

Strategic Southern Expansion of Peterborough

WORKING PAPER 03: SHAPING THE DEVELOPMENT

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Working Paper 3: Shaping the Development

Several major opportunities for the development of new strategic expansion areas to accommodate the growth envisaged for Peterborough in the *Sustainable Communities Plan* have been identified in Working Papers 1 and 2 of this series.

A strategic 'sieve' analysis identified the largest area of unconstrained land as south of the city in the area between the A1/A1139 Fletton Parkway and the A15, south of Hampton, the fourth planned township currently under construction. This Working Paper looks at the way in which this area - termed the Strategic Southern Expansion of Peterborough - could be further defined, designed and delivered in a way which meets in full the requirements of the *Communities Plan*.

Physical Influences

There are several issues which will shape any development in this location. The first relates to the physical characteristics of the area, including the area's physical relationship to existing infrastructure and settlement pattern:

- The site can be well defined in terms of its natural boundaries - the A1(M) and Area of Best Landscape to the west, the A1139 Fletton Parkway and existing urban area of Orton to the north, the existing urban areas of Hampton and Yaxley to the east and the change in topography and landscape character of the fenland to the south;
- Because of the impact on Grade 1 and 2 Agricultural Land, the area of search south of the A15 has been limited to the area of higher previously-worked land in the west. Other land within the area of search is defined as 'other land not in agricultural use' on the ALC Maps;
- There are no physical features within the area itself which represent an absolute constraint on development. Existing water bodies, copses and hedges would function as structuring elements for any new development;
- The area represents a balancing of the southern and northern halves of the city and a 'rounding off' of the Peterborough urban area, where expansion of the city consolidates the settlement pattern and maximises the opportunities created by previous investment in strategic infrastructure and planned township centres, whilst still having a strong physical relationship to the historic city core.

Economic Influences

Related to the geographic positioning of the Strategic Southern Expansion land is its ability to strengthen existing and establish new economic relationships. It is useful to note that development in this location would be influenced by the following factors:

Strategic Economic Factors

- Because of innovations in technology, physical proximity is less critical than previously to establishing a successful economic relationship between different centres of activity;
- It is recognised that Peterborough's historic dependence on a few large employers and a relatively narrow range of manufacturing activities has left it vulnerable to market decline in these sectors;
- Meanwhile, the economic sphere of influence of Cambridge is increasing, whilst scarcity of available development land and increasing local congestion mean that employers are widening their search for development opportunities. In terms of strengthening Peterborough's relationship with Cambridge, the



Emerging economic relationship between Peterborough and Cambridge

Strategic Southern Expansion land is ideally placed to capture some of this economic activity over the long term;

City-Wide Economy

- Peterborough has become a focus for large scale storage and distribution (B8) employment development, with IKEA and Debenhams recently taking up strategic land allocations for this purpose in the south of the city;
- Due to its large scale and proximity to the national highway network, the junction of the A1 and the A605 has already been identified as the best future strategic opportunity for this type of large scale employment development (B8 storage and distribution-led) within the city;
- In contrast, the A15 - one of the key radial routes into the City Centre - runs through the Strategic Southern Expansion land, and offers the opportunity to support economic development which complements the City Centre offer, strengthening the links between the City Centre, Hampton Township including Cygnet Park, the A1 and the rest of the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough corridor to the south;
- These two strategic southern gateways into Peterborough offer opportunities for high quality 'prestige' strategic employment sites capable of supporting associated housing, shopping, leisure and other facilities. The location of the southern gateway at the A1/A15 junction is also best placed in Peterborough to capture any economic overspill from the south (including Cambridge);
- Focusing strategic employment opportunities within the Strategic Southern Expansion land would also capitalise on the potential from any future A1 and East Coast Main Line upgrading south of the city. Strategic economic development in this location may also help support the long term potential for new railway stations on the East Coast Main Line at Hampton and elsewhere, capable of providing direct access both south and north to the city centre.

Local Economic Sustainability

- The recognition of this area by the current market as a strategic employment location is critical in delivering the jobs-led growth sought for Peterborough in the *Communities Plan*;
- Large scale B8 development use is the only commonly-allocated land use which cannot realistically be fully integrated with other land uses. The operational activities, transportation movements and large built form characterising strategic B8 development combine to create a very distinctive local environment which is not compatible with finer grain mixed use and residential development;
- However, the Strategic Southern Expansion land offers a unique opportunity in Peterborough to deliver economies of scale based on this strategic employment location, by delivering large scale B8 development as part of a planned development framework for a larger defined physical area, thus securing the widest possible range of deliverable employment opportunities within a relatively small geographical area. This concept is developed further in Working Paper 4;

Sustainable and Social Influences

In our view, the identification of constraint-free land in an economically sustainable location is not sufficient justification for selecting land for the level of growth sought in the *Communities Plan*. Proposals must also address the **sustainable** and **social** aspects of development.

In drawing together the framework for development on the Strategic Southern Expansion land, consideration has been given to the ways in which long term environmental and social sustainability can be secured as an integral part of the development concept and both the macro and micro scale. These include:

- Realising the potential for implementing strategic patterns of sustainable travel at all scales:
 - ensuring that real alternatives to the private car are planned and financed from the start - including extending the Cambridge Guided Bus system from its planned terminal at Huntingdon to Peterborough via the Strategic Southern Expansion land (see Working Paper 4 for details);
 - ensuring that the new township adequately serves its population with its day to day needs in a sustainable manner whilst complementing and supporting existing centres in the immediate vicinity (Hampton and Yaxley);
 - designing development in line with the urban design principle of 'walkable neighbourhoods'.
- Because of the large scale of development opportunity, using new environmental technologies

to meet the government's sustainability objectives and deliver energy efficiency and sustainable development, including:

- the introduction of alternative energy sources, including exploiting the prevailing wind through wind turbines associated with the A1/A605 'triangle' land and exploring energy efficient building methodologies;
- delivering Environment Agency objectives and removing any adverse impact on the surrounding Fenland area through strategic on-site surface water attenuation ('green roofs'/ 'wet roofs' as part of large scale B8 development/ 'grey water systems' in domestic buildings).
- Delivering a 'wired community', where technology can make a real difference to people's way of life (using technology to engage in flexible working arrangements (live/work units; working from home with ISDN/broadband connections) and where technological advances deliver better local services (real time information for travel information and public transport; operating community services on-line);
- Building in flexibility in land uses and patterns of development over time, so that the township is not 'of its time' but remains sustainable in the face of changing economic, social or behavioural circumstances;
- Meeting the widest possible range of residential and employment requirements for all sectors of the new community - delivering 'homes for life' and ensuring changing working patterns can be accommodated within the township;
- Creating a self-sustaining new community with a sense of identity and ownership which makes a valuable addition to what Peterborough as a place offers its investors.

Working Papers 4 and 5 in this series explain the way in which the development principles outlined above have governed the emerging Development Concept for the Strategic Southern Expansion land.