



AUGUST 2021

Uttlesford Economic Development & Employment Needs Assessment

Assessment of Existing Employment Sites

Iceni Projects Limited on behalf of
Uttlesford District Council

August 2021

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ON BEHALF OF
UTTLESFORD DISTRICT
COUNCIL

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Employment Needs Assessment**
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides an assessment of the quality of existing employment sites in Uttlesford District. It addresses issues such as their location, accessibility, quality of buildings and environment and occupancy, and draws conclusions on their future role as part of the portfolio of employment land in the District.

2. OVERVIEW OF APPROACH

Existing Employment Sites

- 2.1 Uttlesford's 2005 Local Plan identifies in Policy E2 that existing employment areas of 1.0 ha and over located in the main urban areas of Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden and Stansted Mountfitchet, together with existing employment areas of over 0.5 ha in key rural settlements of Elsenham, Great Chesterford, Takeley and Thaxted, will be safeguarded from redevelopment or change of use. In addition a number of further specific sites are safeguarded by the policy – Chesterford Research Park; Stansted Distribution Centre in Great Hallingbury; and Elsenham Industrial Estate.
- 2.2 In addition, Policy E1 in the Plan made a number of allocations of land for employment development – Great Dunmow Business Park; Land adjoining Saffron Business Centre, Saffron Walden; Thaxted Road, Saffron Walden; London Road, Great Chesterford; and the extension to the Stansted Distribution Centre.
- 2.3 This allocated and protected employment land has formed the starting point for considering existing employment sites in the District. In addition, consideration has been given to those sites identified and assessed in previous studies and those identified in the Appendix 6 in the 2018 Draft Local Plan.
- 2.4 Icenis has undertaken an assessment of each of these sites. The location of sites is shown in Figure 2.1.

Site Assessment Methodology

- 2.5 The site assessments have considered the existing employment sites listed in the Local Plan together with other existing employment land in the District.

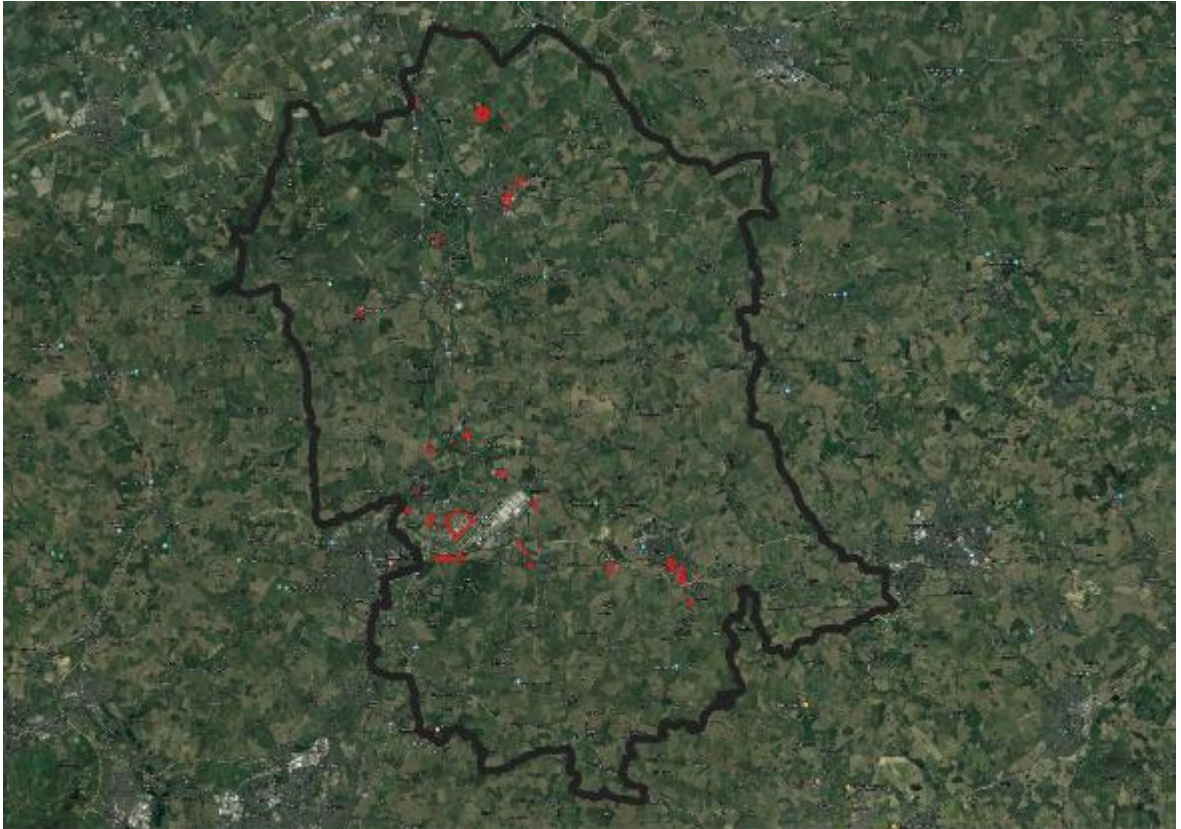
2.6 Site surveys were undertaken by Icenl in July 2021 using a site assessment proforma agreed with the Council which draws on the Planning Practice Guidance. The site assessments addressed:

- The size, nature and intensity of use of the employment site including information on the nature of businesses and key occupiers;
- The site's accessibility including its location, accessibility by road and proximity to the strategic road network, public transport accessibility, and internal access including by HGVs together with servicing arrangements for existing businesses;
- The age and quality of existing buildings, including vacancy levels, the quality of the environment on-site and whether there any physical constraints to the use of the land such as steep topography or adjacent uses;
- Adequacy of existing parking provision, including evidence of on-street parking and whether this inhibits HGV access and circulation;
- The site's attractiveness as a working environment including proximity to local services and amenities for employees, and open space;
- The site's relationship with its immediate surrounding and whether there are any potential bad neighbour or adjacency issues.

2.7 Where there was development potential on existing sites, either through vacant plots or buildings, or the potential for intensification of use, this was noted. Our assessment included consideration of the market attractiveness of available land, and any known constraints (including infrastructure) which might impact on its deliverability. Icenl has not undertaken detailed development appraisals to assess viability at a site-specific level or appraised land ownership.

2.8 Figure 2.1 below provides an overview of the locations of existing employment sites.

Figure 2.1: Existing Employment Sites in Uttlesford District



2.9 The site assessments are structured to assess those in the south of the District, and the north of the District.

3. REVIEW OF EXISTING EMPLOYMENT SITES – SOUTH OF THE DISTRICT

Sion Park, Birchanger



- 3.1 Sion Park is a courtyard office development providing good quality office space in a rural location (postcode CM23 5PU) within the Green Belt which is close to Birchanger, Bishops Stortford and M11 Junction 8. The development sits within a high quality landscaped setting, and provides suites of 1,000 – 15,000 sq.ft. Occupiers include DMG, Blue, Global Self Drive.
- 3.2 The primary use of the site is for E(g)(i) offices. It includes a mix of historical buildings, which are Grade II listed, and 1990s courtyard office development; but is generally of a good quality set in a high quality environment with some on-site sports facilities, including an tennis court and fitness centre.
- 3.3 There are a number of ancillary uses on site, including Sion Studios which provides beauty consultation/treatment rooms, and a hand car wash facility located within the car parking area (UTT/17/2799/FUL). Some areas of land on the site are used for open storage.

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- 3.4 The site is well located, with direct access from the B1383 which provides access to the M11. We consider that it offers some potential for intensification for E(g)(i) office uses subject to market demand, landscape and Green Belt impact. It should be designated as an existing employment site in the Local Plan suitable for E(g)(i) office use.

Recommendation: this site should be designated as an existing employment site suitable for E(g)(i) office use.

Parsonage Farm/ M11 Business Link



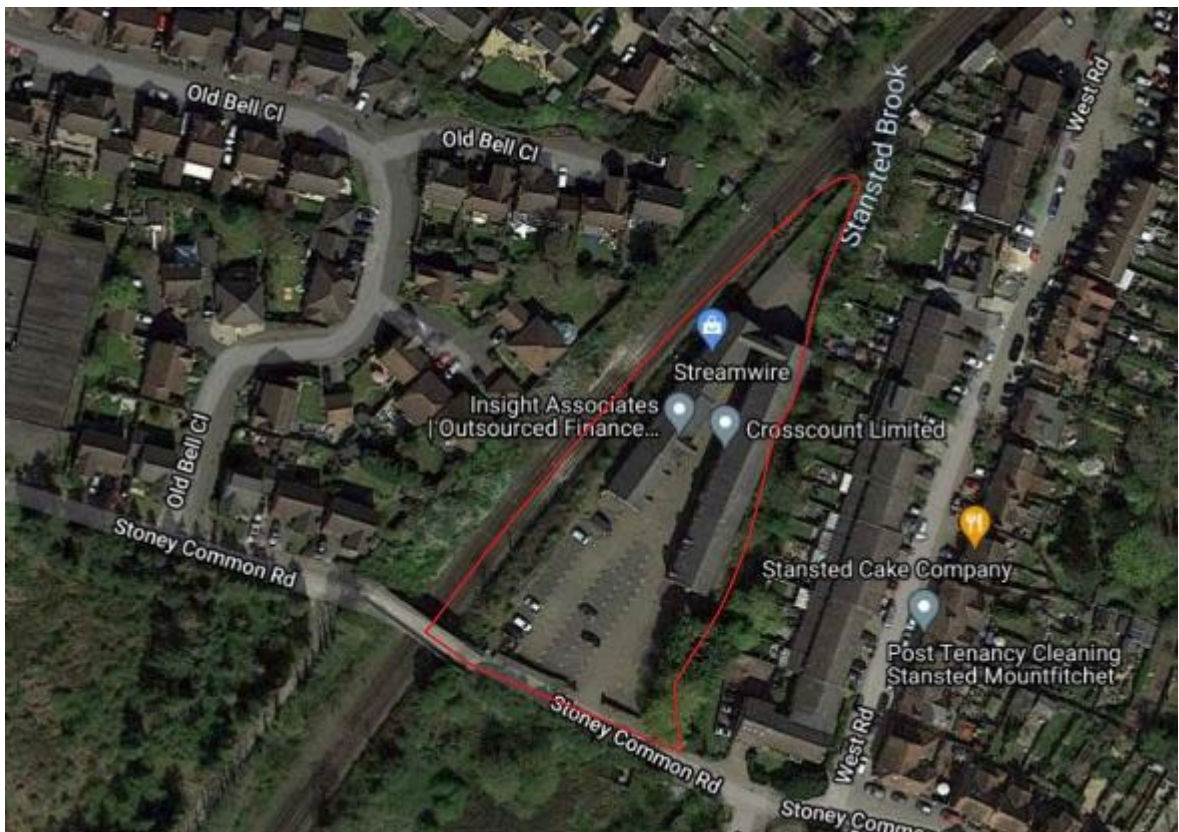
- 3.5 Policy SM5 in the 2005 Local Plan supported the redevelopment of existing buildings to provide B1 and some B2 floorspace as part of an agreed plan for the phased improvement of the site. It is evident that new light industrial and office development has since been delivered, with the northern part of the site forming a coherent cluster of medium-sized light industrial units; with the southern part of the site developed to provide an office campus with around 26 units arranged over 6 two-storey buildings with associated car parking. The newer buildings on site are relatively high quality construction reflecting the rural location and character of the area, and their visibility from the M11. The central part of the site accommodates older and poorer quality industrial units, and is occupied principally by Essex Autospray. A number of businesses on the site have multiple units including Gamit. There is little evident vacant space.

3.6 The site is generally flat, has a relatively high quality environment and accommodates modern high quality buildings. SME occupiers predominate. It is however at a relatively rural location at some distance from services/amenities, to the south of Stansted Mountfitchet, and accessed via Forest Hall Road and Parsonage Lane. It is not suitable as a result for activities which would generate notable HGV traffic. Parking provision on-site is generally adequate although there is some evidence of parking on on-street roads. Public transport accessibility is however poor.

3.7 Overall, we consider this a high quality site which accommodates a mix of office and industrial activities close to M11 Junction 8 and Bishop Stortford. There is further potential for development on the southern part of the site, to the south of the existing office campus (0.68 ha). This falls within the red line above and would be suitable for E(g)(i) office development.

Recommendation: the site should be designated as an existing employment site suitable for E(g) office and light industrial uses to protect the existing use of the site. Policy should encourage redevelopment of older units together with development of the remaining 0.68ha land at the south of the site. This is a key high quality employment site in the District.

Riverside Business Park, Stansted Mountfitchet



3.8 This is a 1990s build two storey courtyard office development located on a narrow, 0.4 ha triangular site adjoining the rail line. It is located in a principally residential area, with access from Stoney

Common Road which connects the site to the B1383 and Church Road. This is a relatively narrow road, with a single track access over the rail line.

- 3.9 The site appears well occupied, albeit activity levels were low at the time of the site assessment in July 2021. The quality of environment was reasonable; and parking provision on site was considered adequate. The site is accessible from the Rail Station and local bus services.
- 3.10 There is no evident further development potential. Whilst this is a small site, it makes an important contributing to providing office space for SME businesses within the settlement. We consider the existing use should therefore be protected from redevelopment. There is potential for loss of employment space at this location through permitted development, with prior notification given in 2020 for conversion of Unit 3 to 2 dwellings (UTT/20/2468/PAO3). We do not consider that it would be justified to apply an Article 4 direction to this site.
- 3.11 Recommendation: the site should be designated as an existing employment site suitable for E(g)(i) office use to protect the existing use of the site.**

Sworders Auctioneers Site, Cambridge Road, Stansted Mountfitchet



- 3.12 This 2.6 ha site is located on the northern side of Stansted Mountfitchet, accessed from Cambridge Road. It comprises a low rise unit, occupied by Sworders Fine Art Auctioneers, together with a small garden centre operation (Squires). It sits outside of the current development limits, although

residential development is extending northwards from the settlement and includes land to the west of Cambridge Road.

- 3.13 The site is thus currently at an urban fringe location, accessed from the B1383. It comprises generally good quality buildings in a high quality landscaped setting. Local bus services run along the B1383.
- 3.14 There is no obvious commercial development potential on the site, but some potential for expansion of operations depending on the requirements of the occupying businesses.
- 3.15 **Recommendation: this site comprises sui generis rather than traditional employment uses. Planning policy should support the continuation of employment-generating uses.**

Alsa Business Park, Alsa Street, Stansted Mountfitchet



- 3.16 This comprises a small scheme of courtyard offices located off Alsa Street immediately to the north of Stansted Mountfitchet. The site is 0.02 ha in size. At the time of the site assessments activity was limited, but the site appears actively used and provides office space for local small businesses.
- 3.17 A planning application was granted for COU of Unit 1 to a D1 Day Nursery in 2016 but it was not clear that this has been implemented.
- 3.18 **Recommendation: the site should be designated as an existing employment site suitable for E(g)(i) office use to support the continuing employment use of the site.**

Gold Business Park, Elsenham



- 3.19 This site is a local industrial estate which accommodates c. 28 E(g)(iii) light industrial units together with a number of larger units. It is safeguarded employment land in the 2015 Local Plan. The site is located within the village and adjoins and is accessed through existing residential areas (Jenkins Drive). It is located close to Elsenham Train Station with local bus services along both New Road and Old Station Road. Site access is adequate for LGVs. A key occupier is first Flight Forwarders, but a range of local SME industrial uses are evident including vehicle repair and valeting.
- 3.20 The units on site are becoming relatively dated, with two units appearing vacant at the time of the site survey.¹ Environmental quality is reasonable; with businesses having sufficient on-site parking provision. There is limited recent development/ investment activity.
- 3.21 Overall we consider that the site is a good quality industrial estate which provides an important source of employment within the settlement, and supports a range of local SME businesses. There is no evident potential for further development or intensification. The Council should support investment in

¹ These are not however advertised as currently available

the site, and might consider providing some flexibility in allowing other employment-generating uses to support its continuing performance.

- 3.22 Recommendation: the site should remain designated as an existing employment site, suitable for E(g) office and light industrial use. It should consider the occupancy of the site, how investment can be encouraged and impacts on existing occupiers in assessing any applications for other employment-generating uses.**

Old Mead Road, Elsenham



- 3.23 This 1.8 ha site is located off Old Mead Road, on the eastern side of Elsenham. It comprises a 1960s warehouse unit, occupied by Tuplins (a packaging firm) and You're Furnished, together with associated yard space. It sits on the edge of the village, but is close to Elsenham Station and local bus services and is thus at a relatively sustainable location for employment development. The quality of the buildings is average/poor, but overall the site is adequate for its existing activities. The rural location impacts on the site's accessibility as does the level crossing. However the site plays an important role in accommodating warehouse/distribution activities and provides local employment.
- 3.24 Land on the southern side of the existing unit (within the red line) together with land to the rear of the existing unit (totalling 1.1 ha) has been promoted for development through the Call for Sites process as providing potential for 4,000 sq.m of employment space. We consider that there is potential for

extension of this site subject to market demand, landscape and environmental impact; in particular if residential growth is being accommodated at the settlement.

- 3.25 Recommendation: the site should remain designated as an existing employment site suitable for E(g), B2 and B8 uses. The Council should consider the allocation of additional land through the Local Plan preparation.**

The Industrial Site, Gaunts End



- 3.26 This site, located off Green Street and Hall Road in the settlement of Gaunts End sits in a rural location between Elsenham and Stansted Airport. Over the last 20 years a number of modern HQ buildings have been developed on the site which are now occupied by corporates including Molton Brown Cosmetics, Cheergrey, HYTEK UK and Belcom. These include a mix of office and production space.
- 3.27 The site is safeguarded employment land in the 2005 Local Plan. It also sits within the Countryside Protection Zone around Stansted Airport.
- 3.28 Access to the site is via Hall Road from the A120, with two access points from Hall Road evident. There has been investment in landscaping but this has yet to mature; with overall environmental quality therefore reasonable. Local bus services 7A and 7B serve Hall Road and there is adequate on-site parking for employees.

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- 3.29 There is an extant planning consent for development of three elliptical towers (of 5,6 and 7 storeys) at the eastern end of the site, together with associated landscaping and parking, to provide HQ office space. This development – known as Trisail Towers - was approved in April 2012 (UTT/1473/11/FUL), has been commenced, but has yet to be delivered. An NMA was approved in 2019 amending the design and parking (UTT/19/1476/NMA) but the development has yet to be delivered. The ground level in this area is set down and it is clear that initial earthworks have been undertaken. Icen consider that given the high build cost associated with the design of this scheme, current rental levels together with the weak accessibility of the site to the A120/ M11 and local amenities, mean that the extant consent should not be considered deliverable.
- 3.30 The potential for employment development on eastern part of the site (c. 1.1 ha in size) however remains. Icen consider that the site boundary should be adjusted to fully include this.
- 3.31 Consideration should also be given to the allocation of land to the west of the existing buildings between the existing development and the treeline, in particular given the existing access/road infrastructure which is in place. There are two potential development plots here – 1.5 ha and 1.6 ha in size.
- 3.32 Recommendation: the site should remain designated as an existing employment site suitable for E(g) and B2 uses. The Council should revise the site boundary to fully include the land subject to the Trisail Towers consent and consider the allocation of land to the west of the existing allocation subject to market demand and landscape impact. This is a key high quality employment site in the District.**

Waltham Hall Farm, Hall Road, Bamber's Green



- 3.33 The site is an industrial estate comprising modern industrial/ warehousing premises on land to the east of Hall Lane occupied by Acme Transport Services (a bus company) and You're Furnished (a retail warehousing firm). It is in a rural location accessed from Hall Road and close to Stansted Airport. Hall Lane provides access to the A120. Environmental quality is good, there is adequate parking and the location is served by local bus services. There is no evident development potential.
- 3.34 The second part of the employment location comprises land to the west of Bammers Green Road and includes industrial and small business units of varying sizes, together with courtyard office space and yard space. Occupiers include 4D Structures and Scaffolders and Revere. Parking and internal circulation on this site is tight, with evidence of parking on internal estate roads. The site is actively used and provides an important resource for small businesses.
- 3.35 Recommendation: the site should remain designated as an existing employment site suitable for E(g), B2 and B8 uses.**

Mill End, Bambers Green Road, near Takeley



- 3.36 This site comprises a small, local industrial site comprises older, poorer quality industrial/ agricultural buildings, land used for open storage and a day nursery (High House Day Nursery).² The quality of buildings is poor, and environmental quality average/poor. The building to the rear of the nursery appeared vacant at the time of the site surveys. Activity levels were low. The land is not being promoted for development/redevelopment.
- 3.37 **Recommendation: Icenl do not consider that this site should be identified as part of the portfolio of employment land. Applications for redevelopment should be treated on their merits.**

² See UTT/19/0259/FUL

Stansted Airport – Northern Ancillary Area



- 3.38 This c. 89 ha site is identified in the 2005 Local Plan as the Airport's Northern Ancillary Area. The Policy states that the site will be reserved for activities directly related to or associated with the airport including business aviation activities, hangars, aviation fuel storage depots; and other airport-related activities (as listed under AIR3) including car hire, flight catering, aircraft maintenance/ training, airline offices and storage facilities.
- 3.39 Influenced by the policy position, the site accommodates airport-related activities. It includes a fuel storage depot, a number of business aviation providers – TCR International, Fayair, Titan Airways, Harrods Aviation, Inflight Jet Centre, Universal Aviation etc – together with engineering and catering activities associated with the Airport including Aer Aviation Equipment, Inflight Engineering and Swissport. There is some office space on site, particularly in the 2 storey 1960s Stansted House, with evidence that there is some small business space available in this building.
- 3.40 Overall we would characterise this site as somewhat under-used. It benefits from good access to the A120 and M11 Junction 8. The quality and age of the buildings is however varied, environmental quality average/poor and a number of plots of land on the site which are vacant or under-utilised.
- 3.41 Development proposals are emerging for development of 43 ha over two distinct parcels (17 ha and 26 ha in size). However there are a number of known development constraints including the safety buffer associated with the fuel farm on the site, an oil pipeline affecting part of the site, together with

potential issues associated with impacts on bird strikes and buildings of over 15m in height which could impact on radar operations. In addition there are potential contamination issues and the site falls within the 57dB noise contour. Potential impacts on M11 Junction 8 are also of concern and would likely require mitigation as part of development of land here.³

3.42 The site offers the potential for intensification of use and could accommodate general and light manufacturing and warehouse/distribution activities (subject to consideration of the above issues) as well as the aviation/airport-related uses which are supported in the existing policy framework. Icenl understands that the site is owned by Manchester Airport Group, but that a development partner – Columbia Threadneedle – has been brought on board and that a planning application is due to be submitted in the short-term.

3.43 **Recommendation: The Council should consider the allocation of this site within the Plan as a brownfield development opportunity which is close to Stansted Airport and the A1(M). It offers the potential for around 200,000 sq.m of employment floorspace which we would expect to focus on industrial and warehousing development,**

³ Scoping Opinion UTT/16/3601/SO

Stansted Distribution Centre, Great Hallingbury



- 3.44 This 8.8 ha employment site is located on the B1256 close to M11 Junction 8 and Stansted Airport. It is a good quality industrial site which accommodates a mix of E(g) light industrial, B8 warehouse/distribution and sui generis uses in units of a range of sizes, including a number of car showroom/dealership uses (and associated parking). An Audi showroom is located on the front of the site; and it additionally accommodates a Mercedes commercial vehicles dealership.
- 3.45 The site sits within the Countryside Protection Zone as well as the Public Safety Zone associated with the Airport. It is also within the 57dB noise contour. The western part of the site is identified as within the development limits.
- 3.46 The site has been extended to the east, through construction of medium-sized industrial/distribution units. Occupiers include DHL, Clarity Pharma and T Clarke (a construction firm). It is one of the few sites in the District which accommodates B8 uses.
- 3.47 It is a well occupied and successful site which accommodates a number of larger units and benefits from good strategic accessibility to the motorway network. Local bus services run along Dunmow Road. There is some evidence of on-street parking within the Estate but this does not unduly constrain its operation.

floorspace, and ancillary A3, D1 and D2 space. An amended scheme was approved in April 2020 (UTT/19/1741/NMA). Buildings 1 and 2 have been delivered to date; with Buildings 3 and 4 (2,024 sq.m) outstanding. Having regard to current market conditions and values, a pre-let would likely need to be secured for these remaining units to be delivered. The Call for Sites includes the remaining land within the allocation, identifying potential for up to 2750 sq.m of employment floorspace.

- 3.53 The Council might give consideration to the extension of the site boundary to include the adjoining 1970s industrial unit located to the east of Bury Lodge Lane, which is occupied by Kearsley Airways, or the additional protection of this land for industrial activities.
- 3.54 **Recommendation: this site should be retained as a key employment site suitable for E(g)(i) office use. Given the high quality of existing accommodation and strategic accessibility, consideration should be given to its protection through an Article 4 direction. The build-out of the c. 2,000 sq.m permitted office floorspace should be supported.**

Takeley Business Centre, Dunmow Road, Takeley



- 3.55 This 1.3 ha site comprises a development of principally 1990s industrial units fronting the B1256 Dunmow Road, together with land used for storage uses to the year - occupied by Weston Logistics (portacabin, crane and plant storage which is associated with Weston Homes) which is within separate ownership. The site falls the settlement close to the main cluster of local services.

3.56 The site is generally well occupied. At the time of the site assessment there was one 2,300 sq.ft unit advertised as available. Parking provision on the site is adequate; with local bus services running along Dunmow Road. There is no vacant land or evident potential for intensification.

3.57 Recommendation: the site should be designated as an existing employment site suitable for E(g), B2 and B8 storage use to support the continuing employment use of the site.

The Jaguars, Dunmow Road, Takeley

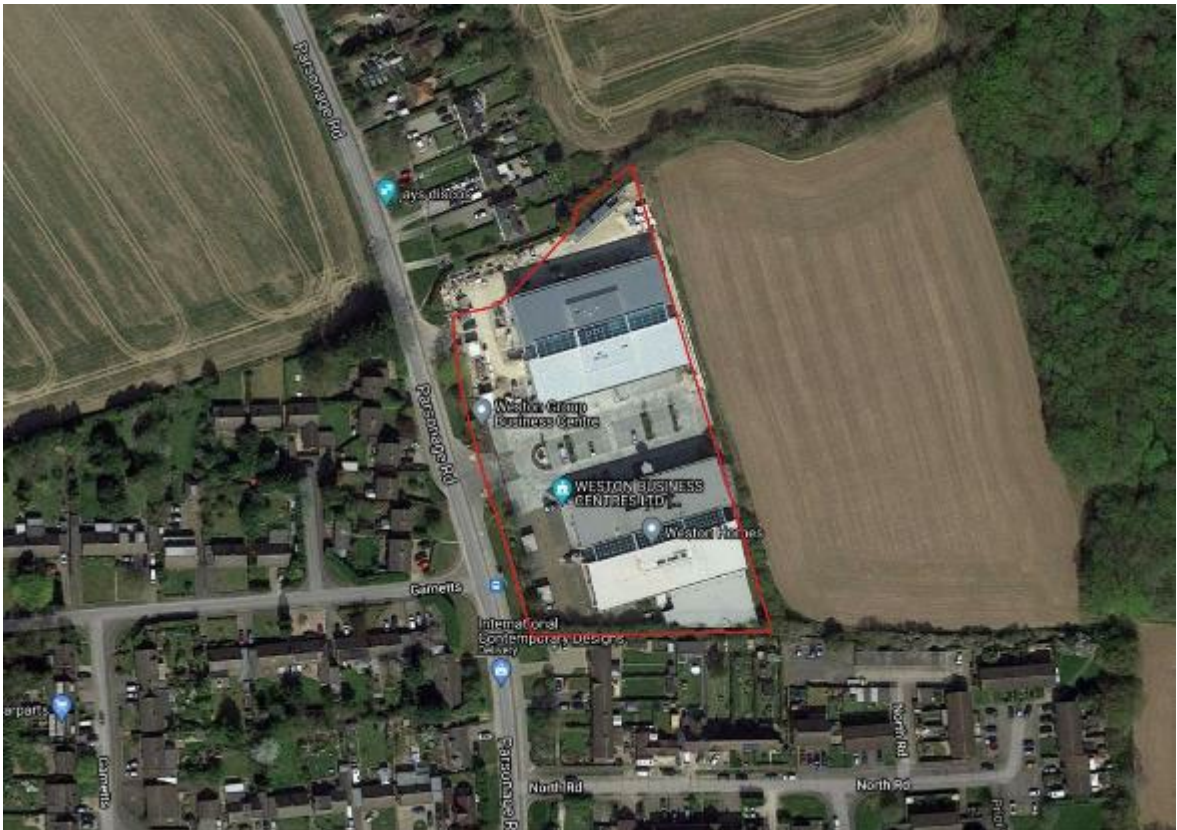


3.58 This 1 ha site adjoins the Takeley Business Centre site and comprises a former scrap metal and breakers yard together with car servicing/repair business (TR Autos) with associated yard. The yard is currently vacant as advertised as having development potential. This is a lower grade site, with tight access, but performs a function in catering for lower value employment sites.

3.59 A planning application is pending for conversion of the former breakers yard (0.4 ha) to a scaffolding yard with workshop and offices (UTT/21/1987/FUL). It would be suitable for light industrial, and storage uses and appears to be in single ownership.

3.60 Recommendation: Recommendation: the site should be designated as an existing employment site suitable for E(g), B2 and B8 storage use to support the continuing employment use of the site.

Weston Group Business Centre, Parsonage Road, Takeley



- 3.61 This site comprises a high quality business park which includes two modern HQ office buildings which house the Weston Group HQ and Stansted Business Hub/ Weston Innovation Centre in two storey modern office buildings. It is located off Parsonage Road, on the edge of Takeley, and close to and accessible from Stansted Airport (including its rail station). It has been developed since the 1990s. The site comprises employment land safeguarded in the 2005 Local Plan.
- 3.62 The site provides high quality employment space at an accessible location. There appears to be a level of available space/ suites within the existing buildings available to rent.
- 3.63 A planning application has been submitted to the Council for mixed use development of Land at Warish Farm (UTT/21/1987/FUL) which includes three plots of development of light industrial and flexible employment uses on land to the rear of this site to provide 3,568 sq.m of employment floorspace. The development of this land would potentially require reconfiguration of the parking arrangements on this site to facilitate access to new development.
- 3.64 Recommendation: the site should be designated as an existing employment site suitable for E(g)(i) office floorspace. The potential extension of this site should be considered subject to market demand and decisions regarding residential growth at the settlement, with careful consideration given to provision of suitable access and parking arrangements.**

Stansted Courtyard, Parsonage Road, Takeley



- 3.65 This is a 1.2 ha site which sits in a rural location to the north of the A120 between Takeley and Stansted Airport. It comprises a courtyard office/ business park development with buildings constructed over 2 storeys, which is occupied by SME office-based businesses. The site benefits from a good quality environment and accessibility to the Airport and M11 Junction 8. A number of local bus services run along Parsonage Road. A key occupier is the National Farmers Union (NFU).
- 3.66 The site provides modern, high quality buildings and has a benefits from a high quality environment together with the conversion of Disarono House. It sits within the Countryside Protection Zone. A number of suites appear available to lease and desks are available on a flexible basis.⁴
- 3.67 There is an approved application for conversion of Unit 1 to a D1 Childrens Nursery (UTT/21/0929/FUL). There is extant planning consent for construction of two further units (Unit 7 and 8) to form 10 separate office suites (UTT/1212/07/FUL). This scheme was under construction at the time of the site assessments in July 2021, with the first building (adjoining the entrance) almost complete. This is expected to yield c. **1240 sq.m** of E(g)(i) office floorspace.

⁴ See <https://stanstedcourtyard.co.uk/>

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- 3.68 **Recommendation: the site should be designated as an existing employment site suitable for E(g)(i) office floorspace.**

Winfresh Ripening Centre, Little Canfield



- 3.69 This site is located to the south of the A120 and accessed from High Cross Lane East. It comprises a relatively low grade/ quality industrial estate in a rural location which caters for typically noisier and dirtier activities. Units on the site vary in age and size. The largest unit comprises a c. 98,000 sq.ft industrial unit which was formerly occupied by Winfresh on an 8.9 ha plot with associated yard space. At the time of the site assessments, this was vacant, but we understand that the site has subsequently been sold.
- 3.70 The age of properties, tight internal circulation and generally poorer environment together with limited public transport accessibility mean that this not as commercially attractive as other employment sites in the area, but nonetheless plays a complimentary role in providing lower cost space and accommodating dirtier/ noisier activities. There are small scale opportunities for intensification.
- 3.71 **Recommendation: the site should be designated as an existing employment site suitable for E(g)(iii), B2 and B8 storage use to support the continuing employment use of the site.**

Fritch Industrial Estate, Great Dunmow



- 3.72 This is a successful, active local industrial estate located close to the Town Centre. The building stock dates particularly from the 1980s and 1990s but remains well occupied. The focus is on industrial activities, with occupiers including businesses involved in automotive parts, farm machinery, electronics etc. One unit is occupied by the Cambian Essex School.
- 3.73 The site is accessed from Chelmsford Road which links the site to the A120. There were no evident vacant properties at the time of the site assessments, with both building stock and the estate environment of generally reasonable quality. There is extensive evidence of parking on the estate roads indicating parking provision is tight. There is no evident further development potential.
- 3.74 **Recommendation: the site should be designated as an existing employment site suitable for E(g), B2 and B8 storage use to support the continuing employment use of the site.**

Station Road Industrial Estate, Great Dunmow



3.75 This site is a local industrial estate which comprises small light industrial units of c. 1980s construction set down from the main road. It is located close to the Town Centre with the site access located off Chelmsford Road. The site was generally well occupied at the time of the site assessments, with little evident vacant employment floorspace. The quality of environment is reasonable, and whilst parking is tight this does not appear to unduly influence or constrain existing activities.

3.76 Recommendation: the site should be designated as an existing employment site suitable for E(g), B2 and B8 storage use to support the continuing employment use of the site.

Ongar Road Trading Estate, Great Dunmow



- 3.77 This is a small local industrial estate, c 1.4 ha in size, which is located in a principally residential area. It comprises older/ dated lower value industrial units, principally accommodating SME occupiers, together with some non B-class uses (such as a taxi firm). The site is generally well occupied at the time of the site assessments. The quality of premises on site varies, with a number of older/ poorer quality buildings.
- 3.78 Internal road access within the site is relatively tight but adequate for existing uses. Access to the site is tight, between residential properties along the B184 Ongar Road. It is gently sloping away, towards the rear.
- 3.79 **Recommendation: the future of this site needs to be carefully considered through the Local Plan process. A more flexible policy might be appropriate to its future use, with alternative better located employment sites being identified to support economic growth in the Town.**

Chelmsford Road Industrial Estate, Great Dunmow



- 3.80 This 4.2 ha industrial estate accommodates principally B1c and B2 activities, focused on SME occupiers. Building ages vary, but the site is generally well occupied and actively used. Travis Perkins is a key occupier and there are a number of automotive dealerships (Taylors, P Tuckwell) together with some non-B-class uses such as a veterinary surgery (Mercer & Hughes).
- 3.81 The A184 Chelmsford Road provides access to the A120. At the time of the site assessments there was evidence of parking on the internal site roads, but this does not appear to unduly inhibit circulation. Environmental quality was adequate and there is limited evident further development potential.
- 3.82 **Recommendation: the site, which is active and well used, should be designated as an existing employment site suitable for E(g), B2 and B8 use to support the continuing employment use of the site.**

Oak Industrial Park, Great Dunmow



- 3.83 This is a general industrial estate comprises principally 1980s/ 90s premises accessed from Chelmsford Road which links the site to the A120. It is generally well occupied and actively used, with a focus on SME businesses and light industrial and industrial activities. RGH Rubber is a key occupier on the site and occupies a number of units. There are a range of other manufacturing/ engineering focused businesses.
- 3.84 There is some evidence of on-street parking on site, but this does not constrain the operation of the site. Environmental quality is good. There is limited vacancy or evident development opportunities.
- 3.85 Recommendation: the site, which is active and well used, should be designated as an existing employment site suitable for E(g), B2 and B8 use to support the continuing employment use of the site.**

Hoblongs Industrial Estate, Chelmsford Road, Great Dunmow



- 3.86 This 2.4 ha site is located off Chelmsford Road and comprises a combination of small and medium-sized industrial units. Belle Trailers is the largest occupier and majority landowner.
- 3.87 The site access is essentially through the forecourt of the Dunmow Petrol Station and is a weakness of this site. There is tight internal circulation with parking issues evident on-site. The quality of buildings varies, with some older, poorer quality stock evident. Environmental quality is average to poor. There is some evidence of internal storage on the site.
- 3.88 There are no evident opportunities for further employment development / intensification of the site.

Recommendation: the site boundary should be amended to exclude the Travelodge Hotel and the Petrol Filling Station at the front of this site. The Council should consider the future of the site, in terms of either how to promote investment or consider its redevelopment subject to viability.

Haslers Yard Industrial Estate, Great Dunmow



- 3.89 This is a local employment site situated close to Great Dunmow Town Centre and adjoining the New Street Council Depot (but with a separate access). The site accommodates a range of activities, including office and light industrial space. Occupiers include Daniel Robinsons & Sons, David Oliver Associates Dunmow Motor Services and RTA ROM Theatre Arts.
- 3.90 Internal access and parking on the site is tight, and it located within a predominantly residential area. Environmental quality is average. Prior approval exists for the change of use of the Old Mill to 12 residential dwellings.⁵
- 3.91 Recommendation: the site should be designated as an existing employment site suitable for E(g) use.**

⁵ UTT/20/2380/PA03

Martels Industrial Estate, Barnston



- 3.92 The site is a local industrial estate situated to the south of Great Dunmow and close to the village of Barnston. It comprises buildings of a range of ages, accommodating principally B1 and B2 floorspace with some land used for open storage. It is situated in a rural location, but is relatively close the A120; albeit the local road access is relatively weak. HGV access would be constrained.
- 3.93 The quality of premises varies, but the site is generally well occupied and there is limited evident development potential. The site is slightly sloping. We see limited realistic development potential.
- 3.94 **Recommendation: the site should be designated as an existing employment site suitable for E(g) use. Access means it is not suitable for B2 or B8 uses.**

4. REVIEW OF EXISTING EMPLOYMENT SITES – NORTH OF THE DISTRICT

Plextek, Ickleton Road, Great Chesterford



- 4.1 This site comprises a 1990s development of 2 and 3 storey office buildings, with car park to the rear. It is located off the B1388 which connects to M11 Junction 9A with the site accessed from Ickleton Road.
- 4.2 This is a single user site, occupied by Plextek, a technology firm operating in sensing, advanced communications and intelligent data insight. Environmental quality is good and the site is close to the train station.
- 4.3 **Recommendation: the site should be designated as an existing employment site suitable for E(g)(i) office use. The site boundary should be amended to include the associated car parking to the north-east of the buildings on site.**

Station Road Industrial Estate, Great Chesterford



- 4.4 This site comprises a range of employment uses situated alongside the railway line. The northern end of the site includes two storey 1980s offices (Great Chesterford Court) with occupiers particularly focused on the IT / software sector. A 1980s industrial unit (Iceni House) appeared vacant at the time of the site assessment. Light industrial uses predominate to the south of this, including Coles (food manufacturing), PFC Engineering and Therlemont Hupton.
- 4.5 The age and quality of properties varies, but this is generally a good quality employment location and is well occupied with good connectivity by both road and rail. Environmental quality is reasonable; with no evident development opportunities.
- 4.6 **Recommendation: This is a good quality, accessible employment location. The site should be designated as an existing employment site suitable for E(g), B2 and B8 use.**

Chesterford Research Park, Little Chesterford



- 4.7 Chesterford Research Park covers 15.7ha located to the east of Little Chesterford in a rural location in the north of the District. It is located off the B184 which connects the site to M11 Junction 9A and onwards north towards Cambridge. Occupiers include Astra Zenica, Charles River and Domaniex.
- 4.8 The site provides laboratory space and associated offices for businesses involved in the biotechnology and pharmaceuticals sectors in particular; set within a mature, landscaped parkland setting. There is currently around 350,000 sq.ft of commercial floorspace on site, comprising some of the historic buildings – which are of varying quality – together with the development of purpose-build laboratory buildings. There are 26 existing tenants as at 2021. The Nucleus building provides on-site amenities and conferencing facilities. It is a secure site with on-site security.
- 4.9 The site evidently forms part of the Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire ‘bioscience cluster’ and is an attractive, successful and high quality location. Shuttle bus services are provided, connecting the site to both Great Chesterford Rail Station and to Cambridge.
- 4.10 The site is owned by Aspire and Aviva Investors; with development managed by Churchmanor Estates Plc. The developer is keen to expand the site area to include land to the front of the site which provides larger/deeper plots which are capable of accommodating campus developments of 250,000 sq.ft. Their masterplan identifies total floorspace of 1 million sq.ft on site (650,000 sq.ft additional).

- 4.11 **Recommendation: The premier employment site in the District and part of an established pharma/ biomed cluster centred around Cambridge. The Council should continue to support development of E(g)(ii) R&D floorspace and refurbishment of existing space. There is a strong case in support of extension of the site boundary to provide potential to accommodate larger international requirements and strengthen the critical mass of floorspace and businesses at this site.**

Hall Farm, Little Walden



- 4.12 This is a small employment site in a rural, village location, in Little Walden off the B1052. It comprises 19th Century barns/ agricultural buildings which have been converted to provide employment space. Occupiers include 24/7 – a cleaning business – and Ambient.
- 4.13 Activity levels at this site are low, and the quality of accommodation is average/poor. Internal access within the site is tight, albeit there is a one-way system in place and parking provision appears adequate. The site is slightly sloping. There is a relatively high level of empty/ under-used space. Public transport accessibility is poor.
- 4.14 **Recommendation: Whilst this site is currently an EMP1 safeguarded site for B-class employment uses, we consider that greater flexibility of use should be considered in the new Local Plan. Supporting a mix of uses – including other employment-generating uses – could**

help to support investment and regeneration, subject to market demand. The site boundary should be amended to exclude the Crown Inn.

Ashdon Road Commercial Centre, Saffron Walden



- 4.15 This site is currently occupied by Huws Gray Rigeons – a timber and builders merchants retailer – with associated yard. This is a sui generis rather than B-class use. It is at an edge of settlement, hilltop, location. It comprises a modern, good quality commercial unit which is served by a local bus service.
- 4.16 The adjoining land has outline consent for 55 dwellings and 3650 sq.m of commercial space; with an application for 3322 sq.m GEA of employment development in use classes B1/B2 and/or D2 approved in February 2021 for land at the front of the site (between Rigeons and Ashton Road).⁶
- 4.17 **Recommendation: the site should be protected for E(g), B2 and employment generating sui-generis use to support the town’s economy. The site boundary should exclude the permitted residential land.**

⁶ UTT/20/0921/DFO

Saffron Business Centre, Saffron Walden



- 4.18 This is a 0.8ha local industrial estate located at the rear of the Homebase Store (which has been the subject of a recent appeal refusal for redevelopment as an extra care development). The site comprises 9 light industrial units dating from the 1980s. Occupiers include Aquasolve, Aspire and EMC Products. Units are arranged around a central courtyard area.
- 4.19 The site is well occupied and the quality of buildings is reasonable, albeit units are now somewhat dated. It is however fully occupied and evidently plays a role in supporting local small businesses. It is served by a local bus service.
- 4.20 **Recommendation: the site should be designated as an existing employment site suitable for E(g) use.**

Shire Hill Industrial Estate, Saffron Walden



- 4.21 This site is the main industrial estate in Saffron Walden. It comprises a mix of E(g) and B-class employment, in units of a range of sizes and age from the 1960s/70s to present. There is an industrial and trade-counter focus to employment activity on site, and a number of non B-class uses have been introduced (e.g. snooker club, church and gym). A gym and nursery school provide some on-site facilities which may benefit employees.
- 4.22 Key occupiers include Contamac, who occupy a number of units across the estate, Holyroyd, a manufacturing firm, and the Business and Technology Centre which includes some managed office and workspace provision.
- 4.23 The B184 provides access to M11 Junction 12. Internal road access within the site is generally adequate. The site slopes up, away from the main road. The quality of buildings varies, as does the environment – but overall it is reasonable. There is some evidence of on-street parking. There is a limited number of vacant premises at the time of the assessment, and a 0.29 ha vacant plot located adjoining the Toolstation unit. But this is owned by LPA Group Limited, an existing business on the estate and used for open storage. There is no evidence of its active marketing.
- 4.24 **Recommendation: the site should remain designated as an existing employment site suitable for E(g), B2 and B8 use and sui generis employment generating uses. It is a key employment site for the Town.**

Audley End Business Centre, Wenden Ambo



- 4.25 This site comprises a small-scale courtyard business centre in a rural location. There are 3 buildings on site providing small business space, principally in small office suites. Key tenants are the Injury Recovery Centre and Greenwoods. The majority of floorspace on site is dated, pre-1940, but the quality is generally reasonable.
- 4.26 Overall there was limited activity evident at the time of the site assessment, and public transport accessibility is weak. At the current time the site website indicates 3 rooms vacant providing 340 sq.ft of space.⁷
- 4.27 Recommendation: whilst the quality of the space is relatively poor, it has a role in providing affordable office suites for local small businesses. However given the quality of space and scale of the site, we do not consider that this is a site of any strategic significance. We do not consider that it should be allocated.**

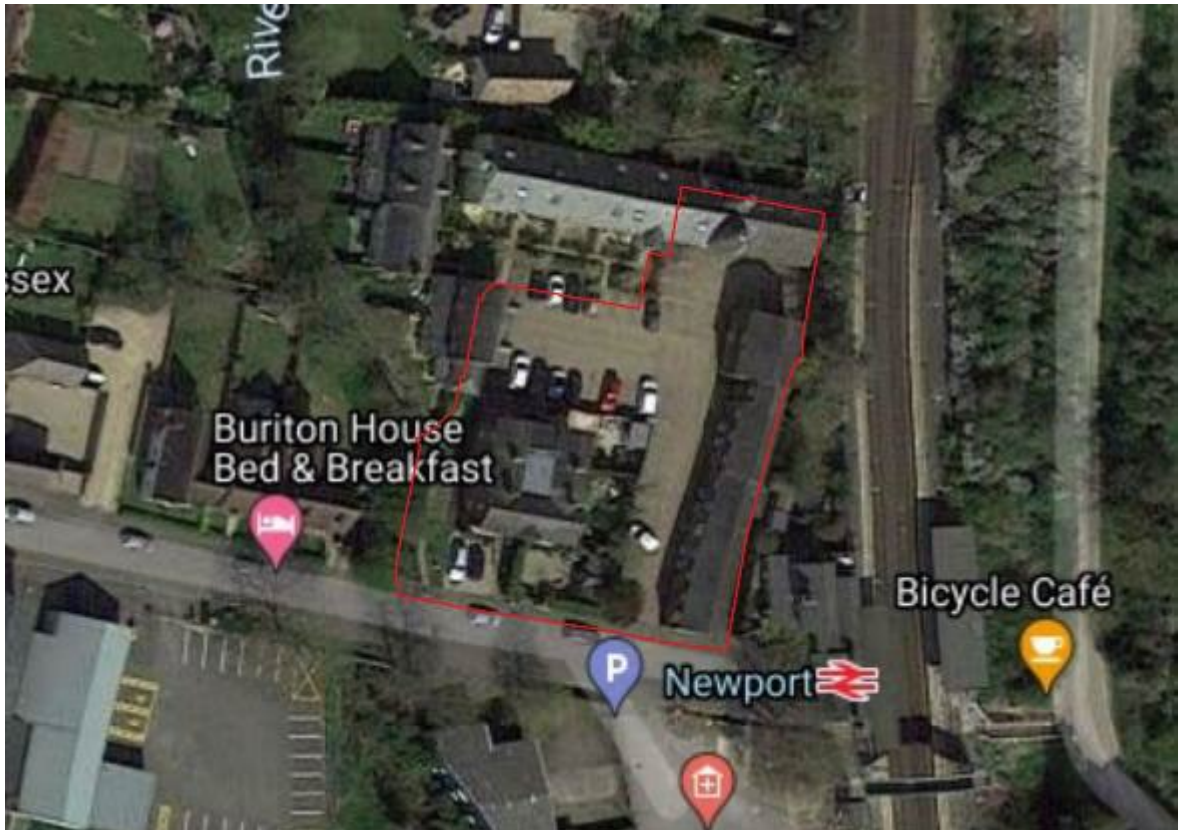
⁷ <http://audley.stevensuk.com/lettings>

Bearwalden Business Park, Wenden Ambo



- 4.28 This is a small employment site, 1.5 ha in size, adjoining Audley End Railway Station. It comprises two office buildings- Neville House and Wenden Court – together with some ageing (c. 1960s) light industrial units and a garage (Wenden Garage). It is situated in a rural location, but is close to the B1383 which provide links to the M11, and is relatively close to Saffron Walden.
- 4.29 The quality of the site overall is reasonable, but parking appears tight in parts, which limits circulation. There is evidence of some vacant office space on-site.
- 4.30 **Recommendation: Whilst this is a reasonable small site, it is relatively intensively used and is at a sustainable location. We consider that it should be protected for E(g) and B2 uses.**

Station Road, Newport



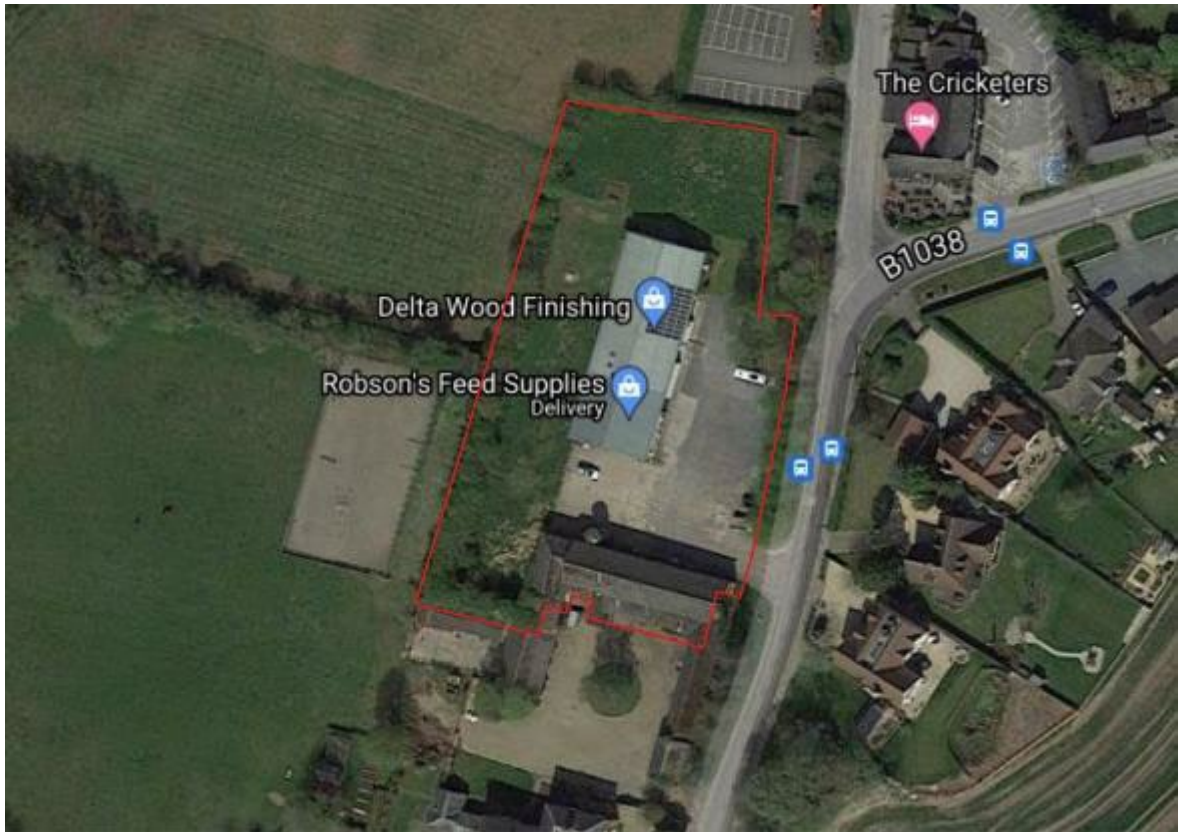
- 4.31 This site (sometimes known as The Maltings) is located close to Newport Station, off the B1383. It comprises 19th century buildings which have been converted to provide SME business space. There is residential development adjoining, but also some other employment uses along Station Road – including offices of the National College of Journalists and Saxon House.
- 4.32 The Maltings comprises 12 commercial units, focused on professional services firms, with some units having been converted to residential. The quality of environment and space is reasonable/good, and whilst parking is tight it is a location which benefits from public transport accessibility.
- 4.33 **Recommendation: protect through policy for E(g)(i) office use to support local employment opportunities within the settlement.**

Britannia Works, Clavering



- 4.34 This is a good quality industrial estate in a village location. It comprises offices in Funstons Commercial Centre plus light industrial space for SME businesses. Units range in age, but there is evidence of clear investment in the estate environment. Occupiers include Fitness Focus Dance Studio, Cloverfield Cars and Ross Nursing Services.
- 4.35 The site is accessed from the B1038 and offers a generally good quality environment. It is generally well occupied.
- 4.36 **Recommendation: protect through policy for E(g) and sui generis employment-generating use to support local employment opportunities within the settlement.**

Hill Green Farm, Clavering



- 4.37 This site comprises a single (former agricultural) unit constructed in the 1970s which now accommodates an animal feed shop/suppliers and a handmade furniture and print finishing business (Delta Wood Finishing). The older buildings to the south of the site are considered redundant.
- 4.38 We foresee no clear development potential at this site. Some small scale intensification of use would be possible subject to market demand.
- 4.39 **Recommendation: protect through policy for E(g) and sui generis employment-generating use to support local employment opportunities within the settlement.**

5. POTENTIAL LOCAL PLAN ALLOCATIONS

- 5.1 Potential employment site allocations have also been assessed within the Economic Development and Employment Needs Assessment.
- 5.2 The precise strategy for employment allocations will be influenced by the Plan's broader spatial development strategy; and the evidence from this Assessment will need to be brought together with other elements of the evidence base in considering whether these sites should be allocated for development in the new Local Plan, including evidence related to transport impact and infrastructure and (where appropriate) Green Belt performance and impact.
- 5.3 The assessment undertaken as part of reported & ENA considers issues related to:
- The location of the potential site allocation, its accessibility and evident constraints which could impact on its suitability for employment development (subject to further detailed assessment);
 - The nature of potential uses which could be attracted to the site having regard to evident constraints, location and the nature of market demand;
 - Evidence regarding its availability for development, an assessment of its market attractiveness for commercial development and assessment of potential delivery timescales.
- 5.4 The sites considered within this assessment, as agreed with Uttlesford DC, are those which were put forward as potential allocations for consideration. The results of this exercise have been addressed in the spreadsheet provided to UDC.