

Hertfordshire IQ Response to St Albans City and District Council Local Plan Questions 12th December 2019

The purpose of this brief is to provide responses to questions raised by the planning inspectorate in relation to the St Albans Local Plan examination, relevant to the Hertfordshire IQ Enterprise Zone sites.

Context Statement

Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter, or Herts IQ, is the name for Hertfordshire's Enterprise Zone, formally known as the Herts Enviro-Tech Enterprise Zone. The term 'enviro-tech', short for environmental technology, is no longer used in marketing of the site, although Herts IQ is actively targeting companies operating in environmental technology fields, particularly in agri-tech/science and smart construction.

The targeting of these sectors is supported by the excellent sector leadership of Herts IQ partners Rothamsted Research for agri-tech/science, BRE for smart construction, and also the research and educational strengths of the University of Hertfordshire.

The Herts IQ Enterprise Zone was given formal designation by government in April 2017, which stands for 25 years, and has a target to deliver 8,000 new jobs with a focus on 'enviro-tech' sector growth. It is governed by a partnership of seven organisations; Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Hertfordshire County Council, St Albans City & District Council, Dacorum Borough Council, BRE, Rothamsted Research and The University of Hertfordshire.

The East Hemel Hempstead Central commercial sites is one of seven Herts IQ sites, and is the site with the greatest capacity to deliver a range of new high quality employments spaces and good job creation outcomes.

The Herts IQ Enterprise Zone strategy is fully in line with Hertfordshire LEP's Strategic Economic Plan, and emerging Local Industrial Strategy for Hertfordshire.

With regard to the questions raised by the planning inspector in relation to the St Albans local plan, it appears that questions relevant to Herts IQ primarily fall within Matter 7, East Hemel Hempstead (Central).

Therefore, set out below are responses to those questions deemed relevant to Herts IQ, from within this section. It is recognised that other Herts IQ partners, specifically the planning authorities, will also be responding to these questions, therefore information provided below is intended to help add additional clarity to the likely responses from the Herts IQ planning authority partners.

Matter 7:

East Hemel Hempstead Central Questions and Responses

- 1. Is the site suitable for the development proposed and are there any specific constraints or requirements associated with it, or the need for mitigation measures?**

Hertfordshire IQ thinks the site is suitable, with constraints that are manageable, and we provide evidence to that effect in subsequent answers to questions.

- 2. What evidence is there to demonstrate that the proposed broad location is suitable for enviro-tech employment uses and capable of providing 10,000 jobs?**

In March 2018 Herts IQ commissioned a commercial feasibility study to assess the potential for generating new enviro-tech employment growth and job creation within the Enterprise Zone Sites. This study concluded that it is possible to generate the job creation that the project is seeking within its target sectors, on the basis that the project focused on the unique sector leadership of partners Rothamstead and BRE, adopted a robust marketing strategy, and sought to address some of the transport constraints in the area. The job creation target is 8,000 jobs across the seven sites.

As a result, the Herts IQ brand was created and proposition launched to market in March 2019, with a comprehensive marketing strategy to target and attract new and growing employers to the area. There is a team of three experienced sales and marketing professionals leading the Herts IQ project, and the pipeline of new employers is already growing and evident.

There is a structured delivery plan for the Herts IQ project, progress against which is reported to the Herts IQ Partnership Board each quarter. This includes reporting of the future occupier pipeline growth, and there is confidence that the job delivery targets for the project are deliverable. The transport challenge raised by the commercial feasibility study is also being addressed, primarily through the support for the upgrade of M1 Junction 8 but also with investment in sustainable travel solutions (see below).

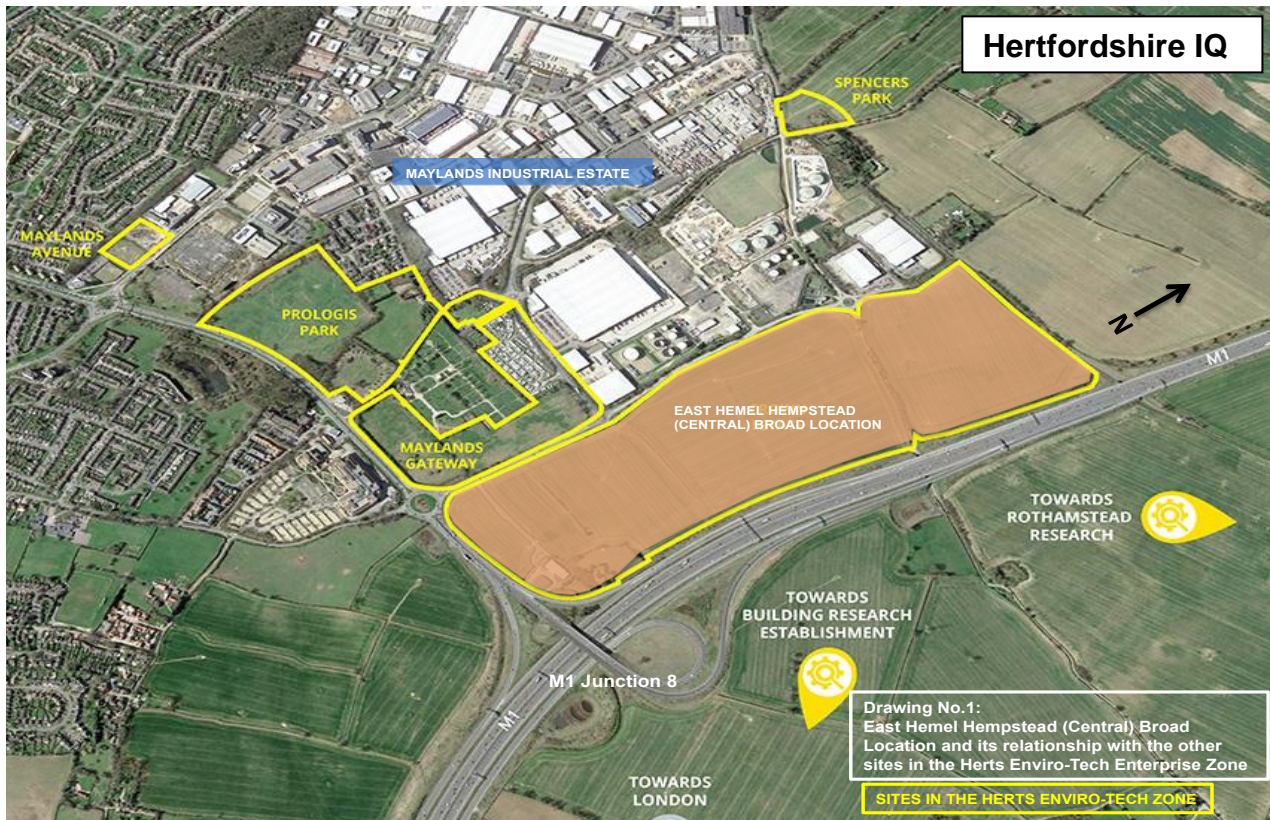
This proactive sector targeting by the Herts IQ project is set within the wider backdrop of Hertfordshire's economic character, which is heavily defined by the scale and diversity of its scientific research and other knowledge-based assets that underpin the County's economic growth and prosperity. As a hub for scientific research, Hertfordshire specific characteristics – generally considered to be strengths – this focus is vested primarily in a dynamic group of world-leading, research-

intensive, businesses – GSK, Airbus, MBDA, Roche, Eisai and Johnson Matthey as well as many others.

Around these and other major players, a series of overlapping innovation ecosystems - characterised as clusters - have evolved. These are defined around 5 key sector specialisms:

- **Life sciences** including a major focus on cell and gene therapy in and around Stevenage, Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield
- **Advanced engineering and manufacturing** – which has as its heritage the defence industry operations such as that of BAe (formerly in Hatfield) but has now substantially broadened out and frequently has a very strong IT and IA component
- **Smart construction**, which is embracing the commercial opportunities resulting from adoption of new methods, materials and technologies across the construction industry, as it rapidly evolves to address the challenges of sustainability, accelerating housing delivery and skills constraints. This is supported by local, and global, sector leader BRE, part of the government funded Construction Innovation Hub consortium to lead national sector innovation over coming years.
- **Agri-tech/science** involving the development of new technologies in agriculture, horticulture and the impact of climate change on farming, with the aim of improving yield, efficiency, and profitability, where there are substantial crossover benefits and synergy to be derived from partnership with Rothamsted Research
- **Creative Industries**, particularly film and TV, with the presence of Leavesden Studios and Elstree Studios within the county

Five of the seven Herts IQ sites are an expansion to the already thriving Maylands Business Park, already employing circa 20,000 people in a range of sectors. The other two sites are the BRE Campus and Rothamsted Research Campus, both a short distance away. (See image overleaf showing the relationship between the sites within/adjoining the Maylands Estate).



Enterprise Zone status provide Herts IQ with several benefits, including:

- Retention of business rates income generated from new Herts IQ occupiers for 25 years to allow the priority use of the funds to stimulate growth within the local authority areas in which the zone is situated, and to help secure good outcomes for the Herts IQ Enterprise Zone
- A level of Business Rate Relief for firms identified as operating within the target sectors

In terms of sustainable travel, Herts IQ is a lead partner in the new SmartGo initiative.

- The launch, in December 2019, of SmartGo Maylands, a 3 year Sustainable Travel Plan for the Maylands Business Park, involving a staff benefits package that aims to incentivise the use of sustainable transport - such as buses, bikes, trains and Electric Vehicles - offer rail discounts and increase expectations around improved staff health & wellbeing, a reduced carbon footprint and lowered parking demand

In terms of the capability of the broad location of Hemel Hempstead (Central) to deliver 10,000 new jobs, the original submission to government for Enterprise Zone approval and the Herts IQ Delivery Plan refer to a total of 8,000 new jobs being created across the sites, not just the East Hemel Hempstead Broad Location, which we considered has

the capacity for circa 6,000 jobs. So our identification of a lower figure does not challenge the SADC figure, but instead adopts a different interpretation within this range.

3. What arrangements have been made for joint working between the Council and Dacorum Borough Council to deliver the proposed broad location?

Whilst it is not itself party to specific joint working arrangements between the City and District of St Albans and Dacorum Borough Council, Herts IQ has both authorities as key members of the Herts IQ Partnership Board, along with Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (Herts LEP) Hertfordshire County Council, the BRE Group, Rothamsted Research and the University of Hertfordshire.

4. Is the proposed site capacity appropriate taking account of constraints including the provision of infrastructure including the buffer zones and mitigations to address the Buncefield Oil Depot and pipelines? Has the Health and Safety Executive been consulted?

4.1 In promoting Herts IQ the partners recognised that there were a number of constraints on the development of the East Hemel Central site, but were satisfied that the site could deliver substantial employment. Working in partnership with landowners, planning authorities and the Health and Safety Executive solutions are being found to ensure that emerging masterplans can meet the aspirations of local partners and comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety Executive in relation to the Buncefield Oil Depot and pipelines.

5. What are the timescales and funding sources for the necessary improvements to junction 8 of the M1 and the link road? Are these required for other development? Are any other road improvements required and what mechanisms are in place for their delivery?

5.1 The upgrade of M1 Junction 8 is a critical infrastructure improvement needed to support both the delivery of the Hertfordshire IQ sites in and adjoining the Maylands Business Park as well as the wider transformation of Hemel Hempstead through the Hemel Garden Community programme (set to deliver 11,000 homes/10,000 new jobs).

5.2 The M1 junction 8 upgrade would be delivered on land either within the ownership of The Crown Estate (TCE) or highway land. TCE and Hertfordshire IQ (supported by Hertfordshire LEP) are currently funding a design project in sufficient detail to enable the construction of the J8 upgrade, along with the design of related highway improvements

required for delivery of the TCE owned Hertfordshire IQ Hemel Hempstead (East) site within St Albans.

- 5.3 This work will include the major upgrade of Breakspear Junction which provides a key access point from the A414 to the Maylands Business Park and East Hemel areas. This co-funded £6m design project is being undertaken ahead of planning permission being secured, in order that these essential highways works are ready to be implemented when planning permission is secured by The Crown Estate.
 - 5.4 It is clearly unusual for both public and private investors to take such an approach, and this gives a strong indication of the local stakeholders' commitment to the success of the project and the deliverability of the J8 upgrade scheme.
 - 5.5 In terms of funding for the implementation of the main J8 upgrade scheme, this will be secured through a package of funders, and a plan is currently being concluded to target and secure a range of funding sources, including Road Investment Strategy 2, S106, CIL, Housing Infrastructure Fund, LEP Growth Deal funding and landowner contribution of land in lieu of funding.
 - 5.6 However, Hertfordshire IQ is able to provide a level of confidence in relation to funding for this scheme, through future retained Business Rates income being an already 'secured' source of funding to help deliver a range of Herts IQ priorities, of which the upgrade of the M1 J8 is its major project.
 - 5.7 Hertfordshire IQ should be viewed as the funder of last resort to underpin delivery as there are a number of competing uses of Business Rates funding to support delivery of the wider Hertfordshire IQ project. In terms of the timeframe in which funding will be available, Hertfordshire County Council is the accountable body for Hertfordshire LEP and Hertfordshire IQ and has already considered early access to funds via public borrowing, to be repaid as funding sources become available.
- 6. Have the impacts of the proposal on the wider road network been considered?**
- 6.1 This is a matter that has been considered in master planning work, with input from Hertfordshire County Council as Highways authority, so we believe this to be the case. The Maylands Growth Corridor Study (November 2017) set out the transport constraints and opportunities in relation to the impacts of growth in the East Hemel area, and this has set the director for emerging strategies and planned interventions.

7. What is the justification for the Multi-Modal Transport Interchange and how will this work in practice? Has it been costed and how will it be delivered?

7.1 Hertfordshire IQ is in the western terminus of the proposed A414 Corridor Strategy, a plan including a package of 30 separate proposals designed to improve east – west transport links across Hertfordshire (links that the Corridor Strategy considers to be currently inferior to those running north – south) and encourage substantial modal shift changes to enable and complement the development of a proposed Mass Rapid Transport system. An MMTI within the EHH site would provide an interchange location for a future MRT system with other modes of local travel.

7.2 Creation of an MMTI within the East Hemel Central site supports the recommendations of the Maylands Growth Corridor study, encouraging modal shift. It also will provide a sustainable transport hub within the Herts IQ Enterprise Zone, acting as an interchange between various modes of transport, and supporting sustainable travel across the areas as well as for ‘last mile’ journeys. Improving all transport solutions, including sustainable transport is a key success factor for Herts IQ as it will make the sites more attractive to target occupiers.

8. How have heritage assets been considered and is a Heritage Impact Assessment required?

8.1 Hertfordshire IQ has no comments to make on this specific question

9. Should the plan identify specific allocations/areas for employment use within the broad location?

9.1 In order to encourage the location’s potential for a range of prospective tenants there are significant advantages to identifying specific areas for different employment uses.

It would be beneficial for there to be some identification of the overall mix and anticipated quantum of individual business activities, together with a number of specified requirements associated with future development. Hertfordshire IQ feels that this supports the promotion of the site for employment - including specialised activities - without being excessively prescriptive.

10. What is the justification for the 15 pitch gypsy and traveller site within this broad location? Should a specific location be identified? Have the implications of the nearby commercial developments in terms of noise and disturbance been taken into account?

10.1 Hertfordshire IQ has no comment to make on this specific question.

11. What further infrastructure work needs to be undertaken, and is this appropriate to be left to the master planning stage?

- 11.1 Herts IQ is also putting significant focus on energy and digital infrastructure opportunities for the East Hemel Hempstead central site and is exploring potential in partnership with the landowner and planning authorities.