



Land at Bourn Airfield - Vision Document

October 2012

Client: The Taylor Brothers
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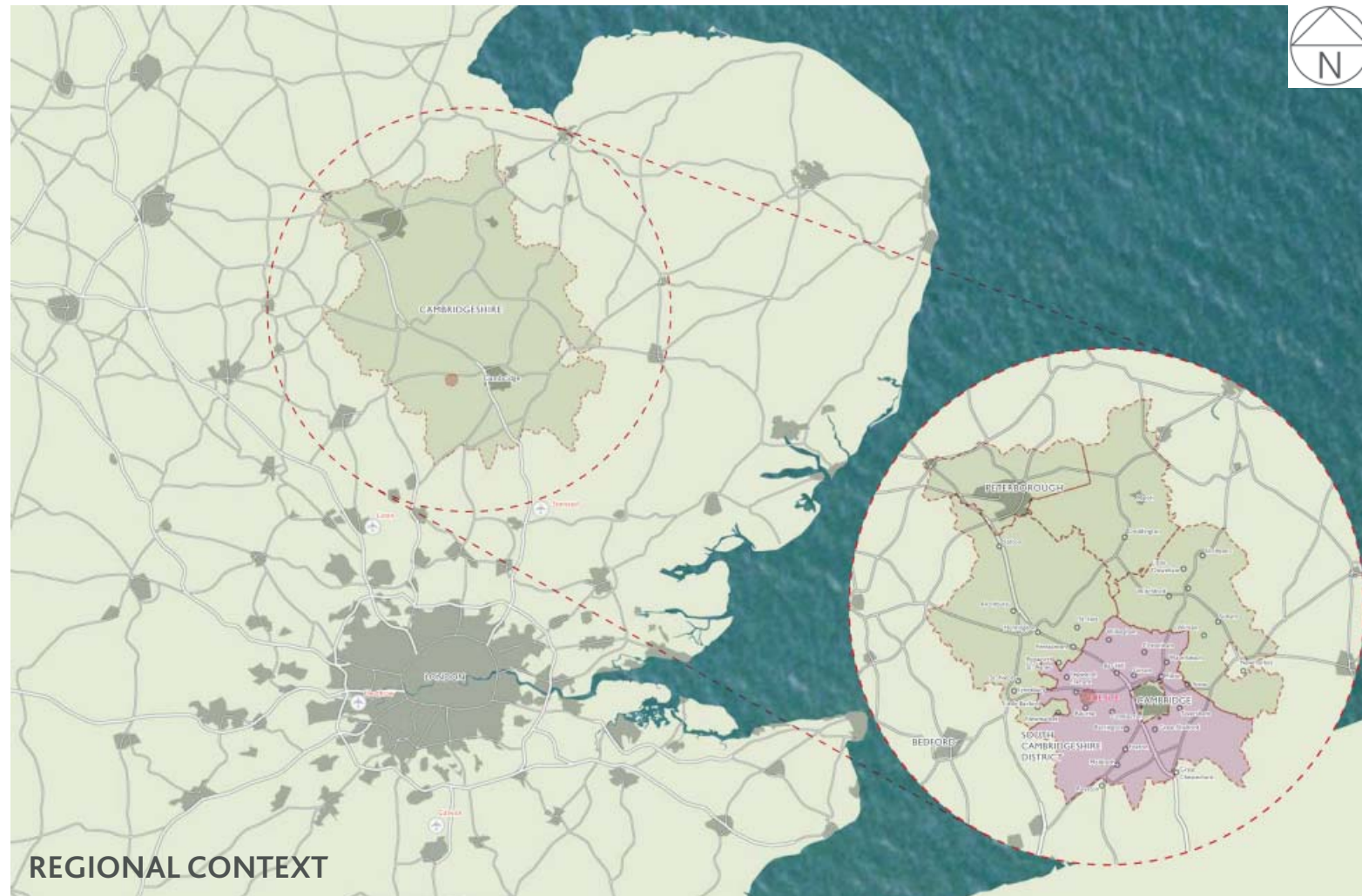


Figure 1: Regional Context

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INTRODUCTION

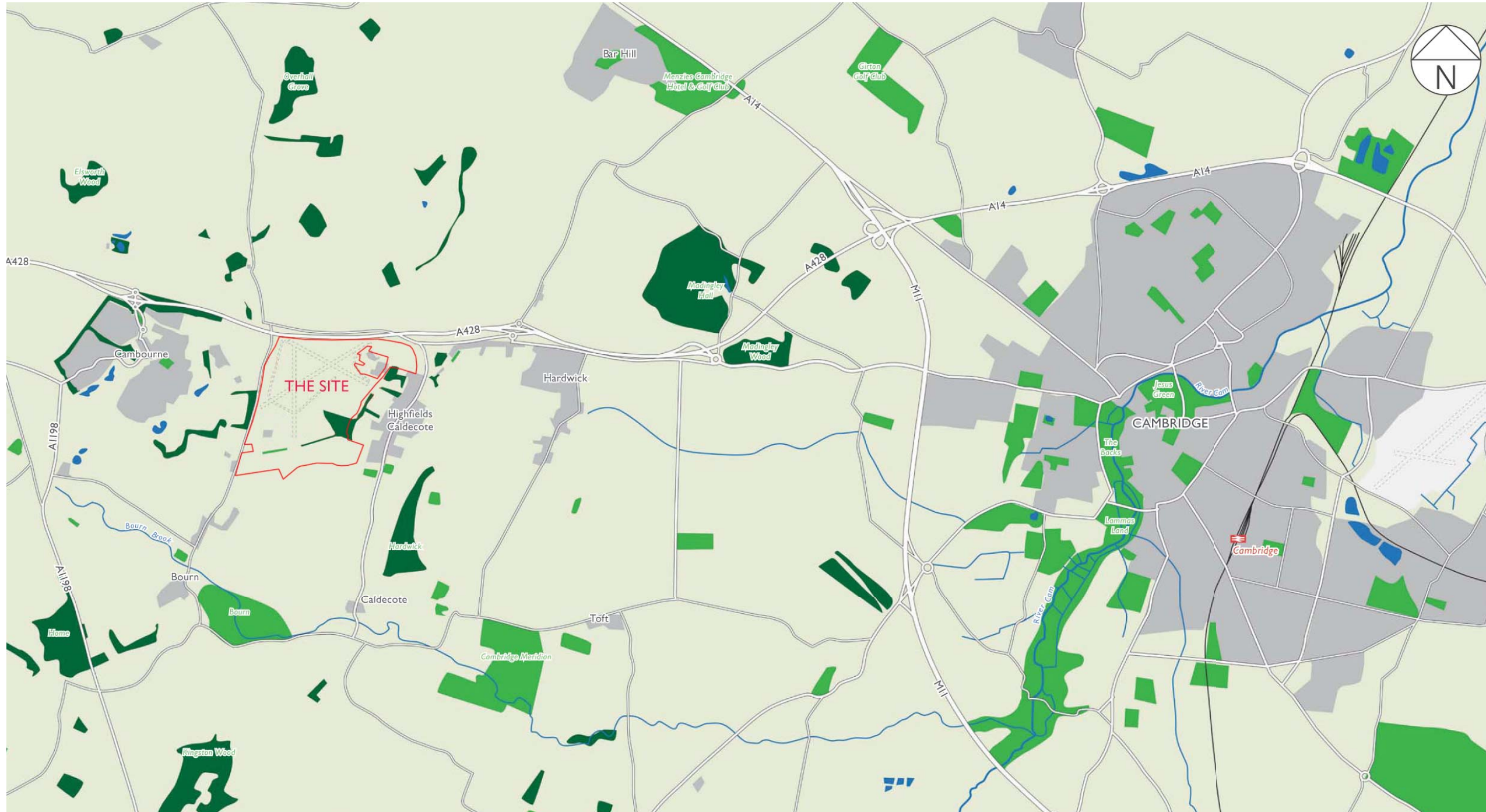


Figure 2: Site Context

section 1

INTRODUCTION

This Vision Document has been prepared on behalf of the landowners - the Taylor Brothers - in support of a proposal for a new settlement of circa 3,500 homes on land at Bourn Airfield.

It is submitted to South Cambridgeshire District Council for consideration as a sustainable development opportunity that can be delivered in the early phases of the emerging Local Plan.

This document should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Representations document prepared by Andrew Martin - Planning.

The purpose of this document is to set out a vision for the site, and establish the principles of development, and benefits of developing at this location.

Initial assessments have been undertaken of key issues such as transportation, utilities, ecology, archaeology, noise, flood risk, landscape impact, education and health needs to ensure viability of a scheme at this location. These studies are on-going and will inform this Vision Document as it evolves.

Bourn Airfield is located to the west of the settlements of Highfields and Caldecote, immediately south of the A428 trunk road, to the north of Bourn, and to the east of the new settlement of Cambourne.

Cambridge City Centre is located approximately 9km to the east and St. Neots is approximately 18km to the west.

The current use is an Airfield for pilot training and private aircraft. The site is also used for storage and as a bank holiday market. Some 50% of the site is previously developed land, or 'brownfield' land.

The gross development site area is circa 267 hectares. This Vision Document illustrates a proposal for a mixed use settlement of approximately 3,500 residential units, shops, employment space, schools and other community facilities.

At this stage the vision plans serve to illustrate the current thinking of the landowners and show a form of potential development for the site.

The landowners are co-operating with, and are seeking to integrate the proposals with the neighbouring employment site owned by Tallent Automotive, in order to ensure an integrated approach to any future development proposals.

It is inevitable that the vision and concepts illustrated in this document will be the subject of revision and refinement as the Local Plan proceeds and as the formulation of a subsequent planning application for the site evolves. The proposals will be prepared in the context of consultation with Council officers, various statutory bodies and members of the public.



Figure 3: The Site

section 1

INTRODUCTION

A Previously Developed Site: Brownfield Land

At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. An important criteria for achieving sustainable development is to encourage the effective use of land by re-using what has been previously developed i.e. brownfield land.

On March 27th 2012, Planning Minister Greg Clark told MPs that the NPPF *“makes clear what was always implicit: that councils’ policies must encourage brownfield sites to be brought back into use”*.

As a former WWII military airfield, approximately 50% of the land at Bourn Airfield is brownfield land.

“One aspect of sustainable development is making the best use of previously developed land, sometimes called ‘brownfield’ land, and in some parts of the country this can help reduce the amount of ‘greenfield’ land that is needed for development.” (South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, Issues & Options Report, Public Consultation, July 2012)

“The NPPF encourages the effective use of land by re-using previously developed land and therefore the Local Plan should ensure that the re-use of previously developed land in sustainable locations is prioritised, provided that the land is not of high environmental value.” (South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, Issues & Options Report, Public Consultation, July 2012)

A further sustainable feature of the proposals rooted in the re-use of previously developed land, is the opportunity that exists to break up the existing runways and re-use the crushed concrete and recycled aggregates for new development thereby minimising heavy goods vehicle movements and associated harmful environmental impacts.

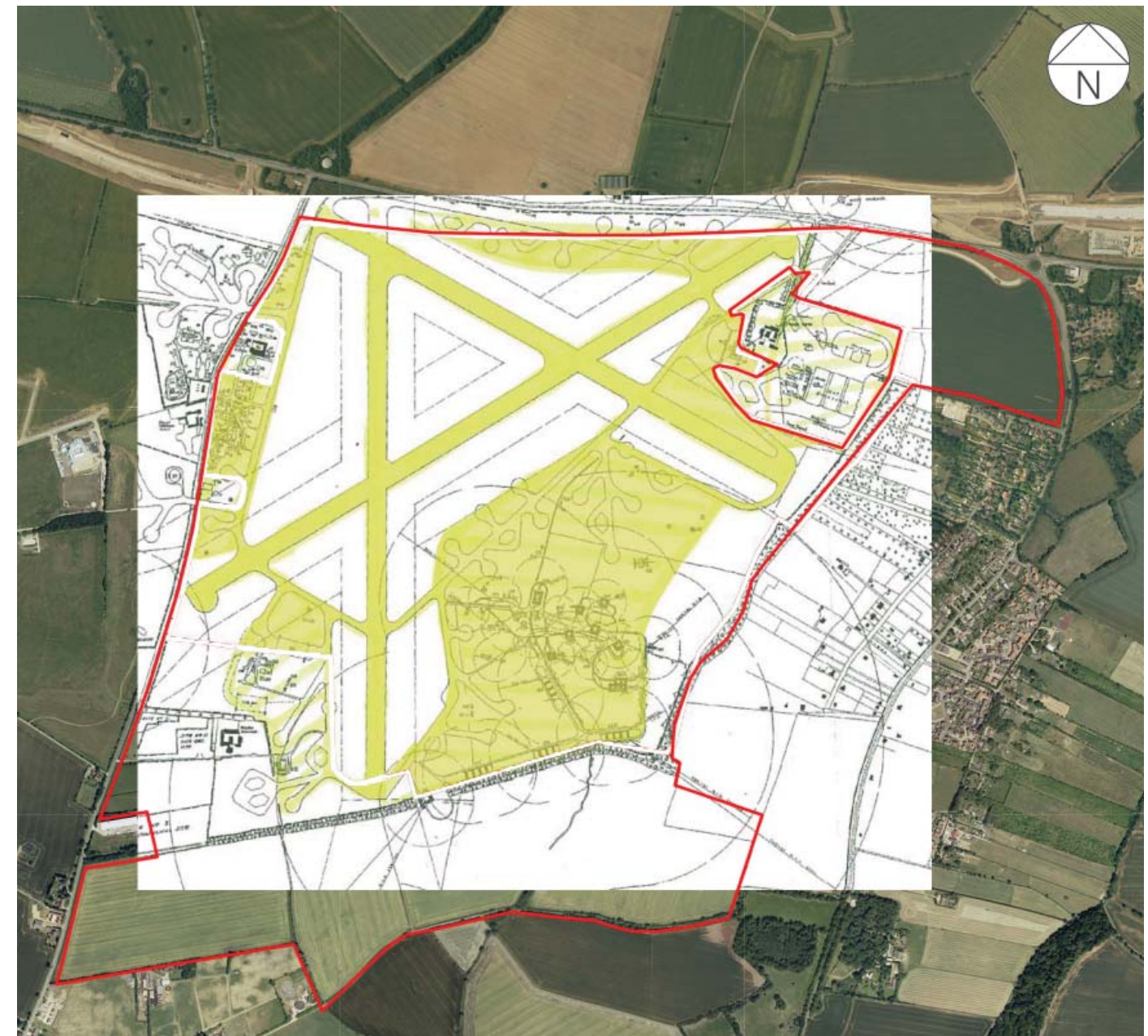


Figure 4: Brownfield Land

section 1

INTRODUCTION



Areas of the site are used for crane equipment storage



Gap in planting to accommodate flight paths



Aviation related structures



Hard surfaced runway



Bourn Airfield Market



Woodland block



Planting screens edges of the site

INTRODUCTION



Figure 5: Aerial Site Location

section 2

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The land at Bourn Airfield represents a sustainable opportunity for locating future development:

Delivery

- Spreading housing growth across the district will help to ensure the delivery of South Cambridgeshire's housing targets.
- The site is available, being in a single family ownership with no other constraints to its early development.
- The infrastructure required is not of a scale that would be prohibitive to economic viability.

Brownfield over Greenfield

- Approximately 50% of the Land at Bourn Airfield is previously developed, or brownfield.
- Developing on the brownfield land at Bourn Airfield releases development pressure elsewhere and helps to protect the character of existing villages and the Green Belt surrounding Cambridge.
- Re-use of the crushed concrete and recycled aggregate from existing runways will minimise construction traffic and other harmful environmental impacts.

A Self Contained Settlement

- Opportunity to provide a separate, self-sufficient settlement at Bourn Airfield with strong connections to existing surrounding communities.
- Bourn Airfield can become a 'Rural Settlement' and can help to support existing local communities by providing key facilities to meet its own needs and any shortfalls that exist in the local area. There is the opportunity to create a new settlement of approximately 8,000 people. A population of this order is enough to trigger a full range of facilities including shops, employment, leisure and education on-site to support daily life and provide a well rounded settlement.

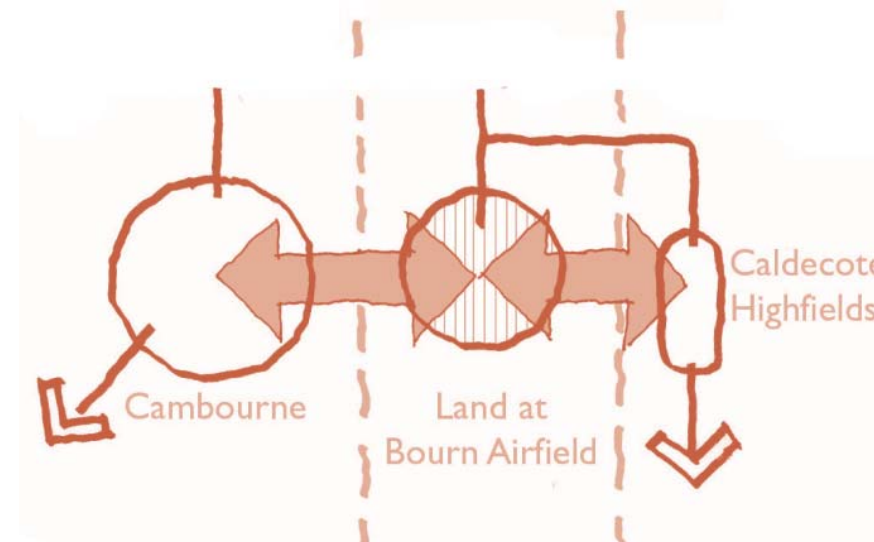


Figure 6: Separate but connected

Movement

- The proposed high quality bus service linking St. Neots to Cambridge creates a well connected site.
- Opportunity to locate a Park & Ride.
- Excellent road connections to Cambridge and the rest of the country via the A428 and M11.
- Frequent bus service already connecting the site to key destinations.
- Existing network of Public Rights of Way.
- There is the opportunity to enhance the overall transport sustainability of Cambourne and other local settlements through better integration.
- A separate transport assessment to support these proposals demonstrates that new development can be accommodated in this corridor supported by improved public transport provision and the enhancement of cycle and pedestrian routes.

Landscape

- The site is already almost completely enclosed by planting. There is further opportunity to screen new development from the surrounding countryside and minimise visual impact.
- Minimal internal on-site vegetation reduces the impact of redevelopment. Redeveloping the land at Bourn Airfield provides the opportunity to increase biodiversity through the enhancement of the landscape.
- Opportunity exists to celebrate the sites Royal Air Force (RAF) heritage through public art and other features.
- The proposal will give due consideration to the setting of listed buildings within the site.

In partnership with South Cambridgeshire District Council, the development at Bourn Airfield will seek a new model of urbanism that is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable and which meets the needs and expectations of 21st Century living.

section 3

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT /FACILITIES AUDIT

The land at Bourn Airfield can be a self-sustaining settlement. The gross development area of circa 267 hectares of land presents an opportunity to create a new settlement of approximately 8,000 people. A population of this order is enough to trigger a full range of facilities including shops, employment, leisure and education facilities to support daily life.

(Source: District Design Guide SPD, 2010, South Cambridgeshire District Council & Shaping Neighbourhoods: For Local Health & Global Sustainability (2nd Edition, 2010))

Supporting assessments have been undertaken to examine issues raised by the District Council in its Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

Key conclusions of the assessments are as follows:

Education

3,500 homes would be expected to yield between 875 and 1,225 children of primary school age. It is acknowledged therefore that the proposed development would be required to provide adequate mitigation for this impact on local school places.

Some local surplus primary school places are available but in addition at least one new school will be required. The illustrative masterplan makes provision for 2 schools at this early stage. Land will be made available together with associated S106 contributions/construction costs.

There are very few surplus secondary school places available locally to the proposed development.

3,500 homes would be expected to yield between 630 and 875 children of secondary school age. It is acknowledged that the proposed development would need to provide adequate mitigation to counter this impact.

S106 contributions will be required to pay for the school places, which at this early stage are envisaged will be provided at a new secondary school planned to the West of Cambourne.

Health

When comparing the level of local healthcare provision with other areas in Cambridgeshire and further afield in surrounding PCTs, it is clear that the local registered patients currently benefit from a very favourable ratio of GPs per patient. It is also apparent that the combined local GP practices could sustain significant increase in registered patients without falling out of line with the overall perspective of GP to patient ratios across the East of England.

Further work is required to establish remaining capacity at local practices and to understand the extent to which they could sustain some, if not all of the new residents. This information is needed to inform potential future discussions with SCDC regarding any healthcare-specific Section 106 agreement pertaining to this site.

Transport

Existing Transport Provision

Highways

- the site provides easy access to the strategic highway network via the A428, A1, A14, A11 and M11;
- Cambridge city centre is located approximately 9km to the east via the A428.

Bus

- frequent bus services currently connect the site with St Neots, Cambridge City Centre, St Ives, Caxton, Comberton and Cambourne;
- most services run from Monday to Saturday every 30 minutes to 1 hour, with services rarely running on Sundays;
- a high quality bus service route has been proposed for St Neots Road, connecting St Neots and Cambridge City Centres.

Pedestrian & Cycle

- Public Rights of Way connect the site to neighbouring Cambourne;
- the Harcamlow Way and Wimpole Way National Trails run to the south of the site, connecting Cambridge to Wimpole Park.

Transport Proposals

The transport consultant acting on behalf of the landowner has met with Cambridgeshire County Council and now advise that new development at this location will need to:

1. minimise off-site trip generation by maximising internal trip generation via provision of complimentary land uses on-site;
2. maximise the number of trips on foot and by cycle. This is achieved in part through the site's location, as well as composition of uses on-site, and as a result of transport measures proposed;
3. maximise trips by bus and other public transport modes;
4. establish a Travel Plan to encourage non-car transport behaviour;
5. establish residual highways implications and the need for mitigation or wider travel planning measures to reduce private motor vehicle demand.

In the context of the above, the proposals for Bourn Airfield will comprise:

- a mixed use development including education, employment, community and leisure facilities which will reduce the need to travel;
- pedestrian and cycle linkages or enhancement of existing routes to Cambourne, Bourn and Caldecote;
- a segregated off-road cycle route between Bourn Airfield and the centre of Cambridge;
- bus links to all principal destinations within Cambridge;
- ways of promoting a culture of travel by means of other than the private car. eg travel packs including maps, timetables, car sharing information, and a Community Travel website.

Utilities Assessment

On going assessment by independent consultants is seeking to establish utility requirements. Discussions are underway with key statutory undertakers to determine the locations of services/plant within the site boundary and in the vicinity of the site; determine the potential diversion and easement requirements and the feasibility/cost implications of servicing the development from the individual service providers. At this early stage of the process there do not appear to be any insurmountable constraints to serving the proposed development. The outcome of the further investigations will be reported to the Council as they emerge.

Ecology

A preliminary ecological assessment of the site was undertaken in September 2012, including a desk study and Phase 1 habitat survey. More detailed and specialist surveys will be required as the development proposals progress. Findings to date suggest that development within the main area of the airfield would not be unduly constrained by features of nature conservation interest, although there may be a need to accommodate protected species. The site owners have further land to the south and east of the airfield, which presents additional opportunities, together with the land surveyed in the ecological report, to buffer and integrate those features of local conservation interest. These features can be incorporated into the masterplan as part of the green infrastructure for the residential and mixed use area, with the supplementary areas available in the southern area for offsetting mitigation and buffering should these be required.

Mixed use and residential development would bring with it long term opportunities to enhance and manage features of ecological interest including their integration with the wider area in line with national and local planning policy.

section 3

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT /FACILITIES AUDIT

Heritage Considerations

An archaeological desk-based assessment has been carried out in response to issues raised by the District Council in its SHLAA. The key conclusion of this report, which has been submitted to the Council, is that *"it is unlikely that any archaeological finds would be a constraint on development with the exception of the requirement for prior archaeological survey and excavation..."* Archaeological finds identified by the report are considered too far away to be affected. In other cases the County Historic Environment Team might recommend that archaeological remains found are preserved in situ, or more likely that 'preservation by record' (i.e. complete area excavation) would be required.

Listed Buildings

The setting of listed buildings on the site will be respected in the proposed layout.

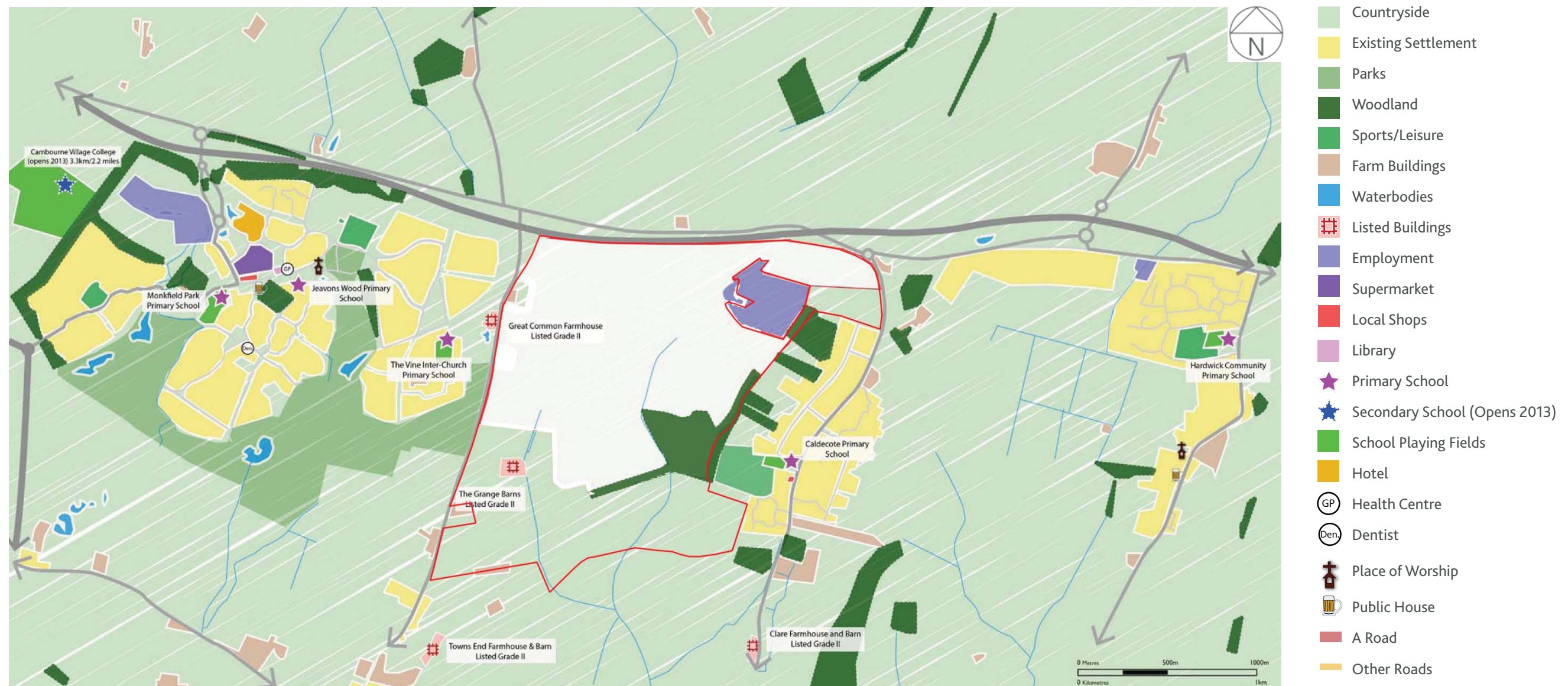


Figure 7: Local Facilities

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT / FACILITIES AUDIT

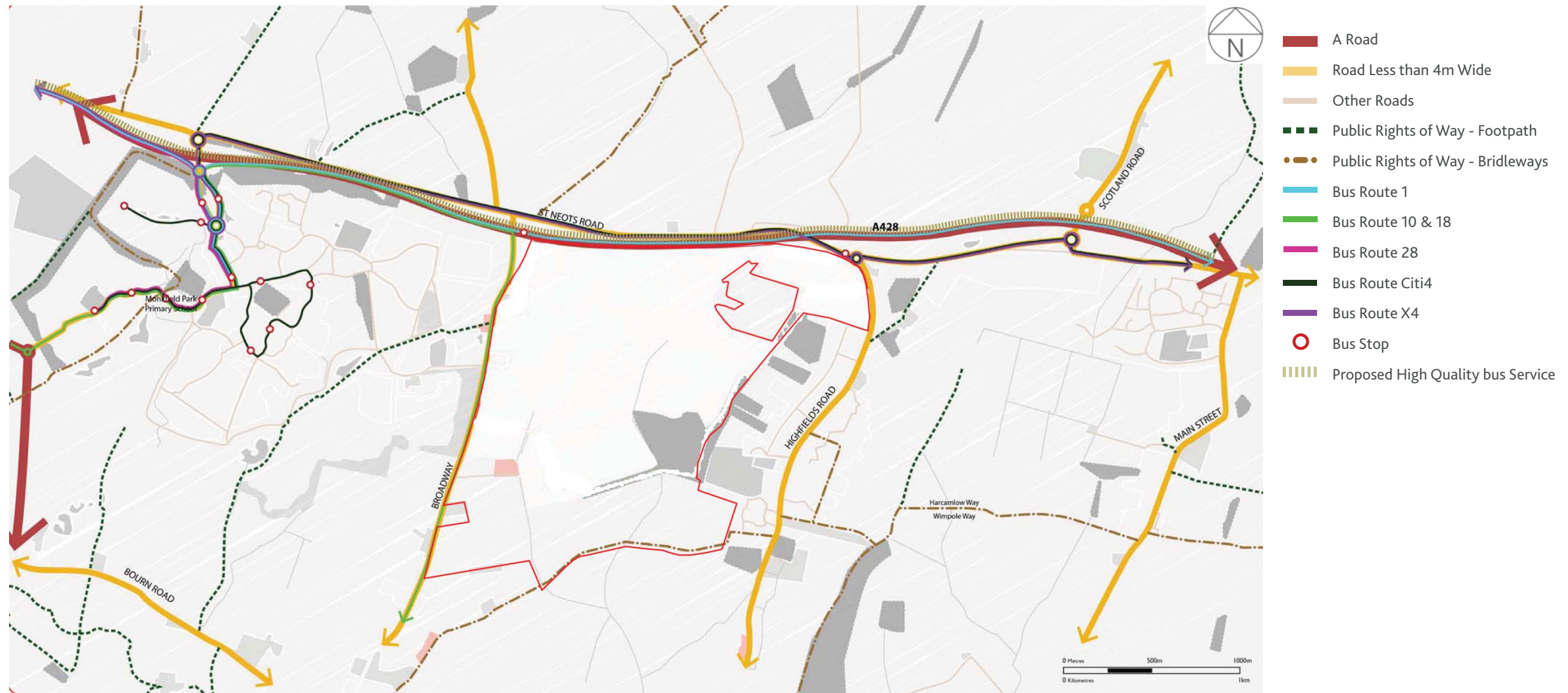


Figure 8: Local Connections

section 4

SCHEME VISION DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

A New Approach

The land at Bourn Airfield represents a unique opportunity to create a sustainable new settlement.

In partnership with South Cambridgeshire District Council, the development at Bourn Airfield will seek a new model of urbanism that is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable and which meets the needs and expectations of 21st century living.

The Challenge

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recommends local authorities plan for larger scale development (new settlements or extensions) following the principles of Garden Cities.

The landowners are willing to work in partnership with the District Council to explore innovative ideas and create a model for applying the overarching principles of Garden City suburbs, to free standing new settlements. This can then be emulated by others.

Site Development Principles

The following sequence of diagrams show how the development model, through a sequence of key principles, adapts to the Bourn Airfield site.

1. The Site Today

The Site provides a rare opportunity to develop on previously developed land, or 'brownfield land', a rare commodity in rural South Cambridgeshire.

The site is currently in use as an airfield.

2. Complete Visual Seclusion & Enhance Existing Features

Retain and enhance natural features including hedgerows, trees and water bodies for the benefit of wildlife, flora and fauna. The retention of trees and hedgerows provides mature planting with aesthetic value.

Filling the gaps in the existing tree belt would visually contain the site from strategic and local views. The visual seclusion the tree belt offers helps to create a separate yet connected settlement with its own distinct identity.

3. Mitigate Noise from the A428

Opportunity to create a landscape buffer and/or acoustic fence to reduce the noise generated by the A428.

4. Create Settlement Buffers

Opportunity to provide a separate, self-sufficient, settlement at Bourn Airfield with strong connections to existing surrounding communities.

Landscape buffers to Cambourne and Caldecote would define the redevelopment of Bourn Airfield as a distinct settlement with rural separation from its neighbours.

5. Create Landscape Corridors

Connect people to nature and natural systems by creating green corridors and opportunities for various 'green' community uses, e.g. community gardens and orchards, appreciation of wildlife, passive leisure, formal sports and potential sustainable drainage and a wastewater system that extracts nutrients to grow food on-site.

The ability to see and experience where resources are produced and where they go after they are used promotes a human lifestyle better integrated with natural systems.

The landscape corridors also provide a recreational and educational resource and are an attractive outlook for new homes.

6. Water Features and Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDs)

The existing topography, water features and proposed landscape corridors provide an opportunity to create a sustainable urban drainage system (SUDs) of swales and ponds to help mitigate any flash flooding.

The creation of a SUDs network provides the opportunity for semi-wetland habitats, which increase biodiversity. Swales and ponds also provide a place for people to enjoy nature and relax.

7. Footpath Connections

New footpaths set in generous landscape create safe off-road pedestrian routes to complement existing Public Rights of way to neighbouring settlements.

8. Neighbourhoods Positioned within Landscape

Neighbourhoods clustered around a mixed-use centre to maximise accessibility by foot.

Landscape features define the position of development.

9. Walkable Hierarchy of Centres

The land at Bourn Airfield can be a self-sustaining settlement of approximately 8,000 people. A population of this order is enough to trigger a full range of facilities including shops, employment, leisure and education on-site to support daily life and provide a well-rounded settlement.

The majority of the non-residential uses will be focused in the Mixed Use Centre where they are most accessible to all by foot. The Neighbourhood Focal Points are the local community spaces and may include a public space, shop, and/or primary school.

10. Density

Opportunity to design a new settlement at an average density of 38dph to support community facilities and public transport infrastructure so daily needs can be met on foot.

Higher densities are focused around facilities and areas of higher public transport accessibility.

A range of residential densities provide various dwelling types catering for all ages and personal circumstance to create long-term social sustainability.

Opportunity for over 50's living, assisted living and formal residential care.

11. Road Connections

Primary access via the old A428.

Internal streets designed to Manual for Streets standard will provide routes that balance the needs of vehicles and pedestrians equally.

12. Sustainable Transport Corridor

The sustainable transport corridor provides an opportunity to reduce the reliance on the private car by:

1. providing a cycle route to Cambridge that is separate to traffic
2. routing local bus services via the site
3. connecting to the proposed high quality bus service route linking St Neots to Cambridge

SCHEME VISION DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

There are a range of challenges and opportunities presented by the land at Bourn Airfield

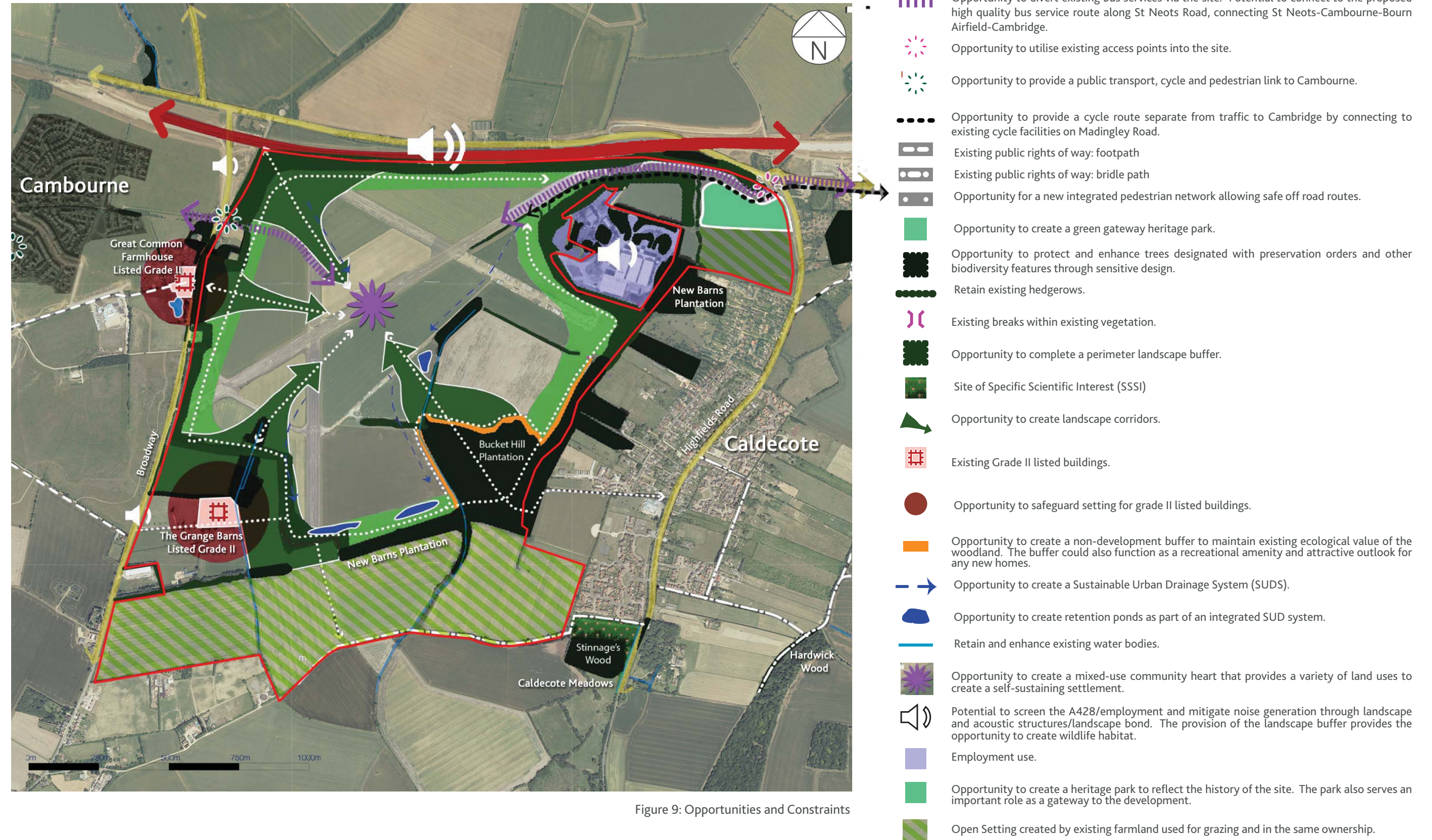


Figure 9: Opportunities and Constraints

section 4

SCHEME VISION DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Site Development Principles

The following sequence of diagrams show how the development model, through a sequence of key principles, adapts to the Bourn Airfield site.



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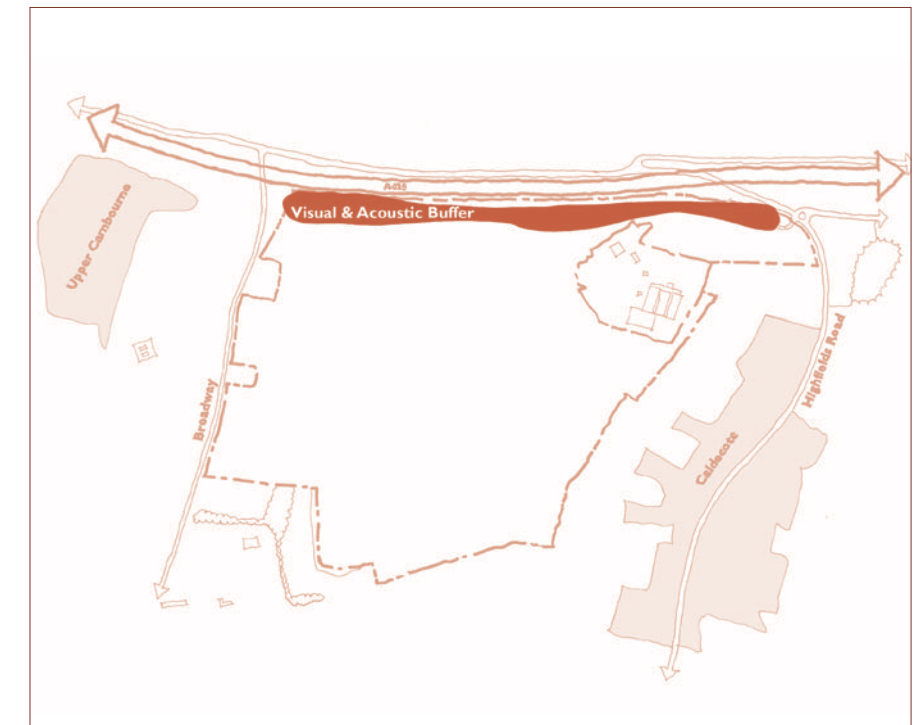
The site currently in use as an airfield.



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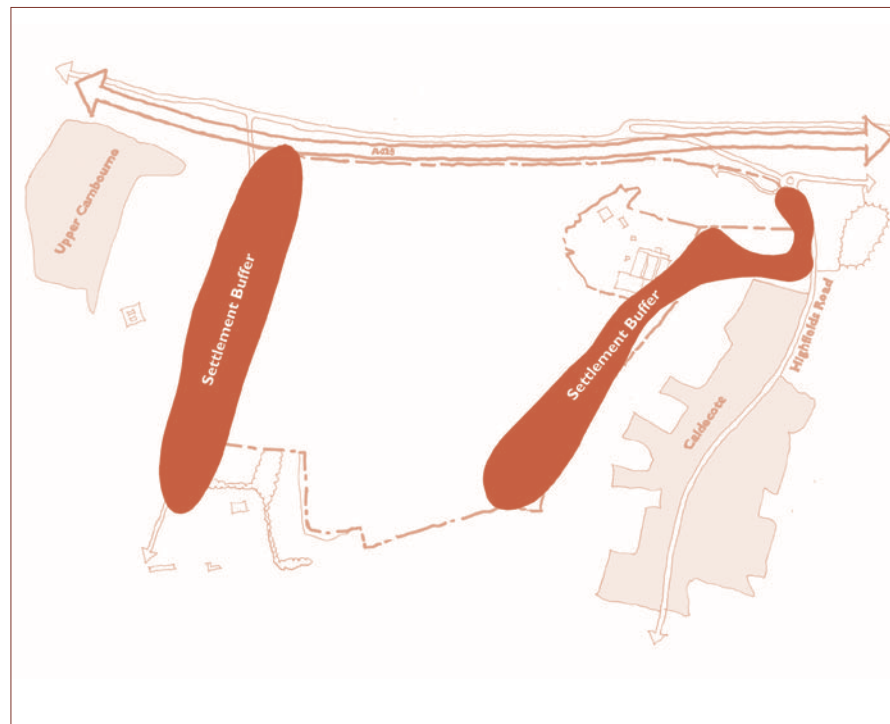
Filling the gaps in the existing tree belt visually contains the site from strategic and local views. The visual seclusion the tree belt offers helps to create a separate yet connected settlement with its own distinct identity.



3. Mitigate Noise from the A428

Opportunity to create a landscape buffer and/or acoustic fence to reduce the noise generated by the A428.

SCHEME VISION DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES



4. Create Settlement Buffers

Opportunity to provide a separate, self-sufficient, settlement at Bourn Airfield with strong connections to existing surround communities.

Landscape buffers to Upper Cambourne and Caldecote define the redevelopment of Bourn Airfield as a distinct settlement with rural separation from its neighbours.



5. Create Landscape Corridors

Connect people to nature and natural systems by making resources flows that support our lifestyles visible and experiential. For example, door step food production, animal husbandry or a wastewater system that extracts nutrients to grow food on-site creates and incentive not to dump chemicals down the drain.

The ability to see and experience where resources are produced and where they go after they are used promotes a human lifestyle better integrated with natural systems.

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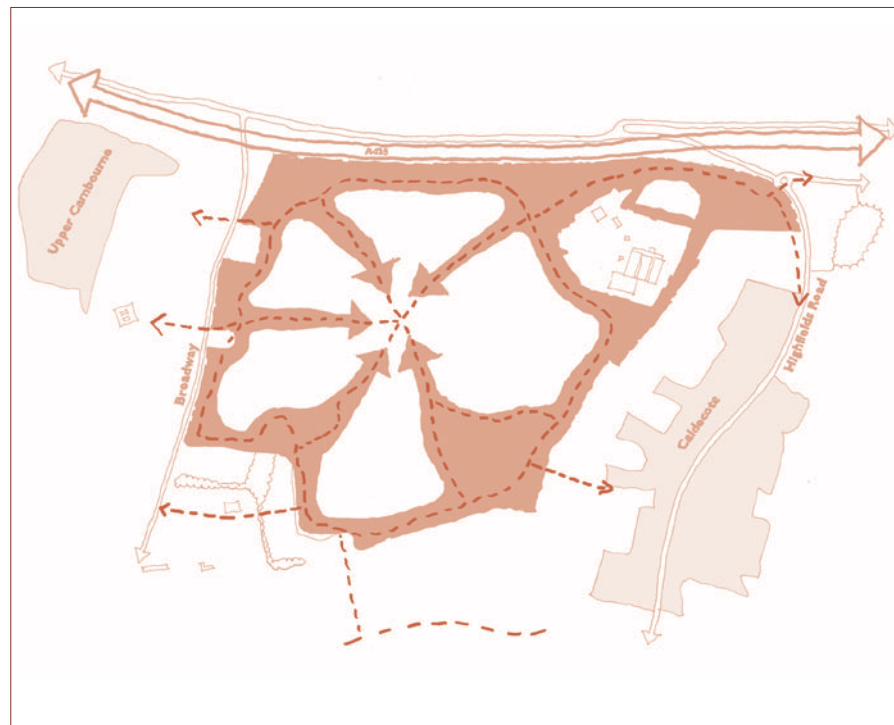


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SCHEME VISION DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES



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New footpaths set in generous landscape create safe off-road pedestrian routes to complement existing Public Rights of way to neighbouring settlements.



8. Neighbourhoods Positioned within Landscape

Neighbourhoods clustered around a mixed-use heart to maximise accessibility by foot.

Landscape features define the position of development.

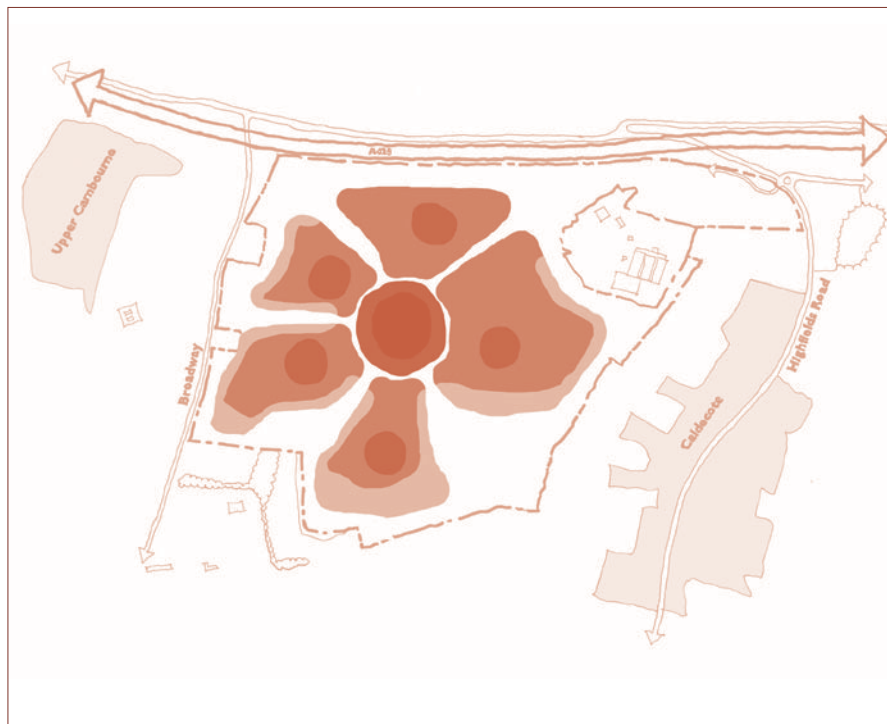


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SCHEME VISION DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES



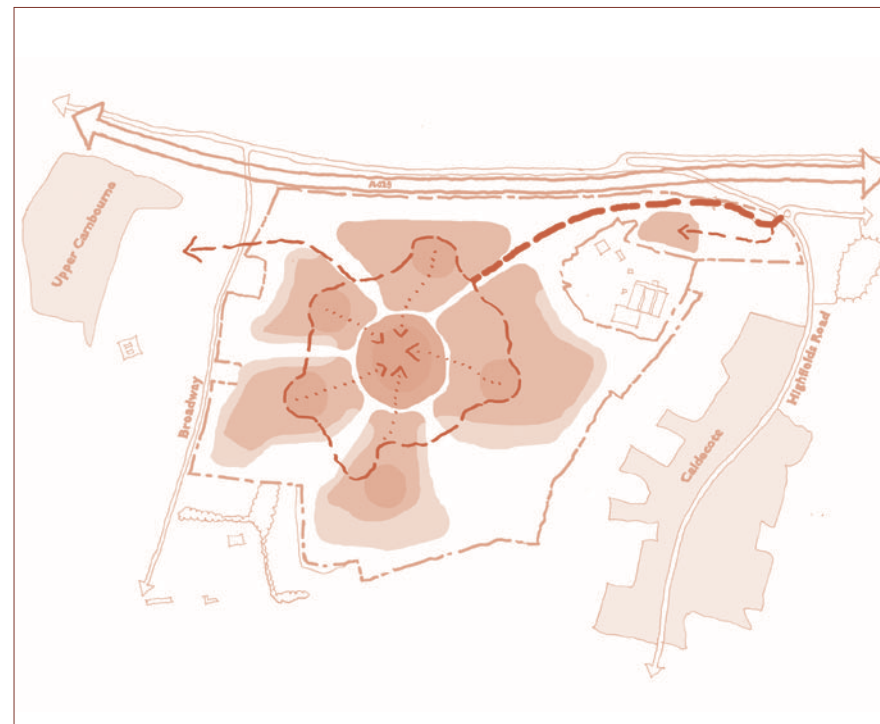
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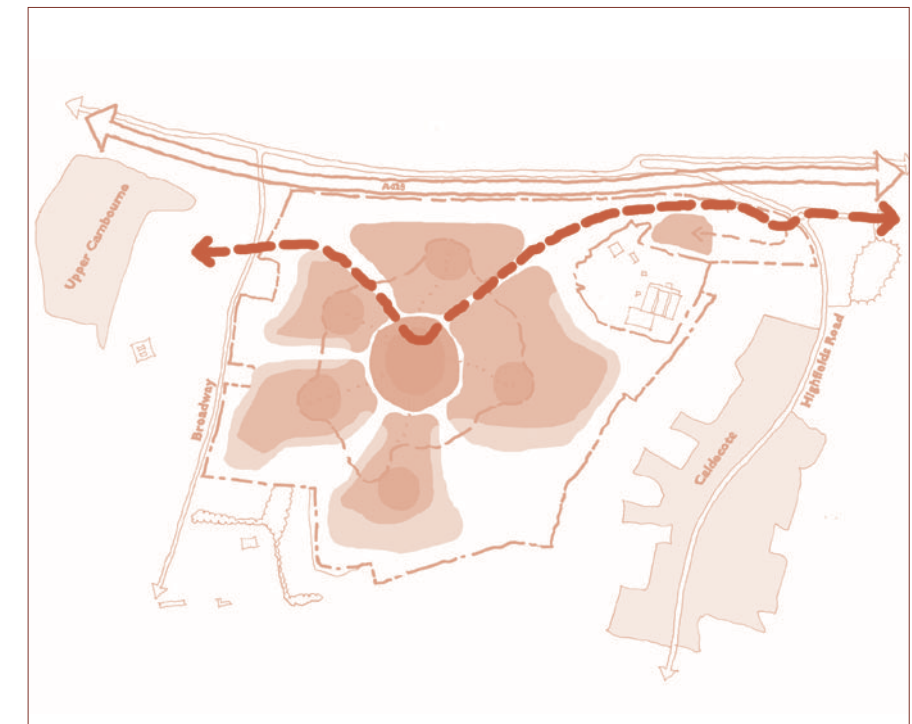
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section 5

AN ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN – THE GUIDING VISION

The key objective is to create a new settlement that is complementary to surrounding existing villages and sets a new benchmark for sustainable site planning.

The redevelopment of the brownfield land will create a complete, self-sustaining settlement that offers a range of accommodation, community facilities, shops and employment to maintain a diverse community at different stages of life.

The land at Bourn Airfield is well connected by public transport, walkable, efficient with land, connected to nature and offers high performance buildings and infrastructure.

From its conception to delivery, the land at Bourn Airfield will meet South Cambridgeshire's twelve sustainable development core planning principles:

1. Plan-led
2. Creative
3. Proactive
4. High quality design
5. Area specific
6. Low carbon
7. Conserve natural environment
8. Re-use land
9. Mixed use
10. Conserve heritage
11. Actively manage growth
12. Meet local needs

The Development:

- Gross development site area of circa 267 hectares;
- Circa 3,500 homes;
- Employment expansion area;
- Average density of 38 dwellings per hectare;
- Typical housing mix comprised of detached, semi-detached and terraces, family homes and some flats;
- Other non-residential uses include a farmers market, food store, pub, shops, cafes, employment, education, health Post Office, community centre and leisure.



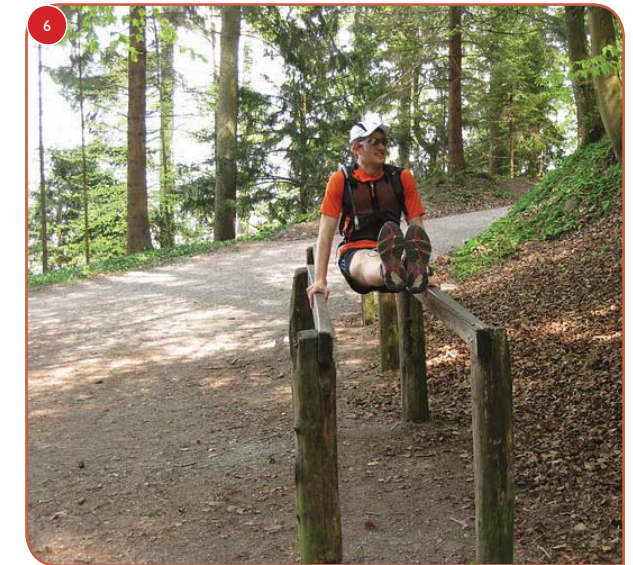
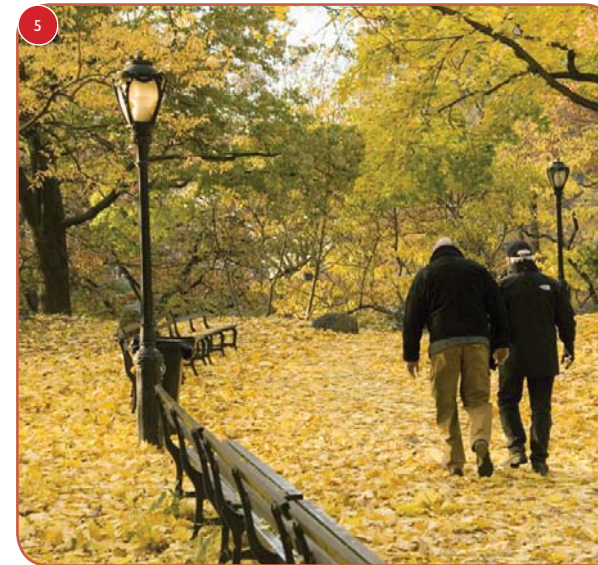
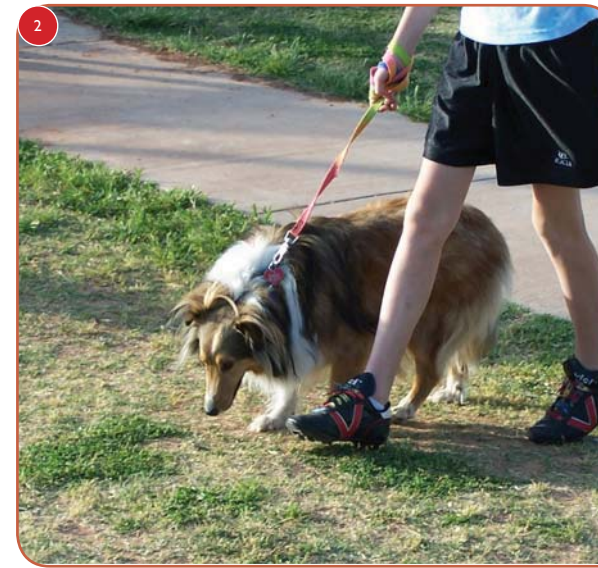
Figure 10: Masterplan

section 6

MOOD BOARDS

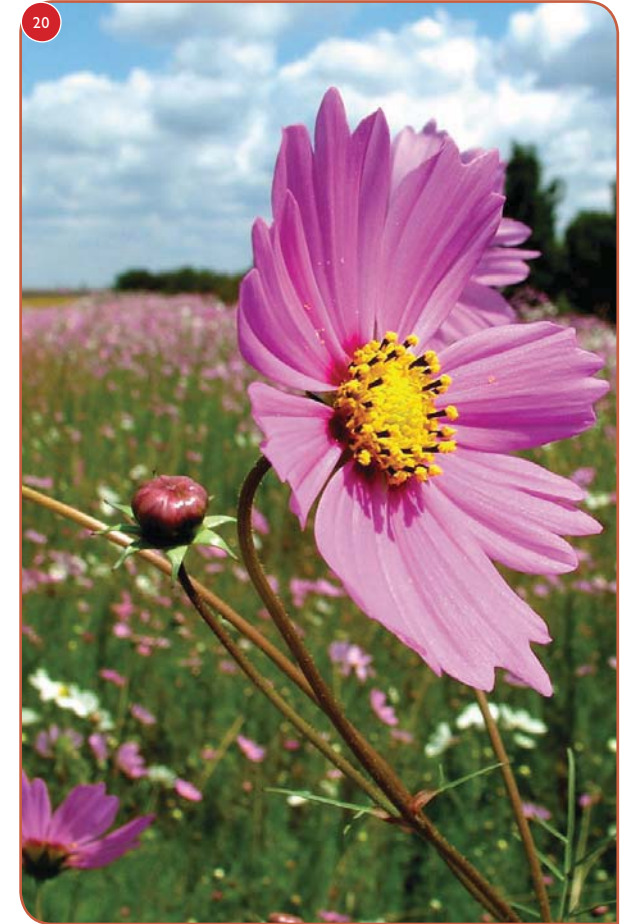
POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE LANDSCAPE CORRIDORS

1. Animal husbandry
2. Dog walking paths
3. Picnic area
4. Productive landscape
5. Walking routes
6. Outdoor trim trail & outdoor gym equipment
7. Natural meadows and woodland
8. Information plaque
9. Boardwalk over sensitive / natural landscape
10. Historical/heritage trail
11. Information sign
12. Cafe
13. Public art
14. Play area
15. Woods
16. Ponds
17. Cycle routes
18. Equestrian routes
19. Wildlife habitats
20. Meadow landscape



section 6

MOOD BOARDS



section 7

DEMONSTRATING VIABILITY AND THE ABILITY TO DELIVER DEVELOPMENT EARLY IN THE PLAN PERIOD

On 4th September 2012 a letter was sent from Andrew Martin – Planning to planning officers – David Roberts and Keith Miles – at South Cambridgeshire District Council, setting out how the promoters of Bourn Airfield intended to take forward their advocacy of the site, in the context of the Local Plan – Issues and Options. A reply dated 7th September 2012, outlined a specific request for the representations to address, amongst other things, issues of viability and delivery.

Officers requested the following:

Viability – to demonstrate that development of the site will be viable and so deliverable in terms of the necessary infrastructure investment that will be required.

Delivery – to demonstrate when the airfield could realistically start to make a contribution to the five year housing land supply if it were to be allocated.

The need to ensure viability and delivery are issues addressed in the NPPF at paragraphs 173-177. These confirm that

“Pursuing sustainable development requires careful attention to viability and costs in plan-making and decision-taking. Plans should be deliverable. Therefore the sites and the scale of development identified in the plan should not be subject to such a scale of obligations and policy burdens that their ability to be developed viably is threatened. To ensure viability the cost of any requirements likely to be applied to development, such as requirements for affordable housing, standards, infrastructure contributions or other requirements should, when taking account of the normal cost of development and mitigation, provide competitive returns to a willing landowner and willing developer to enable the development to be deliverable.”

Local authorities are advised to assess the likely cumulative impacts on development in their area and Community Infrastructure Levy charges should be worked up and tested alongside the local plan.

The NPPF goes on to add that it is equally important to ensure that there is a reasonable prospect that planned infrastructure is deliverable in a timely fashion. To facilitate this it is important that local planning authorities understand district-wide development costs at the time local plans are drawn up.

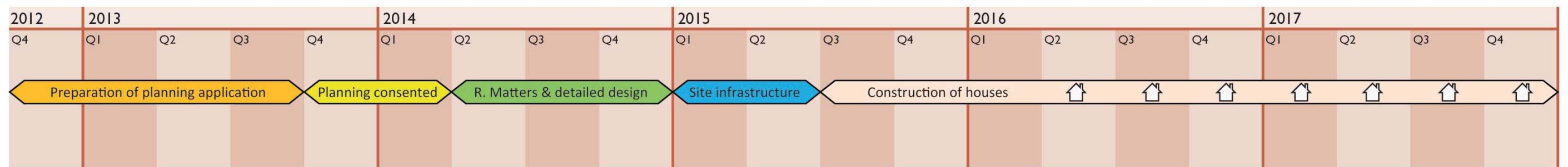
Landowners and developers are required to take part in the consultation and collaboration required to ensure that Local Plans are deliverable and that standards and policies applied locally have a clear local justification and do not undermine the viability of the local plan. This advice is set out in a report prepared by the Local Housing Delivery Group in June 2012. The group was set up by the Government to boost the delivery of new homes within the context of calls for balance between sustainable development, which benefits the local community, and realistic returns for landowners and developers, such that development is commercially viable.

This site can make a meaningful contribution towards the Council’s 5-year housing supply. Unlike Northstowe or Waterbeach Barracks, the site does not require major infrastructure to be delivered before the houses can be built, and the land is in single family ownership with owners committed to the new development. Both of these factors, as well as the strong local housing market that exists in Cambridgeshire, means this development is much more financially viable than other typical schemes of this size.

Individual assessments have been appended to the representations to outline key infrastructure requirements such as transport provision and utilities, and how these would be delivered. The reports are the subject of on-going consultation and collaborative working with relevant statutory bodies, that will continue to inform the local plan as it progresses. Other assessments have examined areas of potential environmental concern highlighted by the Council in its Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal, such as ecology, archaeology, education and health provision. These studies conclude that there are no site constraints which cannot be dealt with via mitigation or compensation and accordingly incorporated into the design process.

In recognition of the likely lead-in times for developments of this scale, it is anticipated that an outline planning application would be prepared in parallel with the local plan process. The submission of an outline planning application for the site is envisaged by the end of 2013. It is assumed that consent will be secured by the summer of 2014.

Current expectations are for the first houses to be delivered by the summer of 2016 with approximately 350 houses delivered by the end of 2017. The site therefore represents a realistic prospect of being delivered early in the plan period and contributing to the five year housing land supply and crucially helping to ensure the viability of the local plan.



350 houses could be delivered within 5 years

Figure 11: Time - line