

North of Hertford - Land West of Wadesmill Road, Bengoe

(HERT 4, Phase 2) Masterplanning Framework

(NOVEMBER 2022)



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Introduction

Introduction

This Masterplan framework document has been prepared in response to East Herts Council’s commitment to ensure high quality design through a masterplanning process. The document builds on material previously submitted as part of the first phase of the HERT4 allocation at the Stiles. The masterplan document is submitted on behalf of Durkan and Anthony Ian Thompson and Daniel Robert Ugur (The Trustees) in support of proposals for the residential development of approximately 5.24 HA of developable land at Wadesmill Road, Hertford, SG14 3HG.

The Masterplan Framework will shape the form of the development and act as the basis of initial discussions with third party stakeholders, including the three tiers of local government at member and officer levels, other consultees, and the Shaping Hertford Steering Group. The Masterplan Framework has been prepared on a without prejudice basis in respect of HERT4 policy relating to previous mineral extraction on neighbouring land.

This Masterplan framework document is intended to demonstrate the core design principles underpinning the design concepts for a detailed planning application to deliver around 100 new dwellings anticipated to be submitted in the latter part of 2022.

The details included within this document follow a thorough examination and comprehensive assessment of the site and the wider surroundings and demonstrate the thought processes leading to the a proposed design that includes:

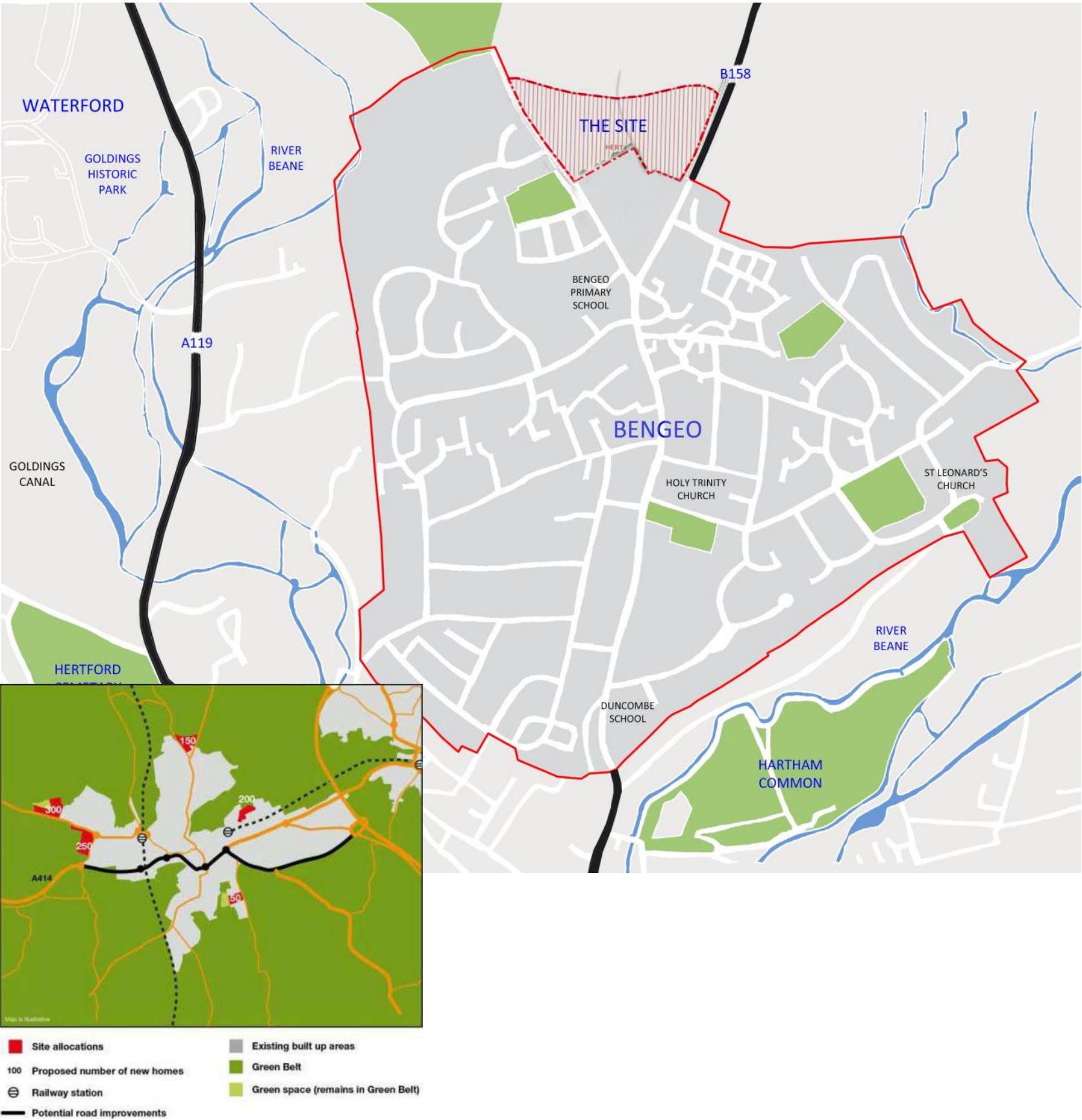
- A range and mix of around 100 dwellings including a 40% provision of affordable housing.
- The inclusion of integrated public open spaces incorporating children’s play facilities.
- A design that will respect and respond to the topography of the site.
- Sustainable Drainage strategies.
- Pedestrian and cycle routes running through the development forming important off-site connections to the neighbouring LEAP to the southwest and the byway running north-south through and beyond the site.
- The retention, strengthening and enhancement of existing landscaping features.
- New strategic landscaping and biodiversity enhancements.
- A carefully considered road hierarchy incorporating shared surfaces where appropriate.
- Safer by Design Principles.

Our Vision

Our vision is to deliver a well-designed, high quality, verdant development combining attractive new dwellings within carefully balanced landscaped settings including the improvement and enhancement of the existing landscape and ecology to create a high quality new addition to the existing community that is well integrated with the first phase of HERT4, the Stiles. Key elements include:

- Traditional housing forms within a landscape led design approach.
- Dwellings that frame and overlook the main streets providing active frontages.
- Key buildings at strategic locations.
- Double aspect built forms that ‘turn the corner’.
- Pedestrian and cycle routes that link the development to key areas off-site enhancing connectivity to the wider community.
- Passive natural surveillance to streets, parking areas and open spaces.
- On plot parking where possible to reduce car dominance.
- An integrated road hierarchy to help define character areas.
- An integrated landscaping design to help define character areas.
- Subtle design variation to help define character areas.
- Retention and reinforcement of mature trees and hedgerows around the site perimeter.
- Policy compliant car and cycle parking standards.
- Refuse strategies contained within private areas.
- Policy compliant garage designs.
- A fabric first approach to energy conservation along with the provision of air source heat pumps
- SuDs strategies.
- Sustainable strategies including the provision of charging points for low and zero carbon vehicles and covered secure storage for cycles.
- Private gardens.
- Reduced density at the fringes of the development.
- Open space to the periphery of the development.
- Wildflower Meadows.

Site Location & Planning Context



Planning Context

The site is allocated for residential development in the submitted version of the East Hertfordshire District Plan under reference HERT4.

The site has historically been located within the Metropolitan Green Belt where highly restrictive planning policies apply. Following the adoption of the new District Plan (Oct 2018), this site has been removed from the Green Belt and will form the second phase of an allocation to provide over 150 dwellings in total. HERT4 sets out an expectation for the site to deliver housing for this phase by 2027. This aligns with strategic policies DPS2, DPS3 and HERT1.

The allocation establishes the principle of residential development for the site in line with the Council’s aspirations.

Key policy HERT4 requires a masterplan to be collaboratively prepared involving a range of key stakeholders. This document will evolve through a process of pre-application engagement with East Herts Council and statutory and non statutory consultees and will include a public exhibition and presentations to the Shaping Hertford Steering Group.

Policy HERT4 sets out a series of requirements expected from the delivery of a development. These include a 40% allocation of affordable housing, an appropriate mix of housing, the delivery of green infrastructure, vehicular access from Wadesmill Road, off-site mitigation measures and wider pedestrian and cycle connectivity, all of which are included within these proposals.

The proposals must also be considered in relation to the previous phase design to allow for successful integration with phase 1.

In line with HCC LTP4 Policy 1 sustainable travel methods will be at the heart of the development through:

- The promotion of sustainable patterns of movement.
- The provision of cycle routes and linkages.
- Linkages and enhancements to local bus services.
- Prioritising pedestrian and cycle use over car use.
- Measures to encourage modal switching.

Site Analysis - Location & Site in Context



Location of the Site

The site area to be developed, measuring 5.24 Ha, is located in the Bengo area of Hertford on the northern edge of the town. The site lies North of the former Bengo Nursery now currently being developed to provide 52 new homes. The allocation proposes a vehicular access taken from the south eastern, tree lined boundary off Wadesmill Road. There is currently no physical boundary to the North of the site and it is a requirement of the scheme to provide landscaping and planting, both within the site and peripheral, which responds to the existing landscape and complements the development as appropriate and provides a defined, recognisable boundary to the Green Belt. The eastern boundary is partly adjoined by an existing residential dwelling with agricultural fields extending to the north and north-east. Existing residential settlements including The Orchard and The Wick lie beyond Sacombe Road to the west. The recent settlement of Buckwells Field with it's associated play area is situated to the south-west and to the north-west lies the Waterford Heath Community Nature Park.

The site is easily accessible to services and facilities with direct footpath links along both Sacombe Road and Wadesmill Road.

The Site in Context

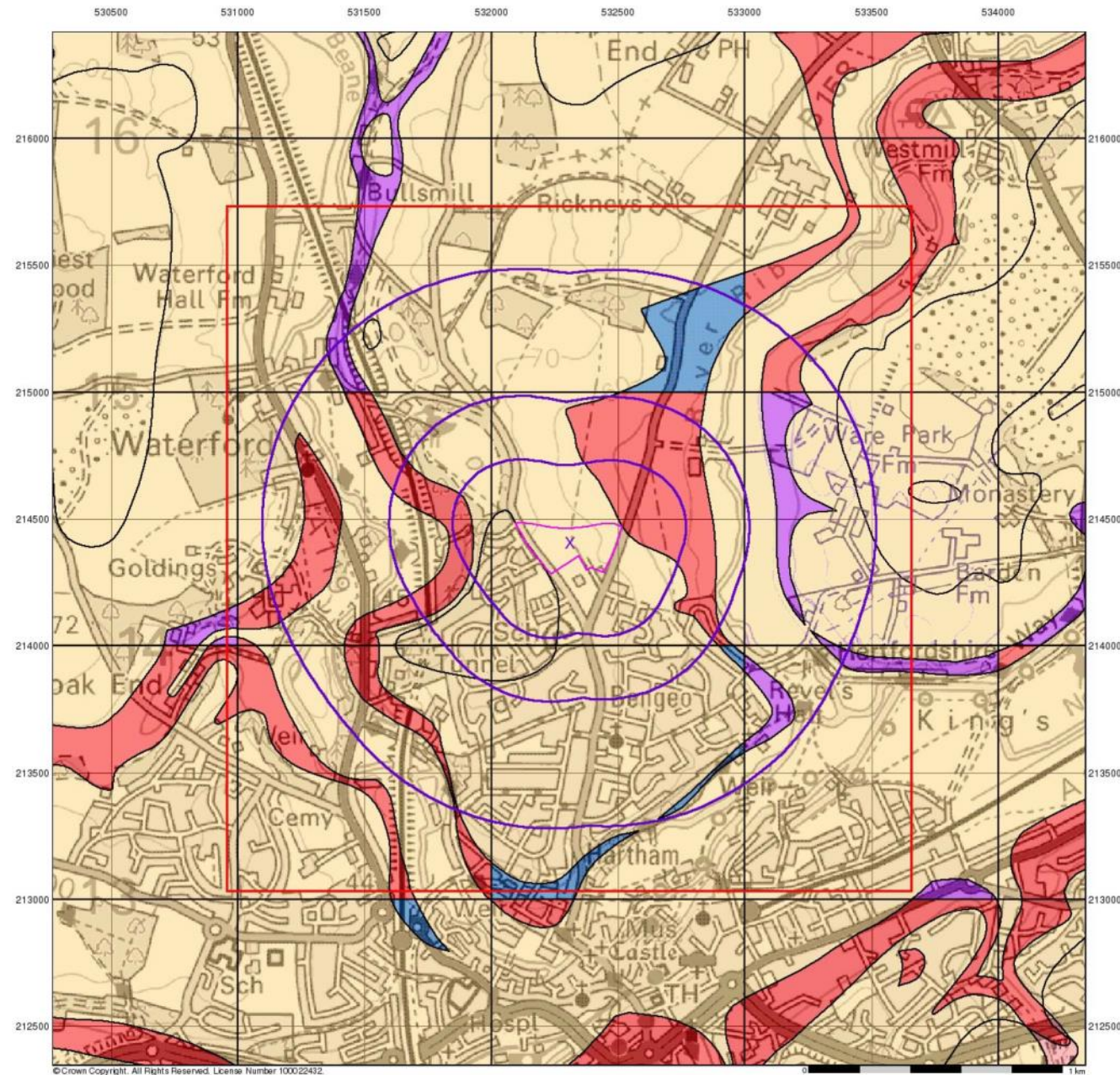
There are a range of local amenities, services and shops available within Bengo which are within walking distance of the site, including a Post Office and a Cooperative Food Store.

The site is also located approximately 1.5km from the centre of Hertford and its associated shops and facilities including doctor's surgeries, supermarkets and leisure facilities.

Bengo Primary School is located approximately 0.1km to the south-west of the site. Furthermore, Duncombe School, an independent school is located approximately 1km south of the site, providing school places between 2 and 11 years of age.

A bus service (bus route 333) currently runs via Bengo Street / The Avenue and Cowper Crescent located an approximate 3-minute walk to the south of the site, with services running at least every 30 minutes into the centre of Hertford. Hertford also benefits from two railway stations, providing regular direct links into London.

Site Analysis - Site Investigation, Ecology & Built Heritage



Site Investigation

A detailed site investigation has been undertaken by GEOSPHERE ENVIRONMENTAL following a walkover survey carried out in November 2019 and the findings will accompany the formal planning application.

Ecology

An initial ecology appraisal is to be undertaken.

There is an opportunity to incorporate high quality landscaping, planting up existing hedgerows, protecting high quality trees and maximising the benefits of the SuDs features to create new habitats and improve biodiversity across the site and aim to achieve biodiversity net gain.

This approach aligns with Policies NE3 and NE4.

Tree Survey

A tree survey is to be undertaken to determine the constraints and the impact on the development proposals in relation to shading, tree route protection areas and tree category to BS5837. High quality trees will be retained and incorporated into a high-quality landscape scheme. The proposed development will seek to promote new tree planting where appropriate.

Topography





Local Character

Local Context

The Hertford Conservation Area Appraisal (Adopted 2017) recognises the distinctive character of different areas. The development site is adjacent to Identity Area 2- North West Quadrant which includes the allotments to the south. The built form of the immediate locality is a mixture of historic terraced housing with additional later semi-detached and detached housing. There is a grouping of historic buildings along the linear route of Beng eo Street which is interspersed with modern housing and commercial premises reflecting the expansion of Hertford.

The pattern of development within Identity Area 2 creates views that are generally contained by the built form. Longer views are along highways where the interplay between building scale, materials and building line set backs from the carriageway complemented by mature trees and planting define the verdant character of the street scene.

There are a number of notable residences built in the 19th and early 20th century which are located within this area of Beng eo including Beng eo House and the Grade II listed Warren Park.



Red Brick with burnt headers:
Flemish bond



London stocks: Flemish bond



White brick: Flemish bond



Weatherboarding



Pargetting



Stucco



Plain tiles



Pantiles (mainly in north and east
Herts)

From Understanding Hertfordshire's Character by HCC.

Image Location

- 1. The Stiles
- 2. The Stiles
- 3. Duncombe Road
- 4. Fanshawe Street
- 5. Fanshawe Street
- 6. The Drive
- 7. New Road
- 8. Beng eo Mews
- 9. Warren Street



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.



9.

Opportunities & Constraints



Landscaping Framework



Design Principles

Primary Elements of the Emerging Design

The underpinning design principles reflect the thought process undertaken to achieve a development with a clear sense of identity and of place that can successfully integrate into the existing community.

1. Points of Arrival - Focal buildings set within an attractive landscaped setting will frame the primary entrance.
2. A coherent movement strategy that promotes sustainable principles.
3. Internal Routes:
 - Primary Street - A verdant avenue combining dwellings set back from the carriageway with footpaths adjacent to tree lined grass verges. The primary streets lead to the verdant main thoroughfare connecting the existing byway running south to north through and beyond the development.
 - Secondary Streets - Connect to the lanes serving the fringes of the development.
 - Tertiary Streets - Designed as lanes serving less dense dwellings at the fringes of the development.
 - Cycle/footway links connecting important features outside of the development
4. Landscape and Ecology - The primary street will be designed as a verdant thoroughfare linking the main access to the interconnecting verdant thoroughfare leading to public open spaces.
5. The northern fringe will include public amenity greens with integrated play spaces and SuDs features and new planting strategies which will enhance and strengthen the existing landscaping features and provide increased ecological benefits.
6. The fringes of the development will combine existing tree and hedge planting with new tree, hedge and shrub planting to create a 'leafy green' character offsetting the new low density mainly detached housing.
7. Fully Integrated Landscape Strategy - Verdant primary routes will be designed to interconnect with the main thoroughfare leading to open spaces adjacent to development fringes at the north of the development. The open spaces will be versatile spaces where children can play safely overlooked by housing to create a secure environment where they can interact with their natural surroundings. The central space described as the 'heart of the development' will incorporate a linear pocket park with the byway running along its edge.
8. Layout - Dwellings will be designed to overlook roads, footpaths and public open spaces providing natural surveillance and active frontages to all public areas in the best practice of secure by design philosophy. The built form will include focal buildings in key locations and buildings designed to 'turn the corner'. Density will draw on the principles approved on phase 1 (The Stiles). Land to the east of the byway and at the fringes of the development will be lower density and will increase marginally towards the centre along the primary and secondary routes. A key aim will be to avoid a development dominated by cars by ensuring that parking can be accommodated on plot or within off-road parking courts.
9. Building Heights - The maximum storey height of buildings will be 2.5 storeys although there potentially may be an opportunity to provide a three storey landmark building at the very lowest point of the site along the eastern edge.
10. Frontages - Respond to their respective character areas. The emphasis will be on subtle variation to ensure that the development as a whole maintains a cohesive identity.

Design Principles - Character Areas

Character Areas

Character areas will play an important role within the design with areas defined by landscaped settings and by nuances in architectural expression and by their location within the development. The nature of the topography and the desire to make the existing byway route an integral part of the development creates the opportunity to consider the layout as three distinct areas, each with their own set of unique characteristics all of which need to successfully combine to help form a cohesive development.

1. The Western Side of the Development.

The western side of the development will feature similar characteristics and variations to those within the Stiles development. Housing facing Sacombe Road and the Stiles will be of similar forms with materials and landscaping selected to create the same leafy lane approach. Housing to the northern fringe will be softer in approach with materials and boundary treatments selected to reflect a semi-rural character. Housing framing streets will be slightly denser and more formal in character to help provide a sense of enclosure and scale and will face the streets to provide active frontages and promote security.

2. The Centre or Heart of the Development.

The centre of the development requires careful planning with a focus on the sensitive inclusion of the existing byway. Buildings will be designed to accentuate and complement the exiting route with architectural characteristics that will create visual interest for pedestrians and cyclists and frame an area of open space at the very centre of the development.

3. The Eastern Side of the Development

The eastern side of the development will be designed to accommodate the steeply sloping nature of this part of the site. Housing will be set out in rows following the contour lines and will rise in tiers towards the centre of the site. A focal building of status will mark the main point of arrival into the site from Wadesmill Road. For the purpose of this document a main point of arrival is defined as being located at the main vehicular entrance into the development with key points of arrival located at various locations within development. Housing plots will be less dense in this area to allow the existing topography to be successfully integrated into the design.

Existing trees and hedgerows will be retained and reinforced around the site perimeter providing an attractive leafy outlook along lanes to the western fringe and combining with public open spaces to the north to create an attractive and harmonious setting.

A carefully considered tree and planting strategy will be integral to the main primary streets and north-south thoroughfare to create verdant, overlooked routes through the development leading to green links and public open spaces.

The internal street network will be privately managed and designed to adoptable standards.

Design Principles - Masterplanning Framework



Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs)

Sustainable Drainage Systems

The new development will explore and incorporate a variety of sustainable drainage systems to mitigate the potential threat of flooding and as part of a comprehensive landscaping strategy to enhance the sustainability of the site and will seek to promote water efficiency through innovative design.

The proposed SuDs strategy for the site is to have a combined hard and soft approach with the potential inclusion of swales, soakaways, permeable surfaces and below ground storage.

The site does not benefit from being located in the vicinity or close by to an accessible ditch to which surface water could discharge. The on-site infiltration testing demonstrated that the site could however benefit from the use of infiltration with a below-ground system, soakaways and use of porous driveways.

Underground storage areas will be located within open spaces and parking areas and in those areas identified by favourable infiltration testing results.

The combined hard/soft approach will mitigate the impact of surface water discharge from the development to decrease any risk of flooding.

The development will connect (subject to agreement with Thames Water) to the existing foul sewer and drainage network beneath Sacombe Road. Other utilities including electricity and communications are available locally for connection with minimal disruption and a small substation may be required within the development.

Thames Water have confirmed that a private foul pump station will be required. To minimise impact the station will be designed below ground with a small service kiosk above ground concealed within a landscaped setting.

Maintenance & Management

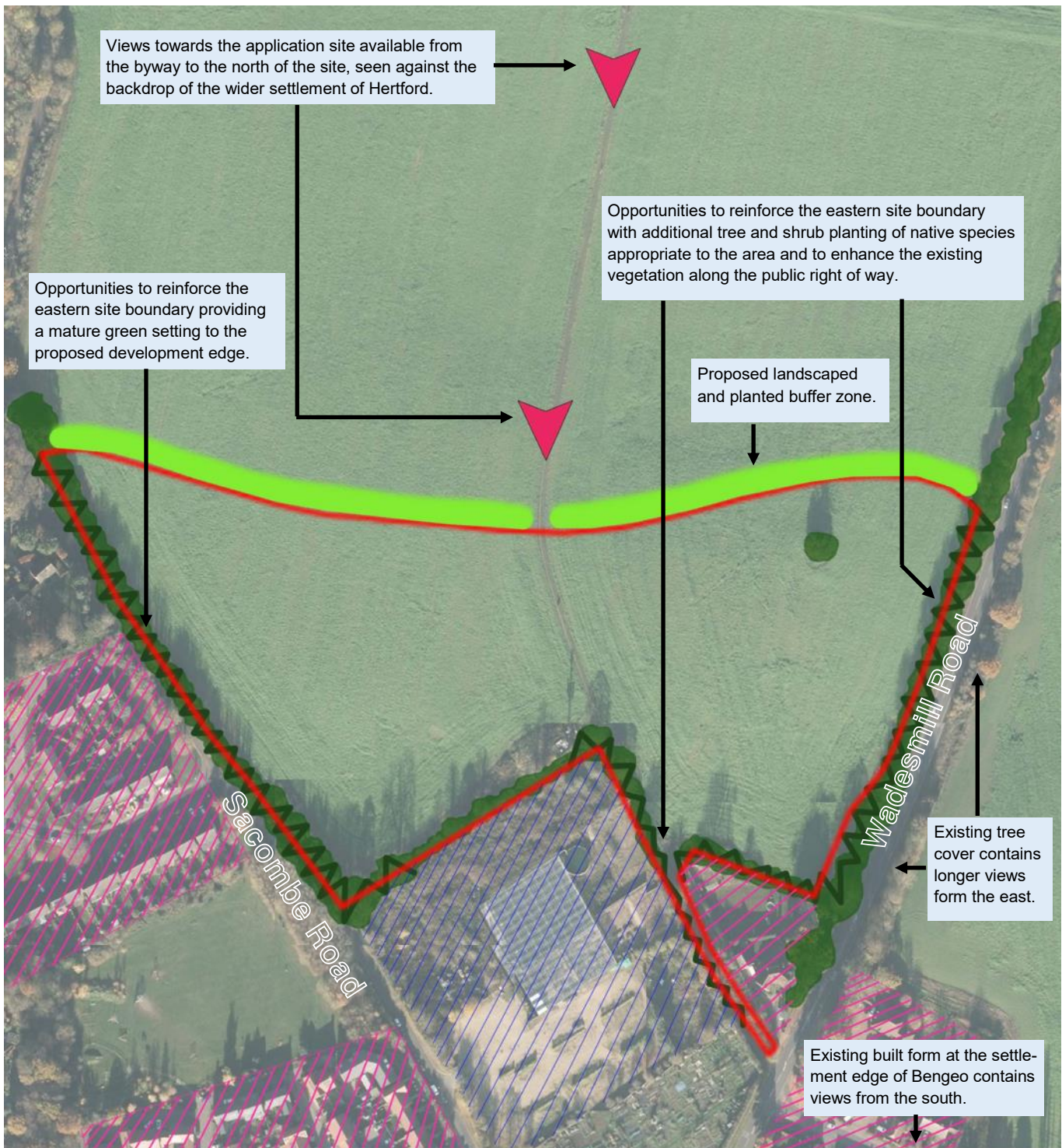
The purpose will be to set out the long term aims and objectives for all stakeholders involved and how components will be developed & maintained through timed operations in perpetuity.

These items will include all publicly assessable open space, SuDs & drainage features, lighting & boundary features, foul pump station and parking management for communal & visitors spaces. The site will be handed over to a resident led management company following practical completion of the site.

It is expected that an estate management company will be responsible for the maintenance and management of public areas and spaces. The estate management company will be established by the developer, and future residents will contribute towards the associated maintenance costs. Once fully established and the scheme is complete, the developer will transfer the land to the estate management company where residents will be encouraged to participate and decide how these areas are governed.



Landscape Strategy - Landscape



Landscape

The development layout will seek to conserve the site's existing perimeter hedges and trees. These landscape features will be reinforced by high quality landscaping and the introduction of new hedgerow and tree planting in and around the built form (Policy DES3). This strategy of proposed vegetation will assist in enhancing existing landscape features and help assimilate the new development into the wider landscape.

The landscape proposals include the following:

- Native tree and shrub planting to provide a buffer around the edge of the site, forming a transitional area between the development proposals and existing vegetation.
- A natural greenspace which forms the setting to a high quality, existing hornbeam tree, to ensure a suitable development off-set and ensure the soft landscaping feature is prominent within the public realm, forming a focal point within the development.
- All areas of greenspace will be well overlooked by properties to ensure that they are attractive and safe to use.
- The design of the publicly accessible open space will provide the following benefits:
 - Encourage biodiversity
 - Landscape and sustainability benefits;
 - Create amenity value
 - Enhance existing hedges and trees with additional landscape elements to provide a mix of habitats.

Views of the site are localised due to topography, built form and vegetation. There are a number of short and medium distance views of the site from the countryside to the north and across the existing allotments and enclosing hedging from the southern approach continuing east along Wadesmill Road. Due consideration will be given to design, scale, form, layout and landscaping which will minimise the visual impact of the development (Policy DES2).

Landscape Strategy - Images



Childrens play combined with landscaping

Strategic landscape proposals will be designed to improve the local environment and create spaces for relaxation, support wildlife and generate additional sensory experiences for residents and visitors.



Wildflower and SuDs areas

Boundary native tree and shrub planting



Street and feature trees and planting

Design Aspirations - Illustrative Images

Summary

Successful placemaking requires the creation of quality spaces that people want to live, work and play in forming connections that can be fully integrated into wider surroundings.

We aim to create a scheme that promotes attractive and sustainable place-making objectives, to produce an environment residents are proud to call home.

A new development to benefit the Bengo community to include:

- The delivery of around 100 new high quality dwellings within a landscaped setting.
- An attractive high quality development with a strong sense of identity.
- Well defined streets and spaces.
- A network of cycle and footpath links in and around the site to be provided on land within the control of the landowner of the application or on adopted highway.
- The reinforcement and enhancement of the existing natural environment.
- A landscape led approach through the provision of a high quality landscape framework.
- The delivery of open market and affordable housing to meet local needs.
- Fully accessible dwellings built to the highest standards.
- A comprehensive SuDs strategy.
- Children's play area within the landscaped setting.
- Policy compliant car parking and cycle storage.
- A highly legible road, cycle and footway network incorporating shared surfaces where appropriate.
- Creating new and strengthening existing vehicular, pedestrian, cycling and equestrian connections in and around the site and to the wider Bengo area.
- Design and construction methods developed from Building Futures Sustainable Design Toolkit.
- Air source heat pumps.
- High speed broadband through FTTP provision subject to existing infrastructure.



Traditional housing designs with high quality materials along a verdant street



Traditional housing designs at phase 1 The Stiles



Traditional palette of materials (phase 1 The Stiles)



Well proportioned detached housing (phase 1 The Stiles)



Simple but effective features and detailing



Organic children's play areas



Housing along a lane at phase 1 The Stiles