

Sundon Rail Freight Interchange SSSA

Introduction

- 10.18a Sundon Rail Freight Interchange (RFI) SSSA is located on land adjacent to Sundon Quarry and lies to the north of the built edge of the urban area of Luton bounded to the west by the Midland Mainline railway and the M1 motorway. North of Luton SSSA adjoins the site in the south east. The village of Upper Sundon is located to the north east and the Chilterns AONB lies beyond Upper Sundon village.
- 10.18b For the purposes of the Core Strategy and allocation purposes, the site referred to as the Sundon RFI SSSA refers to the arable land adjoining the rail line to the east, adjacent to the former Sundon Quarry, as shown on the Proposals Map Amendments. The adjacent County Wildlife Site and Site of Specific Scientific Interest, formerly used for quarrying, are not included in the SSSA designation. The RFI site is to be located on the arable land which is level with the railway line but rises towards the south of the site to the level of the houses in the hamlet to the south of the site.
- 10.18c Current access to the site is obtained through Upper Sundon village; however the development will necessitate improved and direct access to the site from the M1 motorway, in particular from the proposed Junction 11a. A new and improved road network to this junction will be constructed prior to the occupation of the RFI development.
- 10.18d Adjoining the site to the east is a disused quarry comprising Sundon Chalk Pits County Wildlife Site (CWS) and within the CWS is Sundon Chalk Quarry Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The SSSI comprises a variety of habitats containing important plant and animal species. Due to unauthorised access to the site over the years, there are areas of the CWS and SSSI that could be enhanced and better managed. The CWS forms part of a larger CWS that extends to the north into the Chilterns AONB. There is also a small CWS to the south of the site; Chalton Scrub and Grassland CWS.
- 10.18e The green belt boundary has been altered in this area to remove this land within the red line as shown on the Proposals Map Amendments. Only the land to be developed as part of the RFI, including a possible adjacent minerals depot, will be removed from the Green Belt. This will provide a permanent Green Belt boundary and remove the need for further reviews of the boundary should further development be required within or beyond the period to 2026 in this location. Sundon Chalk Pits

CWS and Sundon Chalk Quarry SSSI will not be removed from the green belt.

Sundon RFI – Vision

The strategic allocation on the land adjacent to Sundon Quarry will maximise the advantages arising from its specific location, alongside the Midland Mainline railway and M1 Motorway, to provide a Rail Freight Interchange for the sub-region. It will contribute to the regeneration of Luton and southern Central Bedfordshire through the provision of a range of employment opportunities and reduction in freight movements. A road link off the proposed Junction 11a on the M1 motorway will improve accessibility to the RFI, as well as to the north of Luton and the North of Luton SSSA. Green infrastructure, in the adjoining SSSI and CWS, will be well managed and maintained enabling greater accessibility to the areas rich and diverse natural environment.

Development Principles and Land Use

- 10.18f As outlined in Policy CS13A, the land at Sundon RFI SSSA, approximately 55 hectares in area, will be developed as a Rail Freight Interchange providing an intermodal facility providing pick-up/drop-off access to the rail network on the western side of the site. The RFI will be approximately 5 hectares in size. To complement the RFI, provision will be made for approximately 40 hectares of employment land, accommodating some 170,000 sqm of B8 floorspace in the central and eastern parts of the site.
- 10.18g Approximately 7 hectares to the north of the SSSA could be developed as a potential minerals distribution depot. This use is currently located in Luton and thus moving it to the RFI will free up land in Luton for development and regeneration opportunities as well as facilitate construction in the North Houghton Regis and North Luton SSSAs.
- 10.18h It is essential for the RFI to have direct access to the M1 at the proposed Junction 11a. The development of the RFI will contribute towards the delivery of a road connection from Junction 11a to Sundon Park Road, which will form the first part of the strategic route linking the M1 and the A6, the Northern Bypass. The IDP and FS identify the provision of the new Junction 11a and North Luton Bypass as critical infrastructure for the sub-region.
- 10.18i Although the development is primarily of a warehousing nature, the design of the buildings and site layout will be of a high quality so as to enhance the site and surrounding area. The design, scale and height of the buildings will respect the topography especially to the south of the site, and will seek to minimise the intrusiveness of the development. Landscaping will be used to enhance the environment of the RFI and be sensitive due to its close proximity to the adjoining CWS and SSSI. Landscaping will also be used to mitigate potential visual impacts and improve the

local wildlife habitats creating linkages with the adjoining CWS and SSSI.

- 10.18j The use of sustainable building techniques and technologies that are energy efficient and the use of renewable energy sources, where viable, will be adopted to minimise the impact on the environment.
- 10.18k The development of the RFI offers the opportunity to enhance and manage Sundon Chalk Pit CWS and Sundon Chalk Quarry SSSI because these are in the same ownership as the SSSA. Enhancement and mitigation measures will be carried out to increase the ecological value of the site and these adjacent designated areas. Specific opportunities for enhancement measures and improvement to the management of the CWS and SSSI to enhance the Green Infrastructure opportunity will be identified at the masterplanning stage.
- 10.18l Although there are no areas at risk of flooding on site, balancing ponds and SuDs will be incorporated into the development to manage the run-off. These will also ensure that there is no increased run-off into the SSSI and CWS which could impact upon its ecology.
- 10.18m The Rail Freight Interchange proposed on land adjacent to Sundon Quarry is a specific form of development responding directly to its particular location adjacent to the Midland Mainline railway and proposed Junction 11a on the M1 motorway, and to the consequent opportunity to provide a strategic rail freight interchange resource for the sub-region. The RFI will also provide an opportunity to reduce road freight movements in the wider sub-region and is critical to the delivery of a substantial proportion of the employment resource for Luton and southern Central Bedfordshire. This development, together with the opportunities for enhancement at the adjacent SSSI and CWS, contributes to the delivery of several strategic objectives; including in particular; increasing job opportunities (SO3), improving strategic road connectivity and promoting new sustainable transport opportunities (SO4), protecting and improving access to the natural environment (SO7), promoting sustainable development (SO8) and improving the quantity and quality of green infrastructure (SO9).

Policy

Policy CS13A
Sundon RFI SSSA

Sundon RFI SSSA will be contained within the red line shown in the Proposals Map. The Green Belt boundary is revised to remove the Green

Belt within this line.

The Master Plan will be prepared to take forward the vision and development principles to deliver a SSSA that:

1. provides an intermodal rail facility on approximately 5 hectares of the site;
2. provides for approximately 40 hectares of new employment land accommodating approximately 170,000 sqm of B8 floorspace;
3. provides for a potential mineral distribution depot on approximately 7 hectares of the site;
4. is connected by a strategic road to the M1 Junction 11a; and
5. enhances and manages Sundon Chalk Pits CWS and Sundon Chalk Quarry SSSI to improve their ecological value and contribute to the GI network.

The Master Plan will confirm the timings and phasing of the development taking account of the capacity of the proposed infrastructure.

Green Belt principles will be applied until the development of the Sundon Rail Freight Interchange.

Delivery and Monitoring

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| 10.18n | A Master Plan and accompanying Delivery Strategy will be prepared for the Sundon RFI SSSA in partnership between the Local Authorities, service providers, statutory bodies and the developers. |
| 10.18o | The time frame for the production of the Master Plan is yet to be finalised but it will be in place before submission of a planning application and commencement of development of the RFI. It is essential for the site that the strategic road from the M1 Junction 11a is constructed and an appropriate road connection to that junction is in place prior to the occupation of the RFI development. That road connection will form the first part of the North Luton Bypass. |
| 10.18p | The Master Plan will finalise the layout of the SSSA and provide more detailed guidance about the scale of development and infrastructure requirements. It will also provide more detailed principles to guide the design of the development including the enhancement and management measures for the adjoining CWS and SSSI. |
| 10.18q | The associated Delivery Strategy will outline in more detail the phasing of the development. It will also confirm the roles and responsibilities for delivering and funding the associated infrastructure. An overview of the key milestones in relation to |

the delivery of the SSSA as a whole, which will be expanded upon further within the Delivery Strategy, is provided in Table 10.4a.

Table 10.4a: Sundon Rail Freight Interchange SSSA: Delivery of key milestones

Master Plan Completed	2013
Application Submitted	2013
Application Determined	2014
Completion of M1 Junction 11a	2016
Delivery of a road link between site and M1 Junction 11a	2016/2017
Start of development	2017
Completion of development	2021
North Luton Bypass Started	2021-2026