

Bury St Edmunds Concept Statement

Moreton Hall Concept Statement

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Prepared by:

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1. Moreton Hall Concept Statement

This concept statement has been prepared to provide the parameters and framework for the development of the Moreton Hall strategic site as defined in Policy BV4. Its purpose is to inform the preparation of more detailed development proposals for the site within the context of current and emerging national and local planning policies and local environmental and infrastructure constraints.

1.1. The Borough Council expects that the issues raised in this concept statement will be given full consideration in the masterplan which will be developed for this site at a later date and prior to any planning applications for this site being determined.

1.2. This concept statement has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the council's adopted protocol for the preparation of concept statements and the emerging policies relating to the preparation of concept statements and masterplans in the Joint Development Management Policies Submission Document (October 2012). The concept statement will inform the preparation of a masterplan for the area.

1.3. Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy proposes limited further growth at Moreton Hall that will complete the recent growth by:

- making provision for a secondary school;
- providing additional recreation and community facilities, including the relocation of Bury Town Football Club;
- delivering around 500 homes of mixed tenure and size, including affordable homes;
- providing improved public transport, foot and cycle links to the town centre and other locally significant leisure, employment and service destinations;
- enabling potential transport links to the north of the railway line;

1.4. The policy notes that the development is likely to commence early in the plan period, but that the additional housing will not be permitted until the completion of the Eastern Relief Road to junction 45 of the A14 (Rookery Crossroads). The actual amount of development will be determined by environmental and infrastructure capacity considerations and the preparation and adoption of a detailed masterplan in which the community and other stakeholders have been fully engaged.

1.5. The Core Strategy neither defined the boundary, nor the extent of the site, which has been achieved in the preparation of this Concept Statement and the draft Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031 local plan document. In doing so, careful regard has been paid especially to:

- a. ensuring the flying operations at Rougham Airfield are not compromised by the development;
- b. the development is easily accessible for cyclist and pedestrians from the existing Moreton Hall development, the future strategic growth area to the north of the railway line, the Suffolk Business Park and the strategic growth area south west of the A14.

Policy Context

1.6. It is not the purpose of the Concept Statement to repeat all relevant planning policies published elsewhere. However, in preparing this document, the following local policies are of particular relevance.

1.7. Core Strategy (December 2010):

- Policy CS2 – Sustainable Development
- Policy CS3 – Design and Local Distinctiveness
- Policy CS5 – Affordable Housing
- Policy CS7 – Sustainable Transport
- Policy CS11 – Bury St Edmunds Strategic Growth
- Policy CS14 – Community infrastructure capacity and tariffs

1.8. Replacement St Edmundsbury Borough Local Plan (2006)

- Policy DS4 – Masterplans
- Policy H5 – Mix of housing
- Policy L4 – Standards of Open Space and Recreation Provision
- Policy L7 – Public Rights of Way
- Policy T1 – Transport Assessments
- Policy T2 – Hierarchical Approach to Site Access
- Policy T5 – Parking standards
- Policy T8 – Cycling and Pedestrian Strategies
- Policy NE2 – Protected Species
- Policy NE3 – Protection of the Landscape
- Policy IM1 – Developer Contributions

1.9. Submission Draft Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan

- Policy DM2 – Creating Places – Development Principles and Local Distinctiveness
- Policy DM3 – Masterplans
- Policy DM6 – Flooding and Sustainable drainage
- Policy DM7 – Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy DM8 – Improving Energy Efficiency and Reducing Carbon Dioxide Emissions
- Policy DM13 – Mitigation, Enhancement, Management and Monitoring of Biodiversity
- Policy DM14 – Landscape Features

- Policy DM21 - Archaeology
- Policy DM23 – Residential
- Policy DM36 – Protection of Local Centres
- Policy DM41 – Community Facilities and Services
- Policy DM45 – Transport Assessments and Travel Plans
- Policy DM46 – Parking Standards

Landscape Context

1.10. The site is located on the east side of Bury St Edmunds, bound by the Ipswich to Cambridge railway line to the north and existing residential development to the west. To the south of the site is a large parcel of land extending eastwards, which is allocated for development as a strategic employment site incorporating the eastern relief Road, which will connect Moreton Hall with the A14 at Junction 45. The site is bisected by Mount Road, (C692) and National Cycle Network route number 51 which connects Bury St Edmunds with the villages of Thurston and Beyton to the east. To the east of the site, south of Mount Road is Rougham airfield, a former WWII airfield, now utilized for open air events and shows and to the north of mount Road is open arable land.

1.11. The site lies within the plateau estate farmlands as defined in the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment. Characteristics of these areas which are evident in the locality are:

- large scale rectilinear field pattern;
- flat landscape of light loams and sandy soils;
- network of tree belts and coverts.
- former airfields

1.12. The site forms part of a plateau with a gentle slope at its northern end, truncated from land beyond, to the north by the railway. The northern portion of the site north of Mount Road is open arable land with no physical features to identify the eastern boundary. Two private properties are located on the frontage with Mount Road. The larger part of the site to the south of Mount Road is open arable land with evidence of field boundaries along its eastern edge, with a sections of tree belts and remnants of hedges, separating it from the airfield. A single building forming the Flying Fortress Public House site in the north west section of this part of the site, served by a vehicular access from Mount Road.

Constraints and Opportunities

1.13. Until such time as the Eastern Relief Road has been provided linking Moreton Hall directly with Junction 45 of the A14 (Rookery crossroads), any development within the site will increase traffic flows onto Junction 44 of the A14 which is already operating at capacity.

1.14. The proximity of Rougham Airfield, which is used as an outdoor entertainment venue for vehicle shows, air displays country shows, music events and farmers markets has an influence on adjacent land uses. This arises not only from potential noise and disturbance, but also from the requirement to avoid development below flight approach paths.

1.15. The open nature of the site on a plateau, with little screening, means that any development has the potential to be visible from a wide area, particularly from the north and east, with potential to have a significant impact upon the surrounding landscape, unless compensatory measures are put in place as part of the development. Those natural landscape features which do exist should be retained and significantly enhanced to provide a strong visual structure as well as adding benefit through providing the site with green infrastructure opportunities.

1.16. The existing built development to the west of the site is provides access to primary school facilities and open space, but is located at some distance from existing community facilities centred around Lawson Place. The existing public house facility within the site provides a focus for the siting of community facilities accessible to both the existing and proposed development.

Community engagement

1.17. The community consultation events carried out by the developer included two public exhibitions, one held at Rougham and one at Moreton Hall. These identified six issues which were ranked in order as follow:

1. Road congestion;
2. Road infrastructure;
3. Parking;
4. Public Transport;
5. Open space; and
6. Community facilities

1.18. A subsequent workshop for invited stakeholders discussed the six issues identified above and identified further issues as follow:

- current school locations are not spread throughout the town and parents feel they have to use their cars for the school run;
- an additional school on the east side of Bury St Edmunds would assist in resolving one of the main contributors to the congestion problem;
- improvements to school transport, particularly for Middle Schools would assist where children cannot be expected to walk alone; and
- improved pedestrian access/cycle routes, particularly for High School routes would enable those who can walk to school to do so safely

Place making

1.19. The vision for the growth area is to provide a place that people choose as a place to live that provides attractive well-designed houses, employment opportunities, recreation and community facilities, set within an attractive environment with open space, trees, landscaping and other green infrastructure, including allotments.

1.20. It will provide a modern, high quality, sustainable, energy efficient development which integrates with the existing development to the west and provides an attractive edge to the urban form of Bury St Edmunds.

1.21. Within St Edmundsbury borough there are several nature conservation sites of international importance, one of which is the Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area for Conservation (SAC). The Brecks area supports the Stone Curlew, Woodlark and Nightjar species and as an area this has been given additional protection from the potential impact of future development through Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy. Although the SPA does not fall within the area covered by the Bury St Edmunds Vision document, impact on the SPA, in terms of increased recreational pressure resulting from the strategic growth, will need to be carefully considered in appraising the proposals for development on the site. A Habitat Regulations (Screening) Assessment of the strategic site, as part of the Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031 document process, has concluded that a small increase in visitors to Breckland SPA is likely to be concentrated in areas closer to Bury St Edmunds, although not in sufficient extra numbers to cause any harm to the SPA.

1.22. Mature trees and the tree belt on the eastern boundary of the site will be retained and extended to provide a screened edge to build development to the east and north. These should be extended into the development to create place making features and movement connections, together with the creation of interconnected habitats to encourage both flora and fauna within the built environment.

1.23. Consideration will need to be given to the incorporation of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) from the outset. This can incorporate features such as rainwater capture and integrated attenuation systems.

1.24. Built development will need to avoid the flight path safeguarding areas associated with the adjacent airfield. With planning permission already in place for the football academy in the southern part of the site, accessed directly from the eastern Relief Road, the focus for residential development will be at the northern end to either side of Mount Road.

1.25. In accordance with the principle of walkable communities identified in the Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031, a community hub is

identified. This is identified in close proximity to the existing public house and should provide a focus for the new community activities such as shops, community facilities and healthcare facilities. The location of the community hub would be accessible to both the proposed community, the existing community to the west and users of Mount Road and cycle route 51. The design of the community hub should allow flexibility of use and help engender community interaction and a strong sense of place.

1.26. The masterplan should address how opportunities will be created to achieve the establishment of local community governance groups and other community run initiatives, so that individuals feel able to get involved in managing the community they live in.

1.27. In order to achieve a balanced community, the new neighbourhoods will provide a mix of housing types and sizes, including affordable housing (30%), general market housing, executive housing and self build housing. Provision also needs to be made to meet the accommodation needs of the older generation.

1.28. The overall density of the development will be higher close to the community hub and lower at the eastern margins of the site. The extreme margins at the eastern part of the site, north of Mount Road provides an opportunity to construct homes within a landscape setting.

1.29. Policy CS11 of the adopted St Edmundsbury Core Strategy identifies the requirement for a secondary school. This could be accommodated to the south of the flight path safeguarding area, north of the football academy, enabling shared use of amenities with the football academy. The area within the flight path safeguarding area would be utilized as school playing field and amenity open space, linking with the open space on the opposite side of Lady Miriam Way to the west.

1.30. Opportunities to reduce short trips by car will be an important factor in measuring the environmental sustainability of the development. Movement through the site will be facilitated by a network of footpaths and cycleways, which will connect with the existing system which provides access to the town centre. Links should also be made to development proposed to the north of the railway line. Vehicular access to the secondary school will be provided from the Eastern Relief Road to the east of the football academy, but footpath and cycle access should also be provided direct from Lady Miriam Way.

1.31. A relief road is required between Moreton Hall (Skyliner Way) and junction 45 of the A14 trunk road (Rookery Crossroads), which will provide access to the football academy and secondary school. The provision of this road will also accommodate existing traffic which currently uses junction 44 of the A14 and Mount Road. The relief road will also provide access to the eastward extension to Suffolk Business Park providing significant employment opportunities.

