

North **Hemel Hempstead**

Design and Access Statement

December 2025





Masterplanning



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01 Introduction



INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of Pigeon and Bloor Homes (Bloor) regarding the proposed development of North Hemel Hempstead ("the Site").

Description of Development

Outline application for residential-led mixed use development comprising up to 1,500 new dwellings (including residential accommodation and specialist accommodation for older people) (Use Class C3), a care home (Use Class C2), a 3FE primary school (including early years provision) (Use Class F1), a local centre, mobility hub, open space, amenity space, allotments, green infrastructure, sustainable drainage systems, vehicular and active travel routes, and supporting infrastructure and works. All matters reserved save for access from the B487.

Future Reserved Matters Applications

Matters relating to layout, scale, appearance and landscaping will be the subject of future Reserved Matters applications.

Parameter plans

This Outline Planning Application is based on development parameters rather than a fixed masterplan. The accompanying illustrative material serves as one example of how the development could be implemented, but it is not the only way, in accordance with the development parameters.

This document is accompanied by the following Parameter Plans:

- Land Use and Green & Infrastructure
- Access and Movement



Role of the Design & Access Statement

A Design and Access Statement is a report accompanying certain applications for planning permission and applications for listed building consent. They provide a framework for applicants to explain how the proposed development is a suitable response to the site and its setting and demonstrate that it can be adequately accessed by prospective users. Design and Access Statements can aid decision-making by enabling local planning authorities and third parties to better understand the analysis that has underpinned the design of a development proposal.

The level of detail in a Design and Access Statement should be proportionate to the complexity of the application.

A Design and Access Statement must:

- explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed development; and
- demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the proposed development, and how the design of the development takes that context into account.

A development's context refers to the particular characteristics of the application site and its wider setting. These will be specific to the circumstances of an individual application and a Design and Access Statement should be tailored accordingly.

Design and Access Statements must also explain the applicant's approach to access and how relevant Local Plan policies have been taken into account. They must detail any consultation undertaken in relation to access issues and how the outcome of this consultation has informed the Proposed development. Applicants must also explain how any specific issues which might affect access to the proposed development have been addressed.

The sections of this document follow the Design Council CABE guidance 'Design & Access Statements: How to write, read and use them':

- Assessment
- Involvement
- Evaluation
- Design

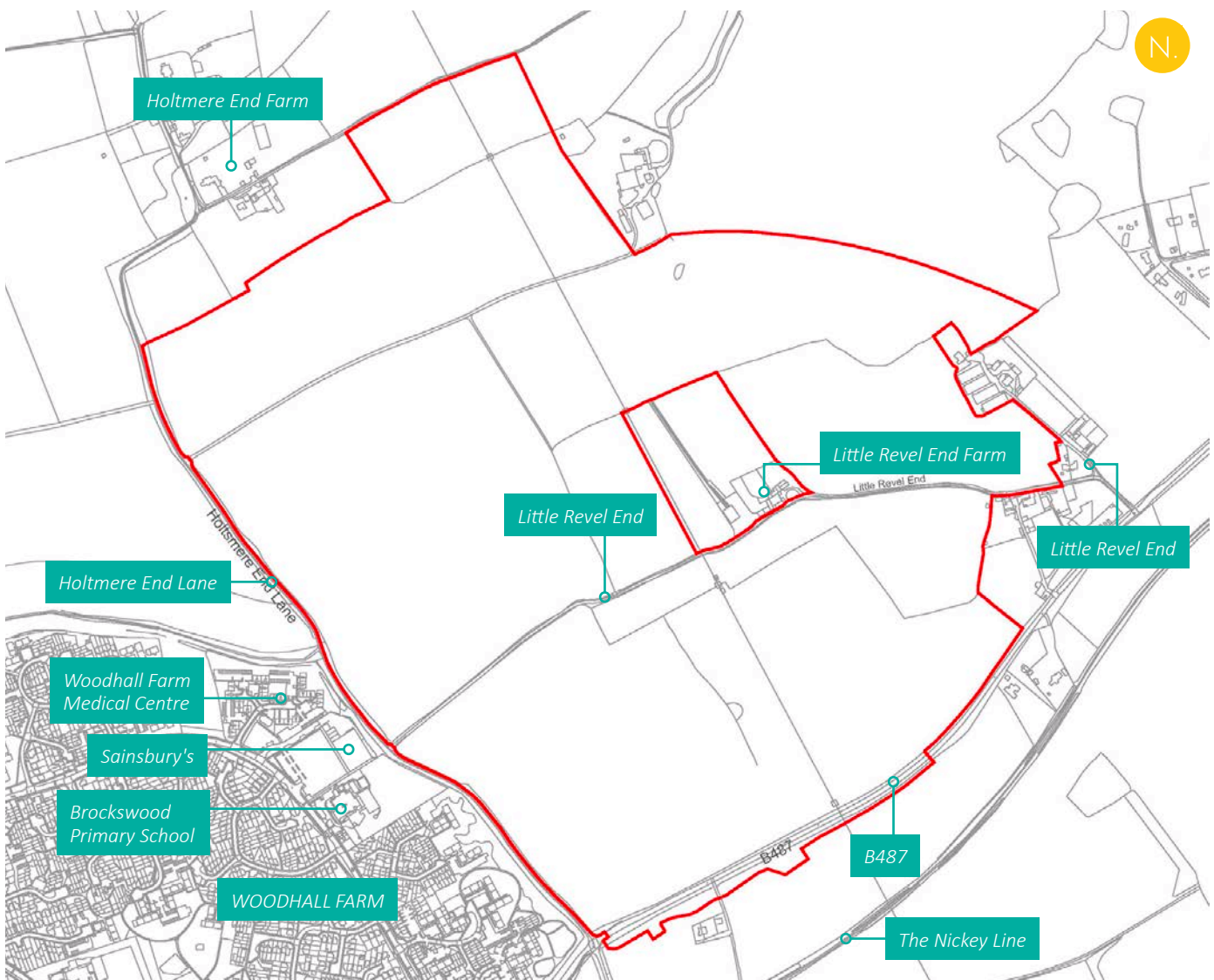


The Site

The Site comprises 105.607 hectares of predominantly arable agricultural farmland, interspersed with mature field trees and hedgerow field boundaries. A public footpath (ref: Redbourn 011), an underground gas main, a line of 400kv overhead pylons and a high voltage overhead power line all cross the Site.

The Site is bounded to the south by draft Site Allocation H2 which is subject to a separate planning application submitted by The Crown Estate, by Holtsmere End Lane to the west and north and further arable land to the north and east (both Holtsmere End Lane and Little Revel End are single carriageway, rural lanes with few passing places). The Site is in close proximity to strategic routes and benefits from direct linkages via the B487 Hemel Hempstead Road to the A5183 Dunstable Road and the M1.

The Site is located on land situated between the eastern urban edge of Hemel Hempstead and the village of Redbourn. The M1 motorway forms a physical and visual barrier between Hemel Hempstead and Redbourn. Whilst the Site is designated as Green Belt in the adopted St Albans Local Plan, the Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan now allocates the Site under Policy H1 – North Hemel Hempstead as a major residential led urban extension forming part of the Hemel Garden Communities programme. Policy H1 identifies capacity for approximately 1,500 homes (1,125 within the plan period) together with associated supporting uses and green and blue infrastructure. This Design and Access Statement demonstrates how the emerging masterplan responds to the requirements of Policy H1 and supports the delivery of the wider Hemel Garden Communities vision.



Site application boundary. Not to scale



The Site. Not to scale. Aerial photograph: © Google Earth

Site photographs



View looking east across the Site to Hemel Hempstead



View looking north across the Site featuring pylons, fields and a tree belt



View looking north-east east across the Site to the Chilterns National Landscape



View looking east along Little Revel End Lane



View looking east along Public Right of Way





02 Contextual Assessment



PLANNING AND DESIGN POLICY CONTEXT

St. Albans City and District Council has submitted a new Local Plan for Examination, which sets out the policies and proposals to meet the need for new housing, employment and other development within the District in the plan period to 2041.

Planning Policy Context

Policy H1 – North Hemel Hempstead

The Site will fulfil the detailed development requirements and considerations outlined in Policy H1- North Hemel Hempstead of the St. Albans City & District Council Draft Local Plan 2041. The abridged Policy H1 wording is outlined below:

Green Infrastructure & Open Space: Creation of extensive green networks including public open spaces, sports facilities, woodlands, ecological corridors, and a large publicly accessible green area acting as a buffer to Redbourn, alongside contributions to the wider Green Loop, Nickey Line, and countryside access improvements.

Sustainable Transport & Connectivity: Development of a high-quality transport network with sustainable and active travel routes connecting to key destinations (schools, town centre, Redbourn, etc.), supported by safe pedestrian/cycle crossings and an integrated mobility hub.

Community Facilities & Housing: Provision of around 1,500 homes, including specialist housing for older people, supported living, and nursing facilities; a new 3-form entry primary school with Early Years provision; and contributions towards secondary education and community infrastructure.

Design, Heritage & Environmental Quality: Masterplanning to respect the landscape, heritage assets (e.g. Holtsmere Manor, Great Revel End Farm), and neighbouring areas, with high-quality design standards, noise/air quality buffers, and surface water mitigation measures.

Local Economy & Employment: Creation of a new local centre offering education, retail, and commercial opportunities that complement Woodhall Farm, encourage remote working, and strengthen local active travel links.

Environmental Protection & Contributions: Delivery of biodiversity net gain (exceeding 10%), SANG provision, and SAMMS contributions for the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC, while managing environmental constraints such as aquifers, source protection zones, and historic landfill sites.

Policy LG3 – Hemel Garden Communities Growth Areas Place Principles

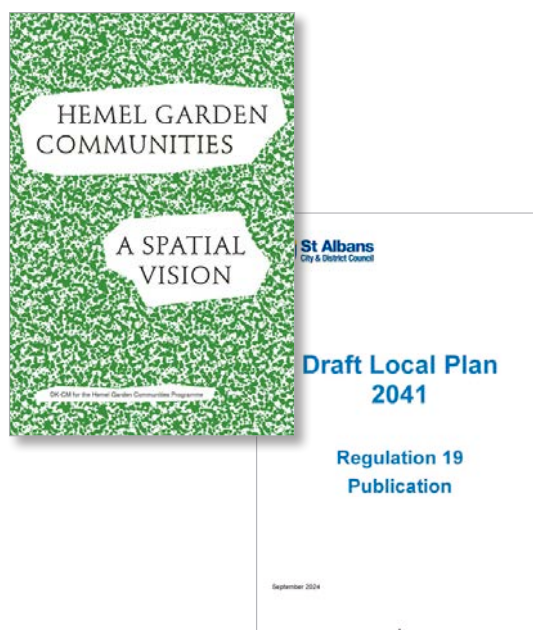
Sets out the requirements for the design and delivery of HGC Growth Areas within the Hemel Garden Communities Programme Area. The four design pillars relate to: Green Network; Integrated Neighbourhoods; Self-sustaining Economy; and Engaged Communities.

Policy LG5 – Green Belt

Requires proposals in the Green Belt be assessed in accordance with national policy and be consistent with the Council's Green Belt purposes and objectives.

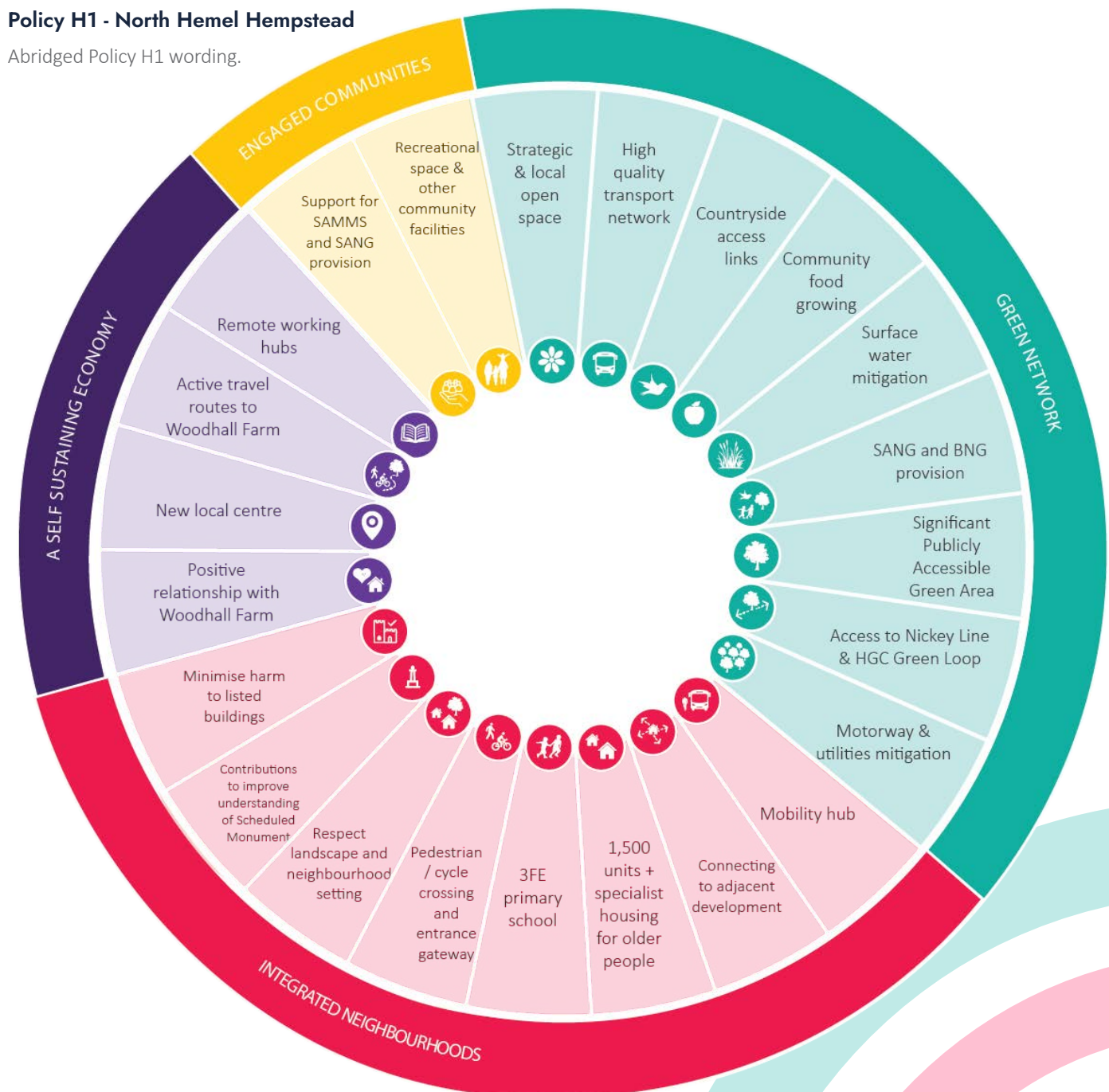
Policy LG6 - Green Belt Compensatory Improvements

Policy LG6 seeks to ensure that allocations in Part B of the Local Plan that are facilitated by Green Belt boundary changes submit a Green Belt compensation strategy, and retain and enhance green and blue infrastructure and rights of way to a degree proportionate to the development.



Policy H1 - North Hemel Hempstead

Abridged Policy H1 wording.



Design Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was first published on 27 March 2012 and has received subsequent updates with the latest revisions being published on 12 December 2024.

The National Planning Policy Framework states developments should take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents.

Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission

The Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission (BBBBC) is an independent body that advises Government on how to promote and increase the use of high quality design for new build homes and neighbourhoods.

The Commission recommends practical measures to help ensure new housing developments meet the needs and expectations of communities, making them more likely to be welcomed, rather than resisted, by existing communities.

The Commission published its final report, 'Living with Beauty', on 30 January 2020. This report proposes a new development and planning framework that will:

- Ask for Beauty
- Refuse Ugliness
- Promote Stewardship

Those three aims must be embedded in the planning system and in the culture of development in such a way as to incentivise beauty and deter ugliness at every point where the choice arises.

In particular, the BBBBC promotes the following two principles that are particularly relevant to the place making principles of North Hemel Hempstead.

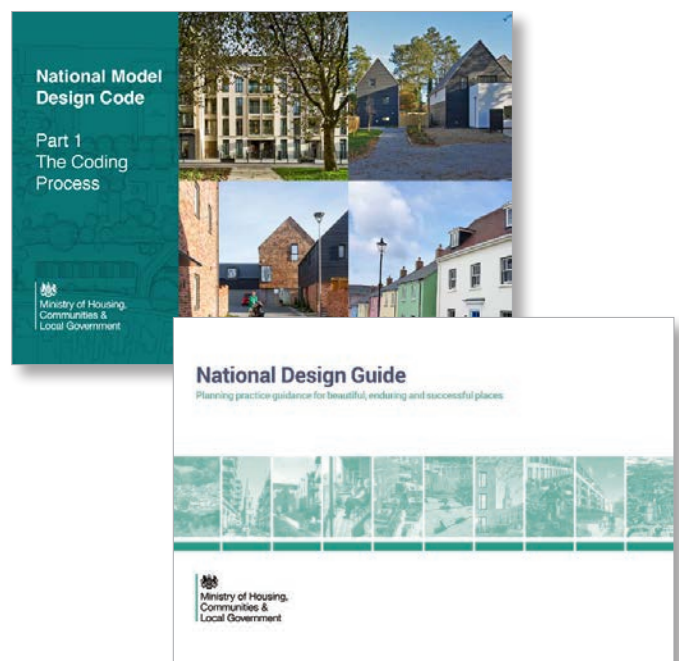
Neighbourhoods: create places not just houses. Develop homes within mixed-use real places at 'gentle density', thereby creating streets, squares and blocks with clear backs and fronts.

Nature: re-green our towns and cities. Urban development should be part of the wider ecology. Green spaces, waterways and wildlife habitats should be seen as integral to the urban fabric. Create new community orchards. This is both right and aligned with the Government's aim to eradicate the UK's net carbon contribution by 2050. Green spaces should be enclosed and either safely private or clearly public.

National Design Guide

The National Design Guide (NDG) sets out the Government's priorities for well-designed places in the form of 10 characteristics. The 10 characteristics are based upon Chapter 12: Achieving well-designed places of the NPPF. They are as follows: context, identity, built form, movement, nature, public spaces, uses, homes and buildings, resources and lifespan.

Well-designed places have individual characteristics that work together to create their physical character. The 10 characteristics help to nurture and sustain a sense of community. They work to positively address environmental issues affecting climate. They all contribute towards the cross-cutting themes for good design set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.



National Model Design Code

The purpose of the National Model Design Code is to provide detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design. It expands on the 10 characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide which reflects the Government's priorities and provides a common overarching framework for design.

The chart shown below illustrates how the principles of the NDG have been embedded in the vision for North Hemel Hempstead from the outset.



A well designed place	How the principles of the NDG have been embedded within this DAS
Context	Refer to pages 06 to 09, 19 to 27 and Appendix A for an understanding of the site and its immediate surrounding and to pages 44 to 45 and 110 to 111 to on how the proposals are shaped by an understanding of the local context.
Identity	Refer to pages Appendix A for an overview of local identity. Pages 110 to 111 explains how the proposals respond to character and identity.
Built form	Refer to pages 44 to 45 and 74 to 109 to understand how the proposals have a coherent pattern of development.
Movement	Refer to movement strategy on pages 68 to 73
Nature	Refer to landscape strategy on pages 64 to 65 and Green Infrastructure Strategy Document .
Public spaces	Refer to landscape strategy on pages 64 to 65 and Green Infrastructure Strategy Document .
Uses	Refer to pages 40 to 51 . The character areas on pages 74 to 109 give an indication how the proposals integrate a mix of housing tenures and types to suit people at all stages of life and socially inclusive principles
Homes & buildings	The application is seeking an Outline Planning Permission, with appearance and detailed architecture being part of a future reserved matter. Therefore the application is based on parameters which are described on pages 52 and 69 and within the parameters plan drawing that support this application.
Lifespan	Edible landscapes and open spaces are places for the local community to come together. Management and stewardship strategies are being prepared at later stages.

St Albans Strategic Sites Design Guidance (2023)

The St Albans Strategic Sites Design Guidance establishes clear expectations for the design and delivery of major developments across the district. It provides a framework for achieving high-quality, sustainable, and contextually responsive places, aligning with the National Design Guide, National Model Design Code, and Hemel Garden Communities Spatial Vision.

The Guidance promotes a “comply or justify” approach, ensuring that all major proposals adhere to ten key design principles covering character, connectivity, sustainability, and long-term stewardship. These principles encourage compact, walkable neighbourhoods, mixed-use centres, and landscape-led layouts that respond to local topography and setting.

Hemel Garden Communities Strategic Design Code (Reg 19 Draft, 2024)

The Hemel Garden Communities (HGC) Strategic Design Code (draft) provides the overarching design framework for new neighbourhoods forming part of the Hemel Garden Communities programme. It translates the HGC Spatial Vision into practical design principles to guide the layout, architecture, landscape, and infrastructure of major developments, including North Hemel Hempstead.

Throughout a series of meetings with St Albans District Council and key stakeholders, undertaken as part of a Planning Performance Agreement, it was broadly agreed how the design and planning of the site should evolve in accordance with the Hemel Garden Communities Strategic Design Code. The process focused on aligning with the overarching aims of the Code, while identifying and justifying any departures where a more tailored response was necessary to reflect the specific character and context of the North Hemel Hempstead site.

The Code promotes a landscape-led approach, reinforcing the original “city in a park” vision established under the New Town movement. It seeks to integrate new development with the surrounding landscape through multifunctional green infrastructure, sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), and the enhancement of biodiversity corridors and walking and cycling routes.

A strong emphasis is placed on neighbourhood structure and character, ensuring that new places are distinctive, legible, and connected. The Code identifies a hierarchy of character areas – including local centres, neighbourhood streets, and edge conditions – supported by guidance on density, massing, and materials. Each character area should reflect its topography and landscape setting, with rural edges adopting a softer, lower-density form.

A strong focus is placed on place identity, active travel, and climate resilience, underpinned by design-led density, green infrastructure integration, and adaptable built form.



For North Hemel Hempstead, the Guidance reinforces the importance of a landscape-led masterplan, embedded within its setting, that delivers well-connected neighbourhoods, distinctive character areas, and long-term environmental and social sustainability.



The Code also promotes sustainable design and active travel, encouraging compact, walkable neighbourhoods, integrated public transport, and energy-efficient building forms. Design should respond to climate resilience and the natural terrain, with particular attention to drainage, orientation, and the treatment of slopes and valley landscapes.

Architecturally, the Code encourages a modern interpretation of Hemel’s local character, drawing from the town’s New Town heritage and traditional Hertfordshire materials such as red and brown brick, flint, and clay tiles. Building forms should be simple, robust, and varied to create visual interest and support a coherent streetscape.

Ultimately, the HGC Strategic Design Code establishes a shared framework to ensure that all development within the Garden Communities delivers high-quality, distinctive, and sustainable places that build upon Hemel Hempstead’s legacy while responding to 21st-century design and environmental priorities.



A SUSTAINABLE LOCATION

The Sustainability Audit is a comprehensive analysis of the Site and the wider area encompassing assessment of the Site's access to local facilities, landscape and open space and connectivity.

Sustainability audit

Access to local facilities is fundamental to the concept of locating sustainable development. New development needs the full range of social, retail, educational, health, transport and recreational facilities to allow people, especially those of limited means or mobility, to go about their daily lives without over reliance on a private car.

Hemel Hempstead: A sustainable town

North Hemel Hempstead is at a highly sustainable location due to its relationship with the existing urban centre of Hemel Hempstead and the wide range of services, facilities and employment opportunities within the town. The Site is also well located to benefit from the existing employment area of the Maylands Business Park, which is less than 1 mile away, and is home to more than 650 businesses. This Business Park is being expanded as part of the Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter Enterprise Zone which is seeking to deliver 3 million sq ft of new commercial space to Hertfordshire creating approximately 10,000 jobs.

Building for a Healthy Life



Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) is a tool to assess and compare the quality of proposed neighbourhoods. It has been written by Design for Homes in partnership with Homes England, NHS England and NHS Improvement.

Whilst BHL is usually awarded to completed schemes, the site selection criteria have been applied to North Hemel Hempstead to demonstrate the sustainability of the design proposals.

Building for a Healthy Life principles advise places should 'offer social, leisure and recreational opportunities a short walk or cycle from their homes' and that developments should provide or be near to 'community facilities, such as shops, schools, workplaces, health facilities, co-working spaces, parks, play spaces, cafés and other meeting places that respond to local community needs'.

The facilities audit on the following pages demonstrates that the Site is a sustainable location and fully meets the Building for a Healthy Life principles through existing local facilities and the opportunity to provide facilities missing in the area.

Shaping Neighbourhoods, a best practice neighbourhood design guide, also suggests the Site scores highly as a sustainable location for a new neighbourhood.

Facilities Audit

Figures one, two, and three assess North Hemel Hempstead against the accessibility criteria benchmark established by Shaping Neighbourhoods for the sustainable design of new neighbourhoods. Figure one outlines the recommended distances for local facilities in a sustainable neighbourhood. Figure two provides a current snapshot of how accessible local facilities are from the Site, and Figure three envisions the accessibility of these facilities once the Site is fully developed.

The 'Actual' audit of facilities in Figure two generally reveals 'ideal' or 'good' access to most amenities. However, it highlights weaknesses in access to playing fields and allotments, which could be addressed through the introduction of new open spaces and recreational facilities as part of the proposed scheme. This underscores that the Site is already situated in a highly sustainable location even before any development, offering 'ideal' and 'good' access to a variety of amenities.

Figure three, on the other hand, shows that once North Hemel Hempstead is incorporated into the Hemel Garden Communities and introduces new amenities like a Country Park, playing fields, allotments, and play areas, access to facilities will be significantly improved.

In summary, North Hemel Hempstead represents a sustainable choice for new development and surpasses the accessibility expectations set by 'Shaping Neighbourhoods,' a best practice design guide for new neighborhoods, especially when the development is fully completed.

- Ideal accessibility
- Good accessibility
- Weak accessibility

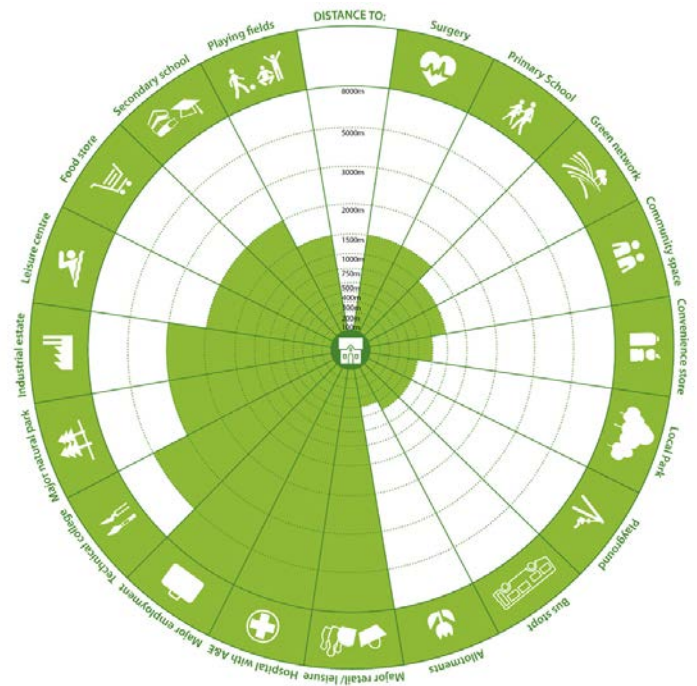


Figure One: Desired
Illustrative ideal accessibility criteria, adapted from 'Shaping Neighbourhoods, for Local Health and Global Sustainability'.

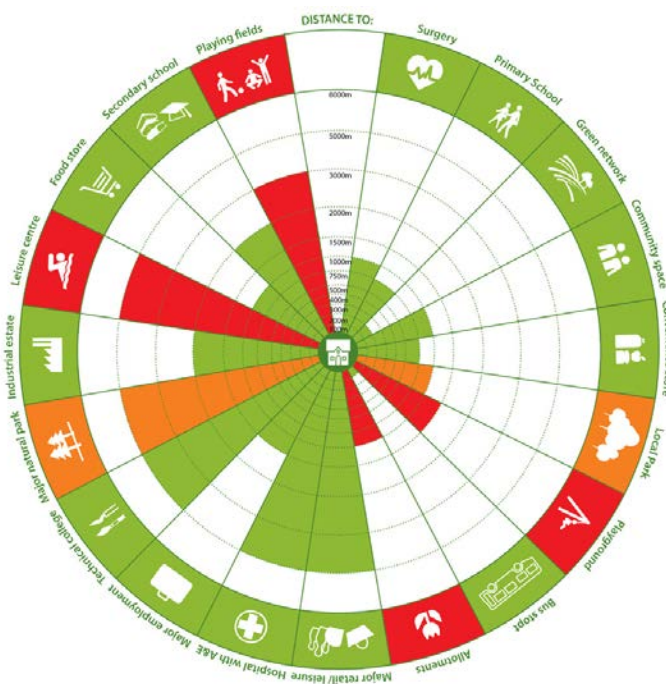


Figure two: Actual
Illustrative actual accessibility criteria to relevant local facilities from the Site location.

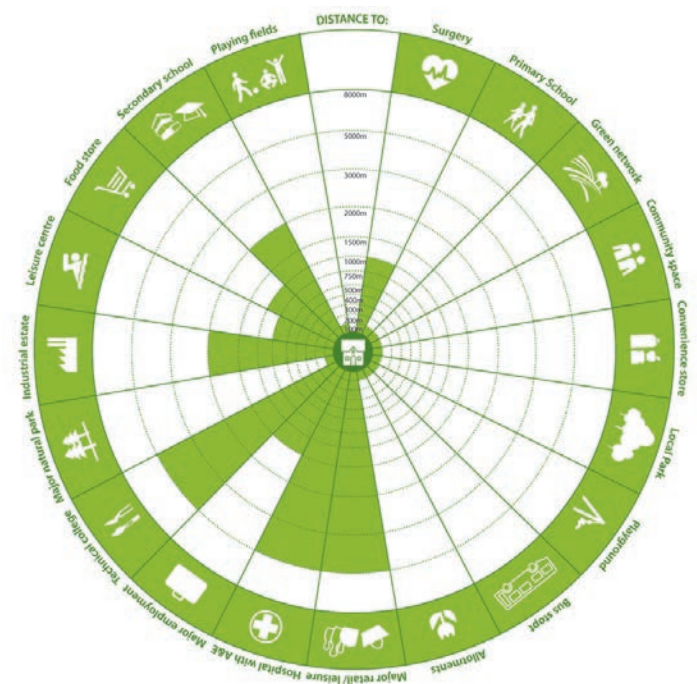
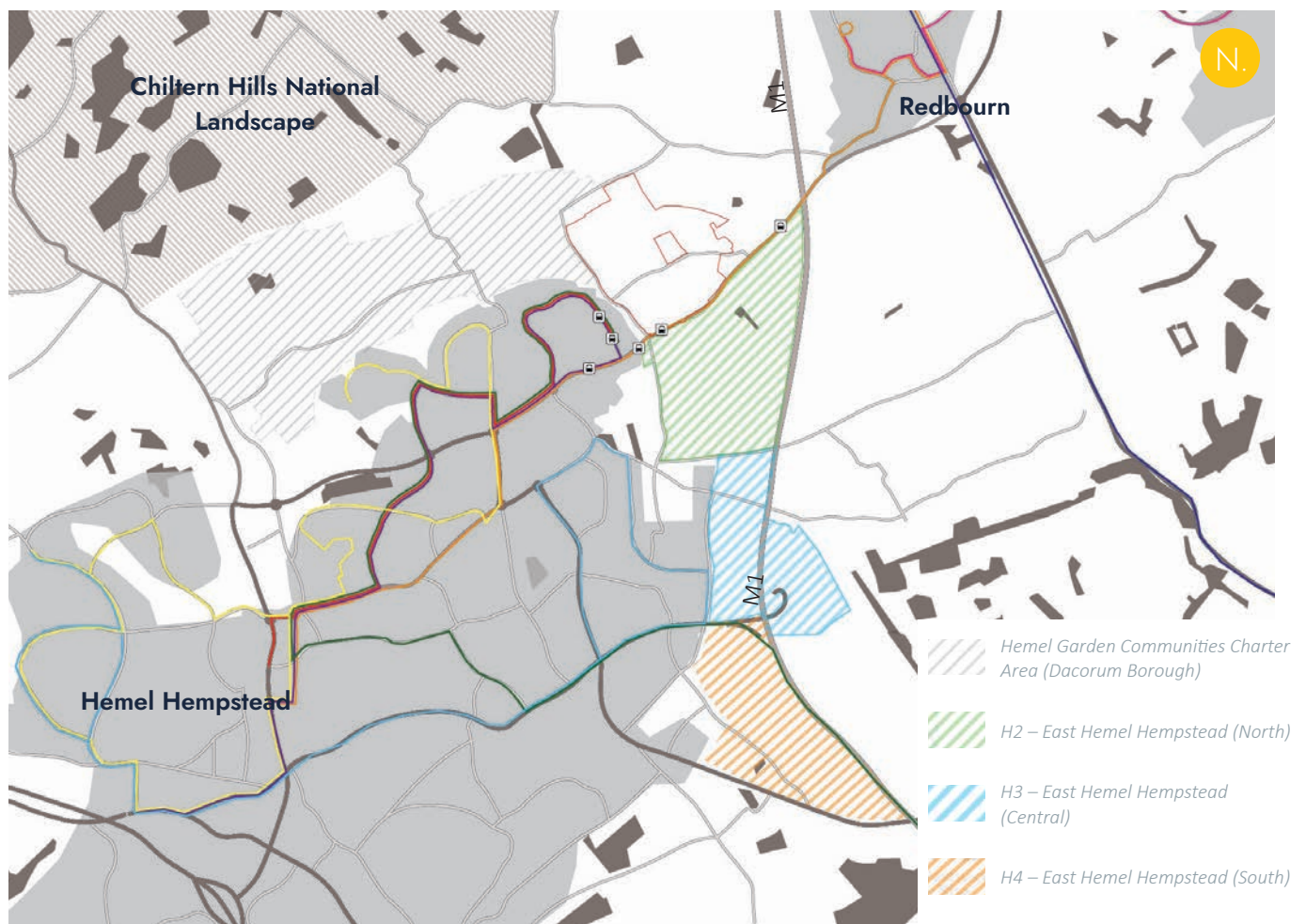


Figure Three: Future potential
Illustrative future accessibility criteria once North Hemel Hempstead is built.

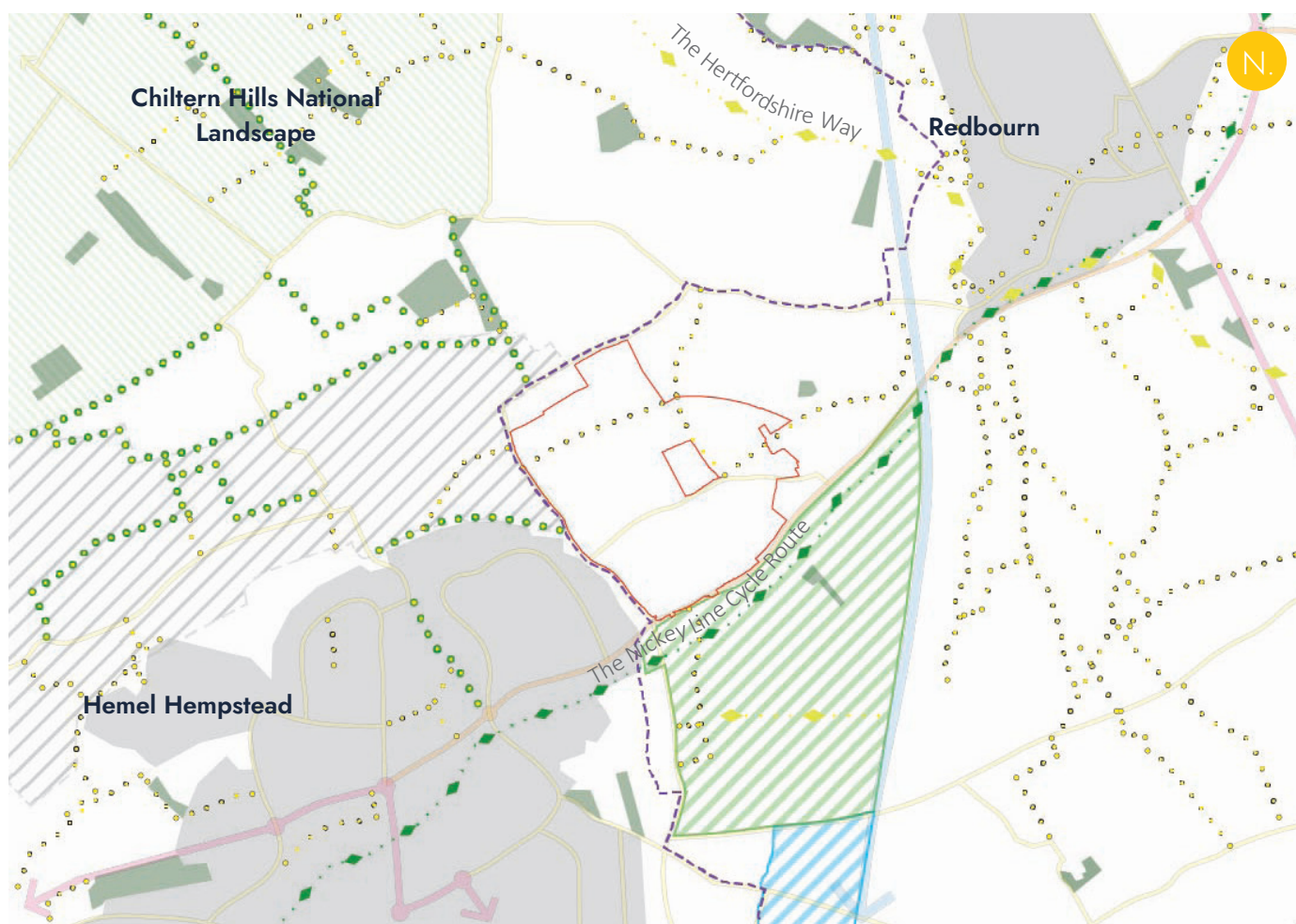


Connectivity Audit: Public Transport

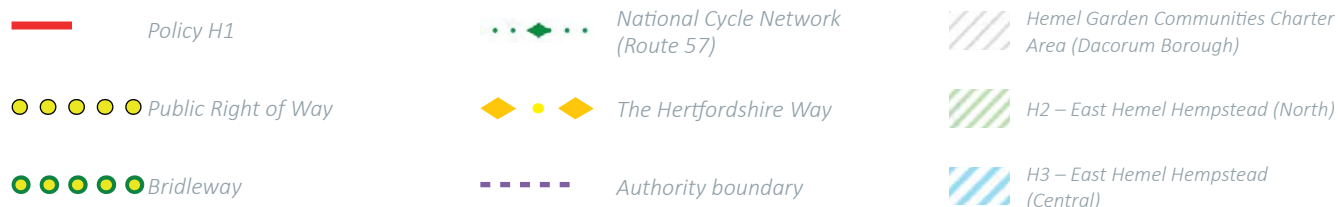
The closest public transport locations are the bus stops located on B487 Hemel Hempstead Road immediately south of the Site. The bus service that operates from these stops (Route 46) connects Luton, Markyate, Redbourn and Hemel Hempstead every hour (Monday-Saturday). Bus routes 2 and 4 are also accessible within a short walk at Woodhall Farm providing connections to local destinations including Bennetts End, Grovehill, Warners End as well as Hemel Hempstead town centre and station.

Hemel Hempstead Train Station forms part of the London Northwestern Railway route, with frequent services between London Euston, Milton Keynes and Northampton.

The Site is well located to encourage future residents to travel to key local employment, retail and leisure destinations by public transport with opportunities for improvement.



Pedestrian and cycle network. Not to Scale

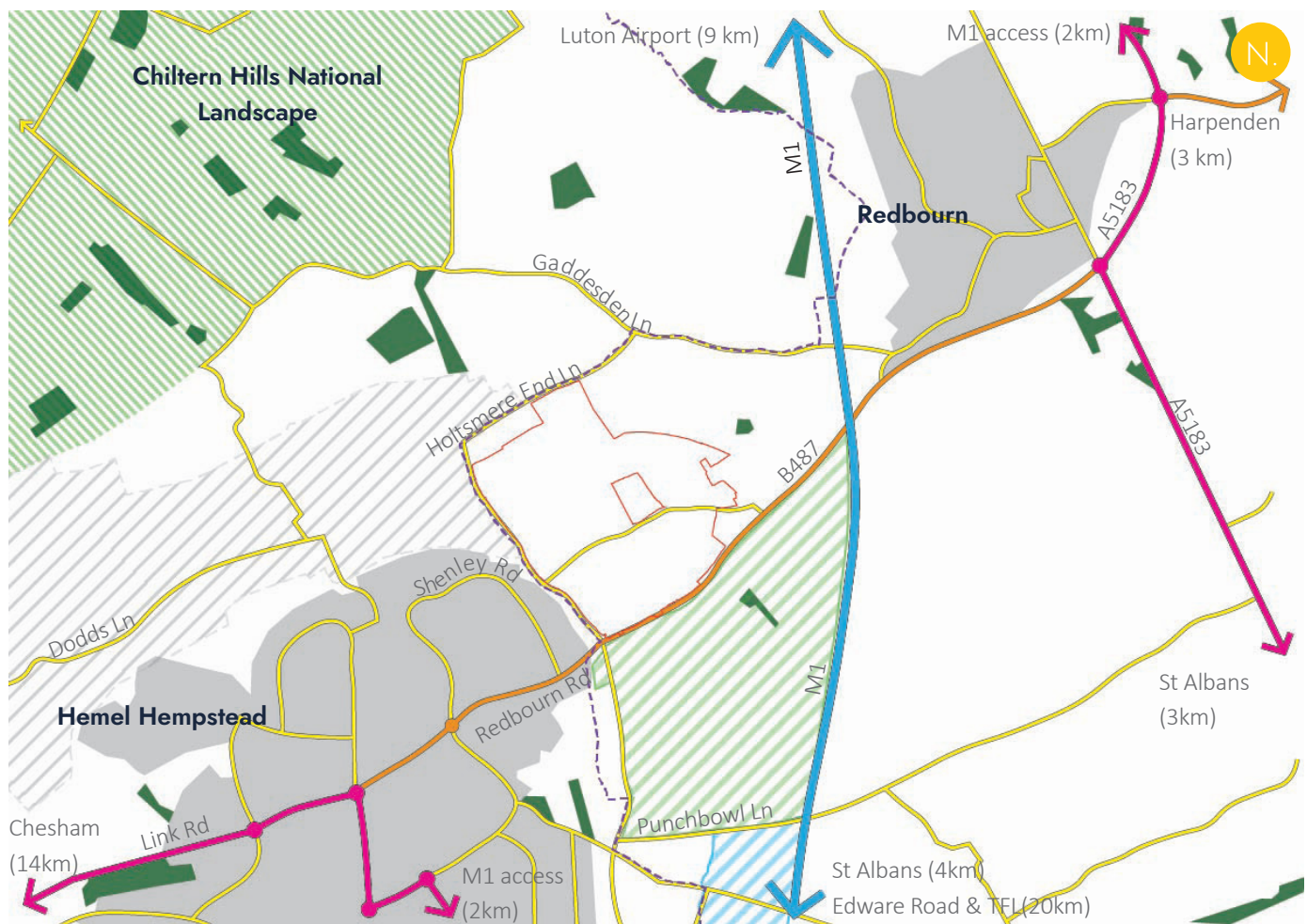


Connectivity Audit: Pedestrian & Cycle Network

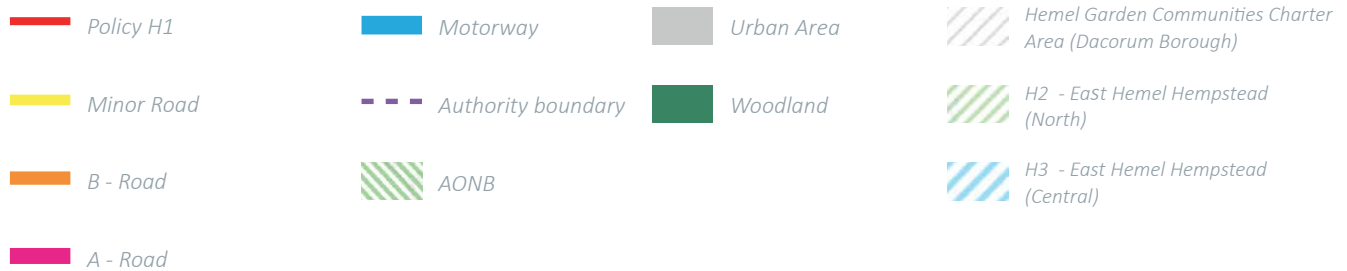
The location of the Site, adjoining Hemel Hempstead, lends itself to sustainable modes of transport. The plan below shows the Site is well connected to an extensive network of pedestrian and cycle routes, including direct pedestrian and cycle links to various parts of Hemel Hempstead as well as the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Site is also connected by pedestrian links to the Hertfordshire Way; a long-distance walk (190 miles) providing a route through the majority of Hertfordshire including St Albans, Tring, Langley and Bishop's Stortford.

The Nickey Line, directly south of the Site, is a long-distance cycle path along a disused railway line. It is approximately 9 miles long and connects Hemel Hempstead to Redbourn and Harpenden and is part of national cycling route 57 (Oxford to Welwyn Garden City). The draft allocated East Hemel Hempstead Site identified within the St Albans Local Plan to the south presents an opportunity to connect the Site to the Nickey Line via the HGC Green Loop and STC to encourage sustainable modes of transport.



Highway Network. Not to Scale



Connectivity Audit: Road Network

The site is accessible from the B487 Hemel Hempstead Road which provides a connection to Hemel Hempstead Town Centre to the west and Redbourn and Harpenden to the east. The M1 can be accessed via the B487/A414 providing good links to London and the North. The Site is well located with respect to accessing key local centres and the wider region via the strategic road network.

The western and northern boundaries of the Site are bordered by Holtsmere End Lane, a small single-track road connecting the B487 to Gaddesden Lane. The Site is divided by Little Revel End Lane, a single track road used to serve the small number of properties.



CONTEXT AND CHARACTER SUMMARY

A detailed analysis of Hemel Hempstead's character, setting, and surrounding context has been undertaken to inform the vision and design response for North Hemel Hempstead.

This analysis, provided in full within Appendix A, examines the historic evolution, urban structure, landscape character, and built form of Hemel Hempstead, together with the adjacent settlement of Redbourn, Woodhall Farm, and other nearby neighbourhoods. It also draws lessons from recent developments and national garden community case studies, identifying best practice in placemaking, sustainability, and integration with the landscape.

The key lessons learnt are set out to the right.

The findings have directly shaped the vision, principles, and layout set out in this Design and Access Statement, ensuring that North Hemel Hempstead builds upon the area's New Town heritage, strengthens existing communities, and responds sensitively to its landscape context.

Conclusion and lessons for the design and planning of North Hemel Hempstead

North Hemel Hempstead presents an opportunity to build on Hemel Hempstead's New Town legacy, while integrating modern design principles promoted by the Hemel Garden Communities initiative- with a focus on sustainability, connectivity, and placemaking. The town's historical evolution underscores the value of structured neighbourhood planning, green corridors, and integrated social infrastructure- all of which must be carefully considered in shaping future development.

Key lessons learnt

Neighbourhood Identity and Cohesion

Hemel Hempstead's existing neighbourhood structure provides a strong model for self-contained communities, yet newer developments require better connectivity. North Hemel Hempstead must ensure walkability, a mixed-use centre, and well-designed public spaces that foster community interaction.

Green Infrastructure as a Foundation

The original New Town concept prioritised generous green spaces, though subsequent development has reduced their scale. North Hemel Hempstead must adopt a landscape-led approach, integrating parkland, natural areas, green corridors, green spaces and sustainable drainage systems to enhance ecological and recreational value.

Architectural Variation and Street Definition

Lessons from Woodhall Farm and similar developments show that excessive uniformity can result in a weakly defined urban environment. Future design should balance consistency with variety, ensuring active frontages, well-defined streetscapes, and a diverse mix of housing typologies.



Integration with the Surrounding Context

The proximity to Redbourn and the rural landscape underscores the need for sensitive transition zones that blend urban edges with open countryside.

Transport and Accessibility Priorities

The success of North Hemel Hempstead depends on an efficient road hierarchy, segregated pedestrian and cycle routes, and improved public transport links. A focus on low-traffic neighbourhoods, sustainable travel, and multi-modal connections will help future-proof mobility infrastructure.

Community and Social Infrastructure

New facilities in North Hemel Hempstead must complement rather than compete with existing amenities in Woodhall Farm and the future East Hemel Hempstead site. The HGC's vision is to provide a balanced provision of schools, healthcare, local retail, and leisure spaces to support long-term sustainability and community wellbeing.

Garden Village and Community Case Studies

Lessons from Garden Village and Community Case Studies demonstrate the importance of thoughtful urban planning, ensuring that new developments balance sustainability, accessibility, and strong community identity. These principles are particularly relevant to the design of North Hemel Hempstead, providing a foundation for creating a well-integrated and resilient neighbourhood.

Final Considerations

The Hemel Garden Communities initiative provides a framework for future-proofing North Hemel Hempstead, ensuring it reflects best practices in placemaking, sustainability, and integrated growth. By drawing on lessons from existing neighbourhoods, embracing heritage and landscape sensitivity, and prioritising high-quality design, the development can evolve into a cohesive, well-connected, and resilient community.

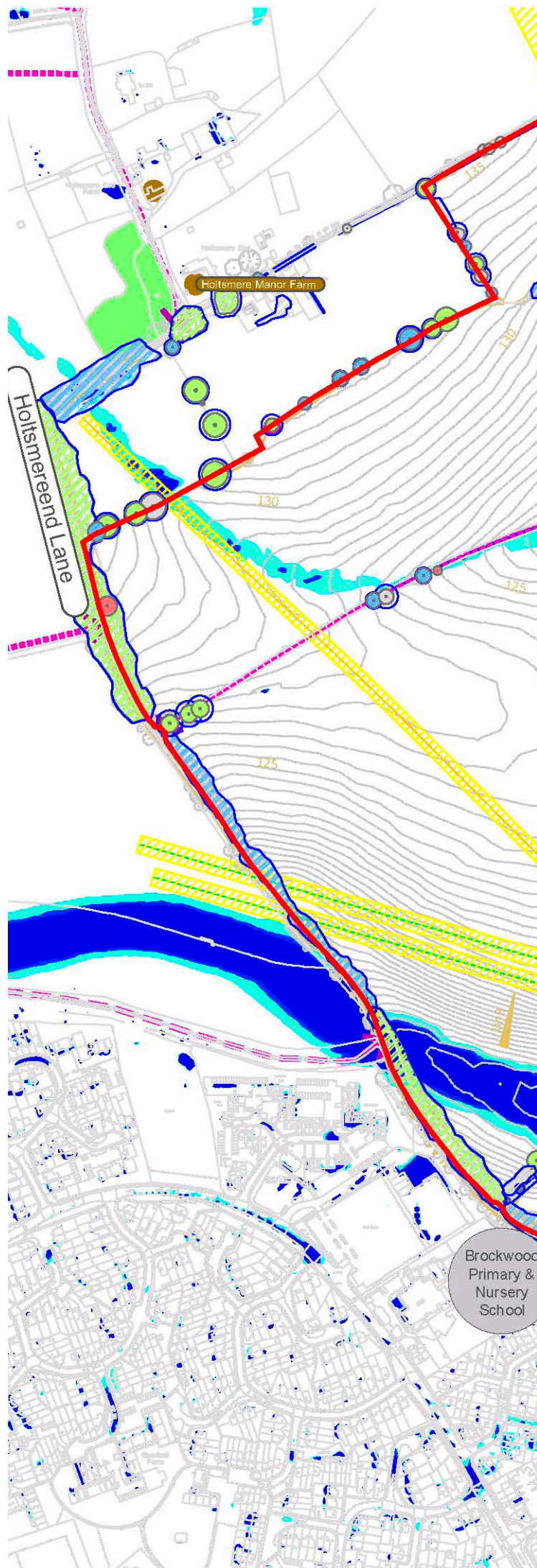
CONSIDERATIONS

An assessment of site considerations was undertaken at the outset to ensure that the development of the site properly considered its opportunities and constraints.

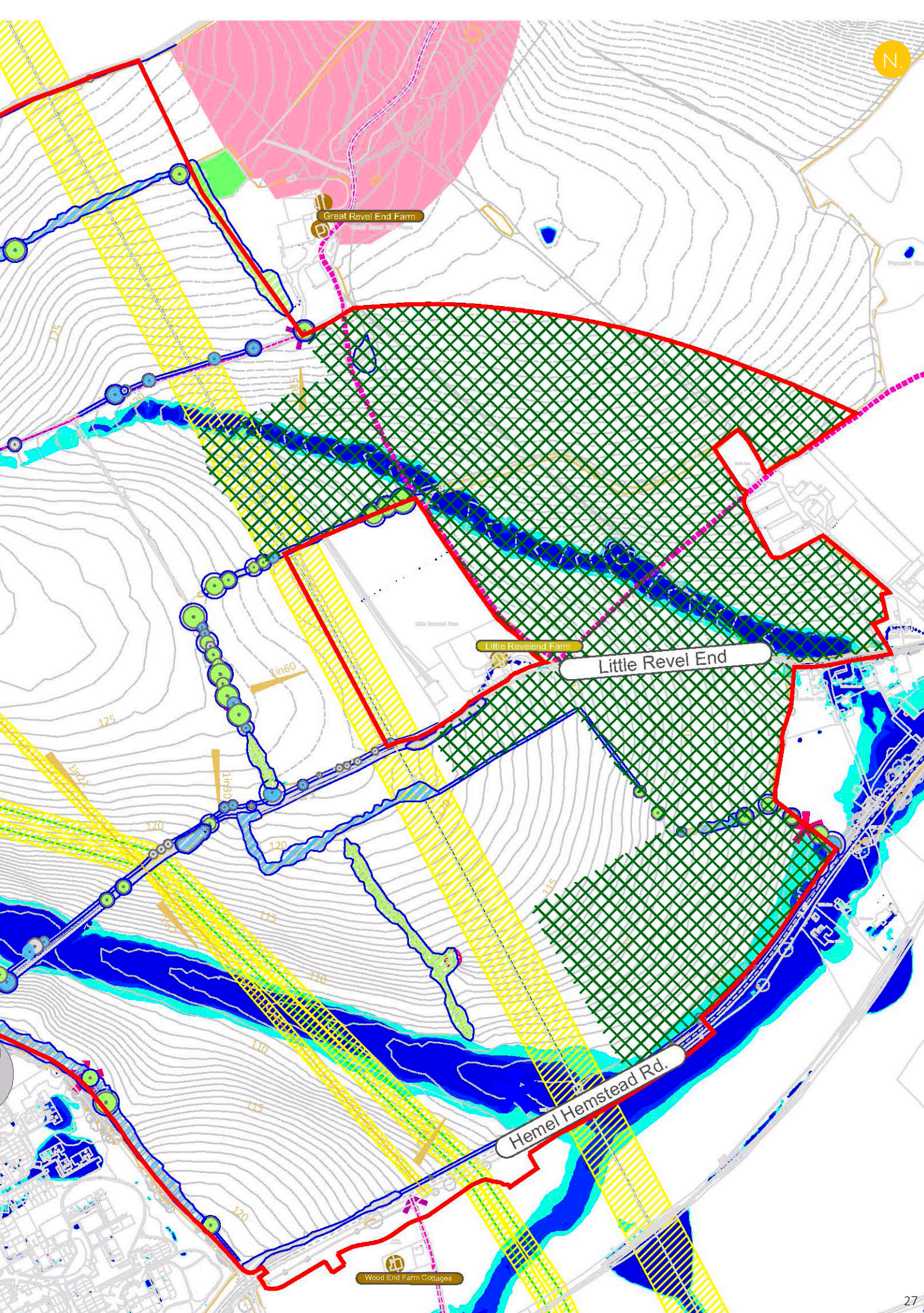
As is typical for a project of this scale, the site presents various constraints and opportunities that have been carefully considered in the design proposal. The approach taken aims to address these considerations thoughtfully and comprehensively, with the goal of creating a unique and distinctive development for Hemel Hempstead.

The plan on the right summarises these findings, while Appendix B provides a detailed summary of the technical work and reports conducted.

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Site boundary |  Priority habitat: orchard |
|  SANG boundary |  Priority habitat: semi improved grassland |
|  0.5m contour |  Category A tree |
|  Existing pedestrian access |  Category B tree / group / hedge |
|  Public Right of Way: footpath |  Category C tree / group / hedge |
|  Public Right of Way: bridleway |  Category U tree / group / hedge |
|  Grade II listed building |  Root protection areas |
|  Non Designated Heritage Asset |  Pipeline and easement 6m easement / 12m corridor |
|  Surface water flooding (low risk) |  Over 11kV and up to 33 kV powerlines to be rerouted |
|  Surface water flooding (medium risk) |  High voltage powerline 30m easement / 60m corridor |
|  Surface water flooding (high risk) | |
|  Climate Change Allowance for SWF | |
|  Lowest areas of topography | |
|  High bat roost potential | |
|  Red kite nest restrictions to construction if nesting with an offset of between 150 -300m required if active | |



Considerations plan. Not to scale.







03 Involvement & Evaluation

Design 2: Vision and Delivery Statement 2023

Public Consultations

A series of public consultation events were held in the lead-up to this submission. The first round of public consultation included two public exhibitions that took place on 14 July 2025 at the Aubrey Park Hotel and on 16 July at Brockwood Primary School. Online consultation ran between 14 July and 1 August 2025. The second round of public consultation consisted of a project website between 1 and 19 October 2025.

Newsletters were distributed to nearby addresses on 7 July 2025 and 1 October 2025. A two-page newsletter was distributed to 4,123 addresses around the Site for the first round of consultation, and a one-page newsletter was distributed to 621 nearby addresses for the second round of consultation. The newsletter provided a summary of the proposals, information about the Applicants, the consultation, in-person events and ways to provide feedback and details of the website. Social media advertising was used to promote the two rounds of consultation and survey.

The exhibitions were able to reach a broad area of coverage for community involvement. The first public consultation event in July 2025 received a total of 142 responses. A summary of the key themes raised are as follows:

- there were concerns over the loss of the Green Belt, albeit with positive comments relating to the delivery of public open space;
- concerns over increased traffic;
- the delivery of a new primary school was generally welcomed;
- concerns over increased pressure on local services and infrastructure, however, the financial contributions to local services was supported;
- support for the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain.

A second public exhibition took place online in September and October 2025 and received a total of 80 responses. The comments received were generally similar to those provided at the first public exhibition. The key themes raised, include:

- concerns about insufficient healthcare facilities;
- concerns about traffic congestion and inadequate road infrastructure;
- concerns over the loss of Green Belt land;
- support for genuinely affordable housing, particularly for local residents; and
- support for the community park and recreation spaces.

Feedback forms were made available at the in-person events and were made digitally available via the website during the first and second rounds of consultation. A total of 423 responses were received across the consultation period, including pre-consultation.

The submitted SCI provides a full overview of the comments made on the Proposed Development at the exhibitions and the feedback from the written forms received online and via post.'

Responses to feedback received

Feedback received	Applicant's response
Loss of Green Belt land	The draft St Albans City and District Council Local Plan allocates the site for residential development of 1,500 (indicatively) homes and a range of other uses. The site is allocated by draft Local Plan Policy H1. The draft Local Plan proposes a new Green Belt boundary within the eastern area of the site that follows the alignment of the overhead powerlines. The proposals will provide strategic planting within proximity to the overhead powerlines to strengthen this new Green Belt boundary. The Applicant has ensured that in developing the illustrative masterplan that green infrastructure is a key focus. This includes a Community Park and SANG to the east of the Green Belt boundary. These spaces will remain undeveloped in perpetuity and will ensure a green buffer is retained between the Site, the M1 and Redbourn.
Strain on local services	The proposed development will deliver a range of local services on-site, including a new primary school, a new local centre, accommodation for older people, a care home, and new green spaces and sports pitches. If approved, the planning permission will also include a number of financial contributions towards local services and transport infrastructure. The exact contributions will be agreed as part of the determination of the application but is likely to include contributions for infrastructure improvements and contributions to childcare, library and waste management services.
Impact on local road network and public transport	Extensive pre-application dialogue has been held with Highway Officers at the Hertfordshire County Council to discuss the proposed development. This has included discussions on the proposed road improvements that will be delivered on-site as part of the proposed development, proposed off-site road improvements that will be secured via S278 agreement, and discussions with bus operators. The impact on the local road network has been considered within the supporting Environmental Statement and Transport Assessment. As noted above, appropriate mitigation is proposed to minimise impacts on the local road network, and these mitigation improvements will be secured as part of any planning permission.
Pedestrian movement	Pedestrian routes through the site has been a key consideration in the development of the parameter plan and illustrative masterplan. The accompanying Land Use and Green Infrastructure Parameter Plan shows key east west routes through the Site to enable the development to connect to wider pedestrian routes and PRoWs. The development will also deliver north south routes through the Site that will connect to the wider HGC development, including to East Hemel to the south.
Parking provision	The proposed car parking provision will be determined at the reserved matters stage, but it will include provision for electric vehicle charging. Secure cycle parking will be provided.
Affordable housing	The Applicant's plans represent an opportunity to deliver around 1,500 new homes, including up to 40% affordable housing, alongside extensive areas of enhanced public open space for the benefit of the whole community.
Housing mix	At the time this Application has been submitted, the exact mix of dwellings that might be needed is unknown and therefore the unit mixes for all housing tenures are expressed as ranges within Table 3.3 of the Development Specification. The housing mix will be delivered through RMAs on a phase by phase / zone by zone basis and is therefore not fixed as part of the outline application.
Do the houses have garages, at least a single for bikes, garden equipment, tools and/or a car?	Some, but not all, of the houses will have garages. All homes will have storage for a bike.

The illustrative masterplan and development parameters have been refined through a process of key stakeholder engagement and informed by detailed technical and environmental assessments.

This section provides a summary of the key revisions and alterations made throughout the design phase, illustrating the progression and enhancement of the proposals.

Design Evolution One: Initial Illustrative Framework Plan (2021)

The first illustrative framework was prepared to test the deliverability of the Site in line with the former draft Policy S6 iv of the withdrawn St Albans Local Plan. This early stage plan responded to baseline site analysis and technical assessments, demonstrating the site's suitability as part of the wider Hemel Garden Communities (HGC) proposals.

Key features of the initial framework included:

- **Housing:** A minimum of 1,500 new homes across the wider Broad Location, including around 500 on land controlled by Pigeon.
- **Community facilities:** Provision for a new 3FE primary school with early years, at least one care home, and a local centre with employment, community, leisure, and health uses.
- **Green infrastructure:** A substantial new Country Park forming a permanent buffer to Redbourn, alongside strategic planting, landscape corridors, allotments, and play areas for all ages.



- **Access and movement:** Primary access from Redbourn Road, a potential secondary access, and an integrated SuDS network following the natural fall of the land. The framework also safeguarded routes for a future multi-modal link road and provided pedestrian and cycle connections into the town and wider countryside.
- **Utilities and infrastructure:** Consideration of pylons, oil pipelines, and rights of way, with opportunities to mitigate and integrate these within a landscape-led layout.

The plan represented a comprehensive starting point, setting out how the land could deliver a sustainable neighbourhood integrated with Hemel Hempstead and consistent with Garden City principles.

Design Evolution Two: Vision and Delivery Statement 2023

The proposals were refined in line with Policy H1 of the Regulation 18 stage of the St Albans Draft Local Plan (2041) and the Hemel Garden Communities (HGC) spatial vision. This evolution of the framework plan incorporated more detailed technical work and engagement with stakeholders, producing a more comprehensive and landscape-led masterplan.

Key refinements included:

- **Housing:** 1,500 homes, with a site-wide minimum density of 40 dph, including specialist housing for older people.
- **Community facilities:** A new local centre at the heart of the neighbourhood, providing shops, café, community space, health services, remote working hub, and a parcel collection point. A 3FE primary school with early years provision and extra care housing were integrated within the community core.
- **Green infrastructure:** Delivery of a substantial new Country Park providing a permanent Green Belt boundary, together with 13.7 ha of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG). The green network was strengthened with allotments, orchards, community food growing, play areas for all age groups, and improved public rights of way connections
- **Sustainability and mobility:** A mobility hub, bus services, and active travel corridors formed the backbone of movement, connecting to Woodhall Farm, the Nickey Line, and the wider HGC Green Loop.
- **Landscape and setting:** Development was concentrated on higher ground, while valley floors and lower-lying areas were retained as accessible landscape corridors and SuDS features, enhancing biodiversity and creating a strong transition to open countryside.



Design Evolution Three: Outline Planning Application Design Development (Winter 2024 – Spring 2025)

This stage marked the beginning of design development in preparation for the outline planning application. It captured a key phase in which design work was coordinated through a structured series of Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) meetings with St Albans District Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Hemel Garden Communities, and other key stakeholders. The process culminated in a Design South East (DSE) Design Review Panel site visit and meeting in May 2025.

Aim:

- Advance a coordinated masterplan demonstrating how the proposals respond to the Hemel Garden Communities Strategic Design Code (Reg 19 Draft, 2025).
- Translate the three HGC design themes - Green & Blue Infrastructure, Transport & Mobility, and Placemaking - into tangible design principles tailored to the site.
- Develop the framework for the Development Specification, Design and Access Statement (DAS), and Parameter Plans.
- Progress detailed engagement on connectivity, land use, infrastructure delivery, and character area development.

Key Themes and Outcomes:

Landscape and Green Infrastructure

- The masterplan evolved around a landscape-led structure, integrating the valley landform, SANG, and green corridors as defining spatial elements.



- Feedback from SADC and HCC reinforced the need for a coherent Green Belt boundary, robust Green Infrastructure Framework, and connectivity to East Hemel and the Nickey Line.
- The team developed a Community Park concept and refined SuDS and attenuation features to balance ecology, landscape character, and recreation.

Connectivity and Movement

- PPA discussions confirmed the Sustainable Transport Corridor (STC) as the main north–south movement spine, to be designed as a multimodal route prioritising active and sustainable travel.
- Connections to Woodhall Farm and the Hemel Green Loop were explored, alongside options for a temporary bus loop and future extension of Route 46 into the site.
- The DRP endorsed the overall connectivity principles but recommended clearer hierarchy, enhanced east–west integration, and stronger pedestrian/cycle prioritisation within the STC design.

Design, Density and Character

- Character areas were refined to align with the HGC Code, with emerging principles for the Local Centre/School, Neighbourhood Streets, Town Edge, and Countryside Edge.
- The DRP supported the approach to topography and orientation, encouraging the use of sections and 3D visualisation to communicate how development responds to level changes and long views.
- Commitments were made to rationalise and simplify the number of character areas, using valley form and plateaus as the main structuring device
- SADC requested a clear density and building heights strategy to demonstrate capacity and deliverability, supported by indicative typologies and parking ratios aligned with modal-shift objectives.

Collaboration and Delivery

- The team maintained fortnightly coordination with The Crown Estate to align on the Redbourn Road junction design, Green Belt interface, and STC connection.
- SADC, DBC, and HCC jointly participated through the HGC framework, ensuring cross-boundary coherence
- Legal advisors were appointed to begin early Section 106 and delivery discussions.

Design Review Panel (May 2025)

A Design South East review was held on 14 May 2025, focusing on the emerging outline masterplan for North Hemel. The panel commended early progress in understanding the site's constraints and opportunities and noted the positive intention to deliver a landscape-led, sustainable community. However, it emphasised that the scheme needed greater ambition to align fully with the Hemel Garden Communities vision.

Recommendations centred on:

- Establishing a clearer transport hierarchy and a stronger sustainable travel vision, ensuring the Sustainable Transport Corridor (STC) prioritises walking, cycling, and public transport.
- Broadening the connectivity strategy to integrate the site with surrounding neighbourhoods and future HGC developments.
- Using long sections, 3D studies, and visualisations to express topography, roofscape, and relationships between landscape and built form.
- Reassessing character areas to reflect contextual conditions such as landform, orientation, and aspect, rather than parcel boundaries.
- Clarifying the Local Centre strategy, stewardship vision, and how community infrastructure will integrate with existing facilities at Woodhall Farm and Redbourn.
- Testing density to ensure a viable, walkable, and sustainable development capable of supporting public transport.

Design Evolution Four: Refinement through Councillor and Stakeholder Engagement (Summer–Autumn 2025)

This stage focused on refining the North Hemel masterplan through continued engagement with St Albans City and District Council, Dacorum Borough Council, Hemel Garden Communities (HGC), and Hertfordshire County Council, under the framework of the Planning Performance Agreement (PPA). The process culminated in a second Design Review Panel (DRP) with Design South East in September 2025, followed by a joint meeting with The Crown Estate and key stakeholders.

Councillor and Community Briefings

In June and July 2025, presentations were made to both St Albans and Dacorum councillors to update members on how the emerging masterplan responded to Local Plan policies and the Hemel Garden Communities Strategic Design Code (Reg 19 Draft, 2025).

- Sessions emphasised the site's landscape-led structure, integration with the Hemel Green Loop, and a strengthened approach to sustainable transport, including potential enhancement of Bus Route 46.
- Councillors raised queries about the relationship with Redbourn, bus service frequency, and the timing of delivery of the Country Park and community facilities
- Public consultation events followed in July, providing feedback from Woodhall Farm and Redbourn residents, focusing on access, traffic, and integration with the wider HGC network.



PPA Stage 3 Meetings (July–August 2025)

A coordinated series of PPA meetings between July and August 2025 explored and refined key technical and design topics:

Drainage and Topography

- The drainage and SuDS strategy was advanced to demonstrate site-wide flood resilience, including an integrated landscape and attenuation design that followed the natural valley topography.
- Stepped building forms and terraced gardens were developed to manage level changes, supported by cross-sections showing how retaining features would be contained within private plots.

Green and Blue Infrastructure

- Parameter Plans were refined to coordinate with East Hemel, aligning with Natural England's feedback on SANG and noise levels.
- The Community Park concept was expanded to include multi-functional spaces balancing recreation, habitat creation, and water management.

Parameter Plans and Development Specification

- Revised parameter plans introduced flexible zoning, ensuring clear yet adaptable boundaries for built development and open space.
- The Development Specification was expanded to define design principles for density, building heights, character areas, and the Local Centre, ensuring consistency with HGC guidance.
- The team agreed that heights would be assessed through the Environmental Statement rather than fixed in a parameter plan, giving design flexibility while maintaining environmental compliance.

Local Centre and Social Infrastructure

- The Local Centre layout and mobility hub were refined, inspired by best-practice examples such as Heyford Park in Oxfordshire.
- Principles were set for an active frontage along the Sustainable Transport Corridor (STC), including provision for a 500 sqm convenience store, early years facility, and flexible Class E community uses.
- Parking strategies were reviewed to balance accessibility with modal shift, supported by HCC Highways and public health officers.

Character Areas and Density Strategy

- Five distinct character areas were finalised, with density and typology ranges tested against site levels and infrastructure constraints.
- Long sections were commissioned to illustrate how the roofscape and building lines would step with the terrain to create an interesting townscape and positive skyline

Second Design Review Panel (September 2025)

A follow-up Design South East review was held on 24 September 2025, focusing on character areas, density, and the relationship between built form and topography. The panel acknowledged progress since the first review, noting clearer articulation of landscape structure, movement hierarchy, and overall masterplan organisation.

Key Panel Feedback:

- Commended the improved definition of character areas but urged further clarity on density distribution and transitions between key masterplan areas
- Recommended stronger use of sections and 3D visuals to demonstrate the impact of topography on built form and open space.
- Noted that higher densities could be appropriate along the STC and Local Centre to support walkability and sustainable transport, while maintaining lower densities at the Countryside Edge.
- Advised defining site-specific, measurable design principles within the Development Specification to safeguard quality at outline stage.
- Encouraged additional work on figure-ground testing, housing typologies, and place-specific metrics to underpin the character areas.

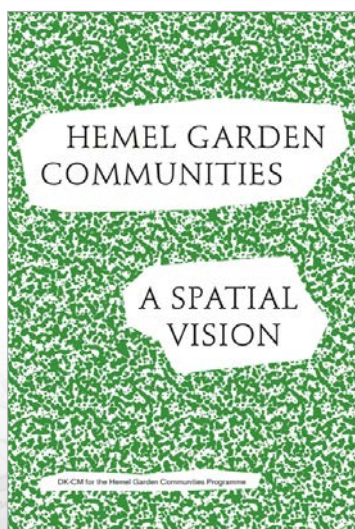
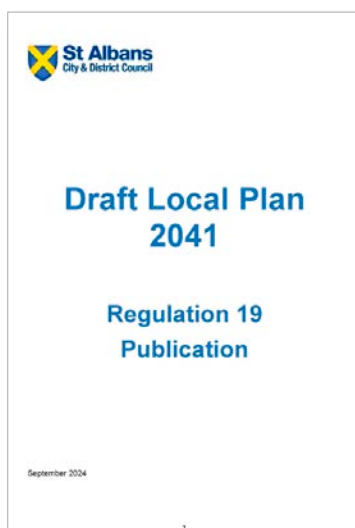
In summary, the panel acknowledged progress in refining character areas and responding more closely to the site's context. However, it advised that further work was needed to convey the three-dimensional qualities of the site, strengthen the relationship between density and topography, and provide greater clarity on transitions between key masterplan areas.







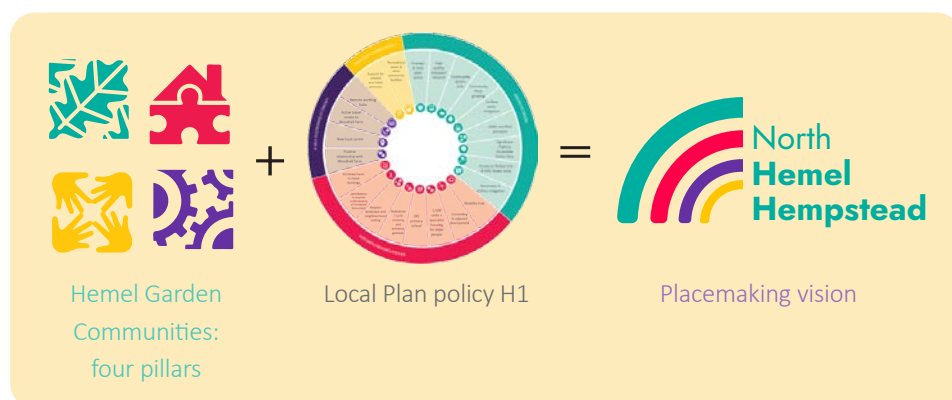
Hemel Garden Communities: creating a greener, more connected New Town.



Placemaking Vision

The placemaking vision for North Hemel Hempstead aims to establish a new neighbourhood that aligns with the spatial vision outlined in the HGC spatial vision and policy H1 of the St. Albans City & District Council Local Plan 2041.

The following pages of this document explore how the proposals for North Hemel Hempstead align with and support the vision of HGC and deliver policy H1 .



Hemel Garden Communities: Spatial vision and four pillars

North Hemel Hempstead aligns with Hemel Garden Communities vision, which is organised into four thematic pillars, all of which reinforce the aspiration to promote healthy lifestyles and respond to the climate crisis.



A GREEN NETWORK

A network of green routes, travel and places will support healthy lifestyles, biodiversity, climate resilience, environmental sustainability and the wellbeing of local communities.



A SELF SUSTAINING ECONOMY

Innovation in sustainability, circular economy principles and digital connectivity will be key employment drivers in Hemel Garden Communities and provide a strong theme for the economic identity of the town.



INTEGRATED NEIGHBOURHOODS

Hemel Garden Communities will be made up of a series of walkable neighbourhoods, connected to each other with individual distinct identities, exemplar design and sustainability standards, centred upon lively, inclusive local centres.



ENGAGED COMMUNITIES

Connected and engaged communities will be active participants in the transformation of Hemel Garden Communities. Cultural and heritage activity, public art, knowledge and skill exchange and enterprise will all play a role, now and in the long term.

Policy H1 of the St. Albans City & District Council Draft Local Plan 2041.

For the full policy wording please refer to the planning policy context section of this document.





PLACEMAKING CONCEPT

Introduction

The placemaking concept for North Hemel Hempstead is to create a dynamic, inclusive, and sustainable community that meets the diverse needs of residents through thoughtful planning and a variety of housing and community uses.

Summary of benefits



Homes to Meet Local Need

Diverse Housing Options: Includes up to 1,500 homes and a care home of approximately 70 beds, offering diverse housing options to meet local needs, from first-time buyers and families to downsizers who wish to remain in the area and maintain important connections with friends and family.

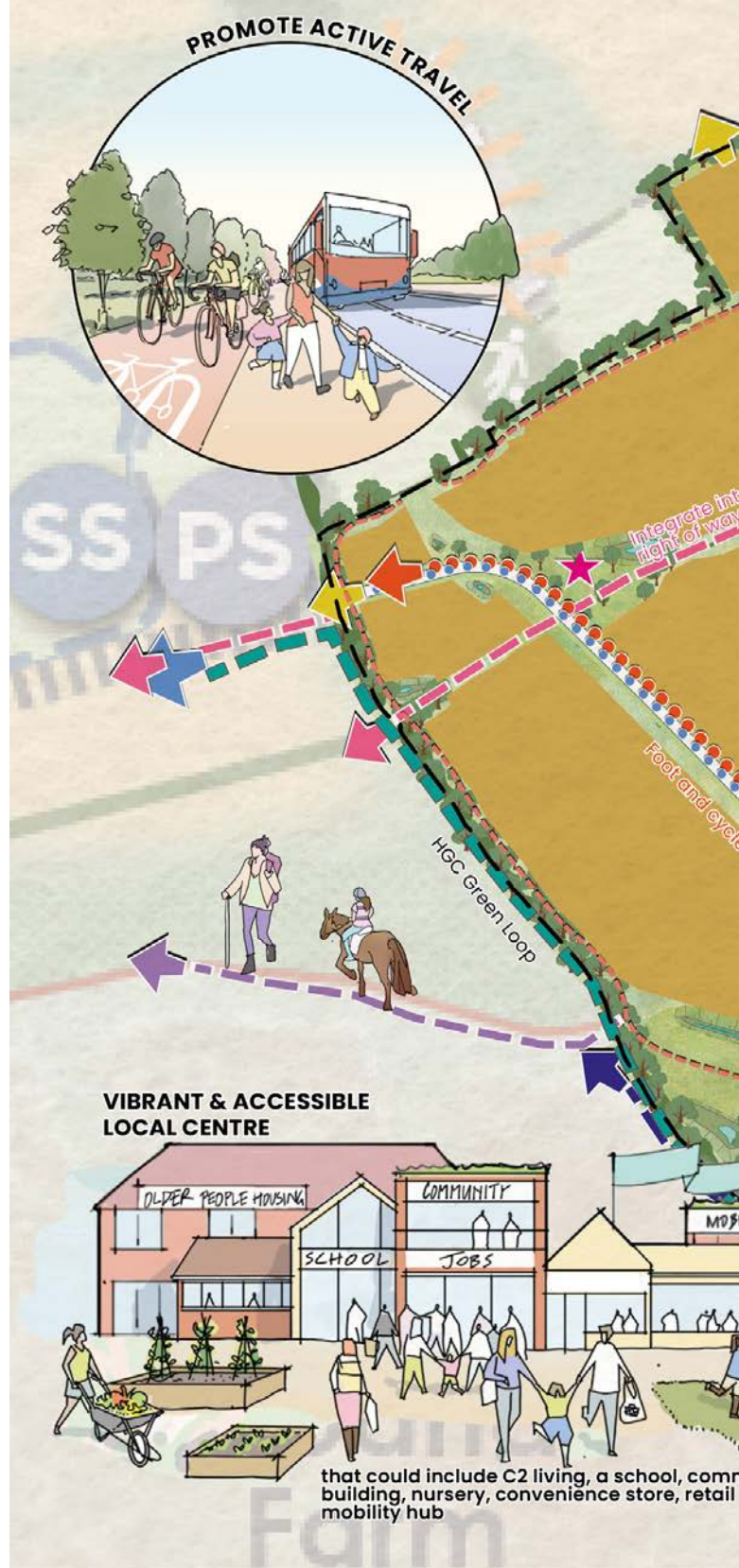


Community Facilities

Local Centre: A new local centre will be established to support the residents of North Hemel Hempstead and neighbouring communities, without creating competition with the existing Woodhall Farm facilities. The local centre is likely to include:

- A destination children's play space for everyone to enjoy
- A three-form entry primary school with early years provision to serve the new community and help meet existing local need within surrounding communities, including Redbourn.
- A 70 bed care home for older people to cater to an ageing population and maintain local social connections
- A community building, nursery, convenience store, retail units to create jobs and foster a vibrant community.
- A mobility hub with facilities that encourage and facilitate alternative modes of transportation beyond private cars

An extensive Community Park, with sports pitches and changing facilities, will also provide opportunities for community-led food cultivation through allotments and orchards. The provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) is intended to strengthen connections with the natural world, enriching North Hemel Hempstead's environment for everyone.



Green Infrastructure and Public Open Space

Community Park: Introduces a substantial new community park and green buffer to Redbourn. The community park provides facilities for the new residents of HGC and the existing residents of Redbourn and Woodhall Farm.

Community Food Growing: Offers opportunities for community food growing that harmonise with the landscape setting, including allotments, community orchards and edible species of trees and plants in the landscape.



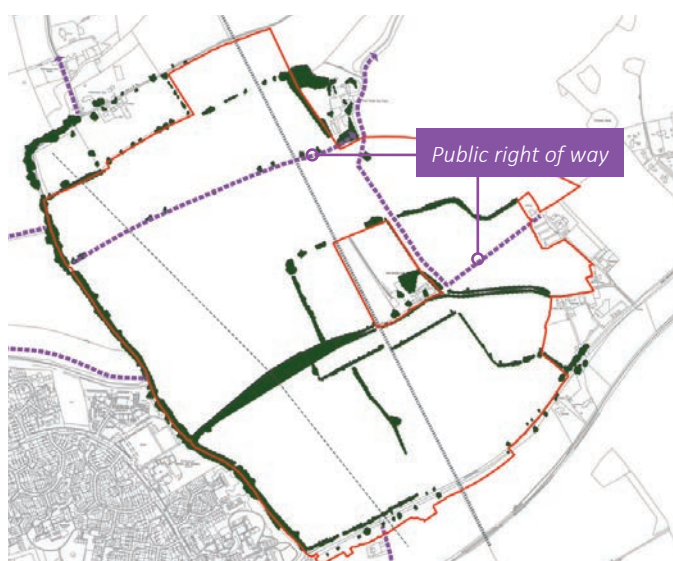
Green Infrastructure: Meets SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space) requirements, strengthening green infrastructure and the preservation and enhancement of the natural landscape.

Sustainable Movement

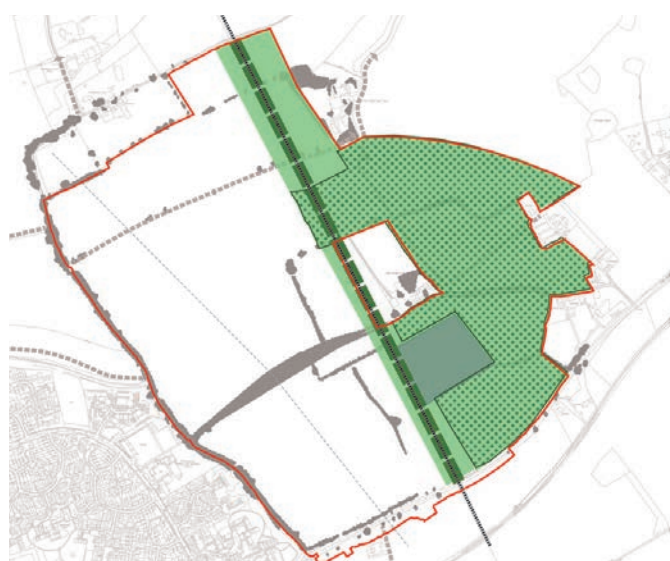
DESIGN RATIONALE

The following pages present a series of diagrams illustrating the key organising design rationale for the proposed development at North Hemel Hempstead.

The design rationale is based on the placemaking concept outlined in the previous pages, as well as the contextual analysis and technical constraints discussed earlier in this document and the appendix



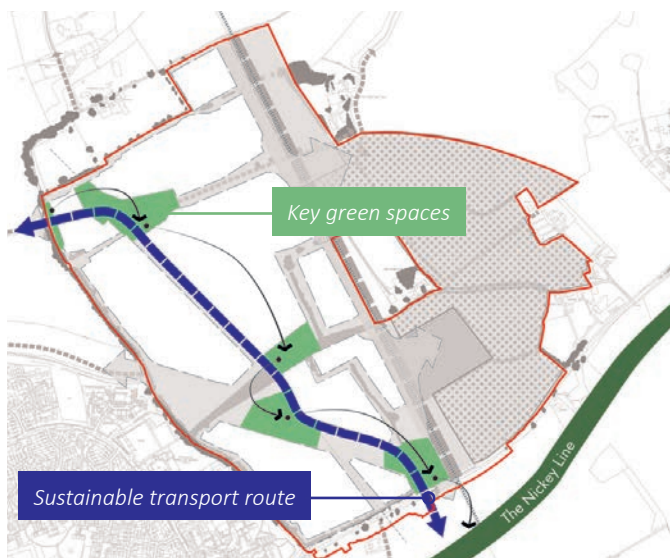
1. The site today



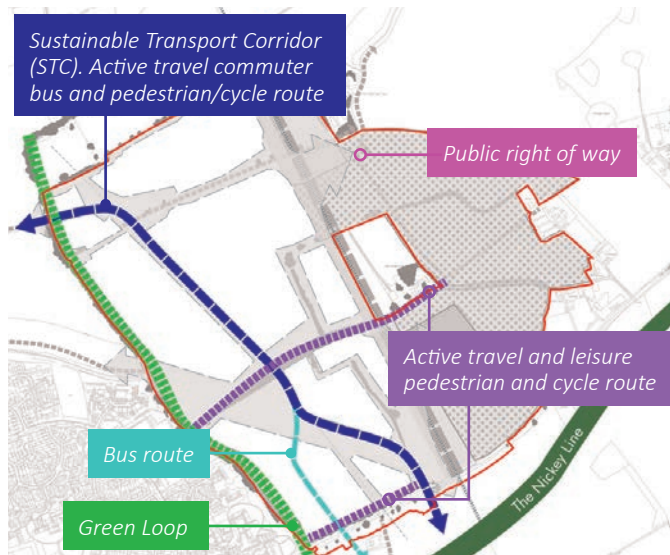
2. Establish a Community Park, featuring Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), sports pitches, and a new defensible Green Belt boundary



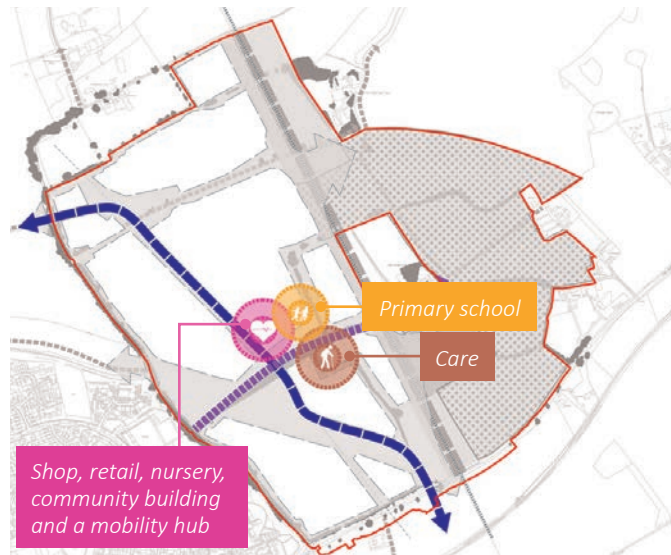
3. Create a network of multifunctional and biodiverse landscape corridors



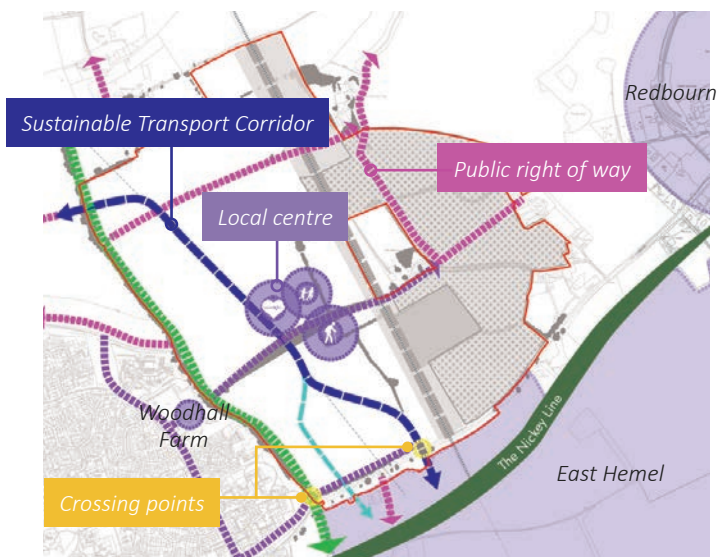
4. Create a sustainable transport corridor with a positive kinetic placemaking experience



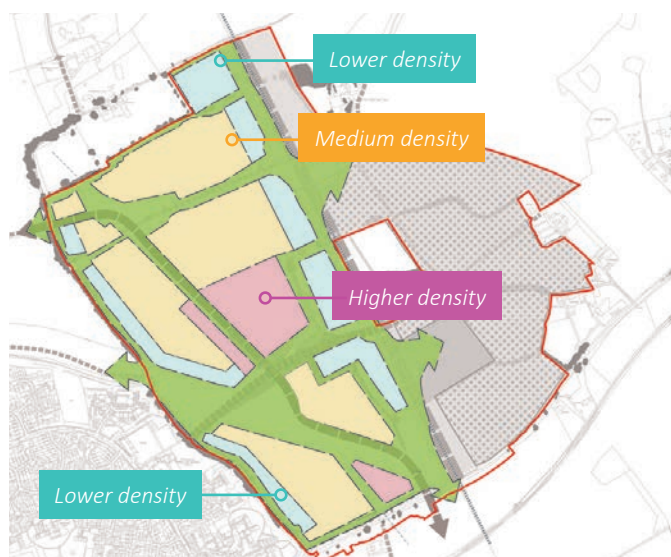
5. Establish a network of sustainable, active travel and leisure corridors



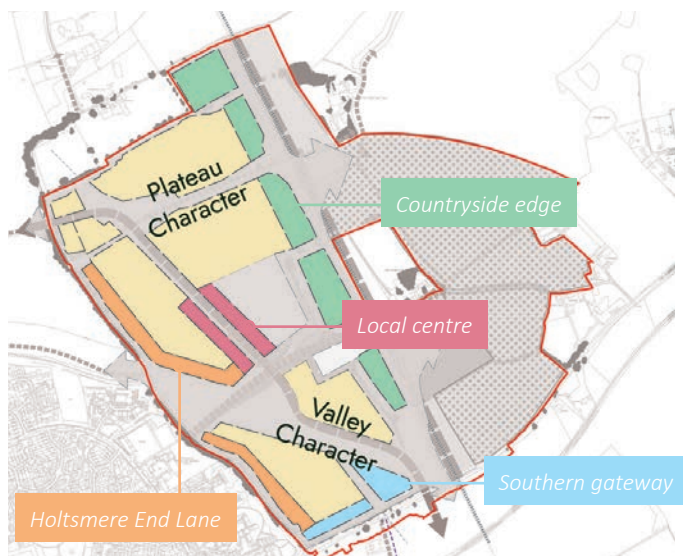
6. Create a mixed-use local centre at the most accessible location



7. Establish sustainable routes to key destinations on- and off-site



8. Locate homes within a comprehensive and well-connected network of biodiverse and multifunctional corridors and create a density strategy that responds to the unique characteristic of the site



9. Create character areas that respond to the site's characteristics, including landform



ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN

The illustrative masterplan demonstrates how the proposals for North Hemel Hempstead (Policy H1) deliver a sustainable, landscape-led extension to the town.

- Includes up to 1,500 homes and a care home of approximately 70 beds, a 3FE primary school, and a local centre with community and mobility facilities.
- Embeds the principles of the Hemel Garden Communities (HGC) Spatial Vision, founded on four pillars: Integrated Neighbourhoods, Engaged Communities, a Self-Sustaining Economy, and a Green Network. (See Appendix C)
- Reflects Hemel Hempstead's "City in a Park" legacy, extending the town through a series of green corridors and open spaces that connect new and existing communities.
- Responds directly to Policy H1, which calls for a comprehensively planned, high-quality and well-connected new neighbourhood.

The illustrative masterplan shows how the vision and parameter plans could come together to create a distinct and enduring extension to Hemel Hempstead. A strong landscape-led framework defines the structure of the masterplan. The natural valley running southeast-northwest through the site accommodates sustainable drainage, biodiversity-rich planting, and recreational routes, forming the heart of a wider green and blue infrastructure network.

At its edges, the masterplan provides a variety of accessible and multifunctional open spaces, including a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), sports pitches with changing facilities, and allotments, all designed to encourage active and healthy lifestyles. These green spaces are linked by tree-lined walking and cycling routes that connect into the Hemel Green Loop and Nickey Line, extending the town's active travel and ecological networks.

The Sustainable Transport Corridor (STC) provides the primary north-south route for pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport. It connects key facilities with proposed residential area, ensuring essential services are easily accessible on foot or by bus.

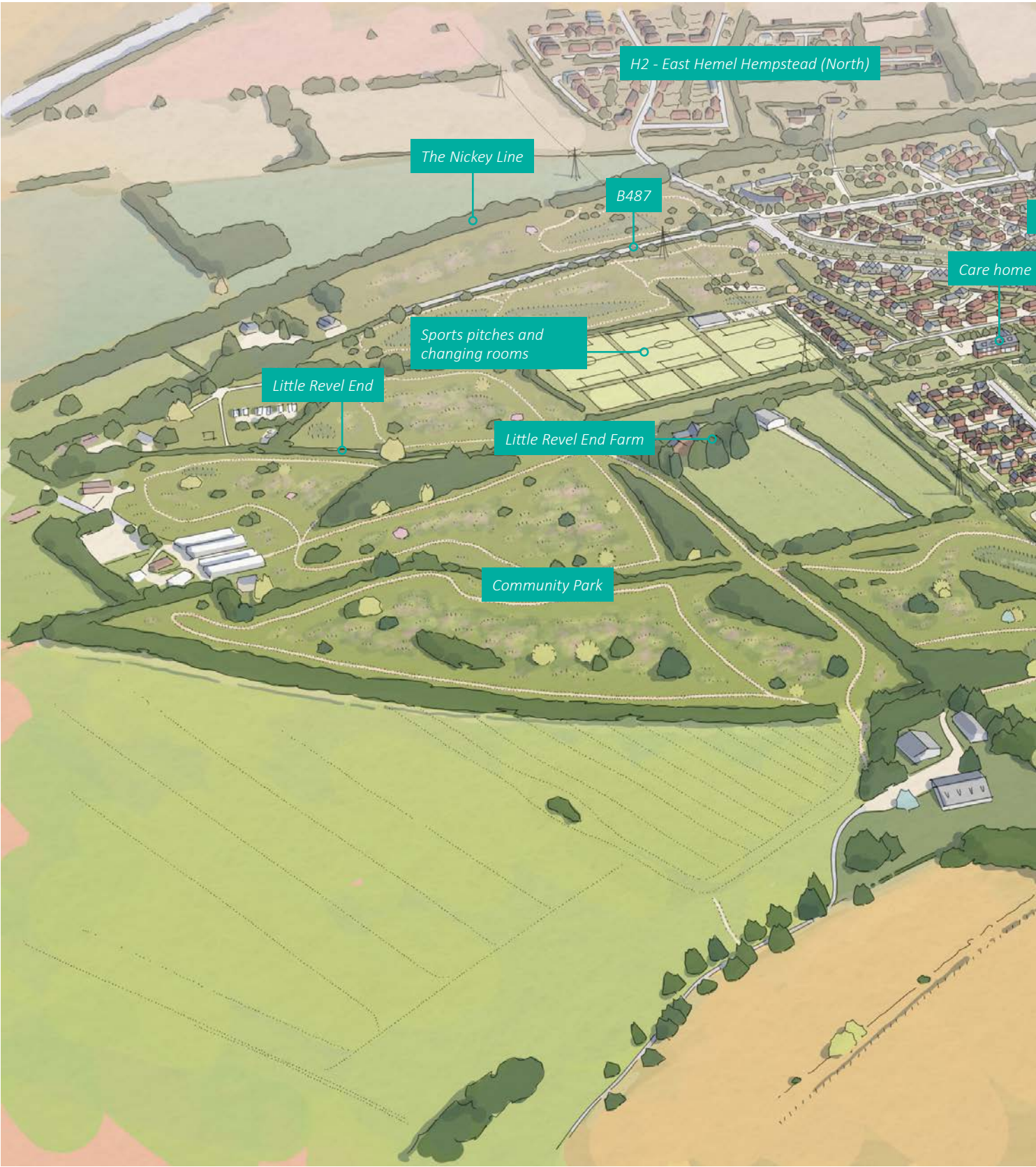


Illustrative masterplan. Not to scale. Aerial photograph: © Google Earth



- Site Red Line
- 01 Vehicular and pedestrian access point
- 02 Bus only access
- 03 Sustainable drainage system(SuDS)
- 04 Retained hedgerow planting
- 05 HGC Green loop - pegasus crossing
- 06 Active travel: cycle and pedestrian route
- 07 Two form entry primary school
- 08 Local Centre (with mobility hub)
- 09 Care
- 10 Play area
- 11 Sport Pitches
- 12 Allotments
- 13 Community orchard
- 14 Future access links
- 15 Pedestrian crossing point
- 16 Changing rooms and car park for SANG and sports provision
- 17 Understory vegetation and hedgerow
- 18 Indicative bus stop
- 19 STC (Sustainable Transport Corridor)
- 20 Indicative primary connections
- 21 Existing Roads
- 22 PRoW
- Land Uses
- 23 Residential
- 24 Local Centre & Mixed Use
- 25 Wider HGC Development Areas

Artist's Aerial Impression





Maylands Business Park

Woodhall Farm

Hemel Hempstead

Three form entry primary school

Local centre

Sustainable transport corridor

Dacorum Borough Council
HGC neighbourhood

Holtmere End Farm

Allotments

Community
orchard

Holtmere End Lane



LAND BUDGET AND DEVELOPMENT PARAMETERS

Land Budget, Density and Building Heights

The proposals for North Hemel Hempstead are supported by a land budget of the illustrative masterplan that demonstrates how the site can accommodate up to 1,500 homes and a care home of approximately 70 beds, together with a primary school, local centre, sports pitches, SANG, and other essential green-infrastructure components. The balance between development and open space has been carefully designed to ensure that the new neighbourhood feels generous, landscaped, and consistent with the Hemel Garden Communities (HGC) Spatial Vision.

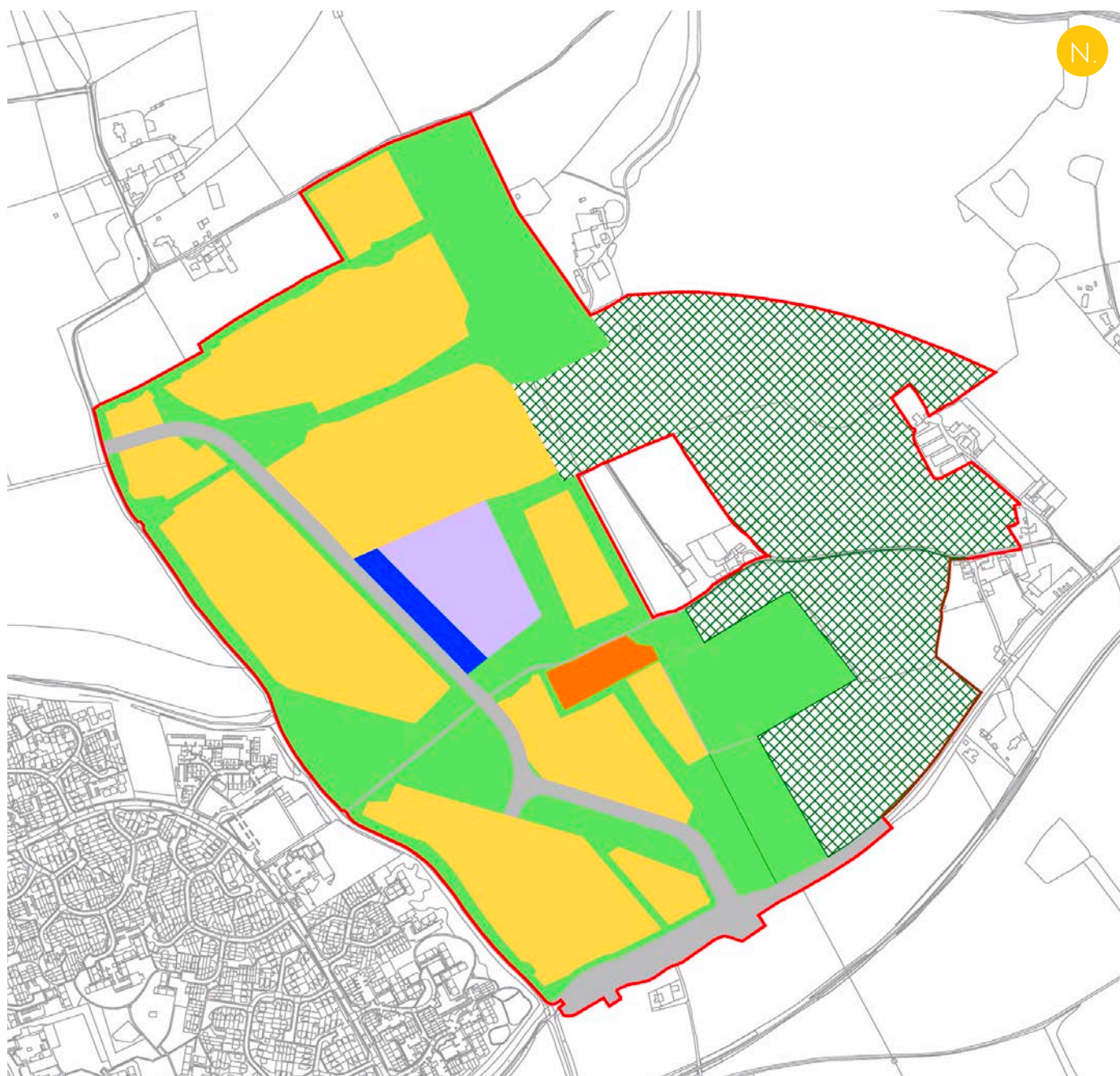
Land Budget and Land Use Distribution

The total site area extends to approximately 105.607 hectares, of which 55.82 % is dedicated to green and blue infrastructure. This includes formal and informal open spaces, sustainable-drainage corridors, the Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), sports pitches with changing facilities, parks and amenity areas, children's play, and allotments.

The land budget supports Policy H1 (North Hemel Hempstead) by delivering a range of uses required to create a complete and self-sustaining community. The generous proportion of green space reflects both the site's topography and its role as part of the wider HGC network, enhancing biodiversity, recreation, and water management while maintaining a soft transition to the countryside.

Housing Density

The overall net residential density across the developable area (C2 and C3) averages around 41 dwellings per hectare (dph), creating a balanced pattern of housing that responds to accessibility, landscape character, and topography.

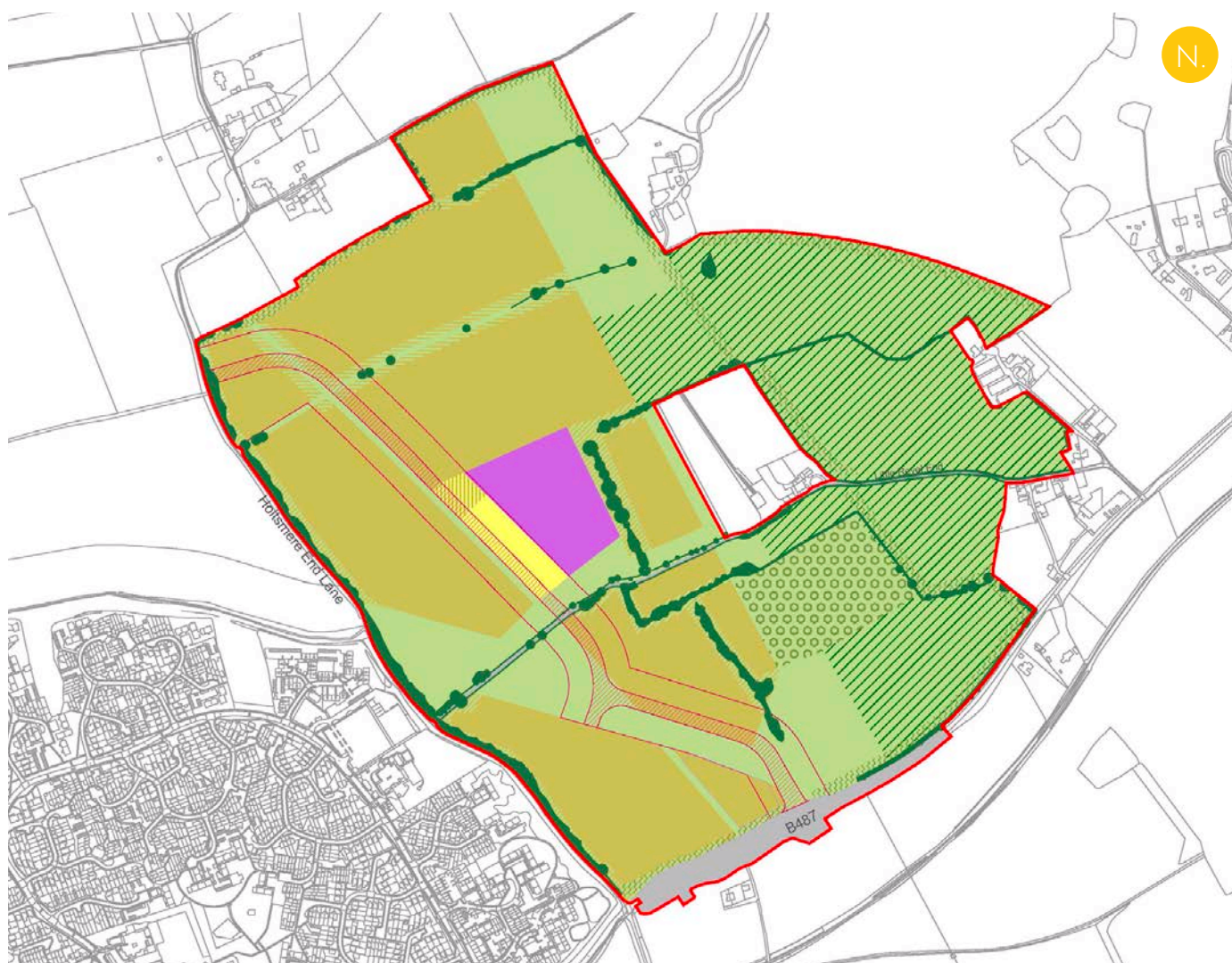


Land budget of the illustrative masterplan. Not to scale

	Land use typology	Net developable area (hectares)	% of total
	Residential (C2 & C3)	36.31	34.38%
	Care home	0.86	0.82%
	3 form entry school	3.00	2.84%
	Mixed-use local centre	0.91	0.86%
	Strategic highways infrastructure	5.58	5.28%
	Green infrastructure	29.88	28.30%
	Suitable alternative natural greenspace	29.07	27.52%
	Total	105.61	100%

Land Use and Green Infrastructure Parameter Plan

The parameter defines how the North Hemel Hempstead site will accommodate a mix of residential development types and supporting community facilities in accordance with Policy H1. It establishes the distribution of land uses across the site, including housing areas, the local centre, primary school, care home, and STC, alongside a comprehensive framework of green and blue infrastructure.



Land use and green infrastructure parameter plan. Not to scale

- | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|
|  | Site boundary |  | Mixed-use area (1)
Area to include mobility hub and local centre facilities |  | Existing vegetation (3) |
|  | Residential including care (1) |  | Mixed-use area or residential including care (1) |  | New Strategic planting - broad location shown* |
|  | Residential (including care) or green infrastructure |  | Green infrastructure (2) |  | Sports pitches and changing facilities - broad location shown* |
|  | Primary school |  | Sustainable Transport Corridor
Indicative alignment with the hatched zone.
Limit of deviation within outer lines |  | Highways infrastructure |

Building Heights

The design approach seeks to work with the existing landform wherever possible. This is explored further in the Approach to Topography section later in this DAS. The proposed building heights and ground levels shown in the strategy plan below have been developed in parallel with the project team's landscape and visual impact work.

Up to two storeys: concentrated in the central part of the site where the primary school is located.

Up to two-and-a-half storeys: located along the northern and eastern edges, providing a balanced transition between the built development, existing buildings to the north, and the Community Park.

Up to three storeys: focused around Redbourn Road, the Sustainable Transport Corridor (STC), and the Local Centre, marking areas of good access to public transport and social infrastructure.



Building heights

-  Up to 2 storey (9m)
-  Up to 2.5 storey (10.5)
-  Up to 3 storey (12m)

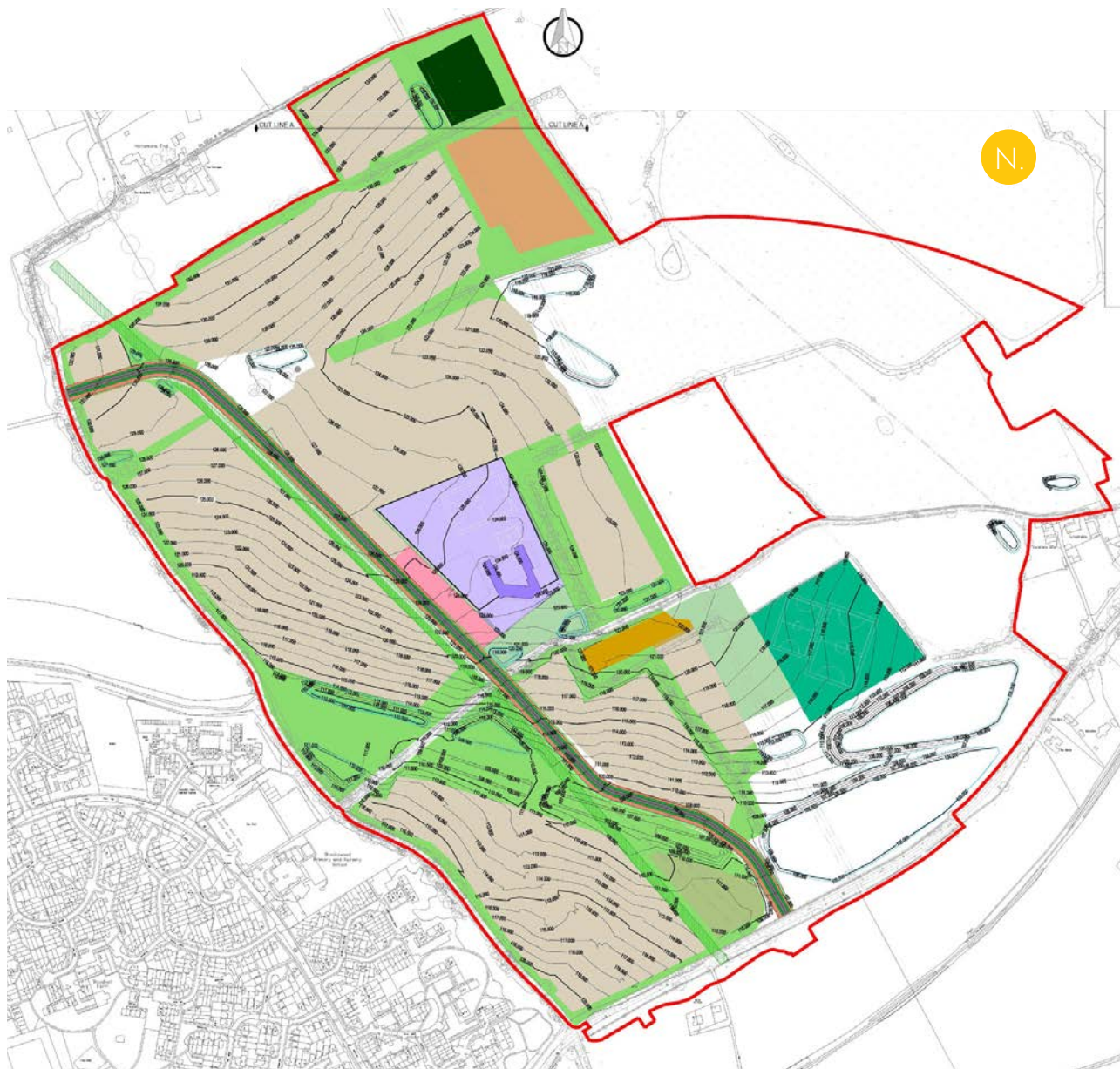


APPROACH TO TOPOGRAPHY

The landform of North Hemel Hempstead defines the site's character and has guided every stage of the design process.

Existing ground levels fall from approximately 130m AOD along the northern ridgeline to around 105m AOD in the central valley, creating a broad, natural depression that extends east-west across the site. This distinctive topography provides both opportunities and design challenges - influencing the position of open spaces, drainage features, and the orientation of streets and buildings.

The proposed earthworks strategy responds to these natural contours, using the existing valley as the organising element of the masterplan. The design seeks to work with the landform rather than against it, minimising cut and fill and avoiding large engineered platforms. Most regrading is within ± 1.5 metres, with the steepest transitions located near the valley sides and managed sensitively within private gardens or rear plot boundaries rather than public open space. Most significant changes in landform is as a result of the SuDS features.



Proposed contour plan. Not to scale

A series of illustrative sections demonstrate how the development sits comfortably within the existing terrain. These show existing levels (in red) against proposed ground lines, highlighting how subtle changes in height are used to maintain accessibility while preserving the natural flow of the landscape. The strategy achieves gentle gradients along main streets, ensuring that the Sustainable Transport Corridor (STC) and key walking and cycling routes remain fully inclusive.

Where steeper slopes occur, a hierarchy of design responses is applied. Minor level changes are accommodated through gentle garden grading or low retaining features up to approximately 0.5 metres, while more pronounced transitions of 0.6 to 1.8 metres are addressed using brick or blockwork retaining walls, often combined with soft planting or terraced gardens to reduce their visual impact. All retaining elements are located within private plots wherever possible to maintain a natural appearance and avoid visual clutter in the public realm.

The lowest areas of the site form part of a multifunctional green and blue infrastructure corridor, accommodating attenuation basins, swales, and wetland planting that manage surface water in a naturalistic way. This central landscape not only provides flood resilience but also creates a biodiverse, visually rich setting for recreation and play.

At the southern end of the site, proposed sports pitches, changing facilities, and the Sutable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) sit naturally within the gentler lower slopes, with level adjustments used to create accessible, well-drained recreational areas. The adjoining allotments are set on shallower gradients to maximise usability and integrate with walking routes that connect to the wider Hemel Green Loop.

Across the site, the combination of terraced building lines, stepped roofscapes, and contour-following streets celebrates the landform and reinforces the valley's identity. The result is a development that feels embedded in its setting, one that balances engineering practicality with placemaking quality, ensuring that the natural topography continues to shape the landscape and character of North Hemel Hempstead.



Key site section. Not to scale. Aerial photograph: © Google

Site Section: A-A

