KIMPTON ROAD LUTON
PLANNING STATEMENT

PREPARED BY
DAVID LOCK ASSOCIATES LTD

FOR
SOUTHSIDE & CITY DEVELOPMENTS LTD

JULY 2005
CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION  4
Scope and Purpose of the Planning Statement  4
The Applicants  4
Context for the Planning Applications  4
Community Involvement  4
Planning Applications  5
Documentation Submitted with Outline Application for Kimpton Road, Luton  6
Development Framework Plan and Other Outline Application Plans  6
Environmental Statement (ES)  7
Transport Assessment  8
Other Supporting Material  8
Retail Impact Assessment  8
Design Statement  9
Sustainability Statement  9
Statement of Community Involvement  9

2.0 THE APPLICATION SITE  10
Location and Context  10
Transport Linkages  10
Topography  11
Landscape Character  11
Ecological Designations and Surveys  12
Historic Environment  12

3.0 PLANNING CONTEXT  13
Introduction  13
National Guidance  13
Sustainable Communities Plan  13
Planning Policy Guidance and Planning Policy Statements  14
Regional Policy  15
Bedfordshire and Luton Structure Plan  17

4.0 THE APPLICATION PROPOSALS  20
Introduction  20
Explanation of, and Rationale for, Proposed Development Components  20
Employment  20
Housing  21
Retail  22
Infrastructure  23
Open Space  24
Drainage  24
Parking  25
5.0 PLANNING EVALUATION

Introduction 27
Sustainable Communities Plan 27
Development Plan 27
Site Location 28
Development Form 28
Integration of Land Use and Transportation 29
Relationship with Adjacent Uses 29
Development Structure 30
Phasing 30

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS 31

ABBREVIATIONS

CWS County Wildlife Site
CMS Construction Method Statement
DFP Development Framework Plan
EA Environment Agency
ELC East Luton Corridor
EiP Examination in Public (Structure Plan)
ES Environmental Statement
FRA Flood Risk Assessment
LBC Luton Borough Council
LDF Local Development Framework
ODPM Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PPG Planning Policy Guidance Note
PPS Planning Policy Statement
PDL Previously Development Land
RPG6 Regional Planning Policy Guidance for East Anglia
RSS14 Draft Regional Strategy Statement for East of England
SCP Sustainable Communities Plan
SMR Sites and Monuments Record
1 INTRODUCTION

SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE PLANNING STATEMENT

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by David Lock Associates in support of the planning application submitted by Southside & City Developments Ltd for the redevelopment of the Kimpton Road site, Luton.

1.2 This report outlines the aims and content of the planning application material, detailing the information submitted formally as part of the application, including the development framework plan, and that submitted in support of it.

1.3 The Planning Statement describes the application site, background to the proposals and the proposed scheme. It summarises the scheme’s compliance with national, regional, sub regional and local planning policy and outlines the ongoing approach taken to consultation.

THE APPLICANTS

1.4 The applications are lodged by Southside & City Developments Ltd a joint venture company between the developer Roxylight and Laing O’Rourke.

1.5 The application site is controlled in its entirety by Southside & City Developments Ltd having purchased the freehold of the site from General Motors, following closure of the manufacturing plant in 2000.

1.6 Southside & City Developments Ltd specialise in the redevelopment and regeneration of sites for major residential and mixed use developments and have experience in guiding complex urban development through the planning process to realisation.

CONTEXT FOR THE PLANNING APPLICATIONS

1.7 The planning application is consistent with, and pursuant to the Government’s urban regeneration priorities set out in the Sustainable Communities Plan, Regional Planning Guidance for the East of England, the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub Regional Spatial Strategy (2005) and the adopted Development Plan policy as set out in the Bedfordshire and Luton Structure Plan (1997).

1.8 Those policies give strong policy guidance in terms of the spatial development strategy within the Luton Sub-Region, advocating the regeneration of Luton via redevelopment of brownfield land for mixed use schemes. The redevelopment of the Kimpton Road site is intended to address the urgent need to provide sustainable development that supports positively the regeneration of Luton and its economy within the region, the wider south east and the country as a whole.

1.9 The application proposals have been developed alongside the ongoing review of the Luton Local Plan. A site specific policy has been agreed with Luton Borough Council, allocating the site for mixed use redevelopment. The Local Plan Inspector has endorsed the majority of this policy and has recommended its inclusion, as modified, with the soon be adopted Local Plan.

1.10 In this context, the application proposals are intended to support wider planning, social and economic objectives and will accord wholly with emerging Local Plan policy in this regard.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

1.11 In preparing the application proposals and material, the applicant has been mindful of the importance attached by the Government to community involvement and the advice which is spelt out in PPS1 “Delivering Sustainable Development”, in “Community Involvement in Planning: The Government’s Objectives” (ODPM, February 2004), and in ODPM’s ‘Creating Local Development Frameworks: A Companion Guide to PPS12’ November 2004 (Chapter 7 Managing Community Involvement).
1.12 The application proposals have evolved in the light of a comprehensive programme of consultation which has involved local authorities, key stakeholders, community representatives and individuals.

1.13 The details of the consultation process are set out in the Statement of Community Involvement that supports the planning application. The report sets out the evolution of the application proposals in the light of consultation. Stakeholder engagement on specific development principles and issues has been achieved through four distinct processes:

- LBC Joint Forum;
- Consultation with Elected Representatives;
- Consultation with other Stakeholder Groups; and
- Informal Public Consultation.

1.14 A Joint Forum involving Luton Borough Council planning officers and the applicant team was established well in advance of the application submission (commencing March 2005) and involves a fortnightly meeting to update officers on progress and discuss outstanding issues. This is an effective tool in disseminating information and evolving the scheme in line with Council objectives and will continue through the life of the scheme development.

1.15 A number of presentations of the evolving masterplan were made to both Luton Borough Council Officers and Members, in order to engage stakeholders in the development of the scheme. These events allowed for the thorough examination of the detail of the proposals and subsequent revisions to incorporate Member and Officer comment.

1.16 Formal consultation exercises are proposed in support of the development proposals which will be supported by newsletters, a CD-ROM and a regularly updated interactive website, providing information on the progress of the scheme and related issues. This also provides the public with the opportunity of contact with appropriate members of the team.

PLANNING APPLICATION

1.17 The application site at Kimpton Road, Luton is located within the Borough of Luton, approximately 1km to the SE of Luton town centre. The application is for the mixed use redevelopment of the site, incorporating employment, residential, commercial, retail and community uses as well as the necessary infrastructure to support the development.

1.18 The application proposals for the Kimpton Road site comprises a single outline planning application [the Planning Application] that seeks planning permission for alternative forms of development. The application also includes for detailed approval at this stage, matters relating to land remodelling together with detailed infrastructure works (vehicular access, roads, drainage, open space) to allow the early commencement of work on site. It is recognised therefore that the application submitted is a hybrid planning application. A full description of development together with a description of those matters for which detailed approval is sought is contained in chapter 4 and is outlined below:

Creation of a mixed use development to include:

- up to 1,000 mixed tenure residential units (C3);
- up to 45,000m² office accommodation (B1);
- up to 11,951,500m² general industrial accommodation (B1/B2);
- up to 10,500m² conferencing facility (C1);
- 200 bed hotel and fitness centre;
- multi-deck car park to provide 5,000 off-airport related car parking spaces;
- the provision of associated infrastructure and services including car parking, roads and drainage;
- landscaping;
- 4,000m² of local services and neighbourhood retail (A1/A2/A3/A4/A5/D1);
• formation of 2 new vehicular accesses to Kimpton Road;
• enabling works to include ground remodelling;

Together with:

Either

• up to 7,432m² of bulky goods retail floorspace (A1);
• up to 10,500m² of casino (D2); and,
• up to 4,000m² of conferencing facility

Or

• up to 9,290m² of bulky goods retail floorspace (A1)

1.19 The outline planning application contains within it two distinct options for the development of zone 4, the alternatives (as referred to in Luton Borough Councils emerging policy for the Kimpton Road site). Option 1 includes provision for a casino and bulky goods retail unit of 7,432m². Option 2 recognises that the delivery of a casino as part of the wider development is largely dependant on the Government concluding a long term debate on the gaming industry which includes the quantum and distribution of casinos on a countrywide basis. The uncertainty generated by this continuing impasse could delay or frustrate the delivery of this significant urban brownfield site and as such an alternative development proposal needed to be determined. Option 2 therefore includes a larger bulky goods retail unit of 9,290m² but no casino.

1.20 Both these options have been assessed for the purposes of the accompanying Environmental Statement and a fuller exploration of the implications are dealt with within later chapters of this planning statement. The assessments have been based on the floor space assumptions, Land Use Budget and the principles of the Development Framework Plans for each option which accompany the planning application.

1.21 In addition to the application for the mixed use redevelopment of the Kimpton Road site, a full application for the relocation of the Vehicle Release Facility is submitted to Luton Borough Council. This application seeks permission to relocate the existing VRF, currently sited in a parcel of land fronting Kimpton Road, to zone five at the rear of the site. The construction of a ramp, office building, vehicle inspection building and associated lighting are proposed.

DOCUMENTATION SUBMITTED WITH OUTLINE APPLICATION FOR KIMPTON ROAD, LUTON

1.22 In this section the documentation that forms the outline planning application is described. A distinction should be drawn between this documentation and that set out in the following section, which do not form part of the application but which are submitted as supporting material and information.

Development Framework Plan and Other Outline Application Plans

1.23 The Development Framework Plan- Option 1 and Option 2 (RXL007/DFP/01A and RXL007/DFP/02A) (DFP) describes the disposition of land uses, primary infrastructure and access arrangements and open spaces and summarises that which outline permission is sought for, for both development options.

1.24 The Land Use Budget – Option 1 and Option 2 formalises the DFP and sets out the range of uses and floorspace for which consent is sought for both development options.

1.25 In addition to the DFP, and to be approved as part of the outline planning application are the following plans:

• a Building Height Plan (RXL007.OPA/02RevA) showing the proposed maximum building heights; and
• a Landscape Framework Plan (RXL007.OPA/03) showing the principal landscape features and landscape strategy.
1.26 The documentation referred to above and which have been submitted for approval are intended to set the parameters for the subsequent detailed design of the schedule. They define clear thresholds and ranges of permissible development to define the proposed development adequately for the purposes of assessing its likely significant environmental effects.

1.27 The DFPs and accompanying plans are reproduced within this report and within the application documentation.

1.28 In addition the following detailed plans relating to the formation of two new vehicular accesses to Kimpton Road, enabling development and infrastructure provision are included for approval at this stage:

- Proposed Access Arrangements LSS/001/01T/P5
- Drainage Schematic 35161 SA 92 0001/A01
- Proposed Contours 35161 SA 95 0002/A01
- Road Layout 35161 SA 95 0001/A01
- Proposed Longsections 35161 SA 95 0003/A01
- Existing Incoming Services WG96GDU01A
- Gas Utility Modifications WG96GDU02A
- Electrical Utility Modifications WG96GDU03A
- Water Utility Modifications WG96GDU04A
- Site Gas Services WG96GDU05A
- Site Electrical Services WG96GDU06A
- Site Water Services WG96GDU07A

**Environmental Statement (ES)**

1.29 The planning application proposals fall within Schedule 2(10) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999. Given the criteria set out in Schedule 3 of the Regulations to determine whether a Schedule 2 development requires an EIA, the applicants at the outset have accepted the need for a full assessment of the potential impacts of development.

1.30 A Scoping Report was formally submitted to Luton Borough Council in March 2005, which set out the content and scope of the Environmental Statement in detail. This was consulted upon internally within LBC who formally commented upon the Report. The Environmental Statement submitted as part of this application has incorporated the Council’s recommendations in respect of minor revisions to content and is therefore fully consistent with both the planning department’s advice and the EIA Regulations.

1.31 The outline planning application is therefore accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES) that reports on the potential environmental impacts of the development. The process of environmental assessment has been continuous in the development of the application proposals in order that the Development Framework Plan and land use budget responds to and respects (where appropriate) important environmental features and constraints. The application proposals reflect the iterative nature of this process.

1.32 The ES submitted with the application documentation describes the impact of the application proposals as defined in the DFP and other application plans and in the Land Use Budget. Where necessary, it sets out each of the mitigation measures proposed to further reduce the impact of the development as required by Circular 02/99 and DETR’s “Environmental Impact Assessment: A Guide to the Procedures” (2000).
1.33 The ES contains the information specified in Part 1 (where relevant) and Part II of Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations 1999 and has been prepared using the methodology outlined in the “Preparation of Environmental Impact Assessment – A Good Practice” (Department of the Environment, 1995) and other relevant good practice guidance.

1.34 The ES is presented as follows:
- Non-Technical Summary;
- Text and Figures; and
- Appendices Volumes.

**Transport Assessment**

1.35 The Transport Assessment addresses the following matters:
- the current relevant local transport policies for the area set out in the Development Plan;
- the existing conditions in the area (considering all available modes) and the details of committed developments and schemes;
- the accessibility of existing land uses in the area, the content of the development and the transport measures that are proposed;
- a framework for a Travel Plan; and
- the traffic impact of development and the local network capacity to accommodate non car trips.

1.36 In modelling the traffic impact of the development, the assessment year which has been agreed is 2012. The modelling exercise includes an independent trip generation analysis, with sensitivity test, which covers all modes.

**OTHER SUPPORTING MATERIAL**

1.37 The outline planning application is supplemented by a series of additional documents submitted in support of the planning applications but which do not form part of the applications themselves. The scope of this supporting material is described below.

**Illustrative Masterplan**

1.38 The illustrative masterplan shows a possible development strategy for the site including building relationships and internal movement, which is consistent with the principles established by the DFP and other information which has been submitted for approval. Permission is not sought for this plan which is for illustrative purposes only.

**Demolition & Construction Statement**

1.39 The demolition and construction statement outlines proposed recommendations to minimise and mitigate construction impacts not only on the existing communities, but the new community to be established within the site. It also considers the phasing and sequencing of works with respect to environmental management within the site. It includes proposals in relation to:
- the management of earthworks within the site;
- construction traffic generation and potential routes of construction traffic; and
- general environmental, health and safety provisions in relation to the implementation of the construction programme.

**Retail Impact Assessment**

1.40 The Retail Impact Assessment (RIA) addresses the requirements of Planning Policy Statement 6: “Planning for Town Centres”. It explains how the retail elements of the proposal will function within the Luton retail hierarchy, establishes a clear need for additional retail development and investigates alternative town centre sites.
1.41 The RIA reviews the existing retail provision within Luton and presents a capacity assessment for future provision. It assesses the potential impact of the retail units incorporated within the proposal.

1.42 The RIA concludes that the retail element of the scheme accords with PPS6 and the emerging Local Plan policies.

**Design Statement**

1.43 The Design Statement describes the design principles adopted in the Kimpton Road scheme. It is submitted for illustrative purposes only, and its main role is to provide an understanding of and expand on the concept of the key development principles and rationale and to explain its key features in more detail. The Design Statement sets out the factors which have influenced the form and content of the DFP. In particular the Design Statement articulates the approach taken to density, building heights, mix of uses and the principles behind the proposals for open space and public space. The principles of the landscape strategy and the sustainability statement proposing a fully integrated approach to landscape, nature conservation, land use and infrastructure requirements are described.

**Sustainability Statement**

1.44 The Sustainability Statement describes the sustainability issues addressed, and incorporated within the planning application proposals. The statement outlines the approach that the team has taken to sustainability throughout the design process and considers the extent to which the development proposals accord with the principles of sustainable development, where opportunities exist to encompass new technologies and, importantly, where the site constraints create a barrier to sustainable development.

1.45 Following a sustainability workshop and review of relevant policy, ten sustainability topics were identified against which the development proposals have been evaluated. The statement presents the results of this evaluation and explains how sustainability has been an integral consideration within the scheme.

**Statement of Community Involvement**

1.46 The Statement of Community Involvement describes the Government’s commitment to consultation, and the consultations that have taken place during the preparation of the planning application in accordance with this approach. A broadly based approach is described including public consultation through exhibitions and consultation with elected members and officers. In particular the report describes the role that such consultations have played in the development and evolution of the application proposals in the light of views expressed.
THE APPLICATION SITE

LOCATION AND CONTEXT

2.1 The application site is located approximately one mile to the south-east of Luton town centre and covers a total area of 22.72 hectares (55 Acres).

2.2 To the north-west of the site lies the established residential neighbourhood of St Anns, linked to the site by an existing pedestrian route, providing access to neighbouring facilities. Immediately west of this residential district is the local cemetery, a key area of open space.

2.3 The retained General Motors van production facility is located to the immediate south-east of the site and has a contiguous boundary with the application site for the whole of its southern boundary. The site is bounded on the south west by Kimpton Road along which a number of established small retail units are located. Further to the south are some large retail and storage warehouses, beyond which lies the Midland mainline and Luton Parkway railway station.

TRANSPORT LINKAGES

2.4 The Midland Mainline railway line is located immediately south west of the application site. Parkway Station is some 200m from the site. This line provides direct and regular rail services to London and the wider south-east together with Nottingham, Sheffield and the north. The proximity of this key national transport corridor is a key influence on the development of the site and the mix of uses proposed.

2.5 In the vicinity of the application site are two bus stops (both within 400m, an acceptable walking distance) providing regular bus services linking to Luton town centre and beyond.

2.6 The rapidly expanding London Luton airport is located to the east of the application site and offers an increasingly wide range of flights to European and British destinations.

2.7 The M1 motorway and junctions 10 and 10A runs along the western extremity of Luton and is directly linked to the Kimpton Road site by the A505.

2.8 Improvements to the congested East Luton Corridor are planned from junction 10A of the M1 in the west to the junction of Stopsley Way and Hitchin Road in the east. These improvements, including carriageway widening and junction improvements have now received funding and have been considered at Inquiry. A decision on the future of the ELC is imminent. The Kimpton Road site will be directly served by the ELC and would therefore benefit immeasurably from the improvements which will enhance accessibility into and out of the development, improve safety and reduce air pollution.

2.9 Luton Borough Council is also promoting Translink, a guided busway linking Luton (in particular the Airport Parkway Station and London Luton Airport) with Houghton Regis and Dunstable, anticipated to provide up to 12 buses per hour. Following public inquiry, Secretary of State approval is expected in 2006, when construction will commence. The Translink service will run adjacent to the railway line, in close proximity to the site and will provide valuable links to both the airport and town centre.

2.10 The planning application site is dominated by the former General Motors Manufacturing Plant. Since 1907, General Motors has constructed vehicles on the Kimpton Road Site, becoming the major employer within Luton. The car manufacturing plant was closed in 2000. The remaining plant is still in use for van assembly, retaining approximately half of the original General Motors site area. This land is currently operated by IBC vehicles. The remaining General Motors plant will remain entirely independent of the current proposals.

2.11 At present, the application site remains dominated by the former manufacturing buildings, including blocks X, V, AC. Indeed these buildings have visually dominated the town for many years.
2.12 At the lower, westerly end of the site is the existing Vehicle Release Facility (VRF), serving the IBC van production plant. A separate, full application has been submitted to Luton Borough Council, in advance of this application in order to relocate the VRF to the location of the Press Shop (Zone 5), towards the easterly end of the application site. Upon completion of this new facility, it will revert back to General Motors ownership and the existing VRF site will be available for redevelopment as part of the wider application proposals.

2.13 The existing vacant on-site buildings are all industrial in nature and range from single to approximately eight storeys in height, although this is very much dependent upon existing ground levels which have been altered significantly over time. The extent of the ground remodelling becomes apparent in the Ground Investigation but it is clearly evident when looking at the site from Kimpton Road that the land form across the whole site is man made. This has provided significant challenges to the design team.

2.14 Existing structures are largely steel framed although AC block is a significant concrete structure reflecting its former role as the main production line over several floors. None of the buildings within the site have any aesthetic or architectural merit and are located in close proximity to each other. They continue to dominate the Luton skyline, located as they are in an elevated position. The majority of the rest of the site is given over to hard standing (former vehicle storage and staff car parking), internal access roads and associated open car storage.

2.15 Access to the site is currently gained via two gated access points on Kimpton Road one of which will be retained by General Motors as their main access point to their retained van production facility. The remaining access will be closed and two new purpose built accesses provided to serve the proposed development.

TOPOGRAPHY

2.16 The application site incorporates a number of very steep level changes and embankments resulting from the former manufacturing operations. Indeed a number of the existing buildings include internal level changes to accommodate these changes of level within the ground form.

2.17 The range of levels within the site is perhaps one of the most significant and challenging elements of the proposed redevelopment. The land external to the buildings is divided into a number of largely flat man-made plateaus divided by steep escarpments at gradients of up to 1:2. These plateaus and slopes are currently too steep to be developable in any meaningful way if the development is to maximise the potential of the site.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

2.18 None of the application site lies within any local character designations and is not considered to contain any areas of landscape character merit, being largely industrial in nature.

2.19 Furthermore, the topography of the site, its location on a hill overlooking Luton and the nature of the industrial buildings means the site dominates the character of the area and views across Luton. It is considered that any redevelopment of the site would result in an improvement in character and visual amenity terms.

2.20 Within the vicinity of the site are a range of land uses (retail, commercial, residential), architectural styles and characters. The predominant form however is intensive industrial and urban, with an emphasis on function over form. The site itself and surrounding environs is dominated by roads and associated infrastructure.

2.21 The adjacent residential area, visible from the site, is a high density estate of 1930s houses, of a largely coherent, although not necessarily high quality character.
2.22 The terrace of retail units to the south of Kimpton Road are of poor aesthetic quality and are significantly run down, reflecting the relative decline of this area following the closure of the General Motors plant.

ECOLOGICAL DESIGNATIONS AND SURVEYS

2.23 The site is not situated within any areas statutorily designated for ecological importance at a national, regional or local level. There are three County Wildlife Sites (CWS) located within 1 km of the site but not within the development boundary. These are:

- Church Cemetery – adjoining northwest boundary;
- Dairy Born Scarp – 250m to the east; and
- River Lea – 500m to the southeast.

2.24 The full detail of the ecological survey completed is set out in Appendix E1 of the Environmental Statement.

2.25 Given the urban nature of the site and predominance of hardstanding, the only possible areas of ecological value are found within the site are the cut faces resulting from the terracing and land form. These fill faces have been soiled and planted with landscaping. However, the survey revealed nothing of note and concluded that there are no legally protected species of flora or fauna on the site.

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

2.26 The desk-based archaeological assessment (Appendix A1 of the Environmental Statement) undertaken as part of this application concludes that there is only limited potential for archaeological remains of post-medieval and earlier to remain within the site. Furthermore, any subsequently constructed structures are not considered likely to have been retained on site following construction of the General Motors manufacturing units.

2.27 There are no listed buildings or structures within the site. The nearest listed building is the former General Motors Motor HQ located on Kimpton Road.
INTRODUCTION

3.1 The proposal for the redevelopment of the Kimpton Road site is consistent with the objectives of all tiers of planning guidance and policy, from national to local. The new planning agenda advocates sustainable development via the re-use of brownfield land and the promotion of high density mixed use schemes maximising accessibility.

3.2 Within this framework, support for the redevelopment of the Kimpton Road site is clear. Luton is identified as an area for growth within the Sustainable Communities Plan and Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub Regional Strategy. These documents make clear their support of the regeneration of brownfield within Luton, to which this application will make a significant and positive contribution.

3.3 It is generally recognised that the redevelopment of the Kimpton Road Site is significantly important to the long term regeneration and social and economic growth of Luton and the wider region. This recognition is evident in the emerging site specific policy emerging as part of the review of the Luton Local Plan.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

Sustainable Communities Plan

3.4 The Sustainable Communities Plan published in 2003 seeks to bring about a step change in investment in housing and regeneration. The Plan instils a sense of urgency in addressing housing need but requires that such needs are met sustainably.

3.5 The Plan highlights the shortage of housing in parts of the country and the failure to tackle this issue. In consequence “the gap between the need for new housing and what is being provided is widening”.

3.6 The Plan commits to make good recent shortfalls in house building rates. Hence it commits to provide 200,000 homes in the four growth areas in the south east, in addition to those currently planned through regional planning guidance. This is to amount to a step change in the supply of new housing in the South East. As such, early progress is required.

3.7 The ODPM's Five Year Plan “Sustainable Communities: Homes for All” was published in February 2005 and is described “as the next phase in delivering the Sustainable Communities Plan”. It continues to emphasise the Government's commitment to the delivery of new homes in appropriate locations. Luton is one such location.

3.8 In the South East of England, the Sustainable Communities Plan highlights the key issues of housing supply, the affordability of housing and transport. The challenge is the expansion and development of sustainable communities within the region but also, specifically, with the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Spatial Strategy. The plan advises that in taking development forward we must be mindful of the need to:

- promote sustainable patterns of development;
- support the fastest growing and largest regional economy in Britain;
- promote the location as a gateway to continental Europe;
- protect the diverse nature and character of the south east and the high quality of its countryside; and
- tackle economic and social disparities.

3.9 In both long term vision and the programme for immediate action, the Plan promotes strong and sustainable communities and not just more housing – “places where people want to live and will continue to want to live” and “communities in which people thrive and prosper”.

3.10 Drawing together advice set out in Planning Policy Guidance and Planning Policy Statements, the Sustainable Communities Plan begins to set out the key requirements of a sustainable community. A number of those requirements relate to the form and components of the community, matters capable of being addressed in the design process:

- “Sufficient size, scale and density, and the right layout to support basic amenities in the neighbourhood and minimise use of resources (including land)”
- “Good public transport and other transport infrastructure both within the community and linking it to urban, rural and regional centres”;
- “A flourishing local economy to provide jobs and wealth;
- A safe and healthy local environment with well-designed public and green space”;
- “Good quality local public services, including education and training opportunities, health care and community facilities, especially for leisure”.

Planning Policy Guidance and Planning Policy Statements

3.11 Planning Policy Statement 1 supports and carries forward the Government’s strategy for sustainable communities.

3.12 PPS1 outlines the four pillars of sustainable development and urges that they be treated in an integrated and balanced manner. The four aims are:

- maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment;
- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
- effective protection of the environment; and
- the prudent use of natural resources.

3.13 PPS1 articulates the requirements of development if these aims are to be achieved. It draws on, and draws together, the guidance already set out in a number of Planning Policy Guidance notes.

3.14 In order to deliver sustainable development forms paragraph 27 of PPS1 sets out a general approach for development plans. Key elements which are of relevance to the application proposals include:

- the provision of “a positive planning framework for sustainable economic growth”;
- “promote communities which are inclusive, healthy, safe and crime free…”
- “bring forward sufficient land of a suitable quality in the right locations to meet the expected needs for housing, industrial, and retail and commercial development”, taking into account accessibility and sustainable transport needs.
- “provide improved access for all to jobs, health, education, shops, leisure and community facilities, open space, sport and recreation, by ensuring that new development is located where everyone can access services or facilities on foot, bicycle or public transport rather than having to rely on access by car…”;
- “focus developments that attract a large number of people, especially retail, leisure and office development, in existing centres to promote their vitality and viability, social inclusion and more sustainable patterns of development”.
- “promote mixed use developments that create linkages between different uses and create more vibrant places”.
- reduce the need to travel and encourage accessible public transport provision “to secure more sustainable patterns of transport development”.
• promote “the more efficient use of land through higher density, mixed use development and the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings”.

• “enhance as well as protect biodiversity, natural habitats, the historic environment, landscape and townscape character”; and

• address climate change, pollution management, safeguarding of natural resources and the minimisation of impacts from the use of resources.

3.15 These principles will be achieved by the application proposals in that they:

• redevelop a brownfield site;

• provide both employment and residential uses, thus reducing the need to travel, providing valuable houses and offsetting job losses:

• enhance accessibility through the site and into adjoining areas;

• are located within close proximity to a number of forms of public transport; and

• are built at high density, thereby maximising the use of valuable edge of town centre land.

3.16 In addition to consideration of PPS1, the development proposals have been developed in accordance with the guidance set out in the following national planning policy documents:

PPS6: Planning for Town Centres;
PPS22: Renewable Energy;
PPS23: Planning and Pollution Control;
PPG3: Housing;
PPG4: Industrial, Commercial Development and Small Firms;
PPG13: Transport;
PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation;
PPG24: Planning and Noise; and
PPG25: Development and Flood Risk.

REGIONAL POLICY

3.17 Guidance at the regional level is set out first in Regional Planning Guidance for the South-East (2001). RPG9 acknowledges the issue of growth in the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-region, and sets out a strategy to produce a more sustainable pattern of development in light of increasing pressure on resources and land within the south-east.

3.18 RPG6 was adopted in March 2001 and identifies Luton, Dunstable and Houghton Regis as a Priority Area for Economic Regeneration (PAER), within the wider growth area. PAERs are areas of regional importance considered to be in need of regeneration strategies and resources to address economic deprivation and contribute to the region’s social and economic well being. RPG9 advises that planning can contribute to such growth via the designation of development sites, re-use of brownfield land, transport access and urban renewal.

3.19 RPG9 recognises Luton’s advantageous position between London and Milton Keynes, linked by an efficient rail service. It also highlights the proposals for airport expansion, Translink and the East Luton Corridor, all of which will contribute to Luton’s accessible location and sustainable credentials for growth. The document recommends that the reserves of previously used land within the urban area are utilised to take advantage of this location and support the strategy for economic diversification and strengthening.

3.20 In this context, it is therefore apparent that the proposal for the redevelopment of the Kimpton Road site wholly accords with the general thrust of RPG9 and policies for Luton.
3.21 As part of the revised planning system, RPGs are to be phased out and replaced with Regional Spatial Strategies. Draft Regional Spatial Strategy 14 has now been published bringing together guidance for East Anglia and parts of the Eastern England previously falling in the South East region (including Luton). Draft RSS14 rolls forward regional planning guidance to 2021.

3.22 Following publication of an Issues Report in autumn 2002, the East of England Regional Assembly has published a draft of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS14), for consultation purposes (March, 2005). The position is complicated by the subsequent decision of the Regional Assembly to suspend its endorsement of the East of England Plan, pending a re-examination of the availability of funding to deliver the infrastructure required to support the strategy. It is imperative that this delay does not frustrate otherwise acceptable development proposals currently in the pipeline.

3.23 Nevertheless, consultation on draft RSS14 is proceeding and an independent examination into RSS14 is scheduled to take place in September 2005 with the Panel report to be published the following spring. Draft RSS14, as published, continues to set out the views of the East of England Regional Assembly regarding the spatial patterns of future growth in the East of England.

3.24 The vision for the East of England outlined in the draft RSS14 is as follows:

The spatial planning vision for the East of England is to sustain and improve the quality of life for all people who live in, work in, or visit the region, by developing a more sustainable, prosperous and outward-looking region, while respecting its diversity and enhancing its assets.

3.25 The general strategy for growth focuses on sustainable development, regeneration and renewal of urban areas. Policy SS1 requires that development be located in major urban areas where there is good public transport accessibility and where strategic networks (bus/rail/road) connect. Furthermore, development which integrates employment and residential uses is encouraged. The Kimpton Road application proposals accord directly with these principles in that the site is well linked to public transport and incorporates residential and employment uses.

3.26 The draft RSS14 recognises the current imbalance between Milton Keynes and Luton and seeks to redress this by promoting growth in Luton. The section of RSS14 directly relevant to the growth of Luton will be largely informed by the conclusions of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub Regional Strategy.

MILTON KEYNES AND SOUTH MIDLANDS SUB REGIONAL STRATEGY

3.27 The MKSM Strategy was submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in July 2003. Following a period of public consultation, a public examination began in March 2004. Proposed changes were published in October 2004 for the strategy for the period 2001-2021.

3.28 In line with the Sustainable Communities Plan, the MKSM Strategy was published to secure the future of the sub-region as a growth area. It identifies a number of key objectives:

- increase housing supply;
- provide for economic growth;
- locate development in main urban areas;
- ensure developments contribute to an enhanced environment;
- meet infrastructure needs; and
- create sustainable communities.

3.29 Luton is identified as one of the four urban areas, within which growth will be focused, with a target of provision of 26,300 new dwellings within Luton/Dunstable/ Houghton Regis/Leighton Linslade to 2021. The Strategy requires that Luton be turned into a ‘vibrant, culturally diversified conurbation with a major improvement in the local economy and skills base and capacity to meet housing need.’
3.30 The Strategy recognises Luton’s potential for growth in light of the airport expansion and strategic location within the transport network. However, reference is made to the fact that Luton’s economy is weak, based primarily on a manufacturing skill base, and requires regeneration of the economy to achieve urban renaissance and regeneration.

3.31 It is noted that development should ideally be incorporated within existing urban areas, although a review of green belt delineations may be required. The Kimpton Road proposals are consistent with the key objectives of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub Regional Strategy, to promote growth and provide much needed housing and jobs within the existing urban area accessible to a wide range of services and facilities.

BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON STRUCTURE PLAN

3.32 The Bedfordshire and Luton Structure Plan for the period 1997-2011 was adopted in 1997. It has subsequently been revised with the production of a Deposit Draft Structure Plan for 2016 but this process was abandoned in light of the changing planning system, whereby Regional Spatial Strategies supersede county level planning documents.

3.33 The existing Structure Plan advocates the principle of sustainable development whilst strengthening the local economy. It outlines a locational strategy focusing development on the two core urban areas (including Luton).

3.34 The Structure Plan endorses and develops the vision for the Sub-region as described in RPG9.

3.35 In particular, the Structure Plan advocates the development of mixed use schemes to encourage sustainable communities in key urban areas. The redevelopment of the Kimpton Road site will contribute to meeting this aim by creating a sustainable mixed use scheme on brownfield land.

LUTON LOCAL PLAN


3.37 The Second Deposit Local Plan states that its main aim is to ‘achieve sustainable development in Luton’. It outlines a number of key objectives for Luton to be achieved via the land use planning system, notably:

- ensuring development is sustainable;
- ensuring development promotes regeneration;
- protection and enhancement of the environment;
- high quality design;
- meeting local housing needs;
- provision for community / sport / leisure;
- reducing unemployment;
- maintaining viability and vitality of town centre;
- promoting non-car modes of transport; and
- accommodating utilities demand.

3.38 Whilst the development fully accords with all these primary objectives, in providing a mixed use development which will support the economic and social regeneration of the town, the proposals in part do not accord with the proposed site-specific policy for the site (as recommended by the Local Plan Inspector). The Second Deposit Local Plan did not alter the adopted site specific policy and allocates the former General Motors Motors site for employment uses.

3.39 Representations were made on behalf of General Motors Motors to both iterations of the revised plan, with regard to the site specific policy and the issues of affordable housing and airport parking.
3.40 In making representations to the Local Plan, the applicant made clear its support of the aims of the plan to encourage the sustainable, mixed use redevelopment of the site.

3.41 Following a long process of negotiation and discussion with Luton Borough Council officers via the Local Plan review process, a site specific policy has emerged which has the support of both the applicant and the Council. A mixed use policy for the following elements was agreed and submitted to the Inspector for consideration. The recently published Inspectors Report reveals the Inspector’s endorsement of all elements of the site specific policy, with the exception of the casino use, which he considered to be more appropriate to a town centre location. The Inspector recommends the following policy wording:

**General Motors Car Plant**

Planning permission will be granted for the comprehensive mixed-use redevelopment and/or re-use of the former General Motors car plant provided that:

[A] the various areas of the site as defined on the Proposals Map are developed for the following uses:

(1) B1 or residential, or residential and associated community facilities;

(2) residential and associated community and/or leisure and/or retail facilities to meet to meet the needs of the immediate locality, and/or B1 and/or hotel and/or car showroom;

(3) B1 and/or B2 and/or hotel and/or car showroom, or, if the site is not redeveloped, the retention of the vehicle release facility to serve the adjacent vehicle manufacturing plant;

(4) B1 and/or B2 and:

a. up to a maximum of 20% of this area for B8 uses and/or a bulky-goods outlet which is in accordance with the retail strategy in Policy S1; and/or

b. up to a maximum of 20% of this area for long stay airport-related car parking which is in accordance with Policy LLA2; and/or

c. up to a maximum of 20% of this area for a hotel;

(5) B1 and/or B2 and up to a maximum of 30% of this area for B8 uses, or, if Area 3 is redeveloped, Area 5 to comprise a replacement vehicle release facility to serve the adjacent vehicle manufacturing plant; and

[B] the design of any proposed redevelopment will enhance the character and appearance of the site when viewed from the surrounding area.

(v) By adding text to support this policy as follows:

The B1, B2 and B8 uses referred to in the policy relate to the Use Classes Order and are Business, General Industry and Warehousing/Distribution respectively.

The Council’s objectives for the future of this site are:

(1) to maximize both the quantity and quality of job opportunities;

(2) to maximize the opportunity presented by this major previously developed site;

(3) to ensure that any proposed development does not have an adverse effect upon the operation or amenity of neighbouring uses;

(4) to enhance the overall appearance of the site to the maximum possible effect;

(5) to seek to ensure development within a reasonable period of time; and

(6) to ensure that any development does not have any adverse effect upon the vitality or viability of the town centre.
Given the Council’s objectives for the future of the
this site, any development proposals which are not in
accordance with the policy will need to demonstrate how
all of these objectives will be successfully achieved

3.42 Luton Borough Council is proposing to consider the
Inspector’s recommendations during July 2005 with
a view to publishing proposed modifications shortly
afterwards. It is anticipated that the Local Plan will
move forward towards adoption

3.43 This revised site specific policy has directly informed
the evolution of the development framework plan and
the land use budget, which is based upon the same
zones. The proposals are therefore consistent with the
emerging policy which in turn accords with wider Local
Plan strategies for redevelopment within Luton.
4 THE APPLICATION PROPOSALS

INTRODUCTION

4.1 The application proposals have been developed over an extended period during which full account has been taken of:

- the development plan policy framework;
- joint working with local authority officers and key stakeholders;
- environmental assessment work undertaken in parallel with the design process.
- site constraints and opportunities

4.1 The Description of Development for which outline planning permission is sought is set out below and are expressed as maxima.

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

Creation of a mixed use development to include:

- up to 1,000 mixed tenure residential units (C3);
- up to 45,000m² office accommodation (B1);
- up to 11,950m² general industrial accommodation (B1/B2);
- 200 bed hotel and fitness centre;
- multi-deck car park to provide 5,000 off-airport related car parking spaces
- the provision of associated infrastructure and services including car parking, roads and, drainage;
- landscaping
- 4,000m² of local services and neighbourhood retail (A1/A2/A3/A4/A5/D1);
- formation of 2 new vehicular accesses to Kimpton Road;
- enabling works to include ground remodelling;

Together with:

Either
- up to 7,432m² of bulky goods retail floorspace (A1);
- up to 10,500m² of casino (D2); and,
- up to 4,000m² of conferencing facility or,

Or

Option 2
- up to 9,290m² of bulky goods retail floorspace (A1)

4.2 The outline application includes for detailed approval at this stage vehicular access (2) to Kimpton Road, Land Remodelling together with the provision of phase 1 Infrastructure to include roads and drainage. The disposition of uses within the application site is set out in the Development Framework Plan (DFP).

EXPLANATION OF, AND RATIONALE FOR, PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT COMPONENTS

Employment

4.3 A key driver to the proposed development mix is the desire to generate new and diverse employment opportunities that will sustain the social and economic growth of the town. Provision is made for up to 100,000 square metres of employment floorspace across the site, in a number of locations. This will contribute significantly to the MKSM Sub Regional Strategy target for net overall employment growth within Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis of 12,600 to 2021.
4.4 The location of appropriate and complementary employment uses immediately adjacent to residential units makes the proposal a mixed use development which can be categorised as a sustainable development form, as per the criteria specified in PPG3. It is intended that a high proportion of those working within the proposed employment areas will also inhabit the residential units and will not need to travel by car to work, thereby reducing traffic generation and avoiding an associated increase in air quality.

4.5 The development proposes a range of flexible employment space to encourage and support a broad range of employment opportunities. This range of new quality jobs will seek to address the current perceived lack of modern employment opportunities within the Luton economy.

4.6 The loss of manufacturing jobs, following the closure of the former General Motors plant, will be in part offset by the provision of incubator units. These will encourage fledgling manufacturing and hi-tech industries to grow and thereby contribute and provide suitable jobs for those experienced in the manufacturing sector. It is anticipated that the incubator units could help generate and support highly skilled and well remunerated jobs in this sector. It is considered that the sites location close to the airport, which has been earmarked for growth, is particularly advantageous to accommodating the needs of growth in this sector.

4.7 The B1 office floorspace will provide up to 2,000 high quality, full time jobs serving the expanding office market and maximising the location of the site in close proximity to the airport, station and M1.

4.8 The hotel/conferencing facility and the proposed casino falls within the category ‘large casino’. Together with hotel and conferencing facility the complementary uses will also generate in the region of 1,000 full- substantial numbers of full time jobs. The casino in particular requires a a significant number of management level and technology based positions which will contribute to and enhance the employment profile of Luton and together with encouraging further inward investment. The hotel/ conference facility will provide a much needed facility in a location which can take advantage of proximity to the airport and major transport links whist remaining accessible to the town centre.

4.9 It is recognised that the casino does not accord with the site specific policy as amended by the Local Plan Inspector, who recommends that this use should be located within the town centre. It is considered, however, that the proximity of London Luton airport and its associated transport links is a key material consideration in determining the acceptability of locating a casino on the Kimpton Road site. Indeed it is considered that the Kimpton Road site has a key land use relationship with the airport and will function to support the airports long term growth.

4.10 A casino of this size will cater largely for hotel and airport users, covering national and international travellers. This is a markedly different client profile to the smaller casinos already located in the town. The proposed casino hotel and conferencing facility at the Kimpton Road site is considered to be the most convenient and appropriate location for this market given the proximity and accessibility of Luton Parkway station, London Luton airport and the airport-related car parking proposed on the application site. It is not considered appropriate to locate such a use in the town centre where such a use could compete with existing, more locally-based provision.
4.11 Proposed local retail and community uses will also contribute to local employment provision, although on a slightly smaller scale. The socio-economic chapter of the Environmental Statement addresses in detail the exact number of jobs created by the scheme and their direct impact upon the Luton economy.

Housing

4.12 The Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub Regional Strategy requirement for housing provision in Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis to 2021 is for 26,300 new dwellings. The Bedfordshire Structure Plan 2011 requires the construction of 6,200 net additional dwellings. The Kimpton Road scheme proposes up to 1,000 residential units, making a substantial contribution to both these targets.

4.13 A key objective of the Luton Deposit Draft Local Plan is to meet local housing needs. Luton’s Housing Strategy to 2006 states that there is an identified need within Luton for 450 additional homes per year, with current provision at only 100 units per annum. There is a clear need for additional growth within the residential sector to meet Luton’s existing need. Furthermore, this demand will expand if economic regeneration required by the Local Plan and MKSM Sub Regional Strategy occurs in Luton.

4.14 The provision of up to 1,000 residential units as part of the Kimpton Road site proposals therefore provides a valuable proportion of required housing and will lessen the acute housing shortage problem.

4.15 It is anticipated that the majority of residential units will be 1 or 2 bed apartments, reflecting the overall trend in the housing market for smaller units. This is particularly suited to Luton’s need as nearly a third of the population are under 20 years of age (Housing Strategy Statement, 2003) and are therefore likely to require smaller properties.

4.16 Densities throughout the residential element of the scheme exceed the 30 dwellings per hectare minimum required by PPG3. The dwelling densities reflect PPG3 and the Sustainable Communities Plan advice that densities should relate to a number of factors, including proximity to services, public transport nodes and urban centres.

4.17 The application site is ideally situated in close proximity to frequent and regular bus services, the parkway station and the airport and is located on the periphery of Luton town centre. As such and in accordance with PPG3 and PPG13, high densities are proposed, to achieve a sustainable development form, maximise use of facilities and public transport and reduce the need to travel.

4.18 A percentage of the units constructed will be affordable housing, in accordance with Local Plan requirements and PPG3. Although details on the range, tenure and mix of affordable housing do not form part of the application proposals, these details will be negotiated with Luton Borough Council to ensure the units meet the particular needs of the population.

4.19 The affordable units will offer the young and less well off members of the population an opportunity to enter the housing market. This is of particular use in Luton, where the Council stock levels have progressively decreased since the 1990s, when Council Houses were sold into private ownership.

Retail

4.20 The application proposals include 2 options for a bulky goods retail outlet within zone 4 depending on the ability to deliver a casino as part of the wider development mix. In addition small scale local retail provision to serve the needs of the future population of the site is proposed fronting the main boulevard providing the main link from Kimpton Road into the development.

4.21 The Retail Impact Assessment submitted with this application outlines the nature of the proposals and assesses the provision of retail floorspace against the sequential test specified in PPS6. It is proven that there is a quantitative need for bulky goods retail of up to to 7,432m² now which cannot be provided for elsewhere within the town centre and a need for up to 9,290m² by the year 2013. As an edge of town centre site, the application site is considered to be the optimum location for such retail uses and will not impact upon the viability of the town centre in the longer term.
4.22 It is acknowledged that Option 2 includes a potential ‘policy non-compliant’ element into the development proposals. The reasons for including this additional option have been clearly explained previously within this statement. However the implications for the land use mix need to be clearly stated to understand the rationale of introducing a use that is currently non-compliant.

4.23 The development mix already incorporates a significant and robust commercial floorspace mix that includes offices, B1 Light Industrial and B2 General Industrial. The land use mix needs to remain both robust and commercially viable to ensure that the development can proceed in a reasonable time period. Therefore, to include additional elements in these sectors, where there is limited market support, could prejudice the long term viability and delivery of the wider scheme together with the economic and social benefits that the development will ultimately bring.

4.24 The accompanying Retail Impact Assessment clearly identifies a need for new bulky goods retail floorspace to 8,000m² now (with existing commitments) and that a single store of that size would not impact on existing edge or out of centre bulky goods stores or vacancy levels or investment confidence in Luton town centre. In addition, the Retail Impact Assessment concludes that bulky goods retail floorspace in excess of 10,000m² will be required during the period 2011-2013.

4.25 In putting forward Option 2, the applicant is readily aware of the conflicting justification for a larger retail floorspace provision. However, given the significant lead in-time for site remediation and infrastructure provision that will enable and facilitate the wider development of the site, the necessary approval of details and subsequent construction, it is reasonably suggested that the potential impact on Luton town centre of granting permission now will be limited in terms of time, investment and confidence and will be measured more appropriately against the longer term and wider social and economic benefits arising as a result of the regeneration of the Kimpton Road site. Significant improvements to the urban fabric together with the commercial space designed for quality of jobs and investment in Luton are key to the delivery of a sustainable and successful development.

4.26 The small scale retail uses associated along the boulevard frontage will serve only the immediate needs created by the development and will act to ensure vitality at street level. The units also have the potential to enhance local service provision beyond purely retail. These units will generate additional local jobs and encourage sustainable lifestyles whereby car journeys to out of town retail outlets are minimised.

Infrastructure

4.27 This application also, seeks consent for phase one infrastructure and includes the primary and secondary Kimpton Road vehicular accesses, main boulevard and access roads throughout the site, drainage and utility provision together with the necessary ground remodelling.

4.28 In order to construct the access road from the lower level at Kimpton Road to the existing high plateau adjacent to the residential area and provide effective development platforms it will be necessary to undertake a cut and fill exercise. This is fundamental to maximising the development potential of the application site and achieving acceptable relationships between street and building, accessibility and permeability within the site.

4.29 The principal access to the site will be taken from Kimpton Road, via a signal controlled junction. This accords with the layout of the East Luton Corridor and the predominance of signal controlled junctions as opposed to roundabouts. The proposed access will be incorporated into the wider signalling system to ensure the free flow of traffic along Kimpton Road.

4.30 Throughout the scheme, a comprehensive network of pedestrian and cycle routes will be provided, linking the proposed uses within the site to the wider area and the town centre. The layout of the scheme has been developed to facilitate easy movement by foot and cycle and will priorities pedestrian movements over vehicular.
4.31 A pedestrian/cycle route currently exists between the link area being considered between the northern element of the scheme and the St Anns residential area. Options are currently being considered which would provide a more flexible link between the proposed development and St Anns. This could allow at some time in the future residents of the site to utilise existing bus services along Devon Road and access education, community and open space facilities within St Anns to the Kimpton Road site.

4.32 The viability of providing a link to the Parkway station is also being investigated although this does not currently form part of the scheme proposals. This would have undeniable benefits for all users of the site, given that access to the station from Kimpton Road is currently restricted. Employment and residential land values could increase as a result and accessibility to the wider area via public transport and a key sustainability indicator, would be achieved. Furthermore, improved access to the station would support higher intensities of use, providing a greater focus for the mixed use development.

Open Space

4.33 A two tiered approach to the provision of open space will be taken.

4.34 Local level open space and play space will be provided on site, in a form and scale to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority. This will include incidental open space, Local Areas for Play and a formal public square.

4.35 The public square will be located to provide a focus within the commercial sector as well as providing accessibility to Kimpton Road for pedestrians. This space will be designed to create a formal, hard landscaped open space for use by visitors, residents and employees within the site. Use of high specification materials and opportunities for public art will seek to compliment the desire for high quality building design.

4.36 To serve the needs of residents, open space will be provided for informal recreational and amenity use within the communal private gardens together with informal open areas around the buildings.

4.37 Given the constrained nature of the site and the significant level changes, on site provision of strategic open space is not considered appropriate or viable. As an alternative, a strategy of improvements to existing open space in the vicinity of the site is proposed. This will take the form of Section 106 contributions to upgrade local areas of open space and improve access from the site to these areas.

4.38 This is considered to be the optimum solution to open space provision, ensuring both immediate and local needs of the development will be met. Furthermore, the proposals for upgrading existing open space will benefit the wider community, allowing access to improved facilities.

Drainage

4.39 The proposed surface water drainage system for the redevelopment of the Kimpton Road site is as follows:

- drainage of the site by gravity (in a westerly downward direction) to the existing connection on Kimpton Road;
- attenuation of an anticipated 5,840m³ surface water run off via a ‘Stormcell’ structure located in front of the proposed hotel/conference centre. This attenuation tank would provide approximately 6,800m³ storage volume, attenuating storm water runoff for the whole site for up to the 1 in 100 year storm event, accounting for climate change;
- road surface and hardstanding areas are to be drained by a positive drainage system which will convey water from impermeable areas to 900mm sewers beneath main roads and underneath the boulevard. From there, attenuation will be split and surface water discharged at a restricted rate to the public sewers;
- all surface water susceptible to petrol contamination will be passed through an interceptor tank;
- in addition to these measures, a cut off ditch along the northern parameter of the site could be constructed to prevent overland flooding from areas above the site and on the base of the slopes;
• permeable paving and rainwater recycling will also be investigated as sustainable drainage techniques.

4.40 The redevelopment of the Kimpton Road site will require a new foul water drainage system which would discharge to the existing public foul sewers in Kimpton Road, at manholes 3801 and 4701.

4.41 The majority of the site could be served by a gravity system, although the far east end of the site may require a small package pump station depending on the final location of foul connections.

Parking

4.42 Car parking standards for Luton have been set out in the Adopted and Second Deposit Luton Local Plan (March 2004). The standards generally accord with the national planning guidance set out in PPG13 and are expressed as maxima. The proposals for car parking are set out in the Transport Assessment and are in accordance with the guidance set out in the Local Plan.

4.43 As an edge of town centre, mixed use scheme it is recognised that it may be appropriate to apply some flexibility in parking provision. It is considered possible for some uses to share parking within the site and this principle will be adopted with respect to the commercial uses where it is commercially viable to do so.

4.44 Whilst it may be preferable to share parking between residential and some commercial uses, which tend to have differing usage patterns, the level changes on site and location of these uses preclude this.

4.45 It is however feasible to discount some parking provision on the basis that the retail uses, hotel/conferencing facilities, casino and office uses can share parking. The casino and hotel are likely to demand parking during the evening and night time periods, whilst conversely the office and retail will create demand during the day. This allows for a lower parking provision as spaces will be shared and demand spread equally throughout at 24 hour period.

4.46 Overall, the parking provision proposed as part of this application meet Luton parking standards, albeit through shared provision.

4.47 It is anticipated that parking to serve the residential will be provided largely as undercroft or basement parking beneath the residential units. This takes advantage of the level changes and provides a parking solution which does not impact negatively upon the public realm and reduces the dominance of the car within the street scene.

4.48 It is considered that some limited on-street parking can also be provided along the main boulevard and main access roads and where appropriate to do so in some areas of incidental space between buildings. This will allow the street frontages to remain usable and vibrant.

Airport Parking

4.49 The development includes an airport related car park as part of the larger multi-storey car park proposed in zone 4. This will provide 5,000 dedicated spaces to serve London Luton Airport. It is intended that the car park will be linked to the airport in the short term by a private bus which could also provide links to Parkway station.

4.50 This provision accords with both the LBC proposed site specific policy and the recommendation of the Local Plan Inquiry Inspector that airport parking be included, on the proviso that it is consistent with Policy LLA2 of the Local Plan. This policy precludes airport related parking unless it can be proven that there is an established long-term need for off site provision (the preference is for on-site parking).

4.51 In line with the White Paper, The Future of Air Transport, the London Luton Airport is projected to expand by to 3030 million passengers by 2030, to serve the ever increasing demand for low cost, budget flights to Europe and beyond. An extension to the existing runway to a full-size runway is proposed to facilitate this expansion. Although these proposals have currently been remitted for further consultation, the principle of airport expansion is accepted in the long term.

4.52 As part of this expansion, a masterplan for the airport is being produced for ‘Project 2030’, the strategy for expansion and is due to be published at the end of 2005.
4.53 The expansion of the airport has been identified as a strategic priority in the East of England Regional Economic Strategy, the draft RSS14 for the East of England and the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub Regional Spatial Strategy. As such, the growth of the airport is assured and well supported at all tiers of planning policy.

4.54 It is apparent that the airport is expanding beyond the scope of its existing site. Whilst, current statistics reveal that there is capacity within existing on-site car parks, with trends for rapid expansion, this will not remain the case. It is imperative that the expansion of the airport is not hindered by a lack of supporting infrastructure, including parking.

4.55 The airports access strategy seeks to encourage alternative modes of transport thereby reducing reliance on the use of the private car. However, given the level of expansion predicted, the airport will need to continue to cater for significant numbers of car borne journeys and it will not be possible to accommodate all airport related car parking on site.

4.56 It is therefore necessary to cater for this increased demand offsite. As the Kimpton Road site is located immediately adjacent to the airport and is well linked to the station both of which are connected by regular bus link, it is considered to be an ideal location for airport parking.
INTRODUCTION

5.1 The principal contexts for the consideration of the application proposals are provided by:

- the Government's national and regional planning agenda; and
- the relevant Development Plan policies.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PLAN

5.2 The Sustainable Communities Plan published in 2003 is described in paragraphs 3.4 to 3.12 above. Of particular relevance to the application proposals, the Plan:

- seeks to usher in a step change in investment in housing and regeneration;
- instils a sense of urgency in addressing housing need;
- commits to make good recent shortfalls in housebuilding rates; and
- promotes more sustainable forms of development - "places where people want to live and will continue to want to live".

5.3 In the South East of England the issues of housing supply, the affordability of housing and transport are identified as critical to the future planning agenda. The expansion of growth areas is considered to be the key to the continuing success of the region. The application proposals for the Kimpton Road site will contribute to the economic growth of Luton and the sub-region and as such are wholly consistent with the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan, representing an important step in its implementation.

5.4 The form proposed accords with the Plan's aspirations in relation to the components of sustainable communities. It offers:

- a sustainable scale and robust mix of development;
- a major provision of housing to in part meet established and future need in the Sub-region;
- a major contribution to the Luton Sub-regional economy;

5.5 In accordance with the Sustainable Communities Plan and Planning Policy Statement 1, the application proposals will provide a mixed use development capable of making significant contributions to the local and regional economies. There is clear support from all tiers of planning policy for the mixed use redevelopment of the site.

5.6 Furthermore the proposals reflect a comprehensive programme of effective engagement with stakeholders and local communities.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

5.7 Policies in RPG9, the emerging RSS14, the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub Regional Strategy and in the adopted Structure Plan, provide the context for the regeneration of Luton as part of the growth area.

5.8 Luton's role within the sub region has been recognised and planning policy actively encourages the development of the town to achieve core housing and employment led regeneration.

5.9 The emerging Luton Local Plan is at an advanced stage of preparation, with the Inspectors report recently published (May 2005). It is anticipated that the Local Plan will be adopted at the end of 2005.

5.10 The site specific policy for the Kimpton Road site, negotiated with Luton Borough Council and recommended for inclusion within the Local Plan by the Inspector, has evolved to support the mixed use redevelopment of the site.

5.11 The policy for the former General Motors Kimpton Road site is based upon a zoning plan, splitting the land into 5 discrete parcels. Each zone is allocated a range of uses within the emerging policy. This application proposal accords directly with this policy and is therefore in line with emerging local plan policy.
SITE LOCATION

5.14 A fundamental policy criterion is that future development should make best use of previously developed land. The whole of the Kimpton Road site is defined as previously developed land as outlined in PPG3. The application proposals will therefore make a substantial contribution towards the PPG3 requirement to provide 60% of all new dwellings on previously developed land and will maximise the re-use of land within Luton’s urban core. This is particularly valuable in the Luton context where the potential to expand the town is constrained by greenbelt.

5.15 The redevelopment of the site presents a valuable opportunity to remediate and regenerate a former industrial area. The Environmental Statement outlines an appropriate strategy for the remediation of the site which will include where possible onsite remediation. This strategy has been agreed with the Environment Agency.

5.16 The remediation of the site will offer a substantial benefit to the local area in health terms and allows for its redevelopment for all uses including residential.

5.17 The policy framework, from national to local level, also emphasises the preference in planning terms for mixed use developments on the basis that car journeys between work and home are minimised and accessibility to services maximised. To this end, and in line with the emerging planning policy, a mixed use scheme is proposed. This combines a range of residential units with office, retail, light industrial, hotel and casino employment uses. It is considered that this is the optimum mix to regenerate the site in line with both commercial and planning interests.

5.18 In terms of ecological and biodiversity interests, there are no internationally or nationally important sites of nature conservation interest located within the application site. Further, the documentation submitted with the application describes the comprehensive ecological survey that has been completed. This survey concludes that there are no habitats of ecological value within the site, given its industrial history and the predominance of hardstanding / buildings throughout the site.

5.19 There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas or other nationally important archaeological sites recorded within the application site. As such, the proposal will have no impact upon sites or features of historic interest.

5.20 A full archaeological survey, appended to the Environmental Statement has been undertaken and concludes that there are no features of archaeological merit within the site.

5.21 The majority of the site falls within the EA defined Flood Zone 1 (as specified in PPG25), which is indicated as being at low or no risk of flooding. The drainage chapter of the Environmental Statement and the Flood Risk Assessment consider the impact of the site on flood risk within the site and its environs. The application proposals demonstrate that there will be no adverse impact consequent upon the application proposal in terms of the functional flood plain or the risk of flooding elsewhere.

5.22 Sections 9 and 10 of the ES describe the measures proposed to protect both groundwater and surface water. The measures comply with well tested approaches to managing construction. The application proposals do not pose a significant risk to the quality of surface and groundwater.

DEVELOPMENT FORM

5.23 The development form that is described in the application proposals has evolved following ongoing discussions with Luton Borough Council and commercial operators. The physical form of the proposals reflect:

- government guidance and aspirations in relation to the creation of sustainable communities.
- Development Plan policy regarding development and the emerging site specific policy;
- an iterative process of environmental assessment;
- pre-application discussions with officers of Luton Borough Council;
• where development is proposed that does not fully comply with adopted or emerging policy there are material planning reasons for doing so.

5.24 Section 4 of the Planning Statement describes each element of the application proposals and demonstrates full compliance with policy expectations in respect of: the scale of housing provision, housing density, employment opportunities, provision for open space and recreation, access and internal movement and drainage.

5.25 The vision for the Kimpton Road site is described in the Design Statement submitted in support of the application. The vision responds to the more general aspirations to create a highly sustainable development form and describes how the application proposals have responded to the design influences and challenges that are presented within the application site. The guiding principles which underpin the application proposals are drawn from national, regional and development plan policy to promote sustainable development forms and provide significant benefits in terms of social and economic prosperity together with improvements to the physical urban environment.

Integration of Land Use and Transportation

5.26 The application proposals have sought to maximise the opportunities to integrate land use and transport.

5.27 A compact development form is proposed within which densities are raised to levels fully in accordance with Government and Development Plan guidance. Up to 1,000 residential units will be constructed at densities of at least 50 dwellings per hectare.

5.28 Such elevated densities are thought appropriate to this site for a number of reasons. Firstly, the site is particularly well connected to public transport, including bus and train services. This will be enhanced by the possibility of providing an enhanced bus link through to the St Anns district via Devon Road and the planned Translink guided bus way and link through to the Parkway station. The application proposal therefore accords with planning guidance, in particular PPG3, which promotes high density developments in sites at key transport nodes, to encourage patronage of public transport services.

5.29 Furthermore, as an edge of town centre site, within walking distance of a range of community, retail and social facilities, the application site is ideally located to support higher density development. The range of uses proposed facilitates a move towards a more sustainable pattern of development which meets the needs of the town.

5.30 Internally a network of streets, rather than of distributor roads, is proposed so as to encourage ease of movement throughout the site by a variety of modes. The application proposals include key pedestrian and cycle routes and identify the opportunities to make appropriate linkages off site. The Transportation Assessment describes further the measures that are proposed in relation to parking, green travel, and additional bus provision to promote modes other than the car.

5.31 It is clear that the application proposals have placed great emphasis on the need to integrate land use and transportation planning, and to give every encouragement to reducing the need to travel by car and to enhance the opportunities to travel by non-car modes.

Relationship with Adjacent Uses

5.32 The application site is located immediately adjacent to the St Anns residential district, an area of established detached and semi-detached housing. To maximise the benefit to both this area and the proposed development, enhanced linkages between the two are proposed.

5.33 The viability of providing a bus / pedestrian / cycle link between zone 2 and Devon Road is being investigated, to allow unrestricted movement between the two areas. Either the existing or a new bus service will utilise this route to serve the new development and St Anns, providing a more direct route from the town centre to the airport.

5.34 Enhanced linkages will help to ensure that the scheme integrates effectively with St Anns and will encourage the sharing of facilities such as open space, local retail and community buildings. Furthermore, it is the residential element of the application proposals which will back directly onto St Anns, thus ensuring a coherence of mix and avoiding inappropriate adjacent uses. This element of the scheme is outlined in greater detail in the design statement.
Development Structure

5.35 The illustrative masterplan and development framework plan have been developed via the application of a number of design principles. These are detailed further in the design statement.

5.36 A main boulevard forms the principal street of the development, linking from Kimpton Road. Community and retail facilities will be located at street level at the beginning of the boulevard and on Kimpton Road, taking advantage of the prominent frontage and maximum footfalls.

5.37 From this, a series of secondary streets provide access to the proposed uses, including a zig zag form street up to the elevated residential parcels. A principle of active frontages has been applied to ensure maximum passive surveillance of the street throughout the site.

5.38 A comprehensive landscape framework is described within the application proposals offering a high quality, versatile and accessible public realm that meets the needs of all.

5.39 The proposals for the scheme will provide the framework for a strong and sustainable community, in the terms of the Sustainable Communities Plan, a place “where people want to live and will continue to want to live”.

Phasing

5.40 It is anticipated that the development of the site will be completed by 2012. The commitment to provide infrastructure early in the life of the development allows for a flexible approach to the phasing of development allowing the site to respond to prevailing market conditions. It is considered that any mitigation or development related requirements arising from the development are dealt with appropriately by way of s106 or other appropriate legal agreements with clearly defined trigger points identified at appropriate stages of development.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 This Planning Statement sets out the aims, purpose and content of the planning application material. The document explains the compliance of the proposals with national, regional and local planning policy.

6.2 The application proposals are the culmination of a long process involving many policy makers and stakeholders. They are lodged pursuant to the Government’s Sustainable Communities Plan and strategic planning decisions made in Regional Spatial Strategy, the Bedfordshire Structure Plan, the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub Regional Spatial Strategy and the emerging Luton Local Plan.

6.3 The application proposals take full account of:

- the development plan policy framework;
- environmental assessment work undertaken in parallel with the design process.

6.4 The principal contexts for the consideration of the application proposals are provided by:

- the Government’s national planning agenda; and
- the relevant Development Plan policies.

6.5 The application proposals accord squarely with all tiers of planning guidance and policy through:

- the implementation of a proposal to support the social and economic regeneration of Luton;
- the ability to deliver a development form with all of the elements of a sustainable community;
- the rapid contribution that may be made to meeting housing and employment needs.

6.6 The proposals are consistent with and have been developed alongside the emerging Luton Local Plan site specific policy for the former General Motors site. The recently published Inspectors report ratifies the majority of the content of this policy which will be published as proposed modifications as part of the Local Plan review process. It is anticipated that the Local Plan will be adopted at the end of 2005.

6.7 The application site makes best use of previously developed land. The whole of the former General Motors site is defined as previously developed land in the terms of PPG3. The application proposals will make a substantial contribution towards local and regional targets in relation to the provision of new dwellings on previously developed land.

6.8 The application proposals demonstrate the readiness with which the proposal may be served by high quality public transport through access to the Translink and through the penetration of bus services within the application site, meeting key accessibility criteria.

6.9 The development is of a compact form. The application proposal is economical in the use of land and is built to high densities, reflecting the edge of town centre location and accessibility to public transport.

6.10 The development form that is described in the application proposals has evolved over a substantial period of time and reflects extensive discussions with Luton Borough Council regarding the content of the Local Plan policy.

6.11 Each element of the application proposals demonstrates full compliance with Development Plan policy expectations in respect of: the scale of housing provision, housing density, employment opportunities, provision for open space and recreation, access and internal movement and drainage. Where there is deviation from policy there are material grounds for doing so.

6.12 The vision for the scheme is described in the Design Statement submitted in support of the application. The vision responds to the aspiration to create a highly quality place that supports a successful development and vibrant economy - “where people want to live and will continue to want to live”.

6.13 The application proposals have sought to maximise the opportunities to integrate land use and transport, so as to maximise opportunities for journeys to be made on foot, by cycle and by public transport. The proposals for the scheme will provide the framework for a strong and sustainable community.
6.14 In conclusion, the application proposals are wholly consistent with the policies set out in national planning guidance, RSS and the Local Plan and will allow the regeneration of a significantly underused brownfield site that has been at the heart of the local economy for several generations. The proposals fulfil aspirations and need to revitalise the local economy and bring with it much needed employment opportunities and housing contributing significantly to the wider social and economic regeneration of Luton.