

Breckland Local Plan Examination

Topic Paper:

General Employment Areas and the approach to Snetterton

Breckland District Council

June 2018



Contents

1.	How the General Employment Areas were defined	1
	The purpose of General Employment Areas (GEAs) and how they have been defined in the Core Strategy	1
	General Employment Areas as defined on the Policies Maps	1
	Methodology for assessing and amending General Employment Areas.....	3
2.	Site Assessments.....	4
	GEA1: Haverscroft Industrial Estate, Attleborough	4
	GEA2: Bunns Bank Industrial Estate, Attleborough	8
	GEA3: Gaymer Industrial Estate, Attleborough	12
	GEA4: Dereham Business Park, Dereham	15
	GEA5: Yaxham Road Industrial Estate, Dereham.....	18
	GEA6: Rashes Green Industrial Estate, Dereham.....	21
	GEA7: Roudham/Harling Road Industrial Area	25
	GEA8: Shipdham Airfield Industrial Estate.....	28
	GEA9: Snetterton Heath, Snetterton	31
	GEA10: Ecotech Business Park, Swaffham	32
	GEA11: Tower Meadow, Swaffham	33
	GEA12: Station Yard, Swaffham	34
	GEA13: Thetford Enterprise Park, Thetford.....	38
	GEA14: Brunel Way Industrial Estate, Thetford.....	39
	GEA15: Fison Way Industrial Estate, Thetford	40
	GEA16: Burrell Way Industrial Estate, Thetford	43
	GEA17: Caxton Way Industrial Estate, Thetford	44
	GEA18: Trexton Road Industrial Estate, Watton.....	48
	GEA19: Norwich Road Industrial Estate, Watton.....	51
	GEA20: Griston Road, Watton	54
	GEA21: Part of RAF technical site, Watton	57
	GEA22: Mundford Road, Weeting	60
	Summary of Findings.....	62
3.	Why is the approach to Snetterton Heath different to the other General Employment Areas.	63
	A11 Corridor vision: The Cambridge Norwich Technology Corridor.....	63
	Known Energy Constraints.....	64
	Landowners Consortium	64

Summary	65
4. GEA9 Snetterton Heath General Employment Area	66
Introduction	66
Why it was considered appropriate to extend the GEA and not to allocate further.....	66
Summary of the site.....	67
Planning Permissions on the site	67
Conclusion.....	68
5. Conclusion – Impact upon the Economic Strategy	72
6. Policy EC 02 – Snetterton Heath	74
7. Policy EC 03 – General Employment Areas.....	76
Should policy EC03 refer to all employment.....	77

1. How the General Employment Areas were defined

The purpose of General Employment Areas (GEAs) and how they have been defined in the Core Strategy

- 1.1. General Employment Areas (GEAs) identify clusters of well established employment uses (Within Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 “as amended)).
- 1.2. GEAs were first designated in 2009 with the adoption of the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan document (LP/D/1). The supporting text of Policy DC 6 ‘General Employment Areas’ states that “the GEAs as identified on the Proposals Map have been assessed as being attractive to the employment market, can realistically accommodate further employment development or are established for employment uses”.
- 1.3. The purpose of Policy DC 6, General Employment Areas, is primarily to protect B class uses on the defined GEAs, but is also to ensure that alternative uses are not permitted where they would be in conflict with the existing B class uses. The supporting text of policy DC 6 also states that “non-employment uses on established industrial estates can also create tension with existing users in terms of amenity and volumes of traffic and parking which can harm the ability of existing and appropriately located business to operate effectively”.
- 1.4. The emerging policy within the Pre-submission version of the Local Plan (LP/S/1), Policy EC 03 General Employment Areas, seeks to carry forward the designation of GEAs in recognition of their contribution towards the local economy and the provision of local employment opportunities. Policy EC 03 seeks to protect these areas for employment use in the same manner as Policy DC 6; however, given the changing landscape of national policy and the diversifying economy an element of flexibility is proposed to be included. The fundamental principles, however, remain consistent: The policy seeks to ensure that B class uses on these sites are supported and where non-b class uses are proposed these must be compatible with, and do not constrain the operations of, adjoining businesses.

General Employment Areas as defined on the Policies Maps

- 1.5. There are a total of 22 General Employment Areas within the district. These are as follows:

GEA Code (for the purposes of this topic paper only)	Location	Site Name	Area ha
GEA1	Attleborough	Haverscroft Industrial Estate	10.9

GEA2	Attleborough	Bunns Bank Industrial Estate	12.4
GEA3	Attleborough	Gaymer Industrial Estate	11.4
GEA4	Dereham	Dereham Business Park	5.3
GEA5	Dereham	Yaxham Road Industrial Estate	13.2
GEA6	Dereham	Rashes Green Industrial Estate	25.1
GEA7	Roudham/Harling Road	Roudham/Harling Road Industrial Area	14.5
GEA8	Shipdham	Shipdham Airfield Industrial Estate	22.2
GEA9	Snetterson	Snetterton Heath	73.9
GEA10	Swaffham	Ecotech Business Park	14.1
GEA11	Swaffham	Tower Meadow	0.5
GEA12	Swaffham	Station Yard	1.5
GEA13	Thetford	Thetford Enterprise park	18.1
GEA14	Thetford	Brunel Way Industrial Estate	38.7
GEA15	Thetford	Fison Way Industrial Estate	48.2
GEA16	Thetford	Burrell way Industrial Estate	30.5
GEA17	Thetford	Caxton Way Industrial Estate	22.1
GEA18	Watton	Thrextan Road Industrial Estate	12.45
GEA19	Watton	Norwich Road Industrial Estate	11.2
GEA20	Watton	Griston Road	4.3
GEA21	Watton	Part of RAF technical site	2.2
GEA22	Weeting	Mundford Road	23.5

- 1.6. As previously stated, these GEAs were defined in the 2009 Core Strategy. Further work was then carried out on all of the GEAs through both the Site Specific Policies and Proposals Development Plan Document (LP/D/1) and the Thetford Area Action Plan (LP/D/3).
- 1.7. The only exception to this being sites within Attleborough and Snetterton Heath. It was the intention that this assessment would be carried out through the Attleborough and Snetterton Heath Area Action Plan. However, production of this document was halted and it was envisaged that this work would be undertaken through the Local Plan.
- 1.8. All of the GEAs were subject to detailed assessment through the Breckland Employment Growth Study (LP/ER/1). It is considered that the assessment of the sites within the study provides robust justification for retaining the GEAs within the Local Plan.

- 1.9. As a result of this robust evidence and due to no representations being made to suggest otherwise, it was considered that the boundaries of the GEAs were robustly defined. However, through the Examination in Public, specifically sessions regarding Matter 10 on Tuesday 15 May 2018, questions were raised regarding the GEA boundaries.
- 1.10. The following methodology and subsequent site-by-site assessment assesses the boundaries of the GEAs in light of the discussions through the Examination in Public.

Methodology for assessing and amending General Employment Areas

- 1.11. To ensure consistency across all GEAs it is important that each site is assessed in the same manner. A map for each site shows the boundary as defined through the Site Specific Policies and Proposals Development Plan Document (LP/D/1). Planning permissions (residential, employment and retail) for each site have then been mapped and analysed to indicate if these permissions would result in a change to the boundary. Where a boundary change is required a further map has been created to illustrate the change.
- 1.12. Changes to boundaries were made in the following circumstances:
1. Where a retail planning permission has been granted on the site and has been implemented, it is proposed to remove these from the extent of the GEA unless the permission is small in scale and/or would not impact upon the functionality of the employment area.
 2. Where a residential permission has been granted on the site and has been implemented, it is proposed to remove these from the GEA.
- 1.13. This methodology has been applied to all General Employment Areas within the District. The results of this are detailed in the following site by site assessment.

2. Site Assessments

GEA1: Haverscroft Industrial Estate, Attleborough

Introduction

- 2.1. The General Employment Area boundary was designated in 2009 through the adoption of the Core Strategy, but was not reviewed through the 2012 Site Specific Policies and Proposals Development Plan Document. This was proposed to be amended through the Attleborough and Snetterton Heath Area Action Plan, however production ceased in order to progress work on the Local Plan. Map 1 shows the extent of the general employment area as proposed on the Local Plan Policies Maps (LP/S/2).

Summary of the site

- Site totals 5.5 hectares.
- Site is located off London Road on Attleborough's southern fringe and is considered to have reasonable access to local services and good access to the strategic road network.
- An estate road has been constructed on the undeveloped parcel of land and all the main services are connected.

Planning permissions on the GEA

- 2.2. The following planning permissions have been granted on the General Employment Area:
- **3PL/2016/0417/O** - Outline planning permission for B1, B2 and B8 uses.
 - **3PL/2016/0097/O** - Outline permission for up to 6335 sqm. of B1, B2 & B8 uses including offices, workshop, engineering & storage facilities, car parking, infrastructure, internal access roads & strategic landscaping
 - **3PL/2007/2049/F** - Double steel frame extension to either side of an existing steel portal frame building
- 2.3. These planning permissions can be seen on Map 2. The planning permissions on the site are in conformity with the uses that have formed historically in this location. As a result of these permissions there is no need to amend the current General Employment Area boundary.

Adjacent planning permission

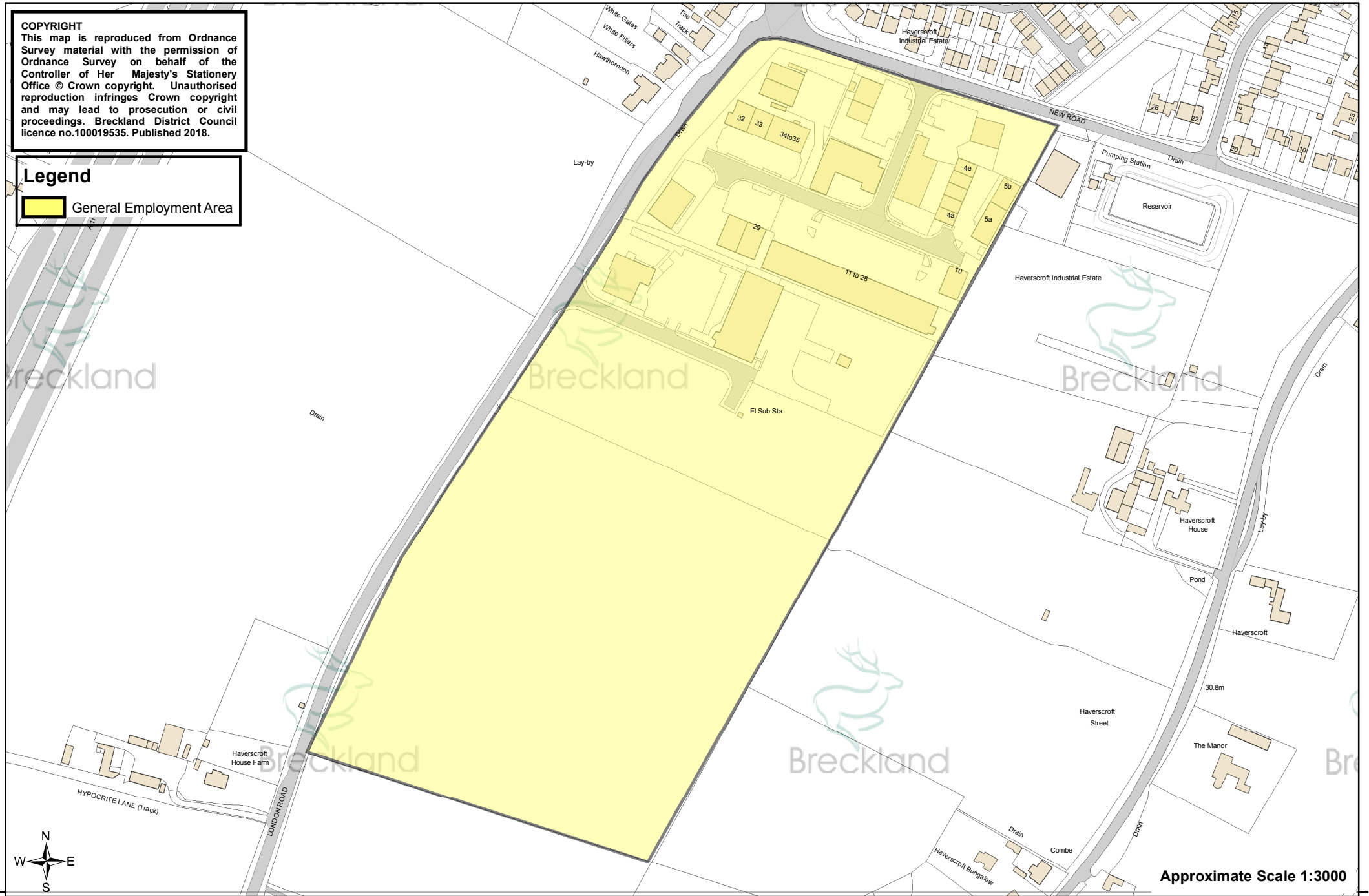
- 2.4. The following planning permission has been approved adjoining the GEA boundary.
- 3PL/2011/1149/CU - Change of use from B1 to B2
- 2.5. Although the adjacent use was historically B1 and is now B2, it is not considered appropriate to extend the GEA boundary around this property due to the proximity of the pumping station.

Conclusion

- 2.6. There are no planning permissions that would result in a need to amend the boundary of the GEA. The boundary as defined is considered to be robust and is proposed to be carried forward within the Local Plan.




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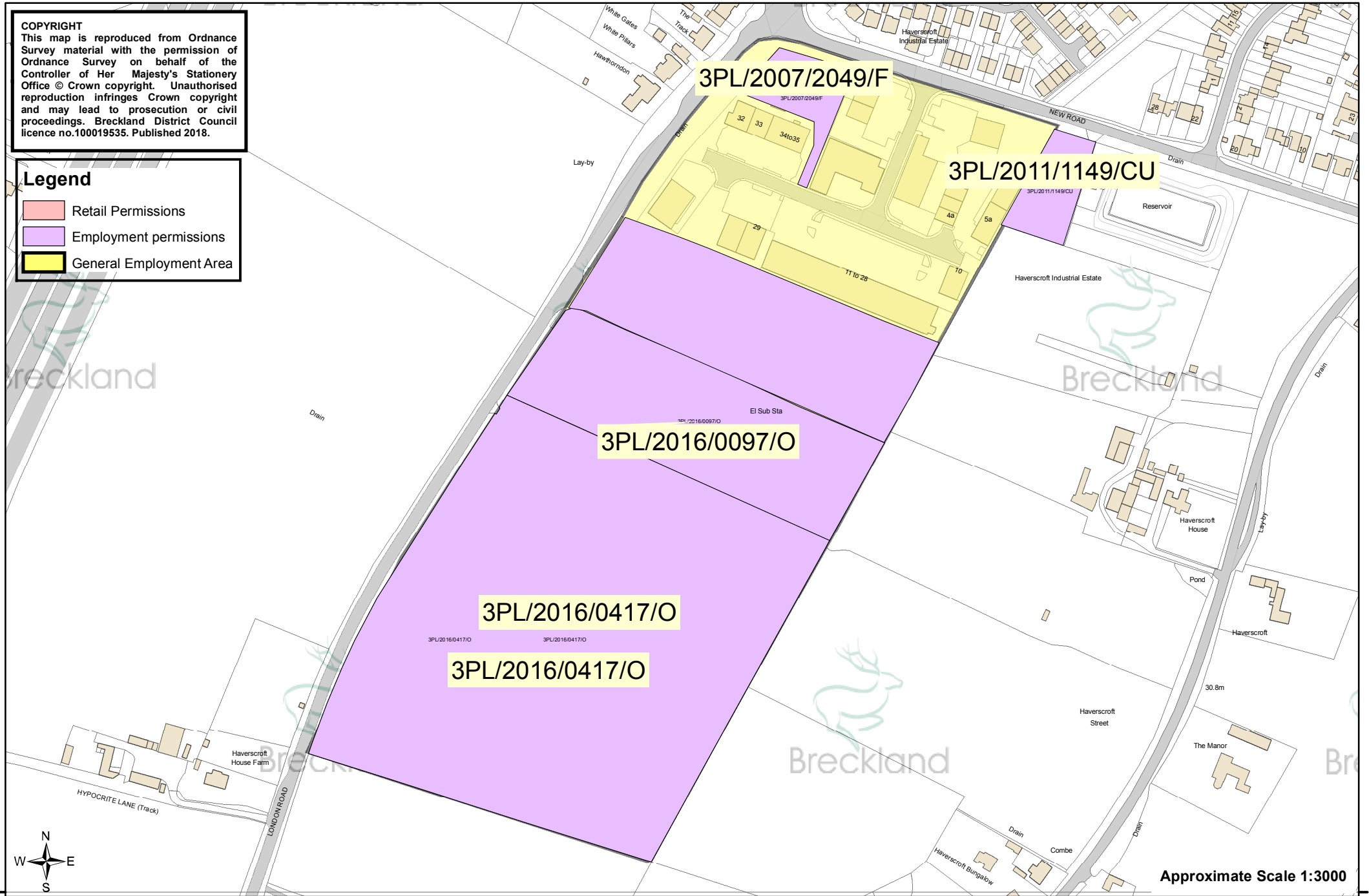
Legend
[Yellow Box] General Employment Area



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Legend

-  Retail Permissions
-  Employment permissions
-  General Employment Area



GEA2: Bunns Bank Industrial Estate, Attleborough

Introduction

2.7. The General Employment Area boundary was designated in 2009 through the adoption of the Core Strategy, but was not reviewed through the 2012 Site Specific Policies and Proposals Development Plan Document. This was proposed to be amended through the Attleborough and Snetterton Heath Area Action Plan, however production ceased in order to progress work on the Local Plan. Map 3 shows the extent of the general employment area as proposed on the Local Plan Policies Maps (LP/S/2).

Summary of the site

- Site totals 12.4 hectares and is the largest employment area in Attleborough.
- The site extends mainly along Bunns Bank road with a relatively small frontage onto the B1077 (Attleborough Road).
- Located 2.7km to the south of Attleborough's town centre and is surrounded by fields.

Planning permissions on the GEA

2.8. The following planning permissions have been granted on the General Employment Area:

- **3PL/2005/1015/F** - Erection of office/store building & parking for articulated vehicles
- **3PL/2007/1094/F** - Relocation of existing portakabin office buildings with associated road & parking new wc & wash down area
- **3PL/2007/0687/F** - Erection of two blocks of industrial units
- **3PL/2007/0519/F** - Construction of industrial units and surface water attenuation lagoon
- **3PL/2011/1015/F** - Proposed B2 General Industrial Unit
- **3PL/2013/0511/F** - Relocation of current Station Rd poultry processing to site of former poultry processing facility at Bunn Bank
- **3PL/2015/0845/F** - Proposed single storey extension to rear of existing industrial unit 22

2.9. These planning permissions can be seen on Map 4. It is considered that none of these permissions would lead to the need to assess the GEA boundary.

Adjacent planning permission

2.10. The following planning permission was granted partially outside of the General Employment Area:

- **3PL/2013/0511/F** - Relocation of current Station Rd poultry processing to site of former poultry processing facility at Bunn Bank

- 2.11. Part of the planning permission extends beyond the General Employment Area boundary, however this part of the application is solely for the provision of car parking and it is therefore not considered that a boundary change is required.

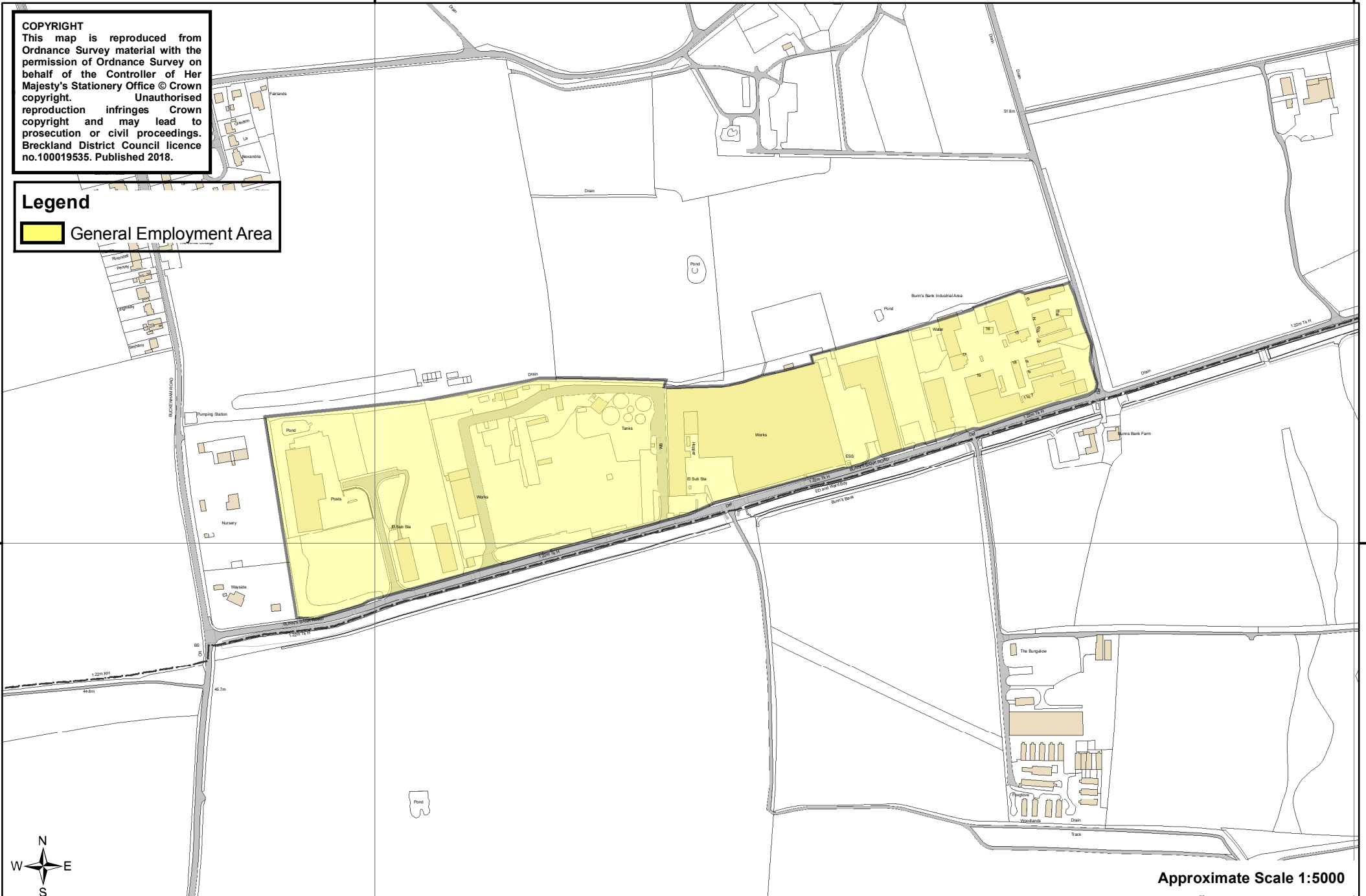
Conclusion

- 2.12. There are no planning permissions that would result in a need to amend the boundary of the GEA. The boundary as defined is considered to be robust and is proposed to be carried forward within the Local Plan.

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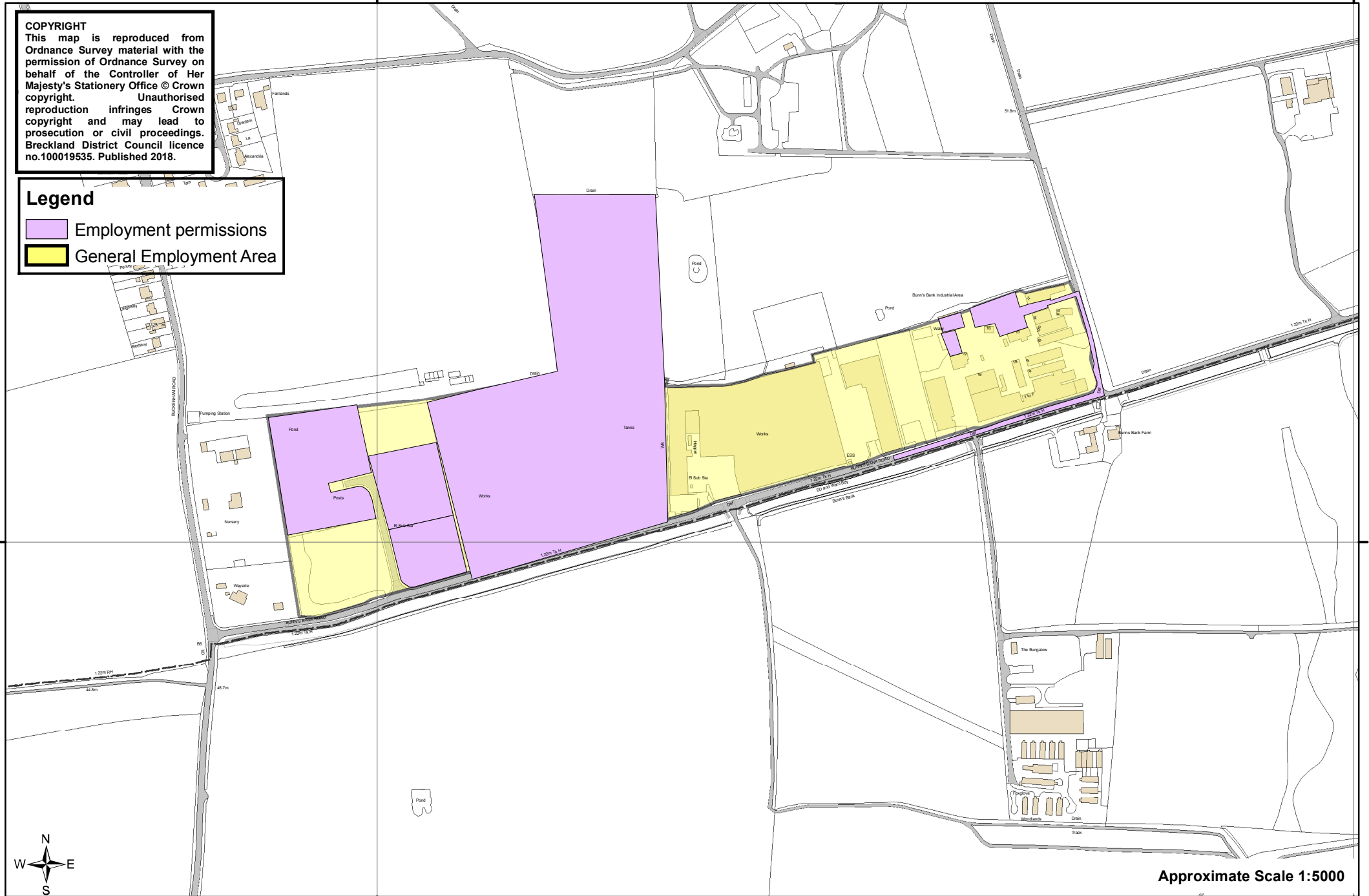
 General Employment Area



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Legend

- Employment permissions
- General Employment Area



GEA3: Gaymer Industrial Estate, Attleborough

Introduction

2.13. The General Employment Area boundary was designated in 2009 through the adoption of the Core Strategy, but was not reviewed through the 2012 Site Specific Policies and Proposals Development Plan Document. This was proposed to be amended through the Attleborough and Snetterton Heath Area Action Plan, however production ceased in order to progress work on the Local Plan. Map 5 shows the extent of the general employment area as proposed on the Local Plan Policies Maps (LP/S/2).

Summary of the site

- The site totals 11.4 hectares and is located near to Attleborough railway station.
- The site is flanked by playing fields to the south, while to the north (on the opposite side of the railway line) and east there is mainly houses.

Planning permissions on the GEA

2.14. The following planning permissions have been granted on the General Employment Area:


- **3PL/2004/1791/F** - Extension of existing industrial units
- **3PL/2006/0687/F** - Erection of light industrial/ commercial starter units
- **3PL/2013/0278/O** - Retail (A1), office (B1), and leisure (A3/A4/A5) uses, petrol filling station & associated works including access
- **3PL/2016/0595/F** - Erection of Storage Building

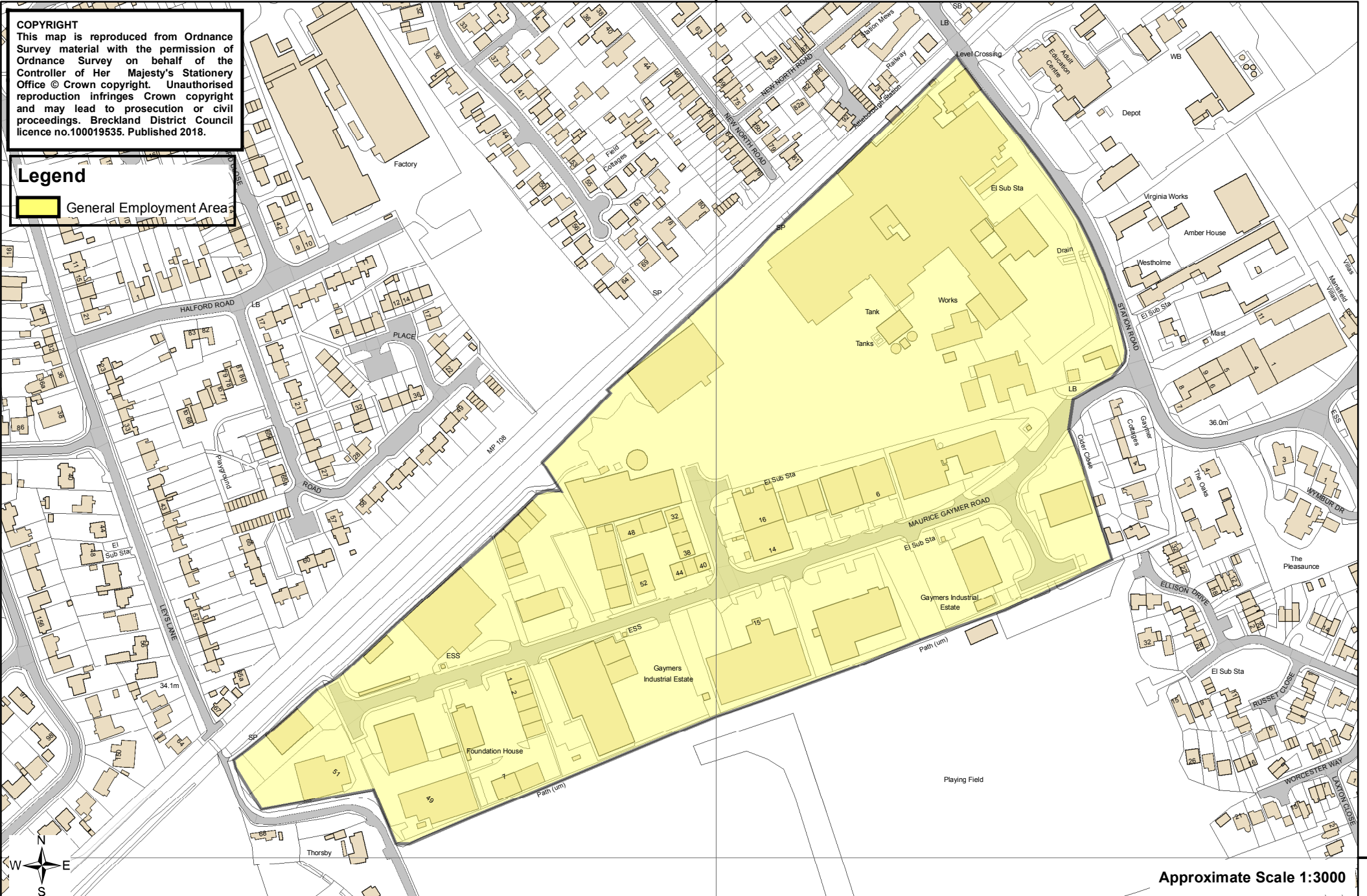
2.15. These planning permissions can be seen on Map 6. The permission 3PL/2013/0278/O has not yet been implemented and is due to expire on the 30/07/2018. As a result, no proposed changes to the boundary are required.

Conclusion

2.16. Although part of the site now has outline planning permission for retail use, this permission has not been implemented and therefore no amendment is proposed to the boundary. The boundary as defined is considered to be robust and is proposed to be carried forward within the Local Plan.

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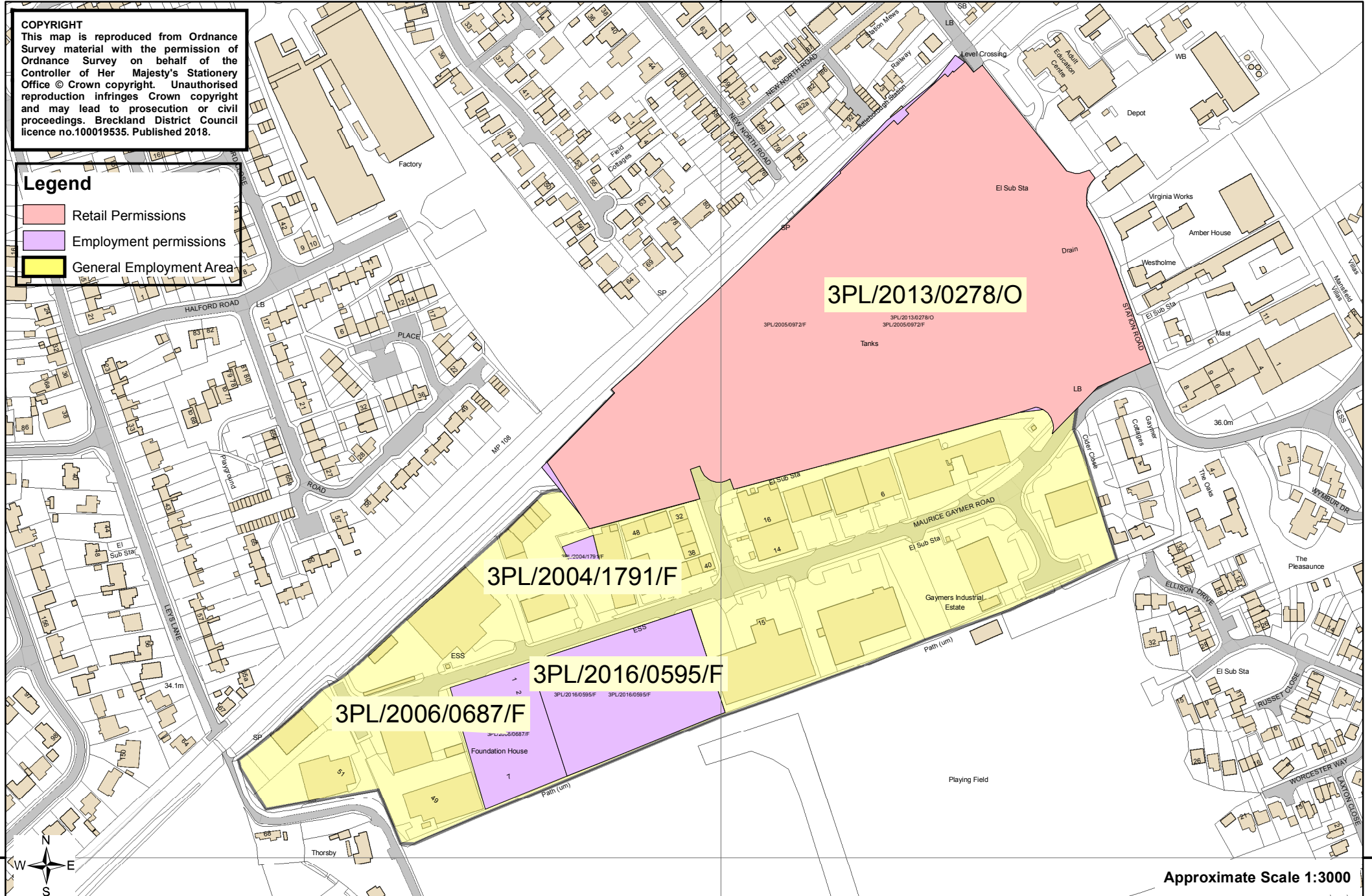
Legend
 General Employment Area



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Legend

- Retail Permissions
- Employment permissions
- General Employment Area



GEA4: Dereham Business Park, Dereham

Introduction

- 2.17. The General Employment Area boundary was designated in 2009 through the adoption of the Core Strategy and reviewed through the Site Specific Policies and Proposals Development Plan Document. Map 7 shows the extent of the general employment area as proposed on the Local Plan Policies Maps (LP/S/2).

Summary of the site

- The site totals 5.3 hectares and is located between a Tesco superstore and Breckland Council offices.
- The site features excellent connectivity to the A47 trunk road.

Planning permissions on the GEA

- 2.18. The following planning permissions have been granted on the General Employment Area:

- **3PL/2004/1505/CU** - Change of use to fitness gym/ changing rooms etc
- **3PL/2005/0554/F** - 5 new office/light industrial units(B1,B2,B8, trade counter/showroom/distribution)with car park
- **3PL/2007/1946/O** - Proposed commercial building
- **3PL/2008/1596/CU** - Change of use from part storage to all retail (retrospective)
- **3PL/2008/0896/F** – Erection of seven office units & associated wind turbine

- 2.19. These planning permissions can be seen on Map 8. It is considered that none of these permissions would lead to the need to assess the GEA boundary.

Conclusion

- 2.20. There are no planning permissions that would result in a need to amend the boundary of the GEA. The boundary as defined is considered to be robust and is proposed to be carried forward within the Local Plan.

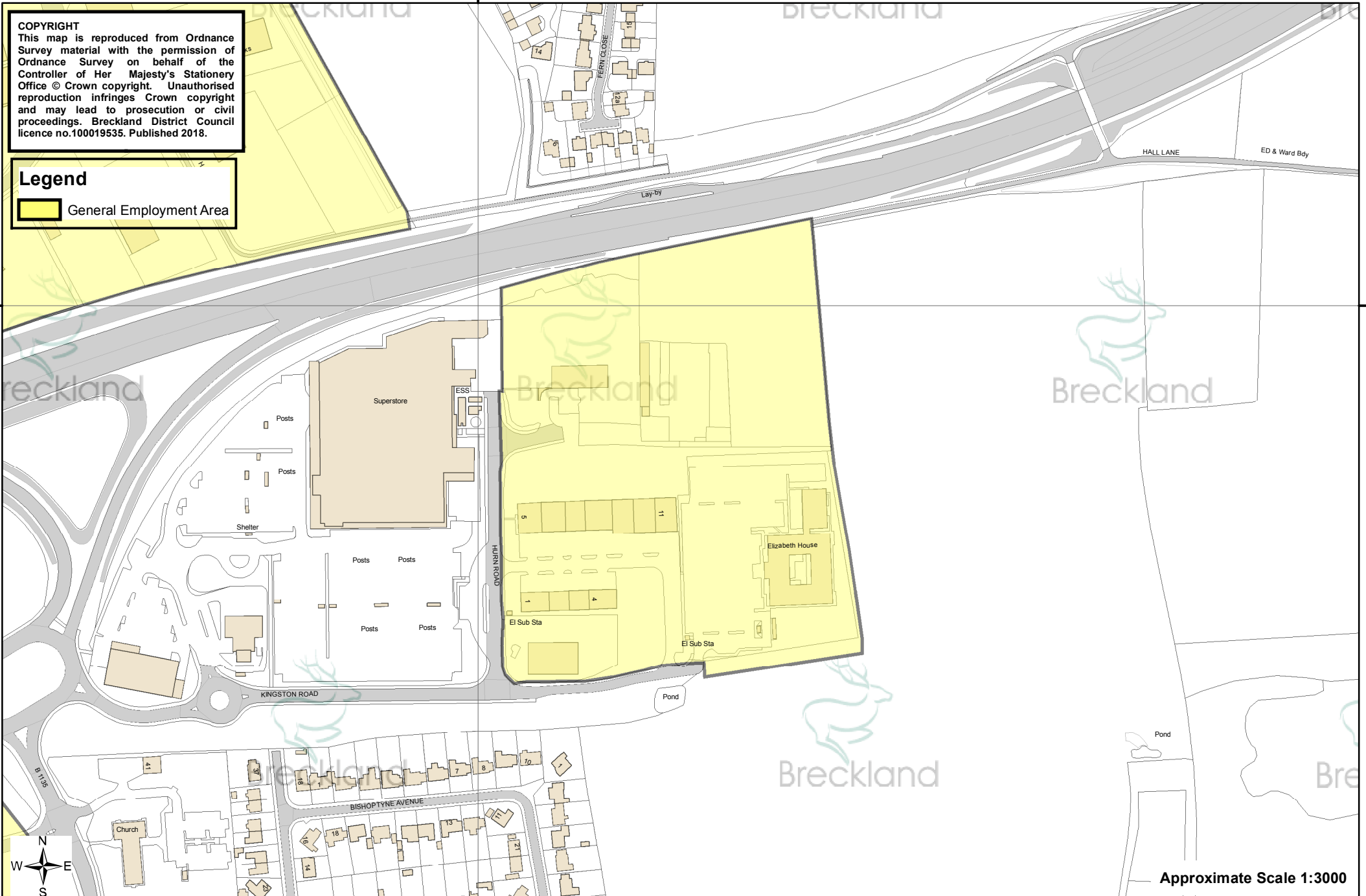
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Legend
[Yellow Box] General Employment Area

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Approximate Scale 1:3000

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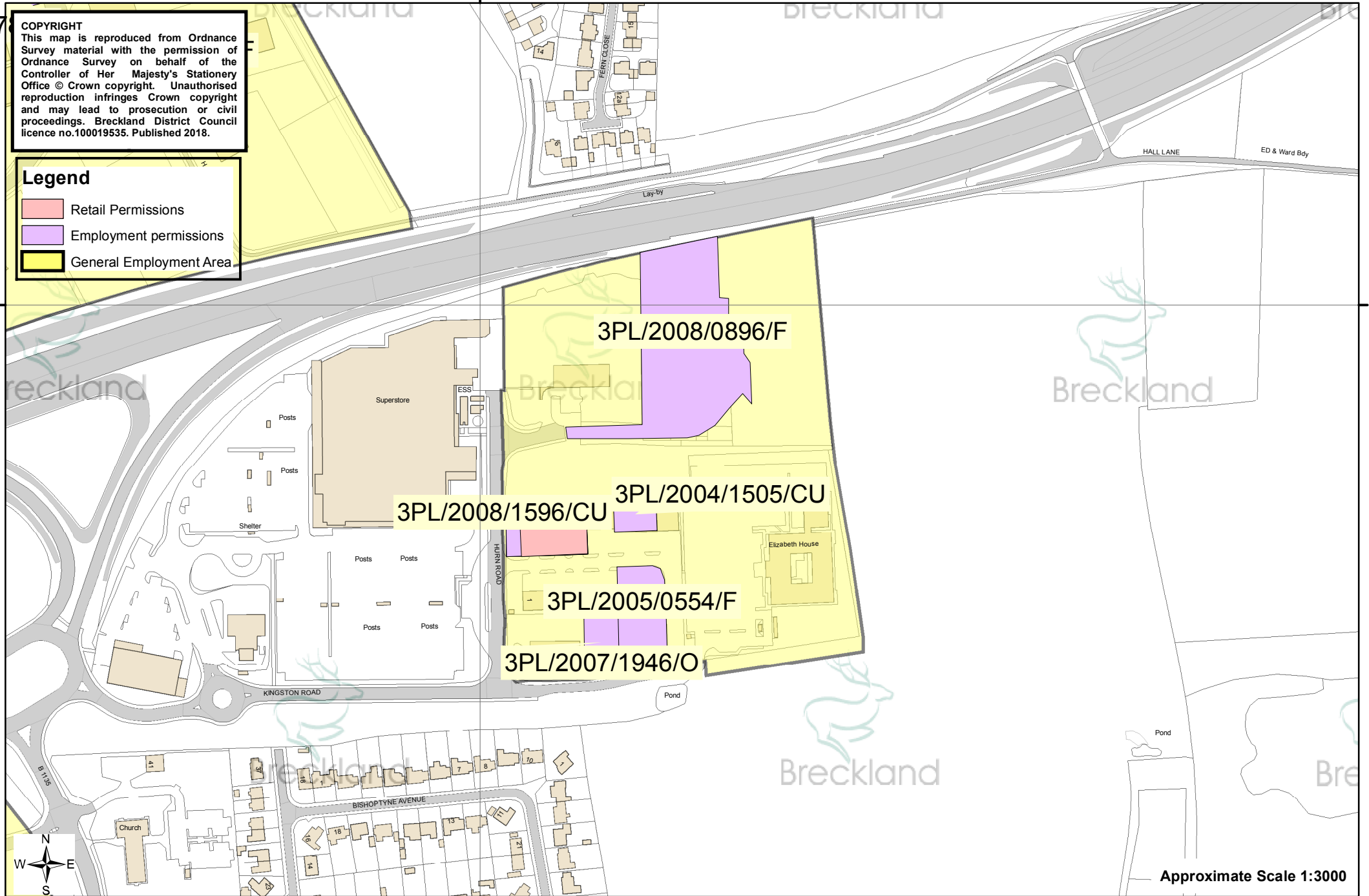
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Legend

-  Retail Permissions
-  Employment permissions
-  General Employment Area

312500

312500



Approximate Scale 1:3000

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GEA5: Yaxham Road Industrial Estate, Dereham

Introduction

- 2.21. The General Employment Area boundary was designated in 2009 through the adoption of the Core Strategy and reviewed through the Site Specific Policies and Proposals Development Plan Document. Map 9 shows the extent of the general employment area as proposed on the Local Plan Policies Maps (LP/S/2).

Summary of the site

- The site totals 13.2 hectares and is located next to a junction for the A47.
- The site has excellent access to local services and the strategic road network.

Planning permissions on the GEA

- 2.22. These planning permissions can be seen on Map X. The following planning permissions have been granted on the General Employment Area:

- **3PL/2004/0904/F** - Erection of agricultural machinery workshop and offices
- **3PL/2005/0788/F** - Construction of light industrial unit with associated parking (renewal)
- **3PL/2007/2073/F** - Erection of builders merchants
- **3PL/2008/0622/F** - Proposed extension to ind. unit to provide add. workshop floor space & spray painting bay & prep.area
- **3PL/2015/0710/F** - Extension to warehouse, construction of offices and 4 industrial units

- 2.23. These planning permissions can be seen on Map 10. It is considered that none of these permissions would lead to the need to assess the GEA boundary.

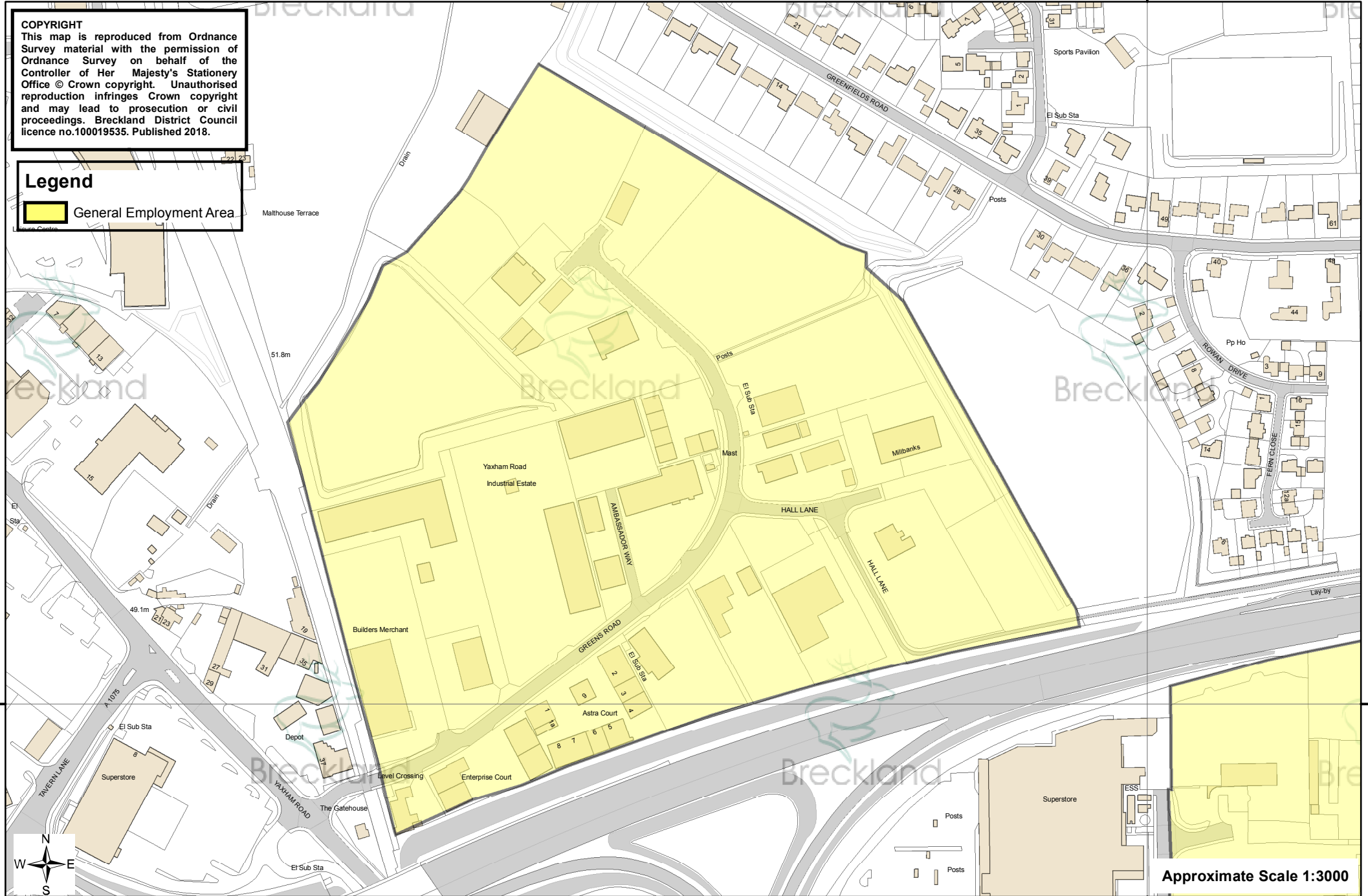
Conclusion

- 2.24. There are no planning permissions that would result in a need to amend the boundary of the GEA. The boundary as defined is considered to be robust and is proposed to be carried forward within the Local Plan.

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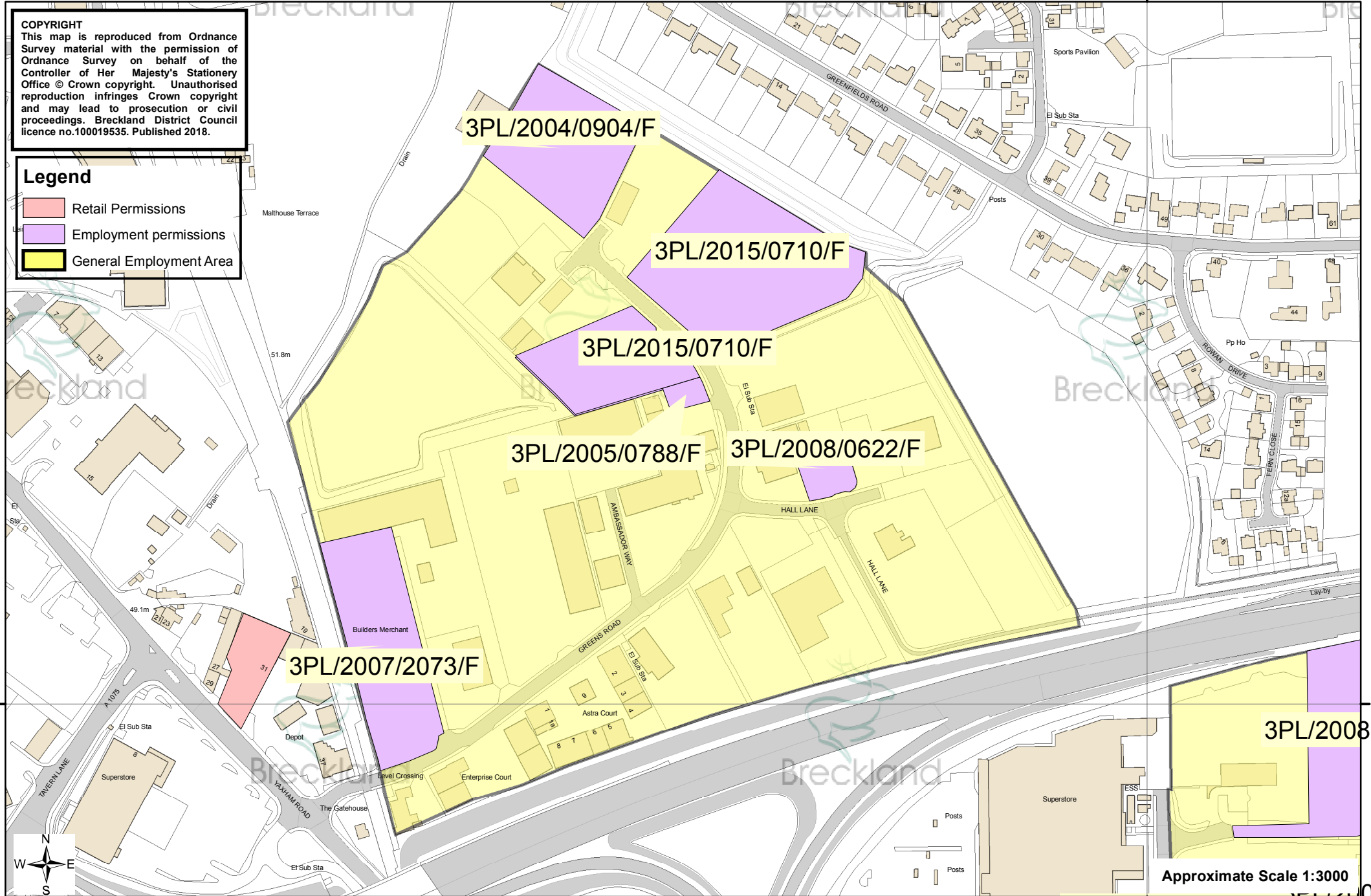
 General Employment Area



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Legend

-  Retail Permissions
-  Employment permissions
-  General Employment Area



3PL/2004/0904/F

3PL/2015/0710/F

3PL/2015/0710/F

3PL/2005/0788/F

3PL/2008/0622/F

3PL/2007/2073/F

3PL/2008

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3PL/2008/1596/CU

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GEA6: Rashes Green Industrial Estate, Dereham

Introduction

- 2.25. The General Employment Area boundary was designated in 2009 through the adoption of the Core Strategy and reviewed through the Site Specific Policies and Proposals Development Plan Document. Map 11 shows the extent of the general employment area as proposed on the Local Plan Policies Maps (LP/S/2).

Summary of the site

- The site totals 25.1 hectares and is the largest employment area in Dereham.
- The site is located next to a junction for the A47 so has very good access to the strategic road network

Planning permissions on the GEA

- 2.26. The following planning permissions have been granted on the General Employment Area:

- **3PL/2007/1626/CU** - Change of use to martial arts school
- **3PL/2008/0191/F** - Proposed alterations together with a proposed linked extension with associated parking areas
- **3PL/2008/1365/F** – First floor extension
- **3PL/2009/0517/F** - Change of use of units 1 & 2 from warehouse (B8) to industrial (B2), MOT inspect. bay, increase door size unit 2
- **3PL/2012/0469/F** - Demolish unit 7, refurbish & Change of use of unit 5 to bus depot, hardstanding & erect 3m acoustic fence
- **3PL/2012/0028/F** – Erection of office block
- **3PL/2013/0071/H** - Proposed mixed use development (full - new drive thru restaurant & family restaurant, outline - 51 bed hotel & dev.)
- **3PL/2014/0934/F** – Proposed Discount Food Store & Car parking

- 2.27. These planning permissions can be seen on Map 12. The planning permission for a proposed mix use development (3PL/2013/0071/H) has been amended and there is now a McDonalds Drive Thru restaurant and the Greenstone pub on the site. The planning permission for the proposed discount food store and car parking (3PL/2014/0934/F) has now been built out. A proposed amendment is proposed to the General Employment Area to exclude the area that has now been built out. This proposed change can be seen on Map 13.

Conclusion


- 2.28. The approved uses on the site mean that the GEA boundary has been amended to exclude these. The proposed boundary change is proposed to be reflected on the Local Plan policies maps.

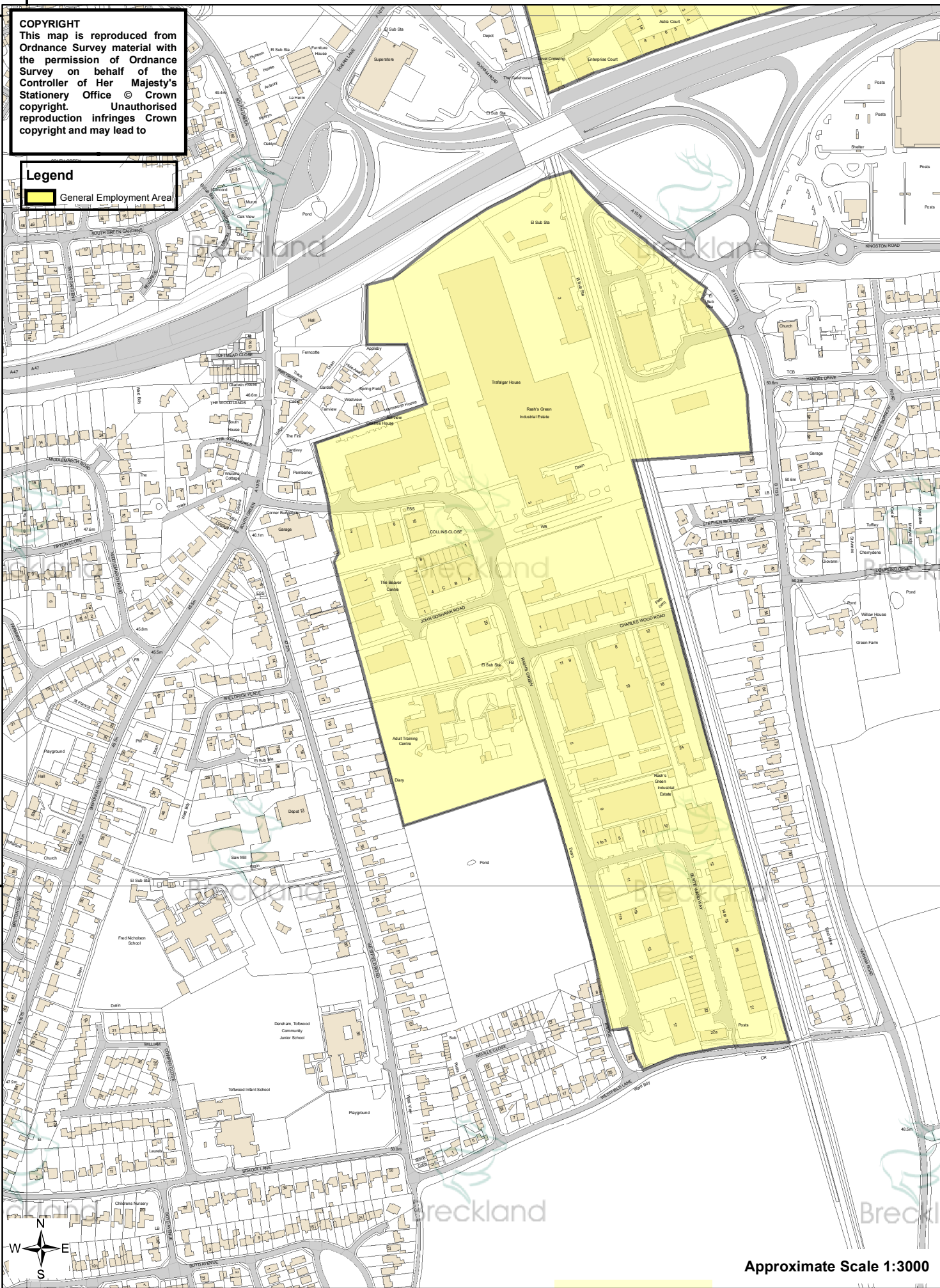
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 General Employment Area



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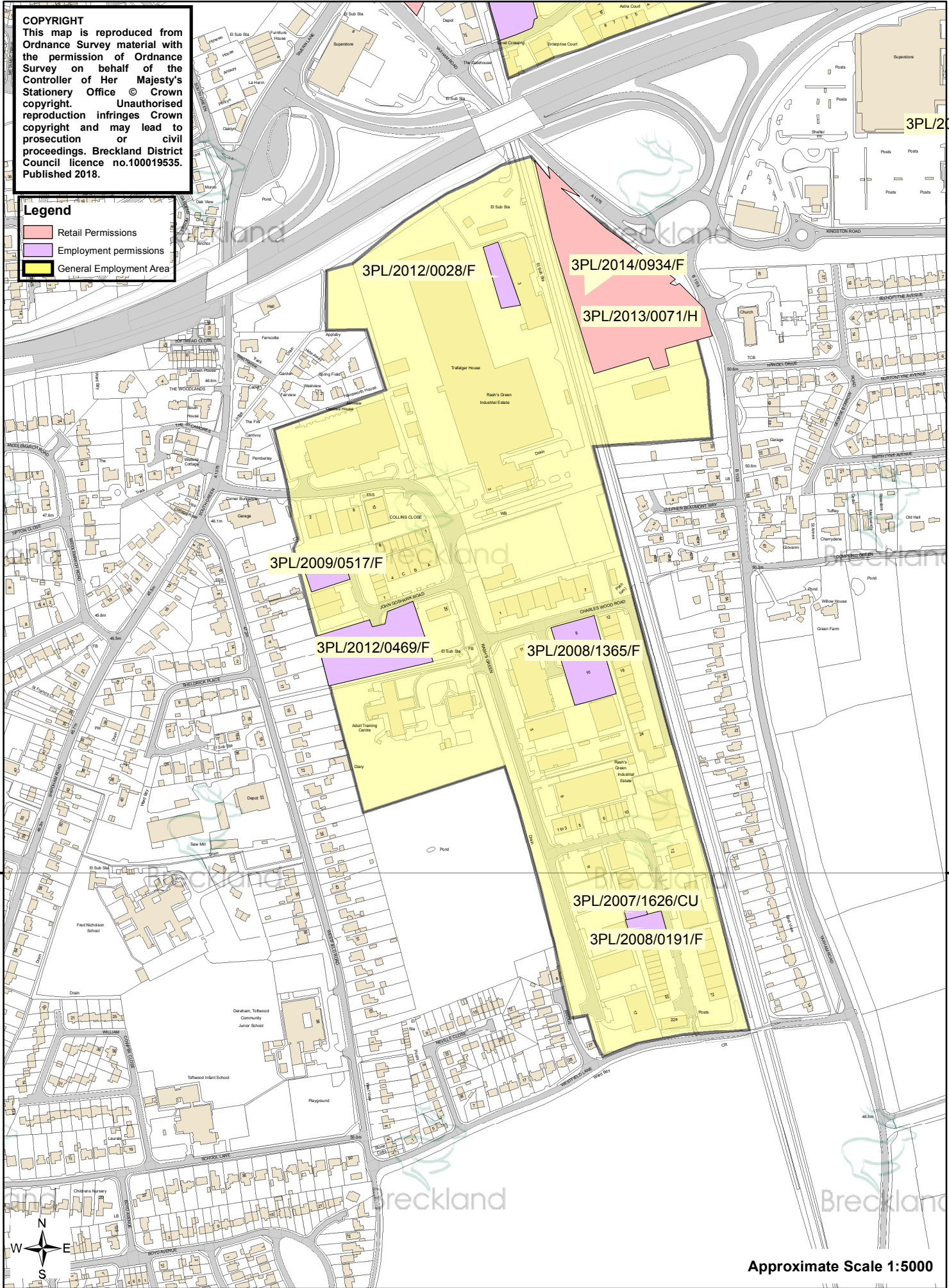
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Legend

-  Retail Permissions
-  Employment permissions
-  General Employment Area



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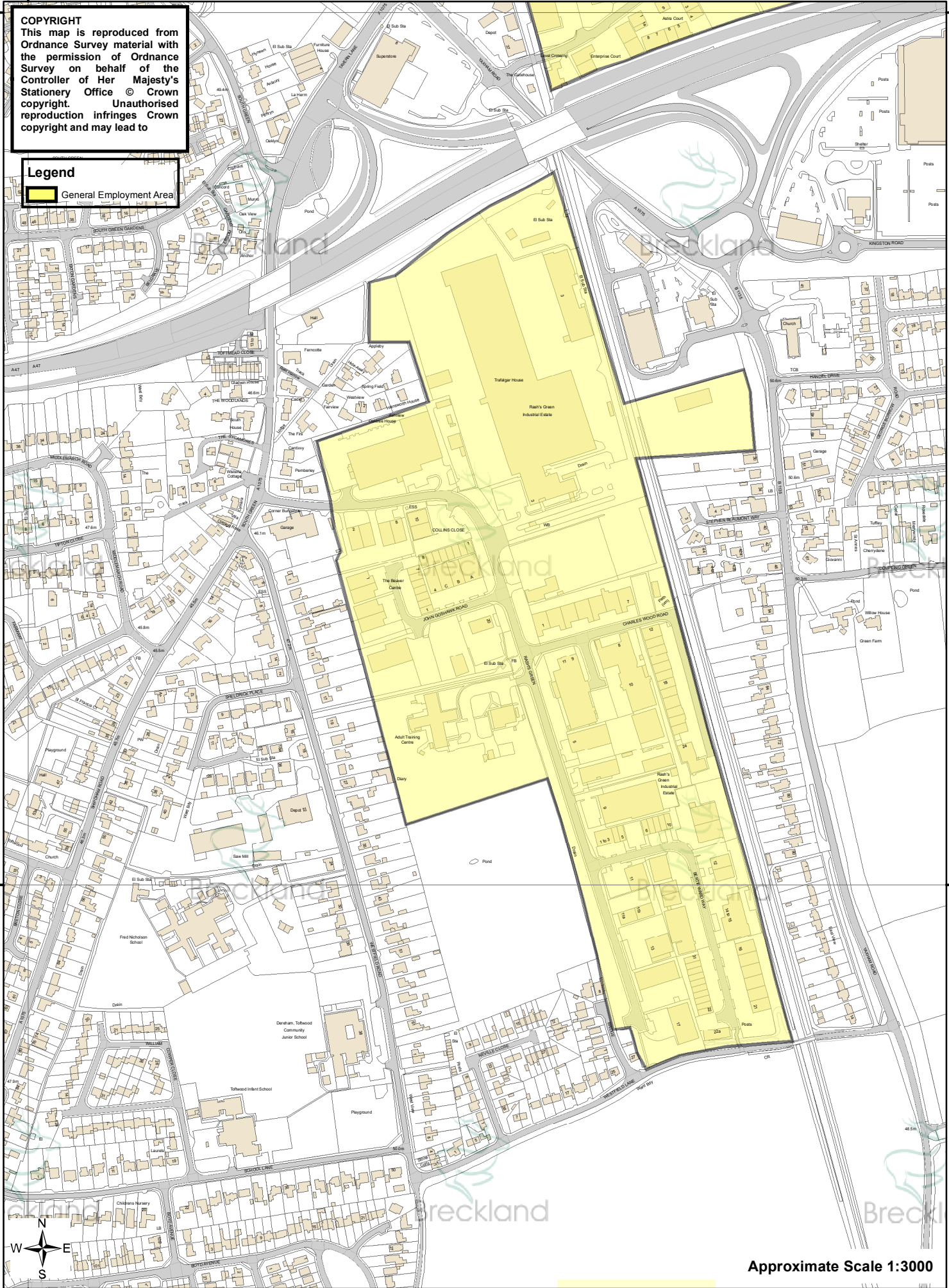
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 General Employment Area



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Approximate Scale 1:3000

GEA7: Roudham/Harling Road Industrial Area

Introduction

- 2.29. The General Employment Area boundary was designated in 2009 through the adoption of the Core Strategy and reviewed through the Site Specific Policies and Proposals Development Plan Document. Map 14 shows the extent of the general employment area as proposed on the Local Plan Policies Maps (LP/S/2).

Summary of the site

- The site totals 14 hectares and is located to the south of a railway line.
- The site is located at the junction of Roudham Road and the B111.

Planning permissions on the GEA

- 2.30. The following planning permissions have been granted on the General Employment Area:


- **3PL/2005/1784/F** - Erection of office/store building and parking for articulated vehicles
- **3PL/2006/0807/F** - Industrial unit for warehousing with lorry dock and ground floor offices
- **3PL/2011/1202/F** - Change of use from B1 to B8 storage and distribution. Erection of 2.2m high timber acoustic fencing
- **3PL/2012/0189/F** - Erection of storage building
- **3PL/2015/0035/F** - New steel clad storage unit to the rear of units 19 & 20

- 2.31. These planning permissions can be seen on Map 15. It is considered that none of these permissions would lead to the need to assess the GEA boundary.

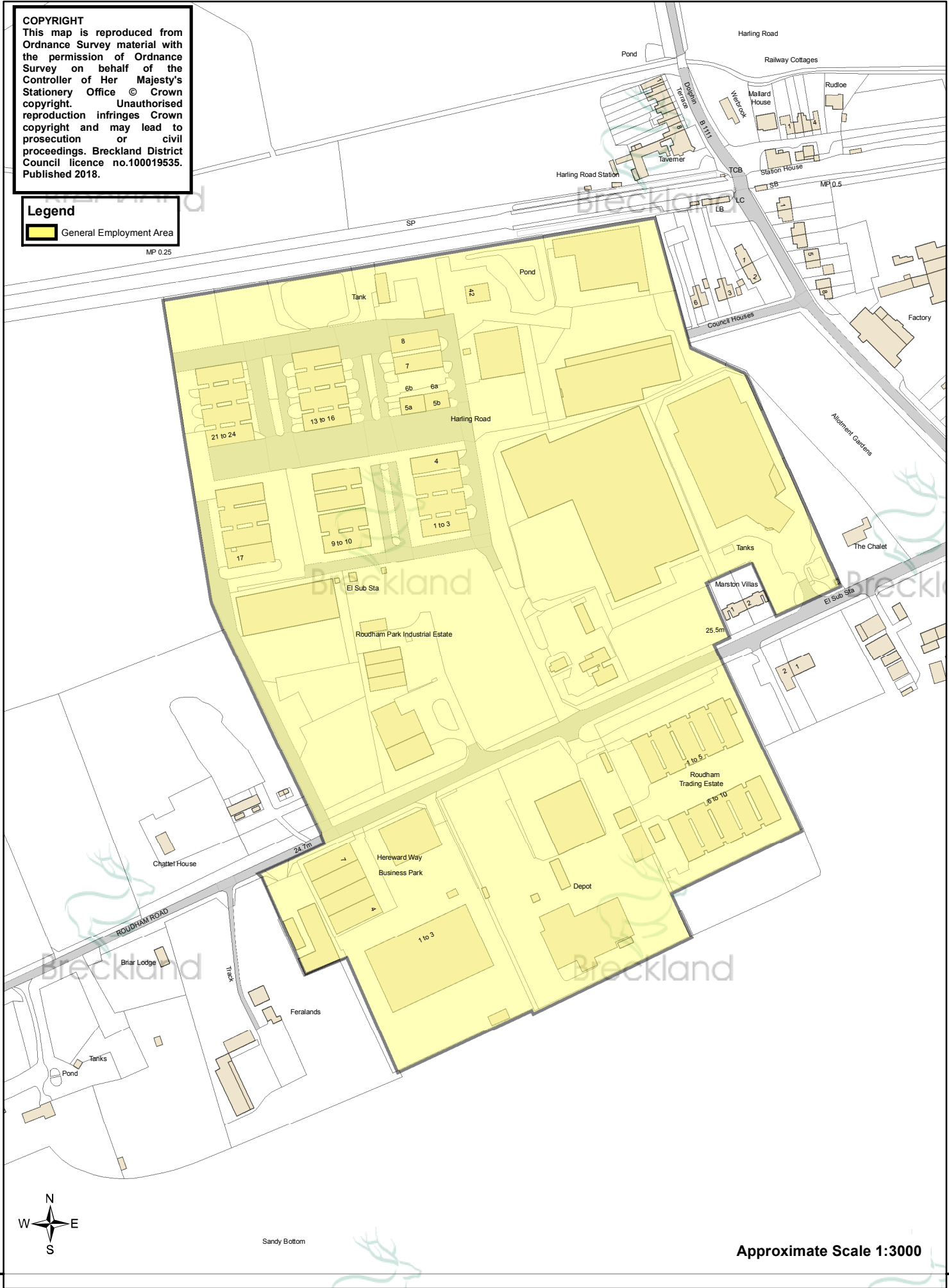
Conclusion

- 2.32. There are no planning permissions that would result in a need to amend the boundary of the GEA. The boundary as defined is considered to be robust and is proposed to be carried forward within the Local Plan.

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Legend
 General Employment Area

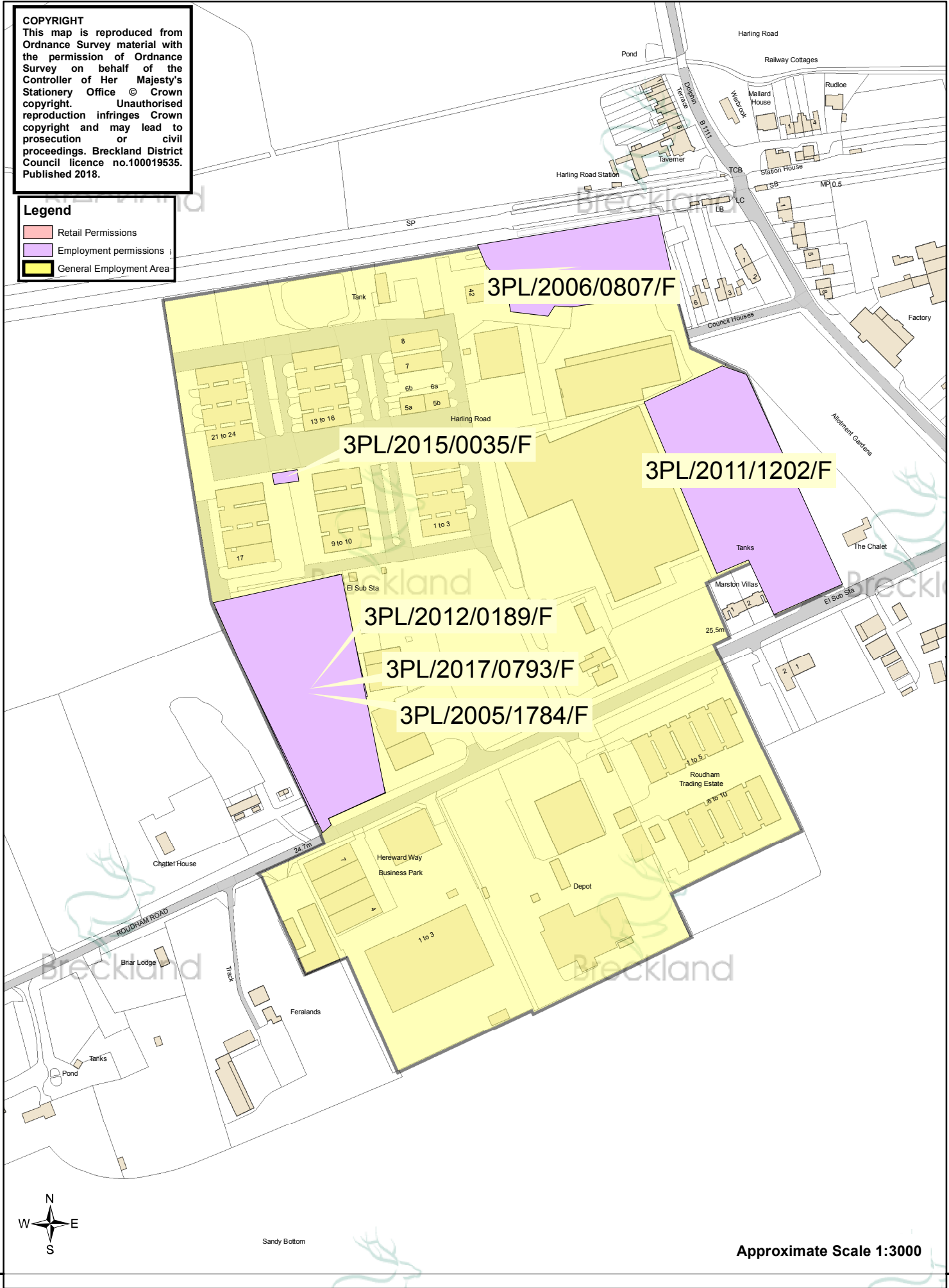
MP 0.25



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Legend

- Retail Permissions
- Employment permissions ;
- General Employment Area



Approximate Scale 1:3000

287300

287300

GEA8: Shipdham Airfield Industrial Estate

Introduction

- 2.33. The General Employment Area boundary was designated in 2009 through the adoption of the Core Strategy and reviewed through the Site Specific Policies and Proposals Development Plan Document. Map 16 shows the extent of the general employment area as proposed on the Local Plan Policies Maps (LP/S/2).

Summary of the site

- The site totals 22.2 hectares and is situated on part of the former Shipdham airfield.
- The site fronts onto Mile Road (the C197), and via the A1075, Dereham is approximately 9km to the east and Watton is about 12km to the west.

Planning permissions on the GEA

- 2.34. The following planning permissions have been granted on the General Employment Area:

- **3PL/2017/0301/F** - Extension to portacabin offices

- 2.35. These planning permissions can be seen on Map 17. It is considered that none of these permissions would lead to the need to assess the GEA boundary.

Conclusion

- 2.36. There are no planning permissions that would result in a need to amend the boundary of the GEA. The boundary as defined is considered to be robust and is proposed to be carried forward within the Local Plan.