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1 The Gateway to a Greener Future

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This Master Plan seeks to unlock the potential that Maylands has to become the leading location for business in the East of England and beyond.

1.1.2 It taps into and re-ignites a New Town spirit. The New Town ethos exemplified in Hemel Hempstead, through innovative forms of development and land use planning, is instilled in this work through ensuring Maylands embraces emerging concepts of sustainable energy use and green technologies, and takes these forward as an inherent part of its strategy for the next generation.

1.1.3 The original rationale for the area made nearly 60 years ago, to provide an employment and manufacturing location for the town, needs updating. This Plan aims for a similar level of longevity. It gives the area a strategic direction to guide the location, quality and character of development to ensure Maylands can achieve its Vision and potential.

1.1.4 Without intervention now, our analysis suggests that Maylands would continue to underperform in comparison to newer, less tired employment areas. Furthermore, most new investment will continue to be in the relatively low-value, land-hungry logistics (warehousing) sector, meaning that Hemel Hempstead would miss out on a golden opportunity to attract higher-value, professional employers that meet the needs of Hertfordshire's well qualified workforce.

1.1.5 The Buncefield Incident provides some more impetus, allowing Maylands to refresh itself in the same way that Manchester city centre did after the 1996 bombing. But this refreshing would have been needed anyway, and with the opportunities on offer, it may well be a case of now or never.

1.1.6 Maylands already boasts a number of strengths including easy access to the M1 and M25, fast rail links to London, a range of accommodation for a variety of businesses at competitive rates and room for expansion.

1.1.7 Our aim is that Maylands will become a sustainable, well connected, Green Business Park hosting high quality accommodation, within a pleasant environment, complemented by a range of shops, cafes and restaurants set in a network of open spaces. Development will aim to reach the highest environmental standards and will incorporate an on-site Energy Centre, providing a showcase for sustainable energy use through the inclusion of renewable energy producing technologies utilising on-site waste and inputs.

1.1.8 The Master Plan recommends:-

- Seizing the development and renewal opportunities

- Encouraging employment growth, particularly for offices
- A new business park at Maylands Gateway
- A new Heart for Maylands
- Dividing Maylands into Character Areas
- Going green, including the development of an Energy Centre
- A landscape-led design strategy; and
- A sustainable transport and movement strategy

1.1.9 These recommendations are elaborated below, together with the rationale in Annex A.

1.1.10 The Master Plan is supported by a number of documents, including a Sustainability Appraisal and Report of Community Involvement (see Annex C).

1.1.11 Through the Master Plan and with the ongoing support and commitment of the Maylands Partnership and other partners, the regeneration of Maylands is the gateway to a brighter future for local business and the economy and prestige of the town.

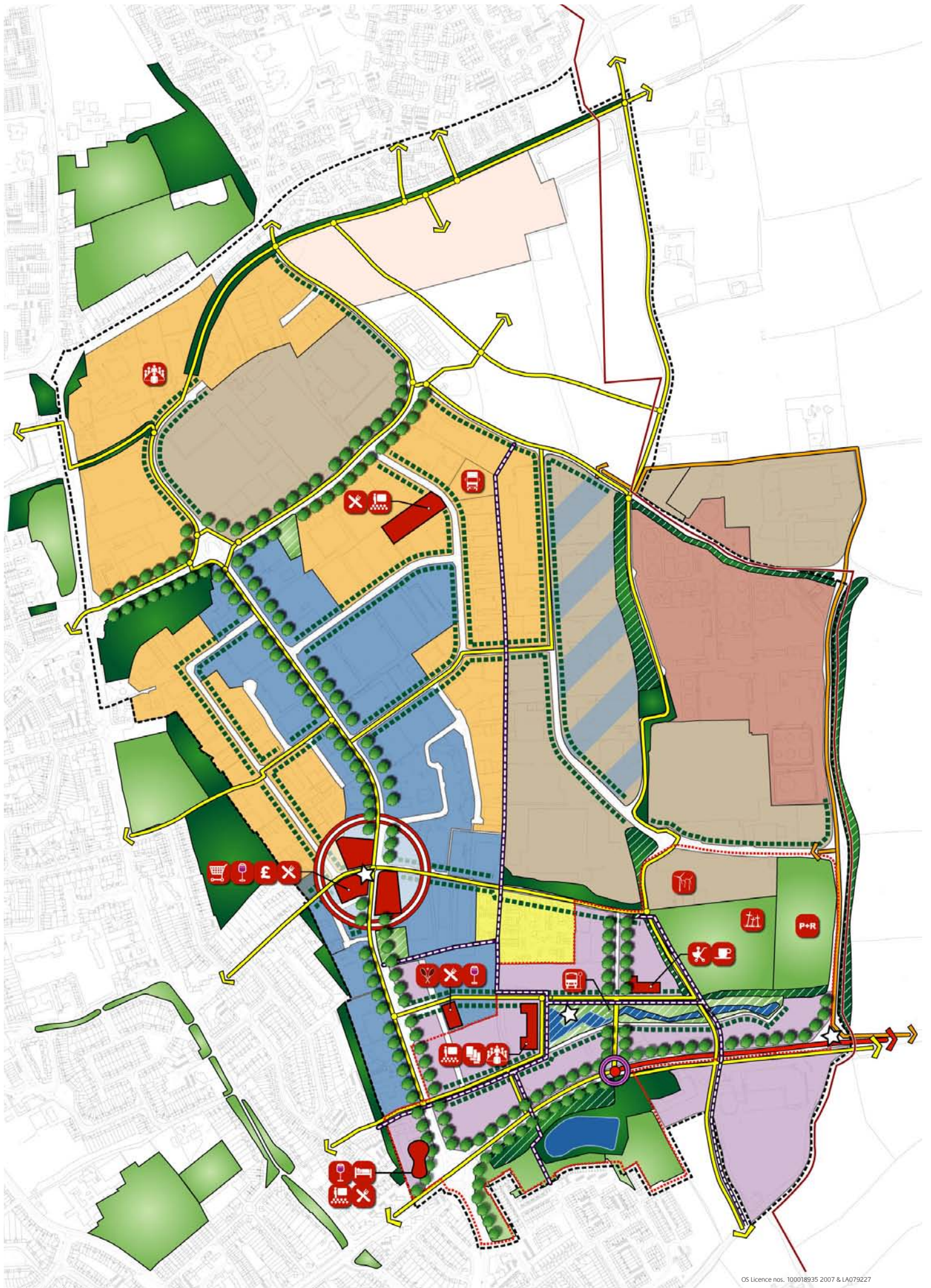
1.2 Vision

1.2.1 The Master Plan's vision is

1.2.2 "To create an environment where a range of businesses can grow and prosper through the development of Maylands as a sustainable, well connected Green Business Park offering a high standard of accommodation within a pleasant high quality environment, served by a range of conveniently located shops and amenities."

1.2.3 This vision is rooted in a need to be both aspirational in terms of the role Maylands can play in Hemel Hempstead's, and the East of England's, expanding economy, and to address the current issues that are limiting Maylands' potential.

1.2.4 The vision, and the set of objectives to which it relates, has been developed through a process of analysis of the issues, extensive consultation with stakeholders (including public sector stakeholders and organisations, local businesses, landowners, developers, property agents, current tenants of Maylands as well as residents and community groups), and an interpretation of expectations as to how Maylands can overcome its current problems and unlock its potential to become the best place to work in the East of England.



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