



The Future of Eye Airfield



Newsletter Two: January 2012

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Possible vision – A Food, Energy and Waste Centre of Excellence

One of the key outcomes from a consultation event on Eye Airfield's future, held on 11 January at Cornwallis Hotel, was that the vision for the future could be for the airfield location to become a "food, energy and waste Centre of Excellence".

For further information, and to keep informed, contact:
liz@coreconnections.uk.com

HUB
Business
support

HUB
Improve
networking



Photo above shows the Cornwallis Hotel in Brome



HUB
Build on
strengths



Centre of excellence Energy, Waste and Food

Energy could come from sustainable sources such as waste from surrounding businesses and from restaurants in Eye, Diss and all the surrounding villages. Anaerobic digestion could provide a way to convert food waste to gas for energy or a combined heat and power unit.

The cluster of existing business located in Langton Green and on the Mid Suffolk Business Park provides a base to create further business opportunities in the food science, technology, food preparation and distribution areas.

The excellence of local agricultural produce can be showcased in our existing tourist outlets and with a hub offering business advice and support there is scope to expand this area of local industry.

There is already a good hotel at the north of the airfield, but perhaps there is scope for another at the southern end, with access from the A140.



An application for Rural Hub status made for ‘Hartismere i-Hub’

As there was a very positive vibe for improving business support from the meeting on 11 January, Mid Suffolk District Council was encouraged to submit an application for a Rural Hub to be established here.

Rural Hub status, although itself not offering great additional finance, would be a useful catalyst to encourage other funding sources here. The funding could however provide for access to a business advisor, saving journeys to Ipswich or Norwich, currently the nearest places for local businesses seeking support.

Business support in the form of administrative services could also be created, so smaller enterprises could share their office services. Joint offices would reduce overhead costs and save funds participants can then put to better use on manufacture and to market their products.

The application will be considered in the coming months and we will be tracking whether it is successful. If it is, can anyone offer a spare desk space for a business advisor? This way the scheme could get off to a flying start, with a purpose-built support office coming on stream in the future, perhaps linked to rentable areas for new and smaller businesses.

At the meeting the idea of dropping the name ‘Airfield’ from the site’s branding was discussed. We therefore came up with the name “Hartismere i-Hub” for the application, with its full title being “The Hartismere Enterprise i-Hub”. Possibly the hub would share the business advisor with another application for a Rural Hub in Harleston, if both applications are successful

For more details contact Dawn Easter at MSDC, dawn.easter@midsuffolk.gov.uk

The Suffolk Waste Core Strategy adopted by Suffolk County Council allocates in Policy WCS4 an extensive “area of search” for a strategic residual waste treatment facility on the former airfield.

However the Waste Core Strategy states:

“The County Council seek to work with the landowner and the District Council with a view to drawing up a development brief for the site, in accordance with the Development Plan. In safeguarding the site the County Council will rely on Policy WDM1. It is estimated that a strategic waste facility would require approximately 5 hectares of the total site, excluding access roads.”

Policy WDM1 of the Waste Core Strategy states:

The Waste Planning Authority will seek to safeguard Areas of Search identified in Policy WCS4 and shown on the Proposal and Inset Maps and will encourage only development proposals that would not prevent or prejudice the potential for a strategic residual waste treatment facility. This safeguarding is not intended to preclude other forms of development within the Area of Search which do not prejudice or would not be prejudice by a strategic residual waste treatment facility.

The District Council is currently in discussion with the County Council to identify a suitable site to the south of the existing energy from waste facility operated by EPR.

Waste Core Strategy



Comments

If you would like to comment on either the findings from the consultation or on the proposal for a 5 ha site for a waste to energy facility to be defined within the SCC area of search, please send your comments by 24 February 2012.

Comment can be sent by email to:

liz@coreconnections.uk.com

Dawn.easter@midsuffolk.gov.uk

**Or write to: Dawn Easter,
Mid Suffolk District Council,
131 High Street Needham
Market
Suffolk IP6 8DL**

Remember to add a stamp if you write.



Consultation Key points

Quick summary

Improve identity, as a centre of excellence for food, energy & waste engineering.

Look at a long-term 10-20 year vision, attracting and stimulating growth.

Tourism potential centres on Eye and the Waveney Valley, but could consider a low budget hotel on the site?

Build in public transport on the site from the start. Create joint foot and cycle paths. Cap growth in road traffic through the town centre, transfer to other types of travel, and link to Diss rail station. It is important to also provide links to Eye, to ensure use of shops etc.

Renewable power could be anaerobic digestion?

Create a ‘quiet zone’ for non-noisy businesses.

Design to be of high quality. Branding of the site is important.

Support facilities welcome, for example a business advisor located in a new rural Hub location on the airfield.

Also scope for creating another initiative for assisting young people with advice on work opportunities, training etc, located in Eye.



Residential

There could be suitable areas for new houses



Where should new houses be built?

Could Dutch housing models be appropriate here? Should landscape be community managed?

Is a south-east edge of the airfield location appropriate?

Could local, sustainable, construction materials be used?



The debate on sustainability that took place on 11 January was largely supportive of a mix of uses, to include some housing, and this is an area that will need more detailed planning, to create a 'soft' area of the airfield, with a mix of homes, woodland and hedgerows, small businesses.

A clear suggestion to emerge was to plan in from the start good connections on foot and by cycle back into the centre of Eye, so that residents use the local facilities of shops, schools and the hospital and GP surgery easily without adding to the traffic on the roads.

The photo here shows the very attractive mix of trees, hedges, orchard and homes, along Brome Avenue.



Key Issues identified at consultation event

The debate on what would be sustainable development here was lively and very constructive. New ideas to emerge were a 'quiet zone' for non-noisy businesses, so they would be easily compatible with one another and with existing and possible future residential neighbours. More business to business trading opportunities were sought. Links should be made to town centre shops.



One detailed debate was on the idea of including some housing within the airfield site. In particular the area at the south-east corner was thought to be possible. However other groups felt there should first be a study of what can be achieved in Eye town itself.

The form of development was discussed, with an idea for setting out the landscaping and infrastructure of roads, foot and cycle routes and drainage early, so that land parcels would then be defined, and individual houses or smaller groups developed in phases.

Could Dutch housing models be appropriate here? Should landscape be community managed?



Drainage needs to be managed across the whole of the site.

With the clay soils here, could the best water management be collection in detention ponds/wetlands then used on site for example ensuring the landscape features are watered in the early years of their growth.

Should potential off-site wetland areas along drainage routes downstream of the airfield be considered if they would be in better locations?



Sustainability should also include transport and foot and cycle routes, planned right from the initial discussions, the group debates concluded. There was widespread support for using sustainable materials, especially if there are local firms that can supply them.

Design quality will be important so that good quality employment can be attracted here.

The site is surrounded by attractive countryside and should fit into its surroundings through careful landscaping to "protect and enhance key views into the site". Appropriate lighting to avoid light pollution was requested to be part of the sustainability design principles.



Food production is one of the strengths of the area, and a "centre of excellence for food, energy and waste" was suggested as the vision for this area.

The time scale should be long term – 10-20 years - with councils committed to assist.

The idea of creating a Rural Hub, to provide a focus for business support and a place to improve local networking was widely supported. It is a project that could be started easily, with just a spare desk for a business advisor, and business-to-business networking meetings established on a regular basis – they could be hosted at Cornwallis Hotel.