



Taunton Deane Borough Council  
The Deane House, Belvedere Road,  
Taunton TA1 1HE Tel 01823 356407  
[press.office@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:press.office@tauntondeane.gov.uk)  
twitter: @tdbc

## **News release**

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### **Public exhibition for the new Junction 25 business development**

Residents and businesses are being asked to give their views on a new business development at Junction 25 of the M5, supported by Taunton Deane Borough Council.

The public exhibition will be held at the Holiday Inn at Junction 25 on 1 March 2017 from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Representatives from the project team will also be on hand to answer questions.

The new strategic employment site, which could create thousands of new and skilled jobs, is part of a range of plans, outlined in the Taunton Growth Prospectus, to support Taunton's economic development up to 2028.

The development is being created as a 'green campus.' Space for research and development and high quality offices, alongside light industrial units and warehouses will provide a range of flexible premises suitable for many types of business.

Footpaths and landscaping including tree planting will create an environment in line with Taunton's new Garden Town status.

Councillor Mark Edwards, Deputy Leader of Taunton Deane Borough Council and Portfolio Holder for Business Development said: "Junction 25 is ideally positioned to create a well-connected strategic employment site in the region, enabling the high quality jobs so crucial for Taunton and the South West's future growth.

"The development represents a significant opportunity to bring new business and investment to Taunton in a unique environment that supports innovation and growth."

Taunton Deane has commissioned Peter Brett Associates to prepare a Local Development Order (LDO) to set out the planning and design principles and other site-specific requirements to guide development of the site.

LDOs were introduced by the Government to enable Local Authorities to speed up the planning process, while ensuring that the usual environmental safeguards are properly applied. Once approved by the Council, the LDO will set out the extent and nature of the proposed development together with all the criteria and requirements that proposals must meet to satisfy the terms of the Order. Developers must demonstrate to the Council that their proposals satisfy the requirements of the LDO in order for them to proceed.

The designs will include green infrastructure and sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDs) to manage surface water run-off through the use of features such as landscaped ponds.

The 25 hectare site is approximately 2.5 miles from Taunton's town centre, to the south east of Junction 25. The work to improve Junction 25 and the A358 is being undertaken by Somerset County Council and Highways England and will include access to the site. Existing Park and Ride services as well as pedestrian and cycle routes will link the site to the town centre and encourage people to use different forms of transport.

Nigel Hounslow, Director from Summerfield, the developers for the scheme, said: "Junction 25 has been selected by Taunton Deane as a strategic employment site, due to its location, especially after the M5, J25 and A358 road improvements have taken place. Good connectivity is vital to business so J25 will provide gigabit fibre access throughout the site to ensure that occupiers have the latest digital links possible."

Councillor David Hall, Deputy Leader of Somerset County Council and Cabinet Member for Business, Inward Investment and Policy said: "This is a huge step forward in unlocking further economic opportunities in Taunton, Somerset and beyond. We are working closely with Taunton Deane and partners to improve transport links and encourage inward investment, putting Somerset firmly on the map. I urge people to attend the public exhibition on the 1 March 2017 and have their say on the plans, helping shape the way forward."

The designs are being developed by a team drawn from the public and private sectors. Key partners include Taunton Deane Borough Council, Somerset County Council, Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership, Highways England, the Environment Agency, Summerfield Developments and Henry Boot Developments.

The public consultation will begin on 1 March 2017, with a further consultation on the Local Development Order in May 2017 ahead of submission to the Council in June 2017. The LDO could be adopted in August 2017.

## **ENDS**

### **Notes to Editors**

#### **How big is the proposed employment site at Junction 25?**

The approximate size of the site is 25 hectares (about 25 rugby pitches)

#### **How many jobs could it create and when could work on site start?**

Up to 4000 new jobs could be created once fully occupied. It is anticipated that the first phase of construction work on site would start in 2020.

#### **What are the plans for managing the increased traffic?**

Junction 25 and connecting roads are already well used, especially at peak times and a key objective is to firstly ensure the current situation was not worsened. Somerset County Council and Highways England have brought forward plans to

improve Junction 25. The scheme will provide access to the site and from the start of the A358 dualling between the M5 and A303. Park and ride schemes as well as cycling walking and routes to the town centre will help to reduce car use.

**Some of the site is flood plain. What plans will be put in place to mitigate development on the flood plain? Should you not be looking to develop sites that are not on the flood plain?**

The proposed development site is located predominately in the area with the lowest probability of flooding, defined as Flood Zone 1. The Council commissioned a Flood Risk Assessment in 2014 to assess the suitability of the site and this will be followed by a comprehensive Flood Modelling Assessment that will form part of the mitigation requirements of the Local Development Order. While parts of the site are located in Flood Zones 2 and 3 there will be no construction in these areas, but they will be suitably landscaped to manage flood risk.

**Explanatory note:**

Flood zone 1 has a very low probability of flooding (1 in 1000 year event or less) while Flood zone 3 has a high probability of flooding (1 in 100 year event or greater).

**How does a Local Development Order work?**

LDOs were introduced by the Government to enable Local Authorities to speed up the planning process. The Council sets out the criteria and regulations that the development must meet within the order. Once the developer has shown that the proposals comply with the LDO, the Council will grant a formal certificate of compliance that allows development to proceed.

**ENDS**

**Contact:**

Councillor Mark Edwards Executive Councillor for Business Development, Asset Management and Communications 07860 172749

Julie Everett at Coast Communications. Email [julie@coastmarcoms.co.uk](mailto:julie@coastmarcoms.co.uk)

T: 015795352600 or mob: 07866002635

Debbie Rundle, Public and Media Relations Officer 01823 356407 or 07714 759899

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