



# **NS1 LAND NORTH OF STEVENAGE**

## Masterplan Summary Report

This report has been prepared by the Strategic Policy Urban Design Team as a summary of the NS1 Strategic Masterplan Report. Circulation is intended for North Herts Councillors. The full report (prepared by the applicant Croudace Homes) is appended to the Cabinet Report.

## KEY INFORMATION

LP Allocation	NS1
Total Site Area	42.7ha
Open Space	15.7ha
No. of Homes	upto 900
Density (net)	(900/23.8) 37.8dph
Non-Resi Uses	2.2ha (2.1ha 2FE Primary School + 0.2ha Community Hub)

LP Allocation	Yes
Strategic Master-plan Framework	Endorsed by Project Board and Cabinet, not adopted by Full Council (11 July)
Outline Planning Application	Submitted Dec 2023, decision pending - PPA ongoing
Legal Agreements and Conditions	Ongoing
Design Coding	PPA ongoing - all workshops (8) completed, awaiting draft document for review
Reserved Matters Applications	None

The masterplan sets out how the development will seek to champion sustainability, organised around the themes in the Sustainability SPD. It is important to note that the following are targets and subject to more detailed design and viability. Ranges are also used where there are multiple components to certain themes.

Optimising Passive Design and Fabric Performance	Silver
Achieving Low Carbon Energy	Bronze
Minimising Carbon Footprint	Bronze
Enhancing Open Space/Integrating Health into Placemaking	Gold
Promoting Biodiversity	Bronze/Silver
Sustainable Travel	Gold
Conserving Water	Bronze/Silver
Incorporating Sustainable Urban Drainage	Gold



## DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

The draft strategic masterplan for NS1 was reviewed with Design South East in February 2023. Key amendments to the design following the session include:

1. Increased buffer from Graveley to soften the impact of development on the village.
2. Linear park alignment reviewed to connect to the SUDs feature to the north.
3. Reworked community hub layout to increase frontage of building onto the central park.
4. Straightened boulevard from North Road gateway to frame views of the central park.
5. Options for bus routes tested as part of follow-up actions from meeting.
6. Linear park crossings moved further apart to create a more cohesive open space.
7. More generous open space to address HO3 Plot A1 with play to activate entrance.



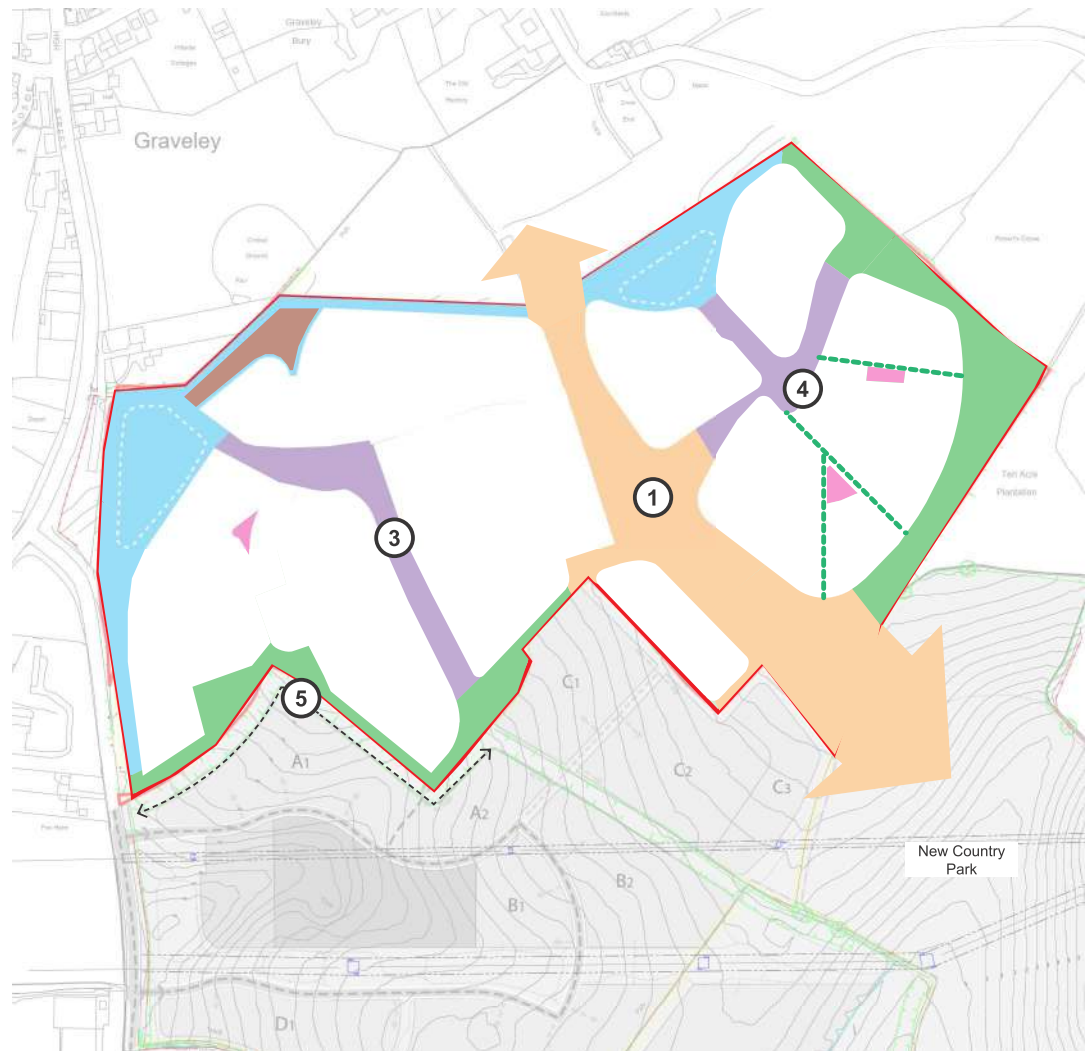
## SETTLEMENT STRUCTURE AND LAYOUT

1. Two settlement structures (east and west) with a linear open space through the centre.
2. Block and plot structures have been shaped around the existing site contours with non-residential uses placed on the flattest part of the site.
3. The western settlement adjoins the HO3 site in Stevenage, extending the urban structure and negotiating the transition from town to countryside.
4. The western side is more formal and urban in structure, activated by the community hub, school and linear park.
5. Most plots on the western side will have a residential density of 35-40dph (apart from the plots addressing Graveley village which will be more spread out).
6. The eastern settlement is more informal and creates a village that sits within the rural landscape at a density of 25-35dph.
7. The radial structure maintains a sense of openness, framing views towards the surrounding landscape.
8. A central play park ('village green') provides the focal point for the eastern village.



## NATURE, OPEN SPACE AND ECOLOGY

1. The central park connects the new country park in the south to the countryside in the north along the alignment of the existing public right of way. The park creates two distinctive neighbourhoods (east and west) and is activated by the community hub, MUGA and primary school in the centre.
2. The site sits within two landscape character areas which will inform the planting and landscape character of open spaces; East Anglian Chalk in the western settlement and North Essex Clayland in the east.
3. The urban linear park provides green in the centre of the western neighbourhood and forms a key route from Graveley to the new local centre and school in HO3.
4. The eastern village is characterised by a series of green 'fingers' that frame views out towards the countryside. The centre is a focal point or 'village green' with play and planting to bring the community together.
5. The edge with HO3 must address the ecological value of the existing tree belt which serves as a wildlife corridor. Any breaks in this must be sensitively placed to allow pedestrian, cycle and vehicular links through.
6. The development is on target to achieve 10% biodiversity gain on site in both habitat and hedgerow units. There are no existing watercourse units on the site.



## MOVEMENT, ACCESS AND PARKING

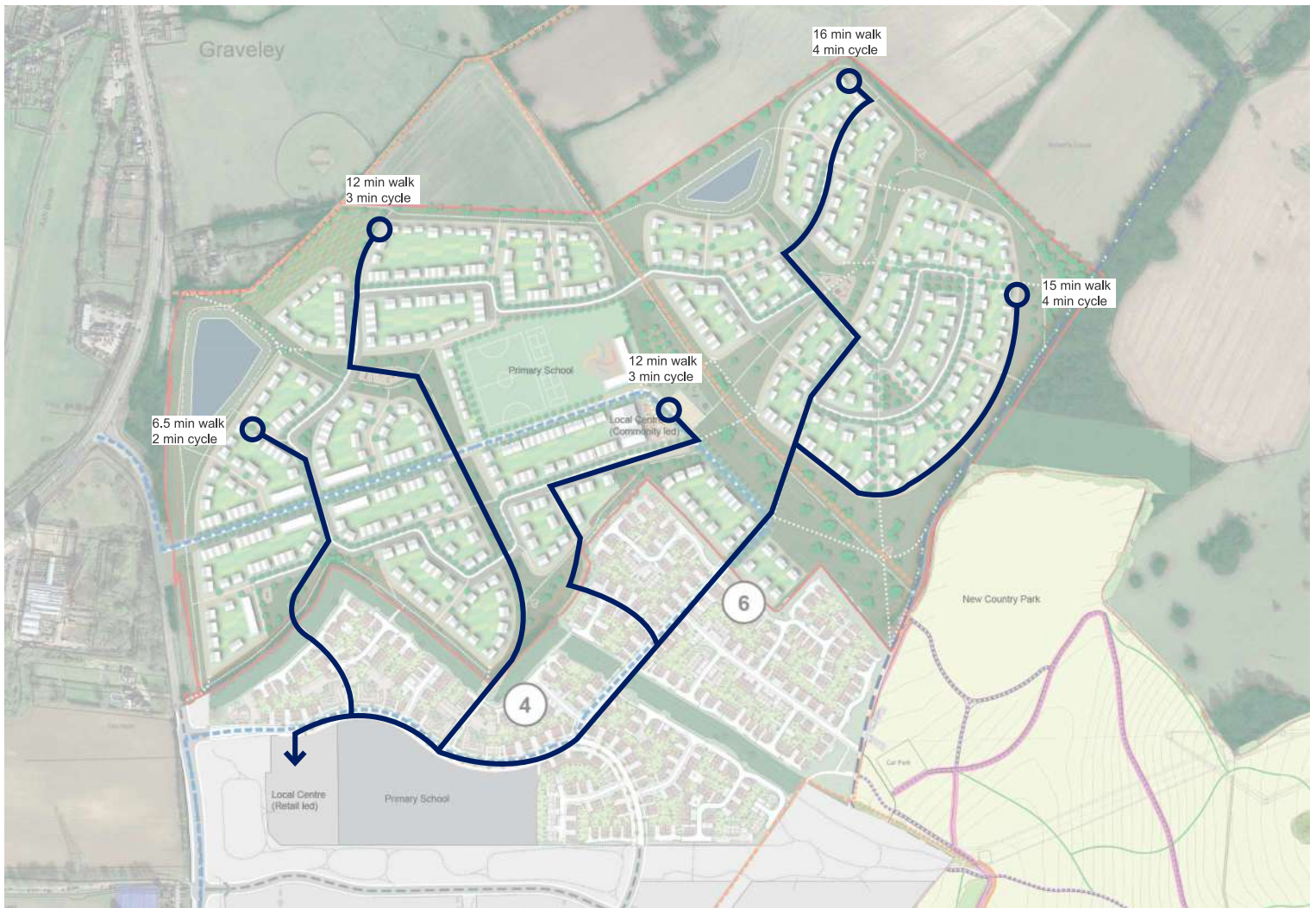
1. The main bus route through the site runs from North Road, past the primary school and community centre, into the HO3 development (between plots C1,C3) - shown in black.
2. This road will have a bus gate in the vicinity of the school.
3. The road layout has been designed to have just one road crossing of the central green space, retaining the sense of openness and minimising conflict with the public right of way.
4. The secondary road (shown in blue) is deliberately indirect to keep traffic speeds low and encourage sustainable travel.
5. A continuous edge lane network ensures pedestrian permeability and seeks to avoid private driveways on pedestrian desire lines.
6. There are two key active travel routes (shown in purple): connecting the eastern village in NS1 to the school and local centre in NS1 and connecting Graveley to the schools and local centres in NS1 and HO3
7. Other routes provide connectivity within the site, to the new country park on the east side of HO3, and to the wider public rights of way network.



## SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND COHESION

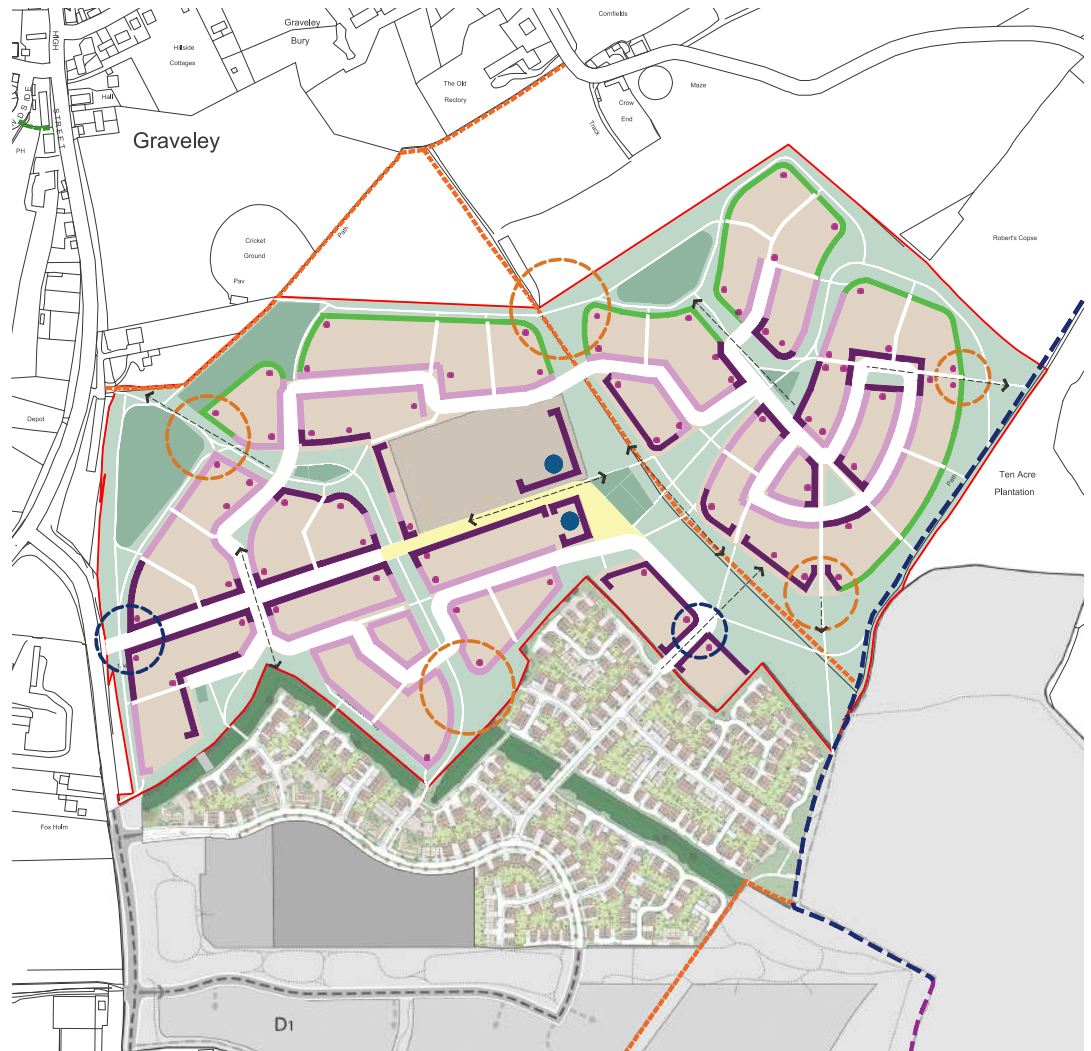
1. Social infrastructure, community facilities and education have been arranged and co-ordinated across both sites to ensure the offer is distinctive and not in competition with each other.
2. The Local Centre in HO3 has a 2FE primary school and retail-focussed units.
3. To ensure the offer is different in NS1 - the school and focal point will be activated by a community hub. The detail of this hub will be developed during the next stages of planning with external stakeholders such as the NHS and Graveley Parish Council who have expressed an interest in using/managing a community hall.
4. Playspaces play a vital role as focal points, bringing residents together and creating sense of community - they have been placed along key east-west and north south axis (shown in green).
5. North-south - the key axis connects Graveley to the HO3 centre via a linear park featuring a SUDs basin and play.
6. East-west - the key axis connects both neighbourhoods via the central park activated by the school, community building and MUGA.
7. Linking key focal points together through walkable, playable routes contributes to social cohesion and promotes active travel within the neighbourhood.
8. The focal area at the heart of the development is being developed through the design code workshops. A community orchard, civic square, formal and informal play are some of the 'events' that will ensure this space is activated throughout the day during the week and weekends (by offering a variety of activities for a range of users).





## CHARACTER, TYPOLOGY AND BUILT FORM

1. Development plots are arranged in a perimeter block structure to create well-defined streets and open spaces, with a clear boundary between public and private.
2. Primary frontages (dark purple) define the primary street and key open spaces with more continuous building frontage and taller massing.
3. Secondary frontages are less continuous and more informal.
4. Rural frontages address the country-side edge - buildings will have lower massing, varied building line and frontage with variation to soften the transition from urban to rural.
5. The urban design framework plan identifies locations for key buildings which mark entrances and terminate vistas. Their design approach will be developed further in the design code but may include special materiality, taller massing and distinctive architectural features.
6. In the western settlement which is more urban, views and vistas are generally terminated by built form.
7. In the eastern settlement, views and vistas are terminated by the open landscape or key green spaces.
8. Architectural approach and materiality will be developed further with the design code through character areas. This process has already started with the urban design team facilitating a number of workshops with the applicant.



## DELIVERY, MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

1. The phasing strategy will be developed in the next stages, with special consideration on when the school will likely be delivered through engagement with HCC and triggers for the delivery of the bus route.
2. It is most likely the development will be built out from west to east through the main access point at North Road.
3. The council has expressed that adoption of key spaces would be preferable. How this will work with Biodiversity Net Gain and the 30-year maintenance requirement needs to be further developed.
4. The design coding process will ensure that there is a clear delineation between public and private space to ensure responsibility for maintenance is clear.

