

# 1 SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction and background

- 1.1.1 Royal Haskoning and partner, Carter Jonas, have been engaged to prepare a Commercial Land Study of the former British Sugar Factory, Ipswich (“**The Site**”), to determine its strategic importance relative to employment use and to provide a commercial evaluation of **The Site** relative to employment use. In addition, the commission is to appraise supporting documents submitted as part of a planning application referred to as the “Broadmeadows” scheme, which is a predominantly residential led mixed used development.
- 1.1.2 **The Site** is located to the North-West of Ipswich town centre and the Hadleigh Industrial Estate, See Figure 1-1 Site Map. **The Site** is characterised by the fact that it has distinct boundaries, located in an industrial / commercial zone and of strategic importance is the immediate existing good quality access afforded to the A14.
- 1.1.3 **The Site** is bounded to the north by Sproughton Road, which provides access from the A14 to Ipswich. The Norwich to London mainline railway passes directly to the east of **The Site**, with a commercial zone beyond that (occupied by Morrisons supermarket and numerous other operators); whilst the A14 dual carriageway forms **The Site’s** western boundary. To the south, the River Gipping forms a green boundary to the development, set within a river valley. **The Site** extends over approximately 55ha (136 acres) with approximately 36 ha (90 acres) available for development and is currently occupied by disused buildings from the former British Sugar Factory which ceased operations in 2001.

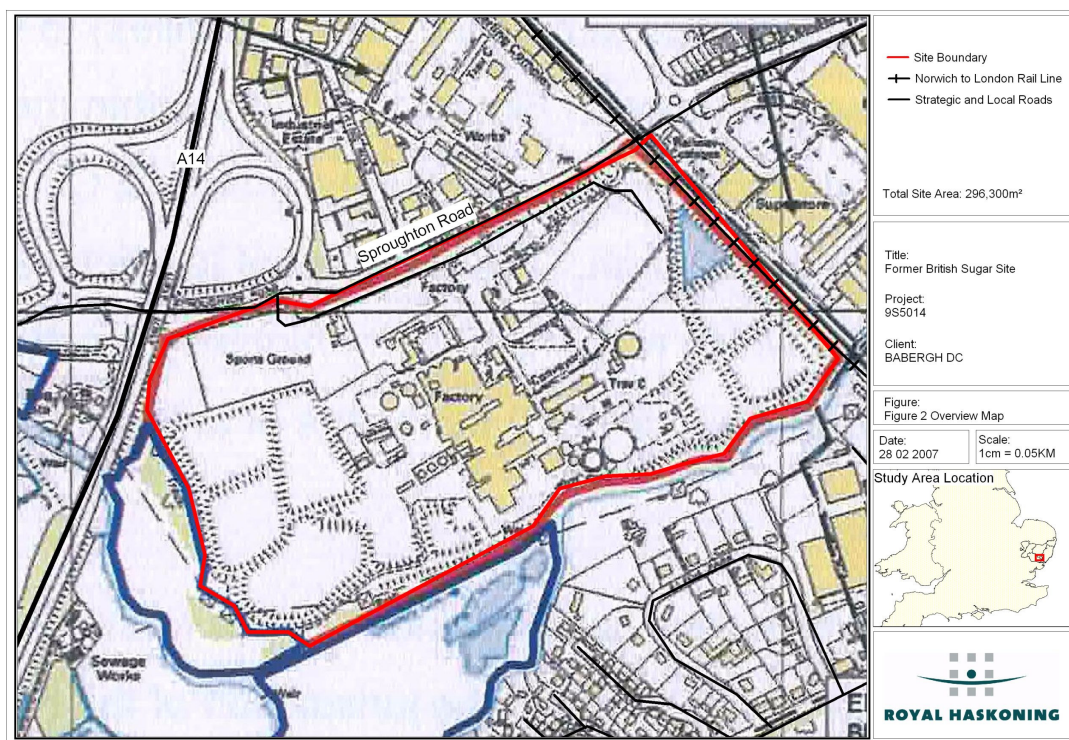


Figure 1-1 Site Map

1.1.4 Although on the very edge of Ipswich, **The Site** lies within Babergh District Council, and as such is part of the area designated as the Ipswich Policy Area (also known as the Ipswich Fringe).

## 1.2 Key understanding

1.2.1 **The Site** is allocated for employment use in the Babergh Local Plan, through policy EM02 and subsequent allocation as site EM04.

1.2.2 The quality (i.e. location, links) and availability of the total “*strategic employment*” land bank within Babergh DC, the Ipswich Policy area, Ipswich Borough Council and the Haven Gateway is relatively limited and requires careful examination to ensure appropriate use of **The Site** is identified and facilitated. This study seeks to confirm the “strategic” or non-strategic nature of **The Site** for employment use. It is noted and considered unquestioned that any non employment led scheme for **The Site** would need to categorically demonstrate the availability of similar employment land in the immediate area; Ipswich Policy Area, Babergh DC or Ipswich itself, such that an undesirable or unjustifiable surplus exists, in order to justify a change of use.

1.2.3 Nearly half of all employment land within the district of Babergh is located in rural areas and another quarter located in inner urban areas which restricts the type of uses that sites may be used for (i.e. as they may generate adverse residential amenity and other impacts). In addition, when linking available land to the future strategies and needs of key businesses within the area, such as the international ports of Felixstowe and Harwich, many sites do not fit the profile of their, and supporting business, site requirements.

1.2.4 As such, a key aspect of this commercial study has been to appraise the real market interest for this specific site and how any particular site constraints and enabling costs may influence future end land use.

## 1.3 Study Area Context

1.3.1 It is considered that due to the size and location (i.e. on the border of Ipswich Borough Council and within Babergh District) of **The Site** it should be considered in a broader policy context area than just Babergh District Council. Therefore, due to the overlapping policy areas and **The Site**'s potential strategic nature, this study has been undertaken with respect to the Ipswich Policy Area as well as the local council areas, whilst also recognising the broader context of the Haven Gateway Sub-Region and the emerging RSS (East of England Plan) through the Government Proposed Changes to the RSS.