



**MEETING** : EXECUTIVE  
**VENUE** : COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD  
**DATE** : TUESDAY 5 SEPTEMBER 2023  
**TIME** : 7.00 PM

## **MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

Councillor Ben Crystall	- Leader of the Council
Councillor Carl Brittain	- Executive Member for Financial Sustainability
Councillor Alex Daar	- Executive Member for Communities
Councillor Joseph Dumont	- Executive Member for Corporate Services
Councillor Vicky Glover-Ward	- Executive Member for Planning and Growth
Councillor Mione H Goldspink	- Executive Member for Neighbourhoods
Councillor Sarah Hopewell	- Executive Member for Wellbeing
Councillor Tim Hoskin	- Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability
Councillor Chris Wilson	- Executive Member for Resident Engagement

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- must not participate in any vote taken on the matter at the meeting;
- must disclose the interest to the meeting, whether registered or not, subject to the provisions of section 32 of the Localism Act 2011;
- if the interest is not registered and is not the subject of a pending notification, must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days;
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## AGENDA

### 1. Apologies

To receive any apologies for absence.

### 2. Leader's Announcements

To receive any announcements from the Leader of the Council.

### 3. Minutes - 11 July 2023 (Pages 5 - 15)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2023.

### 4. Declarations of Interest

To receive any Member(s) declaration(s) of interest.

### 5. Birchall Garden Suburb Masterplan (Pages 16 - 172)

### 6. Fit and Proper Persons Determination Policy for Mobile Homes Sites (Pages 173 - 196)

### 7. Castle Park Improvement Project -match funding contribution via optioned sale of final community centre (Pages 197 - 206)

### 8. Urgent Business

To consider such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration and is not likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
EXECUTIVE HELD IN THE COUNCIL  
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON  
TUESDAY 11 JULY 2023, AT 7.00 PM

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PRESENT: Councillor B Crystall (Leader)  
Councillors C Brittain, B Crystall, A Daar,  
J Dumont, V Glover-Ward, M Goldspink,  
S Hopewell, T Hoskin and C Wilson.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors E Buckmaster, S Bull,  
N Clements, B Deering, G McAndrew,  
T Stowe and G Williamson.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Katie Mogan	- Democratic Services Manager
James Ellis	- Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Laura Guy	- Principal Planning Officer
Steven Linnett	- Head of Strategic Finance and Property
Helen Standen	- Deputy Chief Executive
Kevin Steptoe	- East Herts Garden Town Lead Officer

87     APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

88     LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader reminded Members and Officers to use their microphones as the meeting was being webcast.

89     MINUTES - 13 JUNE 2023

Councillor Goldspink proposed, and Councillor Glover-Ward seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2023 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 13 June 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

90     DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Glover-Ward declared an interest in Item 7 – Adoption of the Kingsmead Neighbourhood Plan as she was the Chair of the Kingsmead Neighbourhood Plan group.

91     COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2024 - 25

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2024-25. He

said that it was a government requirement that the Council approved the scheme annually and the recommendation was to leave the scheme unchanged. The scheme had remained the same since 2013 and there was no persuasive argument to make any changes and would provide additional certainty to residents at a difficult time.

Councillor Daar said that she had been to the Joint Revenues and Benefits Committee in Stevenage and was impressed by how hard the officers worked with recruitment difficulties and the extra demands from the government on covid and energy support grants. She congratulated officers and managing that alongside their day-to-day workload.

Councillor Goldspink thanked Officers for their detailed report and the careful consideration of all the options. She said that the final recommendation was sensible, and she fully supported it.

Councillor Brittain proposed, and Councillor Goldspink 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 no changes be made to the Council Tax Support scheme for 2024/25.

92 WASTE SHARED SERVICE: CLIENT TEAM AND CORPORATE SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability presented the Client Team and Corporate Support

Arrangements for the Waste Shared Service. He said the report had been presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20 June 2023 and the proposals in the report supported the goals around digital transformation to ensure residents will receive a consistent service across the two districts of East Herts and North Herts. He said there were no major changes, each council will lead on its own customer service provision and there were some minor changes to the governance of the service as detailed in the report.

Councillor Dumont said that he was in his second term as a Member and said that the customer service of the waste service and contract created the largest volume of communication from residents. He said he welcomed the fact that there was a huge emphasis in the report on customer service and in streamlining the process.

Councillor Hoskin said customer service was a central theme of the report and to ensure that the customer service was similar across the two councils.

Councillor Glover-Ward asked whether it was possible to forewarn residents when streets were about to be cleaned. She had received feedback from residents that they have not been able to get their cars out the way in time.

Councillor Hoskin said he would speak to Officers and provide a written answer to the question after the meeting.

Councillor Goldspink said she welcomed the report and thanked the working group who gave up their time to produce the report. She said that she liked the principle that the two councils should work together as it would

provide cost savings and best practice to the partnership. She also welcomed the paragraphs in the report that referred to proper engagement with the community to achieve a good service.

Councillor McAndrew said he also welcomed the report and said it was good to hear endorsement from various Members of the work that had been done. He said the Member workshops were intense but lots of ideas were brought together to streamline the future contract. He hoped that the IT systems at East Herts would be brought up to speed to enable the contract to move forward. He welcomed that East Herts would be taking on payment from customers in 2023.

Councillor Crystall thanked Councillor McAndrew for the work that was carried out when he was the Executive Member.

Councillor Hoskin proposed, and Councillor Brittain 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 held on 20th June 2023 be noted;

- (B) the updated waste service policy statements to come into force from May 2025 be agreed;
- (C) each council leads on their own customer service provision with one set of processes for

customer interactions being developed and agreed with a focus on resolution at the first point of contact be agreed;

- (D) further work to identify resources and costs to integrate the customer relationship management system with the waste management IT system be agreed; and
- (E) the proposed minor updates and changes to financial management and governance arrangements and subsequent minor changes to the Inter Authority Agreement outlined in Section 3 be agreed.

### 93 ADOPTION OF KINGSMEAD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Councillor Glover-Ward declared an interest in the item as she was the Chair of the Kingsmead Neighbourhood Plan. She left the Chamber for the discussion and voting of the item.

The Leader of the Council presented the report on behalf of the Executive Member for Planning and Growth. He said that Neighbourhood Plans were an important document for residents and the Kingsmead Neighbourhood Plan had a strong vision for sustainable development and was a positive addition to the development management process. He paid tribute to Councillor Glover-Ward who had chaired the plan and to those who had been involved in the community effort to develop the plan. He said that the referendum result spoke for itself with the vote on 4 May 2023 receiving 93% support and referred to the examiner's report which gave great feedback on the quality of the plan. He referred to one factual error in the report



on page 89 that stated the pre-submission (Regulation 14) consultation took place in November and December 2021 when it was extended to February 2022.

Councillor Daar said it was exciting to see the Neighbourhood Plan come into place and said that there was one area left in Hertford without a plan and hoped the community would start developing one soon.

Councillor Hopewell said she knew that a massive amount of work had gone into the plan and said it was fantastic that it got such a high level of support in the referendum.

Councillor Crystall proposed, and Councillor Daar second 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 Kingsmead Neighbourhood Area Plan 2019-2033, as detailed at Appendix A to this report, be formally made (adopted).

94 HARLOW AND GILSTON GARDEN TOWN - DRAFT STEWARDSHIP CHARTER FOR CONSULTATION

The Leader of the Council presented the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town – Draft Stewardship for Consultation report. He stressed that the document was a draft and a generic strategic document that set out six high level principles for stewardship. He said that the document should help to ensure that the council gets the unique and specific solutions right for the Garden Town. He said that the consultation would run for a minimum of eight weeks

and a draft would be circulated to all Garden Town community groups and relevant Town and Parish Councils.

Councillor Buckmaster asked the Leader for the Council for assurance that if stewardship arrangements could be separated, that they would be. He accepted that there were strong similarities between the draft stewardship and the Places for People draft but there were other garden town work streams that could have a bearing on the document. He asked for reassurance that the responsibility for managing a wide range of assets like parks, play areas, allotments and community centres would remain solely in the Gilston town. He said if the responsibility went outside the area, it would challenge the principle of community ownership.

The Garden Town Lead Officer said that the draft document was trying to achieve a set of high-level principles that established good practice to be applied across the Garden Town and it did not seek to constrain Gilston in any way. He advised Members to keep an open mind when it came to what the best solutions were. He said the Garden Town was seeking to achieve delivery of 60% of transport by active healthy modes and residents in the new developments were likely to want to access facilities in Harlow so this would need to be developed in partnership with other organisations.

Councillor Buckmaster said he understood about the transport issue but said some partners would want control over the green spaces.

Councillor Dunlop said he did not understand why East Herts needed to be a part of the partnership at all. He felt the council should set the charter as it sees fits and questioned why it was being done at this stage before any

s106 agreements had been signed. He said that Gilston was part of East Herts and felt there was a pull towards Harlow.

The Garden Town Lead Officer gave some history to the Garden Town and said that the concept came together over the life of the District Plan which resulted in the allocation of 10,000 homes. He said the council worked with partners as the planning strategy needed to be considered beyond the district boundaries. He said that the council worked with Harlow and Epping Forest Councils to support the delivery of growth. He said that there were significant benefits of working in partnership and Gilston had local involvement and commitment.

The Garden Town Lead Officer explained that the draft stewardship had been put together now to provide some overarching principles and the detail would follow later. He said that resources and priorities had also played a role as the team had been focussing on the planning applications for the last couple of years.

Councillor Dumont said that he had been open in terms of raising concerns from residents about the development and spoke at the outline planning application before the election. He said he remained disappointed that the level of affordable housing had dropped from 40% to 23% but he said the Executive were being asked to approve that the document goes out for consultation. He said he hoped the council would take on board the positive and negative feedback in the final document.

Councillor Dunlop said the consultation results would be skewed as it would be heavily weighted towards the larger population of Harlow.

Councillor Crystall asked if it was possible to distinguish

between respondents in different areas.

The Garden Town Lead Officer said that the consultation would take place on online platforms and will offer to meet and discuss with community groups and parish councils. He said the consultation would capture the location of respondents.

Councillor Wilson said he thought it was sensible to have an overarching plan between two closely linked areas. He said residents will want to use the facilities in the local town so it was inevitable that there had to be co-operation.

Councillor Crystall responded to Councillor Buckmaster's question about reassurance on retaining local control. He said that the Green Party were big supporters of local control and it made sense that local control was retained as much as possible. He said he had heard what Councillor Buckmaster had said and recognised that it was a key issue.

Councillor Daar asked if neighbouring parish councils were being consulted.

The Garden Town Lead Officer said he was more than happy to open up the consultation as wide as necessary if Members felt it appropriate.

Councillor Dumont asked if Great Amwell and Stanstead parishes could be included as the Garden Town was the biggest issue for the local area.

Councillor McAndrew said Much Hadham were affected too, and it was used a rat run to get to Ware.

Councillor Daar asked if the stewardship arrangements precluded the new villages from having their own Town or Parish Councils.

The Garden Town Lead Officer said it would not. He said thoughts were starting to emerge locally as to how the existing parish councils could come together to fit the new geography.

Councillor Crystall proposed, and Councillor Glover-Ward seconded supporting the recommendation in the report. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** - That the draft Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Stewardship Charter be approved for consultation

95      URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 7.47 pm

Chairman .....

Date .....

# Agenda Item 5

## East Herts Council Report

### Executive

**Date of meeting:** Tuesday 5 September 2023

**Report by:** Councillor Vicky Glover-Ward – Executive Member for Planning and Growth

**Report title:** Birchall Garden Suburb Masterplan

**Ward(s) affected:** Hertford Rural;

**Summary** – To enable Executive Members to consider the Masterplan document for Birchall Garden Suburb; site allocation Policy EWEL1 Land East of Welwyn Garden City.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR** Executive to recommend to Council that:

- a) The Birchall Garden Suburb Masterplan for the strategic allocation known as EWEL1 Land East of Welwyn Garden City, as detailed in Appendix A, be agreed as a material consideration for Development Management purposes.**

### **1.0 Proposal(s)**

- 1.1 In accordance with District Plan Policies DES1 and EWEL1, a Masterplan document has been produced for Land East of Welwyn Garden City, known as Birchall Garden Suburb, as a collaborative process including engagement with the Steering Group.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The District Plan was adopted in October 2018 and sets out the Council's strategy for delivering growth in East Herts over the Plan period up to 2033.
- 2.2 The East Herts Approach to masterplanning was first presented to the District Planning Executive Panel in September 2017 (and was subsequently agreed by Council on the 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017). The report set out a series of steps that describe the various stages involved and processes expected for all 'significant' development sites. Whilst not a one-size-fits-all approach, the process is based upon a collaborative approach to identifying and resolving issues, creating a vision for what the site aspires to achieve, testing design options and consulting upon preferred solutions. The output of this process is a masterplanning framework or masterplan which is presented to members for consideration.
- 2.3 In order to embed the masterplanning process, District Plan Policy DES1: Masterplanning requires all 'significant' development proposals to prepare a masterplan. The significance of development is measured not only on its scale, but on the potential impact on the community and local character. However, paragraph 17.4.1 of the District Plan supporting text suggests that generally a threshold of fifty dwellings or more will apply.
- 2.4 The masterplan should set 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. Furthermore, the masterplan should be collaboratively prepared and informed by public participation. Finally, Policy DES1 states that to ensure sites are planned and delivered comprehensively, any application for development on part of the site will be assessed against its contribution to the masterplan as a whole.

- 2.5 The masterplanning document should therefore provide sufficient information to inform the preparation of detailed aspects of the site at the planning application stage. The level of detail required for the masterplanning document will depend upon the likely form of delivery of the site. For example, where delivery is expected by one party who has been involved throughout the Plan-making stages, a masterplanning document may be prepared, which provides key parameters and aspirations which form the basis of detailed design determined through a planning application process at a later stage.
- 2.6 Steering Groups have been established for masterplanning in the District to help inform the development of strategic sites allocated in the adopted District Plan. These are comprised of East Herts councillors, town and parish councillors, representatives of the local community and other interested groups, where appropriate. The Steering Group is a sounding board for key issues and, depending upon specific circumstances, for discussing detailed design elements whilst preparing the planning application through to when construction is underway. The Birchall Garden Suburb Steering Group was established in October 2022 and has been used to progress the masterplan document. The Birchall Garden



Suburb Steering Group is a joint Steering Group that is comprised of representatives from both East Herts and Welwyn Hatfield.

### **3.0 Reason(s)**

- 3.1 The masterplanning process is based upon a collaborative approach to identifying and resolving issues, creating a vision for what the site aspires to achieve, testing design options and preferred solutions. The output of this process is a masterplanning framework which is presented to members for consideration.

#### *Policy Context:*

- 3.2 Birchall Garden Suburb is an extension to Welwyn Garden City straddling the boundary between Welwyn Hatfield and East Hertfordshire. Policy EWEL1 in the adopted East Herts District Plan (2018) and Policy SP19 of the emerging Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan (2016) set out the strategy for the coordinated development of Birchall Garden Suburb via the production of a joint masterplan.
- 3.3 Policy EWEL1 and SP19 requires the joint masterplan to be prepared by East Herts District Council and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, working with the landowner and other key stakeholders. The usual route for this is for masterplanning and pre-app advice to commence prior to submission of a planning application. However, in this case the landowner took a different approach and in June 2022 submitted an outline planning application prior to undertaking masterplanning and pre-app. In light of this approach the councils took the decision to lead on the masterplanning process. As such Allies and Morrison were appointed jointly by the councils to undertake and formulate a masterplan for Birchall Garden Suburb.
- 3.4 Allies and Morrison is an architecture and urban planning practice who have been involved with the Birchall Garden

Suburb site for a number of years, originally appointed in 2019 to prepare a masterplan for the provision of approximately 2,500 dwellings. This was paused during the ongoing Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan examination in public, but was resumed in 2022 to respond to the smaller site area providing for 1,950 dwellings with reflects the Inspector's recommendations on the draft Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan.

*The Masterplan:*

- 3.5 The role of the masterplan is to provide a long-term strategy and development framework which responds to the local and wider issues and needs. The masterplan is not designed to be a prescriptive blueprint, but to provide clear guidance on the priorities and principles for the new neighbourhoods that can inform the subsequent planning application/s for the site.
- 3.6 The Birchall Garden Suburb Masterplan, which can be found at Appendix A, is a comprehensive document which, across four Chapters covers the following:
1. *Introduction* (pages 5-20) – an overview of the site, the purpose of the masterplan and the policy and Garden City context.
  2. *Site analysis* (pages 21-61) – inclusive of site location, current and previous land uses, existing amenities and heritage assets, ecological, landscape – constraints and opportunities.
  3. *Design Approach and Development Objectives* (pages 63-75) – overarching vision and approach, key themes and principles, land use, movement, placemaking, green infrastructure and sustainability.
  4. *Masterplan* (pages 77-145) – strategies for land use, movement, placemaking, green infrastructure and sustainability. The overall masterplan and approach to each neighbourhood.
- 3.7 The design approach and development objectives chapter sets-out nine principles which combine the original Garden City

Principles and the TCPAs Garden Community Principles to reflect the desired approach at Birchall Garden Suburb. From those principles, five key themes have then been identified to underpin the masterplan framework itself. These are:

*Land Use: A well functioning place*

- Safe and secure places
- Supporting businesses and communities
- Vibrant and diverse communities

*Movement: An integrated place*

- Legible, permeable and well connected streets
- Walkable and cycle-friendly neighbourhoods
- Safe and characterful streets

*Placemaking: An attractive and diverse place*

- Responding to character and context
- Resilient and distinctive design
- A varied mix of typologies and tenures

*Landscape and Green Infrastructure: A landscape led approach*

- Integrated with the landscape
- Spaces for nature
- High quality public space and landscaping

*Sustainability: A resilient place*

- Sustainable design and construction
- Integrated with the landscape
- Reducing all forms of consumption

- 3.8 The Masterplan itself builds on these key themes and the final chapter addresses those themes section-by-section. These sections include 'key characteristics and guidance' which are intended to guide future detailed masterplanning and planning applications and ensure that the themes are maintained as proposals develop.

*Engagement:*

- 3.9 Engagement in a masterplanning process provides the best opportunity to ensure a collaborative approach aiming to achieve the most successful design for the development and to help influence the design of the scheme that will inevitably be submitted as a planning application.
- 3.10 Throughout the masterplan process a number of meetings have taken place with officers and key stakeholders. As well as this, the Steering Group have met on four occasions to debate and discuss the development of the Masterplan. The Birchall Garden Suburb Steering Group is made up of the following members:
- Officers from East Herts District Council, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council;
  - Councillors from East Herts District Council and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
  - Hertingfordbury and Essendon Parish Councils
  - Landowner representatives
  - Friends of Panshanger Park
- 3.11 Pages 10-11 of the Masterplan detail and timeline where stakeholder engagement has taken place alongside the drafting of the Masterplan. It also details further stakeholder interviews that were undertaken outside of the Steering Group meetings, including with Hertingfordbury Parish Council, the Gardens Trust and the Green Corridor Group. Alongside the key issues raised by the Steering Group, the issues raised through these stakeholder interviews have been incorporated into the final Masterplan.
- 3.12 On 20 January 2023 the LPAs engaged with the Hertfordshire Design Review Panel to review the draft Masterplan. The draft Masterplan was generally positively received, with the panel

making suggestions and a number of comments on areas for improvement. Those areas included; encouragement to emphasise the differences between the three neighbourhoods and improving and enhancing connectivity across and into the new and existing neighbourhoods.

3.13 Discussion with the Steering Group at the final meeting in March regarding next steps, led to feedback suggesting that the public and local residents would benefit from receiving further information on the masterplan and be able to ask questions about the masterplan. The LPAs therefore hosted a number of engagement events in locations in Welwyn Garden City and East Herts in July and August 2023. The Welwyn events were very well attended across two separate afternoon/evening events, a similar event in East Herts took place on the 17<sup>th</sup> August. The main points raised during the events relate to:

- Impact of development on traffic and congestion, particularly on Black Fan Road/B195.
- Access to services and new infrastructure provision. In particular the provision of healthcare facilities, schools and water infrastructure.
- Location and necessity of Gypsy and Traveller sites
- Compatibility of heavy industry and employment uses alongside the new community.
- Drainage, contamination and landfill questions.

3.14 The above is not an exhaustive list, however a number of the key points raised are addressed in the final Masterplan. Some of the issues raised are likely to be addressed at the planning application stage or relate to detailed design or S106 matters.

### *Conclusion:*

3.15 With the adopted District Plan in place, it is important that the Council can demonstrate the delivery of its strategic sites. It is therefore important that, while maintaining flexibility, the

Masterplanning Framework should provide sufficient breadth of information to guide both future developers and, importantly, decision-makers. An agreed Masterplan will be a material consideration in the decision-making process and is key to ensuring that proposals meet the Council's aspirations.

- 3.16 It is the view of Officers that this Masterplan provides a strong vision supported by clear objectives and the necessary balance of detail and flexibility to guide development proposals towards achieving those objectives. Officers will continue to work with Tarmac the landowners, alongside other stakeholders to ensure that the best possible design quality is achieved on this site.
- 3.17 It is therefore recommended that the Masterplan, as detailed at Appendix A, be agreed as a material consideration for Development Management purposes.

#### **4.0 Options**

- 4.1 The Council could choose not to approve the Masterplan. However this would be contrary to District Plan Policy DES1. It would also mean that when determining the application, the Council would not be able to take account of the design framework prepared in collaboration with the steering group and stakeholders. This is likely to have a detrimental impact on design quality and community engagement.

#### **5.0 Risks**

- 5.1 If the scheme progresses to the planning application stage without a masterplan, it will be contrary to the District Plan.

#### **6.0 Implications/Consultations**

- 6.1 The masterplanning process includes public engagement and steering group meetings with members and local representatives. This is explained above in more detail.

## **Community Safety**

No

## **Data Protection**

No

## **Equalities**

No

## **Environmental Sustainability**

The Masterplan incorporates design principles that address environmental sustainability

## **Financial**

No

## **Health and Safety**

No

## **Human Resources**

No

## **Human Rights**

No

## **Legal**

No

## **Specific Wards**

Hertford Rural

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

7.1 Appendix A: Birchall Garden Suburb Masterplan

## **Contact Member**

Councillor Glover-Ward, Executive Member for  
Planning and Growth

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# BIRCHALL GARDEN SUBURB

DRAFT MASTERPLAN







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# Introduction

# 1.1 BIRCHALL GARDEN SUBURB

The Birchall Garden Suburb Masterplan sets out the potential for a high quality, sustainable and mixed-use new community, set within a rich and varied landscape on the south eastern edge of Welwyn Garden City. The area has been identified within the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Draft Local Plan and East Herts District Plan as a suitable location for integrated neighbourhoods that draw inspiration from Welwyn's Garden City origins and respond to the distinctive setting and local landscape attributes. The proposed 1,950 new homes will be supported by schools, community uses and local shops and services and will encourage sustainable lifestyles.

## Masterplan role and status

The masterplan provides a long-term strategy and development framework which responds to the local and wider needs and issues affecting the Authorities. The masterplan is not designed to be a prescriptive blueprint for how development will come forward, but provides a clear steer on priorities and principles for the new neighbourhoods, and sets parameters for design proposals that can inform detailed masterplans and planning applications for the site.

The masterplan will be a material consideration in planning decisions relating to the site for Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council and East Herts District Council and will be a reference for Hertfordshire County Council with regard to transport and highways and education provision. It is, therefore, intended to be reference tool and steer for land owners, developers and designers preparing planning applications and design codes for the site. It is also designed to be a useful reference for local representatives and community members.

## Process towards planning applications

### LPA STRATEGIC POLICY DIAGRAMS

### MASTERPLAN THEMATIC PRINCIPLES

### MASTERPLAN PARAMETERS AND GUIDANCE

### DETAILED MASTERPLANNING

### DESIGN CODES

including but not limited to:

- Route hierarchy and street sections
- Active travel network and infrastructure
- On-plot and street parking approach
- Building densities, heights & roofscape
- Housing typologies and delivery models
- Building frontage and edge conditions
- Building materials and fenestration
- Building lines and boundary treatments
- Green amenity space location and design
- Buffers and treatment of wildlife habitats
- Tree planting and SuDs approach
- Accommodation of the Green Corridor
- Phasing of homes and infrastructure

COMPLETE

APPLICATION PROCESS







## 1.2 PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

The masterplan is designed to help support the delivery of the site and the report has a number of practical functions, including:

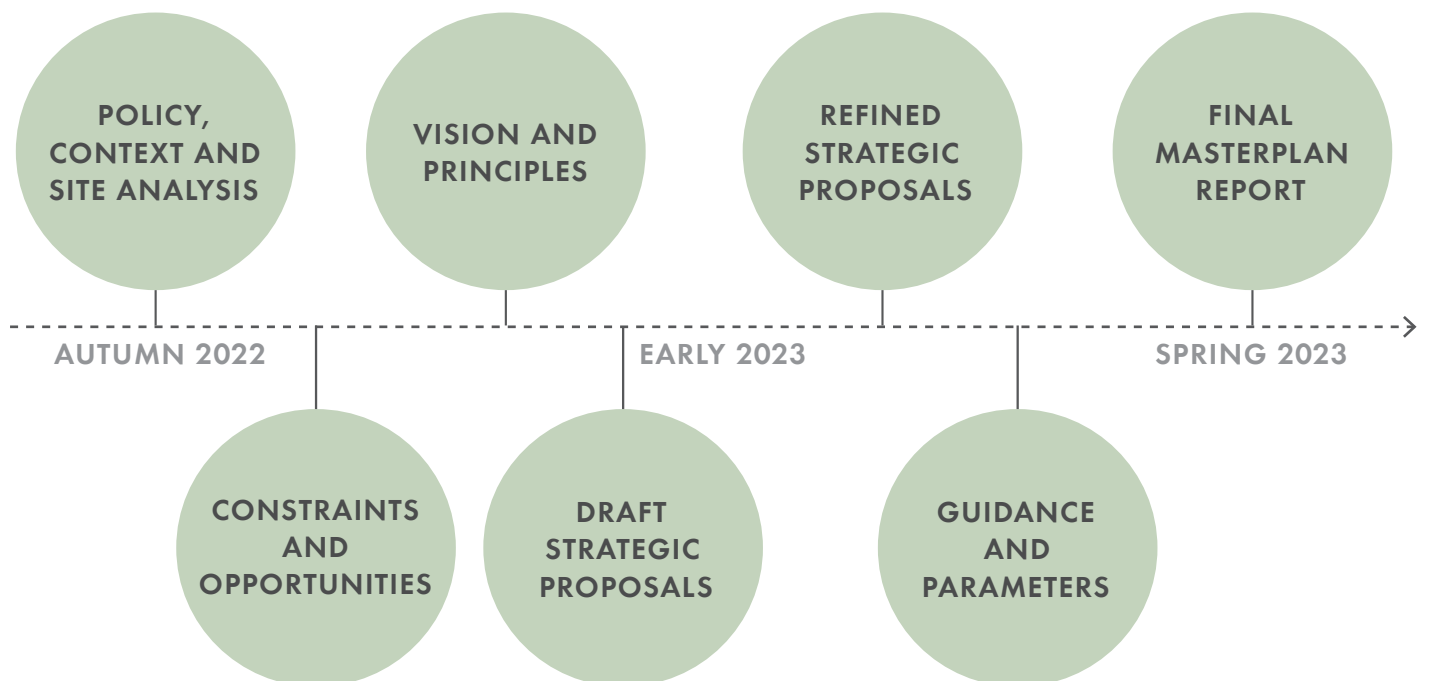
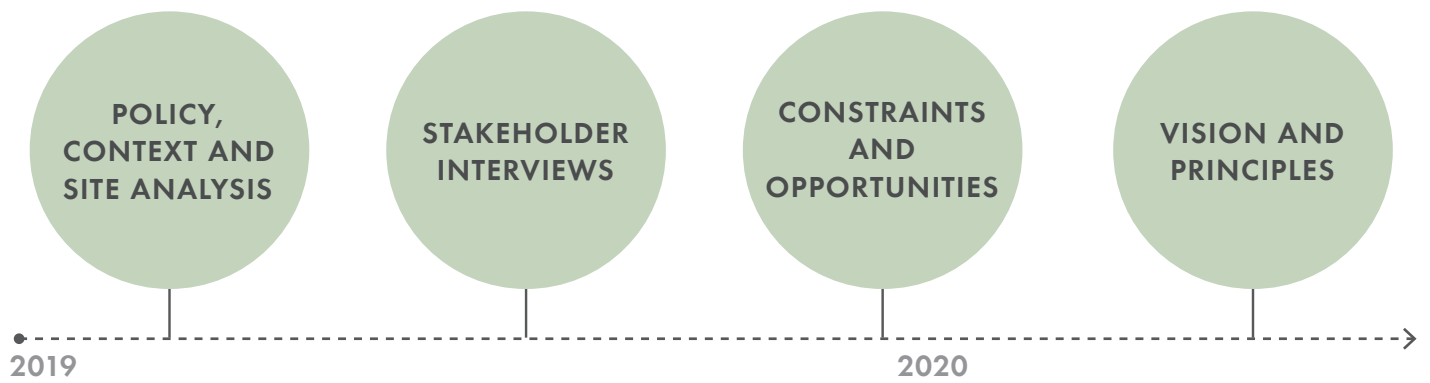
- Guiding the creation of a new sustainable community incorporating Garden City principles
- Setting out the quantum and distribution of land uses, access, sustainable design and layout principles
- Providing a high level design framework that sets out principles for any future development that will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications relating to the site
- Responding to technical concerns raised at the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan review, including strategic views, screening new development and buffering between uses and landscapes

### Masterplanning Process

Allies and Morrison was appointed in 2019 by Welwyn Hatfield and East Herts Councils to prepare a masterplan for Birchall Garden Suburb for provision of up to 2,500 new homes within mixed-use new neighbourhoods. This paused during the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan Examination in Public and was resumed in 2022 to respond to a smaller site area providing 1,950 homes, reflecting the Inspector's recommendations on the draft Local Plan.

The masterplan has been informed by liaison with relevant officers at Welwyn Hatfield and East Herts planning authorities and Hertfordshire County Council. Key statutory and local stakeholders have also contributed to the process and informed the preparation of proposals and guidance.





## 1.3 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

### Stakeholder Steering Group

The stakeholder Steering Group for the project was established in autumn 2022 and has met regularly throughout the project process.

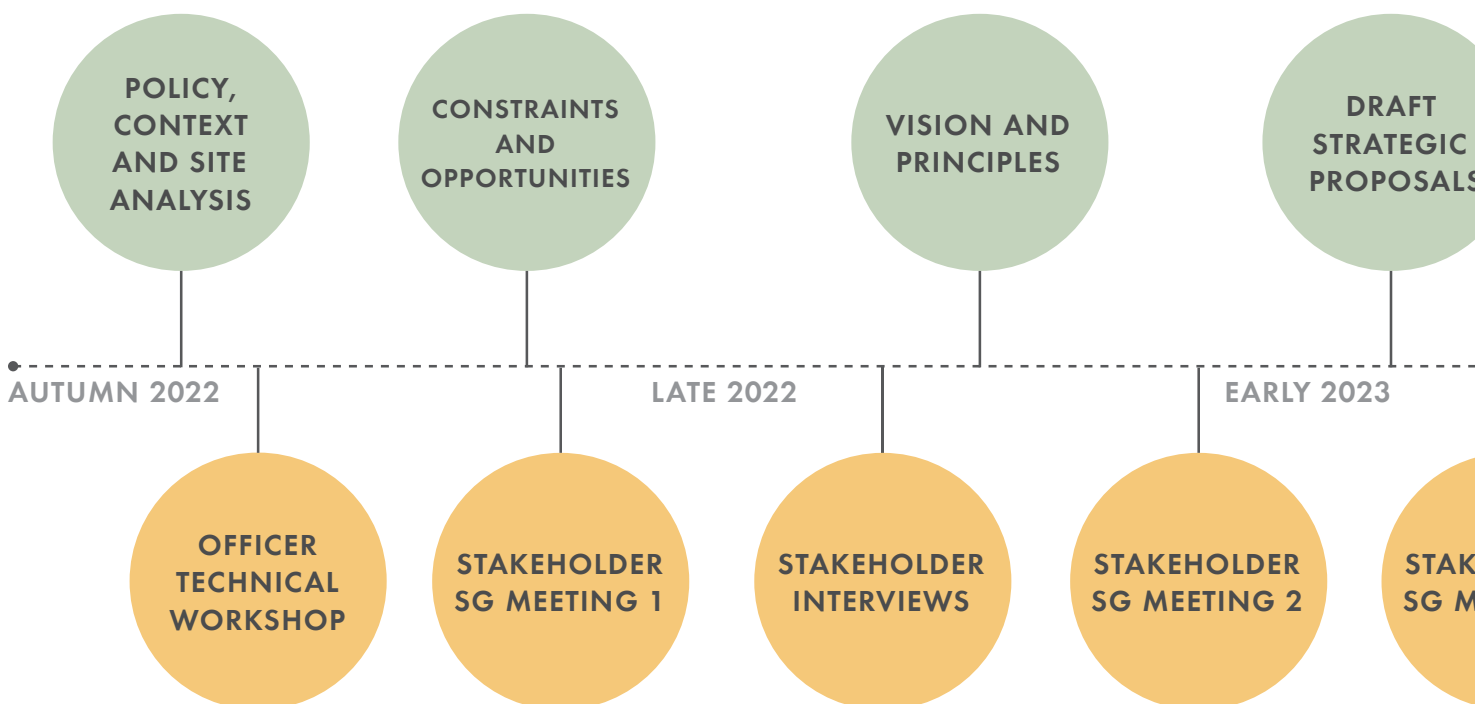
The Steering Group comprises:

- Officers from Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
- Officers from East Herts District Council
- Officers from Hertfordshire County Council
- Portfolio holders and Parish Councillors
- Representatives of civic and special interest groups
- The landowner for the site and design team

### Stakeholder Interviews

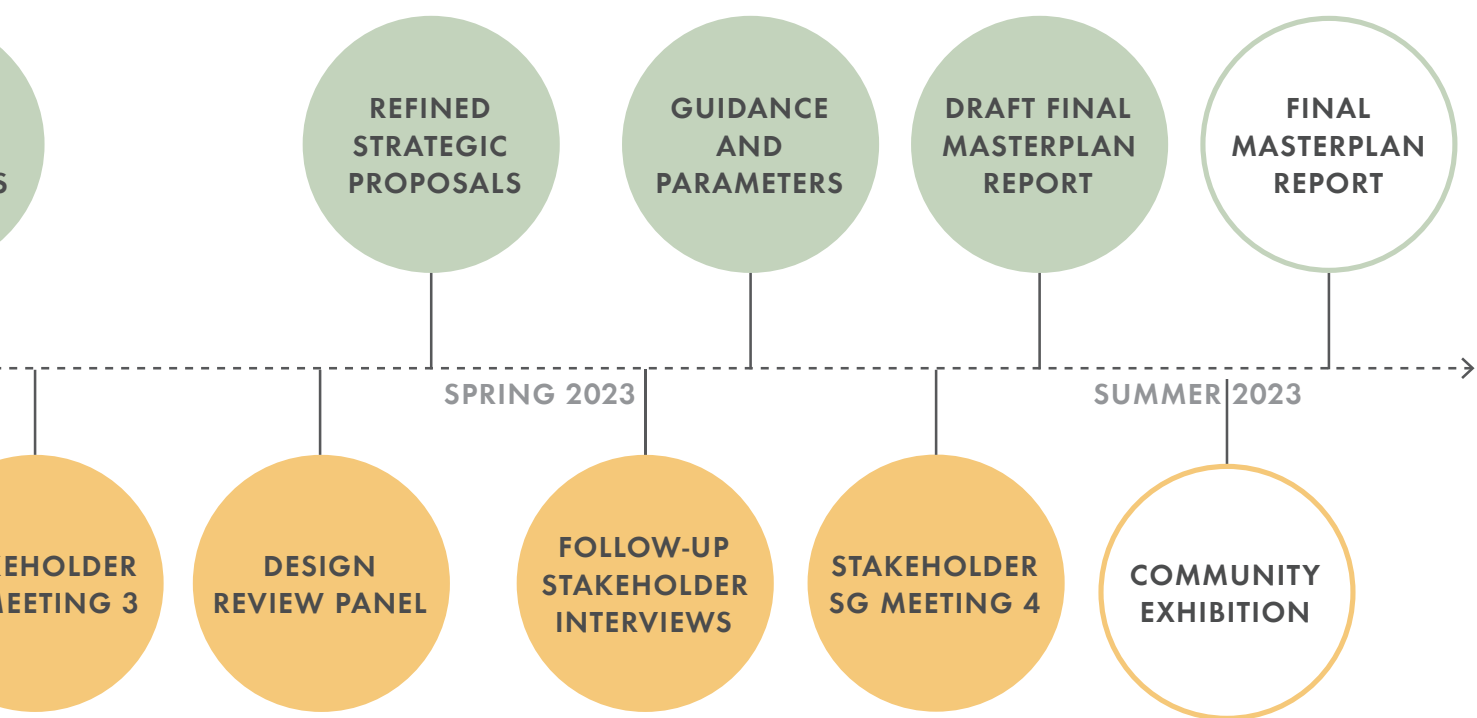
A number of stakeholder interviews were undertaken for the project with statutory consultees, officers and special interest groups. These included:

- Historic England
- Hertfordshire Gardens Trust
- Welwyn Green Corridor Group
- Hertingfordbury Parish Council
- Essendon Parish Council
- BP Mitchell waste site agent
- Land Use Consultants (LUC) (preparing the Green Corridor SPD in 2019)
- Education and highways officers from HCC



## Design Review Panel (DRP)

The team presented draft principles and strategic proposals to the Hertfordshire County Council Design Review Panel (DRP) in late January 2023. This provided an objective and strategic review of the masterplanning, movement, landscape, design and delivery aspects of the emerging masterplan. The feedback from the design review session was incorporated into refined strategic plans and guidance for the Birchall Garden Suburb masterplan.



## 1.4 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

### 1.4.1 Planning

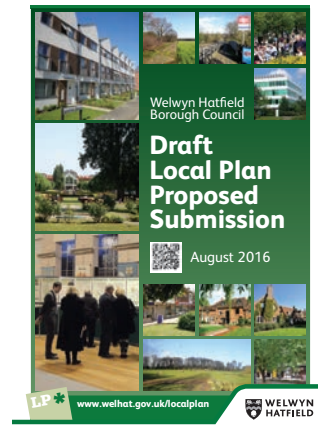
The site is located across the boundary of East Herts District and the Borough of Welwyn and Hatfield.

#### East Herts District

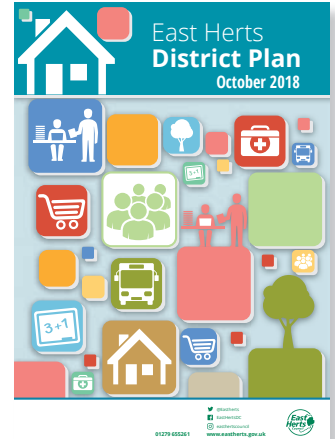
In the East Hertfordshire District Plan (2018) Policy EWEL1 states "Land at Birchall Garden Suburb is allocated for development in both the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan (SDS2) and the East Herts District Plan (EWEL1), to accommodate approximately 2,550 new homes over the plan period, of which 1,200 will be in Welwyn Hatfield Borough and 1,350 in East Herts District'.

#### Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan

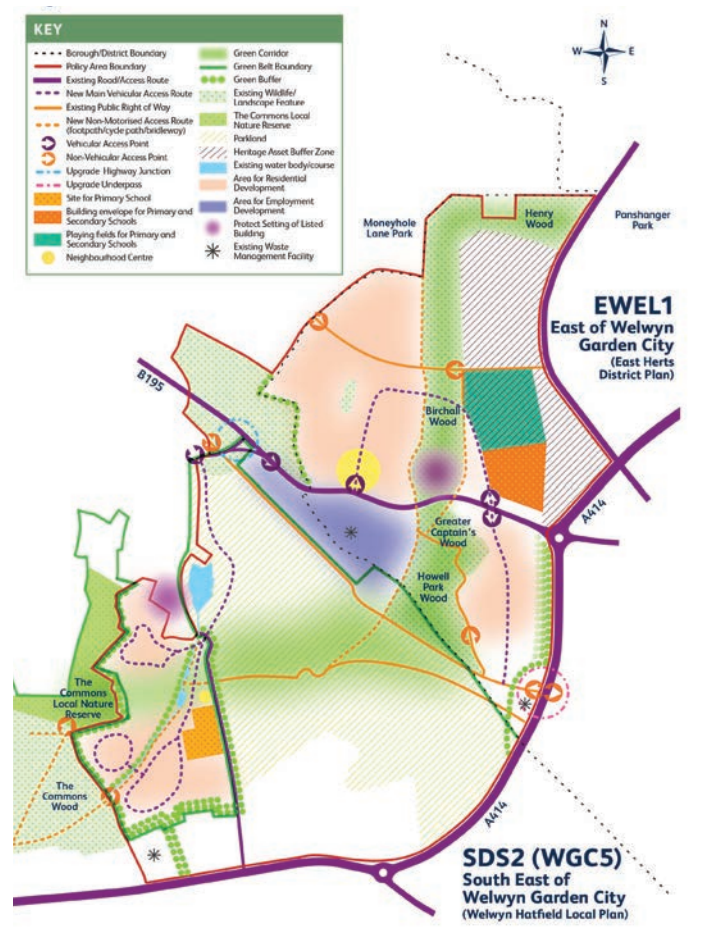
Welwyn Hatfield consulted on Main Modifications to its Local Plan, reflecting recommendations from the Planning Inspector from 4th January-15th February 2023. The previous policy submitted for the Welwyn Hatfield part of the site was to be allocated for 1200 homes, a small neighbourhood centre, and a 2FE primary School. The Local Plan Inspector concluded that it would not be a sound outcome to allocate the fields to the immediate north of the A414 for residential development. As a result, the number of dwellings in the Welwyn Hatfield portion of the site have been reduced from 1,200 homes to 600 homes, and subsequently, the connection to the A414 has been removed for general traffic. The Inspector specifically notes that the land to the south would not provide a sound outcome because of the impact such development would have on the visual openness of the wider Green Belt and the consequent experience of users of the open countryside to the south, as well as the potential harm to the setting of heritage assets.



Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Draft Local Plan 2016



East Herts District Plan 2018



WHBC 2022 Main Modifications Local Plan diagram



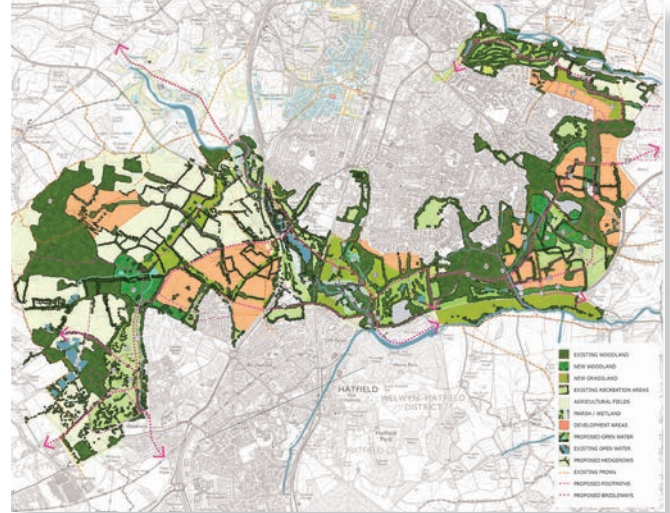
## 1.4.2 Green Infrastructure

### Central Parkland

Due to previous land uses, including mineral workings and landfill operations, it is not possible to develop the central portion of the site. The Hertfordshire Ecological Network (HEN) notes the potential to restore areas of grassland, scrub and woodland within the north of the site. Furthermore, it encourages opportunities to maintain and enhance the ponds in the north and woodland copse to the south.

### Green Corridor

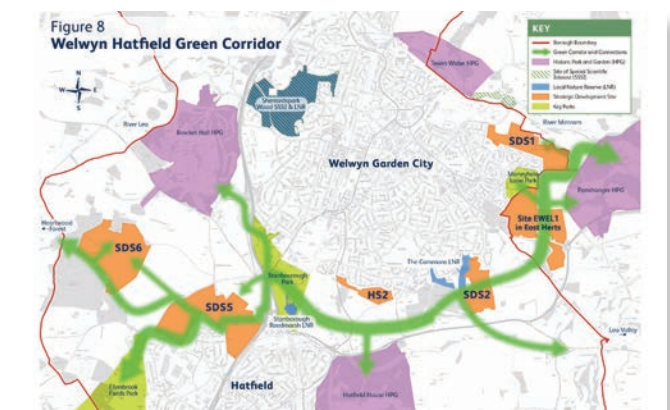
In 2019, LUC established a Green Infrastructure Masterplan, which incorporated a Green Corridor within the site. The Welwyn Hatfield Green Corridor is located between Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield New Town and runs west to east, and is bound to the south by the A414 Hertford Road. The corridor interfaces with the suburban fringe of Welwyn Garden City to the south and east, and wraps around the north-west area of Hatfield. The Green Corridor is a linear network of green infrastructure, intended to aid the movement of wildlife and people, connecting existing green infrastructure in the form of cycleways, bridleway and footpaths. It will provide a strategic green link between Panshanger Park, in the east and Symondshyde Great Wood and Ellenbrook Country Park in the west. In the context of the site, "The inclusion of a Green Corridor within the BGS site will help to conserve features of natural and cultural heritage importance, help communities respond to the anticipated impacts of a changing climate, secure overall net gains to biodiversity through the development and will help mitigate potential impacts on land which is currently not heavily influenced by human involvement." (2019 LUC BGS Green Corridor Consultation).



2019 LUC Green Corridor Masterplan



2019 LUC BGS Green Corridor Consultation



2021 Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan Green Corridor

## 1.4.3 Transport

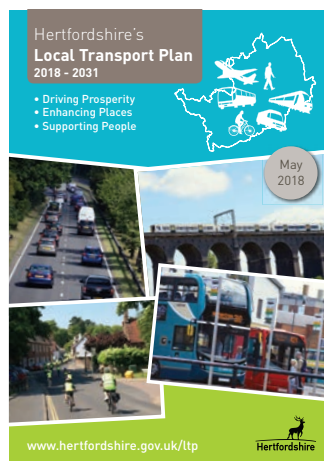
### Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4)

LTP4 was adopted in 2018 and covers the period up to 2031. It provides a framework to guide all future transport planning and investment. The plan sets out a balanced approach to transport which seeks to encourage a switch from private cars to sustainable modes of transport. The plan highlights that Hertfordshire has high levels of car ownership, poor east-west connections, high levels of cross boundary commuting and complicated movement patterns, resulting in congestion, rail overcrowding and air quality problems. To create a transport plan which aims to increase the highway capacity would have a number of negative impacts, and thus the plan seeks to encourage alternative modes of sustainable transport.

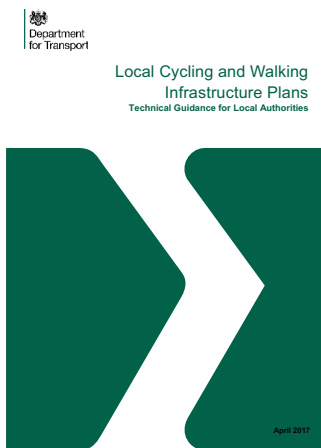
### Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP)

In 2017 the Department for Transport (DfT) published a technical guidance to help local authorities develop LCWIP's. The overarching ambition of LCWIP is to make walking and cycling the desired mode of transport for both short and (parts of) longer journeys. Furthermore, it aimed to decrease the number of cycling fatalities and accidents and increase the number of children (ages 5-10) that walk to school. Welwyn Hatfield produced its own LCWIP in 2022 demonstrating HCC's and WHBC's shared ambition for walking and cycling.

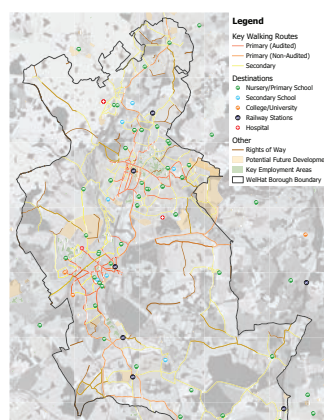
(right) Benefits of Cycling and Walking (produced by Gear Change who gathers existing research on the benefits of active travel. Infographic published in England Cycling and Walking Strategy, by the Department for Transport, 2020



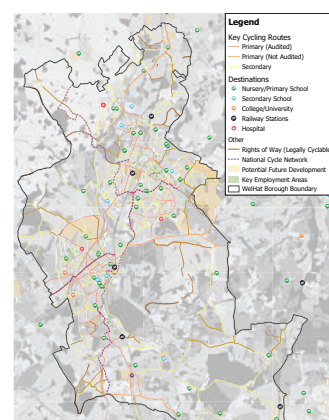
Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (LTP4, 2018-2031)



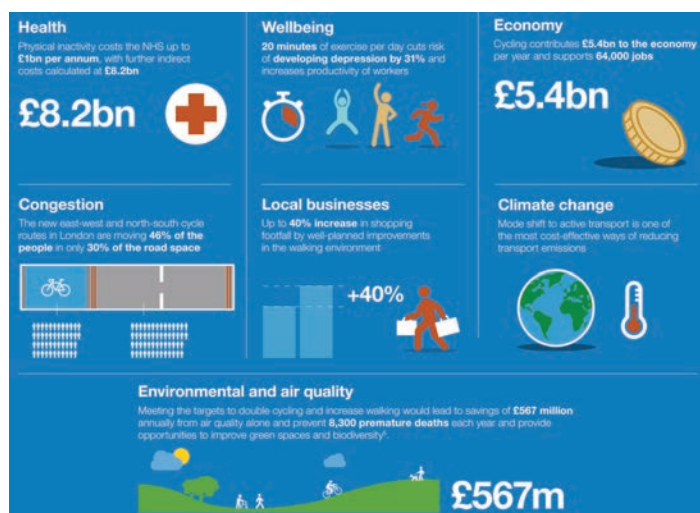
Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (Department for Transport, 2017)



Key walking routes (LCWIP, Welwyn Hatfield Borough, 2022)



Key cycling routes (LCWIP, Welwyn Hatfield Borough, 2022)





## 1.4.4 Housing

### Overall housing figures in site allocation

The East Herts Local Plan allocates the northern part of the Birchall Garden Suburb area for 1,350 homes and the Welwyn Hatfield Main Modifications Local Plan allocates the southern part of the masterplan area for 600 homes.

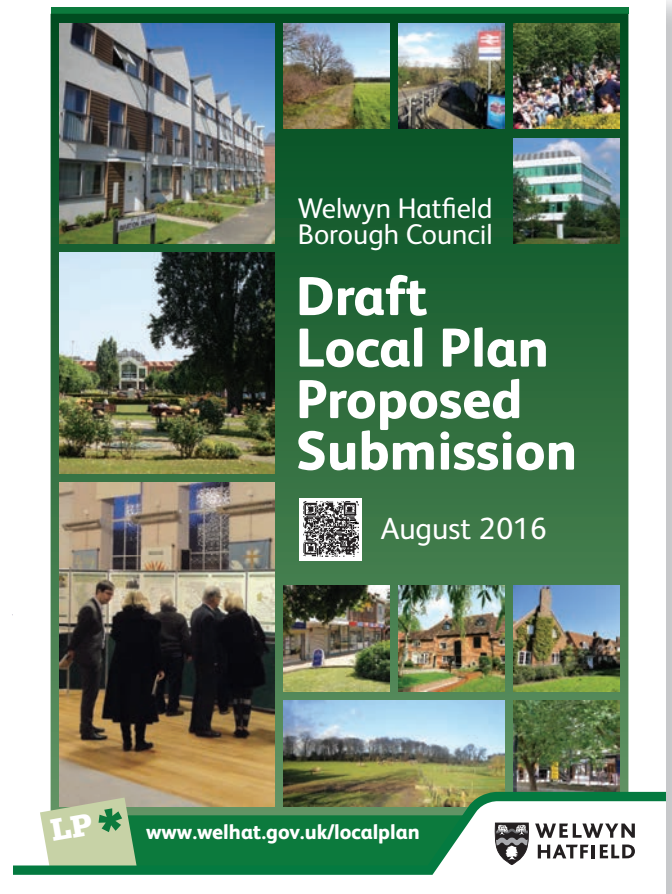
### Housing range and mix

For large developments such as at Birchall Garden Suburb, a range of home sizes and types should be provided, including a mix of starter homes, family homes; specialist residences for older people (flexi-care and residential care homes); and self-build and custom housing (EH Local Plan policies HOU1-HOU10 and WH policy SP7). East Herts identifies a need for 4 Gypsy and Traveller pitches within BGS. Welwyn Hatfield identifies the need for 11 pitches.

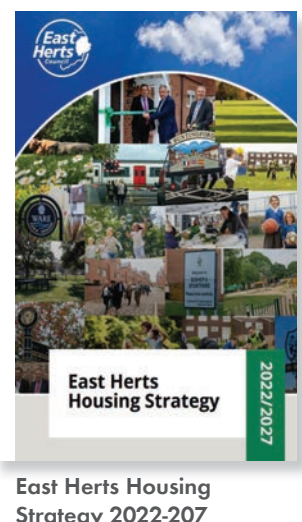
East Herts housing policy requires 40% of homes to be developed as affordable (policy HOU3 and Affordable Housing SPD). Welwyn Hatfield identifies 30% of homes to be affordable (policy SP7), including affordable rent and intermediate affordable housing. This should be provided on-site and integrated within neighbourhoods.

### Density range

Both local planning authorities suggest gross densities of 30-35 dwellings per hectare (dph) for Birchall Garden Suburb. This includes making efficient use of land and being informed by the character of the local area. It should be noted that the HCC Design Review Panel recommended higher densities than this, to support a sustainable approach to masterplanning.



Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Draft Local Plan 2016



## 1.4.5 Sustainability

### International Policy

The UN have set out 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests. SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities - should form a core part in developing a holistic approach to the masterplan's design and development.

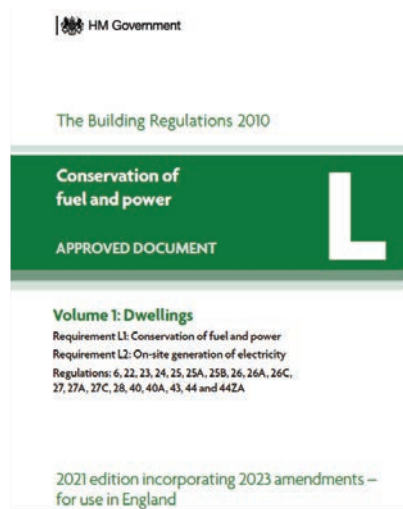
### National Policy

In conjunction with the NPPF, updates to the UK Building Regulations put sustainable communities and sustainable design and construction to the forefront. Part L 2021, as well as the introduction on Part O, set out new building performance standards and ensuring overheating risk is correctly assessed.

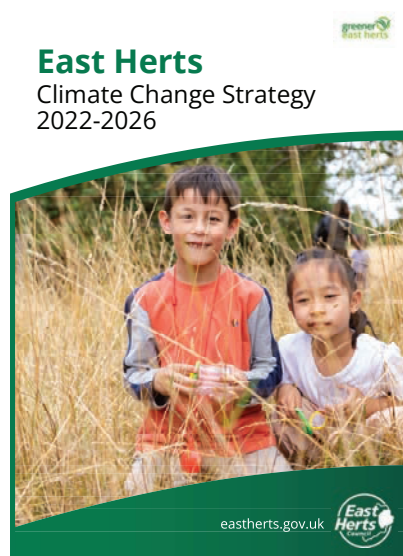
### Local Policy

In 2019 Welwyn Hatfield and East Herts declared a Climate Emergency and subsequently outlined respective Climate Change Strategies to recognise the gravity of the emergency. Both Councils have set an ambition of reaching net-zero by 2030 for their own operations.

Each Council also have extensive policies on sustainability, conservation and improvement of the natural environment and promoting healthy lifestyles.



Part L 2021



East Herts Climate Change Strategy 2022-2026



Global UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)







## 1.5 GARDEN CITY CONTEXT

Welwyn Garden City has served as a prototype for Garden Cities, setting the benchmark and providing radical and inspirational contributions to urban planning.

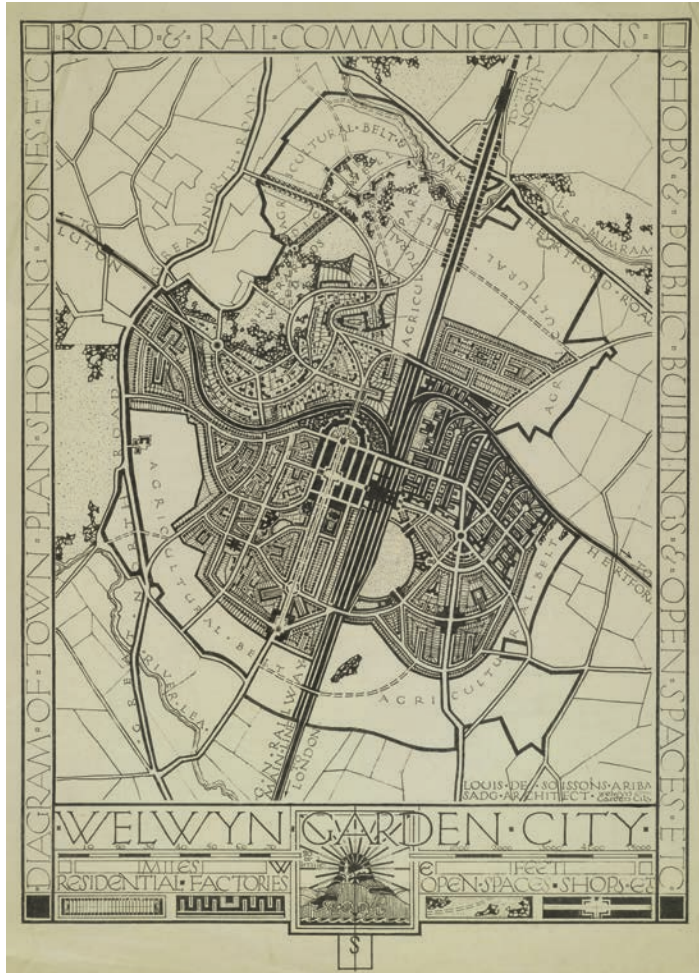
Welwyn Garden City was created in 1920 as England's second Garden City, based on ideas formulated by the Garden City Movement, founded by Ebenezer Howard in 1899, which was later realised by Louis de Soissons. Howard's vision was to reverse the depopulation of the countryside and to decentralise the population of Greater London. London's inner neighbourhoods of the time were overcrowded and residents suffered from poor sanitation and living conditions. Garden Cities were designed to give residents their own homes with outdoor space, indoor toilets, reliable heating and light and airy conditions, in direct response to the conditions of inner London. They were also intended to provide the best of both the town and the country, which was demonstrated in Howard's three magnets diagram.

De Soissons self-sufficient and community focused approach saw plans for Welwyn Garden City include a wide variety of houses, civic and community buildings, industrial buildings, churches, schools, shops, a public theatre and open space. The masterplan was largely landscape-led; Howard's vision of a great central garden was realised through a mile-long Parkway. The whole city was encircled by an agricultural belt as per Howard's garden city concept. Housing densities were low, with no more than 12 houses to an acre (translating as 30 houses a hectare). Many of the city's new roads incorporated mature trees, with few being cut down, and many new trees being planted, creating a green haven for residents.

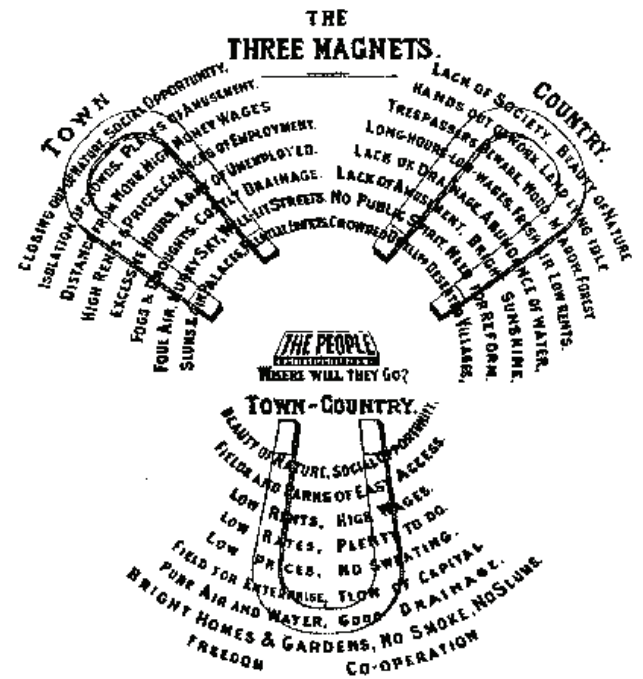
### Garden City Principles (TCPA)

The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) defines nine key principles of a Garden City which are listed below:

- 1. Land value capture for the benefit of the community.**
- 2. Strong vision, leadership and community engagement.**
- 3. Community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets.**
- 4. Mixed-tenure homes and housing types that are genuinely affordable.**
- 5. A wide range of local jobs in the Garden City within easy commuting distance of homes.**
- 6. Beautifully and imaginatively designed homes with gardens, combining the best of town and country to create healthy communities, and including opportunities to grow food.**
- 7. Development that enhances the natural environment, providing a comprehensive green infrastructure network and net biodiversity gains, and that uses zero-carbon and energy-positive technology to ensure climate resilience.**
- 8. Strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable, vibrant, sociable neighbourhoods.**
- 9. Integrated and accessible transport systems, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of local transport.**



Louise de Soissons' Welwyn Garden City masterplan, June 1920



The three magnets diagram by Ebenezer Howard, which addressed the question 'Where will the people go?', with the choices 'Town', 'Country' or 'Town-Country'





# Site Analysis



## 2.1 CONTEXT



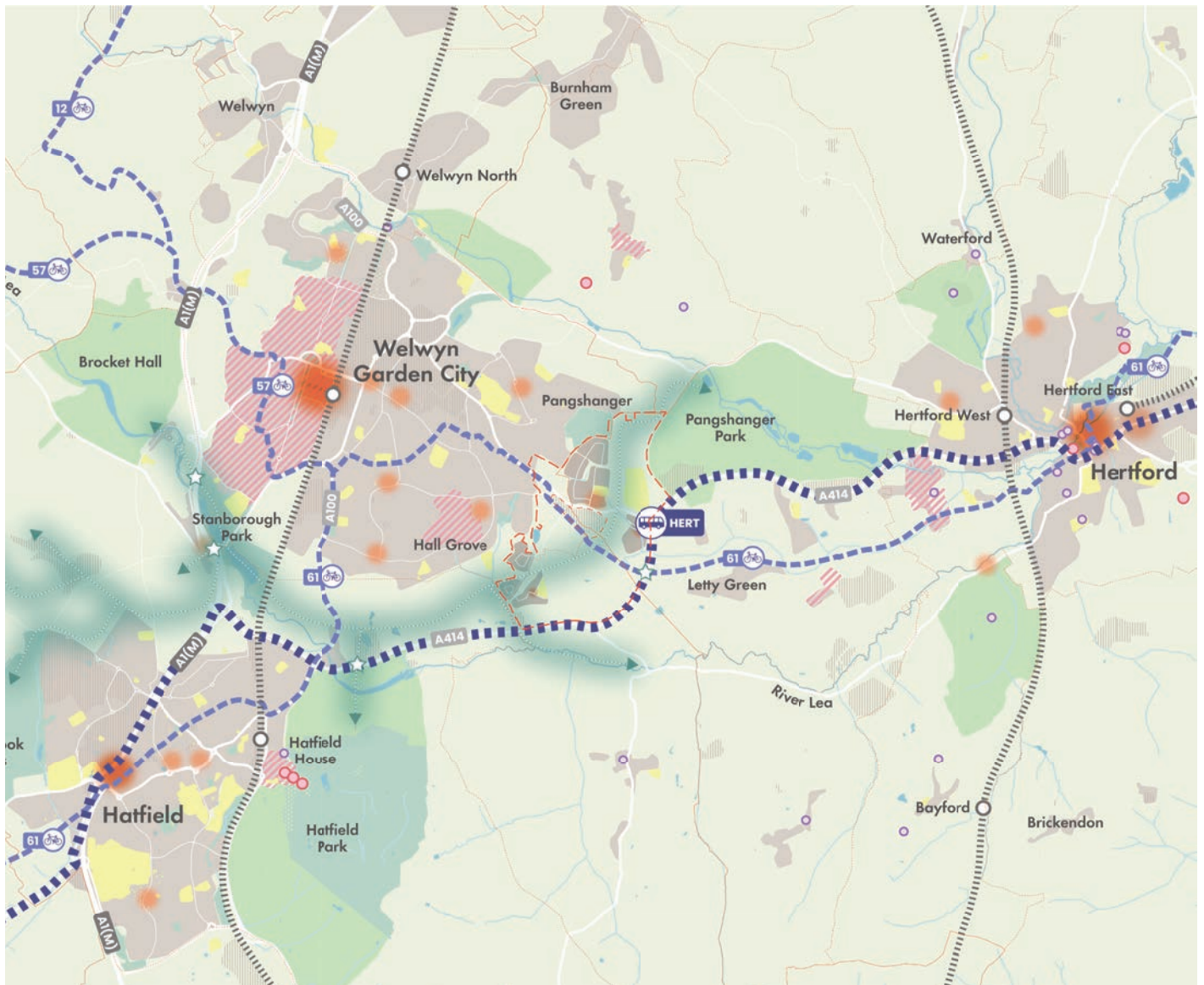
Welwyn Garden City is a town, located in the Welwyn Hatfield borough, within the administrative and historic county of Hertfordshire, located southeast-central England. It is located 32km north of London, and 60km south of Cambridge.

The site is located approximately 2.8km east of Welwyn Garden City town centre, and 475m west of Cole Green. Welwyn Garden City is well-served by major arterial roads. The A1(M) located with the west of Welwyn and Hatfield, and goes from Potters Bar in Outer London, to Stotfold, which is located a few miles north of Letchworth. Junction 5 of the A1(M) provided access to Welwyn Garden City and junction 4 provides access to the A414. The A414 runs along the south and eastern boundary of the site and connects east to Hertford and further on to Harlow.

In addition to these road links, there are connections to St Albans, Harpenden and Luton via the B653, Hatfield via the A1000 and A1001 and Hertford via the B1000.

Welwyn Garden City has a railway station in the town centre with excellent rail links and services south to London King's Cross in an average journey time of 31 minutes, and north east to Cambridge in an average of 56 minutes.

The closest international airport to the site is London Luton airport, located approximately 12.3 miles from Welwyn Garden City, near junction 10 of the M1.



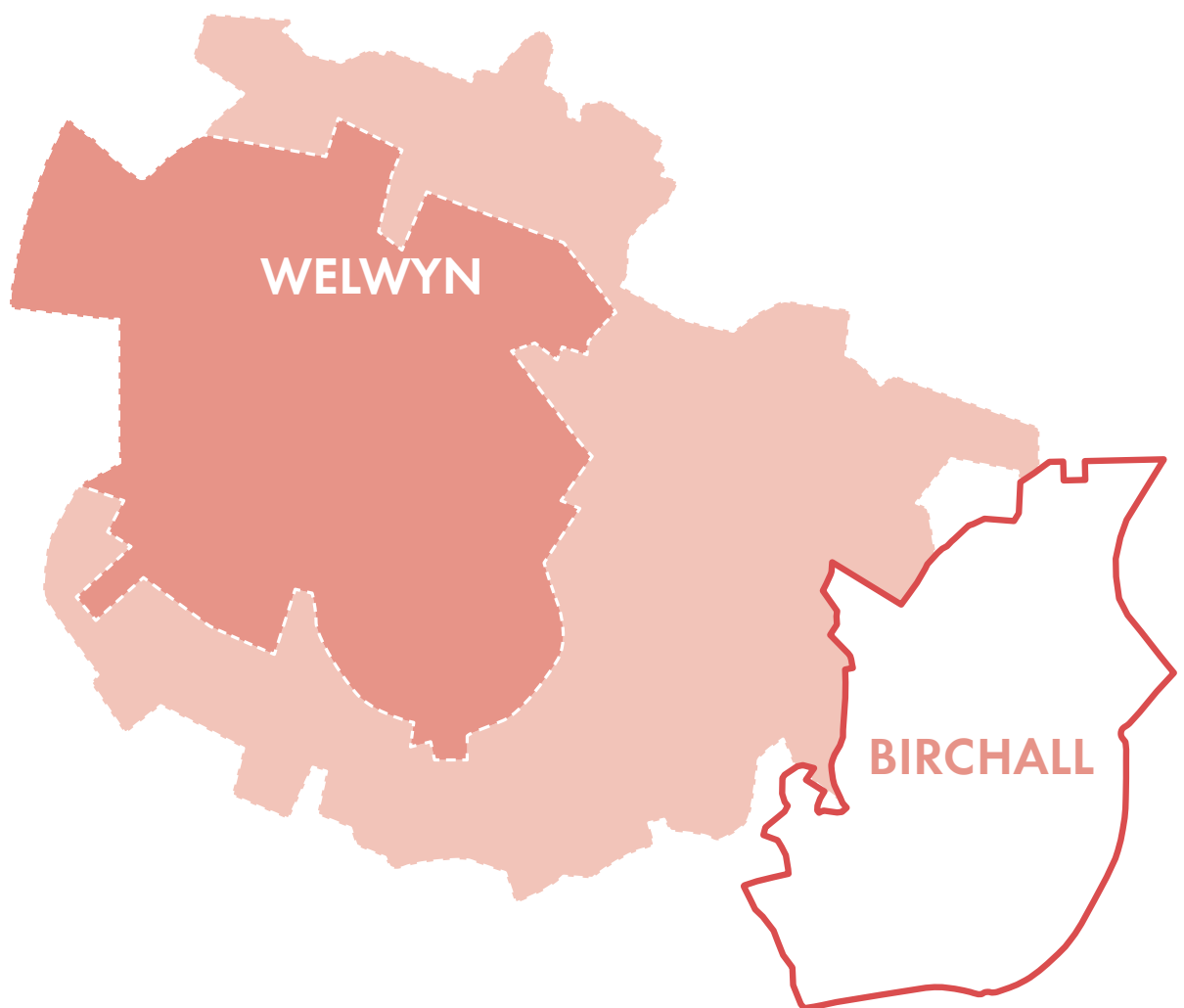
## 2.2 SITE LOCATION

Welwyn has evolved over time, with a number of new layers of development. Birchall Garden Suburb would represent the latest of these evolutions.

The site occupies an area that has been released from the green belt, including agricultural land that will accommodate homes, and a former landfill site that has been redundant since the 1950s and will accommodate parkland.

The site is located to the west of the existing Welwyn Garden City neighbourhoods Panshanger and Hall Grove. To the east of the site are Panshanger Park and a cluster of villages, including Cole Green, Letty Green, Birch Green and Hertingfordbury. To the south are the villages of Essendon and West End.

To the north of the site, the former Panshanger Aerodrome has planning permission for a new residential neighbourhood with a primary school, community uses and local shops.









## 2.3 LAND USES

Within the Birchall Garden Suburb allocated area, there are very few active land uses. The most substantial uses are:

- The waste recycling facility, operated by BP Mitchell, called Burnside, which is located to the south west of the site;
- The Cole Green Lane BP Mitchell site processing, storing and supplying construction materials including concrete, sand and chalk;
- The logistics hub based on Cole Green Lane

All three of these uses require access for articulated lorries.

In addition to the industry, the Birchall Farm building, barn and stables operates from the north side of Birchall Lane. This also serves as a residential building, close to the homes found on Birchall Lane.



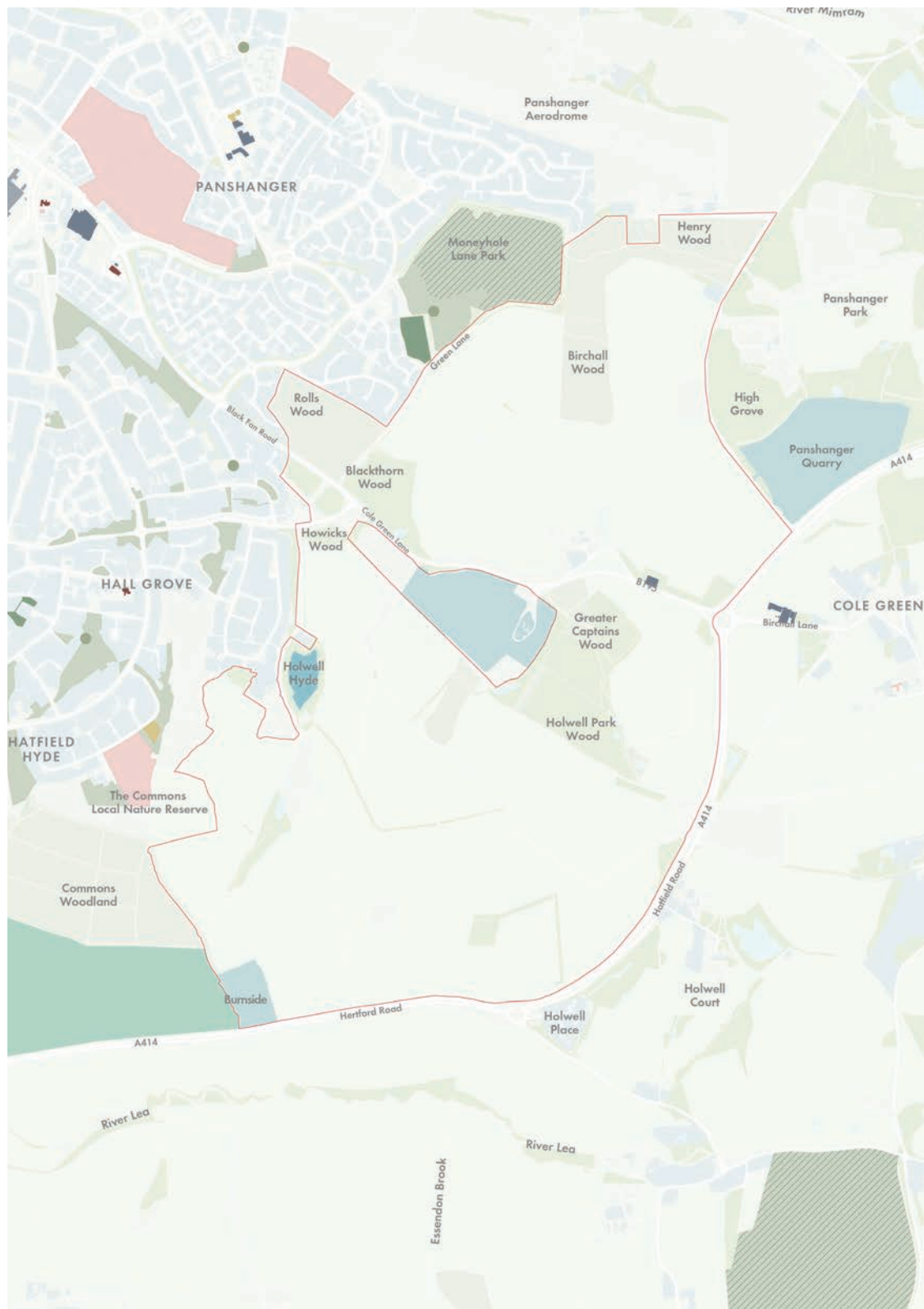
**Birchall Farm**



**Birchall Farm**



**Holwell Hyde Angling Lake**





## 2.4 LOCAL AMENITIES

The majority of existing local amenities nearby are found in the Panshanger and Hall Grove neighbourhoods, each of which have local shops, a community centre, nursery, church and medical centre. Additionally, Panshanger additionally benefits from a local supermarket and Hall Grove includes a care home and pharmacy. Cole Green village also has nursery provision. Allotments are found to the south of Moneyhole Lane Park, next to the Panshanger neighbourhood.

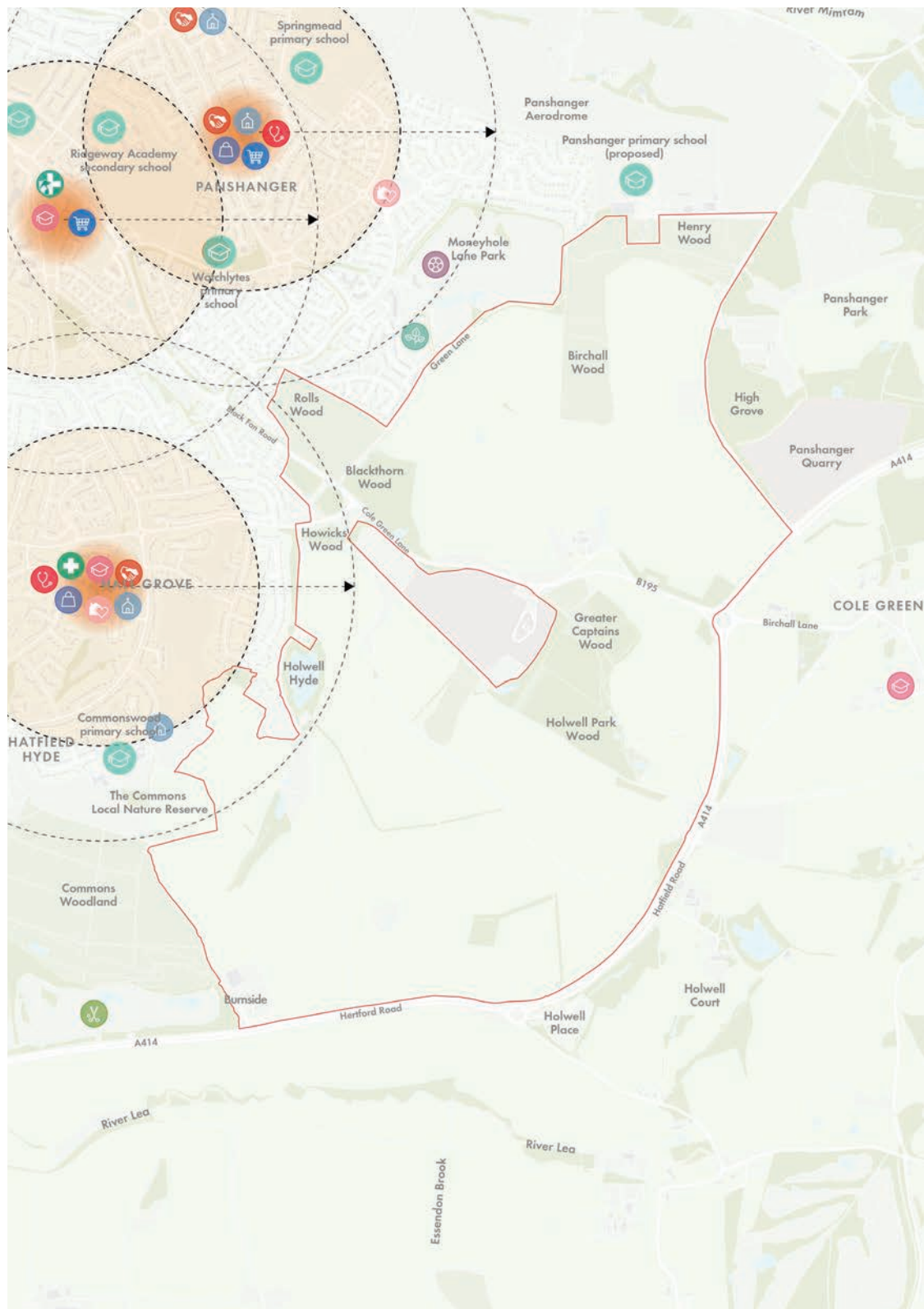
A number of primary schools are found at Commonswood, Watchlytes and Springmead, along with the Ridgeway Academy secondary school. A primary school is also proposed to the north of the site, at the former Panshanger Airfield site.



Attimore Park pub in Panshanger



Local shops in Hall Grove



- Site boundary
- 🎓 School
- 🎒 Nursery
- ⛪ Church
- 🏠 Community Centre
- 🏥 Medical Centre
- 🌱 Allotments
- ⚽ Football pitch
- 🏌️ Golf course
- 🏠 Care Home
- 🏥 Pharmacy
- 🛒 Local shop
- 🛒 Supermarket
- 🏥 Veterinary Hospital
- 📍 Local Central
- 500m catchment
- 800m catchment

## 2.5 VEHICULAR MOVEMENT

### Vehicular Movement

Birchall Garden Suburb sits within the A414 strategic road which wraps around the southern side of Welwyn Garden City. This provides good access locally to Hertford and Hatfield, and more widely to the M25 and M1. However, the road acts as a significant barrier for the villages located to the east and the south of the site (The Greens, Hertingfordbury and Essendon), from Welwyn Garden City.

The area is connected to the town centre via Blackfan Road and Cole Green Lane, which runs through Hall Grove and through to the station. This road currently has a 50 mph speed limit as it passes the Birchall Garden Suburb site.

There are currently no roads which extend into the EH Birchall Garden Suburb area. Holwell Hyde Lane extends south from Cole Green Lane to Holwell Hyde Brook, towards the WH neighbourhoods within Birchall Garden Suburb.

A Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT) extends southwards from Hall Grove to the A414 Hertford Road, although there are no crossings on the A414 at the southern end of the byway.

### Public transport

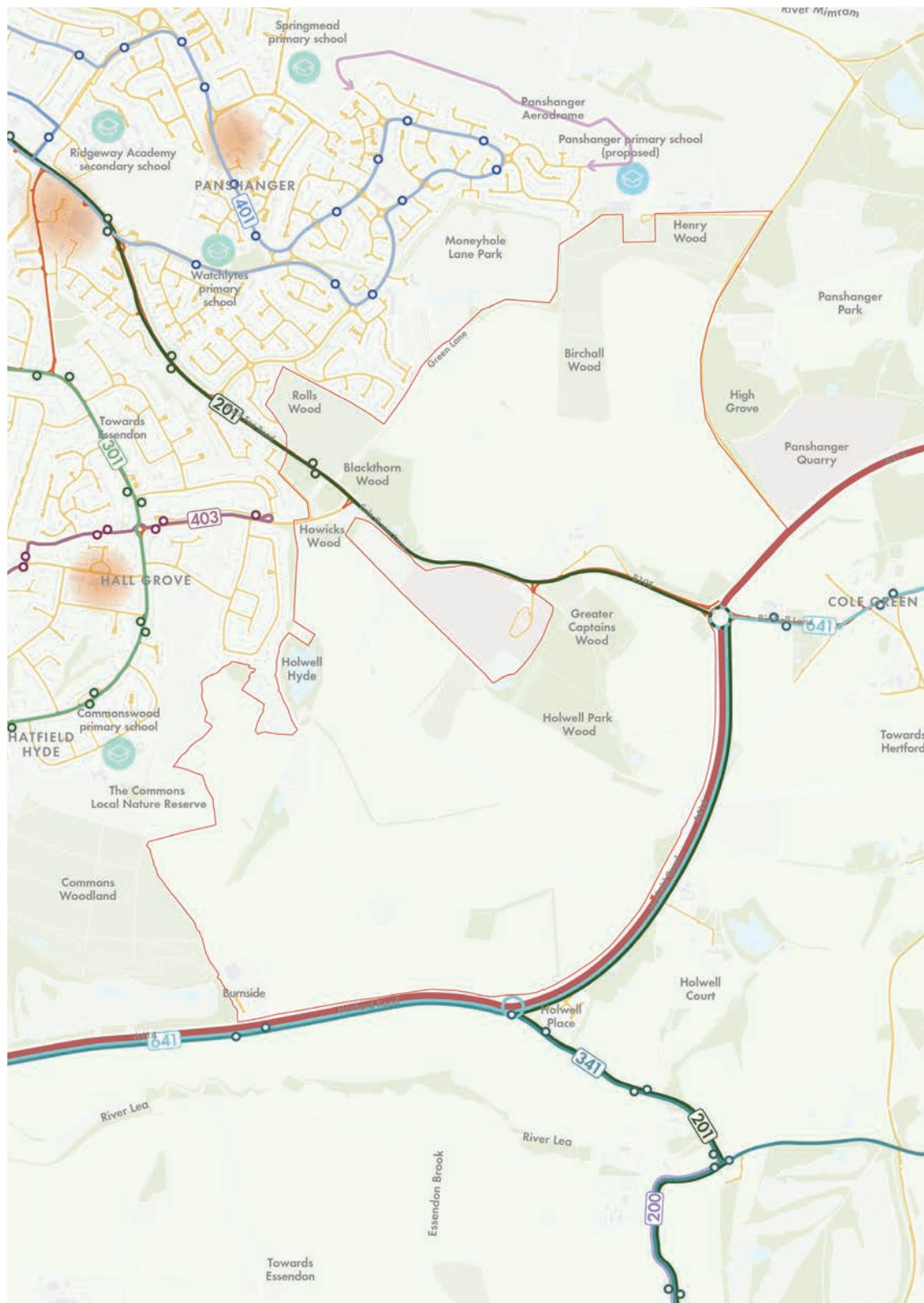
The adjacent Hall Grove area is currently served by the 301 and 403 bus routes. The Panshanger area is served by the 401 bus route. The 401 route is very likely to be extended in the future to serve the proposed neighbourhood at the former Panshanger Aerodrome. Some of these routes could be extended in the future to serve the Birchall Garden Suburb area.

The nearby villages are served by the 641, 341, 201 and 200 which all run along the A414. The 201 runs along Blackfan Road and Birchall Lane, which could easily serve Birchall Garden Suburb in the future.

A Bus Rapid Transit - HERT - is proposed to run between St Albans to the west and Harlow to the east, and extending on to Stansted Airport. The Birchall Garden Suburb area has been identified as a suitable location for a stop on the HERT.

Welwyn Garden Station has direct links to London, Cambridge and Peterborough.





## 2.6 ACTIVE MOVEMENT

The Birchall Garden Suburb area is traversed by a number of existing Public Rights of Way (PRoW), bridleways, byways, footpaths and tracks. However, these do not currently combine to create a full network, with some areas such as Birchall Wood far better served than others.

These routes often run through ancient woodland, wildlife sites and the Local Nature Reserve at The Commons. There are three entrances to The Commons LNR which can be found on Holands, The Commons and Cornfield open space.

Key routes within the masterplan area include:

- A public footpath which extends from the eastern boundary of the masterplan area to the byway and then south-eastwards to the A414 Hatfield Road near to Holwell Court Farm.
- A public footpath which follows Green Lane along the northern boundary of the EH masterplan area and links Rolls Wood to Money Hole Lane Park.
- A public footpath which extends east-west across the EH masterplan area providing access from Welwyn Garden City towards Panshanger Park.
- The byway between Holwell Hyde Farm and Hertford Road (A414), which is a popular walking route and provides access to the angling lake at Holwell Hyde. The byway also takes walkers to the informal access space on the former Holwell Hyde waste disposal/ land fill area.

Public access is available at The Commons Local Nature Reserve which is located to the west of the BGS site. There is limited permissive access over The Commons Woods, which are located to the south of the LNR.

There are walking connections to nearby neighbourhoods Panshanger and Hall Grove although these are not particularly legible or well-maintained. Walking connections to the nearby villages are even more challenging, with pedestrian crossings across the A414 very limited and unsafe.

The Cole Green Way is a non-motorised transport route, which follows the former Hertford to Welwyn Garden City branch rail line. It is part of the National Cycle Route 61 which provides a valuable connection between Hertford and Welwyn Garden City for cyclists, horse riders and pedestrians. The cycle lane continues along Blackfan Road into Welwyn Garden City town centre. However, other than this link cycling provision is limited in the area.





- Site boundary
- ⊕ Non-motorised access point
- PRoW
- National Cycleway
- Cycle route
- Bridleway
- Footpath/desire lines
- Byway
- Track
- Local centre
- ⊕ School

## 2.7 LOCAL VERNACULAR

The local vernacular of Welwyn Garden City's original neighbourhoods and later additions close to the site give design clues for the development that can help it to reflect and sit comfortably in its context.

### Welwyn Garden City

The original residential and street character of Welwyn Garden City was developed in a Neo-Georgian style, with symmetry, generously sized windows and a range of articulated building façades to give interest to the street. Red brick is the dominant material, with pitched roofs and chimney stacks evident. Many buildings were designed to create double aspect internal rooms, either through shallow or L shaped building footprints. The scale and density of buildings varied, however, with one and a half storey cottages and three storey maisonettes incorporated in the earlier phases of the Garden City.

Clear boundaries between private and public space were important, with many residences having front gardens and others being defined by hedgerows. In some cases, homes were set back or away from through roads, creating a mews environment.

Later development at Panshanger (close to the Birchall Garden Suburb site) reflected a more Modernist design aesthetic, with asymmetric windows and roof pitches (top left). The focus on creating light-filled interiors remained, however.

Later phases of development in the Panshanger area also included self-build developments including the Panway Self-Build Group (middle left) which was developed over an 18 month period.





## Site Context

There are very few buildings within and immediately adjacent to the Birchall Garden Suburb site area. However, these include the Grade II Listed Birchall Farmhouse, barn and stable buildings just to the north of Birchall Lane, built in the 17th and 18th Centuries in red brick and wooden clapboard, with a moat surrounding the site at one point. The Grade II Listed Holwell Hyde Farm buildings just to the west of Holwell Hyde Lane were built in the 17th Century, with 19th Century additions. Each of these heritage assets will need to be respected in terms of their setting. Further information on these is provided in the heritage section of the site analysis.

Residential buildings are located on the north side of Birchall Lane and these are excluded from the site allocation. These are red brick, 1.5 storey chalet bungalow style buildings, with tall pitched roofs and hung tiles on the gable ends. They are set back from the road, with privet hedges screening the buildings from the road.

More recently, a logistics hub has been developed on the south side of Cole Green Lane which provides a tall, single storey block with graduated sage green cladding. The building backs onto the road and provides parking to the rear.

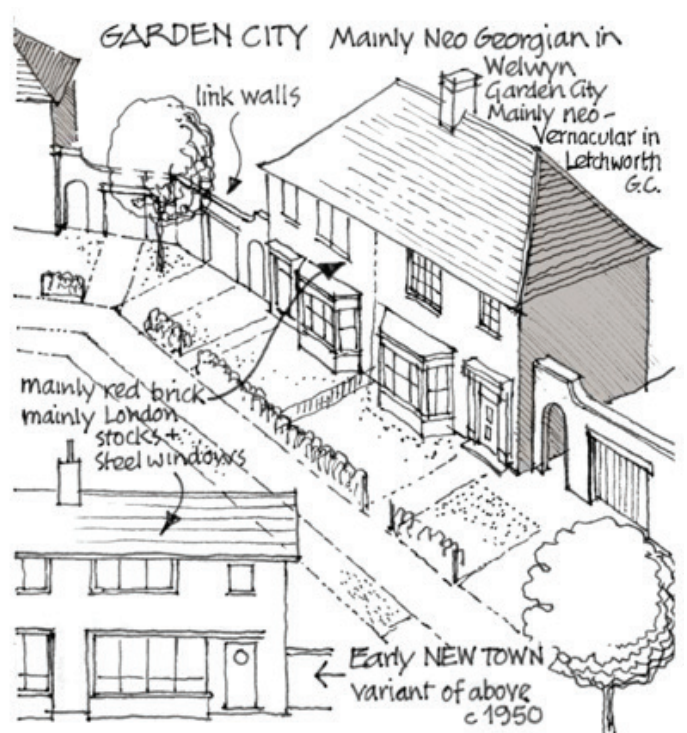
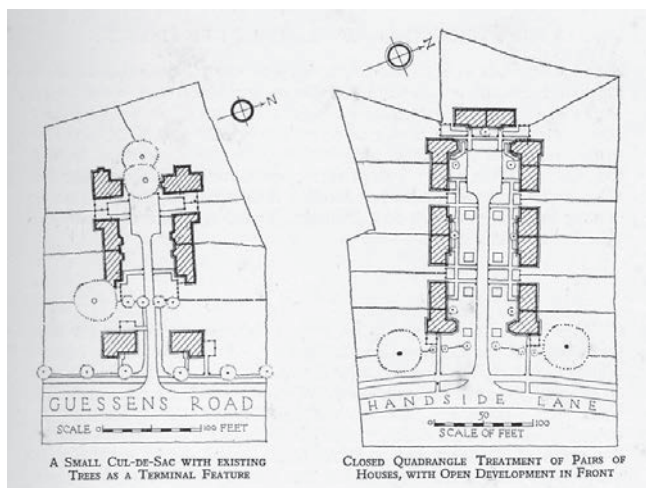
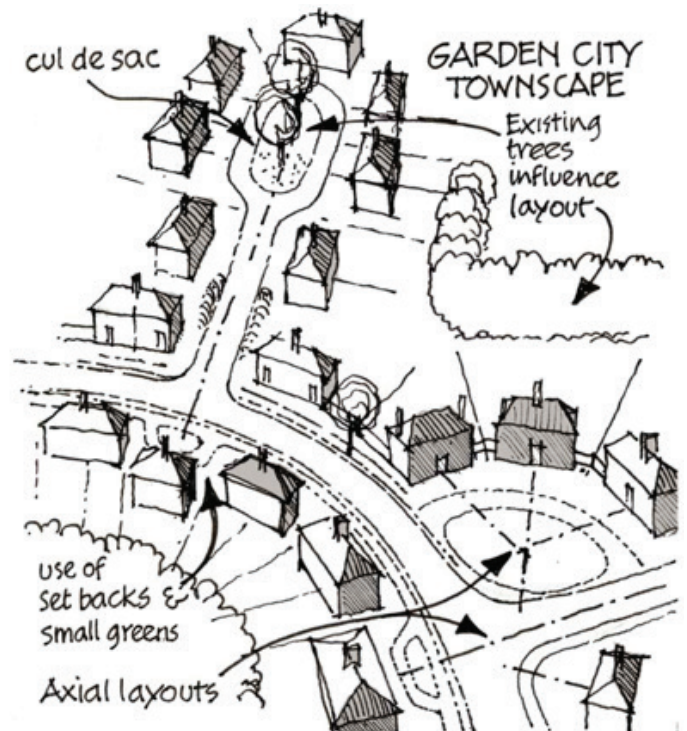




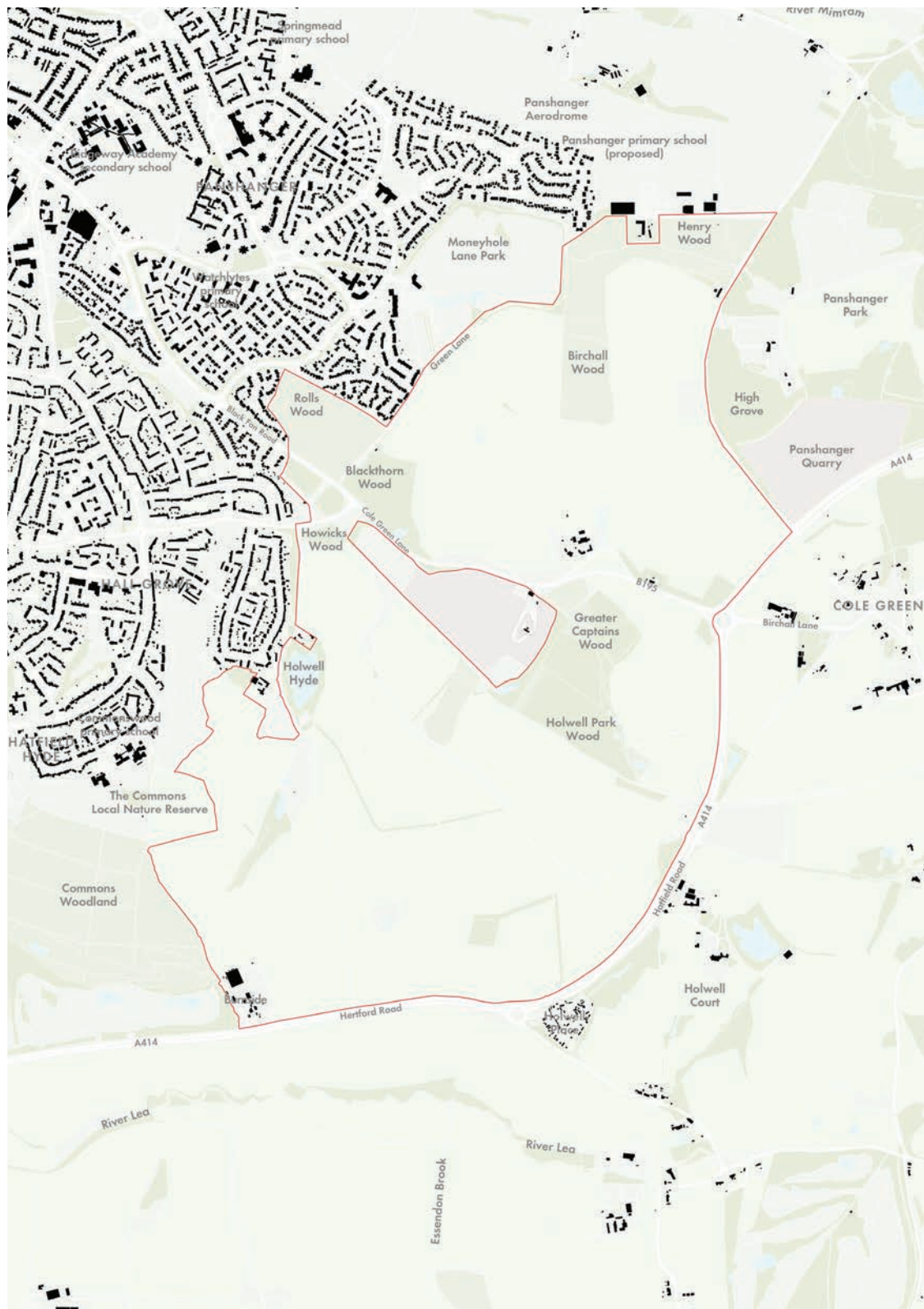
## 2.8 URBAN STRUCTURE AND CHARACTER

Welwyn's original neighbourhoods were set out as generous boulevards, with connected streets and set pieces around communal green space. Louis de Soissons created variation in the street scene by varying the distance from front facade to road between houses. More recent development at Panshanger and Hall Grove reflect standard suburban developments, with semi-detached and detached homes set out along residential streets, some of which connect and some which operate as cul-de-sacs. Street patterns are less pronounced and legible in the suburban developments. However, both in Welwyn Garden City's original neighbourhoods and more recent additions, homes tend to front onto public open spaces. Welwyn Garden City's original neighbourhoods were set at 12 homes per acre (c.30 dph). Density levels nearby are generally 25-35 dwellings per hectare with family homes being two-storeys with pitched roofs.

The surrounding villages of Cole Green, Letty Green, Birch Green and Essendon have more informal layouts with compact village cores but more dispersed homes beyond these, which provide overall lower density levels of 5-15 dwellings per hectare







**Figureground plan**  
The figureground plan gives clues to the morphology, density and structure of existing neighbourhoods by highlighting building footprints against roads and open spaces. This information is further analysed on the following pages.

□ Site boundary  
■ Built form

## 2.9 NEIGHBOURHOOD STRUCTURE

A tissue study comparison between original Welwyn Garden City neighbourhoods and more recent suburban development shows some striking differences in form and structure.

The original Garden City neighbourhoods had a far clearer structure and associated legibility than their later suburban counterparts. This formal structure enabled a far more efficient layout and use of land. This means that the density levels (dph) of the suburbs and the garden

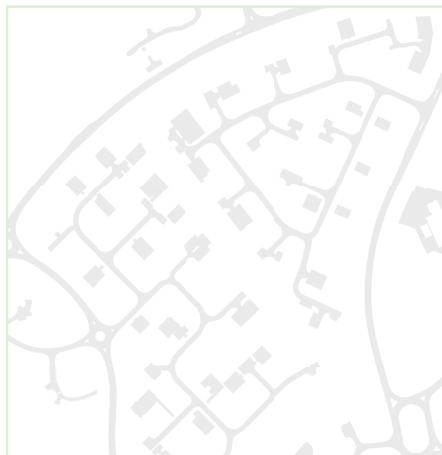
city neighbourhoods are very similar, despite the suburbs having far smaller gardens and a far less spacious character.

This provides a valuable steer for masterplanning new neighbourhoods at Birchall Garden Suburb, which can reflect the more structured character of the original Garden City neighbourhoods to establish a more sustainable approach of slightly higher densities whilst retaining a spacious character.

### SUBURB

#### Street Hierarchy

Far more space is given over to roads and parking areas - 'grey infrastructure' - in the suburb, which lowers density without improving the environment. There are far more cul-de-sacs within the suburban area



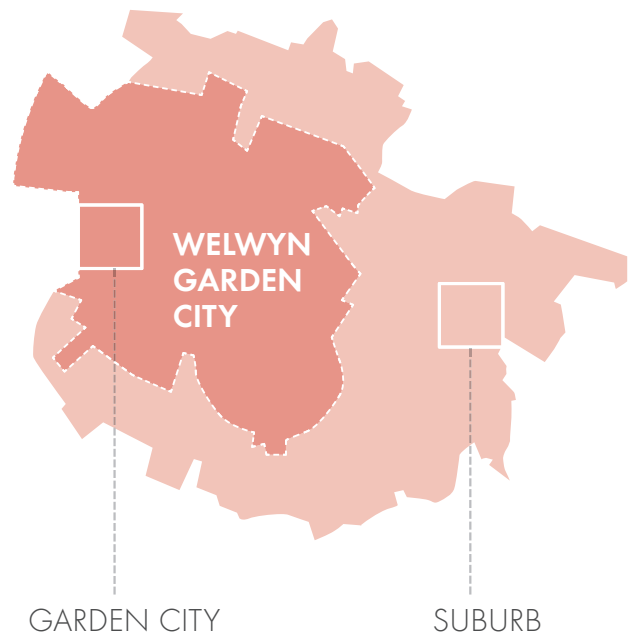
### GARDEN CITY

#### Figure Ground

The figureground demonstrates the lack of legibility within suburban neighbourhoods. Without these being clearly marked, it is almost impossible to identify where the roads are, revealing a lack of structure and road hierarchy







## SUBURB

## GARDEN CITY

### Private gardens

Private gardens in the original Welwyn Garden City neighbourhoods are far more generous than within the suburbs. It is surprising then that densities are very similar



### Morphology

The striking differences between the two neighbourhood areas are revealed by isolating the different aspects of the spatial layout. These characteristics combine to provide a more familiar plan of each area



## 2.10 HERITAGE ASSETS

Birchall Farmhouse (late C18th) and the associated Stables and Barn are Grade II Listed and located in the EH area of the site, north of Greater Captains Wood. The Grade II Listed Holwell Hyde Farmhouse (circa late C16th) is located just outside of the north-western boundary of the WH area of the site. The farmhouse is relatively well enclosed, with trees to the south and Holwell Hyde lake to the east. Panshanger Park (circa early C19th) is located to the north-east of the EH area of the site. Numerous grade II listed buildings are included within Panshanger Park including the walled garden and gardeners house.

The setting of Birchall Farm and its associated buildings will be further protected by the presence of the Green Corridor. Furthermore the Green Corridor will protect the historical landscape character through the conservation and restoration of hedgerows.

The plan identifies a open landscape buffer adjacent to Panshanger Park. Additional buffers are located at Birchall Farm and Holwell Hyde Farmhouse.

Hatfield House (Grade I listed) and its Registered Park and Garden (Grade I listed), is located approximately 1.5km southwest of the site (located off the plan). There are open rural views to the south, east and northeast of Hatfield House. Whilst extensive mature tree planting within the north of the park and garden softens the relationship with the A414 and Welwyn, there are some long views and inter-visibility through the landscape and open fields, facilitated by the topography of the land. The rural nature of the Lea valley contributes strongly to the setting of Hatfield House.

Any development should respect the setting of Panshanger Registered Parks and Gardens by providing sufficient landscape buffering and noise mitigation measures.

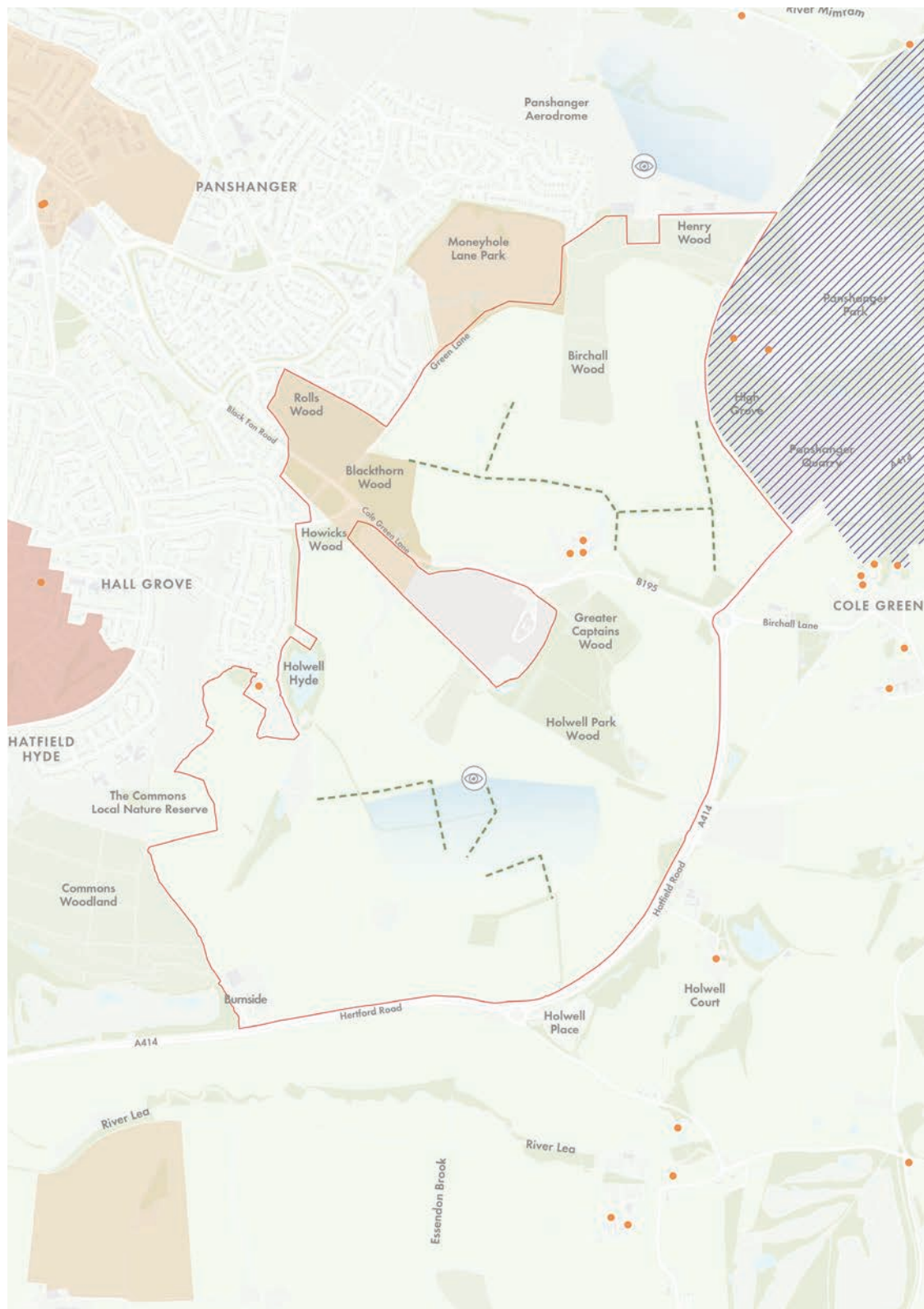


**Birchall Farm Barn**



**Birchall Farm southern block**







## 2.11 LANDSCAPE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Much of the land within the site is managed as arable agriculture, interspersed with large areas of semi-improved grassland, blocks of broad-leaved woodland, remnant field boundaries, dense scrub, and water bodies, which include ditches and ponds.

Much of the agricultural land on the site will support a range of ecosystem services, including carbon storage, water infiltration, nutrient cycling and food provision. Natural England (NE) highlight that due to the loss of a portion of this agricultural land to development, there is a need to retain as much as possible of the soils important functions and services.

The plan identifies a central area of land in the site which was previously used for mineral workings and landfill operations. Central Herts Green Corridor Group (CHGC) have identified areas of Leachate breakout, as a result of the former landfill waste disposal operations. These are located predominantly within the scrub and grassland mix close to the water course in the WH area. These have been identified on the plan as blue flags.

The CHGC have also identified an area of ancient fen within the Commons LNR which is a highly important site, including the water source that supports it.

Within the EH area of the site Blackthorn Wood, Rolls Wood and Holwell Hyde and Howick's Woods are covered by TPO. Outside of the site boundary, there are TPOs on areas of woodland where Henry Wood meets Panshanger Park.

The water bodies within the site, and network of trees, hedges and woodland, support a variety of wildlife, contributing to the wider network of habitats within area. Despite this, much of the woodland and green spaces are relatively fragmented, limiting the movement of wildlife biodiversity.

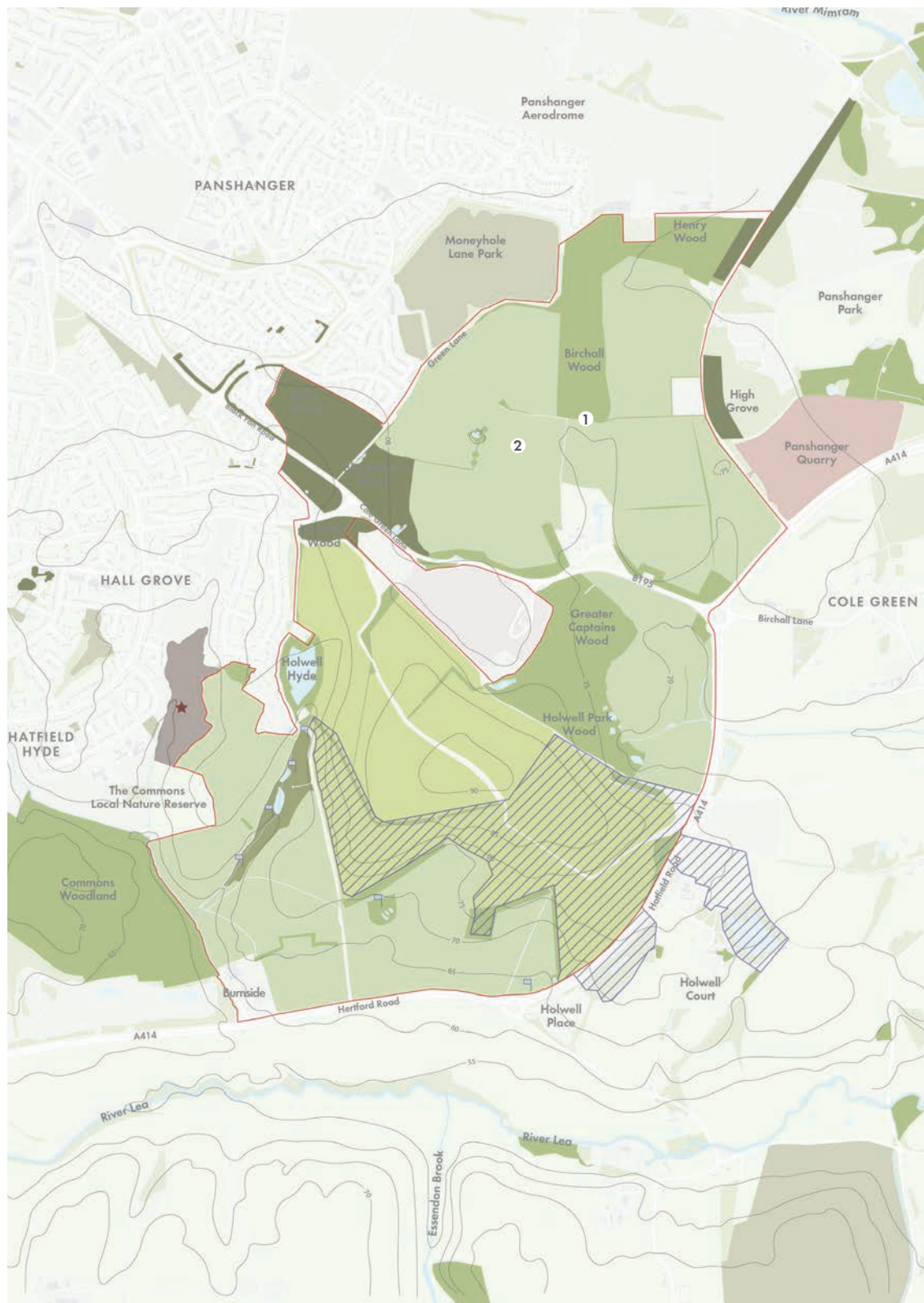


**Birchall Wood (south) (1)**



**Undulating landscape in EH area of site (2)**





- Site boundary
- Contours
- Grassland
- Agricultural land
- Scrub and grassland mix
- Trees/hedges/woodland
- Area of trees with Tree Preservation Order (TPO)
- Water bodies
- Quarry area
- Green space site
- ▨ Disused mineral extraction
- Identified by CHGC:
- ★ Ancient Fen
- Blackfan Fen area
- └─┘ Leachate breakout



## 2.12 ECOLOGICAL DESIGNATIONS

### Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)

Located both within and around the site are several broadleaved woodlands, which are designated as LWS's. These include Rolls and Blackthorn Woods LWS, Greater Captain's and Holwell park Wood LWS, Cole Green Way (western end) LWS, Henry and Birchall Woods LWS, The Commons LWS, and Panshanger Park LWS. Located to the north of the site, along the River Mimram is the Archers Green LWS, which includes rare chalk streams, home to a rich variety of wildlife including Kingfishers, bees and endangered Water Voles.

### Local Nature Reserve (LNR)

The Commons LNR is located to the south west of the site, adjoining the western edge of the WH site area. This 15 hectares includes a mosaic of habitats including broadleaved woodland and is designated for its grassland indicators, Blackfan valley fen and swamp. The boundaries of the LNR have remained the same since 1840.

### Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Tewinbury SSSI is located approximately 1.8km north west of the site boundary and comprises a series of alluvial meadows and marshes bordering the River Mimram. There are several Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) radiating out from the SSSI with varying conditions applied to them. An IRZ covers much of the EH portion of the site, which will impact major infrastructure and roads.

### Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW)

Henry Wood, and parts of Greater Captain's and Holwell Park Wood are designated as Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland. Birchall Wood is designated as Planted Ancient Woodland Site.

### Panshanger Registered Park and Garden

Panshanger Park includes a variety of mature tree planting, which forms a strong visual barrier to the site.



The Commons LNR



Birchall Wood - Ancient Woodland





- Site boundary
- Local wildlife site
- Conservation area
- Local Nature Reserve
- Tewinbury SSSI IRZ
- Ancient woodland (ASNW & Re-planted ancient woodland)

## 2.13 GREEN CORRIDOR

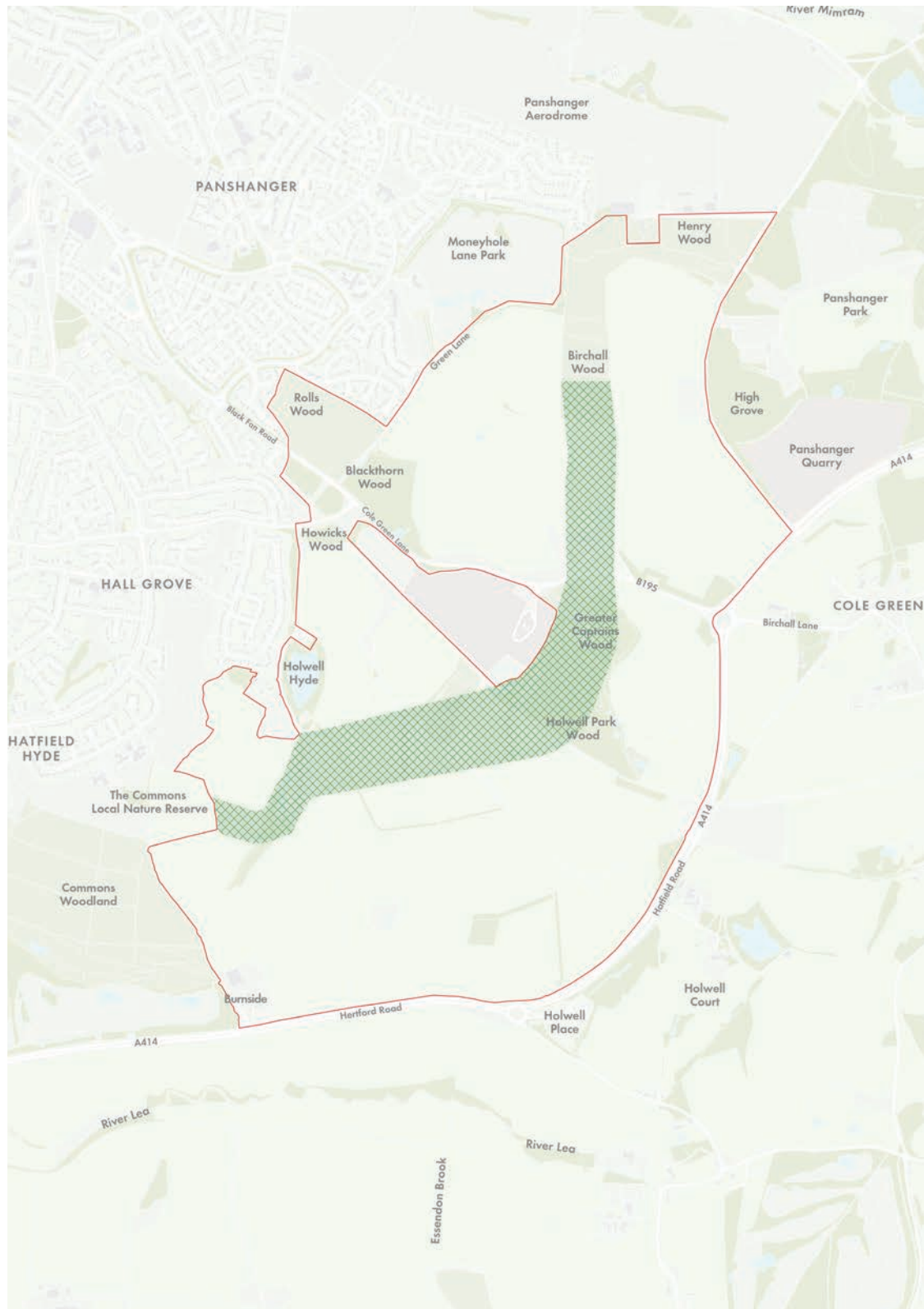
The Green Corridor has been introduced as part of the emerging Draft Local Plan (Policy SP12 - Green Infrastructure). WHBC will work with partners and developers to enable the delivery of a Green Corridor. Within the site, the Green Corridor is intended to connect key nature conservation assets including the Commons LNR, Local Wildlife Sites and Ancient Woodland. It extends from The Commons Local Nature Reserve on the western boundary of the WH area of the site, north-east wards through Greater Captain's and Holwell Park Woods and Birchall Farm before travelling north and connecting with Birchall Wood. Its strategic position allows for the movement of wildlife between the key nature conservation assets.

LUC have identified a number of key considerations for the creation of the Green Corridor. These include:

- **supporting the conservation and enhancement of Birchall Farm, associated building and environs, as well as other cultural heritage features including Burnt Mound and the Grade II listed Holwell Hyde Farmhouse.**
- **supporting the conservation and restoration of the historic landscape character through the retention and creation of hedgerows.**
- **enabling the connection of existing footpaths and future proposed pedestrian and cycle routes**
- **supporting the enhancement of the existing chain of ponds and ditches, to create a network of sustainable drainage which will contribute to the attenuation of water, before reaching the Brook.**
- **contribute to air cooling, water management and moderating air quality, which will help mitigate the effect of climate change.**

The CHGC Group have identified several species within the site including barn owl, polecat, brown hare, harvest mouse, bats and several declining bird species such as yellowhammer, linnet and grey partridge. A low population of water vole have been identified in the eastern boundary of the EH area, south of the B195 adjacent to the A414 (SLR, 2017).





- Site boundary
- Proposed Green Corridor
- Water Vole
- The below ecological assets have been identified by the CHGC (2019)
- Badger sighting
- Great Crested Newt sighting
- Barn owl sighting
- Barn owl hunting area



## 2.14 HYDROLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

### Hydrology and Flood Risk

The site contains a network of water bodies including ditches and ponds. The site is located on higher ground, between the River Mimram to the north, and the River Lea to the south. The River Mimram flows south easterly to meet the River Lea in Hertford.

There are two primary watercourses within the site. Within the WH area of the site, Hatfield Hyde Brook (1) is located along the western boundary, and is made up of three main channels; two of which flow from the Welwyn Garden City area, and the third joining from the Holwell Hyde Brook, located within the site. The Hatfield Hyde Brook (2) is tributary of the River Lea, which is located south of the A414, approximately 400m from the site boundary. A ditch flows south-westwards from the Holwell Hyde lake which connects to the Holwell Hyde Brook.

There is one fishing lake located in the WH area of the site called Holwell Hyde, which was previously used for mineral extraction that was not in-filled. Within the southern portion of the EH area, there are several ponds and brooks adjacent to Holwell Park Wood. Several ponds are also located in both Great Captains Wood and Blackthorn Wood. The site is predominantly outside of Flood Zone 2 and 3. In the south of the WH area, Flood Zone 3 slightly encroaches into the site boundary.

### Topography

The WH area of the site slopes north from point 4, down towards River Lea in the south.

The CHGC have identified a ridge (3) from which rain-water seeps westwards to support the fens and wetland areas within The Commons LNR.



**Holwell Hyde Farm Lake**



**Mimram River (near Panshanger Park)**



**Holwell Hyde Brook**







## 2.15 RECREATIONAL GREEN SPACE

Whilst the majority of the site is not specifically an area for recreation, a series of pedestrian rights of way (PRoW's), footpaths, bridleways and byways provide access into the site, allowing people to enjoy walking, cycling and riding horses through it.

Moneyhole Lane Park is located to the north-west of the site and provides opportunities for formal recreation activities, including a multi-activity area, 3 youth football pitches, a tennis court and children's playground.

Holwell Hyde is a well-established angling lake, open to members only. Mill Green Golf Course is located on the south-western boundary of the site and is open to members and visitors.

The Commons Woodland is enjoyed by walkers and includes a range of habitats including oak woodland, calcareous fen, meadows, ditches and ponds.



Moneyhole Lane Park



Moneyhole Lane Park



c. Julian Paren

Panshanger Park Run







## 2.16 VISUAL AND LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The site is located on the western residential settlement edge of Welwyn Garden City. To the north, east, and south of the site lies a combination of woodlands and open fields and parks. This rural context, together with the sites green open landscape, interspersed with woodlands, creates a strong rural character for the site.

The western portion of the WH area of land is relatively flat. The land north of the A414 slopes upwards and is visible from higher ground to the south of the River Lea.

The northern area within EH is mostly flat, with a slight undulation in the land south of Birchall wood, located within the proposed Green Corridor.

### Outward



### Inward



Site aerial with photograph numbers, indicating location of picture and direction of view.





1



2



3



3



4



5



7



8



9



## 2.17 ECOLOGICAL AND HERITAGE BUFFERS

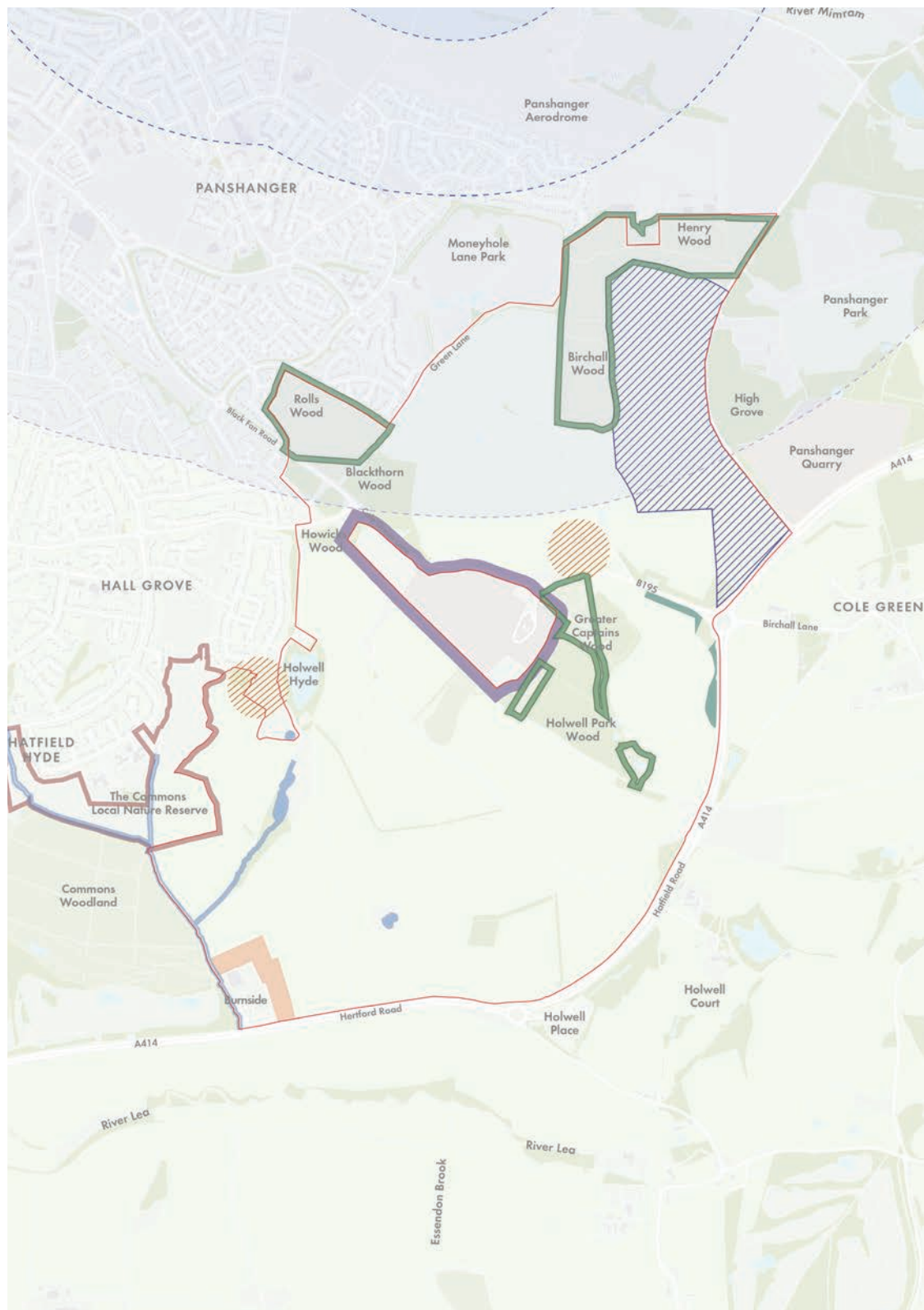
Buffer zones are used to protect sensitive areas from the impacts of development. Buffers may vary from landscaped features with planted trees or shrubs, or may be areas of land left undeveloped. The nature of the buffer zone will vary depending on the asset which it is protecting. The buffer zones identified below represent best practice.

A minimum of 8m undeveloped buffer is required along both the Hatfield Hyde and Holwell Hyde brook. There must also be sufficient maintenance access to the main rivers.

A 15m minimum buffer zone from the boundary of Ancient Woodland is required in policy to avoid root damage of the trees. Where ancient or veteran trees are present, there must be a buffer of at least 15 times larger than the diameter of the tree.

A 65m buffer zone is required around Burnside, which must include both a 5m planted bund and a 14m solid barrier. This buffer will provide visual screening and ensure that homes and other land uses are not adversely affected by noise and air pollution impacts. The buffer will also contribute in providing a visual screen to the A414, and mitigate harm to heritage assets located to the south of the site.

A buffer is also be recommended to Cole Green Lane employment area, with a 5m high planted bund. However, the longer term shift in character of this road should also be considered, should the waste site relocate and be replaced with commercial uses that do not have associated noise and dust pollution issues.



- Site boundary
- Buffer to Burnside (65m)
- Buffer to Commons LNR
- Buffer to brook (8m)
- Buffer to historic asset
- Buffer to Ancient Woodland (ASNW & PAWS) (15m)
- Buffer to Registered Park and Garden
- Buffer to road
- Buffer to Employment site
- Tewinbury SSSI IRZ

## 2.18 SITE CONDITIONS

### Ground Contamination

Much of the Green Corridor area is a former landfill site, which was decommissioned in the middle of the 20th Century. Knowledge of the contents within the landfill is not complete, although some information is known for each of the areas, which is set out in the plan to the right. A thorough assessment of ground contamination and the likely remediation requirements will be needed at the detailed planning application stage.

### Services and Utilities

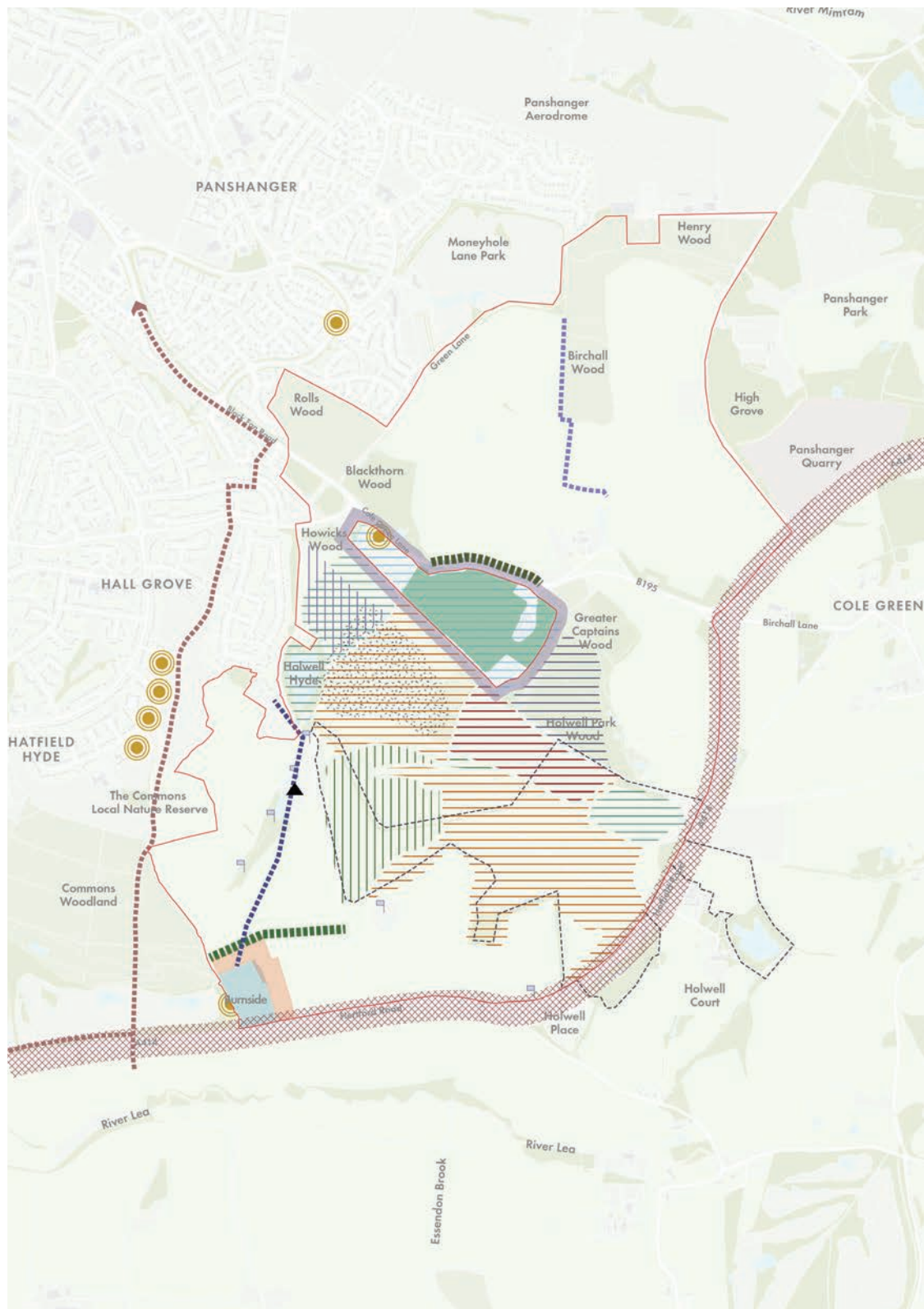
A gas pipeline has been identified, which runs to the immediate west of the masterplan area and may be a relevant concern for homes developed in the WH neighbourhood areas.

Both overhead and underground high voltage power lines have been identified within the masterplan area, with the overground lines within the WH area and the underground lines within the EH area.

### Noise and Pollutions

The two BP Mitchell waste sites at Burnside (on the A414) and Cole Green Lane are considered to be sources of noise pollution that would need to be mitigated for any new residents. For this reason, landscape buffers and bunds are suggested for each within policy. For Burnside, a 65m landscape buffer with a 5m high planted bund is recommended. A 14m solid wall facade is also required for the buildings to the north of the bund. For the Cole Green Lane waste site, a 5m planted bund is required on the north side of Cole Green Lane.













































- Ground Conditions**
- Site boundary
  - Filled Area (material unknown) (Hertfordshire County Council Act 1935)
  - Filled Area (material unknown) (Hertfordshire County Council Act 1935)
  - Hertfordshire County Council Act 1935. Includes 80m inert corridor at western boundary
  - Area filled prior to 1956 (material unknown)
  - Biodegradable waste
  - Refuse and liquid waste
  - Excavated spoil and inert rubble only
  - Putrescible waste in S.E. area. Non-putrescible waste in N.W. area, however location was previously used for putrescible waste
  - Pollution Incidents
  - Leachate breakout (identified by CHGC)
- Services and Utilities**
- Gas pipeline
  - Overhead HV
  - Underground HV
  - Pumping station
- Noise pollution**
- Noise of A414
  - Burnside industrial area
  - Cole Green industrial area
  - 65m buffer to Burnside industrial area
  - 5m Landscaped bund required at Burnside industrial area
  - Buffer to Cole Green industrial area
  - 5m landscaped bund required at Cole Green Employment Area

## 2.19 CONSTRAINTS

An in-depth analysis of the site and the surrounding area has provided an understanding of the various constraints which will influence the proposals for the site. The degree to which the different constraints affect the site varies and a sensitive approach to the site's key features must be taken. Details of each constraint can be found in the previous sections of this report.

<b>Key</b>		<b>Ecological and Heritage Buffers</b>	
	Site boundary		Buffer to Burnside (65m)
	Contours		Buffer to Commons LNR
<b>Flood Risk</b>			Buffer to brook (8m)
	Water body		Buffer to historic asset
	Flood zone 2		Buffer to Ancient Woodland (ASNW & PAWS) (15m)
	Flood zone 3		Buffer to Panshanger Registered Park and Garden
<b>Ecological Designations</b>			Buffer to road
	Registered Parks and Gardens		Buffer to Employment site
	Local wildlife site		Tewinbury SSSI IRZ
	Conservation area		Mineral extraction area
	Local Nature Reserve		Buffer to historic views of Hatfield House
	Ancient woodland (ASNW & PAWS)	<b>Heritage</b>	
	Proposed Green Corridor		Grade II listed building
	Water Vole		Area of Archaeological significance
	Area of Blackfan Fen		Grade II* Registered Park and Garden
	Tree preservation order (TPO)	<b>Movement</b>	
<b>The below ecological assets have been identified by the CHGC (2019)</b>			PRoW
	Badger sighting		National Cycleway
	Great Crested Newt sighting		Cycle way
	Barn owl sighting		Bridleway
	Barn owl hunting area		Footpath
	Ancient fen		Byway
			Track







## 2.20 OPPORTUNITIES

The site has an abundance of rich opportunities which focus on creating a vibrant and sociable community, which is highly connected through modes of sustainable active travel. Ecological opportunities to retain and enhance the existing environment should be pursued to provide biodiversity net gain and ecological enhancement. Opportunities for the site include:

### Landscape and ecology

1. Retain areas of open space and create new areas of green amenity space
2. Strengthen existing planting and/or create new tree planting for screening
3. Active management at The Commons LNR to protect and enhance scrub and fenland
4. Water courses and bodies, namely Holwell Hyde Brook, Hatfield Hyde Brook and Holwell Hyde lake, protected as key blue infrastructure
5. Open neutral grassland is retained and enhanced on former landfill site, with scattered tree planting and habitats for small mammals and reptiles
6. Woodland retained and managed at Henry Wood, with opportunities for coppicing and clearance to promote biodiversity
7. Woodland and scrub planting to enhance the woodland along the perimeter of the site adjacent to Moneyhole Lane Park
8. Landscaped buffers along Commons Wood Local Nature Reserve, protecting rural context and existing habitats
9. View point with interpretation or cultural heritage feature

10. New woodland planting

11. New planting along historic hedgerows

12. Retained open space, protecting rural context and views into/from Panshanger Park and Heritage assets to the south of the site

### Movement

13. New Vehicular connections with safe pedestrian and cycle crossing points

14. New and improved connections and wayfinding with the existing walking and cycle network, integrating the new development with surrounding communities

15. Creating new walking and cycling routes within the site, through key amenity green spaces

16. Opportunity to create safe junction for the National Cycle Route, both crossing the A414 and the B195

17. Opportunity for new public transport connection with bus stops close to homes and key destinations

### Place-making

18. New development parcels integrated into the landscape

19. Opportunity for primary schools located within the local centre with close walking distance to homes

20. Opportunity for secondary school

21. Proposed local Centres at the heart of the new communities











# Design Approach and Development Objectives

## 3.1 VISION AND APPROACH

The design approach for Birchall Garden Suburb is underpinned by nine Garden City Principles. These have been developed as a combination of the original Ebenezer Howard Garden City Principles and the TCPA Garden Community Principles (set out in section 1.8), which most reflect the desired approach for Birchall Garden Suburb.



## 3.2 KEY THEMES AND PRINCIPLES

Five key themes have been identified which underpin the masterplan framework for the site. These include:

- Land use: a well functioning place
- Movement: an integrated place
- Placemaking: an attractive and diverse place
- Landscape and Green Infrastructure: a landscape led approach
- Sustainability: a resilient place

The five themes create the overarching structure to explain how the masterplan has been developed. Each theme has a set of three key principles which help to guide development and growth of the site. For each principle, a series of guidance and indicators have been developed, which help to shape and inform future detailed masterplanning for the Birchall Garden Suburb area.





## 3.3 LAND USE

# a well functioning place

### Vibrant and diverse communities

1. Neighbourhood centres will co-locate shops, community uses and schools to help establish a critical mass to support these and help encourage linked trips
2. Local centres shall be located where they are visually and physically accessible to local residents, to maximise their profile and support these active uses
3. A range of homes including sizes, types, tenures and delivery models will support mixed and balanced communities and cater to different life stages and budgets.
4. A phased approach will see homes delivered close to existing local centres or for infrastructure and new local centres to be delivered early, to establish communities and encourage sustainable behaviours.
5. Gypsy and Traveller sites will have close access to schools and services, with high quality pitching facilities that meet their everyday needs.

### Safe and secure

6. Overlooked community play areas will be provided in space that can also support community events
7. Public uses such as schools and community spaces will have legible and welcoming entrances and be well lit, so they feel safe and comfortable
8. Key routes to schools, community uses and local centres will be well-lit and safe
9. Thresholds between private and public spaces will be clearly defined, with all streets and open spaces fronted by front doors and windows, maximising active frontages and animating public spaces.
10. Open spaces will be fronted, to provide natural surveillance and a sense of safety
11. Parking courts without overlooking from surrounding homes will be avoided

### Supporting businesses and communities

12. Existing workspace within the areas such as at Birchall Farm, and the waste sites at Burnside and on Cole Green Lane shall be retained while this is viable
13. Design mechanisms such as landscape buffering and bunds will help to mediate between employment uses and new homes.
14. Homes will be designed to support home working and have high-speed fibre-optic cable
15. The potential to include flexible work space in the EH local centre will be explored

## Creating activity, responding to context



Garden City Principles



The local centre could include a cafe use and associated seating (example from Lincolnshire Lakes)



Shops and community spaces could support co-working space



Overlooked play areas will be provided, in spaces that can also support community events

## 3.4 MOVEMENT

# a well-connected place

### Prioritising sustainable movement

1. Any future development will be developed with the sustainable transport hierarchy in mind and in line with HCC policy LTP4.
2. Neighbourhoods will be directly served by local bus routes to and from Welwyn Garden City town centre that form a loop through BGS. These can be extensions of existing routes.
3. The Birchall Garden Suburb area will have a stop for the HERT rapid transit system in an accessible location for residents.
4. Parking provision will be carefully considered and car clubs will be explored, to encourage people to use alternatives to private cars, where possible.
5. Electric charging points will be provided for cars and bikes, at residences, on street and/or in key locations.

### Walkable and cycle-friendly neighbourhoods

6. Good and safe pedestrian and cycle links will be provided within and between new neighbourhoods; and to/from existing neighbourhoods such as Hall Grove and Panshanger.
7. New developments will be designed to promote physical activity and active lifestyles through the built and natural environment. Walking and cycling will be prioritised, with direct routes for both and priority at signalled junctions. Key cycle routes will be segregated from vehicular traffic.

8. Local centres and schools will have ample cycle and scooter parking, and infrastructure such as cycle pumps and tools, to encourage active travel to the schools and for local journeys.
9. Homes will be designed with easily accessible cycle storage, to make it simple to use a bike for transport.
10. Improvements to strategic cycle connections will be explored with the Councils, particularly towards Welwyn Garden City train station and to Hatfield.

### A Permeable, attractive street network

11. Design proposals will take design cues from the original Garden City neighbourhoods, including the road structure and hierarchy, and relationship between roads and spaces, rather than more recent suburban neighbourhoods.
12. Streets will be integrated and permeable, with direct connections, particularly for walking and cycling, and cul-de-sacs avoided.
13. Homes and other buildings will front onto streets and reinforce a clear hierarchy and structure of connected streets.
14. Street sections will provide sufficient space for all users - walking, cycling and driving - alongside sustainable urban drainage and on-street parking where this is possible.
15. Detailed masterplanning will consider innovative parking responses that can adapt over time to provide green space, should demand fall.





## Establishing a permeable street network



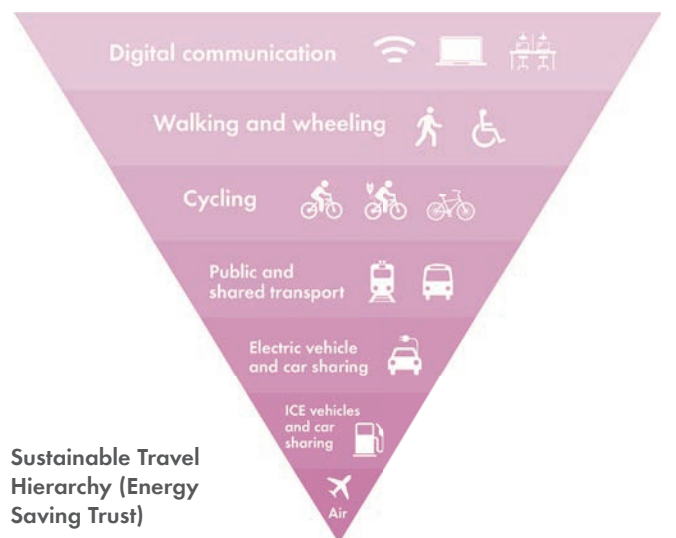
Garden City Principles



Safe, segregated cycle routes will be provided to local schools (example Cambridge)



Cycle hubs could be a good model for providing safe cycle parking and maintenance tools (examples Waltham Forest)



Sustainable Travel Hierarchy (Energy Saving Trust)

## 3.5 PLACEMAKING

# an attractive and distinctive place

### Responding to character and context

1. The form and structure of neighbourhoods, including spine roads and civic building locations will take their cue from local topography, views and landscape features, so that they sit comfortably in terms of its scale, massing and orientation.
2. The setting of local heritage buildings including Birchall Farmhouse, Stable and Barn; and Holwell Hyde Farmhouse will be preserved through buffer zones and landscape design.
3. The setting of Panshanger Park will be protected by avoiding buildings (other than the school) in land to the east of the Green Corridor in the Birchall Gardens neighbourhood.
4. Buildings will take characteristics of Welwyn Garden City as design cues, helping to inform materials, colour palette, form and structure and design proposals will demonstrate how this has been done.

### A varied mix of typologies and tenure

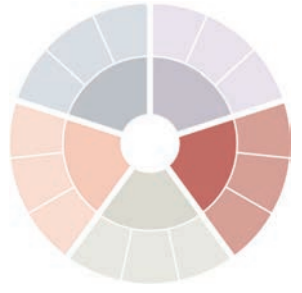
5. A tenure-blind mix of homes will be provided, including ownership occupied, private rented, affordable and social rented, and alternative housing models such as co-housing.
6. Net density levels will typically be between 30 and 60 dph with the variation in density facilitating the range in housing types that will create a mixed and balanced community.

7. Slightly higher densities will be focused at the local centre, amenities and public transport stops, to help support these uses.

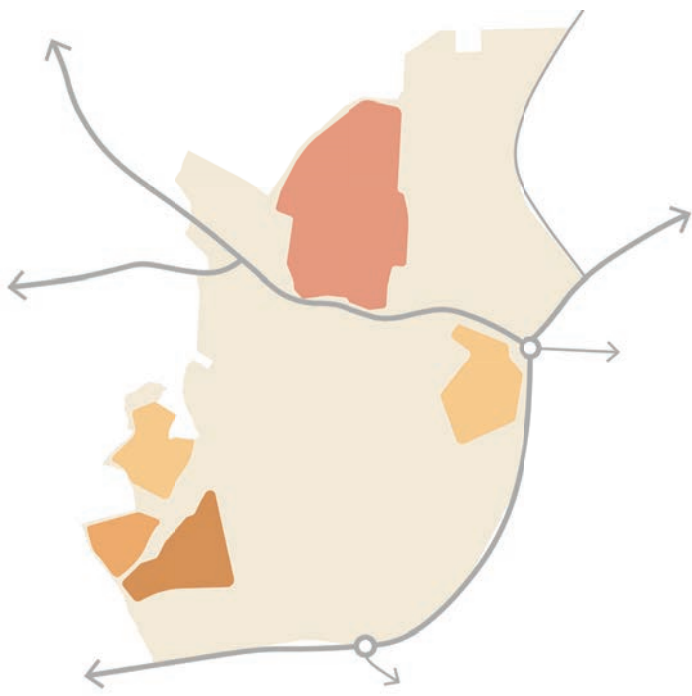
### Resilient and distinctive design

8. Birchall Garden Suburb will have a clear, overall identity and read as one cohesive place. However, within this, each neighbourhood will have a distinctive character and design ethos
9. Buildings will be designed with scope to adapt to the changing needs of occupants in years to come, with potential for example, for loft conversions or rear extensions.
10. Buildings will front onto streets and community open spaces, reflecting the approach within Welwyn Garden City's original and more recent neighbourhoods.
11. Roofscapes will be varied with terraced rooflines avoided so that the roofline is fragmented and punctuated by trees and greenery.
12. Clear delineation will be provided between public and private space through landscaping measures.
13. Detailed masterplanning will be undertaken as part of a participatory design process with local communities, to help ensure the new neighbourhoods respond to local needs and preferences.





*Distinctive neighbourhood characters*



Garden City Principles



Homes will front onto green spaces to support community use and activity



Density can be slightly higher in the local centre, next to shops and services but also open space





## 3.6 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

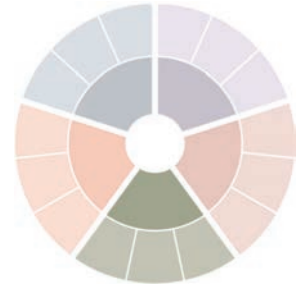
# a landscape-led approach

### Integrated with the landscape

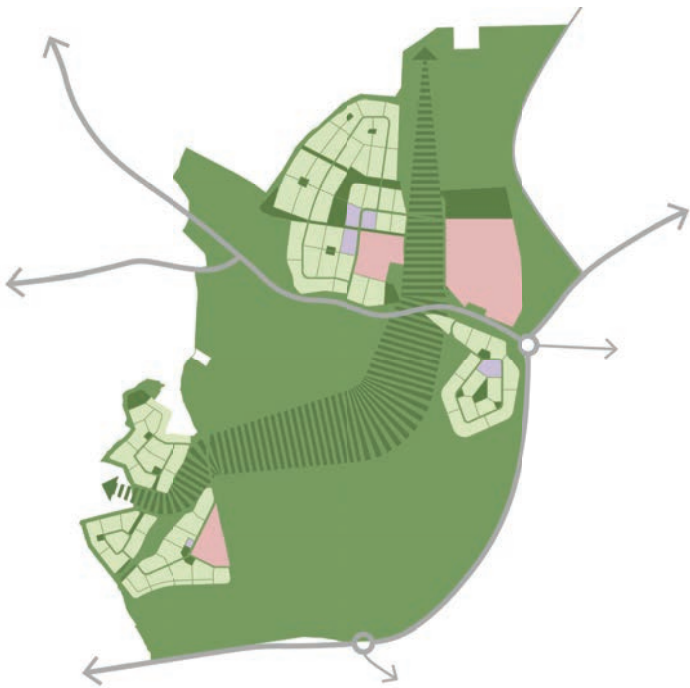
1. The masterplanning process will identify, protect, enhance and expand the natural systems unique to the site.
2. The existing landscape will shape new development, which will retain and respond to existing woodland, waterways at Holwell Hyde and Hatfield Hyde brooks, historic hedgerows and topography.
3. Views into and out of the neighbourhoods from the surrounding landscape will be carefully considered and inform designs.
4. The Welwyn Garden City Green Corridor will be accommodated, with a minimum width of 100m to this green infrastructure link, to allow for continuity of wildlife habitats.
5. Designs will work with natural drainage patterns and existing water features, and will be enhanced to maximise sustainable urban drainage.
8. A large central park will be established between the neighbourhoods with areas of community access and areas protected as wildlife habitats.
9. Streets and key routes will be important landscape corridors, as part of a green/blue infrastructure strategy.
10. Tree lined streets will provide shaded pavements, access to nature and help to screen rooflines.
11. Neighbourhood growing spaces will support the health and well-being of residents, including allotments and orchards.
12. Access points will be provided to the Green Corridor from each neighbourhood, so this can provide public amenity space.
13. Green infrastructure including planting and drainage will happen early in the development process, so it matures as places are established.

### High quality public space and landscaping

6. Each neighbourhood will have communal, public space located close to amenities such as local shops and/or a primary school.
7. Active open spaces will be multi-functional and support a variety of uses such as play, exercise and community events for residents. Particular attention will be given to designing activity spaces that are welcoming and accessible to girls.
14. Ancient woodland, The Commons Local Nature Reserve and wildlife rich areas within the central park will be protected and enhanced.
15. Continuity of wildlife habitats will be carefully maintained and enhanced, with barriers mitigated.
16. Existing mature trees will be retained and complemented by new tree planting of native species and to create interest throughout the year.
17. These investments will mean that the development will result in a biodiversity net gain. A strategy to achieve this will be developed at detailed masterplanning stage.



## Embedded in the natural landscape



Attenuation ponds retain run-off and remove contaminants before draining into a water course.



Allotments will play an important role in creating social and healthy places.



Garden City Principles



Sociable green spaces and play will be integrated into the neighbourhoods

## 3.7 SUSTAINABILITY

# a resilient place

### Sustainable design and construction

1. All homes should target the highest levels of energy and material efficiency - i.e. reducing operational energy and embodied carbon.
2. Buildings will be designed to encourage low carbon living.
3. Employ highly energy-efficient means of heat and power delivery, following the energy hierarchy described in Policies SADM13 & CC2.
4. All Development should assess the whole life carbon impact.
5. This development should be considered an opportunity for exploring sustainable construction methods and materials.
6. Density of housing along with co-location of services should be maximised to an appropriate level. As per policies SP1 & CC2.

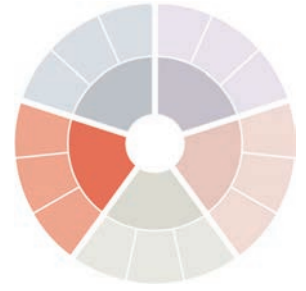
### Supporting sustainable lifestyles

7. Minimising waste streams throughout the development.
8. Maximising circular waste stream possibilities; where not, maximising recycling rate.
9. Provide homes with appropriate internal and external storage for recycling and landfill waste.
10. New developments should demonstrate how lower domestic energy use, reduced utility bills and increased rates of recycling will be achieved.
11. Provide access to green spaces and biodiverse areas.
12. Create and maintain food-growth areas such as community allotments and orchards.
13. Encourage a shift to more sustainable means of transport such as cycling or walking. As per Policies SADM3 & TRA1.

### Future-proofed and resilient neighbourhoods

14. All homes should consider the impacts of climate change, including hotter weather conditions and flood risk.
15. Designs should endeavour to make all buildings highly water-efficient including rainwater harvesting and recycling of grey-water.
16. All new homes and commercial buildings shall be designed to demonstrate their adaptability for future growth and innovations in energy generation and conservation technology.
17. Minimising peak electricity loads of the development.





## Adapting to climate challenges

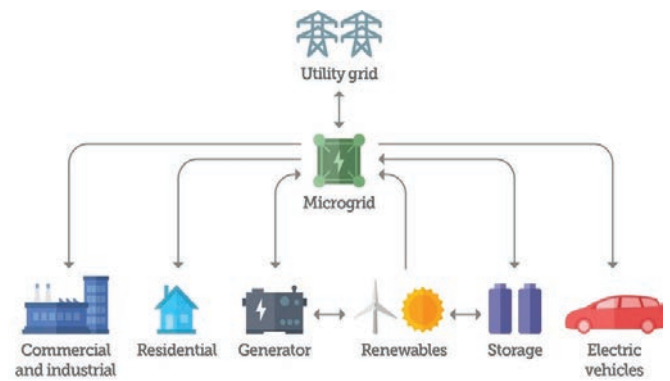
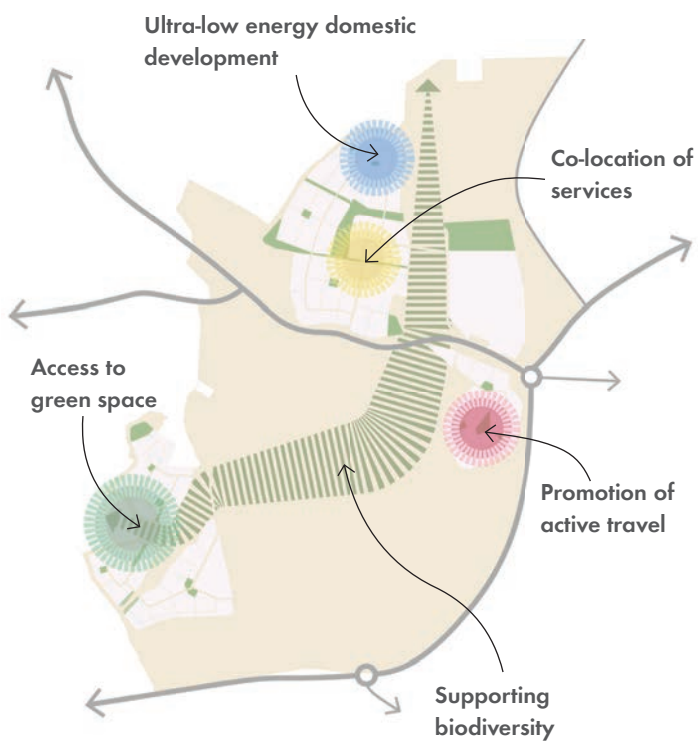


Diagram showing how a microgrid could function



SUDs incorporated into the residential landscape





# Masterplan

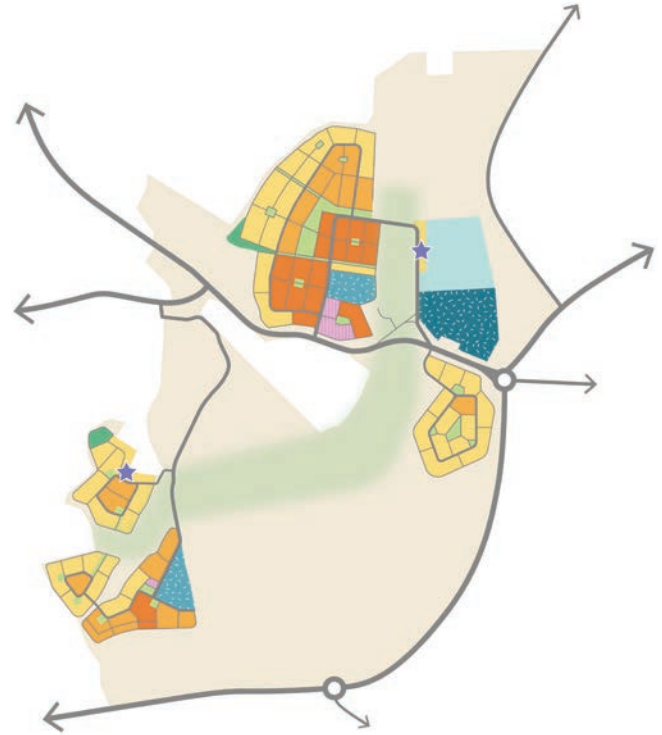


## 4.1 DESIGN OPTIONS



**Option 1**

Within the East Herts area, the proposed primary and secondary school are co-located in the east of the site. The local centre is located adjacent to the B195, in the south of the EH community. Within the WH area, the primary school is located within a triangular parcel, to the east of the primary spine road. In this option, the EH Gypsy and Traveller (G&T) site is proposed off a new junction along the A414 on the former waste site. However, this relies on the waste site being decommissioned and relocated to another location and remediation works being undertaken. The WH G&T site is proposed along the edge of the northern neighbourhood. Allotments are provided on the edge of neighbourhoods, alongside the green corridor and to the north of Birchall Farm in the EH area; and alongside woodland in the WH area.



**Option 2**

Within Option 2, the primary school in the East Herts area has been moved closer into the centre of the new community. The local centre remains in the south of the community, however, its orientation has changed to provide active frontage onto the proposed primary road within the neighbourhood. Given concerns about co-location of the G&T site and the household waste site in EH, this has been relocated to an area along the edge of the secondary school playing fields. The allotments within EH are tested alongside Blackthorn Wood.



### Option 3

Within Option 3, the EH primary school is tested on a north-south orientation to the east of the spine road and the local centre is moved northwards, to front the road and establish a strong relationship with the school. Allotments are provided alongside Blackthorn Woods and to the south of the school, buffering the green corridor and Birchall Farm. Community sports pitches are introduced to the north of the secondary school fields. The G&T site is tested south of Holwell Park neighbourhood, accessed either from the A414 or through the neighbourhood.

The WH primary school is tested to the west of the main spine road to be more centrally located but results in a very linear site and creates a difficult relationship with Holwell Hyde Brook and woodland. The WH G&T site is relocated away from sensitive woodland and Holwell Hyde Farm, at the south east corner of development. An emergency services access and bus route is introduced from the WH neighbourhoods to Holwell roundabout.



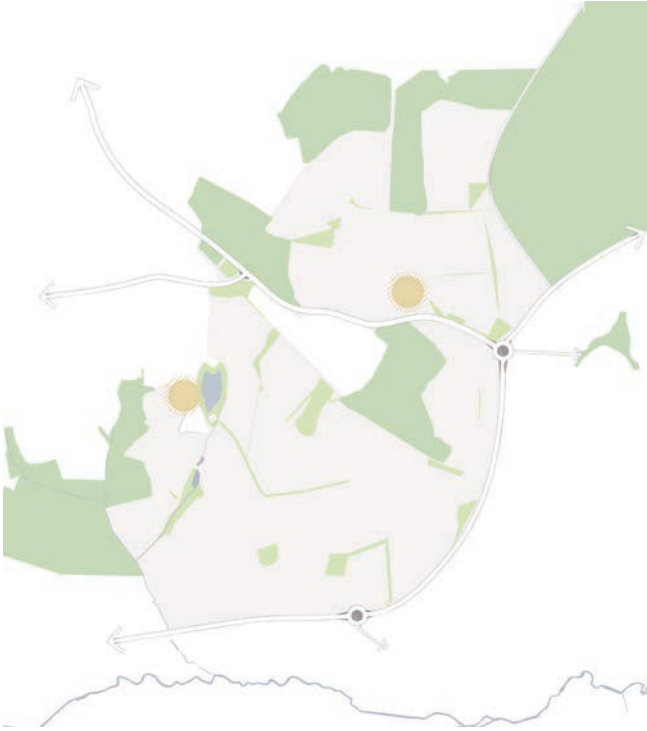
### Option 4

Within Option 4, the EH primary school and local centre are moved northwards, to a more central neighbourhood location based on Design Review Panel feedback. The allotments are kept in the same positions, but with their shape and size adjusted. The G&T site is relocated to a site to the western of Holwell Park, close to the entrance, to address access issues.

The WH primary school is relocated to the east of the spine road following testing of potential layout options. The WH G&T site retained in the same location, to the south of the school site.

Throughout the options, densities have been tested through overall layouts and tissue studies at street scale. These have broadly remained the same, with areas of higher density adjusting to respond to active use locations.

## 4.2 CONCEPT EVOLUTION



### 1. Retaining Existing Assets

Existing woodlands, trees and hedgerows will be retained and form the structure of the landscape for the new development. The existing brooks, Hatfield Hyde and Holwell Hyde, will be protected supporting the Commons Local Nature Reserve.



### 2. Enhancing green infrastructure and biodiversity

Existing tree belts will be strengthened forming connected green buffers, enhancing biodiversity and screening views to the new development. A parkland will form the central green open space, with a Green Corridor navigating from west to north, connecting key woodlands and nature reserves. Additional Green Corridors will be set along key desire lines and footpaths and will connect woodlands and green spaces. Two areas of retained open space will preserve long-distant views and the rural setting of surrounding heritage assets. Green buffers around the edges of the site will restrict the new development infringing on woodland and assist in screening views to neighbouring settlements.





### 3. Establishing landscape-led neighbourhoods

Development parcels are integrated into the landscape structure and will sensitively respond to the buffers, Green Corridors and heritage assets surrounding the site.



### 4. Creating permeable neighbourhoods

Existing walking and cycle paths will be retained and new routes will be introduced to develop a legible, connected and accessible network within and between the communities. Vehicular access will be provided off Birchall Lane for the EH neighbourhoods and Cole Green Lane to the WH neighbourhoods. A network of secondary and tertiary routes will provide further permeability through the site. A bus route will navigate through the neighbourhoods with bus stops at key destinations.



## 5. Social, supportive neighbourhoods

New green amenity spaces will be integrated within the neighbourhoods and connected along pedestrian and cycle routes. They will support a variety of sports, play and community activities including allotments and community orchards. The communities will be further supported with a local centre in both EH and WH which include a variety of facilities and amenities for the community. One secondary school and two primary schools will be carefully situated within accessible, safe and close walking distances to homes.



## 6. Connecting to surrounding communities and green spaces

The future development will be seamless with both the social fabric and natural landscape of the existing context. Walking and cycling routes will connect with the existing network and new access points will provide further permeability between neighbourhoods and surrounding open spaces including Panshanger Park and The Commons LNR. Improvements to junctions and key routes such as the Cole Green Way will make accessing the site safer.







## 4.3 THE MASTERPLAN

### Introduction

The Birchall Garden Suburb masterplan has been designed to establish a series of distinctive but integrated neighbourhoods that respond to the significant local landscape assets and sensitivities and sit comfortably in their setting. They will forge relationships with existing neighbourhoods rather than sit in isolation and it is intended that after a few years, it should feel as if the neighbourhoods have always been there. The new neighbourhoods will draw on the best of the Garden City ethos, and respond to this with contemporary characteristics and features.

Once developed, Birchall Garden Suburb will establish neighbourhoods and patterns of living that should last 100 years or more. For this reason, the masterplan is designed to support sustainable and healthy lifestyles and respond to the need for climate change adaptation and mitigation. The masterplan has been designed to avoid embedding 20th century models of living that may fail to adapt or be inappropriate to respond to the climate and environmental challenges of the 21st and 22nd Centuries.

Over the following pages, a series of masterplan strategies are provided according to the themes identified for the projects:

- A well-functioning place, which covers land-uses and activities
- A well-connected place, which covers active travel, public transport and vehicular access
- An attractive and distinctive place, which covers the approach to densities, typologies, layout and building design
- A landscape-led approach, which covers green infrastructure of all types and biodiversity
- A resilient place, which covers the approach to sustainability

For each of these sections, masterplan diagrams are provided which indicate the suggested approach for the masterplan, though are not intended to be prescriptive. Each section also includes 'Key characteristics and guidance', which any future detailed masterplanning should respond to.

Following this, the various neighbourhoods are introduced, with information on the nature and character of each.



HOLWELL  
GREEN

COMMONS  
WOOD

HATFIELD  
DOWNS

BIRCHALL  
GARDENS

HOLWELL PARK



## 4.4 LAND USE STRATEGY

### Overview

The masterplan has been developed to establish sociable and self-sufficient neighbourhoods, with local shops, community uses and amenities positioned in an accessible location for residents and co-located to provide a critical mass for these uses and encourage linked trips.

### Key characteristics and guidance

1. A local centre within the large East Herts neighbourhood (Birchall Gardens) should be centrally located and be closely related to both the primary school and community open space.
2. Community uses, including community space and a children's centre, should be provided in the larger of the Welwyn Hatfield neighbourhoods, and this should be located close to the primary school.
3. A small local shop or community use, such as a nursery, should be explored for the Holwell Park small neighbourhood within the East Herts area. This should be located in a central, visible location and relate to open space.
4. A visible employment site should be established on Cole Green Lane, should the relocation of the waste site from this location become viable. Careful thought should be given to the landscape treatment along Birchall Lane, to successfully accommodate this shift, should it happen at a later date.
5. The local centre should come forward in an early phase of the detailed masterplan delivery, to support new residents.



Recently developed community centres at Fulham and Nunhead





- Site boundary
- Proposed local centre
- Proposed amenities
- Proposed primary school
- Proposed secondary school
- Proposed gypsy and traveller homes
- Proposed green amenity spaces
- Proposed allotments
- Proposed community sports pitches
- Residential
- Industrial employment
- Retail/employment
- Restaurants/cafe/pubs
- Business park
- Education (schools & Nursery)
- Places of worship
- Outdoor sports facilities
- Open space
- Fishing lake
- Golf course
- Allotments
- Play area

## Local Centres and amenities

During the first phase of development, the local centre and community uses may not yet be delivered and the nearby local centres at Panshanger and Hall Grove will, therefore, be important in meeting the everyday needs of new residents. As new facilities are delivered, local amenities will be within easy access of residents in all of the neighbourhoods, with good links between the villages and, particularly, to the Birchall Gardens neighbourhood local centre.

### Key characteristics and guidance

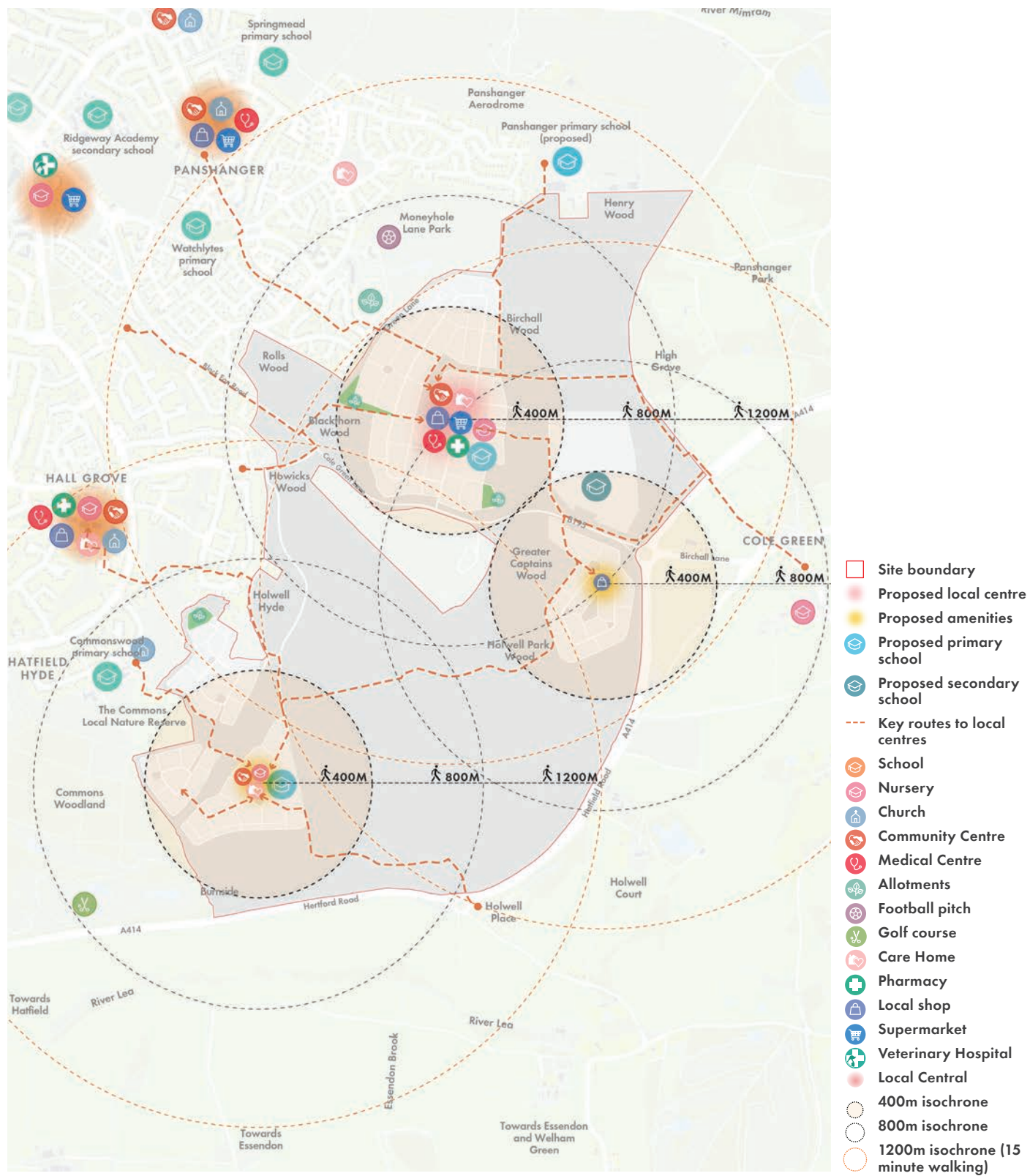
1. The local centre within the EH Birchall Gardens neighbourhood should include shops and a grocery store, healthcare facilities, a children's centre, community space and the potential for small, flexible employment space. The centre should be highly accessible by walking and cycling and broadly within 5 minutes walk (400-500m) from homes within the Birchall Gardens neighbourhood.
2. The community space and children's centre within the Hatfield Downs WH neighbourhood could be combined within one building, providing that there is no conflict between the operational requirements of both. This should be explored at the detailed masterplanning stage.
3. Safe and comfortable walking and cycling routes should be provided to the local centre and community spaces to encourage people to walk or cycle to these rather than take private car, with associated health, wellbeing, air quality and sustainability benefits. Suggested key connections to these are identified on the plan.

4. The masterplan identifies key routes to access existing local centres in Panshanger and Hall Grove for the period before these services are delivered within BGS. Detailed masterplans should also identify these routes and investment needed to make these safe and comfortable connections to surrounding amenities.



Barnsbury community centre and a cafe at Poundbury in Dorset







## Education

A 3-form entry primary school with early years provision and an 8-form entry secondary school will be provided within the EH Birchall Gardens neighbourhood. A two-form entry primary school will be provided within the WH Hatfield Downs neighbourhood.

### Key characteristics and guidance

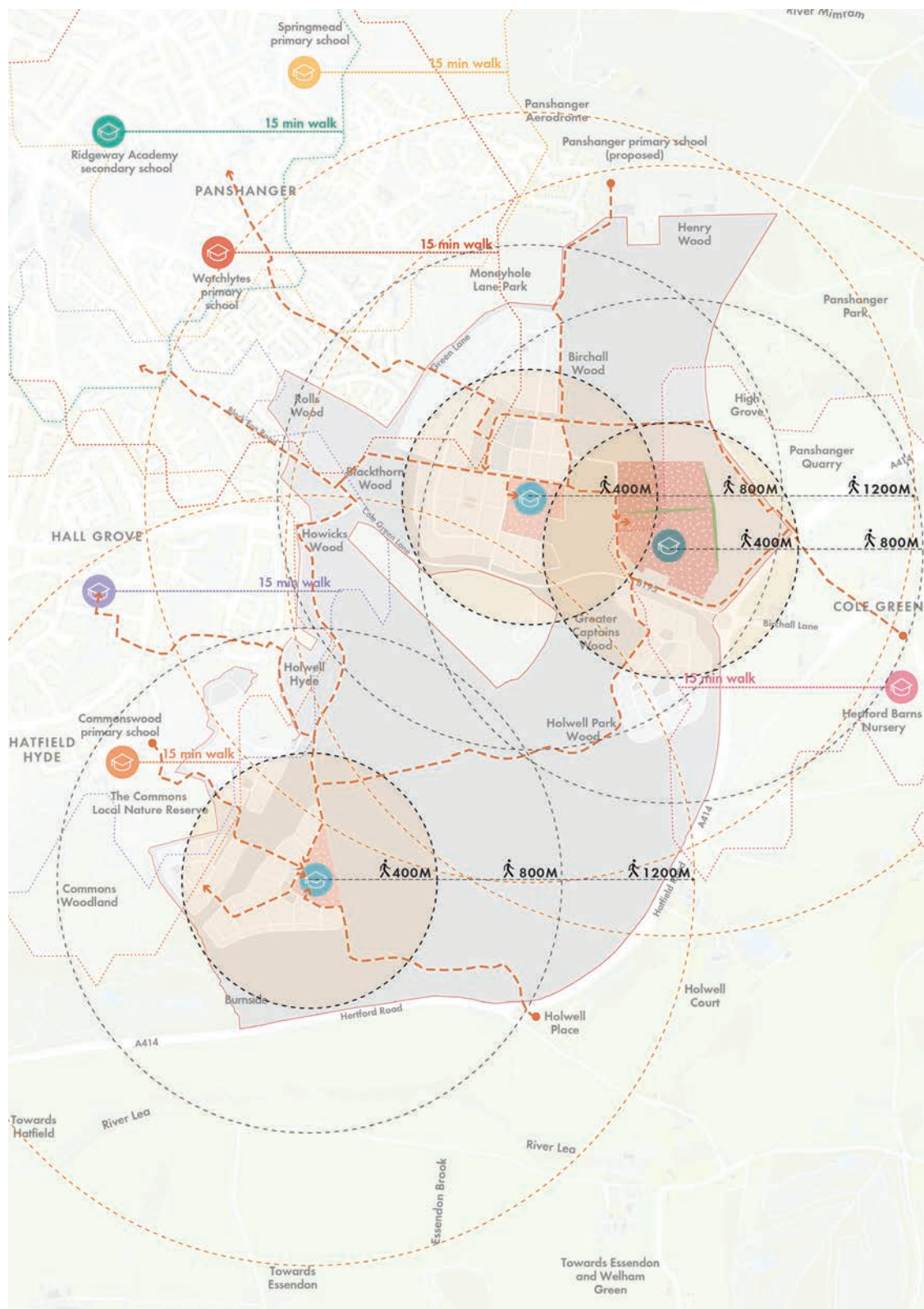
1. The EH primary school should be located in a central neighbourhood position so that it is within a 5 minute walk (400-500m) from most of the homes with the Birchall Gardens neighbourhood and within ideally a 10 minute walk (800m) of all new homes within EH. It should be close to the local centre.
2. The WH primary school should be located within the eastern Hatfield Downs neighbourhood and co-located with the community uses.
3. The EH secondary school should be located to the east of the Green Corridor, providing a buffer to Panshanger Park and protecting the setting of the historic park. The school building should be on the southern portion of the site, south of the ancient hedgerow
4. Safe and attractive cycling routes should be provided to the primary and secondary schools to encourage parents and then pupils to walk or cycle to school rather than take private car, with associated health, wellbeing, air quality and sustainability benefits. These key routes should be lit so that they are safe for children to use during winter months when it gets dark at 3pm.



Recently developed Kings College school in Wimbledon (Allies and Morrison architects)



Recently developed Kings College school in Wimbledon (Allies and Morrison architects)



- Site boundary
- Ⓢ Proposed secondary school
- Ⓟ Proposed primary school
- Retained and enhanced hedgerow
- Key walking routes to proposed schools
- Ⓢ Springmead School
- Ⓟ 15 minutes walk
- Ⓢ Ridgeway Academy
- Ⓟ 15 minute walk
- Ⓢ Watchlytes School
- Ⓟ 15 minute walk
- Ⓢ Hall Grove School
- Ⓟ 15 minute walk
- Ⓢ Commonswood School
- Ⓟ 15 minute walk
- Ⓢ Munns Farm Day Nursery
- Ⓟ 15 minute walk
- Ⓢ 400m isochrone
- Ⓟ 800m isochrone
- Ⓢ 1200m isochrone (15 minute walking)



## EH Primary school and local centre location

The EH primary school location has been shifted from the local authority policy diagram (co-located with the secondary school to the east of the Green Corridor) to a central location within the Birchall Gardens neighbourhood. This is based on research and analysis on encouraging walking and cycling to the primary school and feedback from the Hertfordshire Design Review Panel. It also helps to support a movement approach informed by the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy (see Movement principles section) and aligns with HCC's Local Transport Plan (LTP4).

The benefits of walking or cycling to school are now widely accepted. The Living Streets 2018 report summarises the following positive impacts:

- Improved physical and mental health and wellbeing for pupils, which is an increasing national priority
- Road safety and social skills, and levels of independence for pupils
- Improved air quality for all as a result of fewer vehicles on the roads
- Associated reduced peak time congestion
- Safer streets for the community
- Pupils arrive at school ready to learn

The key barriers identified for students walking to school are the distance and the associated time it takes to make the journey. This is followed by the comfort and safety of the walking or cycling route.

Research has been undertaken by the University of Granada into the thresholds at which distances to school become too far and prompt car journeys rather than

walking or cycling. These were identified on average as 875m in urban areas (c.11 minutes) and 675m in rural areas (c. 7 minutes) for 7-18 year olds. For younger children of 5-10 years old, a shorter distance of 400-500m will likely be the threshold that prompts car journeys rather than active travel.

This suggests that relocating the primary school will bring many health and wellbeing benefits for the community and establish neighbourhoods that can adapt to the environmental priorities and changing lifestyles of the 21st Century.

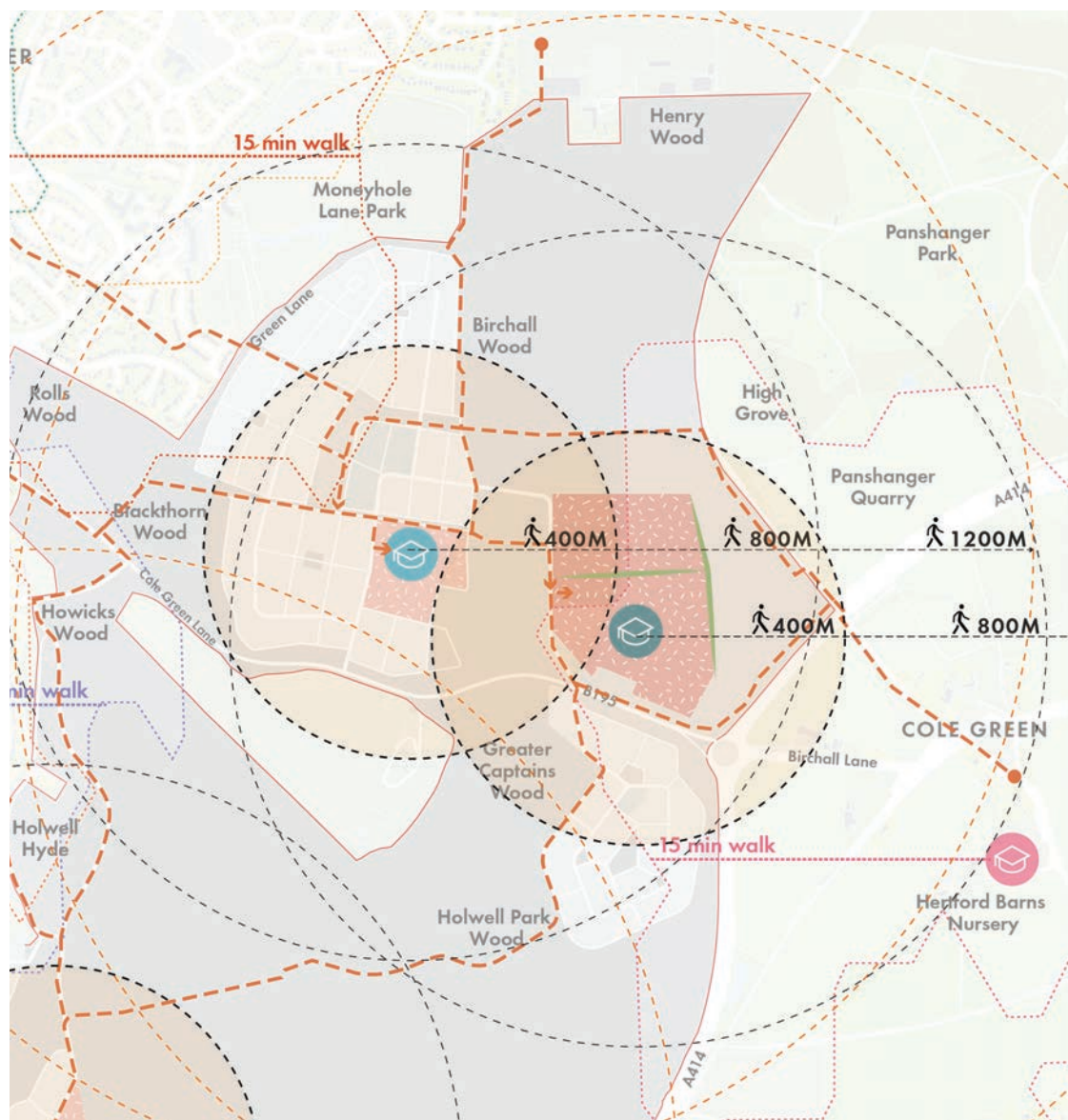
The local centre has similarly shifted northwards to the centre of the Birchall Gardens neighbourhood, remaining on the primary spine route and activating this with commercial and community frontage. This will similarly encourage residents to walk or cycle to shops and services and give a 'heart' to the community. Co-locating the local centre and primary school in a central neighbourhood location will additionally encourage meaningful community interaction and help to support local shops through linked trips. This has been chosen as the priority over visibility of the local centre from the B195, which would be challenging to achieve if a bund and landscape buffer is required between the road and the local centre to buffer the Cole Green Lane employment site to the south.

The masterplan locations of the primary school and local centre represent the Council's preferred position. However, it is expected that this will be further explored at the application stage. See the masterplan evolution pages for more information on the options testing for this.

**80% BOYS**  
**72% GIRLS**  
**ARE PHYSICALLY**  
**INACTIVE**

**30%**  
**CHILDREN ARE**  
**OVERWEIGHT**  
**OR OBESE**





- Site boundary
- Proposed secondary school
- Proposed primary school
- Retained and enhanced hedgerow
- Key walking routes to proposed schools
- 400m isochrone
- 800m isochrone
- 1200m isochrone (15 minute walking)

**15%**  
CHILDREN SHOW  
SYMPTOMS OF  
MENTAL ILL-  
HEALTH

**60%**  
PARENTS  
CONCERNED  
ABOUT TRAFFIC  
SPEEDS

**30%**  
PARENTS  
CONCERNED  
ABOUT TRAFFIC  
OVERCROWDING

Data from Living Street  
2018 report Swap the  
School Run for a School  
Walk

## 4.5 MOVEMENT STRATEGY

### Active travel

Birchall Garden Suburb will be designed to be well-integrated with existing adjacent neighbourhoods (which previous periods of growth in Welwyn Garden City have failed to do). The urban structure and layout will encourage healthy and sustainable lifestyles through active travel.

### Key characteristics and guidance

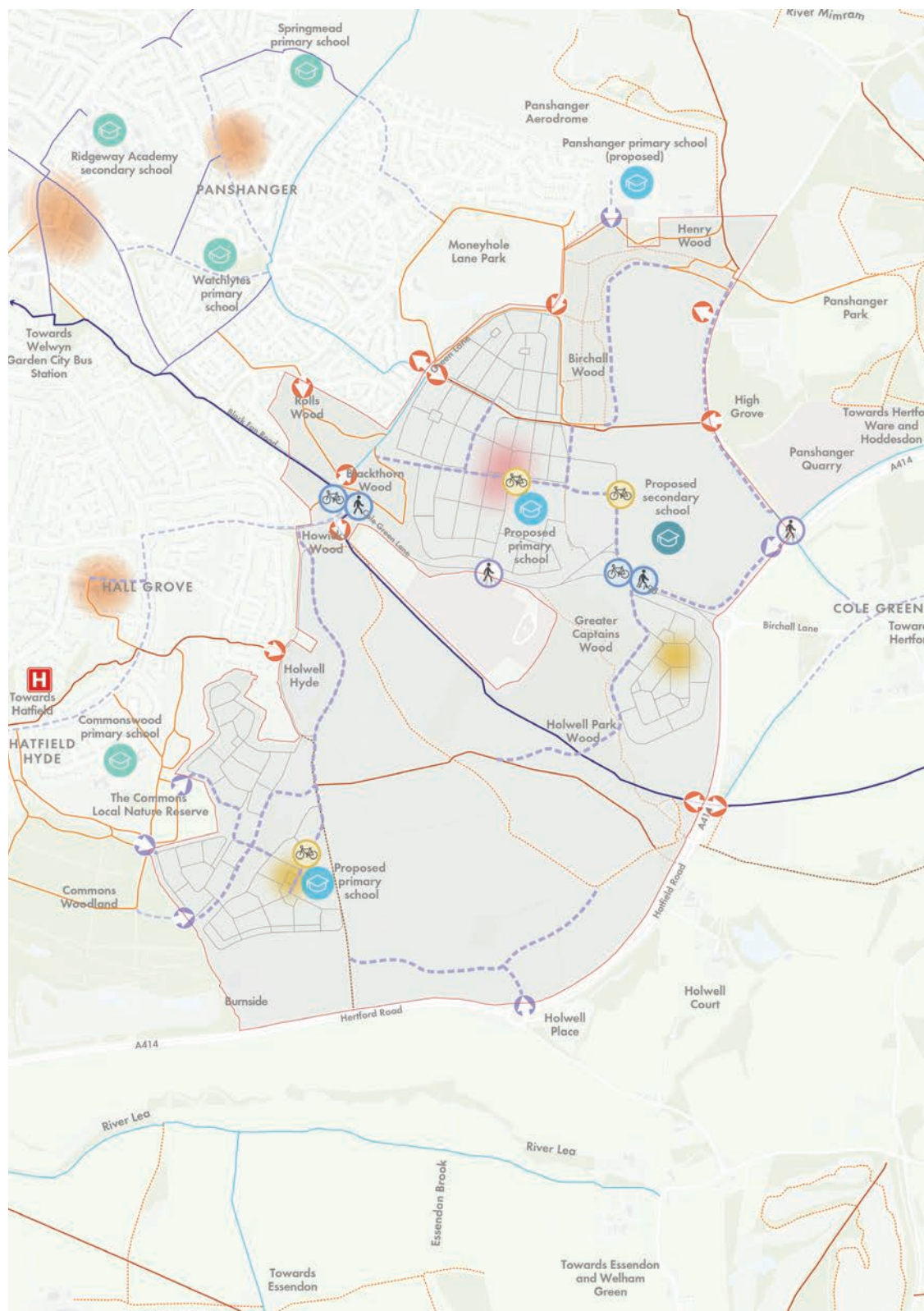
Priorities for new or improved connections as part of the masterplan have been identified as:

1. Direct, segregated and prioritised walking and cycling links at the junction of Cole Green Lane/Black Fan Road and on Birchall Lane by the secondary school site and Holwell Park EH neighbourhood.
2. A pedestrian crossing at the main vehicular access point to Birchall Gardens, connecting from the footpath by the entrance to the waste site.
3. Improved signage and junction management at the 'fiveways' junction that is already a busy walking and cycling route and will connect Birchall Gardens with the Panshanger neighbourhood.
4. Cycle hubs or similar infrastructure with parking and maintenance tools at the local centre, EH secondary school and WH primary school / community centre.
5. Improvement to the rights of way network for new routes and to accommodate the increased use, particularly between the WH neighbourhoods and Commonswood / Hall Grove.
6. A potential cycle route is identified to Hatfield station within the green infrastructure plan on page 120. This route should be enhanced through public realm investment as funding becomes available.
7. Enhancement of the Cole Green way to provide a safe and attractive route to key destinations within and beyond the site. Particular focus at the underpass beneath the A414 to provide a usable route year-round.
8. Coordination with the pedestrian link to/from the forthcoming Panshanger Airfield neighbourhood.
9. A high quality, safe connection across the A414 between Cole Green and Panshanger Lane, to overcome issues of poor rural connectivity and enable nearby village residents to access the amenities of the BGS area. This should be grade separated.
10. Pedestrian access and enhanced bus stop provision in the area of Holwell Roundabout.
11. A signage strategy across the BGS area, to ensure routes to the local centre, schools, community uses and local assets such as Panshanger Park are clear.
12. Connections to the LCWIP network, which should be constructed and funded by the site developer.



Walking and cycling routes such as the Cole Green Way and local signage should be improved





- Site boundary
- ↻ Proposed non-motorised access point
- 🚶 Proposed pedestrian crossing
- 🚶🚲 Proposed pedestrian and cycle crossing
- 🚲 Proposed cycle hub
- Proposed pedestrian and cycle route
- 🎓 Proposed primary school
- 🎓 Proposed secondary school
- Proposed local centre
- Proposed amenities
- ↻ Existing Non-motorised access point
- Existing PRoW
- Existing National Cycleway
- Existing Cycleway
- Existing Bridleway
- Existing Footpath
- Existing Byway
- Existing Track
- Existing non-strategic walking route
- Existing local centre
- H Existing hospital
- 🎓 Existing schools



## Public transport

Providing viable public transport options that represent a preferred alternative to private cars will be central to supporting a modal-shift amongst new residents. This will need to be well-integrated with the cycle network to support multi-mode sustainable trips where possible.

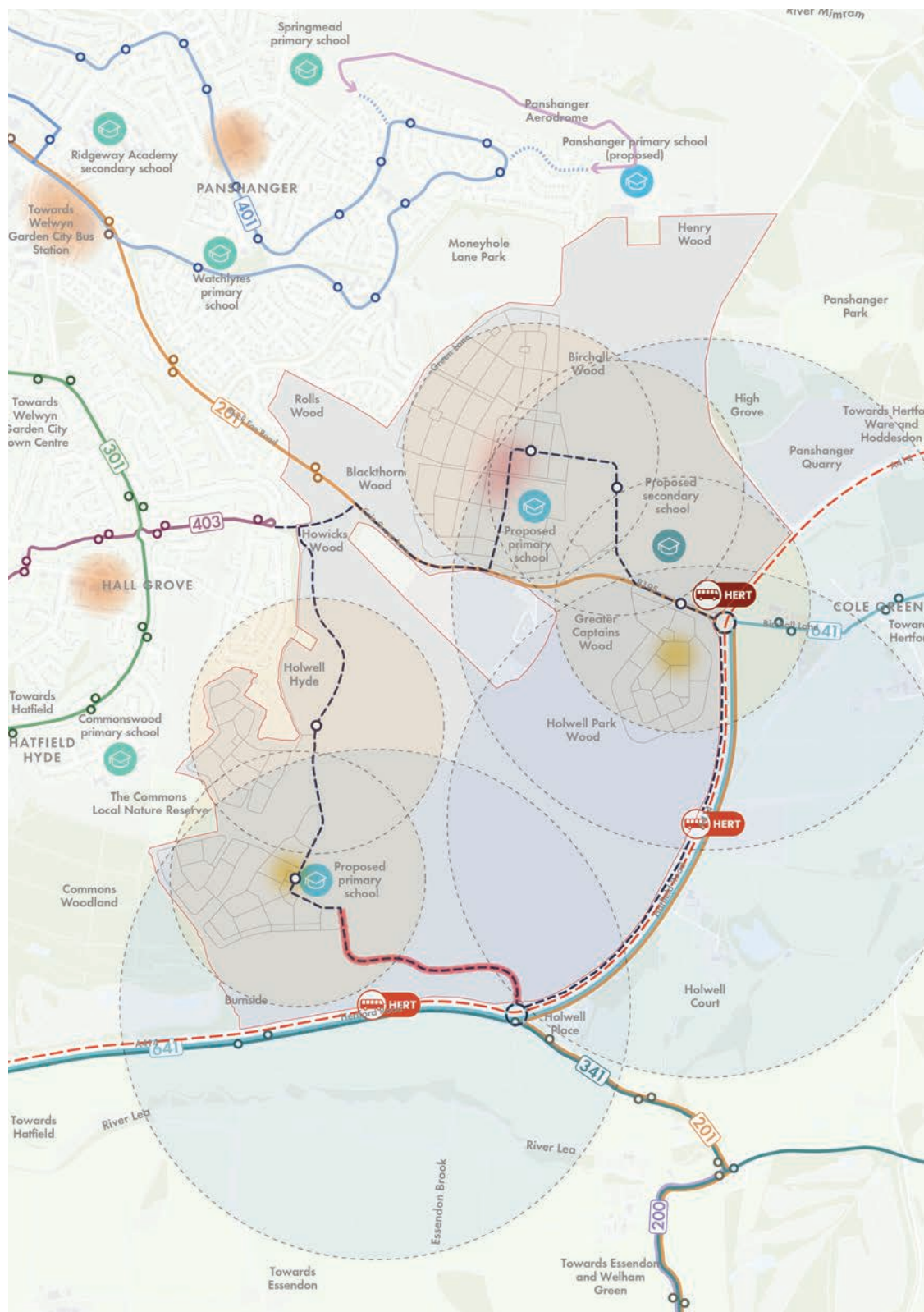
### Key characteristics and guidance

1. Local bus stops should be provided at regular intervals in the larger neighbourhoods and should be located close to the local centre and to schools and amenities. These could form an extension to, ideally, both of the 403 and 201 existing bus routes.
2. Bus stops should be within an approximately five minute walk (400m) of all new homes within the Birchall Garden Suburb community.
3. Direct and comfortable walking routes should be provided for Birchall Gardens residents to pick up the 401 bus route; and for WH neighbourhood residents to access the 301 bus route.
4. A bus and emergency service access only road will need to be included between the Hatfield Downs WH neighbourhood and Holwell roundabout. This will support a bus loop that can circle the neighbourhoods before returning to Welwyn Garden City town centre.
5. A minimum of one stop for the HERT should be provided at a point that is well-integrated with the proposed A414 route and within a 10 minute walk (800m) of as many homes as possible. Proximity to key uses such as the secondary school should also

be considered, along with interchange with local bus services. Suggested indicative locations are shown on the masterplan, but these should be tested and refined during the detailed masterplan process.



The Cambridge and Donegal rapid bus transit systems



- Site boundary
- Proposed bus route
- Proposed bus stops
- 400m walking distance from bus stops
- Proposed HERT route
- Proposed HERT stops
- Preferred proposed HERT stop
- 800m walking distance from HERT stops
- Proposed emergency access/bus route
- Proposed Panshanger route
- Potential proposed extension of bus route 401
- 401 Bus route
- 201 Bus route
- 403 Bus route
- 641 Bus route
- 341 Bus route
- 200 Bus route
- 301 Bus route
- 🎓 Existing schools
- 🎓 Proposed primary school
- 🎓 Proposed secondary school
- 📍 Proposed local centre
- 📍 Proposed amenities
- 📍 Existing local centre



## Vehicular movement

A clear hierarchy of streets is proposed within the masterplan area, to aid legibility and to create a natural sorting of travel modes, with a vehicular focus to spine streets and a walking and cycling focus to residential streets.

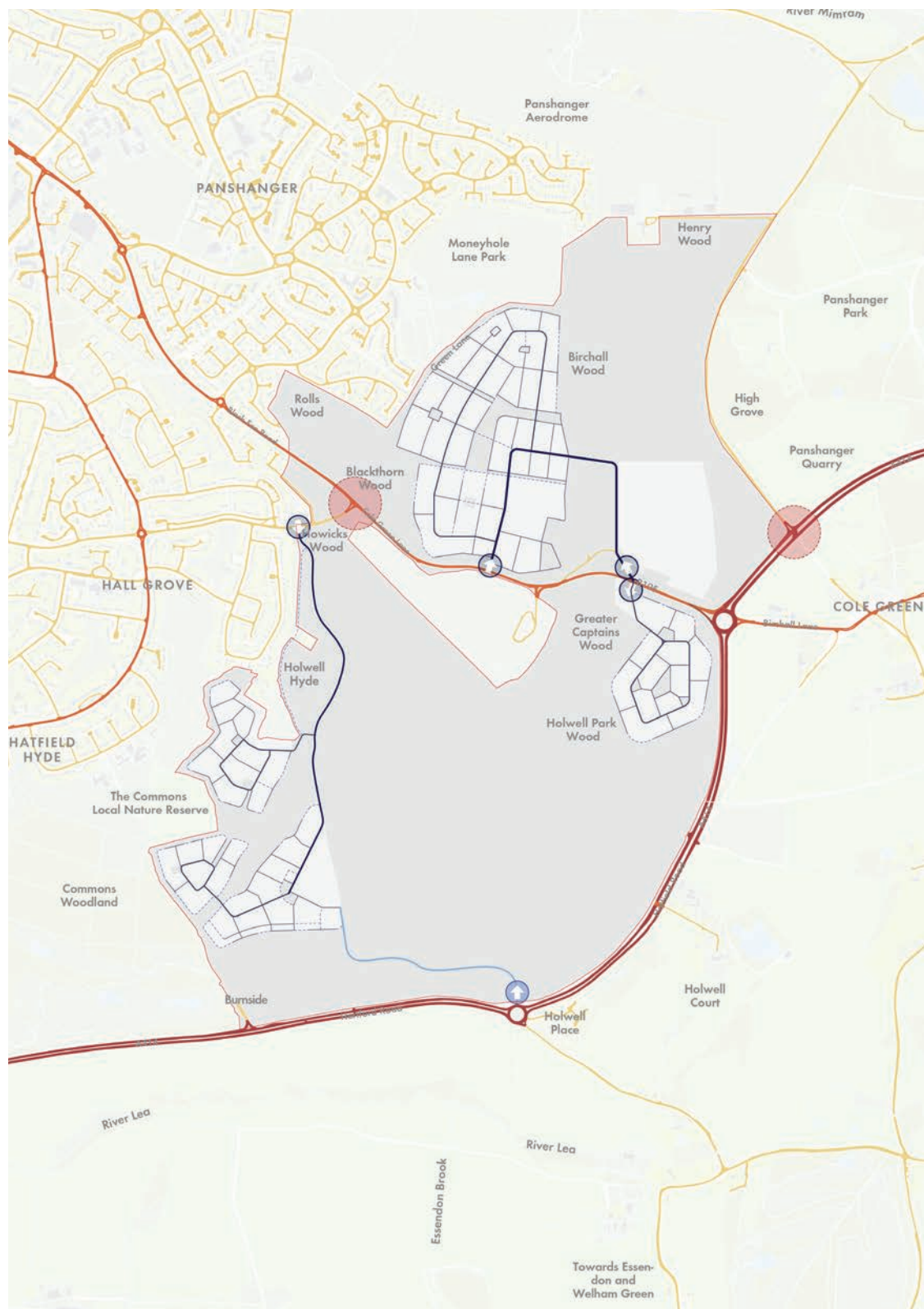
### Key characteristics and guidance

1. A clear spine road loop should be provided to the EH Birchall Gardens neighbourhood, which will run past the local centre. This could run past the primary school and secondary schools. At its northern point, it should be pulled back from the Birchall Wood ancient woodland.
2. A clear spine road should be provided from Cole Green Lane to the WH neighbourhoods, which will run to the east of Holwell Hyde angling pond.
3. Each neighbourhood should have a secondary loop serving the core residential streets. These lightly trafficked streets will feed into the main movement corridor and have local streets emanating from them. Modal filters should be used to retain the street form whilst removing unwanted vehicle movement.
4. As set out in the principles, the roads should follow Welwyn Garden City's traditional character, with set pieces and long, framed views, where possible
5. An emergency services access route should be provided between the WH Hatfield Downs neighbourhood and Holwell roundabout on the A414. This will need to have a solid sub-structure to support 12 tonnes emergency service vehicles (and buses). However, the route need not be lit, or could have low level lighting to limit impacts on biodiversity and strategic views. The design of this route will need to be given careful thought at the detailed masterplan stage, including surfacing options, so that it can have minimal impact on strategic views. Designs should not preclude the route from becoming a general access route for all vehicles at some point in the future
6. Improvements will be needed to the Cole Green Lane/ Black Fan Road junction and new junctions will be required on Birchall Lane at the primary entrance point to the EH Birchall Gardens neighbourhood and at the entrance point to the EH Holwell Park neighbourhood (on the south side of the road). (see the pages on the B195 for further information).
7. Careful consideration will be needed for the new junction created by the current access point to Holwell Hyde Lane. This will need to accommodate far greater levels of traffic; avoid conflict with movements to/from Holwell Hyde residential street; and accommodate an important cycle route between the WH neighbourhoods and to Black Fan Road and towards Moneyhole Lane Park area (see the pages on the B195 for further information).
8. Access and impacts to the A414 will require detailed understanding and suitable mitigation measures, likely at Holwell roundabout and Birchall Lane Roundabout.



The Cambridge Busway is an examples of a solid sub-structure road that can read as a 'lane'.





## Role and character of the B195

The character of the B195 will play an important role in establishing successful neighbourhoods at Birchall Garden Suburb. It has the potential to be a significant active travel and psychological barrier between the neighbourhoods to the north and south and will require careful design to ensure this can be overcome.

The road will form the entrance to both Birchall Garden Suburb and to Welwyn Garden City. In the short-medium term the road will continue to read as a 'lane', with trees on both sides and a landscape bund to the north, designed to mitigate noise pollution from the waste site.

However, in the medium-long term, with the possible relocation of the waste site, the road has the potential to shift in character to a 'street'. A visible employment site can be established on the south side of the road with active frontages to the road. At this point, it may be possible to review the role of the landscape bund (see the landscape and green infrastructure section for further information) and remove this to create a visual connection with the Birchall Gardens neighbourhood.



**Birchall Lane is currently framed by trees on two sides and this will remain in the short-medium term**

## Key characteristics and guidance:

1. Pedestrians and cyclists should have direct and prioritised access at signalled junctions along the road, to facilitate easy access to the schools and local centre and to avoid the Holwell Park neighbourhood from being isolated. Roundabouts are not considered appropriate to deliver these characteristics.
2. HCC's emerging strategy has a 'place and movement' strategy. Within this, the B195 corridor will move from a purely movement function to a place function. The design of the road should take account of this future change in role and associated character and avoid designs that do not support a future 'place' function of the street. Designs should help remove severance and support Birchall Lane as an attractive corridor for the new community.
3. Working with HCC and the Police, the speed limit on the road should be lowered, for example to 40 mph in the short term, and to 30 mph in the longer term, as potential future active frontage change the designated role of the road.
4. An indicative layout is provided for the Cole Green Lane/Blackfan Road junction, to demonstrate how the competing requirements of walking, cycling and vehicular movements could be accommodated. This will be an important movement node for all modes and so should be carefully considered. This layout should be tested and worked up at detailed masterplan stage, along with consideration and balance of different transport modes at the new junctions on the B195.

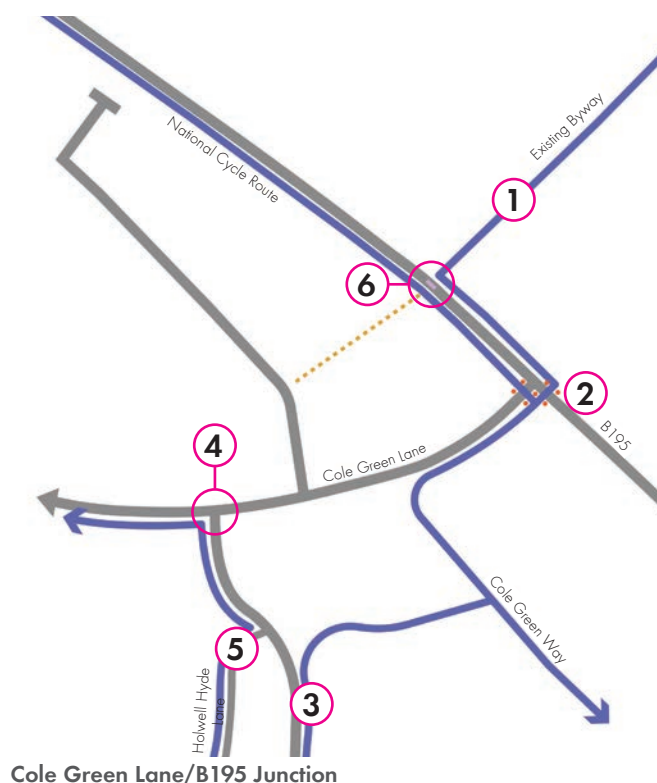




- Primary vehicular road
- Secondary vehicular road
- Tertiary vehicular road
- - - Tertiary vehicular road (local access only)
- - - Proposed Bus route
- Existing non-motorised access point
- Existing PRow
- Existing footpath
- - - Existing non-strategic walking route
- - - Existing track
- Existing cycle route
- - - Proposed footpath and cycleway
- Proposed pedestrian crossing
- Proposed pedestrian/cycle crossing
- Proposed cycle hub
- Proposed Local centre
- Proposed secondary school
- Proposed primary school

#### Plan of the proposed vehicular, public transport, and active travel routes

1. Existing byway as primary point of access for pedestrians and cyclists to the Birchall Gardens neighbourhood area. Opportunities to upgrade and improve the byway should be explored.
2. The Cole Green Way cycle route could be diverted to a junction where cyclists and pedestrian can either cross west to the National Cycle Route 61 or north toward to existing byway.
3. Proposed two-way cycle route along proposed primary vehicular route.
4. Proposed access point utilising existing Holwell Hyde Lane access point.
5. Holwell Hyde Lane to be diverted to a junction onto proposed vehicular route. Cycle route to be maintained for cyclists turning left at Cole Green Lane, towards the tow centre
6. Opportunity for an island to allow pedestrians to access the footpath through the woodland.



Cole Green Lane/B195 Junction

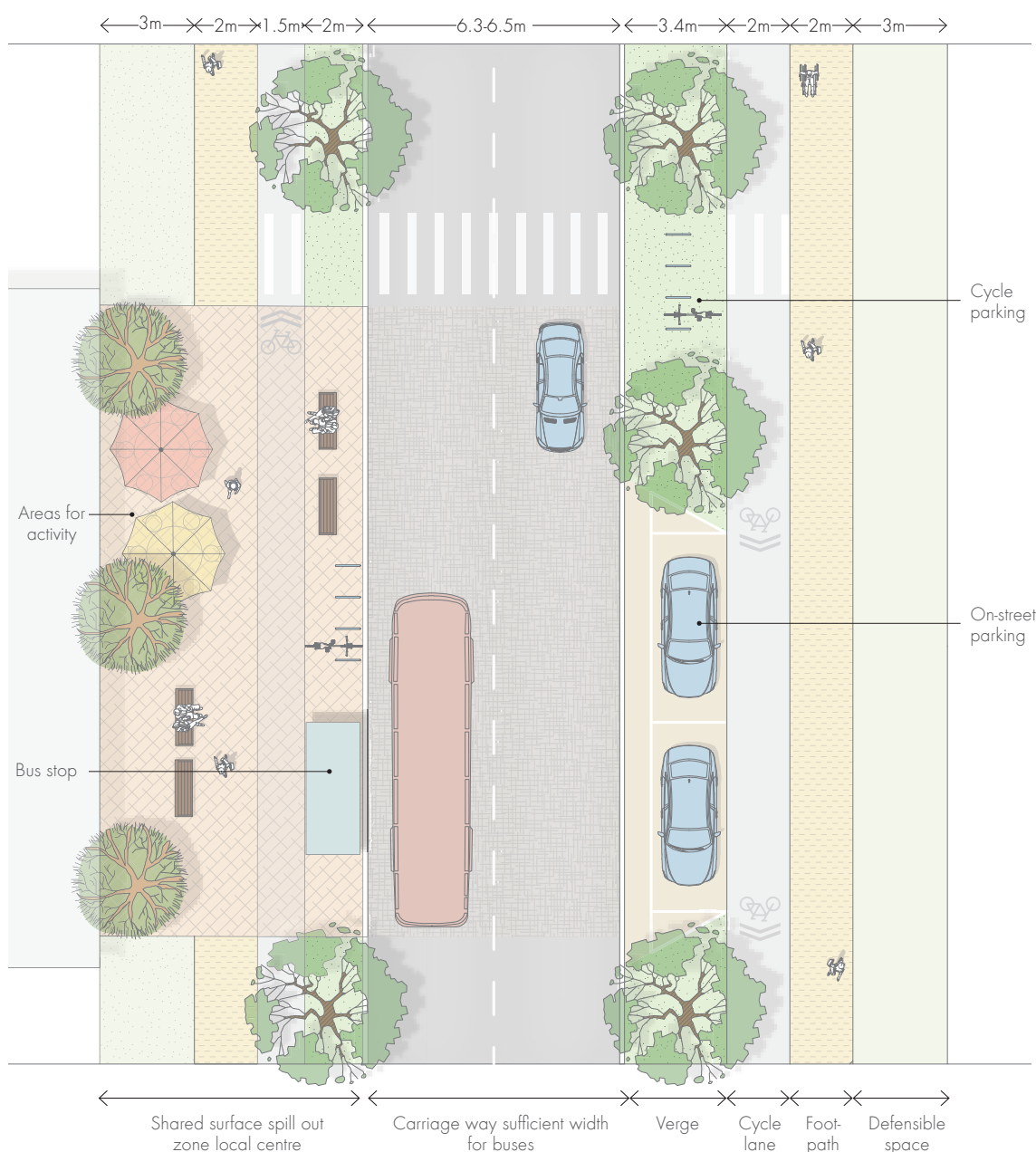


## Example street sections

The following four street plans show examples of how different hierarchies of road could look and function. The roads act as both movement corridors and places within themselves for people to socialise and relax. As such, each street type should be designed to reflect their location in the masterplan, function and priority for cars and pedestrian and cyclists.

## Primary Road

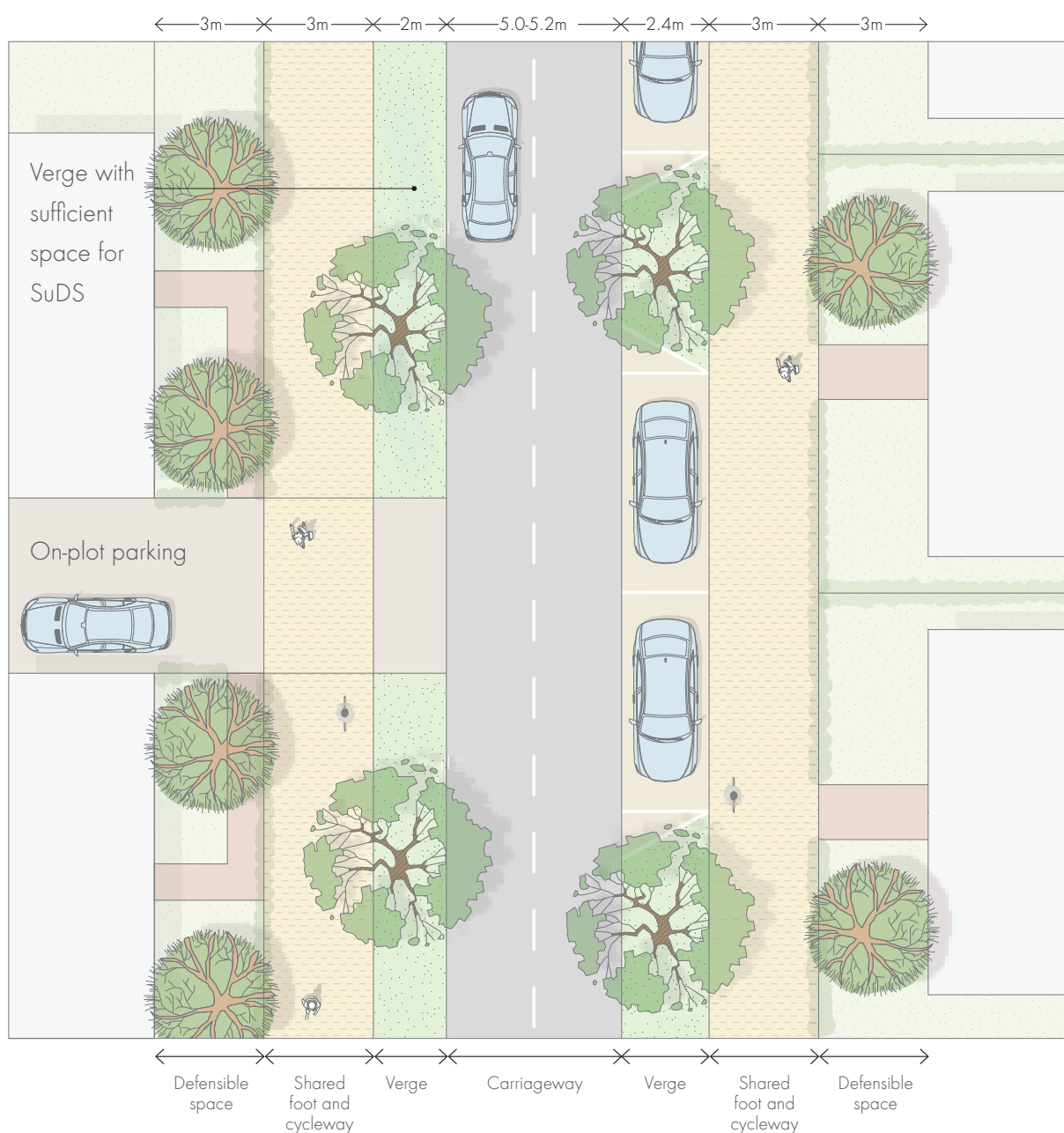
The main function of the primary road is to connect residents with the proposed local centre, amenities and schools. The plan below shows an example of how the primary road could look near the EH Local Centre. This area includes segregated cycle routes with areas dedicated to cycle parking, sitting and socialising, create a vibrant and active local centre.





## Secondary Road

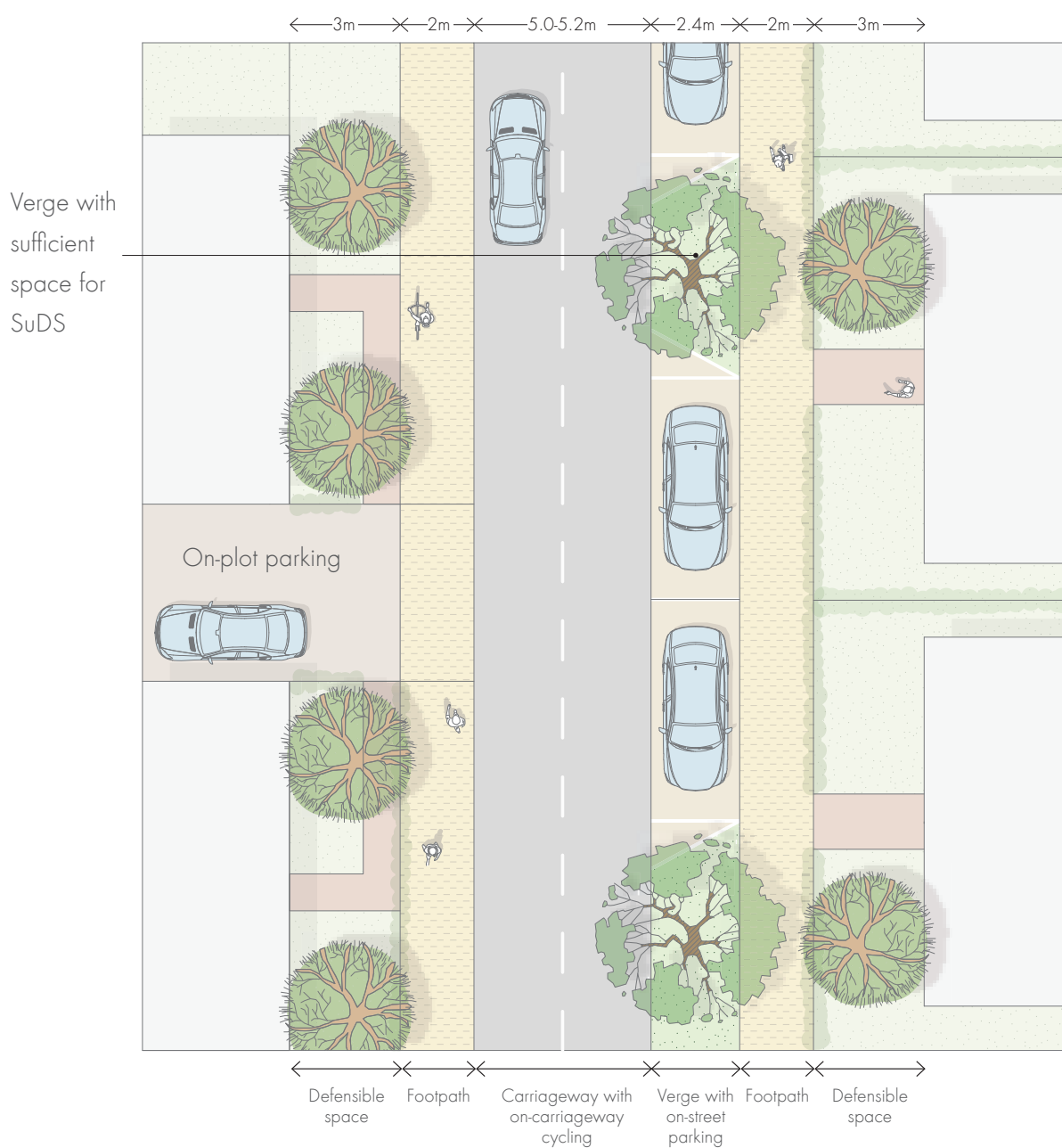
Secondary roads are accessed off the primary road. There should be opportunities for both on-plot and on-street parking. Street trees are used as traffic calming measures with the opportunity to integrate SuDS into the verge. In this example, cycle provision is provided on generous shared cycle/footpaths. Opportunities for safe on-carriageway cycle paths could be explored.



## Tertiary Road

Tertiary roads provide permeability through the neighbourhood and access to dwellings. As quiet residential roads, measures to minimise traffic speeds are important. The plan example presents on-carriageway cycle with a footpath on either one or both sides of the carriageway.

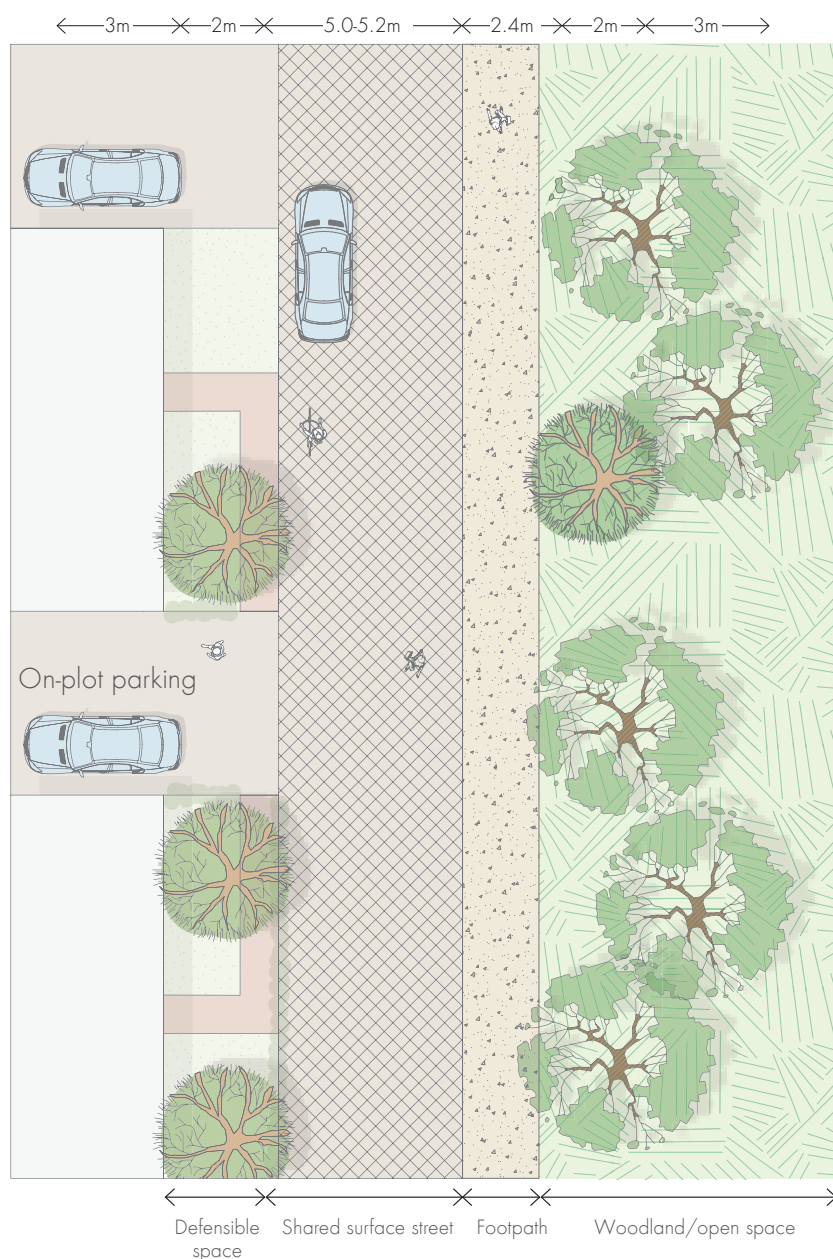
Opportunities for both on-plot parking and either on-street parking or a green verge with planting and SuDs to improve biodiversity.





# Local access tertiary road

The local access tertiary roads are the lowest order of streets, and they should be designed in a way to minimise vehicular access and provide safe footpaths and cycle routes. They should have an informal character and be used solely to provide access to the homes they feed into. They may include shared surfaces with on-street parking and/or on-plot parking. Along these streets, priority should be given to cyclists and pedestrians.



## 4.6 PLACEMAKING STRATEGY

### Housing typologies

To establish a mixed and balanced community it will be important to provide a range of housing types within Birchall Garden Suburb, homes should cater to people buying their first home; sizing up to accommodate a growing family, or moving somewhere more accessible or with care options as they get older. Homes should also cater to a range of budgets, including affordable housing to respond to WHBC and EH Plan requirements.

The plan on the following page shows the range of homes that can be included and suitable locations for these. However, it is not intended to be prescriptive in terms of those locations or the balance between the types. The principles of variation is the important aspect.

#### Key characteristics and guidance

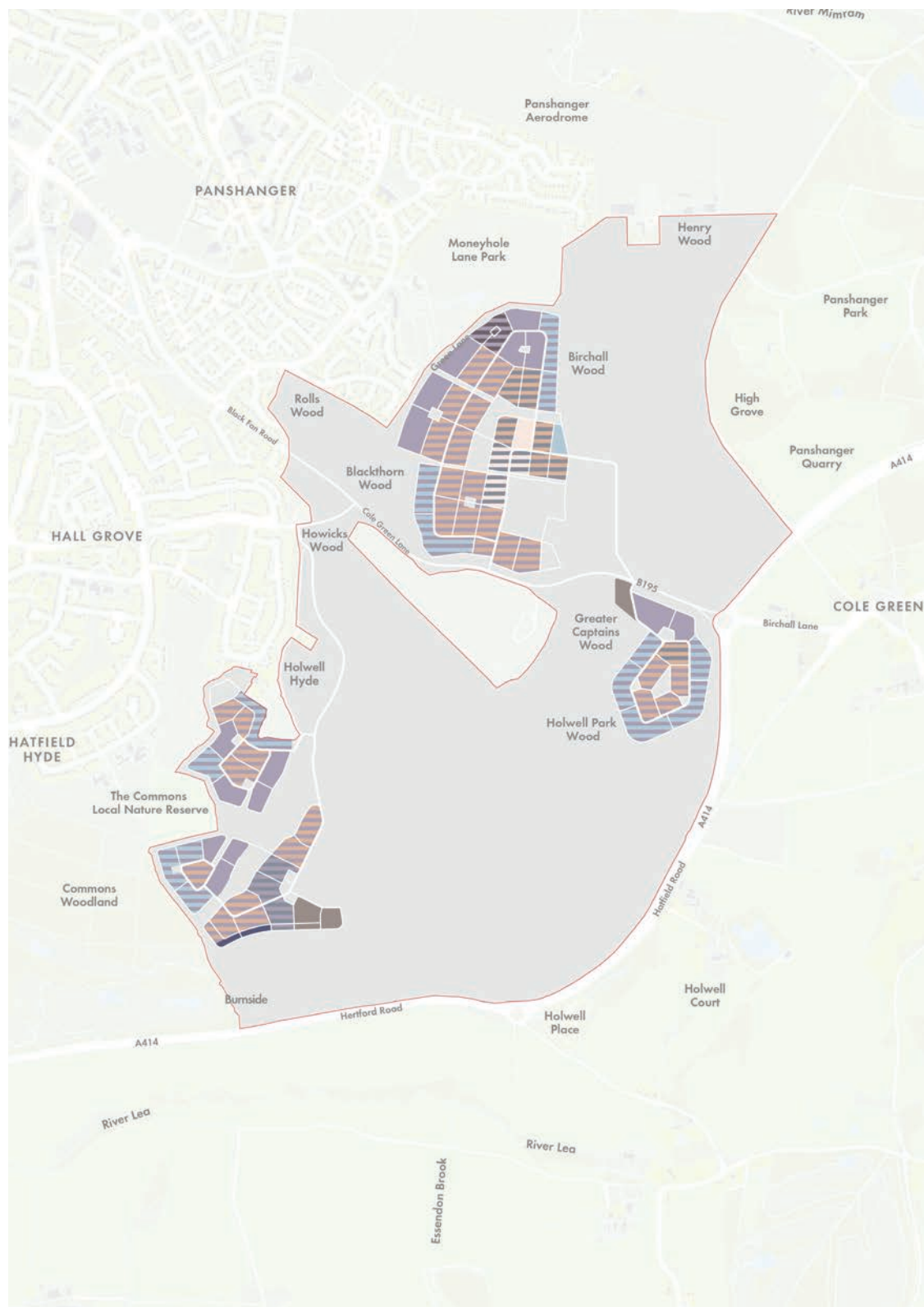
1. A range of housing types should be provided, including detached, semi-detached, terrace, town house and maisonette. This range will help to improve legibility within the overall area and will help to establish distinctive characters for each of the neighbourhoods.
2. Maisonettes are more suited to central locations, close to the local centre and community amenities, and where height is required in the Hatfield Downs neighbourhood, to mitigate noise pollution from the Burnside waste site to the south (see more on this in the section on contextual and high quality design)
3. Terraces and town houses are more suited to spine roads and secondary residential streets; and overlooking community green spaces

4. Semi-detached and detached homes are more suited to tertiary and perimeter streets, which overlook more natural landscapes, such as the Green Corridor, and areas of woodland buffer
5. Examples of each type of housing generally exist within Welwyn Garden City's original neighbourhoods, and a study of these dwellings should be undertaken during the detailed masterplanning to understand their key characteristics.

A brief profile of different housing typologies is provided in the density pages. Designs are for reference only and do not represent homes within a Garden City tradition. See section on contextual and high quality design for more information on this.



Examples of terraces, maisonettes and semi-detached homes from Welwyn GC earlier neighbourhoods



- Site boundary
- Detached
- Semi-detached
- Apartments
- Gypsy and Traveller site
- Semi-detached/detached
- Semi-detached/terrace
- Semi-detached/maisonette
- Maisonette/Terrace
- Semi-detached/mews
- Apartments/maisonettes
- Stacked maisonettes



## Housing offer

The housing typologies developed at Birchall Garden Suburb will have a close relationship with the mixed and varied housing offer to be provided within the neighbourhoods. Both WHBC and EHDC have policy guidance within their Plans regarding housing offer, which is included below.

The plan identifying locations for different types of housing officer is intended to be indicative rather than prescriptive. However, there may well be limited locations for house types such as later living and Gypsy and Traveller pitches within the masterplan area.

### Key characteristics and guidance

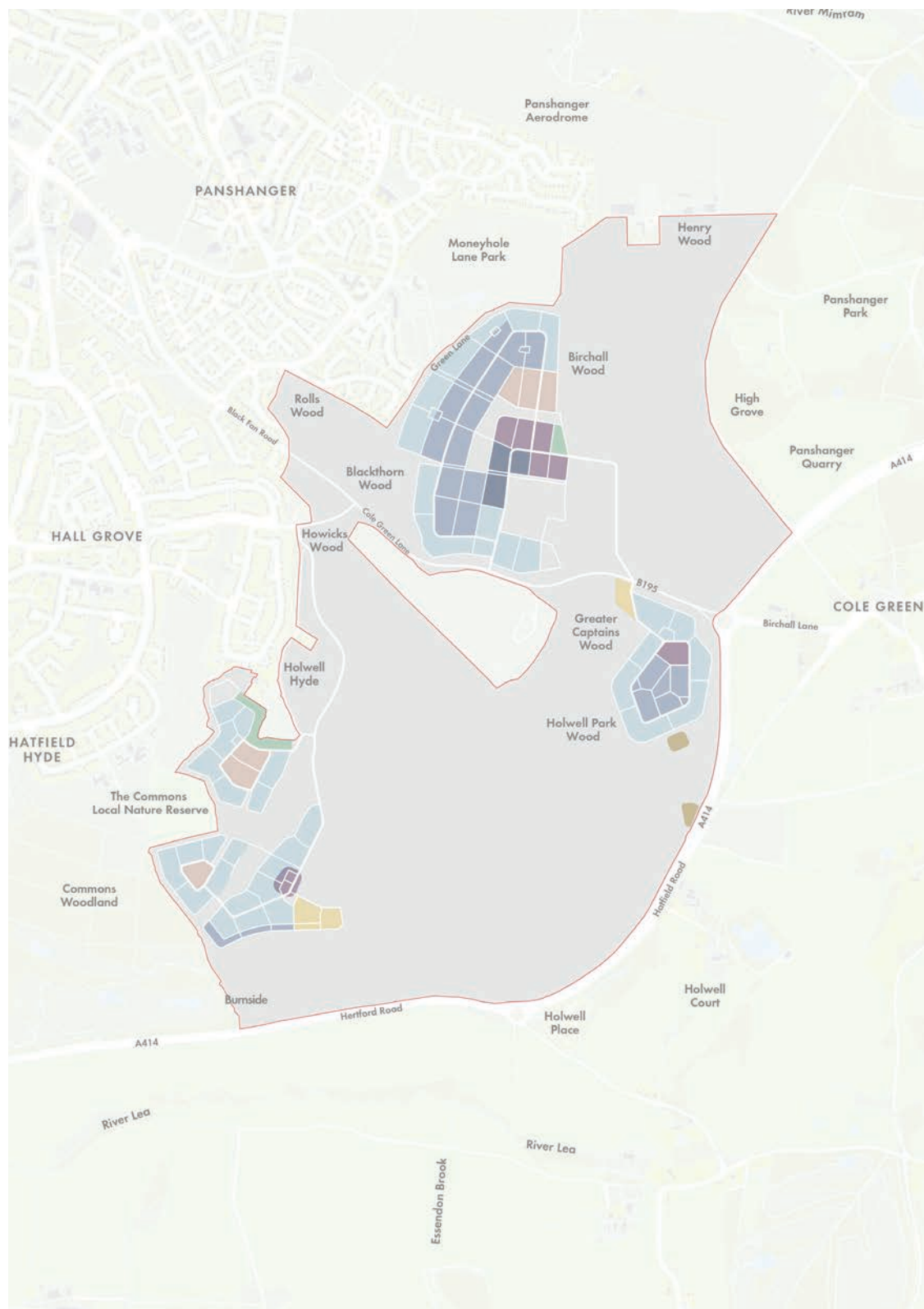
1. Within WH neighbourhoods, 30% of homes should be affordable. Within EH neighbourhoods, 40% of homes should be affordable. These should include affordable rent and intermediate housing
2. Flexible homes should be provided for later living, such as retirement bungalows/apartments, flexi-care housing and/or residential care homes. These should be located close to shops and community services and to green, open space, and should consider inclusion of the sociable, communal spaces provided in successful co-living models.
3. Co-living housing models could also be considered for other groups such as younger people and families starting out in their first homes or for all-female developments. Both of which have proved popular elsewhere.
4. 11 Gypsy and Traveller pitches should be provided within WH and 4 pitches within EH. These pitches should be reasonably close to local

shops and amenities but not located centrally within neighbourhoods. They should not be located directly adjacent to any operational waste sites. In each case, scope should be considered for future expansion.

5. Whilst withdrawn from government policy, the 2008 Good Practice Guide on Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites provides a useful steer. Contact should be made with GATE Herts during the detailed design process, to fully understand local community needs and preferences.
6. The masterplan suggests locating 11 Gypsy and Traveller pitches to the south of the primary school in the WH Hatfield Downs neighbourhood and 4 pitches close to Birchall Lane and the primary and secondary school, next to the EH Holwell Park neighbourhood. Additional pitches might be possible to the south east of Holwell Park or close to the household waste site, should this be decommissioned. Careful consideration and liaison with HCC would be needed regarding access to these. Direct access from the A414 is not supported by HCC.
7. Self-build and custom housing should be included within both the EH and WH areas of the masterplan. Providing these as a neighbourhood area rather than single plots and partnering with a specialist custom build developer will help to improve deliverability for these areas. Positive examples exist at Marmalade Lane, Cambridge (TOWN) and at Graven Hill, Bicester (Graven Hill Bicester Development Company)



**New Ground at High Barnet and Marmalade Lane in Cambridge. Successful custom-build and co-living schemes (PTE and Mole Architects)**



## Densities

Gross densities for the masterplan area are likely to be in the region of 30-35 dwellings per hectare (dph). This includes all roads and neighbourhood green spaces but excludes sites for the schools. Net densities are proposed to be between 30 and 60 dph. This excludes roads and local green spaces and measures density at the block scale. Slightly higher densities in areas that are well-served by shops and services provide a more sustainable approach, by establishing a critical mass of people to support these uses and by limiting the need for private cars to be used for all activities in these locations. For this to be successful, however, those local facilities must be provided and both public and active travel options must be viable, comfortable and preferred alternatives to using a private car.

Indicative densities are set out in the plan to the right. This is not intended to be prescriptive but to demonstrate the range of densities that will be expressed through accommodating a range of housing typologies and offer.

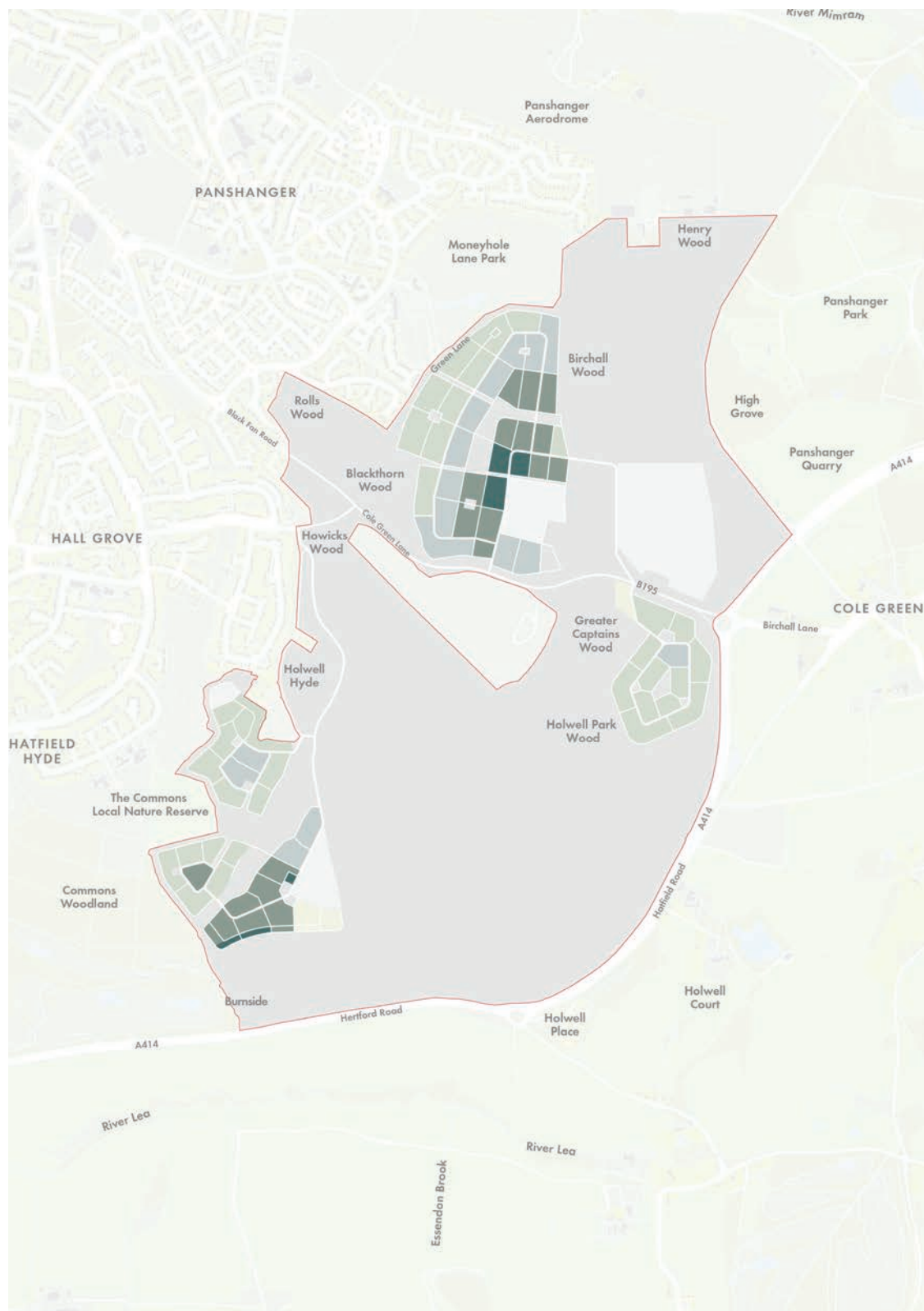
### Key characteristics and guidance

1. A range of densities should be shown in a detailed masterplan, with higher densities at the local centre within the EH Birchall Gardens neighbourhood.
2. Slightly higher densities are recommended close to the primary school and community centre in the WH Hatfield Downs neighbourhood and close to the suggested local shop or small community use such as childcare within the EH Holwell Park neighbourhood.

3. Higher densities are shown in the southern most edge of the WH Hatfield Downs neighbourhood, which is required to accommodate a solid southern facade of 14m to buffer noise from the Burnside waste facility to the south. This will equate to 3.5-4 storeys, which are therefore very likely to be maisonettes.
4. Lower densities should be included in the WH Holwell Green and Commons Wood neighbourhoods, particularly along the edge of the Green Corridor which runs between these two neighbourhoods and close to the listed Holwell Hyde Farm buildings. For this reason, custom build houses are suggested close to the farm boundary.
5. Lower densities should be included in the EH Holwell Park neighbourhood, and along the northern and western edges of the main Birchall Gardens neighbourhood, as well as close to the listed Birchall Farm buildings. For this reason, allotments are suggested close to the farm buildings.

Examples of the suggested net density levels are shown on the following pages for reference.





- Site boundary
- Lowest (30 DPH)
- Low (40 DPH)
- Low-moderate (50DPH)
- Moderate (50-60PH)



## Profile of development parcel

- Local Authority: Welywn Hatfield
- Neighbourhood: Commonswood
- Geometry: Formal, meandering
- Gross area: 0.65 Hectares
- Gross density: 30 DPH
- Projected capacity: 20 dwellings
- Land uses: Residential
- Edge conditions: Woodland, residential, secondary road

## Masterplan guidance

- Indicative capacity: 28 dwellings
- Net density: 43 DPH
- Amenity: Private gardens, shared garden, landscaped buffer
- Building heights: 2 - 3 storeys
- Building types: Detached, semi-detached houses, mews



<b>Location</b>	Trumpington Meadows, Cambridge
<b>Tenure</b>	Market
<b>Homes</b>	660
<b>Density</b>	net 39 dph average
<b>Features</b>	Set within parkland, new allotments and orchard. Code for Sustainable Homes 3/4



<b>Location</b>	Horsted Park, Kent
<b>Tenure</b>	Mixed use
<b>Homes</b>	337 homes
<b>Density</b>	net 45 dph average
<b>Features</b>	Courtyard structure to resemble farmsteads, community facilities, extra-care housing





## Profile of development parcel

- Local Authority: East Herts
- Neighbourhood: Birchall Gardens
- Geometry: Orthogonal, regular
- Gross area: 0.52 Hectares
- Gross density: 50 DPH
- Projected capacity: 26 dwellings
- Land uses: Mixed
- Edge conditions: Park, residential, main road

## Masterplan guidance

- Indicative capacity: 45 dwellings
- Net density: 86 DPH
- Amenity: Shared/private gardens
- Building heights: 2 - 4 storeys
- Building types: Apartments



<b>Location</b>	Woodside Square, Haringey
<b>Tenure</b>	Mixed-tenure
<b>Homes</b>	159
<b>Density</b>	net 69 dph average
<b>Features</b>	Public square, restored heritage, range of house types, community centre



<b>Location</b>	Abode, Trumpington, Cambridge
<b>Tenure</b>	Mixed-tenure
<b>Homes</b>	450 homes
<b>Density</b>	net 47 dph average
<b>Features</b>	Central 'great court', range of house types, green lanes and village character





## Profile of development parcel

- Local Authority: Welwyn Hatfield
- Neighbourhood: Holwell Green
- Geometry: Informal, linear
- Gross area: 1.1 Hectares
- Gross density: 30 DPH
- Projected capacity: 20 dwellings
- Land uses: Residential
- Edge conditions: Woodland, residential, secondary road

## Masterplan guidance

- Indicative capacity: 33 dwellings
- Net density: 30 DPH
- Amenity: Private gardens
- Building heights: 2-2.5 storeys
- Building types: custom build and detached houses



© Jim Stephenson



© Jim Stephenson

## Location Tenure Homes Density Features

Lovedon Fields, Hampshire  
Market  
50  
net 22 dph average  
Overlooking South Downs AONB, mix of contextual-led and contemporary homes, public realm designed to promote interaction

## Net densities of 30-40 dph

### Large family homes



Typically two to three storeys on large plots with generous and safe outdoor private amenity space. Good connections to communal or doorstep play space. Private garage spaces can be appropriate but should be adaptable for conversion, as should loft spaces.

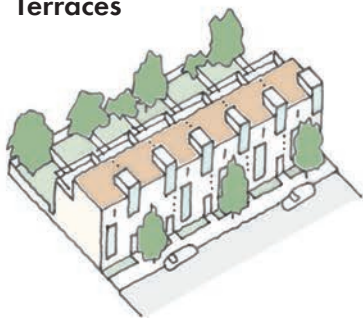
### Semi-detached



Paired dwellings of typically two to three storeys, set back from the street and suburban in character. Off-street parking with strong visual links to front, side and rear gardens. Adaptable to changing needs and lifestyles, particularly that of a family.

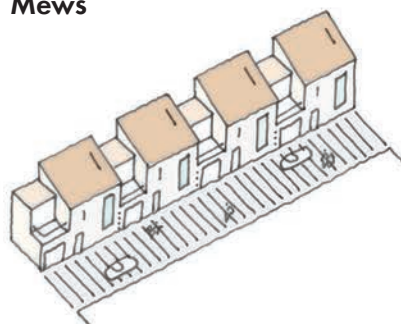
## Net densities of 35-50 dph

### Terraces



Typically one to four storeys terraces can be converted into flats or remain as individual houses, allowing for variation in unit types along any given street. All the while maintaining the desired street condition with well defined fronts and backs.

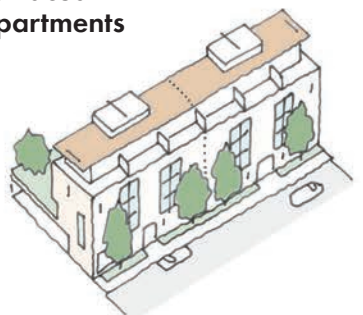
### Mews



Intimate, low-rise style, with private front doors alternating with garage doors. Flexible options to cater to a variety of changing household sizes, needs and lifestyles. Smaller average plot sizes can therefore achieve intermediary to high densities.

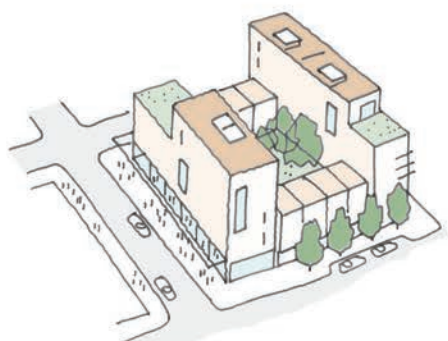
## Net densities of 50-60 dph

### Terraced apartments



Terraced apartments can cater to many needs. Lower-levels can form maisonettes with private entrances or shops; whilst upper level apartments can have private terraces and balconies. Can achieve high densities and can vary in scale to suit local context.

### Local centres



Local centres provide opportunities for apartment perimeter blocks. High densities and a critical mass can be achieved with shops at ground levels to create active fronts. Suitable in urban contexts.



## Edge conditions

The edge conditions refer to the transition or interface between the proposed development and adjacent land uses or structures. Within the masterplan there are a range of edge conditions, including woodlands, open green spaces, green amenity space including both pocket parks and allotments, new homes, schools and local centres. These edge conditions form the characteristics of the neighbourhoods.

### Key characteristics and guidance

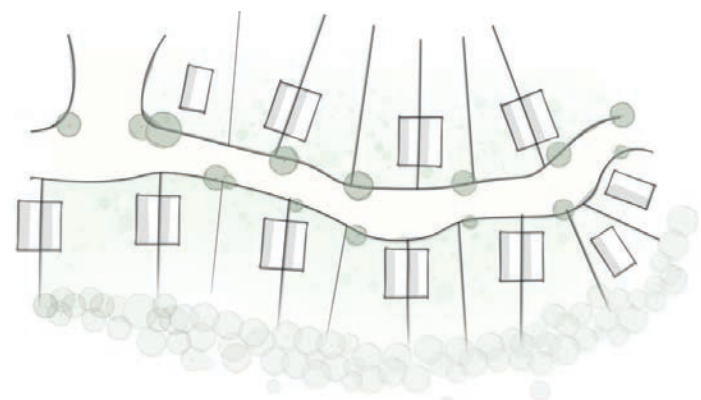
1. All homes should front onto green amenity space, encouraging passive surveillance and instilling a greater sense of safety and 'eyes on the street' within communities.
2. Careful thought should be given to boundaries to the masterplan area with existing wooded areas or pathways. Frontage here could be along a private lane, with perforated vehicle access but continuous walking and cycling routes, to respond to the sensitive context.
3. Where homes are located adjacent to woodlands, detailed masterplans must take into consideration elements such as daylight/sunlight and safety, and assess whether it is appropriate for homes to front or back onto woodlands. It may be appropriate to back onto existing tracks which run along the south western boundary of the WH Commons Wood and Hatfield Downs neighbourhoods, to retain a rural character.
4. Within the development, clear boundaries between public and private space should be provided through privet hedges or low fencing.



**Woodland/open space edge: open informal frontage to landscape edge**



**Woodland/open space edge: open informal frontage with private lanes, appropriate for a more sensitive edge**



**Woodland edge: rear gardens with new planted shrubbery at the boundary, to retain a rural character**

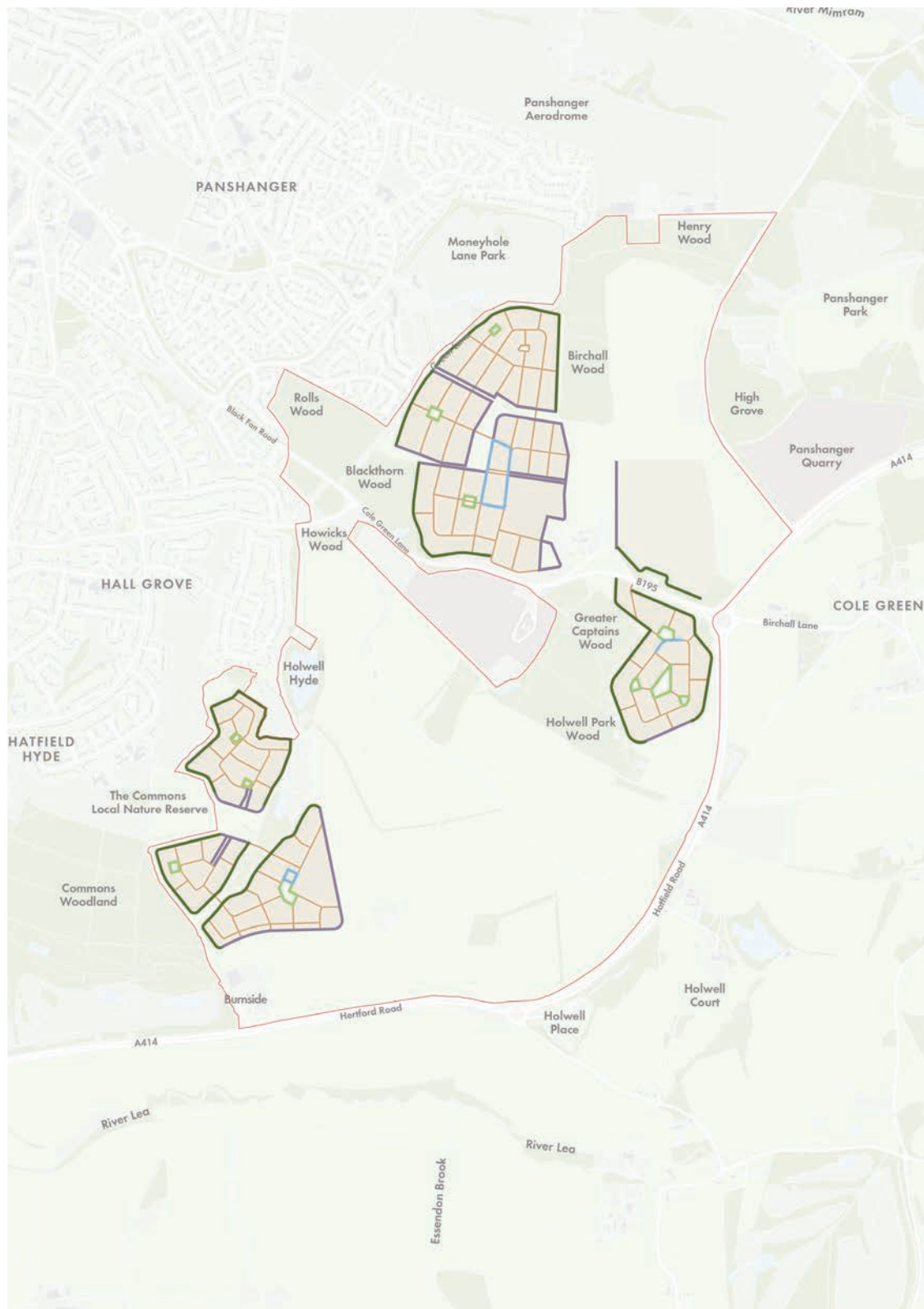


**The western edge of Birchall Wood, which will meet the eastern edge of the development**



**Western edge of the EH masterplan area,**





- Site boundary
- Residential edge
- Woodland edge
- Open space edge
- Amenity space edge
- Local centre/amenity edge

## Contextual and high quality design

Birchall Garden Suburb should be designed to the highest standards, reflecting its local context and the Garden City tradition within which it will sit; and responding to the contemporary TCPA Garden Communities principles to create new communities that are sustainable, healthy and provide a high quality of life for residents.

### Key characteristics and guidance

1. Building design should take cues from the local vernacular of Welwyn Garden City and the surrounding villages. In terms of materials, this includes the red brickwork, painted timber and tiles found both in the neo-Georgian buildings of Welwyn Garden City and surrounding villages.
2. In terms of rooflines, these should generally be pitched or hipped, and tiled, to reflect local characteristics and help mitigate any harm to heritage assets. Rooflines should also be fragmented and avoid terraces and runs which are parallel to contour lines on any raised ground. The Garden City's original roofs tend to have generous overhangs to the building façades.
3. Welwyn Garden City's original buildings have distinctive Neo-Georgian fenestration, with large, panelled windows and this should be considered in building designs
4. Consideration should be given to providing an articulated building line on streets, to reflect Louis de Soissons original design intent for stepping building, the L-shaped buildings from those original neighbourhoods and the bay windows provided in some original streets
5. Building designs should not preclude contemporary interpretation of Welwyn Garden City's vernacular, making use of 21st century design innovations, particularly where these can help to mitigate and adapt to climate change
6. Where possible, shallow or L-shaped residential buildings should be considered, which allow for double aspect rooms, as is typical of Welwyn Garden City's original neighbourhoods
7. Buildings should generally be two or three storeys in height. Four storeys is considered to be the maximum appropriate height and should be treated as the exception, with design attention paid to integrating these buildings with surroundings. Four storeys are only considered to be appropriate in the EH Birchall Gardens local centre and at the southern boundary of the WH Hatfield Downs neighbourhood, where height is required.
8. Half storeys are encouraged as a useful means of maximising space whilst maintaining a suitable scale and roofline.
9. Homes will benefit from good levels of natural light and ventilation, and single aspect homes will be avoided, wherever possible, particularly those with a due northerly aspect. Proposals will meet the requirements set out in WH policy SADM11 and EH policy DES4 regarding amenity and layout. For BGS, this will be a consideration for homes located close to Burnside, which will require a solid wall/building façade to mitigate noise levels.





**Examples of building materials, rooflines and fenestration within the local area**

10. In the WH Hatfield Downs neighbourhood, a building's façade may be required to form the noise barrier to the Burnside waste site. If this is required, it will be important for these homes to have windows to the southern façade. These would be for non-habitable rooms such as kitchens and bathrooms and would be non-openable but will provide valuable daylight for these homes. Innovative layouts should be explored, such as open kitchen-diners or open plan living, meaning that light can fill the space from the south, while ventilation is afforded from windows on the northern facade. It is expected that the approach to these homes should be explored further, with

innovative design solutions to building and internal layouts encouraged. Establishing L-shaped buildings with stepped northern façades will enable side and front windows and encourage more light and airflow in these homes.



## 4.7 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

### Integrating with strategic green infrastructure

Birchall Garden suburb is well-placed within a rich and varied strategic network of green space and connections that surround Welwyn Garden City. Masterplans and subsequent new development should consider these strategic assets and how best to provide good connections to these places for new residents.

Welwyn Garden City Centenary Circular Walk runs along the western boundary of Birchall Garden Suburb, and this should be signposted, with investment in the route for the benefit of residents.

Other strategic natural spaces that provide both amenity but also valuable habitat spaces include:

- Panshanger Park historic gardens to the east
- Moneyhole Lane Park, Caponfield Park and King George V playing fields, all to the west
- Tewinbury SSSI and Archers Green River Valley to the north
- Commons Wood and Home Park to the south west

National Cycle Route 61 runs through BGS and provides good onward links to Sherrardspark Wood and Stanborough Park on the west side of Welwyn Garden City. It will be important for masterplanners to work with WHBC and HCC to strengthen the strategic cycle routes between BGS and both Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield town centres and rail stations. Indicative routes are shown on the plan, but routes would need to be tested and explored with HCC.







## Local green connections

The masterplan retains existing green connections, identifies areas where these need to be improved, and suggests new connections where these will be of value to existing and new communities.

### Key characteristics and guidance

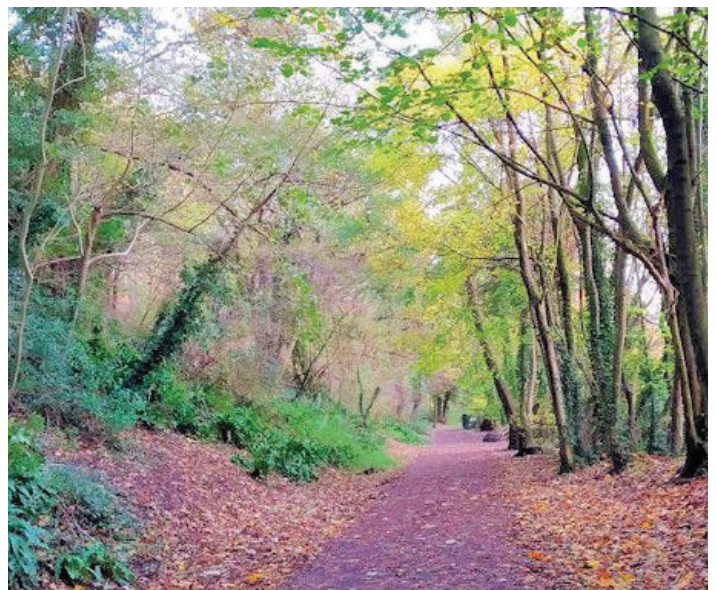
New and improved connections include:

1. A connection north to the proposed Panshanger Airfield neighbourhood and Tewinbury SSSI beyond this
2. A retained and enhanced route from Panshanger through Birchall Gardens to Birchall Wood and onto Panshanger Park
3. A new green route through Birchall Gardens connecting Blackthorn Wood with Birchall Wood
4. Green connections through the central park area, which converge at the highest point to provide views to the south of Essendon Ridge. This area will be an appropriate point for seating and public art.
5. Investment in Cole Green Way cycle and walking route, including the underpass beneath the A414
6. Links to the north and south of The Commons LNR which connect new neighbourhoods with Commons Woodland and Caponfield Park.
7. Routes along the edge of Holwell Hyde Brook and within the 100m Green Corridor, balancing access here with wildlife habitat considerations

Detailed masterplans should give consideration to these local green connections and similarly provide a continuous network of green links within the Birchall Garden Suburb area.



**Dog walking route along the southern edge of Birchall Wood**



**Nailsworth, Stroud walking and cycling track along old Midland rail route. Resurfaced using material mostly made from old tyres**





## Community green space

The masterplan proposes a range of community focused green and open spaces that can support the physical and mental well-being of residents and contribute to a high quality environment. These include:

1. The retention and enhancement of existing tree clusters and hedgerows to inform routes and spaces of the neighbourhoods and retain mature vegetation
2. The large central park through which the Green Corridor runs. This has walking trails, view points and wildlife observation.
3. Neighbourhood green spaces with playable landscapes and natural exercise equipment for residents. These have been prioritised with three functions:
  - Co-located with local centres, to provide sociable spaces close to shops and amenities
  - Connected to green fingers which in turn link to broader green infrastructure
  - Centrally within neighbourhoods, to provide an even distribution of green spaces
4. Community sports pitches next to the Birchall Gardens larger neighbourhood
5. Allotments for each group of neighbourhoods, often buffering sensitive landscape or heritage features, to avoid building close to these areas. Allotments are also located between new and existing neighbourhoods to bring these communities together
6. A community orchard alongside the Birchall Gardens neighbourhood, within the Green Corridor area, and possibly between WH neighbourhoods, within the Green Corridor
7. Nature trails with incidental play and walking trails within local woodland
8. Improved waterside routes and spaces, with natural paths running alongside these
9. Detailed masterplans should provide a similar hierarchy of open spaces with ample opportunity for active and passive enjoyment by residents of all ages. Examples and precedents of these types of spaces are provided on the following page.
10. Community green spaces should be considered early in the masterplan process and delivered in early stages to support the community and help establish positive social relationships

These spaces should be designed with community activity in mind and the potential to host events such as neighbourhood picnics, May Day activities or other bank holiday activities.





- Site boundary
- Green amenity space
- Community sports pitches
- Community allotments
- Community orchard
- Green Corridor
- ✦ View point
- Central parkland



## Community green space examples



Community orchard with information board



Incidental play in community green space



Allotments





Exposing the waterside



Natural materials in play



Trails with signage and wayfinding



Woodland trails with natural materials



Dedicated playgrounds



Play streets and pocket squares



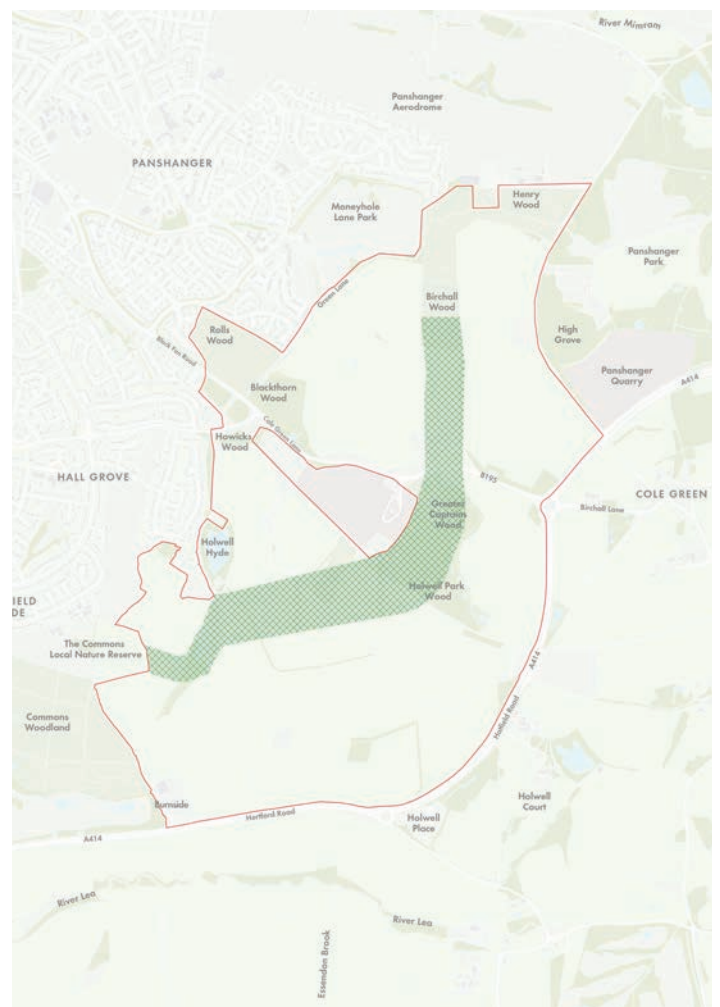
## The Green Corridor

The Green Corridor, as promoted by the WHBC Local Plan under policy SP12 and identified by the LUC masterplan, runs through the site and forms part of a strategic Green Corridor that wraps around the southern edge of Welwyn Garden City. The corridor connects open spaces and parks and provides both a continuous walking route for respectful appreciation of natural spaces around Welwyn Garden City and supports biodiversity in the these area.

### Key characteristics and guidance

1. The Green Corridor must be an minimum of 100m in width at all points and will play an important role in providing habitat continuity between The Commons LNR and open green space to the east.
2. Access should be provided to the Green Corridor from surrounding neighbourhoods with routes then running along the edge of the corridor and limited routes through the corridor. This access should come in the form of green fingers from within neighbourhoods, where possible.
3. Access beyond the Green Corridor as it traverses the central parkland should be limited to key paths, with areas protected for wildlife such as ground nesting birds.
4. However, at the highpoint where routes converge, potential exists to establish a seating area and incorporate public art and/or interpretive information at the high point where routes meet, identified on the plan
5. Enhancement of the Green Corridor will include tree planting, including possible creation of orchards to at the northern point by Birchall Wood, and potentially in a small area between WH neighbourhoods.

6. Habitat continuity will have to be supported through the inclusion of wildlife or badger tunnels beneath the spine road providing access to the WH neighbourhoods. This should be considered carefully to coordinate with transport planning to accommodate buses on this route.
7. Further work is required to fully understand the relationship between the Green Corridor and the natural habitats associated with the river corridors of the River Lea and River Mimram. This should be explored at the detailed masterplanning stage.







The Dream public art at the high point of Sutton Manor Woods in Merseyside



Beulieu development, Chelmsford



Woodhurst Parks, The Oaks



Trumpington Meadows



Lovedon Fields, Hampshire



Trumpington Meadows

## Biodiversity

Biodiversity and habitat enhancement plays a key role in the masterplan's landscape framework. The masterplan aims to protect existing habitats and proposes the introduction of new habitats, promoting ecology, biodiversity and wildlife.

### Key characteristics and guidance

1. Detailed masterplans should demonstrate a thorough understanding of key common or protected species supported within the area, particularly within the LNR, ancient woodland Green Corridor and central park. These include barn owls, ground nesting birds, badgers and great crested newts
2. Masterplans should establish an approach to developing nature networks within the Birchall Garden Suburb area, following guidance from Natural England and the 10 principles needed for this
3. Proposals should be developed in dialogue with HCC Ecology to ensure that the design process addresses ecological considerations
4. Management of The Commons LNR should be given special consideration, including how to manage human access to this and how to maintain habitat continuity between this and the central parkland, including under the spine route to access the WH neighbourhoods
5. Ancient hedgerows should be re-established within the central parkland, along with tree planting at key areas, as identified in the LUC Green Corridor Masterplan. Detailed masterplans should review and take account of proposals within the Green Corridor Masterplan
6. Tree planting should be enhanced and landscape buffers provided where the edge of development runs adjacent to existing LNRs, local wildlife sites, ancient woodland and water corridors
7. A 5m high planted bund is required to mitigate noise pollution from both Burnside and Cole Green Lane waste sites. These should be planted and careful consideration given to how these can support local species and contribute to the biodiversity of the area
8. Proposals will be required to identify clear strategies to manage invasive non-native species through the preparation of a Construction Environment Management Plan. Proposals for planting should be reviewed with the Council with a view to agreeing appropriate native species
9. Ground contamination from the former landfill site and the potential for leaching needs to be thoroughly understood at detailed masterplan stage, and inform designs. A detailed assessment and remediation strategy will be required
10. Proposals for public realm and buildings should maintain dark environments, with appropriate specification of lighting during construction and operational stages. This is vital for biodiversity and proposals should consider any potential impact on ecology including bats. Lighting for routes through the Green Corridor will be particularly sensitive and low-level lighting should be used
11. Homes should also play a role in supporting biodiversity, through inclusion of swift boxes and other measures such as planting shrubs in gardens, and provision of small holes in fences to allow passages for wildlife. This should be explored through detailed masterplans
12. A biodiversity management and maintenance programme should be proposed during the detailed masterplanning stage, to ensure that habitats are not degraded over time





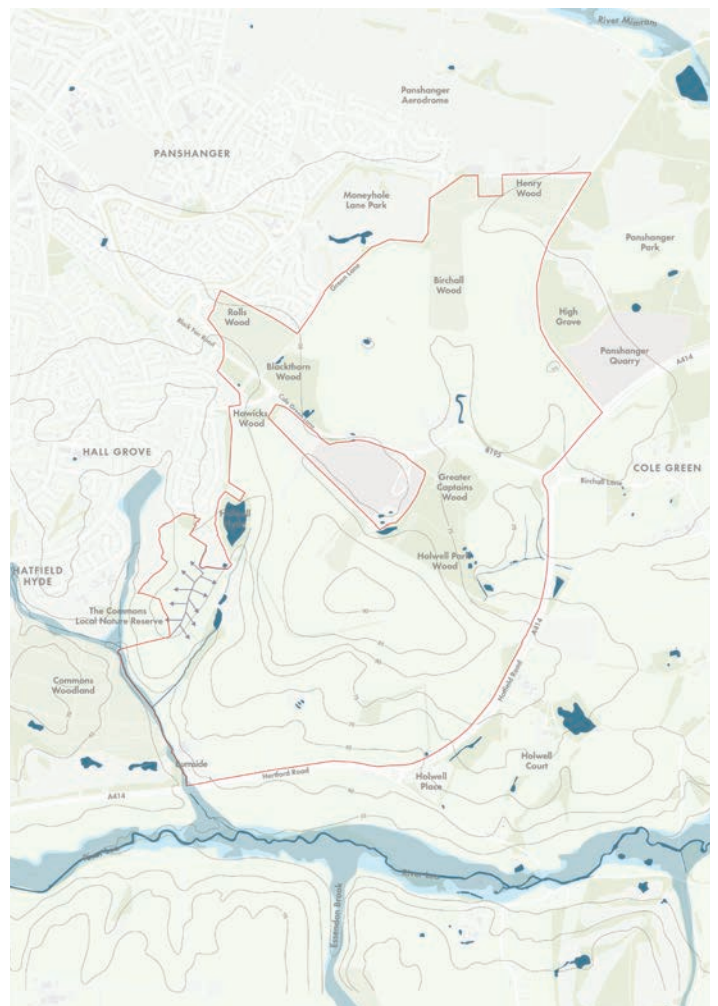
- Site boundary
- Local Wildlife Sites
- Local Nature Reserve
- Retained area of open space
- Existing trees and hedgerows retained and strengthened
- Landscaped buffer to road
- Landscape buffer to sensitive landscape assets
- Landscape buffer to employment area
- Grass and shrub area enhanced and maintained
- Replanted historic hedgerows
- New woodland planting
- Orchard planting
- Green amenity space
- Green Corridor
- Water vole
- Area for barn owl hunting
- Area for ground nesting birds
- Wildlife tunnels
- The below ecological assets have been identified by the CHGC (2019)
- Badger sighting
- Great Crested Newt sighting
- Barn owl sighting

## Blue infrastructure and climate resilience

It will be important for Birchall Garden Suburb to be designed and developed with climate resilience in mind, with measures to mitigate the impacts of climate change and to adapt to changing weather conditions. Establishing a network of sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) and shaded areas within the neighbourhoods will be central to this.

### Key characteristics and guidance

1. Sustainable drainage solutions should work with the natural topography of the landscape and existing waterways, including Holwell Hyde Brook and Hatfield Hyde Brook, and take account of the drainage basins of the River Mimram and River Lea
2. A minimum of 8m landscape buffers should be provided either side of Holwell Hyde brook
3. Sustainable urban drainage should be incorporated within the design of residential neighbourhoods, with this taken into account for the design of street sections. SuDS can take many forms throughout the development, including swales, wildflower basins and turfs, bio-retention tree pits and permeable surfacing for play areas and for driveways.
4. The 'grey infrastructure' of asphalt for roads and parking areas can significantly limit sustainable drainage and increase the carbon footprint of masterplans and subsequent development. Careful thought should, therefore, be given to how to design these spaces efficiently to limit this impact
5. Tree planting provides visual interest and health and wellbeing benefits but will also play an important role in climate adaptation through establishing both shade and drainage. A detailed tree planting plan should be prepared at the detailed masterplan stage to identify the location, role and suitable species for street tree and local green space planting.







Wildflower turf



Swales creating greener streets



SuDS close to homes



Wildflower basin



Integrating play and drainage



Bio-retention tree pits



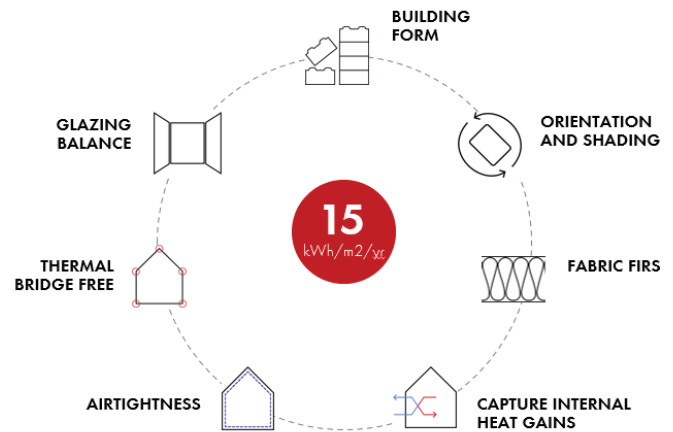
## 4.8 SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

### Sustainable design and construction

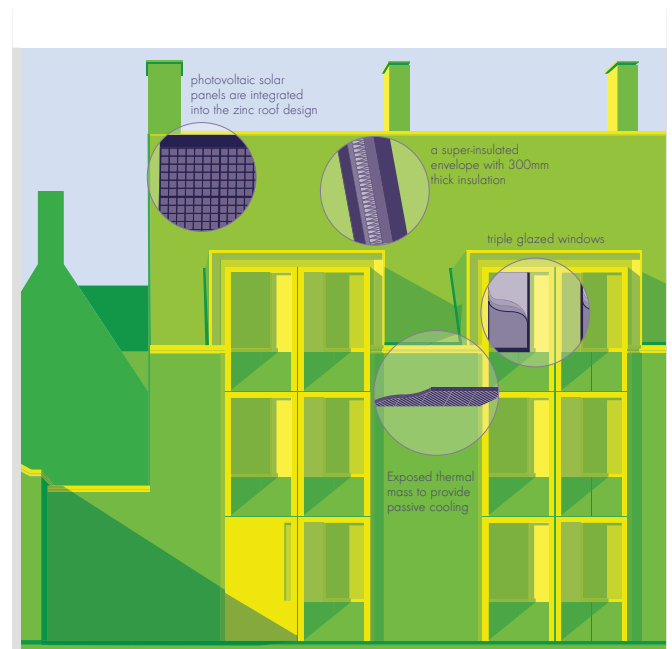
Sustainable principles should be embedded throughout the design and build process to deliver high quality and considered buildings for Birchall Garden Suburb.

#### Key characteristics and guidance

1. Development should be designed to target ultra-low energy performance standards, such as Passivhaus.
2. Development must incorporate Passivhaus Design Principles.
3. Development must be 100% fossil-fuel free, prioritising heat pump and other highly efficient heating/cooling delivery systems.
4. All new development should maximise on-site renewable generation, where the energy use intensity exceeds 35 or 55 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/yr for domestic and non-domestic buildings respectively.
5. All development should include details of how quality of construction is being upheld.
6. All development regardless of scale should take steps to reduce its embodied carbon.
7. All development should achieve LETI Band C for its whole life carbon.
8. Where possible, development should consider reclaimed materials for new build.
9. New Development must conduct post-occupancy evaluations on all buildings to validate predicted energy consumption.



#### Passivhaus Design Principles



Examples of efficiency through building elements



Circular economy principles © AECOM



## Supporting sustainable lifestyles

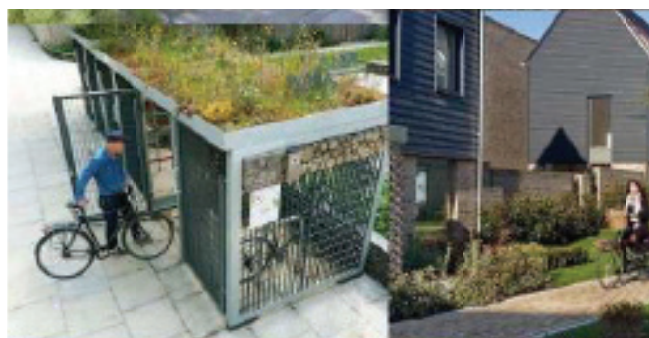
Enabling all residents and users of Birchall Garden Suburb to maintain a sustainable lifestyle is key to creating a happy, healthy and resilient community.

### Key characteristics and guidance

1. Providing homes with sufficient recycling storage and clear signage on what may be recycled and how to do so correctly.
2. Active travel routes, such as segregated cycle lanes, must be available. Where not possible, evidence must be given.
3. Provide accessible, covered cycle storage space either within buildings or secure exterior areas.
4. Amenities should be available to all residential development within a adequate distance that active modes are the preferred travel option.
5. Provide access to open and green spaces, including ecologically diverse streets and parks.
6. Provide adequate area to serve allotments and community orchards. These could be either self-governed or maintained centrally.
7. Create community spaces which can serve multiple groups and purposes.



Communal food growing + sharing areas such as orchards and allotments



Outdoor Cycle storage and active travel means



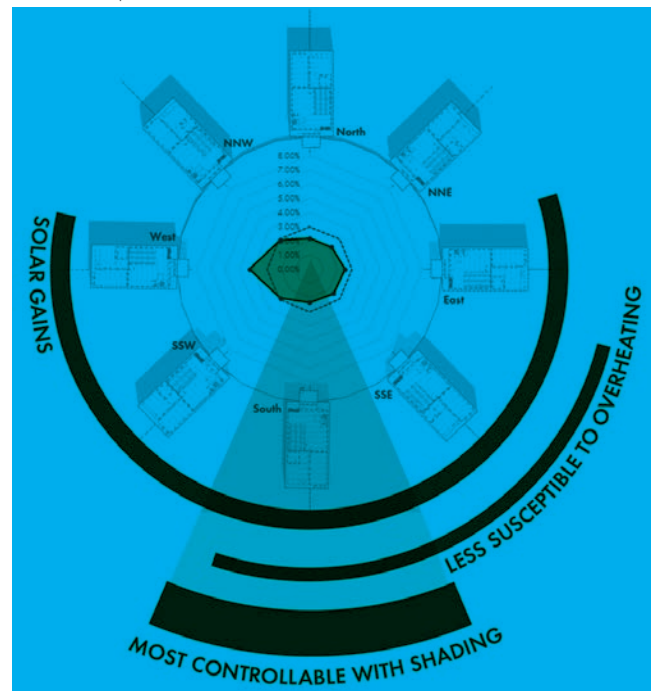
Access to green amenity space

## Future-proofed and resilient neighbourhoods

Birchall Garden Suburb should include resilient places that allow for changing demographics, future growth, and the impacts of climate change including flood risk and water availability, with durable landscape and building design planned for generations to come. This should include anticipation of the opportunities presented by technological change and energy use.

### Key characteristics and guidance

1. All development should use the Good Homes Alliance Early Stage Overheating Risk Tool and follow all recommendations from the tool's scoring results.
2. Compliance with future weather scenarios, such as DSY2 and DSY3, should be carried out as part of each dynamic overheating assessment completed.
3. Sustainable Urban Drainage systems (SuDs) should be designed in conjunction with Birchall Garden Suburb's blue infrastructure strategic framework.
4. Designs should endeavour to make all buildings highly water-efficient including rainwater harvesting and recycling of grey-water.
5. No new domestic development should exceed 110 L/person/day. Non-domestic development should not exceed 10 L/person/day.
6. All development should be designed with flexibility / adaptation of space in mind. I.e. future extensions or re-purposing.
7. Exploration of micro-grids should be done as part of reducing power draw from the National Grid.
8. Co-location of heating and cooling demands should be assessed to encourage the sharing of rejected heat / coolth.
9. New Development must conduct post-occupancy evaluations on all buildings to validate predicted energy consumption.



Orientalional-dependant overheating risk control



Flexible and adaptable commercial workspaces








## 4.9 THE NEIGHBOURHOODS

### Birchall Gardens (EH)

- Large contemporary garden suburb including secondary and primary schools as well as a local centre that would serve surrounding neighbourhoods
  - Two points of access from Cole Green Lane form a primary loop road connecting the non-residential uses towards the south and east of the site
  - A secondary loop road connects the wider residential areas to the primary loop
  - The neighbourhood is structured around long, continuous and gently curved streets (reminiscent of central Welwyn Garden City)
  - These produce regular, well-proportioned and flexible development parcels that can achieve a range of housing types and densities
  - The prevailing grain of development is oriented north-south to maximise daylight to gardens and streets, making the streetscape character of Birchall Gardens more formal
  - A network of small green open spaces form set pieces and provide residents with nearby amenity and play areas
  - Existing footpaths and desire lines between the Panshanger neighbourhood and Birchall Wood have been strengthened via new formal landscape corridors (reminiscent of Parkway)
  - Mature trees at the heart of the site have been retained within a new, enhanced park setting
- 
- New homes front onto Birchall Wood and Money-hole Lane Park with restricted vehicular access along the periphery of the neighbourhood
  - New inner residential streets will be tree-lined and two-sided with continuous building frontages



## Holwell Park (EH)

- Small neighbourhood nestled within new and existing woodland
- A single point of access from Cole Green Lane forming a primary loop road that services every street
- New pedestrian and cycle crossings over Cole Green Lane would ensure that residents of Howell Park would rely on Birchall Gardens as its local centre
- Organised around a new local park (Howell Park) with streets that emanate from it in a radial and/or concentric manner
- More compact and informal development parcels that are better suited to detached and semi-detached housing at modest densities
- The informality, absence of repetition and lack of a prevailing grain makes the streetscape character more differentiated and distinctive
- Smaller green open spaces form set pieces and provide residents with nearby amenity and play areas
- Mature trees at the heart of the site have been retained within a new, enhanced park setting (Howell Park) which is the focus of the neighbourhood
- New homes front onto Greater Captain's Wood and Howell Park Wood with restricted vehicular access along the periphery of the neighbourhood
- New inner residential streets will be tree-lined and two-sided with staggered building frontages relating to the curvature of streets



## Hatfield Downs (WH)

- More central WH neighbourhood, incorporating primary school and community centre
- Framed by new parkland, Hatfield Hyde Brook and buffer to south
- A single point of access from Holwell Hyde Lane
- New multi-modal crossings over Hatfield Hyde Brook
- Neighbourhood structure informed by the site's geometry and edge conditions (woodland, parkland and buffer)
- Streets emanate from spine road in regular development parcels, suited to semi-detached, terraces and maisonette at mid-densities
- Stacked maisonettes likely to be needed as part of Burnside buffer
- The neighbourhood benefits from good access to nearby green open spaces smaller amenity/play areas will be provided for residents
- New homes will face Hatfield Hyde Brook
- The setting of Hatfield Hyde Brook will be enhanced
- New inner residential streets will be tree-lined and two-sided with continuous building frontages
- Continuous pedestrian and cycle link between larger blocks included





## Holwell Green (WH)

- Small residential neighbourhood encircled by significant natural infrastructure (Commons Nature Reserve, Holwell Hyde, Hatfield Hyde Brook, Green Corridor)
- A single point of access from Holwell Hyde Lane, to the north of the Green Corridor, forming a primary loop road that services every street in the neighbourhood
- New pedestrian and cycle crossings (and potential restricted vehicular access) through the Green Corridor via Commonswood would ensure that residents of Holwell Green can rely on Hatfield Downs for their local school and community needs
- New pedestrian linkages to the nearby Hall Grove local centre along the edge of the Commons Nature Reserve will better integrate the neighbourhood with its surroundings
- The structure of the neighbourhood is informed by the site's complex geometry and its various edge conditions (allotments, woodland, parkland and waterway)
- This results in more irregular development parcels that are suited to detached, semi-detached and custom build housing at more modest densities
- The irregularity and lack of a prevailing grain makes the streetscape character of Holwell Green more informal and distinctive
- The neighbourhood benefits from good access to nearby green open spaces and smaller amenity/play areas will be provided for residents
- New homes will back onto Holwell Hyde Farm, These could be custom build at lower densities
- Elsewhere, new homes will front onto Hatfield Hyde Brook and the new Green Corridor with restricted vehicular access along the periphery of the neighbourhood
- The setting of Hatfield Hyde Brook will be enhanced via a wider landscape corridor, which is maintained to avoid existing issues such as littering and fly-tipping, to ensure that it becomes an attractive natural feature.
- New inner residential streets will be tree-lined and two-sided with staggered building frontages relating to the geometry of the street network



## Commonswood

- Small residential neighbourhood encircled by significant green and blue infrastructure (The Commons Wood, Commons Nature Reserve, Hatfield Hyde Brook and the new Green Corridor)
  - A single point of access from the extension of Holwell Hyde Lane (that traverses Hatfield Downs) forms a primary loop road that services every street in the neighbourhood
  - New multi-modal crossings over Hatfield Hyde Brook would ensure that residents of Commonswood can rely on Hatfield Downs as their local centre
  - New pedestrian and cycle crossings (and potential restricted vehicular access) through the Green Corridor could better integrate Commonswood with the Holwell Green and Hall Grove neighbourhoods
  - The structure of the neighbourhood is informed by the loop road, the site's geometry and its different edge conditions (woodland, parkland and waterway)
  - Streets emanate from the loop road in a radial and/or concentric manner resulting in compact, rounded and regular development parcels that are suited to detached and semi-detached housing at more modest densities
  - The repeated curvature and lack of a prevailing grain makes the streetscape character of Commonswood both familiar and informal
- 
- The neighbourhood benefits from good access to nearby green open spaces and smaller amenity/play areas will be provided for residents
  - New homes will be outward facing towards the Commons Nature Reserve, Hatfield Hyde Brook and the new Green Corridor with restricted vehicular access along the periphery of the neighbourhood
  - The setting of Hatfield Hyde Brook will be enhanced via a wider landscape corridor, which is maintained to avoid existing issues such as littering and fly-tipping, to ensure that it becomes an attractive natural feature, with new pedestrian and cycle crossings
  - New inner residential streets will be tree-lined and two-sided with continuous building frontages emphasising the street network







## 4.10 SUMMARY

The summary masterplan diagram pulls together the various strands for the masterplan strategies covering movement, landscape, and uses and activities and placemaking. This enables the various elements to be read together and highlights particular relationships, such as between uses and activities and open spaces.

The diagram is designed with the same graphic language as the Local Planning Authority strategic policy diagrams, to clearly identify where refinement and adjustment has been made to those diagrams.

- - - Borough/District Boundary	■ ■ ■ Emergency service access and bus route	■ Site for secondary school
— Policy Area Boundary	○ Proposed upgrade to highway junction	■ Community playing fields / pitches
■ Existing Road/Access Route	○ Proposed upgrade to underpass	■ Pocket park
■ Main Vehicular Access Route	○ Bus stops	■ Allotment Site
■ Secondary Vehicular Access Route	■ Potential HERT bus stop	■ Green Corridor
■ Tertiary Vehicular Access Route	■ Area for residential development	■ Green Belt Boundary
■ Existing Public Right of Way	■ Area of higher apartments near Burnside employment area	■ Green Buffer
... Existing footpath	★ Potential location for Gypsy and Traveller site	■ Existing Wildlife/Landscape feature
- - - Existing byway	★ Preferred location for Gypsy and Traveller site	■ The Commons Local Nature Reserve
- - - Non-Motorised Access Route (footpath/cycle path/bridleway)	★ Area for self-build plots	■ Community orchards
○ Cycle parking	■ Local centre	■ Existing water body/course
○ Vehicular Access Point	■ Amenities	/// Parkland
○ Non Vehicular Access Point	■ Site for primary school	/// Heritage Asset Buffer Zone
○ Emergency Vehicular Access point		○ Protect Setting of Listed Building
		✱ Existing Waste Management Facility
		■ Area for Employment Development





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## East Herts Council Report

### Executive

**Date of meeting:** Tuesday 5 September 2023

**Report by:** Councillor Sarah Hopewell – Executive Member for Wellbeing

**Report title:** Fit and Proper Persons Determination Policy for Mobile Homes Sites

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Summary** – Changes to the legislation regulating mobile homes sites now require that all licensed residential mobile homes sites are operated by someone who has passed a suitable ‘fit and proper person’ check. These regulations were enacted to protect tenants from illegal behaviours including harassment and financial exploitation.

This paper seeks approval of a new policy and fees relating to the fulfilment of this requirement for mobile homes sites in East Hertfordshire.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR Executive:**

- a) **Approve the ‘Fit and Proper Persons Determination Policy for Mobile Homes Sites’**
- b) **Approve the structure for charging set out in section 13 of the ‘Fit and Proper Persons Determination Policy for Mobile Homes Sites’**
- c) **Approve the application fee of £180 for the assessment of the fit and proper persons check and inclusion on the fit and proper persons register, subject to an annual increase in line with the council’s fees and charges strategy**

- d) Approve the ‘appointment of a manager’ fee of £51 per hour or part thereof, plus the employment cost of the manager (including agency fees if applicable), subject to an annual increase in line with the council’s fees and charges strategy.**
- e) Delegate the authority to make minor amendments to the policy to the Head of Housing and Health in consultation with the Executive Member for Wellbeing.**

## **1.0 Proposal(s)**

- 1.1 This report seeks to gain approval for the introduction of a ‘fit and proper persons’ determination policy and fee structure for mobile homes sites as required by the Mobile Homes (Requirement for Manager of Site to be Fit and Proper Person) (England) Regulations 2020, hereon in referred to as “the Regulations”.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The Regulations prohibit the operation of ‘relevant protected sites’ in England unless the site owner or a person appointed to manage the site, satisfies the relevant local authority that they are a fit and proper person to manage the site.
- 2.2 For the purposes of the legislation and clarity in this report a relevant protected site is in essence one that is residentially occupied all year round. Such sites may range from a single caravan on a plot of land to many caravans on land in single ownership and includes residential caravans on holiday sites.
- 2.3 At the time of writing the report, East Herts has ten licenced mobile homes sites which will be covered by this new legislation, these are listed in the table below.



Site Name	Postcode
Ashleigh Park	SG11 1BH
Bayford Wood Mobile Home Site	SG13 8PY
Bells Wood Caravan Site	SG13 8PY
Club Cottage Caravan Site	AL6 0NH
Contessa Riding Centre	SG11 1EN
Great Hadham Country Club	SG10 6JE
Hooks Cross Caravan Park	SG14 3RX
Nine Acres	SG11 1BA
Puckeridge Park Homes	SG11 1UP
The Stables	SG13 8PR

- 2.4 The Policy attached as Appendix A details the assessment that the Environmental Health Team will undertake to determine whether someone is a 'fit and proper person' along with how it will respond to the outcomes of a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check should this investigation highlight any relevant convictions.

### **3.0 Public Register**

- 3.1 The Regulations require the council to set up and maintain a register of persons who have passed the 'fit and proper persons' checks and are able to manage a site in their area. This register must be open to inspection by the public during normal office hours and to allow maximum access it is proposed that it will also be available via our website.

- 3.2 It must be noted that the name of rejected applicants will not be included on the register. The council will however be able to consider requests for further information about the entry on the register, for example, the details of the specific conditions attached and any additional information, on a case by case basis and in accordance with data protection legislation.

#### **4.0 Application Fees**

- 4.1 The council can charge fees on a cost-recovery basis. The council believes that the administration of the fit and proper person assessment and/or checks to be included on the fit and proper register will incur costs to the council of £180 per application. This cost includes the time taken to update and publish the public register.
- 4.2 Fees will be reviewed annually in line with the council's published fees and charges strategy and will be based on time recording undertaken by officers while processing the applications.

#### **5.0 Appointment of a manager fee**

- 5.1 Where a site owner or their manager fails the fit and proper person test, and they are unable to identify and appoint a suitable alternative manager who must pass the fit and proper person assessment, the council can instead appoint a person to manage the site but only with the consent of the site owner.
- 5.2 Where the council is provided with the site owner's consent to appoint an individual to manage a site, it is proposed that the costs associated with arranging this work will be charged at £51 per hour or part thereof.



- 5.3 In addition, the employment costs for the manager (including agency fees if applicable) will also be charged to the site owner.

## **6.0 Payment of fees**

- 6.1 The council will not consider an application for entry on the register unless that application is accompanied by the correct fee. If the correct fee is not paid, the application will not be valid and the site owner could be in breach of the Regulations.
- 6.2 If the council decides not to approve an application the applicant is not entitled to a refund of the fee paid.
- 6.3 If the applicant decides to withdraw their application after work has started to process the application, the applicant is not entitled to a refund of the fee paid.

## **7.0 Reason(s)**

- 7.1 Executive's approval of this policy will help to ensure fair, consistent and transparent application of these new Regulations across East Hertfordshire.
- 7.2 Executive's approval of this fee structure will help to ensure fair, consistent and transparent fee structure which allows the council to undertake this work on a cost-neutral basis.

## **8.0 Options**

- 8.1 The council could decide to not have a 'fit and proper person' determination policy. This is **not recommended** because the council would be failing its legal duties to protect the residents of residential mobile homes sites and thus could open itself up to a challenge or judicial review which would be hard to defend.

- 8.2 The council could decide to adopt a revised version of the proposed 'fit and proper persons' determination policy. This is **not recommended** as the proposed policy is consistent with others across England and, officers argue, contains the correct balance between protecting the residents of residential mobile homes sites and the ability of the owners of the sites to legitimately operate.
- 8.3 The council adopts the proposed 'fit and proper persons' determination policy. This is **recommended** as the best course of action.

## **9.0 Risks**

- 9.1 Failing to adopt a 'fit and proper persons' determination policy could lead to undue risks to the health and safety of residents of mobile homes sites in East Herts.
- 9.2 Failing to adopt and/or then follow the policy (if/when adopted) could lead to successful claims against the council at the First-tier Tribunal (Property Chamber) and a loss of reputation for the council. Audit of officers' work by senior officers will help ensure this doesn't happen.

## **10.0 Implications/Consultations**

- 10.1 The council has consulted with the current mobile homes site licence holders and placed the consultation on its website.
- 10.2 [to be completed once consultation closes on 25/08/2023]  
number of consultation responses were received.

### **Community Safety**

No

### **Data Protection**

No



**Equalities**

No

**Environmental Sustainability**

No

**Financial**

Yes – Finance consulted.

**Health and Safety**

No

**Human Resources**

No

**Human Rights**

No

**Legal**

Yes – Legal consulted.

**Specific Wards**

No

**11.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

- 11.1 Appendix A - Fit and Proper Persons Determination Policy for Mobile Homes Sites

**Contact Member**

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# **Fit and proper persons determination policy for mobile homes sites**

September 2023



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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Mobile Homes (Requirement for Manager of Site to be Fit and Proper Person) (England) Regulations 2020 (hereafter referred to as “the Regulations”), require the manager of a “relevant protected site” to be a “fit and proper person”. The fit and proper person assessment applies to mobile home site owners, or the person appointed to manage the site, unless they are eligible for an exemption under Section 3 of the Regulations because they are a non-commercial family-occupied site.
- 1.2 A relevant protected site is a mobile homes site which requires a licence, and which is not solely for holiday purposes or is not restricted from being used all year round.
- 1.3 The fit and proper person requirement will ensure that site owners, or their managers, have integrity and follow best practice. Additionally, it provides the safeguard that council sees no reason to believe that such individuals will not pose a risk to the welfare or safety of persons occupying mobile homes on the site.
- 1.4 For clarity, in this document, the “applicant” is the person who makes an application under regulation 6 and the “relevant person” is the individual who is the subject of the fit and proper person assessment.

## **2.0 The Fit and Proper Persons Register**

- 2.1 The council will maintain a register of persons who we are satisfied are fit and proper persons to manage a site in East Herts. This register can be inspected by the public during normal office hours at our Wallfields office or via our website at any time.
- 2.2 The register will provide a record of the outcomes of the fit and proper person tests the council has carried out for sites. The register will include the following:
  - (a) the name and business contact details of the person
  - (b) the name and address of the relevant protected site to which the application relates
  - (c) the status of the person (site owner or manager of the site)

- (d) the dates of the first and last day of the period for which the person's inclusion in the register has effect (up to a statutory maximum of five years)
  - (e) whether any condition is attached to the person's inclusion in the register and
  - (f) where any condition is attached to the person's inclusion in the register—
    - i. the number of any such conditions
    - ii. the dates of the first and last day of the period for which any such condition applies (if applicable) and
    - iii. the date any condition is varied or satisfied (if applicable).
- 2.3 Where there is a rejected application, the name of the rejected applicant will not be included on the register, however the following information will be included in the register:
- (a) the name and address of the site to which the application relates
  - (b) that an application in respect of the site has been rejected and
  - (c) the date on which the application was rejected.
- 2.4 Details of the rejected application will remain on the register until a successful fit and proper person application is made in respect of the owner or manager of the site.

### **3.0 Evidence-based approach to fit and proper persons checks**

- 3.1 When conducting the fit and proper person assessment, the council will consider the points detailed in section 3 to be relevant to the application. In considering these points, the council will be mindful that each case must be considered on its individual merits and, where the circumstances demand, the decision makers may depart from the guidelines in this policy.

#### **3.2 Is the individual able to conduct effective management of the site?**

This includes, but is not limited to, securing compliance with the site licence and the long-term maintenance of the site. In determining this, the council will have regard to the following points.

(d) **Whether the person is competent to manage the site**

This includes reviewing the competency of the appointed individual and where necessary interviewing them. The council must have reasonable cause to believe the individual has either sufficient experience in site management or has received sufficient training and be fully aware of the relevant law as well as health and safety requirements.

(e) **The management structure for the site**

The council will consider whether suitable management structures are in place. The council must have reasonable cause to believe they are adequate to ensure effective management of the site. Things to be considered include, whether or not the applicant has a robust management plan that also addresses the following issues: the pitch fee payment, proximity of the manager to the site, manager's contact details for residents (including out of office and emergency contact details), the complaints procedure, maintenance, staffing and refuse removal.

(f) **Location of the manager**

The site must be managed by an applicant based in the UK. A management structure would be unlikely to be suitable if the applicant is an individual, or a company (including its directors), which does not reside or have a permanent UK address. This is because there may be complex issues as a result of this, such as needing the court's permission to serve a claim in a foreign country. The applicant's interest in the land will also have an important impact, as would their financial standing, management structures and competence, all of which could contribute to the overall assessment of their suitability to manage the site effectively.

(g) **The funding arrangements in place for managing the site**

The applicant must have sufficient funds (or access to sufficient funds) to manage the site and comply with licence obligations. Evidence of these funds should be readily available.

If funding is through a third party (including an associated company), clear details must be provided to the council so that its ability to deem whether the application is financially viable is not compromised.



### **3.3 Personal information relating to the applicant concerned**

To help inform the suitability of the applicant, the council is entitled to use personal records and information that may be available to it in determining applications. Checks will be carried out using publicly accessible Government registers, including, though not limited to, the 'bankruptcy and insolvency register'<sup>1</sup> and the 'disqualified directors register'<sup>2</sup>, formal documents such as a British passport or UK birth/adoption certificate and the report from a 'basic' Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Where another local authority has rejected an application for the relevant person to be included in a register, the council can consider that authority's reasons for the decision.

### **3.4 Conduct of the applicant**

The council will investigate any conduct which could amount to harassment of the site residents by the site owner or manager. The council will also consider convictions by the courts as evidence of harassing behaviour.

Where the council has records of previous harassment complaints made against a site owner or their manager, even if no action was taken on these complaints at the time, the council will take these into consideration in the fit and proper person determination. These complaints may identify further potential risks and can also provide an indication of potential underlying problems with the management of the site or the site owner's lack of experience/skills in dealing with customers. Where relevant, the council may address any underlying issues by attaching conditions to the individual's entry on the register.

In addition, the Council will also consider further information from sources such as the Police (including abduction notices), Children and Adult Safeguarding Boards (or other bodies with a similar function), other licensing authorities and statutory agencies where appropriate.

### **3.5 Conduct of any person associated with the relevant person**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/search-bankruptcy-insolvency-register>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/search-the-register-of-disqualified-company-directors>

A relevant associate is defined as any individual who may have played a part, directly or indirectly, in a decision or action, which has had an impact on residents' rights, or the quiet enjoyment of their homes.

The council will consider the conduct of any relevant associate (whether on a personal, work or other basis) when undertaking the fit and proper person assessment.

### **3.6 Other relevant matters**

The council will also consider the following specific matters relevant to the fit and proper person application:

- (a) current or previous issues, or events, that have occurred in the past ten years that have occurred in relation to the site or any other mobile homes owned or managed by the site owner or site manager in East Hertfordshire or any other local authority area
- (b) the site owner's conduct regarding other business, outside of the mobile homes sector, that is relevant to the determination of whether someone is a fit and proper person, as this could also have implications on the financial and management arrangements of the site in question
- (c) any matters which the council believes to be of relevance to the application which primarily focus on the relevant person's conduct, competence and their suitability to manage the site, including but not limited to convictions and foreign convictions, cautions, Police warnings, arrests, fixed penalty notices and impending prosecutions.

In relation to convictions, the council will consider whether the conviction is spent or unspent, but only in so far as it is relevant to an application for inclusion on the register.

### **3.7 Determination of applications**

Any information gathered will be used to help determine that the applicant:

- (a) has not committed any offence involving fraud or other dishonesty, violence, firearms or drugs or any offence listed in Schedule 3 to the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (offences attracting notification requirements)

- (b) has not contravened any provision of the law relating to housing, caravan sites, mobile homes, public health, planning or environmental health or of landlord and tenant law
- (c) has not contravened any provision of the Equality Act 2010 in, or in connection with, the carrying on of any business
- (d) has not harassed any person in, or in connection with, the carrying on of any business
- (e) is not or has not been within the past 10 years, personally insolvent
- (f) is not or has not been within the past 10 years, disqualified from acting as a company director
- (g) does not give the council cause to reasonably question, for any other reason, that the person is fit and proper
- (h) has the right to work in the United Kingdom and
- (i) is a member of any redress scheme enabling complaints to be dealt with in connection with the management of the site (when this is in place).

Where an applicant has failed at least one of the criteria above, they will generally not be deemed to be a 'fit and proper person' for the purposes of this policy although this policy provision does not fetter the decision maker's ability to determine the application on its own merits.

### **3.8 Rejected applications**

Applications from persons who do not pass the fit and proper assessment by virtue of not meeting the criteria set out above will be rejected and the person will not be able to manage the site.

Rejected applications will be centrally recorded and will include the details of the person involved and the reasons for the rejection. Rejected applications will be shared with other local authorities, subject to requirements of data protection legislation being met.

The council will have regard to rejected applications made by any other local authority.



## **4.0 Applications**

- 4.1 The application for inclusion in the fit and proper persons register must include the required information, which will be identified on the council's website, and associated fee. Failure to provide either will result in the application being refused.
- 4.2 The applicant must clearly specify whether their application is made in respect of either the applicant, or site owner, or the person that the applicant or site owner has appointed to manage the site.

## **5.0 Criminal record certificate(s)**

- 5.1 A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate or Criminal Records Certificates (issued under section 113A (1) of the Police Act 1997) will be required for:
  - (a) the relevant person, where they are an individual; and
  - (b) for each individual to whom the applicant is required to provide information for under paragraph 10(2) or (5), 11 or 12 of the Regulations.
- 5.2 The Disclosure and Barring Service check should be a "basic" check as opposed to an "enhanced" check and can be undertaken via the GOV.UK website.
- 5.3 The certificate must have been issued no more than six months before the date of the application. It is incumbent upon the site owner to ensure that any certificates provided meet this requirement.

## **6.0 Decision makers**

### **6.1 Head of Housing and Health**

The Head of Housing and Health manages a number of service areas within East Herts Council including Environmental Health. The council's constitution affords the Head of Housing and Health delegated authority to undertake certain functions with regards to this Policy, including refusing an application to be included on the register.

### **6.2 Service Manager – Environmental Health**

The Service Manager – Environmental Health manages the Environmental Health Team on a day-to-day basis. Through delegated authority from the Head of Housing and Health, they will determine applications which either meet the conditions set out in this determination policy or can meet the conditions set out in the policy if additional conditions are added to the register entry; this includes setting those conditions.

## **7.0 Decisions and notifications**

7.1 On receipt of a valid application the council will:

- (a) grant the application unconditionally
- (b) grant the application subject to conditions; or
- (c) reject the application.

7.2 Granting the application unconditionally

- (a) Where the council is satisfied that the applicant meets the fit and proper person test unconditionally, the applicant will be included on the register for up to a statutory maximum of five years. The council will also issue a final decision notice to the applicant to inform them of its decision.

7.3 Granting the application subject to certain condition(s)

- (a) Where the council considers an applicant would meet the fit and proper person test if certain conditions are met, the council will grant an application subject to those condition(s). In this case, the council will send a preliminary decision notice to the applicant.
- (b) The fit and proper person test is aimed at ensuring that the person managing the site is competent and the conditions will relate directly to the person's ability to secure the proper management of the site.
- (c) Where additional conditions are required, the council can also grant an application for less than five years.
- (d) An applicant can appeal against the decision to attach (or vary) any condition to an entry on the register.

7.4 Decisions not to include the applicant on the register

- (a) Should the council determine that the applicant does not meet the requirements, and attaching conditions would not be appropriate, the council will refuse to grant the application and send a preliminary decision notice to the applicant.
- (b) Where an applicant is refused entry onto the register, the site owner or manager will be required to seek alternative management arrangements to comply with the fit and proper person requirement. If they fail to do so they will be committing an offence.
- (c) Where a site owner or their manager are unable to identify and appoint a suitable alternative manager, who must pass the fit and proper person assessment, the council can instead appoint a person to manage the site, but only with the consent of the site owner.

#### 7.5 Right to make a representation

- (a) An applicant who receives a preliminary decision notice will have 28 days in which to make representations to the council. The 28-day period begins with the day after the day on which the notice was served.
- (b) The council will consider and take any representations it receives into account before making a final decision.

#### 7.6 Final decision notice

- (a) The council will, as soon as reasonably practicable, after the end of the period allowed for making representations, make a final decision and serve the decision notice on the applicant.

### 8.0 Duration of time on the fit and proper persons register

- 8.1 Where the council is satisfied that the applicant meets the fit and proper person test unconditionally, the applicant will be included on the register for the statutory maximum of five years.
- 8.2 Where additional conditions are required to facilitate an applicant's inclusion on the fit and proper persons register, the council may grant an application for less than five years.



- 8.3 Where an application is for less than five years, the length of time will be determined by the conditions to which entry onto the register was granted. For example, a person who has the right to work in the UK for two years, would only be entered onto the register for a period of two years.

## **9.0 Appeals**

- 9.1 The applicant can decide to appeal the decision by making an application to the First-tier Tribunal (Property Chamber) ("the tribunal") within specific timeframes set by the tribunal. The applicant is permitted to appeal against any decisions served by the council. These include:

- (b) including the relevant person on the register for an effective period of less than five years
- (c) including the relevant person on the register subject to conditions and
- (d) rejecting the application.

- 9.2 An appellant will not be able to claim compensation for losses incurred pending the outcome of an appeal.

## **10.0 Withdrawal or amendment of notice**

- 10.1 There may be circumstances where the council may decide not to continue or to withdraw a previously agreed action such as after serving:

- (a) a preliminary decision notice but before service of the final decision notice
- (b) a final decision notice but before the decision to which it relates takes effect or
- (c) a notice of proposed action but before the proposed action is taken.

- 10.2 Where the council decides to withdraw or amend a notice, the council will serve notice to the person on whom the original notice was served stating:

- (a) that it is withdrawing/amending the original notice (a copy of the original notice will be attached for reference)
- (b) the reasons for withdrawing the notice
- (c) the date it takes effect and

- (d) the implications of the decisions in relation to the person's entry on the register.

## **11.0 Removal from the register**

11.1 If, after a person is included in the register and new evidence relevant to the person's inclusion becomes available, the council may decide to:

- (a) remove the person from the register
- (b) impose a condition on the inclusion of the person in the register (whether or not there are conditions already imposed)
- (c) vary a condition or
- (d) remove a condition.

11.2 When considering removal from the register any such decision should be related to the person being a fit and proper person rather than, for example, site licensing issues which are governed separately.

11.3 Where action is considered necessary the council will serve a notice of any proposed action on the occupier clearly stating the reasons.

11.4 A notice of proposed action is not required to remove a condition attached to an entry as this is viewed widely as being a positive step, which is unlikely to be opposed. Instead, the council will make the site owner or their manager aware of the decision in writing and also ensure the register is updated.

11.5 Where a notice of proposed action is given, the occupier will have 28 days, starting from the day after the notice is served, in which to make representations.

11.6 The council will, as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of the 28-day period, decide whether to carry out the proposed action.

11.7 Where the council decides to take the action, they will serve a further notice on the occupier, indicating the action that has been taken, within the period of five working days beginning with the day after the day on which the action was taken.

## **12.0 Offences**

12.1 There are three offences within the regulations. They are:

- (a) operating a site in contravention of the fit and proper person regulations
- (b) withholding information or including false or misleading information in the registration application
- (c) failing to comply with a specified condition.

12.2 A site owner found guilty of any of the above offences will be liable on summary conviction to a level 5 (unlimited) fine.

## **13.0 Fees**

13.1 A completed application will only be considered where the correct fee is included with the application.

13.2 When setting the fees for consideration of applications for entry on a fit and proper person register, the cost incurred by the council on the following will be taken into account:

- (a) initial enquiries
- (b) letter writing/ telephone calls etc. to make appointments and requesting any documents or other information from the site owner or from any third party in connection with the fit and proper process
- (c) sending out forms
- (d) updating files and/or the council's website
- (e) processing the application fee
- (f) land registry searches
- (g) time for reviewing necessary documents and certificates
- (h) preparing preliminary and final decision notices
- (i) review by manager or lawyers; review any representations made by applicants or responses from third parties
- (j) updating the public register



- (k) reviews of decisions or in defending appeals
- (l) all other tasks reasonably undertaken by the council in connection with processing, determining and/or publishing the outcome of an application.

13.3 Where the council is provided with the site owner's consent to appoint an individual to manage a site, the full costs associated with this will be recoverable by the council from the site owner.

13.4 Where any condition is attached to the person's inclusion in the register, the council will charge an additional annual fee to cover the costs it incurs undertaking this role. This annual charge will take into account the following:

- (a) letter writing/ telephone calls etc to make appointments and requesting any documents or other information from the site owner or from any third party in connection with the fit and proper process
- (b) handling enquiries and complaints
- (c) updating files/ computer systems and website if appropriate
- (d) processing the annual fee
- (e) time spent reviewing necessary documents and certificates
- (f) time spent reviewing any representations from an applicant or third parties, including reviews carried out by manager or lawyers
- (g) carrying out risk assessment where considered necessary
- (h) time spent on consulting the site owner and third parties
- (i) time spent on meetings/discussions and in giving informal advice and assistance to site owners
- (j) monitoring and enforcement of fit and proper person requirements
- (k) all other tasks reasonably undertaken by the council in connection with this function.

13.5 Fees associated with administering the fit and proper person checks will be reviewed annually in line with the council's existing Fees and Charges Policy.

13.6 If the council decides not to approve an application the applicant is not entitled to a refund of any part of the fee paid and/or invoiced.

13.7 If the applicant decides to withdraw their application after the council has started processing the application, the applicant is not entitled to a refund of any part of the fee paid and/or invoiced.

#### **14.0 Renewals**

14.1 In order to comply with the fit and proper person requirement, a site owner must, at least two months before the period of being on the register as a fit and proper person comes to an end, submit a new application for the person (or alternative) to be included on the register.

## East Herts Council Report

### Executive

**Date of meeting:** Tuesday 5 September 2023

**Report by:** Councillor Carl Brittain – Executive Member for Financial Sustainability

**Report title:** Castle Park Improvement Project –match funding contribution via optioned sale of final community centre

**Ward(s) affected:** Bishop's Stortford North; Bishop's Stortford Parsonage;

**Summary** – The Castle Park project within the Council's capital programme is delivering improvements to the areas known as Swarder's Field and Waytemore Castle Gardens. The partnership work with stakeholders including Bishop's Stortford Council (BSTC) and the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) means that the project has been funded through a variety of organisations including East Herts District Council. Additional funds have previously been raised after cost increases relating to the Pandemic, Brexit and the war in Ukraine resulting in significant increase in materials and construction costs and then following an unforeseen building subsidence issue.

A solution was agreed to secure these additional funds by selling some assets (Community centres) to the partner organisation, Bishop's Stortford Town Council as part of an Options Agreement. The last of three community centres is now due to be sold. Capital receipts are required from this sale to secure the final stages of the project after further additional costs relating to unexpected



archaeology, deterioration of a repurposed building roof and environmental pressures.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE:**

- a) Approval of the sale of St Michael's Mead community centre pending trigger by BSTC as defined by the Options Agreement**
- b) That £125,000 of the capital receipt from the sale of St Michael's Mead community centre contributes to the funding gap for the Castle Park project**
- c) That the option sum of £15,000 and £30,000 (deduction in liabilities) is deducted from the sale of this last remaining centre at time of purchase**

### **1.0 Proposal(s)**

- 1.1 That St Michael's Mead community centre is sold as defined by the Options Agreement pending BSTC exercising their option to purchase
- 1.2 That £125,000 of the capital receipt from the sale of St Michael's Mead community centre is used to contribute to the funding gap for the Castle Park project
- 1.3 That the option sum of £15,000 and £30,000 (deduction in liabilities) is deducted from the sale of this last remaining centre at time of purchase (£170,000 - £15,000 - £30,000 = £125,000 sale price)

### **2.0 Background**

2.1 Additional funds were previously raised to meet unforeseen cost increases relating to the Pandemic, Brexit and the war in Ukraine which resulted in significant increase in materials and construction costs and then following the need to resolve a building subsidence issue.

2.2 Significant value engineering was carried out to omit any elements of the overall project works that were not essential to achieve the deliverable elements required by NLHF as part of their grant conditions.

2.3 The previous cost pressures and an Options Agreement solution to raise funds to meet the funding gap were explored in a report: Castle Park Improvement Project, match funding contribution via proposed sale of community centres, Appendix 1.

2.4 An option agreement to sell three community centres to BSTC was approved; Bishop's Park, Havers and St Michael's Mead. It was agreed that the capital receipt from the sale of Bishop's Park community centre (£175,000 including £15,000 options sum to secure the agreement) was used to contribute to the funding gap for the Castle Park project.

2.5 The options sum of £15,000 was required from BSTC to secure the option agreement, to secure the project funding gap at that time and to compensate EHC should the sale of the remaining two centres not proceed.

2.6 Use of capital receipts from the sale of Havers Community was latterly agreed raising an additional £60,000 to cover the skate

park contractor going into receivership resulting in an increase in the tendered price to complete the works by a new contractor.

2.7 BSTC made equal contributions of £175,000 and £60,000 to match fund both of these amounts and then subsequently an additional contribution of £80,000 to balance out the overall contribution made by East Herts Council.

2.8 NLHF granted a £600,000 funding extension.

2.9 The Grant End Date (GED) is currently 31/12/23. A preference to extend this by 6 months to 31/06/24 to allow for spring planting/seeding, completion of activity programme and holding celebratory event has been informally agreed by NLHF. Practical Completion is currently scheduled for Jan 2024.

### **3.0 Reason(s)**

3.1 It was not anticipated that further cost pressures would arise. However, the project has experienced spiralling costs of archaeology, in a not dissimilar way to the leisure centre project at Grange Paddocks along with some unforeseen building and environmental costs. The gap to fund is £200,000 without allowance for a continued contingency fund to safeguard minor adjustments through the remaining project. A working contingency must be retained and therefore it has been agreed with BSTC that they will provide £125,000 leaving EHDC to find £125,000 from the income achieved through selling the last community centre. The contingency amount of £50,000 (£25,000 from each authority) will be held in reserve and retained if it is not required.



3.2 The key pressures have been

- **archaeology** -over x50 human remains found which are now believed to be part of a formal burial ground and not a prison disposal as was initially considered. The archaeological contractor has minimised the removals as much as they can and persuaded the County archaeologists during the planning stage that there should be no digging below 27cm. However, far more than expected were found at this shallow level and the law requires that all remains, including partial remains below that level are removed. The need to bring a mains power supply in through the park unfortunately revealed even more remains in areas that they were not anticipated
- **building** - replacement of an existing roof that has deteriorated beyond repair during the period of the project
- **environmental** – voles and bats discovered where none were previously surveyed required further survey and relocation of voles, plus discovery of asbestos in an unexpected location

3.3 It is not anticipating that any further significant archaeological costs or building works will be required other than those already accounted and budgeted for. Essentially there is only a small area of excavation work below surface level with pipes to lay around the repurposed building but much of this has already been surveyed. There should therefore be no further opportunity to find more human remains.

3.4 The sale of the third community centre allows EHDC to meet the funding gap of the castle park project, offset borrowing costs and remove the liabilities of maintaining the building from the Council.



## 4.0 Options

4.1 The Council has no capital reserves to fund the gap. There is a contingency budget in the capital programme, but that is borrowing and as it is in the authorised but not committed section of the capital programme, the borrowing costs are not included in the budget so would have to be funded.

4.2 Following a risk analysis exercise carried out in partnership with BSTC to ensure that remaining contingencies are safeguarded, they have agreed to match fund the Council's contribution from the capital receipts relating to the third community centre.

- a)** The Town Council exercise their option to purchase community centre number 3. EHDC put £125k of the capital receipt towards the funding gap and BSTC match fund the remaining £125k as they have done previously.
- b)** NOT RECOMMENDED - The Town Council exercise their option to purchase community centre number 3 and we put £125k of the capital receipt towards the funding gap. We then borrow the remaining £125k over 10 years. The borrowing costs (£15,290) are funded by reducing the grounds maintenance revenue budget for parks and open spaces within Bishop's Stortford Civil Parish.
- c)** NOT RECOMMENDED - Further value engineering is carried out to make up the funding gap.

Considerations for this option include the following:



- omit pontoon by river intended to offer access to local canoe clubs etc - £20,000
- omit attractive element of hard landscape attached to refurbished community building - £5,000
- omit provision of electrical supply to Sworders Field - £700
- omit removal of old tennis courts (which was to provide new event space linked to monuments and bridge) - £23,000
- Omit new bike stands - £2,500
- Omit demolition of Elsie Barret building and creation of outdoor seating area for café - £35,000
- Omit creation of space to accommodate café and accessible Changing Places toilet - £122,500

## **5.0 Risks**

5.1 Completion of the project is at risk unless the Council are able to make up a match funding contribution.

5.2 Funding the gap without support from the Town Council to match fund the capital receipt (Option b) would be difficult to achieve without creating reputational damage to the Council by contentiously reducing the grounds maintenance service offered in Bishop's Stortford.

5.3 Carrying out further value engineering (Option c) would be extremely damaging from a reputational angle and has not been agreed by NLHF. It would mean failing to complete the transformation of the building to accommodate an income generating café.

5.4 There is a risk that NLHF might withdraw any further funding on the basis that we have not delivered our commitments. Indications from ongoing discussions are that they are not in a position to offer any further grant increase and that their previous uplift of £600,000 was generous.

5.5 The savings from the proposed value engineering are approximate figures not including the mitigation work that would be required to accommodate them. It is not possible to accurately estimate this without commissioning further design work. There would be compensatory claims from our contractors.

## **6.0 Implications/Consultations**

6.1

### **Community Safety**

Yes/No

### **Data Protection**

Yes/No

### **Equalities**

Yes/No

### **Environmental Sustainability**

Yes/No

### **Financial**

Yes/No

### **Health and Safety**

Yes/No

### **Human Resources**

Yes/No

## Human Rights

Yes/No

## Legal

Yes/No

## Specific Wards

Yes/No

### 7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

#### 7.1 Appendix 1

Castle Park Improvement Project

Meeting of Executive, Tuesday 6th September, 2022 7.00 pm (Item 136.)

[12/07/2022 - Executive \(1\)](#)

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