

DEVELOPMENT BRIEF AND SITE DISPOSAL

Lands at Comber Road, Newtownards, Co Down

Industrial / Business Unit Development Opportunity

Pre-Engagement Marketing



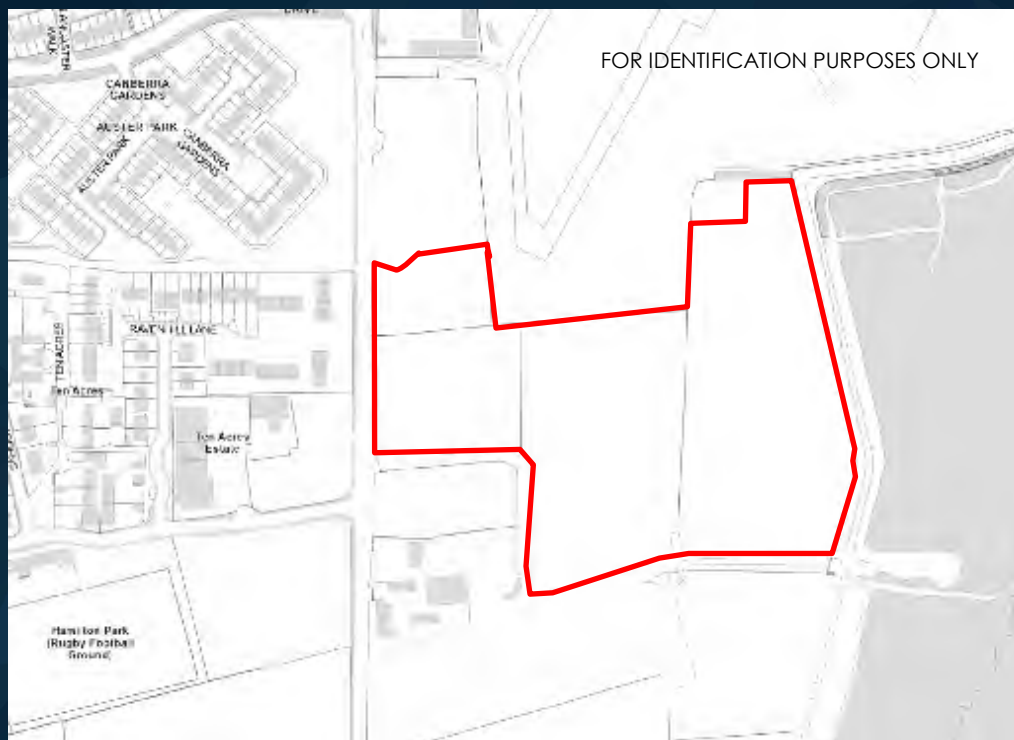
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**Ards and
North Down
Borough Council**

OPPORTUNITY SUMMARY

Ards and North Down Borough Council is offering an exceptional and rarely available development opportunity at Comber Road, Newtownards. Opportunities to secure development-ready, employment-zoned land of this scale – approximately 11 acres in a single, cohesive holding – are increasingly scarce across Northern Ireland, and this site represents one of the most significant landholdings to come to the market in the greater Belfast region in recent years.

The Council is inviting proposals from experienced developers to acquire a long leasehold interest in the land, with a view to delivering a high-quality business or industrial park development that will make a meaningful and lasting contribution to the economic growth of the Borough.



Customer Due Diligence:

As a business carrying out estate agency work we are required to verify the identity of both the vendor and the purchaser as outlined in the following: The Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Transfer of Funds (Information on the Payer) Regulations 2017 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/692/made>. Any information and documentation provided by you will be held for a period of 5 years from when you cease to have a contractual relationship with OKT. The information will be held in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on our client file and will not be passed on to any other party, unless we are required to do so by law and regulation.

REF: 10253

LOCATION

Newtownards — A Thriving Commercial Hub at the Gateway to the Ards Peninsula

Newtownards is the largest town in Ards and North Down Borough and one of the most economically active settlements outside Belfast city centre. Situated approximately 10 miles east of Belfast, the town occupies a strategically important position at the head of Strangford Lough and the entrance to the Ards Peninsula, serving as the commercial and administrative centre for a wide and prosperous catchment area.

The town is exceptionally well connected to the regional road network. The A20 provides a direct and fast dual carriageway link to Belfast city centre, typically accessible within 20–25 minutes, while the A21 connects northward to Bangor and the wider North Down coast. These arterial routes place Newtownards firmly within the greater Belfast commuter belt and ensure the town is easily accessible for businesses, employees and customers alike. Belfast City Airport is located just 8 miles from the town centre, offering direct access to a wide range of UK and international destinations and making Newtownards an attractive base for businesses with national and international trading requirements.

A Strong and Growing Catchment

Newtownards sits at the heart of a catchment area encompassing a sizeable and economically active population. Ards and North Down Borough has a population of approximately 160,000 people, making it one of the most populous council areas in Northern Ireland outside Belfast. The wider Belfast Metropolitan Area, within which Newtownards sits comfortably, has a total population in excess of 650,000, providing access to a large and skilled labour pool for businesses locating in the town.

The Borough consistently performs strongly on key socioeconomic indicators and benefits from a relatively affluent population with high levels of car ownership and workforce participation. The towns of Bangor, Comber, Donaghadee and Ballynahinch all fall within easy commuting distance of Newtownards, further broadening the available workforce and customer base for businesses operating from the town.



Tesco at Castlebawn Retail Park



Formation Works, Jubilee Road

An Established Business Location

Newtownards has a long and successful track record as a business location, with a diverse economic base spanning manufacturing, engineering, logistics, professional services and retail. The town is home to a number of significant employers across the private and public sector and has historically attracted inward investment from both national and international businesses drawn by its accessible location, competitive property costs relative to Belfast, and high quality of life offer.

The town centre supports a healthy retail and hospitality economy, while the surrounding area offers an attractive environment for employees, with the scenic coastline of Strangford Lough and the North Down shore on the doorstep. This quality of place is increasingly recognised as a key factor in businesses' location decisions and in their ability to attract and retain talent.

Future Growth Potential

Newtownards is well placed to benefit from a number of significant growth drivers in the coming years. The continued expansion of Belfast as a major European city for technology, financial services and advanced manufacturing is generating increasing demand for high-quality business accommodation across the wider metropolitan area, as occupiers seek locations that offer strong connectivity to the city at more competitive rental levels. Newtownards, with its unrivalled road access to Belfast and its established business infrastructure, is ideally positioned to capture a share of this expanding demand.

IMMEDIATE VICINITY

The subject site is located on the Comber Road on the southern fringe of the town, directly adjoining Ards Airfield and in close proximity to Castlebawn Retail Park, home to national occupiers including Tesco, Starbucks and Home Bargains, as well as the established commercial and business uses along Jubilee Road — placing it within an already vibrant and active commercial corridor with strong day-to-day footfall and excellent visibility.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site extends to approximately 11 acres of largely level, open grassland and represents one of the most significant undeveloped employment-zoned landholdings in the greater Newtownards area. The land is currently in virgin greenfield condition, free from any significant built structures, and presents a clean and highly developable canvas for a comprehensive, planned employment or industrial park scheme.

The site is bounded to the north by the runway of Ards Airfield, to the west by Comber Road and existing commercial and residential development, and benefits from attractive open views eastward across Strangford Lough — one of Northern Ireland's most iconic natural landscapes.

The topography is broadly flat throughout, which is a considerable practical advantage in terms of site preparation and construction costs, and the regular, open nature of the landholding lends itself well to a flexible and efficient development layout. The site's direct frontage onto Comber Road provides an obvious and accessible point of vehicular access, whilst its scale is sufficient to accommodate a range of plot sizes suitable for both larger industrial occupiers and smaller business units.

In summary, this is a genuinely rare opportunity to develop a strategic, large-scale employment site in a highly visible and accessible location on the edge of one of Northern Ireland's most economically active towns.



NEIGHBOURING BUSINESSES



PLANNING CONTEXT/ZONING

The site is located within the development limits of Newtownards as defined by the Ards and Down Area Plan 2015, which remains the operative development plan for the area. Within the Area Plan, the site is zoned for Employment and Industry, a designation which provides a strong and clear planning basis for the delivery of a high-quality business and industrial park development.

The Employment and Industry zoning supports a range of uses including offices, light industrial, general industrial and ancillary uses appropriate to an employment park setting. This zoning certainty represents a significant advantage for prospective developers, removing a considerable element of planning risk that would typically be associated with a landholding of this scale and providing a clear and established policy framework within which proposals can be brought forward with confidence.

Whilst the Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 remains the operative plan, prospective developers should note that Ards and North Down Borough Council is progressing its Local Development Plan, which will in due course replace the existing area plan. The Council's emerging Local Development Plan is expected to continue to support and protect the employment and industrial zoning of the site, consistent with the Council's wider economic development objectives for Newtownards and the Borough as a whole.

Prospective developers will be responsible for securing all necessary planning consents in connection with their proposed scheme. The Council, as landowner, is committed to working constructively with the successful developer to support the timely delivery of an appropriate and high-quality development on the site.

TENURE & PRICING

The site is offered by way of a long leasehold interest for a term of 999 years, subject to a ground rent of £1 per annum (if demanded).

The Council is seeking a capital premium upon completion of the lease and offers the site at a guide price of £825,000.

The guide price reflects the significant scale of the landholding, the zoning certainty that the site benefits from, and the considerable development opportunity that it presents. Interested parties should note that the Council reserves the right to accept or decline any offer received and is not bound to accept the highest or any offer submitted.

COMMERCIAL TERMS

The transaction will be subject to a series of positive developer covenants to be incorporated within the lease, including obligations relating to development timeframes, the achievement of planning objectives and, critically, the requirement that the lands are developed and maintained for employment and industrial uses in a manner consistent with the Council's overall vision and objectives for the site. These covenants are intended to ensure that the development delivers lasting and meaningful economic benefit for the Borough and that the lands are not left undeveloped or diverted to uses that fall outside the Council's strategic intentions.

Heads of Terms and draft Lease documentation will be made available to interested parties through the eTenders NI portal following registration.

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

Ards and North Down Borough Council has a clear and ambitious vision for this site. The Council is seeking a development partner who shares its commitment to delivering lasting economic benefit for the Borough and who has the experience, ambition and financial capacity to bring that vision to life.

The Council has agreed the following key objectives for the development of the site, which prospective developers will be expected to address substantively in their proposals:

Economic Growth and Rate Base: The development must support delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan 2024–2028, with particular emphasis on growing the local economy. A central priority of the Corporate Plan is the expansion of the Borough's non-domestic rate base, and the successful development of this site has the potential to make a significant contribution in this regard. Proposals that maximise the quantum of high-quality, occupiable commercial floorspace – and which demonstrate a credible strategy for bringing that floorspace into active occupation – will be viewed favourably.

Alignment with the Integrated Strategy: The development must support delivery of the Council's Integrated Strategy for Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development (ITRDS) and the findings of the Ards and North Down Business Accommodation Review. Together, these strategies identify a clear need for modern, high-quality business and industrial accommodation within the Borough to attract inward investment, support indigenous business growth and retain existing employers. This site is uniquely positioned to address that need at meaningful scale.

Job Creation and Productivity: A primary measure of success for this development will be its contribution to employment within the Borough. The Council is seeking proposals that will generate a significant number of new jobs and support the retention of existing employment, while also contributing to increased productivity and gross value added (GVA) within the local economy. Developers are encouraged to consider the full range of employment uses that the site could accommodate and to set out realistic but ambitious projections for job creation over the development programme.

A Viable and Innovative Development Offering: The Council is seeking a development that is genuinely responsive to the needs of the local business community and the wider regional market. Proposals should demonstrate a clear understanding of current market demand for business and industrial accommodation in the greater Belfast area, and should set out an offering – in terms of unit mix, specification, tenure and phasing – that is both commercially viable and capable of attracting a diverse occupier base. The Council welcomes innovative approaches to the design and delivery of employment space, including proposals that incorporate flexible, multi-use or incubator-style accommodation alongside more traditional industrial and warehousing uses.

Quality of Development: The Council expects the development of this prominent and strategically important site to set a high standard of design and environmental quality. Proposals should demonstrate a commitment to creating an attractive, well-landscaped and functional business environment that will serve the Borough's needs for generations to come.