



# Eye Airfield Development Framework

February 2013



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Suffolk County Council Highways, Heritage,  
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Norfolk CC, South Norfolk DC  
Suffolk Preservation Society, SWT  
English Heritage  
Many individual residents, landowners and  
businesses on and close to the airfield

Our thanks to Hartismere High School and  
the Cornwallis Hotel for hosting consultation  
events

Cover photos anticlockwise: WW2 aircraft  
on site; view across southern agricultural  
land to Eye: EPR chicken litter power  
station; Rapsey-Tapsey Lane.

Approved by Mid Suffolk  
Environment Policy Panel on 19  
February 2013

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Cover photo: WW2 aircraft

Courtesy of Speeddeck

Report by: Elizabeth  
Wrigley, Core  
Connections

February 2013

## Summary

The Eye Airfield Development Framework has been prepared between July 2011 and January 2013, by the consultant team appointed by Mid Suffolk Council's Economic Development Department, to guide detailed design proposals for the development of the site. The Draft Development Framework has been the subject of extensive stakeholder engagement at various stages of the process, as set out below.

The aims:

- Collate together information about the site and its surroundings, and identify constraints and opportunities
- Set out planning policies relevant to the development of the site for developers
- Describe the site's characteristics and those of its surroundings
- Promote high quality development, in terms of site layout, landscape, design and access and set out sustainable design principles to provide a sound basis for detailed design
- Consider the likely transport impact of the proposed development and state measures required to mitigate the impact
- Present baseline information and options for development

The Development Framework seeks to guide investment and to provide a framework for the evaluation of planning proposals for development as they come forward. This reduces the risk of new development and related improvements failing to meet local needs or requirements. Also it provides greater clarity and guidance for those planning new developments. The document, once adopted, can become the basis of pre-application discussions in the development management process. Already the work done on putting together the Development Framework has stimulated interest from both landowners and businesses looking to relocate.

## Consultation

The following consultations with local businesses landowners, parish & town councils and local residents captured the aspirations and views on possible future development on the site.

Two main consultation events were held, the first a drop-in session with landowners and business tenants held on 26 September 2011 at the local Hartismere secondary school, and the second one, with a wider range of participants, on 11 January 2012 at the Cornwallis Hotel.

On 17 April 2012, a workshop briefing was held for Mid Suffolk District Council members. Members then considered the draft brief at the Environment Policy Panel on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2012.

In July 2012 a seven-week consultation on the draft development framework document and its landscape strategy was undertaken, requesting feedback and comments, proposals and ideas.

Summary

The documents were available to download on the council's web site, and were also displayed in libraries and the local hospital reception. Amendments were made and on 19 February 2013, the Mid Suffolk DC Environment Policy Panel approved the document.

One of the main outcomes from consultation was the requirement that development in this location is sustainable and is landscape led, another was to realise the potential for new business to take advantage of on-site energy generation, and the third key finding identified the need to concentrate on improving skills locally so local young people could readily secure better paid local employment opportunities. Links to the secondary schools would assist this.

### **The site and surroundings landscape analysis**

Lloyd Bore Landscape's assessment of the surroundings of Eye within a 5 km radius sets out the main areas of landscape sensitivities. The site landscape character has been analysed in detail; sensitive views into and out of the site recorded; and a landscape strategy drawn up and made widely available for discussion by the businesses, parishes and landowners during the above consultations.

Following the discussions, the amended landscape strategy is presented here in Appendix 05, and in the Landscape Assessment baseline report document prepared by Lloyd Bore. This should be used as their reference by

future developers at Eye Airfield, in order to assess the Landscape and Visual Impacts of their proposals.

The full landscape assessment document is available from Mid Suffolk DC, Landscape Strategy - Drawing 2162 – D10\_C. Please refer to the drawing 2162/D10\_C and document 2162 – R02 Landscape Baseline Appraisal by Lloyd Bore for details.

### **Ecology**

An ecological analysis was also undertaken, again to provide a useful reference for developers and the council. This shows that the site generally lacks biodiversity; but the proposed new landscaping and drainage pattern in this framework offers scope to rectify this. The full Ecology report is available from Mid Suffolk DC and is entitled:

'Draft Phase 1 Habitat and Ecological Scoping Survey'. Doc ref no: 2162 – 03 October 2011.

### **Eye Airfield – a brief introduction**

Eye Airfield is established in the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy as an important employment area, providing jobs in manufacturing, as well as logistics and other B1, B2 and B8 business uses for this part of Mid Suffolk and South Norfolk.

The town of Eye is identified as requiring some growth, but it has strong landscape and conservation constraints, that, together with the existence around the town of substantial areas of flood risk, set severe boundaries to the potential areas of residential search.

Summary continued

The south-east part of the airfield site represents one such potential area, where there could be opportunity for residential and mixed-use development.

The Suffolk County Waste Core Strategy identifies Eye Airfield as an area of search for waste to energy generation: a site location for this proposal is given here. The gas compressor and the pipelines from it represent hazards to development, limits to which the Health & Safety Executive sets.

**Site boundary**

The site is bounded by the A140 to the west and B1077 to the east, and Castleton Way to the south: it is a roughly triangular shape. The town of Eye abuts the southeast edge of the site. To the north is the small settlement of Brome, and to the southwest lies the village of Yaxley.

**History, archaeology, listed buildings and Conservation Areas**

The site is bounded on the west by the line of a former roman road, part was a common, and the majority of the site was then used as a World War 2 airfield. The landscape strategy aims to celebrate this history.

Several listed buildings and conservation areas are close to the boundaries of the site. The main sensitive area is the edge of the airfield where it meets the town of Eye, a market town with considerable historical value; here the southeast of the airfield is part of the setting of Eye.

**Topography**

The site is a generally flat plateau, with slight undulation, falling very gently towards river valleys to its east and south. The lowest point is in the southeast, the highest, some nine metres higher, is to the west of the site’s centre. However as the site is very large these variations are almost imperceptible.

**Local context**

The surrounding area is largely farmland with some notable woodlands, in particular to the south and southwest in Thornham Parva. Just east of the northern point of the site is the Cornwallis Hotel grounds, part of what was once a large estate. Land under a DEFRA Environmental Stewardship Agreement covers most of the area and surroundings.

**Regional context**

To the north of the site, in Norfolk is the town of Diss and the Waveney valley. The A140 passes the site and continues north to Norwich. This road connects to the A14 to its south, from which Ipswich, the Haven ports and London can be reached. To the east the key connections are the A143 to Cambridge and the A11, which becomes the M11 to London and Stansted airport. The main train service from London to Norwich is close, with Diss station some 10 minutes drive away. The site is just outside the sphere of the Haven ports, with strong pressures for additional distribution parks, and, to counterbalance, is also influenced by the closest university and research centres in Norwich and to the east in Cambridge.

Summary continued

### **Suffolk: a view from the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership**

“Whether it is in high value manufacturing, software development, the creative industries or food and drink production, Suffolk is home to world-leading research and internationally recognized brands. The economy is the smallest of the four-county alliance but is innovative and balanced. Yet it is far from realising its potential to generate jobs, prosperity and growth. The poverty of local transport infrastructure is a major restraint on Suffolk adding all it could to the wide United Kingdom economy.” From: *Once in a Generation* page 17

### **Sustainability, water, waste management, energy and quality of building**

The Development Framework presents a sustainability design policy, as debated at the consultation event. The transport proposals take on board additional comments relating to sustainable transportation, and the aim is that all the businesses on the airfield participate in a joint Green Travel Plan, details of which are set out in the development framework.

An improvement in the quality of the environment on the airfield will help attract higher value businesses, and expanding the employment here would enable a variety of additional jobs for local residents within say a 15-20 mile radius who would otherwise only have the option of commuting to larger towns.

### **Sustainable Development**

The Development Framework promotes the principles of sustainable development. It is proposed that new building projects deliver development to anticipated standards.

The framework seeks to improve facilities within this part of Eye, and improve access to services by walking, cycling and public transport, both for local use and incorporating the extension of the National Cycle Route through the site.

Equally, the implementation of the principles here will improve employment opportunities within this part of the town of Eye and will give more people the opportunity to work locally.

### **Recreation and amenity**

The airfield at present offers a lung for walkers, model airplane enthusiasts and learner drivers: this informal recreational element is recognised and a new “common” is proposed.

### **Phasing**

it is not possible to totally predict phasing for a framework to 2031, but the site has been shown on the indicative masterplan for development in three main phases. See page 8 below.

### **Low carbon development**

The region has signed up to a 60% reduction in carbon emissions by 2031, the same timescale as this development framework covers.

Summary final page



## Chapters

### One: Introduction and purpose of the development framework

p 9

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Purpose of the development framework
- 1.3 Vision for future

### Two: Site appraisal

p 18

- 2.1 Site context
- 2.2 Movement
- 2.3 Bus routes
- 2.4 Rail
- 2.5 Pedestrian & cycle facilities
- 2.6 Parking
- 2.7 Landscape and character areas
- 2.8 Ecology & nature
- 2.9 Cultural Heritage & archaeology
- 2.10 Noise & air quality
- 2.11 Surface drainage design
- 2.12 Foul drainage
- 2.13 HSE zones
- 2.14 Wind turbines
- 2.15 Contamination
- 2.16 Other issues: common land, amenity
- 2.17 Utilities

### Three: Planning Policy

p 29

- 3.1 National Planning Policy Framework
- 3.2 Sub Regional context: Greater Norwich
- 3.3 Core Strategy Mid Suffolk
- 3.4 Waste Core Strategy Suffolk CC
- 3.5 Local Plan MSDC
- 3.6 Transport Plan SCC
- 3.7 Planning History
- 3.8 Landscape Character Assessment Suffolk CC

### Four: The Development Framework

p 37

- 4.1 Development Principles
- 4.2 Land uses existing
- 4.3 Proposed land uses
- 4.4 Green Infrastructure
- 4.5 Developer contributions S106

### Five: Planning, design & access

p 42

- 5.1 Landscape
- 5.2 Access, movement & parking
- 5.3 Biodiversity
- 5.4 Heritage, tourism
- 5.5 Surface water design & management
- 5.6 Waste management
- 5.7 Foul sewerage management
- 5.8 Design of buildings: principles

### Six: Conclusion

p 45

### Appendices – in separate pdfs

- A01** Surface Water Drainage Overview - EAS
- A02** HSE safety zones – EAS
- A03** Wind Turbines - EAS
- A04** Sustainability Principles – BAM Transport EAS
- A05** Archaeology SCC, Landscape – Lloyd Bore
- A06** Fire services and sprinklers -SCC

### Additional documents available on request

Phase 1 Ecology Report 2182-03 – Lloyd Bore

Landscape Strategy - Drawing 2162 – D10\_C

Landscape Baseline Appraisal 2162 – R02 - Lloyd Bore

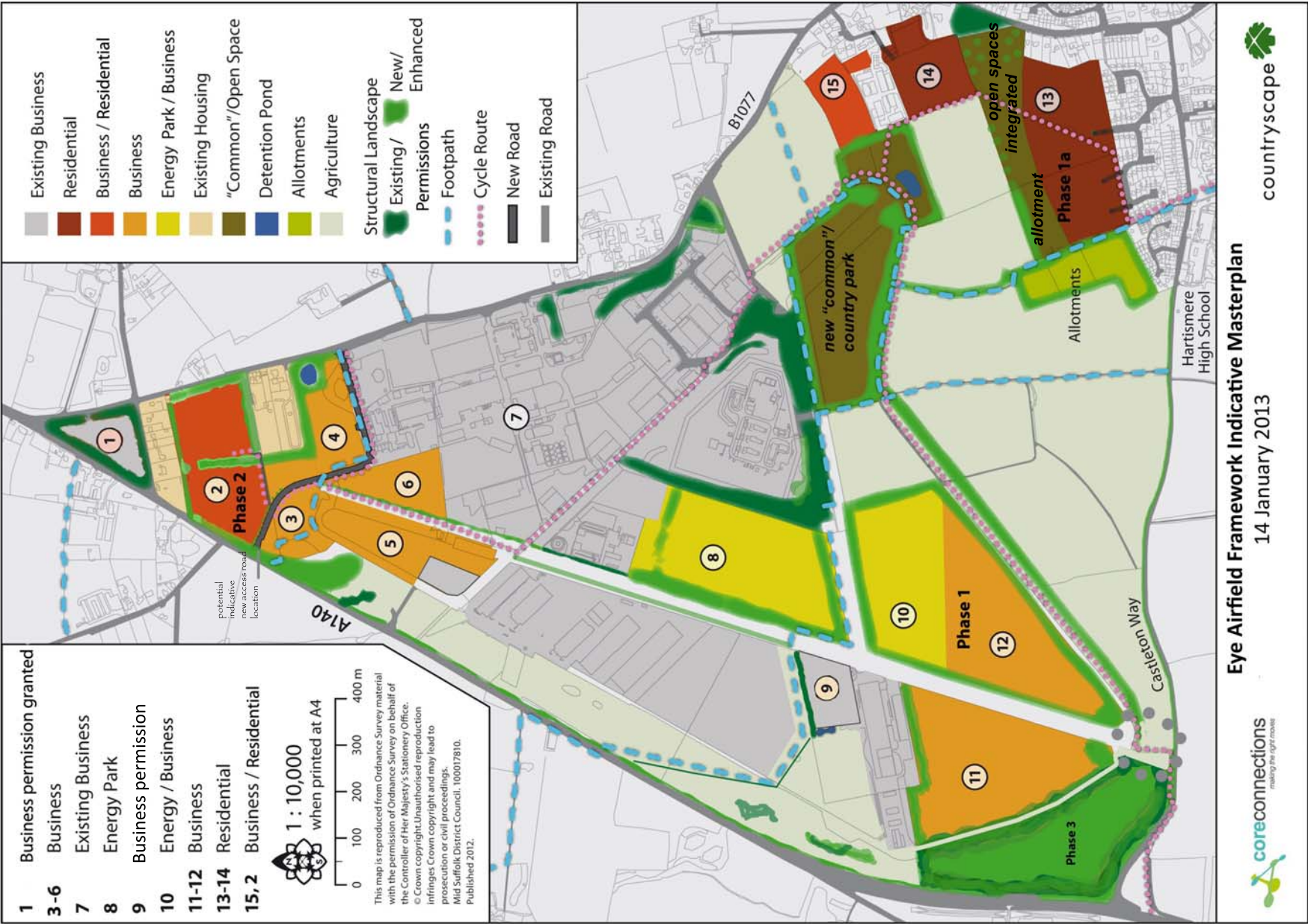
Site Plans: all available at large scale

Figures 1 to 8 – EAS

Airfield and surroundings 1:25,000 @ A2 25k pdf -  
Countryside

120229 Eye A3 Report Map 3 1:50,000 @A3  
Protected/designated/important landscape features  
March 2012 - Countryside

## Contents





**Eye Airfield**  
**Development Framework**  
**Chapter One: Introduction &**  
**Purpose of the Framework**

## Chapter One

### 1.1 Introduction

This development framework covers the area of the disused WW2 Eye Airfield, and is prepared to assist the council to manage and control development in this location going forward to 2031. The airfield is large, around 135 hectares, and has both considerable existing activity and scope for further development. There are however, constraints on the level and types of development in certain parts of the site, some of which are imposed by the Health And Safety Executive due to a secure Gas Compressor Plant at the centre of the airfield, and to the high-pressure pipelines connected to it.

The A140 forms the western edge of the site and links Norwich to Ipswich, whilst just north of the site the east-west A143 links the east coast to Cambridgeshire, so within the Norfolk-Suffolk sub-region it is a good location.

The development framework sets out a structured and co-ordinated approach for future sustainable development for this site, to help ensure it meets the needs of the surrounding rural area, without which the land is likely to only attract land-hungry low value uses rather than generating the higher value uses and skilled well paid employment needed here.

There is, encouragingly, a growing interest in Eye Airfield from both manufacturing and logistics businesses.

Already since the work started on the development brief, a key site allocated as a brownfield for development within the existing Local Plan has been given planning permission.

#### *The importance of the landscape*

The development framework presents baseline research into the ecology, landscape and visual characteristics of the site and its wider context, undertaken by Lloyd Bore, which is analysed in accordance with industry standard methodology. This data forms essential baseline material for developers submitting site-specific Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments of their proposals.

#### *New high quality site uses*

The framework has as its starting point that in principle new arrivals to the site in terms of business types should not put existing ones at a disadvantage. However, the scope to create new business opportunities appropriate to this century is important. The skills required can also provide a route for local young people to raise their average income levels over time.

Although it cannot be controlled through the development framework, an aspiration emerged to improve job opportunities and skills in advanced manufacturing, energy, life sciences, creative digital and ICT sectors.

#### *Key constraints*

There is a constraint to the amount of people who can use sites located on parts of the airfield due to the gas compressor station. The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) imposes zones within defined distances from the compressor station and high-pressure gas pipelines across the site, within which there are constraints on the numbers of people who can be located in any building. These constraints are set out in this document.

The District Council has received land bids for several possible sites on the southeast perimeter of the airfield where landowners aspire to develop housing. Here landscape sensitivities are due to the proximity of Eye, a medieval town, and the character of development needs to be defined and carefully designed. We take the analysis to a certain level in this Airfield-wide document, but we also recommend this area needs to be designed in more detail. The consultation response suggested that this should be part of a plan covering the future of Eye Town.

#### *Climate*

The framework also addresses Suffolk Greenest County objectives, through the second Suffolk Climate Action Plan, committed to the following objective:

“Suffolk wants to be an exemplar in tackling climate change and protecting and enhancing its natural environment to be the county with the greatest reduction in carbon emissions”.

We therefore recommend all development here should:

- Design sustainable urban drainage systems to capture on site and attenuate the flows of surface water, important when the amounts of water falling can sometimes be unpredictably heavy
- Give attention to providing right from the initial design work: water catchment and storage; porous paving; greater tree cover; and more open green spaces
- Design cycling and walking routes to encourage physical exercise and reduce use of fuel.

#### *A flexible development aspiration*

The future of business and industry in the UK is currently under debate and we do not know all the types of business that will be needed in 20 years' time, but this framework aims to enable such new users to have the space and the facilities for a good working environment. We seek flexibility and long term environmental improvement, together with vigilance over the environmental quality of all the businesses here, control of all forms of waste and pollution, good structure to the landscape, and providing the opportunity for workers to live reasonably close to their employment.

## **1.2 Purpose of the framework**

The framework aims to give the development industry the confidence to proceed, and sets out aspirations on:

- Acceptability of different types of development
- Identification of site zoning to direct certain types of development to certain areas of the site
- Opportunities that exist for mutually beneficial clustering of employment sectors within the site
- Health & Safety constraints arising from the Gas Pumping Station
- Expectations of different landowners and their agents
- Traffic management and operating conditions required
- Possible phasing

### **Background on Eye Airfield**

Eye Airfield is a former WW2 airfield directly adjacent to the A140 in Suffolk. Several parts of the site are fully developed, so that there is currently only a small plot of the employment land allocated in the 1998 Mid Suffolk Local Plan remaining undeveloped. However, much of the remaining site is either undeveloped or in agricultural use.

Following closure of the airfield most buildings were removed but the main concrete runways remain, and whilst in planning terms the undeveloped site is a 'greenfield', there could be residues of contamination, and interesting archaeology from the former airfield uses and buildings here. Brome Common once covered much of the northern part of this site, but was enclosed.

Support from the EU was obtained for construction of infrastructure and services on the part of the site known as the Mid Suffolk Business Park; in particular assistance was required towards the considerable investment for pumping surface water drainage north and east to reach the River Dove. The Mid Suffolk Business Park is largely now occupied, with several of the businesses having expanded or added mezzanines. One office use has recently ceased, and this offers an existing building suitable for subdivision to suit smaller businesses co-locating. However only one other industrial building here is vacant.

The Western Suffolk Employment Land Study 2009 identified the site as suitable to serve local markets but not as a strategic site due to its location. It is, however, the largest employment site in the north of the Mid Suffolk district, has good connections to transport routes, and is well placed to serve businesses not heavily reliant on the Haven Ports.

The Mid Suffolk Core Strategy defines this site as one of its key employment sites. The potential to provide additional jobs for the area is recognised in this document.

There are a very wide variety of industrial users on site, ranging from small workshops to a power generation plant, a cluster of food production businesses in the eastern side of the site, a range of small workshop units and a Highways Depot. Logistics and warehousing business occupies most of the frontage onto the A140 and there are a number of large logistics and transportation businesses throughout the site.

## 1.3 Vision for the future

### *Some objectives from consultation*

- Capture evidence of the natural beauty in the vicinity of the area, and ensure it is not spoilt by development
- Seek to introduce broadband on the airfield, keep good road links, and improve links to the rail network, as this will attract better quality development
- Capture footloose IT and energy firms
- Promote tourism, food and green aspects in particular
- Address lack of large water sources, so capturing and reusing water that falls on the site is important
- Improve roads into and across the site
- Create opportunities to exchange ideas and inter-trade opportunities between the businesses
- Support new businesses, create links to schools
- Ways of “working from home”, how can we cater for this growing trend?
- Improve governance – managing resources across the whole site
- Recognising competition from other sites and playing to strengths here, branding, balance, better links
- Food and distribution of food, promote best practice in using energy and waste

### *The vision*

- To become a regionally recognised “centre of excellence for food production and distribution”.
- To ensure there are better local connections to Eye town (for using the facilities located there), and within and across the site. To seek new connections using public transport and cycle and footpaths, to Eye and Diss
- To promote better inter-trading opportunities amongst businesses (both on the site and within the local catchment)
- To attract business support

### *Strategic context*

Several reports from the former East of England Development Agency were reviewed for the presentation at the Cornwallis Hotel event. One study of growth potential in the region was used to illustrate that our site is located midway between a number of strategic growth areas: Greater Cambridge to the west; Norwich to the north; Great Yarmouth port to the north east; and Ipswich and the Haven Ports to the south east.

Studies of the potential for energy generation confirm the eastern region is average for wind potential, that there is a strong concentration of energy source material such as chicken litter in the area, but that the existing power stations absorb the majority of this, that the region also has lower than average access to biomass in the form of forestry and wood thinnings, and

only average amounts of other biomass source material. Therefore we conclude that there is a case that further expansion of power generation from these sources should only be considered where they do not require material to be imported to the region.

In terms of types of industry, the site is very much at the edge of the Haven Ports sphere of influence, so that major expansion in logistics and storage capacity here to meet demand arising from the expansion of the Haven ports’ berthing capacity would be inappropriate.

There is a strong argument for expansion of industries that are already strong in the area: food and food preparation and distribution; biochemistry R & D; tourism and hospitality; and engineering, especially for specialist products with high added value.

It is clear that this is a highly productive part of the UK with an enormous range in firms within a 30-mile radius, from sushi production to specialist high-end of the market bicycles. More details on the site and surrounding area are given in section 3.7 below.

### *How much Growth here?*

“It is an established principle that employment growth and housing growth need to be coordinated, not just for economic growth but to provide as wide a range of employment opportunities as economically possible to reduce commuting; to ensure sustainable travel patterns; and to support the efficient provision of infrastructure”. (SCC consultation response)

## Sustainability

A key way to differentiate this business park offering from the many others in the region is through implementing high standards of sustainability, covering transport, [energy](#), landscape and biodiversity, and buildings. Details of the proposed guidance are given in the chapters below. The green travel plans explained in section 4.5 below would also be key to any development here.

## The nature of proposed development

### *SE Quadrant*

We have taken on board the potential to seek housing and other mixed-use development on the south east of the airfield, close to Eye Town. Here we recommend that the proposal made at the Cornwallis consultation event for a Quiet Zone (i.e. with a policy controlling the upper level of noise, smell, traffic and other industrial elements permitted), should be given very careful consideration. Further research is needed into the appropriate way to progress such a zone. It could be by restricting the business development to B1 and mixed use, careful siting of tall features, and through a widespread and carefully designed landscape mitigation strategy. Conservation constraints have also been emphasised in several consultation responses. A Local Development Order could be considered here that specifies how quiet zone compatible B1, B2, B8 can locate here provided it does not exceed certain criteria, such as appropriate scale and landscaping and numbers of HGV movements.

The south side of the airfield on this eastern edge has a smaller scale, and is more intimate in character than the main areas. With careful landscape implementation it could form a good edge to the built-up residential areas, and possibly be an acceptable location for new housing here. There are attractive views across this site to Eye Church Tower that could be used to create a sense of place in small village 'greens'.

### *The existing areas of Mid Suffolk Business Park*

Cycle and footpath connections from this area back to Eye could assist in making it better integrated with the town including creating potential for the employees to make use of the town's facilities

### *Brome Triangle*

The triangle of land, undeveloped for many years, at the far north of the site is noisy and not therefore suited to residential use, but is too small for large business units. It could be subdivided into individual plots for sale to smaller enterprises. [A care home](#) could be investigated. There are questions about the traffic safety of the roads here.

### *North area*

A new mixed-use hub is suggested, with a new road access from the A140.

In the consultation event a group raised an idea of adopting a 'Dutch housing model' for residents to settle these areas. This is a method to sell land in small plots for development. In places such as Almere, land is parcelled-up into individual plots for sale with the possibility that individuals can build their own homes (see para 4.3). The key to this process is to specify a known scale and layout of infrastructure where all elements: water, energy, roads, landscape and social facilities are pre-planned, and jointly funded.

### *South West quadrant*

In this area another business hub can be created, using the existing road junction from Castleton Way and upgrading it. The mix of uses sought here is suggested as combining a series of screening tree belts, to be planted in advance of development, and a parkland setting for low density modern business activities, buildings with limited ridge heights, together with ancillary uses such as a hotel and café.

### *Design guidance proposals*

- Edge of town: softening of new development through use of small greens and orchards.
- Skills-building in the Parishes and Eye Town to facilitate local input to the design process.
- Consider finding a potential site for a design competition for live-work or mixed uses: which could take a similar process to the one developed for Elmswell, as suggested during the Eye consultation.



| Site number  | Area in ha  | Uses | B1          | B2          | B8         | Residential |
|--------------|-------------|------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| 1            | 1.9         |      | 0.95        |             |            | 0.95        |
| 2            | 2.9         |      | 1.45        |             |            | 1.45        |
| 3            | 1.6         |      | 1           | 0.6         |            |             |
| 4            | 2.4         |      | 1.2         | 1.2         |            |             |
| 5            | 2           |      |             | 2           | 2          |             |
| 6            | 1.9         |      | 0.6         | 0.7         | 0.6        |             |
| 7            | 1.5         |      |             |             | 1.5        |             |
| 8            | 3.8         |      |             | 3.8         |            |             |
| 9            | 1.4         |      |             |             | 1.4        |             |
| 10           | 3.8         |      |             | 1.9         | 1.9        |             |
| 11           | 9.2         |      | 4.6         | 4.6         |            |             |
| 12           | 7.5         |      | 2.5         | 2.5         | 2.5        |             |
| 13           | 7           |      |             |             |            | 7           |
| 14           | 2.6         |      |             |             |            | 2.6         |
| 15           | 1.8         |      | 0.9         |             |            | 0.9         |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>56.3</b> |      | <b>13.2</b> | <b>16.3</b> | <b>8.9</b> | <b>12.9</b> |

### Notes & Assumptions

All measurements are very approximate, and where sites have a mix of possible uses, there is an assumption of an equal split across the mixes.

Note the 5 Ha for the energy use on site 8 is omitted from these calculations.

Note that, applying the HCA 2012 employment density guidance, this site could yield some 3000 jobs when finally completed, but very approx. based on assumptions.

This makes a significant contribution to future jobs and economic growth for the north of the district and for a catchment area serving both Suffolk and Norfolk.

Assumes B1 employment density = 10-12 sq metres/job for office, 47sq metres/job for IT/ data centres, 10 sq metres/job for business parks.

B2 = 36 sq metres per full time employee, B8 = 70 sq metres per FTE (80 if large scale high bay)

Note that without any plans to work from this is a **very approximate estimate**. Assumptions: for this site landscape and drainage provisions a priority,

Assumes only 20 % of the allocated land is covered by buildings for the business parks, 10% for manufacturing, IT, logistics and warehousing buildings.

$132,000/(12 \times 5) = 2200$  jobs,  $163,000/(36 \times 10) = 452$  jobs,  $8,900/70 \times 10 = 127$ : total 2779.

Housing is indicated on some 12.9 ha with a density of just above 30 dph would offer homes on the airfield for some 1000 people, assuming 2.5 people per home.

Landscape in surrounding area

The development framework is to be informed by the landscape considerations. These include both natural and built form conservation, key views, skyline plantations, and interesting links such as sunken lanes and long tree lined avenues. Designated areas in the vicinity include traditional orchards, ancient woodlands, county wildlife sites and environmental stewardship agreement areas. Note plans are available at large scale as separate documents.

In response to a comment during consultation on the agricultural land stewardship context, a plan shows the extent of land both on and off the airfield covered by the DEFRA Environmental Stewardship scheme. We suggest the on-airfield Stewardship scheme is extended to include parkland settings for the business use. Although there is not a precedent we are aware of, there seems no reason in principle why business parks could not be managed using the same stewardship principles as the agricultural land they abut.

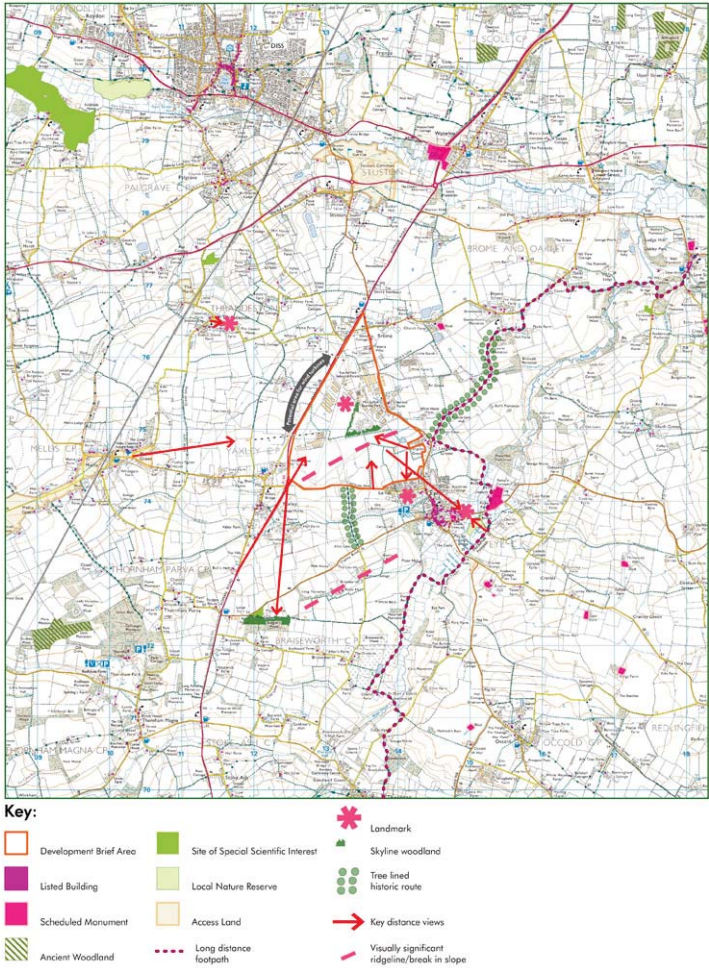
Below: Broader area around Eye Airfield showing conservation areas, protected green spaces and other statutory designations in the area, together with surveyed views. Map by Countryside with Alison Farmer & Core



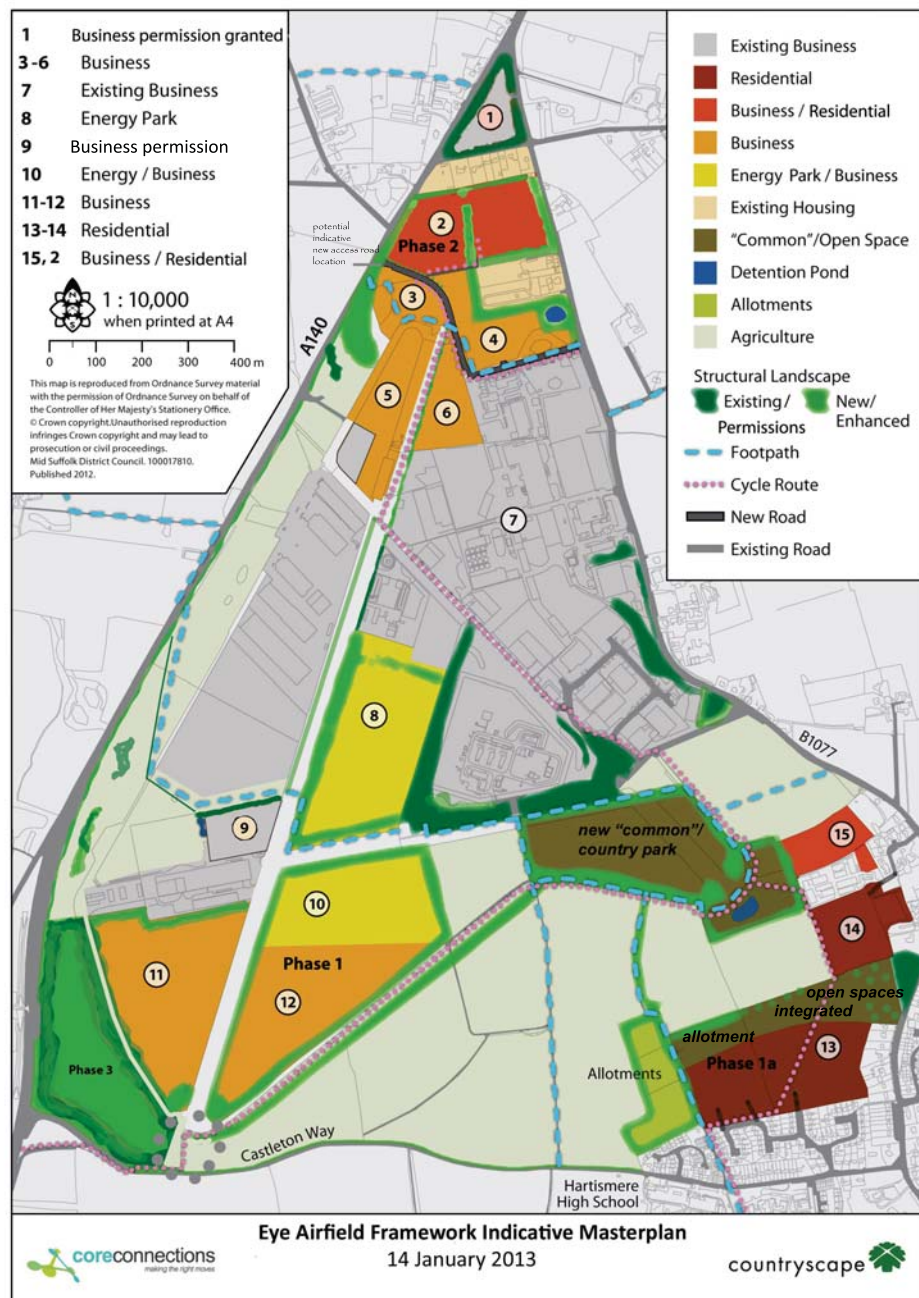
Top left: Small open spaces with orchard trees or green space can soften the town edge – images by Gardner Stewart, from the West Stowmarket Development Brief prepared with core connections for MSDC.



Bottom left: DEFRA stewardship areas in buff on and in the vicinity of the airfield, together with SSSIs and nationally recognised landscape designations. Map by Countryside







|    |                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Brome Triangle 1.9 ha site with unimplemented permission for B1 business premises. Retain/ replace all existing perimeter landscape. Possible alternative of mixed use / care home.        |
| 2  | Open agricultural land suitable for high quality mixed use in a landscaped setting: residential, B1/ R & D business park with access from a new road from A140                             |
| 3  | Business park with access from A140                                                                                                                                                        |
| 4  | Business uses with existing road to be upgraded to an adopted standard, to connect to the A140, and sustainable drainage to wetland detention pond                                         |
| 5  | Area potentially to be opened up with access to the new road, could extend site onto part of existing airstrip, add connecting cycle route                                                 |
| 6  | See 5 above, but also potential for a second access to new road, so site can be sub-split. Existing allocated brownfield site in Local Plan.                                               |
| 7  | Sites given planning permission, some scope for extensions, B1, B2, B8 logistics and data centre type use, retain and upgrade accesses.                                                    |
| 8  | Energy Park to contain potential waste to energy power plant. Detailed designs to meet framework requirements. Potential to provide heat and energy to adjoining users.                    |
| 9  | Existing allocated brownfield site with planning permission.                                                                                                                               |
| 10 | Site with potential for uses requiring robust energy provision, (e.g. IT, data centres). Potential to link directly to power sources as well as to the grid.                               |
| 11 | Potential Business Park in a parkland setting with high quality buildings and landscaping and control on maximum eaves height. Access from main n-s runway road.                           |
| 12 | See 11 above                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 13 | Area for more detailed plan to encompass use for housing, allotments, and community orchards. Cycle and footpaths to provide good safe connections to the school hospital and rest of Eye. |
| 14 | See 13 above                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 15 | Area for mixed uses, residential and Quiet Zone workspaces.                                                                                                                                |

*Draft Indicative Masterplan*

Several sites are appropriate for business use developments, (Sites 4, 5, 6, 9,11,12, and site 2 including business in mixed uses). In the sensitive south east of the airfield we propose residential and quiet zone business uses, sites 13,14,15.) The SW quadrant is another business hub, with ancillary uses such as a café and hotel possible in the longer term.

Within the centre of the site, energy producing uses would be appropriate provided they meet environmental criteria that ensure a good quality of life for all around them (sites 8 & 10, total 12.6 ha of which 5 ha would be assigned for energy producers, the remainder for business including high energy users)

The olive green site directly south of the Mid Suffolk Business Park is the location of a proposed “common” for recreation use. This reflects the fact that the airfield is an important local recreation facility for a range of activity from dog-walking to model aircraft flying (area 10.4 ha)

The potential new A140 access road would link across to the existing business and industrial parts of the airfield and would be to full adoptable standards, which a bus route could service, linked to the B1077. A cycle link runs through the whole spine of the airfield.

*Approximate split business uses allocated*

|                   |                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Total B1          | up to approx 14 ha (36%) |
| Total B2<br>(41%) | up to approx. 16 ha max  |
| Total B8<br>(23%) | up to approx 9 ha max    |



**Eye Airfield**  
**Development Framework**  
**Chapter Two: Site appraisal**



## Chapter Two

### 2.1 Site Context

Eye Airfield is between Diss and Eye on the A140. The A140 is a major transport route that runs north from the A14 into south Norfolk linking Ipswich and Felixstowe in the south to Norwich in the north. Eye Airfield is roughly half way between Norwich and Ipswich, being about 30km from each city.

Approximately three km north of Eye, the A140 joins the A143. The A143 provides access to Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth about 50km to the east, and to Bury St Edmunds and the A14, about 30km to the west.

### 2.2 Movement

Eye Airfield and surrounding areas included in this development brief are defined by the triangle of roads formed by the A140 to the east, the B1077 to the west and Castleton Way to the south.

The A140 forms the western site boundary and is a 50mph single carriageway road, reducing to 40mph at the northern end of Eye Airfield on the approach to the Thrandeston Road. The A140 has a high volume of HGV traffic and passes the adjacent business park on the redundant airfield

of Mendlesham, as well as Eye, both of which are allocated for significant employment. The existing employment uses on Eye Airfield are accessed via a number of different points including a ghost island right turn from the A140 and a number of accesses from the B1077 north of Eye. The various Industrial Estates are sign-posted from the A140 junction with the B1077, which is also a ghost island right turn junction. The B1077 is a single carriageway road with a 30mph speed limit from the A140 into Eye. It provides access to and from Eye to the north. Although signed as 30mph, it is undeveloped for much of its length between the A140 and Eye and has the feel of a country road. Rectory Road also provides access from the A140, forming a smaller triangle north of the airfield with the A140 and the B1077.

Castleton Way runs from the south-west corner of the airfield eastwards into Eye and is an unrestricted country road for the first two thirds of its length until it reaches Eye, where the speed limit becomes 30mph.

#### 2.2.1 Accident data – see appendix A04

The A140 and B1077 in the site vicinity have relatively poor accident records. As Suffolk County Council has expressed concerns about the accident record, any new development proposals need to carefully consider the impact upon accidents.

A review of the most recent five years accident data (to June 30th 2011) shows that there were 36 personal injury accidents in the site vicinity including two fatalities and seven serious accidents.

Nine of the accidents involved HGVs including one fatality and 2 serious accidents. Although there were no significant clusters, the diagram of accidents included with this brief shows six accidents including one fatality involving an HGV occurred on the triangle of the A140, the B1077 and Rectory Road. The B1077 heading into Eye, south of Rectory Road has thirteen further accidents of which 3 were serious and one fatal.

Based upon this, the access strategy for further airfield development should seek to avoid additional traffic on the B1077 north of Eye in particular.

#### 2.2.2 Highway Access Works

The proposed indicative new highway access routes, and any improvements to existing entrances to the airfield would be landscaped formally on the A140 side of the airfield, and in a way more in keeping with its rural setting on the B1077 access. More details of highway access proposals are set out in section 5.2 below.

### 2.3 Bus Routes – see appendix A04

There are few routes and few bus stops in the site vicinity, with no buses penetrating the airfield itself. The only regular bus service is the 113/114, which provides an hourly service from Ipswich to Diss via Eye. Other services provide access to nearby villages including the 456/457, which provides 3 to 4 buses per day to Diss, Finningham, Mendlesham and Stowmarket.

## 2.4 Rail

Diss is the nearest railway station, and is an important local transport hub approximately 5km north of the Airfield. The rail station can be accessed using the 113/114 hourly bus service, but it is an approximately 400m walk from the bus stop on Victoria Road in Diss to the Station and there is an opportunity for bus services to link with trains arriving and departing from the station, potentially through a shuttle bus, through rerouting of existing services or demand responsive transport (DRT). There are cycle stands and lockers at Diss Station, a Taxi rank and a Station Car Park. Rail services are managed by Greater Anglia and there is one service per hour to London and Norwich, also serving Stowmarket and Ipswich, from which it is also possible to catch half-hourly local trains to intermediate stations, and trains west to Cambridge and to Peterborough.

## 2.5 Pedestrian and cycle facilities – see appendix A04

Provision on the site for the pedestrian and cyclist is not currently very extensive. There are some public rights of way that cross the site, and Castleton Way is part of National Cycle Route 30. Eye town centre is also one end of regional route 40, which runs between Eye and Framlington.

“To ensure that there are suitable links between employment and residential uses, opportunities for north-south and east-west movements across and through the site should be created, and safe crossings of key roads such as the A140”. From: SCC consultation letter September 2012.

The site has many public rights of way that are poorly connected and there is evidence of fragmentation and re-routing of the historic connections. Many will be irrelevant to the new development proposals. This Development Framework provides an opportunity to improve connectivity within the site, to Eye Town, and also to the wider Public Right of Way network.

Some of the footpaths have a historical significance: ancient hollow way green tracks abut both the southern site edge on Catleton Way – Rapsey Tapsey Lane – and in the east, Victoria Hill to Brome Avenue. The latter is part of the long distance Mid-Suffolk Footpath, which links to another long distance route “Angles Way” at Hoxne.

Details of footway/cycle way proposals are set out in section 5.2 below, providing shared footway/cycle way links between the northern, south-eastern and south-western sections of the airfield and Eye itself. These proposed links will make use of the existing runways where possible and will provide new surfaced and lit footway/cycle ways where necessary.

The Airfield retains its skeleton of runways; unique features which connect directly to its recent history and contribute significantly to its character and appearance.

## 2.6 Parking

There is ample car parking in the various parts of the airfield site. New development will need to meet the council’s parking standards and reflect a shift to sustainable transport methods.

## 2.7 Landscape and Character Areas - see appendix A05

A baseline assessment of the current landscape and visual character of the Eye Airfield site and its landscape context has been undertaken, the purpose of which is to assess the landscape and visual sensitivity of Eye Airfield in the context of potential future development proposals. The findings are summarised here, but for full details refer to the Baseline Landscape Appraisal 2162-R02. The assessment provides evidence for a Design Code and Landscape Strategy for Eye Airfield, also presented in the above document. These are to meet the key objectives: to take opportunities to improve landscape quality; to create and reinforce habitats and habitat connectivity; to retain important local views and to enhance local amenity. A well-considered landscape structure and site layout provides the opportunity to create an attractive setting for future development, and supports Suffolk County Council’s wider landscape and biodiversity aims as set out in the County Landscape Character Area assessment. The landscape assessment therefore sets the context for the development framework.

### The site and its landscape context

Eye Airfield extends from Brome in the north, to Eye in the south east and Yaxley in the south west. It is largely situated within the ‘Ancient Plateau Claylands’ character area identified by Suffolk County Council, with the northern and south-eastern corners lying in ‘Rolling Valley Claylands’, see diagram in Chapter 3.

The landscape has become degraded, both where the historic matrix of hedgerows and trees is eroded, having been cleared to construct the airfield, and then from more recent land-use pressures. The Development Brief provides the strategic layout to improve the landscape quality of the site, through extensive planting of hedgerows and shelterbelts to contribute to habitat connectivity and local amenity. A baseline landscape appraisal document accompanies this brief, 2162-R02 *Landscape Baseline Appraisal*.

Due to the large size of the airfield site and its wide range of land uses, it has been subdivided into smaller Character Areas for the purposes of assessment. The character areas with the highest sensitivity to change are located in the southern part of the site, comprising Character Areas A 'Agricultural', F 'Rural Lane', G 'Eye Setting and Approach', and H 'Eye'.

These contain key features considered worthy of protection, retention and/or enhancement, as follows:

- The rural quality of the approach to Eye along Castleton Way, and the contribution this landscape makes to the setting of Eye/
- Allotments, and scope for their extension, or other public or community use of the land
- A new 'Common' for Eye and new community orchards. The undeveloped land in the southern part of the site forms a countryside gap between Yaxley (and the A140) and Eye, and separates the identities of the settlements.

- The remnant broad concrete runway strips - an important historical feature of the site
- Hedgerows and veteran trees delineating field boundaries
- The rural qualities of Castleton Way.

#### Views and visual sensitivities

Eye Airfield is a complex site, in which areas of intensively developed employment land contrast with open agricultural land; rural lanes contrast with busy trunk roads; there is an array of land uses and architectural styles; an unique historical connection largely expressed in concrete runways; and a network of public rights of way crossing the site. The following points are important to note:

- Viewpoints with high and highest visual sensitivity are Viewpoints 4, 6 (representative of 5 and 7), 13 (representative of 11, 12, 18), 14, 23 as shown in Appendix 4 'Photo Viewpoint Locations' of 2162-R02
- Care should be taken in the design of any future development proposal that might impact on the viewpoints of greatest sensitivity and amenity. This will include resisting development in areas of highest sensitivity, and guiding development to areas of lower sensitivity.
- Where development takes place, careful consideration should be given to siting, scale, colour and massing of development, and how its impacts might be mitigated.

- There are opportunities to enhance views by introducing shelterbelts and reinforcing hedgerows and tree belts, strengthening important wooded ridgeline characteristics. The general area of the site that contributes most to visual amenity, and from where views of high sensitivity are located, is the southern part of the site (character area A).
- The rural lane corridor along Castleton Way is considered particularly sensitive, due to the proximity of public footpaths and footpaths that link to it, and its topography of slopes falling to the south. Viewed from the south, character area A slopes up to a horizon occupied by the existing industrial estates and the planted tree belt south of the compressor site.

"The Landscape Strategy, which is an integral part of the development framework, proposes design and layout that is appropriate. It generally reflects the historic character of the site whilst taking opportunities to create new landscape features, habitats and areas of community open space.

A consistent approach is required for strategic landscape planting across the site that could be reasonably expected to mitigate and minimise the landscape and visual impact of development, in areas 1,2,5,10 and 12 for example. The landscape strategy should have a clear principle that existing established boundary vegetation should be retained and enhanced wherever possible". From SCC consultation letter September 2012.

### Landscape Design Code

The Design Code identifies the key considerations for the design of future developments, and safeguarding the landscape setting of Eye Airfield, (see Design Code in 2162-R02). The Design Code is to be read in conjunction with the Landscape Strategy. Key points are summarised below:

- Design of new development on the southern part of the site is to respond to identified landscape sensitivity. All new residential development is to be of high quality design and protect and enhance the historic setting of Eye.
- The landscape structure of the airfield site is to be reinforced and extended with an objective to connect with landscape features beyond the site boundary.
- Landscape features are to be used to connect green spaces and to separate settlements.
- The ditches and ponds within the development brief area are to be retained and enhanced for amenity and biodiversity.
- A new 'Eye Common' to be created, as a recreation and biodiversity feature, that will also restore the historic common landscape character once found in this area.
- Key cycle routes and footpaths should be improved and new direct routes provided.
- The historical features of the site of significance are to be retained and incorporated into the strategic layout of the site.

- Key views toward important landscape / cultural features are to be retained, protected and enhanced. Details are given in Lloyd Bore document 2162-R02.
- Positive landscape characteristics of the principal routes to and from Eye are to be retained and enhanced.
- Any new development incorporating chimneys, flues, masts or other vertical structures and tall industrial buildings should be sensitively planned, sited and designed, and carefully considered in relation to sensitive local views.
- Proposals for landscape mitigation and planting should be commensurate with the landscape and visual impacts of development proposals.
- Lighting, particularly exterior lighting, should be designed and installed so it minimises detrimental landscape and visual impacts.
- A range of appropriate tree and shrub species should be used, having due regard for the requirements of the National Grid guidance where planting is near to pipelines

See Appendix A05 for more detail on the full landscape strategy, and drawings and sections for guidance on proposed new landscape features. All developers are required to take account of the Baseline Appraisal prepared by Lloyd Bore, which will be used by the council in determining planning applications for the sites. See drawing 2162/D10\_C and document 2162 – R02 Landscape Baseline Appraisal by Lloyd Bore for details.

### Sensitivity of Eye to development

"The town of Eye derives its name from the Old English word for 'island' and it is believed that the first settlement on the site would have been almost entirely surrounded by water and marshland formed by the River Dove." (Source MSDC website)

"Development options are very limited as the south and east of the town remain in low-lying flood risk areas." MSDC



*Photo: Eye church from the castle mound, view looking out to the east. Note the skyline tree belt to the right of the church on the photo: a characteristic feature of the local landscape here.*



## 2.8 Ecology & Nature

Although there are places within the site that are of potential ecological interest, such as water-bodies, headlands around agricultural land and areas of rough grassland and scrub, the majority of the site, comprising industrial units and intensely farmed agriculture, is of low ecological value. The existing biodiversity of the site is, therefore, relatively restricted with individual habitat types somewhat isolated.

The proposed landscape strategy will provide connectivity between the existing Biodiversity Action Plan Habitats within the site; standing open water and species rich hedgerows. In addition, the retention and strengthening of important habitat features, such as woodland and agricultural land will provide improved habitat for species that may currently use the site, such as ground nesting birds and badgers.

The creation of new habitats; orchards, coppice and allotments will increase the ecological diversity of the site by providing a mosaic of vegetation structures that are well connected through corridors within the site and to the wider surrounding area.

For the full report see the accompanying phase one Habitat survey document from Lloyd Bore: 2162 -R03 Draft Phase I habitat and scoping survey. This will be used for reference by MSDC in determining planning applications for the sites covered by the development framework.

## 2.9 Cultural Heritage & Archaeology

The Eye Airfield is itself a heritage site. The HER citation is reproduced in appendix A05. The A140 along the western edge of the site is a roman road in origin. The south-east site boundary is part of the setting to Eye town, which has Conservation Area status, and there are also several listed buildings clustered at the junction of Castleton Way and Victoria Hill (the B1077) as well as on both sides of this road. The development also needs to respect archaeological potential here.



*The north of Eye airfield in 1945: photo SCC Archaeology*

This proposal affects a very large area (135 hectares) within an extensive multi-period archaeological landscape in the parishes of Eye, Yaxley and Brome and Oakley, recorded in the County Historic Environment Record (HER).

It is a historic cultural resource from World War 2 and part of Britain's recent Military History. The former USAF airfield (HER no. EYE 072) was constructed between 1943 and 1944 and used by the USAF Eighth Air Force 490th Bomber Group until the end of this War. It was transferred to RAF Bomber Command in November 1945, and sold in 1962-3. Aspects of the airfield are preserved in the landscape.

The northern part of the airfield was constructed over the site of a former medieval green, shown on Hodkinson's map of 1783, HER no. TDE 016. There is high potential for encountering medieval settlement remains around the green. There are also various earlier sites and 'find spots' of below ground archaeological interest within the immediate vicinity of the airfield.

"Neither the airfield nor the surround areas have been the subject of systematic archaeological investigation. For example, a scatter of Roman and medieval material is recorded within area 12 of the development framework (HER no. YAX 032), and metal detected finds have been made to the south indicate Roman and Anglo-Saxon and medieval occupation."

“The site complex as a whole needs to be carefully and thoroughly examined and evaluated. The first stage of this work should be a detailed archaeological desk-based assessment. This should include an appraisal to establish the survival and significance of any structures and installations associated with the military history of the airfield. The assessment should also address the potential impact on designated heritage assets (the Eye Conservation Area and other listed buildings) and, therefore, a visual impact assessment should be undertaken as part of the work.

In terms of areas within the site on which extensive new development is proposed, for example, areas 2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 11 and 12, a field evaluation will be required. This will enable the Local Planning Authority to be able to take into account the particular nature and the significance of any heritage assets at this location, so that informed decisions can be made about the future development of this site, in accordance with paragraphs 128 and 129 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The field evaluation should, in this case, comprise geophysical survey and trenched evaluation.

The county council would be pleased to offer more detailed guidance on the level of work required and will, on request of the applicant, provide a specification for each stage of this work.” Source: SCC letter in consultation September 2012

## 2.10 Noise & air quality

The air quality within the site is documented in the SCC Waste Core Strategy supporting documents. The air quality impact of a new Energy from Waste power station here, and potential air quality is also modelled in the supporting documents. As there are both large areas of agriculture and food-processing firms clustered on and near the site, in the route of prevailing winds, air quality is an important consideration here.

**‘Quiet Zones’** - In the consultation event in January 2012, a key idea to emerge was to create a new Quiet Zone for businesses that could co-exist with nearby residential users, due to their characteristics in terms of impact on neighbours. They could be co-located with small-scale residential schemes, perhaps in developments around shared courtyards, imitating the historical pattern of farmsteads. In these areas, “Quiet” will refer to noise, smell, air and water quality, traffic movements and lighting, and provided the criteria were met, could allow crafts and storage, manufacture and food production as well as B1.

Site specific master plans would need to be developed for this area with clear design coding, in which issues of noise transmission, visual impact, smell and waste management and privacy could be addressed.

It is an area where a further, more detailed study could be undertaken, also considering the role this area can provide to assist the town of Eye in its future strategy.

## 2.11 Surface drainage design

- see appendix A01

From an initial site walkover it was established that the majority of the surface water runoff from the northern developed part of the airfield discharges to what is believed to be a culverted watercourse, which runs west to east across the north of the airfield between the A140 and B1077, and is a tributary of the River Dove: it follows a ward or parish boundary from the A140 to the River Dove. The map in Appendix A01 illustrates the existing drainage pattern.

The surface water drainage on the airfield is split into a number of catchments:

- The A140 access and associated development on the west of the airfield appears to discharge via a balancing pond and settlement tank to the watercourse/highway drain which runs along the A140. This watercourse appears to discharge to the south of the A140 access point into the culverted watercourse across the airfield referred to above. Since the initial site walkover one landowner commented that the runoff discharges across the A140 to the west here, and further survey work would be required to confirm the direction of flow at this point.
- Both the Brome Industrial Park and Airfield Industrial Park on the east of the airfield are assumed (with some observations from a number of positions on site) to discharge to the culverted watercourse (which is an open

watercourse for a short section between the two Industrial Estates); with a possibility that some of the surface water runoff drains to the watercourse/highway drain along the B1077.

- The Mid Suffolk Business Park (including a private surface water drain along Potash Lane) discharges by means of adopted sewers to a pumping station, surface water is then pumped into the watercourse that runs along the B1077.

When the Mid Suffolk Business Park was constructed, new ditches/watercourses were dug across the fields to the east of the airfield and pumped surface water runoff from the business park into these ditches. The continuation of the watercourse along the parish/ward boundary towards the River Dove to the east of the B1077 has been confirmed to be an open watercourse for the majority of its length with some culverts at crossings.

Surface water runoff from the former runways on the airfield are generally channelled into holes drilled into the airfield, which discharge to a french drain arrangement. In the north east of the site this appears to discharge to the culverted watercourse across the airfield. The majority of the former runway drainage appears to be in poor condition or completely blocked.

- Parts of the site experience occasional surface water flooding, which is highly likely to be as a result of a combination of blocked surface water drains within the airfield

hardstandings, blockages within the culverted watercourse and also a lack of capacity in the culverted watercourse.

- Surface water runoff in the largely undeveloped arable land in the south/southeast of the airfield drains to a land-drain located along a field boundary which then discharges to an adopted sewer across Castleton Way, and into a tributary of the River Dove located in the north of Eye.

## 2.12 Foul Water drainage

Existing adopted Anglian Water foul water sewers in the vicinity of the airfield are limited to the Mid Suffolk Business Park and the residential streets on the south-west border of the site. This can be seen on the utilities plans (these are available on request). Existing foul water from the Mid Suffolk Business Park is pumped from the business park to the Eye Treatment Works and it is likely that any new development would also need its foul drainage to be pumped either by upgrading the pump and rising main, or providing a new system depending on the quantum of development.

EAS held an initial dialogue with Sue Bull, Planning Liaison Manager at Anglian Water, regarding the capacity of the foul water network, and although it is difficult to determine the demand that would be placed on the network at this stage, the following information was established:

- The Eye Treatment Works still have some capacity available for additional effluent, however Anglian Water have to be mindful of other potential developments in the area and will not commit to providing capacity for un-allocated developments.
- It is likely that the Eye Treatment Plant could be upgraded to cope with a significant additional flow with some forward planning: there would be a cost associated with these improvements to be borne by the development.
- The upgrade of the Eye Treatment Plant would require a new consent to discharge from the Environment Agency (EA) and this could be challenged in the future should the requirements of the EA change regarding water quality.

In summary there is capacity in the existing Treatment Plant and potential to upgrade. It is recommended that MSDC and developers have early further dialogue with Anglian Water, once additional site allocations are agreed, to provide a sensible solution to the likely phased future development of the airfield.

## 2.13 HSE zones – see appendix A02

Due to the gas compressor station being located in the centre of the Eye Airfield, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) planning advice for developments near hazardous installations (PADHI) needs to be considered.

Where a site is near to a hazard such as a gas compressor station, the planning authority will have a statutory duty to refer the planning application to the HSE. The HSE will respond that they either 'Advise Against' (AA) or 'Don't Advise Against' (DAA) the granting of planning permission and the planning authority take this into account when making a decision on a planning application.

PADHI uses a three-zone system: inner (IZ), middle (MZ) and outer (OZ). The risks and hazards are greatest in the inner zone and the restrictions to development the strictest. These zones within the Eye airfield have been illustrated in Appendix A02.

Each land use has different advice on what would be appropriate in each zone and where there are mixed-use sites the strictest advice applies across the site. Based on PADHI guidance published by the HSE May 2011, the restrictions on each land use considered within this brief have been summarised below:

#### Workplaces

Including offices, factories, warehouses, haulage depots, farm buildings, non-retail markets and builder yards.

Within the HSE Inner Zone, workplace development will be limited to 100 staff per building and / or a maximum height of 3 storey building; outside of this zone the HSE will not advise against workplace development.

#### Residential

The table below summarises the appropriate residential development within each zone:

|    |                                                                                                                                          |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| IZ | Residential would be advised against with the exception of some minor infill (i.e. 1 or 2 units).                                        |
| MZ | Residential sites would only be advised against if they are more than 30 dwellings, or with densities of above 40 dwellings per hectare. |
| OZ | No issue with residential development.                                                                                                   |

#### Retail

Where these types of developments are for use by the general public:

|    |                                                          |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------|
| IZ | Floor areas of less than 250sq m don't advise against.   |
| MZ | Floor areas of 250sqm to 5000 sq m don't advise against. |
| OZ | Floor areas over 5000 sq m don't advise against.         |

#### Hotels / Holiday Accommodation

The table below summarises the appropriate development within each zone:

|    |                                                                                            |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| IZ | The HSE don't advise against accommodation of less than 10 beds or 3 caravan/tent pitches. |
| MZ | Accommodation of up to 100 beds or 33 caravan/tent pitches is appropriate in this Zone.    |
| OZ | No issue with hotel / holiday development.                                                 |

## 2.14 Wind turbines – see appendix A03

Two sets of two wind turbines have been approved at Eye Airfield. Both of these sets of turbines are shown on Figure A03 in appendix A03. Topple zones do not appear to be a driving factor in development layout in proximity to wind turbines. There appears to be no structural reason to prevent siting turbines close to non-residential buildings and infrastructure with the exception of power lines, airfield, radio and radar systems.

Apart from providing maintenance access routes to the turbines, there is little that should sterilise land around the turbines proposed at Eye.

## 2.15 Contamination

The former use of the airfield should be taken into consideration and potential contamination should always be considered a possibility, to be considered on development sites when details are being designed.

## 2.16 Other: common land, amenity

The airfield site is currently used for a wide variety of amenity activities: walking; flying model aircraft; using the runways and taxiways for informal car club meetings are just three that have been observed.



## 2.17 Utilities

An assessment of the existing utilities infrastructure on the site has been undertaken by EAS, in order to assess the potential for the future provision of services and protection and diversion of existing services.

The results of the assessment are set out below.

Utilities providers operating in the area include Anglian Water (foul and surface water drainage), National Grid (gas network), UK Power Networks (electricity network), British Telecom, and Essex and Suffolk Water (potable water supply). Over thirty utilities providers were contacted and the results of the utilities search are available from MSDC (please note these plans are for strategic planning purposes only and the positions are indicative).

### Gas Network

As discussed in this development brief, the existing National Grid Major Accident Hazard Pipeline (MAHP) high-pressure gas pipeline (Feeder 5 - Yelverton to Stowmarket) is within the proposed development area, and this has associated restrictions under PADHI (Planning Advice for Developments near Hazardous Installations) regulations as detailed in section 2.13 above, and illustrated in appendix A02.

In addition to the PADI guidelines, National Grid has further restrictions on what may be developed close to the gas main. This includes no building within the easement strip (and no structures within 10ft of the 20ft easement) and that any services crossing the gas main require 600mm clearance and additionally also might require an impact protection slab.

In addition to the MAHP high-pressure gas main, there are further intermediate, medium and low-pressure gas mains within the airfield site, illustrated on draft utilities plans (please note that National Grid has yet to release mapping for the northern part of the site or the southwestern part of the site). However, we are advised that an intermediate gas main runs from the south of the existing A140 access to the land just to the north of the gas compressor station, where it steps down to a medium pressure main that terminates at the Eye Business Park.

There are low-pressure mains extending from these mains into the various existing development areas within the site. As these mains are within the development areas they are unlikely to require significant diversion/protection to accommodate additional development, with the possibility of diversionary works where the intermediate main crosses the main runway.

At this stage National Grid were unable to comment on the provision of new services to the airfield without a detailed estimate of the demand that would be placed on the system, however it is clear that there is already an available intermediate pressure supply to the airfield, which could be used to supply the site whether in its current form or following reinforcement.

### Electricity Network

There is already an established high voltage network extending across the site that could be used to supply the site, which is likely to require some reinforcement. Existing UK Power Networks high voltage electricity cables and overhead lines can be seen on the utilities plans. (Please note that low voltage cables are known to cross all the developed areas of the airfield, but are too numerous to show in the plan).

The majority of the electricity supply on the airfield is currently from high voltage electricity cables within the site, supplied by high voltage overhead lines on the periphery of the site. There are also some overhead high voltage electricity lines within the site from the power station.

It is likely that some diversion or protection of the high voltage electricity network would be required in order for the identified parcels of development within this brief to be realised.

The underground high voltage electricity cable in the north of the site between B1077 and the A140 to the north of the Four Oaks Park / builders yard, and the overhead lines within the centre of the site are most likely to require diversion / protection. It is recommended that future developers have an early dialogue with UK Power Networks to identify the likely cost of any works.

### Telecoms

There are underground British Telecom (BT) cables supplying the majority of the developed areas of the site, and some overhead lines, mainly along the A140, into the White House Farm area in the southwest corner of the site and along Castleton Way. No other telecoms provider infrastructure was identified in the vicinity of the site. Existing BT infrastructure can be seen on the draft utilities plans.

Some protection and diversion of BT infrastructure may be required, for example there is known to be an overhead telecoms line at the location of the proposed access with the A140.

In the majority of cases BT will supply sites free of charge and it is unlikely that there would be any issues supplying the development site; any specific requirements i.e. fibre optic lines would need to be discussed with British Telecom at an early stage to determine the likely costs.

The New Anglia LEP is currently examining ways of funding improvements to broadband speeds in certain rural areas including Eye Airfield, which is also identified as an existing industrial site with potential for significant fast broadband potential growth by both the Better Broadband for Suffolk team and BT directly. Therefore it will be given priority in upgrading of exchanges and the roll out of super fast broadband.

### Potable Water Supply

Existing Essex and Suffolk Water mains supply the developed areas of the site, and there is an additional trunk potable water main along the southern boundary of the Brome northern triangle site. Existing water infrastructure can be seen on the utilities plans.

The works required to supply the site are not known at this time, however the location of the trunk main in the north of the site and the presence of numerous mains within the site would indicate that it will be possible to supply the site, although some reinforcement may be required to the existing network.

There are two existing potable water mains located centrally within the site that may require protection or diversion as a result of future development, however as these mains are

located within the vicinity of the main airstrip they may be buried to a depth where diversion can be avoided. Developers should seek early advice from Essex and Suffolk Water regarding supply and protection.

### CHP

The proposals for extending the on-site Energy Park include a new power station to generate approximately 20MW, sufficient to provide electricity for 35,000 domestic residential homes via an underground link to the National Grid. The facility could be CHP-ready allowing waste heat to be supplied on a commercial basis to customers within a 3km radius. The facility would run on a 24 hours basis and would employ 24 people in shifts.

Source: Renewable energy proposal letter from SCC to EPR 25 May 2012



# Eye Airfield

## Development Framework

### Chapter Three: Planning Policy

*Photos: Above Eye Airfield from viewpoint  
west of Eye, Photo Lloyd Bore*

*Below: EPR power station*

## Chapter Three

### 3.1 National Policy

It is not necessary to repeat here the short new National Planning Policy Framework published in 2012. However the policy guidance of two of its sections will be of particular relevance to the vision suggested for the site: employment policy and design policy.

#### Duty to cooperate

The Greater Norwich Development Partnership has a clear influence on the Eye Airfield, as it is so close to the Norfolk boundary, and to the market town of Diss. The South Norfolk District Council has been consulted and made aware of progress with the **framework**.

### 3.2 Sub Regional context

#### West Suffolk Review of Employment Land

Suffolk County commissioned a study in 2008 of the Western Area employment land availability. This recognised the Eye Airfield as a local employment area, and suggested it would be a strategic location if the A140 were to be improved to be the main link from Ipswich to Norwich.

Their review of demand, carried out with Oxford Economics and GV Grimley, suggested a shortfall in office space in Mid Suffolk and a surplus in industrial space (albeit much is of low quality).



### 3.3 Core Strategy Mid Suffolk

#### Balance homes and jobs

The Mid Suffolk Core Strategy recognises Eye Airfield as a location of existing business uses, and whilst it is not close to the main residential areas, seeks to retain it in order to provide a source of rural employment.

“Both the Regional Economic Strategy and the draft revision of the East of England Plan seek as far as possible to ensure that development results in a better alignment or balance between homes and jobs, which will maximise the potential for people to form sustainable relationships between home, workplaces and regularly used services and facilities and their means of travel between them.

However not all employment uses can be comfortably accommodated within settlements, some are better sited on the edges of settlements while those involving frequent, regular use by heavy lorries may be better located close to major transport routes. Similarly the needs of the rural economy may also require a variety of uses be located in more remote areas where they cannot be more sustainably located elsewhere.”

Source: MSDC Core Strategy page 48

Also relevant are employment policy CS11 and focus review papers FC1 Sustainability and FC3 Employment.

### 3.4 Waste Core Strategy - Suffolk County Council

The Waste Core Strategy (WCS) identifies Eye Airfield as an Area of Search for a Strategic Residual Waste Treatment Facility. “Strategic” is considered to be 100,000 tonnes of waste treated per annum or above. Residual Waste Technologies include Energy from Waste (incineration), Gasification or MBT (Mechanical and Biological Treatment). Anaerobic Digestion or AD on its own is not residual waste treatment although the site might be able to accommodate such a facility as well.

#### Regional Spatial Strategy for Waste

The East of England Plan, approved in May 2008, includes information on the overall level of provision to be made for waste management within the counties of the former East of England Region, including Suffolk. This includes: waste management objectives in policy WM1; the levels of recycling in policy WM2; the allowance to be made for imported waste in policy WM3; the regional waste apportionment in policy WM4.

All policies referring specifically to waste planning matters are in the East of England Plan and the Suffolk Waste Core Strategy. A number of policies are, however, saved pending the adoption of completed Local Development Frameworks by District and Borough Councils.

### Suffolk Waste Core Strategy Policies

#### Policy WCS1 The Spatial Waste Planning Strategy for Suffolk

In respect of the Suffolk Waste Core Strategy (WCS) the proposal for an Energy Park here is in accordance with Policy WCS1 and the Key Diagram, within a designated Area of Search for a Strategic Residual Waste Treatment Facility, (subject to meeting all the other policies).

The designated site for the Energy Park is considered to be well related to the strategic lorry route network, centres of population and sources of waste, and would not have adverse impacts upon features of environmental importance or endanger human health.

Paragraph 8.2.2 of the WCS makes reference to the drawing up of a development brief and in consultations both at the events with stakeholders and with MSDC, discussion so far has focused on the an area of land immediately to the south of EPR’s existing facility. An Energy Park in the proposed location, in accordance with the draft Eye Airfield Development Brief, is therefore to be promoted.

#### Policy WCS2 Management of Sub-regional Apportionment

Based on the adopted Regional Spatial Strategy, the WCS indicates a requirement for

330,000 rising to 384,500 tonnes per annum of residual waste capacity for commercial and industrial waste, between 2015/16 and 2020/21. It is also indicated in the WCS that the requirement would remain at 384,000 tonnes per annum between 2020/21 and 2025/26. The existing planned capacity for commercial and industrial waste at the only other planned residual waste treatment facility at Great Blakenham is 100,000 tonnes per annum, leaving between 230,000 and 284,500 tonnes shortfall.

Since the RSS was approved in May 2008 however, a draft revised RSS has been produced and although submitted to the Secretary of State was not, due to the abolition of the regional tier of local government, ever approved. The members of the (formerly Regional) Waste Technical Advisory Body, including Suffolk County Council, have agreed to use the revised figures as part of their evidence base for future waste planning provision as they are more up to date and are considered to be more accurate projections. The new figures by comparison project a requirement for 221,500 rising slightly to 221,750 tonnes per annum of residual waste capacity for commercial and industrial waste between the periods 2015-16 to 2020-21.

The revised figures also continue to 2031 with the annual requirement reaching 228,750 tonnes per annum. Subtracting the permitted contribution that would potentially be made by the Great Blakenham facility, this projects a

requirement of 121,750 tonnes in 2015-16 to 128,750 tonnes in 2031.

#### Policy WCS4 Allocated Sites for Strategic Residual Waste Treatment Facilities

Eye Airfield is included as an “Area of Search” within Policy WCS4 of the Suffolk Waste Core Strategy (WCS) for a “Strategic Residual Waste Treatment Facility”. Strategic is defined as having an annual capacity of 100,000 tonnes or more. Residual waste is defined as waste left over after re-use, recycling and composting and which may either be treated in a residual waste treatment facility or be landfilled.

As discussed above under Policy WCS2 there is an identified need for such facilities and these facilities should provide for the recovery of energy and the use of combined heat and power. The proposals are therefore in accordance with Policy WCS4.

#### Policy WDM1 Safeguarding of Waste Management Sites

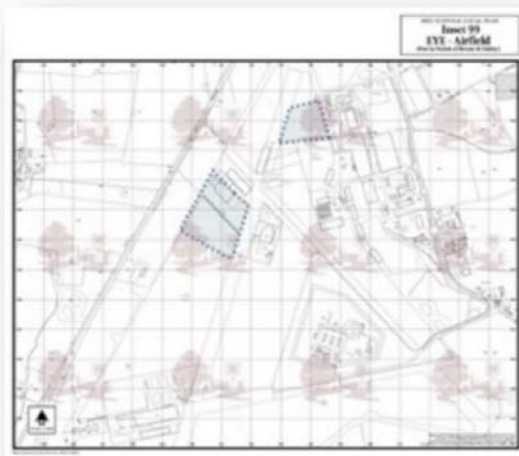
The proposal for an EfW facility on the Energy Park here is in accordance with Policy WDM1 as a strategic residual waste treatment facility.

#### Policy WDM2 General Considerations Relevant to all Waste Management Facilities

Detailed proposals will need to adequately address, where appropriate, the issues listed under Policy WDM2 namely: flood risk; vehicle movements and access design; landscape; biodiversity; archaeology and cultural heritage; sustainable modes of transport; compatibility with neighbouring land uses; agricultural land; noise and vibration; air quality including odour; visual impact, including from lighting; the local water environment; land instability, and site management issues including litter, vermin and birds.

#### Construction policy Policy WDM17 Waste Reduction, Sustainable Construction and Demolition and Provision of Waste Management Facilities within New Development

Detailed proposals will need to adequately address, where appropriate, the issues listed under Policy WDM17 namely: minimising waste and maximising the recycling and reuse of materials during construction, and; the minimal use of primary aggregates and maximum use of recycled and secondary materials in construction. Source: based on a SCC letter of 25 May 2012 to MSDC planning and copied to the MSDC Economic Development team.



Figures: Above Eye Airfield in Local Plan

Right: Eye town boundary and Special Landscape Areas in Local Plan 1998

### 3.5 Mid Suffolk Local Plan

Eye Airfield was identified in the 1998 Mid Suffolk Local Plan for continued employment uses. The Mid Suffolk Local Plan referred to the need to prepare a development brief for Eye Airfield, as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).

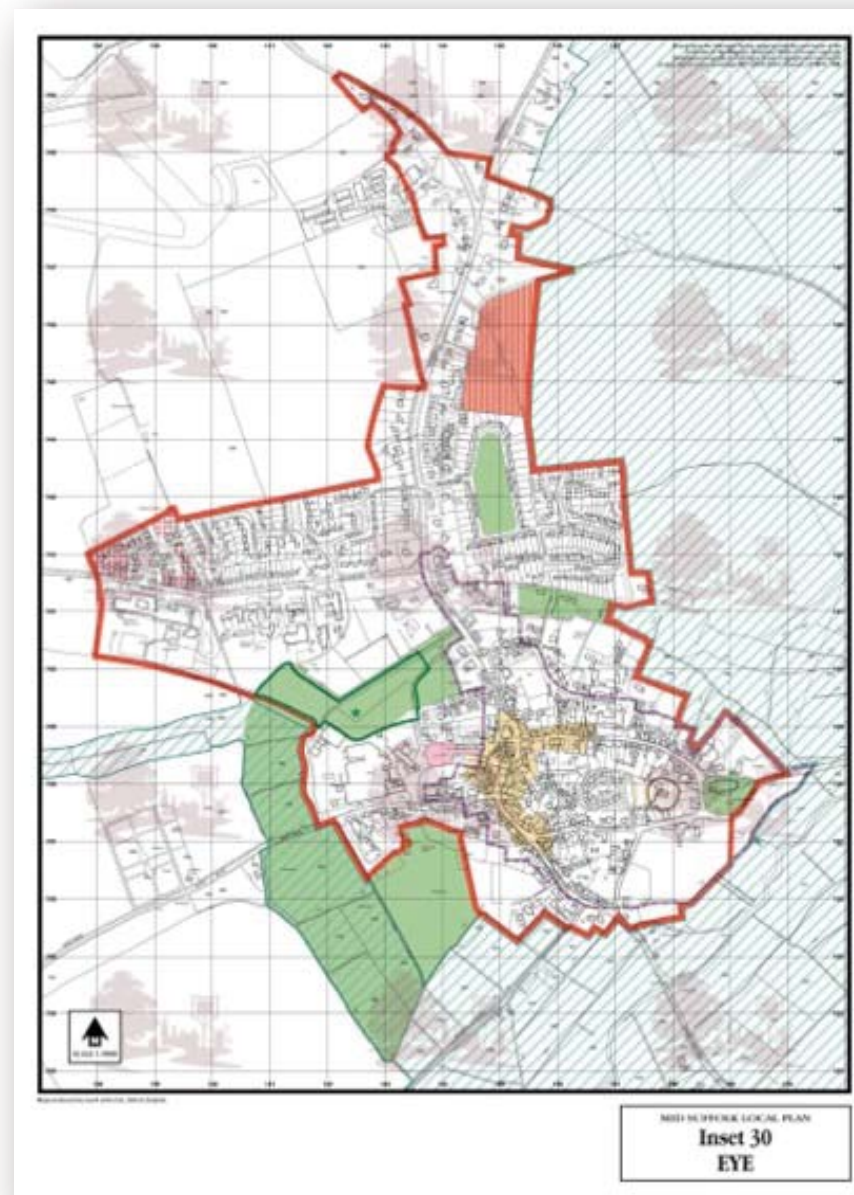
#### Eye Airfield employment sites in the 1998 Local Plan

Two sites were allocated for industrial use in the 1998 Plan. The southernmost site has since been fully developed, although the northern one has not, probably due to its poor road connections.

#### Eye Town boundary

The existing town boundary as defined in the Local Plan 1998, shows there are also significant landscape constraints to expanding the town.

The constraints are both onto land in its south west where there are large areas defined as Visually Important Open Areas (in green on the plan), and an almost complete restriction on the potential for significant development extending both south and east into the (green hatched) Special Landscape Areas.





### 3.6 Local Transport Plan - Suffolk CC

- The county council, as the transport authority, recognises and emphasises the importance of transport in supporting economic growth and ensuring sustainable development, as is evident in the 2011-2031 Suffolk Local Transport Plan (LTP3).
- 'Transport is critical to the development of most of the key employment sectors for Suffolk. Maintaining our roads in good condition, improving accessibility and developing a reliable sustainable transport network in Suffolk will be our focus. This will be essential for businesses in creating access to more jobs for more people, reducing travel costs and encouraging smarter ways to work.'

LTP3, Part 1- Transport Strategy, page 11

- 'The county council and our district and borough council partners also have a key role in planning and encouraging a better relationship between the home, leisure, retail and employment. New developments will be required to provide facilities that promote walking, cycling and local public transport access to local employment sites and wider transport networks'

LTP3, Part 1- Transport Strategy, page 14

"Pedestrian routes through the site need to be safe and need to link up with existing pedestrian routes in order to encourage walking to work. Public Rights of Way are dealt with under a separate heading.

Those are the key transport principles that the county council would wish to see realised through this development brief. It is very important that a modal shift to sustainable forms of transport and that the necessary improvements to the highway are included in the formation of the framework".

SCC consultation letter September 2012

### 3.7 Planning History

#### History in 20th century

Eye airfield was built by 827th and 859th Battalions (Engineering) and was home in 1944 to the American 490th Bomb Group. Then it was taken over by the 93rd Combat Bomb Wing of the 3rd division. (Source: SCC historical records office.)

Shortly after the war, several industrial sites were set up on the airfield, notably the site in the south of the airfield often referred to as the Stramit Factory, now occupied by Speeddeck.

#### Historical traces

Elsewhere on the airfield most of the runways still survive as well as a lych-gate, 50 hardstandings, 2 T2-type hangers, a Nissen hut and various other temporary type buildings. All are mentioned in the HER archaeological record for the site, see Appendix A05.

#### Mid Suffolk Business Park

The Mid Suffolk Business Park was built with the assistance of a grant from the EU towards infrastructure, the District Council contributed and the rest of the funding was from a private investor.

It contains separate units set on linked adopted roads, with a single access from the B1077. The majority of the units are owned outright by the businesses.

An association was formed in 2000 as a private limited company to act as a management company; this is still registered but is largely defunct.

Many businesses that moved here were local to the area, and used the move to expand. Most of the units have been extended or mezzanines inserted. Currently two units are vacant.



### Airfield Industrial Park & Brome Industrial Park

Airfield Industrial Park has access from the B1077, but the roads are owned privately. Brome Industrial Park also has its own access off the B1077, again not adopted nor to adoptable standards. Drainage is provided for these sites through an existing system, and an anaerobic digester treats the sewage. Inspection of web sites in spring 2012 indicates there were then three vacant units on the market in Brome Industrial Estate: 11, 14 and 9d. The two larger units are some 150 square metres in size with a 5 metre eaves height.

The centre of the airfield has several large industrial users, notably: an abattoir; a concrete batching plant; and several grain storage silos. Planning approval was given for the abattoir following an appeal, but is still regarded as incompatible by the nearby food processing businesses, and the environmental standards of operation need constant monitoring.

### Sites accessed from the A140

On the A140 a private access road serves several logistics and distribution sheds arranged along one of the former long taxiways. This area has grown rapidly with seven large distribution sheds. Two of the four proposed wind turbines are also to be located here.

### EPR Power Station and other businesses

Finally, from Castleton Way, there is a private access to the southern tip of the longest former runway: this serves as an access road to the Speedeck Eleco factory and also to the EPR power station, powered from chicken litter. Lorries delivering the product for use access the site from here. Two wind turbines recently received permission, to be accessed from this point. For the locations, see Appendix A02.

### Nearby Businesses and Norwich Research Park

Norwich Research Park, Colney, is the location for The John Innes Centre and the Institute of Food Research, and is home to the Genome Analysis Centre and several other leading research institutes, employing together over 1,500 people involved in research and development in food and biotechnology. BERU F1 is located in Diss. Components from BERU F1 Systems supply world championship winning cars in every major Formula 1, and are now available in military, road car, aerospace and nautical applications.

### Energy generation

Whilst EEDA's Regional Strategy is no longer recognised in planning policy, the background research they undertook is still relevant. The work for them by AECOM on the energy capacity in the region, and in particular, on reviewing the scope for additional biomass energy use, states there are already some significantly sized biomass power stations in East Anglia, including the one on our site:

- 38 MW Ely Power Station biomass plant at Elean Business Park, in Ely, Cambridge. The fuel demand is 200,000 tonnes annually. The fuel supply includes mostly cereal straw but also oil seed rape and miscanthus.
- The 38.5MW Thetford Power Plant in Thetford, Norfolk is the largest chicken litter fuelled plant in the UK. The plant consumes 420,000 tonnes of litter annually.
- The 12.7 MW Eye Power Plant in Suffolk (on this site) consumes 140,000 tonnes of chicken litter per annum.

In addition to these, schemes that have either received planning consent or are currently at the planning application stage include:

- A 40MW plant burning waste wood in Thetford Norfolk;

- A 60MW Green Power Plant, currently awaiting construction at Tilbury, will be importing biomass fuel from Europe but with aspirations to switch to local providers after three years of operation.
- A 40 MW proposed straw fired Biomass Plant at Mendlesham with local straw contracts. This project is at consultation stage.”

Source: East England Renewable & Low Carbon Capacity Study April 2011 AECOM.

### The Greater Norwich Development Partnership employment development plans

Norwich is the focus of considerable expansion planned in Norfolk, as another AECOM document outlines, however the larger population growth areas lie to the east and north of Norwich. “Overall 68% of employment is expected to come forward as B1, with the majority (12.8 ha or 35% of the total) coming forward within Norwich City Centre. Outside of the town centre, 10.3 ha are expected to come forward within the Norwich Research Park. The largest amount of industrial employment land is expected to come forward at the Airport Business Park, with 25.5 ha of B2 space and 9.5 ha of B8 space in addition to almost 16 ha of B1.”

The document also suggests that food employment would not see a net increase as several large Norwich-based firms are declining in numbers, and creative industries, science-based industry, advanced engineering, tourism, construction and retail are the growth areas expected. In terms of the science-based industries, the report suggested: “building on the strength of research institutions in the fields of health, life sciences and environmental technologies. The sites and premises study identifies the potential to create 2,000 jobs in this sector over the next 10 years and double that amount during East of England Plan period going forward to 2026.”

Source: page 46, *Greater Norwich Infrastructure needs and funding study* October 2009 AECOM for GNDP

The Community Infrastructure requirement that GNDP has set for the South Norfolk area adjoining Mid Suffolk is considered in this brief under the section 106 paragraphs in chapter four.



SCC Landscape Character areas on the site, shown as a red line

## 3.8 Landscape Character Assessment

Quoted extensively in the Lloyd Bore Baseline Landscape Assessment (available as a separate document), the SCC landscape character assessment has informed our initial site analysis and the development brief recommendation that the **development should be landscape-led** for this particular environment, so that the wider area’s character integrity can be maintained and enhanced in new development.



*View to Eye Church across southern part of the site*

# **Eye Airfield**

## **Development Framework**

### **Chapter Four: The Framework**

## Chapter Four

### 4.1 Development Principles

The **historical significance** of the airfield will be recognised in the landscape strategy where the runways and taxiways will be picked out and enhanced as landscape features and also as routes for possible new footpaths and cycle paths, connecting businesses to one another and to the surrounding villages and Eye itself.

**Sustainable development** will be sought for all new buildings, future-proofing so that **zero carbon** regulations due to come into force in 2016 for residential and 2019 for commercial development are adhered to before this date. This will give the Airfield a commercial advantage, as purchasers will not have to face expensive retrofits in 3-4 years time.

**Biodiversity** is not a current feature of the landscape here, as hedges were removed in the past, for example for the airfield runways. However there is scope for the airfield to become a more nature-rich area without compromising its primary employment purpose. Introducing landscape features will also have a benefit in amenity for the users.

**Development form:** the airfield is a very large space capable of absorbing a wide range of uses and sizes of development.

Due to the HSE constraints, the usual form of development radiating from a single, central hub location is not appropriate here. Instead it is proposed to locate the larger developments towards the centre of the site and smaller, more diverse and mutually compatible uses around the peripheral areas.

Therefore **several different focal points** or hubs are proposed: one towards the north, one in the south west near to the A140, and a third cluster, serving the existing food-related businesses, on the existing business park located near Langton Green.

### 4.2 Land Uses Existing

The existing land uses fall into several categories, from large scale industrial users, cement batching, abattoir, and power station to smaller scale manufacturing, engineering, vehicle repair and parts manufacture; waste management; industrial manufacture of building materials; and a cluster of food-related industries alongside the B1077.

There are no office uses on the site; one (Flagship House) has recently been vacated, but several businesses have either an office in their mezzanines or an office building next to the factory. A further cluster of business uses consists of haulage, trucking, and logistics firms. Some have links to the food industry as they operate a refrigerated fleet,

whilst others are distributors for large scale drinks manufacturers such as Aspells.

New businesses are coming to the airfield sites, notably in high-end manufacturing and agricultural product storage.

### 4.3 Proposed land uses

#### *Higher value uses, more skilled employment*

There is a balance to be determined between the amount of low employment large-scale uses such as logistics and storage, and the amount of higher value and potentially more dense but smaller scale uses. The latter are likely to have higher employment to land take ratios and are likely to provide **more skilled job opportunities**: both are key objectives for development here.

Whilst it cannot be delivered through a development framework alone, to realise the vision requires organisations to take action aimed at improving the local skills and perceptions of the Airfield employment opportunities. A greater collaboration between the High School and the business community is strongly recommended.

Proposed new clusters will be in the uses such as food, best use of energy resources, and engineering skills, all with a focus towards taking full advantage of the agricultural and biochemical expertise of the Eastern Region.



Nurturing of such a range of uses has to be done positively by all the organisations together: the planning use class system is not able to bring about such a change in emphasis.

During consultations the idea of locating a small café in the Mid Suffolk Business Park to serve local businesses was discussed, and well received. This is now being created.

Another idea is to create a visitor and exhibition centre for the various energy installations and any new renewable energy developments here. This could be a new feature to boost tourism.

#### *Scale*

Within the airfield, the HSE safety zones impose a discipline and restrict employment density in the Inner Zone. Therefore larger, low employment uses such as logistics and storage could be the most appropriate ones to locate within the Inner Zone, where the strongest safety constraints have to be rigorously followed.

The higher employment and higher skill uses would also be most appropriately located in the more visible parts of the airfield, on the peripheries where a more prestige visual impact is also desirable. With such uses the scale of buildings will be smaller, there is scope to provide an attractive and well-kept landscape and a parkland setting is appropriate.

#### *The Dutch housing model*

Combining housing, working from home, and compatible workspaces within a single development emerged as a well liked innovative approach to the balance of living and working in an area, as well as ensuring not all homes are sold to retirees. Areas favoured for this idea during consultations were ones near to existing areas of housing in Eye and Brome.

At the Cornwallis Hotel consultation event a new approach (called by the group who suggested it a “Dutch housing model”) was advocated. Subsequent research reveals a model referred to as ‘collective private commissions’, in the municipality of Almere in Holland, in which a group of individuals organise themselves into an association and together acquire land, commission architects and builders, and raise individuals’ finance from local banks who understand the process. Each family then buys a plot and builds to its chosen design within an overall agreed plan.

The main contribution from the municipality seems to be in specifying in detail the drainage, roads and social infrastructure that will be supplied to the relevant plots of land, and operating a general design code for the size of plots, and rules for building perimeters, heights and materials that might be expected, and which would therefore easily secure the relevant planning consents.

The Dutch model for housing seems a good fit to localism. However it will need access to a cooperative funding source, and the cooperation of the landowners and developers.

Planning such a housing scheme for local housing provision is an option. Could MSDC housing department, the Suffolk Preservation Society, landowners and a local office of the HCA promote a scheme together? The landowners could seek an alliance with local builders, and together with the relevant Parish or Town Councils, could progress a more detailed development brief for suitable plots.

## **4.4 Green Infrastructure**

Public transport for the airfield development will be important to achieving growth here without upsetting the delicate balance of long distance and local traffic on Suffolk and Norfolk roads. Foot and cycle paths to serve the airfield are also not currently suitable to daily workers’ use: the A140 is totally unsuitable and the B1077 lacks footpaths. However there is scope to create on-site foot and cycle routes, and for Suffolk County Council to review the potential for longer distance connections.

Existing services and bus stops serving the site are infrequent, and no bus routes currently go onto the airfield, so a walk from work to the bus stop can currently be a long and unpleasant experience. There is scope to create a new route and stops to serve the airfield. Creating bus links to Diss station is also important, as this allows for easy public transport links to Norwich, Cambridge and Ipswich.

Developers and businesses planning expansions would be expected to prepare Green Travel Plans, and details are set out below.

#### Sustainable water management

As the site will be developed in stages over time, each area should have designs to retain and manage its own surface run-off within an overall jointly managed surface water drainage strategy. It is proposed that sustainable drainage (SUDS), which mimics natural water management, is used on Eye Airfield; however due to the heavy clay soils, the details need to be carefully worked out. Run-off from car and lorry parking areas will need treatment to remove contaminants. See section 5.5 below and appendix A01.

### 4.5 Developer contributions S106

The main contributions proposed to be sought from land developers here would be towards the green infrastructure and the travel access management required across the site. Site-specific access would be a S106 matter and individual businesses would take responsibility for managing the roads on their own sites.

#### Green Travel Plan

Contributions could be sought jointly to develop and maintain an Eye Airfield Green Travel Plan. Key to this Travel Plan will be a co-ordination group consisting of key stakeholders, which needs to be formed across the airfield.

More details on such an Eye Airfield Green Travel Plan are set out in section 5.2 below on access, movement and parking. Funding will be required to develop this Travel Plan and associated measures that will need to be agreed with Mid Suffolk District Council and Suffolk County Council. As well as funding the initial green infrastructure development, developers should also pay for:  
A site-wide website which as well as promoting Eye Airfield, will promote sustainable travel to and within it:

- Other promotional material such as maps and plans to assist with travel coordination;
- Administration of the Co-ordination Group and other potential Travel Plan Groups such as Bicycle User Groups;
- Setting up and maintaining a car share scheme;
- Monitoring travel plan measures;
- Possible subsidised rail or bus tickets or bicycle discounts
- Possible small fleet of electric-powered delivery and shuttle staff transport vehicles and a number of charging points on the airfield.

Some or all of these may be carried out by local authority Travel Plan Officers or by other third party transport professionals, reducing the overall cost.

#### Foot/Cycle Ways

Developer contributions would be sought towards providing shared footway/cycle way links between sections of the airfield and to Eye itself. These links will make use of the existing runways where possible and will provide new surfaced and appropriately lit footway/cycle ways where necessary.

#### Highway Access Works

Developer contributions will be sought towards improving highway access to the airfield to allow the north and south-east areas to be developed in a sustainable fashion.

#### SUDS Works

Details of the SUDs surface drainage principles to be adopted for all new development on the site are given in section 5.5 below.

The solutions required in order to improve the existing flooding issues and enable future development could be quite simple, such as re-laying a larger culverted watercourse and cleaning out and improving the existing airfield drainage along the runways and taxiways.

Whilst a joint surface water drainage strategy is advocated for the airfield, the developer should note that it remains the responsibility of the landowners to ensure that any culverts or ditches on their land are not blocked and are able to convey flows. As such it likely to be up to each individual land owner to ensure that the drainage system is working to a reasonable

standard within their own land, and if there are any major issues the LPA have some rights to ensure that this maintenance takes place.

### Other

The county council is likely to have a number of requirements such as the provision of early years childcare on or close to the residential component of this site facility. See: Section 106 Developers Guide to Infrastructure Contributions in Suffolk

### Landscaping

Whilst individual development parcels will each have landscaping requirements to mitigate the impact of its development, the main structural planting in the landscape strategy for developing this airfield, for example along the runways, and the woodland belts on the south west, would best be undertaken well in advance of development works so the planting has a chance to mature to screen the development well.

A joint developer contribution towards a single contract could be the most appropriate way to fund this work, and will be cost effective to install at an early stage even for the later development phases compared to the cost of buying and planting more mature plants later.

A recommendation is that the landowners and councils seek a DEFRA contribution to the new “common”, local community-owned orchards and the hedgerow maintenance as a new stewardship scheme.

The suggested structural planting includes:

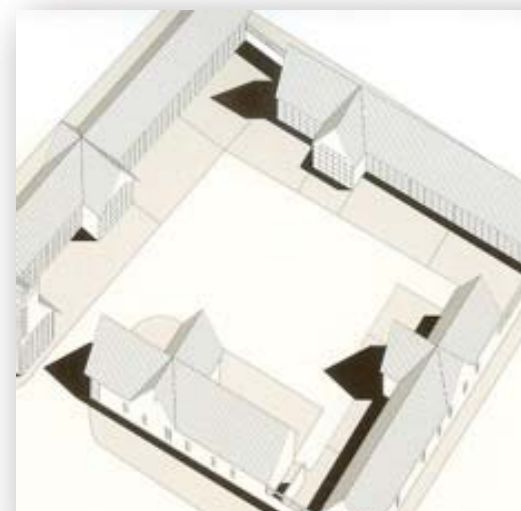
- Planting along the former runway edges (running along south eastern boundary of Zone 10 and 12),
- Planting on the south-western corner (The phase three area is a temporary biomass opportunity) with a wide structural belt bordering western and southern edges, responding to comments raised in consultation.
- Reintroduce compartmentalisation into the landscape by generally reinforcing field boundaries.
- The northern boundary of the proposed residential area (13 in the illustrative masterplan), reflecting the consultation comments with concerns about the potential visual impact of wind turbines on future residents here.

For full details see the landscape strategy document by Lloyd Bore 2160 D10\_C.



*Images - Above: New housing can take full advantage of solar power with integrated panels on southern faces. Aarhus, Denmark house for life: [www.activehouse.com](http://www.activehouse.com) and [www.aart.dk](http://www.aart.dk).*

*Below: business development at Stradbroke has steel portal frames; mostly dry assembly; design to incorporate mezzanine in future; and cheap partitions. Clustered around courtyard to give protection from wind and to promote intertrading. Source: Simon Condor Archaedizioni 2003.*



# **Eye Airfield Development Framework**

**Chapter Five: Planning Design &  
Access principles**

**Chapter Six: Conclusions**



## Chapter Five: Planning design and access

### 5.1 Landscape – see Appendix A05

The Landscape Appraisal and Strategy Document (2162-D10\_C) forms part of the Development Framework. All development should take these into consideration and demonstrate how the proposed development meets the requirements. Advance planting of the structural belts is part of the strategy so that the mitigation of development is effective at an earlier time, and in certain areas there would also be a restriction on building heights.

### 5.2 Access, Movement and Parking – see Appendix A04

Access is suggested from a number of points, with a new road from the A140 an important part of providing for the second phase of development and for relieving traffic from using the B1077. All developers will be required to provide Transport Assessments and Travel Plans, see appendix A04.

### 5.3 Biodiversity - see Ecology report and landscape report

The proposed landscape strategy will provide connectivity between the existing Biodiversity Action Plan Habitats within the site. In addition, the retention and strengthening of important habitat features, such as woodland and agricultural land will provide improved habitat for species that may currently use the site.

### 5.4 Heritage & tourism - see Appendix A05

The site has a heritage as a former WW2 airfield, the HERS citation for which is given in appendix A05. Whilst the local population do not perceive potential to develop on site any facilities for heritage tourism, other than for the WW2 airfield enthusiast, there are good tourism attractions in Eye, Brome and surroundings.

As there are several listed buildings on or near the site and the Eye Conservation Area is close to the site on its eastern edge, design should be sensitive to its setting. The majority of the existing large industrial buildings are painted in BS10A05 Goosewing Grey, which is suitable when seen against the usual UK sky colour. Bright contrast colours, even for trims, should be avoided. Smaller buildings could relate in form to farm building structures, and could be in darker greys, such as those used in the business units at Stradbroke. Green roofs and Hemcrete walls would be appropriate, but developers should again be very careful in choice of colour render.

### 5.5 Surface water design & management – see appendix A01

The drainage strategy is to move away from providing just a few large balancing ponds, as this is not practical for a site of this size. There are many choices for SUDS systems, ranging from individual site features to shared features between several plots. However a joint management system is recommended with a regular maintenance payment system. The types of SUDS systems that are appropriate will depend on the location, and also on the likely phasing of the development; this framework has therefore not been prescriptive and instead provides guidance on best practice. There are four options:

1. Infiltration may be suitable in some parts, but not everywhere due to the underlying geology here. Parts of the airfield are in groundwater protection zones so the views of the Environment Agency on the proposed details will be important.
2. Detention / attenuation of surface water run-off to slow it down will be required on each plot as it is developed. Using open ponds and wetlands will have the added benefit of improving the area's biodiversity.
3. Conveyance of water using SUDS principles, along open swales, ditches, filter strips and drains should be designed.
4. Rainwater reuse/harvesting from roofs and car parks, with the collected water being re-used on the airfield is advocated.

Appendix A01 gives some design options and guidance for SUDS for development.

## 5.6 Waste management

### *Construction phase*

Development proposals would be welcomed that seek to produce no waste to landfill (including the export of existing materials off site), and reuse materials. Developers are strongly encouraged to put a process into place to minimise waste from construction activities by initiating WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme) guidelines for Designing Out Waste (during the design); and to review construction and delivery processes to eliminate waste production.

### *Management of waste across the site*

A management regime to enable efficient collection and disposal of waste, including an industrial recycling scheme would be advantageous, and it is possible the new owners of the household waste unit on the Business Park would be able to create and run such a scheme.

If an Energy from Waste (EfW) unit is constructed, it should be located in the Energy Park designated location, and if a CHP scheme for providing a local source of heat and power housing and employment users within 3 km is practical to provide, this would increase the sustainability of such a plant.

Electrical points for vehicles provided by the power station would also be a good addition, enabling a fleet of vehicles to convert in the longer term, and a van shuttle to Diss and Eye in the short term.

## 5.7 Foul sewerage management

Initial discussion has suggested there is capacity in the existing Treatment Plant and developers will need to work closely with Anglian Water. We note that an Anaerobic Digestion solution is in existence for part of the airfield.

## 5.8 Design of buildings: sustainability principles – see appendix A04

In line with the criteria for development proposals to be efficient, buildings are to be designed using robust details, with due consideration for air tightness and to ease of construction.

**The designers should consider using materials with low embodied energy and natural building materials, with a preference given to local materials and manufacture.**

Choices in both materials and construction methods should be founded on an evaluation of the life cycle of a product or process to determine the least impact to the environment for the buildings' life and also consideration for deconstruction and reuse.

The development proposals should be in line with current legislation, although in order to future proof development and to attract investment, proposals should encourage all development to be exemplary in terms of efficiency of building mass, layout and robustness, thereby reducing energy use in operation.

The site strategy should be informed by a target to work towards zero carbon developments, bearing in mind the government's targets for zero carbon homes by 2016, and will be followed by non-domestic buildings by 2019.

Appendix A04 gives the detailed sustainability guidance, based on the briefing that was debated and supported at the January 2011 consultation event.

## Chapter six: Conclusion

### Uses appropriate to the site

The proposed scale and framework for development at Eye Airfield provides excellent opportunities for reuse and regeneration of previously used land and industrial buildings located at the heart of Suffolk.

The site has strong agricultural and industrial uses, combined with good access routes such as the A140 from Norwich, and close proximity to local amenities. The site would benefit from a mix of uses. Appropriate here are: IT centres, data centres, R&D, green products, high value engineering manufacture, financial, insurance and also other business park uses for smaller companies. This Development Framework seeks proposals to reinforce the site's identity, whilst increasing the amenity linkages with the adjacent sites.

The site can supply a good future employment location, and both Norfolk and Suffolk residents can benefit. We recommend that consideration is also given to ways the education service and higher education institutions in the region can help support businesses by assessing ways of meeting the current and future skills training needs.

The energy hub and the food hub meet local priorities, but this framework has no relocation decision for the Vion chicken factory in Eye town onto the airfield site. This issue would be more appropriate to consider as part of an Eye Town-wide review of sites and housing needs, but with the recognition that the total cost to relocate the processing factory may be too high to make such a proposal viable.

## Appendices

### A01 – A05

A01 to A04 are available in one separate pdf document. A05 is in another document.

**A01** - Surface Water Drainage Overview - EAS

**A02** - HSE safety zones - EAS

**A03** - Wind Turbines - EAS

**A04** - Sustainability Principles to be adopted across the whole development framework area – BAM. Transport and sustainability - EAS

**A05** - Landscape – Lloyd Bore

### Contacts

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Connections

Appendices are in a separate  
document