










**LEGEND**

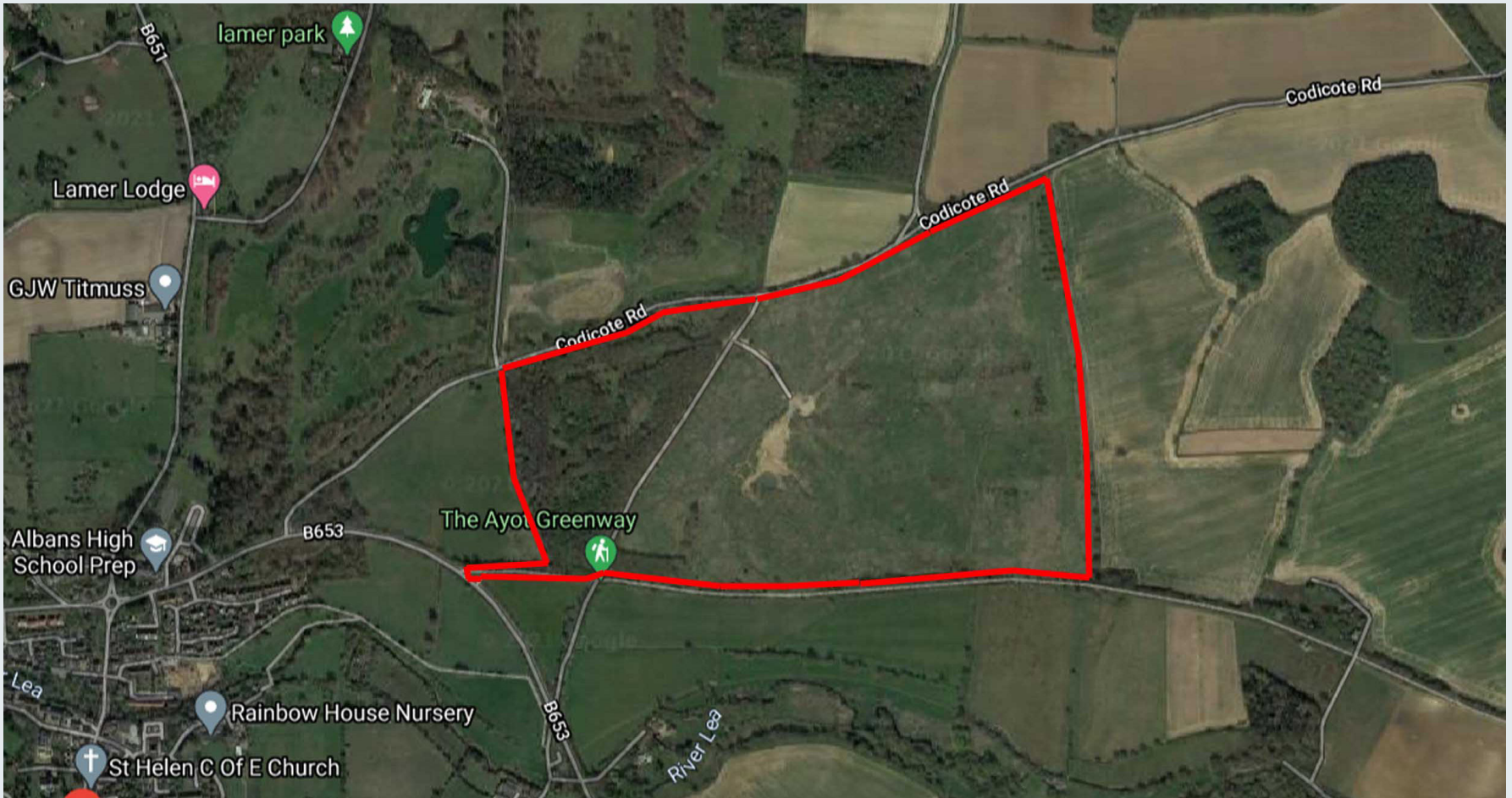
-  Hertfordshire Way
-  Existing footpaths around the site
-  Ayot Greenway cycle route
-  New tree planting and woodland areas
-  New primary cycling and walking route around the site and linking into existing Ayot Greenway and Hertfordshire Way.
-  Trim trail / outdoor gym areas located off primary routes
-  Secondary walking routes

1. Visitors Centre - Cafe, Information, themes and links towards local ecology, walking, landscape and history.
2. Bike hire / bike shop / repairs / bike wash area
3. Hard surface road bike track - 1.5 - 2KM
4. Football facility - changing rooms / WC's / grass pitches
5. Outdoor area linked to visitor centre - gathering / landscaped seating / picnics / informal play space / ornamental planting / access to surrounding foot path and cycle ways
6. Car parking
7. Mountain biking trails
8. Off-road family orientated cycle routes
9. Adventure Play
10. Existing water course extended / adapted to form landscape feature
11. Open grass land area. View across visito centre from existing walking and cycle networks.
12. Holiday lodges / camping pods to existing woodland

**Illustrative Site Layout Plan - 1:2500**

LK2

# St Albans City & District Council Call for Site Justification Statement Semi-Restored Infill Land off Codicote Road



Prepared for: Tarmac Aggregates Ltd  
March 2021

# 1. Introduction

St Albans City and District Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan 2020-2038. The 'Call for Sites' is an early opportunity for individuals, landowners and developers to suggest sites within the District for development over the next 15-20 years.

These should be capable of delivering economic development on sites of 0.25 hectares or more. Proposed land uses can include:

- Housing
- Gypsy & Traveller Housing
- Mixed Use
- Employment
- Renewable and low carbon energy and heat
- Biodiversity Improvement / Offsetting
- Green Belt Compensatory Land
- Land for Tree Planting
- Other

We would like to put forward the following land to supplement the economic development of St Albans City and District Councils local Plan.

Tarmac Aggregates Ltd commissioned LK2 to undertake a pre-feasibility study of the Blackbridge Tip site which concluded in March 2020 and was specifically commissioned to understand the future potential of developing the site for sport, leisure, health and recreational provision. The study sought to understand the political, and social agendas for the locality, and the strategic need for sport and leisure.

The results of this can be seen in the evidence presented below, which has been taken from a series of strategic documents owned by the Local Authority, National Governing Bodies and Sport England.

Tarmac Aggregates Ltd are committed to continuing to find a positive solution for the site, which will enhance the leisure / sport and green space offer for St Albans. As a result of the 'Call to Sites outcome' LK2 will continue to develop a full feasibility study to consolidate a master plan for the site.

## 2. Site Background

Blackbridge Tip is a former gravel pit that was used as a refuse tip between 1910 and 1970. The site was acquired by Tarmac in the 1990s. A Tripartite Agreement has prevented land fill operations, so the site has remained inactive since 1973. Over the past 20 years there have been several attempts to re-open the land for domestic landfill, however this has been unsuccessful. Restrictions on the usage of the land have limited its value and called into question its future as a sustainable location within the green belt.

The previous usage of the land has rendered it unfit for housing, mixed use developments and commercial operations. However, this does provide an opportunity to regenerate this semi-restored infill site into a sustainable, accessible, leisure destination with meaningful pedestrian and cycling links to existing routes which will help protect and reinforce the green belt.

In 1970 the site became semi restored infill land, and since this time it has been left vacant and unused in recent times.



# 3. Justification of Need

## Demographics

There are a large number of families in the St Albans area as shown by the large proportion of age groups: 0-14 and 35-49. St Albans is a very affluent district with it being amongst the 5% least deprived local authorities in the country. As a region, the East has a noticeably higher population growth than the national average.

## Market segmentation

Sport England has developed 19 sporting segments, of which 3 dominant types have been identified for Wheathampstead. Each of these three dominant segments live within the 10km catchment and are described by Sport England as being particularly active with higher activity levels than national average.

The five most popular sports within the segments are: cycling, 'keep fit/gym', swimming, football and athletics. Cycling is particularly popular with two of the dominant segments in the area having a noticeably higher cycling participation than national average.

There is a very successful Cycling Club based in St. Albans with membership in excess of 500 members

## Links to Wider Strategies

Blackbridge Tip is within the Green Belt and so any development on this site will need to be considered alongside its requirements. Primarily, outdoor sport and recreation facilities are not deemed to be 'inappropriate' but developments should preserve the openness of the Green Belt.

Proposals that increase leisure trips made through walking, cycling and horse-riding are supported by the local authority. The Ayot Greenway and Hertfordshire Way provides strong connectivity from the site into the local town and surrounding network of footpaths and cycle routes.

The proposed development must take into consideration its impact on the environment, specifically the impact on the air quality from traffic and the landscape. Blackbridge Tip will need to provide on-site car and cycle parking.

A proposal with an emphasis on health & well-being, especially for children, is likely to be supported by the local authority and would be of benefit to the community. The need for retail provision is low due to the provision in the neighbouring villages of Codicote and Wheathampstead.

Upon Review of the sporting data, and the St Albans Playing Pitch Strategy there is an under supply of grass football & Rugby pitches particularly for junior engagement.



### Ayot Greenway Green space Action Plan

The Ayot Greenway is a 4.5 mile (7km) non-motorised transport route, used by cyclists, horse riders and walkers throughout the year, both for active travel and for recreational use and is recognised as a National Cycle Route.

Tarmac Ltd own and manage 0.4km of this route which runs along the south of the site. This network will support the Government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) which aims to see more people with access to safe, attractive routes for cycling and walking by 2040.

The network will also support delivery of Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4), which aims to encourage active travel and improve sustainable travel provision to achieve 'a modal shift in future years away from car use to more sustainable modes such as walking and cycling'.

## 4. The Suggested Offer

The landowners wish to make informed decisions of the future of the land and its viability being sensitive of, and aligning to local government plans and community and economic needs, creating a sustainable and vibrant place.

The site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt and so any development on this site will need to be carefully considered alongside its requirements. Primarily, outdoor sport and recreation facilities are not deemed to be 'inappropriate' but developments should preserve the openness of the Green Belt.

The offer establishes the concept of developing a 'country park' as an outdoor recreational location, including the provision of walking, cycling, trim-trails, horse riding and bridle paths, which can enhance and provide links to the Ayot Greenway. This should be supported by both the local authority's Health & Well-being Strategies and by Sport England's principles to enhance and provide physical activity in the area.

There are multiple opportunities to offer various formalised sport facilities to meet the local needs and address the under supply of such provision in the surrounding area. Junior football, rugby and cycling (dirt / pump track, or potential for cycling circuit), outdoor gyms and outdoor classrooms are some examples of how this need could be met.

This will reinforce the County Council's commitment to improving the health and well-being of their communities, making their towns cleaner, less congested and better places to live, work and visit.

By creating these destinations in an environmentally conscious way, will in turn will deliver significant long term benefits to the health and well-being of the local residents and reduce our impact on the environment.

The site's natural landscape lends itself to the protection of wildlife and creating protected woodland and wetland areas for future development of breeding programmes. Landscaping and land restoration proposals for all leisure uses should preserve and enhance their setting and additional landscaping including tree planting, should be provided where necessary. Heritage trails, wildlife routes and educational provision for local ecological / biodiversity could be ways of improving the identity of the site.

New leisure use proposals must be acceptable in terms of location, land use, residential amenity, access, cycle/car-parking, environmental impact, safety and landscaping.

Car parking, cycle storage, café/shop/visitor enrichment centre would be an opportunity to create a commercial offer, helping sustain the location and providing both an economic and community benefit, but also to meet customer expectations and all round immersive experience.



## 5. Conclusions

- The tripartite agreement currently in place, would not be contravened if the local authority changed the allocation of the land.
- The land is vacant and could be swiftly adapted to suit the suggested allocation.
- The land has remained vacant and derelict for numerous years and could now be improved to supplement and benefit the local and surrounding area.
- The proposals could help meet all the local authority needs for tree planting and sport/ leisure requirements.
- The proposals help protect the green belt and provide a long-term sustainable solution for a site that has become unusable and run-down.
- The site could be used to promote economic and community development, without detriment to the land usage and sensitive area.
- The site could provide a large benefit, to keeping local people active and meeting the local and National health and well-being strategies.
- The provision to develop a new country park within the St Albans area will have a positive impact on the communities it serves.
- At the time of submitting this application, we are under a national lock down due to an ongoing pandemic, the need for open space, walking, and cycling paths has never been more important. The potential of this site will continue to consolidate the aspirations to live a more healthy lifestyle.



# LK2

Chartered architects  
Sports and leisure consultants



## Lincoln (Head office)

Studio 2, Deepdale Enterprise Park,  
Nettleham  
Lincoln LN2 2LL

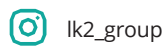


Email us at

## Offices in

**London**

**Nottingham**



[www.lk2.co.uk](http://www.lk2.co.uk)

**Project Lead: Andy Newman,**