

SITE PROMOTION DOCUMENT

FOR



REGARDING

**LAND AT EVOLUTION BUSINESS PARK,
MILTON ROAD, IMPINGTON (SOUTH
CAMBRIDGESHIRE)**

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PLANNING | **DESIGN** | **ENVIRONMENT** | **ECONOMICS**

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by Pegasus Group, on behalf of [REDACTED], who are promoting their land at Evolution Business Park, Milton Road, Impington. This document has been produced in response to the South Cambridgeshire District Council's call for sites process that seeks land to meet the future employment needs of the district.
- 1.2 The call for sites process is the first stage of the early review of South Cambridgeshire District Council's and Cambridge City Council's Local Plans, that were both formally adopted in September 2018. This early review is a requirement of Policy S13 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan and will result in a single Local Plan to direct development proposals across both the District and City Council areas.
- 1.3 The success of Cambridge is supported by the outlying business research parks that accommodate clusters of different businesses. It is expected that the future approach to employment allocations in the district will continue this approach by seeking to maximise the use of land at existing employment sites and to extend them where there is the appropriate infrastructure to support the growth in a sustainable way.
- 1.4 It is estimated that our client's site currently has an indicative capacity to accommodate an additional 2117m² of B1c employment space within the existing boundaries of the site. As the site presently forms part of the Cambridge Green Belt the proposed scheme would make provision for an enhancement of the landscaping to the west and south of the site to help integrate the development into the rural landscape and better define the boundaries of the site.
- 1.5 This document demonstrates how the site is capable of achieving one of the fundamental objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF), sustainable development, through the delivery of additional employment floor space at an established employment site with good access to nearby public transport infrastructure and facilities.

2. THE SITE

- 2.1 The site lies to the northeast of the villages of Histon and Impington and is accessed off the public highway that leads to the village of Milton, Milton Road. The recently converted former poultry sheds sit to the southeast of the site with cycle and car parking to the north and west. An existing earth bund on the site has recently been reprofiled and is due to be landscaped as part of the approved landscaping scheme. The site that is being promoted is the 0.7ha area of land to the west of the existing buildings presently occupied by the earth bund.
- 2.2 To the east of the site there is a strong tree belt that limits distant views of the buildings from the east. Further east along Milton Road there is the Milton Household Recycling Centre and a Park and Ride site that serves the north of Cambridge. To the east Milton Road meets the A10, which extends northwards towards Ely and southwards to junction 33 of the A14.
- 2.3 To the north of Milton Road there are large areas of commercial greenhouses that extend northwards into the countryside. Further west on Milton Road there are the joined villages of Histon and Impington that contain a range of services and facilities around their historic centre.



Figure 1: Site Location Plan showing the former poultry sheds before their conversion

- 2.4 The Histon and Impington village development framework finishes approximately 1 km to the west of the site. Therefore, the site is located on land designated as countryside and forms part of the Cambridge Green Belt.

3. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 superseded the documents of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework 2007. Policy S/5 (Provision of New Jobs and Homes) identifies the need for 22,000 additional jobs to support the Cambridge Cluster and provide a diverse range of local jobs in the district over the period 2011-2031.
- 3.2 Policies E/9 (Promotion of Clusters), E/15 (Established Employment Areas) and E/16 (Expansion of Existing Business in the Countryside) promote the development of existing clusters of employment sites, subject to material considerations. Policy E/10 (Shared Social Spaces in Employment Areas) recognises the importance of providing social space as part of the holistic development of employment areas.
- 3.3 Given that the new Local Plan will also cover the Cambridge City area, and there are limited sites to accommodate employment buildings of this scale, it is clear that the future development strategy for employment will need to rely more on smaller scale sites and the densification of existing employment sites. This would accord with paragraph 82 of the NPPF that identifies the important contribution that small and medium size development sites in suitable accessible locations can make to meeting the employment requirements of an area.

4. SITE SUSTAINABILITY

4.1 Whilst it is located in the countryside the site benefits from good connectivity with the services and facilities of Histon and Impington, Milton and Cambridge.

4.2 Tables 1 below provides a schedule of key local facilities and their approximate distance from the site.

Table 1 - Public Transport Connections, Local Services and Retail

Facility, shops and services	Location	Distance from site and journey time
Bus	Milton Park and Ride, Milton, Cambridge, CB24 6ZE	1.77 Km 18 minute walk 6 minute cycle
	Cambridgeshire Guided Busway, Impington, Cambridge CB24 9YS	3.22 Km 11 minute cycle 5 minute car
Train	Cambridge North Station, Cowley Road, Cambridge, CB4 0WZ	4.18 Km 15 minute cycle 10 minute car
	Waterbeach Station, Station Road, Waterbeach CB25 9HS	6.11 Km 21 minute cycle 8 minute car
Superstore	Tesco Superstore, Cambridge Road, Milton, Cambridge, CB24 6AY	3.38 Km 10 minute cycle 7 minute car
Food store	Tesco Express, 30 High Street, Histon, Cambridge, CB24 9JD	2.58 Km 8 minute cycle 5 minute car
	Co-op Food, Station Road, Histon, Cambridge CB24 9LQ	2.25 Km 8 minute cycle 5 minute car
Post office	Histon Post Office, 6 High Street, Histon, Cambridge CB24 9JD	2.41 Km 7 minute cycle 5 minute car
Bakers	Barkers Bakery, High Street, Histon, Cambridge, CB24 9JD	2.41 Km 7 minute cycle 5 minute car
Cafe	The geographer, 103 Station Road, Impington, CB24 9NP	2.41 Km 9 minute cycle 5 minute car
	St Andrew's café, School Hill, Histon, Cambridge, CB24 9JZ	3.06 Km 9 minute cycle 8 minute car
Bank	Cambridge Building Society, 2 High Street, Histon, Cambridge, CB24 9LG	2.25 Km 7 minute cycle 5 minute car
	Barclays Bank, 15/17 High Street Histon, Cambridge CB24 9JD	2.41 Km 8 minute cycle 5 minute car
Sports Facilities	Impington Sport Centre, New Road, Impington, Cambridge CB24 9LX	1.77 Km 6 minute cycle 3 minute car

	Histon and Impington Recreational Ground, Impington, Cambridge, CB24 9EL	2.25 km 7 minute cycle 5 minute car
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Summary

- 4.3 Table 1 demonstrates that people employed on the site would have convenient access to a range of public transport connections that can be reached via foot and cycle. The site is also very well related to the facilities at the Impington Village College campus and the sports and leisure facilities that it offers. One thing that Table 1 highlights is that the site would benefit from having greater social facilities by way of a café on the site so as to reduce the need for employees to travel to buy food at lunchtime.
- 4.4 A short walk from the site the Milton Park and Ride offers excellent connections to Cambridge North Station, which offers sustainable travel options to major employment hubs and recreation/leisure destinations in Cambridge and further afield.

5. GREEN BELT

- 5.1 The adopted development plan confirms that the site is currently located in the Cambridge Green Belt.
- 5.2 In light of the rising demand for housing and employment in South Cambridgeshire, the availability of development sites in urban areas and the rural nature of South Cambridgeshire, it is deemed essential and inevitable that the Council will need to consider sites in the Green Belt as part of the Local Plan Review. The allocation of suitable and sustainable sites in the Green Belt will allow the Council to address the rising demand for employment in the district. The need for employment growth, particularly in the most sustainable locations, is an exceptional circumstance which warrants the consideration of sites in the Green Belt.
- 5.3 Paragraph 133 of the NPPF sets out the five purposes of Green Belt. Below is an initial assessment that identifies the extent to which the site at Evolution Business Park contributes to the five purposes.

Checking unrestricted sprawl: The proposed additional floorspace would be contained within the existing site boundary of the Business Park with no encroachment onto adjacent agricultural land. The site does not perform a role in preventing the sprawl of Cambridge and its development can be contained by a new defensible Green Belt boundary defined by the existing boundary of the site that will be enhanced by additional landscaping.

Preventing neighbouring towns from merging: The nearest neighbouring settlements to the site are Histon and Impington (circa 1km to the west) and Milton (circa 1km to the east). Between the site and Histon and Impington there is agricultural land and several isolated agricultural buildings and dwellings. Between the site and Milton there is the Park and Ride site and the Household Recycling Centre. All this land forms part of the Cambridge Green Belt. The extent of these fields and other uses, and their designation as Green Belt, mean that they would act as a significant barrier between the development site and the closest neighbouring settlements of Histon and Impington and Milton.

The development of the site for employment purposes will not therefore result in neighbouring settlements merging.

Safeguarding the countryside from encroachment: The consented development at Evolution Business Park is already well screened by the

existing landscaping to the east. The development of this site will not extend the site area of the Business Park north, south or west of the existing site boundaries, which presently form defensible boundaries for restricting further growth and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

Preserving the setting and special character of historic towns: In this case, the Cambridge Green Belt preserves the setting and character of the historic city of Cambridge. Consequently, the site plays little purpose in preserving the setting and character of Cambridge. Conversely, its development will potentially relieve pressure for greater development within and around the city of Cambridge itself. In relation specifically to Histon and Impington, the site's visual containment together with a sensitively design scheme at the application stage will ensure the impact of the new built form upon the existing character of the villages will be minimal.

Supporting urban regeneration: In this case the urban regeneration relates to Cambridge where there are relatively few opportunities for regeneration (where opportunities do exist, these have been identified in the Council's planning policies and/or are currently being progressed by developers). In South Cambridgeshire the pressing need for employment sites necessitates expansion beyond existing developed urban land and some allocation of Green Belt sites.

- 5.4 The assessment above demonstrates that further development within the existing site area of Evolution Business Park would ensure that the purposes of defining Green Belt in the NPPF would not be harmed. When coupled with the need to deliver new employment growth at sustainable locations in the district Evolution Business Park should be considered as a suitable site for further development as part of the Local Plan review process.

6. OTHER SITE CONSIDERATIONS

Flooding and Drainage

- 6.1 The GOV.UK flood mapping extract (Figure 3) confirms that the all the site falls within Flood Zone 1, as such, it is at a low risk of flooding. Therefore, risk of flooding will not be a constraint to the development of the site.

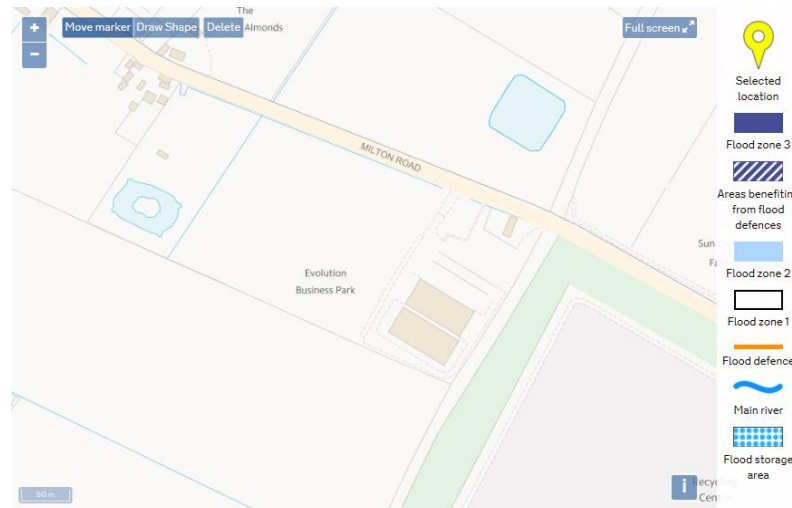


Figure 3: GOV.UK Flood Mapping

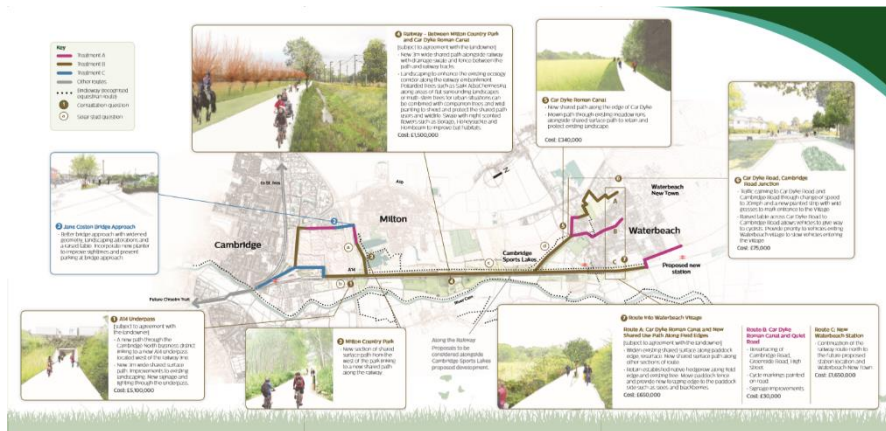
Highways

- 6.2 The site benefits from having a newly upgraded vehicular access onto Milton Road. This access has been designed to accommodate the traffic from the approved employment space and would have the capacity to take the traffic flows from the additional floorspace that would be created.

Cycle and pedestrian connectivity

- 6.3 To east and west there is a footway along parts of the southern side of Milton Road. As part of the approved development there are works to upgrade sections of this footway and a Travel Plan has been produced for the site. The present businesses that occupy the site have a relatively young employee profile and levels of cycling to the site are high. As a result of the proposed development further improvements could be put in place to encourage walking and cycling, especially improved connectivity with the Park and Ride site.

6.4 As part of the Greater Cambridge Partnership Greenways works there are proposals for a green cycle route that will run east of the site from the new town of Waterbeach to Cambridge. This will further encourage sustainable travel to the site.



Public transport

6.1 The site is less than one kilometre from the Milton Park and Ride, which provides access to the Science Park, Cambridge city and Cambridge North rail station. Impington to the west is also well served public transport, including the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway, which provides access to the Addenbrookes Biomedical Campus.

Ecology

6.2 At this stage a comprehensive ecological assessment of the site has not been carried out. Notwithstanding this, the existing earth bund has been the subject of remodelling works and is unlikely to contain any habitats or any particular ecological value. The existing boundary hedge to the east will be retained. The proposed landscaping and any water attenuation would provide new habitats within the site. There would also be the opportunity to provide bird and bat boxes on the sides of the new buildings as part of a scheme of ecological enhancement.

Heritage and Conservation

6.3 The site is not within or near the village Conservation Area and its development would not have any visual impact upon the setting of any of the heritage assets within the Conservation Area.

Protected trees

6.4 There are no trees with Tree Preservation Orders on them within, or anywhere near the site.

7. PROPOSALS

7.1 The Proposal

- 7.1 The proposed allocation site has the potential to deliver two new commercial buildings with all the necessary ancillary landscaping, SUDs and cycle and car parking within the existing boundaries of the site.



Figure 6: Concept Framework Plan

Indicative Layout

- 7.2 The Concept Framework Plan indicates how the two new buildings would be similar in scale and appearance to the existing buildings and could be accommodated on the existing bund area. These buildings would provide approximately 2117m² of additional B1c floor space. In order to maximise the use of the land parking would be provided underground, so the parking standards could be met without the significant loss of developable land.
- 7.3 The vehicular access into the site would remain the same as the existing and would not need any additional works to accommodate the additional traffic flows.

- 7.4 The design and materials of the new buildings would mirror those of the existing converted poultry sheds and additional landscaping would be provided to the west to soften distance views of the new buildings.

- 7.5 Presently there are employees that leave the site to purchase their lunch either at Milton Tesco or the shops in Histon and Impington. Part of the proposed floorspace could accommodate some ancillary A3 class uses to provide more social facilities for those employed on the site. This would have further benefits in terms of the sustainability of the site by reducing car use.

8. DELIVERY

- 8.1 The success of Evolution Business Park is down to a number of niche, pioneering companies that occupy units on the site. These companies are led by Cambridge Medical Robotics (CMR) and Intelligent Fingerprinting that occupy the two largest units on the site. Both these companies are presently in need of further space to expand their operations and have expressed an interest in the new buildings.
- 8.2 Our client has already been approached by companies presently on the site that are keen to expand their operations. Part of the attraction of Evolution Business Park is the size and flexibility of the units on the site. Vacant units like this are difficult to find elsewhere in the Cambridge area. Without the additional space to expand their businesses there is the risk that existing businesses on the site could relocate out of the area.
- 8.3 In terms of implementation and delivery, it is estimated that development at the site could be completed in 12 months following the approval of all necessary planning applications.
- 8.4 There are no significant infrastructure works that would be necessary to enable the development. All potential mitigation measures can either be carried out within the confines of the site (water attenuation, etc.) or could be accommodated within the confines of the adopted public highways (footway improvements, etc.).

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 In our assessment the delivery of the site at Evolution Business Park would result in a significant contribution in employment floorspace to meet the District's employment needs.
- 9.2 Whilst the site has never been identified through a site allocation the development of Evolution Business Park has resulted in the creation of hundreds of new jobs in a sector that benefits from close links to Cambridge.
- 9.3 The Park is in a demonstrably sustainable location with good connectivity to services and facilities by sustainable modes of transport. The site is capable of accommodating a policy compliant level of cycle and car parking as well as landscaping to limit the visual impact upon the Green Belt.
- 9.4 As there is limited space available at other business parks in the Cambridge area it is inevitable that there will be greater emphasis on providing employment space in the more sustainable existing employment sites. The expansion of Evolution Business Park offers to opportunity to support an existing hi-tech employment cluster that will in turn help support the wider Cambridge economy.