

Hearing Statement on behalf of British Sugar Plc

# CENTRAL LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION MATTER 11

4 November 2022

Our Ref: WH/600/136/2

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## Appendix 1     Site Location Plan

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared on behalf of British Sugar Plc in response to Matter 11 (Employment and Economic Development).
- 1.2 This Statement relates to the former Bardney Syrup Factory which comprises two parcels of land (totalling 58ha) ('the Site'), dissected by the River Witham, as identified on the site location plan at **Appendix 1** (also provided as Examination Document Ref EX012). British Sugar is the landowner of the Site. The former factory buildings were located in the land parcel to the east of the River Witham (extending to 18.9ha) and the southern parcel contains artificially made "settlement ponds" including effluent treatment plant which were integral to the sugar beet industrial operation and continue to serve the remaining operations.
- 1.3 Since the closure of the Sugar Factory, redundant buildings and structures have been demolished and cleared, the remaining structures have been used by British Sugar and Silver Spoon (a subsidiary company of British Sugar). In addition, part of the Site is occupied by a Class B2 bakery, operated by The Jordans and Ryvita Co (a subsidiary company of British Sugar's parent company Associated British Foods). British Sugar intends to bring forward the remaining land for redevelopment in the future, including on-site renewable energy development (solar and wind powers) to reduce carbon emissions from the industrial operations. Therefore, British Sugar wishes to ensure that there is a positive policy framework which safeguards the Site as longstanding employment land, operating within the agri-food sector and making a significant contribution to the local economy and to support future development of the Site.
- 1.4 British Sugar objected to the Proposed Submission Local Plan at the Regulation 19 consultation stage, as the policy framework for the Site is ambiguous and could prevent future economic development of the Site in the absence of a defined employment land designation of both parcels of the Site. We note the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee's ('the Committee') response to our representations in the Summary of Main Issues from Regulation 19 Consultation (Examination Document Ref: STA020), which states:
- "Having reviewed the site, the site falls within most of the definition but not all as set out in Table 4 of EVR0028-034 Policy S28-S34 Employment Policies. Therefore, Policy S33 is the most appropriate policy within the employment suite of policies that would be applied to the site."*
- 1.5 This Statement responds to the Inspectors' Questions under Issue 4, as well as the Committee's response to our representations.

## 2 RESPONSE TO INSPECTORS' QUESTION

**Issue 4 Q1: How were the sites selected and has a robust process being followed including the consideration of alternatives?**

- 2.1 We note that the Committee followed the proposed criteria for employment allocations as set out in table 4 contained in the Employment Policies S28-S34 Report (Document Ref: EVT0028-034). Our assessment of the former Bardney Syrup Factory site against the criteria for the Important Established Employment Area ('IEEA') is set out in the table below:

About Sites/Areas	IEEA Criteria	The former Bardney Syrup Factory site
Settlement hierarchy	Located in the Lincoln Urban Area, Main Towns, Market Towns or Large Villages in the settlement hierarchy. TIER 4 or higher - are there any sites in Medium or Small Villages that would be suitable?	The eastern parcel of the Site is in Bardney which is a Large Village.
Units and occupancy	Has 5 or more separate units occupied by separate businesses	The Site is occupied by 3 businesses at present.
Site size	Land area 2ha or more	58ha (eastern parcel - 18.9ha and western parcel - 40.2ha)
Floor Space	At least 8,000sqm [sic] of employment floor space ( <i>it is assumed to be 8,000sqm</i> )	Jordans Ryvita factory has over 13,300sqm.  British Sugar/Silver Spoon's operation extends to 9,500sqm of storage and operational floor area.  The Site has a further capacity to deliver additional floor space.
Permission and use	Is currently primarily in a commercial B use class, excluding agricultural use and has planning permission for the current use/s.	The Site is primarily in Class B2 and B8 use.

2.2 As set out above, the Site satisfies the criteria for the IEEA designation, with the exception of the units and occupancy category. It is considered that the strict application of the criteria alone is not a robust process for the site selection, as it fails to take account of the significance and importance of employment land and the contribution it makes to Central Lincolnshire's economy. In the case of the former Bardney Syrup Factory site, the following factors should be considered for the site selection:

- The Site has contributed to the local and regional economy, for approximately 90 years, and it is, by definition, established employment land.
- The Site extends to 58ha in total, which substantially exceeds the site size criteria for the IEEA designation.
- The currently supports 3 businesses in the agri-food sector, including the Jordans Ryvita factory which employs circa 120 people, British Sugar and Silver Spoon.
- There has been an investment of over £55million to the Site for the development of the Jordans Ryvita factory as the first major replacement of the former factory.
- The Site has a significant potential to accommodate more businesses, as it is an optimum location for a wide range of operators in the agri-food sector in terms of the supply chain and the distribution network.
- The existing businesses will continue to invest in the improvement of the Site, including on-site renewable energy development.

2.3 Evidently, the Site's contribution to the Central Lincolnshire economy is **substantial** and it warrants a designation as employment land to safeguard the Site for employment purposes and to support the development of the Site to accommodate economic development needs.

2.4 The Committee's response implies that the most appropriate policy for the Site is Policy S33, on the basis of the criteria based assessment. However, the Committee's approach disregards the substantial contribution the Site makes to the economy. Policy S28 states that *"outside of existing employment areas and allocated sites, economic development will typically limited to small-scale proposals which satisfy the requirements of Policy S33 or Policy S34"*. Given the size of the Site and the scale of the existing development on the Site, which is not "small-scale," and the Site's substantial contribution to the economy, it is wholly unjustified that Policy S33 is the most appropriate policy for the Site. Rather, it would unjustifiably diminish the importance of the Site to the economy particularly the role it plays in the agri-food sector which is identified as one of the growing sectors in Policy S28.

2.5 It is considered that the Site should be designated as an IEEA to ensure that the Local Plan safeguards the Site so that it can continue to make a substantial contribution to the Central Lincolnshire's economy and supports further employment development of the remaining area of the Site in future. Non-designation of the Site is not based on a robust process and is not consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) which requires planning policies to:

- Set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development and make sufficient provision for (inter alia) employment and other commercial development (paragraph 20);
- Help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt, placing significant weight on the need to support economic growth and productivity (paragraph 81);
- Set criteria or identify strategic sites for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period (paragraph 82);
- Enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas (paragraph 84);
- Encourage the use of previously developed land and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements where suitable opportunities exist (paragraph 85), and
- Give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes or other identified needs and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land (paragraph 120).

**Issue 4 Q2: Is it clear to decision-makers, developers and local communities how applications for planning permission should demonstrate that any loss would not have an unacceptable impact on the overall supply of employment land and premises?**

2.6 With regard to Part 2, in the interest of clarity, the penultimate sentence which states that *"non-employment generating proposals will not be accepted in IEEA,"* should be amended, as not all developments required by existing uses are defined as employment generating uses (for example, renewal energy development in connection with existing uses). For clarity, this sentence should be amended as follows:

*"Other non-employment generating proposals not in connection with existing uses on the site will not be acceptable in IEEA".*

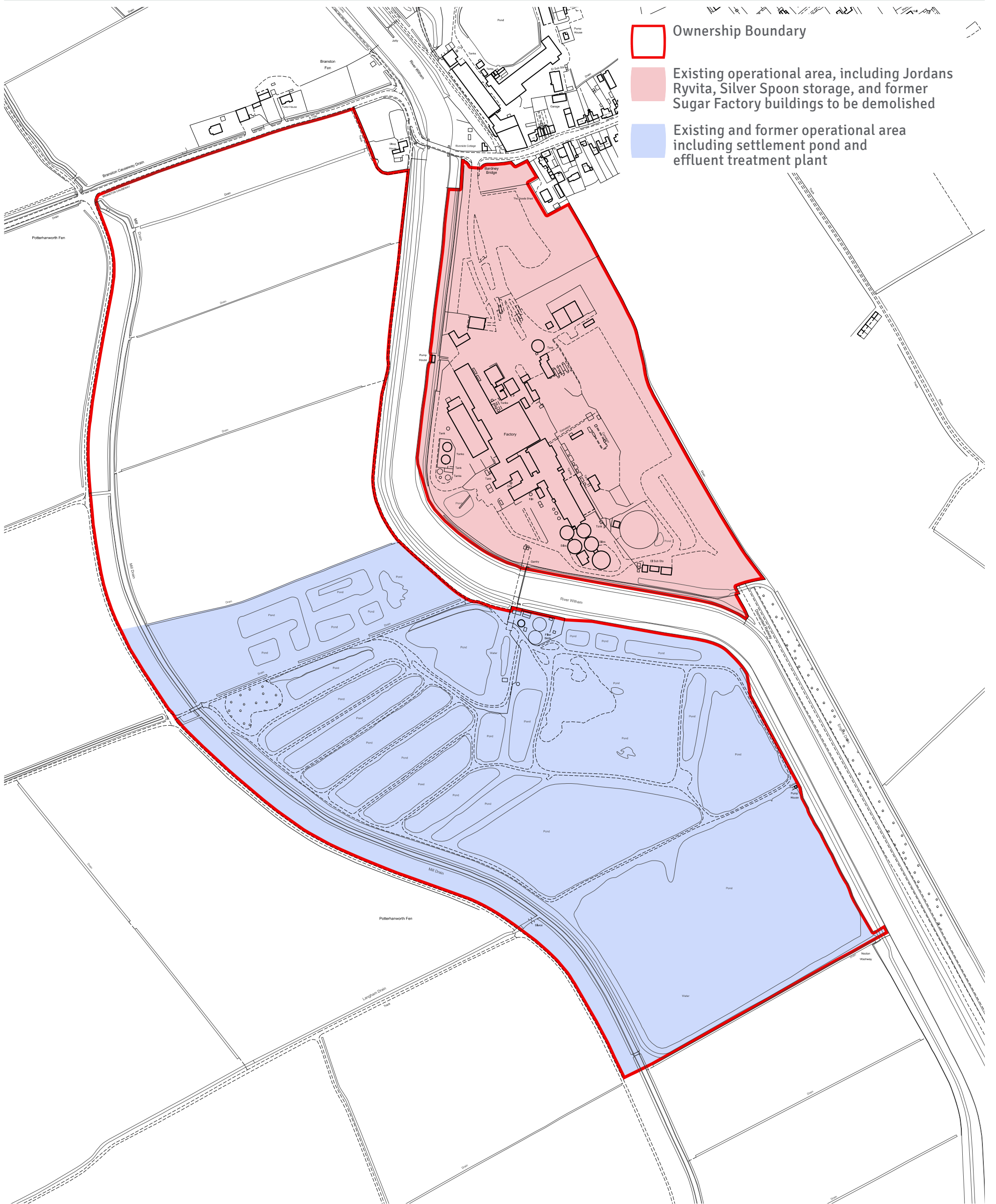
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### 3 CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The former Syrup Factory site ('the Site') is currently occupied/operational in part by agri-food sector businesses, and part of the redundant factory buildings have been demolished in order to facilitate future re-use/redevelopment. The Site as a whole represents longstanding and established employment land, forming part of Bardney.
- 3.2 The Plan is unsound on the basis that the Site is not designated as defined employment land, which is not justified or consistent with the NPPF, on the basis of a number of factors which confirm the substantial contribution the Site makes to Central Lincolnshire's economy now and in future.

Appendix 1

## SITE LOCATION PLAN



Ownership Boundary



Existing operational area, including Jordans Ryvita, Silver Spoon storage, and former Sugar Factory buildings to be demolished



Existing and former operational area including settlement pond and effluent treatment plant

## SITE LOCATON PLAN BARDNEY



Scale @ A3 : 1:5000

Plan No. : 600/136/2\_SLP02

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0370 777 6292

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