

# Public Document Pack

## **EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a meeting of East Hertfordshire District Council will be held in the Council Chamber, Wallfields, Hertford on Tuesday 1st March, 2022 at 7.00 pm, for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the Agenda below, and you are hereby summoned to attend.

Date this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of February 2022

*James Ellis*  
Head of Legal and  
Democratic Services

*Note: Prayers will be said before the meeting commences. Those Members who do not wish to participate will be invited to enter the Chamber at their conclusion*

### **AGENDA**

1. Chairman's Announcements

To receive any announcements.

2. Apologies for Absence

To receive any Members' apologies for absence.

3. Minutes - 15 December 2021 (Pages 7 - 20)

To approve as a correct record and authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 15 December 2021.

4. Declarations of Interest

To receive any Members' declarations of interest.

5. Petitions (Pages 21 - 22)

To receive any petitions.

6. Public Questions (Pages 23 - 24)

To receive any public questions.

7. Members' Questions (Pages 25 - 26)

To receive any Members' questions.

8. Executive Report - 8 February 2022 (Pages 27 - 282)

To receive a report from the Leader of the Council and to consider recommendations on the matters below:

(A) Treasury Management 2021/22 Mid-Year Review

(B) Annual Treasury Report 2020/21

(C) External Audit National Procurement Opt in

(D) Corporate Plan Refresh 2022/2023

(E) Parks and Open Spaces Strategy

(F) Updated Masterplan for the Goods Yard

(G) Masterplan for land to North West of Buntingford



9. Hertford Theatre Capital Project - Update on capital scheme budget and financing (Pages 283 - 302)

(A) Exclusion of the press and public

To move that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of Appendix A and B in Item 9 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act.

10. Budget 2022/23 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2022-25

Report to follow.

11. Council Tax Setting

Report to follow

12. Capital Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy 2022/23

Report to follow.

13. Treasury Management and Annual Investment Strategy 2022/23

Report to follow.

14. Millstream 30 Year Business Plan and Council Cashflows (Pages 303 - 340)

(A) Exclusion of the press and public

To move that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the

discussion of Appendix A in Item 14 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act.

15. Pay Policy Statement (Pages 341 - 356)

16. Review of the Council's Grant Priorities (Pages 357 - 366)

17. Motions on Notice

To receive Motions on Notice.

(A) Platinum Jubilee (Pages 367 - 368)

(B) No confidence in Prime Minister\_(Pages 369 - 370)

### **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

A Member, present at a meeting of the Authority, or any committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee of the Authority, with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) in any matter to be considered or being considered at a meeting:

## **Public Attendance**

### **Audio/Visual Recording of meetings**

Everyone is welcome to record meetings of the Council and its Committees using whatever, non-disruptive, methods you think are suitable, which may include social media of any kind, such as tweeting, blogging or Facebook. However, oral reporting or commentary is prohibited. If you have any questions about this please contact Democratic Services (members of the press should contact the Press Office). Please note that the Chairman of the meeting has the discretion to halt any recording for a number of reasons, including disruption caused by the filming or the nature of the business being conducted. Anyone filming a meeting should focus only on those actively participating and be sensitive to the rights of minors, vulnerable adults and those members of the public who have not consented to being filmed.

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER  
- COUNTY HALL, HERTFORD, SG13 8DQ ON  
WEDNESDAY 15 DECEMBER 2021, AT 7.00  
PM

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PRESENT: Councillor K Crofton (Chairman).  
Councillors D Andrews, S Bell, R Bolton,  
P Boylan, M Brady, E Buckmaster,  
R Buckmaster, S Bull, J Burmicz, B Crystall,  
A Curtis, B Deering, I Devonshire, H Drake,  
J Dumont, J Frecknall, J Goodeve, A Hall,  
L Haysey, J Jones, J Kaye, I Kemp,  
G McAndrew, S Newton, M Pope,  
C Redfern, S Reed, P Ruffles, D Snowdon,  
M Stevenson, T Stowe, N Symonds,  
R Townsend, A Ward-Booth, G Williamson,  
C Wilson and J Wyllie.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Richard Cassidy	- Chief Executive
James Ellis	- Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Steven Linnett	- Head of Strategic Finance and Property
Katie Mogan	- Democratic Services Manager

268 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Members and Officers to the meeting and reminded Members that it was being recorded.

The Chairman explained that due to the current increase in cases due to the Omicron Covid variant, the questions that had been submitted by members of the public and Members would be provided with a written response outside the meeting with the exception of Councillor Symonds' question who had agreed to defer her question to the next meeting. The responses would be provided on the Council's website and circulated to Members.

The Chairman thanked Members for wearing their Christmas jumpers to raise money for his chosen charity, Macmillan Cancer Support.

The Chairman said that the Vice-Chairman and himself had been busy representing the Council at a number of events. He said that he had attended a fundraising event for Breathe Easy organised by Councillor Hollebon. He had attended the Remembrance Day parade in Hertford and Sawbridgeworth and thanked Councillors Devonshire, Jones and Kaye for attending the events in the other towns in the District. He said that he had attended the opening of a new facility for Hertfordshire Independent Living Service which would allow them to expand their services.

The Chairman gave his condolences to the family of Ian Spall, an Officer at the council, who had sadly passed away. He had attended his funeral and said that he

would be remembered by colleagues for his sense of humour and great work ethic.

269 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Alder, Beckett, Cutting, Fernando, Goldspink, Hollebon, Huggins, McMullen, Page, Rowley and Rutland-Barsby.

270 MINUTES - 20 OCTOBER 2021

Councillor Haysey proposed and Councillor Newton seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The motion to approve the Minutes being put to the meeting and a vote taken, was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

271 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

272 PETITIONS

There were no petitions to consider.

273 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The questions submitted by the public were provided with a written response after the meeting. The written responses can be found at Appendix A.

274 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

The questions submitted by Members were provided with a written response after the meeting. The written responses can be found at Appendix A.

275 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 23 NOVEMBER 2021

The Leader of the Council said that she wanted to thank the staff at East Herts Council for all their extra work over the last year. She said that it was unfortunate to be in a similar situation to this time last year and hoped that by next Christmas, the Council could meet in its own Council Chamber. She urged people to stay safe and follow the 'Hands, Face, Space' guidance.

Councillor Haysey then presented a report setting out recommendations to the Council made by the Executive at its meeting on 23 November 2021.

276 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY

The Executive Members for Neighbourhoods presented the recommendation which was referred to in the Executive report of 23 November 2021. Councillor Boylan said that the policy had been revised and updated by Officers, subject to public consultation and consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He thanked the Overview and Scrutiny



Committee for drawing attention to the previous reference to the Housing Strategy which had now been amended to the emerging Housing Strategy. The policy had also been reworded to address the points raised about the financial assistance on offer.

Councillor Boylan proposed, and Councillor Symonds seconded a motion supporting the recommendation. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – That the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy be adopted.

#### 277 TAXI LICENSING POINTS POLICY

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 23 November 2021. She said that the policy had been updated by Officers, subject to public consultation and the Licensing Committee. The council was responsible for the regulation of the Private Hire and Hackney Carriage taxi drivers and the proposed points scheme would allow Officers to take a wider range of enforcement action outside the remit of the Suitability Policy which dealt with serious offences resulting in suspension or revocation of licences. Councillor Goodeve said that the points scheme had been updated following new standards being issued from the Department of Transport.

Councillor Goodeve proposed, and Councillor Bolton seconded a motion supporting the recommendation. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the

motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** - That the Taxi Licensing Points Policy be adopted.

278 STATEMENT OF GAMBLING PRINCIPLES

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the recommendation which was referred to in the Executive report of 23 November 2021. She said that the council were required to update the policy every three years under the Licensing Act 2003. The updated policy had only minor amendments that were subject to consultation. Councillor Goodeve thanked the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods for his work on the policy.

Councillor Goodeve proposed, and Councillor Curtis seconded a motion supporting the recommendation. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** - That the Statement of Gambling Principles 2022-25 be adopted.

279 HARLOW AND GILSTON GARDEN TOWN TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The Leader of the Council presented the recommendation, which was referred to in the Executive report of 23 November 2021. She said that the strategy was part of a suite of documents that would be coming forward for the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town. The strategy was subject to extensive

consultation and would help in providing a green economy and transport system for the public.

Councillor Haysey proposed that the recommendations in the Executive report be supported. Councillor Ruffles seconded the proposal.

Councillor Redfern felt that this was a difficult decision as the decision had been brought forward before the Stortford river crossing planning application had been decided. She said that if a decision had been made on the river crossing, she would have supported the recommendation as it was an excellent document. She felt that the document assumed that the second river crossing would go ahead. She believed the process was the wrong way round and did not feel she could support the recommendation ahead of a planning decision on the crossing. She proposed an amendment to the recommendation to defer the decision until after the planning application had been decided. Councillor Brady seconded the amended recommendation.

Councillor Bell said that the Liberal Democrat Group approved of the document but could not support the policy as a whole as the potential damage of the river crossings had not been explored. She said that the planning application on the council's website had received hundreds of comments about the potential environmental damage.

Councillor Haysey felt that Councillors Redfern and Bell were getting confused between the strategy proposed and the planning application which were not directly

related. The strategy was to ensure sustainable transport across the Garden Town. She said that to defer the decision would not make sense as the strategy was for the whole of the Garden Town and not just one road and could not support the proposal to defer. All five councils involved in the Garden Town were putting the strategy through their own committee system.

Councillor Curtis said that he did not understand the proposal to defer. He said he did not think it was wise to defer and lose out on an investment opportunity. He said that it was disappointing the objections had not been raised earlier.

Councillor Goodeve assured the council that Members would have the opportunity to ask questions when the application came before the Development Management Committee. She urged caution and said that Members should make sure they were not pre-determining their decision on the application.

The motion to defer a decision on the recommendation until the planning application had been determined having being proposed and seconded, was put to the meeting and a vote taken. It was declared LOST.

The meeting returned to the original motion that had been proposed and seconded.

Councillor Wilson said that the East Stortford crossing was mentioned in the document as a solution. He said that an inevitable result of the Garden Town would be

increased congestion for residents in Bishop's Stortford. He said he could not support the recommendation presented as a survey had not been carried out on wildlife in the area. He said he would like to see sustainability extended to the wildlife and not just transport.

Councillor Curtis said that he understood elements of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town were controversial but the District Plan had listed this as a key site for development. He said that the decision could not be delayed as the strategy was required to be in place and felt it should be celebrated.

Having been proposed and seconded, the motion was put to the meeting and a vote taken. The motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** - That the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy be endorsed as a material consideration in the planning process for the preparation of masterplans, pre-application advice, assessing planning applications and any other development management purpose for sites within the Garden Town area.

280     TRANSFORMING EAST HERTS PROGRAMME AND  
PROPOSED REVISED FEES AND CHARGES POLICY

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the recommendation referred to in the Executive report of 23 November 2021. He said that the council's Transformation Programme would

propose a number of policies to Council in order to improve the council's financial position. The revised fees and charges policy aimed to ensure the council's costs were recovered and provide a framework so they could be set more consistently. He confirmed that the policy was not to exploit customers of the council but to cover costs and if there was any surplus, it would be reinvested.

Councillor Wilson said that he felt the policy was sensible and thanked Officers for their hard work. He said that this would not be necessary if the current government had not cut funding to local authorities by 37% between 2009-2020 and residents would now need to pay more for services.

Councillor Bell said that the Liberal Democrat Group would like to request that Councillor Haysey write to the government as Leader of the Council to ask them to halt or reverse the cuts in funding so the Council did not have to make these decisions.

Councillor Haysey said that she did not feel that writing to the government would achieve anything. She said that she was the Chair of the East of England Local Government Association and they had made representations to the relevant government departments and the Chancellor to express that the funding provided was not adequate. She said that the Council needed to take responsibility for its own finances.

Councillor Ward-Booth said that local residents were lucky to have a Conservative led Council who managed

its finances well. He said that the government had provided immense support to councils during the pandemic.

Councillor Curtis said that the money would need to come from somewhere if the government was to reverse the funding cuts to local authorities. He said that the Council should get on with providing services to residents and everyone had to play their part.

Councillor Williamson proposed and Councillor Pope seconded a motion supporting the recommendations. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** - That the revised Fees and Charges Policy be approved.

## 281 COUNCIL TAX BASE

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the report on the Council Tax Base. He said that it was an annual report that set out the anticipated Council Tax Base and needed Council approval as set out in the regulations.

Councillor Williamson proposed, and Councillor Stowe seconded a motion supporting the recommendations in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** - that (A) the calculation of the Council's tax base for the whole district, and for the parish areas for 2022/23 be approved; and

(B) pursuant to the report and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by East Hertfordshire District Council as its council tax base for the whole area for 2022/23 shall be 62609.7 and for the parish areas listed below for 2022/23 shall be as follows:-

ALBURY	282.88
ANSTEY	172.15
ARDELEY	211.65
ASPENDEN	125.14
ASTON	427.47
BAYFORD	227.43
BENGEO	279.17
BENNINGTON	412.81
BISHOP'S STORTFORD	16494.18
BRAMFIELD	111.85
BRAUGHING	665.37
BRENT PELHAM/MEESDEN	147.73
BRICKENDON	357.37
BUCKLAND	115.37
BUNTINGFORD	3241.43
COTTERED	314.77
DATCHWORTH	736.82
EASTWICK/GILSTON	440.08
FURNEUX PELHAM	268.73
GREAT AMWELL	962.63
GREAT MUNDEN	142.61
HERTFORD	12175.71
HERTFORD HEATH	961.09



HERTINGFORDBURY	332.08
HIGH WYCH	345.83
HORMEAD	355.21
HUNSDON	517.27
LITTLE BERKHAMSTED	272.15
LITTLE HADHAM	538.22
LITTLE MUNDEN	425.90
MUCH HADHAM	968.79
SACOMBE	95.03
STANSTEAD ST. MARGARETS	697.12
SAWBRIDGEWORTH	3853.32
STANDON	1993.37
STANSTEAD ABBOTTS	706.06
STAPLEFORD	268.56
STOCKING PELHAM	82.71
TEWIN	871.41
THORLEY	152.79
THUNDRIDGE	680.56
WALKERN	715.35
WARESIDE	311.77
WARE TOWN	7562.01
WATTON-AT-STONE	1061.90
WESTMILL	161.40
WIDFORD	291.78
WYDDIAL	74.74

282 MOTIONS ON NOTICE

There were no motions submitted.

283 APPENDIX A - RESPONSES TO MEMBERS' AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The meeting closed at 7.57 pm

Chairman .....

Date .....

## EAST HERTS COUNCIL

### COUNCIL – 1 MARCH 2022

#### (A) PETITION – “WOODLAND NORTH OF HARE STREET VILLAGE – EAST OF B1368 OPPOSITE MILL VIEW”

A petition has been submitted by Sheila Beetles, on behalf of 167 signatories, seeking that the Council name and recognise the woodland North of Hare Street Village, impose a Tree Preservation Order on existing trees and impose a replanting order on those failing to comply. Signatures have been collected via a written petition. The petition states:

“We the undersigned petitioners feel very strongly that woodland at the above location be named and recognised as existing woodland and that a tree preservation order be place on mature and semi mature trees some of which are over 20 years of age and have a girth of 6 ft 4 inches. These trees are currently under threat and it is vital that this wildlife habitat is protected. The Government has strict guidelines for farmers and landowners for planting and protecting the environment and ecology. Photos are attached.”

“This woodland had been planted by owners and allowed to develop naturally over the last 30 years it is now a haven for birds and wildlife, and since it borders a public footpath and bridge over the rivers, is a valuable local amenity for birdwatching and nature study. Bordering the River Quinn, it also serves as a natural sponge to soak up high water table in this river valley and as such is serving a vital purpose, particularly at times of flood. This is the only wooded area along this stretch of the River which drains thousands of acres of arable land and forms the source of the river which feeds the River Lee, allowing this to be removed would cause added flooding further downstream.”

"We are being told that woodlands are so important both for people and habitat for nature and we are urged to plant more trees. Indeed 'Natural England' who advise the government on such matters launched an initiative in Nov 2020 to 'restore nature across England'. It seems wrong to be allowing trees to be destroyed whilst using public money to plant more. We hope our Council is seeking to contribute to this plan to conserve biodiversity."

"We therefore request that you consider:

- a) Naming and recognising this 30 acre wood as existing woodland.
- b) Imposing a Tree Preservation Order on existing trees
- c) Imposing a replanting order on those failing to comply"

COUNCIL – 1 MARCH 2022

## PUBLIC QUESTIONS

<b>Question 1</b>	<b>Shaun Balding to ask Cllr Graham McAndrew, the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability</b>
<p>In respect of the reasoning for such a substantial change to the parking permit costs can I ask the following. The Total Costs RPZ 2021, which appear to have been used to calculate the 2022 values, were £214,818.18</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. In this figure what is the role of Business Support Engagement and a Customer Support Engagement - why are residents having to pay for a Business Support Role?</li><li>2. How has 15% of the contractors been measured to make sure its 15%?</li><li>3. Why have has the hard copies allowance been used for 2022 budget calculation. We no longer have paperless vouchers.</li><li>4. What is the "Income RPZ Related (Permit and Voucher Sales) value made up from?</li></ol>	

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COUNCIL – 1 MARCH 2022

## MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

<b>Question 1</b>	<b>Cllr Ben Crystall to ask Cllr Graham McAndrew, Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability:</b>
<p>It is clear East Herts Council needs to promote active travel.</p> <p>It is also clear, according to HCC Highways, that in providing funds for active travel, the government looks extremely favourably on those districts and boroughs which have prepared Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).</p> <p>Several authorities in Hertfordshire, including Stevenage and Broxbourne, have had LCWIPs for 3 or 4 years and have used these to develop ambitious active travel strategies.</p> <p>There is no mention of LCWIP in our EHC Sustainability Action Plan.</p> <p>Why hasn't East Herts developed an LCWIP, and when will we have one?</p>	
<b>Question 2</b>	<b>Cllr Ben Crystall to ask Cllr Graham McAndrew, Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability</b>
<p>The excellent East Herts Sustainability Action Plan states that action 3.10: <i>"Incentivise the public to make more use of the council e-car pool"</i> has been completed.</p> <p>It states: <i>"The scheme has now been fully re-opened to the public and promotion is now in place on our website."</i></p> <p>The link to the e-car page on our website is buried at the bottom of the Highways and Parking page.</p> <p>Can you tell us the change in the numbers of sign ups that this promotion has led to, and whether you feel action 3.10 should be repeated, given that we are now coming out of COVID?</p>	
<b>Question 3</b>	<b>Cllr Alastair Ward-Booth to ask Cllr Jan Goodeve, Executive Member for Planning and Growth</b>
<p>Does the Executive Member for Planning &amp; Development agree with me that it is important that developers on the Stortford Fields estate</p>	

are held accountable for their failure to adhere to the conditions of their planning application, and what steps will the Council take ensure compliance with their planning conditions?

**Question 4**

**Cllr Rosemary Bolton to ask Cllr Jan Goodeve, Executive Member for Planning and Growth**

What is this Council doing to support local business owners and help them learn new skills to foster further economic growth in our District?



## Council

**Date of Meeting:** 1 March 2022

**Report by:** Councillor Linda Haysey, Leader of the Council

**Report title:** Executive Report – 8 February 2022

**Ward(s) affected:** All

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## Summary

- This report details the recommendations to Council made by the Executive at its meeting on 8 February 2022.

### 1.0 Item considered and recommended to Council

1.1 Since the last Council meeting, the Executive met on 8 February 2022. At that meeting the Executive considered and supported a number of recommendations for Council on the following items:

- 1.1.1 Annual Treasury Management Report 2020/21
- 1.1.2 Treasury Management 2021/22 Mid-Year Review
- 1.1.3 External Audit National Procurement Opt In
- 1.1.4 Corporate Plan Refresh 2022/23
- 1.1.5 Parks and Open Spaces Strategy
- 1.1.6 Updated Masterplan for the Goods Yard
- 1.1.7 Masterplan for land north west of Buntingford

1.2 This report sets out the recommendation for the above items. The full report, including the Appendix, may be viewed via [this link](#).

1.3 The Minutes of the meeting are attached as **Appendix A**.

1.4 This report excludes items also considered by the Executive where those reports are separate agenda items on the Council agenda.

2.0 Annual Treasury Management Report 2020/21

2.1 The Executive was asked to review the Council's treasury management activities for 2020/21, including the prudential indicators and identifies the associated impact on the 2021/22 treasury management strategy.

**RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:**

**(a) That the Annual Treasury Management Review and Prudential Indicators 2020/21 be approved.**

3.0 Treasury Management 2021/22 Mid-Year Review

3.1 The Executive was asked to review the Council's treasury management activities for the first six months of 2021/22 financial year, including the prudential indicators.

**RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:**

**(a) That the Treasury Mid-year Review and Prudential Indicators for the first 6 months of 2021/22**

4.0 External Audit National Procurement Opt In

4.1 The Executive was asked to consider the options available and put in place new arrangements in time to make the appointment of the external auditor by 31 December 2022 for the five financial years beginning April 2023. The Council can opt into the national procurement process run by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA) or undertake its own

procurement and risk no suitable firm bidding or higher audit fees than can be gained via the national procurement process.

**RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:**

- a) That under Regulation 19 of the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015, East Hertfordshire District Council opts into the sector led body for audit appointments provided by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited.**

5.0 Corporate Plan Refresh 2022/23

- 5.1 The Executive were asked to consider to review and comment on Corporate Plan priorities ahead of them being proposed for adoption to Council alongside the 2022/23 budget.

**RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:**

- a) That the refreshed Corporate Plan 2022/23 be approved.**

6.0 Parks and Open Spaces Strategy

- 6.1 The Executive were asked to review the updated parks and open spaces strategy following the online consultation with the public and Members.

**RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:**

- a) That the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy be approved.**

## 7.0 Updated Masterplan for the Goods Yard

- 7.1 The Executive were asked to consider the revised/refined Masterplan Document for the Goods Yard, Bishop's Stortford.

### **RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:**

- (a) **That the Refined Masterplan Document for the Goods Yard, Bishop's Stortford be agreed as a material consideration for Development Management purposes.**

## 8.0 Masterplan for land north west of Buntingford

- 8.1 The Executive were asked to consider the Masterplan Document for the land North West of Buntingford.

### **RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:**

- (a) **That the Land North West of Buntingford Masterplan Document be agreed as a material consideration for Development Management purposes.**

## **9.0 Executive Decisions**

- 9.1 Other matters determined by the Executive are detailed in the Minutes of the meeting, at Appendix A to this report.

## **10.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

- 10.1 Appendix A - Minutes of the Executive meeting 8 February 2022  
10.2 Appendix B - Annual Treasury Management Review 2020-21

- 10.3 Appendix C - Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2021-22
- 10.4 Appendix D - External Audit National Procurement Opt in
- 10.5 Appendix E – Refreshed Corporate Plan 2022/23
- 10.6 Appendix F, Fi, Fii – Parks and Open Spaces Strategy
- 10.7 Appendix G - Updated Masterplan for the Goods Yard
- 10.8 Appendix H - Masterplan for land north west of Buntingford

**Contact Member**

Councillor Linda Haysey – Leader of the Council.

[linda.haysey@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:linda.haysey@eastherts.gov.uk)

**Contact Officer**

James Ellis – Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer, Tel: 01279 502170. [james.ellis@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:james.ellis@eastherts.gov.uk)

**Report Author**

Katie Mogan – Democratic Services Manager

Tel: 01279 502441. [katie.mogan@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:katie.mogan@eastherts.gov.uk)

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL  
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON  
TUESDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2022, AT 7.00 PM

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PRESENT: Councillor L Haysey (Chairman/Leader)  
Councillors P Boylan, E Buckmaster,  
G Cutting, J Goodeve and G Williamson.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors B Crystall, M Pope, C Redfern  
and P Ruffles.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

James Ellis	- Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Jonathan Geall	- Head of Housing and Health
Helen George	- Housing Development and Strategy Manager
Tamara Jarvis	- Improvement and Insight Manager
Steven Linnett	- Head of Strategic Finance and Property
Katie Mogan	- Democratic Services Manager
Sara Saunders	- Head of Planning and Building

	Control
Helen Standen	- Deputy Chief Executive
Su Tarran	- Head of Revenues and Benefits Shared Service

306 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kaye and Councillor McAndrew.

307 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council said that she had accepted an urgent item from Officers on Hertford Theatre which was a restricted report. She said that the additional funding request report had implications on Item 8 - Budget 2022/23, so would be heard first. The order of the agenda would be amended accordingly.

The Leader reminded Members that Item 14 – Introduction of Electric Vehicle Charging Tariffs had an exempt appendix so if Members wished to discuss the financial information, the meeting would again need to exclude the press and public.

The Leader said that the budgetary items were tricky at the moment and local authorities had to have a balanced Medium Term Financial Strategy. She said that the council have had to make difficult decisions but East Herts Council were in a better position than others.



308 MINUTES – 23 NOVEMBER 2021

Councillor Haysey proposed, and Councillor Williamson seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2021 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Leader. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

309 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

310 UPDATE FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Leader of the Council thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their work and comments.

311 UPDATE FROM AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee had no further comments.

312 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Councillor Haysey proposed and Councillor Buckmaster seconded, a motion that the press and

public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of the next item, on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, in that disclosure could compromise information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information).

On being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of the next item, on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, in that disclosure could compromise information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information).

313 ADDITIONAL FUNDING REQUEST - HERTFORD THEATRE  
CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Full details in the restricted minutes.

314 BUDGET SCRUTINY - BUDGET 2022/23 AND MEDIUM TERM  
FINANCIAL PLAN 2022-25

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the proposed Budget 2022/22 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-25. He said that

the plans were set around an increasing challenging background with less funding from government, limited means to increase revenue and higher costs and less income due to the pandemic. He said that the Council had carried out a comprehensive spending review in 2020 which brought forward a significant level of savings. The Council Transformation Programme was underway but it was a medium to long term project and results would be noticed in 2023.

Councillor Williamson said that the Executive endorsed working assumptions in September 2021 including a £5 increase on Council Tax and a review of the Fees and Charges Policy which proposed an average increase of 5% and where a discretionary service was provided, the cost would be paid in full by the service users. He said that the budget gap still needed to be filled and further savings proposals were presented at Appendix B. The Medium Term Financial Plan and the Capital Programme appendices had been updated in relation to the Hertford Theatre funding. He thanked the Audit and Governance Committee for their comments which were included at Appendix H.

Councillor Haysey said difficult decisions had to be made but believed the proposed budget was the best way forward.

Councillor Williamson proposed, and Councillor Buckmaster seconded a motion supporting the recommendations in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – (A) That the comments from Audit and Governance Committee, as shown at Appendix H be considered, and endorse the recommended actions shown;

(B) To **recommend to Council**:

- I. that the East Herts share of the Council Tax for a Band D property in 2022/23 be set at £184.09, an increase of £5, the maximum permitted within the Council Tax Referendum principles;
- II. The Budget 2022/23 and the Medium Term Financial Plan 2022 – 2027 is approved;
- III. The savings plans summarised in Appendix B are approved for implementation and that Council require that compensating savings, delivered to the same timescales, have to be put in place and reported to the next Council meeting should the Executive decide that any savings proposals should not proceed, or are reduced by 10% or more
- IV. The capital programme set out in Appendix C is approved; and
- V. The schedule of charges for 2021/22 set out in Appendix G, with an average increase of 5%, is approved;

- (C) That the results of the consultation on how the public value services that are provided by the council be noted;
- (D) That the Equalities Impact Assessment at Appendix F be noted; and
- (E) That the savings due to be delivered from the Transforming East Herts Programme be noted that a full business case and benefits realisation plan will be presented to Executive in June 2022 be noted.

315     CAPITAL STRATEGY AND MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION  
POLICY 2022/23

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented a report on the Capital Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy 2022/23. He said that there was a need for the council to produce a strategy following a strengthening of government guidance.

Councillor Williamson proposed, and Councillor Buckmaster seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** - To recommend to Council the approval the Capital Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision policy 2022/23 onwards.

316     TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT AND

### ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2022/23

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented a report on the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2022/23. He said that the Treasury Management Strategy was an important document to help the council deliver on its programmes and provided a basis to manage funds. The Council is required to provide three reports; this was the first report looking forward. He highlighted that Appendix B had been updated and published in the supplementary agenda.

Councillor Williamson proposed, and Councillor Cutting seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** - To recommend to Council to approve the Treasury Management and Annual Investment Strategy 2022/23 and Prudential Indicators for approval.

### 317 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT 2021/22 – QUARTER 2 FORECAST TO YEAR END

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented a report on the Financial Management of the Council - Quarter 2 Forecast to year end. He said that it was not unusual to have an overspend at the current point in the year and it would be managed by the Leadership Team throughout the year.

The Leader wanted to record her thanks to the Head of Strategic Finance and Property and his team for all their hard work and their briefing to Members was well received.

Councillor Williamson proposed, and Councillor Goodeve seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** - That (A) The net revenue budget forecast overspend of £132k in 2021/22 be noted; and

(B) The revised capital budget for 2021/22 of £57.060m, with a forecast underspend of £15.825m, which will be carried forward to 2022/23 be noted.

### 318 CORPORATE PLAN REFRESH 2022/2023

The Leader of the Council presented the refreshed Corporate Plan 2022/23. She said that the Council produced a Corporate Plan annually and the plan for 2022/23 reflected the issues arising from a challenging financial situation and a continuing commitment to provide first class services to residents. She thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their comments and was happy for them to be incorporated into the final document.

Councillor Haysey proposed, and Councillor Boylan seconded a motion supporting the recommendations

in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – That (A) the One Page Plan priorities be reviewed, as shown at Appendix A;

(B) the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as shown at Appendix B be considered, and endorse the recommended actions shown; and

(C) the One Page plan, as amended by Recommendation (B) be endorsed, and recommended to Council for approval.

## 319 HOUSING STRATEGY

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods presented a report on the Housing Strategy 2022 – 2027. He said that the strategy was a culmination of a considerable amount of work over the last 18 months. There was no statutory requirement to produce a strategy and the extent and range of housing pressures had made it imperative to set new priorities.

Councillor Boylan said that the development of the strategy was overseen by a cross party working member group who met three times to shape emerging themes. Once approved by Council, detailed action plans would be developed and reviewed regularly. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee gave detailed consideration of the strategy and Appendix A listed their comments.



The Leader of the Council thanked the team for their work on the detailed strategy with evidence based conclusions.

Councillor Boylan proposed, and Councillor Cutting seconded a motion supporting the recommendations in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – That (A) the comments put forward by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, listed in Appendix A, be considered and endorse the resulting amendments proposed by the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods as also detailed in Appendix A;

(B) the draft East Herts Housing Strategy for 2022 to 2027, as amended by Recommendation (A) be endorsed, and recommended to Council for approval.

(C) the authority to (i) determine action plans to deliver the objectives in the Housing Strategy, pending its approval by Council, and (ii) authorise periodic progress reports be delegated to the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, acting in consultation with the Head of Housing and Health.

## 320 DISCRETIONARY COVID-19 ADDITIONAL RELIEF FUND (CARF) SCHEME

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability

presented a report on the Discretionary COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF) scheme. He said the scheme was announced in March 2021 but the details were only published in December 2021. £3 million had been allocated to East Herts and the scheme must be set locally and directed to businesses that had not had grants previously.

The Leader of the Council thanked the Revenues and Benefits team for their hard work on behalf of residents.

Councillor Pope asked how the scheme would be publicised.

The Head of Revenues and Benefits said there would be extensive social media coverage and the team would be contacting all businesses eligible to apply.

Councillor Williamson proposed, and Councillor Boylan seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – That the Discretionary COVID-19 Additional Relief scheme be approved.

## 321 PARKS AND OPEN SPACES STRATEGY

The Executive Member for Wellbeing presented a report on the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy. He said that the strategy was updated to reflect the feedback through the public consultation in autumn 2021. The

Council's parks were an opportunity for residents to enjoy the outdoors and were central to the council's health and wellbeing offering. He said that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had provided some comments and suggestions and wording in the strategy would be clarified.

Councillor Buckmaster proposed, and Councillor Goodeve seconded a motion supporting the recommendations in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – That (A) the comments from Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as shown at Appendix D be considered, and endorse the recommended actions shown;

(B) the draft Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, as amended by Recommendation (A) be endorsed, and recommended to Council for approval.

## 322 INTRODUCTION OF ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) CHARGING TARIFFS

The Leader of the Council presented a report on the introduction of electric vehicle charging tariffs on behalf of the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability. The proposal was to introduce a tariff for electric vehicles in car parks managed by the Council in line with the Fees and Charges Policy. She said that the proposed tariff was 25ppkw and the council would be submitting a request for funding to upgrade the infrastructure.

Councillor Haysey proposed, and Councillor Williamson seconded a motion supporting the recommendations in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – That (A) the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as shown at Appendix C be considered, and endorse the recommended actions shown;

(B) the Electric Vehicle Charging Tariff Policy, as amended by Recommendation (A) be adopted.

323 HARLOW AND GILSTON GARDEN TOWN - FUTURE LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

The Leader of the Council presented a report on the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town – Future Leadership and Governance Report. She said that the Garden Town had received revenue funding from government for £172 million for a rolling infrastructure fund and there was a need for open and more transparent decision making processes. The Leader believed it was the best model for East Herts Council and the Garden Town.

Councillor Buckmaster said he did not have an issue with the recommendations but wanted to raise his concerns about the reference to stewardship. He said that stewardship was a complex problem to resolve and a single body would be equivalent to corporate ownership. He felt there needed to be local

accountability to create a sense of community with an accountable body spread over a larger area.

Councillor Buckmaster proposed, and Councillor Goodeve seconded a motion supporting the recommendations in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that (A) the Executive agrees ‘in principle’ to explore the creation of a Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Joint Committee, consisting of representation by all five Garden Town Partner Councils;

(B) subject to the outcome of A above, the details of the constitution, priorities and operating model of the proposed Joint Committee are to be returned to the Executive for further consideration.

#### 324 UPDATED MASTERPLAN FOR THE GOODS YARD

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented a report on the updated masterplan for the Goods Yard. She said that the site already benefitted from a masterplan and hybrid planning application however a combination of events has meant the plan needs to be reviewed. Of major significance was the decision by Network Rail to retain the railway sidings which had reduced the developable area.

The Leader of the Council commended the developer involved in the process for being fully engaged in the

masterplan process.

Councillor Goodeve proposed, and Councillor Cutting seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – To recommend to Council that the Refined Masterplan Document for the Goods Yard, Bishop’s Stortford as detailed in Appendix A, be agreed as a material consideration for Development Management purposes.

325     MASTERPLAN FOR LAND TO NORTH WEST OF BUNTINGFORD

The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented a report on the masterplan for the land to North West of Buntingford. The masterplan was for 55 units and the developer had worked with East Herts Council to produce a mix of development types and affordable housing. She gave her thanks to the Buntingford Steering Group for their help.

Councillor Goodeve proposed, and Councillor Buckmaster seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – To recommend to Council that the Land North West of Buntingford Masterplan

Document be agreed as a material consideration for Development Management purposes.

326 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2020/21

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the Annual Treasury Management report for 2020/21. He said the report followed on from Item 10 and it looked back and reviewed the activities for the last financial year.

Councillor Williamson proposed, and Councillor Cutting seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – To recommend to Council the approval of the Annual Treasury Management Review and Prudential Indicators 2020/21.

327 TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2021/22 MID-YEAR REVIEW

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented a report on the Treasury Management 2021/22 Mid-Year Review.

Councillor Williamson proposed, and Councillor Cutting seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared

CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – To recommend to Council the approval of the Treasury Mid-year Review and Prudential Indicators for the first 6 months of 2021/22.

328 EXTERNAL AUDIT NATIONAL PROCUREMENT OPT IN

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented a report on the External Audit National Procurement Opt-in. He said that the arrangements for the current audit period expired next year and the report considered options available for appointments of external auditors from April 2023 and a decision needed to be made by 31 December 2022. The report recommended opt in to Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited.

Councillor Haysey said auditing of local authorities was not as easy to procure as it used to be. She said there was a national backlog and East Herts' audit had just started. She urged CIPFA to listen to concerns raised by senior bodies and officers.

Councillor Williamson proposed, and Councillor Goodeve seconded a motion supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** - To recommend to Council that, under Regulation 19 of the Local Audit (Appointing Person)



Regulations 2015, East Hertfordshire District Council opts into the sector led body for audit appointments provided by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited.

329 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 8.16 pm

Chairman .....

Date .....

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East Herts District  
Council Annual  
Treasury  
Management  
Review 2020/21

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*Outturn Report 2020/21*

## ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

*This is an optional area which clients may wish to include in their report if they feel that members would appreciate having this list of abbreviations and definitions.*

**ALMO:** an Arm's Length Management Organisation is a not-for-profit company that provides housing services on behalf of a local authority. Usually an ALMO is set up by the authority to manage and improve all or part of its housing stock.

**LAS:** Link Group, Treasury solutions – the council's treasury management advisers.

**CE:** Capital Economics - is the economics consultancy that provides Link Group, Treasury solutions, with independent economic forecasts, briefings and research.

**CFR:** capital financing requirement - the council's annual underlying borrowing need to finance capital expenditure and a measure of the council's total outstanding indebtedness.

**CIPFA:** Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy – the professional accounting body that oversees and sets standards in local authority finance and treasury management.

**CPI:** consumer price index – the official measure of inflation adopted as a common standard by countries in the EU. It is a measure that examines the weighted average of prices of a basket of consumer goods and services, such as transportation, food and medical care. It is calculated by taking price changes for each item in the predetermined basket of goods and averaging them.

**ECB:** European Central Bank - the central bank for the Eurozone

**EU:** European Union

**EZ:** Eurozone -those countries in the EU which use the euro as their currency

**Fed:** the Federal Reserve System, often referred to simply as "the Fed," is the central bank of the United States. It was created by the Congress to provide the nation with a stable monetary and financial system.

**FOMC:** the Federal Open Market Committee – this is the branch of the Federal Reserve Board which determines monetary policy in the USA by setting interest rates and determining quantitative easing policy. It is composed of 12 members--the seven members of the Board of Governors and five of the 12 Reserve Bank presidents.

**GDP:** gross domestic product – a measure of the growth and total size of the economy.

**G7:** the group of seven countries that form an informal bloc of industrialised democracies--the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom--that meets annually to discuss issues such as global economic governance, international security, and energy policy.

**Gilts:** gilts are bonds issued by the UK Government to borrow money on the financial markets. Interest paid by the Government on gilts is called a coupon and is at a rate that is fixed for the duration until maturity of the gilt, (unless a gilt is index linked to inflation); while the coupon rate is fixed, the yields will change inversely to the price of gilts i.e. a rise in the price of a gilt will mean that its yield will fall.

**HRA:** housing revenue account.

**IMF:** International Monetary Fund - the lender of last resort for national governments which get into financial difficulties.

**LIBID:** the London Interbank Bid Rate is the rate bid by banks on deposits i.e., the rate at which a bank is willing to borrow from other banks. It is the "other end" of the LIBOR (an offered, hence "ask" rate, the rate at which a bank will lend).

**MHCLG:** the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government -the Government department that directs local authorities in England.

**MPC:** the Monetary Policy Committee is a committee of the Bank of England, which meets for one and a half days, eight times a year, to determine monetary policy by setting the official interest rate in the United Kingdom, (the Bank of England Base Rate, commonly called Bank Rate), and by making decisions on quantitative easing.

**MRP:** minimum revenue provision -a statutory annual minimum revenue charge to reduce the total outstanding CFR, (the total indebtedness of a local authority).

**PFI:** Private Finance Initiative – capital expenditure financed by the private sector i.e. not by direct borrowing by a local authority.

**PWLB:** Public Works Loan Board – this is the part of H.M. Treasury which provides loans to local authorities to finance capital expenditure.

**QE:** quantitative easing – is an unconventional form of monetary policy where a central bank creates new money electronically to buy financial assets, such as government bonds, (but may also include corporate bonds). This process aims to stimulate economic growth through increased private sector spending in the economy and also aims to return inflation to target. These purchases increase the supply of liquidity to the economy; this policy is employed when lowering interest rates has failed to stimulate economic growth to an acceptable level and to lift inflation to target. Once QE has achieved its objectives of stimulating growth and inflation, QE will be reversed by selling the bonds the central bank had previously

purchased, or by not replacing debt that it held which matures. The aim of this reversal is to ensure that inflation does not exceed its target once the economy recovers from a sustained period of depressed growth and inflation. Economic growth, and increases in inflation, may threaten to gather too much momentum if action is not taken to 'cool' the economy.

**RPI:** the Retail Price Index is a measure of inflation that measures the change in the cost of a representative sample of retail goods and services. It was the UK standard for measurement of inflation until the UK changed to using the EU standard measure of inflation – CPI. The main differences between RPI and CPI is in the way that housing costs are treated and that the former is an arithmetical mean whereas the latter is a geometric mean. RPI is often higher than CPI for these reasons.

**TMSS:** the annual treasury management strategy statement reports that all local authorities are required to submit for approval by the full council before the start of each financial year.

**VRP:** a voluntary revenue provision to repay debt, in the annual budget, which is additional to the annual MRP charge, (see above definition).

# Annual Treasury Management Review 2020/21

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## 1. Introduction

This Council is required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury management review of activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2020/21. This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, (the Code), and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, (the Prudential Code).

During 2020/21 the minimum reporting requirements were that the full Council should receive the following reports:

- an annual treasury strategy in advance of the year (Council 29/01/2020)
- a mid-year (minimum) treasury update report (Council 16/12/2020)
- an annual review following the end of the year describing the activity compared to the strategy (this report)

The regulatory environment places responsibility on members for the review and scrutiny of treasury management policy and activities. This report is, therefore, important in that respect, as it provides details of the outturn position for treasury activities and highlights compliance with the Council's policies previously approved by members.

This Council confirms that it has complied with the requirement under the Code to give prior scrutiny to all of the above treasury management reports by the Audit and Governance Committee before they were reported to the full Council.

## 2. The Council's Capital Expenditure and Financing

The Council undertakes capital expenditure on long-term assets. These activities may either be:

- Financed immediately through the application of capital or revenue resources (capital receipts, capital grants, revenue contributions etc.), which has no resultant impact on the Council's borrowing need; or
- If insufficient financing is available, or a decision is taken not to apply resources, the capital expenditure will give rise to a borrowing need.

The actual capital expenditure forms one of the required prudential indicators. The table below shows the actual capital expenditure and how this was financed.

£m	31.3.20 Actual	2020/21 Budget	31.3.21 Actual
<b>Capital expenditure</b>	<b>10,762</b>	<b>64,614</b>	<b>31,525</b>
Financed in year	-6,231	-	-6,870
<b>Unfinanced capital expenditure</b>	<b>4,531</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>24,655</b>

### 3. The Council's Overall Borrowing Need

The Council's underlying need to borrow to finance capital expenditure is termed the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR).

**Gross borrowing and the CFR** - in order to ensure that borrowing levels are prudent over the medium term and only for a capital purpose, the Council should ensure that its gross external borrowing does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the capital financing requirement in the preceding year (2020/21) plus the estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the current (2021/22) and next two financial years. This essentially means that the Council is not borrowing to support revenue expenditure. This indicator allowed the Council some flexibility to borrow in advance of its immediate capital needs in 2020/21. The table below highlights the Council's gross borrowing position against the CFR. The Council has complied with this prudential indicator.

	31.3.20 Actual	31.3.21 Actual
Total CFR General Fund (£m)	-23,079	-18,548
Gross borrowing position	4,531	24,655
Under / over funding of CFR	-18,548	6,107

**The authorised limit** - the authorised limit is the "affordable borrowing limit" required by s3 of the Local Government Act 2003. Once this has been set, the Council does not have the power to borrow above this level. The table below demonstrates that during 2020/21 the Council has maintained gross borrowing within its authorised limit.

**The operational boundary** - the operational boundary is the expected borrowing position of the Council during the year. Periods where the actual position is either below or over the boundary are acceptable subject to the authorised limit not being breached.

**Actual financing costs as a proportion of net revenue stream** - this indicator identifies the trend in the cost of capital, (borrowing and other long term obligation costs net of investment income), against the net revenue stream.



	2020/21
Authorised limit	£27m
Operational boundary	£24.5m
Financing costs as a proportion of net revenue stream	0.94%

## 4. Treasury Position as at 31st March 2021

At the beginning and the end of 2020/21 the Council's treasury, (excluding borrowing by PFI and finance leases), position was as follows:

DEBT PORTFOLIO	31.3.20 Principal	Rate/ Return	Average Life yrs	31.3.21 Principal	Rate/ Return	Average Life yrs
Fixed rate funding:						
-PWLB	£1.5m	8.875%	35	£1.5m	8.875%	34
-Market	£6.0m	8.785%		-		
Variable rate funding:						
-PWLB	-			-		
-Market	-			-		
<b>Total debt</b>	<b>£7.5m</b>	<b>8.83%</b>		<b>£1.5m</b>	<b>8.875%</b>	
<b>CFR</b>	<b>(£18.6m)</b>			<b>£6.1m</b>		
<b>Over / (under) borrowing</b>	<b>£7.5m</b>			<b>(£4.6m)</b>		
<b>Total investments</b>	<b>£59.0m</b>			<b>£33.3m</b>		
<b>Net debt</b>	<b>(£51.5m)</b>			<b>(£37.9m)</b>		

The maturity structure of the debt portfolio was as follows:

	31.3.20 actual	31.3.21 actual
Under 12 months	£6.0m	£0.0m
12 months and within 24 months	£0.0m	£0.0m
24 months and within 5 years	£0.0m	£0.0m
5 years and within 10 years	£0.0m	£0.0m
10 years and within 20 years	£0.0m	£0.0m
20 years and within 30 years	£0.0m	£0.0m
30 years and within 40 years	£1.5m	£1.5m
40 years and within 50 years	£0.0m	£0.0m

<b>INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO</b>	<b>31.3.20 Actual £</b>	<b>31.3.20 Actual %</b>	<b>31.3.21 Actual £m</b>	<b>31.3.21 Actual %</b>
<b>Treasury investments</b>				
Banks	23.2m	38.3%	11.5m	20.4%
Building Societies - rated	-	-	-	-
Building Societies – unrated	-	-	-	-
Local authorities	6.5m	11.0%	-	-
DMADF (H M Treasury)	-	-	-	-
<b>Total managed in house</b>	<b>29.7m</b>	<b>49.3%</b>	<b>11.5m</b>	<b>20.4%</b>
Bond funds	-	-	-	-
Property funds	20.0m	36.3%	20.0m	62.8%
Cash fund managers	8.5m	14.4%	5.6m	16.8%
<b>Total managed externally</b>	<b>28.5m</b>	<b>50.7%</b>	<b>25.6m</b>	<b>79.6%</b>
Accrued interest/timing difference	0.8m		(3.8m)	
<b>TOTAL TREASURY INVESTMENTS</b>	<b>59.0m</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>33.3m</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Non Treasury investments</b>				
Third party loans	-	-	-	-
Subsidiaries	-	-	-	-
Companies	2.3m	12.9%	5.0m	35.5%
Property	15.5m	87.1%	9.1m	64.5%
<b>TOTAL NON TREASURY INVESTMENTS</b>	<b>17.8m</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14.1</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Treasury investments</b>	<b>59.0m</b>	<b>76.8%</b>	<b>33.3m</b>	<b>70.3%</b>
<b>Non Treasury investments</b>	<b>17.8m</b>	<b>23.2%</b>	<b>14.1m</b>	<b>29.7%</b>
<b>TOTAL OF ALL INVESTMENTS</b>	<b>76.8m</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>47.4m</b>	<b>100%</b>

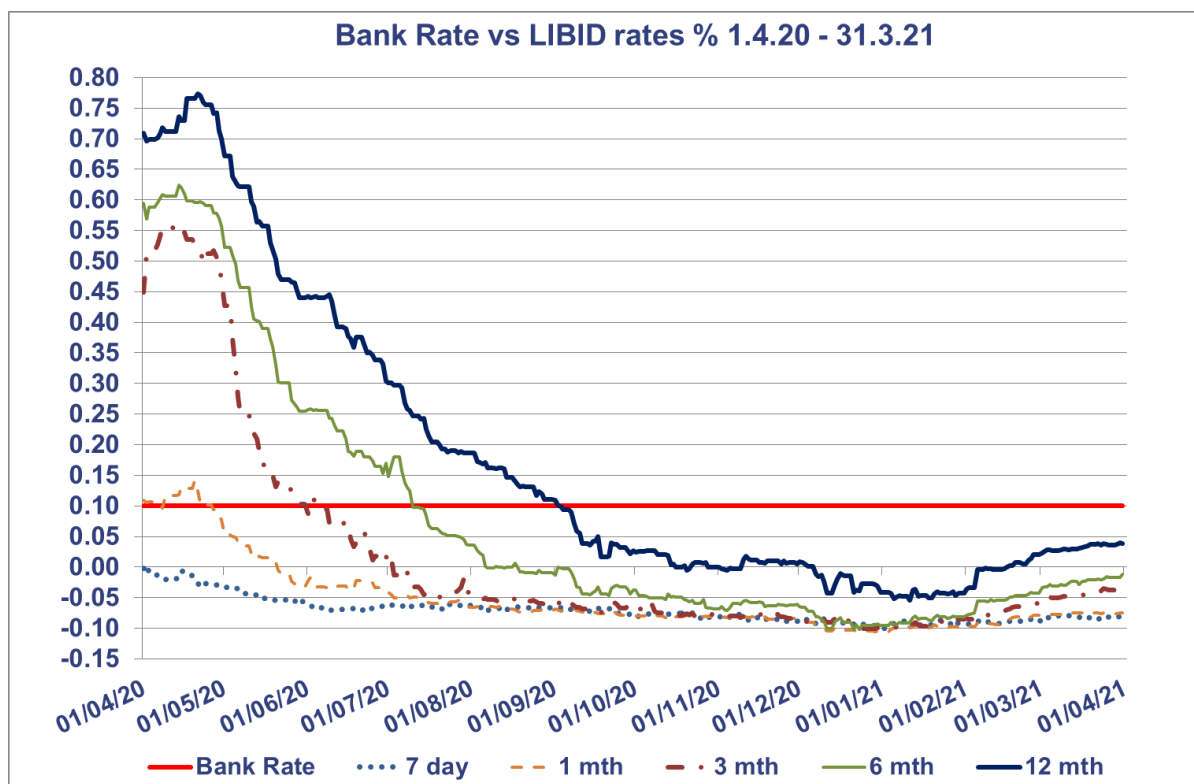
<b>Treasury Investments As at 31.03.21</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Rate</b>
Santander (95 day notice)	1.0m	0.08%
Lloyds (32 day notice)	3.7m	0.05%
Santander (Instant Access)	4.5m	0.04%
Morgan Stanley (Instant Access)	5.6m	Variable MMF cash fund
NatWest (Instant Access EHDC main bank)	2.3m	0.01m
<b>Total actual Investments held as at 31.03.21</b>	<b>17.1m</b>	

The maturity structure of the investment portfolio was as follows:

	<b>31.3.20 Actual £</b>	<b>31.3.21 Actual £</b>
<b>Investments</b>		
Longer than 1 year	39.2m	35.0m
Up to 1 year	37.6m	12.4m
<b>Total</b>	<b>76.8m</b>	<b>47.4m</b>

## 5. The Strategy for 2020/21

### 5.1 Investment strategy and control of interest rate risk



	Bank Rate	7 day	1 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth
<b>High</b>	0.10	0.00	0.14	0.56	0.62	0.77
<b>High Date</b>	01/04/2020	02/04/2020	20/04/2020	08/04/2020	14/04/2020	21/04/2020
<b>Low</b>	0.10	-0.10	-0.11	-0.10	-0.10	-0.05
<b>Low Date</b>	01/04/2020	31/12/2020	29/12/2020	23/12/2020	21/12/2020	11/01/2021
<b>Average</b>	0.10	-0.07	-0.05	0.01	0.07	0.17
<b>Spread</b>	0.00	0.10	0.25	0.66	0.73	0.83

Investment returns which had been low during 2019/20, plunged during 2020/21 to near zero or even into negative territory. Most local authority lending managed to avoid negative rates and one feature of the year was the growth of inter local authority lending. The expectation for interest rates within the treasury management strategy for 2020/21 was that Bank Rate would continue at the start of the year at 0.75 % before rising to end 2022/23 at 1.25%. This forecast was invalidated by the Covid-19 pandemic bursting onto the scene in March 2020 which caused the Monetary Policy Committee to cut Bank Rate in March, first to 0.25% and

then to 0.10%, in order to counter the hugely negative impact of the national lockdown on large swathes of the economy. The Bank of England and the Government also introduced new programmes of supplying the banking system and the economy with massive amounts of cheap credit so that banks could help cash-starved businesses to survive the lockdown. The Government also supplied huge amounts of finance to local authorities to pass on to businesses. This meant that for most of the year there was much more liquidity in financial markets than there was demand to borrow, with the consequent effect that investment earnings rates plummeted.

While the Council has taken a cautious approach to investing, it is also fully appreciative of changes to regulatory requirements for financial institutions in terms of additional capital and liquidity that came about in the aftermath of the financial crisis. These requirements have provided a far stronger basis for financial institutions, with annual stress tests by regulators evidencing how institutions are now far more able to cope with extreme stressed market and economic conditions.

Investment balances have been kept to a minimum through the agreed strategy of using reserves and balances to support internal borrowing, rather than borrowing externally from the financial markets. External borrowing would have incurred an additional cost, due to the differential between borrowing and investment rates as illustrated in the charts shown above and below. Such an approach has also provided benefits in terms of reducing the counterparty risk exposure, by having fewer investments placed in the financial markets.

## **5.2 Borrowing strategy and control of interest rate risk**

During 2019-20, the Council maintained an under-borrowed position. This meant that the capital borrowing need, (the Capital Financing Requirement), was not fully funded with loan debt, as cash supporting the Council's reserves, balances and cash flow was used as an interim measure. This strategy was prudent as investment returns were very low and minimising counterparty risk on placing investments also needed to be considered.

A cost of carry remained during the year on any new long-term borrowing that was not immediately used to finance capital expenditure, as it would have caused a temporary increase in cash balances; this would have incurred a revenue cost – the difference between (higher) borrowing costs and (lower) investment returns.

The policy of avoiding new borrowing by running down spare cash balances, has served well over the last few years. However, this was kept under review to avoid incurring higher borrowing costs in the future when this authority may not be able to avoid new borrowing to finance capital expenditure and/or the refinancing of maturing debt.

Against this background and the risks within the economic forecast, caution was adopted with the treasury operations. The Director of Finance therefore monitored

interest rates in financial markets and adopted a pragmatic strategy based upon the following principles to manage interest rate risks:

- if it had been felt that there was a significant risk of a sharp FALL in long and short term rates, (e.g. due to a marked increase of risks around relapse into recession or of risks of deflation), then long term borrowings would have been postponed, and potential rescheduling from fixed rate funding into short term borrowing would have been considered.
- if it had been felt that there was a significant risk of a much sharper RISE in long and short term rates than initially expected, perhaps arising from an acceleration in the start date and in the rate of increase in central rates in the USA and UK, an increase in world economic activity or a sudden increase in inflation risks, then the portfolio position would have been re-appraised. Most likely, fixed rate funding would have been drawn whilst interest rates were lower than they were projected to be in the next few years.

Interest rate forecasts expected only gradual rises in medium and longer term fixed borrowing rates during 2020/21 and the two subsequent financial years. Variable, or short-term rates, were expected to be the cheaper form of borrowing over the period.

*Forecasts at the time of approval of the treasury management strategy report for 2020/21 were as follows: -*

### 31.1.20

Link Asset Services Interest Rate View													
	Mar-20	Jun-20	Sep-20	Dec-20	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23
Bank Rate View	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25
3 Month LIBID	0.70	0.70	0.80	0.80	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.10	1.20	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.30
6 Month LIBID	0.80	0.80	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.10	1.20	1.30	1.40	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50
12 Month LIBID	0.90	0.90	1.00	1.10	1.20	1.30	1.40	1.50	1.60	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.70
5yr PWLB Rate	2.30	2.30	2.40	2.40	2.50	2.60	2.70	2.80	2.90	2.90	3.00	3.00	3.10
10yr PWLB Rate	2.50	2.50	2.60	2.60	2.70	2.80	2.90	3.00	3.10	3.10	3.20	3.20	3.30
25yr PWLB Rate	3.00	3.00	3.10	3.20	3.30	3.40	3.50	3.60	3.70	3.80	3.80	3.90	3.90
50yr PWLB Rate	2.90	2.90	3.00	3.10	3.20	3.30	3.40	3.50	3.60	3.70	3.70	3.80	3.80

*The following tables show how interest rate forecasts changed during 2020/21: -*

### 31.3.20

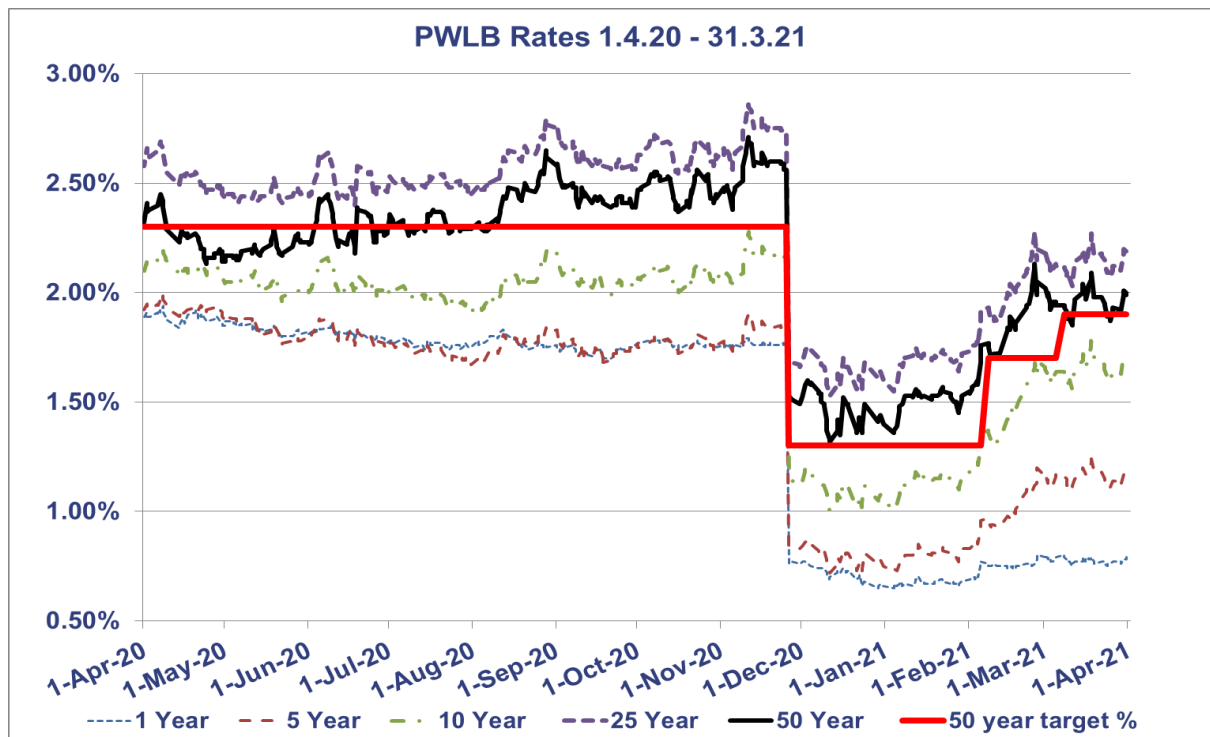
Link Asset Services Interest Rate View								
	Jun-20	Sep-20	Dec-20	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22
Bank Rate View	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
3 Month LIBID	0.45	0.40	0.35	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30
6 Month LIBID	0.60	0.55	0.50	0.45	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40
12 Month LIBID	0.75	0.70	0.65	0.60	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55
5yr PWLB Rate	1.90	1.90	1.90	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.10	2.10
10yr PWLB Rate	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.30	2.30
25yr PWLB Rate	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.60	2.60	2.60	2.70	2.70
50yr PWLB Rate	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.50	2.50

Link Group Interest Rate View 11.8.20											
	Sep-20	Dec-20	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23
Bank Rate View	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
3 Month average earnings	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	-	-	-	-
6 Month LIBID	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	-	-	-	-
12 Month LIBID	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	-	-	-	-
5yr PWLB Rate	1.90	1.90	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.10
10yr PWLB Rate	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.30	2.30	2.30
25yr PWLB Rate	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.60	2.60	2.60	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.70
50yr PWLB Rate	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50

Link Group Interest Rate View 9.11.20														
	Dec-20	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24
BANK RATE	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
3 month ave earnings	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
6 month ave earnings	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
12 month ave earnings	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20
5 yr PWLB	1.80	1.80	1.80	1.80	1.80	1.90	1.90	1.90	1.90	1.90	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
10 yr PWLB	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.30
25 yr PWLB	2.50	2.50	2.60	2.60	2.60	2.60	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.80
50 yr PWLB	2.30	2.30	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.60	2.60	2.60	2.60

Link Group Interest Rate View 8.2.21													
	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24
BANK RATE	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
3 month ave earnings	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
6 month ave earnings	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
12 month ave earnings	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20
5 yr PWLB	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20
10 yr PWLB	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.40	1.40	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.60
25 yr PWLB	1.90	1.90	1.90	1.90	2.00	2.00	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.20
50 yr PWLB	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.80	1.80	1.90	1.90	1.90	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00

Link Group Interest Rate View 8.3.21													
	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24
BANK RATE	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
3 month ave earnings	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
6 month ave earnings	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
12 month ave earnings	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20
5 yr PWLB	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.30	1.30	1.40	1.40	1.40	1.40
10 yr PWLB	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.80	1.80	1.90	1.90	1.90	1.90
25 yr PWLB	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.20	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.40	2.40	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50
50 yr PWLB	1.90	1.90	1.90	2.00	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.20	2.20	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.30

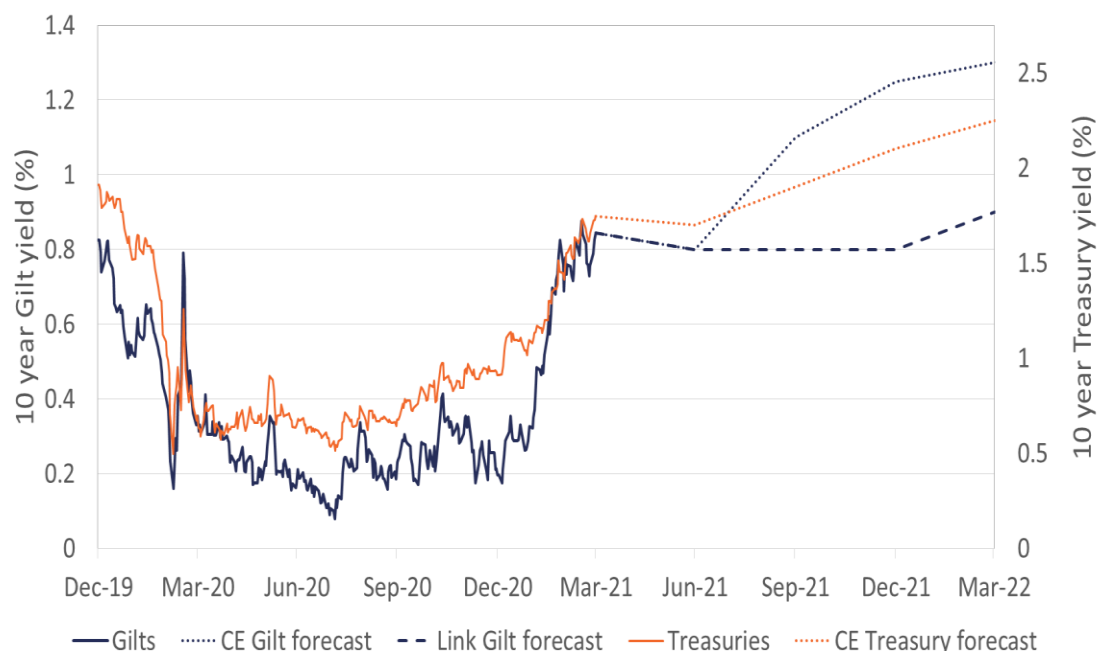


	1 Year	5 Year	10 Year	25 Year	50 Year
<b>Low</b>	0.65%	0.72%	1.00%	1.53%	1.32%
<b>Date</b>	04/01/2021	11/12/2020	11/12/2020	11/12/2020	11/12/2020
<b>High</b>	1.94%	1.99%	2.28%	2.86%	2.71%
<b>Date</b>	08/04/2020	08/04/2020	11/11/2020	11/11/2020	11/11/2020
<b>Average</b>	1.43%	1.50%	1.81%	2.33%	2.14%
<b>Spread</b>	1.29%	1.27%	1.28%	1.33%	1.39%

PWLB rates are based on, and are determined by, gilt (UK Government bonds) yields through H.M.Treasury determining a specified margin to add to gilt yields. The main influences on gilt yields are Bank Rate, inflation expectations and movements in US treasury yields. Inflation targeting by the major central banks has been successful over the last 30 years in lowering inflation and the real equilibrium rate for central rates has fallen considerably due to the high level of borrowing by consumers: this means that central banks do not need to raise rates as much now to have a major impact on consumer spending, inflation, etc. This has pulled down the overall level of interest rates and bond yields in financial markets over the last 30 years. We have seen over the last two years, many bond yields up to 10 years in the Eurozone turn negative on expectations that the EU would struggle to get growth rates and inflation up from low levels. In addition, there has, at times, been an inversion of bond yields in the US whereby 10 year yields have fallen below shorter term yields. In the past, this has been a precursor of a recession.



**Graph of UK gilt yields v. US treasury yields**



Gilt yields fell sharply from the start of 2020 and then spiked up during a financial markets melt down in March caused by the pandemic hitting western countries; this was rapidly countered by central banks flooding the markets with liquidity. While US treasury yields do exert influence on UK gilt yields so that the two often move in tandem, they have diverged during the first three quarters of 2020/21 but then converged in the final quarter. Expectations of economic recovery started earlier in the US than the UK but once the UK vaccination programme started making rapid progress in the new year of 2021, gilt yields and gilt yields and PWLB rates started rising sharply as confidence in economic recovery rebounded. Financial markets also expected Bank Rate to rise quicker than in the forecast tables in this report.

At the close of the day on 31 March 2021, all gilt yields from 1 to 5 years were between 0.19 – 0.58% while the 10-year and 25-year yields were at 1.11% and 1.59%.

HM Treasury imposed **two changes of margins over gilt yields for PWLB rates in 2019/20** without any prior warning. The first took place on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2019, adding an additional 1% margin over gilts to all PWLB period rates. That increase was then, at least partially, reversed for some forms of borrowing on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020, but not for mainstream non-HRA capital schemes. A consultation was then held with local authorities and **on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020, the Chancellor announced the conclusion to the review of margins over gilt yields for PWLB rates;** the standard and certainty margins were reduced by 1% but a prohibition was introduced to deny access to borrowing from the PWLB for any local authority which had purchase of

assets for yield in its three year capital programme. The new margins over gilt yields are as follows: -.

- **PWLB Standard Rate** is gilt plus 100 basis points (G+100bps)
- **PWLB Certainty Rate** is gilt plus 80 basis points (G+80bps)
- **PWLB HRA Standard Rate** is gilt plus 100 basis points (G+100bps)
- **PWLB HRA Certainty Rate** is gilt plus 80bps (G+80bps)
- **Local Infrastructure Rate** is gilt plus 60bps (G+60bps)

There is likely to be only a gentle rise in gilt yields and PWLB rates over the next three years as Bank Rate is not forecast to rise from 0.10% by March 2024 as the Bank of England has clearly stated that it will not raise rates until inflation is sustainably above its target of 2%; this sets a high bar for Bank Rate to start rising.

**Change in strategy during the year** – the strategy adopted in the original Treasury Management Strategy Report for 2020/21 approved by the Council on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2020, was subject to revision during the year due to delays in major capital project spend, reducing the 2020/21 borrowing requirement.

## 6. Borrowing Outturn

### **Treasury Borrowing**

No borrowing was undertaken during the year.

### **Borrowing in advance of need**

The Council has not borrowed more than, or in advance of its needs, purely in order to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed.

### **Rescheduling**

No rescheduling was done during the year as the average 1% differential between PWLB new borrowing rates and premature repayment rates made rescheduling unviable.

### **Repayments**

On 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020 a historic, club loan / bond of £6m, with a fixed rate of 8.785%, matured and was repaid.

## 7. Investment Outturn

**Investment Policy** – the Council's investment policy is governed by MHCLG investment guidance, which has been implemented in the annual investment strategy approved by the Council on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2020. This policy sets out the approach for choosing investment counterparties, and is based on credit ratings

provided by the three main credit rating agencies, supplemented by additional market data, (such as rating outlooks, credit default swaps, bank share prices etc.).

The investment activity during the year conformed to the approved strategy, and the Council had no liquidity difficulties.

**Resources** – the Council's cash balances comprise revenue and capital resources and cash flow monies. The Council's core cash resources comprised as follows:

Balance Sheet Resources	31.3.20	31.3.21
Balances	£46.8m	£9.2m
Earmarked reserves	£11.9m	£23.9m
Usable capital receipts / Capital grants	£0.3m	£0.2m
<b>Total</b>	<b>£59.0m</b>	<b>£33.3m</b>

### Investments held by the Council

- The Council maintained an average balance of £31.8m of internally managed funds.
- The internally managed funds earned an average rate of return of 0.30%, which exceeds comparable performance indicators listed below:

7 day LIBID uncompounded	-0.0706%
7 day LIBID compounded weekly	-0.0699%
1 month uncompounded	-0.0526%
1 month compounded monthly	-0.0471%
3 month uncompounded	0.0150%
3 month compounded quarterly	0.1092%

- Total investment income was £1.086m compared to a budget of £1.090m, being just £4k below budget, which was an excellent return, considering the budget was set pre-COVID 19 and all funds other than property funds, were kept liquid.

### Investments held by fund managers

The Council uses two external property funds to invest part of its cash balances. The performance of these funds was as follows:

Fund Manager	Investments Held	Unit Value 31.03.21	Gross Total Rental Return and Interest 2020/21*	Return on initial investment
Lothbury Property Trust	£10.000m	£10.319m	£0.392m	3.92%
Hermes Property Unit Trust	£10.000m	£10.606m	£0.457m	4.57%
Total	£20.000m	£10.925m	£0.849m	4.24%

\* Before management fees.

Performing exceedingly well against a benchmark of:

12 month uncompounded	0.1731%
12 month compounded	0.7086%

### Non- treasury Investments held

The council holds an investment property portfolio which is valued each year at its fair value, to ensure compliance under IFRS 9. Their value and performance are as follows:

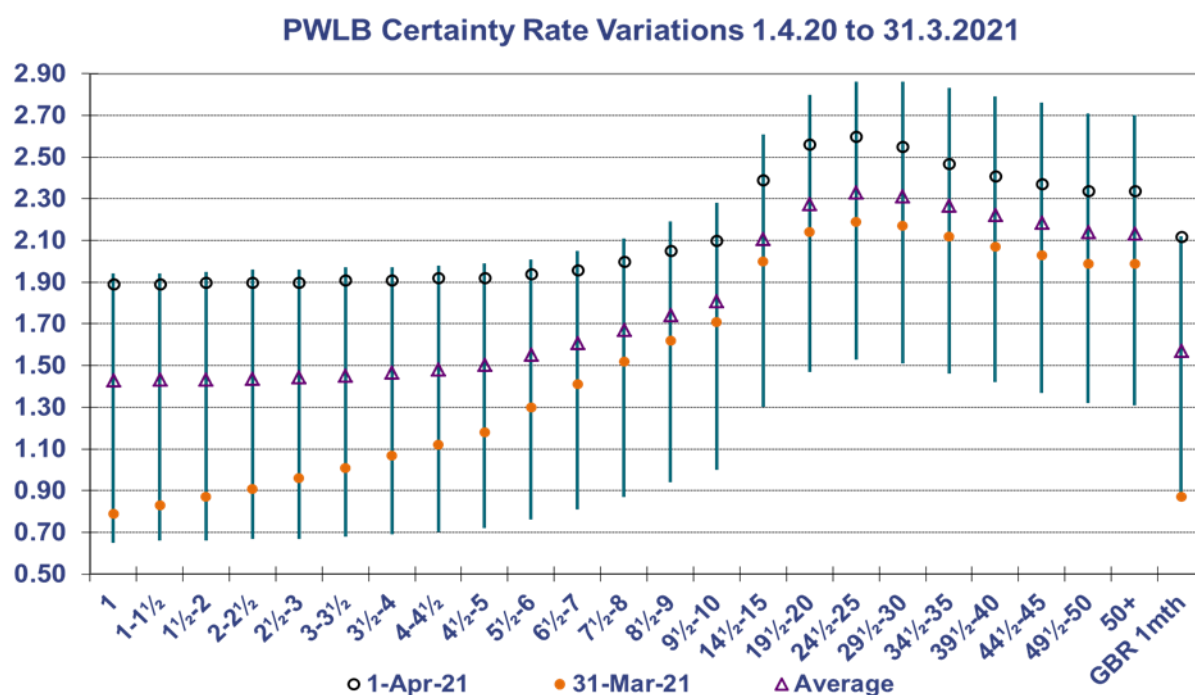
	Fair Value 31.03.20	Gross Rental Return 31.03.20	Return on Fair Value 31.03.20	Fair Value 31.03.21	Gross Rental Return 31.03.21	Return on Fair Value 31.03.21
Investment Property Portfolio	£15.486m	£0.956m	6.17%	£9.070m	£0.882m	9.72%

The financial sustainability programme, set up increase our investment property portfolio, has been frozen, due to the change in PWLB borrowing rules.

## Appendix 1: Graphs

Please find below a selection of graphs and tables for your information.

### a) PWLB borrowing rates

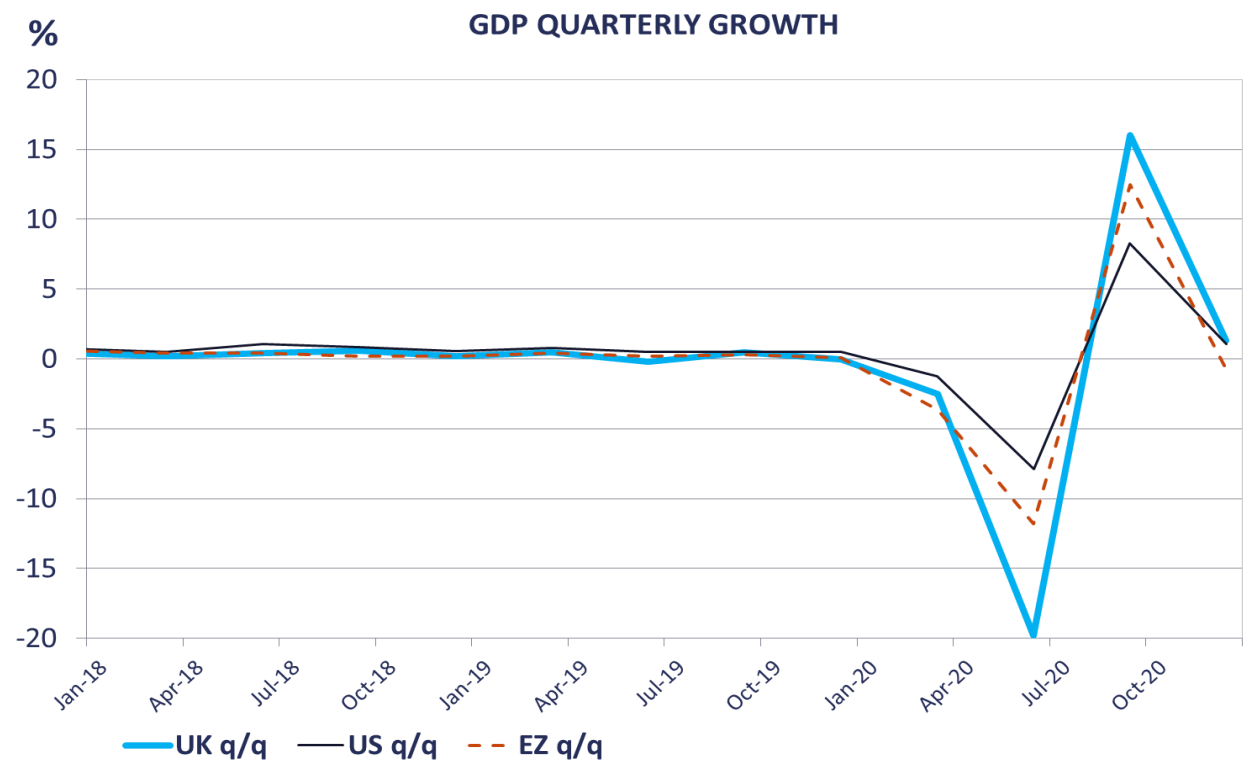


	1 Year	5 Year	10 Year	25 Year	50 Year
<b>Low</b>	0.65%	0.72%	1.00%	1.53%	1.32%
<b>Low date</b>	04/01/2021	11/12/2020	11/12/2020	11/12/2020	11/12/2020
<b>High</b>	1.94%	1.99%	2.28%	2.86%	2.71%
<b>High date</b>	08/04/2020	08/04/2020	11/11/2020	11/11/2020	11/11/2020
<b>Average</b>	1.43%	1.50%	1.81%	2.33%	2.14%
<b>Spread</b>	1.29%	1.27%	1.28%	1.33%	1.39%

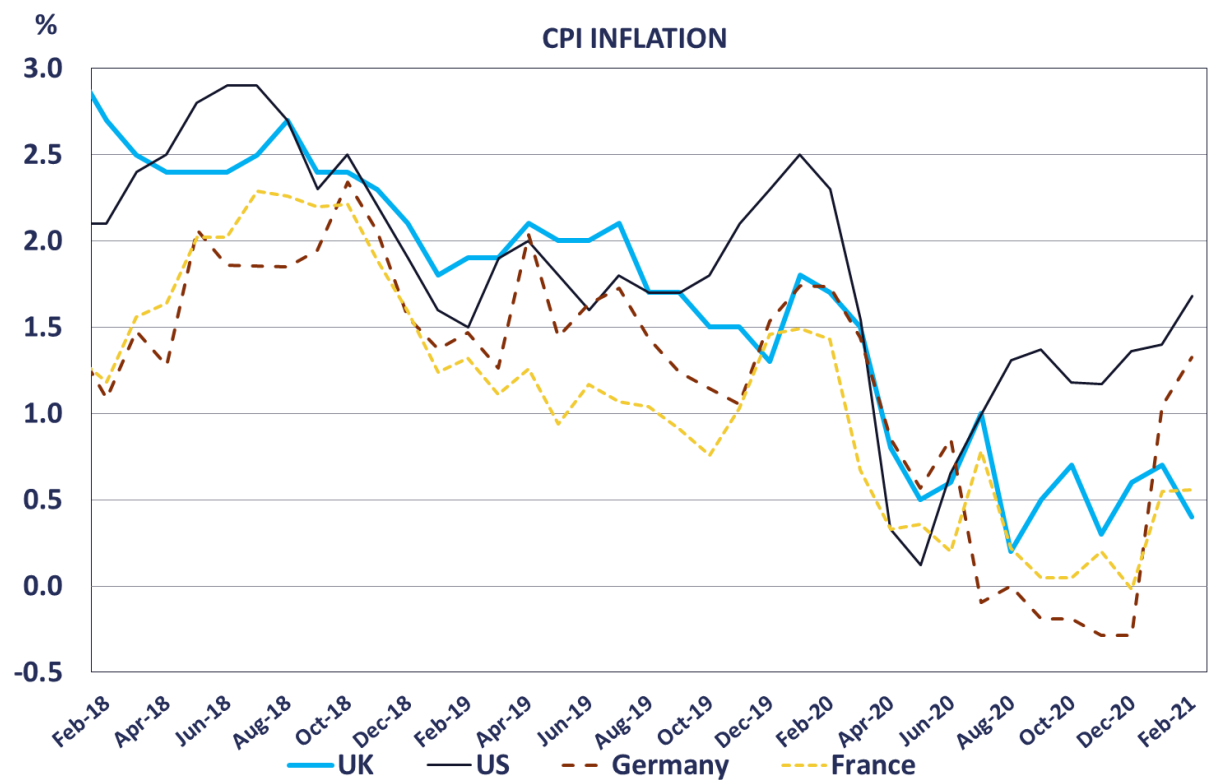
### b) Money market investment rates and forecasts 2020/21

	Bank Rate	7 day	1 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth
<b>High</b>	0.10	0.00	0.14	0.56	0.62	0.77
<b>High Date</b>	01/04/2020	02/04/2020	20/04/2020	08/04/2020	14/04/2020	21/04/2020
<b>Low</b>	0.10	-0.10	-0.11	-0.10	-0.10	-0.05
<b>Low Date</b>	01/04/2020	31/12/2020	29/12/2020	23/12/2020	21/12/2020	11/01/2021
<b>Average</b>	0.10	-0.07	-0.05	0.01	0.07	0.17
<b>Spread</b>	0.00	0.10	0.25	0.66	0.73	0.83

### c) UK, US and EZ GDP growth



### d) Inflation UK, US, Germany and France



## Appendix 4: Approved countries for investments as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021

*Based on lowest available rating*

### AAA

- Australia
- Denmark
- Germany
- Luxembourg
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Singapore
- Sweden
- Switzerland

### AA+

- Canada
- Finland
- U.S.A.

### AA

- Abu Dhabi (UAE)
- France

### AA-

- Belgium
- Hong Kong
- Qatar
- **U.K.**

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**East Herts District  
Council  
Treasury Management  
Strategy Statement and  
Annual Investment  
Strategy**

**Mid-Year Review Report  
2021/22**

# 1. Background

## 1.1 Capital Strategy

In December 2017, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, (CIPFA), issued revised Prudential and Treasury Management Codes. These require all local authorities to prepare a Capital Strategy which is to provide the following: -

- a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services;
- an overview of how the associated risk is managed;
- the implications for future financial sustainability.

## 1.2 Treasury management

The Council operates a balanced budget, which broadly means cash raised during the year will meet its cash expenditure. Part of the treasury management operations ensure this cash flow is adequately planned, with surplus monies being invested in low risk counterparties, providing adequate liquidity initially before considering optimising investment return.

The second main function of the treasury management service is the funding of the Council's capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing need of the Council, essentially the longer term cash flow planning to ensure the Council can meet its capital spending operations. This management of longer term cash may involve arranging long or short term loans, or using longer term cash flow surpluses, and on occasion any debt previously drawn may be restructured to meet Council risk or cost objectives.

Accordingly, treasury management is defined as:

“The management of the local authority's borrowing, investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.”

# 2. Introduction

This report has been written in accordance with the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management (revised 2017).

The primary requirements of the Code are as follows:

1. Creation and maintenance of a Treasury Management Policy Statement which sets out the policies and objectives of the Council's treasury management activities.
2. Creation and maintenance of Treasury Management Practices which set out the manner in which the Council will seek to achieve those policies and objectives.
3. Receipt by the full Council of an annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement - including the Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy - for the year ahead, a Mid-year Review Report and an Annual Report, (stewardship report), covering activities during the previous year.
4. Delegation by the Council of responsibilities for implementing and monitoring treasury management policies and practices and for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions.
5. Delegation by the Council of the role of scrutiny of treasury management strategy and policies to a specific named body. For this Council the delegated body is Audit and Governance Committee:

This mid-year report has been prepared in compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management, and covers the following:

- An economic update for the first half of the 2021/22 financial year;
- A review of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy;
- The Council's capital expenditure, as set out in the Capital Strategy, and prudential indicators;
- A review of the Council's investment portfolio for 2021/22;
- A review of the Council's borrowing strategy for 2021/22;
- A review of any debt rescheduling undertaken during 2021/22;
- A review of compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits for 2021/22.

## 3. Economics and interest rates

### 3.1 Economics update

#### MPC meeting 24.9.21

- The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted unanimously to leave Bank Rate unchanged at 0.10% and made no changes to its programme of quantitative easing purchases due to finish by the end of this year at a total of £895bn; two MPC members voted to stop the last £35bn of purchases as they were concerned that this would add to inflationary pressures.
- There was a major shift in the tone of the MPC's minutes at this meeting from the previous meeting in August which had majored on indicating that some tightening in monetary policy was now on the horizon, but also not wanting to stifle economic recovery by too early an increase in Bank Rate. In his press conference after the August MPC meeting, Governor Andrew Bailey said, "the challenge of avoiding a steep rise in unemployment has been replaced by that of ensuring a flow of labour into jobs" and that "the Committee will be monitoring closely the incoming evidence regarding developments in the labour market, and particularly unemployment, wider measures of slack, and underlying wage pressures." In other words, it was flagging up a potential danger that labour shortages could push up wage growth by more than it expects and that, as a result, CPI inflation would stay above the 2% target for longer. It also discounted sharp increases in monthly inflation figures in the pipeline in late 2021 which were largely propelled by events a year ago e.g., the cut in VAT in August 2020 for the hospitality industry, and by temporary shortages which would eventually work their way out of the system: in other words, **the MPC had been prepared to look through a temporary spike in inflation.**
- So, in August the country was just put on alert. However, this time the MPC's words indicated there had been a marked increase in concern that more recent increases in prices, particularly the increases in gas and electricity prices in October and due again next April, are, indeed, likely to lead to **faster and higher inflation expectations and underlying wage growth, which would in turn increase the risk that price pressures would prove more persistent next year than previously expected. Indeed, to emphasise its concern about inflationary pressures, the MPC pointedly chose to reaffirm its commitment to the 2% inflation target in its statement;** this suggested that it was now willing to look through the flagging economic recovery during the summer to prioritise bringing inflation down next year. This is a reversal of its priorities in August and a long way from words at earlier MPC meetings which indicated a willingness to look through inflation overshooting the target for limited periods to ensure that inflation was 'sustainably over 2%'. Indeed, whereas in August the MPC's focus was on getting through a winter of temporarily high energy prices and supply shortages, believing that inflation would return to just under the 2% target after reaching a high around 4% in late 2021, now its primary concern is that underlying price pressures in the economy are likely to get embedded over the next year and elevate future inflation to stay significantly above its 2% target and for longer.
- Financial markets are now pricing in a first increase in Bank Rate from 0.10% to 0.25% in February 2022, but this looks ambitious as the MPC has stated that it wants to see what happens to the economy, and particularly to employment once furlough ends at the end of September. At the MPC's meeting in February it will only have available the employment figures for November: to get a clearer picture of employment trends, it would need to wait until the May meeting when it would have data up until February. At its May meeting, it will also have a clearer understanding of the likely peak of inflation.

- **The MPC's forward guidance on its intended monetary policy** on raising Bank Rate versus selling (quantitative easing) holdings of bonds is as follows: -
  1. Placing the focus on raising Bank Rate as "the active instrument in most circumstances".
  2. Raising Bank Rate to 0.50% before starting on reducing its holdings.
  3. Once Bank Rate is at 0.50% it would stop reinvesting maturing gilts.
  4. Once Bank Rate had risen to at least 1%, it would start selling its holdings.
- **COVID-19 vaccines.** These have been the game changer which have enormously boosted confidence that **life in the UK could largely return to normal during the summer** after a third wave of the virus threatened to overwhelm hospitals in the spring. With the household saving rate having been exceptionally high since the first lockdown in March 2020, there is plenty of pent-up demand and purchasing power stored up for services in hard hit sectors like restaurants, travel and hotels. The big question is whether mutations of the virus could develop which render current vaccines ineffective, as opposed to how quickly vaccines can be modified to deal with them and enhanced testing programmes be implemented to contain their spread.

**US.** See comments below on US treasury yields.

**EU.** The slow roll out of vaccines initially delayed economic recovery in early 2021 but the vaccination rate has picked up sharply since then. After a contraction in GDP of -0.3% in Q1, Q2 came in with strong growth of 2%, which is likely to continue into Q3, though some countries more dependent on tourism may struggle. Recent sharp increases in gas and electricity prices have increased overall inflationary pressures but the ECB is likely to see these as being only transitory after an initial burst through to around 4%, so is unlikely to be raising rates for a considerable time. German general election. With the CDU/CSU and SPD both having won around 24-26% of the vote in the September general election, the composition of Germany's next coalition government may not be agreed by the end of 2021. An SPD-led coalition would probably pursue a slightly less restrictive fiscal policy, but any change of direction from a CDU/CSU led coalition government is likely to be small. However, with Angela Merkel standing down as Chancellor as soon as a coalition is formed, there will be a hole in overall EU leadership which will be difficult to fill.

**China.** After a concerted effort to get on top of the virus outbreak in Q1 2020, economic recovery was strong in the rest of the year; this enabled China to recover all the initial contraction. During 2020, policy makers both quashed the virus and implemented a programme of monetary and fiscal support that was particularly effective at stimulating short-term growth. At the same time, China's economy benefited from the shift towards online spending by consumers in developed markets. These factors helped to explain its comparative outperformance compared to western economies during 2020 and earlier in 2021. However, the pace of economic growth has now fallen back after this initial surge of recovery from the pandemic and China is now struggling to contain the spread of the Delta variant through sharp local lockdowns - which will also depress economic growth. There are also questions as to how effective Chinese vaccines are proving. In addition, recent regulatory actions motivated by a political agenda to channel activities into officially approved directions, are also likely to reduce the dynamism and long-term growth of the Chinese economy.

**Japan.** 2021 has been a patchy year in combating Covid. However, after a slow start, nearly 50% of the population are now vaccinated and Covid case numbers are falling. After a weak Q3 there is likely to be a strong recovery in Q4. The Bank of Japan is continuing its very loose monetary policy but with little prospect of getting inflation back above 1% towards its target of 2%, any time soon: indeed, inflation was negative in July. New Prime Minister Kishida has promised a large fiscal stimulus package after the November general election - which his party is likely to win.

**World growth.** World growth was in recession in 2020 but recovered during 2021 until starting to lose momentum more recently. Inflation has been rising due to increases in gas and electricity prices, shipping costs and supply shortages, although these should subside during 2022. It is likely that we are heading into a period where there will be a reversal of **world globalisation** and a decoupling of western countries from dependence on China to supply products, and vice versa. This is likely to reduce world growth rates from those in prior decades.

**Supply shortages.** The pandemic and extreme weather events have been highly disruptive of extended worldwide supply chains. At the current time there are major queues of ships unable to unload their goods at ports in New York, California and China. Such issues have led to mis-distribution of shipping containers around the world and have contributed to a huge increase in the cost of shipping. Combined with a shortage of semi-conductors, these issues have had a disruptive impact on production in many countries. Many western countries are also hitting up against a difficulty in filling job vacancies. It is expected that these issues will be gradually sorted out, but they are currently contributing to a spike upwards in inflation and shortages of materials and goods on shelves.

## 3.2 Interest rate forecasts

The Council's treasury advisor, Link Group, provided the following forecasts on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021 (PWLB rates are certainty rates, gilt yields plus 80bps):

Link Group Interest Rate View		29.9.21									
		Dec-21	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24
BANK RATE		0.10	0.10	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.75
3 month ave earnings		0.10	0.10	0.20	0.20	0.30	0.40	0.50	0.50	0.60	0.70
6 month ave earnings		0.20	0.20	0.30	0.30	0.40	0.50	0.60	0.60	0.70	0.80
12 month ave earnings		0.30	0.40	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.60	0.70	0.80	0.90	1.00
5 yr PWLB		1.40	1.40	1.50	1.50	1.60	1.60	1.60	1.70	1.70	1.70
10 yr PWLB		1.80	1.80	1.90	1.90	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.10	2.10	2.10
25 yr PWLB		2.20	2.20	2.30	2.30	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.50	2.50	2.60
50 yr PWLB		2.00	2.00	2.10	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.30	2.30	2.40

Additional notes by Link on this forecast table: -

- LIBOR and LIBID rates will cease from the end of 2021. Work is currently progressing to replace LIBOR with a rate based on SONIA (Sterling Overnight Index Average). In the meantime, our forecasts are based on expected average earnings by local authorities for 3 to 12 months.
- Our forecasts for average earnings are averages i.e., rates offered by individual banks may differ significantly from these averages, reflecting their different needs for borrowing short term cash at any one point in time.

The coronavirus outbreak has done huge economic damage to the UK and to economies around the world. After the Bank of England took emergency action in March 2020 to cut Bank Rate to 0.10%, it left Bank Rate unchanged at its subsequent meetings.

As shown in the forecast table above, one increase in Bank Rate from 0.10% to 0.25% has now been included in quarter 2 of 2022/23, a second increase to 0.50% in quarter 2 of 23/24 and a third one to 0.75% in quarter 4 of 23/24.

### Significant risks to the forecasts

- COVID vaccines do not work to combat new mutations and/or new vaccines take longer than anticipated to be developed for successful implementation.
- The pandemic causes major long-term scarring of the economy.
- The Government implements an austerity programme that suppresses GDP growth.
- The MPC tightens monetary policy too early – by raising Bank Rate or unwinding QE.
- The MPC tightens monetary policy too late to ward off building inflationary pressures.
- Major stock markets e.g. in the US, become increasingly judged as being over-valued and susceptible to major price corrections. Central banks become increasingly exposed to the “moral hazard” risks of having to buy shares and corporate bonds to reduce the impact of major financial market sell-offs on the general economy.
- Geo-political risks are widespread e.g. German general election in September 2021 produces an unstable coalition or minority government and a void in high-profile leadership in the EU when Angela Merkel steps down as Chancellor of Germany; on-going global power influence struggles between Russia/China/US.

### **The balance of risks to the UK economy: -**

- The overall balance of risks to economic growth in the UK is now to the downside, including residual risks from Covid and its variants - both domestically and their potential effects worldwide.

### **Forecasts for Bank Rate**

Bank Rate is not expected to go up fast after the initial rate rise as the supply potential of the economy has not generally taken a major hit during the pandemic, so should be able to cope well with meeting demand without causing inflation to remain elevated in the medium-term, or to inhibit inflation from falling back towards the MPC's 2% target after the surge to around 4% towards the end of 2021. Three increases in Bank rate are forecast in the period to March 2024, ending at 0.75%. However, these forecasts may well need changing within a relatively short time frame for the following reasons: -

- There are increasing grounds for viewing the economic recovery as running out of steam during the summer and now into the autumn. This could lead into stagflation which would create a dilemma for the MPC as to which way to face.
- Will some current key supply shortages e.g., petrol and diesel, spill over into causing economic activity in some sectors to take a significant hit?
- Rising gas and electricity prices in October and next April and increases in other prices caused by supply shortages and increases in taxation next April, are already going to deflate consumer spending power without the MPC having to take any action on Bank Rate to cool inflation. Then we have the Government's upcoming budget in October, which could also end up in reducing consumer spending power.
- On the other hand, consumers are sitting on around £200bn of excess savings left over from the pandemic so when will they spend this sum, in part or in total?
- There are 1.6 million people coming off furlough at the end of September; how many of those will not have jobs on 1<sup>st</sup> October and will, therefore, be available to fill labour shortages in many sectors of the economy? So, supply shortages which have been driving up both wages and costs, could reduce significantly within the next six months or so and alleviate the MPC's current concerns.
- There is a risk that there could be further nasty surprises on the Covid front, on top of the flu season this winter, which could depress economic activity.

In summary, with the high level of uncertainty prevailing on several different fronts, it is likely that these forecasts will need to be revised again soon - in line with what the new news is.

It also needs to be borne in mind that Bank Rate being cut to 0.10% was an emergency measure to deal with the Covid crisis hitting the UK in March 2020. At any time, the MPC could decide to simply take away that final emergency cut from 0.25% to 0.10% on the grounds of it no longer being warranted and as a step forward in the return to normalisation. In addition, any Bank Rate under 1% is both highly unusual and highly supportive of economic growth.

### **Forecasts for PWLB rates and gilt and treasury yields**

As the interest forecast table for PWLB certainty rates above shows, there is likely to be a steady rise over the forecast period, with some degree of uplift due to rising treasury yields in the US.

There is likely to be **exceptional volatility and unpredictability in respect of gilt yields and PWLB rates** due to the following factors: -

- How strongly will changes in gilt yields be correlated to changes in US treasury yields?



- Will the Fed take action to counter increasing treasury yields if they rise beyond a yet unspecified level?
- Would the MPC act to counter increasing gilt yields if they rise beyond a yet unspecified level?
- How strong will inflationary pressures turn out to be in both the US and the UK and so impact treasury and gilt yields?
- How will central banks implement their new average or sustainable level inflation monetary policies?
- How well will central banks manage the withdrawal of QE purchases of their national bonds i.e., without causing a panic reaction in financial markets as happened in the “taper tantrums” in the US in 2013?
- Will exceptional volatility be focused on the short or long-end of the yield curve, or both?

The forecasts are also predicated on an assumption that there is no break-up of the Eurozone or EU within our forecasting period, despite the major challenges that are looming up, and that there are no major ructions in international relations, especially between the US and China / North Korea and Iran, which have a major impact on international trade and world GDP growth.

### **Gilt and treasury yields**

Since the start of 2021, there has been a lot of volatility in gilt yields, and hence PWLB rates. During the first part of the year, US President Biden’s, and the Democratic party’s determination to push through a \$1.9trn (equivalent to 8.8% of GDP) fiscal boost for the US economy as a recovery package from the Covid pandemic was what unsettled financial markets. However, this was in addition to the \$900bn support package already passed in December 2020 under President Trump. This was then followed by additional Democratic ambition to spend further huge sums on infrastructure and an American families plan over the next decade which are caught up in Democrat / Republican haggling. Financial markets were alarmed that all this stimulus, which is much bigger than in other western economies, was happening at a time in the US when: -

1. A fast vaccination programme has enabled a rapid opening up of the economy.
2. The economy had already been growing strongly during 2021.
3. It started from a position of little spare capacity due to less severe lockdown measures than in many other countries. A combination of shortage of labour and supply bottle necks is likely to stoke inflationary pressures more in the US than in other countries.
4. And the Fed was still providing monetary stimulus through monthly QE purchases.

These factors could cause an excess of demand in the economy which could then unleash stronger and more sustained inflationary pressures in the US than in other western countries. This could then force the Fed to take much earlier action to start tapering monthly QE purchases and/or increasing the Fed rate from near zero, despite their stated policy being to target average inflation. It is notable that some Fed members have moved forward their expectation of when the first increases in the Fed rate will occur in recent Fed meetings. In addition, more recently, shortages of workers appear to be stoking underlying wage inflationary pressures which are likely to feed through into CPI inflation. A run of strong monthly jobs growth figures could be enough to meet the threshold set by the Fed of “substantial further progress towards the goal of reaching full employment”. However, the weak growth in August, (announced 3.9.21), has spiked anticipation that tapering of monthly QE purchases could start by the end of 2021. These purchases are currently acting as downward pressure on treasury yields. As the US financial markets are, by far, the biggest financial markets in the world, any trend upwards in the US will invariably impact and influence financial markets in other countries. However, during June and July, longer term yields fell sharply; even the large non-farm payroll increase in the first week of August seemed to cause the markets little concern, which is somewhat puzzling, particularly in the context of the concerns of many commentators that inflation may not be as transitory as the Fed is expecting it to be. Indeed, inflation pressures and erosion of surplus economic capacity look much

stronger in the US than in the UK. **As an average since 2011, there has been a 75% correlation between movements in 10 year treasury yields and 10 year gilt yields. This is a significant UPWARD RISK exposure to our forecasts for longer term PWLB rates. However, gilt yields and treasury yields do not always move in unison.**

There are also possible **DOWNSIDE RISKS** from the huge sums of cash that the UK populace have saved during the pandemic; when savings accounts earn little interest, it is likely that some of this cash mountain could end up being invested in bonds and so push up demand for bonds and support their prices i.e., this would help to keep their yields down. How this will interplay with the Bank of England eventually getting round to not reinvesting maturing gilts and then later selling gilts, will be interesting to keep an eye on.

**The balance of risks to medium to long term PWLB rates: -**

- There is a balance of upside risks to forecasts for medium to long term PWLB rates.

**A new era – a fundamental shift in central bank monetary policy**

One of the key results of the pandemic has been a fundamental rethinking and shift in monetary policy by major central banks like the Fed, the Bank of England and the ECB, to tolerate a higher level of inflation than in the previous two decades when inflation was the prime target to bear down on so as to stop it going above a target rate. There is now also a greater emphasis on other targets for monetary policy than just inflation, especially on ‘achieving broad and inclusive “maximum” employment in its entirety’ in the US before consideration would be given to increasing rates.

- The Fed in America has gone furthest in adopting a monetary policy based on a clear goal of allowing the inflation target to be symmetrical, (rather than a ceiling to keep under), so that inflation averages out the dips down and surges above the target rate, over an unspecified period of time.
- The Bank of England has also amended its target for monetary policy so that inflation should be ‘sustainably over 2%’ and the ECB now has a similar policy.
- **For local authorities, this means that investment interest rates and very short term PWLB rates will not be rising as quickly or as high as in previous decades when the economy recovers from a downturn and the recovery eventually runs out of spare capacity to fuel continuing expansion.**
- Labour market liberalisation since the 1970s has helped to break the wage-price spirals that fuelled high levels of inflation and has now set inflation on a lower path which makes this shift in monetary policy practicable. In addition, recent changes in flexible employment practices, the rise of the gig economy and technological changes, will all help to lower inflationary pressures.
- Governments will also be concerned to see interest rates stay lower as every rise in central rates will add to the cost of vastly expanded levels of national debt; (in the UK this is £21bn for each 1% rise in rates). On the other hand, higher levels of inflation will help to erode the real value of total public debt.

## **4. Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy Update**

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement, (TMSS), for 2021/22 was approved by this Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021.

- There are no policy changes to the TMSS; the details in this report update the position in the light of the updated economic position and budgetary changes already approved.

## 5. The Council's Capital Position (Prudential Indicators)

This part of the report is structured to update:

- The Council's capital expenditure plans;
- How these plans are being financed;
- The impact of the changes in the capital expenditure plans on the prudential indicators and the underlying need to borrow; and
- Compliance with the limits in place for borrowing activity.

## 5.1 Prudential Indicator for Capital Expenditure

This table shows the revised estimates for capital expenditure and the changes since the capital programme was agreed at the Budget.

<b>Capital Expenditure by Service</b>	<b>2021/22 Original Estimate £m</b>	<b>Current Position  £m</b>	<b>2021/22 Revised Estimate £m</b>
Total capital expenditure	45.8	14.2	40.5

The current position is lower than expected, due to delays in major projects. The revised estimate, is likely to reduce after further major project re-profiling.

## 5.2 Changes to the Financing of the Capital Programme

The table below draws together the main strategy elements of the capital expenditure plans (above), highlighting the original supported and unsupported elements of the capital programme, and the expected financing arrangements of this capital expenditure. The borrowing element of the table increases the underlying indebtedness of the Council by way of the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), although this will be reduced in part by revenue charges for the repayment of debt (the Minimum Revenue Provision). This direct borrowing need may also be supplemented by maturing debt and other treasury requirements.

<b>Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>2021/22 Original Estimate £m</b>		<b>2021/22 Revised Estimate £m</b>
<b>Total capital expenditure</b>	<b>45.8</b>		<b>40.5</b>
<b>Financed by:</b>			
Capital receipts	(7.2)		(7.2)
Capital grants	(3.4)		(3.4)
Capital reserves			
Revenue	(0.2)		(0.2)
<b>Total financing</b>	<b>(10.8)</b>		<b>(10.8)</b>
<b>Borrowing requirement</b>	<b>35.0</b>		<b>29.7</b>

## 5.3 Changes to the Prudential Indicators for the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), External Debt and the Operational Boundary

The table below shows the CFR, which is the underlying external need to incur borrowing for a capital purpose. It also shows the expected debt position over the period, which is termed the Operational Boundary.

### Prudential Indicator – Capital Financing Requirement

We are on target to achieve the original forecast Capital Financing Requirement (*or explain any significant changes*).

## Prudential Indicator – the Operational Boundary for external debt

	2021/22 Original Estimate £m		2021/22 Revised Estimate £m
<b>Prudential Indicator – Capital Financing Requirement</b>			
<b>Total CFR</b>	42.2		35.8
<b>Net movement in CFR</b>	<b>35.0</b>		<b>29.7</b>
<b>Prudential Indicator – the Operational Boundary for external debt</b>			
Borrowing	40.0		40.0
Other long term liabilities*	10.0		10.0
<b>Total debt (year end position)</b>	<b>50.0</b>		<b>50.0</b>

\* On balance sheet PFI schemes and finance leases etc.

### 5.4 Limits to Borrowing Activity

The first key control over the treasury activity is a prudential indicator to ensure that over the medium term, net borrowing (borrowings less investments) will only be for a capital purpose\*. **Gross external borrowing** should not, except in the short term, exceed the total of CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for 2021/22 and next two financial years. This allows some flexibility for limited early borrowing for future years. The Council has approved a policy for borrowing in advance of need which will be adhered to if this proves prudent.

\* The management of transferred debt should be excluded from net borrowing.

	2021/22 Original Estimate £m		2021/22 Revised Estimate £m
Borrowing	26.0		29.7
Other long term liabilities*	-		-
<b>Total debt</b>	<b>26.0</b>		<b>29.7</b>
<b>CFR* (year end position)</b>	<b>42.2</b>		<b>35.8</b>

\* Includes on balance sheet PFI schemes and finance leases etc.

\*\* Estimated £15m internal borrowing.

A further prudential indicator controls the overall level of borrowing. This is **the Authorised Limit** which represents the limit beyond which borrowing is prohibited and needs to be set and revised by Members. It reflects the level of borrowing which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term. It is the expected maximum borrowing need with some headroom for unexpected movements. This is the statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003.

Authorised limit for external debt	2021/22 Original Indicator £m		2021/22 Revised Indicator £m
Borrowing	150.0		150.0
Other long term liabilities*	10.0		10.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>160.0</b>		<b>160.0</b>

\* Includes on balance sheet PFI schemes and finance leases etc.

The authorised borrowing level was set prior to the change in the PWLB borrowing regulations and when there was a different proposal for the Old River Lane project. As per the expenditure figures quoted above, we are not due to borrow at the original estimated high levels and the limit will be reduced in the 2022/23 Treasury Management Strategy.

## 6. Borrowing

The Council's estimated capital financing requirement (CFR) for 2021/22 is £35.8m. The CFR denotes the Council's underlying need to borrow for capital purposes. If the CFR is positive the Council may borrow from the PWLB or the market (external borrowing), or from internal balances on a temporary basis (internal borrowing). The balance of external and internal borrowing is generally driven by market conditions. Table 5.4 shows the Council has estimated borrowings, at year end of £29.7m and is looking to utilise £15m of cash flow funds in lieu of borrowing. This is a prudent and cost-effective approach in the current economic climate but will require ongoing monitoring in the event that any upside risk to gilt yields prevails.

Due to the overall financial position and the underlying need to borrow for capital purposes (the CFR), no new external borrowing has been undertaken, as we are currently still utilising cashflow. The capital programme is being kept under regular review due to the effects of coronavirus and shortages of materials and labour. Our borrowing strategy will, therefore, also be regularly reviewed and then revised, if necessary, in order to achieve optimum value and risk exposure in the long-term.

It is anticipated that external borrowing will be undertaken during this financial year.

### PWLB maturity certainty rates (gilts plus 80bps) year to date to 30th September 2021

(See graphs and table provided in Appendix1)

Gilt yields and PWLB rates were on a falling trend between May and August. However, they rose sharply towards the end of September.

The 50 year PWLB target certainty rate for new long-term borrowing started 2021/22 at 1.90%, rose to 2.00% in May, fell to 1.70% in August and returned to 2.00% at the end of September after the MPC meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> September.

- The current PWLB rates are set as margins over gilt yields as follows: -.
  - **PWLB Standard Rate** is gilt plus 100 basis points (G+100bps)
  - **PWLB Certainty Rate** is gilt plus 80 basis points (G+80bps)
  - **PWLB HRA Standard Rate** is gilt plus 100 basis points (G+100bps)
  - **PWLB HRA Certainty Rate** is gilt plus 80bps (G+80bps)
  - **Local Infrastructure Rate** is gilt plus 60bps (G+60bps)

## 7. Debt Rescheduling

Debt rescheduling opportunities have been very limited in the current economic climate and following the various increases in the margins added to gilt yields which have impacted PWLB new borrowing rates since October 2010. No debt rescheduling has therefore been undertaken to date in the current financial year.

## 8. Compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits

It is a statutory duty for the Council to determine and keep under review the affordable borrowing limits. During the half year ended 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021, the Council has operated within the treasury and prudential indicators set out in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2021/22. The Director of Finance reports that no difficulties are envisaged for the current or future years in complying with these indicators.

All treasury management operations have also been conducted in full compliance with the Council's Treasury Management Practices.

## 9. Annual investment strategy

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) for 2021/22, which includes the Annual Investment Strategy, was approved by the Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021. In accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice, it sets out the Council's investment priorities as being:

- Security of capital
- Liquidity
- Yield

The Council will aim to achieve the optimum return (yield) on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity and with the Council's risk appetite. In the current economic climate it is considered appropriate to keep investments short term to cover cash flow needs, but also to seek out value available in periods up to 12 months with high credit rated financial institutions, using the Link suggested creditworthiness approach, including a minimum sovereign credit rating and Credit Default Swap (CDS) overlay information.

As shown by the interest rate forecasts in section 3.2, it is now impossible to earn the level of interest rates commonly seen in previous decades as all short-term money market investment rates have only risen weakly since Bank Rate was cut to 0.10% in March 2020 until the MPC meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2021 when 6 and 12 month rates rose in anticipation of Bank Rate going up in 2022. Given this environment and the fact that Bank Rate may only rise marginally, or not at all, before mid-2023, investment returns are expected to remain low.

### **Creditworthiness.**

Significant levels of downgrades to Short and Long Term credit ratings have not materialised since the crisis in March 2020. In the main, where they did change, any alterations were limited to Outlooks. However, as economies are beginning to reopen, there have been some instances of previous lowering of Outlooks being reversed.

### **Investment Counterparty criteria**

The current investment counterparty criteria selection approved in the TMSS is meeting the requirement of the treasury management function OR *insert any changes to the criteria you wish to make, with supporting criteria.*

### CDS prices

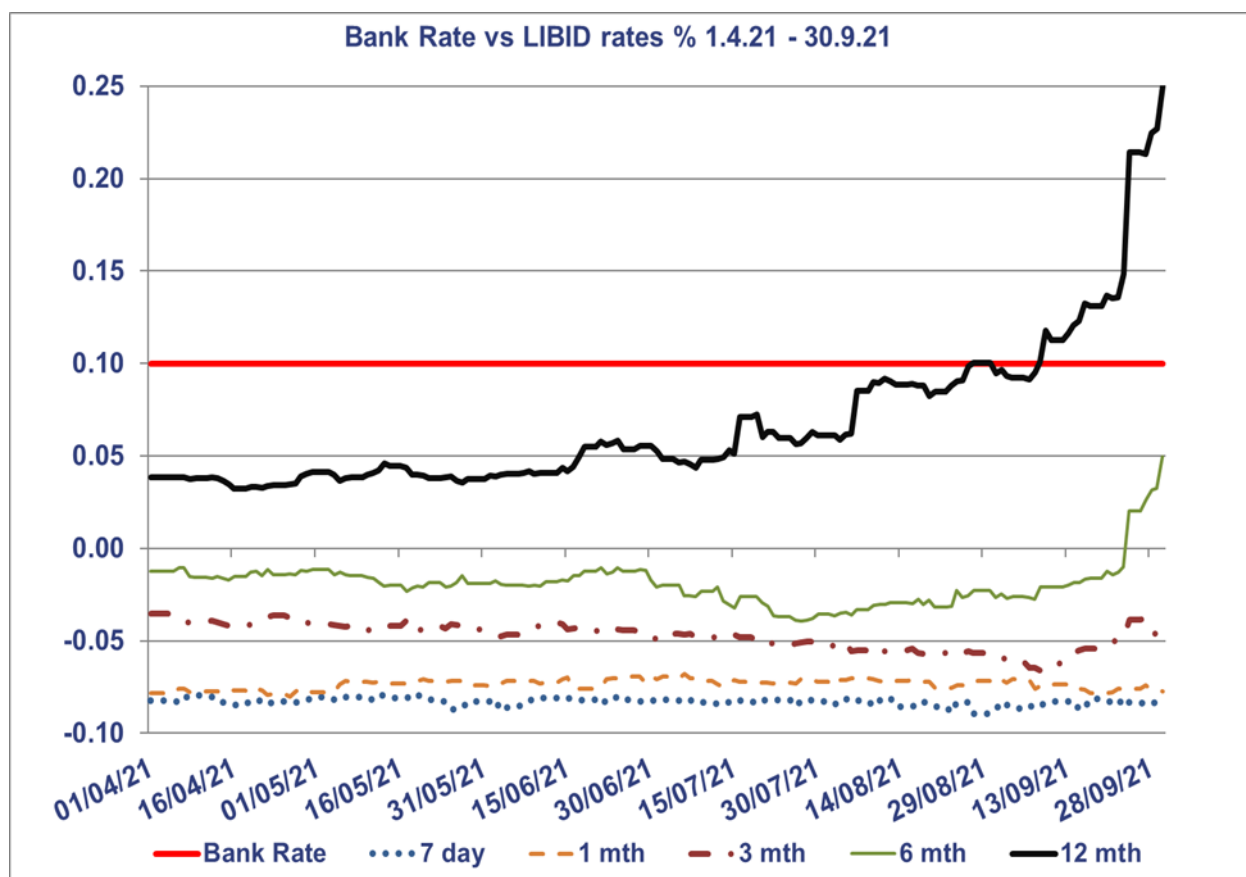
Although CDS prices (these are market indicators of credit risk) for banks (including those from the UK) spiked at the outset of the pandemic in 2020, they have subsequently returned to near pre-pandemic levels. **However, sentiment can easily shift, so it remains important to undertake continual monitoring of all aspects of risk and return in the current circumstances.**

### Investment balances

The average level of funds available for investment purposes during the quarter was **£15.4m**. These funds were available on a temporary basis, and the level of funds available was mainly dependent on the timing of precept payments, receipt of grants and progress on the capital programme. The Council holds **£20.0m** core cash balances for investment purposes (i.e. funds available for more than one year).

### Investment rates during half year ended 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021

As highlighted earlier in this report, the levels shown below use the traditional market method for calculating LIBID rates – i.e., LIBOR – 0.125%. Given the ultra-low LIBOR levels this year, this produces negative rates across some periods.





	Bank Rate	7 day	1 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth
High	0.10	-0.08	-0.07	-0.04	0.05	0.25
High Date	01/04/2021	09/04/2021	06/07/2021	01/04/2021	30/09/2021	30/09/2021
Low	0.10	-0.09	-0.08	-0.07	-0.04	0.03
Low Date	01/04/2021	27/08/2021	26/04/2021	08/09/2021	27/07/2021	16/04/2021
Average	0.10	-0.08	-0.07	-0.05	-0.02	0.07
Spread	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.09	0.22

### Investment performance year to date as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021

*(Please see our note in section 3.2 underneath the table, on the current divergence between the calculation of LIBID rates using market convention and average rates actually being earned by local authorities.)*

Period	LIBID benchmark return
7 day	-0.08%
1 month	-0.07%
3 month	-0.05%
6 month	-0.02%
12 month	0.07%

The Council has kept its cashflow investments liquid, investing for no longer than 3 months but has still outperformed the LIBID benchmark, achieving a positive average return of 0.05%. The Council's budgeted investment return for 2021/22 is £750k, which includes returns from our property funds and commercial loans. Performance for the year is currently estimated to return £800k, but if property funds continue to perform well, this figure could be higher.

### Fund investments

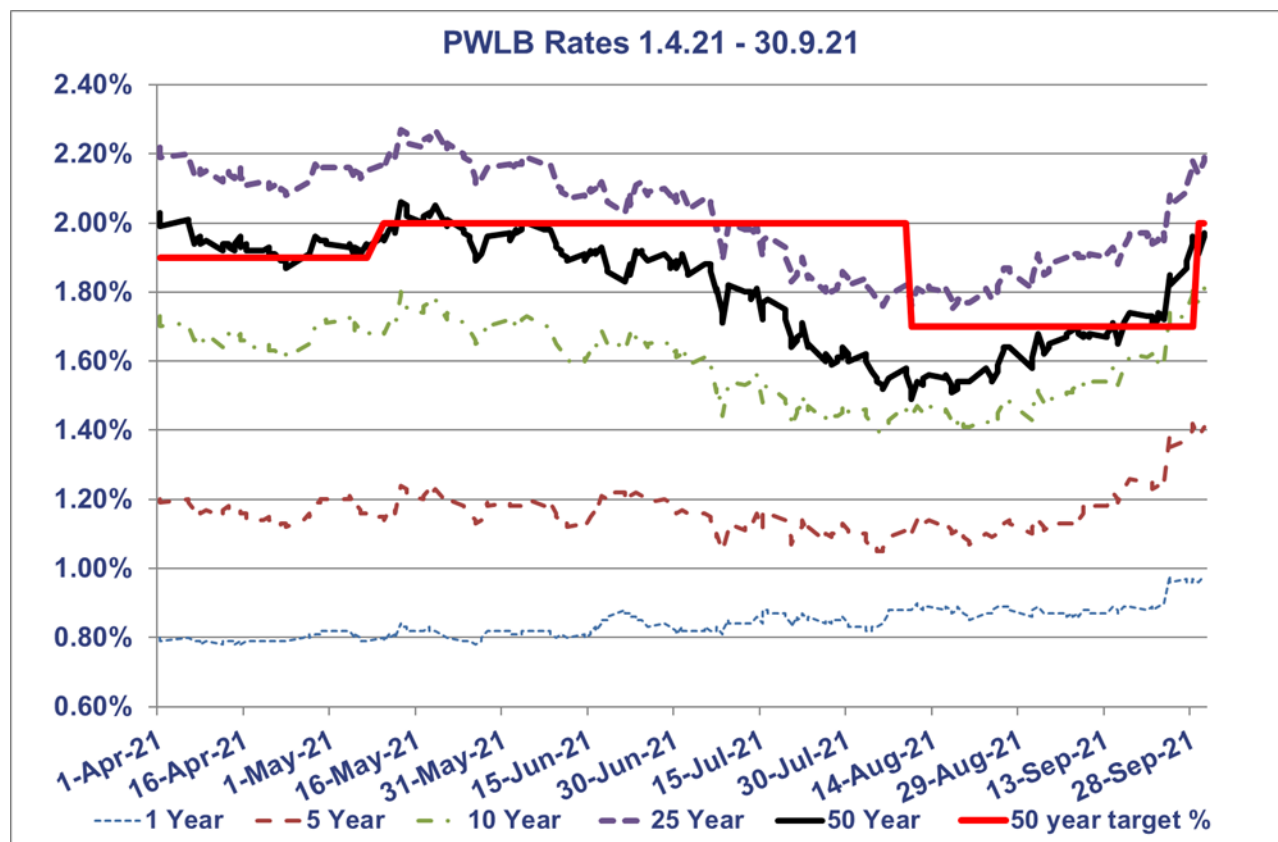
- Property Funds have continued to perform well, under COVID, with the current average, net rate of return as 3.69% and good capital appreciation.

### Approved limits

Officers can confirm that the approved limits within the Annual Investment Strategy were not breached during the period ended 30th September 2021.

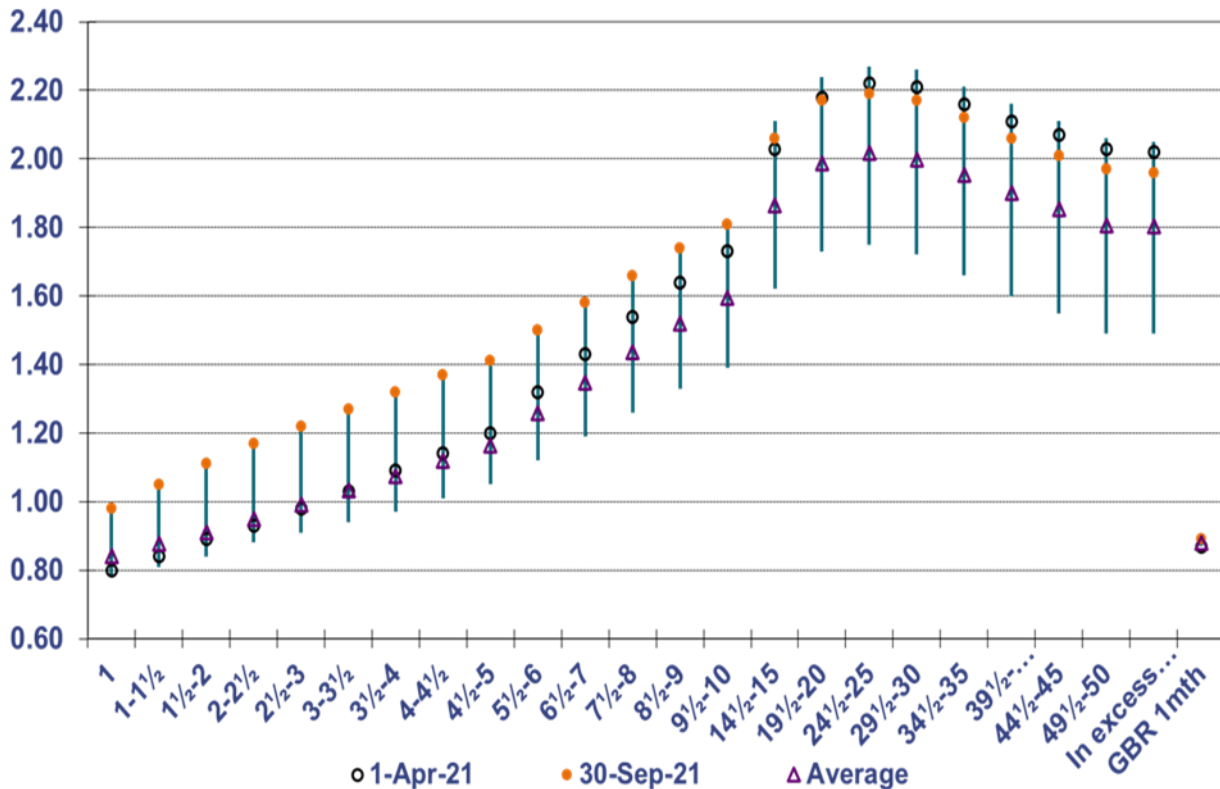
## APPENDIX 1: Borrowing rates

The following graph and tables are optional for clients to use if they wish.



	1 Year	5 Year	10 Year	25 Year	50 Year
<b>Low</b>	0.78%	1.05%	1.39%	1.75%	1.49%
<b>Date</b>	08/04/2021	08/07/2021	05/08/2021	17/08/2021	10/08/2021
<b>High</b>	0.98%	1.42%	1.81%	2.27%	2.06%
<b>Date</b>	24/09/2021	28/09/2021	28/09/2021	13/05/2021	13/05/2021
<b>Average</b>	0.84%	1.16%	1.60%	2.02%	1.81%
<b>Spread</b>	0.20%	0.37%	0.42%	0.52%	0.57%

PWLB Certainty Rate Variations 1.4.21 to 30.9.2021



**PWLB RATES.** There was much speculation during the **second half of 2019** that bond markets were in a bubble which was driving bond prices up and yields down to historically very low levels. The context for that was heightened expectations that the US could have been heading for a recession in 2020. In addition, there were growing expectations of a downturn in world economic growth, especially due to fears around the impact of the trade war between the US and China, together with inflation generally at low levels in most countries and expected to remain subdued. Combined, these conditions were conducive to very low bond yields. While inflation targeting by the major central banks has been successful over the last 30 years in lowering inflation expectations, the real equilibrium rate for central rates has fallen considerably due to the high level of borrowing by consumers. This means that central banks do not need to raise rates as much now to have a major impact on consumer spending, inflation, etc. The consequence of this has been **the gradual lowering of the overall level of interest rates and bond yields in financial markets.** Over the year prior to the coronavirus crisis, this resulted in many bond yields up to 10 years turning negative in the Eurozone. In addition, there was, at times, an inversion of bond yields in the US whereby 10 year yields fell below shorter-term yields. In the past, this has been a precursor of a recession.

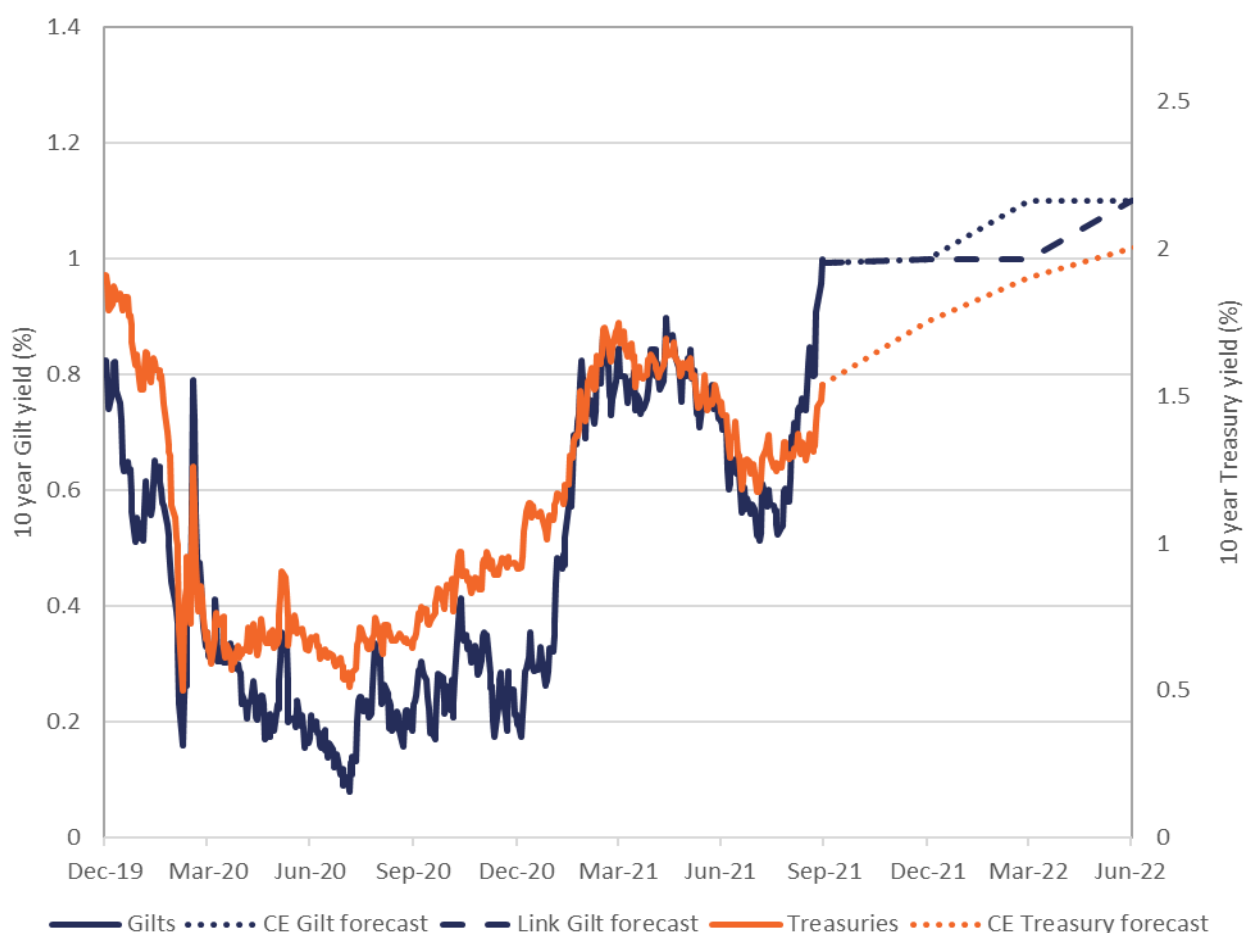
**Gilt yields had, therefore, already been on a generally falling trend up until the coronavirus crisis hit western economies during March 2020 which caused gilt yields to spike up.** However, yields then fell sharply in response to major western central banks taking rapid policy action to deal with excessive stress in financial markets during March and starting massive quantitative easing driven purchases of government bonds: these actions also acted to put downward pressure on government bond yields at a time when there was a huge and quick expansion of government expenditure financed by issuing government bonds. Such unprecedented levels of issuance in "normal" times would have caused bond yields to rise sharply.

**At the start of January 2021,** all gilt yields from 1 to 8 years were negative: however, since then all gilt yields have become positive and rose sharply during the spring, especially in medium and longer-term

periods, until starting a significant decline since May which was then sharply reversed in August / September. Repeated assurances by the Fed in the US, and by other major world central banks, that inflation would spike up after Covid restrictions were abolished, but would only be transitory, allayed investor fears until August / September when high inflation was again seen as a growing danger and both central banks in the US and UK gave indications that monetary policy tightening was now on the horizon. **There is considerable concern that the US Fed is taking a too laid-back view that inflation pressures in the US are purely transitory and that they will subside without the need for the Fed to take significant action to tighten monetary policy. Lack of spare economic capacity and rising inflationary pressures are viewed as being much greater dangers in the US than in the UK. This could mean that rates will end up rising faster and further in the US than in the UK if inflationary pressures were to escalate; the consequent increases in treasury yields could well spill over to cause (lesser) increases in gilt yields.**

### Correlation between 10 year US treasury yield and 10 year gilt yield

The Link Group forecasts have included a risk of a 75% correlation between movements in US treasury yields and gilt yields over 10 years since 2011. As US treasury yields are expected to rise faster and further than UK gilt yields, there is an upside risk to forecasts for gilt yields due to this correlation. The graph below shows actual movements in both 10 year yields and forecasts by Link (gilt only) and Capital Economics.



- Yields on 10 year Gilts and Treasuries initially both fell during the first quarter of 2020, as signs emerged that the COVID-19 virus would become a global pandemic which would lead to a sharp downturn in economic growth.

- The correlation between 10 year yields in the UK and the US lessened during the second half of 2020 when US yields displayed an increasing tendency to rise, whilst UK yields remained more range bound. This divergence was consistent with the relatively better economic performance registered by the US during the pandemic, which was aided by historically low US business inventory levels needing to be rebuilt.
- During late 2020 gilt yields rose significantly, reflecting optimism that the fast vaccine roll-out in the UK would support a strong economic recovery during 2021.
- During September 2021, treasury yields rose sharply in response to growing investor concerns around high inflation and indications from the Fed that tapering of quantitative easing purchases of treasuries are likely to occur in the near future. Gilts also rose sharply, as did investor concerns around a sharp increase in inflation in the UK which is now likely to go over 4%. In addition, the MPC meeting on 23rd September flagged up major concerns around the strength of inflation which may require Bank Rate to go up much faster than had previously been expected.

## APPENDIX 4: Approved countries for investments as at 30th September 2021

*Based on lowest available rating*

AAA

- Australia
- Denmark
- Germany
- Luxembourg
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Singapore
- Sweden
- Switzerland

AA+

- Canada
- Finland
- U.S.A.

AA

- Abu Dhabi (UAE)
- France

AA-

- Belgium
- Hong Kong
- Qatar
- **U.K.**

22 September 2021

To: Mr Cassidy, Chief Executive  
East Hertfordshire District Council

Copied to: Mr Linnett, S151 Officer  
Councillor Pope, Chair of Audit Committee or equivalent

Dear Mr Cassidy,

### **Invitation to opt into the national scheme for auditor appointments from April 2023**

I want to ensure that you are aware the external auditor for the audit of your accounts for 2023/24 has to be appointed before the end of December 2022. That may seem a long way away but, as your organisation has a choice about how to make that appointment, your decision-making process needs to begin soon.

We are pleased that the Secretary of State has confirmed PSAA in the role of the appointing person for eligible principal bodies for the period commencing April 2023. Joining PSAA's national scheme for auditor appointments is one of the choices available to your organisation.

In June 2021 we issued a draft prospectus and invited your views and comments on our early thinking on the development of the national scheme for the next period. Feedback from the sector has been extremely helpful and has enabled us to refine our proposals which are now set out in the [scheme prospectus](#) and our [procurement strategy](#). Both documents can be downloaded from our website which also contains a range of useful information that you may find helpful.

The national scheme timetable for appointing auditors from 2023/24 means we now need to issue a formal invitation to you to opt into these arrangements. In order to meet the requirements of the relevant regulations, we also attach a form of acceptance of our invitation which you must use if your organisation decides to join the national scheme. We have specified the five consecutive financial years beginning 1 April 2023 as the compulsory appointing period for the purposes of the regulations which govern the national scheme.

Given the very challenging local audit market, we believe that eligible bodies will be best served by opting to join the scheme and have attached a short summary of why we believe that is the best solution both for individual bodies and the sector as a whole.

I would like to highlight three matters to you:

1. if you opt to join the national scheme, we need to receive your formal acceptance of this invitation by Friday 11 March 2022;

2. the relevant regulations require that, except for a body that is a corporation sole (e.g. a police and crime commissioner), the decision to accept our invitation and to opt in must be made by the members of the authority meeting as a whole e.g. Full Council or equivalent. We appreciate this will need to be built into your decision-making timetable. We have deliberately set a generous timescale for bodies to make opt in decisions (24 weeks compared to the statutory minimum of 8 weeks) to ensure that all eligible bodies have sufficient time to comply with this requirement; and
3. if you decide not to accept the invitation to opt in by the closing date, you may subsequently make a request to opt in, but only after 1 April 2023. We are required to consider such requests and agree to them unless there are reasonable grounds for their refusal. PSAA must consider a request as the appointing person in accordance with the Regulations. The Regulations allow us to recover our reasonable costs for making arrangements to appoint a local auditor in these circumstances, for example if we need to embark on a further procurement or enter into further discussions with our contracted firms.

If you have any other questions not covered by our information, do not hesitate to contact us by email at [ap2@psaa.co.uk](mailto:ap2@psaa.co.uk). We also publish answers to [frequently asked questions](#) on our website.

If you would like to discuss a particular issue with us, please send an email also to [ap2@psaa.co.uk](mailto:ap2@psaa.co.uk), and we will respond to you.

Yours sincerely

Tony Crawley  
Chief Executive

Encl: Summary of the national scheme



## Why accepting the national scheme opt-in invitation is the best solution

### Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA)

We are a not-for-profit, independent company limited by guarantee incorporated by the Local Government Association in August 2014.

We have the support of the LGA, which in 2014 worked to secure the option for principal local government and police bodies to appoint auditors through a dedicated sector-led national body.

We have the support of Government; MHCLG's Spring statement confirmed our appointment because of our "strong technical expertise and the proactive work they have done to help to identify improvements that can be made to the process".

We are an active member of the new Local Audit Liaison Committee, chaired by MHCLG and attended by key local audit stakeholders, enabling us to feed in body and audit perspectives to decisions about changes to the local audit framework, and the need to address timeliness through actions across the system.

We conduct research to raise awareness of local audit issues, and work with MHCLG and other stakeholders to enable changes arising from Sir Tony Redmond's review, such as more flexible fee setting and a timelier basis to set scale fees.

We have established an advisory panel, which meets three times per year. Its membership is drawn from relevant representative groups of local government and police bodies, to act as a sounding board for our scheme and to enable us to hear your views on the design and operation of the scheme.

### The national scheme for appointing local auditors

In July 2016, the Secretary of State specified PSAA as an appointing person for principal local government and police bodies for audits from 2018/19, under the provisions of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015. Acting in accordance with this role PSAA is responsible for appointing an auditor and setting scales of fees for relevant principal authorities that have chosen to opt into its national scheme. 98% of eligible bodies made the choice to opt-in for the five-year period commencing in April 2018.

We will appoint an auditor for all opted-in bodies for each of the five financial years beginning from 1 April 2023.

We aim for all opted-in bodies to receive an audit service of the required quality at a realistic market price and to support the drive towards a long term competitive and more sustainable market for local audit. The focus of our quality assessment will include resourcing capacity and capability including sector knowledge, and client relationship management and communication.

### What the appointing person scheme from 2023 will offer

We believe that a sector-led, collaborative, national scheme stands out as the best option for all eligible bodies, offering the best value for money and assuring the independence of the auditor appointment.

The national scheme from 2023 will build on the range of benefits already available for members:

- transparent and independent auditor appointment via a third party;
- the best opportunity to secure the appointment of a qualified, registered auditor;
- appointment, if possible, of the same auditors to bodies involved in significant collaboration/joint working initiatives, if the parties believe that it will enhance efficiency;
- on-going management of any independence issues which may arise;
- access to a specialist PSAA team with significant experience of working within the context of the relevant regulations to appoint auditors, managing contracts with audit firms, and setting and determining audit fees;
- a value for money offer based on minimising PSAA costs and distribution of any surpluses to scheme members - in 2019 we returned a total £3.5million to relevant bodies and more recently we announced a further distribution of £5.6m in August 2021;
- collective efficiency savings for the sector through undertaking one major procurement as opposed to a multiplicity of smaller procurements;
- avoids the necessity for local bodies to establish an auditor panel and undertake an auditor procurement, enabling time and resources to be deployed on other pressing priorities;
- updates from PSAA to Section 151 officers and Audit Committee Chairs on a range of local audit related matters to inform and support effective auditor-audited body relationships; and
- concerted efforts to work with other stakeholders to develop a more sustainable local audit market.

We are committed to keep developing our scheme, taking into account feedback from scheme members, suppliers and other stakeholders, and learning from the collective post-2018 experience. This work is ongoing, and we have taken a number of initiatives to improve the operation of the scheme for the benefit of all parties.

Importantly we have listened to your feedback to our recent consultation, and our response is reflected in [the scheme prospectus](#).

## **Opting in**

The closing date for opting in is 11 March 2022. We have allowed more than the minimum eight-week notice period required, because the formal approval process for most eligible bodies is a decision made by the members of the authority meeting as a whole [Full Council or equivalent], except police and crime commissioners who are able to make their own decision.

We will confirm receipt of all opt-in notices. A full list of eligible bodies that opt in will be published on our website. Once we have received an opt-in notice, we will write to you to request information on any joint working arrangements relevant to your auditor appointment, and any potential independence matters which may need to be taken into consideration when appointing your auditor.

## **Local Government Reorganisation**

We are aware that reorganisations in the local government areas of Cumbria, Somerset, and North Yorkshire were announced in July 2021. Subject to parliamentary approval shadow elections will take place in May 2022 for the new Councils to become established from 1 April 2023. Newly established local government bodies have the right to opt into PSAA's scheme under Regulation 10 of the Appointing Person Regulations 2015. These Regulations also set out that a local government body that ceases to exist is automatically removed from the scheme.

If for any reason there is any uncertainty that reorganisations will take place or meet the current timetable, we would suggest that the current eligible bodies confirm their acceptance to opt in to avoid the requirement to have to make local arrangements should the reorganisation be delayed.

## **Next Steps**

We expect to formally commence the procurement of audit services in early February 2022. At that time our procurement documentation will be available for opted-in bodies to view through our e-tendering platform.

Our recent webinars to support our consultation proved to be popular, and we will be running a series of webinars covering specific areas of our work and our progress to prepare for the second appointing period. Details can be found on [our website](#) and in [the scheme prospectus](#).

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# East Herts: A Place to Grow

## DRAFT Corporate Plan Refresh for 2022/ 2023

The Council's Corporate Plan (2020/21 – 2023/24) was agreed in January 2020 and sets out a range of actions and objectives against 4 overall, 'SEED' priorities. Whilst the aspirations in that plan are still relevant Covid-19 has changed local, national and global priorities for public service delivery and impacted how and where East Herts Council is deploying its resources. As we move towards Covid recovery this refreshed plan outlines amended objectives for the 2022/ 2023 year which better reflect the needs of the district in this context.

Each of the 'one page plans' for the 4 themes have been updated. New priorities have been included where relevant and actions which have either been completed or are now less relevant compared to one year ago have been removed. Please note that for each theme there is a wider set of actions and measures which sit underneath the one page plan.



### ***Sustainability at the heart of everything we do 2022/ 2023***

The council's work towards achieving its nine commitments for tackling climate change has continued at pace in 2021/22. Over the last 12 months the council has completed the redevelopment of Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre, minimising the building's carbon emissions by installing solar PV panels and a combined heat and power system, commissioned the installation of 59 additional e-vehicle chargers in council car parks (which will be ready to use by summer 2022) and run a food waste minimisation publicity scheme.

In 2022/23 we will publish an overarching Climate Change Strategy which will pull together how we are working with key partners in the county and beyond to promote sustainability in a cost effective way. In addition, we will focus on supporting residents to make positive changes to their behaviour.

Strategy/ objectives	Actions/ key projects
1. We will make changes to The Council's own premises, people and services we deliver	1a. Switch the council's fleet of diesel vans to electric vehicles. 1b. Publish a Climate Change Strategy including a proposed route map to the council's services being carbon neutral by 2030. 1c. Deliver sustainability upgrades at the remodelled Hartham Leisure Centre in Hertford.
2. Use our regulatory powers to promote action by others	2a. Publish revised Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document covering new development, including provision for e-v charging points at new residential properties and locations. 2b. Incorporate the findings of the Hertfordshire-wide Biodiversity Baseline Study into planning guidance. 2c. Implement stricter taxi emission requirements for all new vehicle applications and renewal applications.
3. Influence and encourage others to do things	3a. In partnership, seek external funding to introduce e-v chargers in more rural locations in the district. 3b. Promote domestic energy efficiency improvements supported by the national Local Authority Delivery 2 scheme and the domestic energy efficiency assessment. 3c. Work with Hertfordshire County Council and community groups to promote or directly undertake tree planting as part of the national Queen's Green Canopy initiative

### ***Enabling our communities 2022/ 2023***

Over the past 12 months we have kept up momentum on delivery of our capital programme demonstrating commitment to the wellbeing of our communities. This includes the opening of our brand new £30m leisure centre at Grange Paddocks in Bishop's Stortford and working with community groups to co-design and open the new play area at Hartham Common. The Council has also created a new portfolio for Communities and adopted an Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy in the summer of 2021 highlighting the need to understand and address the disproportionate impact that challenges like Covid has had in East Herts.

In a survey residents informed us that parks and open spaces are the service that they are most satisfied with and a major priority for 2022/23 will be the delivery of a new strategy reviewing use of these assets and ensuring their public health and leisure benefits are maximised where possible. We will also continue to focus on delivering our capital programme, whilst still delivering services to our most vulnerable residents. This will of course include supporting partners with Covid recovery efforts and rolling out the national vaccination programme.

<b>Strategy/ objectives</b>	<b>Actions/ key projects</b>
1. We will invest in our places	1a. Complete refurbishment of Hartham Leisure Centre 1b. Deliver £20m investment in Hertford Theatre 1c. Deliver the Castle Park project 1d. Deliver the Cultural Strategy
2. We will ensure all voices in the community are heard	2a. Grow our digital communications channels (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and Linked in) 2b. Deliver the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
3. We will support our vulnerable residents	3a. Further establish the East Herts Healthy Hub to promote access to health, social, wellbeing advice and support 3b. Provide specialist support to those facing or recovering from homelessness
4. Keeping communities safe	4a. Support national vaccination roll out with East Herts assets where possible 4b. Support national and county led communications campaigns on vaccine roll out and vaccine hesitancy 4b. Provide regulatory advice and support to businesses with post Covid recovery

### ***Encouraging economic growth 2022/ 2023***

Since the start of the pandemic we have given out £53m in grants to businesses affected by Covid. Our High Streets are under enormous pressure to recover and remain relevant and with changing patterns of workplace distribution we will face additional pressure on viability of commercial development. However this may also bring opportunities for the district and the 34 businesses that have opened up new premises in the last 6 months with our support indicates a healthy demand for economic growth.

Over 2022/23 we will continue to focus on delivery of major projects such as Old River Lane and our European Funded Launchpad 2 business support programme. Working in partnership with the County Council, Town Councils, police and businesses will be an important means of ensuring residents feel comfortable and confident when visiting their town centres. Continuing to work with developers on delivery of growth sites across the district and supporting communities with neighbourhood planning will be key to ensuring East Herts remains a vibrant place to live.

<b>Strategy/ objectives</b>	<b>Action/ key projects</b>
1. We will continue to support businesses and business growth	1a. Deliver the match funded ERDF Launchpad 2 project and continue to grow the Launchpad in Bishop's Stortford and Ware 1b. Submit a plan for East Hert's share of UK Shared Prosperity Fund to support economic growth in the district
2. We will support town centres with post Covid recovery	2a. Learning from the 20/21 pilot work in Hertford on developing a town centre vision and action plan in conjunction with stakeholders, support similar approaches in other towns
3. We will ensure development is viable	3a. Support the Herts Growth Board with presenting a case for additional infrastructure investment in Hertfordshire 3b. Complete construction of the multi-story car park on the Old River Lane site 3c. Deliver an SPD and Masterplan for the Old River Lane site 3d. Delivery of the strategic sites allocated in the District Plan in accordance with the housing trajectory.



### ***Digital by default 2022/ 2023***

Global changes in behaviour following the pandemic have accelerated the take up of digital services and this has been evident with the 92.5% take up of green waste by the website, 100% take up of business grant applications via webform and the increasing use of our appointment booking and web chat software. We will build on this impetus to further enhance the digital offer to residents and businesses aswell as internally to all our employees and elected representatives.

The Transforming East Herts programme is designed to save the council £1m over the next 3 years by automating more processes, streamlining the customer experience, being more commercial in our mindset and more creative with our office space and ways of working.

<b>Strategy/ objectives</b>	<b>Action/ key projects</b>
1. We will encourage greater use of the website and self-service for customers	1a. Expand use of the appointment booking system for customers who need to see us 1b. Expand use of the chatbot to help customers resolve their queries
2. We will work with partners to ensure our communities are digitally enabled	2a. Ensure fibre to the premise (FTTP) is provided on all new developments 2b. Support joint delivery of Harlow and Gilston Garden Town as a fully sustainable and digital 'place' 2c. Support the Digital Innovation Zone to lobby for investment in our towns and villages
3. Deliver the Transforming East Herts programme	3a. Creating modern workspaces 3b. Creating a modern workforce through new blended working arrangements 3c. Developing a more commercial approach to service delivery 3d. Investing in modern technology and software

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Objective	Action	Lead	By when	Relevant indicators/ measures/ targets	Reporting frequency	Portfolio holder	NOTES - changes for 22/23 corporate plan refresh
ENABLING COMMUNITIES THEME							
We will invest in our places	Complete construction of a refurbished and extended Hartham Leisure Centre	Rob Allwood	05/06/23	Practical Completion (PC)	Quarterly	Eric Buckmaster	
	Deliver the Castle Park Heritage Lottery Funded project (subject of funding)	Ian Sharratt	01/09/23	Practical Completion (PC)	Quarterly	Eric Buckmaster	Subject to meeting funding gap - negotiations currently taking place.
	Deliver £20m investment in Hertford Theatre (subject to funding)	Jess Khanom-metaman	30/11/23	Practical Completion (PC)	Quarterly	Eric Buckmaster	Subject to Council decision
	Refurbishment of Pinehurst Community Centre	Geoff Hayden	31/03/22		Annual	Geoffrey Williamson	
	Delivery of 3G pitch at Grange Paddocks	Rob Allwood	01/09/22	Practical Completion (PC)	Annual	Eric Buckmaster	New action following completion of Grange Paddocks (planning permission approved)
	Deliver the cultural strategy	Nick Phipps & Mehola Ray	31/03/23		Annual	Eric Buckmaster	
	Respond to fly-tipping in a timely manner	Chloe Hipwood	31/03/23	Fly-tips, time taken for removal	Quarterly	Graham McAndrew	
	Maintain standards of cleanliness in our streets	Chloe Hipwood	31/03/23	Inspector's grading of Urabser street cleaning	Quarterly	Graham McAndrew	
	Deliver the community grants scheme	Claire Pullen	31/03/23	Number of grants given	Annual	Suzanne Rutland-Bardhy	
	Maintain the register of community assets (Assets of Community Value)	Esther Piper	31/03/23		Annual	Geoffrey Williamson	
	Continue to support the newly constituted charitable incorporated organisation overseeing the repurposing of a council allotment site in to a community garden and monitor impact of initiative.	Claire Pullen	31/03/22		Bi-annual	Eric Buckmaster	
	Grow the East Herts Lottery	Claire Pullen	31/03/22	Number of players	Annual	Geoffrey Williamson	
				Number of groups signed up to take part			
	Supporting the crowdfunding platform for community causes	Claire Pullen	31/03/22	Income raised for good causes (£)	Annual	Geoffrey Williamson	
				Number of groups who have created a campaign			
We will ensure all voices in the community are heard	Grow our digital communications channels	Lindsay Creed	31/03/23	Amount pledged (£)	Quarterly	George Cutting	
				Number of Twitter followers			
				Number of LinkedIn followers			
				Number of Insta followers			
				Trust favourability score			
				Number of Facebook likes			
				Number of email subscribers to Network			
	Evaluate the impact of any comms and campaigns (eg: behaviour change/ awareness raising)	Lindsay Creed	31/03/23	Audience attention – e.g., unique visitors, views, clickthroughs Awareness – e.g., recall Understanding – e.g., comments Interest and liking – e.g., likes, follows, shares, retweets.	Annual	George Cutting	
	Trial new engagement tools with different audiences	Lindsay Creed	31/03/23	Engagement – e.g., return visits, subscribing, positive comments. Consideration – e.g., comments, subscribing, registering.	Annual	Jonathan Kaye	
	Support our local communities with the neighbourhood planning process	George Pavey	31/03/23		Annual	Jan Goodrive	
	Continue to deliver the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy	Corinne Crossboure	31/03/23		Annual	Linda Haysey	
We will support our vulnerable residents	Further establish the East Herts Healthy Hub to promote access to health, social, wellbeing advice and support	Simon Barfoot	31/03/23	Number of clients supported through EH Social Prescribing Service Number of EH residents registering for Healthy Hubs Number of EH residents attending Healthy Hub sessions Number of Healthy Hub sessions delivered Number of onward referrals through Healthy Hubs	Quarterly	Eric Buckmaster	

	Provide specialist support to those facing or recovering from homelessness	Claire Bennett	31/03/23	Number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation	Quarterly	Peter Boylan	
	Ensure all new applications for Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax support, including changes in circumstances, are processed on average within 10 days	Su Tarran	31/03/23	Time taken to process new benefit claims (10 days)	Quarterly	Geoffrey Williamson	
	Manage the SLA with the CVS to deliver support to voluntary and community organisations and community transport	Nick Phipps	31/03/23		Quarterly	Eric Buckmaster	
	Manage the SLA with the Citizens Advice Service	Nick Phipps	31/03/23		Quarterly	Eric Buckmaster	
	Support community safety	Nick Phipps/ Julie Pomfret	31/03/23	Neighbourhood watch membership (as OWT is a useful way of reaching communities)? ASB data around the issuing of CPWs / CPNs where the conduct that has led to the issuing of the CPW/N is relevant? Number of safeguarding referrals?	Quarterly	Peter Boylan	
	Inspection, licensing and regulation of HMOs	Paul Thomas-Jones	31/03/23		Annual	Eric Buckmaster	
	Provide support to hoarding cases	Paul Thomas-Jones	31/03/23		Annual	Eric Buckmaster	
	Underwrite public toilets	Paul Thomas-Jones	31/03/23		Annual	Eric Buckmaster	
	Deal with nuisance and noise cases	Paul Thomas-Jones	31/03/23		Annual	Eric Buckmaster	
	Support the East Herts Dementia Friendly Action Group	Mekhola Ray	31/03/23	Renewal of Dementia Friendly District Status Number of agencies signed up to action group Number of staff attending awareness sessions	Quarterly	Eric Buckmaster	
	Support delivery of chatter tables in the 5 towns to address social isolation and loneliness for vulnerable residents.	Mekhola Ray	31/03/23	Number of chatter tables running in 5 market towns, not requiring EHC facilitation Number of people attending chatter tables	Annual	Eric Buckmaster	
	Support the East Herts Dementia Friendly Action Group	Mekhola Ray	31/03/23		Annual	Eric Buckmaster	
	Identify community assets that are managed via a third party and investigate SLAs and appropriate policies are in place (eg. safeguarding)	Claire Pullen	31/03/23	Assets identified and timescales for engagement with them agreed	Bi-annual	Geoffrey Williamson	
	Provide training and support for third parties who manage community centres to engage effectively with wider community, including vulnerable residents	Claire Pullen	31/03/23	No. of training activities provided	Bi-annual	Eric Buckmaster	
	Apply the £150 one off funding for households	Su Tarran	TBC			Geoffrey Williamson	New action following government announcement. Further guidance awaited
	Continue to administer self isolation grants	Su Tarran	31/03/22	No. of grants administered	Bi-annual	Geoffrey Williamson	Remove as funding expires 31 March
	Support national vaccination roll out with East Herts assets where possible	Geoff Hayden	31/03/23		Bi-annual	Geoffrey Williamson	
	Support national and county led communications campaigns on vaccine roll out and vaccine hesitancy	Lindsey Creed	31/03/23		Bi-annual	George Cutting	
	Provide regulatory advice and support to businesses with post Covid recovery	Paul Thomas-Jones	31/03/23		Bi-annual	Peter Boylan	
	Provision of Covid marshals in town centres, neighbourhood shopping centres and green spaces	Hayley Springall	30/06/21		Bi-annual	Jan Goodeve	Remove as funding expires 31 March
ENCOURAGING ECONOMIC GROWTH THEME							
We will continue to support businesses and business growth	Deliver the match funded ERDF Launchpad 2 project and continue to grow the Launchpad in Bishop's Stortford and Ware	Chris Smith	31/03/23	Number of Launchpad uses (both sites)	Annual	Jan Goodeve	
				Income generated (both sites) (£)	Annual	Jan Goodeve	
				Number of businesses supported across the 3 sectors	Annual	Jan Goodeve	
				Number of businesses receiving financial support	Annual	Jan Goodeve	
				Number of businesses receiving non financial support	Annual	Jan Goodeve	
	Submit a plan for East Herts's share of UK Shared Prosperity Fund to support economic growth in the district	Ben Wood	31/03/23		Annual	Jan Goodeve	New action
	Find alternative accommodation for the BS Launchpad	Chris Smith	31/03/22		Annual	Jan Goodeve	Remove as will be reconsidered as an action once timescales for ORL scheme are known.
	Support the Better Business for All Partnership	Oliver Rawlings	31/03/22		Annual	Jan Goodeve	Remove - part of budget reductions proposals
	Ensure all business rate reliefs are applied in a timely manner	Sandra Huntingford	31/03/23	NNDR (business rates) collection, % of current year liability collected Council tax collection, % of in year recovery	Monthly	Geoffrey Williamson	
	Work in partnership with the Innovation Corridor and Central Zone Alliance to lobby for inward investment	Ben Wood	31/03/23		Annual	Linda Haysey	
	Work with Visit Herts to ensure local businesses and venues are supported	Andrew Figgis	31/03/23	Total value of visitor economy to East Herts and by town Total number of day trips and overnight trips to district and by town Total number of jobs in district and by town attributed to visitor economy	Annual	Jan Goodeve	
	Work in partnership to support recovery of town centres and deploy 'Welcome Back' funding	Andrew Figgis	31/03/22	Production of town centre visions and action plans	Biannual	Jan Goodeve	Remove as WBF expires March
	Continue to administer business grants including the Restart Grants and Additional Restrictions (discretionary) grants	Su Tarran	31/03/22	Number of grants awarded and amount (£) given out	Quarterly	Geoffrey Williamson	Possibly remove as grants expire March however new round of funding has been announced by the Chancellor
	Implement grant scheme to support businesses taking up vacant retail, commercial and industrial premises	Chris Smith	31/03/22	Number of grants awarded	Biannual	Jan Goodeve	Remove as funding expires in March
	Deliver the jobmart employment support programme	Ben Wood	31/03/22	Number of referrals	Biannual	Jan Goodeve	Remove as funding expires in March

We will support town centres with post covid recovery	Learning from the 20/21 pilot work in Hertford on developing a town centre vision and action plan in conjunction with stakeholders, support similar approaches in other towns	Ben Wood	31/03/22	Town centre footfall	Quarterly	Jan Goodeve	New action following on from Welcome Back Funding
	Provide support for local business representative organisations including Chambers of Commerce and the Bishop's Stortford BID	Chris Smith	31/03/23		Annual	Jan Goodeve	
	Provision of advice and support around licensing function (alcohol, food, noise) and processing pavement licences to support town centres	Oliver Rawlings	31/03/22	Number of pavement licences granted	Annual	Peter Boylan	
We will ensure development is viable	Deliver the business plan for East Herts share of the UK shared prosperity fund	Ben Wood	31/09/2022		Annual	Jan Goodeve	New action following publication of the Levelling Up White Paper
	Complete construction of the multi-story car park on the Old River Lane site (72 week build)	Rob Mayo	31/05/22		Annual	Linda Haysey	
	Deliver an SPD and Masterplan for the Old River Lane Site	Rob Mayo	TBC		Annual	Linda Haysey	
	Support the Herts Growth Board with presenting a case for additional infrastructure investment in Hertfordshire	Richard Cassidy	On-going		Annual	Linda Haysey	
	Deliver a fit for purpose planning service including provision of pre-application advice, determination of planning applications and approval of the strategic sites allocated in the District Plan in accordance with the District Plan in accordance with the housing trajectory	Sara Saunders	31/03/23	Approval of strategic sites	Quarterly	Jan Goodeve	
				Determine major applications within 13 weeks			
				Determine 80% of minor/other applications within 8 weeks	Quarterly	Jan Goodeve	
				Delivery of at least \$35 new dwellings per year and delivery of affordable homes			
	Agree masterplans on: the Gilston Area Villages 1-7; NE of Ware; East of Welwyn Garden City; significant windfall development sites through collaborative process with developers and Members	Sara Saunders	31/03/23		Annual	Jan Goodeve	
	Redesign the shops at Elizabeth Road	Geoff Hayden	31/03/23		Annual	Geoffrey Williamson	New action
	Ensure Section 106 contributions are allocated in accordance with agreements	Jackie Bruce	31/03/23	Amount awarded	Annual	Jan Goodeve	
	Undertake planning enforcement activity where required in keeping with the district plan and NPPF	Sara Saunders	31/03/22	Site visits undertaken for non urgent cases within 15 working days	Quarterly	Jan Goodeve	

DIGITAL BY DEFAULT THEME							
We will encourage greater use of the website and self-service for customers	Implement a new core digital platform	Steven Linnett	TBC		Annual	George Cutting	Remove as it comes under transforming East Herts
	Implement a central business support function	Ben Wood	31/03/22		Annual	George Cutting	Remove as it comes under transforming East Herts
	Maximise self-service options for customers	Ben Wood	31/03/23	Geometric ratings for website	Quarterly	George Cutting	
				Geometric ratings for email	Quarterly	George Cutting	
				Call answer rate	Quarterly	George Cutting	
				Increase customer satisfaction with East Herts web	Quarterly	George Cutting	
				Increase % of households that have signed up to self service	Quarterly	George Cutting	
				Increase % of businesses that have signed up to self service	Quarterly	George Cutting	
				Increase % of landlords that have signed up to self service	Quarterly	George Cutting	
	Expand use of the appointment booking system for customers who need to see us	Alex Cook	31/03/23	Number of appointments by service	Quarterly	George Cutting	
	Expand use of the chatbot to help customers resolve their queries	Alex Cook	31/03/23	Number of chats	Quarterly	George Cutting	
We will work with partners to ensure our communities are digitally enabled	Maintain website accessibility (WCAG 2.1) standards	Lauren Hague	31/03/23	Soclim accessibility rating	Annual	George Cutting	
	Deliver an effective complaints and member query management system	Sharon Bunce	31/03/23	Ensure 80% of stage 1 complaints and Member queries are dealt with within 10 working days	Quarterly	George Cutting	
				% of complaints that are upheld at stage 1	Quarterly	George Cutting	
				% of complaints that are upheld at stage 2	Quarterly	George Cutting	
				Number of complaints upheld by the ombudsman	Annual	George Cutting	
	Ensure fibre to the premise (FTTP) is provided on all new developments	George Pavey	On-going		Annual	Jan Goodeve	
	Support joint delivery of Marlow and Gilston Garden Town as a fully sustainable and digital 'place'	Sara Saunders	On-going		Annual	Jan Goodeve	
	Support the Digital Innovation Zone to lobby for investment in our towns and villages	Helen Standen	On-going		Annual	Linda Haysey/Jan Goodeve	
	Review an anti-wasting policy with staff	Simon O'Hear	31/03/2021		Annual	Geoffrey Williamson	
	Agree a business case for creating modern workspaces	Geoff Hayden	31/03/22		Annual	Geoffrey Williamson	Remove as now under 6 transformation strands
	Lean Processes - implementation of a CRM	Ben Wood	31/03/23		Annual	George Cutting	
Deliver the Transforming East Herts Programme	Lean processes - Determine viability of a corporate business support hub	Jess Khanom-metaman	31/03/23		Annual	George Cutting	
	Modern workspaces - use of Wallfields	James Ellis	31/03/23		Annual	George Cutting	
	Modern workspaces - front of house offering	Ben Wood	31/03/23		Annual	George Cutting	
	Modern workforce development - right skills for the future	Simon O'Hear	31/03/23		Annual	George Cutting	
	Commercial - adoption of a commercial strategy	Steven Linnett	31/03/23		Annual	Geoffrey Williamson	
	Commercial - grow revenues from trading companies	Jonathan Geal/ Helen Standen/ Jess Khanom-Metaman	31/03/23	Share dividend from the Herts Building Control Company	Annual	Geoffrey Williamson	
				Share dividend from Herts CCTV Ltd	Annual	Geoffrey Williamson	
				Share dividend from Millstream Property Investment Ltd	Annual	Geoffrey Williamson	
	Undertake service reviews	Sara Saunders	31/03/23		Annual	Linda Haysey	
	Technology - Deployment of MS Teams	Zoe Taylor-Dixon	31/03/23		Annual	Geoffrey Williamson	
	Technology - Deployment of ICT equipment	Helen Standen	31/03/23		Annual	Geoffrey Williamson	

SUSTAINABILITY AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING WE DO THEMSE please note the full set of actions are updated on the council's website on a monthly basis and more details can be found there: <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/about-east-herts-0/environmental-sustainability/environmental-sustainability-action-plan>

Make changes to the council's own premises, people and services we deliver	WALLFIELDS - Review and action repairs to improve insulation of windows	
	BELL STREET - Install e-chargers appropriate to demand identified during audit.	
	HARTWAM - Calculate carbon reduction from efficiency measures	
	Audit the council's vans with a view to replacing them with e-vehicles	
	Publish a new Housing Strategy for 2021 - 2026 incorporating environmental sustainability measures	
	Monitor and report on Housing Association energy efficiency programmes	
	Investigate opportunities for improving biodiversity of council estate and associated services	
	Work with HCC and others to identify options for tree planting	
	Work to improve biodiversity infrastructure on council's estate	
	Publish a Vehicle Parking Standards SPD	
Use regulatory powers to promote action by others	Publish a Biodiversity SPD	
	Develop sustainability advice geared towards listed buildings / conservation areas	
	Utilise L106 to maximise interventions in order to facilitate the council's sustainability ambitions	
	Review and update taxi vehicle policies to further strengthen incentives/requirements for low emission taxis	
	Work to utilise regulatory powers to facilitate improved domestic energy efficiency measures	
	Provide and promote energy efficiency grants/support	
	Work with community to explore and action tree planting	
	Enable volunteers to come together on joint initiatives (information, co-ordination and training)	
	Establish improved dialogue with rural and farming community	
	Work with local MPs to promote the case for investment in sustainability interventions in East Herts	
Influence and encourage others to do things	Facilitate EV roadshows and demonstrations - at least once a year	
	Hold a Schools Climate Conference	
	Actively implement and encourage waste minimisation initiatives	
	PARISH COUNCILS AND VILLAGE HALLS - explore creation of rural EV charging hub network based on parish owned sites	
	Integrate sustainability topics within the agenda for East Herts Parish Councilors Conference	

Review and expand web site pages on environmental sustainability, climate change and energy efficiency to provide enhanced advice and encourage behaviour change to promote positive climate action

## Parks & Open Spaces Strategy – 2022 – 2027



### Executive Foreword

Parks provide a vital opportunity for our residents to enjoy the outdoors. Green spaces are central to the council's vision of offering health and wellbeing to all.

They provide a calm environment for all generations to relax and exercise. Sustainable habitats provide an abundance of wildlife. The Council works closely with some energetic and dedicated volunteers in Friends Groups across the district and we are proud of the great contribution they make. Over many years we have committed to our vision to develop our parks to a high standard and have made some considerable achievements; great opportunities for sport and leisure at Hartham Common, majestic and historic landscapes at Pishiobury Park and natural environments at Southern Country Park. We have some first class play areas which are regularly reviewed and updated. We will continue to keep parks in the forefront of our minds, reflecting on their considerable contribution to helping us through some difficult times during the Covid epidemic and through our response to managing the impacts of climate change.

This strategy will operate closely alongside the Council's wider plans outlined in our corporate objectives and specifically supporting our Environmental Sustainability, Cultural Strategy and Health & Wellbeing Strategies.

There are still some major projects to complete such as the improvements to Castle Park in Bishop's Stortford supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The next five years will be committed to ensuring our parks remain fit for purpose to accommodate a higher volume of use as our District grows. We are aware of the problems that need tackling such as the increase in littering, these will be managed with a resilience to find effective and positive solutions.

The Council, like many authorities across the country, no longer receives its Revenue Support Grant from central government and therefore needs to manage its resources effectively. Our aim is to deliver cost effective services

and explore inventive solutions which ensure our parks can continue to meet the needs of our communities whilst generating sustainable income.

Our Parks will be **ACE; Attractive & Accessible** to all, managed with a **Commercial** influence and **Engaged** with their users whilst considering the **Environment** and will continue to contribute to the wellbeing of our residents.

*Cllr Eric Buckmaster*

*Executive Member for Wellbeing*



## Introduction

Our parks provide a wide range of leisure opportunities and habitats from small local play areas to wide open spaces for walking and playing sports. The following video provides a very brief insight into their diversity demonstrating why we are proud of the progress made to provide such attractive places to visit.



**Figure 1 Strategy Introduction video**

East Hertfordshire District Council (EHDC) has a strong history of providing high quality and well maintained parks and open spaces. Our corporate objectives over many years have recognised our green spaces as key assets able to deliver a wide range of benefits.

Our parks often form the heart of our communities. They have not stood still, we have invested and grown them to ensure they remain relevant and able to meet the wide needs of which they are capable.

Parks and Opens Spaces provide us with places to enjoy the open air, to keep fit and to play. They offer a brief escape from the hustle and bustle of normal life. There are many studies<sup>1</sup> that explore their benefits, demonstrating how important they are to our wellbeing from physical exercise, relaxation, play and socialising and connecting with nature.

We understand what parks can offer the community and in preparing this strategy, outline how our parks have been brought to life and maintained at a standard of which we are proud. We also look forward by setting out our key objectives and focus over the next five years to ensure our green spaces continue to thrive.

## Our Vision

***"Our Parks and Open Spaces are highly valued by residents and used more and more to promote health and wellbeing and our sustainability ambitions."***



**Figure 2 Southern Country Park main pond area**

## Reviewing our Achievements

We must take stock of our achievements to guide new directions and inform decision making. New play areas, access enhancements and conservation initiatives have invariably been made possible through grant funding contributions, effective tendering and in-house project management.

The Council has delivered a wide range of development projects over the last eight years. These include simple refurbishment of small play areas, protecting woodlands, creating meadowland, improving access and transforming spaces.

Explored below are some key improvements in the context of our Green Space management plans recognising that facilities installed 20 years ago must be re-assessed periodically to be sure that they still meet needs. We have carried out audits that assess play value, check physical condition and monitor whether there are now better ways to deliver interesting and vibrant parks and play areas.

Our Green Space Action Plans<sup>2</sup> have used fundamental criteria laid out by the Green Flag Award<sup>3</sup> initiative to raise the standard of parks across the country. We have used these for the last 20 years as a structure to guide our projects and maintenance regimes.

Projects are prioritised from the findings of audits to ensure open spaces with a lower profile are not left behind. Whilst balancing the right investment opportunities from a diverse range of contributions and the timing of projects we have created a wide network of parks and open spaces for our community.

This snapshot of development projects provides examples of work carried out under six of the key Green Flag criteria, drawing out successes that inform the direction of this new strategy.

### 1. A welcoming Place

*Creating a space which, through its visual appearance, range of facilities, standards of maintenance and ease of access, makes people feel that they are in a cared-for place.*

We have developed a new play space to welcome visitors to Hartham Common in Hertford as part of a high profile replacement project. This had been anticipated for a number of years but could not be justified until other play sites had been brought up to an acceptable standard. It was prudent to wait for an opportunity to deliver something special. Planning contributions from local developments bolstered the Council's own capital investment alongside support from the local community to crowd fund enough for a "gold standard" design.



**Figure 3 Hartham Common - prior to new play area**



**Figure 4 Hartham Common new play area**



Increased awareness of the project through working with local users in this way provided further opportunities to engage with local businesses and the media. A shared ambition with residents helped to create a design that met everybody's needs and to deal proactively with challenges along the way.

The resulting space offers an incredible range of play experiences promoting inclusivity and exceptional landscape design. It transforms what was previously a tired park entrance into an inspiring and welcoming gateway. These images from before and after show the wide range of play value that has been achieved. The space now welcomes visitors with open arms.

## 2. Healthy, Safe and Secure

*Understanding users' needs, encouraging them to enjoy healthy activities using appropriate, safe-to-use facilities and activities, and to feel personally safe and secure.*

Good access has been a key consideration in the development of many of our parks:

- Bishop's Park - new car parking and safer routes to walk
- Pishiobury Park – disabled access parking, woodland walk and boardwalk
- Southern Country Park – hard surface paths and boardwalk across lake

Trinity Close is a much smaller park in Bishop's Stortford which had a reasonably good range of play equipment but was ready for a makeover. The site had some access issues that were not going to be easy to resolve. It had previously experienced some problems with antisocial behaviour which to some extent had been resolved by clearing vegetation to increase natural surveillance from surrounding properties. When funds became available through planning contributions from an adjacent development, we were able to make best use of some additional capital investment to launch a visionary project.



This involved substantial changes to the topography of the site and considerable upheaval for the very supportive local community. The resultant play space, now with an area in which the local community will be able to hold events, and with access not seen before, has been warmly received.

The Council is committed to the health and wellbeing of its residents.

- Fitness zones at Bishop's Park
- Marked running tracks
- Active Friends Groups
  - having significant positive influence on anti-social behaviour, communication, wildlife... our eyes and ears in the park
  - community cohesion with local people working with the Council to develop parks.
  - a working presence in our parks, sharing our plans with visitors and letting us know what is important to our customer from first hand interaction on site
  - opportunities to work in teams, develop friendships and keep healthy
  - organising events for the wider community

### **3. Well Maintained and Clean**

*For aesthetic as well as health and safety reasons, issues of cleanliness and maintenance are addressed*

We have developed systems of well-considered and connected maintenance. Experience learnt from delivering good quality maintenance through successive grounds maintenance contracts and investment in procurement specialists resulted in the successful re-tendering of the main contract in 2020 which now incorporates:

- Delivering a full tree maintenance service
- Working closely with our tree risk inspection management provider
- An holistic open space and play inspection and maintenance regime
- Flexible litter picking and collection services

### **4. Environmental Management**

*Ensuring the way the site is managed has a positive impact on the environment, locally and globally, both now and for the future.*

Green spaces can really come alive when they have the benefit of two key ingredients; interested residents and healthy habitats.

Southern Country Park in Bishop's Stortford is a prime example of this:

It was handed to the Council by developers as a well maintained and tidy park but somewhat bland and sterile. We worked with local people to develop a greenspace action plan in partnership with CMS which resulted in the formation of the enthusiastic and active Friends of Southern Country Park. That management plan explored what could be done to improve the park and how residents felt about this. It created an agreed action plan of the higher priority works for a five year period. The Friends group were empowered to work with us to seek further investment and to carry out long term tasks alongside Council developed projects that progressively transformed the environment and won a Green Flag Award. These tasks included:

- Defra funded lake marginal planting
- Environment Agency funded fishing platforms
- Boardwalk across pond gabions to improve access and safety funded through planning contributions
- woodland thinning
- tree planting
- hedge laying
- pond restoration
- managing fish stock



Transformed habitats across the park created a more diverse and abundant wildlife, this in turn encourages even more reason to protect and improve.

## 5. Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage

*Attention to the appropriate management and conservation of natural features, wildlife and flora; landscape features; and buildings and structures.*

Pishiobury Park in Sawbridgeworth had a similar trajectory:

Early intervention by the Council to invest in a Historical Landscape Character Assessment of the park, informed the first greenspace action plan.

Support from local people consulted through developing the plan resulted in the dedicated and committed Friends of Pishiobury Park working with us to achieve some important improvements:

- reforming woodland to achieve visible enclosure of the landscape
- Restoration of the English landscape (created in the 18<sup>th</sup> century)
- Creation of ponds
- Return of grazing, supporting rare breed livestock and a diverse grassland habitat
- Archaeological exploration of the park's history
- annual events
- repurposing of the Osier beds
- boardwalks to discover hidden areas and to cross wet areas in the winter

Local Nature Reserve status and a protected historical landscape emphasised the need to conserve and develop the park's biodiversity and fascinating history.

We have made a lot of improvements to our open spaces by increasing meadowland areas, protecting reed beds, altering our grass cutting regimes to leave longer grass areas, creating wildlife areas,



**Figure 7 Pishiobury Park cattle at Love Parks Week event**



improving our management of woodlands, increasing wetland areas and improving the management of chalk banks.

## 6. Community Involvement

*Understanding the community; a park seeks to serve and actively involve people in making decisions about the site's development; providing opportunities for active participation in site projects; and ensuring that there is appropriate provision of recreational facilities and activities for all sectors of the community.*

All our Friends groups are examples of how we work directly with residents to develop our parks. The Friends of Castle Park in Bishop's Stortford is one of our newer groups who have already been involved in a wide range of activities:

- created as part of the development of the National Lottery Heritage Funded project to transform the park they have
  - provided hands on support to develop events and inform the direction of the project
  - organised annual events
  - carried out youth engagement
  - supported archaeology projects
  - improved wildlife habitats through Groundworks partnership
  - planted trees
  - run health walks / HSBC Breeze Rides
  - supported Parkrun

Each year the Council celebrates Love Parks Week at the end of July with events in two of our major parks, Pishiobury Park and Southern Country Park. This wouldn't be possible without the dedicated support of our Friends groups. The events invite our residents to come and have fun and have grown each year, promoting our parks and providing us with an opportunity to reflect on how important the connection between the community and our parks really is.

We believe these six fundamental criteria underpin how our parks and open spaces should be managed. However, given the changing climate and priorities we need to bolster our commitments when looking to the future. The following sections of this strategy will illustrate the change in policies that we need to adapt to and build upon these foundations.



## Strategic Context

- **The Corporate Plan**

The Council's overarching corporate aims<sup>4</sup> are captured in four priorities:

- Sustainability at the heart of everything we do
- Enabling our communities
- Encouraging economic growth
- Digital by default

The Council and partners have developed various plans and strategies which help to steer delivery of these corporate objectives and should be considered in the context of developing our parks:

- **East Herts Environmental Sustainability Strategy & Action Plan**

This strategy is being developed from the current working project Action Plan (below). It will be a succinct tool to guide the authority and will contain environmental target KPIs, (net gains for example) some of which are likely to be delivered through parks and open spaces over the next 5 years.

- **Hertfordshire Climate and Sustainability Partnership's (HCCSP) Biodiversity Action Plan**

The HCCSP represents the ten district and borough councils of Hertfordshire, the County Council, and the Local Enterprise Partnership. It formed in 2020 and identified four priority areas upon which to focus its collaborative efforts : Water, Biodiversity, Transport, and Carbon Emissions. Four subgroups were tasked each with the development of a Strategic Action Plan. The Biodiversity Subgroup has been preparing a working draft with an overarching aim to halt and reverse biodiversity declines across the county. This includes an audit of open spaces across the district which will have a bearing on parks and open spaces providing opportunities to work in partnership over some shared objectives.

- **Planning strategy (SPD) and Local Plan**

Opportunities through planning contributions (section 106 agreements) will continue to be important and future changes to these landing within the timeframe of this strategy may require some inbuilt flexibility.

- **East Herts Cultural Strategy 2021-2025**

The Council is currently consulting on this strategy. The vision it offers has considerable synergy with the aims set out to manage our parks: *East Herts will*

*lead the way in demonstrating that when residents, community organisations and the creative industries come together extraordinary, surprising and delightful things can happen that enrich and enhance everyone's health, wellbeing and sense of inclusion.*

It emphasises that partners can contribute to this in a number of roles; enabler, innovator, partner and provider. Our parks have rich opportunities for cultural activities and bringing people together with aspirations to have a positive impact on health and wellbeing.

- **East Herts Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2023**

This strategy focusses on areas that can be assisted greatly through the delivery of parks for people. Wellbeing is closely connected to our health and is associated with a sense of purpose and contentment; it often relates to our values and beliefs. The Council is committed to helping individuals, families and communities look after their health and wellbeing.

Parks can offer access to events and activities for different ages; buggy fitness, local woods activities, cycle rides, community games, Get Park Active Events, scooting and walking.

- **East Herts Physical Activity Strategy**

The Council is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of its community and enhancing the quality of people's lives. We recognise that sport and physical activity is key to achieving this. We want every member of our community to have the opportunity to participate in physical activity in the way they choose. This might include walking in open spaces, cycling to work, playing sport with friends or going to a gym.

From a national perspective this documents also has some relevance:

- **England Tree Strategy**

This has now gone through consultation and the final Strategy is expected to be published in Spring 22. The Council aims to develop a separate Tree Strategy that will reflect on this, explore the services we provide and plan how will continue to care responsibly for a trees and woodlands.

## Looking to the Future

Our ongoing ambition will be for our parks and open spaces to be **ACE; Attractive & Accessible, Commercial and Environmental & Engaged**, inspiring others to partner with us to make them even better places to live and work in.

With these core aims, we will focus on our parks being:

### Attractive & Accessible to all

Promoting equality and access for all whether its walking in our open spaces, accessible equipment in play areas or learning more about historic monuments in our parks and open spaces. We will:

- Maintain good access for all users including visitors with disabilities
- provide access to more information about our parks and open spaces online and promote the “park herts” web tool
- ensure our parks and open spaces are clean and welcoming with appropriate infrastructure to rest and move around them safely
- review our litter and dog waste provisions and look at ways to maximise the service efficiently whilst aiming to tackle the problems of littering
- ensure we protect our natural assets- biodiversity and sustainability

### Commercial

Finding ways to keep our parks financially sustainable, we will:

- work with local providers to secure income through hiring out our open spaces for vending, physical activity and events
- maximise the use of our open spaces to commercial providers to generate income
- source external funding to enhance our parks and open spaces
- manage the grounds maintenance contract efficiently and grow its capacity to deliver improvements
- seek further opportunities to engage the community in crowd funding to support specific site improvement projects
- explore alternative delivery models working with the local community

## Environmental and Engaged

Looking to our residents, we will:

- act upon recommendations from an independent audit of our parks that finds opportunities to improve habitats and increase biodiversity
- plant trees effectively informed by inspection data and the habitat audit
- identify locations within residential areas on Council owned land where tree planting can be increased
- develop a scheme to offer residents the opportunity to fund the planting of a native tree in predetermined locations informed by the two previous initiatives
- develop verge/pollinator/wildflower initiatives
- provide electric hook up points that ice cream vans can plug into in our parks, providing ice creams without noise and air pollution
- communicate with our customers effectively and promote positive messages
- continue to commit to events such as love parks week
- work with providers to promote activity in our parks and open space which support health and well being
- continue to support our Friends of Parks groups to
  - help us improve and develop our parks
  - provide opportunities for residents to socialise, keep fit and look after their health and wellbeing
  - contribute actively to the maintenance of our parks
  - engage with visitors positively on our behalf and help us to monitor our parks
- find ways to support smaller groups of volunteers where there may not be sufficient activity to create a fully-fledged Friends Group
- welcome community groups and organisations to support our objectives
- Secure economic vibrancy in our parks by increasing footfall and engendering a sense of ownership

Working closely with our residents will be important as we move forward. Local people have demonstrated to us through their interest in our parks and through the increased usage that they value these special places. Our message through this Strategy is that we need to nurture that support further by enabling people to get more involved, with a common aim to make them special places to visit.

The experience of managing parks through the Covid pandemic has brought many challenges but it has also introduced some of our open spaces to residents who had previously not been minded to visit them.

The unprecedented level of use may begin to decline as people return to other forms of leisure and take exercise in other ways but we anticipate that many new visitors will continue to return.

Managing this increased level of use has helped us to review what elements of our parks are most important to our visitors and how we can ensure that they continue to meet our needs.

### **Core Aims – some more detail**

- **Accessibility**

We have learnt that our residents have recognised the significant opportunity that our parks offer for leisure and for our wellbeing, we must ensure that the infrastructure is reviewed and adjusted to cope with the increased future use.

Moving forward, we need to manage and control access at peak times. This may require the widening of pinch points and improved grass reinforcement to support car access to suitable areas for temporary parking. Our clients offering boot camps and events will benefit from this. During busy periods these routes might facilitate different entrance and exit points to manage congestion and will need well designed infrastructure to safely combine cycle and pedestrian access alongside vehicles where necessary.

Some parks with strong heritage or biodiversity value such as Pishiobury Park for example will be unsuitable for expanding hard surface networks. Whilst visitors should be encouraged to wear appropriate footwear, there may still be opportunities for resolving pinch points to facilitate social distancing. The ongoing Lottery funded project at this park includes work to improve the

signage at the park's extremities. Ensuring visitors can find our parks is something that we can do more of.

The Council is also supporting the new web based tool for residents to find and navigate parks in the County; ParkHerts<sup>5</sup>.

- **Communicating with our customers**

We consistently offer useful advice about our parks and open spaces through our consultation events and deal promptly with customer enquiries. However, we could make it easier for customers to find out how we manage our services and what we can and can't do to help.

To make it much easier for customers to find answers without needing to ask and wait for a response, we will develop the Council's web based service to answer "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQs). This will include answers to questions relating to overhanging trees, memorial benches and the scattering of ashes along with some detailed explanations of how we manage shrub pruning adjacent to people's properties and whether we allow drones in our parks.

We will also use this opportunity to bring together some policies and working procedures into one easily accessible format. The council has expressed an informal position for example on wild animals in circuses, memorabilia in parks and the use of helium balloons and sky lanterns. These will be formalised as part of the Council's adoption of this document. The FAQs are developed using the Operating Policies and Guidance listed in Appendix 1 and will be made available as a searchable tool on completion of the final approved version of the strategy.

We will work with our contractor to offer a web based facility for customers to find out about grass cutting in their local area. This area of service has always been of considerable interest to residents. The system will offer a postcode search of the grass cutting programme to inform residents when to expect the next visit.

As we improve our parks further, creating new features, updating existing ones and exploring how we manage them we will continue to develop our ideas and commitments through Greenspace Action Plans offering residents the opportunity to get involved.

Parks need to be used and cherished by local people. Community awareness of our open spaces and what they offer can result in a healthy partnership between the Council who manage these assets and the residents who enjoy them.

This is demonstrated strongly in our Friends of Parks groups where residents are able to influence how our parks develop, take an active role in their maintenance and help the Council to forge stronger relationships with the wider community. Where anti-social behaviour has once been a feature in some of our parks, this has improved with the positive presence of these groups. The Council will continue to provide resources to support volunteers who get involved through these groups and who also play an important role through other activities such as litter picking.

We aim to welcome visitors to our parks without unnecessary restriction by encouraging responsible behaviour.

Our observations are that park users are more likely to comply with sensible guidelines that they understand and can relate to. Where there is a specific issue we may target campaigns to that area but try to avoid generalised actions where there is no evidence of a problem. A sensible approach to dog fouling should foster peer pressure from dog owners for compliance.

An example of this is the way we aim to deal with issues relating to dogs. We work with dog trainers to help educate visitors and have installed dog training areas without banning dogs or installing prohibitive signs.

Encouraging parents and young people to use play areas responsibly is another example of sensible communication, creating safe yet challenging play but without the need for restrictive regulations. "Keep off the grass" signs are not going to help us engage in a positive way with our customers.

- **Attractiveness**

There has been an unprecedented increase in the number of residents from East Herts and beyond visiting our parks during the pandemic (2020-2021). This is likely due to the constraint on residents from enjoying any other form of exercise or leisure activity. It is very encouraging that we are able to welcome so many new visitors to our parks but this has created some issues.

The amount of litter being dispensed into litter bins and being dropped across our sites has increased dramatically.

We encourage people to take litter home and with the support of organisations such as the Keep Tidy Britain Group who understand how to 'nudge' better societal behaviours. Other organisations such as The National Trust for instance do not provide litter bins on all their sites, preferring visitors to "take your litter home and leave no trace of your visit". We will continue to explore campaigns that go to the heart of the littering problem for those that choose to litter.

Our grounds maintenance contractor has diverted considerable resources into additional litter picking and increased the number of visits to empty litter bins. Many of our bins are emptied on a frequency basis and we have increased this frequency where possible. Some litter picking is carried out on a performance basis to ensure that high profile parks are litter picked as often as necessary to meet the given standard. There is however, a limit to the level of resources available to respond to pressures such as these where the whole service across all parks has been affected.

Going forward, we will be auditing our litter and dog bin service to ensure that it is fit for purpose, offers value for money and can adapt to any future ongoing increases in need. This may result in larger bins or a different style of bins.

We will review all the agreements we have with towns and parishes to empty bins on their open spaces, ensuring that there is consistency in relation to their location, purpose and funding. There may also be some bins on privately owned ground or on the highway that should perhaps not be managed by East Herts Council at all.

We will ensure that our cross cutting services coordinate litter picking and bin emptying services and engage positively and supportively with residents or community groups wishing to litter pick as volunteers.

We are committed to delivering attractive enhancements that signpost our facilities and offer a welcome to visitors with colourful planting. This includes our annual bedding schemes and containers, wild flower displays at high profile locations, herbaceous beds and an ongoing review of our shrub borders. These all combine to offer a mix of summer and winter colour.



- **Commercial**

We will continue looking after our parks to a high standard but need to recognise that the natural deterioration of assets requires a process of replacement and renewal. This can be delivered through a broad mixture of in-house and external opportunities.

The Council aims to continue allocating resources to keep the district attractive, clean and tidy and to protect investments already made to improve our parks. We will continue to seek sustainable funding from granting bodies such as the Environment Agency, Heritage Lottery Fund and other partner agencies. We will ensure businesses that benefit from the investment in delivering high quality parks are engaged to contribute toward their upkeep through initiatives such as vending outlets and events.

The Council welcomes local community groups and charities to book our parks and open spaces. We ask for evidence of a well-run and safe event before authorising any activity. Companies or charities proposing larger events that require input from officers and have an impact on an open space are required to pay a contribution to the significant costs of developing and maintaining our parks to a standard that offers such a useful and attractive resource.

Contributions from developers through the planning system (section 106 agreements) should continue to be directed toward the Council's portfolio of assets such as our open spaces to ensure their quality is maintained.

We believe there are a number of commercial opportunities we can explore for our parks and open spaces to ensure we are able to maintain standards of operation. The strategy will provide us the impetus to focus efforts in this area.

- **Engaged and Environmental**

The Council values the support it receives from the community both through volunteer work and through active engagement with our processes of consultation to develop our services.

We will continue to work with providers to promote activity in our parks and open spaces which support health and wellbeing and to commit to events such as "Love Parks" week in Southern Country Park, Castle Park and Pishiobury Park.

We support the parish and town councils by sharing our experience in managing play areas and particularly through an opportunity to benefit from our county wide procurement of annual play inspections.

The Council has made substantial improvements to the biodiversity of our parks through a range of initiatives including the creation of wild flower meadows, ponds, good woodland management and tree planting. These have largely been as a result of our commitment to responsible maintenance. It is now time, to approach this ambition in a more focussed and measurable way.

We will be working with other authorities through ParksHerts to consider what scope there may be for collaboration between authorities over verge/pollinator/wildflower initiatives. The Countryside Management Service is working on our behalf to identify opportunities for improving biodiversity across specific district portfolios. They will be carrying out an audit of our open spaces to pinpoint actual improvements that could be made; finding open spaces, or parts of open spaces that might for instance have grassland or woodland that could be improved. This data will be sense checked regarding any practical issues or future plans; for instance where grassland has been identified for other requirements such as additional football pitches.

This supports wider initiatives being delivered by the County Council through Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP) sub group for Bio-diversity bringing a level of consistency to work across the County and exploring a base line for improvements.

The Council plants trees as part of an ongoing annual programme and is conscious of campaigns to increase tree cover by specific amounts.

East Herts as a district currently has approximately 10% tree canopy cover (4,728 ha) although this does not include small wooded areas and sites less than 0.5 ha. The Council is proud of the work it has already undertaken in terms of tree planting and management of our open spaces. Indeed over the last few years, through our Greenspace Action Plans, we have already undertaken considerable planting programmes in our open spaces, whilst at the same time attempting to maintain a balance to allow the continued multi-purpose use of these areas. We have more than 70,000 trees in our tree stock. These trees are located in a variety of settings such as woodland copses, hedgerow trees, enclosures around

major parks such as Pishiobury Park, a community woodland at Hartham Common, an extension to the woodland at Balls Wood and considerable planting schemes at Southern Country Park.

However, as the Council owns comparatively little land it is not possible for us to commit to planting significant new wooded areas ourselves unless some of that land currently used for other leisure purposes is given over to tree planting, this would be detrimental to our fundamental offer of recreational and sports facilities. Any purchase of new land is beyond the remit of this strategy.

The Council firmly recognises the need to work with other partners to encourage them to plant more trees not only for the purpose of carbon capture but also air quality and the general social benefits trees so clearly provide. We therefore expect to work with relevant partners where possible to consider options for planting additional trees on suitable land that they may manage.

We will continue to plant trees informed by the open space audit and by our risk management tree inspection programme which tracks potential opportunities to replace trees that have been lost for safety reasons. Whilst many of our larger open spaces have less capacity now for additional trees after several years of tree planting, we will begin to assess and plant in smaller Council owned spaces in residential areas where there is sufficient space.

We aim to set up a map supported web page for residents to express their interest in funding some of these new trees to help increase this valuable contribution to sustainability and climate control. This may be to remember a loved one or simply to demonstrate commitment. Volunteer planting will still be undertaken by our Friends Groups.



**Figure 8 Buryfield Local Park**

## Key Actions

The strategy is supported by an annual action plan that will be revised in line with the Council's corporate plan refresh.

Ref	Action	When	Who	Resource
<b>Accessible and Attractive</b>				
1	Create and maintain a comprehensive library of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)	2021	EHC	Operations
2	Work with our contractor; to offer a web based facility for customers to find out about grass cutting in their local area	2022	EHC	Glendale
3	Promote the "park herts" web tool	2022	EHC	Comms
4	Work with providers to promote activity in our parks and open space which support health and well being	2022-27	EHC	Operations / Providers
5	Complete litter and dog waste bin review	2022	EHC	Operations
6	Coordinate litter functions across services	2023	EHC	Operations / Waste
7	Take the lessons learnt through developing our major and larger parks to smaller open spaces, ensuring that the Green Flag concept of a good park is used to continue developing a network of accessible and attractive green spaces across the district	2022-27	EHC	Operations
<b>Commercial</b>				
8	Work with local providers to secure income through hiring out our open spaces for vending, physical activity and events	2022	EHC/ Provider s	Operations / Providers
9	Explore alternative delivery models	2022	EHC	Operations

Ref	Action	When	Who	Resource
10	Review all third party users and identify potential users to ensure that access improvements meet needs and to secure appropriate financial contributions toward maintaining parks as an asset	2023	EHC	Operations / External
<b>Environmental and Engaged</b>				
11	Continue to provide support to our Friends of Parks groups through our partnership arrangements with the Countryside Management Service	2022-27	EHC / CMS	Revenue Budget
12	Actively work to find ways of delivering the maintenance of our parks and open spaces to improve biodiversity and sustainability	2023-27	EHC	Revenue Budget
13	Act upon recommendations from an independent audit of our parks that finds opportunities to improve habitats and increase biodiversity	2022-27	EHC / CMS	Operations / External
14	Plant trees informed by inspection data and the habitat audit	2022-27	EHC / CMS	Revenue Budget
15	Identify locations within residential areas on Council owned land where native tree planting can be increased and develop a scheme to offer residents the opportunity to help fund this	2023		Operations
16	Develop verge/pollinator/wildflower initiatives	2022-27	EHC / CMS/HC C	Operations / External
17	Provide electric hook up points that ice cream vans can plug into in our parks, providing ice creams without noise and air pollution	2022	EHC	Operations
18	Manage and develop the grounds maintenance contract efficiently	2022-27	EHC	Operations
19	Deliver Lottery funded improvements at Castle Park, Bishop's Stortford	2021-23	EHC	NLHF / Capital / CMS
20	Apply for National Lottery Heritage Fund grant to improve Hertford Castle Grounds	2021	EHC	Operations / CMS

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Some national studies relating to Parks & Open Spaces

<https://www.parksmanagement.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Revaluing-Parks-and-Green-Spaces-Report.pdf>

[https://www.parksmanagement.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/improving\\_access\\_to\\_greenpace\\_2020\\_review.pdf](https://www.parksmanagement.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/improving_access_to_greenpace_2020_review.pdf)

<https://www.parksmanagement.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/the-value-of-public-space1.pdf>

<https://www.parksmanagement.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/recreating-parks.pdf>

<https://www.parksmanagement.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/managing-public-parks-during-covid-19-final-1.pdf>

<https://www.parksmanagement.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/making-parks-count-compressed-document.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>Green Space Action Plans

<https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/sports-leisure-parks/how-we-look-after-our-parks-open-spaces>

<sup>3</sup>Green Flag Award

<https://www.greenflagaward.org/>

<sup>4</sup>Corporate priorities

<https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/about-east-herts-0/vision-and-corporate-priorities>

<sup>5</sup>ParkHerts web based tool

<https://www.parksherts.co.uk/>

<sup>6</sup>Planning for Dog Ownership in New Developments: Reducing Conflict – Adding Value

<https://documents.hants.gov.uk/ccbs/countryside/planningfordogownership.pdf>

**Appendix 1** - Operating Policies and Guidance, See separate document

## Operations, Parks & Open Spaces Team



## Operating Policies and Guidance

These operating policies have been developed over a number of years to explain the Council's position on a range of activities. These policies underpin the work of the parks and open spaces strategy.

We will do our best to help residents resolve issues where we can but our position must always bear in mind the resources we have available and certain parameters within which we must operate.

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## Animals in Circuses

Whilst we have few circuses hiring our land and have not been approached by any which use wild animals, the Council has considered concerns raised about this matter and are confident it is not a practice which our customers would support. We have therefore introduced a clause within our rules and regulations for hiring open spaces which prohibits it.

Our research shows that this is a simple and effective control mechanism employed by a number of other local authorities.

The Council imposes a ban on the use of wild animals in circuses performing on East Herts Council land described in our open space hire rules as follows:

It is a condition of the grant of the authorisation that the organiser:

*Will not include the use of performing animals at the event, except those which are normally regarded as domesticated in the United Kingdom (i.e. horses, dogs, cats, birds used in falconry demonstrations, caged birds and rabbits) which may be used as an ancillary part of a performance.*

## **Ballgames in open spaces and play areas**

The Council manages more than 120 open spaces across the district including around 60 equipped play areas. Our play areas are located wherever possible at a reasonable distance from residential properties and in general we receive very few concerns about them. A small number of residents do have concerns about noise from children playing or kicking a ball about on an open space.

We installed play areas signs in 2011 to provide a welcome and to provide users with some sensible guidance. Those play areas which included a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) a goalball or basketball hoops or that are large enough to accommodate kick-about have a sign that permits ball games. All other play areas have a sign that includes “no ballgames”. These signs on all our play areas include a note that “dogs are banned from this play area”.

This reminds visitors that smaller play areas designed for younger children are not suitable for ballgames.

The Council does not and will not erect signs on any of our open green spaces to prohibit ball games. Our open spaces are there for all to enjoy including kicking a ball about. Our experience is that “no ball games” signs are not an effective solution to anti-social behaviour. There is no law to support this type of ban and such signs are therefore not enforceable.

We will always listen to concerns but our starting point is that young people have as much right to use our green spaces as any other resident.

If residents believe that a particular activity such as kicking a ball about is causing a nuisance they can contact customer services who will alert our Community Safety & Anti-Social Behaviour Team. They will work with us to investigate concerns.

In some instances they may not agree that kicking a ball about does constitute antisocial behaviour but where it does they will help to find a solution. That may include talking to the young people or if behaviour is exceptionally challenging, may involve support from the police. In some circumstances where the area is very small and close to property boundaries it might also include modifying the landscape with trees or shrubs to divert activity if there is a more suitable space nearby.

## **Events**

Our parks and open spaces can be used for events however requests must go through the event application process before being approved.

- **Event application Process**

If residents or businesses are planning an event and would like to hire one of our open spaces, they are required to provide us with some initial information so that we can consider the application. We may ask for more details depending on how complex the ideas are so it's best to tell us as much as you can at the first stage. We won't necessarily need a complete event management plan, but will need to understand how the event might impact upon the open space and other users and to gauge whether you are likely to be able to run it safely. Residents and businesses are to contact customer services to log their interest, the council will send the applicant an initial application form from which we can decide whether to authorise the event and to set an appropriate fee. The Council will make a charge where appropriate to offset the costs of maintaining and developing our parks. Customers should allow sufficient time to organise the event and seek our approval.

The type of information that we will need to know about are the intended activities are where in the park the customer would like to locate, number of participants, level of resources, health and safety issues, parking, access, expertise, any equipment you intend to use and whether the applicant has Public Liability Insurance in place if it is needed.

If applicants are planning a large event they may also need to seek guidance from our Safety Advisory Group (SAG). Further information can be found here: <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/community-wellbeing/community-events>

### **Fireworks in a Council park**

Any group or person letting off fireworks in a Council owned park or open space without authorisation would be breaking the law as explained on the government's web site;

<https://www.gov.uk/fireworks-the-law>

This states that "you must not set off or throw fireworks (including sparklers) in the street or other public places."

Organised firework displays will be authorised only where the organisers are able to demonstrate sufficiently rigorous event management including risk assessments covering crowd control and the provision of appropriately trained personnel. Organisers will be required to hold sufficient liability insurance cover to indemnify the Council. Applications are assessed through the event application process.

### **Bouncy castle / gazebo / tent / barbecue in a Council park**

We encourage residents to make the most of our parks and enjoy them in any way that does not adversely affect the park or have negative impact on other users.

Organised events must have our formal authority to proceed so that we can ensure risks have been properly considered and that the Council is able to make a charge where appropriate to offset costs of maintaining and developing our parks.

Families or groups of friends however, may gather in our parks as long as participants take sensible precautions to keep themselves and other park users safe. In some parks where space is limited, it is not appropriate for any group to spoil the enjoyment of the park for others.

We do not permit barbecues as they can present a risk to users and often result in hot coals being left that might present a fire risk. We would not allow the use of calor or butane gas in our parks unless as part of an authorised event.

Likewise, bouncy castles are not permitted unless erected and supervised by a professional supplier as part of an authorised event.

Camping is not permitted in our parks but we are happy for families to use gazebos for “one day” events. Gazebos cannot be left overnight. They should be located mindfully to avoid blocking access or enjoyment of the park for other users.

All litter and arisings from gatherings must be cleared. Litter can be left in bins but if they are full, as can happen on busy days, visitors must take their litter home for disposal.

## **Cattle in parks**

We have grazed cattle in our parks for many years on and off. It is very important that visitors follow the country code and keep their dogs under control. The few incidents that have been reported to the council are where the animals have been frightened by dogs that have not been kept under control or on a lead in the park. This is of course the same across the country in areas where the public come into contact with cattle through parks or across public rights of way. If residents and visitors visit any of our parks where there are cattle with a dog we ask that this is taken into consideration.

We are aware that some residents are worried by the presence of cattle in some of our parks such as Pishiobury Park, Stortford Meadows and Hartham Common and would like to provide some reassurance:

We are aware that the cattle can be quite inquisitive, especially when they arrive at the beginning of the season (April/May). If residents are not comfortable with

this, waving arms about will send the animals in the opposite direction but the more natural reaction to run away from them is not advised. The cattle are then likely, given their inquisitive nature, to follow.

Our graziers are in the park a number of times during the week and are always happy to talk to visitors about their animals.

The cattle are an important part of conservation grazing and ecological management of the park. We have been fortunate enough to have a herd of rare breed cattle in Pishiobury for over ten years and we can assure residents that there is no great risk to the public. The cattle are all aged under 30 months and are carefully selected, by the grazier, for their suitability to maintain this important permanent parkland pasture. Only steers (bullocks) are used for grazing at Pishiobury and are known for their docility and calm temperament. The animals seen at Pishiobury are all from pedigree, rare or traditional breeds. The Longhorns come from our oldest recorded indigenous breed. The Herefords are from some of the oldest known bloodlines and British Whites have been seen on parkland pastures for centuries.

We understand that some visitors are not used to seeing large animals in parks and may be un-nerved but the benefits in terms of conservation and education are huge. We hope therefore to be able to continue to help people understand these benefits and to be able to enjoy the park alongside the cattle and of course all the wildlife that it supports.

We install signs to provide visitors with some guidance and information about the animals. For further information about why we graze our parks in this way and about the animals in general c b found on the Council website.

<https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/sports-leisure-parks/local-parks-open-spaces-0/parks-open-spaces-sawbridgeworth/pishiobury-park>

## **Dogs in our Parks**

- **Dog Fouling**

We aim to ensure our parks welcome visitors without unnecessary restriction by encouraging responsible behaviour. For example, we work with dog trainers to help educate visitors, have installed a dog training area in one of our parks and have introduced some legislation which we believe is fair and proportionate.

This legislation was considered through a consultation process and is contained within a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO). It does not ban dogs from any of our parks but does deal with a range of issues including dog fouling and control. It excludes dogs from certain areas including fenced tennis courts,

bowling greens and marked football pitches when a game is in progress. It is an offence to allow a dog to foul in any East Herts owned open space.

There are 12.5 million dogs in the UK in 33% of households. The majority of dog owners behave responsibly and many share concerns about the few who do not. Our view is that residents generally prefer to comply with sensible guidelines that they understand and can relate to. This approach should help to retain the support of dog owners.

Further information on the PSPO with links to the specific rules relating to dogs can be found at:

<https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/community-wellbeing/public-spaces-protection-order-pspo>

We will along with the police take action on dog fouling if we witness anybody not picking up after their dogs. We regularly patrol our parks, if residents are concerned that a dog owner is not meeting the requirements to clear up after their dog in one of our listed parks and open spaces they can report this on our "Report Dog Fouling Form" at

<https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/environmental-health/dog-fouling-dog-control/report-dog-fouling-form>

If residents believe that an owner has allowed their dog to behave aggressively or dangerously then they may report this to the police on their non-emergency number 101 or 999 if the incident is serious and ongoing. East Herts Council is not empowered to deal with or enforce issues with dangerous dogs.

- **Dog control - fencing**

Whilst we try to make our parks great places for all residents to visit, the Council cannot prioritise expenditure on dog proof fencing. The Council has a finite budget available to maintain and develop its parks and open spaces. We believe that our parks are already good places to walk dogs but that secure fencing to contain dogs is not a justifiable expense.

The shrubs and vegetation around the boundaries of our parks need to be pruned back periodically in order to promote healthy growth and in some instances to afford access to our contractors to clear litter or fly tipped material. They are generally planted to attractively screen out buildings and to create an enclosed character but are not planted to provide security to residents or to create a barrier to prevent dogs from escaping.

We do understand that our parks are very popular with dog owners and we welcome such use. We are keen to promote responsible dog ownership and for dog owners to have sufficient control of their pets to be able to let them run without the need for secure fencing. It is important that dog owners are able to get their dogs to return when needed, not just for their own safety but for the benefit of other park users. Even in our parks where we have stock proof cattle fencing, there are still kissing gates through which dogs are able to escape. Stock proof fencing may not contain smaller dogs. It is far better that dog owners take responsibility for their animals than for the council to try and guarantee enclosure.

We understand that some dogs may chase rabbits or suddenly scatter if spooked but would advise that where there is a risk nearby such as a rail line, road, cattle or other potential hazard, they should then be kept on a lead. The Council cannot commit to installing and maintaining dog proof fencing around the perimeter of all its parks.

## **Drones and model aircraft**

The Council's parks are there for all to visit and explore. We have no problem with people enjoying their hobbies in our parks as long as they are doing so legally and with respect for other visitors.

### *Byelaws*

We have introduced byelaws in some of our larger parks; Southern Country Park, Bishop's Stortford, Northern Parkland, Bishop's Stortford, Lower Park Crescent, Bishops Stortford and Pishiobury Park, Sawbridgeworth.

<https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/sports-leisure-parks/rules-regulations-parks-open-spaces>

The Northern Parkland and Pishiobury Park byelaws were designed to include the following regulation on the basis of their location and previous record of people flying model aircraft.

### **PART 5**

#### **MODEL AIRCRAFT**

16. In this Part:

“model aircraft” means an aircraft which weighs not more than 7 kilograms without its fuel;

“power-driven” means driven by:

(a) the combustion of petrol vapour or other combustible substances;

(b) jet propulsion or by means of a rocket, other than by means of a small reaction motor powered by a solid fuel pellet not exceeding 2.54 centimetres in length;

or

(c) one or more electric motors or by compressed gas.

General prohibition

17. No person shall cause any power-driven model aircraft to:

(a) take off or otherwise be released for flight or control the flight of such an aircraft in the ground; or

(b) land in the ground without reasonable excuse.

This byelaw is still active and enforceable.

### *New legislation*

Since November 2019, anyone flying a drone or model aircraft between 250g-20kg must have it registered and be able to demonstrate that they are able to fly responsibly by passing an online theory test.

<https://dronesafe.uk/drone-code/>

If it's a "toy" drone that we are sure is under 250g then as long as the user is respecting others and not causing a nuisance and adhering to the "dronesafe" guidance, we wouldn't have any objection to them flying in our parks.

### *Reporting misuse*

The Council is not empowered to enforce the law on this but we do have an interest in ensuring our customers are behaving responsibly and safely. Our advice to residents is that they should make the police aware of any incidents of concern on the 101 non-emergency number. If we are on site and find customers flying drones over 250g in our parks, we will ask them to stop if they cannot prove that the aircraft is registered.

If a customer makes us aware of what they believe to be unsafe behaviour involving such aircraft in one of our open spaces, our Inspectors will monitor during their routine visits. If they see a drone or anyone that looks like they are piloting one, they will speak to them if possible. However, the reality is that some of these aircraft have a long range; pilots can potentially fly them remotely from other locations.

Council officers may need to call the police themselves if somebody is flying dangerously and refuses to stop.



The Civil Aviation Authority provides some further guidance about reporting misuse of unmanned aircraft and drones:

<https://www.caa.co.uk/Consumers/Unmanned-aircraft/General-guidance/Reporting-misuse-of-a-unmanned-aircraft-and-drones/>

## **E-scooters in parks**

Whilst there is interest in developing alternative modes of transport, it still remains illegal to use privately owned electric scooters on footpaths or in public spaces. They are covered by the same laws and regulations that apply to all motor vehicles.

The law is explained by the government on their website should residents wish to find out about this in more detail:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/powered-transporters>

If residents witness illegal activity involving a privately owned e-scooter either on the highway or in one of our parks we would ask that they make the police aware. This should be through the non-emergency 101 number unless it's believed that the behaviour of the rider is such that immediate apprehension may be required. The Council are not empowered to enforce the laws relating to e-scooters. If the police find that there is an increasing problem identified in our parks through calls from the public and their own observations, they may, subject to available resources, be able to focus patrols on this and take appropriate action.

Our own monitoring officers will continue to observe areas for anti-social or illegal behaviour in our parks and would make the police aware in the same way.

The Council will of course revise this position should the law change to make these vehicles legal to use in a public place.

## **Graffiti in parks**

The Council is defined as a Principal Litter Authority and has a statutory duty (under the Environmental Protection Act 1990) to keep "relevant land" (that is, land in the open air that is under its control including the public highway) clear of litter and refuse. However, it does not have a duty to remove graffiti from

property it does not own. Under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2003) the Council may issue a Graffiti Removal Notice requiring the owner of the land to remove the graffiti with a statutory 28 day period but this power can only be used against 'statutory undertakers' e.g. Highways authorities; telecoms and utility companies that have street furniture on the highway itself. It does not apply to private property adjacent to the highway.

In practice it is generally not constructive to impose such fines on private residents that we may be working with to try to resolve the problem. Our Environmental Inspectors are accredited in order to be able to take action against anyone caught defacing property. The Clean Neighbourhoods Act (2005) enables East Herts Council to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) to those found to be committing "Environmental Crime". This legislation allows the Council and the residents to work together in keeping the streets, parks and open spaces free from graffiti, fly-posting and other Environmental Crime.

As part of this new legislation we will issue FPN's to anyone caught carrying out acts of graffiti. Graffiti in this context is classed as unauthorised writings or drawings on a surface in a public place. If residents in the area are able to identify the culprits we will take what action we can to bring them to justice.

If we can identify culprits there is also sometimes the opportunity to take further action with Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) or Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs).

Through our Waste Services contract, the Council will aim to remove graffiti from East Herts Council owned property within seven to ten days of it being reported and within 24 hours if the graffiti is racist/offensive. For non-racist/ offensive graffiti (e.g. tagging) which is visible from one of our parks or open spaces, we will aim to identify and make contact with the land owner to request its removal.

We are also able to offer a service to residents to remove graffiti from their property charging them only the cost to the Council.

Where we take action to remove incidents of graffiti on behalf of residents, we need also to be aware of the liability for any damage caused to private property as a result of removing graffiti and will seek a waiver from property owners.

## Helium Balloons and Sky Lanterns

The Council bans the intentional release of sky lanterns and helium balloons from its land. We have taken this action to protect the environment as outlined below and to highlight to residents and event coordinators as well as Council tenants and property occupiers, the hazards in releasing lanterns and balloons.

This policy applies to all East Herts District Council holdings and land ownership.

The principles and commitments set out in this policy apply to all services and decisions of the Council and to our contractors and partners delivering council services on our behalf.

This policy does not apply to piloted hot air balloons.

### *Background*

- The release of sky lanterns and helium balloons can be a visual spectacle often used during festivals, anniversaries and as a part of large and small events.
- Sky lanterns and helium balloons have been identified as a hazard for wildlife and farm animals. Balloons, plastic parts, wire and ribbons can all be eaten by animals and wildlife causing a risk of choking or blockage leading to starvation and other internal injuries. In addition they can get mixed together with grass cut for silage which is then fed to livestock.
- Sky lanterns pose a further risk as a fire hazard with the potential to spark fires in crops, heath, moorland, forests and buildings.
- Plastics which are used in sky lanterns and balloons are a major source of aquatic and global marine pollution. They cause harm by entering the food chain as they are broken down by the sun and the action of water.
- The Marine Conservation Society (MCS) – is an internationally recognised charity for the protection of seas, shores and wildlife which has produced a detailed Pollution Policy and position statement on balloons and sky lanterns, asking UK Local Authorities to recognise balloons and sky lanterns as a form of littering and to ban all outdoor releases. This stance is actively supported by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), the National Farmers Union (NFU) and many other public organisations.

- Debris from both balloons and lanterns has been found littered across the County and District Council estate and wider countryside.

#### *Principles and Commitments*

- The Council will not permit the release of any sky lanterns or helium balloons from land or property which it owns and/or controls.
- It is the responsibility of all Services to comply with and implement this policy as appropriate to their Service.
- The Council will highlight to residents and event organisers as well as Council tenants and property occupiers who enquire about releasing lanterns and balloons what the hazards are in releasing them and why the Council prohibits the release.

#### *Notes*

It should be noted that this policy is intended to prohibit the deliberate release of sky lanterns (including helium balloons) such as the mass release of lanterns and balloons at events. The council recognises that there may be instances where single helium balloons will be accidentally released into the environment such as may happen at children's parties.

## **Invasive plants**

- **Giant Hogweed on private land visible from highway**

The Council will carry out an inspection if Giant Hogweed is found on our own land and will remove it if we determine that it is presenting a risk to the public.

Residents more often notice this large weed in areas of land not owned by East Herts Council. The Council has no duty or powers to take action with regard to invasive plants on privately owned land.

There is information available on the government's web site about control measures should residents find Giant Hogweed on their own land and wish to find out more:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prevent-the-spread-of-harmful-invasive-and-non-native-plants>

Giant hogweed is one of the most commonly found invasive, non-native plants. The advice provided is that landowners do not have to remove these plants or control them on their land. This is with the exception of Japanese knotweed

whereby if landowners allow it to grow on anyone else's property they could be prosecuted for causing a nuisance.

If residents spot Giant Hogweed near to the highway on land that they believe may be owned by the County Council or where pedestrians might easily come into contact with it the County Council may investigate and decide whether any action is necessary as part of their highway fault reporting assessments. Noxious weeds are likely to be categorised by County as a potential hazard but the risk level they attribute would depend upon the proximity of the infestation to a public area and the likelihood that pedestrians might come into close proximity with it. Noxious weeds are those covered by the Weeds Act 1959 and Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The prescribed weeds are: Ragwort, Broad Leaved Dock, Curled Dock, Creeping Thistle, giant hogweed, Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam and Spear Thistle.

Customers who have concerns about such issues on or near the highway should report them on the County's Highways Fault reporting web page:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/report-a-problem/report-a-street-light-or-pothole.aspx>

If it is on private land, they may decide not to investigate and if it is on County land they will make an assessment of risk and may decide not to take any action. If noxious weeds are found on highway verges managed as part of the agency agreement we have with County, they may commission us to action their removal but this is not required as part of our routine verge maintenance works that we carry out on their behalf.

- **Japanese Knotweed on East Herts Council land**

Japanese knotweed was brought to Britain as an ornamental garden plant in the mid-nineteenth century. Since then it has become widespread in the wild and can cause serious problems by displacing native flora and causing structural damage.

#### *The Council's Role*

The Council monitors the occurrence of Japanese Knotweed on the Council's own Parks, Open Spaces and verges and will take appropriate action when it is identified.

The Council does not have a responsibility to either monitor or control Japanese Knotweed on land that it does not own. We may record sightings on land for

which the Council is not responsible to help us track its presence in the district but we will take no action relating to its control unless it is on our own land or on neighbouring land where it might potentially create a threat to Council Property.

Concerns relating to the illegal disposal or transporting of Japanese Knotweed can be reported by residents directly to the Environment Agency on their 24hr incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60. They will also provide advice about managing waste on their customer services line 08708 506 506.

Concerns relating to the illegal planting or spreading of Japanese Knotweed in the wild should be reported to the police. Local Authorities have some enforcement powers in this specific area but this has not been identified as a District Council responsibility in East Hertfordshire.

### *Legislation*

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 provides the primary controls on the release of non-native species into the wild in Great Britain. It is an offence under section 14(2) of the Act to 'plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild' any plant listed in Schedule 9, Part II. This includes Japanese Knotweed.
- It is not an offence to simply have it growing in your garden or on your land and there is no legal requirement to control it if it is (unless doing so forms part of a legally binding contract or agreement with another party).
- Private landowners may be wise to consider how the weed on their own land might affect others if it were to grow outside their boundary.
- It is not listed in the Weeds Act and is not a 'notifiable' weed so there is no need to report its presence on your land (unless doing so forms part of a legally binding contract or agreement with another party).
- The Environmental Protection Act - Duty of Care - Regulations 1991 state that any material containing Japanese Knotweed taken off a site must be safely contained and disposed of at a licensed disposal site according to current guidelines.

### *What we can do*

Where Japanese Knotweed is found on land within the Council's control the Council will take appropriate action to minimise the risk of spread and where appropriate, endeavour to eradicate it in line with current good practice.

No specific inspection of Council owned land is carried out to locate potential occurrences of Japanese Knotweed. There is no legal requirement to do so and this would be prohibitively time consuming. However, monitoring officers have

been trained to identify the weed and to record any occurrence of it whilst carrying out other routine contract or open space inspections.

The Council's grounds maintenance contractor is responsible through our contract to report occurrences on council land and to ensure that all their staff are trained to do so.

A property check of land ownership may be undertaken to identify the adjacent landowner. This would only be necessary however if they are likely to be affected by any proposed control of the weed or they own the land where the weed may have originated from. If necessary, they will be notified of our intention to control the weed and of the risks to the environment if the weed is allowed to continue growing. The Council may offer assistance to apply the appropriate herbicide to control the weed on their land if it is present if they give their written permission.

If approached by a landowner wanting to control a patch that spreads onto Council owned land, the Council will co-operate with control measures provided any other potentially affected landowners are willing to participate and providing that sufficient funds are available to do so.

If the weed is allowed to grow on adjacent land and is found to cause damage to Council property, appropriate action would be considered in relation to the offence to 'plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild'.

#### *General Control considerations*

The control and eradication of the weed is the responsibility of the land owner, and on sites where it is present, a policy of control leading to eradication is regarded as best practice.

Studies of the weed have been undertaken by various organisations. A chemical application applied to the whole leaf growth at a height of approximately 1 metre has been found to be the most satisfactory control during active growth. Control may be applied before the plant reaches this height dependent upon the density of the canopy. If the growth has become woody, the stems should be cut and the new growths sprayed. The height of the plant early on in the season may reduce as treatment continues.

Timing of the application will depend upon vegetative growth that season. This is likely to be April to May followed by subsequent applications as determined by our specialist contractor.

Ongoing treatment will only be continued where it can be justified and will be stopped once control has effectively prevented any regrowth. Each site will be inspected periodically to check for regrowth until the Council is confident that the plant at that location has been eradicated.

#### *Grass cutting and Japanese Knotweed*

As research has shown that the plant can be spread by the smallest amount of cut stem material' extreme care should be taken to ensure that areas of Knotweed are not cut, flailed or strimmed unless the work is being undertaken as part of an agreed control operation.

- **Herbicide Use**

The Council carry out weed killing on pavements and gullies across the district on behalf of the County Council as part of an agency agreement.

The work is aimed at keeping the district tidy. One of the benefits of controlling weeds on highway pavements is that it minimises and supports the work that our street cleansing team would otherwise have to carry out to mechanically remove weeds. Where pavements are regularly brushed, the weeds cannot take a hold so easily. Some weeds are more persistent than others however and some areas need sweeping less frequently. Controlling weeds helps to prevent damage to the surface infrastructure and reduces trip hazards.

Our grounds maintenance contractor delivers two applications of herbicide each year under this agreement using a product called glyphosate. The brand we use is Roundup. This is a non-selective herbicide meaning it will kill most plants. It is widely used to control unwanted vegetation in parks and gardens and works by entering the leaves of the plant.

We also use herbicide to control weeds in shrub beds and to prevent encroachment of grass and weeds across footpaths in some of our open spaces.

We explored different alternatives to chemical control through the tender of our grounds maintenance contract in 2019 and were advised by tenderers that this is the most cost effective solution. Whilst we are aware of other weed control systems such as hot foam and propane flame, these are still relatively expensive and not proven to be as effective as herbicide.

We ensure our contractors apply herbicide in accordance with the relevant legal guidelines which include optimising their effectiveness whilst minimising the volume applied. They must design their weed control regime to control the use



of chemicals, by ensuring that they are applied at the correct time and using the most effective application method at the minimum effective dosage rate.

Glyphosate is not used as an exclusive solution but as part of a chemical regime which uses another product earlier in the season; a residual chemical (Chikara) applied in February to suppress (hold back) weed growth. This reduces the volume of glyphosate used.

We employ the use of hand weeding and hoeing in some ornamental areas including herbaceous beds and annual bedding where it is the most effective way of maintaining high standards. Hand weeding across the entire district however is not economically viable.

We do not use herbicide in areas of our parks set aside for conservation or habitat improvement unless absolutely necessary; to control invasive weeds such as Japanese Knotweed for example. We aim to maintain our Green Flag awarded parks without the use of herbicide to comply with their criteria.

## **Benches, plaques and memorial trees**

- **donating a bench or plaque**

We will consider all applications for new benches or plaques. We will only install new benches where we feel there is a real need for them. We won't fill our parks with too many benches but find that most requests are for larger parks where it is usually possible to accommodate a new one.

If the location is one where we have already identified the need for a new bench, we may consider funding the installation. If not then residents will be asked to pay the full cost. We will meet residents on site to agree the precise location. This will take into consideration preferences (a favourite view perhaps) but must also include a sensible approach to spreading our benches out to create convenient stopping points for visitors wishing to take a rest. We will not place them where they might encourage anti-social behaviour such as unreasonable noise near residential properties.

We generally use two styles of benches to retain some design consistency across our parks and because they are tried and tested to resist vandalism. In most of our parks we use the earth anchor Evergreen recycled plastic bench which has cast Iron end frames and boards made from recycled material.





In some of our rural parks we use a bespoke chunky oak bench designed and supplied to us by a local specialist (e.g. Pishiobury Park).

These come flat packed and can be installed by volunteers if that is appropriate.

We do not allow standalone plaques in our parks to commemorate trees. With the exception of benches, our view is that the place for memorials is the local churchyard or cemetery. Previously we have allowed brass plaques which residents have arranged for themselves. We have installed these by routing out to let the plaque sit flush with the surface, glued and screwed. However, we now prefer to have words engraved directly into the seat back which is far more vandal resistant.



This can either be retro fitted to an existing bench by replacing a slat or ordered with a new bench. Residents will be asked to pay

for the full cost of this but we will make the arrangement with the supplier on their behalf as part of an order for a new bench. Once we have agreed initial details, customers would email the precise text to us before we contact the supplier who would then confirm to both parties. If retro fitted the resident would also pay the installation cost.

We've not found it necessary to set up any formal agreement to control these arrangements or to protect the authority. We would transfer an engraved slat free of charge if we need to replace a bench. We cannot fund a replacement if an engraved board is damaged or stolen.

- **Request to plant a memorial tree**

We are happy to support any initiative to plant new trees in our parks where we have space to do so and where it fits in with our wider plans. When we receive a request for a memorial tree we will consider whether the proposed location is appropriate in relation to the landscape and the environment. We will also discuss the cost. New trees planted as part of our normal programme can be the subject of vandalism but in some parks they fair better than others. Where we have sufficient funds we will sometimes install protection fencing but often we will simply plant a greater number of whips (very small tree saplings), some of which will reach maturity.

The location and the species are important. We aim to plant only native trees in our wider park landscapes. Ornamental trees are appropriate in a formal landscaping scheme or residential garden but not appropriate for our larger open spaces or reserves that are managed in the interests of biodiversity.

Some parks such as Hartham Common, whilst being a large park does not have a great need for more trees in its open areas. It is possible in some of these parks however that we can carry out some replacement planting in woodland areas, at perimeters where we may seek to soften fencing or in localised areas of formality.

If residents would like to consider planting a new tree with our guidance in a different location, we would be happy to discuss this.

We do not allow plaques near trees or any other feature in our parks to commemorate people but we can consider donations from families to plant a tree in memory of a loved one. We also encourage residents to think about engravings on our benches. *(see links to Memorabilia in parks / donating a bench or plaque)*

We can offer guidance on suitable trees and can help to find the right location. In dedicating a tree or bench to a park or open space, it is placed there for all users to enjoy and retained as public property.

- **Memorabilia in parks**

The Council understands that floral tributes and cards, while they remain, provide a visible and poignant focus of grief for families and friends. Other items such as articles of clothing, photographs and toys provide a very personal and heart felt reminder to families of their loved ones.

In the same way as many highway authorities, we are supportive of short term acts of remembrance, whether this is at the roadside or in a place that is special to family or the person grieved for. The County Council for instance allows flowers or small decorations to be placed at the roadside for one month after a collision.

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/births-deaths-marriages-and-citizenship/deaths/roadside-memorials.aspx>

They do not however allow permanent memorials on the roadside and remove them after a period of time, working with the police liaison officers and the families to deal with this as sensitively as possible.

East Herts District Council does not allow memorabilia such as toys, clothing and banners to remain on display in our parks. We do not allow plaques near trees or any other feature in our parks to commemorate people. We understand that some residents find comfort from these actions but our view is that the place for memorials is the churchyard or cemetery. We find that floral tributes or any other memorabilia compromise visual amenity and can hinder maintenance of our parks.

We will ask for items to be removed or will make arrangements to have them taken away. We may support residents for a period of two weeks while they consider where or how they might like to more permanently remember their relatives or friends.

We appreciate cooperation in this matter. If residents would like to consider a lasting memory in one of our parks, we can offer a service in some circumstances to donate a bench with an engraving or plant a tree (see links to donating a bench or plaque / request to plant a memorial tree)

In dedicating a bench to a park or open space, it is placed there for all visitors to enjoy and use.

## **Metal detecting and magnet fishing**

Whilst we endeavour to allow as many diverse activities on our open spaces as we can, we regret that we cannot permit metal detecting on our land.

We have reflected on the National Trust approach to guide us.

We know most metal detectorists have a genuine interest in history and archaeology, and take care to report their finds, but we need to guard against finds being removed without proper recording or archaeological supervision. All our land has archaeological potential and is managed for the benefit of everyone – when finds are taken out of context we lose a piece of the jigsaw, making it harder for us to care for our archaeology.

Some detectorists are covered by National Council for Metal Detecting insurance and we are encouraged that they follow their guidelines for responsible metal detecting. We do not however, have the resources to evaluate those wishing to metal detect on our land, to assess any project they may have designed or to decide which of our parks might or might not be suitable.

Where we believe that archaeological investigations are needed to explore the history of one of our parks or to support our own developments, we will employ a specialist company. On these occasions we work closely with the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Team to ensure that our consultants are coordinating effectively and operating within the relevant legislation and guidance.

We commissioned a company; Oxford East Archaeology for example, to explore history below the ground at Grange Paddocks to support our plans to develop the leisure centre.

## **Pests & nuisance from wildlife**

- **Pest Control**

The Council has no duty to control rats, wasps or other pests across the district and is not able to provide a service to do so. There are professional companies widely available that are able to offer such services.

We will carry out pest control on our own land (open spaces, buildings etc) where we believe there is a problem. This will not however include attempting to trap or poison rats in our parks. We see rats in our parks particularly where there is a water source and where there is food to sustain them. Unfortunately where there is litter or where visitors feed ducks with bread, this provides them with a food source.

We try to encourage visitors not to drop litter and to feed ducks with appropriate food that is neither harmful to ducks nor left as food for rats. (see [link](#) Feeding ducks)

Trying to reduce rat populations in our parks with pest control methods would be ineffective and a waste of resources. It would also risk harming wildlife present in our parks such as other small mammals and birds.

A wasp's nest in one of our parks is unlikely to present an actionable risk to the public but we will investigate where residents have legitimate concerns.

### *Service for Vulnerable Residents*

We are however able to provide a pest control service for vulnerable residents, that is residents on income related benefits who own their own homes.

If residents rent their property then they should contact their landlord or housing association as they are the owner of the building and are ultimately responsible for the building's condition.

The council only provides a service, for vulnerable customers of owner occupied properties. For other customers we recommend that they use an approved company which has signed up to one of the industry bodies such as the [npta.org.uk](http://npta.org.uk) or the [bpca.org.uk](http://bpca.org.uk)

The company that council use to deliver a service to vulnerable customers is Glendale but they are not currently able to provide any external service to other residents. If residents are employing a company to provide pest control, we advise them to get a number of quotes, confirm what is actually included in the treatment cost and get recommendations from others or use a trade review site such as checkatrade.com.

More information on how to prevent pests can be found on our web site:

<https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/environmental-health/pest-control>

- **Bird Droppings from trees**

We occasionally receive calls about birds roosting in the trees near to houses and creating a mess.

Trees growing on highway verges are either owned by or under the management of the County Council.

We inspect of all our own trees regularly and carry out any maintenance that is needed to manage the risk of damage or injury. Any nuisance presented by birds however, is not the fault of the tree or the Council.

The Council values the trees under its care and does not accept that any nuisance experienced from bird droppings, from birds roosting or nesting in a tree is sufficient cause to fell or carry out pruning. It is indeed an offence to disturb birds while they're nesting; building a nest, in or near a nest that contains their young.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wild-birds-protection-surveys-and-licences>

Pruning trees is not the solution, as the birds will simply roost on the remaining branches or other nearby trees. Even when trees are pruned, they will continue

to be inhabited by wildlife. Healthy and attractive trees are an asset to the environment.

If vehicles are affected, residents are advised to consider, garaging, covering, regular cleaning or alternatively parking away from the tree.

Where residents own trees in which birds are roosting there are alternative actions that residents might want to consider:

- Installation of commercially available pigeon spikes onto the level limbs where birds are likely to land
- Use of strung wires placed along the landing areas
- Application of a non-toxic bird repelling caulk
- Installation of audio devices
- Use of 'mock' birds, targeted towards the correct species

The Council will not fund these sorts of initiatives on its own trees.

- **Bees around Ivy**

The Ivy Bee (*Colletes Hederae*), is a species of plasterer bee, and are harmless. They are a relatively new species to the UK. Many residents report these bees as nesting in large patches of Ivy, mostly during the autumnal months of September through to November. The females collect pollen from the ivy flowers, whilst the males dig burrows and prepare for winter. These bees are often found in large numbers but are harmless and best left alone. Their work is vital to their survival, and the Council advises that residents do not disturb them.

- **Feeding ducks**

It is important to know what is healthy to feed ducks as the wrong food can have serious consequences. Please don't feed bread to the ducks in our parks. We have provided some information to explain why this is at:

<https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/sports-leisure-parks/feeding-ducks>

## **Play areas**

- **Sand play – animal faeces**

The vast majority of people we talk to about play areas with sand are fully in favour of these facilities. Not only is it a safe surface to minimise the risk of head injuries, it is also a fun play and learning element in its own right and adds an attractive character to a play area.

For instance; at Trinity Close in Bishop's Stortford the "bowl" characteristic tucked into the hillside provides a more natural and welcoming feel than it



would had we just used grass matting or rubber pads. The huge sand pit in Hartham Common play area in Hertford has proved incredibly popular and provides a great platform for the water play facilities.

We find that sand is very popular wherever we install it.

We install fences and gates on most of our play areas. These are installed for a range of reasons, sometimes where busy roads or rivers may present a potential hazard. They are generally installed though to prevent dogs from entering play spaces designed for young children to minimise the risk of Toxocariasis, a rare infection caused by roundworm parasites. Humans can catch it from handling soil or sand contaminated with infected animal faeces. Roundworm parasites are most commonly found in cats, dogs and foxes, and are more likely to affect young children. This is because children are more likely to come into contact with contaminated soil when they play and put their hands in their mouths. Older children are generally less likely to do this.

We believe, along with many other authorities across the country and leading play safety experts that the benefits of sand are considerable and outweigh the low risk of any health issues from animal droppings, particularly with the control measures we put in place.

Whilst cats are able to climb fences and gain access to our play spaces, the risks of Toxocariasis are reduced by preventing access to dogs. Dogs are excluded from all our play areas through the Public Spaces Protection Orders.

<https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/environmental-health/dog-fouling-dog-control>

All our play areas with sand are inspected and maintained at least three times per week which includes raking through the sand to remove any debris or animal faeces. The wider park areas are also visited regularly to clear litter.

- **Play area noise and frequent use (Antisocial behaviour)**

We appreciate that noise from play areas can become an annoyance for some at certain times. While many of us are now working from home, we are experiencing different pressures and it is understandable that we might prefer a quiet environment during periods when we would not normally have been at home. However, we must stress that these are public open spaces.



Play areas are an essential part of the community, providing somewhere for young people to play and socialise. Most of our play areas have been in their current location for many years and do not present any significant problems.

Young people and parents are likely to gather at play areas on their way home from school. We would expect a certain amount of noise generated from this and do not agree on the face of it that children playing in or around a play area is unreasonable behaviour.

We do have a Community Safety & Anti-Social Behaviour team at East Herts Council who are able to investigate concerns in more detail. Residents can find out more about their work here:

<https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/community-wellbeing/anti-social-behaviour>

We advise that residents consider the information provided and, if residents would like to seek further assistance, submit concerns through the Anti-Social Behaviour Report Form with a little more information about how often residents are disturbed by noise and whether it is always at the same time. Our team can then consider this further and advise whether they feel that the behaviour residents are describing is unreasonable or not, and if so how they may be able to help.

## **Risk assessments in parks**

The Council carries out routine inspections of all its parks and open spaces including those with woodland areas.

These are predominantly undertaken through our grounds maintenance contract. Their purpose is to ensure that the areas are as safe, secure and fit for use as is possible (having regard to practicability and available resources), and to ensure that any areas or items requiring reactive maintenance identified during the course of an inspection are speedily addressed. These inspections will be undertaken in two ways; frequent routine visual checks and less frequent operational inspections to a more detailed level. Routine inspections are planned but not formally recorded, operational inspections are planned and recorded in detail.

These inspections are supplemented by audited client inspections to assess open spaces and to monitor contract performance.

We also commission detailed inspections of trees in our parks.

- **Rope swings in Woodlands**

The Council carries out risk assessments in relation to its operations which are periodically reviewed and updated. These note considerations for open space inspections including any obvious signs of play such as worn grass on slopes (running, makeshift sledges, bmx bikes etc.), clearings in woodland, graffiti, ropes in trees, concentrated litter collection indicating social gathering spots. Our inspectors will decide whether these should be removed, made safer, encouraged and/or monitored.

There is of course a good argument that “natural” play is important and that young people are actually very good at assessing risks. We like where possible to encourage and facilitate young people making use of our open spaces for play. There have however been incidents across the country involving serious injury where rope swings have been erected without the benefit of professional guidance.

In practice, rope swings are generally removed as they have been installed without the Council’s input or any informed risk assessment that we are aware of and may not therefore provide for safe use.

## **Scattering of Ashes on East Herts Council Open Spaces**

We aim to ensure our parks and open spaces can be used and enjoyed by as many people as possible for as many diverse activities as we can. We consider how we can accommodate people’s needs fairly and sensitively. As with any request to carry out an activity in our parks we consider how that might affect other users, the environment and our maintenance regimes.

We are aware families are increasingly choosing to scatter ashes at favourite beauty spots or in places their loved ones were fond of. The general consensus amongst professionals in this field is that there are no legal restrictions to prevent this but it is widely accepted that relatives should seek the landowner’s permission.

If able to satisfy some simple criteria, we will provide our permission, offering our condolences at such a sad time. If we decide a requested location is inappropriate, we will try to suggest a more suitable site. There may be occasions when we are unable to help.

We will not agree to people scattering ashes in all our public parks and gardens, especially in urban areas. Many of our parks are relatively small and visited by high numbers of people. If relatives wish to conduct a ceremony, it is unlikely they will have the privacy or space that they need to make it a special event. Some of our parks are environmentally sensitive or need to be maintained to high ornamental standards.

Some sites however, such as The Warren in Hartham Common or the woodland areas surrounding Pishiobury Park are natural spaces with a fair degree of seclusion where residents would be able to scatter their relative's ashes without adversely affecting others' enjoyment of the park or causing any damage to the environment.

If choosing to scatter on a river on our land – we would still like to be consulted. Residents don't need special permission, but should consult the Environment Agency's guidance:

<https://www.scattering-ashes.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/GEHO0306BKIK-e-e.pdf>

Once we have agreed a location in a suitable park, we simply ask that people let us know when they would like to proceed so we can make a note in our events database. This information will not of course be shared outside the authority but means that, should we receive any enquiries, our team will be aware of the permission.

We receive some requests for memorial plaques in our parks and do not allow these other than upon benches. We will not permit residents to use trees or other features in the park as memorials or to leave flowers or personal items. We feel that this sort of remembering of loved ones is best confined to our local cemeteries. If residents wish to arrange a bench engraving we can provide details of the cost of benches and discuss a suitable location. We may decide in some of our parks that there are already sufficient benches.

The planting of a memorial tree may be authorised where there is sufficient space and need. Species choice is determined by the surrounding landscape.

We ask that people do not make any permanent marks or leave items at locations where they have scattered ashes or where a tree has been authorised. We are happy to provide a map of the chosen site so that relatives are able to record the location. We appreciate relatives are likely to want to remember the site and record it for future generations and feel that this is the best way to do this.

We suggest to those disposing of ashes that they might provide a courtesy note to Parish Councils as Burial Authorities. In 50 years' time there may be mystified searchers or historians and a routine search place will still be burial records. A note in them would be a help to researchers of all kinds in the future.

We have reviewed some of the information available about scattering ashes and ask that residents consider the following:

- Scatter in a secluded area, ideally away from other people and avoiding the main pathways
- Be aware of the environment - avoid areas of special conservation and try not to disturb the ground
- Try to avoid busy periods such as Bank Holidays, if choosing a popular spot then sunset or sunrise will be less busy
- Try to avoid windy days, be aware of the direction of wind and proximity of family members and other park users
- Avoid scattering on land where animals are grazing
- It is probably better to hold a discreet, informal gathering rather than an official ceremony
- Residents might find it easier to use an ashes scattering container known as a 'scatter tube' to help scatter the ashes
- Ashes should not be scattered in one solid mass on the ground and should be scattered evenly

Things to consider when making a record of the day:

- **Where** – Keep it simple but be detailed, so for example: Hazel Wood, 50m to the east of the main bridge
- **When** did the resident conduct scattering? e.g. dawn, midday, sunset
- The date – Any particular reason why residents have chosen this date? A birthday or anniversary?
- **Why** – Why residents have chosen to scatter there, this might help future generations to understand the significance
- **Who** – Who was there at this special occasion
- Details/Readings – did everyone sprinkle some ashes? Did anyone say a few words?

We do not require the completion of any formal application request. Relatives can email our Customer Services Team at [customer.services@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@eastherts.gov.uk) or telephone us on 01279 655261 to arrange for one of our Monitoring Inspectors to consider their request.

Their request will be logged on our customer enquiry database. The inspector will consult with colleagues before making a decision. Once a location has been agreed we only need confirmation of the relative's full name and address and the approximate time and date they are planning to visit. We don't need to know the precise location but ask that they keep slightly away from the main footpaths and follow our general guidance.

## **Shrubs / shrub beds / hedges**

- **Shrub bed / hedge encroachment to boundary**

All our hedges should be pruned twice a year, some are faced off to keep them tidy and to minimise encroachment across paths. Some are also "topped" to keep them to a manageable height.

All our shrub beds are pruned once every year and then visited regularly through the year to control weeds and prune back any encroachment across paths or signs.

Most hedges are pruned back to previous year's growth and shaped to a tidy hedge of approximately 800mm wide and 1200mm to 1800mm high.

Shrubs are pruned to various heights according to species and location.

The Council does not reduce the height of hedges to afford access to resident's walls or fences.

The purpose of shrub beds and hedges planted by developers when houses are built, are to enhance the visual amenity for all residents and often to hide or "screen" fences from public spaces.

After having adopted any such areas for maintenance, we maintain the landscape as it was intended. Walls should have been designed by developers to withstand the presence of any trees and hedges included in their landscape schemes.

The Council advises residents who install fences adjacent to hedges in the public amenity to ensure that they are removable from the inside should they wish to access the outer side of panels.

Shrub beds may sometimes be reduced in height (to approximately 400mm) on a rotational basis (e.g. every 5 or 7 years) where it is beneficial to the species and where it is more cost effective than annual pruning, e.g. Laurel.

Our grounds maintenance contractor will remove any litter in the hedge base or shrub bed as part of each pruning operation. Any other litter picking would be carried out through any scheduled street cleansing operations under the Waste contract.

We are confident in most cases that our maintenance regime is sufficient to keep vegetation tidy and to minimise the potential for any damage. If residents believe however, that vegetation on Council owned land has caused any damage to their property (such as a garden wall, fence or residents house) through subsidence or root/branch movement, we would advise that they consult their household insurance provider to arrange an investigation. If residents wish to pursue a claim, guidance can be found at:

<https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/about-east-herts-0/insurance-claims>

- **Ivy growing over boundary from a Council open space**

Ivy is a woody stemmed, self-clinging climber that can grow relatively quickly to cover fences, walls and buildings. English Ivy supports itself by aerial roots and where these penetrate, cracks or joints they may cause structural damage – but, sound masonry is generally unaffected.

In our wider parks, where wildlife conservation is of consideration, ivy is not removed.

Ivy uses trees and walls for support, allowing it to reach upwards to better levels of sunlight. It is not a parasitic plant and has a separate root system in the soil, absorbing its own nutrients and water. It forms an beneficial and naturally occurring part of woodland habitats.

We will not remove ivy that is growing across a boundary but residents are at liberty to prune it at the boundary line. If it is growing in an ornamental shrub bed and encroaching other plants, we may remove it during the winter remedial works.

If residents feel that ivy is encroaching from property owned by the Council and causing potential damage, then residents should report concerns to our Customer Services Team. One of our inspectors will investigate.

- **Hedge or shrubs close to residential fence, concerns about encroachment and height**

The Council does not reduce the height of hedges to afford access to resident's walls or fences. Hedges would have been planted by developers to "screen" such infrastructure for the benefit of the public amenity. Once the Council adopts any such areas for maintenance we will maintain the landscape as it was intended. Walls should have been designed by developers to withstand the presence of any trees and hedges included in their landscape schemes.

The Council advises residents who install fences adjacent to hedges in the public amenity to ensure that they are removable from the inside should they wish to access the outer side of panels.

Shrub beds may sometimes be reduced in height on a rotational basis (e.g. every 5 or 7 years) where it is beneficial to the species and where it is more cost effective than annual pruning, e.g. Laurel.

If residents are concerned that vegetation may have caused any damage to their property such as the brick supporting wall through subsidence or root/branch movement, we would advise that residents consult their household insurance provider to arrange an investigation. If residents do wish to pursue a claim, guidance can be found at:

<https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/about-east-herts-0/insurance-claims>

- **High Hedge complaints**

Some residents may be unhappy with the height of their neighbour's hedge where it is affecting reasonable enjoyment of their property. The Council is empowered under the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 (High Hedges) to consider disputes. Our planning enforcement team may be able to help.

Information about high hedges can be found on the [Planning Portal website](#) and in [High Hedges Complaints: Prevention and Cure \[768KB\]](#).

To complain about a high hedge, this is a chargeable service of £515 (at 2021 fees and charges). If residents are receiving benefits they may be eligible for a discount. Please complete our [High Hedges Complaint Form \[199KB\]](#)

## Trees owned by the Council

- **Tree safety**

The Council operates an independent tree risk management inspection programme to inspect our trees regularly and diligently. Our inspection methods are reviewed regularly and updated wherever necessary to keep up with nationally recognised good practice.

Where our inspections reveal there is any cause for concern regarding the safety of trees, we endeavour to take appropriate action. We investigate each request we receive and refer to the findings of the latest inspection as well as considering the position of the trees in relation to customer's properties.

The Council invests considerably in this robust inspection process to fulfil our duty of care to residents and to minimise the risk of injury or damage to property. Whilst we do all can to achieve this however, trees are naturally growing in the environment and not always predictable.

We prioritise the budgets available to manage our entire tree stock to prune or remove those trees which do present a risk, ensuring that the most urgent cases are dealt with first.

We can reassure residents that we employ a specialist arboricultural consultancy practice. They are involved in a wide range of relevant work including planning consultancy, large scale computerised tree surveys, legal expert work, subsidence, insurance consultancy, state of the art tree management software and general consultancy advice relating to both trees and the landscape.

All their arboricultural surveyors delivering the service have a minimum level 3 qualification in Arboriculture and are LANTRA accredited to ensure a high level of assessment for all trees. Quality management systems, key performance indicators and quality checks are carried out by a senior consultant regularly on site and all survey data is signed off by a senior member of staff before being issued.

The Council recognises that regular tree inspections are crucial to minimise risk to the public and to present a strong case against potential allegations of negligence. It is committed to maintaining a defensible and responsible system of tree risk management.



All trees and tree groups are individually assessed to determine their “risk category” based on their proximity to high value targets in relation to their height and size. Trees or tree groups capable of falling on a very high or high value target are inspected annually (Category 1). All other trees and tree groups are inspected every three years or more frequently if specifically recommended by the surveyor (Category 2).

Our consultant uses the Quantified Tree Risk Assessment (QTRA) method for assessing the risk from trees. All arboricultural staff engaged in our inspections are trained, registered users. Tree safety management under this system is a matter of limiting the risk of harm from tree failure while maintaining the benefits conferred by trees. Although it may seem counterintuitive, the condition of trees should not be the first consideration. Instead, tree managers should consider first the usage of the land on which the trees stand, and in turn this will inform the process of assessing the trees.

The system moves the management of tree safety away from labelling trees as either ‘safe’ or ‘unsafe’ and thereby away from requiring definitive judgements from either tree assessors or tree managers. QTRA quantifies the risk of significant harm from tree failure in a way that enables tree managers to balance safety with tree values and operate to pre-determined limits of tolerable or acceptable risk.

By quantifying the risk from tree failure as a probability, QTRA enables a tree owner or manager to manage the risk in accordance with widely applied and internationally recognised levels of risk tolerance.

While defects in trees are relatively common, only a small minority of trees with observable defects require works. However, the possibility of structural failure is assumed to increase with time, therefore where trees are not to be re-inspected for three years the surveyor is justified in taking a more cautious approach to making recommendations than where 12-15 month inspections are scheduled.

QTRA is based on data calculated over a 1-year period. A detailed assessment of the Risk of Harm (RoH) informs the prioritisation of resources to deal with all “urgent” and “necessary” works as soon as is practically possible within one year. Other “appropriate” works are dealt with on a priority basis through the year with any remaining resource capacity. The Council sets aside a reasonable budget to meet these demands but in years where “urgent” and “necessary” works increase, the level of “appropriate” works may decrease.

“Appropriate” works might include landscape improvement, good arboricultural practice, established maintenance, specialised pruning of ancient or veteran trees, managing nuisance or clearing basal vegetation for access.

This process of realising “tolerable” or “acceptable” risk enables us to demonstrate that risks are managed reasonably and proportionately (As Low As Reasonably Practicable ; ALARP) in relation to our duty of care whilst making the best use of our finite resources and maximising the many benefits our trees provide.

Our inspection contractor works closely with our maintenance contractor to ensure our budgets are prioritised effectively and recommended works are carried out efficiently.

The Council is committed to providing a responsible regime of tree risk management that reduces risk from injury and property damage. However trees are living organisms and may fail despite our best efforts. We aim to ensure that trees do not present an unacceptable risk to residents and that our policy and decisions are defensible in the event of claims.

If residents would like further information, for the methodology of the QTRA system currently used, the link below provides further information.

<https://www.qtra.co.uk/cms/index.php?section=4>

The Council will only commission works based on current survey results. **We will not carry out works to trees that have not been recommended as part of our rigorous inspection process** other than in the unusual circumstances where the condition or status of a tree has suddenly changed. High winds may for instance have fractured a branch that requires pruning.

Trees will naturally move in the wind and make noises as they sway which can sometimes create concern for residents. The guidance we receive from our expert consultant does not conclude however that all large trees near to buildings must be removed or reduced in size. We reassure our customers that carrying out unnecessary heavy pruning to trees is not recognised arboriculturally as necessary to prevent a tree from falling.

Some pruning may be required for example where a tree has been unexpectedly exposed to the prevailing wind or where it has developed a weakness or disease. In some instances heavy pruning can in fact cause structural weaknesses in the tree that can create problems in the future.

Where a tree is healthy it is far better to monitor it and carry out work in response to regular inspections.

- **Tree dropping fruit/seeds/leaves onto resident property**

The Council values its trees across the district including those on its own land.

We recognise that actions taken need to be proportionate to the actual risks involved and the importance of trees in our environment. Our inspection regime is thorough and carried out by specialist arboriculturalists qualified to undertake risk assessments. Management decisions are taken in light of the wider benefits of trees; aesthetic, ecological, environmental and sociological. Trees offer many benefits; they reduce carbon dioxide levels, filter and absorb pollution, absorb noise, produce oxygen, reduce the stress of modern lifestyles, encourage wildlife, have an aesthetic value and offer shade and shelter.

Trees are naturally growing, shedding organisms. Leaves, twigs, fruit litter, pollen and dead branches are a normal consequence of living with trees and are not sufficient justification for felling or pruning.

**We will not fell or prune any trees without sound evidence that the tree is likely to cause damage or injury** or where for conservation reasons, its removal will benefit the wider environment.

If a tree presents a real risk of damage or injury we will take appropriate action to deal with it. A build-up of leaves in a gutter or covering a patio may be seen as a nuisance to some people but fallen leaves are a natural phenomenon and there is no obligation or duty for a landowner to collect or dispose of leaves that fall onto neighbouring land. We would advise that residents don't locate structures or features beneath the canopy of a tree that might naturally shed debris.

We don't pick leaves up from our own trees falling in our parks, other than on hard surfaces or in shrub beds when they are pruned. We recognise that leaves are a crucial part of the natural cycle of plants growing in the environment.

The Council does not own or manage trees on highway verges. These are the responsibility of the County Council. If residents have concerns about a County owned tree they can make them aware through their fault reporting process at:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/report-a-problem/report-a-street-light-or-pothole.aspx>

Honeydew deposits during the summer months are produced by aphids which feed on the leaves of trees. This is common with tree species such as Lime and Sycamore. Heavy infestations of these insects can create significant deposits of honeydew which will fall on anything under the tree and drift in the wind. This feeding activity is a natural process and there is no practical treatment which will control insect numbers or prevent honeydew secretion.

The Council manages thousands of trees across the district, many of which are adjacent to gardens, footpaths, roads and parking areas. We receive complaints about some of these trees in relation to fruit dropping onto patios, leaves blocking gutters, sap from aphids falling onto cars and droppings from bats and birds falling onto cars and garden sheds. It would be incongruous with our commitment to protect trees to accept their loss for such reasons.

The Council is not legally obliged to clean honeydew deposits from an adjoining property, vehicle or structure. **We will not fell or disfigure trees to deal with this issue.**

If vehicles are affected, residents are advised to consider, garaging, covering, regularly cleaning or alternatively parking away from the tree. One approach residents may consider is to install the type of plastic spikes on branches above their property used to prevent birds from roosting. A tree surgeon may be able to advise on this alternative.

- **Tree/shrubs: allergies and pollen**

Whilst the Council sympathises with allergy sufferers, it would not be practical nor beneficial to our environment to stop planting all the trees and shrubs which create pollen. Many of these trees are native to the UK and are an important part of our landscape. Oak for example is one of the main allergenic pollen and affects about 20% of sufferers. As one of the countries most loved and splendid trees and one which creates habitat for a huge variety of other species it would not be acceptable to stop planting it. If we were to adopt such a strategy we would also of course need to consider the future of the grass areas in our parks as grass pollen is the most common trigger of hay fever in the UK.

The reality is that pollen from a wide number of species travels freely in the wind and does not remain in the close vicinity of each plant. We understand that it may be possible to reduce symptoms by choosing plants carefully for resident's own contained gardens but this is neither practical nor would it be effective for the wider landscape.

We are mindful of what we plant and how our schemes impact the wider environment. We are conscious of how plants can have an adverse effect on people but we cannot remove certain plants or modify our planting programmes in relation to allergies.

- **A Council tree overhanging resident's property.**

Residents are only permitted to cut back growth to the boundary line of their property and no further.

Our general advice regarding vegetation overhanging property boundaries is that householders are legally within their rights to remove any branches that are overhanging the boundary up to and no further than the line of the boundary and preferably no higher than 3 metres.

This does not allow residents to reduce the height of a Council owned tree in any way. It is important to note that any such pruning may damage the visual appearance of a tree and could seriously destabilise it. For that reason the Council would only agree to any major pruning to one side of trees near boundaries if it can be achieved sympathetically to the tree and the landscape.

We manage the trees and woodlands in our parks and open spaces carefully and in line with good practice. We commit to a programme of responsible management which will often include thinning woodlands (removing a number of trees) where they have been purposely planted too close together. Woodlands are often planted at a high density in the knowledge that some trees fail and to provide the opportunity to choose the best trees to reach maturity.

- **A Council tree blocking light from resident garden**

The Council will not prune trees to afford light to residents.

We operate an independent tree risk management inspection programme to inspect our trees regularly and diligently. Where our inspections reveal there is any cause for concern regarding the safety of trees, we endeavour to take appropriate action. We investigate each request we receive and refer to the

findings of the latest inspection as well as considering the position of the trees in relation to customer's properties. Any change to the condition of trees is assessed as part of the ongoing inspection regime. We prioritise the budgets available to manage our entire tree stock to prune or remove those trees which do present a risk, ensuring that the most urgent cases are dealt with first.

Many residents have concerns about the amount of light they feel is obscured from their property by vegetation. The only practical solution to this would be to either fell a huge proportion of specimen trees and trees in our woodlands or to commit to a long term exercise of reducing the height of thousands of trees at the cost of many thousands of pounds every year. This would be to the detriment of our trees and woodlands.

We advise all customers there is no legal entitlement to light in this respect. There are common law rights relating to developments which might affect an uninterrupted use for a number of years such as the building of a new extension. This does not however relate to trees present in the landscape.

We can only consider the effects of trees or shrubs with regard to any physical effects that they may have to properties. Our view is that it would not be fair to all residents for the Council to spend a high proportion of funds on ongoing pruning or felling that is not necessary for the health and safety of the tree but only to afford light.

Our general advice regarding vegetation overhanging property boundaries is that householders are legally within their rights to remove any branches that are overhanging the boundary up to and no further than the line of the boundary and preferably no higher than 3 metres. This does not allow residents to reduce the height of a Council owned tree in any way. It is important to note that any such pruning may damage the visual appearance of a tree and could seriously destabilise it. For that reason the Council would only agree to any major pruning to one side of trees near boundaries if it can be achieved sympathetically to the tree and the landscape.

We manage the trees and woodlands in our parks and open spaces carefully and in line with good practice. We commit to a programme of responsible management which will often include thinning woodlands (removing a number of trees) where they have been purposely planted too close together. Woodlands are often planted at a high density in the knowledge that some trees fail and to provide the opportunity to choose the best trees to reach maturity.

We understand resident's natural concerns with regard to the safety of the woodland trees adjacent to their property. The Council will not however, prune trees to afford light to residents. We can explain in more detail why this is and what positive work we are able to carry out in our woodlands.

We operate an independent tree risk management inspection programme to inspect our trees regularly and diligently. Where our inspections reveal there is any cause for concern regarding the safety of trees, we endeavour to take appropriate action. We investigate each request we receive and refer to the findings of the latest inspection as well as considering the position of the trees in relation to customer's properties. If we find that a tree is in a condition that might cause injury or damage, we carry out the necessary work to keep it safe.

Any change to the condition of trees in the future will be assessed as part of the ongoing inspection regime. We prioritise the budgets available to manage our entire tree stock to prune or remove those trees which do present a risk, ensuring that the most urgent cases are dealt with first.

Trees will naturally move in the wind and make noises as they sway which can sometimes create concern for residents. The guidance we receive from our expert consultant does not conclude however that all large trees near to buildings must be removed or reduced in size. We reassure our customers that carrying out unnecessary heavy pruning to trees is not recognised arboriculturally as necessary to prevent a tree from falling. Some pruning may be required for example where a tree has been unexpectedly exposed to the prevailing wind or where it has developed a weakness or disease. In some instances heavy pruning can in fact cause structural weaknesses in the tree that can create problems in the future. Where a tree is healthy it is far better to monitor it and carry out work in response to regular inspections.

The Council values its trees across the district including those on its own land. We recognise that actions taken need to be proportionate to the actual risks involved and the importance of trees in our environment. Our inspection regime is thorough and carried out by specialist arboriculturalists qualified to undertake risk assessments. Management decisions are taken in light of the wider benefits of trees; aesthetic, ecological, environmental and sociological. Trees play an important role to reduce carbon dioxide levels, filter and absorb pollution, absorb noise and produce oxygen. They can reduce the stress of modern lifestyles, encourage wildlife, have an aesthetic

value and offer shade and shelter. They are naturally growing, shedding organisms.

Leaves, twigs, fruit litter, pollen and dead branches are a normal consequence of living with trees and are not sufficient justification for felling or pruning. We will not fell any trees without sound evidence that the tree is likely to cause damage or injury or where for conservation reasons, its removal will benefit the wider environment. Whilst we understand that some residents see trees near their properties as a nuisance, we cannot fell any tree because it is dropping seeds or leaves. This would set a precedent which could result in the loss of thousands of trees growing in our urban areas.

Some residents have concerns about the amount of light they feel is obscured from their property by vegetation. The only practical solution to this would be to either fell a huge proportion of trees in our woodlands or to commit to a long term exercise of reducing the height of thousands of trees at the cost of many thousands of pounds every year. This would be to the detriment of the trees and the woodland. We advise all customers there is no legal entitlement to light in this respect. There are common law rights relating to developments which might affect uninterrupted use for a number of years such as the building of a new extension. This does not however relate to trees present in the landscape.

We can only consider the effects of trees or shrubs with regard to any physical effects that they may have to properties. Our view is that it would not be fair to all residents for the Council to spend a high proportion of funds on ongoing pruning or felling that is not necessary for the health and safety of the tree but only to afford light.

Our general advice regarding vegetation overhanging property boundaries is that householders are legally within their rights to remove any branches that are overhanging the boundary up to and no further than the line of the boundary and preferably no higher than 3 metres. This does not allow residents to reduce the height of a Council owned tree in any way. It is important to note that any such pruning may damage the visual appearance of a tree and could seriously destabilise it. For that reason the Council would only agree to any major pruning to one side of trees near boundaries if it can be achieved sympathetically to the tree and the landscape.

The felling of trees in woodlands without good reason is the sort of work that we would seek to prosecute against if carried out without permission in a Conservation Area. If the Council were to carry out such work on its own land



it would set a very poor example to local contractors and residents who have trees in their own gardens to manage and care for. We provide a consistent response to all requests for what we believe to be unnecessary pruning or felling. Our advice supports the Council's corporate objectives to protect the environment.

Our woodlands provide an important wildlife habitat and an attractive natural backdrop for local people to enjoy. It would be incongruous with our commitment to manage our parks responsibly for both wildlife and people, to consider removing woodland trees unnecessarily. We manage our trees and woodlands carefully and in line with good practice. We commit to a programme of woodland management which will often include thinning (removing a number of trees) where they have been purposely planted too close together. Woodlands are often planted at a high density in the knowledge that some trees fail and to provide the opportunity to choose the best trees to reach maturity. They are often planted by developers to screen new properties from view in order to protect the visual amenity or to compensate for a loss of biodiversity.

In some instances where developers have planted near to properties, we may decide to remove trees that we believe are too close and to create a clear buffer zone between property and woodland, usually around 3.0m in width. This is not always popular as some residents see the vegetation behind their property as a natural security measure to prevent others from reaching their boundaries. We have carried out such work where we believe it has an overall benefit to the woodland and neighbouring residents. In some instances we have also thinned (removed some trees) or coppiced trees further into the woodland if it is appropriate for the type of woodland and species. Our prime objective is good woodland management which may sometimes help to lessen any undesired impact of trees on our neighbours.

- **Branches from a Council tree are touching resident building**

If a tree is touching private property (dwelling, house, garage etc.) and is owned or managed by the Council, we may take action to avert the nuisance by the most appropriate means.

In many cases, the solution will be for the Council to prune the tree, but in rare circumstances, where a tree is found to have health conditions or has been planted too close by the developers from whom the Council has adopted land, it may need to be removed.

- **Trees blocking light to solar panels**

The Council supports sustainable alternatives to producing energy. However, it is not reasonable to ask us to commit to pruning or removing hundreds of trees where they might block light.

Residents should ensure that panels are orientated to maximise their potential but must take into consideration the location of nearby trees when doing so. If residents have too much tree cover near their property, they may not be able to benefit from solar panels.

- **Trees affecting TV/Satellite reception, or hanging wires**

We receive some requests from residents to carry out work to our trees in relation to light, television reception and other concerns. Our view is that it would not be fair to all residents for the Council to spend a high proportion of funds on ongoing pruning or felling that is not necessary for the health and safety of the tree.

We advise all customers that there is no legal entitlement to light and we are not aware of any legal obligation for landowners to remove trees or branches that may be affecting a television signal.

The Council can only consider trees or shrubs with regard to their physical effects on the structure of properties. It would be poor arboricultural practice to reduce the height of any tree on a regular basis unless the health of the tree was in question or there was a significant risk of damage or injury to the public.

We appreciate concerns about the poor television reception in some areas but would advise that there might be various reasons for this. The signal for instance may be weak or resident's antennae or dish may require lifting higher or boosting.

Trees are a crucial part of our landscape and play an important ecological role. A commitment to remove or reduce the height of trees across the district where they may perhaps be affecting television signals is unacceptable for the Council in terms of both cost and the protection of our environment.

Statutory undertakers such as telecommunications companies will carry out pruning to trees on the highway to protect the integrity of their system and have exception to do so on protected trees. These statutory undertakers, or

contractors working at their request, are advised to liaise with local authorities prior to carrying out work to trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order. It is expected that all vegetation control is carried out in accordance with best arboricultural practice. They should also take care to not contravene the provisions of legislation protecting plants and wildlife.

- **CCTV & Security Cameras are blocked by Council owned tree branches**

If residents have security cameras protecting their property, there is no reason for these to be directed into a public space.

Residents may prune branches hanging across their boundary.

- **Tree roots lifting my patio, pathway or drive.**

We do not routinely inspect or repair root damage made to private property, even if residents feel the tree is located on land owned by East Herts Council.

Cutting the roots of any tree is generally ill-advised as it may affect the tree's health and stability. If a tree is covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), or if it stands within a Conservation Area, an application will be required before root pruning can take place.

We are confident in most cases that our maintenance regime is sufficient to keep our trees safe and to minimise the potential for any damage. If residents believe however, that a tree on Council owned land has caused any damage to their property (such as a garden wall, fence or house) through subsidence or root/branch movement, we would advise that residents consult their household insurance provider to arrange an investigation. If residents wish to pursue a claim, guidance can be found at <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/about-east-herts-0/insurance-claims>

- **Trees damaging drains**

It is rare for trees to block up or cause damage to drains. In order for the roots to gain access into a drainage system, the drain must already be damaged. Instances of underground pipes being broken by the growth of tree roots are rare.

The Council will not undertake the topping, thinning or felling of trees to prevent roots entering damaged pipes. The necessary repairs of the defect in the pipe are the only certain remedy that will prevent future problems.

Modern materials and joints will significantly reduce pipe damage and subsequent root encroachment in the future.

- **Council tree with fungus growing on it**

There are many types of fungi that live happily on trees. However, if the fungal growth is close to the base of the tree, or from the stem or branches, this may suggest wood decay.

Removing fungal fruiting bodies from trees will not get rid of the fungus since, by the fruiting stage, it will already be well established. They are an invaluable habitat for insects and beetles and should not be removed from the tree.

We inspect all our trees on a regular basis and our inspectors are expert in the identification of fungi and the effect if varying types on trees. Our inspectors are likely therefore to have noticed anything that might present a risk in one of our trees. Their recommendation for work, if they decide it necessary, is added to our system and work will be prioritised according to the level of risk.

If residents believe that a tree on Council owned land is diseased and unsafe, then please report this to us. We can check the most recent inspection. If the tree is on a resident's own property and they are unsure if its condition, then residents are advised to contact an experienced arborist for a professional opinion.

- **Council owned trees that are covered in ivy**

Ivy is a climbing, scrambling plant abundant as a groundcover shrub in many types of woodland. It has a variety of conservation benefits and forms an integral part of a woodland's habitat.

It supports many species of wildlife which use ivy for nesting and hibernation for insects, birds, bats and other small mammals. Nectar, pollen and berries of ivy are a nutritious food resource for insects and birds during autumn and winter when there is little else about. It also provides food for some butterfly and moth larvae.

In a public open space, there is a need to balance certain considerations for its retention: tree safety, conservation and aesthetics. Ivy causes no direct damage to trees. However, in some situations, it may be considered unsightly

and more importantly, can create problems for efficient management by obscuring structural defects and fungal fruiting bodies. It can in some cases increase the weight of a tree's crown and the 'sail' effect during the wet, windier, winter months, when deciduous trees have shed their leaves.

The Council only undertakes the removal of ivy from trees where considered necessary to aid the health of an ailing tree or to support the inspection of tree.

- **Cracks/splits in a Council tree.**

Cracks and splits in a trunk can be an indicator of an unstable tree.

Residents should report any such concerns issues to us through our Customer Services Team. Our inspection staff can make an initial assessment and call in our specialist arborist consultant if necessary.

The Council cannot offer a service to inspect trees that it does not own.

## **Trees on the highway**

- **Street lights obscured by trees**

Trees on the highway are owned or managed by the County Council. We carry out grass cutting, hedge and shrub pruning on their behalf as part of an agency agreement but we do not manage their trees.

If residents would like to report an issue of concern as a fault to the County Council they can do so through their web site at:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/report-a-problem/report-a-highway-fault/what-type-of-fault-are-residents-reporting.aspx>

East Herts Council will undertake work to trees owned or managed by the Council, to ensure that the presence of trees does not substantially stop the light omitted by lighting columns in our parks or open spaces.

Residents should contact Customer Services or report this through our web site and we will investigate and carry out pruning if it is necessary.

- **Tree, bush or hedgerow encroaching on a public footpath from a private garden**

East Herts Council are not empowered to intervene where a resident has allowed plants in their garden to obstruct a footpath.

Residents may report this to the County Council via their online fault reporting page, on their website

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/report-a-problem/report-a-highway-fault/what-type-of-fault-are-residents-reporting.aspx>

The County Council manage the safety of the highway and may, if they feel there is a problem, contact the householder under the powers granted to them through the Highways Act.

They may ask the householder to carry out the work necessary to remedy the problem or they may arrange for the work to be carried out and re-charge the householder. In that instance they may ask us to arrange for our contractor to carry out work under the agency agreement we have with them.

This is entirely at the discretion of the County Council according to their resources and assessment of the issue.

## General Tree Health

- **Inspection of an unsafe tree on privately owned or common land**

Generally the Council cannot take responsibility for somebody else's tree.

It would not be appropriate for the Council to offer a service to inspect trees on land for which it is not responsible. Apart from the complexities of using council funds to maintain land for which it is not responsible, there would be liability issues with us identifying works that might need to be carried out without having the means to do so.

It is very unusual for common land not to be owned by somebody. If residents are concerned about a tree on neighbouring land should try to identify a responsible party. They should then aim to impress upon the owners that they have a duty of care to the public to ensure their tree is not presenting a risk.

Any resident can apply for a land search through the Land Registry.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/land-registry>

Another potential source of information might be the County Council who are responsible for identifying common land and ensuring that it is properly registered to protect its future. They may be able to advise from their own records whether land has been identified as common land and, if they have no record of an owner, may be able to advise further.

East Herts Council does have powers under section 23 of The Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976 in relation to dangerous trees in the district. Our view however is that this is designed to provide a remedy where there is imminent risk of injury or damage from a tree where there is not an immediate solution. Residents may for instance have been unable to find record of who owns a tree which has been identified as dangerous or there is uncertainty as to who may own the land upon which the tree is growing. The powers referred to in the Act are at the Local Authorities' discretion. They allow us to take remedial action to avert a risk.

In most instances there is no imminent risk of danger and therefore no immediate remedial work required. We would only consider acting under these powers to avert an immediate risk of danger and then seek costs from the owner.

In some instances residents have asked the Council to use these powers to intervene where they believe their neighbour is not carrying out work to a tree which they believe is necessary. This however is not a matter for the Council. We would urge residents who are not able to resolve concerns about a tree in their neighbour's property to work through a process of mediation to find a resolution. Citizen's Advice may be able to provide some advice on how to do this.

Residents can obtain expert advice from a tree specialist to determine whether their concerns about a tree are well founded or not.

We have a considerable task in managing our own trees (in excess of 70,000) and must focus our limited budgets carefully to ensure that we are acting reasonably to minimise risk.

The Council is not able to provide any specialist advisory service to determine the condition of a tree or to mediate on behalf of residents where they are in dispute with a neighbour.

- **Tree advice**

We have a considerable task in managing our own trees (in excess of 70,000) and must focus our limited budgets carefully to ensure that we are acting reasonably to minimise risk.

The Council is not able to provide any specialist advisory service to determine the condition of a privately owned tree and does not have sufficient resource to offer a general advice service.

We may sometimes discuss issues with residents in relation to an application for works to a protected tree in their garden once they have made an application for tree works and as part of our determination process.

Residents must make an application for tree works before we are able to discuss their tree with residents and in most instances we are able to inspect and determine the application without needing to do so.

We would suggest that residents approach a local tree surgeon or consultant to obtain expert advice on the health and management of their trees.

Details of tree contractors and consultants operating throughout the UK are available from the Arboricultural Association.

<https://www.trees.org.uk/Find-a-professional>



## Equality Impact Analysis Form

### 1. Equality Impact Analysis (EIA) Form

<b>Title of EIA (policy/change it relates to)</b>	Parks & Open Spaces Strategy – 2022-27	<b>Date</b>	December 2021
<b>Team/Department</b>	Leisure & Parks / Operations		
<b>Focus of EIA</b>  What are the aims of the new initiative? Who implements it? Define the user group impacted? How will they be impacted?	<p>This strategy replaces the outgoing Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and draws from previous parks improvements to outline the Council's commitment to parks and open spaces. It also sets out key areas of focus for the next five years.</p> <p>Implemented by the Council with support from partners.</p> <p>Parks and open spaces are potentially used by a wide range of residents from all age groups and ethnicities.</p> <p>Impact is related to access and facility improvements and working with other departments on initiatives to engage with users through volunteering.</p>		

**Please note:** Prepopulated data for protected categories other than Age and Gender come from 2011 census results<sup>1</sup> on the district, the Age and Gender data comes from ONS mid-year estimates<sup>2</sup>. If the service has specific demographic data for service users/residents than this should be used instead.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationestimatesforukenglandandwalesscotlandandnorthernireland>

## 2. Review of information, equality analysis and potential actions

Please fill in when appropriate to the change. If it does not, please put N/A

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	What do you know? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff		What do people tell you? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean? Impacts (actual and potential, positive and negative. Clearly state each)	What can you do? All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advance equality of opportunity,</li> <li>• eliminate discrimination, and</li> <li>• foster good relations</li> </ul>
Age	Under 20 20-24 25-29 30-44 45-59 60-64 65-74 75-84 85-89 90	24.2% 4.5% 5.5% 19.8% 22.9% 5.4% 9.6% 5.6% 1.6% 0.9%	Age data was not collected through the consultation but evidence from routine inspections suggests a broad age range use our parks. The consultation did not reveal any concerns from residents about any age related discrimination.	Our service needs to accommodate young people including both the very young and older teenagers both of whom require opportunity to play and socialise through to the other end of the spectrum including older people who may have mobility issues and also benefit from opportunities to socialise.	We provide a good range of equipped play areas designed to cater for the full range of ages and are mindful of creating opportunities for natural play. We ensure our parks are as accessible as possible with appropriate gates and parking where possible. We install seating at intervals throughout our parks. We commit to continue delivering a high quality of service in this respect. We continue to commit to delivering

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	What do you know? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff		What do people tell you? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean? Impacts (actual and potential, positive and negative. Clearly state each)	What can you do? All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• advance equality of opportunity,</li><li>• eliminate discrimination, and</li><li>• foster good relations</li></ul>
					opportunities for volunteer work through our Friends Groups and are aware that these are enjoyed to a good extent by the 45-74 yr brackets capturing the larger age profile for the district.
Disability	11,663 households in East Herts have one person in household with a long-term health problem or disability.		The consultation did not find any issues relating directly to any long term health or disability problems. 36% of consultees advised that “accessible to all” is one of the three most important things that people	Physical access was noted as a priority as we develop our open spaces. The consultation feedback mentioned better access for cyclists, parking for disabled visitors and interventions to improve wet weather access. Attention to	These have been and will continue to be picked up in our individual greenspace action plans which are routinely revised. The strategy commits to continue focusing on good access for all users.

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Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	What do you know? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	What do people tell you? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean? Impacts (actual and potential, positive and negative. Clearly state each)	What can you do? All potential actions to: • advance equality of opportunity, • eliminate discrimination, and • foster good relations
		believe parks should offer. When asked "what is the one most crucial thing we should focus on to meet our customers' needs in our parks and open spaces" the relevant options were Health & Wellbeing (6%) and Accessibility (6%) both demonstrating very limited concern.	footpath maintenance was also raised.	

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	What do you know? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	What do people tell you? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean? Impacts (actual and potential, positive and negative. Clearly state each)	What can you do? All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advance equality of opportunity,</li> <li>• eliminate discrimination, and</li> <li>• foster good relations</li> </ul>
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	Neither this consultation, nor our previous public engagements relating to green space action plans have identified any data relating to gender reassignment.	Our strategy consultation found no issues raised about gender reassignment.	We have been conscious not to discriminate against this group.	Continue awareness.
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	Neither this consultation, nor our previous public engagements relating to green space action plans have identified any data relating to pregnancy or maternity.		We have been conscious not to discriminate against this group.	Continue awareness.
<b>Race</b>	<div> <div> <b>White</b>  English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British  Irish  Gypsy or Irish Traveller  Other White </div> <div> <b>95.47%</b>  90.25%  1.14%  0.04%  4.04% </div> </div> <div> <b>Mixed/multiple ethnic groups</b>  White and Black Caribbean  White and Black African  White and Asian  Other Mixed </div> <div> <b>1.61%</b>  0.45%  0.15%  0.62%  0.38% </div>	Our strategy consultation found no issues raised about race discrimination.	We have been conscious not to discriminate against this group.	Continue awareness.
	<b>Asian/Asian British</b>	<b>1.95%</b>		

2

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	What do you know? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff		What do people tell you? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean? Impacts (actual and potential, positive and negative. Clearly state each)	What can you do? All potential actions to: • advance equality of opportunity, • eliminate discrimination, and • foster good relations
	Indian Pakistani Bangladeshi Chinese Other Asian <b>Black/African/Caribbean/Black British</b>  African Caribbean Other Black <b>Other ethnic group</b>  Arab Any other ethnic group	0.73% 0.15% 0.20% 0.37% 0.49% <b>0.71%</b>  0.43% 0.22% 0.07% <b>0.26%</b>  0.10% 0.16%			
Religion or belief	Christian Buddhist Hindu Jewish Muslim Sikh Other religion No religion Religion not stated	62.75% 0.32% 0.45% 0.33% 0.72% 0.12% 0.32% 27.75% 7.26%	Our strategy consultation found no issues raised about religious discrimination.	We have been conscious not to discriminate against this group.	Continue awareness.

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	What do you know? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	What do people tell you? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean? Impacts (actual and potential, positive and negative. Clearly state each)	What can you do? All potential actions to: • advance equality of opportunity, • eliminate discrimination, and • foster good relations
Sex/Gender	The district is 51% female and 49% male	The data indicates an even spread of need for female and male visitors to our parks. Our consultation has raised no issues from our customers in relation to sex or gender.	We are confident that our services provide an equal opportunity for all groups. Some research suggests that play areas may not always offer as much opportunity for play or socialising for girls as for boys.	Our strategies in the past and going forward are to ensure that we offer a wide range of play types including those traditionally enjoyed by girls such as netball. We ensure that equipment and seating is designed to offer socialising for all young people. There is a general increase in interest in football by girls and so less risk of our Multi Use Games Areas which offer football and basketball being gender biased.
Sexual orientation	Neither this consultation, nor our previous public engagements relating to green space action plans have identified any data relating to sexual orientation.		We are confident that our services provide an equal opportunity for all	We can be mindful during our engagement with users and as we develop our services of any

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	What do you know? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff		What do people tell you? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean? Impacts (actual and potential, positive and negative. Clearly state each)	What can you do? All potential actions to: • advance equality of opportunity, • eliminate discrimination, and • foster good relations
				groups.	potential discrimination in this area.
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	Single Married Civil partnership Separated Divorced Widowed	30.5% 52.3% 0.2% 2.3% 8.6% 6.2%	Our consultation has revealed no evidence of any discrimination against any of these groups	Our parks and open spaces are freely accessible to any visitor and offer sports, leisure and relaxation to all.	We can be mindful during our engagement with users and as we develop our services of any potential discrimination in this area.
<b>Assessment of overall impacts and any further recommendations</b>					
<p>The services offered through our parks and open spaces, the consultation undertaken and the strategy going forward are designed to offer a wide range of activities and benefits to all residents.</p> <p>Parks are crucial places for residents and visitors to relax, play and keep fit, supporting our health and wellbeing, no better emphasised than through the pandemic experience. We offer to ensure they remain fit for purpose; have good access, are clean and welcoming and that we continue positive engagement with users.</p> <p>We are confident that there is neutral impact from this strategy and no issues of concern.</p>					

### 3. List detailed data and/or community feedback which informed your EqIA (If applicable)



<b>Title</b> (of data, research or engagement)	<b>Date</b>	<b>Gaps in data</b>	<b>Actions to fill these gaps: who else do you need to engage with?</b> (add these to the Action Plan below, with a timeframe)
<b>Prepopulated EHC data</b>		<b>None identified</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Eight week consultation process receiving 179 responses to an online questionnaire.</b>	<b>Aug to Sept 2021</b>	<b>None identified</b>	<b>n/a</b>

**4. Prioritised Action Plan (If applicable)**

Impact identified and group(s) affected	Action planned	Expected outcome	Measure of success	Timeframe
NB: These actions must now be transferred to service or business plans and monitored to ensure they achieve the outcomes identified.				

**EqIA sign-off:** (for the EQIA to be final an email must sent from the relevant people agreeing it or this section must be signed)

<b>Lead Equality Impact Assessment officer:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Directorate Management Team rep or Head of Service:</b>	<b>Jess Khanom-Metaman</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>5.1.22</b>
<b>Author of Equality Impact Analysis:</b>	<b>Ian Sharratt</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>23.12.21</b>







- Client

Solum Regen (Bishops) LLP
- Planning Consultant

Savills
- Architects

Pollard Thomas Edwards
- Landscape Architects

Building Design Partnership
- Highways Consultants

Mayer Brown Limited
- Energy and Sustainability

HDR|Hurley Palmer Flatt
- Project Management Advisor

Mace Group
- Communications

Forty Shillings

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Revisions

Rev	Date	Notes
-	25/11/2021	EHDC Issue

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# Introduction

This Refined Masterplan document is for the Bishop’s Stortford Goods Yard site and supersedes the previous masterplan for the site which was endorsed by East Herts Council in October 2017. A Refined Masterplan is required to enable the wider site to come forward due to change in circumstances.

It has been developed to meet the aspirations of East Herts council and aligns with the Bishop’s Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework, while considering the local and neighbourhood plans.

A hybrid planning application will be submitted in the early part of next year on behalf of Solum Regeneration (Bishops) LLP a partnership between Network Rail and Kier Property, by architects Pollard Thomas Edwards (PTE) and planning consultants Savills and will be supported by a full technical team. The proposal comprises the refining of the masterplan to the southern part of the site, bound between the River Stort, the railway, London and Station Roads in the centre of Bishop’s Stortford.

## OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION

In July 2018 a hybrid planning application granted permission for the entire redevelopment of the former Goods Yard, existing station car parks and land between the River Stort, the railway, London Road and Station Road, in the centre of Bishop’s Stortford. The detailed planning permission was granted for the northern half of the site, the southern most section and the link road between the two. The outline planning permission was granted for the remainder of the site comprising two parcels of land; one to the east and one to the west of the link road (LPA Ref. 3/17/2588/OUT).

This comprised for a comprehensive mixed-use development of;

- 641 dwellings, comprising 585 residential units (C3) and a 55 unit care home (C2)
- 3,004 sqm of office floorspace (Use Class B1);
- 1,083 sqm of retail floorspace (Use Class A1-A4);
- 491sqm of dual / alternative use retail and health care floorspace (Use Classes A1-A4 / D1);
- An 85 bed hotel (Use Class C1);
- A new link road through the site connecting Station Road / Dane Street with London Road;
- Two multi-storey station car parks;
- New cycle parking;
- Car parking for the residential development;
- Improvements to the Bishop’s Stortford transport interchange;
- New and altered access points from the adopted highway network; and
- Associated landscaping and public realm works.

The Detailed application comprised:

- 323 No. Residential units (Use Class C3);
- 3004 sqm of office floorspace (Use Class B1);
- 1083 sqm of retail floorspace (Use Class A1-A4);
- 491sqm of dual / alternative use retail and health care floorspace (Use Classes A1-A4 / D1);
- An 85 bed hotel (Use Class C1);
- A new link road through the site connecting Station Road / Dane Street with London Road;
- One multi-storey car park containing 401 spaces;
- New cycle parking;
- Car parking
- Improvements to the Bishop’s Stortford transport interchange;
- New and altered access points from the adopted highway network; and
- Associated landscaping and public realm works.

Solum are in the process of completing the delivery of several of the initial elements of the scheme including; the link road that crosses the scheme linking London road, in the south to Station Road in the north; the first of 2 Multi storey car parks; the names of which have been formally recognised as MSCP1 & MSCP2 respectively. Two substantial plots of land which contain the first two phases of residential blocks (Plot A and B - 323 mixed tenure apartments) have been sold to Bellway Homes who have started construction on-site.

## EMERGING MASTERPLAN

Network Rails requirement to retain the railway sidings have led Solum and the design team to reconsider parts of the masterplan.

These areas will include:

- 1 - Block H – Retaining the hotel use - an enhanced building with flexible commercial/community floorspace at ground floor with hotel over.
- 2 - Plot A6 – A rationalisation of the commercial building.
- 3 - Plot A7 - Develop a mixed-use residential building with commercial use at the ground level, located beside the MSCP02. Commercial space is reallocated within Plot A6.
- 4 - MSCP02 - Marginally repositioned to avoid the Network Rail sidings tracks and equipment. Review the layout and footprint of the MSCP. Develop the appearance within a new context.
- 5 - The Sidings (Plot F) – Develop a new residential proposal on reduced land area due to retention of the Network Rail Sidings.

- 6 - Riverside (Plots C, D and E) and public realm - Develop a new riverside residential proposal, re-imagining the Goods Yard in a new context with railway sidings retained.

The refined masterplan includes;

- Up to 420 homes (Use Classes C2-C3 with the split to be determined subject to further assessment);
- A minimum of 3,004 sqm of commercial floorspace (Use Class E);
- Around 90 bed hotel (Use Class C1);
- Multi-storey station car park 02;
- New station cycle parking;
- Car parking for the residential development;
- Improvements to the Bishop’s Stortford transport interchange;
- New and altered access points from the adopted highway network; and
- Associated landscaping and public realm works.

Those elements retained as part of the masterplan currently being delivered;

- 323 residential apartments (Use Class C3);
- 1,083 sqm of retail floorspace (Use Class A1-A4);
- 491sqm of dual/alternative use retail and health care floorspace (Use Classes A1-A4 / D1);
- Multi-storey station car park 01 (401 spaces);
- A new link road through the site connecting Station Road / Dane Street with London Road.

The changing nature of Bishop’s Stortford with the South and North strategic sites are expanding the town and delivering more houses. There is an opportunity to realign the vision of the Goods Yard, a large town centre central site beside a major transport hub, for the delivery of apartments.

# Consultation

Consultation to date:

Steering Group 01, 15 December, 2020

HCC Estates and Transport, 6 January, 2021

HCC Estates and Transport, 10 February, 2021

EHDC planning officers pre-app01, 26 March 2021

Energy Review, 7 April, 2021

EHDC planning officers pre-app02, 28 April 2021

Steering Group 02, 3 June, 2021

CRT meeting, 17 June, 2021

EHDC planning officers pre-app03, 3 July 2021

CRT meeting, 20 July, 2021

Site visit members and planning officer, 23 July 2021

Shaping Stortford, 28 July 2021

EHDC planning officers pre-app04, 26 August 2021

Design Review, 13 October 2021

Public Consultation Webinar, 28 October 2021

HCC Transport, 28 October 2021

Steering Group 04, 8 November, 2021

Network Rail - regular rail stakeholder meetings

Future events up to planning application will include meetings with East Herts District council, the Steering Group for the Goods Yard site, Hertfordshire County Council, Allies & Morrison (the council’s design adviser for this site), the local community, Canal and River Trust and other stakeholders as necessary.



## Endorsed masterplan (October 2017)



## Parts of masterplan built or under construction

Under construction by Bellway:

Plot A due completion 1st Quarter 2022

Plot B due completion 1st Quarter 2023

Completed:

Main carriage way of North-South link (Sextons Road, connecting with Morton Peto Road)

Multi Storey Carpark 1





## Network rail sidings is retained

"NR's retention of the sidings land, directly frustrates the ability to bring forward the extant proposals for the southern site.

However, this presents an opportunity to re-imagine the plots to better relate to and respond to the new context.



## Parts of the masterplan to be refined

Plot H - Hotel building

A6 - Commercial Building

A7 - Mixed Use Building

MSCP02 - Multi storey Carpark 02

Plot C - Maltings buildings

Plot D and E - Riverside buildings

Plot F and G - Sidings buildings





# 1 Existing Site

Bishop’s Stortford is located in Hertfordshire close to the border with Essex, within the district of East Hertfordshire. The town is approximately 30 miles North East of London and has a population of approximately 41000.

The town is situated among a number of growth areas, principally around the M11 and expansion around Cambridge, but also at Stansted and along the A120 route.

The site comprises 5.37 hectares (adjusted site development area) of brownfield land, located part within the town centre boundary with the bulk of area immediately to the south. The site is located between the Anglia London Liverpool Street to Cambridge railway line, to the immediate East, and the River Stort Navigation to the West.

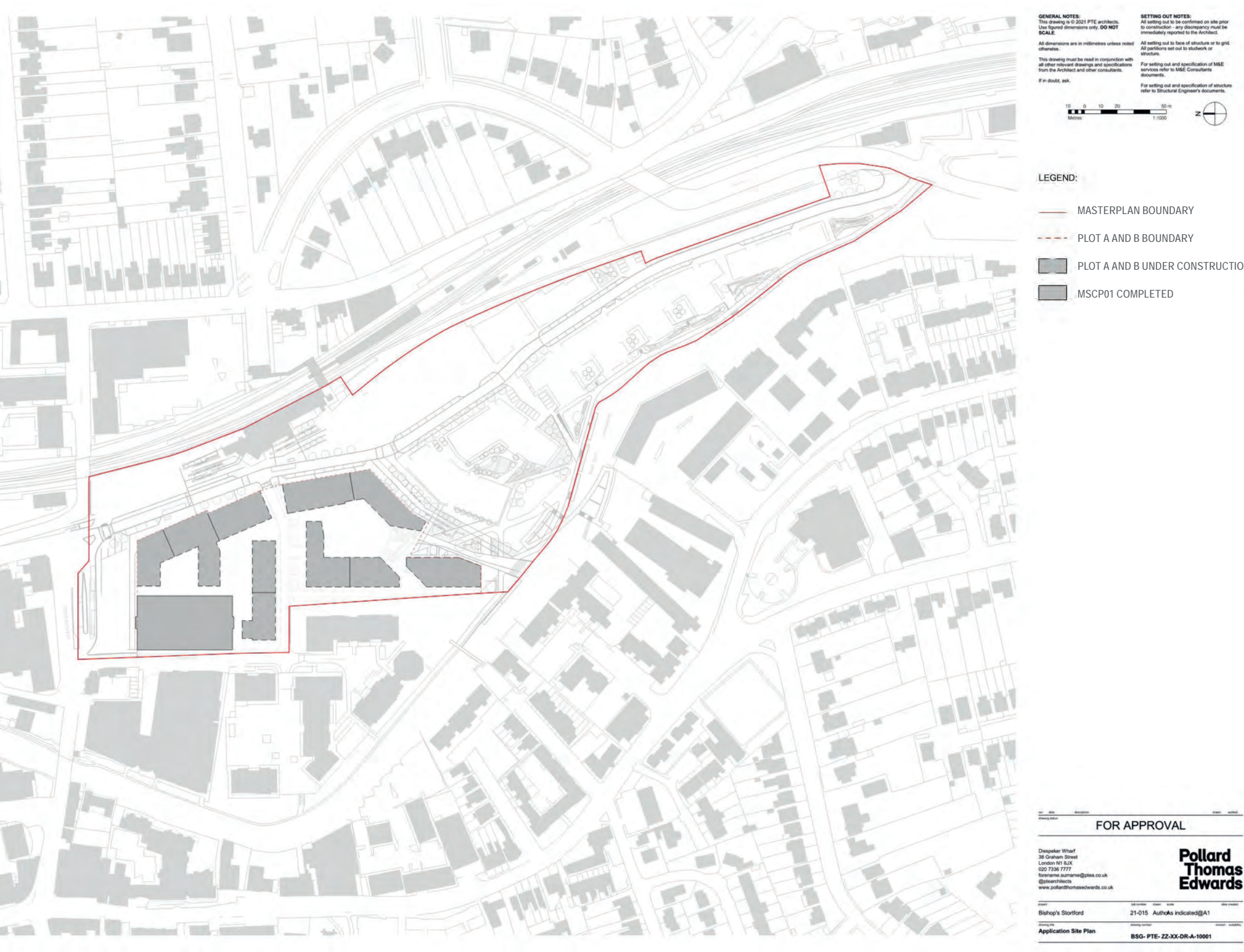
The northern part of the site, the existing bus station remains, located beside Station Road, and the Taxi’s located in front of the station arrival. Secured station cycle parking is located between the train station and the ramp.

Vehicle down ramp closed, part removed to allow for construction of new North-South road. Main carriage way of North-South link road (Sextons Road) constructed with temporary intersection onto London Road. The MSCP01 is complete and the Anchor Street road widening at the Station Road end is yet to be carried out. Buildings to Plot A and B are currently under construction.

The southern part of the site is occupied by commuter car-parks together with maintenance sidings operated by Network Rail. Much of the site is inaccessible to the public. Network Rail operate a vehicular access from London Road at the South of the site to its maintenance area.

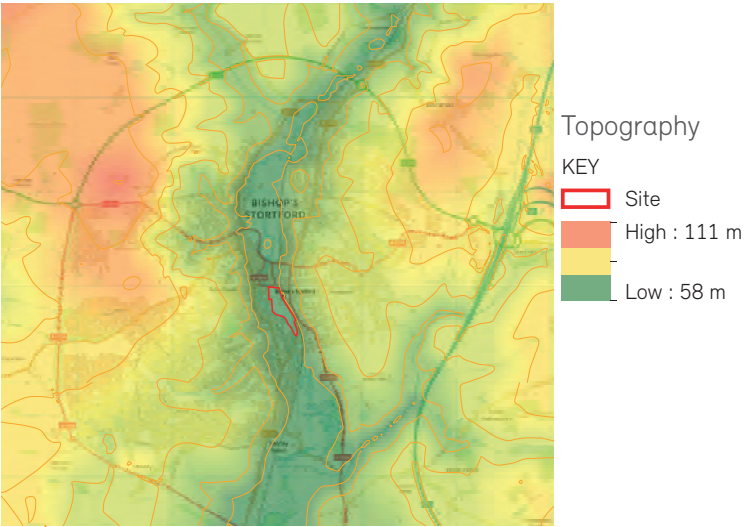
The Northern part of the site is located within the Bishop’s Stortford Town Centre designation. The site is not located within a Conservation Area but borders the Bishop’s Stortford Conservation Area to the Northwest, north and northeast. The site does not contain any statutory or locally listed buildings or structures. Whilst not locally listed, the Rose & Crown Pub to the northeast of the site is identified within the Conservation Area Appraisal. The site is identified as an Area of Archaeological Significance.

# 1.2 Site Plan





2 Surrounding Context

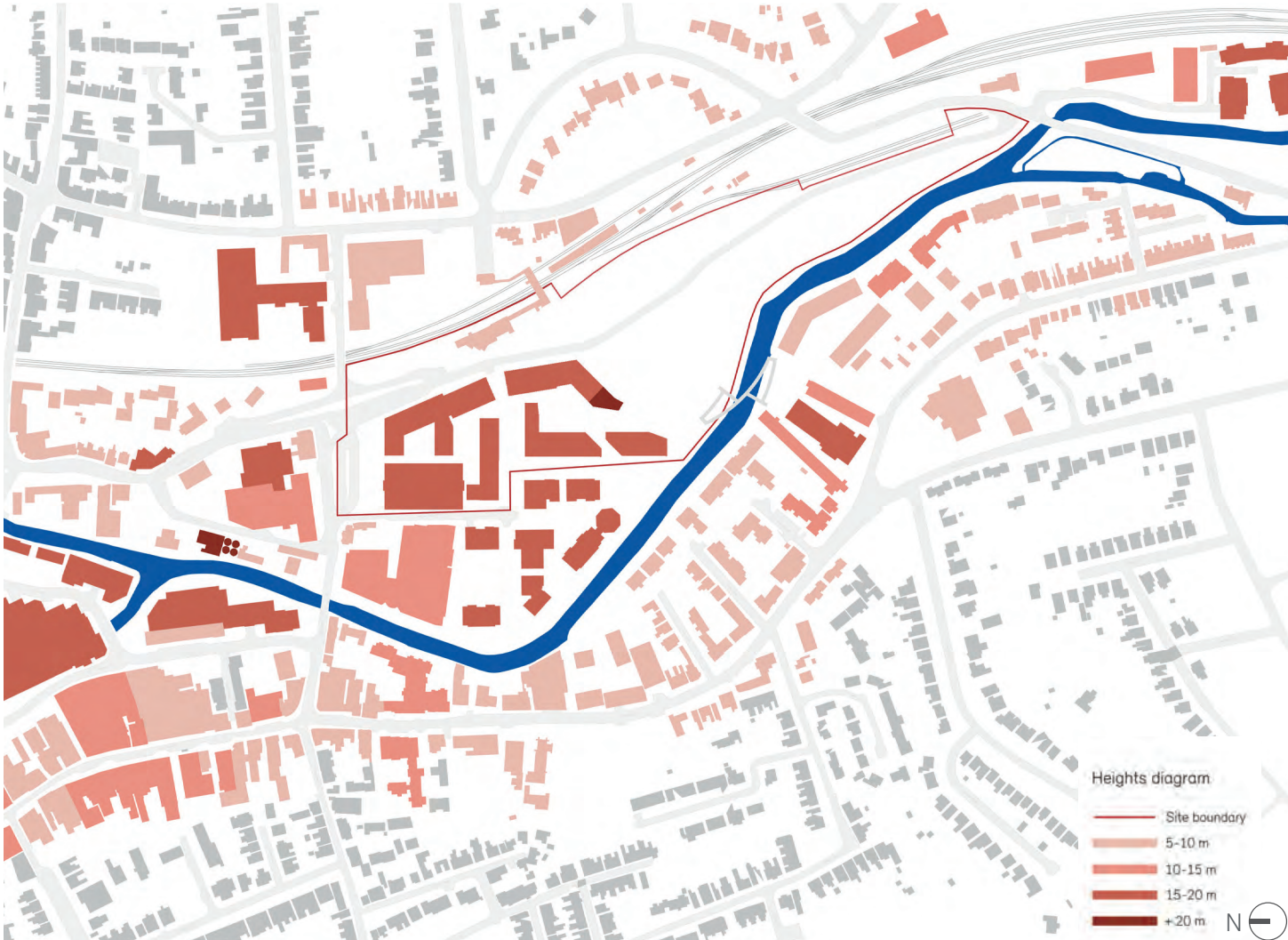
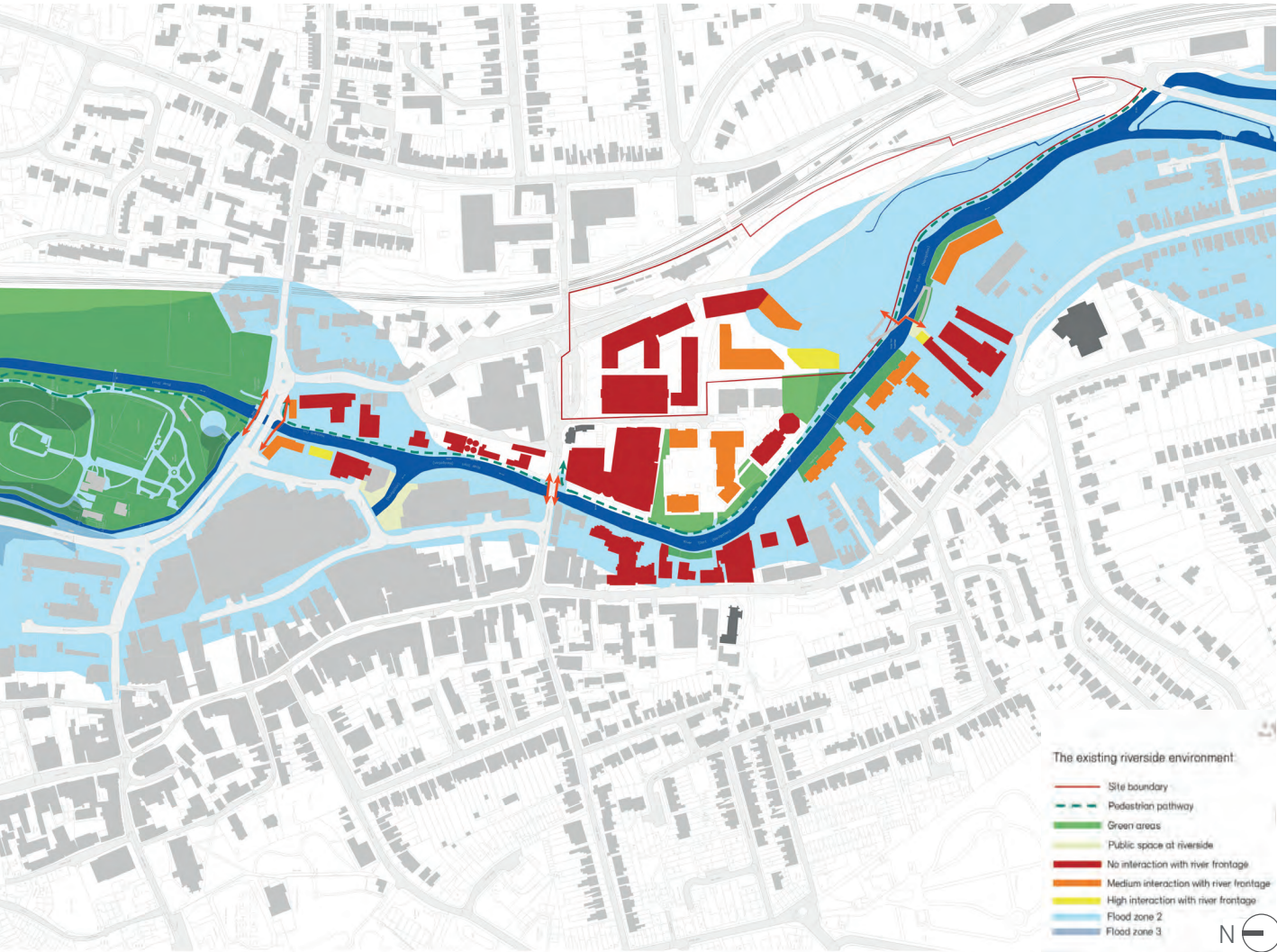


2.1 Existing Riverside Environment Context

The River Stort, an Environment Agency Main River, flows to the south and west of the site. It is navigable with a tow-path for this stretch. There is a drainage channel to the south of the site that drains towards the outfall into the River Stort, north of the London Road Bridge. The site lies within the 'Towns and Villages in open floodplain (North and West). Please refer to the Flood Risk Assessment for detail information.

2.2 Existing Building Heights around the Site

The site is bordered by the railway to the East and River Stort to the West. Ground levels to the East are 5 – 6m above that of the site. Residential buildings of 5 – 6 storeys are present north of the site with taller industrial mill buildings to the north. The buildings to the west of the site are 5 storeys in height. To the south Tanner's Wharf is 6 storeys high as is the mill across the footbridge.





## 2.3 Townscape Analysis

Due to the long history of the area, a range of building styles co-exist next to one another. This creates varied and interesting streetscapes, which contribute to the overall strong sense of place. While there is a strong emphasis on defining the street corridor, buildings often meander and deviate from a strict building line, creating a specific sense of place and variety along the town's central streets. Due to this, there is a strong sense of enclosure, both along streets and within spaces.

This changing character, which is experienced throughout the town core, is a key attribute to be emulated by the new streets and spaces in the Goods Yard masterplan, where street types, building types, orientation and views will help to create new and distinctive places.

Many of the existing buildings in Bishop's Stortford pre-date the dominance of the car. Typical of these older buildings, traditional materials, smaller spanning distances and generally more vertical proportions create buildings that relate well to the human scale. A great variety of detailing, representing changing architectural fashions of the past, accentuate building facades with interesting ornamentation. In addition, the varied roofscapes provide a playful and changing silhouette whilst moving along the streets.

While the overall architectural expression provides a rich variety, this is balanced with elements to provide a sense of continuity, including the generally narrow frontages, and regular rhythm of doors and windows. Whilst heights range from 2-5 storeys, the floor-to-ceiling ratios can often vary greatly between adjacent buildings, allowing for interesting juxtapositions and a greater variety in the roofscape.

A modern interpretation of these elements will help to bridge the gap between the history and its future development in the Goods Yard site.

The Goods Yard site is located in the historic industrial part of the town beside the train station. This part of town therefore has a distinct character from that of the historic town centre. New development will take its queues predominantly from the industrial maltings and railway goods yard buildings.



① Old River Lane Malting



② Shop Front, South Street



③ Former South Street Maltings



④ Holy Trinity Church





⑤ Corn Exchange



⑨ Water Lane United Reformed Church



⑬ Bridge Street



⑬ St Michael's Church



⑬ North Street



⑥ South Street



⑩ Riverside Walk



⑭ Palmers Lane



⑱ Shops on South Street



⑳ King Street / Basbow Lane



⑦ Former South Street Maltings



⑪ Former Workhouse



⑮ Former South Street Maltings



⑲ Storage Sheds



㉒ Bridge Street



⑧ Hockerill Street



⑫ Water Lane



⑯ London Road



㉒ North Street

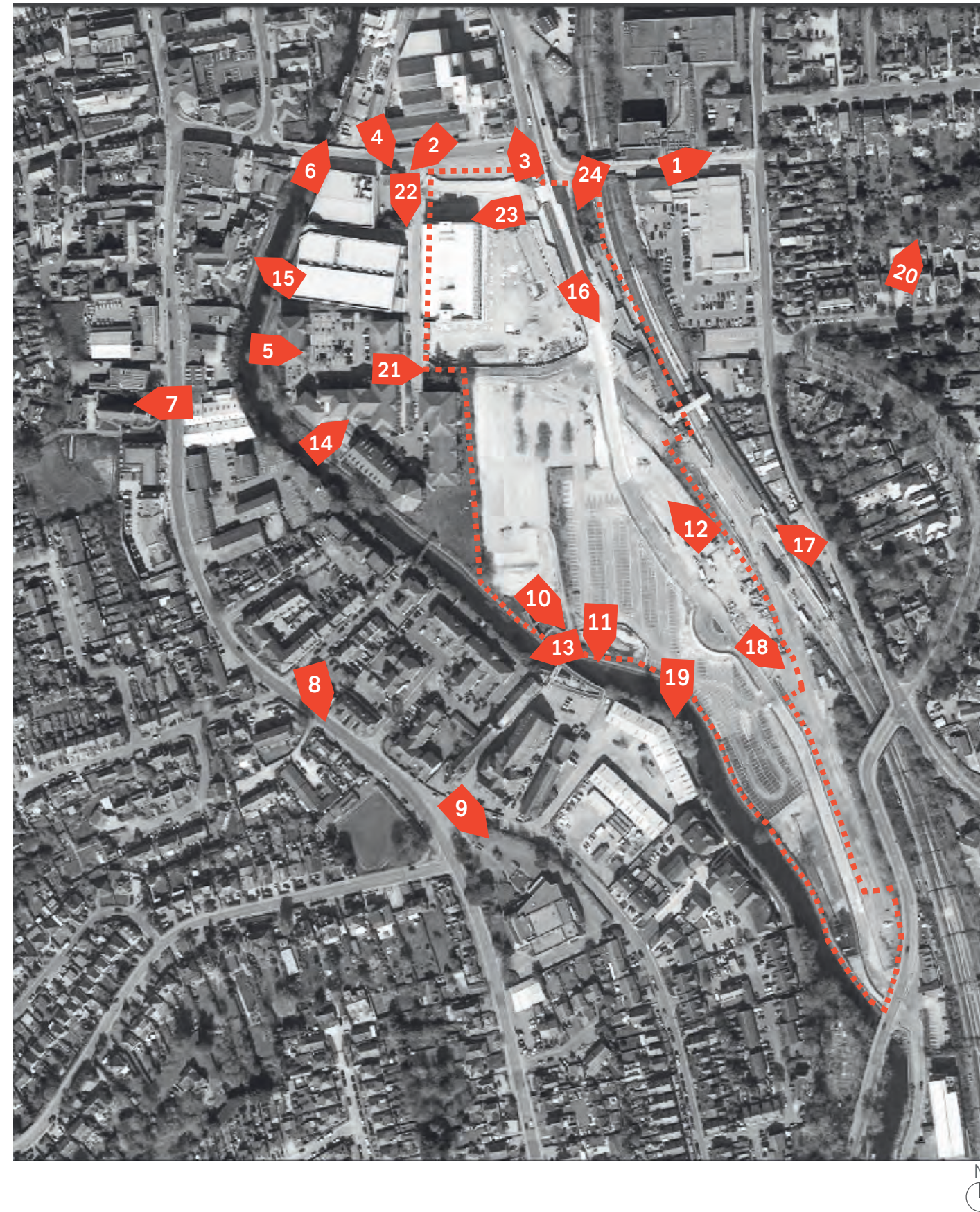


㉔ Market Square



## 2.4 Site and Surroundings Photographs

These site and surrounding photographs show the range and mix of building forms that are local to the area.



1 Thomas Heskin Court



2 Leisure Park



3 Former public house



4 Rose & Crown public house





5 John Dyde Close



9 South Mill Arts Complex / Museum



13 Braziers Quay Residences



17 Signal box



21 Morton Peto Road



6 Allinson's Flour Mill



10 Pedestrian bridge



14 Starling Court, John Dyde Close



18 Storage sheds



22 Anchor Street



7 Holy Trinity Church



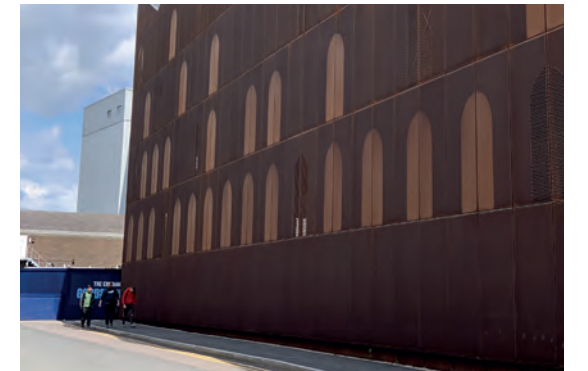
11 Maltings complex



15 Waterfront House



19 Adderley Riverside



23 Anchor Street (Lane section)



8 Kings Cottages



12 Mallard & Swallow Courts, John Dyde Close



16 Train station



20 Multi-storey Car Park 1



24 Dane Street / Station Square



## 2.5 Neighbouring Sites

As part of understanding the surrounding context we have looked at neighbouring residential developments within the immediate area including the Maltings.

We have studied these as local precedents for the Good's Yard site. We have looked at what works well and things that could have been better.

Some of the key things we have considered in our approach to the Good's Yard site include;

- How do the buildings address the public realm,
- Do they have active frontages,
- Are they safe to walk around,
- Are they too car dominated,
- How they are buildings placed on the site,
- What relationship do they have with the river,
- What height are they, scale and massing,
- What quality of detailing and use of materials,

### The Maltings (Listed Buildings)

- The Maltings form a main precedent for the Goods Yard and are considered in further detail throughout the planning application.
- The Maltings form the driver for both place making with their positive relationship to the river and each other
- Form, massing, scale up to 6 floors is acceptable.
- Architectural quality and historic value is positive.
- Rich use of materials and detailing while being clean and strong formed.
- Expressed brick detailing and banding.
- Roofscape and ventilation chimneys interesting.
- Distinctive long footprints running down to the river.
- Window openings not suitable for residential.
- Quality of public realm is low.
- Car dominated at rivers edge is poor.

### The John Dyde

- Poor relationship to the river.
- Close relationship between buildings acceptable.
- Scale acceptable 4 - 5 storeys but could have made more of the roof scape.
- Poor relationship between ground floor and public realm.
- Car parks dominate public realm.
- Low quality landscape, unused triangular amenity space not inviting.
- Poor quality boundary fencing and relationship to tow path.
- No private open space for residents.
- No distinction between floors on external elevations, base, middle, top.
- Little depth to elevation, UPVC white windows flat with no relief to brickwork.
- Low quality materials and detailing.
- Architecture lacks character.

## Local Context - The Maltings



1



2



3



4

## Local Residential Context - John Dyde



1



2



3



4



Local Residential Context - Tanners Wharf



①



②



③



④

Local Residential Context - Riverside Wharf



①



②



③



④

Tanners Wharf

- Site layout positive to river.
- Close relationship to the river.
- Poor quality public realm.
- Poor security.
- No active frontages.
- Car dominated.
- Dead frontages at ground level – car parking and stores.
- 5 - 7 storeys in height.
- Buildings in close proximity to each other.
- Architecture acceptable though forms are a little broken up, feels gritty.
- Some brickwork detail banding though render not acceptable.
- Weatherboard product.
- Provision of private terraces.

Riverside Wharf

- Poor relationship to the river.
- 6 storeys is acceptable though massing of building is too bulky because the footprint is too greedy.
- Poor relationship to the road creating an inactive street frontage.
- Poor quality landscaping.
- Car dominated at ground level – look through car park to river.
- Elevations far too busy, too many building lines.
- Roof form and pitched dormers not in scale with the building, creates too many rainwater downpipes.
- Top floor sits within a lowered roofscape positive.
- Steel balconies cantilever to the riverside only.
- Quality of detailing poor for the scale of building.
- No private common amenity space.



## 2.6 Historical Context

The historic context has provided a richness to the masterplan which has informed our approach to placemaking at each level, from the layout of buildings on-site running down to the rivers edge, as did the historic malt houses, to robust industrial building forms, scale, to the varying use of materials and detailing.

We wish the richness and spirit of the old Good's Yard to inform an important layer in the design evolution of the masterplan and the architecture.

History of Goods Yard and the Station  
Railway commissioned in the 1840's by the Eastern Counties Railway company to provide link between London and Cambridge.

The line first ran from Shoreditch to Bishop's Stortford and opened 16 May 1842. This initial line was broad gauge until 1844 and included a covered station.

July 1845 link between London and Norwich – via Bishop's Stortford, Cambridge and Ely was complete. This Increased the range of the railway and its effectiveness

Later the station was rebuilt with a large area dedicated to goods sheds and a granary with dedicated sidings running to Anchor Maltings.

The current station building was originally the station masters house and was built to resemble an Italianate Villa, this has been much compromised by further additions and modifications.

Following the arrival of the railway in the nineteenth Century the town expanded to the South and East with the construction of the Hockerill Park Estate and the New Town.

The station was busy, known in 1893 to have handled 205,000 tons of barley and malt along with many tons of vegetables, straw and hay, all destined for London's markets.

The Sidings were allocated for coal merchants and for supplying the Gas Works at the end of Anchor Street. To the South of the station a crane and aggregates yard operated until 2004.

Livestock pens were provided with stables at the station for horses. This complex was accessed via a gate opposite the Tanner's Arms Public House in London Road, with pedestrian access to the station yard.

The railway was electrified in 1958 and the North signal box was demolished, a new footbridge was constructed. Following a fire, this was rebuilt in the 1980's. The Steam

depot closed in 1962 when the Northern end of the site was cleared to form car parks.

Shortly after the branch to Dunmow was cleared, although a new spur was opened in the 1980's to access the newly constructed terminal at Stansted Airport.

From 1997 the London to Cambridge line was operated under franchise and from 2011 by Abellio Greater Anglia, the current operator. The station forecourt was redesigned in 1999 and in 2015 a refurbishment of the station building was completed with a new retail concession and improved ticketing facilities.

History of Stort Navigation  
Bishop's Stortford is connected by the River Stort to London via the River Lee.

This provided a good opportunity to adapt this river for boat traffic so as to directly connect Bishop's Stortford to London and its port.

Parliament passed 'An Act for making and continuing navigable the River Stort, in the counties of Hertford and Essex', which empowered the navigation to be constructed and opened in 1769.

It involved the construction of fifteen locks, so as to control the flow of the river and open up navigable sections previously impassable with shallows. Trade increased gradually, rising from around 18,000 or 19,000 tons in 1791 to 40,000 tons in 1811.

Income from the navigation halved in the first 10 years from competition with the railway, the navigation was sold several times, before coming back into public ownership and then being transferred into the ownership of a charitable body, the Canals & Rivers Trust.

The 15 locks are built to take boats 86 feet (26 m) by 13.25 feet (4.0 m), which means that they are not quite wide enough to take two narrow boats at a time and so traffic along the system is slower as a consequence.

There is a tow-path along the entire length of the navigation, which forms part of a number of long distance walks. These include The Stort Valley Way, which is a 28-mile (45 km) circular walk and the Three Forests Way.

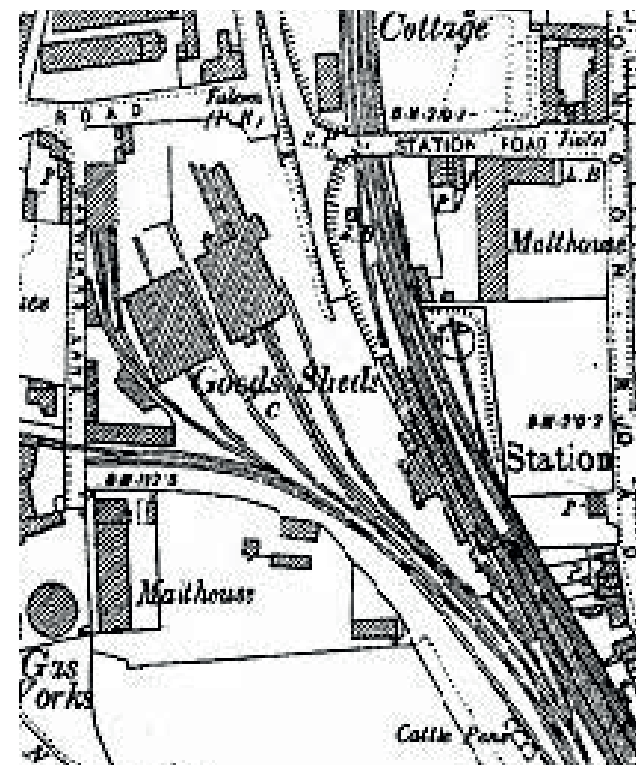


PHOTO CREDITS: BISHOP'S STORTFORD TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE, STORTFORDHISTORY.CO.UK



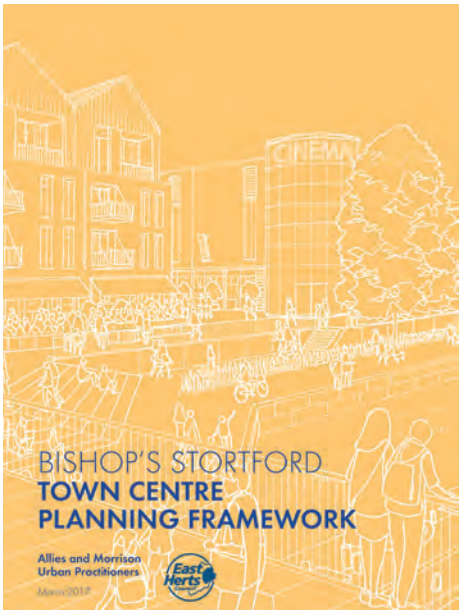
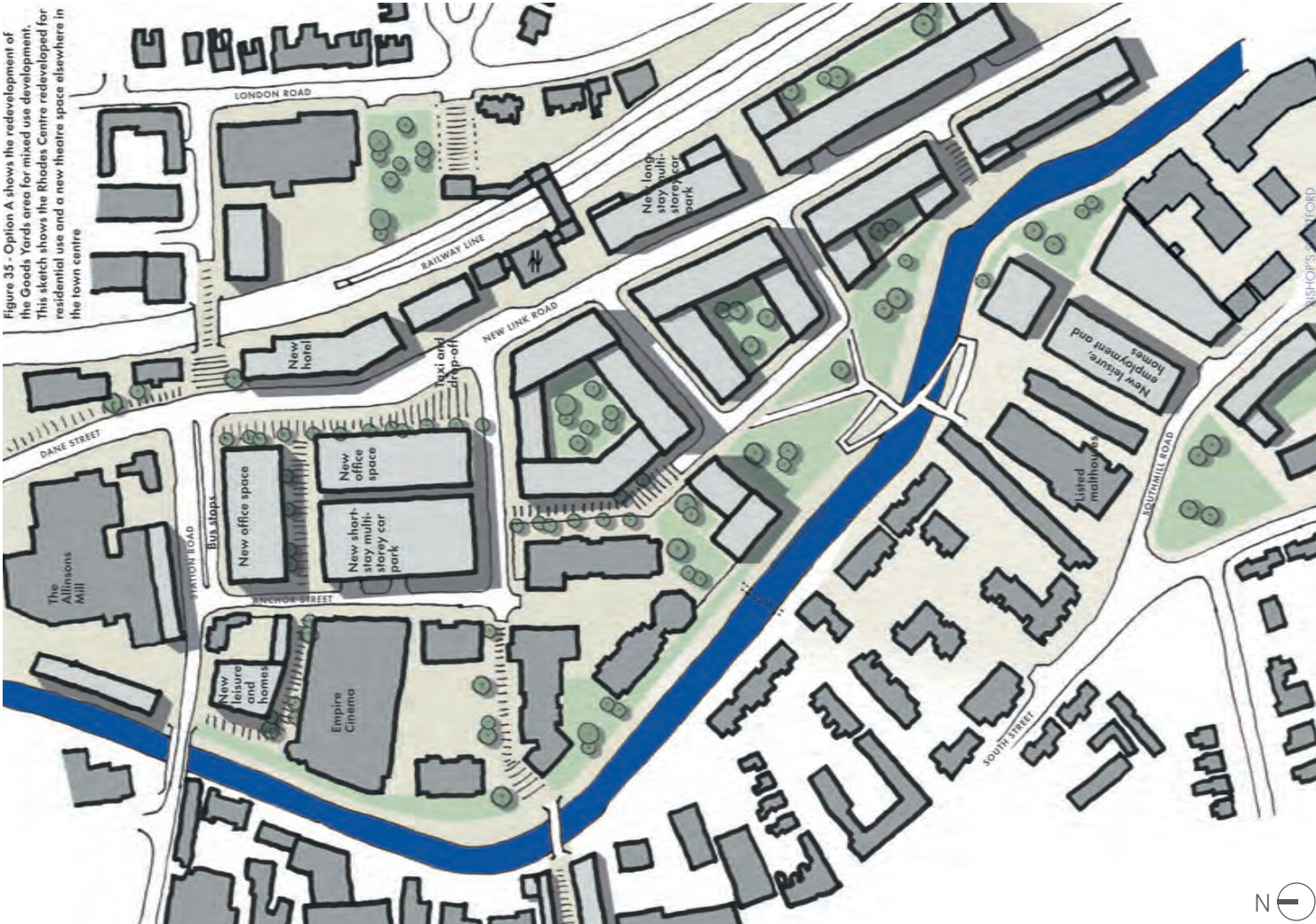
2.7 Town Centre Planning Framework

In July 2017 the Council approved the Bishop’s Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework for development management decisions. It is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications within the Town Centre. Prepared by Allies & Morrison on behalf of the Council, the Framework sets out a vision and strategy for development of Bishop’s Stortford.

A positive design review (Nov 2021) was held with Allies & Morrison, who were previously engaged by EHDC as design adviser to the original application. It is the intention to meet again prior to submission of a planning application.

In section 3.10 we show the endorsed masterplan alongside the proposed masterplan.

The Bishop’s Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework sets out an indicative masterplan for the Good’s Yard site as part of a wider study that looked at a series of sites within town. The endorsed masterplan for the Goods Yard site (2017) aligns and develops on the principles and aspirations outlined in the document. It provides a two-way North-South road through the site with development either side. It provides routes from the station and down to the river. It provides a mix of uses across the site.



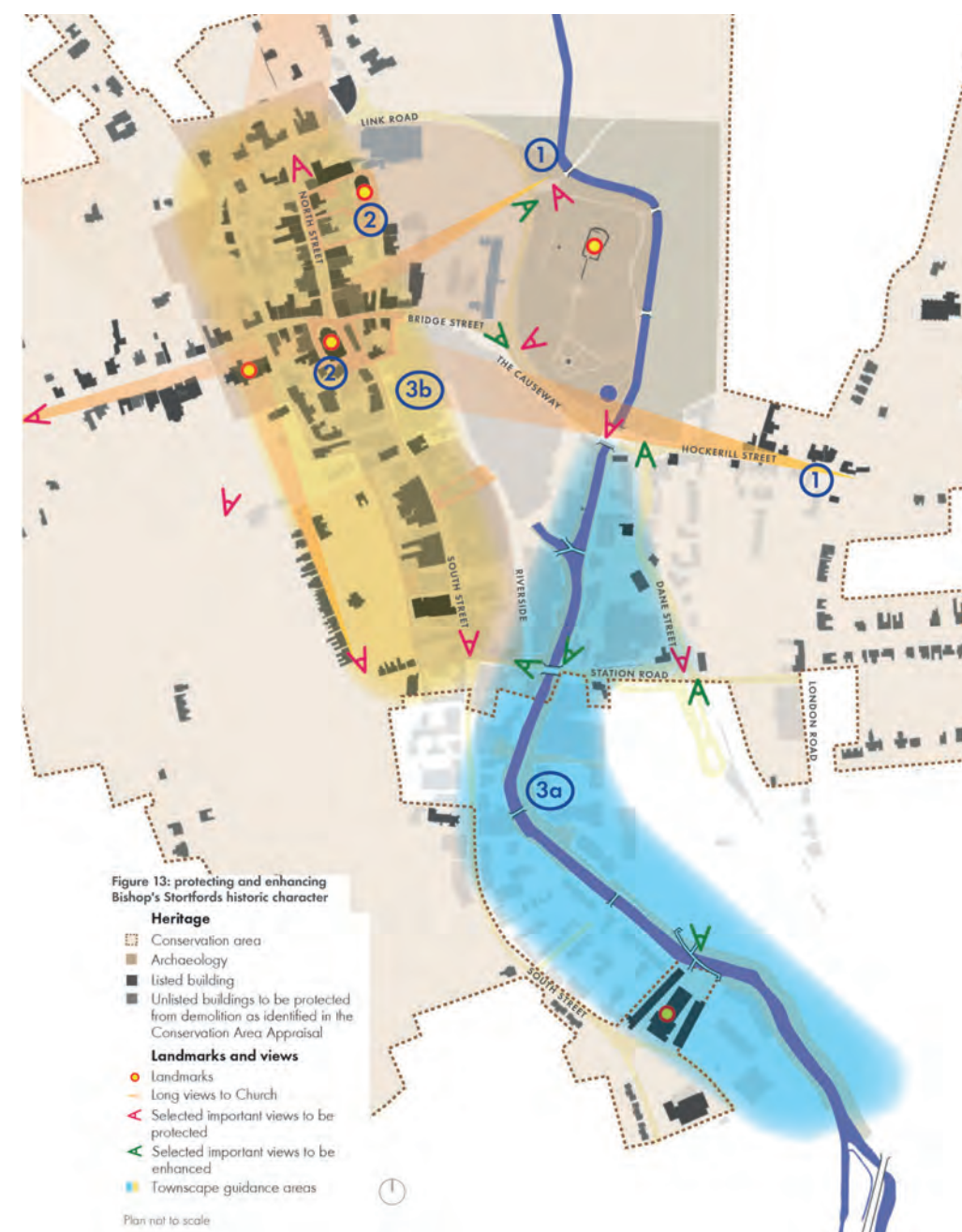


## 2.8 Important Views to be protected and enhanced

The diagram has been extracted from Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework, drafted by Allies & Morrison and Urban Practitioners, March 2017, shows the need to protect and enhance views in and around the town which include those from Station Road to the train station and from the pedestrian bridge.

Our masterplan creates a series of townscape views connecting and enhancing views from the train station towards the town centre and from the station down to the Maltings at the river edge.

The masterplan creates a series of views from the new North-South road to the river, including linking the station to the pedestrian bridge.



EXTRACTED FROM BISHOP'S STORTFORD TOWN CENTRE PLANNING FRAMEWORK, DRAFTED BY ALLIES & MORRISON AND URBAN PRACTITIONERS, MARCH 2017



THE TRADE CENTRE / SOUTH STREET MALTINGS



ALLISON'S FLOUR MILL



ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH



TRAIN STATION



ROSE & CROWN PUBLIC HOUSE



DANE STREET



### 3 Sustainability Strategy

Solum and the design team recognise the climate and biodiversity crisis and are committed to placing Bishop's Stortford Goods Yard scheme on the road to de-carbonisation. PTE is working closely with HDR for the hybrid application proposal.

The points on the page summarise the initial site wide sustainability strategy taken and how we seek to respond to the District Plan (October 2018) and guidance within the Sustainability SPD (March 2021).

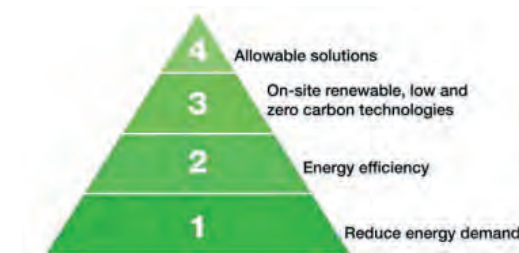
#### Strategy Summary

- In line with the governmental target to met net zero carbon the Proposed Development will replace the natural gas CHP and boiler in favour of heat pump technologies.
- Building envelope will have due consideration for U values, thermal bridging and air tightness.
- Building forms will make use of their orientation to harness daylight and solar gains where possible whilst mitigating the risk of overheating within the homes.
- Homes will aim to have an ambient water loop system fed by an air source heat pump and have MVHR ventilation for improved air quality
- Retail space will have standalone VRF system and MVHR ventilation by tenant
- Office space will also have VRF heating and cooling, a centralised AHU with heat recovery



#### District Plan October 2018

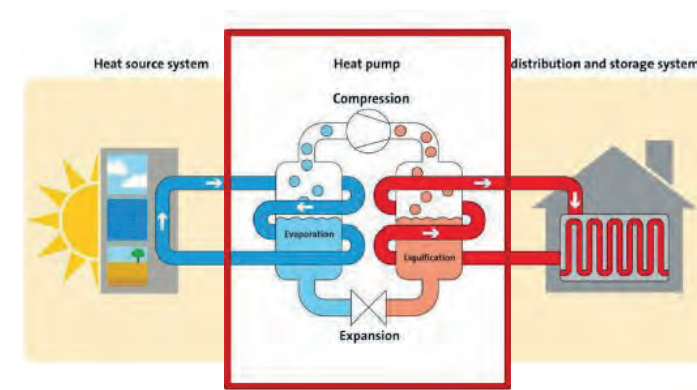
1. Efficient site opportunities
2. Fabric first approach and minimise overheating in summer and reduce the need for heating in winter.
3. Reduced energy consumption (energy hierarchy)



4. Water Efficiency (110 ltrs/p/d)
5. Sustainable lifestyles (incl. EVCs)

#### Sustainability SPD March 2021

- (3) Energy and Carbon Reduction (using SAP 10 carbon factors)
- (4) Climate Change Adaptation (in-line with the CIBSE TM 52 and 59)
- (5) Water Efficiency (110 ltrs/p/d)
- (6) Pollution (Air quality and light pollution)



HEAT PUMP DIAGRAM

#### Proposed Response

The proposed building orientation and form will be maximise to reduce heat gains.

The building envelop will be design to exceed significantly Building Regulation Part L minimum values to ensure that carbon reductions is achieved. CIBSE TM 59 and 52 to inform the design.

Energy Reduction: (fabric first approach to reduce energy demand)

Be Lean:

- Minimise Heat losses and gains, Efficient MEP Systems, Minimise
- Heat gains - Summertime Overheating (future weather files)

Be Clean:

- Block-by-Block approach using central systems

Be Green:

- Heat Pumps for MEP Zero-Carbon strategy (using de-carbonisation of grid electricity) and photovoltaic system.
- Site-wide - Targeting Policy (35% savings beyond Part L 2013 using SAP 10 carbon factor)
- Residential = Building Regulations Part G (110 ltrs/p/d)
- Retail = BREEAM Water Credit targeted

EVCs proposed

Changing Climate: Carbon savings to target 35% against Building Regulation Part L 2013 using SAP 10 as per above energy hierarchy.

Overheating mitigation: the proposed development intends to comply with the CIBSE TM 59 and 52. Additionally the design will aim to mitigate heat island effect. SUDS will be included within the design to reduce the volume of water run-off.

Residential units will achieves at least 110 Litres per day per person. Commercial units will achieves 25% water reduction when assess under the BREEAM New Construction Wat 1 calculator.

- The design will assess the external noise and air quality levels and these will be mitigated by the use of acoustically treated windows and mechanical ventilation with heat recovery.
- Light Pollution, the external lighting strategy will be designed in compliance with Table 2 (and its accompanying notes) of the ILP Guidance notes for the reduction of obtrusive light.
- The biodiversity will be improved as part of the landscape strategy;
- The use of EVC's and bike store will reduce the need to car parking on-site.
- SWMP, the contractor will provide a SWMP to ensure that waste is mitigated during construction. Additionally the waste strategy will be implemented within the dwellings to facilitate recycling.
- Material with low embodied carbon emissions will be privileged in the design.



## 4 Refining the masterplan

### 4.1 Constraints and opportunities of the refined southern site

Section 4 refers to the refinement of the southern part of the masterplan. This has evolved through consultation and design development, as shown in later sections.

Constraints of the redefined southern site

- Potential noise from railway station and train lines.
- Railway sidings to remain, with additional building setback from site boundary.
- Potential for development on one side of the new road at southern end of site.
- New road through to London Road has been constructed (temporary junction).
- The shape of the site is long and narrow.
- London Road is car dominated.
- Set back from the river to create open space setting.
- Site contours, flood zone.
- The quality of ground.

Opportunities:

- Improve the Riverside frontage and connection to the station.
- Linear exposed site with good frontage to River Stort.
- Clear site used predominately for car parking.
- Bishop's Stortford station within site demise – providing good connections across the country.
- Ideal commuting location for workers in London and Cambridge.
- Good road connections, including M11.
- Good bus links – including along new road.
- Pedestrian and cycle route along side of river.
- Close proximity to and views of The Maltings buildings.
- Opportunity to provide quality green landscape public place.
- Improve traffic movement in the town centre with new road through site connecting to London Road.
- A range of high quality apartments in a town centre location.

### 4.2 Refinement of the southern masterplan

The next series of diagrams considers the site in a changing context, where the sidings have been retained, while also looking at the current masterplan and character areas to inform the refining and re-visioning of the southern part of the site.

### 4.3 Creating Connections

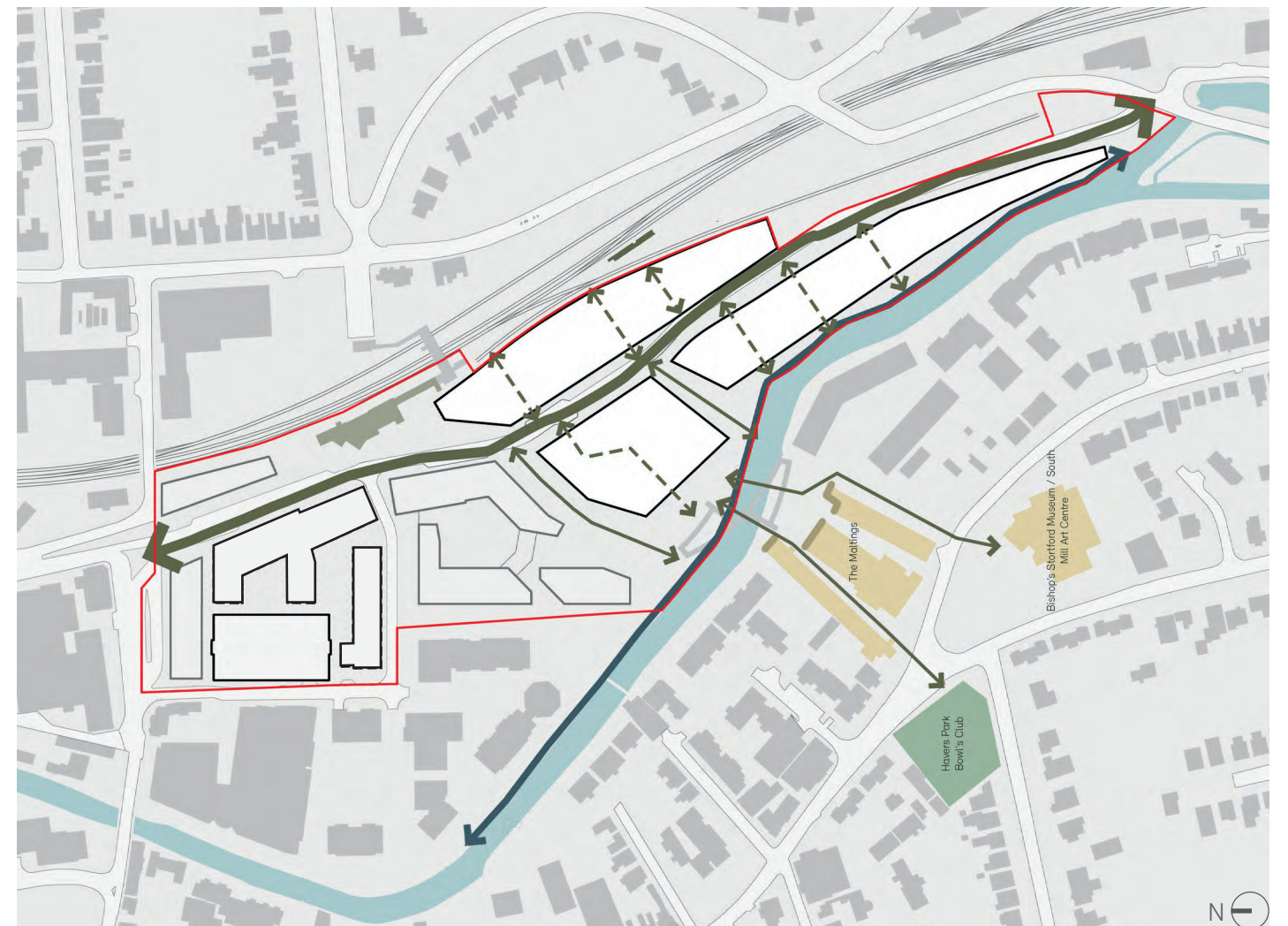
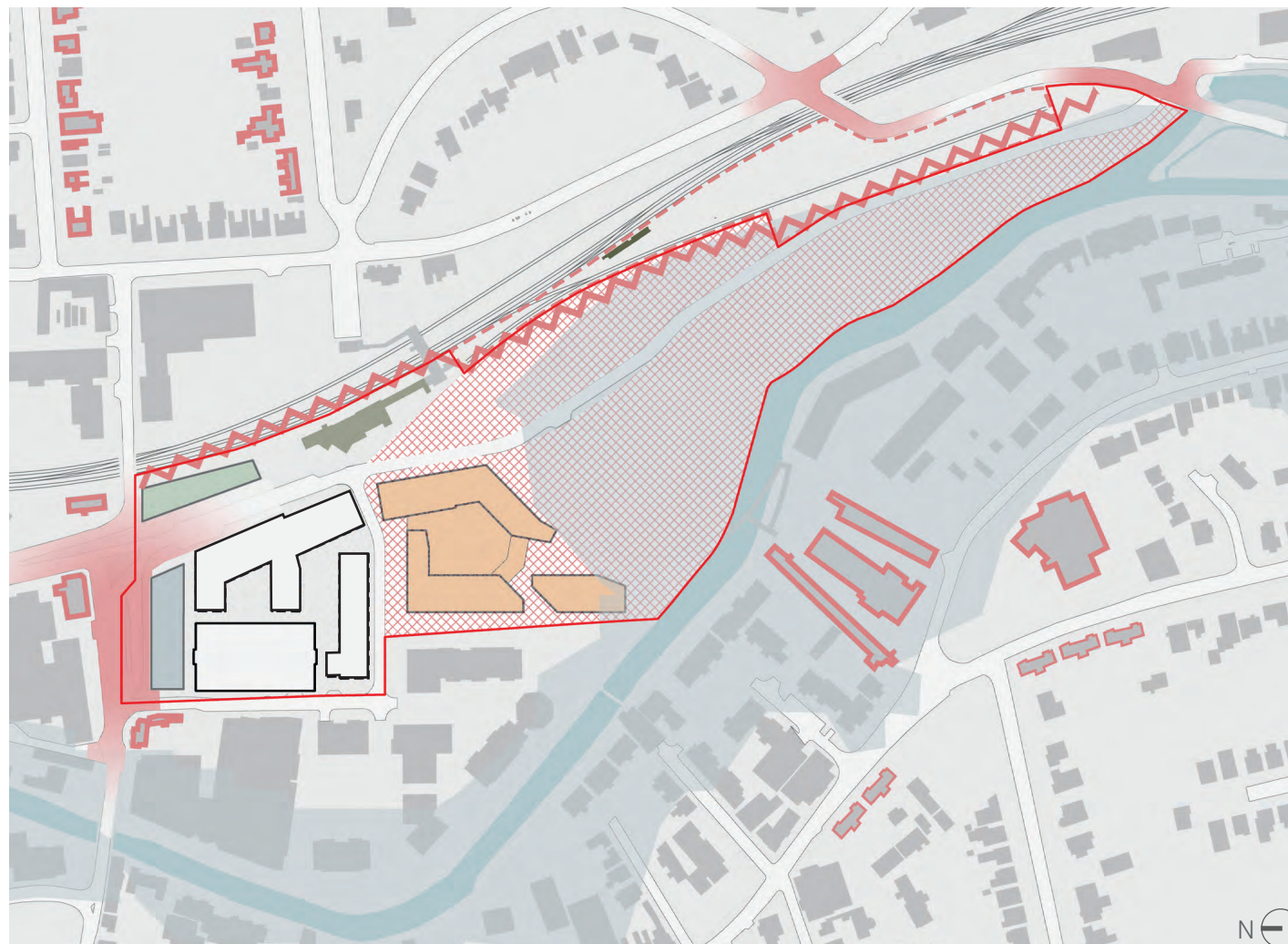
The main principles of routes have been retained as previously developed through careful review of the Local Planning Policy, the Town Centre Planning Framework and the aspirations of East Hertfordshire District Council.

Key routes include;

- A new north-south all purpose street – now completed.
- Train station to station road and into the town centre.
- Train station to the riverside bridge, the Maltings and Bishop's Stortford museum/South Street arts complex beyond.

Another key element of the layout is to create choice through a series of routes which link the North-South link (Sextons Road) and the river edge, thus bringing the river back into the site.

Enhancement of the riverside path will provide an alternative route to the North-South link.





## 4.4 Refining key areas

Once the main connections and routes are made for the southern site we are able to identify areas which will provide a sense of place to key parts of the site.

### Key areas

Station Square – marking arrival into Bishop’s Stortford by train. The aim is to provide a sense of arrival when stepping of the train, to provide a gateway to Bishop’s Stortford. Consideration to the whole arrival experience for those that live or visiting. Making this an active place, a series of spaces that offer variety for all people.

Place Linking Station Square and the Riverside Park – the aim is to provide, through landscaping and building placement, a public route or boulevard from the station square to the riverside public realm helping the draw the riverside landscape up to the Station Square.

Riverside Public Realm – providing a high quality landscaped open space beside the Stort River, bridge and connection to the South Street Maltings. This area is to be vibrant with potential for seasonal activities in the park and on the water.

South Street Maltings – the aim is to enhance the connection from the newly developed Goods Yard site through to the maltings buildings, museum and Rhodes Arts complex and bowling club beyond.

Riverside Play and Amenity – Along with the Riverside public realm there will be place for play and rest along the river edge.

Consideration will be given to the junction at London Road as an entrance and gateway to the Good’s Yard.

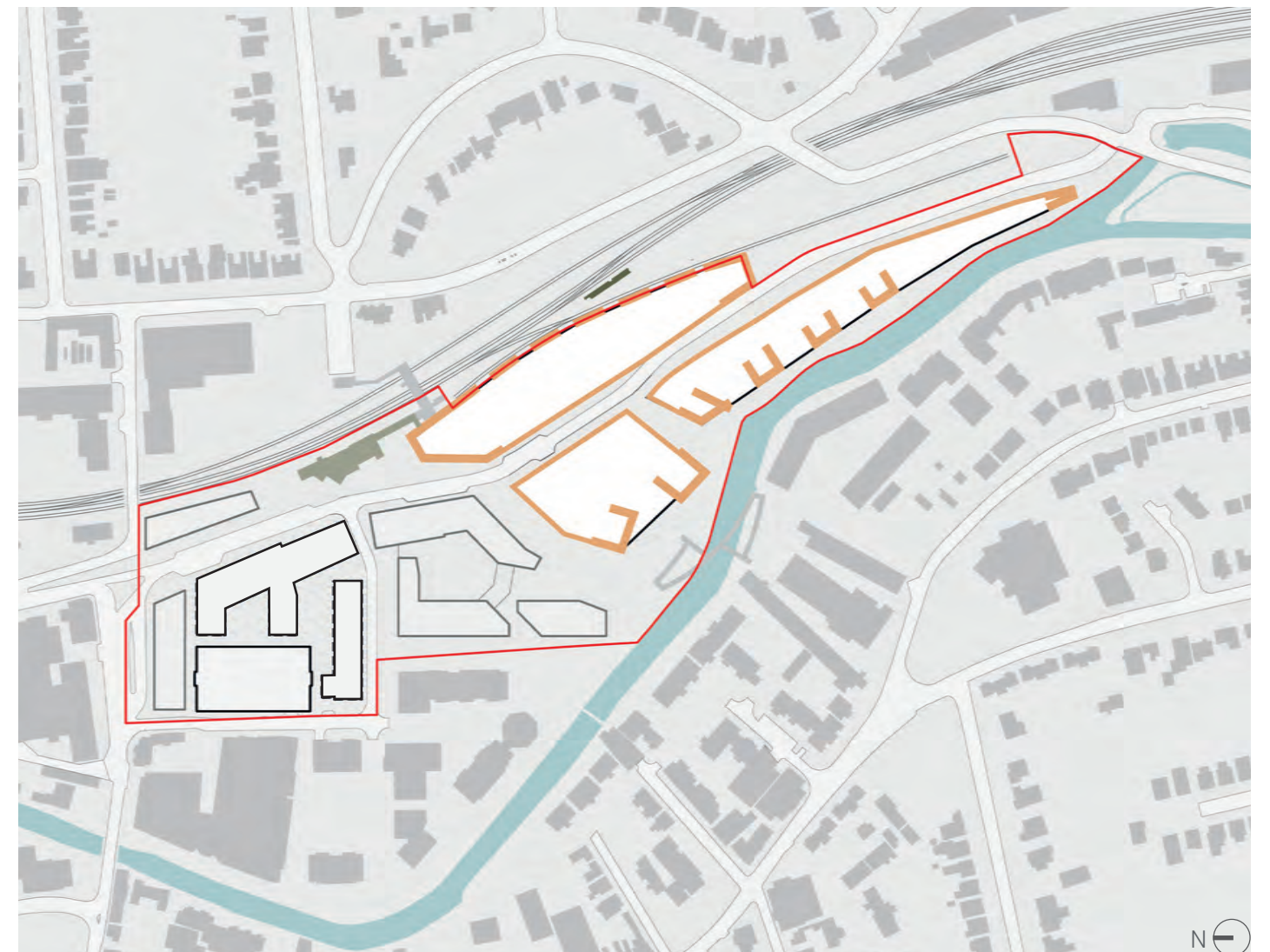
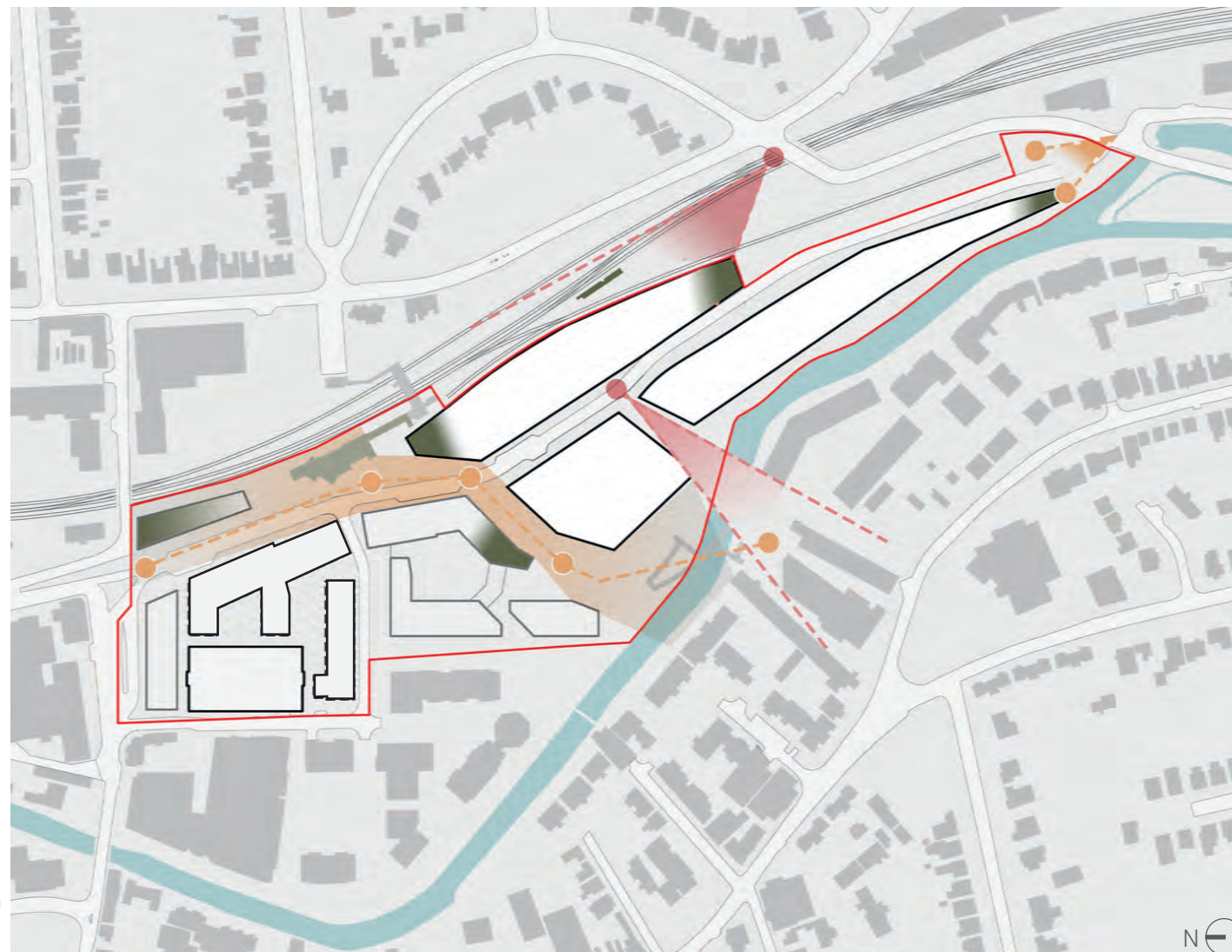
The planning application will define how key areas, public realm will be delivered.

## 4.5 Important frontages

Having identified the key connections and linking areas within the southern site we start to define key building frontages that play an important part in defining edges to spaces providing containment and enclosure and others setting a continuous frontage strengthening an edge, all to provide a public realm with hierarchy and legibility.

Important frontages to:

- Station Square
- Railway and station platform
- Route between Station Square and the Riverside Park
- Riverside Park
- To the River Stort and riverside path
- Entry point of London Road
- The retained railway sidings

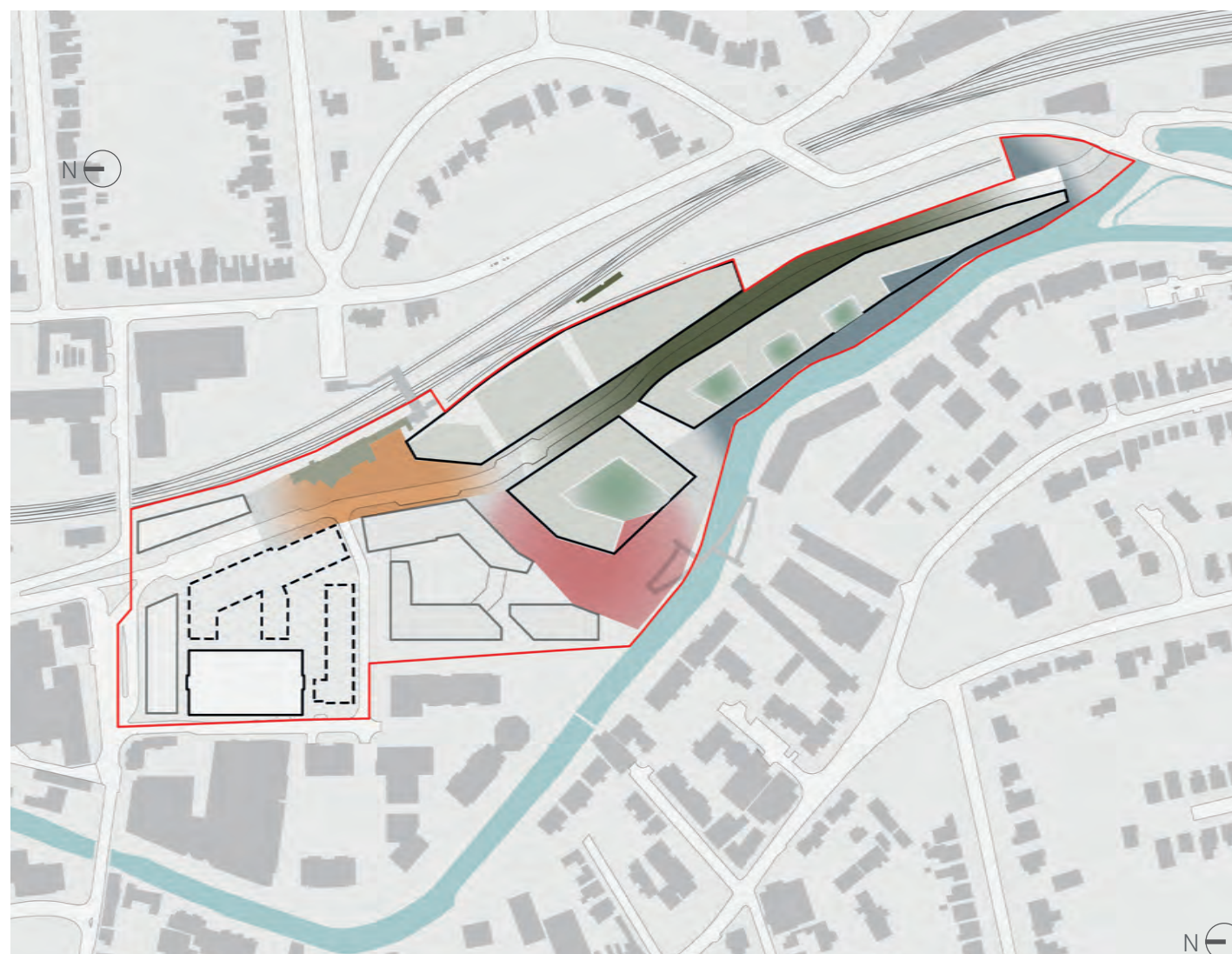




## 4.6 Public Realm

The key areas that provide an opportunity for high quality landscaped open space that can be accessed by the public are identified below:

Station Square  
Riverside Park and Amenity  
Riverside frontage  
North-South link (Sextons Road)  
London Road



## 4.7 Refined development Plot Plan

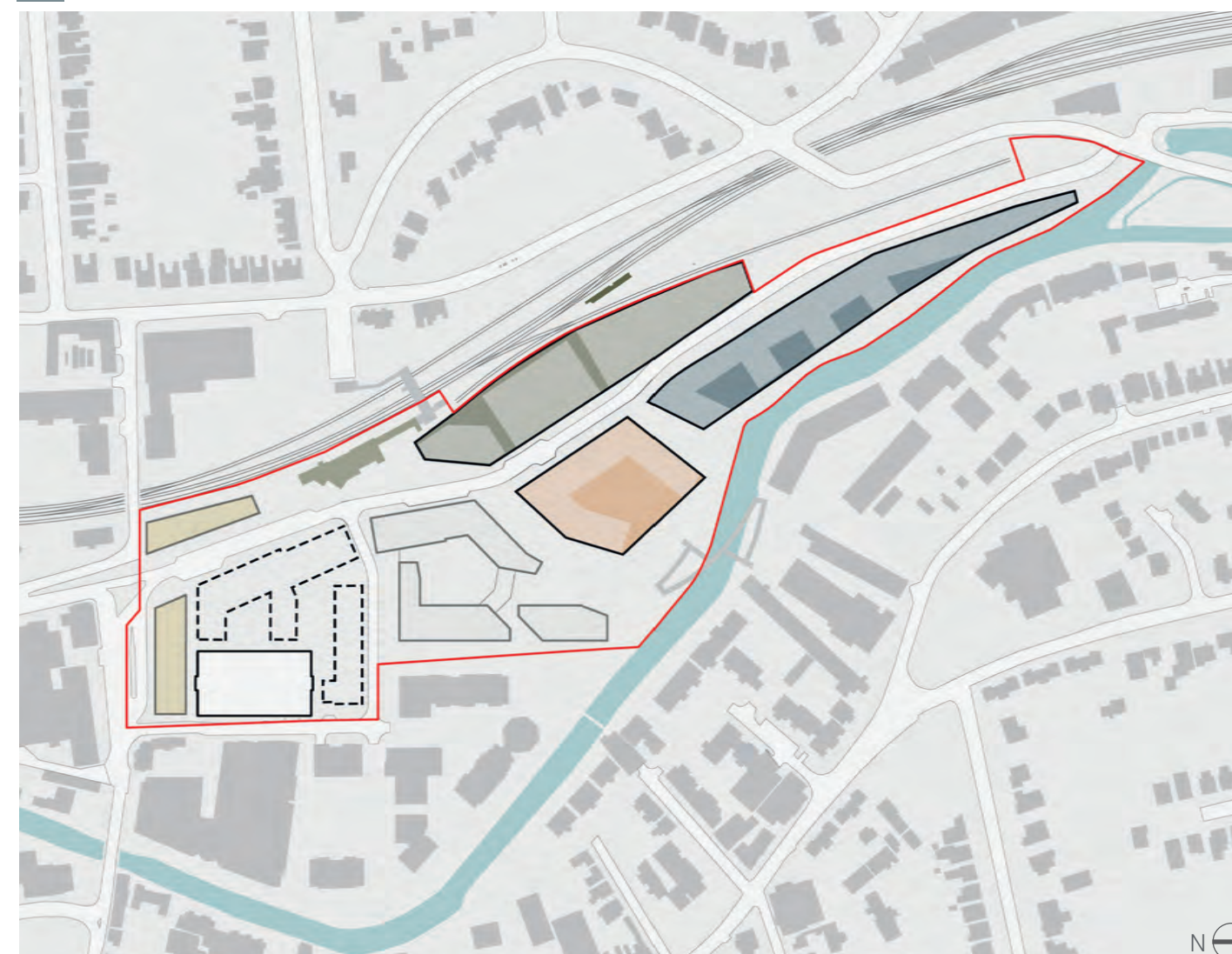
Having identified the routes through the southern site and key areas, we have defined development plots and identified and tested the best location for the placement of buildings within these development plots. These zones are shown below:

THE GRANARY AND THE GOODS SHED

SIDINGS

THE MALTINGS

RIVERSIDE



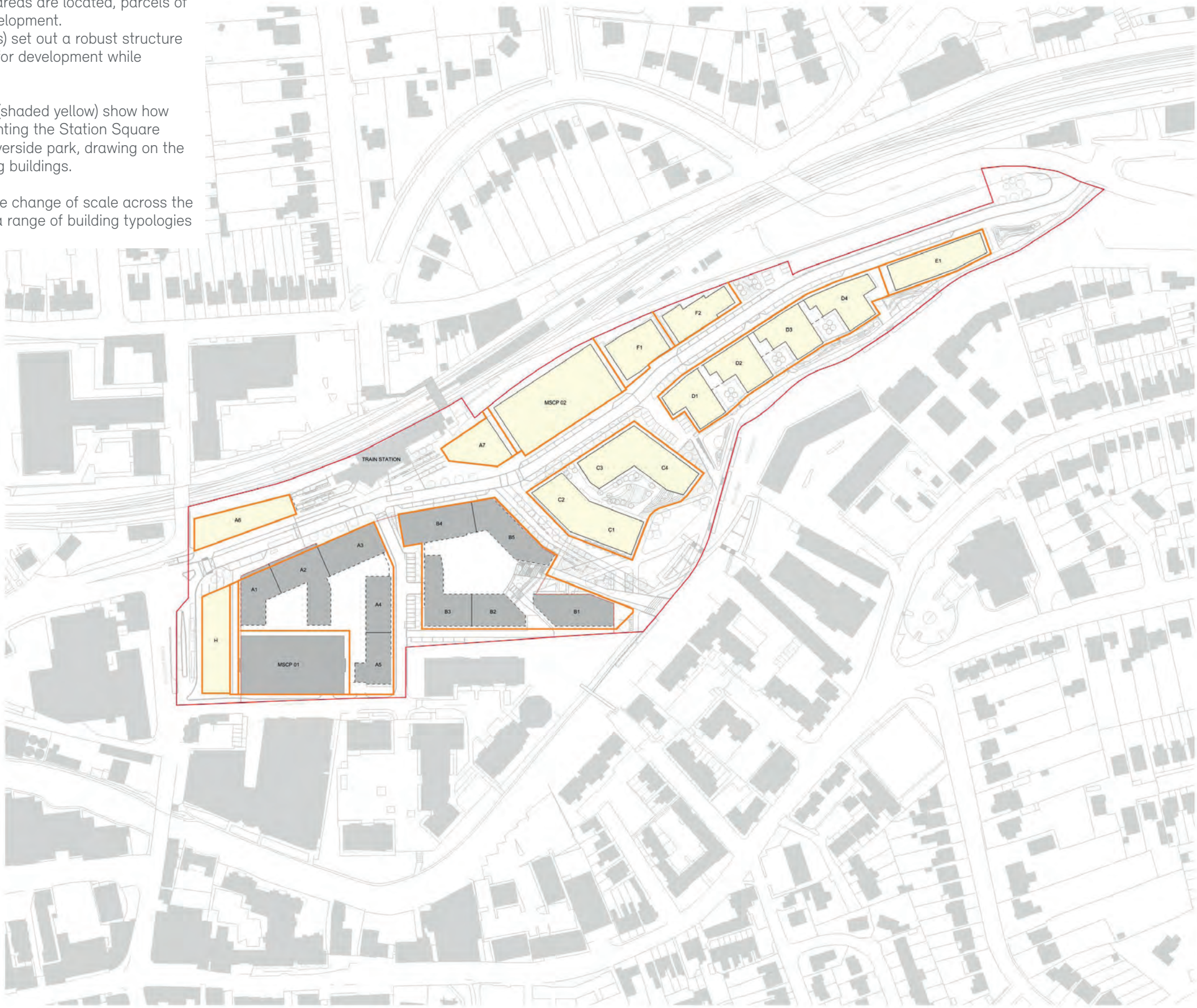


4.7 Refined development Plot and Block Plan

Once connections and key areas are located, parcels of land can be defined for development.  
The plot layout (orange lines) set out a robust structure and define the opportunity for development while protecting the public realm.

The blocks within the plots (shaded yellow) show how buildings will be placed, fronting the Station Square and running down to the Riverside park, drawing on the historic layout of the Malting buildings.

The building blocks show the change of scale across the development, providing for a range of building typologies and mix of homes.



**GENERAL NOTES:**  
This drawing is © 2021 PTE architects.  
Use figure dimensions only. **DO NOT SCALE.**  
All dimensions are in millimetres unless noted otherwise.  
This drawing must be read in conjunction with all other relevant drawings and specifications from the Architect and other consultants.  
If in doubt, ask.

**SETTING OUT NOTES:**  
All setting out to be confirmed on site prior to construction - any discrepancy must be immediately reported to the Architect.  
All partitions set out to studwork or structure.  
For setting out and specification of M&E services refer to M&E Consultants documents.  
For setting out and specification of structure refer to Structural Engineer's documents.

10 0 10 20 30 40 50 m  
Metres 1:1000

**LEGEND:**

- MASTERPLAN BOUNDARY
- UNDER CONSTRUCTION
- COMPLETED
- DEVELOPMENT PLOT BOUNDARY
- BLOCK BOUNDARY

Rev	Date	Description	Drawn	Checked
FOR APPROVAL				

Dispeker Wharf  
38 Graham Street  
London N1 5JX  
020 7336 7777  
forename.surname@ptea.co.uk  
@ptearchitects  
www.pollardthomasedwards.co.uk

**Pollard  
Thomas  
Edwards**

Project	Job number	Drawn	Author	Date issued
Bishop's Stortford	21-015	Authors indicated@A1		

Drawings	Drawing number	Revision	Author	Authority
Development Plot and Block Plan	BSG- PTE- ZZ-XX-OR-A-10002			



## 4.8 Refined Masterplan

### Our vision

The Goods Yard will be an exceptional place in which to live, work or enjoy a day out. Inspired by the culture and history on its doorstep it will bring together a series of;

- riverside neighbourhoods;
- inspirational architecture;
- landscaping and;
- exemplary community infrastructure;
- it will have exceptional rail links;
- a cycling network and;
- pedestrian friendly streets.

Our overall vision for The Goods Yard continues to be that of a thriving, residential and mixed use community that is physically and socially integrated with the rest of Bishop’s Stortford.

It will be a much sought after place in which to live, offering a uniquely convenient address for rail commuters with a wide range of social, community and commercial facilities, all in an exceptional setting.

Its layout and design will reflect its proximity to the High Street and the River Stort. We expect that it will also become a visitor destination in its own right, complementing High Street, and thereby significantly increasing the attractiveness and prosperity of Bishop’s Stortford. Visitors will be attracted by the new riverside and wharf side cafés and shops, by the new parks and by the continuous riverside walk.

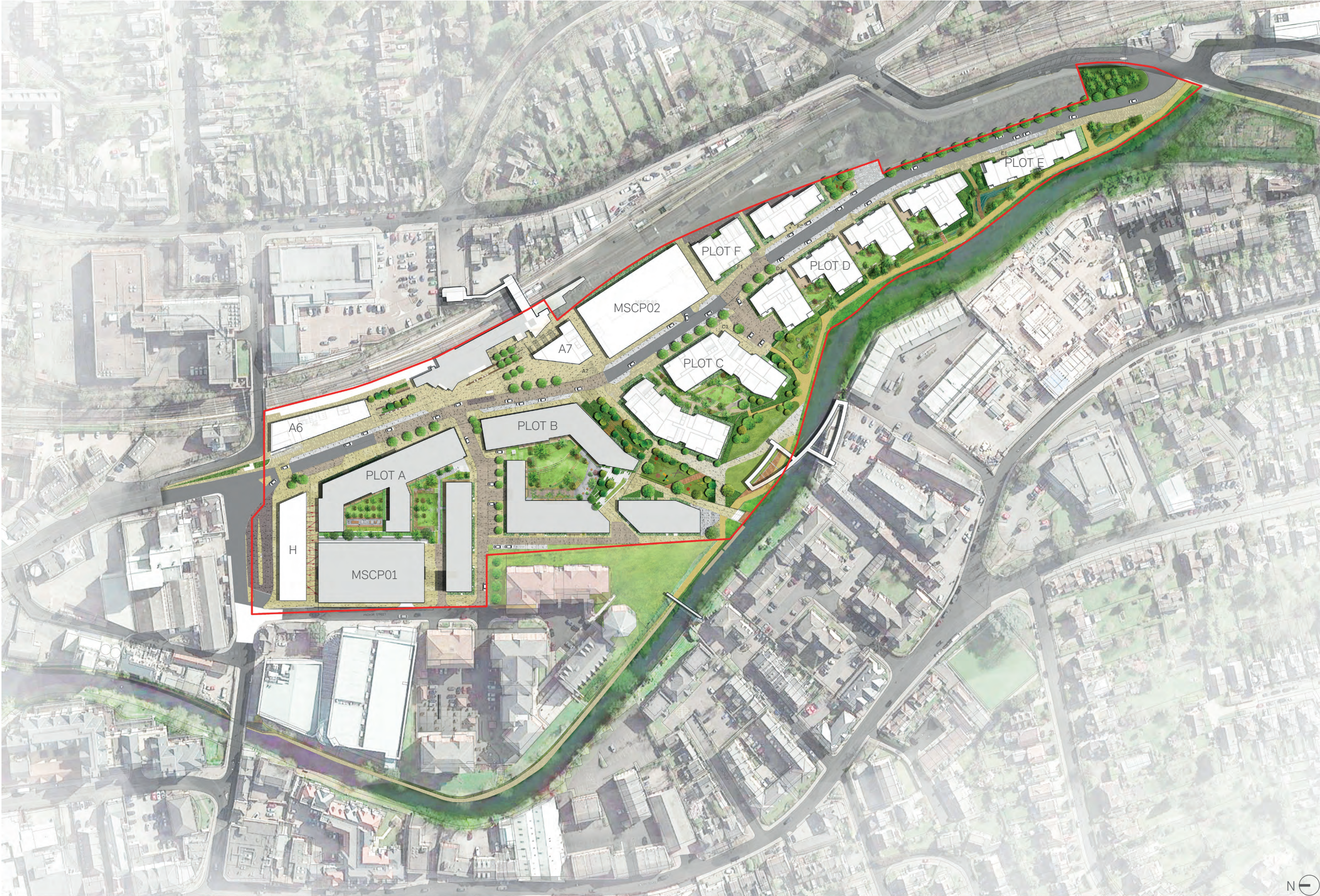
We have substantially developed our Masterplan and related proposals for The Goods Yard during the Pre-application stage, in conjunction with the Council, and its consultants. This has been a very successful and productive partnership and we believe that the proposals in this submission now provide the foundations for an exceptional scheme that will not only fully realise the enormous potential of The Goods Yard but also make a major contribution to the economic prosperity of Bishop’s Stortford.

To transform the Goods Yard into a successful place, it must look and feel integrated into its setting. It must respond to the surrounding assets and overcome existing barriers. The resulting urban structure will create the structure for the place to grow and enhance over time. The masterplan layout illustrates a strong urban structure responding to the key moves to integrate the site into its wider context, including;

1. Enhancing the existing river walk through an improved public realm and landscaping, introducing a range of public spaces and experiences, and enabling longer term connections to extend the river walk to connect to the town centre and station, and to connect to the river walk to the south, which may be developed in the longer term.
2. Creating connections between the historic core and enhanced landscapes, effectively linking High Street to river walk and providing a series of gateway spaces welcoming visitors to The Goods Yard.
3. Introducing several new neighbourhoods, each with fabulous river views, a range of open spaces and all within a few minutes walk to the railway station, local facilities, neighbourhood uses and some of Bishop’s Stortford best established and new destinations.
4. Defining a new Urban Avenue with a range of mixed commercial, civic, transport and open space uses and concentration of more urban housing along this accessible and connected route.
5. Providing local streets to reinforce views and access to the river walk, each with a distinctive character defined by a range of bespoke housing typologies developed from building precedents within Bishop’s Stortford. Embedded in the plan is a very strong open space strategy, based on creating a series of spaces along the river front.
6. A range of mixed uses will provide for both local neighbourhood needs and destinations for the wider community. The bustling Station Square will have convenience retail, offices, c cafés and restaurants offering spill-out areas fronting adjacent open space. The Goods Yard will become a place established in the hearts and minds of local residents. It will be an extension of the historic core and will contribute to wider area regeneration.



4.9 Refined Masterplan







ENDORSED MASTERPLAN (2017)



PROPOSED MASTERPLAN

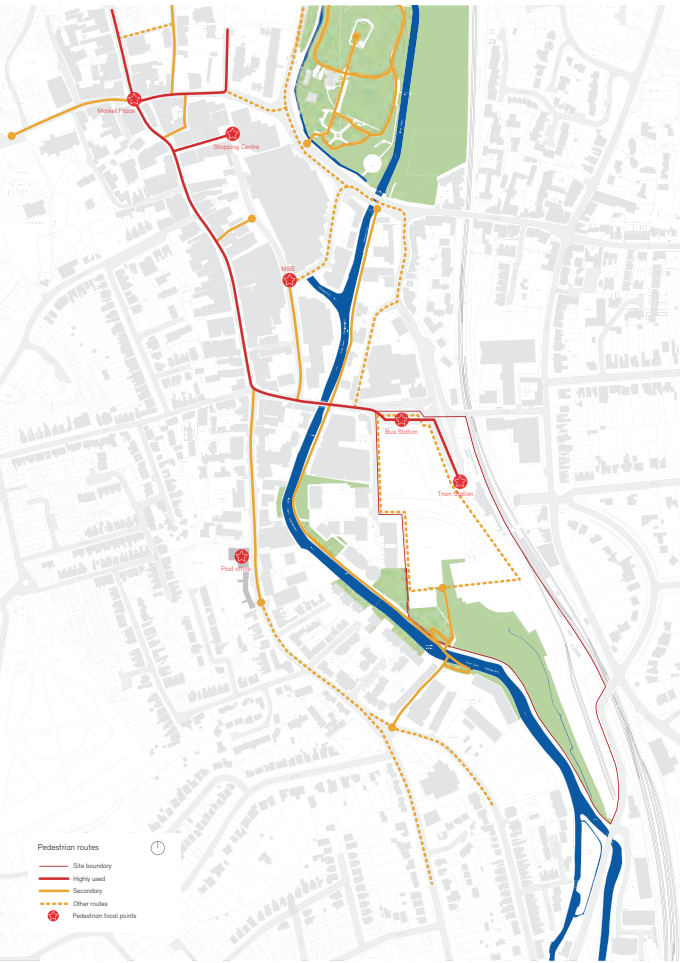


5 Movement and Transport

The design team, including Mayer Brown and BDP, engaged with HCC in developing the movement strategy for the masterplan. The refined masterplan maintains this approach.

The movement strategy is aligned to the aspirations of the Bishop’s Stortford Town Centre Framework and with the construction of the new north-south link sees that the scheme will deliver:

- a new two-way street through the site
- improved bus facilities
- improved taxis facilities, new parking has now been located
- increased cycle provision at the station
- increased station car parking facilities, of which MSCP01 is complete
- look at delivery of short stay parking facilities
- improved cycle routes through the site with riverside and road-way cycle routes



CONNECTION TO BISHOP’S STORTFORD

Sextons Street (north-south route) – main carriage way and temporary London Road intersection constructed

Mayer Brown TRANSIT modelling showed that minor changes in traffic involving people currently turning left from London Road into Hockerill Street and vice versa, the Anchor Street improvements which will reduce the inter-green periods and the provision of MSCP01 will take traffic from Station Road/South Road junction, will provide a benefit for the town centre network, for which the predominant use of the capacity can be to provide benefits for buses, cyclists and pedestrians.

Sextons Road removes traffic from the Hockerill Junction and the South Road/Station Road junction. This provides the Local Highway Authority working with EHDC with a considerable opportunity to use the capacity generated for the purpose of all road users within the town centre.

Sextons Road

- Target design speed of 20mph, which has a target maximum speed of 24mph.
- 6m carriage width with street parking is additional either side.
- Slowing features are provided every 80m to achieve 20m/h speed.
- Parking bays are 2.5m wide, clearly defined from the carriageway – flush kerb or material change.
- Reduce amount of tarmac and visually break up street with crossings that use a change in material. Contrast is perhaps more important than level change.
- Raised tables are shallow for buses.
- Footpaths with high footfall should be 3-4m wide.
- Range of material options – natural stone, concrete, tarmac.
- Adoptable materials to be agreed with HCC asset team.

Station Square

The delineation of the shared space;

- Shared space will need to be consulted on and have buy-in from disability groups.
- HCC consider that similar materials between pavement and carriageway is acceptable.
- 25mm height difference is recommended to define the carriageway and aide people with visual impairments.
- 160mm kerb required for buses, which will not be located on raised shared space.

Bus Interchange

The new bus interchange will be located in the same location to the existing and phased following the construction of Block H. It will form an important part of the journey and public realm, from railway station to town centre.

Street Car Parking

Street parking will be located away from junctions to provide view splays and clusters of street trees. Wider parking bays (2.4-2.5m) will reduce clash between cyclists and car doors. Perpendicular parking on the north-south street is least favourable preference for parallel, then angled.

HCC noted in their response to the previous application, they considered the sites sustainable location made a lower parking ratio acceptable in highways terms and were supportive of this.

Multi Storey Car Park 2

MSCP02 is the second of two new station car parking facilities; it is proposed the car park will accommodate both commuter and residents parking. Solum have been working with rail stakeholders to agree the overall quantum of commuter car spaces required within MSCP02 as informed by assessments of anticipated commuter usage.

The current approval of MSCP02 has 565 spaces which will be allocated across commuter and residents car parking.

Vehicle Trip Rates

Mayer Brown provided information below to HCC in respect of the revised masterplan impact on the local highways network as a result of proposed additional dwellings.

The planning application will to be supported by a revised Transport Assessment and Travel Plan.

In the context of processing the revised masterplan the resulting quantum is justified from a vehicle movement perspective.

Robust vehicle trip rates were agreed with HCC for the purpose of assessing the impact of the now approved development at the site. These are show in the table below (which forms Table 8.2 of the previous Transport Assessment).

	Arrivals	Departures	Total
AM Peak 0800-0900	0.050	0.190	0.240
PM Peak 1700-1800	0.158	0.069	0.227

Table 1: Basic Residential Trip Rates for the Development (Source: TRICS Database)

Using these vehicle trip rates the anticipated vehicle movements associated with the additional dwellings (c.100) is shown in the table below.

	Arrivals	Departures	Total
AM Peak 0800-0900	5	19	24
PM Peak 1700-1800	16	7	23

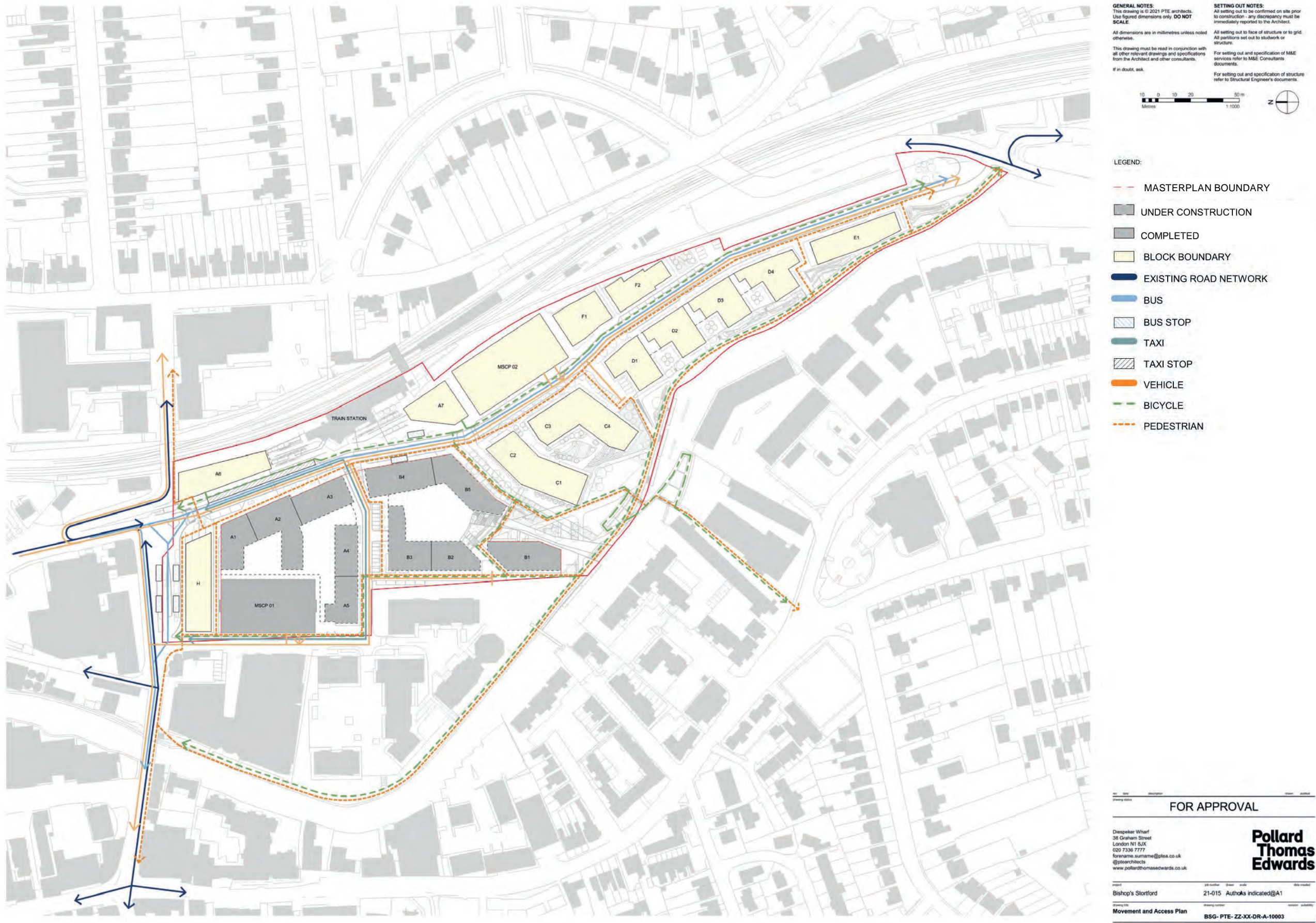
Table 2: Total Additional Trips for the revised masterplan, based on the vehicle trip rates used in the submitted TA for the planning consent

With reference to the above table this only equates to one additional vehicle exiting the development every 3 minutes in the morning peak period, and only one additional vehicle entering the development in the evening peak period.

It is clear from the above that the change in vehicle trips is of a threshold that would not be noticeable in terms of impact on the local highway.



5.1 Movement Access Plan



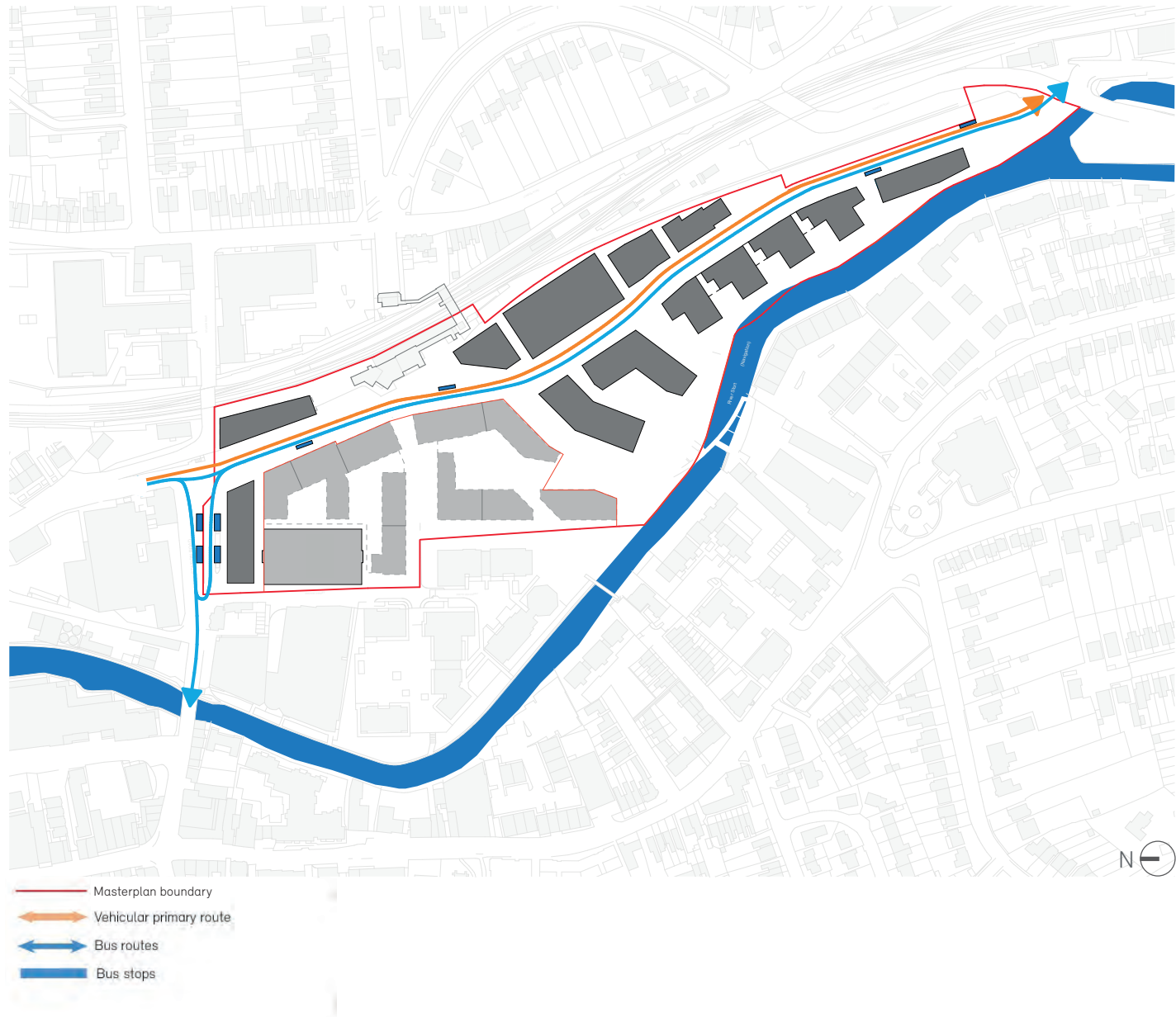


5.2 Public Transport Routes  
5.2.1 Buses

The Masterplan provides the opportunity for much improved bus journeys for residents to the railway station and the centre of Bishop's Stortford.

There is no change to the Bus Strategy agreed with HCC and consistent with the Neighbourhood Plan in encouraging journeys by non-car means.

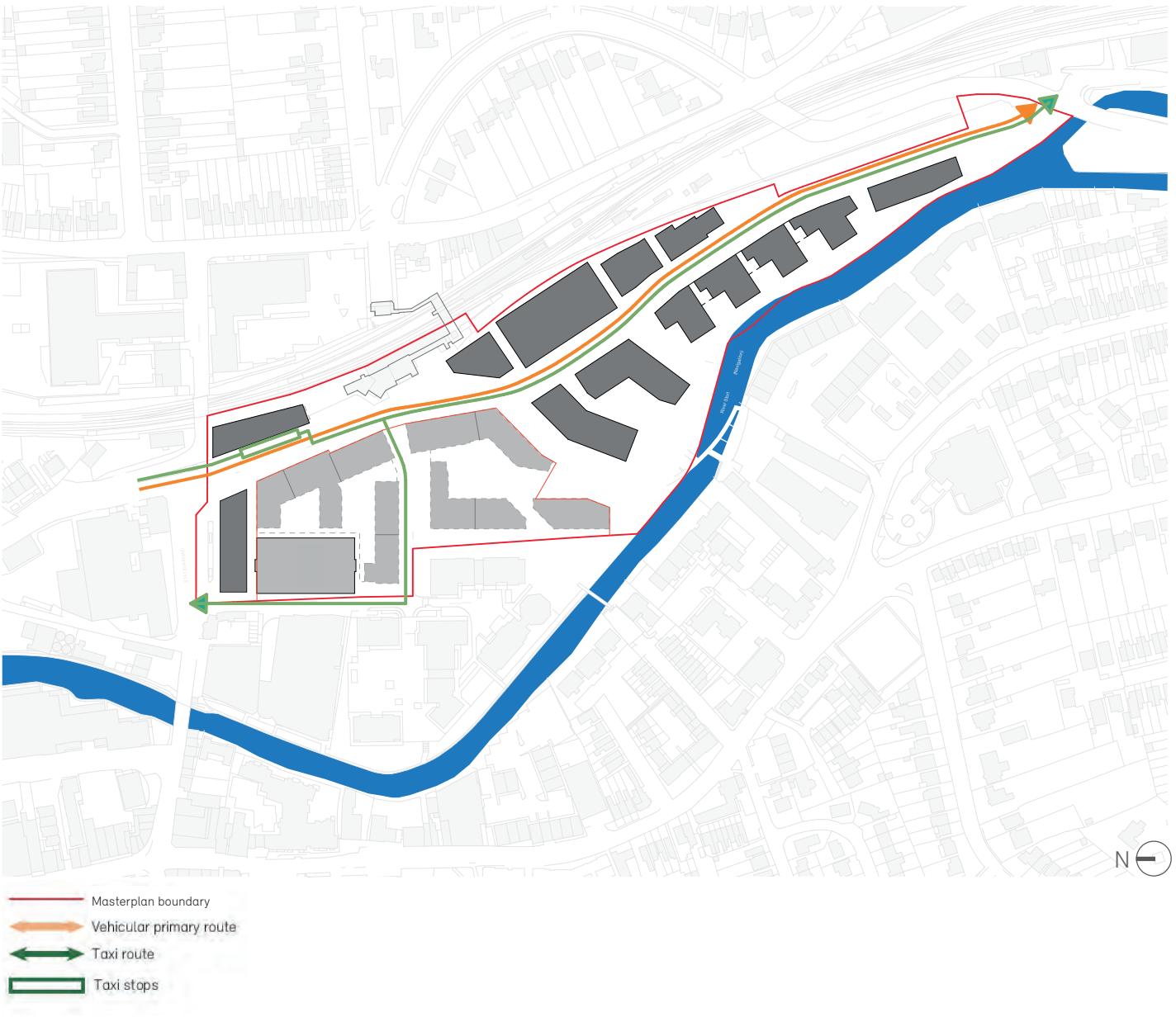
HCC agreed that north to south bus stops along the north-south route be located south of the station interchange with clear way finding signs provided outside the station.



MOVEMENT DIAGRAM - BUS

5.2.2 Taxi's

12 Taxi spaces are provided between the Train Station and Station Road alongside the building (A6).



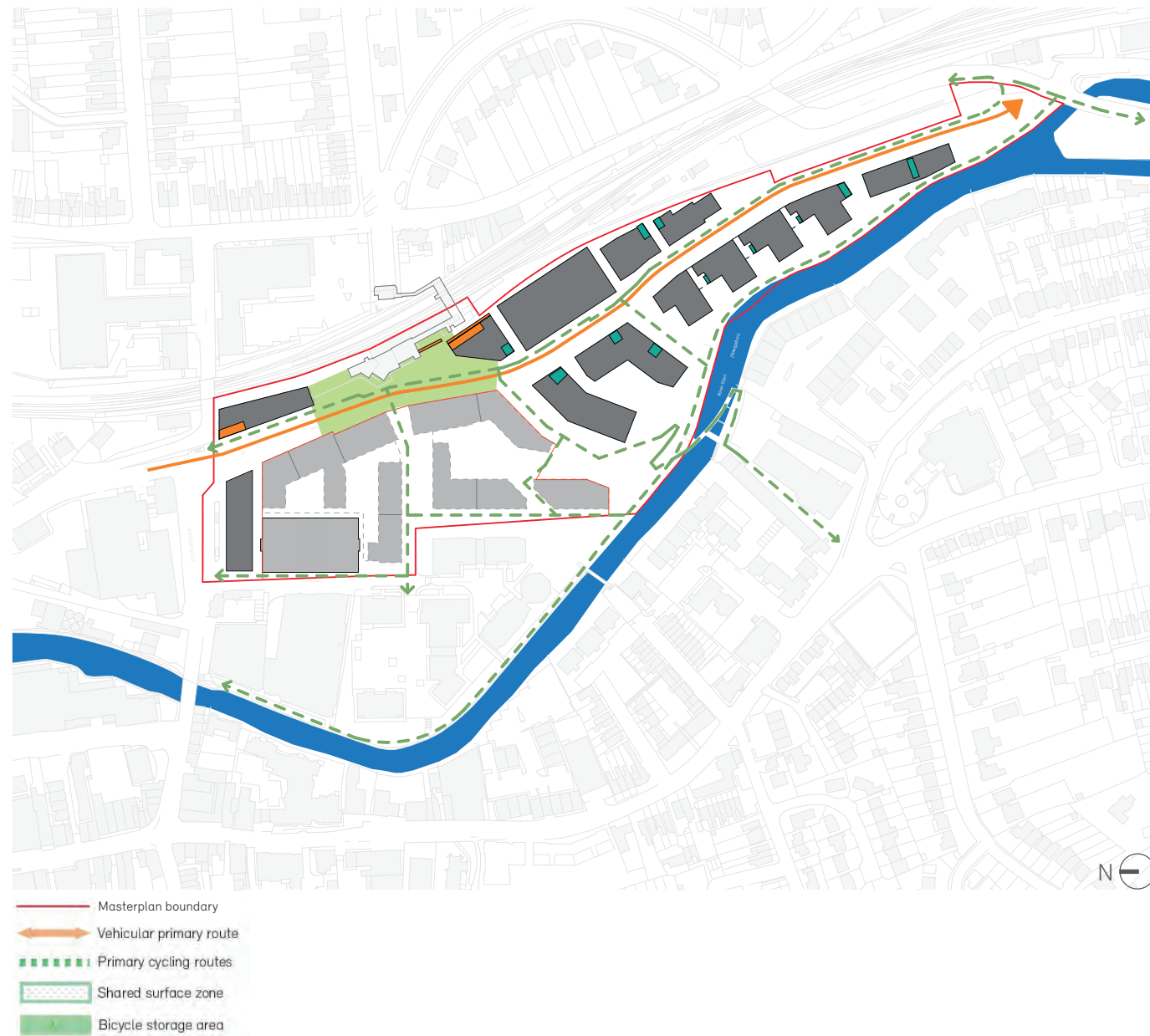
MOVEMENT DIAGRAM - TAXI

## 5.2.3 Cycling Routes

Cycle routes through the site will remain in line with the endorsed masterplan, occurring on street and along the riverside providing for a choice of routes depending on the cyclist.

Cycle parking will continue to be located close to the train station with an increase of storage available. These are to be visibly located beside the station and building A7 at the southern part of station square.

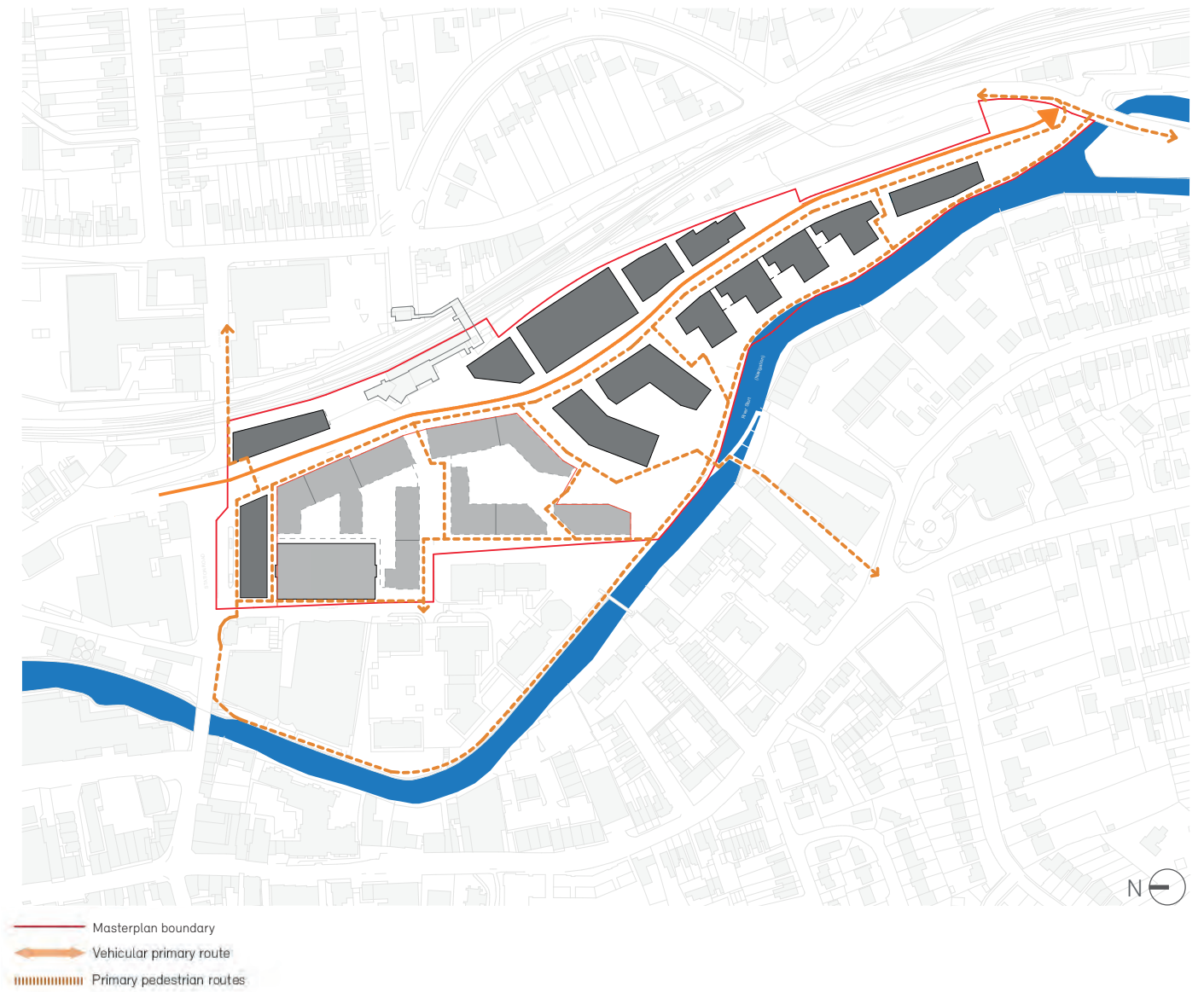
A current provision of 236 cycle spaces is provided. The scheme proposes 400 cycle spaces in total.



MOVEMENT DIAGRAM - CYCLE

## 5.2.4 Pedestrian Routes

The design of the public realm is extremely important and is to be inclusive for all users providing safe and level access throughout the scheme.



MOVEMENT DIAGRAM - PEDESTRIAN



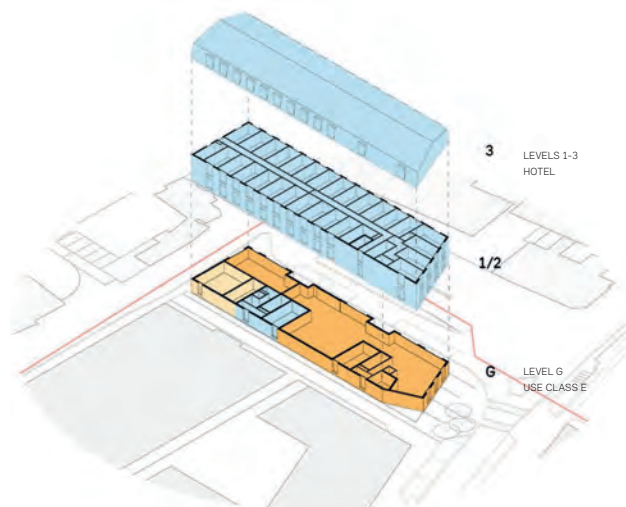
## 6 Mix of Uses

### 6.1 Hotel - Block H

Solum is currently looking at introducing circa 500 sqm GIA of commercial, business and service floorspace (Use Class E) at ground floor level with 3 floors of hotel floorspace above.

The introduction of the additional floorspace at ground floor level seeks to improve the viability of the hotel to promote a realistic offer for the site and thereby retain the consented use.

The introduction of the new uses at ground floor level will also better activate the frontages of the building and create opportunity to provide better surveillance onto the bus interchange and public realm.

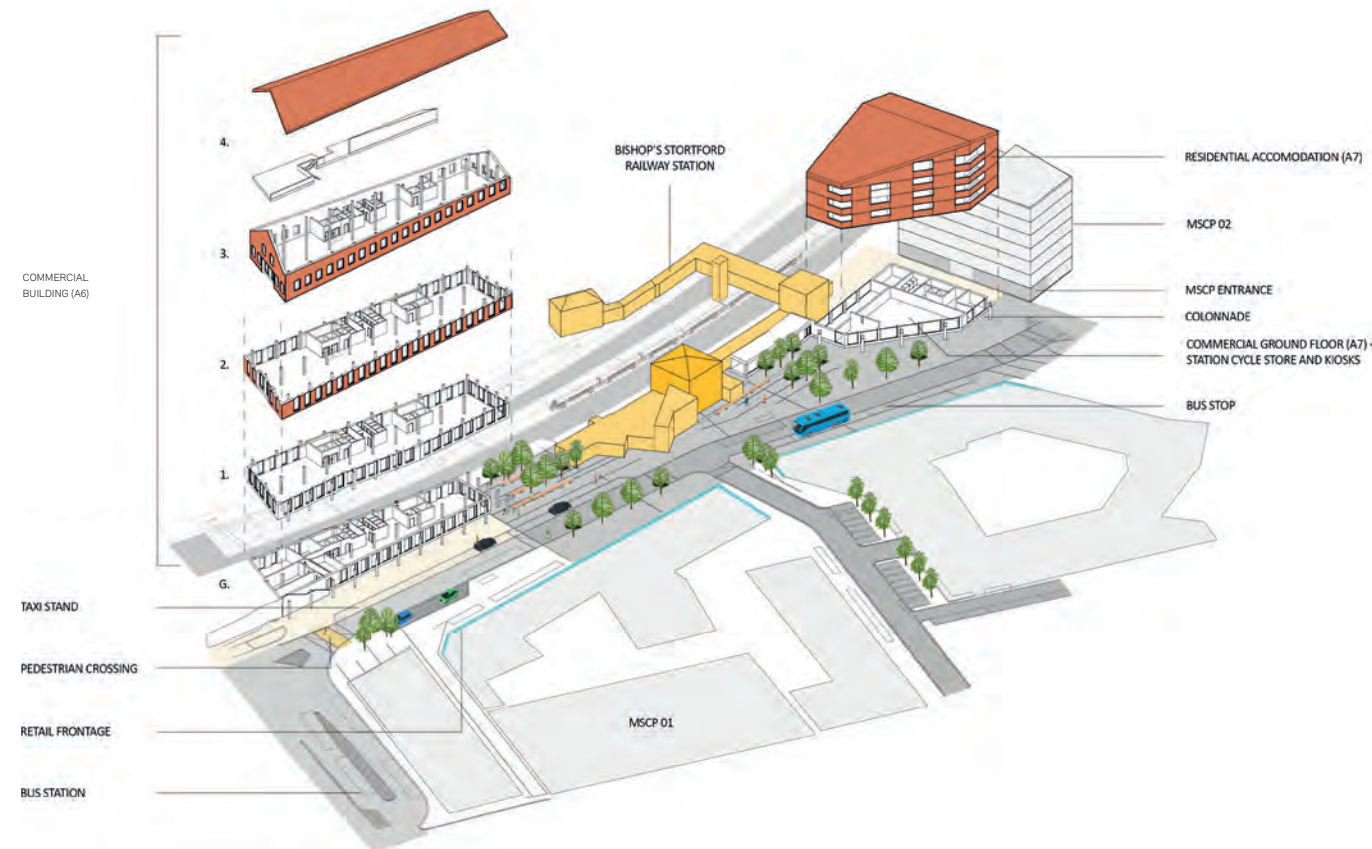


BLOCK H

### 6.2 Commercial - Goods Sheds A6 and A7

The amount of commercial space being proposed is not being reduced from the overall quantum on the existing application. This is possible due to the flexible nature of both Goods Sheds, Blocks A6 and A7.

The commercial accommodation is optimised within the Block A6 shell, by transferring station cycle stores to the southern part of station square, and increasing floor area at the upper levels, this achieving no net loss.



GOODS SHEDS A6 AND A7

### 6.3 Residential

#### Range of Homes

**Southern Site**  
c420 new homes are proposed for the Goods Yard southern site, all thoughtfully designed providing a range of homes from family sized to smaller apartments for a variety households.

**Overall site**  
Consented 586 apartments plus 55 care apartments  
=641 homes

Plots A and B under construction 323 homes  
Refined southern site proposed c420 homes  
= c740 homes

c12% additional homes across the masterplan.

#### Design standards

The scheme is designed to meet the London Plan. All homes either meet or exceed the Nationally described Space Standards (NdSS).

90% of new homes are designed to comply with Approved Document Part M Category 2 (Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings). 10% of new homes are designed to comply with Category 3 (Wheelchair User Dwellings).

Each home has a balcony or terrace. The size of these spaces is a minimum of 5 sqm for 1-2 person homes and an extra 1 sqm is provided for each additional occupant.

The majority of the homes, and all of the larger ones, enjoy a dual aspect, none have north-facing single aspect.

#### Achieving quality beyond compliance with standards

We understand the full range of technical standards and design guidance with which our client and registered providers, are expected to comply.

We understand that standards contribute to quality, but are not the same thing as quality. Our homes offer much more subtle qualities to their occupiers: beautiful secure courtyards, brick detailing with deep reveals for shade and shelter, generous windows and balconies.

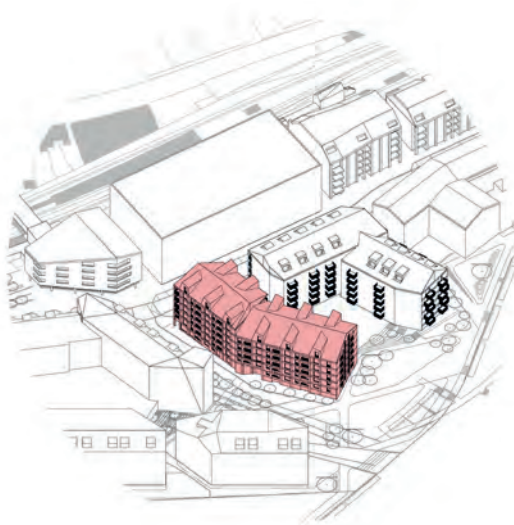
## 6.4 Care/Senior Living C2 - Plot C

Solum is currently exploring alternative options for Block C for the provision of care / senior living apartments at the site. This could include more or less apartments than the existing permission or none at all if an operator and funder cannot be secured.

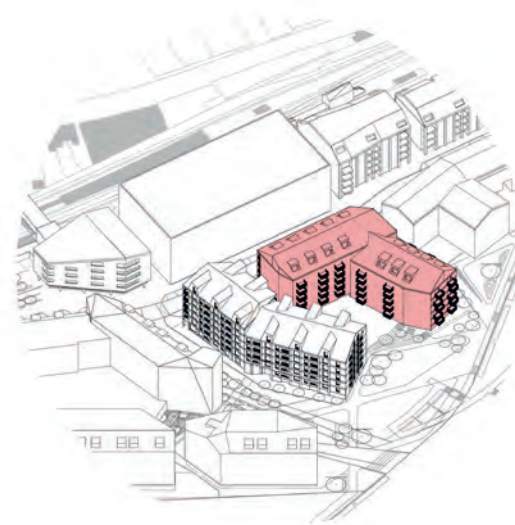
The four possible options for Block C include:

- A) The northern block as C2 and the southern block as C3 (similar to the approved development)
- B) The southern block as C2 and the northern block as C3.
- C) Both blocks as C2.
- D) Both blocks as C3.

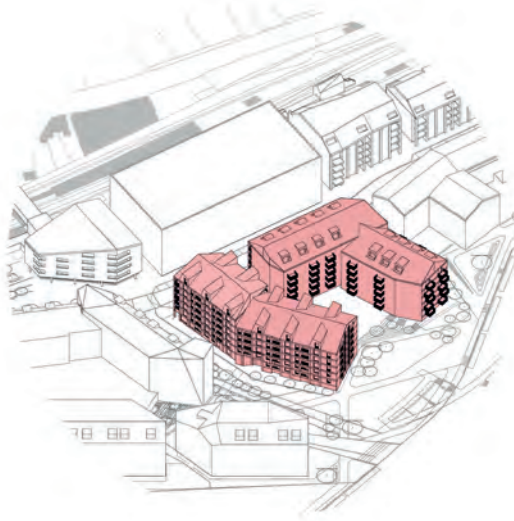
In the event that option D) is pursued as part of any future planning application, Solum will prepare and submit to the Council a detailed marketing report to demonstrate that it has taken all reasonable steps to secure an operator and a funder.



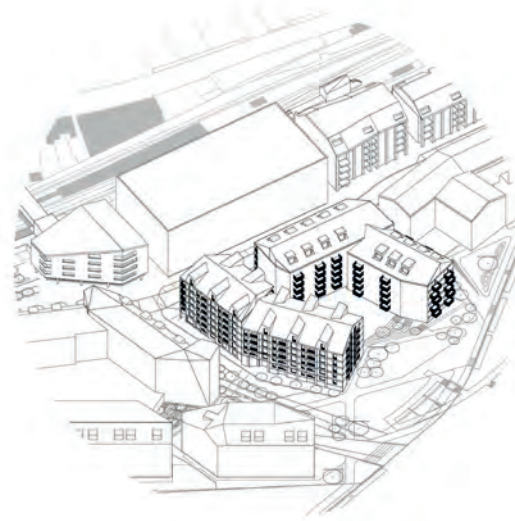
OPTION A



OPTION B



OPTION C



OPTION D

## 6.5 Self-build and Custom-build - Plot E

As per the existing permission at the site, and in line with policy BISH7 and policy HOU08 (self-build and custom housing) of the district plan, the masterplan will provide 1% of the total dwellings as custom-build.

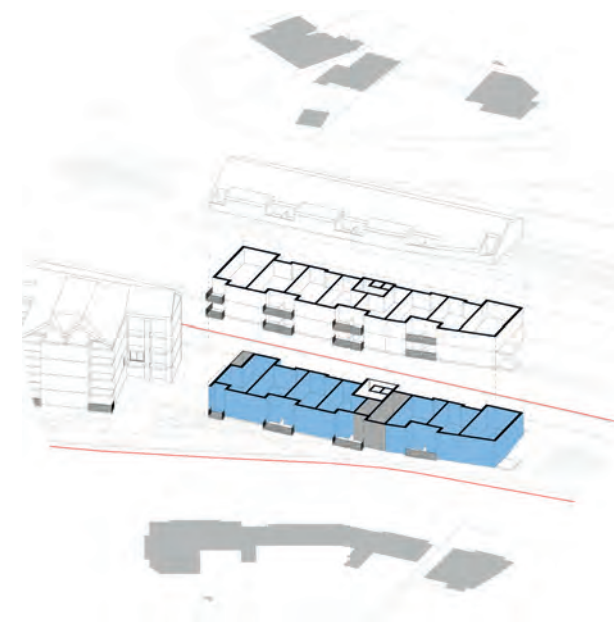
The existing permission identifies this at the southern end of the site beside the river (Plot E).

In a sustainable town centre location beside transport services, and with the relationship to the river and railway sidings, this location is suitable for a small apartment block of which 7 will be 'shell apartments'.

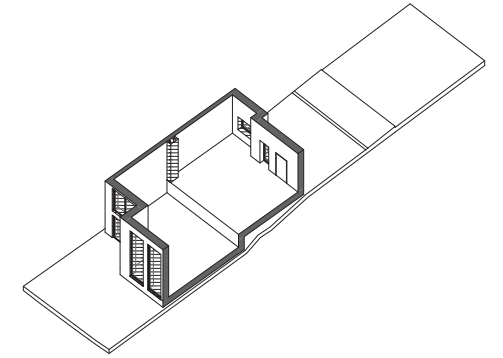
The indicative layout for Plot E includes 8no. Dual aspect apartments per floor, each accessed via a generous gallery deck to the east with private amenity space looking the River Stort.

The building frame and envelope will form part of the residential offer with the residents able to fit-out the apartment to their own specification.

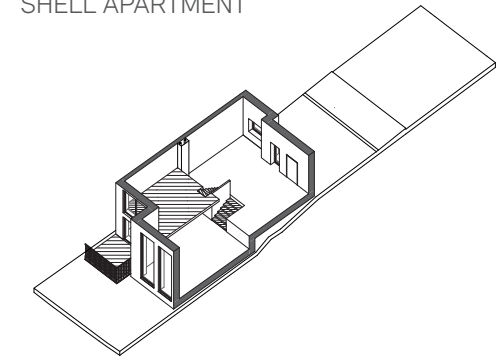
The lower level apartments will be able to accommodate up to 3 bedrooms taking advantage of existing site level change between road and riverside path, which offer potential for a mezzanine floor.



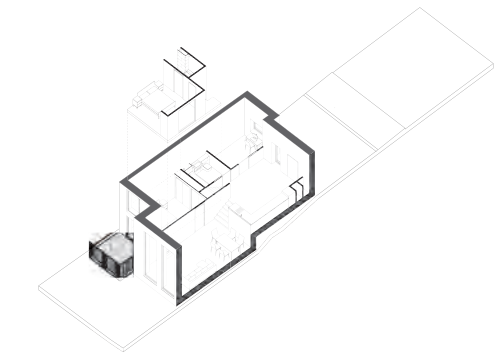
INDICATIVE LOCATION OF CUSTOM BUILD HOMES WITHIN BLOCK E



SHELL APARTMENT



POTENTIAL FOR MEZZANINE LEVEL

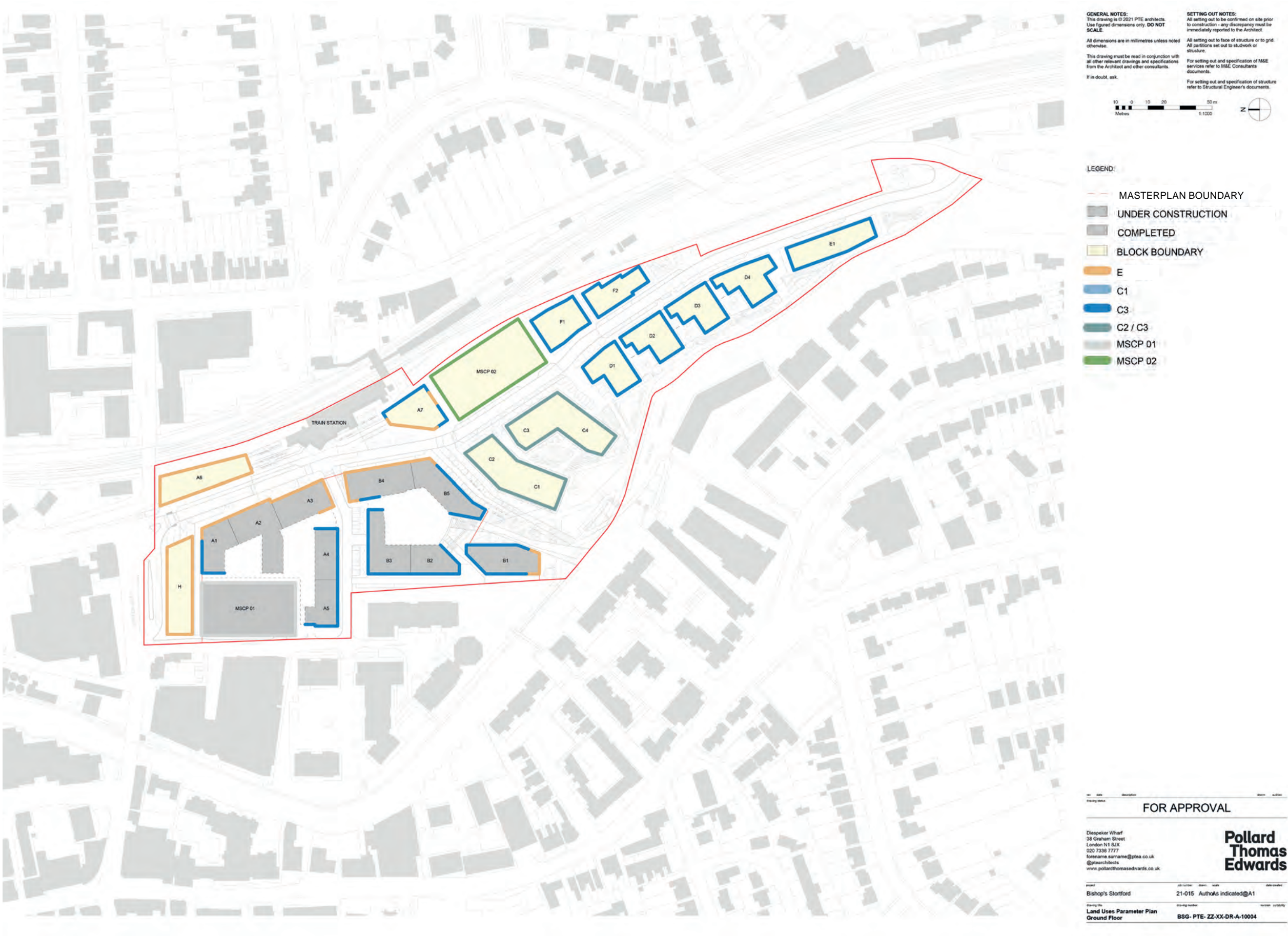


POSSIBLE FIT-OUT

POSSIBLE FIT-OUT OF A SHELL APARTMENT WITHIN BLOCK E



6.6 Land Uses - Land Uses Parameter Plan Ground Floor





6.7 Land Uses - Land Uses Parameter Plan Typical Floor





# 7 Parking Strategy

## Residential Car Parking

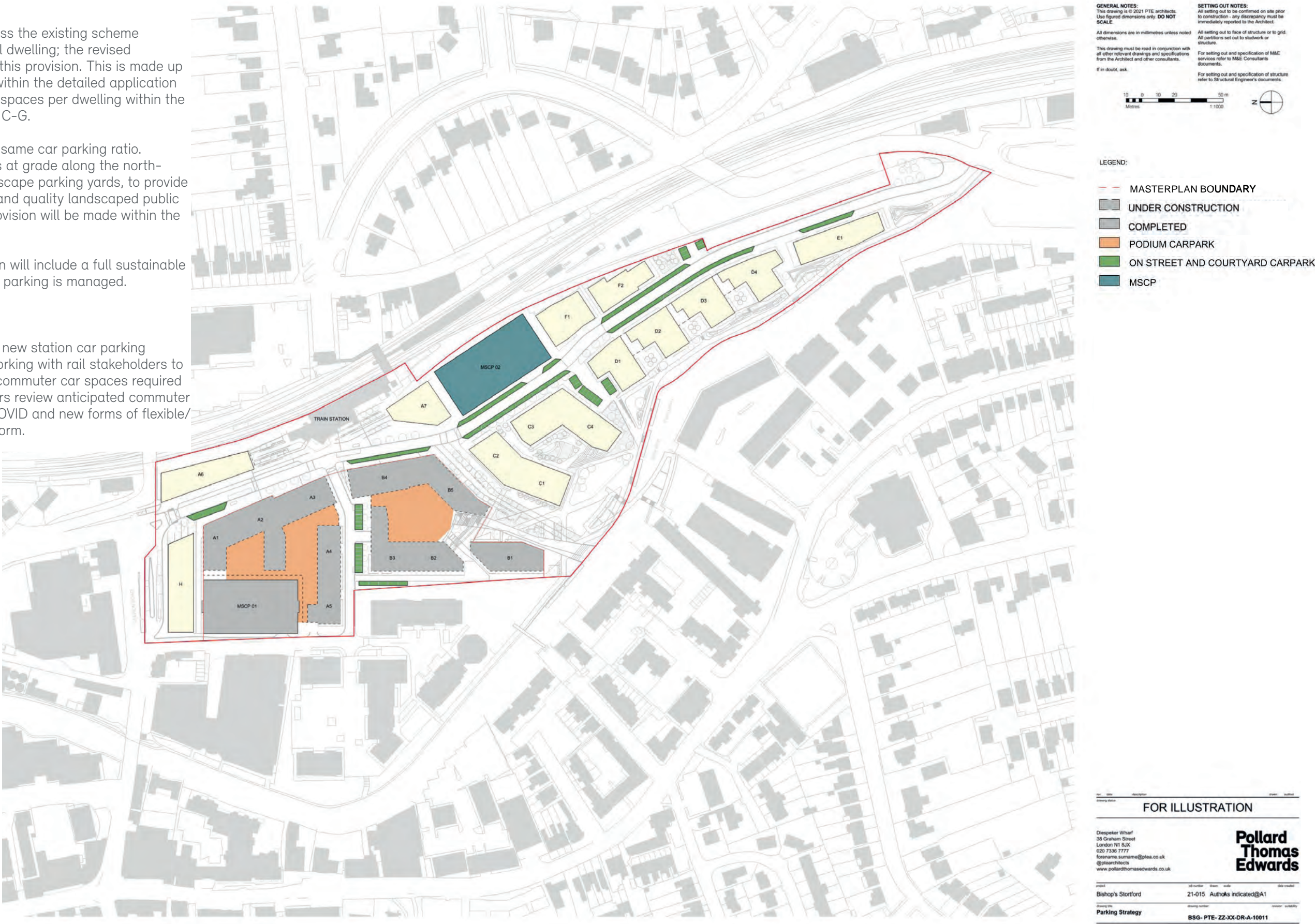
The car parking provision across the existing scheme equates to 0.63 per residential dwelling; the revised masterplan seeks to maintain this provision. This is made up of 0.474 spaces per dwelling within the detailed application area, Plots A and B, and 0.81 spaces per dwelling within the outline application area, Plots C-G.

The proposal is to provide the same car parking ratio. The approach is to locate cars at grade along the north-south street and in small landscape parking yards, to provide a balanced approach to cars and quality landscaped public realm. A further residential provision will be made within the upper levels of MSCP02.

The future planning application will include a full sustainable transport plan and define how parking is managed.

## MSCP02

MSCP02 is the second of two new station car parking facilities. Solum have been working with rail stakeholders to agree the overall quantum of commuter car spaces required within MSCP02 as stakeholders review anticipated commuter usage as a consequence of COVID and new forms of flexible/home working becoming the norm.



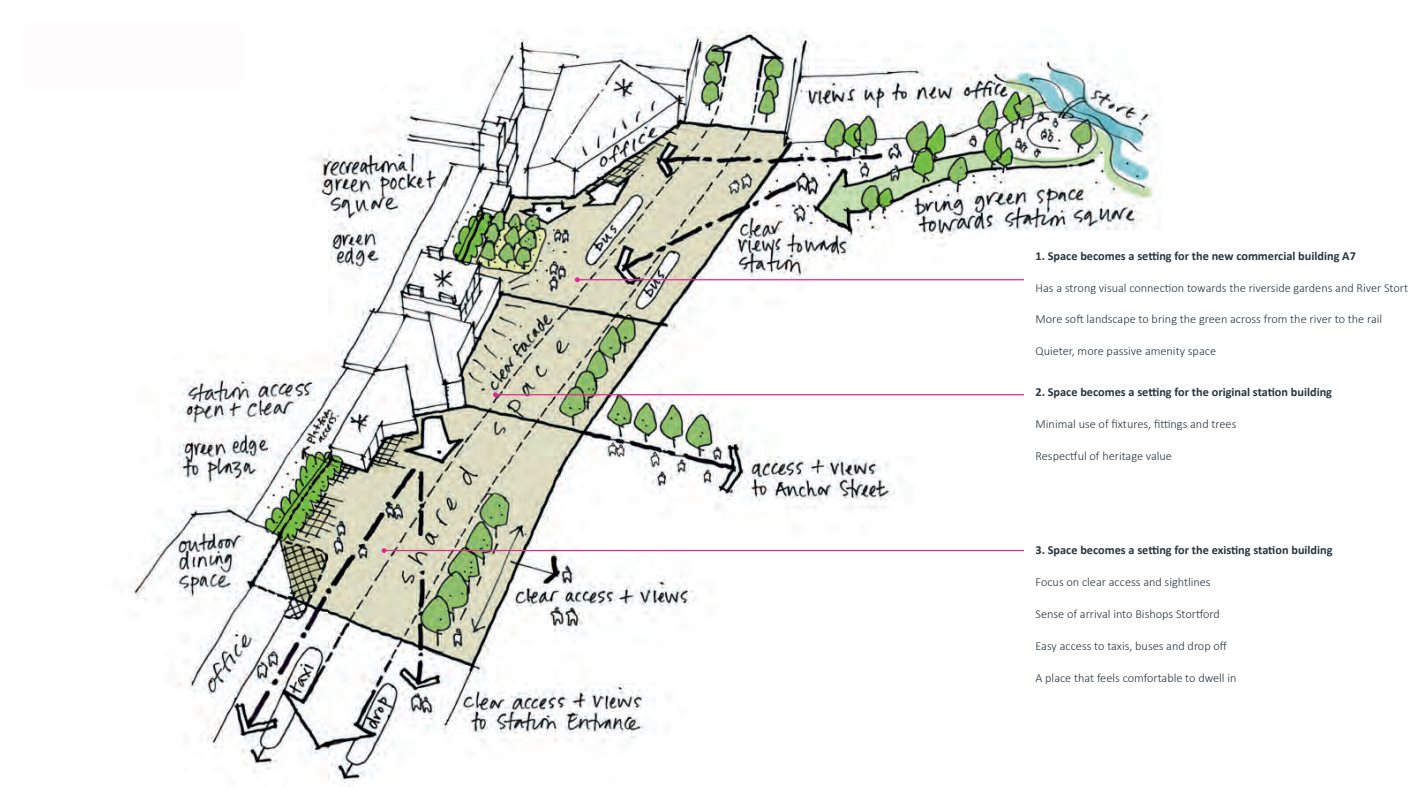
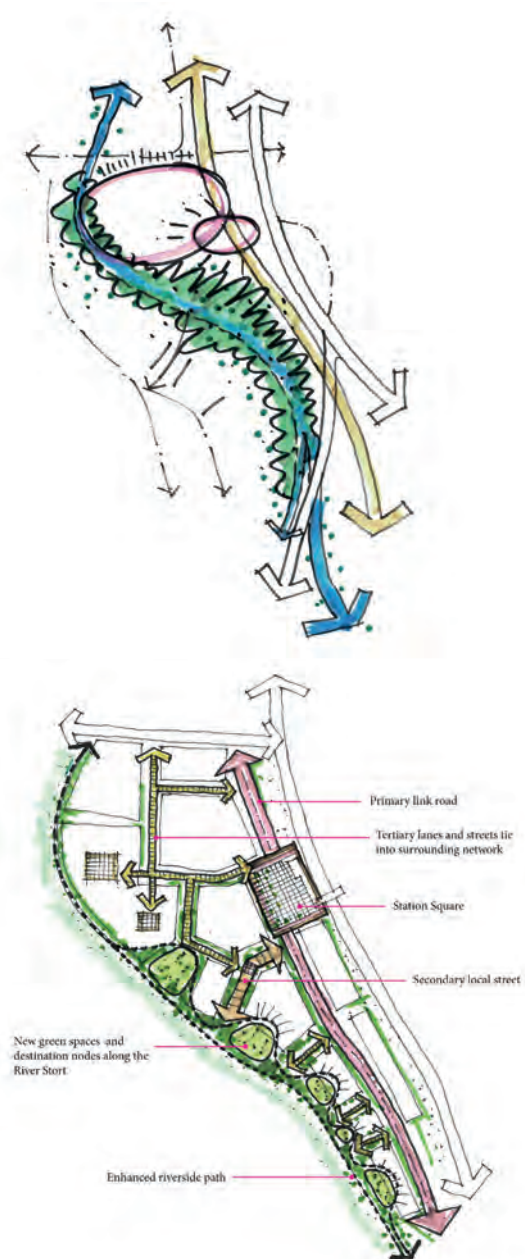


# 8 Landscape Strategy - Station Square

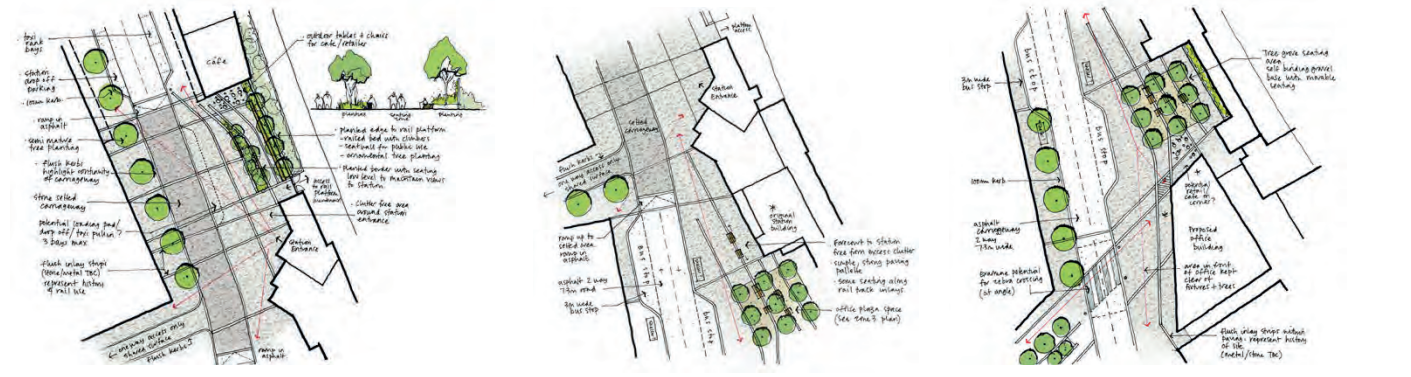
The character of the spaces within the previously approved Landscape Masterplan draws inspiration from two main site influences- the railway and its industrial uses, connectivity and urban 'toughness' and the River Stort- a place of navigational importance but also as a source of natural habitat and ecology within Hertfordshire.

The original concept explores how the landscape character of the site transitions from a more harder orientated environment around a new Station Square and link road towards a more softer, natural environment along the Stort.

We feel this approach remains a strong vision for the Goods Yard and one that can continue to be reinforced within an amended masterplan.



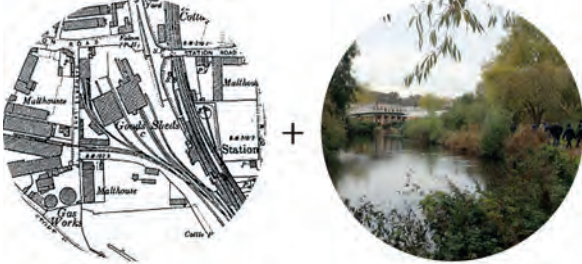
STATION SQUARE DIAGRAM (CONSENTED 2018)



MASTERPLAN TO CONSIST OF A SEQUENCE OF DIFFERENT URBAN SPACES REFLECTING THE MARKET TOWN HERITAGE



THE INDUSTRIAL & TRANSPORT USE THE NATURAL RIVERSIDE EDGE



REFERENCE TO HISTORIC USE REFERENCE TO RIVER STORT





8.1 Landscape Strategy - Maltings and Riverside

The amended masterplan presents an opportunity to gently enhance the proposals of the approved masterplan, yet retaining much of the successes of the original approach.

The environment along the River Stort has several key areas which have been explored further:

**The Maltings**

The public Riverside Garden- maintaining and enhancing public tow-path and the creation of a riverside park which will enhance setting of proposed homes and the link between the existing pedestrian bridge and train station. A sequence of residential gardens between the new blocks with views out to the rivers edge. The transition between 'public and 'private' demise-blurring the boundary between the riverside and resident gardens.



MALTINGS LANDSCAPE SKETCH

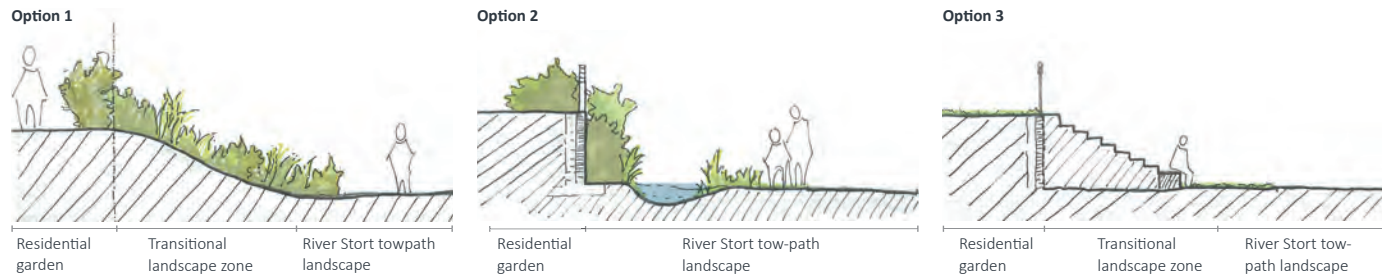
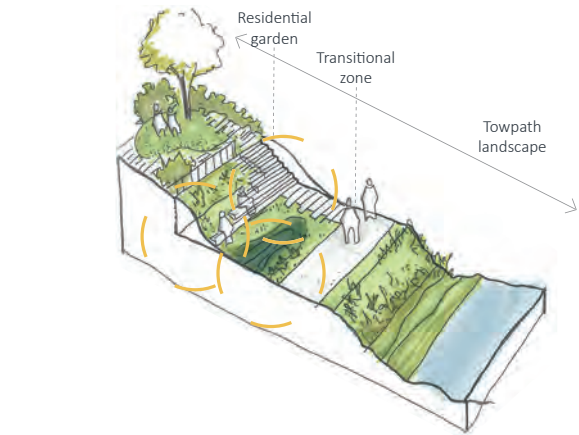
**Riverside Residential Gardens and Transitional Areas**

The general approach to residential gardens across the site responds to the sites context and history. The design approach to the residential gardens of Blocks D1 to D4 considers the natural habitat of the river frontage reflected in organic forms and fluid planting arrangement.

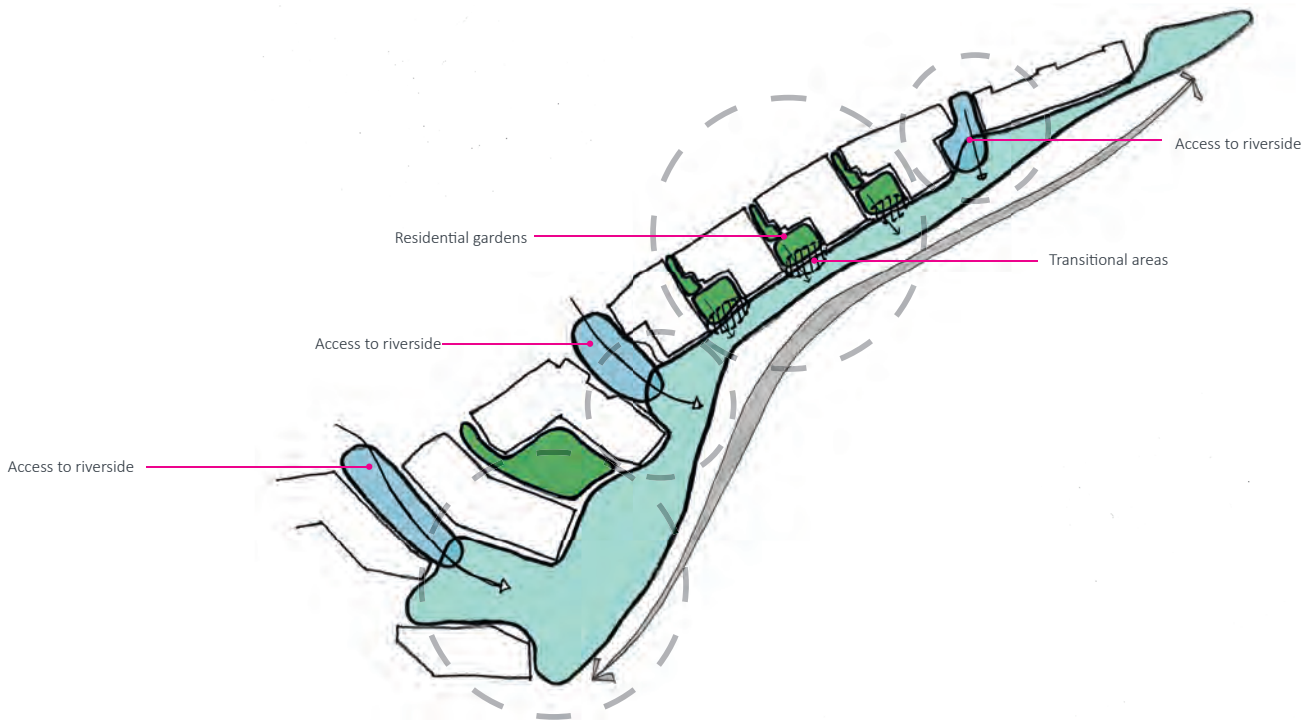
A number of options have been explored which can be created along the public tow-path and the residential garden, which is approximately 1.5m higher. All seek to provide a transition which encourages the soft landscape between the two spaces to merge and reduce any sense barriers or fences. The integration of steps, both for access from the gardens to the tow-path landscape should be considered and can also be used as a way to provide informal seating and social places to rest and enjoy the river.



RIVERSIDE COURTYARD GARDEN SKETCH



APPROACH TO RIVERSIDE TRANSITIONAL AREAS



APPROACH TO COURTYARD GARDENS (PLOT D)



## 8.2 Landscape Strategy - The Sidings

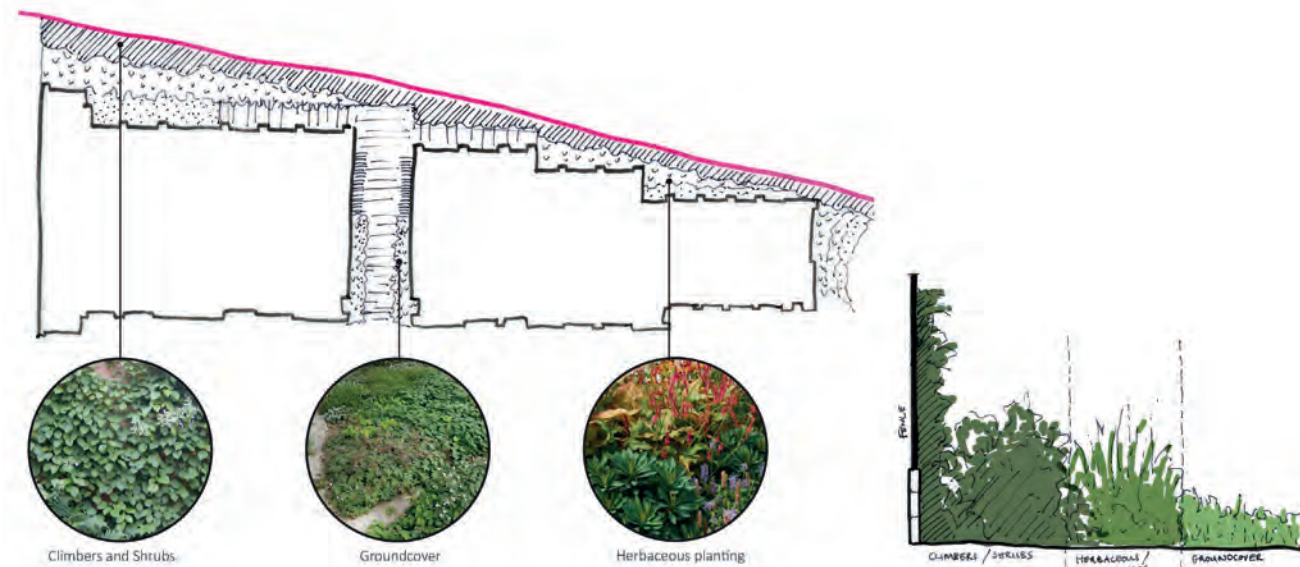
### Fence and planting

#### Boundary Edge Approach:

- 2-2.5m tall timber fence alongside boundary.
- Masks rail activity and can integrate acoustic screening where required.
- Non-permeable.
- Softened by foreground planting.
- Materiality and design to reflect character of wider masterplan; use of timber sleepers, metal (iron) vertical supports and framing.

#### Soft Landscape Approach defining a new green edge

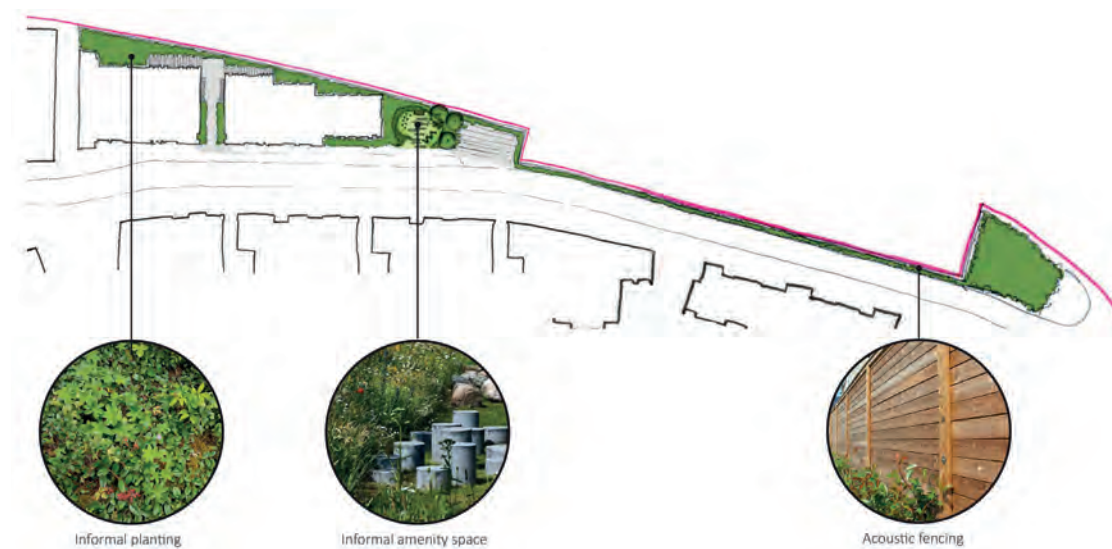
- Consistent approach to planting north to south.
- Planting 'reveals' and 'hides'.
- Buffer between housing and sidings edge, and street frontage.
- Emphasis placed on habitat creation and biodiversity.
- Consideration to future extension via removal of sidings so that soft landscape can 'push' east and colonise land towards rail tracks.
- Breaks in planting create points of entry and places for informal amenity.



## 8.3 Open Space

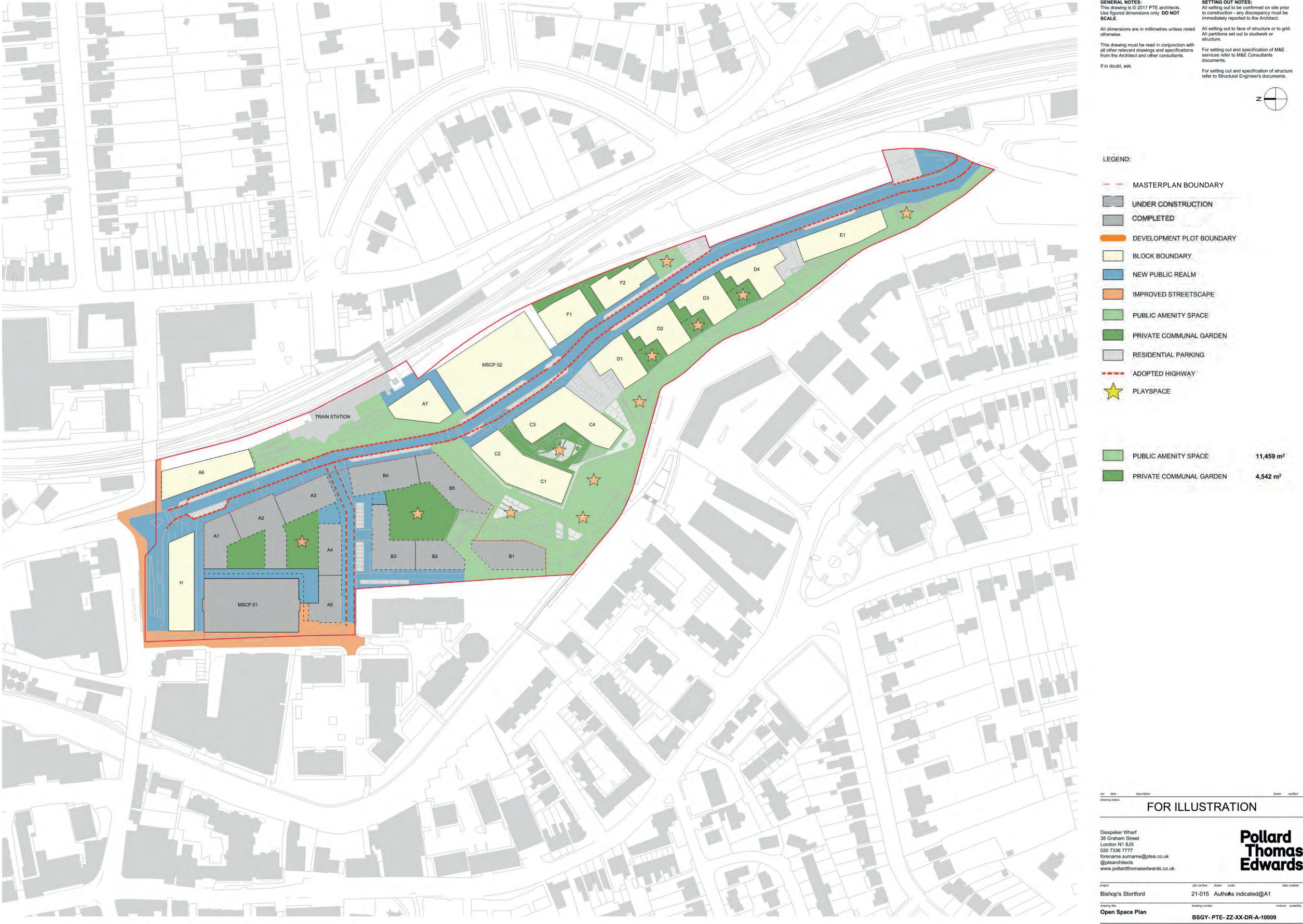
### Open space

- Potential for an increase in residential communal garden space.
- Station Square and public realm environment remains as consented.
- Quantity of open space available remains relatively similar between approved masterplan and the emerging version.





8.4 Landscape and Open Space Strategy





## 9 Placemaking Principles

The proposed Masterplan has been developed based on a series of framework principles, one of which being to create distinct and connected neighbourhoods. To ensure a variety of experience and richness four character areas have then been established.

They have been designed with regard to the edges of the site, and they blend in or respond to the context in terms of built form, open spaces, streets so that together the character areas will create the framework for a new successful urban area.

It has been an imperative to connect the new Goods Yard site back into Bishop's Stortford and overcoming the physical barriers such as the railway. Therefore, the new character areas have been heavily informed and influenced by existing characters found within Bishop's Stortford.

The diverse architectural styles, densities and historic elements of Bishop's Stortford will be used to influence the north-south link and riverside and rail side areas of the masterplan. These areas also include the non-residential elements of the masterplan.

The character areas are summarised below and discussed in greater detail in section 11 of this report.

### Station Square

- Views/ connections between Bishop's Stortford Station and the River Stort.
- Taller ground floor accommodation to accommodate commercial space fronting Station Square and podium parking to blocks A and B.
- Variation in roof profile breaks down massing and provides rhythm on streetscape.

### The Maltings

- Form mirroring historic Maltings buildings on opposite side of river bank.
- Views/ connections towards Station Square and the River Stort.
- Direct 'Green link' connects Station Square with the River Stort.
- Taller ground floor to accommodate podium car parking to blocks A, B and C.
- Higher scale, density and massing than Southern blocks.

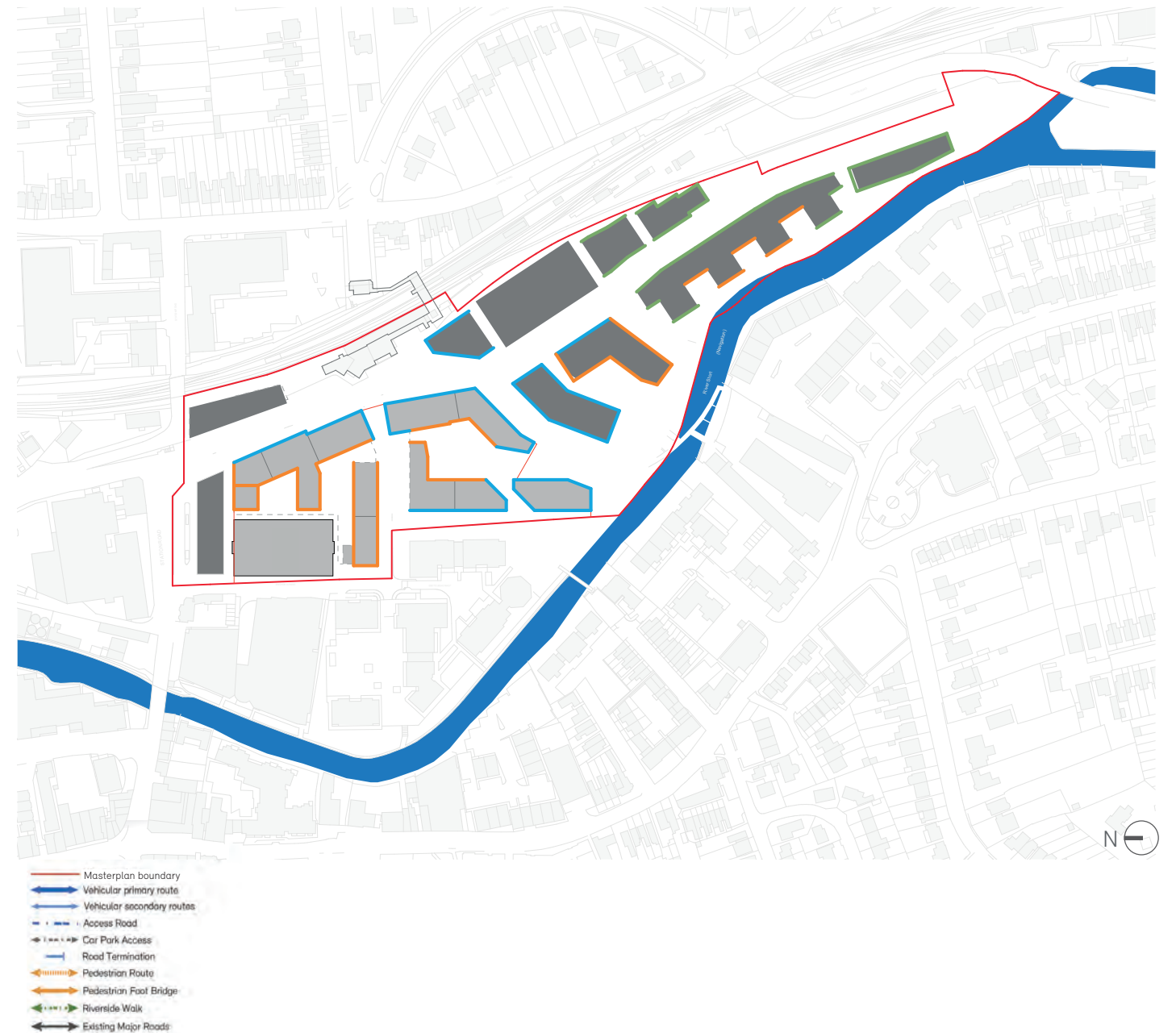
### The Riverside

- Connections between North-South route and River Stort.
- Building form reflect Malting's buildings.
- Buildings have close relationship with the River Stort.
- Lower scale density and Massing than Northern Blocks.
- Landscape stitching the river to the station.

### The Sidings

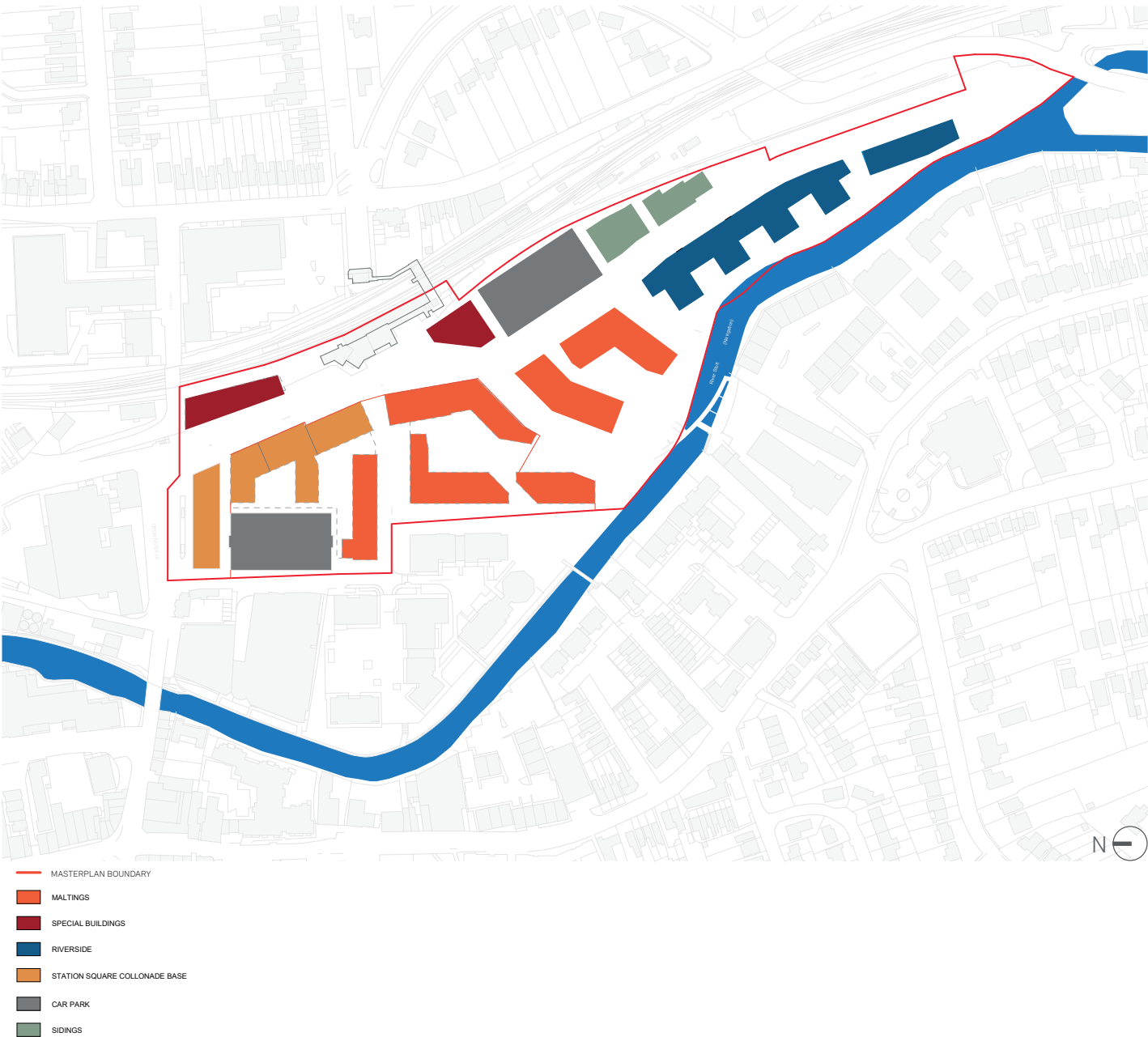
- Visual link and connection to railway line.
- Visual connections West to Riverside block and River Stort. The form reflects Goods Yard railway architecture.

## 9.1 Street Hierarchy and Character



STREET HIERARCHY AND CHARACTER DIAGRAM

9.2 Townscape and Building Typologies



- MASTERPLAN BOUNDARY
- MALTINGS
- SPECIAL BUILDINGS
- RIVERSIDE
- STATION SQUARE COLLONADE BASE
- CAR PARK
- SIDINGS

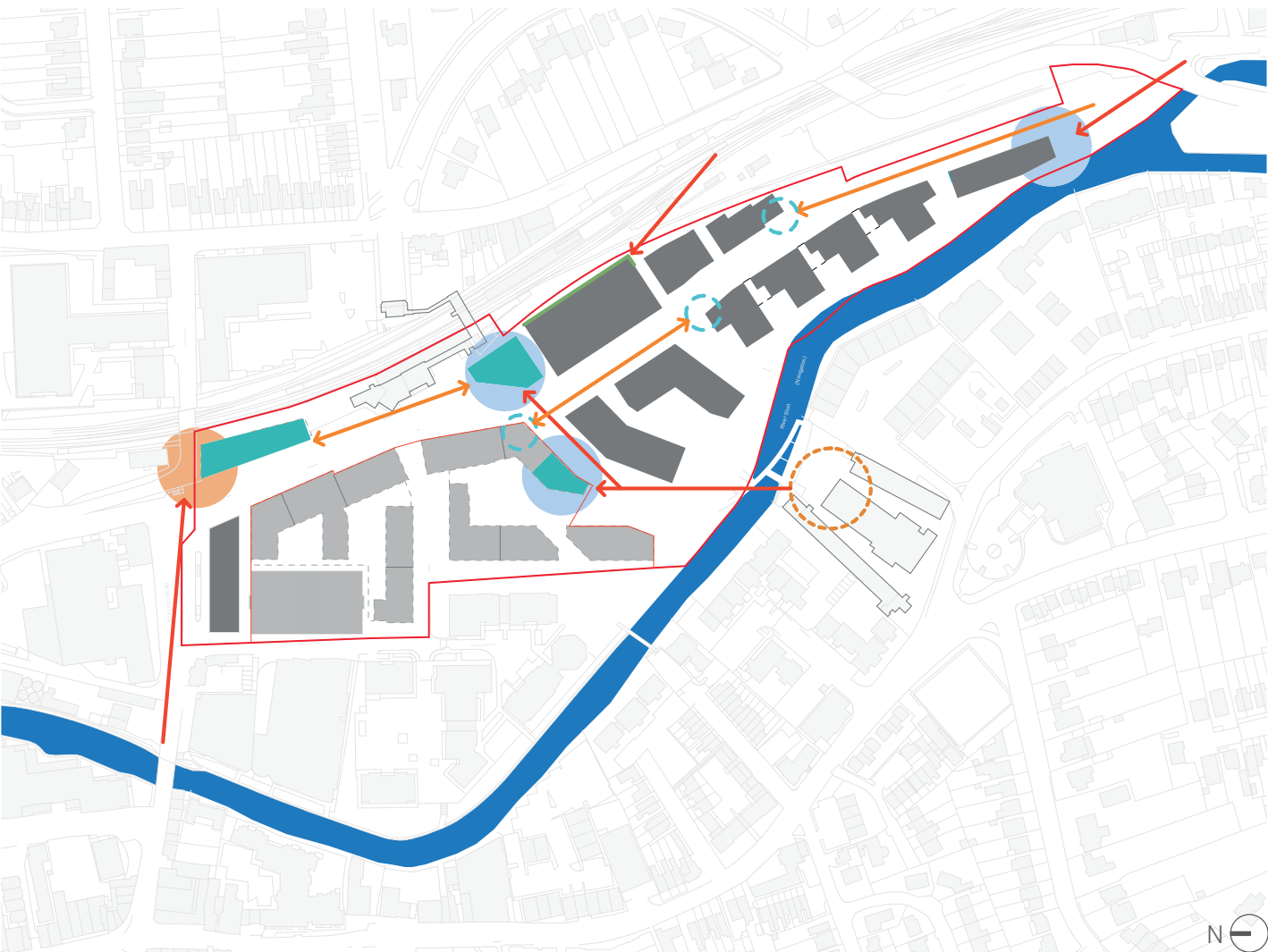
9.3 Special Buildings

To enrich the experience when moving between the main places in the masterplan, special buildings are located at key points. These aid way-finding and a hierarchy to the legibility of the masterplan and provide a sense of place.

They reinforce site lines from Station Road to the train station and the Stort River. These buildings are special in form and material setting them apart from the others.

The two special buildings either side of the train station, A6 and A7, book-end the Station Square helping to provide enclosure while also extending

the station experience and sense of arrival. These buildings are based on industrial forms and interpreted in a contemporary manner. The use of metal cladding contrasts the brick nature of the main group of buildings providing a distinctive quality.



- Key Buildings
- Street View
- Views Beyond Development
- Special buildings
- Prominent view from train
- Landmarks from Riverside
- Landmark from Town
- Bishop's Stortford Landmark
- Prominent Building Edge

BUILDING TYPOLOGIES DIAGRAM

SPECIAL BUILDINGS DIAGRAM

## 9.4 Building Heights and Roofscape

The overall building heights strategy responds to an analysis of the existing context in Bishop’s Stortford. The development ranges in height from 4-7 storeys with the top floor located in an inhabited roof space, therefore reducing the overall appearance of the building height to 6 storeys.

Special Buildings A6 and A7 provide a change in height to distinguish the buildings at Station Square and mediate the height between the taller residential and MSCP blocks and the lower scale existing station building. Plots A and B (currently under construction) are 5 storey blocks with inhabited roof space set within pitched roof forms.

Residential blocks of up-to 7 storeys, include inhabited roof space are positioned in Maltings and Sidings character areas closest to MSCP02.

The perceived building height, through inhabited roof space and dormer windows, creates variation across the roofscape, with dormers running perpendicular to the roof-line.

Section 10 Townscape Views and Sections, indicates the heights and roofscape strategy.

### Station Square

Block H - It is proposed to retain 4 floors, with an additional level possible if required to make the building viable. The roofscape will be modelled to screen M+E plant from view.

A6 - It is the intent the roof form of A6 will remain similar as consented, though adjusted to allow for roof top plant and a potential roof terrace. Lift cores and over runs also provide opportunity for historic vent forms to be expressed.

A7 - The roof form of A7 reduces in height down towards the existing station building negotiating the change in height from MSCP02, to help frame the square. It is proposed to change the commercial building heights of 2-3 floors, to residential 4-5 floors and better screen the MSCP02. The roof form will house a shared roof terrace for residents, and screen roof plant and lift overrun. The roofing material of A7 will contrast with the buildings of Plots A and B.

### The Maltings

The Maltings character area contains larger scaled, robust buildings with the building heights between 6 and 7 storeys, set within the roof scape. The roofscape varies between the two buildings to create contrast while maintaining pitched roof forms and gables fronting the river relating to the historic Maltings.

Plot C1-C2 - The northern building aligns with the route from the river to Station Square. Here the eaves line steps up towards the station. The upper level accommodation is set within the roof form, with dormers expressed, aligning with the main building façade. The dormers are formed with brick to read as an extension of the main façade, providing a heaviness and robustness to the building over others around it. The dormer forms allude to the historic maltings’ vents, and roof terraces are recessed hidden back within the main roof form.

Plot C3-C4 - The southern building roofscape in contrast, the dormers are set back from the main building façade maintaining a clean eave line. The building form, ‘L’ shaped, with varying roof heights provides the opportunity for a gable on the south-east corner, to be seen on approach along the north-south road. The dormers and inset balconies are formed with the selected roofing material.

### Sidings

Plot F - The Sidings character area contains buildings located beside the railway and north-south road with heights of 5 and 7 storeys, within the roofscape, stepping up to the MSCP02. The site narrows towards the southern end, providing opportunity for a gable form to terminate the building, on the London Road approach. The buildings are viewed from both the railway and roadside, with varying eave heights, pitched roof forms and inset balconies. These buildings do not have expressed dormers, varying from the other character areas.

### MSCP02

The MSCP02 will have 7 levels (14 half levels), running parallel with the railway line. The upper level will not be enclosed. The external façade will animate the building with thought given to the top of the upper level of the building.

### Riverside

Plot D - The building heights to Riverside character area are 4-5 storeys set within the roof scape. A strong building edges runs along the north-south street, with gable forms returning to the riverside. The upper level accommodation set within the roof have dormers and balconies set back from the eave line. Dormers will vary across the roofscape further defining the street scape as a series of buildings.

Plot E - relates in height to those buildings across the River Stort, at 4 storeys. There is potential for this building to create a strong gable roof form announcing the entrance to the Good’s Yard from London Road entrance. The change in site levels from road to river edge also offers the opportunity for an asymmetrical roof form to responding to context. Here a clay tiled roof form wraps down the building façade.

## 9.5 Balcony Strategy

The balcony strategy for the masterplan reflects the street hierarchy surrounding each block, which is articulated through inbound balconies to primary routes and projecting balconies to secondary streets and courtyards.

For the courtyard spaces and secondary streets, balconies are projecting. Black metalwork reflects the ironmongery on the Old Maltings buildings which can be viewed from the courtyards to the west, referencing the site’s industrial heritage.

Projecting balconies orientated southwest maximise views to the River Stort and surrounding green space.

The balcony strategy is further differentiated across each character area, Section 11 Character Areas and Section 10 Townscape Views and Sections.

### Station square

- Block H – No balconies will be provided.
- Building A7 - The form and appearance is differentiated from other buildings within the Station Square. The pure form dictates that the private amenity space will have inset balconies.

### The Maltings

- Plot C1-C2 – The solid and robust nature of this brick building requires inset or semi-inset balconies to each apartment along street frontages, with projecting acceptable to courtyard and green facing spaces.
- Plot C3-C4 – In contrast to C3-C4 will have projecting concrete balconies with metal work railings to each apartment, on all facades apart from the north-south street facing the MSCP02.
- The gables of each building will be differentiated separately from each other, one having inset, semi-inset balconies while the other having projecting balconies.

### The Riverside

- Plot D – The balconies facing the north-south street, in an east orientation to the sidings will have part inset, part projecting balconies. Where balconies face into the courtyard, over the river, these are proposed projecting, bound with brick/concrete panels between for privacy. Balconies to each of the gables ends facing the river may vary.
- Plot E – Balconies to the gable end and facing the river will be semi inset and projecting with metal railings.

### The Sidings

- Plot F – Balconies facing the railway and the north-south street are to be inset or semi-inset (part projecting) with brick columns (buttresses) and solid balustrades provide privacy in this location.



## 10 Townscape Views and Sections

### 10.1 Masterplan Scale and Massing

The proposed approach to scale and massing acknowledges that the character and feel of the streets and open spaces within the development is greatly influenced by the scale and relative position of the buildings that frame them. In order to meet the underlying intention to achieve a variety of open spaces and distinct character areas within this Masterplan, massing was also distributed to contribute to the identity of each character area.

The scheme will relate to the River Stort to create a strong but diverse waterfront edge. To create a strong riverside frontage to the area, a mixture of building heights are composed in a fragmented block type that will vary between 4 and 6 storeys. The buildings with maximum height of 6 storeys are proposed within the north sector of the masterplan and reduce to the south end. Upper floors are set within the roof line to the public frontage.

The fundamental design principle in setting out built form across the Masterplan is to ensure that blocks make a clear distinction between public fronts and private backs. Buildings which front streets and open spaces present their public face to the outside world and give life to it. Public fronts and private backs are made distinct when primary access is from the street, the principal frontage. The proposed layout creates blocks with building lines that clearly define streets as the spaces in-between the buildings.

The proposed massing varies considerably in shape and size according to the configuration of streets and the preferred orientation and location of open spaces and parks. The nature of plot sub-divisions and apartments that are to be accommodated has also influenced the layout of blocks.

Lined along the perimeter of the streets and open spaces, the blocks create positively framed public realm, clearly either streets or open spaces. A common building line maintains the differentiation between public, semi-public and private zones, and contributes to the distinct functions of each area. Distinctions are achieved through elements such ground floor treatments and proposed materials.

The following are a series of townscape views and sections which describe the proposed masterplan. Section 11 Character Areas, considers each part of the site in further detail.

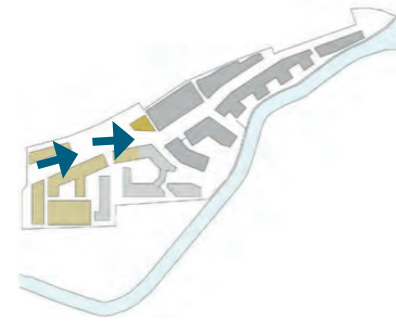
### 10.2 Townscape

The masterplan creates a series of townscape views connecting and enhancing views from the train station towards the town centre and also from the station down to the Maltings at the rivers edge. These views are de-fined in the Town Centre Planning Framework as views which require enhancing, to enhance Bishop's Stortford Historic Character.

The masterplan sets up further views from the North-South street to the river. At the southern end of the site a new pedestrian connection from London Road to the river will create a new view.

The Town Centre Planning Framework mentions the maintenance of local and town side views to key land-mark buildings.

### 10.3 Townscape Views - Station Square (A7)

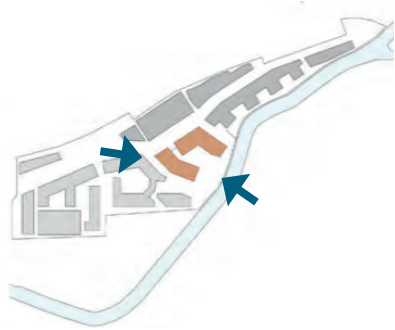


INDICATIVE SKETCH VIEW OUTSIDE THE STATION LOOKING TOWARD A7 AND THE MALTINGS BEYOND (PLOT C)



INDICATIVE SKETCH VIEW IN STATION SQUARE BESIDE A7 LOOKING TOWARD THE MALTINGS (PLOT C)





The following principles define the character of the street:

Building arrangement offers views to Station square and River Stort.

Primary route in the Malting's Character area connects the Station to the Riverside and brings green space towards station square through increased soft landscaping.

Parking does not dominate this area, allowing Stort Way to be predominantly pedestrianised. Access is required for servicing the plots.

As residential uses are proposed for the ground floor of the Maltings, a residential boundary treatment of 1.5m is proposed to blocks.

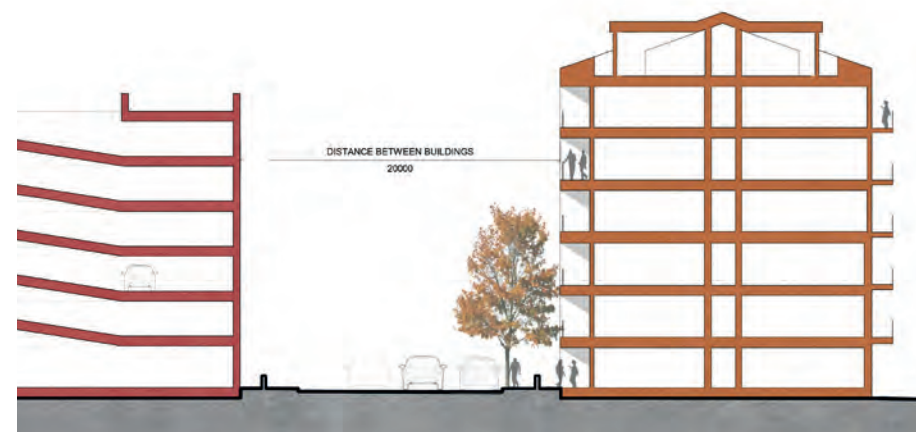
A mixture of inset and recessed balconies animates the street edge.



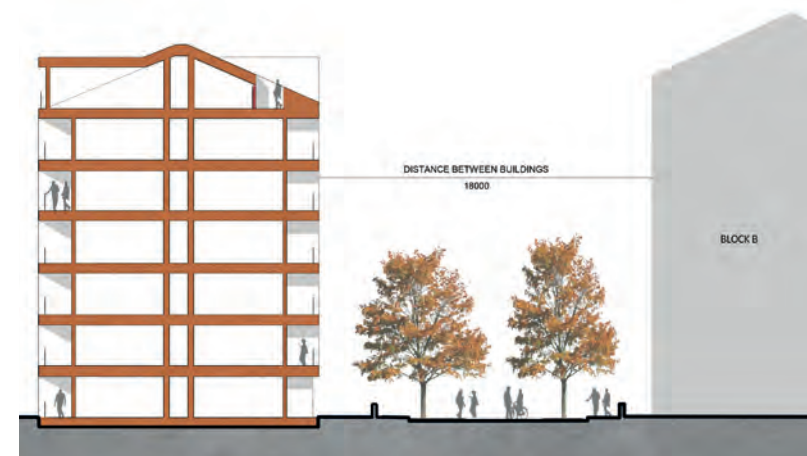
INDICATIVE SKETCH VIEW LOOKING SOUTH ALONG ROAD AND EAST TOWARDS THE MALTINGS AND STORT RIVER



INDICATIVE SKETCH VIEW ACROSS THE RIVER STORT RIVERSIDE GARDEN, ROUTE UP TO STATION SQUARE



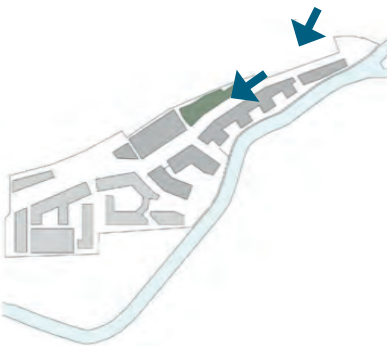
SECTION 01 - THROUGH THE MSCP AND THE MALTINGS (PLOT C)



SECTION 02 - THROUGH THE MALTINGS (PLOT C)



10.5 Townscape View and Street Section - The Sidings (Plot F) and The Riverside (Plot D)



The following principles define the character of the street:

Traffic calming is proposed along the street.  
Building heights reduce in this area from 3 - 4 storeys.  
Dormer windows and recessed balconies create variation along street-scape to West elevation.

Designated residential parking to either side of access road. As residential uses are proposed for the ground floor the Sidings, a residential boundary treatment of 1.5m is proposed to Plots F and G.



INDICATIVE SKETCH VIEW OF FROM LONDON ROAD TOWARDS THE RIVERSIDE (PLOT E) AND THE SIDINGS

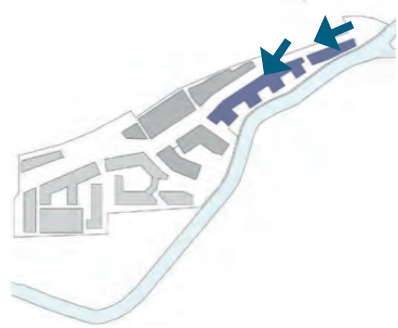


INDICATIVE SKETCH VIEW LOOKING NORTH ALONG NORTH-SOUTH ROAD



SECTION 03 - THROUGH THE SIDINGS (PLOT F) AND THE RIVERSIDE (PLOT D)





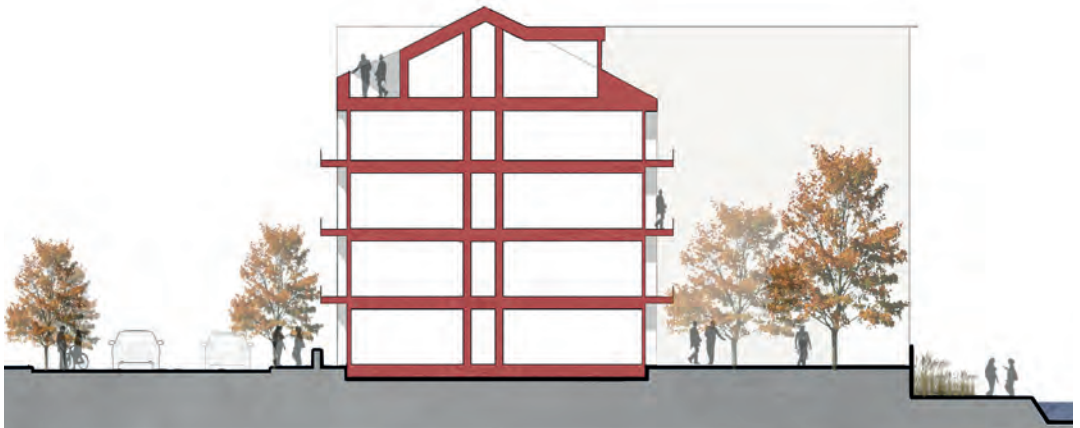
INDICATIVE SKETCH APPROACH VIEW OF THE RIVERSIDE (PLOT E) NORTH ALONG ROAD



INDICATIVE SKETCH VIEW LOOKING NORTH ALONG THE NORTH-SOUTH ROAD TOWARDS THE SIDINGS (PLOT F) WITH THE RIVERSIDE (PLOT D)



SECTION 04 - THROUGH THE RIVERSIDE (PLOT E)



SECTION 05 - THROUGH THE RIVERSIDE (PLOT D)



10.7 Townscape View and Street Section - The Riverside (Plot D) and The Sidings (Plot F)



The following principles define the character of the street:

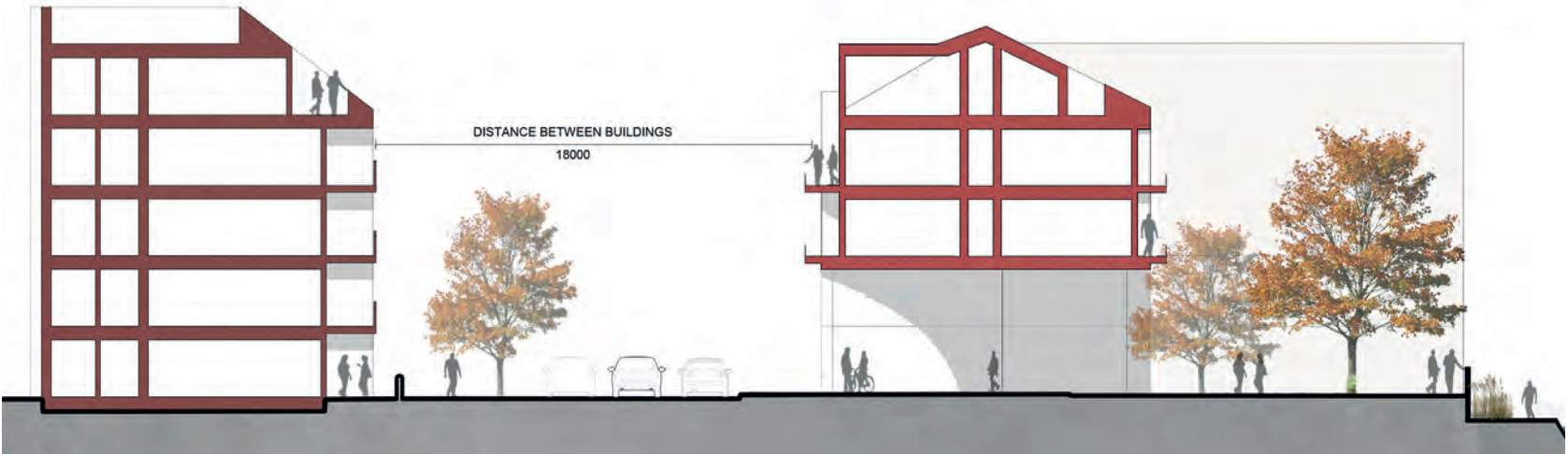
Arrangements form courtyards, facing and framing views towards the River Stort.

Residential parking to either side of access road between Plots D and F.

Residential uses are proposed for the ground floor the Riverside, a residential boundary treatment of 1.5m is proposed to Plots D and E



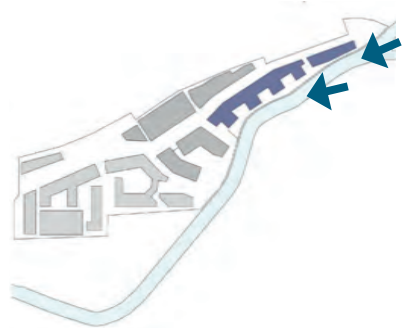
INDICATIVE SKETCH VIEW LOOKING TOWARDS THE MALTINGS (PLOT C) WITH THE RIVERSIDE (PLOT D)



SECTION 06 - THROUGH THE SIDINGS AND THE RIVERSIDE (PLOT D)



# 10.8 Townscape View - The Riverside - Plot D and E



INDICATIVE SKETCH VIEW LOOKING NORTH ALONG TOW-PATH BESIDE RIVER STORT AND THE RIVERSIDE (PLOT E)



INDICATIVE SKETCH VIEW LOOKING NORTH ALONG TOW-PATH BESIDE THE RIVER STORT AND THE RIVERSIDE (PLOT D)



10.9 Illustrative sections through the masterplan



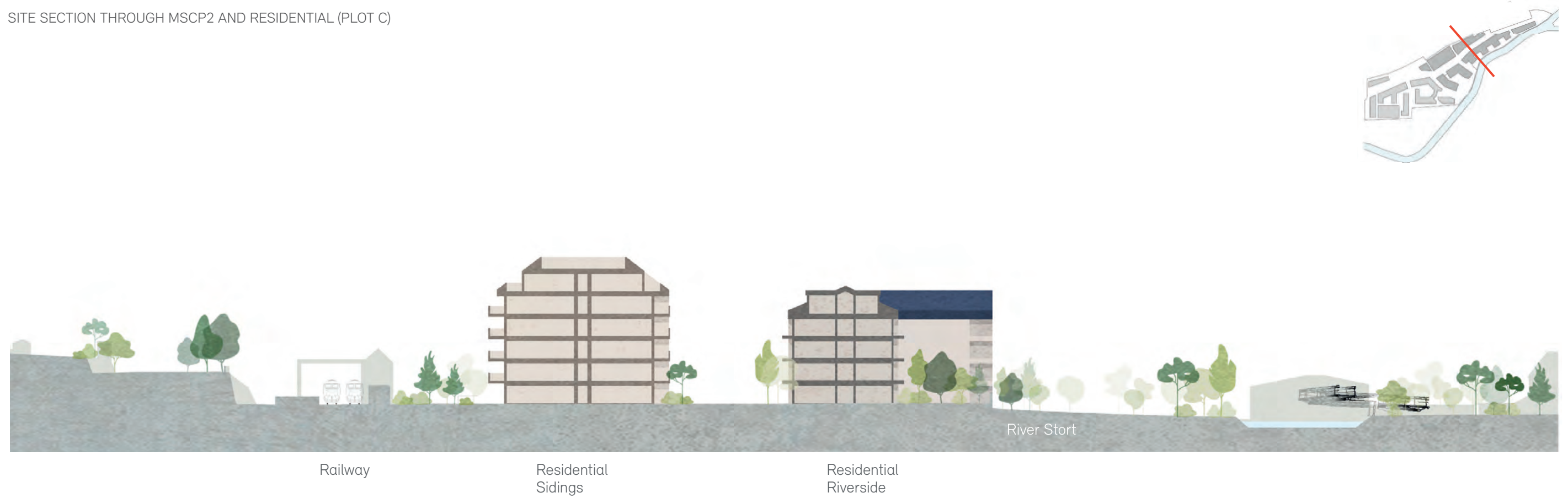
SITE SECTION THROUGH PLOT A7 - STATION SQUARE AND ROUTE DOWN TO RIVERSIDE (PLOT C)



# 10.10 Illustrative sections through the masterplan



SITE SECTION THROUGH MSCP2 AND RESIDENTIAL (PLOT C)



SITE SECTION THROUGH THE SIDINGS (PLOT F) AND RIVERSIDE (PLOT D)



10.11 Sections through the Masterplan



SITE SECTION THROUGH THE SIDINGS (PLOT F) AND RIVERSIDE (PLOT D) RESIDENTIAL



SITE SECTION THROUGH THE RIVERSIDE AND RAILWAY SIDINGS (NEAR LONDON ROAD)



# 11 Character Areas

## 11.1 Character Area Plan

### Key characteristics of the character areas

#### Station Square

- Open views/ connections between Bishop's Stortford Station and the River Stort.
- Taller ground floor accommodation to accommodate commercial space fronting Station Square and podium parking to blocks A and B.
- Variation in roof profile breaks down massing and provides rhythm on streetscape.
- Materials reflect the Malting's buildings on the opposite side of the River Stort.

#### The Maltings

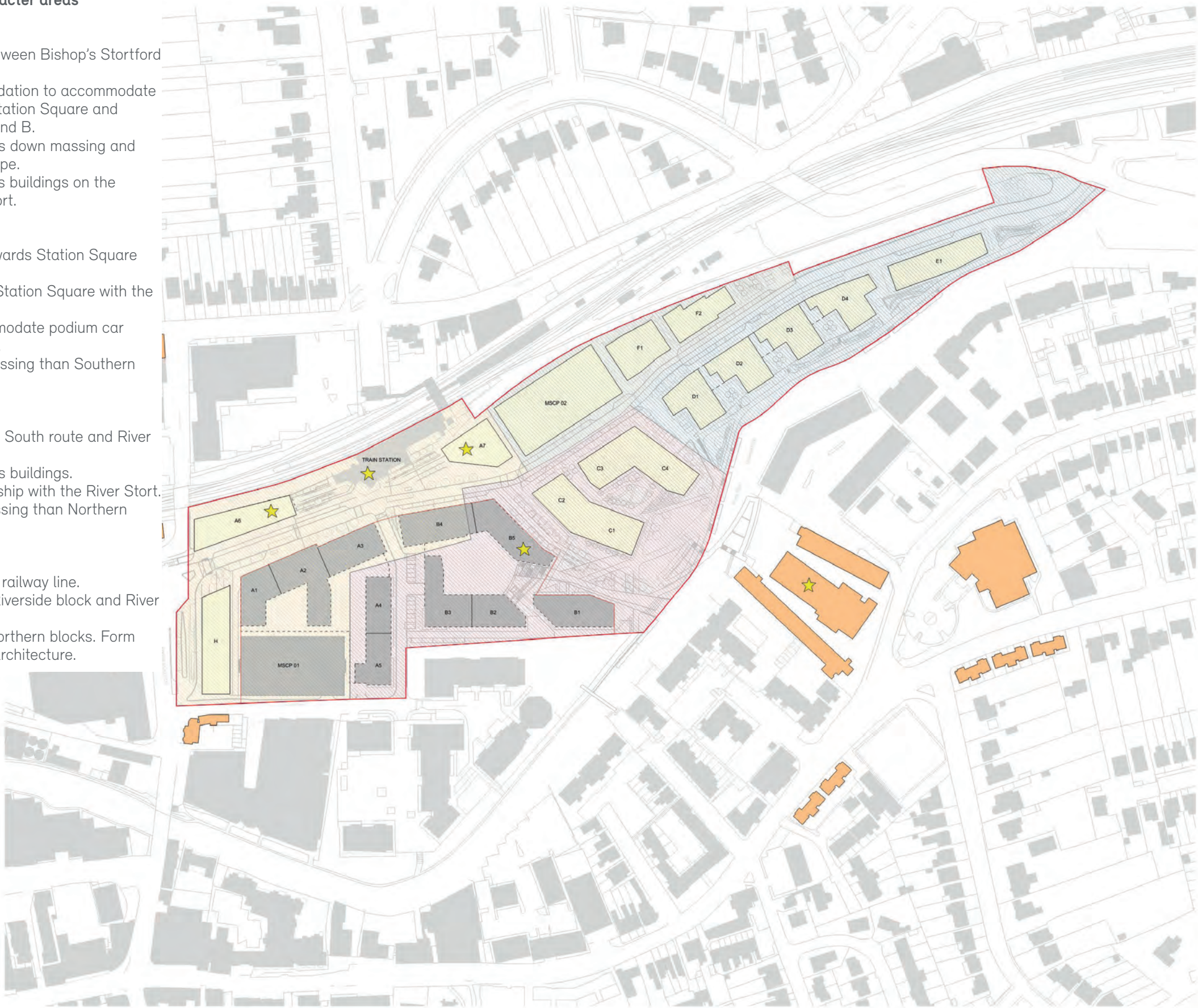
- Open views/ connections towards Station Square and the River Stort.
- Direct 'Green link' connects Station Square with the River Stort.
- Taller ground floor to accommodate podium car parking to blocks A, B and C.
- Higher scale, density and massing than Southern blocks.

#### The Riverside

- Connections between North- South route and River Stort.
- Building form reflect Malting's buildings.
- Buildings have close relationship with the River Stort.
- Lower scale density and Massing than Northern Blocks.

#### The Sidings

- Visual link and connection to railway line.
- Visual connections West to Riverside block and River Stort.
- Lower scale, massing that Northern blocks. Form reflects Goods Yard railway architecture.



**GENERAL NOTES:**  
This drawing is © 2021 PTE architects.  
Use figured dimensions only. DO NOT SCALE.  
All dimensions are in millimetres unless noted otherwise.  
This drawing must be read in conjunction with all other relevant drawings and specifications from the Architect and other consultants.  
If in doubt, ask.

**SETTING OUT NOTES:**  
All setting out to be confirmed on site prior to construction - any discrepancy must be immediately reported to the Architect.  
All partitions set out to studwork or structure.  
For setting out and specification of M&E services refer to M&E Consultants documents.  
For setting out and specification of structure refer to Structural Engineer's documents.

10 0 10 20 50 m  
Metres 1:1000

North arrow pointing up.

- LEGEND:
- MASTERPLAN BOUNDARY
  - UNDER CONSTRUCTION
  - COMPLETED
  - BLOCK BOUNDARY
  - STATION SQUARE
  - THE MALTINGS
  - THE SIDINGS
  - RIVERSIDE
  - HERITAGE ASSETS
  - KEY BUILDINGS

**FOR INFORMATION**

Disperser Wharf  
38 Graham Street  
London N1 6JX  
020 7336 7777  
forename.surname@ptea.co.uk  
@ptearchitects  
www.pollardthomasedwards.co.uk

**Pollard Thomas Edwards**

project: Bishop's Stortford  
job number: 21-015  
drawing number: BSGY-PTE-ZZ-XX-DR-A-10010  
author: Autho's indicated@A1  
date issued: 2021-01-15  
revision: 1



# 11.2 Station Square



## Refinig the Character Area

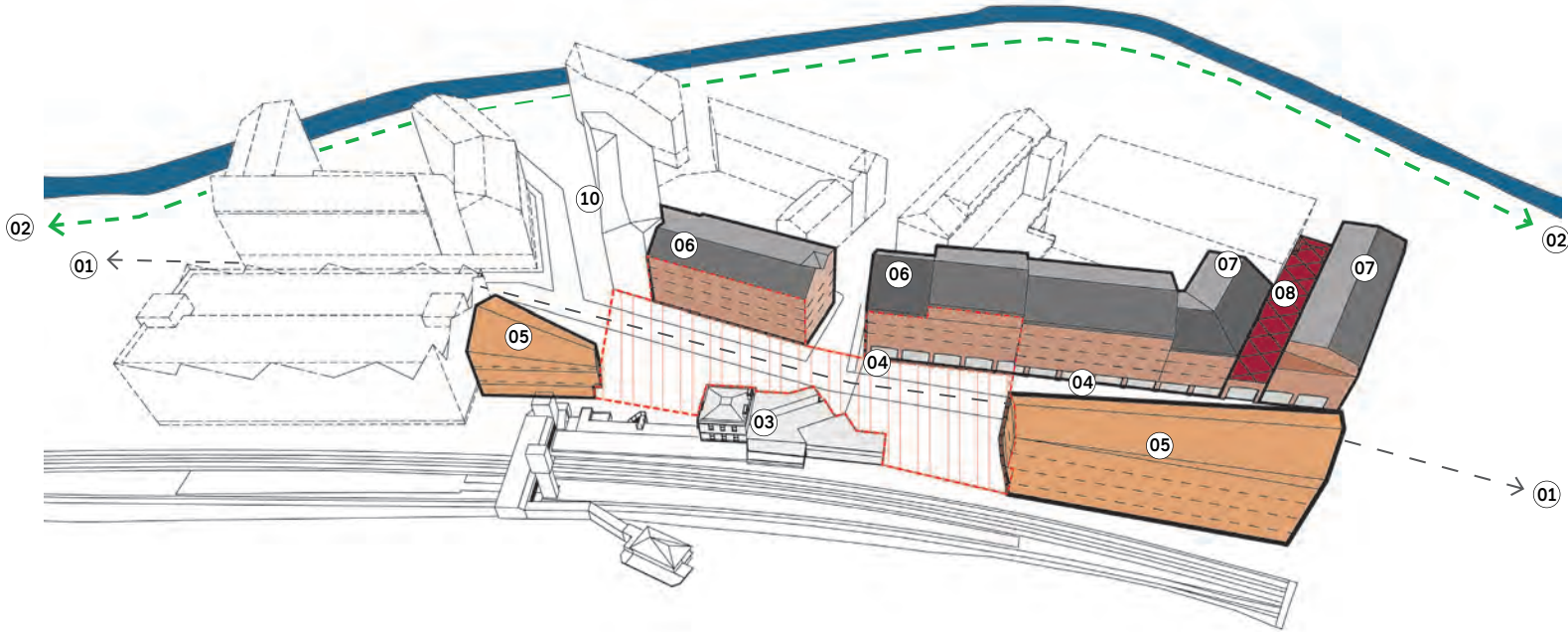
The Station Square character area runs north / south and is located at the northern end of the masterplan, encompassing the vehicular road and access points into the site from Bishop Stortford along with the station car park. This area forms the entrance gateway to the northern edge of the site and backs onto the railway line along its eastern edge. The Station Square is envisioned to be linear in character with commercial use at the ground floor and apartments above lining the western edge of the access road. The commercial 'key' buildings frame the existing station building along the eastern edge of this area. This character area contains the main public / civic space - a gateway to the station forecourt. The buildings along the western edge are under construction and will reflect the form and scale of the buildings in central Bishop's Stortford and will also accentuate that the Station Square is a transient area that is 'passed through'. The massing of the blocks is punctuated by a number of pedestrian routes, one of which forms a covered colonnade leading from the station through to the car park. The car park is embedded within this zone defining the western edge of the character area.



VIEW OF BISHOP'S STORTFORD TRAIN STATION THE 1960'S



STATION SQUARE (CONSENTED 2018)



STATION SQUARE (CONSENTED 2018)

- 01 Spine Road- Street Character
- 02 Riverside Walkway
- 03 Existing Bishop's Stortford Railway Station.
- 04 Taller ground floor forming parking podium and commercial colonnade.
- 05 Key buildings framing station building and public square.
- 06 Roof profile helps break massing of buildings and provides rhythm along street-scape.
- 07 Linear block emphasises route from central Bishop's Stortford to Station Square.
- 08 Colonnade - walkway link between station and car park.
- 09 Car park- embedded within the Character Area.
- 10 Buildings orientated to emphasise route between road and river.



GRENEVILLIERS CENTRE,  
BRENAK GONZALEZ



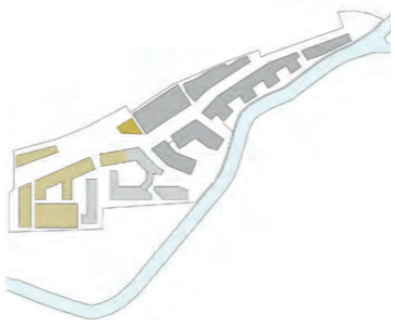
BRIGHTON COLLEGE,  
ALLIES AND MORRISON



THE GRANARY,  
POLLARD THOMAS EDWARDS



## 11.2.1 Station Square



### Arrival – Gateway Commercial Building

The gateway Goods Sheds (A6 and A7) buildings frame station square and centre the existing station building in the space, creating a sense of arrival in Bishop's Stortford.

Potential retail/ cafe spaces located on the square edge of the commercial building at ground floor would further animate the public space with outdoor tables and chairs in the square.

A7 marks the route from the River Stort to Station Square and will provide cycle parking beside at ground level.

### Ground Connections

It is important to learn from and reference the existing town of Bishop's Stortford. The building form of the East elevation of station square responds to the medieval jettying of buildings in Bishop's Stortford town centre where the building line of the upper floor projects beyond the ground floor.

A colonnade of shop fronts faces onto Station Square activating the Street edge and accentuating the route towards the vibrant commercial town centre.

### The Lane

A lane-way is proposed between Plot A and Plot H to provide a pedestrian connection between the Car park and Station Square.

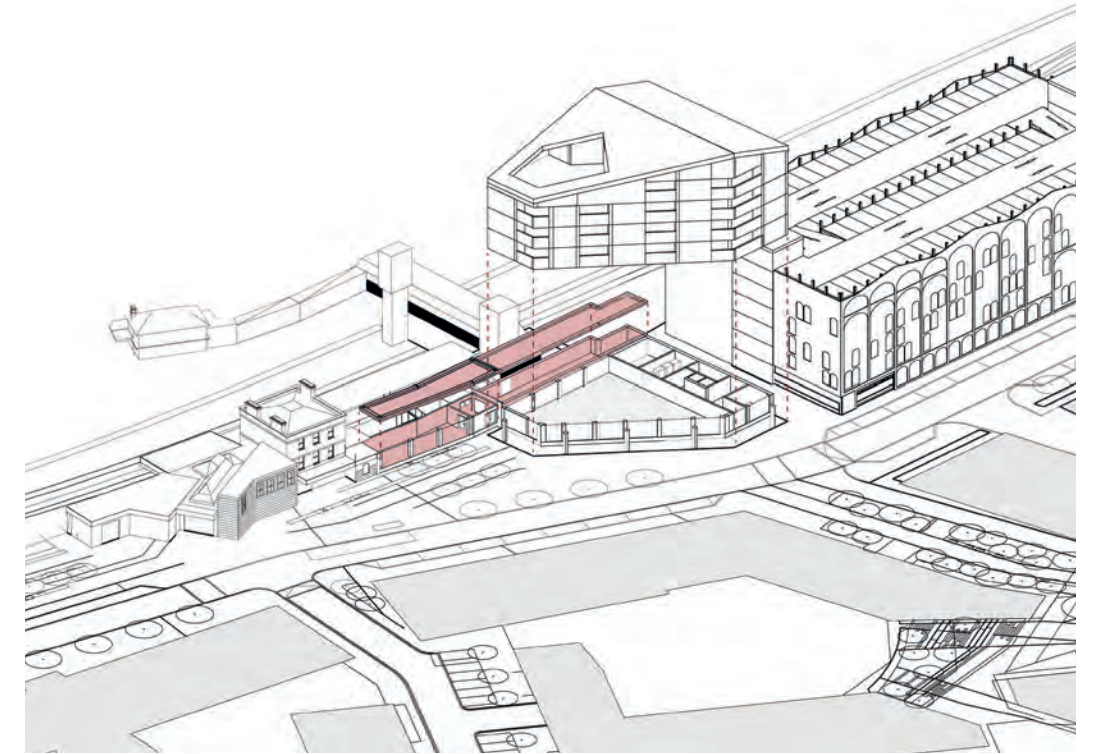
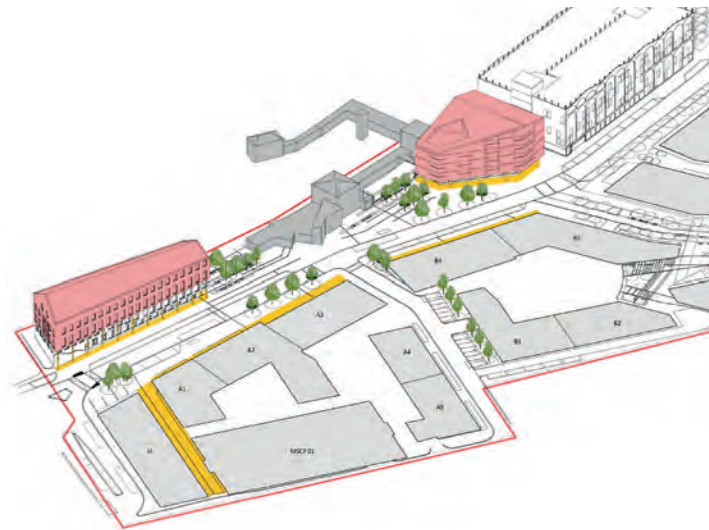
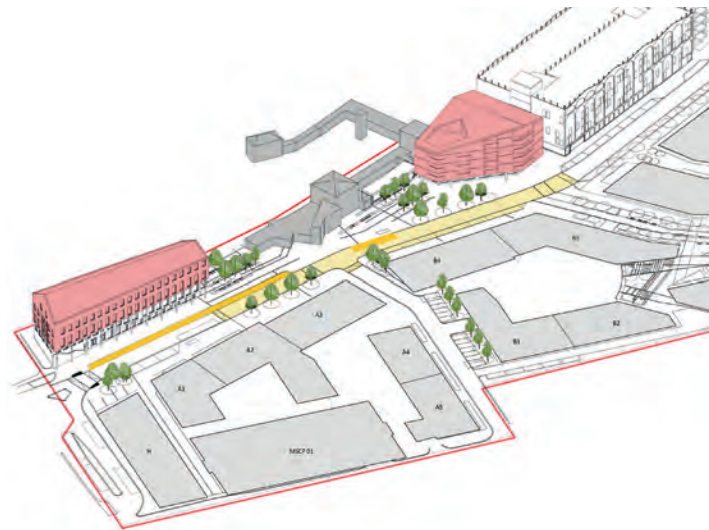
It is an aspiration that this space is animated by expanses of floor to ceiling glazing and overhead lighting, creating a safe and pleasant environment for pedestrians.

Plot H and Car park brick walls facing onto the Lane-way will be painted white to create a feeling of lightness to the space. The position of the commercial building at the end of the lane-way acts as a way- finding tool en route to the Station, creating a sense of arrival to Station Square.

### Street design – boundary treatments

The following principles define the character of the street:

- Traffic calming is proposed along the street through a raised table, creating a shared surface outside the station with pedestrian priority.
- Building heights are appropriate to the scale of the existing station building. Commercial building roof forms reduce in scale at station to negotiate a change in height from the residential buildings.
- Street trees are provided along the length of the North- South route. A cluster of trees is located outside the station creating a green edge to the plaza.
- Easy access to buses and taxis from station with designated taxi bays.



PROPOSED NEW LOCATION FOR STATION CYCLE PARKING



11.2.3 Station Square - Block H



Plot H is the site of the consented Hotel. To the north it will front a new bus interchange off Station Road, to the east the new north-south route and Goods Shed (A6), to the south, the lane. On the opposite side of the lane Plot A is under construction and the Multi Storey Car park 01 is completed. To the west is Anchor Street and the Rose and Crown Public House.

Revised ground floor

The footprint of this building and its relationship to the surrounding context and townscape is to remain similar to the previous proposal.

The proposed ground floor will have retail/workspace and community use, with a hotel above.

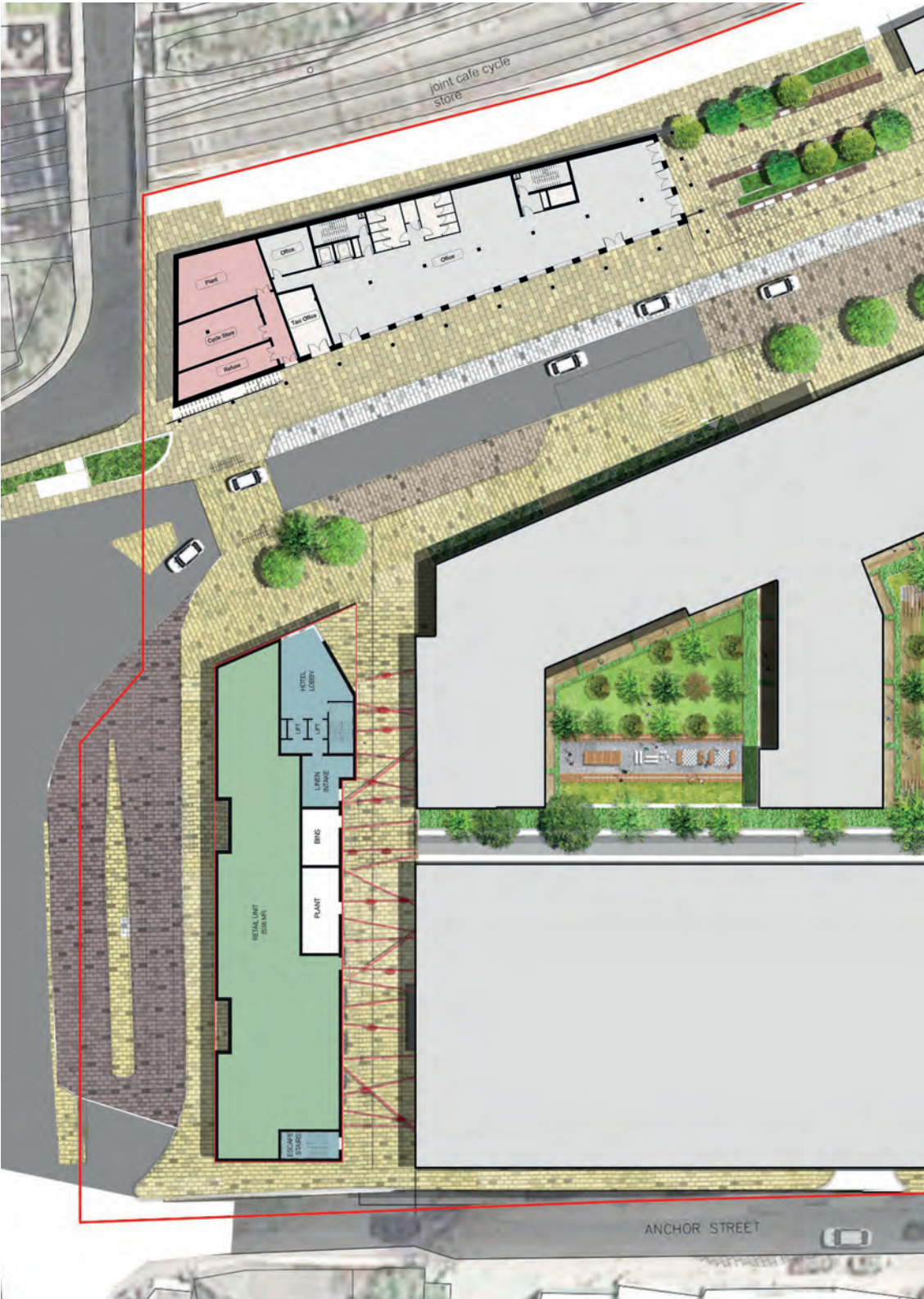
The introduction of commercial space at ground level opens up the opportunity to introduce glazed facades providing for active frontages to all four sides of the building. The main access points to the building will remain the same.

Solum have met with HCC and discussed the revised proposal in relation to the bus interchange, whom will accept the same approach to be maintained.

The hotel foyer and core is anticipated to be located on the corner of the lane and Sextons Road.

A plant room/sub-station is anticipated will be located off Anchor Street.

Vehicle servicing will remain for Plot H as the previous, with lay-by access of the north-south route, Station Square.



BLOCK H AND A6 - POTENTIAL REORGANISED FLOOR PLAN LAYOUTS

11.2.4 Station Square - A6

Rationalisation of layout

Blocks A6 and A7 are known as the 'Goods Sheds', key buildings which bookend Station Square. Goods Shed North (A6) is being adjusted to improve its efficiency as a standalone building and in relation to Goods Shed South.

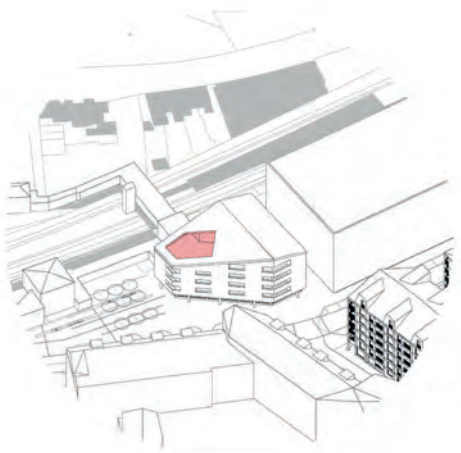
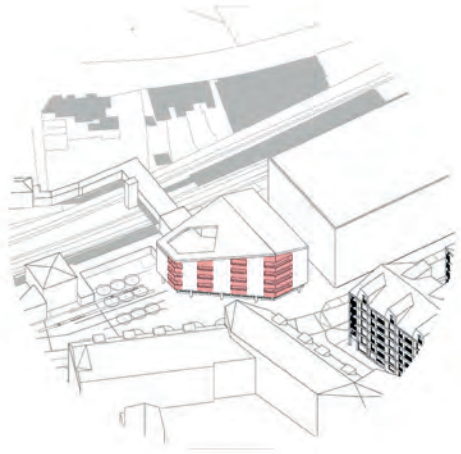
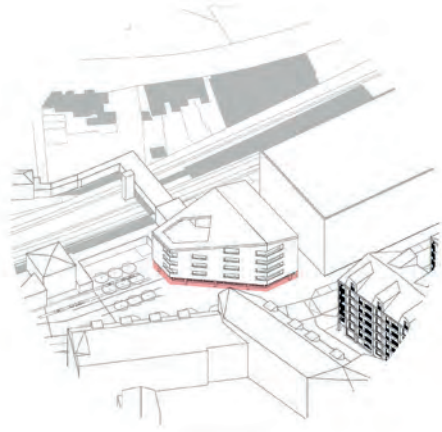
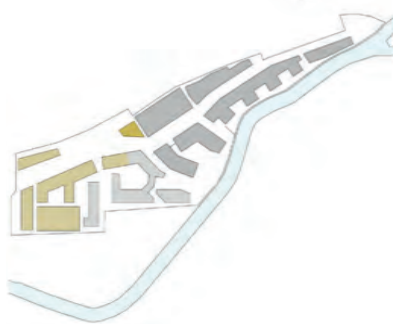
The station cycle parking will be relocated from A6 to beside A7 along with the station kiosks. These moves remove network rail provisions from the building while increasing floor area at ground floor for commercial use. At the upper level, the floor area will increase within the current building form, together these moves offsetting area relocated from A7.



A6 - SKETCH ELEVATION



## 11.2.5 Station Square - A7



### Key Elements of A7

The key elements define the character of this area. The diagrams, part elevations and reference images shown give an indication of the design intent to date. These will continue to evolve with further technical input through to planning submission.

### Colonnade

The ground floor treatment to blocks A6 and A7 reference the existing town of Bishop's Stortford. The building form of the East elevation of station square responds to the medieval jettying of buildings in Bishop's Stortford town centre where the building line of the upper floor projects beyond the ground floor.

A colonnade of shop fronts faces onto Station Square activating the Street edge and accentuating the route towards the vibrant commercial town centre.

### Form and Roofscape

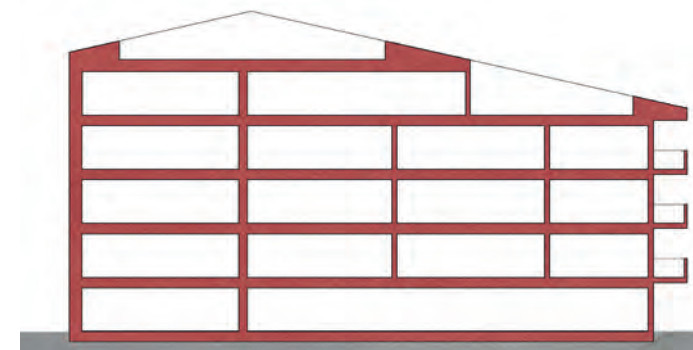
Building heights in the Station Square character area range from 4- 6 storeys. The roof form of the commercial buildings (A6 + A7) reduces in height towards the existing station building negotiating the change in height from the residential buildings and framing the square. The perceived building height through inhabited roofspace and dormer windows creating variation across the roofscape, with dormers running perpendicular to the roof line.

### Facade and Material

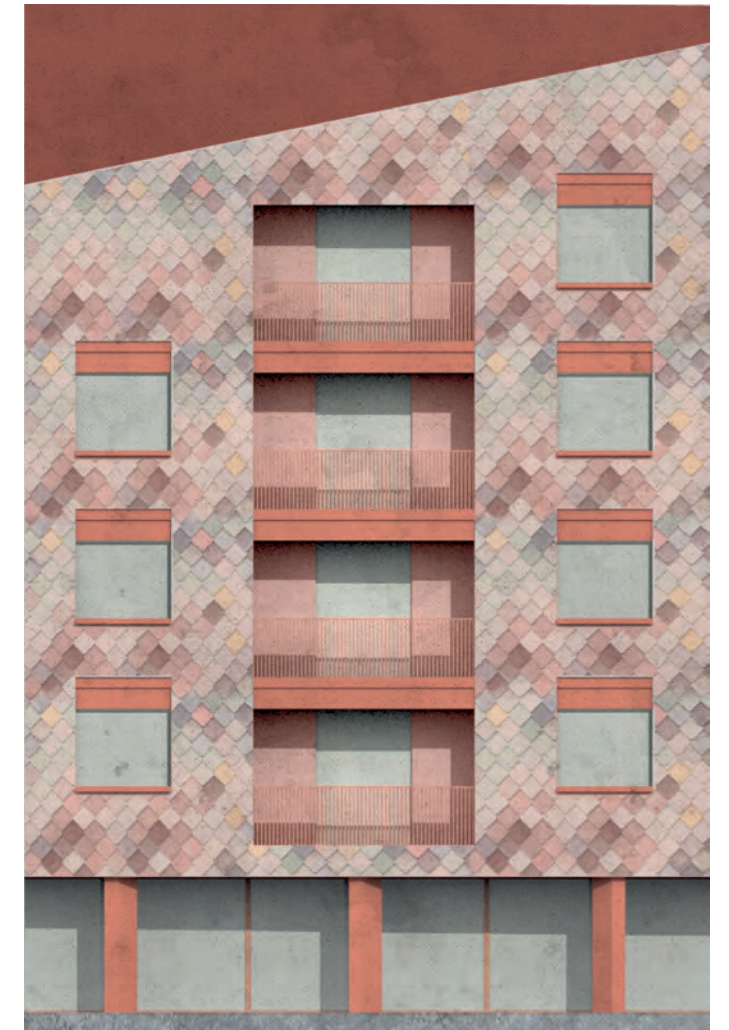
Building facades in station square reflect the commercial character of the buildings with use of metal cladding and curtain walling. The aspiration is to create a striking sense of arrival to Bishop's Stortford, and a memorable passing destination by train. The residential buildings lining the main axial route, on the opposing side to station square are under construction and are predominately brick with a colonnade at ground level. The roof materials to blocks A2- B4 reflect their relationship to the façades, where a clay tile is proposed.

### Balconies

The pure form and location of A6 on the main public north south route dictates that the private amenity space at upper levels will be provided by inbound balconies.



SECTION CONCEPT STUDY



CONCEPT SKETCH ELEVATION STUDY



POTENTIAL REFERENCES



# 11.3 The Maltings



## Refining the Character Area

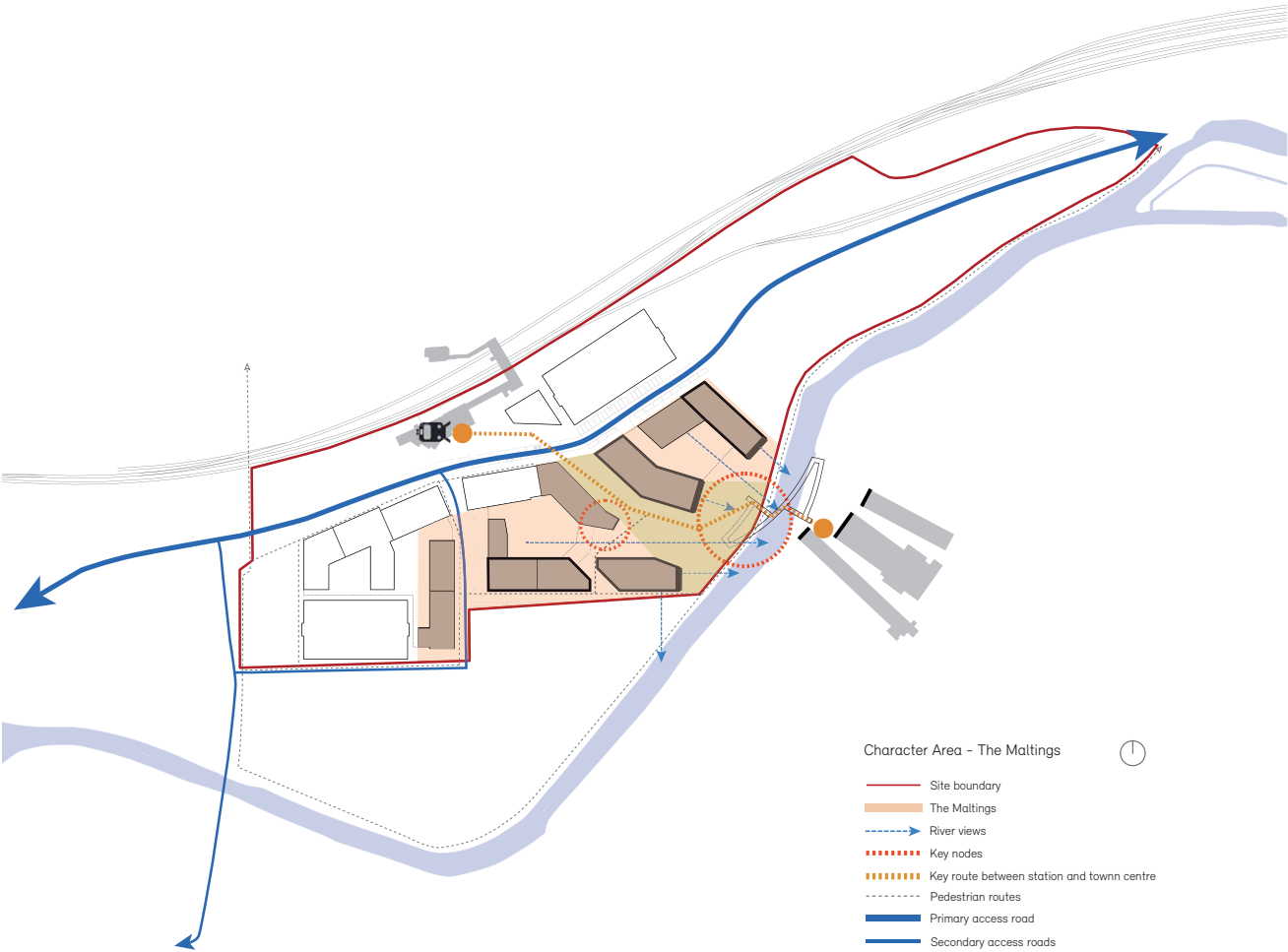
The Maltings character area is located within the central section of the masterplan. Fronting both onto the North-South route and the River Stort and Maltings buildings.

This area in particular, seeks to reflect Bishop's Stortford's Industrial heritage. There is a strong relationship with the river and the architecture reflects the warehouse typologies along the riverside. With a higher number of apartments and hard surfaced landscaping adding to the warehouse aesthetic. There is as direct response to the Bishop's Stortford maltings buildings form with 3 gables facing onto the River Stort.

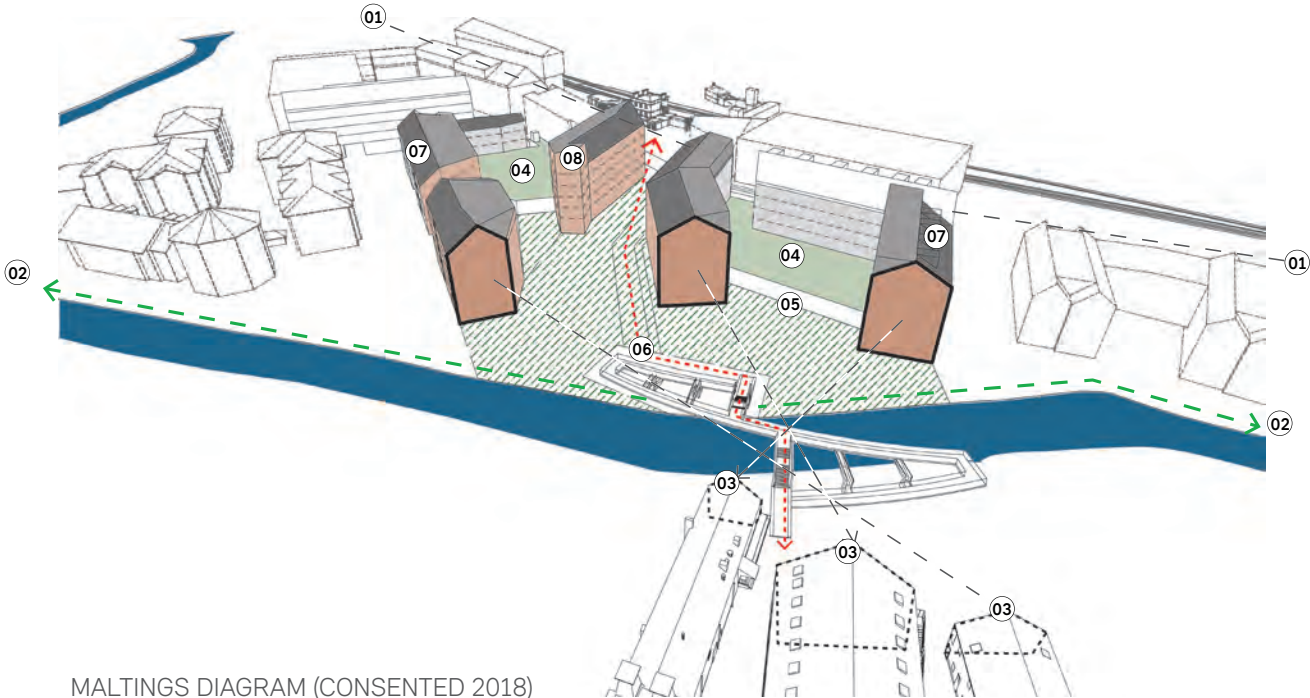
This area bridges between two character areas - the station square area to the north and lower scale Riverside development to the south.

The Buildings form courtyards facing the river edge and are used to frame the views of the river which sit amongst a rich and landscaped riverside park. Block A and B are currently under construction.

- 01 Spine Road- Street Character
- 02 Riverside Walkway
- 03 Buildings orientated to face the Maltings Buildings and River.
- 04 Courtyard formed between buildings facing river Stort edge.
- 05 Parking podiums form base to buildings- taller ground floor.
- 06 Direct link to Bishop's Stortford Station/ Riverside and Bridge.
- 07 Building form reflects Malting's Buildings.
- 08 Key buildings as focal point on river edge.



MALTINGS DIAGRAM (CONSENTED) 2018



MALTINGS DIAGRAM (CONSENTED) 2018

- Constraints:
- New road through to London Road has been constructed.
  - Set back from the river to create an open space setting.
  - Site contours, flood zone.
- Opportunities:
- Opportunity to improve the Riverside frontage and connection to the station.
  - Linear exposed site with good frontage to River Stort
  - Potential to enhance pedestrian and cycle route along side of river.
  - Close proximity to and views of The Maltings buildings.
  - Opportunity to provide quality green landscape public place.
  - Potential to improve traffic movement in the town centre with new road through site connecting to London Road.
  - Possibility to accommodate half basement parking taking advantage of the level difference between New Road and River Stort.
  - Opportunity to use building lines to direct way finding from new station square down to riverside path and the historic Maltings beyond.
  - Potential to retain relationship between buildings running down to river and historic Maltings.
  - Opportunity to create additional link.



FORMER SOUTH STREET MALTINGS



KROYERS PLADS, COBE ARCHITECTS



SNAPE MALTINGS, HAWORTH TOMPKINS



THE ECHOES, BELL PHILLIPS ARCHITECTS



## 11.3.1 The Maltings



BLOCK C1 GABLE END SKETCH



KILNS OF FORMER SOUTH STREET MALTINGS

### Key Elements of the Maltings (Plot C)

The key elements define the character of this area. The diagrams, part elevations and reference images shown give an indication of the design intent to date. These will continue to evolve with further technical input through to planning submission.

#### Gables

The gable ends to blocks A, B (under construction) and C, overlooking the River Stout, reflect the gable form to the existing maltings buildings on the opposing bank.

#### Jetting (Overhang)

The jetting of the Maltings buildings form a colonnade facing onto Station Square activating the Street edge and accentuating the route towards the vibrant commercial town centre.

#### Facade and Material

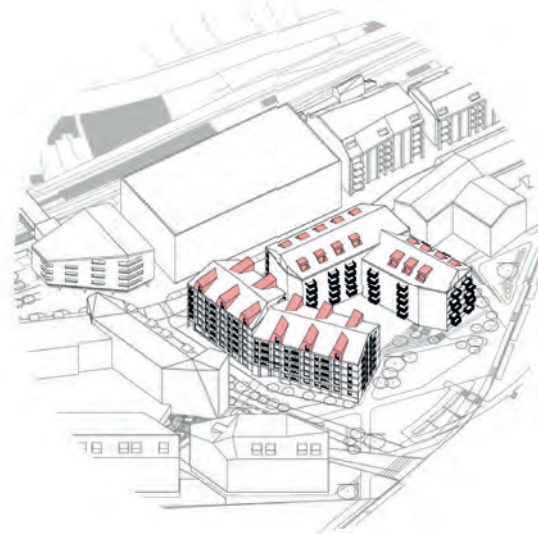
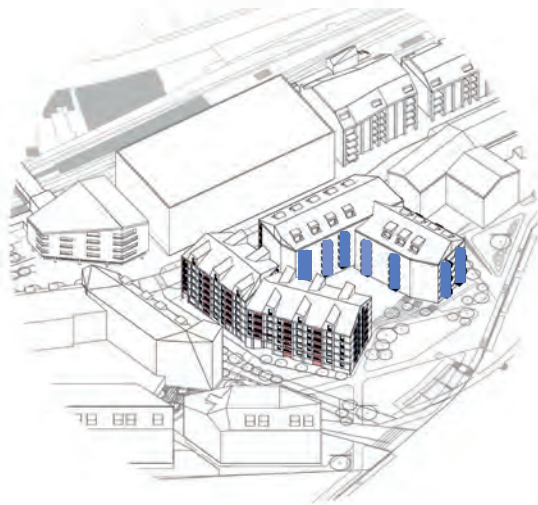
Building facades in this character area will reference the industrial heritage of the former South Street Maltings buildings west of the River Stort. The predominant material throughout this character area is brick. Soldier and varying brick detailing is proposed in this character, reflecting the brick banding details of the former South Street Maltings.

#### Balconies

A combination of projecting and inset balconies are proposed depending on location, to create variation to the elevation and offer opportunities to overlook the landscape of the riverside.

#### Roofscape and Dormers

Building heights in the Maltings character area range between 6 and 7 storeys (including the roofspace). In the taller blocks, the roofspace is used to reduce the perceived scale of the block. Inhabited roof-space reduces the perceived building height and activates the building edge. Dormer windows create variation in the elevation. There is a continuity of roofscape to the Station Square edge, which is broken down by a shift in storey height to the secondary streets running towards the River Stort. The form and massing of the roofscape relaxes in form at the River Edge, an evolution of the form of the pyramidal kilns at the Old Maltings creating a marker on the route between the river and Station square.



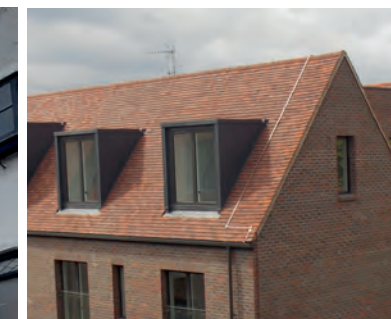
BLOCK C2 SKETCH ELEVATION



BLOCK C4 SKETCH ELEVATION

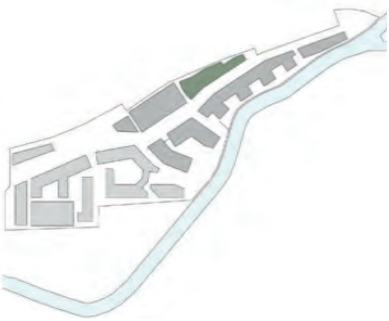


POTENTIAL REFERENCES



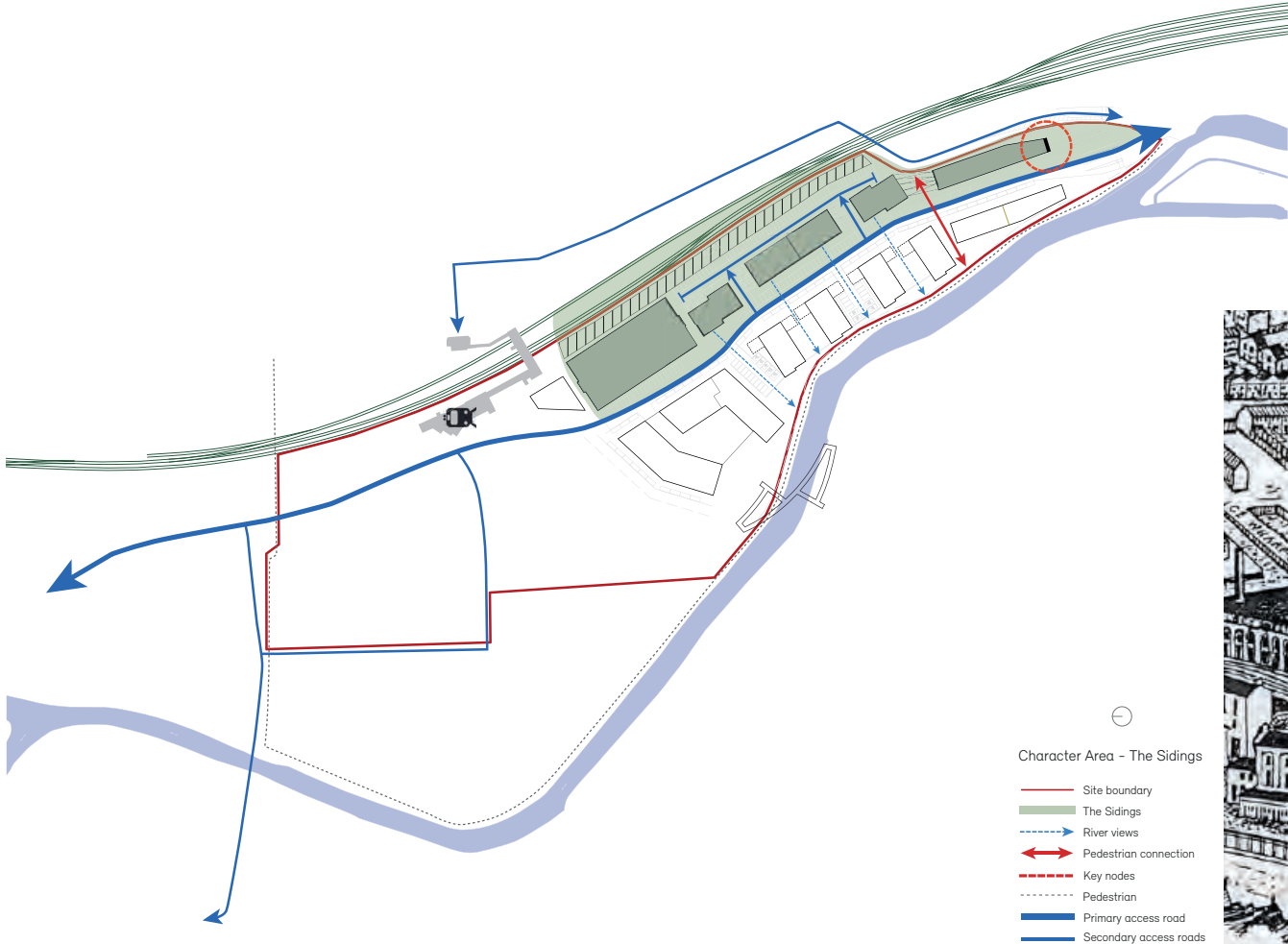


11.4 The Sidings



**Refining the Character Area**  
The Sidings provides the opportunity for this area of the site to have a closer relationship the railway past and present. The linear land form between the rail and street allows for honest robust buildings along its length.

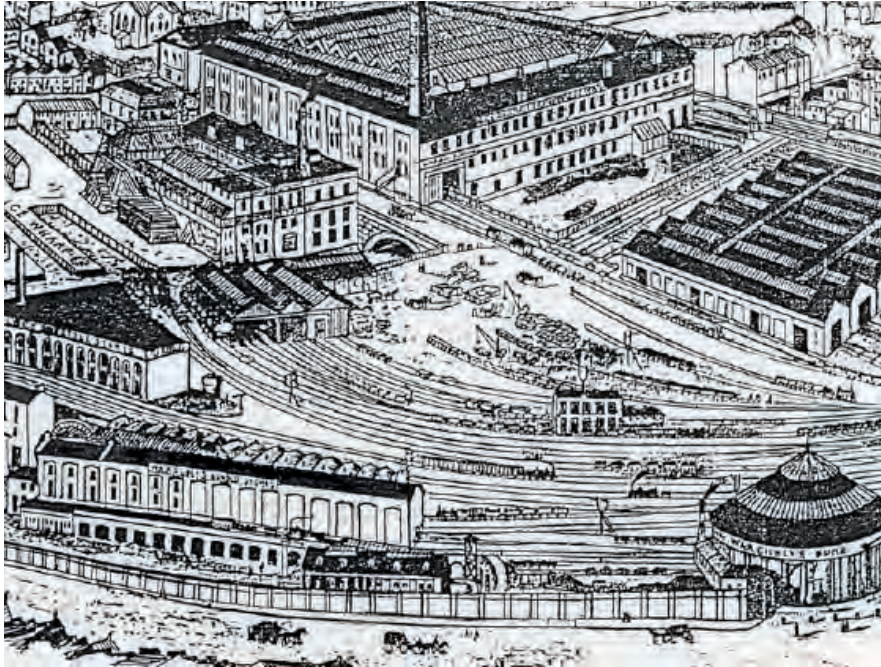
The sidings character area is located at the Southern end of the masterplan and runs North - South acting as a buffer between the railway line and North- South route. This area forms the entrance gateway to the Southern end of the site. The sidings area is envisioned to be a long linear character area with taller buildings, the majority of which are apartments lining the road. These buildings will have a high level of uniformity in scale height and building line. As with the station square character area the sidings buildings will also accentuate that this is a transient area that is 'passed through'. There is a strong relationship with the station and the architecture reflects the warehouse typologies of railway and warehouse buildings. The buildings frame parking and landscaped courts.



SIDINGS DIAGRAM (CONSENTED 2018)

- Constraints of the redefined southern site:
- Railway noise source.
  - Aspect / view to the railways.
  - Existing pedestrian railway bridge.
  - Maintenance distance to be accommodated from the boundary line.
  - Car parking.

- Opportunities:
- Potential to establish a visual connection with the signal box.
  - Opportunity to maximise double aspect homes.
  - Ability to enhance views to and from the River Stort.
  - Possibility to use form of building to help way finding to and from the station.
  - Potential to create a positive arrival experience to Bishop's Stortford by Rail.
  - Opportunity to accommodate station car parking flanked by residential buildings.
  - Possibility to provide views to railway and riverside.
  - Potential to enhanced Good's Yard character along railway edge.



BISHOP'S STORTFORD'S FIRST STATION IN THE 1840S



DU JARDIN MEWS, KARAKUSEVIC CARSON ARCHITECTS



BRENTFORD LOCK, DUGGAN AND MORRIS ARCHITECTS



PARADISE GARDENS, LIFSCHUTZ DAVIDSON SANDILANDS ARCHITECTS



SIGNAL TOWER AT BISHOP'S STORTFORD TRAIN STATION



## 11.4.1 The Sidings



### Key Elements of the Sidings (Plot F)

The key elements define the character of this area. The diagrams, part elevations and reference images shown give an indication of the design intent to date. These will continue to evolve with further technical input through to planning submission.

### Buttress detail

As previously mentioned there is a strong relationship with the station and the architecture reflects the warehouse typologies of railway and warehouse buildings. We have introduced buttress elements, as shown in the drawings below, that reinforce this and correspond to the patterning to railway arches.

### Balconies

The balcony strategy for the sidings is to provide solid inset balconies for facades fronting the railway, providing both visual and acoustic privacy in this location. The balconies facing the spine road maybe part inset and part projecting.

### Materials

Building facades in this character area will reflect the railway heritage of the site. The predominant material throughout this character area is brick. Brick detailing that enhances the buttress is proposed for this character area.

### Roofscape

Building heights in the Sidings character area range between 5 and 6 storeys (including the roofspace). The roofspace is used to reduce the perceived scale of the block. Inhabited roof-space reduces the perceived building height and activates the building edge. Skylight windows create variation in the elevation along with terraces 'carved out' within the roof form providing private amenity space to the upper floors.



BLOCK F (GABLE END) SKETCH ELEVATION



BLOCK F (STREET SIDE) SKETCH ELEVATION



POTENTIAL REFERENCES



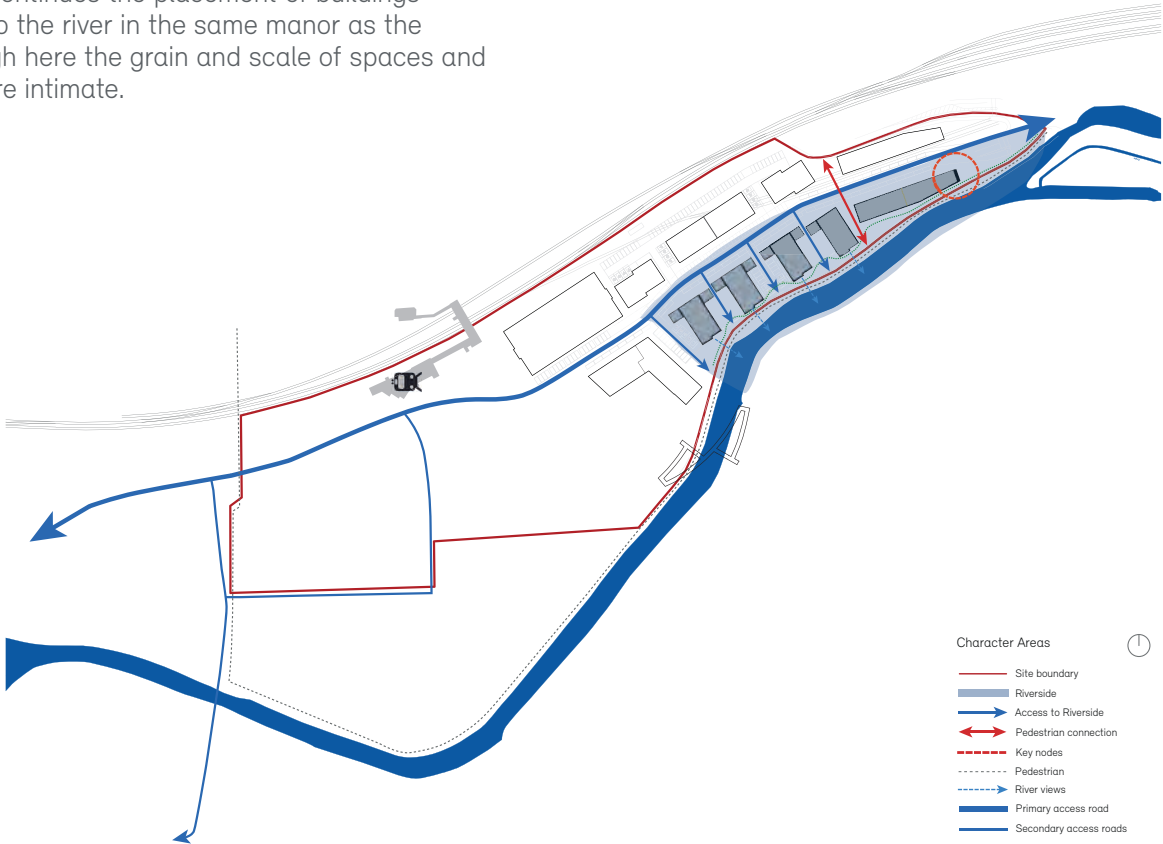
11.5 The Riverside



Refining the Character Area

The Riverside character area is located at the southern end of the Bishop’s Stortford Goods Yard development. It is unique in that it encompasses only one line of buildings which face out onto the river. The riverside is envisioned as a residential area with building typologies and materials reflecting the adjacent Maltings buildings. The buildings range in height from 5 storeys at the north end adjoining the Maltings buildings to 3 storeys housing at the southern end. As with the Maltings character area the Buildings form courtyards facing the river edge and are used to frame the views of the river and landscaped riverside park.

The Riverside continues the placement of buildings running down to the river in the same manor as the Maltings, though here the grain and scale of spaces and buildings is more intimate.



RIVERSIDE DIAGRAM (CONSENTED 2018)

- Constraints of the redefined southern site:
- Redefine the site boundary means a single sided frontage for the southern section of the new road
  - New carriage way has been constructed
  - Temporary road intersections
  - The shape of the site being long and narrow
  - Site contours, flood zone
- Opportunities:
- Ability to create and define a new footpath and on-street car parking along with the landscape edge
  - Close proximity to and views of The Maltings buildings
  - Opportunity to provide quality green landscape public place
  - Potential to accommodate half-basement parking, taking advantage of the level difference between New Road and River Stort
  - Potential to enhance riverside pedestrian and cycle paths alongside river front, swale and wetland landscaping
  - Potential for new contour to create movement through landscaping, stepping down to the riverside
  - Levels provide opportunity to define public and private open space
  - Opportunity to re-imagined entrance to the Good’s Yard from London Road
  - Potential to enhance overlooking to the riverside path, providing a natural surveillance and safe environment
- Potential Develop-able Area of Plots D and E



BISHOP’S STORTFORD SMALL SCALE HISTORIC BUILDINGS



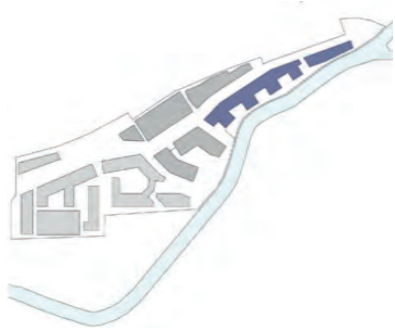
BISHOP’S STORTFORD SMALL SCALE HISTORIC BUILDINGS



BISHOP’S STORTFORD HISTORIC MALTINGS  
LOCAL REFERENCES



## 11.5.1 The Riverside



### Key Elements of the Riverside (Plot D and E)

The key elements define the character of this area. The diagrams, part elevations and reference images shown give an indication of the design intent to date. These will continue to evolve with further technical input through to planning submission.

### Garden Wall and Gables (Plot D)

The riverside is defined by a 'garden wall' marking the edge between private demise to the new buildings and the public tow-path and swale. The riverside wall wraps either end of the block stepping up to form the gable ends. The transition of the wall on the public roadside takes the form of a series of arches.

### Arches (Plot D)

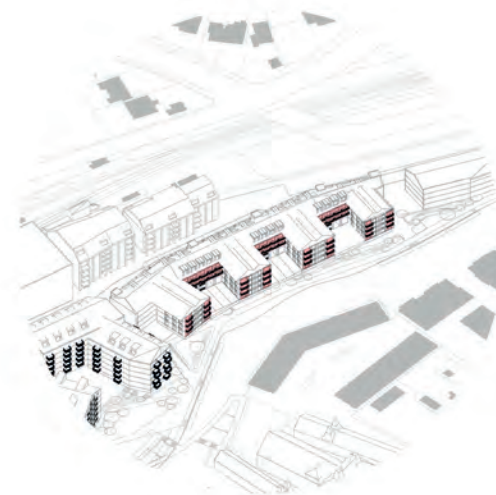
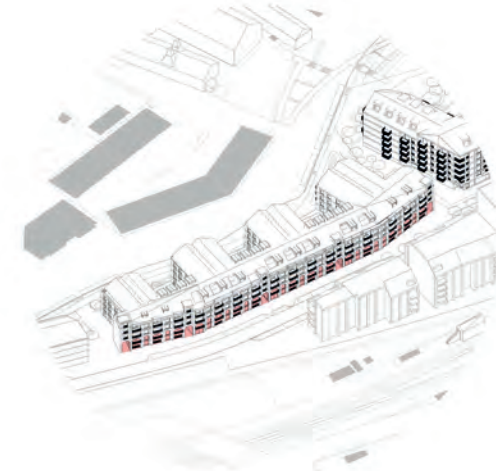
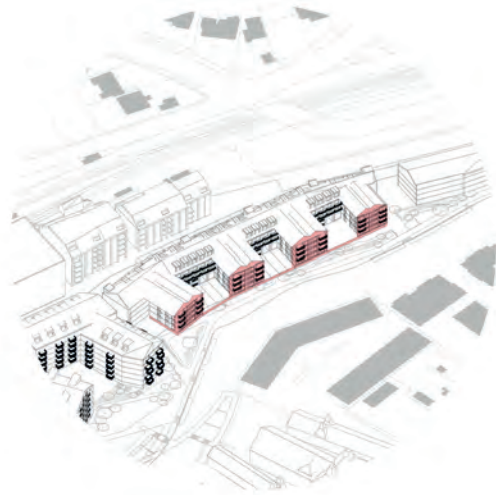
The roadside elevation creates a narrative around old railway structures with reference to railway arches historic buildings on Water Lane in Bishop's Stortford. Arches may be created over entrance ways through to courtyard gardens and picked up through lintels and detailing along the facade.

### Balconies

The balconies facing the river will project allowing wide views along the river edge and tow-path. To the roadside it is anticipated balconies will be partly inset to provide visual and acoustic privacy along the public edge and location to the railway sidings.

### Roofscape and Dormers

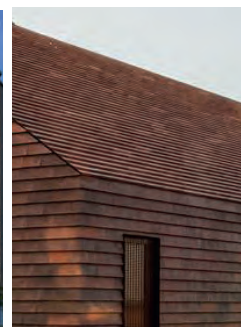
The gable ends to the building wings facing the river have split gables, adding variety to the roofscape along the river edge and helping reduce the roof height. There will also be a series of dormers, some set back and some inset within the roofscape.



RIVERSIDE SKETCH PART ELEVATION



STREET SKETCH PART ELEVATION



POTENTIAL REFERENCES



12 Conclusion

The material presented at this stage is a reflection of our engagement and consultation to date, with a view to illustrate and indicate our intent and the design direction for the Goods Yard. At the next stage, we welcome the opportunity to explore and progress these themes as we engage further and develop the design towards a new planning application.

The proposed scheme will provide a combination of residential, commercial and multi-use shared facilities for the residents of Bishop Stortford that will be inviting to the widest cross-section of the local community. It will provide major local regeneration and much needed homes for local people. It responds to the brief and key issues raised during consultation and will provide a safe and secure environment in which to work and a stimulating and inclusive place in which to live. It will make a significant visual improvement to the area, and uplift a run-down, as well as increasing and encouraging biodiversity on the site. The residential element will provide high quality accommodation in a part of the town well serviced by transport, shops and other facilities. We are confident that the proposals described in the masterplan will make a wholly positive contribution to the Bishop Stortford and surroundings.

The Goods Yard will be an exceptional place in which to live, work or enjoy a day out. Inspired by the culture and history on its doorstep it will bring together a series of;

- riverside neighbourhoods;
- inspirational architecture;
- landscaping and;
- exemplary community infrastructure;
- it will have exceptional rail links;
- a cycling network and;
- pedestrian friendly streets.

The Goods Yard will be that of a thriving, residential and mixed use community that is physically and socially integrated with the rest of Bishop’s Stortford.

It will be a much sought after place in which to live, offering a uniquely convenient address for rail commuters with a wide range of social, community and commercial facilities, all in an exceptional setting.

Its layout and design will reflect its proximity to the High Street and the River Stort. We expect that it will also become a visitor destination in its own right,

complementing High Street, and thereby significantly increasing the attractiveness and prosperity of Bishop’s Stortford. Visitors will be attracted by the new riverside and wharf side cafés and shops, by the new parks and by the continuous riverside walk.

We have substantially developed our Masterplan and related proposals for The Goods Yard during the Pre-application stage, in conjunction with the Council, and its consultants. This has been a very successful and productive partnership and we believe that the proposals in this submission now provide the foundations for an exceptional scheme that will not only fully realise the enormous potential of The Goods Yard but also make a major contribution to the economic prosperity of Bishop’s Stortford.

To transform the Goods Yard into a successful place, it must look and feel integrated into its setting. It must respond to the surrounding assets and overcome existing barriers. The resulting urban structure will create the structure for the place to grow and enhance over time.

As set out in the vision statement earlier in the document the masterplan layout illustrates a strong urban structure responding to the key moves to integrate the site into its wider context, including;

1. Enhancing the existing river walk through an improved public realm and landscaping, introducing a range of public spaces and experiences, and enabling longer term connections to extend the river walk to connect to the town centre and station, and to connect to the river walk to the south, which may be developed in the longer term.
2. Creating connections between the historic core and enhanced landscapes, effectively linking High Street to river walk and providing a series of gateway spaces welcoming visitors to The Goods Yard.
3. Introducing several new neighbourhoods, each with fabulous river views, a range of open spaces and all within a few minutes walk to the railway station, local facilities, neighbourhood uses and some of Bishop’s Stortford best established and new destinations.
4. Defining a new Urban Avenue with a range of mixed commercial, civic, transport and open space uses and concentration of more urban housing along this accessible and connected route.
5. Providing local streets to reinforce views and access to the river walk, each with a distinctive character defined

by a range of bespoke housing typologies developed from building precedents within Bishop’s Stortford. Embedded in the plan is a very strong open space strategy, based on creating a series of spaces along the river front.

6. A range of mixed uses will provide for both local neighbourhood needs and destinations for the wider community. The bustling Station Square will have convenience retail, offices, cafés, restaurants and a hotel, offering spill-out areas fronting adjacent open space.

The Goods Yard will become a place established in the hearts and minds of local residents. It will be an extension of the historic core and will contribute to wider area regeneration.

Summary of the benefits of the Goods Yard will include:

- Bringing a brownfield site back into productive use
- Much needed homes in the town centre, including affordable homes
- Car parking for the new homes
- New commercial floorspace
- Dual use retail and health care floorspace
- A new hotel for the town.
- Opening up the riverside.
- New accessible public realm and high quality landscaping.
- A new link road through the site connecting Station Road / Dane Street with London Road.
- Jobs and business opportunities.

Station improvements include:

- A new public station square
- A new bus interchange
- New bus stops and links
- Taxi and drop-off bays
- Increased cycle parking
- New station car parking facilities





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# Land North West of Buntingford

MASTERPLAN DOCUMENT

DECEMBER 2021

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# Land North West of Buntingford

Page 20

This masterplan document has been collaboratively developed with East Herts Council, Buntingford Town Council and other key stakeholders to ensure the delivery of a high quality, beautiful and sustainable place on Land North West of Buntingford.

The masterplan presents a site and context appraisal, assessment of relevant policies, design principles and a clear design 'vision' that will help to guide future planning applications and ensure best use is made of this sustainable site in accordance with the agreed design vision.





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2.0	Planning Policy Context
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4.0	Site in Context: The Site
5.0	Sustainable Location
6.0	Connectivity
7.0	Character Assesment
8.0	Site Opportunities and Considerations
9.0	Sustainable Construction
10.0	Design Evolution
11.0	Masterplan Engagement
12.0	Design Framework
13.0	Landscape Strategy
14.0	Illustrative Layout

# 1.0 Land North West of Buntingford Vision

This masterplan document has been collaboratively developed with East Herts Council, Buntingford Town Council and other key stakeholders to ensure the delivery of a high quality, beautiful and sustainable place on Land North West of Buntingford. By setting out a vision and key design principles, the masterplan aims to ensure the delivery of a high quality sustainable scheme that will enhance the local area and provide beautiful places to live, in accordance with the updated National Planning Policy Framework and policy DES1 (Masterplanning) of the East Herts District Plan.

## Design Vision

The design vision for Land North West of Buntingford is to create a high quality, landscape and design-led scheme for around 55 new homes (including 40% affordable homes), together with amenity space, landscaping and all associated infrastructure, that provides an attractive green approach to the northwest of the town through appropriate landscape design and new tree and hedgerow planting along Neale Drive, whilst providing attractive green spaces with native planting that create a strong landscape framework for the site. New homes will be in keeping with the local vernacular and will reflect the character of the surrounding area. The scheme will be designed to integrate with the existing homes to the east and will provide high levels of connectivity to encourage active travel (cycling and walking). New homes will adopt a dwelling-centric, fabric first approach which locks in carbon-savings for the life of the building with opportunities for renewable energy technologies to achieve further carbon savings; and electric vehicle charging points and water efficient measures provided to encourage sustainable living.

The design vision will be delivered through provision of the following key elements:

### High Quality Beautiful Design

- Create a beautiful traditional style scheme in keeping with the local vernacular, incorporating a materials palette that reflects local character.
- Provide a high-quality approach to the northwest of the town, through landscape design and new tree and hedgerow planting along Neale Drive, to create a sense of arrival.
- Incorporate new hedgerow and tree planting throughout in order to provide a beautiful setting for new homes.
- Create a range of building types, heights and densities that respond positively to the site's topography and landscape features.
- Dual aspect buildings on key corner plots.
- Position buildings in order to mitigate potential noise from the A10 (buildings fronting onto the A10 and private amenity space to the rear).
- Create an east-west green corridor incorporating the existing oak tree in the southern part of the site.
- Provision of an attractive public realm through the use of appropriate surface treatments, street tree planting and soft landscaping.

### Movement and Connections

- Provide for a well-connected site and create a place that encourages active travel (cycling and walking) over car-based trips.
- Provide for cycle and pedestrian links with the town centre and the neighbouring scheme, including provision of a new cycle and pedestrian link with Baker Drive.
- Provide for an access to the Hertfordshire County Council land to the south in order to allow for its potential future use for education/sport and recreation.
- Provide active frontages within the scheme to influence driver behaviour and create a traffic calmed environment for residents.

### Landscaping and Green Space

- Provide a high-quality approach to the northwest of the town, through appropriate landscape design and new tree and hedgerow planting along Neale Drive.
- Adopt a landscape-led approach that integrates with the proposed green space to the east of the site and retains existing landscape features.
- Provide attractive green spaces with native planting in order to create a strong landscape framework.
- Retention and reinforcement of existing landscape features, including the creation of an east-west green corridor incorporating the existing oak tree in the southern part of the site.
- Deliver a biodiversity net gain through appropriate planting that encourages wildlife, including planting within sustainable drainage features.
- Incorporate new hedgerow and tree planting throughout in order to provide a beautiful setting for new homes.
- Creation of an area of species rich wildflower meadow planting in the northern part of the site, providing opportunities for informal recreation and the creation of new wildlife habitat.
- Provide access to proposed green spaces to the east including provision of a green link with Baker Drive.

### Sustainability

- Provide new homes that adopt a dwelling-centric, fabric first approach which locks in carbon-savings for the life of the building with opportunities for renewable energy technologies to achieve further carbon savings.
- Provide for electric vehicle charging points in safe and accessible locations.
- Design buildings to minimise the use of mains water through the inclusion of water efficient appliances and rainwater harvesting.
- Provide secure and weatherproof cycle parking and storage facilities for all homes.



# 2.0 Planning Policy Context

## The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021

Relevant national planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which was first published in March 2012, and most recently updated in July 2021. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, with emphasis on three key objectives: social, economic and environmental sustainability. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out in Paragraph 11.

Section 12 of the NPPF addresses design matters, with Paragraph 124 explaining that “good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.” It also highlights that **“the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve”**. Paragraph 130 further details design objectives that new development is expected to meet:

1. function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
2. visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
3. sympathetic to local character and history, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change;
4. establish or maintain a strong sense of place;
5. optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development;
6. create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being.

## East Herts District Plan, 2018

The Land North West of Buntingford falls within the ‘Buntingford Settlement’ where policies BUNT1 and DPS2 apply. Policy DPS2 of the District Plan confirms that residential development within settlement boundaries is acceptable in principle.

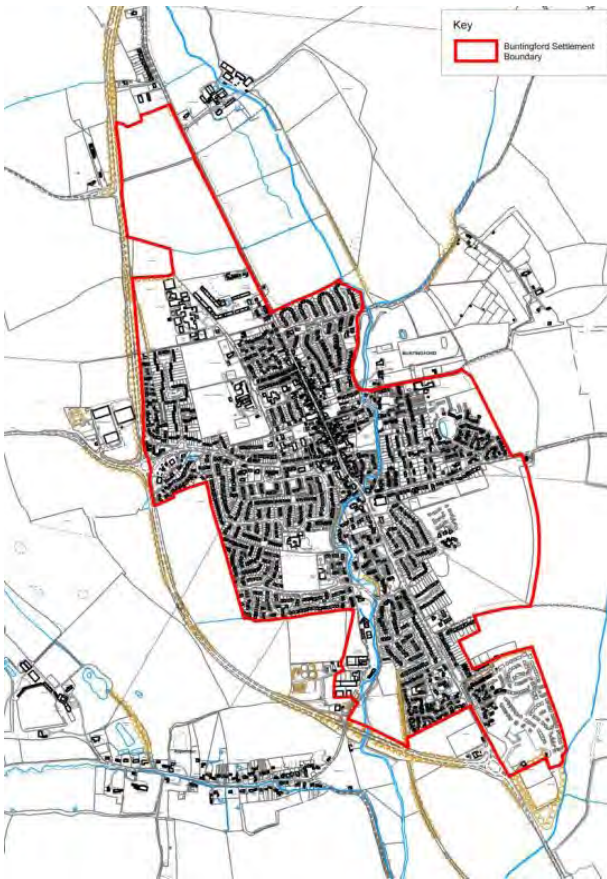
The explanatory text for policy BUNT1 notes that: “...additional homes will be provided which will consist of a mix of dwelling types and sizes, including bungalows and specialist retirement accommodation, to ensure that Buntingford’s population is able to access a balanced housing market catering for all life stages. The provision of affordable housing as part of new residential and mixed-use development schemes will allow emerging households to be able to remain living in Buntingford in accommodation suited to their needs”.

Policy DES1 (Masterplanning) introduces a requirement to prepare a Masterplan setting out the quantum and distribution of land uses; access; sustainable high quality design and layout principles; necessary infrastructure; the relationship between the site and other adjacent and nearby land uses; landscape and heritage assets; and other relevant matters

## Buntingford Neighbourhood Plan, May 2017

The site’s location within the settlement boundary is also confirmed in the Buntingford Neighbourhood Plan – where Policy HD1 confirms that new housing development (which it is inferred also includes class C2 development) is acceptable in principle, subject to such development meeting the following criteria:

- All new developments should be sensitive to the landscape and be of a height that does not impact adversely on views from the countryside. Where appropriate an LVIA will be required (policy HD2);
- Green energy principles will be encouraged and supported (policy HD3), and
- New housing design should respect the rural / semi-rural character of the area, having regard to the design code (policy HD4 / Appendix 4) and reflect local housing needs in terms of mix and tenure (according to the SHMA and other up-to-date evidence) (policy HD7)



Buntingford Neighbourhood Plan, May 2017



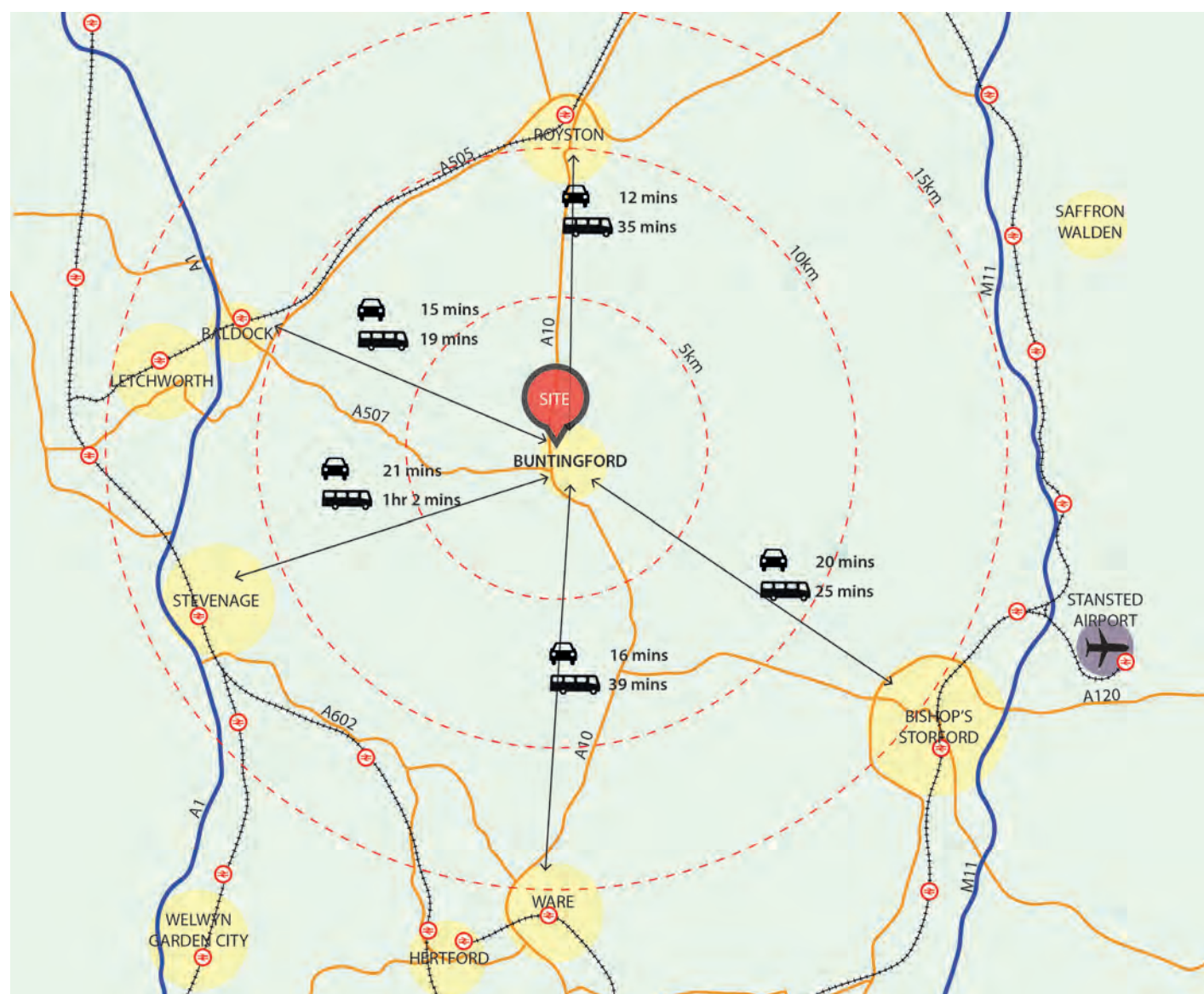
## 3.0 Site in Context: Strategic Location

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Buntingford is located at the centre of a large rural area in the northern half of the District. The town has developed in a valley setting astride the River Rib and the Roman Road Ermine Street.

Being surrounded by an extensive rural hinterland enables Buntingford to function as an important rural service centre for the outlying villages in the north of the District and it has an extensive range of services and facilities that serve the day-to-day needs of its residents.

The site is located to the north west of Buntingford on land to the east of the A10 and west of Ermine Street.





# 4.0 Site in Context: The Site



## THE SITE

The site consists of two parcels of land, north and south of Neale Drive. The A10 runs along the western boundary and the recently completed Redrow Homes scheme at Ermine Street lies to the east.

The site consists of vacant land with boundary hedgerows and trees. The southern parcel features a mature oak tree, which will be retained as part of the scheme.





## 5.0 Sustainable Location

Buntingford functions as an important rural service centre for the outlying villages in the north of the District. It has a vibrant local community demonstrated by the numerous clubs and societies that are active in the town and it has an extensive range of services and facilities that serve the day-to-day needs of residents, within easy walking and cycling distance of the site.



Buntingford Library



Large Co-Op near the High Street



Playground less than 200m from the site



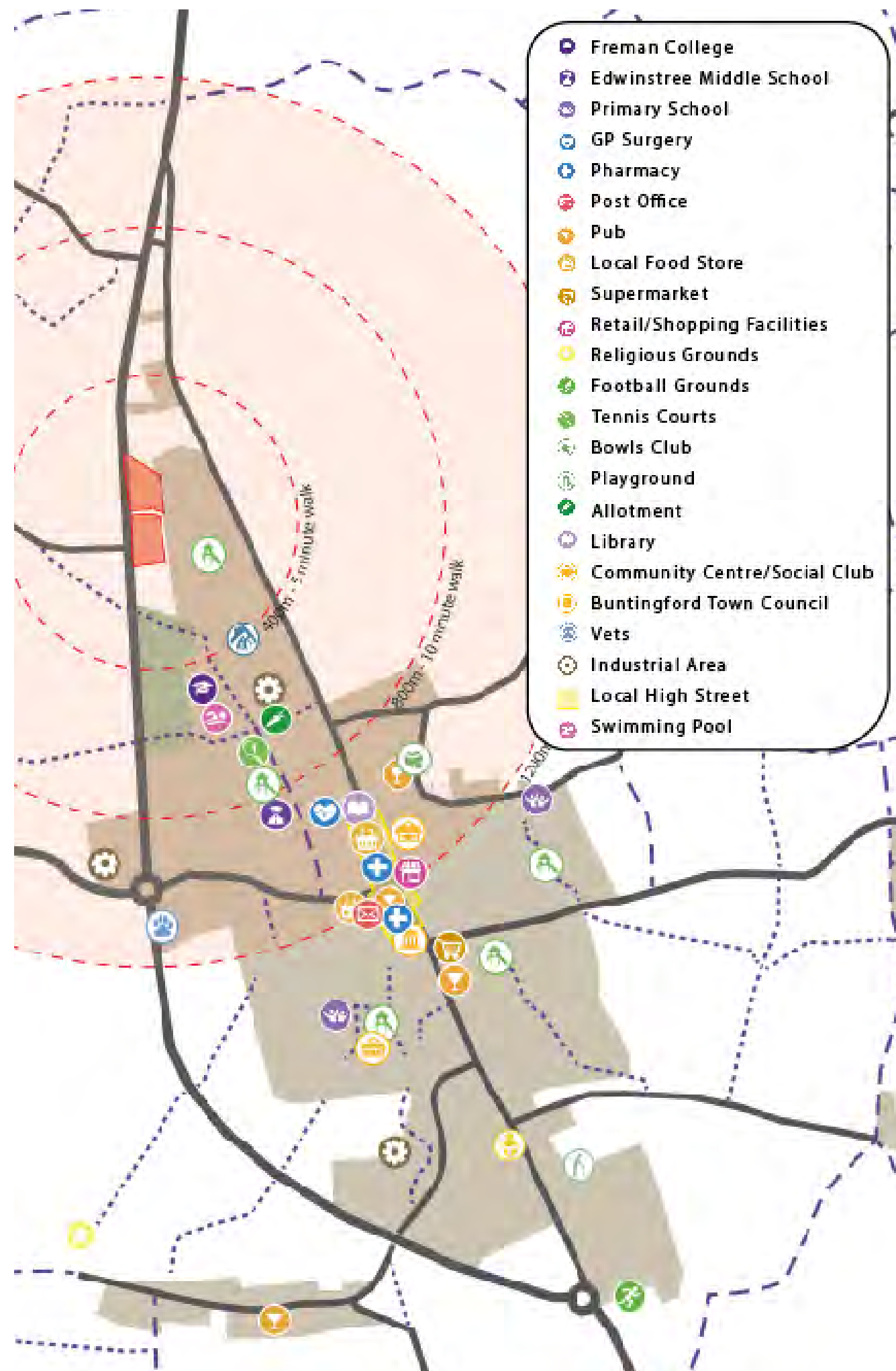
St Peter's Church



Pharmacy in the centre of the town



One of the pubs within the town





# 6.0 Connectivity

The site is located in a highly sustainable location within easy walking and cycling distance of the town centre and associated services and facilities. A 3m shared foot/cycleway on the northern side of Neale Drive provides a safe and convenient link with existing cycle and pedestrian infrastructure on Ermine Street.

Arriva busses provide services in and around Buntingford that connect with Hertford, Ware and other local towns and villages. Proposed bus stops on Neale Drive are located immediately adjacent to the site.

The Connectivity and Movement Plan diagram shows the site in the context of the existing public rights of way network, showing potential off-road walking routes, including Footpath 35, which provides a link onto Bowling Green Lane to the south.



View along Ermine Street looking north



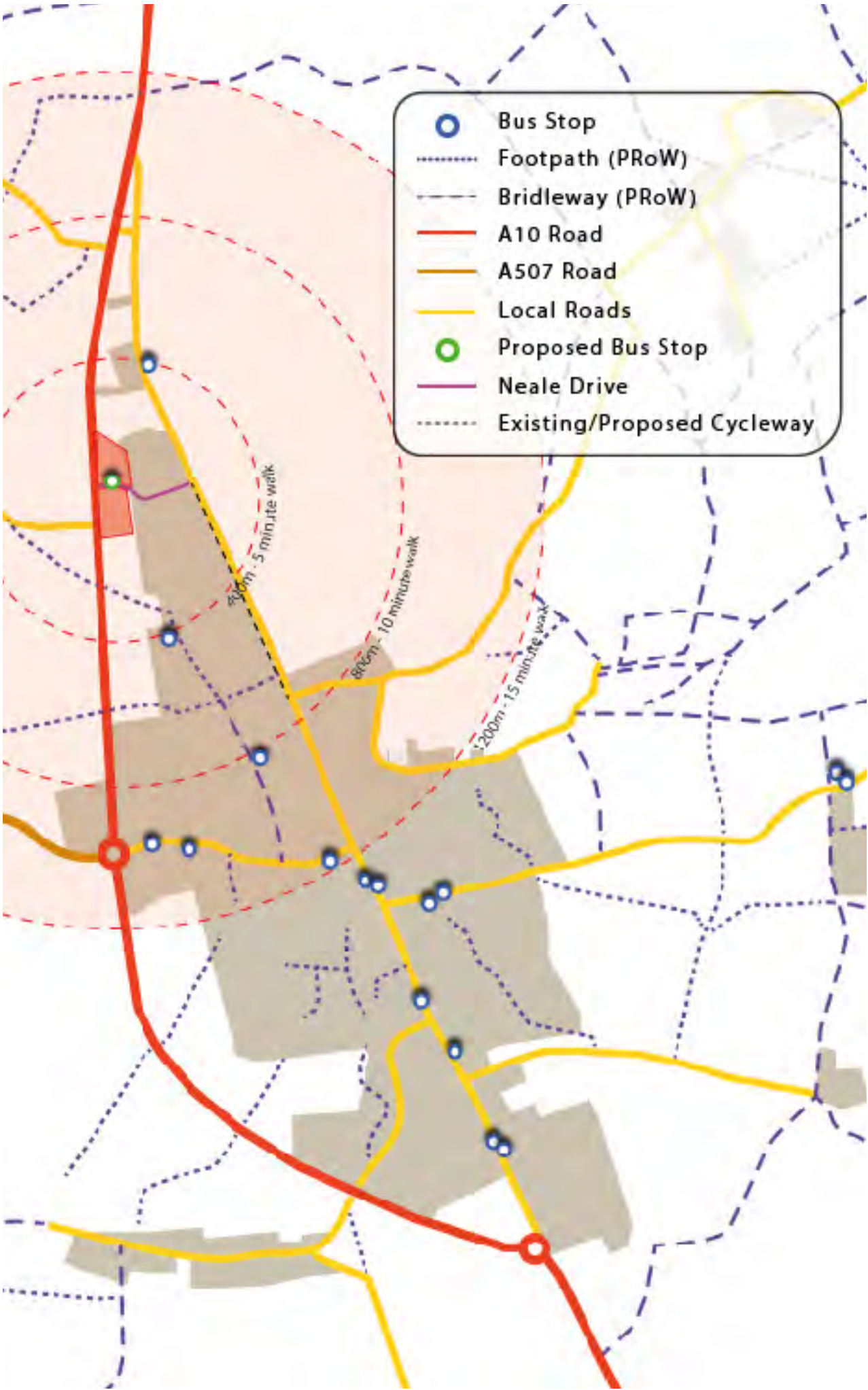
Buntingford PRow network



Public right of way from Ermine Street



Bus stop along the High Street



Connectivity & Movement Plan



# 7.0 Character Assessment

The town has a varied roof line, particularly along the High Street within the historic core. There is a mix of housing types and the scheme will be designed to reflect this variation.

Other notable features that are present within the town are historic frontages with a large opening for movement and vehicles and predominantly portrait orientation windows

The character of the site itself is also heavily influenced by the recent Redrow Homes scheme to the east.

The photographs below provide examples of some of the architectural styles within the Town. The Buntingford Town Evolution diagram shows the evolution of the Town with the historic core shown in maroon and more recent schemes, including the Redrow Homes scheme to the east of the site, shaded pink.



Buntingford Town Evolution



# 8.0 Site Opportunities and Considerations

The Opportunities and Considerations diagram provides a summary of the key considerations for the site and its surrounding context, based upon detailed site surveys and analysis that have been undertaken to inform the master planning process.

The diagram also identifies site opportunities that have helped to inform the evolving design. These include the existing oak tree within the southern parcel and access from the A10.

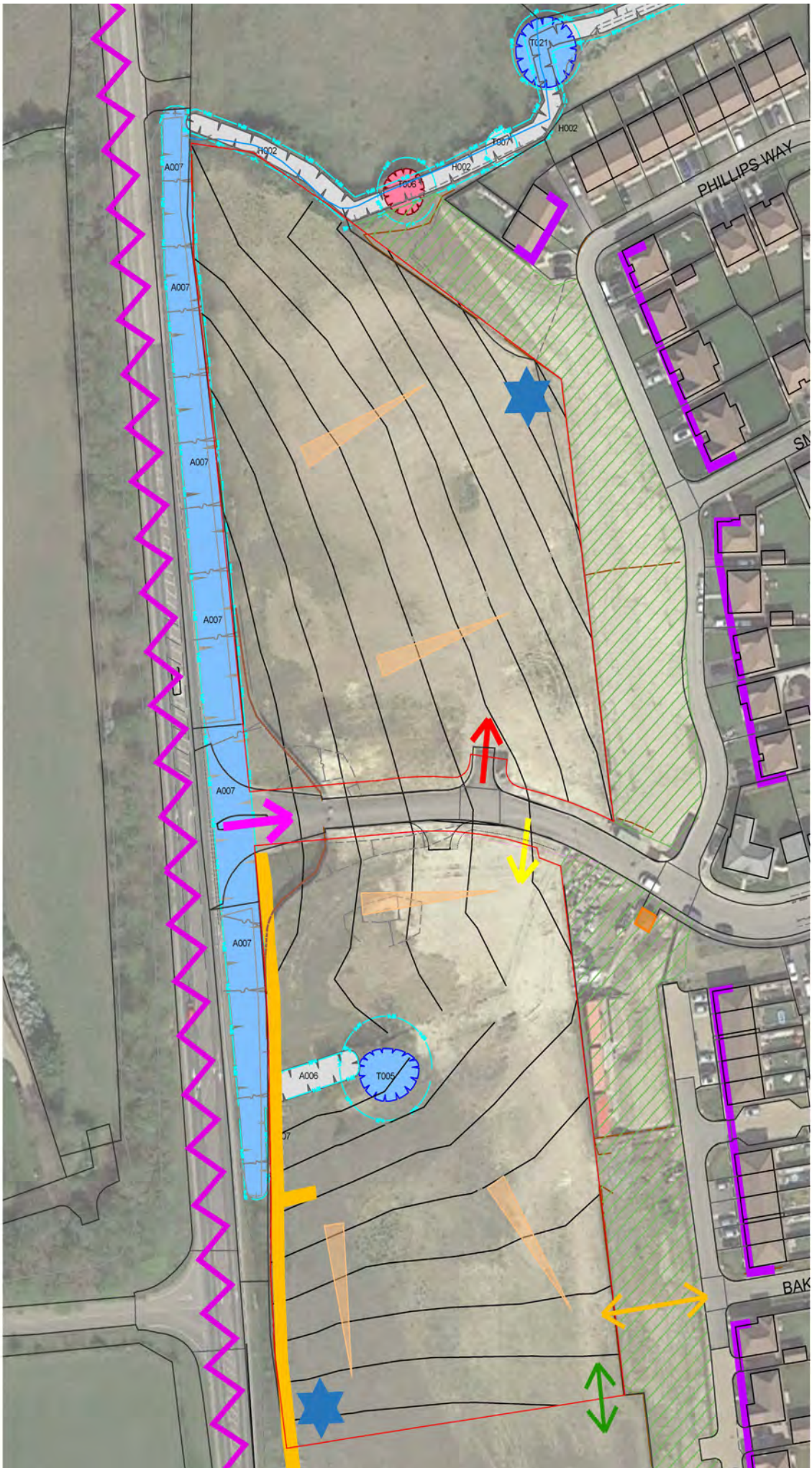


View from the new access point from the A10, looking east



View west looking at the category B oak tree in the middle of the southern parcel

- Site Boundary
- Access from A10 - new northern gateway to town
- Main access point into the northern parcel
- Potential access point into southern parcel
- Potential pedestrian & cycle connections
- Potential all traffic access to the sports & recreation land
- Sub station
- Adjacent landscape features from Redrow scheme
- Category B tree
- Category B hedgerow
- Category C hedgerow
- Category U hedgerow
- Root protection area
- Existing development frontage which overlooks the site
- Topography contours (5m intervals)
- Direction of slope
- Lowest point of the site-potential area for SuDs
- A10 noise
- Alignment of cable & easement
- Fence



Opportunities and Considerations Diagram



## 9.0 Sustainable Construction

- The scheme will be designed to function as a highly sustainable addition to the Town, utilising existing footpath links and providing new foot and cycleway connections to maximise the potential for people to walk and cycle along attractive routes, providing connectivity with key destinations within Buntingford.
- The scheme will create a Green Infrastructure network incorporating existing landscape features, new landscaping and SuDS features, which will be designed to provide new habitat.
- All new homes will include a dwelling centric, fabric first approach which locks in carbon savings for the life of the building.
- Further carbon savings through building centric, renewable energy technologies will be confirmed during the detailed design process, including installation of carbon saving technology such as photovoltaic (solar) panels and air source heat pumps.
- Provision will be made for electric vehicle charging points in safe and accessible locations as part of the detailed design, in accordance with planning policy.
- Buildings will seek to minimise the use of mains water through the inclusion of water saving measures and equipment (i.e. water efficient appliances) and rain water harvesting. New homes will be designed so that mains water consumption will meet a target of 110 litres or less per head per day and opportunities to include grey water recycling will be considered as part of its detailed design.
- During construction a Waste Management Plan will be prepared to identify means of reducing waste, and appropriate methods of disposal of waste to minimise harm to the environment. Post construction, the scheme will make provision for the storage and collection of recycling waste.





# 10.0 Design Evolution

The following sequence of diagrams show the key principles that have helped to shape the design concept, taking into account the site context, policy requirements and opportunities and considerations set out in the previous sections.

**1. The site today** comprises vacant land between the A10 and the recently completed Redrow Homes scheme, which lies to the east. Access is provided from Neale Drive, which runs through the middle of the site. The site will provide an important approach to the town from the northwest and this is reflected in the scheme design.

**2. The site is located within the ‘Buntingford Settlement Boundary’** where new homes are acceptable in principle, subject to compliance with relevant policies within the East Herts District Plan and the Buntingford Neighbourhood Plan. These policies have been taken into account as part of the design evolution.





# 0.0 Design Evolution

**3. Retention of existing landscape features**, including planting along the A10 and the green space to the east of the site are important elements for the scheme design. These features provide a strong landscape framework for the scheme.



**4. The Landscape Framework** will be enhanced through new tree and hedgerow planting in order to create a high-quality green approach to the northwest of the town and provide a beautiful setting for people to live. This includes the retention of the existing oak tree within the southern parcel and the creation of a green corridor in this part of the site.





# 10.0 Design Evolution

5. In order to **mitigate potential noise from the A10** buildings will be designed to front onto the A10 with private amenity space positioned to the rear of buildings adopting principles of good acoustic design. This requirement begins to create a framework and structure for the buildings.



6. The site falls gently towards the east and southeast. **Sustainable Drainage Features** are positioned within the lower lying parts of the site using the site's existing topography to manage on-site surface water. The site **topography** also provides an opportunity to consider single storey buildings within the northern part of the site and 2-storey buildings and apartments elsewhere.





# 0.0 Design Evolution

7. The site's location off the A10 to the northwest of the town creates an opportunity to create a **high-quality approach to the northwest of the town**, through appropriate landscape design and new tree and hedgerow planting along Neale Drive, with buildings positioned to front onto the A10, the proposed green space to the east and the land for potential future education/ sport and recreation use to the south.



8. The site topography and surrounding context provide the opportunity to incorporate a **range of building types, heights and densities**, which will help to provide for a range of housing needs, including single storey homes to meet the needs of an ageing population, whilst responding positively to the site's landform and visual context.





# 10.0 Design Evolution

9. The main site access is from Neale Drive. In order to **encourage cycling and walking**, the new residential streets will be designed to provide **high levels of connectivity** throughout the scheme. Connectivity will be provided with the shared foot/cycleway on Neale Drive, together with a new cycle/pedestrian link providing connectivity with Baker Drive and the existing community to the east. The scheme also provides for an access to the potential future education/ sport and recreation land to the south.



10. The principles set out within the previous diagrams help to create a **Design Framework** for the site that forms the basis for the Masterplan and design aspirations set out in the following section. The Masterplan will form the basis for the future scheme design.





# 1.0 Masterplan Engagement

As part of the masterplan preparation a public consultation website was hosted between 27 September and 11 October 2021 to provide the local community with an opportunity to engage in the masterplan and provide comments on how the scheme should be brought forward to ensure the delivery of a high quality, beautiful and sustainable scheme. The consultation website was advertised via a leaflet that was distributed to around 350 homes within an agreed consultation zone and was also advertised via the Buntingford Town Council website and Facebook page. During the consultation there were 303 unique visitors to the website and 34 feedback forms were received. In addition to being able to engage with the masterplan via the website, the consultation leaflet also included a contact telephone number and a postal address for anyone who was unable to access the website.

The following provides a summary of the key messages from the feedback received:

- Support for the principle of development and acknowledgement that it complies with the Buntingford Neighbourhood Plan.
- Support for the creation of a green approach along Neale Drive and the need to “finish-off” the north-western part of the town.
- Support for the provision of bungalows.
- Suggestion that apartments should be positioned adjacent to the A10.
- Comments surrounding the need for new homes and the need for genuinely affordable homes for people living in Buntingford.
- The need to consider the impact of traffic on the town and for highway improvements associated with the Redrow scheme to be delivered.
- The need to ensure that there is sufficient community infrastructure alongside the provision of new homes (NB. improvements towards health and education will be secured at the planning application stage).
- The need to ensure that sustainable construction techniques are considered at the detailed design stage.

The need to consider an access to the HCC land to the south of the site, including the potential for this land to come forward for a Special Educational Needs School.

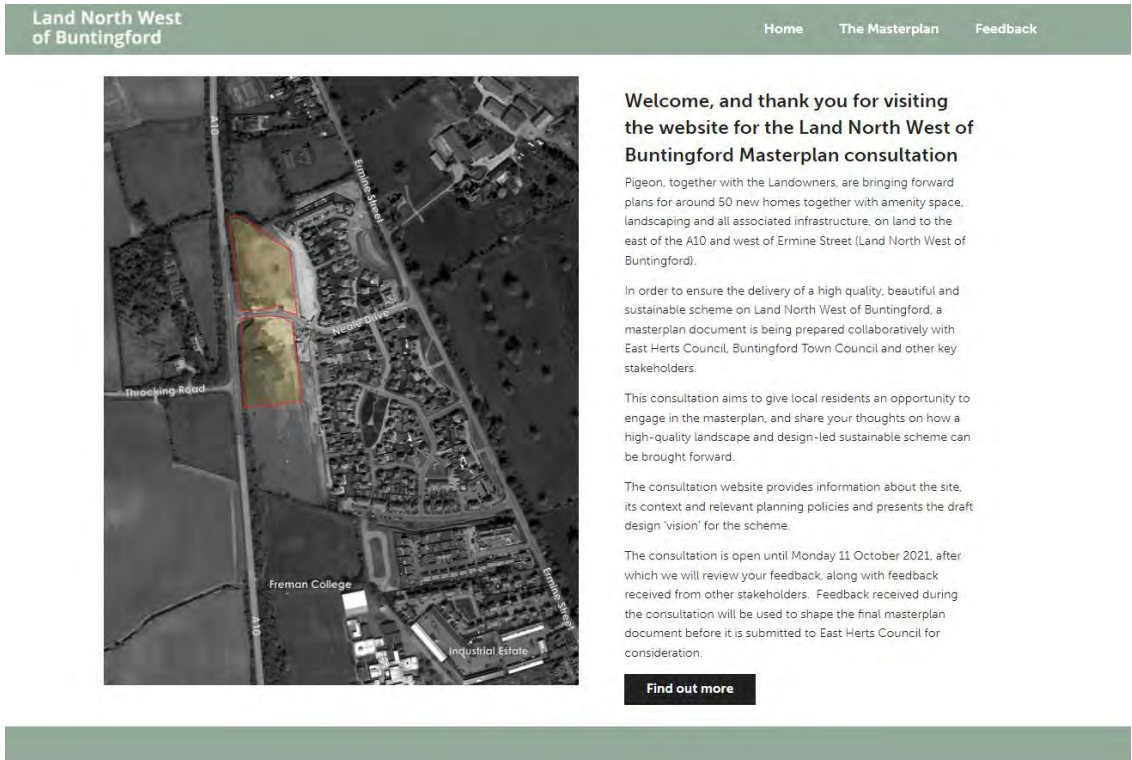
As part of the masterplan preparation, the scheme was also presented to the Hertfordshire Design Review Panel on the 27 September 2021.

Following completion of the formal masterplan consultation and receipt of feedback from the Hertfordshire Design Review Panel, further meetings were held with the Shaping Buntingford Steering Group on 21 October and 7 December 2021. During these meetings, updated draft plans were presented to the Steering Group to enable the masterplan to be finalised prior to submission to East Herts Council.

The key changes to the masterplan that have followed the engagement activities described above are:

- Creating enhanced east-west connections through the scheme to encourage active travel (cycling and walking) over car-based travel.
- Creation of a larger area of amenity space as part of an east-west green corridor around the existing oak tree in the southern part of the site.
- Reconfiguring the southern part of the site to create a more clearly defined southern edge that responds positively to the land to the south.
- Repositioning the apartments in the south-western corner of the site to create increased separation with the A10.
- Relocating car parking for the apartments so that it creates a buffer between the new homes and the A10.
- Introduction of more varied roof heights and building form, together with increased density within the southern part of the site so the scheme better reflects the character of Buntingford.
- Provision of access (including footway provision) to the Hertfordshire County Council land to the south in order to provide for its potential future use for education/sport and recreation.

The feedback received during the masterplan engagement has helped to shape the scheme and is reflected in the updated Design Framework and Illustrative Layout presented in the following sections. All comments received during the masterplan engagement have been fully considered and, where appropriate, have helped to shape the masterplan. Where comments have been received that are not directly related to the masterplan, these will continue to be considered as the scheme is taken forward, as part of a future planning application.



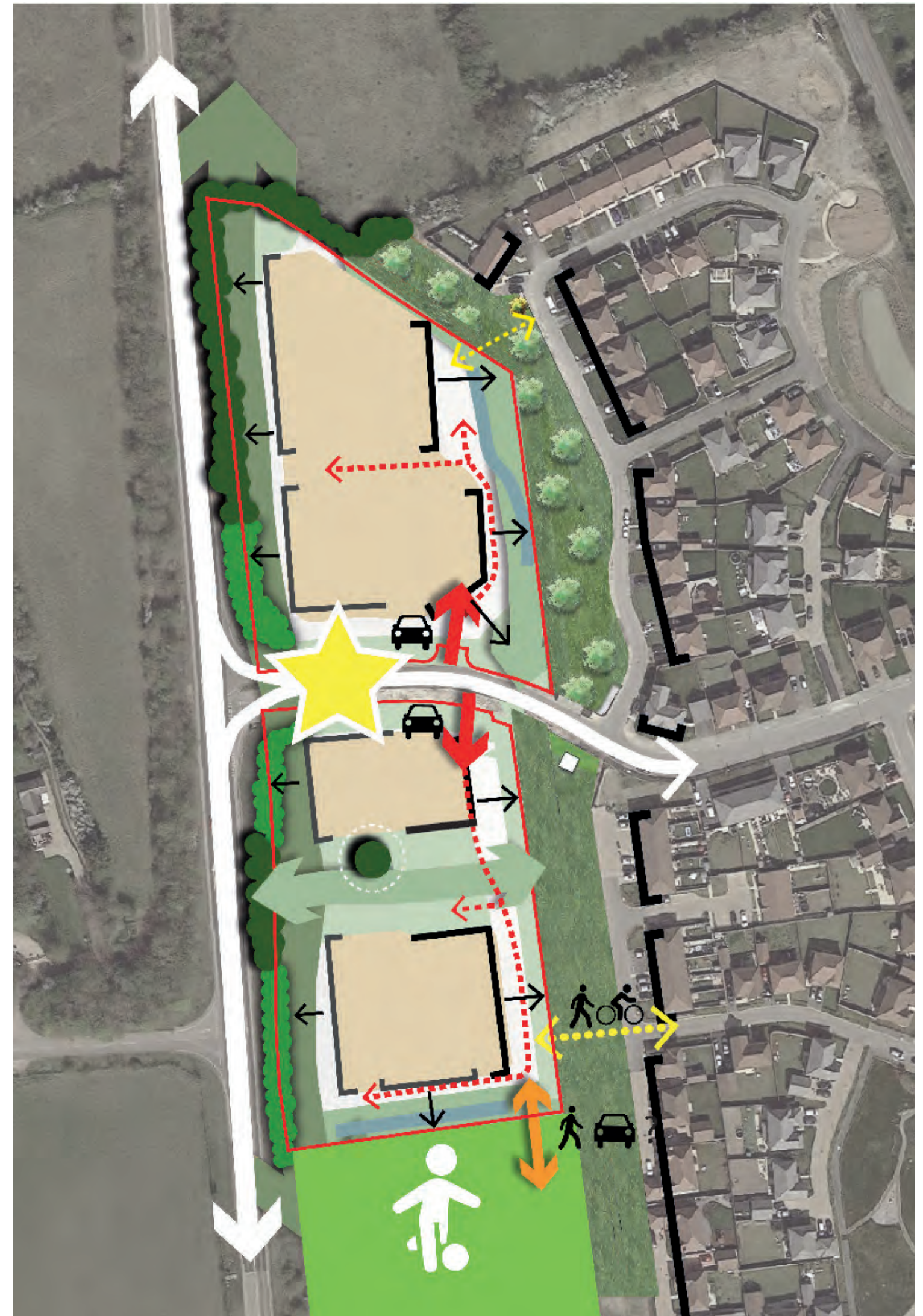


## 12.0 Design Framework

The Design Framework for the site is based upon the following key design aspirations:

- Provide a high-quality approach to the northwest of the town, through landscape design and new tree and hedgerow planting along Neale Drive;
- Provide attractive green spaces with native planting in order to deliver biodiversity net gain and create a strong landscape framework, including the creation of an east-west green corridor around the existing oak tree in the southern part of the site;
- Position buildings in order to mitigate potential noise from the A10 (private amenity space positioned to the rear of buildings);
- Provide for a well-connected site and create a place that encourages active travel (cycling and walking) over car-based trips;
- Provide for an access to the Hertfordshire County Council land to the south in order to facilitate its potential future use for education/sport and recreation.
- Incorporate new hedgerow and tree planting throughout in order to provide a beautiful setting for new homes;
- Create a range of building types, heights and densities that respond positively to the site's topography, landscape features and visual context;
- Create an attractive traditional style scheme in keeping with the local vernacular, whilst incorporating a high-quality materials palette, which respects local character.
- Provide new homes that adopt a dwelling-centric, fabric first approach which locks in carbon-savings for the life of the building with opportunities for renewable energy technologies to achieve further carbon savings.
- Provide for electric vehicle charging points in safe and accessible locations and design buildings to minimise the use of mains water through the inclusion of water efficient appliances and rainwater harvesting.

The above design aspirations and the Design Framework diagram form the basis of the scheme design, and will help to inform subsequent stages of detailed design.





## 3.0 Landscape Strategy

The scheme adopts a landscape-led approach with existing landscape features together with new hedgerow and tree planting creating a strong landscape framework.

By conserving and enhancing the site's existing landscape features, the scheme will provide a high-quality approach to the northwest of the town, through appropriate landscape design and new tree and hedgerow planting along Neale Drive.

This landscape-led approach will help to integrate the site with the proposed green space to the east and will help assimilate the scheme into the existing environment and also the wider landscape setting.

Attractive green spaces will be created through native planting in order to create a strong landscape framework for the site. This will include the creation of an east-west green corridor around the existing oak tree in the southern part of the site and the creation of an area of species rich wildflower meadow planting in the northern part of the site providing opportunities for informal recreation and the creation of new wildlife habitat.

New planting and the use of native species together with appropriate planting that encourages wildlife, including planting within sustainable drainage features, will help to deliver a biodiversity net gain, whilst also helping to provide a beautiful setting for the new homes.

All areas of greenspace will be well overlooked by properties to ensure that they are attractive and safe to use.

The proposed green spaces will be designed to provide the following benefits:

- New wildlife habitat and biodiversity net gain;
- Incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) with appropriate planting to encourage wildlife;
- Create amenity value and a beautiful place for new residents; and
- Provide a high-quality approach, through appropriate landscape design and new tree and hedgerow planting.

Long-term management and maintenance of the public realm will be via an estate management company thus ensuring that all non-private landscaped areas are maintained to a suitably high standard.



SuDS and Wildflower areas



Street Trees



Boundary native tree and shrub planting



# 14.0 Illustrative Layout

The Illustrative Layout shows how the scheme could be brought forward to deliver the key design aspirations for the site in accordance with the Design Framework. It shows how the site could be brought forward to deliver a high quality landscape and design-led scheme for around 55 new homes (including 40% affordable homes), amenity space, landscaping and associated infrastructure.

The Illustrative Layout shows the creation of a strong landscape framework and how this combined with the provision of an east-west green corridor in the southern part of the site and an area of species rich wildflower meadow planting in the northern part of the site will create a beautiful setting for new homes.

New tree and hedgerow planting along the A10 and Neale Drive provide for a high quality green approach to the northwest of the town, whilst helping to reinforce the site's landscape framework.

The use of appropriate surface materials, street tree planting and soft landscaping, provide for an attractive public realm that provides for high levels of connectivity, encouraging active travel (cycling and walking) over car-based trips. The Illustrative Layout provides for a new cycle/pedestrian link with Baker Drive to the east together with potential links to the proposed green space to the east. Provision is also included for a future access to the education/sport and recreation land to the south.

A range of building types, heights and densities that respond positively to the site's topography and landscape features are shown, including provision for bungalows within the northern part of the site reflecting the character of the existing bungalows on the Redrow scheme to the east, and two storey homes and apartments elsewhere, helping to meet different housing needs.

Dual aspect buildings are shown on corner plots and at key positions in order to provide natural surveillance for existing and proposed areas of amenity space.







## East Herts Council Report

### Council

**Date of meeting:** 1 March 2022

**Report by:** Councillor Geoffrey Williamson –  
Executive Member for Financial  
Sustainability

**Report title:** Hertford Theatre Capital Project – Update  
on capital scheme budget and financing

**Ward(s) affected:** Hertford Wards

### Summary

This paper sets out changes to the capital scheme budgets for the Hertford Theatre Growth and Legacy project, to reflect price inflation for construction and materials since the original estimate set in 2019. There have been significant inflationary pressures from the combined impact of Covid and Brexit and the resulting supply chain disruption across the globe. The additional funding is requested from a combination of capital contingency funds and funding from Earmarked Reserves and the request is supported by a robust business case. The business case demonstrates the long term financial sustainability of the new offer, which negates the need for the existing subsidy requirement, which is already factored into the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), and delivers an improved income to the Council in excess of £525,000 from year one (increasing thereafter). This will provide the agreed contribution to the MTFP as well as the ability to repay the funds from Earmarked Reserves, subject to the approval of Council.



As revising the Capital Programme affects the revenue budget, the Prudential Indicators and some of the supporting tables and graphs within the Capital Strategy, the budget papers for Council will include in the main report pack a budget based on the recommendations in this report being approved. A supplementary agenda pack will contain the Budget and MTFP, Council Tax Setting Resolution, Capital Strategy and Treasury and Investment Strategy should Council not approve the recommendations in this report.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL**

- a) To approve the increase in the Hertford Theatre capital scheme budget by £4 million for the delivery of the Hertford Theatre Growth and Legacy Project, of which £3 million will be funded Earmarked Reserves, and up to £1million in additional borrowing from the capital programme contingency.
- b) To approve that any surplus receipts over and above those originally forecast and built in to the Medium Term Financial Plan be used to repay the funding from Earmarked Reserves and to contribute to future savings requirements within the Medium Term Financial Plan, those amounts to be determined by the prevailing need to make savings and the priorities of Council at the time.

### **1.0 Reason(s)**

- 1.1 The original capital scheme budget was set in 2019. Since that time the UK has experienced both Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic which has caused supply chain disruption and significant price increases.
- 1.2 This report requests an increase in the overall capital scheme budget that reflects this price inflation and also increases the

scheme contingency budget to reflect the use of Tier 3 contractors whose tenders are currently being evaluated.

## **2.0 Reason(s)**

- 2.1 The project budget has been impacted significantly by the combined inflationary pressures that have occurred as a result of Brexit and COVID. The industry has experienced significant increases in packages such as the price of materials Cross Laminated Timber (CLT) and Steel have increased by 40%, Mechanical & Electrical (M&E) packages including labour cost have increased by 15-20%. Overall this adds a minimum of 15% to the total contract price as a result of Covid / Brexit related inflationary pressure. This is in line with the Office for National Statistics Construction Output Prices Index. In addition, there is the added cost of having to build in additional contingency (taking the project contingency from 5% to 7.5%) to reflect rising inflation, general market instability and the project risk profile.

## **3.0 Options**

- 3.1 The following alternative options have been considered by the team.

### **3.2 NOT RECOMMENDED – Not approve funding/Reinstatement – of the previous offer with some cosmetic enhancements to existing areas**

- 3.3 This option will require a lead in time of approx. 6 months to procure key packages of work to reinstate the building. Following procurement it is anticipated that a minimum of a further 6 months may be required to complete the works.

Subject to a worked up programme this could mean that the theatre will re-open in spring 2023 for the “old” offer.

- 3.4 This is expected to cost in the region of £5.5m (as a minimum) and will require an ongoing subsidy in the region of c. £300,000 on the assumption that numbers return to pre-Covid levels for the “old” offer. In addition, there will be approximately £2m abortive costs. This option will not deliver any of the business case principles or expected contributions to the MTFP. It will add an addition pressure to the MTFP of £450,000. All costs are indicative and would require full feasibility being carried out.

**3.5 NOT RECOMMENDED – Not Approve Funding /Reinstatement of the previous auditorium and studio space alongside a new 150 seat (or two 75 seat) cinema screen(s) and an enhanced food and beverage offer, community space either within the building or through partnership working and an expanded outreach programme delivered through the community well-being team.**

- 3.6 Reducing the scope significantly to focus on the addition of first release film and improvements to the food and beverage offer only would likely only achieve a cost neutral standing (or subsidy requirement) due to the significant costs associated with reinstatement, redesign, planning and delivery, this would negatively impact the MTFP contribution by £110k.

- 3.7 This option has not been costed or modelled at this stage and would come with a significant planning risk. It would require going back to RIBA stage 0, for a minimum of 12 months to agree feasibility and concept design and a further 6-9 months for procurement, award and commence enabling works. Should the build programme take 12-18months the Hertford Theatre could re-open in Spring/Summer 2025. This will result in the Hertford Theatre being closed for almost 5yrs before it re opens



and would require significant efforts to recover the customer base and grow the visitor numbers.

- 3.8 Given spend to date, abortive costs and reinstatement costs, it is difficult to see a viable alternative that will provide financial sustainability for the Theatre and an ongoing income stream for the Council, which the current scheme is forecast from the business plan to deliver.

#### **4.0 Risks**

- 4.1 The key risk for consideration is the financial impact on wider capital projects and the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).
- 4.2 The Council's borrowing currently planned is at the higher level of what is affordable for the Council. The key risk is the Old River Lane project which must be delivered – if the project fails the Council will have to de-capitalise the entire scheme expenditure. This will substantially reduce earmarked and general reserves to the absolute minimum level recommended by the section 151 officer.
- 4.3 The current expenditure on North Gate End and Old River Lane is currently showing a potential 20% contingency in the budget but updated cost estimates are yet to be received and we are not in control of the tender process – it is the developer who will tender the works and present the Council with a tendered cost estimate.
- 4.4 In order to minimise risk to the delivery of Old River Lane and the affordability of the overall capital programme Executive approved the following enhancements to control:

- 4.4.1 Value engineering must be undertaken on the Hertford Theatre project that seeks to reduce cost for the project overall.
- 4.4.2 The increased budget for Hertford Theatre is absolutely fixed and the project team will have no further opportunity to increase the budget.
- 4.4.3 The Hartham Leisure Centre project team be instructed to deliver that project within the budget plus no more than 75% of the contingency sum to reduce the cost of the capital programme overall.
- 4.4.4 The contingency sum at Old River Lane of 20% of the overall budget be restricted and require the explicit authorisation of the Project Board if use of the contingency exceeds 25% of the total amount with regular monitoring against that contingency reported at every project board.
- 4.4.5 A Hertford Theatre annual report will be provided to the leadership to monitor progress of business plan after the first year of opening and every year after. The report will also be added to the Audit and Governance Committee work programme.

## **5.0 Implications/Consultations**

- 5.1 External cost consultants have been engaged throughout the project life cycle including the pre tender process.
- 5.2 Multiple consultations have been carried out as a part of the design and planning process for the Hertford Theatre Growth and Legacy project.

## **Community Safety**

No

## **Data Protection**

No

## **Equalities**

Yes – An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out as part of the project delivery. Improving accessibility and becoming DDA compliant are key drivers in the design and delivery of the new offer. The financial envelope for approval will deliver improvements.

## **Environmental Sustainability**

Yes – sustainability is at the heart of the design and delivery of the Hertford Theatre Growth and Legacy project.

## **Financial**

Information on Procurement, the business plan and financial implications are contained in **EXEMPT** Appendix A

The requested additional funding can be financed as follows:

Allocation of Capital Project Contingency:	£1,000,000
Revenue Financing from Earmarked Reserves:	£3,000,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£4,000,000</b>

## **Health and Safety**

No

## **Human Resources**

No

## **Human Rights**

No

## **Legal**

No



## Specific Wards

Yes – All Hertford Wards

### 6.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

Appendix A – **EXEMPT** Appendix containing Procurement, Business Plan and financial information

(Information is **EXEMPT** from publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972)

Appendix B– **EXEMPT** Appendix containing Hertford Theatre

Business Plan Income Assumption Analysis by Business Plan Year

(Information is **EXEMPT** from publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972)

### Contact Member

Cllr Geoffrey Williamson – Executive Member for Financial Sustainability

[Geoffrey.Williamson@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Geoffrey.Williamson@eastherts.gov.uk)

### Contact Officer

Jess Khanom-Metaman, Head of Operations

Contact Tel. No.1693

[Jess.khanom-metaman@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:jess.khanom-metaman@eastherts.gov.uk)

Steven Linnett, Head of Strategic Finance and Property

Contact Tel. No. 2051

[Steven.Linnett@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Steven.Linnett@eastherts.gov.uk)

### Report Author

Tamara Jarvis – Major Projects Manager

[Tamara.Jarvis@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Tamara.Jarvis@eastherts.gov.uk)

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## East Herts Council

**Date of Meeting:** 1 March 2022

**Report by:** Joint Report by the Directors of Millstream Property Investments Ltd and the Executive Member for Financial Sustainability

**Report title:** Millstream 30 Year Business Plan: 2022/23 Onwards

**Ward(s) affected:** All

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### Summary

- This report presents the Business Plan for the 30 year period commencing 2022/23 prepared by Millstream Property Investments Ltd (herein referred to as 'Millstream' or 'the company'). It updates the company's previous 30 year plan. In line with the Shareholder Agreement between Millstream and the council, the directors of the company are required to review the company's business plan and submit for the approval of its shareholder (the council) a revised plan each year, based on a rolling 30 year planning period.
- This report is presented by the directors of the company jointly with the council's Executive Member for Financial Sustainability because it is recognised that the council's shareholding, any asset value increases which could in time be returned to the council through dividends and any income accruing to the council from Millstream's activities will be of paramount interest to members.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL, that:**

- (a) Millstream Property Investment Ltd's 2022/23 30 Year Business Plan, presented in the EXEMPT Appendix A, be approved**

### **1.0 Proposal(s)**

- 1.1 As required by the Shareholder Agreement, Millstream



has revised and updated its business plan and now puts before Council its new 30 Year Business Plan commencing 2022/23.

- 1.2 In overall terms, the company is proposing to its shareholder, full Council, approval of its business plan which would see the company retaining the portfolio of properties it currently holds for rental in the private market.
- 1.3 The company is not proposing any new acquisitions or developments in 2022/23.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 At its meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> September 2017, the Executive approved the establishment of a property investment company wholly owned by East Herts Council, subsequently incorporated in February 2018 as Millstream Property Investments Ltd.
- 2.2 The council established the company as a commercial endeavour with the aim of generating an income stream to the council arising from:
  - interest on loans made by the council to the company
  - council officer time and services sold to the company
  - operating surpluses available as dividends, on the assumption that the company pro-actively manages surpluses so as to legitimately minimise losses to corporation tax.
- 2.3 The Shareholder Agreement between Millstream and the council requires the directors of the company to review the company's business plan on an annual basis and submit an updated plan for the approval of its shareholder (the council). Full Council has previously approved Millstream's business plans on an annual basis at its meetings held on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017, 19<sup>th</sup>

December 2018, 29<sup>th</sup> January 2020 and 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021.

- 2.4 Millstream's directors have reviewed the company's business plan and produced a revised 30 year business plan, rebasing the forthcoming financial year as the first year of this 30 year period. Millstream has fully complied with the requirement in the Shareholder Agreement to have submitted its first draft 30 Year Business Plan for 2022/23 to the council's Shareholder Representative (Richard Cassidy, the Chief Exec) and the members of the Shareholder Advisory Committee by 29<sup>th</sup> October 2021. The views of the council's Lead Member for Financial Sustainability and Head of Strategic Finance and Property have also been sought.

***Changes to how the council would lend money to Millstream***

- 2.5 Since the company's inception, a number of changes to the way the council can lend money to Millstream have arisen; some anticipated and some unexpected.
- 2.6 The company's directors and the council's Head of Strategic Finance and Property have reviewed the impact of these changes on any *further* borrowing to the company to fund *additional* property purchases or development. It should be noted that the changes do not affect the company's existing portfolio of properties. The cumulative outcome of the changes is discussed below.

***Council's switch to external borrowing to fund its capital programme***

- 2.7 To date, the council has lent its own capital resources to Millstream to fund the purchase of properties. It has been recognised from the earliest discussions with members about establishing a company that, at some point, the council could be in the position of having to fund its capital programme by external borrowing. This is now the case.
- 2.8 Modelling, however, demonstrates the council's interest

payments would be lower than the payments from Millstream resulting from the additional properties the company would buy with the new loans, meaning the council would still be able to receive an income from the company even if it simply on-lent money it borrowed.

***HM Treasury rule introduced in November 2020 that bans a council from borrowing from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) if its capital programme includes 'investment for yield'***

- 2.9 As discussed above, the council could still receive an income from Millstream even if it had to borrow from an external source to raise the money to lend to the company. A new rule introduced by HM Treasury in November 2020, however, suggested that if the council did this, it would not be able to access loans from the PWLB. The PWLB provides local authority with loans attracting the lowest interest rates available, so the council would not wish to cut itself off from this source of finance.
- 2.10 Subsequent counsel's opinion sought by the council and shared with Millstream has, in fact, confirmed that lending to Millstream would *not* be classed as 'investment for yield' under this rule and thus the rule is not of itself an impediment to the council lending to Millstream.

***CIPFA guidance change regarding the need for a council to make a minimum revenue provision if it lends to a company to fund property acquisition***

- 2.11 Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) is essentially the amount the council must set aside from its revenue budget each year to cover the cost of repaying the principal amount of the money it borrows. The aim is to ensure that a council can repay the loan over the useful life of the capital asset it finances with the loan.
- 2.12 As raised last year when the company's previous business plan was put in front of Council, at the time of



Millstream's inception, councils had a degree of freedom over the determination of when an MRP was required and as residential property can be sold relatively quickly to repay any debt, many councils decided there was no need to make an MRP. Since then, however, CIPFA have amended their regulations such that council *must* now make an MRP in such circumstances.

- 2.13 This unforeseen CIPFA regulation change means that for new lending to Millstream to create a revenue income for the council, the income from the company to the council must be in excess of the council's borrowing costs *and* minimum revenue provision.
- 2.14 Business modelling by the company, reviewed in detail by the council's Head of Strategic Finance and Property, has revealed that the company cannot create sufficient income to cover the interest and MRP charges from any newly acquired properties and thus it is no longer viable for the council to lend money to the company for new property purchases.

### **2022/23 Business Plan**

- 2.15 Given the context described above, the company has submitted a business plan based on no acquisition of additional property in 2022/23 – see EXEMPT Appendix A
- 2.16 The company's 30 year business plan therefore includes:
- confirmation that there is no schedule of properties and/or sites the company proposes to acquire in the next financial year
  - a financial business plan covering the coming 30 years based on management and maintenance of existing assets

- a procurement plan which includes details of contracts coming to an end and contracts to be tendered
- an asset management plan
- key performance indicators with previous performance and targets for the coming financial year; and
- as described in the Shareholder Agreement, estimates, assumptions regarding reinvestment of profits, distribution of dividends and capitalisation of profits for the coming financial year including the amounts it will be prudent to retain in order to meet operational costs in the coming financial year and the amounts available for distribution to the Shareholder.

### **3.0 Reason(s)**

- 3.1 Millstream's directors contend that the proposed business plan as presented in the EXEMPT Appendix A meets the requirements of the Shareholder Agreement and adheres to the discussion of the company's operating model and context with the Shareholder Advisory Group held on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2021.
- 3.2 The business plan as presented will contribute to the council's income targets presented in the budget report elsewhere on this agenda. It should be noted that the business plan includes commercially sensitive information provided by a third party (that is, Millstream) and so is exempt from consideration in public.
- 3.3 The company proposes to retain the current performance indicators agreed by the shareholder – see the table below. Performance (to date) in 2021/22 and targets for 2022/23 are given in the business plan.

<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Gross yield per private rented property – annual rent as a % of property value	'Industry standard' means of gauging the value and performance of private rental stock
Company's projected end-of-year financial position as a % of modelled position at year start	A means by which the shareholder can monitor the overall financial performance of the company

- 3.4 The revenue cashflow for Millstream and an illustration of the cashflow for the council are presented in the business plan attached in the EXEMPT Appendix A. The council's target for income accruing from Millstream's activity is projected to be met in 2022/23.

## 4.0 Options

- 4.1 The specific proposals within the business plan have been subject to discussion with the Shareholder Representative and members of the Shareholder Advisory Group. Members of the group, while wishing to support the company's growth, appreciate the financial rules and regulations relating to council borrowing and on-lending have changed in recent years and so are supportive of the proposed business plan which seeks to create a cashflow to the company's shareholder (the council) from the management of the company's existing property portfolio.
- 4.2 Alternative options considered but not recommended include the following.
- 4.3 Acquisition of further properties in 2022/23 funded by Millstream taking out a loan from a 'high street provider' – NOT RECOMMENDED. Research by the company directors and the council's Head of Strategic Finance and Property indicates that a high street bank loan for 69% loan to value (LTV), the average of the leading high street loans available to property investment companies, augmented with a loan from the council for the remaining 31% would see the company being unable to cover the council's interest and MRP before



even providing any additional income to the council.

- 4.4 The council uses capital receipts as they arise to fund lending to Millstream – NOT RECOMMENDED. The council's Head of Strategic Finance and Property has pointed out to Millstream's directors that the council doesn't have many capital receipts and so, year-to-year, the council would have to determine if it has any new capital receipts and then lend them to Millstream. More importantly, receipts are already factored into the council's capital programme and so spending them on Millstream would simply mean the council would have to borrow more from the PWLB to fund its other capital liabilities. In overall terms, only £10k income would be available from Millstream to cover every £17k of borrowing costs and MRP incurred by the council.
- 4.5 Prioritisation of new build over acquisition of properties – NOT RECOMMENDED. The same pressures on the company to cover the council's interest and MRP liabilities and provide additional income as discussed earlier in this report would pertain. The company's directors have modelled a modest development of four houses on an existing parcel of council land; unfortunately, the annual revenue income to the council from Millstream was found to be £36k less than the council's interest and MRP costs and thus the option is not viable.
- 4.6 Decision not to adopt the revised business plan – NOT RECOMMENDED because it is considered important for the council, as the company's sole shareholder, to agree the direction for the company over the coming year.

## **5.0 Risks**

- 5.1 Millstream's directors have identified a series of risks and mitigations.
- 5.2 Risk 1: there are adverse inflationary movements and other costs increases. The business plan includes a

comprehensive 'downside sensitivity analysis' which has sought to assess the combined impact of a number of adverse changes. The sensitivity analysis indicates that the company's profits over the lifetime of the business plan, and thus the availability of dividend payments to the council, would be eroded by the adverse factors applied over the 30 years of the business plan. Of note, however, the impact is not 'fatal' to the company's viability. Furthermore, the company believes it could, if / as necessary, mitigate the impact of inflation through, for example, revenue efficiencies. In addition, the downside sensitivity testing has a less marked impact on the income to the council as although dividend income would drop, this loss would in large part be offset by increased interest income from Millstream accruing from the imposition of higher interest rates assumed in the downside sensitivity analysis.

- 5.3 Risk 2: local rental market values drop as a result of adverse economic movement arising from Covid and/or Brexit. The company has not experienced any difficulties to date. In addition, as the company operates at the lower value end of the rental market which is typically more resilient in times of economic turbulence, the company's directors consider that it has protected its position in the market as best it can.

## **6.0 Implications/Consultations**

- 6.1 Paragraph 2.4 above explains how the company has consulted the shareholder during the preparation of this revised business plan.
- 6.2 The 30 Year Business Plan includes full 30 year forecasts for the company's cashflows and has been subjected to sensitivity testing with the results included in the business plan.
- 6.3 Annex B to the business plan provides illustrations of the revenue cashflows to the council. These cashflows enable the council to realise its targeted income

accruing from the company's activity in 2022/23.

- 6.4 The company will carefully manage its finances so as to ensure resources are available to manage and maintain its properties. Realistic assumptions have been made for void periods and bad debt based on benchmarking with other organisations and the company's experience since first letting properties in September 2018. In addition, resources for day-to-day repairs and replacement of capital items such as kitchens and bathrooms over the lifetime of ownership have been included in the financial modelling. Again, the financial provisions for repairs and investment have been based on benchmarked data.
- 6.5 Detailed tax advice was sought during the inception of the company and during the audit of the 2020/21 accounts so as to ensure that the company's finances are managed in the most tax efficient way.

### **Community Safety**

No

### **Data Protection**

No

### **Equalities**

No

### **Environmental Sustainability**

Yes

Millstream pays close attention the Energy Performance Certificate ratings of the properties it acquires. In addition, it prioritises works to its properties to increase energy efficiency, for example, to date in 2022/23 the company has replaced the boilers in two of its properties with new, high efficiency condensing boilers and has upgraded internal insulation as part of the works to bring properties to a lettable standard.



## **Financial**

Yes

See the discussion above.

## **Health and Safety**

No

## **Human Resources**

No

## **Human Rights**

No

## **Legal**

No

## **Specific Wards**

No

## **7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

- 7.1 EXEMPT Appendix 1 – DRAFT Millstream 30 Year Business Plan 2022/23.

### **Contact Member**

Cllr Geoff Williamson – Executive Member  
for Financial Sustainability

[geoffrey.williamson@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:geoffrey.williamson@eastherts.gov.uk)

### **Contact Officer and Report Author**

Jonathan Geall – Director, Millstream Property  
Investments Ltd

Contact Tel No 01992 531594

[jonathan.geall@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:jonathan.geall@eastherts.gov.uk)

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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## East Herts Council Report

### Council

**Date of Meeting:** 1 March 2022  
**Report by:** Head of HR and Organisational Development  
**Report title:** Pay Policy Statement 2022/23  
**Ward(s) affected:** N/A

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### Summary

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR Council:

**a) That the Pay Policy Statement 2022/23 be approved.**

### 1.0 Proposal

1.1 The Pay Policy Statement 2022/23 has been recommended for approval by the HR Committee to the Council on 15 February 2022. Members are invited to approve the Pay Policy Statement 2022/23.

### 2.0 Background

2.1 A pay policy statement is required to be produced annually under sections 38 of the Localism Act. Regard is to be had to guidance section 40 from the Secretary of State in producing this statement.

2.2 A pay policy statement for a financial year must set out the Authority's policies for the financial year relating to:

- the remuneration of chief officers
- the remuneration of the lowest paid employees
- the relationship between chief officers remuneration and that of other officers

- 2.3 "Remuneration" for the purposes of this statement includes three elements:
- basic salary
  - pension
  - all other allowances arising from employment
- 2.4 The objectives of the report are to:
- a) ensure a capable and high performing workforce;
  - b) ensure simplicity, clarity and fairness between employees and between the council and the community;
  - c) differentiate between remuneration and other employee related expenses.

### **3.0 Report**

- 3.1 The Pay Policy Statement 2022/23 can be found at Appendix A.
- 3.2 The Pay Policy Statement framework for East Herts Council has not yet been updated in line with the pay award for 21/22 or 22/23 in terms of reference to salary scales, salary levels and multipliers (as this has not yet been agreed).
- 3.3 No significant changes to the overall framework it provides have been made, last year the section on Honorariums was strengthened. This was to ensure a clearer definition and understanding of when an Honorarium may be appropriate. It also clarifies that an employee in receipt of an Honorarium cannot also accrue flexi time in relation to the work for the Honorarium is being paid. This is in line with authority set in the constitution in relation to Heads of Service and the Head of HR and OD.



## **4.0 Options**

N/A - publishing the Pay Policy Statement on an annual basis is a statutory requirement. The statement will be published on the Council Website once it is approved and will be formatted into an accessible document before publication.

## **5.0 Risks**

N/A

## **6.0 Implications/Consultations**

### **Community Safety**

No

### **Data Protection**

No

### **Equalities**

No

### **Environmental Sustainability**

No

### **Financial**

Yes – The Pay Policy Statement has been shared with the Head of Strategic Finance and Property and budgets set have been based on the pay changes agreed.

### **Health and Safety**

No

### **Human Resources**

Yes – Policy Statement produced by Head of HR&OD

### **Human Rights**

No

### **Legal**

Yes – Head of Legal and Democratic Service has confirmed that statutory requirements have been met.

### **Specific Wards**

No

## **7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

7.1 Appendix A – Pay Policy Statement 2022/23

### **Contact Officer**

Simon O'Hear – Head of HR and OD

Contact Tel No – x2141

[simon.o'hear@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:simon.o'hear@eastherts.gov.uk)

### **Report Author**

As above

### **Executive Member for Corporate Services**

Cllr George Cutting - Portfolio Holder for HR &  
OD

[George.cutting@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:George.cutting@eastherts.gov.uk)

## **Pay Policy Statement 2022/2023**

### **April 2022**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 A pay policy statement is required to be produced annually under Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011. Guidance from the Secretary of State has been taken into account when producing this statement.
- 1.2 Any decision under powers delegated in the council's Constitution with regard to remuneration from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 will be bound by and must comply with this statement.
- 1.3 This statement supports the requirements under the Local Government Transparency Code to publish data on Senior Salaries and Pay Multiple.
- 1.4 The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development must be consulted prior to any decision impacting on remuneration to ensure compliance with this pay policy statement.

#### **2.0 Scope**

- 2.1 This statement sets out the council's policy with regards to:
  - the remuneration of Chief Officers
  - the remuneration of the lowest paid employees
  - the relationship between Chief Officers' remuneration and that of other officers

"Remuneration" for the purposes of this statement includes three elements:

  - basic salary
  - pension
  - all other allowances arising from employment
- 2.2 The council's constitution regards the following as its "Chief Officers"  
  
Chief Executive  
Deputy Chief Executive
- 2.3 The council, also has Statutory officer roles (Head of Paid Service; S151 Officer; Monitoring Officer, Data Protection Officer)



- 2.3 There is a statutory requirement that for the purposes of producing this statement the following posts (Leadership Team) be covered by the policy statement as well as the above posts and statutory roles.

Head of Strategic Finance and Property (S151 Officer)  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer)  
Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development  
Head of Shared Revenues and Benefits Service  
Head of Operations  
Head of Communications, Strategy and Policy  
Head of Housing and Health  
Head of Planning and Building Control

In this policy statement the term “Chief Officers” refers to the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive roles in that where there are any differences in terms of the policy it is between this group and all other employees.

- 2.4 This policy statement applies to all Council employees, but not to other workers such as casuals, agency workers, etc.
- 2.5 This pay statement does not include the Returning Officer payment. The fees payable to the Returning Officer are set by statute for national elections, and are paid by central government. Fees are, also, payable to the Councils’ Returning Officer for local elections. These fees are payable as required and can be made to any senior officer appointed to fulfil the statutory duties of this role. The Returning Officer is an officer of the Council who is appointed under the Representation of the People Act 1983. Whilst appointed by the Council, the role of the Returning Officer is one which involves and incurs personal responsibility and accountability and is statutorily separate from his/her duties as an employee of the Council. As Returning Officer, he/she is paid a separate allowance for each election for which he/she is responsible.

### **3.0 Objectives**

- 3.1 East Herts Council recognises the importance of having a clear written policy statement on pay in order to ensure that employees are fairly rewarded and there is proper public accountability.
- 3.2 In respect of Chief Officers and all other employees the council’s policy is to set remuneration sufficient to attract and retain adequately experienced, trained and qualified individuals to deliver the council’s priorities.
- 3.3 The council aims to be transparent on pay to its employees, prospective employees and the wider community and uses and maintains an effective job evaluation system and procedures to provide

equity and consistency in pay, whilst adhering to the basic principles of the national Local government Single Status pay agreement.

#### **4.0 Remuneration subject to national and local determination**

- 4.1 The council is a member of the Local Government Employers' Association for national collective bargaining in respect of Chief Officers and other employees.
- 4.2 Changes from national negotiations generally take effect from 1 April each year and are retrospective to 1 April if agreements are finalised after 1 April. It is the council's policy to implement national agreements.
- 4.3 The Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive are under the JNC conditions of service including pay. All other employees are under the NJC national agreement on pay and conditions of service.
- 4.4 The national pay award (the NJC national agreement) has still not yet been agreed for 2021-2022 and discussions for 2022-2023 have not yet begun, the JNC award has also not yet been agreed as this tends to be informed by the NJC award. A final offer of 1.75% for officers and 1.5% for chief officers has been made but rejected by the unions, industrial action has been proposed but actioned, further discussions are expected. The process was also delayed due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, central government had also determined a public sector pay freeze and although this does not determine the NJC award it will have affected negotiations along with spending reviews. This Pay Policy Statement will therefore provide that the National Award will be implemented for both NJC and JNC once agreement is confirmed. East Herts will implement increments for applicable staff from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2022 but the national pay award is not expected (due to the delay in negotiations/agreement) to be implemented in this payroll and will instead be processed as a backdated payment once the award is agreed (this may affect the April 22 award as well as April 21 as there is still no clarity on agreement).
- 4.5 As previously set out in addition to the NJC award applicable for April 2019 East Herts Council negotiated and agreed further investment in pay for all staff through collective bargaining with the recognised trade union Unison. Previously staff could be awarded a local award of an additional 2% payment once they had completed 3 years' service with East Herts. East Herts commissioned EELGA to review the current pay and grades and this demonstrated that the council was below market rates in a number of areas and this was supported by recruitment difficulties therefore an investment in pay was required as was the need to improve the grading structure.

- 4.6 The negotiated local agreement consolidated the previous 2% local award into the basic salaries of all staff regardless of service to improve recruitment and retention (the local 3 year (retention) award has therefore ceased from 1/4/19). Staff were assimilated to the closest new spinal column point (scp) within the revised NJC rates e.g. an old scp 6 has been assimilated to a new scp 4 rather than a scp 1. The local negotiated agreement also addressed undesirable significant overlaps between grades and to reduce the number of increments in grades so progression through grades and differences between grades became more meaningful and fair. This meant that the base of grades increased along with some additional headroom created where this was appropriate as well as reducing the number of increments within grades. As part of the local collective agreement the terms around Redundancy and Disturbance have been reduced: the previous redundancy multiplier has reduced from 2.6 to 2 and the previous protection on pay when redeployed to a lower paid role has reduced from 3 years to 1.5 years and the same was applied to disturbance allowances (again from 3 years to 1.5 years).

## **5.0 General Pay Policy**

- 5.1 All employees other than Chief Officers have their basic pay determined by a job evaluation scheme to ensure that different jobs which have the same value are paid on the same grade. Grades have between 4-7 spinal column points (increments).
- 5.2 The Chief Executive is paid a fixed spot salary with no set incremental progression. Performance review is facilitated through the East of England Local Government Association .
- 5.3 Heads of Service and the Deputy Chief Executive's progression through the pay range (incremental points) is based on performance (measured through the LT 360° performance review process) rather than by annual time served increments and this can lead to drop of one increment if poor performance has been established.
- 5.4 The Deputy Chief Executive is paid on incremental scale points between a pay range of £92,496 to £102,500 base pay, with set incremental progression also based on performance.
- 5.5 There are no other additional elements of remuneration in respect of overtime, flexi-time, bank holiday working, stand-by payments, emergency call rota, etc, paid to these senior staff (Chief Officers and Leadership Team), as they are expected to undertake duties outside their contractual hours and working patterns without additional payment.
- 5.6 Basic pay is calculated on a pro-rata basis for part-time employees.



- 5.7 All employees (except chief officers) receive local weighting which is called an outer fringe payment which is determined by the NJC, for 2020-2021 this was £626pa for a full time employee but will be revised for 2021-2022 and then 2022-2023 once the pay awards have been agreed and the increases will be backdated to 1 April 2021 and 1 April 2022 as applicable.

#### 5.8 Setting Salaries

For the posts of

Chief Executive

Deputy Chief Executive

The council will use robust recruitment processes when making an appointment to these roles, ensuring the best candidate for the role is appointed. In determining the appropriate salary, market testing and bench marking from peer authorities will be considered. Both the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive salaries were benchmarked for 2019-2020 and this has led to a revised spot salary for the Chief Executive appointed from 3 June 2019 in line with market expectations as advised by EELGA and a revised salary range for the Deputy Chief Executive.

#### 5.9 Pay ceilings

For 2022/23 the basic pay ceiling for Chief Executive post will be £123,025 per annum (including an additional payment of £10,000 for Head of Paid Service) plus the percentage agreed by the JNC.

The basic pay ceiling (i.e. including additional payments, salary protection and professional fees where appropriate) for Deputy Chief Executive will be £102,500 plus the percentage agreed by the JNC.

As noted above national agreed pay settlements from the JNC will be applied to the Chief Officer posts with effect from 1 April 2021 once agreed and again for 1 April 2022 once agreed.

For other posts covered by this statement the basic pay ceiling for grade 13 will be £75,321 plus the (Cost of Living) percentage agreed by the NJC (the outer fringe area allowance is paid in addition to these posts):

Grade 13 Posts:

Head of Legal and Democratic Services\*

Head of Strategic Finance and Property\*

Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

Head of Operations  
Head of Housing and Health  
Head of Communications, Strategy and Policy  
Head of Planning and Building Control  
Head of Shared Revenue and Benefits Service \*\*

\* Both of these posts are statutory posts designated as the council's Monitoring Officer and S151 Officer respectively (see additional payments below for further details).

\*\* Head of Shared Revenues and Benefits Service post receives an additional 10% of base salary per annum for shared services role.

#### 5.10 Pay floor

The pay floor is the remuneration of the lowest paid employees. "Lowest paid" is defined as the average pay of employees paid on grade 2. Grade 2 are the lowest grades paid by the council. This year the figure is 0.62% (2 part-time employees) of the council's employees. Where any employee is less than full time their pay is multiplied up to full time and the aggregate full time equivalent pay for the group divided by two to determine the average.

As at 1 February this average is £20,096 per annum (full time).

The council will not pay basic pay less than the amount applicable to the bottom point of the national pay scales as agreed from time to time by the Local Government Employers (apprenticeships are excluded). Employees in this group will be entitled to all other benefits – local weighting/fringe, pension, redundancy as all other employees.

#### 5.11 Pay multiples

The council does not explicitly set the remuneration of any individual or group of posts by reference to a simple multiple of another post or group of posts.

In terms of overall remuneration packages the council's policy is to differentiate by setting different levels of basic pay to reflect differences in responsibilities.

The council would not expect the remuneration of its highest paid employee to exceed 10 times that of the lowest group of employees. In the case of East Herts Council, the pay of the Chief Executive is 6.12 times the value of the lowest paid employee (calculated using salaries at 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022).

- 5.12 Pay ranges are as follows as set on 1 April 2021  
(N.B. These will be adjusted by any Pay Award agreed by NJC)

Grade	Minimum £	Maximum £	Median £	Number of employees in the grade *
2	18,933	20,493	19,698	0.84
3	20,903	22,627	21,748	15.99
4	22,627	24,491	23,541	24.91
5	24,491	27,741	25,991	72.24
6	27,741	30,451	29,125	20.95
7	30,451	33,782	32,234	44.61
8	33,782	36,922	35,237	21.01
9	36,922	39,880	38,390	28.92
10	41,881	45,859	43,857	23.59
11	45,859	51,609	48,366	12.68
12	51,609	59,748	55,902	10.00
13	64,530	75,321	69,696	9.00
Deputy Chief Exec	92,496	102,500	97,369	1.00
Total				285.74

\* Full Time Equivalent (excludes Casual staff as at 1 February 2022)

- 5.13 The minimum apprenticeship pay rate set by East Herts is £4.70 for year one, the national living wage rate is paid as appropriate to an individual's age range thereafter (i.e. from year 2).

## **6.0 Additional payments and Variations**

### **6.1 Additional Payments**

The council's policy is not to normally pay any form of "signing on" fee or incentive payment when recruiting. Exceptions may occasionally be agreed for hard to recruit posts.

The statutory posts designated as the council's S151 Officer, Monitoring Officer and Head of Paid Service will receive a payment of £10,000 per year. No officer will receive more than one additional statutory post payment.

### **6.2 Acting Up and Honorarium payments**

The council will ensure that acting up and honorarium payments are paid in a fair and consistent manner across the council.



Acting up payments can be made when an employee undertakes either some or all of the duties of a senior post, for a continuous period of four weeks or more (payment will then be backdated to the beginning of the cover).

Acting up payments do not apply for periods of less than four weeks or when an employee is providing cover for another employee's annual leave

Honorarium payments (Responsibility Allowances) can be made where an employee is required to complete an important project or produce major work output to a high standard that is significantly above and beyond the scope of their normal duties or responsibilities, or for significant additional duties or responsibilities not commensurate with the employee's current job description/grade or for work which is exceptionally onerous (e.g. difficult and/or demanding situations or working to extremely tight timescales).

Where an Honorarium payment is determined to be appropriate for additional work, any additional work time spent on the additional duties/responsibilities for which the honorarium is being awarded should not be accounted for on the flexi-time sheet.

Permanent changes to job roles should be dealt with through the job evaluation process.

The Head of Service in consultation with the Head of HR and OD have the responsibility for implementing and monitoring these arrangements.

### **6.3 Professional fees and subscriptions.**

The council will meet the cost of a legal practicing certificate for all those employees where it is a requirement of their employment. No other professional fee or subscription is paid.

## **7.0 Market Supplements**

Market supplements are only paid in exceptional circumstances where several attempts have been made to recruit and usual recruitment processes have not resulted in an appointment. Market rate will be established by reference to soft market testing, external advice and dialogue with peer authorities.

## **8.0 Pension**

Pension provision is an important part of the remuneration package.

All employees (except those employees over the age of 75) may join the local government pension scheme. The scheme is a statutory scheme with contributions from the employee and from the employer.

All employees will automatically be enrolled into the LGPS pension scheme unless the contract of employment is less than 3 months' duration, although the employee does have the option to 'opt in'.

For more comprehensive details of the local government pension scheme see: <https://lgpsmember.org>

Neither the scheme nor the council adopt different policies with regard to benefits of employees, the same terms apply to the Chief Officers and other employees (although higher paid staff are required to pay a higher contribution in terms of the percentage of pay deducted as a pension contribution).

East Herts Council as an employer is under a legal duty to prepare and publish a written statement of its policy relating to certain discretionary powers under the Regulations which apply to the Local Government Pension Scheme ("the LGPS"). The scheme provides for the exercise of discretion that allow for retirement benefits to be enhanced. The council will consider each case on its merits but has determined that its usual policy is not to enhance benefits for any of its employees. The Policy on Exercise of Employer Discretions reaffirms this in respect of Chief Officers and other employees.

The pension scheme provides for flexible retirement. In applying the flexible retirement provision no distinction is made between the Chief Officers and other employees. The scheme requires that a minimum permanent reduction in working hours of 25% is made and/or there is a reduction in grade and that any consequential payments to the pension fund are recoverable in three years with the discretion to extend the three years in exceptional circumstances. The council's Human Resources Committee will consider requests from a Chief Officer and Leadership Team will consider requests from other employees where there is a cost to the council, if there are no costs the Head of Service can approve in consultation with the Head of HR and OD.

## **9.0 Annual Leave**

Annual leave entitlement is related to both an individual employee's spinal column point and length of continuous service in local government.

The council awards five days additional annual leave for employees that reach five years' local government service.

Spinal Column Point (SCP)	Annual leave entitlement	Annual leave entitlement after 5 years in continuous local government service
4-22	25 days	30 days
23-25	26 days	31 days
26-28	27 days	32 days
29-59	28 days	33 days
Chief Officers	30 days	35 days

Annual leave entitlement is calculated on a pro-rata basis for part-time employees.

## **10.0 Occupational Sick Pay**

Entitlement to sick pay is related to continuous service, measured in complete months or years at the start of the period of absence. Any previous absences in the twelve months before the start of any absence are deducted from the entitlement.

Entitlement to sick pay is in accordance with the provisions of the NJC for Local Authorities, as follows:

During 1st Year	1 month's full pay and (after completing 4 months service) 2 months half pay
During 2nd Year	2 months full pay and 2 months half pay
During 3rd Year	4 months full pay and 4 months half pay
During 4th and 5th Year	5 months full pay and 5 months half pay
After 5 Years	6 months full pay and 6 months half pay

## **11.0 Expenses**

- 11.1 The council will meet or reimburse authorised travel, accommodation and subsistence costs for attendance at approved business meetings and training events in accordance with the council's Expenses policy. The council does not regard such costs as remuneration but as non-pay operational costs. This policy is applied consistently to Chief Officers and other employees.
- 11.2 The council pays car mileage in accordance with HMRC approved rates which are the same for Chief Officers and other employees. The current rates are:



<b>Mileage</b>	<b>HMRC Rates</b>
Car* (first 10,000 business miles per annum)	45p per business mile
Car (after 10,000 business miles per annum)	25p per business mile
Electric Car Rate	4p per business mile
Motorcycle Rate	24p per business mile
Bicycle Rate	20p per business mile
Passenger Rate (employee/member)	5p per passenger per mile

\*A Hybrid car falls under the Car HMRC rate of 45p per business mile.

## **12.0 Redundancy payments and payments on termination**

- 12.1 The council has a single redundancy scheme which applies to all employees without differentiation. The council does not provide any further payment to employees leaving the council's employment other than in respect of accrued leave which by agreement is untaken at the date of leaving.
- 12.2 The redundancy payment is based on the length of continuous local government service as set out in the employee contract, the council follows the statutory process in terms of age multipliers and a maximum of 20 years' service, however, no statutory cap is applied to weekly pay and actual weekly pay is used in all cases and the council then further enhances the redundancy payment by applying a multiplier of 2. Details of the full scheme can be found in the council's Redundancy Policy.

## **13.0 Future appointments**

In the event of a vacancy to either a Chief Officer or other employee post the arrangements set out above in regards to pay will apply in respect of permanent appointments.

## **14.0 Publication and access to information**

The publication of and access to information relating to remuneration of Chief Officers' is set out in this document and published on the council's website.

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## **East Herts Council Report Council**

**Date of meeting:** 1 March 2022

**Report by:** Councillor Jonathan Kaye – Executive Member  
for Communities

**Report title:** Community Grants Priorities 2022/23

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Summary** – The council's Community Grants Policy includes the provision for members to review the priorities for grant giving on an annual basis. This report sets out the proposed updated priorities for 2022/23.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL** that:

- a) the updated Community Grants priorities for community grant giving be approved
- b) authority be delegated to the Head of Housing and Health, acting in consultation with the Executive Member for Communities, to determine operational matters relating to community grant giving in 2022-23.

### **1.0 Proposal(s)**

- 1.1 It is proposed that the priorities for awarding community grants in 2022/23 be updated. The new priorities include provision for marking the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The proposed priorities for 2022/23 can be found in Appendix A.
- 1.2 It is proposed to Council that the Head of Housing and Health, acting in consultation with the Executive Member for



Communities, be given the delegated authority to amend the operational elements of the community grant giving procedures in light of the recommended priorities.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 Community grant giving helps strengthen communities, enabling residents to work toward a common goal, develop and maximise their community assets and bring about positive change, leading to improved health and wellbeing for residents in East Herts.
- 2.2 Community grant giving also takes forward the new East and Equal Strategy (2021-2025) and helps to build relationships with people with protected characteristics.
- 2.3 The council's community grants policy is kept under review with the last amendments approved by Council on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021. The existing policy and programme can be found [HERE](#). No amendments to the overall policy are now proposed. It is recommended, however, that the Head of Housing and Health, acting in consultation with the Executive Member for Communities, be delegated the authority to make any changes and updates to operational procedures.

## **3.0 Reason(s)**

- 3.1 The annual priorities for community grants form part of the council's Community Grants Policy which is reserved for determination by full Council, thus the revised priorities are now being recommended to Council.

### **Updated priorities**

- 3.1 The proposed priorities ensure that community grant giving reflects the refreshed corporate plan. The new priorities are intentionally broader, encouraging applicants to think creatively about how they can deliver on our priorities in their neighbourhood.
- 3.2 Over the coming year, it is to be expected that community grant giving will also be informed by the results of the Hertfordshire Covid-19 Community Impact Assessment 2021/22.

### **Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 3.3 Officers have considered the impact of the updated priorities on people with protected characteristics. It is considered that the proposals will not have an adverse impact on anyone with a protected characteristics, whether individually or as a group, as no organisation who would have been eligible for a community grant under the previous priorities will be excluded or have reduced eligibility under the proposed revised priorities. Furthermore, it is considered that the new 'Diversity and Inclusiveness' priority will help support bids for grants that will tackle some of the equalities challenges that some of our communities face.

### **Community Covid-19 Recovery Fund**

- 3.4 Officers applied and obtained an extra £200,000 from the Hertfordshire Health Protection Board to support voluntary and community groups and their clients most impacted by Covid-19. This provides an additional means of supporting community groups in the district.

## **4.0 Options**

- 4.1 Do not update the priorities or provide delegated authority for operational changes – NOT RECOMMENDED as it is important that the priorities are reviewed annually to ensure community grant giving continues to address the most pressing community issues at this time and that the grants programme is inclusive, creative and experimental.
- 4.2 Update the priorities and policy – RECOMMENDED to ensure the community grants programme is more inclusive and attractive to harder-to-reach groups and enables residents to put their own solutions in place that creatively takes forward the council's strategic priorities at the neighbourhood level.

## **5.0 Risks**

### **If the priorities were not updated**

- 5.1 This would reduce the council's opportunity to maintain a mechanism whereby it can kick start innovative ideas and thus community grant giving would arguably be less effective. Adopting the proposed 2022/23 priorities mitigates this risk as does continued signposting to the East Herts Lottery in order to support local good causes.
- 5.2 There would also be a possible reputational risk as the council's responsive, creative and forward stance could be compromised.

### **If the priorities were updated**

- 5.3 Should the priorities be updated there is a small risk that there would be less take up due to the priorities being broader than before, thus reducing organisations' ability to understand what the council wishes to fund. To reduce this risk, officers would



post information on social media and use existing networks to provide examples of the types of projects that could be supported. Grants workshops and drop-in advice sessions would be provided.

- 5.4 The impact of these risks, in paragraphs 5.1 to 5.3, has been assessed. Overall, it is considered that the risks would be minor in the wider scheme of things and carry little financial risk.

## **6.0 Implications/Consultations**

- 6.1 This latest review of the Community Grants priorities was conducted by officers of the Housing and Health service in consultation with the Executive Member for Communities, having regard to the delivery of and feedback on the 2021/22 programme.

- 6.2 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found below.

### **Community Safety**

Perception and fear of crime and maintaining good community safety is closely connected to the resilience and strength of a community. Support for events and projects that bring people of different backgrounds together helps build civic pride, creates a sense of belonging and more resilient neighbourhoods

### **Data Protection**

A GDPR statement is included on grant applications to minimise any risk of data breaches.

### **Equalities**

An EQIA was completed and approved last year and is posted on our website [HERE](#) As noted in the body of the report, it is considered that the proposals will not have an adverse impact on anyone with a

protected characteristics, whether individually or as a group, as no organisation who would have been eligible for a community grant under the previous priorities will be excluded or have reduced eligibility under the proposed revised priorities. Furthermore, it is considered that the new 'Diversity and Inclusiveness' priority will help support bids for grants that will tackle some of the equalities challenges that some of our communities face.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

East Herts Council's corporate priorities form the direction of travel for community grant giving and one of the headline grant priorities is: environmental sustainability. Grant giving enables the voluntary and community sector, including community centres and villages halls, to reduce their carbon footprint and explore more environmentally sustainable actions.

### **Financial**

Internal budgets are under increasing pressure so it is vitally important that the council continues to raise awareness about the [East Herts Community Benefit Lottery](#), which is an innovative way to generate income for the grants budget, replacing the need to use council monies.

### **Health and Safety**

Eligibility criteria state that the applicant has policies in place to ensure the safety of those taking part. Applicants must confirm this is the case and if officers have any concerns they will ask to view documents. Safeguarding policies must be submitted as part of the application.

### **Human Resources**

No direct implications

### **Human Rights**

No direct implications

## **Legal**

No direct implications

## **Specific Wards**

Projects that take place in the top 10 wards for deprivation (according to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation) are considered a priority and are considered first.

Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

### **7.1 Existing Community Grants Policy.**

#### **Contact Member**

Cllr Jonathan Kaye, Executive Member for Communities

[Jonathan.Kaye@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Jonathan.Kaye@eastherts.gov.uk)

#### **Contact Officer**

Jonathan Geall, Head of Housing and Health

Contact Tel. No. 01992 531594

[Jonathan.Geall@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Jonathan.Geall@eastherts.gov.uk)

#### **Report Author**

Claire Pullen, Housing and Health Projects Officer

Contact Tel. No. 01992 531459

[claire.pullen@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:claire.pullen@eastherts.gov.uk)



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## Appendix A

*Subject to approval by Council, this page will replace the current priorities listed in the [Discretionary Community Grants Policy](#). All other aspects of the council's Discretionary Community Grant Policy approved in March 2021 remain unchanged.*

# Community Grants Priorities 2022 -2023 – Discretionary Community Grants Policy

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The priorities for discretionary grant funding in 2022/23 help take forward the council's corporate priority of enabling our communities in the East Herts Corporate Plan 2020-2024.

Grant giving will help improve the wellbeing and quality of life of East Herts residents as well as help address the equalities challenges and barriers to participation that some of our communities face. The results of the Hertfordshire-Covid 19 Community Impact Assessment will further inform our grant giving over the course of 2022/23.

Successful applicants will demonstrate how the changes they want to achieve will address at least one of the following priorities for community grants:

- **Recovery from Covid**
- **Diversity and inclusiveness**
- **Mental and physical wellbeing**
- **Environmental sustainability**
- **Queen's Platinum Jubilee.**

Applications that address the following will score more highly:

- deliver in a geographic area of deprivation. A list of wards identified as disadvantaged can be found in Appendix 4 of the Grants Policy. These applications will be considered first
- support and involve vulnerable or isolated people
- are from organisations that have not applied before or who applied more than five years ago.

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This Council recognises that this year marks the 70th anniversary of Her Majesty the Queen's accession to the throne.

This Council notes that Her Majesty the Queen is the first British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years of service to the people of the United Kingdom, the Realms and the Commonwealth.

The Council resolves that:

1. The Chairman of the Council will write to Her Majesty the Queen to congratulate her on this significant achievement; and
2. The Council will do what it can to support local community events and activities to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee.

Proposed by Cllr Angela Alder

Seconded by Cllr Alastair Ward-Booth



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Council notes its severe disappointment in the Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

Council further notes that the Prime Minister acted unlawfully, misled Parliament and lied to the residents of our country.

Council adds that while the Prime Minister attended Downing Street parties, millions of people, including countless East Herts residents, obeyed the lockdown rules, often at huge personal cost. They missed funerals, cancelled weddings and said goodbye to loved ones on video calls – some on the very day that Number Ten illegally hosted a garden party.

Council condemns the Prime Minister whose disregard for his own rules itself represents a threat to the health of our nation, including residents of East Herts as he failed to set an example for the country to follow. This is also a threat to the rule of law and the standing of democracies at all levels. For these reasons he must resign.

Council calls upon the Leader of the Council to write to Boris Johnson stating that the council has no confidence in his leadership and calls for him to resign.

Council resolves that we no longer have confidence in the Prime Minister.

Proposed by Councillor Chris Wilson

Seconded by Councillor Joseph Dumont

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