



Buntingford
PARKSIDE

Design & Access Statement

Buntingford, Parkside:
Land North of Baldock Road

May 2024



Contents

	Introduction	4
	Part 1 Context	14
	Part 2 Design & Access	32
	Part 3 Masterplanning & Placemaking	49

Introduction

This Design and Access Statement (DAS) is submitted in support of an outline planning application for Buntingford, Parkside to the west of Buntingford, Hertfordshire. The application is submitted by Hallam Land Management Limited.

The development proposed comprises an “Outline planning application for development of up to 600 dwellings (C3), elderly accommodation (C3), Mixed Use Local Centre (including flexible use E, F and Sui Generis), First School, informal and formal open space, associated works and infrastructure including a new access from the A507 and pedestrian bridge over the A10, with all matters reserved save for access”, on a site of 50.12ha.

Buntingford, Parkside has been designed as a comprehensive mixed-use scheme and is being pursued as separate outline planning applications to be submitted for the northern and southern parcels, that can come forward independently of one another. This DAS conveys the proposals for the northern parcel, as a part of the planning application for land north of the A507 Baldock Road.



Purpose of the Design and Access Statement

The Design and Access Statement (DAS) is a tool to explain development proposals in a clear and legible way and document the evolution of the proposals from the original design concept to the development scheme submitted for consideration in the planning application.

The government’s Guidance to Making an Application in the Planning System (2021) states that Design and Access Statements

“provide a framework for applicants to explain how the proposed development is a suitable response to the site and its setting, and demonstrate that it can be adequately accessed by prospective users”.



Site boundary Northern Parcel

The DAS follows best practice guidance that seeks to create well-designed places using the following documents:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
- Planning Practice Guidance, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
- National Design Guide, 2021, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
- National Model Design Code, 2021, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
- Building for a Healthy Life, 2020, Homes England.
- Manual for Streets, 2007, Department for Transport

Structure Of the DAS

The DAS presents the evolution of the application proposals in a logical way, first illustrating how the masterplan has evolved as a comprehensive scheme from initial concepts through to the illustrative masterplan, and demonstrating how engagement with local representatives and the public has informed the design.

The DAS then explores the matters of the planning application site, with an analysis and understanding of the site and its surrounding context, and exploring the Design & Access Matters, such as landscape, character, access and movement, layout, scale, and uses.

Design Concept for Buntingford, Parkside

This section explores the evolution of the design for Buntingford, Parkside, setting out the initial thinking and principles for development, and how this translated into a masterplan informed by an understanding of the context, placemaking principles, and consultations and engagement. This reflects the design as a comprehensive scheme.

Outline Application for Land North of Baldock Road.

Context

A look at the physical, visual, social and economic context of the site and its surrounding context will identify challenges and opportunities posed, as well as the policy and guidance context within which the application is governed. This assessment influences the evolution of the design, in addition to consultation and engagement feedback.

The Design & Access Matters

This section details the application proposals, including setting out the land uses and quantum of development and green infrastructure proposed, access arrangements, layout and density of development, culminating in a proposed Development Framework Plan which sets out this information concisely and legibly.

Masterplanning and Placemaking

This section sets out our thinking on how the development components can be brought together in a way which demonstrates positive placemaking: reflecting the local design context, the character of the existing town, and how the application proposals can enhance and support the town.

Ensuring Design is Prioritised Throughout the Development Process

A range of technical analyses has informed the design of the proposal, which include, but is not limited to:

- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment;
- Ecological Impact Assessment;
- Employment Needs Assessment;
- Flood Risk & Drainage Strategy; and
- Utilities Assessment.

These details are set out in a suite of technical material submitted in support of the application.

‘Prioritising Design’

The DAS sets out how the evolution of the proposal has responded positively to its design context, and, together with the technical analysis, sets some key design principles which have shaped the proposal to date.

It is anticipated that key design parameters will be agreed upon through the determination process and that if the application is approved, planning conditions will require more detailed design guidance to be agreed upon prior to the submission of detailed (Reserved Matters)

applications, which will be required to comply with these details alongside the design principles identified in the DAS and Development Framework Plan.

The following images illustrate exemplars of high-quality placemaking.



Newhall, Harlow



Houlton, Rugby



Brooklands, Milton Keynes



Great Kneighton, Cambridge



Houlton, Rugby



The Garden Café, Cambridge



Houlton, Rugby

Overall design concept for Buntingford Parkside

Design Evolution

This section illustrates how the design has evolved through a series of stakeholder and public engagement events and meetings that helped to refine the design. The masterplanning approach has been to design Buntingford, Parkside as a comprehensive, mixed-use, scheme, and the evolution of the design reflects this.

Emerging Principles

An analysis of the site and its context informed the initial thinking behind the masterplan, illustrated in this principles plan which informed the first draft masterplan.

The principles plan identifies the initial thoughts around the fundamental opportunities of the site and outlines key elements and features that will inform further iterations of the design. The proposals aimed to strengthen Buntingford, Parkside's, relationship with the wider town through three key connections that prioritise active travel and serve as strong links.

Emerging Vision for West Buntingford

West Buntingford is a new neighbourhood, well connected to Buntingford itself but with its own sense of place, protecting the character of the existing town whilst bringing together established and new communities through a network of east-west green links, culminating in Buntingford Park, new open space and parkland designed to enclose the new western extent of the town.

Providing Local Infrastructure and Facilities When Needed



A new local centre forms the focus and heart of West Buntingford, with local shops that complement, not compete with Buntingford High Street, and space for serviced offices and community uses in adaptable buildings. Located along one of the green links, a new First School will meet the needs of the new development alongside existing schools in town.

New Homes for Local People



Recognising that a range of homes is needed to meet local housing needs and create a mixed community, West Buntingford will include 40% affordable homes, homes for those starting out, families and elderly care, and will also offer opportunities for selfbuild/custom build homes.



Moving Around



With a focus on encouraging residents to walk and cycle around town for everyday journeys, a mobility hub will form part of the local centre – offering cycle hire, car club, and a stop for bus services. A network of new footpaths and cycleways will connect to the established town and wider countryside. For longer journeys, new access to Baldock Road and Throcking Lane will link to the A10, designed to avoid putting more pressure on existing roads within the town.

A Healthy and Sustainable Place



West Buntingford will be designed to accord with best practice guidance including Sport England's Active Design to help reduce the reliance on the private car, encourage healthy lifestyles and activity, and to create positive interaction of communities with their environment. As part of carbon reduction measures, all homes will meet or exceed the Future Homes Standard, and there is an opportunity to introduce renewable energy measures alongside new development via a proposed solar farm.

Employment /Jobs



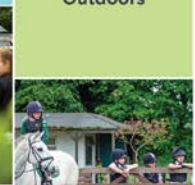
As part of supporting the future resilience of Buntingford as a place to work as well as live, opportunities for smaller scale employment growth within the town will be introduced at West Buntingford at an accessible location well related to the existing town and focused on flexible space to support small businesses.

Co-ordinated Engagement, Planning and Delivery

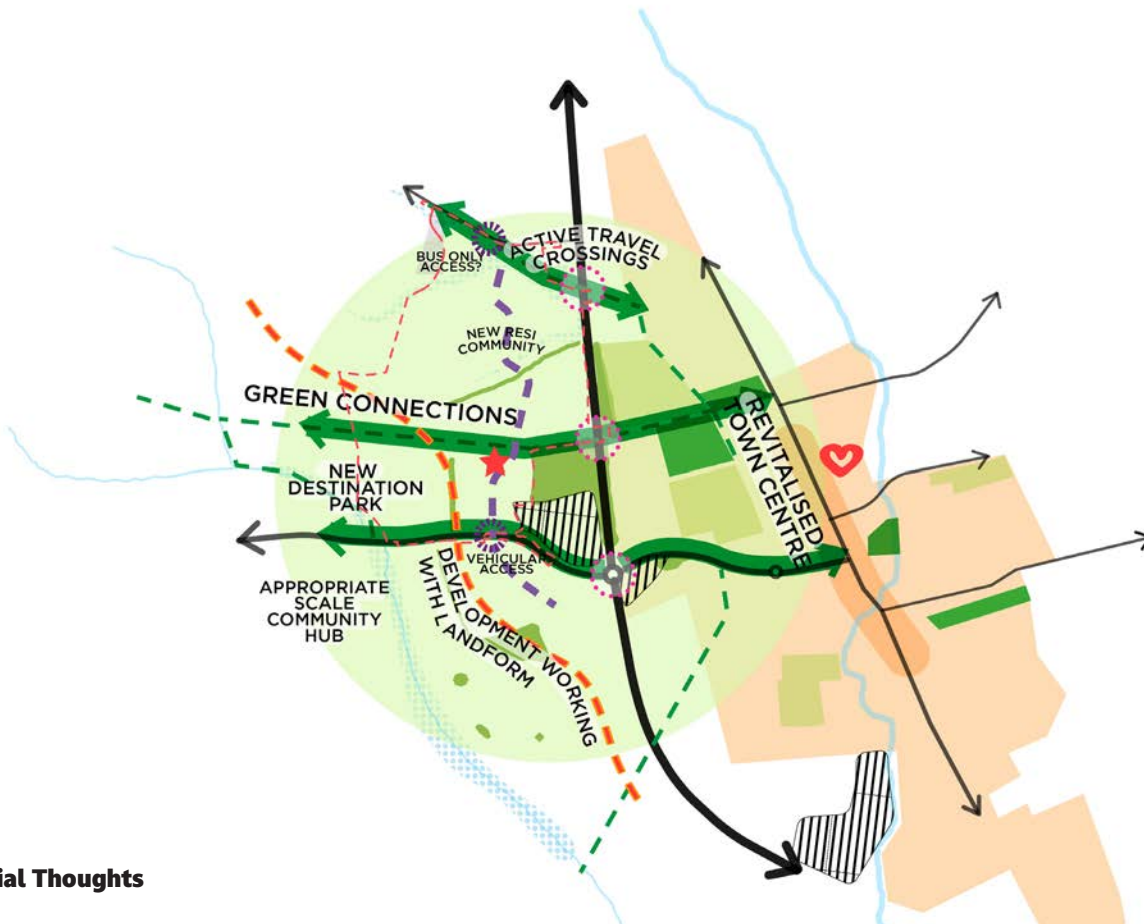


As an experienced master developer, HLM will work with local people to shape plans for West Buntingford. Comprehensive and flexible planning permissions will enable new homes and supporting facilities to be built in a well-planned way to meet the needs of the new community in a timely manner, offer wider benefit to the established town and ensure no additional strain on existing services.

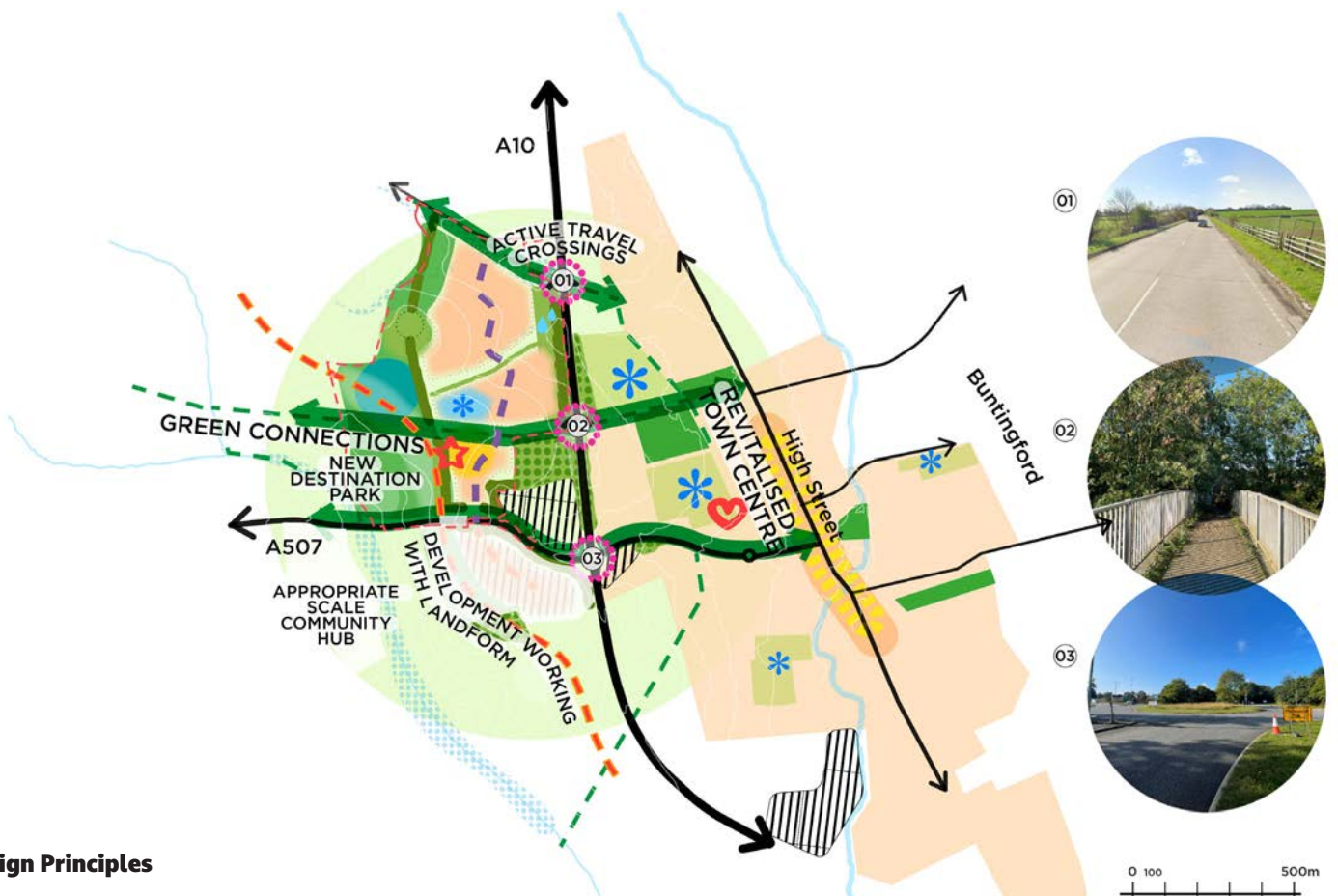
The Great Outdoors



Nature and landscape permeate throughout West Buntingford, encouraging outdoor activity, recreation and active travel. Green links will connect the town to Buntingford Park. The park is a town-wide destination, including space for biodiversity and nature recovery; copse woodland planting; sustainable drainage; informal recreation and leisure alongside formal open space and sports pitches.



Initial Thoughts



Design Principles

Stakeholder Consultation

The evolution of the masterplan has been an iterative process, ensuring the design responds to the context through a detailed site and area assessment as well as consultations to inform the design.

Engagement has taken place with East Herts District Council, Buntingford Town Council, Aspenden Parish Council, and Cottered and Throcking Parish Council, informing the masterplan evolution through positive discussions to ensure Buntingford, Parkside not only benefits the town and its surrounding communities but also to discuss where it can tackle local issues. Engagement has also taken place with members of the public, where an emerging

masterplan, informed by meetings with local councillors, was presented at an in-person event in January 2024, and through a digital consultation platform.

Constructive discussions took place on the:

- 8th November 2023 with Buntingford Town Council,
- 19th December 2023 with Buntingford Town Council and Aspenden Parish Council,
- 31st January 2024 as a public exhibition in Buntingford, and the
- 26th February 2024 with Cottered Parish Council.

The key items discussed with local councillors are noted below.

Key Points	Action
Improvements to local schools.	Hallam Land Management are in discussions with Hertfordshire County Council about expansions needed at Edwinstree Middle School and any improvements that may be needed to Freman College. Buntingford, Parkside will promote active travel to schools through its sustainable transport offering.
Improvements to the local Doctor's Surgery.	Onsite provision has been made for a doctor's surgery, and discussions will take place with East Hert's District Council and the NHS to identify the need and requirements.
Concerns regarding traffic along the A507 traffic levels and impacts in the surrounding area.	Hallam Land Management will undertake a transport assessment and model traffic on the surrounding road network. Discussions will also take place with Hertfordshire County Council to understand what highway improvements can be made in the wider area.
Concerns around the capacity of the sewage network.	Onsite sustainable drainage is being considered as a part of the design to mitigate the impacts on the local water network and mitigate flooding. Discussions are ongoing with Thames Water regarding foul sewer capacity. The applicant is also investigating the option to provide a Water Treatment Works on-site.
If solar panels are brought forward, their design should support biodiversity and enable underlying plant growth. Queried whether housing in Buntingford, Parkside will feature solar panels.	All new homes will meet the Future Homes Standard, and could include solar panels. The applicant is exploring the provision of a solar farm. This would form a part of the biodiversity network, supporting wildflowers and grazing underneath. The detailed design of the solar farm will be subject to the solar farm operator.

Consultation feedback form

Consultation website



Consultation Masterplan



Public consultation event



Public Consultation Feedback

The public consultation was open for just over 6 weeks following an in-person public exhibition, that presented the components of the design concept, from the green and blue spaces, through to movement and community amenities, building up to the

illustrative masterplan that was presented as a comprehensive, mixed-use scheme, including the northern and southern parcels. The key items raised in the consultation, and discussed in detail in the Statement of Community Involvement, are summarised below and constructively inform the masterplan evolution.

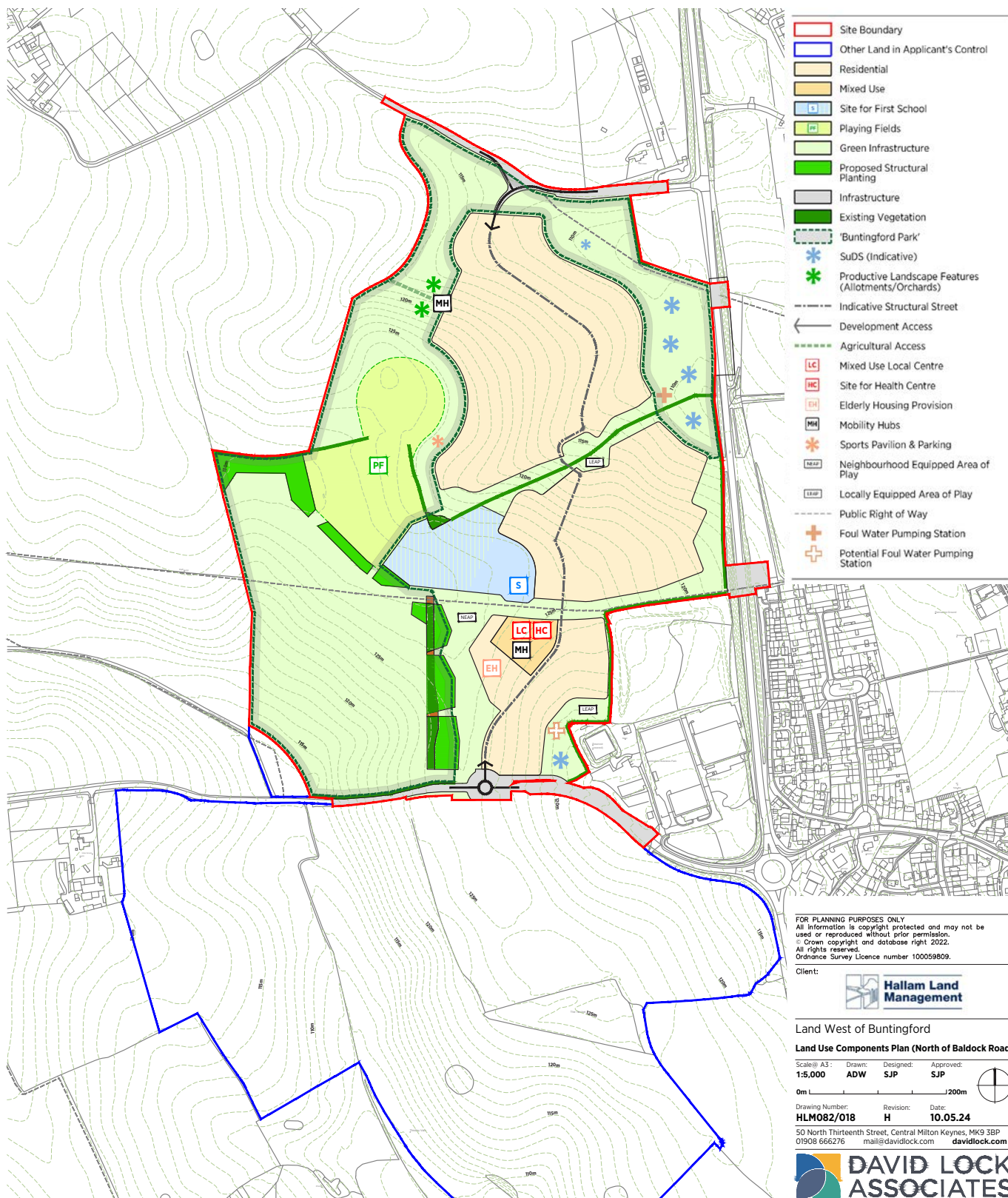
Key Points	Action
Impact on existing infrastructure and how this will impact existing residents.	Development west of the town and associated accessibility of the A10 will limit the transport impacts on the High Street, and through the provision of strong active travel connections between the existing town and Buntingford, Parkside, existing and new local services will be readily accessible on foot and bicycle to all.
Transport issues.	Appropriate access will be provided to the proposals that will cater for the associated vehicle movements and will also serve to provide high-quality connection by sustainable modes. The offsite impact of proposals will also be investigated through a detailed Transport Assessment, and should it be required, offsite mitigation will be set out in this report.
Concerns around the preservation of the Green Belt and the biodiversity net gain of the development.	A significant proportion of the land will be delivered as publicly accessible green infrastructure and the establishment of Buntingford Park to include many amenities for the whole town (e.g. allotments, playing fields etc). Buntingford, Parkside will make provision for at least a 10% net gain in biodiversity value.
Sustainability measures.	In recognition of the climate emergency, the development will incorporate a range of measures to reduce carbon emissions, mitigate the effects of climate change, and ensure the long-term resilience of the development to the effects of climate change.
Principle of development.	Further growth is required in Buntingford in recognition of the shortfall in housing land supply, recognised limited employment opportunities in the town, and in support of the review of the East Hertfordshire District Plan which is due to get underway in the coming months.
Location of development and coalescence.	Through the provision of strong active travel connectivity, the development can be integrated into the town. Hallam Land Management recognise the importance of the existing smaller settlements of Throcking, Cottered and Aspenden retaining their identity. Buntingford Park will establish a significant formal buffer between Buntingford and these smaller settlements.
Drainage system, flooding risks, and sewage.	A detailed assessment of the site has identified no significant flood risk to the site. We are aware of ongoing issues with the existing foul sewer network that serves Buntingford. A connection to the existing public sewer is achievable and once planning permission is granted we will be able to work with Thames Water to deliver their obligation to accept flows from new developments. The applicant is also investigating the option of providing a Water Treatment Works on-site.
Concerns surrounding the design of new homes and the aesthetic of the local area.	Detailed design will include a review of the unique townscape characteristics of Buntingford and inform elements of the architecture and public realm design. There is an opportunity to re-interpret some of the best local vernacular and design elements and embed them in the development of new buildings.

Development Framework Plan

The development framework plan illustrates the vision for Buntingford, Parkside, outlining the land uses and quantum of development, site access and movement, the proposed layout, scale and density and landscaping elements.

The site is being brought forward as separate outline planning applications and has been designed as a comprehensive proposal.

Development Framework Plan





Part 1 Context

Policy and Design Context

Design Influences

The National Design Guide

2021 – Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

The National Design Guide demonstrates how well-designed places can be achieved. It builds upon the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to set out the basic principles of good design using 10 characteristics.

The NDG states that:

“Well-designed places and buildings come about when there is a clearly expressed ‘story’ for the design concept and how it has evolved into a design proposal” which “inform and address all ten characteristics”.

CONTEXT

IDENTITY

BUILT FORM

MOVEMENT

NATURE

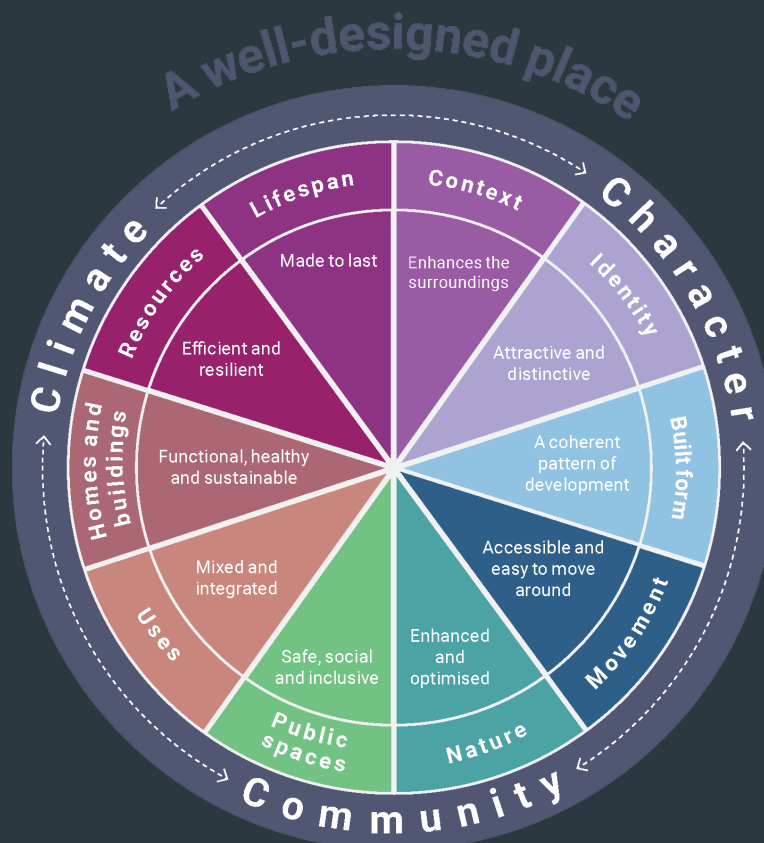
PUBLIC SPACES

USES

HOMES AND BUILDINGS

RESOURCES

LIFESPAN



Building for a Healthy Life

2022 - Homes England

The Building for a Healthy Life toolkit highlights the qualities of successful places through 12 considerations to inform design and placemaking decisions from the beginning of the design process. It stems from the original Building for Life 12, seeking to create healthy places for people and nature. The guidance, produced in partnership with Homes England and NHS England allows stakeholders to assess the quality of the scheme, using a traffic light system, against the quality of each of the considerations listed throughout the guide.



Streets for a Healthy Life

2022 – Homes England

Prepared to be read as a companion to Building for a Healthy Life and the Manual for Streets, Streets for a Healthy Life looks to illustrate best practices in street design. The guide identifies the principle functions of streets and uses them as categories to critique case studies to highlight how the functions of streets change according to the street typologies.



Draft Hertfordshire Place and Movement Planning and Design Guidance

2023 – Hertfordshire County Council

The draft P&MPDG supports the Local Transport Plan by ensuring proposals achieve sustainable design. The detailed guidance is divided into four parts:

- Part 1: Setting the Scene and the Development Management Process in Hertfordshire;
- Part 2: What Sustainable and Responsible Development looks like – The Hertfordshire Vision;
- Part 3: Pre-Planning Design Requirements; and
- Part 4: Detailed Design and Specification.

This guidance seeks to strengthen the relationship between transport, land-use planning, and the environment to promote sustainable development that reduces car dependency in favour of walking, cycling and public transport. A consultation on the draft guidance closed in 2023, and so it may be subject to change.

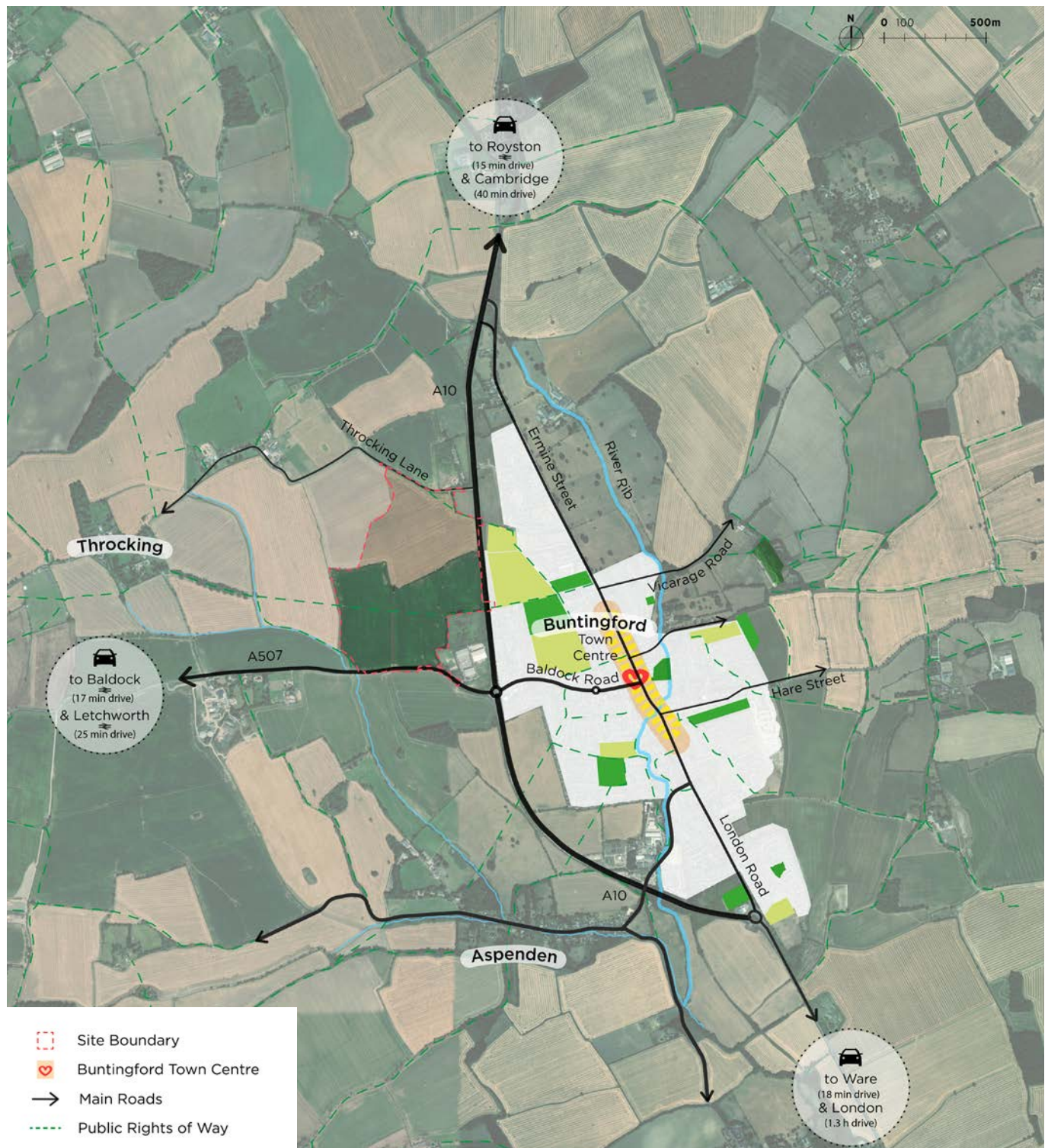
Site Context

Site Location

Buntingford is a market town towards the northern edge of the East Hertfordshire district. It is surrounded by open countryside, acting as a centre for numerous outlying villages that serves

everyday needs. The historic town centre lies on a plateau in the valley of the River Rib, along the former Roman Road, Ermine Street, of which a section of the road is still named, and many remnants

of the town's history as a key stop on the route between London and York, remain.



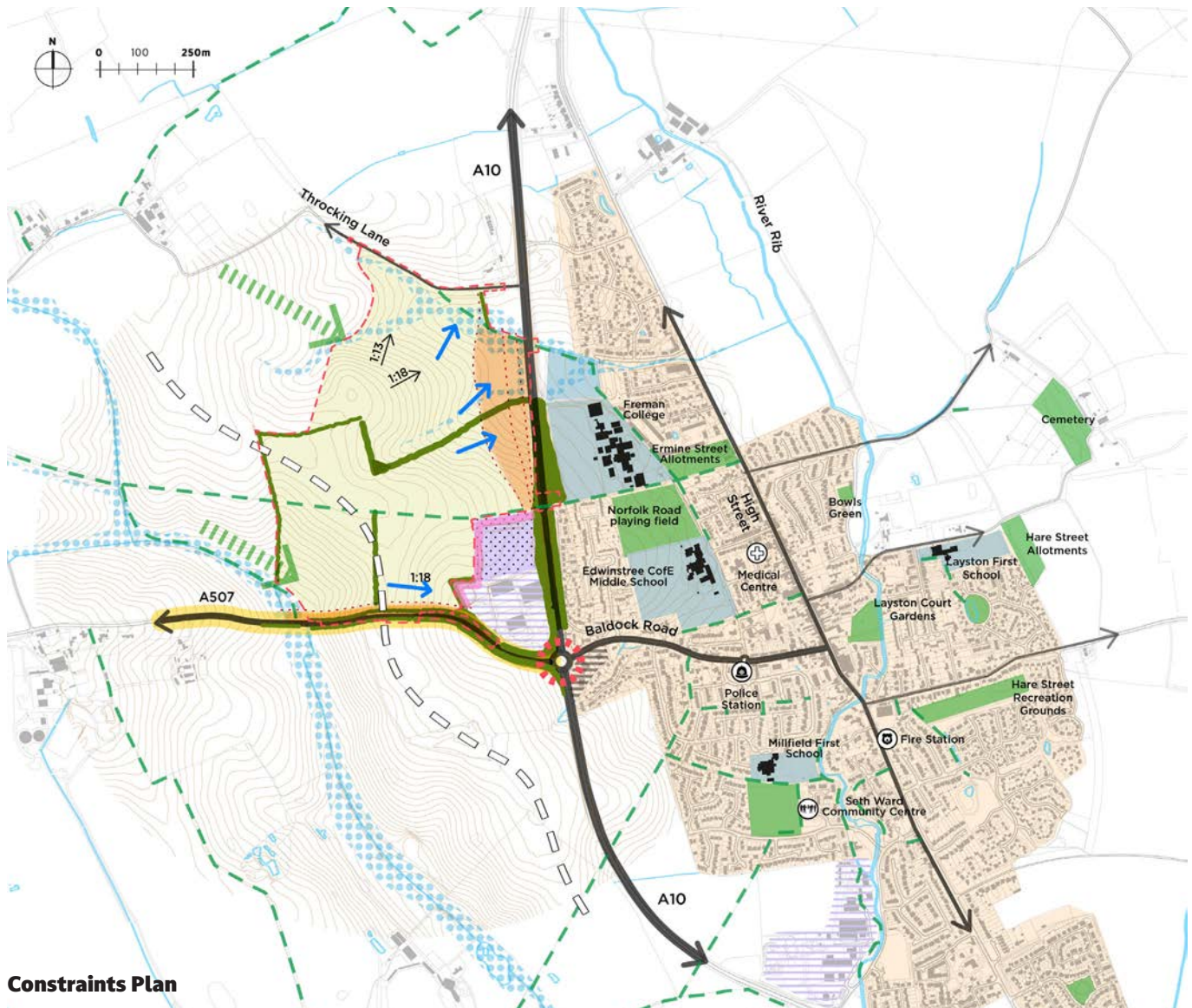
Site Context Plan

Description of the Site

The site, which lies to the west of Buntingford and north of the A507 Baldock Road, is 50.12ha in size, and is distinct, with its eastern boundary characterised by the A10, which connects Buntingford to London

and Cambridge with railway stations along the route connecting to those respective destinations. This boundary transitions from a steep embankment with dense vegetation and woodland to a gentle

topography with the edge marked by wooden post and rail fencing, with visual connectivity towards the new developments north of Buntingford and beyond to the tree-tops of the River Rib Valley.



Constraints Plan

- | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Site Boundary | Local Plan Employment Allocation | Surface Water Flooding |
| Existing Settlements | Out of Town Retail uses | Water Flow |
| Main Roads | Education | Medium-High Noise Risk |
| Road Barrier including roadside vegetation | Key Open Spaces | Land Slope Gradient more than 1:20 |
| Vehicle dominated roundabout | 1m contour lines | Inward Views |
| Employment Land | Ridgeline | Back of Employment Area |
| Local Plan Employment Allocation | Existing hedgerows/trees | |
| Out of Town Retail uses | Public Rights of Way | |

Along this eastern edge, straddled between the A10, and the Buntingford, Parkside site, lies the Buntingford Business Park, an underground reservoir, and scrubland, allocated for business uses in the local plan, with dense vegetation and tree planting along its edge. Baldock Road (A507) runs along the southern boundary of the site connecting Buntingford to Baldock. The A507 is characterised by dense hedgerows and vegetation that screen views into the

site from the A507. Open countryside dominates the western edge of the site, with the site boundary following the intermittent hedgerows and vegetation that exist on-site, and following the topography of the land in areas.

Throcking Lane defines the northern boundary, connecting the village of Throcking to the A10. Along the north-eastern edge, the boundary is demarcated by wooden post and rail fencing, which ends where Public

Right of Way (PRoW) 41 meets Throcking Lane.

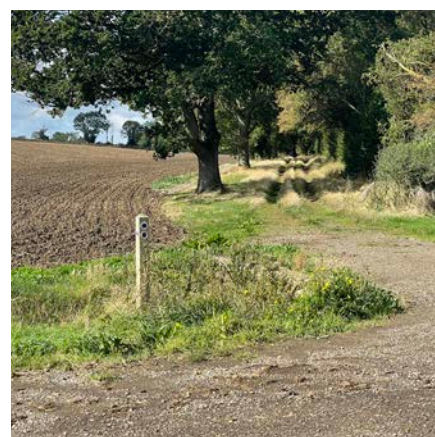
Two PRoWs cross the site, with PRoW 41 in the north-east linking Throcking Lane to Norris Way and Freman College. Where the PRoW meets the A10, signage indicates the route, but no pedestrian crossing is currently provided. Also linking the site to Freman College is PRoW 40, connecting the site to Buntingford to the east via a pedestrian bridge over the A10, and to the west



Existing A10 Bridge:



A10, looking North



Thistley Vale Brook Public Right of Way



Baldock Road (A507) looking west



Site viewed from A10 bridge



Northern parcel, looking north

connecting to a single-farm track (PRoW 39) along the Thistley Vale Brook.

The site itself is and has historically been agricultural in use, with an undulating topography that visually separates it from the nearby villages of Throcking and Cottered where a ridgeline runs through the western portion of the site. Other site features include a newly planted plantation, a hedgerow which crosses the site east-west and a 33kV power line which bisects the site north-south.

Landscape Context

This section provides a summary of the landscape features relevant to the evolution of the design and masterplan.

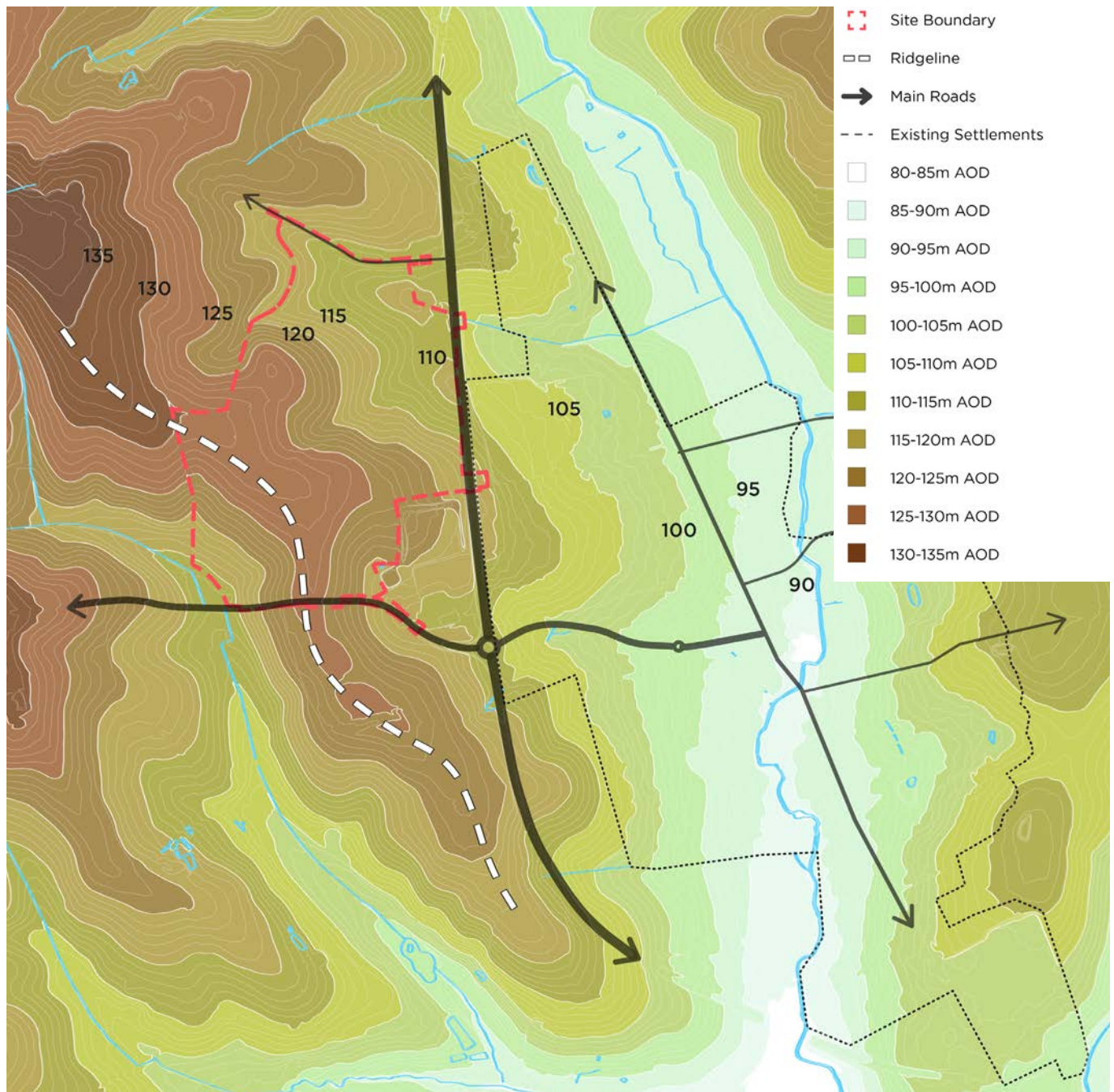
The site consists of arable and pastoral fields, with the field boundaries demarcated by sparse and complete hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The boundaries of the site are marked by overgrown hedgerows, scrub vegetation, and vegetated road verge.

The site is situated in the local Cherry Green Arable Plateau Landscape Character Area, which is predominantly an arable landscape, with limited woodland cover, organic lanes, and an isolated and remote feel.

The site does not feature a high landscape quality or condition, is characterised by its individual elements and does not feature any long-distance panoramic views.



Parcel north of the A507

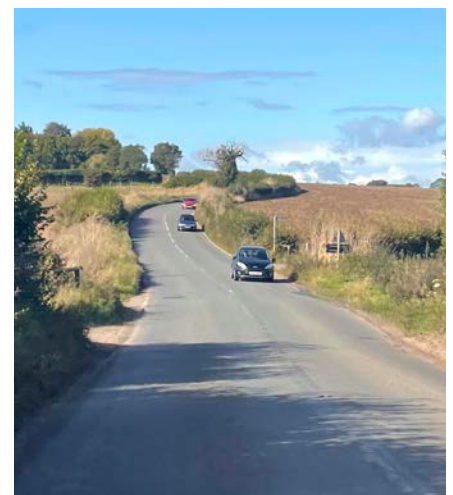


Existing Topography Plan.

Topography

The site experiences an undulating topography, situated on the western slope of the River Rib Valley, along a local ridge between the River Rib to the east and the Thistley Vale Brook to the west. The site experiences no significant gradients, instead gradually sloping downwards towards the east and west.

The topography peaks towards the south of the site, called Tire Hill, along Baldock Road.



Topography of the site from Baldock Road

Water and Drainage

The proposed site is identified as lying outside of the fluvial and tidal flood risk zone according to the Environment Agency's (EA) published flood map for planning. Flood zones associated with the Thistley Vale Brook are located immediately southwest of the site, and the risk of fluvial flooding is low due to the site's topography.

Areas of potential surface water flooding have been identified within the site, corresponding to the existing topography of the site and the surrounding areas. Whilst it is anticipated that the risk to the site is low, further mitigation measures have been considered as a part of the development proposals.

No other sources of flooding have been identified which are considered to pose a risk to the proposals.



Wintringham, St Neots:



Ashridge Meadows, Wokingham



Lawley, Telford



Brooklands, Milton Keynes

Ecology

The following provides a summary of the baseline ecological conditions. Further details can be found in the Ecological Impact Assessment, submitted with the planning application.

The site consists of three arable fields, with no statutory designations on or within 3km of the site. There are no non-statutory designations on site, with eight Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) within a 2km radius.

The site features a small woodland copse in the centre of the site, alongside a ditch, and there are no identified ancient woodlands or tree designations on site or on the immediately adjacent land.

The fields currently feature narrow margins that support common arable plant species, although a small area of scrubland exists along the northern boundary. These ecological features are characteristic of the wider landscape, but given their limited extent and absence of rare and notable plants, they are not ecologically significant.

The site has a low diversity of grasses and herb species, with a narrow strip of grassland running along the central ditch. The ditch is of local ecological importance, supporting aquatic vegetation and supporting

local fauna. Many hedgerows on site are associated with a wet ditch and are of local ecological importance, however, many are defunct with large gaps, and ground flora restricted by the narrow field margins.

The habitats on site provide limited opportunities for bats, limiting them to hedgerows and the woodland copse. A 2023/24 winter bird survey identified that the site supports a limited diversity of bird species, and the site is of local ecological importance for birds. Desktop studies have taken place to identify mammals, reptiles, and other ecological features on-site, and on-site surveys will take place in 2024.



Ecology precedents.

Landscape and Visual Considerations

This section provides a summary of the Landscape and Visual considerations for the Buntingford, Parkside site. The full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Report is submitted as a part of the planning application.

Open views of the site can be found from the PRow's 40 and 41, though the undulating topography prevents views of the entirety of the site. In contrast, built development and infrastructure provide a degree of enclosure to the south-east. The gently rising topography to the west, in addition to the

vegetation, creates a strong visual relationship between the western portion of the site and its surrounding landscape to the north, south and west.

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment identifies the site exhibits a low to medium sensitivity to visual effects, and efforts should be made to visually contain development and reinforce green infrastructure throughout the site.

The LVIA report set out a series of key landscape design principles that guide the detailed design:

- To strengthen green infrastructure, responding to the landscape character and topography.
- To extend woodlands and enhance the biodiversity of trees and vegetation.
- To locate development in enclosed areas of the site.
- To improve the quality and character of the landscape.
- To enhance the environmental and amenities values of the site.
- To ensure a built-form that is of a sensitive massing and scale to the landscape and townscape context, particularly from views from the PRow's and to the west of the site.



The site from Throcking Lane



The site from Thistley Vale Brook Valley

Local Character

On the site, and within its immediate proximity, there are no Listed or Locally Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas or other statutory designations. This reflects the history of the site as open agricultural fields.

Buntingford, itself, has a particularly rich heritage, especially within the core of the town, which is designated as a conservation area. Buntingford has its roots as far back as the Iron Age, but gained prominence as a Roman settlement along the historic Ermine Street between London and York, now The High Street and Station Road. Its position here established Buntingford as an important coaching town with a weekly market

that continues to this day, and inns and coach houses, of which many remain along the High Street. This history led to Buntingford's growth being focused along a north-south axis, linear along the High Street, as well as later growth, west, along Baldock Road.

Buntingford was formerly the terminus of the Buntingford branch line which linked the settlement to south Hertfordshire and London. This closed as a part of the Beeching cuts.

The narrow, linear, High Street is brimming with character and heritage. Many of the original buildings which were formerly coaching houses or places of trade, such as Maltheuses

and Tanneries, have since been converted into retail units with dwellings above. Many of these buildings are listed, ranging from as early as the 15th century, and including a mix of Tudor, Stuart, Hanoverian and Georgian buildings, which retain architectural detailing, such as steep red tile roofs, stone window surrounds, and carriage entrances.

The settlement experienced little development for decades, with growth largely focused along the High Street for a significant period until the 1970s to 2010s, bringing with it new development, architectural styles and new facilities and amenities.



1883 - 1884



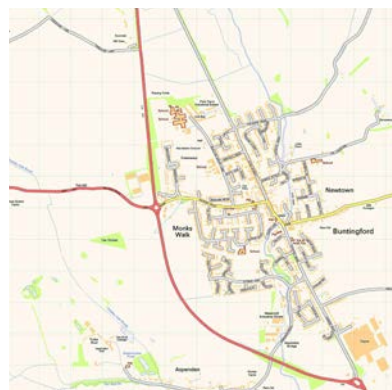
1948 - 1950



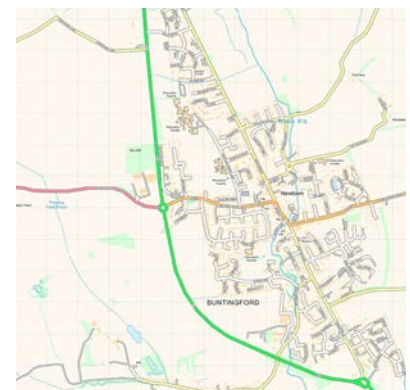
1978 - 1981



1988 - 1992



2010



2024

Buntingford Character



Residential Character



Access and Movement

A transport assessment has been prepared separately. This section highlights its key findings as well as identifying key opportunities the transport context creates.

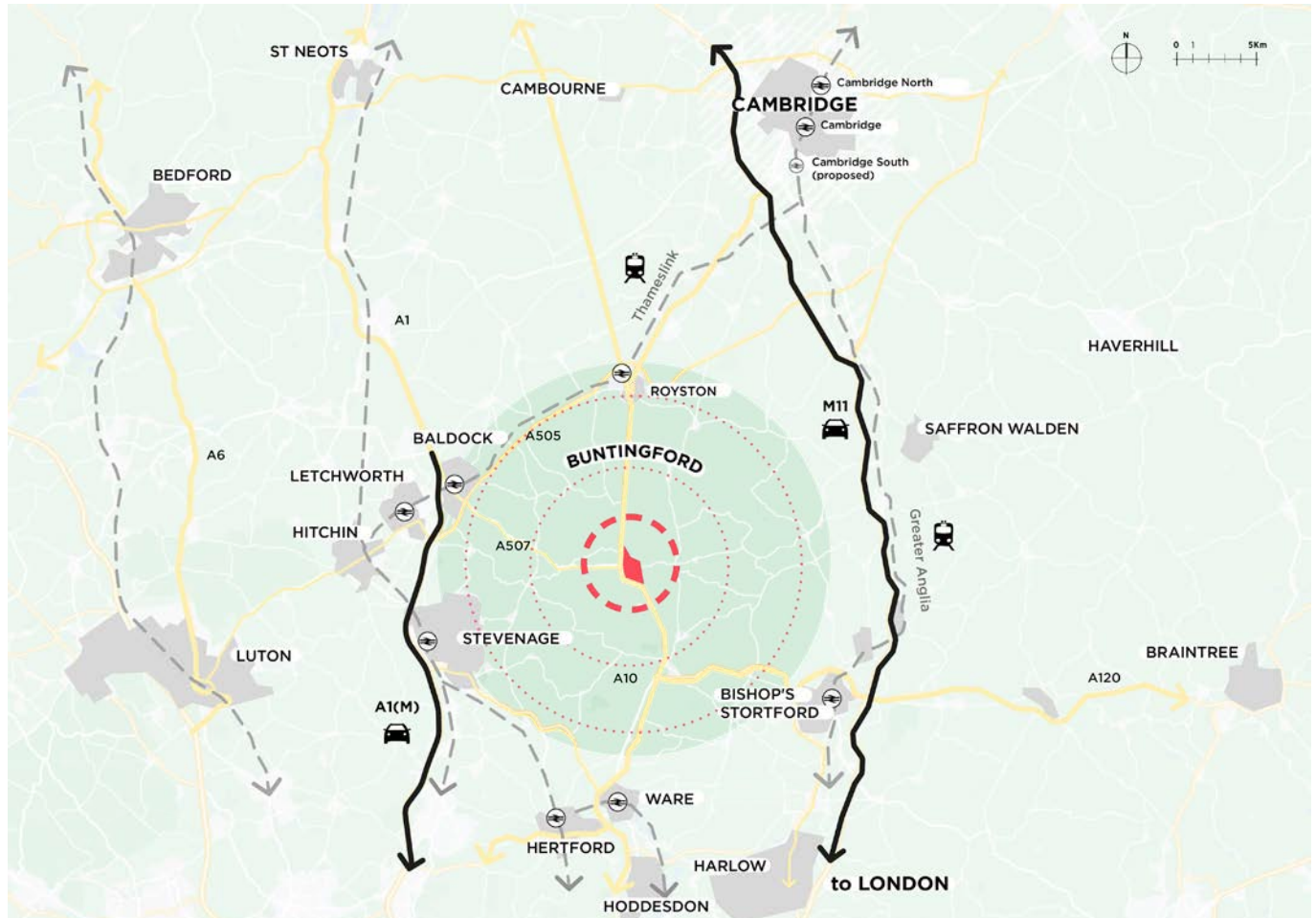
In terms of pedestrian connectivity, the site is linked to Buntingford via a footbridge over the A10, and given the high walkability of the town, and its potential to support active travel, there is the opportunity to increase and strengthen the active travel links between the

site and Buntingford. This includes the potential for a network of walking, cycling and public transport routes within the site itself, but also onwards into Buntingford, by providing safe, accessible, and attractive connections along the A507 and across the A10.

The A507 currently provides a vehicular connection between Buntingford and Baldock, comprising a vehicular carriageway, with hedgerows on either side. A shared pedestrian/cycleway is only present along part of the northern edge, linking the

Buntingford Business Park to the town and crossing the A10 with no formal crossing.

The A10 runs along the eastern edge of the site, providing a convenient connection between London and Cambridge. The A10 is highly accessible, due to its proximity, via the A507 and Throcking Lane. The A10 has no pedestrian footpaths, with vehicles travelling up to 60mph. Ensuring the A10 does not pose a significant barrier to active travel movement between the site and Buntingford will be key to the design.



Wider Connectivity Plan

Throcking Lane experiences significantly less traffic, as a link connecting the small

village of Throcking to the A10. The lane consists of a vehicle carriageway, with

grass verges on either side and a hedge, set back, along the northern edge.



Existing Transport Plan

- | | | |
|----------------------|---------------|-----------|
| Site Boundary | Bus Route 386 | Bus Stop |
| Existing Settlements | Bus Route 331 | Cycleways |
| Main Roads | Bus Route 18 | |

Economic and Social Context

Buntingford is a market town that plays an important role as a key service centre for the outlying rural villages in the north of the East Herts District.

The district is experiencing a growing population. Its proximity to London has added pressures, with a high number of young families and first-time buyers migrating from London to East Herts. This growing population is coupled with an ageing population. East Herts has a higher-than-average population aged over 65, representing 18.7% of all residents, a 32% increase from the 2011 Census, and of whom 89% are living in an under-occupied property. For all households in Buntingford, 73.5% are under-occupied, compared with 70.6% across the district. The need to house Britain's ageing population is a growing one, and the elderly population is expected to grow.

Furthermore, East Herts is experiencing affordability pressures, with a median-priced house costing 12.29 times a median salary, beyond the reach of most residents. Property prices in East Herts have increased 62% since 2011, far higher than neighbouring authorities, and this issue is particularly acute in Buntingford. The level of homelessness in the East Herts district has remained relatively consistent over the past five years between 477 households in 2022/23 and 565 households.

In recent years, Buntingford has seen a loss in employment provision, with a significant proportion of this loss in available floorspace accounted to the closure of the Sainsbury's Distribution Depot in 2002. A lack of employment opportunities has caused a high level of out-commuting, and with job growth estimated to increase by 38,000 across the district by 2031, there is a need for new employment provisions in Buntingford.

Local Facilities

Buntingford acts as a key service centre for the surrounding villages, as identified in the Buntingford Community Area Neighbourhood Plan. The High Street offers a wide range of facilities and services including a cycle shop, hairdressers, and butchers, as well as local supermarkets, pharmacies, pubs and community facilities. Most of the town's facilities and services are based here, but the town also has several employment sites and industrial estates that offer a range of services, as well as a range of sports facilities distributed throughout the town.





Part 2 Design & Access

Quantum of Development

The evolution of the masterplan through the assessment of the context, public engagement, and various iterations of the design concepts and proposals, has culminated in a masterplan that responds to its context, the landscape, and the needs and wants of the local community.



Brooklands, Milton Keynes



Brooklands, Milton Keynes



Alconbury Weald



Brooklands, Milton Keynes

The design approach for Buntingford, Parkside is landscape-led, with a strong focus on access to high-quality green space for both the new and existing communities of Buntingford.



Alconbury Weald

Quantum of Development

Green and Blue Infrastructure

Landscape context and design have driven the masterplan evolution to create a proposal that delivers high-quality green spaces for health and well-being, as well as biodiversity and environmental benefits.

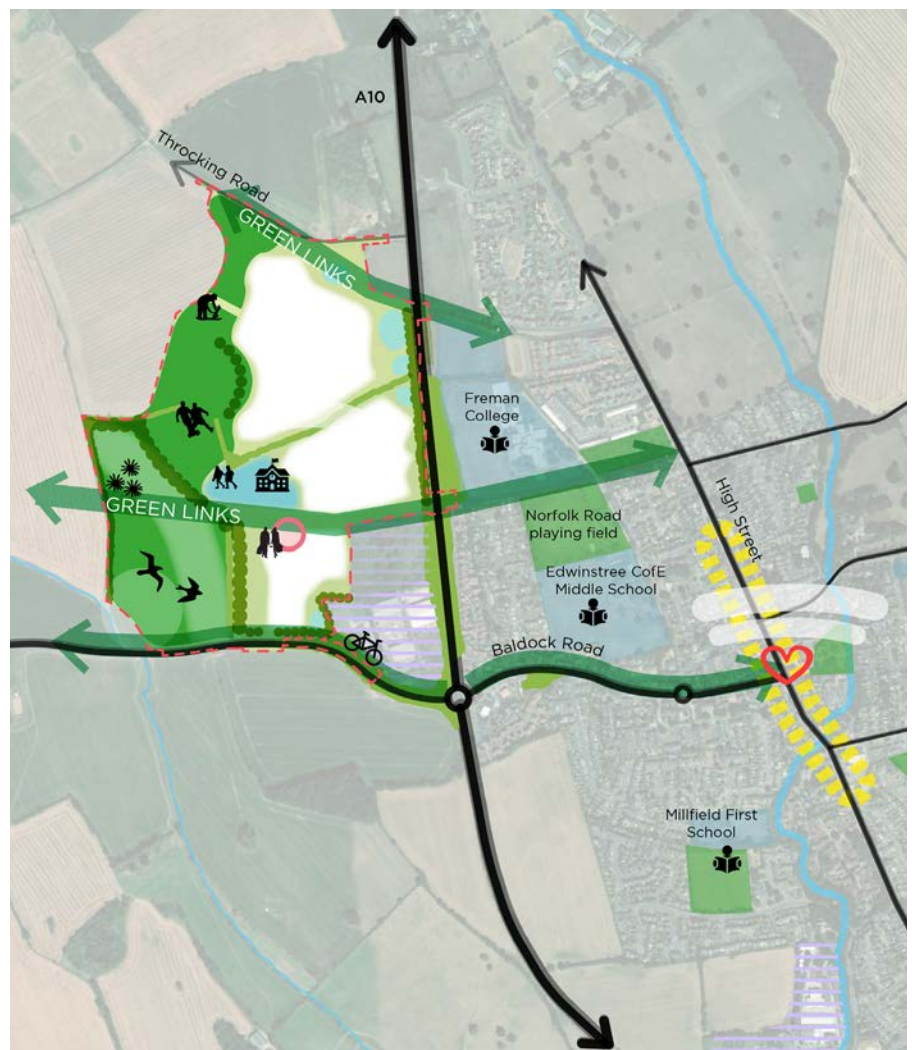
Green infrastructure will weave throughout the development, with a series of green corridors, enhanced hedgerows and habitats, and a variety of spaces that offer different opportunities from

sport and play, to socialising and rest. The existing green infrastructure network will be preserved, enhanced, and embedded into the proposal, supporting local wildlife as well as giving residents closer contact with nature.

The most significant opportunity is Buntingford Park, which will create 22.95ha of parkland, accessible to new and existing communities, that offers recreational opportunities, as well as informal spaces for the environment to flourish.

Buntingford, Parkside will feature a site-wide drainage strategy which will sustainably manage surface water run-off from the new development and mitigate flood risk to the site and surrounding area.

The green infrastructure network will have a positive management regime that ensures the long-term establishment and maintenance of the proposals.



Green Infrastructure Vision

Community Heart

The local centre will be a true heart for the community, providing much-needed new amenities for the town, adjacent to the proposed First School, in proximity to Buntingford Park and various playing spaces. The local centre will be well connected along the green active travel corridor into Buntingford, and sustainable travel opportunities to this centre enhanced through the provision of a mobility hub. The local centre will be characterised by its public square, which will be well-overlooked and animated by residences, flexible

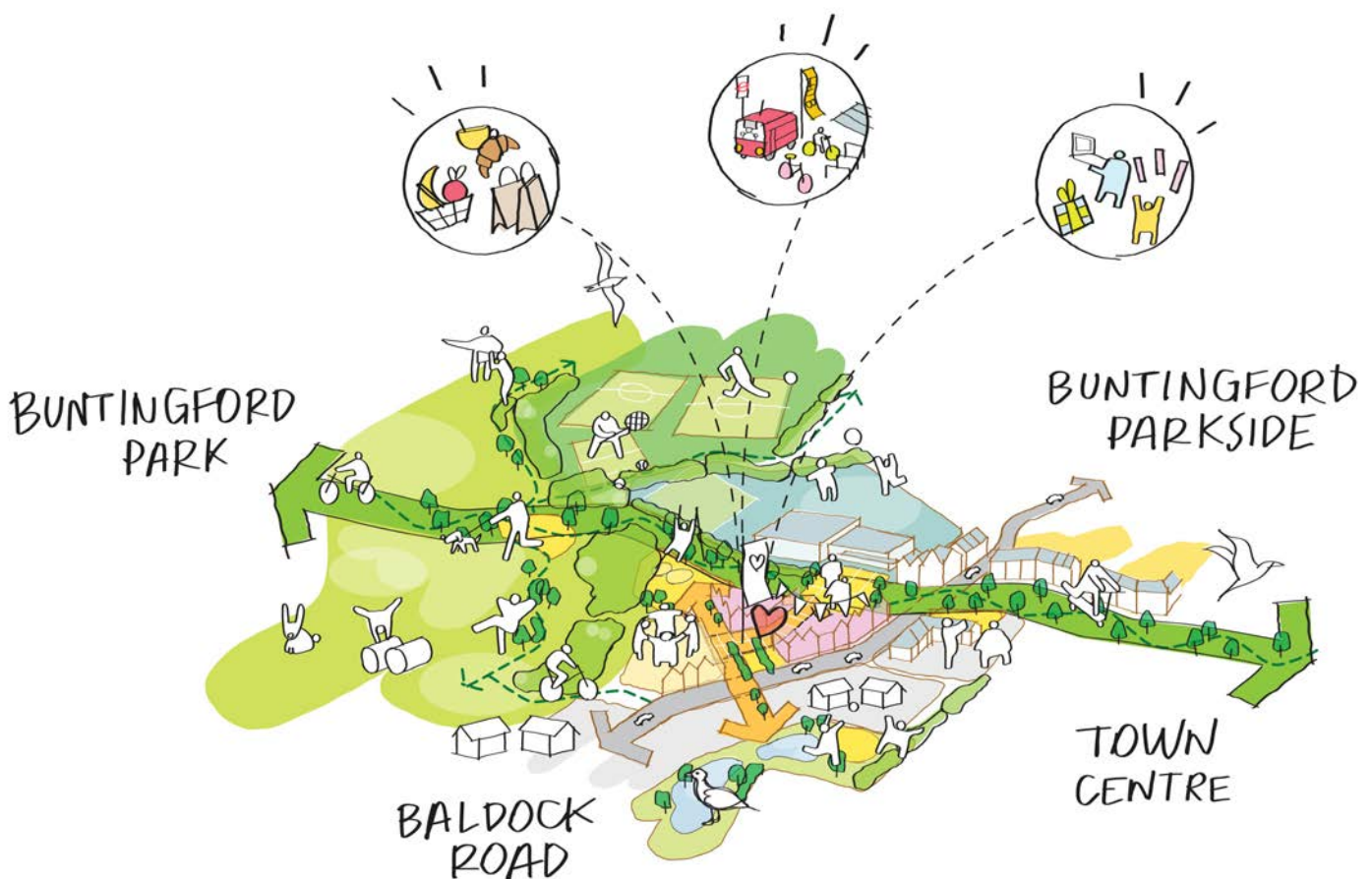
commercial units and a small convenience store.

The local centre is perfectly suited to serve the day-to-day needs of Buntingford, Parkside residents, yet also accessible to the wider town, providing a range of flexible commercial units, ensuring that the centre complements, rather than competes with, Buntingford's existing offer.

A key element to these new provisions is a new Doctor's Surgery to help ease existing pressures identified, by providing a new facility for Buntingford, in a highly accessible location within the local centre at Buntingford,

Parkside. Understanding the challenges around delivering a Doctor's Surgery will be important to ensure that the facility can be successfully delivered. Should it not be feasible, or if it is not required, to bring the Doctor's Surgery forward, the parcel will remain flexible to commercial development, but only in the instance that a Doctor's Surgery cannot be delivered.

In addition, a community centre will provide the space for all-weather community events and social gatherings. A detailed layout and mix of uses will be finalised at a later planning stage.



Local Centre Concept Sketch

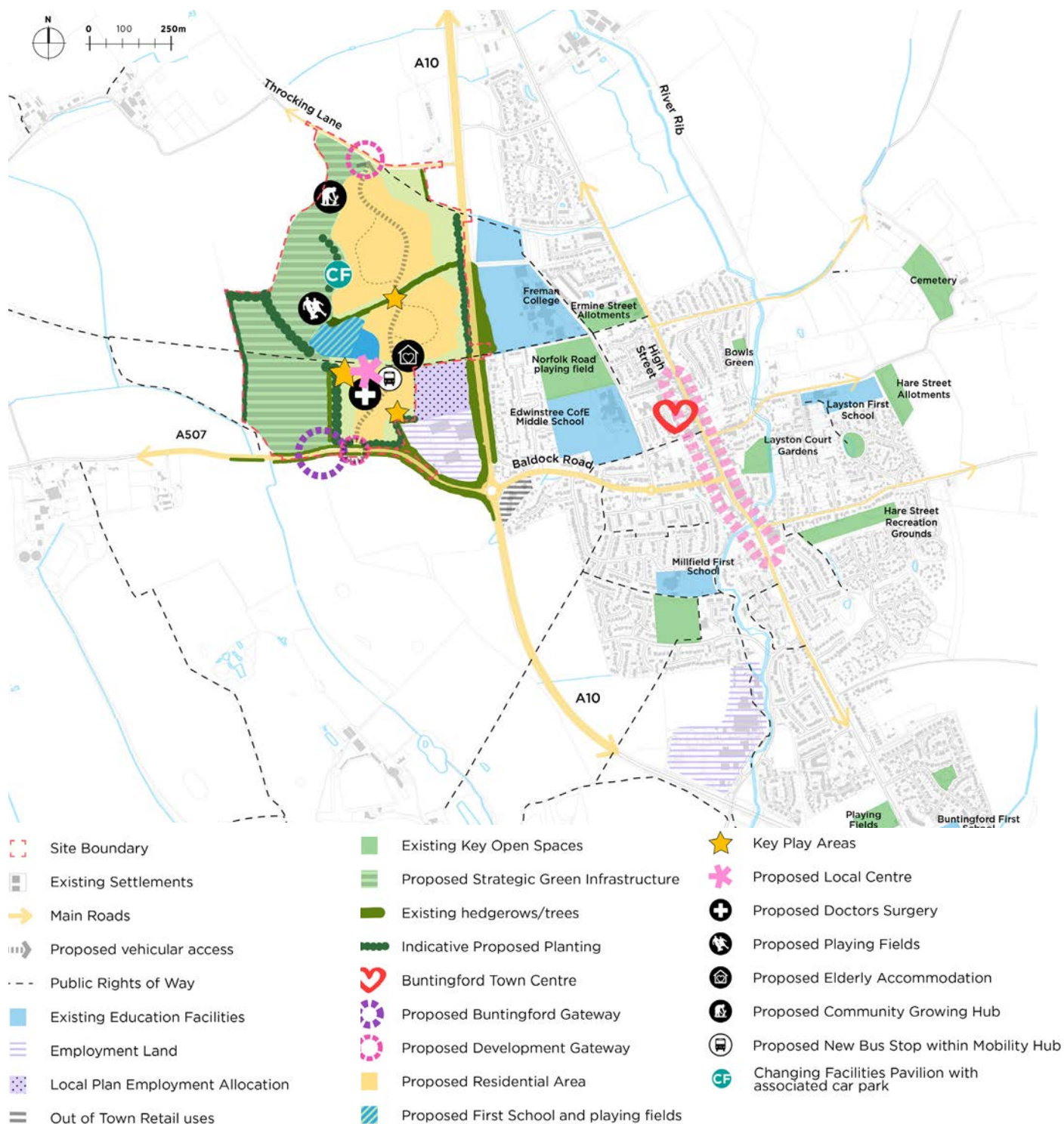


Houlton, Rugby



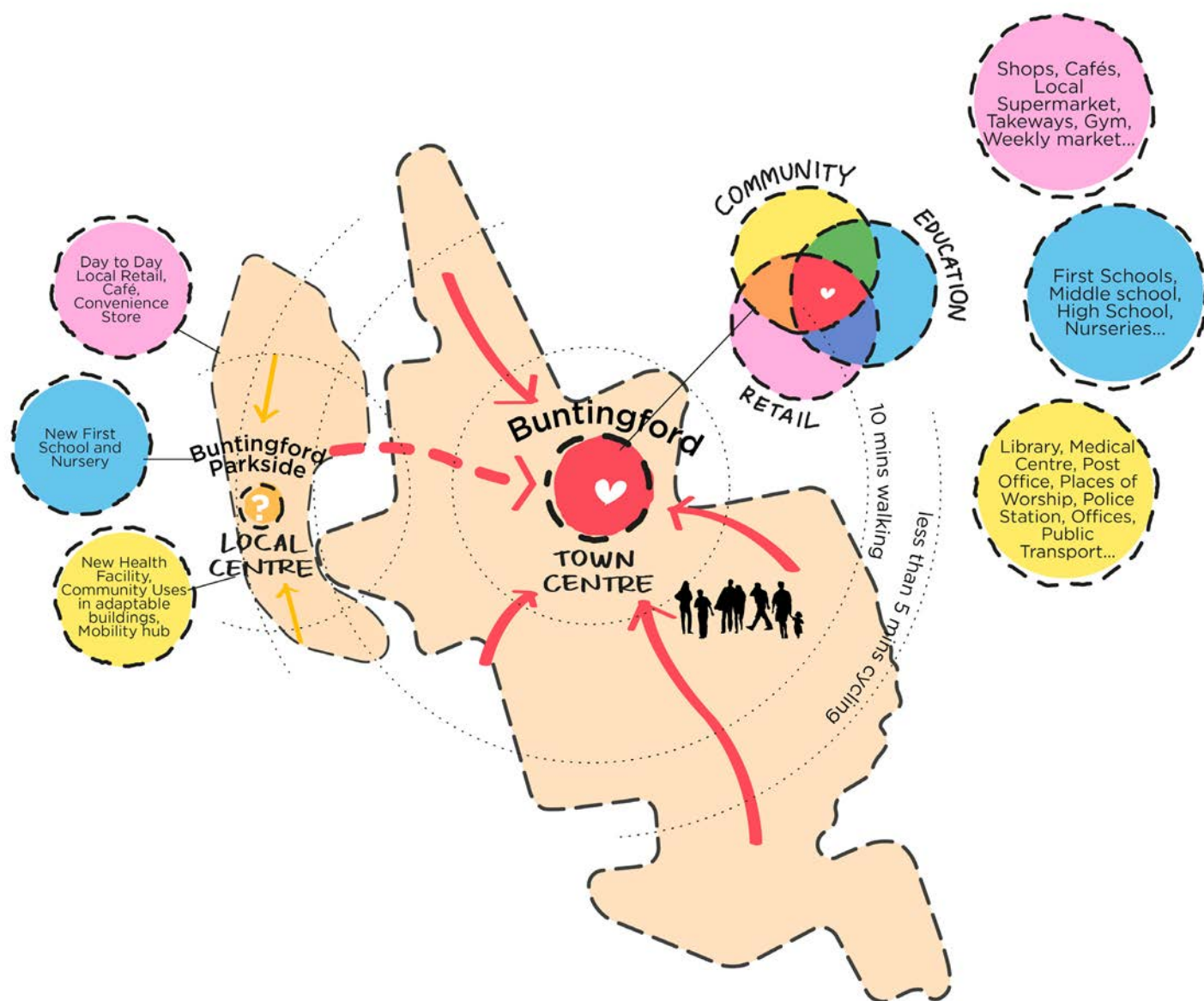
Lightmoor Village, Telford

Land Uses Plan





Buntingford Town Centre



Existing Facilities Comparison Plan

Quantum of Development

Education

We consider there is a need for a new First School in Buntingford given its growing population and to accommodate growth at Buntingford, Parkside. Allowance for a new First School is made in the Development Framework Plan; its form and function will be subject to discussions with Hertfordshire County Council as the Local Education Authority during

the course of the application.

The school is set in the heart of Buntingford, Parkside, adjacent to Buntingford Park and its sports pitches and playing fields, and the local centre. The co-location of these amenities and facilities can reduce vehicle trips, placing complementary uses within proximity to one another.

The schools positioning, and the wider site, are designed

to encourage sustainable movements. A network of pedestrian and cycle routes, in addition to the green corridors and greenway, create a variety of safe, accessible, and attractive routes to and from the school.

The detailed design of the school will emerge through discussions with the Local Planning Authority at a later planning stage.



Houlton, Rugby



Trumpington Meadows, Cambridge



Alconbury Weald



Lightmoor Village, Telford

Residential

Buntingford, Parkside will deliver high-quality housing, fit for the future, providing up to 600 homes for the town, of a mix of types and tenures to help meet local housing needs. The new community will be set in an attractive landscape with play areas, green corridors and parklands that surround and weave through the neighbourhood. A high-quality network of streets, that prioritise active travel, will create an attractive and desirable place to be, supported by three, strong, active travel corridors

between the site and the town.

A diverse mix of housing will be delivered, consisting of market, affordable, and self- and custom-build options, alongside dedicated elderly accommodation to meet the growing needs of the town. A mix of affordable housing is currently proposed to be brought forward, in line with the East Herts District Plan which requires 40% of homes to be affordable. The variety of housing types and tenures will reflect the local housing need, contributing a broad variety of property types that are designed in line with

the Future Homes Standard. This mix will be set out in line with the Buntingford Neighbourhood Plan, and the Strategic Housing Markets and Needs Assessment (SHMA), to be determined at a later stage.

Buntingford, Parkside sensitively integrates with the town through the residential layout, reflecting the town's historical growth along Ermine Street, with the proposal focused along a north-south link, with densities reflecting the suburban and semi-rural nature of Buntingford.



Millbrook, Derby



Upton, Northampton



New Lubbesthorpe



Millbrook, Derby

Green and Blue Infrastructure

Buntingford, Parkside will deliver a series of environmental benefits, through a long-term approach to boosting biodiversity and ensuring sustainability across all aspects of the vision.

Buntingford Park will be a new, extensive, parkland that offers a variety of experiences, from sports and recreation to education, and sensory experiences, as well as space to sit, rest, and socialise. The park will have a distinct character, transitioning from formal spaces towards the north, such as playing fields and a community orchard, towards more informal environments in the south, with a greater focus on biodiversity enhancements. All this is tied together through a greenway, that loops through Buntingford Park, connecting the various experiences, as an accessible and attractive route through nature.

Green infrastructure proposals extend beyond Buntingford Park, weaving into the development itself, preserving and enhancing existing hedgerows and habitats, and introducing new green corridors, street trees and swales that will give residents a closer connection to nature, support local wildlife, and establish a community that is resilient to climate change.

Water will also play a role in the green infrastructure network, enhancing biodiversity and sustainably managing water flows. The proposal is designed to capture and transport rainfall, and slow surface water run-off from impermeable areas of the site, through a series of sustainable drainage features, including attenuation ponds that can hold water from 1 in 100yr, plus an allowance for climate change, flood

events. A Water Management Strategy has been produced separately and elaborates on this in more detail.

Buntingford, Parkside creates opportunities for new habitat creation, consisting of structural planting, species-rich wildflower grasslands, new hedgerows and boundary planting, and wetlands. Ecological niches, such as bat boxes and bee bricks will be integrated into the design of the scheme. The proposal is not expected to result in negative effects on important ecological features existing on site. Further details on the ecological proposals are elaborated in the Ecological Impact Assessment submitted as a part of the planning application.

The following plan highlights the existing green assets on-site, and the immediate context, as well as illustrating the proposed landscape.



Green Infrastructure Plan



- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Site Boundary | Green Links | New Planting/ Buffers |
| Existing Settlements | Proposed Buntingford Greenway | Key Green Spaces - Recreational/ Public Open Space |
| Main Roads | Future Opportunity to extend Buntingford Greenway | Key Green Spaces - Semi-natural |
| Existing Education and Playing Fields | Key Pedestrian and/or cycle routes | Local Plan Employment Allocation |
| Existing Key Open Spaces | Strategic Sustainable Drainage System Feature | Key Play Areas |
| 1m contour lines | Wildlife ponds | Outdoor Sports Provision |
| Ridgeline | Existing hedgerows | Changing Facilities Pavilion with associated car park |
| Public Rights of Way | Existing woodland | Productive Landscape |
| | | Open Views to countryside |

Access and Movement

Buntingford, Parkside will be a new community that is cohesively integrated with the town, achieved not only through the green infrastructure, layout and scale of development but also the proposed access and movement network.

Sustainable travel takes precedence at Buntingford, Parkside with an extensive network of new pedestrian and cycle connections throughout the development and beyond into the town. Primary access for the site will be along Baldock Road (A507), which will be transformed into a sustainable transport corridor that prioritises active travel movement. A roundabout, with cyclist priority, serves as access, and creates a new gateway for Buntingford, with formal landscaping, and traffic calming measures. The extent of the sustainable transport corridor along Baldock Road extends east into Buntingford, with the extension of shared pedestrian/cycleways to encourage active travel into the town.

A bus route will be extended along the A507 and into the site, increasing opportunities for sustainable travel, and supporting the viability of the bus route by providing a larger catchment of potential users. Mobility hubs complement the sustainable



Buntingford Parkside Gateway Visualisation

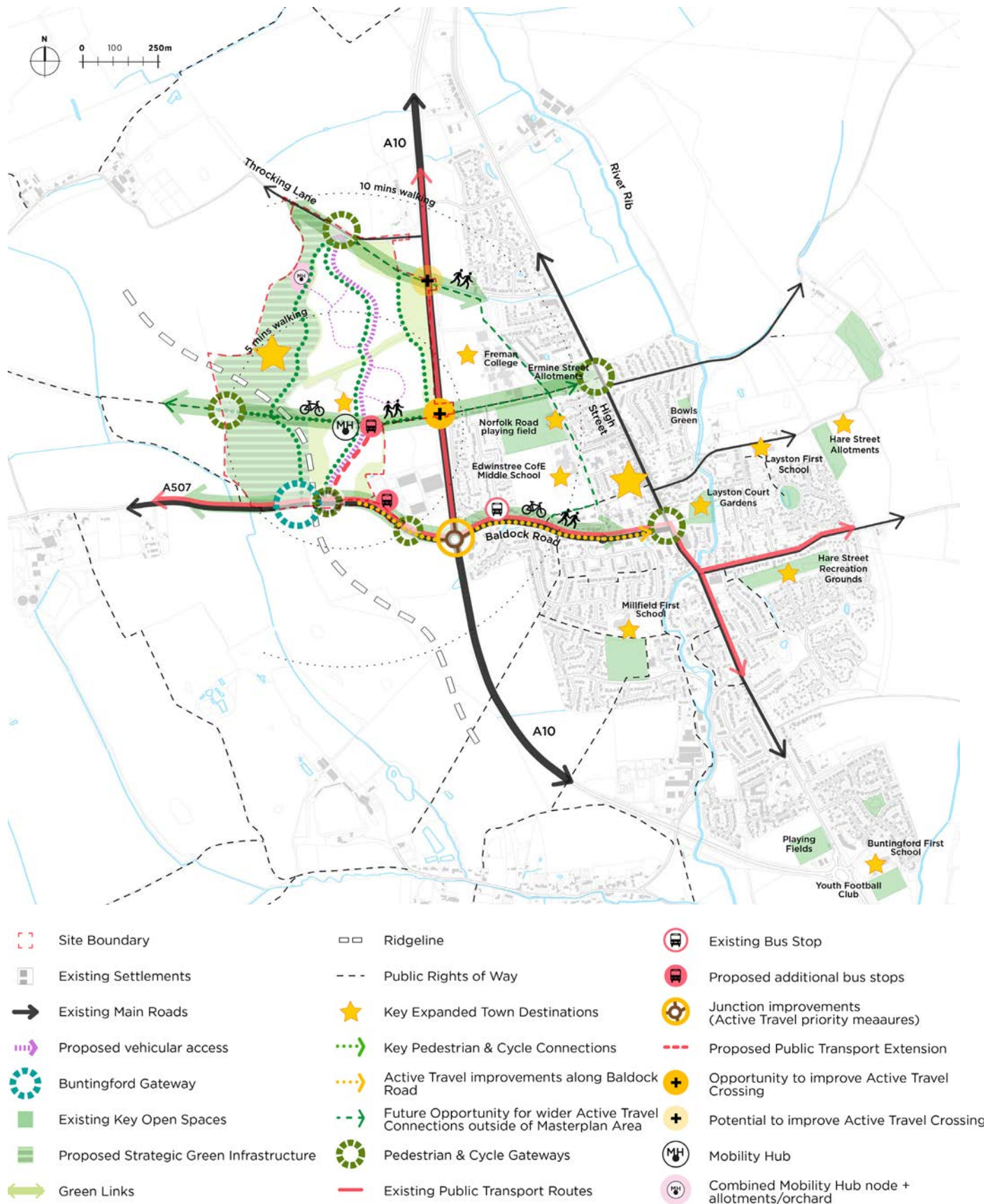
travel offer by delivering additional amenities that support and encourage active travel.

A green corridor at the heart of the site will provide active travel connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists linking the site to Buntingford via an upgraded bridge link over the A10. This will provide a convenient, quiet, and accessible route between Bowling Green Lane and Buntingford, Parkside's local centre, First School, and Doctor's Surgery, and so will become a key link.

Towards the north, as a potential further enhancement to this high-quality network, an additional pedestrian bridge will, subject to technical review, be introduced to connect PRow 41 to 35 to improve safety for pedestrians crossing the A10. This route will provide a quick and green connection to Freman College.

For vehicle movements, Throcking Lane towards the north of the site will also be realigned to prioritise flows into the site, with access still retained to Throcking Lane.

Movement and Transport Plan



Layout and Density

Buntingford, Parkside is designed to be a legible and walkable environment, following desire lines and incorporating clear sightlines. It responds to the site context, limiting development to below the ridgeline and screening it with structural planting, to protect views from the west, and respect the existing green infrastructure assets on site.

Density will vary across the site according to context. Lower densities will be more suited towards the edges of the site, to reflect a more rural character. In contrast, higher densities will be more appropriate around the local centre at the heart of the proposal. This contextual approach to density allows for a mix of house types and plot arrangements to meet local needs.





1 Ha

Typical residential densities

- 01 Contemporary residential zone, south of the town. 35dw/HA



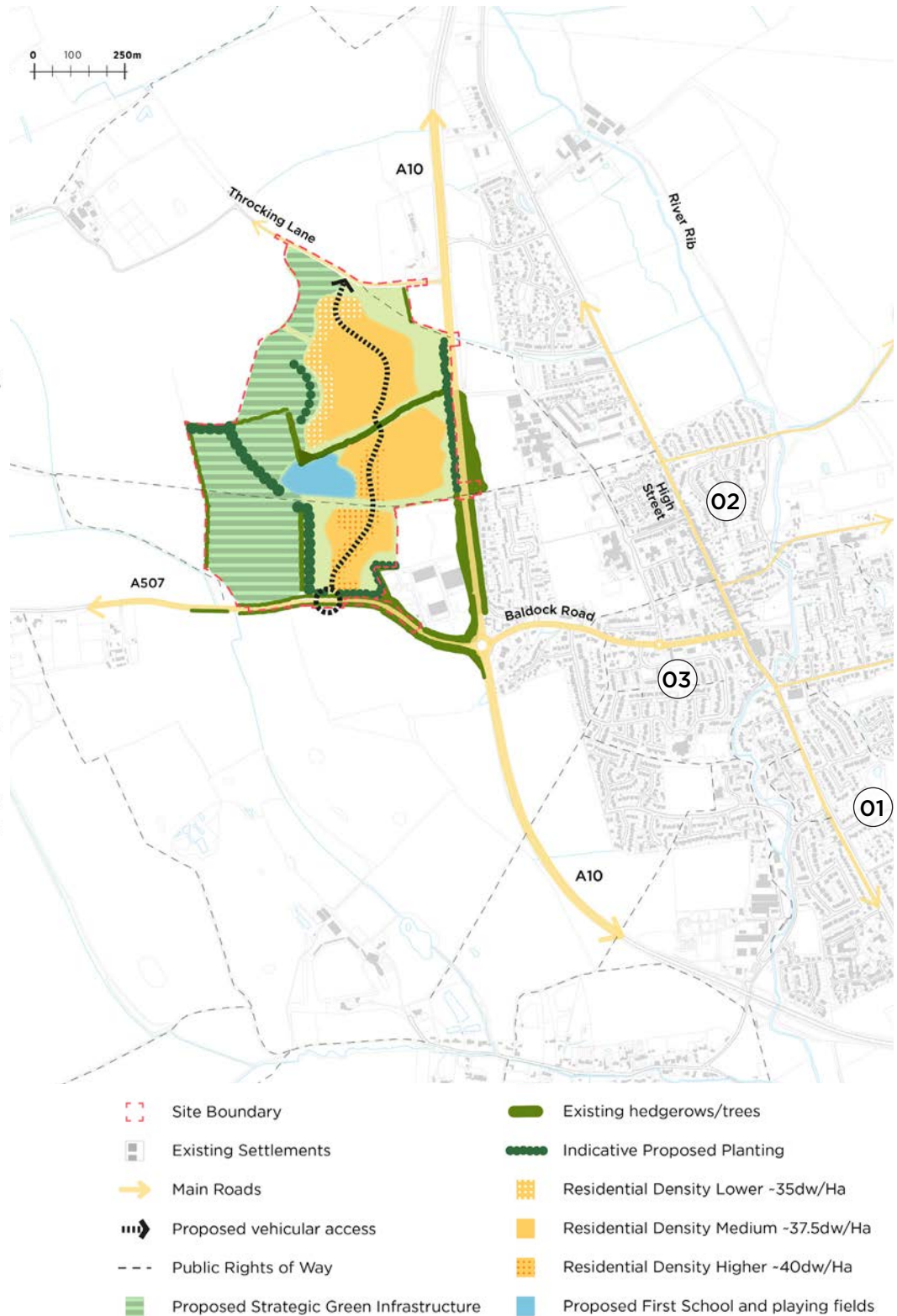
- 02 Town centre, east of the High Street (Porters Close). 37dw/HA



- 03 Town centre, west of the High Street (Monks Walk). 40dw/HA



Density Plan



Scale

The scale and massing of Buntingford, Parkside responds to its context, accounting for views into the site, as well as the architectural characteristics of Buntingford. Buildings will be a maximum of 3 stories, with this maximum height adopted for landmark buildings and around key nodes.



Priors Hall, Corby



Newhall, Harlow



Cranbrook, Devon

Design and Local Vernacular

The Masterplan will explore opportunity for re-interpretation of local vernacular and design elements such as:

1. Carriage arches/ entrances (conservation areas);
2. Roofs: high-pitched roofs, half-hipped roofs, couple of examples of thatched roofs;
3. Large gables facing the street;
4. Openings: dormer windows, canopies over front doors, recessed openings;
5. Ornaments: Visually strong window frames, ornate gables;
6. Feature chimneys.



Design elements mosaic

Materials and colours will be inspired by the existing palette and characteristics:

1. Plainly and decorated rendered houses in cream or a range of pale colours with some pebble dash render;

2. Timber frames and timber

cladding, predominantly in white, black or natural colour;

3. Coloured brickwork in varying tones including brown, orange and lighter yellows, with bands of different colours;

4. Pastel coloured doors and

window shutters ;

5. Facade variation with recessed elements;

6. Tyle cladding;

7. Ornated gables and dormers;

8. Contrast of light and darker colour tones.



Materials and colours mosaic