MASTERPLAN
Land west of the A131, Great Notley
Introduction

The proposed site identified within this document was recommended for development in the Council’s recently adopted Core Strategy (September 2011). A masterplan for this strategic development site is required by the Core Strategy to be approved by the Council. This will be used as a material consideration when assessing future planning applications on this site.

The aim of this document is therefore to provide a series of indicative plans that set out the broad parameters for development and a masterplan that provides a landscape framework with which future planning applications will be generally consistent and from which deviations will only be approved if they are not likely to have any significant adverse impacts.

The proposed masterplan and indicative plans provide:

- a guiding vision and coherent framework for any future development;
- a clear statement of the physical and other parameters, constraints and restrictions to which the design of the infrastructure and structural landscape must adhere under the terms of the planning permissions sought in future; and
- a flexible framework which is capable of responding to the needs of the scheme and the aspirations of key stakeholders involved in its delivery but always within the boundaries contemplated by the Environmental Statement that will accompany any future outline planning applications;

If approved the masterplan will form the basis for any future proposals and will be a material consideration when considering any further development of the site.

The wider design and sustainability credentials of the scheme will be addressed through a subsequent outline planning application.
Countryside Properties PLC

- Countryside Properties is a leader in property development, the creation of sustainable communities and urban regeneration. The Group’s vision is to create exceptional places for people to live, work and enjoy.
- The Group’s award winning developments span the full range of property sectors, including private and affordable housing and all aspects of commercial property.
- Countryside Properties has developed over 4.0 m sq ft (370,000 sq m) of commercial space and going forward has a commercial property development programme of up to 5.0 m sq ft (460,000 sq m).

Countryside Properties development of Great Notley Garden Village

- Countryside Properties has been involved in the development of Great Notley Garden Village for over 20 years. The award winning “garden village” was designed as a sustainable new community on a 465 acre green field site, adjacent to the south-west of Braintree.
- Great Notley Garden Village has now evolved into a successful community comprising:
  - 2,000 mixed-tenure dwellings.
  - 500,000 sq ft Skyline 120 business park.

- Neighbourhood shopping.
- Community and leisure facilities.
- 180 acres of public open space including a 100 acre country park, village green and extensive landscaping.
- Skyline 120 Business Park has established itself as the leading employment park in the District. It is now home to 24 companies, many of whom are new to the District, and now provides in the region of 700 jobs.
- With Skyline 120 almost fully built out, the Land to the West of the A131 at Great Notley provides the opportunity to build on this success and to help reinforce Braintree as an attractive location for inward investment and job creation.
Local Planning Policy

The District’s Core Strategy Development Plan Document was adopted on the 19th September 2011. The Core Strategy DPD forms part of the Local Development Framework and it sets out the spatial vision, objectives and strategy for the development of the District up to 2026.

In particular Policy CS4, states that the Council will aim to provide a minimum of 14,000 net additional jobs in the District between 2001 and 2026. To meet these targets the District have identified the 18.5 hectare site to the west of the A131, Great Notley to provide a new business park.

This should be developed for a mix of commercial uses, with an overall quantum of B8 (storage and distribution) use on the site restricted to no more than 40% of the total floor area and the largest unit shall be restricted to 7,500 sq m. The development should also include a 7ha structural landscaping/ wildlife corridor.

In summary there is clearly strong support both in current and emerging local and regional planning policy for the proposed development of this site.

Inset 1b Land to the west of the A131 at Great Notley

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Key Issues and Constraints

Key issues that we are conscious to carefully address include:

- Ensure that the relationship with our neighbours particularly the Country Park is respected;
- Given the setting, a priority of the proposed development will be to ensure a sensitive approach to construction;
- Ensure that the new buildings are energy efficient and include as many viable ‘green measures’ as possible;
- Provide attractive facilities for future employees and visitors alike;
- Deliver the new facilities as quickly as possible to minimise disruption to our neighbours and to generate new job opportunities in the area.
Opportunities

- The provision of approximately 2000 net additional jobs for the District;
- A much greater range of full time and part time employment opportunities for both male and female workers;
- Major opportunities to foster the upgrading, promotion and expansion of local businesses during the construction period and throughout the completed development;
- The development of employment opportunities will contribute to the ongoing upskilling of the local workforce;
- The possible expansion of the Country Park through provision of some community woodland; and
- Reduction in out-commuting from Braintree District.

Overall the proposals will have a long term substantial beneficial impact on the local economy and local community.
Transport

Site Access
• The site is located adjacent to the A131 dual carriageway which links to the A120 trunk road to the north and A130 to the south. It forms part of the primary road network linking Braintree/Great Notley with Chelmsford.
• Vehicular access to the site will be from the existing Cuckoo Way (Tesco) Roundabout.
• A Strategic Transport Appraisal has been prepared and demonstrates that an access via a fourth arm from the A131/Cuckoo Way roundabout could adequately serve as the sole means of access to the development.

Pedestrian and Cycle
• The development will maximise scope for walking and cycling via the provision of pedestrian and cyclist routes through key connections to the existing Garden Village, Country Park, and Skyline 120 business park, as well as to the extensive local bridleway network.
• Pedestrian and cycle access to Great Notley Garden Village will be via the existing signalised crossing to the north of Cuckoo Way roundabout. This will deliver connectivity between the new development, Country Park, Garden Village and existing bus stops, providing a safe and convenient route for both pedestrians and cyclist.
• Provision of supporting cycle friendly infrastructure such as secure, covered cycle parking, showers, changing and storage facilities would support targets to increase levels of cycling.

Travel Plan
• A Green Travel Plan will be developed to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel to and from the business park.
• The Green Travel Plan will act as a management tool that assists people in considering how they travel, with the emphasis on the promotion of sustainable forms of transport. Through a co-ordinated strategy a Travel Plan can help people to understand their travel needs and deliver a package of initiatives to increase choice and reduce the need to travel by car.

Public Transport
• Subject to discussions with bus providers, the intention is to provide direct bus links to the site, connecting with Braintree town centre and the surrounding area.

Transport and Access Strategy - Land West of the A131 at Great Notley
Masterplan Framework Options

Three landscape framework options were initially considered:

**Option 1 - Enclosed, screened development**
- Screened to east and north to the greatest extent possible.
- High density of planting to greatly reinforce existing tree belts.
- Off site reinforcement of planting to west and south east to further improve screening.
- Extensive use of earthworks, notably bunds, to enhance screening effects.
- Likely to result in an inward facing, internalised layout providing few opportunities for integration into the existing community.
- No visual links to Country Park or Great Notley – no opportunity for the site to act as a “gateway” into the District due to the enclosed nature of the site.

**Option 2 - Open, outward facing development**
- Outward facing development with gaps created in existing planting on A131.
- Building frontages orientated to provide active frontages to A131 wherever possible.
- Opportunity to provide feature buildings at entrances.
- Additional planting at low density to maintain connectivity with surrounding sites.
- Limited use of earthworks, primarily maintaining existing contours around the edge of the site.
- Contrasts with, rather than complements, the existing landscape treatment around Great Notley where bunds and higher density landscaping solutions have been adopted.
- Likelihood that majority of buildings will include an element of industrial/warehouse accommodation which will limit opportunities for active frontages. Given the more limited landscape treatment, there is therefore a greater risk of this option presenting blank facades to the exterior of the site than the other options.
Masterplan Framework Options

Option 3 - Balanced Solution
- Balanced option. Largely screened but with visible elements at key locations.
- Provides opportunities for the provision of gateway features at the entrance to the site, adding visual appeal and improving the visual links between the site and the surrounding area.
- The focal points could be formed by a building (e.g. a hotel), public art and/or a landscape feature. Other buildings would generally be more inward looking to minimise impact on surrounding area.
- Medium density landscape solution, with bunding/earthworks focussed on most sensitive locations.
- Some off site reinforcement of planting to minimise impact of longer views from the south.
- Opportunity for extension of open area of Country Park into the northern part of the site, providing more complementary boundary treatment and maintaining some of the open feel that is currently provided along parts of the Southern boundary of the Country Park.

Conclusion
These three illustrative plans demonstrate a range of landscaping solutions that could be adopted for the site.

Given the desire to build upon the existing landscape context at Great Notley Garden Village and to provide a better gateway to the District, it was our belief that Option 3 provided the best potential solution for the site. This option still offered a considerable amount of landscape screening (in keeping with the existing landscape character), whilst however providing opportunities to view key building frontages (visible from the A131) at the entrance to the site and at other opportunities/focal points.

Further iteration (Option 3C)
Following a meeting with the County Council’s Country Parks Officer and Braintree District Council’s Landscape Officer, it was clear that there was a desire for a new woodland to the southern end of the Country Park.

After the consideration of various factors we identified that an area of woodland could be accommodated within the development site, and this is shown in principle on the illustrative plan Option 3C.

Further amendments were made to this option following the consideration of ecology matters, relationship to the built form and access requirements etc.
Existing Landscaping Context

• The site is currently agricultural land which is bounded to the north by Great Notley Country Park, to the west by hedgerows and agricultural fields, to the south by Slampseys Farm and to the east by the A131 and Great Notley Garden Village.

Landscape Philosophy

• The aim is to create a landscape framework for the development which will complement the existing setting and enable the business park to sit comfortably within its surrounding environment.

Landscape Principles

• Landscaping designed to be sympathetic to the existing country park, agricultural surroundings and existing built development.
• Significant landscape buffer to the Country Park to provide potential for expansion and provision of a woodland area.
• A semi-screened development allowing elements of the development to be seen, providing a link to the surrounding area, in keeping with the landscape framework of Great Notley Garden Village.
• “Green fingers” of landscaping across the site providing screening and ecological routes through the development.
• An area of new hedgerow along part of the western boundary to provide an enhanced setting for the “Green Lane” along the existing bridleway.
• Planting schemes to contain mainly native species and mixes to be in keeping with vegetation mixes in the local area.
• Sustainable drainage, through a combination of swales, ditches and ponds to reflect the existing surface water run off from the site.

Preferred Masterplan Framework

Application boundary
Existing retained agricultural land
Existing vegetation along A131
Proposed woodland
Proposed individual trees
Proposed native shrub planting
Proposed hedgerow
Proposed marginal planting
Existing retained pond
Proposed pond/ditch/swale
Proposed species rich grassland
Proposed bunding
Proposed fence
Proposed lockable gate
Existing public bridleway
Existing public footpath
Proposed footpath/cycle links (indicative route)
Potential access track for maintenance

Total structural landscaping area shown to exceed 7ha to comply with requirements of the Core Strategy.
The proposals will concur with the principles of sustainable development specifically defined within national, regional and local planning policy.

These objectives have been identified as:

- High density use of land;
- Sustainable transport;
- Planning development around adequate infrastructure and services;
- High standards of design;
- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity;
- Efficient use of natural resources;
- Investment in people and capital for a competitive economy;
- Reducing the level of social exclusion;

and

- Conserving cultural heritage.

The masterplan demonstrates key development and design principles and objectives for the site.

The proposed development is based around a strong landscape strategy, in particular efforts have been made to accommodate the existing biodiversity of the site within the masterplan and this will continue to be promoted through various initiatives as the detail design of the scheme emerges.

Overall there will be high standards of sustainability in design, procurement and operation that will seek to meet or exceed the District’s guidelines.
Indicative Parameters Plan

This plan shows the key indicative parameters for the built form on site, including maximum build heights and location of the internal spine road.
Indicative Development Areas Plan

Key
- Application boundary
- Gross Developable Area - 45 acres (including main spine road and landscaping zones)
- Indicative individual development plots. Total developable area - 42.15 acres (Excluding main spine road and landscaping zones, but including primary and secondary estate roads and associated fingers of landscaping)
- Phase 1 of spine road
- Future spine road extension
- Indicative primary estate roads
- Indicative secondary estate roads
- Indicative maintenance track to the country park

This plan shows the indicative development parcels.
Indicative Layout

This plan shows an indicative layout for the site, based on the principles and arrangements shown on the previous plans e.g. the preferred landscape framework and indicative parameters plan. This is only indicative as detailed layout arrangement will need to be approved via future reserved matters applications.

Whilst it is too early to determine the location of different uses, the likelihood is that the proposed hotel would be located close to the site entrance, with larger employment uses located towards the centre of the site. The precise location will however be driven by market demand and it is therefore inappropriate to fix these at this stage.
Indicative Phasing Plan

Phase 1
Phase 2
Phase 3
Phase 4

Indicative maintenance track to the country park

This indicative plan shows how the site could be developed out in phases.
Indicative sections through the site

SECTION THROUGH SITE (North East - South West). Looking North

NOTE
ALL BUILDINGS SHOWN ARE INDICATIVE. ALL DETAILS TO BE AGREED WITH LOCAL AUTHORITY PRIOR TO DEVELOPMENT.

SECTION THROUGH SITE (North - South). Looking West

SECTION THROUGH ROADWAY/FOOTPATH ZONE. SCALE 1:100
In summary, we believe the proposed masterplan and indicative plans provide:

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