

## 4.0 Assessment of Employment sites

### 4.1 Sundon Quarry

<b>Site Description</b>
Site between the Midland Main Line railway and Sundon Quarry located north east of Luton and identified by the Core Strategy as a potential site for Strategic Employment Development. The proposal involves a 40 ha rail freight terminal and associated distribution development. This would involve 167,000 sqm of B8 space in four large unit sizes which would be determined by occupier demand.
<b>Major Constraints and Contributions</b>
The Sundon location adjacent to the quarry is reliant on the new Junction 11A of the M1 and the proposed Luton Northern Bypass. There is no rail infrastructure barrier to the proposed development identified by Network Rail. Development may be difficult adjacent to a quarry site but developers do not see this as significant factor. There is a habitat complex of major importance including a County Wildlife Site and SSSI around parts of the Quarry linking up to the Sundon Hills SSSI. Development may be accommodated subject to scale and height limits. There is scope for linking and enhancing green infrastructure, including woodland planting and screening mitigation of views from the motorway, established rights of way, the more sensitive quarry ridgeline with adjacent settlements (particularly historic features in Lower Sundon) and the AONB backdrop to the east.
<b>Potential Contribution of Site</b>
Good demand is seen for distribution space on large sites near motorway junctions in normal market conditions. No other rail linked distribution exists in Luton and southern Bedfordshire and the rail terminal could serve a wider area with benefits associated with transferring freight from road to rail.
<b>Deliverability within the Plan Period</b>
Developers estimate 2-3 years to construct infrastructure and initial units and Junction 11A is planned to open in 2015/2016. This would facilitate B8 development to be built out over 4-5 years after the infrastructure is in place. Generating 167,000 m of rail linked distribution use with potentially 1,300-2,000 jobs; which could be delivered over a 4-5 year period from 2016.

Sundon Quarry			
1. Impact of Development			
Criteria Title	Principal Source	Assessment Factors Measurement	Conclusion
1.1 Impact on important areas of landscape	Environmental Sensitivity Assessment, Dec 2008	Rolling chalk farmland landscape is mainly open arable character with few downland features but several peripheral tree and hedge line features. There are no sensitive designated landscape features within the site and the Chilterns AONB lies beyond the quarry and Upper and Lower Sundon to the north and east respectively. A worked quarry forms the eastern and northern boundary and a wooded ridgeline from where the land slopes down to the railway and M1 motorway forming the western boundary. Development may be accommodated subject to scale and height limits. There is scope for linking and enhancing green infrastructure, including woodland planting and screening mitigation of views from the motorway, established rights of way, the more sensitive quarry ridgeline with adjacent settlements and the AONB backdrop to the east.	Site appropriate for development with significant mitigation and linking green infrastructure enhancement
1.2 Impact on important areas of biodiversity	Environmental Sensitivity Assessment, Dec 2008	There are no designated habitat features on the relatively open farmland with several peripheral tree and hedge line features, which is the main part of this site. However, a County Wildlife Site exists on the southern boundary. The site is further constrained by a habitat complex of national importance around Sundon Quarry SSSI (including the CWS of Sundon Chalk Pits) linking north-eastwards to Sundon Hills SSSI, forming a constraint to any development eastwards and northwards.	Site appropriate for development provided adjacent habitat designations are safeguarded and linkages enhanced
1.3 Impact on important areas of heritage/ archaeological importance	Environmental Sensitivity Assessment, Dec 2008	There are no historic or heritage designations or assets within the site. The site is in context with the adjacent setting of Lower Sundon and landmark listed church and historic Park as well as the separate setting/identity of Upper Sundon and Streatley. Site has moderate sensitivity.	Site appropriate for development with significant visual screening and mitigation to protect the setting of Lower Sundon historic features and identity of other settlements

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<b>1. Impact of Development</b>			
<b>Criteria Title</b>	<b>Principal Source</b>	<b>Assessment Factors Measurement</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
1.4 Impact on important views	Environmental Sensitivity Assessment, Dec 2008	Adjacent to M1 corridor, rail line and existing industry/urban edge of Luton, there are no significant views likely to be affected. Topography surrounding the site means that there is scope to hide development from view from surrounding rights of way and more sensitive settlements in particular Lower Sundon.	Site appropriate for development with significant visual screening and integration within the topography
1.5 Potential to flood or impact on flood risk areas.	SFRA Level 1, Sept 2008 WCS Phase 1, Dec 2008	Within flood zone 1, the proposed development is located on a site of low flood risk and good infiltration; fair to restricted with development. The scale of proposed development would therefore require a site specific flood risk Assessment and consider cumulative impacts on Charlton WwTW. SUDS should be encouraged and ground water flooding investigation.	Site appropriate for development but would require site level FRA
1.6 Presence of major infrastructure constraints	JTU Officer assessment  Luton Gateway Infrastructure Delivery Plan & Funding Study, Oct.2010	Two Electricity pylons advance across the site east to west with a third and fourth pylon located on along the north eastern boundary adjacent to the quarry. A minor tributary (the River Flit) water course runs though the site. Development would need to be shaped to respect these constraints. No major constraints but provision of new water and electricity infrastructure needed. Although, electricity connections would have to go under the M1, thus increasing costs.	Site appropriate for development with mitigation
1.7 Proximity to neighbourhood centre or local centre	JTU Officer assessment	This site is in close proximity to Sundon and Charlton villages with only limited services although a local centre exists at Sundon Park in Luton (within 2 km). The proposed development is likely to have reasonable access to any new facilities delivered within the proposed urban extension to the north of Luton.	Site has limited but reasonable access to local centres but potential scope for mitigation

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1.8 Proximity to core facilities	Environmental Sensitivity Assessment, Dec 2008	Rolling chalk farmland landscape is mainly open arable character with few downland features but several peripheral tree and hedge line features. There are no sensitive designated landscape features within the site and the Chilterns AONB lies beyond the quarry and Upper and Lower Sundon to the north and east respectively. A worked quarry forms the eastern and northern boundary and a wooded ridgeline from where the land slopes down to the railway and M1 motorway forming the western boundary. Development may be accommodated subject to scale and height limits. There is scope for linking and enhancing green infrastructure, including woodland planting and screening mitigation of views from the motorway, established rights of way, the more sensitive quarry ridgeline with adjacent settlements and the AONB backdrop to the east.	Site appropriate for development with significant mitigation and linking green infrastructure enhancement

Sundon Quarry			
2. Contribution of Development			
Criteria Title	Principal Source	Assessment Factors Measurement	Conclusion
2.1 Contribution to the improvement and easing of congestion in known problem areas	JTU Officer assessment  Transport Appraisal, March 2009	<p>The scheme is dependent on direct vehicular access to and implementation of the proposed Junction 11A, North-Luton bypass and midland Main line rail in order to secure a reduction in any generated vehicular traffic arising on east west local roads e.g. HGV and some roads in the northern part of Luton.</p> <p>Public transport share is likely to increase with guided busway implementation but further contributions may also be necessary to ease any increase in road traffic congestion in northern parts of the town anticipated with strategic highway improvements across the north of the conurbation.</p>	Some on and off site contribution

<b>Sundon Quarry</b>			
<b>2. Contribution of Development</b>			
<b>Criteria Title</b>	<b>Principal Source</b>	<b>Assessment Factors Measurement</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
2.2 Contribution to the improvement of existing public transport provision	JTU Officer assessment	Scope to provide new bus services and/or an extension of routes serving existing Sundon Park employment site in north Luton and adjacent housing. Scope to access via the proposed Northern Parkway Station and any extension of guided bus way services to serve the north Luton urban extension.	Some on and off site contribution
2.3 Contribution to the delivery of major transport infrastructure	JTU officer assessment  Infrastructure Delivery Plan & Funding Study, Jan 2010 And Oct.2010	Accessing the proposed development would be heavily reliant on a link road connecting to a new Junction 11A of M1 and Luton Northern Bypass. Rail access is also required and feasible, to the proposed Intermodal terminal. Developer funding contribution would be necessary to deliver these local connections.	Some on and off site contribution
2.4 Contribution to delivery of strategic Green Infrastructure provision	Bedfordshire and Luton Strategic G I Plan, Feb 2007	Within the 'Chalk Arc corridor' and initiative there is a potential scope to contribute to the enhancement and linking of a network of habitats (e.g. Sundon Chalk Pits), rights of way and woodland features for green infrastructure purposes.	Some on and off site contribution
2.5 Contribution to meeting social and community infrastructure needs	JTU Officer assessment	A B8 freight employment area would not offer significant scope for on site provision of social and community infrastructure but may make potential contributions to off site provision.	Limited off site contribution.
2.6 Contribution to meeting existing open space needs	Bedfordshire and Luton Strategic G I Plan, Feb 2007  Draft Green Space Strategy, Feb 2008	One of three 60 Ha strategic green spaces is recommended north of Luton. Within the 'Chalk Arc corridor' and initiative, there is a potential scope to contribute to the enhancement and linking of a network of open spaces, wildlife corridors and habitats (e.g. Sundon Chalk Pits), rights of way and woodland features for green infrastructure purposes.	Some on site contribution
2.7 Contribution to provision of strategic employment land and premises.	JTU Officer assessment ELR, Jan 2008 Employment Land & Market Assessment Study, March 2010	Significant potential on site 40 ha rail freight terminal contribution as well as serving wider needs in a good location for B8 due to rail and planned strategic road improvements as well as proximity to adjacent urban extensions. However, its offer is tempered by proximity to existing employment land and environmental constraints and access to Luton northern Bypass J11a link (from 2016).	Significant on site contribution

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<b>2. Contribution of Development</b>			
<b>Criteria Title</b>	<b>Principal Source</b>	<b>Assessment Factors Measurement</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
2.8 Contribution to affordable and local housing needs of the area.	N/A	N/A.	No contribution
2.9 Contribution to the delivery of an integrated sustainable infrastructure system	JTU officer assessment  Sustainable Development & Adaptation & Mitigation of Climate Change Study, Feb 2010	Scale and proposed use of site suggest that there is scope for on site provision of renewable heating technologies and carbon reduction to code level 6 compliance. Potential scope to contribute to existing utility networks with new sub station, cable routes and grid reinforcement (critical infrastructure 2011). Some scope to contribute towards public transport access and also road access via J11A	Moderate on site contribution
2.10 Contribution to the regeneration of the town centres of Luton, Dunstable, Houghton Regis	JTU officer assessment	Limited scope to assist with regenerating town centres. Luton town centre is remote. Houghton Regis is closer but both would require extensions to guided bus way or public transport provision to increase access/patronage.	Limited off site contribution
2.11 Contribution to reinvigoration and rejuvenation of deprived wards	JTU officer assessment	The proposed development would offer employment opportunities as well as business and freight connectivity accessible to the northern residential and employment areas of Luton and Houghton Regis.	Off site contribution
2.12 Potential to contribute to place making.	JTU officer assessment  Environmental Sensitivity Assessment Supplementary Report, Dec 2008	The proposal may potentially make some on site contribution though balancing employment, freight and business activity and integrating with housing within the proposed urban extension north of Luton, via Green Infrastructure networks.	Some on site and off site contribution

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<b>2. Contribution of Development</b>			
<b>Criteria Title</b>	<b>Principal Source</b>	<b>Assessment Factors Measurement</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
2.13 Contribution to retention Green Belt principles	JTU officer assessment	The proposed site lies within a green belt location on rolling chalk farmland. The development would introduce built up development into the countryside in proximity to Upper and Lower Sundon villages, creating a risk of coalescence/urbanisation, visible from the M1 corridor and the urban edge of Luton and rights of way.	Significant impact

<b>Sundon Quarry</b>			
<b>3. Delivery within the plan period</b>			
<b>Criteria Title</b>	<b>Principal Source</b>	<b>Assessment Factors Measurement</b>	<b>Score</b>
3.1 Availability of the land for development	Developers Forum  Legal Contracts	The site is being promoted by a developer consortium which includes Pro Logis. However, ownership unknown. Site would also have to come forward on delivery of access road to J11A and Luton northern Bypass, Rail sidings etc.	By 2016
3.2 Contamination of the land	Environmental Health Records	A Greenfield site – contamination unknown and site investigation may be required given the proximity to former minerals workings in the adjacent quarry.	By 2016
3.3 Availability of utilities infrastructure	WCS Phase 1, Dec 2008 Infrastructure Delivery Plan & Funding Study, Jan 2010 and Oct.2010	Surface run off from a 40 ha site with medium surface and ground water flood risk could contribute to increased flow to the Charlton WwTW and also require new 850 m gravity sewer capacity (£480k). Contribution to a study will be required to identify mitigation solutions before development can commence, as a result of cumulative implications from development north of Houghton Regis. Minor electricity works and sewer crossing of the M1 are needed. However, new sub station, route and grid reinforcement or connection via M1 to Sundon Primary (£2M). Also need 3km of new off site water main and upgrade to existing booster station (2015-25).	By 2016
3.4 Suitability of access arrangements	Transport Officer Highways Authority Transport Appraisal, March 2009	Accessing the proposed development would be heavily reliant on a link road connecting to a new Junction 11A of M1 and Luton Northern Bypass. Rail access is also required and feasible. These requirements are a major constraint to bringing forward the development being dependent on the phasing and delivery of these schemes.	By 2016

3.5 Physical Constraints addressed	JTU officer assessment	No major constraints however, two electricity pylons advance across the site east to west with a third and fourth pylon located on along the north eastern boundary adjacent to the quarry. A minor tributary (the River Flit) water course runs though the site. Development would need to be shaped to respect these constraints.	By 2016
3.6 Dependence on Major Transport Infrastructure	Transport Officer Highways Authority Transport Appraisal, March 2009  Infrastructure Delivery Plan & Funding Study, Jan 2010 and Oct.2010	Accessing the proposed development would be heavily reliant on a link road connecting to a new Junction 11A of M1 and Luton Northern Bypass. Rail access is also required and feasible. These requirements are a major constraint to bringing forward the development being dependent on the phasing and delivery of these schemes.	By 2016