Independent Examination into the Soundness of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document

Topic Paper 4
Working Communities

Statement by Eden District Council
Principles for Economic Development and Tourism (Policy CS12)

4.1 This policy is very vague and locally indistinctive; it could apply to any rural area. For example, why is the District’s higher education institution not referred to as the University of Cumbria?

The reference at CS12 (8) can certainly be altered to refer to the University of Cumbria. In a similar vein, local distinctiveness could be added to clauses 1,2,3,5,6 and 7 by placing greater emphasis on the rural dimension, reference to employment opportunities sometimes being linked to purely rural activities and they fact that sometimes employment opportunities may present themselves in locations which are not sustainable in the narrower interpretation of that word. (See Schedule of Amendments, reference AM48)

4.2 Clarification is required on how, specifically, this policy will assist in maintaining a healthy economy and will improve the economic base to provide for a more skilled labour force, and to attract and retain young economically active people.

The principal means by which this policy will assist in these respects are as follows:

- By informing development control casework and decision making.
- By establishing clearly that the Council wishes to give every possible encouragement and assistance to local enterprise and businesses wishing to locate or expand in the District.
- Safeguarding existing employment sites and enabling new employment sites to be developed in the District, including locations which might not in the very narrowest sense be regarded as sustainable i.e. they are outside of the main towns and may in particular circumstances be outside of Local Service Centres.
- Recognising the particular circumstances of rurally based enterprise, including those linked to farm businesses, those linked to the tourist potential of the area and the disadvantages experienced on account of physical isolation, reconciling the needs of businesses with conservation objectives and ineligibility for some forms of EU and national business assistance schemes because of District scoring ‘too well’ in terms of indices of deprivation.
- Utilising to the full, the advantages and plus points of Eden District as a location for businesses to locate and expand such as the quality of life, low crime rate, good state schools, the M6 corridor and west coast main line and local authorities that are ‘enterprise friendly’, with help on hand from a wide variety of professional fields.
The active partnership of business enterprise, local government and the University of Cumbria in business development, research and training.

4.3 **Part 3 of the policy infers that all existing employment land will be protected. This is inconsistent with national policy and the RSS, which require all existing employment land to be re-assessed for its employment potential. What is the justification for the Council’s approach?**

The inference that all employment land will be retained for employment purposes uncritically and without exception should not be drawn from CS12 (3). Whilst there is a commitment to the retention of employment land where it will serve the needs of business, it is the intention to re-assess site expressed in the draft brief for the Employment Land Study. The key tasks identified in the brief are set out below for completeness of information:

**Key Tasks**

The company selected to undertake the study will undertake the following tasks:

1) **Provide a thorough and realistic market based assessment of the likely demand for B1 (Business, including Offices), B2 (General Industrial) and B8 (Storage and Distribution) Employment Land and Premises in Eden District excluding the National Park for the period 2009 to 2021. Consideration should include the priority and commitment already afforded to the northward expansion of the Eden Business Park at Penrith and the associated requirements in terms of future investment in infrastructure.**

2) **Integrate the study with the role of neighbouring Districts, particularly Carlisle and South Lakeland.**

3) **Critically review the District’s existing stock of employment sites and allocations and consider the following:**

   i. The extent to which they are likely to be able to contribute to meeting the needs of both existing and incoming businesses identified at 1. above.

   ii. The extent to which these are in accordance with national, regional and County based planning and economic development strategies.

   iii. The degree to which these existing sites are suitable for the requirements of modern business.

   iv. The identification of practical constraints on usage.

4) **Review vacant employment premises to consider how these might meet need established in 1 above.**

5) **Establish to what degree the creation of higher wage jobs is constrained by the availability of serviced employment land and premises, and the likelihood of the private sector bringing these forward in the period to 2021. In particular attention should be paid to the role that an expansion of the Eden Business**
Park could play in this regard. Wider benefits to the Cumbrian economy should be identified in this particular context.

6) Recommend, in the context of over-arching planning policy on whether there is a need for additional allocations of employment land within the District and what criteria should be used to identify such allocations.

7) To identify any existing sites which should be de-allocated.

8) To give an indication of the preferred broad locations for new business investment in Eden, taking into account market factors and principles of sustainability.

**4.4 Is the policy sufficiently flexible?**

It is considered that the policy is expressed sufficiently flexibly; moreover it is the intention to apply the policy with pragmatism and an understanding of the requirements of business people.

**Employment Land Provision (Policy CS13)**

**4.5 What is the justification for the time frame of policy CS13 being less than 15 years post adoption as required by PPS12?**

The general principle that has been adopted in the production of the Eden Core Strategy has been for the time frame to be co-terminus with the North West Regional Strategy. This appears sensible as there are so many facets of the Core Strategy which are required to be in conformity with the RSS. Another practical consideration has been a desire to align monitoring work and therefore adopt the principle of ‘only counting once’. The Core Strategy will naturally be monitored, revised and updated as is required. However, as is set out in the answer to question 3.9, we have taken the decision to extend the duration of the Core strategy to fifteen years post adoption i.e to 2025.

**4.6 Clarity is required regarding the target employment land provision. What is meant by ‘up to 50 hectares’?**

The Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan (ED11) sets targets for employment land provision disaggregated to district level and divided into Strategic Employment Sites, Local Employment Sites and Business/Science Parks (Policy EM1 at page 31). The gross total for Eden in this table is 54 hectares. The plan term of the Structure Plan is to 2016. The North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy (GR16) claims that there is an overprovision of industrial land in Cumbria as a whole, but draws no distinction between the widely differing circumstances pertaining between the districts within the County. It is generally accepted that the over provision of employment land is accounted for almost wholly in West Cumbria and is not a factor in the South and East of the County. Work is progressing on far more detailed assessments of the employment land situation in the district in support of future DPDs, the advancement of the Eden Business Park project and supporting funding bids to the North West Development Agency. Clearly this will enable greater precision in future. In the interim period, the expression “up to 50 hectares” appears to us to be a workable figure.
4.7 What is the justification for this target provision, which seems to conflict with the RSS that is seeking a reduction of employment land in Cumbria in the context of undertaking Employment Land Review. If such a review has not been undertaken what is the evidence that is relied upon by the Council? How do the assumptions and conclusions of the Council compare with the evidence relied upon by the RSS and the Structure Plan? How well does the target provision of policy CS13 accord with the Sustainability Appraisal?

The justification in relation to JSP and RSS is addressed in the response to 4.6 above. In relation to the Sustainability Appraisal (reference CSD2), the matrix for this option was tested at the preferred options stage. The policy scored positively in terms of advocating development in the most accessible locations. The option of 55ha land chosen was deemed adequate to meet employment land needs and supported by the sustainability process.

4.8 In the absence of clarity in the policy or its supporting text regarding its start date, or details regarding the quantities of employment land to be provided throughout the District, or details of phasing or of implementation partners, how will policy CS13 be implemented?

Policy CS13 will be implemented by the following means in addition to those already set out in the three implementation bullet points set out beneath the policy. An employment land study will be undertaken (see detailed answer to 4.3 above.). The Council will continue to work actively with local employers to identify development requirements and develop opportunities, including regularly held employer forums and follow up meetings on site specific issues. The Council will continue to pursue funding opportunities via working with the North West Development Agency and Cumbria Vision.

4.9 It is unclear if the employment urban extension shown on Map 4 is included within the target figure. Clarification is required, together with details of its area and phasing, delivery partners and funding.

The estimated amount of developable land to be provided in a first phase would be approximately 18 hectares of developable land i.e excluding land for access road, landscaping and open space, possible recreational space, attenuation ponds and other possible engineering works. No detailed phasing plan has been prepared, this would effectively be determined by a number of factors, including whether the road were to be completed in part of its length between Gillwilly and a point near to M6 Junction 41 or in parts, whether a start was made from the south or the north (there are points in favour of both options) and naturally, a current assessment of market demand.

The delivery partners that have been identified thus far are:

- North West Development Agency/Cumbria Vision
- Cumbria County Council
Funding has already been secured in the capital budget for £60,000 for appropriate investigation. This will cover the costs of the Employment Land Study.

4.10 What is the evidence that supports the suggested employment land extension? What other locations have been considered and discounted, and for what reasons? To what extent is the ‘suggested’ location still under review? Certainty regarding the broad location of urban extensions is required at this stage.

There is certainty in relation to the location of the intended strategic employment location for Penrith, it is not under review. The location is proposed, rather than “suggested”. Accordingly, in respect of paragraph 7.8 of the supporting text the word “suggested” is replaced with “proposed”. Essentially, it would not be practicable in economic terms, neither would it be sustainable in spatial planning terms to locate future employment land away from the existing employment sites in a disjointed manner. Other strategic locations that have been discounted are basically as follows:

- To the North of Penrith: Exceptionally high landscape value and topographical constraints, principally high inclines and forestation.

- To the South of Penrith: The River Eamont itself creates a natural boundary and poses flood plain issues. Land falls away sharply to the south of the A66.

- To West of Penrith: further encroachment towards the Lake District National boundary has been resisted consistently apart from development of a very limited scale at Redhills, the re-location of the auction mart from its town centre location and the development of the Little Chef (allowed on appeal).

- To the East of Penrith: In addition to further encroachment into open countryside, it is considered that would be an irreconcilable conflict with the residential uses predominating here.

None of the above considerations mean that there might not be perfectly acceptable small to medium scale employment sites in these broad geographical locations, indeed some could be identified from current knowledge. The question however concerns the location of a single strategic employment site.

4.11 PPS12 indicates that it is inappropriate to delegate such strategic detail to a lower order DPD, especially one that is not intended to be brought forward imminently. If it is intended to defer these consideration to a lower order DPD what is the justification for that approach?

The justification for not including employment site allocations in the Core Strategy is due, in equal measure to a clear understanding on the part of Council Officers in preparing the Core Strategy that this was not the appropriate vehicle for precise site allocations and secondly, a judgement that the resources (staffing and financial) were not available to complete housing and employment land allocations at the
same time as a Core Strategy. To have programmed both to occur simultaneously in the Local Development Scheme would have meant far too slow progress on far too broad a front, therefore delaying, to an even more unacceptable degree, reaching the ‘first base’ in the Local Development Framework in the form of an adopted Core Strategy.

Whilst the production of a DPD with employment land allocations is admittedly not ‘imminent’, the progression of the Employment Land Study which will form the principal evidence base document is being pursued with alacrity by the authority. It is anticipated that Employment Land may figure prominently in the next Local Development Scheme.

4.12 The legend to the Key Diagram implies that there will be more than one employment related urban extension, whereas section 7 of the Core Strategy text refers to only one. Clarity and consistency is required.

There is only one Urban Employment Extension proposed. (See Schedule of Amendments, reference AM49)

4.13 What are the necessary infrastructure works referred to in paragraph 7.8 of the Core Strategy? When are they required and how will they be funded and by whom will they be provided

The infrastructure works that will be required are, in summary:

1) Flood prevention/alleviation measures
2) Road construction
3) Electricity supply
4) Gas supply
5) Foul sewers

Fuller details and appropriate context are provided at appendix one to this topic paper – Report of Management Team to Leaders’ Meeting 1 April 2008 – Proposed Extension to Eden Business Park.

Employment Development in the Rural Areas (Policy CS14)

4.14 To aid implementation, clarification of the word ‘suitable’ in the first part of policy CS14, and of the word ‘appropriate’ in the second part of the policy is required.

The use of the word “suitable” in this context may be taken to apply generally to the more traditional, stone built, slated or stone roofed agricultural buildings, that mainly because of their small size, or possibly location have become obsolete for modern agricultural uses.

The word “appropriate” in this context is deployed to exclude the expansion of established businesses which either have caused nuisance and by virtue of their
expansion would intensify that nuisance, or where the scale of the expansion proposed would make the enterprise incompatible with its current location.

Tourism and the Visitor Economy (Policy CS15)

4.15 Policy CS15 is vague and lacking in local distinctiveness. Are there any specific tourist related promoted proposals that would be specifically supported and enabled by this policy that could be referred to?

Over the years, Eden has hosted a very wide variety of tourism developments, from the very large, for example Centre Parcs and Rheged through to small farm diversification developments and self catering tourism developments based on the conversion of former agricultural buildings or in some cases newer more radical chalet designs. Invariably, the planning assessments involved have hinged on site planning considerations – landscape impact, road capacity, impacts on adjoining landscape quality, the capacity of infrastructure to accommodate the development or the improvements and increases in the capacity of infrastructure that have been secured to accompany the development. In tandem with these considerations, the developments have been cast in such a manner, or re-cast as a result of the planning process, to reflect local distinctiveness. This may take many forms; it may for example be reflected in the design-the form, materials and architectural style of buildings – or it may link via the products that are on offer –locally sourced foodstuffs, clothing and craftwork. This local distinctiveness may further be reflected in the marketing.

4.16 Should the policy also inform how tourist accommodation will be provided for?

It is not considered appropriate, or indeed feasible for the Core Strategy to seek to encompass and address this. In part it is addressed by Tourism function of the Council and the Cumbria Tourist Board.
Appendix 1

Leaders Meeting

1 April 2008

Proposed Expansion of Eden Business Park

Report of Management Team

The draft Local Development Framework indicates that the land to the north of Eden Business Park (EBP) will be available for future economic development. It is recognised that there are number of issues that need to be evaluated to determine the viability of any future extension (on land lying between the M6 and the railway up to Junction 41 – see Plan 1) and as such £60k has been allocated in the Capital budget for appropriate investigation.

Significant exploratory and research work has been undertaken and is brought together and laid out in this report so as to inform decisions needed to determine the way forward.

Purpose of report

The report is focussed on the practicalities of development and does not include the economic development and market factors needed for say the next twenty years. There has been no brief with regard to economic development quantum or land use.

The land in question is known to be poorly drained with large areas of standing water. A hydraulic model of Thacka Beck has been commissioned from Consultants to ascertain the extent of the flood plain and this gives an indication of the potential land available for development. Before proceeding with this study, which will cost several thousand pounds, it is considered prudent to seek Management Team’s advice on the way forward regarding the following issues:

- Land ownership
- On site development costs (utilities)
- Development costs (site investigation, road construction)
- Site drainage
- Location of future development
- Further feasibility studies
- Phasing
- Funding
- Estimated costs
1. **Land Ownership**

The Council does not own any of the land to the north of Eden Business Park. This land predominantly used for grazing approximates to 105 hectares (260 acres) and is owned by at least 8 different parties.

George Bowman has offered to sell 9.89 Hectares (24.13 acres) immediately to the north of EBP (see attached Plan 2, Area A) and this has been valued by the Council’s land agent at no more than £250k with the caveat that a ground survey and environmental audit be undertaken. It is the agent’s opinion that development of this land is well in excess of five years. It is anticipated that Mr Bowman’s expectation will be substantially in excess of the Council’s agent value.

2. **Statutory Undertaker’s Apparatus**

United Utilities (water, gas and electricity) has been approached to provide an estimate for the provision of additional capacity based on a 20 hectare (49 acre) development. The response is given below:

- **Electricity:** £1.1M to create 6 substations capable of delivering 150 units with 30kVA 3 phase supply.
- **Gas:** £150k to provide a new gas governor delivering 720 therms per hour
- **Water:** No additional cost

BT provides their apparatus at no cost.

3. **Infrastructure**

No further expansion of EBP will be permitted though the planning process without improvements to the highway network; in particular the construction of an alternative access road. Cumbria County Council has considered (in outline only) various options including:

- **Option 1.** A road extending north from EBP to connect with junction 41 (subsequently discounted as the motorway junction is not large enough to incorporate another exit)
- **Option 2.** A road extending north from EBP to connect with the B5305 (J41 to Stoneybeck roundabout)
- **Option 3.** A road extending north from EBP that crosses the railway and connects with the A6.

Approximate costings were assessed in 2006 to be £4M for each of the above, allowing for construction inflation of 7% pa this would now increase to approximately £4.6M.

It may be worthwhile investigating a partnership with Senator Homes (who are carrying out a detailed study for a housing development between the railway and the A6 near White Ox Farm) to construct Option 3 such that the costs of road construction are shared. Any discussions would include responsibility for building the
crossing of the West Coast Main Line. In considering this option it should be noted that the geometry of the road will be driven by the size of the area to be developed and this would have to meet the requirement of Senator Homes report of its development proposals.

Additional on-site infrastructure will include surface and foul water sewers and any necessary surface water attenuation (e.g. balancing ponds).

In order to inform estimates of the cost of development and the feasibility of continuing to consider this land as potentially available for development the site will require extensive ground investigation including exploratory boreholes and trial pits. Eden Business Park incorporated 39 boreholes and 54 trial pits over the 8.94 hectares (22 acres) of developable land. Current estimates indicate £1500-2000 per borehole and £250 per trial pit (or approx £9,200 per hectare).

4. **Drainage**

*Thacka Beck (flows north to south through site)*

Halcrow has recently completed a model of the Upper Thacka Beck which will determine the extent of the 1:100 year flood zone in which development will not be permitted. It is intended that this model would form the basis of any planning application to extend the business park and as such it has been sent to the Environment Agency (EA) in order that it can be 'challenged' (i.e. the EA check it against their data to determine its acceptability).

Further investigatory work will be necessary to:

- identify the causes of the large areas of standing water (i.e. a raised water table or impermeable ground that holds water)
- ascertain the lag in drop in water levels between the standing water and Thacka Beck
- ascertain the connectivity across/under the surface

Halcrow has been asked to submit its proposal to undertake the above investigation. The EA suggest that such work is likely to take up to one year in order that data may be gathered over a full calendar year. This work is likely to cost £8-15K.

Whilst the 1:100 year flood zone has now been identified the extent of any development will determine the scale of the attenuation measures. In simple terms, the larger the area of development (including the new access road) the larger any balancing pond will need to be to retain the surface water run-off. The construction of any balancing pond is made difficult by the extent of standing water as it will naturally fill with water from the adjacent ground and so it is likely that an open concrete box will need to be built.

The EA are preparing a scheme in detail design though 2008/09 for a strategic storage area (large pond) on land bordered by the railway, Thacka Lane and EBP balancing pond to prevent future flooding of Penrith from Thacka Beck. The EA have indicated that they would be willing to increase the size of this pond such that the
increase in capacity would allow development of approximately 20 hectares (49 acres). The additional costs would have to be met by the Council and are estimated to be in the order of £1.37M (£700k for additional construction work and £670k to underground the existing overhead cables). Should the Council wish to progress with this proposal the EA will need to be informed relatively quickly in order that the larger scheme is progressed. It is not possible for the strategic pond to be increased even further so increasing development potential.

*River Petteril (flows north)*

An alternative solution proposed in the Atkins’ Thacka Beck Drainage Study is to pump the excess run-off from the western tributaries of Thacka Beck into the River Petteril. No detailed drainage study has been carried out for this proposal but it would involve the construction and maintenance of a large pumping station.

The EA consider that run-off into the River Petteril has fewer difficulties associated with it and so whilst it would need to be accurately modelled the overall effect on the downstream catchment is likely to be small.

Any scheme once determined in outline will require a drainage impact assessment at a master plan level such as has been undertaken at Carleton Heights.

5. **Alternative location for development adjacent to Junction 41**

Rather than extend north from EBP the option of developing the northern part of the land around Kettleside Farm from the B5305 may be considered. The land available extends to approximately 18 hectares (44 acres) – see Plan 2, Area B. Advantages include the reduction in road construction cost as any access would only serve the proposed area for development and it is likely that surface water drainage may be attenuated through the River Petteril. A detailed study would be need to undertaken to confirm this assumption. All other issues such as Utility infrastructure and site investigation should be similar to that noted in sections 2 and 3 above.

6. **Phasing of any future development**

EBP has provided 8.94 hectares (22 acres of development land) which has been sold in tranches since 2004.

The Council’s land agent suggests that the demand for additional industrial units (B1 and B2 usage) is unlikely to accelerate and may decline if the national economy slips into recession.

Any extension of EBP northwards will require a new access road to be built at significant cost as noted in section 3 above. This cost is fixed and independent of the area of land opened up for development. As such the new access can service from 1 to 105 hectares. Development adjacent to J41 would reduce the initial road costs and allow a subsequent extension to connect to EBP at a future date.

The issue of surface water attenuation could however be addressed on a phased basis although the EA are keen to limit the number of attenuation ponds across the whole site. Any phased approach will need to ensure that one phase does not preclude the following phase.
It will be necessary to ascertain the amount of land included in each phase before the surface water attenuation can be considered.

7. **Funding**

At present the council does not have sufficient resources to fund any scheme on its own. Available options include all work being undertaken by a developer (unlikely due to the large capital outlay and uncertain return period) or a further partnership with the NWDA. No detailed discussions have taken place with North West Development Agency (NWDA) but they too are known to be short of funding at present.

8. **Estimated costs**

A cost estimate based upon opening up 20 hectares of land to provide 18 hectares of developable land (i.e. excluding land for access road, swales, attenuation pond etc.) is given below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site Investigation</td>
<td>£166,000</td>
<td>See section 3 (£9.2k per hectare)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Access Road</td>
<td>£4,600,000</td>
<td>Option 2 or 3 (see section 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal estate roads, surface water &amp; foul sewers and utility connection</td>
<td>£1,180,000</td>
<td>Taken from costs for Eden Business Park and based upon 500m of internal roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity reinforcement</td>
<td>£1,100,000</td>
<td>Estimate from United Utilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas reinforcement</td>
<td>£150,000</td>
<td>Estimate from United Utilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface water attenuation (contribution to EA scheme)</td>
<td>£1,370,000</td>
<td>EA estimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land purchase</td>
<td>£505,000</td>
<td>Pro-rata based on land valuation for 9.89 hectares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency (15%)</td>
<td>£1,361,000</td>
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Based upon the above figures, in order to break even (ignoring finance costs etc.) the land would need to be sold at £235k per acre. The Council approved in January 2008 an offer from Cranstons which equates to £152k per acre. A partnership to construct the road and/or wider development would considerably reduce financial support required from the Council.

It should be noted that there is no available estimate for the surface water attenuation for any subsequent phase. The costs of the existing balancing pond amounted to approximately £450k (in good comparatively good ground).

9. **The way forward**

9.1 The way forward considered below is based on the development of a twenty hectare area of land. The need for this land has not yet been quantified and it is suggested that before proceeding with further studies and site investigations it would be prudent to develop an economic development brief to inform the Council of its employment land requirement in the short, medium and long term. This would inform any decision on the amount of land to be developed at any one time and allow for better estimates of whole life costs. Once the economic development brief has been approved it will be necessary to undertake the following studies and surveys to ascertain the viability of an extension northwards from the existing Eden Business Park northern boundary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Estimated timescale</th>
<th>Estimated cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hydrological study of Thacka Beck (to identify the causes of the large areas of standing water etc.)</td>
<td>1 year (assuming land owner’s permission)</td>
<td>£8-15k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site investigation to determine ground conditions</td>
<td>6 months (assuming land owners permission)</td>
<td>£166k (based on 18 hectare development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detailed consultation with Senator homes to consider a partnership approach re: access road</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>Officer time and consultant’s fees for road design £20k</td>
</tr>
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It is only once the above information is known that a decision may be taken concerning the purchase of land.
The EA are starting the outline design of the Thacka Beck strategic storage pond in April 2008 and are pressing the Council for a decision on its wish to extend the capacity of the pond. Unless the Council is able to commit to a contribution to the pond in the next couple of months it is likely that this opportunity will be lost. Any stand-alone solution will exceed the cost estimate in section 8 above.

Alternatively (or in parallel) it may be prudent to investigate the hydrological modelling of land to adjacent to J41, the costs for which are likely to be between £10-15k. It is likely that this area will be able to more easily be developed as the drainage implications are more easily overcome through the River Petteril.

10. What are the Options?

10.1 Continue to expand north from Eden Business Park along Thacka Beck.

Such a scheme has the benefit of naturally progressing the industrial estate to the north of Penrith, the adjacent landowner has expressed a willingness to sell land and there exists the possibility of partnership development with Senator Homes (or other). The drainage issues are however substantial with costs for any development in excess of 20 hectares unknown. In addition the EA requires a Council commitment in the near future to fund additional costs associated with a strategic pond. Similarly there is a need to construct an access road at substantial initial cost irrespective of the acreage developed. Development of this option is in keeping with the preference of the Local Development Framework (LDF) for future employment land in Penrith to be situated within the north/south corridor between Eden Business Park and Junction 41 of the M6, bounded to the west by the M6 and to the east by the West Coast Main Line railway.

10.2 Start the development southwards from Junction 41.

This proposal will allow for the expansion of EBP but with possibly more cost effective phasing such that development is driven from north to south (rather than south to north as in 10.1 above). The development requires an access road suitable to service the initial acreage only and is likely to have fewer land drainage issues as it drains into the River Petteril. This option also takes advantage of the preference in the LDF of providing future employment land in this location as set out in 10.1 above. No landowners have been contacted concerning the land sales.

10.3 Seek a site with greater development potential elsewhere

Alternative sites around Penrith may be investigated which may prove to be more suitable (e.g. land to the west of M6, Redhills etc.).

11. The Way Forward – Proposals of Management Team

a) Develop a clear economic development brief in respect of the quantum of employment land required and its land use; and

b) Commence discussion with the NWDA, Cumbria Vision, and other economic development partners to explore their interest in the
development of this land and potential funding opportunities;

c) Challenge the Environment Agency’s interpretation of the Thacka Beck flood plain based on the work commissioned by Eden to obtain a definitive indication of the potential land available for development; and

d) To consider commissioning further investigative work and studies only after the above actions have been completed and their outcome reported to a future Leaders meeting.
Title: Possible extension to Eden Business Park