PL044

GREAT LEIGHS STRATEGIC GROWTH SITES

Bellway LANDVEST

HARROW ESTATES

MOULSHAM HALL ESTATES

Stage 3 Masterplan Framework

February 2023

Summary of changes to the submitted Masterplan Framework Document

SUMMARY OF CHANGE	PAGE NO
Update Vision for Great Leighs to emphasise connectivity and include approach towards securing off-site improvements.	Vision text amended (p10-11).
Ensure consistency between hierarchies of movement routes shown in Figures 6, 8, 20, 26 and 27.	Figures 6, 8, 20, 26 & 27 amended (p20, 27, 85, 96 & 100).
Delete proposed vehicular access from Moulsham Hall Lane.	Figures 20, 26 & 27 amended (p85, 96 & 100) & background of other figures updated. Text deleted (p100).
Increase distance of northern parcel in Site 7a from Triceratops.	Figures 20, 23, 26, 30 & 31 amended (p85, 91, 96, 105 & 107) & background of other figures updated.
Amend proposed building heights at northern parcel of Site 7a and set out clarity of approach in the narrative to be undertaken during application stage to assess potential landscape and visual impacts buildings in proximity to Triceratops and Moulsham Hall.	Figure 31 amended (p107). Text amended (p106).
Include provision for highway improvements at junction of London Road and Main Road adjacent to A131 roundabout.	Figures 26 & 27 amended (p96 & p100).
Show how existing byway on Dumney Lane connects the proposed bridleways across Site 7a to create a continuous bridleway route.	Figures 20, 26 & 27 amended (p85, 96 & 100).
Provide clarity on the proposed pedestrian and cycle network and improved connectivity that will be achieved through improvements to existing Public Rights of Way, the wider movement network, and types of new footpath and cycle routes, including routes to be provided to be compliant LTN1/20 standards.	Figures 20, 25, 26 & 27 amended (p85, 95, 96 & 100). Text amended (p95).
Provide clarity on the intended approach to improving the underpass from Main Road to access Site 7a and including crossing of Main Road.	Text amended (p95 & 110).
Amend location and type crossing of Banter's Lane as a pedestrian and cycle connection.	Figures 20, 26 & 27 amended (p85, 96 & 100) & background of other figures updated.
Provide clarity on providing a 'Pegasus' crossing of the A131.	Text amended (p95).
Show additional landscaping along the eastern edges of Sites 7b and 7c including landscaping around existing properties on Banter's Lane and explain in narrative.	Figure 18 amended (p73). Text amended (p75).
Provide additional detail on sustainable development initiatives, including consideration of including a micro-mobility hub, enhancing health and well-being with reference to the Livewell initiative and providing additional detail on the design and specification of new buildings.	Figure 21 amended (p87). Text amended (p88).
Amend proposed phasing to allow for the proposed Travelling Showpersons site landscaping around Moulsham Hall to be delivered in the first phase.	Figure 34 amended (p114). Text amended (p114).

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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 S106 and CIL at planning application stage.

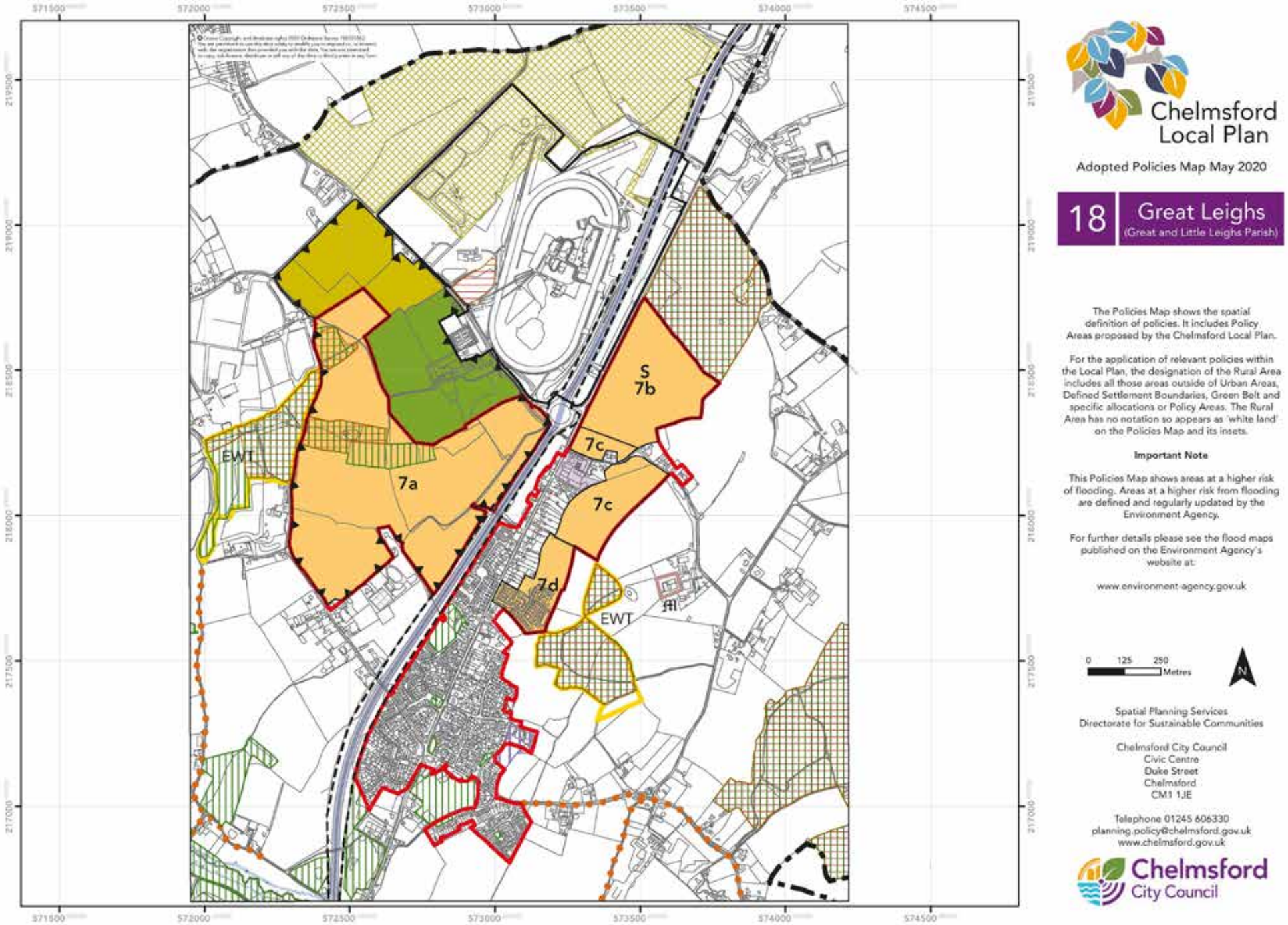


FIGURE 1: GREAT LEIGHS STRATEGIC GROWTH AREA INCLUDING SITE ALLOCATIONS (CHELMSFORD LOCAL PLAN POLICIES MAP, MAY 2019)

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. Athough 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.

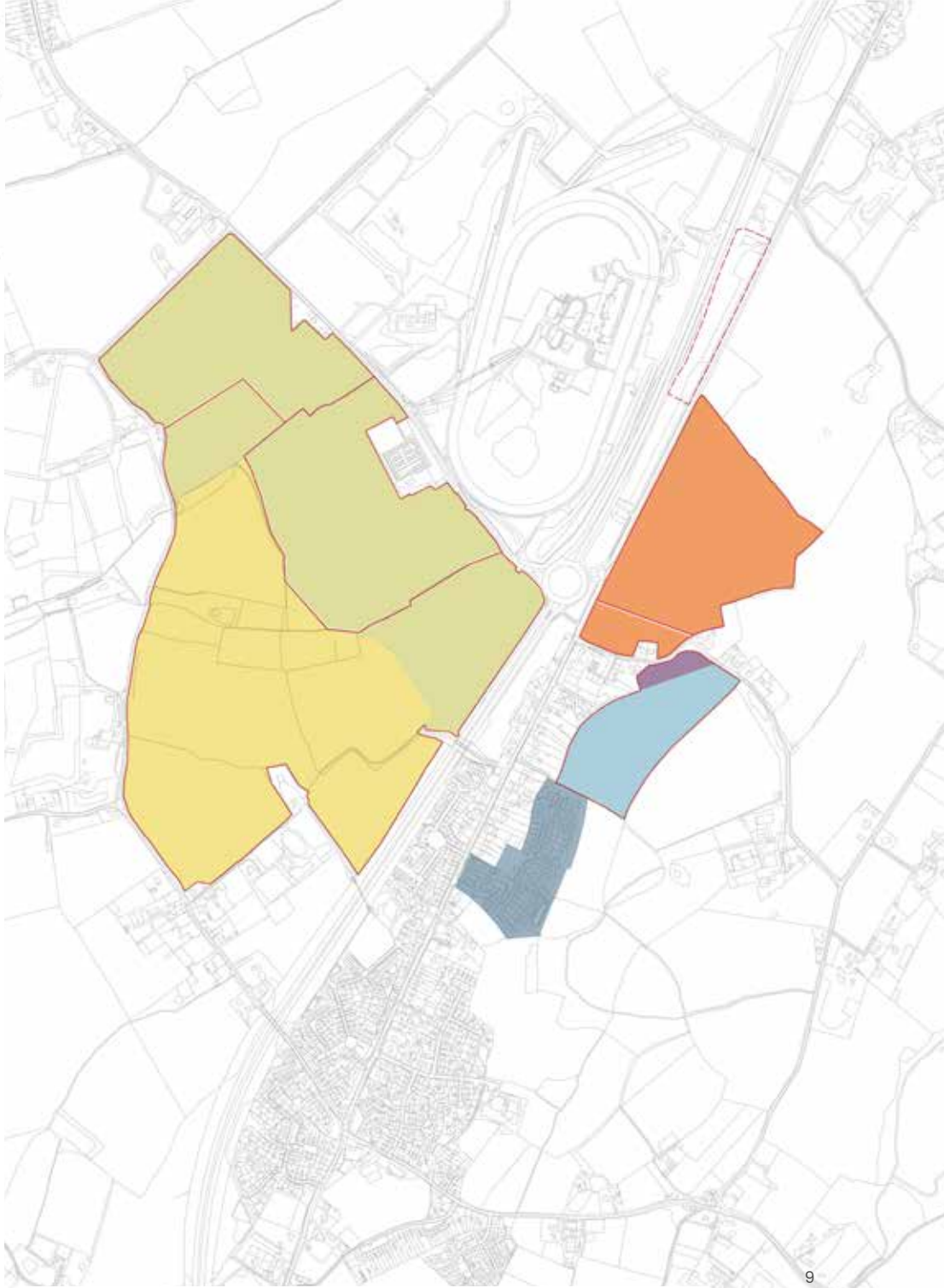


FIGURE 3: LAND OWNERSHIP PLAN ACROSS THE STRATEGIC GROWTH AREA

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 Masterpan 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.

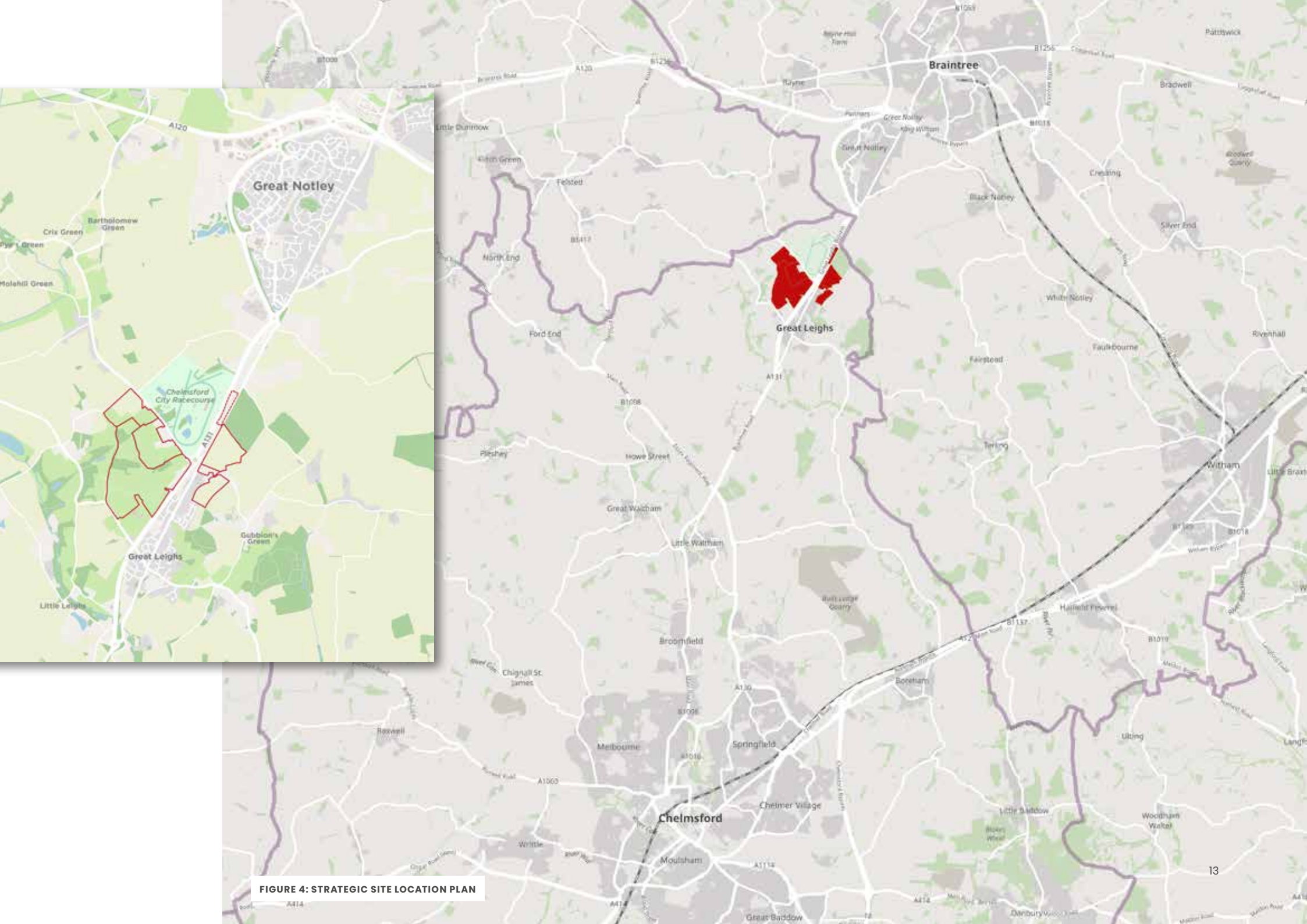


FIGURE 4: STRATEGIC SITE LOCATION PLAN

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.

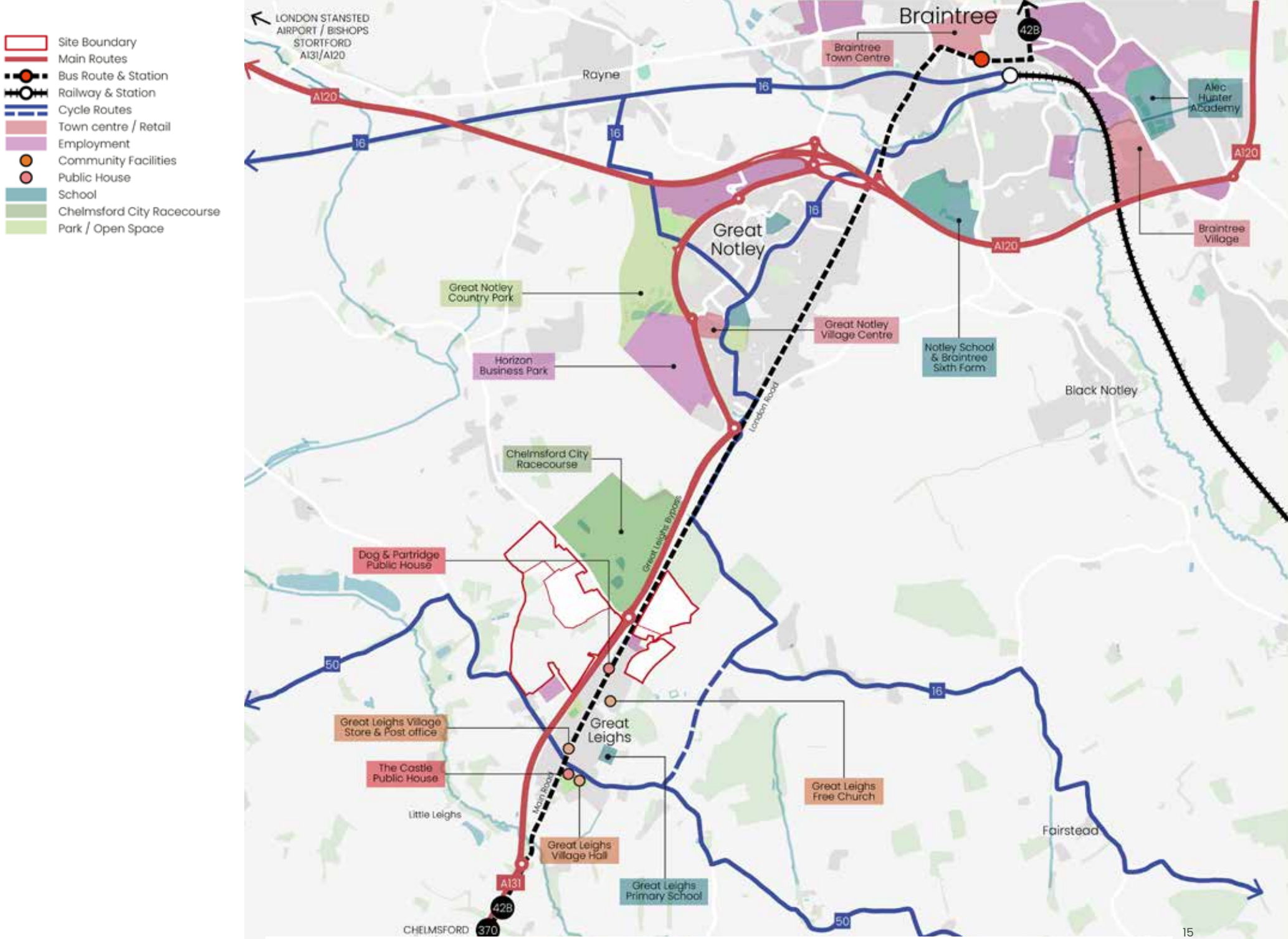
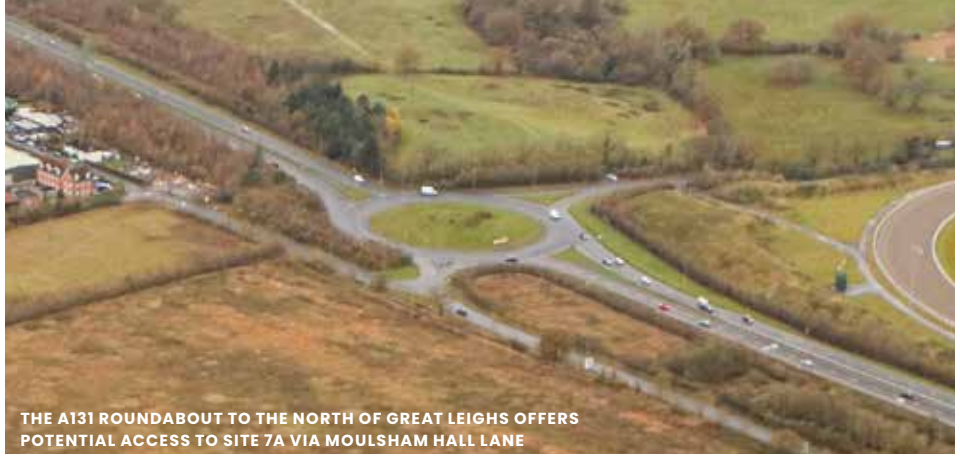


FIGURE 5: RELATIONSHIP OF THE SITES TO LOCAL FACILITIES IN GREAT LEIGHS AND NEIGHBOURING SETTLEMENTS



THE A131 ROUNDABOUT TO THE NORTH OF GREAT LEIGHS OFFERS POTENTIAL ACCESS TO SITE 7A VIA MOULSHAM HALL LANE

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.

VIEW OF MOULSHAM HALL LANE FROM THE A131

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 STOP ON MAIN ROAD WITH REAL TIME INFORMATION

SCHOOL LANE FORMS PART OF REGIONAL CYCLE ROUTE 50 AT THE WESTERN EDGE OF SITE 7A

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.

APPROACHING THE A131 UNDERPASS FROM MAIN ROAD TOWARDS SITE 7A

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.

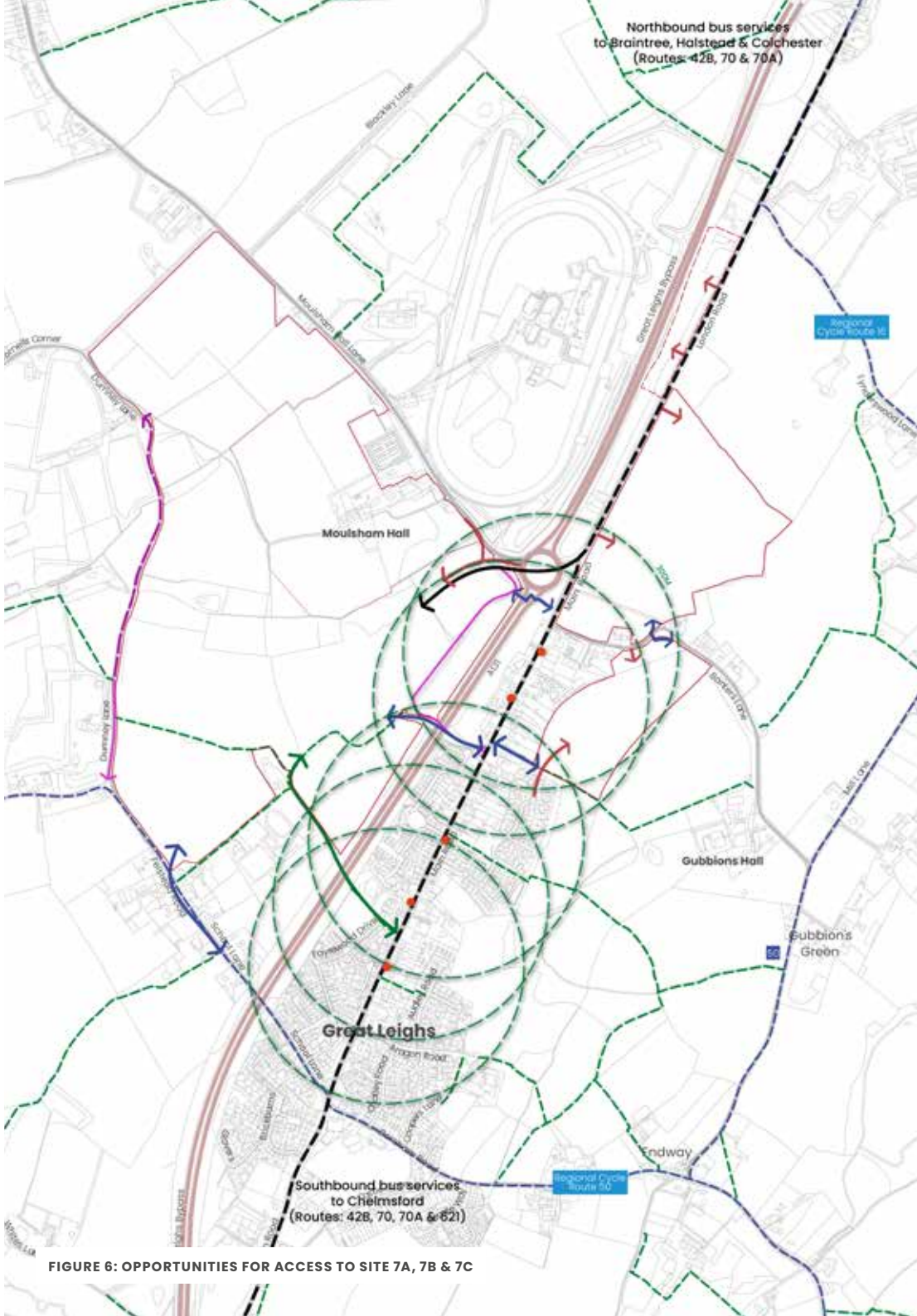


FIGURE 6: OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACCESS TO SITE 7A, 7B & 7C

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

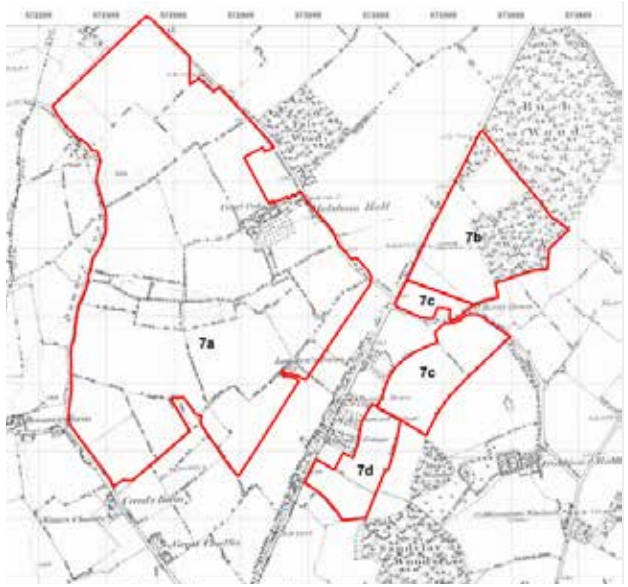
Great Leighs has a linear historic structure that is focussed on Main Road, part of the Roman road known as Peddars Way and assigned the Margary Number 33a between Chelmsford and Ixworth.

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.

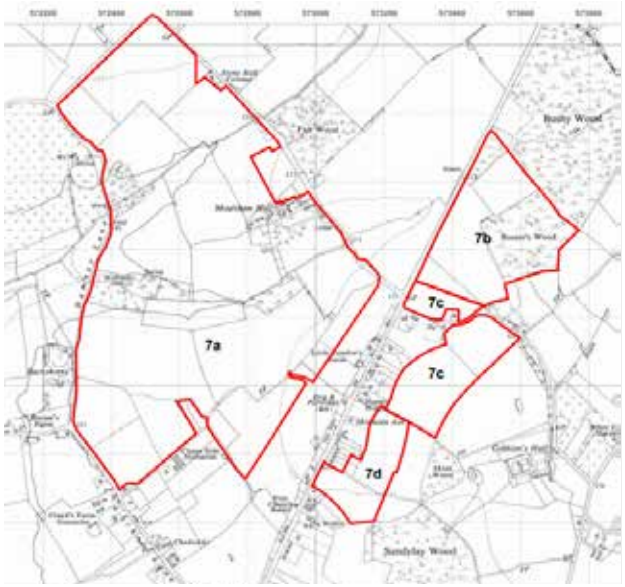
The maps in Figure 7 show how Great Leighs has evolved and expanded over time. In the 18th century, development comprised a loose scattering of farmsteads and groups of cottages on Main Road and the settlement was originally known as Chatley. In the early 20th century, the village expanded to the south 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.

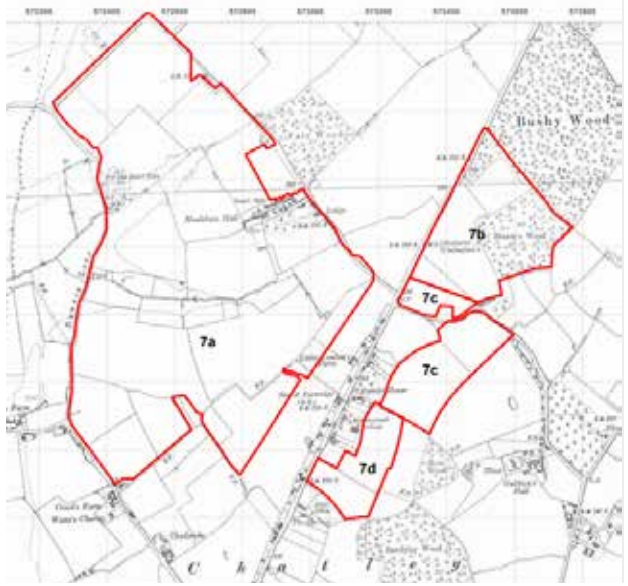


shows the linear form (2022 ,Ordnance Survey Map (Source: RPS 1875
Chatley Hamlet

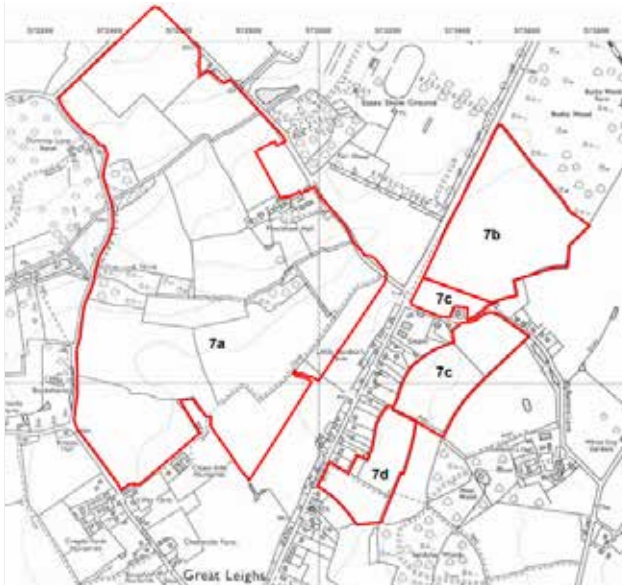


shows additional (2022 ,Ordnance Survey Map (Source: RPS 1955
development on Main Road and School Lane, forming what has become
known as Great Leighs

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

FIGURE 7: EVOLUTION OF GREAT LEIGHS

LOCAL POST OFFICE AND SHOP ON MAIN ROAD

LEIGHS VILLAGE HALL

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.

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

A131 IN LANDSCAPED CUTTING

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 Banters 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
- Senstive relating to Heritage setting
- Barrier to Movement
- Potential Pedestrian Access
- Potential Cycle & Pedestrian Access
- Village Boundary

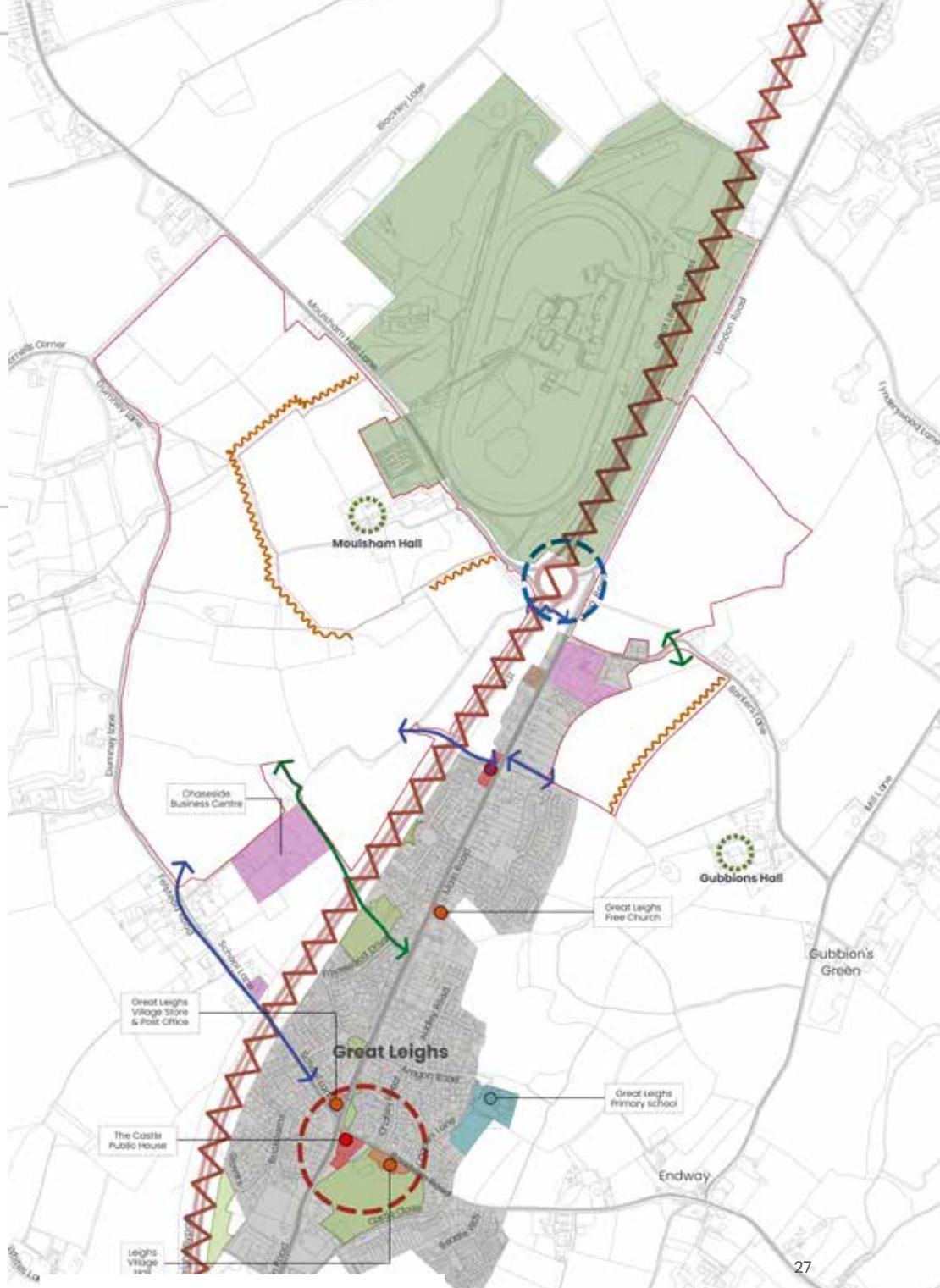


FIGURE 8: STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF GREAT LEIGHS

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.

MAIN ROAD LOOKING NORTH

OLDER DWELLINGS ON MAIN ROAD

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.

EXAMPLE OF A DWELLING WITH A DUAL ASPECT OVERLOOKING THE CORNER OF MAIN STREET AND SHIMBROOKS

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.

APARTMENT BLOCKS TERMINATE THE VIEW INTO SHMBROOKS FROM MAIN ROAD

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT BRICKBARNS 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.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT RECENTLY COMPLETED AT SITE 7D BY BELLWAY HOMES

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

GREENSPACE OVERLOOKED BY DEVELOPMENT AT SHIMBROOKS

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.

EXAMPLE OF AN OLDER COTTAGE WITH PROJECTING GABLE

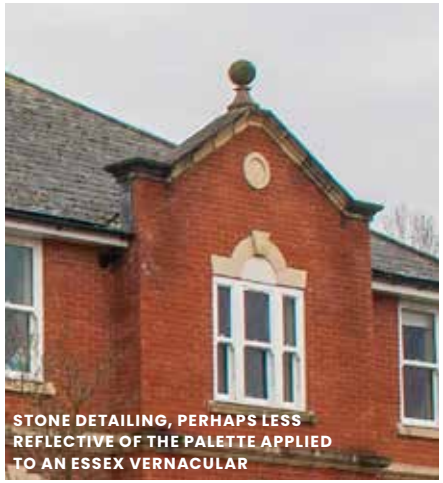
EXAMPLE OF RECENT DEVELOPMENT WITH PROJECTING GABLES AND CANOPIES

DOUBLE FRONTED COTTAGE WITH BAY WINDOWS AND PORCH ENTRANCE

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.

MOULSHAM HALL

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.

GUBBIONS HALL AND MOAT

APPLE TREE COTTAGE & BRENSWOOD COTTAGE ON MAIN ROAD IS AN EXAMPLE OF ONE OF THE EARLIER DWELLINGS ON MAIN ROAD WHICH ARE RECORDED AS A GRADE II 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.

CHAMPIONS ADJACENT TO APPLE TREE COTTAGE AND BRENSWOOD COTTAGE WHICH IS ALSO GRADE II LISTED BUILDING

The proposed layout and form of development at Site 7b and Site 7c on the setting of the designated heritage assets, including Gubbions Hall, has been considered, particularly at the eastern edge of the site to the south of Banters Lane, which is most sensitive with views east towards Gubbions Hall. Landscaping along this eastern edge will mitigate the impact on the setting of this asset from new development.

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.

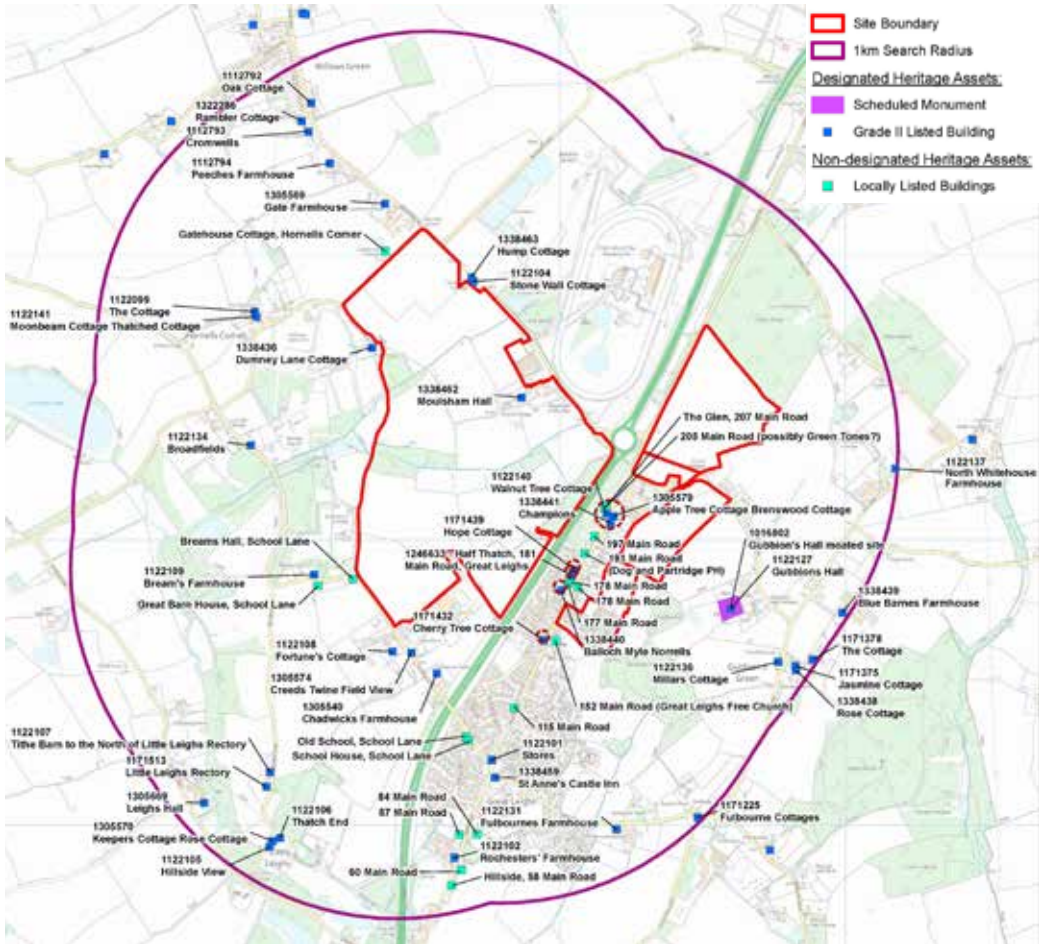


FIGURE 9: DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS INDICATIVE CONSTRAINTS (PREPARED BY RPS)

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.

DUMNEY LANE WOODS WITHIN SITE 7A

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 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 Banters 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.

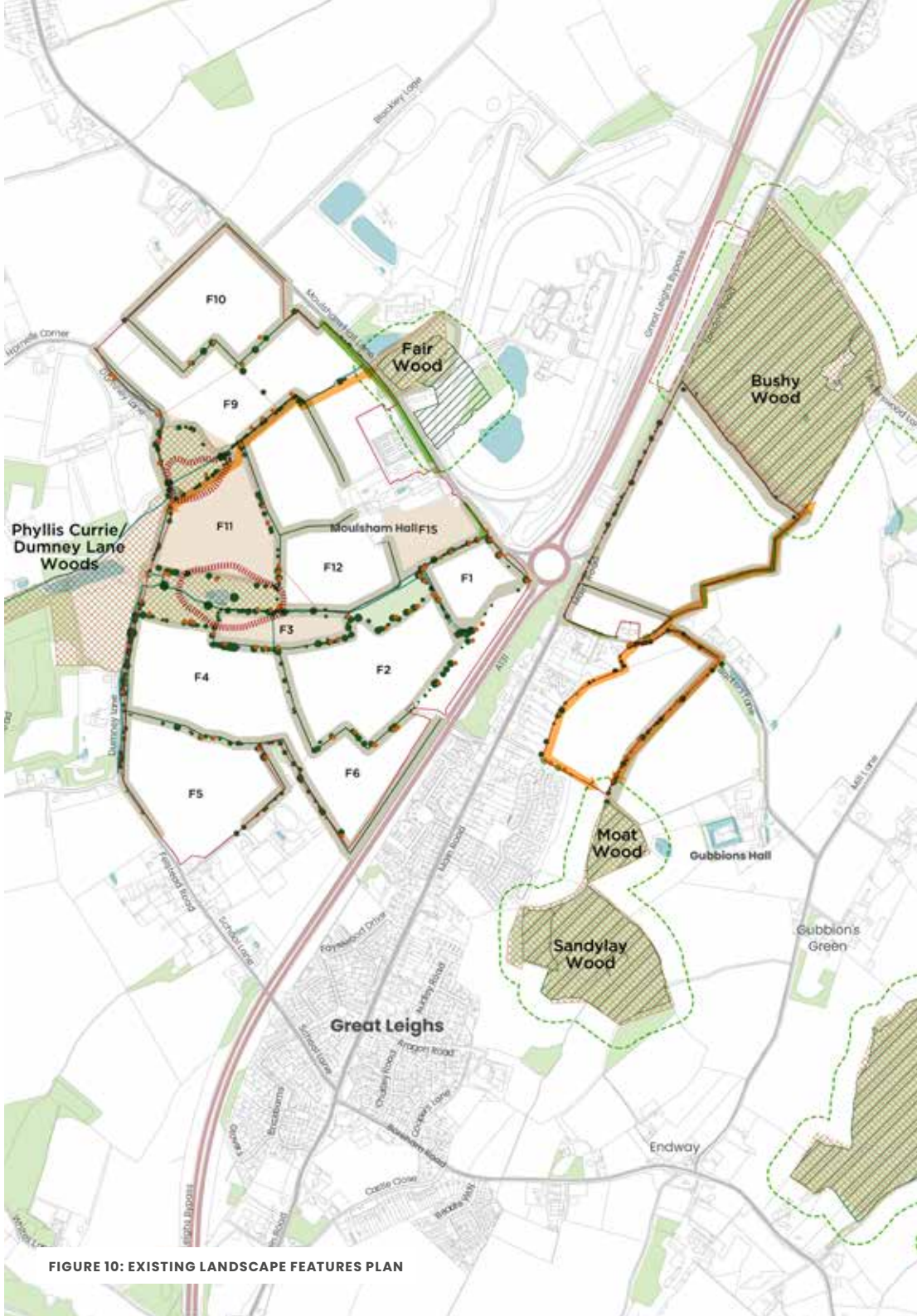


FIGURE 10: EXISTING LANDSCAPE FEATURES PLAN

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 INTO THE WESTERN EDGE OF SITE 7A FROM SCHOOL LANE

VIEW SOUTH FROM THE NORTHERN EDGE OF THE GROWTH AREA TOWARDS CHELMSFORD CITY RACECOURSE

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 with 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.

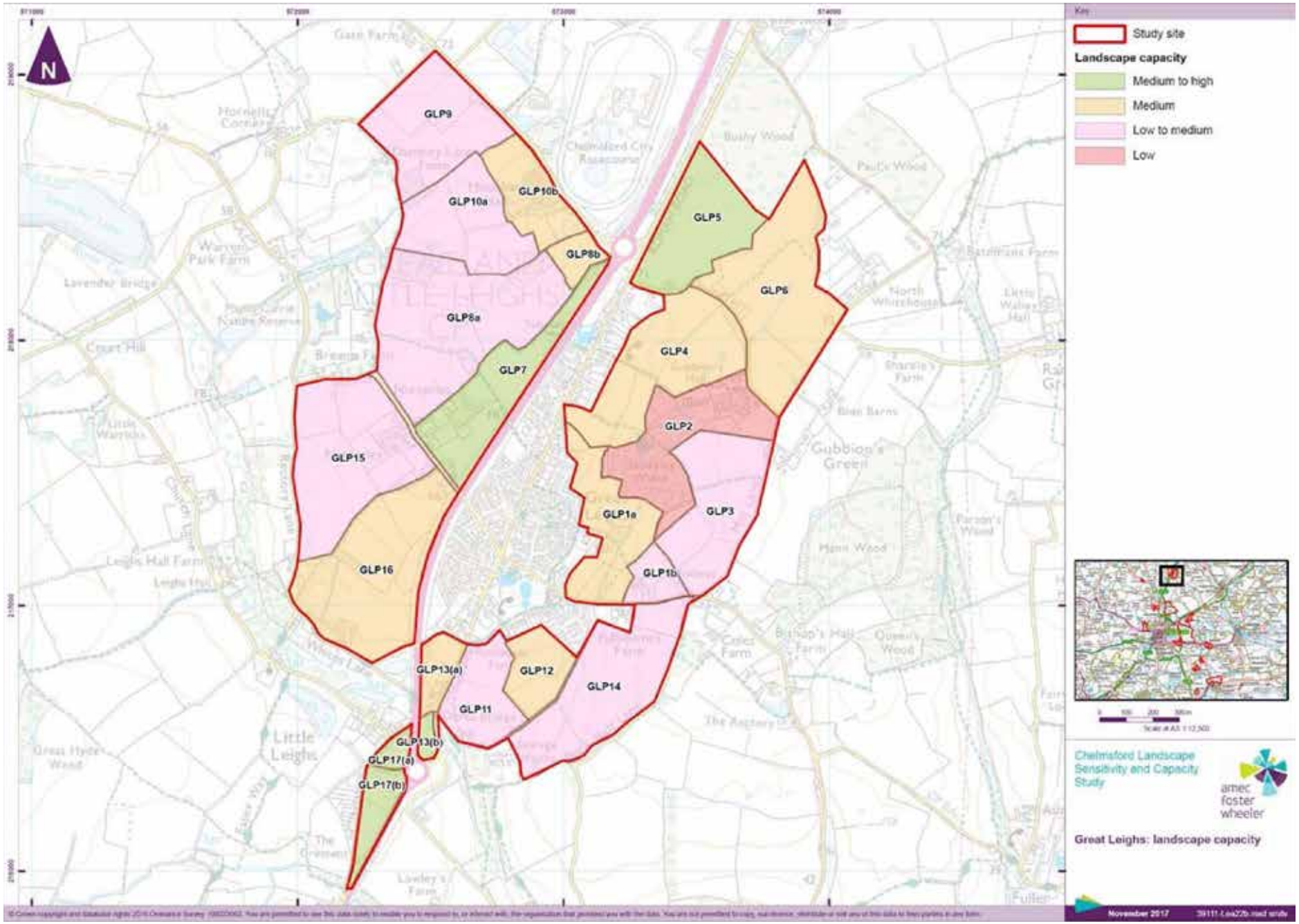


FIGURE 11: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND CAPACITY ADDITIONAL SITE ASSESSMENTS AT GREAT LEIGHS (LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND CAPACITY STUDY – ADDITIONAL SITE ASSESSMENTS (NOVEMBER 2017)

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF SITE 7A FROM THE SOUTH

VIEW FROM SCHOOL LANE INTO SITE 7A

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.

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

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

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 Phyliss Currie Nature Reserve and has good pedestrian connections.

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 and east-west alignment through the centre of the site.

VIEW FROM LONDON ROAD INTO SITE 7B

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 plating to create an appropriate interface with Great Leighs.

VIEW TOWARDS THE NORTHERN PART OF 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.

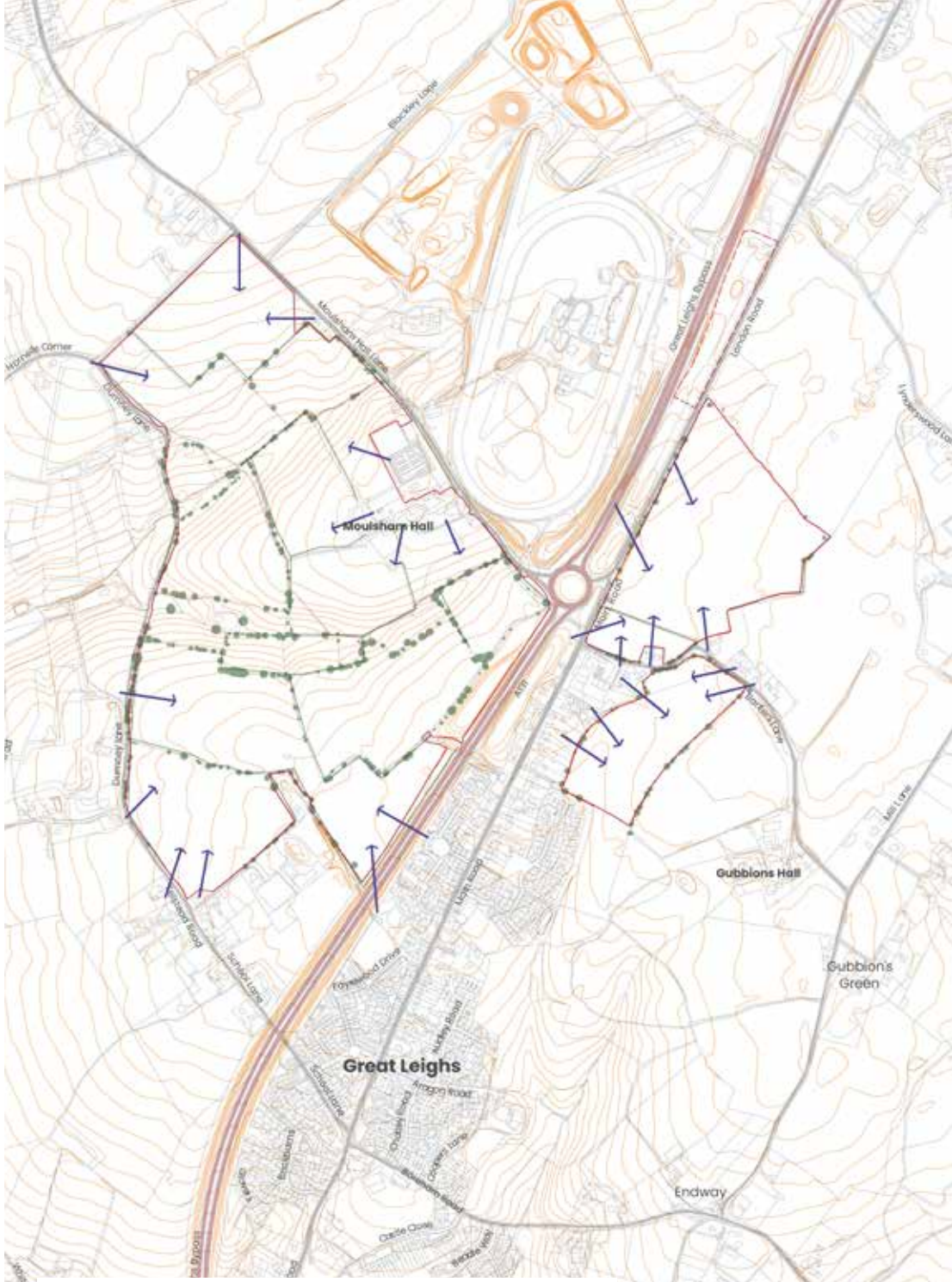


FIGURE 12: TOPOGRAPHY AND VIEWS PLAN (VIEW ARROWS TAKEN FROM THE CHELMSFORD LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND CAPACITY STUDY (2017))

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.

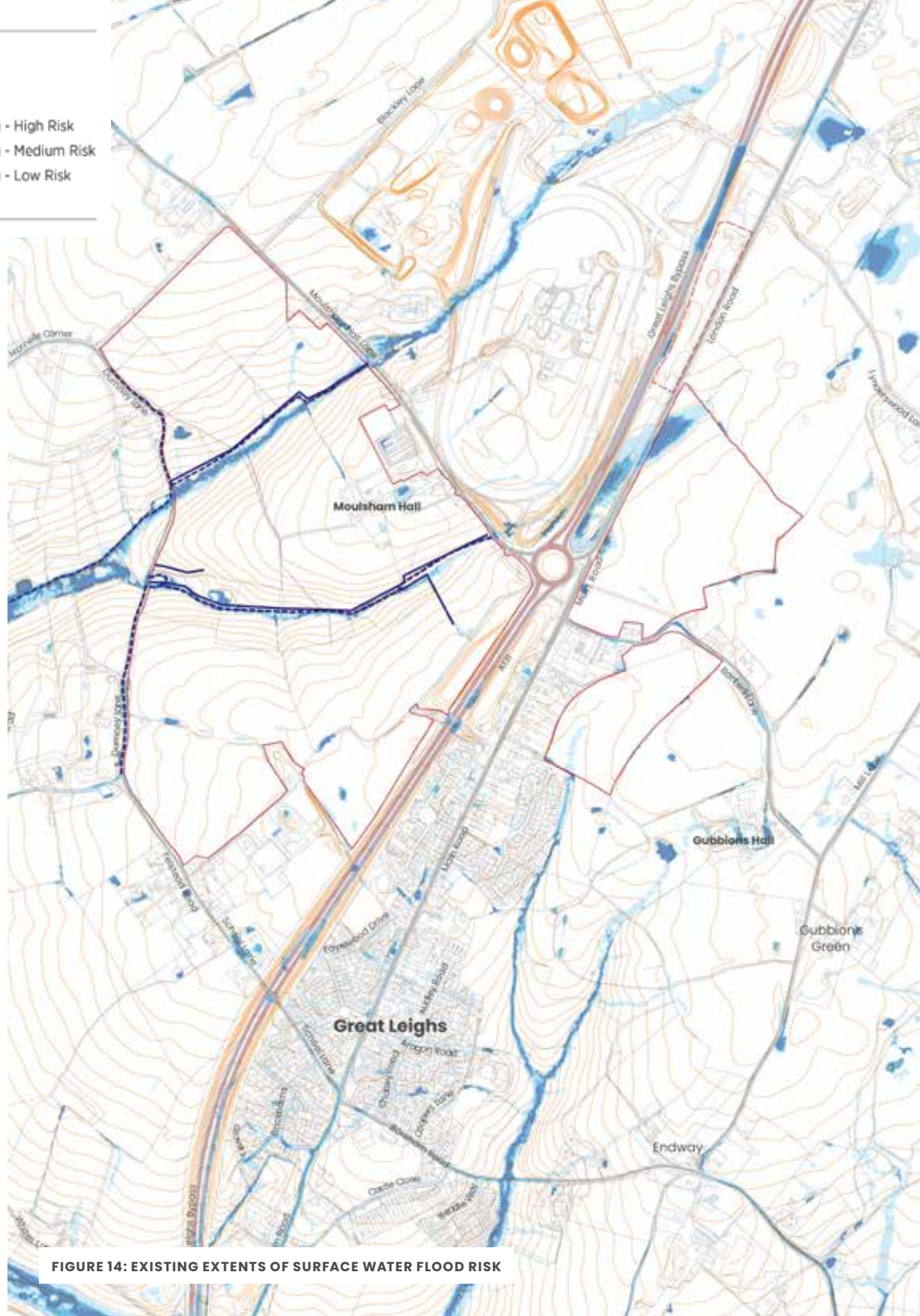


FIGURE 14: EXISTING EXTENTS OF SURFACE WATER FLOOD RISK

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

- Site Boundary
- Noise from A131
- Noise from Blackley Quarry
- Noise from Chelmsford City Racecourse
- Noise from Banter's Lane Business Park
- Noise from Chase Side Nurseries

Noise

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

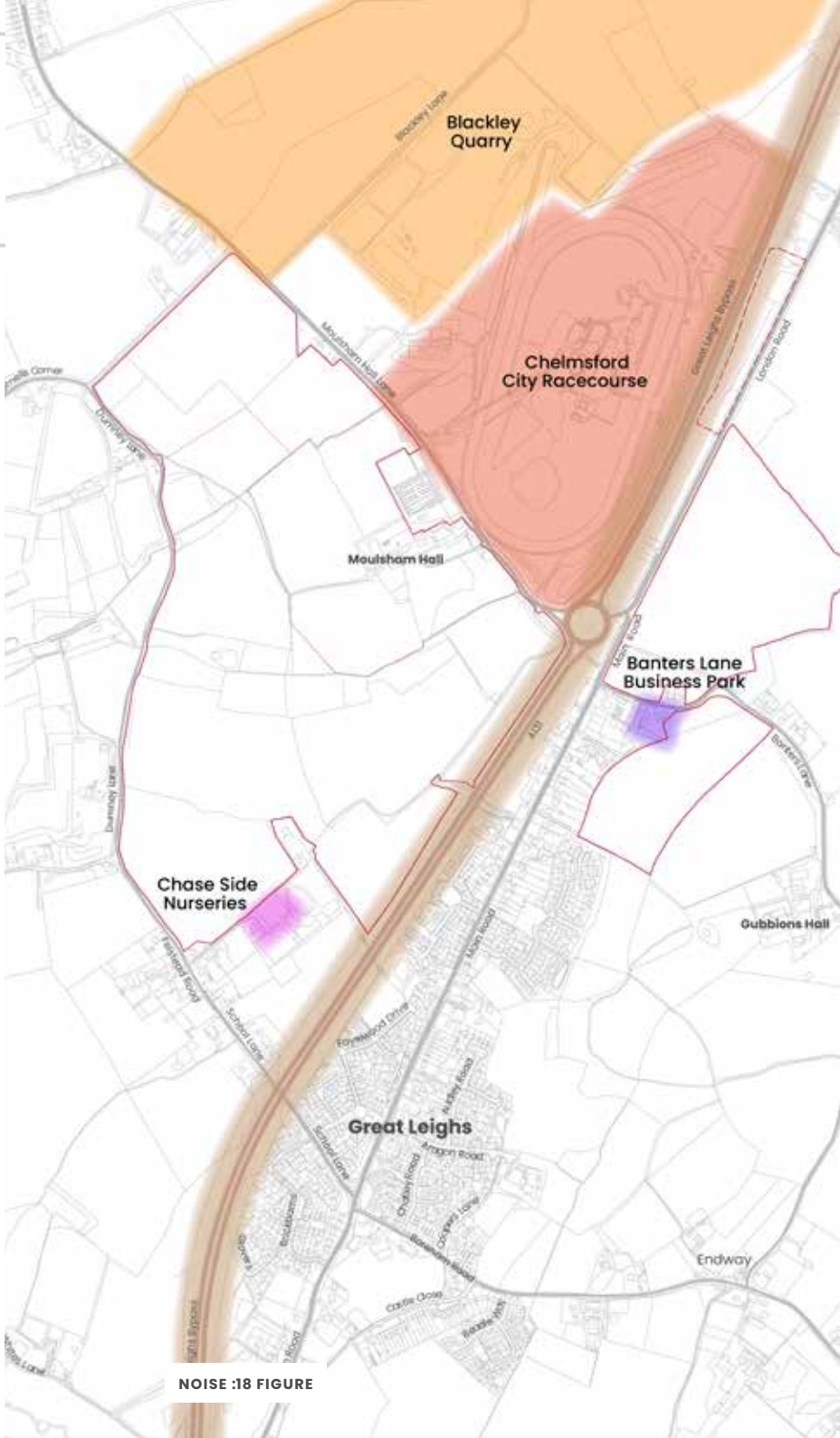
Of the noise sources found the A131 is the main noise source that requires appropriate mitigation with considerations such as the location and composition of land uses and integration of attenuation features.

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 Banters 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

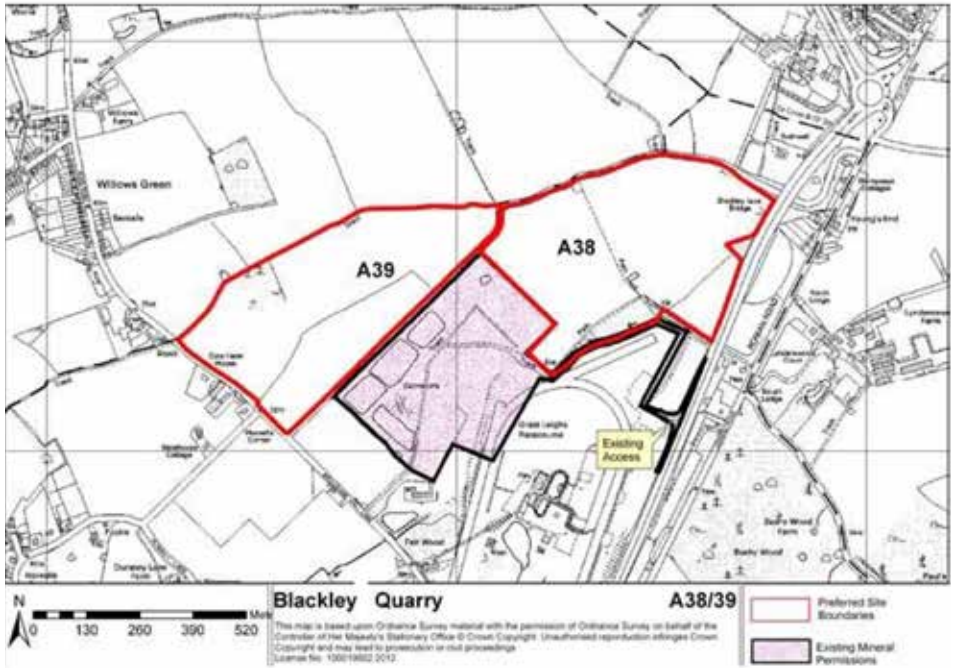


FIGURE 15: LOCATION OF MINERALS ACTIVITY AND PROPOSED EXPANSION AT BLACKLEY QUARRY (ESSEX MINERALS LOCAL PLAN 2014)

AN 11KV OVERHEAD POWERLINE ADJACENT TO CHASE SIDE BRIDGE

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.

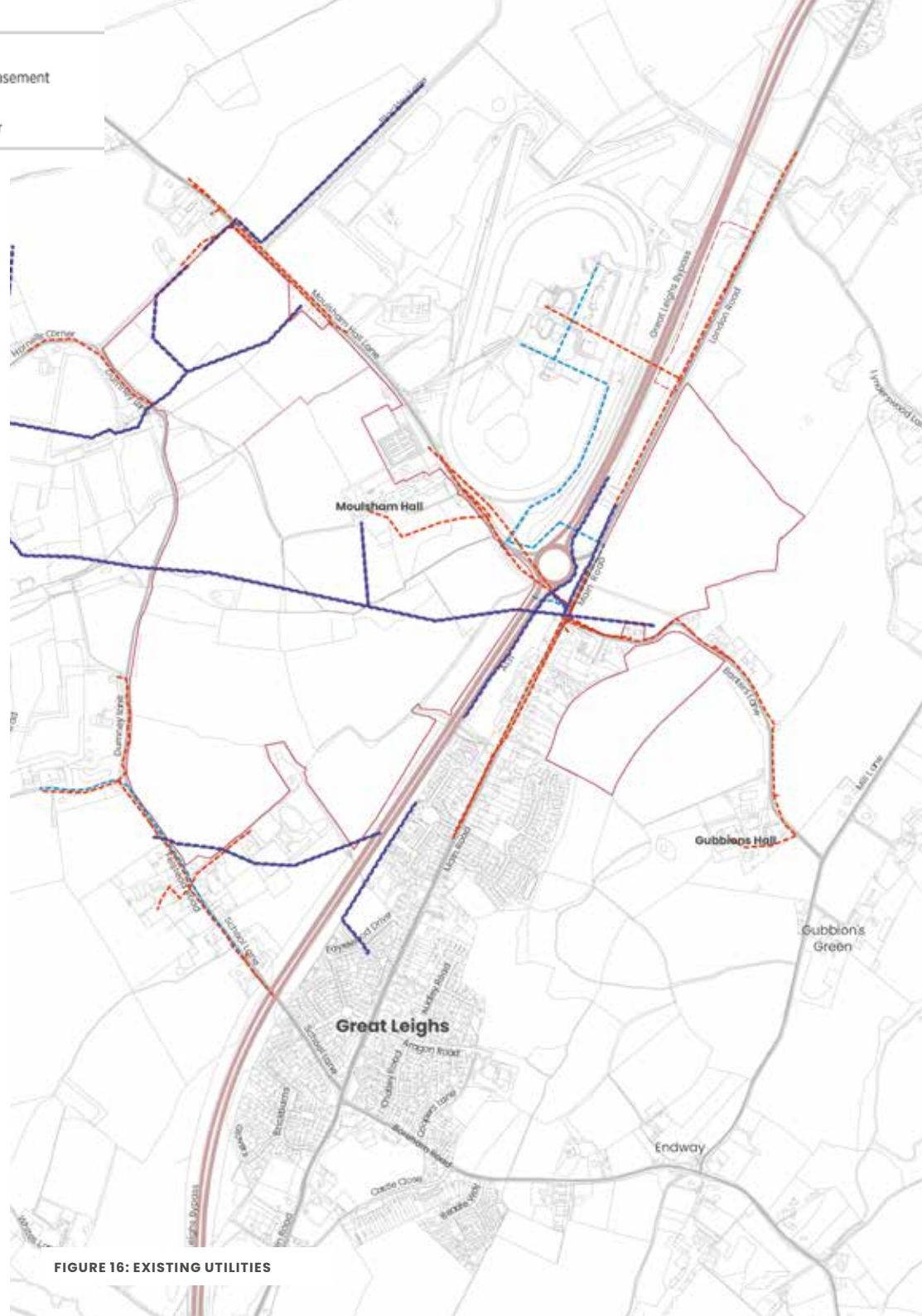


FIGURE 16: EXISTING UTILITIES

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

EXAMPLE OF ATTENUATION BASIN WHICH FOR A WIDER PART OF AMENITY OPEN SPACE

EXAMPLE OF SWALE IN A STREETSIDE VERGE

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:

EXAMPLE OF A RAIN GARDEN UTILISING THE VERGE IN RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

- 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.

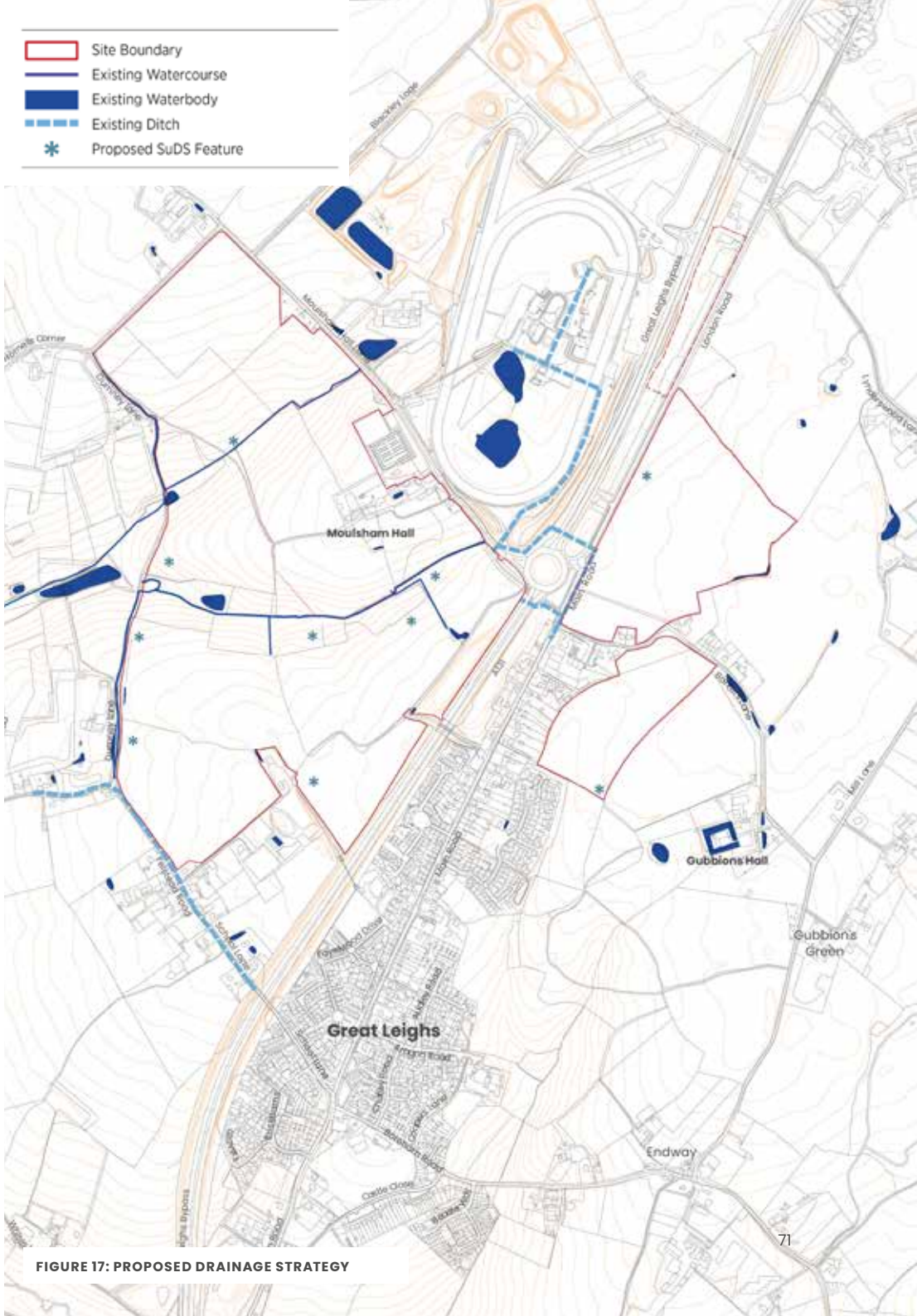


FIGURE 17: PROPOSED DRAINAGE STRATEGY

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.

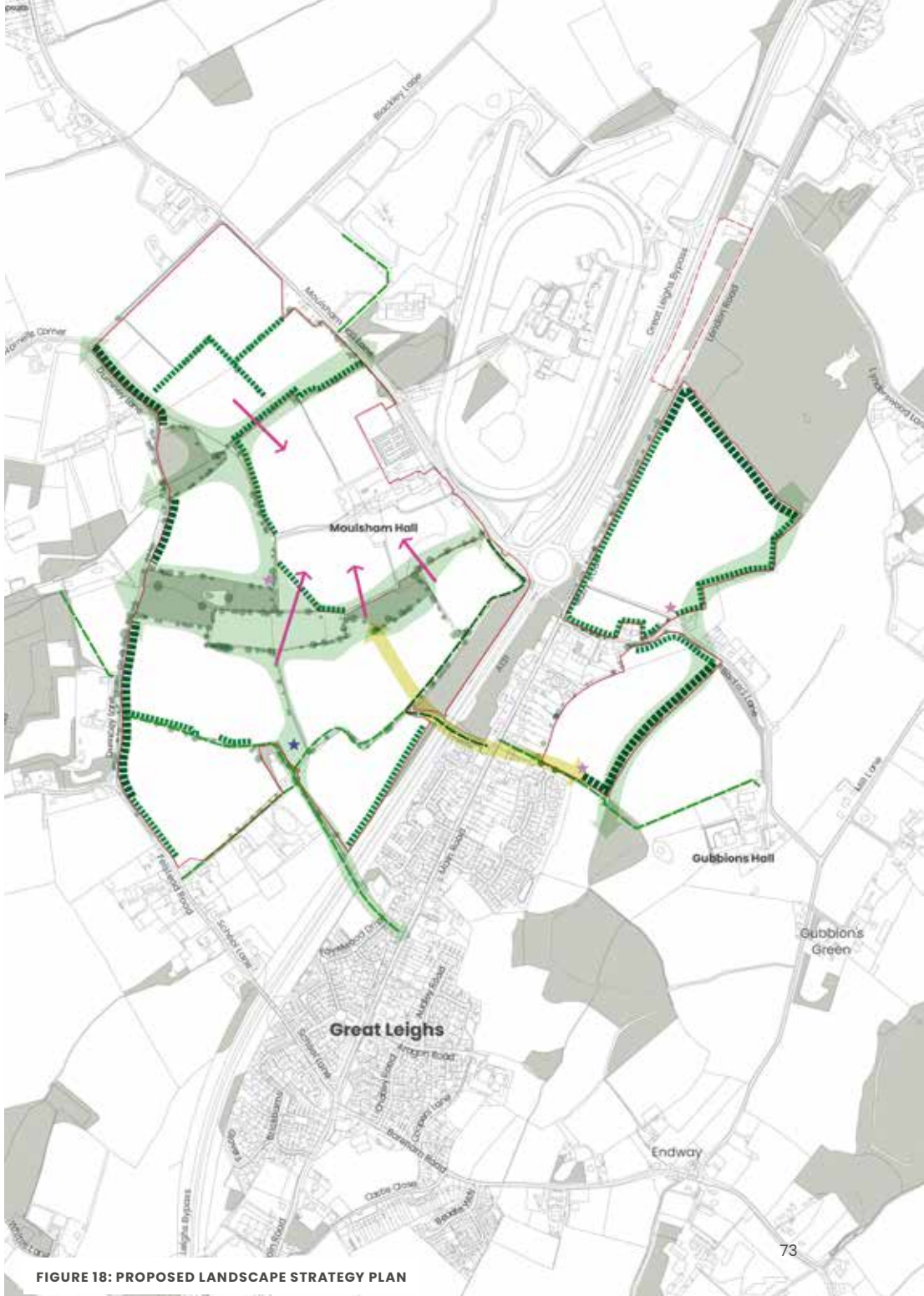


FIGURE 18: PROPOSED LANDSCAPE STRATEGY PLAN

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.

VIEW NORTH TOWARDS THE EAST WEST LANDSCAPE CORRIDOR AND WOODLAND WITHIN SITE 7A

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

Site 7b & Northern Parcel of Site 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. 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.

THE KEY CHARACTERISTIC WILL BE THAT OF OPEN PARKLAND WITH WILDFLOWER MEADOWS AND NATIVE PARKLAND TREES

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.

THE KEY CHARACTERISTIC WILL BE THAT OF OPEN PARKLAND WITH WILDFLOWER MEADOWS AND NATIVE PARKLAND TREES

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.

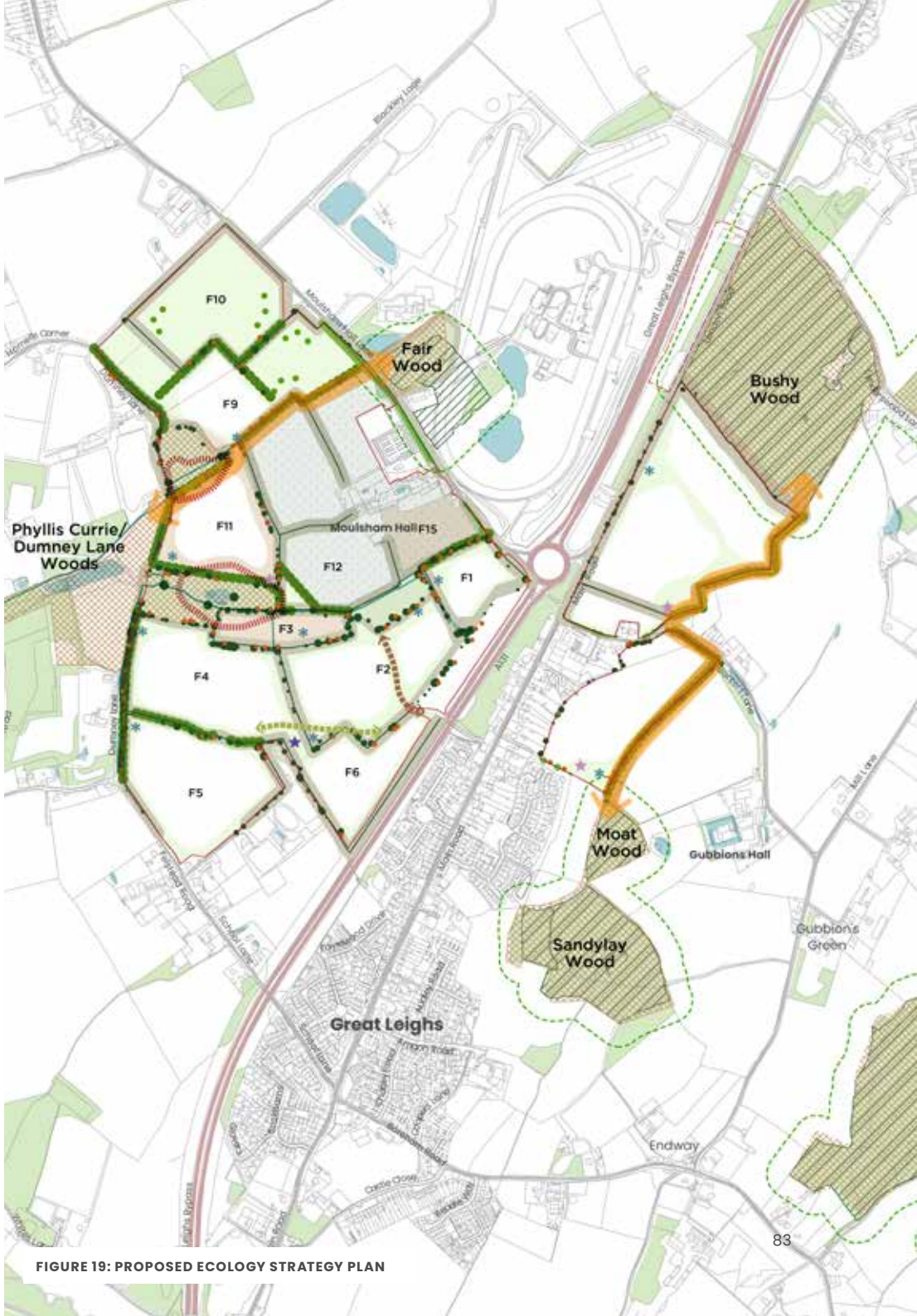


FIGURE 19: PROPOSED ECOLOGY STRATEGY PLAN

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.

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 Densitie***s – 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 Routes & Links (LTN 1/20)
- Recreational Routes & Links (cyclable)
- Commitment to explore potential upgrade to cycle routes & links (LTN1/20)
- Urban Square (including adjacent links / spaces)
- Neighbourhood Centre Parking
- Youth & Children's Play
- Children's Play
- SuDS
- Potential Emergency Services Access

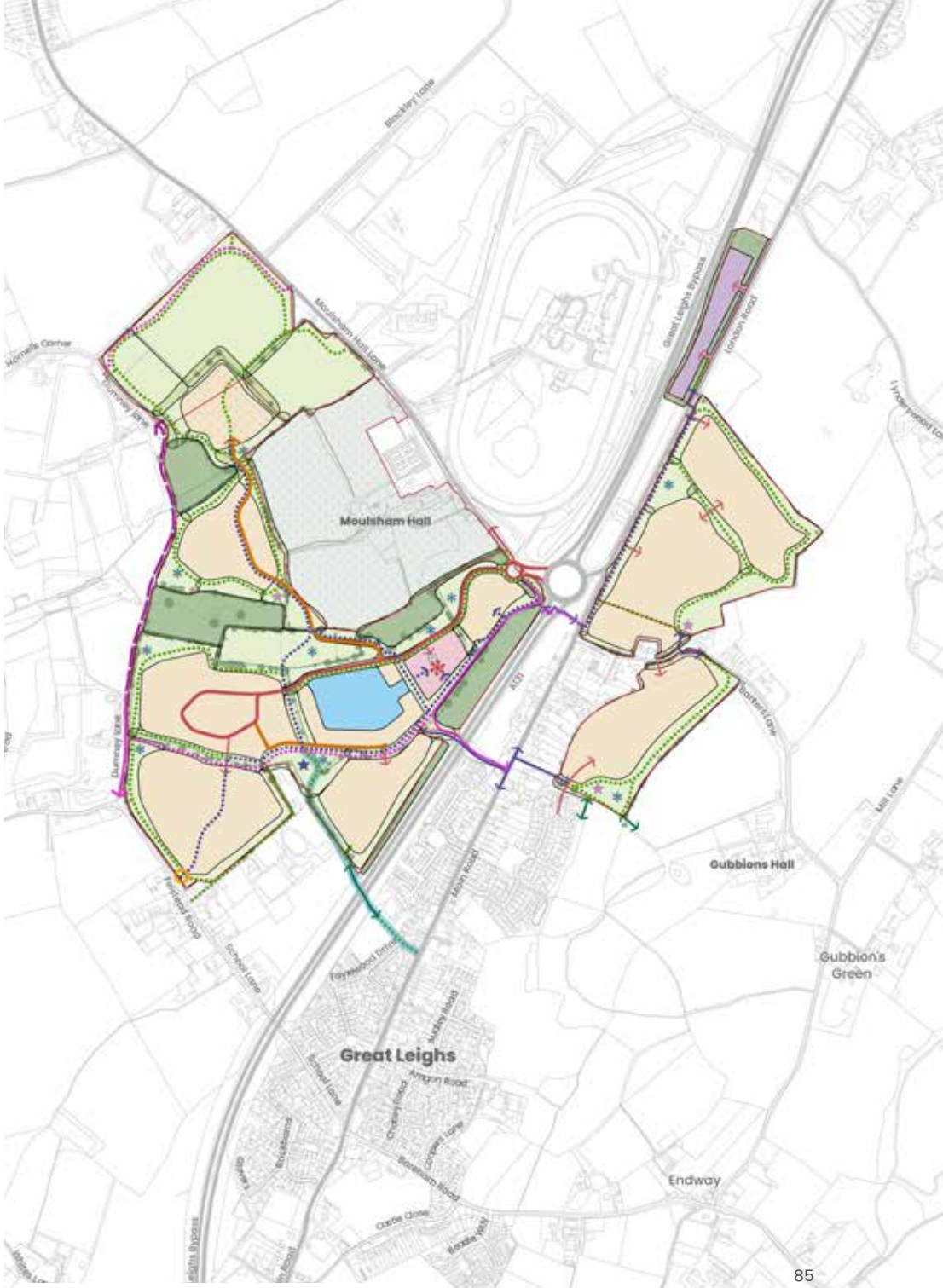


FIGURE 20: PROPOSED MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

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.

HOUSING

- Higher densities within and adjacent to neighbourhood centre
- Mix of types and size incl. self-build provision and affordable housing
- Provision for an ageing society: integrated retirement community
- High-efficiency buildings to meet Building Regulations Future Homes Standard
- Commitment to no gas supply to the development
- Solar gain and natural light maximised where possible
- Water efficiency features

SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY

- Bus links to Braintree and Chelmsford within easy walking distance of homes
- Public transport integrated with neighbourhood centre
- Increased population supports better bus services
- Vehicle access from A131 and directed away from village Main Road
- Opportunity for Micro Mobility Hub at Neighbourhood Centre

ACTIVE TRAVEL

- Enhanced active travel links to Great Leighs village at A131 crossings
- Cycleways and walking networks on desire lines
- Enhanced underpass link for walking and cycling
- Provision of LTN 1/20 cycle routes
- Network of leisure & recreation routes throughout expanded village, connecting to wider countryside

HEALTH & WELLBEING

- Walking and cycling networks prioritised to encourage healthy lifestyles
- Recreation opportunities in open space network
- Potential for Health Centre within Neighbourhood Centre for new & existing population
- On-site and off-site contributionss for sport

BIODIVERSITY

- Existing high value habitats retained
- Continuous green networks provided throughout to connect habitats
- New habitats provided as part of parkland and strategic drainage network
- Habitats integrated into streets through swales where practical

EMPLOYMENT

- Job opportunities within new mixed-use centre at retail & community use and new primary school
- Public transport links to Braintree and Chelmsford
- Post-COVID adaptation: work-from-home support and co-working opportunities in Neighbourhood Centre flexible space provision

BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

- Strategic drainage throughout through use of SuDS
- Drainage corridors used for placemaking, habitat creation and active travel
- Swales in streets where practical
- Retain and enhance existing watercourses
- Use water as a visible part of placemaking

EDUCATION

- New 2FE primary school incl. early years provision
- Public transport links to secondary education in Braintree
- School co-located with mixed-use centre and walkable networks
- Potential community use of playing fields
- Active access promoted and drop off discouraged

NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

- Complementing not competing
- Co-locating uses: higher-density residential, retail, education, flexible office space
- Easily accessed by walking and cycling
- Social contact / inclusion
- Potential for mobility hub

HERITAGE

- Enhanced setting for Moulsham & Gubbions Halls
- Parkland environment
- Preservation and enhancement of key landscape heritage assets
- Traditional built forms of appropriate scale/material

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- Growth of village to secure facility viability
- Community art in link between old and new
- Off-site provision for allotments and community gardens
- Play areas and natural informal play opportunities on routes to school

STEWARDSHIP

- Long-term open space management strategy
- Low-intensity management for wilder areas and habitats
- Community engagement strategy for new and existing residents to encourage cohesive community

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- Landscape-led masterplan considers GI from the start
- Multi-functional network provides amenity, active travel, open space, drainage, habitats, recreation, visual screening and links to wider countryside
- New native hedgerows and ecological buffers created

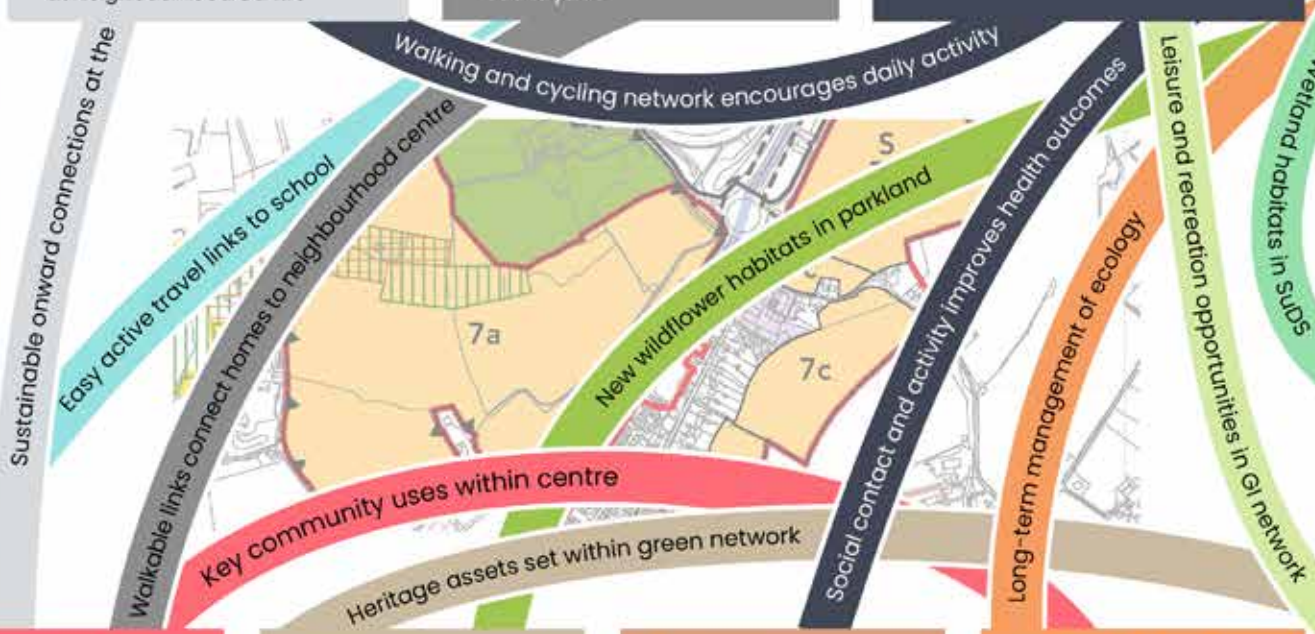


FIGURE 21: SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

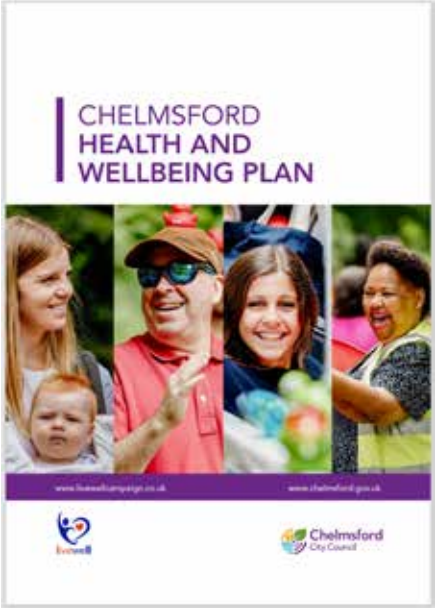
Building design and specification

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

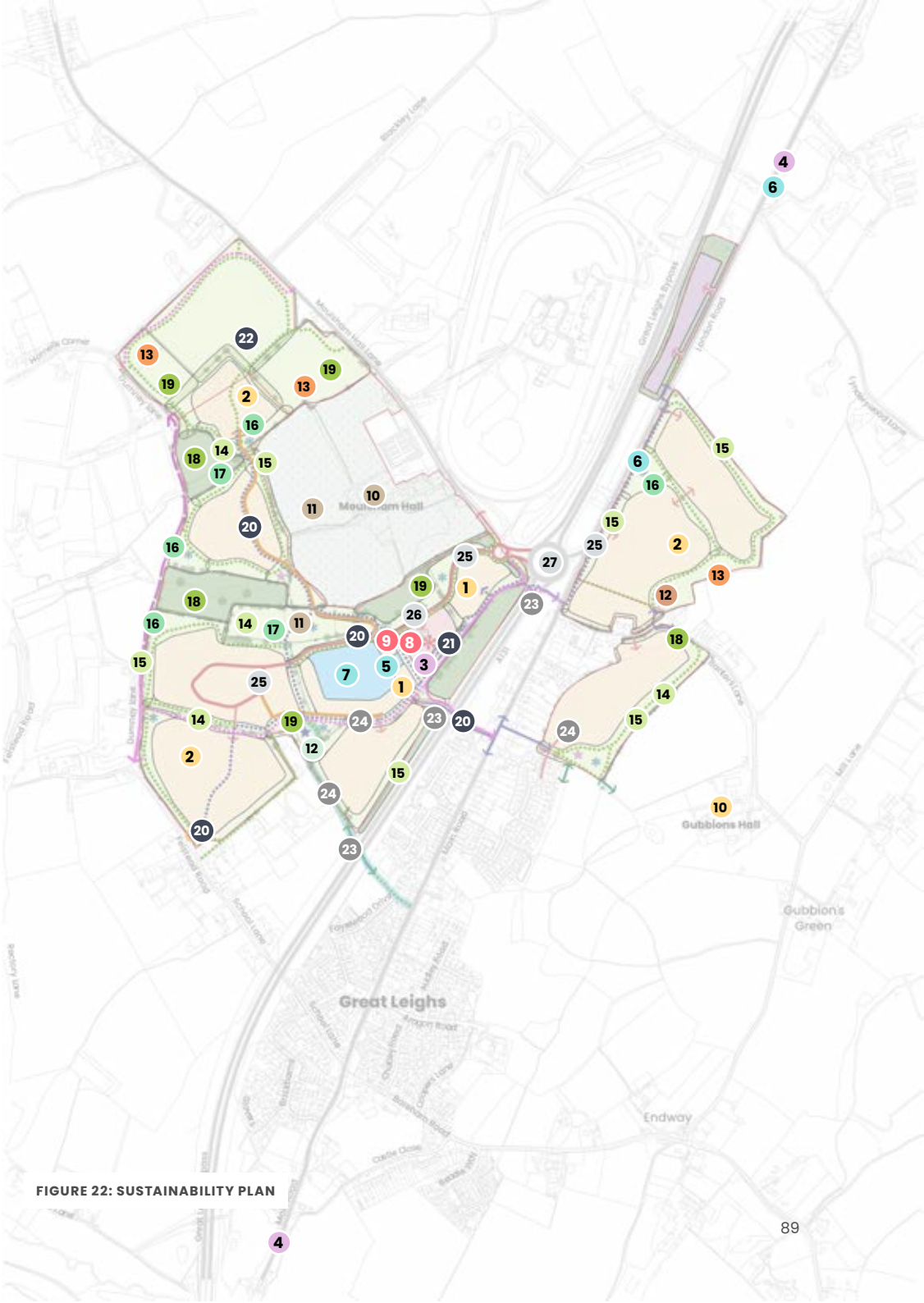


FIGURE 22: SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

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.

Site Boundary
Residential Development Parcels
Self-Build Development Parcel
Mixed Use Neighbourhood Centre
Primary School
Travelling Showpeople Site

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.

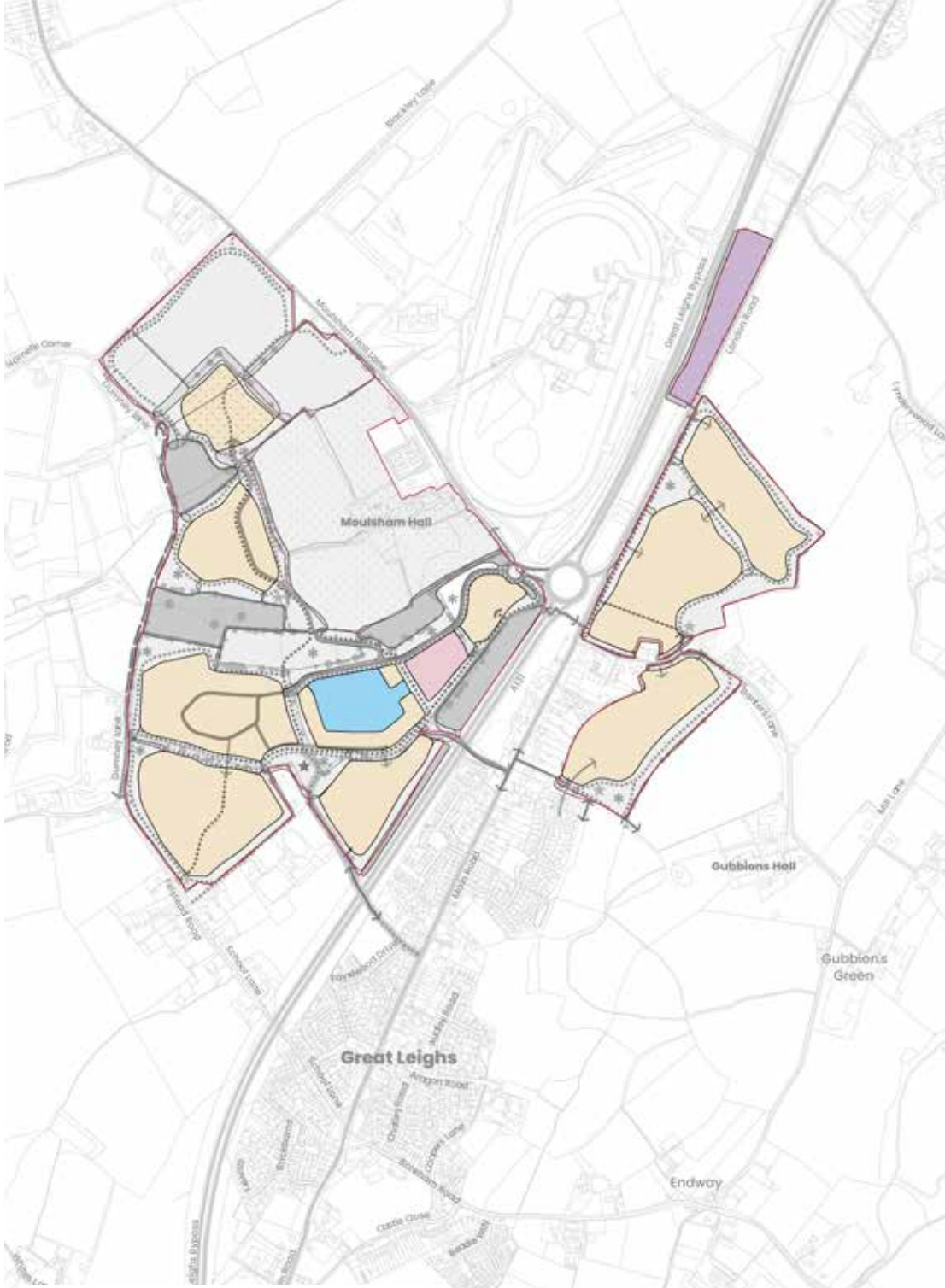


FIGURE 23: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AREAS PLAN

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 view Moulsham Hall Lane or through Site 7a.

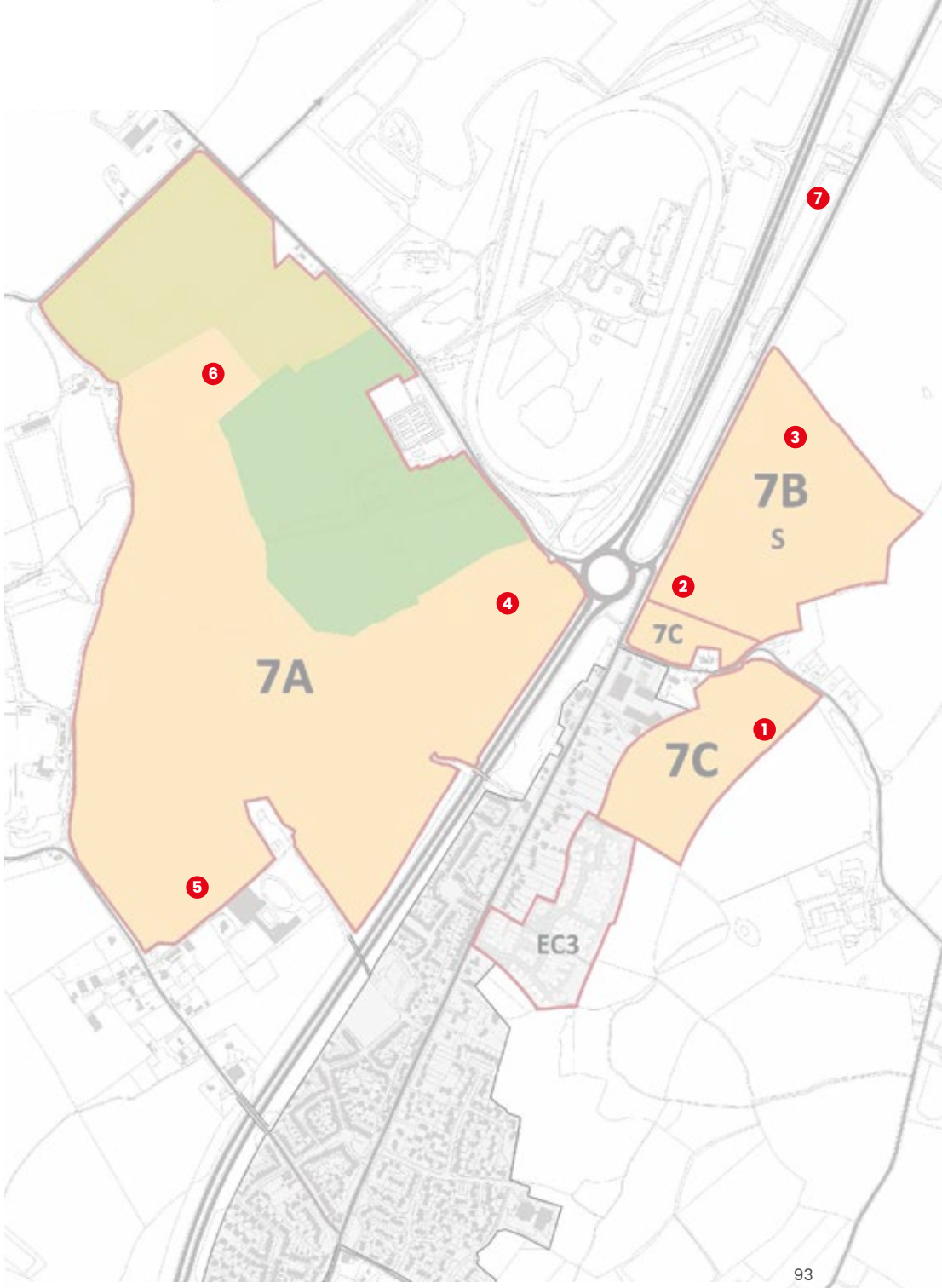


FIGURE 24: TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE POTENTIAL SITE LOCATIONS

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.

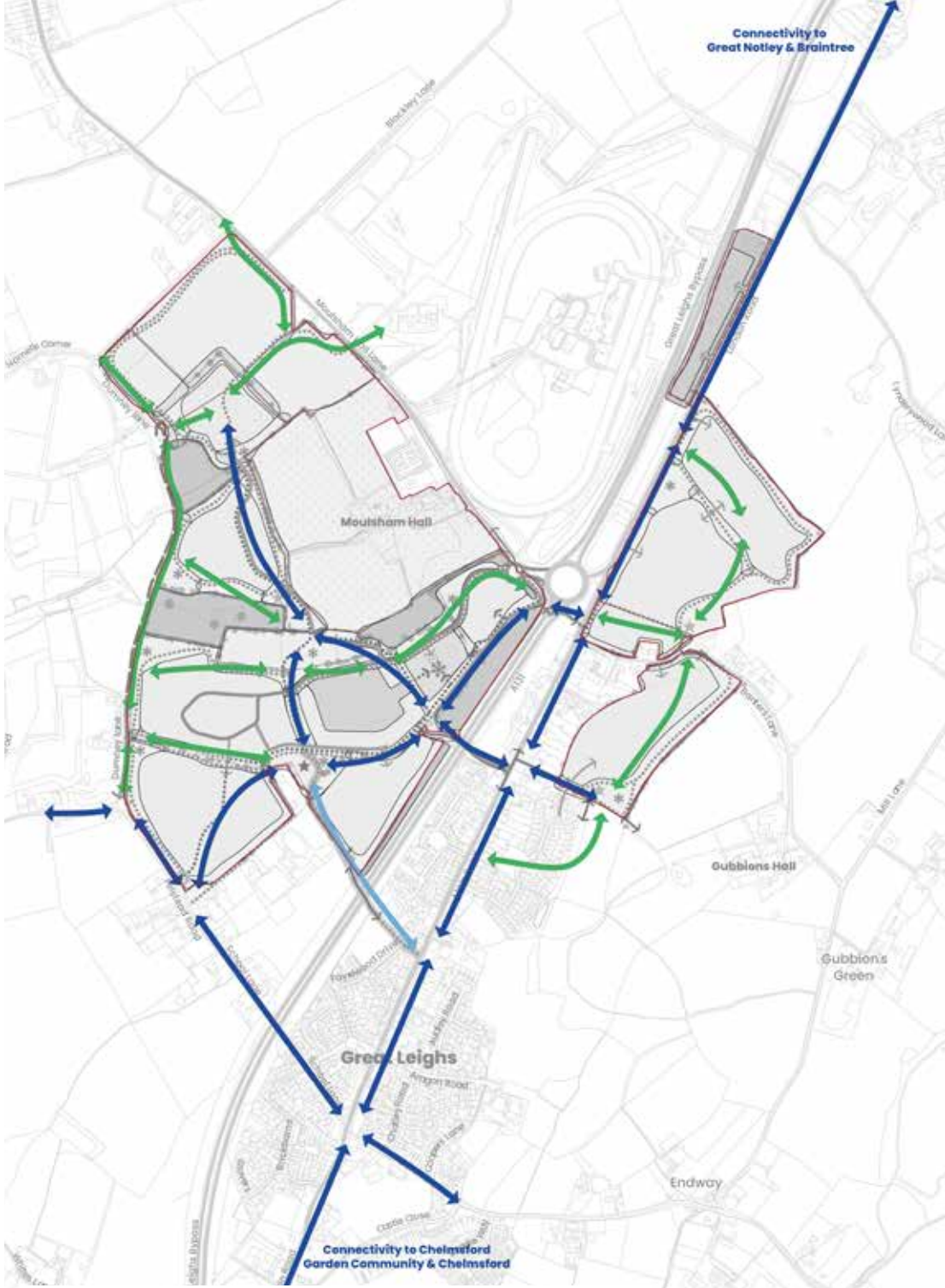


FIGURE 25: PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE DESIRE ROUTES

Pedestrian and cycle 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.

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.

INTEGRATED PEDESTRIAN & CYCLE PROVISION

- ***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.

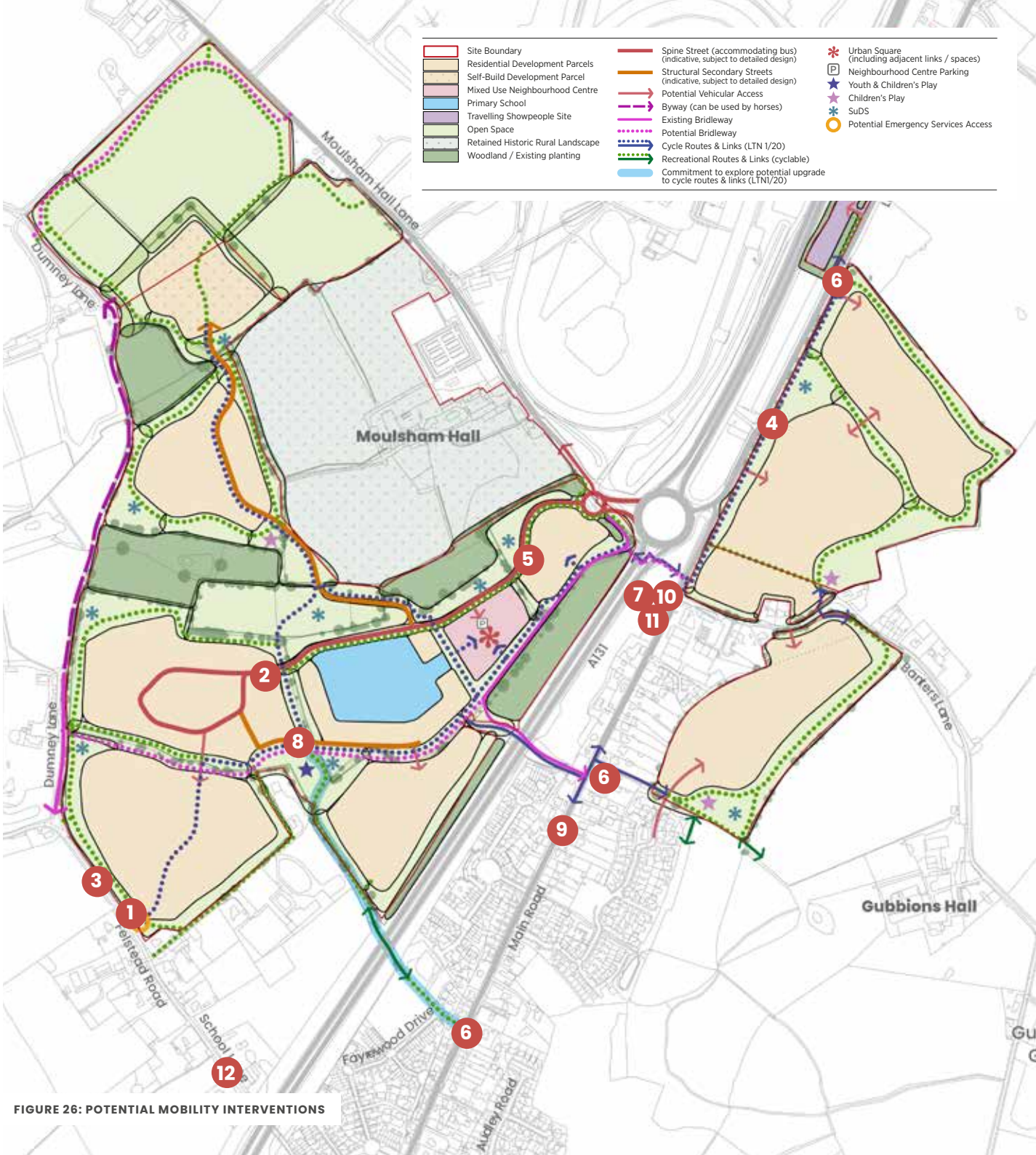


FIGURE 26: POTENTIAL MOBILITY INTERVENTIONS

Potential Mobility Responses

CYCLE PROVISION ALONG MAIN ROAD WITHIN 7B DEVELOPMENT AREA

GREAT NOTLEY EXAMPLES OF LIGHT CONTROLLED CROSSING

POTENTIAL FOR CROSSING TO INCLUDE POSITION FOR EQUESTRIAN USE WITHIN A PEGASUS CROSSING

POTENTIAL SPINE STREET EXAMPLE

SHARED FOOTWAY / CYCLEWAY THROUGH GI

POTENTIAL FOR CROSSING TO INCLUDE POSITION FOR EQUESTRIAN USE WITHIN A PEGASUS CROSSING

POTENTIAL PRIORITISED LTN1/20 CROSSING

POTENTIAL USE OF ADVISORY CYCLE LANES ALONG MAIN ROAD

PROMOTING AWARENESS OF WALKING & CYCLING

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 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 LTN1/20, Section 6.4.

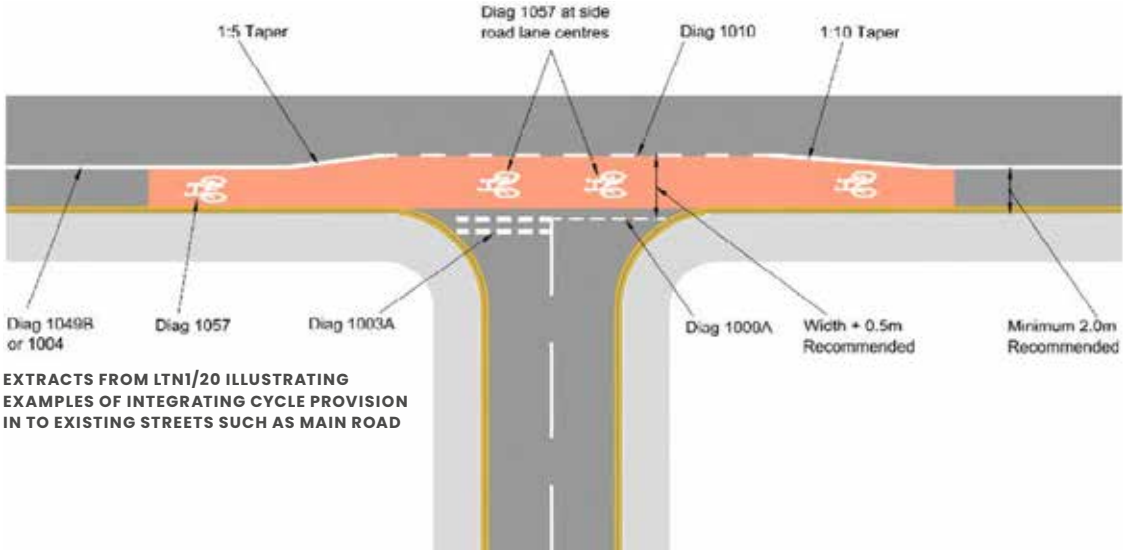
Access and Movement

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 Mian 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.

EXTRACTS FROM LTN1/20 ILLUSTRATING EXAMPLES OF INTEGRATING CYCLE PROVISION IN TO EXISTING STREETS SUCH AS MAIN ROAD



EXTRACTS FROM LTN1/20 ILLUSTRATING EXAMPLES OF INTEGRATING CYCLE PROVISION IN TO EXISTING STREETS SUCH AS MAIN ROAD

EXISTING MAIN ROAD SITUATION

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 Routes & Links (LTN 1/20)
- Recreational 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 Banters Lane is proposed to serve a modest level of development in site 7c to the south of Banters Lane, whilst the majority of development of the remaining site between Banters 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.

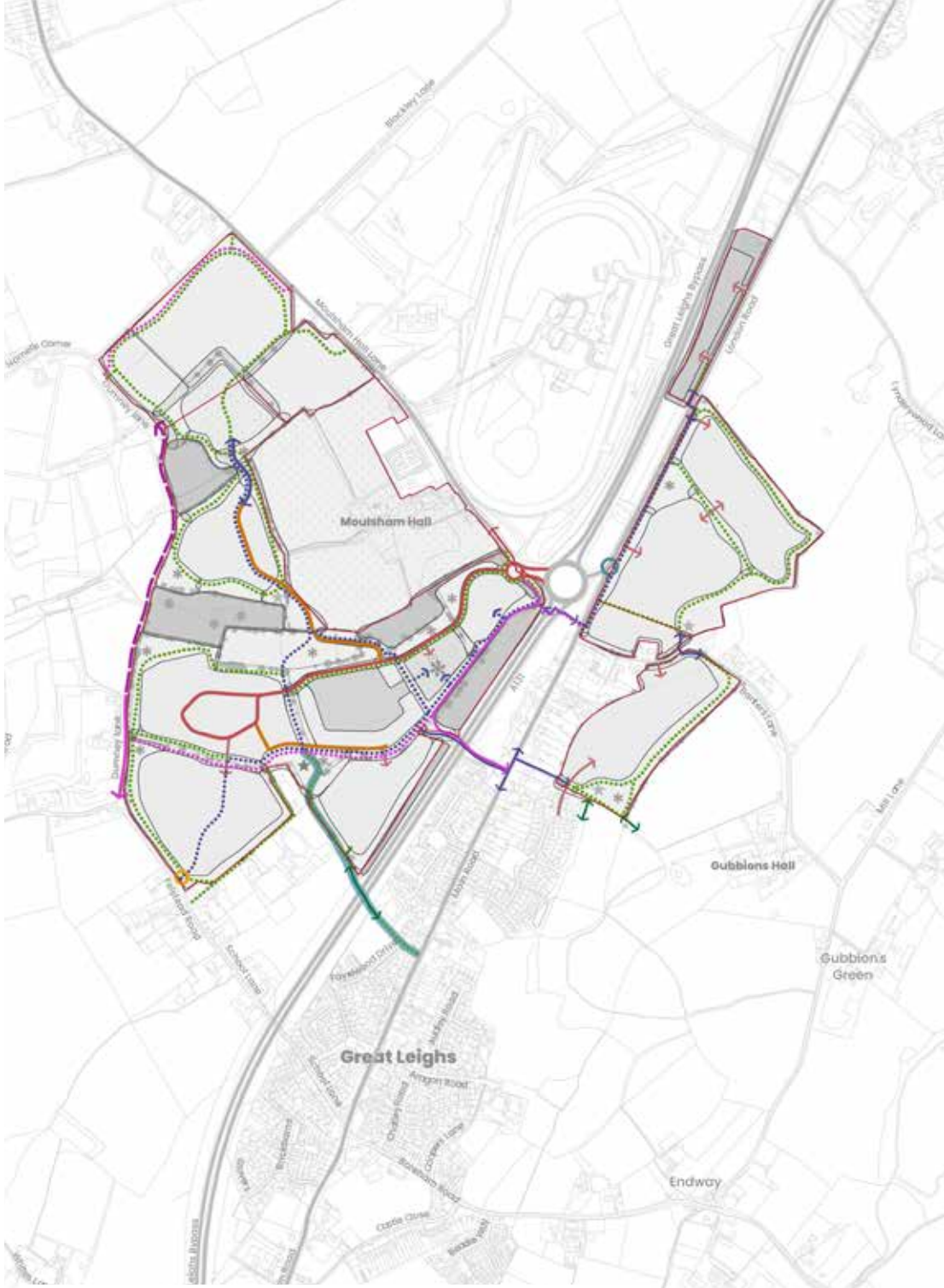


FIGURE 27: PROPOSED ACCESS AND MOVEMENT PLAN

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 an 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.

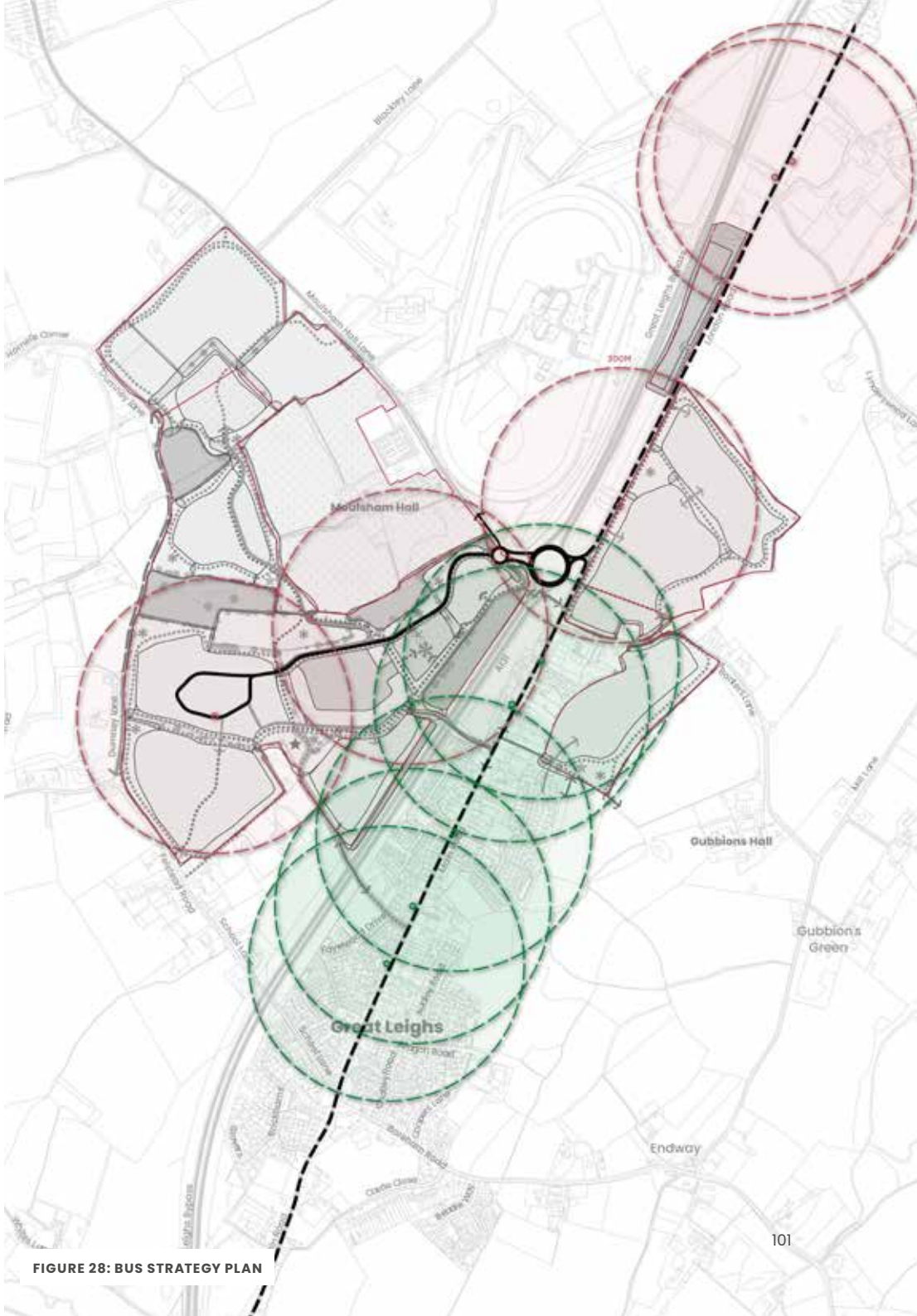


FIGURE 28: BUS STRATEGY PLAN

INTEGRATING EXISTING LANDSCAPE FEATURES AS A POSTIVE ELEMENT OF PLACEMAKING

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

>30DPH: DETATCHED DWELLINGS ON LARGER PLOTS

31-40 DPH: SEMI-DETATCHED AND DETACHED

50+DPH: 3 STOREY APARTMENTS

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.

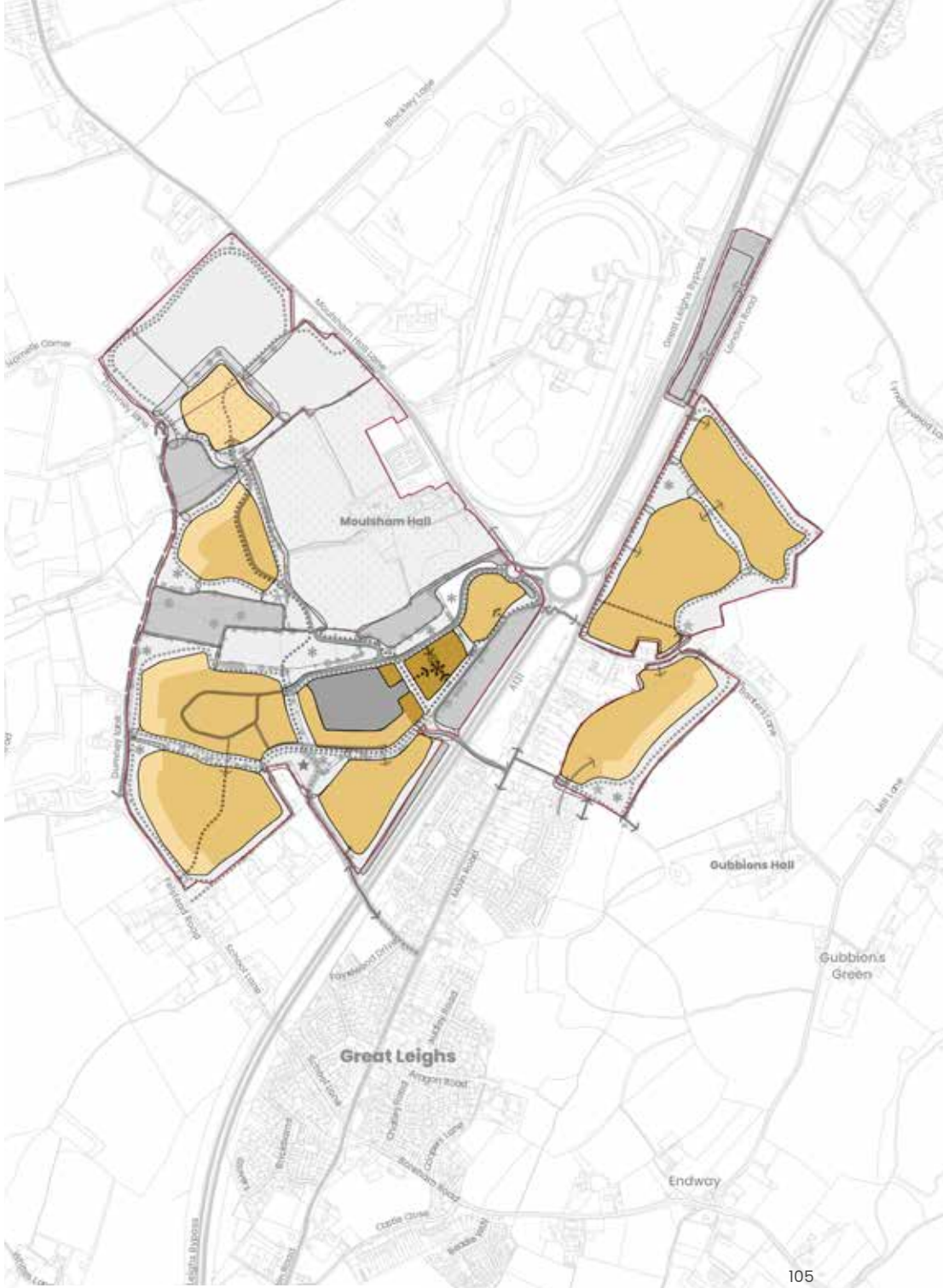


FIGURE 30: PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DENSITY PLAN

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)

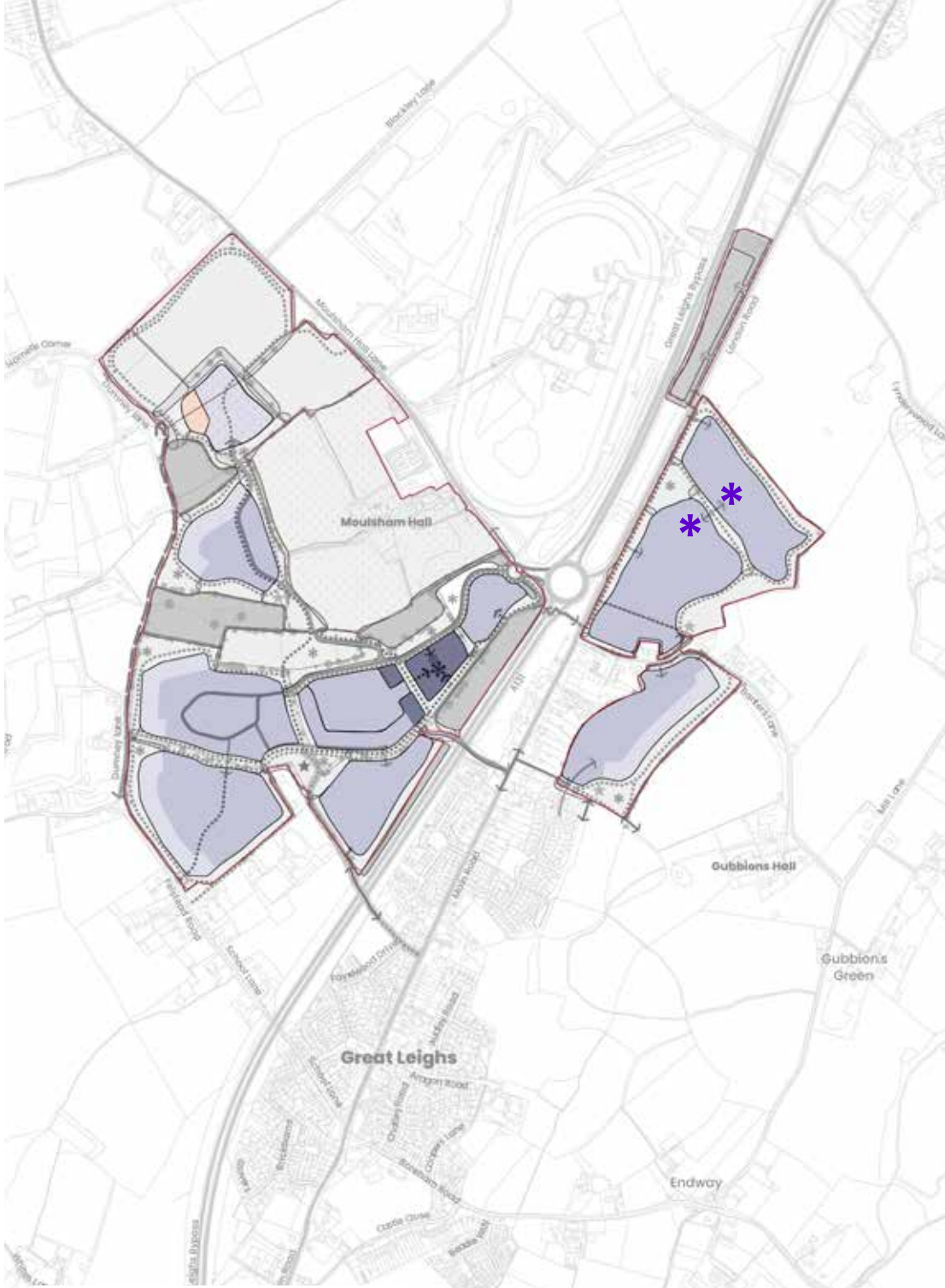


FIGURE 31: PROPOSED BUILDING HEIGHTS PLAN

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:

EXAMPLE OF DEVELOPMENT STRUCTURED BY A GREEN CORRIDOR

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.

BREAKING DOWN BUILDINGS OF GREATER MASS THROUGH DESIGN TREATMENTS TO CONVEY A FINER GRAIN

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.

LANDSCAPE AND APPROPRIATE FRONTAGES ENSURE QUALITY DEVELOPMENT EDGE RESPONSES

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

FRONTAGES RE-ENFORCING STREETS AND SPACES

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

PARKING INTEGRATED IN TO STREETSCENE; BOTH ON STREET AND ON PLOT

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

CONTEMPORARY

TRADITIONAL

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.

WEATHERBOARDING

WEATHERBOARDING

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

WEATHERBOARDING

WEATHERBOARDING

WHITE RENDER

PINK RENDER

RED BRICK

RED BRICK DETAILING

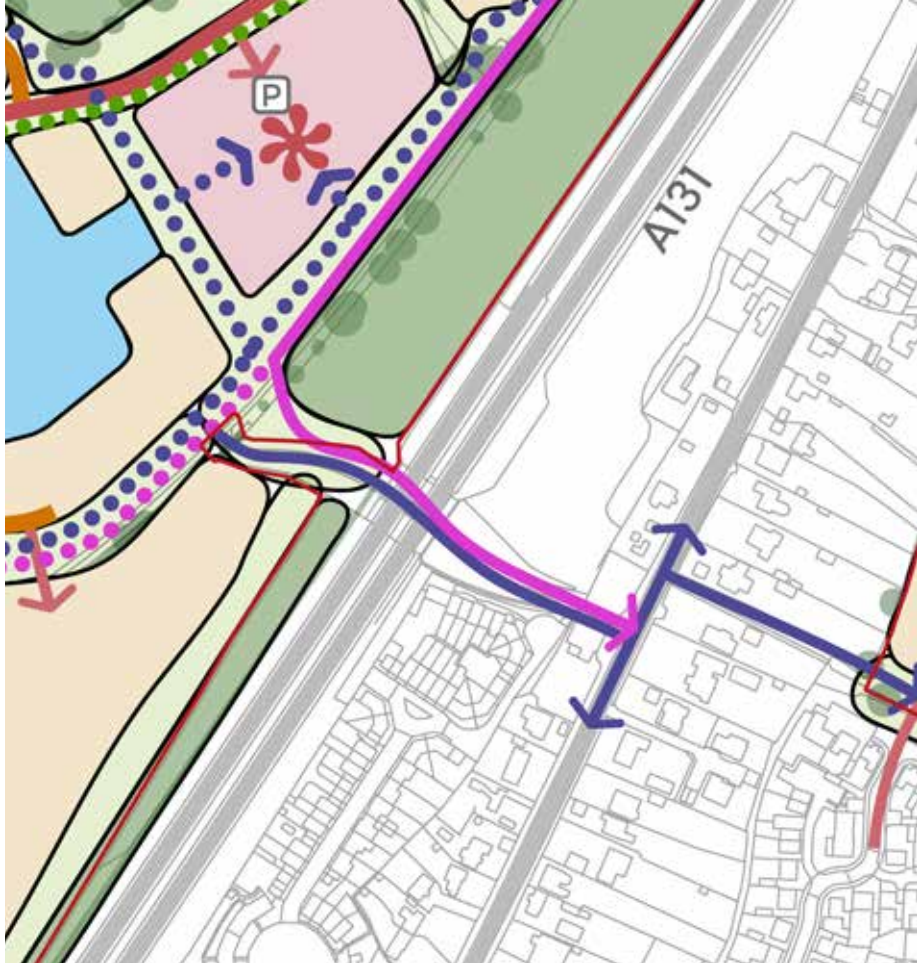
Creating an integrated community hub

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.

EXAMPLE OF ARTWORK ON AT THE FLANKING ABUTMENTS TO THE UNDERPASS ENTRANCE



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.

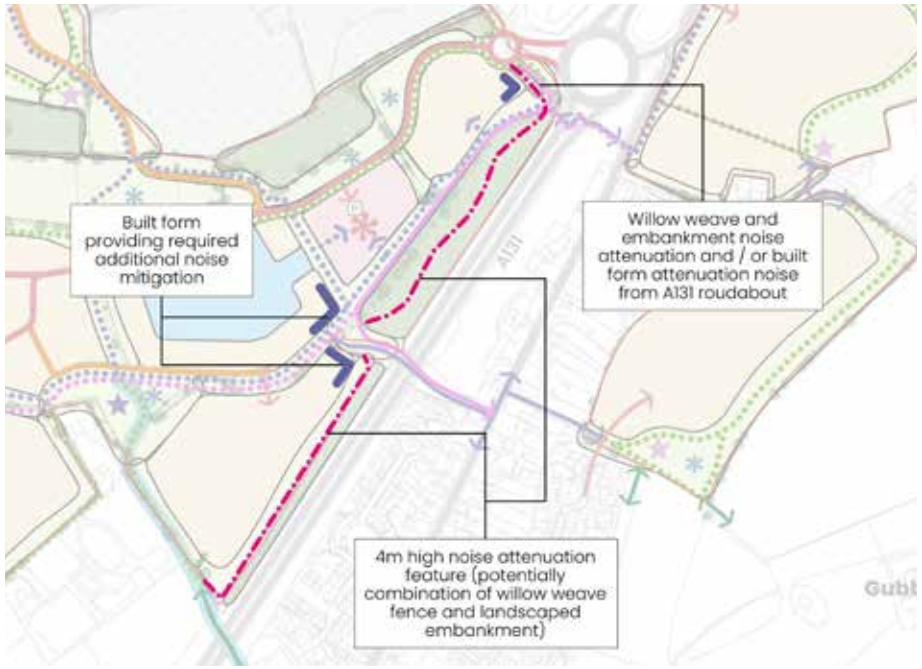


FIGURE 33: NOISE ATTENUATION FEATURES

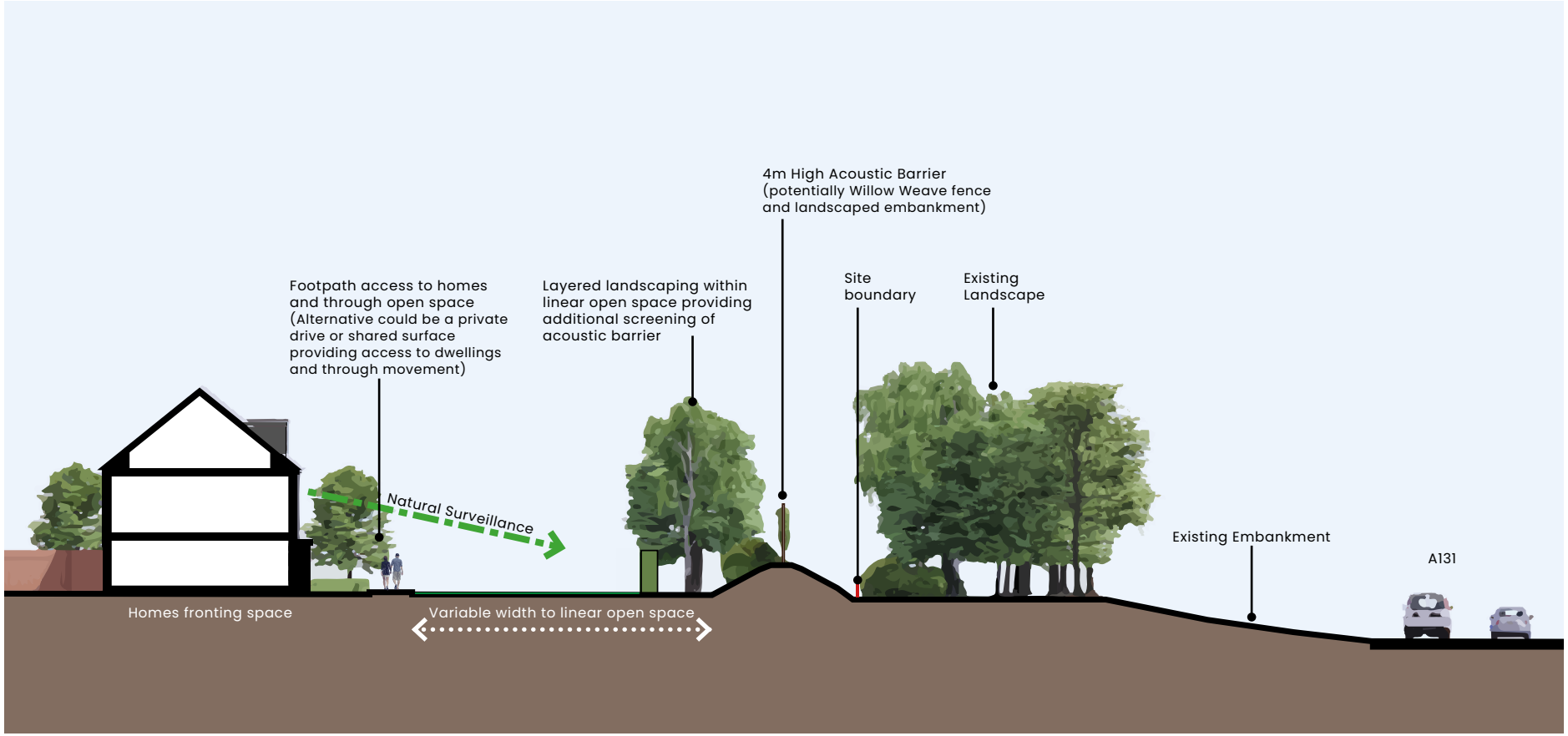


FIGURE 34: CROSS-SECTION ILLUSTRATING RELATIONSHIP OF DEVELOPMENT EDGE WITH ACOUSTIC BARRIER

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 1*** - Central, southern, northern and eastern residential parcels including the self-build residential parcel and related green infrastructure in Site 7a, alongside the neighbourhood centre, primary school and enhancements to the fields surrounding Moulsham Hall. Residential parcels in the northern part of Site 7b and the area of Site 7c to the south of Banters Lane.

- ***Phase 2*** - Remaining residential parcels at the south west of Site 7a. Remaining residential parcels at the south of Site 7b and part of Site 7c north of Banter's Lane and Travelling Showpersons Site

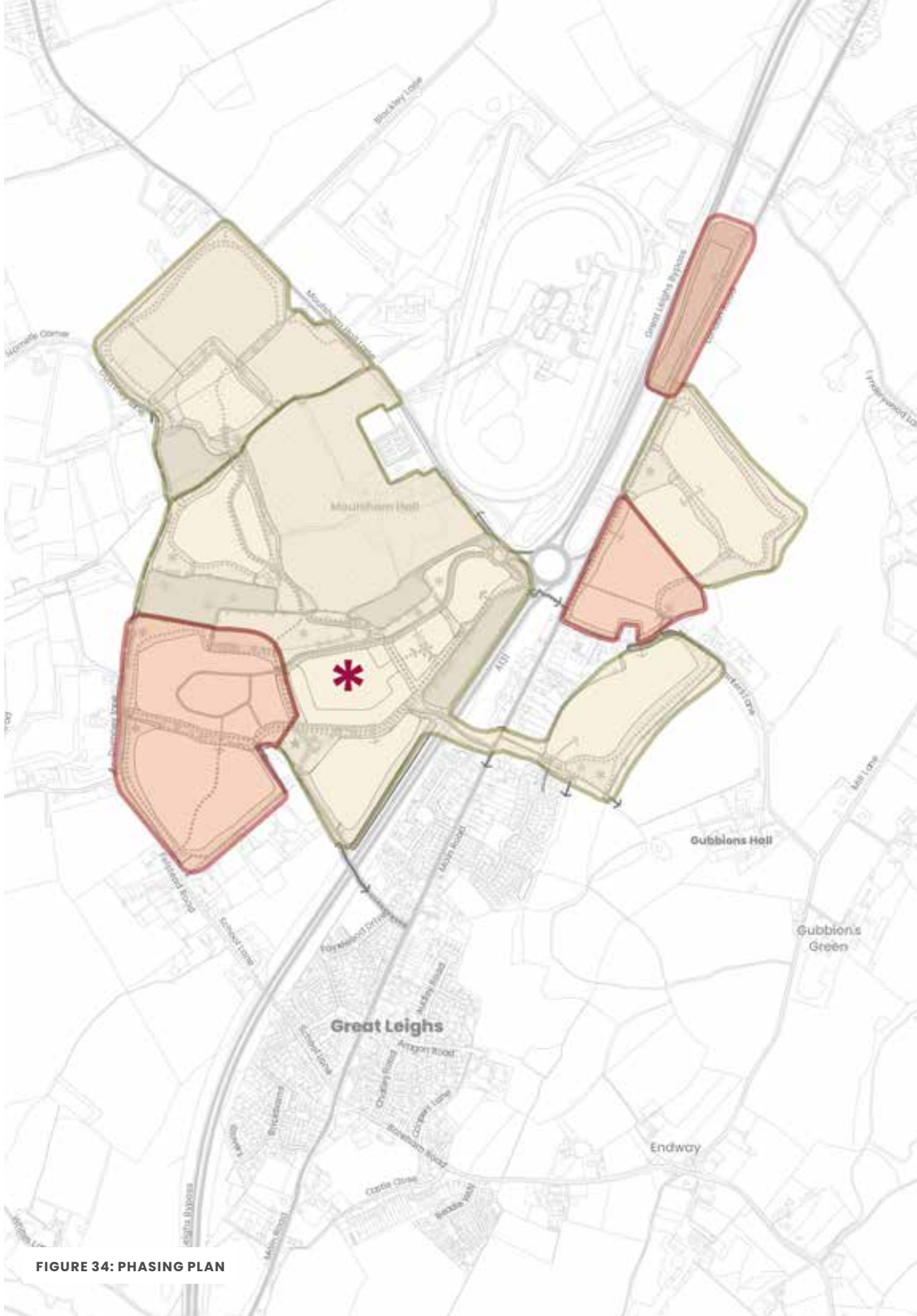


FIGURE 34: PHASING PLAN

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