

Hopkins Homes and Pigeon (Bury East) Ltd

Abbots Vale, South East Bury St Edmunds

Environmental Statement Volume 1: Non-technical Summary



December 2015

Amec Foster Wheeler Environment
& Infrastructure UK Limited



Report for

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Document revisions

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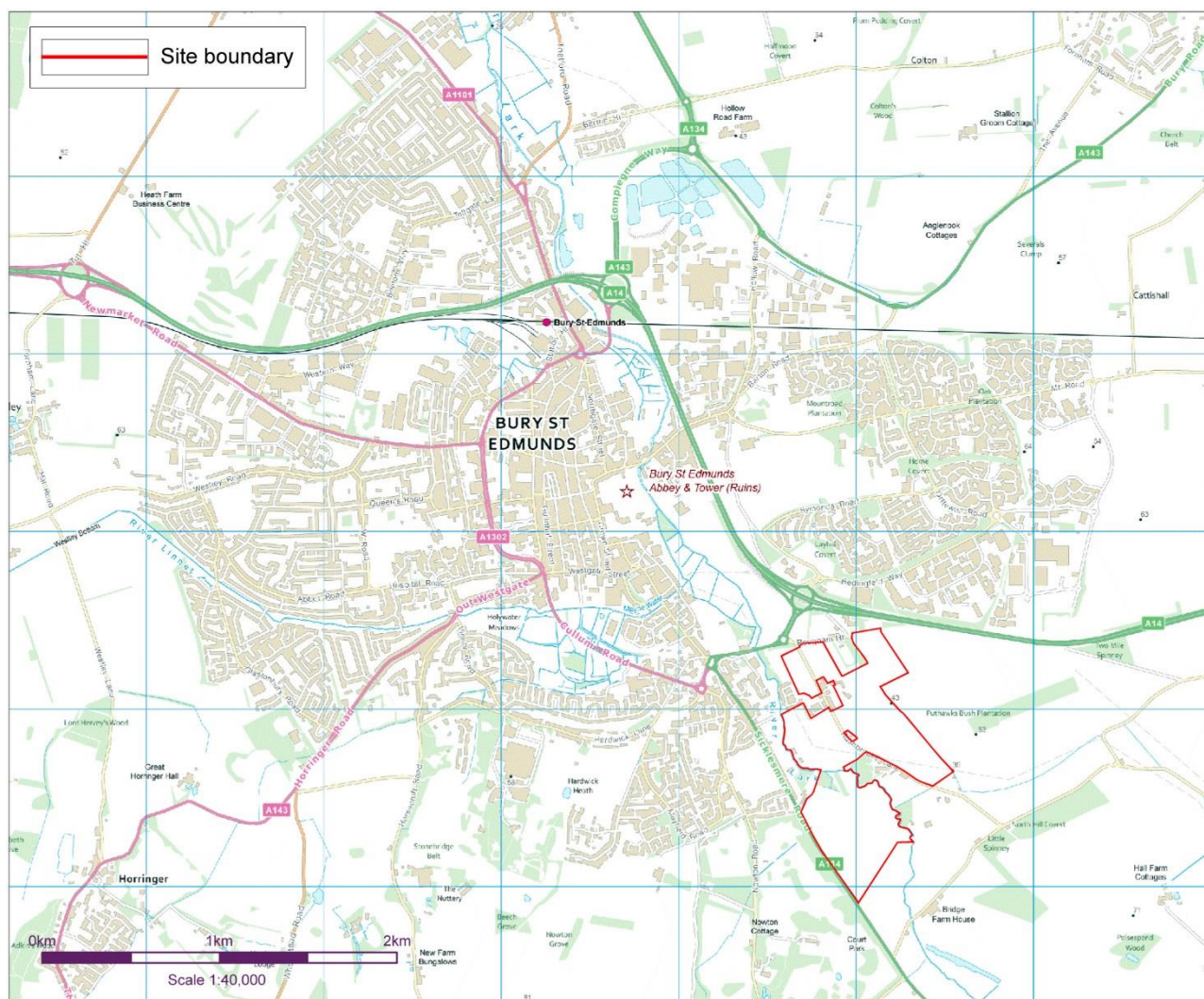


Non-Technical Summary

What is proposed and what is the purpose of the Environmental Statement?

Hopkins Homes and Pigeon (Bury East) Ltd are applying for outline planning consent to develop an area of land known as Abbots Vale, to the south-east of Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk. This land is described in this report as 'the Site' and covers an area of 69 hectares (ha), located approximately 1.2km from Bury St Edmunds town centre. The location of the Site is shown in Figure NTS 1 with the boundary of the Site shown by the red line.

Figure NTS 1 The Site location



The planning application for this proposed development is accompanied by an Environmental Statement, as required under *The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011* (SI 1824) (the 'EIA Regulations'). The preparation of this Environmental Statement, which has been undertaken by Amec Foster Wheeler Environment & Infrastructure UK Limited (Amec Foster Wheeler), forms part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed development.

The Environmental Statement is one of a suite of documents, which together support and explain in detail the nature of the planning application. These documents include a Planning Statement, Design and Access Statement, Flood Risk Assessment, Transport Assessment and Drainage Strategy.

This Non-Technical Summary summarises the content and conclusions of the Environmental Statement, to which readers should refer for further information. The following sections of the Non-Technical Summary describe:

- ▶ Why the proposed development is required;
- ▶ What land uses are present on the Site at the moment;
- ▶ What the proposed development would comprise;
- ▶ What alternatives have been considered;
- ▶ What does the EIA process involve; and
- ▶ What are the likely significant effects of the proposed development.

Why is the proposed development required?

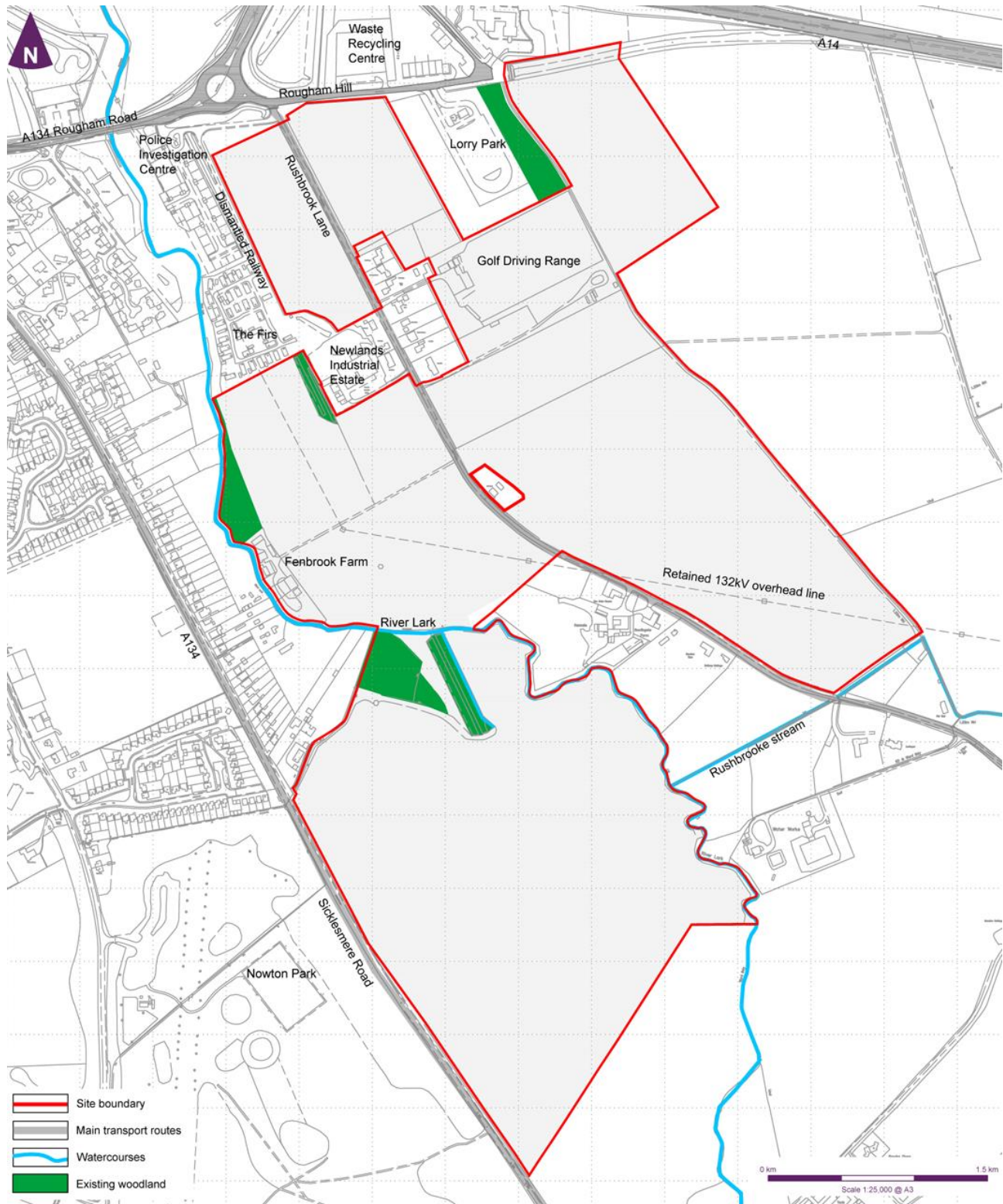
The proposed development is needed to meet future demand for new housing. St Edmundsbury Borough Council has estimated that at least 6,350 new homes will be required in St Edmundsbury (which includes the town of Bury St Edmunds and surrounding areas) between 2010 and 2031. The proposed development is allocated in St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Local Plan as one of five strategic sites for residential development around Bury St Edmunds that will collectively meet this need.

What is at the Site and in the surrounding area at the moment?

The Site is set in a mainly agricultural area on the south-east fringe of Bury St Edmunds. Rougham Hill road lies along its northern boundary, beyond which is a waste recycling centre and industrial/office units. A police investigation centre and a mobile home park (The Firs), are located to the north-west of the Site, south of which are residential properties adjacent to the A134 trunk road (Sicklesmere Road), which links Bury St Edmunds with Sudbury. The Site lies adjacent to the A134 to the south-west, west of which are the gardens and woodland of Nowton Park Country Park. There are areas of built development adjacent to the Site, including Bury St Edmunds Lorry Park to the north of the Site, Newlands Industrial Estate to the west, and 12 residential properties on Rushbrooke Lane, which are enclosed by, but excluded from the Site boundary. To the south and east of the Site are extensive areas of primarily arable farmland. The current land uses within the Site and its surrounds are shown in Figure NTS 2.

The majority of the Site is currently arable agricultural land. The River Lark flows north along the south-eastern boundary of the Site, then crosses the Site and flows along its north-western boundary. The Rushbrooke Stream flows west along part of the Site boundary before running under Rushbrooke Lane and joining the River Lark at the eastern boundary of the Site. Adjacent to the River Lark are areas of woodland and scrub. A golf driving range (Bury Golf Range) is located off Rushbrooke Lane to the north of the River Lark (within the Site boundary). A footpath (which is a Public Right of Way) runs along the eastern boundary of the Site.

Figure NTS 2 Site features



What development is proposed?

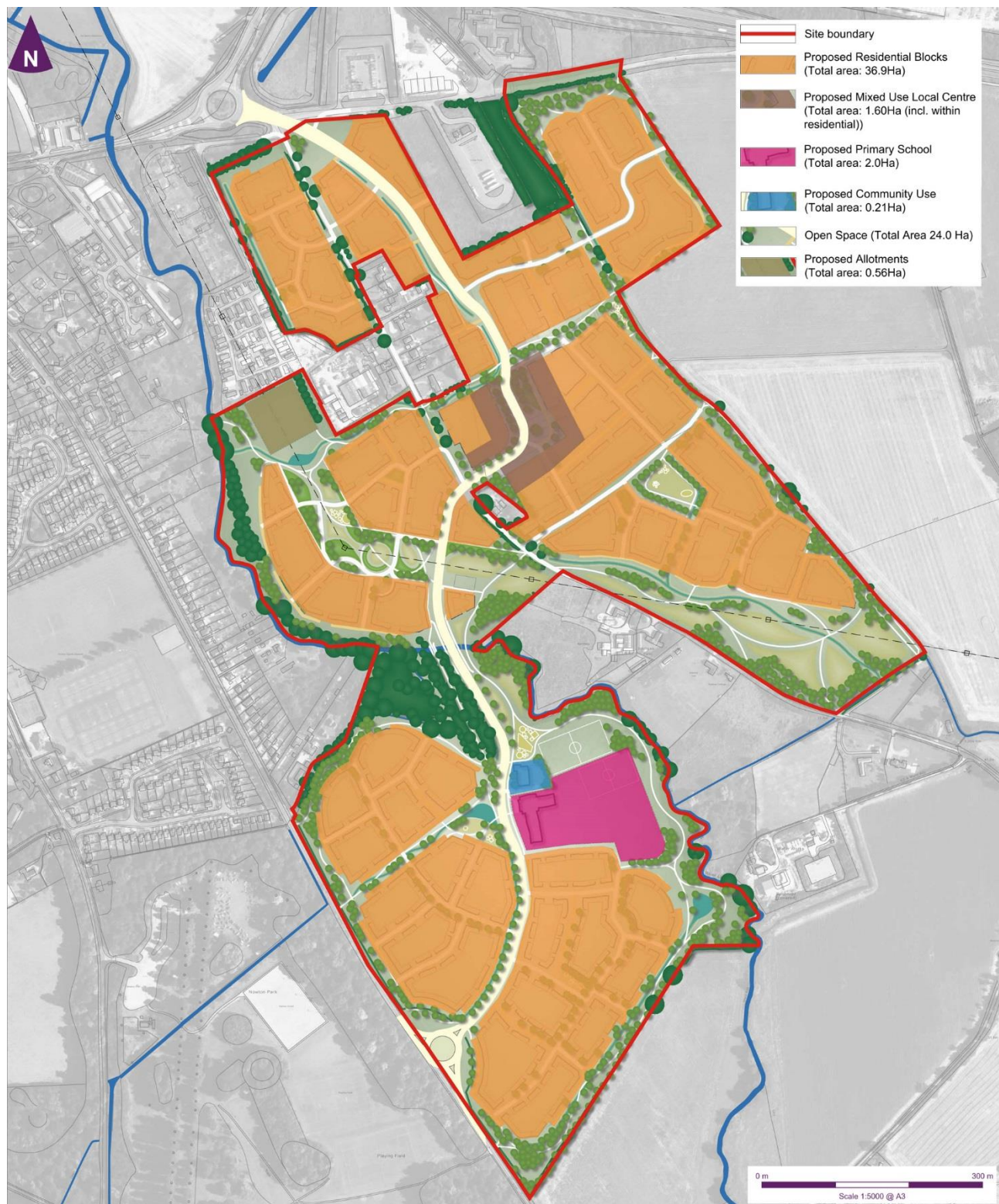
Hopkins Homes and Pigeon (Bury East) Ltd are applying for outline planning consent for:

- ▶ up 1,250 new homes (up to four storeys in height) including a proportion of affordable homes;
- ▶ a local shopping centre with a market square;
- ▶ land for a primary school and associated play areas;
- ▶ land for a community centre/sports pavilion;
- ▶ two new road access points:
 - ▶ a new roundabout junction on the A134 Sicklesmere Road; and
 - ▶ a new road access via Rougham Hill.
- ▶ a relief road linking Sicklesmere Road and Rougham Hill;
- ▶ a bridge over the River Lark;
- ▶ new footpaths, cycleways and public transport links;
- ▶ a significant network of open space (approximately 24ha), incorporating:
 - ▶ landscaping and amenity greenspace;
 - ▶ new wildlife habitats, including meadow grassland and woodland (some of which will be managed to provide an income generating crop);
 - ▶ seven children's play areas;
 - ▶ allotments;
 - ▶ playing fields;
- ▶ a 'sustainable drainage system', which is a natural approach to managing drainage in and around developments – this is achieved by holding back water that runs-off from a development using features such as balancing ponds;
- ▶ associated works and services such as drainage infrastructure, footpaths and roads; and
- ▶ demolition of buildings at Bury Golf Range.

Hopkins Homes and Pigeon (Bury East) Ltd are applying for outline planning permission and will apply for a second, more detailed level of planning permission, referred to as Reserved Matters, at a later date. The exact number, type, design and layout of the proposed new homes will be established at that stage.

The proposed development is likely to be built over a 13 year period starting in 2017 and finishing in 2030, with an average of 100 homes being built each year.

The proposed land uses for the proposed development are shown in Figure NTS3.

Figure NTS3 Land uses within the proposed development

What alternatives have been considered

No alternatives to the Site have been considered as the Site was allocated by St Edmundsbury Borough Council in a planning policy document known as the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy. However, alternative layouts were considered as part of the design process. A design workshop was held in 2011, with members of the local community and key stakeholders, to develop a consensus-based master plan for the Site.

Through this process, a range of options was considered including various locations for key facilities such as the local centre and primary school.

Following the design workshop, more detailed design work and technical work was undertaken to inform the development of the master plan for the Site. This included identifying any ways in which the proposed development could be refined to avoid or reduce negative environmental effects and deliver wider environmental enhancement. Key issues which informed the master plan development are summarised below.

- ▶ **Flood risk:** Work was undertaken to determine which parts of the Site are at risk of flooding from the River Lark and the Rushbrooke Stream which run through and adjacent to the Site. This information was used to ensure that development would be located outside the areas at risk of flooding, both now and in the future, taking into consideration climate change. Those areas of the Site where there is risk of flooding would be retained as open spaces.
- ▶ **Transport and access:** Consideration was given to ways in which traffic generated by the proposed development could be minimised, including: providing access to day-to-day facilities and open space within a short walk of all homes to cut down the use of private cars; providing new footpaths and cycleways within the Site that connect to existing footpaths and cycle networks, and the surrounding residential areas, local schools, and the town centre; and exploring options to provide additional bus stops and bus connections through the Site.
- ▶ **Overhead lines:** A number of overhead powerlines run through the Site. Although all of the lower voltage overhead powerlines are proposed to be removed, the larger 132kV powerlines and pylons would be retained. Most of these overhead powerlines lie within the lower-lying areas of the Site at risk of flooding, which will not be developed. Where the overhead powerlines pass closest to areas of the Site that would be developed, careful consideration has been given to minimising any visual effects, including providing a 30m standoff from the centre of the lines to the nearest residential properties, and careful design of planting and orientation of streets.
- ▶ **Ecology:** Surveys have identified that there are legally protected and other notable species present on-site. The survey information has influenced the design of the open space that would be created within the Site, with a view to ensuring that these species are not likely to be significantly affected or that protected species legislation is not contravened.

What does the Environmental Impact Assessment process involve?

EIA is a process that involves identifying and assessing a proposed development's likely environmental effects, both positive and negative, where these effects have the potential to be likely to be significant. This involves identifying how people and the environment could be affected by the proposed development and incorporating measures within the development to avoid, minimise or offset adverse effects and, where appropriate, to deliver environmental enhancements. Environmental information that is relevant to the assessment of the scheme, the assessment of potential likely significant effects, the evaluation of their significance and other relevant information is set out in an Environmental Statement. Nearly all development has some kind of effect, but the EIA process is about identifying whether these effects are likely to be significant or not.

Potentially significant environmental effects which needed to be assessed in detail were identified through a process known as 'scoping'. A Scoping Report was prepared by Amec Foster Wheeler and submitted to St Edmundsbury Borough Council and other key consultees, including Natural England, the Environment Agency and Suffolk County Council in March 2014. The overall scope of the assessment was refined in response to comments received on the Scoping Report and in response to environmental information obtained from survey and assessment work, subsequent consultation and the scheme design process.

The Environmental Statement sets out an impartial assessment of the potentially significant effects of the proposed development identified through the scoping process. This requires a comparison to be made between the likely baseline environmental conditions in the presence of the proposed development and in its absence.

As the various elements of the proposed development will be built over a period of approximately 13 years and operated indefinitely, it cannot be assumed that the baseline conditions in the absence of development will be the same as at present. This reflects changes resulting from human influences, such as the cumulative changes that would result from other new development in the local area, or natural processes which have the potential to modify current environmental conditions. Therefore where baseline conditions are likely to change over this time (for example traffic flows), the assessment had predicted the future baseline conditions and the effects of the proposed development have been assessed against these.

The cumulative effects of development of the strategic sites and other key planned or consented developments (the Eastern Relief Road, Extension to Suffolk Business Park and the Waste Transfer Station at Rougham Hill) (referred to as planned developments) have been assessed using information about environmental changes associated with these developments in the future baseline conditions, notably in the traffic and transport and traffic related noise and air quality assessments.

The findings of the assessment reported in the Environmental Statement are intended to assist St Edmundsbury Borough Council, those that it consults and other stakeholders, in coming to a view about whether or not the proposed development should proceed. This decision making is also part of the EIA process.

What are the predicted likely significant effects of the proposed development?

Traffic and transport

The proposed development will result in an increase in the volume of traffic on the local road network, both on its own and cumulatively with other planned developments. Changes in traffic conditions, as a result of development, can affect the users of local roads (including drivers, pedestrians and cyclists), the users of land uses fronting local roads (e.g. shopping areas and schools) and accident hotspots. Such effects may occur during construction and operation of the development. The following measures have been incorporated into the proposed development to minimise any such environmental effects:

- ▶ the implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan and a Construction Traffic Management Plan which will detail a number of measures to help minimise the effects of construction traffic on receptors - these plans will need to be agreed with the Borough Council before the development can start;
- ▶ the creation of a relief road through the centre of the Site which links the A134 Sicklesmere Road and Rougham Hill;
- ▶ highway improvements along the A134 corridor, including improvements to pedestrian crossing facilities;
- ▶ a pedestrian and cycle network, with appropriate road-crossing points throughout the proposed development, which will link with new pedestrian and cycle routes in the local area;
- ▶ retention and enhancement of existing public rights of way on Site; and
- ▶ the implementation of a Travel Plan to promote measures to reduce car journeys as part of the long-term management of the proposed development.

The assessment of the proposed development incorporating these measures identified that one road (Southgate Street north from its junction with the A134) would experience a greater than 10% increase in peak hour traffic flow on completion of the development in 2031, whilst two roads (Skyliner Way and Lady Miriam Way) would experience a greater than 30% increase in HGV movements (as a result of school bus movements to the proposed Moreton Hall Secondary School from the Site and other planned developments). These increases in traffic flows exceed the threshold set out in guidance developed by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, and therefore a more detailed assessment was undertaken due to the potential for significant effects on users of these roads. In addition, five areas with a concentration of road traffic collisions were identified, as well as 14 sensitive junctions, which were also subject to assessment.

The assessment concluded that none of the environmental effects associated with traffic would be significant, with the exception of the potential effects of a predicted 14.5% increase in peak daily traffic at the junction of the A1302 and A143 due to the proposed development in combination with other planned developments. This is likely to have a significant adverse effect on road safety at this junction, which already has a concentration of collisions.

Suffolk County Council is aware of potential problems at the A1302 and A143 junction and is investigating possible solutions. If required by Suffolk County Council, the developers could provide a proportional financial contribution to the Council to help to fund any required mitigation measures, such as improvements to the junction.

Air quality

The air quality assessment considered the potential effects of the proposed development during both the construction and operational phases. The effects assessed during the construction phase include the potential generation of dust emissions, whilst during the operational phase, the emissions of pollutants harmful to human health (nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter) from traffic associated with the proposed development have been assessed.

Standard best practice measures would be put in place by the construction contractor to control dust emissions during construction of the development. Such measures would include covering stockpiles of material and vehicles entering and leaving the Site, regular sweeping of the access roads around the Site and dampening down of dry materials. As a result, any effects during the construction phase would be temporary, and would be reduced to a level that is not significant.

Once the proposed development is complete, it will generate additional traffic that could affect levels of air pollutants at the Site and in the surrounding area, which in turn could have effects on human health. Measures have been included in the design of the proposed development to encourage the new occupants to walk, cycle or use public transport which will reduce the amount of traffic (and associated pollutant emissions) associated with the proposed development.

The air quality assessment identified a range of both beneficial and adverse effects on the quality of air experienced by residents of Bury St Edmunds as a result of increased traffic generated by the proposed development. In the initial stages of development, when around 500 houses are occupied but before the relief road is completed, pollutant levels at properties near the junction of the A134 Sicklesmere Road and Rougham Road are predicted to increase to a level which would result in a significant adverse effect. However, this effect would be temporary; on completion of the development (including the relief road) in 2031, it is predicted that pollutant concentrations are likely to be reduced in the same area, due to the diversion of traffic from this junction, resulting in a significant beneficial effect. No other likely significant effects on air quality were identified in relation to emissions from road traffic. The proposed development is not predicted to result in Government air quality objectives being exceeded at any stage of the proposed development.

Noise

The assessment considered potential noise effects on sensitive receptors as a result of the proposed development, both during the construction and operational phases of development. Receptors considered included existing residential properties in the vicinity of the Site as well as proposed dwellings and community facilities (including the primary school). In addition, an assessment was carried out of site suitability for residential and educational uses in relation to noise.

During the construction phase, contractors will be required to work to set limits which will help to control noise levels. Other measures will also be put in place which will minimise the effects of noise created by construction activities. For example, construction work will be limited to daytime working hours, and vehicles will travel to and from the site on main roads (i.e. the A134 Sicklesmere Road and Rougham Road), thus avoiding existing, quiet residential areas wherever possible. With these measures in place it is likely that noise from construction activities will not have a significant effect on local people.

During the operational phase, residents of existing dwellings along Rushbrooke Lane are likely to be significantly affected by increased traffic noise as a result of the proposed relief road. A further assessment of noise from road traffic using the relief road will be undertaken at the reserved matters stage when more

information regarding the design of the relief road is available. This will allow the identification of appropriate mitigation or compensation measures which might avoid a significant effect. No other existing dwellings are likely to be significantly affected by the proposed development.

Noise from the proposed development associated with the proposed local centre and primary school could potentially affect residents of existing and new dwellings in their vicinity. The final end-users and layout of these areas has not yet been finalised, but they are likely to include sources of noise (such as air conditioning units and other plant) which could be audible at nearby residential properties. To control these potential noise effects, noise limits have been determined to avoid the possibility of adverse effects upon nearby residential zones. Any noise generating equipment installed as part of the proposed development will need to comply with these noise limits. It is also proposed that residential units are designed to best practice noise standards (British Standards) to achieve reasonable internal noise level criteria. Therefore, no significant effects from noise at the closest properties are likely with these measures in place.

Noise modelling has indicated that the Site will be suitable for development for housing, community and educational uses, and that new residents living in the proposed development or using the primary school would be unlikely to be adversely affected by noise, providing adequate provision of building façade sound insulation. The final design of the proposed development would include detailed work on the design of the buildings to ensure they achieve minimum standards of noise reduction and provide suitable internal conditions for all of the proposed uses.

Landscape and visual

Landscape summary

The proposed development would result in the loss of arable land and some existing buildings. However, the majority of existing landscape elements such as trees and hedges would be retained within the proposed development, the only exceptions being a small number of hedgerows and a limited number of trees which would be removed during the construction of the relief road.

During the operational phase, the landscape character within the Site would undergo a high level of change resulting from the removal of arable land and its replacement by residential and mixed use development. The southern part of the Site currently falls within a Special Landscape Area, a non-statutory local landscape designation. In response to this designation, lower density housing is proposed within the southern half of the Site. Nevertheless, the development of the Site would be likely to result in the area of the Special Landscape Area within the Site being redefined as 'urban'. However, the area affected represents less than 1% of the Special Landscape Area and as such, this loss is not considered to be significant. The Site falls within three landscape character types, the areas of which within the Site would also be redefined as urban as a result of the proposed development. However, the areas affected represent less than 1% of each landscape character type and their loss is not considered to be significant. The indirect landscape effects upon the remainder of the landscape character types and Special Landscape Area due to the presence of the proposed development would be limited, as built development of Bury St Edmunds to the north and west together with plantations and coverts present within the surrounding landscape to the south, east and west limits visibility between the Site and the wider landscape. In the medium to long term, the landscape scheme would also establish and provide new landscape features including woodland, hedgerow and tree planting, meadow grassland, and green corridors that would soften the interface between the proposed development and rural landscape beyond.

In conclusion, the effects on landscape elements, landscape character types and the Special Landscape Area are assessed to be not significant for both the construction and operation phases.

Visual summary

The inward sloping topography of the Site, combined with its proximity to the urban fringe of Bury St Edmunds is influential in reducing the potential for significant visual effects to arise beyond the immediate boundaries of the Site. In addition, the wooded River Lark corridor, nearby woodland and shelterbelt planting along the A14 reduces the visual relationship between the Site and a large number of highly sensitive receptors associated with the town. As such, the Site has a limited visual relationship with the residential parts of Bury St Edmunds.

The proposed development would be viewed by a number of residents, employees, and users of the local road and footpath network (visual receptors). Whilst the introduction of the proposed development would result in an increase and encroachment of built form and a foreshortening of existing views across agricultural fields for a small proportion of visual receptors, for the remaining receptor groups views of the proposed development in operation would largely be filtered through or above existing hedgerows, tree cover and new planting associated with the landscape scheme implemented across the Site.

As a consequence, the number of people whose views would be significantly affected is restricted to receptors located within or in close proximity to the boundary of the Site, namely:

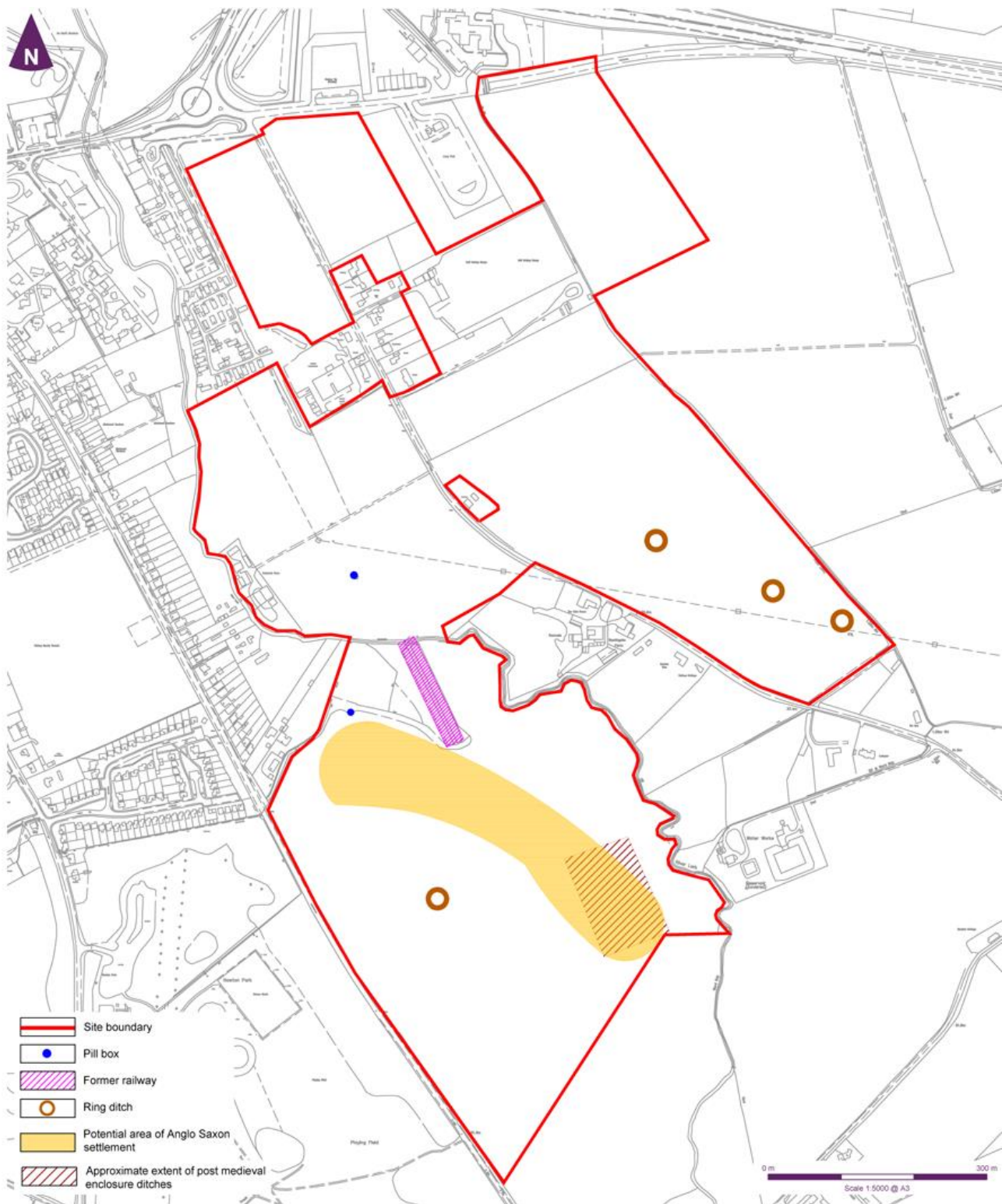
- ▶ residents of The Firs mobile home park (construction phase only);
- ▶ users of Rushbrooke Lane, the A134 Sicklesmere Road (600 m stretch adjacent to the Site), the allotments, and the footpath linking the top of Rougham Hill Road to Rushbrooke Lane;
- ▶ residents of properties located along Rushbrooke Lane; bordering the Site to the south (The Gate House, Southgate Farm); along the unnamed road to the south and east of the Site (Bridge Farm House, Brooke Close properties, Meadow Cottage and North Hill Cottage); and bordering A134 Sicklesmere Road.

Historic environment

A desk study including a search of historic environment records, inspection of historic maps, aerial photographs and documentary evidence identified the potential for archaeological remains to be present within the Site. A geophysical survey was undertaken to determine where any such remains are located, and targeted excavations were undertaken to investigate areas of potential archaeological interest identified by this survey.

The desk study and surveys identified the presence within the Site of a number of heritage assets with the potential to be significantly affected by the proposed development, as listed below and shown in Figure NTS 4.

- ▶ **Ring ditches.** Four ring ditches, which are likely to represent late Neolithic or Bronze Age burial mounds, were recorded within the Site. Three of these would be lost as a result of the proposed development, but due to the relatively low importance of these features, the effect of this would not be significant. Development would be preceded by full excavation and recording of the features to be lost.
- ▶ **Anglo-Saxon settlement.** There is evidence for an Anglo-Saxon settlement within the southern half of the Site, in the form of up to eight Sunken Floored Buildings. These are a relatively uncommon feature type with the potential to generate information with a high level of archaeological interest. The proposed development would result in the loss of the whole of the known extent of the Anglo-Saxon settlement. Due to the relative importance of this asset this would result in a significant adverse effect. Development would be preceded by full excavation and recording of the archaeological remains, which would contribute to an understanding of settlement remains of this period (but will not avoid a significant effect).
- ▶ **Post-Medieval enclosure ditches.** These were located within the south-eastern part of the field to the south of the River Lark. These would be entirely lost as a result of the proposed development. However, due to their low importance this would not result in a significant effect.
- ▶ **Two World War II pillboxes.** Both pillboxes would be retained within the Site boundary, and as such they would not be significantly affected.
- ▶ **Remnants of the former Great Eastern Railway.** These include a bridge across the River Lark and associated embankment, and a section of embankment adjacent to Newlands Industrial Estate. These features would be retained within the proposed development, and as such there would be no significant effect on this asset.

Figure NTS 4 Location of the heritage assets within the Site

There are no designated heritage assets within the Site, but there are 67 within 1km of the Site. Of these, the proposed development has the potential to affect the setting of Bury St Edmunds Abbey Scheduled Monument, Registered Park and Gardens and listed buildings (located approximately 1km to the north-west of the Site), and the Cathedral Church of St James listed building, located within the Abbey complex. Views of the Site from the Abbey and Cathedral Church are screened by surrounding buildings, and there are existing areas of modern development which surround the town centre, including the Abbey precinct. The assessment therefore concluded that the proposed development would not affect the setting of the Cathedral

Church or Bury St Edmunds Abbey, and as such there would be no significant adverse effects on these heritage assets.

Land quality

An initial desk study has identified some limited areas of potential contamination as a result of landfilling and previous land uses within and adjacent to the Site. Once planning permission has been granted a more detailed study involving testing of soils and groundwater would be undertaken to determine whether any contamination is present. Measures would be put in place to remove or remediate the contamination if any was found, thereby avoiding any significant effects.

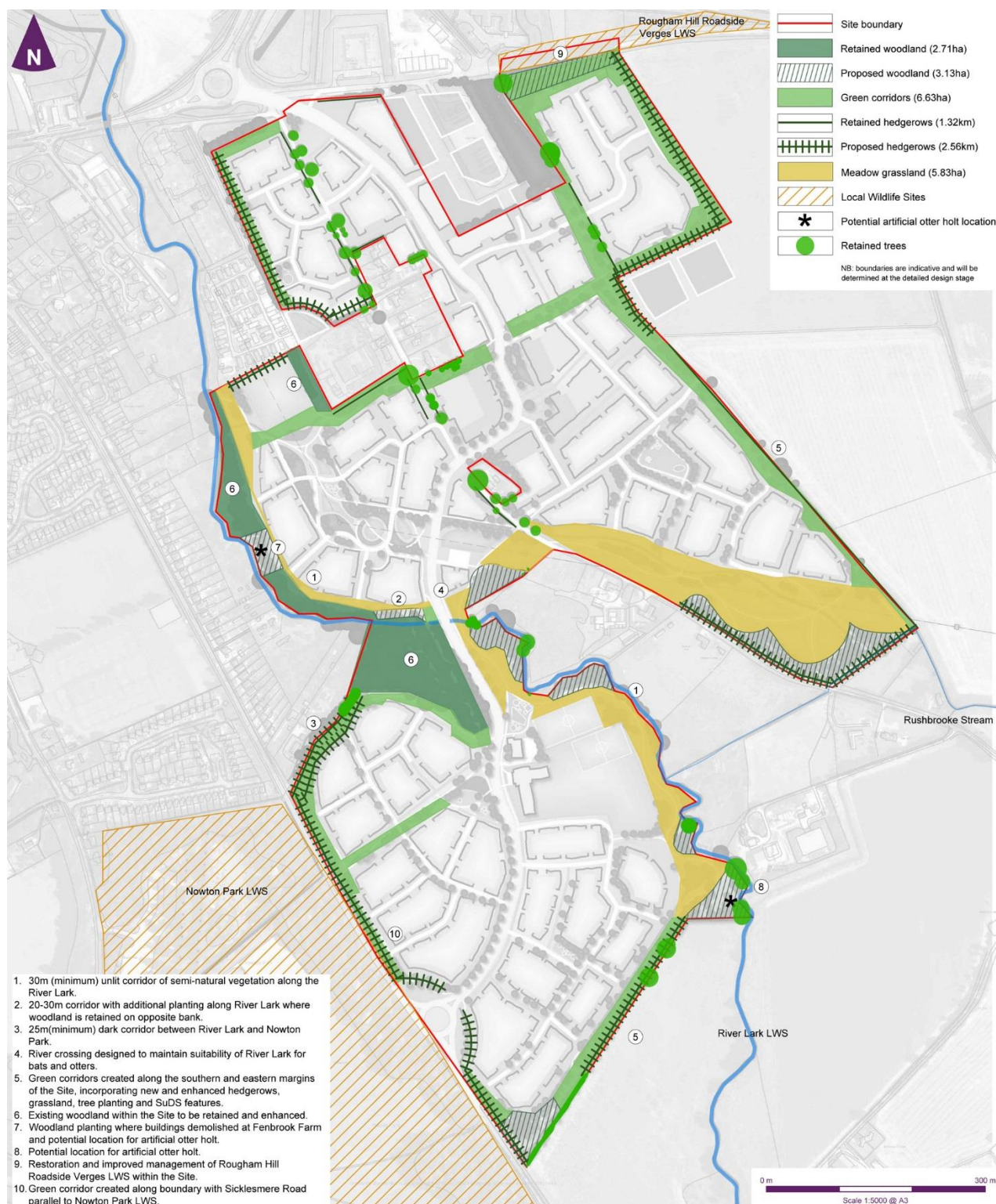
The proposed development will result in the loss of approximately 61ha of 'best and most versatile' agricultural land. This would represent less than 1% of all of this type of land within Suffolk and the borough of St Edmundsbury, and as such, this loss is not considered to be significant.

Biodiversity

A series of biodiversity surveys were undertaken of the Site and surrounds in 2014-15, including Phase 1 habitat, hedgerow, bat, badger, dormouse, otter, water vole, breeding bird, reptile, great crested newt and white-clawed crayfish surveys. The results of these surveys were used to inform the design of the proposed development and ensure that measures to avoid or minimise effects on biodiversity were incorporated within the scheme. These measures are shown on Figure NTS 5.

The assessment of the scheme incorporating these measures identified the following designated sites and legally protected species which have potential to be significantly affected by the proposed development.

- ▶ **Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA)** (a designated site of international importance for breeding birds: stone-curlew, nightjar and woodlark). Breeding birds within the SPA could be affected by increased numbers of visitors as a result of the proposed residential development. The assessment found that given the relatively small number of additional visitors likely to result from the development, the distance of the Site from the nearest point of the SPA (8.6km) and, the provision of 24ha of open space within the development, plus access to off-site recreational opportunities including the adjacent Nowton Park Country Park, the proposed development was not likely to have a significant adverse effect on the SPA.
- ▶ **The Glen Chalk Caves Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** (a nature conservation site of national importance for its populations of hibernating bats). There is the potential for bats (particularly Daubenton's bat and Natterer's bat) to travel through the Site along the River Lark when moving from their summer roost sites to the hibernation site in The Glen Chalk Caves SSSI. The proposed development incorporates measures to maintain potential commuting routes through the Site, to ensure that bats can travel through the Site to access the Glen Chalk Caves SSSI. These measures include: retention of a 30m buffer of semi-natural vegetation along the majority of the River Lark; the provision of unlit corridors through the Site, including along the River Lark; retention and enhancement of existing woodland and hedgerows; sensitive design of the River Lark crossing; design and implementation of an appropriate lighting strategy; and additional planting of trees, hedgerows and woodland. As a result of these measures, the proposed development would be likely not to have a significant adverse effect on the SSSI.
- ▶ **Horringer Court Caves SSSI** (a nature conservation site of national importance for its populations of hibernating bats). Given the location of the Site relative to the Horringer Court Caves SSSI, and the distribution of suitable habitat and potential commuting routes, it is likely that bats would not travel through the Site when commuting from their summer roosts to this hibernation site. The proposed development would not, therefore, be likely to have a significant adverse effect on this SSSI.

Figure NTS 5 Biodiversity measures within the proposed development

- ▶ **Bats** (all of which are legally protected species). The proposed development would result in the loss of potential roost sites within six buildings and a small number of trees. These were not in use by bats when surveyed in 2014, but would be resurveyed prior to demolition/removal (and appropriate mitigation implemented if bats are present). The loss of these roost sites would be compensated for by the provision of new roosting opportunities. The measures put in place to avoid effects on bats potentially commuting through the Site to The Glen Chalk Caves SSSI would also avoid effects on the bat species which have been recorded foraging within the Site. With these measures in place there would be no significant effect on bats, and contravention of the legislation protecting bats would be prevented.
- ▶ **Otter** (a legally protected species). The proposed development includes measures to: maintain the suitability of the River Lark for otters; avoid the disturbance of otters whilst using resting places; and avoid damage to these resting places. These measures include: retention of a 30m buffer of semi-natural vegetation along the majority of the River Lark; retention and enhancement of existing woodland and scrub along the River Lark; sensitive design of the River Lark crossing; monitoring otter activity during and post-construction; design and implementation of an appropriate lighting strategy; additional planting of woodland and scrub; and provision of an artificial otter holt. With these measures in place there would be no significant effect on otter, and contravention of the legislation protecting otter would be avoided.
- ▶ **Reptiles** (slow-worm and grass snake – both of which are legally protected). To ensure that reptiles are not killed during construction works, the reptiles within the Site would be moved away from areas of construction to the areas of new meadow habitat created within the proposed development, which would also include habitat features to support reptiles. The legislation protecting reptiles would therefore not be contravened, and there would be no significant effect on reptile populations.

Socio-economics and recreation

The increase in population associated with the proposed development could have the following significant effects on the local community as a result of demands on local services, and due to the loss or creation of jobs.

- ▶ **Education.** The proposed development would retain land that would be passed on to Suffolk County Council for use as a primary school, to be built and opened once an agreed number of homes have been developed. Additional capacity for secondary and sixth form places would be provided at Moreton Hall Secondary School, which is due to open in September 2016. Further demand for secondary school places would be met through a financial contribution from the developer to Suffolk County Council, if required. With these measures, the overall effect of the proposed development on access to education facilities is not likely to be significant.
- ▶ **Health.** The developer will provide an appropriate financial contribution to expand General Practice doctor's surgeries. With this measure in place, there would be no significant effect on local residents.
- ▶ **Employment.** The proposed development would lead to a temporary increase in jobs during the construction period. These would partially be filled by contractors, but would also support new local employment and training opportunities. This is likely to be a positive temporary effect. The proposed development would result in the loss or relocation of a small number of jobs (less than 20) associated with the Bury Golf Range which will close or be relocated as a result of the proposed development. A greater number of jobs (around 50) would be created associated with the proposed local centre. Further jobs would also be created at the proposed primary school. The net gain in the number of jobs is not likely to be significant.
- ▶ **Recreation.** The proposed development would provide approximately 24ha of open space incorporating sports pitches, equipped play areas, allotments and footpaths. This open space would provide substantial recreational opportunities for both residents of the proposed development and existing residents in adjacent areas, ensuring that existing recreational facilities are not overused. This would provide a beneficial, although not significant, effect.

Water environment

The assessment has considered the effects of the proposed development on the local water environment, which includes watercourses (such as the River Lark flowing through the site), surface features (such as ponds and wetlands) and groundwater. The assessment investigated how construction activities and development proposals might affect: stream/river levels, flows and channel form; flood risk to people, property and infrastructure at the Site and downstream; water quality (of watercourses, groundwater and other features); and groundwater levels.

A number of measures have been incorporated into the proposed development which are designed to avoid or minimise effects on the water environment from the proposed development. These measures include: reducing flood risk by building outside the floodplain and managing surface water runoff using Sustainable Drainage Systems; preventing pollution of surface and groundwaters due to construction activity or operation of the development; and sensitive design of the River Lark crossing to avoid effects on the river's flow and channel form.

With the various measures in place, the proposed development would not have any significant adverse effects on the water environment.

Conclusions

The assessment describes how a range of environmental measures have been built into the scheme's design to minimise potential adverse effects and, where possible, to deliver environmental benefits. As a consequence, the only likely significant environmental effects as a result of the scheme are as follows.

- ▶ Adverse effects on road safety at the junction of the A143 and A1302 as a result of increased traffic flows due to the proposed development together with other planned developments.
- ▶ Increased air pollution levels at properties near the junction of A134 Sicklesmere Road and Rougham Road prior to construction of the relief road.
- ▶ Decreased air pollution levels at properties near the junction of A134 Sicklesmere Road and Rougham Road after construction of the relief road.
- ▶ Increased noise affecting residents of existing properties along Rushbrooke Land during operation as a result of the proposed relief road.
- ▶ Adverse effects on residents within and adjacent to the Site as a result of changes in their views.
- ▶ Loss of the remains of the Anglo-Saxon settlement within the Site. This will be fully excavated and recorded prior to development, but the effect will still be significant.

There are no other significant effects identified in the assessment.

What happens next?

Prior to determining the planning application, St Edmundsbury Borough Council will consult with the Environment Agency, Natural England and other organisations. Members of the public will also be able to comment on the planning application. The normal period for determining a planning application such as this is 16 weeks.

Where can more information be found?

The ES is available to view at St Edmundsbury Borough Council's offices at the following address.

West Suffolk House,
Western Way,
Bury Saint Edmunds,
Suffolk IP33 3YU

And online at <https://planning.westsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications/>

