

14 March 2023 at 7pm

Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Chelmsford

Membership

Councillor S J Robinson (Chair and Leader)
Councillor M C Goldman (Connected Chelmsford
and Deputy Leader)

and Councillors

C K Davidson (Fairer Chelmsford)
M J Mackrory (Sustainable Development)
R J Moore (Greener and Safer Chelmsford)

Local people are welcome to attend this meeting remotely, where your elected Councillors take decisions affecting YOU and your City.

There is also an opportunity to ask your Councillors questions or make a statement. These have to be submitted in advance and details are on the agenda page. If you would like to find out more, please telephone Daniel Bird in the Democracy Team on Chelmsford (01245) 606523 email daniel.bird@chelmsford.gov.uk

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THE CABINET

14 March 2023

AGENDA

PART 1 – Items to be considered when the public are likely to be present

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

All Members must disclose any interests they know they have in items of business on the meeting's agenda and that they must do so at this point on the agenda or as soon as they become aware of the interest. If the interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest they are also obliged to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting.

3. Minutes and Decisions Called in

Minutes of meeting on 24 January 2023. No decisions at that meeting were called in.

4. Public Questions

Any member of the public may ask a question or make a statement at this point in the meeting. Each person has two minutes and a maximum of 20 minutes is allotted to public questions/statements, which must be about matters for which the Cabinet is responsible. The Chair may disallow a question if it is offensive, substantially the same as another question or requires disclosure of exempt or confidential information. If the question cannot be answered at the meeting a written response will be provided after the meeting.

Any member of the public who wishes to submit a question or statement to this meeting should email it to committees@chelmsford.gov.uk at least 24 hours before the start time of the meeting. All valid questions and statements will be published with the agenda on the website at least six hours before the start time and will be responded to at the meeting. Those who have submitted a valid question or statement will be entitled to put it in person at the meeting.

5. Members' Questions

To receive any questions or statements from councillors not members of the Cabinet on matters for which the Cabinet is responsible.

6. Connected Chelmsford Items

6.1 Amendment to Council Tax premiums in respect of empty properties

6.2 Discretionary Business Rate Relief Policy

6.3 Community Funding Scheme – Discretionary Grant Funding 2023/24

7. Sustainable Development Items

7.1 Neighbourhood Plans Update and Delegations

7.2 Strategic Growth Site Policy 7 – Great Leighs Masterplan

8. Leader's Items

8.1 Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

8.2 Cabinet Report on Greater Essex Deal

9. Urgent Business

To consider any other matter which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency and which does not constitute a key decision.

10. Reports to Council

The officers will advise on those decisions of the Cabinet which must be the subject of recommendation to the Council.

MINUTES OF CHELMSFORD CITY COUNCIL CABINET

on 24 January 2023 at 7.00pm

Present:

Cabinet Members

Councillor S Robinson, Leader of the Council (Chair)
Councillor M Goldman, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Connected Chelmsford
Councillor C Davidson, Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford
Councillor M Mackrory, Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development
Councillor R Moore, Cabinet Member for Greener and Safer Chelmsford

Opposition Spokespersons

Councillors R Poulter, J Raven, I Roberts, M Steel, A Thorpe-Apps and R T Whitehead

Also present: Councillors A Davidson, I Grundy S Goldman, B Knight and A Sosin.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bentley, Gulliver, Hyland, Massey, Sismey and Thorpe Apps.

2. Declarations of Interest

Members of the Cabinet were reminded to declare at the appropriate time any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in any of the items of business on the meeting's agenda.

3. Minutes and Decisions Called-in

The minutes of the meeting on 15 November 2022 were confirmed as a correct record. No decisions at that meeting had been called in.

4. Public Questions

One question was asked at the meeting which related to ongoing concerns from several residents about a business operating in Great Baddow. The Cabinet were informed that there had been issues with noise nuisance and anti-social behaviour at the premises. It was noted

that at the planning stage, concerns had been raised with the Council and what appeared to be a short-term holiday let has instead become a party venue for stag and hen do's. The Cabinet heard that no staff were present at the premises and this led to 24/7 drinking and loud amplified music. The Cabinet heard that residents had been unsuccessful in liaising with the business and had instead turned to the Council for help. The Cabinet heard that often once Council officers arrive, the noise has reduced. The Council were asked to be more proactive as residents felt the problem would only increase in the summer months.

In response the Cabinet Member for Greener and Safer Chelmsford, thanked the resident for bringing the issue to the attention of the Cabinet. The Cabinet heard that the Council had been made aware of complaints previously and that they had been investigated. It was noted that some noise had to be expected from a venue of that type but that for it to amount a statutory nuisance, officers must witness noise from the affected resident's property. The Cabinet heard that residents had access to the out of hours noise service and advised that residents call straight away, rather than waiting for 40 minutes before reporting excessive noise. It was also noted that residents affected by noise were asked to complete nuisance log sheets, to help officers determine further steps and action required. The Cabinet also heard that venues of this type did not require a licence, but that officers had contacted the owners and relayed details of the issues, alongside making them aware of measures they should have in place. The Cabinet Member reminded the resident to report any issues straight away and that the Council continued to be committed to dealing with any unreasonable noise and would take formal action, if a statutory nuisance was witnessed.

5. Members' Questions

One question was asked by Councillor Knight at this point of the meeting, other questions were asked by Councillors under the relevant items. Councillor Knight asked about the gender equality consultant that the Council had appointed to oversee the safer women's charter, developed by the Council. They asked what prior training, experience and track record the consultant had in improving women's safety. In response the Cabinet Member for a Greener and Safer Chelmsford stated that the person appointed to the role was highly qualified. It was noted that they had been instrumental in recent years as a spokesperson for women on various causes and had been a strong defender of women's rights. It was noted that they had helped to create the women's safety charter, the first one outside of London and would help to run programs around educating businesses and staff and that they would transform the landscape for women in Chelmsford. The Cabinet Member for Connected Chelmsford also detailed various campaigns the consultant had been involved with, alongside details of published research papers, roles on training bodies and that they were eminently qualified for the role. It was also noted that they had received no payment to date, despite many hours of support and advice being provided.

6. Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) Scheme 2023/24 (Connected Chelmsford)

Declarations of interest:

None.

Summary:

The Cabinet was informed that the Council was required to approve, by 11 March 2023, a Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2023-24. It was proposed that the Scheme adopted for 2022-23 be retained in its current form.

Options:

Retain the present scheme or adopt an amended version.

Preferred option and reasons:

The existing scheme would be affordable to the Council and fair to recipients of Council Tax support.

RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL that the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2022-23 be retained as the Scheme for 2023-24.

(7.21pm to 7.22pm)

7.1 Capital, Treasury Management and Investment Strategies 2023/24(Fairer Chelmsford)

Declarations of Interest:

None

Summary:

The Cabinet received a report setting out a proposed approach to the management of the Council's cash, capital investments (the capital expenditure programme) and other types of investment, including property.

Options:

1. Accept the recommendations contained within the report
2. Recommend changes to the way the Council's investments are to be managed

Preferred Option and Reasons:

The proposed Strategies met statutory requirements for the production of a treasury management strategy that achieved an acceptable balance between risk and return and capital and investment strategies that ensured the proper financial management of the Council's resources.

RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL that the Capital, Treasury and Investment Strategies 2023-24 as submitted to the meeting be approved.

(7.22pm to 7.23pm)

7.2 Revenue Budget 2023/24 (Fairer Chelmsford)

Declarations of Interest:

None

Summary:

The report to the meeting contained recommendations for the setting of the Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2023-24 and the level of Council Tax for that year.

Options:

Agree or vary the proposals contained within the report but with regard to the financial sustainability of any amendments.

Preferred Option and Reasons:

The recommended budget would be prudent and in the best financial interests of the city.

Discussion:

The Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford informed the Cabinet that the last few budgets had been difficult but the current economy, meant setting budgets for 2023-24 would be even more difficult for local authorities. They thanked officers for their continued hard work and stated it was a tribute to their professionalism, that a balanced budget had been put together.

The Cabinet heard that inflation alongside falling income had meant difficult decisions had been made, including higher Council Tax and Fees and Charges, but this had still not matched the scale of cost rises. The Cabinet heard that ambitious investments had continued though, including the theatre, plans for Net Zero Carbon by 2030 and the Council's parks and leisure centres. The Cabinet Member highlighted the recent decision by Essex County Council, to withdraw funding for the Highway Rangers who maintained areas such as overgrown hedges and tidied pavements. It was noted that this continued to be a County Council responsibility, which would now not be funded.

The Cabinet heard that the Council Tax increase was required and noted that the vast majority of Council Tax collected was not kept by the City Council, with nearly 90% going

to the County Council or the Police and Fire services. The Cabinet heard that the increase would help the Council to continue to deliver key services.

In response to a question, it was noted that the £157k cost was for switching to low carbon fuels and that the additional fuel costs for vehicular use were £300k and building energy were £1.5m. It was also noted that the negative charges to the South Essex Parking Partnership were for City Council officers' time, that was charged back to SEPP.

Concerns were also expressed about the removal of the funding for the Highway Rangers. It was noted that they provided a valuable service, and it was not an area in which Parish Councils could carry out the works themselves.

The Leader of the Council stated that the deficit being faced was a significant one, but that a balanced budget had been presented that would allow important projects to continue, alongside making the City a better place for its residents.

RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL that:

1. the contents of Appendix 1 to the report to the meeting, the Budget Report, be approved, and specifically the following be agreed:
 - i. The new Capital investments in Council services shown in **Section 4**
 - ii. The delegations to undertake the new capital schemes identified in **Section 4**, Tables 8 and 8a.
 - iii. The Revenue Budgets in **Section 9** and Capital Budgets in **Section 10**
 - iv. An increase in the average Band D level of Council Tax for the City Council to £215.08, the maximum allowed before a referendum, in **Section 8**
 - v. The movement in reserves shown in **Section 6**
 - vi. The Budget forecast in **Section 6** and **Section 7** the s151 officer's review of the budget, which Members are required to note.
 - vii. Special expenses, parish and Town Council's precepts as identified in **Section 8**, Table 17 (Parish precepts are not available until Full Council).
 - viii. Delegation to the Chief Executive to agree, after consultation with the Leader of the Council, the pay award for 2023/24 within the normal financial delegations.

RESOLVED that:

1. The precepts for the two new Parishes, Chelmer Village and Garden Community, will be recommended under officer delegation to Council in February.
2. A delegation to the S151 Officer to update the budget report for parish precepts, changes to final Government settlement, Business Rate Retention income, following completing of NNDR1 statutory return to Government, and new Parish precepts after consultation with the Cabinet Member for a Fairer Chelmsford.
3. A delegation to S151 officer to prepare a legal resolution for submission to Council for consideration after consultation with the Cabinet Member for a Fairer Chelmsford.

(7.24pm to 7.40pm)

8. Chelmsford Garden Community – Strategic Growth Site 6 Stage 1 Masterplan Framework (Sustainable Development)

Declarations of Interest:

None

Summary:

The report sought the Cabinet's approval of the Chelmsford Garden Community Development Framework Document, which formed part of the Stage 1 Masterplan Framework, subject to the completion of a legal Planning Framework Agreement and to delegate the agreement of the baseline Infrastructure Delivery Plan to the Director of Sustainable Communities.

Options:

To approve or note approve the Chelmsford Garden Community Development Framework Document.

Preferred Option and Reasons:

The Chelmsford Garden Community Development Framework Document as approved by the Chelmsford Policy Board would form an important part of the Stage 1 Masterplan Framework for the Chelmsford Garden Community.

Discussion:

The Cabinet Member stated that this stage represented a significant milestone, and highlighted the excellent work undertaken by the Spatial Planning Team and the developer consortium in reaching this stage. It was noted that the masterplan had embraced the Council's green agenda and the support from Essex County Council and Homes England was acknowledged. It was noted that the masterplan contained the Infrastructure delivery plan and planning framework agreement. The Cabinet Member highlighted the site wide design principles, which would lead to a strong active travel network across the development. It was noted that the masterplan provided an exciting opportunity for an exemplar Garden Community and would assist the Council with meeting its housing needs, alongside significant green infrastructure.

In response to a question, it was noted that it was the intention that the strategic open spaces would be transferred to Council ownership and management, either the new Garden Community Council or the City Council. It was also noted that various routes for cycling and walking to Broomfield Hospital would continue to be explored.

It was noted that the development detailed a significant departure from previous schemes and would accelerate the pathway to zero-carbon housing in sustainable new neighbourhoods. The Cabinet also heard that residents would be able to access services they needed within 15 minutes, via sustainable and active travel methods. It was also noted that the Council wanted resident's service charges to be as low as possible. The

Cabinet agreed that all those involved should be proud of what had been achieved over the past three and a half years.

RESOLVED that

1. Cabinet agreed the Development Framework Document (DFD) attached at Appendix 3, subject to the completion of the Planning Framework Agreement (PFA) to be made under s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and s111 of the Local Government Act 1972, and that the Director of Sustainable Communities use their existing delegated powers to negotiate and complete the Planning Framework Agreement in accordance with the summary set out at Appendix 4.
2. Cabinet delegated to the Director of Sustainable Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development to settle the final presentation of the Development Framework Document (DFD).
3. Cabinet delegated the agreement of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) to a baseline position to the Director of Sustainable Communities with future monitoring and updating to be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Framework Agreement.

(7.41pm to 7.56pm)

9. Memorandum of Understanding with North Essex Authorities (Leader)

Declarations of Interest:

None

Summary:

The report sought the Cabinet's approval for the City Council to enter a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with North Essex Councils.

Options:

1. Sign up to the MOU
2. Seek amendments to the MOU
3. Agree not to enter into an MOU

Preferred Option and Reasons:

Signing up to the MOU would provide greater opportunities for joint working and increases the Councils collective negotiating power with Government and other bodies.

Discussion:

The Leader of the Council stated that the MOU would be a consultation forum and a framework by which all of the Councils would have discussions. It was noted that this already happened in the South of Essex and would be a platform for what could be achieved in the future in North Essex.

RESOLVED that

1. Cabinet agreed to sign the MOU.
2. The CEO in consultation with the Leader be authorised to make minor amendments to the MOU should other authorities request these provided any changes would not be detrimental to the City Council.

(7.57pm to 7.58pm)

10. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

11. Reports to Council

RESOLVED that Items 6, 7.1 & 7.2 be the subject of report to the Council.

The meeting closed at 7.58pm

Chair



Chelmsford City Council Cabinet

14 March 2023

Amendments to Council Tax Premiums in respect of empty properties with effect from 1 April 2024

Report by:

Cabinet Member for Connected Chelmsford

Officer Contact:

Rob Hawes, Revenue and Benefit Services Manager, 01245 606695,
robert.hawes@chelmsford.gov.uk

Purpose

To extend the imposition of Council Tax premiums levied in respect of empty properties once a property has been empty and unfurnished for 12 months or if a property is empty and substantially furnished (a second home).

Options

1. To agree the extension of 100% premiums as detailed in the recommendations
2. To reject the extension of 100% premiums as detailed in the recommendations
3. To determine a lesser percentage than 100% to be applied in relevant cases

Recommendations

That Cabinet recommends to Full Council that a Council Tax premium of 100% is levied in respect of empty and unfurnished properties 12 months after the property becomes empty.

That Cabinet recommends to Full Council that a Council Tax premium of 100% is levied in respect of unoccupied dwellings, which are substantially furnished.

That Cabinet recommends to Full Council that the application of premiums in both cases is applied from 1 April 2024 or such other date as may be permitted following the passage of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill through Parliament, with the implementation date delegated to the Director of Connected Chelmsford.

1. Background

- 1.1. S.11B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (LGFA 1992) allows local authorities the discretion to levy additional Council Tax on the owners of property which has been empty and substantially unfurnished for more than two years. At the meeting of Full Council on 27 February 2019, Council decided that it would increase the Council Tax premium on such properties from 50% to 100% with effect from 1 April 2019. At a subsequent meeting of Full Council on 26 February 2020, Council decided to further increase the premium to 200%, with effect from 1 April 2020, in respect of properties empty for more than five years. It also agreed an increase of the premium to 300%, with effect from 1 April 2021, in respect of properties empty for more than ten years. These are the maximum amounts that can currently be levied.
- 1.2. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, which is currently at Committee stage in the Lords, contains provisions to further amend s.11 of the LGFA 1992. S.75 proposes that local authorities may apply a Council Tax premium of up to 100% in respect of properties empty and unfurnished for more than one year, rather than the current two.
- 1.3. S.76 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill proposes to insert s11C into LGFA 1992 to allow local authorities to levy a Council Tax premium on properties where nobody is resident and which are substantially furnished. Such properties are commonly referred to as 'second homes' insofar as they are nobody's sole or main residence. The wording in the Bill currently allows a premium of up to 100% to be levied, although the Secretary of State may make regulations to both vary the percentage amount and the classes of property to which this new power applies.
- 1.4. The Council must make a decision regarding the imposition of Council Tax premiums in respect of second homes at least one year before the beginning of the financial year in which they are to take effect. It may be that the effective date of this proposal is amended because it is unlikely that the Bill will receive Royal Assent before 31 March 2023 and it is unclear whether amendments will be made to allow a retrospective effect. The purpose of this report in respect of second homes is to seek delegation to Officers to apply the Council Tax premium from the earliest permissible date.

2. Long Term Empty Premium extension

- 2.1. At the time of writing this report, there are 705 properties being treated as empty and substantially unfurnished, which have been empty for between 3 months and 24 months. Of these, 160 have been empty for between 12 months and 2 years. It is these which would be affected by the proposal to impose a 100% Council Tax long term empty premium. Imposition of the premium would raise approximately £300k extra in Council Tax. The benefit to the City Council would be approximately £36k per annum.
- 2.2. Although the additional income may be welcome, the main reason for the imposition of a Council Tax premium after 12 months is to encourage owners to bring their property back into use more quickly in order to increase the amount of available housing stock.
- 2.3. Since the imposition of a 100% long term empty premium on properties empty for more than two years in 2019, the number of properties where a premium is applied has reduced from 118 to 109. Whilst this is a small number, it should be viewed in light of the increase in the number of residential properties in Chelmsford from 76,712 to 79,348 over the same period.
- 2.4. Not all properties which are empty and unfurnished attract a Council Tax liability. There are exemptions for properties awaiting probate or empty because: the resident is in prison or in a care home; the property has been repossessed, cannot be lived in by law or has been compulsorily purchased and will be demolished.

3. Properties empty and substantially furnished – ‘second homes’

- 3.1 The Council currently awards a 10% discount on the Council Tax levied in respect of properties which have no permanent resident, but which are substantially furnished. There are some 350 of these properties, representing a total discount of approximately £69.5k in 2022/23. The City Council's share of this is £8.7k.
- 3.2 The Council already has the power to amend or remove this discount, but this matter has not been reviewed since 2013. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill proposes to introduce a new local authority discretion to impose a Council Tax premium of up to 100% on what it refers to as ‘dwellings occupied periodically’.
- 3.3 Nominally, a decision to impose a 100% premium on such properties would increase Council Tax income by £764k, worth £95.5k to the City Council. However, it is clear from the drafting of the Bill that the Secretary of State is reserving the power to prescribe circumstances in which a premium may not

be applied or may be applied at a different rate. There may also be guidance as to considerations that must be taken into account before taking a decision to apply the premium in individual cases. Any such restrictions would reduce the additional income that could be anticipated.

- 3.4 As mentioned in para 1.4, it is at present unclear whether this measure can be implemented from 1 April 2024, but agreement is sought to implement the premium as far as is permitted by Regulations and delegated authority to the Director of Connected Chelmsford to determine the effective date of implementation once the legal position is clearer.

4. Hardship and Discretion

- 4.1 Any decision to reduce or remove the discounts on empty properties or to impose premiums needs to take into account local circumstances. Any change in policy would mean that the Council could increase hardship of those taxpayers who are already struggling or unable to sell a second property. There is a risk that specific personal requests for assistance may increase and could result in a direct cost to the City Council due to the use S13A LGFA 1992 powers to reduce the amount of Council Tax payable where the Council sees fit.

- 4.2 A report in 2006 by the Local Government Ombudsman stated that, after deciding to remove or change the level of discount, a council must still give proper consideration to individual taxpayers' requests that the additional liability should not apply to them, having regard to their circumstances. A copy of the Council's hardship policy is attached at Appendix A. Central Government produced guidance in 2013 stating that the discretion to introduce a premium should not be interpreted as a desire to penalise owners of property that is genuinely on the housing market for sale or rent. It suggested that billing authorities may want to take into account the health of their local housing market and average prices charged for particular types of properties before taking the decision to impose a premium. However, the guidance stressed that the final decision on any conditions to be imposed rests with the billing authority.

- 4.3 The Council decided in 2019 not to apply any specified exceptions but to rely on the judicious application of its powers to remit all or part of a Council Tax bill as described in paragraph 4.1. Further guidance seems likely to be produced by Government in respect of the imposition of premiums on 'second homes' and the Council will be asked to re-consider its approach if necessary.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The Council declared a housing crisis in February 2022 and needs to use as many tools as it can to increase the supply of residential accommodation to its residents. There are over 1,000 empty properties in Chelmsford and the measures

proposed in this report increase the Council Tax payable on over 500 of them. If the imposition of Council Tax premiums prompts the owners to bring some of those properties back into use more quickly, it will be of more benefit than the additional Council Tax income that the measures generate.

List of appendices:

Appendix A – Guidelines for determining applications for a Council Tax Reduction

Background papers:

None

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: All relevant legal considerations are addressed within the body of the report and the proposed policy.

Financial: Increases to the level and scope of Council Tax premiums is likely to generate additional income

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None.

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None

Personnel: None

Risk Management: None

Equality and Diversity: None

(For new or revised policies or procedures has an equalities impact assessment been carried out? If not, explain why)

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other:

Consultees: Director of Connected Chelmsford, Legal and Democratic Services Manager,

Relevant Policies and Strategies: The report takes into account the following policies and strategies of the Council:

Chelmsford Housing Strategy 2022-2027

Appendix A

Guidelines for Determining Applications for a Council Tax Reduction

1. Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 allows the council to reduce the amount of Council Tax payable. This power can be used for individual cases or class(es) of cases that it may determine.
2. The council will consider using its powers to reduce Council Tax liability for any Council Tax payer. The council would expect there to be exceptional circumstances to justify any reduction and the reduction will be intended as short term assistance. It should not be considered as a way of reducing council tax liability indefinitely.
3. Claims for a discretionary reduction must:
 - be made in writing by the taxpayer or by someone authorised to act on their behalf
 - be supported by any reasonable evidence which the council requires in support of the application.
4. Separate claims must be made in respect of different dwellings and/or council tax accounts.
5. Each case will be considered on its merits. The council will have regard to the following criteria in particular in relation to an application:
 - There must be evidence of financial hardship or personal circumstances which justify a reduction in council tax
 - The taxpayer must satisfy the council that they have taken all reasonable steps to resolve their situation prior to the claim
 - The taxpayer must have claimed council tax support where appropriate and supplied any information or evidence requested by the Benefits section in respect of that application
 - The taxpayer must have applied for any appropriate discount or exemption and supplied any information or evidence requested by the council tax section in respect of that application
 - The taxpayer does not have access to other assets which could be used to pay the council tax
 - The situation and reason for the application must be outside of the taxpayer's control
 - The situation cannot be resolved by some other legitimate means
 - The amount outstanding must not be the result of wilful refusal or culpable neglect to pay
 - The council's finances allow for a reduction to be made and it is reasonable to do so in the light of the impact on other Council Tax payers
6. The length of time any reduction will apply will be for a maximum period of one year.
7. A senior officer within the Revenues Team will determine applications.
8. The council will notify a customer of its decision within 14 days of receiving all the information needed to make the decision.
9. There is no right of appeal under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 against the council's use of its discretionary powers. However, the council will accept a written request for a review of its decision if it is supported by further information or evidence. Any further review will take place in accordance with the Council's complaints procedure.



Chelmsford City Council Cabinet

14 March 2023

Discretionary Business Rate Relief Policy 2023/24

Report by:

Cabinet Member for Connected Chelmsford

Officer Contact:

Rob Hawes, Revenue and Benefit Services Manager, 01245 606695,
robert.hawes@chelmsford.gov.uk

Purpose

To amend the existing Discretionary Business Rate Relief policy to give effect to changes to business rates reliefs announced by the Government.

Options

1. To agree the proposed amendments
2. To reject the proposed amendments

Recommendation

That the additions and alterations to the existing Discretionary Rate Relief Policy, as highlighted in Appendix A, are agreed.

1. Background

- 1.1. In the Autumn Statement on 17 November 2022, the Government announced its intention to: extend Retail, Hospitality and Leisure relief for an additional year (it was due to end on 31 March 2023) and increase it from 50% to 75% of the rate liability for eligible properties; and, to amend and extend the Supporting Small Business Relief scheme until 2025/2026. On 21 February 2023, the Government announced that it did not have enough Parliamentary time to legislate to introduce Heat Network Relief. As a consequence, it has requested that local authorities adopt it as a discretionary relief during 2023/2024.
- 1.2. The Government is not intending to change the legislation around business rates discounts and reliefs. Instead, it has requested that local authorities use discretionary relief powers which were introduced by the Localism Act (under s47 of the Local Government Finance Act, as amended) to give effect to these additional measures. In return for this, Government has committed to fully reimburse local authorities for the cost of granting these various discretionary reliefs by way of grants under s31 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 1.3. A local authority is able to agree its own rules regarding discretionary rate reliefs. However, any reliefs awarded which do not attract s31 grant reimbursement must be paid for in full out of the authority's own funds.

2. Amendments to the existing policy

- 2.2. For ease of reference, the amended policy has been attached as Appendix A and the existing policy as Appendix B. Alterations are shown in Appendix A in red font. The substantive changes are listed below.
- 2.3. **Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Relief Scheme** (section 6). The value of the relief has been increased from 50% of the rate liability to 75% of the rate liability. A new paragraph (6.6) has been inserted to clarify the position if a ratepayer refuses the relief.
- 2.4. The **Supporting Small Business Relief** scheme (section 9) has been extended to 2025/2026 following the revaluation of rateable values taking effect on 1 April 2023. It provides a further year's protection, where appropriate, to businesses benefitting from the 2017 Supporting Small Business Relief Scheme. It also provides that businesses newly affected by the removal of small business rate relief or rural rate relief as a result of the revaluation will only see their business rate bill rise by a maximum of £600pa during the duration of the scheme. A large amount of technical detail regarding calculation of the relief has been removed to improve the clarity of the policy, but the relevant technical guidance is linked (section 9.2).

2.5. **Heat Network Relief** has been added (section 10). No properties currently qualify for this relief, but it has been added to the discretionary relief policy in the event that such a facility is built during 2023/2024.

2.6. Section 12 relating to subsidy allowances has been updated to include the latest guidance and links to further information.

3. Conclusion

3.1. The amendments and additions to the existing reliefs available to reduce business rates bills are a helpful assistance to local business and should be incorporated into Chelmsford City Council's discretionary rate relief policy as detailed in Appendix A.

List of appendices:

Appendix A – Proposed Discretionary Rate Relief Policy 2023/24

Appendix B – Existing Discretionary Rate Relief Policy 2022/23

Background papers:

None

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: All relevant legal considerations are addressed within the body of the report and the proposed policy.

Financial: None, unless Government decides that rate relief has been granted inappropriately.

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None.

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None

Personnel: None

Risk Management: None

Equality and Diversity: No EQIA has been carried out as this policy only affects business.

(For new or revised policies or procedures has an equalities impact assessment been carried out? If not, explain why)

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other:

Consultees: Director of Connected Chelmsford, Legal and Democratic Services Manager,

Relevant Policies and Strategies: The report takes into account the following policies and strategies of the Council:

The changes support the ambition in Our Chelmsford, Our Plan to be a leading regional centre by assisting businesses to meet their business rate liability.

APPENDIX A

CHELMSFORD CITY COUNCIL'S DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 allows Local Authorities to award discretionary rate relief to a range of organisations, including charities, Community Amateur Sports Clubs and other non-profit making bodies.
- 1.2 In the case of charities, the ratepayer must be a charity or trustee for a charity and the property must be wholly or mainly used for charitable purposes. Mandatory relief of 80% will be given in such cases, and charities can also receive up to a further 20% discretionary relief.
- 1.3 In the case of Community Amateur Sports Clubs, these must be registered with HM Revenue & Customs in order to be eligible for 80% mandatory relief. They can also receive up to a further 20% discretionary relief.
- 1.4 In the case of non-profit making organisations, all or part of the property must be occupied by an institution or organisation which is not established or conducted for profit and whose main objectives are charitable or otherwise philanthropic or religious, or concerned with education, social welfare, science, literature or the fine arts or it is wholly or mainly used for the purposes of recreation.

2. Awarding Relief

- 2.1 The Council's policy for determining applications for discretionary rate relief can be divided into 2 parts as follows:

Part 1

- 2.2 A 'top-up' discretionary rate relief of up to 20% may be granted to charitable organisations who already receive 80% mandatory relief.
The Council currently chooses to award 'top-up' relief to scouts, guides and the sea cadets.

Part 2

- 2.3 It is intended that the scheme provides a mechanism for sports clubs and organisations to continue and expand their role in providing sports development opportunities, by maximising the availability of relief to those clubs and organisations who operate in accordance with the Council's aspirations for the development of sport in the City.
- 2.4 All sports clubs and organisations will start off with a flat rate of 40% rate relief, provided that they meet the following criteria:
 - (a) The primary purpose of the club/organisation should be to provide sporting opportunities to its members or to a local community
 - (b) Membership should be open to all members of the community irrespective of gender, race, age, disability, religious belief and financial circumstances

- (c) Membership fees should be realistic and not used as a means of restricting membership to a particular community group
- (d) Profits and surpluses must be used to further the sporting objectives of the club/organisation and not distributed as a share or dividend amongst some or all members
- (e) A legal constitution must be in existence and applicants must demonstrate that they are operating in accordance with its requirements.

3. Adjusted Relief

3.1 Applicants who meet all of the above criteria and are awarded the basic 40% rate relief, will also be able to have their relief adjusted by some or all of the following:-

- 10% The applicant can demonstrate a close working relationship with local schools & disabled groups and where practical, has supported the development of their sport(s) in schools and has encouraged and assisted school pupils and/or disabled persons to join appropriate clubs. The applicant undertakes to continue this development work
- 10% The applicant can demonstrate support for its coaches and administrators to obtain further relevant qualifications, e.g. coaching qualifications, National Coaching Foundation courses, Running Sport courses etc. The applicant undertakes to continue this work.
- 10% The applicant can demonstrate that they have provided opportunities for regular use of its facilities and equipment by outside groups/the Council's Sports Development Unit and undertakes to continue this policy
- 10% The applicant can demonstrate that they have in place or are working towards a development plan and (if applicable) a child protection policy
- 20% Should less than 50% of members be resident in the City, then a reduction in relief of 20% of the total rate liability will be made

Table of relief at current levels.

Relief	
Discretionary Rate Relief	Base level of 40%
Work with Schools or Disadvantaged Groups	+10%
Support for coaches/administrators	+10%
Shared use of facilities	+10%
Current Development Plan/child protection policy	+10%
Less than 50% of members resident in the City Council area.	-20%

EXTENSIONS TO CHELMSFORD CITY COUNCIL'S DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Section 69 of the Localism Act 2011 amends Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. The changes came into effect from 1 April 2012 and they extend the existing provision relating to the granting of discretionary rate relief.
- 1.2 The changes allow Local Authorities to grant discretionary rate relief in any circumstances where it feels fit. However, the whole cost of any purely discretionary relief awarded will have to be met by the City's Council Tax payers. Some discretionary reliefs are reimbursed in full by the Government via grants paid in accordance with section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003. Full details are set out below. Currently, these reliefs are **75% Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Relief Scheme** (1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 only); **Supporting Small Business Relief**; **Local Newspaper Relief** (until 31 March 2025); and, **Heat Network Relief**.

2. Awarding Relief

- 2.1 Any ratepayer applying for discretionary rate relief who does not meet the criteria for relief under the existing policy must meet all of the following criteria and any award will be based on these factors:
- (a) The ratepayer must not be entitled to mandatory rate relief (Charity or Rural Rate Relief)
 - (b) The ratepayer must not be an organisation that could receive relief as a non-profit making organisation or as Community Amateur Sports Club.
 - (c) The ratepayer must occupy the premises – no relief will be granted for unoccupied properties
 - (d) The premises and the organisation must be of significant benefit to the residents of the City
 - (e) The ratepayer must:
 - (i) Provide facilities to certain priority groups such as elderly, disabled, minority or disadvantaged groups, OR
 - (ii) Provide significant employment or employment opportunities to residents of the City
 - (f) Provide residents of the City with such services, opportunities or facilities that cannot be obtained locally or are not provided by another organisation
 - (g) The ratepayer must show that the organisation will comply with all legislative requirements and operate in an ethical, sustainable, and environmentally friendly manner at all times
- 2.2 Where a ratepayer can demonstrate that all the above criteria are met, any award must have due regard to:

- (a) the financial status of the applicant when determining the level of relief to be granted, and
 - (b) the impact and best interests of the Council Tax payers of the City
- 2.3 Relief will not be given to those organisations where a bar is the main activity. It would be expected that any bar profits would be used to offset any expenses thus negating the reliance on public funds.
- 2.4 Where a ratepayer is suffering hardship or severe difficulties in paying their rates liability then an application may be made for relief under Section 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. There will be no requirement to grant relief in such cases under the Council's discretionary rate relief policy.
- 3. Level and Period of Relief granted
- 3.1 The level of relief to be granted, if any, will range from 0% to 100% of the ratepayer's liability. Given the continuing reduction in government grant funding to the Council, awards of discretionary rate relief will be made for a fixed period and reviewed on an annual basis.
- 4. Equality and Diversity Implications
- 4.1 It is important that the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy clearly shows the criteria on which premises could be eligible so that all potential applicants are aware of why their application has been either accepted or refused.
- 5. Right of Appeal
- 5.1 There is no statutory right of appeal against a decision made by the Council in respect of discretionary rate relief. However, the Director of Finance will review the decision if the ratepayer is dissatisfied with the outcome.
- 5.2 If an unsuccessful applicant requests a review, they will still need to continue to pay their rates bill. Once the review has been carried out, the ratepayer will be informed, in writing, of the decision.
- 5.3 The right of appeal process does not affect a ratepayer's legal right to challenge the decision by way of a judicial review.
- 6. **RETAIL, HOSPITALITY AND LEISURE RELIEF SCHEME (1 APRIL 2023 to 31 MARCH 2024) ONLY**
- 6.1 For properties specified in section 7 the relief available is **75%** of the bill after mandatory reliefs and other discretionary reliefs funded by Section 31 grants have been applied. Ratepayers do have a right to refuse this discount.
- 6.2 Subject to the cash cap in paragraph 6.4, the eligibility for the relief and the relief itself will be assessed and calculated on a daily basis using the following formula:

Amount of relief to be granted = **V x 0.75**

Where:

V is the daily charge for the hereditament for the chargeable day after the application of any mandatory relief and any other discretionary reliefs, excluding those where local authorities have used their discretionary relief powers introduced by the Localism Act which are not funded by section 31 grants

- 6.3 This should be calculated by ignoring any prior year adjustments in liabilities which fall to be liable on the day.
- 6.4 Ratepayers that occupy more than one property will be entitled to relief for each of their eligible properties up to the maximum £110,000 cash cap per business. The cash cap applies at a Group company level across all of their hereditaments in England, so holding companies and subsidiaries cannot claim up to the cash cap for each company.
- 6.5 The retail, hospitality and leisure relief scheme is likely to amount to subsidy (see section 12 for more details).
- 6.6 A ratepayer may refuse the relief for each eligible hereditament at any point up to 30 April 2024. The ratepayer cannot subsequently withdraw their refusal for either all or part of the financial year. For the purposes of s47 of the Local Government Act 1988, a decision to refuse relief puts the hereditament outside the scope of the scheme and a decision cannot then be made that the hereditament qualifies for relief.

7. Which types of use are eligible?

- 7.1 To qualify for the relief, the hereditament should be wholly or mainly used:
- as a shop, restaurant, café, drinking establishment, cinema, or live music venue
 - for assembly and leisure
 - as a hotel, guest and boarding premises or self-catering accommodation.

This is a test of use not occupation.

Hereditaments which are occupied but not wholly or mainly used for the qualifying purpose will not qualify for the relief.

- 7.2 The lists below are not exhaustive. Uses that are broadly similar to those listed below will be considered eligible for the relief.
- a) Hereditaments that are being used for the sale of goods to visiting members of the public:
- Shops (such as florists, bakers, butchers, grocers, greengrocers, jewellers, stationers, off-licence, chemists, newsagents, hardware stores, supermarkets, etc)
 - Charity shops
 - Opticians
 - Post Offices
 - Furnishing shops/display rooms e.g., carpet shops, double glazing, garage door showrooms
 - Car/caravan showrooms
 - Second-hand car lots
 - Markets

- Petrol stations
- Garden centres
- Art galleries (where art is for sale/hire)

b) Hereditaments that are being used for the provision of the following services to visiting members of the public:

- Hair and beauty services (such as hairdressers, nail bars, beauty salons, tanning shops, etc)
- Shoe repairs/key cutting
- Travel agents
- Ticket offices e.g., for theatre
- Dry cleaners/laundrettes
- PC/TV/domestic appliance repair
- Funeral directors
- Photo processing
- DVD/video rentals
- Tool hire
- Car hire

c) Hereditaments that are being used for the sale of food and/or drink to visiting members of the public:

- Restaurants
- Takeaways
- Sandwich shops
- Coffee shops
- Pubs
- Bars

d) Hereditaments that are being used as cinemas

e) Hereditaments that are being used as live music venues

-live music venues are hereditaments wholly or mainly used for the performance of live music for the purpose of entertaining an audience. Hereditaments cannot be considered a live music venue for the purpose of business rates relief where a venue is wholly or mainly used as a nightclub or a theatre, for the purposes of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended).

– Hereditaments can be a live music venue even if used for other activities, but only if those other activities (i) are merely ancillary or incidental to the performance of live music (e.g. the sale/supply of alcohol to audience members) or (ii) do not affect the fact that the primary activity for the premises is the performance of live music (e.g. because those other activities are insufficiently regular or frequent, such as a polling station or a fortnightly community event).

f) Hereditaments that are being used for the provision of sport, leisure and facilities to visiting members of the public (including the viewing of such activities):

- Sports grounds and clubs

- Museums and art galleries
- Nightclubs
- Sport and leisure facilities
- Stately homes and historic houses
- Theatres
- Tourist attractions
- Gyms
- Wellness centres, spas, massage parlours
- Casinos, gambling clubs and bingo halls

g) Hereditaments that are being used for the assembly of visiting members of the public:

- Public halls
- Clubhouses, clubs and institutions

h) Hereditaments where the non-domestic part is being used for the provision of living accommodation as a business:

- Hotels, Guest- and Boarding Houses
- Holiday homes
- Caravan parks and sites

8. Which types of use are not eligible?

8.1 As before, the lists below are not exhaustive but uses broadly similar to those set out below will not be considered eligible for the relief.

a) Hereditaments that are being used for the provision of the following services to visiting members of the public:

- Financial services (such as banks, building societies, cash points, bureaux de change, payday lenders, short term loan providers, betting shops)
- Medical services (such as vets, dentists, doctors, osteopaths, chiropractors)
- Professional services (such as solicitors, accountants, insurance agents, financial advisers, employment agencies, estate agents, letting agents)
- Post Office sorting offices

b) Hereditaments that are not reasonably accessible to visiting members of the public

8.2 Any hereditament where the ratepayer is a billing authority, parish or county council or other precepting authority will not be eligible for relief.

8.3 The relief should be applied on a day to day basis using the formula set out in 6.2. A new hereditament created as a result of a split or merger during the relevant financial years, or where there is a change of use, should be considered afresh for relief on that day.

9 **SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF (2023/24 to 2025/26)**

9.1 **The Supporting Small Business Relief (SSBR) will help those ratepayers who, as a result of the change in their rateable value at the revaluation, are losing some or all of**

their Small Business, Rural Rate relief or 2017 SSBR and, as a result, are facing large increases in their bills.

- 9.2 There is no discretion around whether to grant this relief if the terms of the scheme are met. Full technical detail regarding the operation of this scheme can be found at [Business Rates Relief: 2023 Supporting Small Business Relief, local authority guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- 9.3 The SSBR scheme will ensure that the increase per year in the bills of eligible ratepayers is limited to a cash value of £600 per year during the operation of the scheme or until the full increased liability is reached. Businesses previously eligible for the 2017 SSBR scheme will receive this continued protection for one year only (until 31 March 2023).
- 9.4 Those on the SSBR scheme whose 2023 rateable values are £51,000 or more will not be liable to pay the supplement (1.3p) to fund small business rate relief while they are eligible for the 2023 SSBR scheme.
- 9.5 Ratepayers remain in the Supporting Small Businesses relief scheme until 31 March 2026 or until they reach the bill they would have paid without the scheme. A change of ratepayers will not affect eligibility for the SSBR scheme but eligibility will be lost if the property falls vacant or becomes occupied by a charity or Community Amateur Sports Club.
- 9.6 There is no 2nd property test for eligibility for Supporting Small Business relief scheme. However, those ratepayers who during 2022/23 lost entitlement to small business rate relief because they failed the 2nd property test but have, under the rules for small business rate relief, been given a 12-month period of grace before their relief ended can continue on the scheme for the remainder of their 12 month period of grace.
- 9.7 As with all reliefs, the amount of relief awarded under the Supporting Small Business relief scheme should be recalculated in the event of a change to the rateable value or the hereditament. This change of circumstance could arise during the year in question or during a later year.
- 9.8 The Non-Domestic Rating (Discretionary Relief) Regulations 1989 (S.I. 1989/1059) require authorities to provide ratepayers with at least one year's notice in writing before any decision to revoke or vary a decision so as to increase the amount the ratepayer has to pay takes effect. Such a revocation or variation of a decision can only take effect at the end of a financial year. But within these regulations, local authorities may still make decisions which allow the amount of relief to be amended within the year to reflect changing circumstances.
- 9.9 Therefore, when making an award for SSBR, the conditions of the award include that it can be recalculated in the event of a change to the rating list (retrospective or otherwise). This is so that the relief can be recalculated if the rateable value changes. This applies to all Discretionary Relief awarded by Chelmsford City Council.

10 **HEAT NETWORK RELIEF (1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024)**

- 10.1 Heat Network Relief is a 100% relief for hereditaments which are wholly or mainly used for the purposes of a heat network and the heat is generated from a low carbon source.
- 10.2 A heat network is a facility, such as a district heating scheme, which supplies thermal energy from a central source to consumers via a network of pipes for the purposes of space heating, space cooling or domestic hot water. This does not include common heating systems in multi-occupied buildings or estates where the heating facility does not attract its own rates liability.
- 10.3 Hereditaments conforming to the definition of a heat network are certificated by the Valuation Office Agency. There are currently no such hereditaments in the Chelmsford City Council area.
- 10.4 Full technical details can be found at [Business rates heat network relief: local authority guidance 2023-24 – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) The Government intends to legislate to award this relief from 1 April 2024, so it will not be a discretionary relief from that date.

11 **LOCAL NEWSPAPER RELIEF (To 31 March 2025)**

- 11.1 This relief is a sum of £1,500 in respect of office space occupied by local newspapers to a maximum of one discount per local newspaper title and per hereditament. A local newspaper with two offices can only claim the relief in respect of one of the offices. An office shared by three separate local newspaper titles would only be eligible for one relief.
- 11.2 This relief is specifically for local newspapers, those that would be regarded as a 'traditional local newspaper'. The relief will not be available to magazines. The hereditament must be occupied by a local newspaper and wholly or mainly used as office premises for journalists and reporters.

12 **SUBSIDY ALLOWANCES**

- 12.1 The Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Relief is likely to amount to subsidy. Any relief provided by local authorities under this scheme will need to comply with the UK's domestic and international subsidy control obligations. For detailed information see [UK subsidy control regime - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) regarding the UK's subsidy control regime and the UK's international subsidy control requirements.
- 12.2 The Minimal Financial Assistance rules allow public authorities to award up to £315,000 during the 'applicable period'. The 'applicable period' is defined as the elapsed period of the current financial years and the two preceding financial years. As the Council will restrict awards to any one business entity to £110,000 (as per 6.4 above), it is unlikely that subsidy controls will be breached within the Chelmsford City Council area. However, businesses operating in more than one area should be aware of their reporting and accounting responsibilities if receiving multiple awards of Retail, Hospitality and Leisure relief.

- 12.3 Where it is clear to the Council that a ratepayer is likely to breach subsidy controls or Minimal Financial Assistance limits, the Council will automatically withhold the relief. In any case, the Council will ask ratepayers to complete a subsidy declaration before granting the relief.

13 ADMINISTRATION OF APPLICATIONS FOR RELIEF

- 13.1 Decisions relating to the granting of reliefs will be delegated to the staff reporting to the Director of Connected Chelmsford. Most reliefs will be granted automatically using records already held by the Council. Applications from business rate payers who think they should be eligible must be made in writing to Chelmsford City Council, Business Rates, Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford CM1 1JE.
- 13.2 There is no statutory right of appeal against a decision made by the Council in respect of discretionary reliefs. However, the Council will review the decision if the ratepayer is dissatisfied with the outcome. The review will be carried out by **a senior officer within the Revenues Team. Any subsequent request for review will be considered by the Revenue and Benefit Services Manager in consultation with the Director for Connected Chelmsford.**
- 13.3 If an unsuccessful applicant requests a review, they will still need to continue to pay their rates bill. Once the review has been carried out, the ratepayer will be informed, in writing, of the decision.
- 13.4 The right of appeal process does not affect a ratepayer's legal right to challenge the decision by way of a judicial review.

APPENDIX B

CHELMSFORD CITY COUNCIL'S DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF POLICY

1. Introduction

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- 1.3 In the case of Community Amateur Sports Clubs, these must be registered with HM Revenue & Customs in order to be eligible for 80% mandatory relief. They can also receive up to a further 20% discretionary relief.
- 1.4 In the case of non-profit making organisations, all or part of the property must be occupied by an institution or organisation which is not established or conducted for profit and whose main objectives are charitable or otherwise philanthropic or religious, or concerned with education, social welfare, science, literature or the fine arts or it is wholly or mainly used for the purposes of recreation.

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- (d) Profits and surpluses must be used to further the sporting objectives of the club/organisation and not distributed as a share or dividend amongst some or all members
- (e) A legal constitution must be in existence and applicants must demonstrate that they are operating in accordance with its requirements.

3. Adjusted Relief

3.1 Applicants who meet all of the above criteria and are awarded the basic 40% rate relief, will also be able to have their relief adjusted by some or all of the following:-

- 10% The applicant can demonstrate a close working relationship with local schools & disabled groups and where practical, has supported the development of their sport(s) in schools and has encouraged and assisted school pupils and/or disabled persons to join appropriate clubs. The applicant undertakes to continue this development work
- 10% The applicant can demonstrate support for its coaches and administrators to obtain further relevant qualifications, e.g. coaching qualifications, National Coaching Foundation courses, Running Sport courses etc. The applicant undertakes to continue this work.
- 10% The applicant can demonstrate that they have provided opportunities for regular use of its facilities and equipment by outside groups/the Council's Sports Development Unit and undertakes to continue this policy
- 10% The applicant can demonstrate that they have in place or are working towards a development plan and (if applicable) a child protection policy
- 20% Should less than 50% of members be resident in the City, then a reduction in relief of 20% of the total rate liability will be made

Table of relief at current levels.

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Current Development Plan/child protection policy	+10%
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 - (c) The ratepayer must occupy the premises – no relief will be granted for unoccupied properties
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 - (i) Provide facilities to certain priority groups such as elderly, disabled, minority or disadvantaged groups, OR
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 - 6.1 For properties specified in section 7 the relief available is 50% of the bill after mandatory reliefs and other discretionary reliefs funded by Section 31 grants have been applied. Ratepayers do have a right to refuse this discount.
 - 6.2 Subject to the cash cap in paragraph 6.4, the eligibility for the relief and the relief itself will be assessed and calculated on a daily basis using the following formula:

Amount of relief to be granted = **V x 0.5**

Where:

V is the daily charge for the hereditament for the chargeable day after the application of any mandatory relief and any other discretionary reliefs, excluding those where local authorities have used their discretionary relief powers introduced by the Localism Act which are not funded by section 31 grants

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- 7.1 To qualify for the relief, the hereditament should be wholly or mainly used:
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- d) Hereditaments that are being used as cinemas
- e) Hereditaments that are being used as live music venues

-live music venues are hereditaments wholly or mainly used for the performance of live music for the purpose of entertaining an audience. Hereditaments cannot be considered a live music venue for the purpose of business rates relief where a venue is wholly or mainly used as a nightclub or a theatre, for the purposes of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended).

– Hereditaments can be a live music venue even if used for other activities, but only if those other activities (i) are merely ancillary or incidental to the performance of live music (e.g. the sale/supply of alcohol to audience members) or (ii) do not affect the fact that the primary activity for the premises is the performance of live music (e.g. because those other activities are insufficiently regular or frequent, such as a polling station or a fortnightly community event).

- f) Hereditaments that are being used for the provision of sport, leisure and facilities to visiting members of the public (including the viewing of such activities):
- Sports grounds and clubs
 - Museums and art galleries
 - Nightclubs
 - Sport and leisure facilities
 - Stately homes and historic houses
 - Theatres
 - Tourist attractions
 - Gyms

- Wellness centres, spas, massage parlours
 - Casinos, gambling clubs and bingo halls
- g) Hereditaments that are being used for the assembly of visiting members of the public:
- Public halls
 - Clubhouses, clubs and institutions
- h) Hereditaments where the non-domestic part is being used for the provision of living accommodation as a business:
- Hotels, Guest- and Boarding Houses
 - Holiday homes
 - Caravan parks and sites
8. Which types of use are not eligible?
- 8.1 As before, the lists below are not exhaustive but uses broadly similar to those set out below will not be considered eligible for the relief.
- a) Hereditaments that are being used for the provision of the following services to visiting members of the public:
- Financial services (such as banks, building societies, cash points, bureaux de change, payday lenders, short term loan providers, betting shops)
 - Medical services (such as vets, dentists, doctors, osteopaths, chiropractors)
 - Professional services (such as solicitors, accountants, insurance agents, financial advisers, employment agencies, estate agents, letting agents)
 - Post Office sorting offices
- b) Hereditaments that are not reasonably accessible to visiting members of the public
- 8.2 Any hereditament where the ratepayer is a billing authority, parish or county council or other precepting authority will not be eligible for relief.
- 8.3 The relief should be applied on a day to day basis using the formula set out in 6.2. A new hereditament created as a result of a split or merger during the relevant financial years, or where there is a change of use, should be considered afresh for relief on that day.

9 **SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESS SCHEME (EXTENDED FOR AN ADDITIONAL YEAR TO COVER 2022/2023)**

- 9.1. The transitional scheme does not provide support in respect of changes in reliefs. Therefore, those ratepayers who are losing some or all of their small business or rural rate relief may be facing very large percentage increases in bills from 01 April 2017.
- 9.2. The Supporting Small Businesses relief scheme will help those ratepayers who as a result of the change in their rateable value at the revaluation are losing some or all of their small business or rural rate relief and, as a result, are facing large increases in their bills.

There is no discretion around whether to grant this relief if the terms of the scheme are met.

The Supporting Small Businesses relief scheme will ensure that the increase per year in the bills of these ratepayers is limited to the greater of:

- a. a percentage increase p.a. of 5%, 7.5%, 10%, 15%, 15% and 15% 2017/18 to 2022/23 all plus inflation, or
- b. a cash value of £600 per year (£50 per month). This cash minimum increase ensures that those ratepayers paying nothing or very small amounts in 2016/17 after small business rate relief are brought into paying something.

- 9.3 In the first year of the scheme (2017/18), this means all ratepayers losing some or all of their small business rate relief or rural rate relief will see the increase in their bill capped at £600. The cash minimum increase is £600 per year thereafter. This means that ratepayers who are currently paying nothing under small business rate relief and are losing all of their entitlement to relief (i.e. moving from £6,000 rateable value or less to more than £15,000) would under this scheme be paying £3,000 in year 5.
- 9.4 Those on the Supporting Small Businesses relief scheme whose 2017 rateable values are £51,000 or more will not be liable to pay the supplement (1.3p) to fund small business rate relief while they are eligible for the Supporting Small Businesses relief scheme.
- 9.5 Ratepayers remain in the Supporting Small Businesses relief scheme for either 6 years or until they reach the bill they would have paid without the scheme. A change of ratepayers will not affect eligibility for the Supporting Small Businesses relief scheme but eligibility will be lost if the property falls vacant or becomes occupied by a charity or Community Amateur Sports Club.
- 9.6 There is no 2nd property test for eligibility for Supporting Small Business relief scheme. However, those ratepayers who during 2016/17 lost entitlement to small business rate relief because they failed the 2nd property test but have, under the rules for small business rate relief, been given a 12 month period of grace before their relief ended can continue on the scheme for the remainder of their 12 month period of grace.
- 9.7 As with all reliefs, the amount of relief awarded under the Supporting Small Business relief scheme should be recalculated in the event of a change to the rateable value or the hereditament. This change of circumstance could arise during the year in question or during a later year.
- 9.8 The Non-Domestic Rating (Discretionary Relief) Regulations 1989 (S.I. 1989/1059) require authorities to provide ratepayers with at least one year's notice in writing before any decision to revoke or vary a decision so as to increase the amount the ratepayer has to pay takes effect. Such a revocation or variation of a decision can only take effect at the end of a financial year. But within these regulations, local authorities may still make decisions which allow the amount of relief to be amended within the year to reflect changing circumstances.

- 9.9 Therefore, when making an award for Supporting Small Business relief, the conditions of the award that the relief is allowed include that it can be recalculated in the event of a change to the rating list (retrospective or otherwise). This is so that the relief can be recalculated if the rateable value changes. This applies to all Discretionary Relief awarded by Chelmsford City Council.

10 Detailed guidance for operation of the Supporting Small Business (SSB) scheme

10.1 Day 1 Eligibility for the Scheme

For 1 April 2017, the supporting small business (SSB) relief scheme applies to hereditaments for which ratepayers lose some or all of their small business rate relief or rural rate relief.

- a. The chargeable amount for 31 March 2017 is calculated in accordance with section 43(4B) or (6B),
- b. In relation to 43(4) the value of E for 31 March 2017 is greater than 1,
- c. The chargeable amount for 01 April 2017 is found in accordance with section 43(4), 43(4B), 43(6A), or where regulations 12(3), 12(7) or 12(9) of the Non Domestic Rating (Chargeable Amounts) (England) Regulations 2016 No.1265 applies, and
- d. The chargeable amount 1 April 2017 is more than (£600/365) higher than the chargeable amount for 31 March 2017.

Where for 31 March 2017 the chargeable amount has been found under section 47, then eligibility for SSB should be determined as if section 47 did not apply.

10.2 Continued eligibility for the scheme after 1 April 2017

After 1 April 2017, the Supporting Small Business (SSB) scheme will cease to apply where:

- a. The chargeable amount for a day found under the SSB scheme is the same as or more than the chargeable amount found in the absence of the SSB scheme. This ensures that where, for example, the minimum increase in the chargeable amount in the SSB scheme would take the bill above the level it would otherwise have been then the hereditament will drop out of the SSB scheme. It also ensures that where, for example, with effect from after 1/4/17, the hereditament becomes eligible for 100% Small Business Rate Relief then they also fall out of the SSB scheme,
- b. The chargeable amount for a day would otherwise fall to be found by section 43(5) or where paragraph 12(5) or sub-paragraphs 2(4), 3(4), 4(4), 5(4) of Schedule 2 of the Non-Domestic Rating (Chargeable Amounts) (England) Regulations 2016 No.1265 applies (charities or registered community amateur sports clubs), or
- c. The hereditament for a day is unoccupied.

- 10.3 Furthermore, where the ratepayer during 2016/17 lost entitlement to small business rate relief because they failed the 2nd property test but have, under the rules for small business rate relief, been given a 12 month period of grace before their relief

ended (and therefore was still entitled to small business rate relief on 31 March 2017), then eligibility for the SSB scheme will cease at the end of that 12 months period of grace.

- 10.4 Hereditaments which cease to be entitled to Supporting Small Businesses for a day cannot return to eligibility if their circumstances change from a later day. For example, if a property falls unoccupied it will not then be eligible for Supporting Small Businesses relief if it subsequently becomes occupied again.

10.5 Chargeable Amount under the Supporting Small Businesses Scheme

Where the Supporting Small Businesses scheme applies then DCLG will fund local authorities to apply a chargeable amount under section 47 of the 1988 Act for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2022 found in accordance with the rules in (Part 1 to Part 3 of) the Non-Domestic Rating (Chargeable Amounts) (England) Regulations 2016 No.1265 subject to the following changes:

- a. BL for 2017/18 is the chargeable amount for 31 March 2017 x 365 (on the assumption that section 47 did not apply for 31 March 2017 and on the assumption in the City of London that the special authority's small business non-domestic rating multiplier was 48.4p for 2016/17). This ensures the starting base liability for hereditaments eligible for SSB include the SBRR or rural rate relief for 31 March.
- b. Where the certificate has been issued under regulations 17 or 18 then BL 2017/18 should be found in line with a) above but on the assumption that the rateable value in the rating list was the rateable values as certified.
- c. References to "(BL x AF)" are to "(BL x AF)" or (BL + 600) whichever is the greater". This ensures the bill increase is greater or £600 or the increase under the caps in transitional relief scheme,
- d. AF is found in accordance with regulation 10(6) irrespective of the rateable value of the hereditament for 1 April 2017. This ensures only the cap on increases for small properties is applied in the SSB scheme irrespective of the actual rateable value of the hereditament,
- e. Regulation 12(6)(b) is omitted. This ensures SBRR is not also applied to the capped bill in the SSB scheme. This avoids double counting of relief,
- f. The reference to "2" in regulation 12 (8) is "1". This ensures rural rate relief is not also applied to the capped bill in the SSB scheme. This avoids double counting of relief,
- g. "U" is taken to have a value of 0 throughout. This ensures that any hereditament whose rateable value is £51,000 or more does not have to pay the 1.3p supplement whilst eligible for SSB relief,
- h. For a year (the year concerned) other than 2017/18, BL is (BL x AF) or (BL + 600) from the year immediately the year concerned whichever is the greater.

10.6 No change is made to the meaning of NCA. However, as discussed above, eligibility for Supporting Small Business relief ceases when the chargeable amount for a day found under the Supporting Small Businesses scheme is the same as or more than the chargeable amount found outside the scheme.

10.7 For the avoidance of doubt, the rules for changes in rateable value with effect from after 1 April 2017 (regulation 13) will continue to apply as normal subject to the amendments above in sections a to h.

10.8 Splits and Mergers

The SSB scheme will apply to hereditaments;

- a. Coming into existence because of the circumstances described in paragraph 1 of Schedule 2 of Non-Domestic Rating (Chargeable Amounts) (England) Regulations 2016 No. 1265,
- b. Where one of the hereditaments from which the new hereditament was formed in whole or in part was for the day immediately before the creation day eligible for the SSB scheme, and
- c. The circumstances described above in points a to h above do not apply for the creation day in respect of the hereditament.

10.9 After the creation day, the SSB scheme will cease to apply in the circumstances described in points a to h above.

10.10 The number of hereditaments eligible for SSB which then split or merge is likely to be very small and devising rules in particular for mergers with properties outside of the SSB scheme would be complex. Therefore, in discussions with local authority stakeholders, DCLG has concluded it would be disproportionate to devise detailed rules to prescribe the chargeable amounts in the various circumstances which could arise from a split or a merger.

Instead, for hereditaments meeting the criteria in paragraph 39 and 40 above, DCLG will fund local authorities to apply a chargeable amount under section 47 of the 1988 Act found in accordance with the following principle:

- a. That the protection offered by the SSB scheme (that the bill will not rise by the greater of £600 p.a. or the transitional relief caps) will continue to apply in principle to that part of the newly created hereditament which was immediately before the creation day in the SSB scheme, and
- b. That increases (or reductions) in overall rateable value arising from the split or merger are not subject to the protection of the SSB scheme.

For simple splits of hereditaments previously eligible for SSB, authorities may wish to simply apportion the chargeable amount in the SSB scheme for the hereditament before the split in line with the change in rateable value from the split) i.e. in line with the principle in Schedule 2 of Non-Domestic Rating (Chargeable Amounts) (England) Regulations 2016 No. 1265).

For mergers and reorganisations, authorities will have to estimate the degree to which, in line with the principle of the SSB scheme, that part of the hereditament

which was formerly eligible for SSB should continue to receive support under the SSB scheme. DCLG does not expect authorities to seek any formal apportionments of rateable value for this purpose.

11 LOCAL NEWSPAPER RELIEF (To 31 March 2025)

- 11.1 This relief is a sum of £1,500 in respect of office space occupied by local newspapers to a maximum of one discount per local newspaper title and per hereditament. A local newspaper with two offices can only claim the relief in respect of one of the offices. An office shared by three separate local newspaper titles would only be eligible for one relief.
- 11.2 This relief is specifically for local newspapers, those that would be regarded as a 'traditional local newspaper'. The relief will not be available to magazines. The hereditament must be occupied by a local newspaper and wholly or mainly used as office premises for journalists and reporters.

12 SUBSIDY ALLOWANCES

- 12.1 The Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Relief is likely to amount to subsidy. Any relief provided by local authorities under this scheme will need to comply with the UK's domestic and international subsidy control obligations. For detailed information see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complying-with-the-uks-international-obligations-on-subsidy-control-guidance-for-public-authorities/technical-guidance-on-the-uks-international-subsidy-control-commitments> which explains the subsidies chapter of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA), World Trade Organisation rules on subsidies, another international subsidy control commitments.
- 12.2 Article 364 of the TCA allows an economic actor (e.g. a holding company and its subsidiaries) to receive up to £343,000 in a three year period (consisting of the 2022/23 year and the two previous financial years). Expanded Retail Discount granted in either 2020/21 or 2021/22 does not count towards the £343,000 allowance but BEIS business grants (throughout the 3 years) and any other subsidies claimed under the Small Amounts of Financial Assistance limit should be counted.
- 15.3 Where it is clear to the Council that the ratepayer is likely to breach the cash cap or Small Amounts of Financial Assistance limit, then the Council will automatically withhold the relief. In any case, the Council will ask ratepayers to complete a subsidy declaration before granting the relief.

16 ADMINISTRATION OF APPLICATIONS FOR RELIEF

- 16.1 Decisions relating to the granting of reliefs will be delegated to the staff reporting to the Director of Connected Chelmsford. Most reliefs will be granted automatically using records already held by the Council. Applications from business rate payers who think they should be eligible must be made in writing to Chelmsford City Council, Business Rates, Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford CM1 1JE.
- 16.2 There is no statutory right of appeal against a decision made by the Council in respect of retail rate or business rate reoccupation relief. However, the Council will review the decision if the ratepayer is dissatisfied with the outcome. The review will be carried out by the Director of Connected Chelmsford and the final decision made by the

Director of Connected Chelmsford and/or the Cabinet Member for Connected Chelmsford

- 16.3 If an unsuccessful applicant requests a review, they will still need to continue to pay their rates bill. Once the review has been carried out, the ratepayer will be informed, in writing, of the decision.
- 16.4 The right of appeal process does not affect a ratepayer's legal right to challenge the decision by way of a judicial review.



Chelmsford City Council Cabinet

14 March 2023

Community Funding Scheme – Discretionary Grant Funding 2023/24

Report by:

Cabinet Member for Connected Chelmsford

Officer Contact:

Stuart Graham, Economic Development and Implementation Manager, 01245 606364, stuart.graham@chelmsford.gov.uk

Purpose

To agree the allocation of the discretionary grant funding for 2023/24 to voluntary and charitable organisations as part of the Council's Community Funding Scheme.

Options

1. To agree the recommendations contained in this report made by the Community Funding Panel.
2. To agree, with amendment, the recommendations contained in this report made by the Community Funding Panel.

Preferred option and reasons

The preferred option is to agree the allocations recommended by the Community Funding Panel, which have been through a thorough process of assessment and aligned to City Council corporate priorities.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet

1. Agrees to allocate £90,000 in 2023/24 to fund the 15 organisations in the amounts shown in Appendix 1, and
 2. That the Director of Connected Chelmsford is authorised to prepare and issue the grant offer letters and grant funding agreements to those organisations receiving the grants for 2023/24.
-

1. Background

- 1.1. As part of the Community Funding Scheme, each year the Council allocates discretionary revenue grant funding to voluntary and charitable organisations that support vulnerable Chelmsford residents.
- 1.2. In 2022/23 a budget provision of £50,000 was made for this purpose. For 2023/24 this has been increased to £90,000, based on the use of £40,000 from the Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).
- 1.3. This additional funding has been agreed to recognise the vital role that voluntary and charitable organisations play in supporting vulnerable residents at a time when there are even greater pressures and higher demand due to the cost-of-living crisis, inflation and rising energy costs. At the same time, the City Council's financial position has also been affected by the same issues and the increased funding has been identified to support organisations with some increased funding for the next two years. As the economy recovers, it is anticipated that the third sector will not require the same level of support from the Council in future years.

2. Process

- 2.1. The discretionary grant scheme was open to applications throughout October 2022, for grants to be made to the successful applicants in April 2023.
- 2.2. Organisations can apply for up to £10,000 of revenue funding only and must have matched funding of at least 50% of the total applied for. Successful applicants are expected to sign a grant funding agreement with the City Council.
- 2.3. The Council received 21 eligible applications (more than previous years), which were all vetted by the Chelmsford CVS. The value of the grants

requested totalled £179,000 against an available budget of £90,000. The eligible applications are summarised in Appendix 1.

2.4. Following a review of the submitted applications, the Officer Panel (comprising the Procurement & Risk Manager, Public Health & Protection Manager, Strategic Housing Manager, Economic Development Manager and Planning Contributions Officers), met on 18 January to consider the eligible applications.

2.5. The Community Funding Panel (comprising the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Connected Chelmsford, Cabinet Member for Greener and Safer Chelmsford, Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford, Director of Connected Chelmsford, Economic Development and Implementation Services Manager, Procurement and Risk Services Manager) then met on 1 February to consider the Officer Panel comments and make recommendations to Cabinet.

2.6. The Panel fully considered all of the eligible applications and recommended that 15 funding allocations be made. Reasons for the decision to not award funding to the other 6 eligible applications are set out in Appendix 1.

2.7 In considering the applications, the Community Funding Panel agreed that the 15 applications all demonstrated a specific benefit to Chelmsford residents and provided value for money. The Panel therefore agreed that the funding amount available is split between them. CHEAD, Sanctus and SVP Springfield have been allocated a higher percentage of their requested amount as they directly support the key services under the responsibility of the Council and are therefore more closely aligned to Corporate Plan priorities. Kids Inspire demonstrated that they can use the full grant to ensure that a matched Lottery grant is retained for sole use within Chelmsford, and so a full 100% grant award is recommended on that basis.

Organisation	Amount requested	Community Funding Panel Recommendation	Percentage of requested amount
Action For Family Carers	10,000.00	6,076.51	61%
Age Concern	5,000.00	3,038.26	61%
Chess Homeless	10,000.00	8,000.00	80%
City of Chelmsford Mencap	10,000.00	6,076.51	61%
Families InFocus	10,000.00	6,076.51	61%
Hearing Help Essex	8,500.00	5,165.03	61%
HomeStart	9,248.00	5,619.56	61%
Ideas Hub Chelmsford	6,876.00	4,178.21	61%

InterAct	10,000.00	6,076.51	61%
Kids Inspire	9,200.00	9,200.00	100%
Millrace Furniture	4,500.00	2,734.43	61%
Samaritans	10,000.00	6,076.51	61%
Sanctus	10,000.00	8,000.00	80%
Support 4 Sight	9,980.00	6,064.36	61%
SVP Springfield Furniture Bank	9,522.00	7,617.60	80%
Total	178,839.60	90,000.00	

3. Conclusion

3.1 Chelmsford's charities and voluntary organisations play a significant role in supporting vulnerable residents. The City Council can support them in difficult economic circumstances and although the funding the Council has available is limited, it plays a key role in the funding mix that third sector organisations rely on to sustain themselves.

3.2 The recommended discretionary grant awards for 2023/24 will help support 15 organisations continue to provide key services to Chelmsford's residents.

List of appendices:

Appendix 1: Community Funding Scheme – Summary of eligible applications received October 2022 for the discretionary grant

Background papers:

None

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: Provided the UK Shared Prosperity Fund payment is received for 2023/24, it must be spent within 12 months of receipt. The above payments do not amount to a "subsidy" under the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and accordingly the Act does not apply to these grants.

Financial: The £90,000 budget for 2023/24 comprises £50,000 of Council resources and £40,000 from the Council's Year 2 UKSPF allocation. A decision confirming that funding from Government is expected in late March 2022. In the unlikely event that that funding is not confirmed the additional £40,000 will be made available from the Council's reserves.

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None

Personnel: None

Risk Management: Appropriate checks on organisations will be carried out before funding is distributed, including insurance, financial and charitable status.

Equality and Diversity:

(For new or revised policies or procedures has an equalities impact assessment been carried out? If not, explain why)

Health and Safety: Funding agreements will include a requirement that organisations comply with health and safety regulations, and organisations will be required to provide evidence of relevant safeguarding policy and procedures.

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees:

None

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

Our Chelmsford Our Plan

Appendix 1 Community Funding Scheme – Summary of eligible applications received October 2022 for the discretionary grant

	Organisation	Overall cost	Amount requested	Recommended grant	Percentage of total request	Description
1	Action For Family Carers	21,447.00	10,000.00	6,076.51	61%	Establish a fortnightly young carers activity club for age 8–15 providing a break, an opportunity to mix socially with peers and to participate in a variety of activities for local young carers
2	Age Concern	56,159.00	5,000.00	3,038.26	61%	Towards running costs to provide a meal service, classes and hosted advice and support services for elderly residents
3	Carers First	9,000.00	4,500.00	0.00	0%	Supply carer-friendly employer booklets costing £2,750: <i>This part is not eligible for funding</i> The remainder is for walking groups and wellbeing activities. Charity is commissioned by Essex County Council to support unpaid carers aged 18+ across Essex with information/advice/guidance and support <i>Reason for recommendation: The majority of the funding requested is not revenue and the remainder is covered by its commission from Essex County Council</i>
4	Charms the Essex Therapy Centre	54,000.00	6,000.00	0.00	0%	Application for 10% of running costs of previous year to cover estimated increases, including salary, rent, energy and a contingency. Centre is an independent provider of oxygen therapy in return for a 'minimum donation' <i>Reason for recommendation: Partnership working is not evidenced, and the application does not demonstrate the benefit to Chelmsford's most vulnerable residents, as the paid for service is available to all who wish to use it</i>
5	Chess Homeless	1,378,413.00	10,000.00	8,000.00	80%	Support worker for people who find themselves homeless to enable them to move forward purposefully and in good health (annual salary of support worker £23,330)
6	City of Chelmsford Mencap	21,668.74	10,000.00	6,076.51	61%	Senior Support Lead for CCM's lifelong learning service supporting adults with mild to severe learning disability and autism (most service users also have additional needs), to facilitate learning, fulfil daily care needs and co-ordinate ongoing support for service users
7	Crossroads	28,540.80	9,513.60	0.00	0%	Salary for support worker to mainly people with Dementia, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, but also some other conditions / disabilities, to allow their carers a break or people with disabilities to access the community. Salary for 1hr/day x 16 weeks for 60 beneficiaries

Appendix 1 Community Funding Scheme – Summary of eligible applications received October 2022 for the discretionary grant

						<i>Reason for recommendation: The application does not strongly evidence how the service would benefit Chelmsford residents specifically</i>
8	Dementia Adventure	163,659.00	6,000.00	0.00	0%	Small group short breaks for people with dementia and their companion. 2023 program of 36 supported breaks. £6k covers one week holiday for 3 residents + 3 carers <i>Reason for recommendation: The funding would benefit a very small number of residents and there is no evidence of means testing. The application is not considered to represent good value for money</i>
9	Families InFocus	60,711.00	10,000.00	6,076.51	61%	Towards running costs of the Family Support Service in Chelmsford, supporting families who have a child (or children) with any Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND). The service provides practical and emotional support to families who are struggling
10	Hearing Help Essex	81,035.00	8,500.00	5,165.03	61%	HHE provides a Hearing Aid Support Service (HASS) in Chelmsford, Braintree, Maldon, Basildon, and Uttlesford Districts. The grant requested will contribute the Chelmsford HASS related percentage of service running costs
11	HomeStart	19,248.00	9,248.00	5,619.56	61%	Running costs of Family Groups which provide a safe, supportive space where families can come together on a regular basis. Families are referred for reasons including feelings of isolation, challenges managing children's behaviour and challenges getting children school ready. Grant will cover approximately 20 families
12	Ideas Hub Chelmsford	68,768.00	6,876.00	4,178.21	61%	Community Space for the unparished area of Chelmsford. 10% of estimated running costs for 23/24
13	InterAct	154,000.00	10,000.00	6,076.51	61%	Towards running costs of its activity programmes for young people with SEND providing opportunities for social interaction & respite breaks for parents/carers & siblings, and training it provides to local organisations working with young people with SEND
14	Kids Inspire	18,400.00	9,200.00	9,200.00	100%	Therapeutic support as an early intervention for vulnerable children and their families – improving communication, coping strategies, resilience for children and parents Talk Together project: 50% of cost for 10 sessions of therapy for 40 families
15	Little Edi Foundation	20,000.00	10,000.00	0.00	0%	Salary for one full time member of staff to run various projects throughout year inc. food bank, uniform and clothing project, after school club, money planning

Appendix 1 Community Funding Scheme – Summary of eligible applications received October 2022 for the discretionary grant

						<i>Reason for recommendation: Employees are paid, and the activities seem to duplicate voluntary services already in Chelmsford. At this stage the charity does not appear to be well established in the community yet</i>
16	Meadows Shopmobility	21,600.00	10,000.00	0.00	0%	Contribution to rental of a premises from private landlord to run the shop to help raise funds for the charity <i>Reason for recommendation: The grant would be subsidising private sector rent</i>
17	Millrace Furniture	22,200.00	4,500.00	2,734.43	61%	Towards running costs - vocational rehabilitation service mainly for people recovering from mental health problems, but also can accommodate individuals with mild learning difficulties and physical disability. Beneficiaries receive skills training in furniture restoration
18	Samaritans	26,000.00	10,000.00	6,076.51	61%	Towards the running costs of its listening service
19	Sanctus	65,061.00	10,000.00	8,000.00	80%	Towards increased running costs of the service providing food to those in need, and a gateway to encourage individuals to access support
20	Support 4 Sight	26,481.00	9,980.00	6,064.36	61%	Towards running costs - service coordinator £6,148 and rental costs 50% £3,832. Located within Age Concern, offering regular social and well-being activities, advice, guidance, and support to people with sight loss and their families/carers
21	SVP Springfield Furniture Bank	31,200.00	9,522.00	7,617.60	80%	Application is to cover 100% of fixed overheads to support people moving into properties without furniture and those unable to replace items, or those who have lived long term without essential furniture items.
	TOTAL	-	178,839.60	90,000.00	-	



Chelmsford City Council Cabinet

14 March 2023

Neighbourhood Plans Update and Delegations

Report by:

Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development

Officer Contact:

Jenny Robinson, Senior Planning Officer

01245 606265, jenny.robinson@chelmsford.gov.uk

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide an update on the progress of Neighbourhood Plans in the Council's administrative area; and
- Seek Cabinet's approval to delegate to the Director of Sustainable Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development, the statutory functions of considering examiner's reports and recommendations, and deciding what action should be taken in response, including (where applicable) the decision to proceed to referendum.

Options

1. Approve the delegation of the statutory functions referred to above to the Director for Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development.
2. Alternatively, to require these functions to be exercised by Members (in Cabinet).

Preferred option and reasons

Option 1 – Delegating these statutory functions to Director of Sustainable Communities (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development) will enable timely progress on future stages of the statutory Neighbourhood Plan process.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet delegates to the Director of Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development, the statutory functions of considering examiners' reports and recommendations for the six Neighbourhood Plans under preparation set out at paragraph 1.2 of this report, and deciding what action should be taken in response, including (where applicable) the decision to proceed to referendum.
 2. That Cabinet notes the update on progress on Neighbourhood Plans in the Council's administrative area.
-

1. Introduction

- 1.1. There are two adopted – or 'made' – Neighbourhood Plans in the Council's administrative area. These are South Woodham Ferrers and Writtle, which were adopted by Council at its meeting held on 8 December 2021.
- 1.2. There are a further six Neighbourhood Plans in progress, as follows:
 - Little Baddow – Regulation 16 stage
 - Broomfield – post Regulation 14 stage
 - Sandon – post Regulation 14 stage
 - Danbury – Regulation 14 stage
 - Boreham – drafting
 - East Hanningfield – drafting
- 1.3. Neighbourhood Development Plans are prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. Once made, they become part of the Local Plan for use in making planning decisions within their areas.
- 1.4. When Neighbourhood Plan groups have drafted their Plan, the first formal consultation is held to comply with Regulation 14 of the above regulations. This is carried out by the Parish Council as the 'qualifying body' for Neighbourhood Plan preparation.
- 1.5. Once they have amended the draft Plan to take account of comments received, the Parish Council submits the Plan to the City Council which carries out the formal Regulation 16 consultation.

- 1.6. Following Regulation 16 consultation, the City Council appoints an independent examiner to review the Plan. At the close of the examination, the examiner issues a draft report for fact-checking, including recommendations for modifications felt necessary to ensure the Plan meets certain basic conditions, such as having regard to national and local planning policy. If successful, the examiner will then recommend that subject to the modifications the Plan is submitted to a referendum.

2. Next stage

- 2.1. Following receipt of the examiner's final reports, the Council, as local planning authority, is under a statutory duty (legal details are at end of this report) to consider the report and decide what action should be taken in response. It has to consider the same tests as the examiner and, whilst it must take into account the examiner's report, is not bound by it. If, however, the Council is satisfied that the draft Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions, is compatible with Convention rights and complies with sections 38A and 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 or that the draft Neighbourhood Plan would meet those requirements, if modifications were made, it must proceed to a referendum.
- 2.2. The Council must make a decision to proceed to a referendum within five weeks of receiving the examiner's report. There are likely to be four Neighbourhood Plans reaching this stage in 2023/24. Rather than seeking agreement for referendum from Cabinet for each Plan individually, and given that there is a gap of eight weeks between July and September Cabinet, the request is made for the statutory functions referred to in paragraph 2.1 above to be delegated to the Director for Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development.
- 2.3. If more than 50% of those voting in a referendum are in favour of a Plan, it can be formally made by the Council. The costs of holding the referendum are reimbursed through a Government Neighbourhood Planning Grant.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1. There are likely to be four Neighbourhood Plans submitted for Examination in 2023/24, and the Council will need to make a decision whether the Plans should proceed to referendum.
- 3.2. Agreeing the delegation as set out in the recommendation would mean the Council can meet the requirement for it to make a decision on whether to proceed to referendum within the statutory five-week period, avoid repeated requests to Cabinet for a decision to proceed, and avoid delays in the later stages of Neighbourhood Plan making.

List of appendices:

None

Background papers:

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/regulation/17A>

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional:

Neighbourhood Development Plans are prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The statutory duty is primarily set out within para 12 (2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – as applied to Neighbourhood Plans by section 33C of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

They will become part of the Local Plan for use in making planning decisions.

Financial:

Costs of arranging a referendum are borne by the Council, but are expected to be covered through the Government's Neighbourhood Planning grant system.

Potential impact on climate change and the environment:

None.

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030:

None.

Personnel:

Costs of arranging a referendum are borne by the Council, but are expected to be covered through the Government's Neighbourhood Planning grant system.

Risk Management:

None.

Equality and Diversity:

All Neighbourhood Development Plans are subject to an Equality Assessment which is part of the submission document package.

Health and Safety:

None.

Digital:

None.

Other:

Facilitating Neighbourhood Plans contributes to priorities in the Council's Our Chelmsford, Our Plan 2020: A Fairer and Inclusive Chelmsford, A Safer and Greener Place, Healthy, Enjoyable and Active Lives, and Connected Chelmsford

Consultees:

Legal and Democratic Services

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

This report takes into account the following policies and strategies of the City Council:

Local Plan 2013-2036

Our Chelmsford, Our Plan, January 2020.



Chelmsford City Council Cabinet

14 March 2023

Strategic Growth Site Policy 7 – Great Leighs Masterplan

Report by:

Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development

Officer Contact:

Matthew Perry, Principal Planning Officer

Purpose

This report is seeking Cabinet approval of the masterplan for the Site Allocation known as Great Leighs – referenced by Strategic Growth Site Policy 7 of the Chelmsford Local Plan. The Masterplan is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

Options

1. The Cabinet approve the Masterplan as presented, updated to reflect the content of the minutes from Chelmsford Policy Board on 28 February 2023.
2. The Director of Sustainable Communities or Spatial Planning Services Manager, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development, be authorised to make any revisions requested by Cabinet.

Recommendation to Cabinet

The Cabinet is requested to indicate whether it is content for the Chief Executive to exercise his delegated authority to approve the masterplan attached at Appendix 1.

1. Background

- 1.1. The Chelmsford Local Plan was adopted on 27th May 2020. Strategic Policy S7 of the Local Plan requires that the allocated Strategic Growth Sites proceed in accordance with masterplans to be approved by the Council.
- 1.2. Further to officer-led negotiation of the masterplan, Savills have submitted a masterplan on behalf of the developer consortium, for Great Leighs. Following various rounds of community, technical and public consultation, a refined masterplan is presented for Strategic Growth Site Allocation 7 in accordance with the Council's Masterplan Procedure Note (October 2019).
- 1.3. The masterplan has been considered by Chelmsford Policy Board (as required by the Masterplan Procedure Note - Oct 2019), at its meetings of 12 January 2023 and 28 February 2023. The Chelmsford Policy Board reports and minutes are available as background papers. Following its review by Policy Board in January 2023, revisions were requested to the document in order to address member and officer concerns. Subsequently, a revised masterplan was produced by the developer, and its content was subsequently endorsed by the Policy Board in February 2023 subject to some further minor revisions. The masterplan has been amended further to reflect the content of the Policy Board report and minutes.
- 1.4. The recommendations of Policy Board were chiefly that:
 - the masterplan should proceed to Cabinet for formal consideration
 - changes to the Masterplan ahead of consideration by Cabinet be delegated to the Director of Sustainable Communities (or Spatial Planning Services Manager) in consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development.
- 1.5. The masterplan has been amended to reflect the content of the previous Policy Board. Other changes as highlighted within the officer reports to CPB have been actioned. At this point the masterplan is presented to Cabinet for approval.

2. Masterplan amendments

- 2.1 The masterplan has undergone amendments in order to accommodate two rounds of 'Further Considerations' as presented to Policy Board on two separate occasions. The changes to the masterplan are considered to be acceptable to Officers and the content has been agreed between the Spatial Planning Services Manager in consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development, prior to proceeding to Cabinet.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 The masterplan demonstrates how the requirements of the Local Plan will be delivered on this site. The scheme is sufficiently ambitious to achieve a high-

quality development which is well related to its context. The masterplan layout and other content provides a sound framework to guide successful placemaking and will support the planning application process going forward.

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 Masterplan – March 2023

Background papers:

[Chelmsford Policy Board Report & Minutes 12 January 2023](#)

[Chelmsford Policy Board Report & Minutes 28 February 2023](#)

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional:

As referred to in the report.

Financial:

None

Potential impact on climate change and the environment:

New housing delivery can have a negative impact on climate and environmental change issues. Planning Policies, Building Regulations and Environmental Legislation ensure that new housing meets increasingly higher sustainability and environmental standards which will help mitigate this impact.

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030:

The new Local Plan and emerging Making Places SPD will provide guidance to assist in reducing carbon emissions through development. This development will follow the published guidance.

Personnel:

None

Risk Management:

None

Equality and Diversity:

None. An Equalities and Diversity Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the Local Plan.

Health and Safety:

None

Digital:
None

Other:
None

Consultees:

CCC – Spatial Planning

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

This report takes into account the following policies and strategies of the City Council:

Local Plan 2013-2036

Our Chelmsford, Our Plan, January 2020

Chelmsford Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan

GREAT LEIGHS STRATEGIC GROWTH SITES



 HARROW ESTATES

MOULSHAM HALL ESTATES

Stage 3 Masterplan Framework
March 2023



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01.

INTRODUCTION

This section introduces the sites that form the Great Leighs broad location for growth, and summarises the adopted Chelmsford Local Plan policies for Sites 7a, 7b, and 7c that comprise the strategic growth location.

Context of the Masterplan

The Great Leighs broad location for growth comprises four strategic sites that are allocated in the adopted Chelmsford Local Plan through Policies 7a, 7b, 7c and 7d.

To meet the policy requirements of the Local Plan, a comprehensive approach to the development of these sites is required, and this is to be guided by a masterplan to be approved by the Council. Further principles are set out by the City Council in a Masterplanning Principles document for Great Leighs (Chelmsford City Council, November 2021). The masterplan has been prepared in accordance with the procedure for preparing masterplans set out by Chelmsford City Council.

This document forms the Stage 3 Masterplan submitted for approval and adoption by Chelmsford City Council's Policy Board. It has been informed by a number of factors, beginning with an understanding of the Local Plan Policy requirements, masterplan principles, engagement with officers, technical and community workshops, preliminary and formal public consultation and technical assessments of the allocation sites.

This masterplanning framework includes Sites 7a, 7b and 7c. As development is already being delivered on Site 7d, this site is excluded but provides important context for the wider masterplan to achieve a fully integrated development. The masterplanning framework also includes an additional site which is proposed to meet the requirements of the Local Plan to provide a Travelling Showpeople site, as an alternative location to the inclusion of a site as part of Site 7a. The alternative location is considered to be more appropriate, better meeting the key criteria advanced by the Showmen's Guild.

Structure

The document is structured as follows:

- Section 2: The Vision for Great Leighs
- Section 3: Context & Site Analysis
- Section 4: Masterplan Framework

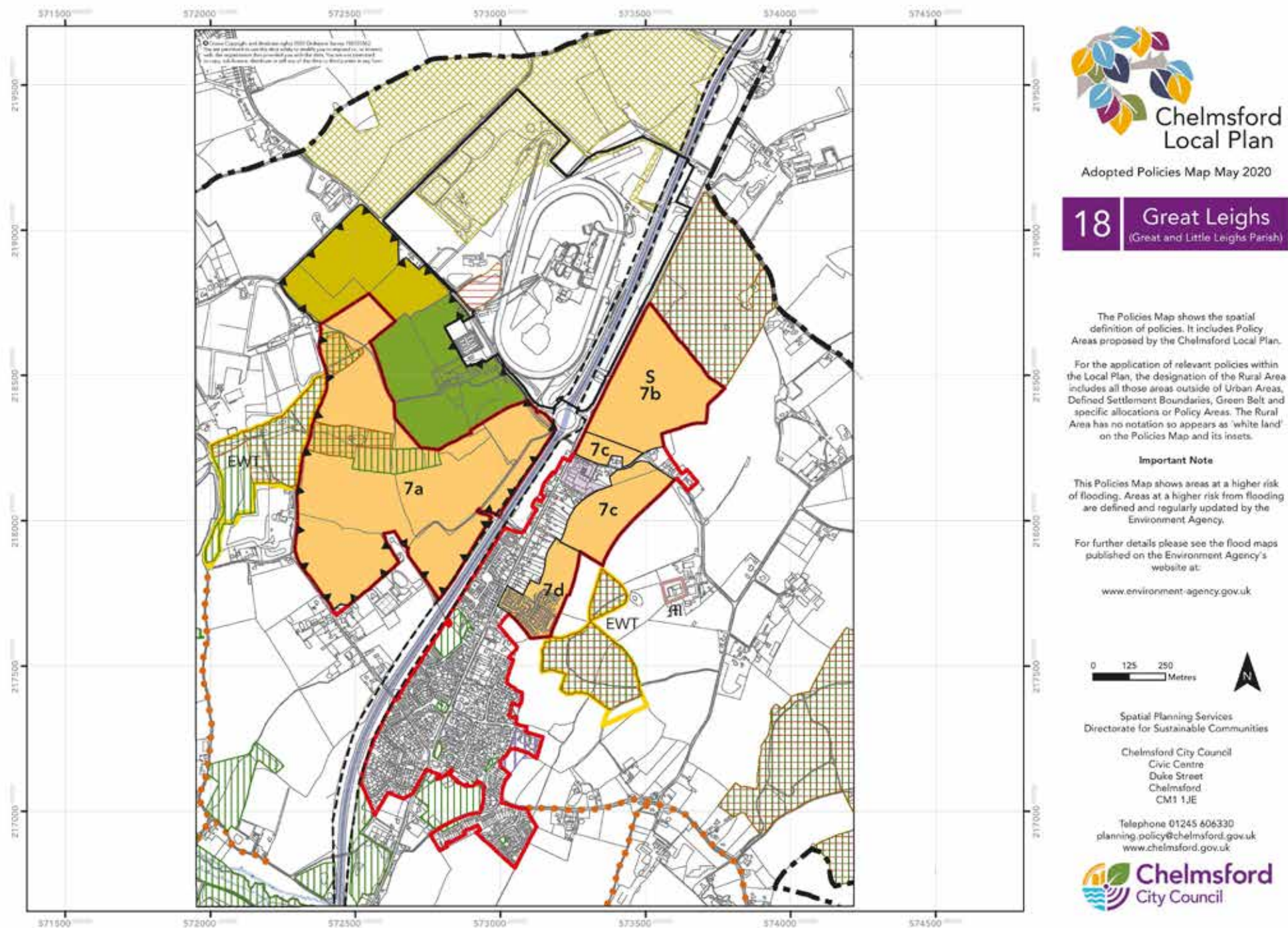
Local Plan Policy Requirements

A summary of Local Plan policy requirements for the overall growth area (7a, 7b, 7c & 7d) includes:

- Around 950 homes and 250 specialist elderly accommodation units (100 of these new homes have been delivered at Site 7d).
- 35% of all residential units to be provided and maintained as affordable housing – 5% of affordable housing to be wheelchair accessible.
- 50% of new dwellings to be accessible or adaptable.
- 5% of new homes to be self-build that can include custom build housing.
- A primary school co-located with early years provision and a childcare nursery in Site 7a.
- A neighbourhood centre co-located with the primary school in Site 7a that is accessible from Great Leighs and the other allocated sites.

- Maximising opportunities for sustainable movement including public transport accessibility, walking, and cycling, whilst making suitable provision for vehicular access. A key objective is also to fully utilise the crossings of the A131 to ensure the proposed neighbourhood centre and primary school are conveniently accessible for all residents.
- Integrating and improving Public Rights of Way into the overall movement network including bridleways where appropriate.
- Retaining and enhancing the setting of the listed buildings named in the policies, with a focus on an enhanced the parkland setting to Moulsham Hall.
- Retaining and enhancing existing landscape features that provide a positive setting for development and contain views into the sites.
- Mitigating visual impacts of development.
- Providing appropriate habitat mitigation and creation.
- Protecting the River Ter Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) to the south of Great Leighs.
- Providing a coherent network of public open space for formal and informal sport, recreation and with community spaces within the sites.
- Integrating SuDS to manage surface water drainage and flood risk.

Details of other infrastructure requirements set out in the policies will be addressed through SI06 and CIL at planning application stage.



The Growth Area and Sites

The broad location for growth shown in Figure 1 covers an overall area of 99.02ha and comprises four separate site allocations. Site 7a measures 46.71ha and is located to the west of Great Leighs and the A131. The overall site extends from the A131 towards Hornells Cor and lies between Moulsham Hall Lane and School Lane / Dumney Lane. The site largely comprises grassland fields, many of which are enclosed by dense hedgerows and trees and include woodland areas, some of which form part of the wider Phyllis Currie / Dumney Lane Nature Reserve along this western edge. Moulsham Hall is a prominent feature within the site adjacent to stable blocks and Moulsham Hall Lane. Chelmsford City Racecourse lies to the north-east of the site with floodlights visible from across Site 7a.

Site 7b measures 12.54ha and is located to the north of Great Leighs to the east of London Road and is defined by ancient woodland to the north and part of Site 7c and Banters Lane to the south. The site is in arable use, relatively flat and enclosed by Bushy Wood to the north and with boundaries comprising tree and hedgerow features.

Site 7c, which measures 7.86ha, also lies near the northern end of Great Leighs and is split by Banters Lane. Much of this site lies to the south of Banters Lane to the east of existing residential development and a small employment site and north of Site 7d where residential development has been completed. Gubbions Hall, a Grade II Listed Building lies within a moated site identified as a Scheduled Monument to the south east. This part of the site is in arable use and relatively flat and enclosed by field boundaries that comprise hedgerows and trees.

The small remainder of Site 7c lies to the north of Banters Lane, adjoins Site 7b and encloses two existing bungalows on Banters Lane. The site is in arable use, relatively flat and enclosed by field boundaries formed by hedgerows and trees.

Site 7d lies to the south of Site 7c and at the eastern edge of Great Leighs. Residential development comprising 100 homes has been delivered on this site. Therefore, Site 7d is excluded from this Masterplan Framework.

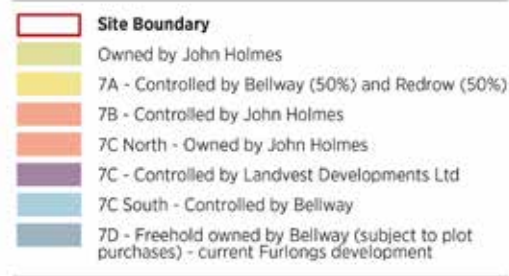
The proposed Travelling Showpeople site is 2.28ha and is located to the north of Site 7b between London Road and the A131. Although outside the defined broad location for growth, the site has been identified as an alternative location to deliver the required number of pitches, as shown in Figure 2.

Additional areas have been included within the defined broad location for growth as shown in the Chelmsford Local Plan Policies Map 18, including a retained parkland area around Moulsham Hall and an area designated for recreational use to the north of the Site 7a.

Detailed descriptions of Sites 7a, 7b and 7c, the Traveling Showpeople site and the parkland and proposed recreational area are provided later in this document.



FIGURE 2: AERIAL PLAN OF THE STRATEGIC GROWTH AREA



Land Ownerships

The growth area is made up of a number of land areas that are subject to differing controls and freeholds.

In Site 7a, the green area represents land owned by Moulsham Hall Estates. The yellow areas represents land under the joint control of Bellway Homes and Harrow Estates.

Site 7b and part of Site 7c to the north of Banters Lane, represents land controlled by Moulsham Hall Estates and is marked in orange.

The remainder of Site 7c to the south of Banters Lane is subject to a freehold held by Landvest, shown in purple next to the rest of site shown in blue that is controlled by Bellway Homes that is shown in blue north of Site 7d, which has been developed by Bellway Homes.

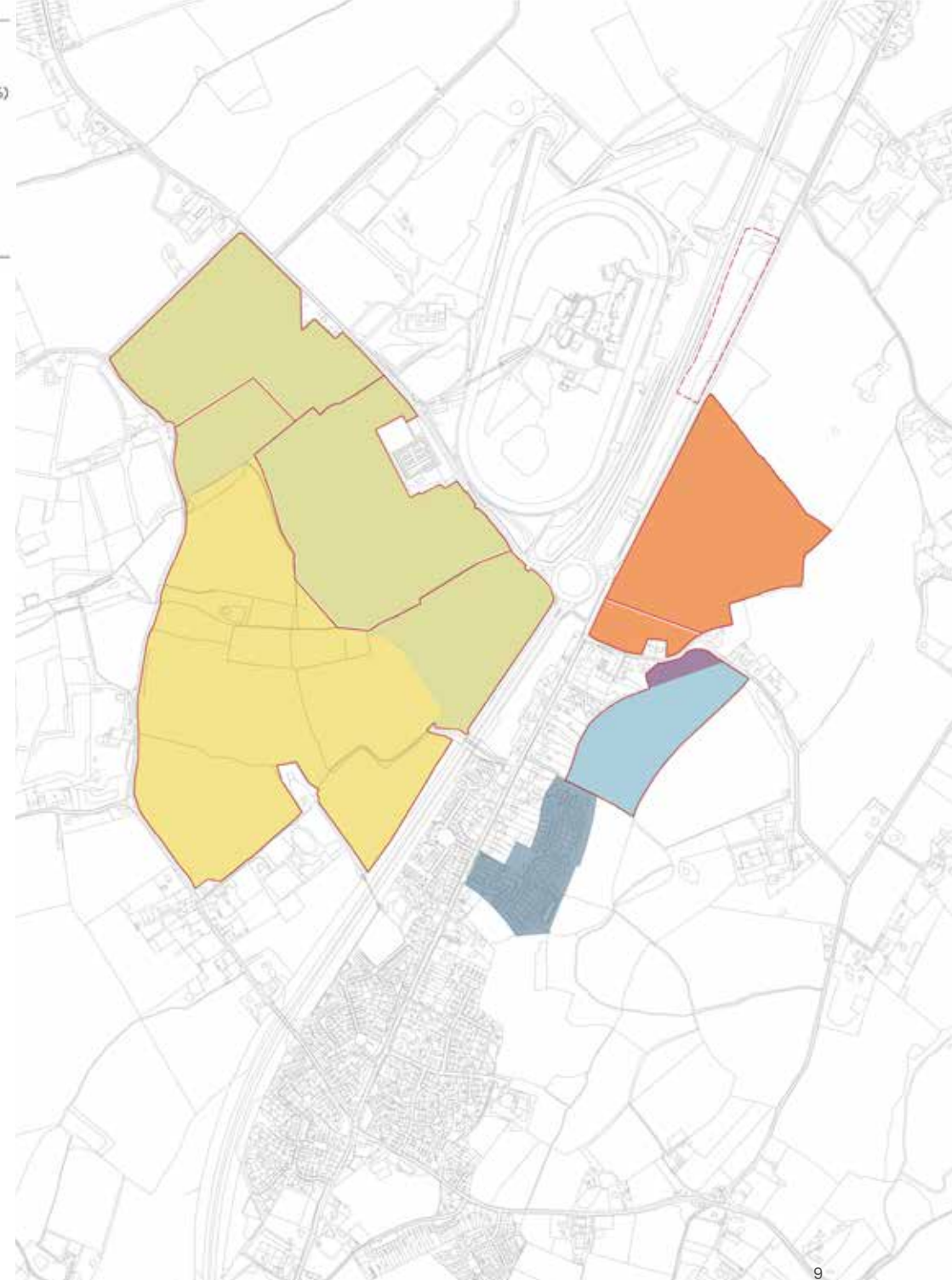


FIGURE 3: LAND OWNERSHIP PLAN ACROSS THE STRATEGIC GROWTH AREA

02.

THE VISION FOR GREAT LEIGHS

The vision for the Great Leighs broad location for growth reflects the policy context and overarching masterplanning principles for the site, officer views and those received from the community and stakeholders during engagement to prepare this Masterplan Framework. The context and site analysis as set out in Section 3 has played a key role in shaping the Masterplan Framework. The Vision also seeks to respond to an advancing agenda for reducing carbon emissions by embedding sustainability into 'the place' and therefore, integrating development to become a part of wider Great Leighs through an all-encompassing approach whereby:

Great Leighs will become a sustainable settlement and an attractive location of choice with a wide housing offer, supported by a new mixed-use village hub including a new school and neighbourhood centre to meet the needs of Great Leighs as a whole.

Set within an extensive green infrastructure framework, development will retain valuable landscape and ecological features, integrate surface water drainage and support a network of bus, walking and cycling routes locally and connecting to the wider area.

Intrinsic to the development are the woodlands, trees and hedgerows, and natural spaces valued for their contribution to the landscape, biodiversity, heritage setting and distinct identity of Great Leighs. Within the broad location for growth, these features, to be retained and enhanced, have influenced the structure of development, alongside the opportunities to maximise connectivity and accessibility. As such the strategic growth area will:

- Integrate a rich network of multi-functional green infrastructure that positively responds to the local context and delivers measurable net gains for biodiversity wherever possible, by protecting existing wildlife assets, creating and enhancing strategic connections between them, and delivering new complementary wildlife habitats and amenity spaces that both enhance the local area for wildlife and bring people closer to nature.

- Integrate a rich network of green infrastructure with a range of natural and amenity spaces and places for play and informal recreation whilst retaining and enhancing natural features for biodiversity net gain.
- Utilise, expand and connect to the extensive network of Public Rights of Way and existing Sustrans routes, to create a movement network that facilitates healthy and active lifestyles with walking and cycling routes and attractive streets and spaces. An improved underpass from the Dog and Partridge pub will provide direct access to the new neighbourhood centre and primary school. The existing network of bridleways will also be enhanced with east west connections.
- Address the current lack of local facilities with a mixed use neighbourhood centre that is convenient to access by walking and cycling and capable of offering local shopping, community facilities, healthcare, employment space, and micro-mobility hub, co-located with a new primary school, early years and nursery.
- Accommodate bus services, together with new bus stops to ensure good sustainable connections from Great Leighs towards Chelmsford and Great Notley / Braintree.
- Create a diverse and attractive residential offer that is responsive to the housing market and housing need with market and affordable housing, and accommodation for a variety of life stages including elderly accommodation and care. The offer also seeks to provide opportunities for self-build and custom build housing and a location for Travelling Showpeople.
- Respond to the vernacular of the village and surrounding hamlets to convey an overall character that will add to the creation of a cohesive settlement, whilst allowing the new community to be of its time.
- Optimise the environmental performance of new development to create a comfortable micro-climate and sustainable drainage networks in addition to adherence to up to date standards for energy and water consumption.
- CIL/S106 – Any further improvements to local or strategic infrastructure which are deemed necessary to mitigate the effects of the masterplan will be determined through discussions at planning application stage. Where funding is required for off-site improvements, this will be secured via the Community Infrastructure Levy or S106 obligations in the usual manner.

03.

CONTEXT & SITE ANALYSIS

This section outlines the strategic and local context of the growth area, including the relationship of the sites with Great Leighs, the wider landscape setting, wider transport links, landscape designations, character and local facilities.

Strategic Context

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

Great Leighs lacks the range of local services and facilities for a settlement of this size. The Local Plan makes provision to address this deficit and also to meet the needs of future growth with a

Strategic Location

Great Leighs is a village that lies on the A131 corridor approximately 12km north of Chelmsford and 6km to the south of Braintree. Great Notley is the nearest settlement of size 2.5km north of Great Leighs via London Road.

Great Leighs is served by the A131, which bypasses the village and connects north to the A120 and Braintree, and south via the A130 to Chelmsford and the A12. Chelmsford is the location of the nearest main railway station that offers connections to London.

Great Leighs is set within an area that is rural in character, although is influenced by the presence of the A131 dual carriageway at its western edge, and Chelmsford City Racecourse to the north of the village. A number of smaller villages and hamlets surround Great Leighs, which with fields and woodland blocks, provide a positive rural setting.

The growth area is generally located to the west, north and east of Great Leighs towards the north of the settlement.



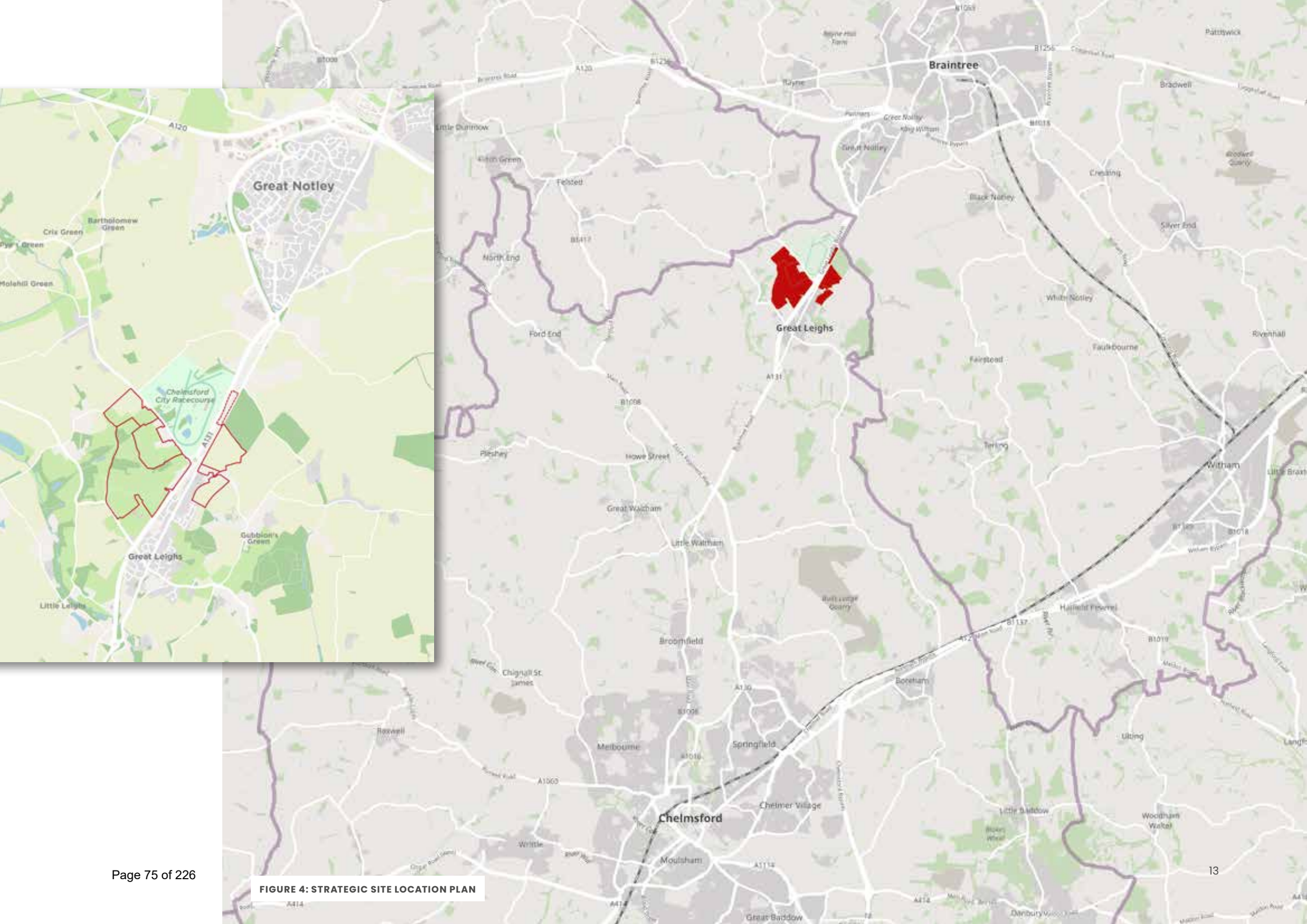


FIGURE 4: STRATEGIC SITE LOCATION PLAN

Relationship with local services and facilities

The current limited offer of services and facilities is a key issue for residents of Great Leighs. The nearest supermarket, and doctors' surgery are located at Great Notley and are not accessible via direct public transport links. Bus services, however, offer access to facilities in Braintree and Chelmsford.

Further employment is located at Great Notley to the west of the A131 corridor which is expanding with a mix of employment spaces at Horizon Park. Wider employment opportunities are also offered in Braintree and Chelmsford, within the town centres and employment areas.

Great Leighs Primary School currently serves the local community. As required in the Local Plan a new Primary School is to be located in Site 7c to serve the growing population. The nearest secondary schools are Notley High School and Braintree Sixth Form.

Overall the lack of local facilities in the village underpins the Local Plan policy requirement for a neighbourhood centre to be located in Site 7a, which will play a key role in serving the needs of new residents and the existing community, supported by an improved offer in walking and cycling distance.

-  Site Boundary
-  Main Routes
-  Bus Route & Station
-  Railway & Station
-  Cycle Routes
-  Town centre / Retail
-  Employment
-  Community Facilities
-  Public House
-  School
-  Chelmsford City Racecourse
-  Park / Open Space

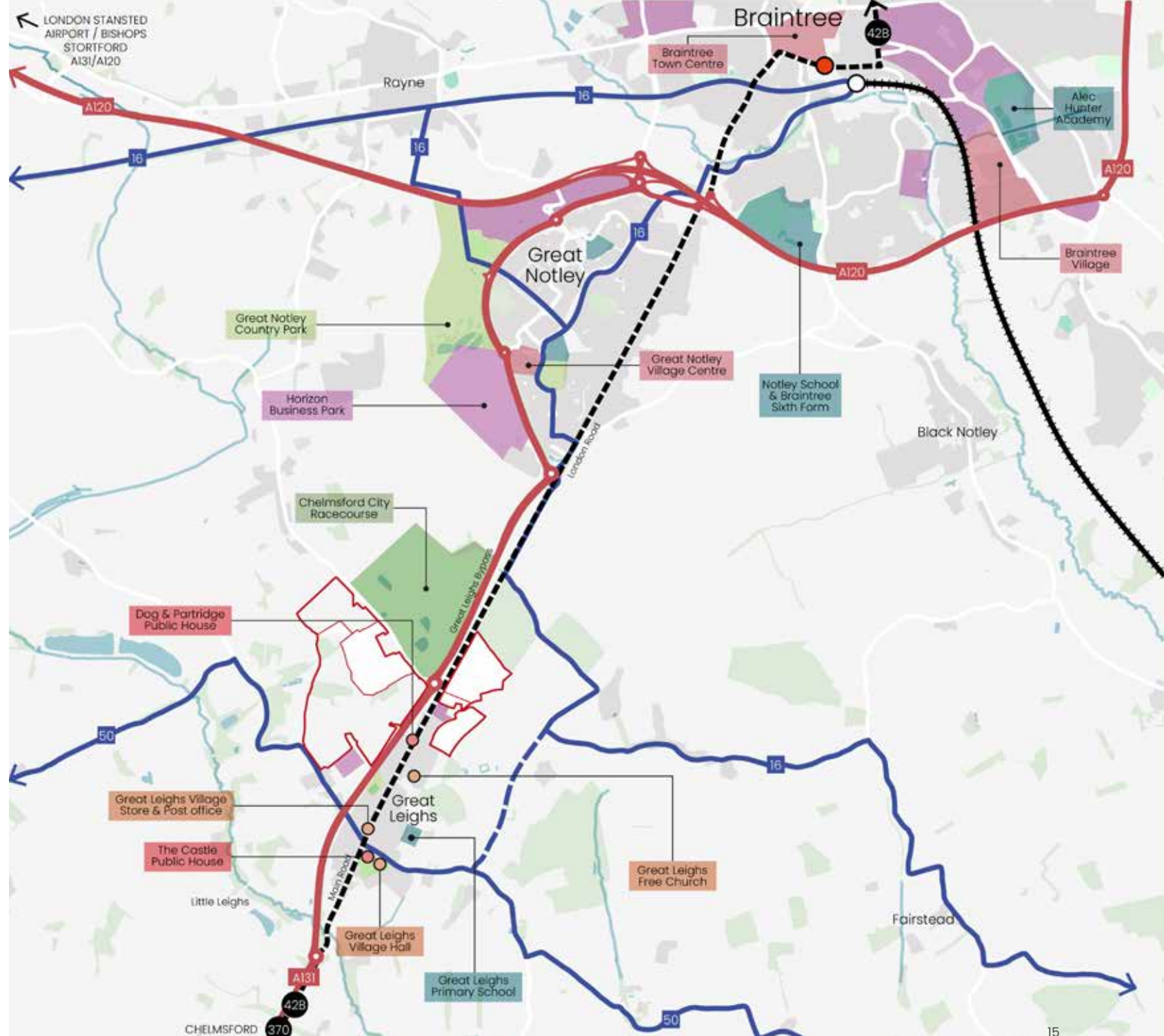


FIGURE 5: RELATIONSHIP OF THE SITES TO LOCAL FACILITIES IN GREAT LEIGHS AND NEIGHBOURING SETTLEMENTS

Movement and Accessibility

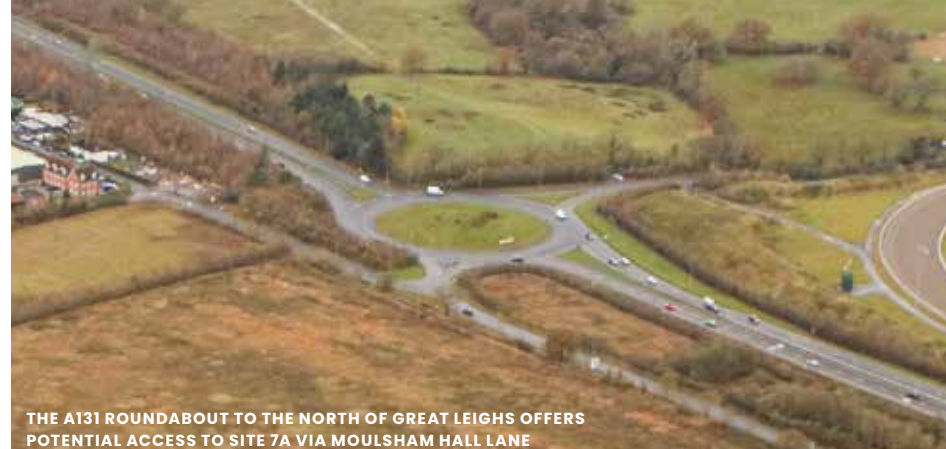
KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

There are good opportunities offered by existing vehicular routes to provide access to:

- Site 7a from the A131 via the Moulsham Hall Lane roundabout
- Site 7b and the northern part of Site 7c from London Road
- A small part of Site 7c adjacent to Banters Lane from Banters Lane to serve a modest level of development, and
- To the remainder of Site 7c from the existing residential street that serves Site 7d

An existing public transport corridor runs along Main Road and London Road with bus stops on Main Road that have the potential to serve new catchments in Site 7c and the eastern edge of Site 7a. Site 7b has the potential to be served with additional bus stops. Provision of a bus route in Site 7a has the potential to serve new residential development.

Great Leighs benefits from an extensive Public Rights of Way network with routes through Sites 7a and 7c. Routes provide opportunities for connection into Sites 7a and 7c whilst there is the potential for pedestrians and cyclists to access Site 7b and the northern part of 7c from London Road.



Vehicular Routes

Great Leighs is located on the A131 and A130 corridor between Braintree and Chelmsford. The A131 once followed London Road and Main Street through the village before the completion of the Great Leighs Bypass in 2002. The bypass is linked to a series of wider improvements on this corridor including the Great Notley bypass and subsequent widening. Further improvements to this corridor include work to deliver the Chelmsford North East Bypass which will improve connections to the A12.

Vehicular access to Great Leighs is offered by roundabouts on the A131 to the north and south of the village. The northern roundabout provides access to Great Leigh's via Main Road. London Road, the former route of the A131 leads north to Great Notley. Moulsham Hall Lane heads west along the edge of Site 7a and south of Chelmsford City Racecourse towards the Hamlet of Willows Green.

From the village minor routes serve neighbouring settlements. From the centre of the village, School Lane leads north west to Felstead Road to reach Cock Green and Bannister Green, whilst Boreham Road heads south east to Boreham. Banters Lane is more local, connecting Main Road to Boreham Road to the east of Great Leighs.



Opportunities for vehicular access into the sites include:

- Site 7a, from Moulsham Hall Lane which lies close to the A131 roundabout with Main Road and London Road;
- Site 7b from London Road;
- The northern part of Site 7c from Banters Lane (immediately north and south of the road), although the role, function and character of Banters Lane suggested that access should be restrained to a modest number of dwellings; and
- The remainder of Site 7c has the potential to be accessed from Site 7d, in which the residential street has been designed to a standard that allow for this street to be extended and serve development in Site 7c.

The Travelling Showpeople site, located adjacent to London Road has the potential to be served directly from Main Road and in this context offers particular advantages over other locations.

Rail services

Chelmsford Railway Station is the nearest key railway station, offering frequent rail services to London Liverpool Street Station, Clacton-on-Sea Harwich, Ipswich and Norwich. Located adjacent to Chelmsford Bus Station, the railway station can be reached easily via bus services from Great Leighs. Braintree Railway Station is more local with services connecting Braintree to Witham.

Forming a package of growth being delivered at North East Chelmsford, a new railway station is being delivered at Beaulieu Park adjacent to the A12 and the proposed North East Bypass. When opened, this station will provide an alternative access to rail services currently offered at Chelmsford Station.



Bus services

Great Leighs is located on a public transport corridor between Chelmsford and Braintree and benefits from regular services which are currently accessed from several bus stops on Main Road. Some of these stops have real-time information displays. Connections to additional bus services are offered at Braintree Bus Interchange and Chelmsford Bus Station to access wider destinations.

Much of Site 7c lies within the recommended 300m (5-minute walking catchment) radii of existing bus stops on Main Road, which also have the potential to serve the easternmost parts of Site 7a. Providing a route that can support bus services into Site 7a will allow the wider site to be more accessible to bus services. Similarly, the provision of additional bus stops on London Road will improve access to public transport services from Site 7b and the northern part of Site 7c.



Existing pedestrian & cycle network

The pedestrian and cycle network in Great Leighs is mainly focussed on the existing street network and is supported by a wider and extensive network of Public Rights of Way.

Boreham Road and School Lane form part of Regional Cycle Route 50 (RCR50) – an on-road route that connects Quendon and Maldon. National Cycle Route 16 (NCR16) is routed from Maldon to the north of Great Leighs via Great Notley to Braintree and onwards to Bishops Stortford. Mill Lane to the east of Great Leighs forms a link between NCR16 and RCR50. Although signed, none of the on road sections in proximity to Great Leighs offer any dedicated cycling facilities.

Main Road, a Roman road and former section of the A131 is the main focus from which streets and lanes radiate to serve residential areas and surrounding hamlets. To the north, London Road connects Great Leighs to Great Notley. A significant benefit of the A131 Great Leighs Bypass is the reduced traffic volume on this corridor and improved conditions for walking and cycling.



Although there are no formal cycling facilities, the A131 bypass, in removing through traffic from Great Leighs, allows Main Road to be more attractive for cycling. Similarly, reduced traffic volumes improve conditions for walking along Main Road.

Although the A131 is a physical barrier, the bridge crossing via School Lane and underpass from the Dog and Partridge pub offer opportunities for creating formal and improved pedestrian and cycle connections into Site 7a. Chase Side Bridge provides an additional pedestrian link via a Public Right of Way into Site 7a. An informal crossing of the A131 roundabout from Main Road offers an opportunity to provide a fourth connection to Site 7a via an additional crossing and has the potential to be upgraded to a formal signalised crossing which could incorporate cyclists and equestrians if desirable

Within Site 7a, a route formed by a bridleway and public footpath crosses fields adjacent to the south eastern edge of Site 7a from Moulsham Hall Lane. This route intersects with connections from Main Road via the underpass, Chase Side Bridge and School Lane and continues west to Dumney Lane. Notable is a convergence of Public Rights of Way within the site to the north of Chase Side Bridge.

Main Road and London Road provide opportunities for pedestrian and cycle connections into Site 7b and the northern part of Site 7c north of Banters Lane. An existing Public Right of Way connects Main Road to the southern part of Site 7c. Combined with an improved route via the Underpass these routes have the potential to provide direct access to pedestrians and cyclists to Site 7a where the new neighbourhood centre and primary school is required.

Both northern and southern parts of Sites 7c have the potential to be connected across Banters Lane. The location of this connection must be considered carefully as trees along Banters Lane are subject to a Tree Preservation Order.



Bridleways

Bridleways have a recreational function and are less extensive than the wider Public Rights of Way Network. Routes include short sections going south from Boreham Road along Castle Close across Main Road and over the A131 to Whites Lane, and a route that follows Dumney Lane as part of a Byway that connects Felstead Road and Hornells Cor. A short section of Bridleway enters Site 7a from Main Road via the underpass from the Dog and Partridge pub and heads north east along the eastern edge of Site 7a to connect to Moulsham Hall Lane.

There is an opportunity to explore the potential to improve bridleway provision, particularly in Site 7a.

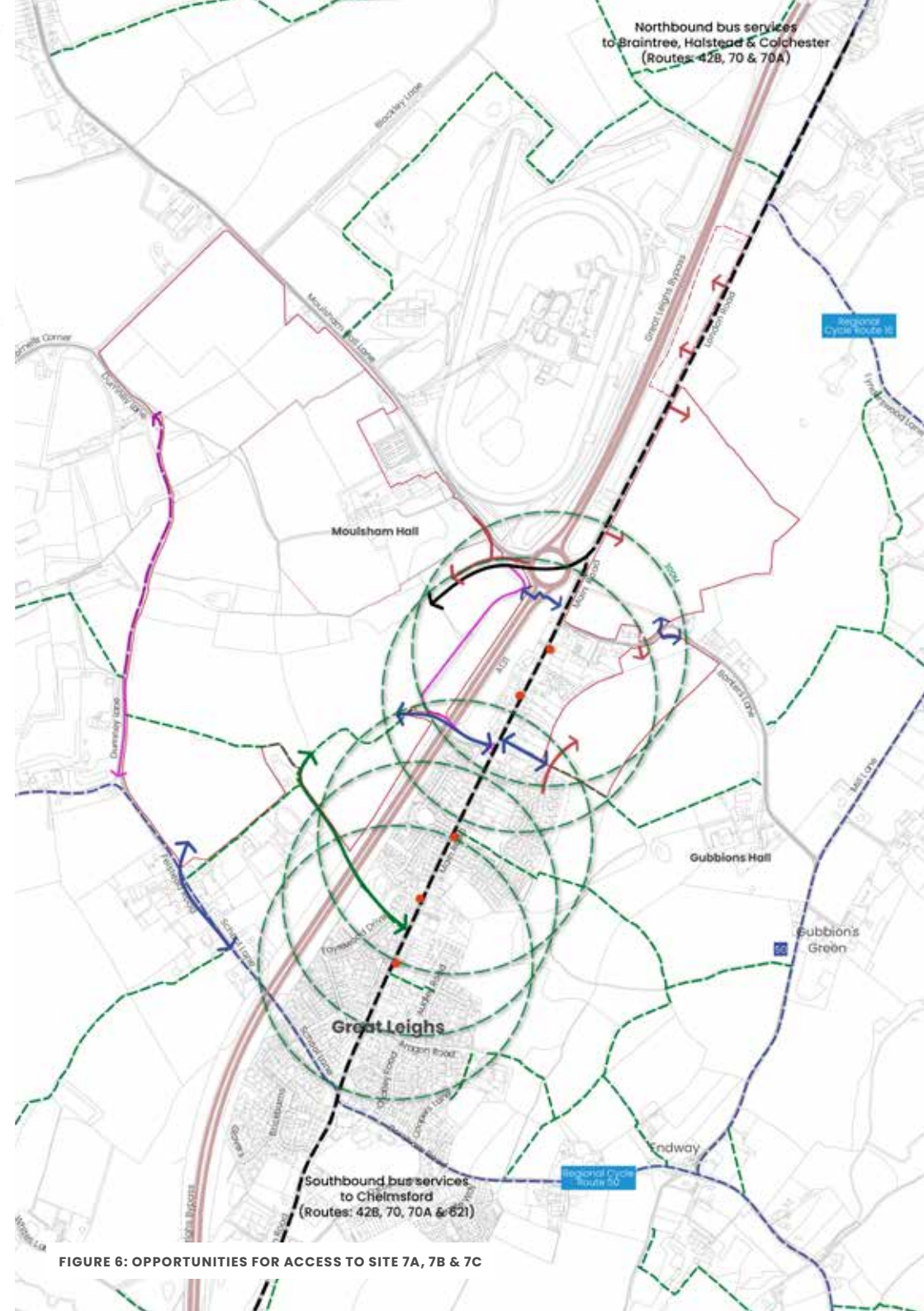


FIGURE 6: OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACCESS TO SITE 7A, 7B & 7C

Structural Analysis

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

As a settlement Great Leighs has its origins in being a loose scattering of farmsteads and cottages on Main Road, as a settlement formerly known as Chatley. Intensification and expansion has created what is known as Great Leighs today.

The village is mainly residential in character and facilities are limited and quite dispersed in a settlement of this size.

Amongst a number of heritage assets, notable landmarks include Grade II Listed Moulsham Hall and Grade II Listed Gubbions Hall which is sites within a moat that is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, which development must be sensitive to.

Roundabouts to the north and south of the village on the A131 define the main gateways into the village.

Although the A131 forms a dominant edge there are three grade separated crossing points that connect the village to Site 7a which lies to the west.

History and morphology of Great Leighs

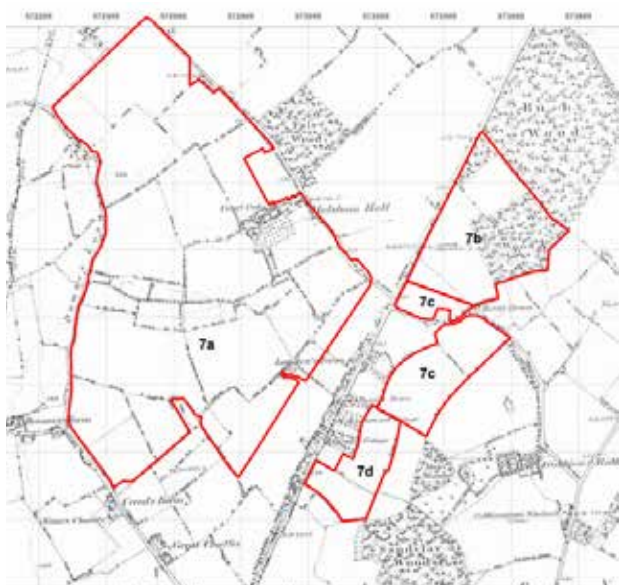
Great Leighs has a linear historic structure that is focussed on Main Road, part of the Roman road known as Peddars Way and assigned the Margary Number 33a between Chelmsford and Ixworth.

As reported in the Initial Built Heritage Assessment by RPS (January 2022), development was exclusively limited to the north west of the village until the late 19th and early 20th century. Several listed timber framed houses with dates ascribed to between the 16th and 18th century suggest that occupation may have been well established towards the north end of the settlement before the 16th or 17th century.

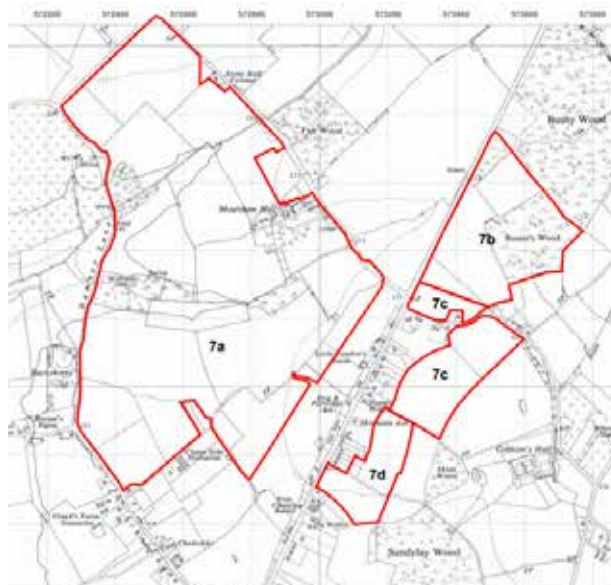
The maps in Figure 7 show how Great Leighs has evolved and expanded over time. In the 18th century, development comprised a loose scattering of farmsteads and groups of cottages on Main Road and the settlement was originally known as Chatley. In the early 20th century, the village expanded to the south with the development of individual plots, resulting in the coalescence of farmsteads and cottages on Main Road. As intensification continued, the elongated settlement became known as Great Leighs in the 20th Century. Some outward growth to the south of Boreham Road occurred in the 1950s/60s, served by Castle Close, leading to the framing the village green to the south east. In the 1960s/70s development to the north served by Chatley Road and Aragon Road delivered a new primary school.

Substantial expansion of the village took place in the early 2000s at Shimbrooks, Fayrewood Drive and Brickbarns, associated with the A131 Great Leighs Bypass and its role in defining a new physical western edge for the village. More recent expansion to the east, includes residential development of 100 dwellings at the Furlongs on Site 7d.

Although the settlement has its origins towards the north west, the main focal point of the village is where School Lane and Boreham Road converge with Main Road further south adjacent to a recreational ground. Other than The Castle public house and Great Leighs Post Office, development framing the village green mainly dates to the late 20th century or later. Leighs Village Hall forms part of the recreation field.



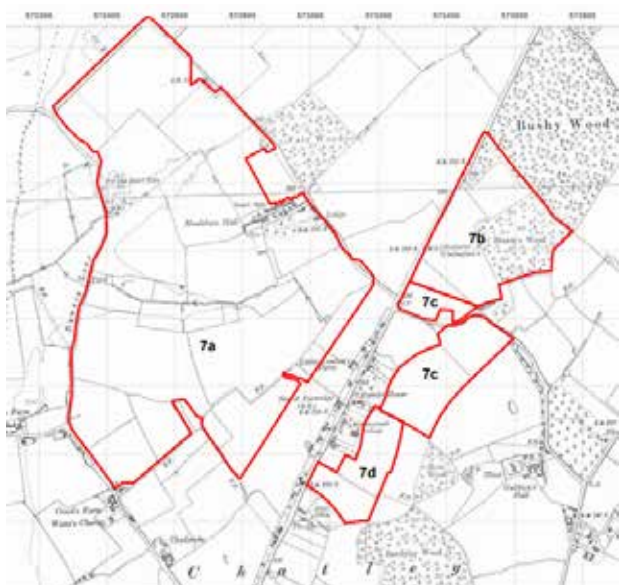
shows the linear form (2022, Ordnance Survey Map (Source: RPS 1875 Chatley Hamlet



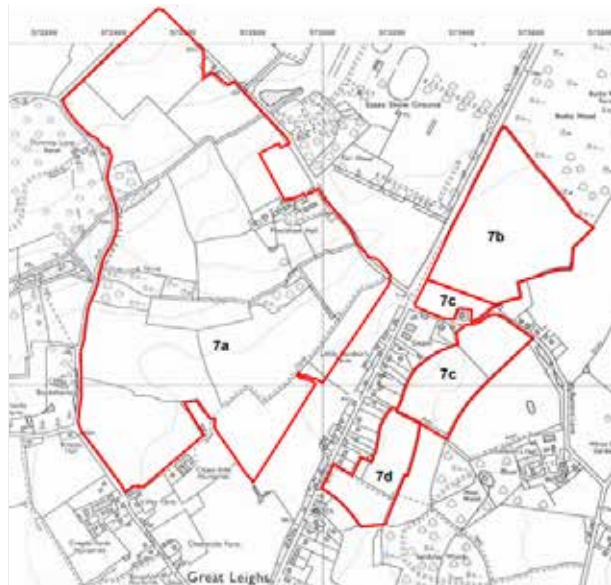
shows additional (2022, Ordnance Survey Map (Source: RPS 1955 development on Main Road and School Lane, forming what has become known as Great Leighs



shows how the village has (2022 Source: RPS) 2000 Aerial Mapping from started to grow to the east of Main Road



shows how the settlement (2022, Ordnance Survey Map (Source RPS 1919 20th Century remained know as Chatley into the



shows a notable expansion (2022, Ordnance Survey Map (Source RPS 1977 of Great Leighs with more intense development along Main Road



Great Leighs shows the A131 (2022, Source: RPS) 2020 Aerial Mapping from Bypass and in creating a strong physical edge created an opportunity for residential development to this edge



LOCAL POST OFFICE AND SHOP ON MAIN ROAD

Land uses

The village is mainly residential in character. Local facilities are limited for a village of this size. They include two public houses, a church, primary school, village hall and post office. With the village evolving incrementally in a linear form and with no historic hub, these facilities are mainly dispersed across the village along Main Road. There is a modest cluster of facilities at the junction of Main Road with School Lane and Boreham Road where the main recreation ground is located, overlooked by the Village Hall.

Other uses include small employment sites to the north and west of the village. St Johns Church lies to the west of the village and forms part of the neighbouring hamlet of Little Leighs.



LEIGHS VILLAGE HALL

Key nodes and landmarks

The A131 roundabout at the northern end of the village provides a gateway into Great Leighs. The most notable landmark is Moulsham Hall which lies to the north west of the village on Moulsham Hall Lane and forms part of the wider setting for growth adjacent to Site 7a. The Grade II Listed building and neighbouring buildings are visible from within Site 7a to the south and east. The Hall has an open setting as a result of more open field boundaries at the edge of Site 7a resulting in several sensitive edges. Development in proximity to these edges must therefore consider the impact of built development on this setting. Sensitive edges also exist at Site 7b and Site 7c looking east towards the Grade I Listed Gubbions Hall.

Other prominent or notable buildings in Great Leighs have a community function, including The Castle public house, Great Leighs Village Hall, Post Office and the Dog and Partridge public house.



CASTLE INN PUBLIC HOUSE



Edges

The A131 bypass is dominant as an edge that creates a hard physical barrier at the western edge of the village.

Other than the A131, the edges of Great Leighs are formed by agricultural fields, many of which are well enclosed by hedgerows trees and woodland blocks abutting rear gardens of existing housing. By exception, new development on Site 7d is oriented to create positive edges, with building fronts overlooking open fields.

Movement

The A131 is a dominant feature with the roundabout with Moulsham Hall Lane and London Road, forming the main vehicular entry point into the village from the north. The road hierarchy is otherwise focussed on Main Road as the key movement corridor through Great Leighs for pedestrians, cyclists, bus services and vehicles that links this linear settlement. Routes served from Main Road include Banter's Lane, School Lane and Boreham Road which become rural lanes outside the village. Other routes comprise streets serving adjacent residential areas or footpath links, with some connecting with the wider Public Rights of Way network.

Although the A131 is dominant edge there are three grade separated crossings of this corridor. They include School Lane, Chase Side Bridge and a bridleway which leads from the Dog and Partridge public house on Main Road under the A131 via an underpass. An additional at grade informal crossing is located at the southern A131 arm of the northern roundabout.



A131 BYPASS IS DOMINANT AS EDGE



MAIN ROAD IS THE KEY MOVEMENT CORRIDOR THROUGH GREAT LEIGHS



EXISTING UNDERPASS CONNECTING GREAT LEIGHS TO SITE 7A

- Site Boundary
- Bus Route
- Bus Stops
- Chelmsford City Racecourse
- ♻️ Landmarks
- Community Facilities
- Public Houses
- Commercial
- Employment
- Primary School
- ⏏ Node
- Village Centre
- Open Space
- ~ Sensitive relating to Heritage setting
- ~ Barrier to Movement
- ➡ Potential Pedestrian Access
- ➡ Potential Cycle & Pedestrian Access
- Village Boundary

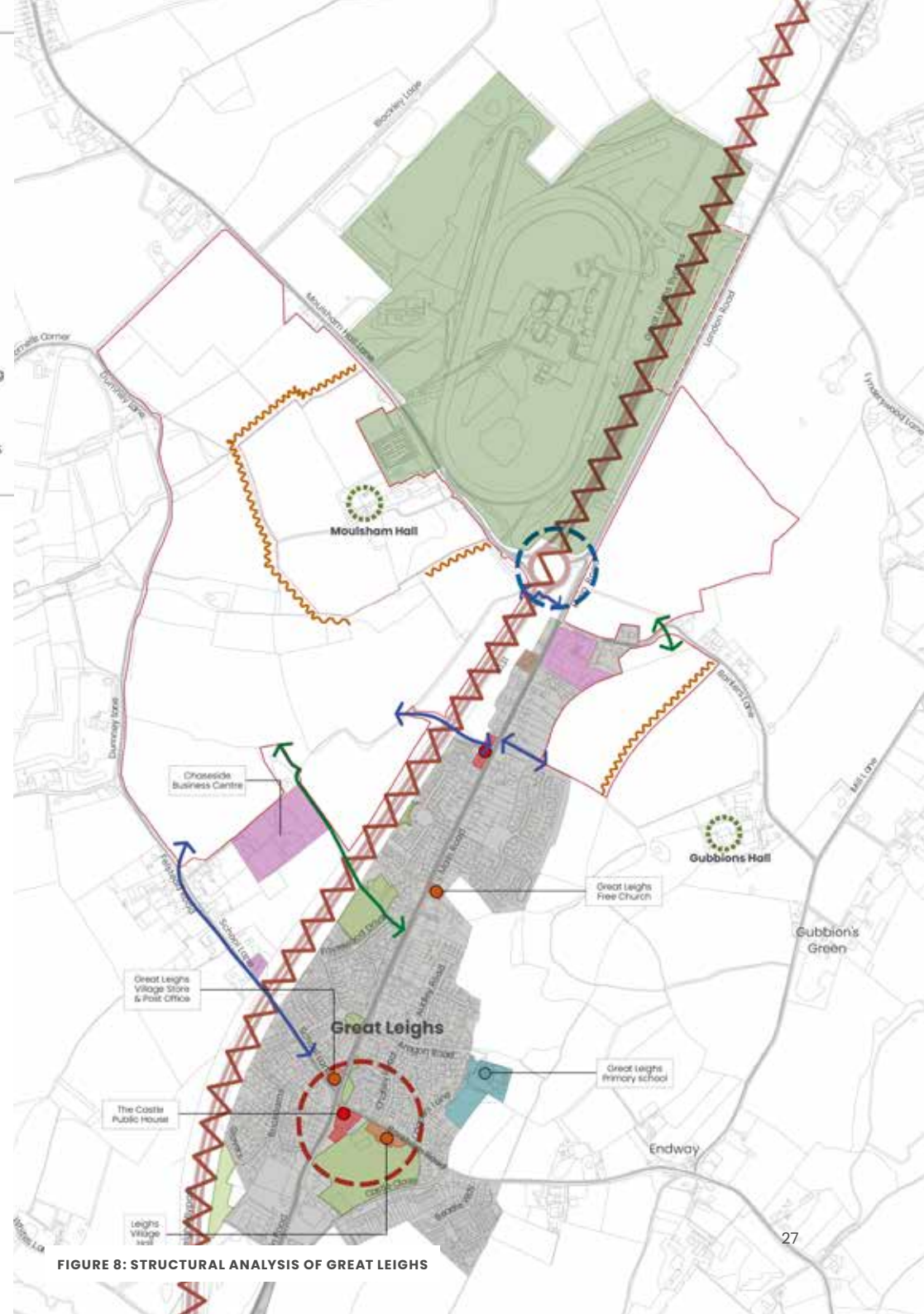


FIGURE 8: STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF GREAT LEIGHS

Existing Local Character

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

The settlement structure is influenced by the A131 Great Leighs bypass, with the roundabout to the north and south of the Village forming key gateways. Despite some urbanising features such as the A131 and Chelmsford City Racecourse, the surrounding fields provide a rural setting in which Moulsham Hall and Gubbions Hall are key landmarks.

As the village has grown its character has changed with more intensified forms of development. More recent growth reflects the Essex Design Guide in terms of architectural style, and residential layouts demonstrate the application of good urban design principles.

Streets vary in their design, the most positive being the more narrow and informal residential streets, compared to those where highway standards dominate. The most positive spaces are those overlooked with development frontages around residential squares and greens.

Although there is a wide variety in the built form, a domestic scale prevails with a wide mix of housing types and this is reflected in the variety of densities and heights up to three storeys.

Decorative render is a feature of the most historic forms, followed with a greater variety of materials used in more recent forms such as render, brick and clay or slate effect floor tiles.





BUNGALOW IN LARGE PLOTS ON MAIN ROAD



RECENT DETACHED HOUSE SET BACK FROM MAIN ROAD



A MIX OF DEVELOPMENT CONVEYS A SENSE THAT DEVELOPMENT ON MAIN ROAD HAS BEEN SUBJECT TO INTENSIFICATION WITH INFILL PLOTS AND EDGES OF LARGER DEVELOPMENTS

Main Road

As illustrated by the morphology of Great Leighs, Main Road is the main structuring feature of the village on which development has intensified.

A wide range in the built form can be found along Main Road, some dating back to the 16th Century, mixed with more recent housing in individual plots and the edges of larger developments with frontages onto Main Road. As such there is wide variety plot sizes, depths and the spacings and setbacks of buildings and boundary treatments. Dwelling types are mixed with detached single and two storey cottages and more recent detached, semi-detached and terraced forms. Those cottages linked to the origins of the settlement are typically set back in larger plots; they are frequently rendered and some include timber framing and / or decorative patterns that appear to be a unique feature of the older properties.



MAIN ROAD SHOWS HOW THERE IS A WIDE VARIANCE IN PLOTS AND DEVELOPED FORMS THAT REFLECTS THE PROCESS OF CONTINUED INTENSIFICATION WITH INFILL PLOTS AND MORE SUBSTANTIAL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS THAT HAS CONTRIBUTED TO SUCH A VARIED CHARACTER.

This mix of development clearly conveys a sense that Main Road has evolved, initially in an organic manner and more intensively with a combination of more recent infill and larger residential developments. Residential density varies and is often as low as 10 dwellings per hectare due to many plots being generous in depth, particularly on the eastern side of Main Road, although some subdivision has occurred within larger plots.



RESIDENTIAL DENSITY ON MAIN ROAD VARIES AND INCLUDES LOW DENSITIES DUE TO GENEROUS PLOT DEPTHS



RESIDENTIAL EXPANSION AT CHATLEY ROAD AND ARAGON ROAD IS LESS SYMPATHETIC TO THE CHARACTER OF THE VILLAGE, BEING SUBURBAN IN CHARACTER AND DOMINATED BY HIGHWAY DESIGN

Earlier Expansion 1950s–1980s

Earlier expansion in the 1950s through to the 1980s to the east of Main Road is less sympathetic to more traditional approaches to the original form and structure of the village, being dominated by highway design hierarchies and limited permeability and standard housing design.

Despite some efforts to employ more vernacular led treatments, with the use of render and weatherboarding, highways dominate with stark concrete surface treatments. Density of development in this period is typically 25–30 dwellings per hectare net, achieved mainly through two storey semi-detached and short terraced homes with gardens.



EXAMPLE OF LESS SYMPATHETIC DEVELOPMENT FROM THE 1970S



DEVELOPMENT AT FAYREWOOD DRIVE SHOWS THE EMPHASIS ON HIGHER DENSITIES DURING THE EARLY 2000S WITH A GREATER MIX OF TERRACES AND APARTMENT BLOCKS

Residential development – early 2000s

More recently in the early 2000s, residential development at locations such as Shimbrooks and Fayrewood Drive has better reflected the Essex character, achieved with reference to design principles contained within the Essex Design Guide. The form and character is also heavily influenced by urban design principles and the planning and design standards of the time which supported an agenda favouring higher densities, achieved with a combination of perimeter blocks, tightly enclosed streets, a composition of terraces



HIGHER DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT FAYREWOOD DRIVE WHICH IS TIGHTLY ENCLOSED BY DEVELOPMENT

and apartments and low parking standards. Densities are much higher at an average of approximately 45 dwellings per hectare.

A greater sense of continuity is achieved with terraced forms and by linking detached or semi-detached dwellings with roofs covering vehicle parking, or with accommodation over car ports, integral garages or entrances to parking courts.

Setbacks are limited and contribute to a more informal feel due to shared spaces. The sense of enclosure is enhanced where boundary treatments, mainly railings create a distinct separation between public and private realm. Edges are more positive with development frontages onto existing streets and open spaces, and corners of blocks and streets are well defined through appropriate design responses.

There is a clear pattern where the scale, height and density of development has been structured to define key spaces. These focal spaces are defined through enhanced surface treatments where streets converge.

Architecturally, the design has focussed on conveying a traditional appearance. Dormer and bay windows, porches and canopies are common features. Dwellings are frequently linked with pitched roofs over car ports, some with rooms above and pitches are varied in orientation to include gable projections to emphasise corners.



Taller three storey buildings create landmarks in these more recent developments with further emphasis achieved with steep hipped roofs, stone headers, bandings and elaborate parapet detailing on projecting elements. There are examples where key buildings have been sited to terminate vistas both formally (with direct frontages) and more informally (with more oblique views of the building closing the view). The materials palette references the Essex vernacular, expressed by more traditional housing in Great Leighs with a mix of brick, pastel shaded render and weatherboard treatments to walls. Roofs are clay and slate effect tiles.

Within the residential development to the south, structured on Brickbarns, there is a noticeable graduation in the intensity of the built form, from terraced forms on Main Street and School Lane to the southern edge, which is mainly composed of larger detached dwellings at a density of some 30 dwellings per hectare. A notable feature is the informal character of the streets which allows for greater enclosure. The continuous eastern edge overlooks Main Road from a slightly elevated position and enjoys a generous set back with verges and tree planting that successfully softens this edge and conveys a positive character on Main Road to the south of Boreham Road. Landscaping in lower density residential areas, including the retention and enhancement of hedgerows boundaries and trees, contribute to a positive setting.



**RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT BRICKBARNES SHOWS A GRADUATION IN THE INTENSITY
OF THE BUILT FORM FROM TERRACED HOUSING ADJACENT TO MAIN ROAD AND
SCHOOL LANE TO DETACHED FORMS TOWARDS THE SOUTHERN RURAL EDGE**

Residential development at Site 7a

More recent housing completed at the Furloughs forms Site 7d of the broad location for growth. The net density is lower at 30 dwellings per hectare with a greater emphasis on a mix of equally spaced detached houses, the exception being an apartment block forming the centre of the site, located to overlook a centrally located open space and play area. Setbacks are limited, and without boundary treatments create a more open streetscape. Again, references are made to the Essex vernacular with material treatments that include a combination of brick, render and weatherboarding.



RECENT DEVELOPMENT AT SITE 7D BY BELLWAY HOMES WITH A MIX DETACHED, SEMI-DETACHED DWELLINGS AND APARTMENT BLOCKS, DEVELOPED TO A LOWER DENSITY (22DPH) AND WITH A POSITIVE INTERFACE WITH THE RURAL EDGE

Streets

Streets vary in their design and impact on character. The most positive examples are those with a more informal feel, including those where place takes precedent over highway geometries, including shared spaces and higher quality surface treatments which contribute to defining focal points within developments.



WELL ENCLOSED STREET, DESIGN WITH A MORE INFORMAL CHARACTER AT THE EDGE OF THE BRICKBARNs DEVELOPMENT ADJACENT TO SCHOOL LANE

Landscape

Landscape treatment also plays a key role in creating a positive setting for development – approaching the village from the south on Main Road, generous verges provide a positive setting for development, including the more recent development at Brickbarns.



EDGE OF RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT BRICKBARNs ADDRESSING MAIN ROAD

Spaces

The most positive spaces are those that are overlooked with development frontages, including gateway entrances to developments, key junctions, spaces and small open spaces.



GREENSPACE OVERLOOKED BY DEVELOPMENT AT SHIMBROOKS

Built form

As the narrative suggests, there is a wide variety in built forms, mainly of a domestic scale. They range from a historic pattern of both modest and larger detached farmstead cottages to a wider mix of housing over recent times with detached, semi-detached and terraced forms, and apartment blocks, the latter being sited and composed to create landmarks and terminate vistas.



AN OLDER MODEST SCALED DETACHED COTTAGE
ON MAIN ROAD SET BACK WITHIN A LARGE PLOT

Roofs

Roofs are generally pitched, oriented to streets and spaces, albeit with some gable frontages or projections and with some landmark hipped roof dwellings. Examples of half hipped roofs are also present on more historic forms. Some of the oldest buildings in Great Leighs have thatched roofs.



HIPPED ROOFS APARTMENTS EMPHASISING THE CORNERS AND CENTRE OF THIS STREET FACING BLOCK



ONE OF THE OLDER COTTAGES ON MAIN STREET WITH A SIMPLE PITCHED ROOF



HOUSES ON MAIN STREET WITH ROOFS ADDRESSING MAIN STREET, ONE WITH A CENTRAL PROJECTING GABLE

Architectural features and detail

Common architectural features include gable projections, dormers and bay windows and porches and canopies to emphasise doorways. Windows are traditional in appearance and come with a variety of small and large panes, some conveying a general traditional style and others with a Georgian appearance.



Materials

The materials palette across Great Leighs also varies. The most historic forms are rendered (mainly in cream, pink and white shades or sometimes blue or green), some with exposed timber frames, and with examples of decorative and distinctive detailing. Roofs are clay tiled or thatched. Subsequent forms of development have utilised

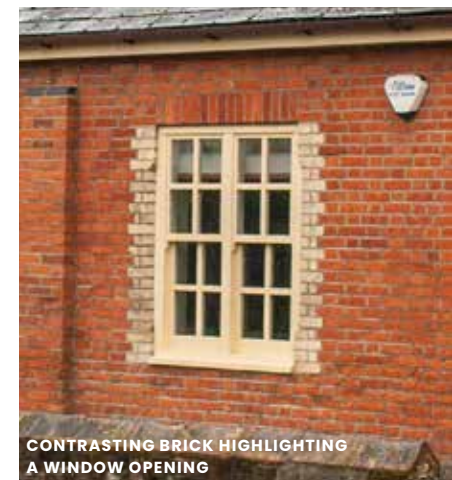
a wider palette, again with a greater use of brick cladding, plain rendering and weatherboarding, and occasionally composed to highlight features such as projecting gables. Contrasting bricks are also sometimes used to highlight window and door openings. The use of stone detailing in more recent development is perhaps more elaborate and less reflective of the Essex vernacular at a domestic scale. Roofs are generally tiled with slate or clay effect materials.



DECORATIVE RENDER IS A FEATURE OF THE OLDER COTTAGES ON MAIN STREET



STONE DETAILING, PERHAPS LESS REFLECTIVE OF THE PALETTE APPLIED TO AN ESSEX VERNACULAR



CONTRASTING BRICK HIGHLIGHTING A WINDOW OPENING

Heritage Assets

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

Potential mitigation measures have been identified to minimise the impact of proposed development on identified heritage assets. These include the proposed location of development, design, density and character, alongside open space and landscape design.

Particular consideration must be given to:

- At Site 7a, retaining and enhancing the open setting around Moulsham Hall, the rural setting of Hump Cottage and Stone Wall Cottage and the setting back of development from Triceratops
- Landscape treatments at the eastern edges of Sites 7b and Site 7c to mitigate the impact of development in the setting of Gubbions Hall, and the interface between proposed development and the setting to the rear Apple Tree Cottage and Champions.

Built Heritage

The Built Heritage Assessment has identified 50 built heritage assets within the scope of assessment (see Built Heritage Assets Plot below). Many of these are focussed on Main Road and contribute to the historic linear form and on the rural lanes that radiate from Main Road to the east and west.

The majority of these heritage assets date from the post-Medieval period and comprise a mixture of farmhouses, cottages and barns reflecting the historic agricultural landscape of the area. Overall, these designated heritage assets can be considered to each have an immediate setting of gardens, farmyards, associated outbuildings and mature tree growth. Many have modern buildings within close proximity, often with thick, tall hedge/tree lines forming the property boundaries and obscuring views significantly.

The wider setting of these heritage assets can be considered to be the surrounding farmland that has a functional link, and which in some instances includes areas of the allocated sites. The extent and contribution the wider setting makes to the overall significance of these heritage assets is dependent on several factors, including the current function of the buildings, state of preservation, the condition of their setting, relation to modern development, and inter-visibility, etc.

Of the 50 identified, 22 are considered unlikely to be affected by development, and therefore have been removed from the scope of further assessment. Hence, 11 of the remaining designated heritage assets are likely to be impacted through a change in their setting and particularly the loss or reduction of their rural context.

As part of the Chelmsford Local Plan process, Chelmsford City Council assessed the non-designated assets in the area (Chelmsford Local Plan, Evidence Base Document, Heritage Assessments Technical Note (March 2017)). This evidence base was used to identify those non-designated heritage assets that had the potential to be affected by the proposed development. Using the same search area baseline as was used to identify those designated heritage assets that have the potential to be affected, 17 non-designated heritage assets were identified.

Of these 14 were considered unlikely to be affected by development of the Site, either due to intervening 20th and 21st century development, landscaping and/or a lack of any historic or functional relationship with the Site and have therefore, been removed from the scope of further assessment.

Three non-designated heritage assets: Breams Hall, School Lane; Great Barn House School Lane and Gatehouse Cottage, Hornells Corner have the potential to be affected by the development of the Site

Following this assessment work, discussions with the Local Planning Authority and in response to Quality Review Panel feedback, further work was carried out to identify mitigation measures that could minimise the potential impact of the proposed development on the significance of the relevant heritage assets. This assessment work has been embedded in the master plan and includes changes to the proposed density, location, design and character etc. of the development so that it responds to the heritage sensitivities of the site. Consideration has also been given to the overall impact on the existing and historical landscape character.

To the north east of Site 7a within the broad location for growth is Moulsham Hall, which is located on an elevated position surrounded by open fields, creating a historic rural parkland landscape. Moulsham Hall is a Grade II Listed Building, described by Historic England as a timber framed and plastered house of 17th Century origin, with extensive additions made in the 18th Century and later.

The land around Moulsham Hall is to be kept free of development to respect the setting of this Grade II listed property. Development will be set back from the boundary and the scale, density and appearance of the neighbouring properties will be sympathetic to the historic setting of Moulsham Hall.

The separate landscape assessment shows the limited inter-visibility between the Site boundary and Moulsham Hall. These boundaries will be retained, and enhanced with additional planting, to create a robust and clearly defined boundary to the parkland. New tree and hedgerow species and understorey planting would be introduced to fill existing gaps. New planting would also ensure a strong natural barrier is maintained along the parkland boundaries, dissuading any attempts at public access to private areas and protecting landowner privacy, while creating carefully framed views into the parkland, to allow this historic asset to be appreciated.

The intention is to enhance the parkland setting of the land around the Hall, the key objective is to create a traditional parkland character which comprises a mix of indigenous parkland trees, areas of pasture and wildflower meadows which has been informed by historic research and the existing character of the parkland. The existing grassland fields around the hall would be retained and sympathetically managed through occasional cutting, at appropriate times of year allowing wildflowers time to flower and set seed. Occasional new tree planting would be introduced, with typical tree species to include Oak, Lime and Horse Chestnut.



Other assets adjacent to Site 7a that require a sensitive response to their setting include the Grade II Listed Hump Cottage and Grade II Listed Stone Wall Cottage to the north of Moulsham Hall Lane. Triceratops is a Grade II Listed building that lies adjacent to the western edge of the site at Dumney Lane and the proposed development has been purposefully set back from the boundary to mitigate the impact on the Listed Building.



Other heritage assets exist on School Lane and Dumney Lane where existing field boundaries including hedgerows and trees interrupt the relationship between the Site and the setting of these assets. This separation is augmented further with the proposed reinforcement of these features.

Approximately 220m to the east of Site 7c lies Gubbions Hall a Grade II Listed Building, described by Historic England as being a 17th Century timber framed house surrounded by a moat. The moated site is designated as a Scheduled Monument and is described by Historic England as a Mediaeval moated site surrounding Gubbions House, including a rectangular island contained by a water filled ditch. Apple Tree Cottage Brenswood Cottage and Champions are neighbouring Grade II Listed Buildings on Main Road on plots with rear boundaries at the edge of Site 7c.



Overall, impacts ranging from very low to low levels of less than substantial harm have been identified. These arise through the alterations to the wider settings of the identified heritage assets.



Existing Landscape Assets

Existing mature trees, woodlands and field boundaries are intrinsic features that contribute to the existing landscape infrastructure and character, and therefore, should be retained where possible. In addition to them being attractive features their retention helps preserve elements of the historic setting of the heritage assets and provides an opportunity for a framework for development focussed on linear green space networks and linked open spaces.

Archaeology

The desk-based assessment has identified variable archaeological potential across the site, for remains most likely dating to the later Prehistoric, Roman, Medieval and Post Medieval periods. A programme of archaeological work will be required to evaluate the site's archaeological potential, determine the likely presence/absence of remains, and the significance of any potential remains. This will initially comprise a programme of geophysical survey and is likely to be followed by a phase of archaeological trenching, targeting possible archaeological anomalies identified during the geophysical survey. Evaluation works will determine areas of the site required for mitigation, which may include mitigation by record or

mitigation by design. Each stage of the archaeological works will be able to further inform the mitigation requirement.

In terms of designated archaeological assets, this includes the Gubbions Hall moated site that is recorded as a Scheduled Monument. It is considered likely that development proposals could be developed in such a way as to limit any harm to the significance of the monument through changes to its wider setting. A full Setting Assessment would be required once development proposals are finalised and to ensure that the master plan has responded positively to the monument.

Ecology Context & Site Analysis

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

The site analysis drives the following objectives for the Ecology and Green/Blue Infrastructure Strategies:

- Protect the adjacent and on-site woodlands and Local Wildlife Sites, and the existing green/blue links between them, through a design response which adequately mitigates against risk of direct damage during construction, and recreational/ lighting disturbance during operation.
- Avoid impacts to protected and notable species wherever possible, by retaining and buffering core habitats, and guiding public access away from these areas.
- Minimise impacts to neutral grassland, by retaining and enhancing existing habitat wherever possible, and taking a strategic approach to the location and scale of retained areas, reflecting their baseline value.
- Mitigate impacts to protected and notable species where these are unavoidable, through sensitive lighting and the provision of animal crossings at road intersections with wildlife corridors.
- Create new wildlife habitats where opportunities present, tailoring provision to complement the site and local context, and to maximise overall habitat diversity and biodiversity value.
- Enhance retained habitats through appropriate long-term management, to compensate losses and deliver measurable net gains wherever possible within the masterplan area.
- Compensate off-site as a last resort where adequate mitigation and/or biodiversity net gains cannot be achieved within the masterplan area due to competing technical and policy considerations. It is considered that this will be required for Sites 7a and Site 7b to deliver 10% BNG and meet the metric trading rules, and to provide adequate compensation for loss of skylark nesting territories on Site 7a.

A comprehensive ecological assessment of the master plan area has been carried out by Southern Ecological Solutions (SES). This has incorporated a suite of Phase I and II surveys carried out on Sites 7a and 7c (south of Banters Lane) by SES in 2021-2022, together with a desk study review of pre-existing information (RSK NVC Survey, 2020; Landscape Planning PEA and Hedgerow Survey, 2018) and recent reports provided by Hybrid Ecology and Tim Moya Associates (TMA) for Site 7b and 7c (north of Banters Lane). This assessment has informed the master plan design through its evolution, to ensure that the design positively responds to the local context. The site context is defined by a network of associated Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS), protected/priority habitats and others of value to local wildlife, which surround and link through Site 7a to the west, and Sites 7b and 7c to the east. Reflecting this network of habitats of value for biodiversity in the local landscape, parts of Site 7a to the east and west, and the entirety of Sites 7b and 7c, sit within Ecological Network Enhancement Zones. The A131 dissects the masterplan area between Site 7a and Sites 7b & Site 7c, ecologically severing it for all but aerially mobile wildlife species. Therefore, though it is recognised that a comprehensive and coherent ecology strategy will be required for the masterplan area as whole, the context and site analysis provided below takes these areas in turn.



VIEW ALONG DUMNEY LANE



PHYLLIS CURRIE NATURE RESERVE

Site 7a

Local Wildlife Sites

Phyllis Currie and Dumney Lane Woods Local Wildlife Site (LoWS) extends into the west of Site 7a. Phyllis Currie Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT) Reserve comprises wooded areas, meadows and ponds, while Dumney Lane Woods comprises two semi-natural woodland parcels within the site. Desk review and site survey indicates Dumney Lane Woods are not ancient in nature. However, they are priority habitat of value to badger and nesting birds of conservation concern, with ponds set within diversifying the habitat and providing for amphibians, and deadwood supporting a saproxylic invertebrate assemblage that includes the nationally scarce tanner beetle.

The EWT Reserve is managed for public access. While Dumney Lane Woods is not formally accessible at present, it does support some existing informal routes through the northern parcel. There is an opportunity to integrate Dumney Lane Woods into the site green infrastructure network, providing an attractive landscape for informal recreation from the outset. However, given the scale, the proposed development of Site 7a can be expected to generate significant additional recreational pressures on this LoWS, as well as other accessible sites within the wider Zone of Influence, which include the Blackwater Estuary SPA/Ramsar, some 16km from the site. Linked to Dumney Lane Woods by hedgerows and a small watercourse is Fair Wood LoWS. This is a small ancient woodland that is separated from site by Moulsham Hall Lane, a minor road that is permeable for wildlife. No Public Rights of Way run through Fair Wood and its edge is defined by thick boundary planting; recreational impacts are therefore considered unlikely. However, development has potential to impact the ecological functionality of this woodland by weakening the existing east/west link, known to be of importance to the site's bat assemblage, through lighting disturbance and severing of habitat connectivity by new roads.



Other Woodlands

Two woodlands in the southeast of site are of lower relative baseline value. The parcel directly south of Moulsham Hall is predominantly semi-natural, meets priority habitat criteria, and has likely grown up around pre-existing parkland planting, while adjacent the A131 is a more recent plantation, unmanaged since its creation. Pre-existing boundary treelines define both woodland edges, providing higher value habitat in the form of several mature trees. However, open space within these woodlands is limited, they contain non-native trees, and their structure is generally poor. This is particularly the case for the southernmost woodland, uniformly aged and densely planted throughout.

Green and Blue Corridors

Linking through the site to connect the various woodland parcels is a network of mature hedgerows and treelines. The majority classify as 'Important' under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. Set within the hedgerows are a high number of mature trees; while none meet criteria to classify as Ancient / Veteran, a limited number do display some veteran characteristics (SES, Tree Constraints Report, December 2021). Many also provide suitable features for roosting bats, and three are confirmed bat roosts. Further ponds are set within the hedgerows, of lower baseline quality than those within the woodlands. The western boundary of the site, defined by Dumney Lane and an associated vegetation corridor, is considered particularly sensitive. The section linking the two parcels of Dumney Lane Woods is of particular value to bats.

While sensitive design can minimise direct loss of habitat, there will necessarily be some minor clearance to create the road network. Appropriate siting and careful design of these connections will be key to minimise impacts to associated wildlife, in particular the foraging and commuting bat assemblage. It will further be a challenge to protect the functionality of these green corridors alongside meeting other aspirations for the development, such as the upgrading of existing PROW to lit and surfaced adoptable cycle routes.

The green corridors through the site are closely linked with existing blue infrastructure; two minor watercourses flow east-west in alignment with the hedgerows, with a third arising in Dumney Lane Woods. The watercourses are heavily engineered, functioning as drainage ditches for the surrounding fields. However, they are considered to form part of the natural river system. Water flows discharge into Phyllis Currie Reserve, and from there to into the River Ter, upstream of the River Ter SSSI approximately 2km south. The sustainable drainage strategy will need to be developed to ensure no adverse effects on water quality and existing flow regimes.



EXAMPLE OF ONE OF THE NEUTRAL GRASSLAND FIELDS WITHIN SITE 7A, LOOKING SOUTH AND TOWARDS DUMNEY LANE WOODS

Grasslands

Example of one of the neutral grassland fields within Site 7a

Neutral grasslands are the dominant habitat on Site 7a occupying all field parcels. Loss of existing neutral grassland will therefore be unavoidable if the site is to be developed. This will present a significant challenge to achieving 10% BNG on-site, and meeting metric trading rules, alongside other technical and allocation policy requirements. This is because loss of neutral grassland must be compensated by new creation and/or enhancement of the same broad habitat, or another of higher distinctiveness, however these are more difficult to create so come with increased risk to delivery. All fields within the development area (i.e. excluding the Moulsham Hall parkland) were subject to a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Metric 3.1 Condition Assessment by SES in 2022 and found to be in 'poor' condition. In most cases these fields were previously in arable cultivation and have recently become pastures, which has likely influenced the species composition. However, underlying soil conditions appear not too nutrient rich, offering good potential for enhancement.

Although all fields class as poor condition, select areas were considered to have more positive attributes. Field 3 included a greater abundance of positive indicators and was considered likely to have been permanent pasture for a long period. An NVC survey carried out by RSK in 2020 also reported Field 15 within the Moulsham Hall parkland to have a similar permanent pasture quality. Three other fields (4, 6 and 11) just exceeded an average species diversity of 9 species/m²; of these, Field 11 was considered to particularly benefit from its situation between two woodland parcels and adjacent Phyllis Currie Reserve.

These fields provide suitable terrestrial habitat for amphibians, foraging opportunities for the site's bat, badger and bird populations, and are home to a low population of grass snake. Five skylark territories were supported by the fields in 2022, and barn owl (a Schedule I species) has been regularly observed foraging over them during bat surveys, though no nest sites for this species have been located.



VIEW ACROSS SITE 7B TOWARDS BUSHY WOOD

Sites 7b and 7c

Local Wildlife Sites

Bushy Wood LoWS is a privately-owned ancient woodland adjacent the northern boundary of Site 7b. Sandylay and Moat Wood LoWS, a further EWT Reserve, is situated adjacent the south-east corner of Site 7c. The northern parcel (Moat Wood) abutting the site is replanted ancient woodland. This is linked to ancient woodland (Sandylay Wood) further south.

The EWT Reserve is again open to public access. A gappy low-level fence exists to the exterior with a few managed pedestrian access points. Bushy Wood contains no PROW though has a relatively permeable boundary to the south. The proposed development of Sites 7b and 7c can again be expected generate significant additional recreational pressures on the EWT Reserve, and the formation of informal 'desire-lines' into Bushy Wood LoWS could also occur.

Green and Blue Corridors

The boundaries of these sites are defined by hedgerows, treelines and ditches. Eastern boundary features are considered of highest importance, forming a north-south connection between Bushy Wood and Sandylay/Moat Woods. The eastern hedgerow on Site 7b has previously been classified as an important hedgerow (Landscape Planning PEA and Hedgerow Survey Report, June 2018), contains a pond used by great crested newt, and supports relatively higher levels of foraging/commuting bat activity. The eastern treeline on Site 7c (south of Banter's Lane) meanwhile is gappy, with a minimal margin to the arable crop field which defines the majority of this site, and trees frequently showing damage from agricultural operations. Reflecting the favourable adjacent woodland habitat, a 'hot-spot' for bat activity has nonetheless been recorded at its southern extent. Protecting and enhancing this ecological link will be a key consideration for the development design.

Grasslands

Neutral grassland occupies the great majority of Site 7b, and of Site 7c north of Banters Lane. The condition of this grassland has been assessed predominantly as 'moderate' by Tim Moya Associates; this will again present a significant challenge to achieving 10% BNG on-site. A small area is also incorporated within Site 7c south of Banters Lane at the northern edge of this land parcel, though the majority is arable. These grasslands provide terrestrial habitat for amphibians, foraging opportunities for local badger and bird populations, and are again home to a low population of grass snake. Brown hare were also recorded on Site 7b during reptile surveys carried out by TMA in 2022, and nesting skylark during surveys carried out by Landscape Planning in 2018.

Protected and Priority Species

In summary the protected and priority species assemblages associated with the masterplan area include:

- A bat assemblage which includes light-sensitive (brown long-eared bat, *Myotis* species) and rare species (barbastelle), utilising the hedgerows and woodlands for foraging and commuting. The hedgerows and woodland edges on Site 7a further contain a high number of suitable roost trees, with three known pipistrelle day roosts.
- A breeding and wintering bird assemblage that includes breeding red list BoCC. Foraging barn owl also occurs frequently on Site 7a (a Schedule I species).
- A locally significant badger population, with setts found in association with woodlands and hedgerows, and grasslands providing foraging areas.



- A notable invertebrate assemblage on Site 7a that includes saproxylic species such as the nationally scarce tanner beetle, associated with the woodlands and mature trees, and NERC Act Priority Lepidoptera such as small heath and cinnabar moth, associated with the grasslands.
- Low populations of grass snake on all parts of the masterplan area, associated with the grasslands and ponds.
- A known population of great crested newts on Site 7b and further east of Site 7c. The presence of great crested newt and common toad on Site 7a is also judged to be highly likely, though detailed survey has not been undertaken as a District Level Licensing approach will be followed.

Surveys have also been carried out on Site 7a for water vole, otter and hazel dormouse. Hazel dormouse surveys have also been undertaken in 2021-2022 on Site 7c south of Banters Lane, and in 2018 on Site 7b. however no evidence of presence has been recorded. There have similarly been no sightings of harvest mouse or polecat on site, though it is possible that they utilise the site in low numbers. Brown hare have been recorded on Site 7b/7c north of Banters Lane, though not on other parts of the masterplan area. European hedgehog have been recorded on Site 7a.

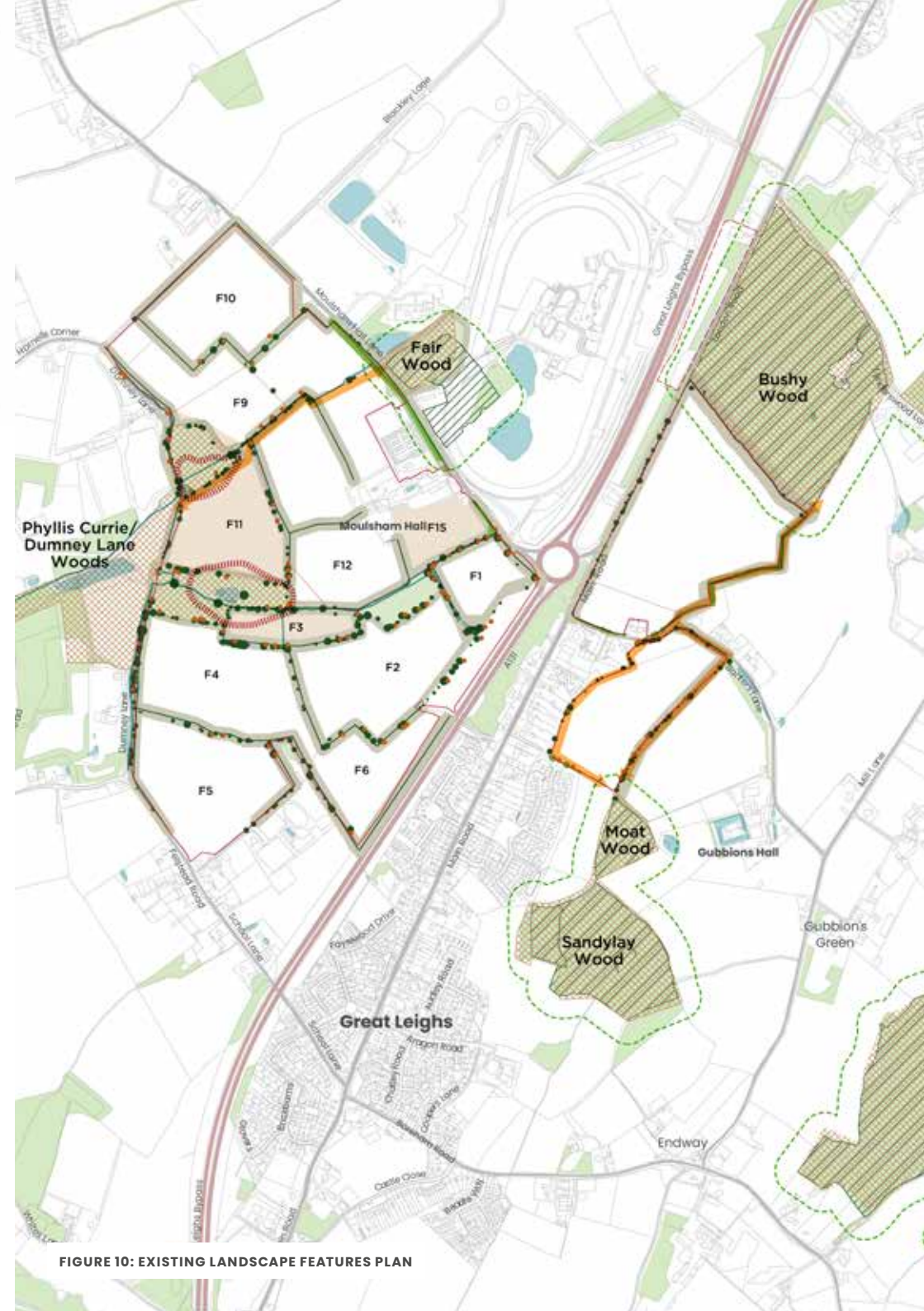


FIGURE 10: EXISTING LANDSCAPE FEATURES PLAN

Landscape

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

The broad location for growth has a strong existing landscape infrastructure which provides the opportunity to create a development that has a distinct sense of place and respects the character of the local landscape and its local wildlife habitats.

There is a broad distinction between the undulating landform at Site 7a and the relatively flat nature of Sites 7b and 7c.

Views into the site are mostly localised and confined to neighbouring roads and footpaths.

The overall recommended approach is for development to be related to Great Leighs whilst having a softer interface with the countryside.

For Site 7a, there should be an emphasis on creating a development which relates to Great Leighs and has a soft interface with the wider rural context, including a woodland buffer along the boundary adjacent to Dumney Lane and Hornells Cor.

For Site 7b, an appropriate set back should be created from Bushy Wood to create a natural swathe of land that caters for natural wildlife. This buffer should extend along the eastern edge to allow for screening between development and wider countryside. The hedgerow alongside London Road and Banters Lane should be retained where possible.

For Site 7c, the eastern boundary of the site should be treated in a similar manner to the eastern boundary of Site 7b. The design of development at this edge should consider the setting of Gubbions Hall.





VIEW NORTH FROM THE EASTERN EDGE OF SITE 7A ACROSS TO MOULSHAM HALL



VIEW SOUTH ONTO THE A131 GREAT LEIGHS BYPASS FROM CHASE SIDE BRIDGE

Landscape Character

CSA Environmental is carrying out a detailed Landscape and Visual Appraisal and this has been informed initially with a Landscape and Visual Overview for Site 7a and Site 7b and Site 7c to support this Masterplan Framework

The sites lie with the B17 Terling Farmland Plateau, as classified in the Landscape Character Assessment (2006). This area is characterised as comprising rolling arable farmland, with irregular field patterns, scattered settlements and winding lanes. Although the broad location for growth reflects these features to a certain degree, Chelmsford City Racecourse and the A131 are considered to be detractors that affect tranquillity to a certain degree.

The recommended strategy for this area is to conserve and enhance hedgerows, and semi-natural woodland and use these to create a strong green infrastructure network within the development. The use of building materials should also reflect local vernacular.

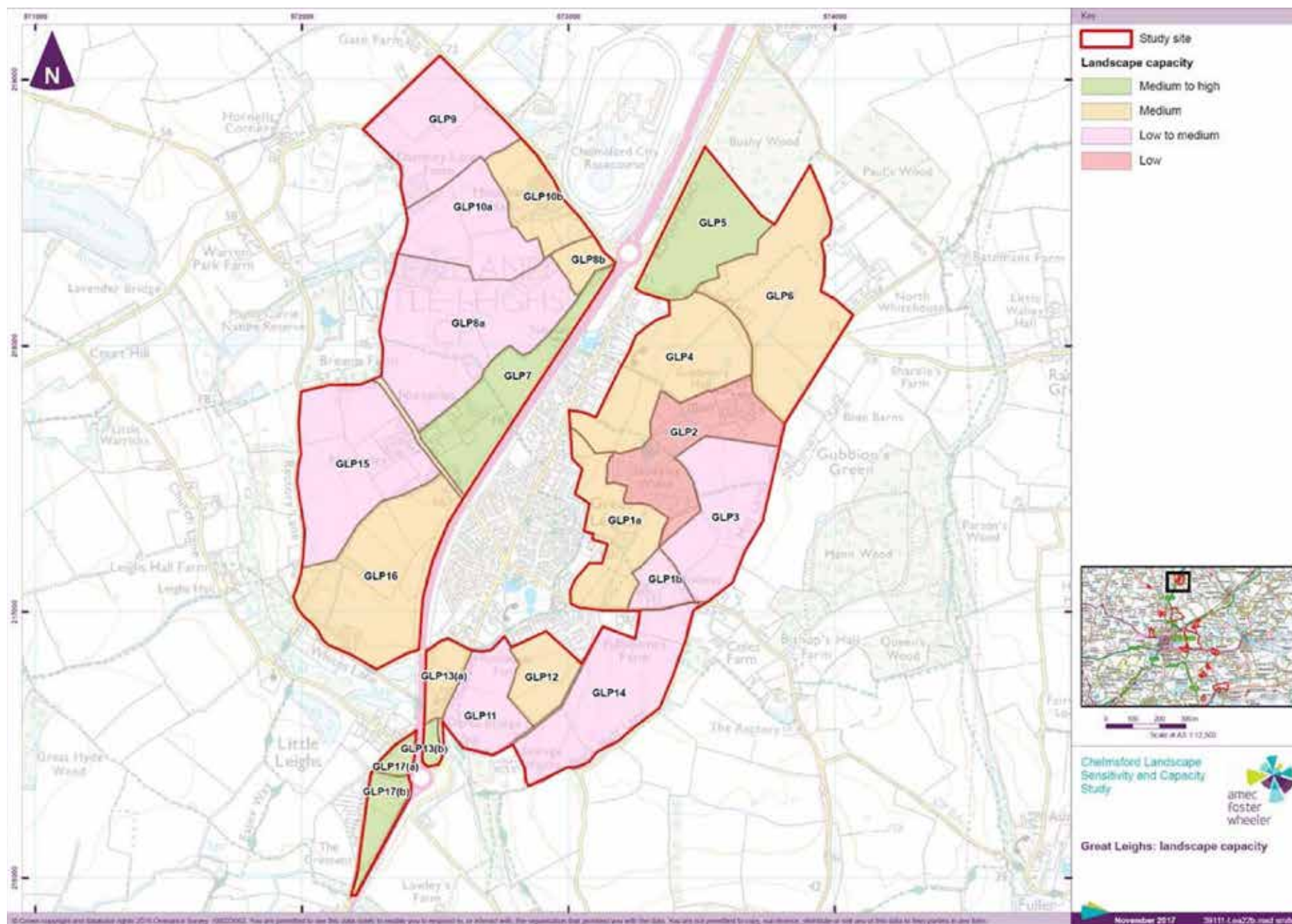
The Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study (March 2017) & Additional Site Assessments (November 2017) were carried out to inform the allocation of sites in the broad location for growth.

The report found that overall, the capacity of the landscape to accommodate development is greater adjacent to the A131 and northern end of Great Leighs and reduces further from the village.

The Landscape and Visual Overview carried out by CSA considers that the broad location for growth has a strong existing landscape infrastructure which provides the opportunity to create a development that has a distinct sense of place and respects the character of the local landscape and its local wildlife habitats.

Views into the sites are localised, and in many cases are filtered and screened. The recommended approach emerging for the broad location for growth is for a development that relates to Great Leighs and has a soft rural interface with the lanes and countryside beyond, with woodland buffers where appropriate to complement the wider landscape character and enhance wildlife habitats. Development also has the potential to enhance the setting of Moulsham Hall through enhancements to its immediate historic landscape setting.

The site also has a network of public footpaths which have good connections to Great Leighs. These provide an opportunity to create sustainable links to Great Leighs and to enhance recreational benefits for the wider population.





AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF SITE 7A FROM THE SOUTH

Views and Topography

Although the landscape character of the broad location for growth reflects the general features of the Terling Farmland Plateau, the landscape character of Sites 7a, 7b and 7c vary slightly.

Site 7a

Site 7a is notable for its undulating landform influenced by two tributaries that cross the site from the east to flow towards the River Ter. Land rises from these tributaries, the lowest point being approximately 53m AOD adjacent to Dumney Lane to heights of approximately 69m AOD adjacent to the A131 (excluding the landscaping bunds), approximately 68m AOD at Moulsham Hall and approximately 72m at the northernmost point of the site adjacent to Moulsham Hall Lane and Hornells Cor.

The aerial photograph is looking across the site towards Chelmsford City Racecourse. It shows that the site is subdivided into a series of relatively large, irregular shaped fields that are contained by established hedgerows that typically have good tree cover. The broad swathe of woodland that follows an east west alignment through the site is a prominent feature of the local landscape and Moulsham Hall can be seen sitting in the central part of the site.



VIEW FROM SCHOOL LANE INTO SITE 7A

Views of Site 7a are for the most part localised and confined to the neighbouring roads and footpaths.

From the A131 to the east, the road sits in a relatively deep cutting and the ridge of the cutting is typically well vegetated. As such, there are no views into the body of the site from the road.

From School Lane on the western boundary of Site 7a, there are intermittent views into the western most field, as the roadside hedgerow is gappy in places. There are also some opportunities for views from the properties served off School Lane. From this direction, the underlying topography and the established vegetation within the site prevents longer distance views.



VIEW FROM DUMNEY LANE

Views from Moulsham Hall Lane and Dumney Lane are generally heavily filtered by boundary vegetation. From Dumney Lane, which forms the greater part of the western boundary, there is a well-established band of vegetation alongside its eastern edge and the occasional stand of woodland. As such, views into the site are largely screened or heavily filtered. The lane has a very pleasant rural character, is single track, and unmade in places. It also provides access to a small area of parking for the Phyllis Currie Nature Reserve and has good pedestrian connections.



VIEW FROM THE PUBLIC FOOTPATH ON THE EASTERN BOUNDARY ACROSS SITE 7A

There are relatively open views into the site from the public footpath which runs along the eastern side boundary. From here the gentle ridge of high ground, which follows a northeast to southwest alignment from Moulsham Hall, allows the viewer the opportunity to appreciate the underlying topography of the area and the established native vegetation, which all form part of the setting of Moulsham Hall.

In the limited number of instances where there are views into the site they are not far reaching as they are typically truncated by the established field boundary vegetation and the broad swathe of woodland which follows an east-west alignment through the centre of the site.



There are open views into the site from the footpaths which cross it and elevated views from the pedestrian overbridge on the A131 and from the footpath on the bridge carrying School Lane.

There are limited opportunities for views into the site from neighbouring properties and from the properties within Great Leighs. There are no significant longer distance views of the site.

Overall, views into the site are localised, and in many cases filtered or screened by roadside vegetation. It is not the intention to screen the development in its entirety from School Lane and from the southern end of Moulsham Hall Lane, but to create a development which relates to Great Leighs and has a soft rural interface with the lanes and the countryside beyond.

On the more sensitive rural boundary of Dumney Lane and Hornells Cor, woodland buffer should be created to provide a robust and defensible boundary, which complements the character of this lane.

The public footpaths which cross the site are frequently aligned alongside hedgerows or established vegetation and these green corridors should be retained and enhanced, with properties typically orientated to provide passive surveillance to these important routes.

Site 7b

Site 7b is a relatively large field with a landform that rises gently from approximately 70m AOD at London Road to 73m at the easternmost extent. The site has an irregular shaped eastern boundary which has good tree cover.

The northern boundary adjoins Bushy Wood which is a significant area of mature woodland that creates an attractive backdrop to the site. The western boundary adjoins London Road, which has a footpath along its western edge.

Views into the site are localised and largely confined to those from London Road. There are also some views from Banters Lane and the properties served off it. There are also intermittent views from the public footpath to the southeast of the site.

On the northern boundary of Site 7b, an appropriate setback should be created alongside this area of Ancient Woodland, with the emphasis being on creating a natural swathe of land that caters for wildlife. This buffer should then extend along the eastern boundary where additional trees and understorey planting should be created to help screen the development from the open countryside beyond. The hedgerow alongside London Road and Banters Lane should be retained, wherever possible, and strengthened with new planting to create an appropriate interface with Great Leighs.



VIEW INTO SITE 7C FROM LONDON ROAD



VIEW OF SITE 7C LOOKING NORTH TOWARDS BANTERS LANE FROM THE PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY

Site 7c

The northern part of Site 7c lies to the north of Banters Lane and east of London Road. The site is a relatively small field that rises gently eastwards from approximately 70m AOD to approximately 71m AOD. The southern and western site boundaries are relatively sparsely vegetated and there is a hedgerow which contains semi-mature trees on the northern boundary. The land is currently in agricultural use.

The southwestern part of Site 7c south of Banters Lane rises gently from approximately 69m AOD to approximately 72m AOD. The site sits alongside the properties that are served off Main Road and adjoins the recent development at Furlongs which lies immediately to the southwest. The south-eastern section of the southern boundary is open. To the northeast, the boundary adjoins Banters Lane. To the east there is intermittent tree cover along the boundary. An unmade public footpath runs along the southern boundary.

Given the relatively low-lying nature of the area and the containment provided by neighbouring development and woodland, views are relatively localised. There are some open views from the short section of Banters Lane which borders the site and from the properties that are served off it. Similarly, there are some views from the properties to the west and the recent development to the south west. There are open views from the footpath which runs along the southern boundary of the site. From the southeast there are filtered views from the footpath which runs alongside Gubbions Hall.

The eastern boundary of Site 7c should be treated in a similar manner to that of the eastern boundary of Site 7b. Buildings on this part of the site should pay due regard to the setting of Gubbions Hall, in respect of building heights, density and materials. The southern end of the boundary would be an appropriate location for a children's play area as it sits alongside a public footpath.

New vegetation should be compatible with the native vegetation in the area with particular emphasis on species that have wildlife value. The existing hedgerows, and tree belts, should be retained in the public realm, so that they can be managed appropriately.

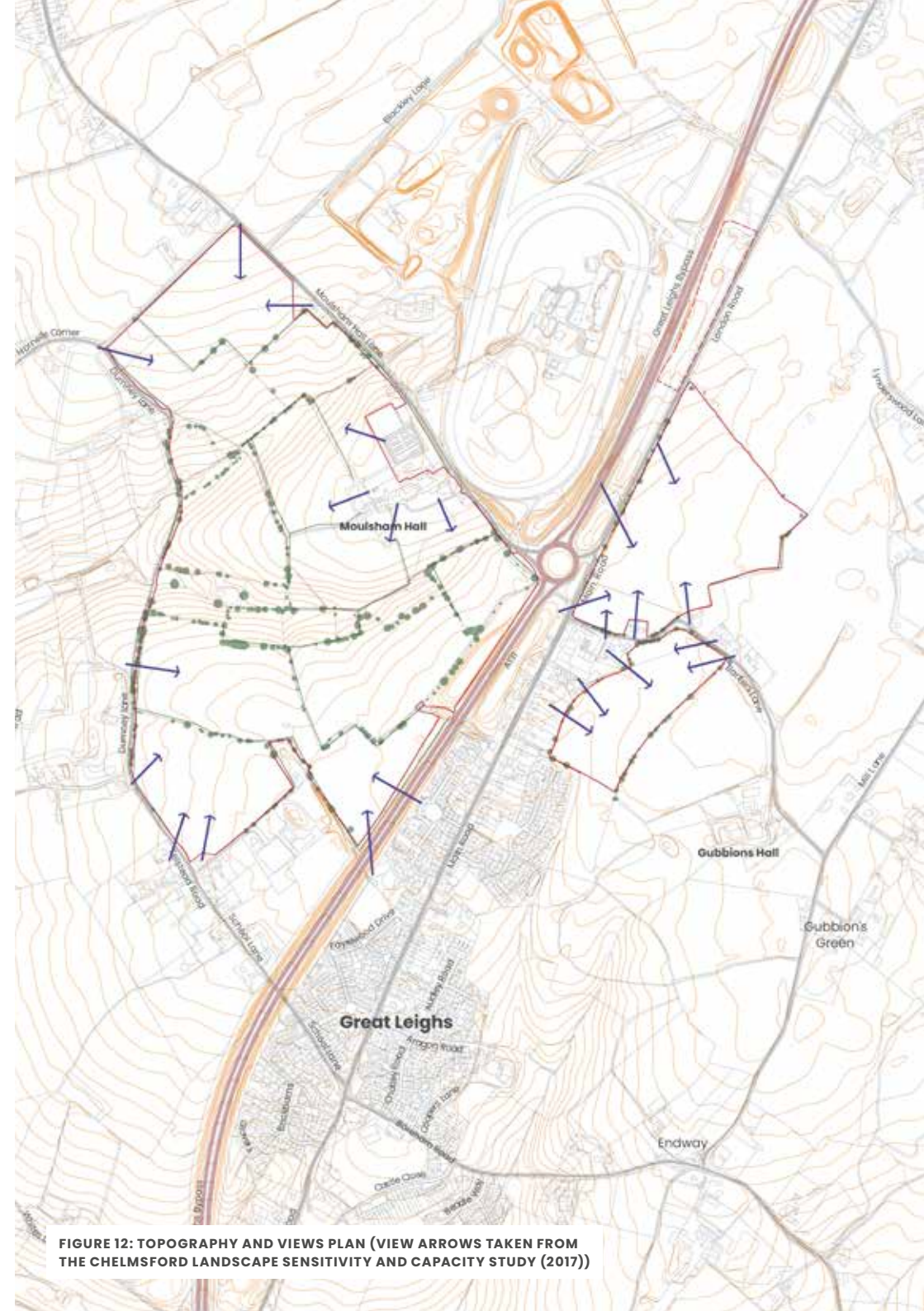
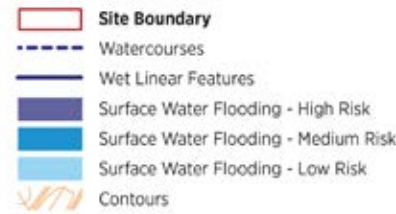


FIGURE 12: TOPOGRAPHY AND VIEWS PLAN (VIEW ARROWS TAKEN FROM THE CHELMSFORD LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND CAPACITY STUDY (2017))



WATERCOURSE CROSSING DUMNEY LANE VIA A CULVERT



Flooding and Surface Water Drainage

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

An understanding of existing drainage features alongside the landform is important for informing an appropriate drainage strategy with preferred locations for SuDS

Flood mapping shows that the sites are located in Flood Zone 1 and have a low probability of flooding.

Some localised parts of the sites in the growth area are identified to be at risk of surface water flooding. These are mainly related to the watercourses through Site 7a and at an area in the north west of Site 7b. These are not considered to place any onerous constraints on development.

The existing watercourses, combined with the topography of the site has informed the identification of drainage catchments which have in turn informed potential locations for SuDS in the masterplan.

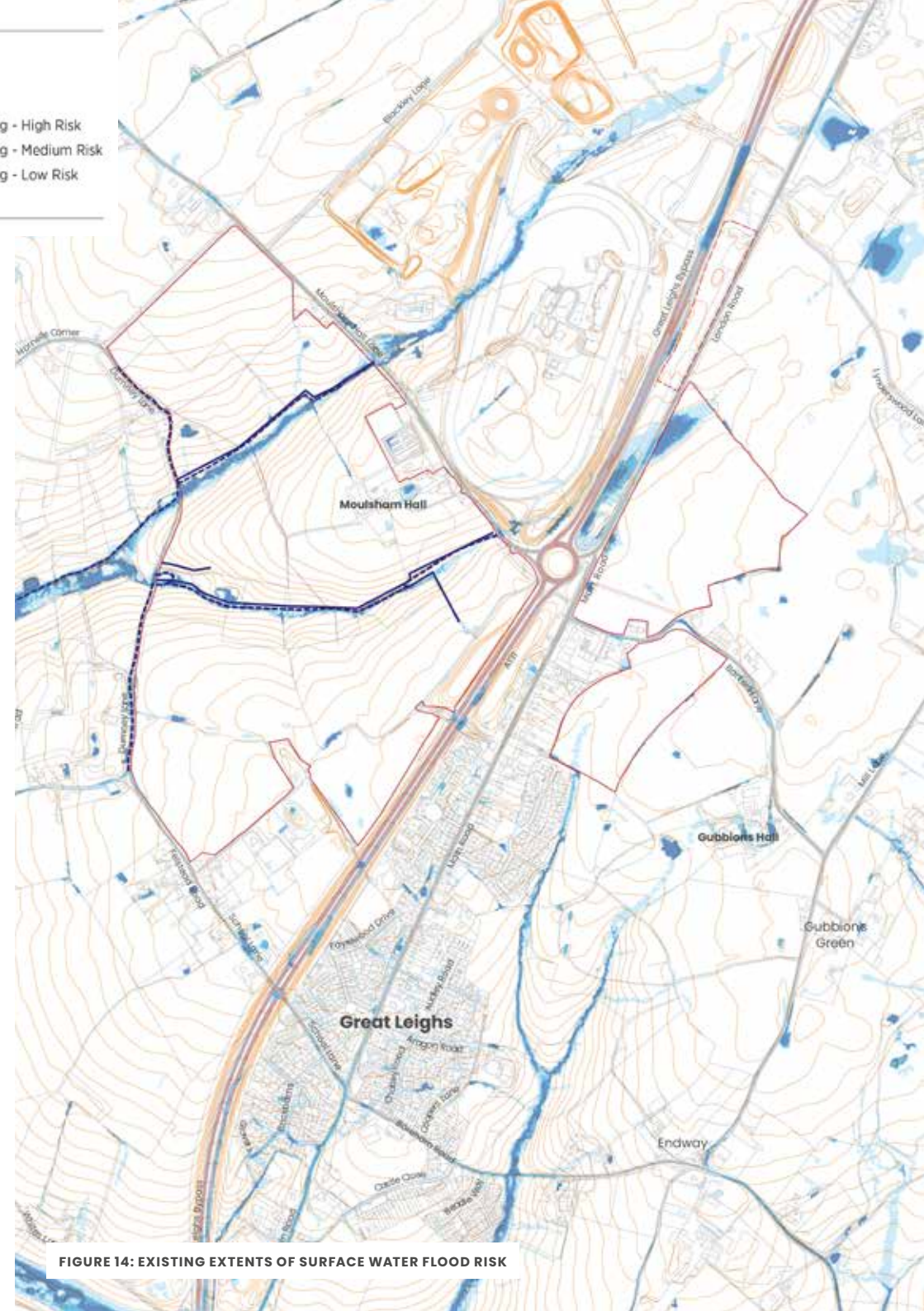


FIGURE 14: EXISTING EXTENTS OF SURFACE WATER FLOOD RISK



VIEW NORTH OF THE A131 CORRIDOR TOWARDS THE SITE TO THE WEST



Noise

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

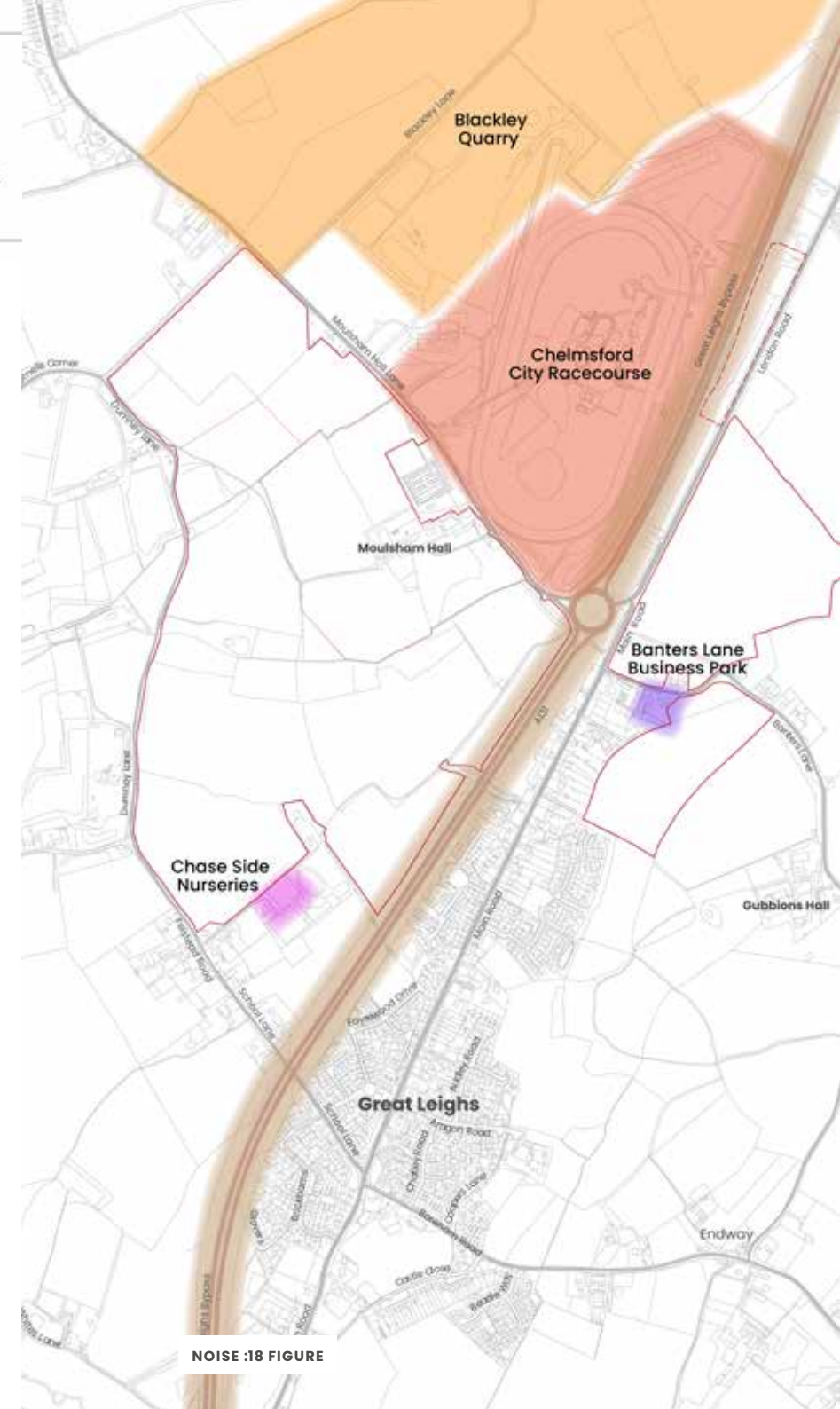
Of the noise sources found the A131 is the main noise source that requires appropriate mitigation with considerations such as the location and composition of land uses and integration of attenuation features.

A noise survey and noise model has been completed by Ardent Consulting Engineers which has identified that road traffic on the A131 is a noise source with potential to impact on Site 7a and particularly uses located in proximity to the A131 corridor. Site 7b is also influenced by noise from road traffic on the A131 and London Road but this to a lesser extent.

Consideration also needs to be given to other potential noise sources including:

- Blackley Quarry, close to Site 7a, has been allocated for future expansion in the Minerals Local Plan and inert waste recycling and landfill as proposed in the Waste Local Plan.
- Chelmsford City Racecourse during events on Sites 7a and 7b.
- Employment premises such as Chase Side Nurseries, at the southern edge of Site 7a adjacent to School Lane and on Banter's Lane which lies between the northern and southern parts of Site 7c.

The noise survey and modelling has informed a strategy for mitigation to integrate into subsequent proposals, which has been subject to noise modelling. This combines considerations of the location, the grouping and positioning of development and land uses closest to the A131, and utilising acoustic attenuation features to reduce noise levels.



NOISE :18 FIGURE

Minerals

All sites within the Great Leighs broad location for growth are located within the Minerals Safeguarding Area for sand and gravel as shown in the Essex Minerals Local Plan.

Extraction of sand and gravel minerals is currently taking place at Blackley Quarry which is located to the immediate north west of Chelmsford City Racecourse with expansion proposed to the east and west of Blackley Quarry which are allocated in the Mineral Local Plan (Sites A38 and A39). When worked, Blackley Quarry is proposed in the Essex Waste Local Plan to be a location for inert waste recycling and inert landfill.

In accordance with Policy S8 of the Plan a Minerals Resource Assessment is required establish the presence of sand and gravel and whether prior extraction of minerals is required. Landowners have engaged with Minerals and Waste officers at Essex County Council and discussions have informed the preparation of the Masterplan Framework. A Minerals Resource Assessment will be submitted as part of the planning application.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

A Minerals Resource Assessment is to be submitted as part of the planning application to assess whether there are any viable minerals to be extracted.

A38 & A39 Blackley Quarry

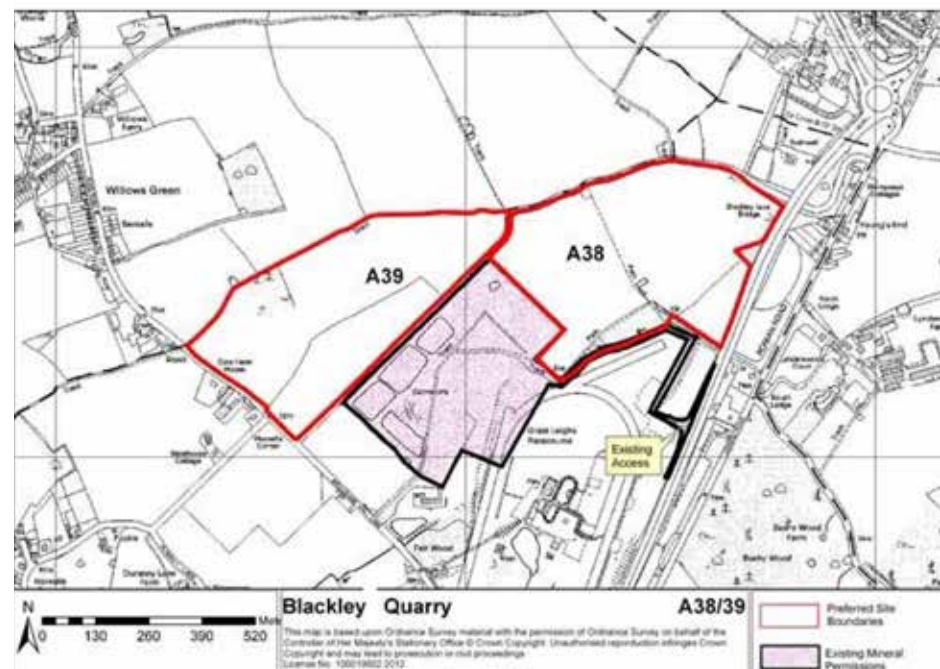


FIGURE 15: LOCATION OF MINERALS ACTIVITY AND PROPOSED EXPANSION AT BLACKLEY QUARRY (ESSEX MINERALS LOCAL PLAN 2014)



- Site Boundary
- Overhead Line and Easement
- BT Cables
- Water and Foul Water

Utilities

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

There is the potential to divert or underground the 11kV overhead powerlines that cross the site.

Utilities crossing the site include a number of 11kV overhead powerlines, which can either be diverted or placed underground and therefore do not pose a significant constraint to development.

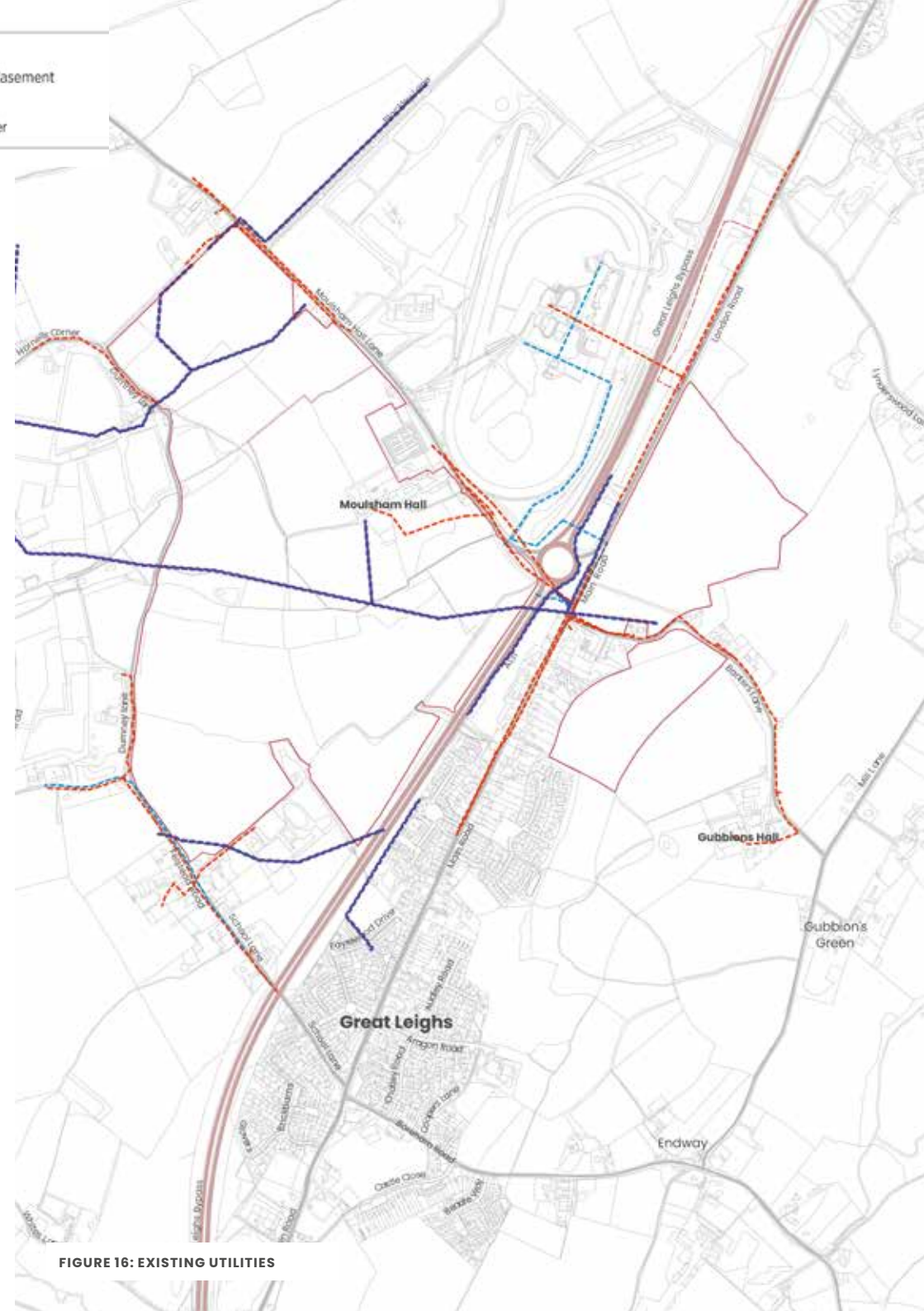


FIGURE 16: EXISTING UTILITIES

04.

CREATING THE MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

Creating a landscape-led structure to underpin the Masterplan Framework

The following strategies are key to informing the Masterplan Framework and include:

- **Drainage Strategy** – incorporating a range of SuDS features to manage surface water run-off and minimise discharge flows into the River Ter.
- **Ecology Strategy** – retaining and enhancing existing ecological assets where possible to avoid and minimise impacts to valuable habitats and associated protected and priority species.
- **Landscape Strategy** – creating a development that has a strong sense of place, relates to the neighbouring countryside, protects the setting of heritage assets, supports the retention and enhancement of ecological assets and provides a range of recreational opportunities.



VIEW ACROSS TO MOULSHAM HALL FROM THE SOUTH WEST



Drainage Strategy

Drainage

The drainage strategy, anticipated to evolve with the engagement of the Lead Local Flood Authority, aims to manage rainfall through the provision of a range of SuDS measures. They include a series of attenuation ponds, complemented potentially with features such as linear swales and check dams, to minimise surface water discharges to greenfield run-off rates.

The suggested locations of the attenuation ponds have been informed by initial surface water modelling undertaken by Ardent Consulting Engineers. Their precise location and extents are to be informed by detailed modelling as clear parameters become established for land uses and development areas within their surface water drainage catchments.

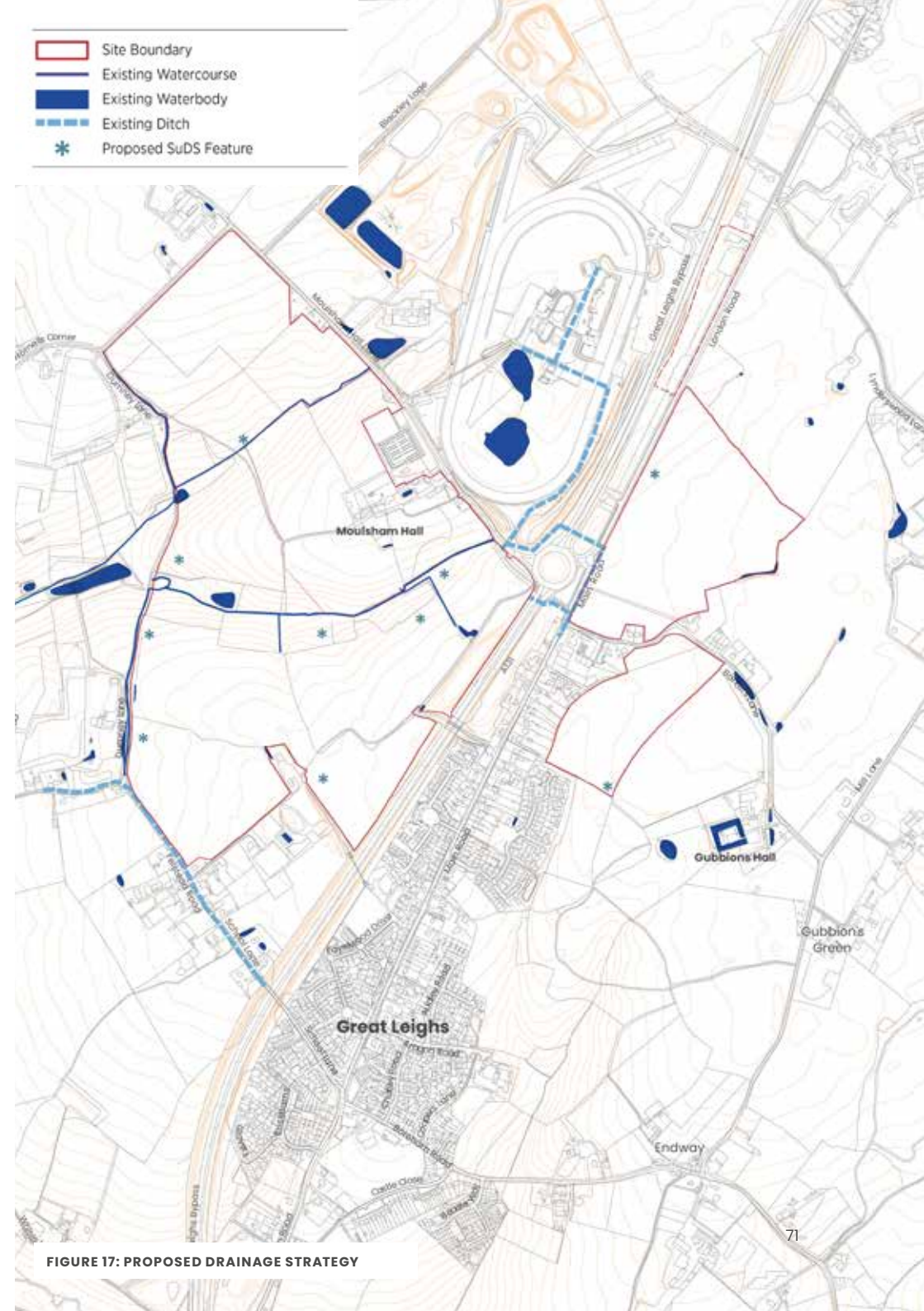
Presently the initial modelling is based on attenuation requirements across drainage catchments within the site which has informed the location of attenuation ponds with the final extends to be informed by development areas, assumptions for surface water run-off and also the range of measures that may manage flows to the attenuation ponds that may be integrated into the design (e.g. the swales etc.)

An important principle for the design of attenuation basins is for them to be integrated to form part of the wider open space network. In this context it is envisaged that attenuation basins could potentially be formed with:



- Shallow sided basins that are capable of forming the wider part of amenity open space provision for informal recreation when they are not capturing surface water run-off.
- Basins that are capable of including habitats and amenity features. This may include wet areas that contain permanent water as wetland habitats and dry areas that have a more informal amenity function.

As development proposals emerge opportunities may be exploited to integrate swales in verges within street corridors and other movement routes such as footpath and cycleways, or in the form of rain gardens.





Landscape Strategy

Landscape

In broad terms, the underlying topography of the Site, the stands of mature woodland, and the established hedgerows provide an excellent opportunity to create a development that has a strong sense of place and one which relates well to the neighbouring countryside.

For Site 7a in particular, the site provides the opportunity to create new wildlife habitats, and areas of natural open space that both respect the history of the area and provide recreational opportunities for new, and existing, residents alike.

For Site 7b and 7c there are opportunities for natural swathes and landscaping creating an appropriate transition between development and Bushey Wood and create a soft landscaped edge to screen development from the countryside.

Site 7a

Enhancing the setting of Moulsham Hall – will be achieved by establishing a traditional parkland character.

Creating Visual links – from within the development towards the retained fields around Moulsham Hall.

Creating a Central East-West Green Corridor – preserving and enhancing this area of woodland, ditches, ponds and grassland with an emphasis on creating a central east west green corridor which is connected to the Phyllis Currie Local Wildlife Site

Areas of Play – where the retained and enhanced Public Rights of Way converge within the northern part of the site.

Planting alongside A131 – reinforcing existing planting adjacent to the A131 with additional scrub and woodland and to support the integration of noise attenuation features.



Creating new footpath and cycle routes – retaining and enhancing the existing Public Rights of Way network and creating additional walking and cycling routes to serve the purpose of providing access to the neighbourhood centre, primary school, bus services and ensuring connections between the site and Great Leighs are maximised to support sustainable movement and active lifestyles. These routes will form part of an integrated network of linear open spaces overlooked with development frontages.

Ecological Buffer to Dumney Lane – strengthen the hedgerow and trees along this lane with additional planting and provide a graded habitat eco-tone from canopy level to scrub and wildflower grassland to maintain its tranquil nature and enhance its wildlife value.

School Lane – create a new native hedgerow, interspersed with native trees, along this lane. Development will be set back but oriented to face towards School Lane.

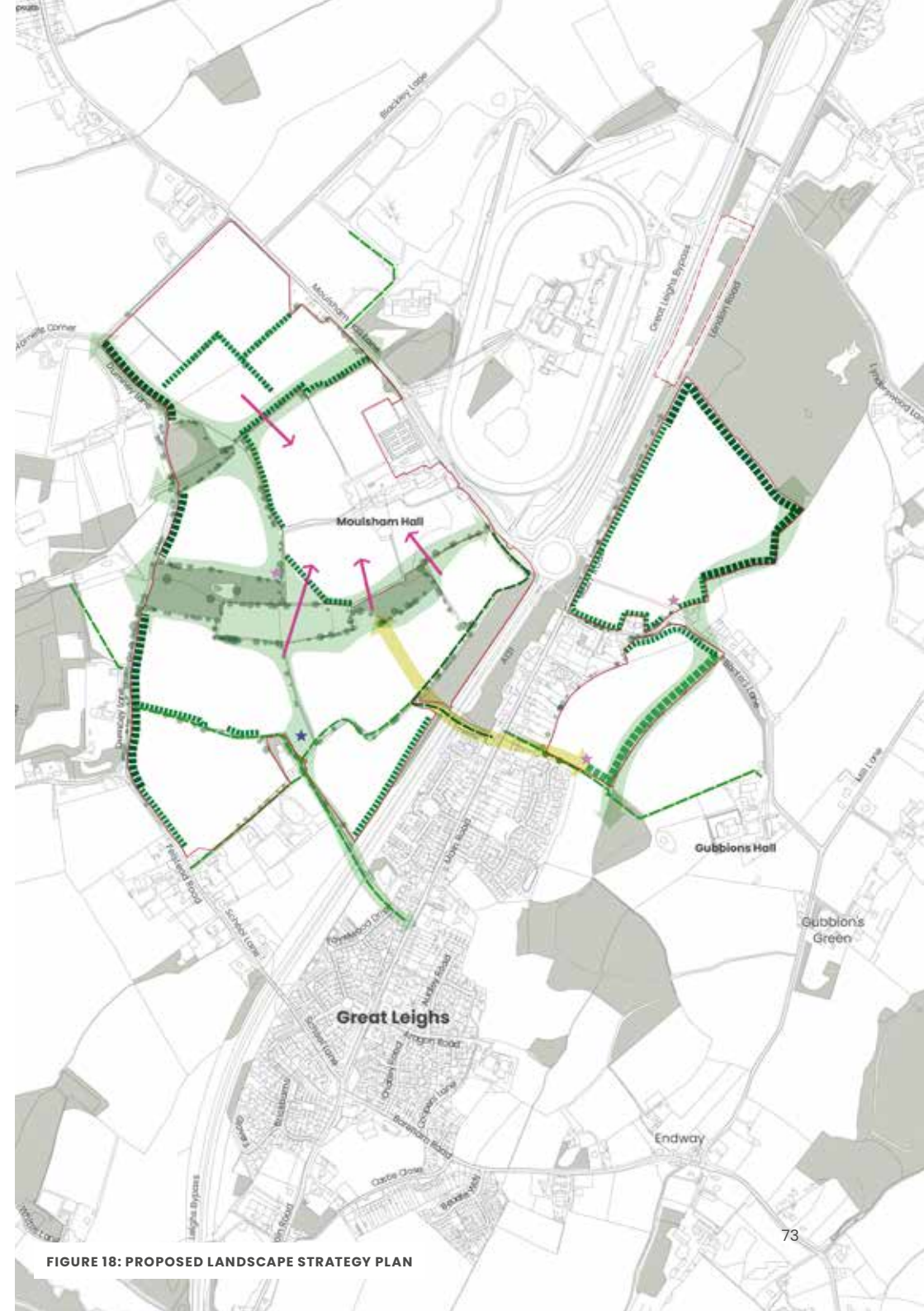


FIGURE 18: PROPOSED LANDSCAPE STRATEGY PLAN



Land for informal recreation - The northern most part of Site 7a will be retained for both passive and active recreational use and could potentially accommodate a variety of uses, including rustic exercise trails and horse riding with the inclusion of an east west bridleway.

In terms of the character of this area, the emphasis will be on creating an environment that caters for both the community and wildlife alike and one which largely maintains the open, rural character of the land. The landscape design will contribute towards ensuring a sensitive response to the setting of neighbouring listed buildings. To achieve these objectives the following principles will be adopted:

- Maintaining and enhancing field boundary hedgerows.
- Creating localised wildlife corridors alongside the hedgerows by introducing additional scrub vegetation and swathes of wildflower grassland.
- Creating a network of informal footpaths.
- Any ancillary buildings should be modest in scale and of a rural vernacular
- Supporting infrastructure should similarly have a rural character and should not be intrusive.
- Hard surfacing should use a rural palette of materials, wherever practical
- The setting of the neighbouring listed buildings should be respected



VIEW INTO SOUTHERN FIELD SITE 7C FROM THE PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY ENTERING THE SITE



VIEW FROM THE JUNCTION OF MAIN ROAD AND BANTERS LANE ACROSS THE NORTHERN PARCEL OF SITE 7C TO SITE 7B

Sites 7b & 7c

London Road – address the fragmented hedgerow with new hedgerows and tree planting.

Bushy Wood – create a transition to this Ancient Woodland to the north of Site 7b with additional tree and scrub planting and by providing a natural swathe of land (15m buffer) that caters for wildlife.

East side of Site 7b and Site 7c – provide a landscape buffer with a natural swathe of land continuing from the northern edge to screen development from the countryside beyond and the listed buildings within it. A robust planting plan for these edges should accompany future Planning Applications. Also provide screening to properties on north side of Banters Lane adjacent to Site 7c.

Children's Play Space – located at the southern end of Site 7c in an accessible location adjacent to a public footpath.



Setting of Moulsham Hall

The land around Moulsham Hall is to be kept free of development to enable the setting of this Grade II Listed property to be understood and appreciated. Development of Parcel 7a also provides the opportunity to enhance the setting of the Hall and to deliver biodiversity benefits, through the design and future management of the area.

Key objectives for the area are set out under the following headings.

Parkland Setting

The gentle ridge of high ground, which follows a northeast to southwest alignment from Moulsham Hall, provides an excellent opportunity to protect and enhance the setting of the Hall; to appreciate the underlying topography of the area; and to create a focal point to development within Site 7a.

In enhancing the setting of the land around the Hall, the key objective is to establish a traditional parkland character which comprises a mix of indigenous parkland trees, areas of pasture and wildflower meadows. The existing grassland fields around the Hall would be retained and sympathetically managed.

Boundary Treatment

The area around the Hall, which is identified in the Local Plan for Conservation and Strategic Landscape Enhancement, follows existing field boundaries. These boundaries will be retained and enhanced with additional planting, to create a robust and clearly defined boundary to the parkland. New tree and hedgerow species understorey planting would be introduced to fill existing gaps. This would deliver biodiversity benefits in the form of enhanced nesting habitat for birds, and foraging opportunities for a wide range of species including bats, birds and invertebrates. New planting would also ensure a strong natural barrier is maintained along the parkland boundaries, dissuading any attempts at public access to private areas and protecting landowner privacy, while creating carefully framed views into the parkland, to allow this built heritage asset to be better understood and appreciated.

A green corridor will be created alongside the parkland boundary to protect the vegetation within it and to allow new habitats to emerge. The green corridors will form part of a wider network within Parcel 7a which will facilitate, and encourage, the movement of wildlife through the development and neighbouring land.

Development will be set back from the boundary and the scale, density and appearance of the neighbouring properties will pay due regard to the setting of Moulsham Hall.



Vegetation

New vegetation will comprise native species, with naturalised species in lower proportions that are typical of the area, where appropriate, which will include:

- **Parkland trees:** Oak, Lime, Horse Chestnut.
- **Hedgerow vegetation and scrub:** Hawthorn, field maple, dogwood, hazel, blackthorn, dog rose, field rose, crab apple, spindle, elm, holly, broom and gorse.
- **Wildflower meadow:** The existing grassland fields around the hall would be retained and sympathetically managed through seasonal cutting, allowing wildflowers time to flower and set seed.

Future Management of the area

The future management of the area is of the utmost importance. This is to ensure that all the proposed planting is managed in such a way that it delivers the best biodiversity benefits and equally provides an attractive setting to the Hall. At the detailed design stage, a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan will be produced to show how the land will be managed. To preserve a naturalistic setting, it is envisaged that management would be low intensity, with limited intervention to the existing habitat.

Ecology Strategy

The masterplan will deliver the Vision and address the Ecology and Green/Blue Infrastructure Strategy objectives through the following means:

Green and Blue Infrastructure Network:

The masterplan incorporates approximately 28ha of open space within Site 7a. This will predominantly comprise existing semi-natural grassland, envisaged to be retained and enhanced through sensitive ongoing management. An additional 15.3ha of existing semi-natural grassland will also be retained within the parkland. Low-intensity management is generally envisaged in these areas, with access for informal recreation provided via both mown and formal pathways. However around core areas for formal recreation, such as children's play facilities, or children and youth facilities, more regular management will be adopted to support increased amenity use. On Site 7b, landscape buffers to the north and east amount to just over 2ha in scale and will have a largely semi-natural quality. On Site 7c, south of Banters Lane, a further semi-natural area of circa 1.6ha is provided along the eastern boundary, extending significantly further into the site at the ecologically sensitive south-eastern corner. These areas are significantly in excess of minimum policy requirements.

The retention of mature existing hedgerows and associated buffers of grassland on Site 7a will provide a feel of continuous green linkage through the site. New street tree and hedgerow planting will bound and link through the residential development parcels, connecting these to the wider green infrastructure network.

A 15m semi-natural buffer to ancient woodlands is required at minimum to accord with Natural England guidance and a 10m open riparian zone is typically applied for watercourses. Where feasible, the masterplan applies this guidance to the wider woodland/hedgerow network more broadly and provides extended buffer widths in areas of higher importance. Extended buffers (20m+) are integrated along the western boundary of Site 7a abutting Dumney Lane/Phyllis Currie Reserve, around the boundaries of Field 11 abutting Dumney Lane Woods, and along the eastern boundary of Site 7b, linking south towards Sandylay and Moat Woods. These buffers will protect sensitive areas from damage during the construction period and minimise potential lighting impacts during operation.

A range of pedestrian routes will link the open spaces and provide attractive opportunities for recreational walking to lessen pressures on local designated sites. The sites existing mature landscape features including woodland, streams, hedgerows and neutral grassland will be celebrated and enhanced, providing a diverse experience for residents while also supporting the sites existing wildlife. Within built up areas, hedgehog highways will prevent fragmentation of habitat by providing access to new gardens, and a wildlife-friendly planting scheme that incorporates a diversity of nectar and berry producing species will attract pollinators and birds.

The sustainable drainage strategy will complement the biodiversity strategy, with SuDS basins designed for wildlife benefit. Basins will incorporate varying bank gradients, permanent water areas with broad shallow zones, and diverse planting of marginals, wet scrub and grassland, to maintain a naturalistic look and feel and deliver for amphibians and grass snake. Permanent water will serve a technical function to manage surface water flows at greenfield rates, thereby avoiding impacts to downstream designated sites, and will also complement aquatic habitats at Phyllis Currie Reserve, providing additional opportunities for associated dragonfly and damselfly populations.

Existing ponds will be retained and those of higher baseline quality within Dumney Lane Woods will be set within 'low-disturbance' areas. The streams within 7a will be integrated within the green/blue infrastructure network, with enhancements delivered in the riparian zones through sensitive management of retained buffer habitats and new planting, and where possible without undue impact to existing mature trees, through re-grading of the steep and heavily engineered banks to create new backwaters and wetland areas.

Management of Public Access:

The masterplan seeks to deliver multifunctional open spaces that work for both people and wildlife. The provision of well-managed on-site recreational routes at carefully chosen locations, in combination with use of natural barriers, is considered a suitable option to mitigate risk of new residents creating their own along 'desire lines' through sensitive areas, and to limit access by dogs.

Recreational routes will be highlighted to residents through waymarking and information boards and informal mown paths will be delivered in combination with more formal routes to maximise the variety of routes available. Measures including thorny scrub planting and dead-hedging will dissuade access to on-site areas managed as low-disturbance zones, as well as the creation of new informal accesses into sensitive off-site areas (Bushy Wood, Sandylay and Moat Woods).

This approach will mitigate disturbance of ecological receptors while still allowing people access to enjoy the sites mature natural environment. The developers are closely consulting with EWT to agree mitigation measures for off-site effects on the Reserves, which may include contributions towards improved access management. The existing western boundary planting on Site 7a will also be re-enforced with native scrub, to minimise the number of accesses leading towards Phyllis Currie, and thereby encourage residents towards preferred recreational routes on-site.

Location and Design of Road Crossings:

It is not feasible to avoid all impacts to existing hedgerows, trees and streams due to technical considerations and competing site sensitivities. Individual mature trees and some sections of hedgerow will require removal, as this is necessary to deliver the development. However, the road network within the site has been located to minimise impacts as far as possible.

This is achieved by making use of existing field boundary gaps, cutting through at thinner, less diverse sections of hedgerows, and avoiding direct impacts to notable mature trees and those with suitability for roosting bats wherever possible. Pinch points exist along the northern arm of the main spine road, where Dumney Lane

Woods present an ecological sensitivity to the west and Moulsham Hall a heritage sensitivity to the east. At these pinch points, the existing streams will also require culverting, and a limited number of mature trees with potential for roosting bats will likely be impacted. However the chosen route presents the best available option, avoiding both direct impacts to the woodlands and respecting the heritage setting of Moulsham Hall. A section of hedgerow will also be removed in the south of the site to provide an appropriate site for the school that is sufficiently distant from the A131; this will be mitigated through planting of a new 'green street', bordered by linear tree and hedgerow planting and forming an extension of the current bridleway.

Where roads intersect with sensitive habitats, connectivity for wildlife will be maintained through the integration of mammal/ amphibian culverts. For bats, a sensitive lighting strategy following ILP Guidance Note 8 will be adopted. Columns will be sited at maximal possible distance from the adjoining retained boundary trees and hedgerows. Where mature trees do not already bound the road alignment, new trees will be planted and the existing adjoining vegetation thickened, to deliver suitable 'hop-overs' once mature. Larger specimens will be selected for planting at these locations to minimise time to maturity.

Providing Homes and Safe Refuge for Wildlife:

Key species associated with the site will be protected from undue recreational and lighting disturbance through a variety of means including buffering of sensitive habitats, sensitive lighting, maintenance of low disturbance zones, provision of attractive waymarked routes guiding people away from sensitive areas, and delivery of refuge habitat enhancements.

Important areas for badgers will be retained and paths have been sited away from these areas. Access will be discouraged through new scrub planting, dead hedging, and natural features of the topography (ditches, wet woodland areas). On Site 7a, these areas are closely located with the sites higher-quality ponds, which will therefore also be protected.

Within green buffers, 'gapping up' hedgerow/scrub planting and sensitive ongoing management is envisaged to increase density of the existing boundary vegetation, providing enhanced opportunities for refuge and nesting, and protecting against cat predation. Discrete enhancements such as hibernacula and log piles will add to the opportunities available for wildlife seeking shelter. Within the built development, further opportunities will be delivered for urban-adapted species through the provision of bird and bat boxes.

Strategic Approach to Maximising On-Site Net Gains:

Retention and enhancement of existing neutral grassland within buffer strips and through key public open spaces will maximise the potential for on-site BNG. This approach will reduce risk to delivery compared to creating new 'higher distinctiveness' habitats and is in accordance with Principle 5 of the BNG Metric Guidance 'The metric design aims to encourage enhancement, not transformation, of the natural environment' (Natural England, 2022). It also aims to compensate, as far as possible, for the losses that will occur through the development of the masterplan area (predominantly neutral grassland), by enhancing the same habitat where it is able to be retained. A strategic approach has been taken to retain greater extents in areas of higher baseline quality (Field 3 and Field 11 on Site 7a) and within strategically significant zones where a greater contribution can be made to the local ecological network; along the western boundary of Site 7a, along the eastern boundary of Sites 7b and c, and adjacent Dumney Lane Woods Local Wildlife Site.

The green buffers through the sites have been designed to allow space for gradation in habitat from the woodland/hedgerow tree canopy level, to scrub, to long-sward grassland. This will maximise biodiversity value and functionality by providing for invertebrates, which will in turn benefit the amphibian, reptile, bird and bat species that feed on these. It is envisaged that the retained grasslands will be

managed on a rotational schedule, with some sections maintained at shorter sward height. This will further diversify the habitat for invertebrates and encourage a more varied flora. It will also enable buffers to fulfil a complementary amenity purpose for new residents, delivering a multifunctional space for both people and wildlife. Habitat variation will be maximised through blue infrastructure creation and enhancement. New native tree planting will add to the overall biodiversity value of the site, with street trees integrated through the built development and within the open space.

The woodlands on Site 7a will be brought into active management to create new glades, improve their structural complexity, and remove non-native trees. Existing connections between woodlands will be bolstered by new native tree and scrub planting, to 'gap up,' broaden and diversify the structure of the existing vegetation. This will be delivered through the masterplan area, but with particular focus on the strategic connections identified between the northern parcel of Dumney Lane Woods and Fair Wood on Site 7a, along the western boundary of Site 7a (adjoining Phyllis Currie and linking the two parcels of Dumney Lane Woods), and between Bushy Wood and Sandylay and Moat Woods on Sites 7b and 7c.

A long-term Landscape and Ecological Management Plan will be developed for the sites to secure favourable management of the habitats long term.

Predicted Outcomes:

Proposals for the sites are currently at a high-level. However, based on the strategy proposed, it is predicted that 10% net gain will be achievable on-site for the larger parcel of 7c south of Banters Lane. The current habitat being lower value arable is a key factor enabling this to be achieved alongside meeting the allocation policy requirements. For other parcels in the masterplan area, though efforts have been taken to retain existing grassland as far as possible, the baseline value of the neutral grassland occupying these areas limits the ability to deliver net gain on-site.

High level calculations have been undertaken by TMA for the northern sector of Site 7b proposed as a Retirement Village (High Level BNG Assessment and Report, September 2022), which predict a circa 45% net loss for area habitats, proposed to be reduced through compensation within the wider masterplan area. Enhancement of two retained fields within the Moulsham Hall parkland is predicted to reduce losses to approximately 1.4%, and options have been identified to improve this to an overall net gain at detailed design stage.

For Site 7a, calculations undertaken based on the July Masterplan (Revision N), indicate that the strategic approach taken to grassland retention and enhancement could minimise net loss to circa 4%. New planting of circa 700 trees through the development and open space could improve this to an on-site net gain of 1%, however, to meet metric trading rules off-site grassland compensation will be required.



Off-site Compensation:

Off-site compensation options are being explored for Site 7a. A potential option is circa 2.5ha of land south of 7c, adjoining Sandylay and Moat Woods. This approach would deliver compensation directly adjacent site and contribute positively to the local ecological network by providing a swathe of new semi-natural habitat adjacent the EWT Reserve. Detailed discussion would be undertaken with EWT to determine design and management; however it is envisaged this area could potentially deliver 13-14 biodiversity units and raise the net gain achieved overall for Site 7a to circa 5%. It is likely that a further 2-4ha of land within Chelmsford district will need to be identified for offsetting to deliver 10% net gain and fully meet metric trading rules for the site.

Off-site compensation will further be sought to compensate for loss of skylark nesting territories on Site 7a.

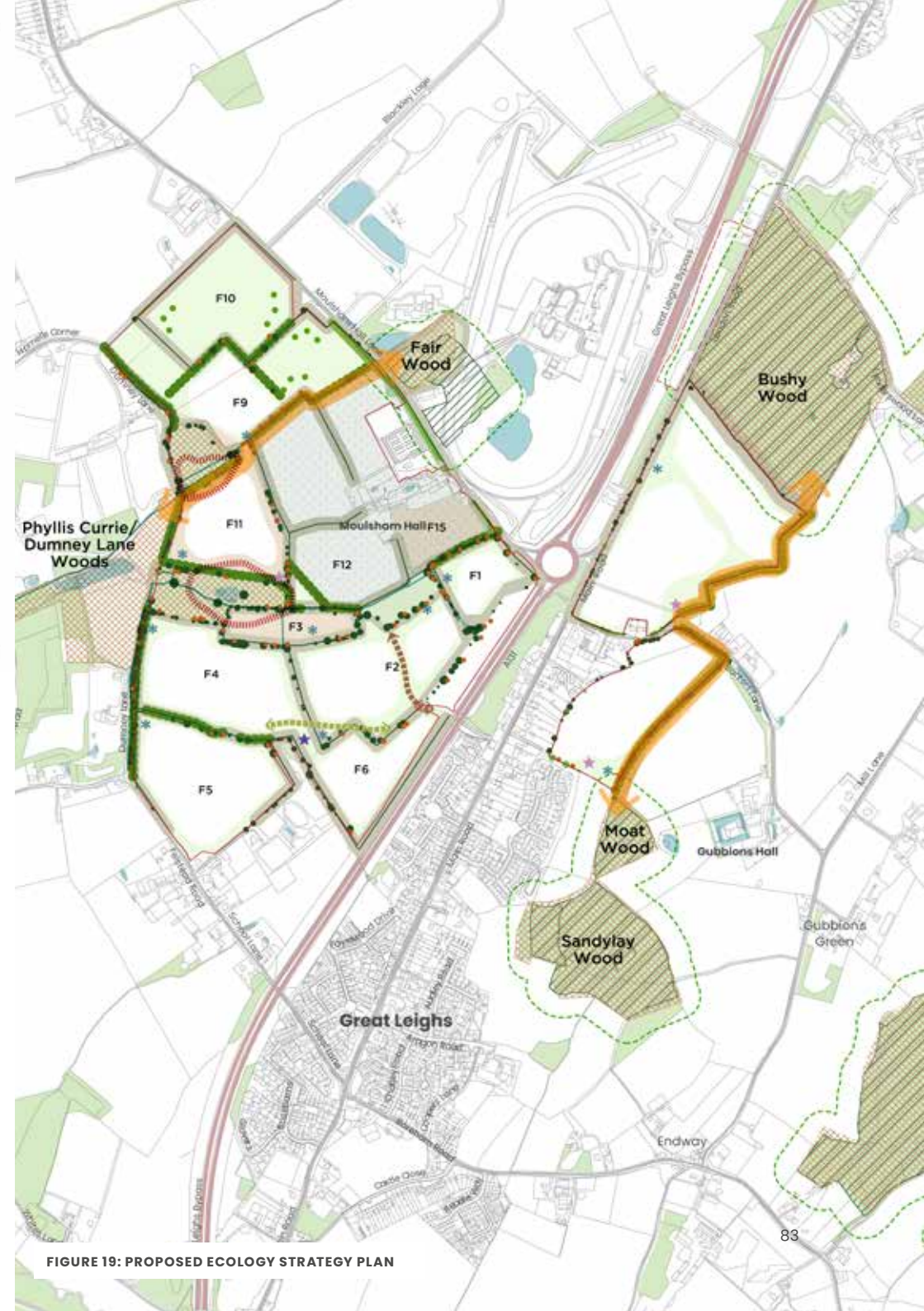


FIGURE 19: PROPOSED ECOLOGY STRATEGY PLAN

Masterplan Framework

As demonstrated by the preceding information, the Masterplan Framework shown in Figure 20 is shaped and influenced by the landscape constraints and opportunities inherent in the location. It is composed of a series of key components which are set out in more detail, including:

- **Integrating Sustainability** – to show how this is embedded in the Masterplan Framework and its components.
- **Development Areas and Land Use** – Creating a development with a varied housing offer and with a mixed use neighbourhood centre and primary school that will support new development and the wide Great Leighs community.
- **Location of the Travelling Showpersons site** – as informed by an appraisal of alternative options setting out a rationale for the proposed location.
- **Access and Movement** – Informed by pedestrian desire routes, prioritising walking and cycling building on the existing network of streets, connections and Public Rights of Way to create a comprehensive network of pedestrian and cycle routes. Additionally, making provision for bus services to serve site 7a and providing additional bus stops to maximise accessibility to public transport provision to new residential catchments, the neighbourhood centre and primary school.
- **Open Space** – Creating a comprehensive network of open spaces that is integrated into the wider green infrastructure network.
- **Residential Densities** – setting out the principles of how residential density could be structured across the site.
- **Building Heights** – identifying the maximum building heights
- **Character** – setting out the key principles that will guide the character of development
- **Creating an integrated community hub** – with an improved multifunctional connection to the proposed neighbourhood centre and primary school.
- **Noise mitigation** – measures to address the noise constraints associated with the A131 Great Leighs Bypass.
- **Phasing** – setting out the approach towards phasing in which parts of the development are likely to come forward, co-ordinated with the delivery of infrastructure and open space.

- Site Boundary
- Residential Development Parcels
- Self-Build Development Parcel
- Mixed Use Neighbourhood Centre
- Primary School
- Travelling Showpeople Site
- Open Space
- Retained Historic Rural Landscape
- Woodland / Existing planting
- Spine Street (accommodating bus)
(indicative, subject to detailed design)
- Structural Secondary Streets
(indicative, subject to detailed design)
- Potential Vehicular Access
- Byway (can be used by horses)
- Existing Bridleway
- Potential Bridleway
- Cycle and Pedestrian Routes (LTN1/20
compliant)
- Pedestrian Routes & Links (cyclable)
- Commitment to explore potential upgrade
to cycle routes & links (LTN1/20)
- ✱ Urban Square
(including adjacent links / spaces)
- P Neighbourhood Centre Parking
- ★ Youth & Children's Play
- ★ Children's Play
- ✱ SuDS
- Potential Emergency Services Access

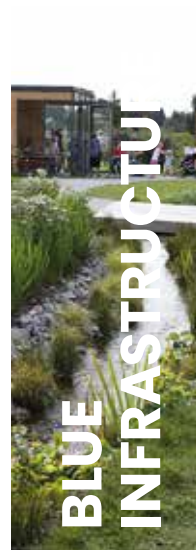


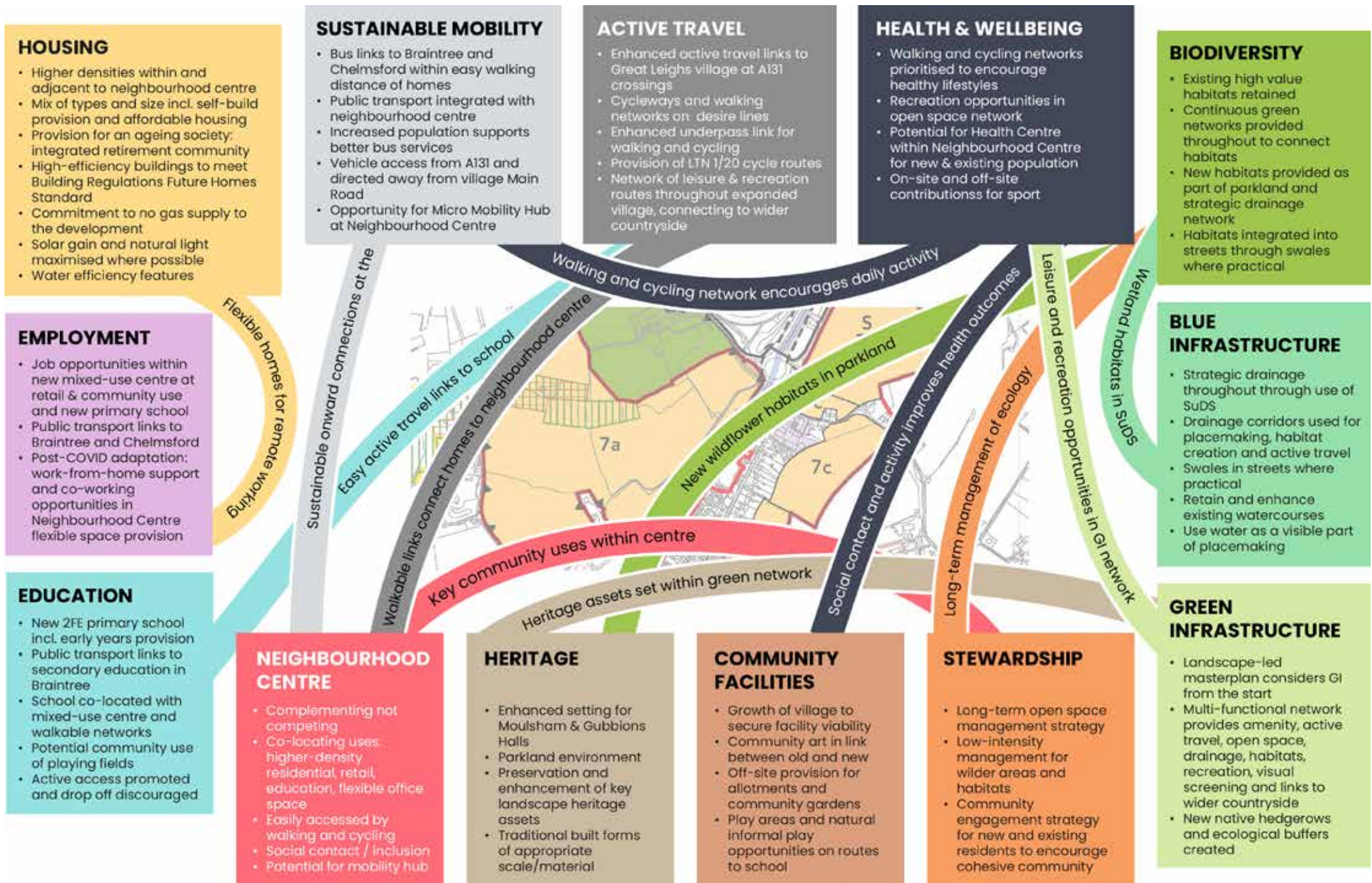
FIGURE 20: PROPOSED MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

Integrating sustainability

As a key part of this Masterplan Framework, sustainability is embedded to consider the overlapping needs to reduce carbon emissions from buildings and travel, enhance ecology and biodiversity on and around the sites, and to secure clean water and environmental quality.

The Masterplan Framework sets out the key spatial requirements that will enable sustainability to be integrated into the place, with good homes, healthy surroundings that support wellbeing, essential facilities and safeguarding valued heritage for the future. Figure 21 sets out the key themes that contribute to environmental, economic and social sustainability and how they are interlinked to provide a sustainability framework that is intrinsic in the delivery of growth at Great Leighs, highlighting key aspects of what the framework enables, grouped under different themes. Figure 22: sets out how this could be applied spatially across the broad area for growth.





Building design and specification

Some detailed aspects, such as detailed building design and specification, are not specified at this stage. However, in recognition of adopted planning policy and guidance, and Building Regulation requirements, all residential and non-residential buildings will incorporate high-efficiency and sustainable design features in order to reduce carbon dioxide and nitrogen dioxide emissions, the use of natural resources, and maximise renewable energy generation.

A key principle of building design will be to adopt a fabric first approach, with buildings orientated to benefit from natural light whilst balancing solar gain to take advantage of passive heating whilst reducing overheating risk. At the detailed building design stage consideration will be given to the positive benefits of energy efficiency that can be achieved with higher standards of insulation, ventilation and air tightness and can allow for more efficient alternatives to gas for heating. Consideration will be given to the provision of photovoltaics on new buildings. New buildings will also integrate water saving features and the possibility of new buildings to integrate rainwater harvesting will be considered where it is practicable and feasible. The parking strategy will incorporate provision of charging points for electric vehicles.

Waste management

All residential and non-residential buildings will incorporate appropriate and well-designed storage for both waste and recycling. Further details will be provided at planning application stage, including refuse collection strategy.



Enhancing Health & Wellbeing

Enhancing the health and well-being of new and existing residents is a priority inherent to creating sustainable development. Drawing on the Livewell Campaign (<https://www.livewellcampaign.co.uk/>) health and wellbeing measures are integrated into the proposals to reflect the themes and priorities that are set out in Chelmsford City Council's Health and Wellbeing Plan to support the wider initiative by Essex County Council. As proposals emerge for development, a Health Impact Assessment will be carried out in accordance with local requirements, drawing on the Livewell campaign and the Health and Wellbeing Plan.

HOUSING

- 1 Higher densities, retail and community facilities near sustainable transport
- 2 Mix of types and size incl. self-build provision and affordable housing

EMPLOYMENT

- 3 Job opportunities within new mixed-use centre at retail & community use and new primary school
- 4 Public transport links to Great Notley, Braintree and Chelmsford

EDUCATION

- 5 New 2FE primary school incl. early years provision
- 6 Public transport links to secondary education in Braintree
- 7 Potential community use of playing fields

NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

- 8 Co-locating uses: higher-density residential, retail, education, flexible office space
- 9 Potential for mobility hub

HERITAGE

- 10 Enhanced setting for Moulsham & Gubbions Halls
- 11 Parkland environment

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- 12 Play areas and natural informal play opportunities on routes to school

STEWARDSHIP

- 13 Low-intensity management for wilder areas and habitats

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- 14 Multi-functional network provides amenity, active travel, open space, drainage, habitats, recreation, visual screening and links to wider countryside
- 15 New and enhanced native hedgerows and ecological buffers created

BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

- 16 Strategic drainage throughout through use of SuDS
- 17 Drainage corridors used for placemaking, habitat creation and active travel

BIODIVERSITY

- 18 Existing high value habitats retained Continuous green networks provided throughout to connect habitats
- 19 New habitats provided as part of parkland and strategic drainage network

HEALTH & WELLBEING

- 20 Walking and cycling networks prioritised to encourage healthy lifestyles
- 21 Potential for Health Centre within Neighbourhood Centre for new & existing population
- 22 Potential playing field provision

ACTIVE TRAVEL

- 23 Enhanced active travel links to Great Leighs village at A131 crossings
- 24 Cycleways and walking networks on desire lines, including enhanced underpass link for walking and cycling

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

- 25 Bus links to Braintree and Chelmsford within easy walking distance of homes
- 26 Public transport integrated with neighbourhood centre
- 27 Vehicle access from A131 and directed away from village Main Road

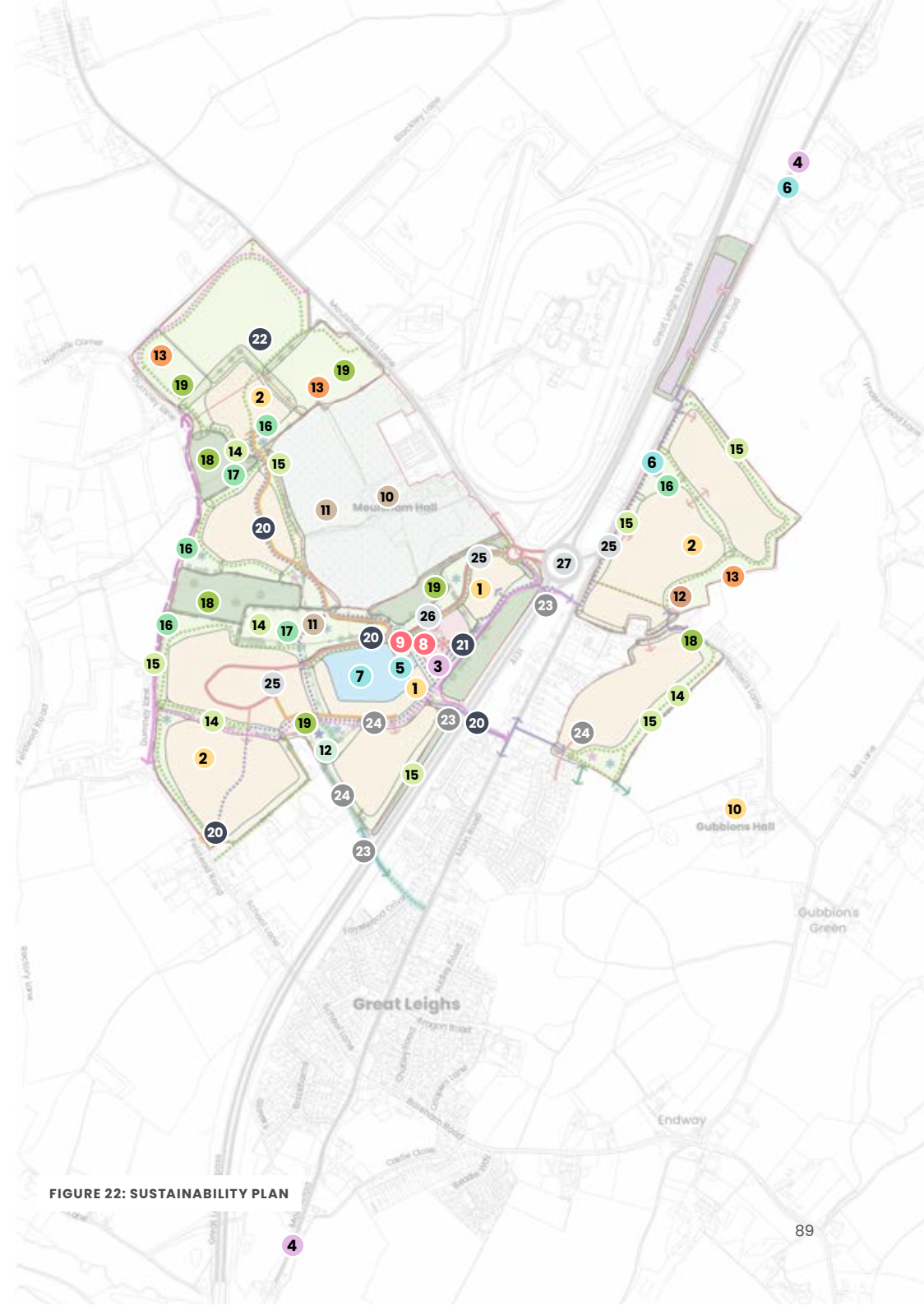


FIGURE 22: SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

Development Areas and Land Use

Development Areas and Land Use

Figure 23 identifies the potential development areas within the site. Most of the development areas in the broad location for growth are proposed for residential development with a neighbourhood centre and primary school.

Residential development

The Covid-19 Pandemic has led to lasting changes in the way that we use space in our homes such as for working from home. This underscores the importance of homes becoming more flexible and adaptable in how we use space.

Residential development, therefore, seeks to respond to these changes by providing a wide range of dwelling types and tenures across the site which are flexible and adaptable, and capable of meeting a wide range of needs. The mix also seeks to include self-build and forms of specialist residential accommodation. The mix responds to the requirements established in relevant policies of the Local Plan set out in Section 1.

The extent of residential development areas has been informed by constraints across the allocated sites, and subsequent strategies for drainage, landscape, ecology. Through this process, the development areas shown are considered to be of sufficient capacity to meet the levels of growth set out in Policies 7a, 7b and 7c.

Neighbourhood centre

The neighbourhood centre aims to create a focal point for planned growth and importantly, aims to meet the needs of existing residents in Great Leighs who currently rely on access to facilities outside the village in Great Notley and further afield. The neighbourhood centre

will be of a scale appropriate to this catchment and be located to be easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport whilst making appropriate provision for vehicular access and car parking. Preliminary consultation has sought feedback on the current offer of services in Great Leighs, which supports the analysis that there is limited provision and explored what the neighbourhood centre could offer and contribute to the sustainability of Great Leighs as a whole.

Policy requires provision for community, health care and retail with a main retail unit not exceeding 500 sqm gross floorspace. Within the mixed use development parcel, the composition and mix of neighbourhood centre uses will be determined in more detail. However, it is envisaged that development will seek to deliver:

- Flexible ground floor/commercial units providing opportunities for a range of uses that may potentially include local retail, cafes/restaurants, health and wellbeing centre and employment space in the form of serviced office space and/or support for homeworking. In terms of retail provision, the largest unit, not exceeding 500 sqm gross floorspace could accommodate a convenience store to serve Great Leighs.
- Potential community hall building, providing a hub for existing and new residents, which may be a function for community events.
- A high quality urban square providing a year round function as an informal space and providing opportunities for more formal events if required that is visually and physically linked to the entrance to the proposed primary school.
- Car parking that is designed to be integrated to be read visually as part of the urban square.
- Residential apartments and / or maisonettes to upper floors.



Primary school

Provision is made for a new primary school of at least 2.1ha to be co-located with early years provision. The Primary School will be located adjacent to the west of neighbourhood centre with the main school building and entrance intended to be located where it can be seen and accessed direct from the neighbourhood square and footpath and cycle network, particularly the connection from the Dog and Partridge pub via under the A131.

The location of the primary school is influenced in part by the requirement for adequate noise mitigation from the A131. Residential development is key to ensuring an adequate sound barrier, as informed by noise modelling by Ardent Consulting Engineers.

Another principle is to site the school entrance where it can be easily accessed from the proposed network of walking and cycling routes, particularly via the existing underpass, which will benefit from improvements and also a direct link proposed with the neighbourhood centre. Separated from the vehicular network, the location seeks to encourage more journeys to school by foot and cycle.

Proposals for the Primary School are to be supported with a Land Compliance Study, including a site suitability checklist, to demonstrate that the site is in a suitable location. The checklist criteria, together with advice from Essex County Council has also informed the location of the primary school site to ensure it is suitable. Exemplar Layouts for Education and Community Facilities, set out in the Essex County Council Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions (Essex County Council, 2019) have also informed the proposed location and shape of the school site.

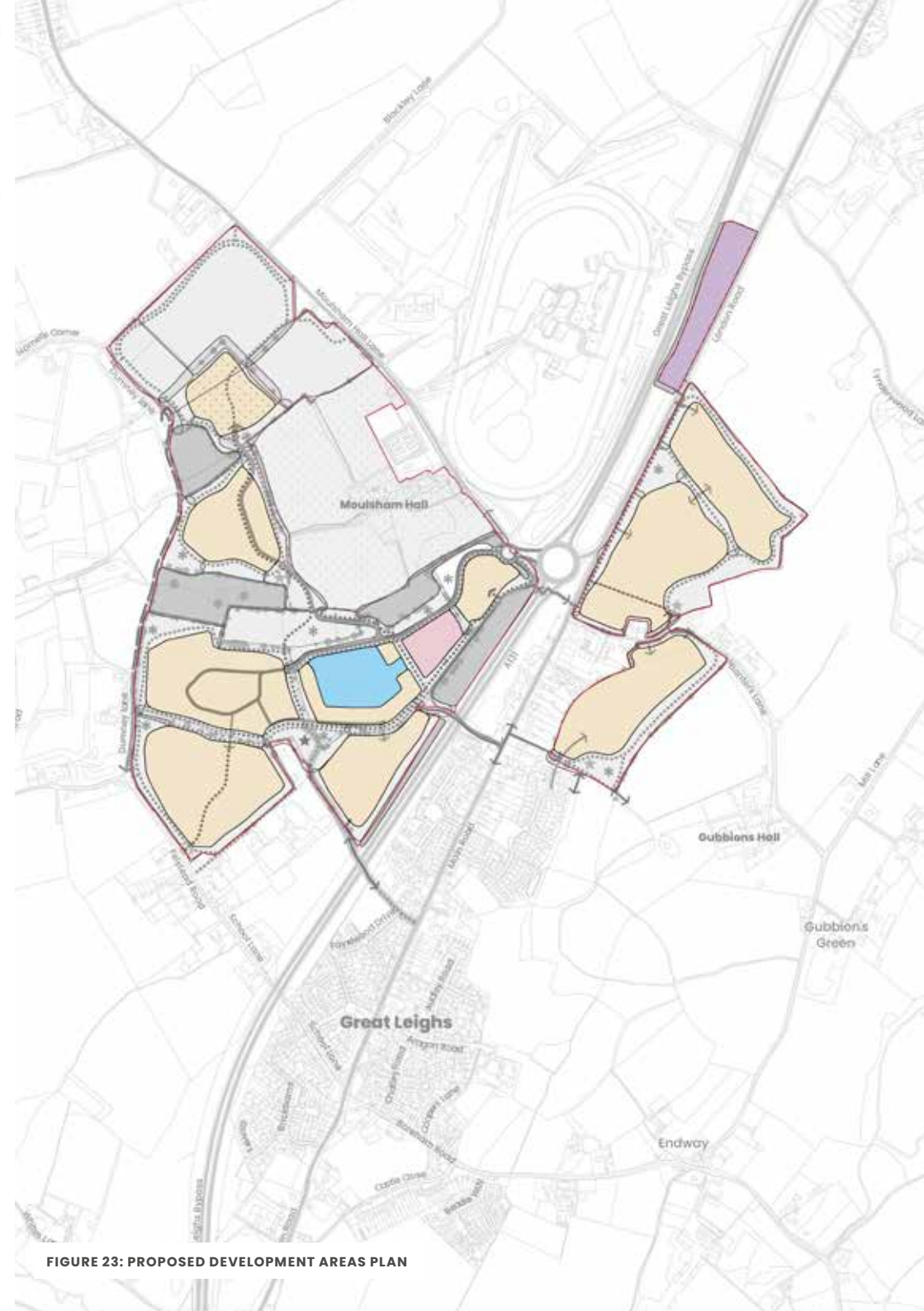


FIGURE 23: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AREAS PLAN

Location of the Travelling Showpersons Site

Site requirements

Policy requires the provision of five serviced plots for Travelling Showpeople. Taking into account key requirements, a preferred site has been identified on London Road. The preferred site was identified from seven possible options that were identified, as shown in Figure 24. All options were considered against criteria set out by the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain that are used to determine appropriate locations for Travelling Showpersons sites. In summary the criteria requires the site to:

- Be relatively flat.
- Have good vehicular access, suitable for large vehicles close to the main highway network, avoiding less suitable minor roads.
- Be accessible to schools and other community facilities.
- Ideally benefit from existing mature and natural landscaping to minimise visual impact.
- Not adversely impact on the amenities of existing or proposed adjacent residential properties.
- Be able to accommodate facilities that support the occupation of the site; and
- Avoid areas at high risk of flooding.

Preferred Site Option 7: Land off London Road

The identified location is considered to best meet the key location principles. Direct vehicular access from London Road – the former A131 is possible. Being outside the allocated sites, the location would be separated from both existing and future residential areas and, therefore, has the advantage of vehicle movements and activities on site having the least impact on residents of existing and new residential areas. The Masterplan Framework also shows how the site will be linked with a walking and cycling route on London Road from Great Leighs. This preferred option is supported by the Showmen's Guild.

Alternative Site Option 1: Land South of Banters Lane (Site 7c north east)

This site is one of the least suitable, being located adjacent to Banters Road, which is a narrow lane and would, therefore, be unsuitable for access for large vehicles. The site would be immediately adjacent to new residential properties, promoting a higher risk of amenity impacts.

Alternative Site Option 2: Land off London Road and north of Banters Lane (Site 7b south & 7c north)

This site lies adjacent to Main Road and London Road and opposite existing employment. Proximity to junctions including the A131 and Banters Lane may constrain opportunities for direct access onto the site for large vehicles, whilst avoiding Banters Lane. The site would also be immediately adjacent to new and existing residential properties, promoting a higher risk of amenity impacts.

Alternative Site Option 3: Land off London Road (Site 7b north)

Although this site could be served from London Road, it would lie immediately adjacent to new residential properties, promoting a higher risk of amenity impacts.

Alternative Site Option 4: Land off Moulsham Hall Lane (Site 7a south east)

Site 4 would benefit from access from the A131 roundabout via the vehicular entrance to the wider development at Site 7a and would be close to the proposed location of neighbourhood facilities. A site at this location, however, would undermine the opportunity to create an attractive gateway to a residential environment and neighbourhood centre at this most prominent part of Site 7a.

Alternative Site 5: Land off School Lane (7a south west)

Site 5 offers the benefit of being co-located with existing employment development but would be adjacent to new residential development. The site is also one of the most distant from the main highway network. Access via School Lane, being a narrow rural lane, would be unsuitable for large vehicles, as would the alternative option of enabling access via residential streets through much of Site 7a.

Alternative Site 6: Land north west of Moulsham Hall (Site 7a north)

Being elevated, Site 6 is in a prominent location promoting visual impact as a concern given its relationship with Moulsham Hall and its surrounding parkland. The site is also remote from the main highway network, requiring access either via Moulsham Hall Lane or through Site 7a.

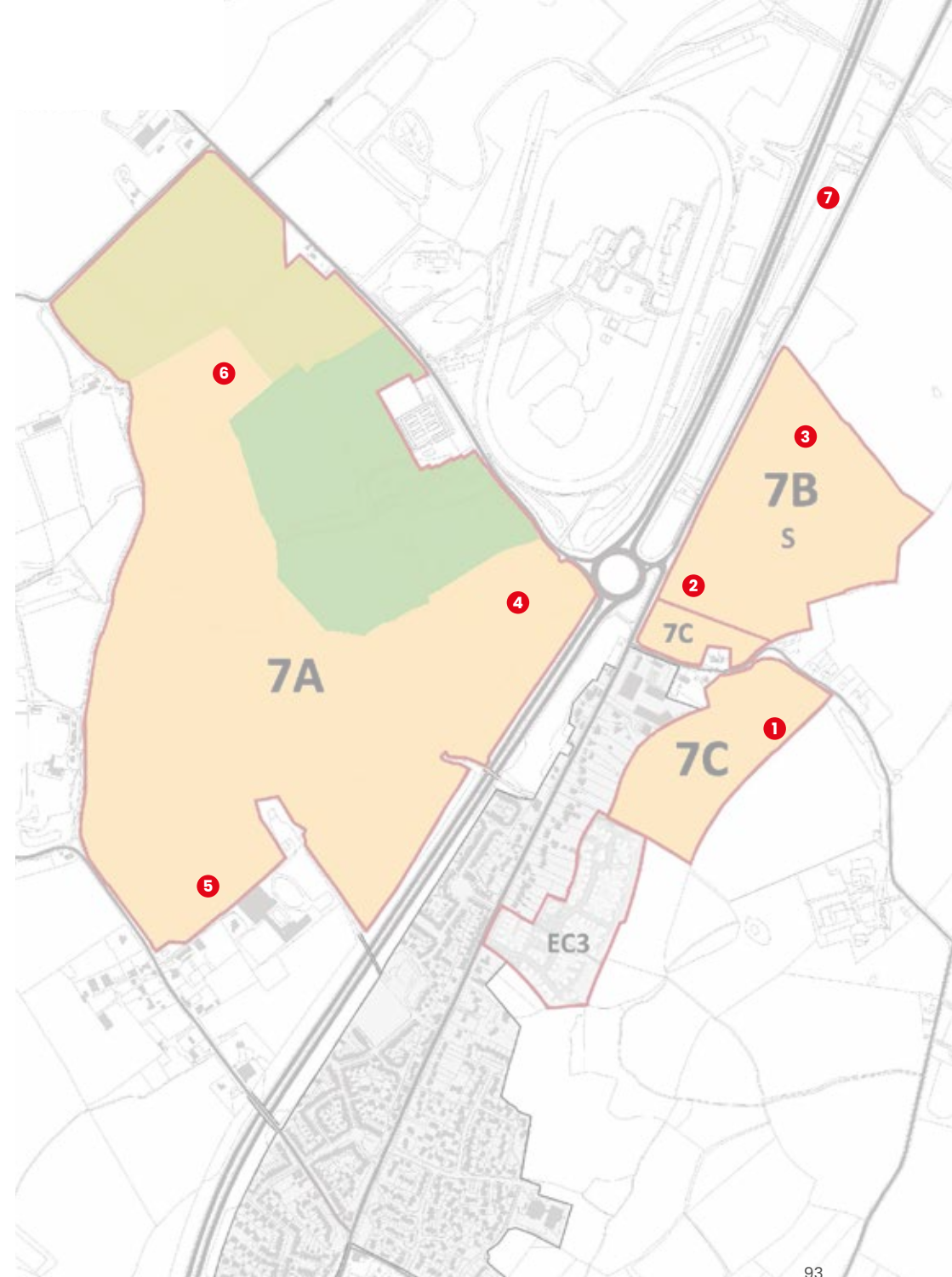


FIGURE 24: TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE POTENTIAL SITE LOCATIONS



Access and Movement

Pedestrian and Cycle Desire Routes

Desire Routes

A key objective of the Masterplan Framework is to maximise accessibility within and between the allocated sites and Great Leighs by enhancing walking and cycling, making full use of the opportunities presented through a number of connections available to the sites. This approach is fundamental if walking and cycling are to become a mode of choice for shorter local trips, and if development is to support more active and healthy lifestyles and achieve the sustainable development objectives for the development.

Sport England in its publication: Active Design, sets out Ten Principles for Active Design that promote activity, health and stronger communities. These ten principles also provide a context for guidance set out by Essex County Council in Essex Healthy Places Advice Notes for Planners Developers and Designers. The principles and guidance have informed the proposed network of walking and cycling routes and how it integrates with streets and the network of open spaces which will offer opportunities for play and informal recreation to further encourage healthy and active lifestyles. Figure 25 shows key desire routes for walking and cycling that have informed proposals for pedestrian and cycle links and crossings.

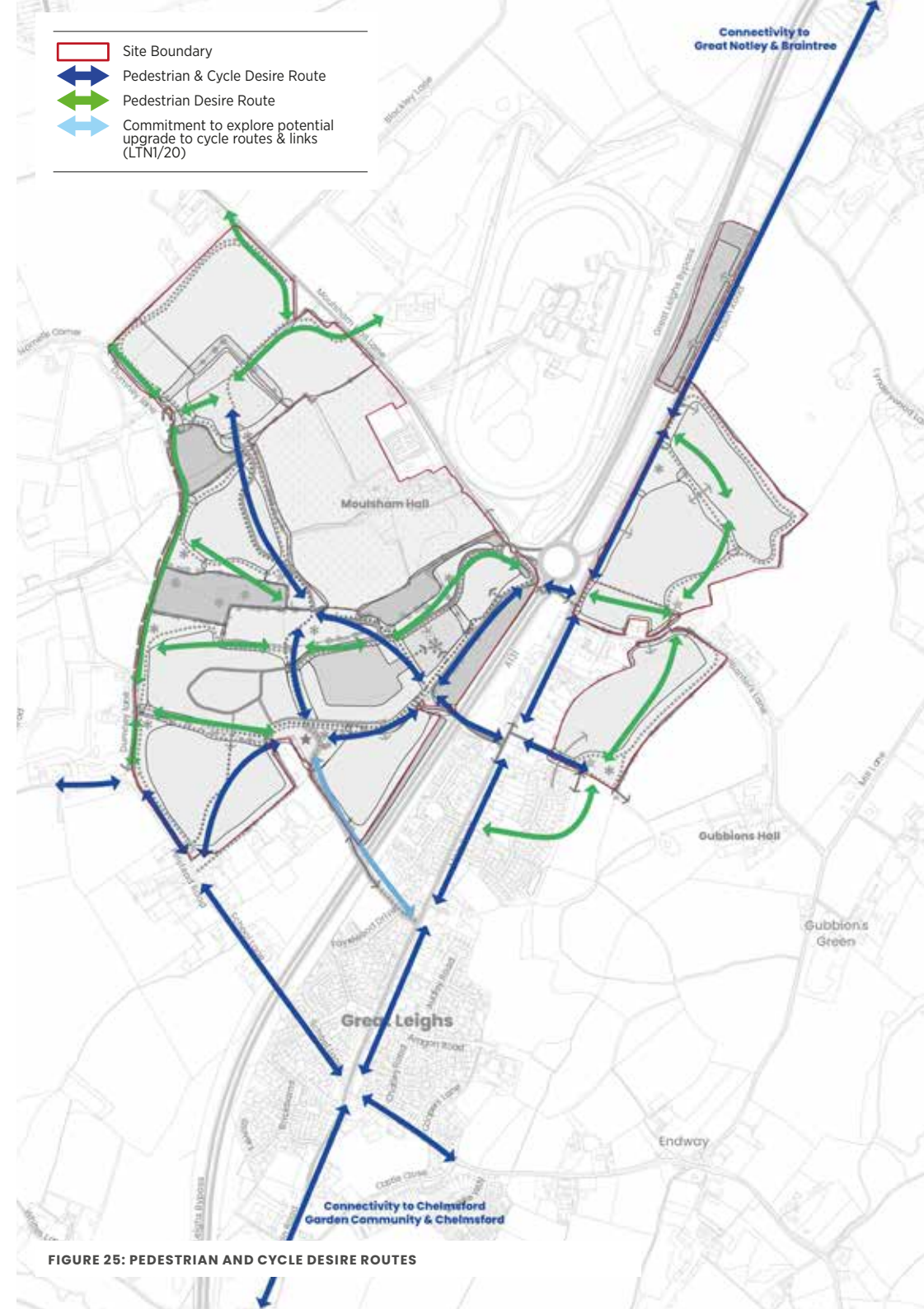


FIGURE 25: PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE DESIRE ROUTES

Pedestrian and cycle routes & links

Provision for walking and cycling is a priority for the broad location for growth, which benefits from a good number of connections in the form of the existing street network and footpath connections and the wide Public Rights of Way network. The network should also support wider efforts to improve connectivity towards Great Notley and Braintree to the north and Chelmsford Garden Community and Chelmsford to the south.

The masterplan seeks to build on these to create a comprehensive network of active travel routes which are shown in Figure 26. These include a combination of on and off road cycle routes. Public Rights of Way are proposed to be upgraded, to be surfaced and lit.

Adopted pedestrian and cycle routes are to be LTN 1/20 compliant where possible and desirable. These are shown on the Masterplan as blue routes in Figure 20 and related drawings in Figures 26 and 27, and will play a role in providing cycle and pedestrian connectivity between homes and local facilities. Other pedestrian routes are shown as green routes that will play a more recreational function to support active lifestyles and therefore, will also be designed to allow recreational cycling.

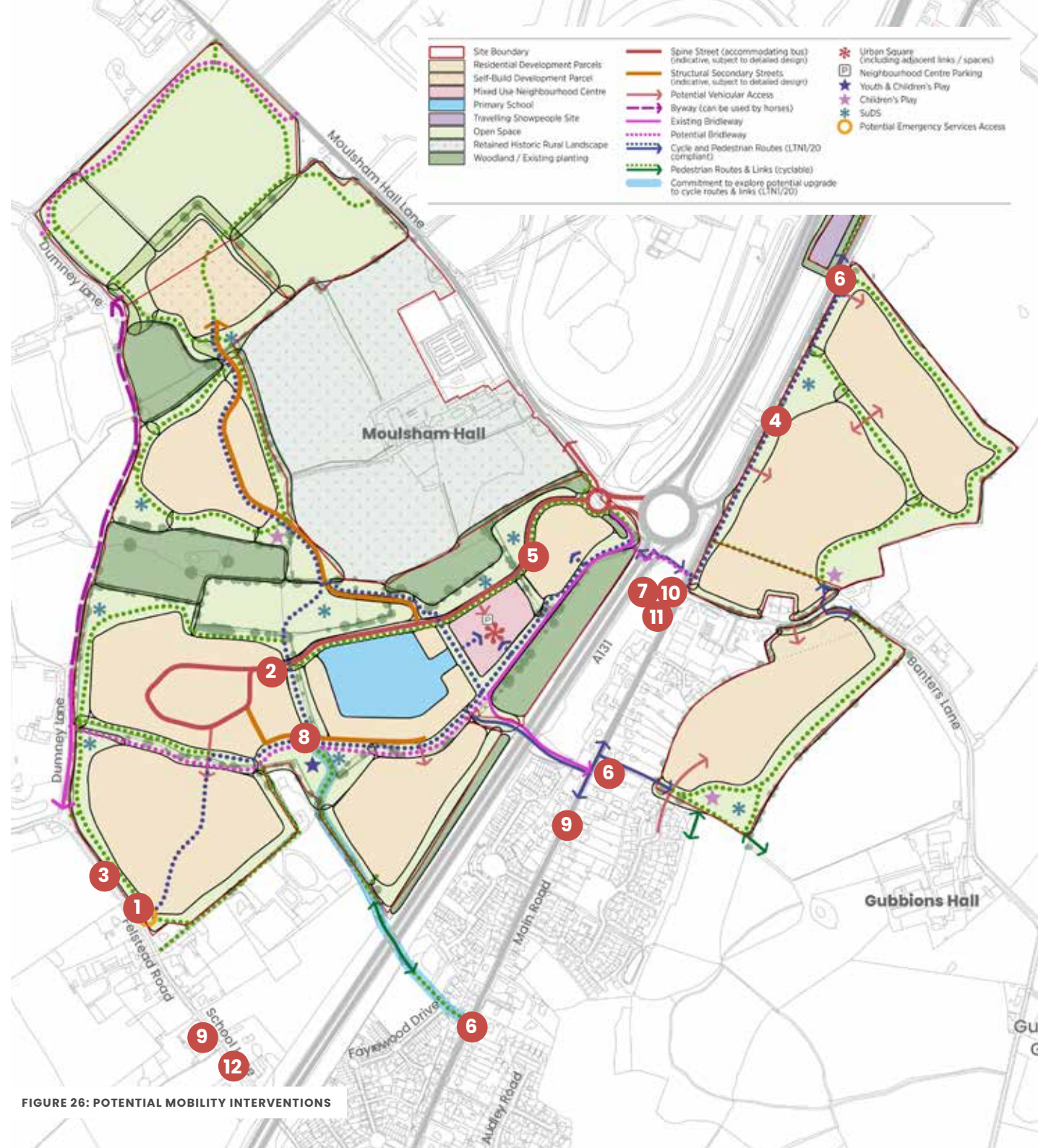
Pedestrian and cycle crossings

Integrating the proposed development into the existing settlement is essential, especially with a neighbourhood centre being a key land use that will serve the village as well as the new communities. Attractive, safe and convenient opportunities to cross the A131 to Site 7a will therefore be important, as will connections across the Main Road and London Road corridor.

The overbridges at School Lane and Chase Side Bridge and underpass leading from Main Road and the Dog and Partridge pub provide opportunities for creating direct, safe and attractive grade separated crossings to access Site 7a with potential design solutions including:

- **School Lane** – forming part of Regional Cycle Route 50 provides an opportunity for cycle and pedestrian access into the site from the south, supported with improved provision for cycling on School Lane.
- **Chase Side Bridge** – forming part of a Public Right of Way which provides recreational access from Main Road into the site and wider Public Rights of Way network. Further investigation work is to be undertaken to explore in more detail the feasibility and viability of improving the existing Chase Side Bridge structure for cycling and for a controlled crossing on Main Road.
- **Underpass** – upgrading this bridleway crossing to integrate a pedestrian and cycle route alongside the retained bridleway, with improvements to the underpass and approaches with reductions in gradients to create an attractive link between Great Leighs and the new neighbourhood centre and primary school. This link will be further enhanced with a controlled crossing of Main Road to facilitate an onward cycle and pedestrian connection to Site 7c.

An additional crossing opportunity has been identified at grade at the southern arm of the roundabout of the A131, Main Road and Moulsham Hall Lane. Further discussions with officers both at Chelmsford City Council and Essex County Council have resolved that a crossing may take the form of a signalised Pegasus Crossing. Provision of a crossing would allow for improved access towards the neighbourhood centre from Site 7b, as an alternative to the grade separated underpass route. On London Road, an opportunity for a controlled crossings has been identified to enable pedestrians and cyclists to access the proposed Travelling Showpersons Site.



Potential Mobility Responses



Access and Movement

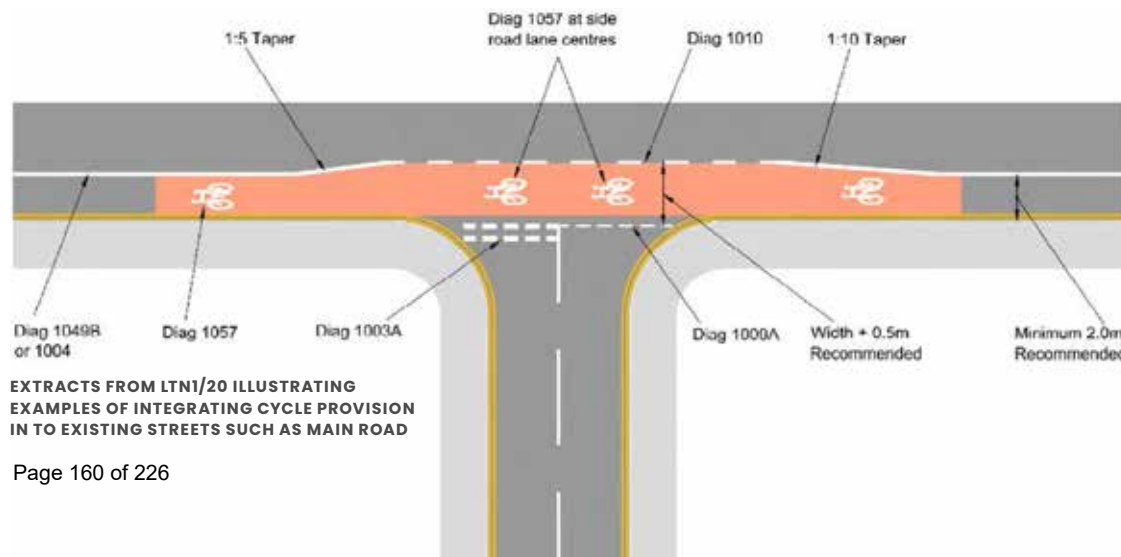
Provision for walking and cycling is a priority for the broad location for growth. In this context, the Masterplan Framework seeks to make the best of existing connections to integrate development into the existing settlement. Development also finally has the opportunity to realise the untapped benefits of the A131 Great Leighs bypass by exploiting the potential of Main Road to become a more pedestrian and cycling oriented corridor. Potential improvements include the integration of advisory cycle lanes, attractive pavements and convenient crossing points and affording cyclists priority at junctions.

The images are examples of potential improvements that could be delivered. The illustrative perspective, conveys how a series of complementary measures could be delivered on Main Road that would allow walking and cycling to become modes of choice for local trips.

Access to Sites 7a and 7c, connect to each other and the wider village on Main Road adjacent to the Dog and Partridge Pub. Forming part of a key link between village, proposed neighbourhood centre and primary school, this is an important location to create a convenient and attractive crossing point.

- 1 Centre line removed as psychological traffic calming and enable space for cycle lanes
- 2 When vehicles are passing, one or both vehicle may need to pull in to their respective near-side advisory cycle lanes – providing further safe and appropriate traffic calming
- 3 Cycle lane introduced (ideally min. 2m in width) to both sides of carriageway
- 4 Opportunity for crossing of Main Road to be introduced, providing safe and controlled or prioritised crossing and additional speed reduction feature
- 5 Local maintenance of landscaping along the edge of footpaths along Main Road will help ensure good quality footways are provided

Note: Based on cycle lane principles as set out in LTNI/20, Section 6.4.





ILLUSTRATIVE PERSPECTIVE OF POTENTIAL MAIN ROAD SOLUTION

- ▬ Site Boundary
- ▬ Spine Street (accommodating bus)
(indicative, subject to detailed design)
- ▬ Structural Secondary Streets
(indicative, subject to detailed design)
- ➔ Potential Vehicular Access
- ▬ Byway (can be used by horses)
- ▬ Existing Bridleway
- ⋯ Potential Bridleway
- ▬ Cycle and Pedestrian Routes (LTN1/20
compliant)
- ▬ Pedestrian Routes & Links (cyclable)
- ▬ Commitment to explore potential
upgrade to cycle routes & links
(LTN1/20)
- Potential Emergency Services Access
- London Road / Main Road Highway
Junction Improvements

Vehicular Access

Figure 27 shows the key vehicular access points. Access to much of Site 7a is to be provided from the A131 roundabout that serves Moulsham Hall Lane. The access will serve all development parcels. Access to 7b and the adjoining northern part of Site 7c is shown from London Road at two points. An access from Banter's Lane is proposed to serve a modest level of development in site 7c to the south of Banter's Lane, whilst the majority of development of the remaining site between Banter's Lane and Site 7d, developed by Bellway will be accessed by extending the existing residential street from Site 7d which is accessed from Main Road. The proposed Travelling Showpeople site will be served from London Road via a single vehicular access.

Sites 7a, 7b and 7c will each be served by a hierarchy of streets with the range of typologies being appropriate to the scale of each site whilst being able to achieve good placemaking objectives. Site 7a for instance is of a scale necessary to integrate a primary street network of a standard that can accommodate bus services. Streets are also anticipated to pass through parts of the site where sensitive edge treatments aim to reflect their immediate surroundings. A key principle guiding the street layout and wider movement network is to minimise the need to cut through trees and hedgerows as detailed in the Ecology Strategy.

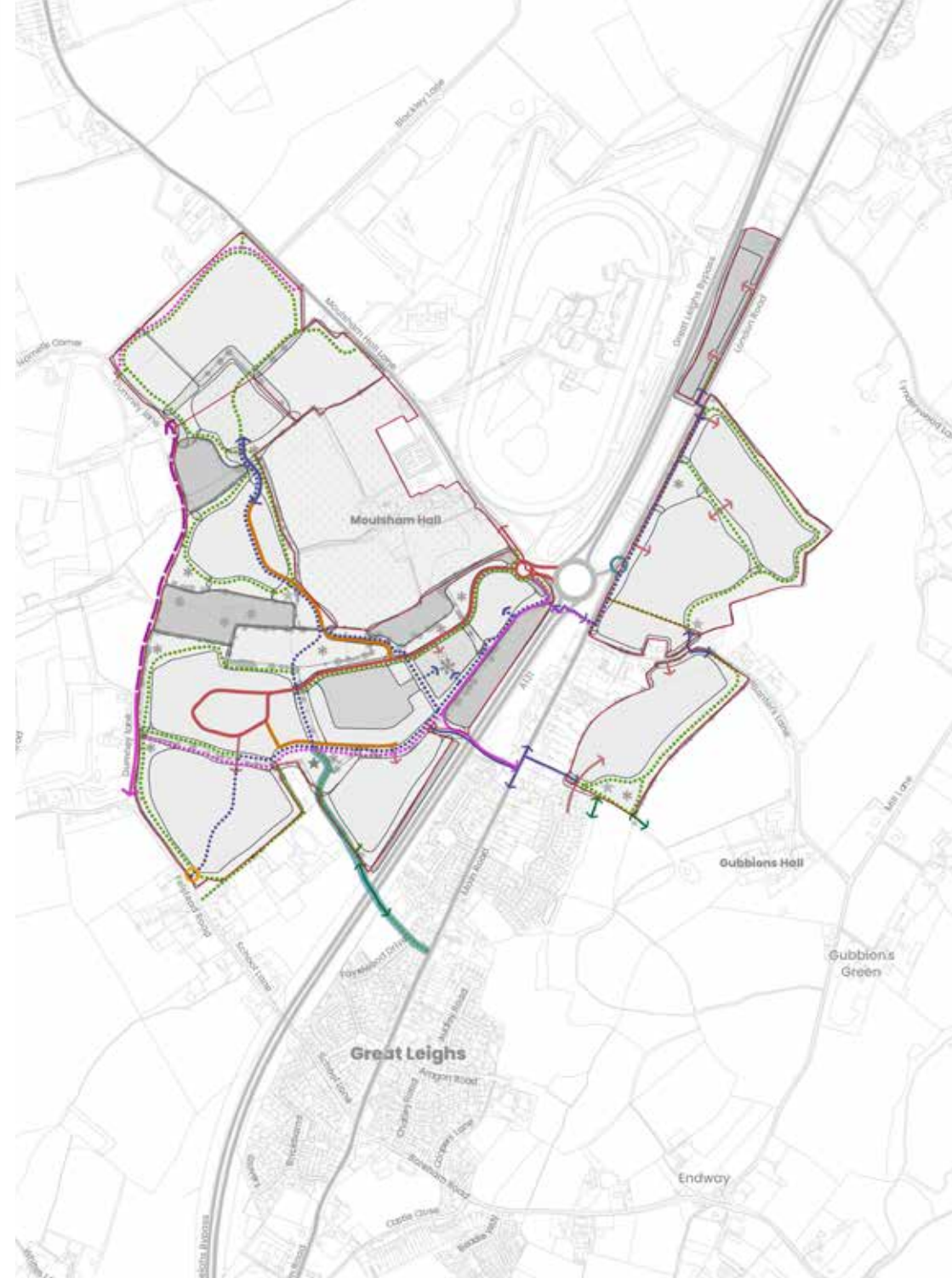


FIGURE 27: PROPOSED ACCESS AND MOVEMENT PLAN



- Site Boundary
- Proposed Bus Route
- Proposed Bus Stop with 5 minutes (300m) Walking Distance
- Existing Bus Route
- Existing Bus Stop with 5 minutes (300m) Walking Distance

Bus Strategy

As part of the development, the following measures to integrate bus services are emerging in order to support a shift away from private car use:

- With a primary street network, enabling bus services to serve Site 7a with an integrated bus loop within the site as shown in Figure 28.
- Provision of an additional bus stops on the London Road that is able to serve Sites 7b and 7c and the Travelling Showpersons site
- Diversions of bus services and potential provision of additional services to serve Site 7a are anticipated to be phased in to reflect the growing population, thus growing in frequency, initially from a limited number of existing services to a more significant proportion, over time, achieving a service frequency that a greater population catchment will support.

Provision of Travel Packs for all residents will be offered to include sustainable travel information for walking cycling and public transport.

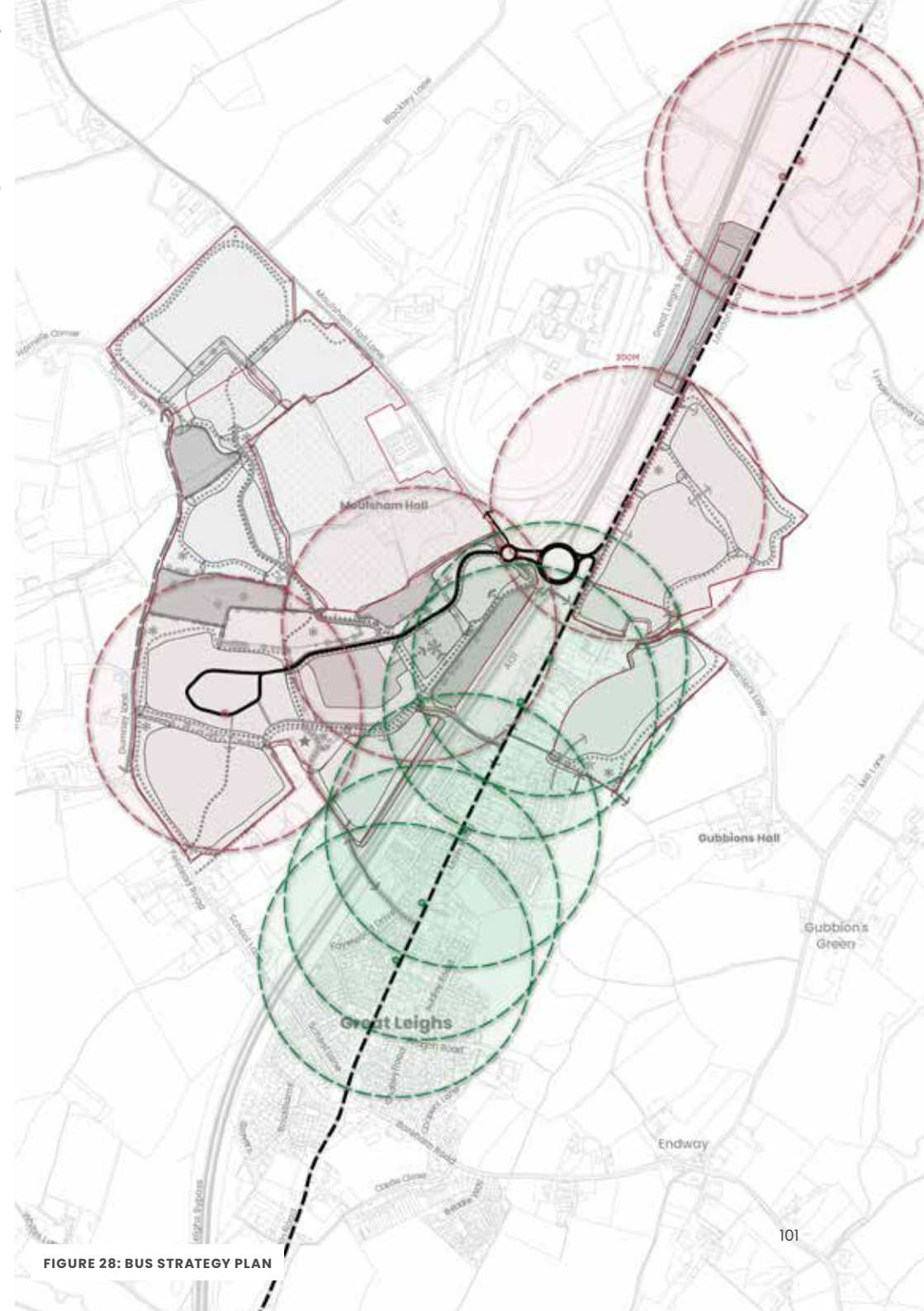


FIGURE 28: BUS STRATEGY PLAN



Open Space Provision

Open Space & Recreation

There is scope to provide a comprehensive network of open spaces that is integrated into the wider green infrastructure network.

Current standards require:

- 0.8 ha of Accessible Local Open Space per 1,000 population to comprise amenity green space, allotments and play spaces;
- 1.0ha of Natural / Semi-Natural Green Space per 1,000 population, with the quality and type to be determined through the planning process for each site. Natural / Semi natural green space may form part of a sustainable drainage system.
- 1.65ha of Strategic Open Space per 1,000 population to comprise parks and recreation grounds; and



The general distribution is shown in Figure 29. Overall the strategy envisages:

- **Informal Open Space** – this comprises retained and enhanced semi natural grassland that structures the development at the edges between development parcels and include areas for informal recreation. These areas integrate the footpath, cycle and bridleway networks and function to provide access and offer opportunities for recreational routes to encourage active lifestyles. At the northern end of the site, it is proposed that this area will include allow for passive and active informal recreation wider features such as rustic trim trails and space for informal play.
- **Retained Historic Rural Landscape** – this comprises the fields that surround Moulsham Hall, comprise of grasslands and provide an immediate setting.



- **Woodland and Existing Planting** – this comprises the retained Phyllis Currie/Dumney Land woods to the west, and woodland that forms part of the east west corridor, and existing planted associated with the A131 corridor.
- **Children's Play (LEAP)** and combined **Children's and Youth Play (NEAP)** to form the Accessible Local Open Space component. These play spaces are to be distributed around the site to give good walkable access to users of all ages. The quantum of open space proposed and the content of the play spaces will be compliant with the requirements of the relevant planning policies. Play facilities would be grouped and form part of larger network of multi-functional open spaces. Natural play will be encouraged, and the use of natural materials favoured. Opportunities for informal play throughout the site will be maximised.

Off-site provision is proposed for formal sport and recreation and for the provision of allotments and community gardens.



FIGURE 29: OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION



Residential Density

Figure 30 identifies the principles of how residential density could be structured, as they will play an important role to:

- Support the variances in characters to enhance sense of place and local identity.
- Allowing development to respond to constraints and relate to context.
- Allow for a wide range of dwelling types to be accommodated and located appropriately to meet household needs and provide choice.

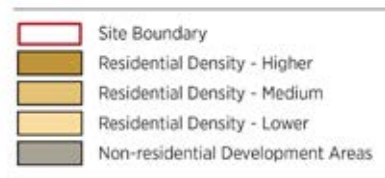
Three broad density types are proposed within the masterplan; the principles guiding their characteristics and location within the masterplan are described here.

Residential Density Higher

Higher density development is to be focussed at the neighbourhood centre and at the eastern edge of the Primary School to frame the school entrance. Subject to further testing, residential density is envisaged to be equivalent to over 50 dwellings per hectare. This will allow for a residential mix that flexible enough to accommodate an appropriate composition of townhouses, apartments and maisonettes.

Residential Density Medium

Medium density development is anticipated to be found across much of the broad location for growth except, in general terms, at locations adjacent to the sensitive edges where lower density development will be focussed. This area is likely to contain a broader mix favouring detached and semi-detached typologies and some terraced dwellings and potentially apartments. Subject to further design testing, residential density is envisaged as being in the broad range of 31-40 dwellings per hectare. Alternative residential, uses such as for an integrated retirement community, may deliver higher densities, which will be guided by wider design principles such as with heights to ensure that development avoids significant impacts on overall built form / massing.



Residential Density Lower

Lower residential density is anticipated to be found adjacent to edges of the site that are more sensitive, such as the western edge adjacent to School Lane and Dumney Lane, edges proximate to or visible from Moulsham Hall and the eastern edge of site 7c. Development in lower density areas is likely to favour a greater mix of detached dwellings, although other typologies may be included if the overall impacts on the built form / massing are acceptable, again using height as one of the key parameters. Subject to further design testing, residential density is envisaged to be up to 30 dwellings per hectare.



FIGURE 30: PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DENSITY PLAN

Building Heights

Figure 31 identifies the maximum building heights to be achieved across all of the development parcels in the broad location for growth. Building heights play an important role to:

- Support variances in character to enhance the sense of place and local identity and enhance the legibility of development;
- Allow development to respond to constraints and relate to context;
- Support the approach towards densities, in essence with greater heights allowed for areas to be developed to medium and higher densities;
- Allow for a range of dwelling types to be accommodated and located appropriately to meet household needs and provide choice, including 3 storey town houses and apartments.

In this context, a maximum height of up to 12.5m has been established which broadly equates to the development of three storey homes and non-residential development of up to three storeys.

As shown in Figure 31, building heights, in the neighbourhood centre and at the eastern edge of the primary school, development will be permitted up to three storeys, aligning with the higher densities focussed at the neighbourhood centre as the key mixed use focus of the development.

In the wider residential parcels, as shown in Figure 31 it is envisaged that the majority of new dwellings will be two storeys, with smaller proportion of dwellings developed to heights of 2.5 storeys. As suggested in Figure 31, there are potential locations within these parcels where heights of up to three storeys may be appropriate.

Figure 31 also shows areas where the development up to a maximum of 2 storeys or equivalent will be permitted – these are identified at the more sensitive edges of development that have a wider rural interface towards Felstead Road and Dumney Lane.

The western edge of the northernmost parcel is shown where development up to a maximum of 1.5 storeys will be permitted in proximity to the Grade II Listed Triceratops on Dumney Lane.

Actual building heights and locations in the context of sensitive receptors (Listed Buildings) will be tested and determined by technical input through planning application preparation which will include Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments.

- Site Boundary
- Up to maximum 1.5 stories or equivalent (7m)
- Up to maximum 2 storeys or equivalent (9m)
- Up to maximum 2.5 storeys or equivalent (9.5m) with some three storey or equivalent (11m) elements
- Up to maximum 3 storeys or equivalent (12.5m)
- * Potential location of key buildings up to maximum 3 storeys or equivalent (12.5m)

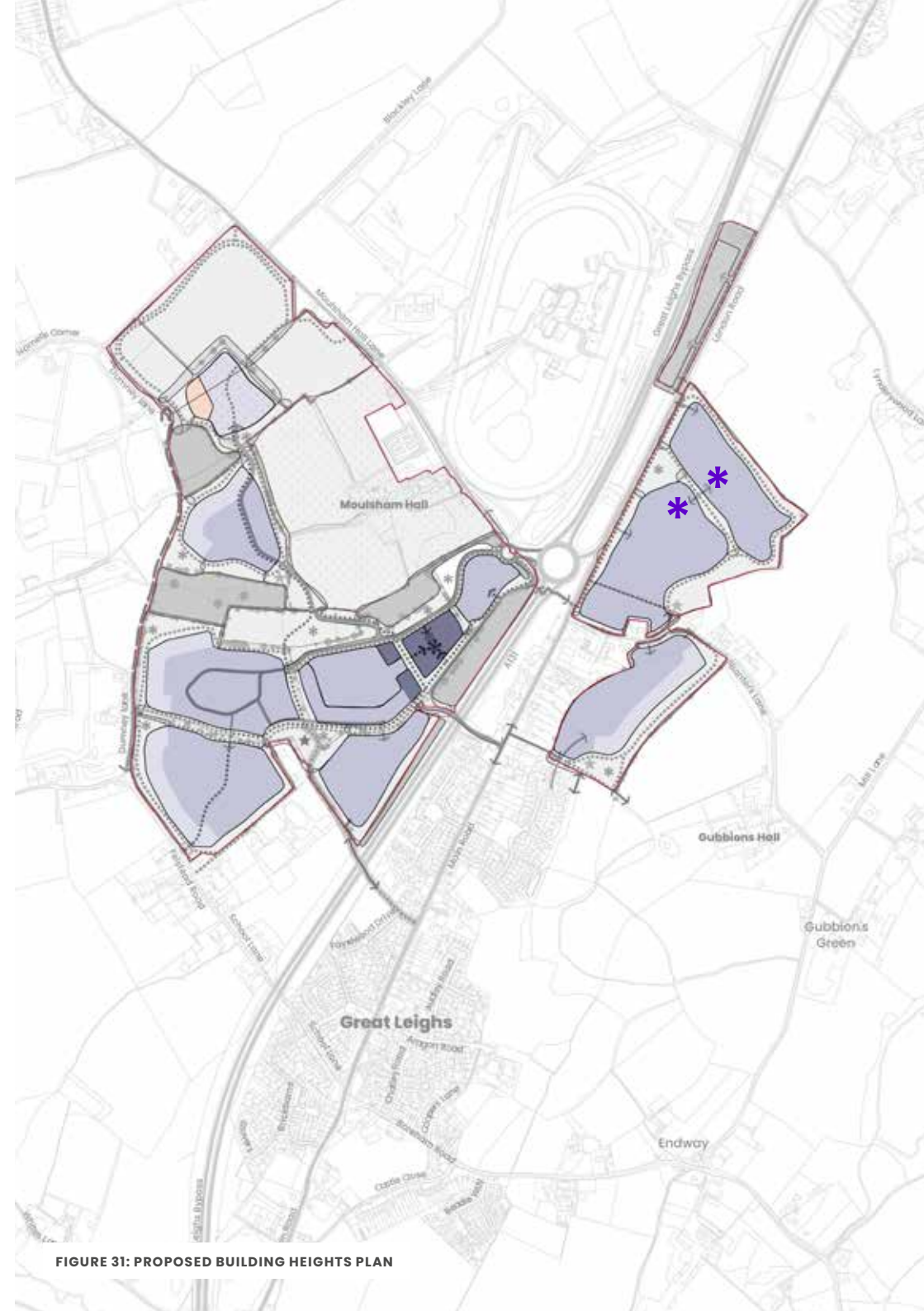


FIGURE 31: PROPOSED BUILDING HEIGHTS PLAN

Character

As guided by the Essex Design Guide, the wider context of landscape, built form, heritage features and character have contributed to the form and character envisaged for development at Great Leighs. The aspirations have also been inspired by exemplars in Chelmsford and more widely where they are considered to be positive for good place making.

Rather than prescribing any particular detailed approaches at this time, this masterplan seeks to set the tone to guide the development of more detailed design principles that will ensure that the Vision for Great Leighs can be met.

The overriding principle is that development should be of today and intrinsic to evolving the character of Great Leighs in this part of Chelmsford. Whilst there is a great deal of variance, common themes have been distilled which, alongside wider exemplars, have informed these emerging overall principles:



Creating development that is well structured, with patterns of blocks, streets and hard and soft spaces, informed by their relationship and connectivity with Great Leighs, wider landscape, ecology and setting of surrounding heritage features.



Creating traditional built forms that are domestically scaled with pitched / hipped roofs. Buildings of greater mass, such as the school and in the neighbourhood centre, will be broken down through design treatments to convey a finer grain.



Linking the structuring of densities and building heights to the hierarchy of streets, spaces, including gateways focal points and sensitive edges.



Similarly considering how residential forms – detached, semi-detached and terraced forms, are composed to reinforce the structuring of streets and spaces.



Integration of car parking into built form (e.g. car parking barns, detached, linked or integral garages, where appropriate).



Encouraging architectural features and treatments that are both contemporary and traditional designs provided their composition contributes positively to the character of development as a whole.



A materials strategy that reflects the vernacular in this part of Chelmsford – red brick, render, weatherboard cladding.



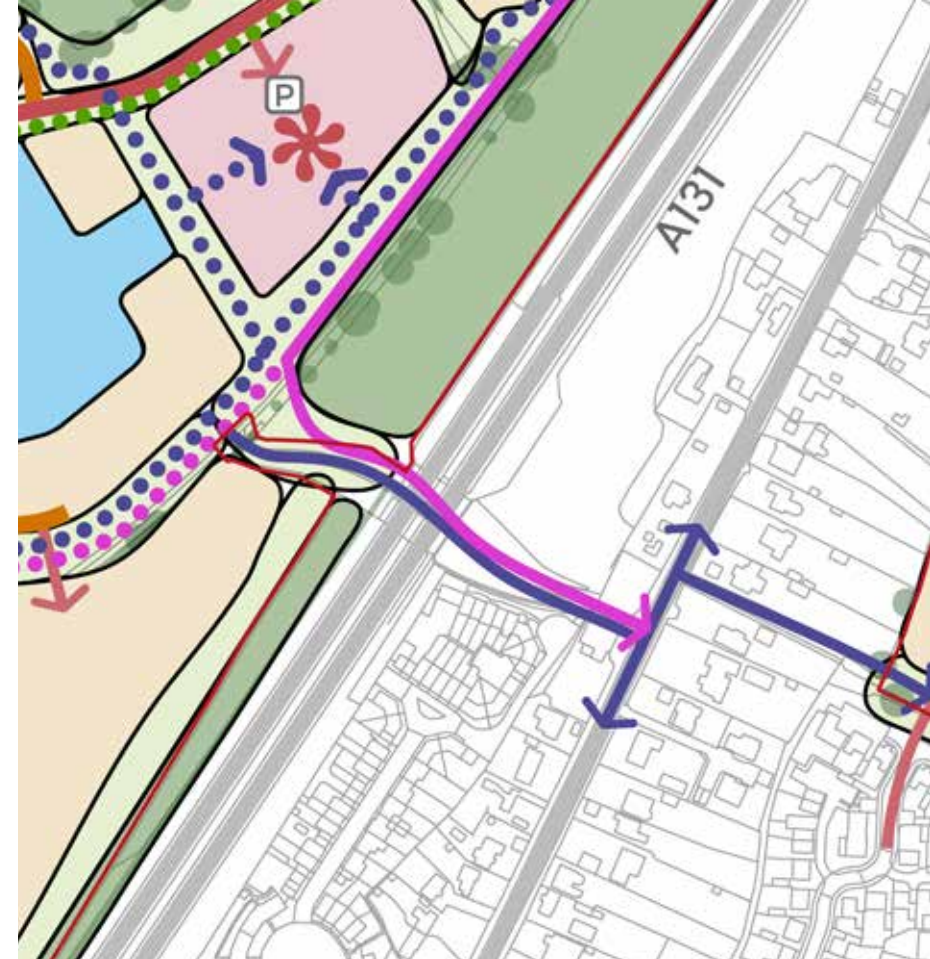


Creating an integrated community hub

The link between Great Leighs and the neighbourhood square

Leading from Main Road adjacent to the Dog and Partridge Pub, via the underpass to the proposed neighbourhood square, this link is offers significant potential to be the primary pedestrian and cycle connection between Great Leighs the new primary school and neighbourhood centre. The proposals seek to improve gradients where possible alongside high quality landscape and surface treatments.

Figure 32 illustrates the key design components that could be explored at the detailed design stage, subject to agreement with the adjacent landowner.



EXISTING APPROACH TO UNDERPASS FROM MAIN ROAD



- 1 Link towards Main Street, Dog & Partridge Pub and wider existing village
- 2 Improved lighting to underpass connecting through to neighbourhood centre, primary school and wider development/green infrastructure
- 3 Natural surveillance provided through thinned existing vegetation from existing properties
- 4 High quality hard and soft landscape features to create quality environment
- 5 Potential for feature steps to add variety and interest for access
- 6 Improved lighting to provide safe environment at night
- 7 Potential for curved alignment to help achieve best possible gradient and add visual interest
- 8 Opportunity for community engagement in detailed scheme design that could include a community art project

FIGURE 32: ILLUSTRATIVE PERSPECTIVE OF UNDERPASS LINK BETWEEN GREAT LEIGHS AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

Noise Mitigation

The noise survey and modelling carried out by Ardent Consulting Engineers, has been critical in informing the master plan as it has evolved.

The survey and modelling outcome have played a critical role in informing the location of noise sensitive uses. Although the Council's Masterplanning Principles Documents (November 2021) had envisaged the school being located adjacent to the A131, the location is further north from the A131. The school is also to be separated by residential development. Noise testing of this scenario finds that these measures are appropriate.

Noise mitigation is also proposed in the form of providing an acoustic barrier adjacent to the A131 corridor. In addition to providing adequate noise abatement, a key aim is for this acoustic feature to be successfully integrated visually the site, and this will be achieved, through the barrier design and 'layered landscaping'

In terms of design, the barrier will comprise a 1.5m landscaped bund together with a 2.5m willow weave acoustic fence. Willow weave fencing has been chosen specifically due to its potential to offer healthy and vigorous growing environment for climber plants.

The 'layered landscape' comprises a combination of existing retained landscape adjacent to the A131 and additional landscaping between the acoustic barrier and new development or elsewhere to further filter views of this feature, which will inherently become a green feature in itself.

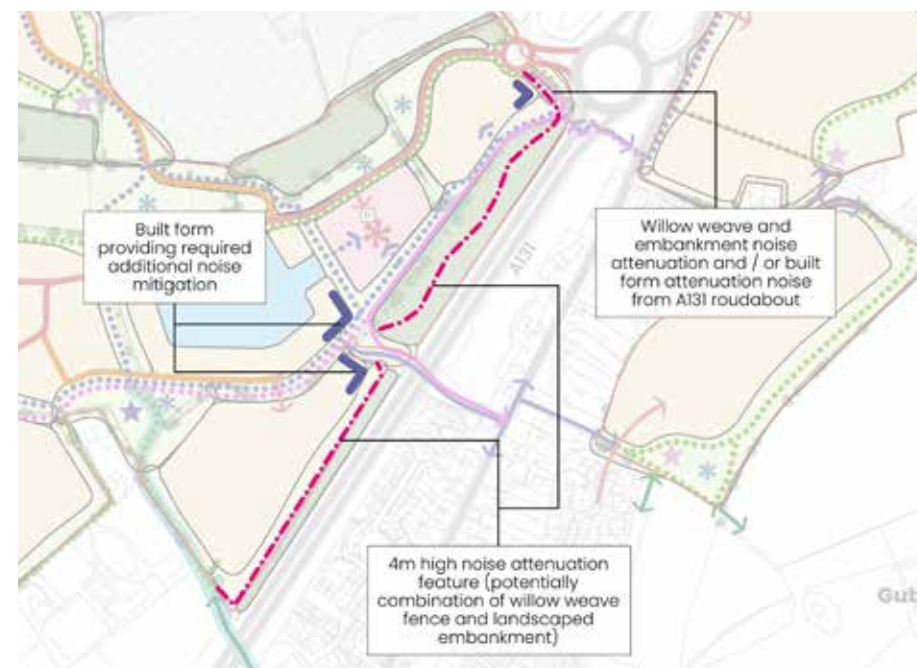


FIGURE 33: NOISE ATTENUATION FEATURES

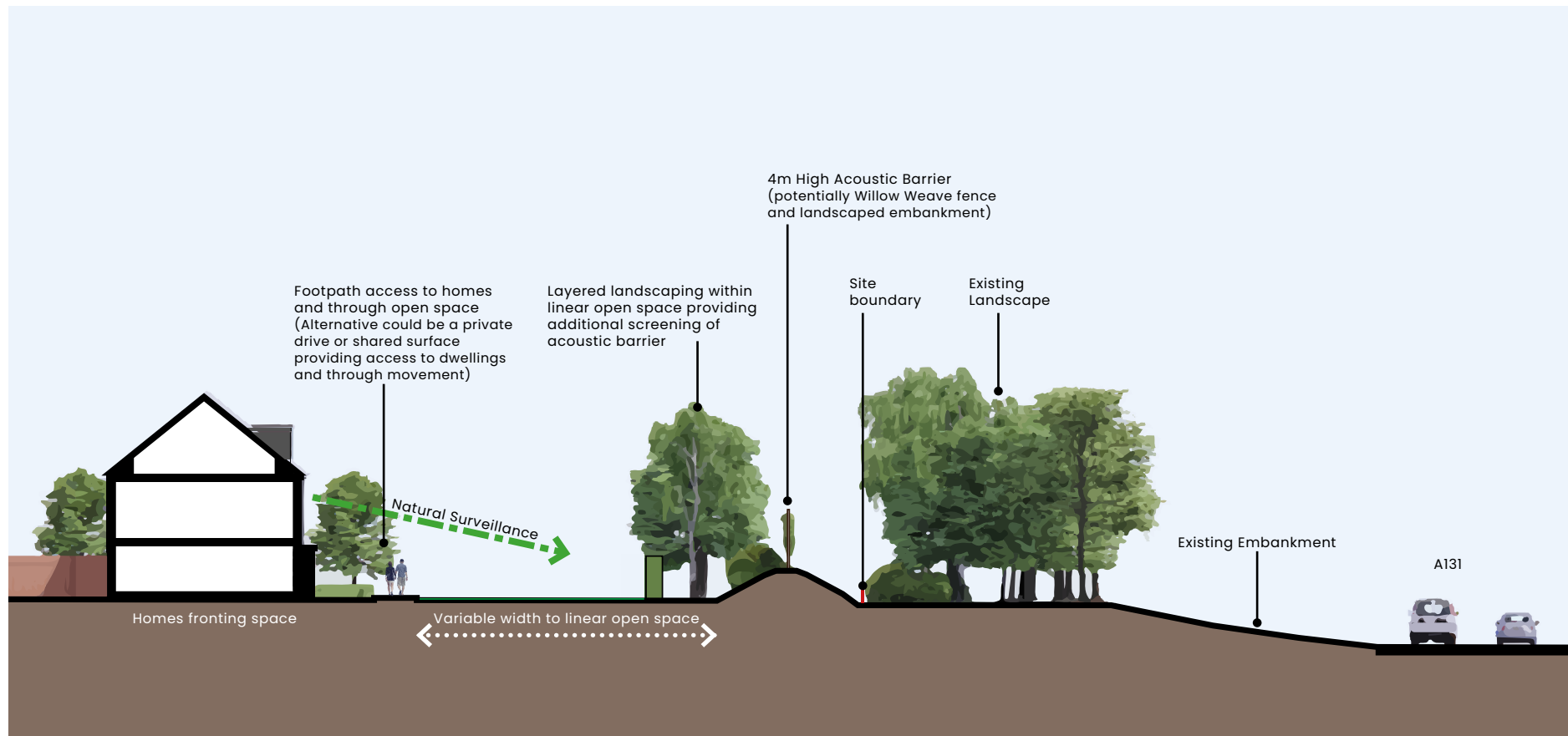


FIGURE 34: CROSS-SECTION ILLUSTRATING RELATIONSHIP OF DEVELOPMENT EDGE WITH ACOUSTIC BARRIER



Indicative Phasing

Figure 34 indicates the sequencing of broad development, infrastructure and green infrastructure areas and is guided on the areas of land that are likely to become available following infrastructure delivery, including:

- **Phase 1A** – The northernmost parcel in Site 7b and Travelling Showpersons Site, together with related green infrastructure, vehicle, cycle and pedestrian connections and crossing of Main Road to serve the Travelling Showpersons Site.
- **Phase 1B** – The central element of Site 7a, including, the residential parcel adjacent to the access from Moulsham Hall Lane, neighbourhood centre, residential area enclosing the primary school site and residential parcel to the west of the site adjacent to Dumney Lane. Enhancements to the fields surrounding Moulsham Hall form part of this phase, alongside the delivery of green infrastructure and vehicle, cycle and pedestrian access, equestrian links, including improvement to the A130 underpass via the Dog and Partridge Public House, controlled crossing of Main Road, and Pegasus crossing of the A130. The site for the primary school will be made available in this phase with the exact timing of the school's delivery to be determined by the education authority.

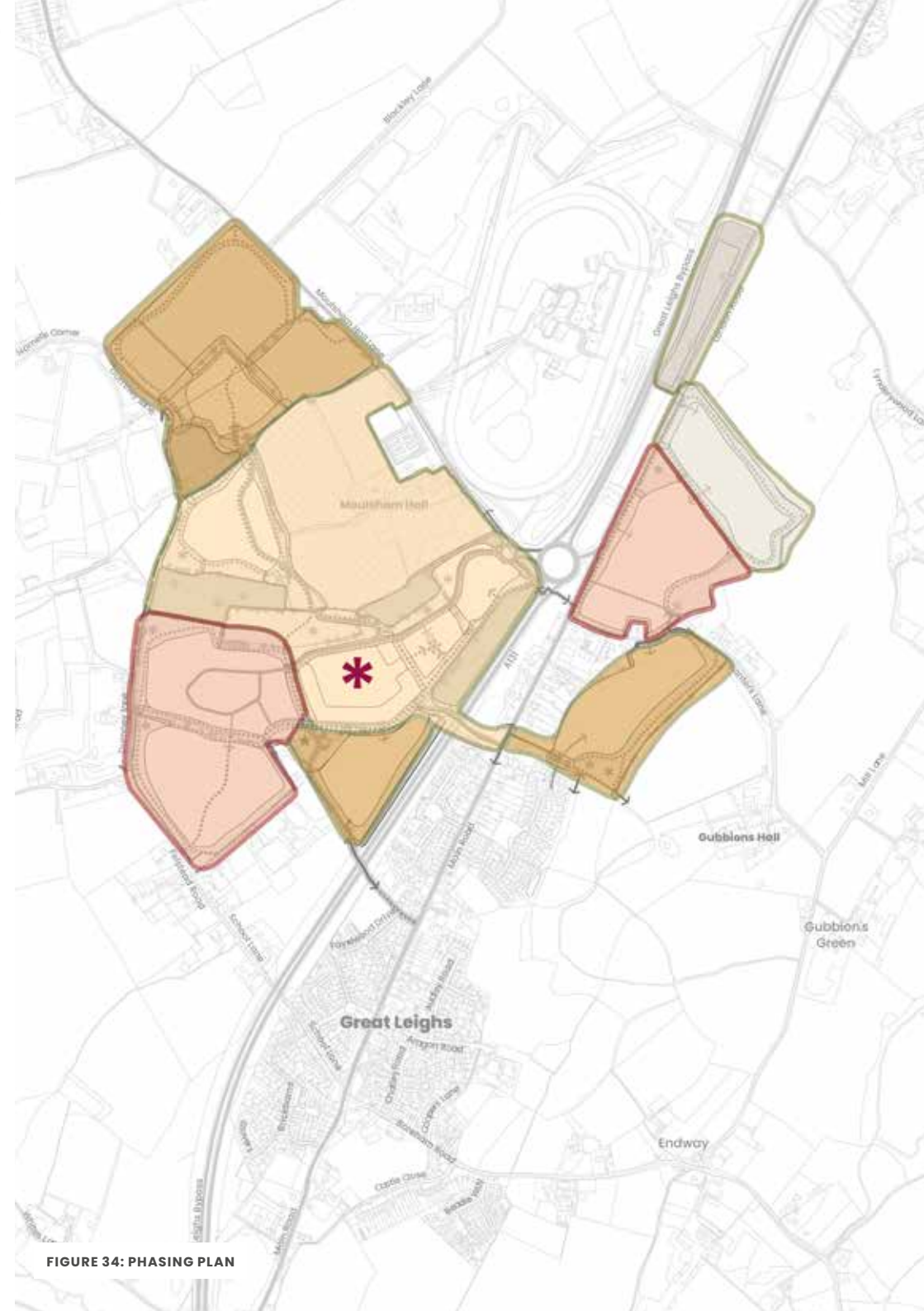


FIGURE 34: PHASING PLAN

- **Phase 1C** – The northern self-build residential parcel in Site 7a alongside the delivery of green infrastructure and related vehicle, cycling, pedestrian and equestrian infrastructure.

The central southern residential parcel in Site 7a adjacent to the A131 with related green infrastructure and improvements to connections from Chase Side Bridge (the detail and function of which is subject to the outcome of further exploratory works).

The main southern component of Site 7c to the south of Banter's Lane for residential development, together with related access and green infrastructure, including a cycle and pedestrian link to Main Road.

- **Phase 2** – Remaining residential parcels, together with related vehicle, cycle, pedestrian and equestrian provision and green infrastructure in Site 7a. Together with improvements to cycle and walking provision on School Lane.

The remaining residential parcel in Site 7b that also spans into Site 7c to the north of Banter's Lane, delivered with remaining vehicular, cycle and pedestrian infrastructure, including the crossing of Banter's Lane.

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Chelmsford City Council Cabinet

14th March 2023

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

Report by:

Leader of the Council

Officer Contact:

Paul Brookes, Public Health & Protection Services Manager,
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Purpose

To approve for publication the annual Statement on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.

Options

1. Approve the Statement on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.
2. Approve a variation of the Statement on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Preferred option and reasons

Option 1 is the preferred option as there is a legal requirement to approve and publish a statement for the 2022/23 financial year. The attached Statement is a comprehensive and factual account of the Council's current position.

Recommendations

The proposed Statement on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking for 2022/23 be approved and published.

1. Background

- 1.1 Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 states that every organisation carrying on business in the UK with a total annual turnover of £36m or more must produce a Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement for each financial year. It is good practice to produce an annual statement.
- 1.2 The statement must include “the steps the organisation has taken during the financial year to ensure that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in any of its supply chains, and in any part of its own business”.

2. Required Content of the Statement

- 2.1. The Modern Slavery Act does not define in detail what a statement must include or how it should be structured. It does, however, indicate that a statement should aim to include information about:
 - i) the organisation's structure;
 - ii) its policies in relation to slavery and human trafficking;
 - iii) its due diligence processes in relation to slavery and human trafficking in its business and supply chains;
 - iv) the parts of the business and supply chains where there is a risk of slavery and human trafficking taking place;
 - v) its effectiveness in ensuring that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in its business or supply chains, measured against such performance indicators as it considers appropriate;
 - vi) the training about slavery and human trafficking available to its staff.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1. The attached statement for 2022/23 meets the above requirements. Government guidance indicates that the statement must be approved by the board of directors and signed by a director (or equivalent) before being published. In the case of a local authority operating executive arrangements, the equivalent would be the Cabinet and the Leader of the Council. This statement is therefore updated and submitted annually to the Cabinet for approval before being signed by the Leader and Chief Executive and published.

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 - Annual Statement on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Background papers:

None

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: These are set out in the report.

Financial: The supplier elements of the strategy may affect the supplier base and possibly increase the costs of procurement exercises.

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None

Personnel: None

Risk Management: None

Equality and Diversity: N/A

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees:

Procurement and Risk Services Manager

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

None



Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2022-23

This statement explains how Chelmsford City Council aims to understand and address all potential modern slavery and human trafficking risks related to its business. This statement is subject to continual annual review and will be published on the Council's website.

Commitment

Chelmsford City Council as a public sector organisation, an employer and community leader is committed to undertaking a preventative approach to modern slavery and human trafficking within its corporate responsibilities and activities.

The Council adopted the Modern Day Slavery Charter at Full Council on 26th February 2020 to reinforce its commitment to preventing Modern Slavery within its operations and supply chain.

Organisational Structure and Supply Chain

Chelmsford City Council provides a large range of services to over 175,000 residents within Essex. All of the services that the Council delivers are directly managed by the Council.

There is a clear expectation that services or goods delivered by the Council are undertaken in conjunction with external organisations that operate their own policy and practice in relation to modern slavery.

All suppliers taking part in Chelmsford City Council's procurement processes must state whether they are a relevant commercial organisation, as defined by section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 ("the Act"). If they are, they are required to confirm their compliance with the annual reporting requirements contained within Section 54 of the Act. Failure to meet these requirements is treated as grounds for mandatory exclusion.

The above approach, adopted by Chelmsford City Council, is in line with that developed by Crown Commercial Services, the executive agency and trading fund of the Cabinet Office of the UK Government and is utilised nationally across the public sector.

Chelmsford City Council has an expectation that any organisation with which it works, commissions or procures a service from, operates appropriate policies and practices in relation to modern slavery and human trafficking.

Our Responsibilities

Chelmsford City Council has a corporate crosscutting role as an employer, community leader and procurer with responsibility to safeguard people within our communities across all our operations.

Chelmsford City Council works with Essex Police and other enforcement agencies as appropriate to share intelligence and work collaboratively to address issues relating to modern slavery or human trafficking.

Our Policies

As a Council, there are a wide range of policies and processes in place that reflect our commitment to prevent modern slavery and human trafficking in everything that we do.

All policies are subject to a robust assurance process and are subject to staff and union consultation. Councillors, senior officers and partner organisations may also be invited to comment.

Relevant Policies:

- Employee Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults Policy
- Domestic Abuse Workplace Policy
- Contract Procedure Rules

Multi-Agency Arrangements

The Essex Safeguarding Adults Board (ESAB) is a statutory organisation that is committed to protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It collaborates with wider strategic partnerships in Essex to ensure that where safeguarding responsibilities spread across the organisations, there is a clear understanding of where responsibility lies or a robust joined-up approach.

The Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) is a statutory body which acts as a mechanism for agreeing how relevant organisations in Essex co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

As part of the Council's commitment to robust safeguarding provision, Chelmsford City Council has a board member on both the ESCB and the ESAB.

The Chelmsford Against Slavery Partnership (CASP) is hosted by Chelmsford City Council and is a community partnership of charities, faith groups, the local authority, law enforcement and community partners within the City of Chelmsford. The purpose is to work towards a slavery-free city through developing community resilience to modern slavery and human trafficking. This will be done through facilitating partnership work, raising awareness, developing and delivering training and safeguarding resources, community intelligence gathering and promoting effective survivor care.

Management Responsibilities

The Council has responsibilities to its workforce, this includes employee health, safety and welfare.

As part of the Council's commitment to the welfare of its workforce, any employee can raise concerns and have assurance from the Council that their concerns will be taken seriously.

The Council has an Employee Assistance program for all staff, which provides confidential support and advice for work and personal matters and also includes support for victims of crime. Employees have access to 24-hour confidential support, 365 days per year.

Training and Awareness Raising

To meet its statutory safeguarding responsibilities, the Council offers a wide and extensive training programme to staff across all services.

In 2022-23 1,428 safeguarding training sessions were delivered by the Council for a wide range of staff, elected members and key partners. The Council's level 3 safeguarding training provides awareness of Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking matters within its delivery.

Bespoke Modern Day Slavery training was provided to all Councillors and key external stakeholders. 85% of Councillors attended this training.

All members of the Procurement Team have successfully passed the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply – Ethical Procurement Test.

Members of the Internal Corporate Safeguarding Group received a modern slavery awareness session delivered by Stop the Traffik and continue to update their professional development when the opportunity arises.

Chelmsford City Council also worked with Together Free and Essex Police to deliver awareness sessions to around 30 professionals from a range of organisations including local authority, housing providers, drug and alcohol services and businesses.

Chelmsford City Council as a first responder worked with Justice and Care and Essex Police to offer National Referral Mechanism training to all of its front line staff in 2022.

Key communications will continue throughout the year via our internal communication mechanisms and social media platforms.

If any staff witness or suspect modern slavery or human trafficking is taking place they follow the internal safeguarding reporting process.

In line with statutory responsibilities and related guidance for local authorities it may be required to notify the Home Office of a potential victim of modern slavery or human trafficking or make appropriate referrals to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for all children and consenting adults.

Due Diligence

Chelmsford City Council is committed to and understands the vital role that procurement plays in this function. This includes due consideration and recognition of its duty when sourcing to ensure that effective employment practices are in place within the supply chain and that modern slavery and human trafficking practices will not be tolerated.

Due diligence actions must be carried out at all times. The contract rules require collaboration with the Procurement Team for high value and high risk procurements to ensure, before awarding any contracts to prospective bidders, the Council meets its legal obligations under the Modern Slavery Act 2015, and the Contract Procedure Rules 2015.

Performance

Chelmsford City Council have made 1 referral to the NRM in 2022-2023.

Declaration

This statement is made pursuant to Section 54 (1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes Chelmsford City Council's slavery and human trafficking statement for the term of the financial period

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Nick Eveleigh, Chief Executive

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Councillor Stephen Robinson, Leader of the Council



Chelmsford City Council Cabinet

14th March 2023

Greater Essex Devolution

Report by:

Leader of the Council

Officer Contact:

Nick Eveleigh, CEO, nick.eveleigh@chelmsford.gov.uk 01245 606419

Purpose

To consider the attached report that sets out the proposal for a devolution deal for Greater Essex which is the geographical area of Essex. The three upper tier authorities within Essex plan to submit an expression of interest for Greater Essex to enter negotiations with the Government for either a level 2 or level 3 devolution deal.

Options

1. Note the report

Preferred option and reasons

Option 1 is the preferred option as the report is just for noting.

Recommendations

Cabinet to note the report

1. Background

- 1.1. The attached report (Appendix 1) from Essex County Council sets out the proposal for Greater Essex (i.e. the geographical area of Essex) to seek a devolution deal with Government.

- 1.2. In summary the Government aim to devolve more powers to upper tier authorities and in doing so are offering both additional functions currently provided by other agencies known as a level 2 deal or a level 3 deal which gives the additional functions together with new funding and further flexibilities.
- 1.3. It is important to note that only upper tier authorities are able to submit a devolution proposal to Government so in the case of Essex such a proposal has to be submitted by Essex CC, Southend CC and Thurrock. However, the three upper tier authorities have involved the District Councils fully in their discussions even though such a deal can be submitted without District support.
- 1.4. The attached report covers the key points together with the functions that will form part of the bid. At this stage the upper tier authorities are only submitting an expression of interest to government with the aim of entering into more formal talks later in the year. If a level 3 deal were to be agreed, it is anticipated that additional funding in the region £1billion over 30 years would be available to invest in the delivery of services for the residents of Essex. If a level 3 deal is agreed however there is a requirement to have a directly elected mayor for Greater Essex.
- 1.5. If a Mayoral model is adopted the Mayor may also be able to levy their own precept which in part will be required to meet the costs of their support unless any efficiencies can be found from elsewhere within the upper tier authorities to meet this.

2. Conclusion

- 2.1 The upper tier authorities intend to submit a proposal to Government for a Greater Essex devolution deal and if successful detailed negotiations will be held with Government in the autumn to shape the deal.

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Greater Essex Devolution Report from Essex County Council

Background papers:

None

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional:

None

Financial:

None

Potential impact on climate change and the environment:

None

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030:

None

Personnel:

None

Risk Management:

None

Equality and Diversity:

None

Health and Safety:

None

Digital:

None

Other:

None

Consultees:

None

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

None

Appendix 1

Report title: Greater Essex Devolution	
Report to: Cabinet	
Report authors: Councillor Kevin Bentley, Leader of the Council and Councillor Graham Butland, Cabinet Member for Devolution, the Arts, Heritage and Culture	
Date: 21 February 2023	For: Decision
Enquiries to: Tom Walker, Executive Director for Economy, Investment and Public Health tom.walker@essex.gov.uk or Richard Puleston, Director of Policy Unit Richard.puleston2@essex.gov.uk	
County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1. Everyone's Essex

- 1.1 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill sets out changes to the legislative framework to make it easier to seek a devolution deal that would enable greater local control over a range of powers and funding currently held by central government.
- 1.2 A significant proportion of the potential powers and funding on offer relate to skills, transport, infrastructure, the environment and the economy, all of which are key components of Everyone's Essex.
- 1.3 Everyone's Essex sets out an ambitious agenda to improve the lives of our residents. Devolution is a means of accelerating the County Council's ability to realise those ambitions by ensuring that we can tailor our approach to the particular needs of our population and communities.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Agree that the Council should submit an expression of interest to Government to begin the process of negotiating a devolution deal in the form appended to this report.
- 2.2 Agree that the Chief Executive may make amendments to the annexed Expression of Interest prior to its submission to government after consulting the Leader of the Council.

3 Background and Proposal

- 3.1 On 11 May 2022 the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill had its first reading in Parliament. The Bill provides the legislation necessary for some of the ambitions set out in the Levelling Up White Paper.

- 3.2 A core element of the white paper and the Bill is the creation of a framework to support the greater devolution of powers from central government – supporting the commitment that ‘by 2030, every part of England that wants one will have a devolution deal with powers at or approaching the highest level of devolution and a simplified, long-term funding settlement’.

The Strategic Case for a Deal

- 3.3 The Expression of Interest at appendix 2 sets out why we want a devolution deal and the benefits, potentially, it will bring. Greater Essex is a large economy – similar in scale to Northern Ireland’s - with huge potential. We have a gross value added measure (GVA) of more than £47bn, and are home to c81,000 businesses, including some of the best known and most innovative companies in the world, employing more than 700,000 people.
- 3.4 We are also very diverse, with advanced manufacturing expertise in the south of the county, logistics hubs around our two freeports and airports; strategically located on the energy coast, with clean energy generation – through offshore wind, solar farms and a potential hydrogen hub; medical technology and life sciences; and digital clusters in some of our main cities and towns. We want to harness a devolution deal to help us build on our strengths, unlocking at least an additional 50,000 high quality new jobs and £5bn of added economic output to make Greater Essex once again one of the fastest growing economies in the UK.
- 3.5 To achieve that and to punch our weight, we need a devolution deal to help us address the challenges we face. For example, we have 101,000 fewer people with NVQ 4+ qualifications than the national average as a proportion of our population. We need to build a large number of new homes by 2040 and we want to do that in a way that is sustainable, creates thriving communities, and doesn’t add stress to our existing transport infrastructure. And we currently have 183,000 people living in the most deprived 20% of neighbourhoods in the country who we are focusing on through one of the most ambitious levelling up programmes in the country.
- 3.6 Devolution can help us address these challenges. The strategic case is built on five pillars.
- 3.7 Economic Case – Greater Essex will have a stronger economy with a devolution deal. A devolution deal will enable better join up and more coherence across key functions. It is a challenge for local places that funding streams from government are narrowly focused and poorly aligned, both with each other, and with local needs and priorities - devolution deals fundamentally are based on taking charge of budgets that are currently administered nationally and subject to national criteria and prioritisation – focusing money, and shaping priorities, based on local economic needs should drive stronger economic outcomes.

- 3.8 Financial case – There is new money on the table for a devolution deal – all devolution deals to date have secured a gainshare/investment fund which is a recognition from the Treasury that a devolved economic system will secure higher levels of growth and that the Treasury should share the proceeds of that growth with local places.
- 3.9 Democratic case – Decisions affecting Greater Essex should be taken in Greater Essex, by which we mean our area together with that of Southend and Thurrock. Responsibility for the success of Greater Essex should be held as much as possible within the boundaries of Greater Essex. Local politicians should be held accountable to local voters and taxpayers for this. A devolution deal is predominantly about localising the powers and funding that are currently exercised and held at a national level so that they are responsive and tailored to the needs of local people and economies – the approach we take to devolution should respect and enhance local identities rather than subsume them.
- 3.10 Efficiency case – We owe it to our residents to operate as efficiently as possible. The financial climate demands that we maximise the efficiency of our local operating environment. A devolution deal will support more efficient ways of working by: streamlining and joining-up funding streams; further strengthening collaborative working at a local level, building on the existing building blocks and alliances in the north and the south of the county; sharing of resources at a more strategic level where it makes sense to do so.
- 3.11 Competition case – We risk falling behind the rest of the country. Within our immediate geographical environment, London, Cambridgeshire and shortly Suffolk and Norfolk may all have devolved arrangements in place. As more than 50% of the country by population will shortly benefit from a devolution deal, and as more and more government funding is channelled directly to devolved areas, GE runs the risk of falling further and further behind the rest of the country.

Levels of Deal

- 3.12 There are three 'levels' of devolution deal on offer. Level 1 constitutes informal joint working between authorities such as through a joint committee arrangement. Level 2 requires a single lead institution or county council working across a functional economic area – in practice, for Greater Essex, this would mean the creation of a County Combined Authority. Level 3 requires a single lead institution or county council working across a functional economic area with a directly elected mayor. A Level 3 deal offers the greatest range of devolved powers and funding on offer through the framework and would require a mayoral county combined authority. The powers linked to each level of deal are set out in the table at Appendix 1.
- 3.13 It has been agreed with Southend and Thurrock that we should enter dialogue with government on the basis that we wish to explore the potential for a Level 2 and a Level 3 deal.

Process for Agreeing the Content of the Deal

- 3.14 Under the terms of the proposed legislation and based on our functional economic geography, the devolution deal needs to be agreed by Essex County Council, Southend on Sea City Council, and Thurrock Council. The twelve district, city, and borough councils in our area and the PFCC do not need to sign off the devolution deal. However, given the impacts across all authorities, the leaders of Essex, Southend and Thurrock have taken the view that they wish to pursue a consensual and collaborative approach to devolution and have therefore developed the approach in dialogue, and with the support of, other authorities across Greater Essex. We are exploring with the PFCC how oversight of police and fire might work in a post devolution world; there are a number of options for this, ranging from the status quo to integration of PFCC role into a combined authority with a Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime.
- 3.15 This process began in June 2022 - Essex Leaders and Chief Executives agreed an approach to exploring the potential for a devolution deal. It was agreed to establish three Greater Essex devolution working groups to consider options and opportunities offered by the new framework.
- 3.16 Workstreams were led by the Leaders of Essex, Southend and Thurrock Councils and supported by CEOs from other authorities. Leaders and CEOs from across Greater Essex have participated in the workstream meetings. The workstreams met twice and their deliberations fed into subsequent discussions by Leaders and Chief Executives on 8 December and on 30 January 2023. Leaders and Chief Execs have been shaping the EOI throughout this period and the current draft reflects that collaborative approach.

Content of the Deal

- 3.17 The content of the proposed deal is set out in the expression of interest. The EOI is a starting point for the dialogue with government. We expect the content to change through that dialogue and therefore relevant councils will be asked to formally sign up to the content of the devolution deal only after those discussions have completed. Assuming we can open up dialogue with government in the next month or so, we expect that decision to come forward in the Summer. In summary, the EOI covers the areas described below.
- 3.18 *On skills*, this is an area where devolution could be a game changer for Greater Essex, enabling us to address long-standing issues with low skills and low productivity and make the transition to new fast-growing economic growth sectors. The skills devolution offer is very substantial and would give us control or much greater influence than we have now over a key economic lever. This includes control over adult education funding streams (currently £28-84m a year depending on precisely what is included in the deal); influence over the Local Skills Improvement Plan ensuring skills provision is matched to our local economy and the sectors where GE has the opportunity to see significant growth; and influence over DWP employment programmes.

- 3.19 *On the economy*, if we were to negotiate a level 3 deal, we could seek to access the gainshare/investment fund of approximately £1bn, alongside the new powers on skills, transport, and strategic infrastructure planning to transform the Greater Essex economy and make it the fastest growing in the UK outside London. Stronger strategic co-ordination would enable us to attract higher levels of inward investment (including FDI) through effective place promotion. Devolution would also enable us to absorb the LEP functions and therefore transform our strategic engagement with business - both businesses that are already here and new businesses we want to bring to Greater Essex.
- 3.20 *On the environment*, we could use devolution to accelerate our drive to net zero; make serious inroads into the large number of homes in Greater Essex that need retrofitting; create up to 19,000 local green jobs by 2030; and save consumers money by developing smart, local energy systems.
- 3.21 *On transport*, sustainable transport is key to energising and enabling many of our objectives: boosting economic growth, tackling disadvantage and inequality, boosting public health and improving the environment. Devolution would enable Greater Essex to become a strategic transport authority, giving us the levers to create a more integrated, connected and sustainable transport network. Potential powers include bus ticketing and franchising, forming rail partnerships, multi-year transport funding and more co-ordination over the key route network.
- 3.22 *On housing*, we face the challenge of having to build many more new homes to meet the needs of an increasing population and to improve the affordability, quality and carbon/climate challenges of housing. Devolution will give us new powers to do this, including the ability to be a stronger partner with Homes England, to accelerate and unlock building on brownfield sites, to take forward strategic planning ensuring an infrastructure first approach (driven by local control of infrastructure funding and delivery) and to boost regeneration where it makes sense to do so.
- 3.23 *On infrastructure*, if we negotiate a level 3 deal, we can seek to access the gainshare fund of approximately £1bn to significantly improve the county's infrastructure.
- 3.24 *On communities, community safety and public services*, devolution offers the opportunity to bring together on a common Greater Essex footprint, and in a much more integrated way, action on the wider determinants of health (such as employment, skills and housing), public health and community safety. This could enable us to strengthen community resilience and reduce health inequalities that widened during the pandemic and are likely to widen further as a result of the cost-of-living crisis. It will also help us address entrenched deprivation which in some parts of our geography is a significant and growing issue. Work in Glasgow and Greater Manchester highlights the benefits of this public health approach to community safety. Other devolution deals have also offered combined authorities the opportunity to work more closely with government agencies in supporting people with complex needs.

This is important as a relatively small number of individuals and families with complex needs drive significant demand and cost on the police, the criminal justice system, the benefits system, the health system and social care. We have also identified the scope for devolution to support our drive for more effective and efficient public services through better use of data and through moving to more integrated service delivery models across authorities where appropriate.

3.25 *Outside the devolution framework*, most places negotiating devolution deals have also sought to identify some opportunities outside of the formal devolution framework. We have identified through the workshops a wide range of proposals where we could go further than the Government's framework. These areas include: the devolution of powers to enable leadership of Local Area Energy and Heat planning, bringing systems thinking to the design of a net zero energy system that works for all; devolved capital funding to support the delivery of housing priorities in Greater Essex including new affordable homes, net zero ambitions and specialist housing; the ability to negotiate for Greater Essex to pilot new sustainable building standards that go beyond the bare minimum.

Engagement of Partners

3.26 We are currently engaging with key partners. Engagement with the public will come later, is a formal part of the process, and is something we need to prepare for early and carefully assuming we think we are on course to agreeing a deal with government.

3.27 In terms of engagement already carried out, alongside the discussions with all local authorities and the OPFCC, we have held individual authority-level and all member briefings; we have discussed with the Health ICS Chairs and the Essex Health and Well-being Board; we have briefed MPs; we have met with businesses; we have engaged with the Universities; and we have an ongoing programme of discussions planned with key partners.

3.28 We are keen to develop the proposals and approach in an open and transparent way and will continue to engage and discuss with key partners across Greater Essex.

4 Links to our Strategic Ambitions

4.1 This report links to the following aims in the Essex Vision

- Strengthen communities through participation
- Develop our County sustainably
- Share prosperity with everyone

4.2 Approving the recommendations in this report will have the following impact on the Council's ambition to be net carbon neutral by 2030:

- Greater control over environmental standards.

- Greater control over funding and powers related to public transport to encourage residents to make the switch to more sustainable forms of transport
- Greater control over funding and powers related to adult skills which could support reskilling into green economy job sectors
- Greater control over funding and powers to support inward investment and business development for green economy businesses

4.3 This report links to the following strategic priorities in 'Everyone's Essex':

- A strong, inclusive and sustainable economy
- A high quality environment
- Health wellbeing and independence for all ages
- A good place for children and families to grow

5 Options

5.1 Option 1: Endorse the submission of the expression of interest to government. This is the preferred option as it is the only basis on which Greater Essex can fully understand the potential benefits of devolution to its residents and communities.

5.2 Option 2: Do nothing. There is no legal requirement for areas to enter into a deal with government. However, not pursuing dialogue with government means that Greater Essex has effectively ruled out devolution without fully understanding and considering its potential benefits and risks falling further behind the growing number of other areas nationally, and within the region, who are benefiting from devolution deals.

6 Issues for consideration

6.1 Financial implications

6.1.1 There are no direct financial implications for the Council in respect of submitting the expression of interest to Government, other than the opportunity cost of existing officer time. If a deal with government is negotiated then the financial implications will depend on what is negotiated, but might include: new funding streams being made available; existing nationally directed funding being localised; increased freedoms and flexibilities on existing financial arrangements; and the costs associated with developing and implementing the deal.

6.1.2 If the Government responds positively to the Expression of Interest, full financial options appraisals will be undertaken at every stage of the developing arrangements and as part of formal decision making on whether to progress a deal.

6.2 Legal implications

- 6.2.1 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill will need to be passed and brought into force before a county combined authority can be created, but this doesn't stop expressions of interest being submitted or a devolution 'deal' being announced, since such negotiations and deals are not legally binding. That said, by submitting an expression of interest we will create an expectation that we will take part and absent major difficulties we will be expected to take part in it.
- 6.2.2 Should a deal be announced there will then be a further decision and statutory consultation as well as the completion of a statutory document called a 'governance review'.
- 6.2.3 Any county combined authority will be created by statutory instrument and we will be consulted on that as it will have significant implications on our participation in the authority.
- 6.2.4 The county combined authority will be a new legal entity completely separate to ECC with its own decision making arrangements. ECC will have some ability to negotiate these. It is clear that ECC will be entitled to appoint at least one member to the county combined authority and other members will need to take part in the combined authority scrutiny function. There will also be legal agreements and arrangements for decision making that are needed.
- 6.2.5 The monitoring officers across the 15 local authorities and the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner have met to have an initial conversation discuss how this would be co-ordinated and resourced.

7 Equality and Diversity Considerations

- 7.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
 - (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 7.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

- 7.3 There are no equalities implications associated with the submission of this expression of interest. If a devolution deal is negotiated with government then the equalities implications of the deal will be considered further through a full Equalities Comprehensive Impact Assessment before a formal decision is made on whether to accept the deal or not.

8 List of Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1: Table of powers for different levels of devolution deal – taken from the White paper: *Levelling Up the United Kingdom*
- 8.2 Appendix 2: Expression of Interest

Appendix 1: Devolution framework in the Levelling Up White Paper

Level 3 – A single institution or County Council with a directly elected mayor (DEM), across a FEA or whole county area

Level 2 – A single institution or County Council without a DEM, across a FEA or whole county area

Level 1 – Local authorities working together across a FEA or whole county area e.g. through a joint committee

Function	Detail	L1	L2	L3
Strategic role in delivering services	Host for Government functions best delivered at a strategic level involving more than one local authority e.g. Local Nature Recovery Strategies	✓	✓	✓
	Opportunity to pool services at a strategic level	✓	✓	✓
	Opportunity to adopt innovative local proposals to deliver action on climate change and the UK's Net Zero targets	✓	✓	✓
Supporting local businesses	LEP functions including hosting strategic business voice		✓	✓
Local control of sustainable transport	Control of appropriate local transport functions e.g. local transport plans*		✓	✓
	Defined key route network*			✓
	Priority for new rail partnerships with Great British Railways – influencing local rail offer, e.g. services and stations			✓
	Ability to introduce bus franchising		✓	✓
	Consolidation of existing core local transport funding for local road maintenance and smaller upgrades into a multi-year integrated settlement			✓
Investment spending	UKSPF planning and delivery at a strategic level		✓	✓
	Long-term investment fund, with an agreed annual allocation			✓

Function	Detail	L1	L2	L3
Giving adults the skills for the labour market	Devolution of Adult Education functions and the core Adult Education Budget	✓		✓
	Providing input into Local Skills Improvement Plans	✓		✓
	Role in designing and delivering future contracted employment programmes			✓
Local control of infrastructure decisions	Ability to establish Mayoral Development Corporations (with consent of host local planning authority)			✓
	Devolution of locally-led brownfield funding			✓
	Strategic partnerships with Homes England across the Affordable Housing Programme and brownfield funding			✓
	Homes England compulsory purchase powers (held concurrently)	✓		✓
Keeping the public safe and healthy	Mayoral control of Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) functions where boundaries align [^]			✓
	Clear defined role in local resilience [*]			✓
	Where desired offer MCAs a duty for improving the public's health (concurrently with local authorities)	✓		✓
Financing local initiatives for residents and business	Ability to introduce mayoral precepting on council tax [*]			✓
	Ability to introduce supplement on business rates (increases subject to ballot)			✓

^{*} refers to functions which are only applicable to combined authorities

[^] refers to functions which are currently only applicable to mayoral combined authorities

DEVOLUTION: DRAFT EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (VERSION 13.02.2023)

Section 1: Why do we want a Devolution Deal: Summary

Greater Essex¹ is a dynamic, thriving, entrepreneurial and creative region with the potential to outpace the economic growth of other parts of the country. We see devolution as the key to helping us punch our weight and unlock that growth for the benefit of our residents and for the UK as a whole.

Over the past century, hundreds of thousands of people have come to Greater Essex to improve their lives. People have moved here to enjoy the quality of life offered in our villages, towns and cities, and to grasp new economic opportunities. While there is no single Greater Essex character, most of the 1.9m people who live in the area are here because they or their parents saw opportunity and seized it.

Greater Essex's hard-working residents have built up the area's economic position and have reaped their just rewards. Economic output in Greater Essex is similar in scale to that of Northern Ireland at c.£47bn per year. The region is home to c.81,000 businesses, including some of the best known and most innovative companies in the world, employing more than 700,000 people. We have a history of low unemploymentⁱ and average incomes exceed national and regional benchmarks.ⁱⁱ Leaders across Greater Essex today – whether in parliament, local government, wider public service or in business – share this same ambition and drive.

We have significant assets and opportunities that a devolution deal will help us capitalise on. We are a gateway to trade and investment with two international airports (Stansted and Southend) and two Freeports – Thames Freeport and Freeport East (Harwich). As well as being well connected to London, Cambridge and the M11 corridor. We have the opportunity to build on our assets to accelerate the pace of growth in key sectors of our economy (construction and retrofit; clean energy; advanced manufacturing; digitech; life sciences) to the tune of 50,000 additional jobs by 2030. And we have a strategy ready to implement this.

We have world class businesses with whom we have excellent relationships – including Manchester Airport Group and DP World on logistics; Ford, Raytheon and Teledyne on advanced manufacturing; Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult for life sciences; Kao Data and Global Marine Systems on digitech.

We have three universities, the University of Essex, Anglia Ruskin University, and Writtle College as well as some of the most outstanding schools in the country – four of which – the girls' and boys' grammar schools in Chelmsford and Colchester – regularly feature amongst the top 20 schools in the whole country.

¹ Greater Essex is the Administrative County of Essex as well as the two unitary areas of Southend and Thurrock.

We have opportunities to create new and thriving communities in Greater Essex with the need for 200,000 new homes by 2040 – we need the powers in respect of infrastructure and spatial planning to enable us to achieve that growth in a way that supports our wider economic ambitions for Greater Essex.

Our local authorities are typically low tax authorities and deliver high quality services. There is a strong record of partnership and sharing of services, including a powerful anchor network of our public service institutions. We have also collaborated strongly on the issues that Thurrock has faced showing the strength of our peer support and problem-solving approach.

Despite these strengths and successes, there is also untapped potential in Greater Essex that devolution can help to unlock. In recent years we have seen Greater Essex fall behind its neighbours in the wider South East in terms of the pace of economic growth and levels of productivity. A growing population, combined with relatively slow growth in the number of jobs, and particularly high-value jobs, across some of our towns and cities has fuelled high levels of commuting, placing a strain on our local transport infrastructure, and high claimant counts in some parts of the region, leading to lower financial resilience and reliance on support services such as food banks and emergency funding schemes.

Around 183,000 Greater Essex residents now live in areas that are amongst the most deprived 20% in England, compared to only 106,000 in 2007.ⁱⁱⁱ The COVID-19 pandemic, shocks to the global energy market and food supply chains, and the current cost of living crisis risk further exacerbating these pressures and amplifying inequalities, including gender inequalities.

If we are to extend the opportunities that Greater Essex has enjoyed in the past to today's young people and to future generations, we will need to think differently, and work together in new ways.

We want Greater Essex to be the fastest growing UK economy outside London in the years to 2030. We see a thriving, inclusive, and sustainable economy as the strongest possible foundation for improvements in local living standards, health outcomes, educational attainment and the future viability of public services. We are seeking a Devolution Deal that will give local partners the resources, powers and policy levers to unlock Greater Essex's substantial and untapped economic potential and to share the proceeds of sustainable growth across communities – tackling disadvantage and spatial inequality and securing progress on the twelve levelling-up missions set out in the White Paper *Levelling Up the United Kingdom*.

Alongside boosting economic growth and Levelling Up, we also need to deal with climate change – a critical issue that requires urgent action now and into the future. Our residents and businesses are already facing impacts from flooding, coastal erosion, water scarcity, overheating: these impacts will increase year on year. Beyond this we are committed to lead the way in moving to a low carbon economy that will secure a long-term future for our businesses and residents.

Net zero and climate resilience principles underpin our vision for Greater Essex alongside action to secure and protect our natural environment and our agricultural productivity.

The right deal will help us to:

- a. Boost skills and productivity: the relative shortage of high skilled jobs in Greater Essex is a reflection of the skills base of the working-age population. A relatively low proportion of our local workforce is qualified to Level 4+, constraining labour productivity, sustainable business growth and inward investment. A further 101,000 workers qualified at level 4+ would be needed in Greater Essex just to bring the area into line with national averages.
- b. Deliver improvements in local infrastructure: historic growth in communities across Greater Essex, and increased freight movements, have not been matched with improvements in local transport infrastructure. This has impacted the resilience of key inter-urban road links across Greater Essex and fuelled congestion in our town and cities. Despite a reduction in rail journeys following the COVID pandemic, demand is expected to exceed the capacity of the network within the next decade. These factors place a constraint on future growth by increasing journey times, diminishing employers' access to customers and suppliers, and limiting the supply of skilled labour. A locally determined package of infrastructure improvement, including sustainable transport and digital connectivity, will be vital.
- c. Create and foster thriving communities: we need to build 200,000 new homes by 2040 to accommodate a growing population and workforce, whilst minimising stress on our transport infrastructure. We want these new homes to be environmentally sustainable and climate resilient, of a quality and price that attracts talented people to Greater Essex, and located in thriving communities. Achieving this means investing in the broader sustainability of our towns and cities, including the regeneration of our town centres, local schools and the local living environment. If we get this right, we can attract inward investment, retain growing firms, and ensure that the benefits of sustainable growth reach all parts of the region. And we want to do this in such a way that we are creating community capital and building not just housing and homes but social connections that strengthen the resilience and well-being of our residents.
- d. Take a Public Health approach to strengthening health and well-being: reversing the increase in inequalities across Greater Essex is a key priority for us, including reversing widening health inequalities which are putting unsustainable pressure on the health system and on other public services. Poor health also means that many people are unable to play their full role in the economy and society. The Health Foundation estimates that 40% of the burden on health services may be preventable and around 50% of health outcomes are shaped by the wider determinants of health, in particular people's access to good jobs, education, a healthy environment and good housing.

Devolution is therefore critical to tackling health inequalities in Greater Essex as it will give local leaders greater control over key levers on the economy, housing, skills, environment and transport. This will help Greater Essex to bolster the work of the NHS and our integrated care systems in promoting better population health – helping people to live longer, healthier, more productive lives. Devolution will enable us to join up interventions on these

issues in a way that is tailored to the needs of local places, and also to integrate more closely with the public health and prevention work that is being led by the Integrated Care Systems (ICS).

- e. Exploit the strengths of key sectors and maximise returns from our economic assets and the transition to net zero: Greater Essex has strengths in the med-tech and life sciences sectors and digital clusters in key cities. The growth of advanced manufacturing (particularly in south Essex), and in logistics (focused around our two freeports and airports) represents a major opportunity. There are also major opportunities in clean energy generation through hydrogen, solar farms and offshore wind – facilitated by our location on the energy coast.
- f. Accelerate our drive towards net zero: across Greater Essex there is an opportunity to create c.19,000 green jobs by 2030 – transitioning the workforce into growing sectors of the economy and reducing Greater Essex’s environmental impact. There are also significant opportunities to reduce energy consumption, ease financial pressures on residents and generate income through the development of smart local energy systems, and the roll out of retrofit programmes. An estimated 400,000 homes across Greater Essex are currently in need of retrofitting.
- g. Deliver a more integrated system of sustainable transport: this is key to energising and enabling many of our objectives: connecting residents with economic opportunities, removing constraints to growth caused by congested infrastructure, tackling disadvantage and inequality, improving public health and reducing our environmental impact. There are also significant opportunities to decarbonise the transport system to meet targets in the national transport decarbonisation plan.
- h. Take advantage of the power of data and digital technology: we want digital skills and technology to be a key strength of an inclusive Greater Essex economy. Central to this is the roll out of digital connectivity, including in remote and rural areas. This is a vital platform for future growth and improved productivity, and an essential element in promoting access to services, education and to social connections. We also want to help close the digital divide, equipping residents with the skills and tools they need for the digital age and to harness the power of data and digital technology to transform our public services so they are faster, better and cheaper. This builds on a wide range of existing work, including the Essex Centre for Data Analytics.

The right deal will position our investments in jobs, homes and infrastructure, within a policy framework that enables effective climate action to cut carbon and build resilience while unlocking improvements in the health of the population and in levels

of wellbeing, crime and community safety.

We want a Greater Essex Devolution deal to create new opportunities for local agencies to tackle entrenched social deprivation and to work closely with government to support people with complex needs – enabling them to take new opportunities and, wherever possible, reducing demand and cost on the wider system of public services – including the police, the criminal justice system, the benefits system, the health system and social care.

Crucially, the right deal will enable Greater Essex to secure these objectives within a governance framework that ensures accountability to local voters and taxpayers and which respects and enhances the distinct identities of communities across Greater Essex.

Section 2: Devolution Deal: Powers and Flexibilities

Skills

What is the Proposition

A key enabler of economic growth is a workforce with the skills to support the needs of the Greater Essex economy and our businesses into the future.

Greater Essex has 101,000 fewer people skilled to NVQ4+ than it should have (35% of 16-64 year olds are qualified to NVQ4+ - well below the Great Britain average of 43%). And is 8% below the national average at NVQ3+. We also have low levels of Traineeships and T-levels in England – meaning fewer progression routes into skills-based education and training. And these are aggregate figures for Greater Essex. Within our most deprived areas, the skills gap is even more stark.

In addition to this historic deficit, the Covid-19 pandemic had a significant negative impact on learning and skills. The OECD estimates that pandemic lockdowns decreased workers' participation in learning by an average of 18%, and in informal learning by 25%, and will have prevented unemployed adults from accessing upskilling and training opportunities. This 'lost learning', along with historically relatively low skills is a drag on productivity and an impediment to growth. Currently our workforce is over-represented in lower skilled occupations and under-represented in managerial and professional occupations – leading to lower workplace earnings than both regional and national averages. This is in spite of having some of the largest global businesses in Greater Essex. All sectors will require new skills to unlock the opportunities in the transition to a low carbon, sustainable economy.

We estimate that there are at least 40,000 new jobs in the key growth sectors that are vital to the future prosperity of Greater Essex.

What will be Different

Our approach is to adopt a more joined-up and co-ordinated approach across the skills system which incentivises skills provision more strongly to support the needs of

Greater Essex businesses, accelerating our progress to being a high wage, high skill, high productivity economy.

This will link with our focus on the key economic sectors that will drive the growth of the future and work with anchor organisations to address more comprehensively workforce needs now and for the future.

We think this will help young people to gain the skills they need to prosper in the modern workplace; enable businesses to find employees with the right skills to support their ambitions; and support UK plc by adding to the productivity and growth of the economy.

And importantly we see skills and wider economic prosperity not only as goods in their own right, but also as important in a range of other key strategic agendas for which a strong economy is foundational – not least the health challenges we face in certain parts of Greater Essex.

What we are seeking

We are seeking the ability to directly address our skills challenges both for the growth sectors of the future and the foundational economy. To achieve that we are seeking:

- Devolved responsibility for the commissioning and funding of education and training for 16–19-year-olds in further education and for adults aged 19+ through the application of the Adult Education Budget. This will enable us to ensure alignment of local provision to the needs of an expanding Greater Essex economy and link provision more tightly to future career opportunities based on the modernisation and expansion of key sectors – recognising the importance of the different economic needs of our functional economic areas. Engagement with business and the experience we have had with regard to this work is that we need to exercise greater control over the curriculum and nature of the provision if we are to be able to achieve our economic ambitions and deliver the outcomes that our businesses need which is young people with good core competencies around communications, maths and science skills, critical thinking, adaptability, and problem solving.
- Building on the recent example of the Multiply fund for adult numeracy, we are keen to explore with Government the scope for greater local flexibility to shape specific skills funding streams in the future, to match them to the current and future needs of residents and businesses in Greater Essex.
- Devolution of unspent Apprenticeships Levy funds from Greater Essex businesses^{iv} into a single place-based budget, and the power to develop a strategy to deploy this budget to respond to local needs and priorities, and achieve a much improved, employer-led offer – including flexibility to support skills tasters, short courses, modules, and full vocational qualifications, not just apprenticeships.
- Powers and flexibilities for joint working with key agencies, for example, joint

working with the ESFA and FE Commissioners Office in undertaking FE institutions' reviews of how well the education or training provided meets local need, and joint working with the National Careers Service.

- Design and delivery of DWP contracted employment programmes – this should include working on careers education, Youth Hubs, and the vast range of adult upskilling/reskilling and employability support – ensuring this is fully joined up with vocational skills-based education to create viable pathways into future jobs. We would seek through our deal, the creation of employment and skills pathways into work for our most disadvantaged residents and the upskilling of workers on low incomes to attain better salaries and reduce the dependency on in-work benefits. The value of achieving this will be felt not only in economic but also in health outcomes and we would like to connect these discussions up with health colleagues' focus on the wider determinants of health to establish the potential for further pooling of funding to reduce health inequalities.
- Jobcentre Plus – We are keen to explore with government the scope for local strategic oversight of Job Centre Plus. This could enable Job Centres to become much more integrated into the local economy, public service provision and voluntary sector support. This would significantly improve outcomes both for those temporarily out of work and for those who face more entrenched obstacles to employment.
- The opportunity to extend Education Investment Area status to those parts of Greater Essex that fall below the national threshold (on a district rather than an LEA footprint). As part of our commitment to supporting excellent education for all pupils, we are keen to explore with Government the role that local authorities can play in supporting academies that are not delivering good or outstanding education.
- Funding to create innovative skills activity including Higher Education short courses and enhancements to school curricula to support work-ready training, testing and trialing new models of delivery, engaging non-traditional learners, increasing opportunity and participation and raising aspirations.
- We will establish a Greater Essex skills council (drawing together/consolidating the federations of colleges, training providers, and education groups) linked to the Local Skills Improvement Plan Board and the Business Advisory Board and convene North and South Local Skills Assemblies, reflecting local economic partnerships, through which educational, employer and local authority stakeholders can maintain influence and respond to needs.
- We will wish to play a full role in shaping and influencing the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). The LSIP is important because it sets out key priorities and changes needed in the local area to align post-16 technical education with business needs.

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Functions

What is the proposition

Our ambition is to be the fastest growing economy in England, outside of London. We are currently a member of SELEP, which does not represent a meaningful functional economic area. Disbanding the existing LEP and forming a new LEP as part of a Greater Essex Combined County Authority will enable us to build on our strengths and track record of collaboration. We want to support businesses across Greater Essex and encourage the growth and relocation of innovative, high productivity sectors that will benefit the wider economy. We will amplify and integrate the strategic voice of business across Greater Essex to turbocharge our economic interventions.

What will be different

The integration of LEP functions will enable Greater Essex to develop propositions around sustainable business growth, innovation, skills, and regeneration linked to the needs of our local businesses, our understanding of the local economy and our commitment to key sectors that will deliver productivity improvements over the next 10 years. It will strengthen collaboration with businesses and create more opportunities to unlock, drive, support and fund sustainable growth across Greater Essex.

What we are seeking

We are seeking responsibility to oversee the delivery of a comprehensive business support programme through a Growth Hub providing business advice, links to grant funding, access to private sector equity finance/angel investment, training and networking, particularly to key sectors that our evidence suggests will be the drivers of prosperity and enhanced economic growth in Greater Essex over the next decade. This will include:

- Grow the sectors of the economy that Greater Essex has underlying strengths in and maximise the economic assets in Greater Essex (such as Freeport East and the Thames Freeport) to boost local growth – creating more high-paying/high-skill jobs.
- Building on our recent proposals to Government for new investment zones across the Greater Essex area, we would like to explore the potential for new enterprise or investment zones type incentives in Greater Essex to allow for boosting of investment, economic growth, productivity and employment in those strategic locations.
- Designate relevant Customs Sites for Freeports: reducing barriers to international trade and investment for Greater Essex businesses.
- Create a business environment in Greater Essex which is successful in attracting domestic and international investment, and fosters a culture of innovation.

We are seeking direct engagement with the Department for International Trade to promote Greater Essex internationally and also to secure our portion of innovation funding from BEIS/Innovate UK so we can drive greater innovation in specific sectors of the local economy.

- Direct the development of high-quality, low carbon business accommodation to places where it is lacking, supporting clustering and agglomeration benefits, and align it with residential development and service provision (such as local schools) to create thriving communities.
- Create a Greater Essex workplace well-being offer with additional pump-priming funding from government to test our ability to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of the workforce with demonstrable benefits to the NHS.

Strategic Economic Investment

What is the Proposition

We consider that the powers set out in the framework will enable us to achieve enhanced and sustainable economic growth across Greater Essex. We are keen to benefit locally from the proceeds of that growth, including from the transition to a net zero economy, and invest for the future to reinforce its momentum. A flexible local investment fund will enable us to make integrated, medium-term decisions about the needs of the Greater Essex economy, enabling a whole-system approach to inclusive and sustainable growth and development.

What will be Different

We are seeking a single long-term transformational investment fund with maximum flexibility because it will accelerate delivery of investment, and enable us to maximise strategic alignment with other funding and opportunities linked to our strategic economic objectives. The determination of the parameters of any fund will need to be agreed but we would see the fund as supporting our sector growth aspirations; the development of our innovation and R&D capabilities and linkages with Universities; strengthening better business collaboration; supporting the development of our digital capabilities and infrastructure particularly in support of some of our rural and coastal areas; and potentially contributing to the development of a public health approach to addressing the wider determinants of health to address spatial inequalities.

What are we Seeking

- Allocation of a multi-year investment fund for Greater Essex to include strategic pooling for our local delivery priorities.²
- Additional funding for Research and Development for Greater Essex aligned to supporting our strategic growth sectors.

- A single departmental-style settlement analogous to the settlements currently under discussion for trailblazing deals.
- A deal for future business rates retention for regionally important regeneration schemes.
- Planning and Delivery of UKSPF – this will enable us to exercise stronger local control and discretion over how we use these funds, the pace of spend and prioritisation. It will also enable greater join up of plans across Greater Essex to support business growth and productivity. We are keen to explore if there is scope to have greater local control over other funding pots to support regeneration and levelling up, to improve outcomes and reduce the inefficiencies of competitive bidding.

² The size of the fund, based on the experience of other devolution deals, we expect to be in the region of £1.2bn over 30 years. This is new money that we will not get without a level 3 devolution deal.

- We wish to develop a local Low Carbon Investment and Business Strategy setting out short, medium and long term plans to decarbonise business and grow green opportunities in Greater Essex. As part of this we want to negotiate with government a new local revolving zero interest loan fund for SMEs to enable investment in energy efficiency.
- We want to work with Government to make Greater Essex a centre for net zero innovation, including on zero carbon energy: hydrogen, solar and wind. The existing energy infrastructure and two major ports within Greater Essex offer potential for the production of green hydrogen for clean energy.

The geographical positioning of the freeports with access to renewable energy from the North Sea and the fact that they could offer the space for electrolyzers mean they are well-placed, with the right support, to capitalise on the opportunity.

Transport

What is the proposition

Transport is a fundamental enabler of all strategic outcomes. Our current transport system is not working well enough. It is too reliant on car journeys and does not sufficiently enable active and sustainable travel, which leads to pollution, carbon emissions and congestion. It lacks capacity on some of our key road networks, such as the A12, A120, A127 and A13. It is poorly integrated across different modes and is also poorly connected. North-south travel (as distinct from in and out of London) is difficult and public transport and active travel needs to be better connected to areas of growth and economic opportunity. Some of our most deprived areas are also poorly connected with limited public transport, which entrenches lack of economic opportunity. We want to become a strategic transport authority and take control of local transport levers to enable us to build a more effective transport system.

What will be different

Through local control of strategic transport, we will create a transport system for Greater Essex that is fit for the future. It will be better connected, more integrated, have more capacity, and be more sustainable. We will put a focus on expanding sustainable and active travel. A future transport system will therefore be better able to support economic growth, reduce deprivation and disadvantage, and promote a healthy environment and healthy and active lifestyles.

What we are seeking

- Control of appropriate local transport functions e.g., local transport plans – we want to build a local transport plan at a Greater Essex level, enabling us to build a coherent transport network that works across the economic area, while also allowing for local delivery to meet the needs of local places. In order to support effective transport planning and delivery, we envisage creating a transport body empowered to deliver for Greater Essex in the same way as TfL for London or TfGM delivers for Greater Manchester.
- Ability to deliver a stronger and more sustainable bus network – the option of franchising powers would enable the commissioning of a fully integrated bus network across the whole of Greater Essex if it could secure sufficient revenue. This could include integrated ticketing; zonal fare structures; and its choice of vehicle standards (e.g., electric), fares, routes, and timetables. However, franchising will only work if it has sufficient funding to enable it to be delivered in practice, so we would need to be satisfied about financing before taking on bus franchising powers. If not, the scale of a Greater Essex transport authority would enable us to drive stronger Enhanced Partnership deals across the region, delivering better, lower carbon services and a more integrated network.
- Defined key route network – the combined county authority would have power over our most strategically important routes, enabling Greater Essex to deliver on wider cross-cutting transport priorities and make the changes that are necessary to ensure transport functions optimally across the region. We are developing a “place and movement” approach to ensure key transport routes support sustainable growth and place shaping.
- Priority for new rail partnerships with Great British Railways – influencing local rail offer, e.g., services and stations – This would enhance the ability to make the case for investments in Greater Essex based on improved passenger outcomes. This could include modest station access improvements (e.g., Wivenhoe); Fitch line frequency; 2nd Stansted tunnel; integration with RTS; and freight improvements (various issues on lines outside Greater Essex such as track improvements around Leicester; and electrification on freight spurs to ports).
- Electric vehicle infrastructure – We note that the government is introducing a new £450 million local electric vehicle infrastructure (LEVI) scheme for local authorities to support local EV infrastructure delivery.

Greater Essex is keen to be at the forefront of EV delivery in the UK and we would welcome engagement with Government on how we can best achieve this – not only through the funding stream but also through the appropriate devolution of infrastructure powers.

Housing and Infrastructure

What is the proposition

We have a housing affordability challenge in Greater Essex, driven by insufficient supply, with 200,000 new homes needing to be built by 2040³. At the same time, we need to ensure that housing growth happens in a way that protects, preserves and enhances heritage and natural beauty; and that it is accompanied by the infrastructure and services required to support a growing population. We also need to improve housing security and quality for people on low incomes; and ensure sufficient specialist housing to meet the needs of a growing vulnerable population. New build and existing stock need to be made climate resilient and ready for net zero – we have developed an award-winning Essex Design Guide which sets out how this should be done.

We will ensure that our approach, under devolution, takes advantage of the benefits of strategic planning for housing and infrastructure development, economic corridors and accessible business clusters; but also preserves the benefits of a locally driven approach based around local place shaping.

We also need to acknowledge the clear link between infrastructure development and the wider determinants of health. A Population Health Management approach focuses on the wider determinants of health and the crucial role of communities, local people and public services including councils, the public, schools, fire service, voluntary sector, housing associations, social services, police and transport services. All have a role to play in addressing the interdependent issues that affect people's health and wellbeing.

What will be different

We will start to turn around housing delivery and housing outcomes for Greater Essex, so that housing becomes an enabler of, rather than a barrier to, economic growth, levelling up, improved public health (through design that encourages active travel), net zero, climate resilience, and stronger communities. Infrastructure strategy and decisions will also seek to address the interdependent issues that affect people's health and well-being.

What we are seeking

- Infrastructure Planning - we need to make sure that we can accommodate growth in Greater Essex in a way that is sustainable and enables our communities to prosper. We will consider whether a more strategic infrastructure plan, based on work previously done across Greater Essex to look at our infrastructure needs, will be helpful in enabling us to capture the full benefits of growth.

- Energy - we wish to explore the devolution of powers to enable leadership of local area energy and heat planning, bringing systems thinking to the design of a net zero energy system that works for all.

³ This figure is based on adopted and/or emerging Local Plans across Greater Essex.

- Partnership with Homes England and greater devolution of land holdings – building on our existing work with Homes England, we want to build a more strategic collaboration to ensure that there is a short, medium and long term view of land supply across Greater Essex. This could include direct funding to build local capacity and joint work with Homes England to drive forward the programme across Greater Essex to highlight viable investment propositions to unlock and accelerate stalled housing sites. We would also wish to explore taking control of Homes England land in Greater Essex to enable more successful land assembly to drive housing and employment site regeneration. This would include the Homes England portfolio of existing sites, including the legacy sites from SEEDA and the Commission for New Towns and would involve a presumption in favour of transfer of ownership to the combined county authority.
- House building on brownfield sites, inc. funding – we want to explore the feasibility and benefits of speeding up and simplifying the process for building on brownfield sites through locally led partnerships with a range of support measures including recoverable investment funding.
- Energy performance of new homes – we are seeking to negotiate for Greater Essex to pilot new sustainable building standards that go beyond the bare minimum as part of our shared commitment to tackling climate change; and the ability to set ambitious planning policies that go beyond the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Building Regulations.
- Opportunity area – we want to explore the ability to identify key locations with potential for new homes, jobs and infrastructure of all types. Examples in London are linked to existing or potential public transport improvements and typically have capacity for at least 2,500 new homes or 5,000 new jobs, or a combination of the two.
- Housing development sites pipeline - creating a pipeline over the short, medium, and long term will enable us to both offer the scale to seek strategic partnerships and investment from major developers as well as working with local SMEs, housing associations and LAs/LA housing companies on appropriate sites.
- Devolved capital funding – as other areas have done, we will seek the devolution of some capacity funding to support the delivery of housing priorities in Greater Essex including new affordable homes, net zero ambitions and specialist housing.
- Affordable Housing – we are keen to explore options for funding and flexibility to enable the expansion of delivery by local authorities and local housing associations.

- Retrofit - we wish to seek access to a proportionate share of the Government's Sustainable Warmth and energy company ECO funds, as well as the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. In addition, we want to secure the powers to implement a Landlord Registration Scheme to manage compliance with regulations including minimum EPC standards.
- Property Collaboration – we are seeking capacity funding from government to support Greater Essex consideration of a whole scale review of public sector assets with a view to rationalising and leveraging the use of our assets to underpin the delivery of more efficient public services.
- Capacity funding - currently Greater Essex authorities have the powers to enforce building standards and environmental health regulations but too often lack the resources to do so. Establishing shared resources, evidence bases and centres of excellence to ensure the quality of our housing stock would be an important step to empowering Greater Essex to deliver better housing outcomes for our residents. This could include shared resource to support viability assessments, strategic planning capacity, housing development capability, and joint procurement of temporary accommodation for homeless households.
- Land assembly and Homes England compulsory purchase powers – we are keen to explore taking on this power, subject to the agreement of the constituent councils over individual decisions.
- Digital Infrastructure - the government has indicated that engagement with local authorities on the delivery of digital infrastructure and potential economic and public service applications of data and data science is possible through a deal. The ability for us to agree our own contracts with BT Openreach and City Fibre, based on investment principles that recognise the increased cost of delivering to isolated rural areas but also the long-term economic and social benefit to bringing broadband to rural communities and businesses, would allow a step-change in outcomes for residents. It would allow Greater Essex to take a demand-led, responsive programme, delivered at a district level that focussed on quick delivery to targeted areas and may also support efforts to address digital poverty and vulnerability.

Keeping the Public Safe and Healthy

What is the Proposition

We believe it is essential that devolution supports the public health agenda – at a whole population level and in closing widening health inequalities that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. In the medium-term, we would like to explore social care and health integration as part of this process, along the lines of the Greater Manchester model.

In the shorter term, we believe a Greater Essex devolution deal can help boost the work of our integrated care systems, facilitating greater ability to collaborate and work together on a small set of strategic issues to improve population health and well-being and address the wider determinants of health. It will facilitate more joined-up and streamlined conversations in respect of economic development, skills, transport and strategic planning. In addition, building on established and successful examples of partnership working and collaboration we believe that a devolution deal could raise the profile of a public health approach to deliver additional community safety and well-being outcomes.

Essex Police and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) are coterminous with Greater Essex, and we have already realised many benefits of a directly elected Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex, through strong partnership working and greater strategic planning. Building on our existing partnerships, we want to explore more opportunities to deliver services within a public health approach where the benefit derived reaches across systems beyond that of police and fire alone and contributes to their efficiency and effectiveness. Greater Essex, in partnership with Government, will work with the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to agree an appropriate arrangement to ensure close collaboration and productive joint working on public safety, in a manner that learns the lessons of existing devolution models and which protects and preserves the operational independence, direction and control of relevant chief officers.

What will be different

This section highlights how devolution can help to build on and deepen local partnership working, and also strengthen collaboration with government on public service integration and reform.

The impact of air quality, housing, employment, early years, education and skills on health and wellbeing is well understood. Tackling the wider determinants of health delivers benefits not just to the individuals and their communities but will reduce demand on public services across the board. Learning from the work of the Essex Violence and Vulnerability Unit in developing a public health approach, we believe that this model could achieve additional benefits in other areas such as substance misuse, nutrition and obesity. In addition, greater collaboration would see an enhanced offer to key vulnerable groups.

Devolution provides the opportunity to join up our approach to delivering services more strategically across Greater Essex. Our ambition is to transform public service outcomes through this devolution deal and therefore we will wish to consider some of the fundamental elements of local delivery and how we can continue to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our offer to local residents through this route.

What are we seeking

- Capacity funding to enhance and expand the progress that has already been made and to extend the public health approach to new areas as described above.

The Essex Violence and Vulnerability Unit is an example of this, having followed the example set by Glasgow. We could use devolution to build on and expand this approach.

- A data sharing pilot between partners with government support to be able to plan and deliver more targeted and effective interventions. Improved data sharing across areas will allow for more evidence-based approaches to targeting funding and services and analysing what works. It will enable detailed understanding of inequalities across areas with the power to direct funding and services where they are needed.

Through this devolution deal we are seeking enhanced dialogue with government and the ONS on establishing local data standards for all public service agencies to make the join up of data at a local level more straightforward and agreement regarding the granularity and timeliness of key data sets to make targeting interventions more evidence-led at the appropriate level.

- Devolution of health and justice budgets from NHS England to whichever directly elected individual exercises the PFCC's functions going forward would mean more targeted and effective health and wellbeing support for people in the criminal justice system. This builds on the work we are already doing through the Essex Integrated Criminal Justice Commissioning Group, which is having a positive impact on supporting vulnerable people in the criminal justice system and helping to reduce reoffending.
- We would also wish to explore whether there are key public health outcomes – for example obesity, healthcare for 0-19s – where devolution would enable us to take a stronger whole-system approach to not just addressing the presenting issue but also tackling the root causes. Building on our existing pilot with Sport England, we are particularly interested in building 'moving more' into the priorities of any future CCA – recognising that movement – especially walking and cycling – provides a range of physical and mental well-being dividends. We will be seeking to promote active workplaces; active schools; active travel; active places; and active communities to realise these benefits and also support our drive to environmental sustainability.

The Environment

The Proposition

Climate change is something that we all face and in Greater Essex we are committed to ensuring we lead the way in moving to a low carbon economy that will secure a long-term future for our businesses and residents. We are already dealing with the impacts from our changing climate and are seeing increasing coastal erosion, flooding, water scarcity, overheating and soil degradation. Our residents and businesses are directly affected and these impacts risk undermining our agricultural productivity and our plans for future development. We need to ensure that we support our communities to be climate resilient through a clear focus on green infrastructure and nature-based solutions.

Effectively addressing climate change is core to our vision for a successful Greater Essex. This underpins actions across all of areas of investment and development set out in these devolution plans. Alongside these proposals, a series of core actions are needed to secure our natural environment. These will ensure we can continue to have a successful agricultural sector while securing 30% green infrastructure critical to protect our soils, build climate resilience and providing a healthy environment for our wildlife and our residents.

We also want to lead the way in delivery of the 25 Year Environment Plan and the legislation in the Environment Act, balancing our growth ambitions with the nurturing and cherishing of wildlife and biodiversity on land and in the water.

What will be different

Greater Essex is already a national leader on climate action. Through the Essex Climate Action Commission, we have developed and are delivering an ambitious programme of activity to transition to net zero. This involves bringing together action by public services, anchor institutions, businesses and communities. We will use devolution to accelerate progress on net zero across our whole region; to ensure that our natural environment is protected from the impacts of climate change; and to enhance the environment for the benefit of our residents, visitors and future generations.

What we are Seeking

- Green Infrastructure - through a Local Nature Recovery Strategy, we want to bring green infrastructure planning across Greater Essex together in a more integrated way, using powers and funding from DEFRA, Natural England and the Forestry Commission.
- Sustainable farming – Greater Essex is a very rural area in parts and the Essex Climate Action Commission recommended a target of achieving net zero farming by 2050. We want the power to set local criteria that apply to funding of landowners through the national Environment Land Management Schemes. This will enable us to influence the development of more sustainable farming in parts of Greater Essex.

Arts, culture, heritage, tourism and sport

The Proposition

The creative industries are the UK's biggest growth sector, with 1.3 million people working in the creative economy across London and the South East. The UK Commission for Employment and Skills predicts 1.2 million new workers are needed in the sector over the next decade. Tourism and the visitor economy are crucial industries for Greater Essex, with the county attracting large numbers of leisure and business visitors every year. This is particularly important for many of our coastal areas, which include some of the areas of highest deprivation in the region, and therefore is a key element of Levelling Up.

The UK government wants to see a growing, dynamic, sustainable and world-leading tourism sector reaching its full potential and driving growth across all parts of the UK. We share this ambition.

Sport and active lifestyles play a powerful role in supporting mental and physical health and addressing disadvantage. Essex is one 12 national pilot areas that is working with Sport England on a comprehensive and community-led programme to boost physical activity.

What Will Be Different

Devolution offers an opportunity to strengthen how we work with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), its arms-length bodies and other national bodies. This will enable us to significantly enhance Greater Essex's track record of developing and delivering ambitious place-based strategies to realise the region's rich cultural potential.

This will include looking across culture, heritage, sport and visitor economy initiatives and identifying opportunities for a joined-up, strategic approach. Building on Greater Essex's outstanding cultural strengths and assets, this collaborative strategic approach will support our cultural partners to deliver an exceptional cultural offer, thus maximising the contribution of culture and heritage to placemaking, local communities and sustainable economic growth across Greater Essex. For example, we will work with DCMS and Historic England on developing legacy investments, the protection and enhancement of Essex's castles and renewing the region's pride and place in further priority places.

Similarly, by building stronger strategic relationships with DCMS and Arts Council England regarding the Levelling up For Culture Places (CPP Project Thurrock) and Arts Council Priority Places (Basildon and Tendring) and the region's National Portfolio Organisations (such as the Focal Point Gallery and Metal Culture Ltd. in Southend), we can work more impactfully and ambitiously to deliver vital levelling up interventions.

Taking forward this work will have significant benefits for the region's economy, including in providing more jobs in areas with high levels of deprivation. Moreover, high quality, accessible cultural and sporting opportunities can act as levers to improve public health outcomes around activity levels, obesity, and mental health, and can also have a positive impact on community safety – for example, using sport to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour, gang-related activity and to help reduce reoffending.

What we are seeking

- Powers to designate areas of Greater Essex as Creative Enterprise Zones where artists and creative businesses can find permanent, affordable space to work; are supported to start-up and grow; and where local people are supported to learn creative sector skills - understanding that arts and culture and the creative industry are important contributors to inclusive growth and placemaking.

The Creative Enterprise Zones model in London has helped local areas with accessing inward investment, enabling new and affordable workspaces for creatives, access to skills and training, and community engagement. We would like to build on this model in Greater Essex.

We want to increase investment in culture, heritage and sport in Greater Essex to boost the local economy and tackle health inequalities. This could include a redevelopment of key cultural infrastructure; investment in key creative industry skills across the county; and the development of support structures for the full range of creative industries e.g., film, gaming, architecture, fashion; artists' studios and gallery space; and continued investment and development of the region's museums and galleries. We want to work with Arts Council England to ensure Greater Essex gets its fair share of national funding, supporting delivery of a regional culture strategy.

- We want to work with DCMS through the accredited Local Visitor Economy Partnership for the region to help develop Greater Essex's visitor economy, with a view to harnessing our potential to grow domestic and international visitor spend, and encourage visits throughout the year rather than just during the traditional tourist season. This collaborative work, across those areas set out in the Government's Tourism Recovery Plan, could include the potential to expand major events and festivals and drive up the economic and place-making potential of these; expansion of business tourism by capitalising on our gateway links with Northern Europe; and harnessing Greater Essex's leading voice in delivering green tourism and its ambition to become England's first fully net zero visitor destination.
- We want to build on the work already in train across Greater Essex and review the region's offer regarding outdoor and leisure facilities, considering the challenges facing the leisure centre sector at present from the energy crisis and the impact of the pandemic, aiming to both reduce the carbon emissions from the leisure sector while matching leisure provision with better health outcomes.
- We are seeking continued investment and development of the Essex Film Office to further establish it as a recognised leader in the industry and strengthen the case for creative infrastructure (e.g., film studios, post production facilities and skills/learning facilities).
- Specific projects that we wish to take forward and that could benefit from support include:
 - The redevelopment at Roots Hall, Southend
 - Relocated stadium for Southend United Football Club
 - Recognition of the importance of Southend Pier and continued investment into it

- Development of artists' studios and gallery space, continued investment and development of the region's museums and galleries (particularly recognising the cultural importance of the Princely Burial and the London Shipwreck)
- Continued development of Southend Airport and the Launchpad
- Development and restoration of Essex's heritage include the development of the visitor experience at Cressing Temple Barns
- Restoration, preservation, recording and the interpretation of the cultural heritage of four registered parks and gardens (Belhus Park, Danbury Park, Thorndon Park, Weald Park); and key sites across the county including Saffron Hall Trust; Roman Wall in Colchester; Palace theatre Clacton, and Shire Hall in Chelmsford.

Finance

What is the proposition

Our goal is a system of funding for local government in Greater Essex that gives local leaders greater freedoms and flexibilities around resources and raising funding; greater certainty over funding sources so that we can plan effectively for the future; the capacity to fund strategic economic investment; and the capacity to drive even better value for money and outcomes for our residents, through better join up and strategic commissioning of services. Greater Essex leaders are committed to doing this in the most effective way possible, maximising the impact of the public pound and gearing and leveraging private investment into our growing economy. Scale and diversity of assets across Greater Essex presents a potent opportunity for private sector partners, together with our proximity to London and its eastward growth and expansion.

What will be different

Devolution will bring in added investment to the region – principally through a long-term investment fund, but also through other investment propositions that we are putting forward. This is important because it will enable us to make the long-term investments that are critical to delivering against the Levelling Up missions. Greater local control of national funding programmes (as on adult skills) will enable better tailoring of investments to local needs and opportunities. This will include joining up funding in local places to deliver better outcomes and return on investment and working more closely with communities to ensure they own the solutions in their neighbourhoods.

What are we seeking

- Mayoral precepting – should Greater Essex adopt a Level 3 devolution deal, we would look to have mayoral precepting powers to enable the Mayoral Combined County Authority to cover the costs of its operation.

- Business rates – we seek the power in the White Paper to levy a supplement on business rates to fund new infrastructure, subject to the support of the local business community. This will enable the combined county authority to have the power to fund local infrastructure projects that are considered necessary by local businesses and which are not funded by central government or already built into existing local capital plans.
- Alongside the above, we would seek wider flexibility to offer discounts on business rates to encourage certain sectors to relocate to Greater Essex.

We would also like to explore the option of retaining a greater share of business rates generated locally, as this will further strengthen the incentives to invest in promoting local economic growth.

Section 3: Leadership and Governance

Greater Essex already benefits from strong local leadership and partnership working across our upper tier authorities, our cities, districts and boroughs, our Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, our health and other partners. We also have an increasingly established way of working in our north and south sub-geographies, which enables us to benefit from working at scale across organisational boundaries, while at the same time tailoring approaches to Greater Essex's diversity.

Whilst our devolution bid is outcome, not governance, led, we are seeking discussions with Government on both a Level 2 and Level 3 deal. This means that we don't start with the question "what governance model do we want"; rather we start with the question "what will deliver the best outcomes for our residents and businesses". With this in mind, we want an ambitious devolution deal for Greater Essex that will enable us to fulfil the economic and social potential of the region and address the big issues that we have set out in this document. Essex and Thurrock are clear that the opportunities and ambitions of Level 3 are significant and would deliver material benefits to Greater Essex residents. Southend-on-Sea City Council passed a Motion in 2020 which stated that 'this Cabinet opposes a directly elected mayoral form of governance, or any form of governance that diminishes the powers of the Southend-on-Sea Borough Council as a unitary authority and the largest conurbation in Essex.' Therefore, understanding both the offer for a Level 2 deal alongside Southend and a parallel conversation on Level 3 elements of the framework is where we would like to begin negotiations in good faith with Government.

- The three upper tier authorities, Southend-on-Sea City Council, Essex County Council and Thurrock Council, would form by statute the founding constituent members of a combined county authority but through the detailed governance work we are keen to explore whether there are other constituting representatives that it would make sense to include in our arrangements.

- We are engaging with city, district and borough councils on the best way of ensuring their effective participation in a future combined county authority. The benefits of devolution cannot be delivered purely by upper tier authorities and requires close collaboration across tiers of local government; and we want to reflect this reality in the governance model for how a CCA will work.
- We are also working with wider public service partners, recognising that they will have a strong interest in shaping the Deal to secure the public service outcomes that are important to the people we serve.
- We are committed to the principle of subsidiarity – that is decisions should be made as close to residents as possible. We don't want to move away from an over-centralised Whitehall model to an over-centralised Greater Essex model. We are supportive an approach similar to that adopted by the East Midlands.⁴

⁴ Principle 6 of the East Midlands deal states: 'The East Midlands MCCA will perform a role that adds value to existing governance arrangements – primarily focused on strategic place shaping functions such as plan

- Discussions are continuing as to whether the PFCC role should be incorporated into a future Mayoral Combined County Authority. This would be facilitated by the fact that the PFCC footprint and the MCCA footprint will be co-terminous. However, we are committed to ensuring that a devolution deal for Greater Essex strengthens and doesn't undermine the success of the forward-thinking model we have had in place for policing and fire and rescue service governance across Greater Essex since 2017 and our collective capability to tackle crime and support community safety.
- The functions of the existing LEP as they relate to Greater Essex would transfer over to the Greater Essex CCA and we have been in discussions about this with the LEP and with Kent and East Sussex, our partners in the existing LEP.

Once the devolution deal starts to take shape, we will be able to confirm these and other details about how the governance model for the new authority would operate, applying the best lessons from existing combined authorities. We will seek to ensure that a combined county authority, however it is constituted, is lean, efficient, provides good value for money and does not duplicate decision making.

making and strategic commissioning. The East Midlands MCCA will not create an additional layer of governance, but instead will bring the governance that currently sits at national government level down into the East Midlands, much closer to businesses and communities. Place making functions will be delivered through the existing local planning authority arrangements that are better placed to deliver functions for which they are statutorily responsible and as close to communities as is practicable.'

The Greater Essex devolution bid and the Government's four tests.

Our approach to devolution meets the four tests set out by the Government as follows:

- 1) Effective Leadership – powers will be devolved to areas that have ‘the necessary structures and leadership for clear, strong local decision-making’ (WP, p.137).

We have strong local leadership in Greater Essex and a strong track record of collaborating together across organisational boundaries. This was demonstrated for example during the pandemic, and is demonstrated in our thematic partnerships and how we are working together in our sub-geographies of North Essex and South Essex.

The governance section confirms that we recognise the need to put in place the necessary governance structures to implement the deal, according to the level of deal that is agreed.

- 2) Appropriate geography – devolution deals should be based on geographies that cover functional economic areas; are ‘locally recognisable’ in terms of identity, place and community; and cover *at least* a whole county council area. Scale is also an important factor and new deals will need to support a population of at least 500,000.

Our EOI is based on the geography of Greater Essex. It recognises that that is the appropriate footprint for devolution as it comprises the most significant functional economic area. Our pitch also recognises the diversity and economic distinctiveness of different parts of the area and we will be building in to our approach arrangements which preserve and enhance the characteristics and distinctiveness of the different parts of our area – particularly building on the arrangements that are in place across South Essex and are currently forming across North Essex.

- 3) Flexibility – the framework set out in the WP is not supposed to be prescriptive. The Government expects deals to be tailored to the needs of local areas and to be built on and extended over time.

We are ambitious for our residents and our place. Our EOI responds to the powers and functions set out in the devolution framework and also seeks to discuss and explore options around additional powers and responsibilities that are linked to the distinctive needs and opportunities of Greater Essex. We have set out some areas – for example around health and social care integration – where we do not expect to secure devolution in our first deal, but where we are signalling a medium-term ambition for further devolution in future.

- 4) Appropriate accountability – local leaders and institutions must be transparent and accountable; work closely with local businesses; seek the best value for taxpayers’ money; and maintain strong ethical standards.

A devolution deal will strengthen value for money, transparency and accountability over how money is spent locally. For example, there is currently no real visibility over how the national adult skills budget is spent in Greater Essex, nor the outcomes that are derived from it. We will change that and use this transparency and accountability to drive better performance. We are keen to develop ways to demonstrate our delivery against the Levelling Up missions in return for greater financial freedom and autonomy which will help secure those outcomes. We look forward to responding to the new accountability framework for devolved authorities.

Section 4: Engagement

We are engaging on devolution with the PFCC and the PFCC's Office and with local Councillors from upper tier authorities and from district, city and boroughs. This is important because we want to ensure that locally elected politicians are fully informed about the details and implications of devolution and have the opportunity to shape the approach we are taking. So far, we have held general briefing sessions open for all Councillors, as well as specific briefing sessions for Councillors from individual authorities. These have been well attended and have seen a high level of engagement.

In addition, the three upper tier authorities have taken the proposal to submit an expression of interest on devolution to their Cabinets and Full Councils during February and March. [A sentence or two to be added re the response of Cabinet and Council discussions]. By taking it to our Cabinets and Full Councils we have also started a public conversation around devolution, which we will follow up on more substantively over the summer and autumn once we are clear on the Government's intention with regards to our proposal.

We have engaged wider system partners and businesses in the discussion. We have engaged Health partners from across the three ICSs. We are also doing the same with the Essex Association of Local Government (which represents our town and parish councils), the Vice Chancellors of the three universities in Greater Essex, representatives of local FE colleges and with the leaders of the main voluntary sector umbrella organisations.

We have held a roundtable event with Greater Essex businesses discussing devolution and what it means for local businesses, including the future of the LEP and support for our two freeports.

Overall, we are confident that at this stage, we have general support for our approach to devolution from local Councillors and from key system partners and businesses. Of course, this will need to be re-assessed through further engagement and in due course through a public consultation once the details of a devolution deal for Greater Essex become clearer.

Section 5: Working with MPs

We recognise the importance of working with our 18 MPs as part of the development of these devolution proposals. In addition to the regular discussions we have with MPs, we have undertaken additional activity to make sure that MPs are engaged and able to influence the process and thinking.

At the outset of the process, we sent all MPs a briefing on the work that we were kicking off across leaders in Greater Essex, and we wrote to all MPs in December to update them on the discussions.

In January, we have held several briefing meetings on devolution, which have been attended by most MPs in Greater Essex, or representatives from their offices. This has enabled us to keep MPs up to date on progress and to ensure their views are reflected in our approach. We will continue to meet with our MPs and engage them in dialogue on these proposals as they are shaped.

Section 6: Timeline

This sets out the timeline we are pursuing with respect to signing off the Deal and establishing new structures – subject to Leaders and Chief Executives agreeing to proceed with the Expression of Interest before the May local elections.

Spring to Autumn 2023: deal refinement and negotiation with Government - we would be seeking to start negotiations with the Government in Spring 2023 with the hope of having a draft deal agreed between Greater Essex Authorities and the Government by late summer/early autumn 2023. Based on reports from other areas we would anticipate this taking up to a maximum of 6 months depending on capacity on both sides and the complexity of the deal.

Autumn 2023: Public announcement of deal and pre-consultation engagement with constituent authorities - following conclusion of negotiations we would be aiming for a public announcement on the deal to be made in the Autumn of 2023 to give time for wider engagement with Greater Essex authorities and key partners ahead of launching a public consultation. As part of the pre-consultation engagement Councils would take the draft deal through their individual governance processes to agree in principle before the public consultation is launched.

Winter 2023/24 Public Consultation - an 8 week public consultation would take place commencing in late 2023 / early 2024 dependent on agreement of all constituent authorities. Consultation results will be submitted to the Government and reviewed by constituent authorities before they formally vote on the draft deal.

Spring 2024. Constituent Authorities vote on the final deal.

Spring / Summer 2024. Government makes statutory order to devolve powers and funding - the timing of this will be determined by the parliamentary timetable and agreed in principle during negotiations with the Government.

Summer 2024 onwards. Implementation of the deal according to the specifics of the deal that have been agreed.

This timeline is based on information provided from other devolution deal areas we have engaged so may be subject to change depending on specific arrangements and agreements made between Greater Essex Authorities and the Government once negotiations have commenced.

ⁱ Between 2004 and 2020, unemployment rates in Essex were, on average, 1% lower than the average for England. Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics. Accessed via www.nomisweb.co.uk in June 2021.

ⁱⁱ The median salary of a full-time worker in Greater Essex is £35,157 - higher than the average for the East of England and England. See Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics. Accessed via www.nomisweb.co.uk in June 2021.

ⁱⁱⁱ ECC analysis of the Indices of Deprivation, 2019 available at <https://data.essex.gov.uk/dataset/2w89n/indices-of-multiple-deprivation-imd-2019-full-report>.

^{iv} CIPD data shows that £1.999 billion of employers' levy funds expired and were returned to the Treasury between May 2019 and March 2021.