



Countryside Partnerships & Vistry Homes Ltd.

Buntingford West

Design & Access Statement

June 2023

“A new liveable mixed use neighbourhood with most of people’s daily needs met within a short walk or cycle”

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INTRODUCTION

This Design & Access Statement (DAS) has been prepared on behalf of Countryside Partnerships & Vistry Homes to support an outline planning application and to ensure the delivery of a high quality, innovative and landscape led, mixed use sustainable community on land West of Buntingford. The scheme will provide for up to 350 new homes (including affordable homes), 0.66 hectare of employment, a local centre potentially including retail facilities and healthcare facilities set alongside new play areas, public open space, footpaths, cycleways allotments, sustainable drainage and woodland planting.

350 New Homes

Including
Affordable Homes

0.66 hectare of
Employment

New Mixed Use Local Centre

Potential Retail
and Healthcare
facilities

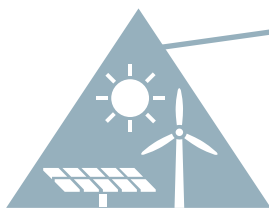


What can
the site
deliver?



New Highway Links

Excellent Pedestrian
and Cycle Connectivity
Connections to
existing PRoW



Renewable zero-carbon
infrastructure and
technologies



Provision of well connected,
accessible public open
space

Provision of Equipped
Play areas, footpaths,
cycleways
and Allotments

Green
Infrastructure
Approximately
45%

of the site (excluding retained
farmland)



New Planting and
Habitats with space
to deliver Biodiversity
Net Gain

Strategic Context

The site is in a sustainable and logical location with good access to both local facilities and the wider area.

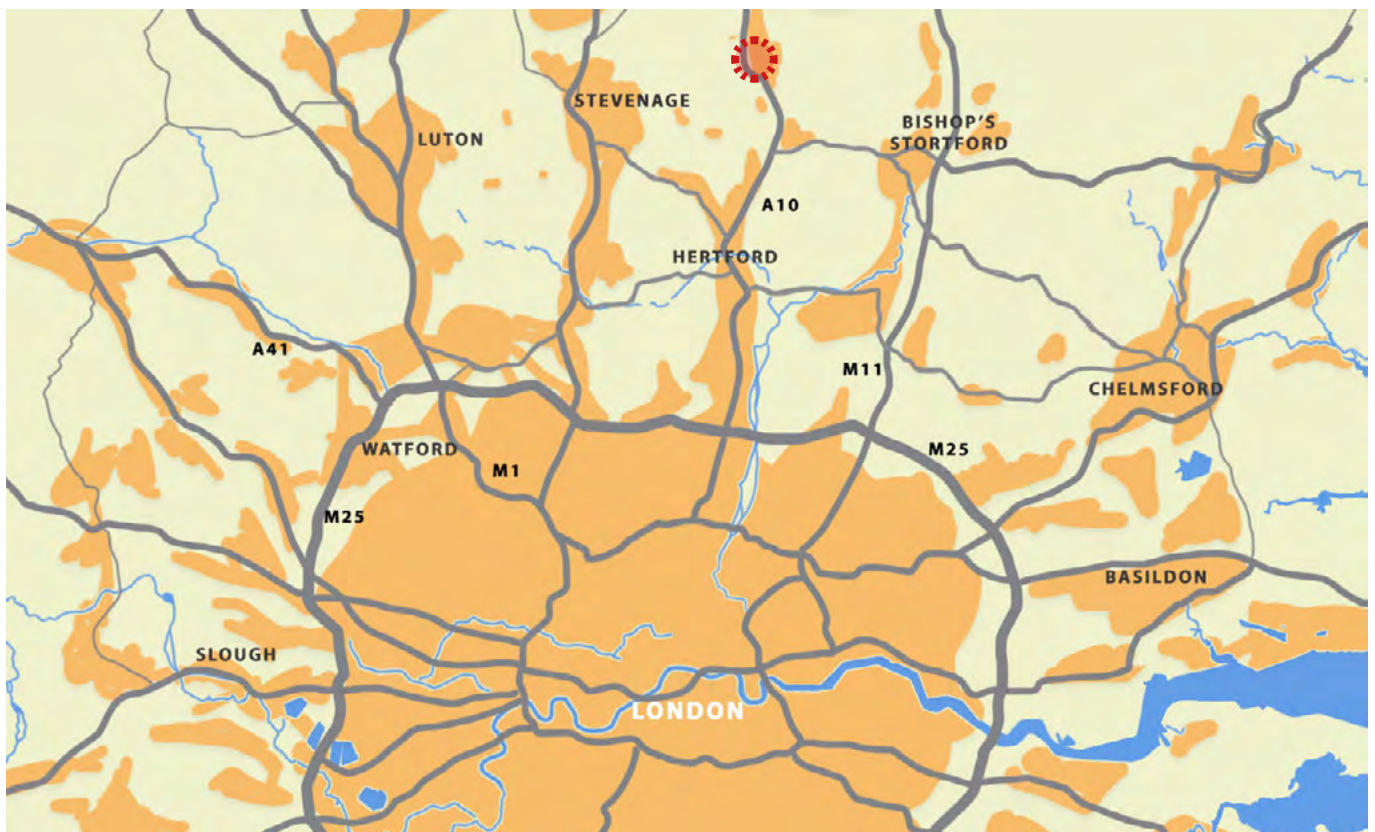
In the wider context, Buntingford lies approximately 30 miles north of London within East Hertfordshire. Buntingford lies on a north south road that was once a Roman Road (Ermine Street) between London to the south and Lincoln to the north. A number of additional north south transport routes also lead north from London and the M25.

To the west of Buntingford the A1(M) forms one of these corridors and the adjacent District Context Plan illustrates a number of Garden Cities and New Towns along this corridor including Letchworth,

Stevenage, Welwyn and Hatfield. Similarly to the east, the M11 movement corridor is adjoined by Bishops Stortford and Harlow New Town.

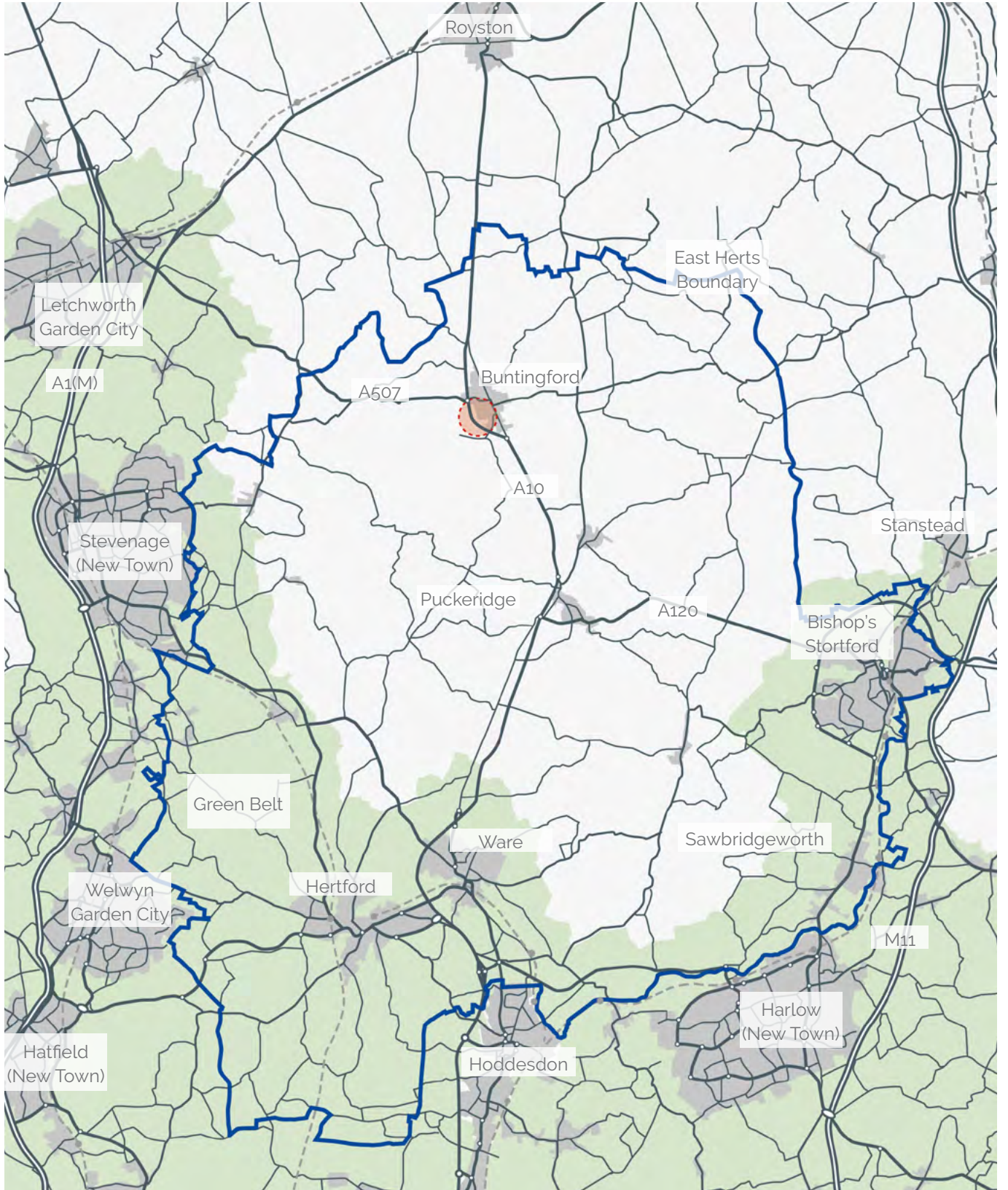
The A10 corridor along which Buntingford sits includes more historic towns such as Hertford, Ware, Puckeridge, Royston and Buntingford.

Buntingford does not lie within Green Belt, which is located to the east, west and south as shown on the adjacent District Context Plan (light green).



Strategic Context Plan

 Approximate Site Location



District Context Plan

 Approximate Site Location

A Sustainable Location

Countryside Partnerships purpose is to deliver sustainable homes and communities across all sectors of the UK housing market and sustainable design will therefore underpin all elements of this masterplan.

Site Location

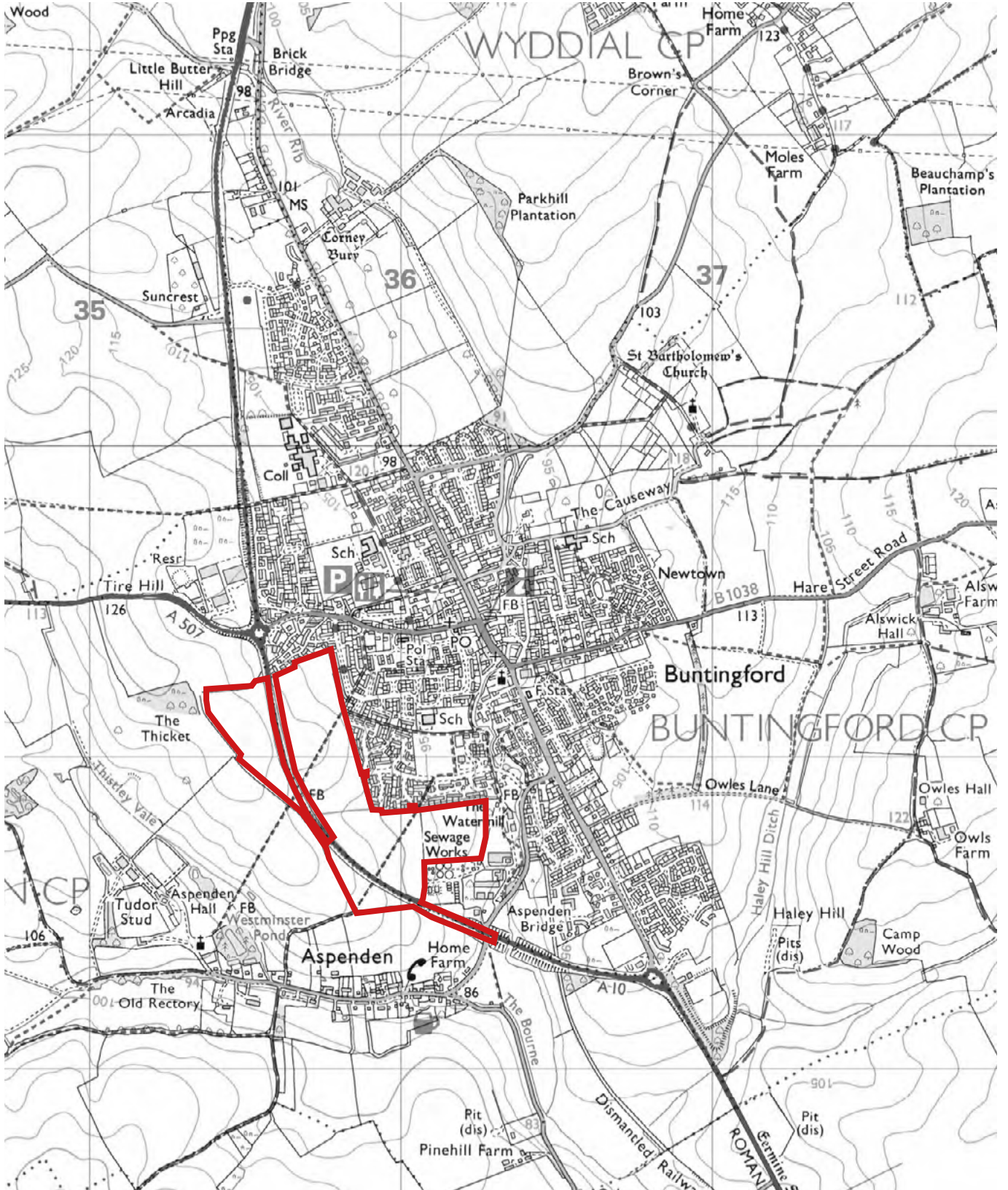
The proposed development area of the site sits within the A10 bypass on the western edge of the town of Buntingford with an overall application area of **28.95** Hectares (this includes **7.85** Hectares of additional land to the west of the A10 bypass).

The site is in a sustainable and logical location with good access to local facilities, bus services and the existing footpath network.

The proposals will be based on a network of new cycle and footpaths both along streets and through green spaces, to create a layout that encourages sustainable travel (cycling and walking) over car-based trips.

By providing a new local centre within the core of the site, this will create a community focus within walkable distances of new and existing homes, and a new play area and footpaths, creating a vibrant hub at the heart of the proposals.

The site lies close to existing employment areas, with new employment proposed within the site to encourage people to live, work and play within the new development.



Site Location Plan

 Site boundary

Design Policy Context

The proposals will follow best practice planning policy and urban design principles that are aimed at delivering good design.

Design Policy Context:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), (Feb 2019, as amended July 2021), Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government;
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.
- National Design Guide, (Sept 2019), Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2014.
- Manual for Streets (MfS) (2007), Manual for Streets 2 (2010) Communities and Local Government.
- Building for a Healthy life (BfHL), (July 2020).
- Living with Beauty (January 2020).



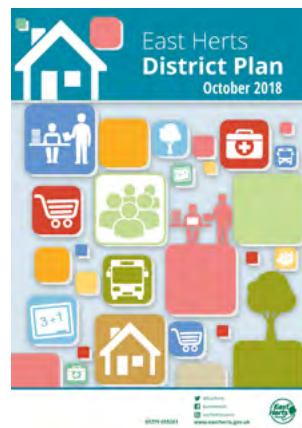
Local Design and Sustainability Guidance:

The proposals will also take into account relevant local design and sustainability guidance including the Buntingford Community Area Neighbourhood Plan (2017), East Herts Local Plan (2018) and East Herts Sustainability SPD (2021).

Planning History:

The site has previously been promoted for development both through the planning application process and for allocation in the now current East Herts Local Plan 2018. The site was acknowledged to be a suitable and logical location to accommodate new homes at Buntingford, but the housing need was mainly met through planning applications to the east of the town.

Countryside Partnership consider the site provides the best opportunity for meeting Buntingford's housing and community needs and aspirations following on from the completion of existing commitments. The Council has yet to commence on its 5 yearly review of the Local Plan. Countryside Partnership is therefore taking a proactive approach, to give the site the best opportunity to come forward with a design and mix of uses to provide a vibrant new community, which will support and enhance the surrounding local area and town overall.



Design Policy Context

The East Herts District Plan (2018) includes a number of design policies relevant to this site. Policy DES1 underpins this document.

East Herts District Plan (2018)

The list below shows the policies from the East Herts District Plan (2018) which could be considered relevant to the proposed scheme in terms of design.

Policy DES1 Masterplanning underpins the request for a Design Review Panel in assisting the development of a Masterplan for the site:

- I. All 'significant' development proposals will be required to prepare a Masterplan setting out the quantum and distribution of land uses; access; sustainable high quality design and layout principles; necessary infrastructure; the relationship between the site and other adjacent and nearby land uses; landscape and heritage assets; and other relevant matters.
- II. The Masterplan will be collaboratively prepared, involving site promoters, land owners, East Herts Council, town and parish councils and other relevant key stakeholders. The Masterplan will be further informed by public participation.
- III. In order to ensure that sites are planned and delivered comprehensively, any application for development on part of the site will be assessed against its contribution to the Masterplan as a whole.

Policy HOU1 Type and Mix of Housing requires that an appropriate mix of housing tenures, types and sizes will be expected in order to create mixed and balanced communities.

Policy HOU2 Housing Density outlines that housing development should make efficient use of land. Proposals are required to demonstrate how the

density of new development has been informed by the character of the local area.

Policy HOU7 Accessible and Adaptable Homes requires that all new residential developments are Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings; and on sites proposing 11 or more gross additional dwellings, a proportion of dwellings are expected to meet the needs of Wheelchair Users.

Policy DES2 Landscape Character requires that development conserve, enhance or strengthen the character and distinctive features of the district's landscape.

Policy DES3 Landscaping outlines that development proposals must demonstrate how they will retain, protect and enhance existing landscape features which are of amenity and/or biodiversity value.

Policy DES4 Design of Development requires that developments are of a high standard of design and layout to reflect and promote local distinctiveness.

Policy DES5 Crime and Security notes that development should be designed to reduce opportunities for crime, for example encouraging natural surveillance of streets, footpaths, parking and communal areas, and the creation of areas of defensible space.

Policy TRA3 Vehicle Parking Provision notes that parking should be integrated as a key element of design in development layouts to ensure good quality, safe, secure and attractive environments.

Policy CFLR3 Public Rights of Way outlines that development should not adversely affect any

Public Right of Way and, where possible, should incorporate measures to maintain and enhance the Rights of Way network.

Policy CFLR9 Health and Wellbeing requires that developments are designed to promote healthy communities and encourage physical exercise and health.

Policy NE3 Species and Habitats outlines that development should seek to enhance biodiversity and create opportunities for wildlife with design features used as a key element in open spaces and measures such as bird and bats boxes implemented to support wildlife.

Policy NE4 Green Infrastructure requires that developments maximise opportunities for urban greening with the planting of street trees and use of appropriate landscaping schemes.

Policy WAT5 Sustainable Drainage requires that development, as far as practicable, includes sustainable urban drainage systems to ensure that surface water run-off is managed appropriately and should also tie in to other design objectives to consider biodiversity, open spaces for recreation and amenity.

The Buntingford Community Area Neighbourhood Plan (2017)

The following policies from The Buntingford Community Area Neighbourhood Plan (2017) are considered potentially relevant:

Policy HD2 requires all new housing developments to be sensitive to the landscape and be of a height that does not impact adversely on views from the surrounding countryside. All proposals should demonstrate how they conserve, enhance or strengthen the character and distinctive features of the Buntingford Community Area landscape.

Policy HD4 sets out that new housing design should respect rural/semi-rural character of the

Buntingford Community Area and its immediate context having appropriate regard to the standards set out in **Appendix 4**- Design Code.

Policy HD7 outlines that new housing should reflect local housing need in terms of mix and tenure.

Policy ES6 welcomes and encourages the provision of allotments.

Policy ES8 welcomes and encourages enhancements to links between areas of natural open green space, wildlife and countryside.

Policy T1 sets out minimum parking standards that will be required unless there is a clear justification for a lower standard to achieve sustainable development.

Policy T2 sets out the provision of car and cycle parking should, as far as possible, allow for off street vehicle and cycle parking to be contiguous with, and part of, each property rather than provided as part of a shared arrangement, however shared parking areas may be acceptable provided they are built to secured by design standards and each space is clearly visible from the property it serves.

Policy T3 requires that existing rights of way will be protected from development that adversely impacts on accessibility within and between settlements within the BCA.

Policy T4 sets out that proposals for new development will be required to take advantage of opportunities to make appropriate connections to existing footpaths, urban alleyways, cycle paths, rights of way and bridleways in the BCA to improve connectivity between and within settlements.

Design Policy Context

Appendix 4 - Housing Design Code

Space around New Dwellings and the Provision of Private Amenity Space

New dwellings should benefit from a satisfactory degree of privacy and daylight and the residents of existing dwellings should not be unduly affected by new development in this regard.

Distances between Dwellings

Minimum separation distances should be maintained between dwellings, and in particular, between the windows lighting habitable rooms. Habitable rooms include living rooms, bedrooms, studies and kitchens. They do not include halls, stair landings, passage ways and utility rooms.

For dwellings of one or two storeys constructed on flat ground:

- Where two habitable rooms face each other, such that direct overlooking is possible, the windows of the corresponding dwellings should be **at least 23 metres apart**.
- Where a window in a habitable room faces a blank wall, the height of which exceeds that of the top of that window, there should be a minimum distance of **13 metres** between them. In the case in which the only habitable room that faces a blank wall is a kitchen, this 13 metre spacing can be relaxed so long as suitable screening is in place between the kitchen window and the blank wall and this screening is at a distance of at least 2 metres from the kitchen window.

Where the ground level varies between the dwellings the above separation distances should be increased by 1 metre for each ½ metre difference in height. Developers will be required to indicate on their plans the finished floor levels of their buildings in relation to a fixed datum and, where there are windows on adjacent existing properties, the levels of these properties.

For dwellings of three or more storeys, the above separation distances should be increased by 3 metres for each additional storey on flat ground and 3 metres for each additional storey plus 1 metre for each ½ metre difference in ground level on sloping ground. On sites where dwellings are angled so that they do not directly face each other and the angle between the facing windows of habitable rooms is more than 60 degrees, the above separation distances may be reduced by 5 metres. (The angle between directly facing windows is 0 degrees). The above distances between buildings apply whether or not they are separated by a road or footpath.

Private Amenity Space

All new dwellings should benefit from private amenity space - effectively a back garden or balcony area - that is not overlooked by adjacent or opposite living rooms or adjacent outdoor seating areas. These private amenity spaces should receive a reasonable amount of sunlight and should not be closely bounded by high walls or buildings. They should be directly accessible from the road on which the dwelling is sited.

Private amenity space shall be provided for new dwellings in accordance with the following minimum standards:

- For houses each dwelling should have a minimum garden depth of 10 metres
- 3 or more bedroomed house - 100 square metres garden area
- 2 bedroomed house - 75 square metres garden area
- One bedroomed house - 50 square metres garden area
- Ground floor flat, apartment or maisonette - 50 square metres garden area
- Non ground floor flat, apartment or maisonette - 10 square metres balcony area per bedroom

Natural Light and Outlook

New housing development should provide a suitable outlook and level of natural light for both new and neighbouring dwellings. This means that dwellings should have sufficient daylight to allow the comfortable use of habitable rooms, kitchens and patio areas in gardens immediately adjoining the building. "Daylight" is defined here as the amount of ambient light received from all directions. Residents should enjoy an outlook of good quality from these rooms and spaces without adjacent buildings being overbearing. Direct sunlight also makes a home more pleasant to live in. All dwellings should receive some direct sunlight in at least one habitable room in all months of the year. This is sometimes difficult, such as with single aspect flats which face north. In these cases, consideration may be given to mitigating measures such as increasing the amount of daylight which can enter the rooms, for example through larger windows. In order to achieve adequate natural light and reduce the possibility of adjacent buildings becoming overbearing, no building facing the windows of a neighbouring building should subtend an angle of more than 25 degrees from the horizontal from a point 2 metres above the floor level (the normal height of windows) of the affected building. This will automatically take into account changes in ground level.

Planning History

The site has been the subject of several previous planning applications. Most recently in 2022, a hybrid application was submitted following a suite of surveys, a design review panel and consultation.

This will be an outline application for up to 350 dwellings, employment and a local centre with potential retail or healthcare uses.

It broadly follows the principles of the Hybrid application, whilst removing the detailed elements.

The framework plan also responds to officers comments on the hybrid application in terms of density, green infrastructure, connectivity and relationship with the adjacent settlement.



Hybrid Application 2015

A hybrid application for up to 400 dwellings, a first school and informal open space was submitted in 2015, including the northern part of the site as a full application for 108 dwellings accessed of Luyne Drive. The application was validated on 2 January 2015, a non-determination of the application was appealed in December 2017 and subsequently withdrawn in January 2018.



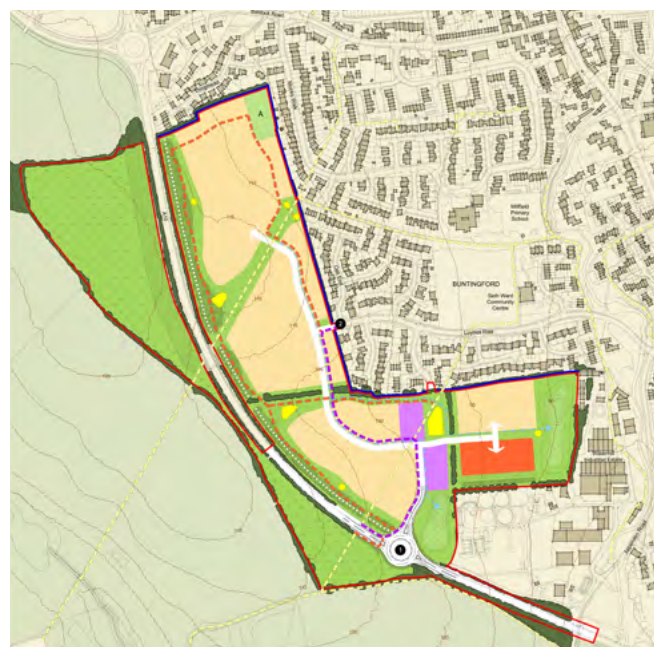
Outline Application 2017

An outline application for up to 400 dwellings and land for up to 2ha Use Class B1 employment (up to 9,000 sqm) was submitted in July 2017 and refused in December 2017. An appeal was lodged July 2017 and subsequently withdrawn.



Hybrid Application 2022

A hybrid application was submitted in July 2022 for 350 dwellings (full application), employment and Local Centre (outline). This was refused in November 2022.



Current Application 2023

An outline application for up to 350 dwellings, employment and local centre.

LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The layout is informed by an understanding of the local constraints, and design will be inspired by the best of the character and detail found within Buntingford. The following pages provide an overview of the constraints and opportunities within the site and surroundings.





Landscape Context

National Landscape Character

In terms of national landscape character, the site lies within National Character Area 86, the 'South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland'. This is a large area, extending from Stevenage in the west to Ipswich in the east, and from Bury St Edmunds in the north to Chelmsford in the south.

County Landscape Character

Within this wider definition of character, Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) have published a landscape character assessment ('A Landscape Strategy for Hertfordshire', 1997) for the county. This formed Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) to the Hertfordshire Structure Plan 1998. HCC have also published a list of changes to the Landscape Strategy, which formed part of a draft new SPG on landscape character, published in 2001.

District Level Landscape Character

The 1997 HCC Landscape Strategy is of necessity quite general, and has now been largely superseded by the more recent and localised assessment of landscape undertaken at a District level and collated for all Hertfordshire Districts on the HCC website. The EHDC landscape character areas are set out in the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 'Landscape Character Assessment', 2007. This shows the northern part of the site as being within landscape character area 141, the 'Cherry Green Arable Plateau', with the southern part (to the south of the A10 footbridge) within character area 142, the 'High Rib Valley'. This character area is divided by the urban area of Buntingford, with part of it to the north and the part which includes the southern part of the site to the south and west of the town.

Key characteristics of the Cherry Green Arable Plateau are noted as including the following:

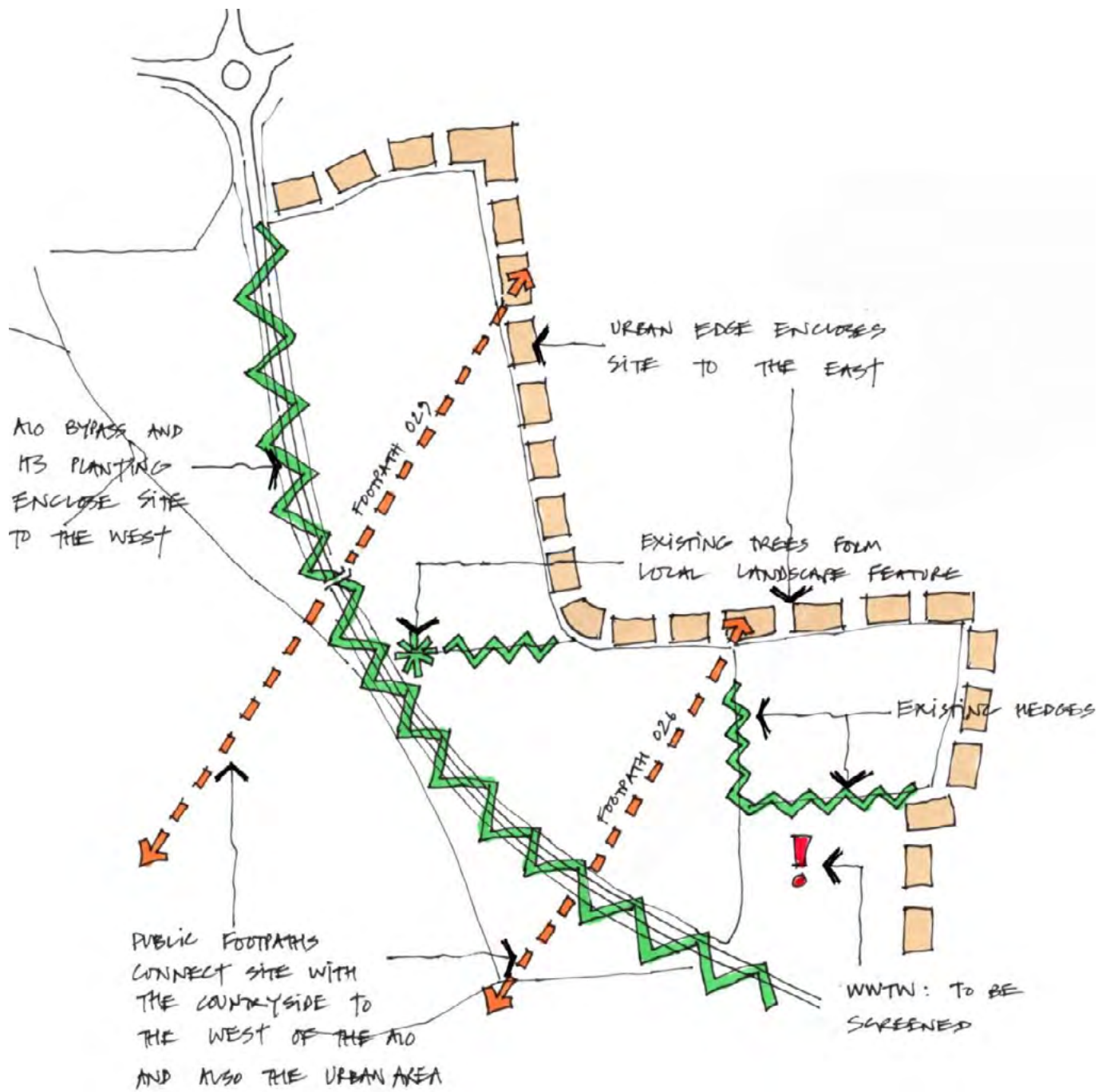
- open arable plateau with some very large field units,
- minimal settlement, restricted to individual farmhouses,
- remote and isolated feel,
- degraded landscape pattern with few hedgerows and associated trees,
- open views across plateau and to valley of the Rib.

Site Landscape Character

The site itself displays some of the characteristics noted in the above character area assessments, but is much more strongly influenced by the A10 and the urban edge of Buntingford (which together enclose it) than the assessment for the Cherry Green Arable Plateau indicates, and is not strongly influenced by the River Rib, which flows at its closest around 100m to the east.

The site is separated from the open countryside to the south and west by the A10 and the planting alongside it, which forms a major local landscape feature, enclosing the site against the edge of the settlement. While the site is in agricultural use and in overall terms has a generally rural character, some parts of it have some urban fringe characteristics, in particular the north eastern corner of the northern field within the site and the enclosed field in the eastern part of the site.

The site is not covered by any national or local designations for landscape quality, and does not lie within the Green Belt.



Landscape Concept Sketch

Facilities



The site is in a sustainable and logical location with good access to local facilities, bus services and the existing footpath network.

Local Services and Facilities



















The site is located in close proximity to schools, a community centre, library, health centre, pubs, sports facilities, post office and convenience stores.

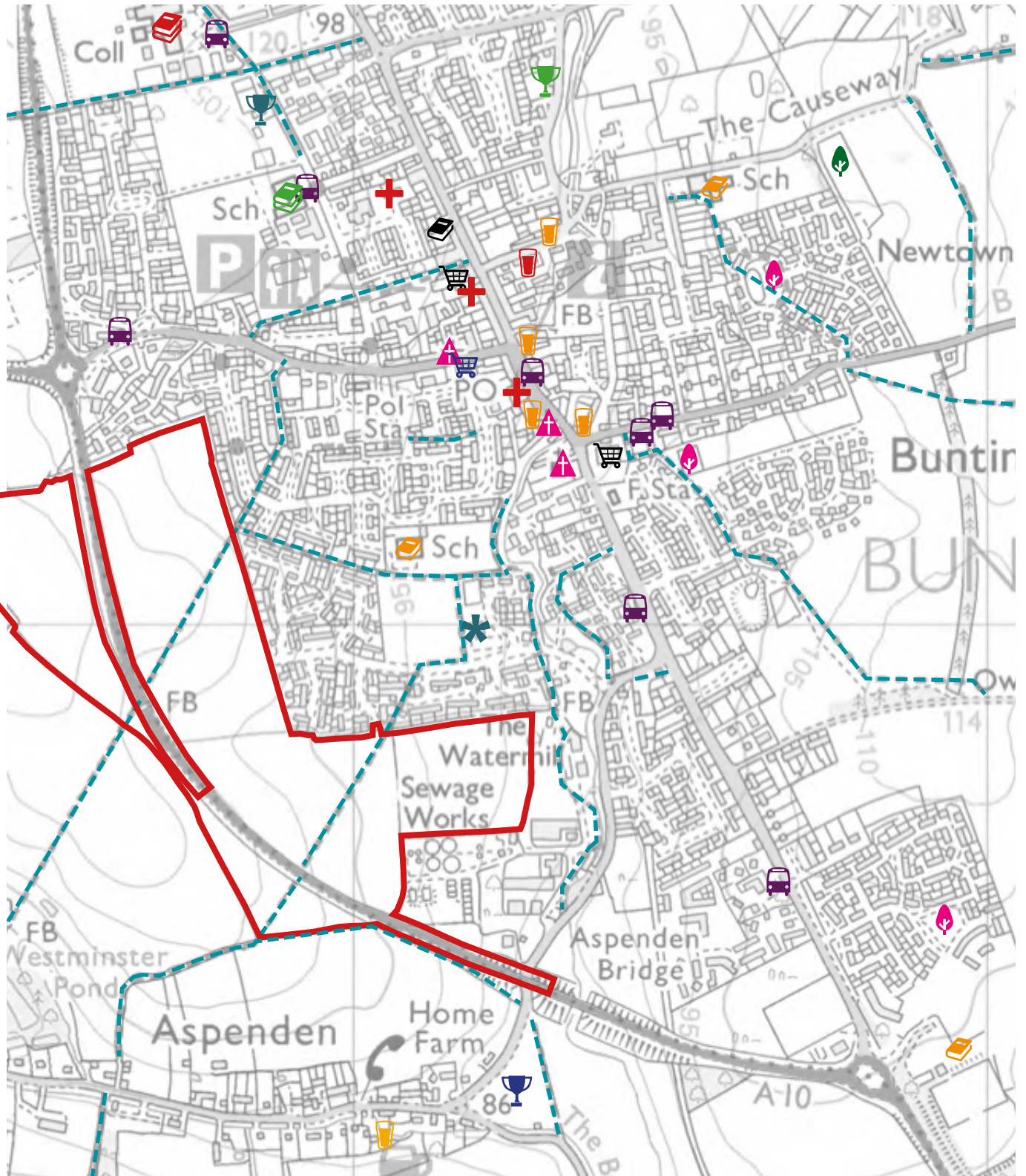
The facilities on the adjacent page shows the site in relation to a selection of the existing local services and facilities.

Key

-  Application Site boundary
-  Footpaths and Bridleways

The local services and facilities include:

-  Selected Bus Stops
-  Nursery School
-  First School
-  Middle School
-  Upper School
-  Place of Worship
-  Seth Ward Community Centre, Sports Hall and Pitches
-  Social Club
-  Bowls Club
-  Sport and Social Club with Pitches and Clubhouse
-  Library
-  Supermarket
-  Post Office
-  Pub
-  Doctor or Dentist
-  Equipped Play Area
-  Allotments
-  Aspenden Village Recreation Ground & Cricket Pitch



Facilities Plan

Built Character

The scheme will respond to the historic context and built character of Buntingford.

Historic Context









The adjacent plan illustrates the urban character and historic evolution of Buntingford, with relevant character areas referenced that can provide precedents for the site at Buntingford West. The historic town centre lies to the north east of the site along the High Street, which follows the Roman road "Ermine Street". Properties within the historic core include a mix of coloured render, buff brick and red brick properties set close to the road, with occasional grand Georgian buildings and older timber framed public houses.

The town expanded in the 20th century with housing spreading east and west of the historic core including the Newtown area to the east during the 1940-1950s with development at Archers, Bridgefoot and Sunny Hill.

The expansion of the town then continued southwards either side of the High Street following the construction of the Sainsbury's distribution depot located at the southern end of the town. Development in the 1960s-1990s include Vicarage Road, Monks Walk, Downhall Ley, Fairfield, Snells Mead, Freman Drive. Some of these areas provide good examples for densities and urban design approaches of the housing within the site and figure grounds showing some of these densities are provided on the following pages.

The A10 bypass was constructed in the 1980s to the immediate west of the site wrapping around the western edge of the town and subsequent growth has continued east and west towards the bypass which has formed the logical extent of the town. This includes Luynes Rise immediately east of the site in the 1990's.

Development has continued in the 21st Century with housing including The Village to the south east, Meadow Vale and Knights Walk to the east, The Maples to the north west, Longmead to the west and Keepers Chase to the south. These generally large scale developments include a mix of buff and red brick with occasional render and weatherboard properties. Images of some of these developments has been included in the following pages with references to how the proposals can draw upon and respond to the best character within these areas.

-  Up to 1900
-  Up to 1925
-  Up to 1950
-  Newtown (mixed dates)
-  Up to 1980s
-  1980s-1990s
-  1990s-2000s
-  2000s - Present day



Historic Evolution Plan

 Site boundary

Built Character

Existing Density

The adjacent plan illustrates the urban grain and density of Buntingford. There is a mix of densities which relates to the historic evolution plan on the previous page, ranging from the higher density within the high street, to the lower density late twentieth century housing through to slightly higher early twenty first century development. The approximate densities are provided below in dwellings per hectare (dph):

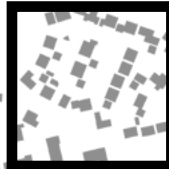
1. High Street - N/A
2. Snells Mead - 28dph
3. Monks Walk - 28dph
4. Oak End - 27dph
5. Knights Walk - 29dph
6. The Village - 40dph
7. Meadow Vale - 29dph
8. Keepers Chase - 30dph

Immediately adjacent to the site, the densities range broadly from 27 to 28dph with development built in the late twentieth century. The eastern and southern edges of Buntingford are generally of a slightly higher density, with twenty first century developments of between 29 and 40 dph. This would be a suitable range of densities for the site, allowing a range of densities as well as providing efficient use of the site and in accordance with current design policy.

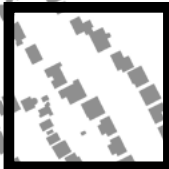




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5



2



7



4

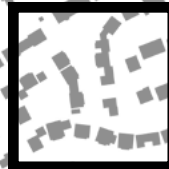
BUNTINGFORD

Luynes Rise

Watermill Industrial Estate

Aspenford Road

London Road



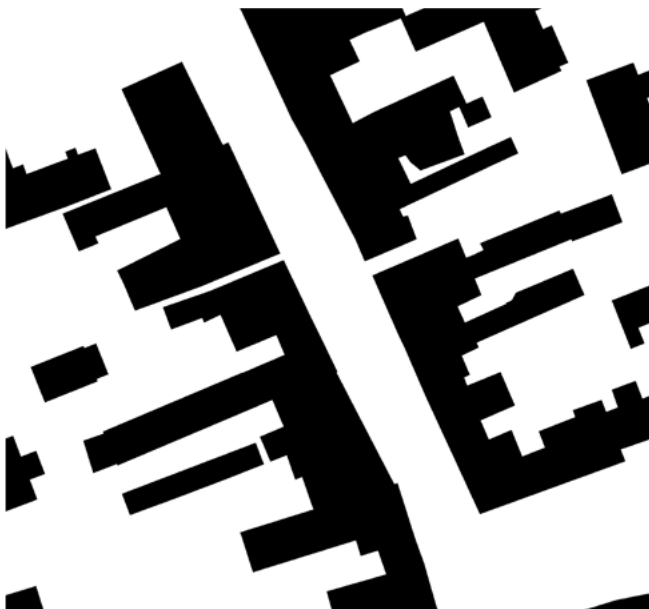
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8

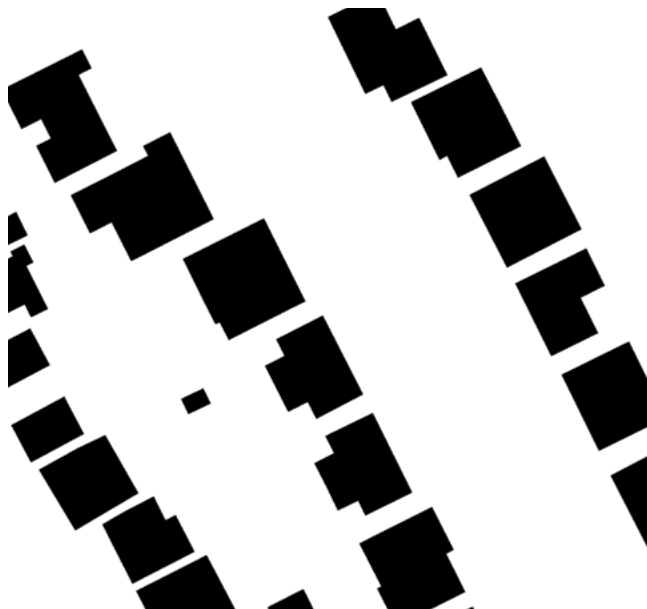
Built Character

1. High Street



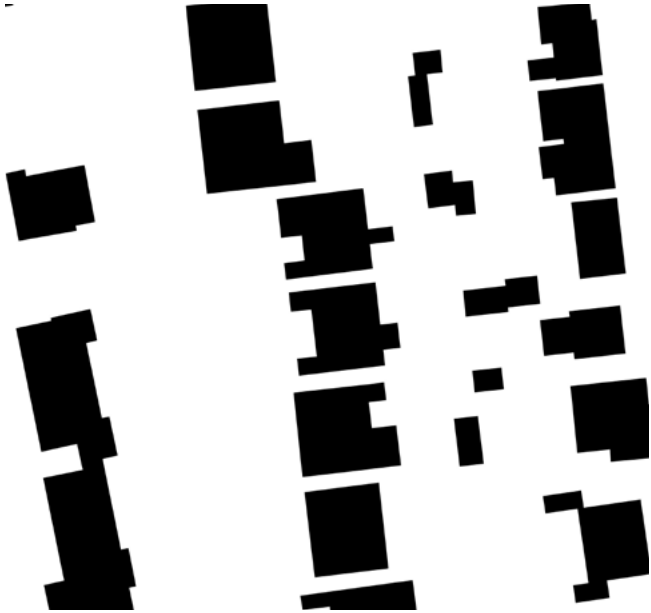
Stepped roof lines of two storey terraced red brick and rendered properties set close to the road within the high street. Chimneys also feature strongly along the High Street and carriageway entrances.

2. Snells Mead



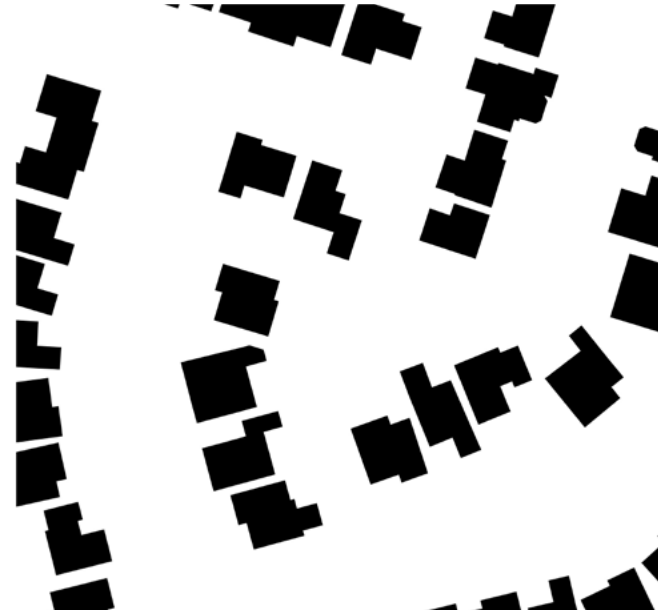
Low density with parking to frontages creates wide streets. The relatively straight streets allow focal vistas. Grass verges (although lacking trees).

3. Monks Walk



Detached and Semi-detached properties with wide frontage parking

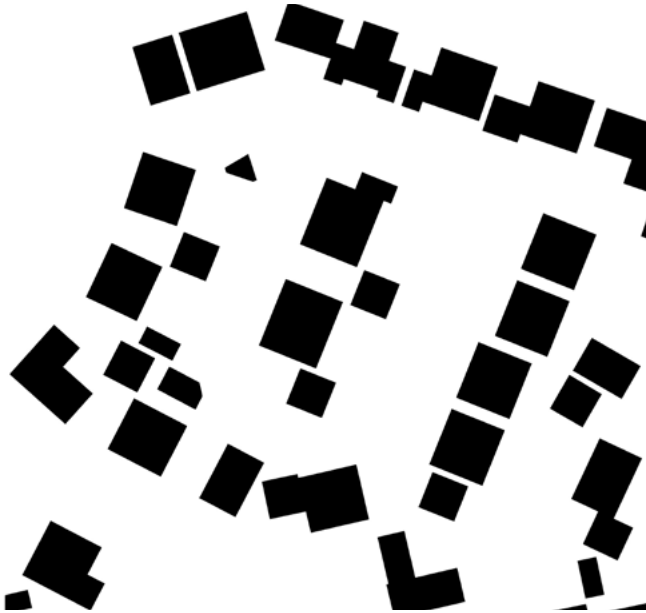
4. Oak End



Low density detached Mock Tudor properties and sinuous roads characterises existing housing immediately east of the site.

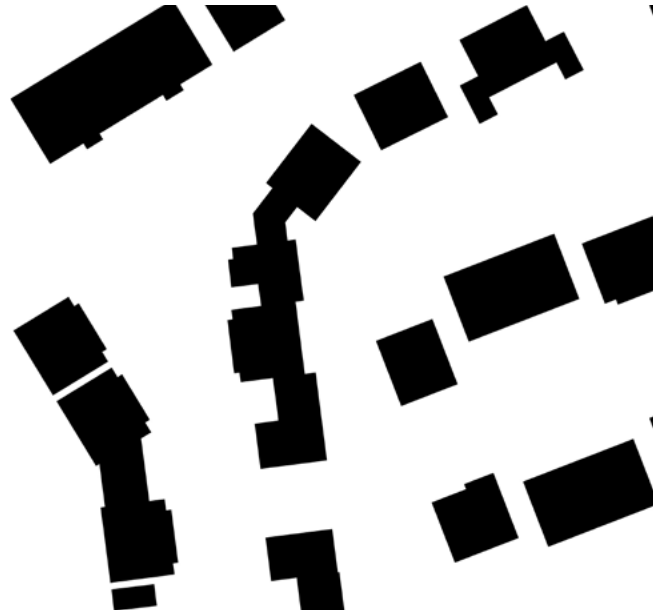
Built Character

5. Knights Walk



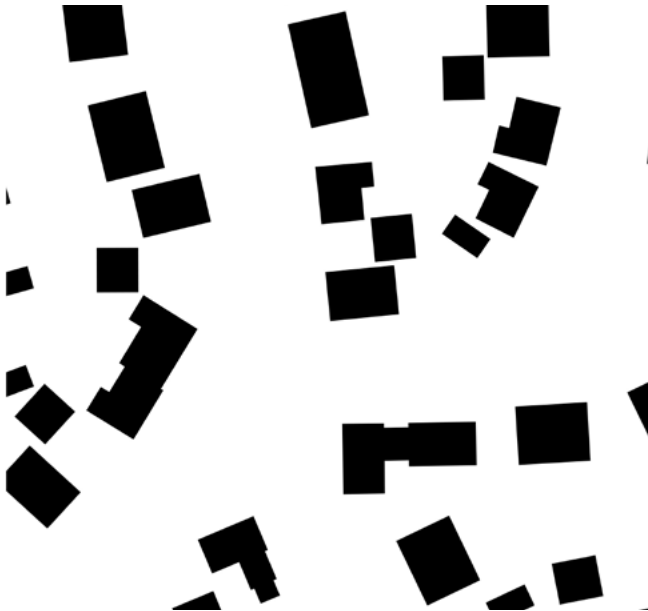
A mix of coloured render, buff and red brick reflects local character, and buildings wrap around corners with minimal frontages.

6. The Village

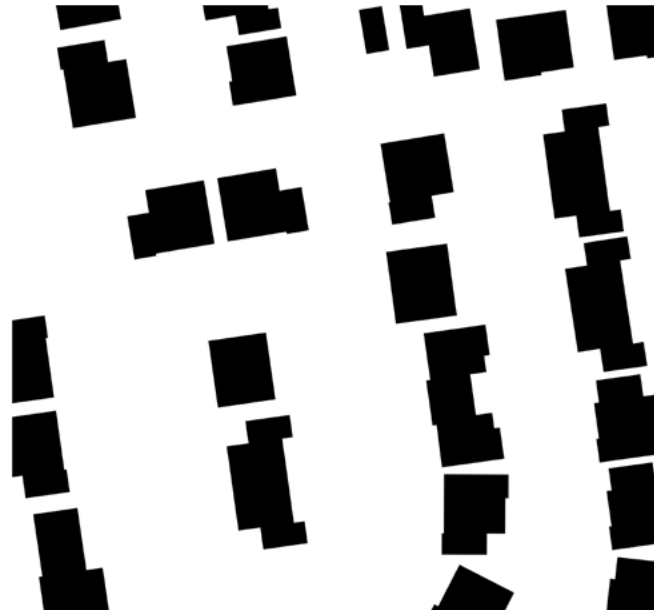


Grass verge separates road from footpath, with tree lined avenue and focal gateway three storey building.

7. Meadow Vale



8. Keepers Chase



Focal timber weatherboard property on corner of street.



Shared surfaces to streets and minimal use of tarmacadam. A mix of render, buff brick and weatherboard.

CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

The development proposals have been guided by an iterative design process. This has included an analysis of landscape, ecology, water and drainage, heritage and movement. It has also considered the development's relationship with Buntingford and the surrounding context.

The following pages explore the principal components or the 'building blocks' of masterplanning. These gradually build up, layer by layer, into a series of design approaches for the site and, ultimately, a design concept.





Site Location Plan: Aerial Photograph

 Application Site Boundary

Site Landscape

The site is on the south western edge of Buntingford, and the area proposed for development forms a broad strip between 150 and 250m wide between the existing urban edge and the A10 bypass. There is also a small area to the south west of the A10 which could be required for the works to construct the proposed new junction on the A10, and a larger strip of land to the west of the A10 required for ecology improvements.

The site is in agricultural use, and comprises three large arable fields, with the A10 running along the western sides of the two larger fields as it curves around the western side of Buntingford. Planting along the east side of the road is continuous, but with some areas denser than others. Species include ash, field maple, hawthorn and sycamore up to 7m in height to the south, a greater proportion of willow and sycamore in the central part around the footbridge where heights are up to 10 to 12m, and with some oak and aspen to the north, where the vegetation is generally more sparse. This vegetation has matured over recent years, with some increase in both its height and density such that it forms a strong landscape feature, and will continue to grow into the future, though as it is deciduous it will form a less effective screen in the winter.

There are two visually significant hedgerows within the site area - one running north from the north west corner of the wastewater treatment works which comprises a double row of hawthorn, field maple and blackthorn up to 8m in height to either side of a shallow ditch, and a similar hedge running west towards the A10 (dividing the two larger fields). At the western end of this field boundary, close to the A10, there are two distinctive multi-stemmed sycamores around 16m in height, with striking domed canopies, to either side of the field access through the hedge line.

There are two public rights of way across the site, one running to the north east from Aspenden Church, across a shallow ridge to the north east of Aspenden Hall, crossing the A10 by means of a footbridge and then across the northern part of the site (as Footpath Buntingford 029) and into the urban area near Monks Walk. The other footpath runs in the same direction but further to the south east, running from Aspenden across the lower end of the same ridge, across the A10 at grade and diagonally across the southern part of the site (as Footpath Buntingford 026) into the urban area. The footpaths are signed and marked on the ground, and both appear to be reasonably well used.



Aerial View Looking South East (March 2017)



Aerial View Looking North West (March 2017)

Historical Development

Buntingford is located on Ermine Street, the Roman road from London to York, and it grew as a staging post between London, Cambridge and the north. As a result the historic core of the town is centred on the High Street.

The town's charter street market has been held since the 14th century and Buntingford remains an important service centre for the surrounding villages.

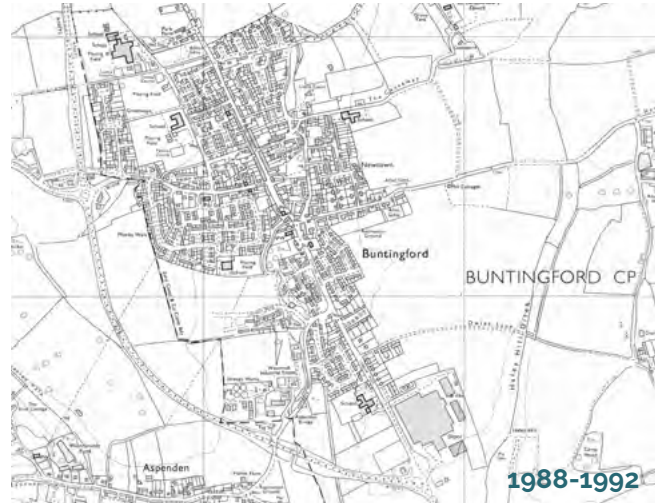
Buntingford had a railway station from 1863 until it was closed to passengers in 1964. It was the terminus of the Buntingford branch line which joined the main line from London to Cambridge at St. Margaret's.

Buntingford Conservation Area was first designated in 1968 with boundary reviews undertaken in 1981 and 2000. It principally consists of the High Street and includes 89 Listed Buildings.





1948-1950



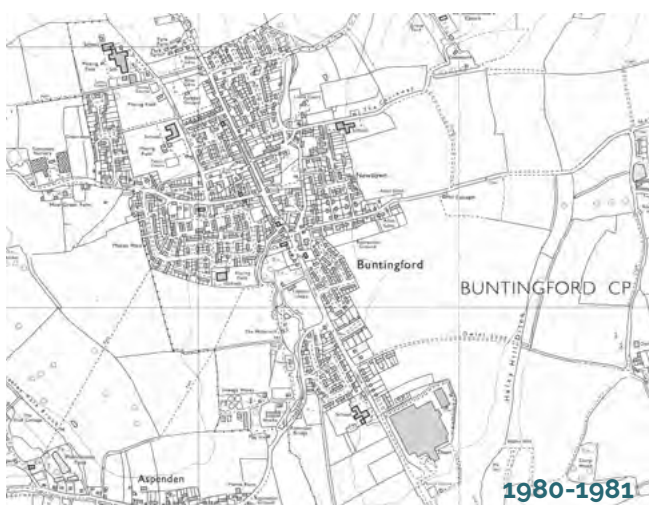
1988-1992



1951-1952



2001



1980-1981



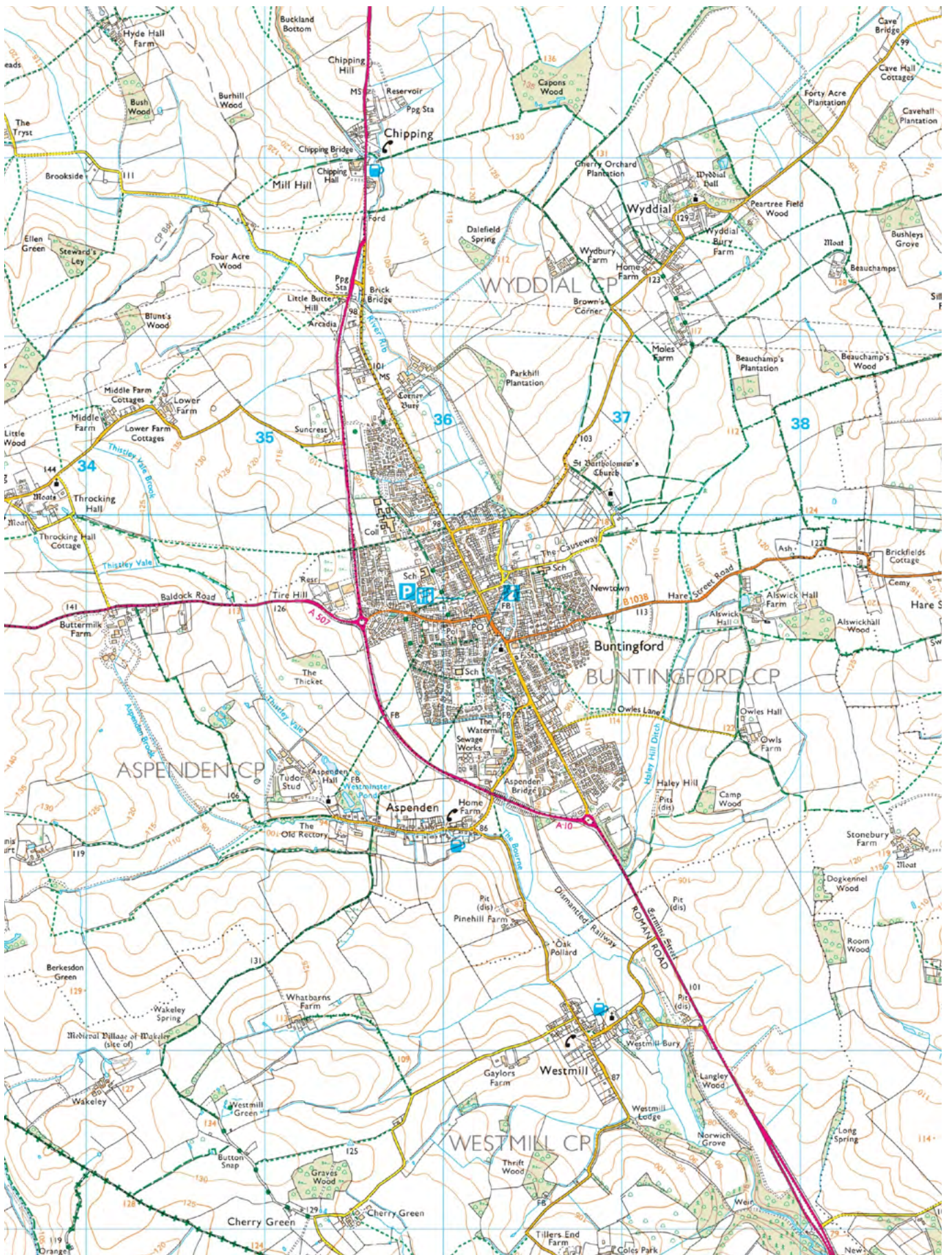
2021

Topography

The site slopes generally down from north west to south east, towards the valley of the River Rib, and levels within it vary from 115m AOD (above Ordnance Datum, or mean sea level) in the north western corner of the northern field close to the A10 roundabout to just below 90m AOD in the easternmost field. Within that general topography, there is a pronounced local ridge within the northern field, running into the site from the A10, such that levels fall to both the north east and south east from this ridge.

Further afield, the site lies on the western side of a broad valley running to the south through the centre of Buntingford, on the eastern slopes of a broad ridge running to the north west, towards Tire Hill on the A507, where levels reach 126m AOD. The A10 runs downhill from the north west at roughly the same level as the surrounding land, but rises up on a broad embankment to cross the valley of the River Rib to the south east of the site.

The relative levels between the site and the A10 vary - the road is set around 2m below site levels in the northern part of the site, and as the site falls to the south the road falls less steeply such that the road is roughly at grade around the pedestrian bridge over the A10. There is a short stretch to the south of the footbridge where the road is above levels within the site, and levels further to the south are generally at grade.



Topography Context Plan

Visual Assessment

In general, visibility of the new development would be limited by a combination of the existing urban edge to the east and north, vegetation along the A10 and also the rising ground beyond that to the south and west and further vegetation to the north. There would be some partial and distant views from the higher ground to the north east and south east of Buntingford. There would be some adverse visual effects for receptors within these areas, and there would be some inevitable harm to the local landscape and views as a result of the introduction of new buildings into what is presently an undeveloped site, but it should be noted that the new houses and employment uses in themselves, and the development as a whole, would not be unsightly or intrusive - any harm would occur as a result of the development of what is presently a greenfield site, and the level of harm would decrease over time, as the extensive proposed planting begins to mature (noting also that the existing trees alongside the A10 will continue to grow into the future), and as the new houses are integrated more fully with the surrounding area.

- From the north there would be some limited and filtered but short distance views of the new houses in the northern part of the site from the houses on the south side of Longmead, but no significant views from any further to the north.
- From the east there would be short distance views of the new houses from some of the existing houses along the urban edge, and the nature of these views varies: in the north eastern corner of the northern field there are open views from both floors of the adjacent houses (though allotments are proposed within the site at that point), but as the land within the site rises and the boundary vegetation becomes taller and denser to the south the views become more restricted, and there would be partially screened views of the upper parts of the new houses from first floor windows only of the existing houses,

mainly in the winter. In the southern fields there are tall hedgerows with some trees along the site boundary, and there would be no significant views in summer, though some filtered views of the new houses on the site would be possible in the winter.

- There are some more distant views from the higher ground to the north east and east, on the far side of the valley of the River Rib and beyond the urban area of Buntingford. Parts of the far valley side can be seen from within the site, particularly from the higher areas of the site close to the A10, indicating that the development would also be visible from those parts of the far valley side, and these views were raised as a potential issue by the Design Review Panel. However, there are relatively few public viewpoints in these areas from which the site can be seen - there are no views from the churchyard of St Bartholomew's Church or the minor road to the north west of the church due to intervening vegetation. The new houses in the northern part of the site would be visible from some of the properties within the ongoing Wheatley Homes Meadow Vale housing development to the south of Hare Street Road, above the intervening urban area, and some of the new houses (again, principally on the higher ground of northern field) would be visible between or above intervening vegetation from the minor road and bridleway just to the west of Owls Farm at a distance of around 1.9km, together with other current or recent housing developments which would also be present in these expansive views (**see Photograph 1**).

The Site



Photograph 1

View west to the site from the end of the minor road near Owls Farm, on the higher ground to the east of Buntingford. The northern field within the site can just be seen above the houses where indicated by the red arrow, with part of the adjoining field to its left. The new houses on the site would therefore be present in this view, but at a distance of around 1.9km would form a small part only of a broad expansive view which already includes parts of the urban area. Turning to the left from this point would open up views of the recent residential development at The Village, around 0.6 to 0.8km away.

Visual Assessment

- From the south east there would be some limited views of the new houses on the higher parts of the site from a small area around the junction of the minor road leading to Westmill with the A10, at a distance of around 2km (**see Photograph 2**).
- From the south and south west there would be filtered views into the western part of the site from the A10 as it passes the site - views ahead along the road are generally well screened even in the winter, but at the moment the site can occasionally be seen between and (in winter) through the vegetation in some views out to the side of the road. However, those views would be screened by the proposed bund and acoustic fence, such that there would be very few views of the new houses on the site from the road. There would be some limited and fleeting views at the points where there would be gaps in the bund and fencing to allow the footpaths to pass through them and also more open views into the site at the point of the proposed access.
- There would also be some more limited and filtered views from the two public footpaths as they approach the site on the far side of the A10, though these are largely screened (in the case of the northern route) in the summer by the vegetation along both sides of the road (forming a double line of screening), and views from any further to the south west are screened by the ridge line which curves around parallel to the A10 just to its south and west, such that there would be no views from the lower ground around Aspenden Hall, or from any areas further to the west.
- From within the site there would be clear views of the new buildings and other elements of the development from the two footpaths which run across the site, and each route would need to cross the new internal access roads (one crossing for the northern footpath, and two for the southern route, which would also run close to the new local centre).

Full details are provided in the LVIA that accompanies the application.

The Site



Photograph 2

View north west from the minor road leading to Westmill, at its junction with the A10 south of Buntingford. The northern field within the site can be seen where indicated by the red arrow at a distance of around 2km. This is a localised view only, and there are no views of the site from around 20m to the north or west of this point. The new houses on the site would be present in this view, but would form a small part only of a broad expansive view which already includes the A10 and its traffic.

Noise/ Access and Movement

Noise

The A10 bypass lies immediately to the west of the site with associated traffic noise. Acoustic consultants RPS have carried out an assessment of the existing noise levels. The required noise mitigation is ongoing and has been incorporated into the current masterplan. The A10 lies in cutting (below the site) to the north west and therefore has some inherent noise mitigation, whereas to the south west, the site lies below the level of the A10. The proposals suggest a wide corridor will be necessary along the western edge to incorporate a 2m high landscaped bund, with 2m acoustic fence to the top. Fronting the proposed residential buildings along the western edge will help to create a continuous built frontage which will screen the amenity garden areas to the rear from the A10 noise.

Access and Movement

Vehicular access will be provided from a roundabout junction off the A10. Consultation with Hertfordshire County Council has been undertaken and is ongoing. The proposed access location is approximately equidistant from the roundabouts to the north and south. A secondary emergency access is proposed off Luynes Rise; the access will be controlled with free movement restricted to pedestrians, cyclists and occasional emergency service vehicles only.

The proposed new residential development is mostly within 400m of bus routes to the east and north of the site. Also public transport accessibility to the site will be improved by Herts Lynx, a new on-demand bus service serving villages in North and East Herts which will be extended into the site. Buntingford has been selected as one of the Key Hub Towns, therefore no bus access is proposed on site, the proposals will instead create new pedestrian links across the site linking into the existing bus stops and facilities within Buntingford.

Active movement, such as pedestrian and cycle networks, takes priority over vehicular access, on natural desire lines across the site with several access points allowing good connectivity with the existing network including the Active Travel infrastructure proposed on Station Road and London Road.

Drainage/ Odour

Drainage

The site lies on elevated land within Flood Zone 1. Drainage consultants WSP have provided input into the masterplan. The site slopes from a high point in the north west to a low point in the south east, which is the logical location for attenuation. Two ditches currently cross the site along the existing hedgerow corridors. The River Rib lies to the east of the site. The site will use sustainable drainage systems, such as swales, attenuation basins and ponds, set within the existing green infrastructure.

Odour

A Waste Water Treatment Works lies to the immediate south east of the site. Following initial consultation with Thames Water, odour contours from a previous assessment of the Waste Water Treatment Works have been utilised and an odour assessment has been undertaken based on these odour contours. As a result, the highest sensitivity receptors (such as residential areas) have been moved away from the odour source and into areas which are appropriate for such uses. The proposed employment has been carefully considered so that accessible areas and buildings are located within appropriate odour contours, and a buffer is provided along the boundary with the Waste Water Treatment Works.

Arboriculture/ Ecology

Arboriculture

An Arboricultural Assessment has been carried out by FPCR Environment and Design Ltd in accordance with guidance contained within British Standard 5837:2012 'Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction - Recommendations'. The guidelines set out a structured assessment methodology to assist in determining which trees would be deemed either as being suitable or unsuitable for retention along with recommendations for considering the relationship between existing trees and how those trees may integrate into designs for development.

In summary, the arboriculture report concludes:

- The site consists of three field parcels.
- Tree cover was predominately positioned along to the boundaries of the parcels and adjacent to the A10.
- A mixture of native species was found throughout the site with trees ranging in quality from Category U (Unsuitable for retention) to Category A (High quality). The majority of trees were classified as either Category B (Moderate quality) or Category C (Low quality).



Across the site a total of seventeen individual trees, thirteen groups of trees and two hedgerows were surveyed as part of the Arboricultural Assessment of which two trees were considered to be high in quality, eight trees and eleven groups of trees were recorded as moderate quality, one tree and one hedgerow were considered unsuitable for retention with the remaining trees and groups of trees low in quality.

To facilitate the proposed development, no significant tree loss will be required for the built form. Existing trees will need to be removed to facilitate the proposed access into the site and the primary road which will link the neighbourhood areas. The losses are considered to be acceptable on arboricultural grounds due to limited nature of the removals and the retention of the majority of trees on site. By developing the site, an opportunity for new tree planting is created, which should be considered as beneficial, in terms of arboriculture. It will improve and increase tree cover in the local area without the loss of any arboriculturally significant trees.

Ecology











A suite of ecology surveys have been undertaken including a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) which was carried out by JBA in 2020 and a suite of additional surveys. The majority of the site comprises improved grassland (for agricultural uses). Other habitats present on site are scrub, hedgerows, wet and dry ditches, boundary trees and semi-improved grassland. In addition, a number of further surveys have been carried out including a badger survey, breeding bird survey and reptile survey. Existing hedgerows and trees will be retained, with the exception of break-through points for access, and ecological input into the masterplan will continue to ensure biodiversity net gain.



-  Category U - Trees / Groups Unsuitable for Retention (BS 5837:2012)
-  Category A - Trees / Groups of High Quality (BS 5837:2012)
-  Category B - Trees / Groups of Moderate Quality (BS 5837:2012)
-  Category C - Trees / Groups of Low Quality (BS 5837:2012)
-  Hedgerow (Colour indicates BS5837:2012 Category)
-  Root Protection Area (The RPA has been altered where appropriate to reflect underground constraints)
-  Individual / Group Number and BS5837:2012 Category
-  Indicative Shade Pattern (in accordance with BS5837:2012 where appropriate)

Arboriculture Plan



-  Target note
-  'Moderate' bat roost potential tree
-  Improved grassland
-  Semi-improved grassland
-  Dense scrub
-  Tall ruderal
-  Species-poor hedgerow with trees
-  Dry ditch
-  Wet ditch
-  Fence

Ecology Plan

Constraints & Opportunities

Following the assessment of the site and its surroundings a number of opportunities and constraints associated with the proposed development of the site have been identified.

These are outlined below and illustrated, where appropriate, on the Constraints & Opportunities Plan.
















Opportunities

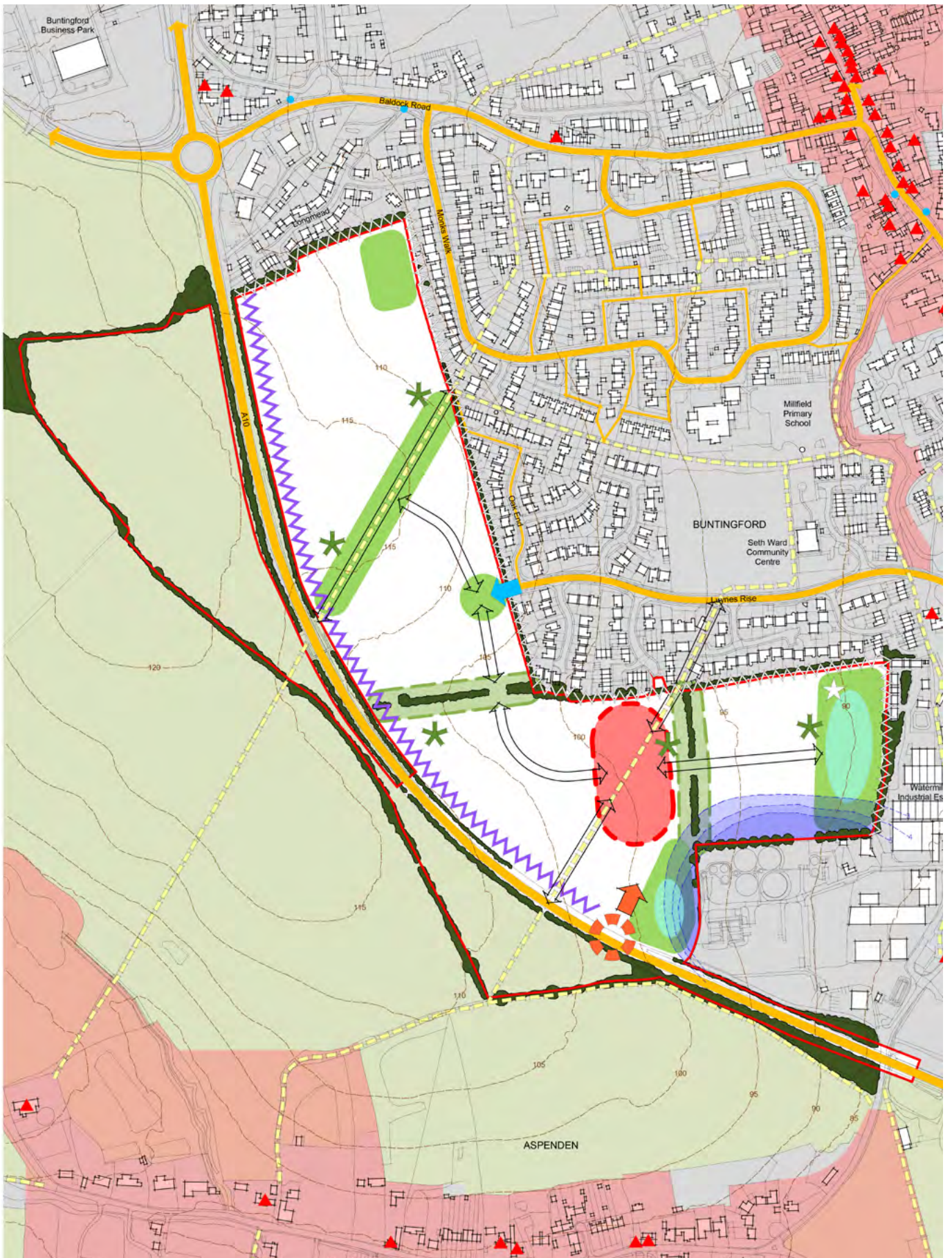
- Provide an appropriate mix of new housing, increasing availability, variety and choice;
- Provide additional employment adjacent to an established and thriving industrial area.
- Retain and enhance existing hedgerow and tree planting and improve biodiversity;
- Create new footpath links improving connectivity;
- Provide additional open space; and
- Provide additional local facilities for the new and existing communities.

Constraints

- Existing trees and hedgerows to site and field boundaries, should where possible, be retained;
- Existing public rights of way across the site;
- Proximity of adjacent residential properties; and
- Existing water treatment works.

Each of the constraints and opportunities has been used to inform the design proposals for the site.

-  Application Site boundary
-  Proposed roundabout
-  Proposed vehicular access point
-  Proposed bus link
-  Proposed pedestrian access point
-  Existing Public Right of Way
-  Existing tree and hedgerow planting
-  Consider relationship with existing development
-  Consider noise from existing road
-  Conservation area
-  Listed building
-  Bus stop
-  Odour offset
-  Proposed drainage attenuation feature
-  Proposed play area



Constraints & Opportunities Plan

DESIGN EVOLUTION

4

Introduction

The development proposals have evolved in response to input from the design team, stakeholders, design review panel and the reasons for refusal provided following the previous application.

Design Review Panel April 2022 (previous Hybrid application).

In April 2022, an initial framework was presented to the Design Review Panel following a site visit. It was agreed by the panel (subject to further detailed comments) that the site was a **Sustainable location for development and appropriate for the development proposed.**

The comments were then incorporated into the Hybrid application that was submitted for planning in August 2022.

Response to design Reasons for Refusal (RfR) for previous Hybrid Application) November 2022.

The relevant RfRs are set out below:

"The proposal due to its design and layout, especially the shallow gardens on the eastern edge, would have an adverse impact upon the adjoining occupiers through overbearingness and would also not provide a useable and functional private amenity space, due to its position either north or east of the dwelling".

The revised proposals are outline and details of garden depths can be considered at reserved matters stage. However consideration has been given to the future relationship between the proposals and the adjoining occupiers to the east to ensure that the proposals can bring forward a high quality design with useable amenity space for all residents. This has included:

- Increased illustrative garden depths on the eastern and northern edge (refer to pages 86 & 87). These will allow an area of buffer planting along the backs of gardens, and an adequate level amenity

area for users. All gardens along this edge will be in accordance with the garden sizes provided in the neighbourhood plan. The back to back distances are also in accordance with the requirements.

The RfR also stated

"In addition, the layout of the car parking courtyards adjacent to the private gardens. The compatibility of the uses is a concern, especially the open space and residential as well as commercial would raise concerns over the potential noise and disturbance to the future occupiers, in addition the layout would mean that commercial servicing would be done through the estate which has the potential to create further noise and disturbance to future occupiers and would not be considered as a high-quality design contrary to policies DES4 and EQ2 of the East Herts District Plan (2018) and guidance in the NPPF."

The proposals are now outline only and details regarding car parking courtyards can be resolved at reserved matters stage.

The proposals have been developed to ensure a mixed use neighbourhood that will allow residents to live, work and play on the site. Employment is located within the southern portion of the site, alongside a new local centre.

Amenity green spaces for the residential users are generally adjacent to these residential areas and within the centre of the site (refer to pages 80 to 87 for details of open space), away from noisier areas, and the mix and use of the layout has been carefully considered.

Public Consultation

The site has been subject to public consultation both at previous applications and for the current application.

A website (www.countrysidebuntingford.co.uk) in June 2023 was used to explain Countryside's strategy for the site, including the rationale for the outline planning application. The website covered a number of topics:

- Details about the proposals
- Information about Vistry and Countryside
- Our approach to highways and associated infrastructure
- Benefits of development
- Details about the proposed S106 for the site (explained as Council led improvements)
- Details of proposed community benefits (explained as local benefits)
- Environmental issues, such as Zero Carbon and Sustainability

The website was advertised to residents through a leaflet drop to the entire Town of Buntingford, delivered via Royal Mail.

More details about the website, the leaflet and a closer examination of the feedback is available from the SCI which accompanies this planning application.

Buntingford West

Welcome to our website which explains Countryside's proposal to bring forward a development of around 350 homes on land to the West of Buntingford. The proposal also includes a local centre and employment uses, which could potentially accommodate a new doctors' surgery.

The idea is to submit an outline application, which means that we will initially ask East Hertfordshire District Council to make a decision about the principle of development including our plans for highways access. This process allows Countryside to focus on the most important issues whilst at the same time, we can have a debate with the community about the sort of infrastructure you would like to see on site and to plan the exact layout based on the results of that discussion.

This website is part of the process of opening up a discussion with Councillors and the community. Please take a look at the ideas we have put together on this website, then fill out the feedback form so that we have your thoughts and can keep you updated.



What is proposed?

The proposals are for around 350 homes, which will include 40% affordable housing. The average house price in Buntingford is over £440,000, resulting in a need for affordable homes to be available to people at preferential rates under a variety of possible schemes, giving local people access to housing that they might not otherwise have.



The proposed masterplan - [click to enlarge](#)

Who are Countryside?

Countryside Homes are an award-winning housebuilder and the only home builder to have received the prestigious RIBA Stirling Prize for a housing development. Countryside have received, once again, a five-star rating from the Home Builders Federation, following the industry's customer satisfaction survey results.

Within East Hertfordshire, Countryside has an excellent reputation for the quality of their housing developments, dating back to the 2000 Housing Design Awards for St Michaels Mead in Bishop's Stortford which was described as "a convincing piece of urban design with a proper sense of place". This high-quality design has more recently been seen at both St. Michael's Hurst and St James' Park both also in Bishop's Stortford. A new development at Sawbridgeworth is coming soon.

What stage is the project at?

Countryside proposes to submit what is known as an Outline planning application, which will lay out the principles for housing and detail how access will be enabled - including a new roundabout access off the A10.

Whilst Countryside is talking to the Council about these issues, they will listen to the community about the outline application; gaining a better understanding of the sort of facilities local people would like to see. This takes a step back from the detail included with the previous application that was submitted by Countryside's partner company - Vistry Homes. We will use the feedback to help us decide the final detail for the site, for when we submit a separate detailed Reserved Matters planning application to East Herts District Council at a later date.

USE & AMOUNT

5



Use & Amount

Framework Plan

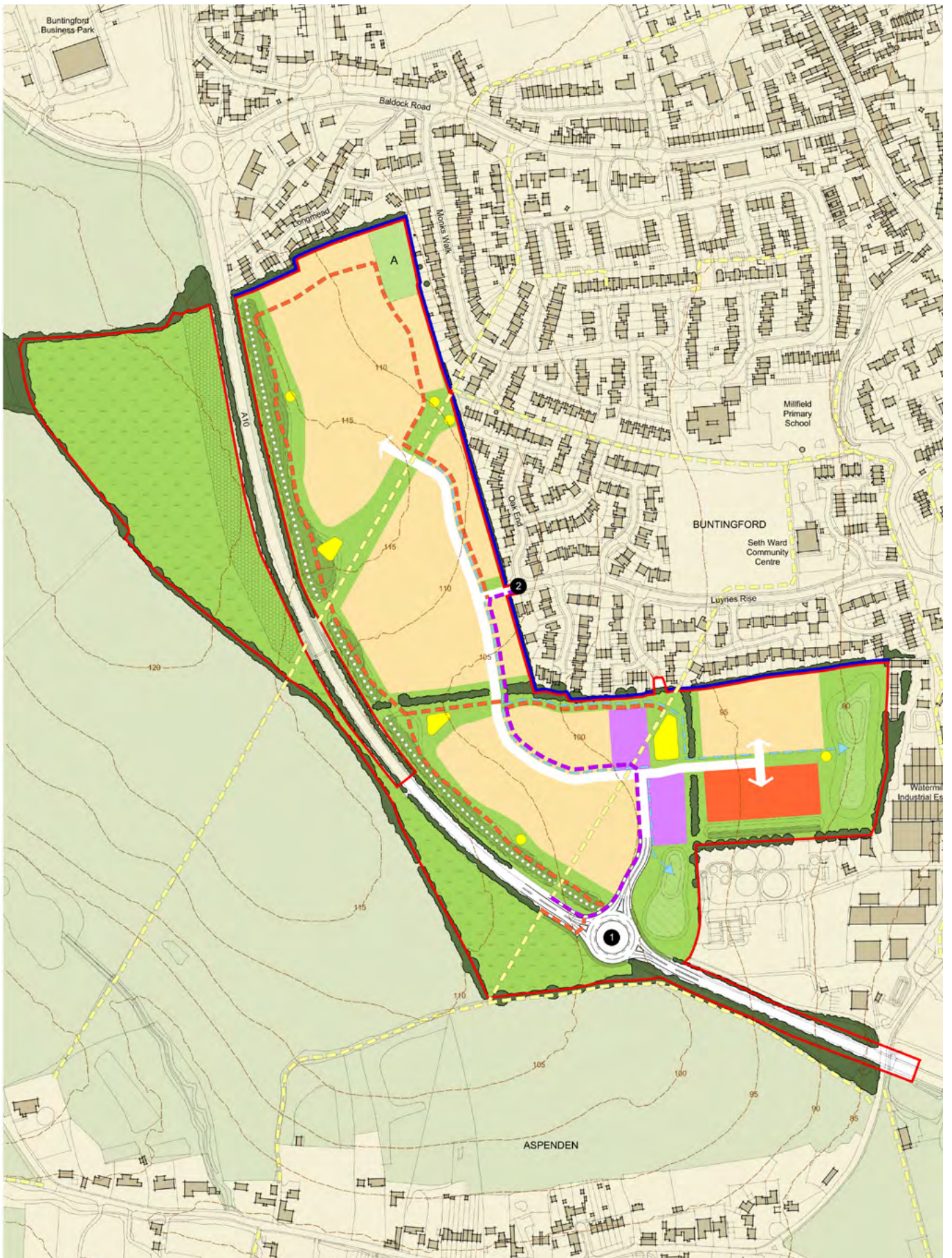
Following the assessment of the site and its surroundings and establishment of the opportunities and constraints a Framework Plan was prepared to show the required disposition of uses on the site and the movement network and hierarchy of streets and footpaths connecting them.

The Framework Plan provides the fixed parameters for the scheme in terms of the amount of housing, the proposed access points into the development and the location of the Green Infrastructure.

The outline planning submission includes four Parameter Plans based on the Framework Plan which show:

- Land Use
- Access & Movement
- Green Infrastructure
- Density & Building Heights

-  Application site boundary
-  Residential development
-  Employment
-  Local Centre
-  Public Open Space east of A10 including SUDs
-  Proposed habitat creation west of A10
-  Existing retained farmland west of A10
-  Children's equipped play areas
-  Existing hedgerows and trees to be retained
-  Proposed structural planting
-  Proposed new footway cycleway
-  Proposed new recreational route
-  Existing Public Right of Way (PRoW)



Development Framework Plan

Use & Amount

Illustrative Layout

The Illustrative Layout has been developed from the Framework Plan and shows one way as to how the detailed design could come forward based upon the parameters of the Framework Plan and the design principles contained in this document.

Amendments have been made to both the Framework Plan and Illustrative Layout in response to the reasons for refusal provided in November 2022.

The Illustrative Layout shows the indicative arrangement of new buildings, the street pattern and development blocks together with the layout of Green Infrastructure (open space, landscape habitats, drainage and walking and cycling routes).



Illustrative Layout

Use & Amount

The proposed development shown on Parameter Plan 1: Land Use comprises:

Residential - up to 350 dwellings on 10.35ha

The development proposals will deliver a mix of one, two, three, four and five bedroom housing in line with national and local policy.

The proposed development will deliver the appropriate level of affordable housing. The number, size, type and tenure (social housing for rent or shared ownership) of affordable housing to be agreed with East Herts Council.

The proposed average density of the development overall is approximately 34 dwellings per hectare.

Employment - 0.66ha

Up to 4,400 sqm of commercial and services floorspace (Use Classes E & B8).


Mixed Use Local Centre - 0.55ha

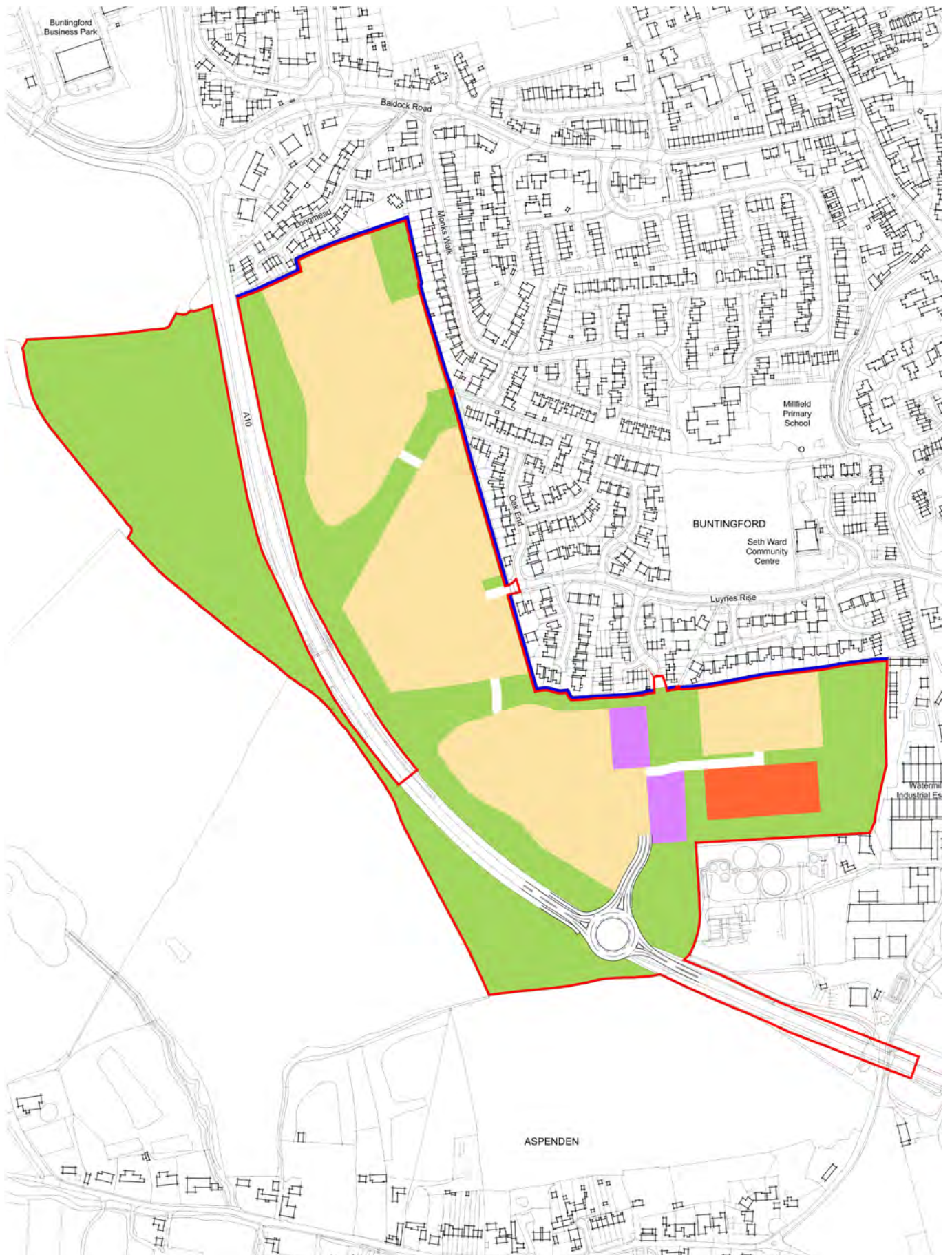
A range of potential possible uses including employment, retail and healthcare. Consent is sought for up to 500 sqm of retail floorspace (Use Class E).

Green Infrastructure - 15.50ha

The design proposals to the east of the A10 include open space which accommodates existing and proposed tree and hedgerow planting, informal recreation routes, equipped children's play areas, allotments, swales and two storm water attenuation basins.

The area to the west of the A10 accommodates existing tree and hedgerow planting, retained agricultural land and an ecological enhancement area.

-  Application site boundary
-  Residential development
-  Employment
-  Local Centre
-  Green Infrastructure



Parameter Plan 1: Land Use

Housing

The development provides land for up to 350 dwellings with associated streets, private gardens and parking spaces

Housing will be set within an attractive network of connected streets and surrounding green space to create a high quality residential environment.

The housing mix will be determined at the detailed stage but it is expected to include a broad range of house types that will allow for modern living and for a wide demographic. The development will also include the provision of affordable housing and custom build units.



Employment

Land is provided for an employment area adjacent to the existing Watermills Industrial Estate.

The exact mix and layout will be determined at the detailed stage but the area will comprise a range of buildings, well designed public realm, car parking, hedgerows and trees, together with additional planting to contain the employment area and screen the adjacent waste water treatment site.

The outline application seeks consent for up to 4,400 sqm of commercial and service floorspace (Use Class E and B8), some of which will be provided in the Mixed Use Local Centre.



Mixed Use Local Centre

The aspiration is for a high quality Local Centre with attractive buildings and a high quality public realm.

An area of 0.55ha is provided for a mixed use Local Centre. This will provide for a range of uses to include potentially employment, retail and health care uses.

Consent is sought for up to 500 sqm of retail floorspace (Use Class E) and up to 4,400 sqm of commercial and services floorspace (Use Classes E and B8), although most of the commercial and services floorspace will be located on the Employment land.

The principle of the Local Centre is that it will offer day-to-day facilities both for the new community and existing adjacent settlement. The exact mix and layout will be determined at the detail stage but could include for example, a convenience store and local shops for 'top up' shopping, a health centre, workspace and cafe.

The Framework Plan locates the Local Centre alongside the Boulevard (the main street serving the development) and one of the existing PRoW which cut through the site providing convenient access to both new and existing residents. All new residents will be within a ten minute walking distance of the Local Centre (800m).



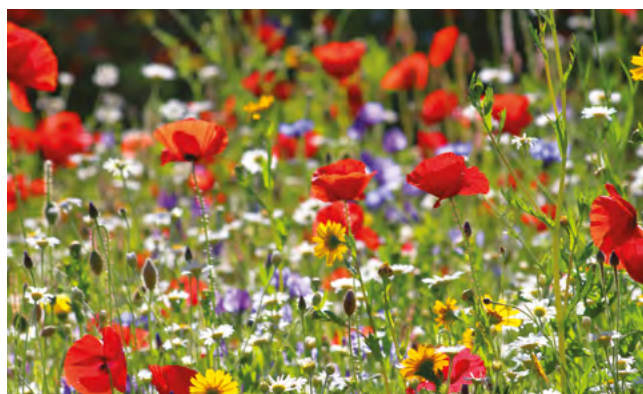
Green Infrastructure

The Green Infrastructure is based upon delivering functional well designed green spaces that enhance biodiversity and provide recreational benefits.

The Green Infrastructure (GI) includes the conservation of existing hedgerows and trees. These will be supported by new landscape and habitats. The landscape framework will ensure that there is connectivity across the layout for wildlife, as well as informal green routes for walking and cycling.

These green corridors will connect with a central open space area that together will deliver natural play and recreation and informal walking and habitat creation.

In total, excluding the retained farmland the GI accounts for approximately 45% of the site area. This does not include private green areas such as the residential gardens which also make a contribution to the overall green infrastructure of the site.



PLACEMAKING

6



Access & Layout

Movement & Circulation

A new roundabout is proposed to provide vehicular access from the A10 with a secondary access point for buses, cyclists and pedestrians from Luynes Rise. All existing access points for PRoW will be retained and the roundabout will provide an improved A10 crossing.

The site access, carriageway and footpath widths will be provided to meet the requirements of Hertfordshire Highway Authority. The internal layout will include a simple hierarchy of street types.

A new bus stop and Mobility Hub could be provided within the mixed use Local Centre.

Existing PRoW will be retained within either green corridors or accommodated in place within the proposed housing layout.

New footways will also be provided within the amenity open space providing recreational routes that will connect and provide access to the extensive green infrastructure for both new residents and the wider community.

A Transport Assessment forms part of the planning application. It concludes that the location of the site provides opportunity for everyday journeys to be undertaken on foot and by cycle and that the proposed development is in accordance with national and local transport policies.

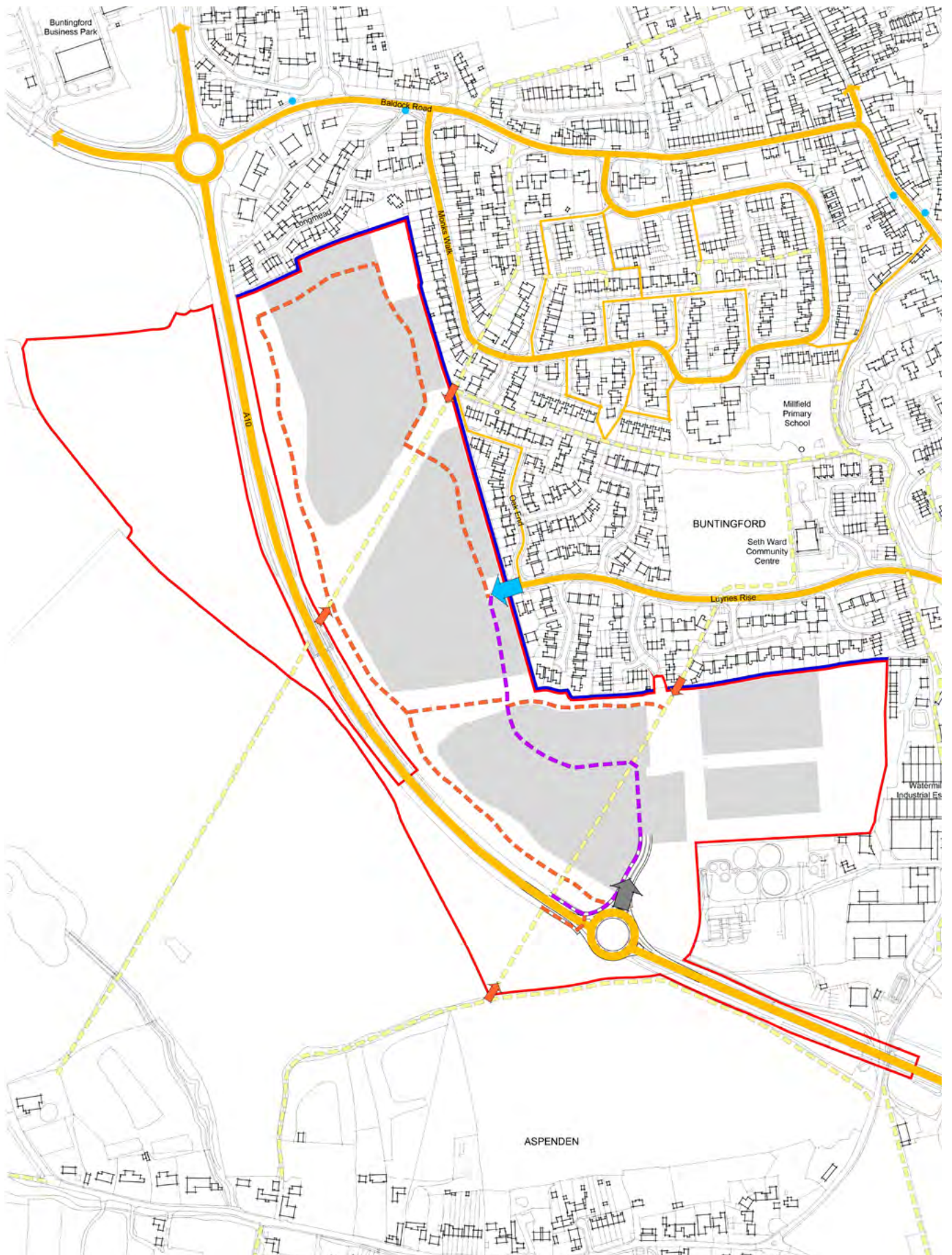
Layout

The arrangement and design of streets is one of the underlying element of place making and the creation of attractive places. The key urban design principles that are expected to be adopted through the detailed stage include the following:

- Create a series of 'street types' that have different functions and design characteristics which will deliver changes in character across the layout;
- Provide streets and routes that are safe, direct and well connected to deliver a legible environment for all;
- Provide appropriate connectivity with the existing urban edge of Buntingford, rights of way and the surrounding countryside;
- Create a development that encourages people to walk and cycle and use public transport.
- Establish active and animated street frontages with an attractive public realm that is well overlooked by the community.
- Ensure that all users (pedestrians, cyclists, car users) can move safely, and calmly, through the layout, with particular emphasis on less mobile people and non-car-users.
- Control and seek to reduce vehicle speed by using established urban design methods.

Car parking will need to be kept to a minimum in order to limit car use but not to such an extent that residents have to resort to on-street parking.

Parking spaces for each plot and for visitors will be provided to satisfy current local standards.



Parameter Plan 2: Access & Movement

Access & Layout

Development Blocks

The Illustrative Layout shows one way as to how the detailed design could come forward.

The development blocks shown on page 71 are based on the Illustrative Layout but the actual arrangement will be determined as part of the subsequent detailed design stage.

The proposed street network is based on an irregular pattern of development blocks.

An irregular block pattern is organic in character and comprises a mix of block and plot sizes which allows a variety of house types to be accommodated.

It is important that the development is easy to navigate and for this reason a 'distorted grid' has been adopted. This provides a choice of interconnecting routes identifiable through the use of landmark features and key spaces. These ensure a high degree of legibility and allow visitors and residents to easily find their way around the development.

Corner Plot Arrangements

How blocks change direction, or move around corners, is an essential part of place making.

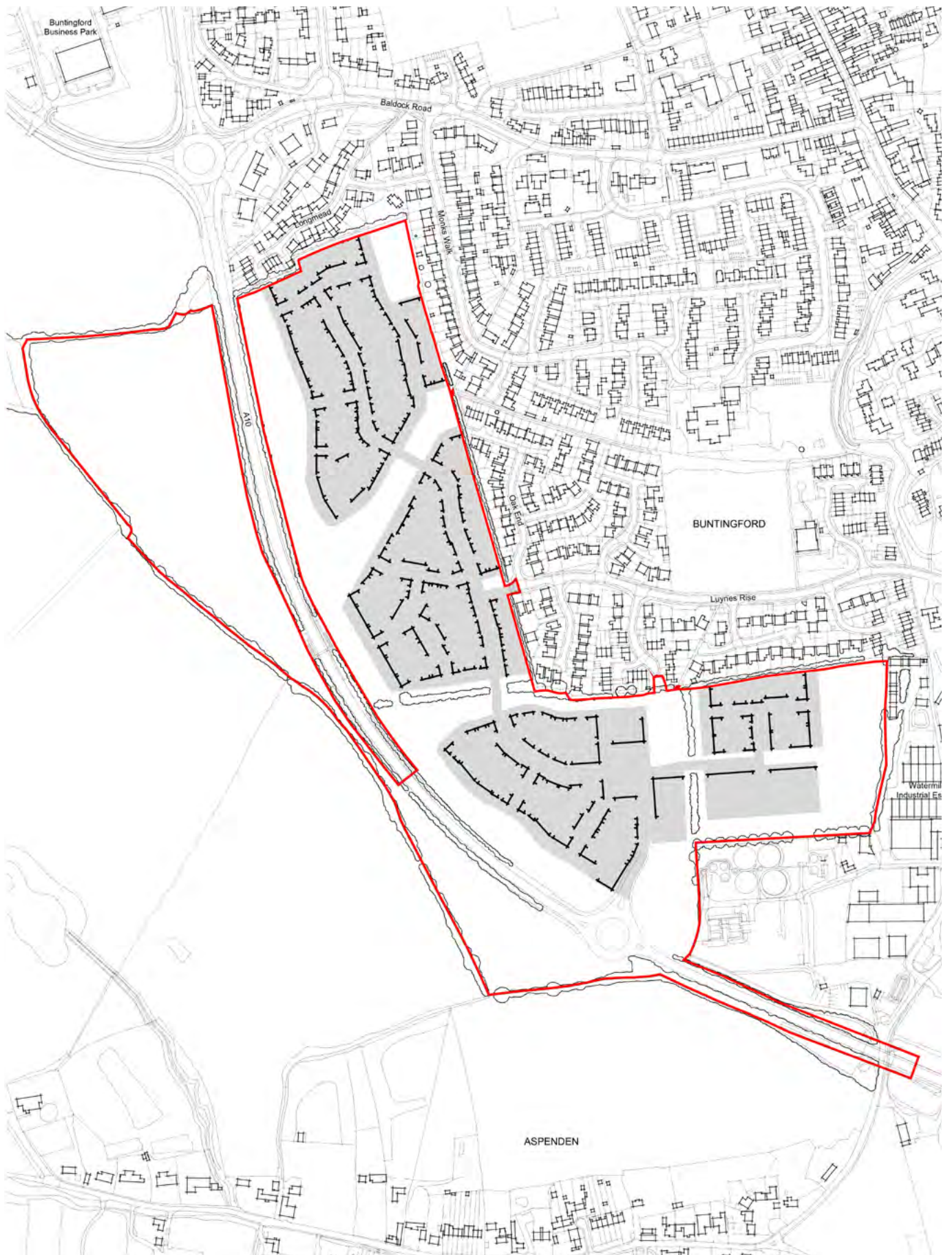
Landmark buildings on corner plots can help to terminate, or frame, views along the street.

Landmark Features

The use of landmark features, such as a gable end facing on to the street in an otherwise uniform eaves line or a building projecting further into the street than its neighbours, will provide identity within the layout.

The subtle use of materials and colours or distinctive architectural detailing can help provide distinctiveness and legibility, for instance a rendered elevation set within a row of brick houses will immediately provide a contrast and point of focus.

Landmark features can also include buildings positioned to terminate key views along proposed roads.



Illustrative Development Blocks

Access & Layout

Street Hierarchy

The Illustrative Layout shows one way as to how the detailed design could come forward.

The street hierarchy shown on page 73 is based on the Illustrative Layout but the actual arrangement will be determined as part of the subsequent detailed design stage.

A new roundabout is proposed to provide vehicular access from the A10 with a secondary access point for buses, cyclists and pedestrians from Luynes Rise. All existing access points for PRoW will be retained.

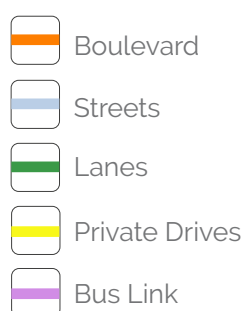
The main street (Boulevard) will serve secondary streets which in places converge into lanes or shared private drives.

This simple hierarchy with each street type following a progression of street and carriageway width, plot sizes, and building types aids legibility and character.

The layout of streets provides a safe and well overlooked network of public spaces. The streets could be designed in detail to slow vehicular traffic and provide a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

The development will promote ready accessibility for the whole community, bearing in mind the needs of parents with young children and those with impaired mobility.

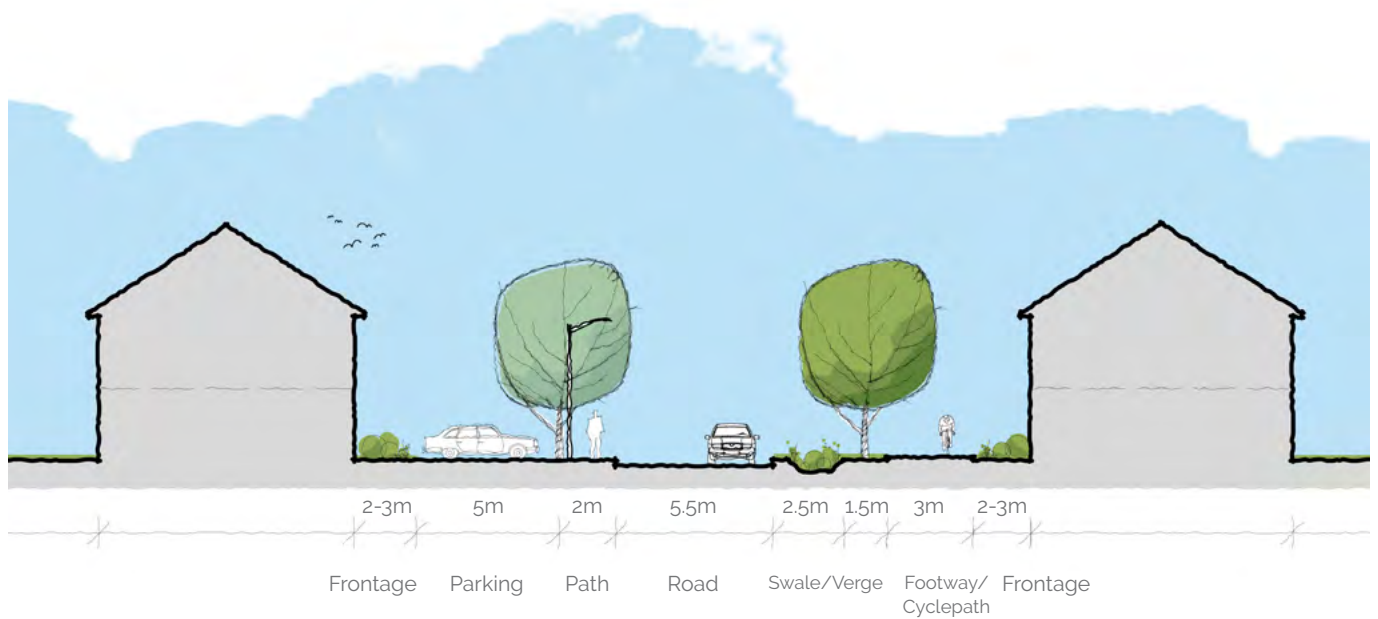
The layout provides a logical progression of streets and places creating a legible layout which is easy to navigate.



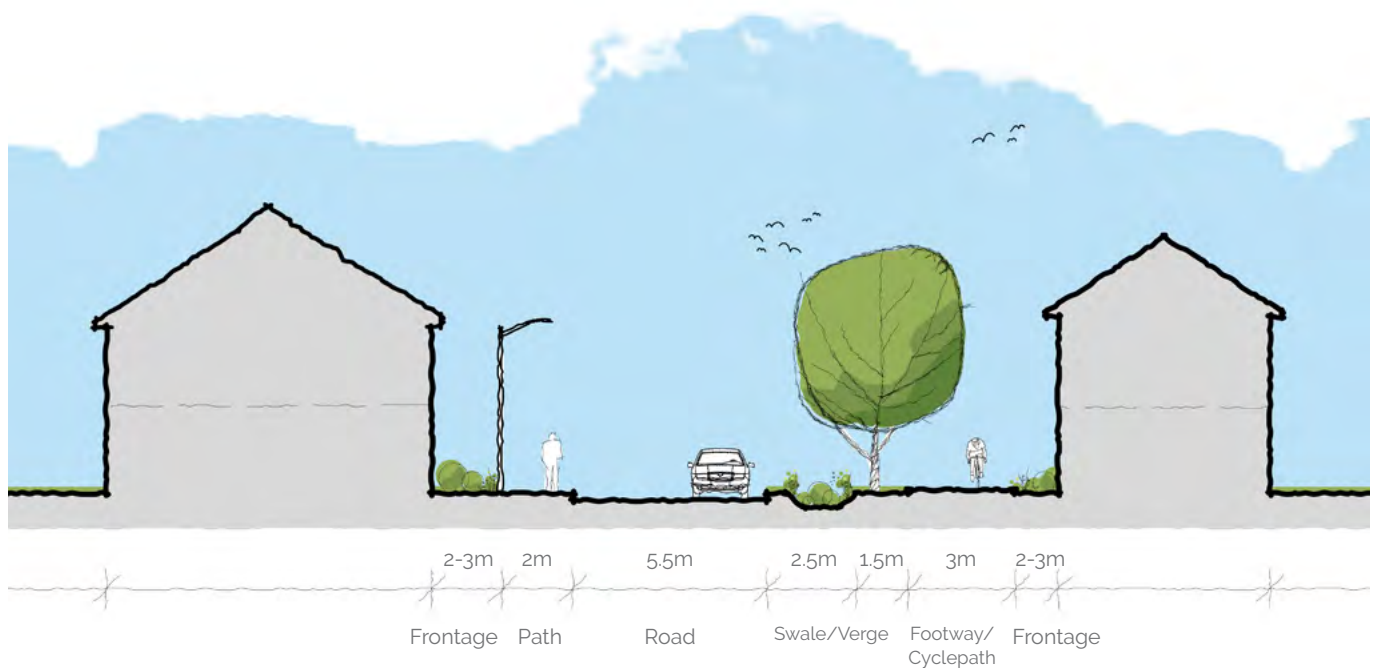


Illustrative Street Hierarchy

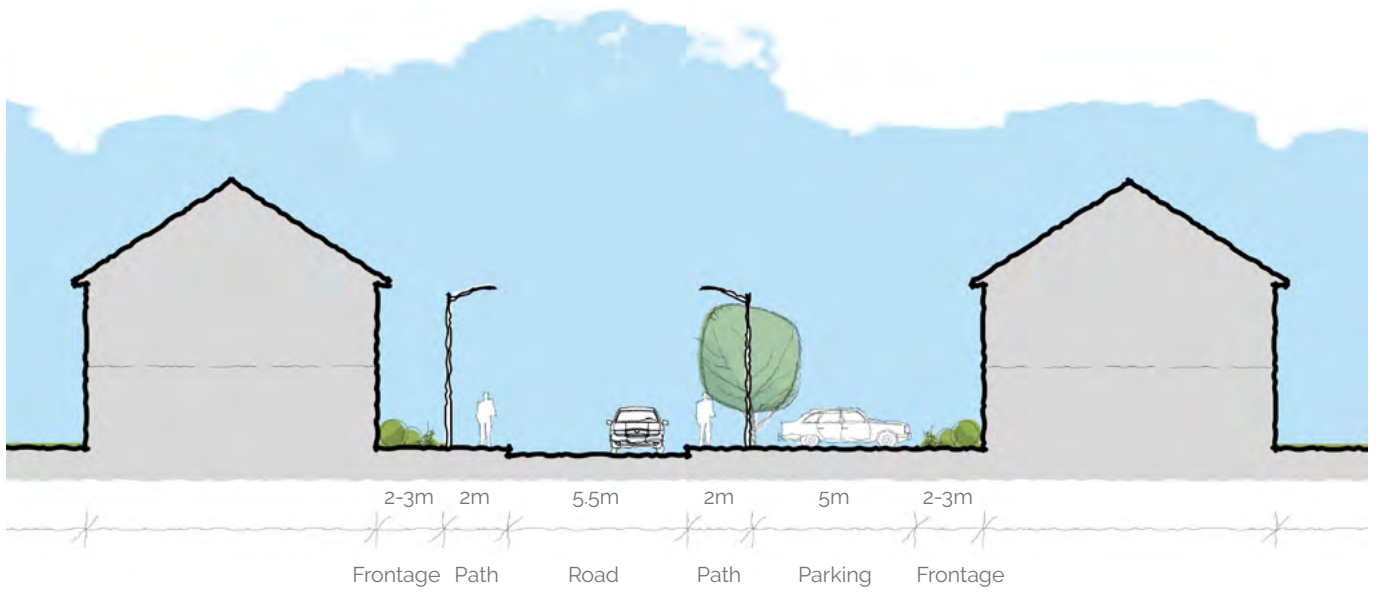
Access & Layout



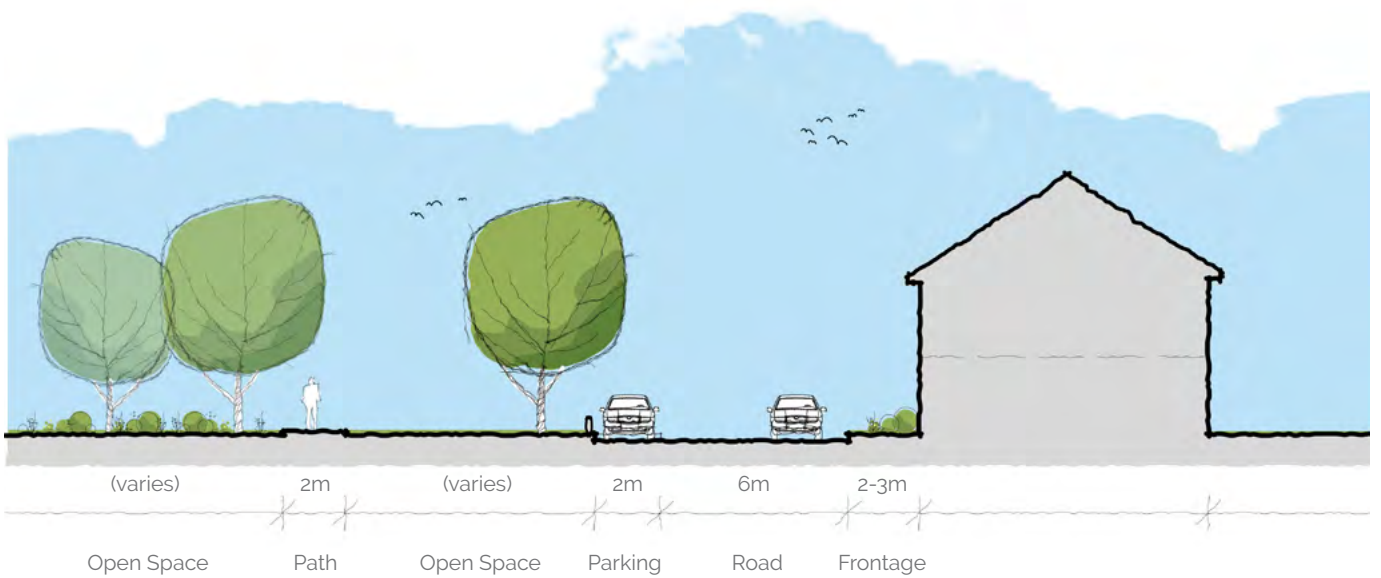
Illustrative Section: Boulevard (Southern parcel)



Illustrative Section: Boulevard (Northern parcel)



Illustrative Section: Street



Illustrative Section: Lane

Scale & Structure

Building Height & Massing

Varying building heights and densities are used to create character and sense of place across the site. The majority of properties in the adjacent settlement are two storeys, and the proposals are similarly predominantly two storey.

The northern part of the site is more visible and therefore building heights are restricted to 10.5m. This would be predominantly two storey with occasional maximum two and a half storey buildings as focal points.

The southern portion of the site has capacity for some three storey buildings and maximum heights of up to 13.5m as shown on Parameter Plan 4.

The proposed building lines will ensure that main access roads and open amenity spaces are all well overlooked and defined.

Building Types

A variety of different house types and sizes will be provided within the development in order to create a diverse and mixed community.



Buildings will be designed to have a variation in their height from ground to ridge or eaves, and the arrangement of buildings within a plot will seek to ensure subtle changes in height to create a varied roof line across the development. Some buildings will include chimney pots which will increase building heights marginally, but will also add significantly to ensuring a varied roof line across the development.

Best practice advocates that a mix of both wide and narrow plan forms are used. Wide frontage buildings allow for greater opportunity of facade variation along the street, whilst a narrow frontage approach will establish a run of linked dwellings and continuous frontages.

Density

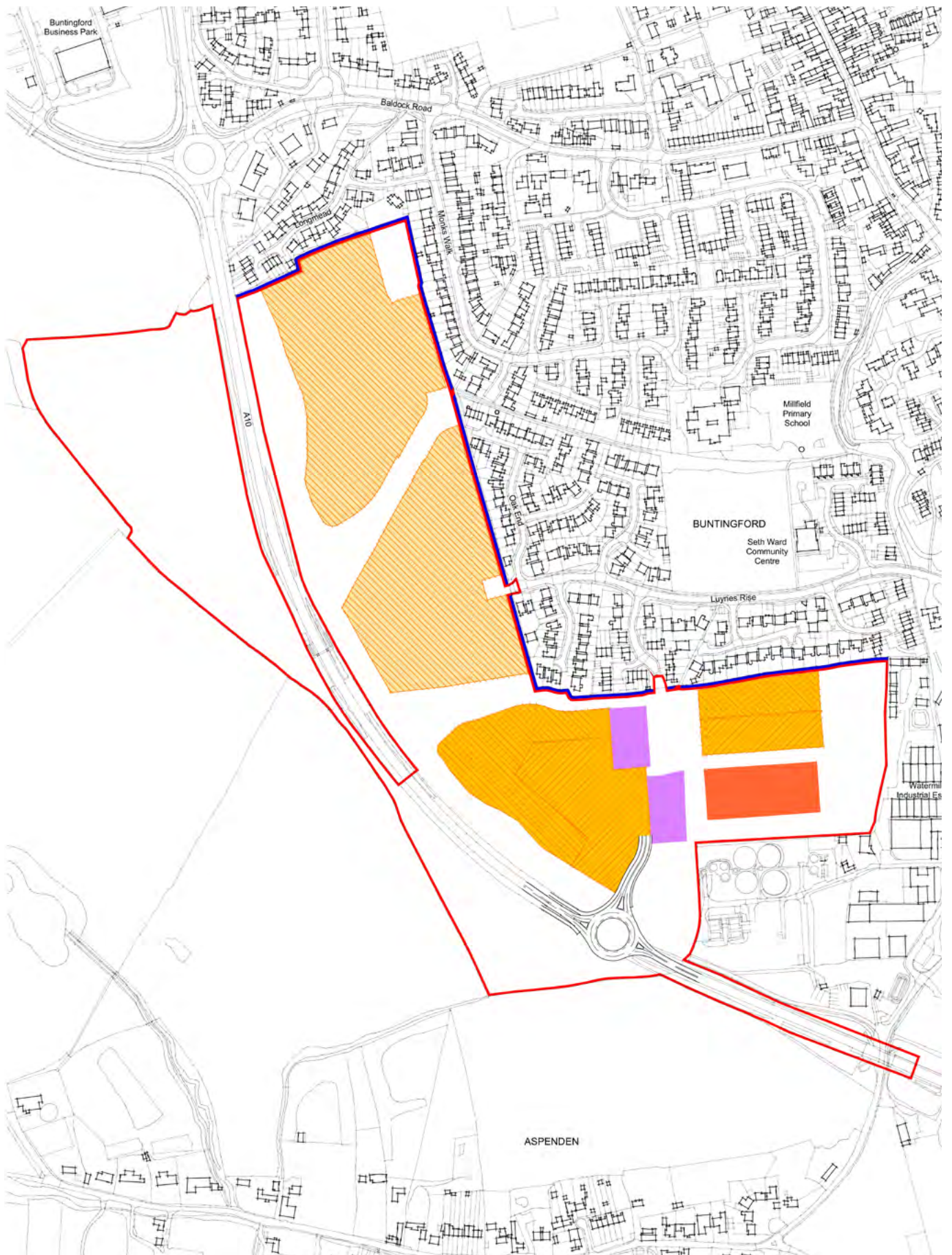
The northern section of the site will be of a lower density, up to 30 dph, with the lower field at a density of 40 dph adjacent to the employment and local centre. This mix in density will provide a strong sense of orientation throughout the site and is consistent with the mix of densities used in the developments to the east and south of Buntingford on the edge of the village.

DENSITY

-  Residential
Density: approx. 30 dwellings per hectare average
-  Residential
Density: up to 40 dwellings per hectare average

BUILDING HEIGHT

-  Residential
Building height: up to 10.5m
-  Residential
Building height: up to 13.5m
-  Employment
Building height: up to 15m
-  Local Centre
Building height: up to 13.5m



Parameter Plan 4: Density & Building Heights

Appearance

The intention of the DAS is not to be rigid or prescriptive in terms of the development's architecture, but to provide some guiding principles on the development's appearance. It is not just about the design and architecture of individual buildings, but also the way the streets, plots and the landscape is designed that is important to the appearance of the place.

The DAS provides a framework of urban design principles and an Illustrative Layout. This will assist and inform the subsequent reserved matters applications.





The emphasis for the development is to produce high quality buildings that are enduring, desirable and attractive; supported by a strong landscape framework, creating a high quality and attractive place. The choice of materials for buildings and the public realm should help to enrich and define the place.

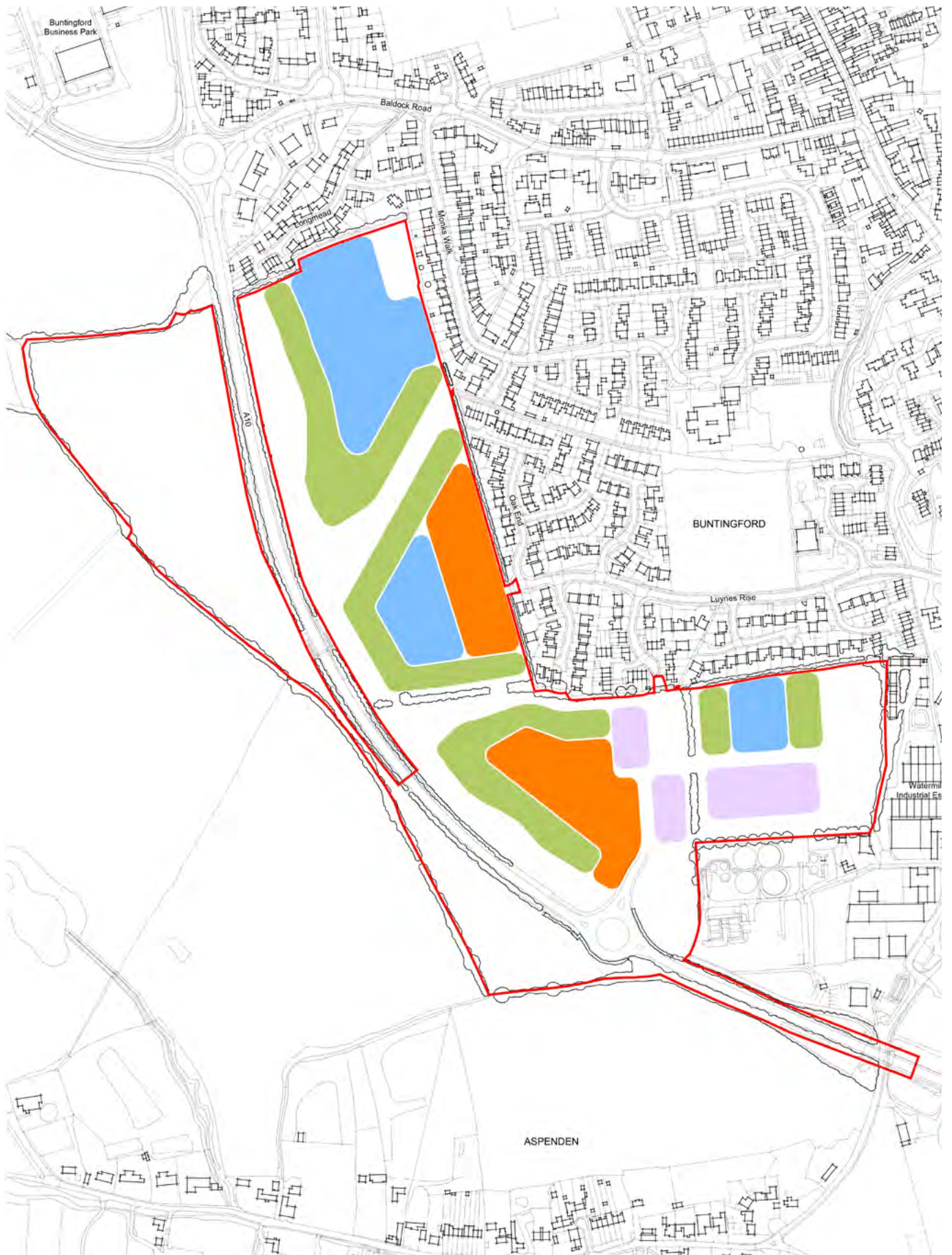
Drawing reference from local character and materials from Buntingford will help to deliver a modern, well designed development that respects and relates to its setting.

The actual appearance of the buildings will be determined as part of the subsequent detailed design stage but it is suggested that the palette of external materials should comprise red or buff brick external walls with either artificial slate or red plain tile roofing. The use of render or weatherboard on feature buildings may also be appropriate.

To assist in creating a sense of place it is suggested that the palette of external materials varies slightly to reflect the changes in character of different parts of the site due to location, street hierarchy and house types used.

Based on the Illustrative Layout it is suggested that three different character areas could be created for the residential development as shown on page 79.

-  Boulevard
-  Streets
-  Green Edge
-  Local Centre & Employment



Illustrative Character Areas

Landscape & Green Infrastructure

The Green Infrastructure is based upon delivering functional well designed green spaces that enhance biodiversity and provide recreational benefits.

The Green Infrastructure (GI) includes the conservation of existing hedgerows and trees. These will be supported by new landscape and habitats. The landscape framework will ensure that there is connectivity across the layout for wildlife, as well as informal green routes for walking and cycling.

These green corridors will connect with a central open space area that together will deliver natural play and recreation and informal walking and habitat creation.

In total, excluding the retained farmland the GI accounts for approximately 45% of the site area. This does not include private green areas such as the residential gardens which also make a contribution to the overall green infrastructure of the site.

Blue Infrastructure has been incorporated into both the main streets with verge and swales, as well as larger areas of permanent water and attenuation.

The eastern portion of the site is the location for the largest area of attenuation, which will be predominantly wildflower meadow, but with an area overdeepened for permanent water.



Illustrative Plan: Eastern Area

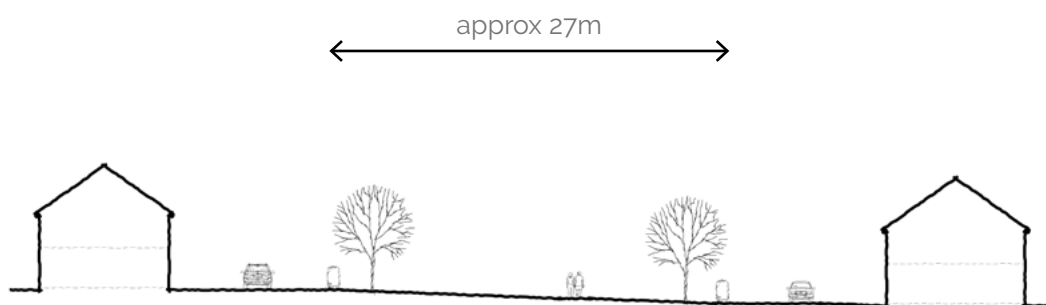


Parameter Plan 3: Green Infrastructure

Landscape & Green Infrastructure

Following the Design Review Panel regarding the previous hybrid application, the layout was adjusted to allow a larger central linear park within the northern part of the site. The park follows the line of existing PRoW 029. This will be one of the most active areas within the site with informal kickabout areas and seating. Towards the A10, the site reaches its high point, with potential views possible to the south and east. Bunds along the western edge will be created, with a potential key seating area and location for public art.

The width of the two green corridors across the site containing existing retained tree and hedgerow planting has also been increased.



Illustrative Section: Linear Park scale approx 1:500



Illustrative Plan: Linear Park

Landscape & Green Infrastructure

Conserving site features such as the mature vegetation and trees will provide an immediate setting for the built development. A variety of types of open space can be provided.

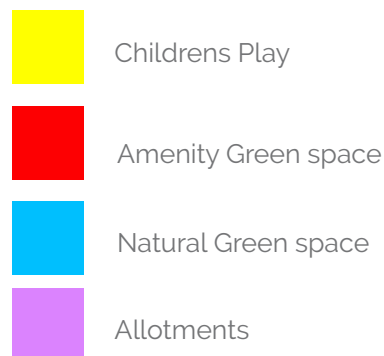
The overall green infrastructure is linked together to provide natural green corridors across the site, with be a number of focal spaces set within the green infrastructure. The site entrance in particular has been carefully considered to create a permanent water feature, with wildflower meadow.

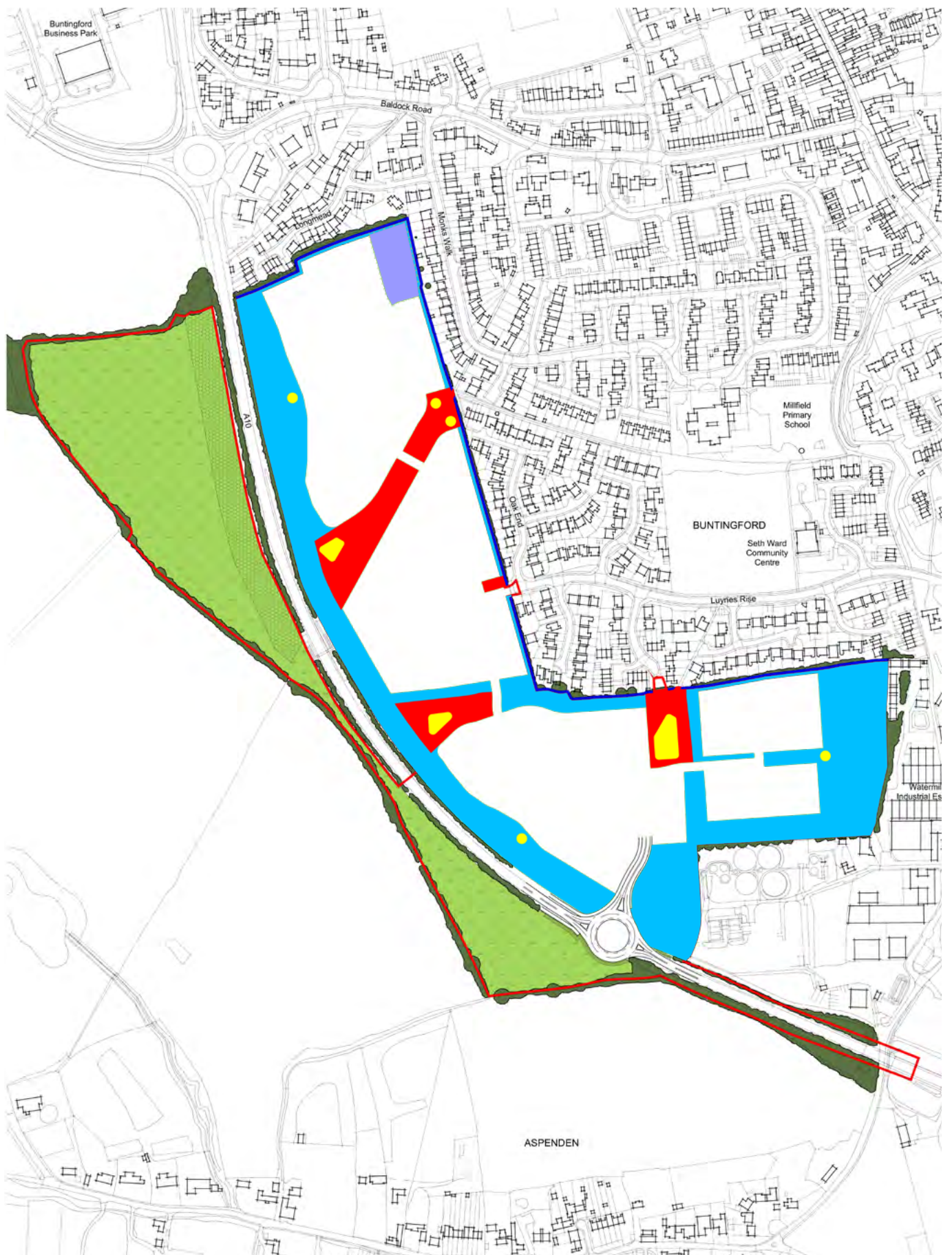
A neighbourhood equipped area of play (NEAP) is proposed adjacent to the Local Centre and close to an existing PRoW providing convenient access for new and existing residents. The NEAP will include a range of play from Multi-use Games Area to fixed equipment for all ages. At the junction with Luynes Rise where the proposed bus only link enters the site, a pocket park will be created to provide a link between existing and new development.

Allotments with dedicated car parking are located to the north east of the site..

The reasons for refusal for the previous application questioned the usability of the amenity green spaces and it's proximity to noise (A10) and odour (treatment works to south west). The adjacent colour plan shows that the areas in proximity to these areas are natural greenspaces (blue). The amenity greenspaces (red) are kept within the development itself, screened from noise and odour and are in excess of the policy requirements.

	Area per 1000 people	Site requirement	Site provision	Difference between provision & requirement
Children's play and provision for young people	0.25	0.20	0.22	+0.02
Amenity green space, parks and gardens	1.40	1.14	1.37	+0.23
Natural / semi-natural greenspace	3.20	2.60	5.93	+3.33
Allotments	0.30	0.24	0.28	+0.04
Total		4.18	7.80	+3.62





Public Open Space Areas

Landscape & Green Infrastructure

Northern & Eastern Edges

A number of illustrative sections have been provided below, showing indicative houses and boundary treatments across the site and to illustrate the width of internal green corridors and levels.

The northern and eastern edges have been carefully considered to minimise any potential affects on amenity of adjacent residents and the illustrative sections have shown that all future gardens will have useable amenity space,

The majority of the northern and eastern edge is backed onto by existing housing. The proposed scheme should also back onto these boundaries as shown on the sections.

The proposals will be in accordance with the neighbourhood plan back to back distances along this boundary. There is a levels difference between the site and the houses to the east which will required an increased back to back distance for these properties at reserved matters stage.

Green Corridors

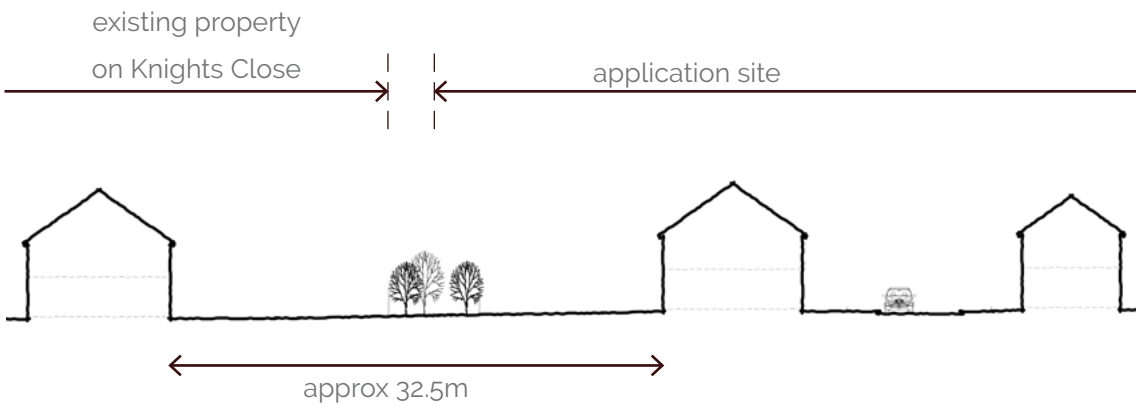
The illustrative sections show that there will be a wide green corridor wrapping around the western edge of the site, alongside a series of wide green corridors through the site following retained existing vegetation and footpath corridors.



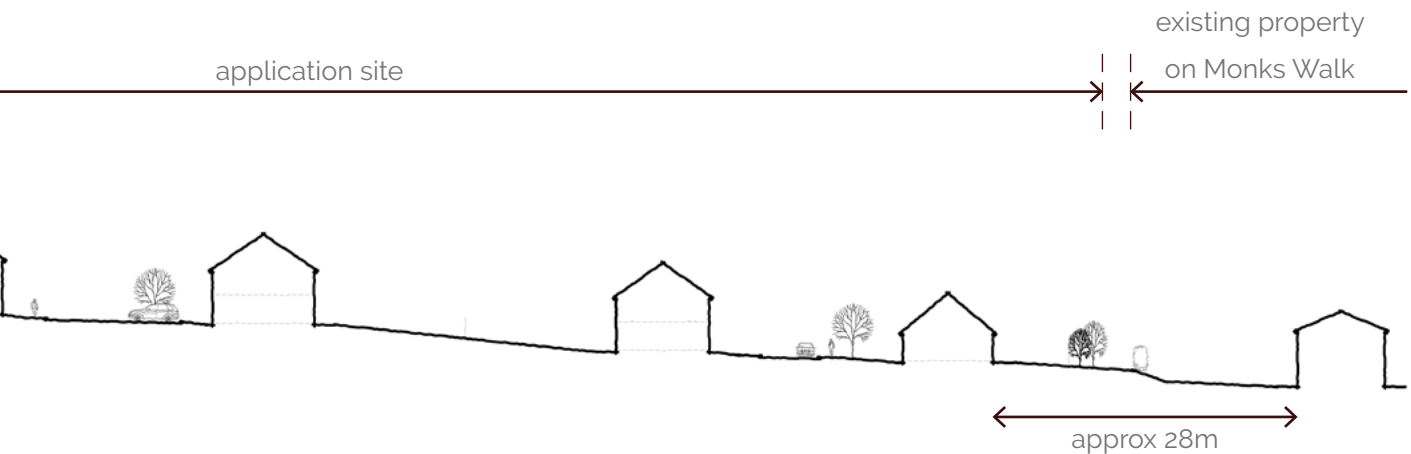
Illustrative Section: A10 to Monks Walk scale approx 1:700



Illustrative Section: Green corridor between southern and northern parcels scale approx 1:500



Illustrative Section: Southern parcel scale approx 1:500



Sustainable Construction

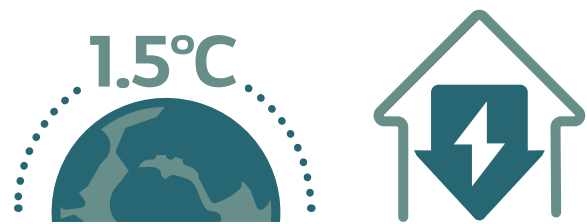
Vistry Group have a dedicated in-house sustainability team working to improve practices and materials across all their sites.

Future Homes Standard

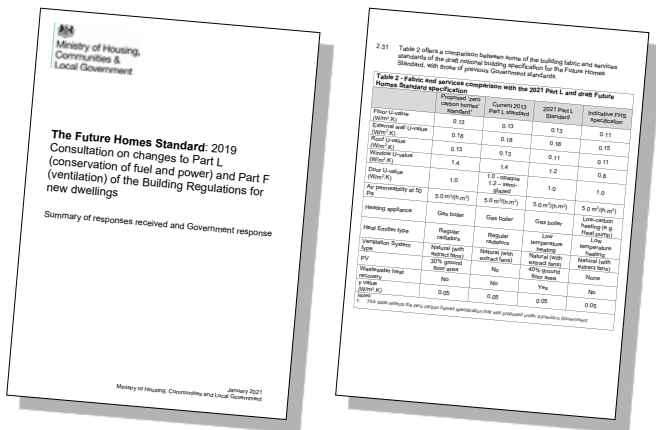
Countryside Partnerships and Vistry Homes Ltd are currently developing the 2025 housetype range to meet the new Part L and Future Homes Standard (FHS) and are piloting the construction of zero carbon homes with Vistry Partnerships West Midlands at Europa Way Triangle, Warwick.

Vistry Homes Ltd are conducting extensive reviews of renewable technologies and products to ensure that they offer the most technically robust solution which is right for their customers.

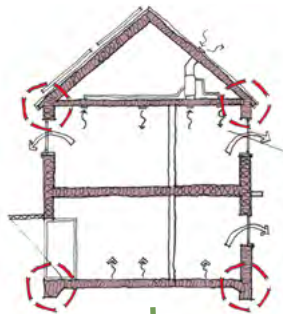
Fabric First Approach



Countryside Partnerships and Vistry Homes Ltd have a commitment to setting carbon reduction targets consistent with reduction required to keep warming at 1.5°C. Building upon its fabric-first approach, Vistry currently aims to:



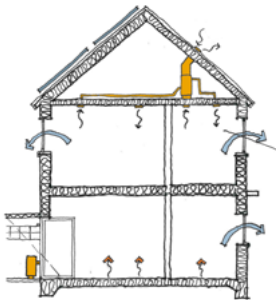
Reduce energy demand within homes



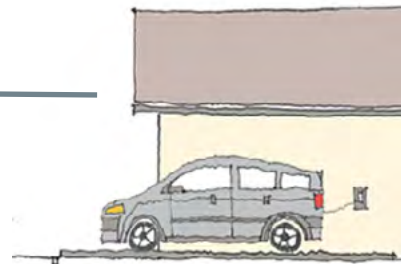
Provide green infrastructure at the forefront of the development



Decarbonise the heating of homes in line with the Future Homes Standard (2025)

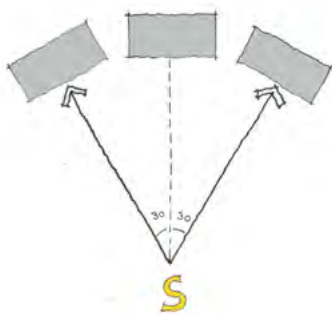


Fabric First

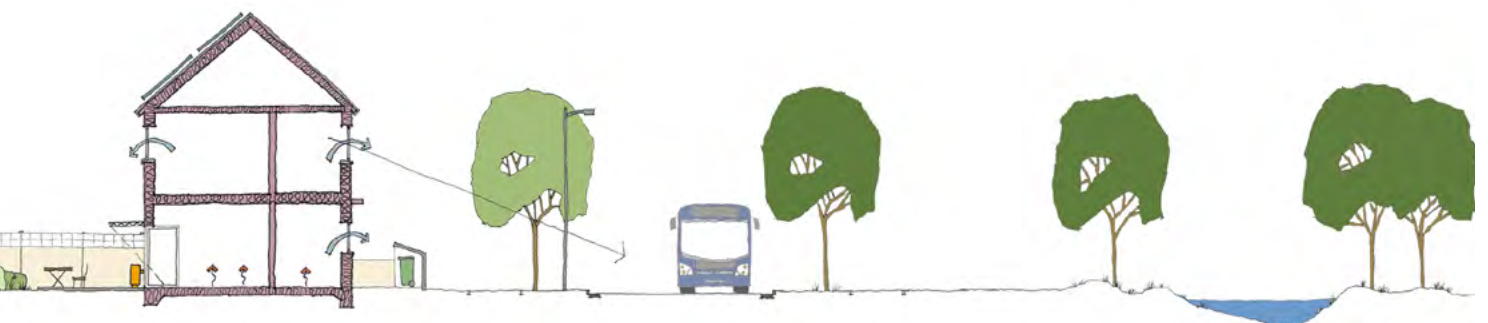


Facilitate the use of electric vehicles through the provision of electric charging points

Make the entire build process as efficient as possible,



Orientate homes within 30 degrees of south where possible to take advantage of heat energy from solar radiation.



Sustainable Construction

Placemaking



Countryside Partnerships and Vistry Home's approach to placemaking is designed to improve people's quality of life and support health and well-being.

The scheme will provide customers with access to high quality amenities that support the local economy. This is a key consideration for Vistry Homes when selecting and designing our sites and in addition to section 106 and community infrastructure contributions.

The scheme will provide a clear hierarchy of public, private, and semi-private spaces that encourage neighbours to interact with each other and build strong communities.



Twigworth Green, Twigworth



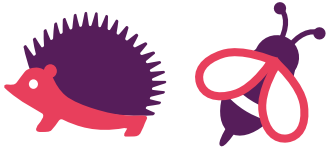
The Green, Winchester Village



Netherhall Park, Great Barr

Bio-diversity Net Gain (BNG)

Nature



Countryside Partnerships and Vistry Home's approach to development design focuses on the principles of Green Infrastructure (GI). The site will create a networks of multifunctional green space, including equipped play areas, open spaces, street trees, allotments, private gardens, sustainable drainage systems and soils.

Based on calculations provided by James Blake Associates, the development can achieve an overall Bio-diversity Net Gain.

Waste Recycling



Vistry Home's waste recycling data for 2020 resulted in an annual total of 95% recycling rate.

Sustainable Procurement



Vistry Homes Ltd. procure only FSC/PEFC certified timber, and support schemes such as the National Community Wood Recycling Project, where in 2020, 686 tonnes of Vistry Home's timber waste was re-used.

Reducing Waste



Vistry Home's ultimate priority is to achieve a 5% reduction in waste intensity tonnes/unit whilst retaining recycling rate of over 95%.

CONCLUSION



Conclusion

- Outline planning permission is sought to establish that the principle of developing the site is acceptable.
- The proposals have been developed based on the suite of technical information provided by the design team and in response to guidance provided by the Design Review Panel, the reasons for refusal of the previous hybrid application and the public consultation.
- The development part of the site sits entirely within the A10 bypass on the western edge of the town of Buntingford on rising land.
- The western edge of the development area is defined by the A10 bypass and existing mature tree planting. A landscape-led design approach will retain these existing landscape features within a wide green buffer that will wrap around the edge of the development. Whilst this green buffer is not intended to screen the site, it will provide a strong wooded approach and attractive setting for both the new development and Buntingford itself.
- A network of green spaces will link across the site from the woodland buffer following the existing retained hedgerows and footpath corridors, helping to create distinct neighbourhood parcels, with their own character and identity.
- Biodiversity net gain will be delivered both through the substantial new green infrastructure and through land to the west of the A10 bypass which will create new grassland and woodland habitats.
- An area of allotments will be provided within the north of the site for growing local produce.
- A network of blue infrastructure will be provided across the site leading to attenuation areas at the entrance to the site from the A10 bypass and in the east of the site at the natural low point.
- Play Areas will form focal points across the development, providing play for all ages including a central NEAP near the local centre, smaller LEAPs, and a trim trail for all ages.
- A 2.5km running loop around the site will help to ensure healthy living, and the new local center will form the heart of the scheme helping to create healthy lifestyles.
- Existing footpath routes are retained and enhanced to allow connectivity from Buntingford out to the wider countryside to the west, in particular via the pedestrian footbridge to the north.
- The existing footpath route for the southern PRoW is retained in place with an additional alternative minor diversion which provides improved connectivity across the A10.
- A network of additional footpaths is proposed including cycle paths.
- A hierarchy of streets is provided across the site to provide a sense of place, including a wide tree lined Boulevard alongside a swale, which will create a green route through the site.
- Several options have been considered for the location of the local centre, which will form the heart of the scheme and could include retail, workspace and healthcare facilities, alongside a mobility hub.
- An employment area will be provided adjacent to the proposed local centre with access from the proposed new roundabout on A10 bypass avoiding most of the residential development.
- Odour constraints have been considered within the south east portion of the site next to the existing waste water treatment works.
- The proposed housing will be in keeping with the local vernacular and will draw on the analysis of the existing urban grain and materials of local character.
- A range of building types, heights and densities will be provided that respond positively to the topography and landscape features of the site with predominantly two storey buildings, together with occasional bungalows and focal

Conclusion

two and a half storey buildings to the north, and some three storey buildings to the south.

- Focal buildings will be provided at key vistas and corners to ensure legibility.
- Buildings along the western edge of the site will be positioned to mitigate potential noise from the A10, and to screen the gardens to maximise residential amenity within the gardens.
- Garden areas and lengths will be considered to ensure that adequate amenity space is provided and that separation distances are acceptable.
- A mix of both affordable and market housing will be provided ranging from 1 bed to 5 bed dwellings, with affordable units located in small groups around the site.
- Custom Build Plots will be provided.
- The relationship with the adjacent settlement edge has been carefully considered and a 3m wide landscape buffer has been provided between existing and new residential development.





Buntingford West

Design & Access Statement

“A mixed use and landscape led Sustainable Community
on the western edge of Buntingford”