



Assessment of alternative sites (part 1)

Land west of A140,
Swainsthorpe

Ben Burgess



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On behalf of Ben Burgess, this report sets out an initial 'part 1' assessment of sites considered for the location of proposals for a new headquarters development.

A list of Ben Burgess' site-specific requirements is used to determine criteria against which each individual site is assessed. Ben Burgess have been actively seeking a site to relocate their existing Norwich headquarters since 2013. If a site does not meet all site selection criteria Ben Burgess will not consider relocation as the investment required in a new headquarters would be undermined by sub-optimal site suitability.

Following an assessment of each site considered, the report concludes that Land west of Ipswich Road, Swainsthorpe is the most preferential location/site for the proposals sought.





1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by CODE Development Planners on behalf of Ben Burgess. It sets out an initial assessment of alternative sites considered by Ben Burgess for the location of proposals for their new company headquarters. The proposals comprise a new headquarters for Ben Burgess including areas for the supply, maintenance, repair and hire of agricultural, horticultural, construction and grounds care machinery and equipment, offices, education hub, trade counter, sales and display areas, associated internal and external storage, and associated infrastructure (sui generis).
- 1.2 This report forms 'part 1' of a two-stage assessment of potential sites considered by Ben Burgess in discussion with planning officers at South Norfolk Council. This first stage report assesses each site against a list of clear criteria informed by Ben Burgess' site specific requirements. A separate 'part 2' assessment, prepared by Harvey & Co, explores in greater detail sites that present higher potential following the conclusions of this report.
- 1.3 Eight sites are assessed within this report including the most preferable site located on Land west of Ipswich Road, Swainsthorpe. All sites have been assessed against site specific requirements which have been used to develop a methodology and set of criteria presented on a separate assessment proforma for each site appended to this report.
- 1.4 This report concludes that Land west of Ipswich Road, Swainsthorpe is the preferred location for the proposals when considered against the assessment criteria, however, three other potentially suitable sites warrant further investigation in-terms of availability and viability. These sites (Keswick, Bixley and Brooke) are therefore assessed in greater detail in 'part 2'.

2 CONTEXT

- 2.1 Ben Burgess are a family owned business and have served the farming community of East Anglia since 1931. They are regional suppliers of several leading manufacturers in agricultural, horticultural, construction and grounds care equipment and currently employ 245 staff across six sites located throughout the region including Aylsham, Beeston, Coates, Ellington, Newmarket and Norwich. The company specialise in the sale, service and hire of quality parts and machinery worldwide and proudly hold a Royal Warrant as suppliers to the Royal Estate at Sandringham.
- 2.2 Ben Burgess' current headquarters is based in Trowse, Norwich and the site has been operating at capacity for many years. The company therefore recognise they are unable to fulfil their immediate and future growth aspirations without relocating to a larger facility designed to accommodate their specific spatial and operational requirements.
- 2.3 Lack of space at the Trowse site has led to a number of operational issues including the erosion of staff safety due to inadequate turning and storage areas used by increasingly larger vehicles and machinery. Concerns over staff safety at the current 1ha site has subsequently resulted in the need for 40 staff



members to park off-site on surrounding public roads and in alternative locations nearby. Lorries visiting the site daily are also currently loaded and unloaded on public highway adjacent the site and some larger machinery is stored at three other off-site locations due to spatial constraints and safety concerns. These inefficiencies mean that Ben Burgess are unable to increase their market performance in-line with the strong competition from similar companies in Europe.

- 2.4 The need to relocate is also crucial to enable Ben Burgess to grow the company's export operation which currently accounts for 12.5% of its annual turnover. As exports have become an increasingly important exit route for used equipment and machinery, which could not otherwise be sold in the UK, the need for the company's relocation to remain relevant and competitive within the global market has also increased.
- 2.5 As leading suppliers and promoters of the latest agricultural technology and innovative farming practices, Ben Burgess are also seeking to expand their operation to include a dedicated education hub which, combined with best practice vehicle demonstration areas, will provide a state-of-the-art learning facility ensuring customers are fully trained in the use of advancing agricultural technology such as telematics and satellites which can greatly improve crop yields. A new purpose-built learning facility would also allow Ben Burgess to improve the offer of their apprenticeship program for those seeking a career in the agricultural sector. The company already provides engineering apprenticeships to 27 trainees located across their six sites, as well as a family owned farm near Brooke, and a larger headquarters will increase apprenticeship availability.
- 2.6 For the reasons above, Ben Burgess are seeking to relocate their existing headquarters to a new purpose-built facility which will provide adequate space to meet both their immediate and long-term growth requirements, whilst allowing the company to continue its significant contribution to the economic prosperity of Norwich and East Anglia.
- 2.7 It is therefore proposed that a new headquarters for Ben Burgess will be of a high-quality sustainable design and will include areas for the supply, maintenance, repair and hire of agricultural, horticultural, construction and grounds care machinery and equipment, offices, education hub, trade counter, sales and display areas, associated internal and external storage, and associated infrastructure (sui generis).
- 2.8 These proposals represent a long-term commitment for the company and it is anticipated they will enable Ben Burgess to establish a centre of excellence for agriculture, focused on the demonstration and training of innovative and best practice agricultural techniques for the arable and horticultural sectors.



3 SITE REQUIREMENTS

3.1 The nature of the company's existing and proposed business, therefore, requires that the proposal site's location meets all the following list of requirements to ensure all Ben Burgess immediate and long-term objectives can be fulfilled:

NB: Following the original Alternative Sites Assessment report dated May 2018 the design of the proposal has led to a reduction in the total gross internal floor space due to more efficient use of the space available following detailed analysis of the client's requirements and through the use of specialist engineered systems and significant design considerations. However, the reduction in GIA has not changed the results of the alternative sites assessment.

- i. The developable site area must be between 5-12ha dependent on site specific considerations (eg a flat site with no constraining features could be accommodated on a site at the lower end of this range; constrained sites will require a greater area to mitigate its constraints);
- ii. The site must accommodate an office/workshop building of no less than 7,713sqm gross internal floor space (GIA) and a storage building of no less than 898sqm GIA. The buildings would be of a high-quality design and sustainable construction. Footprints would be dependent on storey height achievability in response to site specific considerations;
- iii. The site must be within four miles of the A47 Trowse junction to ensure the geographical coverage in relation to its customer base is optimised in consideration of proximity to other Ben Burgess sites and improved accessibility resulting from the Broadland Northway (Northern Distributor Road (NDR)).
- iv. The site's location must enable Ben Burgess to continue their legacy in supplying south Norfolk due to the location of their existing client base served by the Norwich site which is key to the business and its future prosperity.
- v. The site must be available and deliverable within 18 months from receiving positive feedback to pre-application submission. This is critical to the Ben Burgess business model and will allow the company to maintain a competitive edge in the European export market in light of Brexit.
- vi. The site must provide a minimum of 0.8ha for best practice grounds care demonstration purposes.
- vii. The site must be accessibly located and visible from a main arterial route to allow commercial exposure, promote the agricultural sector and attract new talent.
- viii. The site must be located on a main arterial highway route to provide accessibility for the import and export of deliveries between Germany and the USA via the ports of Hull and Liverpool;
- ix. To eliminate current operational inefficiencies the site must have capacity for external storage of approximately 75% of the company's hire vehicles including 110 tractors which are currently stored across four locations including at the existing headquarters and across three satellite storage facilities.



- x. The site must ensure that all staff have enough space to work safely to meet both immediate and future needs as the company grows. The site must, therefore, allow flexibility so that proposals can be configured to focus on health and safety of workers, customers and other users.
- xi. The site must be viable in terms of land acquisition and business rate costs. The specific requirements of Ben Burgess require land to store large vehicles and machinery which result in characteristically high and unaffordable rates being sought on employment sites which are configured for multiple occupiers or single occupier sites with high £'s per square metres profit ratios.
- xii. The site must provide adequate space to enable training and best practice demonstration of increasingly sophisticated technological advances in agricultural machinery and practices. Meeting and training rooms must also be accommodated as part of the proposals education and learning facility offer.

4 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Site selection

- 4.1 Ben Burgess have been actively seeking a site to relocate their existing Norwich headquarters since 2013. During this time, they have discussed a number of potential sites with planning officers at South Norfolk Council (SNC) to gauge suitability through early pre-application advice. Correspondence relating to these pre-application discussions are appended to this report including those received on 12 September 2014 and 23 December 2014.
- 4.2 This correspondence refer to specific sites felt by SNC planning officers to demonstrate potential for the proposals sought. However, it is worth noting that since these early discussions the site-specific requirements presented to planning officers previously have evolved in response to changing political landscapes and advances in agricultural and horticultural practices experienced in recent years. All sites recommended by planning officers during these early discussions have therefore been considered and assessed in-line with Ben Burgess current requirements as set out above. The sites assessed are as follows:
 - a) Bixley (Park Farm - HELAA site reference GNLP0323);
 - b) Brooke (Policy BKE3: Brooke industrial park);
 - c) Costessey (Policy COS3: Longwater employment area);
 - d) Easton/ Honingham Thorpe (Easton food hub Local Development Order site);
 - e) Keswick (Policy KES2: Land west of Ipswich Road);
 - f) Long Stratton (Policy LNGS2: Land west of Tharston Industrial Estate);
 - g) Swainsthorpe (Land west of Ipswich Road – HELAA site reference GNLP0604);
 - h) Wymondham (Policy WYM5: Land at Browick Road).



4.3 Using Ben Burgess' site-specific requirements, a list of criteria has been created against which each of the above sites have been assessed. These criteria are presented within an assessment proforma which has been completed for each site. Completed proforma for each site are appended to this report.

Criteria and methodology

4.4 The site assessment criteria against which each site has been assessed is set out in the table below. The criteria are presented in order of priority but all are considered to be critical factors in enabling Ben Burgess to fulfil their immediate needs and long-term growth aspirations. Therefore, if a site does not meet all site selection criteria Ben Burgess will not consider relocation as the investment required in a new headquarters would be undermined by sub-optimal site suitability. This is reflected in the time that Ben Burgess has taken to identify a suitable site. An explanation of how each of the criteria has been considered is also presented. This defines the assessment methodology for each criterion.

4.5 Site specific planning constraints are also considered as part of the assessment criteria, however, whilst planning constraints are an important consideration in assessing the overall suitability of any site for development, the assessment does not consider individual site constraints as critical to achieving the proposals sought by Ben Burgess. This is because it is generally accepted that most development sites will be constrained in some way, requiring appropriate design solutions to be explored to overcome them.

Criteria	Assessment methodology
Size	<p>The developable site area must be between 5-12ha dependent on site specific considerations i.e. a flat site with no constraining features could be accommodated on a site at the lower end of this range whilst constrained sites will require a greater area to mitigate constraints.</p> <p>The site must also comprise a single area of land and not be subdivided across multiple parcels separated by land in third party ownership. This is important to maximize company efficiencies and ensure security can be managed effectively.</p> <p>This criteria covers items i, ii, vi, ix, x and xii under site requirements in section 3 above.</p>
Within south Norfolk	<p>The site's location must enable Ben Burgess to continue their legacy in supplying south Norfolk due to the location of their client base and the catchment area served by the existing Norwich site which is fundamental to the business and its future prosperity.</p>
Proximity to Trowse/A47 junction	<p>The site must be within four miles of the A47 Trowse junction to ensure the geographical coverage in relation to its customer base is optimised in consideration of proximity to other Ben Burgess dealerships and improved</p>



Criteria	Assessment methodology
	<p>accessibility resulting from the Broadland Northway (Northern Distributor Road (NDR)).</p> <p>Relocation to a site within four miles of this junction is also important to ensure existing staff who hold specific professional skills vital to the future prosperity of the business can be retained in the long-term.</p> <p>In the assessment we have calculated the distance by road and rounded to the nearest mile.</p>
Visible from main road	The site must be accessibly located and visible from a main arterial route to allow commercial exposure, promote the agricultural sector and attract new talent.
Access to strategic route	The site must be located on a main arterial highway route to provide accessibility for the import and export of deliveries between Germany and the USA via the ports of Hull and Liverpool.
Proximity to existing Ben Burgess dealership	The must be located more than 30 minutes' drive from other existing Ben Burgess dealership sites including those at Aylsham, Beeston, Coates, Ellington and Newmarket.
Demonstration space	The site must provide a minimum of 0.8ha for best practice grounds care demonstration purposes. It is also important that this area comprises greenfield land to ensure adequate space is available to enable training and best practice demonstration of increasingly sophisticated technological advances in agricultural machinery and techniques.
Available	<p>Due to existing site capacity issues at the Norwich site which undermine staff safety and operational efficiencies, the site must be available and deliverable within 18 months from receiving positive feedback to pre-application submission. Ben Burgess has been searching for a new headquarters site since 2013, however, the changing political climate and global trading environment requires the investment decision are made and realised.</p> <p>Ben Burgess needs to adapt its business model to enable the company to maintain a competitive edge in the European export market in-light of Brexit, key to this is a new headquarters site.</p> <p>In assessing whether a site is available if it is an existing allocation within a development plan document; appears in the HELAA; or it does not have an extant planning permission or live planning application. Whilst this may be imperfect we have made assumption on a</p>
Site constraints	Known planning constraints are also considered towards assessing the overall suitability of each site for the proposals sought.



Scoring critical factors

4.6 Each site is assessed against the criteria with consideration to how well it meets the parameters defined within the assessment methodology. This does not include site constraints. Each site can achieve a green, amber or red indication based on its ability to meet each of the criterion. These colours represent the following:

Green	Amber	Red
Meets the criterion	Partially meets the criterion	Does not meet the criterion

Scoring site constraints

4.7 An assessment of known site constraints is presented in a similar way based on the following:

Green	Amber	Red
Unconstrained	Partially constrained	Heavily constrained

5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This report provides an assessment of eight sites considered by Ben Burgess in their search to identify a suitable location for a proposed new headquarters development which will enable the company to achieve its immediate needs and long-term growth aspirations.
- 5.2 A list of Ben Burgess’ site specific requirements was used to determine a list of criteria against which each individual site was assessed. The assessment process demonstrates that Land west of Ipswich Road, Swainsthorpe is the most preferential location for the site of the proposals sought.



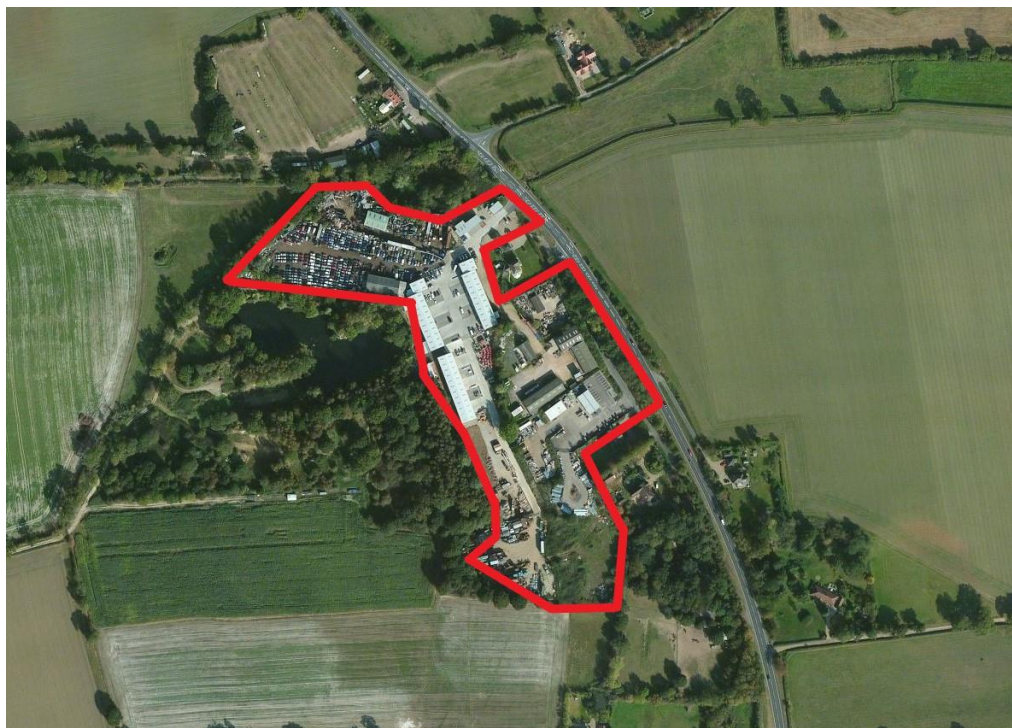


Appendix 1





Site name	Brooke Industrial Park
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Total site area (ha)	4.8ha	Current use	Employment site
Undeveloped land (ha)	0.5ha	Grid reference	628269 300556
Criteria	Comments	Score	
Size	The site does not meet the criteria	Red	
Within south Norfolk	Yes	Green	
Proximity to Trowse/A47 junction	The site is 4.3 miles from the Trowse/A47 junction	Orange	
Visible from main road	Yes	Green	
Access to strategic route	No direct access to strategic route	Red	
Proximity to existing Ben Burgess dealership	The nearest Ben Burgess dealership is more than 30 minutes' drive	Green	
Demonstration space	The sites does not meet this criterion	Red	
Available	Existing employment site with no extant planning permissions within last 5 years. Therefore, assumed that vacant land remains available	Green	
Site constraints	Potential contamination	Orange	



Site name	Park Farm, Bixley		
Total site area (ha)	9.8ha	Current use	Dairy farm
Undeveloped land (ha)	7ha	Grid reference	625982 305313
Criteria	Comments		Score
Size	The site meets the criteria		
Within south Norfolk	Yes		
Proximity to Trowse/A47 junction	The site is 1 mile from the Trowse/A47 junction		
Visible from main road	The site is isolated with restricted views to Bungay Road and the A146		
Access to strategic route	The site does not have direct access to a strategic		
Proximity to existing Ben Burgess dealership	The nearest Ben Burgess dealership is more than 30 minutes' drive		
Demonstration space	Yes		
Available	No planning applications registered in the past 5 years so assumed available. Appears tin GNLP HELAA (site reference GNLP0323)		
Site constraints	Severe access constraints, potential contamination, surface water flooding, impact on heritage assets, considered 'unsuitable' by HELAA capacity assessment		



Site name		Longwater employment area	
Total site area (ha)	13.3ha	Current use	Mineral processing and concrete production (brownfield)
Undeveloped land (ha)	5.5ha	Grid reference	615407 311133
Criteria	Comments	Score	
Size	Total site area split over four sites		
Within south Norfolk	Yes		
Proximity to Trowse/A47 junction	The site is 9.5 miles from the Trowse/A47 junction		
Visible from main road	No		
Access to strategic route	Access through retail park		
Proximity to existing Ben Burgess dealership	Too close to Ben Burgess Beeston dealership being less than a 30 minutes drive		
Demonstration space	Limited scope and cost in ground preparation works to make an area suitable for ploughing etc		
Available	Existing allocation within Local Plan (COS3) and no extant planning permissions or planning applications within last five years so assumed it is available		
Site constraints	Potential contamination, environmental consideration in-light of Longdale county wildlife site to the north		



Site name	Honingham Thorpe (Easton food hub)		
Total site area (ha)	56ha	Current use	Arable
Undeveloped land (ha)	56ha	Grid reference	612652 310815
Criteria	Comments		Score
Size	The site meets the criteria		
Within south Norfolk	Yes		
Proximity to Trowse/A47 junction	The site is 10.4 miles from the Trowse/A47 junction		
Visible from main road	Yes		
Access to strategic route	Yes, via A47		
Proximity to existing Ben Burgess dealership	The nearest Ben Burgess dealership is less than 30 minutes' drive		
Demonstration space	Yes		
Available	There is a Local Development Order for food related uses so availability is unclear		
Site constraints	Potential contamination and land instability from historic landfill use, surface water flooding		



Site name		Land west of Ipswich Road, Keswick	
Total site area (ha)	4ha	Current use	Arable
Undeveloped land (ha)	4ha	Grid reference	621821 304719
Criteria	Comments		Score
Size	The site does not meet the criteria		
Within south Norfolk	Yes		
Proximity to Trowse/A47 junction	The site is 2.8 miles from the Trowse/A47 junction		
Visible from main road	Yes, from A140		
Access to strategic route	Yes, via A140		
Proximity to existing Ben Burgess dealership	The nearest Ben Burgess dealership is less than 30 minutes' drive		
Demonstration space	The site does not have capacity for demonstration space		
Available	There is an existing outlines approval for employment (B use-class) development		
Site constraints	Landscape considerations		



Site name	Land west of Tharston Industrial Estate, Long Stratton		

Total site area (ha)	2.5ha	Current use	Arable/vehicle parking
Undeveloped land (ha)	1.8ha (following recent permission)	Grid reference	618592 292401
Criteria	Comments		Score
Size	The site does not meet the criteria		
Within south Norfolk	Yes		
Proximity to Trowse/A47 junction	The site is 10.6 miles from the Trowse/A47 junction		
Visible from main road	No		
Access to strategic route	No direct access to strategic route		
Proximity to existing Ben Burgess dealership	The nearest Ben Burgess dealership is more than 30 minutes' drive		
Demonstration space	The site does not meet the criteria		
Available	A recent planning approval for extensions to existing buildings and curtilage has been implemented therefore the site is assumed unavailable		
Site constraints	Access restrictions across third-party land		



Site name	Land west of Ipswich Road, Swainsthorpe		
			
Total site area (ha)	11ha	Current use	Arable
Undeveloped land (ha)	11ha	Grid reference	622011 301269
Criteria	Comments	Score	
Size	The site is close to the top end of the criteria		
Within south Norfolk	Yes		
Proximity to Trowse/A47 junction	The site is 4.3 miles from the Trowse/A47 junction		
Visible from main road	Yes the site is adjacent to the A140		
Access to strategic route	Yes directly onto the A140		
Proximity to existing Ben Burgess dealership	The nearest Ben Burgess dealership is more than 30 minutes drive		
Demonstration space	Yes (on-site and within close proximity to the site)		
Available	Yes		
Site constraints	Surface water and Road Side Nature Reserve		



Site name	Land at Browick Road, Wymondham		
Total site area (ha)	22ha	Current use	Arable
Undeveloped land (ha)	22ha	Grid reference	612361 301400
Criteria	Comments	Score	
Size	The site meets the criteria although is divided between two individual land parcels	Green	
Within south Norfolk	Yes	Green	
Proximity to Trowse/A47 junction	The site is 10 miles from the Trowse/A47 junction	Red	
Visible from main road	Yes, the site is visible from the A11	Green	
Access to strategic route	Yes, via B1135 on to A11	Green	
Proximity to existing Ben Burgess dealership	The nearest Ben Burgess dealership is more than 30 minutes' drive	Green	
Demonstration space	Yes	Green	
Available	Existing allocation with Wymondham Area Action Plan with no planning applications or extant permissions within last five years so is assumed to be available	Green	
Site constraints	Impact on setting of Wymondham Abbey, landscape considerations, environmental sensitivities, water main crossing site	Orange	



Appendix 2



My ref: ENQ/20140839
Contact: Miss T Lincoln
Telephone: 01508 533814

By email only – Ben Turner (benturner@benburgess.co.uk)

Date: 12th September 2014

Dear Mr Turner,

Re-Location of Ben Burgess Head Office from Europa Way, Norwich

I write in respect of the above and following various discussions and meetings. Having fully considered the proposal I have the following observations.

Development Description

New Head Office for Ben Burgess with agricultural repair centre and retail base. The proposal therefore includes office accommodation, agricultural machinery repair and storage of agricultural machinery and retailing.

We have explored the issues you are facing at your current site and the requirements of the new location. I have summarised your requirements for the new site below:

- 10-12 acres (approx. 5 hectares)
- Two buildings: 1- offices and workshop (office floor space approx. 2880sqm and workshops approx. 1900sqm) and 2. storage shed (approx. 1500sqm)
- Somewhere near the A47. Cannot be located so as to draw trade from their outposts at Aylsham, Dereham or Newmarket.
- Timeframe is ideally moving in to new building in 18 months. Hope to submit an application in the next two months.
- Adequate space to allow expansion in the future.
- Ability to have extra space for best practice demonstration fields.
- Want to create a centre of excellence for farming including show areas and demonstration fields for best practice farming techniques and practices.
- See the business as a destination business as there is no reliance on passing trade.
- Approx 75% of the vehicles hired from the business will be from this main site. The rest would be from other existing locations.

History of planning discussions

As a note of the understanding of what sites and issues have been discussed to date I have summarised these below:

Applicant's Issues with the site adjacent to KES2

- Cost of infrastructure required
- Timing
- Limitations of size of site (concern that the landowner will seek further commercial development around them and they will have same issue with being unable to expand as they have with their existing site)

Points raised with Ben Turner re KES2 site

- Council's preferred site is that adj to KES 2 so would still encourage BB to liaise with the landowner to bring this forward.
- BT advised that discussions with the land owner have gone cold. They had asked for unrealistic price for the land but were not being responsive recently to discussion regarding the site.

- Acknowledged BB concerns with costs, timing and limited expansion capacity with landowner wanting to develop around BB site.
- All other sites that had previously been suggested (as discussed at meeting on 4/6/14 with TL and JH) would not be encouraged, mainly for reasons of sustainability.
- BT wanted to pursue and discuss the Bixley site further and had prepared some layout plans as to what would be envisaged.

Proposal at Bixley site

Bixley is a redundant dairy farm with 2-3 existing residential dwellings on site. Access is currently from both B1332 and A146

BB considerations of the site:

Not the most ideal site as not visible to the public here but there are benefits to the site:

- Right side of the city and good links to the highway network
- Re-uses the redundant agricultural buildings
- Enough space for expansion in the future
- Fields around to allow rental for demonstration fields for best farming practices
- Site is available and landowner is engaged – currently in talks with Ben Burgess re the site and leases etc.

What is being proposed at Bixley?

- Demolition of existing farm buildings
- New building for office/workshop use (approx. 4800sqm)
- New building for storage of machinery and vehicles (approx. 1500sqm)
- Outdoor loading, work area
- Staff parking area
- Customer parking area
- Grassed display area to the front of the site
- Rental of adjacent fields for demonstration fields for best and new practices for farming.
- Use of existing farm access on to B1332

Issues raised through meetings regarding Bixley site

- Location in the Countryside policy area and the general lack of sustainability of the site for a retail led employment use.
- General policy context of new employment generating uses/retail in the countryside
- Landscape impact – BT indicates site is not overly visible due to topography
- Highways issues – concern with sustainability of the location, no access to A146 and issues with access to B1332, but if from B1332 would need RHTL on B1332 to site and visibility splay at access.
- What distinguishes this proposal from any other commercial/industrial use that may similarly want to re-locate to an unsustainable rural location e.g. a car dealership?

Highways comments:

This site is in an unsustainable location. Just because this is an existing farm, does not make it suitable for an industrial use. Again the A146 is a Principal Route and we would resist any new access or intensification of access along it. Access onto the B1332 is also not desirable in this location. It is an intensification of an access on what is a busy main distributor road. The B1332 at this point is a 60mph road and is long and straight so speeds are likely to be close to the limit. If this were to be considered, a right hand turn lane would be required and significant improvements to the access. Visibility would need to be in accordance with DMRB and would be 4.5m x 215m which is likely to involve

some initial hedge loss on either side. It is estimated that a RHTL would cost a minimum of £150,000.

Relevant Policies for the principle of the development

The NPPF

The NPPF supports the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings(para 28), subject to sustainable economic growth (para 21) and the need to promote sustainable transport (para 30, 34, 35).

Local Plan 2003 –

Policy ENV8 of the adopted Local Plan policy restricts new development in the open countryside except in very specific circumstances which include if the development is requisite for agriculture or forestry; or is justified to sustain economic and social activity in rural communities and demands a rural location; or is for the suitable adaptation and re-use of an existing rural building.

Policy EMP3 allows for the re-use of rural buildings for employment purposes but this would only be permissible if the existing buildings are soundly constructed and suitable for adaptation and re-use without extensive alteration, re-building and/or substantial extensions, including outbuildings, would conserved the intrinsic qualities of the building and its landscape setting; it would not cause demonstrable harm to the viability of the farm concerned; the scale of the proposal is appropriate for its location.

Policy EMP4 gives provision for new employment in the countryside if:

- There are no alternative sites or premises within the identified development limits or village boundaries which are suitable or available; and
- The site is on land adjacent to a town or village with a defined settlement boundary; and
- Road network is suitable for the scale and nature of the proposal; and
- Is for small business, modern growth industry or would specifically address local unemployment; and
- Small in scale and designed to blend with the setting of the settlement concerned; or
- Exceptionally – if proposal is for agricultural related industry which must be located close to a farm to which it relates; or is unneighbourly and unsuitable for a built up area; or reliant on large areas of open storage and would represent an inefficient use of serviced employment land; preference for previously developed land over greenfield sites.

JCS

JCS policy 5 – The economy

- The local economy will be developed in a sustainable way to support jobs and economic growth both in urban and rural locations.
- Sufficient employment land will be allocated in accessible locations consistent with the 'policies for places' in this strategy to meet identified need and provide for choice.
- Larger scale needs will be addressed through the allocation of sufficient land to provide a choice and range of sites.
- The rural economy and diversification will also be supported by... a preference for the re-use of appropriate redundant non-residential buildings for commercial uses...

JCS policy 6 – Access and transportation

- Concentration of development close to essential services and facilities to encourage walking and cycling as the primary means of travel with public transport for wider access
- 5.44 indicates that ‘the transport strategy will promote sustainable economic development, improve local quality of life, reduce the contribution to climate change, promote healthy travel choices and minimise the need to use the private car...’

JCS Policy 17 – Smaller rural communities and the countryside

- In the countryside...Farm diversification, home working, small scale and medium scale commercial enterprises where a rural location can be justified... will also be acceptable.

Emerging Local Plan

Please note that these policies are not yet part of the Development Plan. They were submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 17th April 2014 but have not yet completed the Examination stage. Full weight cannot be given to them until final adoption which is likely to be at the end of 2014. In line with paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) some weight can be applied to emerging policies as they advance through their preparation. Some policies subject to objections have not been included in this list as these issues are unlikely to be resolved within the time frame of the application, and therefore should be afforded little weight.

Policy DM 1.1 Ensuring development management contributes to achieving sustainable development in South Norfolk

Policy DM 1.3 – The sustainable location of new development (challenged on minor points)

Development will not normally be permitted in the countryside except where this is necessary to meet specific needs of the rural economy and is carried out in accordance with the specific policy requirements of the DM policies or otherwise demonstrates overriding benefits in terms of economic, social and environment dimensions

Policy DM 2.1 – Employment and business development (substantially challenged)

Directs employment to allocated sites or sites within the development boundary. Positive consideration given to new employment sites in the countryside that: re-use redundant rural buildings and hard standings; are located on sites well related to rural towns and villages and demonstration there are no sequentially preferable sites available; and create accessible jobs and business opportunities on the rural area.

Policy DM 2.10 – Conversion and re-use of buildings in the countryside for non-agricultural use

Re-use of existing building without substantial alteration or extension to affect original rural character; the development (inc use of external space) is sympathetic to the setting; any retail element should not adversely affect vitality and viability or rural towns and villages)

Policy DM 3.11 -Sustainable transport

All development should support sustainable transport, utilise all opportunities to integrate with local sustainable transport networks and be designed to reduce need to travel and maximise the use of sustainable forms of transport appropriate to the location.

Other relevant documents

South Norfolk Place-Making Guide – Supplementary Planning Document September 2012

Summary of policies:

Presumption generally against new employment/retail in the countryside unless there are particular overriding operational justifications and or the proposal requires a rural location as is tied to the agricultural use of the land.

Officer Opinion

You will note from the relevant policies detailed above that there is a general presumption against new employment generating uses/retail in the countryside. The policy directs new employment to sites within development boundaries first, then adjacent to development boundaries in the interest of achieving sustainable development and preventing the dispersal of employment and buildings across the countryside.

There is some provision for the re-use of existing buildings if the scale and nature of the proposal is appropriate for its location, however clearly in this case new buildings would be required.

You will note that policy EMP4 would allow for, in exceptional circumstances, new employment in the countryside if the proposal is for agricultural related industry which must be located close to a farm to which it relates; or is unneighbourly and unsuitable for a built up area; or reliant on large areas of open storage and would represent an inefficient use of serviced employment land.

Whilst not yet in force, as is due for examination later this year, you will also note that policy DM2.1 again directs employment to allocated sites or sites within the development boundary. It does detail that positive consideration will be given to new employment sites in the countryside that: re-use redundant rural buildings and hard standings; are located on sites well related to rural towns and villages and demonstration there are no sequentially preferable sites available; and create accessible jobs and business opportunities on the rural area.

Whilst the development is for employment, its use is akin to retail and that is a concern in respect of the accessibility and sustainability of the location proposed and impacts on the hierarchy of centres which focuses retail at existing centres.

Having fully reviewed the site and proposal, given the unsustainable location of the site the Council does not consider it could support an application at this time for Bixley should it be formally submitted.

Should you, as discussed, still feel that you want to make an application for the site, as discussed I consider that you would need to address the following issues:

- That consideration and assessment of other more preferable sites has been made and why these have been ruled out – suitability and availability.
- What sets this proposal apart from any other commercial/industrial/retail use wanting to locate to an unsustainable rural location – i.e. what are the overriding operational requirements justifying the need for the location and or ties to the use of the land as agricultural
- How does the proposal help to create accessible jobs and business opportunities and deliver aims of sustainable transport? Where are customers travelling from and employees travelling to for purposes of the business.
- Why it would not harm the character of the wider landscape or impact on the undeveloped approaches to Norwich (as defined by emerging Policy DM 4.7)
- How it complies with all other policies.

Should you submit an application the following would apply:

CIL

The Council has implemented CIL, to which new development is liable. You can find details of the requirements of CIL at the following link <http://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/planning/5191.asp>

As detailed by the County Highway Authority a new Right Hand turn Lane would be required and expense borne by the applicant.

As discussed I have attached the fee regime for planning applications.

KES2 site

As discussed and whilst we appreciate some of the issues you have highlighted in relation to cost and timing of the KES2 site, we would direct you back to this site as the more appropriate site for this development. Recent discussions have been had between the landowner and site promoter and the Council where the landowner has expressed interest in moving the site forward. We would like to believe that there is scope for a scheme and deal to be put together for the KES2 site that would be appropriate for yourselves and the landowner.

I trust the above has satisfactorily detailed the Councils position and apologies that it has taken some time to get to where we are at, you will appreciate that the matters are complex and finely balanced and full and due consideration has had to be had to all of the matters including the potential for development of alternative sites.

You will appreciate that the views expressed in this letter are those of an officer and are not binding on the Council or any of its Committees when considering any subsequent related planning applications.

Yours sincerely

Miss Tracy Lincoln
Senior Planning Officer
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From: Tracy Lincoln [<mailto:tlincoln@S-NORFOLK.GOV.UK>]
Sent: 23 December 2014 12:45
To: Ben Turner <BenTurner@benburgess.co.uk>
Cc: Jo Hobbs <jhobbs@S-NORFOLK.GOV.UK>
Subject: Re-location of Ben Burgess

Afternoon Ben,

Thanks for coming in yesterday.

I just thought I would drop you an email to cover the main points of the meeting and the agreed actions.

You highlighted the issues with the existing site and the search parameters for the new site.

We discussed KES2 site, that no contact had been had with Matt Bartrum, and that the EIA screening request was now in for that site. (I have attached the link to that application should you wish to take a look) <https://info.south-norfolk.gov.uk/online-applications/simpleSearchResults.do;jsessionid=624974680506B0195EE0243A4C2EDEF1?action=firstPage>

We discussed potential sites for you to explore further which were:

Wymondham site allocation (WYM5) – which you will explore and discuss with land owner.
Easton (although question whether the site is advanced enough and you indicated too close to their Beeston site).
Brooke site allocation (BKE3) – you will explore.

You were then going to put some information to us on those three sites plus KES2 to suggest why these are not feasible/viable (if in fact they are not) which we would discuss with senior colleagues before further considering Bixley.

Following the meeting Jo and I also thought we should also mention two other sites to bring to your attention and for possible consideration – COS3 at Costessey (link to proposed site allocations doc where you will find these sites attached) and Long Stratton will have an employment site as part of the proposed allocation to the north (this is not at an advanced stage).

Site specific allocations doc – link:

http://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/planning/media/B122_Site_Specific_Documents_Proposed_Submission_Doc_Part_1.zip

http://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/planning/media/B122_Site_Specific_Documents_Proposed_Submission_Doc_Part_2.zip

http://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/planning/media/B122_Site_Specific_Documents_Proposed_Submission_Doc_Part_3.zip

http://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/planning/media/B122_Site_Specific_Documents_Proposed_Submission_Doc_Part_4.zip

Link to proposed Long Stratton Area Action Plan:

<http://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/planning/4954.asp>

I trust this is of assistance and look forward to helping you progress this in the new year.

Kind regards,

Tracy

Tracy Lincoln
Senior Planning Officer

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