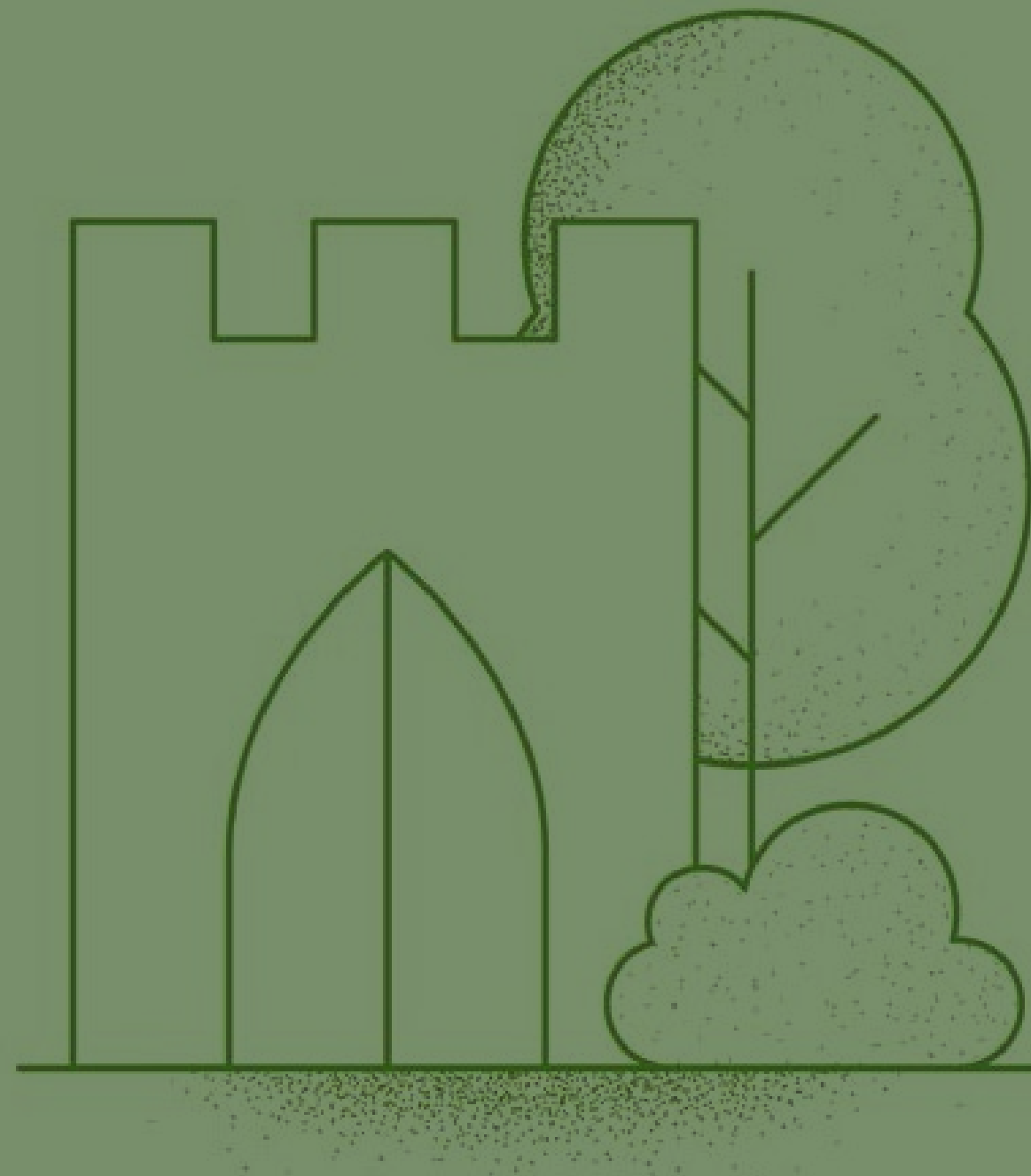




Strategic Landscape Masterplan

Part A - Context and Strategies

FEBRUARY 2025

P02	13.02.2026	For Planning	For Planning	NW. GV	DN	KF
R09	12.02.2026	For Information	Draft for Review and Comment	NW. GV	DN	KF
P01	05.12.2025	For Planning	For Planning	NW. GV	DN	KF
R08	04.12.2025	For Comment	Draft for Comment	NW. GV	DN	KF
P00	31.03.2025	For Planning	For Planning	NW. GV	DN	KF
R07	03.2025	For Reference	Final Draft	NW. GV	DN	KF
R06	03.2025	For Reference	Final Draft for Reference	NW. GV	DN	KF
R05	01.2025	For Comment	Draft for Comment	NW. GV	DN	KF
R04	10.2024	For Comment	Draft for Comment	NW. GV	DN	KF
R03	10.2024	For Comment	Draft for Comment	NW. GV	DN	KF
R02	08.2024	For Comment	Draft for Comment	NW, GV	DN	KF
R01	12.2023	For Comment	Draft for Comment	NW, GV	DN	KF
R00	04.2021	For Comment	Draft for Comment	NW	DN	KF
REVISION	DATE	PURPOSE	DESCRIPTION	PREPARED BY	CHECKED BY	APPROVED BY

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B.	SLMP Quality Review Panel Response Reports
C.	SLMP Design Code Testing Report
D.	Technical Appendix on Key Heritage Views in the Gilston Park Estate

Part B - Regulatory Plan and Design Code

1. Introduction

2. The Landscape Masterplan

3. The Regulatory Plan

4. Character Areas

5. Detailing the Landscape

6. Compliance Checklist

7. References

Refer to GSLM605-GA-DOC-003_Design Code for Part B of the document.



Part A

A Masterplan which is sensitive to the surrounding context and rooted in a sense of place

Part A

Introduction

Chapter 1

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Introduction

1.1 Executive Summary

The landscape of the Gilston Area is the key unifying feature which brings together and provides a structure for the development of the seven new Villages to be built over the next 20 years.

This Strategic Landscape Masterplan (SLMP) sets out the vision for how the existing landscape will be protected, enhanced and transformed to establish a landscape framework ready to accommodate the new level of use and activities, manage and enhance the natural environment, and provide opportunities for leisure and recreation, access and enjoyment of the countryside for existing and future residents.

The study has been undertaken as a process with extensive consultation with the local community, local authorities, and statutory consultees and prepared within the context of local planning policies and the Hunsdon, Eastwick and Gilston Neighbourhood Plan Group (HEGNPG) Gilston Area Neighbourhood Plan. The process has included undertaking detailed mapping of existing landscape features and review of current land management practices, revealing opportunities to transform the landscape into a richly biodiverse landscape providing space for people, nature, water management, celebration of heritage, sports, play and community involvement.

The SLMP highlights the huge potential of the landscape to become the defining element of the new garden town of the Gilston Area. It sets out a vision for achieving an holistic, multi-layered landscape providing opportunities for residents to enjoy connection with nature through creating and nurturing a wide variety of landscape characters, habitats, and activities. The SLMP provides a practical framework for how this can be achieved.

The Part A document describes the planning policy context, objectives and vision of the SLMP. It sets out the existing opportunities and considerations and green and blue infrastructure strategies for the site and defines and describes the key landscape character areas across the site.

The Part B document describes and illustrates the guiding principles for landscape elements and infrastructure which provide practical guidance and design parameters for future detailed landscape proposals for the Gilston Area.

Part B also includes the Regulatory Plans, which set out spatial rules for each character area to guide the future Reserved Matter Applications (RMAs).



LOCAL HERITAGE TRAILS



INCLUSION OF SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS



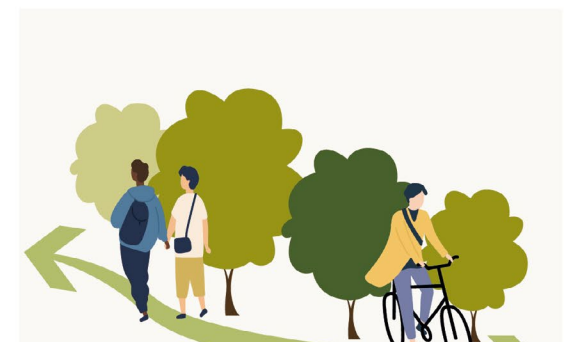
ADVANCE PLANTING



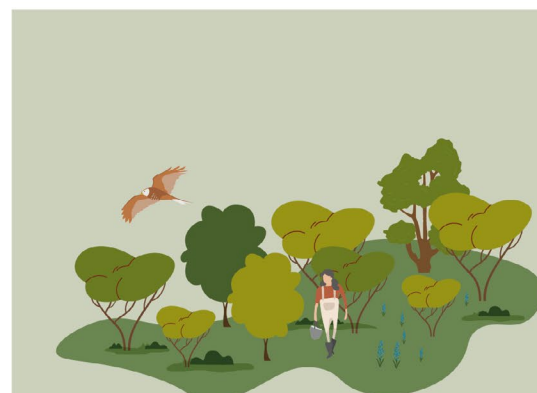
NEW ALLOTMENTS AND PRODUCTIVE LANDSCAPES



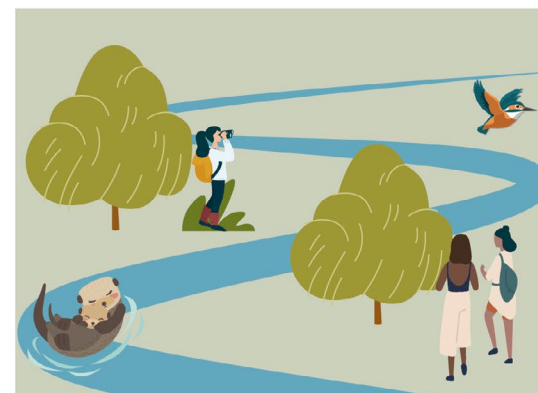
LANDSCAPES INSPIRED BY LOCAL SETTING



SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT CORRIDOR



NEW PLANTATION BROADLEAVED WOODLAND



RIVERS AND STREAMS



SPORTS FACILITIES FOR NEW SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY

The Strategic Landscape Masterplan establishes a landscape-led vision for the creation of a sustainable new community, through strategies to increase biodiversity habitat, enhance existing water courses and to provide access to countryside, sports and leisure and active transport. It considers the protection of heritage assets and existing communities, and promotes dynamic land management and local food production

Introduction

1.2 Document Purpose

This document sets out the purpose, requirements, and process for the Gilston Area Strategic Landscape Masterplan, and presents the contents of the first four work-stages (described in section 1.4) of the study undertaken by Grant Associates, working for Places for People and Taylor Wimpey as developers for Villages 1-6 and Village 7 respectively.

The objectives, study area and Vision for the Strategic Landscape Masterplan are defined and up-to-date baseline mapping of key landscape components of the existing site are presented, together with the proposed key strategies which form the framework of the Strategic Landscape Masterplan.

This is designed to respond to the East Herts District Council requirement for a Strategic Landscape Masterplan, as required by planning conditions upon the outline planning permissions for Villages 1-6 and Village 7, in accordance with the Gilston Area Charter SPD, which supports the implementation of District Plan Policy DES1 concerning masterplanning and the overarching ambitions for the Gilston Area as set out in District Plan Policy GA1.

‘A Strategic Landscape Masterplan will be produced and approved before the first Village Masterplan. This will establish a spatial strategy for the comprehensive development of the entire Gilston Area site allocation in one overarching plan that draws together and expands upon the principles established in the parameter plans approved at the outline planning application stage, and the work already undertaken in the Gilston Area Concept Framework.

It will focus on establishing the key components and Character Areas that will form the comprehensive green infrastructure network across the site that will surround and sit alongside the new villages, existing settlements and wider landscape.

In establishing this, the Masterplan will look to address and plan for strategic matters including: how movement will be accommodates to prioritise active and sustainable modes of travel and the achievement of the 60% mode share target; how the development will successfully integrate with adjacent settlements and landscaping including the Stort Valley; how the new villages will have sufficient landscape buffers but function successfully together as one new settlement, making efficient use of the land through coordinating measures such as the approach to drainage and flood risk and any potential net gains for biodiversity; and how the community open space land allocated in the Gilston Area will be planned and landscaped to help facilitate its long term maintenance’

Page 14 Gilston Area Charter SPD

Key Accompanying Documents

This document (Part A), alongside Part B, also provide a reference point for key elements of project planning, and supporting reference material. It should be read in conjunction with the following information:

- EHDC Landscape Character Assessment SPD, 2007
- HEGNPG - Gilston Area Neighbourhood Plan - July 2021
- Landscape and Green Infrastructure Report, May 2019, Places for People
- Gilston Area Concept Framework, Places for People - 2018
- Gilston Park Estate OPA Application, Places for People
- Village 7 OPA Application, Taylor Wimpey
- Appendix to the Village Development Addendum Report, Central Stort Crossing & Eastern Stort Crossing Addendum Report - Landscape Strategy, Places for People
- Open Space Landscape and Public Realm Strategy Assessment, Taylor Wimpey

Outline and Strategic Masterplans

Throughout this document the following symbols are used to identify where key Masterplan information for the Gilston Area is located:

-  Outline Planning Permission
-  CSC and ESC Detailed Planning Permissions
-  Strategic Landscape Masterplan
-  Village Masterplans

Fig.01 Adjacent page right: Illustrative aerial view of the proposed Gilston Park Estate development for villages 1-6 developed as part of the Outline Planning Application



1.3 Glossary

The Study and Plans

SLMP / Strategic Landscape Masterplan

This refers to the study which has been undertaken to develop the Regulatory Plan and Design Code outputs for the strategic landscape of the Gilston Area

Illustrative Masterplan

This refers to the site-wide drawing of indicative proposals for the Gilston Area which brings together the design and technical studies undertaken by the design team and informs the SLMP Regulatory Plan and Design Code

Illustrative Landscape Plan

This is the rendered plan created to provide an illustrative impression of how the proposals of the SLMP are envisioned to be realised within the existing landscape

Regulatory Plans

The 1:10,000 Strategic Site Wide Regulatory Plans and 10No. 1:2500 Regulatory Plans form the key drawings which define the considerations and requirements for future RMA design of the strategic landscape of the Gilston Area. These plans, together with the Design Code are the formal SLMP documents to be submitted for Approval.

Character Area Plans

These plans provide an illustrative representation of how the required features of each Character Area could come together. They also illustrate the overall character required for each space.

Glossary

AGP

Artificial grass pitch

BNG

Biodiversity Net Gain

CDM

Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015

EHDC

East Herts District Council

HCC

Hertfordshire County Council

HGGT

Harlow & Gilston Garden Town

MHCLG

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

LPA

Local Planning Authority

OPA

Outline Planning Application

OPP

Outline Planning Permission

PROW

Public Right of Way

POS

Public Open Space

Riparian habitat

Habitat at the interface of land and a river or stream.

RMA

Reserved Matters Application

RPA

Root Protection Areas

SuDS

Sustainable Drainage Systems

STC

Sustainable Transport Corridor

V1MP

This is the Village 1 Masterplan, which has been developed in parallel with the SLMP

V1-6

Village 1-6. This is the Development of the former- Gilston Park Estate, being brought forward by Places for People

V7MP

This is the Village 7 Masterplan, which has been developed in parallel with the SLMP

V7

Village 7. This is the Development of the former- Briggens Estate, being brought forward by Taylor Wimpey

V7 OPP

This is the Outline Planning Permission for Village 7

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Introduction

1.4 SLMP Study Structure

The structure of the Strategic Landscape Masterplan study has been led by the requirements of the Gilston Area Plan, and developed through consultation with EHDC. By necessity the SLMP study is an iterative process with each stage of detail and engagement feeding into the outcome of the study as a whole.

STAGE 1

PRINCIPLES AND COMMUNICATIONS / ENGAGEMENT PLAN

- Establish the key principles for the Strategic Landscape Masterplan
- Put in place a clear plan for community and stakeholder involvement
- Summary policy review of new and emergent planning policy and guidance

STAGE 2

VISION

Establish the vision for the SLMP and further articulate themes outlined in the Gilston Park Estate & Village 7 OPP landscape proposals.

Following the OPP the SLMP sets out a renewed vision focusing on

- Beauty and resilience of landscape
- Respect and enhance the existing landscape
- Creation of a sustainable and productive landscape
- Promote healthy and sustainable lifestyles and a close contact with nature
- Address climate change and biodiversity emergencies

STAGE 3

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Establish a clear set of consolidated plans that capture the existing site opportunities and considerations,

- Existing settlements and dwellings
- Topography & hydrology
- Heritage features, listed buildings, scheduled monuments, buried archaeology
- Woodlands, trees, hedgerows classification
- Sensitive local views
- Nature reserves and locally designated areas
- Highways, PROW & Access
- Tenancies and land ownerships
- Utilities and Services corridors

Identify Opportunities including early wins such as advance planting

STAGE 4A

DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK

Strategy for how the various elements will contribute to supporting a sustainable community:

- Heritage assets – protection enhancement
- Access, leisure and recreation
 - PROW, Local walking and cycling strategy
 - Sports provision
 - Play strategy
 - Allotment/community growing provision
- Green and Blue infrastructure amenity
- Ecology & biodiversity
- Lighting strategy
- Land management
- Locations of community amenities such as schools, cemeteries
- Advance planting strategy

STAGE 4B

CHARACTER, PURPOSE AND USE

- Gilston Park
- Home Wood & Gibson's Shaw
- Gilston Fields
- Eastwick Wood Park
- Hunsdon Airfield park
- Stort Valley
- Strategic Green corridors – Eastwick valley; Golden Brook / Fiddlers Brook valley
- Integration of Primary infrastructure road crossings of Strategic green corridors
- Village corridors (including Eastwick village; Pye Corner; Channocks)
- Village 7 strategic open space areas – Northern fields.

STAGE 5

DESIGN CODING

Plans, sections, text to describe requirements and set out the development rules and requirements for the strategic landscape. It would also describe planting palettes and material palettes with outline specification and reference images to define the expected standard and quality of the implemented public open space.

- Design Code Document
- Development benchmarks and references (photo references and other summary of other successful developments)
- Regulatory plans 1:2500

CONTINUOUS STAGE

CURATION & STEWARDSHIP

- Develop a Management and Maintenance Strategy – to sit alongside the governance strategy
- Place a particular focus on woodland, agriculture and conservation. Building species diversity and resilience against climate change pests and diseases in light of the Climate and Biodiversity Emergency.

STAGE 7

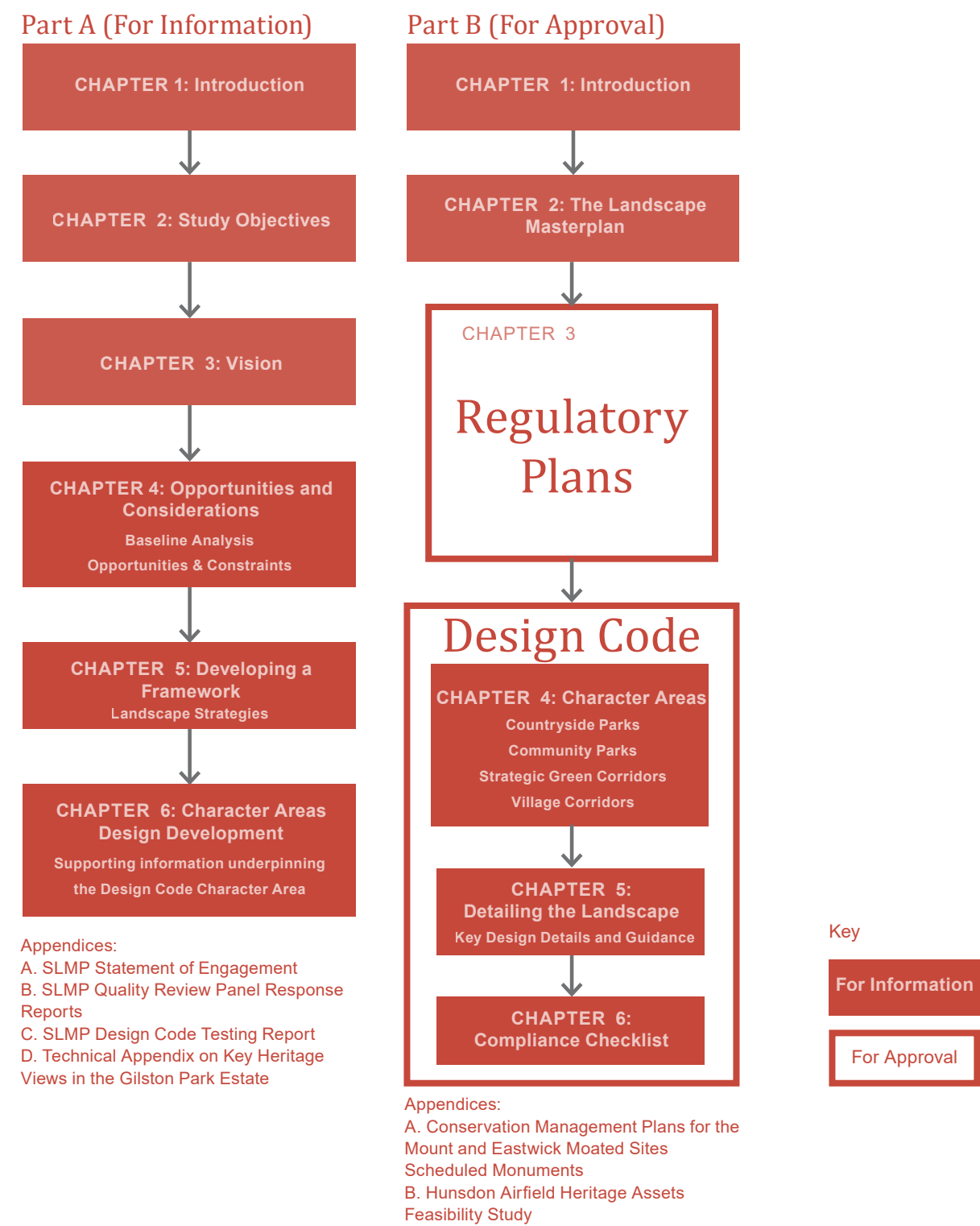
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Production of a consolidated Implementation Plan bringing together information defined through the Masterplan process.

1.5 Strategic Landscape Masterplan Documents

SLMP Documents

The Strategic Landscape Masterplan (SLMP) report is split into two documents, as illustrated in the adjacent diagram. This document, Part A, incorporates the study objectives, baseline mapping, analysis and strategies of the study, together with specific studies within the Character Areas section. This document is for Information. Part B is for Approval and contains the SLMP Regulatory Plans and Design Code.



Introduction

1.6 Planning Context

The East Herts District Plan (2018) and Gilston Area Neighbourhood Plan (2021) provide the policy context for the development of the new Gilston Area community of 10,000 homes across seven distinct villages set in extensive open space and parkland, based on Garden City principles.

In January 2025, East Herts District Council (EHDC) granted outline planning permission for the creation of 8,500 homes, plus supporting development, infrastructure and open space which comprises Places for People's development of Villages 1 to 6, known as the Gilston Park Estate (Ref. No. 3/19/1045/OUT) and Taylor Wimpey's development of 1,500 homes at Village 7 (Ref. No. 3/19/2124/OUT).

The District Plan requires the production of a masterplan for all significant development proposals (Policy DES1). The Gilston Area Charter Supplementary Planning Document (Charter SPD) (2000) has been produced by EHDC through engagement with landowners, key stakeholders and representatives from the local community to help guide the planning and delivery of development and infrastructure within the Gilston Area. The Charter SPD sets out the role of the Strategic Landscape Masterplan (SLMP), and Village Masterplans, the process for production of the documents and the required content of masterplan submissions.

The Charter SPD states that *“given the scale of development in the Gilston Area, individual Masterplans will be required for each of the Gilston Area villages, together with an overarching Strategic Landscape Masterplan that will address the strategic elements of the development and the important network of green spaces that will knit the villages together and integrate the area into its wider context” (para 2.5).*

“Each Gilston Area Masterplan will be supported by a Design Code and together they will provide an added layer of detail to the evolving plans for the Gilston Area, building on the parameters and commitments secured at the outline planning application stage and the work already undertaken in the Gilston Area Concept Framework” (para 4.7).

“Once approved the Masterplans and their associated Design Codes will form a framework to guide Reserved Matters applications (and any relevant detailed planning applications) for development plots or buildings that follow” (para 4.8).

The content of the SLMP must align with the parameters established through the outline permissions, the District and Neighbourhood Plans, and take account of relevant guidance including the Gilston Area Concept Framework and the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision and Design Guide. The SLMP will also be supported and informed by up-to-date technical work such as topographical surveys and flood risk assessments.

In accordance with the Charter SPD, Places for People & Taylor Wimpey

have agreed a SLMP Scope and SLMP Engagement Strategy with the SLMP Project Lead Group comprising EHDC, Hertfordshire County Council, and the two developers.

The SLMP covers the northwest portion of the site (designated as ‘community open space land’ by District Plan Policy GA1), as well as the land in between the Villages 1-6 and 7 (i.e. outside the ‘village developable areas’ as defined on the Village 1-6 and Village 7 Parameter Plans). The developable area boundary, as defined on the Parameter Plans, represents the transition from the SLMP to the Village Masterplans. The SLMP will not set details for the developable area, but it may set some principles that may be applicable.

The SLMP will be supported by a Design Code. The Design Code will establish elements that are considered to contribute to the creation high quality place making, including both strategic and detailed elements. A Regulatory Plan will be produced in support of the Design Code to illustrate how the code relates spatially to land within the SLMP and will be illustrated on a scalable drawing.

Further detail on relevant Planning Policies are provided in Section 1.7

LEGEND



Gilston Area Site Boundary



Woodland



Existing parks, gardens & public green space



Towns & villages



Proposed farmland conservation & enhancement zone



Proposed woodland enhancement zone



Strategic green link



Proposed wetland habitat zone



Valley conservation area



Lee Valley Regional Park



Strategic link



Local link



Strategic / Significant GI assets/resources *



Harlow Gateways *

LEGEND



Gilston Area Boundary



Existing parks, gardens & public green space



Lee Valley Regional Park



Woodland



Towns & villages



Proposed Strategic Green Infrastructure



Proposed Strategic Green Infrastructure connections



Strategic green links



Links to wider landscape



Gateways

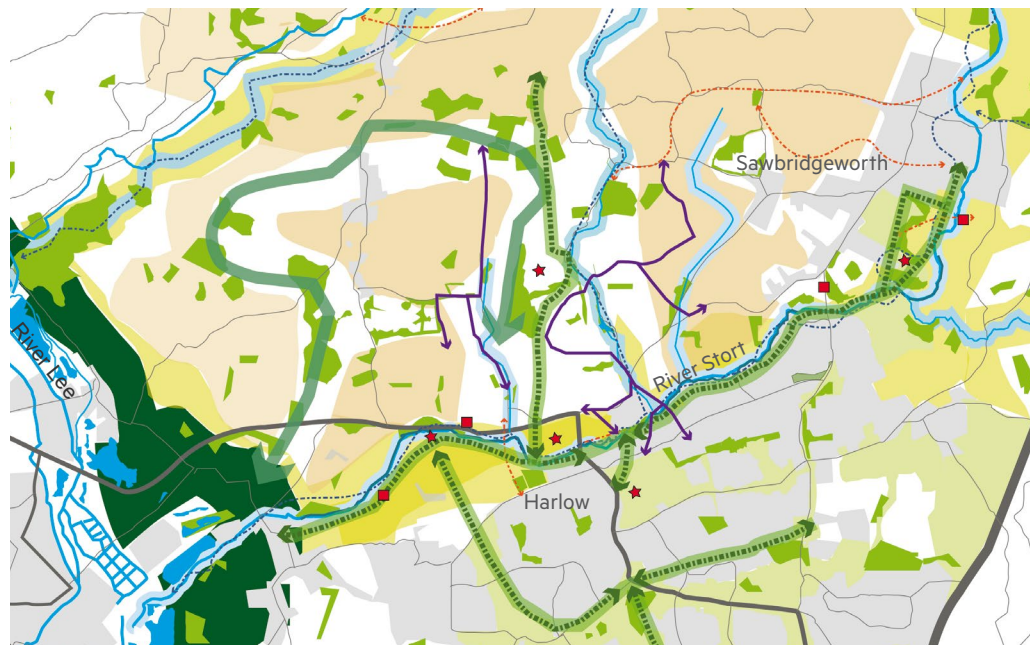


Fig.02 Plan summarising objectives of the EHDC GI Plan 2011 & Harlow GI Study 2013

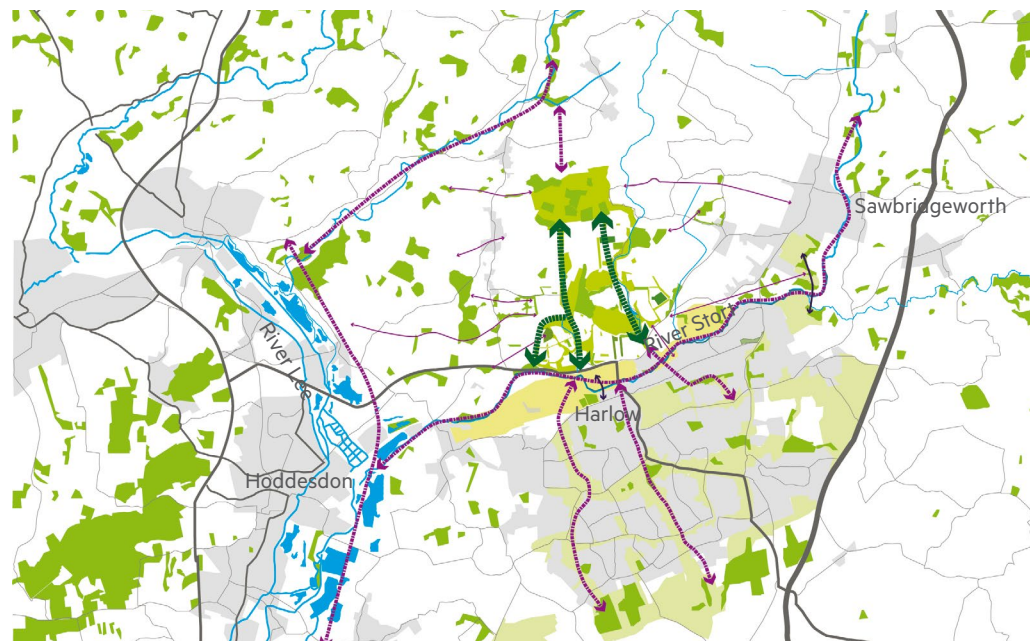


Fig.03 Strategic context of Green Infrastructure of the Gilston Area

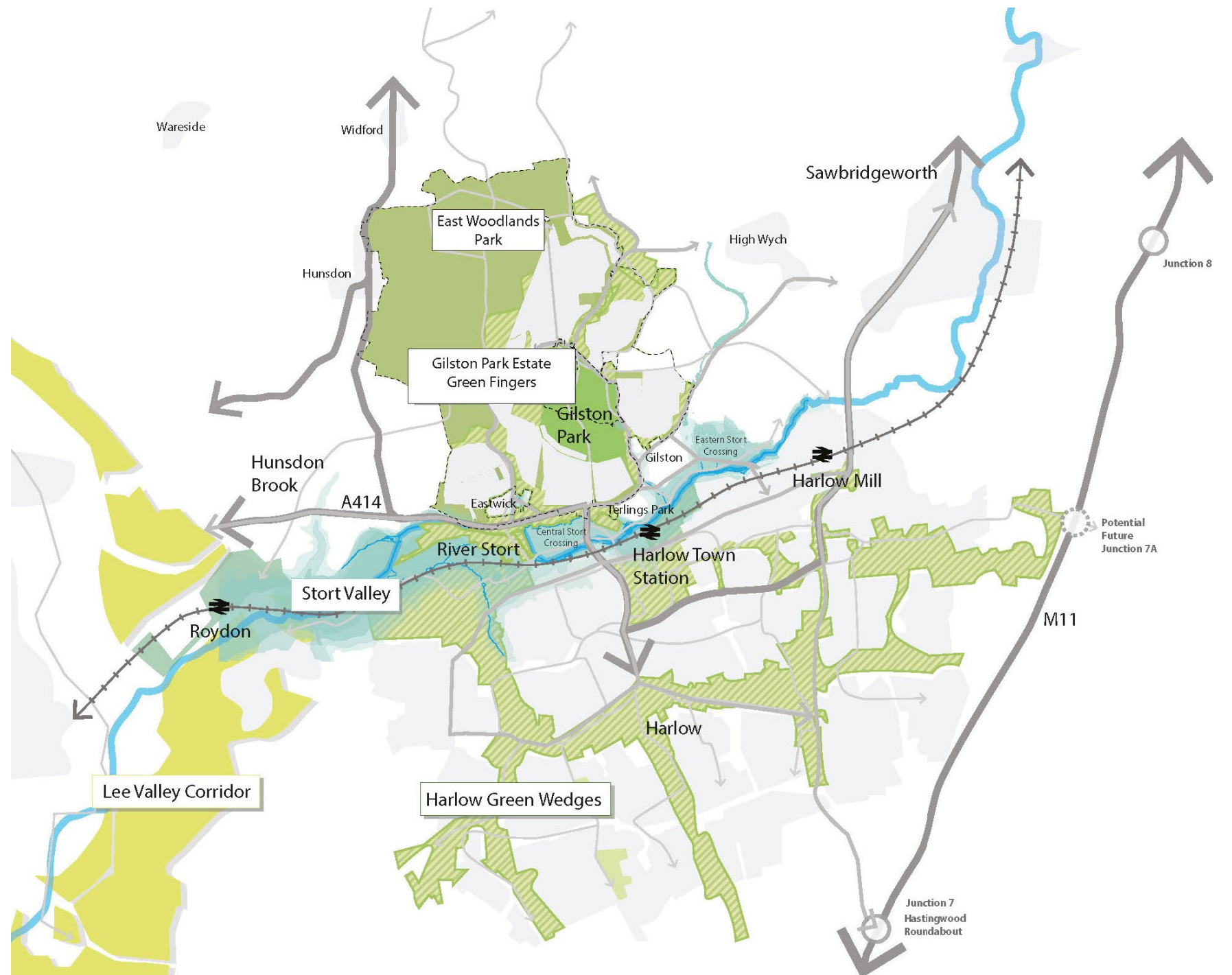


Fig.04 Green Infrastructure Plan - Gilston Park Estate Strategic Design Guide, April 2019

Introduction

1.7 Policy and Commitments

Key Policies

The following section summarises the key planning policy documents and guidance relating to the Gilston Area.

The Gilston Area site and its associated infrastructure is situated within the administrative boundaries of East Herts District Council (EHDC) which is therefore the Local Planning Authority. Other relevant policy context relates to the adjacent Epping Forest District Council, and Harlow District Council, governed at county-level by Hertfordshire County Council and Essex County Council. Local Plans have been prepared by the district councils, including specific planning policies from EHDC for the Gilston Area, and the combined authorities also form the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) authorities, which in turn have prepared a series of HGGT design guidance.

This following table identifies the suite of planning policy and guidance documents relevant to the Gilston Area SLMP

National Planning Policy	
Policy	Date
National Planning Policy Framework	December 2024
Green Space Strategies: A Good Practice Guide, (CABE)	2006
Developing Accessible Play Space: A Good Practice Guide (ODPM, now MHCLG)	2003

Hertfordshire & East Hertfordshire District Council Policies	
Policy	Date
Gilston Area Neighbourhood Plan - Hunsdon, Eastwick & Gilston Neighbourhood Planning Group	May 2021
East Herts District Plan	October 2018
East Herts Gilston Area Charter SPD	July 2020
Open Space, Sport & Recreation SPD, EHDC	May 2020
Sustainability SPD, EHDC	March 2021
Historic Parks & Gardens SPD, EHDC	September 2007
Landscape Character Assessment SPD, EHDC	September 2007
Gilston Area Community Engagement Strategy	December 2020 - Updated March 2021
Gilston Area Concept Framework	July 2018
Children and Young People's Play Strategy 2007-2012, EHDC	July 2007-2012
Open Spaces and Sports Facilities Assessment Technical Study, Nortoft	2017
EHDC Vehicle Parking Provision at New Development SPD	2008
Meeting Sustainable Drainage in Hertfordshire, Herts Interim SuDS Policy Statement 2012 and SuDS Adoption Policy 2013	2012 & 2013
Everyone Matters - A Sustainable Community Strategy for East Herts, April 2009-2024	April 2009-2024
East Herts Draft Physical Activity Strategy 2017-2022	2017-2022

Harlow District Council Policy and Guidance	
Policy	Date
Harlow Council adopted replacement local plan	2006
Children & Young People's Play Strategy 2007-2012 Harlow Council Open Space Sport & Recreation SPD, June 2007	2007

Epping Forest District Council Policy and Guidance	
Policy	Date
Epping Forest Local Plan	2006, Amended 2017
EFDC GI Strategy	2022

Harlow & Gilston Garden Town Policy and Guidance	
Policy	Date
Harlow & Gilston Garden Town Vision	November 2018
Harlow & Gilston Garden Town Design Guide	November 2018
Harlow & Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy	Summer 2021
Harlow and Gilston Garden Town - Sustainability Guidance and Checklist	September 2020

Agriculture, Habitat & Ecology Nature Conservation Legislation & Policy	
Policy	Date
Key Wildlife legislation & Species protection	
Sites for conservation of nature	
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018

Green Infrastructure: National Guidance	
Policy	Date
Green Infrastructure - An Integrated Approach to Land Use, Landscape Institute, March 2013	2013
The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature, DEFRA White Paper, June 2011	2011

Green Infrastructure: Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and SPD evidence base & other related studies	
Policy	Date
Green Infrastructure for the Harlow Area, CBA	2005
Stort Valley feasibility study CBA & The Landscape Partnership	2007
EHDC Green Infrastructure Plan, LUC, March 2011	2011
Green Arc Initiative, LUC	2002
Stort Valley Waterspace Strategy	2010
Objectives of the Stort Valley Partnership catchment plan	2012

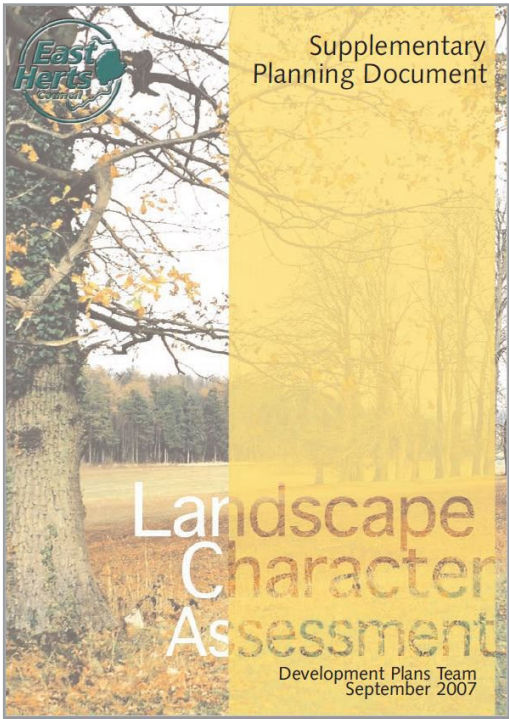
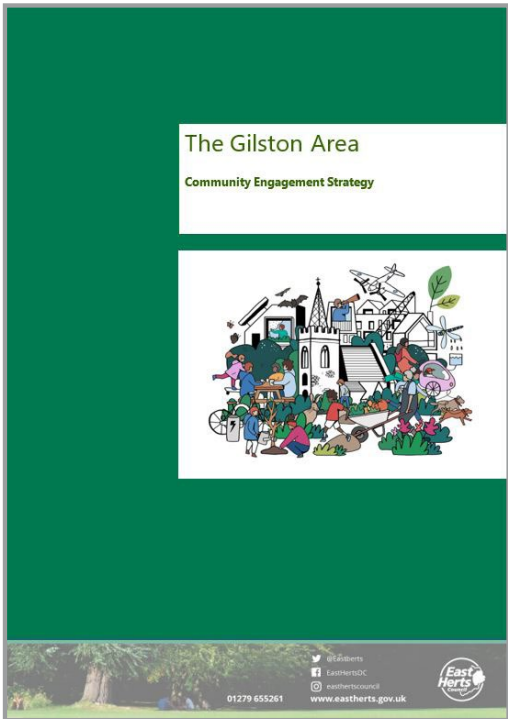
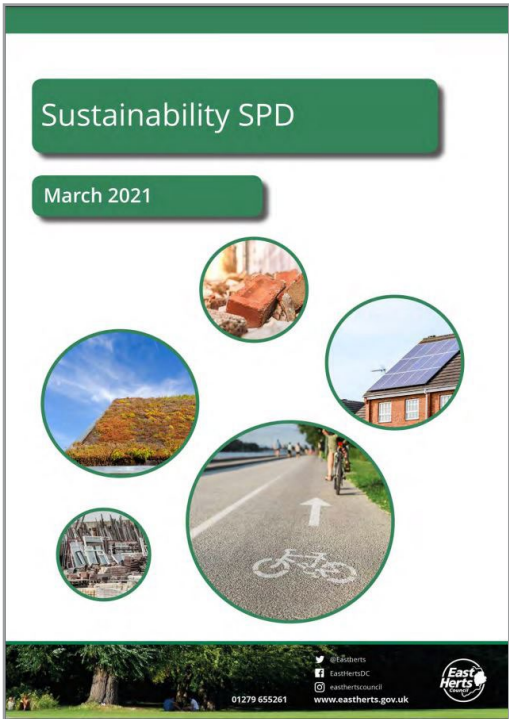
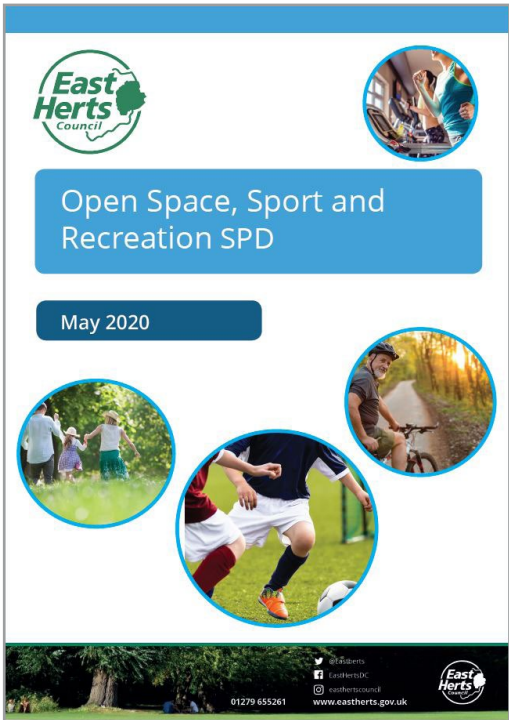
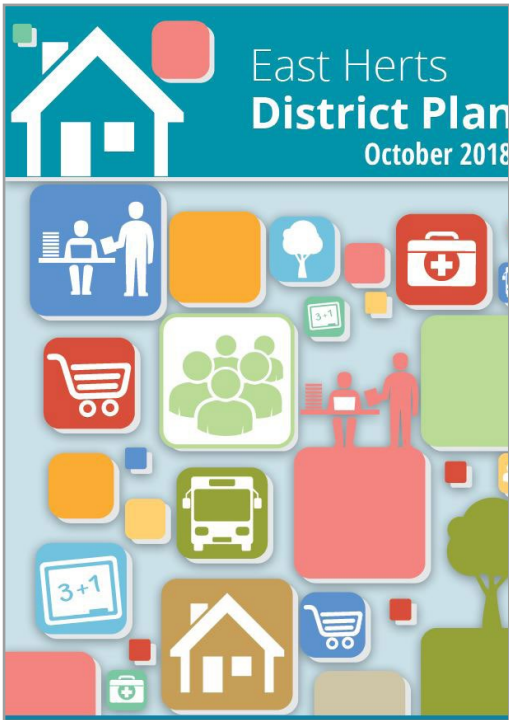


Fig.05 Key Policy documents

Introduction

1.7 Policy and Commitments

Harlow and Gilston Garden Town

Harlow and Gilston was designated as a Garden Town by Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government in January 2017, and will comprise new and existing communities in and around Harlow.

- East Herts, Epping Forest and Harlow District Councils are working together to ensure plans for the Garden Town support sustainable living and a healthy economy; provide a good quality of life for existing and future residents; and respond to local landscape and character.
- The vision and principles for the Garden Town are informed by the Town and Country Planning Association's Garden City principles, the NPFF Garden Town principles, Ebenezer Howard's original Garden City principles; and input from stakeholders and the local community.
- The documents set out the vision for the Garden Town and principles to inform its growth and management. Four key themes are identified, each of which has a set of four principles to help guide growth and development across every aspect of the Garden Town.

Of particular relevance to landscape and open space provision are:

- Responsive and distinctive design
- Balanced, diverse and functional communities
- Healthy, safe and connected neighbourhoods and villages
- Maximising visibility and appreciation of our heritage
- Placemaking & Homes
- Landscape & Green Infrastructure
- Enhancing the Green Belt and expanding the Green Wedge network
- Landscape-led masterplanning
- Biodiversity, climate resilience and food security
- Sustainable Movement
- Revitalising the cycle and walking network
- Changing the character of roads to streets
- Anticipating change and future proofing infrastructure
- The Vision includes a requirement for new homes to have access to an allotments or community growing spaces within 800m (10 min walking time) as addressed in the OPP.



Fig.06 HGGT Policy documents

Gilston Area Concept Framework

- The Gilston Area masterplan concept was defined in 2017 through the creation of the Gilston Area Concept Framework, prepared by EHDC, Places for People and City & Provincial Properties and the community in support of Policy GA1.
- The Gilston Area Concept Framework was prepared to support the strategic Site Allocation in the emerging EHDC Plan for 10,000 new homes, along with supporting social and physical infrastructure.
- The document purpose was to demonstrate that there is sufficient evidence to enable the site to be allocated within the District Plan. It provided an evidence-based document which has informed plan making supporting the Site Allocation policy for the Gilston Area.
- The Principal Landowners and East Herts worked collaboratively with the community to prepare the Concept Framework. This collaboration established a shared vision and a series of development objectives that are embraced by both groups to support the objectives of both districts within their respective Local Plans.
- The objectives and requirements defined within the Gilston Area Concept Framework were subsequently formalised into planning policy through creation of the HEGNPG - Gilston Area Neighbourhood Plan.



Fig.07 The Gilston Area Concept Framework document

Gilston Area Neighbourhood Plan

The Gilston Area Neighbourhood Plan is a key policy document prepared by the local community through the Hunsdon, Eastwick and Gilston Neighbourhood Planning Group. The purpose of the plan is:

“ to influence the character and quality of the new development to ensure that it respects the nature and integrity of the local area, takes place in a way that minimises impact on the landscape, local heritage and existing communities, and upholds the essential quality of life of the area” HEGNPG Gilston Area Neighbourhood Plan 2021

The scope of the Plan is to provide greater detail to the policies set out in the EHDC 2018, and build upon the agreement reached between the Council, developers and community through the Gilston Area Concept Framework and to elevate it to formal policy status.

The Plan sets out:

- A shared vision for the Neighbourhood Area
- Key development principles for comprehensive and integrated development, respectful of the character of local villages and maximising benefits for the existing and new communities
- Planning policies for determining future planning applications with a particular focus on the importance of a comprehensive landscape masterplan covering the whole area which will provide the framework for the creation of individual new villages. Preparation of the landscape masterplan and village masterplans will be undertaken in consultation with the local community
- Other controls needed to protect existing communities and actions required to deliver improvements
- Priority projects as identified by the local community in consultation (where appropriate) with statutory bodies for future funding and implementation
- A framework for partnership working between the Council, developers and the local community

The Policies are divided into three sections:

- Accommodating Growth, Delivering Quality Places, and Implementation and Delivery

As part of the SLMP process HEGNPG representatives presented the Neighbourhood Plan to the SLMP team and a site visit together was also undertaken.

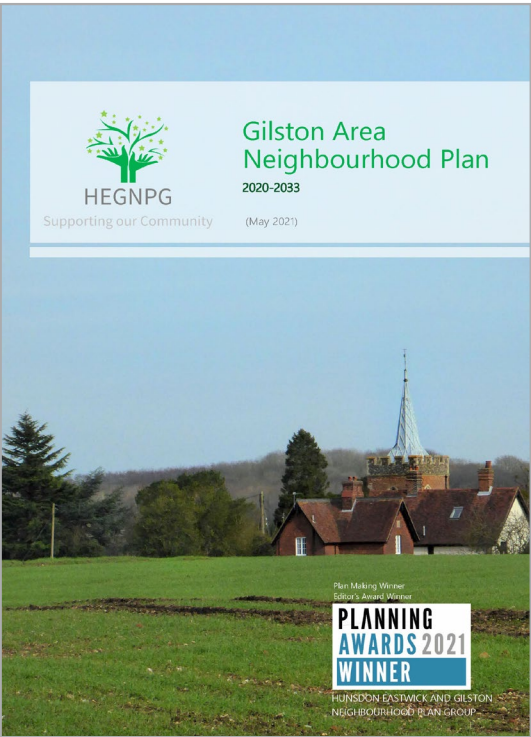


Fig.08 HEGNPG Gilston Area Neighbourhood Plan



Fig.09 Members of the HEGNPG and SLMP design team visiting the site in June 2021

HEGNPG Gilston Area Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2033 (May 2021)	
Policy	Details
AG1	Policy AG1 requires the preparation, in collaboration with the local community, of a Strategic Landscape Masterplan for the entire Gilston Area to provide the context for the preparation of Village Masterplans.
AG2	Policy AG2 states that development proposals should take into account the Strategic Landscape Masterplan for the Gilston Area to ensure the integrity of the landscape and countryside setting, whilst creating an integrated Green Infrastructure Network that will surround and sit alongside the new villages, existing settlements and the wider landscape.
AG4	Policy AG4 requires a landscape led approach to define the extent of green corridors which provide meaningful separation between villages. It requires new villages to have a defined 'Village Boundary' within which built development should be contained in order to create a distinct identity. The policy requires that the detailed design and treatment of the natural green corridors and landscape buffers including rights of way and cycle connections be identified in the Strategic Landscape Masterplan and Village Masterplans in consultation with the local community.
AG6	Policy AG6 states that proposals for the new villages should clearly demonstrate that the best possible balance has been achieved between landscape, village separation, mass, density and the overall delivery of the aims of Policy GA1. This is to be demonstrated in the Village Masterplans prepared in collaboration with the local community, each of which should: • Respect local topography, landscape features and settlement morphology. • Create a village of distinct and individual character. • Provide a range of densities appropriately scaled in relation to location, heritage assets, landscape features and topography. The policy requires each Village Masterplan to demonstrate how it has been informed by its relationship with the landscape and heritage assets and has drawn inspiration from the character and morphology of existing villages in the Gilston Area and elsewhere in Hertfordshire. Consideration is to be given to typical village and other local characteristics as listed in the policy.
LA1	Policy LA1 sets requirements for Village Masterplans to incorporate a comprehensive landscape framework within each village.
BU1	Policy BU1 provides guidance on the design of development within villages
BU2	Policy BU2 requires Village Masterplans to identify the location of public transport hubs at key points and demonstrate flexibility in anticipation of future mobility scenarios.
BU4	Policy BU4 states that the quality and character of the primary street network linking the villages should be defined comprehensively for the whole area in the Strategic Landscape Masterplan, with streets and lanes within the village boundaries being defined in the relevant Village Masterplan.
H1	Policy H1 requires that heritage informs the preparation of the Village Masterplans through the enhancement of assets and the retention of key views.

Introduction

1.7 Policy and Commitments

Gilston Park Estate - Strategic Design Guide

A Strategic Design Guide was prepared by Places for People in April 2019 in order to set out a commitment to quality within the future development. This is an approved document under the outline planning permission.

The document set out ten overarching principles identified as important to defining the quality of the development that will apply to all villages. These were intended to respond to the HGGT Vision and Design Guide, and the Gilston Area Concept Framework, and sought to provide focus for developing the vision for the Gilston Park Estate, derived from the special character of the place and its setting.

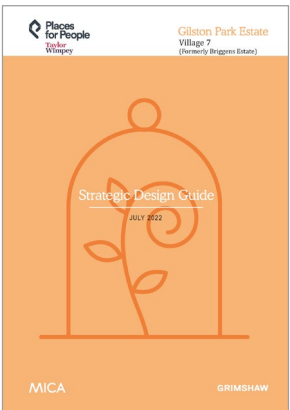


Fig.11 Gilston Park Estate Strategic Design Guide



Fig.10 Gilston Park Estate Strategic Design Guide - Ten principles

Design Code Guidance

In preparing the SLMP Design Code the following key guidance from the MHCLG National Design Guide has been considered, including the '10 Characteristics of a well-designed place'. This highlights the core role of landscape in placemaking and each theme has a particular relevance to the Gilston SLMP.

The comprehensive set of proposals set out within the SLMP Design Code Part B, covering themes of movement; green infrastructure; heritage; ecology; materiality and planting character; ancillary buildings and utilities; water management; and sustainability as well as community facilities such as public open space; play space; sports facilities and community allotments and orchards, set out how the design requirements and guidance for the SLMP will provide successful placemaking through ensuring there is a holistic approach to the overall design of spaces, whilst ensuring consideration is given to the design impact of each element within the proposal.

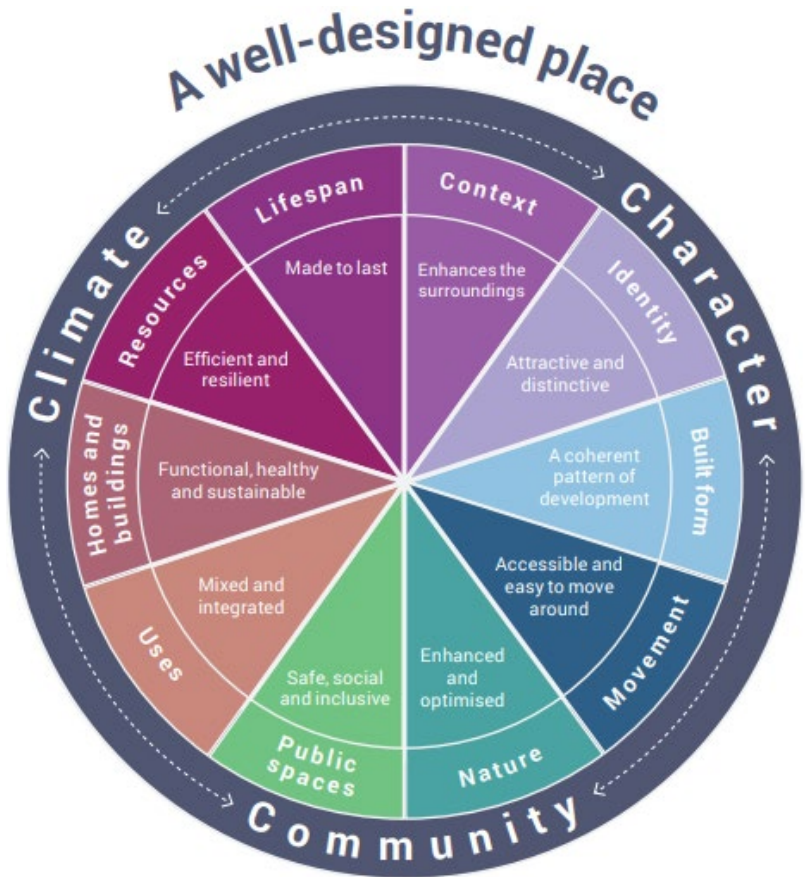


Fig.12 The National Design Guide - Ten characteristics of well-designed places

Current and Future Planning Applications

The proposals for the Gilston Area are organised into the following planning applications. These planning applications follow the policy guidance set out on the previous pages and are the primary reference point for the SLMP

O **Outline Planning Permission (OPP)** Outline Planning Permission was granted in January 2025 for the Gilston Park Estate (Village 1-6), submitted by Places for People and for Village 7, submitted by Taylor Wimpey. These take the form of a set of Parameter Plans and an accompanying Development Specification. In support of the OPP's, a Landscape and Green Infrastructure Report was prepared by Places for People in 2019 to define the core landscape strategies for the Gilston Park Estate. Additionally an Open Space Landscape and Public Realm Strategy Assessment has been prepared by Taylor Wimpey for Village 7, forming part of the submitted Outline Planning Application.

D **Detailed Applications for the River Crossings infrastructure**
Alongside the OPP, detailed proposals for strategic infrastructure for the new villages also gained planning consent in Spring 2022

L **The Strategic Landscape Masterplan and Village Masterplans**
As required within the Gilston Area Charter, the Strategic Landscape Masterplan has been prepared to provide a framework for the creation of green infrastructure, public open space, habitat creation, environmental management and development integration necessary to support the successful realisation of the 7 Villages of the Gilston Area. The study focuses on the treatment of landscape areas around and between the Developable Areas of proposed Villages,

V Further individual Village Masterplans are also to be developed for each of the 7 Villages, incorporating detail of how landscape is to be integrated at the Village scale.



Fig.13 Gilston Concept Framework Masterplan, 2017

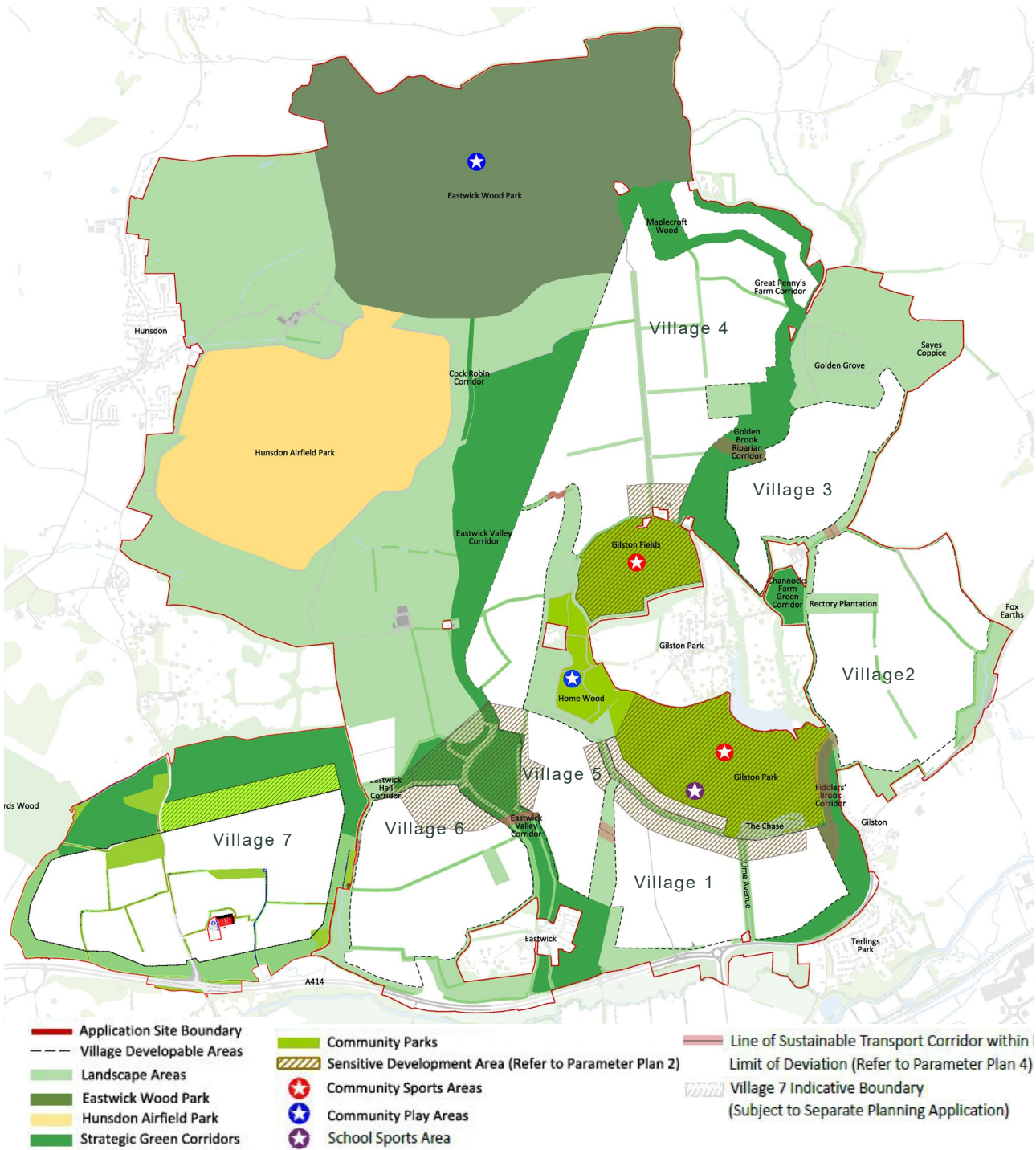


Fig.14 Gilston Park Estate OPP Green Infrastructure and Open Space Parameter Plan, 2020

Part A

Study Objectives

Chapter 2

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Study Objectives

2.1 Purpose of the SLMP Study

A summary of the SLMP Study objectives has been developed to communicate the purpose and desired outcomes of the SLMP study

SLMP Objectives

The objective of the Masterplan is to provide a framework for the future RMA designs and establish the design principles and guidance required in order to achieve a vibrant, cohesive, sustainable and sensitively integrated place which supports healthy active lifestyles and community. It will achieve this by defining design principles which;

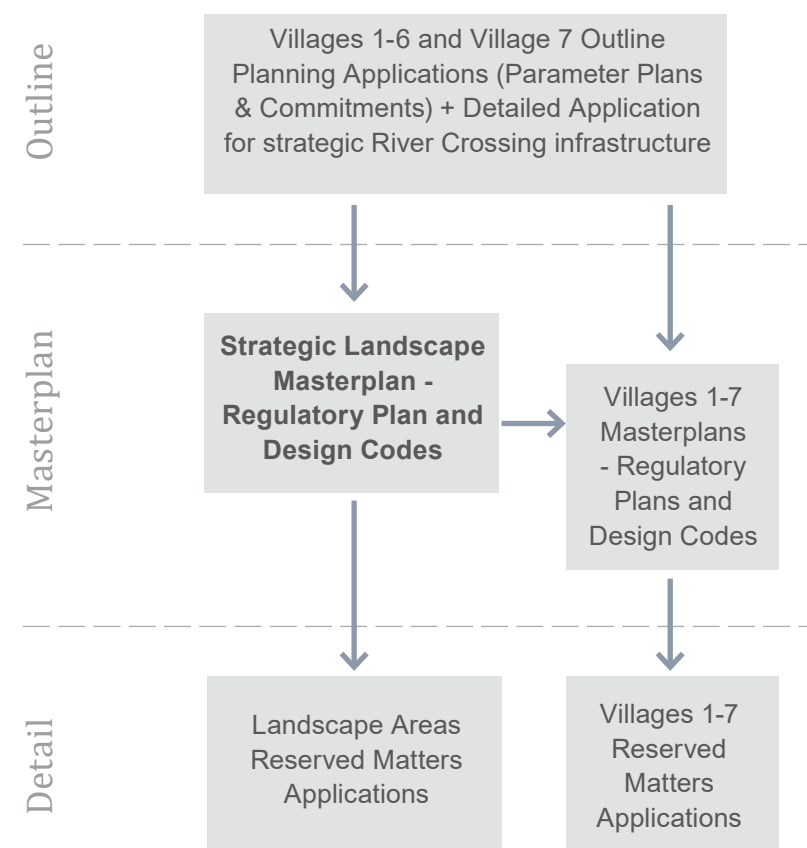
- Create a beautiful and resilient landscape
- Create a framework for ongoing stewardship and curation of the landscape
- Develop and articulate the Natural and Historic Landscape Strategy into a clear and shared vision.
- Identify the character, purpose and use of each of the key landscape areas.
- Provide a framework for the successful delivery of the masterplan, encompassing landscape management, amenity, access, leisure and recreation, SuDS drainage and flood risk, ecology and biodiversity, heritage assets, and landscape integration.

Ensuring SLMP guidance is implemented

- Submission of the SLMP to EHDC is a required planning Condition of the Outline Planning consent for the Gilston Area.
- The guiding strategies and principles of the Strategic Landscape Masterplan will be recorded within a Regulatory Plan and a series of Design Codes.
- These will provide design requirements to control key characteristics and design quality of the proposals, and ensure there is a consistent, sensitive approach to landscape implemented through all subsequent detailed design work.
- Once approved by EHDC, the SLMP will become a key document which future reserved matter applications must abide by.

Relationship of the SLMP previous Gilston Masterplan documents & Approvals

- The flow-diagram below illustrates the relationship of the SLMP to other Masterplan documents relating to the Gilston Area



Creating A Strategy For A Flexible & Timeless Approach

The SLMP study has set out to create a flexible approach appropriate to the significant duration of the Gilston Area project. This has been considered in the following ways:

- Consideration of recently adopted planning policy documents such as the Sports, Open Space and Recreation SPD and Gilston Area Charter SPD, the Draft EHDC Sustainability SPD, the EHDC Gilston Area Community Engagement Strategy. These documents are anticipated to be continually updated and reserved matter applications will need to respond to the latest guidance throughout the project lifetime.
- Consulting with community groups early in the process, and at key stages during the SLMP study. This engagement will be led by the Applicant as set out in the Gilston Area Community Engagement Strategy.
- Projecting forwards to consider the changes in lifestyle that are likely to occur over the 15-20 year construction cycle of the development.
- Incorporating positive action in relation to the Climate Change Emergency and opportunities to utilise new green technologies where possible
- Incorporating positive action in relation to the biodiversity emergency including choice of resilient species and importance of spatial framework in protecting biodiversity.
- Integrating improved sustainable transport links and green active transport links as defined through the masterplan layout of green infrastructure connections
- Considering the conservation of water resources to protect Hertfordshire's aquifer and unique chalk rivers habitats

Study Objectives

2.2 Study Objectives & Engagement



Community Engagement

The Engagement Strategy has been developed following the approach set out within the EHDC Gilston Area Community Engagement Strategy and SLMP Engagement Plan and is set out around the following key activities:

- 2 Quality Review Panel Reviews
- LPA Engagement
- Neighbourhood Planning Group Meetings
- Wider Stakeholder Workshops & Reporting
- Focused Themed Sessions
- Public Consultation Sessions & Online Engagement
- Design Code Testing Workshops

Community Engagement has taken place through the following methods:

- Online video meetings & workshops (with information circulated in advance)
- In person meetings & workshops (where Covid-restrictions allow)
- Online Webinars (Invite-only)
- Website updates including forum for feedback
- Public consultation sessions

Refer to Appendix A - SLMP Statement of Engagement for details

Engagement with the Working Group

The following Local Planning Authorities, Community Groups, and Stakeholders have been consulted for the SLMP. Specialist engagement consultants have worked with the team to ensure the engagement process is made open to a diverse representation of the community. The formation of a Working Group has been central to the masterplan consultation.

Working Group:

- Places for People & Taylor Wimpey & design team Landscape Architects
- Hunsdon Eastwick & Gilston Neighbourhood Planning Group (HEGNPG) or a representative from each of the Parishes
- EHDC Landscape & Strategic Masterplanning Officer
- EHDC ward councillors from Hunsdon / Much Hadham
- Harlow District Council elected member
- Hertfordshire County Council elected representative
- Community Representatives
- Business / Chamber of Commerce representatives
- Youth Representative
- Places for People & Taylor Wimpey technical team where applicable to topic

In addition to the Working Group, proposals will be discussed with:

- Local Planning Authorities:
 - East Herts District Council, Hertfordshire County Council and Harlow Council
 - Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (including HGGT Board, Officer Groups, & Developer Forum)
- Community Groups:
 - HEGNPG and Parish Councils
 - Local Residents & Tenants
 - Wider Community Groups e.g. Stort Catchment Partnership & Wildlife Trusts, & Youth Groups
- Statutory / Non-statutory Bodies:
 - Environment Agency, Historic England, Natural England, Sport England, Highways Authority
- Quality Review:
 - HGGT Quality Review Panel
 - Places for People internal Peer Review



Fig.15 Working Group site tour, August 2024



Fig.16 Public consultation in Hunsdon Village Hall, August 2024

Study Objectives

2.3 Study Area

- O** The Outline Planning Permission (OPP) boundaries for Villages 1-6 and Village 7 have been combined to form the study area for the Strategic Landscape Masterplan. The extent of the Village Developable Areas is also defined by the OPP
- L** The Strategic Landscape Masterplan study focuses specifically on the landscape infrastructure, amenities and interfaces outside of the Developable Areas of the Villages, which incorporate the substantial Green and Blue Infrastructure required to deliver the Gilston Area development vision, and support it sustainably into the future.
- V** In addition to the primary landscape infrastructure which is the focus of this study, each of the seven Villages will include further green space and outdoor amenities including pocket parks, play space and sports facilities. The design strategies for these features will be explored within the Village Masterplans.

Key

- SLMP Study Area
- Developable Areas as defined within the OPA Parameter Plans
- /// Stort Area - For Reference

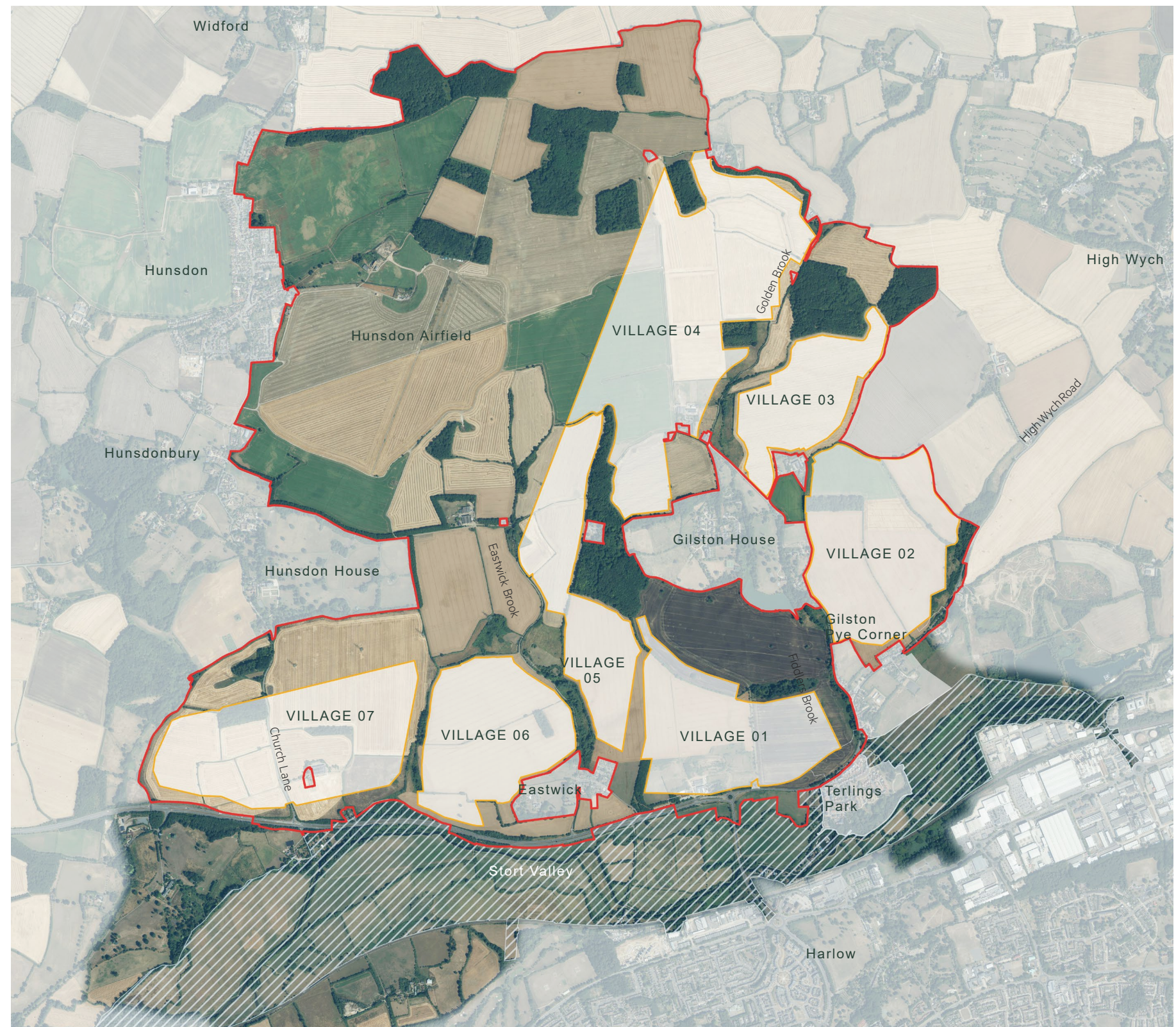


Fig.17 SLMP Study Area

0 250 500 1000m



Study Objectives

2.4 Character Areas

The following diagram identifies the Character Areas which are the focus of the SLMP study. The areas reflect the landscape areas defined within the OPP Parameter Plans. These are defined by overall typology as Community Parks, Strategic Infrastructure, and Village Corridors, as well as specialist areas such as the Stort Valley Park and landscape interfaces with the Sustainable Transport Corridor.

Key design parameters for each Character Area are explored within the Character Areas chapter of Part B.

Key

COUNTRYSIDE PARKS

- CA1 - Eastwick Woodland Park
- CA2 - Hunsdon Airfield Park

COMMUNITY PARKS

- CA3 - Home Wood
- CA4 - Gilston Fields
- CA5 - Gilston Park
- CA6 - Hunsdon Community Park

STRATEGIC GREEN CORRIDORS

- CA7 - Eastwick Valley Green Corridor
- CA8 - Eastwick Village Corridor
- CA9 - Eastwick Hall Green Corridor
- CA10 - Golden Brook Riparian Corridor
- CA11 - Fiddler's Brook Green Corridor
- CA12 - Channocks Farm Green Corridor
- CA13 - Maplecroft Wood & Great Pennys Farm

VILLAGE CORRIDORS

- CA14 - Village Corridors
- CA15 - Village 7 Greenway

AGRICULTURE

- CA16 - Agriculture

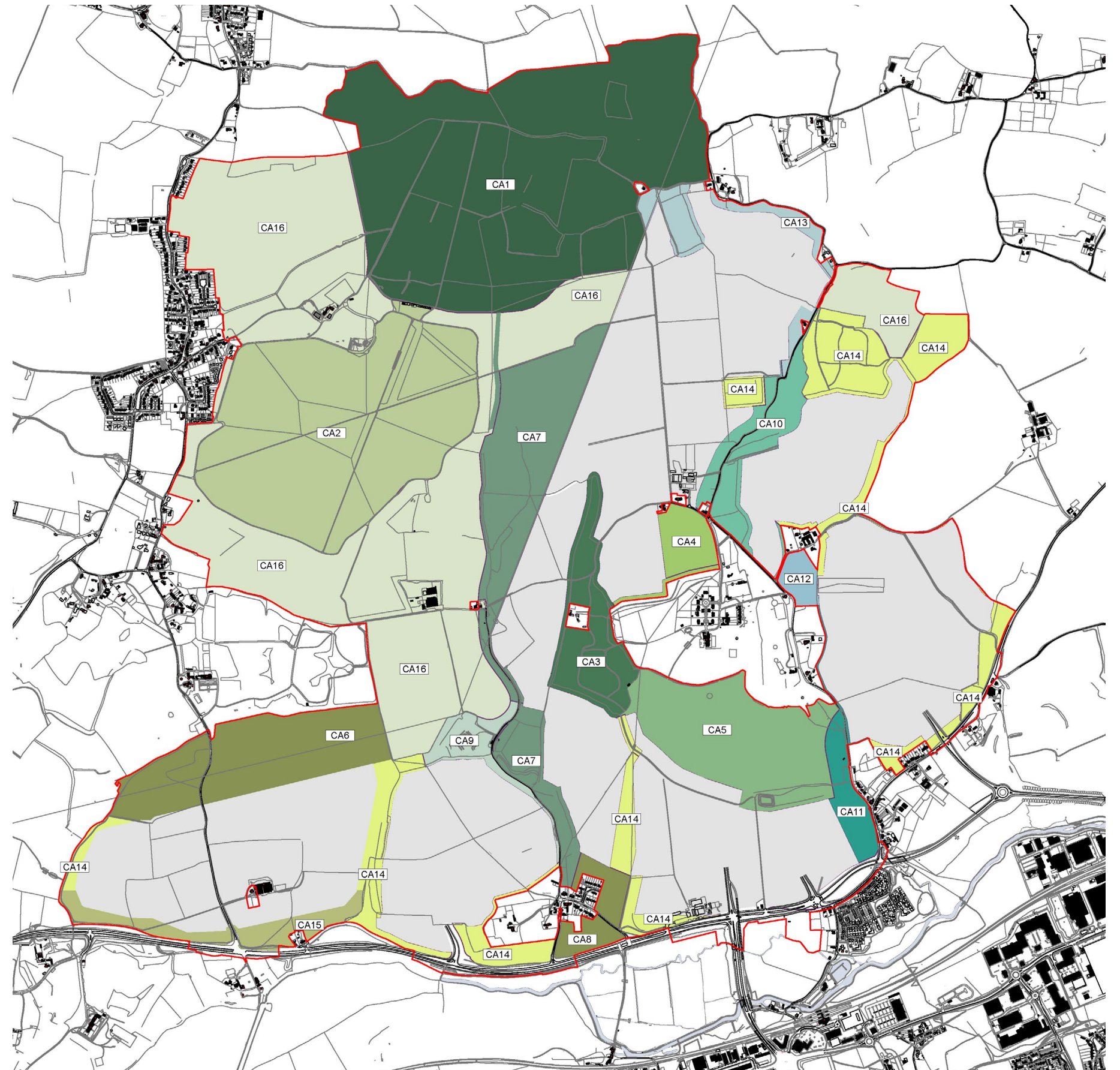


Fig.18 Character Areas Plan

Part A

A truly sustainable new community

Vision

Chapter 3

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3.1 Vision Statement

Building on the vision set out the in Outline Planning Permission, the Gilston Strategic Landscape Masterplan sets out a vision for landscape as the foundation for a truly sustainable new community to be established in the Gilston Area which is embedded in its sense of place. The masterplan study recognises that a landscape-led approach is at the heart of meeting the ambitions of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town, and will lead the future proposals towards achieving high design quality and addressing the landscape, social, and environmental challenges of the development. It will accomplish this through commitment to the following core principles:

- 1. *Beauty and resilience.*
- 2. *Respecting and enhancing the existing landscape*
- 3. *Creation of a sustainable and productive landscape*
- 4. *Promoting healthy and sustainable lifestyles and a close contact with nature*
- 5. *Addressing climate change and biodiversity emergencies*

The Gilston Area presents the opportunity to create an exemplary scheme demonstrating how a new community can thrive and become a model of sustainable social and environmental living, through an holistic vision for a better natural environment.

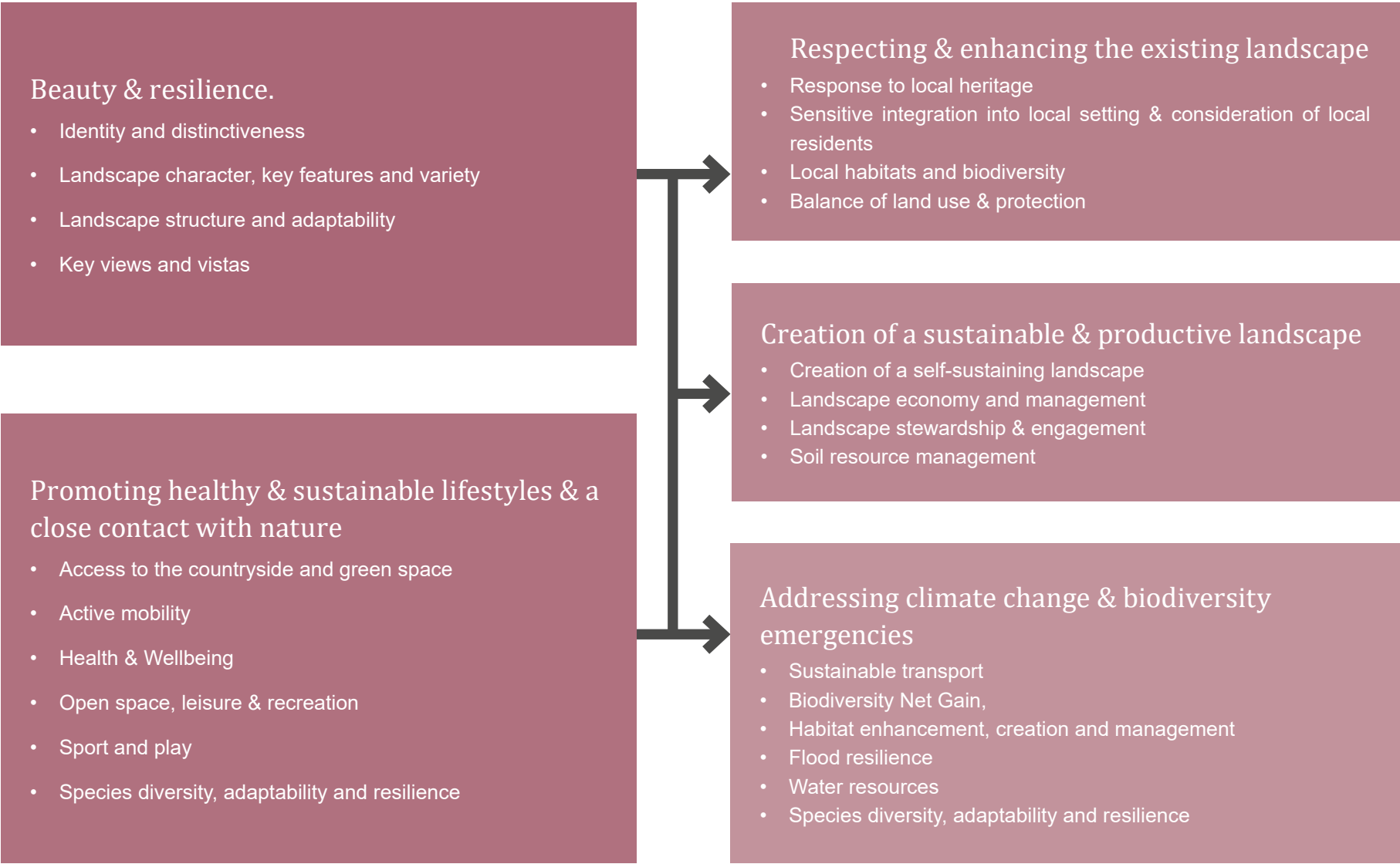
As defined within the Garden City principles the masterplan seeks to provide the best of town and country – re-framed to meet the challenges of 21st century living. To achieve this, it is necessary to equip the new community with realistic options to choose sustainable mobility, particularly through providing opportunities to include access to the countryside as a part of daily life. The vital role of green infrastructure to the needs of the community can be complemented with enhanced landscape richness and ecological diversity.

Key to this vision, is the understanding that the landscape has intrinsic value to the community as a source of mental and physical health and wellbeing, and a balancing force by which the challenges of climate change, flood risk, pollution, water resources can be met. It should also be a source of joy, beauty, variety and inclusivity, providing delight and

respite to residents and the local community, and resilience and protection to the natural world.

The SLMP ambition to connect people with nature, is inherently reliant on the role of stewardship; ensuring that a long-term vision for management of the landscape is set out in order to realise the exceptional potential of the site. In addition to the creation of new country parks and open space held in community-trust, an individual sense of ownership will be fostered through the creation of beautiful walking and cycling routes through the landscape, and settings for outdoor play, sports and leisure, and creation of allotments for food production; each element forming the daily experience of new and existing residents of the area.

Core Principles



At QRP Session 01 the panel highlighted the importance of identifying key principles which apply across the landscape. This diagram sets out these themes

Vision

3.2 Vision Plan

The illustrative plan adjacent graphically represents the Vision for the Gilston Strategic Landscape Masterplan

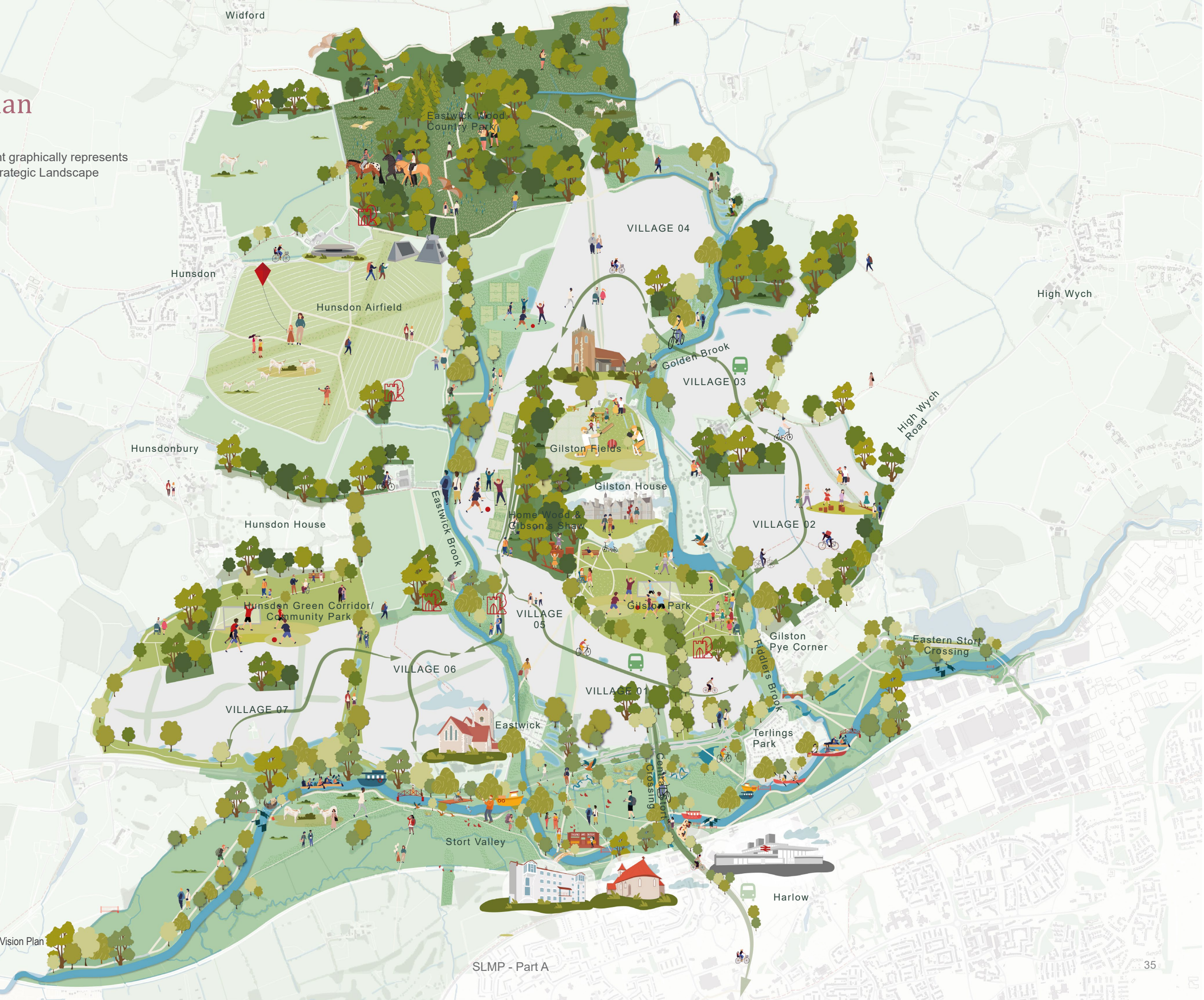


Fig.19 Illustrative Vision Plan

3.3 Landscape Strategies Overview

The Strategies develop the commitments set out within the OPP Parameter Plans, and utilise the updated technical analysis of Section 4, to provide a series of definitive strategy plans which will form the basis of the design development for the Character Areas and determine the features to be defined within the Strategic Landscape Masterplan Design Codes.

36



Fig.21 Hunsdon Plateau woodlands



Fig.22 Parkland of Gilston Park



Fig.23 Stort Valley

Vision

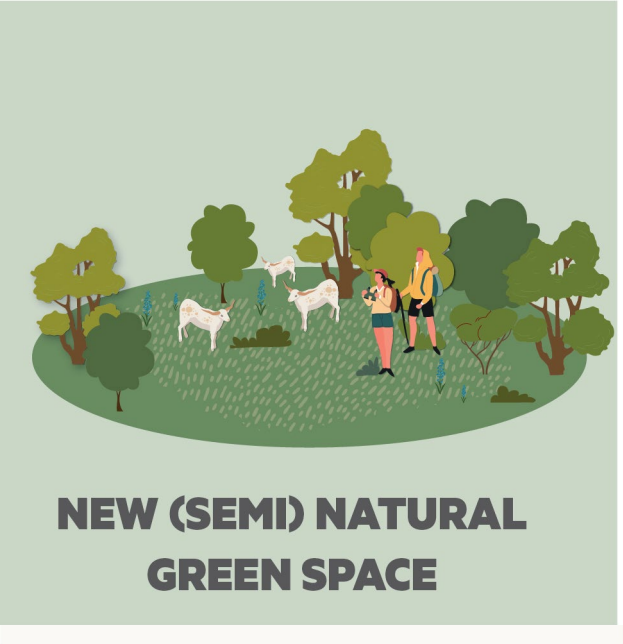
3.4 Green Infrastructure Commitments

The Strategic Landscape Masterplan Vision is to be delivered through an extensive provision of Green Infrastructure as the foundation for the Gilston Area development.

The SLMP builds upon the principles set out within the Gilston Park Estate / Village 7 Strategic Design Guide:

- The SLMP will contribute to the creation of a collective identity for the Villages which is embedded in the landscape character, using this as inspiration for distinct individual characters for the Villages.
- SLMP will set the principles for Village edge treatments which will help to integrate the new Villages into the landscape and create attractive frontage compositions
- A positive relationship to heritage assets will be fostered through the consideration of key views, boundary treatments, materiality and appropriate activities
- The SLMP will set out to promote sustainable and innovative design solutions establishing key principles for the treatment of surface water, and existing vegetation, the design of active mobility options, open space and community food growing, and for the selection of materials
- Building on the OPP principles the SLMP will determine how access to the countryside will be maximised and healthy lifestyles encouraged through the creation of new open space, sports facilities and a strategy for PROW's and a network of attractive commuter and leisure pedestrian and cycle routes,

The Green Infrastructure will be diverse and respond sensitively to the unique character of the existing site, whilst also looking forward to the ways in which people will be able to live more sustainably in future, providing the variety of facilities needed for a diverse population. The function of the landscape in addressing the pressures of the climate and biodiversity emergencies is of principle importance.

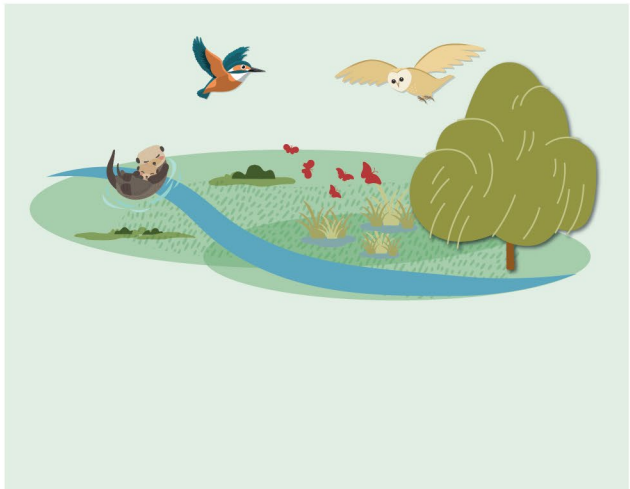




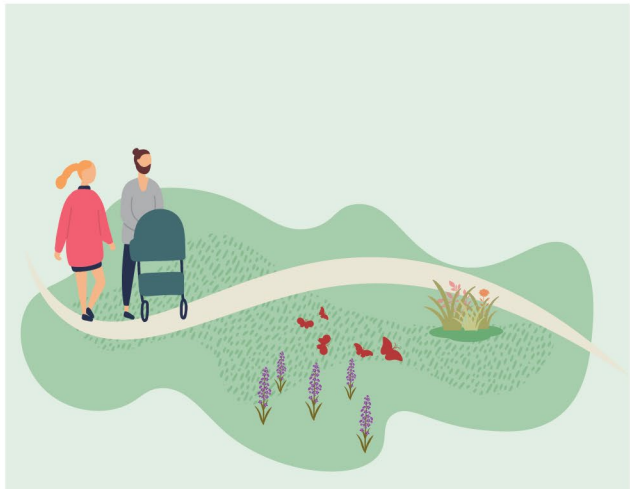
MAJOR NEW PARKS



NEW LANDSCAPE HABITAT CONNECTIONS



ENHANCED FLOOD MEADOWS & WETLANDS



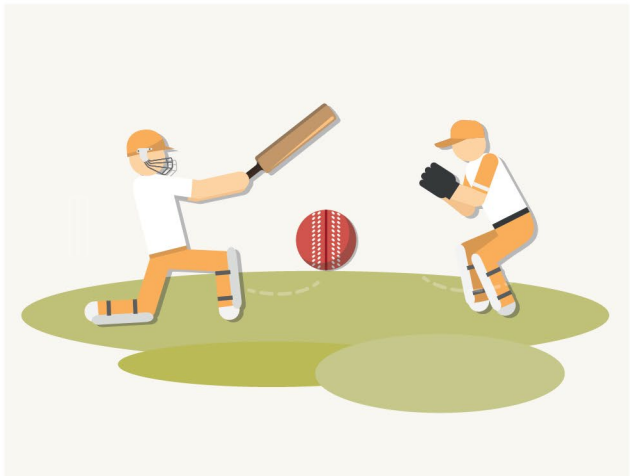
NEW AND ENHANCED SPECIES RICH GRASSLAND



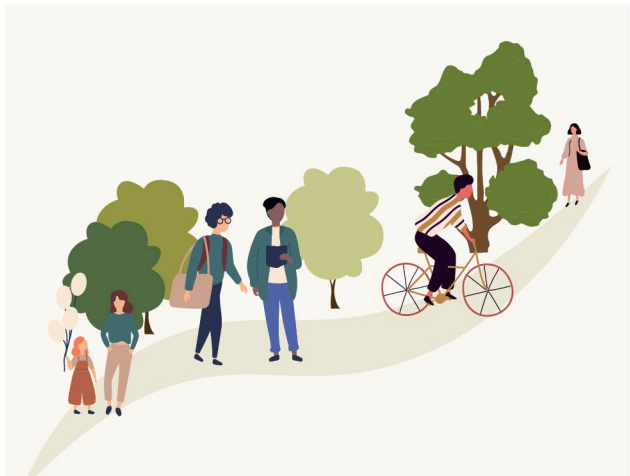
NEW PUBLIC GARDENS, PARKS SPORTS & PLAY



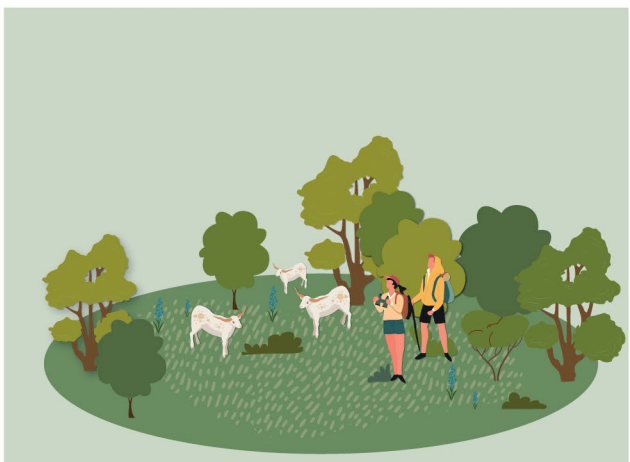
AREAS OF EXISTING AND NEW WOODLAND



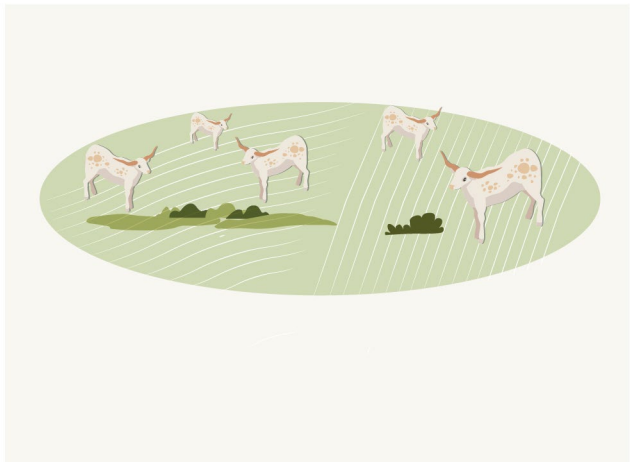
NEW SPORT FACILITIES



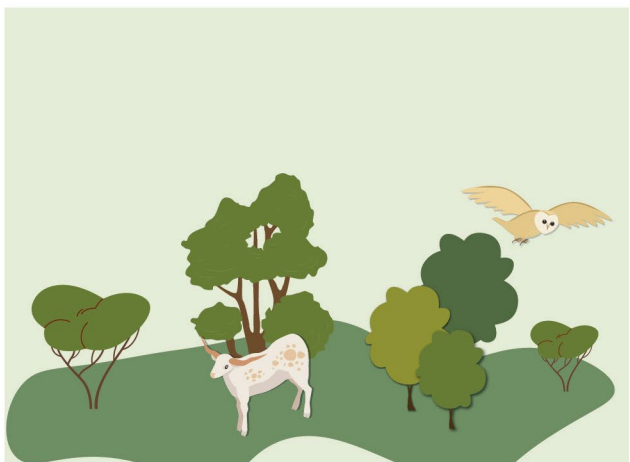
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR WALKING & CYCLING



NEW (SEMI) NATURAL GREEN SPACE



RETAINED AGRICULTURAL LAND



NEW AREAS OF WOODLAND PASTURE



LANDSCAPES INSPIRED BY LOCAL SETTING

3.5 Community Engagement

The Strategic Landscape Masterplan study has been developed in collaboration with the local community, local planning authority and key stakeholders advising on technical and strategic aspects of the proposals.

In addition to meetings and site tours with the Hunsdon Eastwick and Gilston Neighbourhood Planning Group (HEGNPG), the SLMP Engagement Strategy established the following core groups who took part in regular consultation throughout the process of the Masterplan:

- Gilston Area Project Lead Group: Sessions were held at key points in the process, bringing together the two developers Places for People and Taylor Wimpey, with the local planning authority to discuss principle matters of the SLMP
- SLMP Technical Working Groups: A series of 7 workshops each focusing on a key topic of the SLMP design covering: Biodiversity and Ecology, Transport, Flood Risk, Drainage and Utilities, Archaeology and heritage, Green Infrastructure and Design Codes and Implementation. The workshops brought together specialist stakeholders, statutory consultees, and local authority officers to review and provide feedback on emerging proposals for the SLMP
- SLMP Community Working Groups: 4 collaborative session and a site visit undertaken as a presentation and interactive workshop with an invited group from the community incorporating representatives from HEGNPG, local youth groups, local councillors and local authority officers

Specific responses to community / peer and stakeholder feedback are highlighted throughout this document. Refer to Appendix A - SLMP Statement of Engagement for further details

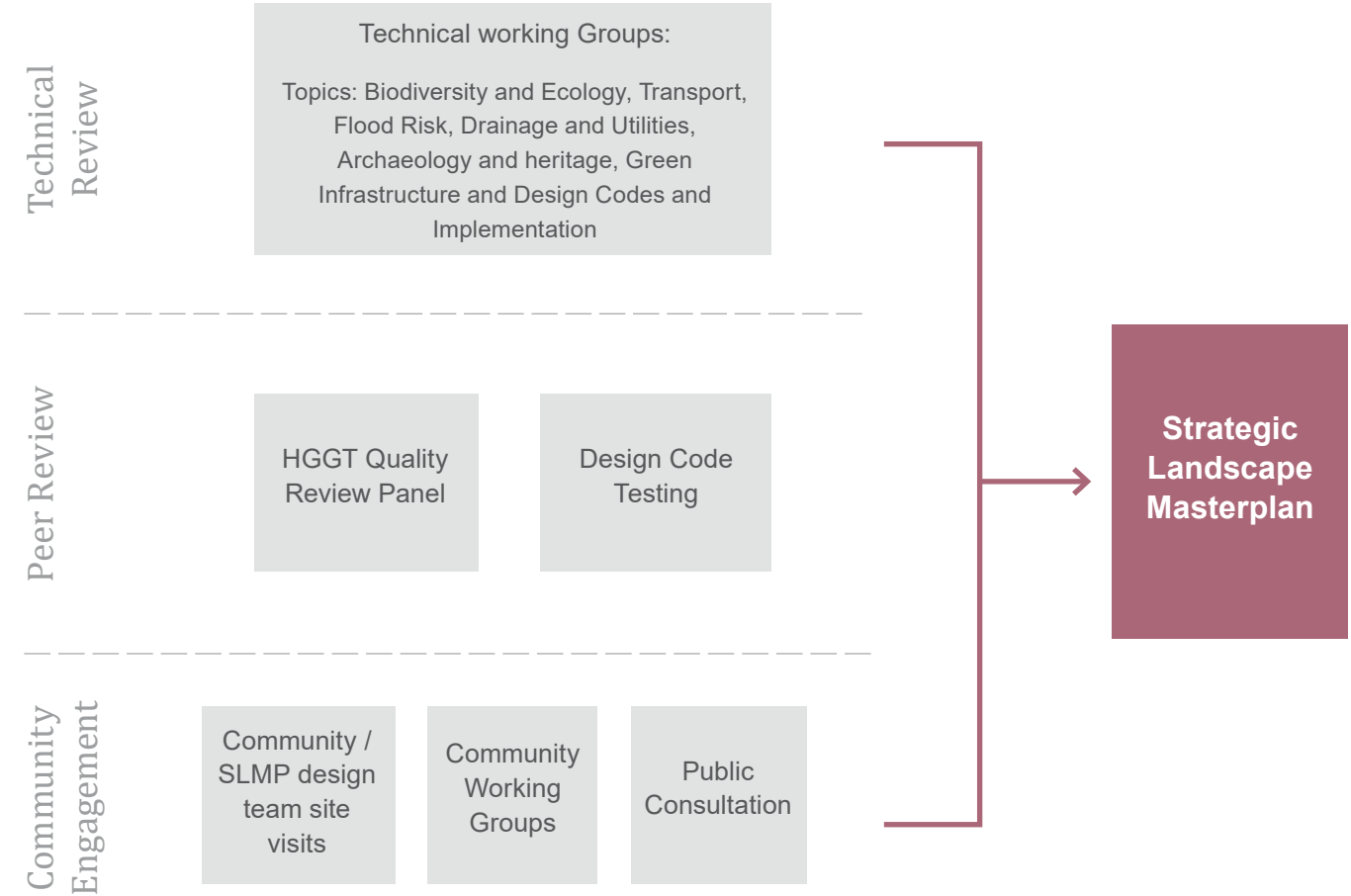
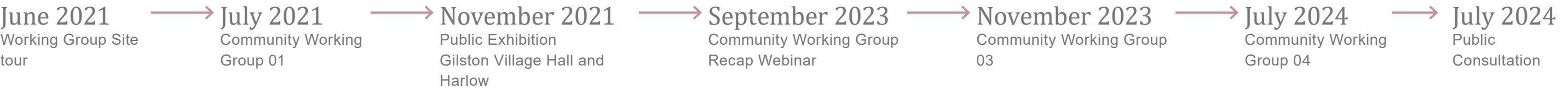


Fig.24 Community / SLMP design team site visit, June 2021



Fig.25 Community / SLMP design team site visit, June 2021

Community Engagements Timeline



Technical Working Groups Timeline



Opportunities and Considerations

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Opportunities and Considerations

4.1 Overview of Opportunities & Considerations

Landscape Themes

Achieving the SLMP Vision requires the cohesion of multiple layers of landscape attributes, developed collectively into a unified whole.

The SLMP therefore is organised according to a set of landscape themes, represented by the adjacent symbols, which are each scrutinized individually within this section in regards to site analysis before being brought together in Chapter 6 under the Character Area studies.

The landscape themes also form the basis of guidance provided within the SLMP Design Codes in Part B.

Overview of Opportunities and Considerations

This section provides an overview of the existing site conditions which have been reviewed and mapped utilising the latest OS Photography, and GIS data-sets.

This baseline study builds upon the analysis undertaken as part of the Gilston Park Estate OPP and Village 7 OPP and is used to verify key considerations and opportunities for the Strategic Landscape Masterplan study area.

The study focuses on geographical analysis, existing ecological and heritage assets, infrastructure considerations, and the relationship of people to this environment through the distribution of access routes, views and key amenities such as Open Space, Sports and Play.

The resulting technical analysis will underpin the proposed strategies and proposals of the Strategic Landscape Masterplan, defining key sensitivities and objectives which must be defined through the Regulatory Plans and design code process in order to ensure realisation of the Gilston Area Vision.



Fig.26 Adjacent page right: Aerial View representing the existing Gilston Area site



4.2 Landscape Character

Landscape Characters

The Landscape & Green Infrastructure Report (May 2019), submitted as part of the OPA, describes three distinct character zones across the Gilston Area. This assessment was informed by the EHDC Landscape Character Assessment SPD, 2007 which splits the Gilston Area into two Landscape Character Areas; the North falls within Area 83: Hunsdon Plateau and the south falls within Area 81: Stanstead to Pishiobury Parklands. This assessment has been considered with site observations in order to create a high level, site-specific landscape analysis, which reveals four areas of distinct character; shaped by topography, aspect and the overall environmental quality as well as the degree of connection to Harlow and East Herts. The OPA illustrative Landscape & Green Infrastructure Report describes the following four character zones:

1. The northern character area, woodland belt, contains clusters of ancient woodlands that fragment the open space and shorten views. This area feels disconnected from Harlow and seems fully immersed in the Hertfordshire countryside.
2. The central character area, the plateau, runs as a central east-west strip of landscape across the site, north of the slopes character area described below. With the exception of dips in the landscape formed by two tributary valley streams, the area is predominantly flat and feels visually disconnected from Harlow to the south. Views are more expansive across the site, punctuated by large human interventions in the form of a line of pylons and Hunsdon Airfield.
3. The southern character area, the Eastwick and Gilston slopes, consist of south-facing terrain sandwiched between the Stort Valley and the ridge lines across the middle portion of the site, including the southern end of the former Gilston Park. Overlooking the Stort Valley this is, visually and physically speaking, the most visually connected area to Harlow.
4. The Stort Valley runs along the southern perimeter of the site and represents one of the most influential landscape features in the area. The floodplain in the valley, bordering on the urban fringes of Harlow, provides natural habitat for a diverse ecology of wildlife.

Opportunities

The proposals should seek to work to preserve the character of the woodland belt, the openness of the Hunsdon Airfield on the plateau, the parkland setting of the former Gilston Park and the riparian corridors of the tributary valleys. The landscape setting of the Stort Valley between the site and Harlow presents an opportunity to enhance existing green infrastructure ecology and movement networks and to create a well-connected gateway to the new development.

Each proposed park and village neighbourhood should seek to reflect the character of its individual landscape character zone through proposed tree planting, habitat type and material uses. Existing defining features of the landscape such as valley bottoms, veteran trees, avenues, holloways should be retained and enhanced.

WSP (formerly GL Hearn and Capita Lovejoy) Landscape architects undertook landscape character assessment for villages 1-6 and Churchman Thornhill Finch for Village 7. These documents were submitted in the respective OPA Environmental statements.

Refer to Appendix D - Technical Appendix on Key Heritage Views in the Gilston Park Estate for further details



Fig.27 Existing woodland



Fig.29 Eastwick slopes and Gilston Park (Gilston Park)



Fig.28 Hunsdon Plateau and airfield



Fig.30 Stort Valley



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The adjacent diagram was developed and submitted as part of the OPA. It maps and identifies the four character zones that are set out on the previous page.

The landscape characters identified in the diagram have been refined to inform the strategies and design guidance for the Gilston Area, which are found in Part B of the document.

Key

- Woodland Belt
- Plateau
- Hunsdon Airfield
- Eastwick Slopes & Gilston Park
- Stort Valley

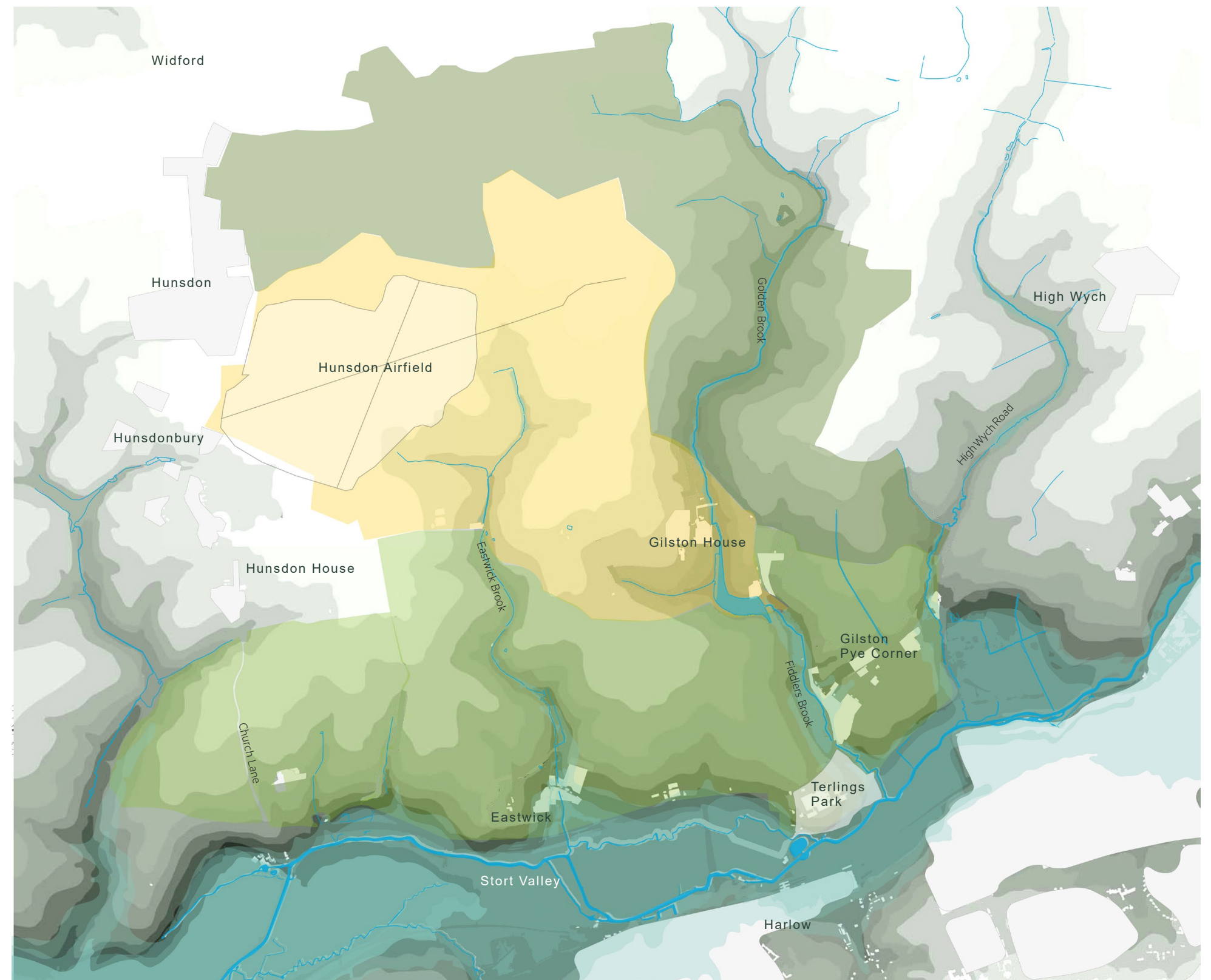


Fig.31 Landscape Character

NTS



4.2 Landscape Character

Place Names

Through reference to OS mapping data together with tenancy plans, the character of the Gilston Area landscape is also be described through place names. Each field and woodland within the area has a unique name, which give insight into their natural and agricultural characteristics, such as Ditching Foot, Spring Meadow, Shepherds, Fox Earths, and Lagoon Field as well as information on functions, such as Vineyards, Widford Common, Wind Pump, and ownership, such as Brickleys and Robinsons, which has at one time defined that plot of land for the local farmers and community.

Certain field names, such as the First Reclaim and Second Reclaim within the Eastwick Woodland area indicate how the current landscape has changed and evolved, and in the case of these fields suggest the land was previously woodland, a typology which there is opportunity to restore within the SLMP proposals for the site.

As well as giving insight to the past, place names can become a helpful tool when considering future landscape character and identity, breaking the large site into a series of interconnected places, each with their own characteristics, function and relationship to the surrounding existing and future community.



Fig.32 View of First Reclaim and 18 Acre



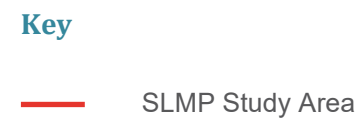
Fig.33 Home Wood



Fig.34 Black Hut Wood



Fig.35 St Mary's Church



0 250 500 1000m

4.3 Topography

Considerations

The site rises gently from the valley flood plain of the River Stort to the south of the site at circa 30m AOD to Eastwick Wood to the north at circa 80m AOD on the East Hertfordshire plateau.

Small valleys formed by the three tributary watercourses of Golden Brook/Fiddlers Brook, Pole Hill Stream and Gould's Brook (Eastwick Valley) cut through the northern slopes of the plateau from north to south across the site. In places these valley sides are steep with slopes of approximately 10%.

Additional topographical surveys were undertaken as part of the SLMP in strategic locations to inform the design process.

Opportunities

The flat shoulders of land within the SLMP, at the centre of the site around Gilston Park, Home Wood, St Mary's Church and also to the north of the future Village 7 and former Airfield site comprise shallow gradients and level land that could be suitable for sports pitches to blend in to the existing landform.



Fig.37 Geomorphology and land use

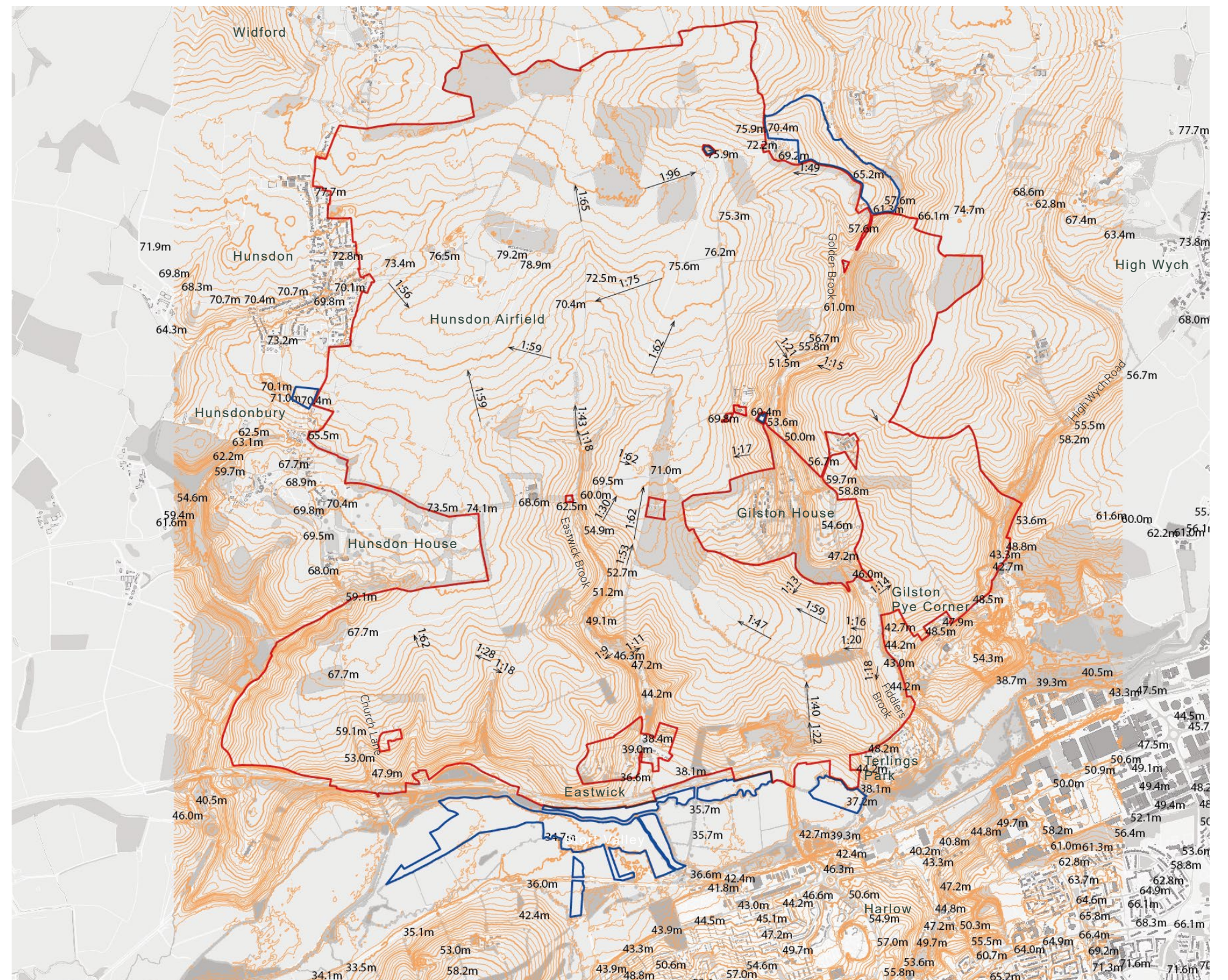
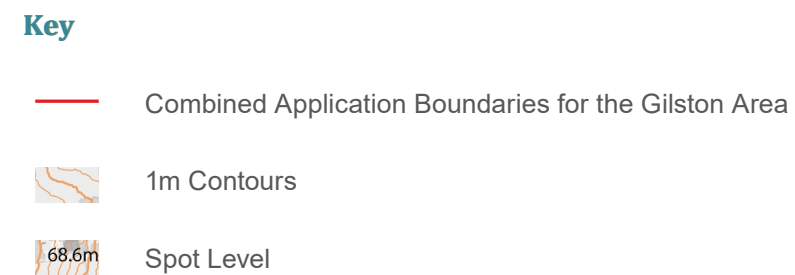


Fig.38 Settlements and Amenities



Opportunities and Considerations 4.4 Topography

Working with Site Topography

From early feasibility studies the site proposals have been explored in direct response to existing site topography. this has involved consideration of integration and visibility, identifying the most suitable locations for certain activities and types of development, and strategic planning of site drainage and analysis of gradients to ensure practical and comfortable movement of key routes across the site.

The adjacent section illustrates a long section through the existing site topography and identify locations and gradients for key activities.

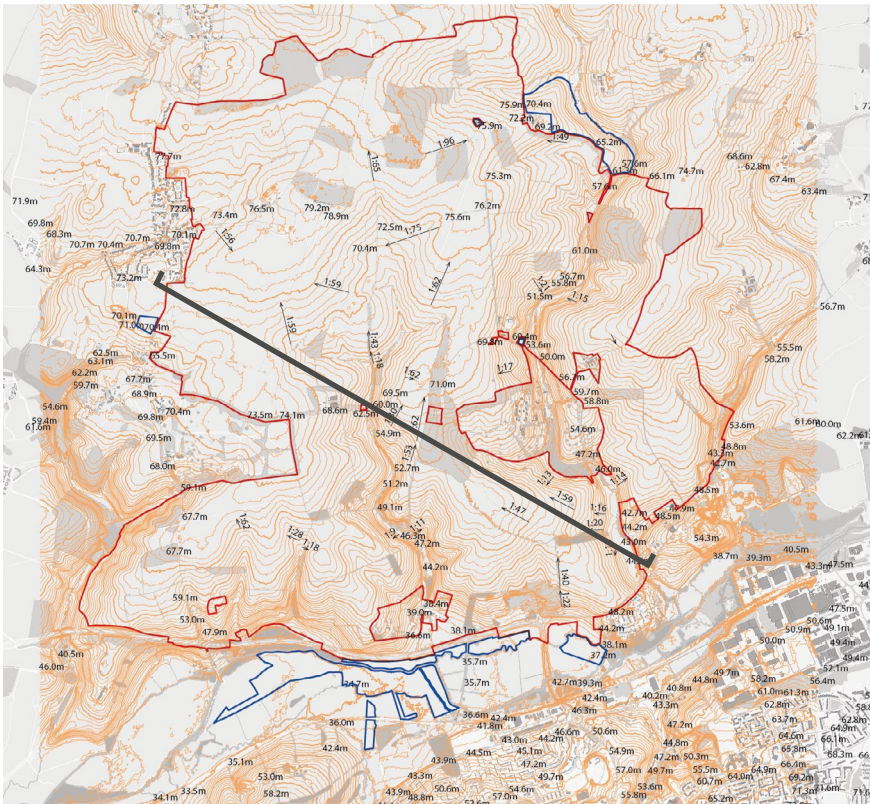


Fig.40 Section Location Plan

At QRP Session 01 the panel recommended we further express how the landscape proposals respond to the existing topography and levels challenges of the site

EXISTING SITE LONG SECTIONS

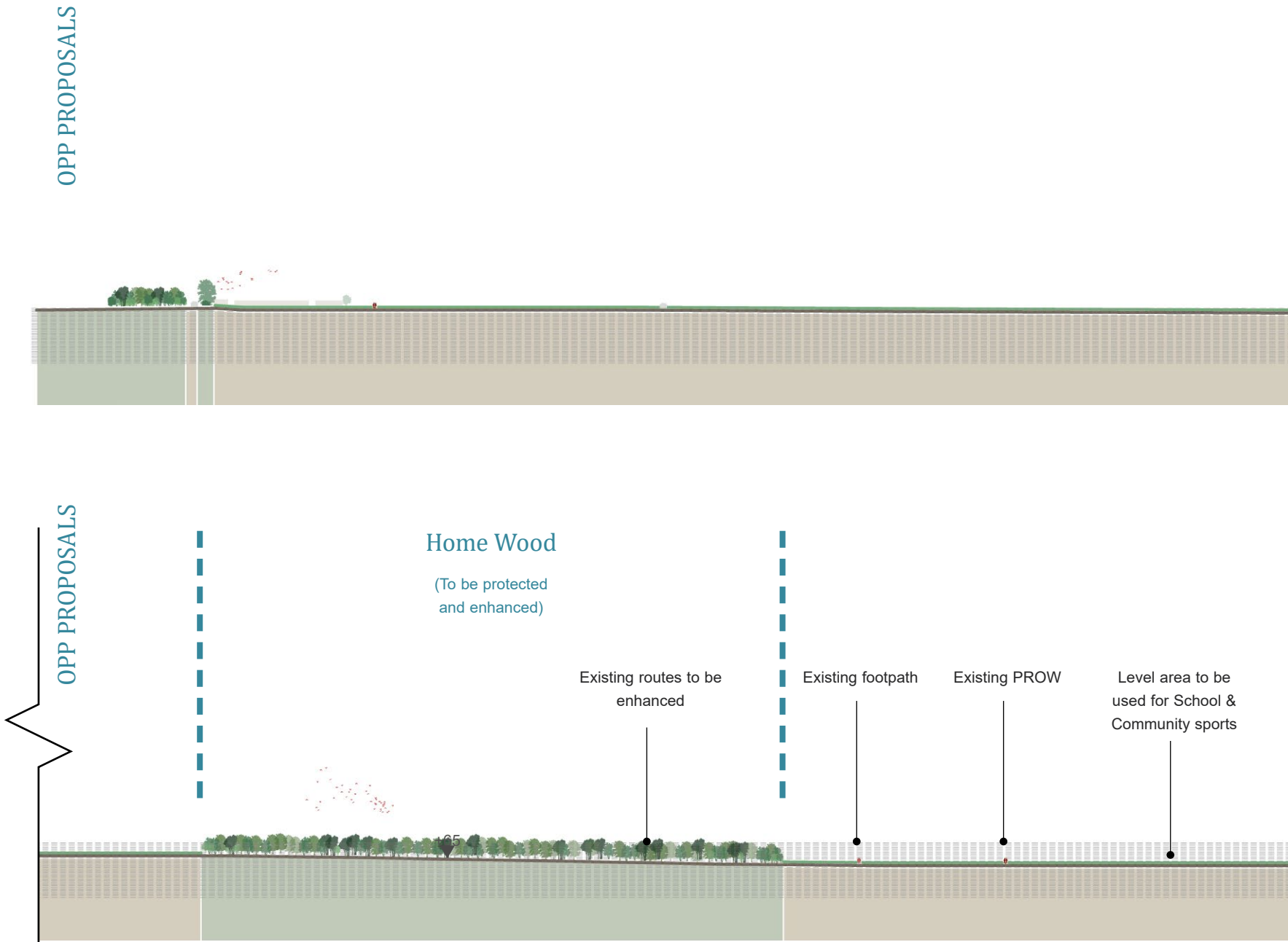
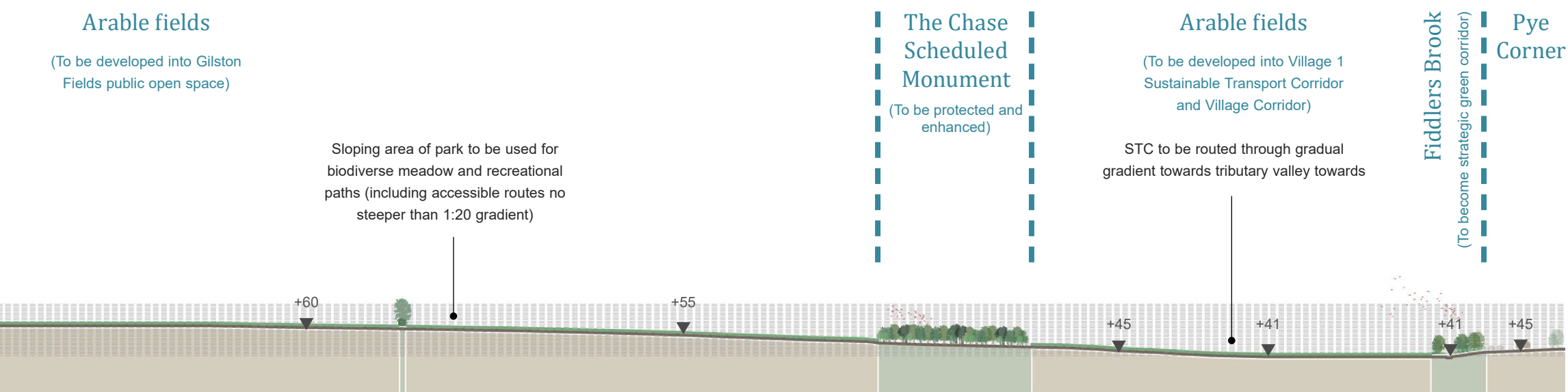
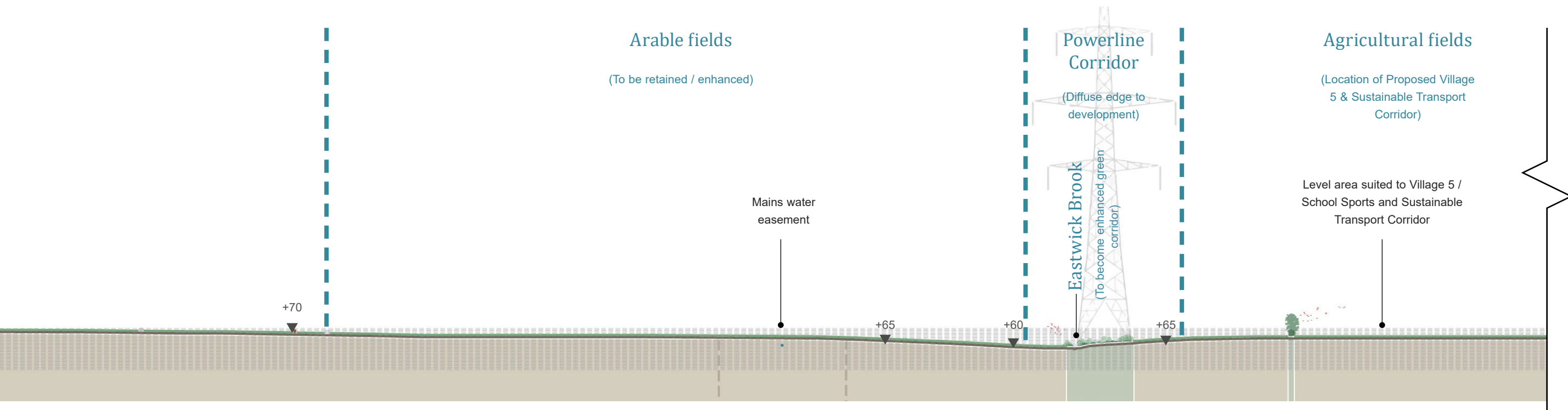


Fig.39 Existing site long section



4.4 Hydrology

Considerations

Small valleys formed by the three tributary watercourses of Golden Brook/Fiddlers Brook, Pole Hill brook and Gould's Brook/Eastwick Brook cut through the northern slopes of the plateau from north to south across the site. The ridges in-between form the watersheds to each of these watercourses

The River Stort flowing from east to west has been canalised to create the Stort Navigation. However, a meandering backwater section of the original river course still exists, accompanied by riparian trees and linking to the nature reserves of Hunsdon Mead and Roydon Mead.

Local pockets of flooding occur across the site due to the poor infiltration rates of clay soils, existing arable ploughing and the sunken nature of the existing network of lanes which are below field level.

Fiddlers Brook, Golden Brook, Eastwick Brook, Pole Hole Book and Hunsdon Brook have EA Main River status and an associated 20m development buffer to the watercourse

The Stort Valley is a large flood plain and is entirely flooded in the 1:100 year event. Equally, much of the tributary valleys fall within EA flood Risk Zones 1-3. All SuDs attenuation is to be located out of Zone 03 and is therefore restricted from development or SuDS attenuation. SuDS will need to be sized based on the 1in100 year storm event + 40% in accordance with NPPF

Additional baseline work was undertaken to support the SLMP, including the supplementary FRA.

Opportunities

Sustainable Urban Drainage systems (SuDS) should be integrated throughout the site, and in valley corridors in particular, to maintain greenfield run off rates, and attenuate for extreme weather events relating to climate change. This will also deliver the ecological enhancement of creating and wet meadow/wetland habitats.

A sensitively designed SuDS strategy also has the opportunity to safeguard the water quality of Hertfordshire's chalk river water and to contribute to protecting the aquifer.



Fig.41 Interlocking valley corridors

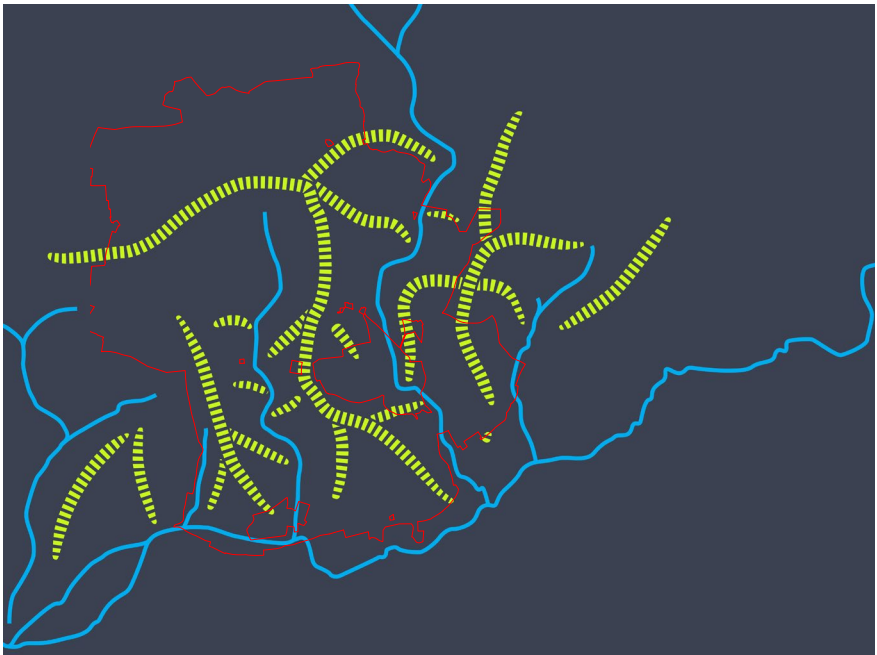


Fig.42 Ridge-lines and valleys

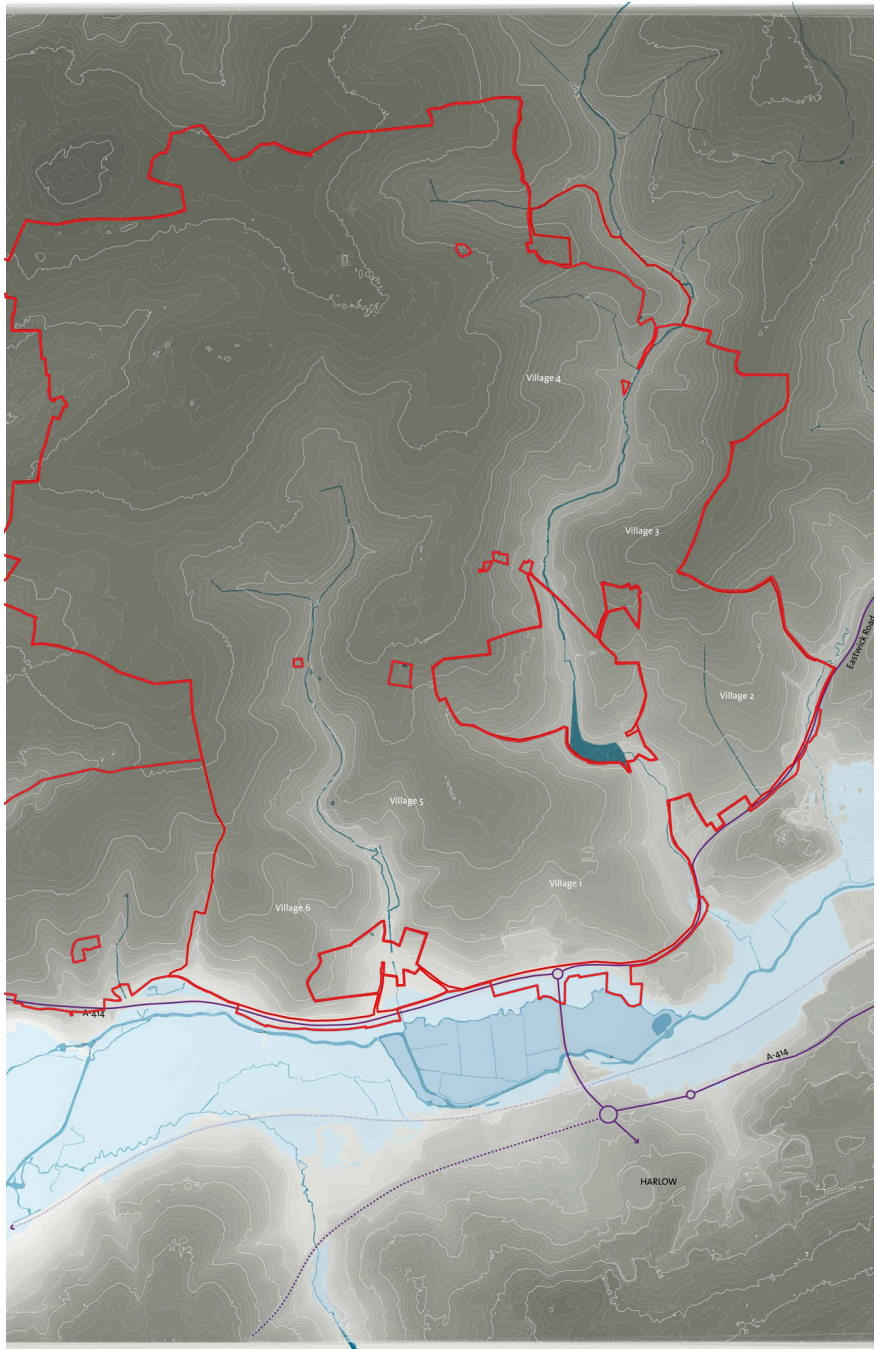


Fig.43 Flood zones and watercourses