



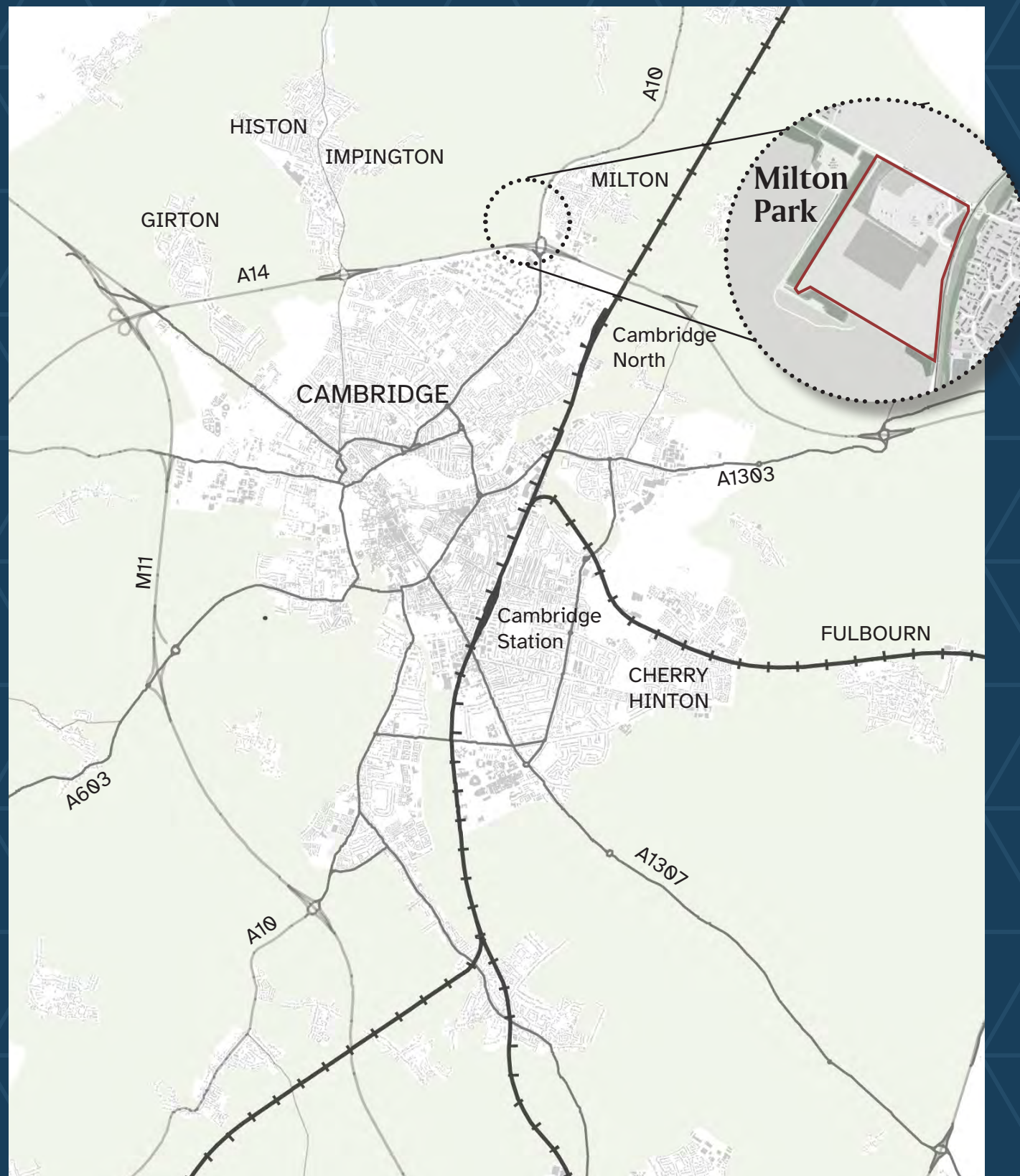
Milton Park

Vision Document
for Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Call for Sites

07 March 2025



The Church of England
Diocese of Ely



Introduction

This proposal by the Diocese of Ely, and their development partner Turnstone Estates, demonstrates how their land at Milton provides a unique contribution to the growth of Cambridge.

Now known as Milton Park (previously referred to as Land off Butt Lane, Milton) this vision illustrates the potential for a highly sustainable phased development to accommodate key employment land uses which is vital to Cambridge's planned growth aspirations.

What's happening in Cambridge?

Employment Demand & Supply

The Greater Cambridge Employment and Housing Evidence Update was produced by Iceni in Jan 2023 to support the emerging local plan. This explains that industrial demand has risen considerably in recent years but supply has failed to keep pace. The document cites a Bidwells report from 2022 which states that the 'notable lack of available space is posing a significant challenge for occupiers in Cambridgeshire'.

Para 2.87 states that 'vacancy is well below acceptable levels' and suggests that there is only 10,000sqm of existing industrial supply most of which is poor quality. Demand is reported to be high, with 'additional demand from those being displaced from the City due to a combination of being squeezed out by rising rents and competition for units as well as a reduction in space due to losses to other uses'.

There are several sites within the City which currently provide key industrial floorspace but are earmarked for comprehensive redevelopment. Such sites include the Clifton Road Area (Policy M2) comprising a 4 hectare site of 52 unit trade counter units in addition to a Royal Mail sorting office on c. 1.5 hectares. Closer to Milton is the North-East Cambridge (Policy S/NEC) which seeks create a new city district. Several established occupiers within the Cowley Road area

will be displaced as phased high density development comes forward, now known as 'Hartree' (subject to DCO approval). Also, within the established science parks, particularly the Cambridge Science Park, significant densification is underway for high density 'life science' accommodation. This will lead to a reduction in floorspace suitable for 'mid-tech' occupiers at affordable rents.

The Iceni report cites a need for around 40,000-60,000 sq m of industrial/warehouse space, but when factoring in the need to accommodate the displacement of existing uses, the need rises to 200,000 sq m, or 149,164 sq m once Dec 2022 supply is accounted for.

The emerging Local Plan will need to ensure sufficient and appropriate site allocations are made to satisfy employment forecasts - both for displacement and additional employment need. Whilst larger growth areas (eg Cambridge East) offer the opportunity to accommodate a mix of uses including industrial, they are intended to be residential-led and will take time to deliver. Land at Milton offers the opportunity meet short term employment needs, especially for those existing employers displaced as a result of planned site intensification.



Green Belt

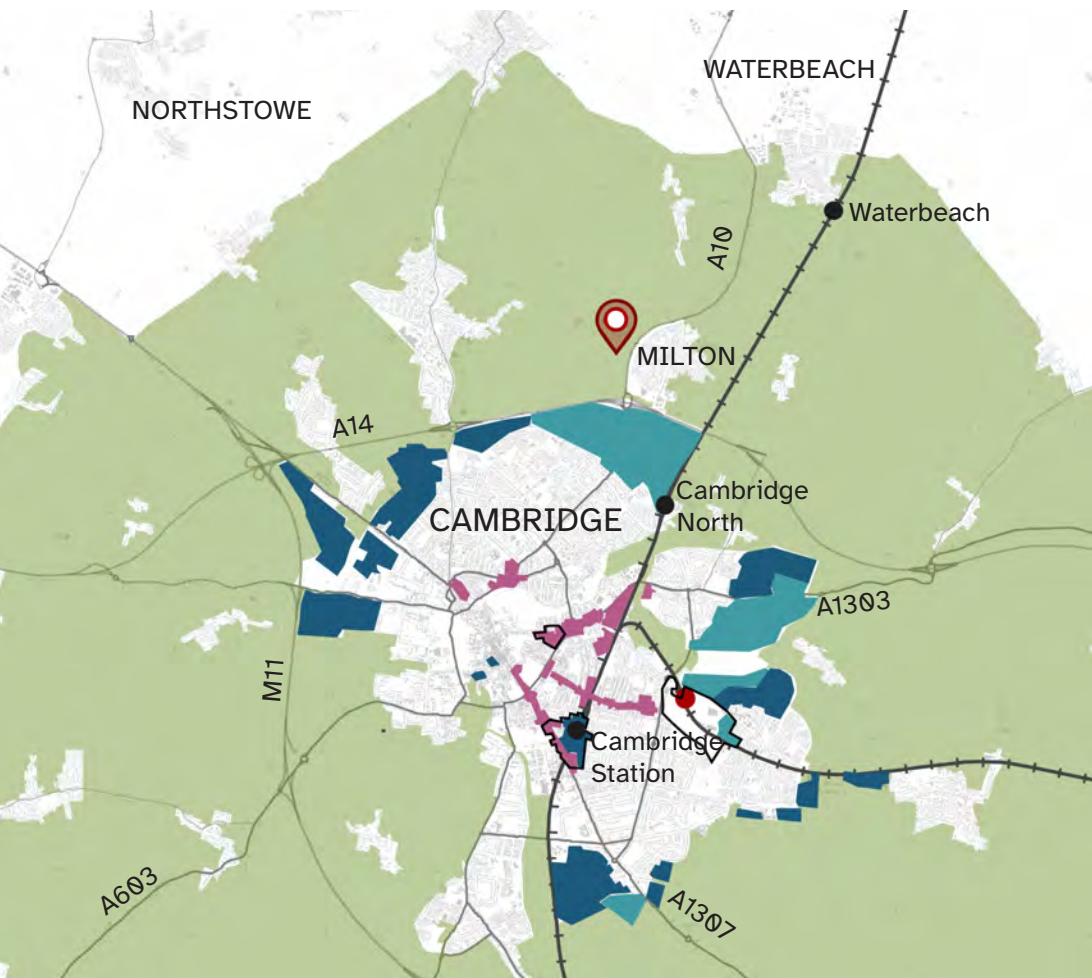
Cambridge's Green Belt has historically protected the City from unrestricted growth. Milton Park is located within the Green Belt and therefore is highly protected by national planning policy.

In March 2021, SCDC granted planning permission within the site for a police station on land immediately south of the Milton Park and Ride. The Officer's Report to committee acknowledged that the proposals constituted inappropriate development but accepted that Very Special Circumstances ('VSC') had been demonstrated to clearly outweigh the harm. In addition, the Council accepted that the land fulfilled a limited Green Belt role and function.

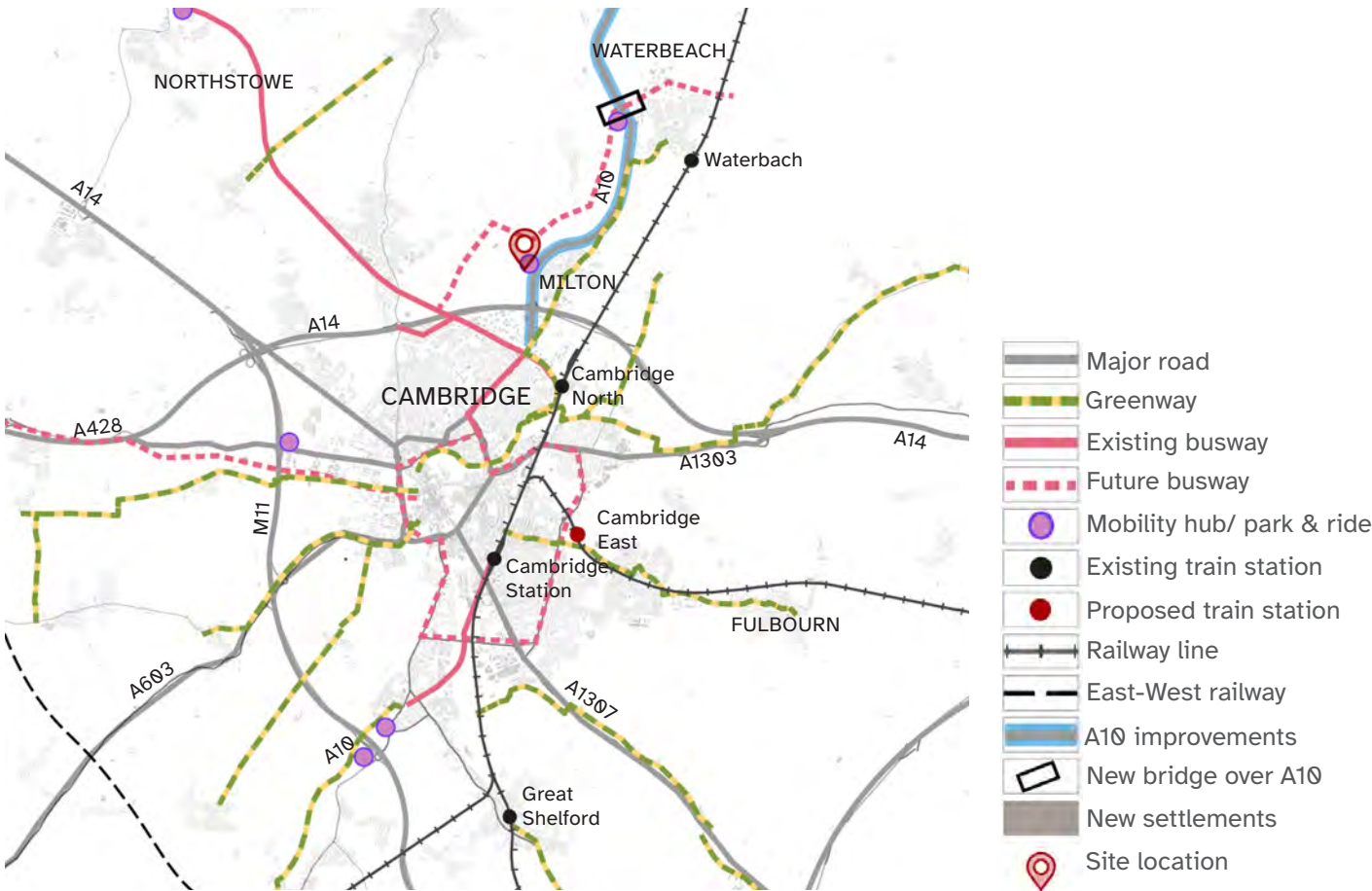
The new NPPF published in Dec 2024, supported by the recent PPG clarifications released in February 2025, introduces the definition of Grey Belt, which if applies means that development in teh Green Belt would not be regarded as 'inappropriate'. A number of criteria need to be satisfied in order to meet this definition, which Milton Park is considered to meet.

A key test is whether the site strongly contributes to Green Belt purposes a); regarding unrestricted sprawl, b); regarding merging of towns or d); regarding protection of historic towns. It is considered that the site does not strongly contribute to these purposes given the existing and consented development located within it (i.e. park and ride and police station), strong physical features that would contain development (i.e. Butt lane, A10, Thirteenth Public Drain and tree belts associated with Milton landfill) and other attributes, which will be subject to a full site-based Green Belt Assessment. This will alsodemonstrate that development within the site would not fundamentally undermine all purposes of the remaining wider Green Belt land.

Therefore in our opinion, the site could be considered 'Grey Belt' land, and its use for employment purposes would not constitute 'inappropriate' development.



*para 2.87 from Greater Cambridge Employment and housing Evidence update by Icenl 2023



Strategic Connectivity

Greater Cambridge benefits from City Deal funding. This was provided by central government to facilitate an ambitious sustainable growth agenda for the area. This funding is in addition to other specific strategic schemes outside of the City Deal programme which are being brought forward by local and national government partners. These funding and project related programmes mean the area is set to benefit from significant transport related infrastructure investment in the next 5 years.

This transformational investment programme will include a number of segregated public transport corridors, a series of Greenways which connect the

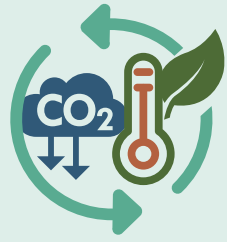
city to the rural hinterlands, new railway stations and, with East West Rail, entirely new railway corridors. These proposals support both the existing and emerging Local Plans but also provide a template for longer term growth and spatial planning by allowing decision makers to allocate sites in locations unlocked by the secured investment. A sustainable, low carbon future depends on putting development in locations that are, or can, be made sustainable.

The Milton site benefits from an established transport facility which will benefit from significant planned transport infrastructure investment.

The Vision

The vision for the site is unique to its location, but underpinned by the overarching principles which aim to deliver the best for the environment, the economy and for life. The site aims to deliver the missing ingredients that Cambridge needs in order to have sustainable growth.

Overarching Principles



Environment

- Reduce impact to environment
- Mitigate effects of climate change
- Enable people to be more sustainable



Economy

- Sustainable hierarchy of services and employment uses for city
- Adaptability
- Local jobs for local people

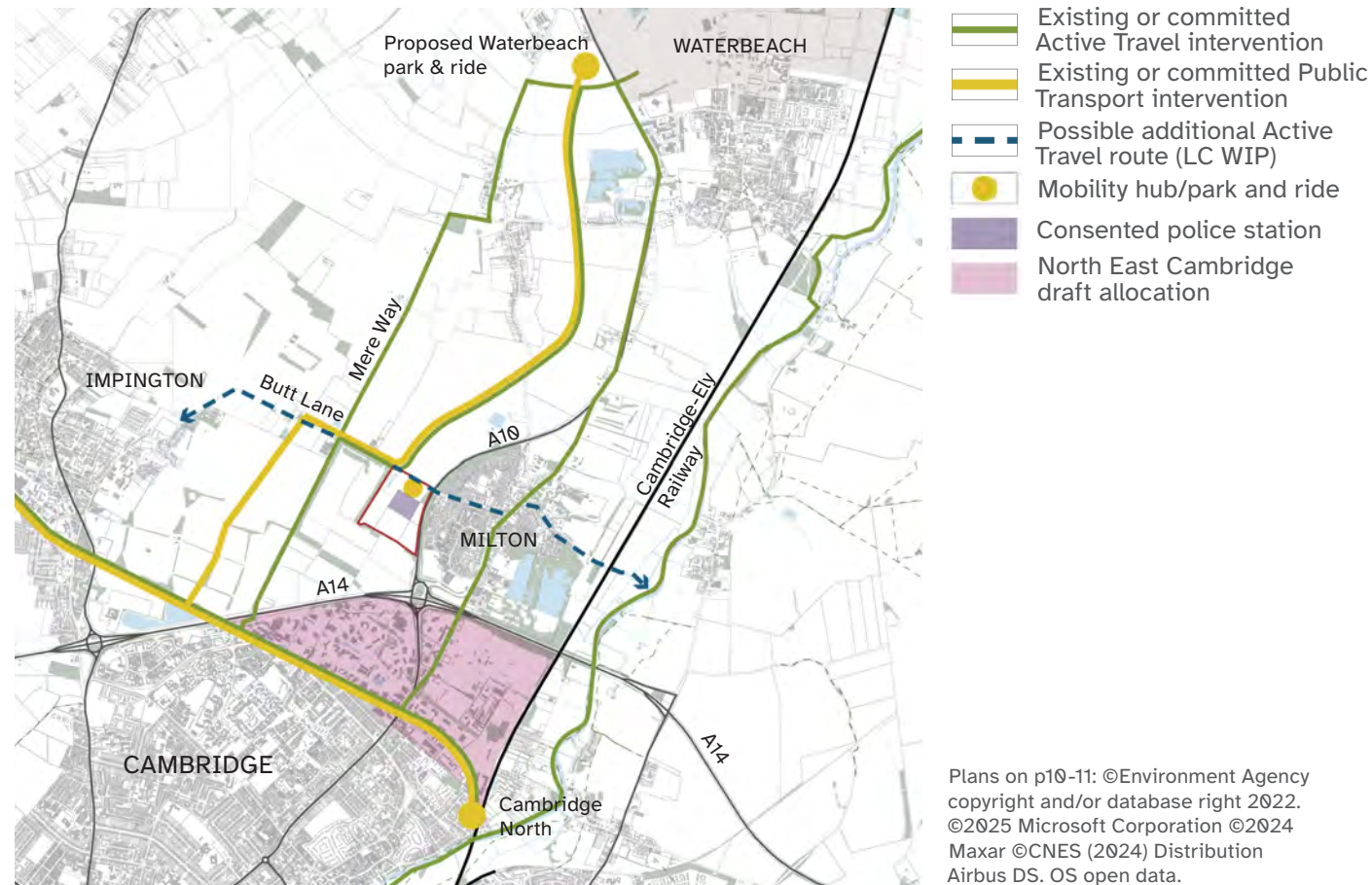


Life

- Embracing local culture
- Encouraging active, healthy lives
- Quality development that delivers a positive legacy for Cambridge



Understanding the site:



Connectivity

The site at Milton benefits from a number of existing and pipelined transport investments. The site is strategically well located for road-based access with the adjacency of the A14 and A10. However, fundamentally in addition to this is the planned Waterbeach to Cambridge Busway delivered by the GCP alongside a number of north-south cycle improvement schemes such as the Mere Way and the Waterbeach Greenway. Improvements, in the longer term, to the A10 are also planned. This puts the site at the convergence of a number of transport networks making it ideal for redevelopment.

Whilst these transport investments will be forthcoming as part of the wider transport programme in the area,

the site also presents an opportunity to facilitate and complement these investments through further measures which will be explored. These include

- a strategically important east-west cycle connection between Impington and Milton via Butt Lane
- the bridge crossing of the A10 and
- a rationalisation of the road network around the Butt Lane junction with the A10.

These further measures in combination with the planned schemes makes the site at Milton exceptionally well connected and appropriate for redevelopment.

Land Ownership & Use

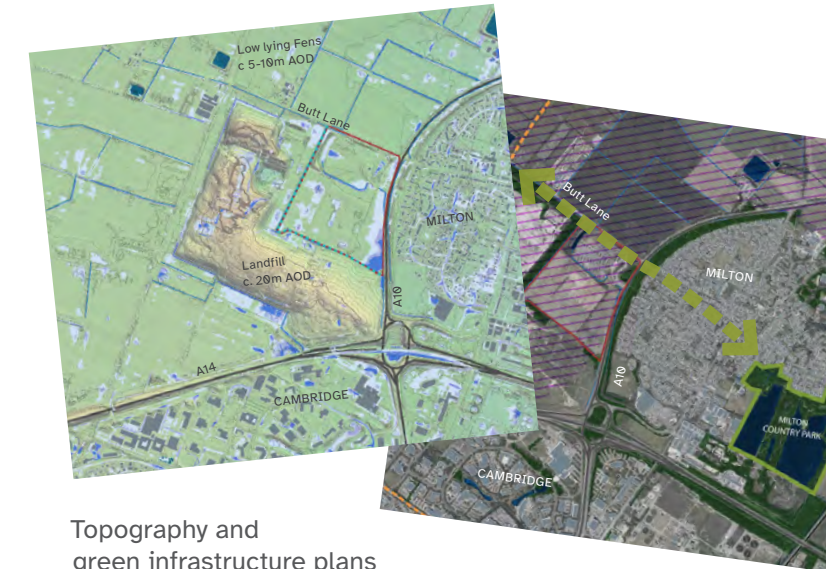
The Milton site broadly splits into two phases. Firstly, the undeveloped land south of the Park & Ride, to the south and east of the new Cambridgeshire Southern Police Station is entirely owned by the Diocese of Ely. This area, totalling 9.6 hectares gross, is immediately available for development, subject to obtaining planning permission. We consider this 'Phase 1'.

Secondly, the north of the site is currently used as an 'Urban Park & Ride', let to Cambridgeshire County Council for a further 34 years. The freehold is owned by the Diocese of Ely and a third party, totalling 7.7 hectares gross. There is an opportunity to assemble the site and bring forward for a later phase, working in conjunction with the County Council. Given the future transport infrastructure investments associated with Waterbeach, it is anticipated the demand for the current 800 space park & ride will diminish, releasing the site for more intensive land uses, albeit still acting as key mobility hub. We consider this 'Phase 2'.

Topography & Drainage

The site is generally low lying and flat which is mirrored within the landscape to the north, being part of the wider Fen landscape. The exception is made-ground associated with Milton landfill which rises around the west and south of the site.

Following the perimeter of the site is the Thirteenth Public Drain, which is found in historic maps, helping to drain the Fenland. Sustainable drainage features have been created in association with the park & ride. The site is outside of fluvial flood areas, but is affected by surface water flooding along the eastern boundary adjacent to the A10. Attenuation features should be located in this area and is an opportunity to create habitat and visual amenity.



Topography and green infrastructure plans available on request. Full analysis to be carried out as part of next stage of design.

Green Infrastructure

The site is located within Area 2B Cottenham Fen Edge Claylands within Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment (2021) which is predominantly an arable landscape with medium sized fields arranged in irregular rectilinear patterns defined by straight historic ditches (i.e. Thirteenth Public Drain enclosing the site) and droveways (i.e. Mere Way to the west of the site).

A number of visually strong tree belts are located along the A10 and around Milton land fill which help to provide a level of enclosure to the site, along with the raised ground associated with the latter.

Given the general lack of vegetation within the site, there are opportunities to improve green infrastructure connections along Butt Lane through additional tree planting, that would also help to soften views to development from open fenland landscape to the north. Ditches, trees and planting could also extend into the site using rectilinear patterns to enhance Fen landscape and help create a distinctive place that attracts people and nature to thrive.

Understanding the site:

Opportunities & constraints

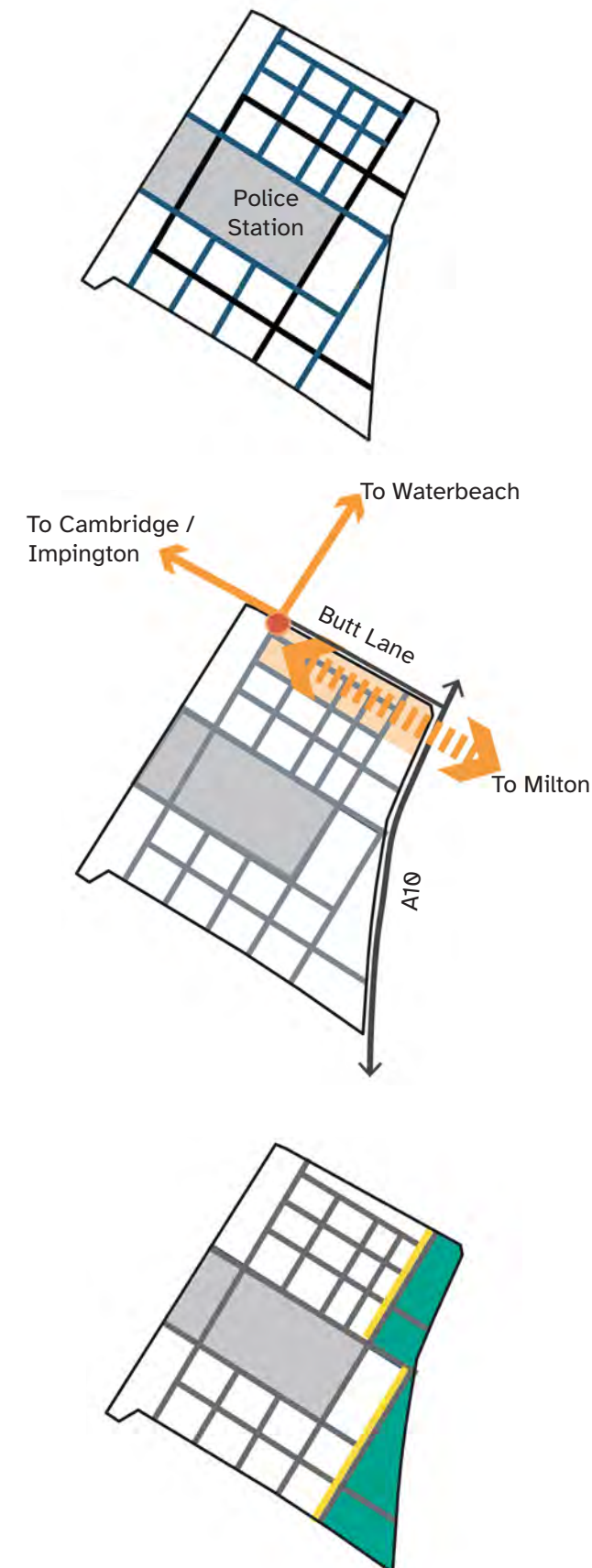
- Delivering employment land for identified need and displaced uses, including trade counter, mid-tech, last mile distribution, manufacturing and high-tech floorspace.
- Creation of super mobility hub associated with Waterbeach Busway along Butt Lane.
- Creation of gateway with Milton at landing of improved cycleway bridge over A10, with associated improvements to A10/Butt Lane junction.
- Delivering wider mixed-uses for the benefit of Milton's residents and users of the transport hub, designed to complement and enhance existing

provision, creating activity along Butt Lane

- Creating rectilinear grid of ditches and trees inspired by Fen landscape and green infrastructure opportunities linking into Thirteenth Public Drain.
- Locating water features that help attenuate site along A10 that also become an attractive gateway feature.
- Respecting existing and proposed uses on the site in terms of access and phasing around park and ride, police station and air ambulance.
- Consider lower, smaller grain buildings in north of site softened by tree planting to reduce visual impact to open Fen landscape to north.
- Use current vehicular access points into site.



Key Moves



Flexible

A grid framework that allows for flexibility and adaptability to meet market demand. The framework allows for the known occupiers (Police Station) whilst allowing new plots to be designed and configured to accommodate a range of typologies - from logistics and distribution to mid-tech and start up incubator spaces. The grid not only provides flexibility of use, but also stitches into the rectilinear character of the surrounding Fen landscape.

Connected

The site's location enables multiple modes of connectivity making it an ideal 'Urban Mobility Hub'.

- A10 - access to Park & Ride, logistics and distribution
- New Busway bus stop - commuting and visitor connection to Cambridge and Waterbeach
- East-west connection between Milton and Impington along Butt Lane (via improved bridge crossing over A10) connects Milton with proposed busway creating pedestrian parade of potential leisure, retail and community uses.

Fen Gateway

Locating sustainable drainage and waterbodies along A10 creates opportunity for an improved gateway to Cambridge and Milton, as well as creating an impressive, locally distinctive entrance into the site.

Connections and location presents the site with a multi-faceted opportunity to unlock its value for much needed logistics and distribution services, as well as high profile and high value mid-tech located along the A10 corridor.

Illustrative Masterplan

Summary

The masterplan presents the opportunity of delivering c. 60,000sqm GIA of employment floorspace helping with meeting local demand in a highly connected location with direct links to strategic public transport and active travel.

It provides the opportunity of creating an active corridor for leisure and community facilities for Milton that links with the Cambridge-Waterbeach busway along Butt Lane, as well as creating a high-quality, locally distinctive gateway into Cambridge along the A10.

A grid framework provides flexibility and adaptability that can respond to market forces. The masterplan illustrates the option to deliver larger units in the south associated with logistics, with smaller units to the north delivering mid-tech offices/workshops and start ups. The east delivers hi-tech offices that overlook the lakes providing a high-quality frontage with kerb-side appeal.

The Fen landscape has been key to influence the rectilinear approach to ditches and street trees across the site creating the opportunity to deliver wetlands, waterbodies and meadows that also provide habitat and sustainable drainage that help to combat resilience climate change.

The site is not just an employment site. It's a place for local people to ensure they can live sustainably in Greater Cambridge whether to work on site, commute to Cambridge or use the community facilities and amenities available associated with a key mobility hub for the area.



Mobility Hub

Key connection with Waterbeach-Cambridge Busway providing future sustainable travel



Sustainable Transport



Go cycling

Pedestrian Parade

Northern mixed-use corridor taking advantage of footfall along active travel link between Milton and Busway with associated multi-storey car park



Leisure



Retail



Park & Ride

Supercharge Square

Improved bridge connection over A10 with leisure and community facilities overlooking park inspired by Fen landscape



Go for a coffee



Service Businesses



Meeting Friends



Electric Powerpoints

East Lakes

Hi-tech campus overlooking lakes that provide attenuation for surface water within site along prime frontage to A10. Lakes provide key habitat and open space to enjoy



Biodiversity Key Site



Hi-tech campus



Contemplation



Water & wetlands

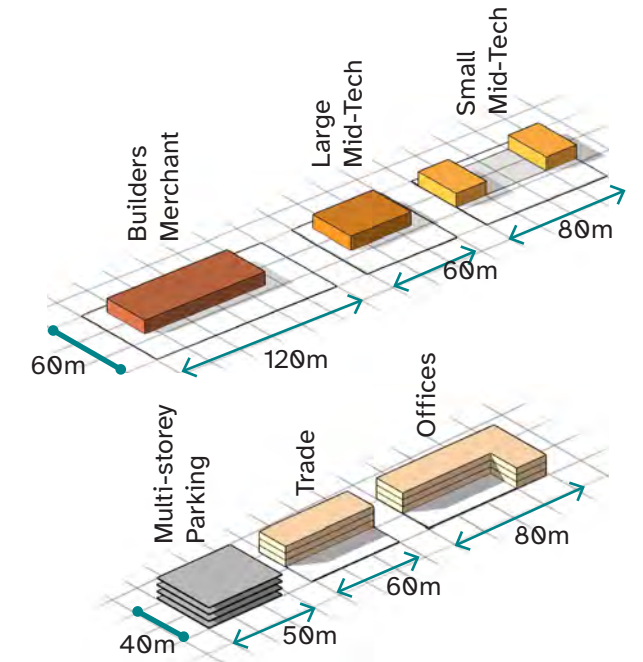
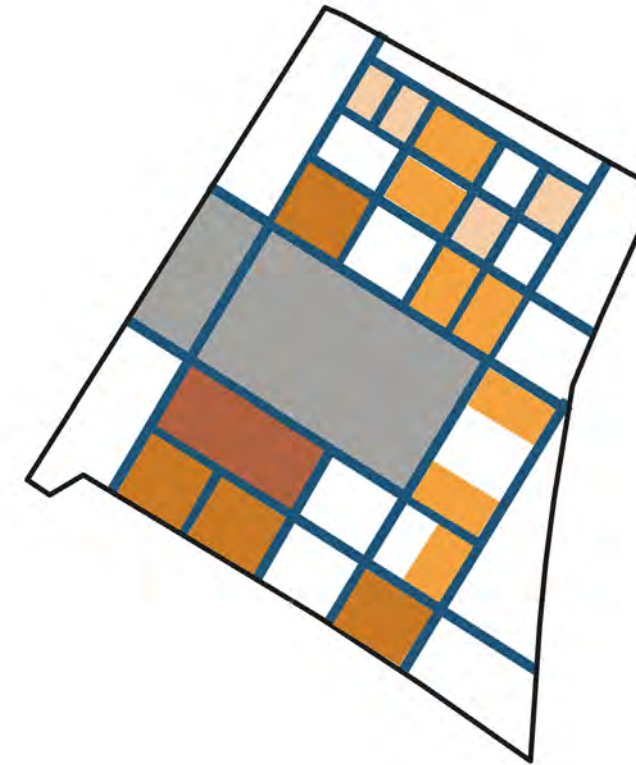
Diverse & Adaptable



© Parkway Construction MK Limited

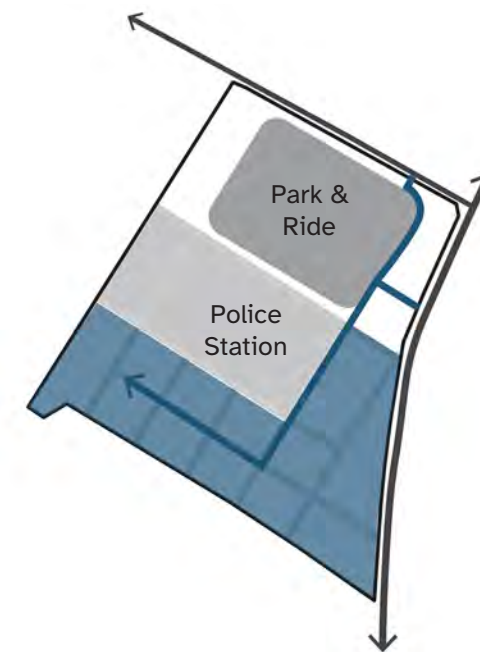


© Parkway Construction MK Limited



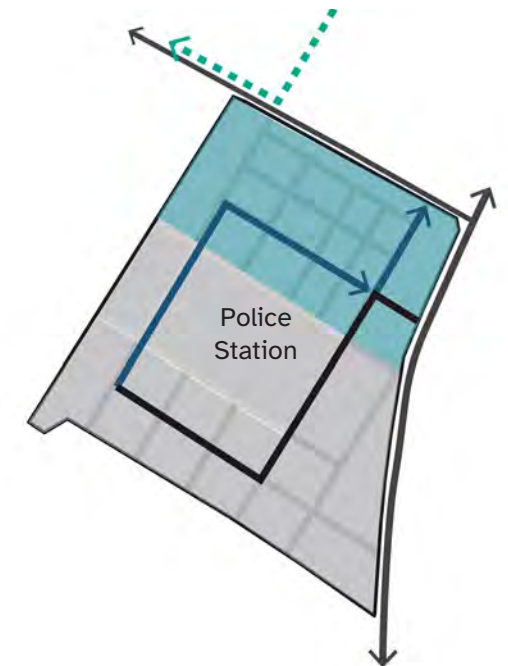
Agility is Key

Two sets of block depths provide a framework for a range of typologies to plug into the grid.



Phase 1

Southern site comes forward first offering larger plots that can serve current need for displaced services within Cambridge, as well as tech park with attenuation lakes. Existing Park & Ride is retained.



Phase 2

Consolidate Park & Ride in the north with east-west link and Cambridge-Waterbeach busway providing mobility hub along with mix of trade, mid-tech and community uses.



The Church of England
Diocese of Ely

Etheldreda House,
Lancaster Way Business Park, Ely CB6 3NX

www.elydiocese.org



Turnstone Estates Limited

Suite 2, Bishop Bateman Court, Thompsons Lane,
Cambridge CB5 8AQ

Tel: 01223 273953
www.turnstoneestates.com

