


SG-02b Almondsbury Business Park (Central Site)

A: BASELINE SITE INFORMATION

A1. Baseline/Context – All baseline data to be provided by SGC either via AMR, GIS layers or other sources			
A1.1 Site Typology	Existing	✓	<i>Tick relevant box</i> <i>Note: Subject to the type of site being considered, not all fields in this proforma will be populated.</i>
	Committed (permitted)		
	Allocated (in Local Plan)	✓	
	Proposed (submitted to HELAA)		
A1.2 Site Name & Address (Inc Site reference, if applicable)	Almondsbury Business Park, Ash Ridge Road, Bradley Stoke, BS32 4QD (Central Site)		
A1.2a Sub Area	Bristol North Fringe		
A1.3 Location Plan / Geospatial reference			
A1.4 Site area (ha)	22.4ha		
A1.5 Site Context	<p>Almondsbury Business Park forms the northernmost edge of the Bristol North Fringe urban area and is a designated business employment area. The overall site lies to the south of the M4/M5 interchange, north of the residential area of Bradley Stoke. This particular section of the site is the central point of the wider existing CS12 allocation, forming part of the main office cluster in the North Fringe (alongside Aztec West). This site section is predominantly made up of office parks branching off Great Park Road and Woodlands. The RAC South West Regional HQ is a landmark building in the northern part of the site. There is a substation in the west of the site, with pylons running through the central section.</p>		

A1.6 Policy Status (existing/emerging)	Site is safeguarded for economic development by Core Strategy Policy CS12. Should an application for B8 storage be sought on the site, policy PSP27 would need to be satisfied.
A1.7 Planning history	This part of the site was developed around the late 1980's initially under application P84/0020/1 , for the wider development of residential and employment land. In 2012, there were a number of planning applications on this site to change the use of the buildings - predominantly to mixed employment and healthcare units, such as PT11/0768/F and PT12/0161/F - both of which changed an element of the B1 units constructed, to part B1 part D1 medical. One application (PT12/3568/F) was for the change of use from Mixed D1/B1 to Office and storage.
A1.8 Location	Situated on the northern edge of the Bristol North Fringe urban area, within settlement limits, bound by the M4/ M5 Interchange which contains the site to the north. The residential community of Bradley Stoke resides to the south. The Woodland Park residential caravan park bounds the site to the west and eastern portion of Almondsbury Business Park (SG-2c) to the east.

A2. Current Use *(Existing employment and town centre sites only)*

A2.1 Current role and sectors served by site	<p>Main Employment Sectors within the site include: Administrative & Support Service Activities - Professional, Scientific & Technical Activities - Information & Communication</p> <p>Key employers within the site include: RAC Motoring Services - TSB Bank Plc - G4S Secure Solutions (UK) Limited - Securitas Security Services (UK) - South Western Ambulance Service NHS - Palmer & Howells Ltd - BDW Trading Ltd</p> <p>Employment activity is predominantly office-based, with some key market sector activity. The south western portion of the site contains Fountain Court –five two storey Grade A/B buildings for larger local professional services, such as accountants and legal firms (e.g. Wards Solicitors). East of Fountain Court is a standalone Toby Carvery restaurant, with a substation to the north. Great Park Court office park in the north west contains four office blocks for professional services, engineering and housing such as Bouygues Energies & Services, Redrow Homes and David Wilson Homes. To the south of Great Park Court is Podville, 12 serviced office pods in shipping containers. These premises accommodate sole traders, micro-businesses and SMEs in the creative and digital industries and flexible working premises, as well as a nursery and pre-school.</p> <p>The RAC building in the north of the site is the company's SW HQ and contains training, sales and marketing functions. To the east of the RAC premises is the largest office building, the Keypoint – occupied by TSB for their key Bristol office functions. The central section of the contains a range of premise sizes and employment sectors, including brick warehouses with ancillary office facilities and loading bays for HGVs (occupied by retail trade counter units and furniture wholesalers). The office park branching off Woodlands and Great Park Road contain a range of employment activity with regional branches for established national design and engineering consultancies (such as WSP, Pegasus and Pick Everard), as well as Ferchau aerospace engineering and smaller office premises for local businesses. The north eastern section of the site contains smaller office unit sizes, occupied by a range of general commerce supply chain activity for aerospace.</p>
A2.2 Amount of undeveloped land on site/within cluster (ha)	None identified.

A2.2a Total number of units on site	According to SGC NDBR records, in June 2020 there were 257 business units operating within the site.
A2.2b Number of vacant units	According to SGC NDBR records, in June 2020 there were 2 unoccupied business units within the site - indicating that the vacancy rate is approx. 1%
A2.2c Estimate of total number of jobs on site (where possible)	There are approximately 5690 (employment) jobs associated with this site. (ONS, 2019)
A2.3 Quality and fitness of purpose of existing site and premises (existing sites only)	The office park buildings across the site are generally dated, although they are in good condition with a reasonable selection of facilities and evidence of recent refurbishment on site. The RAC building is a specialist purpose-built facility with high quality design and specialist equipment. The site layout is reasonably well designed, although there is evidence of unregulated car parking spilling onto Woodlands and Great Park Road narrowing carriageway widths to single lane. The warehouses at Eagles Wood are well designed, with good circulation space for HGVs and loading bays.
A2.3a Age and suitability of stock	Mainly built 1990's onwards; modern specification may attract national occupiers.
A2.3b Evidence of significant vacancies	There is no evidence of significant vacancies.
A2.3c Suitability of buildings for modern occupiers	Well regarded; good market appeal; attracts close to prime values.
A2.3d Onsite facilities	Poor loading and parking; minimal parking and basic fit out.

A3. Description of qualitative features of site (sourced from available data, previous ELRs, GIS & other secondary sources)

A3.1 Strategic connectivity	<p>Close to major road network, easy access for all, however mainly offices are based here. Within 1.2km of a town centre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located adjacent to the strategic road network at the M4 / M5 Almondsbury Interchange. • Patchway Station on the South West main line is reasonable driving distance (2 miles from the site). It provides hourly services to Cardiff Central and Taunton. • Bristol Parkway is a park and ride station, 3 miles away. It provides an hourly service on the London to South Wales and cross-country routes. • Bristol Port is 7 miles away, easily accessed by vehicle on the M5.
A3.2 Local accessibility and opportunities to reduce carbon through travel	The site is adjacent to the A38 radial route in and out of Bristol. The nearest bus station is Eagles Wood outside the site served by route 73, a half hourly service between Temple Meads and Cribbs Causeway. Three further routes can be accessed at Aztec West Roundabout including the M1 rapid bus transit service.
Indicator compiled by the following:	
A3.2a Reducing carbon from travel to work (Walking / Cycling)	The site has pedestrian access however is not within 100m of a strategic cycle route.

A3.2b Reducing carbon from travel to work (Public Transport)	The site is within 400m of a bus stop and is within 800m of a metrobus route.
A3.3 Accessibility to town centres/local amenities	The site is within 1.2km from Bradley Stoke retail centre. There is a health club and restaurant on site. There are two major supermarkets, local community facilities and a vet clustered around the Patchway Brook roundabout. There are several hotels and overnight accommodation along Bradley Stoke Way and Gloucester Road.
A3.4 Digital Connectivity	Think Broadband UK Broadband Coverage and Speed Test Result: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superfast – download speeds up to 24 mpbs Broadband speeds are classified as decent but well below the average for the Filton and Bradley Stoke constituency. Several postcodes within the site register broadband speeds <10mbps, approaching a basic level of service.
A3.5 Compatibility with neighbouring uses/character of wider area	Established commercial area; mainly compatible and uniformity of uses. The site is an established business park location, defining the character of the area alongside Aztec West. The main draw of this site is the location adjacent to the M5, which the site is compatible with. The site is predominantly office-based, which is compatible with adjacent residential area to the south. Existing office activity operates fairly independently, with no clusters of employment activity that define the site.
A3.6 Strength of functional and/or spatial linkages	The main functional linkage is between the site and the motorway and A38. This benefits all businesses, especially transport and logistics services, that can easily move goods between Bristol City centre, Bristol Port and the rest of the UK. For office-based activity this increases the potential catchment for employees. Linkages exist between some occupiers of the site, particularly the range of general commerce supply chain activity for aerospace in the north eastern section.
A3.7 Access to Local Workforce	Site within North Fringe: Fewer resident workers than jobs (job to worker ratio >1.5).

B: QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT – SITE SUITABILITY

B1. Site Potential and Opportunities – Application of market sector frameworks					
B1.1 Suitability of site/cluster for key market sectors	<p>The site is an edge of centre business park in the main employment area in South Gloucestershire, although it is not the prime business park location in the North Fringe. It is in close proximity to the strategic road network (M5), offers a strong range of office floorspaces in 2-3 storeys, functional but not exceptional facilities between Grade A and B but suffers from car parking pressure. The buildings' features and locational criteria are suitable for the regional branches of national companies as well as smaller local businesses, office-based creative and digital activity, as well as health and life sciences and general commerce. This is typically less valuable activity that requires cost-competitive premises.</p> <p>The RAC building is a purpose-built regional HQ with specialist equipment, which makes it a suitable location for the business's core activity. Retail warehouses at Eagles Wood are well suited to the edge of centre location, spacious layout and loading facilities offered at this site.</p>				
B1.2 Strength of existing or potential suitability and rationale		✓			
	Fully, readily and	Committed infrastructure or other	Potentially meets sector / market needs if	Only partial potential	Does not meet sector / market needs and/or demonstrates

	viably meets market / sector needs	planned investment will enable market / sector needs to be met	uncommitted infrastructure or constraints are overcome	to meet needs and/or marginal viability being likely	notable market failure (unviable)
	In terms of existing premises, the site provides a range of facilities serving different key market sectors. In the medium term there may need to be significant investment into the office premises on the site to remain attractive and maintain demand. Electric pylons restrict development potential through the site.				
B1.3 Scale of Opportunity	There are negligible amounts of undeveloped land on site. There is a low level of opportunity for infill development across the site at the expense of onsite car parking.				
B1.4 Requirement for infrastructure investment to enable suitability potential to be realised.	Off street and informal parking appears to be at capacity across the site. Intervention to shift modal share away from private car use can facilitate greater levels of employment. Proposals such as integrated ticketing for rail and bus services mentioned in the JLTP4 would make it easier to link trips. Improving broadband speed would particularly benefit office-based knowledge activity in the modern economy.				
Short-term Recovery (COVID-19)					
B1.5 Significant opportunity to provide short term job generation or supply chain support to drive short-term recovery from COVID-19 pandemic	✓				
	Likely to provide significant jobs or supply chain support within the next year Scores to reflect scale of job opportunities		Not Likely to provide jobs or supply chain support within the next year Scores to reflect scale of job opportunities		
Inclusive Growth					
B1.6 Potential to provide significant job and/or skills opportunities for priority socio-economic groups and/or areas of high deprivation.			✓		
	High to good degree of proximity to areas of high deprivation and scale / type of employment likely to be generated		Reasonable proximity to high deprivation and/or provision of suitable jobs	Very low to low degree of proximity to areas of high deprivation and poor suitability of employment likely to be generated	
B1.6a Within 2km of designated Priority Neighbourhood	Yes – Within 2km of Priority Neighbourhood.				
Clean Growth					
B1.8 Potential to meet demand for new/emerging green industries	Strong presence of professional office activity currently working in sustainability and green industries. The existing office premises are suitable for new/emerging green industries, if demand did exist in this edge-of-centre location.				

B1.9 Potential to contribute to zero/low carbon growth?	The commercial market in this location is cost and functionality lead. Net zero and low carbon building design is not seen as important to its market appeal. Zero/low carbon growth is not seen as essential in the short term. Low cost interventions such as EVCP to support electric vehicle uptake. The site is predominantly accessible by car, limiting opportunities to reduce carbon emissions.		
Regeneration (existing sites only)			
B1.10 Potential for (in-situ) expansion of businesses/ intensification/ repurposing /redevelopment to meet sectoral demand		✓	
	Strong to good market demand with solid viability prospects for repurposing / redevelopment to key sector use.	Reasonable market demand with viability prospects good subject to site or wider infrastructure investment.	Very low to low market demand and/or likely viability constraints for repurposing / redevelopment to key sector use.
Employment land is scarce at this location creating reasonable levels of demand, however increased levels of remote working may mean there is less demand for the larger office plates (especially for cost sensitive business). Poor site wide broadband speed may need to be overcome to support knowledge economy growth.			
Cross-sectoral spatial needs (if not yet captured above)			
B1.11 Can provide space for social enterprise	The office facilities on the site are capable of providing space for social enterprise, if demand exists for this in the location. There are currently flexible desk space providers on the site, as well as a strong offer of smaller premises which could be used for co-working space and remote working through minor refurbishment. Podville demonstrates that the site can provide incubator/start-up hub space, which offers a good example of this type of facility.		
B1.12 Capable of providing flexible/co-working space / and/or facilitate remote working			
B1.13 Capable of providing incubator/ accelerator/start-up hub space.			
Delivery			
B1.14 Ownership	No known ownership constraints.		
B1.15 Physical and/or environmental constraints	An electricity pylon runs through the central section of the site, which limits development heights. The northern section of the site is physically constrained by the M5. The southern section of the site is relatively unconstrained, however adjacent residential development could limit the nature of employment activity occurring on site. There are no constraints posed by environmental designations.		
		✓	
	No significant or relatively minor constraints that will not undermine development feasibility, viability or deliverability.	Some constraints that can be addressed or mitigated through achievable infrastructure investment or other measures. Costs of doing so may reduce but not significantly diminish	Major or prohibitive constraints that will undermine development feasibility, viability or deliverability. Environmental constraints sufficiently important to prevent development for employments.

		development viability or deliverability	
B1.15 Likely Delivery Timeframe	N/A – no significant development potential.		
C1 Regional Conclusion and Recommendations			
C1.1 Conclusion: Considered alongside the other two parcels which comprise Almondsbury Business Park, the site has strong strategic potential to contribute to employment growth and key sector prioritisation across South Gloucestershire.		RAG Summary Strong	
<p>C1.2 Justification/rationale – The site is part of a longstanding business park in South Gloucestershire's main employment area. It accommodates a range of employment activity in the North Fringe, that benefits from its excellent location in relation to the strategic road network and Bristol city centre. The site is defined by its location next to the M5, contains a high concentration of office-based activity in key market sectors and functions well as a secondary business location – offering cost competitive functional office space. The site also provides a good range of office floorplates, creating a fine-grained employment site that is further enhanced by contemporary start up spaces like Podville. Issues surrounding digital connectivity and broadband provision need to be addressed in the long term.</p> <p>The site contains employment activity in key market sectors on a reasonable scale and has a good range of unit sizes, but there are several constraints and challenges to growth which need to be addressed. Electricity pylons running overhead limit higher density development in the central portion of the site. There is also a lack of physical space for further development, with less demand for office space due to greater levels of remote working. There is currently evident pressure on car parking, as this site attracts high levels of vehicle use given its location next to the M5.</p>			
<p>C1.3 Recommendation –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain and continue to safeguard as an employment site. • Consider a strategy for the Almondsbury Business Park to coordinate growth across the site as a whole, focusing on issues around modal share and digital connectivity. 			