

South Wisbech Broad Location for Growth – Broad Concept Plan

Application Number: Not applicable

Parish Wards: Wisbech – Medworth, Octavia Hill, Elm and Christchurch

Date Submitted: April 2015

Proposal: A Broad Concept Plan for the South Wisbech Broad Location for Growth

Location: South Wisbech

Reason before Committee: The Project Team for the South Wisbech area is seeking in principle approval for the Broad Concept Plan. Local Plan Policy LP7 Urban Extensions includes provision for Planning Committee to give ‘in principle’ approval to a Broad Concept Plan which both parties would expect subsequent planning applications to be adhered to.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATION

Broad Concept Plans have been introduced through Policy LP7 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 to ensure that the large urban extensions are planned and implemented in a co-ordinated way.

For the last 12 months a project team consisting of representatives from local authorities, landowners, agents and the business community have been meeting together to develop a Broad Concept Plan for the South Wisbech area. All the landowners in the area have been represented in the meetings. The draft Broad Concept Plan has been produced by the team and is supported by the relevant evidence base as appropriate.

The Broad Concept Plan sets out proposals on 217 acres of land including about 54 hectares of employment land and around 350 homes on the site. The proposal is to deliver the site in three phases between 2016 and 2031.

The Broad Concept Plan is also consistent with the requirements of Local Plan Policy LP8 for Wisbech.

The proposal is considered to comply with the relevant Local Plan policies and should be supported.

1. Introduction & Purpose of the Paper

The purpose of this paper is to present the initial Broad Concept Plan for the South Wisbech Broad Location for Growth as set out in Policy LP7 of the Fenland Local Plan (adopted May 2014). This Paper is being presented to Planning Committee with a recommendation to approve the initial Broad Concept Plan.

What is a Broad Concept Plan?

The Broad Concept Plan approach is introduced and set out in Policy LP7 Urban Extensions of the Fenland Local Plan. The development of the Local Plan urban extension sites requires them to be planned and implemented in a coordinated way through an agreed overarching Broad Concept Plan.

Such a plan is expected to be prepared with Fenland District Council for the whole of an urban extension area and needs to have the support of the land owners and key stakeholders. Policy LP7 requires that this approach is linked to the key infrastructure needs for each urban extension site.

2. Background – Developing a Broad Concept Plan for South Wisbech

Since April 2014 the South Wisbech development site team has been meeting to develop the Broad Concept Plan for this site. The approach being presented in this paper along with the Broad Concept Plan has been developed by this team. These meetings were established because there was a willingness from the local authorities, landowners and their representatives to want to work together to deliver the South Wisbech development in line with the Local Plan policy.

Table one below includes details of the project team:

Sector	Organisation	Expertise & Support
Local Authorities & Public Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fenland District Council & Cambridgeshire County Council • Highways England (formally the Highways Agency) 	Planning Policy, Transport Policy, Development Management, Asset Management, Transport Strategy
Landowner Representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maxey Grounds and Co • Peter Humphrey Associates • David Shaw Planning • EMC Land • Cerda Planning • Rowland Bilisland Traffic Planning 	Views & support of landowners through the meetings and other discussions to ensure buy in for the process, establishing land uses for the site based on expertise and evidence; producing supporting plans and documents
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business 	Support and lobbying for wider infrastructure connected with the delivery of the site. Raising the profile of Fenland for development & growth

The work of the group has enabled the following works to be progressed. These documents are attached with the papers for this report.

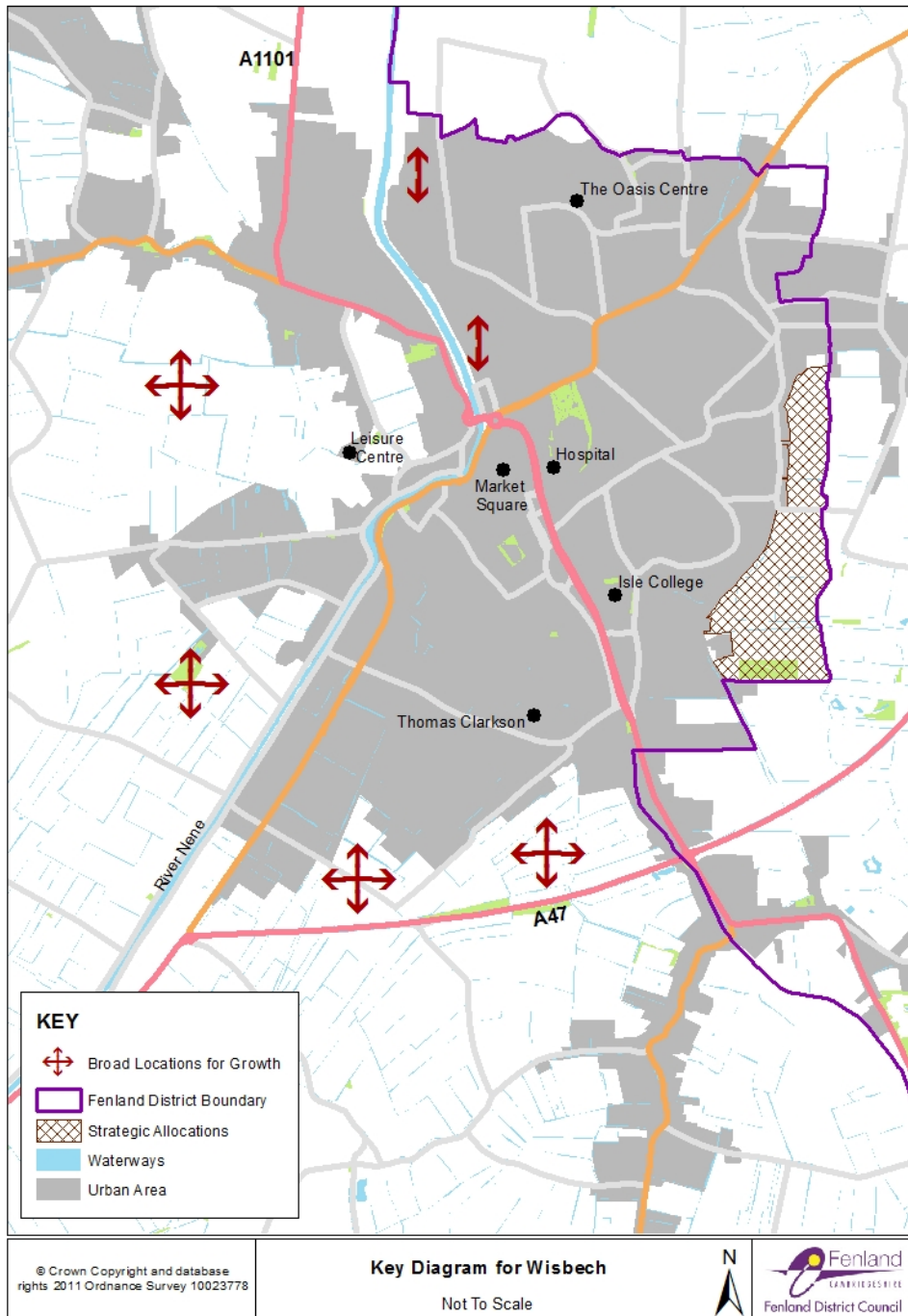
- A Landownership Plan – confirming that all landowners covering the Broad Concept Plan site are involved in the project group directly or through their representatives
- A Broad Concept Plan evidence paper – the document sets out the details of the future land uses for the whole site. The phasing of future development across the whole site is also set out along with the evidence base to support the level of development being considered
- Transport Evidence Paper – This paper considers the transport network and new infrastructure for the whole of Wisbech. It includes the key considerations for access and transport for the South Wisbech Location, based on the future land uses Broad Concept Plan paper

- Infrastructure Requirements Paper – setting out the infrastructure required to deliver the site with initial details about costing and deliverability

3. The South Wisbech Site

Introduction and Location of the site

The South Wisbech Broad Location for Growth is defined in Policy LP8 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 and includes around 217 acres of land to the north of the A47, with the River Nene forming the western boundary and Elm Low Road the eastern boundary.



Vision and key Issues for the site

The Local Plan Policy LP8 for Wisbech requires the development of this site to be carried out as per the information below. This is an extract directly from the Local Plan 2014:

South Wisbech (Broad Location for Growth): this area is located broadly to the north of the A47, south-east of New Drove, north and south of Newbridge Lane, and along Cromwell Road between Newbridge Lane and the A47/B198 roundabout. Provided all significant transport implications can be overcome (which is very likely to require improved east-west road links to relieve pressure on Weasenham Lane, with the arrangements for delivering such improved east-west links being agreed as part of the Broad Concept Plan for the broad location), the area will be predominantly for business purposes, though there is some potential for residential development in the eastern half (very approximately, around 100). Existing areas of high quality woodland, including some mature orchards, should be retained and enhanced to serve as multifunctional public open space areas with amenity, biodiversity and community food value. Noise mitigation and screening measures should be provided along the A47, and between the residential and business areas as appropriate.

The Broad Concept Plan for South Wisbech

The Broad Concept Plan for South Wisbech is included with the supporting papers for this report. The plan indicates the following key proposals for the site:

- Around 350 homes to the east of the site
- Around 54 hectares of employment land
- A new East – West road from Cromwell Road/New Bridge Lane in the west, along the site to link Newbridge Lane with Boleness Road. This road will facilitate access into the whole of the South West Wisbech site but will also offer improved access for the whole of Wisbech
- A new roundabout on A47
- New junctions or upgrades to existing junctions
- The retention and enhancement of some areas of existing high quality woodland and mature orchards which can serve as multifunctional public open space areas
- The location of pedestrian and cycle ways within the proposed development and linking to existing facilities elsewhere such as to the town centre

Evidence to support the Broad Concept Plan for South Wisbech

Transport & Traffic

Traffic Modelling undertaken in 2013 and 2014 to support the scale of growth in the Fenland Local Plan, determined that significant new transport infrastructure would be needed in Wisbech. For the South Wisbech area this included the new east – west road from New Bridge Lane/Cromwell Road through to Boleness Road and Weasenham Lane. The previous traffic testing has shown the importance of this new road for access into the South Wisbech site and to support the wider transport network of the town. Technical Notes F and G on the web page below provides further details about the results of the traffic modelling and the need for the East - West Road.

<http://www.fenland.gov.uk/article/7085/Wisbech-Area-Transport-Study>

Transport and access are the key infrastructure issues relating to the South Wisbech Site. During January and February 2015, additional traffic modelling was undertaken to test the South Wisbech project team proposal for housing and jobs on this site. The traffic modelling assessed transport issues across Wisbech including growth and development in other areas of Wisbech whilst making a specific assessment about the issues relating to the South Wisbech Site. The key issues that required evidence from the traffic model to support the Broad Concept Plan are as follows:

- Understanding the relationship between the railway line and the South Wisbech Site, including whether there is a need for a railway station within the site.
- Understanding whether the proposed entrances to the site are enough to support the level of traffic that is expected. For employment purposes, an understanding of the capacity of the Cromwell Road, Newbridge Lane, and Weasenham Lane entrances of the east – west road and how this relates to the proposed scale of development for the site is essential. In respect of the residential development a similar assessment is required of a possible access from Weasenham Lane and Half Penny Lane to service the housing area to the east of the area.
- An additional access from the A47 might also have benefit for the delivery of the site and possible access to a new railway station, depending on where it is located. The A47 is part of the trunk road network and is therefore the responsibility of the Highways England. Highways England has indicated that it would be for the group to provide evidence and demonstrate the need for such an access, whilst also not disrupting the current A47. It was agreed that such a proposal should be considered as part for the traffic modelling. Tests have been undertaken using the traffic model with and without a new A47 access to assess the implications of both for the South Wisbech site.
- Traffic modelling was also needed in phases to give an indication of the additional capacity of the current road network (if any), to understand when new infrastructure might be required as development is implemented and to ensure the development expectations for the site can be realised. The base year for the traffic model is 2014 and additional updates have been made to ensure the model includes all current development e.g. adding in new Tesco and Cinema. The interim years are 2020 and 2025 with the final year being 2031.

The results of the latest traffic modelling have been completed in the evidence document **Wisbech Traffic Model, Strategic Development Sites: March 2015**. This confirmed the following results in respect of the key transport issues relating to South Wisbech:

- The Railway Station - the location and presence of the railway station makes limited impact on traffic conditions in the area including at the other potential station sites within Wisbech. The new A47 access into the South Wisbech development site does however cause traffic to re-route should a railway station be provided in this area. These options do not restrict or cause congestion for the South Wisbech area
- Accesses to the South Wisbech Site – the traffic modelling confirms that the junction and accesses for the development can accommodate the level of traffic being proposed. This supports the Broad Concept Plan. Consideration will however need to be given to the form and layout of each junction as work begins on masterplanning and preparing planning applications for South Wisbech.

- New A47 Access – a roundabout of a similar size to the existing A47 roundabouts at Cromwell Road and Elm High Road in Wisbech has been modelled to support the evidence for this Broad Concept Plan. No significant delays are forecast as a result of this new infrastructure. This new roundabout improves access to the site and also improves access along Cromwell Road. Highways England has confirmed that they would not completely rule out such a project. There is however a need to demonstrate the effect of such a proposal in the context of cumulative development within Wisbech. The current traffic modelling is not showing any major concerns with A47 as a result of introducing an additional roundabout, there are some small delays in journey times but no major impact from this initial testing. The report recommends moving forward with more detailed work to plan a new A47 junction.
- Phases of Development – a full break down of phasing for years 2020, 2026 and 2031 have been provided in the appendices of the transport evidence report. The overall conclusion of the report is that on the whole the network has sufficient capacity to accommodate the additional development traffic. Some localised issues are noted including for Cromwell Road. It is however expected that detailed work will be undertaken to support South Wisbech Masterplanning and/or planning applications that address any localised issues.

The full Wisbech Traffic Model, Strategic Development Sites: March 2015 report detailing all the results can be found as follows:

<http://www.fenland.gov.uk/article/7085/Wisbech-Area-Transport-Study>

Open Space & Green Infrastructure

In accordance with Policies LP16 and LP19 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014, the Broad Concept Plan will allow for the provision of a high quality environment which provides adequate open space and green infrastructure. Areas of formal public open space will be sought and secured by means of a S106 agreement in accordance with the Developer Contributions SPD. An indication of green infrastructure will be detailed at a later stage and this will inform the specific details which will form part of any planning application. However as described earlier the indicative green infrastructure network indicates:

- Landscaped buffers along the A47
- Buffers between the residential and employment areas, including existing residential areas south east of New Drove

The open space and green infrastructure will be developed in accordance with the Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland SPD 2014, and the Council's adopted Open Space Standards in Appendix B of the Fenland Local Plan and Policy LP8 requirements.

4 The Purpose and Delivery of the Broad Concept Plan

How the Broad Concept Plan will be taken forward

A Broad Concept Plan is intended to deliver a co-ordinated and planned approach for the urban extension areas in the Fenland Local Plan. Such an approach is a "live" concept that will be developed over time as more detailed plans for the urban extensions are prepared, planning permissions approved and phases implemented. This South West Wisbech Broad Concept Plan is an initial plan setting out the headline infrastructure and strategic issues for the site that builds on the information in the Fenland Local Plan.

Broad Concept Plans will be progressed in line with the Council's Facilitating Growth in Fenland document which was adopted by Cabinet on 19 March 2015 and which can be found on FDC website from the following link:

<http://www.fenland.gov.uk/aksfenland/images/att5567.pdf>

There is also potential that a second phase Broad Concept Plan will build on the approach with the development of a business case and masterplan for each site. Should such approaches be taken forward they will be brought back to the Planning Committee for approval leading into public consultation, community involvement and a masterplan that is submitted for outline planning permission.

Suggested Approach and Phasing for South Wisbech

The Broad Concept Plan for South Wisbech indicates that the development of the site will come forward in 3 key phases between 2016 and 2031. Please see the attached Broad Concept Plan diagram. Further details of this phasing are as follows:

Phase 1

This is the western end of the site in and around Cromwell Road, where employment development is expected to come forward. Between 2016 and 2018 the Broad Concept Plan proposes employment as breakdown of 10% office, 60% light industry and 30% distribution. This is expected to create over 600 new jobs in Wisbech. Between 2016 and 2022 additional employment is also expected to come forward on the west side of Cromwell Road.

Phase 2

This is the residential part of the South Wisbech site at the eastern end. Housing is expected through phasing to commence between 2016 and 2021 of around potentially 70 dwellings per annum. Although Local Plan Policy LP8 indicates very approximately around 100 dwellings could be provided in South Wisbech. Further evidence and detailed assessment through the work of the group has indicated that approximately 350 dwellings can be provided on the site. This change in numbers is in accordance with the flexible, pro-growth and evidence based approach of the Local Plan.

Phase 3

This phase is the rest of the employment requirement for the site. It is assumed that employment from the New Bridge Lane area eastwards will come forward between 2018 and 2025. This area is expected to create approximately 1600 additional jobs. The remainder of the area is expected to be implemented between 2025 and 2031 creating about 1150 new jobs. The employment ratio for Phase 3 is expected to be the same as Phase 1 above.

Infrastructure Phasing

Assumptions used for the traffic modelling that are based on current available evidence suggest that the key infrastructure will come forward as follows:

- The new east – west road linking Bolness Road and New Bridge Lane will be in place by 2020
- The March to Wisbech Railway Line will be live by 2025
- The new roundabout on A47 will be live by 2025

5. Planning applications

In the absence of an approved Broad Concept Plan any planning applications submitted within the Broad Location for Growth area are considered to be contrary to Policy LP7 and as such are unlikely to gain planning permission. The approval of this proposed Broad Concept Plan will therefore allow for these developments to be supported in principle on the basis that Policy LP7 has been satisfied and providing they do not compromise the aspirations of the Plan. The proposed Broad Concept Plan for South Wisbech will therefore aid the commencement of development within this area, thereby promoting the Council's aspirations for growth.

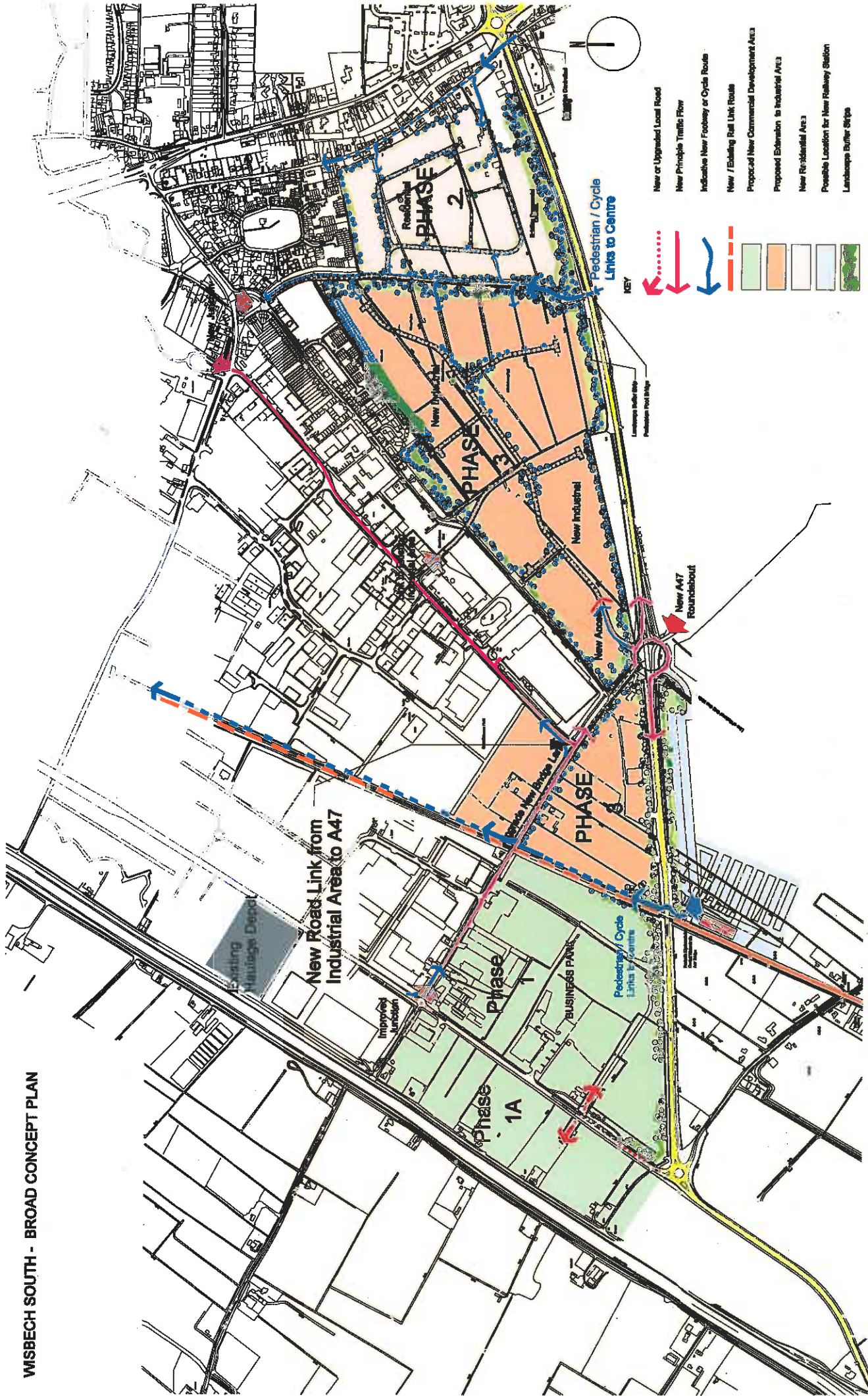
6. Conclusion and Recommendation

The proposed Broad Concept Plan represents an initial strategy for the development of South Wisbech (Broad Location for Growth) as set out in Policy LP8 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014. It is anticipated that the approval of this document will provide a basis to allow for the Project Team to continue discussions to develop detailed masterplans for specific phases of the development.

It is considered that the proposed Broad Concept Plan complies with the requirements of Policy LP7 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 and it is therefore recommended that the Broad Concept Plan for South Wisbech is approved.

Recommendation: Approve the Broad Concept Plan

WISBECH SOUTH - BROAD CONCEPT PLAN



- KEY**
- New or Upgraded Local Road
 - New Principle Traffic Flow
 - Indicative New Footway or Cycle Route
 - New / Existing Rail Link Route
 - Proposed New Commercial Development Area
 - Proposed Extension to Industrial Area
 - New Residential Area
 - Possible Location for New Railway Station
 - Landscape Buffer Strip



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