

# Sequential Test Report

**Honiton**

**June 2012**

June 2012 Sequential Test Study – Honiton

## STRATEGIC LOCATION SELECTION

### HONITON

Honiton's populations including surrounding parishes is 16,840 (2006) and the population change between 1991 to 2004 was 27.6% compared to an East Devon average of 14.4%.

It is evident that Honiton has expanded to become an important economy within the district.

Significant developments to the South of the town coupled with improvements to access to Exeter via the improved A30 have contributed to such growth.

A recent study completed internally by HR identified staff addresses and distances travelled to The Knowle, Sidmouth and Honiton (Appendix 1)

### SKYPARK/CRANBROOK

The findings show that whilst 54% of staff currently live closer to The Knowle offices, 34% live closer to Honiton and the other 12%, equal distances between the two.

Additional costs will be given to staff travelling the extra mileage to Honiton and this has been costed at approx [REDACTED] per annum over 2 years

A sequential test was undertaken in Honiton to assess the suitability of other sites within and around to town. This task was undertaken to prove whether Heathpark was the better site for the new offices. A number of other sites were found and are shown below.

## HONITON SEQUENTIAL TESTING

### *SITE OPTIONS*

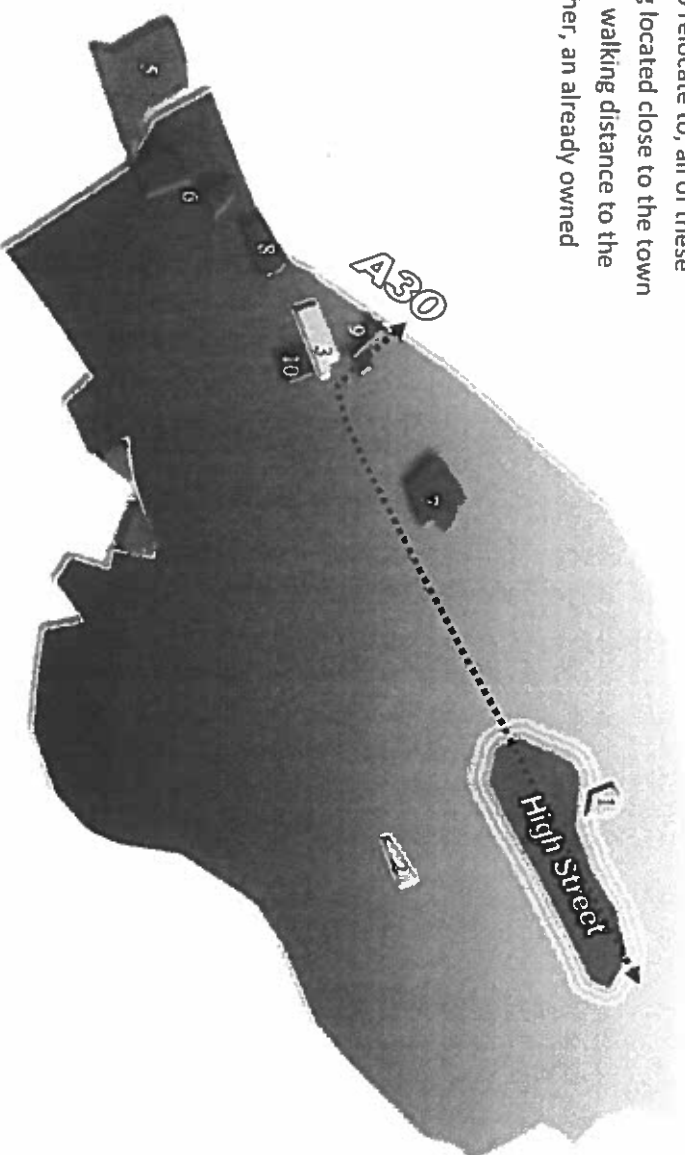
1. CATTLE MARKET SITE, SILVER STREET
2. BRADFORD BUILDERS YARD
3. BROWNFIELD SITE – HEATHPARK WAY
4. GREENFIELD SITE ON WEST PERIPHERY
5. GREENFIELD SITE AT HAYNE LANE
6. GREENFIELD INFILL SITES IN DEVONSHIRE WAY
7. SITE SOUTH OF ST RITA'S CENTRE, HIGH STREET
8. GREENFIELD SITE – DEVONSHIRE WAY
9. ALDI SITE



A sequential test is relevant as part of the study to identify and assess other potential new sites in and around Honiton to rule out all options for the potential sites available for the Council's new Headquarters.

The objective is to assess land supply to inform the selection of the most appropriate site for the development of the new East Devon Offices.

Through this process, 3 sites have been considered as potential options for East Devon District Council Headquarters to relocate to, all of these have strengths and weaknesses with two being located close to the town centre, convenient for both transport links and walking distance to the high street as shown on map below and the other, an already owned EDDC site.



## SITE 1

### The Cattle Market and Council Car Park Site

Located to the east of Honiton High Street this site has an area of 0.6Hectares/1.48 acres.

Currently it is on a long lease by East Devon District Council for a car park, and a lease by Stags on the Cattle Market Site. The Cattle Market however is very small and the main markets at Exeter and Taunton have seen this site becoming more and more underused.

Adjoining land uses are commercial and retail to the south and residential uses to the east.

Whilst the site is close to the retail core of Honiton town centre, vehicle access is one way through a residential area. This road currently provides access to the School, Leisure Centre and Council Car Park.

Due to the Councils staggered working patterns, vehicular traffic is not likely to increase dramatically at any given time.

The site is close to public transport and the town centre, bringing a lot more business to Honiton town centre.

Improvements would be required to the road network to sustain the amount of vehicles to the site whilst retaining the existing. This would be a highway issue and particularly with the new Honiton Air Quality Management Plan.

## Planning policy

Located close to (but outside of) the town centre boundary and not allocated for any specific land use in adopted Local Plan. Adjacent to a Conservation Area.



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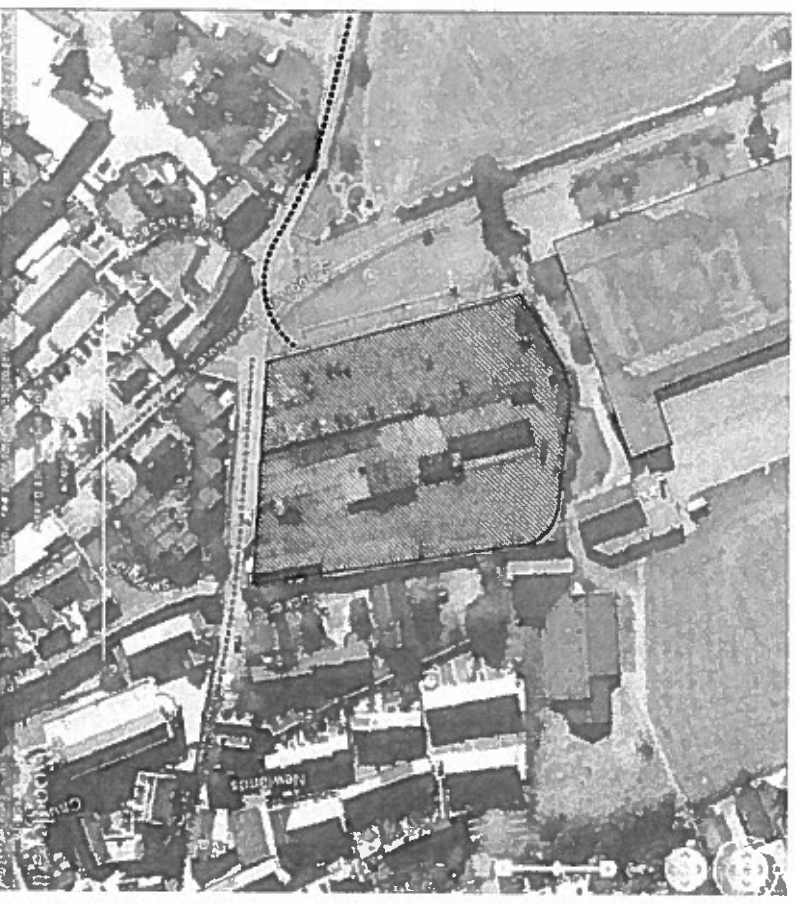
### Site Strengths

- 1.41 acre site
- Council currently lease the site and own adjacent car park, and coach park
- Freeholder of site in agreement to sell with deal already in place
- 100 metres to High Street
- Underused site in central location
- No huge costs involved to clear site.
- An easy move – no need to relocate an existing business
- Close Proximity to Honiton High Street – walk within 1 minute
- Encouraging positive interaction & supporting public transport
- Access route to site avoids having to go into town centre
- Road access to the site
- Visual amenity – to the church, across the hills
- Adjacent open space
- Public amenities for staff opposite
- Support for local businesses
- Permeable routes through to shopping areas

### Site Weaknesses

- Access restraints
- Building needs to be sympathetic to surrounding area
- Loss of some public car parking space
- Access to site through residential area

- Access shared with school and leisure centre
- Increased traffic
- Coach stop on west of site under school ownership
- Temporary housing for the business centre is required short term



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## Current Expressions of Interest – Heathpark / Cattle Market Site

Through extensive market testing there has been interest gained from lots of parties,

One potential developer has registered a firm interest and developed a proposal to East Devon, offering the freehold of the cleared Cattle Market site with certain funds available to build their new offices. They propose to develop the Heathpark Site for retail development in which the two planning applications on both sites would run in parallel so as to demonstrate the linkage and commitment to deliver requisite proposal for both sites.

Their proposals are summarised below

- Vacant Possession of The Cattle Market site can be offered no later than September 2013, possibly sooner, giving a full 12 months to build out new facility for the Council.
- The current site use does not need to be relocated and the Council will not need to fund any costs, or achieve any borrowing.
- The site would be planning use compliant
- [REDACTED] can facilitate all development finance, meaning that the Council can avoid any borrowing, and interest associated therewith
- [REDACTED] to acquire Heathpark site for [REDACTED] whilst the Council would have the ability to secure 2 forward land sales at the Knowle Sidmouth, which we feel would realise at least [REDACTED]

towards the cost of the new offices, this would fund the anticipated shortfall without the need for borrowing.

- A programme of deliverability to ensure occupation in 2014 can be confirmed. There would need to be a twin tracked planning application for the new offices, and the retail development.
- [REDACTED] proposal can be demonstrated to self fund, possibly providing a cash surplus.

## SITE 2

### Bradford's Builders Yard, Honiton

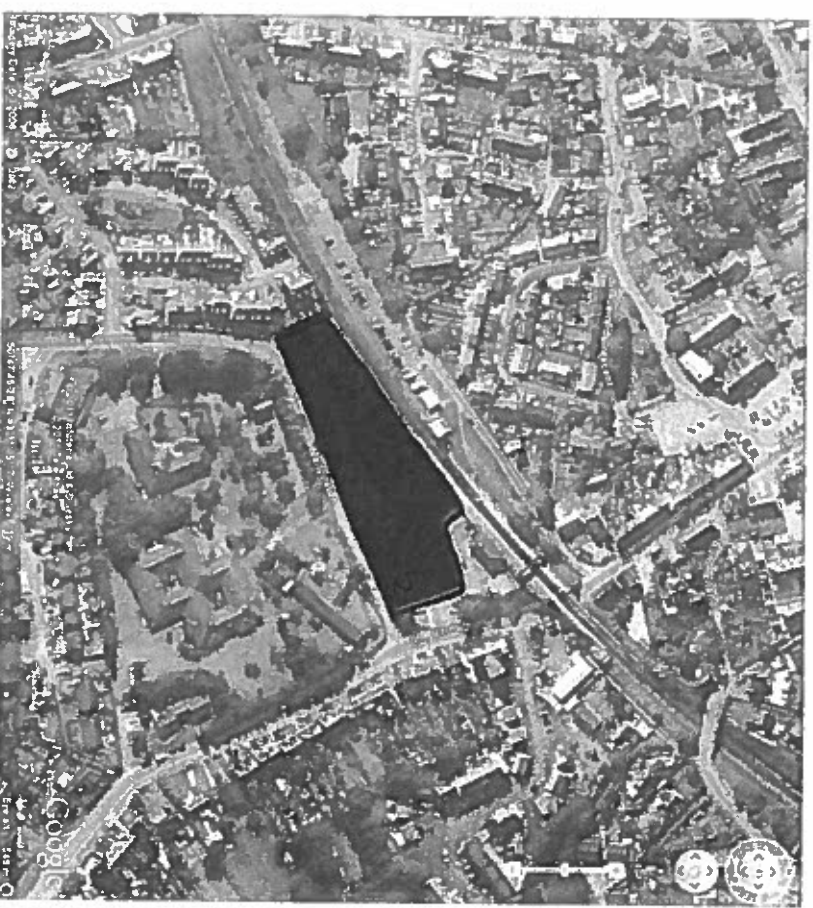
A 1.78 acre site located to the south of the main town centre next to Honiton Railway Station to the north and the hospital to the south.

Its current use consists of a Builders Yard, including retail unit and surface level car park and open storage areas.

The site is allocated under Policy LH3 for mixed use development. It has good vehicle access from New Street, although the site access would need to be shared with the railway station use.

The Site is restricted in size particularly in width, however its location is central with good access to transport links.

Due to it's close proximity to the main railway line, any new development would be restricted in distance to this, could further limit the size of the new offices building.



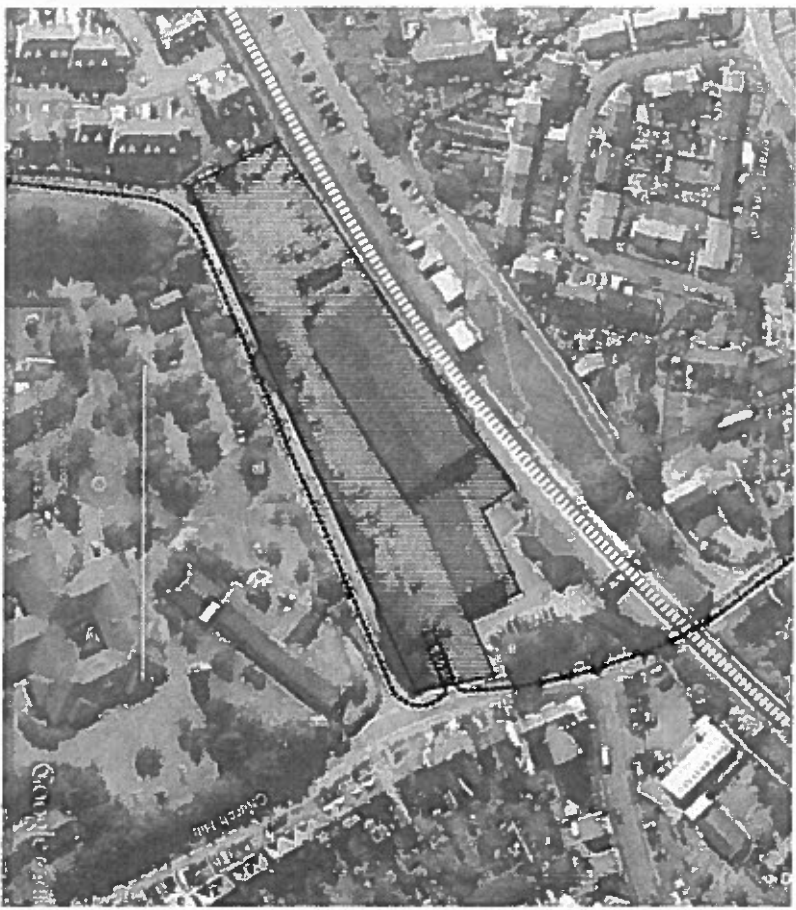
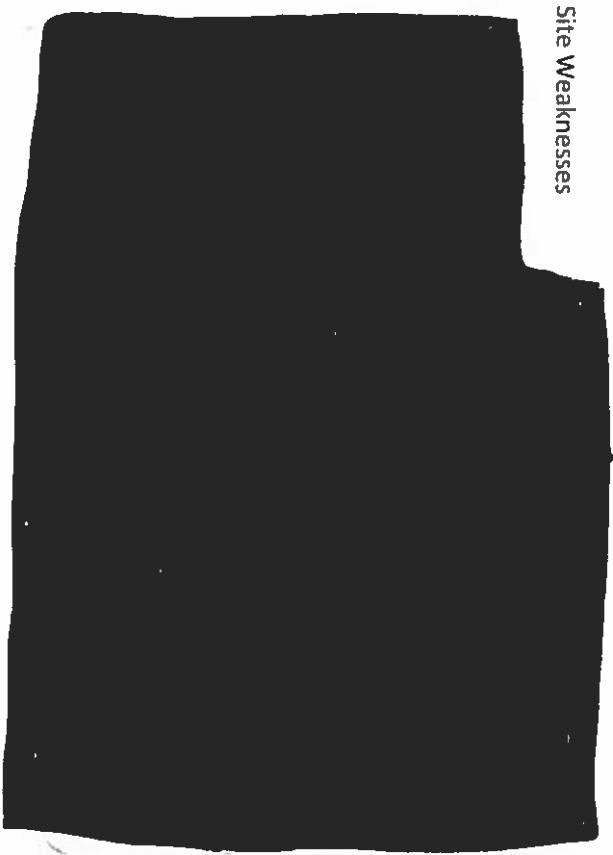


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#### Site Strengths

- 1.78 acre site
- Large site suitable for office requirements and car parking
- Well located next to train station, excellent railway links to Exeter and London
- Town Centre site - 500 metres to High Street
- Easily accessible
- Removes heavy lorry use from the towns highway network for Bradfords deliveries

#### Site Weaknesses



### SITE 3

A premier 3.5 acre site on the outskirts of Honiton town centre. Owned by East Devon District Council this is a Brownfield Site on entrance to Heathpark Industrial Estate.

The existing Business Centre occupies a quarter of the site presently and this building would be demolished and incorporated into the new building.

Access direct from the A30 into the site, the site becomes easily accessible for staff and the public.

Although not central to the town centre, it is still within walking distance to the town centre however this could be too far for a lunchtime trip.

It is a large site, capable of suiting all the needs and requirements for the new High Profile East Devon District Council Headquarters Office building with enough car parking to satisfy demand.

The 3.5 acre / 1.4 hectare site is a valuable piece of land in a good location and preliminary Expressions of interest in the Heathpark site have been established with developers. This would be on the proviso the right land could be found in Honiton for the Council offices.

The sale of Heathpark would allow the funds to be in place to build the new offices without the need to borrow.

Any potential Expressions of Interest will have to take into the account the need to retain the existing Business Centre, or find alternative accommodation for them until the New Offices/Business Centre are completed.

Currently the highest land use being sought for this site is for Food Retail.

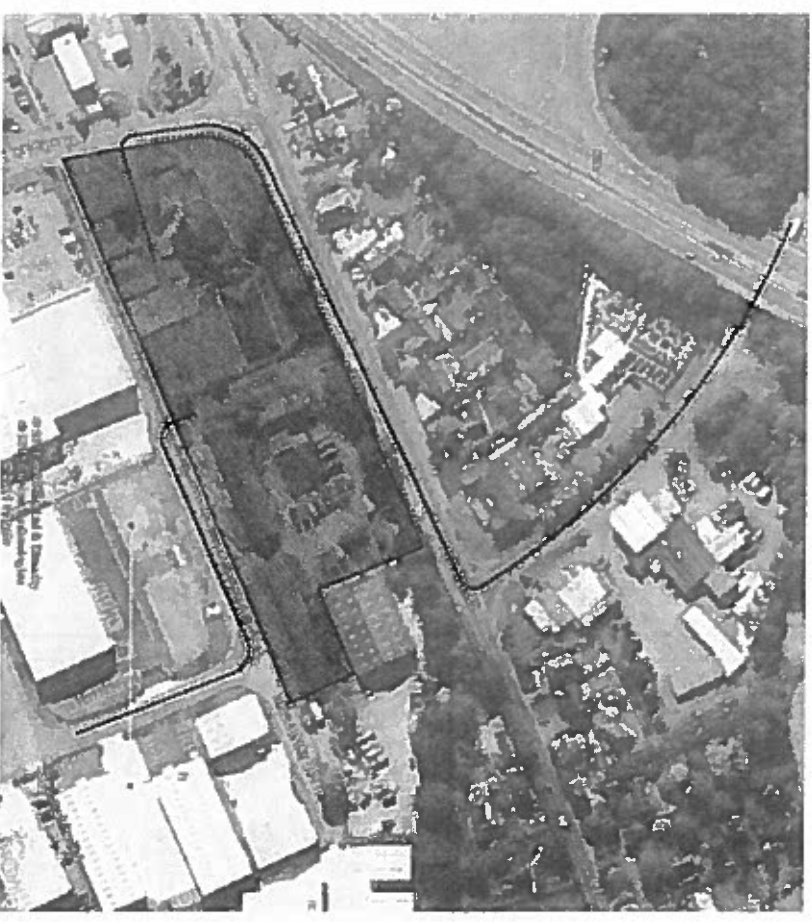
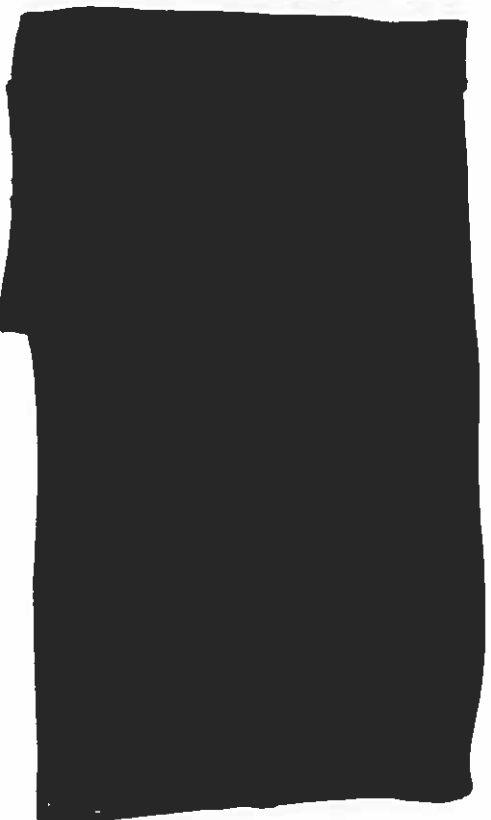
Discussions with the planners and a Pre Application will need to be completed to determine the use.



### Site Strengths

- 3.5 acre site
- Owned by East Devon District Council
- A high profile site for a Headquarters location
- Very close to A30 with good transport connections
- Ample car parking can be accommodated for all employees
- No Highway Issues
- Valuable piece of land – interest from developers for food retail

### Site Weaknesses



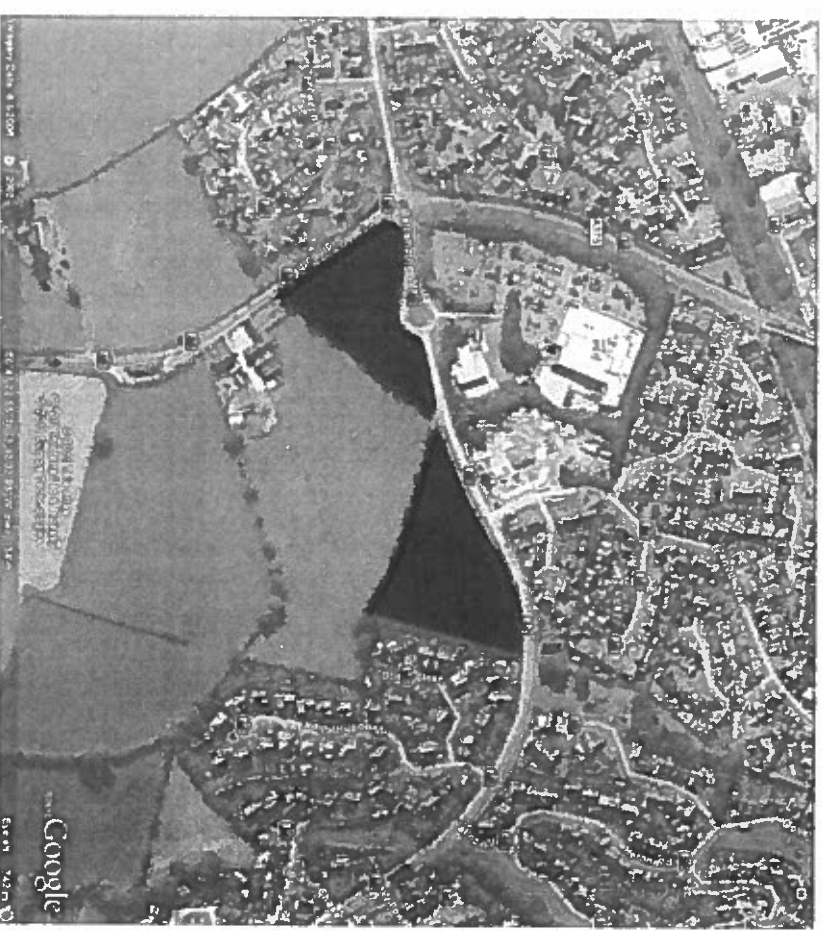
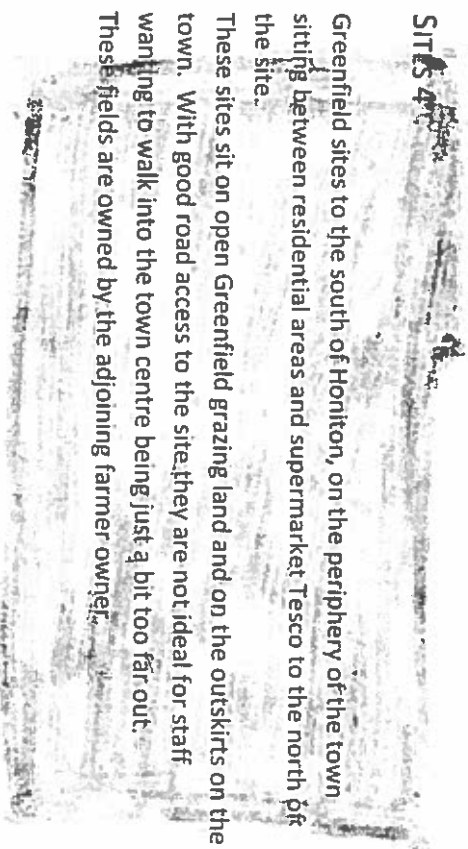
**KensingtonTaylor**  
CHARTERED ARCHITECTS • URBAN DESIGNERS

Below highlight the other sites which were assessed as part of this exercise. A range of sites were looked at and assessed to determine the best suitable and available sites for the location of the new Offices.

#### SITES 4

Greenfield sites to the south of Honiton, on the periphery of the town sitting between residential areas and supermarket Tesco to the north of the site.

These sites sit on open Greenfield grazing land and on the outskirts on the town. With good road access to the site, they are not ideal for staff wanting to walk into the town centre being just a bit too far out. These fields are owned by the adjoining farmer owner.



## SITE 5

The other part of the sequential study looked into the interest from potential developers to buy the Heathpark site along with the adjoining site for retail use. The condition was that another suitable and prominent site would be found in Honiton to relocate the new offices on.

This site has been identified by [REDACTED] as a potential site to relocate the offices as part of their expression of interest in return for the Heathpark Site and partnering option with EDDC. The area shaded in red is owned by East Devon District Council after acquiring it from Coombe estate in 1999.

However East Devon does not currently own the access into the site but with this partnering option they would gain the access to this new 13 acre site and the build of their new offices.

The developers intend to promote the land edged red and grey for mixed employment and residential development. This has already been in SHLAA once and there are plenty of policy arguments in favour of getting the land allocated. They envisage the land to the north of the railway line as being primarily employment land providing Honiton with sufficient expansion employment land to meet its long term needs and land to the south providing the residential urban extension.

The developer is in talks with Coombe estate to relax the covenant existing on the EDDC site (red) at present to allow development for employment uses.





## SITE 5

### SITE AT HAYNE LANE

Hayne Lane is located to the east of the town centre through Heathpark Business Park, accessed via Devonshire Road.

Hayne Lane is located 1.5 miles away from the railway station and town centre, and is considered unrealistic in terms of walking distance to the town for customers and staff.

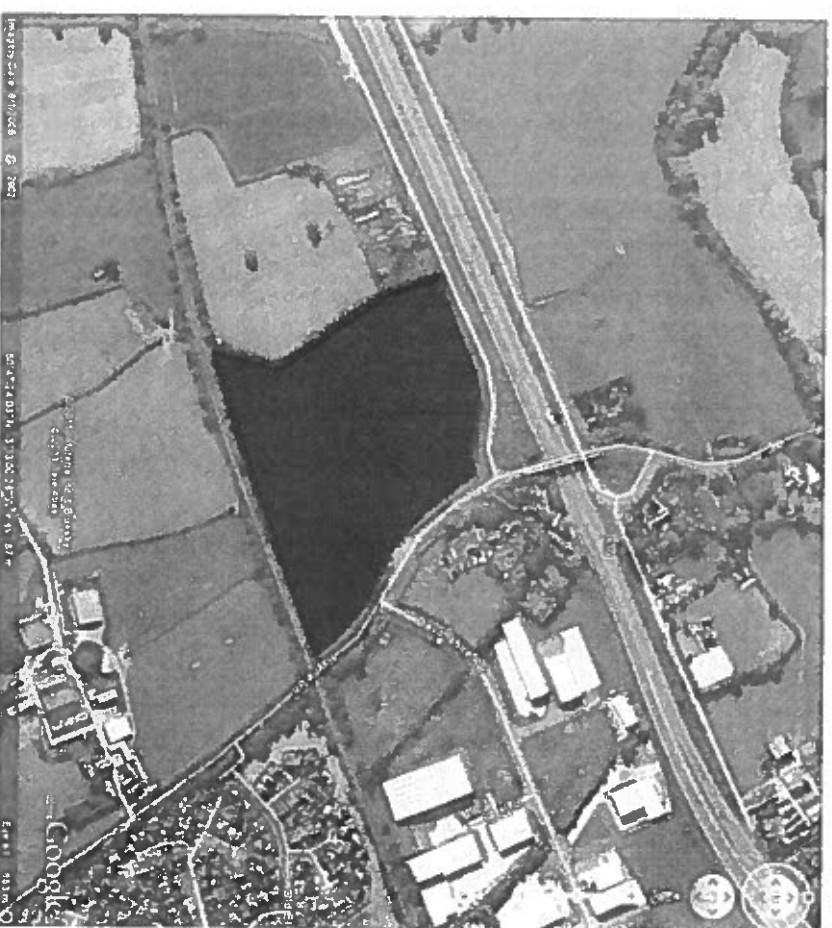
The site is a 13 acre Greenfield plot and currently lies outside the Built up Area for Honiton and is not allocated for any employment use. It is subject to a restrictive covenant prohibiting development for any purpose other than playing fields or sports related recreational purposes.

It was acquired by the Council in 1999 from the Coombe Estate.

In July 2008 the Council instructed King Sturge and Halcrow Fox to undertake a feasibility assessment.

It was concluded that to bring the site to a B1 use it would need significant infrastructure costs in the region of £3.6 million.

Without substantial cross-subsidy, development of the site is unviable.



## SITES 6

Two sites in Devonshire Way, Heathpark, West of Honiton. These are both Greenfield infill sites. The larger, most southerly of the two plots is owned by a shoe wholesaling and distribution company known as Coastguard Road Ltf. They acquired the site (and land to the East) to facilitate the construction of their current premises and again future expansion needs.

They have been contacted in the past and have no plans to sell the site. The smaller site has now been built out.



## SITE 7

This site sits to the north of the High Street in a prestigious location onto Honiton High Street with good vehicular access and pedestrian access to Honiton town centre. This could be an ideal location for East Devon Offices however this site belongs to a body known as the Augustinian Recollects (a community of Catholic Priests and Friars).

They own and operate the adjoining conference centre and the Catholic Church in Ottery Moor Lane/Exeter Road. Their willingness to relocate/sell was tested very thoroughly through the recent Tesco relocation proposal. As long as the current Priests/Friars are in place there is no opportunity of development on Site 7.





## SITE 8

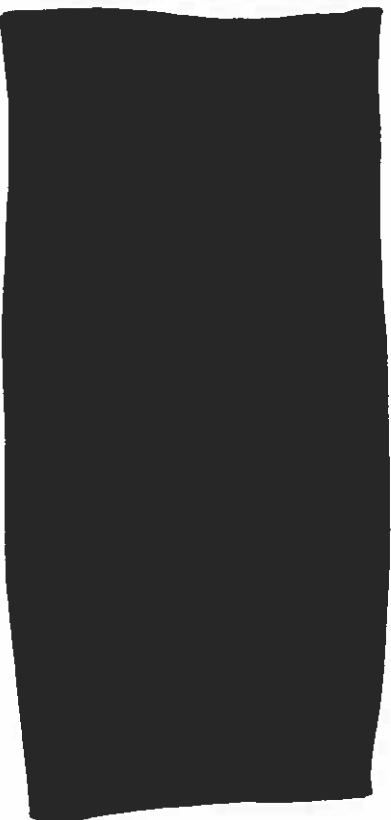
A Greenfield site in the commercial heart of Heathpark Industrial Estate, land for development.

The owners of this site have expressed interest to sell to EDDC for their new headquarter offices however a formal offer has not yet been received.

This site is in a similar location to that of the EDDC owned Heathpark site, in a prominent but an Out of Town location.

- Large enough site for EDDC to relocate to
- In a high profile site for a Headquarters location
- Very close to A30 with good transport connections
- Significant space for Car parking

### Site Weaknesses



## SITE 9

This site is the existing Slades Countrywise Garden Centre on the corner of the A35 and Exeter Road.

Presently the greenhouses are located to the northern end of the site with the retail outlet to the southern edge bordering Exeter Road.

Formally granted consent for an Aldi Supermarket with permission for 74 cars on site, this site along with the adjacent site, the Honiton Motel, was originally offered as an alternative site for East Devon District Council Headquarters.

The site is conveniently located on the A35, the feeder road between the A30 and Exeter Road.

The main site covers an area of 0.52 hectares (5,227sqm), and the adjacent site 0.23 hectares (2,374sqm) which would accommodate the parking for the new offices.

Due to restricted programme this site has since been withdrawn as a potential relocation site.



## SITE 10

This site to the south of Heathpark has been offered to East Devon as part of a partnering deal by the owners of this neighbouring industrial unit (Site A).

The council, owners of the site opposite and the existing Devon County Site (salt depot – Site B) adjacent to Heathpark site would form a 3 way partnering deal.

The deal offered would be to package the 3 sites to form a potential site for a retail foodstore development.

Any food retailer however, would want to be located in a similar position to that of the councils building on the site and it would not be feasible to have both uses situated on this site, causing particular problems with Highways, traffic and car parking issues.

The site would be unsuitable for the council Headquarters and a FoodStore and therefore disregarded as a potential future option.



## SUMMARY

In summary, this sequential test has identified and weighed the strengths and weaknesses of a number of sites within Honiton and surrounding area.

The report has identified the 3 particular sites which would be suitable for the relocation and new build offices.

It has been agreed expressions of interest go out to the market for the Conditional site sale of Heathpark. This will allow other potential offers and options to become clear and to be considered (if another site is found within Honiton for the Offices). It will also provide a value for Heathpark.

# APPENDIX 1

## Brief Summary of Employees Addresses

<u>Location</u>	<u>Number of Employees</u>		
Shepton Mallet	1	Dawlish	2
Weymouth	1	Exmouth & District	104
Bridport	1	Budleigh Salterton & District	19
Lyme Regis	5	South Petherton	1
Exeter & District	58	Crewkerne	1
Sidmouth & District	142	Taunton & District	4
Ottery St. Mary	26	Chard & District	5
Seaton & District	39	Torquay	1
Axminster & District	23	Newton Abbot & District	14
Honiton & District	59	Teignmouth	1
Cullompton & District	7	Paignton	3
Tiverton	1		
Okehampton & District	3		
Colyton & district	12		

