

Strategic Masterplan Framework

May 2024



North Stevenage



croudacehomes

New Neighbourhood

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Branding inspired by E.M. Forster's work as an author, particularly 'A Room with a View' and also the beautiful surrounding countryside.

From 1883 to 1893 E.M. Forster lived at "Rooks Nest" a house past St. Nicholas church in Stevenage.



Contents

Chapter 1	
Introduction	5
1.1. Purpose and Status of the Document	6
Chapter 2	
Vision and Placemaking Objectives	9
2.1. The Vision	10
2.2. Placemaking Themes and Objectives	12
Chapter 3	
Context and Site Analysis	15
3.1. Strategic Connectivity	16
3.2. Green Infrastructure Network	18
3.3. Site Analysis – Constraints and Opportunities	24
Chapter 4 Masterplan Framework	31
4.1. Land Use Framework	32
4.2. Development Framework	34
4.3. Movement and Access Framework	36
4.4. Green Infrastructure Framework	48
4.5. Biodiversity Framework	54
4.6. Height and Density Framework	58
4.7. Urban Design Framework	60
4.8. Sustainability and Energy Framework	64
Chapter 5 Illustrative Masterplan	69
5.1. Illustrative Masterplan	70
Chapter 6 Character Areas	73
6.1. Character Generators	74
6.2. Character Areas	76
6.3. Central Core	78
6.4. North Road Gateway	84
6.5. Woodland View	88
6.6. Village Edge	92
Chapter 7 Summary	97



Chapter 1



Introduction

1.1. Purpose and Status of the Document

Introduction

Land to the north of Stevenage has been identified in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan for the development of approximately 900 homes and supporting facilities and infrastructure.

This Strategic Masterplan Framework Document shows how the scheme can be designed and delivered so as to create a successful and vibrant community on the site which integrates with the proposed development to the south and respects the character of other nearby areas, notably including Graveley village to the north and the proposed Forster Country Park to the south-east.

The masterplan summarises the work which has been done to assess the ecology, landscape, local character and transport networks of the area, alongside other opportunities and constraints. It then presents a proposed masterplan framework which responds to all these considerations to create a new neighbourhood with a community hub, Primary School, open spaces and housing, and considers how the character of different parts of the site will respond to their setting and function. The masterplan will then inform subsequent planning applications, which will develop the concept from the masterplan into more detailed proposals.

This Strategic Masterplan Framework has been subject to extensive consultation with officers at North Hertfordshire District Council and identified stakeholders. This process also included discussion at a Design Review Panel in February 2023 and subsequent progress and updates were presented to the Council's Growth Board in May 2023.

Site Location

The site is located east of North Road, north of the urban edge of Stevenage. The southern boundary also lies adjacent to land within Policy H03 of the Stevenage Local Plan which has planning consent for 800 new homes and is presently under construction.

Purpose of Document

The purpose of the following document is:

- To set out how design proposals align with Policy SP9 Design and Sustainability and Policy SP16 Site NSI - North of Stevenage and national and local plan policy. This includes delivery of 900 homes, a 2FE Primary School and Community Uses.
- To provide a development framework based on a set of clear design parameters that will guide high quality placemaking on the site
- To show the site is linking into the consented site at HO3 within Stevenage Borough Council
- To constitute a material consideration that will form the basis of an Outline Planning Application
- Clarify the parameters and principles for which planning approval will be sought
- Provide a framework to secure design quality and support co-ordinated high-quality development

The proposals in the Strategic Masterplan Framework will be subject to further, detailed investigations as the scheme progresses. This may result in elements of the masterplan being refined or altered.

Structure of Document

The document begins by setting out an exciting Vision for the site informed by a clear contextual analysis identified in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4 then develops a Masterplan Framework comprised of 'design parameters' focused on green infrastructure, access and place making.

An illustrative masterplan is explored in Chapter 5 which represents one illustration of how the design parameters can be delivered on the site.

The final chapter is Chapter 6. This provides an illustrative exploration of Character Areas with design principles based on density, materials, landscape, built form and housing typologies.





Site Location Plan



Chapter 2



Vision and Placemaking Objectives

2.1. The Vision

Our vision is to create a sustainable northern extension to Stevenage with its own distinctive character that provides a new and permanent northern edge to the town, reflects the transition from town to country and respects the adjoining historic village of Graveley.

The scheme will deliver a new primary school, community uses and high-quality homes.

An extensive network of green spaces, centered around a generous linear park along the Hertfordshire Way, will help connect the site with Graveley, adjoining development in Stevenage, the proposed Forster Country Park and the wider rights of way network with an attractive and walkable new neighbourhood for residents and visitors.



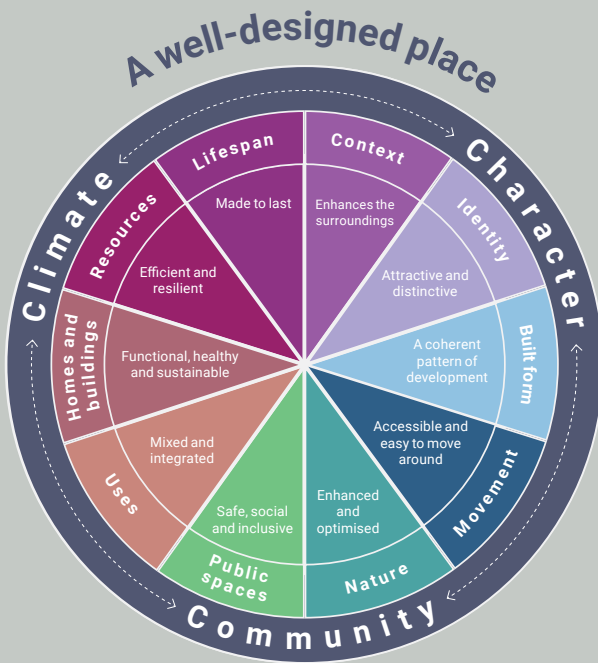


Illustration of the Community Hub and School

2.2. Placemaking Themes and Objectives

In order to deliver the Vision, we are following a set of placemaking themes and objectives that will address the well-designed place characteristics defined in the National Model Design Code and National Design Guide.

These are as follows:



10 Characteristics as identified in the National Design guide

Context

The development will address the existing natural features and context of the site, including sloping topography, landscape character and areas of existing planting such as Ten Acre Plantation. In addition, new development will respond to and interpret the historic local character including Graveley and adjacent parts of north Stevenage.

Identity

The development will draw on the existing vernacular around Graveley and Stevenage to inspire the site identity. However, it will aim to establish an identity of its own. This will be achieved through appropriate scale buildings, considered architectural treatment and a series of formal and informal green spaces including a well-defined street hierarchy to create a distinctive, legible and attractive neighbourhood. A set of character areas responding to key generators will help strengthen the overall identity but also provide some local variation.

Built Form

The density and heights of the proposed buildings will address the sensitivity around the rural edges and partial site visibility as well as enhance placemaking opportunities around key spaces, streets and vistas. Landmark buildings, such as the primary school and community hub, will be established at the centre of the development helping to create a legible community heart.



Movement

A proposed network of green connections will integrate with the existing Public Right of Way (PROW) network linking Graveley with the proposed Country Park, the H03 site and further connections to Stevenage. The attractive, legible and direct routes will create a walkable/cyclable and well connected network to minimise the need for journeys by private vehicles. An improved bus connection will be brought into the site, alongside a mobility hub integrating the site with the wider urban context.

Nature

Existing biodiversity around the development edges, which includes the woodland belt to the south and adjacent plantations and hedgerows around the periphery will be well incorporated into the overall design. Additional green infrastructure through parkland, street tree planting and water attenuation will be introduced to enhance overall biodiversity and placemaking.

Public Spaces

The development will feature a network of streets and public open spaces to enhance the attractive character of the proposed uses as well as to mitigate the rural edges. The Community Hub will include a well integrated and attractive market square. Also, the Central Core will feature a shared space with filtered traffic to favour active and sustainable modes of transport with school drop-off being permitted and managed. Smaller open spaces will feature within housing areas and provide play facilities.

Uses

Taking account of a new local retail centre at H03, a new primary school and community hub will be established on site, which will be located at the centre of the development. A key theme is to ensure new housing for all encourages a strong sense of community and by creating safe places for people to meet, be socially interactive and to feel a sense of ownership.

Resources

The development will seek to ensure an efficient use and overall reduction of resources that will help to contribute towards climate change mitigation and adaptation. The development will need to be resilient to future climate challenges through future-proofed design, which responds to government policy, including the Future Homes Standard.

Lifespan

An attractive and well-designed place will ensure that the development can stand the test of time through quality and simplicity.



Chapter 3



Context and Site Analysis

3.1. Strategic Connectivity

Public Transport

The site benefits from good public transport services, which include a 5-10min walk from the proposed site entrances to services 55 and 100/101. The 55 service provides regular half-hourly connections between Letchworth and Stevenage town centre, accessible via Graveley, while the 100/101 service provides regular 40min services between Hitchin and Stevenage, via Lister Hospital.

The bus and railway stations are located approximately 3km from the site and are directly accessible via bus and cycle connections, in around 15-20mins. The railway station is within a walking distance to the bus station and it is served by Great Northern, LNER and Thameslink services with frequent and direct connections to Brighton, Cambridge, London King's Cross and St Pancras, York, Leeds and beyond. London connections are available approximately every 10 mins.

Cycling

The site is linked to a National Cycle Route 12 (NCR12), which provides off-road connections to Stevenage Town Centre, railway station and beyond, including to Letchworth Garden City to the north. A bridleway link to the south of the site forms a traffic free connection to the NCR 12, facilitating an off-road journey to Stevenage. North Road will undergo road improvements as part of the NS1 and the H03 schemes, which will deliver a (partial) segregated/off-road route and consequently provide more direct cycling links to the extensive network of cycle lanes in Stevenage.

Walking

The site is well linked to the adjacent areas of Graveley and north Stevenage, as well as the wider countryside. The area contains an extensive network of PROWs connecting the site to the surrounding services, recreation areas and landmarks.

The existing pedestrian network places the Old Town, within a 15-20min walk. A number of schools, including primary and secondary are accessible via the same routes along with a 6th Form College.

A number of public houses are also accessible via the PROW network to the south and north towards Graveley.

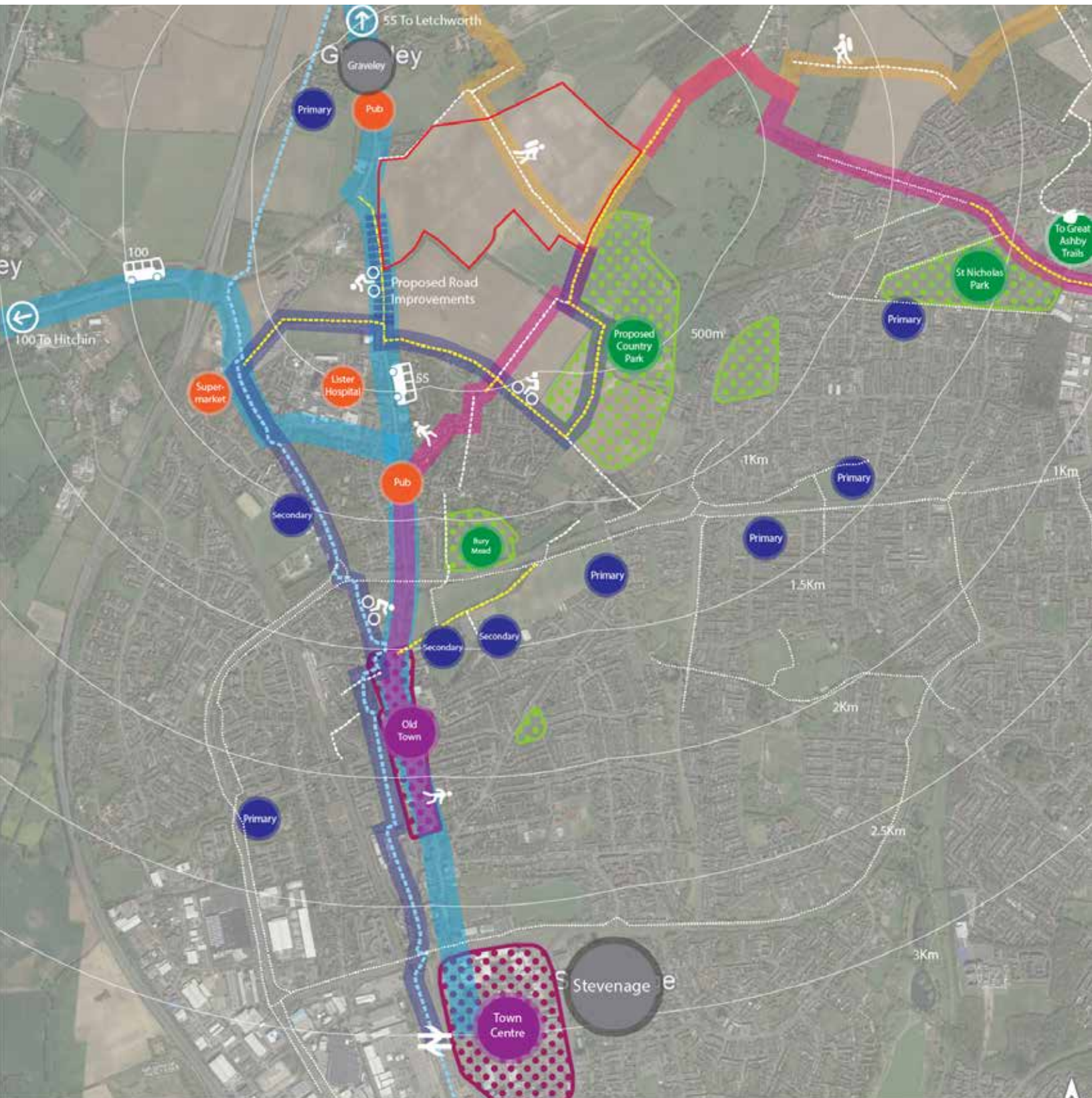
In addition, a supermarket is accessible along an existing bridleway to the west, within a 10min walk. The site is served by Hertfordshire Way - a long distance trail, which runs through the centre of the site and generally runs in the easterly direction towards Great Ashby, where further forest trail opportunities exist.

The site is an excellent location for recreation opportunities as well as important services and creates an opportunity to further improve these links.

Local Services and Facilities

The site enjoys a number of facilities within a walking distance, which should reduce the day to day reliance on private car. These include Lister hospital with on site pharmacy services, a large Sainsbury's supermarket to the west of the hospital and a number of pubs within Graveley and Stevenage.





3.2. Green Infrastructure Network

The development will provide a network of green infrastructure relating to, and influenced by existing:

- Public Open Space and Recreation
- Landscape Character
- Views and Visual Amenity
- Wildlife and Biodiversity

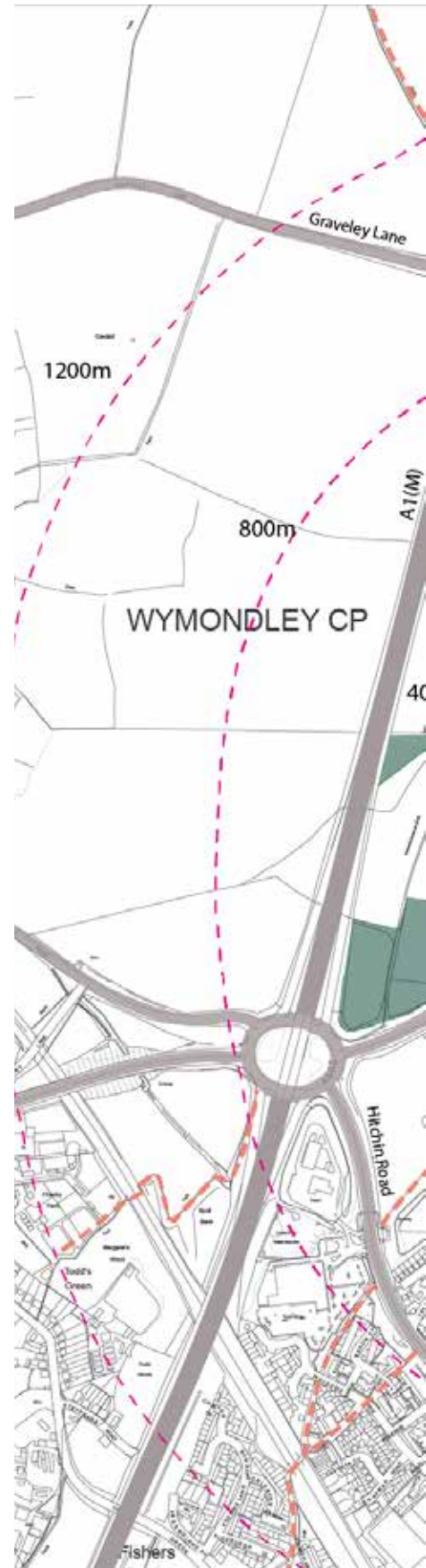
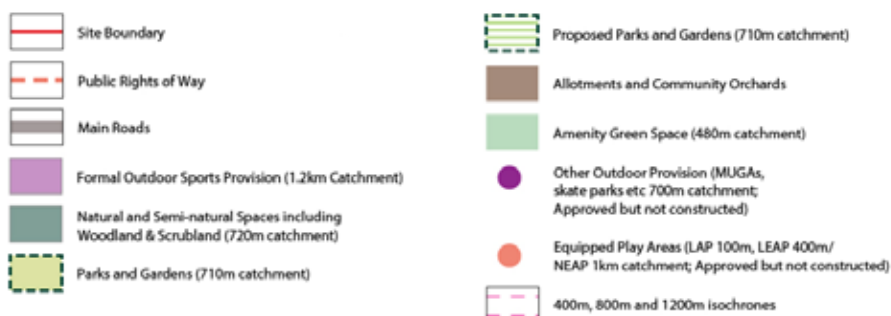
Public Open Space and Recreation

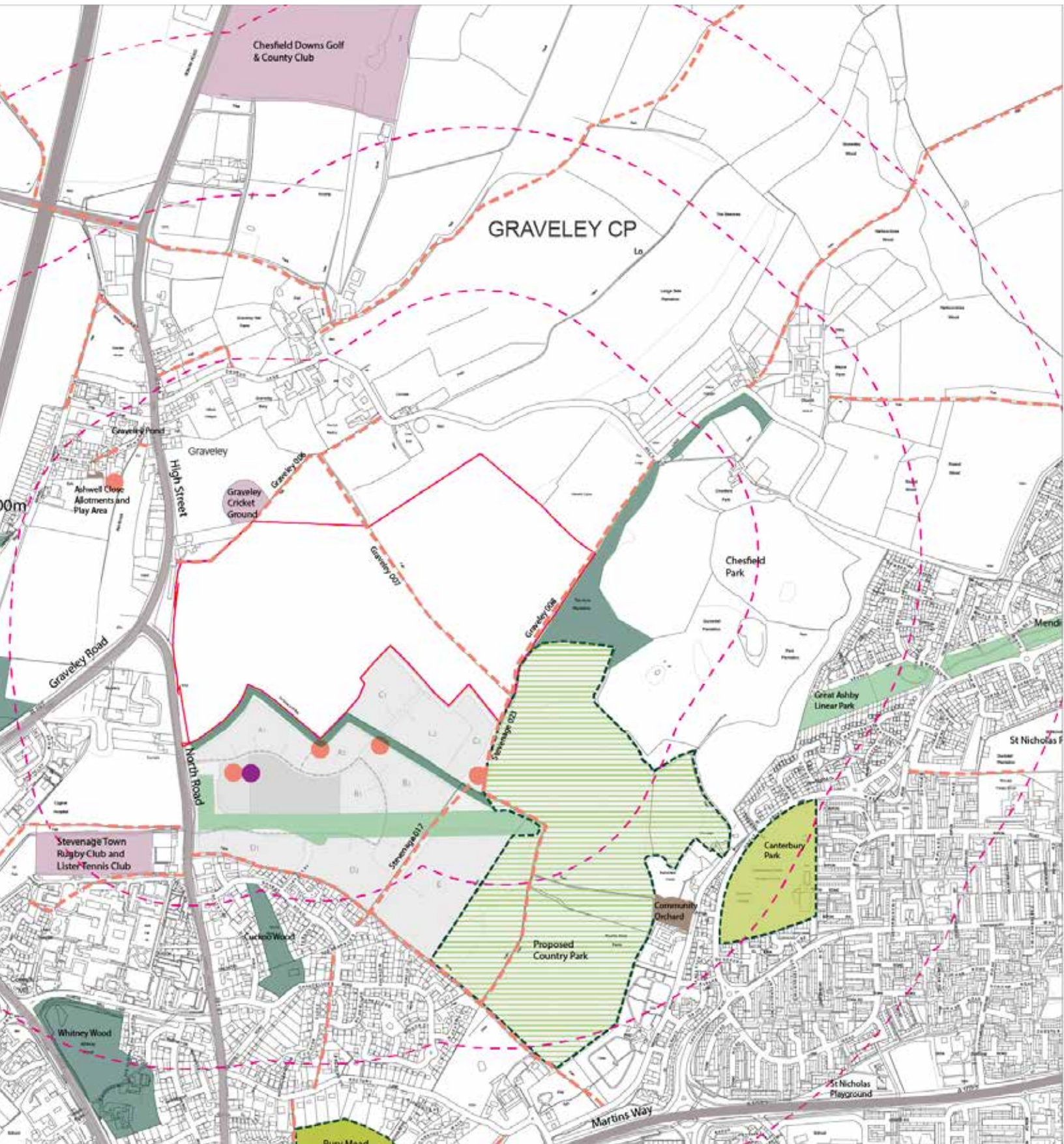
There are a number of existing recreational assets close to the Site and within recognised catchment distances. Facilities for outdoor sports include the Graveley Cricket Club to the north and Stevenage Town Rugby Club to the southwest. Playing fields associated with nearby secondary schools may provide opportunities for community use. There are small allotments, amenity and play area spaces in Graveley Village to the north-west serving local needs.

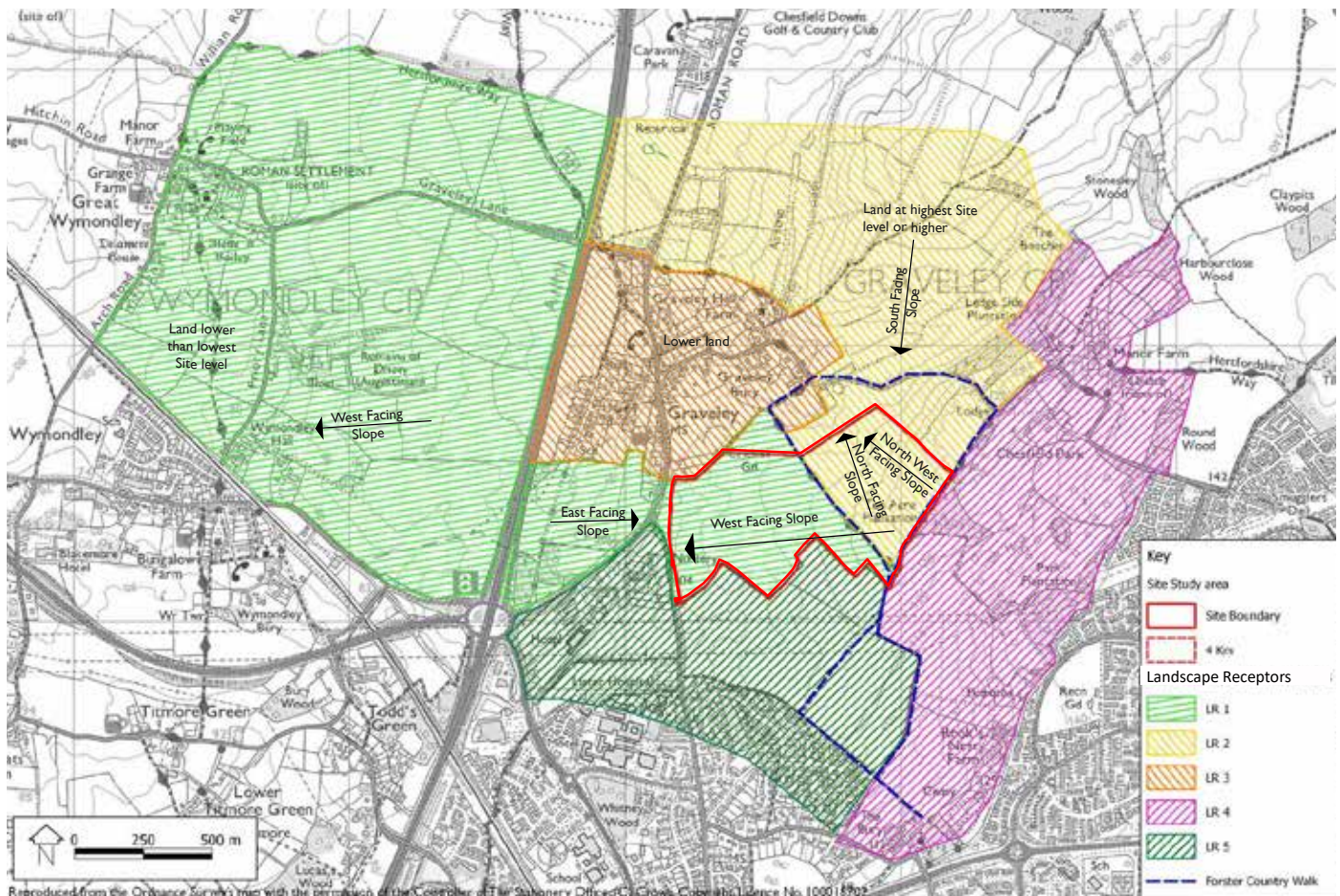
There are pockets of natural and semi-natural woodland within the urban area of Stevenage though these are not publicly accessible. Access to the wider countryside and associated natural environment is provided by several PROWs footpaths and bridleways, which cross the site. These provide connectivity with nearby settlements and include the Hertfordshire Way and Forster Country Walk circulating along footpath numbers 006, 007 and 008.

There are presently no parks and gardens in the immediate area, reflecting the edge of town location.

A significant area of public open space is to be provided as 'Forster Country Park' to the immediate south-east of the site as part of the adjoining development in Stevenage. Proposals for this site are currently under consideration and are expected to be predominantly natural and semi-natural in type. The adjoining site will also provide equipped play and a central green corridor within its developed area.







Landscape Character Plan

Landscape Context

The Site slopes down in two directions – generally down towards both the northern and western boundaries.. Undulations in the landform create minor ridges and dips. The topographic variation of the site and its surroundings, in combination with existing land uses and landscape features, contributes to subtly different local landscape character areas that provide the local landscape context. These comprise:

Landscape Receptor 1:

Large chalk agricultural fields on the urban edge, including tree-lined transport routes. The character area is a predominantly agricultural landscape containing several discordant features including the A1(M) motorway and motorway junction, and the main road network connecting through to Stevenage and Graveley. Local landscape assets include hedges, hedgerow trees and occasional small pockets of woodland plantation.

The landscape character encompasses the western part of the Site - a large, open arable field, bounded to the west by highway vegetation alongside North Road and Graveley Road, and to the south by plantation trees within a shelter belt.

Locally, the character transitions gradually towards the village of Graveley and away from the higher parts of the Site in the south-east. To the eastern edge, on higher ground, the character is more open. This boundary is marked by the Forster Country Walk/ Hertfordshire Way National Trail.

At its southern boundary, the character becomes influenced by a woodland plantation belt situated beyond the Site. Beyond this, the character area will be framed by a new settlement edge (development within Policy H03 within Stevenage Borough Council).

Towards the northern part of the Site the character becomes influenced by the existing settlement edge of the village of Graveley. Here, the site is bounded by a hawthorn

hedge and sycamore tree forming the boundaries of a small number of private gardens and the Graveley Cricket Club. This boundary provides an abrupt transition to the adjoining local character area to the north (LR3).

Landscape Receptor 2:

A clayland agricultural landscape on the rural edge, containing pockets of small woods.

A rolling arable landscape located between parkland landscapes to the southeast and the Chesfield Downs Golf and Country Club to the northwest.

The land rises to a height of approximately 140m AOD in the north-west, dipping to 100m AOD towards the edge of Graveley before rising again through and beyond the Site's eastern boundary to a height of approximately 135m AOD.

The character area encompasses the eastern parts of the Site.

Locally, this character area forms a north-west facing slope, running from the edge of Ten Acre Plantation and Chesfield Park down towards Back Lane and the eastern part of the settlement of Graveley to the north. This part of the Site has a visual relationship to the opposing slopes to the north, both of which are formed of arable fields, partially framed by remnant hedges and occasional small, wooded areas.

It features smaller fields than are found in adjoining character areas. These follow the contours of the hillside. This trait becomes less distinctive to the south (within the Site) where the slope is gentler.

Within the Site, the local character shares similar traits to the adjacent LRI character area. However, it is distinguished by the subtle influence of a local ridgeline running northwest towards Graveley, forming distinct aspects. The ridgeline is followed by the Forster Country Way/ Hertfordshire Way National trail.

Locally, the character area plateaus alongside Ten Acre Plantation, which lies immediately outside the Site but forms a distinctive and positive boundary feature.

The arable field running down the slope within the Site towards Back Lane, is framed by a short section of poorly maintained hawthorn hedgerow with occasional elm. This forms the eastern boundary of the Site.

Beyond the Site, three additional landscape characters can be identified within the immediate surroundings. These have the potential to influence or be influenced by the development proposals. They include:

Landscape Receptor 3:

Comprising the settlement of Graveley and adjoining open spaces and paddocks, sited adjacent to the north of the Site.

The village contains several Listed buildings including the Grade I listed Church of St Mary, and the Grade II Listed buildings at Crow End on the eastern side of the historic settlement.

Collectively the village is designated as a Conservation Area (CA), although additional related open spaces to the west of the village and to the south (Graveley Cricket Club) are also included within this receptor area.

Landscape Receptor 4: Parkland landscapes

Located to the south-east of the Site and contiguous with the Site boundary.

It comprises the parkland landscapes of Chesfield Park, and fields near Rook's Nest House (E.M. Forster's childhood home), which are part of Forster Country and proposed to be developed into a Country Park. This Country Park will be sited to the south-east of the Site and forms part of the St Nicholas/ Rectory Lane Conservation Area (CA) landscape.

Chesfield Park is well-enclosed by plantation woodland along its boundaries. To the south-west, this includes 'Park Plantation' and to the north-west, the estate is framed by Ten Acre Plantation.

Ten Acre Plantation follows a local ridge line running in a south westerly direction towards Stevenage. This focuses Chesfield Park on a south-easterly aspect, with the house located centrally within the Park and locally set within mature trees.

North of Chesfield Park, Back Lane cuts across the hilltop plateau, giving way to Manor Farm beyond and its complex of Grade II and Grade II* Listed buildings. Once more, these buildings and their landscape settings are well enclosed by mature vegetation, including Ledge Side Plantation to the northeast, Harbourclose Wood to the north and Roundwood to the east.

Landscape Receptor 5

Located to the south-west of the Site. It comprises the existing built urban edge of Stevenage, including existing residential areas as well as the proposed new residential development at H03. The parameters for this new residential development permit housing, a Local Centre, and areas of public space throughout the existing fields between the Site and the existing settlement edge.

The character area encompasses Lister Hospital and various brownfield uses such as the nursery to the west of the Site.

The character of this receptor area is strongly influenced by the existing and proposed urban edge, and by the prevalence and dominance of discordant features including Lister Hospital buildings and large overhead pylons and cables which traverse the fields south of the Site. Whilst it is noted that the northernmost cable route is to be undergrounded, in part, by the proposed residential development. Nonetheless, these remain notable detractors on the landscape.

Positive landscape features include the plantation woodland forming the southern boundary of the Site, the proposed Country Park to the east (partly within this character area), and the framework of new public open spaces within the proposed Stevenage Borough Council residential development.

Views and Visual Amenity

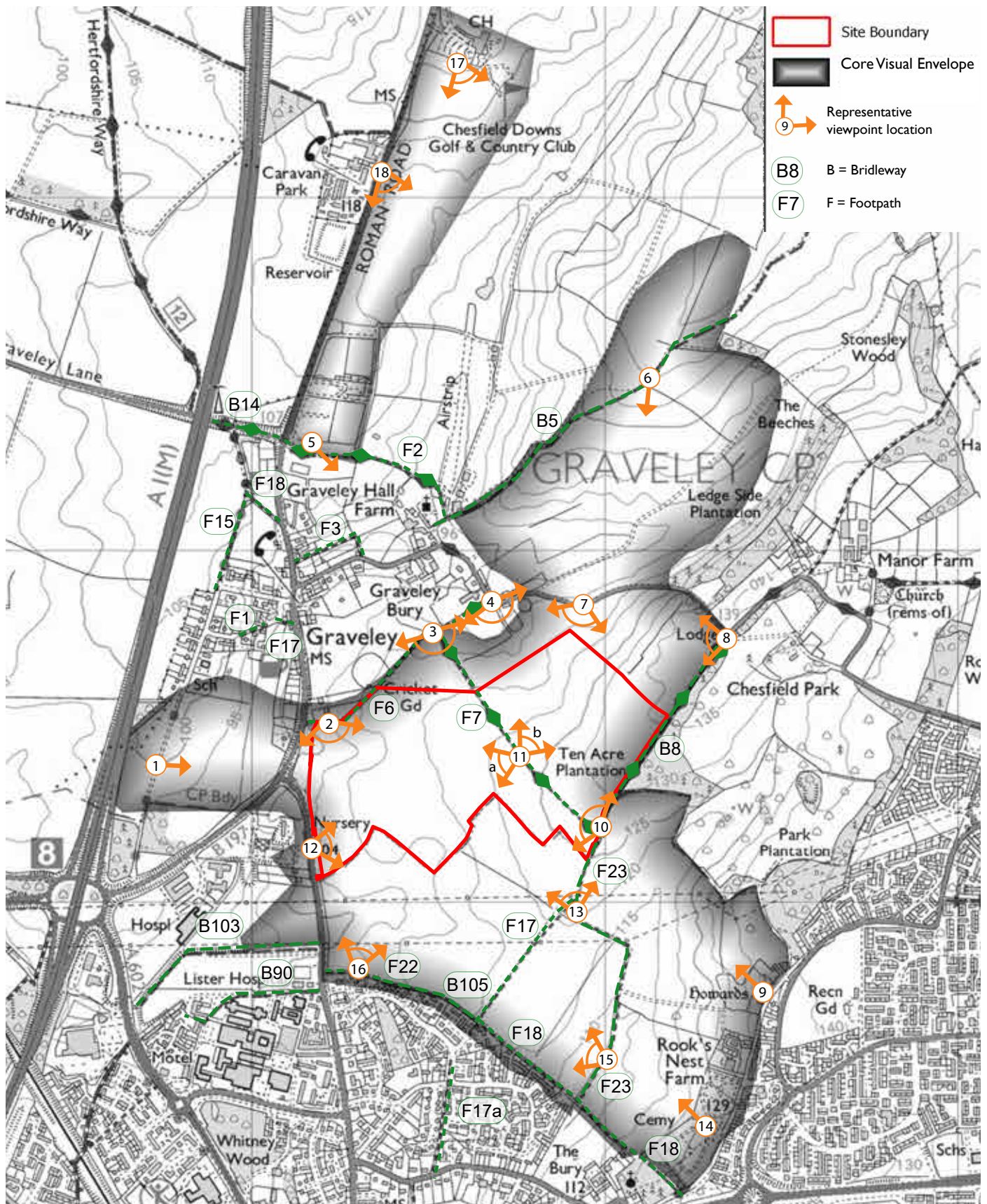
The visibility of the Site from the surrounding landscape is locally reduced by:

- Built form – existing and proposed.
- Substantial trees within the settlement of Graveley.

Existing vegetation adjacent to the field boundaries external to the Site. These include Robert's Copse and the adjacent hedgerow to the east of the Site; Ten Acre Plantation and the woodland plantation shelter belt to the south of the site; hedgerow and other vegetation between the site and the B197 (North Road) to the west; and the outgrown hedgerow to the northwest of the Site.

Residual publicly accessible views to the Site relate mainly to:

- Views from recreational paths within the agricultural landscape to the northeast.
- Views from the south - from public rights of way and from the proposed new Stevenage Borough Council residential development.
- Limited and partial or filtered views from the south east including from Weston Road Cemetery; from Rook's Nest House; and views from the existing settlement edge of Stevenage. Such views will be further limited by the proposed intervening SBC development.
- Views from the west including from Ashwell Common and filtered views from the B197 (North Road).
- Filtered views from the north-west, including from the B197 (North Road), Graveley Fruit Farm/ Car Boot fields; a section of the Hertfordshire Way recreational trail; and the Chesfield Golf and Country Club.



Visual Framework Plan

3.3. Site Analysis – Constraints and Opportunities

Site Analysis

The masterplan process has been informed by a number of technical reports undertaken. These workstreams have identified the opportunities and constraints within and across the site. The key matters include the following summarised below and set out on the accompanying plans.

Topography

The site slopes continually uphill from west to east. This will inform the shape and location of streets and residential parcels. It also sets out the most appropriate location for drainage attenuation, assuming a gravity-led system is proposed. The topography is however considered to assist in providing an appropriate location for the community hub, tied to the location of the primary school, given the County Council requirements to have as flat a site as possible.

Landscape

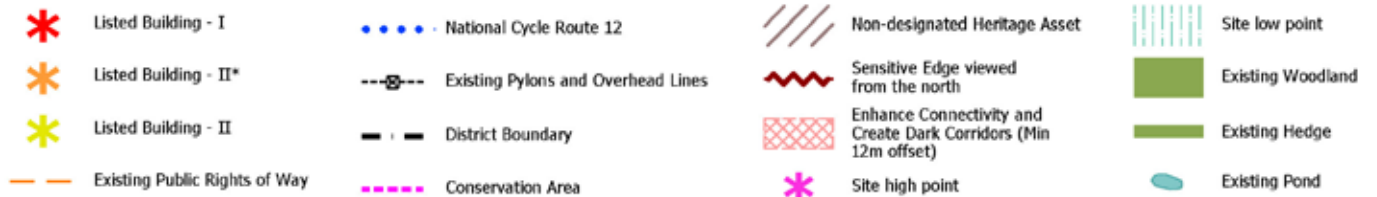
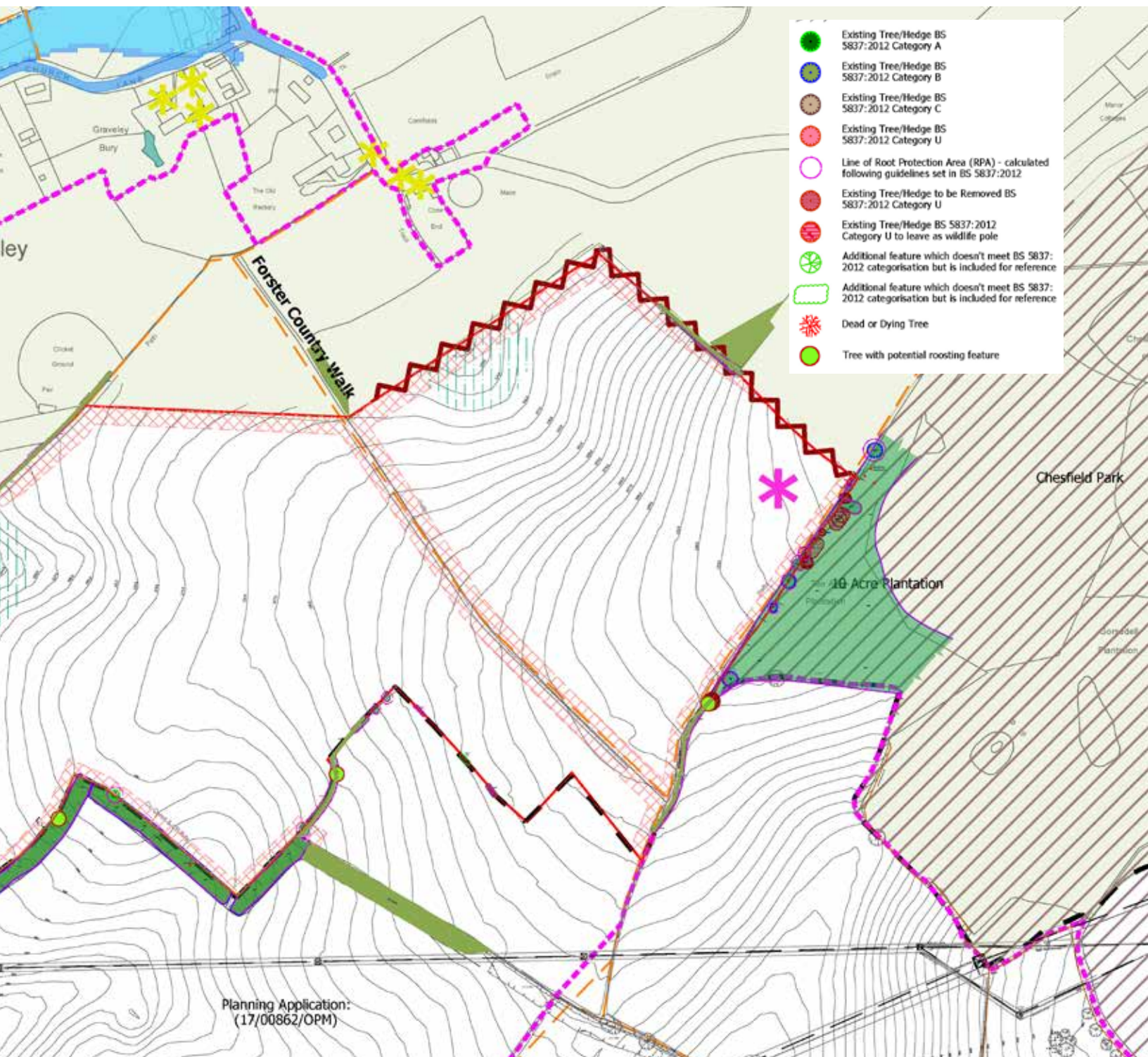
The site itself comprises an arable landscape, largely devoid of structural vegetation with the exception of the boundaries. From the north-west, west, south and south-east, existing boundary vegetation plays an important role in framing the site, providing a back-drop to views and a sense of local enclosure. Development must therefore seek to respect this planting and provide associated clearance and buffers to allow root areas to be protected. To the north-east the landscape is open to the rolling countryside beyond. This open aspect, reinforced by the defunct nature of traditional field hedgerow boundaries elevates the landscape sensitivity of the eastern half of the site requiring a more considered development approach.

As well as the parcels, the landscape will inform the potential planting areas across the site and areas of open space. This is particularly key to the north and north-east of the site. Here supplementary planting can be used to help reinforce the visual separation of the development from the village of Graveley, reinstate defunct field boundaries, and improve wildlife connectivity. At the same time, the provision of new hedges, trees and shrubs can be appropriately located to enhance the character and appearance of the new development whilst retaining key views and vistas.



Constraints Plan

- Site Boundary
- Flood Zone 2
- Flood Zone 3
- Green Belt



Landscape Considerations for Character Zones

1. A transition area of landscape contrast between a defined settlement edge and open fields. Here is an opportunity to retain the footpath as a green link marking a clear separation from the new development to the existing village edge.
2. A low-lying and less visually prominent part of the site, tending to be well-screened from the edge of Graveley and North Road by existing vegetation. This area has capacity to accommodate taller and denser built form. The low-lying position also lends itself to receiving surface water drainage features that could provide additional amenity and wildlife value.
3. A well enclosed and visually screened area of the Site on lower ground, with greater proximity and association to the adjoining Stevenage settlement edge. This area has capacity to accommodate taller and denser built form.
4. An area of rising ground and increasing visibility to and from the surrounding countryside. Enclosed to the south by an existing woodland belt. The increased visual sensitivity and existing sense of openness provides an opportunity to connect new community buildings located centrally within the site with adjoining key open spaces. Building heights should be restricted at areas of higher ground.
5. A local ridgeline followed by the Hertfordshire Way, serving as a boundary between subtly contrasting character areas to the south-west and north-east. There is an opportunity to enhance the Hertfordshire Way as a focal green space, integrating the new development with its wider setting. To the south-east, on higher ground, development should be limited and restricted in height, retaining a notable area of open space as an enhanced gateway to and from the adjoining proposed Country Park.
6. An area of low-lying ground with a strong visual interrelationship with the open countryside to the north-east. Tall and high-density development would be inappropriate in this location. New development should be set back from the site boundary allowing targeted new planting to strategically screen and frame retained views. The low-lying position also lends itself to receiving surface water drainage features that could provide additional separation between the existing village edge to any new development.
7. An area of elevated ground, with a strong visual relationship between the arable hillsides and wooded ridges on either side of the local valley to the north. Generously proportioned landscape buffers should be retained in this area, integrating the existing bridleway which follows the edge of Ten Acre Plantation. New native planting would enhance the connectivity between the Plantation and Robert's Copse at the north-west boundary of the Site. New development should be of restricted height and density due to the visual prominence of this higher ground.



Opportunities Plan



- | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|---|----------------|
| Site Boundary | Site low point and potential attenuation | Green link | Potential open space | Case Facility |
| Existing Public Rights of Way | Existing Woodland and Trees | Potential vehicular access (including buses) | Potential new active travel connections | Garden Centre |
| National Cycle Route 12 | Existing Hedge | Potential pedestrian/cycle access | Landscape Character Zones | Primary School |
| District Boundary | Existing Pond | Main gateway | Pub | Recreation |
| Green Buffer (Min 12m offset) | 1m Contours | Potential community facilities on flattest terrain | | |

Ecology

The site itself is largely in agricultural use and therefore has limited ecological value. It is utilised by a small number of breeding birds. The boundary planting described previously has more ecological value given the nature and continuation of the trees and hedgerows, and their relationship with neighbouring land. This is particularly the case with the Ten Acre Plantation to the east of the site, which forms a large area of mature tree planting. Trees with potential bat roosting features have also been identified. The central Public Right of Way has been identified as a potential foraging corridor. Existing planting will be respected and strengthened where appropriate in order to protect its ecological value.

Green Infrastructure

An existing right of way runs north to south through the site, linking those rights of way extending beyond. This has the opportunity to provide a wider green corridor through the heart of the site, creating a natural setting for the benefit of residents and wildlife. It will encourage healthy and active lifestyles and reduce the need to use the private car, whilst also linking directly to the centrally placed community hub and primary school.

The theme of a north to south connection could also be utilised to the west linking Graveley Village with the H03 development to the south. This will provide a direct route to the wider footpath network, whilst also creating a green swathe of land through the site.

There is a strong planted boundary along the western part of the site's southern boundary. In order to respect this area, there is the opportunity for either additional planting and/or a landscape buffer in this area. This will allow the existing planting belt to retain its ecological function and ensuring that built form and ancillary factors such as lighting do not impact on this function.

The majority of the northern boundary of the site does not follow the field boundary and is therefore currently open. The development provides an opportunity to provide an appropriate planting belt in this area to respect the existing rights of way and the village of Graveley. This is not envisaged to be a strong planting belt seeking to screen the development, but a more disaggregated planting belt, featuring mainly hedgerow with strategically placed trees. This respects the heritage of the area and its previous agricultural function.

The site's topography offers the opportunity to provide long-distance views over the surrounding area. High points should be incorporated into the open space network.

Heritage and Archaeology

There are a number of heritage assets identified around the site, none of which are situated within the site itself. There are a number of listed buildings in Graveley to the north and associated with Chesfield Park to the east. There is also a Conservation Area in close proximity within Graveley, and North Hertfordshire District Council are seeking to bring forward a new Conservation Area around Chesfield Park, which would border the site. This Park is currently a non-designated heritage asset.

The footpath through the centre of the site is part of the Forster Country Walk. This links to author E.M Forster. Whilst Forster Country is not considered to be a designated or non-designated heritage asset in its own right, it forms part of the landscape setting of both the St Nicholas & Rectory Lane Conservation Area and Rook's Nest assets and is integral to the significance of the listed building (Rooks Nest House).

Further archaeological investigation will be carried out as the scheme progresses. Potential areas of interest have been identified at the north and south-west of the site. The results of more detailed surveys will inform the approach to, in particular, green infrastructure as well as any interpretation, signage or equivalent that might be provided within the site to help residents and visitors better understand the historic environment.

Access and Movement

The main vehicular access into the site is from North Road at the western boundary. Given the nature of the existing road and land ownership in the vicinity, there is little flexibility as to this location. This point allows for a focussed gateway area into the site, with strong character setting the tone for the development at its entrance. It also provides the opportunity to connect to upgraded cycling facilities on North Road.

A further vehicular access will link to the development site (H03) to the south. The location of this connection is fixed by the approved Reserved Matters application for the adjoining site. Further pedestrian and cycle links are shown.

These seek to reduce journey times to destinations such as proposed shops and the proposed country park, and encourage the use of sustainable forms of transport. They would also shorten sustainable transport journeys to wider destinations such as local schools, Lister Hospital etc. There are existing bus links along North Road, and the proposal allows an opportunity for buses to run through the site and link through the proposed development to the south.

The wider movement plan also seeks to utilise the existing rights of way within or along the site boundaries. To the north, public footpaths link the site to Graveley and High Street to the west. Along the eastern boundary, direct access is available to the existing right of way, which links to the Hertfordshire Way to the east and the existing built edge of Stevenage to the south.

Drainage

Informed by a technical study at the site, two attenuation areas are proposed on site. These are situated on identified suitable parts of the site to allow for gravity flows into the proposed basins. The largest basin would be situated in the northwest corner of the site. Its location allows a more natural buffer for the neighbouring properties. Appropriate uses can then be located around what will be a large area of land, which will also have an ecological function where possible.

The smaller attenuation basin is situated along the northern boundary. Again, its final size and shape will be determined by its functional requirement. However, this will also factor in its role as a green space and ecological functions will be incorporated in and around where possible.

The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) will be a statutory consultee for any future planning application. They will assess the suitability of the proposed drainage strategy, in terms of both its method(s) and the location / size of attenuation features shown in the masterplan. Any substantive changes required by the LLFA may impact upon the solutions and locations presently shown in this document.

Foul Water

The greenfield site does not contain any existing foul sewers, since there are no existing foul flows. Anglian Water asset plans do not show any public sewers passing through the Site, and the topographic survey did not record any foul sewers within the site boundary. The nearest public foul water sewer to the Site is approximately 300m from the southwest boundary, south of Lister Close junction along North Road. It is a 225mm diameter sewer and the nearest manhole is reference 2700. Anglian Water have confirmed there is sufficient capacity at this sewer to accept foul effluent from.

From existing manhole reference 2700 the Anglian Water foul water sewer continues to flow south for approximately 670 metres before entering the Thames Water foul water network. Beyond this point Thames Water sewers continue to convey foul effluent from the Development to the Rye Meads Wastewater Treatment Works located just south of Stanstead Abbots, approximately 15 miles to the south west of Stevenage.

Effluent discharge will be achieved by constructing a new type 3 adoptable foul pump station and constructing a new rising main in North Road to identified point of connection. Anglian Water confirmed the Pre-Planning Assessment Report can be submitted to accompany a foul drainage strategy for the Development should it seek planning permission.



Chapter 4



Masterplan Framework

4.1. Land Use Framework

The Land Use Framework for the development has been designed to respond to the adjacent context and local need.

Design Principles:

- Landscape-led development to incorporate and enhance adjacent green spaces;
- Neighbourhood level facilities located centrally in the most accessible location;
- A Community Hub that includes co-working spaces, meeting rooms, cafe and community hall;
- A centrally located Primary School that is easily accessible and to reinforce the area as a landmark. The location of the school is primarily focused around the user needs related to flatter topography as well as being located centrally within the site;
- A network of multi-functional open spaces, play areas, allotments and SuDS taking account of and reinforcing localised constraints and opportunities, which will enable site-wide accessibility and recreation opportunities and encourage walking;
- A neighbourhood square, mobility hub and shared central street adjacent to the school and community uses to enable community level outdoor uses and activities.

Further consideration will be given with stakeholders to how the delivery of the scheme is phased, particularly with respect to identifying the point in the development when the school needs to be delivered, but also more widely to ensure that from the first occupation by new residents they have adequate access to the infrastructure and facilities required.

The proposed school site will be subject to further technical assessment as the site progresses to ensure it meets HCC requirements for the identification and transfer of land.





4.2. Development Framework

This section describes the amount and distribution of development for which approval is sought and the factors helping to shape the extents.

Design Principles:

- 12m ecology habitat offset to development from the edge of retained hedgerows, trees and woodland.
- Basin areas to the north east and north west accommodating attenuation.
- Setback from the northern boundary to enable recreation activities and sustainable movement around the edges and to help the development transition into the countryside through filtered views.
- Eastern offset adjacent to Ten Acre Plantation due to site high point.
- Central green corridor running in the north-south direction to form a dumbbell shaped gateway to the proposed Country Park to the south.
- Western green corridor running in the north-south direction to connect into the existing tree belt to the south with further connections to the H03 site and Country Park.
- Localised green spaces to assist with neighbourhood placemaking
- The total development will amount to approximately 27ha, with the remaining 15.7ha being allocated for structural green space to aid with landscaping and ecology.





4.3. Movement and Access Framework

Wider Network Constraints

The highway network in this area of Stevenage can be congested at peak times so it will be important that the development is designed to encourage sustainable and active forms of travel as far as possible and in accordance with the principles of Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4.

The highway network on North Road will be significantly altered by the addition of the traffic signal controlled access junction, together with the further traffic signal controlled junctions associated with access into the neighbouring H03 development. Further alterations will be introduced onto North Road associated with Active Travel Funding which has been awarded to Hertfordshire County Council, which will include improvements to cycle and pedestrian infrastructure on North Road to the south of the development site. It is also understood that the North Road/Graveley Road junction will be converted to traffic signal control as part of the mitigation proposed for the H03 development.

To assess the impact of the development on the wider highway network a full modelling assessment will be carried out using both standalone and microsimulation modelling and appropriate mitigation will be agreed if necessary. This study will include an assessment of Junction 8 of the A1 (M) and the main carriageway of the A1(M).

Movement

The movement strategy has been designed around maximising sustainable travel options. A multi-user active travel network within the site will provide attractive walking and cycling routes to destinations in Stevenage, Graveley and the surrounding countryside.

The development will have a clear street hierarchy that prioritises walking, cycling and buses. Street design will comply with best practice set out in HCC's Place and





Site Boundary

Development Blocks

Structural Green Space

Gateway Street

Community Street

Neighbourhood Street

Central Street and High Quality Public Realm

Lane

Edge Lane

Green Lane

Multi-Use Utility Active Travel Route

Emergency Access and Multi-Use Utility Active Travel Route

Recreational Active Travel Route

Informal Active Travel Route (Haven Path)

Public Footpath

Bridleway

Bus Route

Pedestrian/Cycle Access Point

Vehicular Access Point

Lane to meet adoptable standard

Indicative location of Mobility Hub

Movement Planning Design Guide, the National Model Design Code and Manual for Streets (including companion or successor editions). Internal design of the streets will be in accordance with the revised guidance as it emerges.

The general layout principles will ensure that active travel is prioritised and promoted site-wide to encourage take up of these modes of travel.

Eleven points of access into and out of the site are identified. These will provide connectivity to and from the site to surrounding facilities and destinations including the centre of Stevenage, Graveley, the adjoining development in Stevenage Borough – including the proposed school and Country Park, National Cycle Route 12 (to Letchworth) and the rights of way network and wider countryside. Key Movement proposals include:

- All homes being as close as possible to a 400m walking distance of a centrally located bus route;
- Restricted traffic movement within primary routes to discourage vehicular traffic convenience and to encourage walking and cycling locally;
- A modally filtered Central Street allowing for direct bus and active travel movements only alongside attractive public realm past the school and community hub;
- Provision of two vehicular access points, one to the H03 development to the south and the other on North Road alongside proposed highways improvements to North Road, which will enable integrated public transport opportunities;
- Emergency access to be provided between the eastern and western parcels
- Strong pedestrian and cycle permeability through and around the development connecting to the existing PROW and bridleway network to strengthen connections between Graveley and Stevenage. This will include investigating potential for a utility connection within the western site boundary as part of wider aspiration to deliver continuous walking and cycling links along B197;
- Multiple new pedestrian/cycle access points into the H03 scheme to the south.
- Junction layout to be designed in a way that ensures continuous and seamless cycling and pedestrian connectivity.

Parking

The development will adhere to parking standards set out in NHDCs Local Plan. The policy states a minimum of 1 space per 1 bedroom dwelling and 2 spaces per 2 or more bedroom dwellings.

It should be noted that where parking is to be provided on-plot, parking should be provided behind the building line designed so as to ensure such parking has adequate natural surveillance.

Mobility Hubs

A mobility hub would be provided within the central community hub which may typically include gathering together facilities such as bus stops, car club parking spaces, bike and scooter hire and online parcel collection points. This hub may include a shared workplace and facilities such as cycle repair stations. The facilities provided within the community hub are yet to be defined at this stage of development, though the principle of a Mobility Hub has been included within the Masterplan design.

A smaller minihub will be provided centrally in the eastern parcels to rebalance any walking distances exceeding a 400m to the main mobility hub, which includes public transport services. The minihub may include facilities such as a car club and cycle/scooter parking.

Street Sections

The following pages set out a series of indicative cross-sections and principles for the street hierarchy. They are not the final street configurations and are provided for illustrative purposes at the masterplan stage.

These will be used to inform further development of the street typologies as the scheme progresses. This will include further consideration of the site-wide parking strategy, junctions and interfaces between street types and street-scale approaches to drainage, utilities and landscape.

Detailed requirements will be agreed and secured in a subsequent Design Code for the site which has regard to the street characteristics and hierarchies set out in the National Model Design Code, the Hertfordshire Place & Movement Design Guide and other relevant guidance.



Example of a Mobility Hub

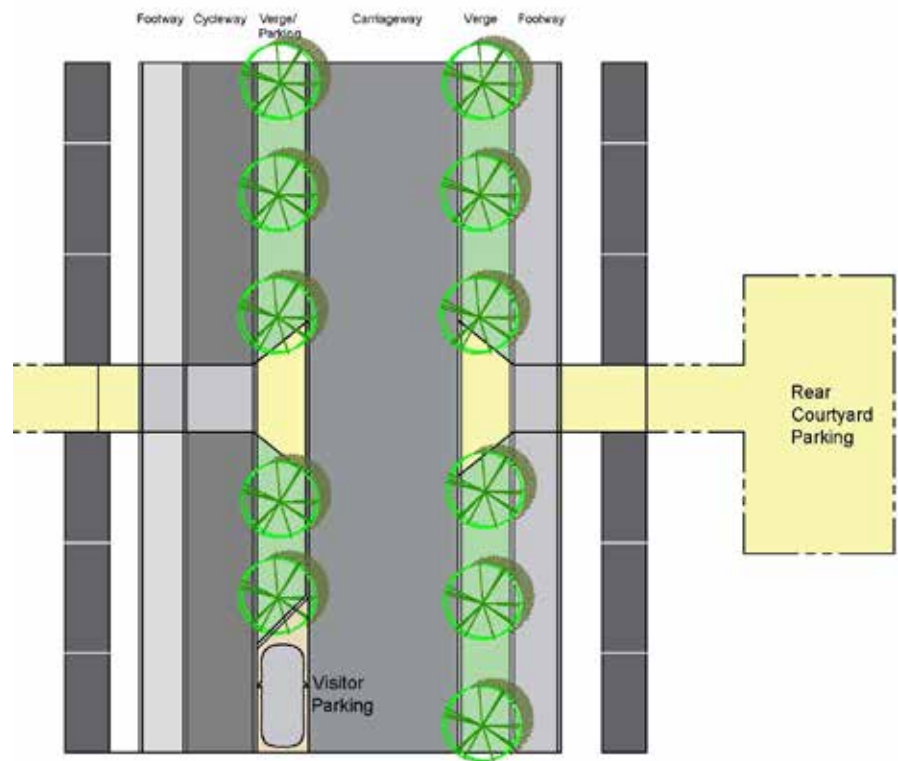


Example of a Minihub

Gateway Street

- Carriageway up to 6.75m wide – tarmac surface material, primarily for vehicular traffic including buses.
- Two approx. 2m verges to both sides – to include tree planting and visitor parking.
- 2m footway and 3m cycleway to one side protected by the verge.
- 2m footway – permeable surface material or block paving to differentiate from carriageway.

The street should limit direct access to dwellings from carriageway through accommodating occasional rear parking, in particular adjacent to the cycleway. Also, the street will be bound by strong, direct and continuous frontage enforcing clear sight lines and strong legibility.



Plan View of Gateway Street



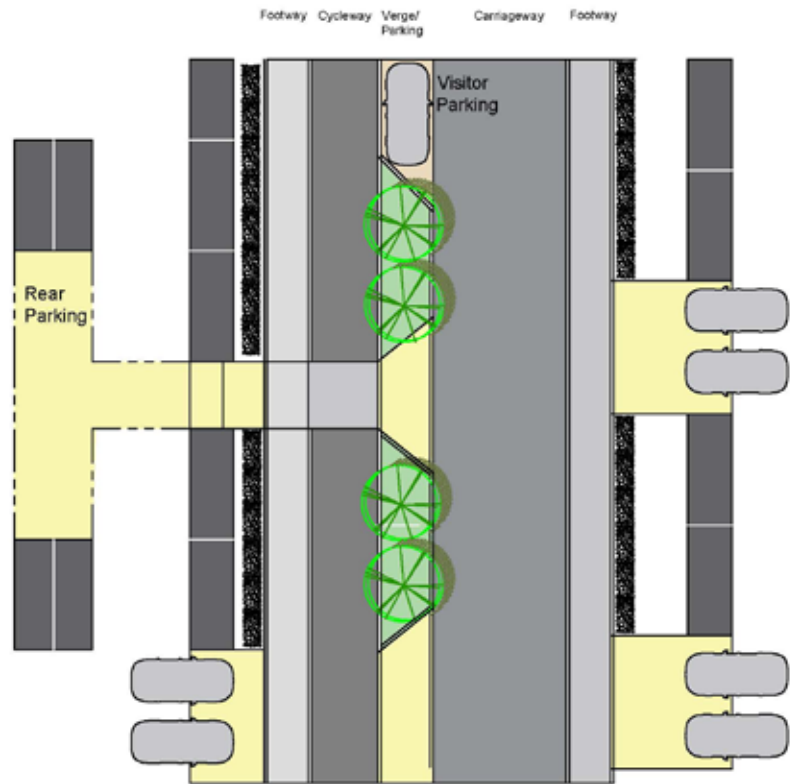
3D View of Gateway Street

Community Street

- Carriageway up to 6m wide – tarmac surface material
- Approx. 2m verge to one side – to include tree planting and visitor parking.
- 2m footway and 3m cycleway to one side protected by the verge, where cycling is not accommodated on street.
- 2m footway – permeable surface material or block paving to differentiate from carriageway.

The street should permit direct access to dwellings from carriageway, with occasional terracing requiring rear or on-street parking located within the verge. On-plot parking should be recessed behind the building line to maintain street continuity and attractive streetscape. The street has been deliberately designed to take private cars on a less-direct route to prioritise and encourage the use of active travel within and beyond the site.

Road narrowing may be accommodated at intersections to green spaces to reduce the impact on these as well as encouraging reduced traffic speeds.



Plan View of Community Street

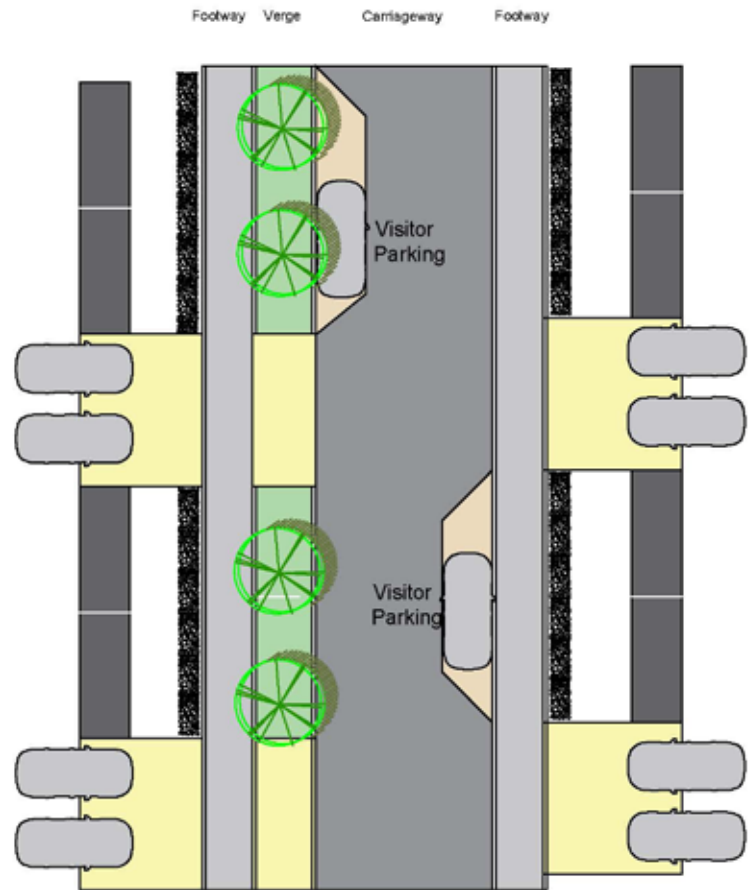


3D View of Community Street

Neighbourhood Street

- Carriageway up to 7m wide – tarmac surface material to include on-street parking.
- Approx. 2.5m verge to one side – to include tree planting.
- Two 2m footways – permeable surface material or block paving to differentiate from carriageway.

The street should permit direct access to dwellings from carriageway, with occasional terracing requiring rear or on-street parking. On-street parking should be accommodated into the street layout through localised narrowing, which will encourage reduced traffic speeds and an interest to the street. Road narrowing may be accommodated at intersections to green spaces to reduce the impact on these as well as encouraging reduced traffic speeds.



Plan View of Neighbourhood Street

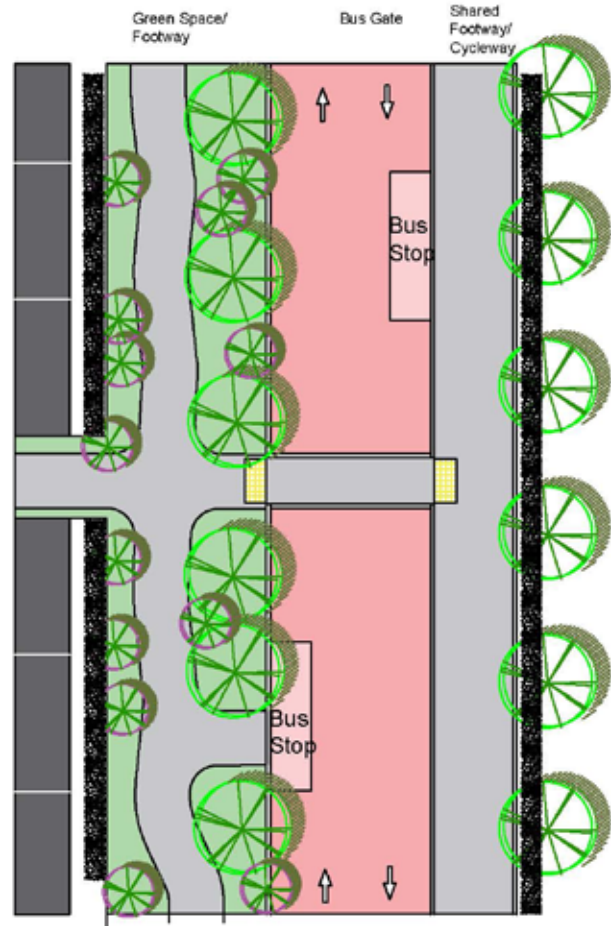


3D View of Neighbourhood Street

Central Street

A bus gate permitting active travel with extensive landscaping and public realm works. The street should establish direct east-west active travel links serving the eastern parcels and the mixed-use centre.

The 15m corridor should comprise of a 3m shared footway/cycleway, 6m bus carriageway and a 6m greenway, which is to accommodate a landscaped linear space with a 2m informal footway to be integrated with the walking network. No car travel or access to adjacent blocks should be permitted to prioritise active travel.



Plan View of Central Street



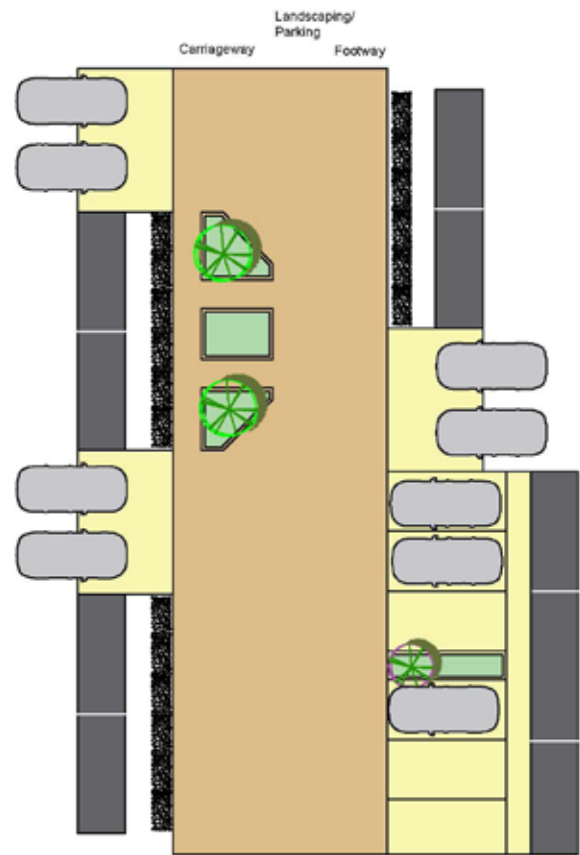
3D View of Central Street

Lanes

- Shared space carriageway and footway – width ranging from 4.2m minimum (6m to frontage parking egress) to 9m maximum.

Block paved surface finish to create an attractive single surface street. Low level shrub planting should be accommodated within buildouts, which may alternate between each side to create visual interest and a green break in development. The buildouts will also encourage reduced traffic speeds through reducing direct vehicular routes through the space.

The streets ends should be incorporated into the wider active travel network.



Plan view of Lane



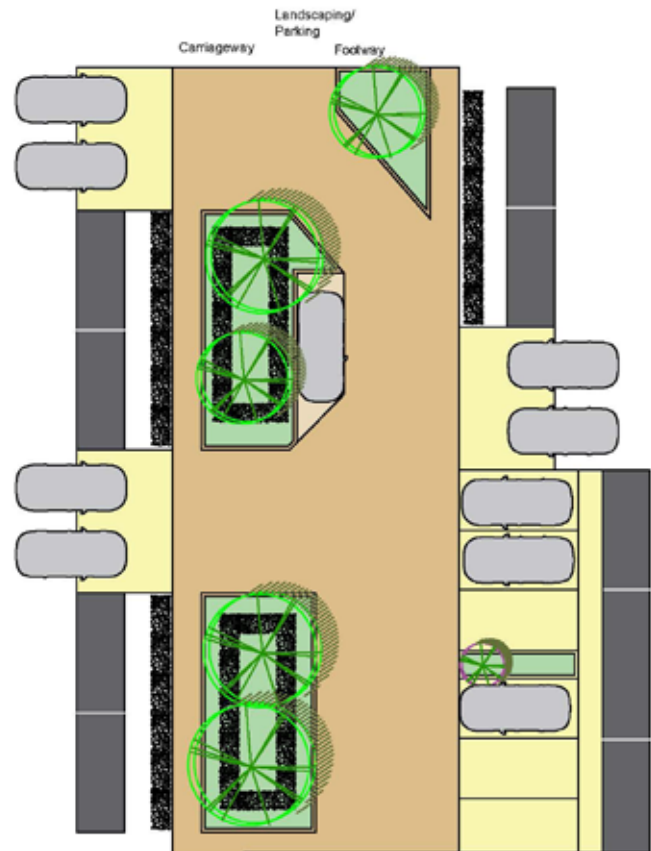
3D View of Lane

Green Lanes

- Shared space carriageway and footway – width ranging from 4.2m minimum to 12m maximum.

Block paved surface finish to create an attractive single surface street. Tree and shrub planting and on-street visitor parking should be accommodated within buildouts, which may alternate between each side to create visual interest and a green break in development. The buildouts will also encourage reduced traffic speeds through reducing direct vehicular routes through the space.

The streets ends should be incorporated into the wider active travel network.



Plan View of Green Lane



3D View of Green Lane

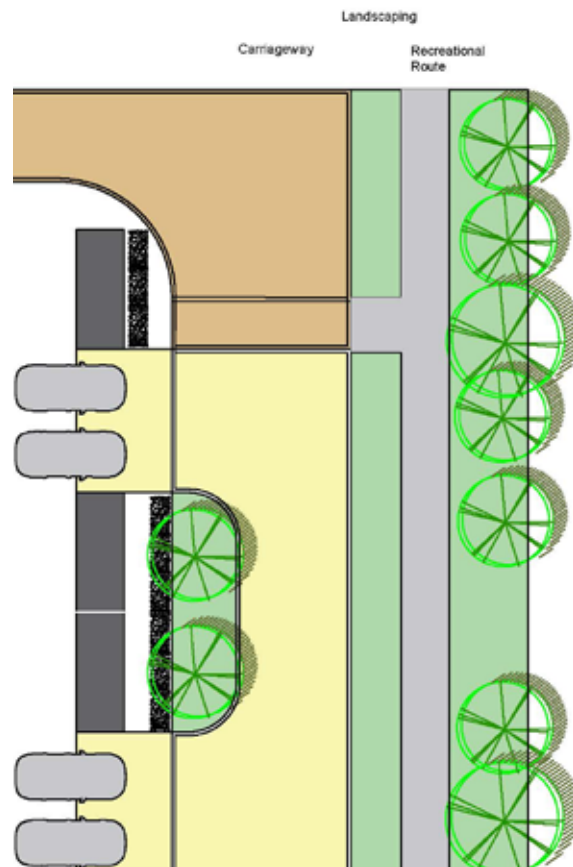
Edge Lanes

- Shared space carriageway and footway – width ranging from 4.2m minimum to 5.5m maximum.

Block paved surface finish to create an attractive single surface street. Pedestrian and cycle continuity must be retained around the edges, with routes provided alongside, where private drives may be used.

Where Cul-de-sacs are to be provided, openness to street ends and clear sight lines are to be maintained with avoidance of built obstructions, such as garages.

The streets should be incorporated into the wider active travel network.



Plan View of Edge Lane



3D View of Edge Lane

Cycle/Footway Network

The development also intends to establish an active travel route hierarchy across the site to strengthen links within the site and to the adjacent areas.

Utility Routes

The development will establish key movement axis, primarily with east-west and north-south movement, linking into Graveley and the H03 scheme. These routes will utilise a metalled or hard 3m surface to enable cycling and walking and take account of higher volumes of movement.

These links will be central to the design and connect most parts of the site with the mixed-use centre. A key connection to the existing bridleway to the south will be upgraded along the existing PROW running through the centre of the development. Appropriate lighting will need to be considered. A 3m link across the southern half of the Central Park will be created to introduce a second connection between the eastern and western parcels. This will typically be used as a utility route, but will additionally be designed and constructed to an adoptable standard for emergency use.

Recreational Routes

The site will also utilise routes, which will generally run through peripheral green spaces and connect to the local lanes around the development. These routes are envisioned to be 2m gravel surfaces taking account of the lower volumes of movement. Appropriate lighting will need to be considered.

Informal Routes

Lastly, the development will include an informal mown path along the southern boundary adjacent to the existing tree belt. Any lighting will need to be minimised to take account of the sensitive local biodiversity, in particular, along bat corridors.

Image of a Recreational Route



Image of an Informal Route



4.4. Green Infrastructure Framework

The overall Green Infrastructure Framework sets out a network of Parks, Greenways and associated green infrastructure areas that will form a network of varied open space.

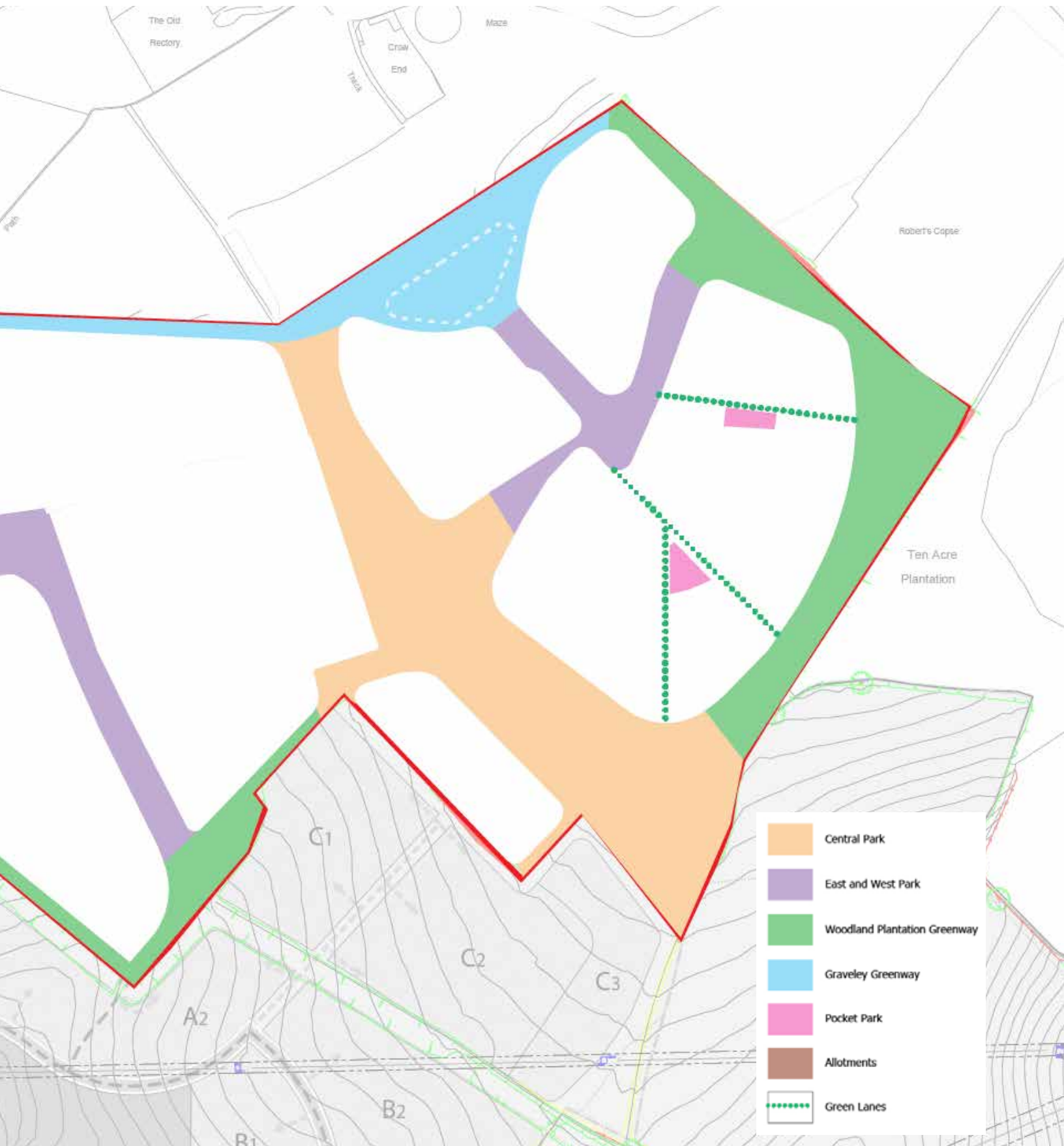
Design Principles

- Promoting Active and Healthy Lifestyles
- Integrating Development into the Landscape
- Promoting Biodiversity

Embracing the spirit of the Local Plan, the proposed Green Infrastructure Framework will establish a network of multifunctional open spaces that are informed by the following site-specific design principles:

- Enhance and expand the existing rights of way through the provision of a network of routes that encourage access and enjoyment of the Site's open spaces and good sustainable connections beyond the Site.
- Provide a central green corridor through the Site - linking the village of Graveley to the north with the proposed new Country Park to the southeast.
- Provide accessible and universally designed formal play opportunities for children and youths of all ages and abilities.
- Provide allotments and community orchards for sustainable food production and the promotion of healthy lifestyles.
- Provide tree-lined streets to assist with integration of the new built form and to assist with micro-climatic resilience.
- Retain, strengthen, and connect existing habitats, including boundary hedgerows and woodland.
- Create new grassland habitats.
- Provide at least a 10% biodiversity net gain.
- Enhance the diversity of flora on the site for the benefit of wildlife and public amenity, and to increase resilience and adaptability to future climate-related impacts.
- Utilise the Site's varied topography to provide sustainable drainage features in low-lying areas, and open and expansive landscapes on elevated ground.





The Green Infrastructure framework comprises a range of open space typologies that will provide the new community and nearby residents with multi-functional benefits. Whilst the character of individual open spaces relates to its locality and context, the Green Infrastructure framework has also been developed in accordance with the requirements set out within the 'Developer Contributions' SPD. (See Table below)

Central Park

- A Community **Park** providing a range of recreational functions and high public value opportunities for informal recreation and community events located close to the community hub.
- Centrally located in order to be easily accessible incorporating a network of PRowS and foot/cycle utility, and recreational routes.
- **Equipped and Designated Play** areas through a Multi-use Games Area (MUGA) and locally landscaped area of play of similar size and function to a Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play (NEAP). Inclusion of supporting incidental play feature or trim trail.
- Expansive **Natural and Semi-Natural** areas to include a range of informal grassland and meadows and planting areas selected for seasonal visual amenity and wildlife value.
- Inclusion of a small-scale **community orchard**.

East and West Linear Parks

- Linear **Parks** running through the built development providing additional informal recreational functions
- Integrating **Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP)** with provisions for both younger and older children with greater independence.
- **Natural and Semi-Natural** areas to include a range of informal grassland and meadows and tree and shrub planting areas that are attractive for visual interest but also support wildlife.

Pocket Parks

- **Amenity Greenspace** provision through doorstep access to open spaces and to enhance the kerb appeal of adjoining dwellings.
- **Natural and Semi-Natural** space comes through small scale tree and shrub planting areas.

Graveley Greenway

- **Amenity Greenspace** created where built development edges are pulled back from the boundaries to form wide buffer zones and generously proportioned recreational routes. Buffers are minimum 12m zones provided to all retained boundary vegetation and proposed new linear planting features.
- Provision of a **community allotment**.

Table of Open Space Standards & Site Provisions

Open Space Typology	Requirements per 1,000 persons	Persons per average household	No. of Units	Estimated Population	Space Required (ha)	Space Provided (ha)
Playing pitches	1.2	2.4	900	2,160	2.592	n/a*
Other outdoor sports	0.4	2.4	900	2,160	0.864	n/a*
Equipped/ designated play	0.25				0.540	0.248*
Other outdoor provisions (MUGA)	0.3	2.4	900	2,160	0.648	0.101*
Parks and Gardens	0.8	2.4	900	2,160	1.728	2.898
Amenity Green Space	0.6	2.4	900	2,160	1.296	3.747
Natural & Semi-natural	1.8	2.4	900	2,160	3.888	6.958
Allotments	0.3	2.4	900	2,160	0.648	0.648

* Where the Council considers it appropriate a financial contribution to be paid in lieu of on-site provision, towards new or enhanced provision off site within the vicinity of the development will be considered where the need arises directly from the development. Such financial contributions in lieu may be considered where the full amount of required open space cannot be realistically delivered on-site.

- **Natural and Semi-Natural** provision is achieved where buffers include informal grassland, tree and shrub planting areas, for visual interest and supporting wildlife. Addition of new boundary hedgerows and tree belts to integrate with existing boundary vegetation to reinforce the separation of the new development from the village to the north. Inclusion of SuDS attenuation feature on lower ground designed for positive visual amenity and wildlife benefit.

Wooded Plantation Greenway

- **Amenity Greenspace** through minimum 12m buffer zones provided to all retained boundary vegetation and proposed new linear planting features. and open spaces.
- **Natural and Semi-Natural** provision through buffer zones to include paths running through 'field margin' grassland, with areas of meadow grassland where green space is more open and expansive. Supplementary boundary hedgerows and tree planting provided to ensure continuity of existing habitat features. Hedgerow and scattered tree planting designed to formalise the boundary whilst preserving the inter-visibility with the countryside beyond.
- Additional planting along the eastern edges of the site to strengthen linkages between Ten Acre Plantation and Roberts Copse whilst retaining Chesfield Parks distinct historic boundary and outline.

Allotments

- A dedicated **community allotment** site is to be provided to the north of the Site, overlooked by adjacent new dwellings, and easily accessed by the new highway network and public right of way footpath 'Graveley 006'. The nature of the allotment provision will be subject to further consultation with the Local Authority. It is sized and located to accommodate a range of formal half and quarter-sized plots, raised beds and associated storage and watering facilities.
- An additional area located alongside the Community Hub shall provide a small orchard for community use.

Green Lanes

- Enhanced shared streets to provide legible active travel connections between key green spaces and nodes.
- Providing doorstep landscape and **amenity green space** role.
- Mix of ornamental and native tree, shrub, clipped hedging, and perennial planting areas, selected for seasonal visual amenity and wildlife value.
- A series of build-outs to accommodate additional rain gardens/planting and traffic calming.



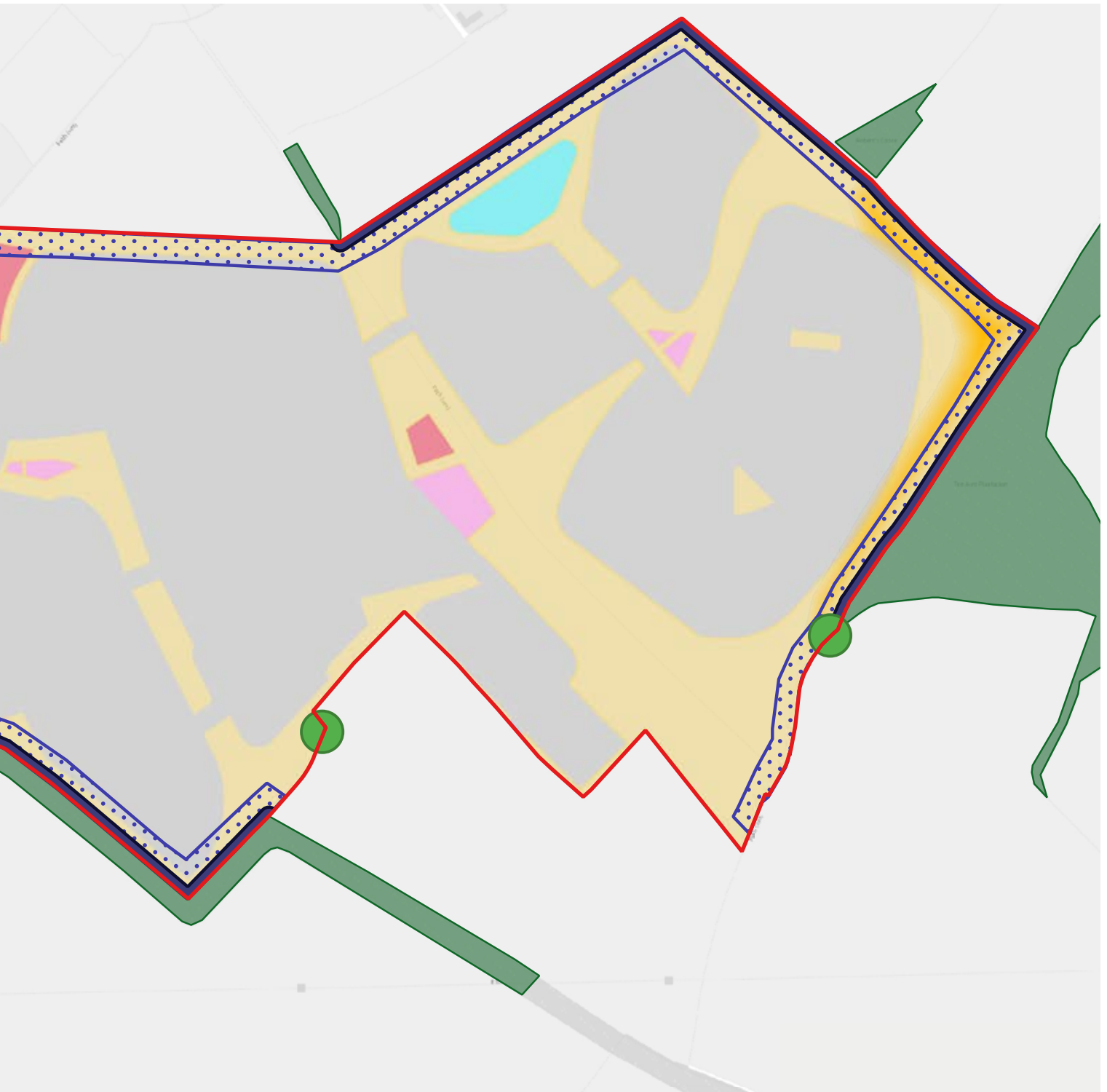
4.5. Biodiversity Framework

The Biodiversity Framework shall be part of a network of open spaces that integrate the built development into its landscape setting; enhance the character, appearance and appeal of open spaces; and expand and enhance the mosaic of habitats and species diversity for the benefit of wildlife.

Design Principles

- Existing boundary hedgerows and trees will be retained where possible with development set well back in accordance with Local Plan policy requirements. Where viable, existing linear features will be supplemented with additional planting to strengthen green movement and wildlife corridors throughout the development
- Additional planting along the eastern edges of the site to strengthen linkages between Ten Acre Plantation and Robert's Copse, whilst retaining Chesfield Park's distinct historic boundary and outline.
- New attenuation basins, forming a component of the Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS), will be designed to provide a range of new aquatic habitats and an attractive asset to enhance the experience of the community using the green spaces or living in nearby dwellings.
- Spaces will be well-designed to create an attractive and natural landscape setting for buildings, as well as being multi-functional.
- Sensitive lighting zones have been identified alongside existing and proposed woodland and hedges to provide dark corridors to allow movement of wildlife around the site boundaries.
- Native species will form a core aspect to new planting and tree schemes, reflecting local context and character. Where beneficial additional non-native species will be used to bolster species-diversity, amenity value, resilience and food/foraging opportunities for wildlife.





- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| Red Line Boundary | Woodland and tree planting to buffer offsite woodland and enhance ecological connectivity | Developed area including roads, school, community hub, houses and gardens |
| Dark corridor, 7m wide, to retain cohesive ecological network for light sensitive species | Ecology Protection Zone | Play |
| Sensitive Lighting Zone | Existing Woodland | Attenuation. Grassland with potential to contain water |
| Trees with features of moderate or above suitability for roosting bats | Habitat Classes (for BNG) | Other POS, including meadows, amenity, paths, scrub and woodland |
| | Allotments | |

- A network of local green corridors will be formed, linking new residents and wildlife to key multi functional spaces and nearby assets such as the proposed Country Park.
- Areas of wildflower grassland, native shrub and tree planting will be integrated into the open space to provide biodiversity net gain.
- Open spaces will be designed to reflect the existing character of the landscape whilst recognising and enhancing the variations in character of the new communities, aiding legibility.



Biodiversity Net Gain

A biodiversity metric calculation has been undertaken using the Defra Metric 4.0. Land use types were estimated from the Green Infrastructure Framework although it is acknowledged that at this stage the planting proposals for the Site are high level and indicative. The land use types identified are summarised in the table below. They demonstrate that a Biodiversity Net Gain of at least 10% can be achieved at the Site.

Opportunities to exceed this minimum statutory requirement for both habitat and hedgerows will be explored in further detail as the scheme is developed.

The site will result in the permanent loss of the existing agricultural land which presently host a number of ground-nesting species. Compensatory measures will be delivered off-site.

Area	Indicative land use type	Habitat class as shown on Biodiversity Framework Plan	Proposed habitats (used in metric calculation)
1.1ha	Native woodland copses	Other POS	Other woodland, broadleaved
6.9ha	Wildflower semi-natural grassland or native shrub planting	Other POS	Other neutral grassland
3.2ha	Mown amenity grassland or ornamental planting	Other POS, play	Modified grassland
0.6ha	Allotments	Allotments	Allotments
1.7ha	Attenuation basins and surroundings, with wildflower grassland or permanent water bodies	Attenuation	Other neutral grassland
23.7ha	Developed land including residential buildings, roads, community buildings, hard play areas and footpaths	Developed areas, Play	Developed land; sealed surface
5.5a	Gardens	Developed areas	Vegetated garden
110 small trees	Urban trees	Not shown	Urban Tree
At least 0.15km	New species rich hedgerow with trees	Not shown	Species-rich native hedgerow with trees

Estimated Land Use Types Table

BNG Metric	Habitat Units	Hedgerow Units
On-site baseline	87.83	7.30
On-site post-intervention	97.11	8.08
On-site change in units	9.28	0.78
On-site net % change	10.56	10.69

Headline Results for Biodiversity Metric Calculation

4.6. Height and Density Framework

Density

The development densities will be reflective of the surrounding vernacular, which will take account of edge conditions to the north and future urban context to the south on the H03 site. The central park will broadly divide the densities in half with the eastern parcels and northern boundary generally comprising of lower density, which will take account of sensitive edge conditions and rural context at around 25-35dph. The western parcels will comprise of higher densities at 35-40dph to take account of a more urban setting and a sustainable location adjacent to the Mixed-Use Centre and mobility hub.

Building Heights

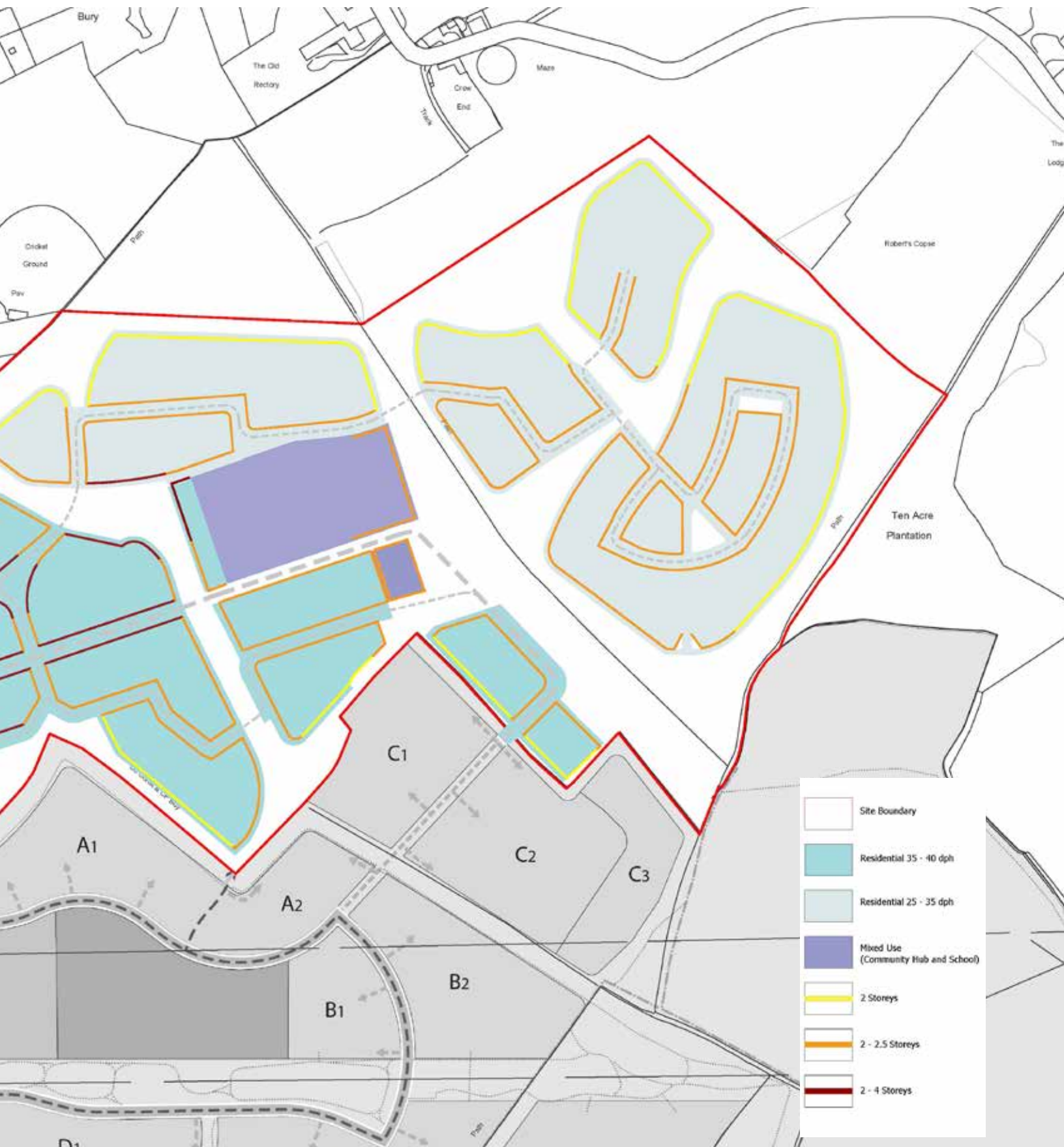
The building heights will address the surrounding context and local character, in particular relating to the surrounding visual sensitivity.

In general, the western parcels will allow for greater flexibility in terms of building heights due to little impact on the surrounding visual context. The area will generally comprise of 2-3 storey buildings, however buildings up to 3-4 storeys will be permitted around key routes and key spaces to provide adequate enclosure and to aid legibility.

The central parcels, adjacent to the Mixed-Use Centre will allow for reduced flexibility in terms of heights due to a relative high point and increased visual sensitivity from the east. Therefore, generally 2 storeys will be permitted with 2.5 storeys permitted at key corners and primary frontages to enable strong placemaking. It should be noted that a higher density will be reflected in these areas through urban form.

The eastern parcels will generally consist of 2 storeys with 2.5 storey buildings permitted at key spaces and key buildings due to the more visually sensitive constraints.





4.7. Urban Design Framework

This section sets out the Urban Design Framework for the site. The framework sets out the design principles for the future development of the Site.

Development Blocks

The development will be arranged around a back-to-back block structure to define open spaces and routes and to create a sense of enclosure with sufficient natural surveillance. The block structure will enable easy edge to edge connectivity through the site and a seamless connection between open green spaces.

The development blocks have been largely formed around the site contours. The steepest areas have been designed to ensure that the built form sits parallel or perpendicular to the level changes. This has resulted in a series of curved and informal blocks reflecting the site context. Equally, the flattest areas have been deemed most appropriate for community uses with the school in particular influencing the surrounding block layout. This has resulted in a more rectilinear formal grid. Due to these constraints, the resulting development has naturally evolved into a more informal eastern area and a more formal western core, each comprising distinct block arrangements.

Public Realm and Key Green Spaces

The development will establish a network of landscaped and hardscaped spaces to aid the legibility and distinctiveness of the development.

A market square will be established adjacent to the community centre to facilitate outdoor community uses and as a place to gather. The square will be well integrated with active travel links and exhibit attractive and high-quality materiality to form a distinctive and attractive sense of place to the overall development.

Pocket Parks will feature alongside main streets and close to key green links. The spaces will be well-enclosed and well-landscaped to form distinctive local features, facilitating local meeting places.





The Central Park will form a landmark space through the centre of the development and form a major north-south axis. The space will be well-enclosed by appropriate urban form and scale and feature natural landscaping alongside larger play facilities, opportunities for informal/naturalistic play spaces and trim trails. The space will act as a gateway to the proposed country park so the landscaping and urban form will create a strong sense of arrival.

Frontages

The frontages across the development will be designed to reflect the adjacent street types, open spaces and surrounding character. Generally, public spaces will be well-enclosed with sufficient natural surveillance and built form that reflects the appropriate scale and openness/enclosure.

Primary Frontages - Strong and continuous building lines will be placed around primary circulation routes and key spaces to create a well defined character and legible space. The central areas will exhibit taller frontages to reflect an urban and distinctive character, which will add a visual interest and focal point to the overall development streetscape.

Secondary Frontages - More variation in building lines will be placed around secondary circulation routes and spaces to create a more informal character.

Rural Frontages - Informal building arrangements with wider gaps between buildings will be placed around the edges of the development to form a considered and softened transition into the open countryside.

All corners will be carefully considered with appropriate building types to ensure adequate surveillance all around.

Landmarks

Key landmarks in the centre of the development will be focussed around a mix of uses, which will comprise of a primary school and community centre. Density around this focal point will be increased to facilitate a more urban character at the heart of the development. A high-quality and more contemporary built form will be encouraged to ensure a distinct sense of place at the heart of the development.

Additionally, corners and ends of vistas along main movement corridors and key green spaces will be strengthened by key buildings which will vary in architectural treatment, scale and layout to increase visual interest in the streetscape and to form legible and distinct neighbourhoods.

Views

The development has been designed to apply good urban design standards, which includes direct and legible routes facilitating long distance views. Streets where possible, have been designed around straight vistas directed towards key spaces or key buildings to enhance safety and wayfinding. In addition, the radial layout of smaller streets ensures that green spaces are often in sight drawing in the landscape character of the surrounding context.

External views towards the site have also been carefully considered in relation to the topography. The northern and eastern edges, where the topography is lower will ensure a softened transition from built form to the open countryside and any impacted views through gapped building lines and filtered tree planting.

Focal Points

Focal points will be distributed around the development to enhance local wayfinding, define key spaces and add to the distinctiveness of the development. The development will utilise variation in heights, form, set-back, boundaries and materials to differentiate focal points.

Existing and new landscape features, such as tree belts, attenuation, play areas and trim trails will be incorporated to enhance focal points and to define routes through and around the development.

Gateways

The development will have two well-defined vehicular gateways; first around the access to North Road and the second adjoining the H03 development to the south. The gateway importance to the overall street connectivity will be defined through integration of bus provision, active

travel links and attractive landscaping, which includes formalised hedge planting, large trees and arrangement of buildings to define key corners. Furthermore, the H03 gateway has been enhanced through running the Gateway Street around the outside of the block alongside the Central Park to create a sense of arrival to the development.

Pedestrian gateways will include points of access to the existing PROW and bridleway network, which will be enhanced through attractive informal landscaping and small focal features, such as trim trails and public art. Key buildings will also be laid out to enhance a sense of arrival.

Central Street

An east-west modal filter will remove private vehicular use from the Central Street bringing active travel and bus connections together with attractive landscaping and placemaking. The street will create direct, attractive and safe links through the mixed-use centre at the heart of the development with connections to the wider active travel network to encourage localised walking and cycling. The street will enhance the school and community centre uses along with a new market square for outdoor community uses. A linear green space will run along the course of this street.

Active Travel Routes

A network of active travel routes will run throughout the development to connect each area with the wider green space network as well as link to the existing PROWs and bridleways. A hierarchy of routes will be established to support the anticipated uses and movement volumes, as well as to enhance wayfinding and placemaking. These will include utility routes for larger volumes of cycling, recreational routes for pedestrian connectivity and low volume movement and informal paths to support local biodiversity while maintaining the active travel network.



Reinforcing Gateways with Public Art



Landmark Building



Attractive Public Realm

4.8. Sustainability and Energy Framework

This section sets out the Sustainability and Energy Framework for the site, responding to national and local policy requirements. The framework presents a set of principles that will guide sustainability and energy aspects on the site, and opportunities aligned to the three pillars of sustainability: social, economic, and environmental.

Sustainability Framework

This site provides an opportunity to deliver a high-quality development of a primary school, community centre, housing, and green spaces incorporating low carbon principles. North Stevenage is ideally located to deliver a sustainable community that embraces best practice design and construction approaches.

Design Principles

The development will follow a set of future-focussed principles that are designed to mitigate and adapt to a changing climate, enhance biodiversity, create walkable neighbourhoods to connect people and nature, and contribute positively to economic growth. Overarching environmental design principles are provided below.

Environmental Design Principles

- New homes will be designed to use less than 105 litres of water per person per day. This will be achieved by specifying water efficient and low flow fittings to all areas.
- Opportunity for construction phase to support the local economy with employment, training, and supply of materials. Where possible, materials will be sourced locally
- The development will incorporate a diversity of flora on the site for the benefit of wildlife and public amenity, and to increase reliance and adaptability to future climate-related impacts
- A biodiversity net gain of at least 10% will be provided

- Open spaces will be designed to reflect the existing character of the landscape whilst recognising and enhancing the variations in character of the new communities, aiding legibility
- Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) will be integrated within the landscape framework, and will provide flood alleviation, water management, and biodiverse habitats
- Charging infrastructure for electric vehicles (EVs) will be installed to dwellings in line with Approved Part S of the Building Regulations, facilitating residents' use of EVs
- Filtered traffic measures will be incorporated to favour active and sustainable modes of transport

Social Design Principles

- The development will encourage a strong sense of community by creating safe places for people to meet, be socially interactive and to feel a sense of ownership
- A series of public open spaces will be provided to enhance the character and proposed uses
- The site is linked to National Cycle Route 12, providing cycle access to amenities and locations outside the site
- The site contains an extensive network of Public Right of Way (PRoW) routes and bridleways connecting the development to the surrounding services, recreation areas, and landmarks
- Provision of high speed data network, enabling residents to work flexibly and ensure digital inclusion for all population groups

Economic Design Principles

- New residents will generate increased demand for local goods and services and provide additional council tax revenue
- Sustainable placemaking principles create a sense of community and social cohesion, improving wellbeing and reducing demand on local support services

- The Community Hub will include a well-integrated and attractive market square
- Bus and railway stations are located 3km from the site and include connections between Letchworth, Stevenage, and Hitchin.
- New primary school to make use of accessibility opportunities and to enforce the area as a landmark
- A mobility hub will be provided within the central community area which includes bus stops, car club parking spaces, e-bike and scooter hire and online parcel collection points
- Easy nearby access to services and amenities such as a secondary and primary school, Lister hospital with on site pharmacy services, a large Sainsbury's supermarket and a number of pubs within Graveley and Stevenage.

Energy Framework

The development will maximise opportunities for reducing energy consumption and supplying energy through low and zero carbon technologies, adopting the principles of the Energy Hierarchy. This nationally recognised framework first promotes the reduction of energy demand, then the provision of clean and green energy supplies.

Energy demand reduction will be achieved using passive and active design measures which will improve insulation, reduce heat loss and avoid excessive requirements for heating and cooling. Measures will also be incorporated to prevent overheating and ensure adequate ventilation.

Energy will be supplied through low and zero carbon technologies. A range of sustainable energy options have been assessed for their potential use on the site (see below). These options will continue to be tested through the subsequent planning and design process as a preferred option has not yet been agreed.

By designing for the use of all-electric heating and hot water systems, in line with the anticipated Future Homes Standard, the homes will become net zero in operation when the UK electricity grid decarbonises.



Low and Zero Carbon Technologies:

Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP)

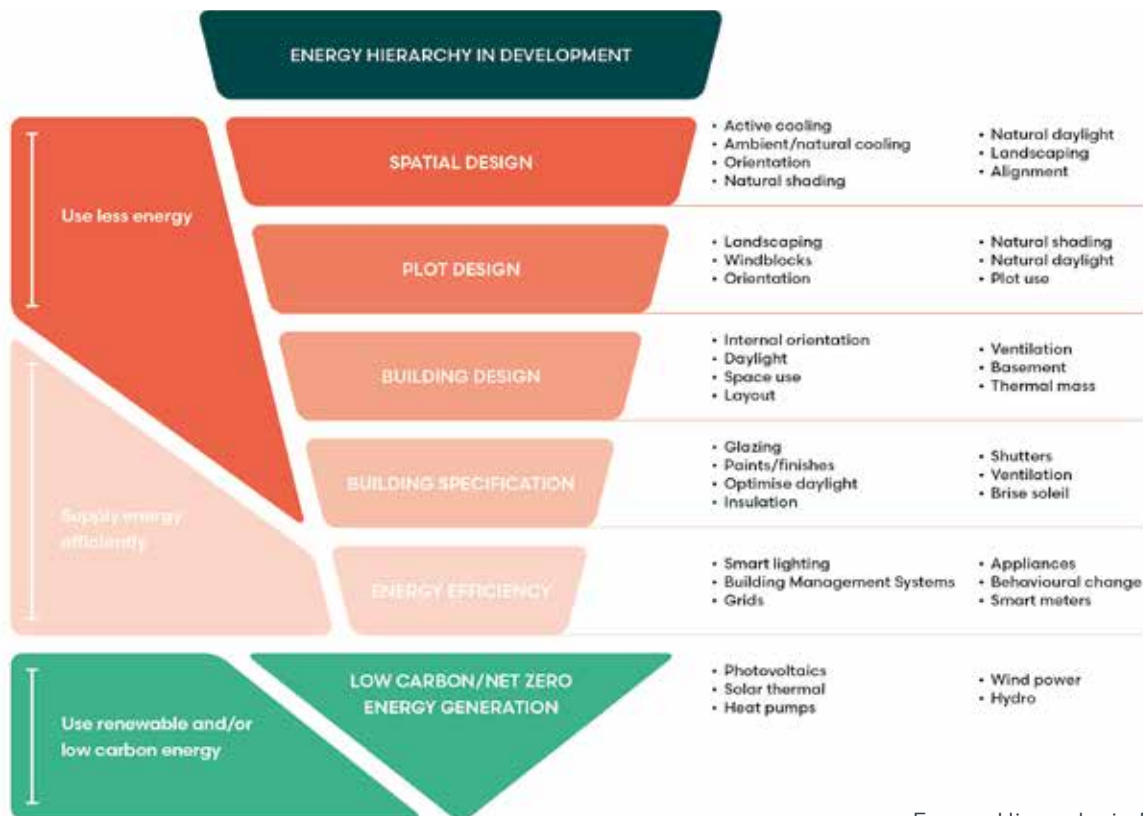
ASHPs extract heat from the external air and condense this energy to heat a smaller space within a dwelling or non-domestic building. A pump circulates a refrigerant through a coil to absorb energy from the air. This refrigerant is then compressed to raise its temperature which can then be used for space heating and domestic hot water. ASHPs can feed either low-temperature radiators or underfloor heating and often have electric immersion heater back-up for the winter months. ASHPs are able to extract heat when temperatures are as low as -15°C ; however, they are subject to fluctuating air temperatures and use more electricity to produce heat in the cooler months. Average temperatures in the region are approximately 9.5°C , with winter averages of around $6-8^{\circ}\text{C}$. This is within the acceptable range for use of an ASHP. The ASHPs would need to be fitted to outside walls or placed on the ground.

Ground Source Heat Pump (GSHP)

GSHPs extract heat from the ground, taking advantage of the moderate temperatures in the ground to boost efficiency and reduce the operational costs of heating and cooling systems. The GSHP could be installed on site, providing renewable energy, however they require access to suitable ground conditions and collection areas. Whilst installation is invasive, maintenance is low once installation is completed. There is potential for GSHPs to be included as part of a hybrid energy strategy, subject to further investigation on ground conditions to assess the feasibility of installing the required components.

Water Source Heat Pumps (WSHP)

WSHPs work similarly to GSHP, however, instead of extracting heat from the ground, they extract heat from water sources such as lakes, ponds, rivers, springs, wells or boreholes. Dependent on the water source used, the temperature can fluctuate from season to season, impacting the reliability of a WSHP. Should further investigation determine a high-water table, there may be potential to explore water source heat pumps as part of a hybrid energy strategy for the development site.



Energy Hierarchy in Development

Solar Photovoltaics

North Stevenage is located in an area with an average of 2.85 kWh/kWp of daily solar energy, on the upper end of the UK average. As such, the site has the potential to use solar photovoltaics (PV) as a source of renewable power. These could be located either on individual roofs, or as part of a larger array at ground level. The use of PV panels would complement the electric only energy strategy as the renewable energy generated could be used to supply the heating and hot water demands.



Example Air Source Heat Pump



Example PV Cells



Chapter 5



Illustrative Masterplan

5.1. Illustrative Masterplan

The illustrative masterplan opposite sets out one illustration of how the design parameters could be interpreted and how the site could be developed.

Key Elements

- Up to 900 new homes
- A Two Form Entry Primary School at the heart of the new development
- A Community Centre adjacent to the school which could include meeting rooms, a hall, co-working spaces and a cafe.
- Extensive Public Open Spaces that includes Children's Play Spaces, Recreational Greenspaces, Allotments and areas of enhanced biodiversity
- Market Square including a Mobility Hub that links to a bus only/active travel link through the heart of the site
- Permeable street network aimed at pedestrians and cyclists

	Development Boundary		Utility Routes
	Buildings		Gateway Street
	Private Garden		Neighbourhood and Community Street
	Allotments		Lanes and Green Lanes
	Trees		Community Orchard
	Play Area		Attenuation
	Recreational Routes		Existing Woodland







Chapter 6



Character Areas

6.1. Character Generators

The new development will create its own sense of character and place, drawing upon influences from the site and surrounding area. The plan opposite sets out a number of Character Generators identified both from the existing local context but also some key design proposals as part of the masterplanning approach. The response to these generators informs a number of emerging character areas set out on the following pages.

Key Character Generators

Summary of key overarching character generators informing the character areas:

- Identified visual sensitivity related to rural setting and long-distance views.
- Presence of a mix of community facilities and their ancillary uses, in addition to public transport/active travel hub at the heart of the development.
- Network of green spaces including significant Parkland running through the centre of the site.
- Topography particularly in the eastern side of the site, where changes in level are more significant.
- North Road on a key route into Stevenage and the beginning of the urban context.
- Graveley Village and the relationship with the northern edge of the development site.
- Key primary streets running through the site.

	Site Boundary		Graveley Village
	Existing Road		Open Countryside
	Existing Trees/Hedges		Strategic New Open Spaces
	Development Parcel		Proposed and Existing Urban Area
	Primary School		Local Greens
	Community Centre		Graveley Village Boundary
	High Quality Public Realm		





6.2. Character Areas

The development will be broken down into a series of distinct areas, each responding to related character generators, informing the scale, density, height and materials used. The identity of each area has drawn on the townscape appraisal, set out in the baseline review. This included an assessment of built form, layout, materials and architectural details.

These will be used to inform further design development as the scheme progresses. Detailed requirements for the site's character areas will be agreed and secured in a subsequent Design Code for the site.

The Masterplan has identified the following Character Areas:

- Central Core;
- North Road Gateway;
- Woodland View; and
- Village Edge.





6.3. Central Core

Context

This character area is predominantly defined by an east-west axis forming a rectilinear pattern and flatter topography allowing a formal grid block typology. The presence of the Central Street results in occasional courtyard blocks due to priority for active travel. The scale of buildings has required consideration relative to a site high point with visual sensitivity to the surrounding countryside. Also, densities have been influenced by being in a sustainable location next to the community hub and mobility hub

Uses

This character area will contain a centrally located 2FE primary school, which benefits from the flattest terrain across the site. The school will be a landmark building located adjacent to the Central Park and the community hub.

The community centre will be a landmark building and accommodate community-level facilities, which may include co-working spaces, meeting rooms, small cafe, health, childcare and a community hall.

Built Form

This will be formed mainly around 2-2.5 storey buildings at higher densities of 35-40dph to make best use of the location. To address surrounding visual sensitivities. 3-4 storey buildings will only be permitted around key spaces, for key buildings and along main corridors.

A more rectilinear formal perimeter block pattern will be visible due to a flatter topography and movement constraints. Also, a degree of rear courtyard blocks will be established to allow more continuous and direct active travel routes.

In terms of the built form, this character area will exhibit stronger and more continuous building lines with reduced or no building gaps with shallow set backs. Housing typologies will be mainly terraced buildings with occasional apartments and semi-detached houses.



Movement and Parking

This area is largely formed around the Central Street, which will allow bus and active travel movement only. As a result, the blocks directly adjacent to the street will require rear courtyard blocks to provide parking for some of the dwellings.

Aside from that, generally Neighbourhood Streets and Lanes will provide a clear and legible movement pattern with a range of on-plot, frontage and on-street parking solutions.

Active travel movements, including cycleways will be designed into the neighbourhood streets with direct links to other cycle routes, ensuring direct and legible movement patterns. Cycle parking will be incorporated within the dwelling curtilage as well as the public realm. Substantial cycle parking provisions will be provided adjacent to the mobility hub and community centre as part of the public realm design.

Public Space

The inclusion of a formal, well enclosed market square allowing a range of community activities; Green character to Central Street with use of formal street tree planting in regular intervals and extensive landscaping

Tree-lined streets to provide lines of visual interest and integration of the built form; Public spaces to be enriched by visually-attractive and diverse planting; Play areas to comprise engaging and stimulating planting, transitioning to naturalistic planting towards the central Central Park.

Identity

Plot Boundaries - Boundary treatments will be a combination of low walls or railings forming the edges of key spaces and movement corridors.

Architectural Approach and Materials - Generally, more contemporary and formal architectural approach. Use of red/buff brick, occasional white/off-white render will form the majority of the residential built form. However elements of black timber weatherboarding along with contemporary treatments such as fibre cement cladding will be encouraged for key and landmark buildings. The community use buildings will have a more flexible approach in terms of materiality.

In terms of roofscapes, generally red tiles will be used with grey tiles/slate around key spaces.

Landscape

A network of open spaces integrating the Central Core development with the wide landscape. Characteristics respond to and complement the adjoining landscapes, including the retention and expansion of recreational routes, and habitat corridors. Specifically, the landscape will comprise:

Central Park: Centrally located for ease of access and providing a range of recreational functions, this space would fulfil many of the functions of the 'Parks & Gardens' open space typology. Its location provides active engagement with the adjacent community hub, with scope to include a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) and locally landscaped area of play – of equivalent scale and provisions to a Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play (NEAP) but naturalistic in character. Play facilities would be designed for children and youths of all ages, and abilities. The spaces would act as both a destination and a stepping-stone to access wider open space network. It will incorporate the existing Hertfordshire Way footpath, with scope to upgrade or provide a complimentary route to enable use by cyclists and horse riders, and with potential for signed heritage trails. The central park would include a

range of accessible informal grassland and meadows, and a mix of ornamental and native tree, shrub, and perennial planting areas, selected for seasonal visual amenity and wildlife value. A small-scale orchard would further enhance its value to the community.



Local Precedents

Country Park Gateway. Connecting with the central park, a new gateway space would be created adjacent to the proposed Country Park. The gateway would be an expansive semi-natural open space drawing people along the Hertfordshire Way (Graveley 007) and bridleway (Graveley 008) through to the adjoining country park. A mixture of meadows and pockets of native tree and shrub planting, to frame views and enhance the existing wooded skyline backdrop in views from the north, will be provided. These would complement the open amenity spaces that will include an incidental play feature or trim trail.

Western Green Corridor. A green corridor weaving through the Central Core will provide new public access and habitat connectivity for wildlife. The corridor will provide a series of spaces or 'rooms' of subtly different typologies, relating to the adjoining built edge. These will create variation and interest and draw users through the space. As well as new multi-user and footpaths to promote access to the wider open space network and nearby facilities, the corridor will include a range of habitats. These will include accessible informal grassland and meadows, a mix of ornamental and native tree, clipped hedging, shrub, and perennial planting areas, selected for seasonal visual amenity and wildlife value.

Wooded Boundary: Where the Central Core dovetails with existing wooded boundaries, a minimum 12m buffer zone is provided to ensure that existing trees are not impacted by the development and its lighting. These buffer zones will integrate pedestrian paths with 'field margin' grassland, and supplementary tree planting.









1. Considered frontage increase legibility and maintain natural surveillance to green spaces
2. Denser and more formal building types, including terraces
3. Gateway street accommodating bus travel
4. A shared footway/cycleway extending active travel provisions through green corridors
5. Well-landscaped and planted verges to improve legibility
6. More contemporary and formal architectural approach. The use of red/buff brick, and occasional white/off-white render will form the majority of the residential built form. However elements of black timber weatherboarding along with contemporary treatments such as fibre cement cladding will be encouraged for key and landmark buildings

View of Central Core
Character Area

6.4. North Road Gateway

Context

This character area will be defined by more flexibility in terms of scale and building typology as a result of reduced visual sensitivity due to the area sloping downwards with good enclosure from existing site boundary vegetation. The area will accommodate enhanced active travel links between Graveley and H03 as well as incorporating gateway features at the intersection with North Road, which will be an urban continuation of Stevenage heading north.

Uses

The area will comprise of residential uses with a complimentary green network and play spaces.

Built Form

This character area will comprise of higher density around 35-40dph to reflect a more urban setting. Generally, building heights will comprise of 2-3 storeys, however an opportunity exists for permitted heights being up to 3-4 storeys around key spaces, key buildings and main corridors, reflecting the visual enclosure and the least visually sensitive areas of the site.

The area will comprise of a range of block types including more rectilinear and formal perimeter blocks around the central areas to accommodate direct active travel movement connections and informal curved blocks reflecting the shifting topography constraints.

The built form will reflect strong and continuous building lines and smaller building gaps to accommodate an urban character and higher densities. This will be achieved through a flexible use of semi-detached, detached and terraced buildings and well as apartment blocks at gateways and key spaces.



Movement and Parking

Gateway Streets with adjacent rear courtyard parking; Neighbourhood Streets with on-plot and rear parking; Lanes with on-plot and frontage parking. Visitor parking and landscaping integrated within highway design. Cycle Parking integrated within public realm; Designated cycleway in street design.

Public Space

The use of local green spaces to provide legibility to residential areas. Neighbourhood Streets with active travel links, informal on-street parking and formal tree planting in verges; informal planting in Lanes. Gateway Streets with double verges with formal tree planting.

Site boundary vegetation retained and proactively managed, where possible; new native planting alongside new highway junctions, forming linear continuity; Tree-lined streets and green spaces; Green spaces to include accessible lawns and enriched by visually-attractive and diverse planting beds; Play areas to comprise engaging and stimulating planting.

Identity

Plot Boundaries - Boundary treatments will include a mix of railings, hedges and low walls.

Architectural Approach and Materials - Generally, traditional architectural approach but influenced by the more formal building frontage found in Graveley, particularly along the High Street. Use of red/buff brick, elements of white/off-white render or tile-hanging.

In terms of roofscapes, red tiles will be used with grey tiles/slate to emphasise key spaces.

Landscape

A network of landscapes that establish a new gateway into the site; that respond positively to local context; and that invites engagement with the new community assets. The new landscape will retain and manage existing highway vegetation to frame the development either side of a new highway junction. New native tree and shrub planting will be provided to re-frame the highway. Where existing vegetation can be retained, including the woodland belt which follows the southern boundary, minimum 12m buffer zones will be provided to ensure that it is not adversely impacted by new development and its lighting. A range of informal grassland will be provided, in combination with a mix of ornamental and native tree, clipped hedging, shrub, and perennial planting areas – all selected for seasonal visual amenity and wildlife value.

Towards the existing edge of Graveley village, development will be significantly pulled back to ensure separation of the new and existing built form. This provides an opportunity to provide a new attenuation basin, designed for positive visual amenity and wildlife benefit. 3-3.5m accessible paths to the perimeter of the basin encourages access to enjoy the habitat as well as facilitating maintenance. The existing footpath (Graveley 006) will also be retained along the settlement edge, with opportunities to enhance the route for improved accessibility.

Extending eastwards towards the Central Core character area, a green corridor will draw people between the new attenuation basin and village footpath, and the new community assets within the development. Here a Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) will serve as a stepping stone destination along the route.



Local Precedent





1. Larger scale to reflect the gateway to the site, reflecting morphology observed in Graveley
2. A range of housing types, including terraced houses and apartments
3. Gateway street accommodating bus travel
4. A segregated cycleway extending active travel provisions through the site
5. Well-landscaped and planted verges to improve legibility
6. Traditional architectural approach but influenced by the more formal building frontage found in Graveley, particularly along the High Street. Use of red/buff brick, elements of white/off-white render or tile-hanging.

View of North Road
Gateway Character Area

6.5. Woodland View

Context

This character area will be defined by a considered approach to the sensitivities around the surrounding landscape and more sensitive views into the site. The surrounding countryside, steeper topography and a clear separation from the higher density areas will form a key influence on the proposed built form.

Uses

The area will comprise of residential uses with a complimentary green network and play spaces.

Built Form

This character area will present a medium to low density of 30-35dph with heights being limited to 2 storeys to address the visual sensitivity and potential views to the surrounding landscape. 2.5 storeys will be permitted around focal spaces, key buildings and vista ends to address good placemaking and a sense of legibility and enclosure.

The block typology will present as informal curved blocks, which have been shaped to compliment the existing topography to minimise the need for large retaining walls. Due to a unique landform, the blocks will be distinct from the more urban and formal western areas carrying a different identity.

The area will also display a less formal built form arrangement through mixed building lines, larger gaps between buildings and increased setbacks to emulate an increasingly rural setting. The area will comprise of mostly semi-detached and detached dwellings, with some terracing around focal spaces.

Movement and Parking

The area will be formed around the Neighbourhood Streets and Lanes, which have been designed to run parallel or perpendicular with the site contours to minimise landform manipulation, where possible. The streets will have a range of parking types, including on-plot and on street.



The area will have a network of direct and attractive active travel links encouraging take up of these movement patterns, which will be formed around natural desire lines to main site access points.

Cycle parking will be incorporated into the public realm and appropriate storage within individual plots.

Public Space

The character area will utilise a variety of different green spaces with varying functions, such as pocket parks and greenways. The spaces have been located around key desire lines and main movement corridors to enhance the active travel movements.

Formal tree planting in verges on neighbourhood streets and both formal and informal planting along lanes will green the character area further creating an attractive environment.

Tree-lined streets to provide lines of visual interest and integration of the built form; pocket parks and greenways to comprise open and accessible lawns framed with visually-attractive and diverse planting beds and trees; Play areas to comprise engaging and stimulating planting, tending to naturalistic planting.

Identity

Plot Boundaries - Boundary treatments will be a mix of low walls and hedges; include landscaping and tree planting.

Architectural Approach and Materials - Generally, more traditional and informal architectural approach. Walls will incorporate a mixture of materials commonly found around Stevenage. Generally, red/buff brick, white/off-white render or half rendered finish will be used.

In terms of roofscapes, red tiles will be used with grey tiles/slate to emphasise key spaces.

Landscape

The new built development will be framed by a wide margin of landscaped spaces, serving as a buffer to the adjoining Graveley village edge, the open countryside and to Ten Acre Plantation. New clipped native hedgerows and scattered tree planting will be provided to formalise the boundary whilst preserving the inter-visibility with the countryside beyond. The boundaries will integrate retained bridleways (Graveley 008), new pedestrian paths, 'field margin' grassland, and native planting to strengthen the connectivity between Robert's Copse and Ten Acre Plantation, for wildlife benefit. Development will be set back from existing vegetation by at least 12m to minimise direct impacts on trees and indirect impacts on wildlife from lighting. To the north, a new attenuation basin will be provided, designed for positive visual amenity and wildlife benefit.

Small-scale pocket parks will be integrated within the development areas together with corridors of open space that serve to connect the new housing with the wider site networks. Within these corridors space will be safeguarded for a new Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP). Such amenity spaces will include a mix of ornamental and native tree, shrub, clipped hedging, and perennial planting areas, selected for seasonal visual amenity and wildlife value.



Local Precedent





1. Informal layout reflecting a more rural character
2. Mostly detached and semi-detached housing types
3. Neighbourhood Street with integrated on-street parking creating traffic calming opportunities
4. Pedestrian/cycle routes around the periphery with good connections to the development
5. Pocket Park planted with native and ornamental tree species
6. Traditional architectural approach with more informal building frontage with use of red/buff brick and occasional white/off-white render.

View of Woodland View
Character Area

6.6. Village Edge

Context

A considered scale, density and building spacing in response to Graveley and the visual sensitivity to the surrounding countryside. This leads to the use of larger gardens to help retain the open character of the landscape; visual filtering to blend built form with the countryside edge; topography has also influenced drainage opportunities.

Uses

The area will comprise of residential uses with associated green-blue network, including attenuation basins and allotments.

Built Form

This character area will comprise of lower density around 25-30dph with building heights limited to 2 storeys to address the adjacent rural and open context by tapering the built form.

The block typology will comprise of informal curved blocks, which have been shaped to compliment the existing topography to minimise the need for large retaining walls. The block arrangement will provide a good sense of passive surveillance to the green network.

The built form will include informal and varied building lines along with larger building gaps, which will consist predominantly of semi-detached and detached dwellings. More terraced forms of houses will generally be used around green corridors and spaces to the south of the character area. The break-up of the built form in combination with planting form will ensure a considered transition to the open countryside.



Movement and Parking

Mainly Lanes leading to block edges. Cycle/footpaths adjoining active travel routes through public open spaces.

Public Space

The use of lanes adjacent to green spaces. Hedge and tree planting to blend with public open space.

Identity

Plot Boundaries – Boundary treatments will comprise of hedges to soften the outward appearance.

Architectural Approach and Materials – Generally, a more traditional and informal architectural approach. Use of a mixture of traditional materials commonly found around Graveley. Generally, red brick, occasional white/off-white render will be used with elements of black timber weatherboarding for key buildings and vista ends to reflect the local vernacular and create visual interest.

In terms of roofscapes, generally red tiles will be used with grey tiles/slate to emphasise key spaces.

Landscape

The new built development edge will be set back from the adjoining garden and cricket ground boundaries to form wide buffer zones and generously proportioned recreational routes. These spaces will incorporate the existing footpath (Graveley 006) together with new complimentary routes to encourage non-vehicular travel.

The landscape will also provide a new community allotment.

New access paths will encourage enjoyment of these assets and facilitate site maintenance. New boundary hedgerows and tree plantings will integrate with existing boundary vegetation and reinforce the separation of the new development from the village to the north.



Local Precedent





1. Informal built form creating a more filtered appearance from Graveley
2. A range of detached, semi-detached and to a small degree terraced dwelling types
3. Site boundary enforced with hedge and tree planting with filtered views towards Graveley
4. Traditional architectural approach with more informal building frontage with use of red/buff brick, occasional white/off-white render and timber weatherboarding.

View of Village Edge
Character Area



Chapter 7



Summary

Summary

Our proposals at North Stevenage will deliver a strong vision that aims to:

- create a sustainable urban extension to Stevenage with its own distinctive character
- deliver much needed new local housing, a Primary School and other community uses
- provide a significant amount of green open space accessible to all comprised of recreational areas, allotments and grow spaces, play areas and places for biodiversity

This Strategic Masterplan Framework document sets our overall vision for North Stevenage and provides:

- Alignment with local policies to deliver 900 homes, a 2FE Primary School and Community Uses.
- A development framework based on a set of clear design parameters that will guide high quality placemaking on the site
- Supporting connections into the consented site at HO3 within Stevenage Borough Council
- A material planning consideration, against which the Outline Planning Application submitted in 2023 by Croudace Homes and any subsequent planning decision can be tested.
- A high level site wide design framework to secure design quality and support co-ordinated high-quality development

The proposals in the Strategic Masterplan Framework will be subject to further, detailed investigations as the scheme progresses.

Future engagement on the proposed Design Code to support development at the site will be agreed between parties and undertaken accordingly.





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