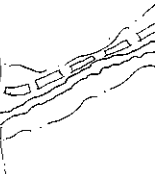
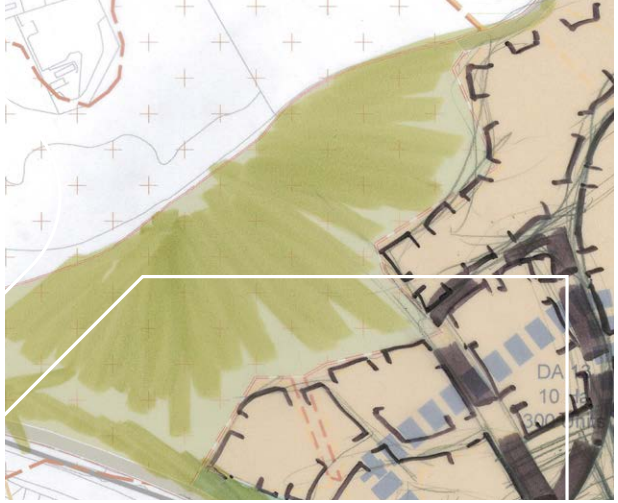
03

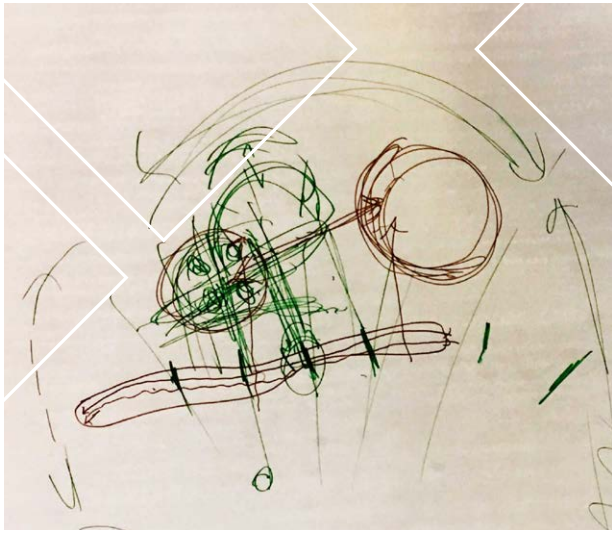
SECTION 3
INVOLVEMENT AND EVALUATION

"Communities can effectively shape both design policies and development through a collaborative process of meaningful participation. Early engagement and linking engagement activities to key stages of design decision-making and plan-making can empower people to inform the vision, design policies and the design of schemes." (National Planning Policy Framework, 2019)

This section summarises the extensive process of refining the proposed design, in consultation with local and statutory stakeholders, through the development of the Masterplan and subsequently the planning application.

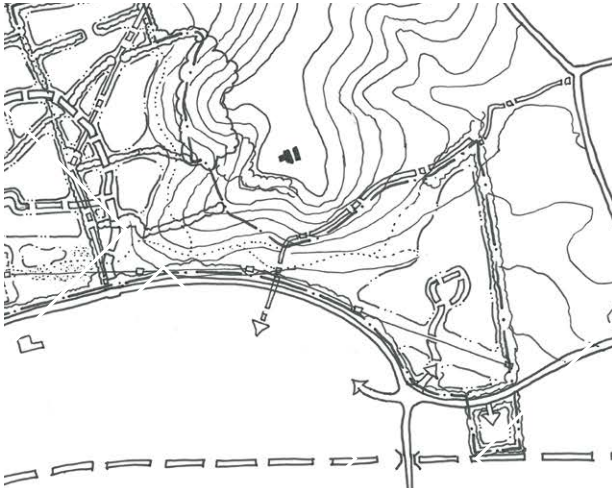


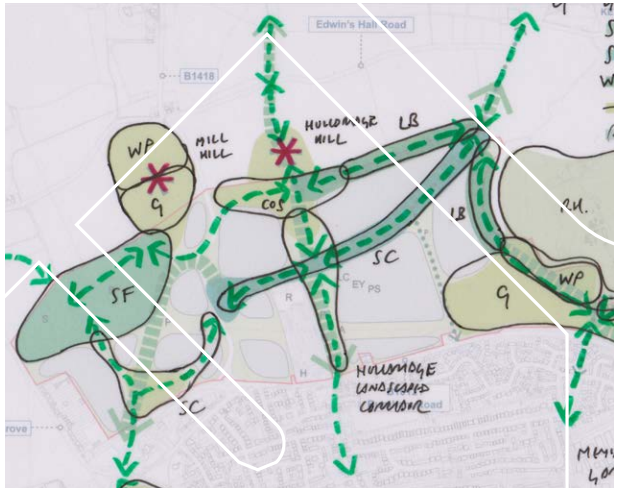




OAKLANDS MEADOWS
SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS

ESSEX





INVOLVEMENT AND EVALUATION

STAGE 0 MASTERPLAN

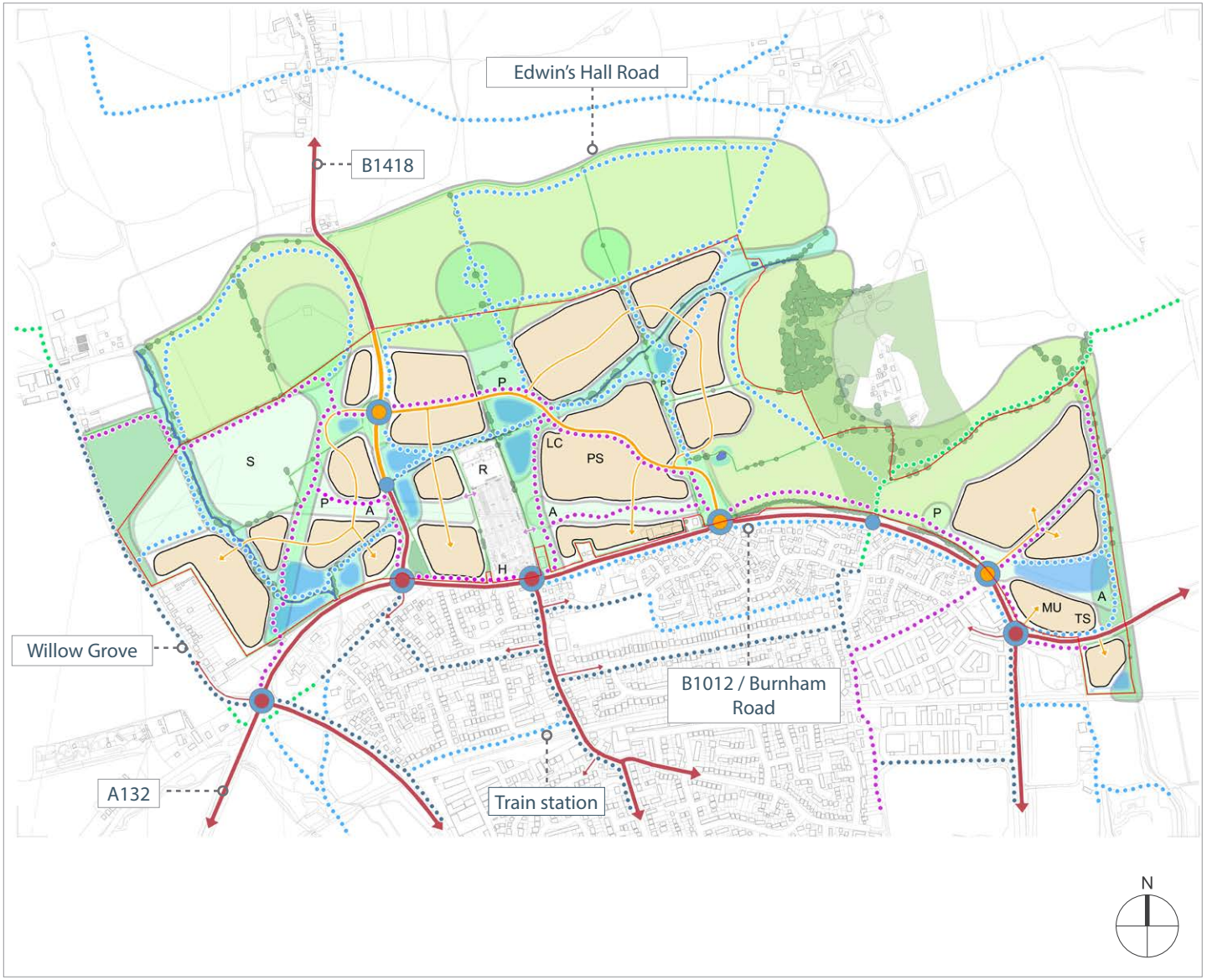
This drawing shows the initial version of the proposed masterplan, submitted to Chelmsford City Council in 2019.

It was generated based on comprehensive analysis of the site's context and constraints, brought together with the then emerging draft allocation policy for the site.

The landscape-led approach, the creation of the 'Green Grid' constituting the spatial framework for the proposed masterplan, can be clearly seen, providing a comprehensive landscape led structure within which the proposed uses can be distributed.

The masterplan proposed the creation of development parcels set within the framework established by the 'Green Grid', incorporating a wide range of residential dwelling types and tenures across the site as a whole, as well as focal community and education facilities, employment, retail and healthcare, with their preferred locations identified.

Initial strategies for pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access, together with managing flood risk, are also incorporated into the masterplan at this early stage.

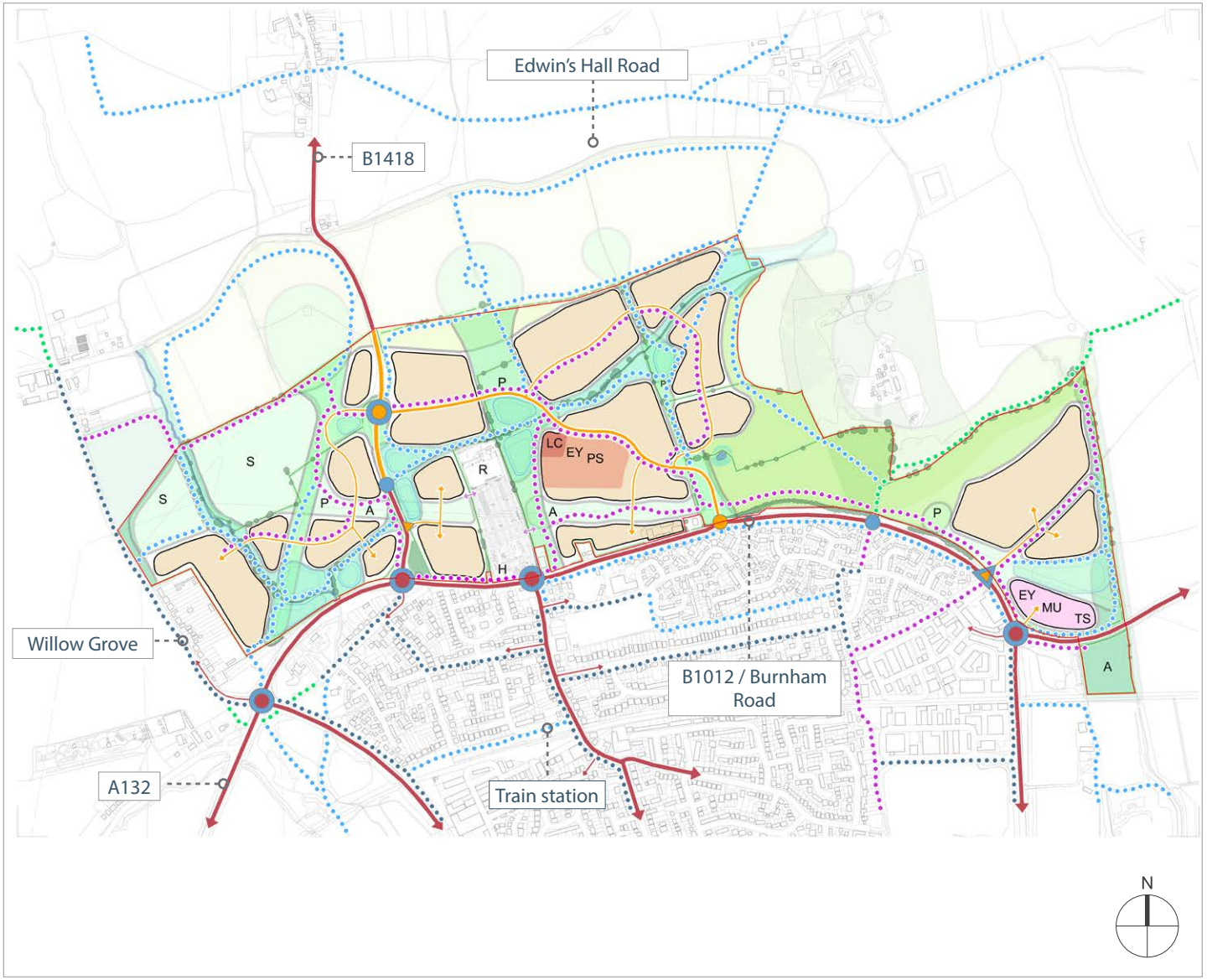


STAGE 2 MASTERPLAN

Following consultation with local and statutory stakeholders early in 2020 ('Stage 1'), the masterplan was revised in order to respond to comments and resubmitted in March 2020 ('Stage 2').

Key changes made were:

- Restricting the full colouring of the plan to the allocation boundary to avoid confusion;
- Removal of development from the land south of Woodham Road adjoining the Garden of Remembrance, replaced by allotments provision;
- Specific locations for Early Years facilities identified;
- Additional pedestrian and cycle routes added;
- Junction amendments.



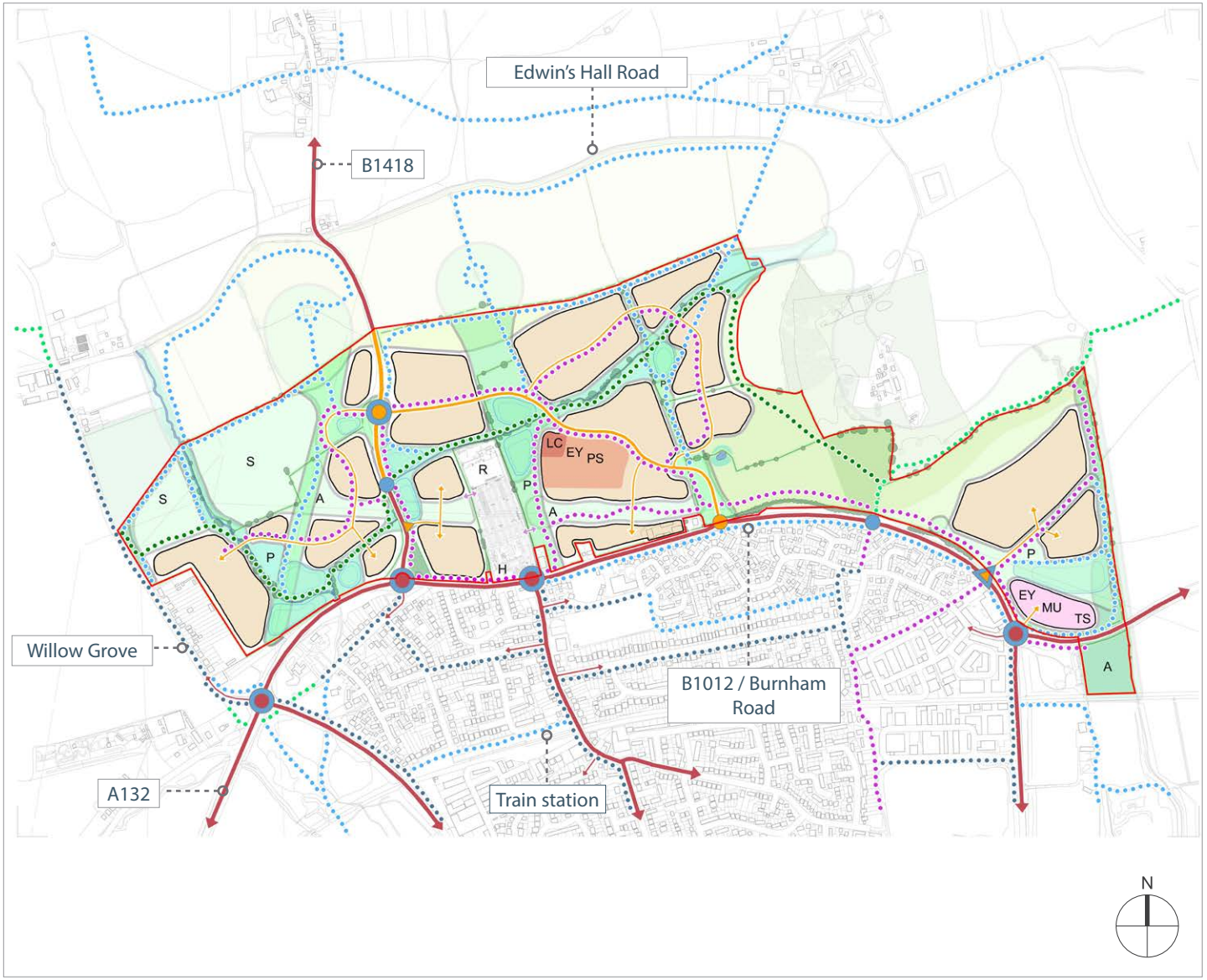
INVOLVEMENT AND EVALUATION

AUTUMN 2020 MASTERPLAN

Over the summer of 2020, following the submission of the Stage 2 masterplan, further consultation took place with local and statutory stakeholders, the Essex Quality Review Panel, and the general public.

In response to comments received , the masterplan was further revised with the following amendments:

- Eastern and northern development edges set back to allow for increased buffer planting;
- Play provision in central corridor located closer to local centre;
- Play provision in eastern parcel moved more centrally to parcel;
- Play provision in western area moved away from powerlines;
- Additional tree planting added around Bushy Hill edge and on Mill Hill;
- Refinements to pedestrian and cycle routes through site;
- Refinements to Burnham Road crossing points.



STAGE 3 MASTERPLAN

This plan shows the Stage 3 final submission Masterplan, approved in March 2021.

A number of minor changes were made late in 2020 prior to submission in January 2021, following further stakeholder comments:

- Refinement of pedestrian and cycle movement strategy including increasing the extent of cycle routes;
- Refinement in the route of the proposed bridleway through and adjoining the site;
- Refinements and additions to crossing points on Burnham Road and the B1418.

INVOLVEMENT AND EVALUATION

PREAPPLICATION LAYOUT

Following the finalisation of the masterplan, consultations continued including a preapplication submission and discussions with Chelmsford City Council.

The illustrative plan shown here was the basis for the preapplication submission and shows the following developments:

- Extent of site reduced from the masterplan to reflect the extent of Oaklands Meadows;
- Inclusion of the landscaped Mill Hill area to the north-west;
- Refinement of the extent of the proposed development parcels;
- Initial development of the design of the proposed parcels considering structure, legibility and placemaking;
- Relocation of the central Burnham Road access junction eastwards to enable reduced land gradients here;
- The preapplication submission included initial proposals regarding building heights;
- Developments in more detail for the landscaped areas around and between the development parcels were also presented.

REFINED LAYOUT

Following the preapplication submission and comments received, further refinements were made to the illustrative layout:

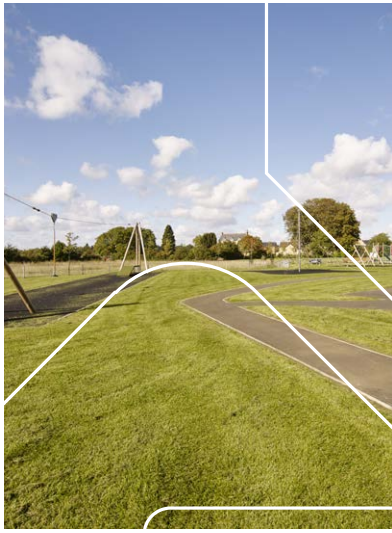
- Extent of application redline extended to include relevant highways land;
- Refinement of spine street alignments based on more detailed design and consultation, in particular the secondary spine street within the northern part of the layout;
- Refinements and additions to junctions and crossing points on Burnham Road and the B1418, in consultation with Essex County Council;
- Hamberts Farm and its immediate curtilage removed from the application area;
- Proposed building heights reviewed and maximum heights adjoining the countryside edge reduced;
- Indicative location for custom build homes added to application plans;
- Indicative location for potential care home added to application plans.

SECTION 4
THE VISION

"Design decisions at all levels and scales shape the character of a new place or building and help to create a memorable sense of place. Character starts to be determined by the siting of development in the wider landscape, then by the layout and grain – the pattern of streets, landscape and spaces, the movement network and the arrangement of development blocks... In this way, it creates a coherent identity for residents and communities to identify with." (National Design Guide, 2021)

This section describes the Vision for Oaklands Meadows, identifying the key aims and objectives for the site.

04



OAKLANDS MEADOWS
SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS

ESSEX

THE VISION

Oaklands Meadows will become the next new chapter in the evolution and growth of South Woodham Ferrers.

Our Vision is to create a high quality, sustainable and inclusive new neighbourhood that, once completed, will have the 'feel' and function of an integral part of the town, but with its own character and identity.

View across Oaklands Meadows looking south-east along central green

THE VISION

Oaklands Meadows will sit within a **high quality and varied green infrastructure** framework that respects the existing landscape context

Oaklands Meadows will be a **healthy place** that offers spaces for outdoor activity as well as quality walking and cycling routes both within the site and to the surrounding countryside.

Oaklands Meadows will be **fully integrated with the adjoining community** and well connected to key services and facilities in the town.

Oaklands Meadows will have a **strong sense of place and community,** focused around a central, accessible and mixed use local hub.

Oaklands Meadows will cater for a **cross section of society,** offering market and affordable housing as well as a location for travelling show people.

Oaklands Meadows will be an **attractive and characterful** place and a new northern gateway into the town.

THE VISION

SUSTAINABILITY

The proposed development at Oaklands Meadows aims to deliver a sustainable extension to the existing settlement, incorporating a range of sustainable design measures to deliver sustainable new homes which mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, as well as delivering social and economic benefits and measures to protect and enhance the environment. A Sustainability and Energy Statement has been prepared to support the application which sets out the sustainable design incorporated at this stage and to be considered further as part of the detailed design of the development to help deliver sustainable development.

Sustainable Location

The development is in a sustainable location due its integration with the existing settlement of South Woodham Ferrers, giving rise to access to the multitude of services and facilities within the town, all within walking or cycling distance. The proposed extension to the existing bus routes through the development, provision of a car club, provision of walking and cycling facilities and proximity to rail stations will reduce the reliance on the private car, especially for short distance journeys, improving the sustainability credentials of the development.

Socio-economic benefits

The development at Oaklands Meadows will generate a range of socio-economic benefits for future residents and the wider area and local economy:

Social benefits – the proposed development has been designed with the health and wellbeing of future residents acting as a guiding principle to the creation of a sustainable community, by integrating the principles of the Livewell Standard into the design. This includes the following design features:

- 35% affordable housing integrated throughout the development
- The primary school and nursery will deliver social value and benefits, creating a close knit community
- Up to 6.2 hectares of open recreational space with good accessibility and adjoining pedestrian routes, alongside formal children's play areas, creating a safe a connected community
- Enhancement of the pedestrian and cycle facilities including over 10km of pedestrian and cycle links permeating through the site and connecting to the existing network, including circular walks
- 0.864 hectares of allotments to provide access to healthier food and encouraging community engagement
- Provision of 5 serviced travelling showpeople plots
- [Anything else in particular from HIA once received, esp. AQ and noise which is one of the principles in Livewell not mentioned above yet]

Economic benefits – the proposed development will contribute to positive economic growth, providing employment opportunities during the construction of new homes, and generating demand for local goods and services during construction and occupation. The development will also generate additional Council Tax revenue to support local Council services. The proposed 1000m2 of business floorspace will create employment opportunities within the community.

Environmental Protection and Enhancement

Through a range of design measures the development aims to protect and enhance the local environment. Key measures include buildings designed to make use of sustainable materials, provision of

measures to protect and enhance site ecology, including new site habitats to achieve a net gain in biodiversity. The development will plant 1 new tree for every new resident (approximately 2,880 trees). The development also has made provision for measures to minimise waste and encourage recycling through construction and operation, detailed in the accompanying Site Waste Management Strategy.

Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change

Countryside Properties are committed to delivering development which reduces carbon emissions and is resilient to the future effects of climate change. UKCP18 climate projections show the UK will experience rising annual temperatures, reducing summer rainfall, increasing winter rainfall and an increase in extreme weather events.

- Water – to reduce the pressure on potable water availability, new homes will be designed to reduce water consumption such as water meter and low flow fittings. This will achieve a water consumption rate of 110 l/p/d.
- Biodiversity – The development will achieve at least a 10% net gain in biodiversity, using climate tolerant species where possible.
- Overheating – to minimise the risk of increasing summer temperatures on overheating, buildings will undergo thermal dynamic modelling using future climate projections to inform design to minimise overheating
- Flood Risk – the development is not at risk of river flooding and the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems will attenuate surface water to the 1 in 100 year event plus a 40% allowance for climate change.
- Carbon Emissions – to mitigate the impact of the development, a range of measures will be incorporated to reduce carbon emissions through construction and operation, including:
- Delivering homes which go beyond the requirements of Part L 2013 achieving at least a 31% reduction in carbon emissions through reducing the energy demand through the fabric first approach.
- The detailed design of the development will explore options for the use of low carbon, renewable energy systems, such as solar PV. It is intended that the use of gas will be avoided.
- EV charging points will be provided.

Waste and Recycling

The proposed new development at Oaklands Meadows is a sustainable and waste-efficient scheme. This efficiency is achieved by a commitment to reduce construction waste and ensuring that there is a robust operational waste strategy in place. The anticipated construction waste arising from the development is 10,771 tonnes based on Countryside's waste intensity of 8.8t / 100m2. A target of 90% diversion from landfill has been set for the development, so approximately 9,694 tonnes will be diverted from landfill and reused or recycled.

From an operational perspective, appropriate waste and recycling management facilities at the building level will be provided. Currently, the proposed waste strategy at Oaklands Meadows is for a conventional system, comprising wheelie bins for individual houses and compounds for non-domestic buildings. Households and business will be encouraged to reduce, reuse and recycle as much as possible to avoid waste going to landfill.

THE VISION

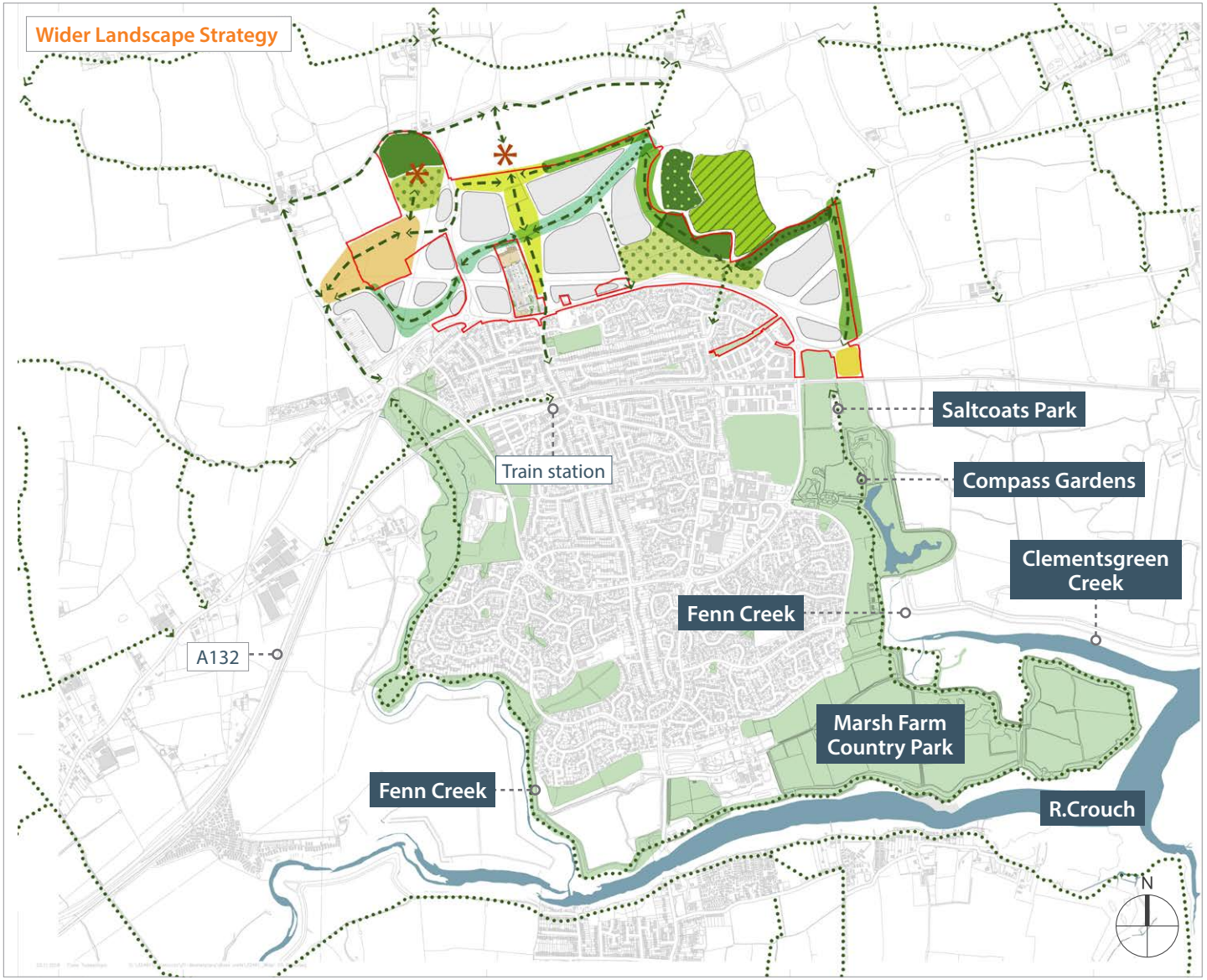
A LANDSCAPE LED MASTERPLAN

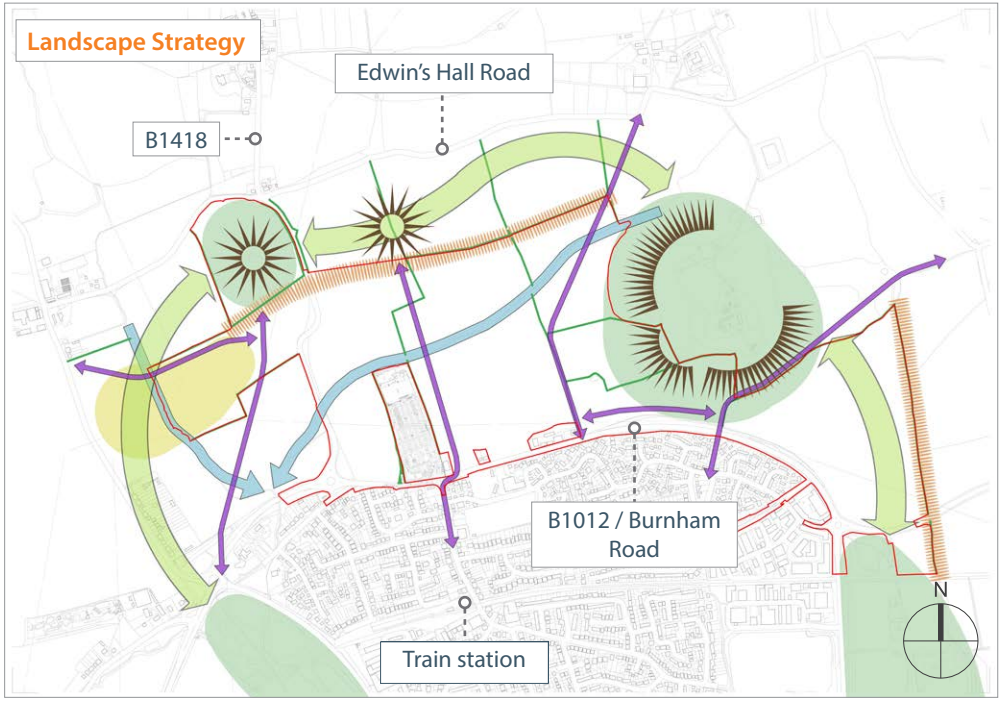
Parkland Ring

The site forms part of the missing link in the 'green ring' of parkland and public space around the town.

A band of publicly accessible space and/or routes around the site's northern edge will complete the parkland ring. This parkland ring will link the four areas of particular local importance in the landscape; namely Fenn Creek, Mill Hill, Bushy Hill and Saltcoats Park.

Of these areas Mill Hill, Bushy Hill and the connecting ridgeline are visually significant. Key views of these areas from the edge of the town and the surrounding landscape will be protected and enhanced.





Key elements of the landscape strategy are:

- The high points to the north of the site, linked by rising ground forming backdrop beyond the site;
- The sensitive northern and eastern edges of the site, adjoining agricultural countryside;
- Retained landscape elements within the site such as trees, hedgerows, watercourses and ecologically sensitive areas;
- The opportunity to create a network of interlinked landscape spaces structuring the proposed layout.

Key

- Site
- High point
- Visually sensitive edge
- Parkland arc
- Central green spine
- Landscape routes
- Areas of local importance in the landscape
- North-western edge
- Retained vegetation

The 'Green Grid' constitutes the spatial framework for the proposed masterplan, providing a comprehensive landscape led structure within which the proposed uses can be distributed.

The 'Green Grid' is generated by combining the strategies for drainage, ecology and landscape, also taking into account the constraints imposed by the various utilities that run through the site, in particular the overhead power lines. The edges of the corridors created by the utility easements will be softened to avoid overly straight linear open spaces.

Key

- Site
- Higher ground around Bushy Hill
- Higher ground to the north
- Stream corridor
- North / south corridor
- East / west corridor
- Eastern and western edges

THE VISION

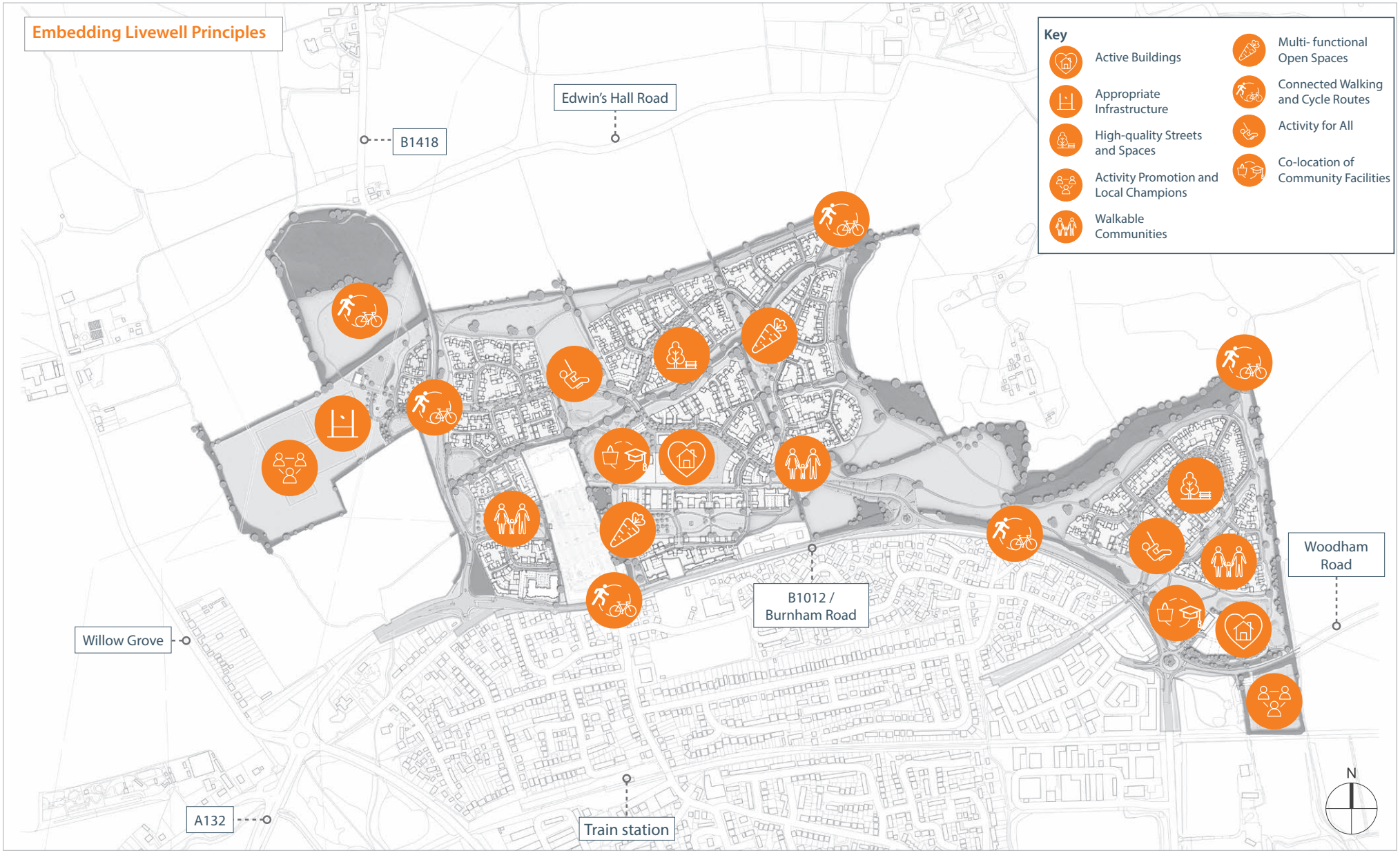
PROMOTING HEALTH, ACTIVITY AND WELL-BEING

The masterplan and layout have been designed according to the principles of Active Design. These include:

- Facilities and open spaces should be accessible to all and should support sport and physical activity across all ages;
- Homes, schools, shops, community facilities, workplaces, open spaces and sports facilities should be within easy reach of each other;
- All destinations should be connected by a direct, legible and integrated network of walking and cycling routes;
- Co-location and concentration of retail, community and associated uses to support linked trips should be promoted;
- A network of multifunctional open spaces should be created to support a range of activities including sport, recreation and play plus other landscape features including Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS), woodland, wildlife habitat and productive landscapes (allotments, orchards);
- Flexible and durable high quality streets and public spaces should be promoted, employing high quality durable materials, street furniture and signage;
- Providing and facilitating access to facilities and other infrastructure to enable all members of society to take part in sport and physical activity;
- The internal and external layout, design and use of buildings should promote opportunities for physical activity;
- A high standard of management, maintenance, monitoring and evaluation is essential to ensure the long-term desired functionality of all spaces;
- Health promotion measures and local champions should be supported to inspire participation in sport and physical activity across neighbourhoods, workplaces and facilities.

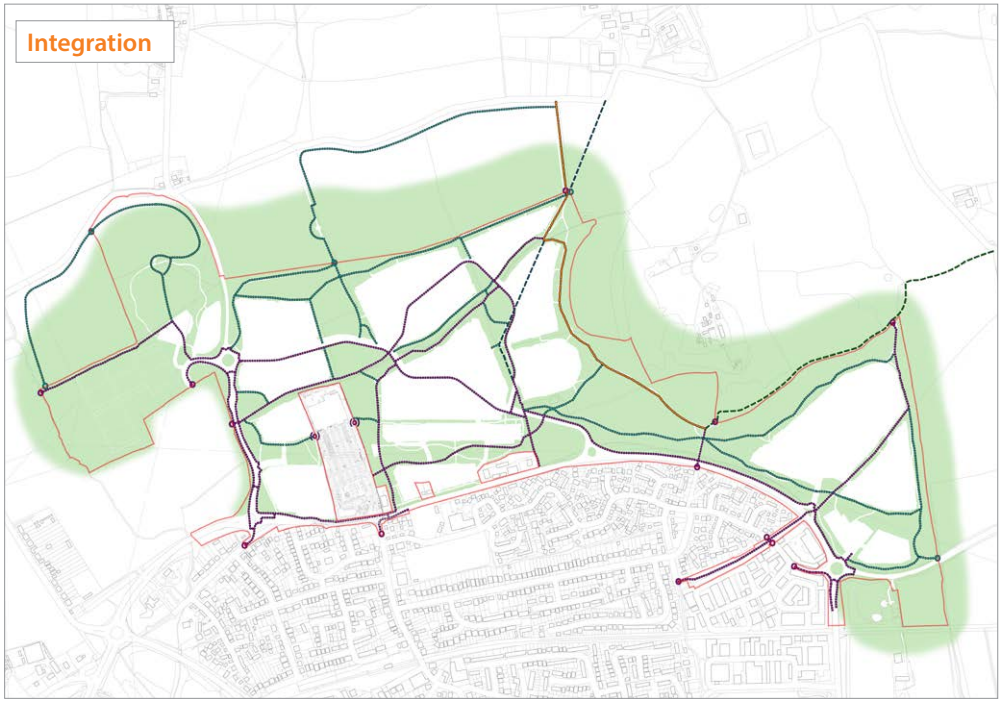
The diagram opposite illustrates how these principles have been incorporated into these design proposals.

Embedding Livewell Principles



THE VISION

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

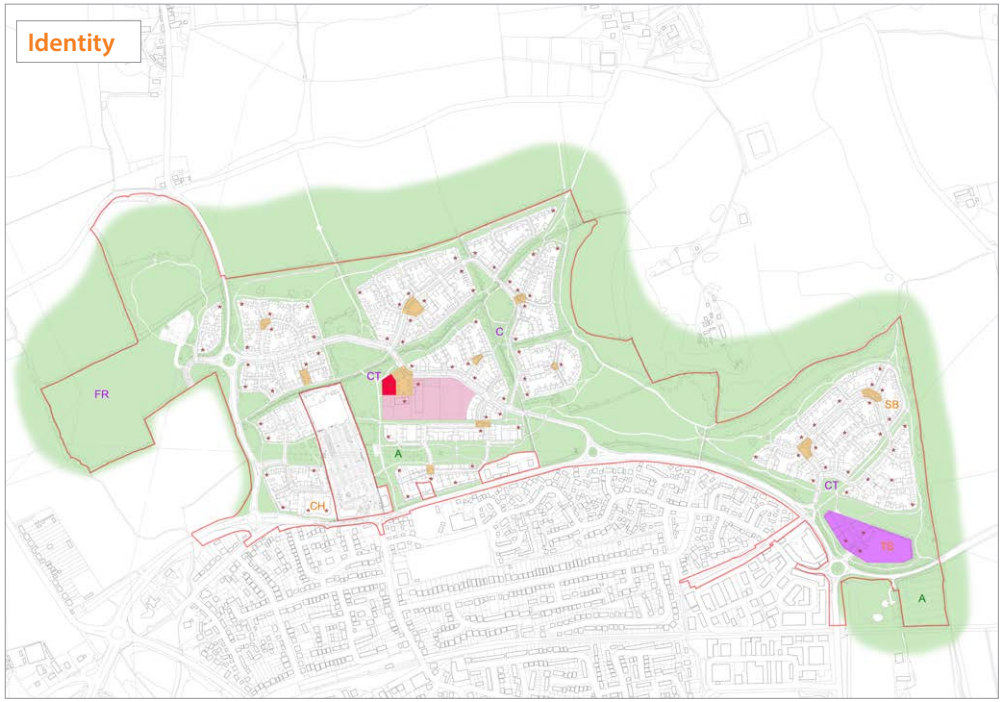


Walking and cycling are considered the priority forms of travel within the development.

Crossing points across major roads, in particular Burnham Road, are integrated with existing pedestrian and cycle corridors within South Woodham Ferrers, creating linkages from the existing town into and through the site.

Links to the surrounding countryside are also created, with existing public rights of way retained and new routes and connection points established.

This strategy enables convenient non-vehicular access to key amenities and destinations within the town, together with increased recreational opportunities within the site and improved linkages into the countryside beyond the site.



The Local Centre will form a central focus for the new community. It is likely to incorporate complementary services from the tertiary sector (for example a hairdressers) and will provide a setting for community uses such as a nursery or community hall / focal building. It will also be co-located with a new primary school.

The Local Centre is centrally located, close to the recently constructed supermarket and health facilities adjoining. It will be easily accessible via all modes of access.

Within the eastern part of the layout, a development area will accommodate another non-residential mix of uses with particular emphasis on employment, complementary to the existing employment uses within the north-eastern part of the town.

Inclusion

The layout will incorporate a wide range of dwelling types and tenures.

New homes will range in size from 1 bedroom apartments to 5 bedroom larger family houses.

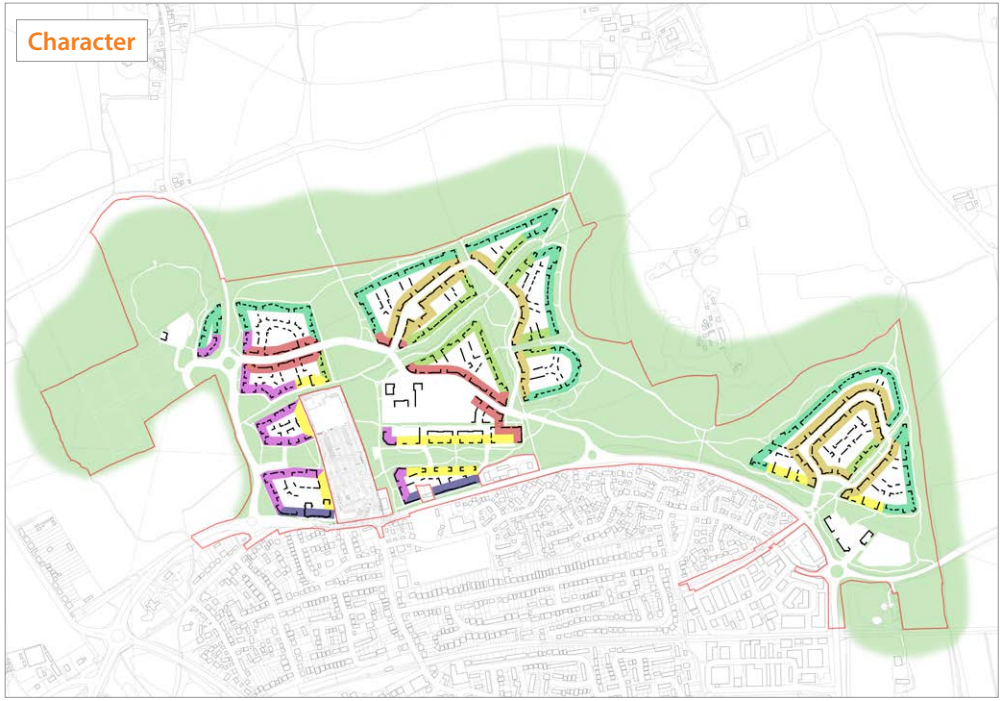
Within this mix of unit types, a range of tenures including private sale, affordable rent, and intermediate tenures will be distributed around the layout.

An area is identified within the eastern part of the site for custom build homes.

There is the potential for specialist elderly care provision to be located close to existing facilities.

Provision for travelling showpeople, in accordance with planning policy and the approved masterplan for the site, will be made.

Character



A high quality and attractive character for the new development will be established first and foremost by its landscaped setting, adjoining agricultural countryside and structured by landscaped corridors incorporating existing and new planting and recreational routes and activities.

Within this landscape-led framework, new buildings will be constructed within a strong pattern of streets, squares, frontages and feature buildings. Forms and materials used will respond to local traditional patterns.

The character, density and scale of building will vary across the layout, responding to each area's particular context while reinforcing the overall legibility of the development, ensuring that every new home has an attractive setting and is a pleasant place to live.

SECTION 5
DESIGN

"The identity or character of a place comes from the way that buildings, streets and spaces, landscape and infrastructure combine together and how people experience them... Local character makes places distinctive and memorable and helps people to find their way around. Well-designed, sustainable places with a strong identity give their users, occupiers and owners a sense of pride, helping to create and sustain communities and neighbourhoods." (National Design Guide, 2021)

This section describes the elements of the proposed design, explaining site-wide principles and more local key features, which together enable the creation of a richly varied and characterful place for both residents and visitors to enjoy.

05

OAKLANDS MEADOWS
SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS

ESSEX

PARAMETER PLANS

As this is an application for Outline Planning Permission, matters such as the location, scale and appearance of buildings, and the layout of development parcels, are all reserved for later approval at the Reserved Matters stage, and no details on these matters are provided as part of this Application.

However, in order to assist the process of Environmental Impact Assessment, and in order to set a framework for the submission of future Reserved Matters applications, a series of Parameter Plans have been prepared, covering Land Use, Residential Density, Building Height, Access and Movement, and Landscape and Open Space.

Together, these five Parameter Plans define:

- The location for the principal areas of built-development within the overall application site boundary;
- The locations for non-residential development within the overall application site boundary;
- The height and density of development;
- The overall extent of land which may be used for open space, landscaping, surface water storage and other 'green infrastructure' (including ancillary structures connected with utility supplies and any structures related to the green infrastructure itself, such as sports changing rooms);
- The principal routes of movement for vehicular and non-vehicular traffic.

This Outline Planning Application closely follows the principles set out in the approved Masterplan. The five Parameter Plans demonstrate this as follows:

Land Use

The disposition of key Land Uses shown on the Application Land Use Parameter Plan matches exactly the distribution of key Land Uses shown in the Masterplan. Whilst some of the parcels have marginally different boundary shapes, there is no material difference between the Application and the Masterplan in terms of the Land Use principles.

Residential Density

The Application Density Parameter Plan closely matches the Masterplan Density strategy, and there is again no material difference in approach albeit the density parameter plan seeks to refine and tighten the density bands than the masterplan drawing so that there is greater differentiation in character areas.

Building Heights

The Masterplan did not specify building heights, but the proposed Heights Parameter Plan which shows predominantly 2 and 2½ storey development with limited incidences of 3 storey is compatible with the general design approach discussed in the Masterplan.

Access and Movement

The Access and Movement Parameter Plan submitted with the Application exactly follows the key movement principles established in the Masterplan strategy, including the same principles for site access, the same principles for public transport, and the same principles in terms of non-vehicular movement.

Landscape and Open Space

The Landscape and Open Space Parameter Plan follows the same principles in terms of the location of the key areas of recreation as are set out on the Recreation Strategy plan contained in the Masterplan, with the locations for allotments and community gardens, play areas, and playing fields being consistent between the two, and with the same drainage strategy principles replicated.

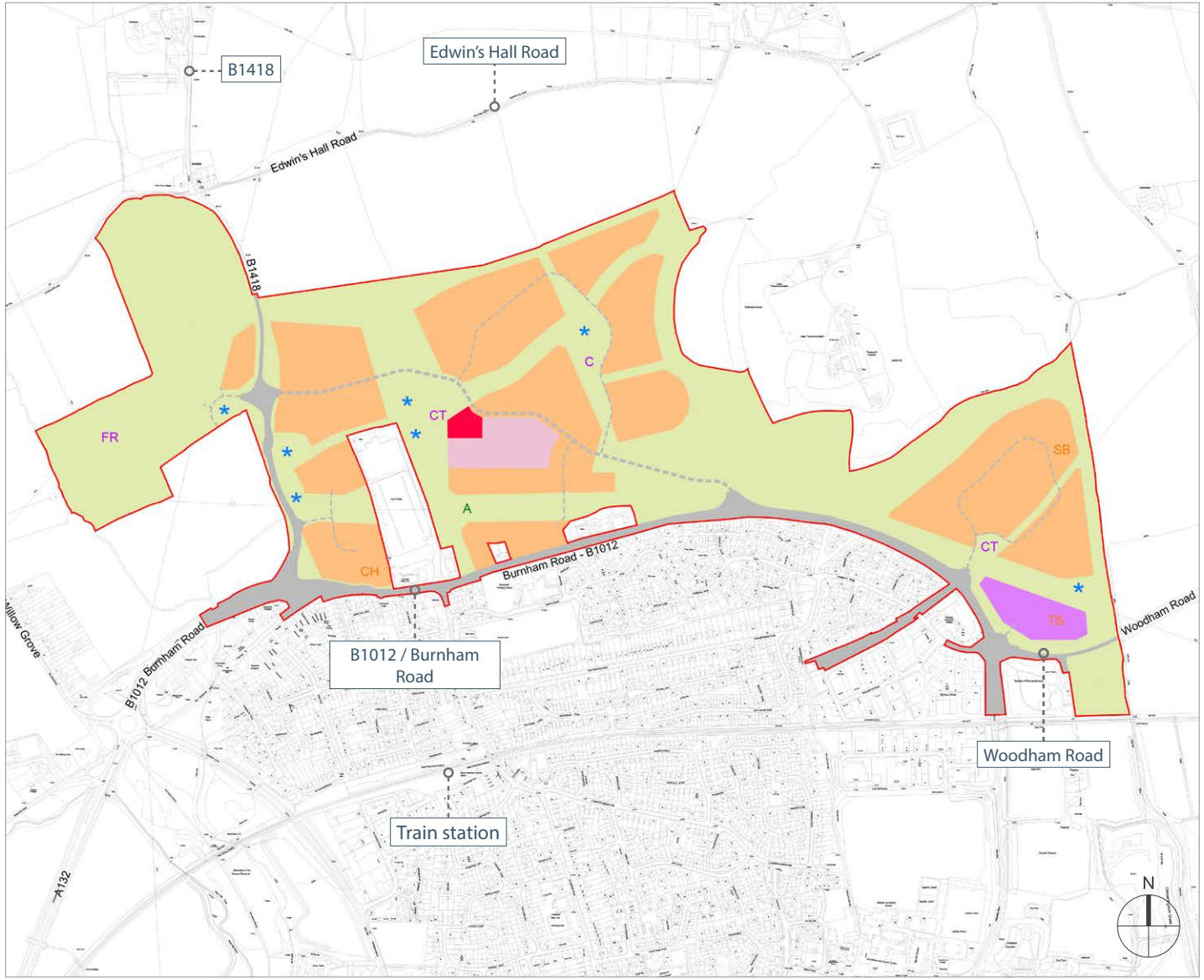
Illustrative Design Principles

The subsequent pages within this Design and Access Statement show in an illustrative way how the application parameter plans establish the framework and principles which will generate a high quality design for the site.

PARAMETER PLAN - LAND USE

This plan shows the distribution of land uses across the application site. It shows the locations of vehicular access points into the site, and the indicative alignments of key streets.

It also shows the indicative locations of certain elements within the layout, such as play areas and formal recreation provision, allotments, areas for custom build homes and travelling showpeople provision, and a potential care home.



Extent of application	
Land use - residential *Including front and back gardens, internal circulation, utilities, parking spaces, sustainable drainage and landscaped areas.*	
Land use - education	
Land use - mixed use area	
Land use - local centre	
Land use - landscape *Including informal and formal open space, sports pitches, equipped play areas, parkland, woodland, buffer planting, ponds, SUDs features, footpaths, cycle routes and internal roads.*	
Land use - highways and access *Including footpaths, cycle routes and landscaping.*	
Primary spine street - Indicative alignment	
Secondary access street - Indicative alignment	

Care Home - broad location	CH
Self Build Area - broad location	SB
Travelling Showpeople Area - broad location	TS
Childrens and teenagers play - broad location	CT
Childrens play - broad location	C
Formal recreation - broad location	FR
Allotments - broad location	A
Sustainable drainage feature - broad location	*

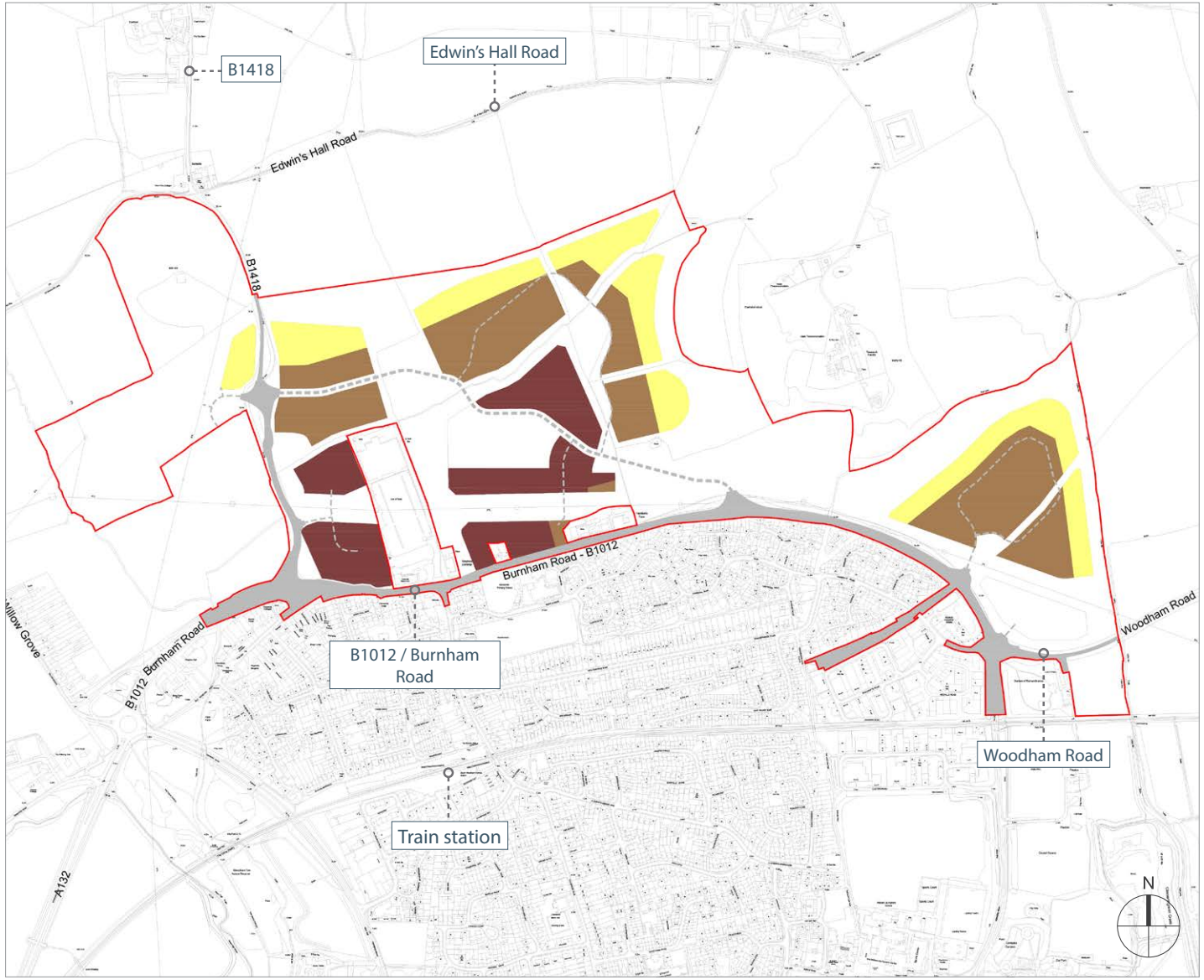
Note: The precise definition of developable boundaries will be determined at Reserved Matters stage. The developable area includes areas of residential, education, mixed use and local centre land uses and will not exceed 41.24 ha.

DESIGN

PARAMETER PLAN - RESIDENTIAL DENSITY

This plan shows the proposed residential density ranges within the development areas including or possibly including residential development.

The distribution of the three density ranges responds to the setting of each development area within the overall site, with a concentration of higher density within the centre of the layout and lower density at those frontages adjoining the wider agricultural countryside landscape.



Extent of application

*Residential density - higher (35-40 dph)

*Residential density - medium (25-35 dph)

*Residential density - lower (15-20 dph)

Land use - highways and access

Primary spine street - Indicative alignment

Secondary access street - Indicative alignment

***Note:** Depending where the boundary line is drawn, there may be pockets of density that exceed the overall density of the parcel. This is acceptable so long as the overall average density parameter is not exceeded.

Note: The precise definition of developable boundaries will be determined at Reserved Matters stage. The developable area includes areas of residential, education, mixed use and local centre land uses and will not exceed 41.24 ha.

PARAMETER PLAN - BUILDING HEIGHTS

This plan shows the permitted maximum building heights within the proposed development areas.

Similar to the distribution of residential density, the different height ranges shown are intended to create structure and legibility for the layout while responding to the setting of different parcels across the layout. In general, potential heights are taller within the central and lower parts of the layout, with heights being more restricted closer to the northern and eastern countryside edges

Maximum building heights are as described below. All heights are to ridge level but exclude any point features. All heights are measured above proposed ground floor level. Proposed ground floor levels will be within a limit of deviation of 1 metre below to 1 metre above existing ground level

Extent of application

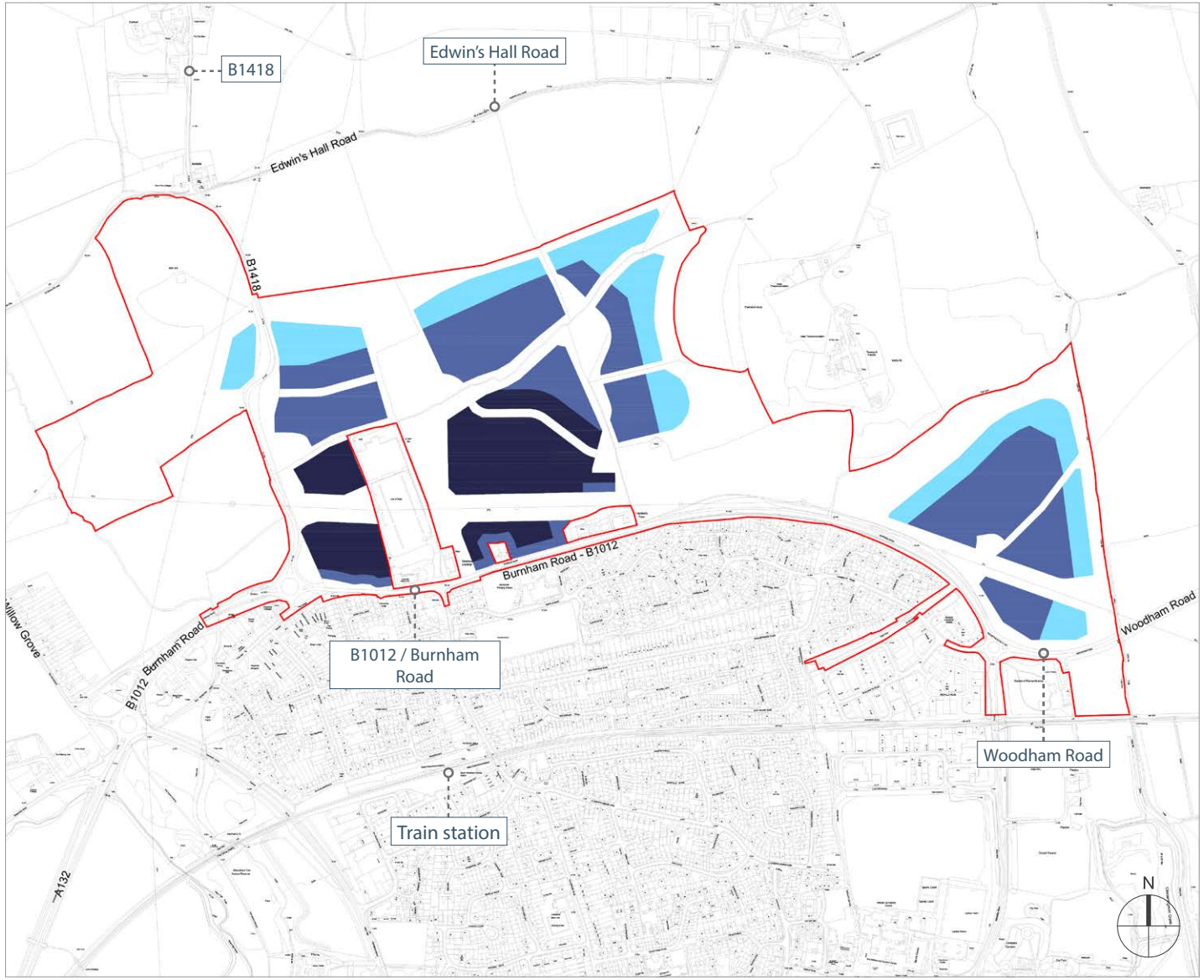
*Building height up to +13.0 metres (up to 3 storeys) - generally 2 or 2.5 storeys with maximum of 25% of built footprint at 3 storeys

*Building height up to +11 metres (up to 2.5 storeys) - generally 2 storeys with maximum of 35% of built footprint at 2.5 storeys

*Building height up to +9.0 metres (up to 2 storeys) - generally 2 storeys with maximum of 15% of built footprint at 2.5 storeys

***Note:** There is some flexibility for occasional taller buildings in carefully considered locations where appropriate. This would add interest to large areas which might otherwise become overly uniform in height.

Note: The precise definition of developable boundaries will be determined at Reserved Matters stage. The developable area includes areas of residential, education, mixed use and local centre land uses and will not exceed 41.24 ha.

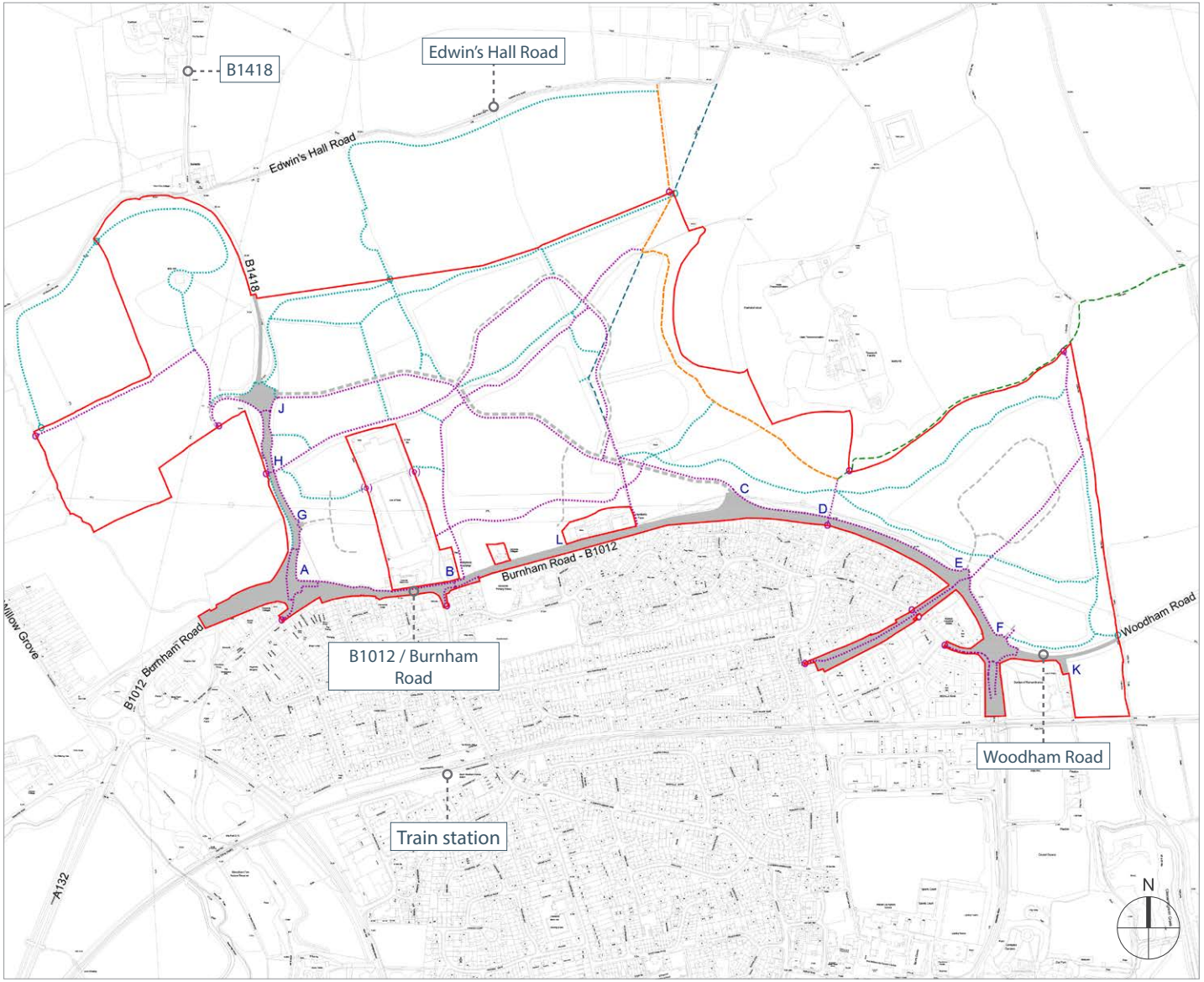


DESIGN

PARAMETER PLAN - ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

This plan shows the locations of vehicular access points into the site, and the indicative alignments of key streets.

It also shows the locations of key pedestrian and cycle access points into the site, and the indicative alignments of key pedestrian and cycle routes.



Extent of application	
Land use - highways and access	
Primary spine street - indicative alignment	
Secondary access street - indicative alignment	
Existing bridleway - retained	
Proposed bridleway route - indicative alignment	
Proposed pedestrian and cycle route - indicative alignment	
Existing pedestrian route - retained	
Proposed pedestrian route - indicative alignment	
Proposed pedestrian and cycle connection point	o
Potential proposed pedestrian and cycle connection point	(o)
Proposed pedestrian connection point	o

Junctions and crossing points to Burnham Road denoted by letters A to F and L. Junctions and crossing points to B1418 denoted by letters A, G, H and J. Junction to Woodham Road denoted by letter K

Controlled crossing points provided at junctions A (Burnham Road and B1418), B (Burnham Road), D (Burnham Road), F (Woodham Road), H (B1418)

Uncontrolled crossing points provided at junctions E (Burnham Road), F (Ferrers Road), J (B1418)

Existing bridleway at crossing point D to be extinguished and replaced by pedestrian and cycle route

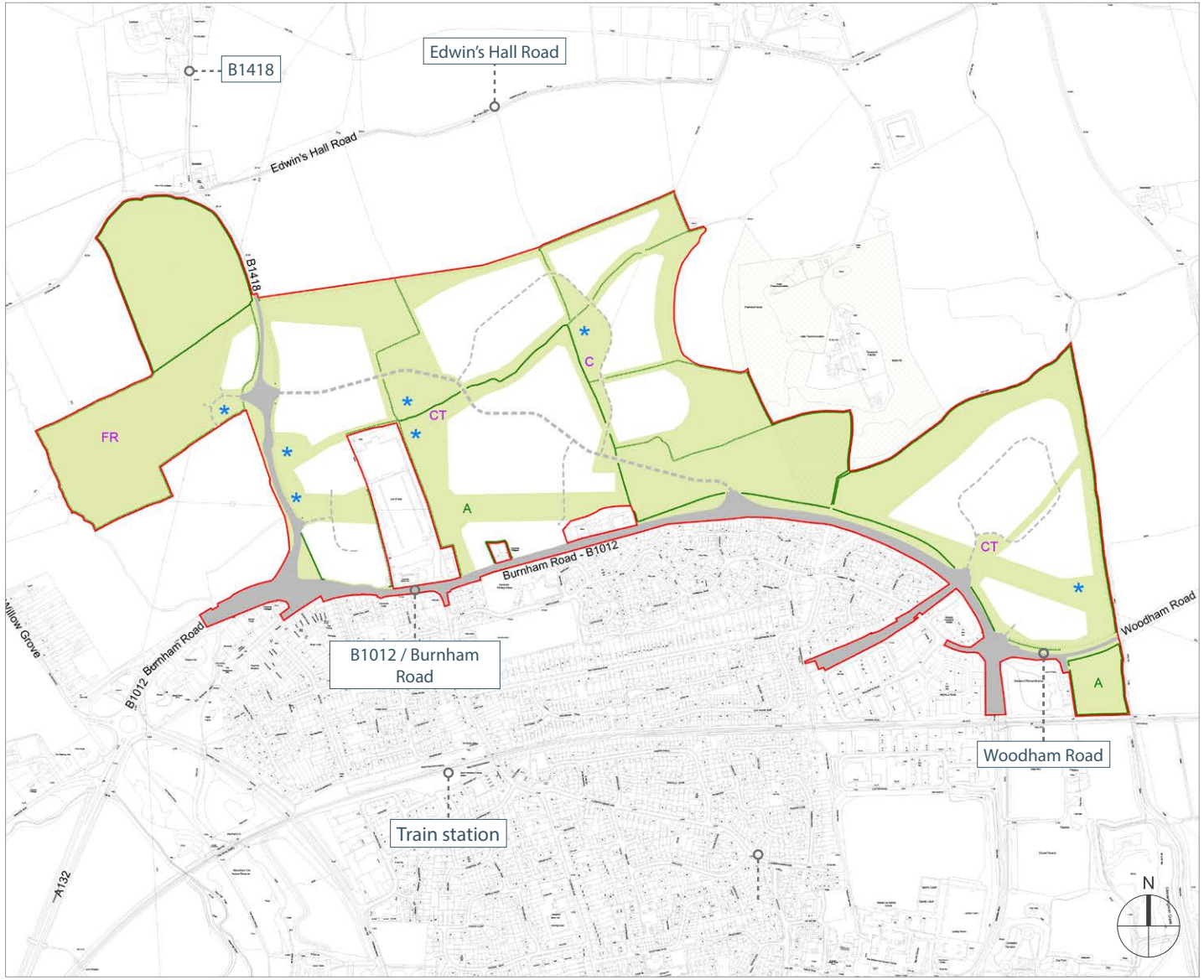
Note: The precise definition of developable boundaries will be determined at Reserved Matters stage. The developable area includes areas of residential, education, mixed use and local centre land uses and will not exceed 41.24 ha.

PARAMETER PLAN - LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACE

This plan shows the extent of open space within the layout as a whole.

Within this, it also shows the extent of land identified for formal recreation provision, as well as indicative locations for play provision, allotments, and sustainable drainage features.

It also shows existing hedgerows where these are retained, as well as key new hedgerow planting, in particular along the site's northern and eastern boundaries.



- Extent of application
- Extent of open space
  Including informal and formal open space, equipped play areas, parkland, woodland, buffer planting, ponds, SUDs features, footpaths, cycle routes and internal roads.
- Extent of land within which formal recreation provision located - not less than 8.59 ha
- Proposed formal recreation provision - broad location — FR
- Proposed play facilities - children and teenagers - broad location — CT
- Proposed play facilities - children - broad location — C
- Proposed allotments - broad location — A
- Proposed sustainable drainage feature - broad location — *
- Existing hedgerow retained (replant small gaps)
- Existing gappy hedgerow retained (replant gaps)

- New hedgerow planting
- Existing Bushy Hill Local Wildlife Site
- Land use - highways and access
- Internal street - Indicative alignment

Note: The precise definition of developable boundaries will be determined at Reserved Matters stage. The developable area includes areas of residential, education, mixed use and local centre land uses and will not exceed 41.24 ha.

DESIGN

ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN

The masterplan opposite shows in an illustrative way how the application parameter plans previously described can generate a high quality design.

The masterplan has been generated by bringing together a number of design strategies:

Drainage strategy

Restricting development to areas of lower flood risk and incorporating a network of SUDS features and swales to limit discharge rates and manage overland flows.

Ecology strategy

Retention and enhancement of important existing habitats, with the creation of additional grassland areas, tree and hedge planting, creation of new ponds, and establishing a lasting management regime.

Landscape strategy

Responding sensitively at the development edges, and structuring the layout around the green grid created by existing watercourses and hedgerows.

The Green Grid

The 'Green Grid' constitutes the spatial framework for the proposed masterplan, providing a comprehensive landscape led structure within which the proposed uses can be distributed.

Desire routes

Identifying key pedestrian and cycle desire routes through the site, together with connection points with the existing town.

Open Space

Provision of a well-connected and distributed network of open space and formal provision, meeting policy requirements whilst maintaining the sensitive northern boundary.

Development areas and land use

The creation of development parcels set within the framework established by the 'Green Grid', incorporating a wide range of residential dwelling types and tenures across the site as a whole, as well as focal community and education facilities, employment, retail and healthcare, with their preferred locations identified.

Access and movement

Creating pedestrian and cycle links responding to identified desire routes and safely connected with the existing town. Provision of vehicular access throughout the proposed development including for public transport

The subsequent pages within this Design and Access Statement describe in an illustrative way and in greater detail the proposed design principles in relation to:

- landscape and open space (including recreation, ecology, non-vehicular access);
- urban design principles (including built character, building relationships, facing materials);
- vehicular access (including illustrative streets typology);
- indicative development phasing.

Key:

1. Village square
2. Community centre
3. Primary school
4. Early years provision
5. Central green corridor
6. Childrens' play facilities
7. Sports pavilion
8. Formal recreation area
9. Allotments
10. Linear orchard
11. Landscaped countryside edge
12. Retained trees and hedgerows
13. Existing stream corridor retained and enhanced
14. Sustainable drainage basins
15. New copses and tree planting
16. New hedge planting
17. Landscaped buffer planting
18. LWS retained and enhanced
19. New wildflower grassland
20. Existing public right of way retained
21. New bridleway
22. Pedestrian and cycle routes
23. Connection with wider countryside routes
24. Existing crossing enhanced
25. New crossing
26. Existing junction enhanced
27. New junction
28. Strong arrival character
29. New homes mixed types and tenures
30. Gateway and focal buildings
31. Spine street frontage
32. Countryside edge frontage
33. Small focal square
34. Potential care home
35. Mixed use area including employment
36. Travelling showpeople provision

Illustrative Masterplan

DESIGN

LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACE

The landscape plays a key role in tying the site together, and forging connections with the existing town. It will:

- Have defined character areas,
- Have a strong identity,
- Be multifunctional, inclusive and sustainable
- Encourage community involvement,
- Have year-round interest,
- Be as attractive to people as it is to wildlife, and
- Promote community integration, informal play and health and well-being.
- Edible landscape - to encourage foraging across the site, edible fruit bearing species will be present in the choice of parkland trees, woodland thickets, hedge mixes, shrubs and planting areas.

Areas of local importance in the landscape

The parkland arc will link the four areas of particular local importance in the landscape; namely Fenn Creek, Mill Hill, Bushy Hill and Saltcoats Park. Of these areas Mill Hill, Bushy Hill and the connecting ridgeline are visually significant. Key views of these areas from the edge of the town and the surrounding landscape are protected and enhanced.

The northern edge of the site was the subject of much analysis in the Northern Boundary Study submitted in determining the extent of the allocation. It is recognised that the form of development proposed and the open spaces created must be sympathetic to this sensitive edge. Building heights would be restricted so as not to be visible over the ridgeline to the north.

The eastern edge of the site is also visually sensitive and will form part of the new gateway into the town. The field boundary is straight so care must be taken to create a sinuous edge to the built form, stepping back in places and punctuated with small open spaces and tree planting.

The Bushy Hill Local Wildlife Site (LWS) forms the green heart to the site. There are opportunities to carefully create pedestrian and cycle links through its lower parts to connect the two parts of the site, without compromising the LWS.

Central green spine

The central water course and treeline forms a strong green spine running through the centre of the site. Similarly, the western watercourse would be retained as the backbone of a strong green infrastructure network. Both retained spines would be enhanced with links to other interconnected open spaces, forming a green infrastructure network that permeates the site. Open spaces would be multi-functional, incorporating amenity space, opportunities for play, SUDS and water management, and biodiversity benefits where possible.

Landscape routes

The proposed landscape routes between the existing town / new development and the wider countryside are formed around existing Public Rights of Way or as connections between areas of particular importance in the landscape, for example the link between Burnham Road and Mill Hill.

North-western edge

The large area of flat ground to the north west of the site near Ilgars Manor contains fewer field boundaries and would be suitable for the provision of formal sports facilities, including the potential relocation of the rugby club. This use forms a soft buffer to the Ilgars Farm complex and a gentle transition to the open countryside beyond. Any pitches here would be unlit.

Retained vegetation

The majority of the existing trees and hedgerows are retained and incorporated into the wider green infrastructure network. Particularly good quality trees identified in the arboricultural survey are celebrated as the focal points of open spaces, on key views or as features in their own right.

Public rights of way

The existing public rights of way (PROW) network within the site would be retained, and enhanced with links to the wider network and within the site, for example connecting the western and eastern parts of the site through the LWS.

A Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) identified a potential increase in recreational pressure on the nearby Crouch and Roach Estuaries (SPA, SAC, RAMSAR). Discussions have taken place with Natural England on the HRA and the provision of wider access to the countryside. Potential additional routes for improved access could link to the high ground at Mill Hill to the west, through the site to the west, and to Edwin's Hall Lane and nearby PROW to the north. Access will be provided throughout the site to allow links to the wider PROW network. These HRA routes fall outside the allocation and would be grassed paths on field edges. By creating suitable routes for walkers on the northern side of the site, the pressure for recreational walking on the more sensitive routes around the estuary can be reduced.

Landscape Strategy

DESIGN

RECREATION STRATEGY

Open space provision

Despite the various constraints within the site there is scope to provide a well-connected network of multi-functional open spaces and formal provision whilst maintaining the sensitive northern boundary. The open space requirement for the masterplan site sets out a minimum of 5.99ha to provide for 1,020 units.

The precise arrangement of open spaces is to be determined but the general distribution is shown opposite. This has been refined through the development of the masterplan. The general location and arrangement of the formal sports facilities is shown.

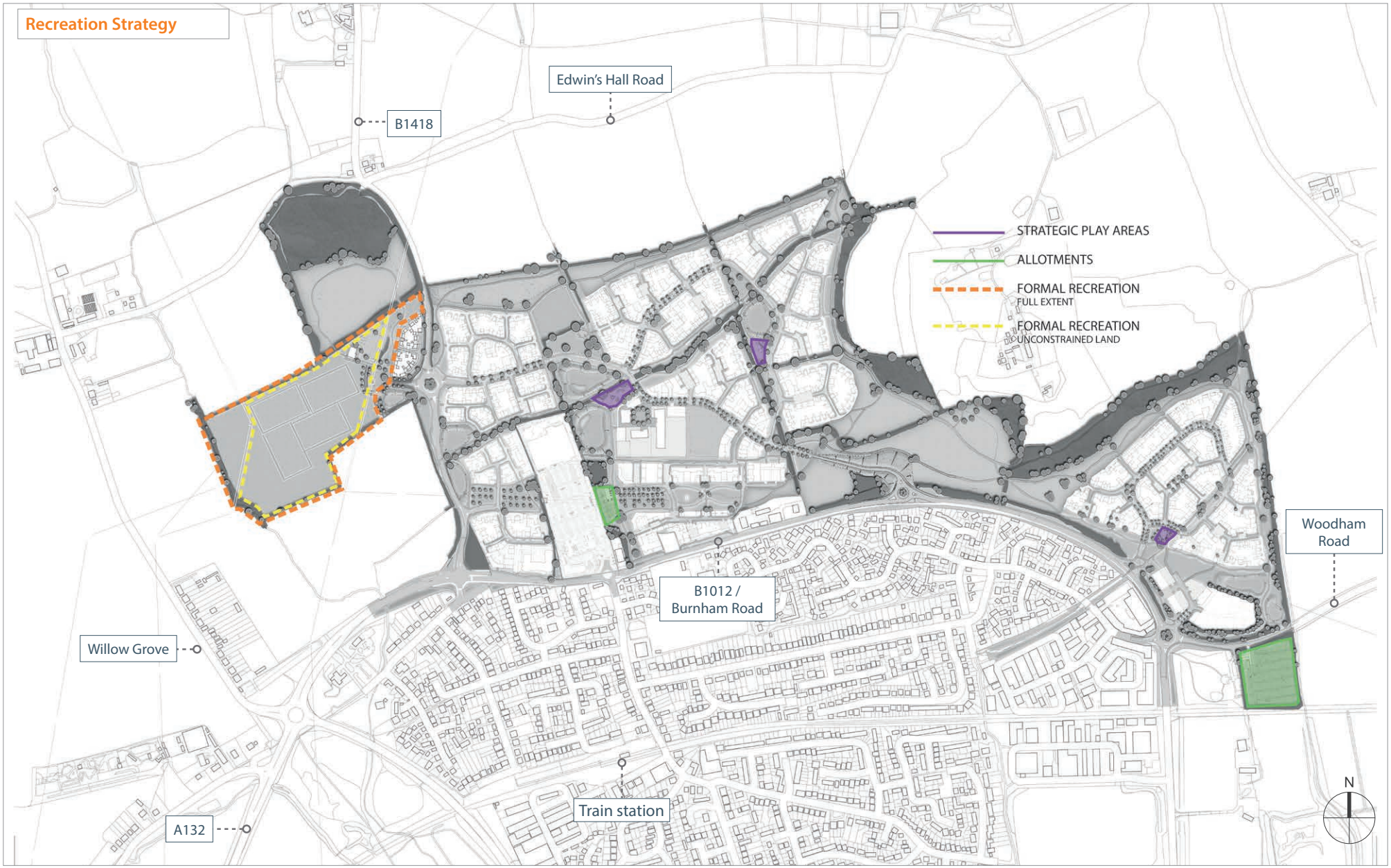
Current standards require 4 ha of formal recreation to provide for 1,020 units. The large area of flat ground to the north west of the site near Ilgar's Manor would be suitable for the provision of the formal playing facilities. This would form a soft buffer to the Ilgar's Farm complex and a gentle transition to the open countryside beyond.

The full extent of this area as identified on the diagram opposite measures 8.19ha, within which an area of 5.4ha is unconstrained for formal recreational use by existing features such as overhead power lines or the stream.

Play spaces would be distributed around the site to give good walkable access to users of all ages. The quantum of space proposed and the content of the play spaces will be compliant with the requirements of the relevant planning policies. Play facilities would be grouped, and form part of larger multi-functional open spaces. Natural play will be encouraged, and the use of natural materials favoured. Opportunities for informal play throughout the site will be maximised, including play trails and trim trails.

Current standards require that a minimum of 0.75ha allotments be provided for 1,020 units. Two areas of allotments are shown within the Central Green Spine and east of the Garden of Remembrance with a combined area of 2.2ha. The wider open space network makes provision for other food growing spaces such as community gardens and orchards.

Precedent examples of play areas, play space and allotments


Recreation Strategy
Edwin's Hall Road
B1418
STRATEGIC PLAY AREAS
ALLOTMENTS
FORMAL RECREATION
FULL EXTENT
FORMAL RECREATION
UNCONSTRAINED LAND
Woodham Road
B1012 / Burnham Road
Willow Grove
Train station
A132
N

DESIGN

ECOLOGY STRATEGY

These pages provide a summary outline of the proposed biodiversity enhancements to be included within the proposed development. For more detail, please refer to the Ecology Strategy report prepared by Geosphere Environmental Limited and submitted as part of this outline planning application.

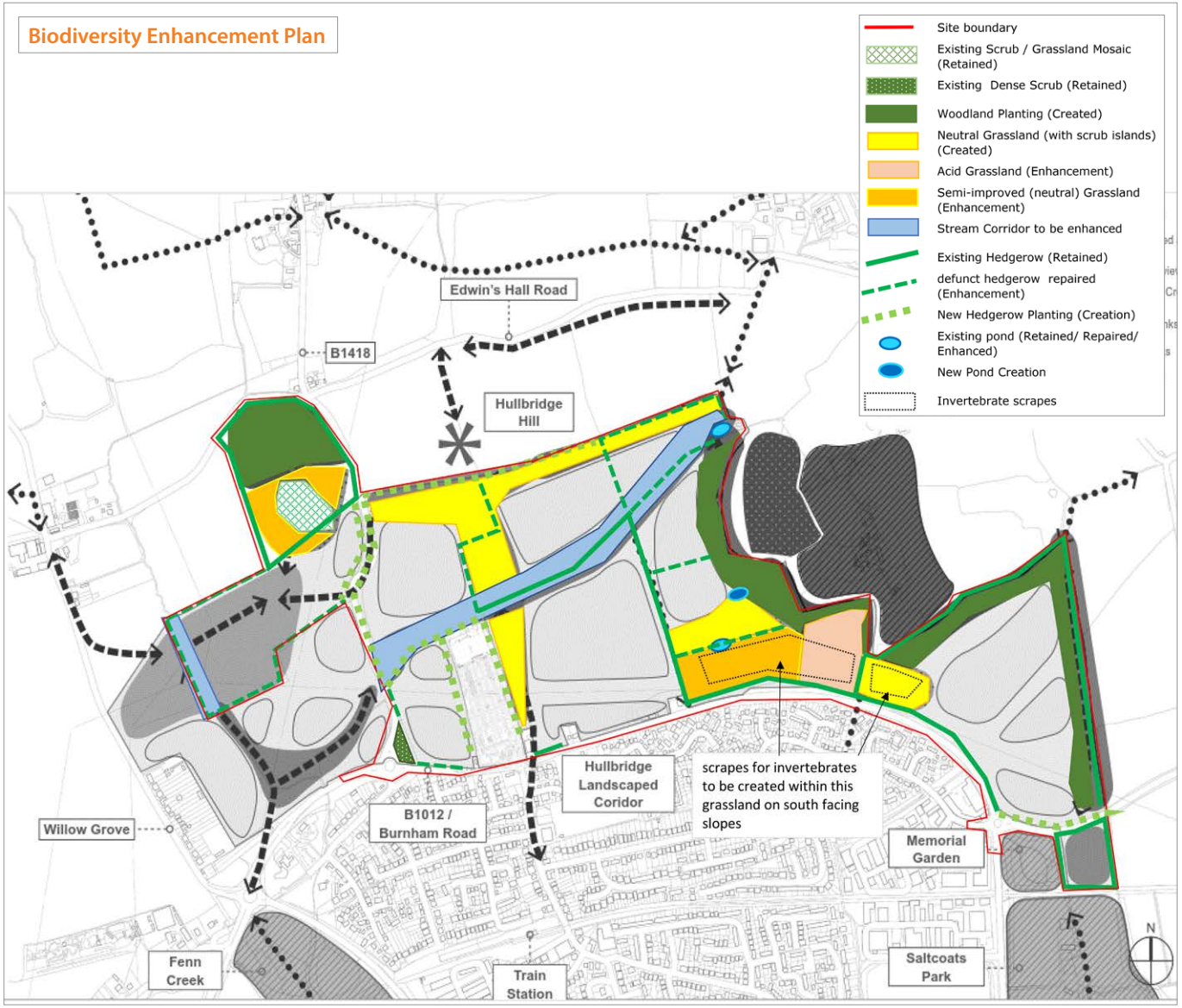
Summary

The proposals include the creation and enhancement of grassland, scrub, woodland, hedgerows, swales and basins, residential gardens and urban landscaping, ponds, and the stream corridor. These enhancements provide a 29.37% Biodiversity Net Gain for area-based habitats, with 23.18% net gain for hedgerows.

Additional features within the site will provide additional habitat enhancement for protected species, with the inclusion of log piles, vegetation piles, bird boxes, and bat boxes.

Grassland

Areas of existing grassland on site will be enhanced to increase the diversity of the sward, followed by long term meadow management of the grasslands. An area of acid grassland has been recorded onsite. This area will be retained and enhanced. New areas of grassland will be created within areas of existing Arable land, followed by long term meadow management of the grasslands.



Scrapes are present within parts of the acid grassland associated with the Bushy Hill Local Wildlife Site. It is proposed to expand these habitats by introducing scrapes into the adjacent grassland areas. The scrapes will be created on south-facing slopes.

Scrub planting

Islands of scrub will be created within the grassland habitats. These islands will create a mosaic of scrub and grassland, providing stepping stone connectivity throughout the area, for species such as bats, reptiles, invertebrates and Great Crested Newt. The scrub planting will comprise of a mix of native species.

Woodland planting

An area of woodland will be created as part of the development. This will include a mix of native species, including a mix of trees and shrubs to create a diverse structure. A wide variety of species should be selected to ensure the new planting is resilient to climate change and pests and diseases.

Planting should be designed to create lots of woodland edges. Patches of scrub should be planted along the boundaries of the woodlands, to create a diverse structure and variety of habitats. Management of the woodland will ensure the ecological value does not degrade over time.

Hedgerows

Hedgerows will be predominantly retained, with a buffer of at least 5m from each side where possible.

The grassland around the base of the hedge will be managed as described above (either as a meadow, field margin, or urban landscaping depending on the situation).

Gaps within hedgerows will be re-planted with native species to provide thicker hedgerows with no gaps.

SUDS Design

Attenuation basins and swales will have shallow, sloping banks, to provide as much area for plants to colonise as possible. As water levels rise and fall this will also provide a variety of habitat conditions.

A variety of substrates should be used within the base of the attenuation basins (such as sections of gravel). Additional habitat features could also be included such as logs, and boulders, where possible. Where possible, parts of the basins should be designed to remain wet at all times to provide additional habitat diversity for invertebrates and plants. The basins will be situated close to the existing ditch network to allow for species already present on site to colonise the SUDS habitats.

The SUDS should be designed such that the water quality of the existing ditches is not affected by drainage on the site. Where possible, the SUDS will be designed to include wetland planting with native species appropriate to the conditions.

Urban Landscaping

Planting within the urban landscaping scheme should be designed to provide additional benefits to wildlife. The planting should aim to provide a diverse mix of structure (height and density), to provide a diverse mix of habitats. Flowering plants should be selected to provide a range of nectaring opportunities for invertebrates, with flowers available through the seasons. Trees and shrubs should be selected to provide fruit and berries.

Patches of dense scrub and evergreen shrubs and trees will provide hibernation and overwintering habitat for hedgehog, reptiles and invertebrates. These areas should not be tidied-up, dead leaves should remain on the ground and dead seed heads should remain on herbaceous plants.

Pond Enhancement

Existing ponds will be retained and enhanced. Ponds should be enhanced / restored if degradation is caused by construction works.

Works to the ponds will need to be managed to best avoid damage to existing wildlife.

Trees and scrub should be removed from the south and west sides of the pond, allowing the pond to receive morning sunlight and therefore stimulating aquatic plant development. The north and east sides of the pond should retain approximately 10-30% of its current vegetation, with the rest removed to prevent overhanging shading. The logs and brash created during vegetation clearance should be piled near the pond, providing good habitat for amphibians.

The existing banks of the pond should be re-profiled to become gently sloping to create a larger area of marginal habitat.

The scrub and hedgerows removed as part of the pond restoration works will be replaced elsewhere onsite.

Once the pond has been fully restored, stock proof fencing should be placed around its perimeter to limit dogs entering the water. Appropriate signage explaining the species present within the pond and its ecological value should be placed upon the fencing to raise awareness amongst the public.

Stream Corridor

The main ditch onsite flows east to west through the centre of the site, with a second ditch flowing north to south along the western boundary of the site. These ditches are all seasonally dry. Other predominantly dry ditches are present within the hedgerows around the site.

A buffer of at least 5m should be maintained between the Proposed Development and the top of the banks of the ditches within the stream corridor, to provide a habitat corridor.

PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE ACCESS STRATEGY

The site is well located in relation to accessibility by means other than the private car; with regular bus routes, which link the site to the town centre and South Woodham Ferrers and Wickford railway stations; and the ability to walk and cycle to a number of local amenities, which will encourage residents of the development to travel by sustainable means, and to create a culture of sustainable travel from the outset.

The plan opposite shows the key pedestrian, cycle and equestrian routes proposed within the development overlaid on the proposed illustrative masterplan.

Pedestrian routes

A network of pedestrian routes are created throughout the proposed layout. These form a key element of street design within the development areas, and also run throughout the network of green spaces and corridors.

As well as enabling good accessibility between residential and non-residential uses within the development, these routes also provide connections through the development, both for residents of the development into the existing town and for residents of the existing town through the development into the wider countryside.

These routes also include permissive pedestrian routes within the agricultural land between the northern boundary of the site and Edwin's Hall Road.

Cycle routes

A network of cycle routes are also created across the proposed layout. These have been carefully arranged to link key destinations within the layout (such as the primary school and village centre) and key desire routes beyond the site. Cycle routes are provided as a key element within the spine streets within the layout, and also within the network of green spaces and corridors.

In addition, the development will Implement a series of cycle improvements from the crossing points on Burnham Road, connecting to key destinations within South Woodham Ferrers. Cycle familiarity training will also be provided for residents.

Equestrian routes

During the masterplanning process, the opportunity was identified to assist with the creation of a new equestrian route linking bridleway 46 (within the eastern part of the site) with bridleway 21 (beyond the western part of the site, leading from Ilgars Manor towards Hyde Hall).

A new bridleway is therefore proposed, forming a continuation of Bridleway 46 northwards across the base of Bushy Hill, across the existing stream, and continuing beyond the site boundary within adjoining land under the applicant's control to Edwin's Hall Road.

Pedestrian and cycle crossing points

The development proposals include for a comprehensive network of pedestrian and cycle links within the development, together with controlled crossing points over the Burnham Road and the B1418. For more details of these see the Transport Assessment. The crossing point locations are identified in summary form overleaf.

Pedestrian and Cycle Access Strategy

DESIGN

CROSSING POINTS

A number of pedestrian and cycle crossing points are proposed, to provide sustainable links to the existing network and facilities:

- Crossing Point 1: Staggered Toucan crossing at the Willow Grove/Ferrers Road/Burnham Road junction;
- Crossing Point 2: Proposed footway / cycleway and island crossings provided at the B1418/Burnham Road junction;
- Crossing Point 3: A Toucan Crossing and footway / cycleway upgrades to existing Hullbridge Road junction;
- Crossing Point 4: A Toucan crossing at existing Bridleway 46 crossing of Burnham Road;
- Crossing Point 5: A new crossing at Burnham Road (Left in/Left out junction);
- Crossing Point 6: A Toucan crossing and other improvements at Burnham Road/ Ferrers Road/ Woodham Road junction;
- Crossing Point 7 – A Toucan Crossing forming part of the B1418/Burnham Road improvements;
- Crossing Point 8 – A Toucan Crossing at a midway point between the new site access roundabout on the B1418 and the B1418/Burnham Road junction;
- Crossing Point 9 – An island crossing north of the new roundabout junction on the B1418.