

Sandy Road, Willington

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

September 2020

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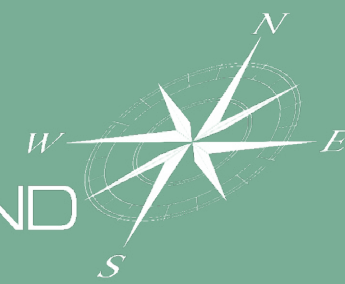
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On Behalf Of:



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01 INTRODUCTION

NDG 10 CHARACTERISTICS: RESPONSE

When one of the 10 characteristics for a well-designed place is addressed throughout this Design and Access Statement (DAS) it is highlighted in a text box and an explanation of how it has been addressed is provided.

1.1 PROJECT BRIEF

The Urbanists was commissioned to prepare an illustrative masterplan and Design and Access Statement to support an outline planning application for land off of Sandy Road (referred to in this document as 'the site') in Willington, Bedford. The outline planning application is for a residential development of up to 50 dwellings with associated public open space which has been chosen by the community as the preferred location for housing development in the village through the Neighbourhood Plan process. The site covers an area of 2.9 hectares and principally comprises open pasture land.

1.2 DOCUMENT AIMS & OBJECTIVES

This Design and Access Statement (DAS) forms part of the outline planning application material for the site. The applicant is Hollins Strategic Land. This DAS describes the background to the project and summarises the extensive design process and considerations that have been taken into account in developing the proposal ensuring a strong sense of character and place whilst also positively contributing towards community and nature.

This document has been informed by a number of environmental studies which examine the site and its context with regard to highways and transportation, ecology, arboriculture, flood risk and drainage, archaeology, noise, ground conditions and utilities. It draws from the following related documents:

- Topographical Survey
- Transport Assessment
- Access Plan
- Agricultural Land Classification Report
- Air Quality Assessment
- Ecological Assessment
- Geophysical Survey
- Historic Environmental Assessment
- Noise Risk Assessment
- Phase 1 Ground Investigation Assessment
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Tree Survey
- Utility Study



National Design Guide 10 Characteristics Diagram

01 INTRODUCTION

1.3 DOCUMENT STRUCTURE

The structure and content of this Statement has been prepared in accordance with the regulatory requirements as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment) Order 2013 (Statutory Instrument 2013 No. 1238) and best practice guidance including the recent National Design Guide. It includes the following Sections:

Section 1: Introduction - The Introduction explains the background information relevant to the project and sets out the overall vision for the development whilst providing an overview of its legislative context.

Section 2: Context Appraisal - The Context Appraisal illustrates the wider setting of the development in terms of transport and movement, access to amenities, its landscape setting as well as the built form and urban fabric in the surrounding areas.

Section 3: Site Appraisal - The site appraisal gives an overview of the site's specific constraints and opportunities in relation to the proposed development.

Section 4: Design - This section explains the key considerations and guiding principles that have informed the development proposal whilst at the same time giving an indication of a potential development layout.



Willington Dovecote and Stables

01 INTRODUCTION

10 CHARACTERISTICS RESPONSE: CONTEXT

This Design and Access Statement (DAS) responds to policy and other material considerations at a local and national level ensuring key policy goals and priorities are reflected within the final design proposals.

1.4 PLANNING CONTEXT

This section of the DAS provides an overview of the national and local policy context relevant to the proposed development. A more detailed examination of key policy considerations can be found within the accompanying Planning Statement.

Key Planning Policy

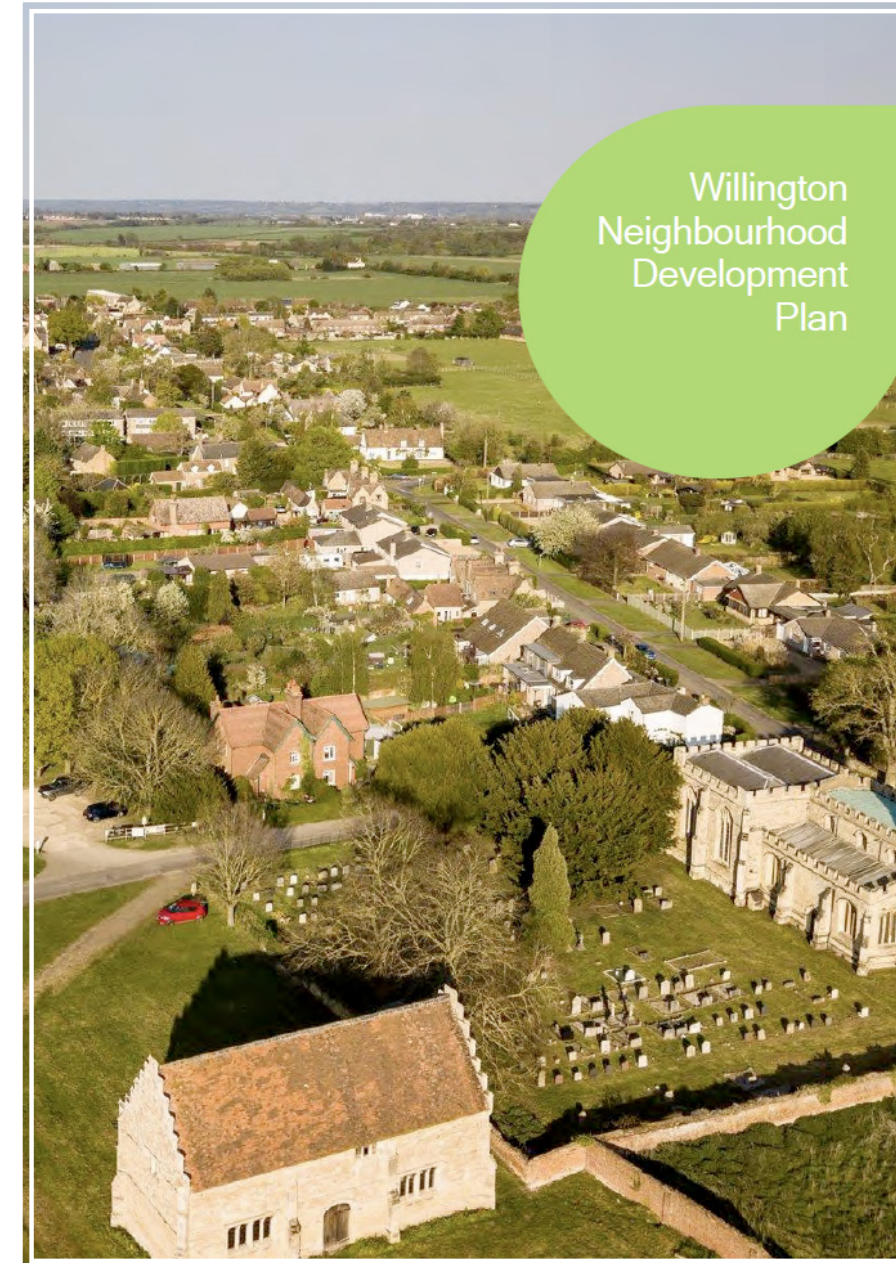
During the formulation of this Design and Access statement particular consideration was given to the consultation draft of the Willington Neighbourhood Development Plan which comprises a series of policies based upon planning requirements and local need, the policies within the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030.

Other relevant material considerations include:

- National Planning Policy Framework ("the Framework")
- National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG);
- Supplementary Planning Documents and Evidence Base documents produced by Bedfordshire Council;
- Relevant Planning Application and Appeal Decisions;
- Willington Green Infrastructure Plan;
- Neighbourhood Plan Survey Results; and,
- Regulation 14 Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan.

Planning History

The planning history for the site is relatively limited with the exception of several years of community engagement with the Parish Council through the Neighbourhood Plan preparation. There have been however, applications in close proximity of the site for change of use of agricultural land to residential garden, one and two storey rear extensions, two storey front extension and erection of detached garage and workshop and extension to Frosts Garden Centre. The site itself is void of any recent applications. A planning application for two dwellings north of Sandy Road (north-east of the site) was approved in 2017 (17/03319/REM).



01 INTRODUCTION

Development Plan

The current adopted development plan consists of the Bedford Local Plan (-2030) adopted in January 2020, as well as made Neighbourhood Plans. It aims to deliver 970 dwellings per annum across the borough.

The Local Plan 2030 identifies Willington as a rural service centre, which have fewer facilities than Key Service Centres and "provide a more localised convenience and service role to meet day to day needs of residents and businesses in the rural areas". Growth in the rural service centres will be more limited to help support local services. For Willington, 25-50 homes, as a minimum, have been identified for delivery through a Neighbourhood Development Plan. The emerging Willington Neighbourhood Plan identifies 63 dwellings to be delivered in the village, of which the site meets up to 50.

Hollins Strategic Land wishes to follow the Neighbourhood Planning process in Willington so as local people have a say on how their village grows and looks.

Green Infrastructure Plan

The Parish has also prepared a Green Infrastructure Plan to help inform policies and objectives in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. The Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have endorsed its findings which involved residents in a series of focused working groups.

Green infrastructure is the network of green spaces, access routes, wildlife habitats, landscapes and historic features which provide:

- A healthy and diverse environment
- Attractive places to live and visit
- A good quality of life
- A sustainable future

The woodland on the site, which is privately owned and not publicly accessible, is identified in the GI Plan as an Orchard. The GI Plan also identified various aspirations for green infrastructure which concluded the need to protect and enhance areas of the Parish including land east and west of Barford Road. Locations were also identified as important views to be retained. The site at Sandy Road is not one of these identified locations. The site offers the opportunity for substantial enhancements to green infrastructure and the provision of public accessibility.

Development of the site can help retain the green space in the heart of the village which was confirmed as a priority within the village.



River Great Ouse

01 INTRODUCTION

Willington Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNDP)

The WNDP sets out the future of the village. Guided by local insight and aspirations, the plan sets out where new housing should be built and what green spaces are important to the community.

Included within the Plan are objectives on key themes such as housing, business development, green space and village assets to ensure that the village can grow in a sustainable manor whilst also ensuring that Willington remains a rural village.

The plan is intended to align with the Bedford Borough Council Local Plan 2030. It has empowered the people of Willington to shape their surroundings, with a concise local neighbourhood plan setting out a positive vision for the future.



Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire

To inform the neighbourhood plan an initial questionnaire to find out from residents and visitors to Willington their likes, dislikes, and how they hope the area will develop in the coming years. Responses to the Questionnaire enabled the Steering Group to identify thoughts on what is good and bad about the village, the environment, housing, facilities, heritage, transport and any other pressing matters people thought worth raising. Key findings from the questionnaire included:

- Access to countryside and community facilities are considered a positive assets as well as the fact the village had retained its small village feel, retained its pub and is generally quiet;
- Concerns for the area included safety in regard to traffic levels and speeds through the village and state of the streets and road infrastructure;
- Local residents are proud of the local architecture and character and recognise a need for affordable housing;
- Overall residents confirmed they were happy with the level and quality of facilities in the village and valued the villages' heritage and identified The Dovecote, Stables and St Lawrence Church as important aspects of heritage in the village; and,
- A local desire to see the bus service improved was also identified through the questionnaire.

Neighbourhood Plan Housing Need Survey

A housing needs survey was also undertaken to inform the neighbourhood plan to identify need for affordable housing in Willington as well as other required housing tenure. In the autumn of 2017 the steering group engaged Bedford Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) to undertake a Housing Needs Survey of the village. This does not take into account needs outside the village in the borough, and those who aspire to live in the village..

The housing type, size and tenure sought by the households in need found that 6 respondents stated they would consider buying on the open market, although all of these were also interested in affordable rental, shared ownership or starter homes as an alternative option. Most of the demand was for 2 bedroom houses with a very smaller demand for bungalows / retirement properties. There was the highest demand for shared ownership properties, followed by affordable rental and starter homes.

There is a demand for open market houses as well as bungalows / retirement housing. The highest demand was for 2 and 3 bedroom properties.

The demand was predominately from households who wish to downsize and are looking for smaller homes. There is also a demand for homes more suited to older people.

Analysis of the data has identified a small need for affordable housing within Willington from households resident in (or with strong links to) the Parish, which is unlikely to be met by normal market provision. The need identified is predominantly from first time buyers but there is also some demand from households looking for properties suitable in retirement.



01 INTRODUCTION

WNDP Vision for Willington

The vision is to encourage the evolution of Willington in terms of local and national needs while maintaining its character and utility for its residents and those employed within the Parish.

The vision aims to maintain Willington's small village character within a strong rural setting by preserving the heritage of the village and protecting areas of historical significance; maintaining thriving natural environment that promotes biodiversity and benefits the whole community.

As part of the vision all future developments within the parish must:

- Show consideration to the scale of surrounding buildings;
- Be sympathetic to the character and positioning of surrounding buildings;
- Be sympathetic to the design of surrounding buildings;
- Be sympathetic to the open space character and density of the village;
- Make an effort to avoid damage to wildlife and to restore and enhance wildlife;
- Provide enough car parking for residents and visitors; and
- Incorporate solar hot water, solar power and rainwater harvesting wherever possible.

Relevant WNDP Core Objectives

The core objectives set out within the WNDP that are relevant to development of the site are summarised below:

- Conserve and enhance Willington's rural character and heritage, protecting and improving features which contribute to this village environment.
- Preserve and improve access to green spaces and the surrounding countryside together with the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure and biodiversity of the surrounding area.
- Move from a net loss of bio-diversity to achieving net gains for nature and the wider environment through the preservation and protection of existing green spaces and the encouragement of domestic scale renewable energy sources.
- Ensure new housing is small in scale within the settlement boundary.
- Ensure that any housing proposals are proportionate in scale and provide a range of different types and size of accommodation to meet the needs of the community, and are of a design which is consistent with the identity and character of the village.
- Ensure good design which conserves and enhances Willington's heritage, with particular regard to the use of sustainable building materials and energy efficiency.
- Meet the objectives of the Borough's housing land supply to the period 2030, the Plan will allocate development for up to 63 dwellings as a Rural Service Area, within the defined settlement boundaries.
- Highway safety, traffic congestion and parking will be addressed to improve movement and safety in and around the village for all road users, including private cars, public transport, cyclists and pedestrians.

Relevant WNDP Policies

There are a number of policies set out within the WNDP that will be taken into consideration as part of the process of producing a design proposal for the site. Relevant policies include:

- Policy W1 – Settlement Policy Area Boundary and Design Principles
- Policy W4 – Housing Delivery
- Policy W5 – Land off Sandy Road
- Policy W8 – Local Housing Needs
- Policy W10 – Residential parking in new developments

As part of the site allocation process of the WNDP Policy W5 identifies 'Land off Sandy Road' as a suitable to provide up to 50 dwellings as it did not fail any of the neighbourhood plan's criteria. Key parameters set out within the policy include:

- The design and layout respects or enhances the surrounding natural, built and historic environment;
- It can be demonstrated that the mix and tenure proposed meets the identified need;
- Parking provision is provided in accordance with Policy W12;
- A green boulevard retaining existing hedgerows is in place along Sandy Road;
- The development retains and enhances the existing pond and woodland area, creating a publicly accessible woodland walk along the Wood Lane boundary;
- Provides safe access and egress from the A603, together with providing any necessary traffic calming measures.

01 INTRODUCTION

10 CHARACTERISTICS RESPONSE: NATURE

The final design proposal includes trees and hedge planting to be incorporated into streets and open spaces in order to create a high quality, green setting for new homes and enhance to the character of the neighbourhood. Whilst this aids in softening the landscape and create an aesthetically pleasing setting it will also contribute towards net biodiversity and offsetting CO² emissions.

1.5 SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

Outline planning permission for up to 50 dwellings with informal and formal open space, including formal open space and associated landscaping and vehicular and pedestrian accesses off Sandy Road. All matters reserved except for principal means of access.

The proposals delivers up to 50 high quality dwellings at an appropriate mix, including detached, semi-detached and terrace style. The proposed houses are set within plots which allow for in-curtilage parking and generously sized gardens, and the layout sits comfortably within the overall built form of the area. These units are at an appropriate scale and at a low-medium density to reflect the character and appearance of the village.

In accordance with the Council's affordable housing requirement set out within the Local Plan 2030, 30% of the dwellings will be provided as affordable working to the Council's assumed dwelling mix (50% 2 bed and 50% 3 bed houses), however the exact tenure mix will be agreed with the Council at a later date.

Vehicular access is proposed from Sandy Road at the central-northern edge of the site with the opportunities to provide new pedestrian access points onto Wood Lane.

Pedestrian and cycle access is also proposed to be taken from Sandy Road at the new Site access, linking through the site to the retained woodland and onto Wood Lane. Ensuring that pedestrian connectivity to the retained green and blue infrastructure assets forms a key part of the proposals, pedestrian footpaths are proposed to run throughout the site and to provide public access to a positive asset currently inaccessible to the village.

Areas of open space are proposed towards the south of the site to support the transition from the developed area to the woodland, including a potential allotment space at the southern corner of the site and play area with strong natural surveillance. These will provide benefits to future and existing residents in the vicinity, and will be linked by footpaths and cycleways. A tree lined spine road will be orientated to provide a clear line of site to the retained woodland area to the south of the site.

Enhancements to the existing vegetation and trees along the northern boundary of the site are proposed to create a green corridor. This new enhanced "green boulevard" along Sandy Road will connects into the village and extend the existing green infrastructure network as well as enhancing the gateway into the village. These proposals are intended to achieve a green gateway scheme, along with highways enhancements, to create an attractive entrance to the village, incorporating safe footways as well as helping to reduce traffic speeds. A buffer will also be maintained to Sandy Road to mitigate noise impact to the site.

Wildlife protection and green infrastructure is a priority with significant long-term management to save the dying green crested newt population and help rejuvenate the poor quality woodland. Some areas will be protected whilst others will be opened up for public access. Retention of the existing tree stock with complementary new planting will enable the development to successfully integrate with the local surroundings.

01 INTRODUCTION



Illustrative Masterplan

02 CONTEXT APPRAISAL

2.1 SITE LOCATION

Wider Context

The town of Bedford is located in Bedfordshire, approximately 70km north of the city of London and 40km west of the city of Cambridge. It has a population of more than 100,000 people. With Bedford being a large town, the site benefits from being close to a wide range of services and facilities.

The site is well connected via public transport, allowing for reaching the Bedford train station within 30 minutes, London Luton Airport in 80 minutes, and London City Centre in 90 minutes. Bus stops on Sandy Road and Bedford Road, a short walking distance from the site, provide a regular service into Bedford town and Biggleswade.

The site is accessible from the A603, which connects to the A421 on the west and to the A1 on the east, providing a quick connection to the closest settlements of Bedford and Sandy. The proximity to the wider road infrastructure also allows for strategic connections to the cities of Cambridge (45 minutes), London (90 minutes) and Birmingham (100 minutes).



02 CONTEXT APPRAISAL

Local Context

As shown by the immediate context plan, the site is nestled within the urban fabric of the village in close proximity to the central junction, surrounded on three sides by homes and a garden centre.

The site sits between Sandy Road to the north and Wood Lane to the South. At north-west and south-east, the site abuts residential dwellings.

Existing residential development fronts the intersection between Bedford Road and Sandy Road, Station Road and Church Road. Further residential development is situated along Willington Road in Cople, at circa 2 Km from the site.

Cycle paths and PROW concentrate to the north of the site, around the River Great Ouse and the woodlands.

With proximity to the town centres of Sandy (5km), Bedford (7Km) and Biggleswade the site has close accessibility to wide range of services.



02 CONTEXT APPRAISAL

2.3 LOCAL AMENITIES AND FACILITIES

The site is in an accessible location for residential development, with some opportunities to travel by non-private modes of transport to a range of essential and everyday destinations. The plan opposite shows the location of local amenities and facilities in proximity to the site. Some pubs/cafés, churches, post offices, garden centres, local grocery stores and the community centre are within 1Km range from the centre of the site. There are also a community centre, garden centres, pubs/cafés and churches. At 2Km from the site, on Willington Road, there is Sheerhatch Primary School.

At only 50m from the site access on Sandy Road, there are bus stops served by the 73 line, that connects to Sandy, Biggleswade and Bedford once every hour in under 20 minutes. Services operate between 6.30am and 8.30pm, thereby making travel by public transport a good alternative to travelling by car for commuting.

Bedford train station is located approximately 7.5 kilometres to the west of the site, and is accessible in approximately 26 minutes via bus from Sandy Road. Services are offered throughout the day, with main services to Brighton via Gatwick Airport (2 trains per hour) and to London St Pancras (2 trains per hour). Less frequent services connect to Corby, Nottingham and Bletchley (1 train per hour).

Sandy train station, at 5Km from the site, is served by a half-hourly Thameslink service southbound to Horsham via London St Pancras and northbound to Peterborough. Both station are served by the bus line 73.



02 CONTEXT APPRAISAL

Health

There are a number of bus services and road links connecting the site to various healthcare facilities in the surrounding context. Queens Park Surgery lies approximately 3.5 kilometres to the west of the site, and London Road Surgery can be reached in 19 minutes via public transport. There are over 12 GP practices in Bedford and over 5 GP practices in Sandy. The Cloves Dental Practice in Sandy is the closest dental practice in Sandy located approximately 25 minutes away by bus to the east of the site. Britannia Pharmacy is located at the centre of Sandy and a large number of pharmacies located around Bedford.

Bedford Hospital, located approximately 7 kilometres to the west of the site, accessible in less than 15 minutes by car, provides both non-emergency care and urgent care services. This is the nearest hospital to the site providing accident and emergency facilities to the site.

Education

There are three educational establishments located with 2 km of the site. Willingtots Pre School is located approximately 750m metres to the north west of the site, and is accessible in 9 minutes on foot. Furthermore, Sheerhatch Primary School is located with 850m to the west of the site, and is accessible in 10 minutes on foot. Sandy Secondary School is the closest secondary school, located approximately 5.5 kilometres to the east of the site, providing secondary education services for Willington. Additionally, Sandy Library, located at the centre of Sandy, provides further educational opportunities and can be accessed via public transport from the site.



Frosts Garden Centre, Willington



The Crown Public House, Willington



St. Lawrence's Church, Willington



Willington Peace Memorial Hall



Bedford Hospital



Sandy Library

02 CONTEXT APPRAISAL

10 CHARACTERISTICS RESPONSE: CONTEXT

The design proposal is informed through the understanding of the context that identifies opportunities for design as well as constraints upon it. Baseline studies of the site and its immediate context identified the risk of noise pollution into the site via Sandy Road and respond appropriately.

Employment and Retail

There are community assets and facilities that the Parish offers including a village shop/post office, the village hall, the playing field, the churches and the village pub which are highly valued by local residents. All local facilities are within walking distance of the site.

The site lies approximately 5.5 kilometres to the west of Sandy Town Centre, which can be accessed via the regular bus service that serves Bedford Road in under 8 minutes. Tesco Sandy Superstore can be accessed in a 19-minute bus ride and is located approximately 6 kilometres to the east of the site. A wide range of facilities, including a post office, a pharmacy, restaurants, cafés and bars are located within Sandy town centre that can be easily accessed via public transport from the application site.

The site also sits approximately 6.5 kilometres to the east of Bedford Town Centre, which can be accessed via the regular bus service that serves Bedford Road in under 19 minutes. Based on the banks of the River Great Ouse, Bedford is home to undercover shopping malls and wide range of cafes, restaurants, bars and clubs, as well as entertainment.

Sandy Business Park is located in the north eastern corner of Sandy which is the site of a significant number of industrial uses, including Marshalls plc and Ashtead Technology. Arkwright Road Industrial Estate and Priory Business Park is located along the eastern outskirts of Bedford and comprises further employment opportunities and facilities within easy access of the site via private or public transport.



Danish Camp, Willington



Willington Post Office



Sandy Tesco Superstore



Arkrwright Road Industrial Estate

02 CONTEXT APPRAISAL

10 CHARACTERISTICS RESPONSE: MOVEMENT

Identification of existing PROWs and National Cycle Routes has informed the design proposals ensuring they tie into the existing network and provide new routes within the site helping reinforce and enhance the existing movement network; creating good connections to key destinations and promoting active travel along routes with low levels of vehicular traffic.

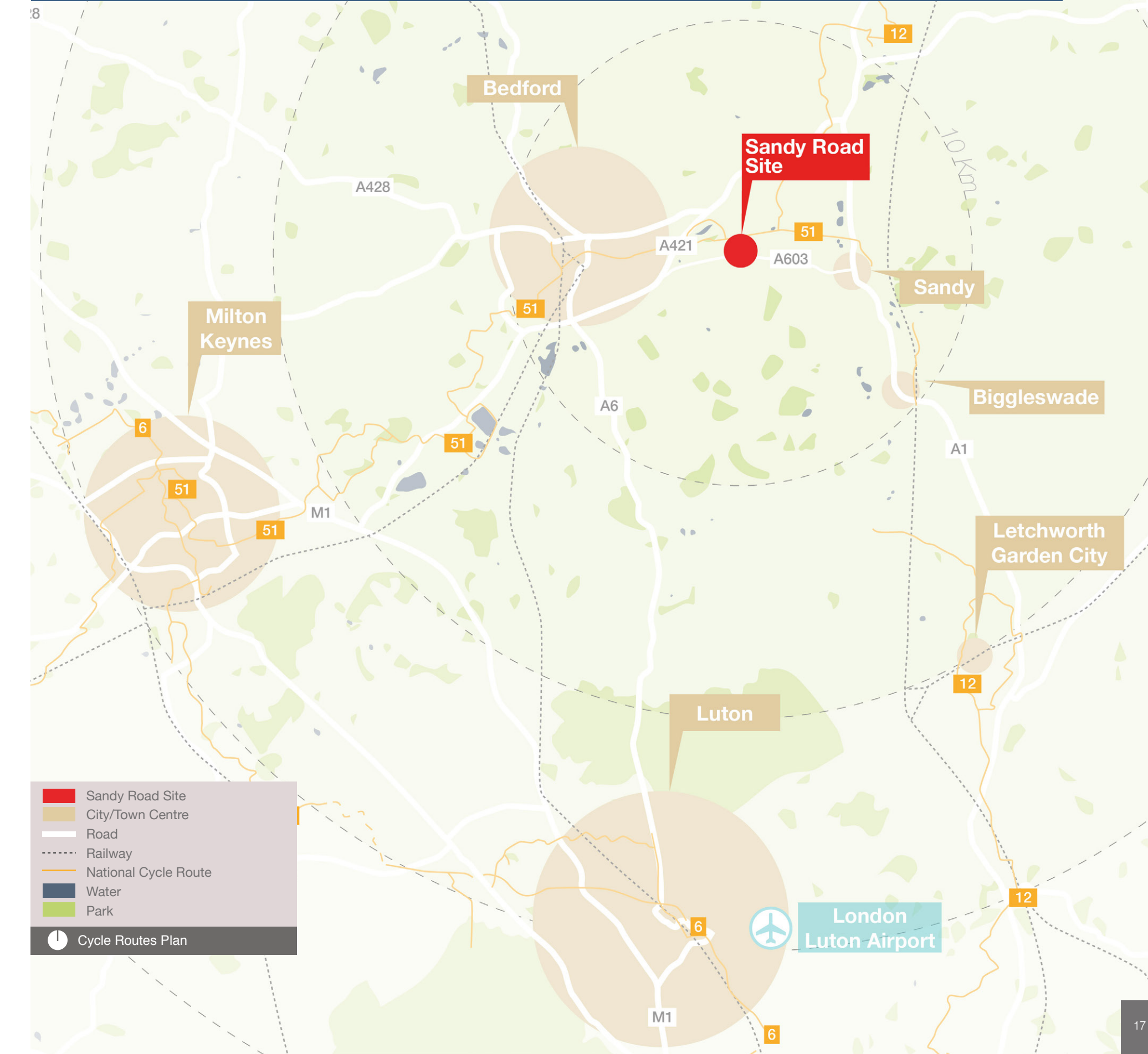
2.4 CYCLE ROUTES

The site is located at circa 800m south from the National Cycle Route 51 that connects Sandy, Bedford and Milton Keynes.

The route is linked to the National Cycle Route 12 to the east and the National Cycle Route 6 to the west.



National Cycle Route 51 Along River Great Ouse



02 CONTEXT APPRAISAL

10 CHARACTERISTICS RESPONSE: IDENTITY

An analysis of the existing built environment of Willington Village has been conducted to provide inspiration and to help create a locally appropriate development. The analysis has helped ensure that the development integrates with and responds to the local context and responds to the grain of the locality.

2.3 LOCAL CHARACTER

The character study is divided into the following analytical headings:

- Urban Form
- Building / Plot Form
- Car Parking
- Open Spaces
- Details and Materials

Urban Form

The village of Willington is set within a landscape which holds evidence of human occupation for a least two thousand years. The beginnings of the village date back to medieval period which results in a village with rich heritage and a number of listed and unique buildings, all contributing towards the sense of place and character of the area.

The most significant period of growth within Willington occurred during the inter-war and post-war period, principally to the south and east of the town centre. The growth was typical of development from this period, principally consisting of a mixture of small cul-de-sacs and infill with semi-detached dwellings laid out on streets. The more historic buildings are concentrated at junctions and along primary streets with comparatively larger setbacks and consist of a mixture of larger detached properties and terraced cottages.

Building / Plot Form

Plot size and built form varies within the town. The older development tends consist more of larger detached properties with some cottage terraces sited towards the centre of large plots. Both historic and more recent properties vary between 1.5 to 2 stories.

The infill 20th century development commonly comprises semi-detached and terrace properties. This type of development is of medium to higher density ranging from moderate to no front garden space. The more recent developments within the village sit towards the front of the plot. The primary streets through the village have a moderate feel of enclosure as a result of mature trees sitting close to the street.



Traditional terrace with interesting roof form with prominent gable features



Thatched property with black timber frame and white render exterior



Recent development with strong frontage to street and corner turning property



Post war cul-de-sac development that relates poorly to the character of the area

02 CONTEXT APPRAISAL

10 CHARACTERISTICS RESPONSE: BUILT FORM

Analysis of the local context and identified the key characteristics of the local urban pattern, grain and scale of buildings and spaces in different situations, which have been used to inform the layout; proposing a new development that fit well into the surrounding context.

Car Parking

In the historic properties within the village have large plots which are able to accommodate on plot parking to the side and front of properties whilst still not dominating the street scene. The cul-de-sacs built in the inter-war and post-war period accommodate cars on plot in front of dwellings. Later development has a mix of on-plot parking with some on-street parking and small parking courtyards.

Open Spaces

The village has a wealth of local amenity space consisting of informal public open space around the areas surrounding Dovecot and Stables, and more formal play facilities at the Willington Peace Memorial Hall. Local facilities are focused towards the northern edge of the village with a good network of recreational walking and cycling links beyond linking Willington to Sandy and Beford.

As part of the formation of the WNDP groups were asked to identify and rank their most important green spaces in the parish:

1. Area surrounding dovecot and stables
2. Walled garden
3. Green space in heart of village
4. Western section of Willington Moat CWS site
5. Grange Estate

Two further local 'sites' were identified but did not receive prioritisation:

- Sheerhatch Wood
- River Great Ouse CWS / corridor



Historic mill conversion with large windows and strong use of yellow brick



Recent development with parking on street and to the front of properties



Sports pitches and children's playground next to village hall



National Trust open space at Willington Dovecote and Stables

02 CONTEXT APPRAISAL



Black timber framework historic property with white wattle and daub walls



Old yellow brick properties with red brick detailing and red clay tile roof

Details And Materials

Willington offers an eclectic pallet of materials and material combinations when it comes to both its historic and more recent structures. There is evidence of historic properties using black timber framework, with white wattle and daub walls using a mixture of clay tile and thatch roofs. Other historic structures use yellow brick and red brick detailing with red clay tiles. In some instances there are some examples of historic properties using black timber framework with red brick infill and red clay tile roofs.

Development within Willington demonstrates the change in building material over the years. Traditional materials became less prominent in the post war era and less sympathetic and more easily accessible materials were used. Dwellings from this time consist primarily of beige bricks with vertical grey tiling and brown concrete tile roofs.

Twentieth century development has contributed towards the villages diversified mix of materials with recent developments adopting more render, timber panels and red brick as prominent exterior materials finishes for their properties. Roof tiles are usually red, grey or brown, and uPVC windows and doors are predominantly white.

Boundaries treatments are again varied, most common treatments including short and tall red brick walls, hedges and timber fence. In some instances boundaries use dear rail fencing or are left open.



Post war era beige brick with vertical tiling and brown concrete tiles



Post war era beige brick with vertical tiling and brown concrete tiles



White render and black timber frame property with red tile roof



Black timber clad properties with red brick base brown tile roof

02 CONTEXT APPRAISAL

2.4 DESIGN REFERENCES

A summary of the character analysis is set out below to ensure the proposed design and layout respects or enhances the surrounding natural, built and historic environment:

Urban Form

Historic properties within the village have moderate to large front gardens with units sited towards the centre of the plot with more recent developments demonstrating smaller front garden spaces between 1 - 2 meters.

The proposed development should adopt a varied approach to building set-back so as to provide interest and changing street scenes with some streets having large set-backs allowing for open space and front gardens and other buildings set closer to the back of pavement.

Building Form and Plots

The scale of properties are predominantly between 1.5 - 2 stories with 2 stories being the most common. Gables, Dormers and Chimneys are common features which provide extra height and could be used to emphasis landmark properties.

The predominant densities vary between 25 - 35 DPH with most properties within the village comprising detached and semi detached typologies. The design proposal could reflect the character of the area with lower densities to the fringe of the development with higher towards the core.

Car parking

On plot parking should be utilised to reflect the surrounding character, however it should be done in a manner that avoids vehicles dominating the public realm visually (preferably to the side on plot parking). If smaller terraced properties are used in the proposal providing small areas of secure rear court yard parking is preferable over on street parking.

The development should accommodate a range of parking solutions to provide for both residents and visitors.

Open Space

The development should contribute towards the villages catalogue of open spaces with a new multifunctional public open space that can support well being for current and future residents and preserve and enhance flora and fauna and wildlife using the principles of net biodiversity gain.

Respond to the existing landscape character by retaining and enhancing the existing pond and woodland area to the south of the site, creating a publicly accessible woodland walk along the Wood Lane boundary. This should be supported by an easy access for all priority foot/cycle link through the scheme.

To respond to the landscape character of Sandy road properties should be set back and a green boulevard created retaining existing hedgerows along the road.

Details And Materials

Walls:

- Yellow Brick*
- White Render
- Black Timber Cladding
- Red Brick*

*Yellow and red brick should predominate with the opportunity to incorporate some rendered properties, and Black timber cladding on landmark Properties.

Roof:

Pitches are generous and include gables to fronts and sides. Roofs are predominantly tiled in red or grey plain or pan tiles.

Curtilage:

Boundary planting and brick walls are predominant, with some dear rail fencing in key locations.

Details:

Dormers and brick chimneys feature regularly on key properties throughout the village creating interesting roof forms. Half hip roofs are also evident.

Porch canopies and bay windows add interest to the front of properties in a number of locations. Red brick sills and lintels around windows and below eaves are a feature that could be used on focal properties and characteristic of the area.

03 SITE APPRAISAL

3.1 SITE DESCRIPTION

As shown by the context plan, the site comprises approximately 2.9 hectares of land and is located within the southern portion of the village, bounded a mixture of homes and by agricultural fields.

To the North-West the plot borders with two houses with large gardens. A 1.2m fence divides the properties there.

The North-East border of the site is defined by a tall hedge with the A603 Sandy Road with the Frost Garden Centre just beyond.

To the South-East is a 1.25 m fence divides the plot from the long and extended gardens of a detached house for half of the length. The other half borders with an agriculturally managed field. Wood Lane, a narrow country road, defines the South-West edge of the site.

The northern portion of the site is open with no physical constraints in contrast to the southern portion of the site is consists of dense tree and shrub cover. The remains of several large greenhouse structures are located within these trees close to the south west boundary.



01 View north towards existing woodland in the southern half of the site



02 View west to existing properties that abut the site



03 View of dense vegetation and tree along southern site boundary



04 View of northern boundary to the Frost Garden Centre and Sandy Road showing relatively flat topography across the site



05 View east to existing property and mature trees that abut the site

03 SITE APPRAISAL

10 CHARACTERISTICS RESPONSE: RESOURCES

Through analysing the site and understanding the features of the site, including the existing woodland and vegetation along the perimeter of the site, the design proposal is able to effectively integrate the existing green features and create new publicly accessible green amenity area for the village and enhance the local landscape character.

KEY

— Site boundary



📍 Photo Location Plan

03 SITE APPRAISAL

3.2 SITE ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

Vehicle Access and Movement

There are two existing vehicular access points into the site from Sandy Road, an A road that forms one of the primary access links from the east into Willington. Sandy Road consists of two carriageways with a width of approximately 6 metres with a footway of around 1.5-2 metres on its northern side. There is currently no street lighting until past the site into Willington and is subject to a 30mph speed limit.

A vehicular access to serve development can provide a safe access and egress from the Sandy Road, together with providing any necessary traffic calming measures. The layout of this access could result in allowing for safe visibility at the junction, whilst encouraging vehicles on Sandy Road to travel at reduced speeds. There is an opportunity to provide a pedestrian access point via Wood Lane; improving accessibility to the woodland and open space within the site.



Site Access off Sandy Road

KEY

↔ Surrounding Roads

⊖ Existing Access

ⓑ Bus Stop



Site Access and Movement Plan

03 SITE APPRAISAL

Pedestrian and Cyclists Access and Movement

A vehicle / pedestrian link can be provided off Sandy Road, allowing good access to the existing woodland area and pond within the site and support pedestrian movement through the site providing more links between Sandy Road and Wood Lane.

Public Transport Access

The nearest bus stops to the site are located on Sandy Road to the west of the site, approximately 100 metres from the centre of the site (around a 1-minute walk) consisting of a bus stop on one side and flag pole on the other. There are additional bus stops along Bedford Road, to the west and Station Road to the North.

The most accessible train station to the site is Sandy which is situated approximately 6.1 kilometres from the centre of the site, approximately a 19-minute bus journey.



Bus stop adjacent site on Sandy Road



Gateway to Willington via Sandy Road



Network of recreational walking routes



National Cycle Route 51 Along River Great Ouse

03 SITE APPRAISAL

3.3 TOPOGRAPHY

As shown in topography plan, the site is generally flat, at an average of 24.40m. Both adjacent streets are around 1m higher than the site, at circa 25-25.4m.



View across the northern half of the site looking East

KEY
 0.2m Contour Lines



Site Topography Plan

03 SITE APPRAISAL

3.4 FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

The Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) prepared by Enzygo Environmental Consultants concludes that:

- The risk of fluvial flooding is assessed as negligible.
- The risk of groundwater flooding is assessed as low for most of the Site and negligible in the eastern corner of the Site.
- The risk of surface water flooding is assessed as negligible for most of the Site, with three areas of low risk associated with surface water ponding.
- The risk of flooding from all other sources is assessed as negligible.


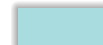
The FRA suggests that flood risk can be mitigated through:

- Set finished floor levels a minimum of +150mm above external levels.
- No below surface habitable buildings (i.e. basements).
- Adoption of a surface water management strategy.
- Lined pond to prevent groundwater ingress.

Surface water runoff from the proposed development would be attenuated on-site up to and including the 1 in 100-year event, plus 40% climate change. Surface water will discharge to the watercourse 280m east of the site.

It is proposed that foul flows will discharge to the public foul sewer along Sandy Road to the north of the Site. Foul flows have been calculated at 2.32l/s.

Further information relating to drainage and flood risk can be found in the FRA prepared by Enzygo submitted as part of this application.

KEY
 Flood Zone 3
 Flood Zone 2



Environment Agency Flood Zones Plan

03 SITE APPRAISAL

3.5 SITE LANDSCAPE

The tree survey revealed 37 items of woody vegetation, comprised of 20 individual trees and 17 groups of trees or hedge groups.

Of the surveyed trees: 6 trees and 3 groups are retention category 'B'; and the remaining 14 trees and 14 groups are retention category 'C' (explanatory details regarding the retention categories are included within Appendix 3).

The significant tree cover within the site consists mainly of distinct areas of dense naturally regenerated groups in the southern half of the site and individual trees and hedgerow groups in the remaining areas of the site, generally close to the boundary lines.

The central areas in the northern half of the site contain little of arboricultural significance, generally consisting of open grassland or a managed agricultural field.

Species diversity at the site is fair. The dominant tree species is Ash, with many Alder, Birch, Elder, Hawthorn, Lime and Willow and the occasional Apple, Beech, Cherry, Hazel, Lilac, Pine, Privet and Walnut. Most of the trees are semi-mature with several early-mature trees.

The higher value retention category 'B' trees and groups should be retained, where possible, and incorporated into any new development design. The retained trees may require protection by fencing in accordance with BS 5837:2012, during the development phase.

Site and Views

The visual character of the site is fairly well contained as a result of the hedgerows that run along the boundary of the site, that significantly restrict views into and out of the site.

Most of the site's trees are located within the relatively dense woodland type groups in the southern areas of the site. The individual trees within these distinct groups are all of lower value; however, they collectively provide comprehensive screening.



03 SITE APPRAISAL

10 CHARACTERISTICS RESPONSE: NATURE

By understanding the weaknesses of the existing biodiversity, and the priorities set out by local policy, the design proposals are able to effectively achieve net biodiversity gain; incorporating new natural features to improve the overall wildlife and green infrastructure with significant long-term management to save the dying green crested newt population.

Landscape Character

The development site is located within the Forest of Marston Vale Forest Plan and the East Marston Clay Vale landscape character area identified in the Bedford Borough Landscape Character Assessment, 2014. This landscape character type exhibits the following key characteristics within the vicinity of the site:

- A large-scale landscape with a low-lying, flat landform providing distant views.
- A predominantly agricultural landscape characterised by large geometric field units with variable field boundaries including remnant hedgerows, scrubby margins and drainage channels.
- Crossed by a number of tributaries of the Rivers Great Ouse, Ivel, Flit and Ousel.
- Land use dominated by arable crop production but with significant areas of land divided up for horse paddocks.
- Active brick-workings have created large scale clay pits and sites restored through capping of workings and landraising such as at Stewartby.
- Large scale industrial features such as the line of chimney stacks (north of Wilstead), the Cardington airship sheds at Shortstown and large distribution warehouses south of Bedford.
- Main transport routes – including the M1, A6, A5, A1M and Midland Mainline Railway have an audible and visual presence in the landscape.
- The Forest of Marston Vale stretching between Bedford, Ampthill and Milton Keynes - one of 12 Community Forests in England.
- Series of lakes formed through restoration of former clay pits to the south of Bedford around Kempston Hardwick.

The overall policy strategy for the landscape character area is to renew/create features of the landscape. The area should continue to provide an open, agricultural setting to Bedford and contrast to the Greensand Ridge. The aim should be to create a high quality urban edge to Bedford and enhance the entrances and gateway to the town. Renewal of features of this landscape including field boundaries, and small scale tree and woodland planting around villages, tributary streams, and farm buildings will strengthen the pattern of the landscape.

The forest of Marston Vale Forest Plan should be referred to as the endorsed strategy for environmentally-led regeneration of this area.

Specific management objectives to be given consideration in the development proposals for the site are to:

- Continue to create areas of woodland in the landscape to enhance the ecological and recreational resource.
- Small scale planting around villages, particularly areas of new development, and around individual farm buildings is a key opportunity and will help integrate these features into the landscape. Seek to limit the use of the coniferous shelterbelt planting that does not respond well to the character or landform of the vale.
- Conserve the areas of existing woodland and apply an appropriate woodland management strategy to enhance their value.
- Conserve the unique, historic character of and the "garden City" vernacular of Shortstown.
- Conserve locally distinctive influences such as the palette of bricks used in buildings.
- Conserve and enhance access and connections from the urban area into the vale. Consider opportunities to create further green infrastructure.



View at the centre of the site looking north



A large-scale landscape with a low-lying, flat landform providing distant views

03 SITE APPRAISAL

3.6 ECOLOGY

A biodiversity survey was not produced for this project, however the Building Biodiversity in Bedford Borough (2009) and the Bedford Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2014) report useful information regarding the ecology of the area where the site is located.

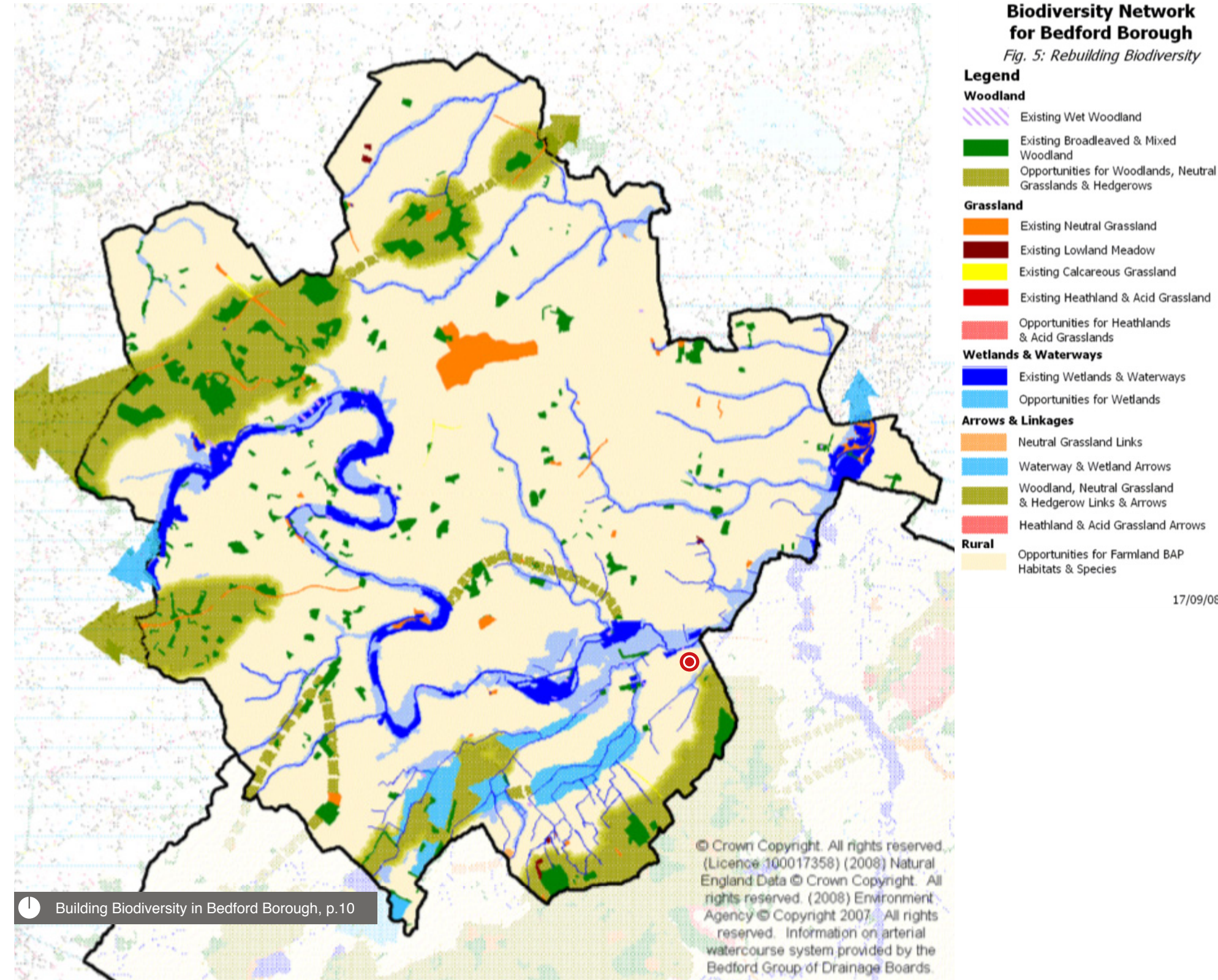
The site falls in the Rural Biodiversity Network with opportunities for Farmland BAP Habitats and Species. Opportunity areas represent key regions for biodiversity, where habitat enhancement, linkage and creation would be most beneficial. This area is characterised by a low lying, mostly open landscape, part of the floodplain of the Great Ouse. Arable farming is the predominant land use with some pasture associated with intervening tributary valleys and around settlements. The Elstow Brook is the main tributary of the Great Ouse - this is the principal feature of biodiversity interest in the area - and supports populations of otter. Farmland is intensively managed and woodland cover is sparse.

The Ecological Assessment by ERAP outlines that residential development at the site can be achieved with no materially adverse effect on designated sites for nature conservation and ecologically valuable habitats. Mitigation for relevant protected species, namely great crested newt and badger, is feasible and will be achieved by the proposals.



Vegetated area within the site providing opportunities to enhance biodiversity

KEY
 Sandy Road Site



Building Biodiversity in Bedford Borough, p.10

03 SITE APPRAISAL

3.7 UTILITIES

A Utility Statement prepared by UCML confirms that whilst there are no utility lines that intersect the site there are existing electricity, gas, water and telecommunications services within the immediate vicinity of the Site, which should have sufficient capacity to serve the development which will be defined and agreed through the application process..

Utilities run outside the boundary along Sandy Road and Wood Lane. There are also watercourses and drainage systems around the site which provide opportunities for surface water runoff.

UCML has identified three existing gas pipelines within the vicinity of the development site, however the report suggests that if part of the site falls in the outer restriction zone, this would not impede the development.

KEY

- Water
- Gas
- Openreach infrastructure
- Virgin



03 SITE APPRAISAL

3.8 GROUND CONDITIONS

Phase I Desk Study Assessment by Brownfield Solution Ltd found that the site has been previously utilised as a nursery with a number of greenhouses in the west of the site. Records suggest an inert/industrial waste landfill may be present intersecting the eastern site boundary.

Should this be present, and development is located in these areas the overall risk to human health is considered to be moderate.

There is considered a moderate / low risk from ground gas due to the presence of made ground associated with the recorded onsite and offsite landfills and gas monitoring is considered necessary to quantify the risk.

The risk from offsite sources of contamination is considered to be low.



3.9 NOISE

REC undertook a Noise Impact Assessment to assess the impact of road traffic sound from the A603, commercial sources, as well as a long-term background and ambient sound survey centrally within the Site.

The developable areas bounding Sandy Road to the north are subject to Medium Risk during the day and night and an Acoustic Design Statement will be required to ensure everything possible has been done to design the layout with acoustics in mind. Additionally, mitigation measures such as acoustic barriers, alternative ventilation and/or higher specification glazing may still be required following this process. All remaining areas of the site are subject to Negligible to Low Risk.

The assessment has indicated that if a stand-off distance of 12m between the nearside road edge of Sandy Road and closest residential receptors is used, all habitable rooms will experience acceptable internal noise levels with standard thermal double glazing.

Due to boundaries with the roads being of Medium Risk, good acoustic design and/or mitigation measures will be required. As such, the adverse impacts of noise will be mitigated and minimised as follows:

- Good Acoustic Design with gardens behind dwellings facing the roads;
- Gaps between dwellings along the boundaries with the roads should be kept to a minimum; and
- Habitable rooms facing away from the noise source or implementation of alternative ventilation systems.

The assessment has shown that the proposed developable areas detailed on the layout are acceptable and suitable levels of noise can be achieved in external and internal areas by way of good acoustic design and/or mitigation measures.

03 SITE APPRAISAL

3.10 AIR QUALITY

The Air Quality Assessment found that air quality is not considered a constraint to planning consent for the proposed development.

Assuming good practice dust control measures are implemented, the residual significance of potential air quality impacts from dust generated by earthworks, construction and trackout activities was predicted to be not significant.

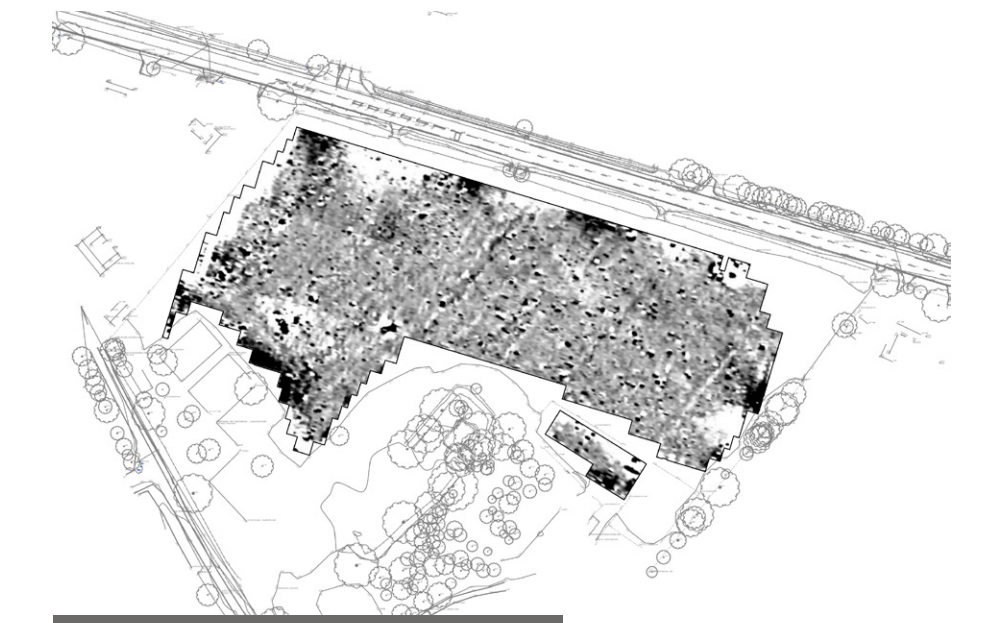
Dispersion modelling was undertaken in order to predict air quality impacts as a result of road vehicle exhaust emissions associated with traffic generated by the development. Results show that the location is considered suitable for the proposed end use without the inclusion of mitigation methods to protect future users from poor air quality.

3.11 ARCHAEOLOGY

The archaeological desk-based assessment by RPS group has established that there are no heritage assets within the study site and that no offsite designated heritage assets are at risk of adverse impacts as a result of proposed development.

Based on the evidence contained within the HER, the study site is considered to have moderate potential for Prehistoric and Roman archaeological evidence and low to nil potential for archaeological evidence of all other periods. However, the geophysical survey did not identify any anomalies of probable or possible archaeological origin. This suggests that archaeological remains are either not present within the study site or that any archaeological remains that are present are of a type that do not respond to geophysical survey.

It is considered that the archaeological potential of the study site can be adequately addressed by an appropriately worded planning condition requiring a phased programme of archaeological work. Such a programme should commence with evaluation trenching.



Geophysical site survey



Frosts Garden Centre, Willington

03 SITE APPRAISAL

3.12 CONSTRAINTS

- Noise generated from Sandy Road will require a 12m offset to provide a suitable buffer and eliminate impact on proposed properties.
- Current vehicles access from Sandy Road is hidden by existing vegetation which would inhibit viability.
- There are a number of category B trees located towards the periphery of the site which should be retained.
- Existing woodland containing a pond encapsulates the majority of the southern portion of the site concentrated at the south of the site.
- Dilapidated greenhouses and structures sit within existing low value vegetation towards the western corner of the site.
- Low risk of flooding from surface water affects the east-south corner of the site.
- There is currently no vehicle or pedestrian access into the site via Wood Lane to the south of the site, restricted by existing vegetation.
- An existing water drainage ditch runs along the northern edge of the site.



03 SITE APPRAISAL

3.13 OPPORTUNITIES

- Introduce a new small roundabout on Sandy Road providing a traffic calming measure and allowing for a new vehicle and pedestrian access into the site
- Create a green boulevard edge along Sandy Road with larger plots fronting the road to mirror existing character and providing new hedgerow and native tree planting.
- Retain and enhance existing Category B of trees and vegetation reinforcing towards the landscape character of the site.
- Enhance and integrate the existing woodland into the scheme to provide a pleasant and accessible amenity for the development, with paths, natural play, benches and biodiversity spots.
- Create an integrated water management system that discharge on the existing drainage at the north of the site.
- Provide better quality green infrastructure ecological pond and corridors to support net biodiversity gain.
- Create views into site from Sandy Road towards the existing woodland to celebrate and better capitalise on the villages green assets
- Contribute towards new highway improvements along Sandy Road and Barford Road including rumble strips to compliment speed cameras, footway widening, refuge upgrade and improved road markings.
- Provide new outdoor community play space and allotment space.



04 DESIGN PROPOSALS

10 CHARACTERISTICS RESPONSE: LIFESPAN

The design proposal offers a wide range of communal spaces that are visible and clearly defined ensuring a feeling of strong accessibility, safety and ownership to their intended users.

10 CHARACTERISTICS RESPONSE: PUBLIC SPACES

A hierarchy of spaces that range from large and strategic to small and local spaces including a new outdoor gym or play area to serve new and existing young and old residents and new woodland walk improving connectivity from the village to Wood Lane.

4.1 ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN

The illustrative masterplan to the right shows the proposed approach for the development of the site. The plan achieves 50 homes with 1.06ha of public open space as well as meeting the policy aspirations in the emerging Willington Neighbourhood Plan.

Ecology, landscape and heritage are at the heart of the masterplan and have played important roles in the formation for the final design proposal masterplan. Understanding of the sites character and setting has informed the design decisions within the masterplan and formed the basis of a responsive development that compliments the local character of the area and responds sensitively to the surrounding landscape context.

The illustrative masterplan is informed by the retention of existing green and blue infrastructure that encapsulate the southern half of the site, and around the perimeter of the site. Natural buffers have been provided as part with development with strong natural surveillance where possible to encourage connectivity through the site to the wider landscape beyond.

The development will incorporate a variety in densities and house types to create character areas within the scheme and inform a urban hierarchy and delivers a high quality development that meets the site and policy requirements whilst reflecting with the local context.

In summary the masterplan development provides the following:

- Provision of 50 new market and affordable homes close to local services and existing and proposed employment areas;
- Provision of high quality housing with a range of house types, sizes and tenures, including 30% affordable housing that responds to locally identified needs.
- Provision of new and enhanced existing community facilities and services, including new play space;
- Strong improved accessibility to the adjacent bus stops, Sandy town centre and National Cycle Network Route 41 through providing new vehicle and pedestrian links onto Sandy Road;
- Development set up around a primary spine road through the centre of the site with secondary and tertiary routes towards the edges of the site forming permeable and legible street hierarchy;
- A proposed residential form that achieves an urban core and rural edge through appropriate densities, architectural forms / details and public realm treatments reflective of the surrounding character;
- Provision of large public open space in the southern half of the site including a LAP (Local Area of Play) and Woodland Walk;
- Integration of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) through provision of an attenuation basin in the southern corner of the site;
- Retention, management and enhancement of existing hedgerows towards the edge of the site with new hedgerow and tree planting and of existing woodland to promote biodiversity, integrate the development with the existing landscape character and mitigate the loss of any vegetation;
- Improved views into the site from Sandy Road along a green boulevard towards the enhanced woodland area and helping ensure improved visibility of green infrastructure and ecological link;
- Creation of a green boulevard edge along Sandy Road with larger plots fronting the road to mirror existing character and providing new hedgerow and native tree planting



Illustrative Masterplan

LAND BUDGET TABLE	
Gross Developable Area	1.82 ha (63.64%)
- Net Developable Area	1.65 ha (57.69%)
Public Open Space and Woodland (including formal play)	1.04 ha (37.06%)
- Attenuation Basins	0.07 ha (2.45%)
Total Site Area	2.86 ha

04 DESIGN PROPOSALS

4.2 ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

Vehicle Access and Movement

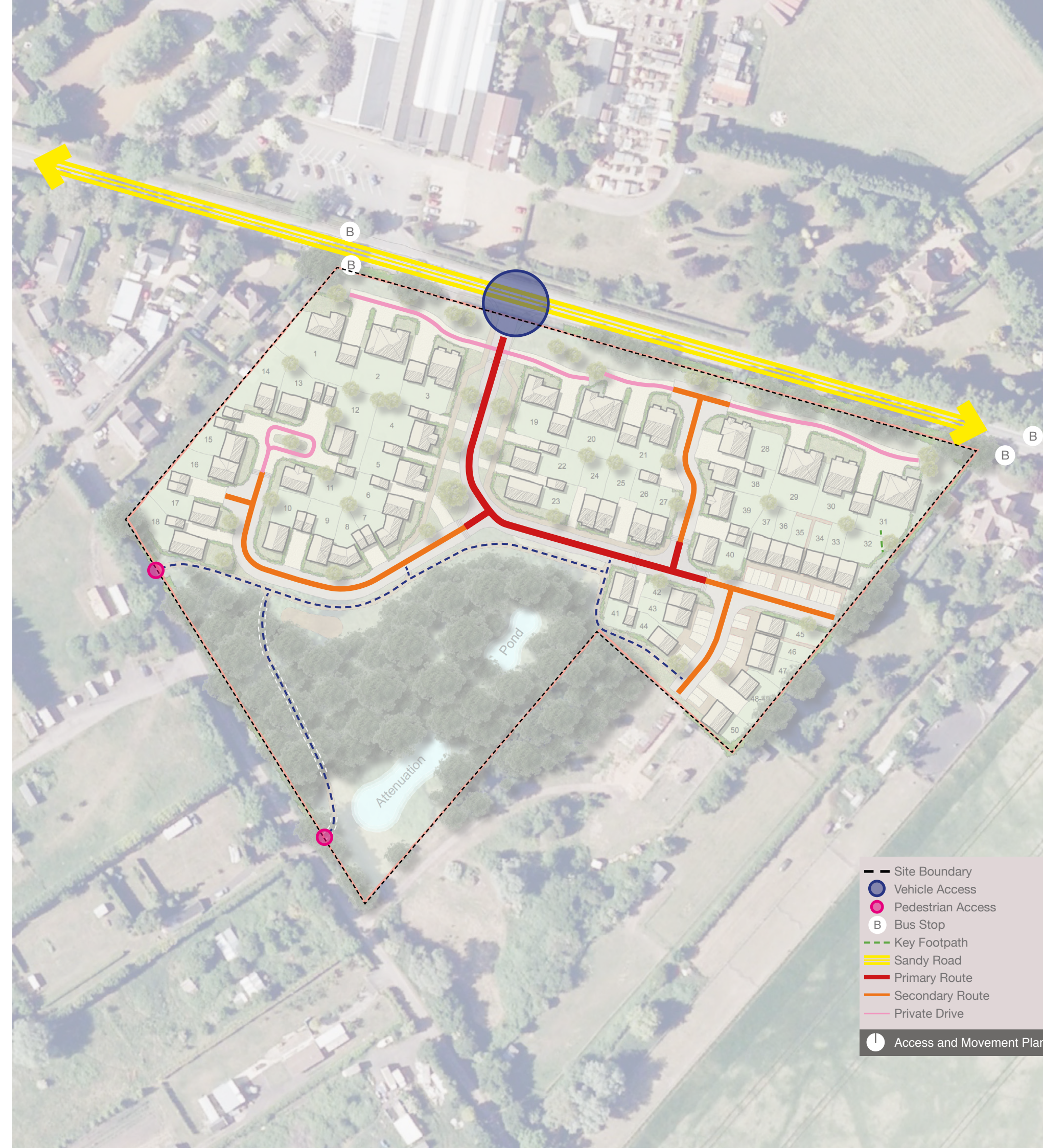
The sole vehicle access to the proposed development will be taken from Sandy Road, at the mid-northern point of the site via a new small roundabout arrangement. As well as a traffic calming measure the access arrangement and Sandy Road improvements also provides access for pedestrians and cyclists, with potential for a new pedestrian crossing located to the west of the junction aiding pedestrian movement across Sandy Road.

The site access' public realm material pallet should respond to current rural character of the village utilising a sympathetic material and colour pallet, such as, a buff coloured heavy-duty bound tar mac surfacing or buff paving.

The vehicle movement network defines a clear pattern of streets that are designed to limit and control vehicles speeds with natural traffic calming measures through restricted amounts of straight roads, strategically placed turning radius and raised tables at junctions. Secondary streets and private drives serve the majority of the development providing less vehicle dominant environments in order to promote activity and social interaction in the public realm; contributing to health, well-being, accessibility and inclusion.

Hedge planting along plot boundaries and tree planting along the streets have been incorporated to soften the public realm and soften the impact of car parking.

Vehicle permeability is second to pedestrian and cyclist movement limiting the impacts of car use; prioritising and encouraging walking, cycling and public transport, mitigating impacts and identifying opportunities to improve air quality.



04 DESIGN PROPOSALS

10 CHARACTERISTICS RESPONSE: MOVEMENT

A pedestrian and cyclist orientated environment is achieved through this design proposal. The movement pattern provides a network of paths capable of facilitating both pedestrian and cyclist movement throughout the site and vehicle parking is located predominantly to the side of properties to avoid dominating the public realm.

Pedestrians and Cyclists

Pedestrian connectivity forms an integral part of the development, with a proposed footpath running along the spine road into the site providing a new connection between Sandy Road and Wood Lane. Key footpaths and been proposed throughout the site's green spaces / woodland with maximum natural surveillance through direct sight lines where possible to ensure strong pedestrian permeability. The delivery of these routes are designed to be safe, direct, convenient and accessible for people of all abilities.

Strong accessibility to the existing bus stops and Garden Centre on Sandy Road, as well as the River Great Ouse which is located approximately 0.8 km (about 10 minutes walk) to the north and network of public rights of way to the south is achieved through the provision of three pedestrian and cyclists access points into the site ensure to the north and south.

As previously highlighted National Cycle Network Route 41 along the River Great Ouse connects the site with Bedford, Neots and the wider national cycle network. Vehicle speeds within the site are proposed to be limited to 20mph on all streets providing a safe environments for cyclists to use the roads.



Overlooked Segregated Pedestrian and Cyclist Route



Informal Path Through POS



Tree and hedge planted Public Realm Masking Parked Vehicles and Softening the Environment

04 DESIGN PROPOSALS

4.3 LANDSCAPE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The illustrative masterplan provides approximately 1.06ha of open space which includes a mixture of natural and designed high quality public open spaces integrating existing and new natural features into a multifunctional network that supports quality of place, biodiversity and water management, and addresses climate change mitigation and resilience.

The landscape and green infrastructure plan to the right illustrates the green infrastructure retained on site and proposed new landscape features.

Existing Vegetation

The proposal aims to retain all category B trees in site. There are no category A trees on site. Where trees have been removed suitable replacements are proposed elsewhere within the proposed development to mitigate this loss.

The existing hedgerows located along the perimeter of the site are to be retained and enhanced with more substantial hedge and tree planting. Limited removal of perimeter hedgerows on the northern and southern edge of the site is proposed to allow for pedestrian and vehicle access into the site.

A tree lined street with green verges is proposed through the centre of the site going north south; providing clear views from Sandy road to the retained woodland and providing an ecological corridor through the centre of the site.

The proposal retains and enhances green infrastructure providing buffer planting to the northern development edge to help integrate with the existing landscape and mimic the existing landscape character; minimising the visual prominence of the development.

Tree hedge planting is proposed along primary, secondary and tertiary streets to soften the public realm and filter landscape into the development area.



- Site Boundary
- Natural Play Area / Outdoor Gym Area
- Woodland Walk
- Retained and Enhanced Hedges
- Retained Trees
- Proposed Trees
- Public Open Space
- Attenuation Basin
- Pond
- Landscape and Green Infrastructure Plan

04 DESIGN PROPOSALS

10 CHARACTERISTICS RESPONSE: NATURE

Proposed streets and open spaces incorporate sustainable drainage systems and trees to create a high quality green setting for new homes and contribute to the character of the area. Strong provision of new accessible woodland and green space in close proximity to proposed and existing homes which will contribute towards well-being for the area providing value space for social interaction.

Public Open Space Provision

The landscape and green infrastructure plan illustrates the extent of proposed high quality, green open spaces with a variety of landscapes and activities, including natural play within the scheme. The proposal exceeds the open space requirements for 50 homes as set out by Bedford's Open Space Supplementary Planning document.

There are Four key open spaces in total that make up this proposal, each has its own role and functions to suite a diverse range of needs contributing towards the overall legibility of the layout:

- Green Boulevard
- Woodland Edge
- Enhanced Woodland
- Informal Natural Space

Provision of these spaces will support a range of activities, provide strong amenity value, opportunities for formal and informal play, exercise and rest that is accessible to existing and future residents.

Green Boulevard

A new enhanced "green boulevard" along Sandy Road which connects into the village will extend the existing green infrastructure network as well as enhancing the gateway into the village. This green gateway scheme, along with highways enhancements, would create an attractive entrance to the village, incorporating safe footways as well as helping to reduce traffic speeds.

Whilst the space is visible from Sandy Road proposed homes are set back out of sight in line with existing homes. The set back of the homes provides a green buffer to noise from Sandy Road and avoids homes being visually prominent. Properties front onto the space providing natural surveillance ensuring a safe environment. The topography of the site make this space a suitable location for bio-swales to support local ecology and the overall on site sustainable urban drainage.

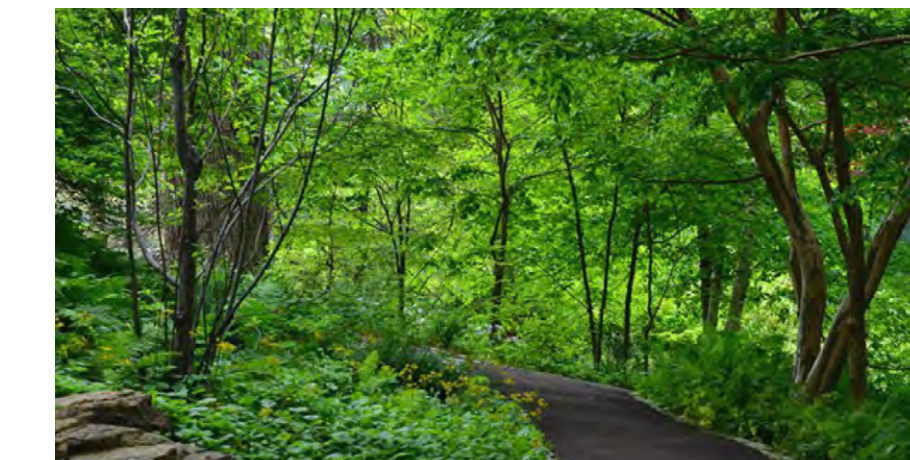
Informal Natural Space

The informal natural space provides a large area open space to the south of the woodland and benefits aesthetically from the proximity to the established mature vegetation all around. The new pedestrian links and access points makes this space a vital link between the development area and Woodland. A number of pedestrian paths are proposed through the space providing strong natural surveillance. The character of the space is informal in response to its edge of settlement location and adjacent context.

Enhanced Woodland

The illustrative masterplan retains are large amount of existing woodland located to the south of the site and proposes new planting to enhance the green asset and ensure net biodiversity gain; creating new habitats in a complimentary way with the development.

An ecological/green street is proposed through the centre of the site to ensure a permeable and connected ecosystem between the woodland and green space to the north of the site. Wildlife and green infrastructure is a priority for the woodland area with interventions within the woodland and pond save the dying green crested newt population and help rejuvenate the poor quality woodland. Some areas of the woodland will be protected whilst others will be opened up for public access.



Woodland path

Woodland Edge & Attenuation

The woodland edge will provide a highly accessible and safe location at the centre of the site with high levels of natural surveillance. The space's highly accessible location makes its suitable home for and natural play provision or outdoor gym facilities within the site.

SUDS is proposed to manage excess runoff from the development, comprising an attenuation basin system designed to maintain runoff at pre-development rates. The basin is located at the lowest end of the site to the south and will offer attractive landscape features as well as a sustainable drainage solution.



Natural Play Area

04 DESIGN PROPOSALS

4.4 TOWNSCAPE PLAN

The townscape plan to the right illustrates the two-dimensional pattern / arrangement of the proposed development blocks, streets buildings and open spaces. These have been arranged in a manner as to ensure these elements compliment one another to create an attractive place to live and work with a strong sense of place. Consideration towards movement desire lines through the site, green infrastructure requirements and landscape character have also informed the development structure.

The development pattern provides a coherent framework that identifies key views and vistas and addresses them with landmark structures aiding legibility and way-finding through the development.

Primary frontages are particularly prominent and critical to the impact and appearance of the development and the public realm. Strong frontage is prioritised along open spaces and nodal points to ensure that these prominent spaces have a building frontage which helps create a distinctive quality and character.

Key spaces and a clear hierarchy of routes / intersections have been proposed to increase the legibility of development. Building and layout design, planting and views are utilised to form visual focal points and create legible routes.

Focal buildings are located at the termination of vistas, development entrances or within key spaces. The inclusion of these homes with increased scale or distinctive architecture will add variety and interest to the appearance of the development, provide points of focus within the street scene and help people find their way round the site.

Buildings at key corner locations will also become focal points and provide animation and surveillance to both sides of the building facing the public realm.



04 DESIGN PROPOSALS

10 CHARACTERISTICS RESPONSE: BUILT FORM

The urban pattern accommodates environments providing destinations and opportunities for community cohesion. The spaces are accessible to all and allow for existing and future residents to meet, share experiences and come together as a community.

The secondary nodal spaces act as a series of distinctive spaces creating legibility and adding variety to the built form. These spaces are predominately more hard landscaped spaces forming focal points for the new community and incorporating tree planting and varying hard surfaces treatment to add interest.

One of the most notable aspects of the development is the range and quality of key landscape spaces. The green infrastructure provides a positive setting for buildings in a natural context and creates opportunities for buildings to look onto a strong natural environment.

Perimeter block principles strongly inform the design of the development providing a frontage to the public realm as much as possible whilst protecting the amenity of existing residents. This approach provides continuity and assists in defining the public realm, promotes an active street scene and helps to create a safe and attractive environment. The new development will provide frontage over the proposed areas of public open space and capitalise on views towards existing mature green infrastructure.

The gateway spaces into the site are punctuated by landmark structures and spaces with memorable features characteristic of the 'village' creating a strong sense of place. These spaces will provide an attractive entrances into the proposed development and enhances its overall legibility.



Positive boundary treatment and interface between properties and open space



Focal buildings terminating views and vistas



Strong frontage and enclosure onto green space



Corner unit providing active frontage and interest to the street

04 DESIGN PROPOSALS

4.5 CHARACTER AREAS PLAN

In order to ensure the proposal creates a strong sense of place and responds positively to its context three character areas have been defined. The character areas plan to the right indicates the extents of the character areas that have been identified as part of this design proposal:

- Green Boulevard;
- Cottage Quarter
- Woodland Edge

The proposed development utilises and incorporates the distinctive and positive street typologies, spaces, materials and architectural details that have been identified through the review of Wellington.

The Green Boulevard, Urban Core and Woodland Edge areas have their own set of individual design rules, creating distinct areas of the site including:

- Built form principles;
- Changes in height;
- Set backs;
- Landscape treatments;
- Architectural detailing; and,
- Colour and use of materials.



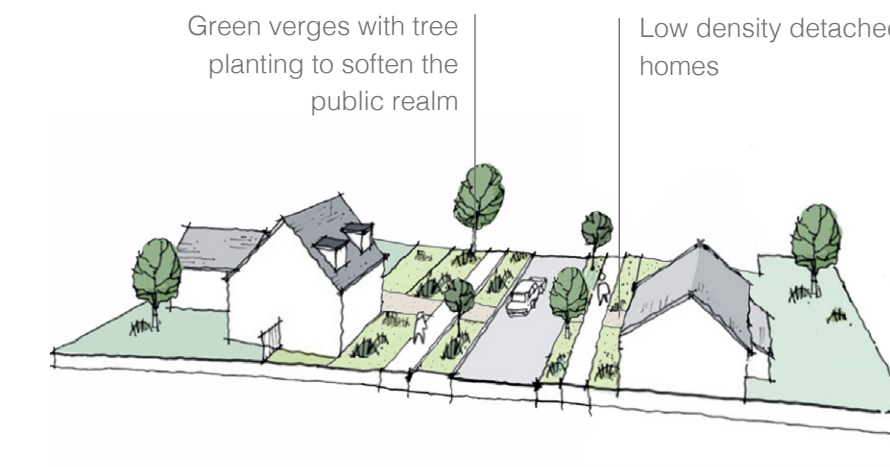
04 DESIGN PROPOSALS

Green Boulevard

The northern edge fronting the Sandy Road to the north of the site should reflect the existing village urban and landscape character characteristic of this approach into the village.

The built form within this character area proposes a generally looser development pattern thus creating a less formal and more landscape dominated settlement fringe. Homes will be predominantly larger detached and arranged in a more informal manner fronting onto the open space and create a positive outlook. Homes in this character area will achieve more generous plots to enable larger front gardens with tree planting and will be set back to typical building line along Sandy Road.

Boundary treatments such as vegetation, brick walls, rail fencing or left open are suitable to be used to help define private front amenity areas. The use of on street or in front of property parking is not be suitable for this character area, thus all parking provision will be located on plot to the side of the associated home.



Central boulevard street section

Woodland Edge

The southern edge of the developable area fronting the open space and woodland in the southern half of the site should provide a transition between the built form and the open space with plenty of soft landscaping through the use of streets tree and green verges.

The built form within this character area proposes a mix of detached and semi-detached properties providing a looser development pattern than that recommended within the urban core areas. Homes will be moderately sized and arranged in a manner to create a strong edge the development area and maximise on views towards the woodland and high levels of natural surveillance. The public realm should be pedestrian orientated and designed to restrict vehicle speeds and facilitate social interaction.

Boundary treatments such as vegetation, timber bollards or timber post and short brick walls should be used to help define private front amenity areas. The use of on street or in front of property parking is not be suitable for this character area, thus all parking provision will be located on plot to the side of the associated home.



Illustrative green edge section

Cottage Quarter

The cottage quarter will cover a small portion of the site in the eastern area and draws upon the higher density cottage terraces that can be found within the village.

The built form will vary in terms of dwelling sizes, but will generally consist of terrace and semi detached dwellings creating a strong building line providing active frontage to routes through the site and providing visual aides to strengthen legibility.

Homes in this character area will maintain a consistent set back to the back edge of the pavement with allowance being made for primarily small front amenity spaces providing defensible space to the proposed homes.

Variations in the roofscape will be created through subtle variations within the building heights and through the inclusion of gable elements and chimneys. Public areas will be clearly defined from private through the use of consistent boundary treatments, such as low planted hedges and may include elements of on street planting.



Illustrative secondary street section

04 DESIGN PROPOSALS

10 CHARACTERISTICS RESPONSE: USES

This proposal enables provision of a variety and choices of homes to suit all needs and ages. This includes people who require affordable housing or other rental homes. The proposal is also able to deliver a tenure neutral scheme where there is no segregation or difference in quality between tenures by siting, accessibility, environmental conditions, external facade or materials.

Building Heights

The proposed development height and massing responds to the sites context and key spaces consisting predominantly of 2 storey homes placed near to the existing urban form and along the development perimeter to minimise the impact of new development on existing residents and to the areas of open space. 2.5 storey homes are recommended to be used in key locations to provide distinctiveness in street scenes including:

- To terminate key vistas;
- To define key public open spaces;
- Within the formal, central core of the development.

Housing Mix

The proposals will deliver up to 50 high quality dwellings at an appropriate mix, including detached, semi-detached and terrace typologies. 30% of the dwellings will be provided as affordable, however the exact tenure mix can be agreed with the Council in accordance with Core Policy 45 at a later date. An element of affordable housing will be provided within the development in a series of small clusters. These will include affordable rented, shared ownership and low cost/reduced cost market housing, details of the precise tenure arrangements will be submitted at Reserved Matters Stage through consultation with the Planning Authority and will be informed by the affordable housing provisions. The mix will be in line with the Housing Need Survey Report to help meet needs quickly within five years and at a low-medium density to match the existing character.

Car Parking

Residential Parking is to be located conveniently close to dwellings and in accordance with local planning policy requirements guidance contained within Manual for Streets. Proposed is primarily of on-plot parking appropriate to the category of street, with visitor parking distributed efficiently over the site.

Any on-street parking is to be designed with the inclusion of street trees, planting features and consideration should be given as to how it can add activity to the streetscene without dominating the environment.

On-plot parking will generally be located to the side or front of properties, and innovative solutions should be explored in order to make efficient use of land.

Bedford's Residential Parking Standards for residential Use sets out the following maximum commercial car parking standards The minimum car parking standards for residential development are:

- 1 bedroom – one space per dwelling;
- 2-3 bedroom – two spaces per dwelling;
- 4+ bedrooms – three spaces per dwelling; and
- Visitor parking – 0.4 spaces per dwelling allocated.

Wherever possible parking will be provided in accordance with the current standards established within the adopted Planning Policy.



04 DESIGN PROPOSALS

10 CHARACTERISTICS RESPONSE: RESOURCES

The layout accommodates a compact and walkable neighbourhood that supports health and well-being. It uses land efficiently provides space for sustaining natural ecosystems and minimises flood risk and the potential impact of flooding.

Sustainability

The masterplan supports and promotes a sustainable lifestyle and health and well-being through providing for sustainable travel via pleasant and direct pedestrian and cycle routes and new outdoor woodland amenity space. The proposed development aims to create an accessible and permeable environment that aids way-finding and encourages physical activity with the provision of space for a natural play area / outdoor gym.

The proposed layout facilitates a close connection between the development and the site's natural assets, providing attractive spaces integrated with the green and blue infrastructure of the site. Public open spaces are well-connected and easily accessible throughout the development, catering for a range of uses including recreation, relaxation and play. The green environment therefore aims to offer social and community benefits for residents but also enhances biodiversity and ecology.

Biodiversity and green infrastructure have been a key consideration for the proposals and have been retained and enhanced where possible with the development to promote the concept of community identity.

The masterplan facilitates the development of a variety of house types, tenures and densities to reflect local needs and create a diverse community. The streets and spaces aim to encourage social interaction and community identity and pride through a shared sense of ownership.

It is anticipated that the development will provide high quality homes with the potential for a range of low and zero carbon design solutions that will stand the test of time.

Community Safety

Community safety and security are essential ingredients to the creation of a successful and sustainable development. Clear urban design principles have been adopted based on a dialogue with a selection of key stakeholders prior to the application, resulting in a robust and legible layout with sustainable community principles at its heart and responding to the need to reduce crime and enhance community safety.

Some of the key benefits of the masterplan vision which will assist in enhancing community safety are:

- Improving links with the wider community and local assets using effective engagement and participation by local people, groups and businesses in the planning, design and long-term stewardship of the development;
- Creating inclusive, well designed, high quality public open spaces whilst maximising active frontages and natural surveillance through development orientation;
- Creating a clear distinction between public and private spaces with appropriate boundary treatments; these can take the form of physical barriers such as dwarf walls, fences or hedges, or more subtle psychological barriers such as change in paving and materiality or landscaping.
- Catering for a healthy mix of people of different ages, lifestyles and economic status through a variety and range of housing types in terms of dwelling size, type, tenure and affordability.



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10 CHARACTERISTICS RESPONSE: LIFESPAN

The proposals provides amenity space for personalisation to improve sense of ownership for home owners and clearly defined the boundaries between private, shared and public spaces, making it more likely that occupants will use, value and take ownership of them.

4.6 APPEARANCE

The surrounding context provides positive elements this proposal can draw upon in order to create a development that contributes towards the local character and identity of Willington. The typical building forms, features and materials identified as part of the contextual analysis is used to inform the proposals to the right with regard to public realm and building treatments to create a positive and coherent identity that residents and local communities can identify with.

GREEN BOULEVARD	
Density	Low Density (15 - 25 dpha).
Building Height	2 storey with limited roof detailing.
Layout Structure	Predominantly less dense large detached dwellings with more open frontage towards edges and green spaces.
Streetscape / Public Realm	More organic built line onto open spaces. Predominantly Tarmac for main carriageways with potentially paving at key nodal points. Resin bound gravel for private drives.
Landscape	Comparatively more rural setting with significantly more soft landscaping and open space with potential for landscaping and tree planting in open spaces and front gardens.
Architectural Design	Gabled roofs, gable end frontages, and use of dormer windows on focal buildings.
Illustrative Materials	Walls: predominantly yellow brick with some white/ off-white render with some red brick detailing. Stone timber frame potentially used in key strategic locations. Roofs: red or brown tiles.
Boundary Treatments	Predominantly left open.

The table below provides an overview of the recommendations around appearance for the site for both character areas.

COTTAGE QUARTER	
Density	Medium Density (25 - 35 dpha).
Building Height	Predominantly 2 storey with some 2.5 storey at focal points and along primary route.
Layout Structure	Mix of terrace, semi-detached and detached dwellings with strong frontage and enclosure onto primary road and secondary spaces/ nodal points.
Streetscape / Public Realm	Relatively uniform built line along linear streets to be broken up by increased height/gable fronted corner buildings. Predominantly Tarmac for main carriageways with potentially paving at key nodal points.
Landscape	Comparatively more urban environment with potential for landscaping and tree planting at nodal points and along streets to break up on street parking and in front gardens
Architectural Design	Gabled roofs, gable end frontages, and use of dormer windows on 2.5 storey dwellings
Illustrative Materials	Walls: predominantly yellow or red brick Roofs: red or brown tiles.
Boundary Treatments	Predominantly low hedge boundaries

WOODLAND EDGE	
Density	Low-Medium Density (20 - 30 dpha)
Building Height	Predominantly 2 storey with some 2.5 storey at focal points and along primary route
Layout Structure	Predominantly less dense large detached dwellings with more open frontage towards edges and green spaces
Streetscape / Public Realm	Relatively uniform built line along linear streets to be broken up by increased height/gable fronted corner buildings. Mixture of tarmac and paving for main carriageways with paving at key nodal points and shared streets. Resin bound gravel for private drives.
Landscape	Comparatively more rural setting with significantly more soft landscaping and open space with potential for landscaping and tree planting along secondary streets, private drives and in front gardens
Architectural Design	Gabled roofs, gable end frontages, and use of dormer windows on 2.5 storey dwellings
Illustrative Materials	Walls: predominantly white/ off-white render with some yellow brick and black timber cladding potentially used in key strategic locations / on landmark structures Roofs: red or brown tiles.
Boundary Treatments	Mixture of hedge boundaries with dwarf brick walls and hedge in key strategic locations / on landmark structures

04 DESIGN PROPOSALS

10 CHARACTERISTICS RESPONSE: BUILT FORM

The design proposals considers the scale of surrounding buildings and are sympathetic to the character and positioning of surrounding buildings as well as be sympathetic to the open space character and typical density of the village.



Open spaces



Material palettes



House forms and detailing



Boundary treatments

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4.7 DESIGN EVOLUTION

The proposal outlined within this DAS has undergone numerous iterations and evolution as a result of feedback gained via key stakeholders and through public consultation events as part of the Neighbourhood Planning preparation. The plan to the right illustrates the initial concept proposed for the site which was used as part of the initial vision document prepared to aid ongoing discussions with Willington Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and the Parish to help inform the site selection consultation process.

- 1 Road access taken from Sandy Road with right turn lane into site.
- 2 Up to 50 (low-medium density) affordable and market to help meet needs identified in the Housing Needs Survey Report.
- 3 Pond and woodland area enhanced in perpetuity to save dying newt population.
- 4 New better quality green infrastructure, ecological pond and woodland walk.
- 5 Provision of green infrastructure within the development to provide ecological corridors.
- 6 View into site from Sandy Road opened up, providing view of existing woodland.
- 7 New pedestrian footway and safe refuge area along Sandy Road.
- 8 Hedgerow and new native tree planting to enhance green infrastructure along Sandy Road.
- 9 Development set back to imitate existing character of properties along Sandy Road.
- 10 Footway connections into Wood Lane allowing public access through the woodland walk, play area, as well as connections into the wider attractive countryside public rights of way.
- 11 New highway improvements including rumble strips to compliment speed cameras, footway widening, refuge upgrade on Barford Road and improved road markings.
- 12 New public play area or outdoor gym for all.
- 13 Walking corridor along Wood Lane enhanced with green infrastructure improvements.
- 14 Community allotment provision.



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The concept plan to the right illustrates the most recent iteration of the design approach to the site. The bullet point below highlight the key design changes:

1. Use a small roundabout on Sandy Road to provide a traffic calming measure and allowing for a new vehicle and pedestrian access into the site.
2. Shifting the vehicle access northward to create a more direct view onto existing woodland within the site.
3. Remove allotment space in order to retain larger woodland area.
4. Introduce a new attenuation basin on site to the south of the woodland to support sustainable urban drainage.
5. Provide a green boulevard into the site.





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