

Proposed residential development at Union Road, Onehouse, Stowmarket
Hopkins Homes Limited

Development Brief

April 2016





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“The vision is to create a place which provides new high quality sustainable development, ecological enhancements and the opportunity for community & economic benefit.”

INTRODUCTION

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to this Development Brief

This Development Brief has been produced to guide the future development of land at Land Union Road, Stowmarket.

The site extends to approximately 1.5 hectares in area and is located on the western edge of Stowmarket.

The principle of housing development of the site is confirmed by the Stowmarket Area Action Plan (SAAP). More specifically, the site is shown as part of a 'Reserve Site' within the SAAP, with the potential for 200 dwellings, subject to the first review of the SAAP.

Paragraph 4.4 of the SAAP requires that a Development Brief is produced, before an application is submitted, for SAAP allocations and other proposals in the SAAP area that have significance beyond their site boundary. In light of this, it is considered that there is a requirement for a Development Brief in relation to the Union Road site and as such, this Development Brief has been prepared in satisfaction of that requirement.

During the 2015 Community Infrastructure Levy Examination the District Council and the site developer agreed that the site would be categorised as a Strategic Development Site which would contribute to the delivery of community infrastructure via a Section 106 Planning Obligation in association with the proposed Chilton Leys development which is the subject of a separate approved Development Brief .

1.2 Purpose of this Development Brief

The purpose of the development brief is to aid the coordinated delivery of infrastructure and provide a framework for the evaluation of future planning applications for all phases of development to ensure the overall vision and development objectives, and associated infrastructure requirements for the site, are delivered comprehensively. The Development Brief will be 'endorsed' by the Council as a material consideration for the determination of planning applications for development of the site.

1.3 Process for the Development Brief

A draft of the Development Brief is to be prepared by Hopkins Homes and its consultancy team as the developers of the Union Road site. This draft will be the subject of discussion between the District Council and Suffolk County Council. Once agreement has been reached as to the draft document, a 4 week period of consultation will take place. This will be followed by any amendments to the Development Brief required as the outcome of consultation. A report to the Council's Executive Committee will then be prepared in readiness for endorsement of the Development Brief at a meeting of that Committee.



Chilton Leys development

Abbey Fields sports grounds

Chilton Ley Community Primary School

Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre

Stowmarket High School

Onehouse Road

Union Road

Starhouse Lane

Finborough Road

Aerial view of the Union Road site



CONTEXT AND ANLAYSIS

2 Context and analysis

2.1 Town wide context

The site's location means that a new community can be created that is able to take full advantage of the local services and facilities and public transport provision that is already available. The proposal will look to maximise the opportunities the existing services and public transport network offers in creating a sustainable development. The diagram opposite highlights the site in a town context and some of the key local services and community facilities. Stowmarket provides a good range of local services and facilities. These include a wide range of pubs and restaurants, banks, library and other shopping and retail opportunities within the town centre.

Public transport serves the site, with bus stops on Union Road within easy walking distance of the site. The existing bus service provides easy access to Stowmarket town centre, and other destinations further afield such as Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich. The mainline rail station is 2km away with direct services to Ipswich, Norwich and London. This brings the whole of the town centre, including the mainline rail station within 20 to 30 minute walk or a 10 minute cycle from the site.

The site also benefits from being within walking and cycling distance of a number of schools, including Stowmarket High School, Wood Ley Community Primary School, Stepping Stones Nursery, as well as Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre and area of public open space.

- | | |
|---|--|
| □ Union Road site | 1 Chilton Fields sports ground and Stepping Stones Nursery |
| ■ Stowmarket Town Centre | 2 Stowmarket High School |
| ● Stowmarket Train Station | 3 Wood Ley Community Primary School |
| □ Chilton Leys development | 4 Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre |
| | 5 Chilton Community Primary School |
| | 6 Stow Health |
| | 7 Stowmarket Recreation Ground |
| | 8 Abbots Hall Community Primary School |
| | 9 Stow Veterinary Group |
| | 10 Lidl Supermarket |



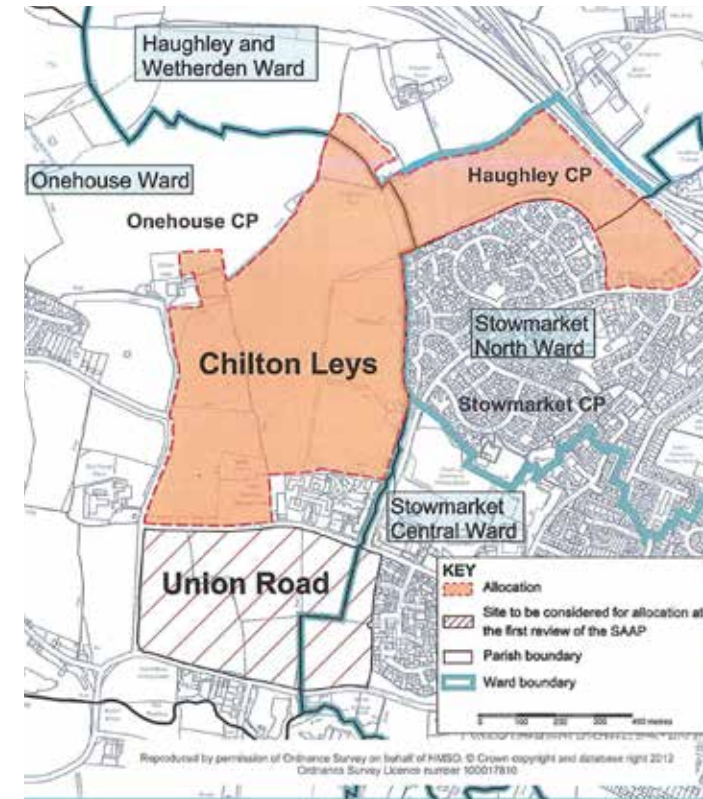
Surrounding key services and community facilities

2.2 Planning context

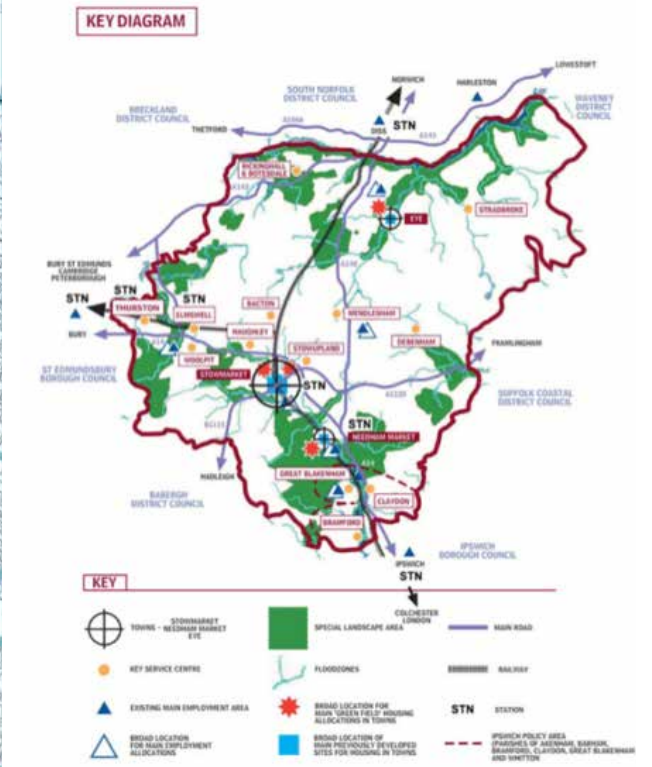
Under the 'Plan-led' system, planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan, along with 'any other material considerations'. The Development Plan for the site comprises of various documents produced by Mid Suffolk District Council. Of principal relevance in this instance are the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy 2008 (the Core Strategy) and the Stowmarket Area Action Plan 2013 (the SAAP) Development Plan Documents.

Within the SAAP, the site is shown as part of a 'Reserve Site' to be brought forward when development delivery monitoring establishes a shortfall in housing supply. The site lies immediately to the south of the Stowmarket 'North and North West' allocation, which is collectively known as 'Land around Chilton Leys'. The basis of these site specific allocations is provided for by the Core Strategy, which confirmed that the growth of the town would take place in the broad location of the area from the north round to the west of the town, as shown on the Core Strategy Key Diagram shown below / opposite. An extract from the SAAP (Map 6.2) showing the site and its Reserve status and the adjacent Land around Chilton Leys development is shown below / opposite.

Paragraph 6.58 of the SAAP states that 'Map 6.2 indicates land between Union Road and Finborough Road which will be considered for future development at the first review of the SAAP'. In terms of the collective allocation of Stowmarket North and North West (Land around Chilton Leys) Paragraph 6.67 states that 'it is estimated that this collective area could yield up to 1,000 dwellings during the plan period with the potential for 200 additional dwellings at Union Road which is subject to the first review of the SAAP.



Map 6.2 Stowmarket North and North-West





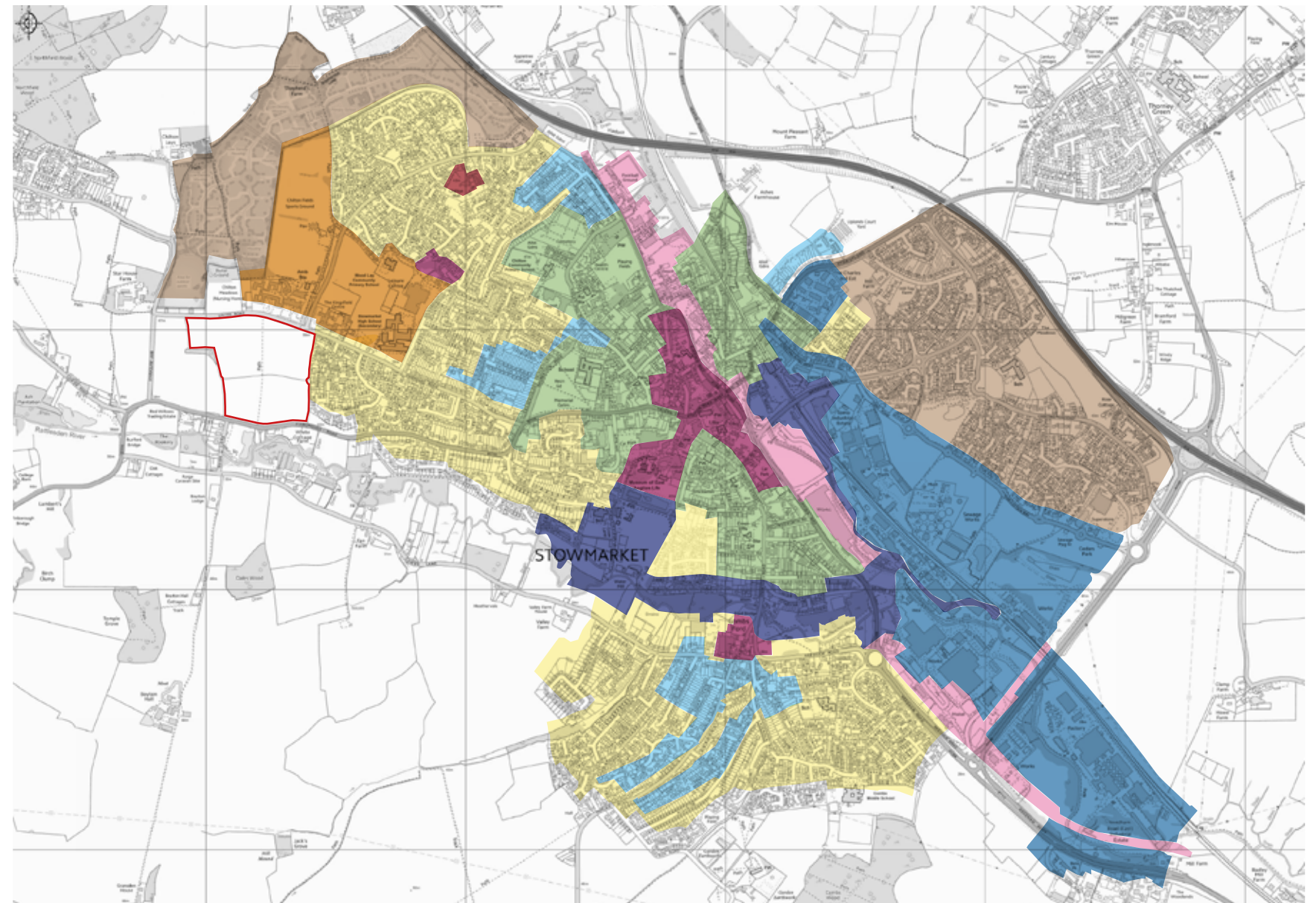
To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance and maintain the vitality of rural communities.

2.3 Stowmarket townscape character context

The plan opposite illustrates the townscape character types for Stowmarket as defined in the Environmental Assessment - Final Report from February 2008.

A brief description is also provided of each type on page 8, which has also been taken from the final report.

- Union Road site
- Type 1: Historic centres
- Type 2: Victorian suburbs
- Type 3: 1920's-1950's housing
- Type 4: 1960's-1990's suburbs
- Type 5: Schools/institutions
- Type 6: Post 2000 development
- Type 7: Valley floor and sides
- Type 8: Mixed corridor development
- Type 9: Employment/Industrial



Townscape character types plan
Source: Stowmarket Environmental Assessment - Final report 2008.

Type 1 - Historic centres:

This type contains the historic parts of the settlement often dating back to the medieval period but also containing distinctive building styles and architectural form other historic periods such as Georgian and Victorian eras. This type contains a high concentration of buildings reflecting local vernacular styles, many of which are listed. It comprises the historic core of Stowmarket where the density of development, street pattern and open space reflect the early origins. In addition this type includes early rural centres such as halls and farmsteads which have over more recent years been incorporated into the urban fabric of the town.

Type 2: Edwardian/Victorian suburbs:

This type contains distinctive Victorian architecture dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, often constructed of Suffolk white brick and reflecting repetitive building styles with a high degree of unity eg. terraced houses. Streets are often formally laid out leading off from main historic approach routes as regular geometric streets. Terraced houses may front directly onto the streets creating a hard narrow streetscape with little vegetation or alternatively properties may be set-back slightly from the road and have small front gardens. This type may contain larger villa type houses set within substantial grounds often planted with trees which were fashionable during this period such as cedars. In addition, notable Victorian public buildings, such as the Station and Signal Box, as well as areas of open space which provide tranquil surroundings for informal recreation are characteristic. Mature vegetation and particularly trees in these open spaces as well as in garden plots/grounds give this townscape type a 'leafy' character which expresses a high degree of maturity and establishment. Typically this type occurs around the historic core of Stowmarket and bolsters the identity and character of the historic core.

Type 3 - 1920's to 1950's housing:

As a response to social and welfare reform agendas in the period between the 1920's and 1950's, there were significant numbers of homes built by local authorities. Although many were sold under the 'Right to Buy' regulations the planned estate layouts are still distinctive within Stowmarket. Typically they comprise housing which is uniform in style, scale and materials and are arranged in strong geometric forms.

Within Stowmarket the 1920's to 1950's housing occurs along the major roads extending out of the town but can broadly be grouped into four areas of the town.

Type 4 - 1960's to 1990's suburbs:

This type comprises suburban residential areas which have developed over the last 40 years. Suburban development dating broadly from the 1960's and 70's generally has a strong formal layout, uniformity of building form and large garden plots. Many of the streets may be relatively broad and have uniform tree planting comprising ornamental species such as cherry and rowan. Suburban development dating to the 1980's and 1990's has a more sinuous cul-de-sac layout and comprises a higher density development, for examples south of Onehouse Road and Chilton Way.

Where the land slopes into either the Gipping Valley or the Rattlesden Valley there are often elevated views to the surrounding rural landscape or historic core of the town from residential areas. These views are significant in defining a sense of place and identity particularly where housing layouts, building styles and streets have a high degree of homogeneity. Similarly where tributary stream valleys pass through suburban areas they form important narrow green corridors which in places are underused and have the potential to strengthen sense of place, for example Combs Ford suburbs.

Type 5 - Schools/infrastructure/public facilities:

This type comprises institutions/public facilities such as the Stow Lodge Hospital and Stowmarket Leisure Centre, schools and associated informal playing fields. The scale of buildings and associated open spaces give this type a spacious character and large scale which contrasts with adjacent areas of residential development. The areas are surprisingly inward looking with few to no views outwards to the wider landscape not least because they are defined by mature vegetation. Lines of poplar trees which flank some of the playing fields provide physical definition to the area and are widely visible from the surrounding landscape setting of Stowmarket and other parts of the town.

Within Stowmarket the schools/institution type occur in one discrete location to the northwest of the town at Chilton Fields.

Type 6 - Post 2000 development:

This type comprises a mixture of housing styles including townhouses/villas, terraced and flats, a number of which reflect local vernacular styles and finishes. This type contains a hierarchy of roads from main distributor routes to small residential streets - the later often being sinuous in nature.

Within Stowmarket the post 2000 development type occurs in two discrete locations to the east of the town centre associated with the Cedar's Park development and to the north at the Chilton Hall and Chilton Leys developments.

Type 7 - Valley floor and sides:

This townscape type comprises open spaces along the valley floors and sides of Gipping and Rattlesden which are surrounded and influenced by the urban context. Land uses comprise a mixture of river meadows or more urban land uses such as allotments, parks and open space south of Abbots Hall.

This type is relatively narrow landscape contained along much of its length by urban development on the valley sides and in the case of the River Gipping within the valley floor. Occasional historic features add interest including the old mill in Rattlesden Valley and occasional metal footbridges (disused) which cross the Gipping River.

Type 8 - Mixed corridor development:

This townscape type comprises linear road corridors which are flanked by a mixture of development including residential, retail and employment. The routes have a 'ring-road' character and feel divorced from Stowmarket town although urban in character. The general lack of strong identity is further reinforced by the poor relationship of the road corridor with the older historic streets such as Bridge Street which are served by the route.

Type 9 - Mixed corridor development:

This type contains small/medium scaled business parks and large scaled industrial development often comprising 'sheds' or factory buildings and or associated infrastructure. Signage is also a characteristic of this type as is car parking. Although dominated by large scale development this type also contains areas of open rough ground which may reflect areas of flood risk on the valley floor or areas likely to be developed for employment uses in the future. Remnant open spaces on the valley floor have a riparian character in places particularly when associated with wetland vegetation such as willows, but more often than not these open spaces comprise rough ground and give rise to a neglected appearance and may have limited access.

Large scale tall buildings within the valley floor are visible from within the urban areas of Stowmarket but also from the wider setting and can act as landmarks but may also obscure or compete with other historic landmarks in the town.

The character and form of development within the immediate area of the site is varied. To the south of the site along Finborough Road and the river valley there are some original rural character remains, with strong landscaping features and traditional cottages built from local materials which in turn creates a local colour palette.

To the east of the site is Mallards Way a development built in the 1980's and 1990's providing a mix of house types, from terraces and flats to large detached properties. The overall urban form and of the scheme lacks any clear or coherent design narrative, is heavily road dominated and as a result does not fully appreciate or respond to the existing environment.

The character of Chilton Way is dominated by a wide road with footpaths on either side. The majority of the houses along Chilton Way turn their back to the road with long sections of red brick walls to private back gardens, resulting in a characterless and sterile environment.

To the north of Union Road is the former workhouse, Stow Lodge which was erected in 1781 which has now been converted into 40 units. The three storey red brick building provides a strong focal point on the landscape and an important architectural reference.

Opposite the site, on the northern side of Union Road is an attractive and pleasant tree lined footpath leading to the Abbey Fields sports grounds and the Stepping Stones nursery.

To the northeast, beyond Stow Lodge can be found the most recent strategic development in Stowmarket, Chilton Leys. Chilton Leys is currently under construction and deliver a mix of housing. The scheme will also provide a new primary school and local centre.

The photographs opposite provide an overview of the build form and character immediately surrounding the site.



2.4 Heritage context

There are four listed buildings within the nearby vicinity of the site. The most prominent being the former Stow Lodge Hospital opposite the site on the northern side of Union Road. The listed buildings are highlighted below.

- 1 Stow Lodge Hospital - Grade II
- 2 Star House Farmhouse - Grade II
- 3 Barn at Star House Farm - Grade II
- 4 The Shepard and Dog public house - Grade II

It will be important at the detailed stage that the design respects these heritages assets beyond the site and makes a positive contribution to them.



The Grade II listed The Shepard and Dog public house



Aerial view of the former Stow Lodge Hospital - setback from Union Road



The now converted former Stow Lodge Hospital

2.5 Landscape and visual analysis

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER BASELINE

The site is not covered by any local or national designations relating to landscape character or quality or nature conservation value. It is not within a Conservation Area or its setting.

In the local context there is a previous Special Landscape Area (SLA) along the Rattlesden River Valley, and the landscape quality of this area is appreciable and its sensitivity heightened given its riparian and pastoral character. The site lies outside of this Local Plan designation.

Suffolk Landscape Typology provides a characterisation of the landscape across the County, available online to view. The site lies along the Rolling Valley Claylands (LCT 17), and slightly encroaching into Ancient Rolling Farmlands at the northern end (refer plan LA2619-003). To the east is the large urban area of Stowmarket. To the south is the Wooded Valley Meadowlands (LCT 30).

The description suggests that the Rolling Valley Claylands are a 'focus of settlement and are often exposed to adverse change through intrusive valley side developments or changes of land use'. It goes on to say that 'they also have within them many areas of landscape in good condition that provide the appropriate context for the adjacent valley floor landscapes'.

The local landscape character generally is influenced by its proximity to urban areas, and the transition between settlement and countryside can often be abrupt. To the north and east of the Union Road site, the landscape is in contrast to the rural landscape to the south and west. The twentieth century suburban development has eroded the local distinctiveness, and a number of recreational amenity spaces break up the urbanisation but are generally flat and open in character to provide sports provision. This area between northwest Stowmarket and Onehouse is allocated for further development.

To the south of the site, the Rattlesden River and its tributaries have a distinct river valley floor character. The character type consists of small

meadows bounded by ditches and hedges or trees where dry enough. These are attractive river valley landscapes contained or confined by woodland and the surrounding higher land.

The site itself is undeveloped, but given its proximity to existing development and open to views, it would be appropriate to give medium capacity for change. The site is enclosed by two roads approaching the town from the west that are flanked by hedgerow, and it lies on a sloping valley side divided by a field boundary east-west and a PRoW north-south. The context of the AAP allocated site to the north extends the settlement northwest beyond the extent of the site (refer plan LA2619-001).

The tranquillity of the site is moderate as the roads are buffered, the exposed and open aspect topography, and the views across river valley with scattered rural development. Landscape features are the mature hedgerow through the site, including mature Oaks, and hedgerows along roads. This reflects the character typology of medium-large agricultural fields, organic field pattern and long established hedgerows. Landscape sensitivity then is considered medium, in comparison to the valley floor to the south which would be medium-high.

VISUAL ENVIRONMENT

A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) has been carried out to show where the site is likely to be visible from. Potential visual receptors are likely to be as follows:

- Users of local road network.
- Residential dwellings adjacent to the site.
- Residents of Chilton Meadows nursing home.
- Users of the public footpath through the site.
- Users of the wider public footpath network in the surrounding landscape (north, east and south).
- To a lesser extent, residents in surrounding villages including Great Finborough and Onehouse.

In terms of sensitivity, high sensitivity receptors are residents at home,

people engaged in outdoor recreation along PRoW, or important heritage assets. Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes generally are of medium sensitivity. Of paramount consideration is the character and appearance of the development in these views, and creating an appropriate edge.

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

The baseline surveys indicated that the more sensitive landscape and visual aspects of the site are:

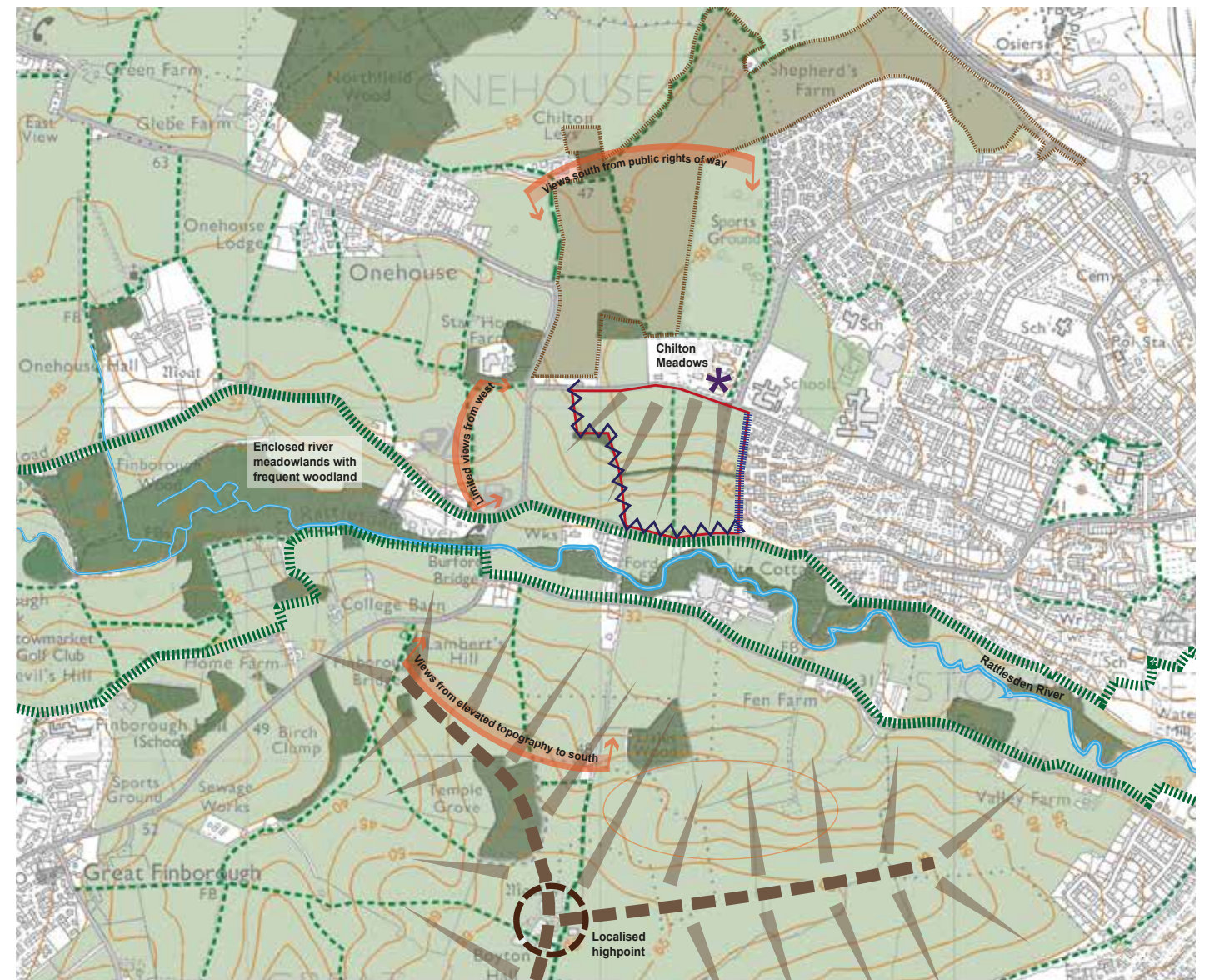
- Views from the opposite valley side at Lambert's Hill to the south.
- Residential amenity on Union Road, the B111 Finborough Road and the Mallard Way development to the east.
- The public right of way that runs through the site.
- The presence of mature hedgerow vegetation around the boundaries and through the centre of the site.

The development proposals should be informed by a landscape and visual appraisal to establish the extent of visibility of the site from the surrounding area and the wider landscape. As the site lies on the edge of the town, it will form a visible extension along the valley side between Union Road to the north and Finborough Road to the south. A landscape-led approach is therefore essential in order that an appropriate treatment to the settlement edge is created, and that an undeveloped area remains between the development site and Onehouse village to the west. This is consistent with the Development Brief for land to the north of Union Road.

In order to minimise any adverse landscape and visual effects on these elements, the following design concepts should be adopted in the landscape strategy:

- Retention of existing hedgerow through the site.
- Landscape buffers to the existing footpath running through the site linking Union Road and Finborough Road.
- Appropriate transition along the eastern boundary to respect

- adjacent housing and retain the existing buffer planting.
- Access points from Union Road should be designed to minimise loss of hedgerow.
- Provide broken edges to development to avoid a hard incongruous edge to the settlement, particularly to the west and south.
- Provision of open space and structure planting along the western and southern boundaries to provide a soft countryside edge to the development.
- Respect the gap between Stowmarket and Onehouse in line with the approved Development Brief for the area of Chilton Leys to the north.
- Series of connecting open spaces for amenity to residents and the local community.
- Significant tree planting to visually break up the development in views from the surrounding landscape.



Landscape analysis plan

2.6 Ecology and biodiversity

To date, an extended phase 1 habitat survey, which provides a standard record of habitats and ecological features on the site was undertaken in December 2015.

The survey concluded that the proposed development area consists of arable farmland, dry ditches, hedge and trees and largely off-site broad-leaved woodland. The majority of the site is thought likely to be of low biodiversity value. However, some of the habitats on site have the potential to be of value to several protected species as well as being of general biodiversity value themselves. To adhere to planning policy and relevant wildlife legislation further survey works have been recommended for the following ecological receptors:

- Bats (activity and potentially tree roost survey)
- Badger (badger survey)
- Birds (wintering and breeding birds survey)
- Reptiles (presence and likely absence survey)
- UK BAP Mammals (habitat assessment survey)
- Hedgerows (survey following regulations 1997)

The following methods are also recommended:

- Retention and protection of trees, including the adjacent woodland block. Protection during construction should follow BS5387:12 (Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations).
- Retention (where possible) and enhancement of habitats of importance, e.g. species-rich hedgerows and off-site woodland.
- The hedgerows and ditches are protected from pollution events following standard pollution prevention guidelines.
- Precautionary construction techniques sensitive to badgers.

It is considered that any potential adverse impact from development upon specific protected species/habitats will likely be able to be mitigated for in line with relevant wildlife legislation and planning policy. It should be noted that an opportunity exists for the proposed development to make a positive contribution to biodiversity. With the appropriate on-site mitigation and targeted enhancements, a positive change in the biodiversity could be achieved, in line with chapter 11: *Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment*, of the NPPF (DfCLG, 2012) and the Stowmarket Area Action Plan (2013).



2.7 Archaeological evaluation

In November 2009 Archaeological Solutions Ltd carried out an archaeological evaluation of land off the site. The archaeological evaluation was undertaken to establish the archaeological implications for future residential development of the site.

A Roman coin of Trajan is believed to have been found on the site, but no other archaeology has been recorded from here, although similar developments on the opposite side of Stowmarket produced Romano-British and medieval occupation sites.

Struck flint occurred in sparse quantities across the site, and no concentration or cluster was evident. The flint ranges in date from Mesolithic to the Bronze Age, reinforcing the sparseness of its occurrence. The burnt flint is more common in the southern half of the site. Roman brick and tile were found in sparse quantities in the eastern half of the site. The earliest pottery found is late medieval and comprises a few shreds, again sparsely distributed.

The site did not have a specific archaeological potential, largely due to the lack of previous archaeological interventions. Based purely on the size of the site archaeological remains may be anticipated. The field walking recovered sparse distribution of prehistoric, Roman and late medieval finds, and these finds are broadly contemporary with known archaeology in the area.

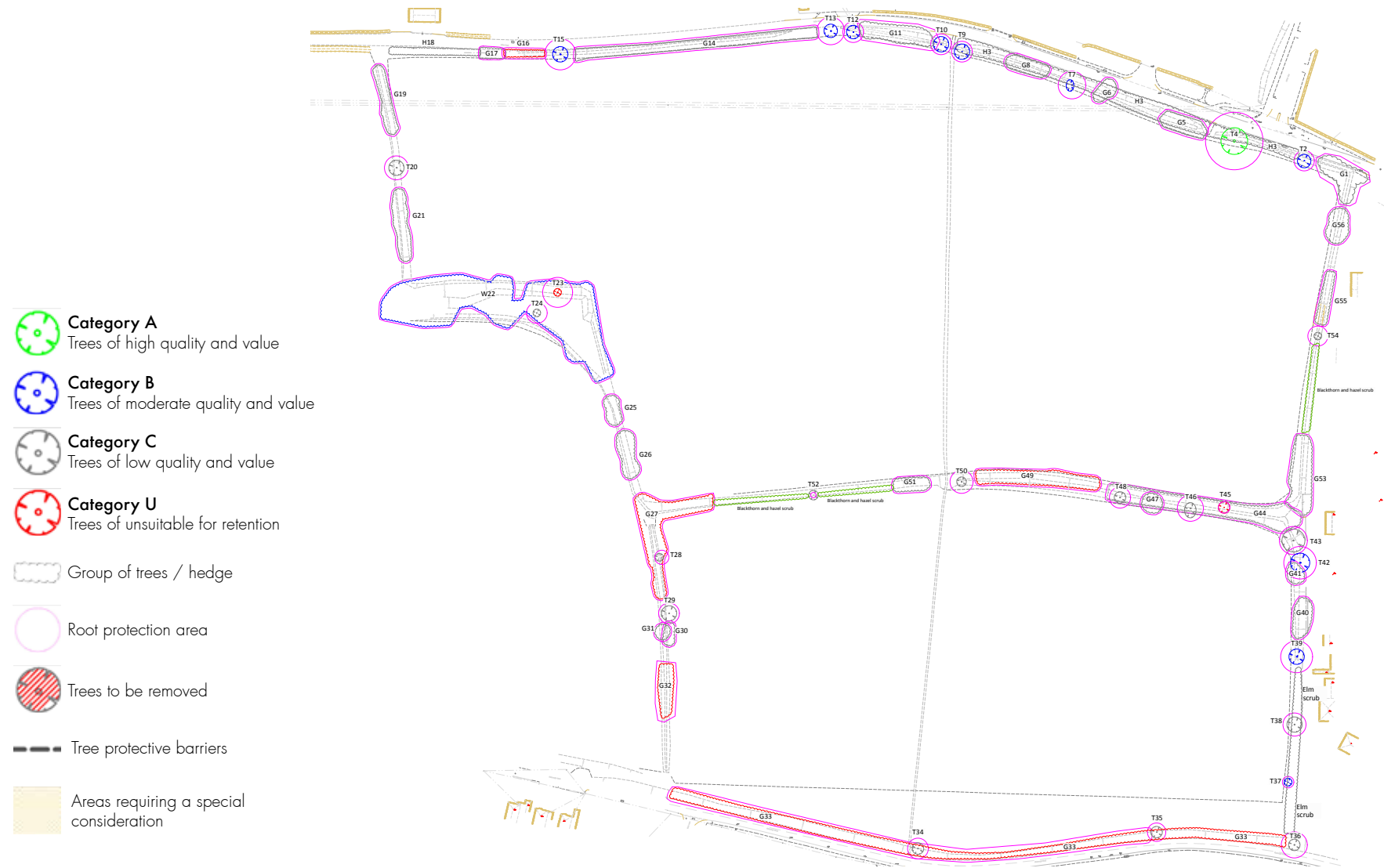
2.8 Existing tree survey

Due to the site's arable nature the tree population comprises almost exclusively linear hedgerows/groups of mixed broadleaf native species around the periphery of the site and bisecting the site east to west. The majority of the trees identified during the survey are of low amenity value ('C' category) and should not be considered as a constraint to development. However, these hedgerows/groups would be valuable as screening to the development.

There are a few larger oak specimens to the north, adjacent to Union Road that would merit retention due to their moderate condition and amenity value ('B' category).

The south western and southern edges of the site both have large areas of dead elm trees which should be removed.

There is also a mixed broadleaf woodland ('B' category) to the west of the site which is outside the development envelope. This woodland is established on an elevated bank above the level of the proposed site, and separated by a field drain. This combination of elevation and the presence of the field drain would limit the spread of roots into the site, and potentially increasing the developable area (consideration should be given to canopy spread, shading, leaf drop etc when siting residential units close to trees).



Existing tree survey plan












2.9 Baseline site analysis

The site is surrounded by mature, overgrown native hedgerows including a high proportion of native trees, including oak, ash and field maple. Other small species within these hedgerows include haze, hawthorn, blackthorn and bramble. There is also a strong boundary hedgerow including trees running through the site, dividing the two fields. Around the southern field the hedgerow includes a relatively high proportion of dead semi-mature trees.

The site consists of two sloping and undulating fields from Union Road in the north to Finborough Road to the south. There are two embankments running across the site in an east-west direction; one between the two fields and one along the southern boundary adjacent to the B1115 Finborough Road.

A public footpath runs through the centre of the site in a north-south direction, connecting Union Road with the B1115 Finborough Road. Future development should seek to retain this existing footpath without the need for diversion and provide the opportunity for further pedestrian and cycle path links to the site with the existing housing to the north and east, as well as greater access to the countryside to the south and west, and retaining the views across to the south and west.

The photographs on page 8 provide a visual reference to the site and further technical information is provided in the following sections.

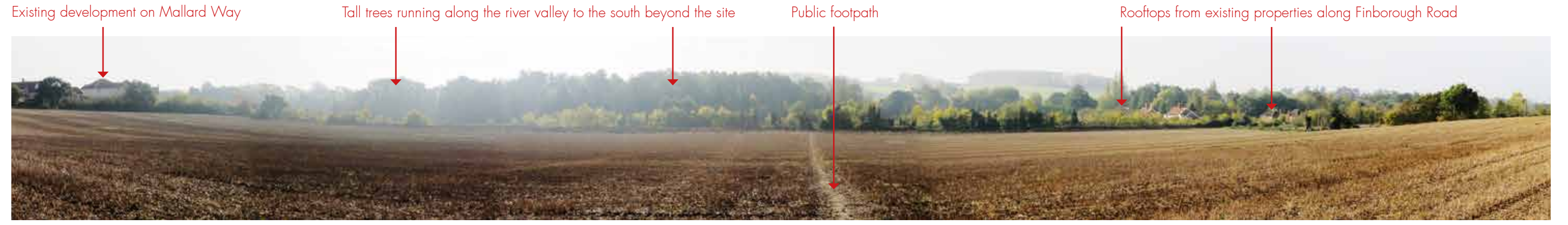
- | | |
|--|---|
|  Union Road site |  Long views |
|  Existing landscaping |  Existing point of agricultural vehicular access |
|  Oak tree |  Significant change in level/embankments |
|  Site contours |  Bus stops |
|  Public right of way |  Listed building (Grade II) |
| |  Sun path |



Baseline site analysis plan



1. View looking north up the southern field from the southern boundary of the site along Finborough Road.



2. Looking south down the southern field from the central hedgerow.



3. Looking north from the central hedgerow up the slope towards Union Road.



4. View from along the northern boundary along Union Road looking south across the northern field.

2.10 Transportation & access

TRAFFIC ASSESSMENT & CAPACITY ISSUES

The site is located approximately 1.8km west of Stowmarket town centre and key routes to and from the site will include using both the A14 Junction 49 and Junction 50; with routing through Stowmarket itself. Transport analysis carried out in 2010 identified the likely routes and the 2010 study identified that it was only the Gipping Way (A1308)/ Station Road (B1115) signalised crossroads which operated (in 2010) with low levels of reserve capacity.

With the site and local Committed Development Trips added, the study concluded that a development of 250 dwellings could be delivered without resulting in unacceptable impacts within Stowmarket and only physical highway improvements would be required into and out of the site.

Assessment of the likely traffic that would be generated by the revised development, the uplift in new trips would be 20% in the AM peak and 12% in the PM peak over that assessed in 2010 for 250 dwellings. The 2015 study reconsidered the impact at the Gipping Way (A1308)/ Station Road (B1115) signalised crossroads and concluded that the increased trips from the 300 dwelling development at this junction was negligible when compared with the results of the 2010 study results. These results indicated that the 2010 study conclusions remained consistent.

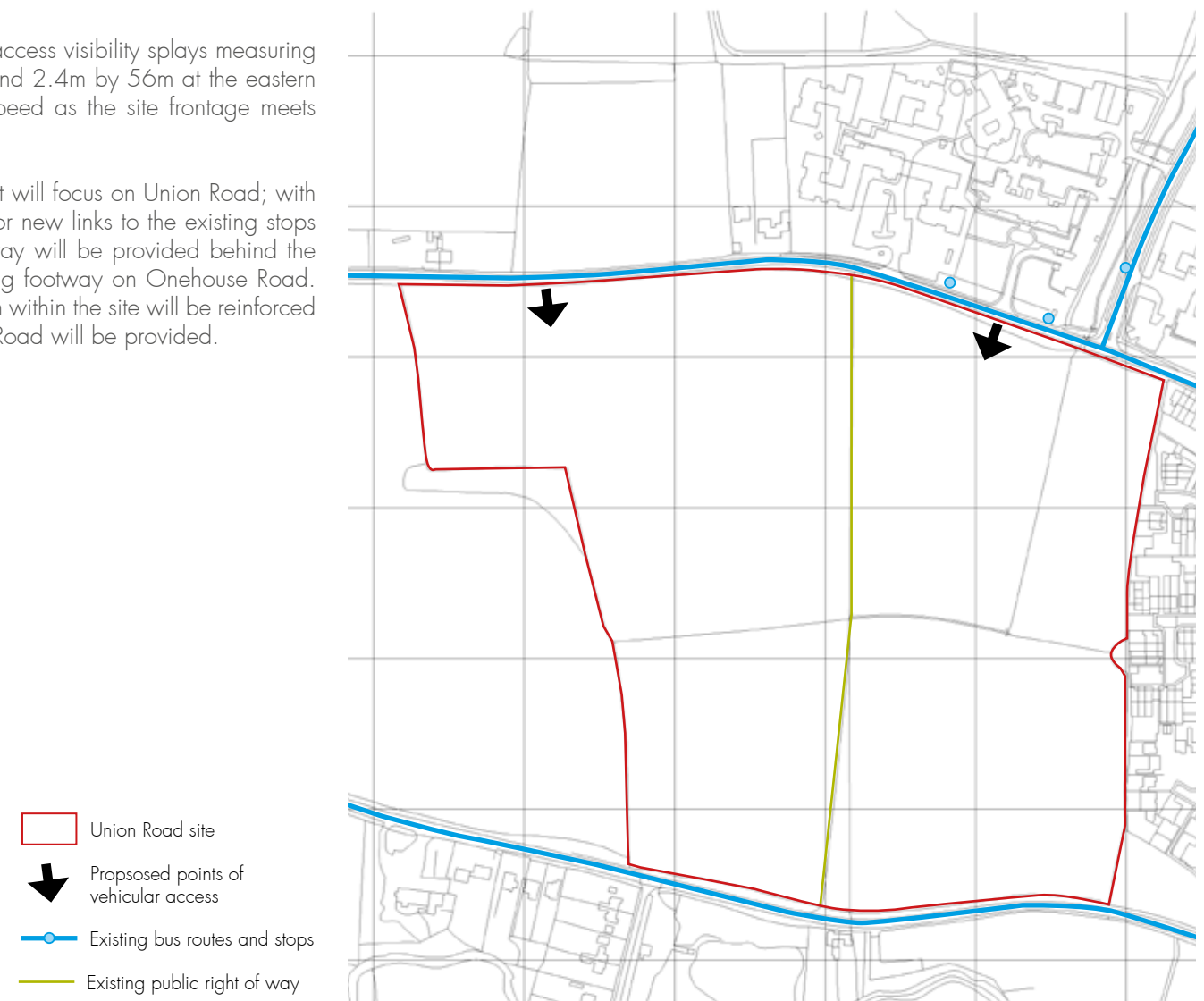
ACCESS

The 2010 transport analysis assessed a single site access on Union Road with a ghost-island right turn facility. As a result of scoping the highway authority requirements in 2015, this was revised to two simple T junction accesses.

In line with the Suffolk Design Guide for Residential Areas the two site access roads will be 6.0m wide and have two 2.0m wide footways to the road edge providing direct access to Union Road.

The Highway Authority would require access visibility splays measuring 2.4m by 90m at the western access and 2.4m by 56m at the eastern access reflecting the reduced traffic speed as the site frontage meets with the built up area of the town.





Sustainable access for the development will focus on Union Road; with bus provision provided within the site or new links to the existing stops on Union Road and an off-road footway will be provided behind the existing hedgerow to link to the existing footway on Onehouse Road. The existing footpath running north-south within the site will be reinforced and a safer connection to Finborough Road will be provided.

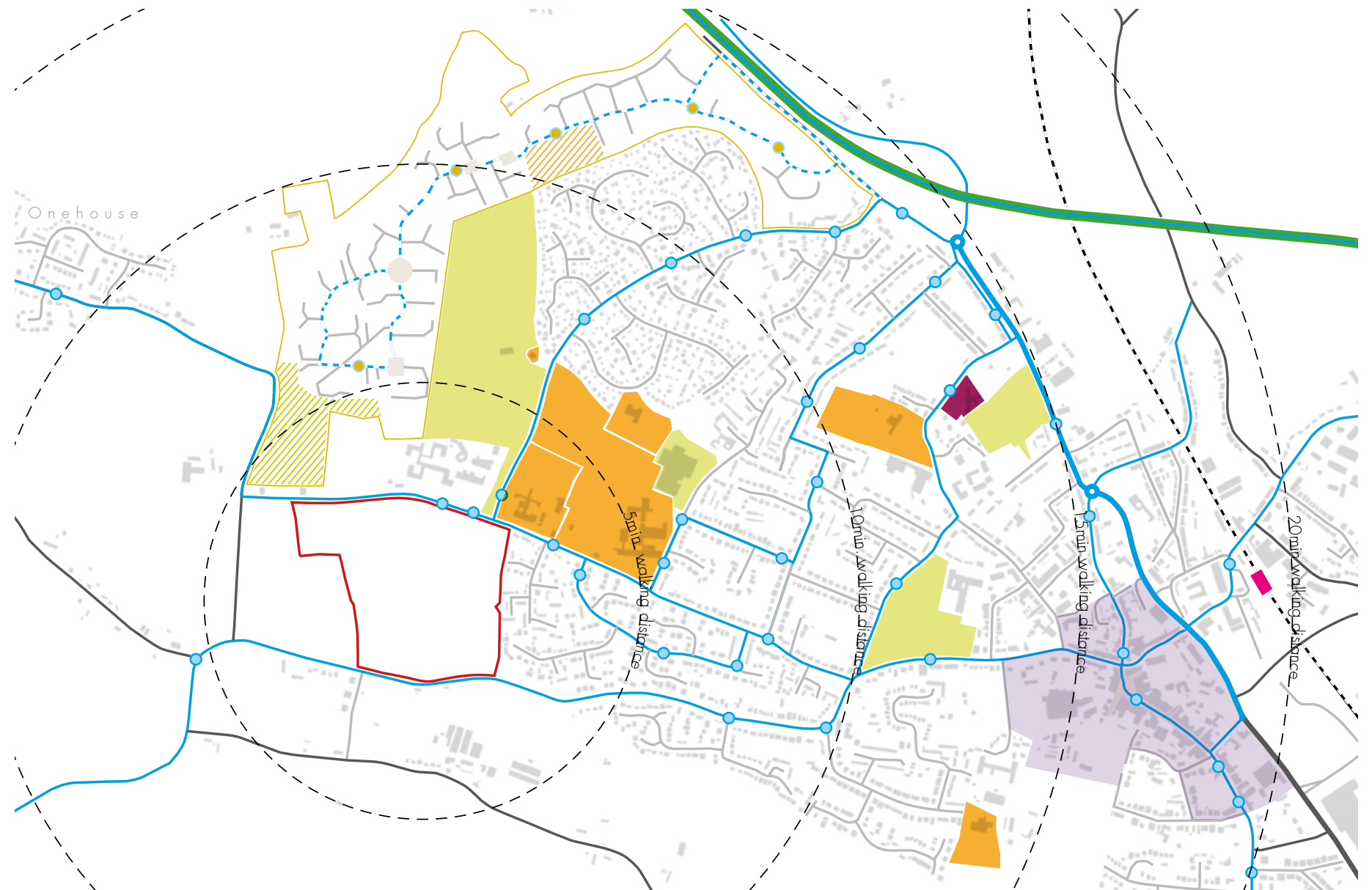


EXISTING PUBLIC TRANSPORT LINKS

Establishing good quality connections is essential to creating a real sense of place. Clear, direct safe links will result in the successful integration of the site. The Union Road proposal should maximise the opportunities that the site offers from connections to the existing public transport network.

Public transport passes the site along Union Road to the north and Finborough Road to the south. Existing bus stops along Union Road provide a direct bus service to the town centre, Bury St. Edmunds and Ipswich. However, it is anticipated that the southern-most part of the site will fall outside the generally accepted 400m (5 minute) walking distance of the existing bus stops and any future layout should be able to accommodate a new bus stop.

-  Union Road site
-  Existing bus routes and stops
-  Proposed bus routes and stops (Chilton Leys)
-  Town centre
-  Education
-  Proposed primary school (Chilton Leys)
-  Public open space
-  Proposed public open space (Chilton Leys)
-  Health



Existing public transport connections

EXISTING PEDESTRIAN & CYCLE LINKS

Development will incorporate a layout which delivers a high level of permeability across the site, prioritising a safe walking and cycling environment, through a series of new shared or dedicated pedestrian and cycle paths.

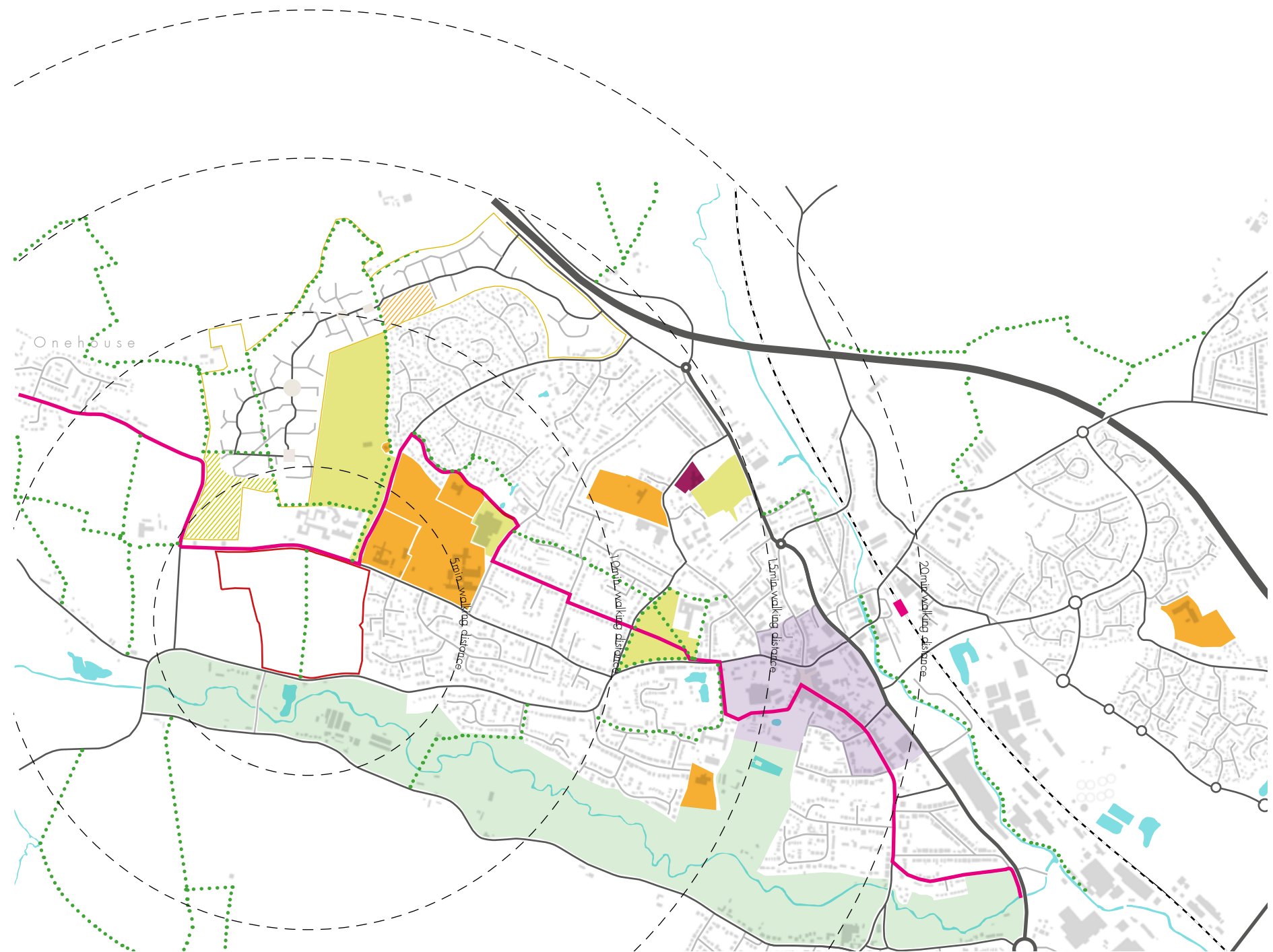
Within the scheme, pedestrian and cycle routes will provide safe and secure access to the children's play spaces and recreational space.

The route of the existing public footpath between Union Road and Finborough Road will be preserved. A new off-road shared cycle and pedestrian route should be created within the site from the new western-most access to the north east corner of the site, avoiding the Chilton Way junction and the new site accesses.

Green corridors along existing hedgerows can provide both new 'Greenway' routes and maintain and enhance existing pedestrian links throughout the site and access to the wider open countryside, creating natural and semi-natural spaces and respecting the existing landscape character of the site.



- Union Road site
- ⋯ Existing public rights of way
- Sustrans National Cycle Route 51
- Town centre
- Education
- Proposed primary school (Chilton Leys)
- Public open space
- Proposed public open space (Chilton Leys)
- Health



Existing public rights of way and cycle routes

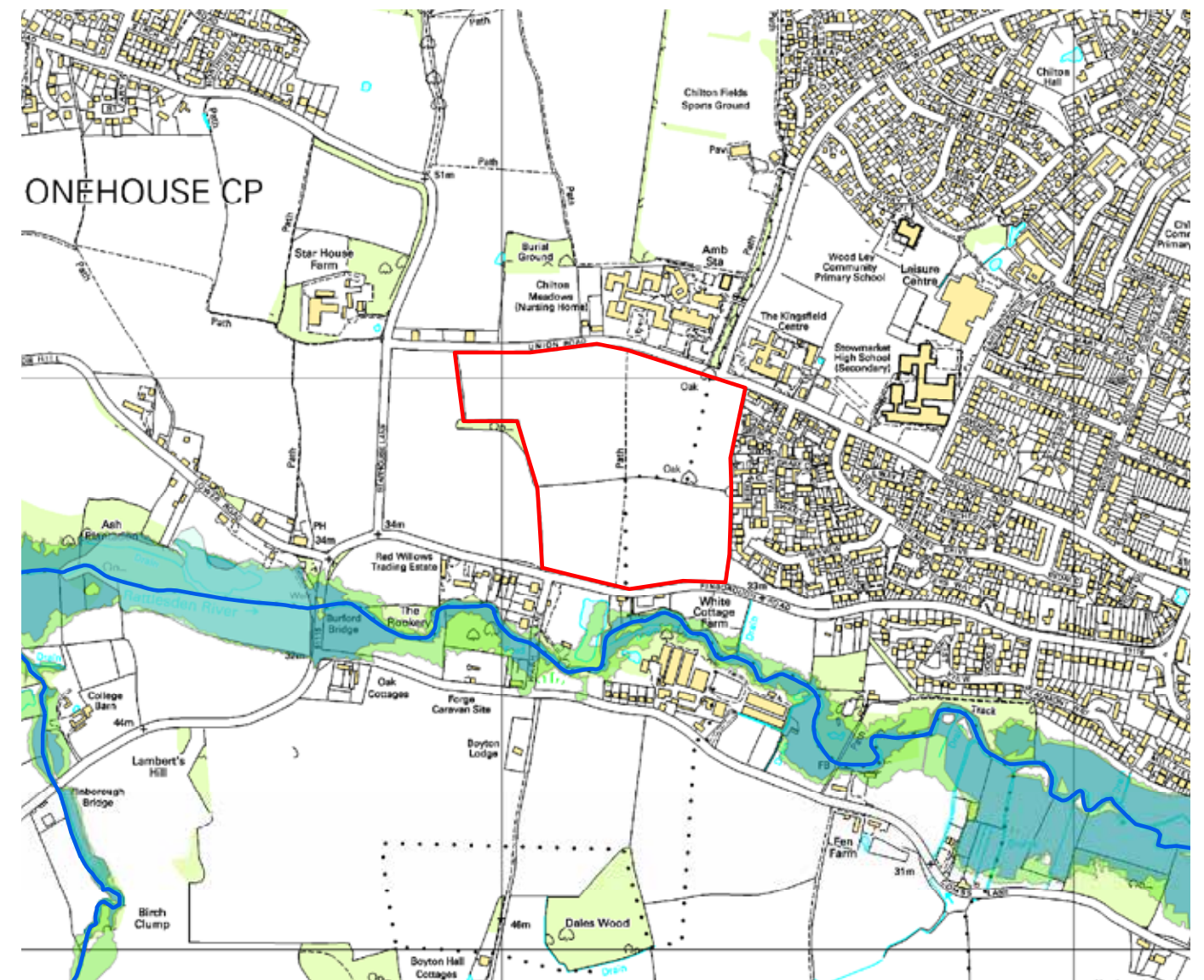
2.11 Drainage and flood risk

The site lies in Flood Zone 1 and is therefore not considered to be at risk of fluvial flooding. The Rattlesden River is located to the south of the site and Environment Agency (EA) maps show that the flood extent associated with the river is confined to the river corridor. EA maps show that small areas in the southern part of the site may experience some surface water flooding. These areas coincide with low areas of the site. The surface runoff generated from this rural site currently leaves the site by two methods:

1. *Infiltration into the ground, although generally the ground conditions across this site are not considered to be favourable for good infiltration. Further infiltration tests will establish if infiltration drainage systems will be feasible for the development*
2. *Any water that does not infiltrate into the ground runs-off via existing field drains towards Finborough Road to the south of the site, or via overland flow to the Rattlesden River. No existing formal drainage connections or outfalls from the site to the river have been identified.*

Surface water run-off from the proposed development will be discharged to the Rattlesden River via a requisitioned outfall across Finborough Road and down Wash Lane within highway. Surface water run-off will be attenuated on-site to discharge at existing greenfield run-off rates. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) will be implemented through the 'green corridors' within the development to attenuate surface water run-off, with attenuation ponds located within the southern part of the site. The location, capacity and design of the SuDS features will be agreed with the Lead Local Flood Authority.

- Site Outline
- Main River
- Areas Benefit Flood Defence
- Flood Storage Area
- Flood Map - Flood Zone 3
- Flood Map - Flood Zone 2



Flood map
Source: Environmental Agency - created 30th September 2015.

DESIGN

3 Design

3.1 Vision and placemaking design principles

The vision is to create a sustainable new living environment, based around a fully integrated development with new homes and open space that are accessible to everyone, an inclusive place which makes everyone feel comfortable, safe and secure, a place where people want to live, which promotes an active lifestyle and sense of wellbeing, a place that future residents are proud to call home. The scheme will provide ready access to essential facilities including open space, leisure, landscape and amenity areas. It will deliver a wide range of choice of new, sustainable, high quality housing, including affordable housing.

The proposed development will deliver a high standard of design across all elements of the scheme including housing, irrespective of price and tenure. The scheme will focus on establishing a strong sense of community, with accessibility to jobs and community facilities.



Proposals should deliver a sustainable, landscaped and environmentally led scheme, which is based on key objectives of good placemaking:

Positive identity to ensure that the new development responds to the site and contextual opportunities, so fully integrating with its surroundings and defining new spaces.

Viable and sustainable place, which is deliverable and contributes in a positive way to the environmental, social and economic viability of the area.

A connected place which links and integrates with its immediate surroundings.

A welcoming place which, through high quality design fosters a strong sense of place which maximises a sustainable way of life.

Delivering best practice and innovation by utilising new technologies and ideas that will reduce energy demands and ensure that the environmental effects of the proposal are minimised.

Quality homes for a wide range of local needs, space to live and play, good access to facilities, public transport and a place people can be proud of.

A sustainable landscape, by creating green corridors and space around the existing landscape features for biodiversity and ecology.

A placemaking approach should be adopted to ensure that the development responds positively to the context and opportunities of the surrounding area and the site. Design proposals need to be based on a strong vision that brings new site-specific ideas into play, as well as drawing on best practice. Proposals should be driven by the objective of creating a strong sense of place, that is fully integrated and linked into Stowmarket.



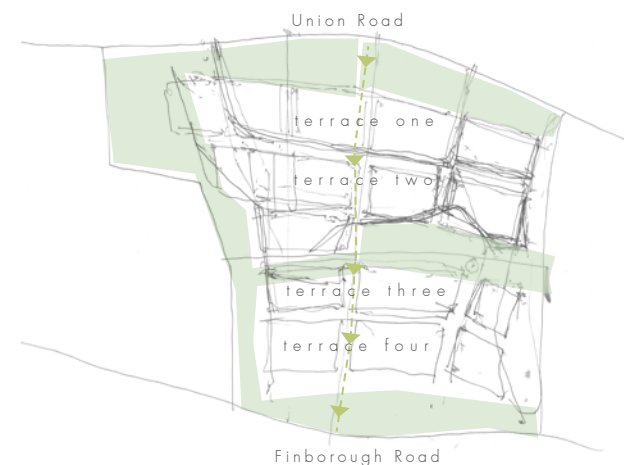
3.2 Design rationale and evolution

The illustrative masterplan has evolved been led by an assessment of the the existing landscape and biodiversity qualities of the site, including the local topography, and hedgerows. The natural elements of the site, including existing trees and landscape will continue to form an integral part of the development. These will be enhanced and extended where appropriate to enrich the landscape qualities within the scheme.

The character of the built form will relate to existing locally distinctive heritage asset and deliver a unique and attractive living environment. The layout, orientation and pattern of development will support the creation of active, attractive streets and to explore opportunity of solar gain design. Variety in physical form will be generated by the inclusion of different dwelling types and sizes.

A key design principle has been the creation of 4 tiers or terraces. These terraces allow the development to gently fall from Union Road down towards Finborough Road. Easy access to a generous quantity of high quality, integrated, biodiverse open space, including informal and formal play provision, will be available to all residents, including the existing Stowmarket community to. A mix of formal and informal open spaces should be provided across the scheme.

Ensuring good links with existing local facilities and services will be located to optimise access for new and existing residents, and to act as a natural meeting place within the wider residential setting. Emphasis has been placed on creating safe, comfortable and well scaled, high quality landscaped spaces which will act as focal points and complement the existing town.



An early sketch design developed the concept of creating a series of 4 tiers or terraces



More detailed sketches developed the terrace design idea but the overall structure was considered to be too linear and rigid in form and structure for the context of the site.



Early sketches began to explore how development could be successfully respond to the existing landscape and topography of the site and how the landscape can blend into and harmonise the scheme.



A new sketch was produced to create a more fluid and sinuous form of development which can better respond to the landscape and topography.

3.3 Draft concept masterplan

The early concept masterplan opposite was produced in response to the design rationale and the initial technical studies that had been undertaken. It was this initial concept masterplan that was presented at the public consultation event and the basis for discussions with Mid Suffolk District Council.

The masterplan begins to illustrate the guiding principle of delivering high quality design, and importantly placemaking, these include the following:

- 2 new points of access from Union Road;
- a new safe and secure pedestrian and cycle link along the northern boundary within the site;
- an irregular block structure that can respond to the site topography and create an outward looking development;
- retention of the existing public footpath running through the site;
- retention of existing trees and hedrows where possible;
- pulling development away from sensitive edges of the site;
- a strong landscape structure that creates a series of informal green open space and corridors;
- maintain and enhance ecological and biodiversity;
- a network of new pedestrian pedestrian routes and links a network of new pedestrian pedestrian routes and links with access to the wider countryside;
- a mix of new children's play spaces across the site;
- easy access public transport - opportunity for new bus stop within development;
- a network of streets for all, not just road;
- a mix of high quality, well designed homes for all including affordable/starter homes;
- provision of on-site attenuation;



First draft concept masterplan
December 2015.

3.4 Consultation and engagement

OUR APPROACH TO CONSULTATION

Consultation and engagement has always formed part of the planning process, and the Government's National Planning Policy Framework reaffirms the importance of undertaking front loaded, pre-application engagement. Hopkins Homes together with their project team have taken a pro-active approach and have completed a series of pre-application meetings, presentations and exhibition as part of their approach the design and placemaking process.

The aim of the consultation process has been to ensure that the project team has a good understanding of stakeholders' views and knowledge, and would be able to integrate them into the project decision-making process where appropriate.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

A consultation event was held at Wood Ley Primary School on the 10th December from 4pm - 8pm.

Ahead of the event, invitations were sent out to 1000 addresses and local councillors were also invited. Articles were also published in local papers giving details of the event.

A total of 79 local residents and interested parties attended over the course of the afternoon and evening, including members of Mid Suffolk District Council, Onehouse Parish Council and Stowmarket Town Council.

A series of exhibition boards were presented, summarising the proposals and the technical evaluation of the site and surroundings to date.



Proposals for
Land south of Union Road,
Onehouse, Stowmarket



Proposals



The technical and physical context has informed the proposals include the following:

- Up to 300 new homes involving a range of types, tenures and sizes.
- Up to 35% (up to 105 homes) of the proposed homes as affordable housing either for shared ownership or affordable rent, as follows:
 - o Shared ownership - the property is owned by a housing association who provides the buyer with the chance to purchase a part share of the property. Rent is paid on the remaining share and over time the buyer can increase their shareholding and;
 - o Affordable rent - the property is owned by a housing association and rent is paid to the housing association. Rents are set at a maximum of 80% of the market rent.
 - o Starter homes - homes sold at a discount to market value.
- The provision of two points of vehicular access from Union Road.
- Graduated development densities, ensuring that the masterplan integrates with the existing edge of Stowmarket to the north and east and the site's more rural boundaries to the south and west.
- The provision of a network of structural planting and open spaces, according to the site boundaries and topography.
- The provision of a network of streets and roads, facilitating safe movement around the site by pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.
- The incorporation of SuDS features as part of the development.



www.unionroadstowmarket.co.uk

Consultation event

Photos from the consultation event and one of the 6 banners used to provide information on the early proposals for the site.

-  MSDC consultation
-  Onehouse Parish Council consultation
-  Stowmarket Town Council consultation
-  Public consultation event
-  Key stage/milestone

KEY STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

In addition to and running in parallel with the public consultation event a series of meetings and presentations were also undertaken with other key stakeholders including Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC), Onehouse Parish Council, Stowmarket Town Council and Suffolk County Council.

The timeline below provides a graphical representation of the consultation and engagement undertaken and anticipated programme up to submission of a planning application.

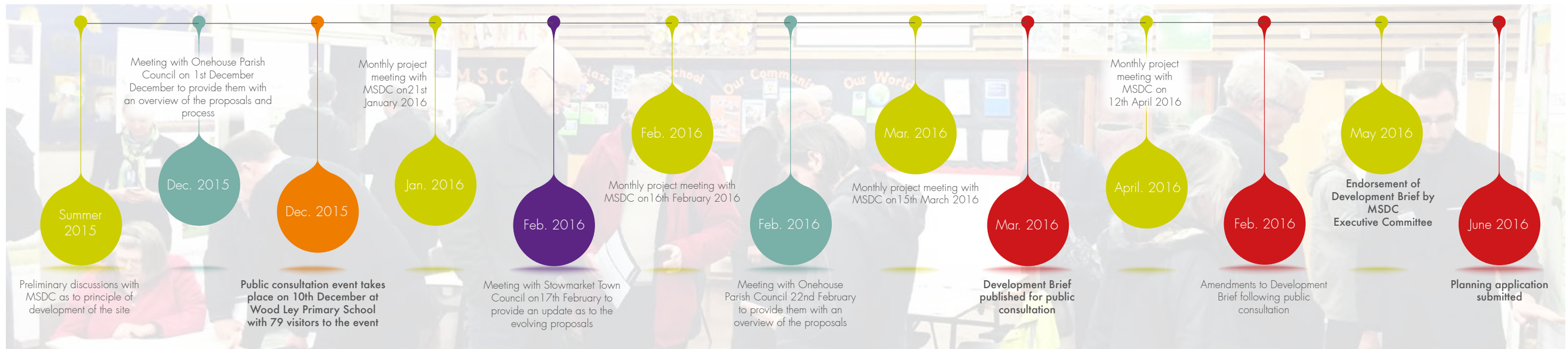
CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

There were 28 completed feedback forms on the day. In addition there was also a dedicated website, providing information of the scheme and the opportunity to comment on the proposals.

District Council members and Town Councillors representing Stowmarket were generally supportive of the scheme. They recognised the need for housing in the area, but wanted to make sure the proposals were developed sensitively.

The biggest concerns from the feedback were about access from Union Road and the impact on local services. A number of residents were worried about the level of traffic which currently exists on Union Road.

Respondents were generally impressed by the design of the scheme and the homes which were on display and liked the public open spaces proposed as part of the illustrative masterplan.



RESPONDING TO FEEDBACK

Following the public consultation event and further presentations and meetings with the various key stakeholders a number of amendments were made to the design of the first draft concept masterplan. The changes are highlighted on the amended illustrative concept masterplan opposite, and include the following:

- 1 Amendments to entrance around eastern access point to respond to the existing Listed Building opposite to create an entrance 'set-piece'.
- 2 Re-design of western access area by pushing development further back from this section of Union Road to respect the rural character.
- 3 Further articulation of green spaces through the scheme to enhance character and sense of place.
- 4 New integrated green space along northern section of existing footpath route.
- 5 Second access street created between northern and southern parcels to further improve permeability and connectivity.
- 6 Redesign of south-western development parcel to create a visual end stop to the street.
- 7 Additional woodland planting proposed to enhance the rural character of views from the west
- 8 Layout to allow for bungalows and increased proportion of smaller family dwellings
- 9 New pedestrian crossing to be incorporated across Union Road.

The illustrative concept masterplan would deliver an approximate developable area of 9.35 hectares.

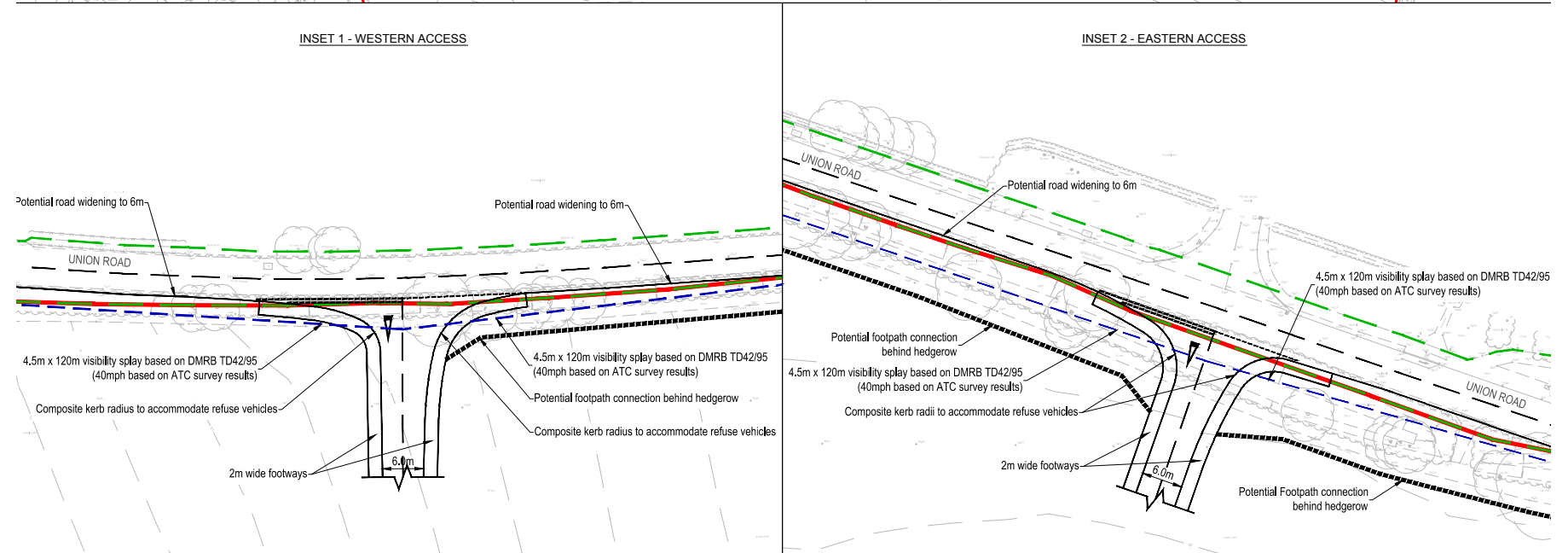
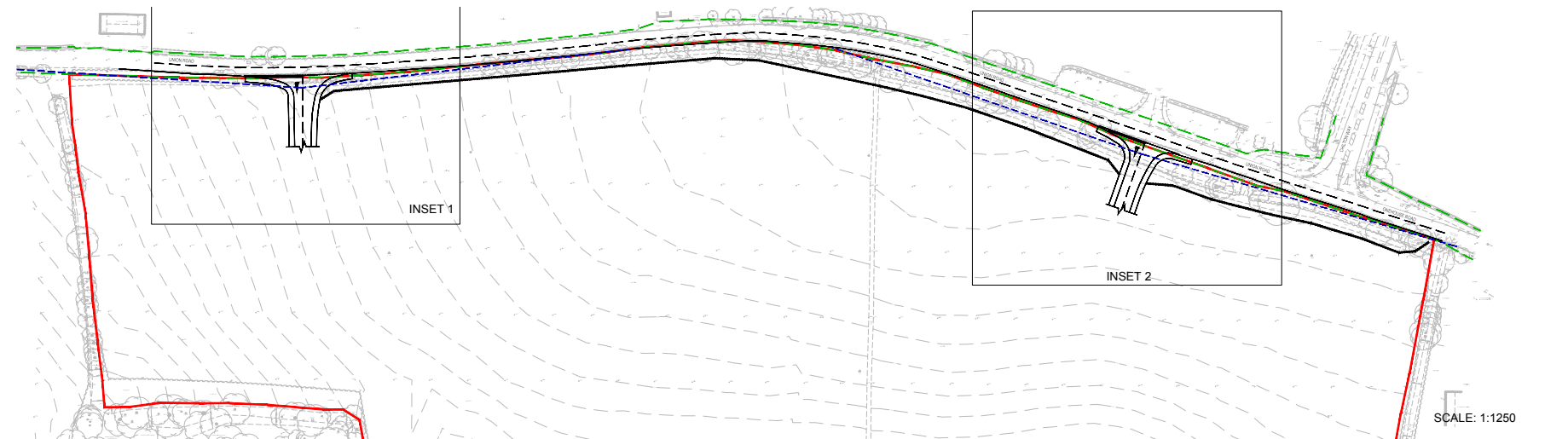


Illustrative concept masterplan

3.5 Access arrangement

The 2010 transport analysis assessed a single site access on Union Road with a ghost-island right turn facility. As a result of scoping the highway authority requirements in 2015, this was revised to two simple T junction accesses.

The proposed detailed access arrangement is illustrated on the drawings opposite.



Proposed access arrangement



Properties framing an area of informal open space.



A new home creating both a visual end stop to a street and also turning the corner providing frontage on 2 sides.



New homes being used to frame and overlook an area of green public open space.



Building being used to create a strong focal and reference point within a scheme.

3.6 Block structure

The proposed development structure embodies the perimeter block pattern which gives a clear definition of public and private space for any future development.

This approach creates streets as active places, not just roads. It ensures a variety of movement routes and can accommodate a range of building types. This form of development also responds to site issues and opportunities in particular the topography and landscape features of the site.

3.7 Frontages and focal points

When designing a proposed development it is important that it creates a sense of place and identity through careful attention to siting, vistas and building detail. The illustrative masterplan acknowledges this by providing opportunity for active frontages and focal points, addressing the key public and private spaces, by emphasising and formalising the spaces through the site.

FRONTAGES

Building frontages will, as much as possible, focus activity on the edge of the development plots, reinforcing the perimeter block structure. The semi-continuous, active frontage along the main access streets provides good enclosure to the streets and informal surveillance to both public and private areas, such as the parking and areas of open space. The buildings must help to define and frame the spaces through the site.

FOCAL POINTS

Although only illustrative at this stage, the layout opposite begins to demonstrate how focal points through the site, created by landscape or architectural detail can compliment the active frontage and spaces. Key focal points and visual end-stops should be incorporated through the site add interest to the street scene and a clear structure of hierarchy. Focal points can be achieved through architectural detail and variation in heights or combination of the two.

Through incorporating simple design techniques and principles, the proposal is able to discourage and minimise the risk of crime and anti-social behaviour through natural and informal surveillance.

- Union Road site
- Primary frontage
- Secondary frontage

- 1 A new formal green space around the eastern access is framed by new focal buildings which are set-back from Union Road to create a set-piece with the existing listed building to the north.
- 2 Green space framed by development creates a sense of arrival. A sensitive design response needs to be delivered with development set-back respecting the more rural character of this section of Union Road.
- 3 A new area of open space along the route of the existing footpath will create a new space and opportunity for a pocket park or LAP which is framed by new homes.
- 4 The existing footpath route offers the opportunity to create a distinct green corridor within the schemes. New homes to frame and front onto the space. Sensitive design, detailing and choice of materials to be used for boundary treatment.
- 5 The existing footpath route offers the opportunity to create a distinct green corridor within the schemes. New homes to frame and front onto the space. Sensitive design detailing and choice of materials to be used for boundary treatment.
- 6 A softer lower density development edge should be designed and adopted along the sensitive edges of the site such as the north western and southern boundaries of the site.
- 7 Focal or landmark buildings should be incorporated within the design to create visual end-stops and points of reference through the site. These can be particularly useful at road junctions and distinctive places such as open space. They can also aid orientation through the scheme.



3.8 Scale and massing

ENCLOSURE OF THE STREET

Streets should not be governed by highway and the movement of vehicles. Streets, as opposed to roads, help to create a positive sense of place and community.

The character of a street is governed by how buildings and structures help to enclose the space. It is therefore important to control the position of building frontages carefully within the street to create a more continuous sense of enclosure.

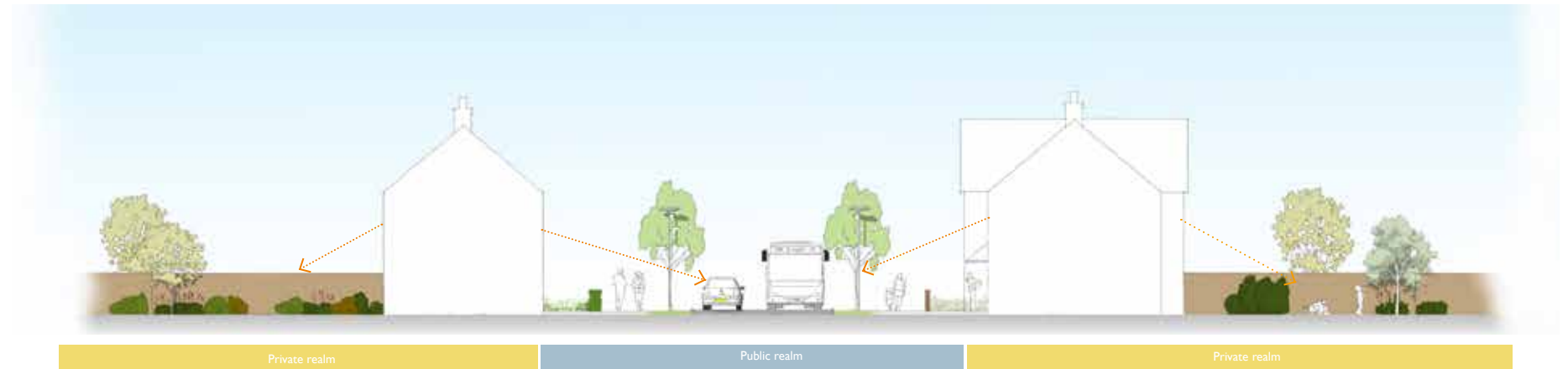
The heights of buildings also need to respond to the width of the street and the role of the street and public space. Taller buildings will be given greater emphasis at the gateway entrance, along the primary street, or around key focal areas such as open space.

HEIGHTS

The existing built form, topography and character define the proposed building heights. The development will be predominantly two storeys with appropriately located single storey properties along with focal buildings which would be of 2.5 storey construction up to a maximum of 3 storeys.

The design rationale behind this is to allow an element of flexibility at the detailed design stage to create strong and attractive street-scenes, through variations in eaves and ridge heights and dormer window details. The objective of taller buildings will be to enhance a sense of arrival and emphasise the importance of the heart of the community and the main east-west street. Lower storey heights are proposed along the sensitive hedgerows and rural edges.

Enhancements to existing boundary screening where required and sufficient back to back distances from the existing houses mean these heights are judged appropriate and acceptable for the site. Bungalows, garages and carports will provide a single storey element to the overall scheme, creating additional vertical variation.



Creating public private realm



An example of buildings creating frontage and enclosing the street.



A sketch to illustrate how a strong, active frontage along the primary street into the site can create a sense of arrival and place

3.9 Street hierarchy

It is important that the Union Road scheme creates a clear and legible movement network. To achieve this a clear hierarchy of streets should be provided. To achieve this the concept masterplan opposite and illustrations on page 32 incorporates a hierarchy of primary, secondary and tertiary streets across the scheme.

3.10 Movement

VEHICULAR ACCESS

As illustrated earlier in this document, vehicular access into the site will be from two simple 'T' junctions from Union Road. This will form the new primary street between the two new points of access.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT ACCESSIBILITY

There are two existing bus stops located on Union Road, opposite the frontage of the site. These bus stops provide a public transport link from the proposed development to the town centre and destinations further afield.

Due to the walking distance from the furthest point of the site to existing bus stops, and to further promote the use of public transport, the provision of a new bus stop within the development may need to be considered.

-  Union Road site
-  Existing highway network and bus
-  Primary street
-  Secondary street
-  Tertiary street
-  Potential bus route/stops



Illustrative street hierarchy

PRIMARY STREET

The avenue will form the main access into the site from Union Road and be able to accommodate buses. The avenue will have grass verges on either side with new street tree planting. On the outside of the grass verge will be the footpaths. The avenue will be fronted by new homes. Homes should be arranged with a strong rhythm and consistency in form.

SECONDARY STREET

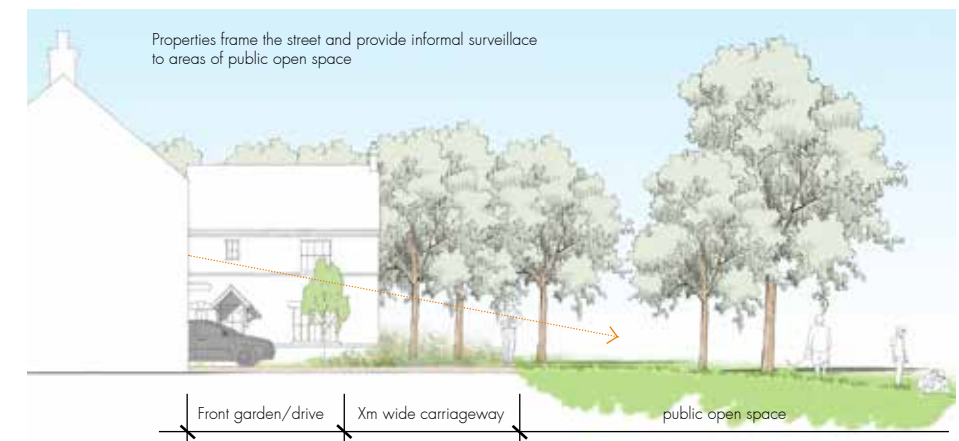
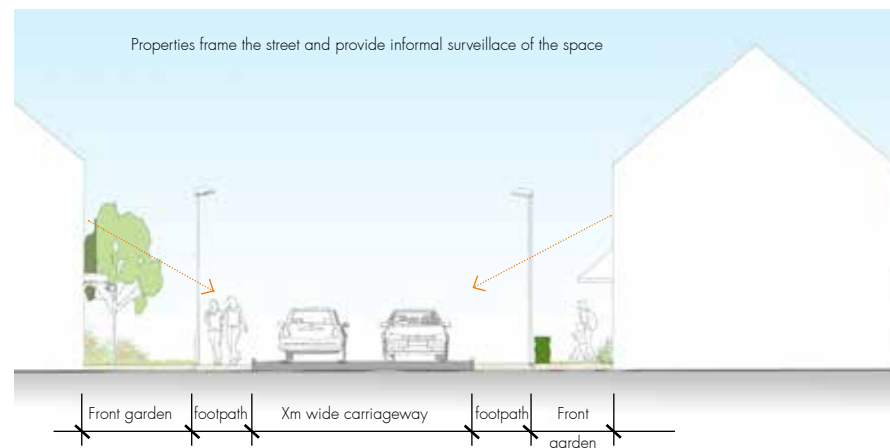
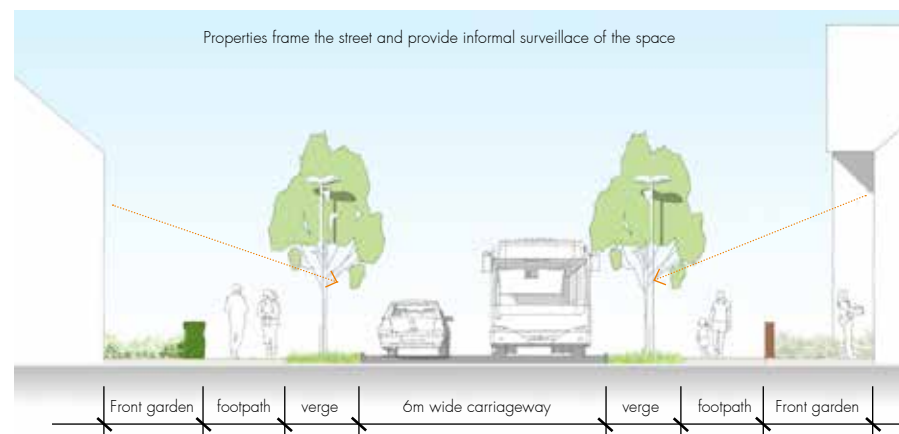
The secondary street provides the same function as the primary street, but include trees and planting in a much less formal arrangement.

Building lines can be looser with a greater degree of flexibility. On-street parking is also acceptable, with trees and planting providing opportunity for traffic calming.

TERTIARY STREETS / PRIVATE DRIVES

Tertiary streets are similar to secondary but with a narrower carriageway width lesser provision of pavements. Shared surfaces would be appropriate with informal planting introduced to help soften the streetscape.

Variation in materials can be used to distinguish them from other streets. These should be used against green corridors and development edges. Informal planting and variations in building line and setbacks should be adopted to create a semi-rural feel to the streets.



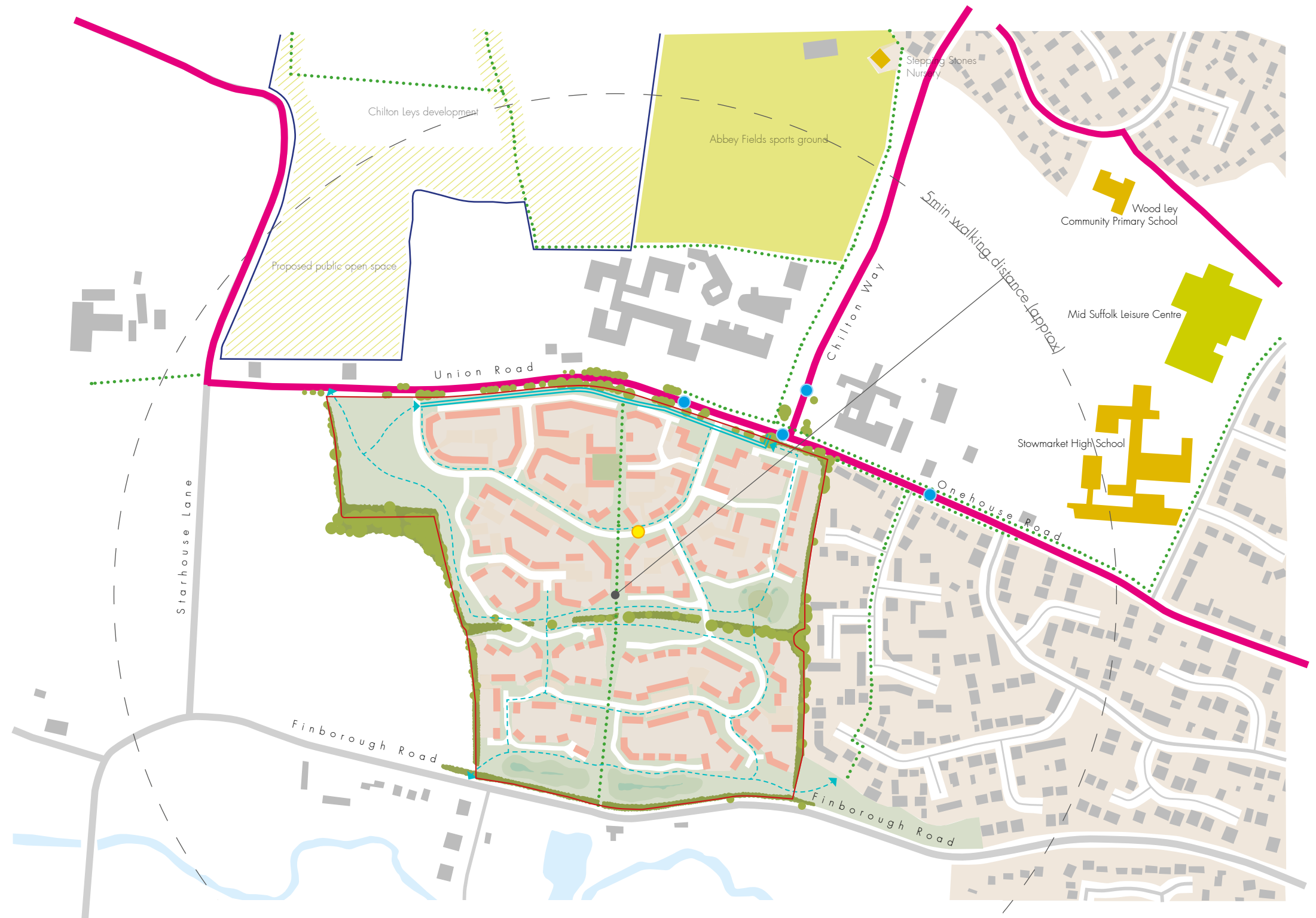
WALKING & CYCLING ACCESSIBILITY

The development will incorporate a layout prioritising a safe walking and cycling environment, through a series of new dedicated pedestrian and cycle paths linking to the existing network along Union Road and Finborough Road into the town centre. As well as providing a link to the amenities available in the town centre, access will also be provided to local schools, leisure centre and nearby playgrounds, all within an approximate 5 to 10 minute walk of the site.

Within the scheme pedestrian and cycle routes should provide safe and secure access to the children's play spaces and recreational open space, creating 'Greenway' routes.

The illustrative masterplan provides a mix of formal footpath routes along streets and informal routes within the green spaces. A new combined pedestrian and cycle path is also proposed within the site along the northern boundary. This results in high levels of permeability and connectivity both north, south and east, west.

- Union Road site
- Existing footpath links and public rights of way
- Sustrans National Cycle Route 51
- Existing bus stops
- Proposed pedestrian routes and links
- Proposed pedestrian & cycle route
- Potential new bus stops
- Schools/nursery
- Leisure centre



Illustrative pedestrian and cycle links

3.11 Car parking provision

At the earliest stages of the design process, careful attention should be given to the mode and level of parking provision within the development.

Parking levels are a key consideration and the need to have regard for the location of the site and the type and scale of development being proposed. Parking ratios will be in accordance with current Council policy.

A mix of parking methods should be considered including, on-plot driveway and garage, integral, carport, off-plot courtyard and on-street parking.

The majority of parking will be on-plot and these will be accommodated in a mixture of garages, carports and surface parking spaces, alongside dwelling or integral.

The design and layout of the streets should aim to reduce vehicle speeds throughout the scheme, enabling car parking to work effectively, with drivers able to pull out of bays, accesses and parking areas safely.

The principles for the parking strategy have been influenced by Manual for Streets 1 & 2 and by the guidance document produced by English Partnerships (HCA) - Car Parking What Works Where,

Parking will be in compliance with current minimum parking standards as set out by Suffolk County Council in their Suffolk Guidance for Parking 2015 - Technical Guidance.

1 bedroom	1	spaces per dwelling
2 bedrooms	1.5	spaces per dwelling
2 bedrooms	2	spaces per dwelling when provided within curtilage
3 bedrooms	2	spaces per dwelling
4+ bedrooms	3	spaces per dwelling

On-plot

The majority of the parking within the scheme will be on-plot, which is most prevalent in the immediate area and in keeping with the form and density of the scheme.

On-plot parking will be accommodated by a mixture of garages, driveways and carports.

Driveways can provide variations across the scheme, in the form of forecourts or as shown below located between homes.



Courtyard

A well designed courtyard parking area can create a safe and attractive environment within a scheme.

It is important that courtyard parking areas within a scheme are designed so that they can be self policed through informal surveillance from properties which overlook the space.

They should also be kept to an appropriate and practical scale to minimise any possible security or future maintenance issues.



On-street

On-street parking can assist in creating active streets and also help to manage traffic calming and speeds through a scheme.

Any on-street parking must be designed as an integral part of the landscape solution, with car bays set into the edges of the street and landscaped appropriately.

The street landscape should be designed to soften the effect of parked vehicles in all situations. The use of changes in surfaces and carefully chosen hard landscaping materials will be used to best effect.



3.12 Landscape and open space strategy

The landscape and open space strategy has been designed to fulfill key elements and requirements of the site, including provision of green spaces and pedestrian friendly streets and corridors.

The proposals should be designed to maintain, where possible existing trees and hedgerows, which will provide an immediate landscape setting to the scheme, and more importantly maintain the ecological and biodiversity asset. Green corridors along these hedgerows provide both important 'Greenway' routes and pedestrian links through the site and access to the surrounding, wider open countryside, creating natural and semi-natural spaces. The current illustrative masterplan would deliver approximately 4.5 hectares of public open space.

In addition to the informal 'Greenway' spaces and corridors the scheme also provides other key areas of public open space, including a series of children's play spaces in the form of LAP's (local area for play) and LEAP's (local equipped area for play).

It is important that the site plays its part in encouraging a more active and sustainable lifestyle for Stowmarket and the wider area, and is also one which is healthy for the environment. Open spaces and recreation will be integral to the development, providing the opportunity for a healthy more active lifestyle for all ages and abilities.

This holistic approach to creating a place which promotes active and healthy lifestyles will mean that the site will continue to enhance Stowmarket as a healthy and enjoyable place to live and work.

- Union Road site
- Local area for play (LAP) (1min walking distance)
- Greenway corridor
- Local equipped area for play (LEAP) (5min walking distance)



Illustrative landscape and open space structure



CHILDREN'S PLAY SPACES

The scheme will provide a series of children's play spaces. These will provide areas of play specifically designed for younger children. These spaces will be within easy walking distance of residential properties and located along pedestrian footpaths and well used routes to provide safe and convenient access. Ideally, these spaces should also be overlooked by nearby properties to provide natural surveillance and security, reducing the opportunity for crime or anti-social behaviour.



RECREATION & OPEN SPACE

At the heart of the public open space strategy is the creation of a new strategic areas of open space for the entire community of Stowmarket.

The vision for this space is to create a 'parkland/recreational setting', offering a flexible and versatile space. A space for people to walk, relax and to meet each other or for holding local community events.



'GREENWAY' CORRIDORS

The existing network of hedgerows within the site provide an excellent opportunity to create 'Greenway' corridors through the site. Where possible proposals should seek to maintain and enhance these features of the site so that they can continue to be enjoyed by both the existing and new community. The greenway network will:

- maintain the important existing network of trees and hedgerows;
- maintain and enhance existing wildlife corridors, habitats and biodiversity;
- maintain the existing footpath running through the site, provide new foot and cycle paths linking to new and existing areas of green spaces and the open countryside.

3.13 Density and form

Across the development, densities will vary in order to create variety and choice and will respond to local need and requirements for a sustainable development. Densities will also respond to adjoining development, landscape characteristics and sensitive areas.

The design objective is to create an attractive mix of housing including for sale and to rent, ranging from flats and smaller houses, bungalows through medium sized terraced and semi detached to detached family homes. The concept is one of inclusiveness, achieving a social mix and developing homes for sale and to rent, with no difference in their design quality and appearance.

The plan shows the density range across the site, with higher densities on the primary street and other focal areas, lower densities adjacent to sensitive features, such as along the north western and southern boundaries of the site.

Based on delivering a scheme of 300 units, this would result in an approximate net density of 32 dwellings per hectare.



Illustrative density plan

3.14 Sustainability

Sustainability is a key component of the development vision. Energy efficiency is a key part of environmental sustainability. The scheme should look to minimise car travel and optimise walking, cycling and public transport use. The current illustrative scheme embodies a high level of transport sustainability.

Social inclusion, cohesion and a strong community focus are key elements of the vision and the design concept. The scheme incorporates open space and recreation elements. Affordable housing is integrated in all phases, built to a standard that is indistinguishable from housing for sale.

The most essential ingredient for any major new housing scheme is to achieve low energy buildings and a low energy layout. In relation to low energy buildings, the development will comprise energy efficient buildings throughout, well insulated and energy efficient, encouraging energy monitoring systems so that future users are acutely aware and able to control energy use. A high number of the houses should have one south facing main elevation, facilitating passive solar gain, taking advantage of solar technologies and reducing energy costs. Opportunities for sustainable energy at both dwelling scale solutions and development scale solutions should be investigated at the detailed design stage.

It is only appropriate to incorporate energy technologies which are effective, economically viable and practically suitable for the development.

DRAINAGE

As part of the sustainability strategy for development of the site a sustainable urban drainage system is proposed. Sustainable Urban Drainage techniques, commonly known as SUDS look to replicate natural systems with low environmental impact to drain away surface water through collection, storage and cleaning, which is released slowly back into the environment at a 'greenfield rate'.

As well as providing an environmentally friendly and efficient method for dealing with surface water, SUDS can also create new ecological habitats and enhance local biodiversity. SUDS can also create new landscape features and green links within a scheme.



3.15 Phasing

The delivery of the site will be approached in a phase way, commencing in 2018 and completed at an rate of approximately 45 dwellings per annum.

The potential phasing is illustrated on the plan opposite.



Illustrative phasing plan

3.16 Amount and mix

The proposal will deliver up to 300 new homes providing opportunities across a range of house types, sizes and tenures, including up to 35% provision for affordable housing. This will include housing for sale across a range of prices, with affordable housing to rent and shared equity/ownership units.

Private mix 65% - 195 total homes
Affordable mix 35% - 105 total homes



3.17 Delivery

Having established the design parameters for the proposed development, it is appropriate to contemplate the framework for delivery of the proposed development.

This framework will allow the development to be brought forward in a sustainable and coordinated way, such that existing services and facilities are not overburdened and that the environment and the amenity of the existing is not harmed.

In terms of demands placed by the development upon existing services and facilities, it has been established through the production of the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy that the site is '£0 rated' and that consequently planning obligations will be secured via a Section 106 Legal Agreement. Discussions with Suffolk County Council have identified the following package of contributions towards the provision of services and facilities in Stowmarket:

- Pro-rata contributions towards the provision of Primary School place and Early Years provision at the new Chilton Leys Primary School;
- Pro-rata contributions towards Secondary School place provision;
- Contributions towards Library provision in Stowmarket Town Centre;
- Incorporation of 'on-plot' measures to reduce waste and to ensure for sustainable approaches to waste disposal;
- Broadband connections to ensure for high-speed information services to the development;
- Provision of affordable housing with regard to Mid Suffolk District Council's policy target of 35%; and,
- Highway improvements as required to ensure that sufficient capacity is provided within the local highway network and to take all available opportunities to ensure that development of the site is well connected by sustainable means of movement

The highest standards of construction management will be applied. Bespoke strategies for the site will be developed in the form of management plans to be prepared and controlled through planning conditions, dealing with matters such as construction traffic and construction hours.



SUMMARY

4 Summary

4.1 Summary of the proposals

This Development Brief provides a detailed analysis of the site's physical, environmental and policy context. Of note from this analysis are the sustainability credentials of the site and its edge of settlement location at the interface between Stowmarket and the rural area beyond. The site is characterised by its sloping topography within the landscape and the mature hedgerows and trees which forms its boundary.

The Development Brief then establishes a vision for the site which seeks to respond positively to the site's context in guiding development which is not only successful in design terms, but which forms a sustainable and integrated addition to the existing town of Stowmarket, in providing additional housing and support for the existing services and facilities in the town.

In line with this vision, a design concept is identified which provides for a new community which is set within its landscape setting, with the provision of a network of open spaces and retained boundary and on-site landscape features. The concept also seeks to provide for a permeable and legible layout, which creates place and community, through a series of streets, open spaces and visual landmarks and features.

In terms of built form and design, the Brief seeks the delivery of sustainable dwellings, constructed according to modern sustainability standards and which reflects and contributes to the design vernacular of Stowmarket and its locality, articulated through contemporary design principles.

This Development Brief has therefore provided a framework and design principles against which future planning applications for development of the site can be assessed to ensure for sustainable, high standards of design, appropriate to the setting of the site and its context.

This Development Brief has also identified infrastructure requirements as highlighted through engagement with Mid Suffolk District and Suffolk County Councils to provide the background against which the submitting planning application and its supporting evidence can be assessed and from which a sustainable and integrated new community can be delivered.

As such, it is concluded that the Development Brief successfully fulfils its purpose and is appropriate to serve as a framework against which future planning applications for development of the site will be assessed. *[Accordingly, Mid Suffolk District Council has endorsed the Brief as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications for the development of the site].*



Illustrative concept masterplan

