



ABBOTS VALE

South East Bury St Edmunds

Design and Access Statement

December 2015



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HOMES



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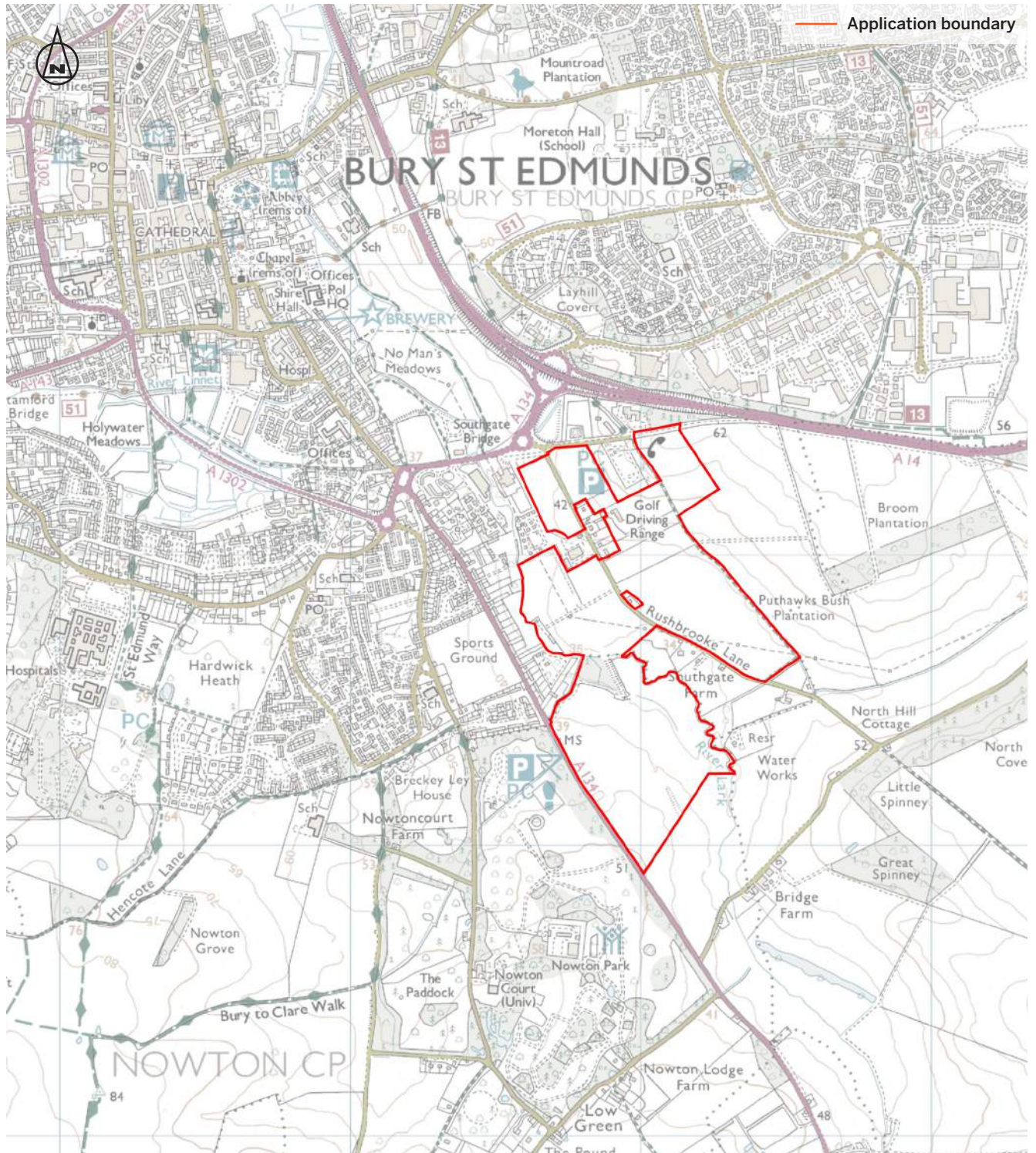
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1 Introduction



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Purpose and Scope of Statement

This Design and Access Statement (DAS), which has been prepared by Amec Foster Wheeler on behalf of Hopkins Homes and Pigeon is submitted in support of the outline planning application for up to 1,250 new homes with supporting infrastructure, community uses and other public amenities in the south-east of Bury St Edmunds. The application area is approximately 68.6 ha.

The Statement explains what has influenced the development proposals for the site and how the proposed approach to design and access has evolved through consultation and community engagement. The Statement defines the key parameters of the proposed development in terms of the proposed layout, land uses, heights and densities, illustrates how the scheme might look once constructed and explains how access will be provided.

The overall approach to design and access outlined in the Statement will be used to inform the subsequent Reserved Matters ('detailed') planning applications for the site.

This Statement has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of:

- ▶ Article 4 of The Town and Country (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment) Order 2013;
- ▶ Article 4C of The Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (as amended); and
- ▶ Articles 62 (5) and 327A of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The structure and content of this DAS also accords with 'Guidance on Information Requirements and Validation' published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (March 2010) and guidance from the Commission on Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) 'Design and Access Statements: How to write, read and use them' (reprinted 2007).

This Statement should be read alongside the contents of the outline planning application pack.

Structure of this Statement

The DAS is structured as follows:

Section 1 - Introduction

This section outlines the Statement's purpose, scope and structure.

Section 2 - Vision

This section sets out the applicants' overarching vision for the future development of land south-east of Bury St Edmunds.

Section 3 - Context and Site Appraisal

This section provides a description of the Site, its history and current character, and appraises the Site in terms of its physical, social, economic and planning policy context. The section concludes with a summary of the key design and access constraints and opportunities.

Section 4 - Involvement and Design Development

This section outlines the stakeholder and community consultation that has been undertaken in advance of, and as part of, the planning application process.

Section 5 - Masterplan and Development Description

This section sets out the design proposals for the development in the form of an indicative masterplan that is underpinned by 'parameter plans'.

Section 6 - A Sustainable Neighbourhood

This section provides an overview of the key sustainability considerations that underpin the indicative masterplan.

Section 7 - Phasing and Implementation

This section outlines the proposed phasing of the development.

2 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.

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

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. Abbots Vale 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.



Watercolour Image 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 opportunities to increase biodiversity and provides new homes that minimise energy use.



3 Context and Site Appraisal

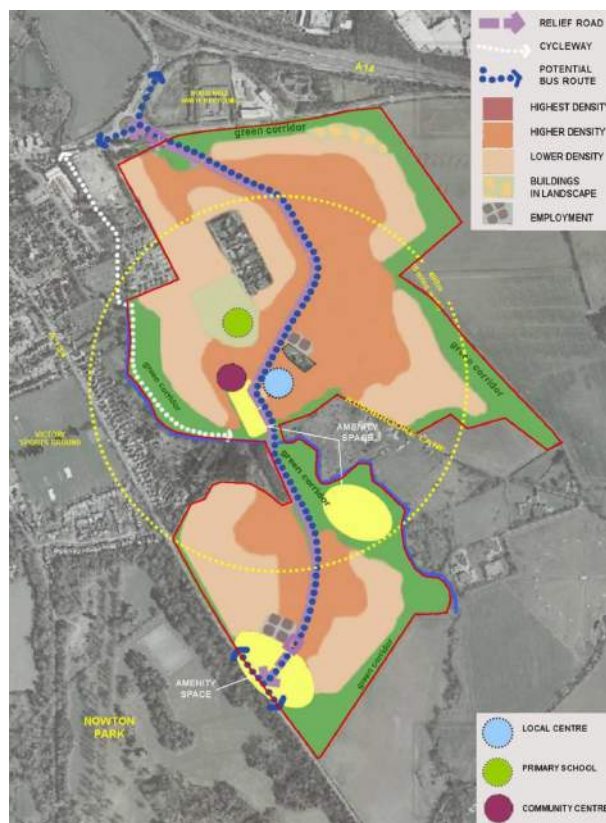
The design and planning team has worked with a wide range of environmental and technical experts to carry out a full appraisal of the site to help determine the best way to respond to the constraints and opportunities to development to meet the objectives and requirements defined in Section 2. This section provides a description of the Application Site and its surroundings in terms of its physical, social, economic, historic and character context. The section concludes with a summary of the key factors that have been considered in developing the indicative masterplan for the proposed development at Abbots Vale.

Planning policy context

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.

The strategic growth location at the South-east of Bury St Edmunds is one of five identified locations for growth (Figure 3.1) 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 a number of strategic sites including South-east Bury St Edmunds was further explored in the adopted Development Plan Document (DPD) Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031. This included a Concept Statement for South-east Bury St Edmunds that set out the policy aspirations to be delivered. These were fully addressed in the South-east Bury St Edmunds Final Master Plan prepared in 2015 by the applicant and now also adopted. The outline planning application is based on the adopted Final Master Plan and this Design Access Statement demonstrates how the proposed development responds to policy and delivers the objectives for the application site in the previous section.

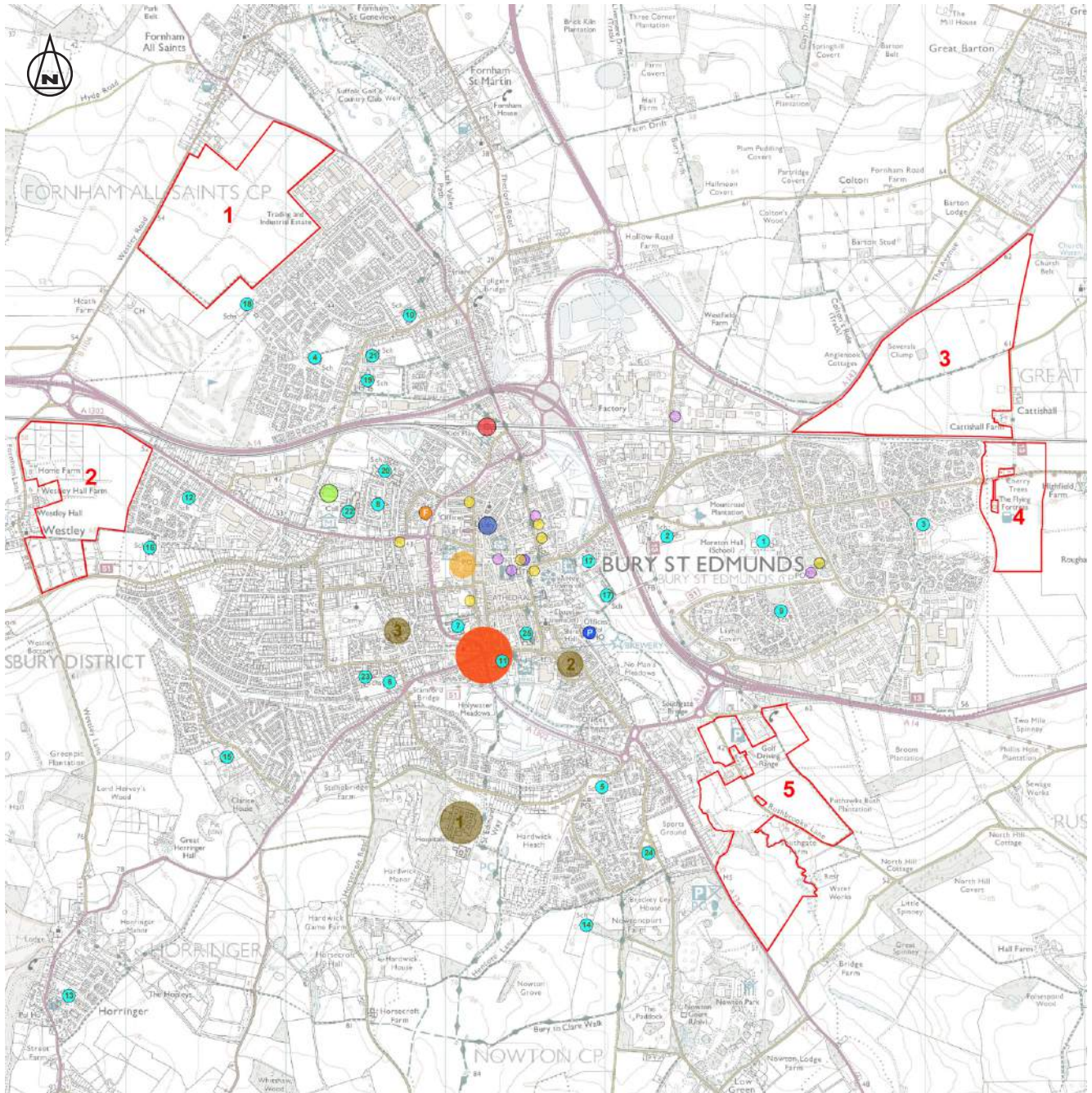


Original concept plan from South-east Bury Concept Statement - Vision 2031

The following list summarises the key policy requirements for the site that are set out in the Vision 2031 document and met by the proposed development:

- ▶ Positively uses the framework for new development provided by the existing natural environment and character of the area;
- ▶ Helps to reduce 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;
- ▶ 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, located to achieve positive integration with the wider area; and
- ▶ Delivers up to 1,250 homes of mixed tenure and size, including affordable homes.

Figure 3.1 – Overview of site and surrounding context



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1	Strategic sites:	P	Police station	●	Railway station
1	North-west Bury St Edmunds	F	Fire station	●	Library
2	West Bury St Edmunds	H	Hospital:	●	Health centre
3	North-east Bury St Edmunds	1	West Suffolk Hospital	●	Doctor's surgery
4	Moreton Hall	2	Bury St Edmunds Hospital	●	Dentist
5	South-east Bury St Edmunds	3	Child Development Centre	●	Schools
■	Town centre	●	Leisure centre		
■	Shopping centre				

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 application area. The lower half of Rushbrooke Lane is more rural in character and serves a number of detached properties and landholdings that are also not included in the master plan area.

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 proposed development.

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.

There are some small blocks of woodland and scrub within the site. These have potential to be incorporated within the green infrastructure network for the proposed development.



River Lark



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



Nowton Park



Upper part of Rushbrooke Lane



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

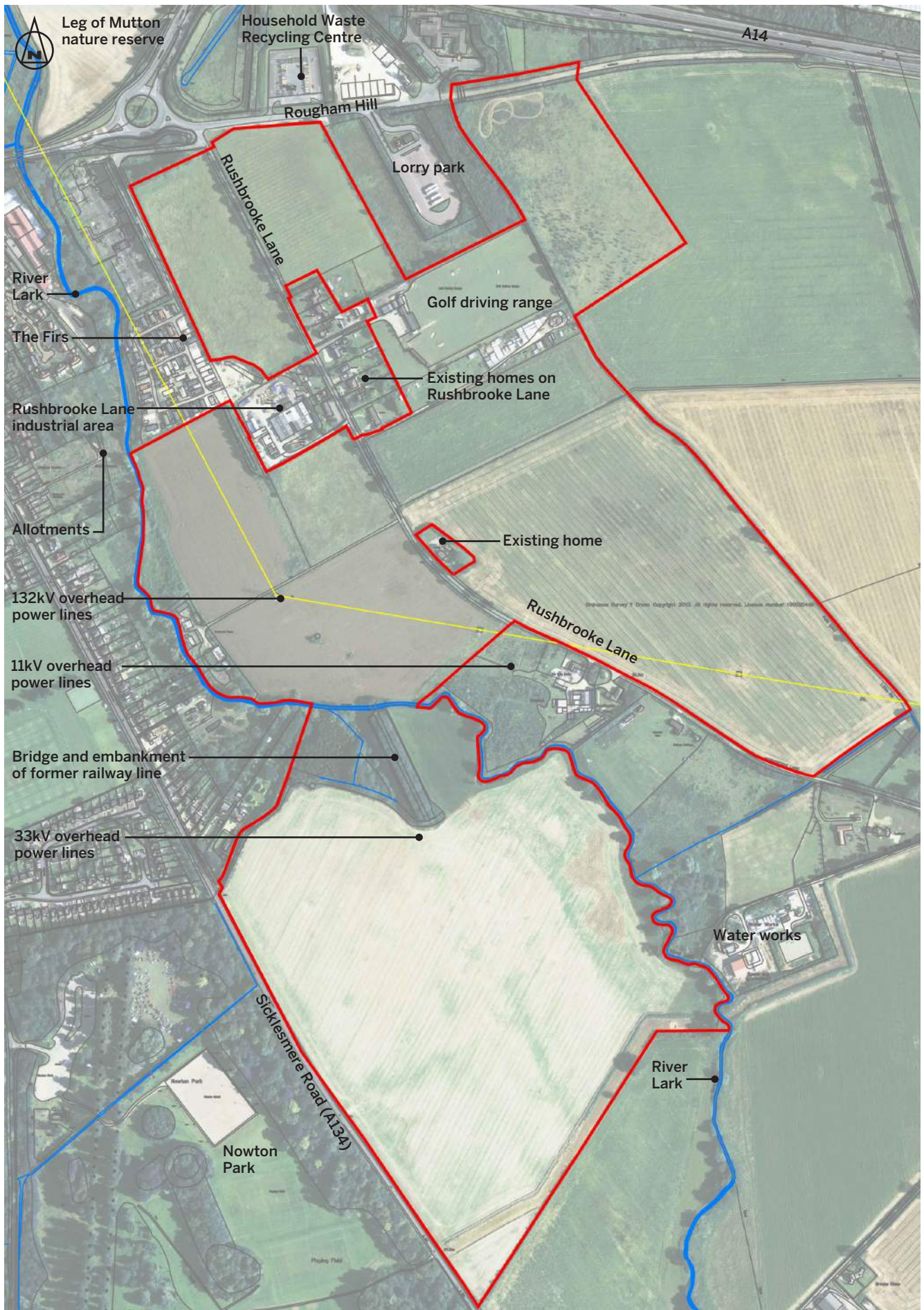


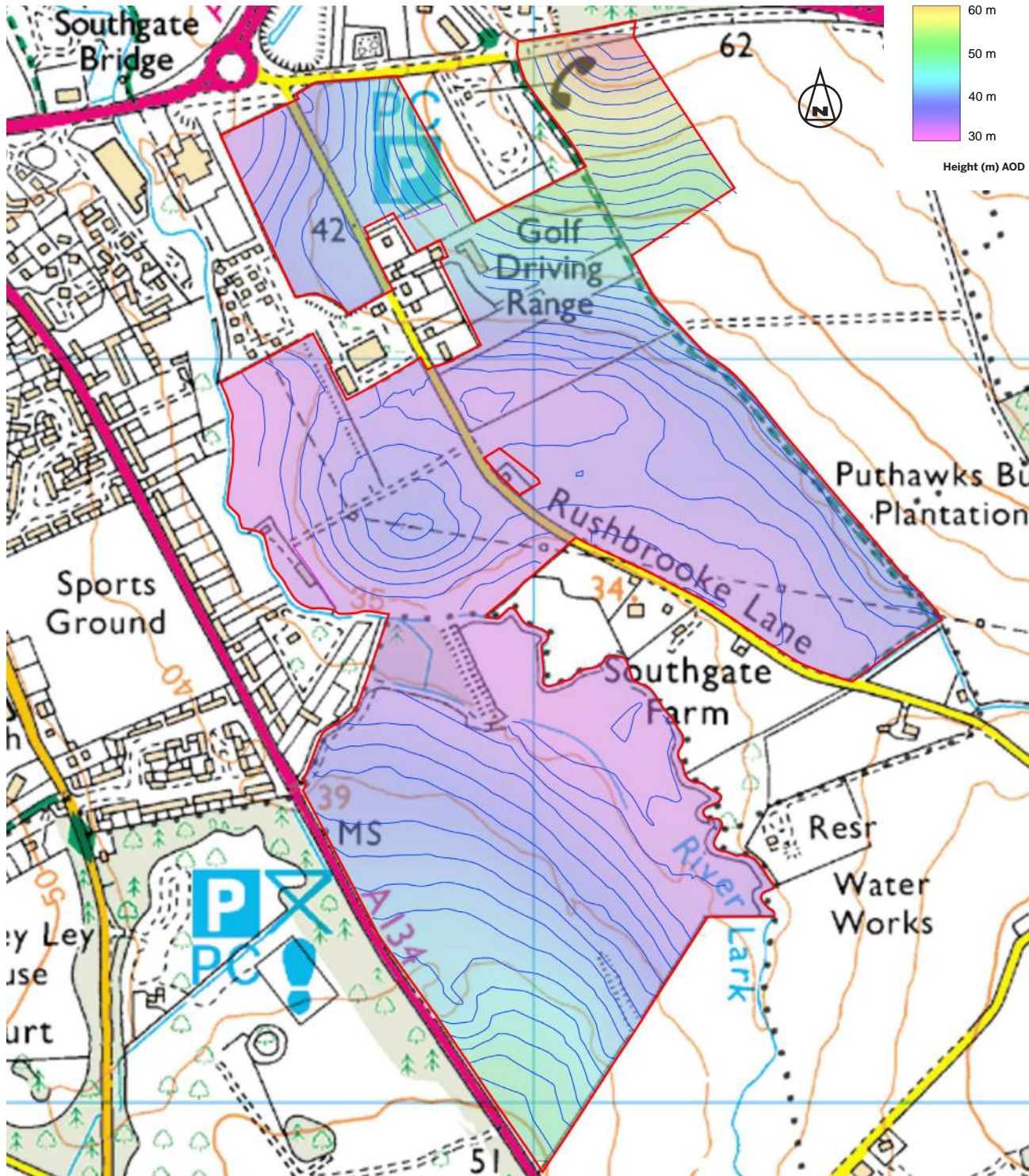
Figure 3.2 – Aerial photograph

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 3.3 – Topography



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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. 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 application 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 design of the proposed 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, badgers, dormice and breeding birds. The survey results found evidence of bats, otters and a limited number of reptiles utilising the site or adjacent land.

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. The foraging route for bats can be created 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.



Former railway line embankment



Community woodland adjacent to lorry park



Hedgerows alongside upper part of Rushbrooke Lane



Hedgerow adjacent to public footpath on eastern boundary of the site



River Lark corridor

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 layout of the proposed development has been informed by a detailed understanding of the flood risk implications. Modelling of the River Lark and its tributary which run through the application 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 proposed development will include appropriate sustainable urban drainage techniques to restrict run off rates.

A drainage strategy is submitted with the outline planning application that demonstrates 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.

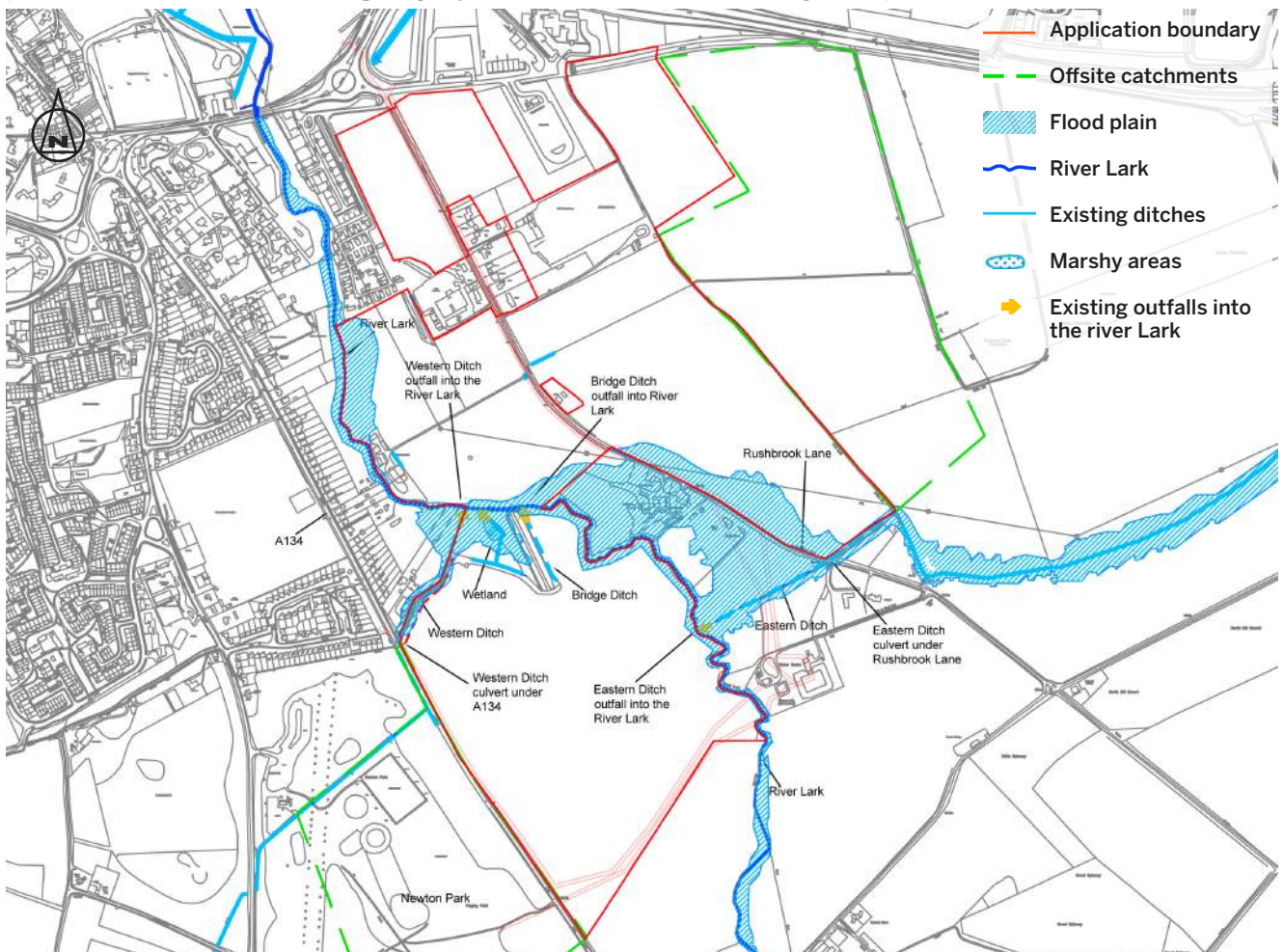


River Lark tributary near former railway bridge



Drainage ditch adjacent to public footpath east of Rushbrooke Lane

Figure 3.4 – Overview of flood risk
(Based on the Environment Agency Updated Flood Risk model May 2015)



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Access and transport

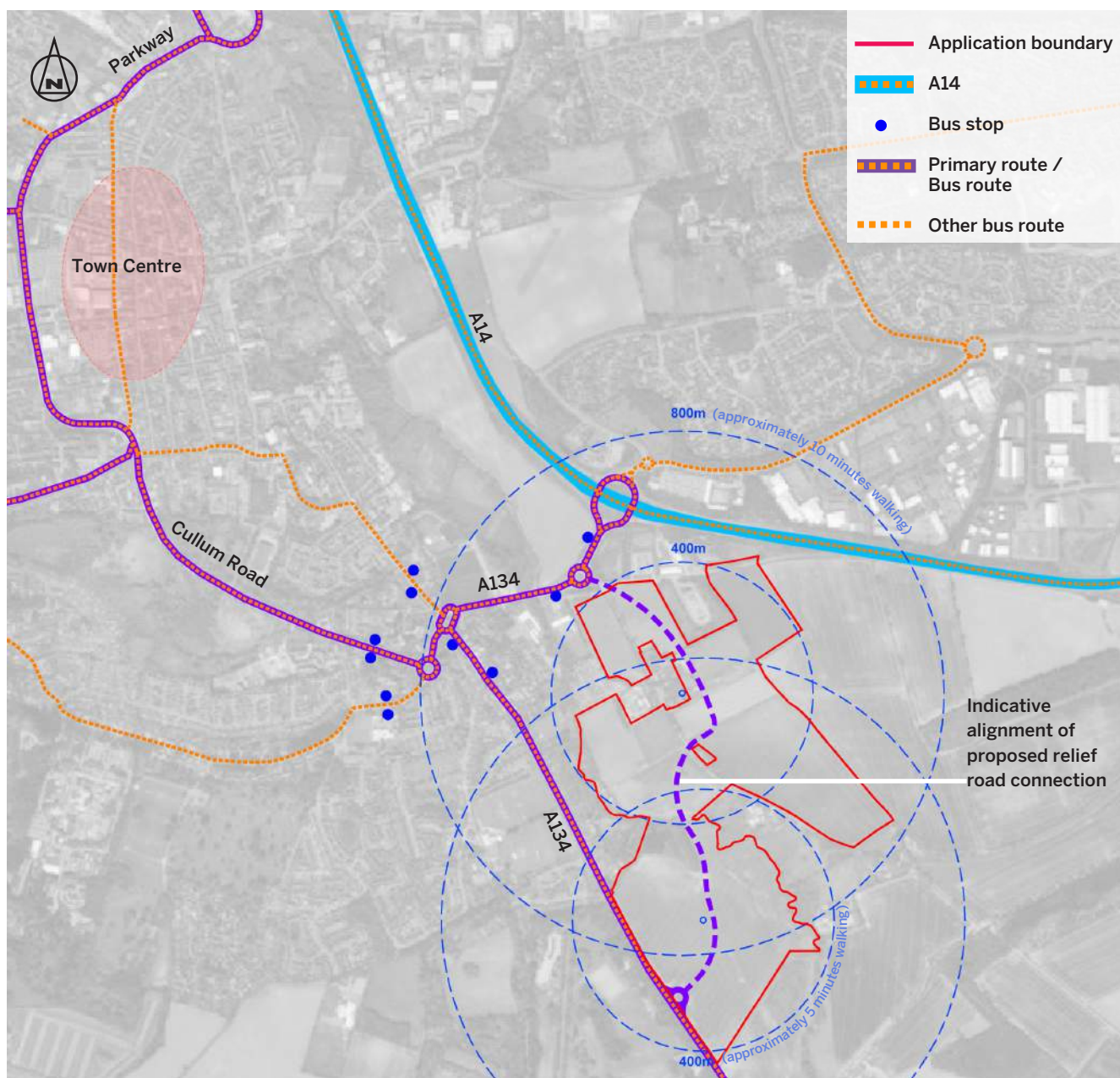
The site has good access to the wider road network. The south-western boundary is located adjacent to the A134 Sicklesmere Road. Rougham Hill (an unclassified highway) runs along the northern site boundary and connects to A134 Rougham Road via an existing three arm roundabout. Approximately 50m to the 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 proposals. This has highlighted the need for additional improvements to the local road network and 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 3.5 – Access



Overhead power lines

A number of overhead power lines run through the site and 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 power lines (11kV and 33kV) are proposed to be removed, considerably reducing the extent of overhead power lines across the site.

The larger 132kV power line 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 132 kV overhead power line benefits from having been sensitively located within the site. As a result, the land occupied by the 132 kV overhead power line is in most part within lower-lying flood risk areas. Consequently, in most areas of the site the pylons and 132 kV overhead power line are away from areas that are suitable for development. Where the 132 kV overhead power line passes 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 powerlines



Typical distant view of 132kV overhead powerline looking west



View south where 132kV overhead powerline crosses Rushbrooke Lane

Noise and vibration

Noise monitoring has been undertaken to assess the potential noise sources which could impact on the proposed 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. The assessment has also considered the impacts of the approved waste transfer station on the north side of Rougham Hill.

These noise sources have been given consideration in the design of the proposed development 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 as part of subsequent Reserved Matters applications. 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. Some small historic areas of land fill have been identified around the site. Subject to agreeing a suitable mitigation strategy there is limited likelihood that these will be a constraint to development.



The lorry park south of Rougham Hill adjacent to the application site

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 particular potential for Prehistoric and 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. The surveys also showed cropmarks likely to relate to prehistoric barrows in a line on the northern side of the river valley.

Trial trenching carried out through consultation with the archaeologist at Suffolk County Council showed evidence of an Anglo-Saxon settlement spanning an area of c. 5ha on the south side of the river, and revealed the remains of several buildings. It also showed evidence for the prehistoric barrows, confirming the suggestions of the non-intrusive survey.

Further trenched investigation will be required as the development proposals progress to detailed design. Following further investigation, any mitigation that is required can be taken into account in the detailed design of the proposals. Where development impacts on sub-surface archaeology, further investigation in the form of detailed excavation will be required in advance of development.

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 has been 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

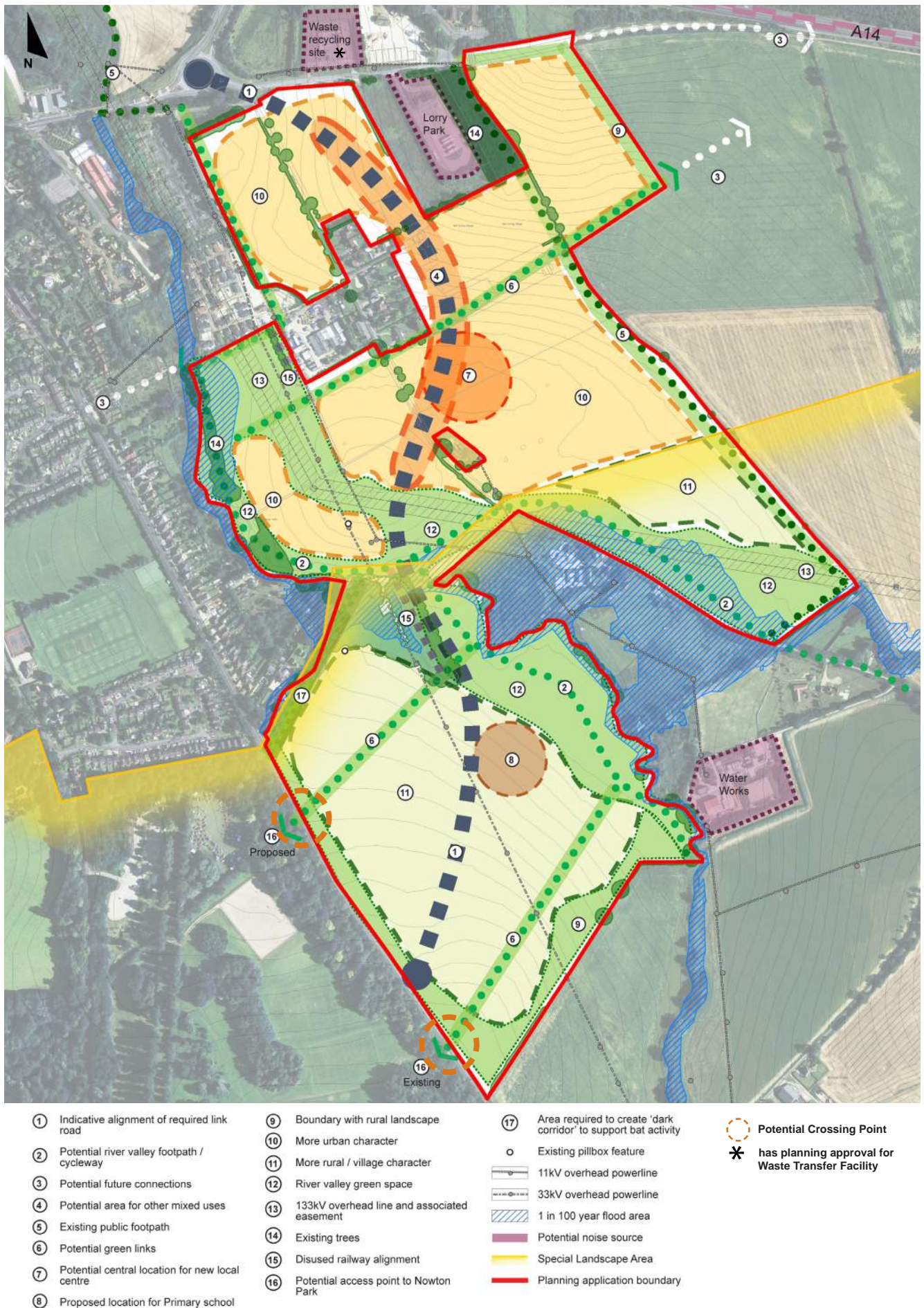


Former railway bridge over the River Lark



Former railway bridge buttresses at the southern end of the embankment

Figure 3.6 – Summary of development constraints and opportunities



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4 Involvement and design development



Figure 4.1 – Overview of central and northern area of the site looking towards the town centre

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 and the Prince's Foundation organised a number of public consultation sessions, including stakeholder workshops to support the development of a masterplan framework for the site through an Enquiry by Design process. From these events a consensus-based Concept Statement was produced including consideration of landscape and transport strategies. This was intended to provide a framework to guide more detailed proposals through preparation of a Master Plan Document.

In the process of preparing the Draft Master Plan Document further consultations were undertaken with the Town and Parish Councils.

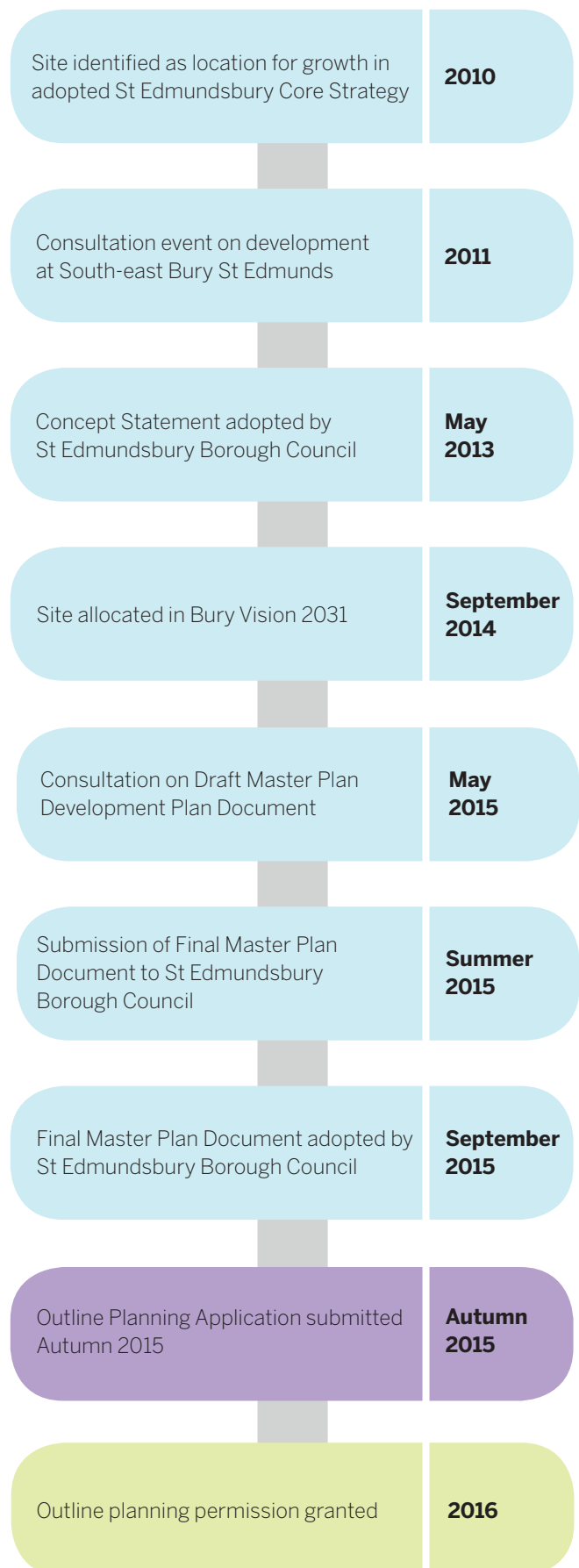
Following public consultation on the Draft Master Plan Document, the Final Master Plan Document addressed feedback that was received. The Final Master Plan Document has now been formally adopted by St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

This Design and Access Statement describes the proposed development and the indicative masterplan that has been prepared to support the Outline Planning Application. The design approach builds on the principles set out in the adopted Final Master Plan Document.



Images from Public Consultation Events held in 2011

Planning timeline



5 Description of Proposed Development and Indicative Masterplan

This section provides a description of the proposed development and indicative masterplan. The underlying design approach is described, highlighting how this responds to the Vision 2031 objectives, the Prince's Foundation Concept Statement and to the environmental and technical constraints and opportunities identified in section 3.

Overview of the Proposed Development

The underlying design approach to the site has evolved directly from the Vision 2031 concept plan. This proposed 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 proposals, 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. This layout is in accordance with the principles of 'designing out crime'. The streets, squares open spaces and green

links are overlooked by homes and the main entrances to homes are from the street. This helps to provide clear definition between the public realm to the front and private spaces to the rear of homes and provides a level of informal 'surveillance' over the public realm.

Abbots Vale will be developed in a range of different and varying characters, responding to different settings in different areas of the site, but overall the northern area, closer to the town centre will be more urban in character and the southern area closer to the rural edge will have a more 'garden-suburb' 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. Elsewhere where existing homes are near to the site their setting will be carefully considered in the proposed development.



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.

Figure 5.1 – Indicative masterplan



Every street including the central spine, will be designed in detail to create an attractive and safe environment. The indicative masterplan is designed 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 will be provided to the rear of homes. 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 indicative masterplan illustrates the general layout of the streets and where buildings will be located in relation to the street, but the detailed layout and 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 up to 1,250 homes. The proposed 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 infrastructure 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.



Pedestrian access to 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 as well as potential to upgrade existing footpaths.



Indicative approach to riverside corridor enhancement

- 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.

Land uses

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 applications 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 and will include homes built to Lifetime Homes standards. The indicative masterplan identifies a potential location for self-build homes.

Homes will be provided in a range of different 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 for new homes is approximately 41.2 ha.

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.



Example of Hopkins Homes development

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. Consideration will also be given to early years education provision.

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. There will be a variety of open space across the site including extensive areas of informal open space along the River Lark corridor, more formal pocket parks and green connecting corridors of various different types. The 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 5; Landscape, open space and ecology.

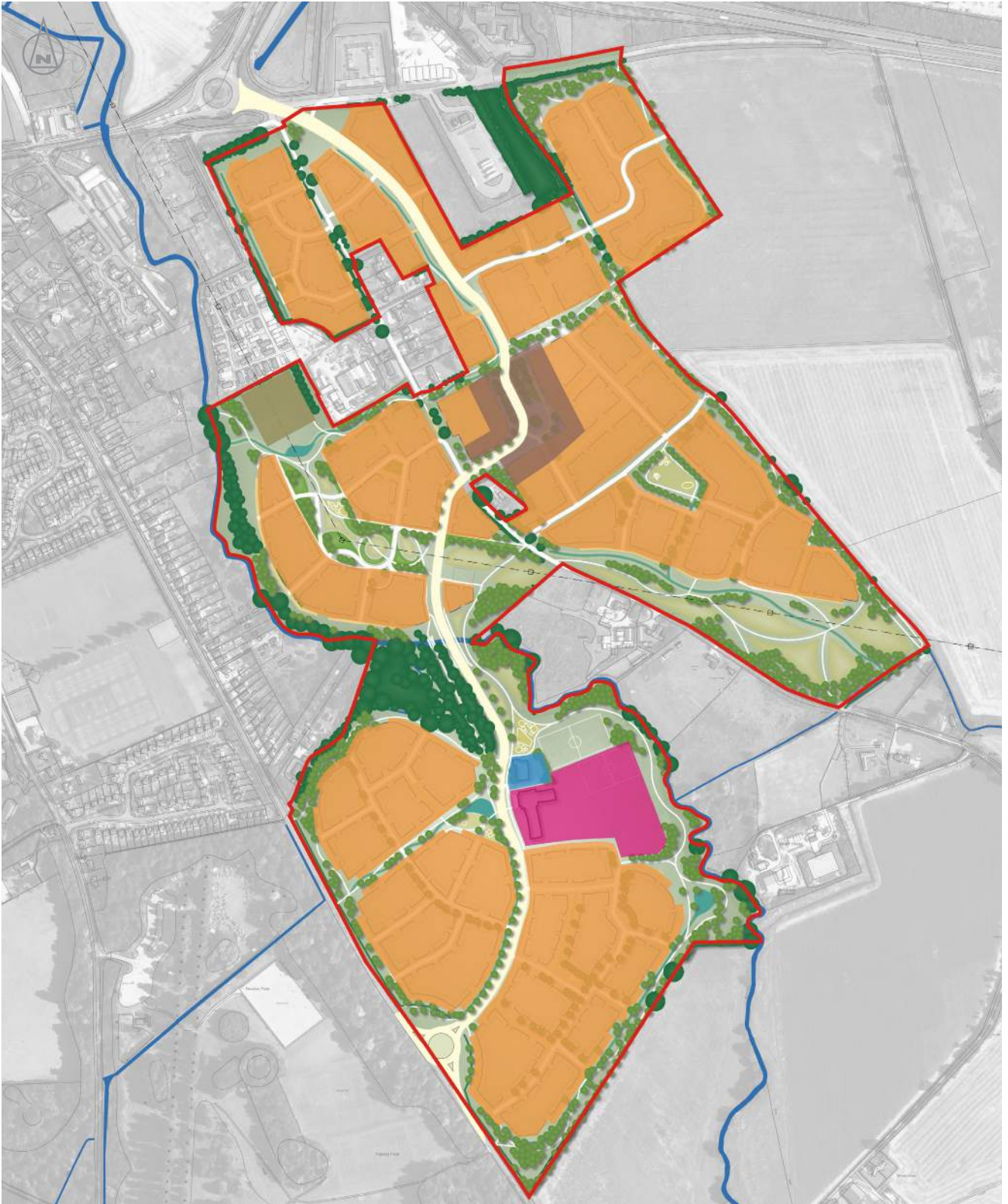
Employment

There will be new job opportunities in local shops and community facilities as well as within business premises proposed within the local centre in the central market square area.



Example of Community Hall

Figure 5.2 – Land use



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- | | |
|---|--|
| — Application boundary | — Proposed Community Use
(Total area: 0.21 ha) |
| — Proposed residential blocks
(Total area: 41.2 ha including local centre) | — Open Space (Total area 24 ha - see Section 8 for breakdown) |
| — Proposed mixed use local centre
(Total area: 1.6 ha) | — Proposed Allotments (0.56 ha) |
| — Proposed primary school (Total area: 2.0 ha) | |

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 5.3.

Figure 5.3 – Building heights



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Density range

The density of homes will vary across the site. Typically homes along the southern and eastern boundary will be 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 5.4.

Figure 5.4 – Density



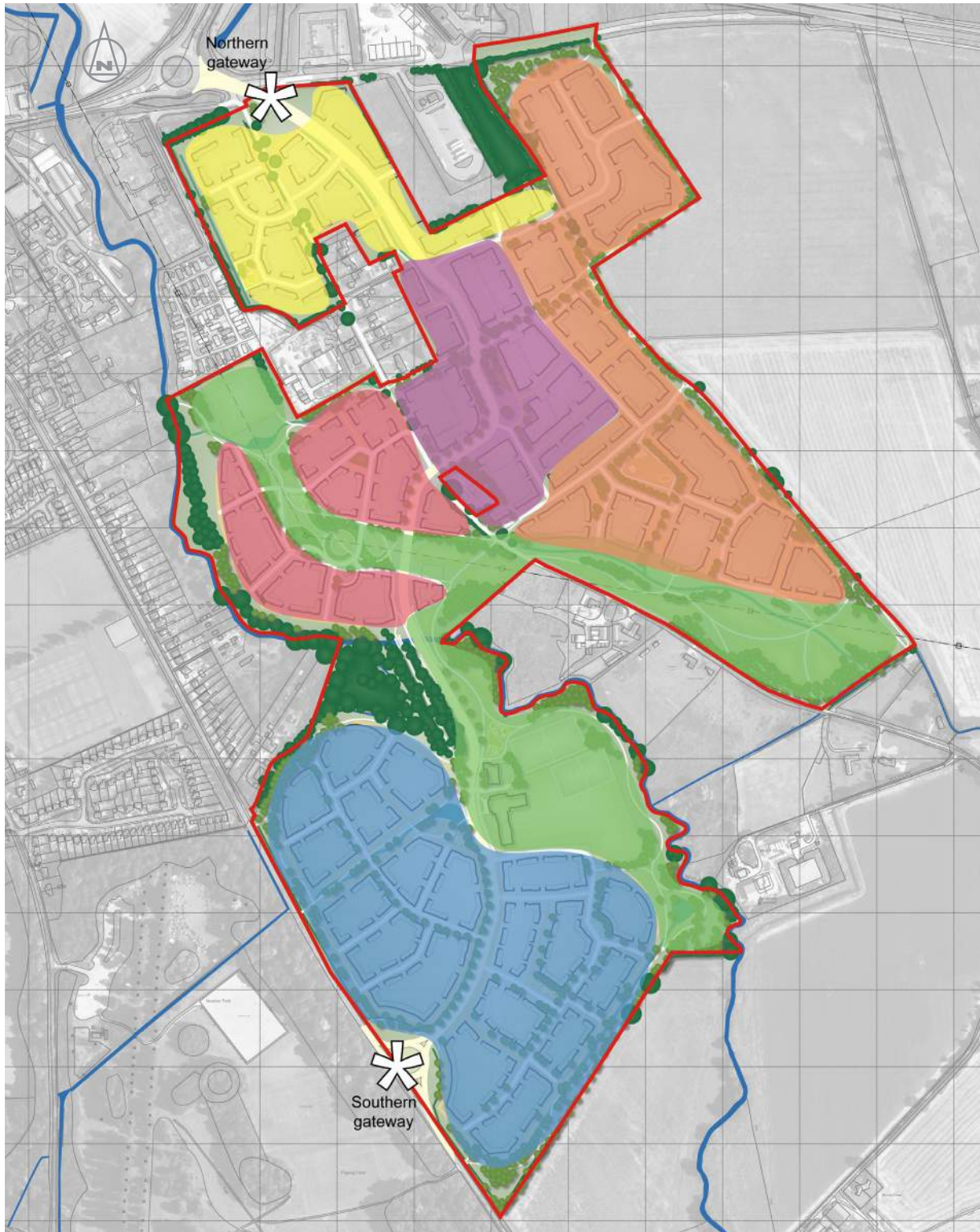
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Character areas

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. The six illustrated character areas are as follows:

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

Figure 5.5 – Character areas



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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.



Example of homes overlooking park

Southern Area – the southern gateway. This area has a garden-suburb character, providing a transition from rural to suburban, and responding to the character of Nowton Park. This area is adjacent to the community and green infrastructure hub and includes a village green. 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.



Example of homes forming gateway

West of Rushbrooke Lane. This is an 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.



Example of higher density homes

Central Area. This is a 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.



Example of mixed use local centre

Eastern Area. This is a 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.



Example of lower density homes

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. This area of higher density along the northern edge and spine road reflects the relative proximity to the town centre. The area to the west of Rushbrooke Lane will be of a lower density to complement the character and respect the setting of existing homes nearby.



Example of terraced homes



Key plan

Key character areas

The key plan identifies three key contrasting character areas, illustrated in further detail on the adjacent pages.

The **northern gateway** forms a focal area at the edge of the site closest to the town centre. Details reflect the importance of this gateway and re-inforce this as one of the more urban areas of the site. The quality of the gateway will help to create a strong sense of place that sets the tone for the whole of Abbots Vale.

The **market square** will form the heart of the site - providing a focal point both visually and in terms of access to local shops and services. The square will also feature materials and highway geometry that naturally slows down passing road users.

The **southern gateway** creates an arrival point from the south which will contrast with the northern gateway by virtue of being more rural in nature, reflecting it's location at the interface with the surrounding countryside.

Northern gateway

The image, example layout detail and indicative section below illustrate the possible character of the northern gateway area.



Example building frontage at northern gateway



Figure 5.6 – Northern gateway layout example



Northern gateway - indicative street section

Market square

The image, example layout detail and indicative section below illustrate the possible character of the market square area.



Example landscape detail and sense of enclosure in market square area

Southern gateway

The image, example layout detail and indicative section below illustrate the possible character of the southern gateway area.



Example building frontage and landscape treatment at southern gateway



Figure 5.7 – Market square layout example

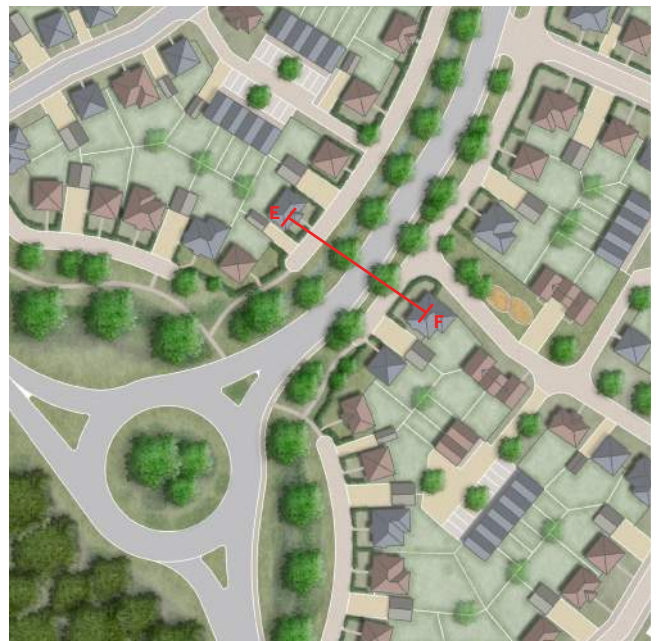


Figure 5.8 – Southern gateway layout example



Market square - indicative street section



Southern gateway - indicative street section

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 findings from the Prince's Foundation Enquiry by Design process was the concept of creating a livable street through the development along the primary access route. This is to ensure that whilst the route meets the functional requirement for a relief road linking Rougham Road to Sicklesmere Road it should primarily be an active and attractive street lined with homes, community and commercial uses, providing safe and convenient access within the new neighbourhood.

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 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 having entrances onto the street. The new development will help fund junction improvements on surrounding roads where required.

Figure 5.9 – Indicative character of proposed primary access road



Watercolour by James Hart Dyke

Sustainable transport

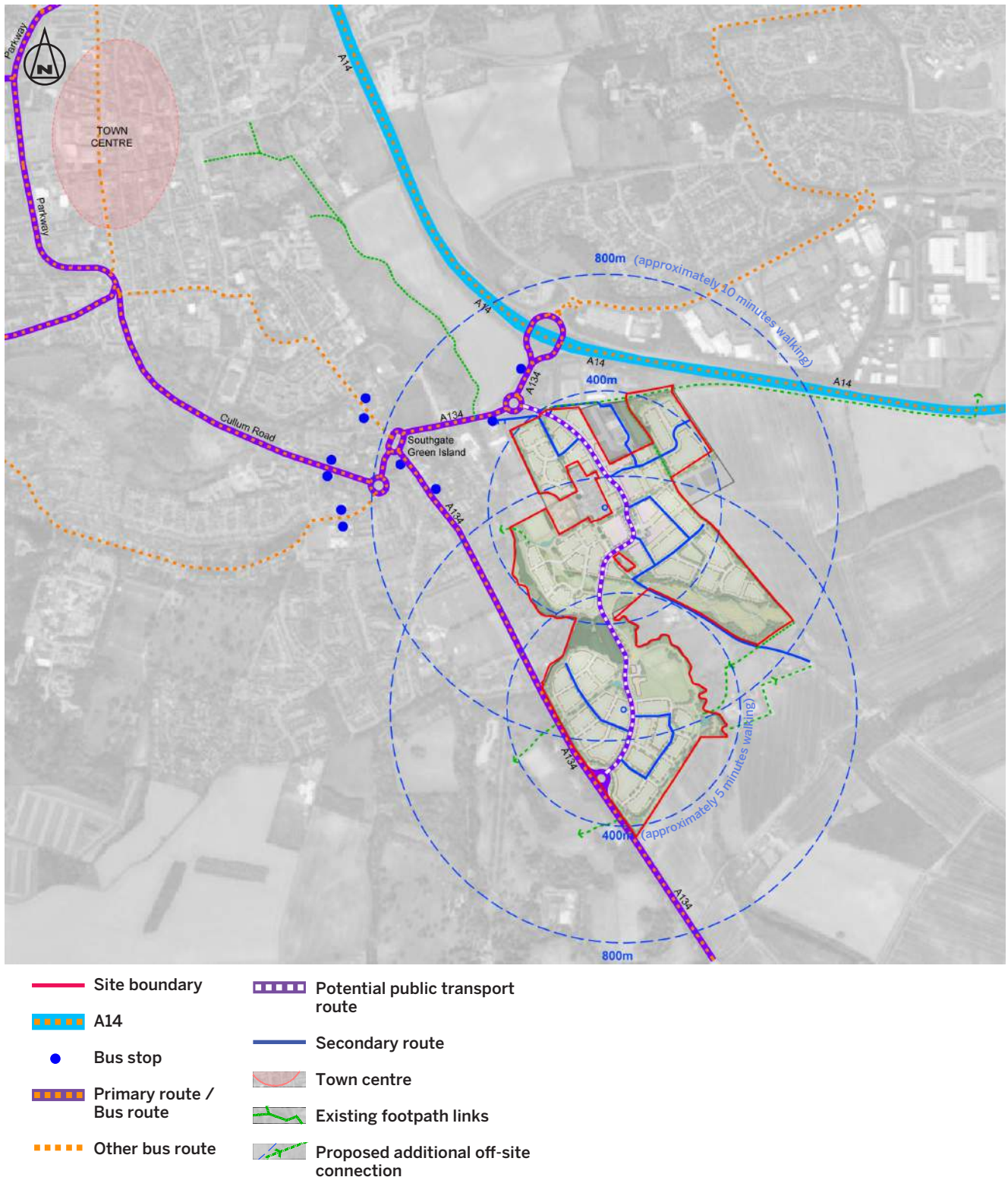
The development proposal for Abbots Vale has been designed as a walkable neighbourhood. This means that residents will generally be within close distance of local facilities, encouraging walking and cycling and reducing the need to travel by car.

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 5.10 – Access and movement



Street hierarchy

The proposed relief road will form the primary 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 provides a network of safe and overlooked new footpaths and green corridors within the site. This network also connects to existing footpaths and cycle routes. This combined network provides 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.

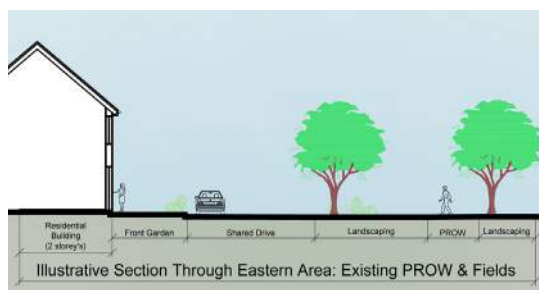
The existing footpath and cycle network will be enhanced by new links that will encourage walking and cycling to new recreational and community facilities on the site as well as to existing facilities in the surrounding area. Rushbrooke Lane will be retained through the development area to be utilised as through-route for pedestrians and cyclist as well as providing vehicle access to existing properties.



Illustrative section a-a: central area

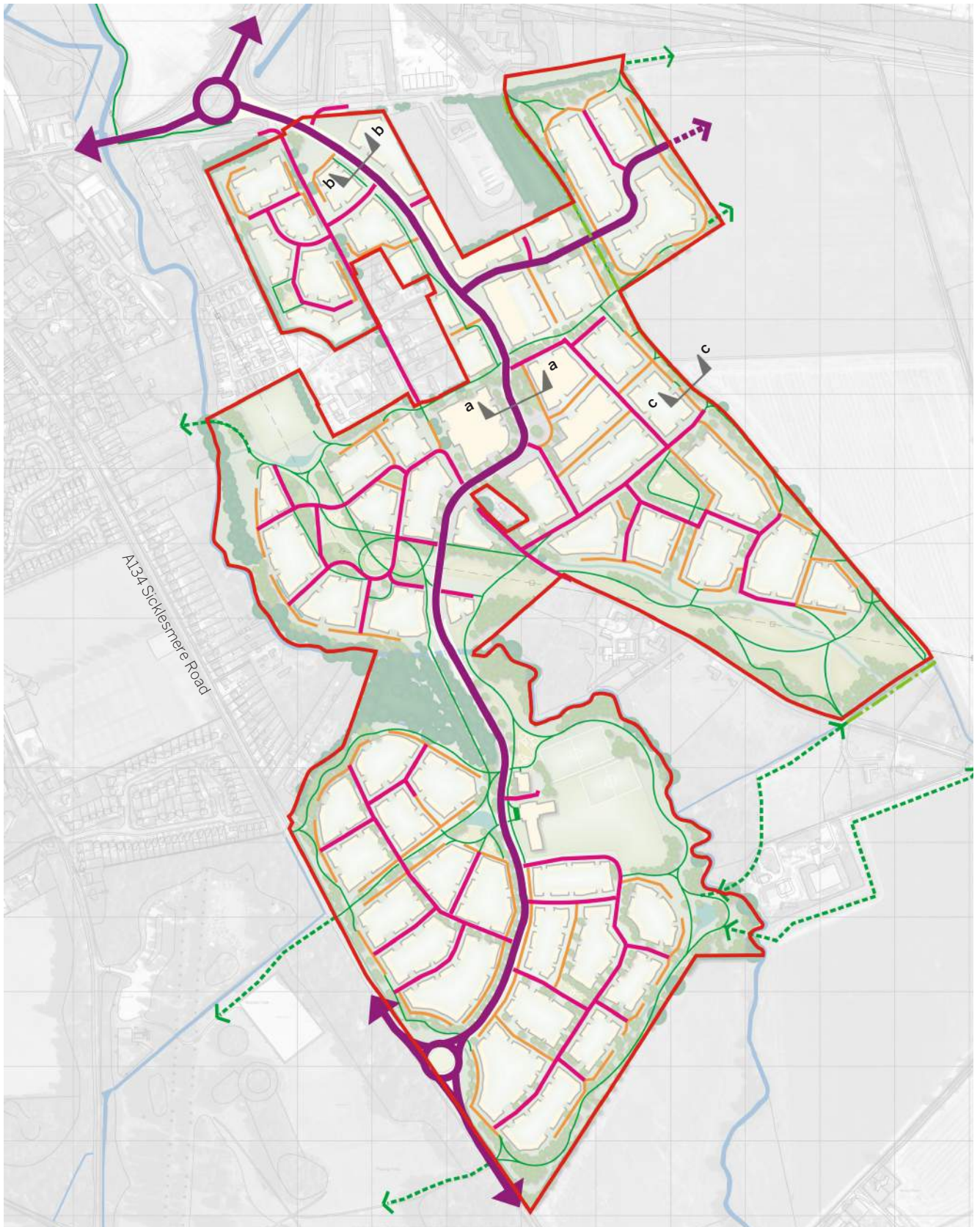


Illustrative section b-b: northern area gateway



Illustrative section c-c: eastern boundary (PROW = public right of way)

Figure 5.11 – 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)

Public transport

Existing bus services run along Rougham Road and Sicklesmere Road providing connections to the town centre. The masterplan layout 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 be explored for new bus services to secondary schools including the proposed secondary 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. Access to existing homes adjoining the site will be integrated within the proposed road network as indicated on the diagrams below:



Northern area access arrangements



Central area access arrangements

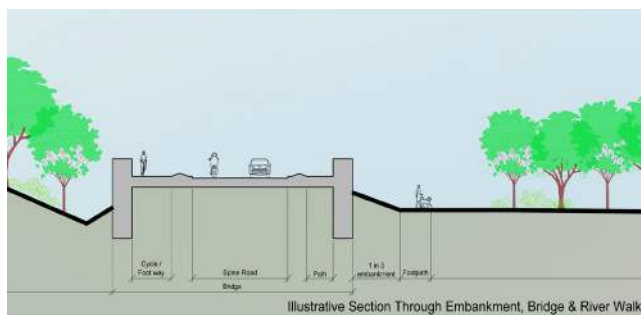
River crossing

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 subsequent 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 that would inhibit the flow of the river; and
- ▶ ecological and environmental requirements to protect local habitats.



Illustrative section through spine road in river corridor area



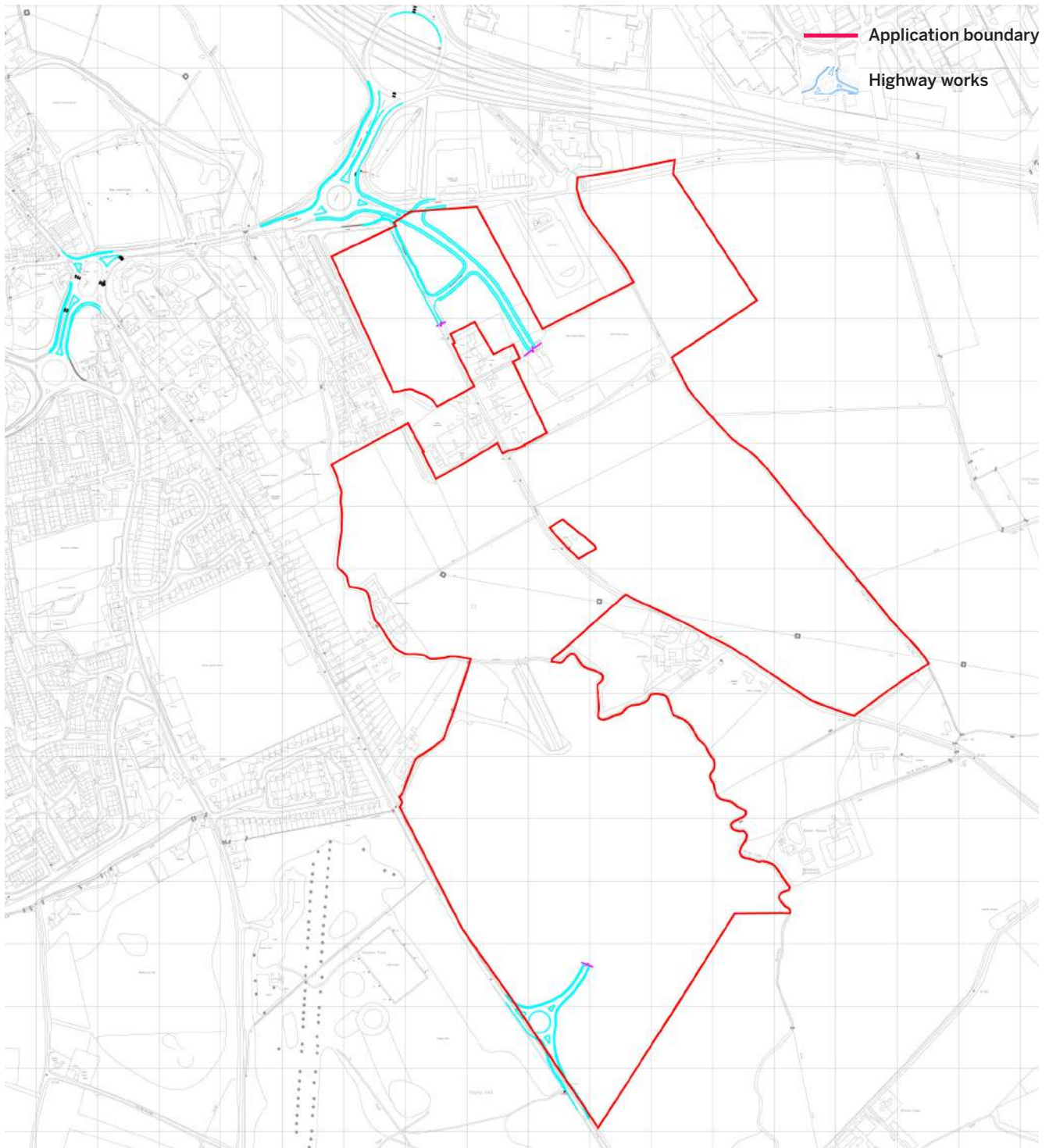
Southern area access arrangements

Off-site highway improvements

Whilst the proposed development creates a sustainable neighbourhood which promotes walking, cycling and use of public transport 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 a number of junctions that will 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 near to Abbots Vale:

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

Figure 5.12 – Overview of Proposed Highway improvements



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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.

The landscape design approach 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



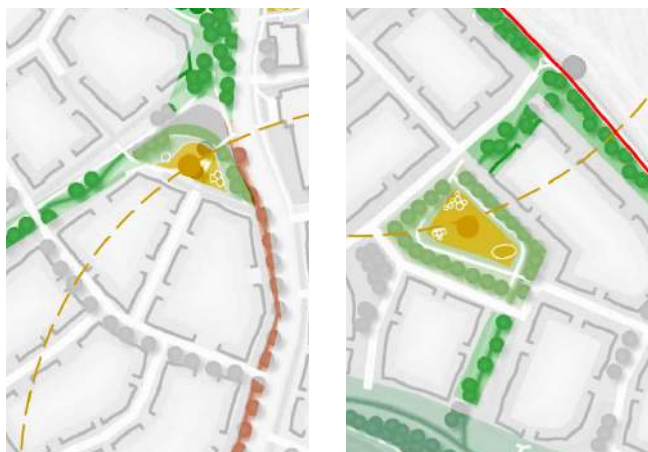
The route of the existing overhead powerline and the associated easement area presents an opportunity for the creation of varying landscape characters within the defined corridor. The indicative masterplan shows formal areas of amenity grass and ornamental planting in this corridor, creating colour, 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.

Figure 5.13 – Open space master plan



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Green corridors and local greens



From the River Lark and Community Hub green corridors stem a network of green links forming a network that connects 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 development areas offering formal outdoor spaces that incorporate avenue trees, ornamental planting and play areas. Examples of these types of spaces are illustrated above.

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



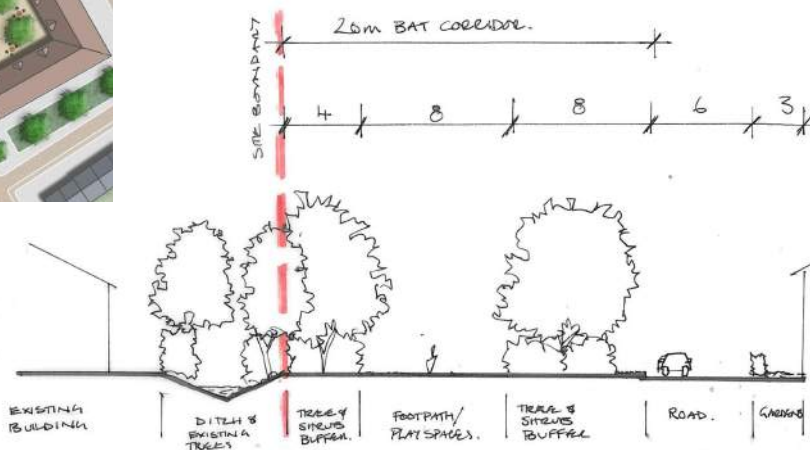
A destination play space combined with sports facilities is located at the heart of the site.

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 design of the proposed development responds to the key ecological features and incorporates mitigation measures to help protect key species and habitats. Notably, the layout facilitates the retention of a darkened corridor along the river and enhanced commuting corridors for bats along the river and around the site. Significant opportunities exist to enhance the bio-diversity value of the site through the creation of new wetland areas created as part of the sustainable drainage strategy.



Indicative sketch section illustrating potential design of proposed dark corridor

Example images of formal and informal play areas



6 A Sustainable Neighbourhood

Hopkins Homes and Pigeon are committed to sustainable development as environmentally and socially responsible developers. The proposed development 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 the outline design 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. 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 health 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 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. The provision of affordable housing may also improve health outcomes.

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 integrated into the outline design proposals as a positive feature.

Energy efficiency: reducing energy use and maximising energy efficiency are key considerations in helping to minimise household energy bills and CO₂ 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.

Waste strategy: the proposed development will result in an increase in the generation of household waste in the local area. The additional waste generation will require collection, treatment and disposal in accordance with waste management practices for the Borough. As this planning application is outline with all matters reserved apart from access, its intention is to set the indicative masterplan framework for more detailed proposals to be prepared at reserved matters stage.

The detailed design and layout of the proposed development will seek to encourage sustainable waste management. This will include a consideration of facilities for kerbside collection and community recycling. In

accordance with national policy the aim will be to ensure that there is sufficient provision for recycling. In addition, waste management facilities should be integrated into the scheme, so that any impacts are minimised.

The detailed design of the site will give consideration to providing the following:

- **Adequate collection points for bins:** The detailed design will take into account residents needs for storage (both inside and outside of homes) relating to kerbside recycling collections. Provision will be made for waste management facilities to serve dwellings. These will be conveniently positioned for residents, well screened and of sufficient size to cater for both normal domestic waste and recycling. It will be important to incorporate appropriately sized recycling facilities in convenient locations. For the majority of dwellings the preferred location will be the front of the plot near to the highway. The detailed design of dwellings will also give consideration to a suitable solution for the storage of bins so that they are easily accessible to the householder but will not spoil the street scene.
- **Suitable access for refuse vehicles:** The detailed layout of the proposed development will also be designed to consider accessibility for refuse vehicles. The relief road has been designed to accommodate this type and size of vehicle (and has been tested through a swept path analysis). The design of other secondary and tertiary routes will also consider refuse vehicle access at the detailed design stage.



7 Phasing and Implementation

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

It is assumed that outline planning permission will be granted in 2016. It is anticipated that the development would commence in 2017, with completion by 2030, a build period of around 13 years. This is based on the construction and sale of up to around 100 dwellings a year, but this rate could change subject to local housing market conditions. The development will come forward in a number of phases with homes being delivered in tandem with supporting roads and community infrastructure.

The precise triggers for the delivery of infrastructure associated with the development (including the school, community facilities, full completion of the relief road, off-site highway mitigation works, sustainable transportation measures etc.) will be agreed in consultation with relevant stakeholders and will be informed by technical work which will be submitted with subsequent planning applications to develop the site. Regard will also be had to any relevant views expressed by the public and other groups. The trigger points will be agreed and secured as part of a S106 Agreement.

For the purposes of the planning application the following indicative phasing of homes and infrastructure is envisaged:

Phase 1: access points on to Rougham Hill in the north and Sicklesmere Road in the south would be provided in addition to foul drainage upgrade works for the northern and southern neighbourhoods. It is anticipated that around 100 homes would be completed.

Phase 2: around 400 further homes would be provided along with further upgrade works to the foul sewer system in the southern neighbourhood along with open space and landscaping works and improvements to the Southgate Green Roundabout and the Rougham Hill/A14 junction. The NEAP would be provided before more than 200 homes are occupied.

Phase 3: around 300 additional homes would be provided. The relief road and the primary school are likely to be completed as part of this phase or towards the end of Phase 2. The construction of the market square would commence no later than in this phase.

Phase 4: in the final phase it is anticipated that around 450 homes would be constructed. The market square is also likely to be completed in this phase.

Initial assessments have been undertaken which indicate that that some limited development could come forward in highway terms without the need for significant improvement to surrounding roads and without the provision of the relief road. Development will start at the northern or southern end of the site in areas where the proposed points of access on to Sicklesmere Road and Rougham Road will be provided. It is anticipated that the relief road will be developed incrementally through each phase 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 agreed with the local planning authority.

