

**Alternatives**

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## 5 Alternatives

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### 5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The EIA Regulations require an ES to include an outline of the main alternatives studied by the Applicants and an indication of the main reasons for the choice made, taking into account the environmental effects. As described in the Scoping Report, alternatives fall within four main categories:

- 'Do Nothing': i.e. the proposed development is not implemented in any form, the baseline condition continues on its current trends. This is not appropriate in this case as the proposed development site is allocated in adopted planning policies for the uses set out in Chapter 4. As such there is a clear mandate for development of the type proposed. This category is therefore not considered any further.
- A different location: the proposed development could be located somewhere else. Note however, that in terms of the requirements of the EIA Regulations this is limited to the alternatives considered by the developer. If a developer owns a site, it is often unreasonable to expect them to consider development on another site that is outside of their control. This is the case for the proposed development where the site has been allocated in adopted planning policies. This category is therefore not considered any further.
- A different design: all development goes through a design evolution where alternative scales, mass and quantum of development are considered, often in the context of a site's constraints and opportunities. The broad scale and nature of the proposed development have been set out in adopted planning policies. However, there is potential for this to be implemented in a variety of ways. This is considered further below.
- Different construction and operational characteristics: these characteristics can involve limiting working hours, transport routes, restricting certain goods that can be sold in any retail outlets etc. These are considered as appropriate throughout the ES.

5.1.2 Consequently, the analysis below focusses on the evolution of the layout of the proposed development. Further analysis is provided in the Design and Access Statement that also accompanies the planning application.

### 5.2 Identification of Environmental Constraints

5.2.1 Through the EIA the following constraints on development were identified:

- Great Wilsey Farm Scheduled Monument adjacent to the centre of the site.
- Substantial woodland blocks and important hedgerows within the site.
- A distinct valley topography.
- A watercourse flowing through the centre of the site.
- The importance of maintaining a visual gap between the proposed development and Kedington.
- A notable bat population using a number of routes through the site.

5.2.2 These constraints do not prevent the sustainable development of the site but rather comprise features that need to be accommodated in the design.

### 5.3 The 2013 Concept Masterplan

5.3.1 An emerging masterplan was produced in August 2013 to inform the emerging Haverhill Vision document (Figure 5.1). Whilst it is only an initial concept, this version was produced on the basis of considerable background analysis, particularly in terms of the landscape impact and the importance of maintaining the existing woodland blocks.

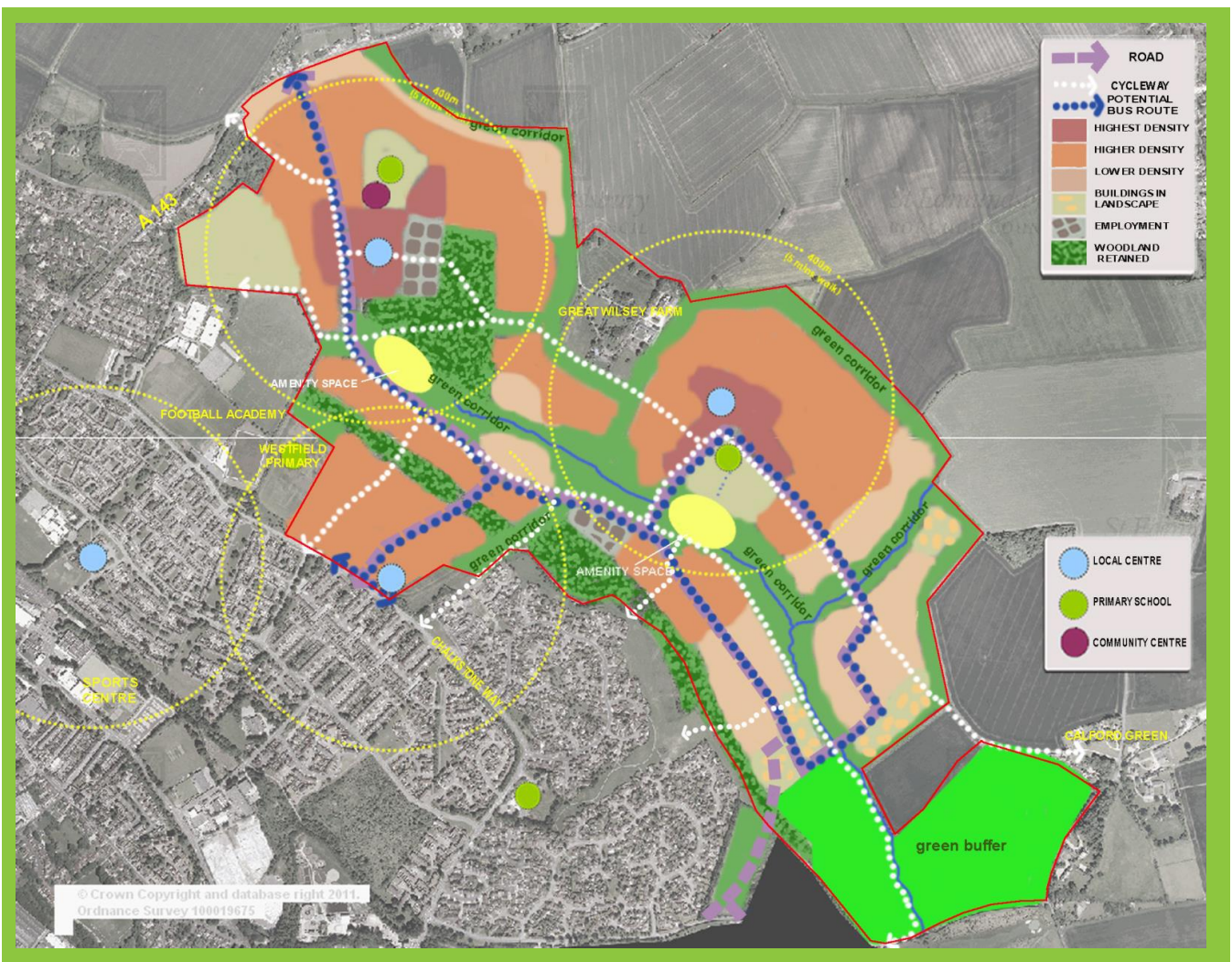
**Figure 5.1: The 2013 Concept Masterplan**



## 5.4 Haverhill Vision 2031 Concept Plan

5.4.1 The final adopted Haverhill Vision document included a much broader concept plan that was largely based on the ethos of the 2013 concept plan. Various uses have moved slightly but overall the distribution and scale of development was the same as envisaged in the previous plan.

**Figure 5.2: Haverhill Vision 2031 Concept Plan**

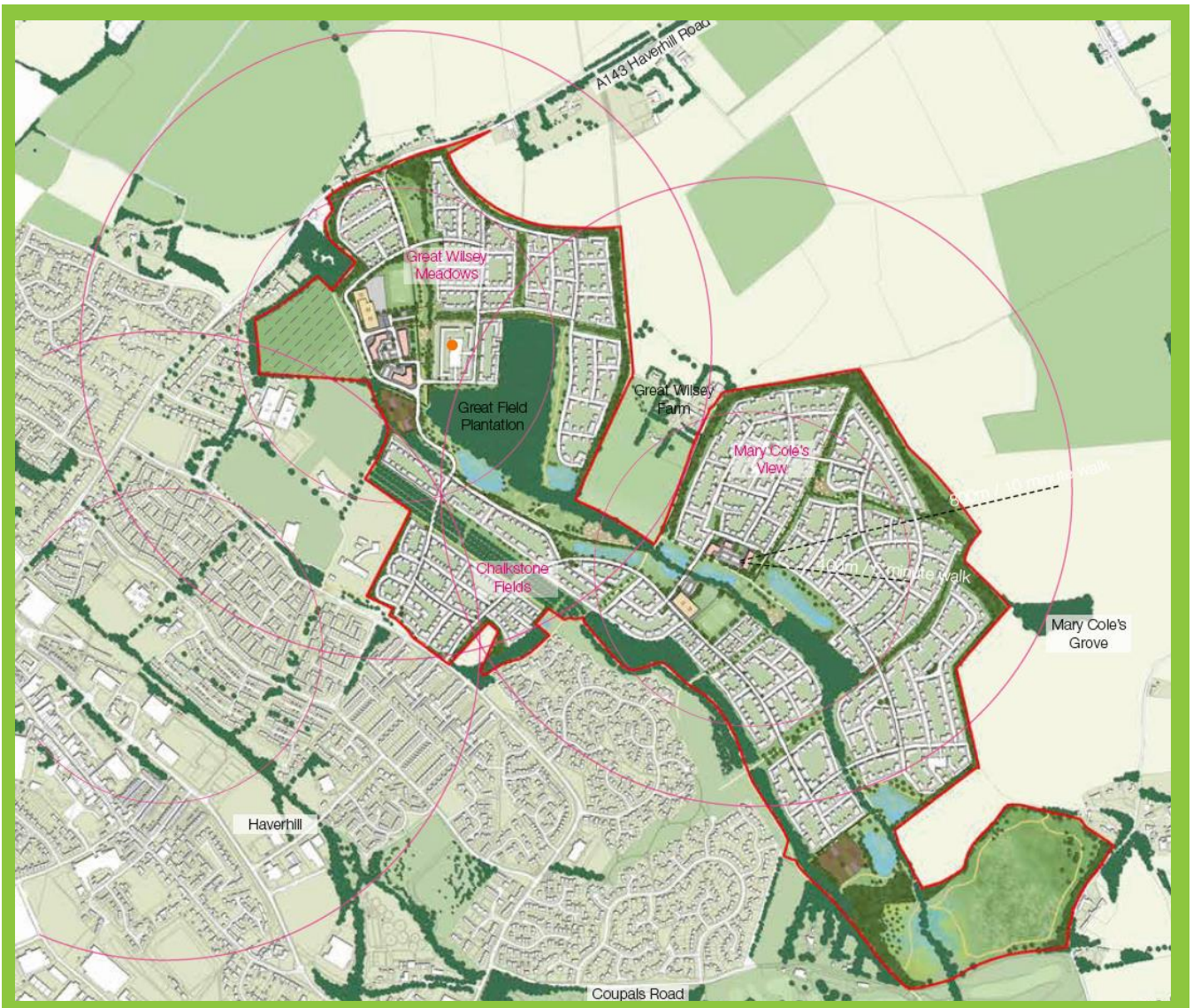


## 5.5 Great Wilsey Park Masterplan

5.5.1 In July 2015 the Great Wilsey Park Masterplan document was submitted to the Borough Council (Figure 5.3). This was largely developed alongside the proposed development now proposed and took account of further, more detailed, surveys on site. It also looked in further detail of the practicalities of developing the site. The main differences between this iteration and the previous are:

- The third access point onto Coupals Road has been removed. This followed detailed junction modelling that confirmed that only the Haverhill Road and Chalkstone Way were needed to serve the proposed development. This resulted from concerns regarding highway safety on Coupals Road raised during public consultation.
- To ensure appropriate emergency access to the eastern part of the site, it is necessary to provide two routes south of Great Wilsey Farm. However, the open farmland available at this point is insufficient to create a satisfactory design. Ultimately, following arboricultural and ecological surveys, the decision was taken to remove part of the plantation woodland to the south.

**Figure 5.3: Great Wilsey Park Illustrative Masterplan**



- The scale of employment uses was reduced to reflect the limited evidence of market demand and was incorporated into the western local centre to provide a greater mixture of uses.
- The reduction in employment uses allowed the housing density to be kept relatively low. This was important in ensuring that the visual gap between the proposed development and Kedington is maintained.
- The extra care residential use was introduced in recognition of the growing need for this type of facility as the average age of residents in the town increases.
- The number of watercourse crossings was reduced to limit the impact on ecology and improve the overall amenity value of the area.
- Greater consideration was given to drainage features necessary to ensure the site and surrounding area were not at greater risk of flooding as a result of the development.

5.5.2 The majority of the changes made to the development were in response to environmental or practical constraints of the site. The only adverse effect attributable to these changes is the loss of approximately 1ha of plantation woodland on the southern part of the site to enable two access routes through to the east. The significance of this effect is considered in detail in Chapter 9.

## 5.6 The Proposed Development

5.6.1 Following the submission of the Masterplan document to the Borough Council surveys confirmed that there was a notable population of bats on the site. As a result a lighting engineer specialising in bat mitigation was employed to review the Masterplan, the results of which are set out in Appendix 4.3. The main changes to the Masterplan were:

- Ensuring that the buffer between parcel A6 and Great Plantation Woodland is at least 10m.
- Provision of a series of bat hop overs to bridge roads and maintain dark commuting corridors.
- Relocating some of the routes through the western part of the site so as to avoid headlights affecting the dark corridors.

5.6.2 The only other change made was to relocate the Haverhill Road access further east due to landownership issues. The opportunity was also taken to draw the roundabout into the site to reduce the impact on existing residents north of Haverhill Road.

**Figure 5.4: The Proposed Development**



## 5.7 Conclusions

5.7.1 The proposed development has been masterplan led with key existing environmental features of the site identified very early in the process. As such only limited alternatives were considered through the evolution of the masterplan, predominantly to the benefit of the environment.