

Response from JLL RE Alscot Estate, Atherstone Airfield, Stratford





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2 July 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

**Stratford Neighbourhood Development Plan - Pre Submission Consultation**

I write on behalf of Alscot Estate to make representations in respect of the above draft plan.

Please find enclosed the following documents:-

- Completed response form
- Written statement of representations
- Site plan of Atherstone Airfield
- Development Prospectus of Atherstone Airfield, including a Feasibility Study by Corstorphine + Wright.

I would be grateful if you could confirm receipt of these representations.

Yours sincerely

**Peter Leaver**  
**Director**

cc Rob Honan of Alscot Estate



## Stratford Neighbourhood Development Plan Pre-Submission Consultation Public Response Form

The Stratford Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has prepared a pre-submission Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Stratford upon Avon Neighbourhood Area and is inviting you to comment by **11.59pm on Friday 3 July 2015**.

In order for your response to be taken into account when the Neighbourhood Development Plan goes to Stratford on Avon District Council for Examination your contact details are needed and also to keep you informed of future progress.

All comments will be publicly available on the Stratford Neighbourhood Development Plan website once they have been analysed, and will be identifiable by name (and organisation where applicable). Please note that any other personal information provided will be processed in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 and not made available on the website.

Please fill in your contact details below

Full Name:
PETER LEAVER OF JLL
Organisation represented (where applicable)
ALLOT ESTATE
Capacity in which commenting on Plan (eg Resident, Business/Work in Area, Residents' Association Rep, Statutory Consultee)
ALLOT ESTATE OWNS AND MANAGES A BUSINESS PORTFOLIO OF OVER 140 PROPERTIES, ACCOMMODATING 120 COMPANIES AND EMPLOYING OVER 1,000 LOCAL PEOPLE IN AATHERSTONE AND IN THE VICINITY OF STRATFORD
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Please make sure any additional pages are clearly labelled/addressed or attached.

Please send your completed form by **11.59pm on Friday 3 July 2015** to

Freepost RTJX-GHEE-ZUCS, Stratford-on-Avon District Council, Consultation Unit,  
Elizabeth House, Church Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6BR

**Many Thanks - your support is appreciated**





## ALSCOT ESTATE

Atherstone Airfield, Stratford-upon-Avon

### Statement of Representations

Stratford-upon-Avon Neighbourhood Plan 2015 - 2031

#### *Executive Summary*

*These representations focus on Policy E2- Promoting New Employment Opportunities on the Outskirts of the Town - and related text contained in Section 6: Employment. The principal reasons for objecting to Policy E2 are as follows:*

- *Policy E2 is too constrained, does not accord with the conclusions or recommendations of the Inspector to the Stratford-upon-Avon Draft Core Strategy and does not meet basic conditions.*
- *No reference is drawn by Policy E2 to the potential of Atherstone Airfield as an alternative employment allocation serving the needs of Stratford town, despite comments made expressly by the Inspector in response to Stratford-upon-Avon District Council's Draft Core Strategy.*
- *The Neighbourhood Plan Area should be extended to take in Atherstone Airfield.*
- *There is no justifying rationale for additional sites to be located just north of the River Avon (as proposed by Policy E2).*
- *Policy SSB2 allocates land south of Alcester Road for B1 development. However, this site is not suitable or deliverable for B2 or B8 uses which will need to relocate from the Canal Regeneration Zone (as promoted by Policy SSB1). As such, alternative provision will be required.*

#### **1. Background Information**

Alscot Estate is a strong supporter of, and provider for, local businesses in Stratford. Over a number of years it has grown its commercial portfolio. It covers 4,000 acres, extending from Clifford Chambers in the north to Alderminster in the south. It owns 140 commercial properties, supporting 120 local businesses and accommodates over 1,000 of locally employed people.

The largest site owned by Alscot Estate is Atherstone Airfield. This site already accommodates Wealmoor, Aviagen, Smiths Concrete and Camgrain in an attractive business setting, with direct access to the A3400. The Airfield has further capacity for growth, with 19 hectares (growth) land available to provide a well landscaped business park of 10 hectares of developable land for industry and warehousing (i.e. B2 and B8 uses).

A site plan (entitled Proposed Strategic Allocations for Stratford upon Avon) is attached. This marks the extent of the land available for development at Atherstone Airfield in orange. Alternative strategic sites promoted by the Pre submission Draft Core Strategy (July 2014) and examined by the Inspector (January 2015) are marked in blue.

In addition, a development prospectus of the site is attached. This prospectus responded to the Call for Sites initiated by Stratford upon Avon District Council in October 2014 to inform the draft Site Allocations Plan. The prospectus provides more detailed information about the development of the site, the market for industrial and warehousing property in Stratford, and introduced an initial Feasibility Study undertaken by Architects, Corstorphine + Wright. This Feasibility Study is attached also.

## 2. Stratford-upon-Avon Core Strategy

The draft Core Strategy proposed a requirement across the District of 35 hectares of new employment land. 10 hectares of this was to be accommodated at SUA2 (land south of Alcester Road) with a further 3 hectares at SUA1 (Canal Quarter). Both strategic allocations were for just B1 uses (e.g. offices). A further 10 hectares was allocated to SUA2 for companies relocating from SUA1, with provision for a further 15 hectares at a Green Belt site off Birmingham Road (SUA3) for the same reasons.

The Alscot Estate argued at the examination for an increased amount of employment land for the District and pointed to the lack of any new employment land either allocated or marketed for B2 and B8 uses (i.e. industry and warehousing) serving Stratford town and its hinterland. It promoted Atherstone Airfield as an alternative location and having a more suitable and deliverable option for the Core Strategy, particularly in respect of B2 and B8 uses.

The Inspector's Report was received by the Council in March 2015. It made a number of key conclusions and recommendations covering both employment land and Atherstone Airfield. With regard to the former, these included:-

- The provision of new employment land of 35 hectares should be considered to be a **minimum**.
- The release of SUA3 from the Green Belt was not justified as no exceptional circumstances existed.



- Alternative provision to SUA3 should be considered.

With regard to the latter, the Inspector made several complimentary references to Atherstone Airfield as a potential strategic employment site. The principal references are extracted below:-

*“I regard the omission of Atherstone Airfield as significant. As I suggested at the hearing, Atherstone Airfield is a similar distance from the town centre as SUA3, indeed in travel time it might be less. It is in **one ownership** and it is **available**. It is not in the Green Belt. At the very least it merits proper consideration as an alternative site”.* (Paragraph 170) (our emphasis).

*“Crucially, my site inspection revealed a unit under construction and this shows up on Appendix 1 to the Council’s statement as a B2/B8 unit of 2,810 sq m. On this basis it is clear that the **Council also regard it to be an acceptable location** for a new industrial unit. My inspection broadly confirmed submissions made on behalf of the landowner that the site is, in many ways, **well suited to such uses**. The runways have been planted as woodland and provide an effective screen. The mass of the existing buildings **strongly suggest that a further large unit, or units, could be accommodated** within the identified site without detracting from the character and appearance of the area.”* (Paragraph 172) (our emphasis).

*“To these reasons I am in no doubt that Atherstone Airfield is a **viable alternative to SUA3 for the relocation of B2 and B8 uses**. In any event the Highways Authority did not see the policy [Policy CS14 – Vale of Evesham Control Zone] as a fundamental constraint for further development at Atherstone Airfield.”* (Paragraph 174) (our emphasis).

*“I have found there is **no justification of Atherstone Airfield to be included with the Vale of Evesham Control Zone [173]** and that the Council might wish to explore the opportunity that the site offers for the relocation of B2 and B8 uses from the Canal Quarter [182]”.* (Paragraph 187) (our emphasis).

From these extracts, it is clear that the Inspector considered Atherstone Airfield to be suitable, available, viable, attractive in market terms and deliverable for employment purposes.

### 3. Sustainability Appraisal

Following receipt of the Inspectors Report, Alscot Estate met officers of the Council. It was agreed that Alscot Estate should provide further information concerning the proposed development of Atherstone Airfield in order for the District Council to extend its Sustainability Appraisal to the Core Strategy to cover other strategic options. The following statements or information was provided:-

- Illustrative layout plan of the proposed development by architects Corstorphine + Wright.
- Heritage Assessment, Archaeological Baseline Study and Heritage Impact Statement by Richard K Morris and Associates.
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal by Tyler Grange.
- Flood risk maps, from the Environment Agency website.
- Highways and Transportation Appraisal by David Tucker Associates.
- Information concerning Agricultural Land Classification.
- Statement on Mineral Deposits and Safeguarding by D.K. Symes Associates.
- A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment by J.B. Landscape Associates.

This information provided comfort about the likely impact of the proposals and their general sustainability as follows:-

- Highways (HGVs) – the proposals will lead to reduction of HGVs in the town centre as HGV's will be able to access the site from the motorway and strategic road network through designated lorry routes (A3400, A422 and A429) and avoid the town centre.
- Highways (traffic generation) - the proposed development will have a negligible effect on the operation of the local and wider highway networks. The traffic flow arriving and leaving the site will be in the opposite direction from the current majority flow of traffic on the A3400 and the surrounding network. As such, it will have an indiscernible effect on the current operation of the road network around Clopton Bridge, the Bridgefoot Gyrotory, High Street and the Birmingham Road.
- Public Transport – the site is accessible by public transport and alternative forms of transport to the private car. A bus service (50 and 50A) currently runs passed the site, connecting Bambury and Stratford, with a bus stop within 400 metres from the centre of the site.
- Heritage - no adverse impact as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework.
- Landscape and Visual Assessment – the site is not designated with an area protected or recognised for its landscape quality. Views into the site are limited and a strong natural tree screening already exists. It concludes that the site should not be refused planning permission for reasons of adverse effects on landscape character or visual amenity.
- Ecology – no ecological issues that could affect the principle or quantum of development of the site have been identified. Conversely, opportunities to deliver biodiversity gain exist within the required landscape planting screen and attenuation features such as surface water.

- Flood Risk – the site is outside areas that are a risk of flooding from rivers, sea and from surface water.
- Drainage – the underlying superficial geology comprises sand and gravel, allowing sustainable drainage solutions.
- Agricultural Land Quality – the land is not recognised for any particular quality.
- Minerals – the site is underlain in part by sand and gravel. However, the overall quantity is too small to be of economic interest. Instead, the modest quantity of sand and gravel deposits could be incorporated in the design of the construction works, therefore reducing demand on other mineral resources in the County.
- Green Belt – the site is not located within the Green Belt.
- Economic Development – the proposed development will bring employment on site, along with other benefits in term of indirect and induced employment associated with spend in the local economy.

Alscot Estate has not seen the results of the revised Sustainability Appraisal undertaken by the Council. However, Alscot Estate is confident that Atherstone Airfield is just as sustainable, if not more so, than other alternatives for employment land in and around Stratford, including SUA2 and SUA3.

#### **4. Implications in respect of Policy E2**

For these reasons, we consider that Atherstone Airfield should be referred to explicitly by Policy E2. It is clear that the Inspector considered Atherstone Airfield to be a clear alternative to SUA3 and recommended that the Council should explore this option.

Atherstone Airfield is located outside the proposed Neighbourhood Plan Area. However, its relationship to Stratford is obvious and was commented upon by the Inspector to the Core Strategy. Advice contained in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) makes it clear that a Neighbourhood Plan Area does not need to be necessarily restricted to a single parish or town council boundary (paragraph 027 ref ID41-027-2140306). In addition, whether the area is wholly or predominantly a business area is advised by the PPG (paragraph 033 ref ID41-033-20140306) to be a consideration when deciding the boundary to a Neighbourhood Plan Area. Moreover, paragraph 025 (ref ID41-027-20140306) of the PPG advises that the community should consult the local Planning Authority before making an area application on any wider planning considerations that might influence the neighbourhood plan process.

It is to be noted that the Neighbourhood Plan Area takes in land outside the Town Council's boundary. Specifically, it includes a large part (but not all) of the adjoining parish of Old Stratford and Drayton. Indeed, the site referred to by Policy E2 (land south of Alcester) and allocated by Policy SSB2 lies within this parish and outside the town council boundary.

Policy E2 anticipates any additional site (i.e. over and above SSB2 (SUA2 in the Core Strategy)) to be located north of the River Avon, with sites to the south only supported if significant road infrastructure changes are proposed. This approach is both unbalanced and unjustified.

As referred to above, the Inspector to the Core Strategy made no such distinction between sites north or south of the River in complimenting Atherstone Airfield as a suitable and viable alternative location. Instead, he noted that the site was well served by designated lorry routes (A3400 and A429) and that there was no reason to include the site within the Vale of Evesham Control Zone.

In addition, Alscot Estate has commissioned an independent Highways Consultant to produce a Transport Appraisal. This concludes that development of Atherstone Airfield will lead to a reduction of HGVs in the town, with traffic generated by employees having a negligible detrimental effect on the operation on the local and wider highway network as the flows arriving and leaving the site will be in the opposite direction to the majority of current traffic.

For these reasons, we consider Policy E2 is unjustified and should be amended to refer to the obvious and recognised potential of Atherstone Airfield as an alternative location for employment serving Stratford town's needs.

## **5. Relocation of B2 and B8 Uses from the Canal Regeneration Zone**

A separate, but related, matter concerns the qualitative aspects of relocation of existing companies from the Canal Quarter to enable the development of the site allocated by Policy SSB1 (SUA1 in the Core Strategy). The majority of the companies in this area are either B2 or B8. In providing evidence to the examination of the Core Strategy, JLL identified 63,000 sq m of B2 and B8 properties within the Canal Quarter which would require close to 16 hectares of developable land in order to be relocated on the same basis as their current occupation. However, the principal intended location for relocating companies is land south of Alcester Road (Policy SSB2 – SUA 2 in the Core Strategy). This site is allocated by both the Neighbourhood Plan and the Core Strategy for **B1 uses only**.

This is a contradiction that the Neighbourhood Plan does nothing to resolve. Moreover, it ignores the completely different characteristics of B2 and B8 uses, which by their very nature and scale are likely to have an impact on neighbouring uses. Specifically, in the case of SSB2, any relocating B2 and B8 uses are likely to

have a detrimental impact on existing and proposed housing in this location. This will not be the case with Atherstone Airfield, which does not adjoin or relate to any significant settlement.

## **6. Conclusions**

Atherstone Airfield was highlighted by the Inspector to the Core Strategy as a site that is suitable, available, viable and deliverable and worthy of serious consideration for allocation for employment purposes. Alscot Estate is ready to deliver much needed employment land for industry and warehousing (i.e. B2 and B8 uses) to serve Stratford's towns needs. No other site in Stratford, or in its vicinity, is being marketed to accommodate or attract such uses. The allocation of Atherstone Airfield for employment uses will allow specifically the relocation of companies from the Canal Quarter to enable the implementation of Policy SSB1 (SUA1 of the Core Strategy) for residential led mixed development and to accommodate other development land pressures for industry and warehousing in an attractive and unique business setting.

For these reasons, we consider that:

- Policy E2 should be amended to refer to the obvious and recognised potential of Atherstone Airfield, particularly its capacity to accommodate B2 and B8 uses from the Canal Quarter.
- If necessary, extend the Neighbourhood Plan Area to take in Atherstone Airfield.
- Any reference constraining consideration of options to just north of the River Avon be removed.

**PJL – JLL**  
**2 July 2015**



# Proposed Strategic Allocations for Stratford-upon-Avon



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Site Allocations Plan for Stratford-upon-Avon District

Call for Sites

October 2014



# Alscot Estate

## Atherstone Airfield, Stratford



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Appendix 1 – Plan showing gross site area edged in red

Appendix 2 – Corstorphine + Wright Feasibility Study

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Alscot Estate is a strong supporter, and provider for, local businesses in Stratford District. Over a number of years, it has grown its commercial portfolio, anticipating and meeting local demand.
- 1.2. The Alscot Estate is now anxious to continue to grow its business portfolio and is putting in place a 25 year business plan. This plan is looking into how existing accommodation can be improved and grown and what new opportunities exist, particularly for a greater scale of development, at Atherstone Airfield (the Airfield).
- 1.3. JLL submitted representations on behalf of Alscot Estate to the Proposed Submission Core Strategy in July. These representations suggested amendments to Policy CS21 – Economic Development, and associated policies, and proposed a new strategic allocation for Stratford-upon-Avon (SUA4: Atherstone Airfield) of around 10 hectares of developable employment land on a gross site area of 19 hectares. A plan showing the extent of the latter is provided in **Appendix 1**.
- 1.4. This response to the Call for Sites seeks to explain and illustrate in greater detail the development potential that exists at the Airfield. It is a development prospectus that considers both opportunities and constraints, and how the latter can be overcome.
- 1.5. The scope of this statement covers a number of different issues. It provides:-
  - In Section 2, background information on the Alscot Estate, particularly as a supporter of local businesses and the community, and how its efforts help to deliver elements of the District Council's Business and Enterprise Strategy.
  - In Section 3, an overview of local market opportunities for Class B employment development.
  - In Section 4, highways and transportation issues are addressed.
  - In Section 5, other infrastructure, services and the delivery of the site are considered.
  - In Section 6, the extent and implications of minerals are assessed.
  - In Section 7, the site, characteristics and constraints are analysed and initial development options appraised.
  - Section 8 draws the principal conclusions into an executive summary.
- 1.6. This prospectus has been written with the full assistance of a core of specialist consultants. These consultants all have significant experience and development in Stratford District and know the area well. The consultant team is as follows:-
  - Planning Consultant and Agency Advisors – JLL.
  - Masterplanners and Architects – Corstorphine + Wright.
  - Transportation, Highways, other Infrastructure and Services – PFA Consulting.
  - Minerals – DK Symes Associates.

## 2. Alscot Estate

### A Supporter of Local Businesses and the Community

- 2.1. The Alscot Estate covers 4,000 acres and, geographically, extends from Clifford Chambers in the north to Alderminster in the south. It owns 140 commercial and business premises – all of which are currently occupied.
- 2.2. The 140 units support 120 businesses and provides for over 1,000 locally employed. The portfolio of business and commercial premises comprises an increasingly important element of the local Stratford economy (<http://www.alscot.co.uk/business-links.html>).
- 2.3. The portfolio extends to 750,000 sq ft of business and commercial accommodation. The type of accommodation is diverse, ranging from small fully serviced offices of 100 sq ft for



one man businesses to the 150,000 sq ft plus warehouse occupied by Wealmoor at Atherstone Airfield which employs 350 staff.

- 2.4. This reflects the long history and ethos that the Alscot Estate has in assisting small start-up businesses to grow. For example, the DCS Group started their business on the Airfield and moved to 3 other locations on the Estate as it expanded. Savcon, a precision engineering company, also started in a small workshop 38 years ago and now occupies a substantial warehouse on the Estate.
- 2.5. The Estate now acts as a hub for business delivering the following amenities and support:
- South Warwickshire Broadband – provision of high speed broadband to support business and residential users at Alscot as BT provision will not occur for many years.
  - The Bell, Alderminster – Award winning country pub, restaurant and boutique B&B which is managed in house by the Estate and acts as a hub for business.
  - Preston Village Shop & Post Office – subsidised amenity used by Alscot's businesses.

### **Stratford-upon-Avon Business and Enterprise Strategy 2012-2015**

- 2.6. This Strategy was published by the District Council in 2012 and is updated each year. It confirms the District Council's commitment to support and promote business and enterprise within the District, recognising the importance of jobs and the value of businesses to the local economy.
- 2.7. The Strategy seeks to create a district where business and enterprise can flourish. It is stated that these will be achieved by removing barriers, supporting skills development and creating jobs to support and promote economic stability.
- 2.8. The Strategy recognises the significant growth seen in the District over the last 10 years in higher value industries. This is particularly so in the fields of professional business services, computing and software, high value engineering and manufacturing. Despite this, and although the District has a skilled workforce, it recognises the area suffers from poor productivity. As such, more business growth is identified as being needed in the knowledge based economy.
- 2.9. The Strategy identifies other strategic issues that need to be addressed. One of these is the likely population and employment growth and the pressure this will place on housing, **employment land supply**, and transport networks.
- 2.10. A number of guiding principles are identified to deliver the Strategy. The first referred to is partnership working. It is recognised that the objectives of the Strategy will depend on a public/private sector approach and effective joint working.

### **Working Together**

- 2.11. The objectives and approaches of Alscot Estate and the District Council are mutually compatible and complementary. The business plan of Alscot Estate will help the District Council to achieve and deliver a number of aims set out in its Business and Enterprise Strategy. Working together, in partnership, the Council and Alscot Estate can provide the infrastructure necessary to boost the local economy.

## **3. Market Opportunities**

### **Overview of the Class B Employment Market**

- 3.1. Stratford upon Avon as the principal town and labour force within the District has, and will continue to have, a buoyant market for employment premises. The town is home to many SME businesses who contribute significantly to the District's employment market. In addition, there are a number of large occupiers/employers such as DCS, Wealmoor, NFU and Amethyst Group who have a significant presence within the District.



Typical small unit scheme

- 3.2. Traditionally, Stratford's core employment area has been located to the north west of the town centre around Birmingham Road, Western Road and Masons Roads. However, the town's traditional employment areas have slowly been declining over time. This is being driven by a market shift away from low value heavy Industrial/manufacturing processes, the evolving requirements of modern occupiers for flexible, modern, employment space, and the value that business's place on the quality of the environment for their employees. In addition, much of the existing built stock around Masons Road/ Birmingham Road is dated and does not meet modern occupier requirements.
- 3.3. Whilst heavy industrial and manufacturing processes have declined within the town over recent decades, in line with national employment trends, there has been a marked shift towards a preference for edge of centre and out-of-town business parks, light industrial and warehousing space. These business parks and industrial estates are often situated away from housing (that can constrain certain operations) and do not suffer from road congestion.
- 3.4. The development and success of Ryon Hill Park, Stratford Business and Technology Park, Goldicote Business Park and the Alscot Estate over the last few decades demonstrate this market shift. It is noticeable from the fully let nature of these four locations, that there is a strong demand for good quality out-of-town employment space. This is in contrast to areas around Masons Road/Timothy's Bridge Road where the extent of vacant buildings is noticeable.
- 3.5. Typical Class B1, B2 and B8 occupiers within Stratford are aligned to the agriculture industry, innovation sector and motor industry (due to the success of Jaguar Land Rover and Aston Martin in Gaydon). By size, typical requirements are for premises ranging from 15,000 sq. ft. to 50,000 sq. ft. with occupiers having a preference for buildings with flexible B1, B2 and B8 consents.
- 3.6. Given the fully let nature of the out-of-town employment locations, the availability of good quality, modern premises within the size range 15,000 sq.ft. to 50,000 sq.ft. is severely limited. Wellsbourne Industrial Estate provides some competition to Stratford, however due to its location and access to Junction 15 of to the M40, the type and size of unit that this industrial estate offers is upwards of 100,000 sq.ft and provides a different offer compared to Stratford.
- 3.7. With regard to active enquiries, JLL is aware of four recent, unfulfilled enquiries in relation to Stratford, these are listed below in Table 1. These enquiries are typical of the type of enquiry in relation to Stratford and focus on B2 and B8 sectors.



Typical medium sized unit scheme

**Table 1 – Current Enquiries for Stratford**

Company	Size Requirement	Reason for Requirement
Ryco Hydraulics	50,000 sq.ft	Business Growth
Super Alloy	50,000 sq.ft	Jaguar Land Rover Contract
Detroit Electric Holdings	40,000 sq.ft	Business Growth
Stratford Generators	20,000 sq.ft	Re-location from Mason Road

Source: JLL

- 3.8. Taking the final enquiry as an example, Stratford Generators, this company has an existing operation on Masons Road. However, due to business growth it is looking for larger, modern premises to assist the business's development. As yet, we understand that this requirement is unfulfilled within Stratford, thus demonstrating the lack of suitable and available employment space in and around the town.

### Implications for Atherstone Airfield

- 3.9. For these reasons, JLL sees a gap in the market in and around Stratford for institutional quality industrial and warehouse buildings. There has been no development of this ilk on a speculative basis since 2007 and there is a real shortage of modern stock both regionally and locally.
- 3.10. This location appeals due to its proximity to Stratford, but still retains a foothold in the automated sector, its direct access to the A3400, and the quality of its environment. We foresee strong demand for units ranging from 15,000 - 50,000 sq ft, although the possibility of larger units, particularly serving the agricultural market, should not be discounted.
- 3.11. In addition, the increased market confidence has translated through to the commercial portfolio of the Alscot Estate. All of the 140 units are now fully occupied with a waiting list and a number of tenants have expressed a desire to move into larger or purpose built premises. This has led to a consideration of the phased construction of an innovation centre providing up to 50,000 sq ft of mixed B class employment floor space in units ranging from 1,000 – 5,000 sq ft.
- 3.12. Given the strength of the market, and the lack of new business premises, the Alscot Estate is actively considering development procurement options for speculative development at the Airfield. Current thinking is for a first phase up to 100,000 sq ft, split as follows:-
- A 25,000 sq ft B2/B8 unit.
  - A 50,000 sq ft B2/B8 unit that can be split into 3, providing units from 15,000 sq ft.
  - 25,000 sq ft innovation centre/small units, predominantly B1, with units ranging from 1,000 – 5,000 sq ft.



- 3.13. Further phases will be rolled out on this basis, depending on the success of the first phase. Overall, JLL consider there could be market capacity of up to 500,000 sq ft of business floor space at this location.

## 4. Highways and Transportation

- 4.1. Following the market commentary, it is assumed that the site has initial development potential for about 75,000 sq ft of B2/B8 units (up to about 4 separate units) and 25,000 sq ft of B1 units in the form of small units, with subsequent capacity for larger B8 units (which could serve the agricultural market in the area). In total, therefore, it is considered that about 400,000- 500,000 sq ft of additional mixed employment uses could be provided at the Airfield site with the recently approved permanent access into the Airfield site from the A3400 providing a high quality entrance.
- 4.2. The County Council has undertaken a strategic Transport Assessment for Stratford-upon-Avon informed by detailed modelling of the town's road network. This identifies that there is congestion within the town centre, particularly during the PM peak as traffic departs from the town. One of the principal congestion areas is the Bridgeway Gyratory and Clopton Bridge.

- 4.3. Locating additional employment development to the south of the town will not add to the existing “exodus” congestion during the PM peak period. Instead, any traffic generated by employment to the south of the town would tend to generate traffic in the “opposite” direction to the main flow of traffic.
- 4.4. The location of the site suggests that this is a location which is more likely to be attractive to businesses serving the rural hinterland around Stratford on Avon (and particularly to the west, south and east of the area) rather than areas to the north or areas which require direct access to the M40 motorway. In addition, the development may be attractive to any employees who live south of Stratford who would ordinarily either enter or cross Stratford to go to work, thus further minimising or reducing any traffic impact on existing town centre congestion.
- 4.5. On the basis of the above development potential, the site could generate up to about 100 HGV movements per day. In terms of “peak hour” traffic, however, employment uses tend to generate relatively few HGV movements in the peak periods.
- 4.6. Network capacity to the south of the urban area is not an issue with existing traffic flows on the A3400 only being in the order of about 7,000 vehicles per day with HGV flows of only about 300 vehicles per day. Development of the scale envisaged at the Airfield can, therefore, readily be accommodated on the A3400 to the south of the town. The relatively limited traffic generated in a northerly direction (through and around the town) will not significantly impact on existing traffic conditions, and development in this location will provide employment opportunities for residents in, and to the south of, the town without the need to travel through the town and importantly avoiding the critical Bridgeway Gyrotary and Clopton Bridge areas.
- 4.7. The Airfield is served by public transport. The A3400 is a regular bus route linking Stratford and Shipston and the rural hinterland.



## 5. Other Infrastructure, Services and Delivery

- 5.1. The site is not within an area susceptible to flood risk, and the underlying superficial geology comprises sand and gravels allowing sustainable drainage solutions to be implemented.
- 5.2. Water and electricity supplies are available on the site, existing high pressure gas mains are close by, and telecommunications are available within the A3400 corridor.
- 5.3. There are therefore no fundamental or significant constraints to further development at the airfield site of the scale proposed.
- 5.4. The Airfield is available and under single ownership. There are no issues in terms of assembling land for the purposes of development.
- 5.5. As referred to in Section 3, the Alscot Estate has held discussions with a developer with a strong track record in developing commercial property. These discussions have been held with a view to build the first phase of the proposed development on a speculative basis.

## 6. Minerals

- 6.1. The proposed site is shown as an 'Area of Search for Sand and Gravel Extraction' in the Minerals Local Plan for Warwickshire which was adopted in 1995. The Draft Minerals Core Strategy (Revised Spatial Options - Feb 2009) shows the site to lie within a Minerals Safeguarding Area where the Policy Principle 4a indicates that planning permission should not normally be granted where sterilisation of minerals is likely to occur.
- 6.2. The Stratford-on-Avon District Draft Core Strategy - February 2012 also has a Minerals Safeguarding Policy CS5, noting that minerals are not a District matter. This refers to Atherstone-on-Stour Airfield as well as a 250 metre buffer zone to all mineral resources.

- 6.3. Both these documents pre-date the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which require planning authorities to adopt policies that avoid needless sterilisation of known mineral locations and to set out policies to encourage the prior extraction of minerals where practicable and environmentally feasible for non-mineral development to take place (para. 143).
- 6.4. The principles in the NPPF are considered the most relevant in relation to mineral safeguarding where prior extraction is 'encouraged' as long as it is done in a manner (i.e. practicable and environmentally feasible) that enables minerals to be recovered such that it does not prevent / jeopardise the non-mineral development.
- 6.5. The proposed site, which lies to the south of the grain store, was included in a detailed site investigation carried out by Smiths Concrete Ltd over the majority of the Airfield. The results showed that the mapped deposits of sand and gravel (which is the base data used by Warwickshire in defining the Mineral Safeguarding Area) were either very thin (the majority being less than 1.0 metre) or absent within the proposed site.
- 6.6. The slightly thicker deposits lie mainly to the north and east of the grain store, but even then they are thin with an occasional very local thickening to around 3.0 metres. The thicker deposits extend into the northern edge of the proposed site where there is a very small area (just over 2 ha) where 2.0 metres of mineral is present.
- 6.7. As a result of the findings, Smiths Concrete Ltd concluded that the deposit was uneconomic due to the very shallow thickness and the quality which was seen as primarily a silty sand with a low gravel content. The geological work indicates that the deposits are not viable for the mineral industry.
- 6.8. In terms of prior extraction the site investigation did identify a very small resource in the north of the proposed site which is estimated to be less than 60,000 tonnes. The NPPF policy seeks to recover mineral where practicable and this resource, or a substantial part of it, could be recovered through the design of the development with the minerals being used in the construction thereby reducing demand on the other mineral reserves in Warwickshire. This small amount (in mineral production terms) is most unlikely to be of interest to the mineral industry as evidenced by the decision of Smiths Concrete Ltd.
- 6.9. In summary, the area has been fully investigated by a mineral company who concluded that whilst sand and gravel deposits were present on the Airfield they are of poor quality, thin and the overall quantity too small to be of economic interest. In the event that the proposed site is developed then a modest quantity of the sand and gravel deposits can be incorporated into the design of the construction works thereby reducing demand on the other mineral resources in Warwickshire. This would normally be secured by means of a planning condition.

## 7. Site Constraints Analysis and Initial Options Appraisal

### Locational and Site Characteristics

- 7.1. Atherstone Airfield is well located and enjoys a number of characteristics that make it an attractive and sustainable location for employment development.
- 7.2. The Airfield is located south of Stratford, just 3.5 km from the town centre. Recent development has improved the extent of amenities in Stratford south of the River Avon. This has included the Rosebird Centre (anchored by Waitrose) and a park and ride. These facilities are only 2 km from the Airfield.
- 7.3. The Airfield has direct access to the A3400. This road provides strong linkage to the principal settlements in the area and strategic road network. The latter provides alternative routes to the M40 motorway, either via Stratford and the A439 and A46 or via Trinity Way, the A422 and the A429.
- 7.4. The Airfield is located in an enviable national environment. This is often an important characteristic when seeking to attract employees.
- 7.5. The Airfield was used in World War II but is no longer used for aviation. The principal runways have been planted as woodland and screen the site. The Airfield is now home to a number of larger businesses supported by the Alscot Estate.



- 7.6. Aside from Wealmoor (referred to in Section 2), the Airfield is home to Smiths Concrete, Camgrain (currently being extended by Expel to house a 100,000 tonne oil processing plant and biomass business) and Aviagen (that has recently been granted planning permission for an extension). Access to these businesses is due to be improved by the use of a new permitted permanent access on the A3400.



- 7.7. The Airfield is very well screened by natural woodland and vegetation. This is very important as the Alscot Estate is naturally concerned that any development at this location does not impact upon the Grade I listed Alscot Park, that is located the other side of the A3400.

#### Site Constraints Analysis

- 7.8. A Feasibility Study has been carried out by Corstorphine + Wright. This forms **Appendix 2**.
- 7.9. The Feasibility Study considers in greater detail and represents graphically the context of development and provides analysis of the site's constraints and opportunities. This analysis covers:-
- Existing buildings.
  - Topography.
  - Mineral deposits.
  - Natural screening and sight lines.
  - Pedestrian movement.
  - Vehicle movement.
  - Transportation links.
  - Micro climate.
- 7.10. It concludes that the proposed development site is a secluded area with limited views into the site. The additional vegetation screening will ensure that future development at the Airfield remains unobtrusive and clear from view.
- 7.11. The portion of land put forward to be developed (i.e. the 19 ha) is currently an empty pocket located between existing buildings. The proposal seeks to fill this gap and in doing so will be contained by the existing buildings and natural screening.

## Initial Options Appraisal

- 7.12. Corstorphine + Wright's Feasibility Study provides indicative master plans in both radial and linear form. These master plans show that a low density development will be the most suitable. Only **60% of the gross site area** will be utilised for development. The remaining 40% will be used for screening with particular attention to landscaped amenity areas and overall design of the site, including the buildings.
- 7.13. The amenity areas will be an essential element of the proposals. They will both frame and complement the low density development. They will also provide an important recreational facility for employees on site.
- 7.14. The actual developable area is likely to be no greater than 11 ha. At 40% site coverage, this could support up to 500,000 sq ft.

## 8. Executive Summary

- 8.1. The Alscot Estate is a strong supporter, and provider for, local businesses in Stratford District. It is now anxious to continue to grow its business portfolio and is putting in place a 25 year business plan to continue this support. This plan is looking into how existing accommodation can be improved and grown and what new opportunities exist, particularly for a greater scale of development, at Atherstone Airfield.
- 8.2. The District Council published the Stratford-upon-Avon Business and Enterprise Strategy 2012-2015 in 2012. This confirms the District Council's commitment to support and promote business and enterprise within the District, recognising the importance of jobs and the value of businesses to the local economy.
- 8.3. The objectives and approaches of Alscot Estate and the District Council are mutually compatible and complementary. Working together, in partnership, the Council and Alscot Estate can provide the infrastructure necessary to boost the local economy.
- 8.4. There is a gap in the market in and around Stratford for institutional quality industrial and warehouse buildings particularly to the south of the city. There has been no development of this ilk on a speculative basis since 2007 and there is real shortage of modern stock. We foresee strong market demand for units ranging from 15,000-50,000 sq ft although the possibly of larger units, particularly serving the agricultural market, should not be discounted. There is also significant latent demand from the existing commercial portfolio of the Alscot Estate. The Estate is now fully occupied, with a waiting list and a number of tenants that have expressed a desire to move into larger or purpose built premises. This has led to consideration of the phased construction of an innovation centre, providing up to 50,000 sq ft of floorspace in units ranging from 1,000 – 5,000 sq ft.
- 8.5. With regards to highways, development of the scale envisaged at the Airfield can be readily accommodated on the A3400 to the south of town. The relatively limited traffic generated in a northerly direction (through and around the town), will not significantly impact on existing traffic conditions. In addition, development in this location will provide employment opportunities for residents in, and to the south of, the town without the need to travel through the town.
- 8.6. There are no fundamental or significant constraints concerning infrastructure and services to the site. The Airfield is available and under single ownership. The Alscot Estate is currently holding discussions with a developer with a strong track record in developing commercial property, with a view to build the first phase for the proposed development on a speculative basis.
- 8.7. The area has been fully investigated by a mineral company who concluded that whilst sand and gravel deposits were present on the Airfield they are of poor quality, thin and the overall quantity too small to be of economic interest. In the event that the proposed site is developed, then a modest quantity of the sand and gravel deposits can be incorporated into the design and construction works, thereby reducing demand on the other mineral resources in the County.
- 8.8. The Airfield is well located and enjoys a number of characteristics that makes it an attractive and sustainable location for employment development. The Feasibility Study carried out by Corstorphine + Wright concludes that the proposed development site is a secluded area with limited views into the site. The additional vegetation screening proposed will ensure that future development remains unobtrusive and clear from view.

- 8.9. The portion of land put forward to be developed (i.e. 19 ha) is currently an empty pocket located between existing buildings. The proposal seeks to fill this gap and in doing so will be contained by the existing buildings and natural screening. The actual developable area is likely to be no greater than 11 ha. At 40% site coverage this could support up to 500,000 sq ft.



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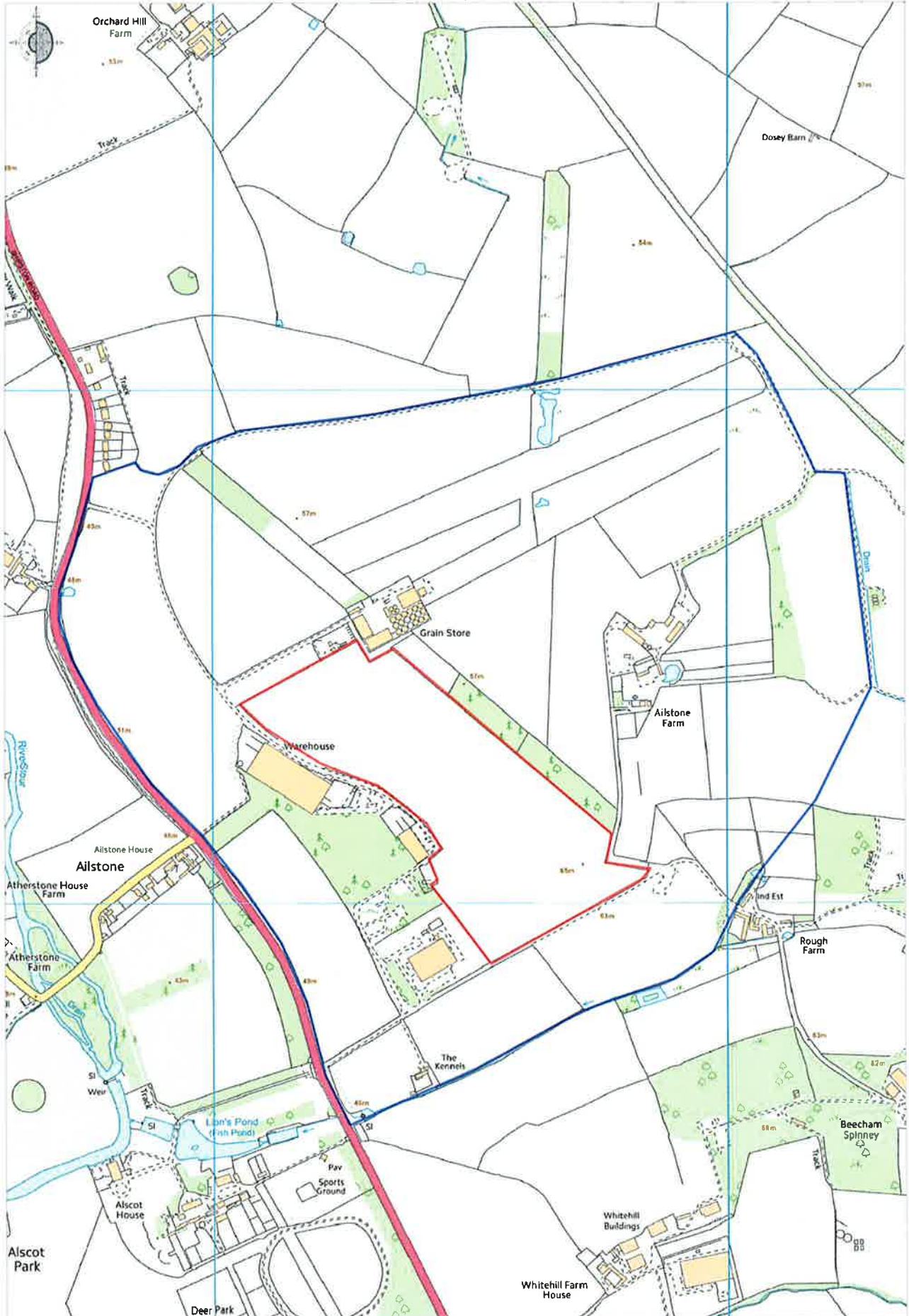
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### Former Airfield Aiscot Estate, Atherstone







CORSTORPHINE  
+ WRIGHT  
ARCHITECTS



# ATHERSTONE AIRFIELD, ALSCOT ESTATE FEASIBILITY STUDY

SEPTEMBER 2014



ALSCOT  
WARWICKSHIRE

APPENDIX 2

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# SECTION 1

## Introduction

This report summarises our initial exploratory work in response to the received brief for development opportunities at Atherstone Airfield, Alscot Estate. The workings critique the existing site characteristics and progress towards establishing a design approach for the development site.



# SECTION 2

## Context

Atherstone on Stour is a village and civil parish in the Stratford-Upon-Avon district of Warwickshire. The Alscot Estate occupies some 4,000 acres in this geographical region (reaching further north to Clifford Chambers and further south to Alderminster) and can be found approximately three miles south of Stratford-Upon-Avon on the A3400.

The development site in question, Atherstone Airfield, takes in a large area of land directly to the east of the A3400. The site was used during WWII but is no longer used for aviation. The principal runways have been planted as woodland screens and the airfield is now home to a number of businesses supported by the Alscot Estate.

The site is currently very well screened by natural woodland and vegetation, meaning there are limited views of the business operations and resultantly maintains the integrity of the rural context. Furthermore, the Grade I listed Alscot Park is within close proximity and therefore any existing or future business developments should be well concealed.



# SECTION 3

## Analysis: Existing Buildings

