ABBOTS VALE

# South-east Bury St Edmunds

## Draft Master Plan Document

May 2015

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PIGEON

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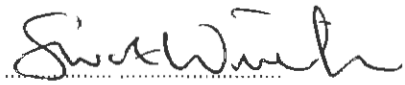

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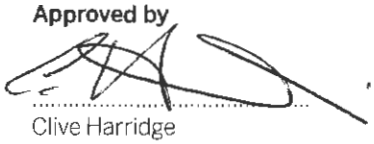

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## Management systems

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**Cover Watercolour Image by James Hart Dyke**

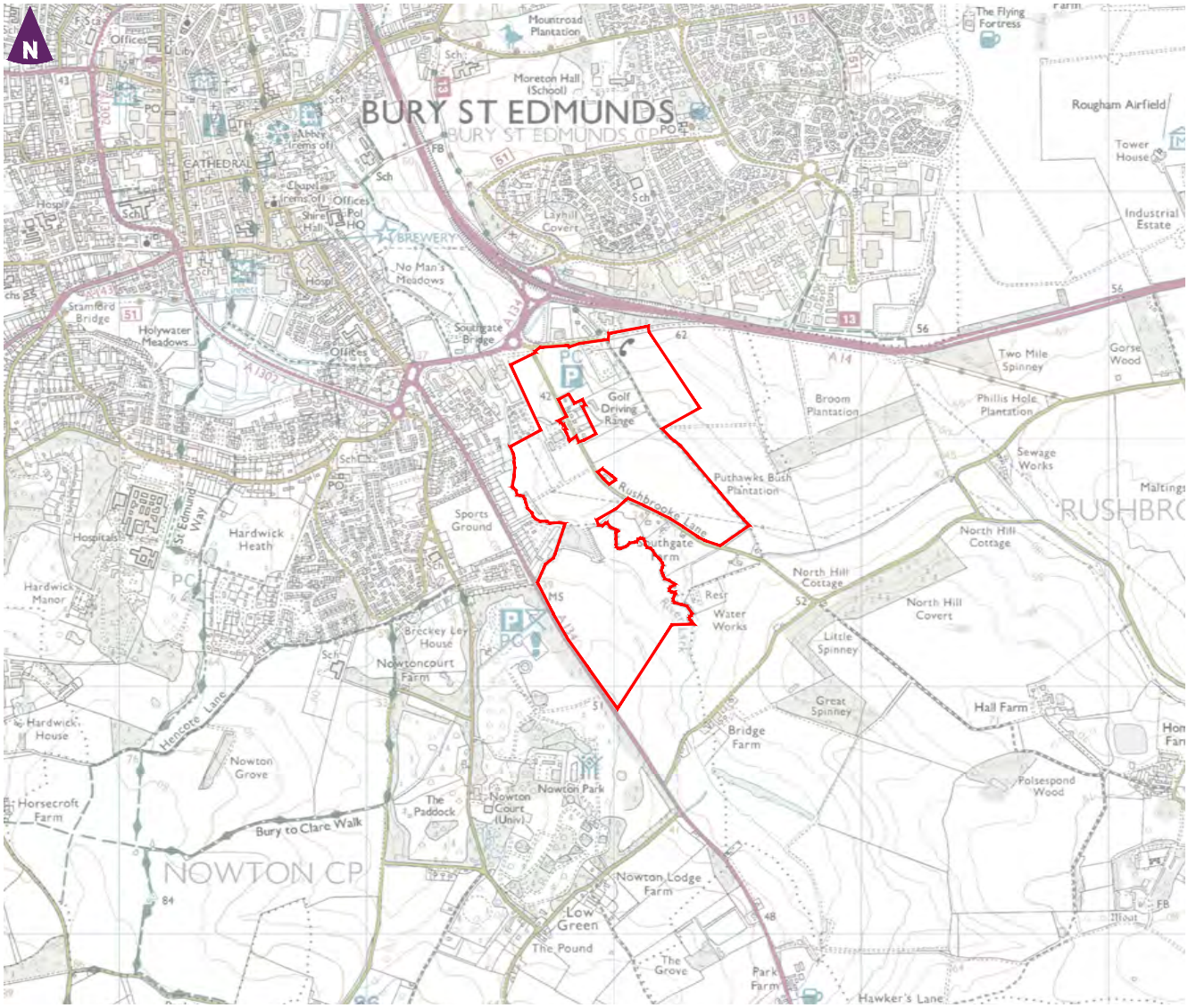
May 2015

# Contents

# Introduction

**Amec Foster Wheeler has been engaged by Hopkins Homes and Pigeon to collaborate with the local community and key stakeholders to create a draft Master Plan Document that responds to the St Edmundsbury Local Plan allocation of around 1,250 new homes with supporting infrastructure, community uses and other public amenities in the south-east of Bury St Edmunds.**

**This draft Master Plan Document sets out the vision and development principles for the proposed urban extension and provides an overview of the emerging design approach. Following consultation on the draft Master Plan a finalised version will be produced addressing any feedback received. The final Master Plan will then be approved by St Edmundsbury Borough Council to provide the planning framework for future development of the site.**



# Vision

***Hopkins Homes and Pigeon's vision for South-east Bury St Edmunds is a highly attractive, sustainable new neighbourhood that responds to and respects the distinctive fabric, landscape and heritage of the town.***

*The development will enhance the site's key assets including the River Lark corridor while achieving an attractive and socially inclusive neighbourhood with a variety of homes and community facilities.*

*The development will be an enjoyable and distinctive place to live and visit befitting the character of Bury St Edmunds and the high standards set by St Edmundsbury Borough Council and the developer partners.*

*Reflecting the history of Bury St Edmunds, Abbots Vale has been chosen as the name for this new neighbourhood.*

Watercolour by James Hart Dyke

## Design and placemaking objectives

- To create a new neighbourhood which encourages a sense of community.
- To create a well connected place which offers easy access to everyday needs.
- To create a memorable and distinctive place that enhances the site.
- To create a place that responds sensitively to neighbouring homes.
- To make a high quality place that looks and feels like it is part of Bury St Edmunds.

## Landscape and open space objectives

- To create a place with good access to a variety of open spaces on the site and to the countryside and nearby open spaces beyond the site.
- To retain, protect and enhance the best landscape features within the site.
- To provide sensitive edges to the development where it can be seen from adjacent countryside through careful design and appropriate planting.
- To create an attractive and multi-functional green infrastructure that links parks, footpaths, the River Lark corridor and recreational spaces within and beyond the site and accommodates nature conservation areas and surface water drainage features.

## Movement and access objectives

- To create a street network that minimises the impact of new development on surrounding communities both through the design of the new network and enhancements to the existing network.
- To provide a street network that facilitates safe and efficient car use but encourages walking and cycling as the best ways to get around.
- To provide a network of safe and convenient footpaths and cycleways to access schools, shops, parks and open spaces on the site and further afield.
- To provide opportunities for public transport access to the site.

## Sustainability objectives

- To create a vibrant new neighbourhood that creates employment through construction, new local school and shops and provides homes within walking distance of the town centre.
- To maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and recreation to encourage the health and wellbeing of the new community.
- To create a high quality development that is environmentally sustainable, is resilient to climate change, maximises opportunties to increase bio-diversity and provides new homes that minimise energy use.

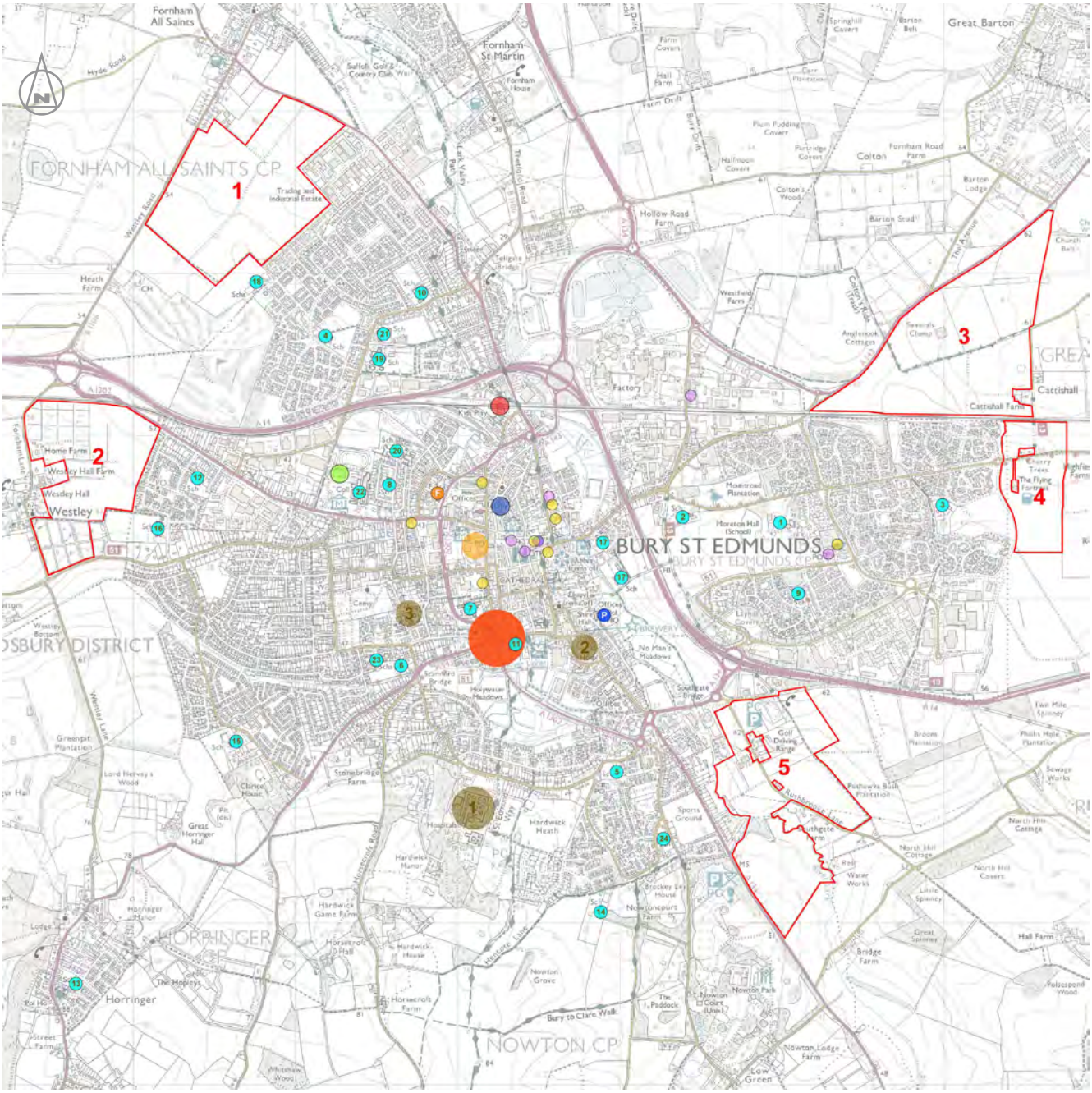





**Figure 1.1 – The site in context**

**Strategic sites:**

1 North-west Bury St Edmunds
2 West Bury St Edmunds
3 North-east Bury St Edmunds
4 Moreton Hall
5 South-east Bury St Edmunds

Town centre

Shopping centre

Police station

Fire station

Hospital:

1 West Suffolk Hospital
2 Bury St Edmunds Hospital
3 Child Development Centre

Leisure centre

Railway station

Library

Health centre

Doctor's surgery

Dentist

Schools

# Section 1
# Planning overview

**This section provides an overview of the planning context for this development, describing the background to the identification of the site as a suitable location for growth, the key requirements that have been defined for the development by St Edmundsbury Borough Council and finally providing an outline of the likely timing for an application for outline planning permission.**

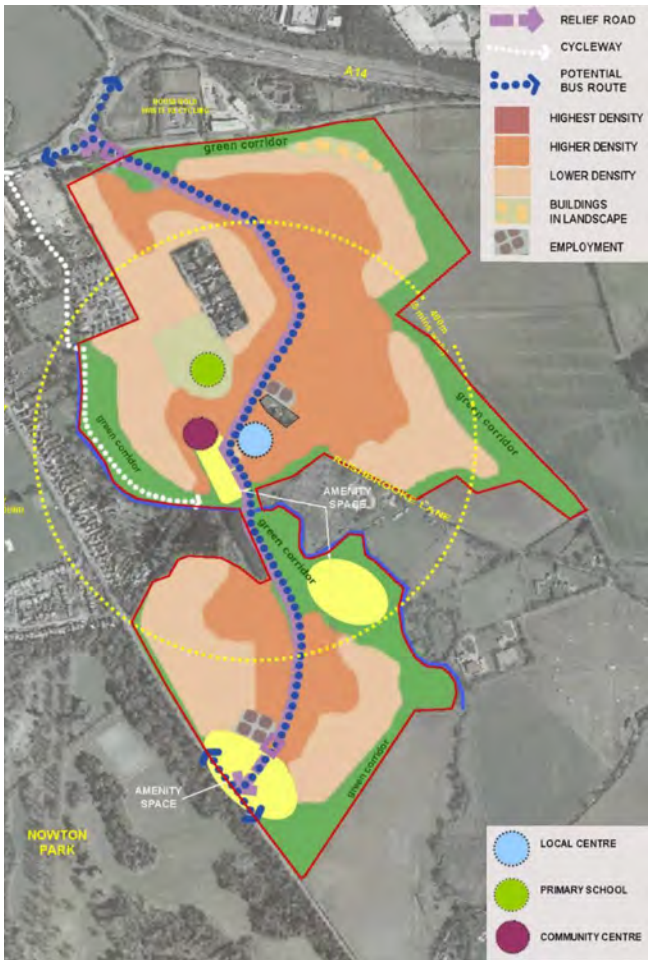
## Planning policy context

The strategic growth location at the South-east of Bury St Edmunds is one of five identified locations for growth to meet the development needs at Bury St Edmunds as set out in Policy CS11 of the Adopted St Edmundsbury Core Strategy (2010). The policy plans for strategic growth in the South-east of Bury St Edmunds that will deliver around 1,250 homes of mixed tenure, and size, including affordable housing and other ancillary development.

The potential for development at this strategic site is further explored through the Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031, Development Plan Document (DPD) which was adopted in 2014. In line with the adopted Core Strategy, the land to the South-east of Bury St Edmunds is included as a strategic direction for growth.

The Council has also adopted a Concept Statement for South-east Bury St Edmunds which is included in Appendix 10 of the Bury Vision 2031 document. This sets out the policy aspirations to be delivered through development at South-east Bury St Edmunds including a development that:

- Positively uses the framework for new development provided by the existing natural environment and character of the area including maintaining significantly important open spaces that provide the setting of the historic town centre;
- Makes a positive contribution to reducing the potential for flooding both in the area and downstream in the Lark Valley;
- Contributes to reducing congestion at nearby junctions;
- Delivers a relief road that reduces levels of through traffic using Rougham Road and Sicklesmere Road;




Original concept plan from South-east Bury Concept Statement - Vision 2031

- Provides improved public transport, foot and cycle links to the town centre and north towards the A14 and strategic employment sites;
- Provides new high quality strategic public open space and recreation facilities;
- Delivers additional education, community and leisure facilities to meet the needs of this development and is located in a way that can achieve positive integration with the wider area;
- Delivers around 1,250 homes of mixed tenure and size, including affordable homes; and
- Considers opportunities for Gypsy and traveller provision if the need is demonstrated at the time of the development.

## Community consultation

The strategic growth location of South-east of Bury St Edmunds has been identified for residential development by St Edmundsbury Borough Council for many years. There have been consultations at each stage of the plan-making process.

In 2011 Hopkins Homes organised a number of public consultation sessions, including stakeholder workshops to support the development of the master plan framework. From these events a consensus-based master plan was developed including consideration of landscape and transport strategies. This was intended to provide a framework to guide further development proposals through the Master Plan Document and any subsequent planning application.

In the process of preparing the draft Master Plan Document further consultations have been undertaken with the Town and Parish Councils.

Following public consultation on the draft Master Plan Document any feedback will be addressed in the final Master Plan. Once this has been formally adopted by St Edmundsbury Borough Council, the Master Plan will provide a planning framework for subsequent applications on the site.

Images from Public Consultation Events held in 2011

## Planning timeline

| | |
|---|---|
| Site identified as location for growth in adopted St Edmundsbury Core Strategy | **2010** |
| Consultation event on development at South-east Bury St Edmunds | **2011** |
| Concept Statement adopted by St Edmundsbury Borough Council | **May 2013** |
| Site allocated in Bury Vision 2031 | **September 2014** |
| Consultation on Draft Masterplan Development Plan Document and Outline Planning Application | **May 2015** |
| Submission of Draft Masterplan Document and Outline Planning Application to St Edmundsbury Borough Council | **Summer 2015** |
| Masterplan Development Plan Document adopted by St Edmundsbury Borough Council | **Autumn 2015** |
| Outline planning permission granted | **Winter 2015** |

Figure 1.2 – Overview of central and northern area of the site looking towards the town centre

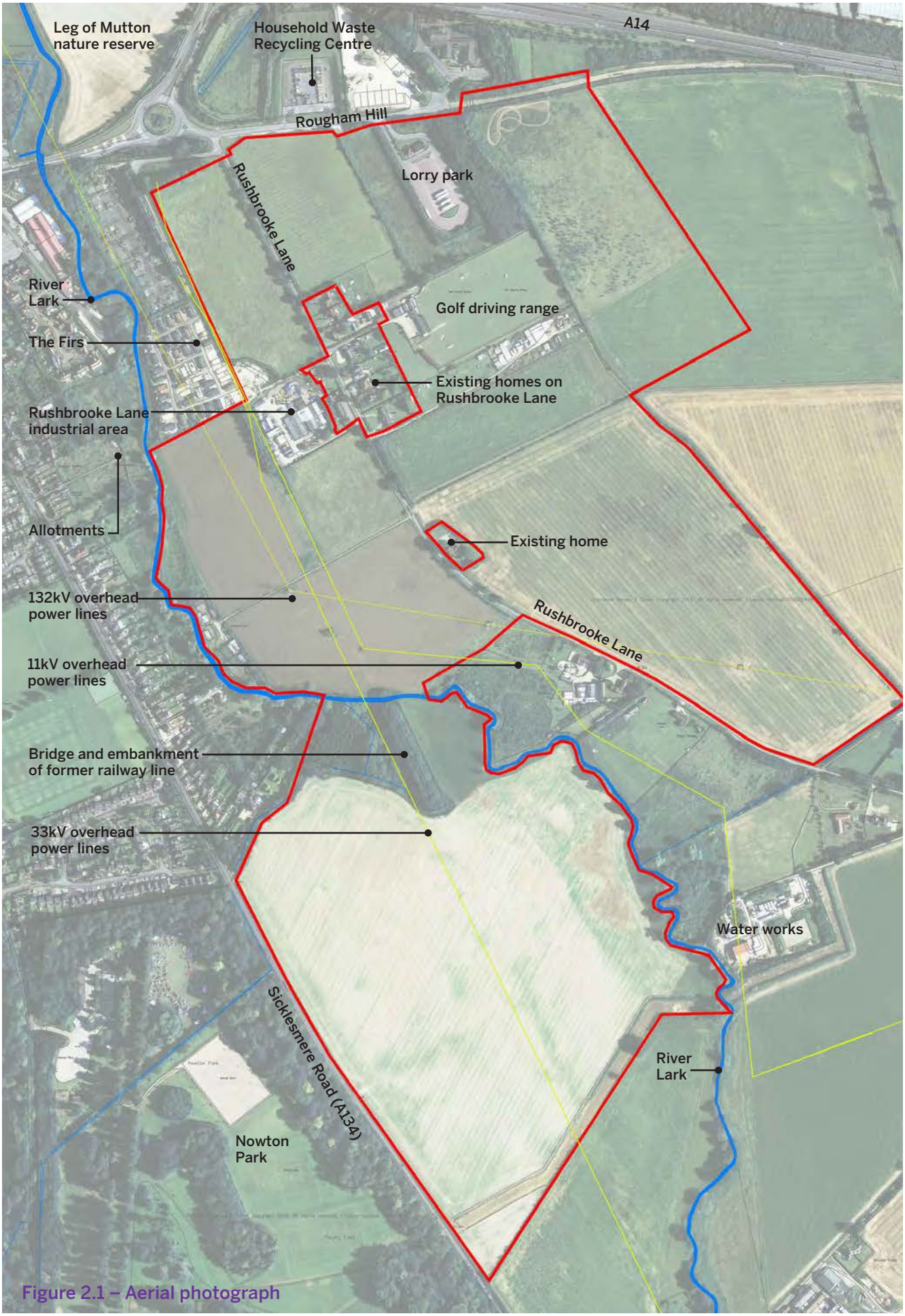



Figure 2.1 – Aerial photograph

# Section 2
# Constraints and opportunities

**This section provides a summary of the key factors that have been considered in developing the master plan for the proposed development at Abbots Vale. The design and planning team have worked with a wide range of environmental and technical experts to carry out a full appraisal of the site to help determine the best way to respond to the constraints and opportunities to development to meet the objectives and requirements defined in Section 1.**

## Overview of the site and surroundings

The site lies approximately a mile to the south-east of the town centre. The northern edge of the site is bounded by Rougham Hill, which provides access to a number of varied land uses adjacent to the site including a household waste recycling site (proposed to be relocated), light industrial and business units and a lorry park.

The eastern and southern edges of the site are generally open to adjacent agricultural land. There is a water pumping station near to the south-eastern corner of the site.

Directly opposite the site on the western side of Sicklesmere Road is Nowton Park – a large and well established park and recreational area, which separates the site from the adjacent community of Nowton further to the west. Further north, the western edge of the site is bounded by homes, allotments, a Police investigation centre, a small industrial estate and a mobile home site (The Firs).

The site is broadly divided into two halves (upper and lower site) by the River Lark which runs along the western boundary of the upper part of the site, before diagonally crossing the site towards the eastern boundary.

Rushbrooke Lane passes through the upper part of the site on an approximately parallel alignment to the River Lark, running from the north-west corner of the site to a point midway along the site's eastern boundary. The road itself accesses a number of homes that back on to the master plan area. The lower half of Rushbrooke Lane is more rural in character and serves a number of separate properties and landholdings that are also not included in the masterplan area.

View towards Cathedral from the area of the site adjacent to Rougham Hill

Bridge over the River Lark remaining from the dismantled Bury St Edmunds to Long Melford railway line

Nowton Park

Existing homes on upper part of Rushbrooke Lane

The upper part of Rushbrooke Lane provides access to a small industrial area. Although it lies within the master plan area it is not anticipated to be redeveloped within the life of the master plan. A golf driving range to the east of the upper part of Rushbrooke Lane forms part of the proposed development area. A small farm complex to the west of the upper part of Rushbrooke Lane will also be redeveloped as part of the master plan proposals.

Other key features of the site include three sets of overhead power lines and associated pylons. The largest 132kV line is broadly aligned along the River Lark corridor and the remains of a former railway route. This overhead power line will be retained and integrated within the proposed green infrastructure network. The smaller 11kV and 33kV lines are proposed to be removed.

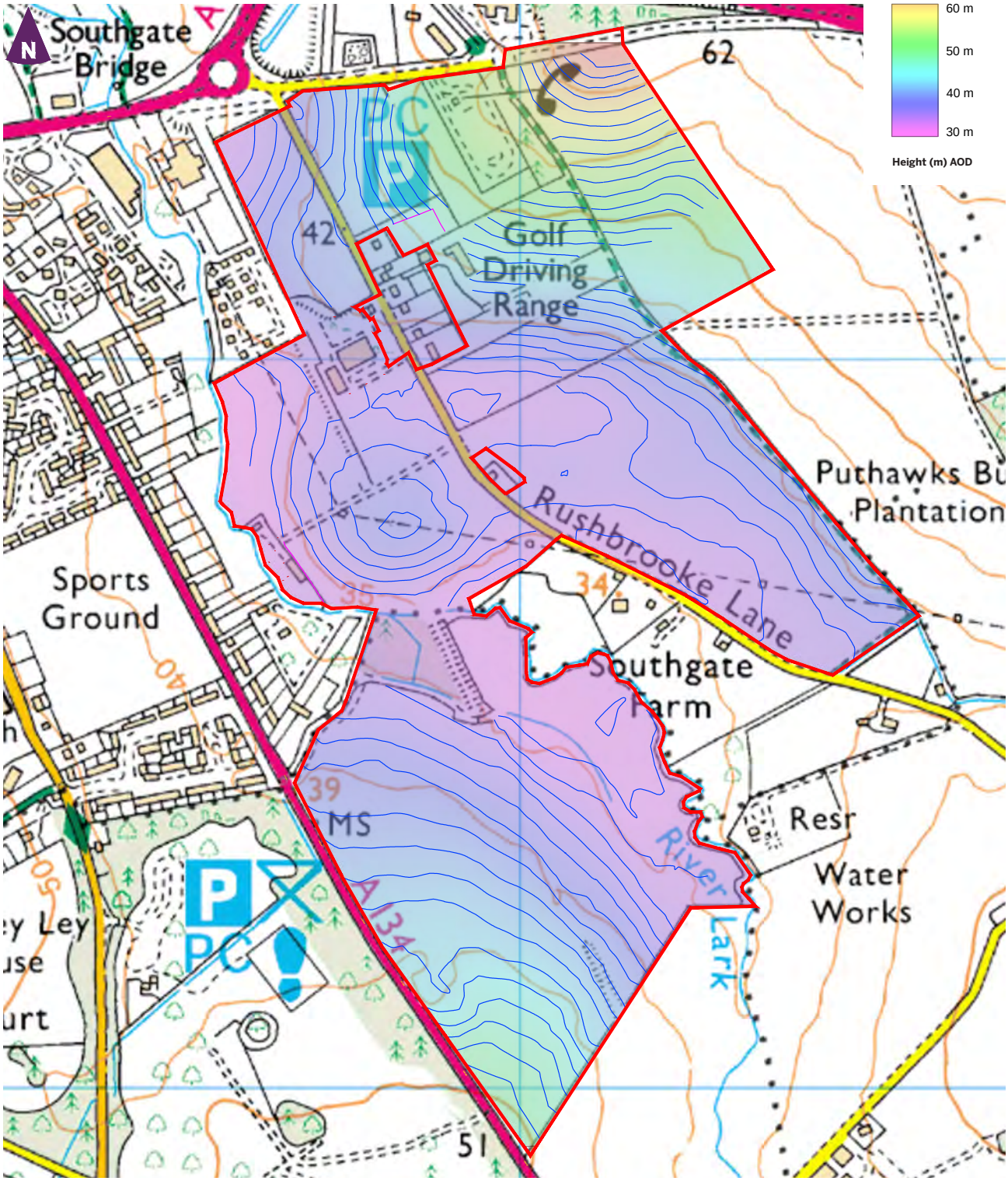
Other than the lorry park and golf driving range the site is predominantly agricultural land. There are some small blocks of woodland and scrub within the site, including a community woodland adjacent to the lorry park.

## Topography

The site's undulating topography presents an opportunity to create variety and interest throughout the development. Due to the requirement for the access/relief road to run centrally through the entire length of the site, this naturally results in this becoming a focal 'spine' to the site that will naturally rise and fall with the varying topography of the site. The figure below indicates the overall topography.

Generally the site is a shallow valley to the River Lark which bisects the site from a point approximately a third of the way up the eastern boundary to the north western corner of the site. There are traces of a former railway line that ran through the site include a bridge across the River Lark, a length of embankment and the remaining buttresses of a further bridge at the southern end of the embankment, all of which provide noticeable landmarks within the site.

### Figure 2.2 – Topography



## Landscape

In overall terms, the landscape character varies from countryside edge along the southern and eastern boundaries, to urban fringe along the northern and western boundaries.

The upper part of Rushbrooke Lane and the eastern and southern edges of the site are predominantly bounded by hedgerows and trees and the retention and enhancement of these and other woodland areas and mature trees create the opportunity to maintain visual screening to both existing and new development and to create character and interest throughout the site.

Views of the site are possible from a range of directions and distances. Key features of the landscape, such as topography, vegetation and built form, limit the extent of the views. One of the most notable elements is the town of Bury St Edmunds, bordering the site to the north-west.

The built form of the town creates a large visual barrier, limiting views to properties bordering the site and nearby residential roads. To the north-east the A14 runs along elevated ground. The shelterbelts and woodland blocks associated with the A14 corridor create a strong visual barrier blocking views from Moreton in the north-east. To the south-west the A134 borders the south western edge of the site and offers clear views across the site. Beyond the A134 lies Nowton Park. This wooded park restricts longer distance views from the west.

The undulating arable countryside to the east and south offer more extensive views. The site's location within the lower lying River Lark valley and the surrounding network of tree belts and coverts that are characteristic of the rural landscape play a big part in limiting views from this area.

Northern boundary of master plan area viewed west along Rougham Hill

View towards south-west across site from upper part of Rougham Hill

View from Rushbrooke Lane looking north towards A14 showing 33kV overhead power line

View north from public footpath near Rushbrooke Lane showing 132kV overhead power line

View east across site from Sicklesmere Road

View north across site from Sicklesmere Road

## Ecology and bio-diversity

A programme of ecological work has informed the master plan development. An extended Phase 1 habitat survey was completed in July 2013, which subsequently informed the scope of survey work undertaken between April 2014 and November 2014. An extensive range of surveys was undertaken to establish the value of the site for protected species including bats, otters, reptiles and badgers.

The key constraints to development are the need to protect wildlife habitats associated with the river corridor and to protect the foraging route of bats between the site and Nowton Park and Sites of Special Scientific Interest to the north of the town comprising chalk caves. This can be achieved through the provision of a corridor with protection from artificial light sources.

The development presents an opportunity to improve bio-diversity on the site through enhancement of existing ecological features including the river corridor, woodland areas and hedgerows. With appropriate design to connect retained assets such as these, the development of arable agricultural land will potentially have a positive effect on bio-diversity.

Community woodland adjacent to lorry park

Hedgerows alongside upper part of Rushbrooke Lane

Former railway line embankment

River Lark corridor

Hedgerow adjacent to public footpath on eastern boundary of the site

Woodland area west of the River Lark

## Flood risk

The River Lark flows north along the south-eastern boundary of the site, before cutting west across the site. There is a small tributary of the River Lark that originates within the southern part of the site and flows north, joining the River Lark within the wooded area on the site.

According to Environment Agency records, parts of the Site alongside the River Lark and the other watercourses are located within Flood Zone 3 (land with a high probability of flooding). The majority of the site is however within Flood Zone 1 (land with the lowest probability of flooding).

The design of the master plan has been informed by a detailed understanding of the flood risk implications. Modelling of the River Lark and its tributary which run through the master plan area has been undertaken to determine those areas of the site where development can be located and those areas of the site where there is risk of flooding and must be retained as open spaces.

To reduce the risk of flooding from an increased area of paved surfaces, the scheme will include appropriate sustainable urban drainage techniques to restrict run off rates.

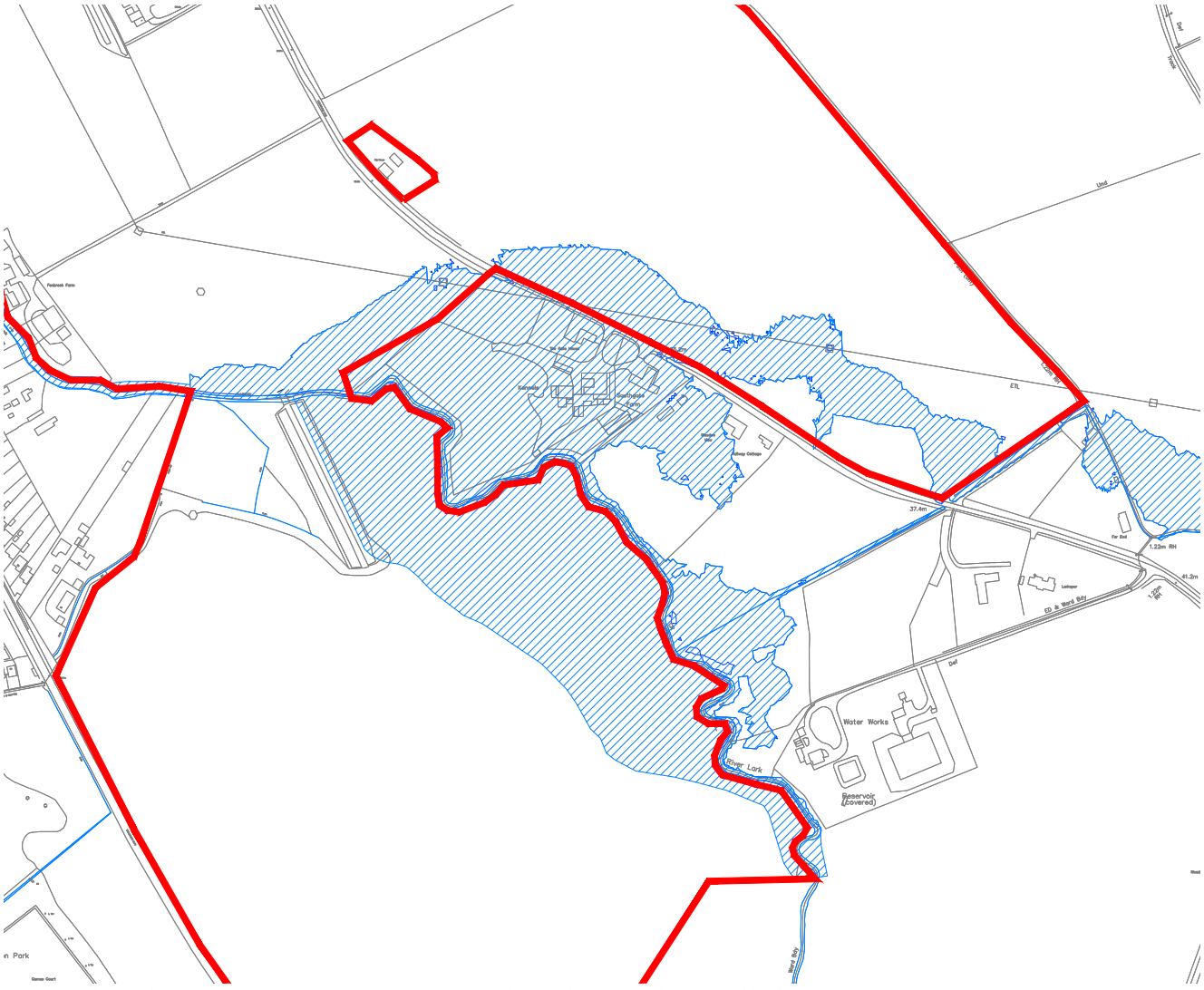
A drainage strategy is to be submitted with the outline planning application that will demonstrate how drainage features will be integrated within green corridors and areas of open space.

The link between the northern and southern development areas will require the construction of a bridge that will be designed to minimise the impact on the River Lark.

River Lark tributary near former railway bridge

Drainage ditch adjacent to public footpath east of Rushbrooke Lane

### Figure 2.3 – Indicative 1 in 100 year flood extent



## Access and transport

The site has good access to the wider road network. The south-western boundary is located adjacent to the A134 Sicklesmere Road. Rougham Hill (an unclassified highway) runs along the northern site boundary and connects to A134 Rougham Road via an existing three arm roundabout. Approximately 50m to the south-east of the roundabout junction of Rougham Road/Rougham Hill, a priority junction is formed with Rushbrooke Lane. This provides access to The Firs and the Police investigation centre. Further west along Rougham Road a roundabout with Southgate Street/ Cullum Road provides a route into the town centre.

Analysis of traffic impacts has been undertaken as part of the development of the master plan proposals. This has highlighted the need for additional improvements to the local road network, as well the provision of a new relief road connecting Rougham Hill and Sicklesmere Road, to improve the flow of traffic.

With close proximity to the town centre and nearby amenities, the site provides a sustainable location for housing. The development has potential to link with and provide enhancements to existing pedestrian and cycle links into the town centre.

Due to the relatively long and thin shape of the site, the central spine road through the site served by public transport will enable most homes to be within 5 minutes walk (or approximately 400m) of the route. There is potential for some existing bus services to be diverted through or extended to the site. By providing other uses in addition to housing including retail and community facilities such as a primary school, the mix of development on the site has the potential to reduce the need to travel outside the new neighbourhood to meet everyday needs.

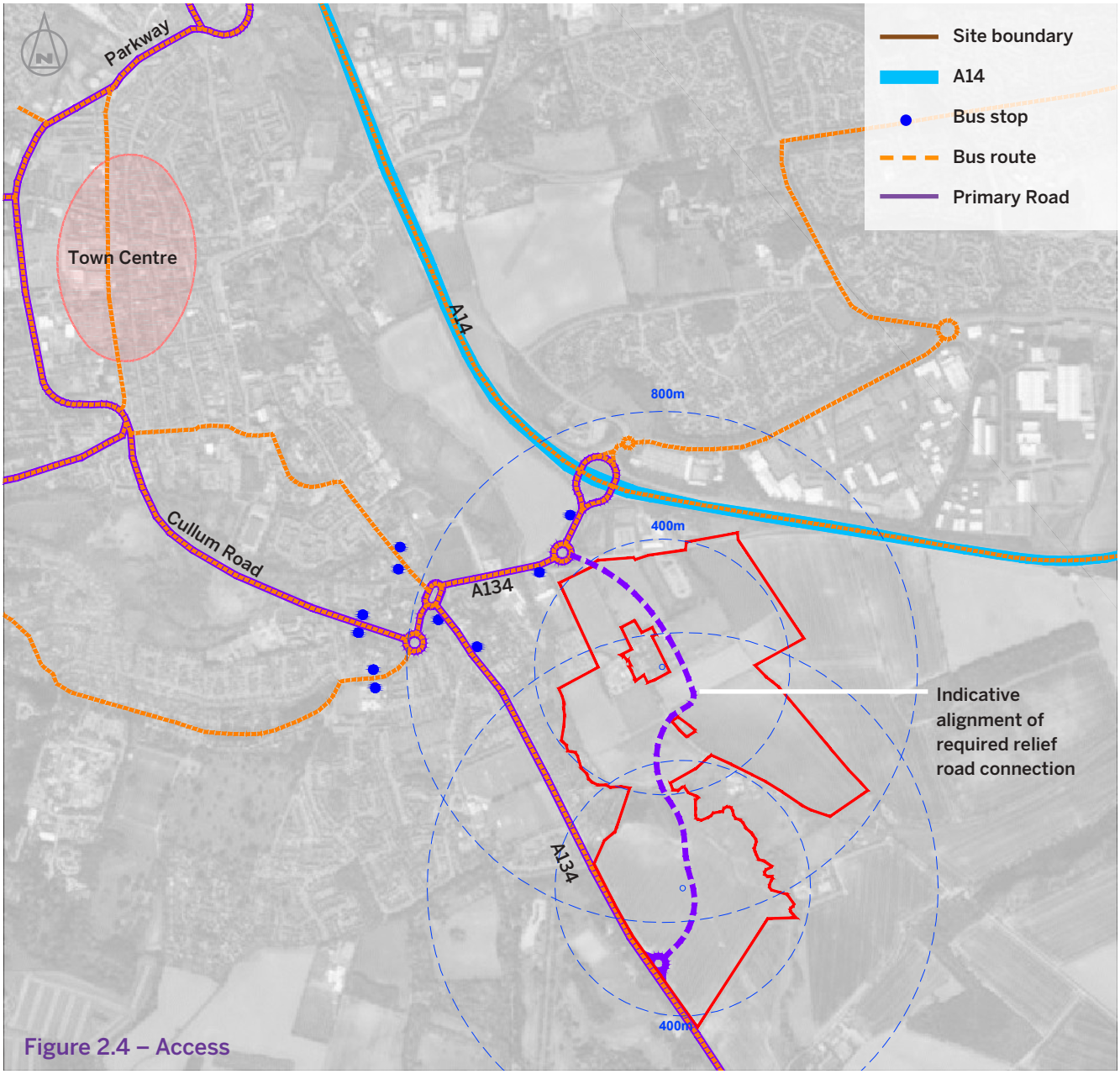



Figure 2.4 – Access

## Overhead powerlines

A number of overhead powerlines run through the site and these are all potentially a constraint to development due to requirements for development to be set back for amenity and maintenance reasons. All of the lower voltage overhead powerlines (11kV and 33kV) are proposed to be removed, considerably reducing the extent of overhead powerlines across the site.

The larger 132kV powerlines will be retained. In the design of the master plan careful consideration has been given to minimising the visual intrusion of the overhead powerline that is to remain. The overhead powerline benefits from having been sensitively located within the site. As a result, the land occupied by the overhead powerline is in most part within lower-lying flood risk areas. Consequently, in most areas of the site the pylons and overhead lines are away from areas that are suitable for development. Where the overhead powerlines pass closest to areas of the site that will be developed, careful design and specification of planting and sensitive orientation of streets will minimise visual intrusion.

132kV, 33kV and 11kV overhead lines

Typical distant view of 132kV overhead line looking west

View south where 132kV overhead line crosses Rushbrooke Lane

## Noise and vibration

Noise monitoring has been undertaken to assess the potential noise sources which could impact on the masterplan development. This identified several existing noise sources including road infrastructure, namely the A14 and A134, commercial activity from existing uses on Rougham Hill, the lorry park and employment uses on Rushbrooke Lane.

These noise sources have been given consideration in the design of the master plan including the addition of landscape buffers to mitigate the impact of noise and so protect residential amenity.

## Air quality

The potential effects of dust emissions from the construction of the development will be subject to further assessment at the request of St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Environmental Health Officer. In addition, consideration will be given to air quality along Sicklesmere Road. The assessment will be undertaken in line with Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM) Guidance, and will classify the risk of effects on air quality associated with the development in order to identify measures to avoid and reduce any such effects.

## Land quality

A phase 1 Land Quality Assessment has been prepared (including a review of historic data). This indicates that there is limited potential for contamination to be encountered on site. There are some historic areas of land fill around the north-west of the site and potential for spilt fuel contamination on the lorry park area but subject to agreeing a suitable mitigation strategy there is limited likelihood that this would be a constraint to development.

The lorry park south of Rougham Hill

## Heritage and historic environment

An assessment has been carried out to better understand the historic environment value of the site and the impact of the proposals on local archaeology. The assessment has used a combination of sources including reviewing historic environment records and aerial photographs in addition to a geophysical survey and trial trenching.

The desk based assessment showed there to be potential for Anglo-Saxon remains on the site. A geophysical survey was subsequently undertaken and showed signs of possible subsurface remains, particularly in the south east of the site.

Trial trenching carried out through consultation with the archaeologist at Suffolk County Council showed some evidence of Anglo Saxon settlement. Whilst further investigation with detailed excavation in advance of development may be required, the finds are not so significant they would prevent development. Following further investigation, any mitigation that is required can be taken into account in the detailed design of proposals.

The more recent remains of the former Bury St Edmunds to Long Melford railway line and two WWII pill boxes located towards the west of the site are proposed to be retained as features of interest within the open space network.

## Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

A robust EIA is being carried out in line with relevant guidelines to assess the environmental impacts of the development and propose mitigation measures where required to ensure any environmental impacts are acceptable.

WWII Pillbox

Part of the remaining length of railway embankment

Former railway bridge over the River Lark

Former railway bridge buttresses at the southern end of the embankment

## Figure 2.5 – Summary of development constraints and opportunities


1. Indicative alignment of required link road
2. Potential river valley footpath / cycleway
3. Potential future connections
4. Potential area for mixed uses
5. Existing public footpath
6. Potential green links
7. Potential central location for new local centre
8. Proposed location for Primary school
9. Boundary with rural landscape
10. More urban character
11. More rural / village character
12. River valley green space
13. 132kV overhead line and associated easement
14. Existing trees
15. Disused railway alignment
16. Access point to Nowton Park
17. Area required to create 'dark corridor' to support bat activity

- Existing pillbox feature
- 11kV overhead powerline
- 33kV overhead powerline
- 1 in 100 year flood area
- Potential noise source
- Special Landscape Area
- Masterplan site boundary

## Figure 3.1 – Illustrative master plan

# Section 3
# Framework plan

**This Section provides an overview of the proposed Framework Plan for the site. The underlying design approach is described and how this responds both to the Vision 2031 objectives and to the environmental and technical constraints and opportunities identified in Section 2. Sections 4 to 6 describe the Framework Plan in further detail.**

## Overview of framework plan

The underlying design approach to the site has evolved directly from the Vision 2031 concept plan. This proposed two development areas either side of the River Lark valley, with community facilities located centrally and access being provided by a road running through the site linking Rougham Hill to Sicklesmere Road. In developing the Framework Plan, much care has been taken to ensure that the central route through the site is designed as a street for the community, not only linking the development areas and providing access, but providing a sequence of attractive and useful places. All of the key community facilities are located along its length, including a school, community centre and market square of shops and other business uses. At the heart of the site where the spine route crosses the River Lark valley, the plan has been designed to provide a focal hub of play spaces, sports pitches and recreational routes including a riverside walk.

Example of multi-functional and attractive green infrastructure

The northern and southern development areas are comprised of a connected network of streets, small squares and parks which link back to the central spine route. Each area will be of a different and varying character, responding to different settings in different areas of the site, but overall the northern area, closer to the town centre will be of a more urban character and the southern area will have more of a village character. The existing Rushbrooke Lane is carefully integrated within the northern development area, providing a direct walking and cycling route through the site, but with revised vehicle access that links to the new spine road.

Example of Hopkins Homes development

Overlaying the development areas and connecting both to the central riverside corridor open space and to surrounding areas including Nowton Park and the adjacent countryside, is a network of green links. This green network provides a setting to the development that retains and links all of the site's natural assets including the riverside corridor, the areas of woodland, existing trees and hedgerows around the edges of the site and along Rushbrooke Lane and the railway embankment. This helps not only to provide a setting and sense of place, but also helps to visually integrate and screen the development as well as providing opportunities for enhanced nature conservation. It also creates a network of recreational routes which will allow all homes to be within close proximity of parks and green spaces within the site or greenways linking to open spaces or countryside outside the site. These green spaces will also be integral to the drainage strategy for the site.

Every street including the central spine, is designed to create an attractive and safe environment, with homes or other uses along the street located and designed to have main entrances from the street and windows overlooking the street to provide a level of natural surveillance. Private gardens, or small private parking areas are provided to the rear of homes, where these areas help provide a buffer between the backs of homes on adjacent streets. This is a layout that is typically found throughout Bury St Edmunds. The framework plan indicates the general layout of the streets and where buildings will be located in relation to the street, but the detailed architectural design of homes will be determined at a later stage.

Example of Hopkins Homes development

The key features of the proposed development at Abbots Vale are:

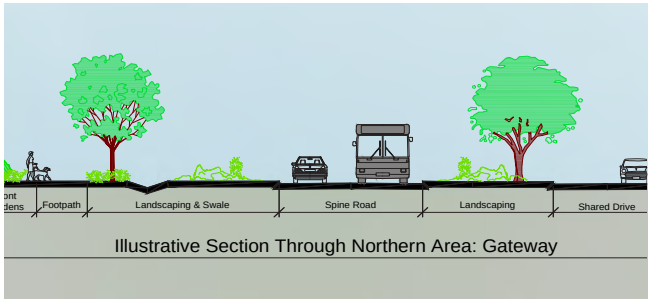
- New Homes and Places - a high quality development of around 1,250 homes. Development will enhance the Rougham Hill area with an attractive northern gateway to the site and will also provide a new and sensitively designed gateway to Bury St Edmunds when approaching from the south.

Example of Hopkins Homes development

- Green Infrastructure - the site provides improved access to the River Lark, where there is currently limited access. This will provide a significant green resource for existing and new residents. A green infrastructure network will be provided throughout the development, integrating and linking new playing fields, community greens, allotments, sustainable surface water drainage features and structural landscaping. The best existing landscape features of the site will be retained and enhanced. The green infrasructure network will provide safe and attractive walking, cycling and recreational routes to all parts of the site including the school, the community centre and the market square, as well as useful off-site destinations including the town centre and Nowton Park.

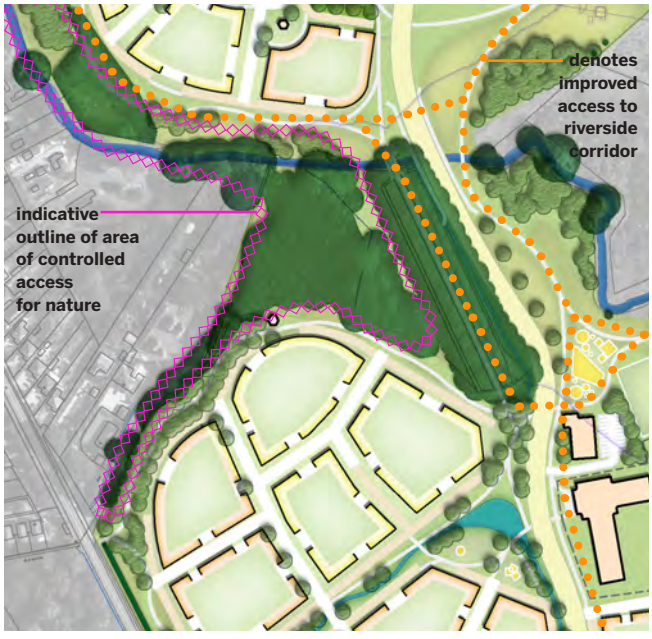
Similar treatment of the River Lark corridor at the Leg of Mutton water meadow

- Maximising and Improving Connectivity – the development provides an opportunity to enhance transport links and minimise the impact on the A14 through the delivery of appropriate junction improvements and the relief road. This will provide a new strategic link designed to ease congestion in the peak hours. This is also a highly sustainable location, well connected to local services and facilities by way of existing and future linkages with, a network of public footpaths, public transport routes and the nearby national cycle network. There are further opportunities to enhance links through the provision of a footpath and cycle route along the river corridor connecting to existing links into the town centre and the surrounding countryside.



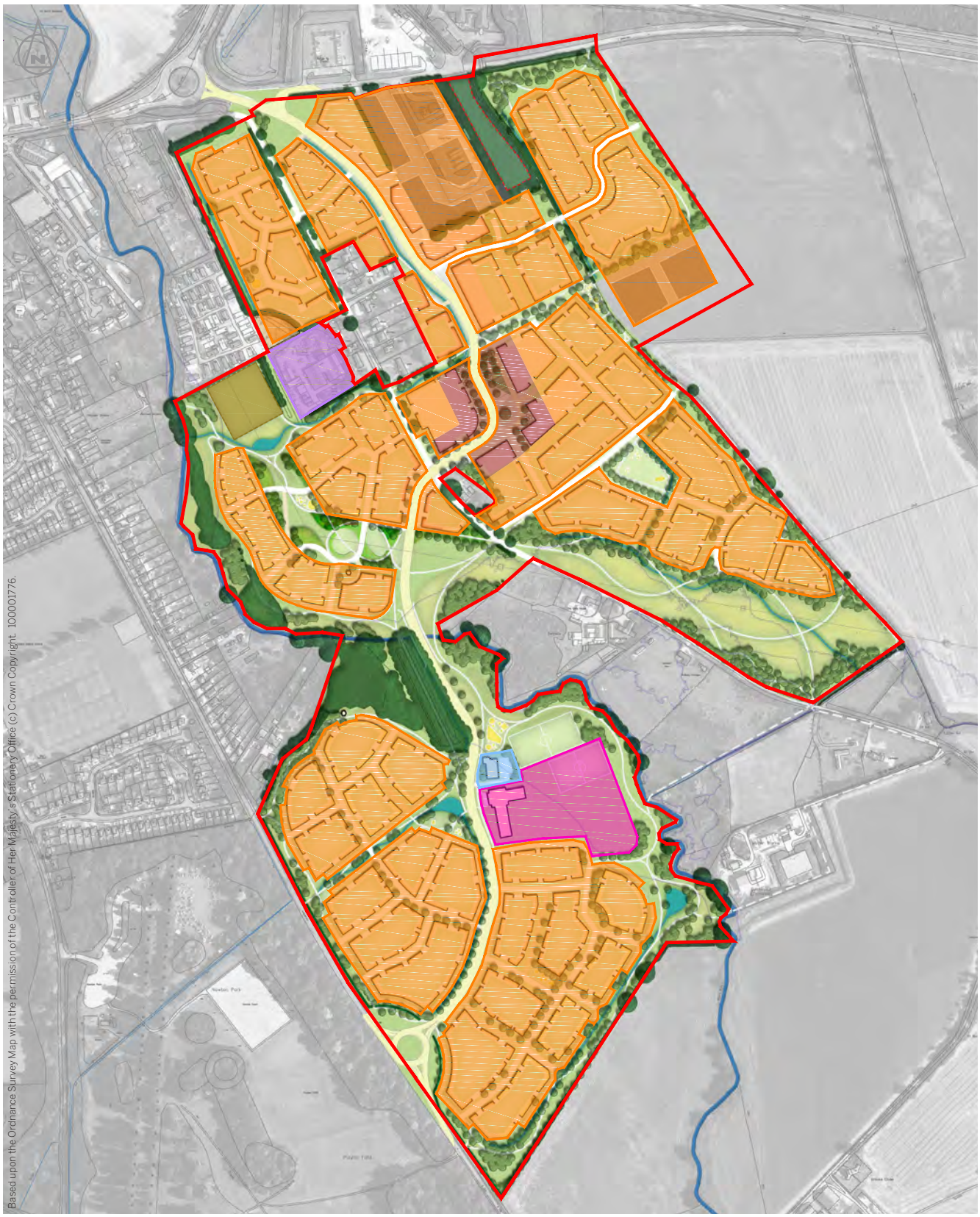
Illustrative Section Through Northern Area: Gateway

- Minimising Environmental Impact - significant opportunities exist to enhance the biodiversity value of the site through the creation of new wetland areas created as part of the flood attenuation works. New landscaping and planting will also provide opportunities to enhance the biodiversity offer of the site when compared to its current agricultural use.



Indicative approach to riverside corridor enhancement

## Figure 4.1 – Land use




- Site boundary
- Proposed residential blocks (Total area: 41.6 ha)
- Proposed mixed use local centre (Total area: 1.6 ha (included within resi))
- Proposed primary school (Total area: 2.0 ha)
- Proposed Community Use (Total area: 0.2 ha)
- Existing Employment Area (Total area: 0.8 ha)
- Open Space (Total area 24 ha - see Section 8 for breakdown)
- Proposed Allotments (0.6 ha)

# Section 4
# Land use

## This section defines the proposed areas and locations for homes, community uses, shops, primary school and open space.

### Residential

The proposed development will provide a wide ranging mix of home types and tenures, in line with policy requirements. The precise mix will be determined as part of the detailed or reserved matters application but will include one and two bed apartments and two, three, four and five bed homes. The homes will be a mixture of market and affordable homes. The master plan identifies limited potential for self-build homes.

Homes will provide a wide choice of residential environments. The variety of different settings will include homes overlooking the countryside at the edges of the development, homes overlooking parks and open spaces within the development, homes in residential streets, homes along the central spine route and homes around the central market square.

The area of land proposed for homes totals 41.6 ha.

Example of Hopkins Homes development

### Retail / Leisure

It is proposed to provide space within the central market square area within the upper part of the site for a small local supermarket and space for up to 3 other retail outlets.

### Community infrastructure

The proposed development will be served by a new primary school and an adjacent site will be provided for a community hall including sports changing facilities and a football pitch.

Example of Community Hall

### Open Space

It is proposed to locate a neighbourhood equipped area for play (NEAP) adjacent to the school and community hall site as part of a centrally accessible hub for the main community facilities. Other opportunities for play and additional local equipped areas for play (LEAPs) will be provided throughout the residential areas. The community will also be provided with a network of safe and overlooked interconnecting footpaths throughout the site and with links to existing and potential future public footpaths beyond the site. These will be located within the extensive areas of informal open space throughout the site which will take the form of natural open space (along the River Lark corridor), more formal pocket parks and green connecting corridors of various different types throughout the site. This open space network will provide a range of recreational opportunities for walking, running and cycling. A full breakdown of the open space provision is provided in Section 7.

### Employment

Within the overall masterplan area there will be new job opportunities in local shops and associated business premises. The existing local industrial area west of Rushbrooke Lane will be retained in employment use.

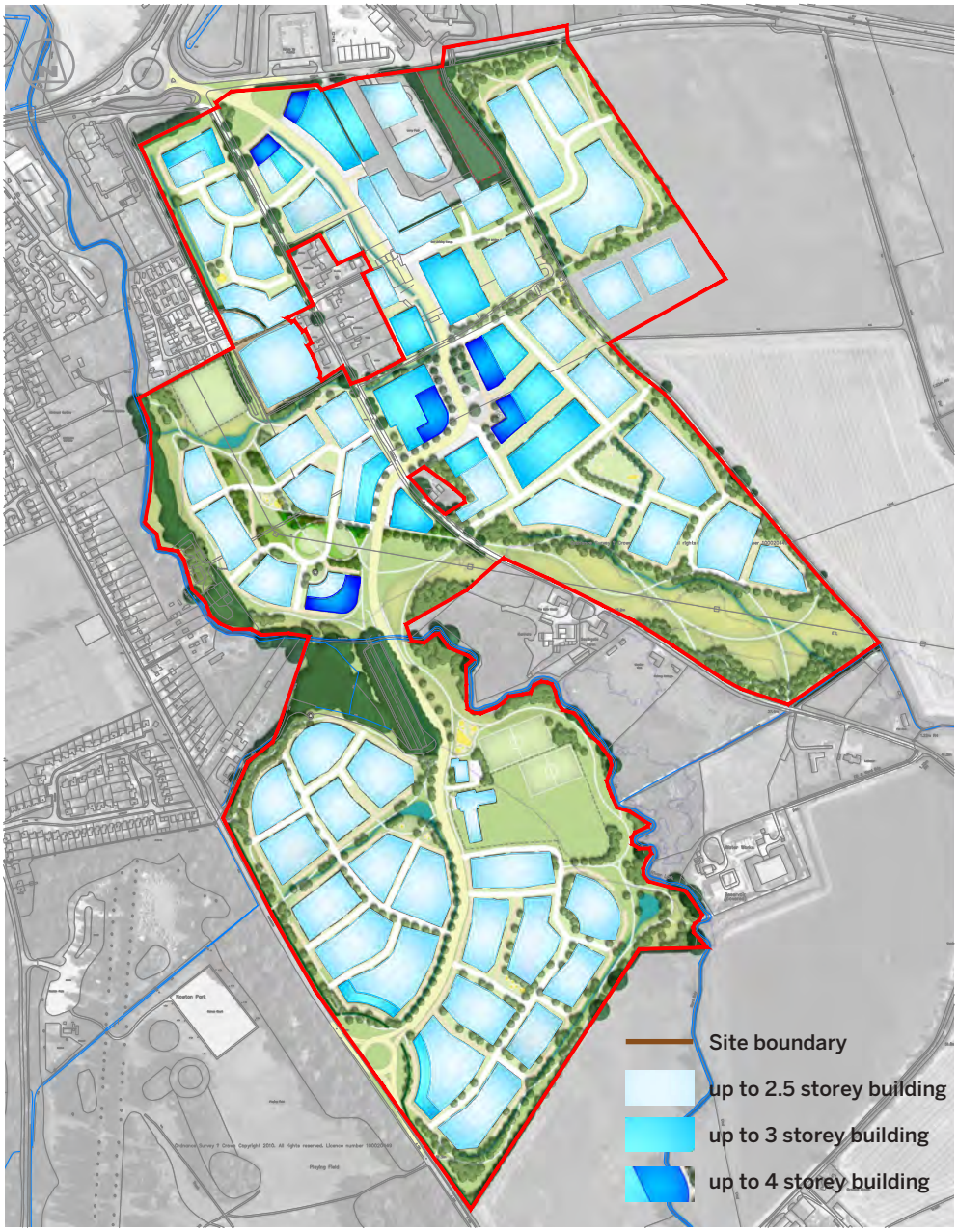
# Section 5
# Building heights, density and character

**This section defines the parameters for building height (number of floors) and density of development (number of homes per hectare) and describes how the character of development will vary across the site.**

## Building height

The proposed development will vary in height between two storeys, two storeys with gable windows in the roof space (also described as two and a half storey) and three storeys. Some limited areas of the site may have potential for up to four storeys, subject to further detailed design and assessment. These areas are identified in Figure 5.1.

**Figure 5.1 – Building heights**



## Density range

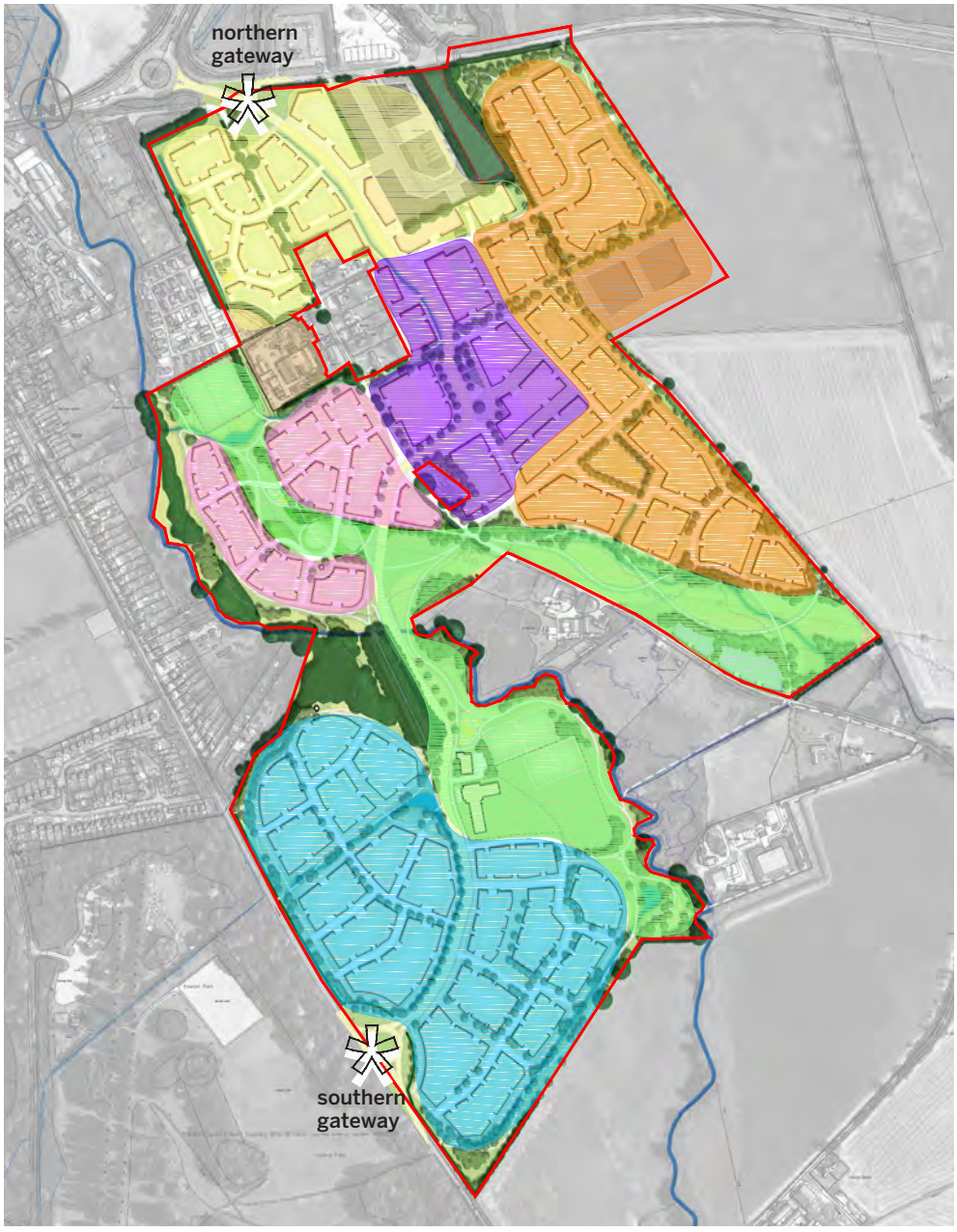
The density of homes will vary across the site. Typically homes along the southern and eastern and boundary will developed at low to medium densities (20 to 25 dwellings per hectare). The southern area will be developed at a lower overall density than the northern area (ranging between 25 and 35 dwellings per hectare). In response to the generally more urban context of the northern area of the site, and closer proximity to the town centre, this area will be developed at a relatively higher density (ranging between 30 and 40 dwellings per hectare). The variation in density on a block by block basis is indicated in Figure 5.2.

### Figure 5.2 – Density

The site naturally divides into two development areas above and below the River Lark corridor. Within each area there will be a variety of different characters of development, responding to different site conditions and design objectives. The character area plan shows the range of different character areas and the supporting text describes their key features.

- Community and green infrastructure hub
- Southern area
- Area west of Rushbrooke Lane
- Central area
- Eastern area and
- Northern area

**Figure 5.3 –Character areas**



**Community and green infrastructure hub –** this area extends from west to east, including the River Lark corridor and is the hub of the open space network. The network of recreational footpaths and cycleways that extend across and beyond the site is oriented towards this central area. As well as play spaces, recreational routes, sports pitches and informal park land, this area includes the school and the proposed community centre and sports pavillion.

**Southern Area – the southern gateway.** This area has a garden village character, providing a transition from rural to suburban, and responding to the character of Nowton Park. The area includes a village green, and is adjacent to the commmunity and green infrastructure hub. The southern and eastern edges are of a lower density and are more rural in character to provide a sensitive edge to the surrounding countryside.

**West of Rushbrooke Lane –** area of transition from rural edge adjacent to the River Lark corridor to a more urban edge closer to the local centre. Homes on the southern edge provide a landmark that is visible from the adjacent Southern Area. Larger, lower density homes are proposed along the river corridor to provide a sensitive edge. Homes adjacent to the overhead powerline overlook an open space divided into a series of pocket parks that provide ground level visual interest and screening.

**Central Area –** denser and more urban area radiating from a focal market square. This area includes apartments, town houses, retail and potentially small scale office uses. It is designed as an inherently traffic calmed constriction within the spine road, to facilitate greater pedestrian priority.

**Eastern Area –** medium to lower density area providing transition from the central area towards the eastern edge. Areas along the site boundaries are of a lower density, presenting a semi-rural character to the surrounding countryside and river corridor.

**Northern Area – the northern gateway.** This has a strong and outward facing frontage to Rougham Hill, with homes oriented to take advantage of views towards the cathedral tower. Area of higher density along the northern edge and spine road – reflecting the relative proximity to the town centre. Area of lower density to the west of Rushbrooke Lane to complement the character of nearby existing homes.

# Section 6
# Access and movement

**The proposed development of land South-east of Bury St Edmunds will deliver improvements to the local transport infrastructure through highway works, public transport improvements and the provision of appropriate measures to promote cycle and pedestrian movement within the site and surrounding area. The strategy to deliver these improvements is outlined in this section.**

## Design Approach

One of the key aspects of the master plan is the proposal for a relief road linking Rougham Road to Sicklesmere Road. This is intended to be an active street in part lined with community and commercial uses and therefore serving a number of functions and ensuring that the road forms an intrinsic part of the development. The road will provide an alternative route for existing traffic, enabling the Southgate Green roundabout to be avoided for some journeys.

The design of the road is such that it can accommodate movement by all vehicles, but will focus on achieving a design speed of 30 mph with 20 mph zones at the proposed Market Square and the Community Hub. The design, alignment and integration of the road within the development will be carefully designed in detail to create the qualities of a livable street, with homes overlooking and directly accessed from the street. The new development will help fund junction improvements on surrounding roads where required.

**Figure 6.1 – Indicative character of proposed primary access road**

Watercolour by James Hart Dyke

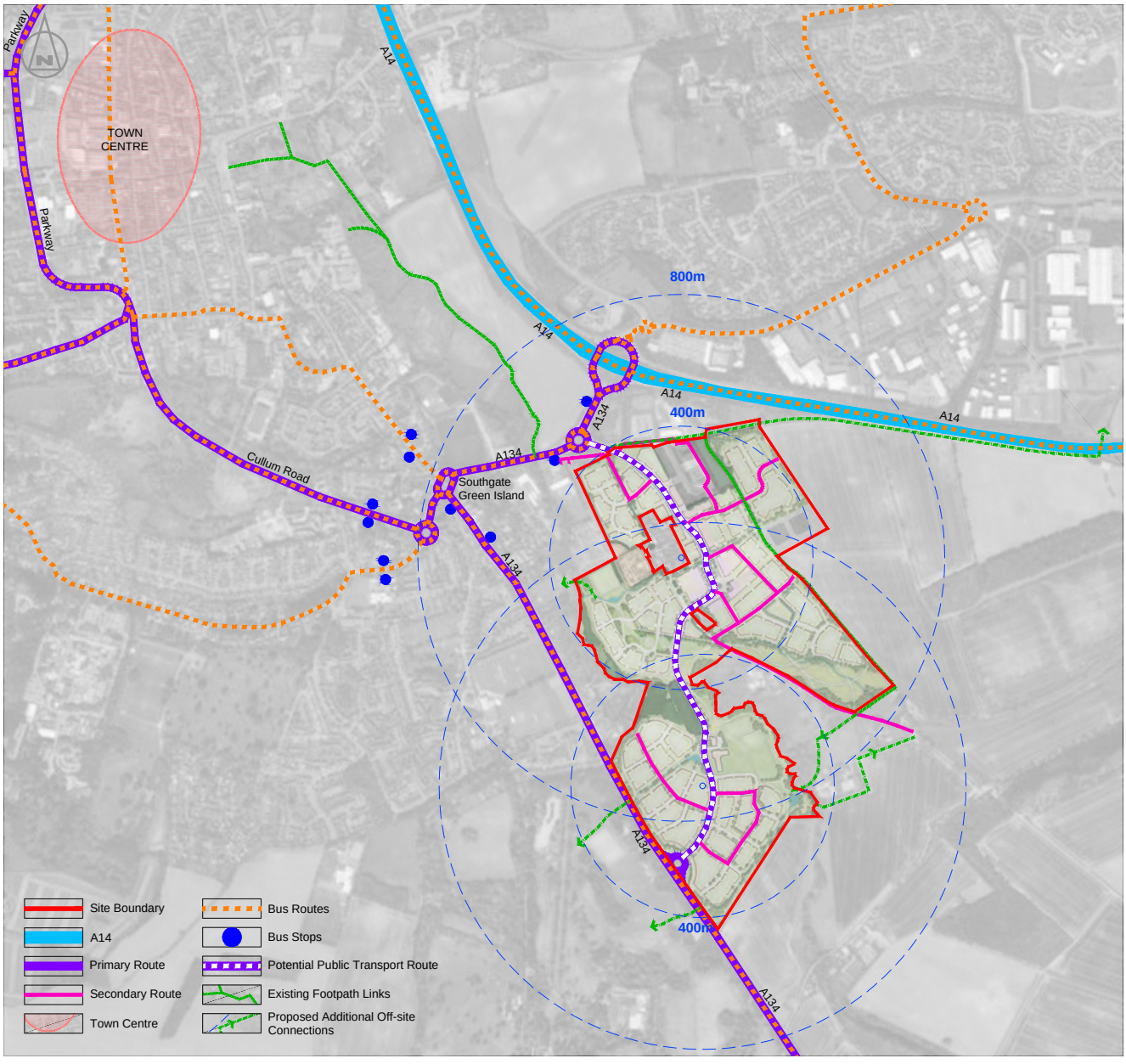
## Sustainable transport

The development proposal for Abbots Vale has been designed as a walkable neighbourhood. This means that residents will generally be within close distance of local facilities, encouraging walking and cycling and reducing the need to travel by car.

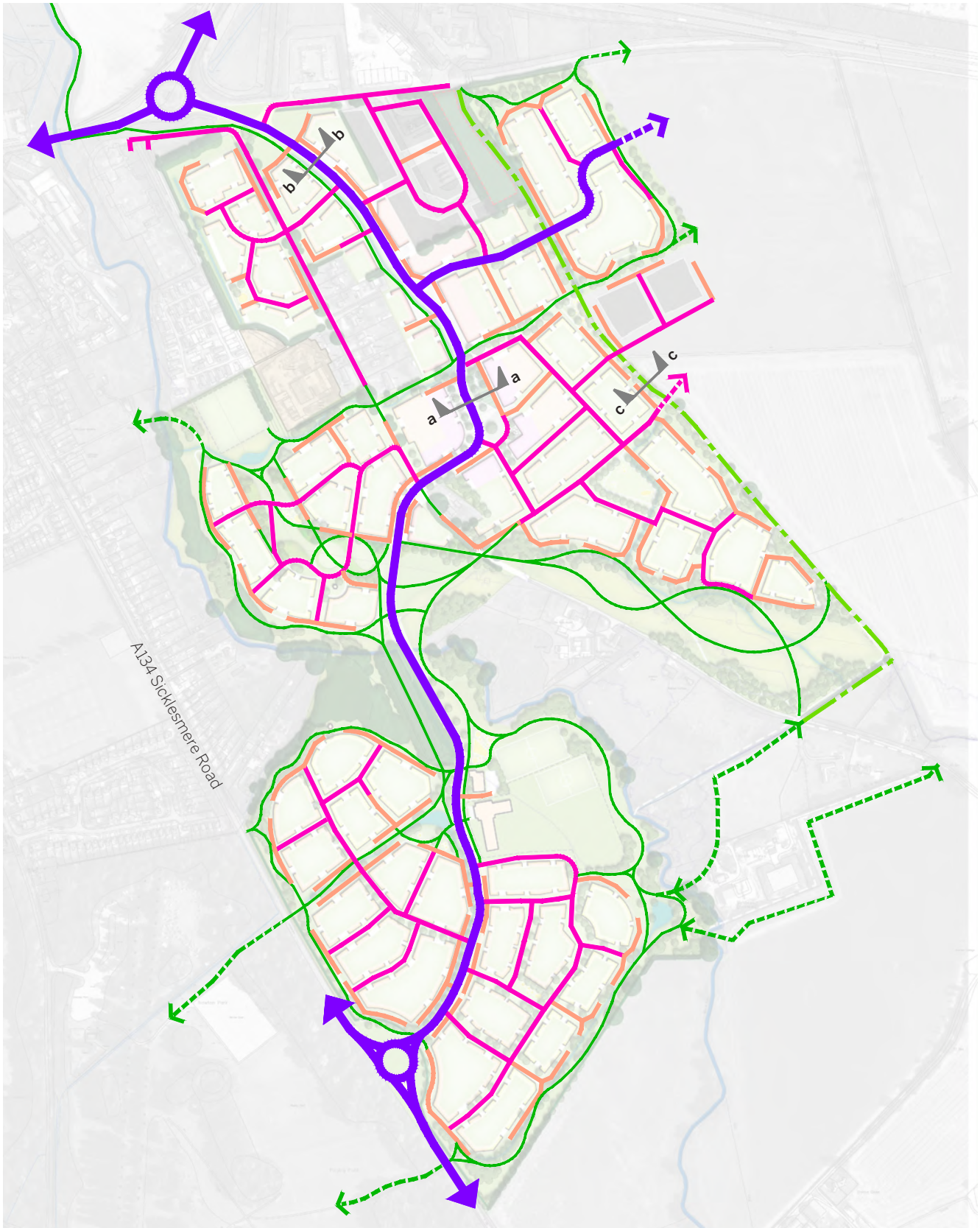
The mix of uses to be provided on the site helps reduce the number of car-based trips as most day to day needs will be met on site or are within easy walking distance. This includes trips to the school and local shops.

In addition to the complementary mix of uses and the walkable neighbourhood structure, a Travel Plan will be developed to include a package of measures to increase travel by sustainable means including public transport.

### Figure 6.2 – Access and movement



## Figure 6.3 – Street hierarchy




Primary Route
(including potential public transport route)

Secondary route

Shared access / private drive

Key footpath / Cycle links

Potential future off-site footpath / cycle links

Public Right of Way (PRoW)

## Street hierarchy

The proposed relief road will form the primary circulation route within the development and will serve homes located along its length via shared private drives or semi-private service roads. In addition to the primary north-south spine, a west-east link from the proposed central market square area will be provided to the same design standard, to allow for further development to the east of the current proposals in the future. These two primary routes have been designed to encourage lower vehicular speed and have segregated space for pedestrian and cycle use. The primary routes are also designed to accommodate public transport access.

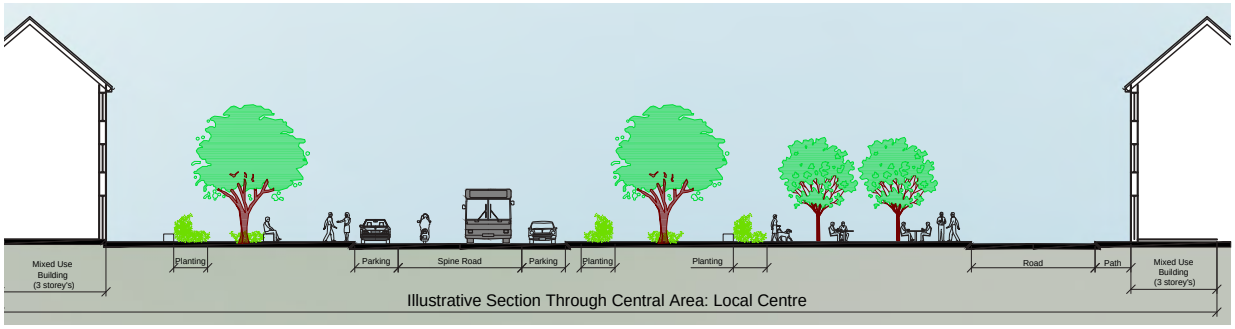
Secondary connecting streets including the retained alignment of Rushbrooke Lane have been designed as low speed vehicle routes and allow for some on-street parking and for shared use by cyclists, but with segregated pedestrian space.

Tertiary routes take the form of access lanes or shared private drives and are typically designed as 'no-through-routes' for vehicles. These have been designed as shared surface spaces to reduce vehicular speed and integrate pedestrian and cycle use.

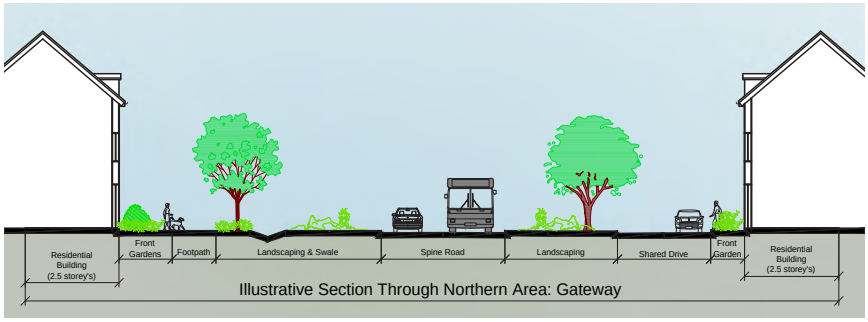
## Pedestrian and cycle movement

The proposed development maximises the opportunity to provide safe and overlooked new footpaths and green corridors within the site that connect to the existing footpath and cycle networks as well as providing recreational opportunities through the creation of a range of walking, running and cycling routes throughout the site, including improved access to the River Lark corridor.

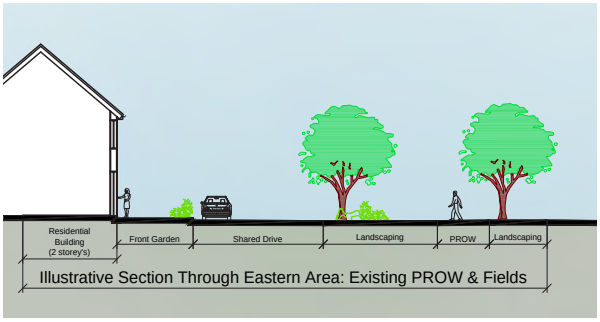
The existing network will be enhanced by new footpath and cycle links that will encourage walking to recreation opportunities for local residents and provide connections to the existing neighbouring communities and Bury St Edmunds town centre. Rushbrooke Lane will be retained through the development area to be utilised as a vehicular, pedestrian and cycle route as well as providing access to existing properties.




Illustrative section a-a: central area




Illustrative section b-b: northern area gateway




Illustrative section c-c: eastern boundary

## Public transport

Existing bus services run along Rougham Road and Sicklesmere Road providing connections to the town centre. The draft master plan allows for a bus to use the proposed relief road and includes space for bus stops and waiting facilities at the proposed market square. This could potentially be an extended existing service or a new route. Opportunities will also be explored for bus services to existing secondary schools and the proposed school at Moreton Hall.

## Site access

Two points of vehicular access into the site are proposed from the north and south of the site. From the north, the access road will connect onto the existing roundabout on Rougham Hill.

A new roundabout will be provided on Sicklesmere Road to the south. As well as providing access to the site, this will act as gateway into the southern approaches to the town, as well as providing traffic calming on Sicklesmere Road.


Northern area access arrangements


Central area access arrangements

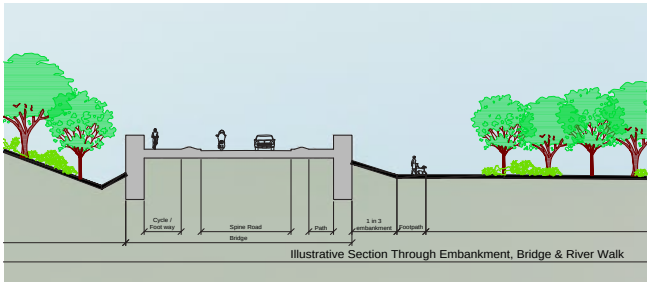
## River crossing

The proposed route of the relief road crosses the River Lark and its floodplain and an appropriate method of bridging this area will be identified through a detailed planning application. This provides a number of opportunities relating to a new river crossing in this location as well as some constraints due to the existing topography and built features.

There are opportunities to enhance the local environment with a sympathetically designed river crossing which complements the existing disused arch bridge as well as opening up the area for recreational use including the development of riverside paths.

Key considerations in designing the river crossing will include:

- The level of flooding with the need for the road to be higher than the flood waters.
- the proximity of the overhead lines north of the River Lark;
- A desire to provide a sensitive bridge design;
- Ecological and environmental requirements to maximise the span clearance of the river and ensure that there is no construction in the river itself and avoid inhibiting the flow of the river;
- ecological and environmental requirements to protect local habitats.




Illustrative section through spine road in river corridor area


Southern area access arrangements

## Off-site highway improvements

Although the emphasis of the master plan will be to provide a sustainable neighbourhood which promotes travel by sustainable means and discourages trips by car, there will also be a need to consider how the impact of additional car trips can be accommodated on surrounding roads. Work undertaken in support of Bury Vision 2031 identified number of junctions that may require improvement to facilitate proposed development on a number of sites around Bury St Edmunds, including South-east Bury St Edmunds.

These include the following which will be considered through further analysis in support of a planning application to alleviate traffic congestion:

- A134 Rougham Road/Rougham Hill Roundabout junction;
- A14 Junction 44;
- Southgate Green Junction; and
- Cullum Road/Nowton Road.

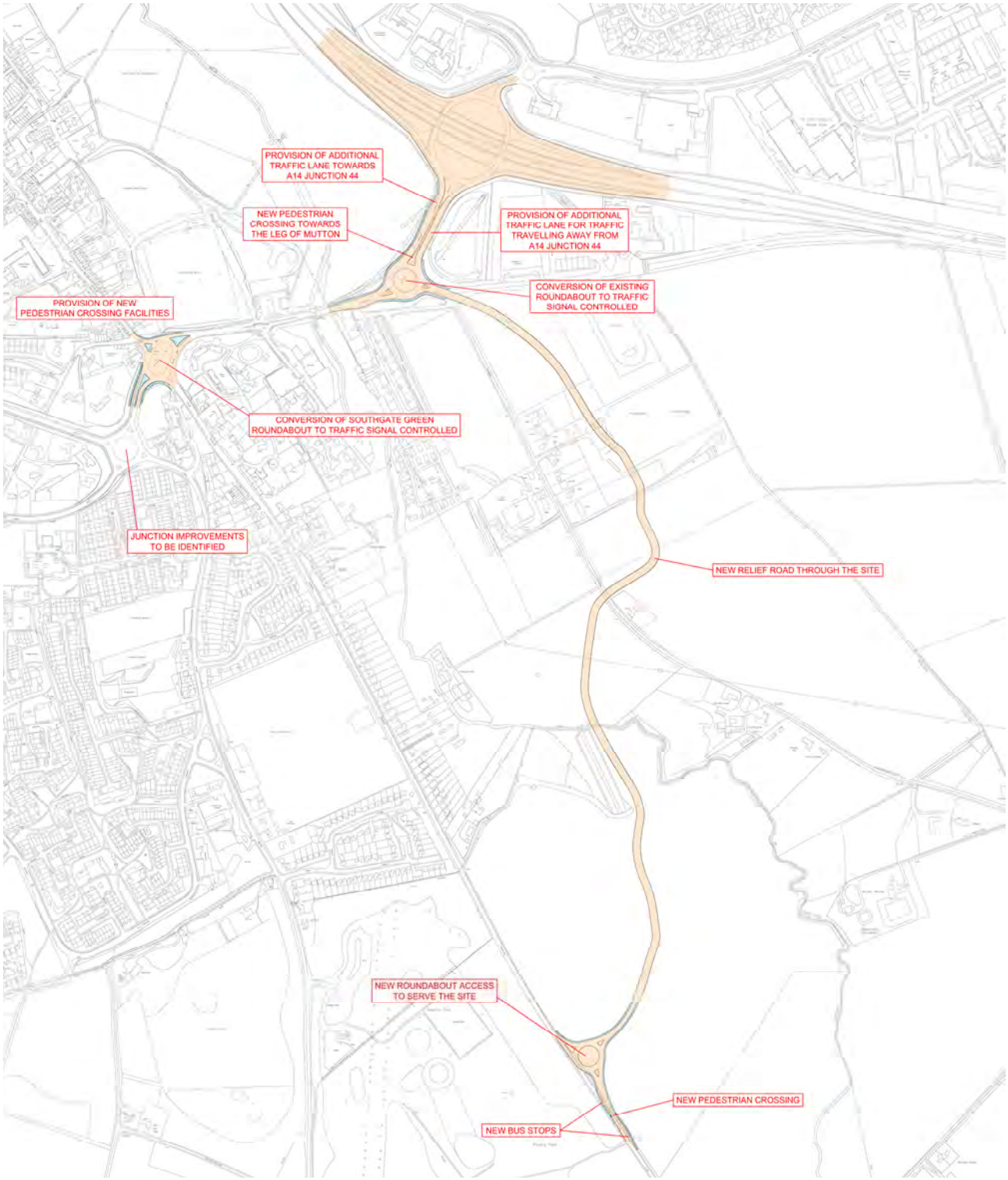





**Figure 6.4 – Highway improvements overview**

## Figure 7.1 – Open space masterplan

# Section 7
# Landscape, open space and ecology

**This section outlines the landscape and ecology strategy for the site, describing the multi-layered elements that make up the proposed green infrastructure network and how they interact.**

## Landscape Design Approach

Existing landscape features have been a guiding factor in the development of the landscape strategy, which aims to build connections with the surrounding context by combining the existing landscape assets with formal and informal open spaces throughout the site.

The river corridor creates a natural linking feature within the site. The landscape strategy enhances this link with a connected network of riverside footpaths and cycleways that link the site to the surrounding context. The habitat associated with the river and surrounding wildlife corridors is protected and enhanced by incorporating buffer areas for otters and wooded corridors for bats.

Throughout the site, the landscape strategy aims to combine Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), allotments, ecological enhancements, formal green spaces, new connections, sports facilities and play areas to offer existing and new residents access to an extensive variety of multi-functional open space.

The southern half of the site lies within the locally designated Special Landscape Area, within which the landscape strategy has a specific garden suburb character with tree-lined avenues, green verges and larger front gardens. This green character helps to further link the development with the neighbouring Nowton Park.

The transition to the surrounding landscape along the boundaries of the site has been designed to connect to the natural character of the area. Wide woodland shelterbelts with hedgerow planting help soften these edges and create space for footpaths, SuDS elements, ecological enhancements and play areas.

## Open Space Strategy

24 hectares of public open space is to be provided, which has been designed to enhance the environment throughout the site. The open space design responds to different site conditions and different requirements depending on the type of space.

**River Lark Corridor**

The river corridor creates a focal ecological feature and acts as a backbone to the open space within the landscape. Biodiverse woodland, wetland and meadow habitats line the edge of the river and the open space network in this area has been designed to provide both improved access and enhanced nature conservation.

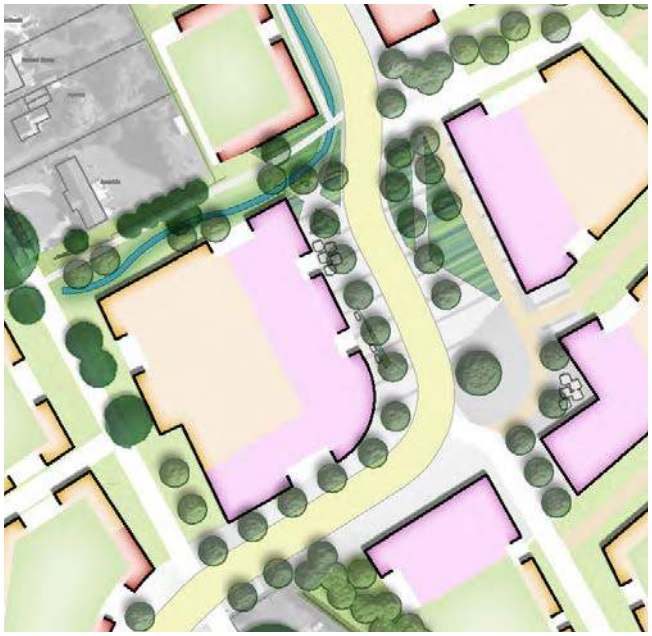
**Community Hub Corridor**

The route of the existing overhead powerline and it's associated easement area creates an opportunity to create varying landscape characters within a defined corridor. The Framework Plan shows formal areas of amenity grass and ornamental planting in this corridor, creating colour, texture and scent to contrast with the softer ecological river corridor. Cellular spaces are provided to break up the linearity of the pylons and to create links across the space to tie-in areas of development either side of the corridor.

### Green corridors and local greens

From these two main features stem a network of green corridors linking through the site to the surrounding context. The corridors create space for structural planting, sustainable rainwater drainage features, play areas and ecological enhancements. Complementing the green corridors are a series of local greens throughout the built development areas offering formal outdoor spaces that incorporate avenue trees, ornamental planting and play areas.

### Market Square



The local centre of the development is located in the northern half of the site and features a market square with high quality hard landscaping, structural planting, street furniture, public art and spaces for retail and market use.

### Other Key Spaces

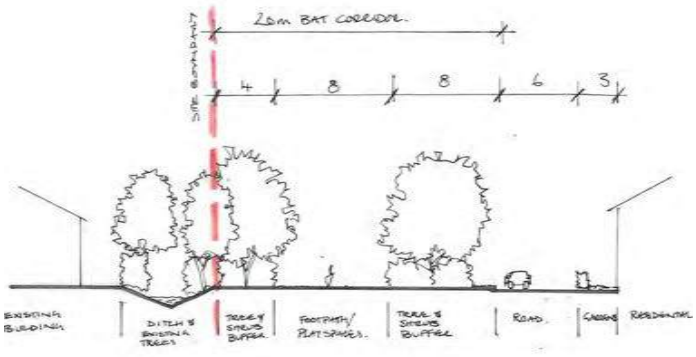
A destination play space combined with sports facilities is located at the heart of the site.

An area has been identified for the provision of new allotments, in close proximity to the established existing allotments to the east of Sicklesmere Road.

Linking all these features together is a network of connected footpaths and cycleways that also make use of the disused railway embankment to improve the connections between the northern and southern parts of the site.

## Ecology

The master plan has responded to the key ecological considerations and mitigation measures have been included to protect key species and habitats. Notably, the master plan facilitates the retention of a darkened corridor along the river and enhance commuting corridors for bats along the river and around the site. Significant opportunities exist to enhance the biodiversity value of the site through the creation of new wetland areas created as part of the sustainable drainage strategy. New landscaping and planting will also provide opportunities to enhance the bio-diversity offer of the site when compared to its current agricultural use.




Indicative sketch section illustrating potential design of proposed dark corridor

## Example images of formal and informal play areas

# Section 8 Sustainability

**Hopkins Homes and Pigeon are committed to sustainable development as environmentally and socially responsible developers. As demonstrated throughout this master plan document, proposals for land at Abbots Vale reflect the three pillars of sustainable development as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework - addressing economic, social and environmental sustainability. This section outlines how sustainability has been taken into account in developing the master plan framework and how future proposals will further develop this approach.**

## Economic sustainability

**Employment:** although the development will be residential led, new employment opportunities are likely to be created through the master plan area. The local centre, which could hold a mix of retail units, health services, and small scale employment/office space will provide employment opportunities. Further employment opportunities will be created through the provision of the primary school. Employment opportunities will also be provided at the construction stage including opportunities for suppliers of good and services to the construction industry.

## Social sustainability

**A healthy community:** the new neighbourhood will be a safe, attractive and sustainable place to live and will provide a range of benefits for existing and future residents. A quality open space framework will retain features of landscape and ecological value, and provide a green network linking the new neighbourhood with existing development, Nowton Park and to the wider open countryside south of the town. The master plan will deliver a substantial area of new public new open space, and green infrastructure along the River Lark corridor. The green network will both encourage walking and cycling, and provide a good opportunity for people to interact in the community. Building upon the area's existing assets, the green network will provide character, an attractive environment and amenity and recreational space, whilst also supporting biodiversity.

**High quality design:** achieving high quality in urban design will help provide an environment that is enjoyable to live in. This recognises that it is not just the design of individual buildings which is important, but the wider aspects too, i.e. the relationship of buildings to each other, to the area around the streets, and to the open spaces that make up the built environment. The design and layout of the scheme and the ultimate development proposals for the master plan area will be governed by over-arching design principles, reflecting aspirations for high quality development and best practice guidelines.

## Environmental Sustainability

**Climate change:** the scheme will be designed to be resilient to the future impacts of climate change – hotter, drier summers and wetter, milder winters – through the provision of extensive green infrastructure to provide natural cooling, shading and surface water drainage. A Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) will be employed to manage surface water drainage on and off-site and this has been factored into the framework plan as a positive integral feature.

**Energy efficiency:** reducing energy use and maximising energy efficiency are key considerations in response to ever increasing household energy bills and the need to help cut $CO_2$ emissions. New homes and buildings will align with high energy efficiency standards (enshrined in building regulations). Opportunities for on-site renewable and low carbon technologies will be explored at the detailed design stage.

**Sustainable Transport:** the neighbourhood has been planned to provide day-to-day facilities and public open spaces within a short walk of all homes. This approach, along with providing safe and attractive streets, aims to encourage walking and cycling for local journeys and thereby cut down on use of the private car. The new neighbourhood will be sustainable in all aspects of transport. The site is well placed for access to public transport corridors. Opportunities will be explored to enhance existing local bus services.

**Resource efficiency and waste reduction measures:** at construction stage, developers will give consideration to current sustainable construction practices, such as modern methods of construction and use of recycled content in building materials. At detailed design stage a range of measures will be considered, including provision of sufficient space for bins and recycling boxes and home composting.

# Section 9 Implementation

## This section outlines the proposed approach to bringing forward the development of a sustainable new community at Abbots Vale.

It is anticipated that an outline planning application will be submitted in 2015. It is envisaged that the development will commence in mid-2016, with completion mid-2026, a build period of around 10 years. This is based on the construction and sale of around 125 homes per year, but this rate could change subject to local housing market conditions.

Given the scale of development that is proposed it will be delivered in a number of phases. The site will be divided into two key areas. The ordering of these areas and sub-phases within these areas will be determined through additional technical work, particularly around highway requirements.

In determining the phasing, consideration will also be given to the level and timing of future infrastructure provision particularly from the point of view of delivering the enabling development needed to fund this. Trigger points for the delivery of the strategic infrastructure needed to create a fully sustainable and integrated neighbourhood will be agreed with St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

Initial assessments have been undertaken which indicate that some development could be delivered without the need for significant improvement to surrounding roads and without the provision of the relief road. Development will inevitably start at the northern or southern ends of the site at the proposed points of access. It is anticipated that the relief road will be developed incrementally through each sub-phase of development. The link of the relief road would not be provided until the need is triggered for transport improvements to facilitate further phases of development.

The primary school will not be provided too early in the build period to ensure that places are not taken up by pupils living beyond the new the neighbourhood, thereby safeguarding capacity for pupils arising from later phases of development. Other community facilities will be delivered at trigger points to be agreed with St Edmundsbury Borough Council.


amec
foster
wheeler