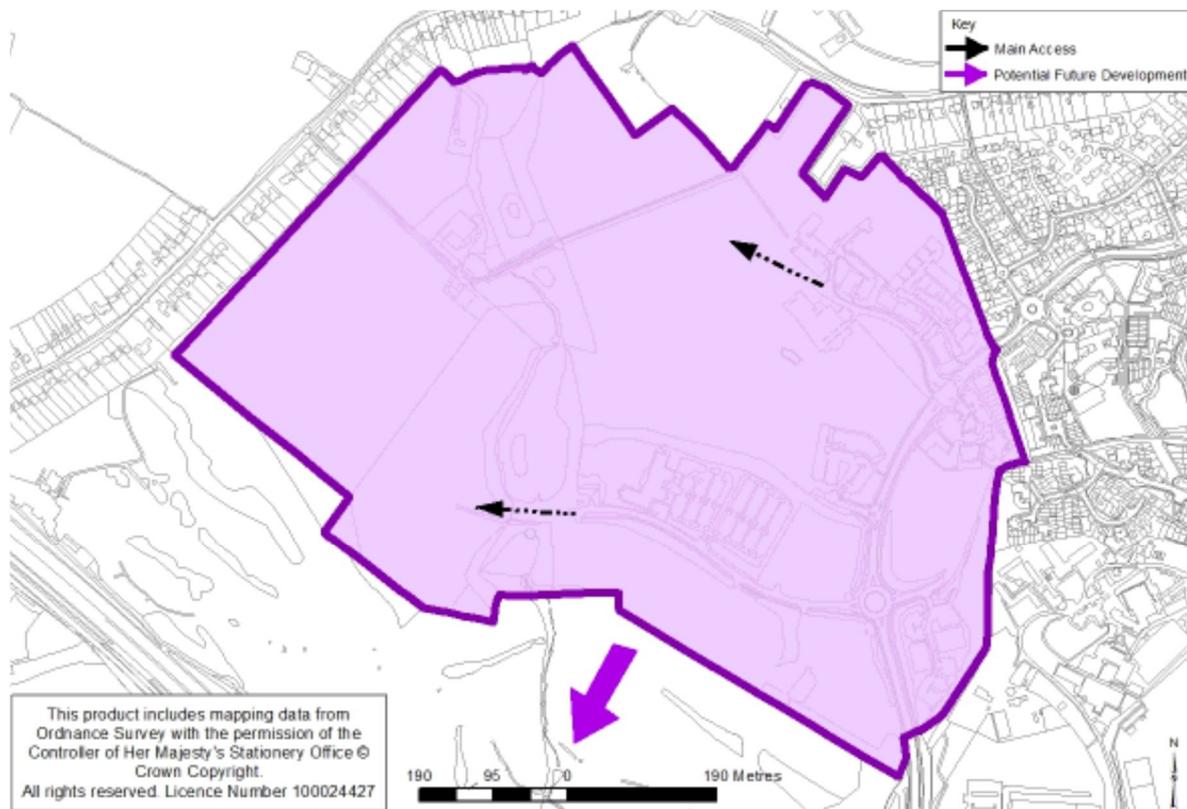


Eureka Park



4.221 The site is located in the north western part of the Ashford urban area and is bounded by Sandyhurst Lane to the north which is characterised by ribbon residential development that directly abuts the Eureka site. To the south and south west, the site adjoins the Ashford golf course whilst to the east is the existing residential development of Goat Lees. The A251 Trinity Road runs through the eastern part of the site linking to the M20 junction 9.

4.222 The Eureka Park area was identified in the Ashford Local Plan (2000), the Core Strategy (2008) and the Ashford Urban Sites and Infrastructure DPD (2012) as a key strategic employment area. The Urban Sites & infrastructure DPD makes it clear that the Eureka site plays an important role as the principal 'higher –order' business park for the town. It is emphasised that it is essential to be able attract headquarter buildings and 'blue-chip' companies to an attractive parkland-style business environment with the aim to broaden the economic base of Ashford and provide a wider set of employment opportunities. The area provides a different type of offer to the other business locations in the town and it is important that this type of provision continues to be accommodated.

4.223 There are established B1 uses along both sides of Trinity Road and along Nicholas Road (Brake Bothers). The areas known as Northdown 1 and 2 which lie between Nicholas Road and Upper Pemberton are now constructed and fully occupied. Eureka Place is a local centre that provides a range of shops and services for both residents and employees.

4.224 The proposed policy area extends beyond the area identified in previous Local Plans to include the area to the north and north-west extending to the boundary with the properties that border Sandyhurst Lane.

4.225 The Local Plan provides the opportunity to review the overall approach to this area. It is critical that the site remains a strategic location for higher-order employment development recognising the importance of the area to the overall business offer of the town but there is the opportunity to re-consider the potential for some high quality residential development on part of the extended site that could fit in with the overall development concept on the site and improve the overall development offer. A high quality mix of employment and residential development in an attractive landscaped setting could deliver wider benefits to improve the business attraction of the site in particular as well as the town as a whole.

4.226 It is proposed that detailed site proposals should be determined following a detailed and inclusive masterplanning exercise that should inform any planning application for development on the site. The site is proposed for up to 300 dwellings and 20 hectares of commercial development.

4.227 In terms of the employment development, the Eureka Park site will not be appropriate for all types of employment uses. For instance, it is unlikely that primarily B2 or B8 uses will be acceptable here. However, it is possible to broaden the scope of potential uses here beyond just B1 office developments. For example, health care facilities or similar high quality services that complement the wider B1 office elements of the site may be acceptable where these generate new jobs for the area. Beyond the existing local centre, retail or leisure uses will not be acceptable as these should be located in, or closer to, the town centre.

4.228 The character of the site and its wider strategic role dictates that new commercial development must be of a particularly high quality in respect of its design, layout and materials. In general, B1 commercial building footprints should be limited to not more than 20% of the total area of the Business Park and generous planting and landscaping should be provided to ensure the proper “parkland” character of the area is maintained. The topography of the site varies significantly, generally rising from the south to the north towards the adjoining residential areas. Innovative designs that complement this topography should be considered with the potential for taller buildings (up to four storeys) on the lower-lying parts of the site nearest the golf course being an option. Conversely, on those parts of the site closest to the Goat Lees housing estate, proposals must ensure that buildings are orientated to generally face away from nearby dwellings and should be designed and laid out to minimise the potential impact on residential amenity from noise and disturbance from vehicle movements and intrusive lighting.

4.229 Residential development shall be located primarily west of the lake that lies in the middle of the site but would also be suitable on land to the south of Grosvenor bungalow on the higher part of the site and, on a more limited basis, south of Nicholas Road opposite the Brake Brothers office. In locations which adjoin employment areas, the masterplan should determine the precise nature and orientation of the residential development to take account of future residential amenities and the likely operational requirements of the employment sites.

4.230 At the western boundary of the site, there should be a generous landscaped buffer provided to reduce the impact and provide some visual separation to the properties on Sandyhurst Lane. In general, residential development here should be of a lower average density to reflect the wider parkland setting of the whole site with average residential densities for individual parcels determined through the masterplan.

4.231 Given the location, size and number of housing units envisaged on this site, 30% of the dwellings shall be provided as affordable housing, in accordance with policy HOU1.

4.232 Vehicular access to the site shall only be from Trinity Road. The current access points at Nicholas Road and Upper Pemberton should form the principal access points to the site, with the former providing the main entrance to the residential development west of the lake and the latter forming a loop to serve the employment development west of Trinity Road and a secondary access to the residential areas. There should be no vehicular access from Sandyhurst Lane other than for emergencies, although pedestrian and cycleway connections from the development to Sandyhurst Lane should be provided.

4.233 Parking provision for the site shall be in accordance with the standards proposed for residential and employment developments in policies TRA3 (a) and TRA3 (b) of this Plan but proposals for development of the area shall also need to include arrangements for parking and traffic management to minimise the risk of staff parking in nearby residential streets (e.g. a controlled parking zone). Alongside this, development proposals shall contribute financially towards the operation of a regular and frequent bus service to the town centre. This service should directly serve both the employment and residential areas of the site.

4.234 Outside the site, strategic highway access is provided by the recently improved M20 Junction 9 and the Drivers Roundabout. It is expected that development here will make a proportionate contribution to the repayment of the forward funding of the junction improvements by the HCA.

4.235 Proposals for the site will need to be based around a comprehensive landscaping and open space strategy that incorporates attractive pedestrian routes through the site. The lake that lies in the centre of the development area should provide the focal point for the strategy with landscaped routes feeding out through the site from this location, including the existing wooded area to the north. An east-west route from the Eureka Place local centre to Sandyhurst Lane should also form part of the strategy. This strategy should also include provision of SuDS to serve the surface water drainage requirements for the site.

4.236 The proximity of the local centre means that the development is not expected to provide similar facilities as part of the residential area on the site but financial contributions to the delivery of off-site facilities for education, play facilities and sport will be required to meet the demand generated by the development. Informal public open space should be planned into the layout of the development as part of the landscaping and open space strategy.

4.237 The site adjoins the Ashford Golf Club land to the south. The Club has indicated a desire to improve their facilities which may best be achieved by moving to a new location around the town. At the time of preparing this Plan, no firm proposals for relocation have come forward but it is reasonable to anticipate that this may occur during the Plan period. If a suitable site for relocation of the Club can be identified and the Club decide to vacate their current site, this land would form, in principle, a natural extension to the Eureka Park site. As vehicular access to the Golf Club land is from Sandyhurst Lane and thus heavily constrained, proposals for Eureka Park must ensure access to the golf club land is available via the development and where necessary access roads should be constructed to the site boundary.

Policy S20 - Eureka Park

The site at Eureka Park is proposed for a mix of commercial (around 20ha) and residential development (up to 300 dwellings).

Development proposals for this site shall be designed and implemented in accordance with an agreed masterplan for the general layout and delivery of development and related infrastructure on the site.

Development proposals for the site shall include the following elements:-

- a) A comprehensive landscaping and open space strategy, incorporating a linear park based around the existing lake and proposals for the future management and maintenance of the areas of shared open space and SuDS;**
- b) A generous landscaped buffer to residential properties along Sandyhurst Lane;**
- c) A drainage strategy that includes proposals to provide SuDS in accordance with Policy ENV9;**
- d) New pedestrian and cycle routes throughout the development with connections to Sandyhurst Lane and existing routes. The Public Rights of Way running through the site should be maintained and incorporated within the development;**
- e) Vehicular access to the site shall be provided from Trinity Road only;**
- f) Ecological mitigation and enhancement measures informed by a habitat survey;**
- g) The provision of vehicular connections to the southern boundary of the site;**
- h) Parking provision on-site to meet at least the minimum parking standards for residential and commercial development set out in policies TRA3 (a) and TRA3 (b);**
- i) A proportionate financial contribution towards the repayments of the forward funding that delivered the M20 Junction 9 & Drovers roundabout improvements;**
- j) A proportionate financial contribution to the extension of local bus services to serve the development;**
- k) Laid out and orientated so that the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers is preserved;**
- l) A connection to the sewerage system at the nearest point of adequate capacity, as advised by Southern Water, and ensure future access to the existing sewerage system for maintenance and upsizing purposes.**

In addition, for commercial proposals on the site, the following will also be required:-

- a) Individual commercial buildings shall be imaginative in their architectural style and designed to sit comfortably in a parkland setting, with car parks and service areas located discreetly, and additional landscaping used where necessary to help reinforce the parkland setting;**
- b) The plot ratio for each commercial development parcel should not exceed 0.4:1;**
- c) The footprints of B1 buildings are limited to no more than 20% of the total area of the Business park and that each development parcel achieves a minimum of 50% of “soft” landscaping**

For residential proposals on the site, the following will also be required:-

- a) A residential design strategy setting out the key design criteria and average net residential densities on different plots and, where appropriate, how residential development will juxtapose with adjacent employment uses.**
- b) The provision of proportionate financial contributions towards off-site primary and secondary education facilities, children’s play equipment and sports facilities.**