

Berechurch Hall Road, Colchester

Policy PP10 Land South of Berechurch Hall Road Allocation Document

JANUARY 2026

ON BEHALF OF R.F. WEST LTD



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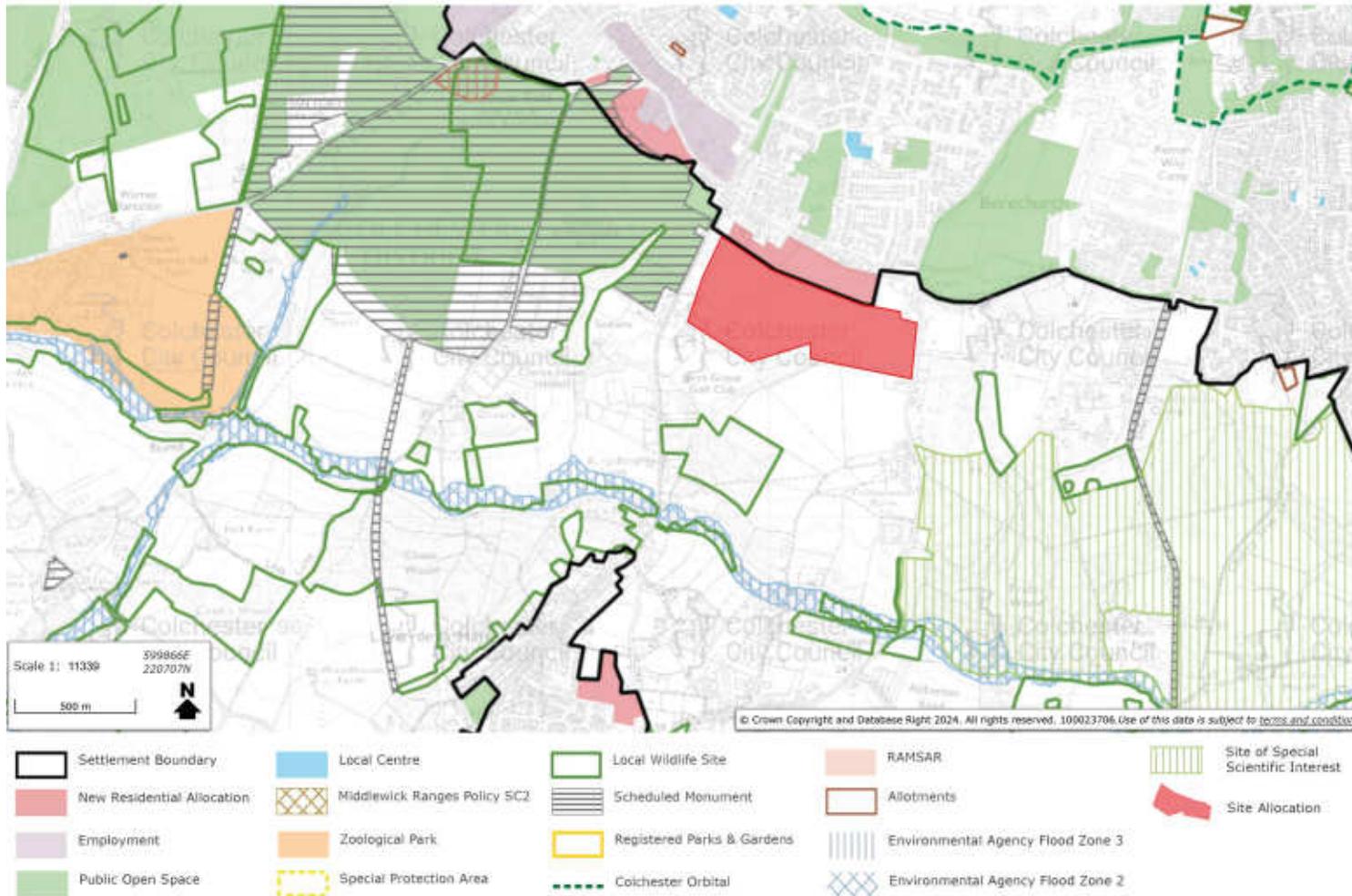
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This document has been prepared as an addendum to the previous allocation document prepared for Colchester City Council's 2024 Local Plan Call for Sites engagement. R.F. The land extends to 27.7 hectares of currently agricultural land directly south of the housing allocation Policy SC1, within Part 2 of the Colchester Local Plan 2017 to 2033. The majority of the Policy SC1 land was also promoted by R. F. West Limited and is currently under construction by Persimmon Homes for 153 dwellings. The layout and highway design of this development specifically made provision for the potential expansion of the allocation to include the land directly to the south of the emerging development. The proposed allocation extends from Bounstead Road to the east almost to Layer Road to the west, save for a parcel of land fronting Layer Road, which is not within the promoter's ownership, but importantly, provides a buffer to Layer Road and views from Gosbecks park.

R.F. West Limited are experienced developers and land promoters having successfully delivered hundreds of homes within Colchester and Tendring, through the local plan process over the last 20 years. The company has a first class track record of working with Local Planning Authorities and partnering major national house builders to deliver high quality inclusive housing developments.

Map extracted from Colchester City Council Proposals Map, Maps and Software Application created by gi Perspective - GIS Solutions from Lovell Johns Limited, Oxford, England.

Notes: Image Not To Scale.

Introduction (Continued)

The respondents R.F. West Ltd, who are the owners of all of the land which is now proposed for allocation under Policy PP10: Land south of Berechurch Hall Road, Colchester, of the regulation 18 Local Plan fully support the allocation of the land for residential development. However, evidence gathered by the respondents suggests that the proposed allocation of 875 dwellings cannot be delivered on this site. The respondents are of the view that a maximum of 600 dwellings could be achieved on this site, and the Council is advised that the allocation in Policy PP10 is reduced to up to 600 dwellings.

The land in question is considered to be unable to support 875 dwellings, principally due to the constraints on the local highway network and the need to make provision for open space, landscape buffers and sustainable drainage attenuation. The respondent's Transport Consultants advise that preliminary junction capacity assessments undertaken have indicated that the number of dwellings that it is likely to be possible to provide at the site would be in the order of 500-600. Following pre-application engagement, including the submission of a Transport Note, Essex Highways has confirmed by email that they considered that the site may be able to accommodate up to 500 dwellings and that further transport analysis of the proposal could be undertaken at the time of a planning application. Further transport assessment is ongoing to see if some additional capacity can be achieved to realise the Council's proposed allocation of 875 dwellings, however it is likely that the maximum number of dwellings possible would be circa 600.

Assuming that the Council accept that 600 dwelling is the maximum achievable on this site, the respondents are confident that 600 dwellings along with a neighbourhood centre, public open space and all the environmental and ecological requirements of Policy PP10 can be delivered. Ecology assessments are underway and will continue to be carried out in the Spring, winter bird surveys are commissioned to be undertaken this winter.

Work is ongoing in relation to highway access to the site and active travel links; the respondent's transport consultants continue to engage with the Essex Highways to scope out and agree the assessment work required to demonstrate that the allocation is deliverable from a highway perspective. This engagement with Essex Highways has taken the form of a Pre

Application submission, in response to which Essex Highways has confirmed that the site might be able to accommodate up to 500 dwellings subject to further highway capacity analysis, the results of which both ECC and CCC think is acceptable and agreeing substantial public transport, cycling, walking, travel planning and junction capacity improvements (works and/or contributions). A summary of the current highway and transportation position is set out on page 21 of the Promotion Document submitted with these representations. Presently, there are no impacts identified that would suggest that the development of up to 600 dwellings could not be deliverable from a transport and highway perspective.

The respondents took part in the consultation for the preparation of the Colchester Whole Plan Viability Assessment (October 2025) prepared on the Council's behalf by Newmark, which forms part of the Local Plan evidence base. Concerns were raised in that consultation in relation to some of the costs, values and inputs that were proposed to be used in the viability assessment. However, that consultation was solely in relation to costs, values and other related inputs, there was no indication of the proposed level of contributions that were likely to be expected from allocated sites. Since the consultation and at the behest of the Local Plan Committee, the final version of the viability assessment was published, just prior to the committee meeting that resolved to allow consultation of the Regulation 18 Local Plan. The final version of the Newmark Viability Assessment suggests a financial contribution of £25,000 per dwelling for s106 items and £35,000 per dwelling for infrastructure projects would be viable for all 'Strategic Allocations.'

Land south of Marks Tey is identified as a strategic site and as such, a combined financial contribution of £60,000 per dwelling would be required to be bound into a planning obligation at the planning application stage, having regard to Policies H1, H2 and ST7. In the preparation of these representations, the respondents commissioned Chartered Surveyors Morely Riches to undertake a Viability Assessment of the draft allocation for 1500 Dwellings at Marks Tey, using only Newmark's values and inputs and making provision for a combined s106 contribution of £60,000 and 30% affordable housing. The result of that exercise resulted in the development making a resounding loss. Given that the Newmark inputs were the only variables used in this exercise, it was alarming to discover that the scheme would be wholly unviable. It was even more disturbing to hear at the Local Plan Committee, the Council's Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Manager advise Members, that Newmark had told her that the Colchester Viability Assessment, was one of the most viable Local Plans they had ever reviewed. The respondents have not had access to Newmark's viability model, so it might be that if access was granted, then it could be shown that the development would prove to be viable. However, the model used by Morley Riches, is the industry standard, so the massive discrepancy is unlikely to be as a result of applying a different modelling method.

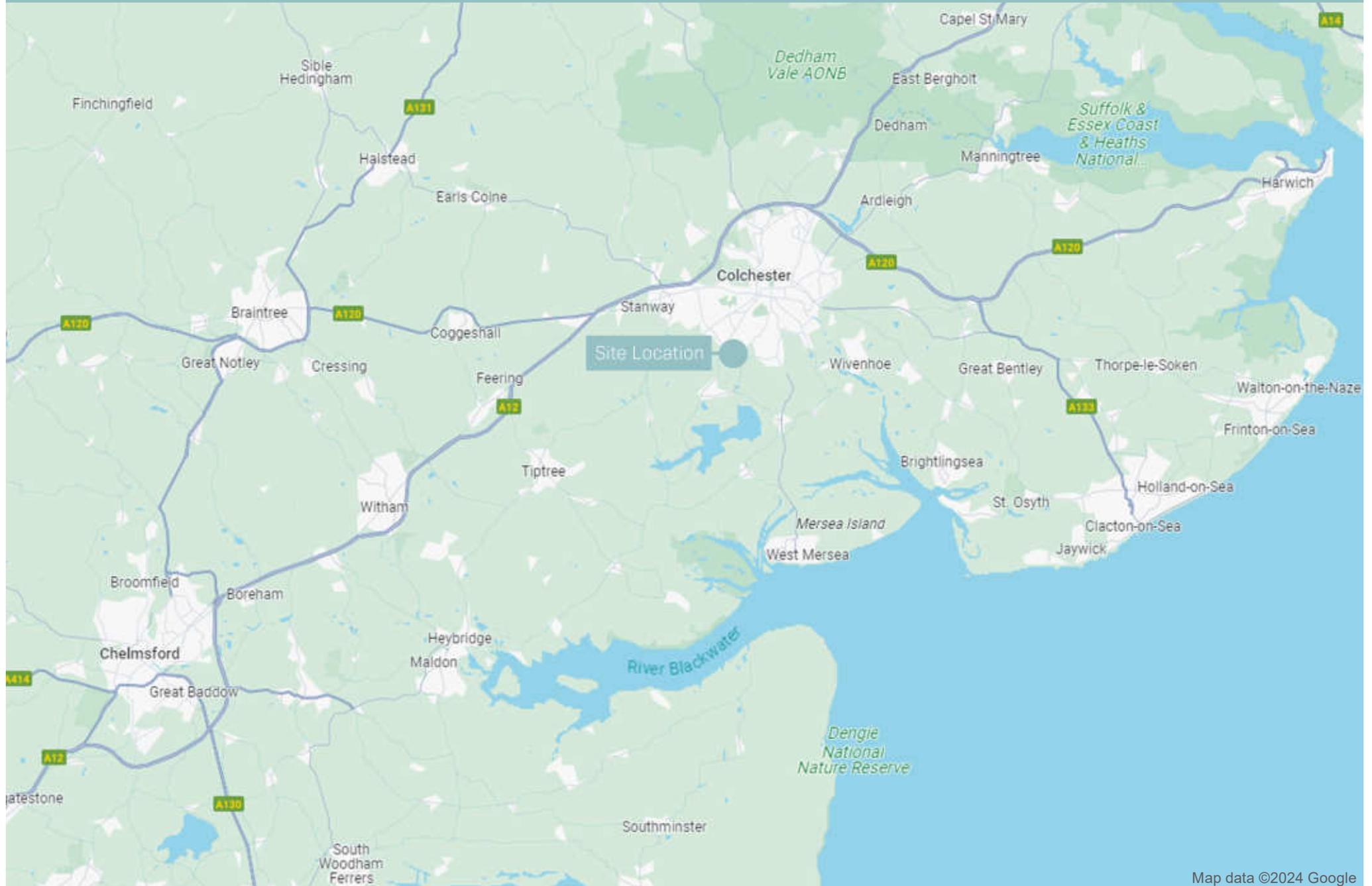
Prior to making these representations, a virtual meeting was held with the Council's Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Manager to alert her to the respondents' grave concerns with regard to the Newmark viability assessment. Rather than objecting to the plan, the respondents were advised by the Strategic Growth and Infrastructure Manager to raise their concerns in these representations, which we have done. The respondent was further advised that once the consultation deadline had passed, she would instigate a review of the viability assessment and a meeting with Newmark and relevant stakeholders to assess the viability assessment and to perhaps allow access to the Newmark model. Land owners and promoters need to be confident that the final and adopted Colchester Whole Plan Viability Assessment will demonstrate that the level of contributions expected from strategic and other development would be at a level that allows development to proceed. The respondents reserve the right to make further representations to the Council and to the examining Inspector in relation to the viability assessment, in the event that the concerns raised now are not allayed.

The respondents would also like to raise their grave concerns as to the infrastructure costs that have informed the level of contribution required within the viability assessment of £35,000 per dwelling.

It would appear that amongst other infrastructure requirements that two key elements of proposed infrastructure are, The RTS 2, Colchester City Centre to Marks Tey, which has been costed at £37 million and the Park and Choose site at Marks Tey, which is understood to have been costed at £67 million. The cost of these and other infrastructure development have been contributors to setting the level of £35,000 per dwelling, that makes up the majority of the £60,000 per unit contribution. However, there are no schemes or publicly available plans of these proposals available, they are at this stage simply ideas, and whilst it might be possible to estimate a cost for their delivery, it cannot be the case that estimated costs for infrastructure that is yet to be shown to be deliverable, can reasonably be used to set what will be a lasting land compelling level of financial contribution embedded within the evidence base. If nothing else, the cost of this infrastructure must be known in detail, and informed by actual and deliverable proposals, before they can be used to set expected infrastructure payments from development under policy ST7.

1. The Site

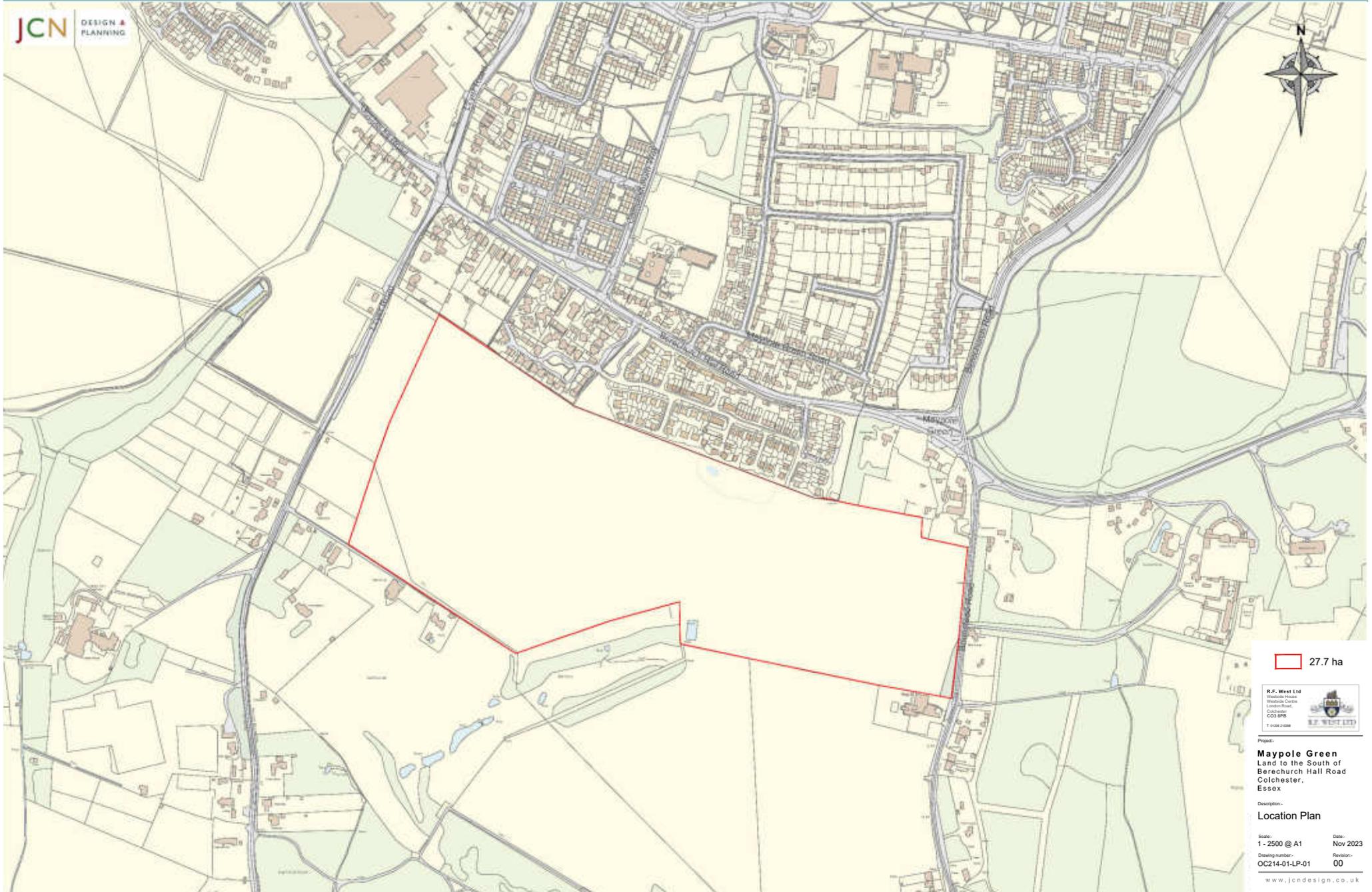
Site Location Surrounding Area



Map data ©2024 Google

Location Plan (Redline Plan)

JCN DESIGN & PLANNING



27.7 ha

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Waltham House
Waltham Centre
London Road,
Colchester
CO3 8PB
T: 0206 200666



Project:-

Maypole Green
Land to the South of
Berechurch Hall Road
Colchester,
Essex

Description:-
Location Plan

Scale:-
1 - 2500 @ A1

Date:-
Nov 2023

Drawing number:-
OC214-01-LP-01

Revision:-
00

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Site Imagery Land to the South of Berechurch Hall Road



Above: an aerial view of the site location with the circles to represent the position on the site in which the images were taken, as well as arrows to show the orientation of the image.

Site Imagery Land to the South of Berechurch Hall Road



1. A view from the south-east corner of the site.



2. A view from the south-east of the site, with the existing Persimmon development adjacent.



3. A view outwards from the west of the site.



4. A view from the north-west corner of the site.

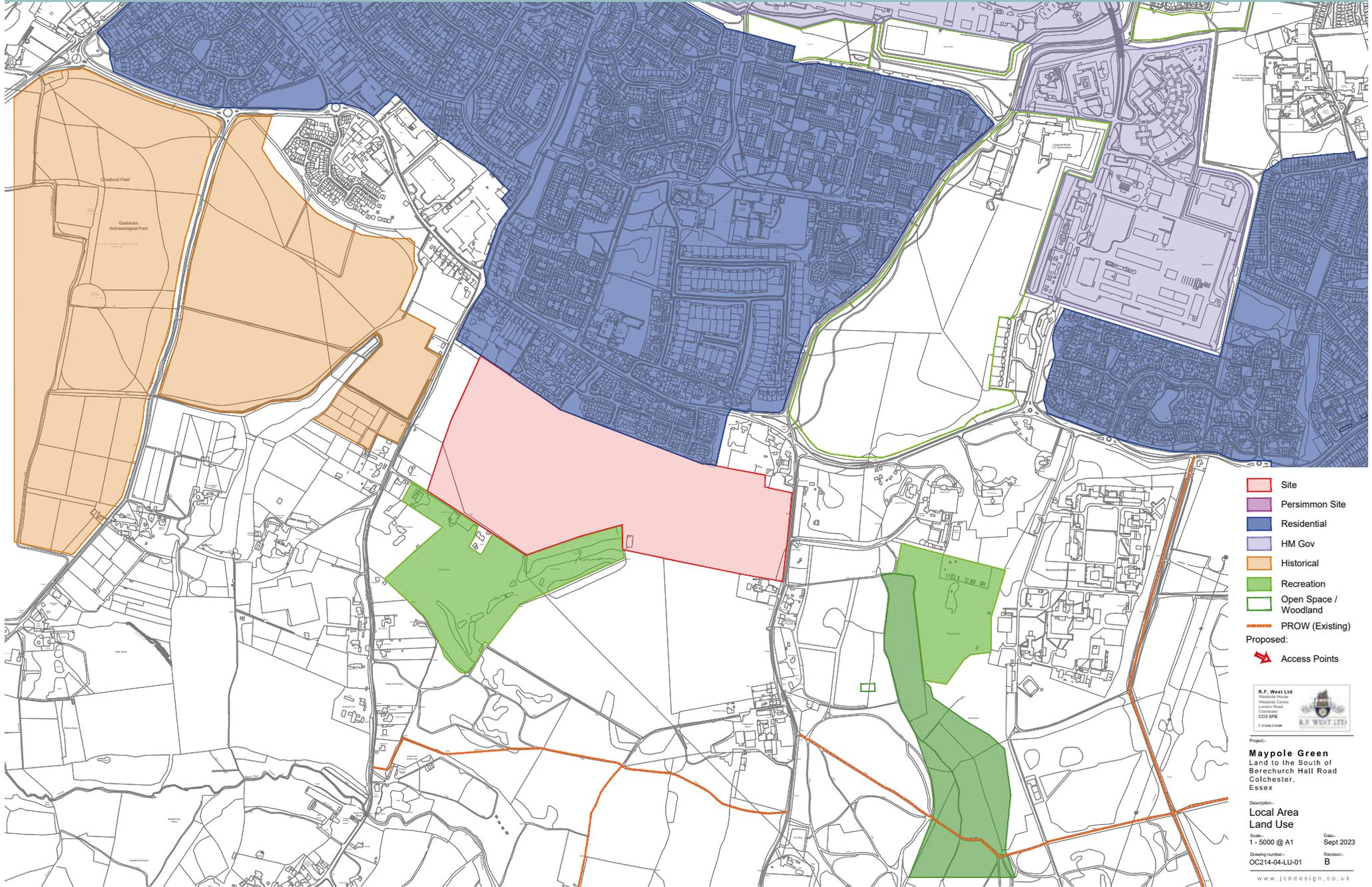


5. A view from the north of the site, in front of the existing Persimmon development.



6. A view from the east corner of the site.

Existing Land Uses



- Site
- Persimmon Site
- Residential
- HM Gov
- Historical
- Recreation
- Open Space / Woodland
- PROW (Existing)
- Proposed:
- Access Points

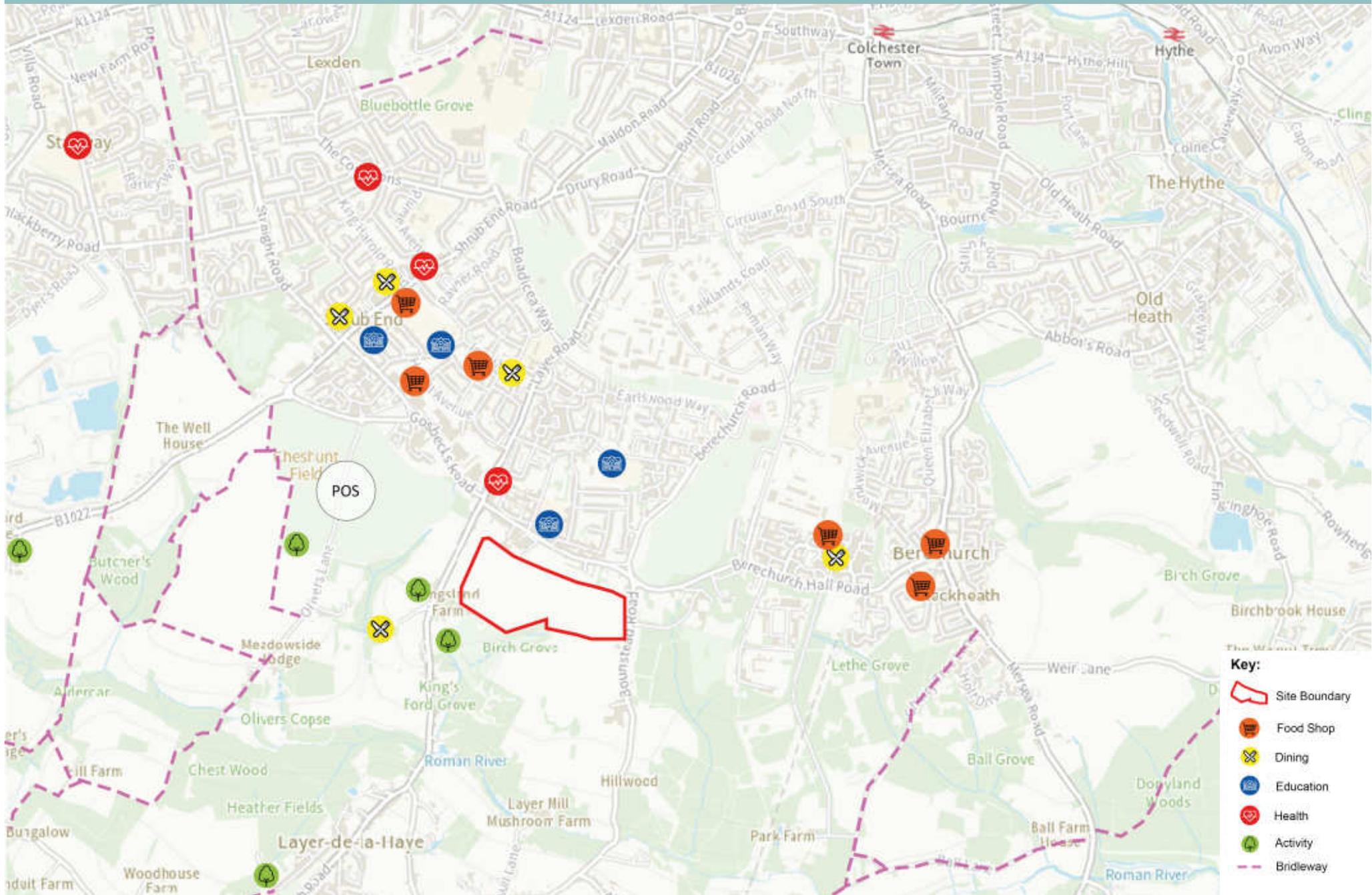


Project:-
Maypole Green
 Land to the South of
 Berechurch Hall Road
 Colchester,
 Essex

Description:-
**Local Area
 Land Use**
 Scale:- 1 - 5000 @ A1 Date:- Sept 2023
 Drawing number:- OC214-04-LU-01 Revision:- B

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Local Facilities & Bridleways



Site Access



Pre-application engagement has taken place with Essex County Council Highways to explore the suitability of accessing the site through the housing allocated previously under Policy SC1, (the Persimmon site).

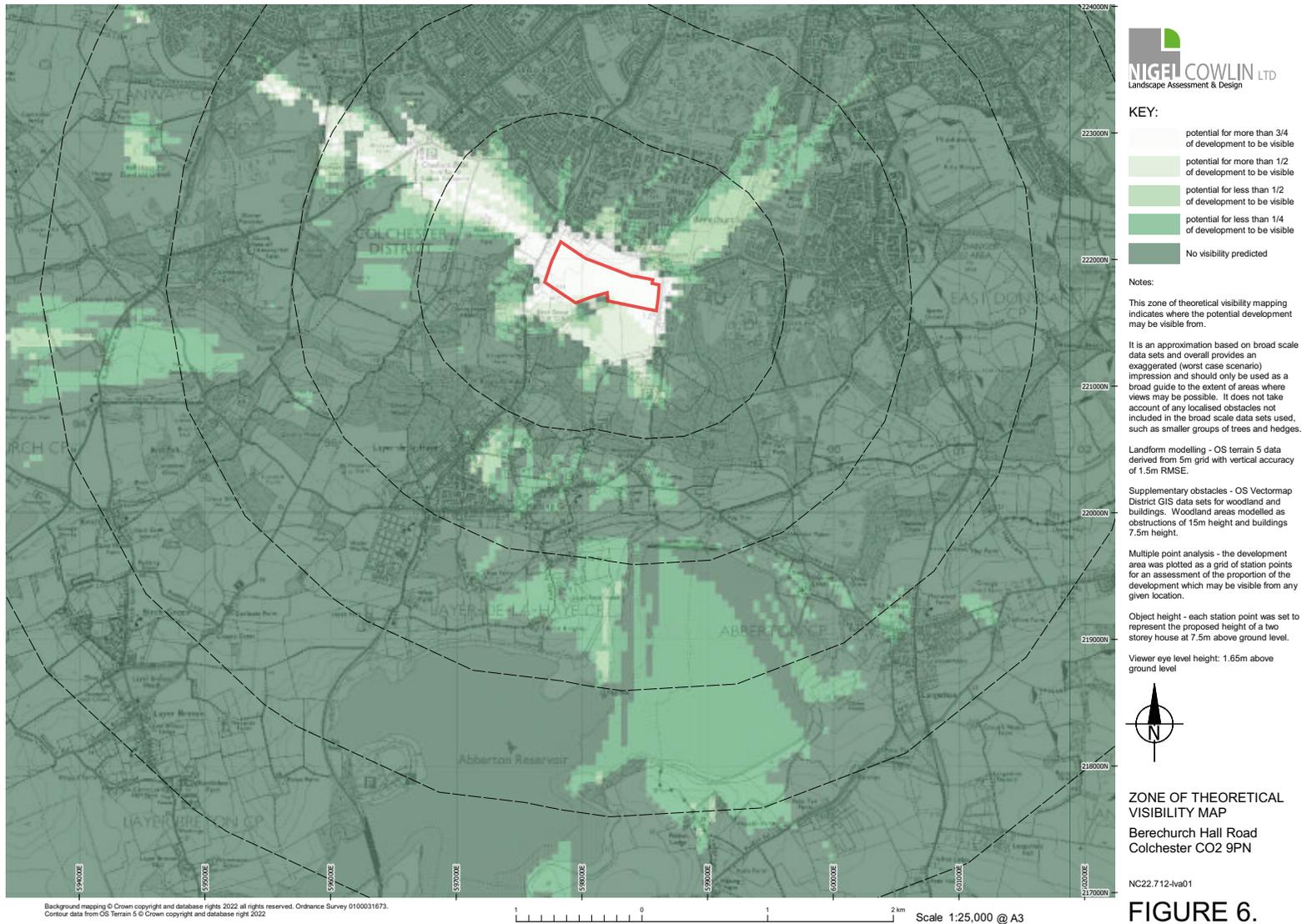
Subject to any potentially required upgrading of the two access junctions with Berechurch Hall Road, the ability to serve the proposed allocation site for up to 500 - 600 dwellings would be acceptable to the Local Highway Authority in principle.

A further access / egress serving only part of the development could also take place onto Bounstead Road.

Notes: The red circles pinpoint the site access points and the dashed red lines indicate the route of access.

2. Landscape

Landscape Visual Assessment



A preliminary Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) finds the context and characteristics of the proposed allocation site to be favourable to accommodate development, with any harms to the character and appearance of the area to be manageable, through good planning and design. In order to manage and minimise potential harm to the character and appearance of the area, and to assist with producing an attractive development, future layout/master planning work should consider and respond to the recommendations in the preliminary LVIA set out on the adjacent page (15).

It is recommended that landscape and visual appraisal work should continue to provide input during the evolution of planning proposals and the resultant scheme proposal should be accompanied by a full Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) in any submissions to the Local Planning Authority through the Local Plan/ Planning Application process.

FIGURE 6.

Please note that the above Zone Of Theoretical Visibility Map is not to scale.

Green Spaces





An image north-west of the site showing some of the established trees and hedgerows which surround the site.

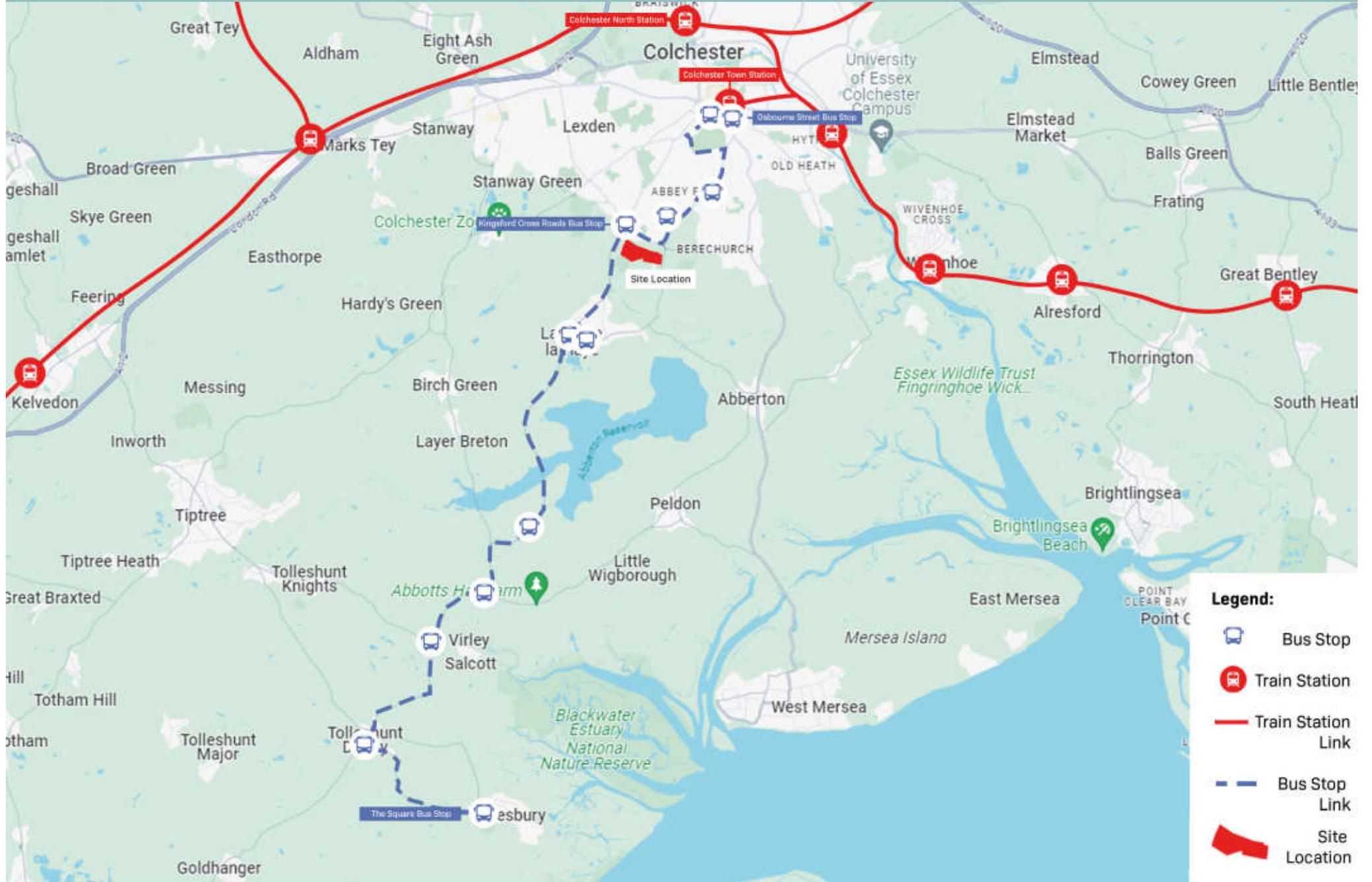


An image taken from the south of the site showing the winter sheep grazing.

Other than the established trees and hedgerows that presently surround the site, which are to be retained and enhanced with deeper landscape buffers, the majority of the site is in agricultural use for both arable production and winter sheep grazing. As such, the land has a low biodiversity value. Biodiversity Net Gain can be achieved both on and off site and achieving the mandatory 10% net gain overall can be achieved.

3. Transport & Connectivity

Transport Links, Roads, Buses & Trains



Transport Statement



Pedestrian and cyclist access to the wider area would be provided through the Persimmon site and the development would be connected to the proposed Colchester Orbital Route that is planned to be routed adjacent to the site's northern boundary.

The site is accessible to a range of local shops and services within walking and cycling distance.

Within the vicinity of the site there are traffic free cycle routes, such as the Garrison Route Cycleway which provides an off-road route north to the City Centre.

Proposed as part of the development is a neighbourhood centre to provide convenience shopping and other community services on site, to meet day to day needs.

New Bus Stops are proposed on Berechurch Hall Road to be delivered as part of the Persimmon development. Existing bus services 50, 50A, 50B and 69 all serve Berechurch Hall Road, however with the additional number of households proposed, there would be a greater incentive for the bus companies to penetrate the scheme providing a loop service through the development.

Intermodal Transportation Ltd (ITL) initially prepared a Transport Note (TN) considering the highways and transportation issues relating to the proposal in November 2024. The Transport Note was submitted to the Call for Sites process. Primary access is proposed from the 2 existing access junctions on Berechurch Hall Road serving the Phase 1 Persimmon development with a secondary access to serve a limited level of development proposed on Bounstead Road.

The TN included traffic generation calculations for the proposed allocation and capacity analysis of the primary and secondary access arrangements as well as assessment of the Layer Road / Berechurch Hall Road / Gosbecks Road double mini-roundabout arrangement.

The TN also considered the accessibility profile of the site and demonstrated that the proposed allocation would have the propensity to encourage the use of non-car modes for everyday journeys.

A supplementary TN was produced in late November 2024 summarising the results of junction capacity assessments at the junction of Berechurch Hall Road / Berechurch Road / Bounstead Road.

The draft allocation for the site assumes the provision of 875 dwellings. However, with reference to the preliminary junction capacity assessments contained within it, the TN confirmed that the maximum number of dwellings that it is likely to be possible to provide at the site would be in the order of 500.

A request for pre-application advice for this site was submitted to Essex Highways and a subsequent Teams meeting was held on 28th May 2025. A scoping Note was submitted to Essex Highways in order to aide the discussions at the meeting. Following the Teams meeting the following in principle drawings, which are attached, were emailed to Essex Highways: -

- IT2173/TA/02 – Proposed Site Access on Bounstead Road;
- IT2173/TA/03 – Proposed Amendment of Hawaii Drive Junction with Berechurch Hall Road; and
- IT2173/TA/04 – Amendment of Bounstead Road junction with Berechurch Hall Road.

Following submission of the scoping note and the in principle drawings listed above and the meeting on 28th May 2025, Essex Highways confirmed by email that they considered that the site may be able to accommodate up to 500 dwellings and that further transport analysis of the proposal could be undertaken at the time of a planning application. A copy of Essex Highways' email of 23rd July 2025 confirming that is appended.

Hi Justin,

Thanks for your emails and sorry I've not had a chance to come back to you until now.

I think the proposed site might be able to accommodate up to 500 dwellings subject to further highway capacity analysis, the results of which both ECC and CCC think is acceptable and agreeing substantial public transport, cycling, walking, travel planning and junction capacity improvements (works and/or contributions).

I'm content the further worked needed could accompany a planning application however you might wish to consider whether a Statement of Common Ground would be useful and when best this should be submitted.

Hope this helps.

With thanks & best wishes.

Martin

Martin Mason | Strategic Development Engineer

Strategic Development



SAFER GREENER HEALTHIER

07919 624331

www.essex.gov.uk/highways



The Highway Authority charges for all pre-planning application advice, full details can be found here – [Pre-App Charging](#)

4. Proposal

The Proposals



Above: Illustrative Concept Layout of proposed development.

The proposed site extends to some 27.7 hectares and having regard to highway, drainage and landscape constraints, would be capable of providing up to 600 homes, which would equate to a low average housing density of 21.6 dwellings per hectare (DPH). At this lower density, the opportunity exists to design a more generous and spacious housing development, with high levels of public open space which would reflect the edge of settlement location of the site. The density proposed will allow for deep landscape buffers to extend and enhance the already established tree and hedge planting on the site boundaries to further contain the site and provide a meaningful enhancement to biodiversity. Assuming 600 homes would be developed, this scale of development would deliver 180 affordable homes across the site.

It is also envisaged that any allocation would incorporate a proportionately sized Neighbourhood Centre within the development to provide a convenience store and other neighbourhood facilities all within walking distance of the new homes proposed, but equally accessible to existing homes within the south Colchester neighbourhood.

The Proposals

The National Planning Policy Framework 2023, (the Framework) at paragraph 74 advises as follows :

“The supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities (including a genuine choice of transport modes). Working with the support of their communities, and with other authorities if appropriate, strategic policy-making authorities should identify suitable locations for such development where this can help to meet identified needs in a sustainable way. In doing so, they should:

a) consider the opportunities presented by existing or planned investment in infrastructure, the area’s economic potential and the scope for net environmental gains;

b) ensure that their size and location will support a sustainable community, with sufficient access to services and employment opportunities within the development itself (without expecting an unrealistic level of self-containment), or in larger towns to which there is good access;

c) set clear expectations for the quality of the places to be created and how this can be maintained (such as by following Garden City principles); and ensure that appropriate tools such as masterplans and design guides or codes are used to secure a variety of well-designed and beautiful homes to meet the needs of different groups in the community;

d) make a realistic assessment of likely rates of delivery, given the lead-in times for large scale sites, and identify opportunities for supporting rapid implementation (such as through joint ventures or locally-led development corporations); and

e) consider whether it is appropriate to establish Green Belt around or adjoining new developments of significant size.

This site represents the very embodiment of the type of site and development envisaged by paragraph 74 of the Framework. For the very same reasons that were applied to the allocation of Policy SC1 of the Local Plan, the site is well located as an extension to the City. One of the drivers behind the allocation of Policy SC1 was to provide improved sustainable public transport links from south Colchester to the City Centre. Provision has been made to include new bus stops as part of the allocation SC1, however, an additional 500 - 600 hundred homes would provide the critical mass required to support increased and more frequent bus services, which would penetrate the development providing a real transport choice to those living within the site, but also a tangible improvement to the wider public transport opportunities within south Colchester.

At the lower densities suggested, the site presents an ideal opportunity to use design codes and to masterplan the site to achieve exemplar urban edge sustainable development.



Proposed Drainage



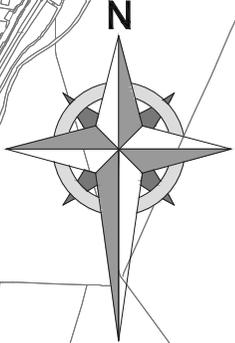
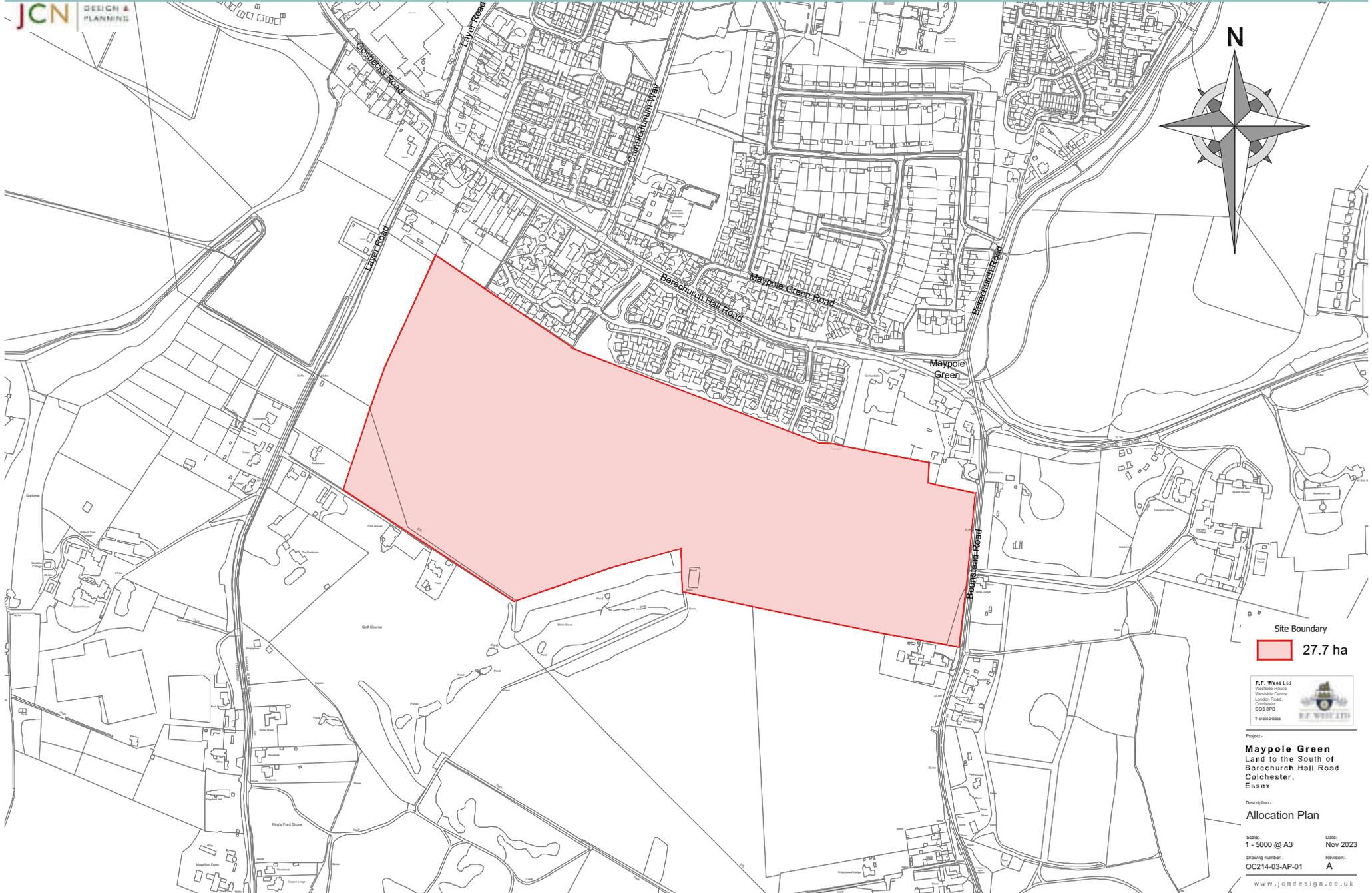
The site has a slight natural fall to the south towards the distant Roman River valley. From past experience of the soil conditions on the Persimmon site, the land is unlikely to be suitable for surface water filtration over the whole site. Therefore, it is anticipated that open attenuation basins will be needed across the site to manage a below greenfield run off rate.

A pre-application report has been received from Anglian Water advising that the foul flows could be received at the Colchester Water Recycling Centre, where there would be capacity to accommodate the growth envisaged.

Above: A drawing to highlight the attenuation locations and pond within the site. Proposed attenuation features would be sized to cater for the 1 in 100 year storm return period + 40% climate change allowance and 10% urban creep.

5. Proposed Allocation

Allocation Redline Plan



Site Boundary
27.7 ha



Project:
Maypole Green
Land to the South of
Borechurch Hall Road
Colchester,
Essex

Description:
Allocation Plan

Scale: 1 - 5000 @ A3
Drawing number: OC214-03-AP-01

Date: Nov 2023
Revision: A

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6. Conclusion

Conclusion



The National planning policy encourages the supply of larger numbers of new homes to be best achieved through planning for larger scale development as significant extensions to existing urban areas, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities including a genuine choice of transport modes.

The allocation of this site as part of the City Council's further housing growth strategy would squarely meet these key policy objectives, on land immediately adjacent to land previously selected by the Council for housing growth; a location considered to be sustainable in every respect.

From a landscape perspective, the site is considered to be well contained and conditions are considered favourable to allow capacity for development, without harmful impact on the character and appearance of the area.

Overall, preliminary investigations contained in this document and carried out to inform it, in relation to key parameters for considering potential sites for housing growth, find there to be no impacts on any interests of acknowledged importance that would prevent the development of the site for up to 600 new sustainable homes, including 180 affordable homes.

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