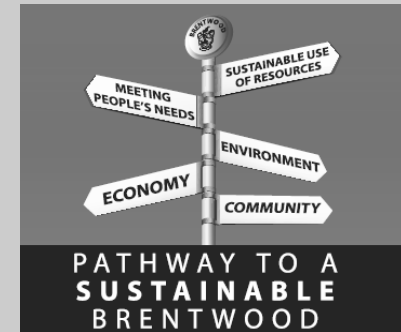
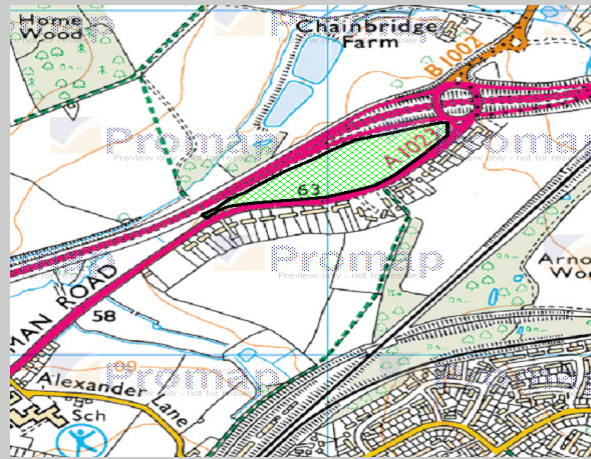


Brentwood Local Plan 2015-2013 Preferred Options for Consultation

**LAND TO THE NORTH OF THE A1023
SHENFIELD, ESSEX
On behalf of S.J and C.M Norris**

SEPTEMBER 2013



LAND TO THE NORTH OF THE A1023

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LAND TO THE NORTH OF THE A1023

1.0 Introduction

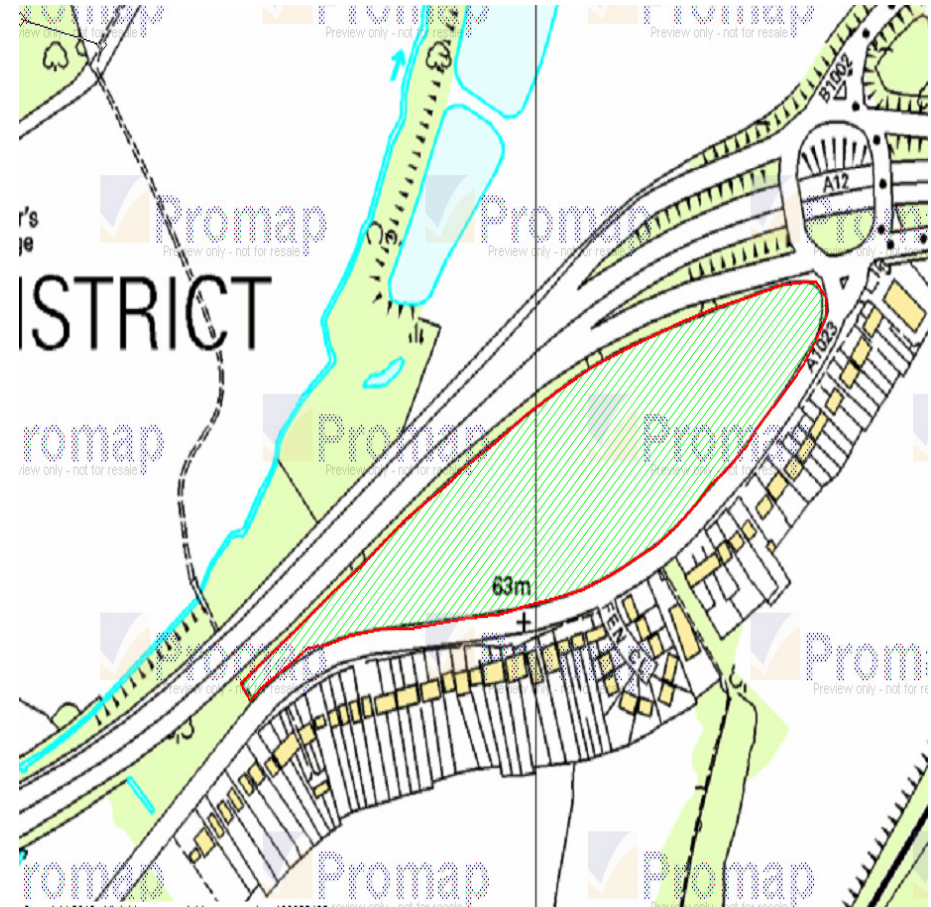
This representation has been prepared by David Fletcher MSc MRTPI of Strutt and Parker on behalf of S.J and C.M Norris to support the promotion of land to the North of the A1023 for pub/ restaurant or hotel hospitality usage in response to Brentwood Borough Council's Local Plan process.

The site is being promoted for a pub, restaurant or hotel leisure/ hospitality usage, but with the additional opportunity for provision a Park and Ride facility, if demand exists.

The response will consider the land highlighted on the plan as shown on figure 1. The representation sets out planning policy support for the proposals in relation to the emerging Local Plan and National Planning Policy Framework.

Section 2 describes the site and its surrounding context. Section 3 discusses national and local planning policy guidance relevant to the allocation, section 4 covers the Park and Ride element of the site, section 5 describes the local infrastructure and facilities related to the site's development and section . This document is summarised in section 6.

Figure 1: Location Plan of the Site



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2.0 Site and Context

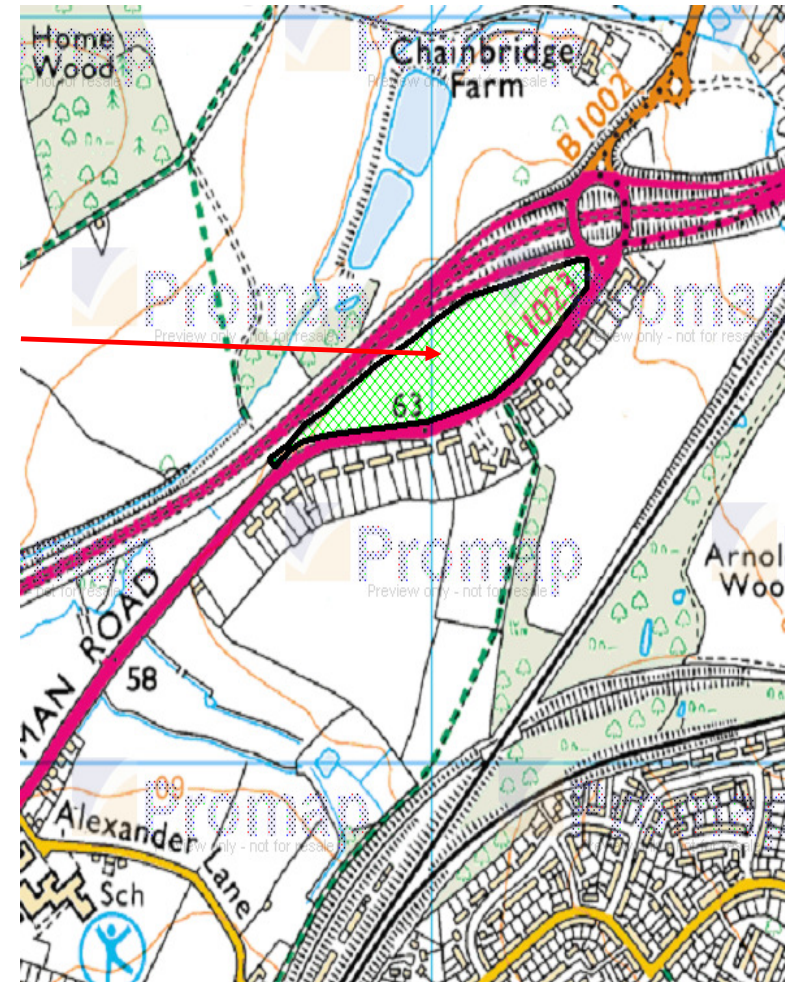
The site is located in a very sustainable location adjacent to the north east settlement boundary of Shenfield which is located approximately 3 miles east of Brentwood and 8 miles west of Chelmsford. The Brentwood-Shenfield conurbation acts as a major commuter settlement for central London, and is a key transport hub. The strong infrastructure links of Brentwood-Shenfield will be enhanced further at a national level as a result of Crossrail, which will provide increased connectivity between Shenfield and west of England.

The site itself is located approximately 1 mile north west of Shenfield, lying to the north of the A1032. The site extends to 4.6 hectares and consists of an arable field. It is adjacent to existing residential land uses to the south and benefits from having potential for direct vehicular access onto the A1032.

Figure 2 provides an aerial view and outline plan of the site. The site is currently an arable field of low ecological value. Although in the Green Belt, the site sits opposite residential land use and is bordered to north by the A12 which ensures that the site is defensible in terms of further encroachment into the wider Green Belt.

The site is 4.6 hectares in size and has the potential to deliver a service sector or hospitality usage, with provision also available for a Park and Ride in conjunction with hospitality.

Figure 2: Outline of Site in the Wider Context



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3.0 Planning Policy

In accordance with criteria set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), when allocating site's for development Local Authorities need to be satisfied that their plan is 'sound'. As set out in paragraph 12 of the NPPF to be sound a development should be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy. Namely that it is:

Positively Prepared- The plan should be prepared on a strategy, which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements and consistent with achieving sustainable development.

Justified- The plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence.

Effective- The plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working cross- boundary strategic priorities; and

Consistent with National Policy- The plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework.



This section provides an assessment of Brentwood Borough Councils Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation against the key policy requirements of the NPPF, with reference to the land north of the A1023, Shenfield.

The first policy consideration that must be made is for the principle of development at the proposed site. In order to do this the Brentwood Local Plan 2015-2030 will be analysed to ensure that the policies are sound and in keeping with national policy guidance.

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3.0 Planning Policy

Principle of Allocation

This section will discuss the principle of allocation for the site adjacent to the A1023. When considering the suitability of releasing this land from the Green Belt there needs to be recognition of the economic and sustainability benefits of allocating the site. This is discussed in further detail later on in this report.

Policy Considerations

As set out in paragraph 83 of the NPPF Council's should review the merits of site's within the Green Belt, and the boundaries of the Green Belt itself as part of the Local Plan consultation process to ensure that the Development Plan stands up to public examination.

Therefore this consultation is considered to be the appropriate time for consideration of whether this site is suitable for allocation and removal from the Green Belt as part of the emerging Local Plan.

Paragraph 83.

Local planning authorities with Green Belts in their area should establish Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans which set the framework for Green Belt and settlement policy. Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan. At that time, authorities should consider the Green Belt boundaries having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period.

In considering in principle terms if this land is suitable for removal from the Green Belt, it is important to assess the land against paragraph 80 of the NPPF, which stipulates the 5 purposes of the Green Belt. The NPPF states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. This site is considered against the five tests of Green Belt land as follows:

1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas

The site will not impact urban sprawl. The proposed development is for a stand alone hospitality/service sector usage on the site, with potential for a Park and Ride. The site is extremely well enclosed from the open countryside, being bounded on all sides by development; the North by the A12, the South and West by residential development and the A1023, and the East by the Mountnessing interchange.

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3.0 Planning Policy

2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

The development site lies approximately 1.5 miles to the north east of Shenfield. The neighbouring town of Brentwood lies 1.5 miles to the west of Shenfield. Development at this site would therefore not impact upon a merger of development between the settlements. In addition, Mountnessing lies 1.2 miles to the north-east of the site. Mountnessing would not be impacted by the development in terms of coalescence, given its location beyond the Mountnessing interchange; a major road junction. Furthermore the enclosed nature of the site ensures that there will be no extension out into the open countryside as a result of the proposals.

3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

The A12 runs along the northern boundary of the site and consequently provides a physical barrier to development to the north. In addition, the site lies adjacent to residential development to the south, meaning that it is essentially bounded on all sides, with no clear views to the wider, open countryside. The proximity of the A12 significantly devalues the land in terms of countryside quality. As a result of the bounded nature and low value of the land, the development of this site will not result in any wider encroachment into the countryside.

4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and

Shenfield is not a settlement of historic merit, furthermore the town centre lies roughly 1.6 miles from the proposed site and it therefore not effected. In addition, Brentwood is the nearest settlement of recognisable character, however given its location to the west of Shenfield it is considered to not be detrimentally effected by the proposed development.

5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

There is not sufficient Brownfield land in Brentwood to support the development requirements for the Borough. The proposed Green Belt allocation of West Horndon for residential development and Codham Hall for employment land, establish this lack of capacity.

Furthermore the provision of the proposed hospitality and Park and Ride use is only appropriate on this site given its very good transport connections. In particular to the A12 and north Essex as well as its close proximity to Shenfield station. It is not considered that there are any brownfield locations within the area that benefit from transport connections as good as this site.

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3.0 Planning Policy

Economic and Sustainability Merits of the Site

Having established the principle of releasing this site from the Green Belt as part of the emerging Local Plan it is Important to consider this in conjunction with the economic and sustainability benefits of the site's allocation.

National – Wider Borough Context

The NPPF takes an economically focused approach in terms of planning. The notion of sustainable and well-planned economic development is promoted throughout the document as a means of improving national employment levels and revitalising communities in need. Paragraph 20 is particular pertinent.

'To help achieve economic growth, local planning authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century.'

In the wider context of the Borough, Crossrail will represent a landmark infrastructural development for the South of England, providing significantly increased connectivity and accessibility between the East and West of the country. Shenfield Railway Station will operate as one of the primary eastern points on the railway network. This accessibility will invariably provide a succession of economic advantages to the area. As part of the Local Plan process It is important that Brentwood Borough Council plan for this demand, particularly in the hospitality/leisure sector in order to cater to the significant increase thoroughfare and reliance upon overnight or entertainment facilities.

Local– Wider Site Context

The Brentwood Local Plan (2015-2030) outlines the Council's aspirations for economic development under policy CP11 'Strong and Competitive Economy'. As set out in policy S3 The plan aims to create 285 jobs per annum. One of the key aspirations under this policy is:

'Capitalising on the economic benefits that arise from Crossrail'

The completion of Crossrail will significantly increase the importance of Shenfield Railway Station on the national railway network, doubling the frequency of trains per hour from 6 to 12. As a result of this significant infrastructural requirements are planned at the station, including a new 210 metre platform to meet the increased demand.

The increased train frequency will have a direct impact upon the level of vehicular traffic coming into Shenfield. This will in turn intensify demand for services to support the influx of commuters from the region. A hotel / restaurant usage would provide an excellent development opportunity given that it would receive an influx of visitors especially given its accessible location by the Mountnessing interchange and A12, but with good links to Shenfield station.

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3.0 Planning Policy

Economic and Sustainability Merits of the Site

The allocation of this site for the proposed use is considered to be supported by policy S3 of the emerging Local Plan and will assist in job creation at a sustainable location.

As set out within policy S3 a total area of 53ha has been allocated for existing employment site's, with a further 31 ha identified for new employment site's. The Council have not however, not identified any areas that would be suitable retail, hotel and leisure growth within the Borough. It is considered that in order for the plan to be sound, as required by the NPPF the Council need to give consideration to the allocation of suitable leisure/hotel site's over the plan period.

This should include the allocation of land to the north of the A1023, Shenfield. In addition as part of policy S3, further evidence needs to be provided on how the required 5,400 jobs over the plan period will be delivered. Table S3, currently assumes that all 5,400 jobs will be delivered solely from B uses, with the use classes order and appears to underestimate the demand for jobs from the leisure and service industry. This is particular given the demand for these types associated with the growth of Crossrail, which will facilitate additional growth in the service sector.

Recognition is also made within policy CP2 of the emerging plan of the need to manage growth. Within this there is a recognition of the need to provide an improved balance between jobs, services, facilities and homes. In particular one of the key challenges effecting the Borough is the level of out-commuting. The provision of hospitality/service industry use in this location will help facilitate job creation within the Borough and reduce the level of out-commuting to work, which is considered to be strongly supported by the principles of emerging policy CP2. The allocation of Land to the north of the A1023 is therefore fully supported by the appropriate policies within the emerging Local Plan.

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3.0 Planning Policy

Sustainable Location of the Proposed Site

When considering the appropriateness of this location for a proposed hospitality/service use, it is important to consider if the location of the proposed development is sustainable, as required by policy CP1 of the emerging plan.

The site's excellent positioning to transport links mean that it is easily accessible from Shenfield and Brentwood to support local employment and also to the national road network to attract custom. This point is particularly prevalent in relation to the implementation of Crossrail which will substantially increase the level of in-commuting to Shenfield, from throughout Essex. It is likely that as a result of Crossrail there will be demand for commuters from the larger settlements of Chelmsford and Colchester to the north as well as a number of other smaller towns and villages.

The Mountnessing interchange is the key entrance point to Shenfield and Shenfield Station from the north and it is therefore considered that this area of land can have significant benefit in terms of facilitating employment and sustainable travel at this transport interchange.

It is therefore considered that this site provides the ideal location for a gastro pub/restaurant/hotel use, given the number of passing commuters using the Mountnessing interchange. Whilst flexibility on the ultimate end use is required at this stage, it is considered that all three uses would provide benefits to commuters and given the location of the site there is confidence that there would be market demand. An addition benefit, would be the assistance in the creation of a transport hub, if a Park and Ride use were to be considered in conjunction with the hospitality uses.



The allocation of the proposed development would therefore also comply with policy CP11 of the emerging Local Plan, which sets out that capitalising on the economic benefits of Crossrail, as a key economic benefit over the plan period.

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3.0 Planning Policy

Hotel Use

With specific regard to the need for a hotel use on the site, the study undertaken by the Essex Tourist Authority is of relevance. The Essex tourism authority undertook a study in 2009 to establish the level of demand for service provision across the county. The report provided the following data in relation to Brentwood.

Feedback is generally very positive regarding a demand for hotels, particularly so in Brentwood. The addition of Crossrail will increase this demand. In addition, television programs and social media have had an economic impact on the local economy, particularly so in the tourism sector.

Current capacity in Brentwood:

4 star	2 hotels	129 rooms
3 star	1 hotel	149 rooms
Budget	2 hotels	167 rooms
Non-Inspected	2 hotels	29 rooms
Total	7 hotels	474 rooms

Sector development potential: Need for Medium/Long term new budget hotels in Brentwood.



The report notes that Brentwood performs strongly in all hotel categories (3 star, 4 star and budget). Brentwood supports a strong 4 star hotel market and achieved at least 70% room occupancy for 2008. Similarly, 3 star hotels performed strongly with occupancy rates also above 70% for the year. Finally, hotels classified as 'budget' have been embraced by Brentwood with high demand for rooms in these facilities:

“The new Premier Inn at Brentwood has already started to deny midweek business“

The proposed development site would be well suited to a budget styled hotel, with strong existing demand in Brentwood for Hotels within this price category. Furthermore, the future implementation of Crossrail in conjunction with the site's excellent access to the local and wider road network present the site as an attractive location for commuters and professionals keen to access Crossrail, but avoid the congestion of central Shenfield.

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4.0 Park and Ride

The site could provide an additional benefit to the Brentwood-Shenfield Conurbation. If Brentwood Borough Council and Essex County Council have demand, provision could be made for the delivery of a Park and Ride facility on the site to work in conjunction with a restaurant or hospitality usage.

A Park and Ride scheme would benefit Shenfield for the following reasons:

As previously mentioned in this document, Crossrail will represent a monumental change to the significance of Shenfield as a commuter gateway within its region, this increased importance will drive demand for access to Shenfield Railway Station. Brentwood Borough Council have undertaken immediate infrastructure improvements to the station itself by constructing a new 210 metre platform at the station. Whilst reference is made within the emerging Local Plan for a 'Park and Stride' facility, it does not appear that the emerging Local Plan consultation document has given adequate consideration to support the wider infrastructural requirements that Crossrail will bring. In particular an assessment of the benefits and the need for Park and Ride facilities should be assessed as part of the emerging plan.

The provision for a Park and Ride in this location is considered to be strongly supported by the NPPF, which states the following with regard to Park and Ride.

The need for sustainable travel and transport is one of the key objectives of the NPPF. Paragraph 30 of the NPPF states that encouragement should be given to solutions, which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion. In preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should therefore support a pattern of development, which, where reasonable to do so, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport.

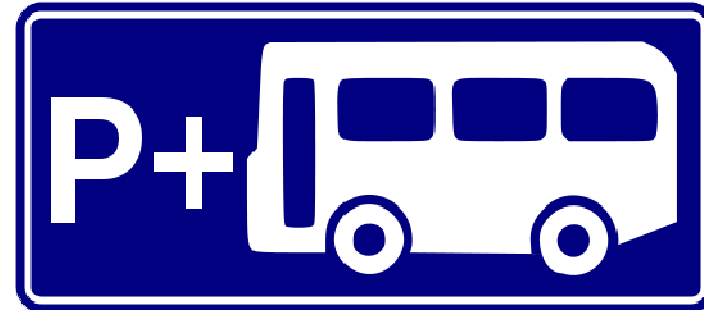
Accessibility is a primary consideration of a Park and Ride facility. This site has unrivalled accessibility to the road network of Shenfield and to the remainder of the East of England due to its close proximity to the Mountnessing Interchange and the A12. In addition, the site is well enclosed. The site is also one of the few available locations, which provides ease of access from the A12 to Shenfield Station, at a distance, which would be convenient for commuters. The lack of parking at Shenfield station is a well documented concern, however it does not appear that adequate provision has been made to address this matter within the emerging plan.

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4.0 Park and Ride

Policy CP13 provides general guidance with regard to sustainable transport, but does not specifically relate to the issue of lack of parking at Shenfield station. This problem will only be exacerbated as a result of Crossrail.

It is considered that further work needs to be undertaken by Brentwood Borough Council, as part of the emerging Local Plan to fully evaluate the impact of Crossrail over the plan period. This should include liaison with Essex County Council with regard to Park and Ride facilities. It is considered that amendments need to be made in this regard in order for the plan to be considered as 'sound' and based on a credible evidence base as required by the NPPF.



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5.0 Local Infrastructure and Facilities

Transport and Deliverability

In accordance with the NPPF and the Essex County Council Highways Authority guidelines, a preliminary transport appraisal has been undertaken by Journey Transport Planning. This access appraisal has been informed through full consultation with the Highway Authority and confirms that adequate visibility exists to enable access to and from the application site. Further capacity and access work will be completed to provide a comprehensive assessment of the site.

The proposed development site adjacent to the A1032 will not have a severe impact upon the local road network. A restaurant/hospitality usage would not significantly impact upon vehicular traffic levels at peak times as its primary business hours will be after this time period.

In order to demonstrate the suitability of this site for a Park and Ride facility it is recognised that further work would need to be undertaken in terms of traffic movements to and from the site, having regard to the Mountnessing Interchange. This information can be commissioned if required by Brentwood Borough Council, in order to demonstrate that the site is fully deliverable

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6.0 Summary

This representation has been put forward and justified why land to the north of the A1023 should be allocated for a hospitality/leisure use with the opportunity for Park and Ride as part of the emerging Local Plan.

The allocation of this site is in accordance with criteria set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The site is situated in a very sustainable location and has an enclosed nature, excellent transport and accessibility benefits. It is not considered that the development of this site, would compromise the objectives of the Green Belt.

The introduction of Crossrail to the region will substantially transform the economic climate of Shenfield, increasing the thoroughfare of traffic to the area and expanding the demand for leisure and hospitality services to fill this need. The allocation of this site would assist the town to adjust to this requirement and ensure that the Brentwood Borough Council Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation is positively prepared, justified, effective and in accordance with national planning policy.

