

walkern road, watton-at-stone

Masterplan Framework Document

November 2023



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the site

... to identify, understand and respond to the opportunities and the constraints

... for the development to make the most of the site's green and blue assets, topography, views and connections

The site is presently a mown field, enclosed by a mature landscaped embankment to the A602 to the north, a fairly recent hedgerow to Walkern Road to the east, dwellings on Beane Road to the south, and an open boundary to the west where the mown field continues.



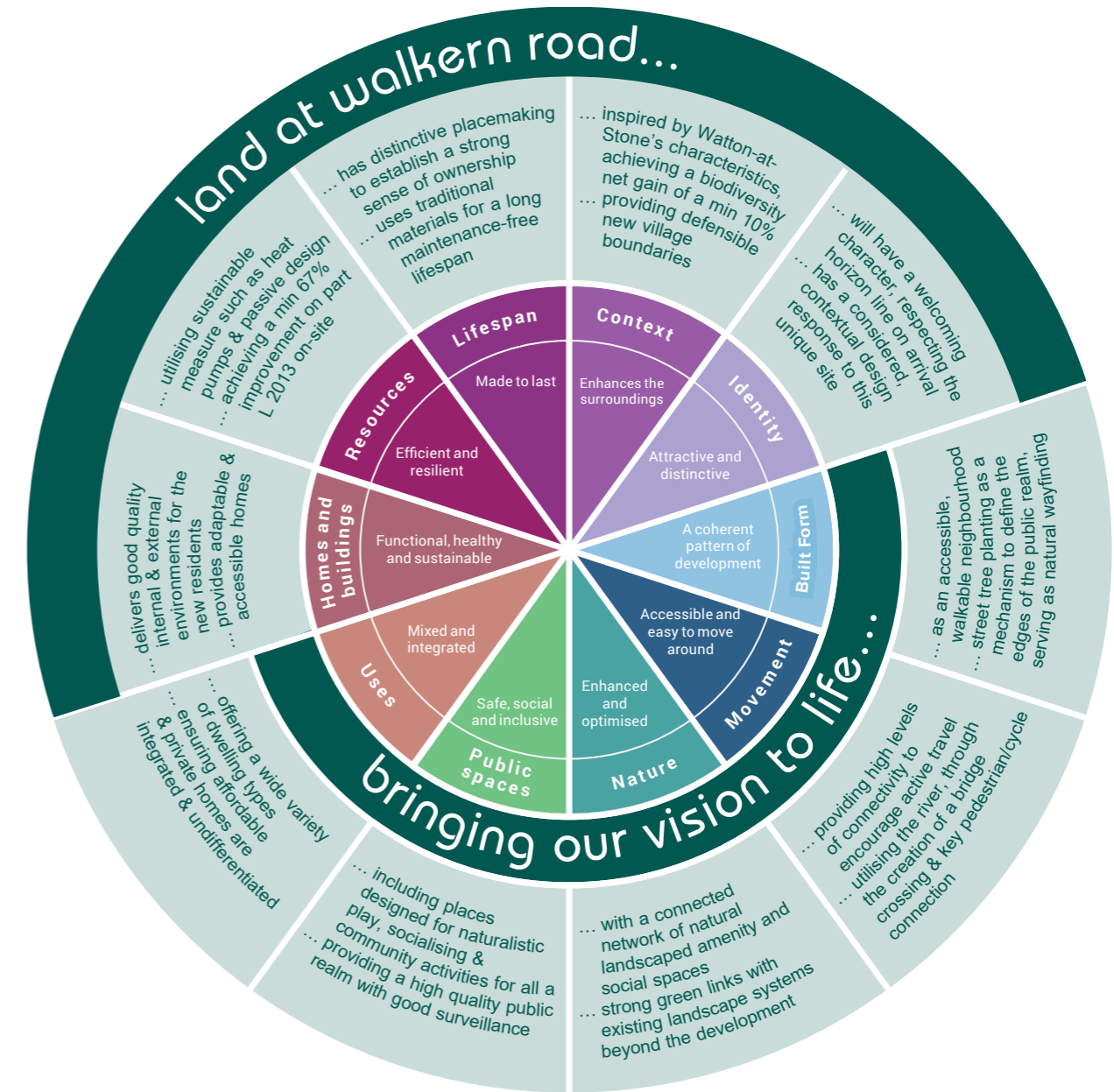
our vision

This Masterplan document has been collaboratively developed with East Herts Council, Watton at Stone Parish Council, Ward Councillors, Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and other key stakeholders to ensure the delivery of a high quality, beautiful and sustainable development at Walkern Road.

By setting out a vision and key design principles, this document aims to ensure the delivery of a high-quality sustainable development that will enhance the local area and provide a beautiful place to live, in accordance with the National Planning Framework, Policy DES1 (Masterplanning) of the East Herts District Plan and policy WAS3 of Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan. This document also provides a framework to guide and inform the detailed design and layout of any future proposed development on the site.

This vision is founded on six key objectives:

1. Providing an attractive development which sits comfortably within the existing context of the village and the River Beane.
2. Provide a mix of new dwellings to accommodate the range of needs within the village.
3. Creation of a sustainable development with opportunities for renewable energy technologies, a fabric first approach which locks in carbon-savings, electric vehicle charging points and water efficient measures.
4. Provide pedestrian and cycle links to the existing green infrastructure and wider village centre.
5. Create defensible new village boundaries.
6. The creation of a new pedestrian bridge across the River Beane in agreement with the Environment Agency.



background & context

ref.2: The Site

The site is being brought forward as a housing opportunity through the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan process. The designation of the Neighbourhood Plan area was originally requested in February 2016 by Watton-at-Stone Parish Council with the designation agreed by East Herts in April 2016. From then, the Parish Council and Steering Committee has undertaken a comprehensive consultation exercise with the local community (detailed on page 8) which has resulted in the submission of the Plan for Examination in June 2023.

As early as the second consultation held in November 2016, Walkern Road was identified as the most popular site for green belt development and development of the site has continued to be supported through subsequent consultations.

In October 2018, East Herts District Plan was formally adopted by the Council. District Plan Policy VILL1 Group 1 Villages, requires Watton-at-Stone to accommodate at least a 10% increase in housing stock between 2017 and 2033. The policy encourages parish councils to prepare Neighbourhood Plans to allocate development and accepts there may be a need for a change to the Green Belt boundary, to accommodate growth. Subsequently, amendments to National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 140, enabled non-strategic policies, including Neighbourhood Plans, to amend Green Belt boundaries if the need for these changes was established in strategic policy. Therefore, Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan took the opportunity to amend their Green Belt boundary and allocate Walkern Road for residential development.

The Neighbourhood Plan is part of the development plan and any planning applications within the Neighbourhood Area will be assessed using the plan alongside the East Herts District Plan (2018), the mineral and waste plans and all other material considerations.

District Plan Policy DES1 requires all significant developments to prepare a masterplan. When endorsed by East Herts Council this will be a material consideration in the planning decision-making process. This masterplan framework document will help shape any subsequent planning application for the site.



planning policy context

The following planning policy context has been considered in the design process:

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023

Relevant national planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which was first published in March 2012, and most recently updated in September 2023. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, with emphasis on three key objectives: social, economic and environmental sustainability. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out in Paragraph 11.

Paragraph 73 identifies the supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for large scale development such as extensions to existing villages. Strategic policy-making authorities should identify suitable locations for such development where this can help to meet identified needs in a sustainable way and “set clear expectations for the quality of the places to be created and how this can be maintained” by ensuring that appropriate tools such as masterplans are used to secure a variety of well-designed and beautiful homes.

Section 12 of the NPPF addresses design matters, with Paragraph 126 explaining that “the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve”. It also highlights that “good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities”. Paragraph 130 further details design objective that new development is expected to meet:

1. Function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short-term but over the lifetime of the development;
2. Visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
3. Sympathetic to local character and history, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change;
4. Establish or maintain a strong sense of place;
5. Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount of mix of development, and
6. Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and wellbeing.

Paragraph 140 permits Green Belt boundaries to “only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans”. It continues to state “where a need for change to Green Belt boundaries has been established through strategic policies, detailed amendments to those boundaries may be made through non-strategic policies including Neighbourhood Plans.”

East Herts District Plan (October 2018)

Watton-at-Stone is identified as Group 1 Village according to Policy VILL1. In Group 1 Villages, development for housing, employment, leisure, recreation and community facilities will be permitted subject to complying with the Local Plan. These villages are encouraged to consider whether it is appropriate, through the formulation of a Neighbourhood Plan, to accommodate additional development especially where it contributes to wider sustainability objectives and the delivery of community benefits. Parish Councils are encouraged to prepare Neighbourhood Plans to allocate land for development.

Policy GBR1 identifies the site as forming part of the Green Belt. However, the allocation and amendment of the Green Belt boundary is set out within the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan. Therefore, the site will no longer be Green Belt once the Neighbourhood Plan has been formally adopted in accordance with Paragraph 140 of the NPPF and Policy VILL1.

Policy DES1 (Masterplanning) introduces a requirement to prepare a Masterplan setting out the quantum and distribution of land uses; access; sustainable high quality design and layout principles; necessary infrastructure; the relationship between the site and other adjacent and nearby land uses; landscape and heritage assets; and other relevant matters. The Masterplan will be collaboratively prepared, involving site promoters, land owners, East Herts Council, town and parish councils, other relevant key stakeholders and public participation.

Policy HOU1 requires new housing development to provide an appropriate mix of housing tenures, types and sizes to create a mixed and balanced community appropriate to local character and taking account of the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment and additional up-to-date evidence. Affordable Housing is also required on all sites proposing new dwellings, with a target of up to 40% affordable housing for sites proposing 15 or more additional dwellings as per Policy HOU3, subject to viability.

The development of the masterplan site should conform with these policies and other policies within the East Herts District Plan.



Policy DES1 Masterplanning

I. All ‘significant’ development proposals will be required to prepare a Masterplan setting out the quantum and distribution of land uses; access; sustainable high quality design and layout principles; necessary infrastructure; the relationship between the site and other adjacent and nearby land uses; landscape and heritage assets; and other relevant matters.

II. The Masterplan will be collaboratively prepared, involving site promoters, land owners, East Herts Council, town and parish councils and other relevant key stakeholders. The Masterplan will be further informed by public participation.

III. In order to ensure that 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.

ref.3: Extract from East Herts District Plan 2018

Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan, 2023

Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan sets out the requirements for the site, playing a key role in shaping the type of scheme brought forward. Policy WAS2 amends the Village's Development Boundary to accommodate additional housing development and includes two housing site allocations (of which one is Walkern Road) within the revised development boundary. Policy WAS3 allocates the site for housing development and supports the development of the site provided it complies with the general design policies, the Watton-at-Stone Design Code, and other policies within the Neighbourhood Plan.

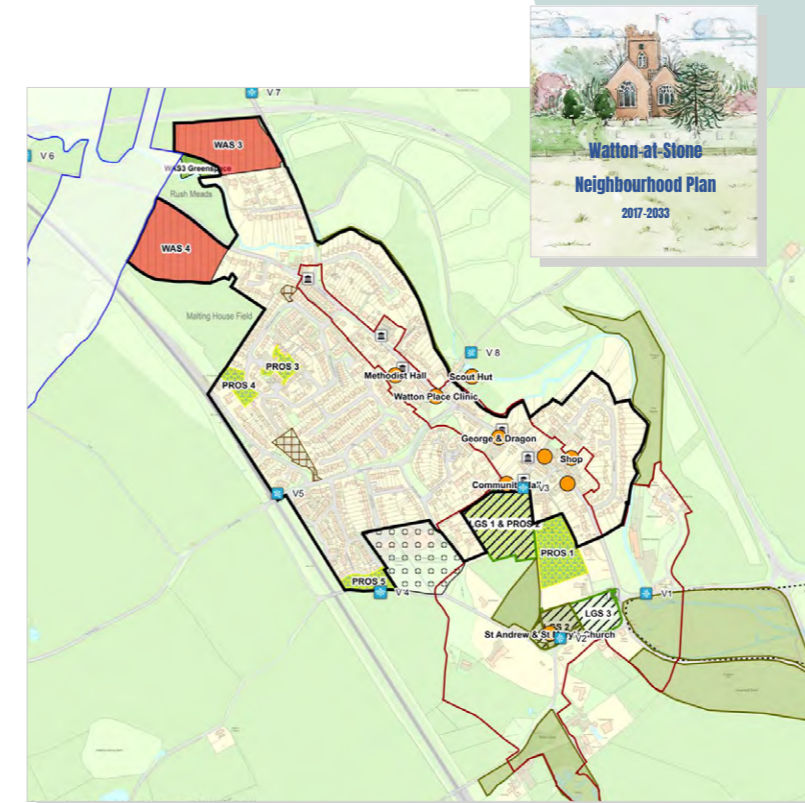
Additionally, the site is expected to meet the following criteria:

- ☐ Achieve 30 units per hectare or 60 homes.
- ☐ Create a physical boundary for the village and Green Belt with appropriate planting.
- ☐ Following the existing frontage and set-back of development along Walkern Road.
- ☐ Reduce traffic speed at the site entrance on Walkern Road.
- ☐ Building should not be over 2 storeys in height or 2.5 storeys where this aligns with the Design Code.
- ☐ The view on arrival into the village (Protected View 7) means that the design must ensure that new buildings must not break the horizon line of the village, and buildings and landscaping enhance the view in the foreground from Viewpoint 7.
- ☐ A mix of house types should be included with positive facades where overlooking public and communal spaces and the development as a whole should have a well-proportioned hierarchy of streets and spaces.
- ☐ Include efficient, effective and well-maintained SUDs system.
- ☐ Include public spaces with well-designed, implemented and maintained landscaping and tree planting.
- ☐ Connect to the existing green areas beyond the development site.
- ☐ Include a connecting footpath that links from the entrance of the site to a new pedestrian/cycle bridge across the River Beane.
- ☐ Provide community benefits in the form of a new bridge over the River Beane and a path, across the field to Stevenage Road to connect the development with the pedestrian access to Moorymead Close and the railway station, through Site WAS4. The provision of the pedestrian/ cycle access and new bridge should be secured by way of a Planning Condition or Section 106 Obligation.
 - ☐ The new bridge must also be designed and constructed to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency.
- ☐ Provide public amenity greenspace within the south western corner of the site which will create a buffer between the development and the River Beane. This greenspace will include public access over the footbridge which crosses the river and link to the new circular path. SuDs could also be provided within this space.

Furthermore, Policy WAS6 requires all development proposals to be assessed against the Watton-at-Stone Design Code.



ref.4: Image showing evolving proposals for the riverside greenspace and dwellings



ref.5: Policy map extracted from Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan, 2023

design code

A descriptive Design Code based on the National Design Guide issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has been written into the Neighbourhood Plan in order to address the ambitions for future housing proposals within the Parish.

The design principles relate to the following aspects:

- Design Principles to enhance the surroundings.
- Design Principles to achieve attractiveness and distinctiveness.
- Design principles for a coherent pattern of development.
- Design principles for accessibility and ease of moving around.
- Design principles for enhancing and optimising biodiversity.
- Design principles for safe, social and inclusive public spaces.
- Design principles for mixed and integrated design, and,
- Design principles for functional, healthy and sustainable places.

The detailed design will need to demonstrate that it complies where relevant with these principles.



ref.6: Image of evolving proposals for the riverside greenspace

engagement

The site's allocation as part of the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan has led to a significant amount of community engagement in relation to its development has been undertaken. Full details of the consultation process undertaken by the Watton-at-Stone Steering Group is provided in the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement (September 2022). A summary of the consultation process and the residents' responses in relation to allocation the Walkern Road allocation is outlined below:

2016

First Consultation

The first consultation started on the 14th May 2016 and involved an exhibition and questionnaires. The responses to the questionnaires identified several possible development sites with the Walkern Road site being one of the more suitable sites considered for development.

The Second Consultation

The second consultation was held in November 2016 and involved a two-day exhibition and questionnaire. This was the first consultation which considered the release of Green Belt with more than 80% of respondents accepting that some development was going to require a limited release of green belt land. The most popular green belt site for development was the masterplan site as it was seen as contained and largely hidden from the village. There was however concern about the impact of additional traffic on the bridge on Walkern Road.

Consideration was also given to the design of new developments with a clear indication that any new housing developments should be in character with the existing village properties, constructed in traditional brick and have high energy efficiency. There was also a clear preference for a maximum of 2 storeys. Limited support was provided for flats and should these be built, they should be maximum of three storeys with underground parking. Most respondents indicated that gardens should be big enough for families and that houses should be set back from the road. Green spaces within developments were also stressed by a few respondents. Adequate off-street parking was seen as essential but not necessarily provided as garaging.

2020

The Third Consultation

The third consultation was held in January 2020 involving an exhibition and questionnaire which focused on the draft policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. Policy WAS2 sought to amend the village boundary and was supported by 86.4% of the residents who responded. Policy WAS3 proposed the housing allocation of Walkern Road and was supported by 76.7% of respondents. Despite this support, a key area of concern in relation to the allocation was the proposed traffic implications from development and the safety of the proposed access onto Walkern Road. Concerns were also raised regarding safety issues of Walkern Road between the site access and the High Street, in particular the adequacy of the one way bridge over the River Beane to accommodate the additional traffic, lack of adequate footpath facilities and enforcement of the speed limit.

Concerns were also raised regarding the scale of the development, both in terms of the number and house design, to reduce the impact on the existing properties along Beane Road and to be more consistent with the local design and limit the opportunity for further development in the area.

Comments were also provided on policies WAS6 Design. Respondents considered it was important for the buildings to be in keeping of the village and for sustainability to play a key role in the design.

2023

The Design Panel Review

The Panel met on Thursday 5th October 2023 to review the emerging proposals for land at Watton-at-Stone. The Panel has a number of comments and suggestions and considered the following matters should be addressed:

- Analysis of the constraints and opportunities of the surface water drainage, acoustics, and ecology of the site.
- Analysis of settlement character and notable buildings.
- new pedestrian and cycle connection to the wider area, views of the countryside, and a new bridge over the river should be integrated into the residents day-to-day experience.
- Sustainability and climate change resilience must have influence over the proposals and elements such as alternative modes of transport and integrating SuDs should be included.

While some of these issues relate to detailed design considerations which will be addressed as part of a planning application, the following elements have been considered in the masterplan strategy: urban grain analysis, inclusion of SuDs, pedestrian and cycle connections to the wider village, and new bridge, views to the wider countryside and potential for Biodiversity Net Gain.

2022

Regulation 14 Pre-submission Consultation

The Regulation 14 consultation was held from January 2022 to March 2022 with summary brochures distributed to all households and a letter/email sent to statutory consultees, adjacent authorities, local businesses and organisations which might have an interest in the Plan. The principle of housing development on the site was supported with following comments provided:

- To optimise the site and achieve an appropriate density, open space will need to be provided in two areas of the site.
- The site is in an area of archaeological significance and reference to this should be included within the site allocation.
- New planting should be required on the northwestern boundary with the green belt to provide a physical barrier and demonstrate compliance with the NPPF.

Regulation 16 Consultation

On the 29th September 2022, Watton-at-Stone Parish Council submitted the Neighbourhood Plan to East Herts District Council under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulation 2012 with East Herts District Council holding a 6-week consultation from November 2022 to December 2022.

Overall, the responses to public consultation were positive with many of the consultees stating their support for the Neighbourhood Plan and how the plan has been very thoroughly researched and the time which had gone into producing the plan to address the needs of Village.

Specifically, in relation to the WAS3 allocation, responses highlighted the importance of providing the pedestrian footbridge over the River Beane and highlighted the benefits that this would provide to the local community. The EA originally objected to the bridge as part of their consultation. However, following further discussion and the submission of additional information later withdrew their objection at examination.

key stakeholder meetings

In addition to the public engagement which has taken place for the Neighbourhood Plan, a significant amount of engagement has been undertaken with Key Stakeholders including meetings with East Herts District Council, Hertfordshire County Council Highways, Watton-at-Stone Parish Council and Steering Committee and the Environmental Agency. A summary of these discussions is provided below:



Regular meetings and on-going discussions with officers since 2015.

Formal Pre-application meetings held in 2018, 2022 and in April and June, 2023.

The focus of these meetings was the detailed design of the site in accordance with adopted policy including layout, height, relationships between properties, street scenes and the site's relation to Walkern Road.



Numerous schemes and presentations have been held with the Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee since 2016.

In October 2020, a detailed scheme for the site was presented to members for comments and feedback.

Members had concerns regarding the proposed access and whether it could be moved to the A602 bypass or High Street, the impact the proposed height of the development would have on key views, alternatives greener provisions to gas boilers, sufficient car parking and the affordable housing provision.

Additionally, the Council sought mature tree planting along the southern boundary with the neighbouring properties on Beane Road.



Formal pre-application meetings have been held with Hertfordshire County Council's Highways team regarding the access to site, improvements to the footway and the potential to reduce the speed limit along Walkern Road.

An agreement has been reached in principle regarding the proposed access arrangements as well as the design of the traffic calming features and pedestrian crossing points along Walkern Road to the north and south of the proposed access.



Several meeting's and on-going discussions have been held with the EA regarding the pedestrian bridge over the river.



ref.10: Image of the evolving proposals for the Walkern Road Frontage



ref.8: Image of the evolving roofscape proposals



ref.11: Image of the evolving proposals for the Walkern Road Frontage



ref.7: Image of evolving proposals for the informal lanes



ref.9: Image showing inspiration for the proposed riverside landscaping



ref.12: Image showing inspiration for the proposed pedestrian bridge over the river Beane



watton-at-stone & the wider context

The rural Parish of Watton-at-Stone comprises an area of approximately 3500 acres and nestles in the rolling countryside of the River Beane Valley in Hertfordshire approximately halfway between Hertford (our county town) and the larger town of Stevenage:

... A Sustainable Location

- Part of an established village and a wider network of larger towns.

... With Public Transport & Accessibility

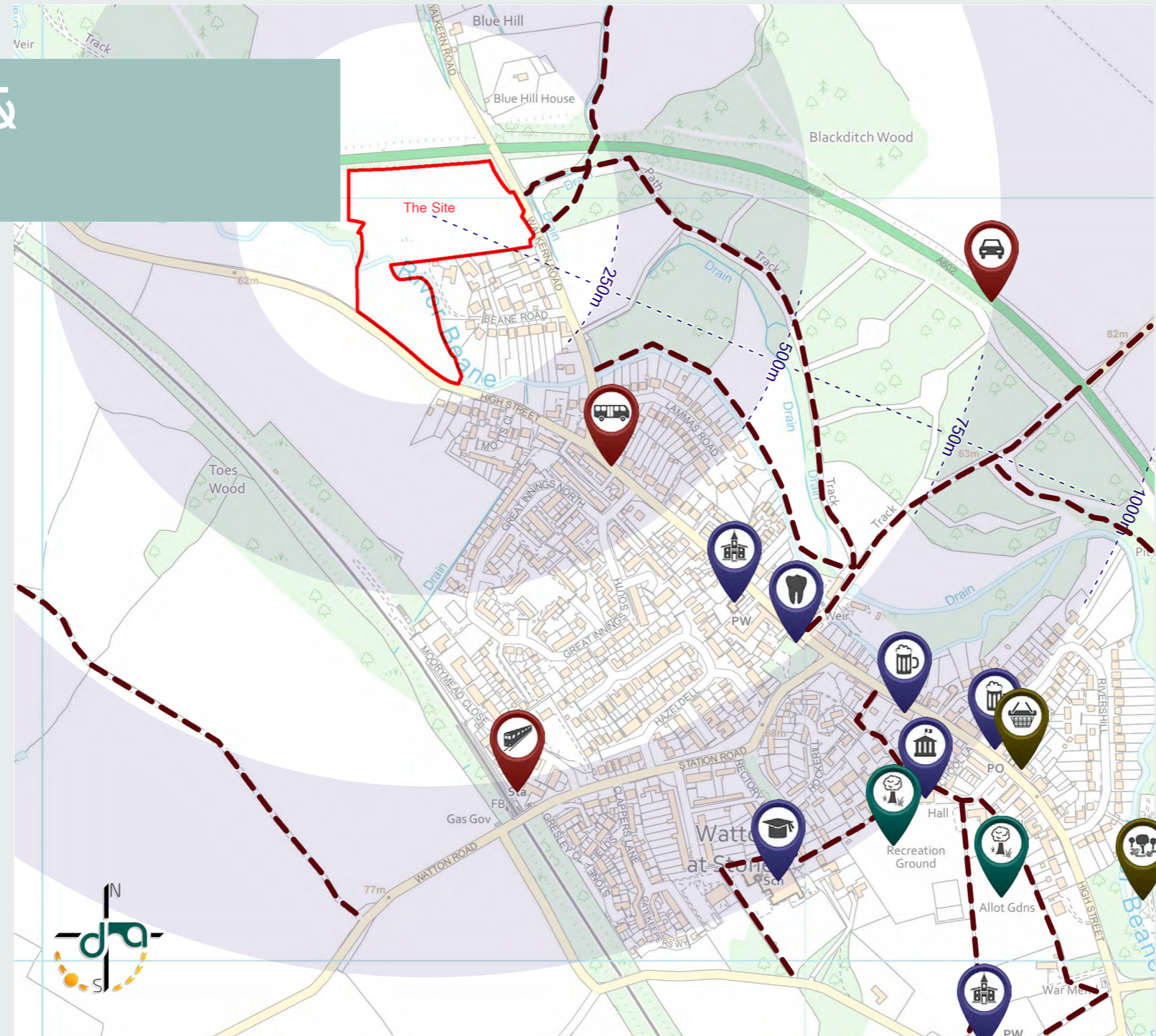
- 390 bus on a route from Hertford to Stevenage with departures approx. every hour from the High Street.
- Trains serve Moorgate on Mondays to Fridays until 22:00 and London King's Cross after 22:00 on Mondays to Fridays and all day on Saturdays and Sundays. Journey time – approx. 1h.

... With Education Facilities

- For younger children in the village, and for older children in nearby towns.

... With Green Recreation Space

- Surrounding and running through the village, with an extensive network of recreational footpaths.



ref.6: The wider context of Watton-at-Stone showing the application site in relation to local facilities and services

The proposed development will seek to dovetail with the transport infrastructure which is in place in the neighbourhood - so that short trips in and around the village can be easily made on foot or by bicycle, helping to improve public health and air quality, whilst also reducing local congestion and carbon emissions

The development of this site will take the opportunity to dovetail with existing public transport facilities including the rail and bus services.








local transport links



Since the opening of the railway station, Watton-at-Stone has attracted more commuters. By providing improvements to the pedestrian and cycling network, it is hoped to reduce the reliance on cars from residents.

In accordance with WAS9 Sustainable Transport Provision, from the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2033, the site will connect well into the local public transport network, providing walking and cycling routes that connect to the wider local area, creating key linkages through the site to the local bus

-  Railway station
-  Bus stop
-  203 Centrebus route
-  Trainline between Stevenage and Moorgate
-  390 / 383 Intalink Bus route

pedestrian connectivity

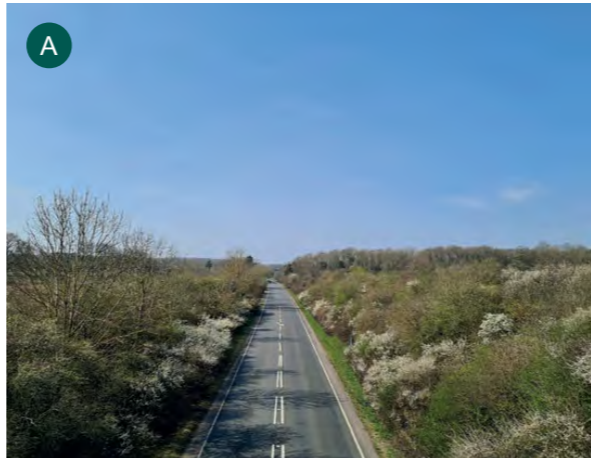


93.9% of residents in the village agreed with the formation of a circular walk connecting up Watton-at-Stone in the January 2020, Neighbourhood Plan consultation. As demonstrated on the left, north east of the village is poorly connected into the wider local area.

WAS10 from the Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan, provides further information on the proposed new footpath/ cycle connections, with the site forming a key connection through linking the existing rights of way east of Walkern Road through WAS3 across the proposed river crossing, allowing residents to connect seamlessly back to the station, and wider local network.

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| | Railway station | | Place of worship |
| | Primary & nursery school | | Dentist |
| | Bus stops | | Public house |
| | Local shops | | Playing Fields |
| | Proposed pedestrian/cycle route | | Wider pedestrian network |

the site & its setting



the wider context

The historic core of the village, particularly along the High Street, has a more connected continuous townscape, and includes some unique buildings and features - including "Victorian Gothic" steep gables and porches, as well as a common brown/buff brick with red brick detailing.



village grain



1. Typical postwar period village edge expansion



2. Very recent development - following the grain of the historic village



3. The historic village core - more compact and intimate character



4. Typical 1970s-era village expansion - very wide streets and generic houses



5. Modern development of terraces and townhouses



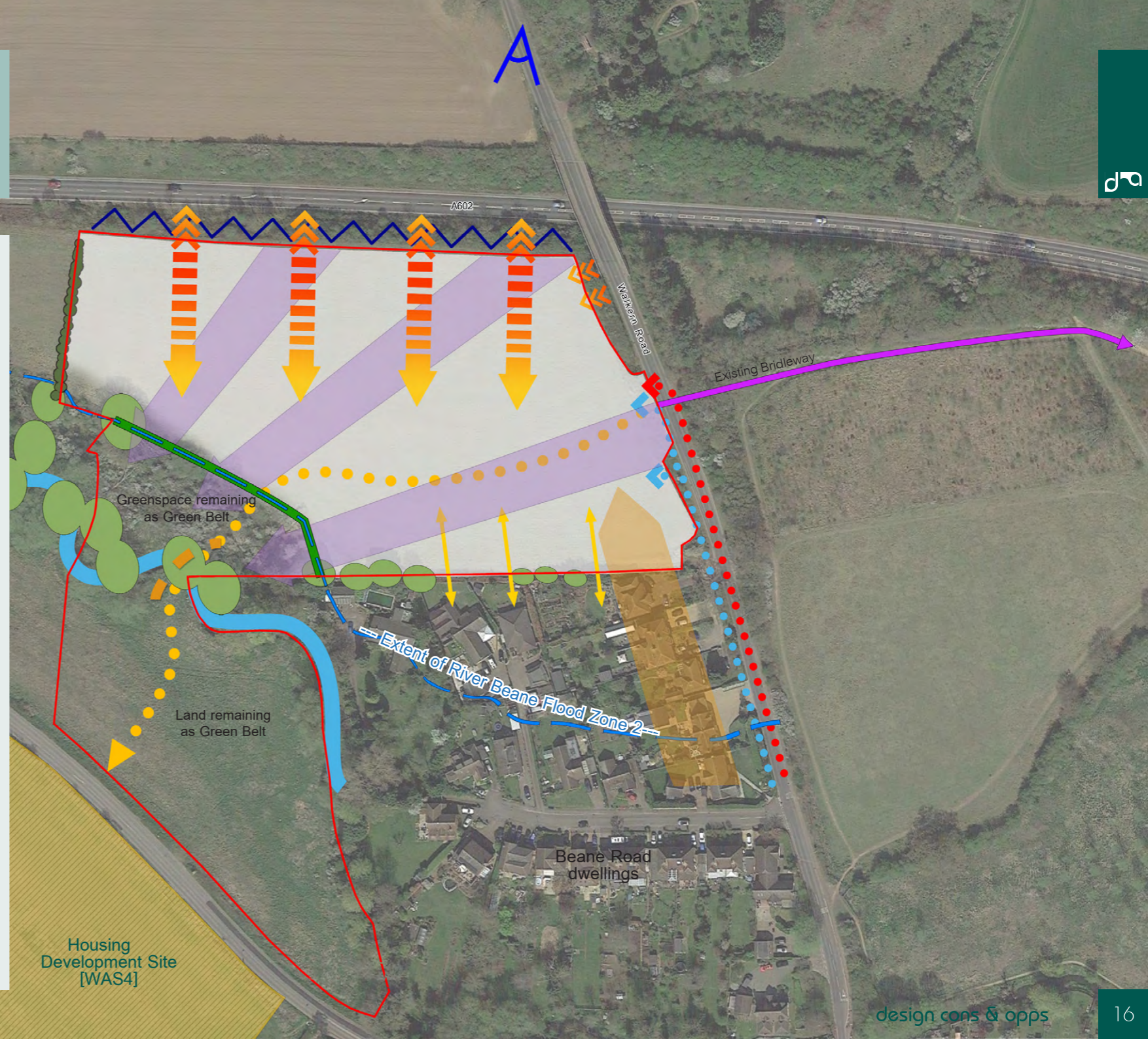
6. 1970s-era development alongside more historic buildings



design cons & opps

- Visual connections between the site and the wider northern countryside
- Visual connections into the site from Walkern road
- Existing trees to be incorporated into the new development as features within a green space setting
- Existing riverside landscape character to be incorporated into the character of the new public green space
- Consideration for the privacy and amenity of neighbouring homes - minimum 25m back-to-back relationships
- Pedestrian connection along Walkern Road towards the village centre
- Vehicular connection along Walkern Road towards the village centre
- Key pedestrian and cycle connection- interconnecting the existing brideway with the River Beane and the adjoining strategic housing site (WAS4), as part of the wider circular path

- Adjacent new Housing Development Site WAS4 - established by the Neighbourhood Plan
- Green belt boundary
- Pedestrian bridge crossing the River Beane
- Potential noise from the A602
- Opportunity to reinforce the village's built relationship with Walkern Road
- Consideration for Protected Viewpoint 7 in accordance with Policy WAS18
- Green belt boundary planting along western edge of site in accordance with WAS3
- Site slopes NE to SW



visual connections & corridors



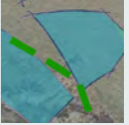
Greenspace remaining as Green Belt

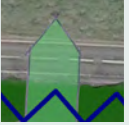
Land remaining as Green Belt


Housing Development Site [WAS4]




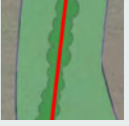
- Green swathe creating a visual & landscape corridor - interconnecting the eastern Local Green Space and bridleway, through the body of the site, with the western Local Green Space



- Green swathe creating a visual and landscape corridor through and beyond the development to the northern countryside beyond



- Central landscaped green space including publicly accessible play space within the core of the site


- Landscape buffer along the northern boundary with the A602 and countryside beyond


- Green belt boundary planting along western edge of site in accordance with Policy WAS3


- SuD in central green space and towards site entrance


- Green belt boundary



how the design takes this context into account



Establishing Development Parameters & Formulating the Design Approach

Landscaping buffer enhanced to reduce potential noise from the A602

The layout allows for visual connections to extend from within the site, out to the countryside and beyond

The dashed line represents the green belt boundary

Tree survey carried out, trees to be retained subject to review at detailed planning application stage

Pedestrian bridge over the River Beane providing future connection to the adjacent housing allocation site WAS4 and circular path

Connection to the existing footpath along the High Street made via a S278 application

Lower density development edge along Walkern road

Key pedestrian and cycle connection-interconnecting the existing bridleway with the River Beane and the adjoining strategic housing site (WAS4), as part of the wider circular path around the village in addition to connecting the proposed development to the wider village

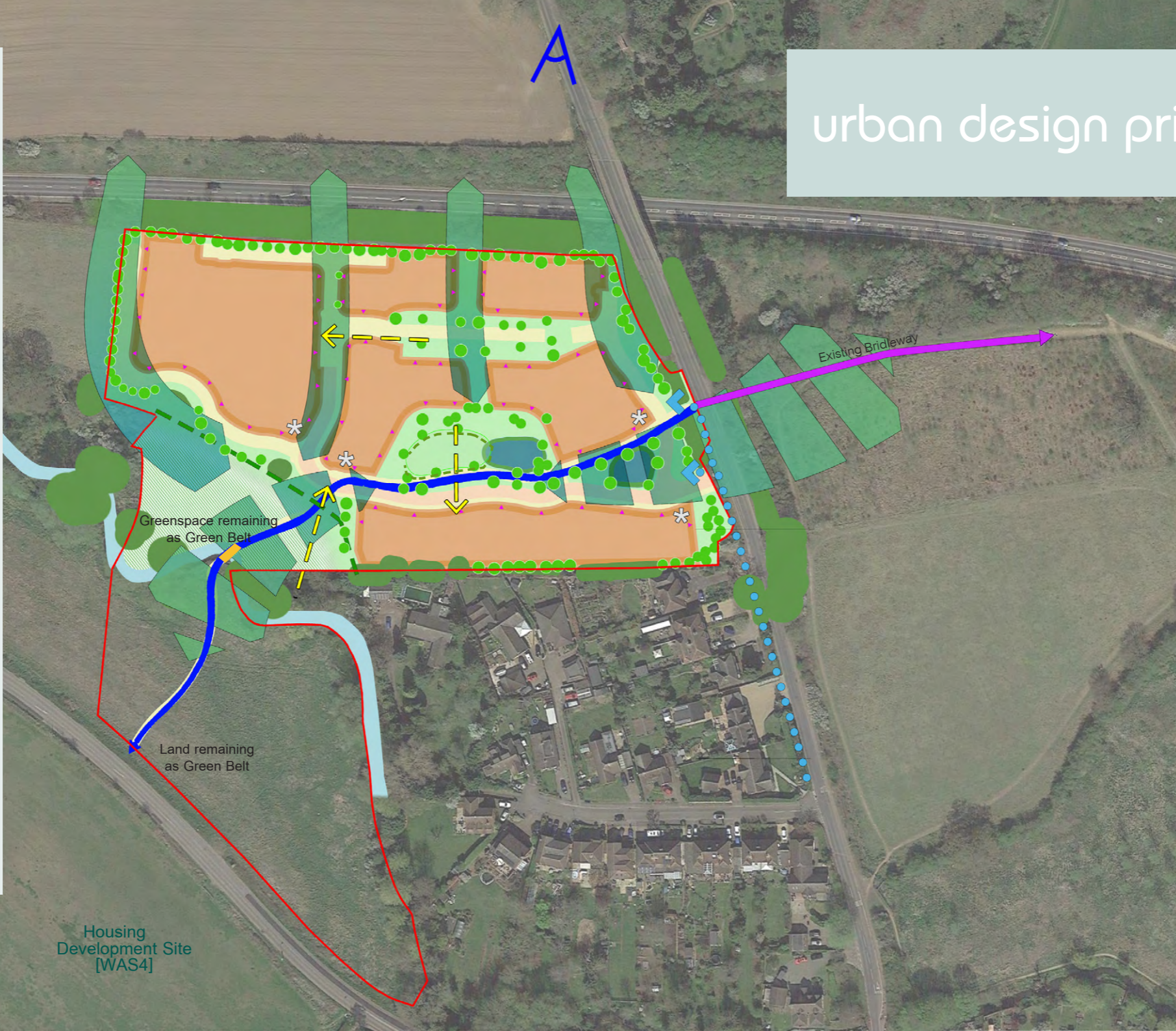
Gardens and additional landscaping along the southern boundary to provide buffer between existing and proposed houses



Housing Development Site [WAS4]

urban design principles

- SuD's integrated within the central green space and towards the site entrance in line with the Design Panels advice
- Protected Viewpoint 7
- Key pedestrian and cycle connection-interconnecting the existing bridleway with the River Beane and the adjoining strategic housing site (WAS4), as part of the wider circular path
- Proposed road network within the site with active frontages overlooking to ensure streets are passively policed
- Pedestrian bridge
- Existing trees retained
- Proposed trees
- Vistas and keynotes as landmarks
- Green belt boundary



- Green swathe creating a visual & landscape corridor - interconnecting the eastern green space and bridleway, through the body of the site, with the western green space
- Green swathe creating a visual and landscape corridor through and beyond the development to the countryside beyond
- Landscape buffer along the northern boundary with the A602 and countryside beyond
- Areas for landscaped public open space incorporating existing mature trees and riverside landscaping
- Areas for residential development (2 to 2.5 storeys with gardens. No residential development to be within Green Belt)
- Flanking relationship of built form with the northern countryside - avoiding any continuous frontage along this boundary and creating long open visual garden and street gaps between buildings
- Proposed extension of the footpath along Walkern road to create a safe pedestrian access
- Central mews courtyard in the development core with publicly accessible play space



Housing Development Site [WAS4]

biodiversity net gain



The proposed development will comply with national targets and Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Plan Policy WAS19, with any development required to achieve a minimum biodiversity net gain (BNG) of 10%.

The plan shows how this could potentially be achieved with the introduction of urban landscaping and planting within the allocation developable area and the maintenance and enhancement of the rest of the site.

The River Beane intersects the site, to the south of the developable area. As an important chalk stream, it is essential that proposed development preserves and enhances the river. Detailed proposals at the planning application stage will be supported by ecological surveys and BNG information to protect and improve the habitats on site (including removal of invasive species), which will need to be agreed by ecologists working for the council.

The future management of the area around the river and to the south of the development site will have its own management strategy which will be implemented either by the future management company of the site or another party.



Introduction of urban trees and residential gardens

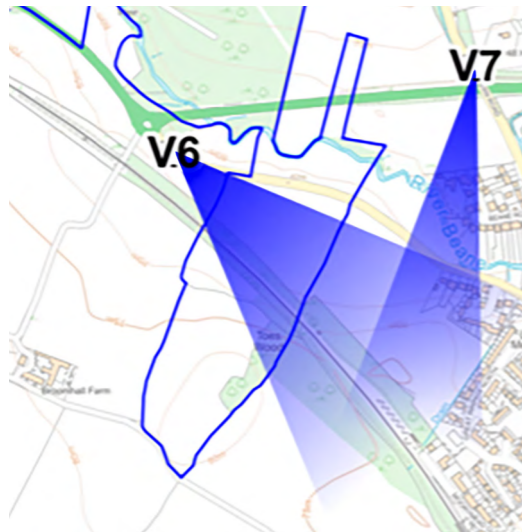
Appropriate management to retain and maintain the existing grassland and other species. Including the removal of invasive species if required

Additional planting to improve the biodiversity

protected view: v7

WAS18 Protected Views

Policy WAS18 within the Watton Neighbourhood Plan, 2023 sets out to protect eight important views and vistas in the village. Under this policy, Viewpoint 7: From the far side of Walkern Road bridge (southward) is identified as an important view. The width and depth of the protected view onto the site is demonstrated in the map below. The subsequent image shows Viewpoint 7 from entrance to the village on Walkern Road (northern approach) prior to development taking place on the site.



ref.11: The map above shows an approximation of the width and depth of the view



ref.12: V7 from entrance to the village on the Walkern road (northern approach)

The view from Ref.13 shows indicative 2-storey buildings with pitched roofs. As demonstrated, the proposed building does not break the horizon line of the village from the viewpoint as required by Policy WAS3. This is therefore considered to have an acceptable level of impact on the viewpoint, agreed in principle by Hertfordshire Design Panel, a similar level of impact should be targeted by an application.



ref.13: Indicative view from protected view 7. The image does not include a landscaping buffer or other types of potential mitigation. A detailed assessment of the impact on Protected View 7 will need to be provided as part of the Planning Application.

sustainability & future management

Through the combination of measures as outlines below, this site at Watton at Stone aims to achieve a 97% improvement over Part L 2013 on-site and 67% improvement over Part L 2021.

Working with a leading Energy and Sustainability Specialist:

- Focus on wider sustainability.
- Energy efficiency priority.
- Balance improvements in their ongoing use.
- Operational / maintenance requirements.

Most sustainability advanced Fairview New Homes development utilising sustainable measures such as:

Heat Pumps

Fairview has committed to fit Air Source Heat Pumps for the houses, and Hot Water Heat Pump Water Cylinder and direct electric panel heaters in flats.

- ✓ Air Source Heat Pumps are a highly efficient way of providing heat using electricity, with manufacturers reporting efficiencies from 250%.
- ✓ Hot Water Heat Pumps installed in flats produce very low noise levels and are compact solution in same footprint as hot water cylinder.

Future Management

Following the completion of the development, public amenity space, open spaces and play space will be maintained by an independent Management Company/Agency on behalf of the residents.

It will be responsibility of the Management Company to maintain and repair any damage in these areas.

Passive Design

- ✓ Passive design utilises daylight, solar energy and shading to illuminate, heat and shade where necessary and ventilate/cool the buildings, thus requiring less (mechanical) energy to achieve the performance standards for the health and wellbeing of the occupants.
- ✓ The proposed glazed areas have been designed to maximise daylight and optimise solar gains. This is enhanced by the linear southeast facing front elevations of the dwellings.
- ✓ One EV charging point for each units.

PV was considered as part of the sustainability strategy but, as a result of providing highly insulated buildings through fabric enhancement, it was not required. Despite this, the majority of buildings have been orientated with south facing roofs which will allow residents to install these at a later date.

Affordable Housing

- ✓ The development should provide policy compliant affordable housing provision.

Proposed Fabric Specification

Design to follow the principles of the LETI (London Energy Transformation Initiative) Climate Emergency Design Guide:

- Element U- Value Proposed Design (W/m2.k)
 - Ground Floor 0.10
 - External Wall 0.15
 - Roof 0.10
 - Door 1.60
 - High efficiency Glazing
- High efficiency ASHP (SCOP over 4.0)
- Mechanical Ventilation



ref.13: Image showing home Electric Vehicle Charging



ref.14: Image showing Air Source Heat Pumps

biodiversity & ecology strategy



Well-designed landscape environments contribute to the creation of sustainable and ecologically-rich infrastructure. Incorporating ecological interventions with residential environments provides habitat opportunities for a variety of flora and fauna.

The palette shown opposite highlights potential enhancements and interventions that could be included throughout the site.

Interventions include:

- ☞ Bat roosts for crevice dwelling Pipistrelles and Myotis species.
- ☞ Bird boxes for nesting species.
 - ☞ Bird boxes/bricks for nesting species on existing trees and/or properties depending on Ecologist recommendation.
- ☞ Beetle loggery at ground level.
- ☞ Invertebrate hotel at ground level.
- ☞ Nectar-rich flowering plants for butterflies and bees.

The proposal for Walkern Road creates linkages to existing green corridors and river habitats. Ecological interventions included around the development will provide habitat for critters, bird life and invertebrates alongside human residents and visitors.

Protection of the River Beane is an important aspiration for the site and the green area north of the river serves as a buffer from the residential development. Details of the biodiversity improvements on the land south of the developable area will be provided at the planning application stage, to enhance ecology on the site.

landscape approach

A safe, well-vegetated landscape which encourages social exchange and a sense of community

A series of external community spaces for residents to enjoy



Open lawn space for games and gatherings



Easily maintained planting with ecological interventions



Playspace for younger residents



Parking and vehicles within a green network

landscape mood board



CLIMBING PLAY



DEFINED PATHS + PLANTING



NATURALISTIC PLAY



SUSTAINABLE URBAN DRAINAGE



PERMEABLE PARKING



LAWN OPEN SPACE



ECOLOGICAL PLANTING



DEFENSIBLE RESIDENTIAL BUFFERS



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