

Hearing Statement on Inspector Questions

Mid Sussex Local Plan 2014-2031

Site Allocations DPD

Examination: Matter 5

Science & Technology Park, Burgess Hill

On behalf of Dacorar (Southern) Limited
& Wortleford Trading Company Limited

Report date:

May 2021

Prepared as response to ID-02:

Matter 5.1(i)

Prepared by:

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Matter 5 - Are the policies to manage and promote the Local Economy and Employment Areas and Allocations sound?

5.1 Policy SA9 allocates land for a new science and technology park; it is located to the north of the A2300, whereas the District Plan policy DP9 is for a high-quality business park to the south of the A2300.

(i) Is there a compelling economic case for the implementation of this scheme?

There is a compelling and fundamentally sound economic case for the implementation of the Science & Technology Park, as set out in Policy DP1 of the Adopted District Plan, and proposed allocation by Mid Sussex District Council under Policy SA9 of the Site Allocations DPD.

In line with para 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework Feb 2019¹, the site allocation is compliant with national policy, justified as based on sound evidence, and effective in delivering the Science & Technology Park for the region, aligning with aspirations of the Adopted District Plan 2018 and the Greater Brighton City Deal², and the Council's own Economic Strategy 2018³.

National Planning Policy Framework Feb 2019 in para 81 requires LPAs to "*set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration;*"

The STP allocation in the DPD achieves this, whilst aligning with para 82 which requires MSDC to set out planning policies that "*address the specific locational requirements of different sectors. This includes making provision for clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations.*"

Policy DP1 of the 2018 Adopted District Plan was an aspirational allocation, that aimed to show support for an STP in a broad location, Policy SA9⁴ of the Site Allocations DPD allocates the defined location of the Science and Technology Park, consistent with national and local policy. The adopted District Plan 2018 was supported as part of its evidence by the Chilmark Burgess Hill Employment Sites Study (E3) which concluded that there was a need, potential, feasibility and market demand for a Science and Technology Park of this scale in this location.

¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf

² https://londonroadlat.files.wordpress.com/2016/03/greater_brighton_city_deal.pdf

³ <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/1835/economic-development-strategy.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/5706/dpd1-site-allocations-dpd-submission-draft-regulation-19.pdf>

For clarity, in the Adopted District Plan 2018, Policy DP9:⁵ : *"Strategic Allocation to the north and north-west of Burgess Hill"* relates solely to the strategic employment allocation of 25ha of Business Park land 10 ha in Northern Arc, a 3500 unit residential led development currently under construction, (the employment area has subsequently reduced through applications), and 15 ha at The HUB, which is currently partially completed and part under construction.

The DP1 STP and provision of DP9 are therefore different sites. Figure 5: Key diagram of the Adopted 2018 District Plan illustrates this.

Policy SA1 of the DPD seeks to allocate an additional 7 employment sites SA2-SA8 in the DPD that provide the 17 hectare of employment floorspace required. The STP in SA9 is therefore in addition to this requirement and is a regional aspiration.

The Site Allocations DPD process has resulted in only one site for the STP being promoted and supported at Reg 19 stage, and the Project Newton Project Team have provided a suite of evidence documents to demonstrate the site is deliverable and can be implemented, successfully drawing on the expertise of our clients, with proven track records in delivery, and the wider Project team assisting with technical expertise and market intelligence.

The economic need for Policy DP1 was based on an evidence base including the Northern West Sussex Economic Growth Assessment (E1) and (E3) Chilmarks' Burgess Hill Employment Sites ⁶. To support the Site Allocations DPD an updated September 2020 version EGA (E2)⁷ confirms the following in regard to the STP. *Para 10.57 "Employment development of a strategic scale is also proposed at Burgess Hill in Mid Sussex, through the form of a Science and Technology Park west of Burgess Hill on the A2300. This was allocated as a broad location in the Mid Sussex District Plan (policy DP1) with the exact site identified in the Reg18 Site Allocations DPD that was recently subject to consultation. This represents around 50ha in size and is likely to accommodate approximately 2,500 jobs across the B1/B2 use classes."*

The EGA confirms that the STP is justified based on LEP aspirations for the region *"10.58 The rationale for a Science and Technology Park in this location was identified by the Coast to Capital LEP in their Strategic Economic Plan (2014), recognising that such a development could impact positively on the wider region and beyond, supporting high end economic and business growth across the Coast to Capital and South East LEP areas."*

Para 10.59 of the EGA confirms that the site provides a unique role and the STP is not in competition with the employment land supply of 17ha of employment land allocated in the DPD under SA2-SA8. *"The scale and nature of proposed (B class) uses on the Science and Technology Park site suggests that any future development could feasibly accommodate occupiers seeking a location within the wider NWS commercial property market area, albeit the focus on science and technology activity means that the site is likely to serve the needs of specific sector based occupiers rather than 'general market' needs."*

⁵ <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/3406/mid-sussex-district-plan.pdf>

⁶ https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/3214/ep36_bhempsitesstudymarch2015.pdf

⁷ <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/5809/e2-northern-west-sussex-ega-update-2020.pdf>

In line with DP1 p23 of the Adopted District Plan⁸, our Science and Technology Park proposal looks to deliver the 2500 jobs in this location.

The Inspector who examined the 2018 District Plan⁹ assessed and considered at that time the compelling economic case for the aspirational Science and Technology Park within the region and his report concluded that it complied with para 35 of the NPPF. Page 22 of the Adopted District Plan states *"The Coast to Capital Strategic Economic Plan (2014) supports both the business park proposal and the proposal for a high quality Science and Technology Park , the latter creating 100,000m2 of employment floorspace and 2,500 new jobsThe Strategic Economic Plan (page 50) states that provision of these developments "will create more sustainable communities within Mid Sussex by improving job prospects within the District and reducing the need for commuting"*.

MSDC have also committed to the delivery of the STP in their corporate wide Economic Development Strategy 2018.

This aspiration for an STP is still supported by the Coast 2 Capital LEP and Appendix 1 of this statement confirms the continued support from the LEP to working with the STP project team and supporting delivery, based on continued partnership working. The role of innovation and science is also recognised in the LEP's new 2018-2030 strategy "Gatwick 360" which states¹⁰ that *"Existing business space can be improved to help attract high-value business into the area. Alongside that, there's a demand for new, high-quality business and science parks that can build on our sector strengths and encourage strong business clusters."*

The project team have been working in partnership with C2C as part of their Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) workshops and regularly share information and updates as part of the Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 stages of the Site Allocations DPD process. We are also sharing and discussing updates of our own evidence base and market discussions, and joint opportunities for any inward investment.

The Coast 2 Capital LEP are also engaged with the project team, in regard to discussions on delivery, planning timelines, branding, phasing and highways infrastructure and associated benefits for the region. (see Appendix 2 for Letter of Support dated 29th April 2021.

The 'golden threads' that underpin the Science and Technology Park, such as sustainability, enhancing employment based links with education, improved transport links, innovation and green technology, and provision of a high quality public realm have also been discussed, ensuring that the regional provision of the STP at this scale will align with the objectives of the Coast 2 Capital LEP, especially in a post-Covid world, with new enhanced economic opportunities provided in the STP to benefit the wider region.

⁸ <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/3406/mid-sussex-district-plan.pdf>

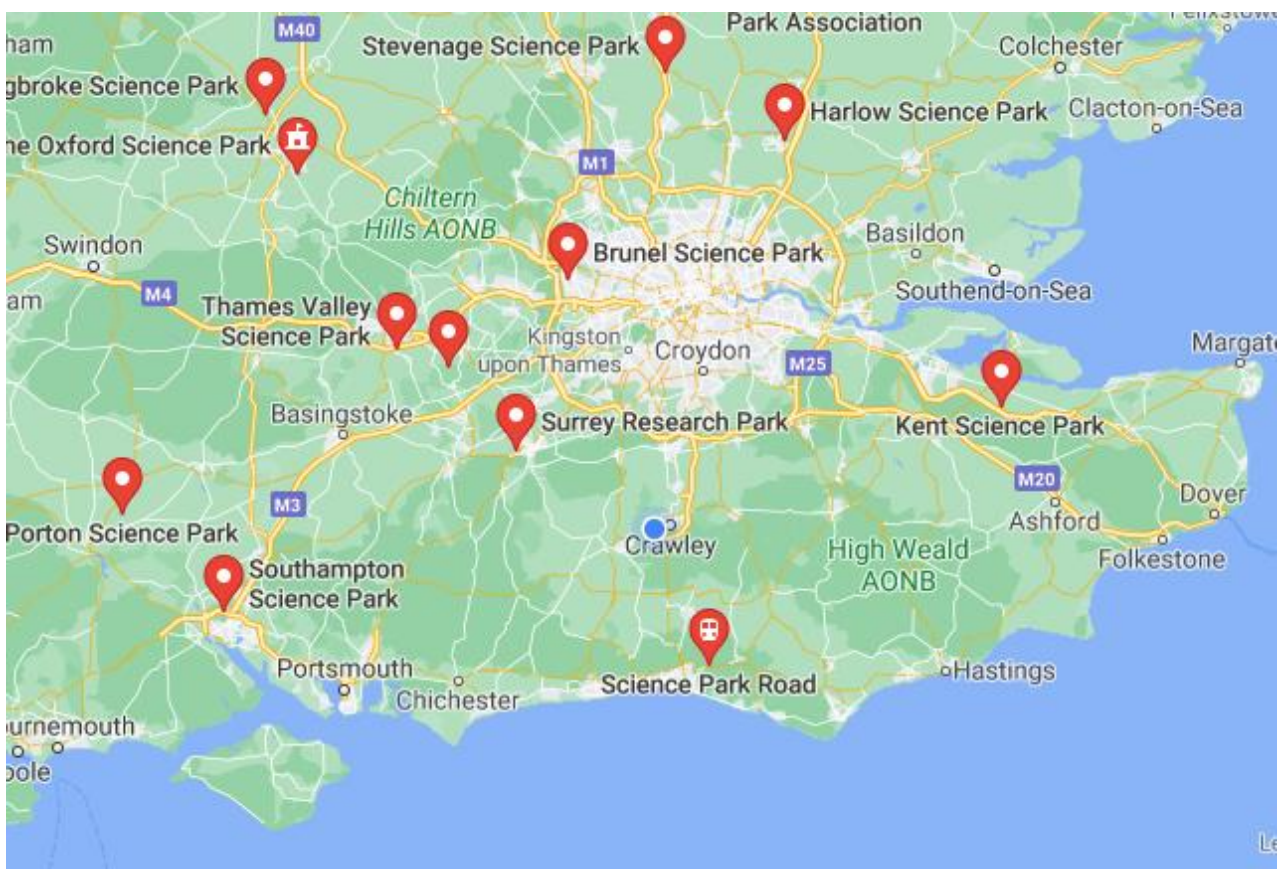
⁹ <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/2216/mid-sussex-lp-report-mar-2018.pdf>

¹⁰ https://www.coast2capital.org.uk/storage/downloads/coast_to_capital_strategic_economic_plan_2018-2030_pdf-1535099447.pdf

With regard to need, Vail Williams are aware from our market activity and historic client searches that it is difficult for a major occupier to find a large facility or site (existing or land to build) on sites of 5 ha (12.5 acres) or more. For example, sites along the M23/A23 and southern M25 corridors, when they have become available, have been purchased for speculative B8 development, and this is generating the highest return for developers. This has left a void of alternative suitable sites for those seeking manufacturing, assembly, high technology and office uses.

Vail Williams and the wider Project Newton team have been developing initial marketing for the Science and Technology Park, which will assist in providing further information to potential occupiers. See Appendix 3 for marketing brochure.

This STP site is able to offer the quantum of space required by some larger regional and national occupiers. It can also provide a critical mass that can compete with other Science and Technology Parks, which are located out of region in locations such as Southampton, Harwell, Oxford and Cambridge. The Surrey Research Park in Guildford is the nearest park to the STP but it is fully occupied, save two small office suites being advertised on their web site. A web based search for "Science and Technology Parks UK", (see google map extract below) clearly demonstrates the void in provision in this part of the south east, hence the C2C LEP' support for such provision.



In regard to a specific compelling economic case, whilst there are other local Strategic Employment Locations (SEL) across the region, there are none of the nature and type, that will compete with, or provide an alternative to, the STP. The

EGA recognises these SEL, including Horley Business Park (Reigate & Banstead Borough Council) and Land North of Horsham (Horsham District Council). In addition, there is an emerging SEL at Gatwick under Crawley's Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan. For further comparison of the other SEL in region see Appendix One.

However, the scale, and STP definition required under the DP1 policy in the MSDC District Plan are recognised as different in the Northern West Sussex Area EGA which covers Crawley Mid Sussex and Horsham (E2)¹¹ which states that -:

"10.59 The scale and nature of proposed (B class) uses on the Science and Technology Park site suggests that any future development could feasibly accommodate occupiers seeking a location within the wider NWS commercial property market area, albeit the focus on science and technology activity means that the site is likely to serve the needs of specific sector based occupiers rather than 'general market' needs."

The compelling and fundamentally sound economic case for SA9 remains unchanged from DP1 and the updated MSDC evidence base supporting the SA9 allocation, including the STP market information on market demand (positioning document section 12), target occupiers (13) target occupying sectors (14) and market testing (15).

¹¹ <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/5809/e2-northern-west-sussex-ega-update-2020.pdf>

Appendix One : Alternative SELs within region compared to STP

Local Authority	Policy Ref	Progress	Allocated Use	Distance from Site	Local Plan Summary
Reigate and Banstead	HOR9	Allocated in Development Plan Management Plan	Office-led with complimentary commercial, retail and leisure uses. 5 ha of public open space	15 miles	Land west of Balcombe Road, Horley adjacent to the M23 spur road to Gatwick Airport, which previously was designated as part of the Rural Surrounds of Horley in the 2005 Borough Local Plan, provides a singular opportunity to address this need. However, this requires sensitive consideration of environmental and other factors such as traffic to ensure that the development of this site achieves its full sub-regional potential whilst respecting other longstanding planning policy objectives and to meet the planning constraints as identified in the policy. No alternative sites have been identified within the borough that have the potential to deliver strategic employment floorspace in a highly desirable and accessible location within the short to medium term. 3.3.159 The planning of a successful office-led strategic business park of this scale will require careful attention to key components as set out in the following policy.
Horsham	SD1 & SD2	Allocated and works commenced	Includes 500,000 sq ft of new employment space	11 miles	A new high quality business park shall be provided in the area indicated on the concept Masterplan Map for approximately 46,450m ² (500,000ft ²). Sufficient floorspace is to be provided in the first phase of the development to meet demand including the needs of existing employers within the District that wish to relocate.
Crawley	EC4	Local Plan Reg 19 consultation ongoing	24.1 ha industrial land, predominantly B8 use	13 miles	There remains significant remaining need for a minimum of 24.1ha new industrial-led employment land in Crawley, principally within the logistics and warehouse sectors. Therefore, a Strategic Employment Location is allocated at land East of Balcombe Road at Gatwick Green.
Mid Sussex	DP9	Allocated and permission for 50,000 sqm employment floorspace in 2015	25 ha land for business park	600m	This strategic allocation is a greenfield site lying between Bedelands Nature Reserve on the east side of Burgess Hill and the Goddards Green Waste Water Treatment works to the west and largely comprises land known as the Northern Arc
Mid Sussex	DP1	Allocated under DP1 and emerging SA9 of site Allocations DPD	49 ha		Strategic allocation for Science & Technology Park. Based of Greater Brighton City Deal 2014, and C2C LEP SEP 2014. Supported by MSDC as preferred location "North of the A2300". Provision of STP supported in MSDC Economic Strategy 2018.

Appendix Two : Letter of Support from Coast to Capital LEP



Suzanne Holloway Unit 4
Peeveril Court
6-8 London Road
Crawley
RH10 8JE

DATE: 29th April 2021

Re: Creation of new business space within Coast to Capital LEP Region

Dear Suzanne

As requested, I set out Coast to Capital's general position on the provision of new business space within our region. This position is publicly available through various source documents on our website and media channels.

There is a shortage of high-quality fit for purpose business space in our region, together with space for innovation and technology based industries. The regional economy has been significantly impacted by Covid19 and Coast to Capital supports the provision of new business space that will attract inward investment and employment growth. We particularly support interventions that have a positive impact upon the Crawley and surrounding economy, which has been disproportionately challenged by Covid 19.

Coast to Capital also supports the attraction of high value and high skill employment opportunities to the region and new businesses that want to benefit from our local labour markets.

I hope this clarifies our position on this matter.

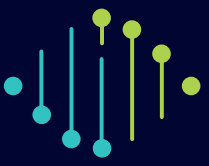
Yours sincerely

Anthony Middleton

Chief Operating Officer Coast to Capital LEP



Appendix Three : Science Park Marketing Brochure



Science & Technology Park

A 120,000 sq m (1,300,000 sq ft) development on 49 ha (120 acres) in the heart of South East England suitable for a wide range of business uses with a technology or science bias.

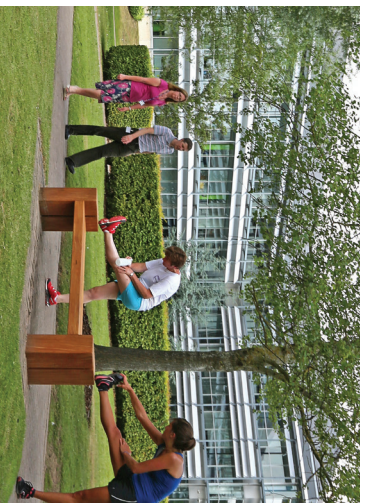
Description

The Master Plan provides for a total of 120,000 sq m (1,300,000 sq ft) of employment accommodation plus ancillary uses. A wide range of business sectors that have a science or technology bias can be accommodated. Buildings would be built to demand and could be for manufacturing, assembly, laboratory/R&D use, offices and incubation units.



Development features

- A high quality building environment suitable for HQ and major facilities, with ancillary parking in an attractive landscaped setting
- A central location within the Coast to Capital LEP economic region, with a significant employment catchment
- Strong 'green' credentials incorporating efficient building design with renewable energy provision, solar energy links and electric charging
- Sustainable transport options, linking to the new green pedestrian and cycle links with the Northern Arc development, and bus and train connectivity via Burgess Hill Town Centre
- A Master Plan accommodating ancillary uses such as a hotel/gym, crèche, convenience store and/or café





From Science and Tech Park to Distance

A23/M23 1 mile

Burgess Hill Rail Station 3 miles (frequent trains to London Victoria and London Bridge – travel time 1 hour)

Brighton 13 miles

M25 Motorway 24 miles

Gatwick Airport 17 miles

Heathrow Airport 55 miles

Central London 53 miles



Location

The site is prominently positioned north of the A2300, a short distance from the A23, in Mid Sussex, with excellent travel communications. The A23/M23 provides a direct route to Gatwick Airport, M25 motorway to the North, and Brighton to the South. The adjacent Northern Arc neighbourhood in Burgess Hill is under construction providing up to 3,500 new homes.

Planning

The site has a draft allocation in the Development plan documents within the adopted Mid Sussex District Plan (2018) under Policy DP1 'Sustainable Economic Development' for a high quality Science and Technology Park. A planning application is due to be submitted for development following Reg19 approval.

Promoters

A development promoted by the landowners, Wortleford Trading Company Limited and Dacoror (Southern) Limited. Glenbeigh are Development Managers.

Developer:



For further information please contact:

Andrew Osborne

aosborne@vailwilliams.com
07768 724345

Suzanne Holloway

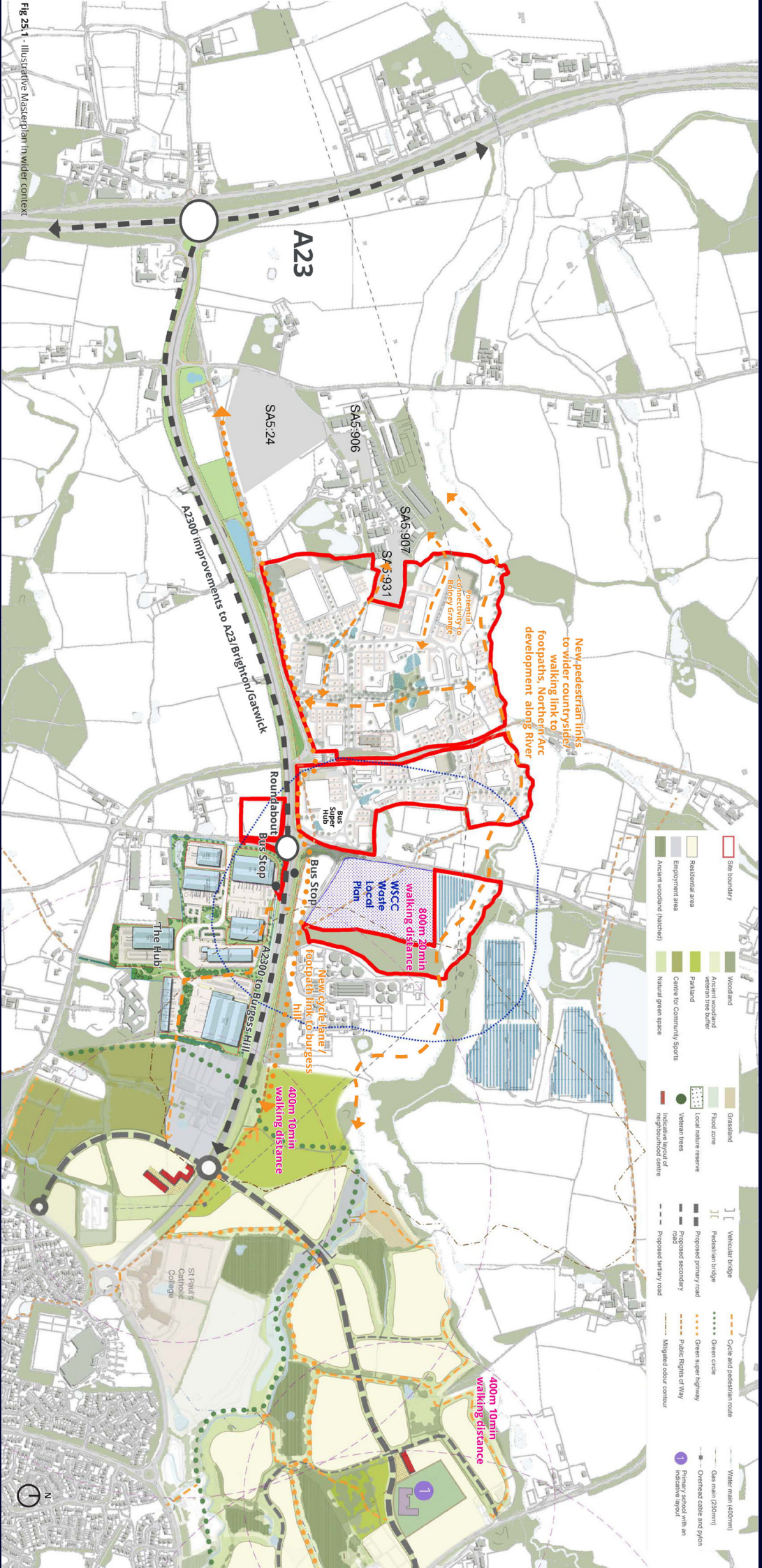
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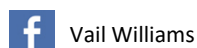
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