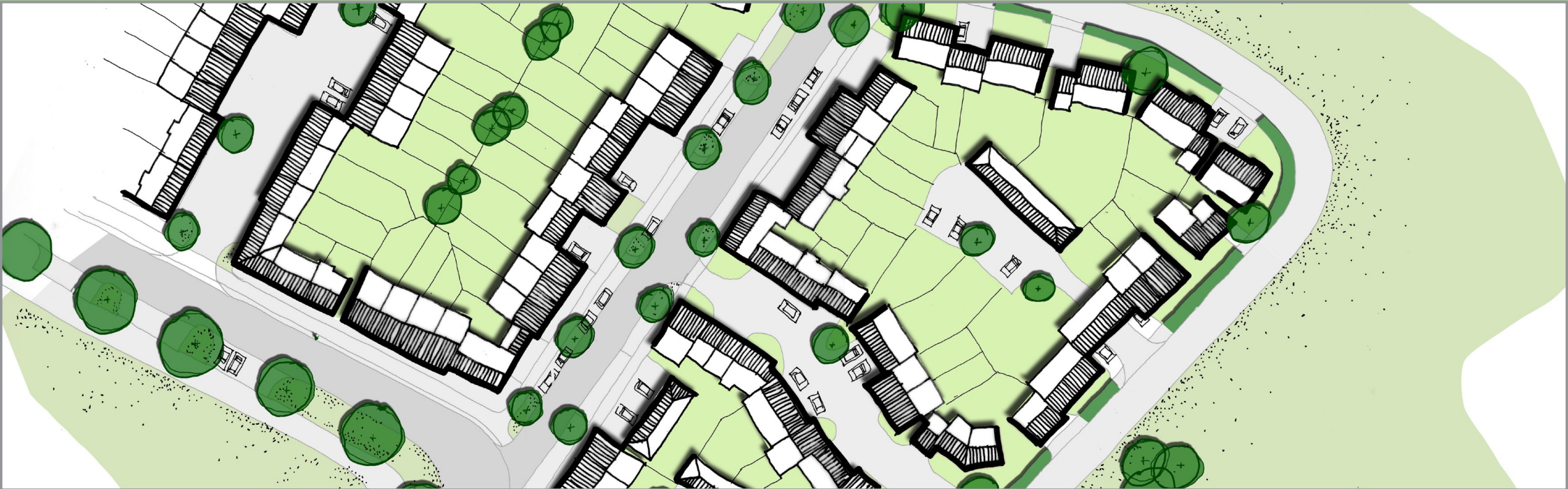


Landscape and Open Space Strategy

Land at North-West Haverhill



September 2010

BIDWELLS

Quality Assurance

Site name: North West Haverhill

Client name: North West Haverhill Landowners

Type of report: Landscape and Open Space Strategy

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1 Introduction

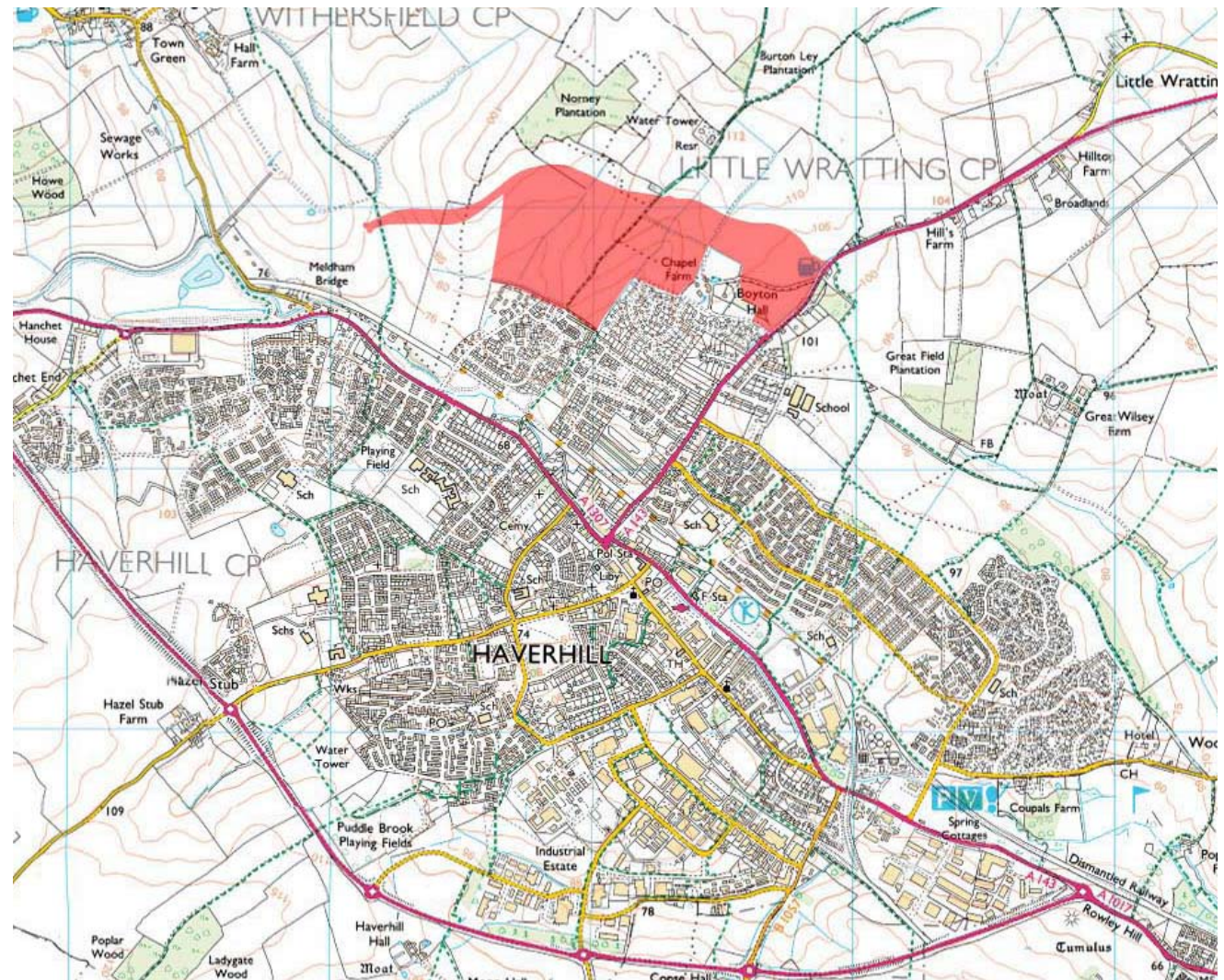
1 Introduction

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This Landscape and Open Space Strategy has been prepared on behalf of the North West Haverhill Landowners' Consortium in support of an outline planning application for development at North West Haverhill comprising a relief road and associated works and landscape buffer, residential development (including the provision of up to 1150 dwellings), a primary school, local centre including retail and community uses, public open space, landscaping, infrastructure, servicing and other associated works.

The document provides relevant supporting information in order to assist the Council with the determination of the planning application.

Details of the Masterplan design can be found within the adopted Masterplan Document, and the Design and Access Statement, submitted as part of the planning application.



Ordnance Survey Map showing proposal site location in red

1 Introduction

Purpose of the document

The Masterplan Document was adopted as Non-Statutory Supplementary Planning Guidance, in June 2009, by St Edmundsbury Borough Council. The Masterplan Document describes the built form and public realm used to create variety in character across the proposal site. This Landscape and Open Space Strategy builds upon the information included within the Masterplan Document.

The creation of a single strategy document for all areas of public open space, play and structural planting will ensure a consistent approach to design and development across the proposal site, particularly if development phases are completed by different developers.

The purpose of this document is to provide an overall landscape and open space strategy for the development scheme.

This will include:

- The overall vision and design principles which will inform the overall strategy;
- The identification of the individual areas of open space at different levels within the open space hierarchy;
- The description and illustration of the different character to be achieved within the individual spaces and how they will differ from each other;
- The identification of different types of planting to achieve the desired character within the spaces;
- The maintenance regime required to ensure the preservation of the landscape framework into the future.

This Landscape and Open Space Strategy sets the framework for landscape design within the Design Code and subsequent Reserved Matters Applications.

Relationship with Other Documents

This document forms part of a series, which together provide a landscape design framework for the development of the site.

Replacement St Edmundsbury Local Plan to 2016

Through Policy HAV2, the adopted Local Plan allocates the land at North West Haverhill for residential development for 755 dwellings in the plan period up to 2016.

Paragraph 2.15 of the Local Plan states that ‘The Borough Council will prepare a concept statement for each of the sites which require a Masterplan as set out in policy DS5,’ (Replacement St Edmundsbury Borough Local Plan, 2003). Policy DS5 identifies North West Haverhill as a site for which a Masterplan must be prepared and states that the Masterplan ‘must be based on the concept statement,’ (Replacement St Edmundsbury Borough Local Plan, 2003).

North West Haverhill Concept Statement

The North West Haverhill Concept Statement was prepared for St Edmundsbury Borough Council ‘to promote high standards of design and layout for the land at North West Haverhill, defined by Policy HAV2 of the Local Plan’ (North West Haverhill Concept Statement, 2007).

A design workshop was held with local residents and stakeholders in March 2007, and the Concept Statement draws from this consultation.

The Concept Statement was prepared in accordance with the Concept Statement Preparation Protocol and adopted by the Council’s Planning Policy Panel in July 2007 as planning guidance. It is intended to inform the preparation of development proposals for the site, ‘to ensure that any issues affecting the interface areas between the site and existing development are appropriately considered, and that the wider area is looked at comprehensively,’ (NW Haverhill Concept Statement, 2007).

Masterplan for Land at North West Haverhill

The Masterplan is based on the principles and framework set out in the Concept Statement and draws on issues raised by that document, public consultation and other studies undertaken on the site, such as a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

The Masterplan outlines the strategic frameworks and design solutions to build on the issues raised within the Concept Statement to inform and shape future development of the proposal site. It seeks to demonstrate how the principles set out in the Concept Statement can be applied ‘on the ground’ and to create an overall strategy to which detailed design proposals must accord.

The Masterplan does not prescribe exact details but sets out a vision for the creation of character within different areas. This vision will be translated into detailed ‘rules’ at the Design Code stage.

Design Code

A Design Code will be prepared following approval of the Outline Planning Application and will be secured by a planning condition requiring submission and approval of the Design Code prior to the submission of the first Reserved Matters Application. It will provide further guidance in relation to the design of the landscape and open space within the development.

The Design Code builds upon the vision set out in the Masterplan and usually consists of ‘a set of written and graphic rules that establish with precision the two and three dimensional design elements of a particular development or area - and how these relate to one another without establishing the overall outcome,’ (Preparing Design Codes, 2006).

The Design Code will seek to ensure that the vision outlined in the Masterplan is translated effectively ‘onto the ground’ when detailed Reserved Matter applications are made to develop part, or all, of the site.

1.2 THE VISION

1 Introduction

The vision for the Landscape and Open Space Strategy is to ensure a connected range of vibrant and interesting spaces that incorporate and complement the existing distinctive landscape structure of the site.

Utilising the vernacular landscape - such as existing hedgerows, woodland, drainage ditches, and public rights of way – will bring character, structure and coherence to the proposed development.

Open spaces within the development will have a clearly-defined structure of usage, providing the optimum balance between the needs for recreation (both formal and informal), allotments, landscape structure, sustainable drainage and wildlife. The open space will form a cohesive and connected network that will create new, and incorporate existing, wildlife habitats to form a series of wildlife corridors.

The open space network will provide a range of more formal and informal open spaces within easy walking distance of people's homes.

1.3 THE MASTERPLAN















The Masterplan design demonstrates how a new Relief Road, up to 1150 dwellings, a primary school and local facilities will be accommodated within the proposal site. The route of the proposed Relief Road has been decided through consultation between the landowners, the design team and the Local Authority.

Access into the proposal site is via two main roundabouts from the Relief Road and three minor entrances from the existing road network. Residential development is arranged in a series of rectilinear blocks, access by the new road network. Where practicable, roads run parallel and perpendicular to the contours, which undulate across the field but fall in level towards the town centre.

A new primary school and local centre are to be located in the centre of the proposal site, at the junction of the main connecting routes from the existing town.

The landscape framework stretches into the proposal site, from the countryside to the north and north west, in the form of a series of 'green fingers'. These 'fingers' extend into the proposal site to the southern boundary, connecting into existing areas of open space within the existing built form and bringing the landscape structure close to existing dwellings.

Key to masterplan

-  Site Boundary
-  Boulevards
-  Streets
-  Mews
-  Rural Mews
-  Lanes
-  Green Lanes
-  Indicative Built Form
-  Public Open Space
-  Footpaths
-  Residential Areas
(including parking courts)
-  Tree Planting
-  Existing Drainage Ditches
-  Wetland Areas



Masterplan

2 Context

2 Context

2.1 SUMMARY OF CONTEXT

A summary of the site context is included in the Design and Access Statement, submitted in support of the Planning Application. The full site context is included within the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, included as part of the Environmental Statement, also submitted in support of the planning application.

The proposal site is located on the northern edge of the town of Haverhill in Suffolk. The southern boundary is formed by the existing development edge. The northern boundary will be defined by the proposed northern Relief Road. The proposed development will form the new northern edge to the town and, therefore, its integration to the wider landscape is fundamental to the success of the Masterplan design.

The landscape structure around the proposal site is strong and retention of the existing structure is key to the successful integration of the new development edge into the local landscape.



Location of significant trees, woodland and hedgerows

2.2 LANDMARKS AND FEATURES

The land within the proposal site generally slopes down from the northern boundary towards the existing edge of the town. There are undulations within the landform so that the site forms a series of ridges and valleys running perpendicular to the general direction of the slope. The landform is a distinctive feature of the site and has historically influenced the shape of the field boundaries and the location of ditches.

Drainage ditches run approximately north to south and east to west across the site, parallel and perpendicular to the main direction of the slope. Hedgerows run alongside these ditches in certain places but poor maintenance has resulted in the loss of large stretches of the hedges, reducing their value as wildlife habitat.

The strongest stretches of hedgerow are those located alongside Ann Suckling Way footpath and the ditch running eastwards from Ann Suckling Way. These are both identified in the Ecological Assessment, produced by RPS, as being 'Important' and some as being 'Ancient and / or Species-Rich'. The height of the hedgerows along these boundaries has not been kept in check and, as such, they form high visual boundaries within the site.

The part of Ann Suckling Way to the north of the proposed Relief Road is a designated County Wildlife Site and, therefore, the hedgerows form an important wildlife corridor into the proposal site.

There is an area of planting, characterised as 'semi-natural broadleaved woodland' in the RPS Ecological Assessment, located to the east of Boyton Hall. The eastern half of this falls within the development boundary covered by this application.

There are very few mature trees within the proposal site, as identified on the survey conducted prior to the Masterplan exercise.

There are two ash trees, located along the northern boundary of the land under the ownership of Boyton Hall, and two Elm trees, within the scrub to the east of the Hall. The most significant trees within the site are three Oaks, two of which are within the hedgerow running east from Ann Suckling Way and one located in the open field to the south of these.



The specimen Oak with Ann Suckling Road behind

3 Design Principles

3 Design Principles

3.1 OVERALL DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The following principles will be incorporated into the design of all open spaces. Further detail will be incorporated later in this chapter.

Usability

The design of open spaces will provide a range of different types of experience that will suit different users, ranging from small children to the elderly. Designs will need to offer flexibility and adaptability as social demographics within the area change.

Spaces will need to be robust, so that they may endure the different pressures placed on them. Design will need to be forward thinking so that different potential uses are foreseen and 'designed in' rather than reactive measures applied later.

Context

The areas of public open space will respond to their context and their position within the overall Masterplan. For example, areas closest to the edges of the settlement will be less formal in nature and contain more understorey planting so that they better integrate into the wider landscape and form continuity of wildlife habitats.

Areas of open space that are further within the settlement and closer to the centre of the built up area will tend to be more formal in nature.

The need for understorey and shrub planting will be balanced against security considerations.

Safety and Security

Where the built form meets areas of open space, building frontages will overlook the public realm. Activity to and from the dwellings will be concentrated into the public realm, providing greater security and fewer opportunities for criminal or antisocial behaviour.

Spaces that are overlooked by adjacent buildings are shown to be safer and to feel safer than those that do not benefit from passive surveillance.

Connectivity

The open spaces within the Masterplan join together to create a single network so that open space is always a short walk from people's homes.

A cohesive landscape structure provides a range of pedestrian and cycle friendly routes through the development that do not run alongside the road network. These routes will connect into the wider footpath network, in the surrounding countryside and through the existing town, providing easy pedestrian access into and between Haverhill and the countryside beyond.

Ecology and Sustainability

The landscape framework incorporates the existing landscape features within the site, protecting them and retaining them as part of a cohesive network. Connected wildlife habitats are shown to be more use as wildlife habitat than disparate areas located throughout a scheme.

The areas of open space will incorporate a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS). Some SuDS features will form minor elements within the public realm, such as extra flood attenuation, which may appear as an indentation into the ground. Other features will become more noticeable elements within the landscape, such as wet ponds, which will provide further wildlife habitat.

3 Design Principles



3.2 Landscape hierarchy

The masterplan provides a three-tiered landscape hierarchy - primary, secondary and tertiary - designed to ensure that there is an interconnected green network throughout the site.

The main areas of open space are contained within the primary and secondary levels of the hierarchy. The tertiary level of open spaces constitutes the green streets, the minor elements of the SuDS and minor open spaces within the built form. This document explores the primary and secondary structures in greater detail. The tertiary structure will be dealt with primarily at a later stage in the Design Code and detailed applications, where design detail is not known at this stage.

The green space network

3.3 Open space

Within the three landscape typologies, the masterplan provides a total of 11.38 hectares of Public Open Space. This is comprised of the following elements:

Amenity/Informal Open Space **6.04 hectares**

Children's Play **3.17 hectares,**

local play features to be incorporated into open space and public realm areas throughout the development. All dwellings to have access to play features within a maximum of 100m, including:

2 Local Equipped Areas for Play

1 Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play

Sports pitches **2.67 hectares,**

including

Greens and Courts (0.85 hectares)

Playing Fields (1.82 hectares, part shared with school)

Allotments **0.5 hectares**



Indicative locations of key open space facilities

3 Design Principles



3.4 Primary Structure

These spaces form the main structure of the landscape framework, incorporating the most important hedgerows and providing a strong green link between the town and countryside to the north. The primary structure incorporates the following spaces:

- The Buffer Zone – the area of land to the north of the Relief Road;
- The Green Corridor – the linear park running around the northern edge of the proposal site and to the south of the proposed Relief Road;
- Ann Suckling Way Park – the primary green corridor, running approximately north east to south west, incorporating Ann Suckling Way footpath and the adjacent hedgerows

The Primary Landscape Structure will be substantially completed before construction commences on dwellings in adjacent areas

Primary landscape framework including the Buffer Zone, The Green Corridor and Ann Suckling Way Park

3.5 Secondary Structure

The secondary structure forms the remainder of the main landscape framework, some of which incorporate existing landscape features such as hedgerows and drainage ditches. The secondary structure incorporates the following spaces:

- The western linear park – including the existing drainage ditch;
- The central linear park – incorporating the proposed extension to the footpath network into the southern corner of the proposal site;
- The Eastern Linear Park – incorporating the Local Wildlife Site and the historic, and potentially archaeologically significant, track to the rear of Boyton Hall.

The Secondary Landscape Structure will be completed contemporaneously with construction of adjacent residential areas and will be substantially completed before 50% of the dwellings in the adjacent areas are brought in to occupation



Secondary landscape framework including linear parks and sports area

3 Design Principles



3.6 Tertiary Structure

The tertiary structure of open spaces forms more minor, often linking elements within the Masterplan design. These include:

- The boulevards with their wide verges and significant tree planting;
- The Streets, with smaller tree planting;
- Local squares;
- Minor areas of buffer planting along the western boundary, along the boundary of Chapel Farm and the area of deciduous woodland east of Boyton Hall; and
- Incidental areas of open space that result from the detailed design and any minor drainage features.

Details of the tertiary structure relating to streets and squares will be dealt with under the Design Code. Incidental areas of open space will be dealt with primarily at Reserved Matters stage.

Tertiary Landscape Structure

3.7 Sustainable drainage

The Drainage Framework and the Masterplan have evolved together, through consultation with drainage engineers.

The Drainage Strategy utilises the natural topography of the site to move water to the existing drainage system via a series of methods that reduce the amount of run-off during peak rainfall.

These methods are incorporated into the Masterplan design so that they may contribute more positively to the character of the space and so that a more natural pattern of drainage is created.



3 Design Principles



Local Areas for Play



3.8 Recreation

In accordance with the Local Plan and national guidance, the masterplan incorporates a range of sports and recreation facilities.

New children's play areas will also be integrated into the new open spaces contained within the proposed development, with play facilities situated in close proximity to cycle ways and footpaths. Three different unit sizes of play facility will be provided on the site according to standards, these are LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs. The broad principles for each of these is outlined in the following pages.

3.9 Local Areas for Play (LAPs)

The smallest form of play facilities are Local Areas for Play. Rather than providing formal areas for play it is intended that play will be integrated into the development both within the open space network and the public realm.

Play equipment will not normally be provided in LAPs but a variety of play features will be provided, particularly on routes to school. The layout and features associated with LAPs, such as changes in level and materials, will be designed to encourage playful activity that will appeal to a range of ages, particularly younger

children. These features will be distributed at regular points throughout the development such that they are no more than one minutes walk (approximately 100m) from any of the proposed dwellings.

Further details of appropriate play features and associated design issues will be addressed within the Design Code.”

3.10 Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs)

Two Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP) will be situated in the east and the west of the development, less than five minutes (400m) from any home. The two LEAPs will be equipped for children of early school age and will be smaller than the NEAP, have play equipment and be designed primarily for games that require running and “exuberance”.

There is a slight underprovision of LEAPs within the development due to the considerable overprovision of the NEAP.



Indicative locations for Local Equipped Areas for Play

3 Design Principles



Indicative location for Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP)

3.11 Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP)

It is envisaged that one Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) will be provided in the proposed development, this will be the largest play unit.

The NEAP will be situated in as central a location as feasible in Ann Suckling Way Park, therefore being no more than 15 minutes walk (1000m) from any of the new houses on the site. The centrally located NEAP will be the largest of the play areas, and equipped primarily for older children, but with opportunities for play for younger children also. The NEAP will ideally be designed to fulfil a variety of play functions, both formal and informal, which could include: ball games, bikes and roller skates.

The provision of the NEAP exceeds the national requirement.

3.12 Sports Provision and Playing Pitches

There is a general underprovision of sports pitches within the development due to the difficulty in accommodating level pitches within the undulating terrain.

Nevertheless two areas of playing pitches and two areas of Courts/Greens will be provided. Any underprovision will be accommodated by commuted sums.

3.13 Playing Pitches

Two areas of playing pitches are to be provided.

One, covering approximately 0.82 hectares, will be located on flatter ground to the North eastern part of the site, accommodating a single football pitch with associated parking.

The second, covering approximately 1.0 hectares, will be located at the school and is intended to be a shared facility with the school.



Indicative locations for Sports Pitches

3 Design Principles



3.14 Courts and Greens

A total of 0.85 hectares of Courts and Greens will be provided, with the central Ann Suckling Way Park.

Indicative location for Courts and Greens

3.15 Allotments

A total of 0.5 hectares of Allotments will be provided on the site, which meets the national and local guidelines. Part of this will be accommodated at Chapel Farm Park, in response to the local consultation, and part within Ann Suckling Way Park.



Indicative locations for Sports Pitches

3 Design Principles



Indicative location of the Buffer Zone

3.16 Buffer Zone

The Buffer Zone will form a green corridor along the north of the proposed Relief Road with an additional area of space to the north of the central roundabout and to the south of Ann Suckling Way County Wildlife Site.

Vision and Objectives

The Buffer Zone will incorporate different types of native and natural planting to aid the integration of the development, and the new edge of the town, into the wider landscape and to provide wildlife habitat to reinforce that within Ann Suckling Way County Wildlife Site.

The key objectives for the area are:

- To provide a visual buffer around the Relief Road and the new development edge;
- To provide a landscape buffer between the Relief Road and the County Wildlife Sites;
- To provide an additional public right of way to remove pressure from Ann Suckling Way and the County Wildlife Site;
- To create an additional area of calcareous grassland to increase the amount of that habitat available and to bolster the County Wildlife Site;
- To preserve the existing hedgerows;
- Increase the wildlife habitat and landscape resource.

3.17 Green Corridor

The Green Corridor stretches around the northern edge of the proposed development, between the new urban edge and the Relief Road. It forms the 'backbone' of the landscape framework, connecting the other areas of open space into a single network.

Vision and Objectives

The design concept for the Green Corridor is an informal path through stretches of native trees and shrubs to create a semi-natural green walk. The semi-natural character with native planting will reinforce the location of the open space at the edge of the development, where the town meets the countryside.

The key objectives for the Green Corridor are:

- Provide further visual screening from viewpoints to the north;
- Create a green edge to the town;
- Provide a semi-woodland walk around the north of the town;
- Screen views of the road from within the town;
- Link the Green Fingers into a cohesive landscape and wildlife habitat network.



