

Greater Thetford Development Partnership

Project Update Report: Thetford Enterprise Park (TEP)

October 2017

OVERVIEW

Thetford Enterprise Park is located on the northern side of the market town of Thetford in Norfolk, adjacent to the A11 dual carriageway and within the Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor. Thetford is midway between Cambridge and Norwich, providing journey times of 30 to 35 minutes to these key research centres.

The 18ha development site has capacity to deliver 52,940m² of B1 and B2 employment space with additional potential for a hotel development. Publically funded construction of an access roundabout to the site has been agreed and design work has commenced.

The employment site is immediately adjacent to a planned 5,000 home sustainable urban extension, with construction of the first 343 houses due to start on site in spring 2018.

The site has potential for the creation of a new technology focused enterprise park, attractive to companies looking for a new build, in an affordable, well serviced location with excellent transport links and adjacent to a modern sustainable housing development.

There are opportunities for land purchases, leases and joint ventures which will create a major technology focused enterprise park, both to provide new modern facilities for existing Thetford based companies and also to attract more high tech companies into the area. The total investment value is circa. £50m

SITE UTILITIES

The TEP employment site will require full utility servicing to be viable. These include;

1. Requirement for an electricity power upgrade

The first 343 houses on the SUE will utilise all spare electricity power capacity to the north of Thetford. UK Power Networks (the area's electricity distribution network operator) has provided some technical details and budgetary costings for a major power upgrade. Discussions are ongoing with UKPN to continue to examine both the short and long term power needs for Thetford, so we can best work in partnership with them to ensure the best technical solutions are adopted.

Breckland Council submitted a bid to the Housing and Communities Agency (HCA) in September which included the cost of delivering a new primary Substation on the Thetford SUE which would also become the primary power feed point for the TEP. This would represent a major step in upgrading Thetford's long term power capacity.

2. Requirement for a new Foul and Surface Drainage scheme

Investigations into a new Foul and Surface Drainage scheme for the TEP are continuing, with a view to connecting to an existing Anglia Water outlet point to the west of the TEP site and which requires an under railway track crossing. Discussions with Network Rail have been taking place for some months and progress is being made towards agreeing a scheme.

3. Requirement for site access

With funding approved in January 2017 for a new access roundabout, Norfolk County Council (NCC) commenced design work in March 2017. The majority of the outline design work has been undertaken and the project is on schedule for completion by June 2019. NCC are considering whether the roundabout constitutes a permitted development under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 and so would not require a separate planning application. No final decision has been reached.

The current estimated design and construction cost of the roundabout is £2.2m. It was agreed that any monies not required from the Thetford Sustainable Transport Package for the completion of the roundabout would be returned to the fund, for use in other Thetford Sustainable Transport schemes.

4. Water Supply

It is known that reinforcements to the water supply will be needed in the future, to provide adequate supply to both further phases of the SUE housing development and for the TEP. A scheme to reinforce the water supply to the SUE was included in Breckland Council's bid to the HCA. This will be of benefit to bringing water supply to the TEP.

5. Gas

We have confirmed that there is a medium pressure gas mains which runs along the Mundford Road adjacent to the site. It has plenty of spare capacity to service the likely needs of the TEP.

6. Broadband

We have confirmation that there is an existing duct in Mundford Road that has the capacity to supply high speed fibre to the TEP. Whilst this will require cabling from the local exchange on to the TEP site and local distribution, this should not require any public subsidy.

SITE PROMOTION

A Masterplanning approach to the TEP site development is being followed and will focus on;

- Ensuring that the TEP aligns closely with the vision for the Cambridge Norwich Technology Corridor (CNTC).

- Providing high quality grow-on space for existing technology companies located in Thetford.
- Ensuring that the TEP can contribute directly to increasing the technology skills base of Breckland.

The Thetford Enterprise Park is an important contributor to the new CNTC project, which needs deliverable employment sites as part of its marketing strategy. The current project will assist in enabling the commencement of the TEP's first marketing phase as part of the CNTC marketing roll-out.

Thetford Enterprise Park is featuring in an investment prospectus brochure at the major land development show MIPIM UK 2017, as part of the New Anglia LEP's site development showcase.

TIMELINE

It is too early to be sure when the TEP site will be ready to market, however opportunities for advance marketing (e.g. MIPIM UK) will be undertaken. The current commercial advice is that we need to demonstrate that funding is secured and work underway to provide the essential services to the site before the site is formally marketed. The outcome of the HCA bid is a key element to firming up a timeline towards marketing the site, however we will continue to explore other funding mechanisms to support bringing the TEP to a marketable state.