

# ALCONBURY DESIGN ENQUIRY REPORT

March 2012





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# FOREWORD



**Nigel Hugill**  
Executive Chairman



**Robin Butler**  
Managing Director

An abiding belief of ours is that crafting great new places requires the consistent involvement of all those who, like us, care passionately about the outcomes. To that end, the four day Design Enquiry at Alconbury last September was an early example of our commitment to a conversation with as many people as possible to help shape the future of the area.

We were particularly thrilled with the numbers who joined us for the Open Day on Saturday 24 September. The weather was kind, of course, but the number of constructive comments and the sheer patience and good humour that enabled 2,500 visitors to attend the event was real testimony to just how much local people do care.

Indeed, for all the major developments Robin and I have been involved in, we have simply never experienced the level of turnout and genuine interest that was shown across the whole Enquiry. We were not alone in taking notice: the extent of the Saturday attendance was even picked up on national radio.

We recognise the implied contract created by this level of participation and will maintain our commitment to carrying on the conversation as the Alconbury project continues to evolve. In the mean time we would like to say a huge thank you to all those that were able to come and join in the discussion.

In this document we wanted to record that special weekend and try and capture something of the spirit of participation that was engendered. You will see that we have concentrated on three core topics:

- 1. The vision we presented**
- 2. The feedback you gave us**
- 3. How we are taking that forward**

The Design Enquiry was an important part of a bigger conversation and we are already planning further events. In the mean time, however, if you would like to contact us there are full details on the inside of the back cover as to how to do so. Please also let us know your initial reactions to this document.

Thank you again and we will very much value your continued contributions over the coming months.

**NIGEL HUGILL**

**ROBIN BUTLER**



# THE STORY SO FAR

The Airfield at Alconbury encapsulates 70 years of global history. From the Second World War, throughout the Cold War and beyond, the site and its surrounding communities played a key role for the UK and its allies.

Alconbury's current position as a commercial site began after the Americans handed back the airbase to the Ministry of Defence in 1995. Since that time the site has operated under temporary consents for distribution and light industrial uses whilst discussions on the long term future of this significant brownfield site have taken place.

In 2007, after a lengthy planning process, a planning consent was issued by the Secretary of State for a freight interchange together with 7 million square feet of warehouse and distribution building on the site, but this has not been implemented.

Urban&Civic acquired the site in 2009 in recognition of the site's clear potential with strong transport links to the A1, A14 and the East Coast Mainline; strategically positioned close to Huntingdon between the global innovation hub of Cambridge and Peterborough's environmental business cluster; and with significant power and other infrastructure in place across the site.

We also purchased an additional parcel of land known as "Grange Farm" in 2010 which extends down from the eastern end of the runway towards the A141. The site now links to the north of Huntingdon Town Centre.

## CURRENT PLANNING SITUATION

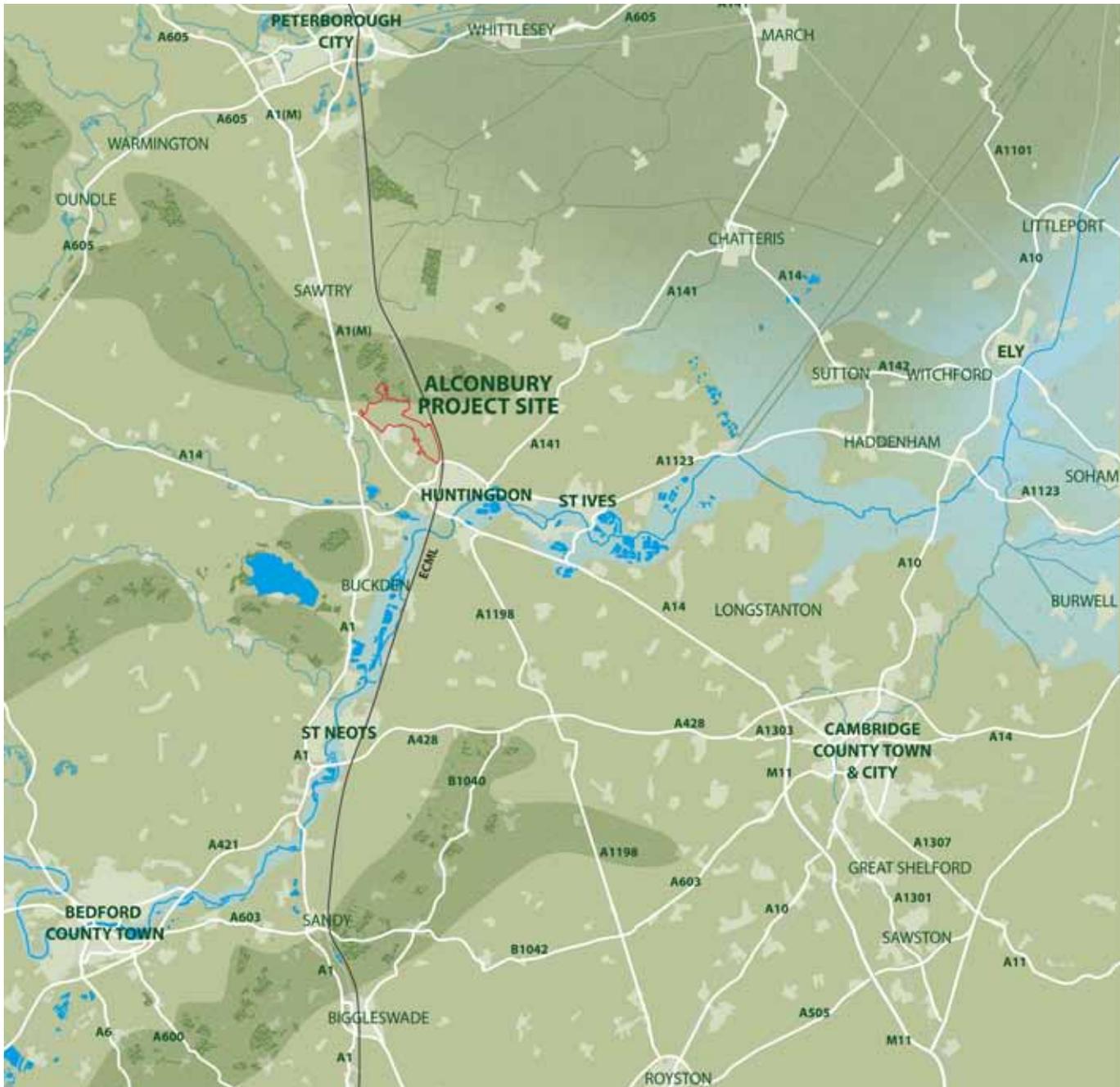
The Alconbury site has been identified as a strategic employment location for a number of years within existing planning policy.

This year, in light of the changes to the national planning policy context (including the abandoning of Regional Spatial Strategies) and the designation of part of Alconbury as an Enterprise Zone, Huntingdonshire District Council have begun a review of their Local Plan in order to consider how best to meet their future growth needs.

When we bought the site in 2009, we inherited and then extended permission to use the site's buildings for temporary commercial use for warehousing (B8) and light industrial (B1/B2) uses. These consents have remained in place whilst discussions on the site's future continue and a vision is evolved which meets the social, environmental and economic needs of the local area, as well as ensuring the site delivers on its potential for the region and for UK PLC.

## THE ENTERPRISE ZONE

In light of the site's strategic employment potential, when the Government announced a policy to stimulate local economic growth through establishing Enterprise Zones in 2011, Huntingdonshire District Council and the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership nominated and successfully secured Enterprise Zone status for the site. This brings a series of benefits to businesses who locate within the designated 150 hectares of the Zone, as well as providing a funding stream for the local area to support its growth plans. Huntingdonshire District Council are also streamlining the planning process for the commercial development of the site within the designated area.



2009	NOVEMBER	<i>Urban&amp;Civic purchase Alconbury Airfield.</i>
2010	NOVEMBER	<i>Development of guiding principles for the project.</i>
	DECEMBER	<i>Urban&amp;Civic purchase Grange Farm.</i>
2011	JANUARY	<i>Urban&amp;Civic set out parameters of site: commercial space, 5000 homes and 50% green space.</i>
	FEBRUARY	<i>First potential layouts (Masterplan) shared with partners.</i>
	MARCH	<i>Setting up monthly Joint Parish Council Liaison Meetings.</i>
	APRIL	<i>Appointment of Community Liaison Manager on site.</i>
	MAY	<i>Recruitment of planning consultant to support parish councils.</i>
	JUNE	<i>Agreement of Design Enquiry approach with CCC, HDC and Parish Councils.</i>
	JULY	<i>Nominated by Local Enterprise Partnership to be an Enterprise Zone.</i>
	AUGUST	<i>Second version of Masterplan developed with suite of supporting materials for Design Enquiry. Alconbury announced as Enterprise Zone by Her Majesty's Government.</i>
	SEPTEMBER	<i>Pre-Design Enquiry meetings with stakeholders and local communities.</i>

# ONE/THE DESIGN ENQUIRY

Urban&Civic held a Design Enquiry into the development of the former Alconbury Airfield between the 23rd and 27th September 2011. A Design Enquiry is a recognised best practice method of enabling a range of technical experts, statutory authorities, stakeholder organisations and members of the public to input views and ideas into a developing masterplan before it is submitted as a planning application.

It is designed around an intensive period of work to look at options and challenges, and collectively develop an approach which responds positively to local circumstances.

The event was organised for when the Masterplan was midway through development: with initial surveys and planning discussions having enabled us to outline an overall vision for the site, but with flexibility and time to include and respond to ideas and concerns.

## DESIGN ENQUIRY

Over the four days of the Design Enquiry the masterplanning team shared and discussed emerging ideas for the site with a wide ranging set of audiences.

**Day 1:** On Friday the 23rd September, over 100 representatives from Huntingdonshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, and a range of organisations and partners attended a day of technical workshops. These included Government partners and agencies such as the Police, English Heritage, Natural England and the Highways Agency; business representation from the Huntingdonshire Manufacturers Association and Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce; and local partnerships and voluntary and community groups such as the Hunts Forum, Huntingdon Secondary Education Partnership and parish councillors.

The day was started by Councillor Jason Ablewhite, the leader of Huntingdonshire District Council, who emphasised the potential opportunity that Alconbury represents and the importance of getting the approach to its future right. A bus tour led by officers of Huntingdonshire District Council helped set the context, with attendees taken around the site and the wider area including the surrounding villages, Huntingdon Town Centre and the major infrastructure and landscape / townscape context to ensure that everyone shared the same basic understanding of Alconbury's location and surroundings.

Members of the Project Design Team, working with officers of the District Council, led a series of themed working groups. A full range of issues were discussed including energy, waste and water, transport & movement, green infrastructure, enterprise, heritage, homes & living and social and community infrastructure. The workshops allowed us to work through and test some key principles for the site, looking at options for how the vision might be delivered, and drawing on best practice and good and bad experiences from across the region and country from each of the organisations present. All of the comments and feedback received was carefully recorded by the project team.





**Day 2** of the Design Enquiry saw the site opened up to the public. On Saturday the 24th September, over 80 metres of interactive display material was set out to articulate the emerging vision for the site. Nearly 2,500 members of the public took the opportunity to come and discuss the future for Alconbury and to share their views and aspirations. More than 150 comments on the proposals were made via post-it notes on the displays themselves - a number of which are reproduced throughout this document. 400 people also floated their thoughts in the hangar attached to helium balloons and more than 50 people filled in questionnaires. Over 30 people from the Project Design Team - including all Urban&Civic staff - and officers of Huntingdonshire District Council were on hand at all times to go through the plans, explain the vision and take comments.

**Day 3** brought the project design team together to distil the messages that had been heard and to focus on potential responses for the masterplan. It was clear from the comments that the vision had received a generally positive reception. There were a number of particular areas of interest including the importance of recording the history of the site, the importance of the landscape to future plans, the need to secure economic benefits and jobs for local people, the importance of ensuring that adequate plans are being made for transport and to work with local groups and clubs.



Finally, on the evening of **Day 4**, the site was once again opened up to the public as an opportunity to come and hear the feedback from the Project Design Team and also as a second opportunity to comment on the vision and proposals. The final presentation drew around 150 people to the airfield. As part of that presentation, and based on that early analysis of the feedback given, Urban&Civic made 10 key pledges.





## TEN KEY PLEDGES

1. Plant over half a million new trees across the site starting Winter 2011-12
2. Bring forward an enabling application during 2011 to start the Enterprise Zone
3. Maximise the jobs on site for local people, working with Jobcentre Plus and Huntingdonshire Regional College
4. Create a Southern Gateway to connect to Huntingdon Town Centre
5. Actively participate in the regeneration of Huntingdon Town Centre
6. Give long term legal protection to the major parks and public spaces, including a permanent green shield for the Stukeleys
7. No vehicular connections through Owl End and Green End (Great Stukeley) and no private vehicular connections through Clay Lane (Abbots Ripton)
8. Record and publish the social history of the airfield and incorporate physical elements of its past
9. Provide long term facilities for local sports teams and clubs
10. This is not the end of the consultation process



## THE DESIGN ENQUIRY IN STATISTICS:

- » Attended by almost 2,500 members of the public
- » Design & Discovery day saw the consumption of 1,252 cups of coffee and 1,200 ice creams
- » Hundreds of post-it notes and comments left with the team
- » Further comments floated to the ceiling of the hanger on 400 balloons
- » Technical day saw participation from over 100 partners and technical stakeholders
- » 7 themed sets of comments and actions were gathered from the technical workshops
- » 80 metres of boards displaying the ideas
- » 35 metre high Ferris wheel gave us a view of the site and the surrounding area





*Robin Butler, Managing Director, Urban&Civic*

“It was great to see so many people here – including a substantial number of local families – to express their opinions on our plans. We know that this is a site with which many people have a strong connection and we had some really interesting discussions, ideas and contributions flowing across a range of subjects.”



*Malcolm Sharp, Managing Director, Huntingdonshire District Council*

“Huntingdonshire District Council applauds the imaginative and extensive work Urban&Civic have undertaken through this design enquiry to engage with a wide variety of agencies and critically local people in an effort to inform their plans.

The future of this strategic site is of huge importance to Huntingdonshire and the wider region. Urban&Civic have opened up a new chapter for the former airfield and this is clearly a pivotal moment and will, hopefully, put behind us the previous unsatisfactory ideas for the site’s future and realise the great potential it offers.



The Council is particularly keen that the economic opportunity provided by the Enterprise Zone is grasped as a priority and then the wider development of the site is considered in the context of our emerging Local Plan. Proper consideration of the proposals through the statutory planning process are required and it would be entirely wrong to prejudge the outcome at this stage but the Council will approach them with an open mind. We look forward to an ongoing dialogue.”



*Neville Reyner CBE DL, Chair of the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership*

“Urban&Civic have worked hard to reach the widest number of stakeholders and members of the community possible through their design enquiry. The LEP were pleased to be a part of the workshops to see progress being made with plans for the site as a whole.

In particular, it was heartening to see that the genuine desire to progress work on the Enterprise Zone swiftly, but also effectively, working with partners to amend plans where required to deliver the best possible outcome. The Enterprise Zone provides our area with a unique opportunity to create a new economic hub between Peterborough, Huntingdon and Cambridge, with strong transport links to the rest of our region and beyond. We look forward to seeing work commence on site and the first new businesses move in.”



*Tim Leathes, Project Director, Urban&Civic*

“Normally planning consultations can be pretty dry, and we wanted to liven things up and get people as excited about the opportunities here as we are. It was good to see the positive response from people and the ideas flowing as we talked through the plans with them.”



# TWO/OUR VISION & YOUR RESPONSES

This section sets out the vision that was presented at the event, your feedback and how we will be taking this forward.

A great variety of people attended the Alconbury Design Enquiry, enquiring about many topics including, transportation, ecology, housing, jobs and schools. These individuals offered a considerable diversity of perspectives and their comments are directly influencing the ongoing development of the masterplan. The Design Team have taken time to analyse all of the responses that have been received, both from the event itself, and also those submitted subsequently via feedback forms handed out at the event or on the website.

At the Design Enquiry we set out the overall vision and emerging masterplan for the site, we also illustrated what the areas of the development could look like through a 40 metre long walk through of the site with “character areas” giving examples of landscape, housing and design which could feature in each area. People left comments along the length of the section with views of the potential design options on display. Finally, each element of the masterplan was drawn out into a series of ‘themes’ where key parts of our proposed approach such as Transport, or Homes, could be explored in further detail.



Set out below is the result of the analysis that we have undertaken based on your responses and how we are starting to take that work forward through the next iteration of the masterplan and future ways of working.



# ASPIRATIONS FOR ALCONBURY

## THE VISION PRESENTED

### WHAT WE WANT TO DO

Urban&Civic bought the Alconbury site in 2009. Our ownership extends to 1,400 acres which is the equivalent of over 800 international football pitches. Whilst the land is currently used for storage and logistics we have a very different vision for its future. We want to create a high quality low carbon development which will:

- » Bring skilled jobs and opportunities to the local area;
- » Provide a range of homes set within attractive landscapes forming part of an active community;
- » Ensure there is green open space for people and nature in keeping with the local area;
- » Provide strong and fast connections with Huntingdon, Peterborough, Cambridge, London and beyond through enhanced road, rail, bus and cycle networks.



*Solar panels are great. Work well in many countries*

*Need to develop strict design guides for developers*

*There must be green areas – not just parks but around homes*

*I hope that the vision shown today becomes reality and that too many compromises are not forced on the idea as time passes*

## HOW WE WILL DO IT

The principles that guide us are:

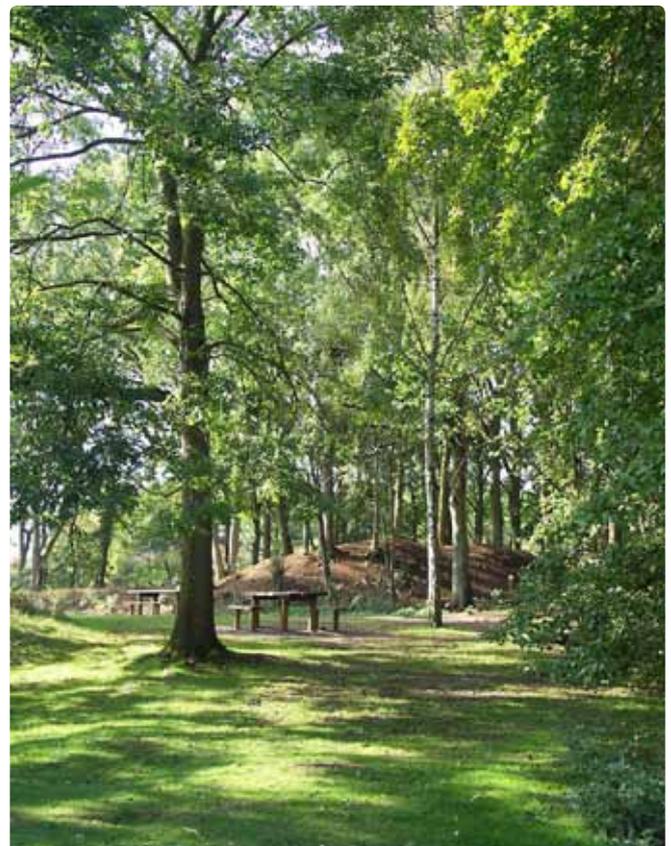
- » **Enterprise and Opportunity:** jobs, skills, investment, business growth.
- » **Linking Landscapes and people:** transport, low carbon, access, living landscapes, active communities.
- » **Using resources wisely:** green energy production, and careful management of waste and water: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.
- » **Creating a sense of place:** working with nature and heritage; working with people, for people.



## DOING OUR HOMEWORK

Since acquiring the site we have studied the technical constraints and environmental factors to help us understand what is possible. In particular we have looked at:

- » Ecology
- » Trees and Woodland
- » Topography
- » Landscapes and Visual Impact
- » Archaeology and Geography
- » Surface Water and Flow Monitoring
- » Heritage



*This is a great opportunity to be a site of best practice for sustainable use of natural resources*

## LEARNING AND LISTENING

We have also been in discussion with local partners and local communities to help us understand the needs and aspirations of the area.

The Design Enquiry was a continuation of that process and we welcome your comments and ideas on our emerging vision.

## GETTING INVOLVED

We are proud to sponsor a number of local activities, partnerships and groups.



Fusion: Youth activities for 8-18 year olds





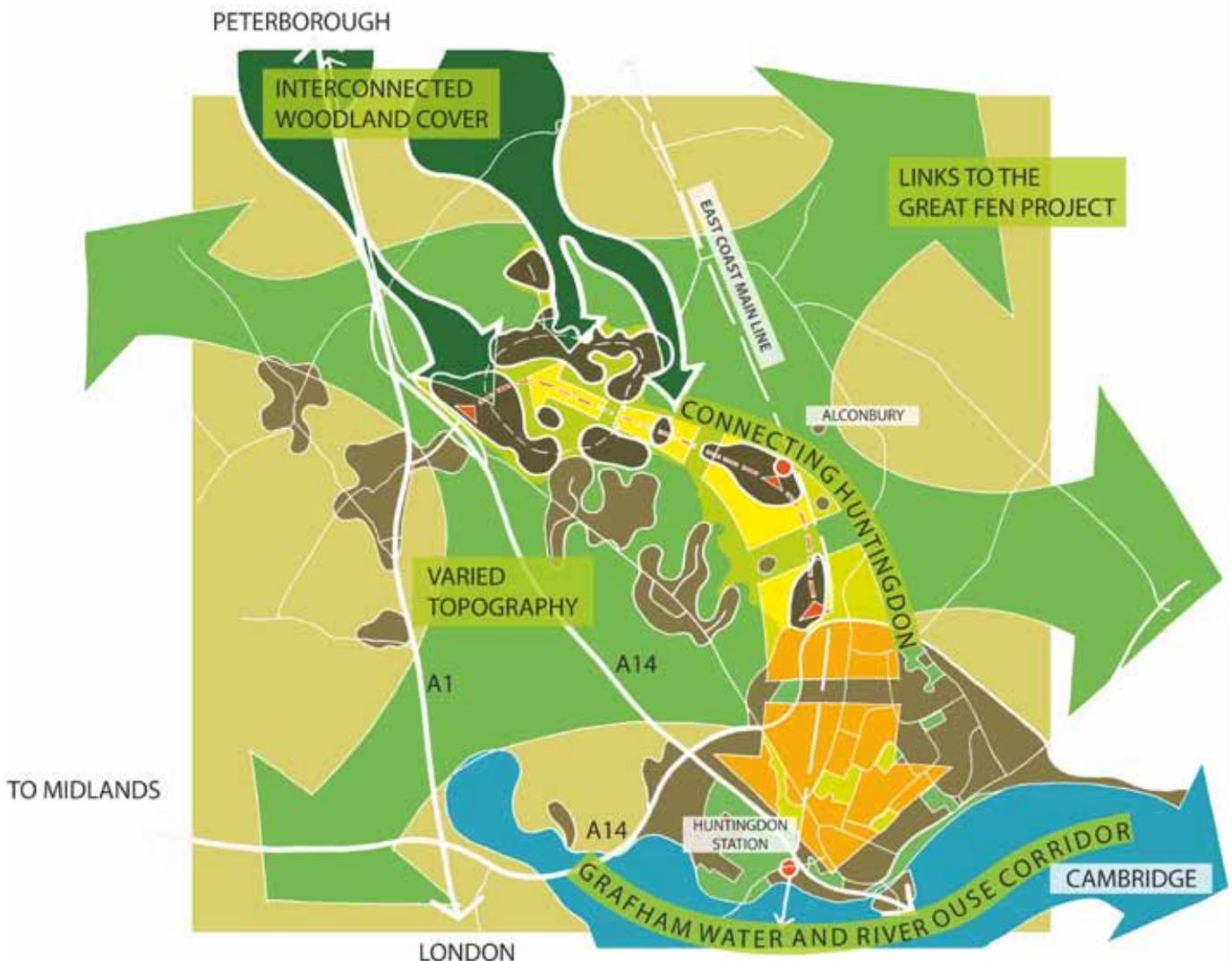
## THE EMERGING MASTERPLAN

Our ambition is to unlock the potential of Alconbury. The emerging masterplan for Alconbury seeks to transform the site over time into a dynamic and innovative mixed- use development including:

- » new high quality business space;
- » a range of housing including affordable homes;
- » community facilities to serve new employees and residents; and
- » a significant investment in new landscape and green space.

Our concept for the site responds directly and sensitively to the location in which it sits.

Alconbury lies within a wider agricultural landscape that includes a number of pockets of woodland, relatively rare in this part of the country. This environmental setting is an important influence on the way in which we have developed our masterplan and in particular the landscape strategy. Through the masterplan, we are proposing high quality jobs and homes sitting in attractive settings, surrounded by open and wooded green spaces.







The topography of Alconbury relative to its surroundings offers particular opportunities to connect to Huntingdon. The land slopes gently from the plateau of the former airfield to the town to the south.

The proximity of Alconbury to Huntingdon is very important. The purchase of Grange Farm means that the possibility now exists to physically connect any future development with the town in a mutually supportive manner. This will be reinforced in the development by extensive public transport links, footpaths and cycleways, and effective integration of community facilities and business opportunities.

Alconbury also sits in a strategically important location on the central spine of the country: heading south you can reach London in an hour by road or rail links; to the north lies the manufacturing centres of Peterborough and the industrial heart of England. To the east is Cambridge with its internationally renowned research base and spin-out enterprises, direct access to London Stansted International Airport and the east coast ports; and west will take you to Bedford, Oxford and the Thames Valley. Our concept for the site seeks to maximise the benefits of these strategic road, rail and information connections in attracting new business and investment to the site.

The potential of the site as a place for strategic transformational employment was reinforced by the nomination and selection of the site as an Enterprise Zone in 2011. It's position at the heart of the Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise area can provide a new focus for innovation and a bridge between existing centres of excellence.

Our aspiration is for a low-carbon space for business and for life. Facilities and resources on the site - with investment - make it possible to deliver innovative solutions to energy, water, carbon and waste management.

The nature of this flexible site will be developed in partnership with the businesses and people who will use it and the parishes and communities who live around it: crafting a landscape for working, living, learning and leisure. The Design Enquiry has simply been a first step in this process. Any new development will be delivered in phases and will enhance the economy and environment of the local area. Over the following pages we have set out the component parts of our masterplan in the form of a series of themes and character areas.

*How is the development going to impact on surrounding villages?*

*Please no shopping centre in Alconbury. It would 'kill off' shops in Huntingdon*

*Housing and parking. Don't forget parking spaces for visitors. Keep housing density low e.g. 20 units / ha*

*Keep more of the runway*

# ACTIVE COMMUNITIES

## THE VISION PRESENTED

### THE INGREDIENTS OF A GREAT PLACE

We know that communities are more than just places where people work and sleep. To ensure a place feels like home from day one a range of local facilities to support new and existing communities need to be provided. For us this means:

- » Primary schools
- » GP surgery/medical centre
- » Local shops
- » Community and faith space
- » Community safety provision
- » Open space, play and sport facilities
- » Local employment
- » Social services
- » Leisure and cultural activities, including libraries

We want to go beyond the standard provision and are working with local partners and looking at national best practice to see how we can create an exemplar site. Our principles in delivering this include:

- » Using buildings and community assets innovatively to ensure that they are cherished and used every day and reflect the quality and low carbon values of the development;
- » Supporting existing provision and filling any gaps or shortages that exist within the wider area;
- » Providing direct links with Huntingdon town centre so that people can access its shops and leisure facilities; and
- » Creating opportunities for people throughout the development to deliver jobs, business skills and innovative partnership working.



*What are you going to do to support / encourage the use of community facilities?*

*Very good but will there be space for less traditional sports?*

*Using a hanger for a skate park would be a good idea. You could also use a hanger for all indoor leisures*

### EDUCATION

Education is part of our DNA and we want to put schools and lifelong learning at the forefront of this development. We're committed to high quality delivery of education space, which lies at the heart of the community. We will build a number of primary schools across the site through careful phasing of the development. We will also work in partnership with new and existing communities and public bodies to find the right solution for an effective secondary and tertiary education provision which serves the local area and supports the skills and aspirations of current and future generations.

### COMMUNITY SUPPORT

From community orchards and allotments to sports and social clubs, we want to create an environment in which people can set down roots and grow together. Crucially we know we need to put these facilities in early, so that they become part of the community from day one.

*If it becomes a town we must have the infrastructure to cope with it especially a secondary school*



# ACTIVE COMMUNITIES

## WHAT YOU TOLD US

*The approach to community infrastructure has evolved through consultation with a range of stakeholders. As a result, there has been much support through the Design Enquiry for the masterplan and the role the community facilities will play in the creation of 'place' for Alconbury.*

### ***"Facilities need to be flexible, complementary and phased early"***

There was overwhelming agreement that a flexible, integrated approach must be the way forward for the delivery of community facilities and services working closely with bodies such as the police, young people's services, health bodies and others. It was also recognised that this may need to be married with investment in existing facilities as the development progresses.

This approach has clear implications not only in terms of structure and organisation, but also spatially with some form of central shared facility being located on the site supported by smaller local centres as required.

### ***"What are you going to do to support/encourage the use of community facilities?"***

There were a number of people who raised issues about how facilities will be owned and run once they have been established.

The involvement of the community and local clubs/associations was a clear suggestion for a number of respondents. Another interesting proposition was to help foster a stronger sense of community across the development by involving businesses in local facilities.



### ***"Please consider a secondary school"***

Appropriate provision for education is clearly an issue locally. It was accepted that primary provision would be essential at Alconbury. The importance of a secondary school on the site came across very strongly, particularly from the general public.

In addition to this, the links between education and businesses on the site were made loud and clear as an important consideration for the development. The creation of an education/skills centre linked to local businesses was felt to be an attractive proposition.

### ***"Local people need leisure facilities"***

There was significant feedback from the Design & Discovery day that the site could address a perceived lack of leisure facilities in the local area, particularly for young people.

A huge range of potential facilities were suggested from an ice rink to a climbing wall, from a bowling alley to a swimming pool.

### ***"Will you support local sports clubs?"***

The extent of the proposed green space at Alconbury clearly provides opportunities for new sports provision. As part of creating a new community on the site, many people saw the accommodation of new and existing sports clubs as a key element. Particular support was apparent for new rugby facilities and for the proposed cricket pitch.



## OUR RESPONSE

### WE HAVE:

- » committed to flexible community space, and a specific faith space and clergy house within the first phase of residential development. We are continuing to involve the stakeholder group in designing and challenging us on the design and roll-out of that space.
- » taken forward discussions with specific partners within health, education and other public services to discuss the needs of the development and the wider context of local needs which any provision could support.



### WE ARE/WILL:

- » be working with Cambridgeshire ACRE, the Hunts Voluntary Forum and local communities to study best practice for providing and managing community assets to support and reflect community aspirations.
- » continue discussions with statutory partners about the potential provision of secondary/tertiary/vocational educational provision on site to optimise the links between education, enterprise and industry.
- » work with Huntingdonshire District Council and Sport England to carry out an audit of current sports and leisure needs locally – building on existing discussions - to see what provisions here would enhance the area. We will be involving local youth and sports groups in these discussions.
- » continue to talk to Huntingdonshire Rugby Club about them being early tenants on site. We also continue to support the Stags and the Alconbury Colts through sponsorship.

### PLEDGE 9:

*We will provide long term facilities for local sports teams and clubs*



# ENTERPRISE AT ALCONBURY

## THE VISION PRESENTED

### DRIVING ENTERPRISE

The strength of Alconbury as a business location has always been a key driver for our vision.

Earlier this year Alconbury was promoted by the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in a national competition as its candidate for Enterprise Zone designation. The LEP was supported by the County Council, Cambridge City Council, Opportunity Peterborough and the surrounding District Councils as well as Anglia Ruskin University and Cambridge University.

On the 17th August the Government awarded an Enterprise Zone to Alconbury endorsing the site's business credentials and putting us on the national map as a great place to do business.

### WHAT BEING AN ENTERPRISE ZONE MEANS

All Enterprise Zones will benefit from:

- » A business rate discount rate worth up to £275,000 over a five year period to businesses located within the zone;
- » Government support to deliver super fast broadband; and
- » A simplified approach to planning led by the District Council.

We estimate that the Enterprise Zone will deliver 1,500 jobs by 2015 and there will be up to 8,000 jobs across the entire site by 2036. It could also create a further 6,000 jobs in the local area through local contracts and ancillary businesses.

This is good news as the growth in business rates generated within the Enterprise Zone, for a period of at least 25 years, will be retained by the LEP and distributed to support local economic priorities.

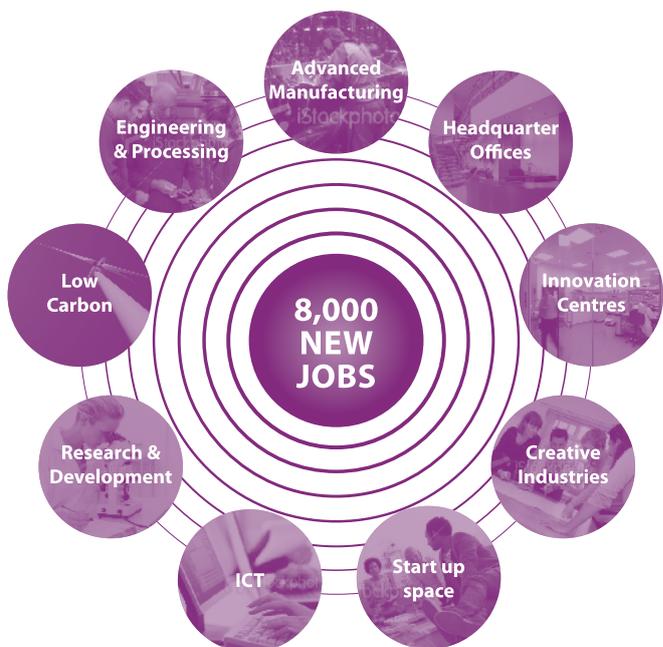
Furthermore, whilst the Zone promises broadband to businesses on site, we are committed to spreading super fast broadband connectivity out to the local communities around the site.

### BRINGING IN INVESTMENT

Our approach to the development of Alconbury is based on attracting new jobs, investment and opportunities by delivering a great place to live, work and play.

Currently we have a range of businesses on the site operating under a temporary planning consent. We will be working with these businesses as part of our proposals for the site.

Future employment will focus on a range of sectors including:



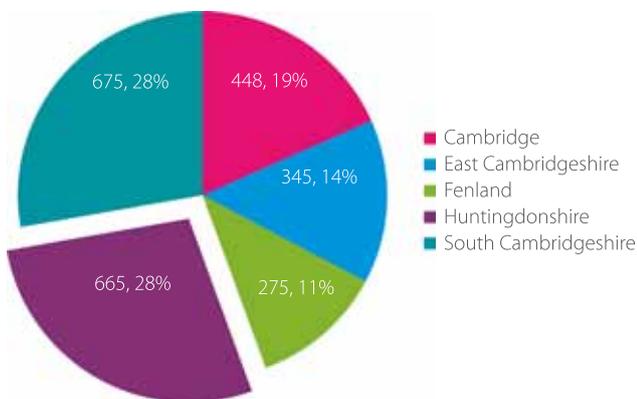
We will need to build a range of space to respond to different types of business needs, including:

- » Innovative businesses looking to start their businesses from scratch;
- » Growing companies who are seeking to expand their business;
- » Large scale operators who wish to incorporate a range of uses such as offices, R&D and manufacturing; and
- » Businesses that are seeking space for headquarter offices.



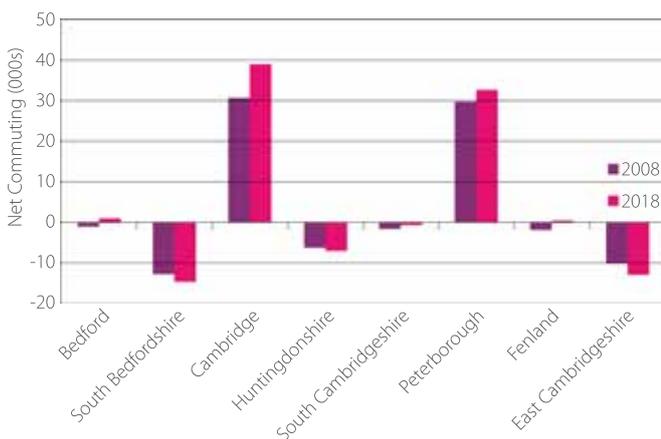
## SUPPORTING START UPS

Huntingdonshire has a high proportion of new companies starting up in comparison with other local districts. Alconbury will be able to support its innovative local community by allowing these businesses to grow and provide further space for new start-ups.



Number of business start-ups in Cambridgeshire (2009) (source: ONS, 2011)

## PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES TO LIVE & WORK IN HUNTINGDON



Significant numbers of people live in Huntingdon but work elsewhere. By creating a mix of new employment opportunities and new homes at Alconbury we hope to significantly reduce the amount of out commuting that currently occurs.

## YOU CAN ACCESS THESE OPPORTUNITIES

As businesses are attracted to Alconbury we want to work with the local community to ensure that as many of these new jobs as possible are available to local people by:

- » Creating a Jobs Academy – linked to Jobcentre Plus and Work Programme objectives. This will channel local people into jobs on site and provide training from the construction phase onwards;
- » Working with local businesses to maximise their opportunities on the site;
- » Providing space for local businesses to grow;
- » Working with local schools and colleges to match skills to jobs; and
- » Working with companies to provide skills development training and apprenticeships.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

To attract great businesses to the site we need to make sure that it looks its best. We will soon be preparing the site by landscaping, tree planting and addressing key access issues.

At the same time:

- » Huntingdonshire District Council will commence consultation on a Local Development Order to facilitate appropriate business development within the Enterprise Zone area of the site; and
- » Urban&Civic intend that the planning process for the whole site will continue with the aim of an outline application being submitted in Summer 2012.

Urban&Civic are working with Huntingdonshire District Council to make sure that the Local Development Order and the Masterplan are entirely complimentary and deliver our ambitions for a high quality mixed use development.

The business rate discount will apply to the site from April 2012.

# ENTERPRISE AT ALCONBURY

## WHAT YOU TOLD US

*The provision of new jobs for Huntingdonshire at Alconbury was felt to be fundamentally a good thing from both those who attended the Technical Workshops and the Design & Discovery day reflecting the current challenges for the area in terms of attracting new investment. In shaping the scope and approach to delivering that new employment the following comments were raised.*

### ***“Where are all these jobs going to come from?”***

There was some scepticism from those attending the Design & Discovery day as to whether the aspirations for 8,000 jobs across the target sectors identified could be achieved. Despite this, the challenge was laid down to aim high in this respect ensuring quality and vision and maintaining these standards. Clearly, the Enterprise Zone status for the site is a significant benefit in this respect in raising the profile of the site at a national level, and further work was considered important in terms of national and international marketing if the aspirations are to be achieved.

### ***“You must remove barriers to get people to invest”***

In delivering these new opportunities, many comments focussed on the need to provide the right conditions at Alconbury. The Enterprise Zone status was broadly welcomed, but the key issues of power, broadband and transport all need to be addressed if businesses are to come to the site. The identity of the site was also felt to be important in this context. The need for a ‘wow’ factor based on a proper approach to mixed use development including new housing was identified.

### ***“What’s to stop companies benefitting from reduced business rates and leaving after 5 years?”***

Real concern was expressed at both the Technical Workshops and the Design & Discovery Day that Alconbury would simply draw businesses out of other locations in Huntingdon rather than resulting in genuinely new investment in the area.

### ***“How will you ensure that these jobs go to local people?”***

Whilst the principle of new jobs in the area was certainly welcomed, the need to ensure that appropriate mechanisms are put in place to enable local people to access the opportunities came across strongly from the event. This was felt to be particularly important for younger people and suggestions included apprenticeship schemes and working with local education organisations including the Regional College.

### ***“The benefits of investment at Alconbury should not be limited to the site”***

The development of Alconbury can and should deliver benefits across a much wider area. There were a number of practical points raised here about the beneficial effects of infrastructure investment, not only in terms of transport but also broadband. It was also felt that economic activity at Alconbury needs to build on the existing business base to ensure the development optimises benefit across the local economy.



## OUR RESPONSE

### WE HAVE:

- » appointed a Brand Development and Marketing agency to support the promotion of the Enterprise Zone and broader development to key target audiences.
- » submitted and been granted an Enabling Application which will help us shape the new Enterprise Zone with a new entrance, early tree planting, internal road lighting and landscaping.
- » commissioned research for transitional and long term superfast Broadband options, which will also benefit the wider area.
- » developed a package of flexible response mechanisms to ensure we can respond quickly and flexibly to interest and potential tenants, including appointing highly respected architects to help design and build for prospective tenants.
- » formed a partnership group with Jobcentre Plus, Huntingdonshire Regional College, Huntingdonshire District Council and the Secondary Education Partnership to look at setting up a brokerage scheme to enable jobs, apprenticeships and work placements to go to local people both as the site is developed, and as new tenant businesses come to the site.
- » committed to the development of a contracts brokerage scheme on similar lines to ensure business can go to local firms as the site is developed and serviced.
- » Become a Board Member of the Huntingdonshire Chamber of Commerce, and the Huntingdonshire Town Partnership to support local businesses and the wider regeneration of the area.

### WE ARE/WILL:

- » ensure a physical presence in the town centre to reach people with clear information about job opportunities and contract opportunities.
- » launch a targeted Marketing Campaign of the Enterprise Zone from Spring 2012.
- » developing a mechanism with Huntingdonshire District Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership to ensure the Zone enhances and supports local businesses and does not lead to displacement ("rate-hopping") with businesses moving to the site just to benefit from the rates relief.

### **PLEDGES 2 & 3:**

*We will bring forward an enabling application during 2011 to start the Enterprise Zone*

*We will maximise the jobs on site for local people, working with Jobcentre Plus and Huntingdonshire Regional College*



# TRANSPORT

## THE VISION PRESENTED

### GETTING AROUND

The development of Alconbury gives us the opportunity to help make transport work – not just on the site, but across the local area. By investing in the right way, in the right things we can start to tackle some of the local traffic issues and provide real alternatives which will reduce people’s dependency on cars.

Our approach is based on delivering low carbon transport through:

#### 1. Establishing a Network of Pedestrian & Cycle Routes

The former airfield is currently gated and fenced off creating a block to movement within the area. New footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths will be established and historic links re-opened with the addition of enhanced connections with Huntingdon, the Ouse Valley and the award winning Great Fen Project.

#### 2. Investing in Effective & Regular Public Transport

Central to our aspiration of being an exemplar low carbon development is prioritised public transport. A new high speed dedicated busway will link the site to the whole of Huntingdon and we aspire to make this an extension of the Guided Busway to Cambridge. Discussions with Network Rail are progressing well, and we hope to bring a new rail station to connect the site to the East Coast main line.

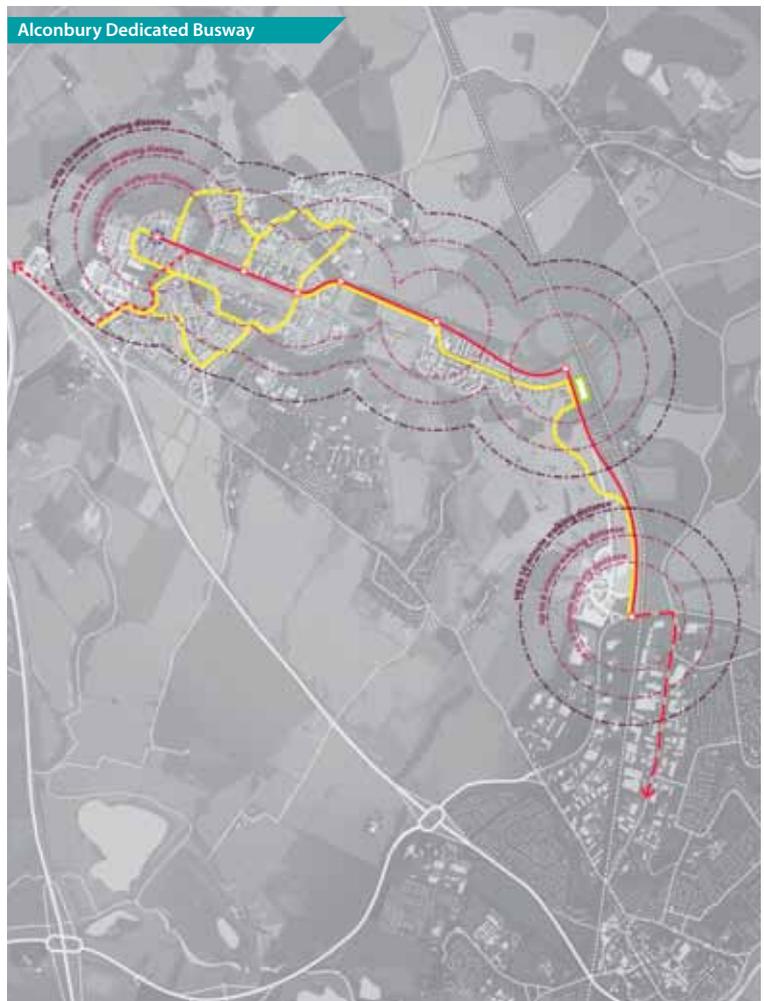
#### 3. Managing Traffic

Whilst Alconbury is strategically placed, within easy access of both the A14 and A1, we are committed to minimising traffic, and in particular impacts on local roads. We have made a strategic acquisition of an additional 340 acres between the airfield and Huntingdon to ensure that a number of entrances and exits can be provided.

We will reduce car usage and promote travel by other modes, through designing the development to make car use less attractive, giving people a viable alternative to the car and proactively managing this through car clubs, car sharing and other measures. At the same time, we will invest in improving local roads – such as Ermine Street – and junctions and provide new road links that remove traffic from the surrounding villages.

### LONG TERM COMMITMENT

We are investing in this site for the long term and will develop a forum which brings together businesses, residents and neighbouring villages to review our transport management systems, ensure we meet our targets and respond to any issues.



- Dedicated Busway
- Stop
- ⊙ Terminus
- Huntingdon connection
- - -→ Potential Peterborough extension
- Primary Street
- ▭ Preferred rail station location
- Walking Catchment

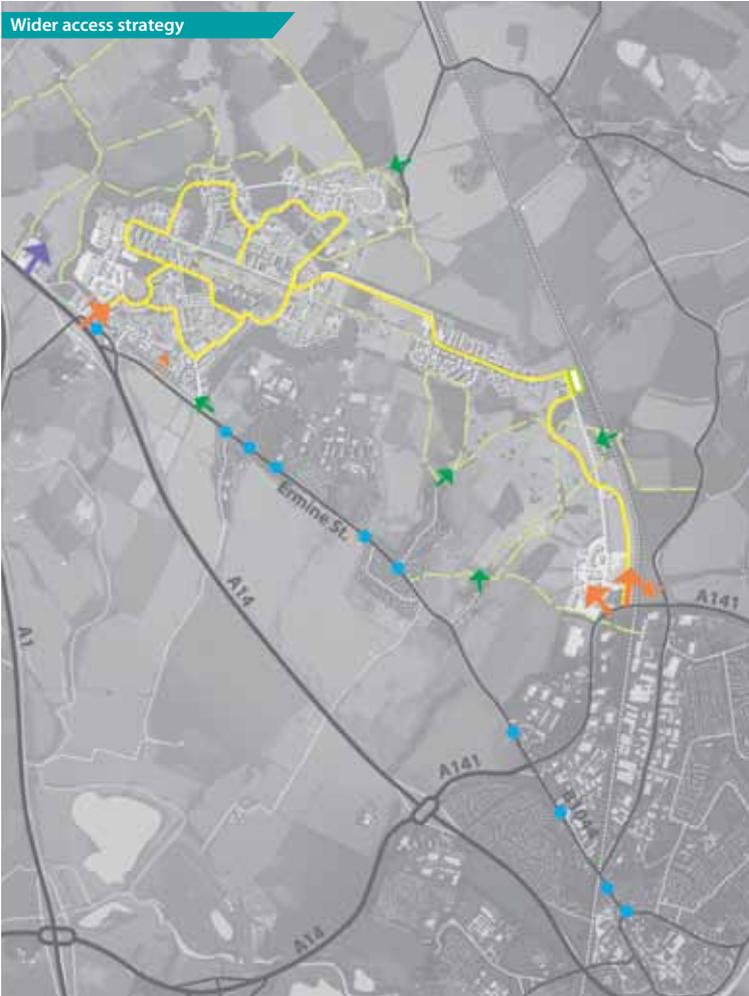
How are you going to ensure that traffic can continue to flow smoothly



## PARTNERSHIP AND PROCESS

Transport planning must be mindful of the future and of the wider area. That is why our transport approach has been developed in partnership with the District and County Council and the Highways Agency. It has been developed through:

- » 6 weekly meetings with partners to discuss current issues and fit the development at Alconbury alongside other future plans;
- » Extensive traffic surveying at different times of the day and week, at key points within a 5 mile radius of the site; and
- » Investment in the County Council's transport modelling system to ensure it properly covers the Huntingdon area and reflects the diverse movements of people living in and travelling through the local area.



- |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
|  | Primary Access (Vehicular, Pedestrian, Cycle, Public Transport)              |  | Preferred rail station location        |
|  | Possible Secondary Access (Vehicular, Pedestrian Cycle and Public Transport) |  | Existing Footpaths and Bridleways      |
|  | Pedestrian & Cycle Access  |  | Potential New Footpaths and Bridleways |
|  | Construction Access  |  | Existing Primary Roads                 |
|  | Primary Street   |  | Existing Secondary Roads               |
|  |  |  | Existing bus stops on Ermine Street    |



# TRANSPORT

## WHAT YOU TOLD US

*Those consulted broadly welcomed the approach being taken forward for the site. However, it is clear that transport was a major concern for many. Most feedback focussed on making sure concerns regarding the traffic issues are taken seriously and addressed robustly.*

### ***“We need to get away from business as usual”***

The need to think differently about transport was welcomed by both technical attendees and those who came to the Design & Discovery day. This led to strong support for the public transport elements of the scheme and the importance of opening up appropriate pedestrian routes, bridleways and cycleways.

There was also some scepticism, however, as to how far these measures might be able to go in reducing car usage on the site and that they should not be seen as an alternative to dealing with the traffic that the scheme will generate.

### ***“The Cambridgeshire Guided Busway should come here”***

There was generally strong support for the concept of linking the site in with the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway, but that this should not be at the expense of considering local bus services as part of the package.

The concept of a new rail station was also broadly welcomed. However, further thought was requested into the nature of this station, the development around it in terms of density and uses, the role that it might play in the wider area and mitigating the potential traffic impacts on the surrounding villages. The issue of car parking at the station, in particular is key in ensuring that this does not intensify traffic to the site.



### ***“Please deal with the infrastructure first”***

Many comments raised the issue of phasing and timing of transport infrastructure. Many saw it as essential to get the link through Grange Farm to the A141 as early as possible. This relates to traffic impact in the Stukeleys (and elsewhere) as well as to the need for the early establishment of non car mode travel patterns as soon as possible. Suggestions included investigating ways of bringing forward funding and provision of a low cost initial link to be upgraded later. At the same time, some concerns were raised that the 2 major vehicular access points will not be sufficient.

### ***“The only concern for us is transport and roads”***

Concerns were raised by a number of attendees in regard to traffic congestion on the A141 and the link between this road and the A14. There is clearly much frustration as a result of the cancellation of the Ellington to Fen Ditton scheme, and the current impact on communities across a wide area when there are problems on the A14.

Without exception people understood that Urban&Civic are not responsible for resolving the A14 problem, but felt that the Alconbury development must not make matters worse. There was general acceptance that we all need to put pressure on the politicians to deliver a solution quickly and the Enterprise Zone is a positive tool in this regard.

The potential knock-on impact of the A14 and the development on the local road network was raised. In particular there was an ask for no vehicular connections through Clay Lane – with which we initially agreed. However in discussions with transport partners it was made clear that a potential future option of a public transport access to the Lane needs to be retained. We have therefore amended the pledge to ensure no private vehicles can use the Lane, and will suggest and fund the installation of bollards to reinforce this.

## OUR RESPONSE

### WE HAVE:

- » committed to no vehicular connections through Owl End and Green End (Great Stukeley).
- » we have committed to no private vehicular access through Clay Lane.
- » put our shoulders behind the lobby for upgrading the A14 through our own connections.
- » joined the Cambridgeshire Travel for Work Partnership and are examining a range of tie-ins, schemes and initiatives for the short, medium and long term.
- » accelerated talks with the Highways authorities about potential improvement works to the A141 and the timing of the Southern Gateway access being in place. Timing of this will be agreed as part of our modelling analysis.
- » encouraged and support a working group which is looking at the potential impacts and potential traffic calming solutions for Ermine Street with the Stukeleys.
- » we have had further positive communication with Stagecoach regarding the Public Transport provision and links to (and enhancement of) the Cambridgeshire Guided Bus route.

### WE ARE/WILL:

- » work with local schools and colleges and draw on national and international best practice to develop behavioural change campaigns which support our investment in public transport solutions – and ensure they are used!
- » ensure that our transport modelling demonstrates a robust assessment of the road network in the context of this development.
- » develop a governance aspect to our transport strategy which will monitor the impacts of traffic from the development on the local area, and respond with additional investment and initiatives as required.

### PLEDGES 4 & 7:

***We will create a Southern Gateway to connect to Huntingdon Town Centre***

***No vehicular connections through Owl End and Green End (Great Stukeley) and no private vehicular connections through Clay Lane (Abbots Ripton)***



# LIVING LANDSCAPE

## THE VISION PRESENTED

### LANDSCAPE

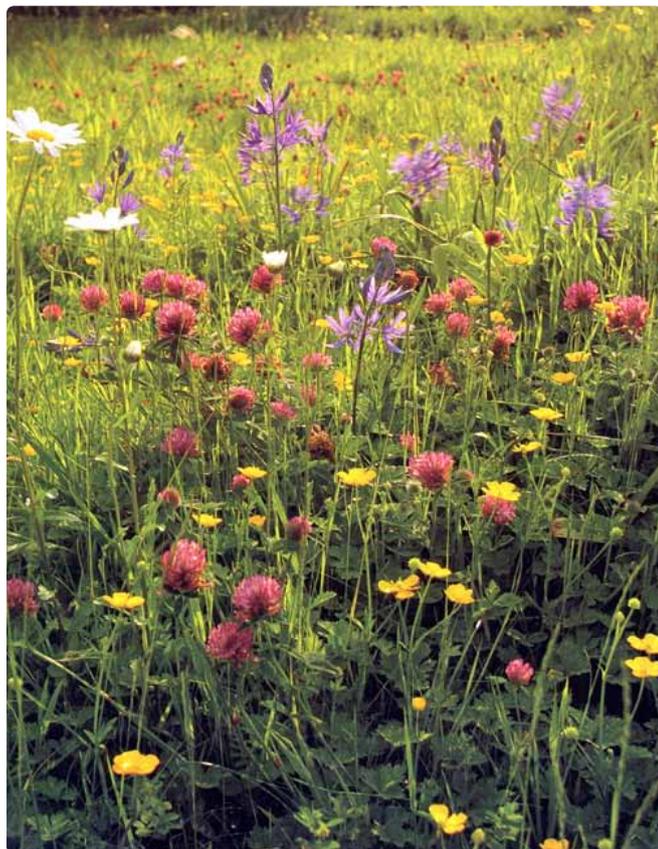
We want to craft a place where the natural environment has a presence throughout the site. We think that homes and places of work can become an integrated part of that environment with connections via woodland walks, green corridors and open space. To do this we will keep over 700 acres of the site – 50% – as green space which will include:

**A Green Wedge** – 75 hectares of land protected for future generations and providing a green buffer zone for the Stukeleys;

**Heritage park** – a new park that will celebrate and interpret the war time heritage of the site;

**New Woodland** – 90 hectares of new woodland will be planted on the site; and

**Food production** – extensive provision of allotments, community orchards and potentially a community farm.

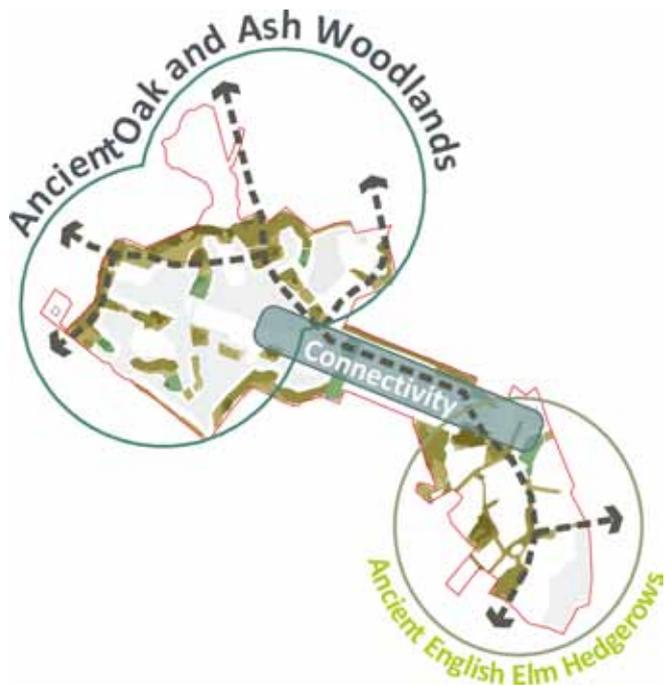


### THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Our approach to the natural environment has three key principles:

#### 1. Connecting Woodlands

Cambridgeshire is one of the least wooded counties in the country. To strengthen the habitat links between the woodland and hedgerows to the south of the site, with the ancient woodland to the north and beyond we will create over 90 hectares of new woodland and hedgerows.



Can we have an apple orchard and strawberry farm "pick your own" and community days there

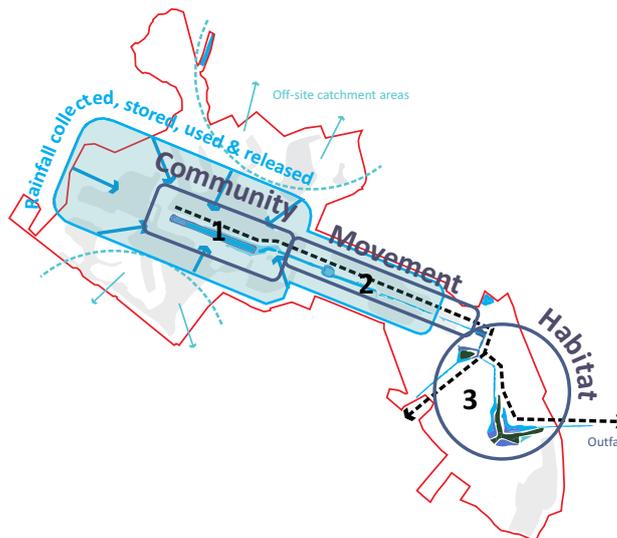
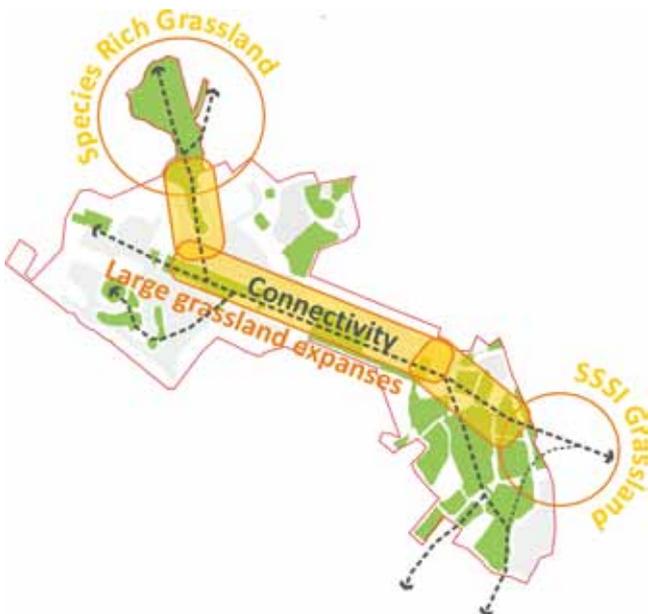
Screening needed from views from the west and south west. Commercial buildings too close to Ermine Street

### 2. Replenishing Grasslands

We want to deliver large areas of new, species rich grassland for people and wildlife to enjoy. We will provide over 200 hectares at Alconbury which will enable us to reintroduce new and lost species such as the "Pasque", the county flower of Cambridgeshire.

### 3. Recycling Water

This region has the lowest rainfall in the country. We want to harness and manage water. By capturing, storing and recycling rain and surface water, we can deliver new landscapes and habitats across the site.



*Protect as much of the wildlife and habitats on site as possible*

*I like it*

*Overall ecosystem good idea*

*Awesome! I hope it goes well!*

**JOIN US FOR A WALK AROUND THE NEW LANDSCAPES**



- 1 Grasslands**
- Reinstated species-rich grassland habitat
  - Wildlife corridors
  - Multi-functional productive landscape



- 2 Moated Woodland**
- Rich, diverse habitat resource for wildlife
  - Retains and enhances existing woodland and hedgerows
  - Integrates SUDS and seasonal wetland habitat



- 3 Open Parkland**
- New large informal green space for the area
  - Passive recreation
  - Reinstates and enhances historic features



- 4 Prestley Wood**
- Schedule Ancient Monument
  - Distinctive feature on the sky line
  - Part of sites heritage story



- 5 Productive Landscape**
- Productive landscape including edible forest garden
  - Community woodland and allotments
  - Educational resource



OF ALCONBURY...



- 6 Linear Park**
- Multi-functional open space, including educational uses
  - Formal and informal recreation
  - Runway retained as part of movement network



- 7 Campus Park**
- New focal space comprising large formal public square
  - Incorporates SUDS as part of new linear waterway feature
  - Strong relationship to surrounding 'commercial hub'



- 8 Cricket Pitch**
- Incorporates listed building as a cricket pavilion
  - Formal recreation
  - Focal point within 'commercial hub'



- 9 Boundary Walk**
- Strong relationship with new and existing woodland
  - Interpretive heritage trail
  - Passive recreation corridor



- 10 Heritage Park**
- Retains listed hangars
  - Incorporates 'magic mountain' within its setting
  - Multi-functional events space

# LIVING LANDSCAPE

## WHAT YOU TOLD US

*The main message from the Design Enquiry process was one of support for the landscape and green infrastructure proposal as set out. The scale, proportions and nature of the landscape, linked to its active use excited many of the attendees at both the Technical Workshops and the Design & Discovery day.*

***“Great ideas for variety, using existing features”***

***“When can you start?”***

The general enthusiasm for the proposals was backed up by a number of attendees being keen to see early planting in creating these new landscapes. There were a number of reasons for this from acting as an early commitment to setting the context for the development that will follow.

***“Have an integrated approach to Green Infrastructure”***

A very clear message for the evolution of the concept plan for Alconbury was to look closely at the potential for green infrastructure to play a number of roles. The ability of green and open space to provide not only access, but also new habitat and visual mitigation all need to be drawn together. In addition, the importance of thinking about open space and landscape in conjunction with the strategies for energy, waste and water is essential in achieving this aim, for example the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage.

***“Don’t forget the importance of future maintenance”***

The scale and nature of the proposed green space and landscape led to a number of comments from both technical attendees and those who came to the Design & Discovery day that a proper management plan for the future maintenance of the proposals must be part of the early planning for all the landscape proposals.

***“Cycle paths, bridleways, running routes and dog friendly walks”***

The feedback from the Design & Discovery day was very clear in terms of the potential to open up the site and to deliver new recreational access routes that are well connected to the surrounding area. This was seen as a real benefit for local people and the delivery of new routes needs to be a core part of the proposals. A particular concern was raised in relation to Clay Lane and the importance of this as a recreational route, linked to the villages to the north but not for vehicular traffic.



## OUR RESPONSE

### WE HAVE:

- » competed our first landscape improvement scheme with the planting of 2,250 trees and shrubs as part of landscape improvements along Ermine Street. This included a community tree planting event.
- » committed to ensuring green “wedges” between the site and existing communities to ensure each community retains its separate identity and rural aspect.
- » broadened the scope of our Green Infrastructure Strategy to ensure it links effectively with our plans for energy, waste, water and active communities, and is a theme which brings each part of the scheme together.
- » heard the excitement and interest in this topic, so are looking at ways in which we can involve local communities in helping us design key parts of the public open space.
- » taken the issue of light impact on the local area as a specific strand of work within other impact analysis we are undertaking and this will guide our lighting policy for the site.

### WE ARE/WILL:

- » plant woodland early around the edges of much of the site to reduce visual, noise and light impact in the surrounding area.
- » undertake research about best practice for sustainable long term management of public open spaces, and as part of the Green Infrastructure strategy will ensure long term maintenance is included and is keeping with our approach to community assets.
- » investigate how we can legally and robustly guarantee the green space bordering the Stukeleys in perpetuity. This will be agreed with the Parish Council.
- » We are working with Natural England to mitigate the impact of the railway station on a small section of SSSI calcareous grassland, and drawing up a plan to create significant new areas of habitat within the same area.

#### **PLEDGES 1 & 6:**

***We will plant over half a million new trees across the site starting Winter 2011-12***

***We will give long term legal protection to the major parks and public spaces, including a permanent green shield for the Stukeleys***



# HOMES & LIVING

## THE VISION PRESENTED

### EXEMPLAR HOUSING

#### 1. New Homes

As part of our commitment to a high quality low carbon site, we propose to deliver approximately 5,000 new homes over 25 years. The bulk of these homes will be built at a medium to low density primarily for families and we will work to ensure that new housing is affordable and flexible in order to respond to changing needs over time.

#### 2. A Living Environment

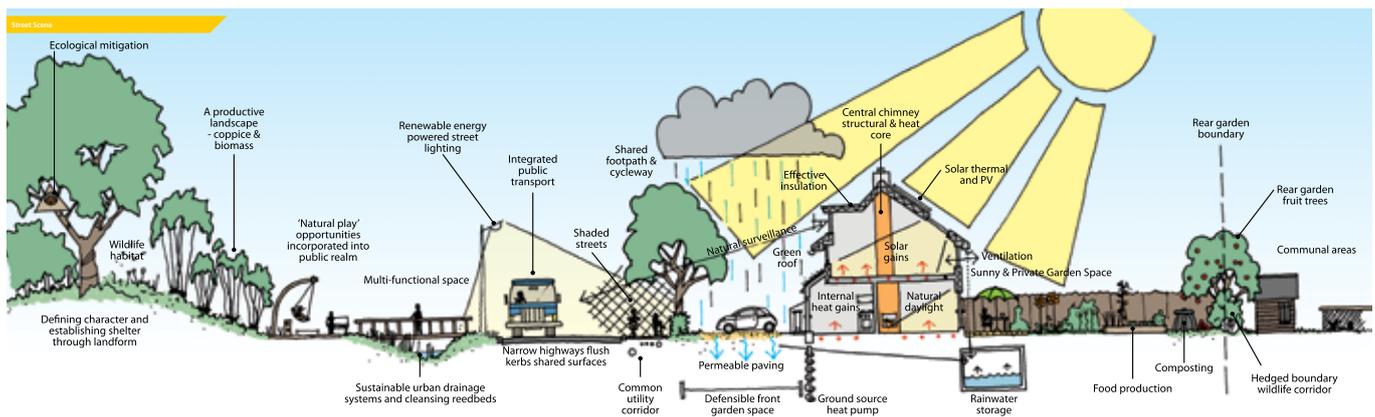
Maintaining the sense of space at Alconbury is a crucial part of the development:

- » All future residents will have access to a range of natural environments including generous private gardens;
- » New public transport, cycleways and footpaths will help ensure that the development is accessible to everyone; and
- » Links with nature through community orchards, allotments and edible forests will help to provide locally grown food.

#### 3. Build Quality – Only the Best will do

We will create attractive high quality places where people can feel at home and in which we can all take pride. This will be delivered by:

- » Best practice design guidance being established and enforced through planning system;
- » Our long term ownership, meaning we share the Council’s interest in seeing quality from first to last; and
- » Providing self-build plots to allow unique architectural solutions and individualism to flourish.



Use local architects

Will you make sure house have decent gardens. We all live so squashed up

The area needs many affordable homes for people to rent as well as buy

Please use Eco friendly building and modern architecture

#### 4. Low Carbon Living

We want to make it easier for people to lead low carbon lives. As part of the development:

- » We are working hard to identify the best low carbon materials and designs from examples across the world;
- » Our homes will integrate practical features to make sustainable living part of everyday life such as recycling facilities, rainwater storage, micro power generation, bike parking and electric car charging; and
- » We will ensure that the infrastructure on and under the site reflects our low carbon ambitions.

#### 5. Creating Community

We believe that by creating engaged and active communities from day one, we will ensure a place which truly works for people, with people. The mix of residential and business use across the site is a key element of this as are local forums to monitor any traffic issues or support community initiatives.

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

We want to deliver different types of housing which meet the needs of the local community. Affordable housing will be a key element of this and we are discussing integration, design and types of tenure with Huntingdonshire District Council to meet local demand.



# HOMES & LIVING

## WHAT YOU TOLD US

*There was much interest in the residential elements of the emerging masterplan. There was very little objection to the inclusion of new homes as part of a sustainable approach to the future for Alconbury. The feedback was much more focussed on the nature of the homes to be provided, the quality of those homes and the facilities that need to be put in place to support them.*

***“Keep housing density low, we all live so squashed up”***

The nature of the housing at Alconbury is clearly a ‘hot topic’. There seemed to be very little appetite amongst those who attended the Design Enquiry for high density residential development. Most people wanted to see a range of housing that meets the needs of young and old. This should move away from the higher density that has been the trend in recent years, delivering sufficient car parking and decent sized gardens reflective of the less urban setting of the site.



***“Residential development at Alconbury should have its own identity”***

Design and quality were issues that exercised many people who attended the Design & Discovery day in particular. Detailed comments on the individual character areas of the site are set out later in the report. These comments on architectural style are very helpful in shaping future design aspirations for the site. The need to ensure identity and quality throughout the development came across strongly. Practical ideas such as the use of local architects and the provision of self build plots were welcomed.

***“The area needs affordable homes for people to rent as well as buy”***

The provision of affordable homes through a range of types and tenures including rental was an important message. There are clear ideas about how this might work spatially on site, for example avoiding high density provision in a single area.

***“Alconbury should develop a new community”***

Many people felt that the delivery of new homes on site will really only be effective if it is balanced with the provision of new facilities to create a community from day one. This is reflective of the comments received under Active Communities. In addition to new provision, the important role that the existing communities around the site might play in helping to establish this was identified. At the same time a number of comments were made about the importance of Alconbury being connected to and supporting Huntingdon town centre rather than competing with it.



## OUR RESPONSE

### WE HAVE:

- » started developing design principles that houses at all price ranges and tenures should be generously proportioned for family living and home-working, as well as having good sized gardens and good parking.
- » reinforced our previous commitment to low density housing across most of the site, with areas of higher density housing to create a civic "buzz" in key locations.
- » started work on a sustainable mechanism of controls which will be agreed with Huntingdonshire District Council , the LEP and the Parish Council Liaison Group, to ensure quality is maintained from the first to the last brick. This will be informed by specific views given about architectural styles through the Design Enquiry.
- » committed to providing a range of different tenures for housing on the site which will be agreed with Huntingdonshire District Council but include social housing, private rented, and shared ownership as well as owner-occupier.

### WE ARE/WILL:

- » explore innovative ways in which to deliver a range of affordable housing without the availability of government grants.
- » seek to provide a proportion of the residential properties for rent.
- » work with Huntingdonshire District Council to establish strong links with Huntingdon Town Centre whilst providing local facilities on site.

### **PLEDGES 4 & 5:**

***We will create a Southern Gateway to connect to Huntingdon Town Centre***

***We will actively participate in the regeneration of Huntingdon Town Centre***



# HISTORY & HERITAGE

## THE VISION PRESENTED

### CAPTURING 70 YEARS OF GLOBAL HISTORY ON YOUR DOORSTEP

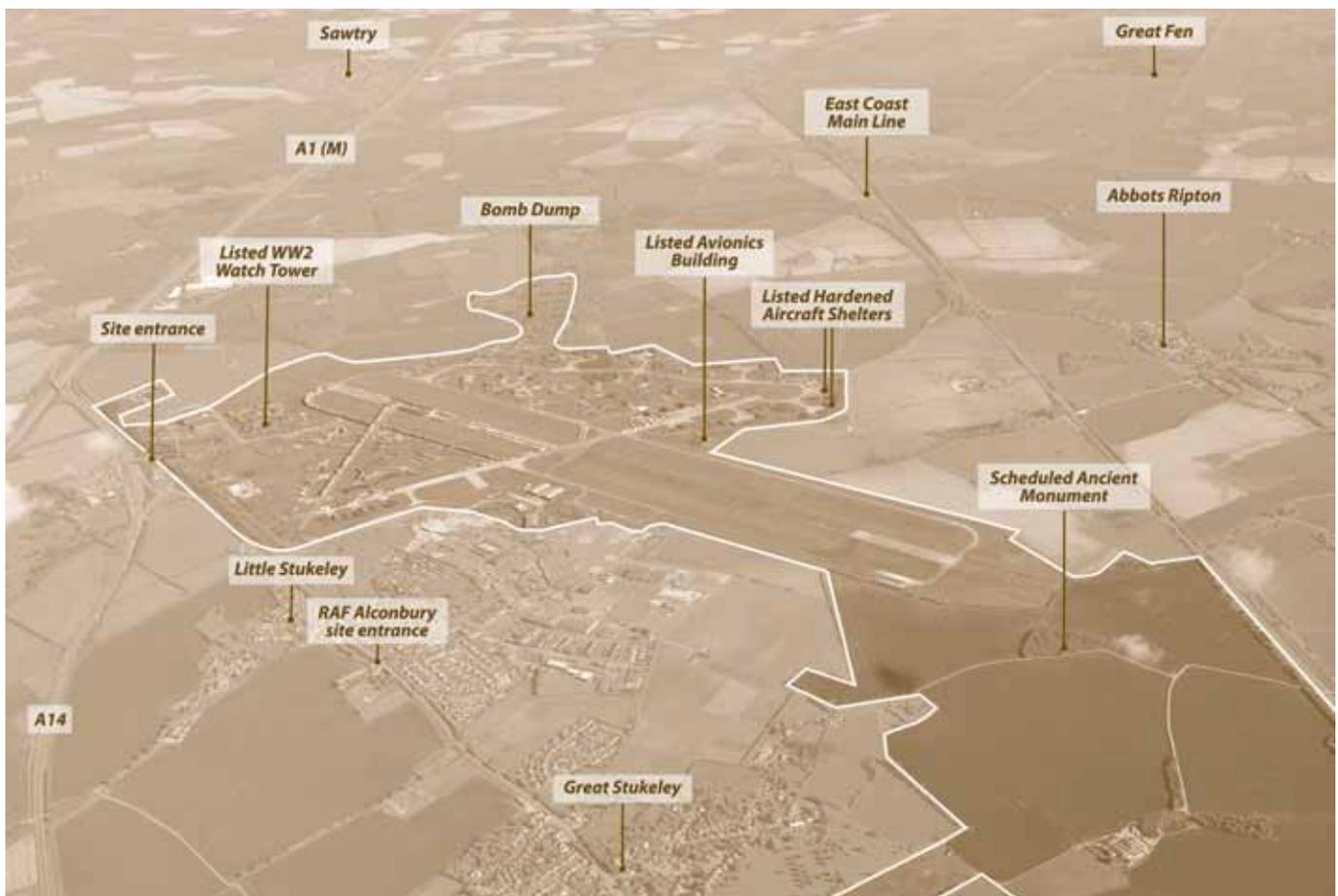
Like many airfields in East Anglia, Alconbury played a key role – first for the British, then the Americans – in the Allied victory over Nazi Germany. Alconbury, however, went on to play a crucial and unique role throughout the Cold War and remained in active service until 1995.

The legacy of these conflicts has laid down layers of history which are intertwined with the communities around the airfield and we want to capture that history and weave it into the future of the site.

The site also contains a scheduled ancient monument which sits within Prestley Wood.

Our principles in developing a heritage strategy for the site are to:

- » Ensure that the listed buildings are properly integrated within the development to provide future heritage, cultural and community benefits;
- » Capture the ‘ghost of the Runway’ within our overall design;
- » Use the heritage buildings and military artwork along the walks and cycle ways to link people to the landscape and heritage around them;
- » Restore Prestley Wood and provide the Scheduled Ancient Monument with the setting it deserves; and
- » Investigate below ground archaeological features to better understand the ancient landscape and to capture the history of the local area prior to the Second World War.



Don't forget us  
at the Stukeleys  
Heritage Group!

Good use of  
the old existing  
buildings

Please keep our  
heritage and make  
it integral to your  
developments



Conversion of an aircraft hangar into an event space



Conversion of an old WWII watchtower to a cricket pavilion to safeguard its long-term future



# HISTORY & HERITAGE

## WHAT YOU TOLD US

*One of the strongest messages of the four days was to effectively record the history of the site for future generations and to ensure that where possible this heritage is built into the approach to the sites future.*

***“Please keep our heritage and make it integral to your development”***

There were a number of suggestions as to how this might be achieved. The need to record and display on site, the names of all those who have lost their lives from Alconbury in the Second World War; support for a heritage park; archaeological investigations to assess the significance of the site prior to the Second World War and investigation of a museum or interpretation centre all emerged.

***“Hoorah for the Cricket Pitch”***

The principle within the masterplan of finding new uses for buildings and heritage assets across the site was welcomed. The reuse of the listed watch tower as a cricket pavilion and the development of a cricket pitch to protect its setting in particular met with approval. Appropriate interpretation for the Cold War listed buildings was also important for heritage stakeholders.

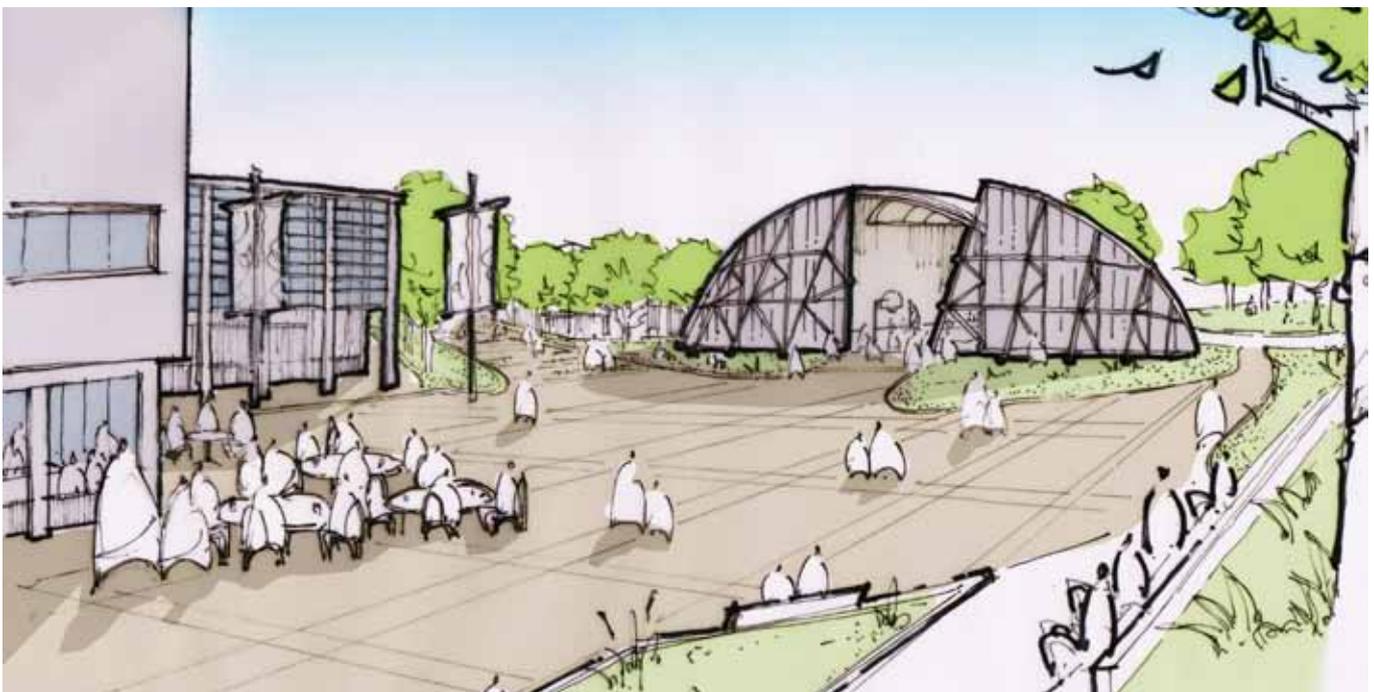
Many of the discussions therefore focussed around ensuring that as the masterplan is developed, its significant Cold War role is reflected.

There was also an understanding that not everything on the site can be kept and that there may be the opportunity to find temporary uses for buildings where it makes sense to do so.

***“Don’t forget the runway”***

The importance of the runway to interpreting the history of the site was identified by both technical stakeholders and those who attended the Design & Discovery day. At the same time, there was a recognition that it is unlikely to be practical to retain it as is. People were keen to ensure that as the masterplan is developed, the memory of the airfield’s layout is reflected.

All this needs to be pulled together through an appropriate Heritage Strategy for the site as part of the planning application process.



## OUR RESPONSE

### WE HAVE:

- » started mapping out a project which will:
  - capture the memories and history of the site for future generations;
  - record the buildings – by photograph and painting – to capture the fabric and setting of the site;
  - Research the names of the servicemen who lost their lives from Alconbury during the Second World War; and
  - include local and regional history groups and stakeholders to help define the future heritage strategy for the site.
- » reinforced our approach of carrying a memory of the airfield's layout within the masterplan.

### WE ARE/WILL:

- » look to appoint an artist in residence to capture the buildings and site through its transition.
- » put together a group to consider making the most of the heritage assets that are retained on the site for educational, cultural and tourism opportunities.
- » alongside the Listed Buildings which we will keep - look at the robustness of other historic buildings where they can have a sustainable commercial or community use.

### PLEDGE 8:

*We will record and publish the social history of the airfield and incorporate physical elements of its past*



# RESOURCES

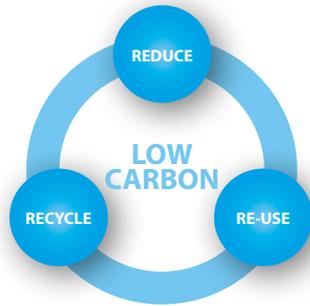
## THE VISION PRESENTED

### REDUCE, RE-USE, RECYCLE

The scale of the site and the mix of uses makes it possible to deliver innovative solutions to energy, water, carbon and waste management for the site itself and the wider district.

We want to create an exemplar of low-carbon development.

We are using three principles of sustainable working and living to support this:



#### Reduce

We will reduce the amount of energy and water we use and the levels of waste produced by:

- » Designing and building highly efficient homes and business space, so that no heat, light, energy or water is wasted;
- » Driving down demand through design and delivery of innovative technologies;
- » Offsetting the district's carbon footprint through extensive woodland creation;
- » Reducing water use and wastage and better managing the water cycle to reduce shortage and localised flood risks; and
- » Control excess water flows to mitigate localised flooding.

#### Re-use

We will re-use as many of the resources we can on site through:

- » Retaining and refurbishing the infrastructure and materials already there from substations to concrete and even buildings;
- » Delivering innovative technology such as renewable energy powered street lighting, ground source heat pumps, solar water heating and a combined heat and power network;
- » Promotion of recycling culture, via online Freecycle forums, and visible interactive features; and
- » Rainwater storage, urban drainage systems, cleansing reedbeds and water recycling.

### Recycle

We aspire to send zero waste to landfill and support 90% recycling of waste throughout the site by:

- » Building effective and efficient recycling facilities into the design;
- » Creating material recovery and household recycling facilities on the site;
- » Providing on-site waste water ('living') treatment - enabling the delivery of black/grey water recycling; and
- » Capturing rainfall/surface water and recycling this for household sanitation use and irrigation.

### ENERGY

We aspire to produce 100% renewable energy on site, and be an exemplar for green energy. We want to involve the schools, businesses and communities on site and in the surrounding area to promote renewable energy options. We are working through all the options of how to do this most effectively, and welcome your views on what you would or would not want to see on the site:

- » Geothermal
- » Solar
- » Energy from waste
- » Biomass
- » Anaerobic Digestion
- » Gas
- » Wind
- » District Heating





# RESOURCES

## WHAT YOU TOLD US

*The views expressed at both the Technical Workshops and the Design & Discovery day were varied and challenging. Whilst there was a good level of support for the aspirations as expressed, there were a number of differing thoughts on the best solutions for achieving them.*

***“This is a great opportunity to be a site of best practice for sustainable use of resources.”***

People who attended the Design & Discovery day were very well informed about technology options and issues, particularly in relation to energy. Much of the debate centred on this topic and whilst there were differing views about the potential sources of renewable energy on site, in particular wind and solar, there was overall support for the need to retain flexibility in energy options. Matched with this was a recognition that generating renewable energy is only one side of the equation and that demand management needs to be built into the approach, particularly through appropriate design of homes and places of work. There was real interest from local renewable energy suppliers in being involved in the project as well as the prospect of community ownership in energy.

***“Combined Heat and Power and the use of waste to generate community heating is a great idea”***

The ability to effectively meet the aspirations that have been set in sustainability terms means that a range of solutions will need to be explored from commercial to community scales. There was a recognition that this is the case and that these different possibilities should be pursued as part of a comprehensive approach to the site to include water, waste and energy. People liked the idea that Alconbury could offer recycling facilities for the benefit of the wider area.

***“Water Management structures must come early and be well planned”***

Queries were raised over water resources, the existing potable supply and the foul water capacity in the area. The approach to water management at Alconbury will therefore require a water cycle study to ensure that the development will not impact negatively in this respect. There were no issues raised at the Design and Discovery day relating to flood risk.



## OUR RESPONSE

### WE HAVE:

- » welcomed the feedback about our aspirations to deliver 100% green energy production on-site, and continue to develop them, including ensuring some options for community ownership and social enterprise linked in to the approach.
- » continue to work with partners to be innovative with water and intend to work closely with schools and colleges on the engineering techniques we plan to use.
- » set up a Water Management Group meeting regularly to agree the water strategy for the site.

### WE ARE/WILL:

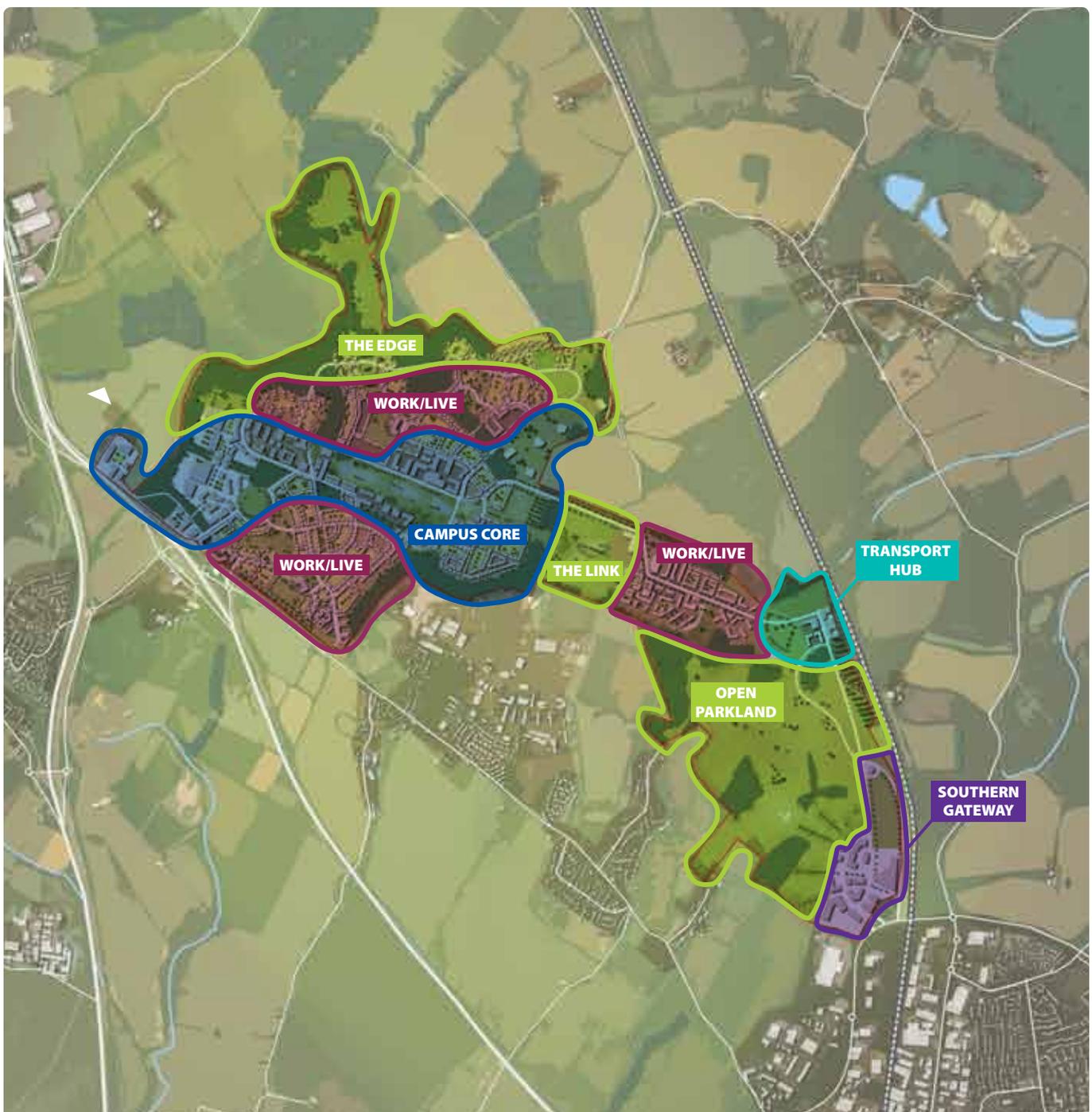
- » be setting up an energy group to discuss and agree the energy approach with local stakeholders through the short, medium and long term development of the site to fit with local energy planning.



# QUALITY & CHARACTER

## THE VISION PRESENTED

A range of architectural styles were shown as part of the Design Enquiry to try and demonstrate the scope of possibility for the site, but also to get a reaction from those who attended to what they saw. These were set out across a series of nominal 'Character Areas' designed to illustrate how the nature of the development might vary.



## CHARACTER AREAS

### CAMPUS CORE

A focus within the development for a diverse range of working, living and recreational opportunities set around a formal park setting. Former airfield uses and alignments are retained in the structuring of this character area.



*"Horrible - please do better than this!"*

*"We need modern environmentally friendly/green architecture that looks good"*

### WORK LIVE

Residential heartlands, where Local Centres and Primary Schools provide a focus for new residential communities integrated with a range of employment opportunities all within easy reach of each other. Interconnecting green space joins areas and provides a varying scale of recreational offer.



*"Some great ideas here!"*

*"Can we have houses with decent gardens"*

### THE EDGE

A richly wooded character with low density housing dispersed within the landscape abutting the adjoining countryside. Generous private gardens and bio diverse green space interlinked with pedestrian and cycle routes.



*"Love the woodland proposal"*

*"Footpath links please"*

### THE LINK

A focus for formal open space recreational uses retaining an openness north-south across the site. Spatial references to the termination and 'lift-off' associated with the former runway. Potential for an educational campus in this mid-point link of the site.



*"Very good, but we need facilities for other sports as well"*

### THE STATION

A zone defined by multi-modal transport interchange. A new railway station to serve the development. Employment site opportunities can benefit from excellent accessibility of this location, creating vibrant station quarter incorporating mixed use living.



*"Is this realistic?"*

*"A great idea in principle"*

### PARKLAND LIVING

Farmstead character with low density housing set in rich landscape setting. Open fields and meadows afford attractive views and aspect to and from residential areas.



*"I love the idea of self build plots"*

## SOUTHERN GATEWAY

Employment cluster forming a strong gateway at the southern end of the development scheme.



*"This area will clog up with traffic in no time"*

## STUKELEY COMMON

Attractive, naturalistic area of significant public open space. Largest landscape character area, defined by meadows, woodlands, fields and recreation, all with public access for walking, cycling and bridleways for horse-riding.



*"Open space needs to be protected from future development"*

# QUALITY & CHARACTER

## WHAT YOU TOLD US

*The importance of quality in the development of Alconbury was a strong message from the Design Enquiry. The setting of standards for the development that can then be managed and applied throughout its evolution is really important to people.*

*“I hope that the vision shown today becomes a reality and that not too many compromises are forced on the idea”*

Whilst the reactions perhaps inevitably varied, reflecting personal tastes, there was a very clear message that emerged towards innovation and quality architecture, particularly in terms of the housing. There was a request to be more generous in terms of both internal and external space for homes. The identification of self-build plots was warmly received and the use of local architects and house builders was put forward as a possible approach.



## OUR RESPONSE

### WE HAVE:

- » begun further work through a Design & Access Statement and Design Principles.
- » commissioned architects to begin designs for key buildings on the site.

### WE ARE/WILL:

- » continuing to look for appropriate precedents for our designs from both the UK and overseas.
- » share emerging designs with the Joint Parish Council Liaison Group.



# THREE/GET INVOLVED

This document is a summary record of the four days in September which make up the Design Enquiry. Since the event we have been working through the points raised to analyse them, test them, and feed them into the development of the overall Masterplan for the site. These conversations are continuing, with partners and communities and there are a number of ways in which you can get involved:

## **PUBLIC MEETINGS (PRE-SUBMISSION)**

We are discussing with the 5 local parish councils and the Town Council, dates for public meetings, which provide an opportunity to talk through the Masterplan that we are planning to submit in the Outline Application and discuss issues arising. This Masterplan will reflect the feedback we have taken on from our partners across the public, private and third sector, and local communities. These sessions will also focus on some of the key issues raised in discussions so far including transport, visual and noise impact and ensuring local access to job and business opportunities.



## **ONGOING FEEDBACK OPPORTUNITIES**

We will provide updated online and paper feedback forms for additional comments following the public meetings. We also have an open offer to meet with any individuals or groups who have concerns about the project, or ideas and aspirations they want included as plans develop – contacts follow below. We also meet every month with representatives of the local Parish Councils and the Town Council, as well as with district and county councillors. As part of those meetings we focus on key issues within the planning process and they raise concerns from their constituents for our response.

## **PUBLIC CONSULTATION (POST-SUBMISSION)**

The statutory period for people to give their feedback on a planning application is after it has been submitted to the planning authority – in this case Huntingdonshire District Council. They – supported by our materials and information – will hold a series of exhibitions for people to find out more and comment on the application.

The application will be available online and we will also have a hard copy for reference available at our Alconbury site office. Within this application will be a Statement of Community Involvement which will list all the comments made in the Design Enquiry and how they have been taken forward.



## **THE PLANNING PROCESS: DOCUMENTS AND TIMELINE**

There are a number of parts to the planning process, which we thought it was useful to set out here, to give a sense of the emerging timeline and process.

### **The Outline Application**

The Outline Application will set out the principles, size and scope of the proposed development. This effectively decides if this is the right place to develop and if the vision and scale for the site is of benefit to and in keeping with the local area's aspirations. This will then be consulted on by Huntingdonshire District Council. No building work can be done on just an Outline Application, even after permission is granted.

### **Phased Applications**

Before any development can happen on site more detailed plans about particular aspects or phases of the development will need to be submitted and approved by Huntingdonshire District Council. Urban&Civic expect to bring forward at least 4 phased applications which will set out the detail of different parts of the site. These applications will be developed and submitted over the next 20 years. They will follow a similar consultation process before and after submission.

### **Specific Applications**

The process on this site is complex, as while it is waiting for outline application, it does have existing permission for employment space which has been reinforced by the District Council and UK Government's support for an Enterprise Zone. While the outline and phased applications process is worked through, Urban&Civic will bring forward specific applications which relate to buildings within the Enterprise Zone.



## GET INVOLVED

Another key message from you over the course of the discussions in September, was to ensure the development supported local business and local people. This has reinforced our resolve and investment in maximising the local opportunities that this development can deliver. We will make a commitment to:

### Businesses

#### **Support local businesses and help the local economy to grow.**

We are setting up a procurement hub to ensure we can support local businesses to bid for work and help us roll out a high quality development. If you are interested in registering and being updated on the procurement process please e-mail [info@urbanandcivic.com](mailto:info@urbanandcivic.com) with your details and the nature of your business. We will keep you updated on progress and include you in details of the procurement process we are drawing up to ensure local firms have a fair chance to compete for contracts.

### Jobs

#### **Generate local employment for the area through all phases of the development.**

We are working with Jobcentre Plus, Huntingdonshire Regional College and a range of local charities and enterprises to support the long-term unemployed back into work, and to help young people get a step onto the employment ladder. We are also in the process of setting up a jobs hub, which will enable people to register for vacancies and receive alerts as positions come up on site. This will also link into our skills project below which will enable people to access training to prepare for a change in career.

### Skills

#### **Help people retrain, upskill and get a job on site**

We are working with Jobcentre Plus, Huntingdonshire Regional College, the Skills Funding Agency and Groundworks among others to see how we can support skills development. Furthermore we will support new and existing workers involved in the development to access options such as apprenticeships and other on-the-job training to keep learning and gain valued qualifications. More details about how this will work will be rolled out over the next few months.



You can also get involved with the project – and continue to have your say – through a variety of channels and mechanisms:

- » **Come and see us:** Rebecca Britton is based on site, and all members of the Design Team and Urban&Civic management team are available for meetings, briefings and discussions.
- » **Invite us to see you:** If you run a group and want to discuss any of the issues raised in more detail, or see how you can input to the developing plans, let us know. We will happily come and talk through our plans or host a discussion and tour on site.
- » **Speak to your parish, district or county councillor:** We meet with the Joint Parish Council Liaison group on a monthly basis, and with district and county councillors regularly. If you want them to raise an issue on your behalf, you can always talk to them.



- » **Get involved in a project:** We have a number of projects which will be rolled out over the next few months – helping us develop key aspects of the site. We would welcome input and ideas if you have local knowledge or expertise to bring to the table. We are also keen to work with local schools or groups who want to focus on any of the major themes set out in this book, and make best use of the work, analysis and expertise within the design team as part of school projects.
- » **Ask about sponsorship:** We support a number of local groups both financially and in kind, whose ambitions relate to our vision and future plans for the site, through our expertise or resources.
- » **Keep up to date:** You can keep up to date on progress through our e-newsletter – subscribe online at [www.alconburyairfield.co.uk](http://www.alconburyairfield.co.uk) or e-mail your details to Rebecca. You can also follow us on Twitter to keep up to date with news and activity [@BeccaUandC](https://twitter.com/BeccaUandC)

HDC will be conducting a review of the Local Plan during the summer of 2012. To find out more about this please view the Planning section of HDC website:

[www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/Planning/Planning%20Policy/Pages/Local%20Development%20Scheme.aspx](http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/Planning/Planning%20Policy/Pages/Local%20Development%20Scheme.aspx)

If you want to find out more please get in touch with Rebecca at any time:

Telephone: 01480 413141  
 e-mail: [rbritton@urbanandcivic.com](mailto:rbritton@urbanandcivic.com)  
 Address: Rebecca Britton  
 Urban&Civic Ltd  
 137 North Gate  
 Alconbury Airfield  
 Alconbury  
 Huntingdon  
 Cambridgeshire  
 PE28 4WX

**DAVID LOCK ASSOCIATES LIMITED**

50 NORTH THIRTEENTH STREET, CENTRAL MILTON KEYNES, MK9 3BP  
TEL: 01908 666276 FAX: 01908 605747 EMAIL: mail@davidlock.com  
www.davidlock.com

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