



North East Colchester Masterplan Framework

Issue	Revision	By	Approved	Date
Final	Final for Submission	CMC	KE	26.01.14

Report prepared by:



SLR Consulting Ltd

5th Floor, 35 Dale Street, Manchester M1 2HF

On behalf of



Ordnance Survey data used under licence © Crown copyright and database rights 2025 Ordnance Survey AC0000808122

Aerial Imagery © Bluesky International

Photo/ Image Credits: SLR

Document size A3 landscape

Contents

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Purpose And Scope
- 1.2 Planning Policy Summary
- 1.3 Delivering The Local Plan

2. Vision

- 2.1 Ambition
- 2.2 Promoting Health And Well Being
- 2.3 Convenient Living For All
- 2.4 A New Neighbourhood
- 2.5 A Memorable And Characterful Place
- 2.6 Enhancing Nature

3. Site Context

- 3.1 Colchester: A Strategic Location In Essex
- 3.2 Growth In Colchester
- 3.3 Historic Growth
- 3.4 Relationship With Existing Communities
- 3.5 The Site

4. Technical Analysis

- 4.1 Access And Movement
- 4.2 Active Travel
- 4.3 Utilities
- 4.4 Flood Risk
- 4.5 Slope
- 4.6 Elevation
- 4.7 Local Designations
- 4.8 Site Constraints
- 4.9 Site Opportunities

5. Masterplan Framework

- 5.1 Design Principles
- 5.2 Masterplan Framework
- 5.3 Spatial Strategies
- 5.4 Summary
- 5.5 Key Benefits

1. Introduction

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Scope

This document has been prepared by the SLR Place Team on behalf of Gladman and Gleeson Land.

The purpose of this Masterplan Framework Document is to articulate a vision for the future development of North-East Colchester in support of representations to Colchester City Council's current Local Plan Preferred Options consultation. It seeks to set out shared objectives, spatial principles and development aspirations that could guide the successful delivery of the site, aligning with the requirements of national and local planning policy, including the expectations of emerging Local Plan Policy PP9.

Drawing on the site's constraints and opportunities, the Masterplan Framework Document presents the emerging proposals for North-East Colchester to inform further engagement with Colchester City Council and other key stakeholders. This will ensure that the proposals are appropriately shaped by collaborative working and consultation as the masterplan for North-East Colchester continues to evolve.

This Masterplan Framework Document demonstrates how growth can be delivered in a sustainable, high-quality and comprehensive manner, responding to identified needs for housing, infrastructure, employment, environmental protection and community facilities taking account of Colchester City Council's emerging Local Plan work.

The document is intended to support a future allocation by:

- Establishing a coherent and future vision for the area;
- Identifying opportunities and constraints that influence development;
- Informing the design and content of a future Masterplan.

1.2 Planning Policy Summary

The masterplan for North-East Colchester is grounded in a thorough review of national and local policy, ensuring that its design and guiding principles align with Colchester City Council's aspirations for the site.

Both national and local planning policy support the ambitions and case for housing growth in Colchester, with development on the site being supported and facilitated through a draft allocation in the emerging Colchester City Council Local Plan, which directs approximately 2,000 homes towards the North-East Colchester site.

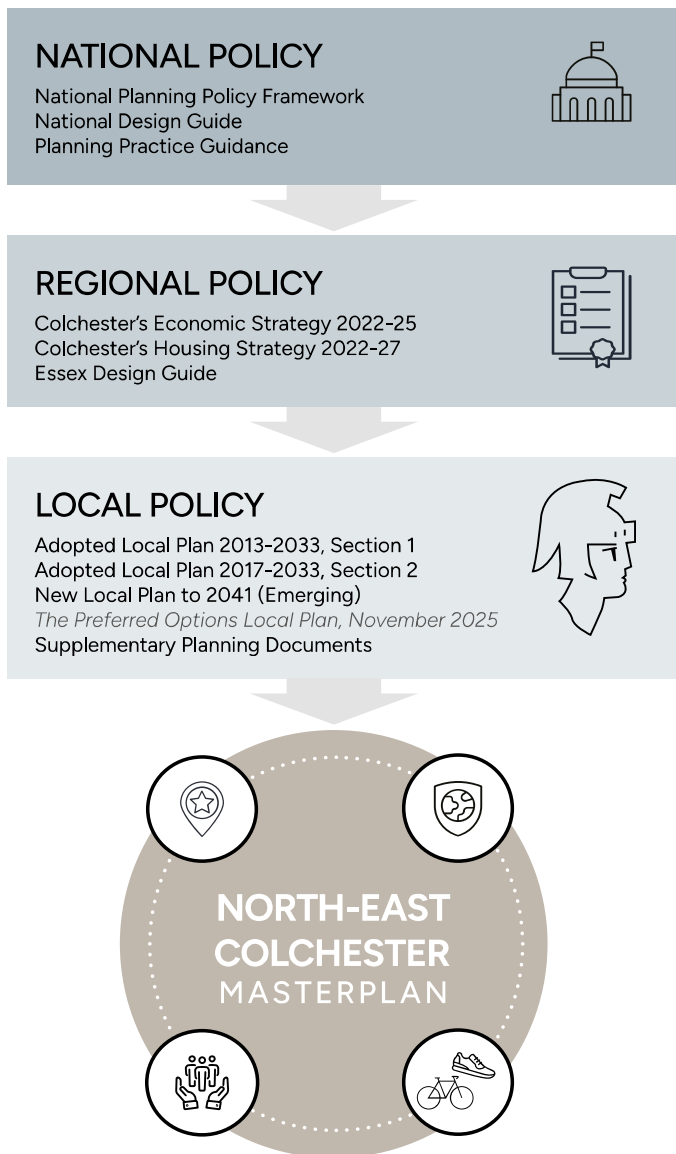
There is a significant level of guidance on large scale housing development, which has been used to develop the masterplan framework for the site (set out in the rest of this document).

Policy PP9: North-East Colchester

As set out by the Council's emerging Local Plan, Policy PP9 allocates the site for a development of approximately 2,000 homes, land for a 2-form entry primary school, a new local centre and enhanced open space. There are also a number of site-specific requirements which relate to the protection and enhancement of the sites' natural features.

The emerging expectations of Policy PP9 have been used to inform the masterplan design in a number of ways:

- Influence the land uses across the site and required quantum of development area (**2,000 new homes, open space, local centre and facilities, education floorspace**);
- Ensure provision of a **connected network for all modes of transport**, including connection and enhancement to the Colchester Orbital and prioritising active travel and accessibility;
- Require the provision of **active travel links** within the site and ensure these best connect with existing connections in the wider area;
- Provision of '**enhanced Open Space**' **substantively in excess of 10% of the site area**. This will include at least one area of strategic open space and multiple areas of less formal and more incidental open space;
- Ensure **protection and enhancement of biodiverse habitats** especially in relation to Salary Brook biodiversity area, Bullock Wood SSSI, Welsh Wood and Wall's Wood LoWS, and provide the necessary mitigation for any biodiversity areas disrupted;
- **Retention of mature trees and hedgerows** within the site;
- Provision of appropriate **SuDS features** working with the site's natural topography;
- Ensure place-making that **reflects Colchester's character** and results in a cohesive development that sits comfortably within its context.



1.3 Delivering the Local Plan Vision

The North-East Colchester masterplan represents an important opportunity for Colchester. Supporting the city's aspiration for sustainable growth, the site offers potential for new homes, enhanced biodiversity areas, an improved active travel network and a new community heart.

Colchester City Council's vision (as presented in 'Colchester City Council Preferred Options Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation, November 2025') focuses on four core themes:

- Healthy, vibrant and diverse places;
- Sustainable;
- Welcoming inclusive communities;
- Well-connected.

The masterplan at North-East Colchester presents an opportunity to deliver on all of those themes by the creation of a well-connected, inclusive and sustainable neighbourhood, where new homes are supported by high-quality green infrastructure, active travel routes and community-focused spaces that contribute positively to the wider city.

Healthy, Vibrant And Diverse Places



Neighbourhood that celebrates and positively contributes to Colchester's character and identity, enhances the quality of natural environment and provides high-quality facilities.

Welcoming Inclusive Communities



Neighbourhood that delivers value to local people through provision of local facilities, helps strengthen communities and provides a mix of housing to meet the needs of all households.

Sustainable



Neighbourhood that provides sustainable infrastructure, water management and ensures resilience to the effects of climate change.

Well-Connected



Neighbourhood that offers new transport options with the focus on active travel; making it easier to walk, wheel and cycle

2. Vision

2. Vision

2.1 Ambition

“

The vision is to create a vibrant, green and well-connected neighbourhood that brings forward around 2,000 high-quality homes within a landscape-led framework to the North-East of Colchester. Rooted in the character of surrounding natural assets, including Salary Brook and Bullock Wood, the neighbourhood will balance the benefits of town and countryside, offering a peaceful and inspiring place to live while remaining closely connected to the city.

A new neighbourhood heart will provide a focus for community life, supporting everyday needs and creating opportunities for people to meet, work and connect. A strong emphasis on walking, cycling and public transport will promote healthy lifestyles and ensure convenient access to schools, facilities, existing communities and the wider Colchester Orbital route.

Nature will shape the identity of the place, with enhanced habitats, generous open spaces and integrated green-blue infrastructure supporting biodiversity, climate resilience and long-term well-being. Together, these elements will create a distinctive, inclusive and enduring neighbourhood, a new chapter in Colchester's evolving story.

”



2.2 Promoting Health & Well-being

The new neighbourhood will be a place where health and well-being are part of everyday life. Streets, spaces and landscapes will be designed to encourage movement, connection and spending time outdoors, supporting active lifestyles for all ages. A rich network of safe, overlooked walking and cycling routes will make it easy and enjoyable to travel on foot or by bike, linking homes with schools, play spaces, community facilities and the surrounding countryside.

Green spaces will be woven throughout the neighbourhood, providing places to play, exercise, relax and socialise. From woodland walks and brookside paths to local parks and village greens, access to nature will support both physical and mental well-being, helping to create a calm, restorative environment in which people can thrive.

2.3 Convenient Living for All

The neighbourhood will offer a highly connected and inclusive way of living, where daily needs are close at hand, and choices for movement are easy and intuitive. Strong links to a new school, local centre, public transport and surrounding communities will ensure that the neighbourhood feels seamlessly connected to the wider Colchester context.

A walkable layout, supported by high-quality public transport and cycle connections, will reduce reliance on the private car while making it simple for residents to reach jobs, services and leisure opportunities. A variety of homes will support a diverse community, enabling people to live well at every stage of life in a place that is accessible, welcoming and easy to navigate.





2.5 A Memorable and Characterful Place

The neighbourhood will be shaped by its landscape, history and setting on the edge of town and countryside. Inspired by Colchester's layered past and the character of Salary Brook and its surrounding woodlands, the masterplan will create a place with its own identity - peaceful, green and rooted in its surroundings.

Buildings, streets and public spaces will be carefully arranged to respond to the site's natural topography, framing views, creating variety and ensuring sensitive transitions to adjoining neighbourhoods and landscapes. A consistent focus on quality, craft and long-term durability will ensure the neighbourhood is memorable, legible and built to endure for future generations.



2.4 A New Neighbourhood Heart

At the centre of the neighbourhood will be a vibrant and distinctive heart, a lively focus for community life.

The new local centre will be a place to meet, gather and connect, bringing together everyday services, community uses and active public spaces. In combining a mix of uses, the neighbourhood heart becomes the centre piece for everyday life, a place with variety and interest.

Designed as a shared destination for both new and existing residents, the neighbourhood heart will play a vital role in strengthening social connections and reducing fragmentation between communities. Flexible spaces will host social, cultural and community activities, creating a welcoming environment that fosters pride, a sense of belonging and long-term stewardship.



2.6 Enhancing Nature

Nature will be placed at the forefront of the vision, shaping how the neighbourhood is experienced and how it grows. Existing woodlands, hedgerows and watercourses will form the backbone of a connected green and blue infrastructure network, strengthening biodiversity and ecological resilience across the site.

The Salary Brook corridor will be enhanced as a living landscape and wildlife route, while generous buffers to Bullock Wood and Welsh Wood will protect sensitive habitats and create welcoming edges for people and nature.

Sustainable drainage features will be integrated as natural, accessible spaces that manage water, support biodiversity and enrich the daily experience of living in the neighbourhood.

3. Site Context

3. Site Context

3.1 Colchester: A Strategic Location In Essex

Colchester is positioned in a strong strategic location, within one of Essex's most dynamic growth corridors. The city benefits from the urban influence of London and its surrounding catchment as well as the more rural character of East Anglia and the Essex coastline.

Colchester benefits from strong rail and road connections connecting the city into the urban areas of London under 2 hours via car and just over 1 hour via train. These road and rail links also provide good regional and national connectivity, supporting Colchester's role as a key economic, cultural and residential centre within North Essex.

Both Stansted Airport and London Southend Airport are easily accessible from Colchester, as well as the Port of Harwich.

Britain's
1st
city

11.3%
population
growth

1 hour
to London
by train

home to
**University
of Essex**

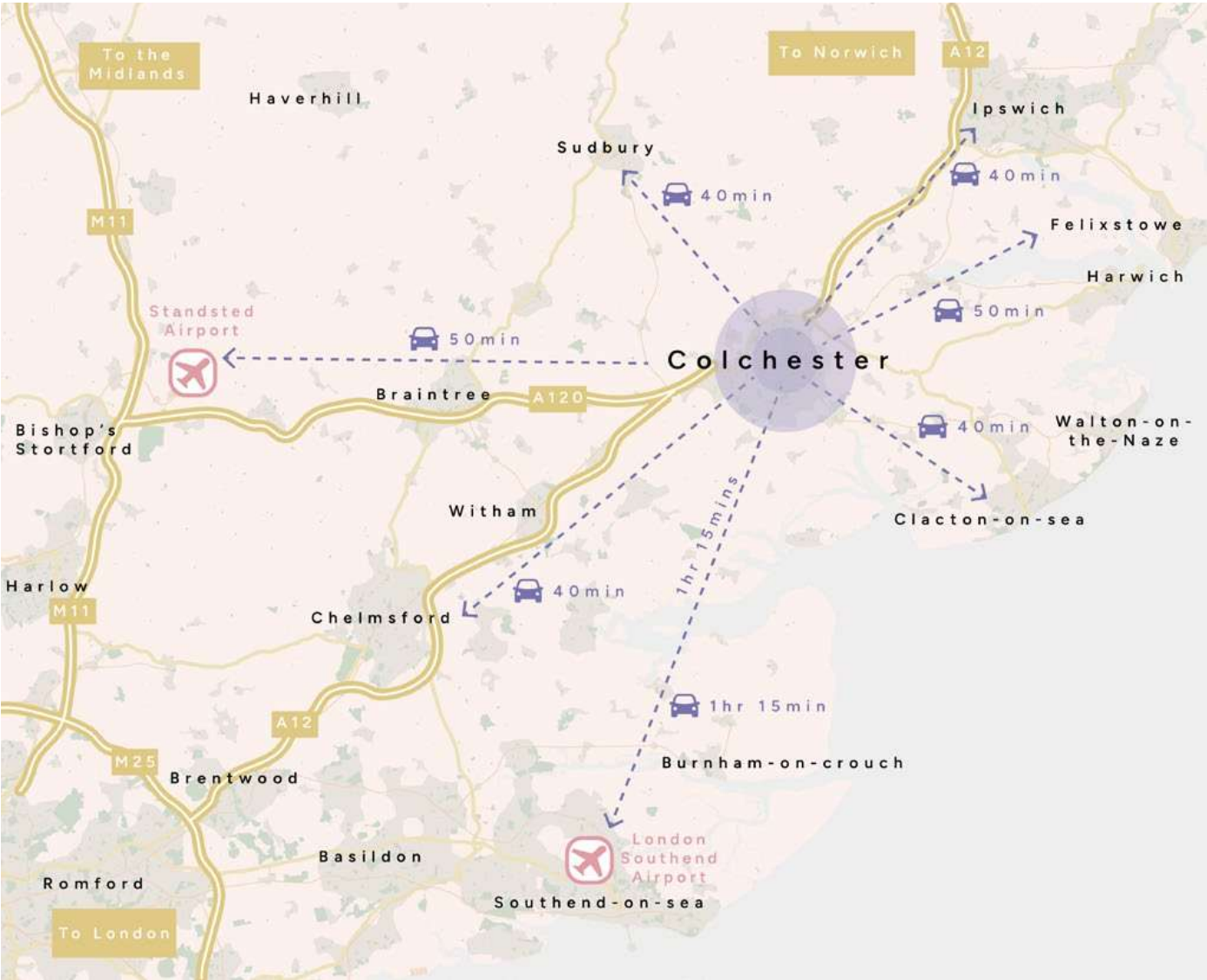


Figure 02 Regional Context of Colchester

3.2 Context of Colchester

Colchester prides itself on being the first major city in Roman Britain, and its first capital and has recently been awarded modern city status. Today, Colchester remains a thriving hub of activity, offering a range of cultural and historic visitor sites, a busy centre and high quality green spaces connected by the Colchester Orbital walk/cycle route.

As well as providing a wide range of services and amenities in itself, Colchester is positioned in a prime location for commuting to and from London as well as venturing further out towards the Essex coast either by car via the A12 and A120, or by train.

Colchester is well positioned to accommodate substantial residential growth, driven by strategic initiatives from the City Council to address housing demand. This reflects a broader transformation aimed at enhancing Colchester's appeal as a dynamic and liveable city.

Key Information



- Growth across Colchester is moving in a radial direction. The site is along the edge of Colchester's boundary with Tendring;
- Further growth in this area is bound by the alignment of the A12 and A120.

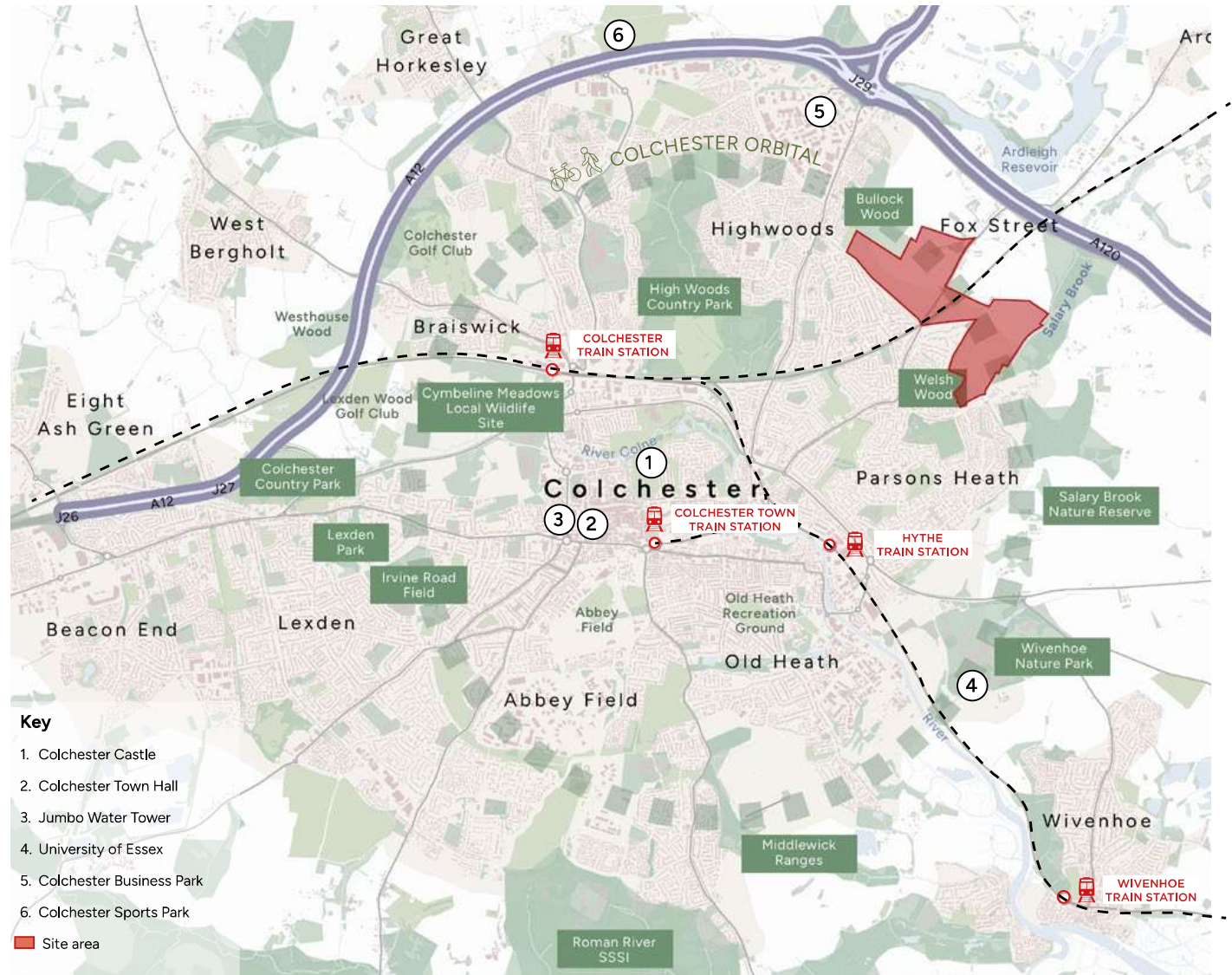


Figure 03 Context of growth in Colchester

3. Site Context

3.3 Historic Growth

Colchester is recognised as the first major city in Roman Britain, and the city today still displays a number of heritage assets such as Colchester Castle and numerous roman roads linked to its past.

The adjacent plans depict the historic growth of the city in the vicinity of the North-East Colchester site, illustrating how development has gradually extended northwards to the present day situation.

Both Harwich Road and Bromley Road are important, historic, radial routes that have long connected Colchester with its surrounding settlements, shaping the development pattern of the area.

Notable historic features include Bullock Wood, one of the earliest examples of woodland plantation in the country, and Welsh Wood, an ancient Local Nature Reserve renowned for its diverse flora and fauna.

The character of the area is defined by ribbon development along Harwich Road and Bromley Road, reflecting its gradual suburbanisation while preserving key elements of its natural and historic heritage.

Key Information

- Similar to patterns with current day growth in Colchester, the historic plans demonstrate how development has radiated out from the city centre towards the site;
- Bullock Wood, Welsh Wood and Salary Brook are key landscape features of the area, and future development should continue to respect and respond to these features.

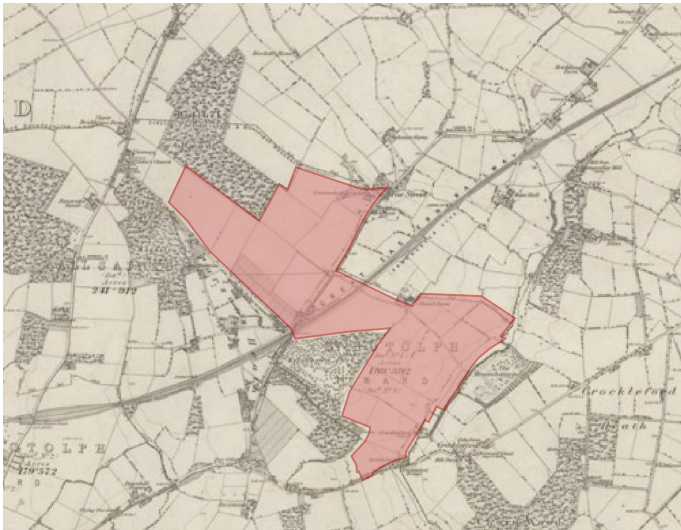


Figure 04 Historic mapping of the site area - 1842*

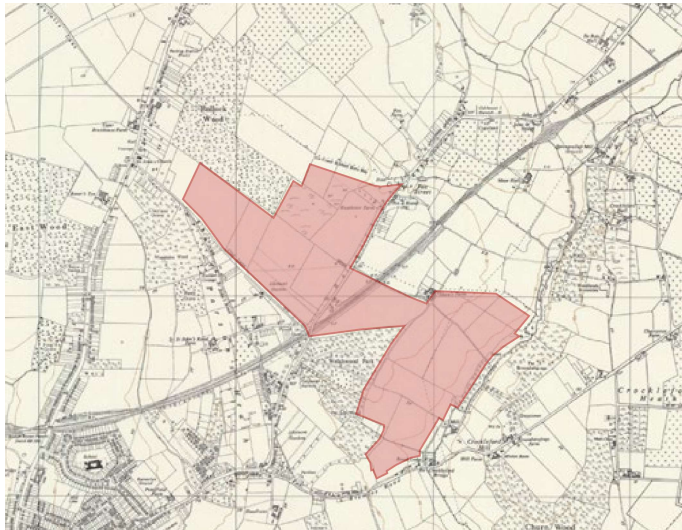


Figure 06 Historic mapping of the site area - 1944*

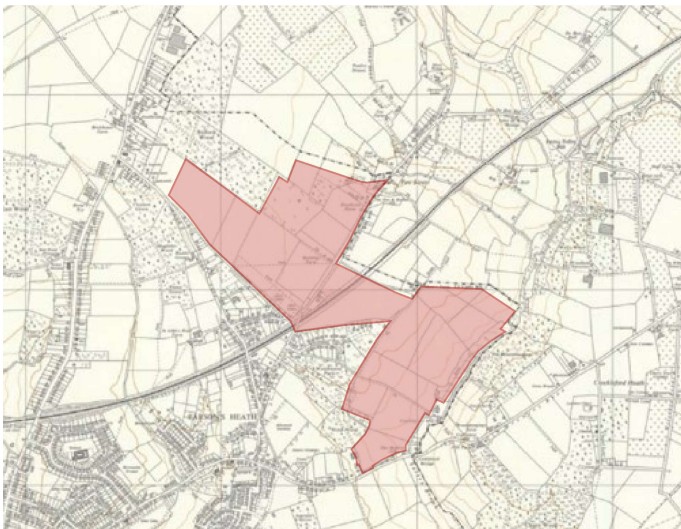


Figure 05 Historic mapping of the site area - 1964*

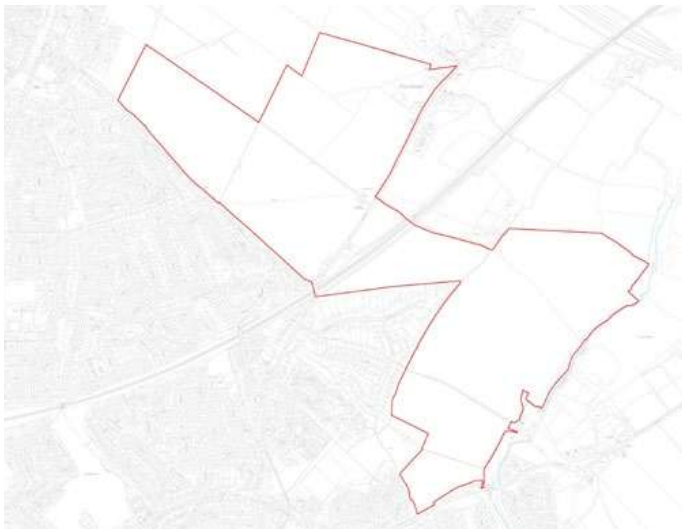


Figure 07 Present day - 2026



* Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland

© Crown copyright, All rights reserved 2025. Licence number AC0000808122.

3.4 Relationship with Existing Communities

The site is situated between several established communities, namely, Highwoods, Parsons Heath, Greenstead, and Fox Street, and also serves as a connection between the emerging Tendring Garden Community and the existing neighbourhoods.

Despite the presence of several movement barriers, the area is well connected by public rights of way and Colchester Orbital, and holds significant potential for inclusive development.

Within the existing communities, a number of local facilities are offered. Future development of the site could support a new community centre to anchor linkages with these existing amenities, offering shared facilities for both new and existing residents, alongside opportunities for enhanced sports and education provision.

The surrounding neighbourhoods, particularly Greenstead, experience higher levels of household deprivation, emphasising the need for thoughtful, equitable investment in infrastructure and community resources.

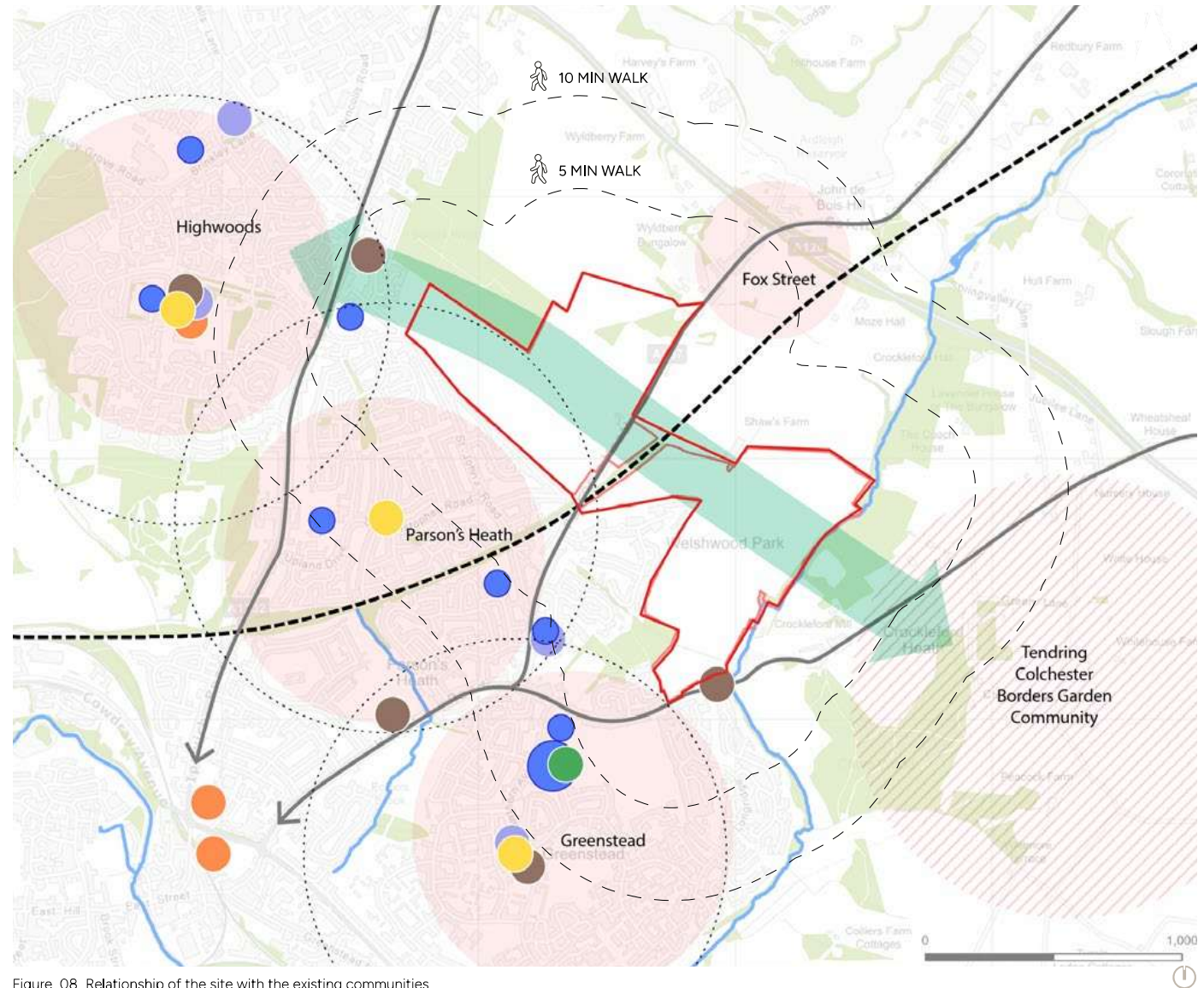


Figure 08 Relationship of the site with the existing communities

Key Information



- The site has the potential to offer a new local centre, strengthen local offer of convenience retail and provide sustainable connectivity into the centre of Colchester and to the neighbouring countryside;
- Development in this location could create a self sustaining neighbourhood offering local facilities, schools and improved living for edges of neighbouring communities

Key

- Local centre
- Community centre
- Education
- Health centre
- Supermarket
- Sports facility
- Existing neighbourhood
- Planned neighbourhood

3. Site Context

3.5 The Site

The site area sits approximately 3.5km from the centre of Colchester, on the north-eastern boundary, at the residential edge between Ipswich Road (west), Bromley Road (south) and A120 (north).

The site forms a natural continuation of the existing urban edge within Colchester's administrative boundary. It is bound by established residential development on its southern edge, Bullock Wood to the west, arable farmland to the north and Salary Brook to the east. Roughly at the centre, the site is traversed by Harwich Road and the Great Eastern railway line.

It is well located in terms of proximity to local amenities, shown on the adjacent plan. A number of schools are within easy walking distance, namely Parsons Heath Primary School, Hazelmere Junior School and Friar's Grove Primary School, and a local centre at St. Christopher's Road offers a range of facilities including local shops, pharmacy, convenience retail and an ATM. Secondary education is provided by the Gilbert Secondary School, which is ranked as outstanding, and public and school transport options which serve the area. Public transport is available nearby with bus routes providing access to Colchester city centre and two railway stations are also within easy reach; Colchester (4 miles to the south-west), and Hythe station (2 miles to the south east), offering direct links to London and further into Essex.

Key Information

- The site is approximately 97 hectares (21.5 acres) in size and is primarily in agricultural use. The western part of the site is at the highest point and the landform falls eastwards towards Salary Brook, with the lowest point at the south-eastern corner;
- There are limited features on-site, although there are some strong peripheral features such as Bullock Wood, Welsh Wood and Salary Brook adds character and provides a degree of containment.



Figure 09 Site location plan



Figure 10 Existing built form along Ipswich Road



Figure 13 The site is currently made up of arable fields, used for agricultural purposes



Figure 16 St John's Church is a Grade II listed building neighbouring the site



Figure 11 Unique and historic character of homes neighbouring the site



Figure 12 Salary Brook bounds the site on its eastern edge



Figure 14 Existing farm houses at Shaw's Farm

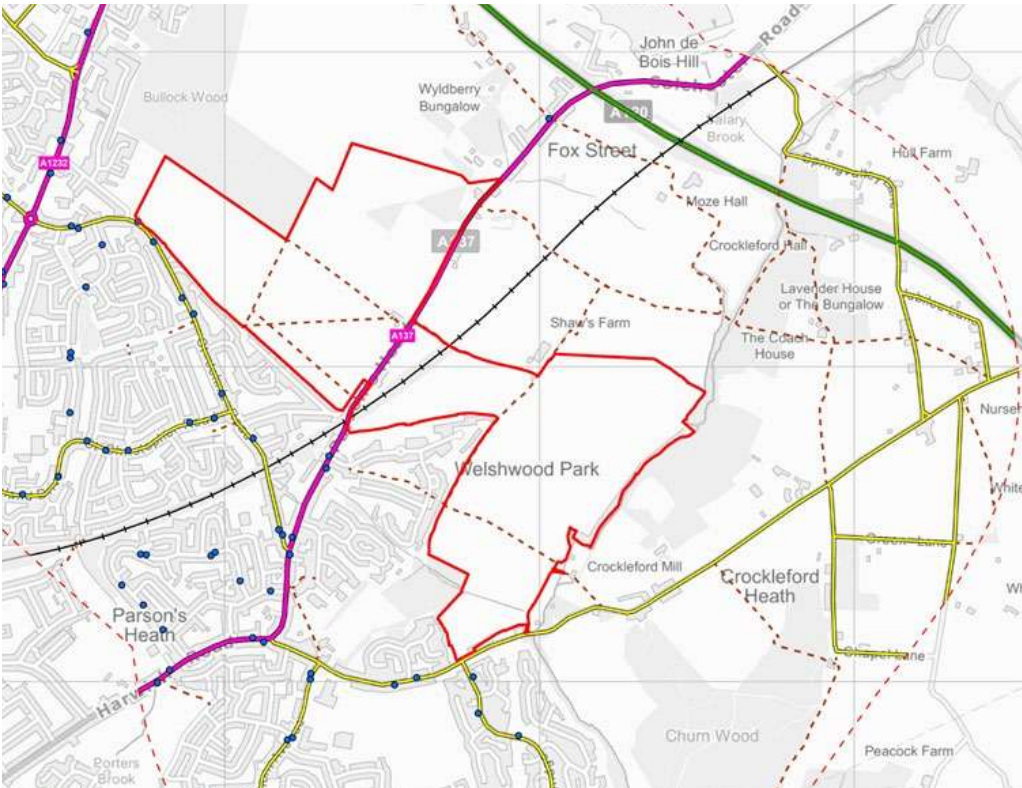


Figure 15 Pedestrian links through green space at John Shell Drive

4. Technical Analysis

4. Technical Analysis

The masterplan framework detailed later in this document is supported by a series of comprehensive technical assessments which have identified site constraints and opportunities which will inform future development. The assessments are summarised below, and the full technical documents are available on request.



4.1 Access and Movement

The site benefits from strong vehicular accessibility, with key connections via the A137 to the north and Bromley Road to the south. It is also well-integrated into Colchester's wider active travel infrastructure, featuring an established network of Public Rights of Way and bridleways that link into the Colchester Orbital walking and cycling route. While the existing railway line presents a potential constraint to east-west connectivity, the area is supported by a good level of local bus provision, enhancing public transport options for residents and visitors.

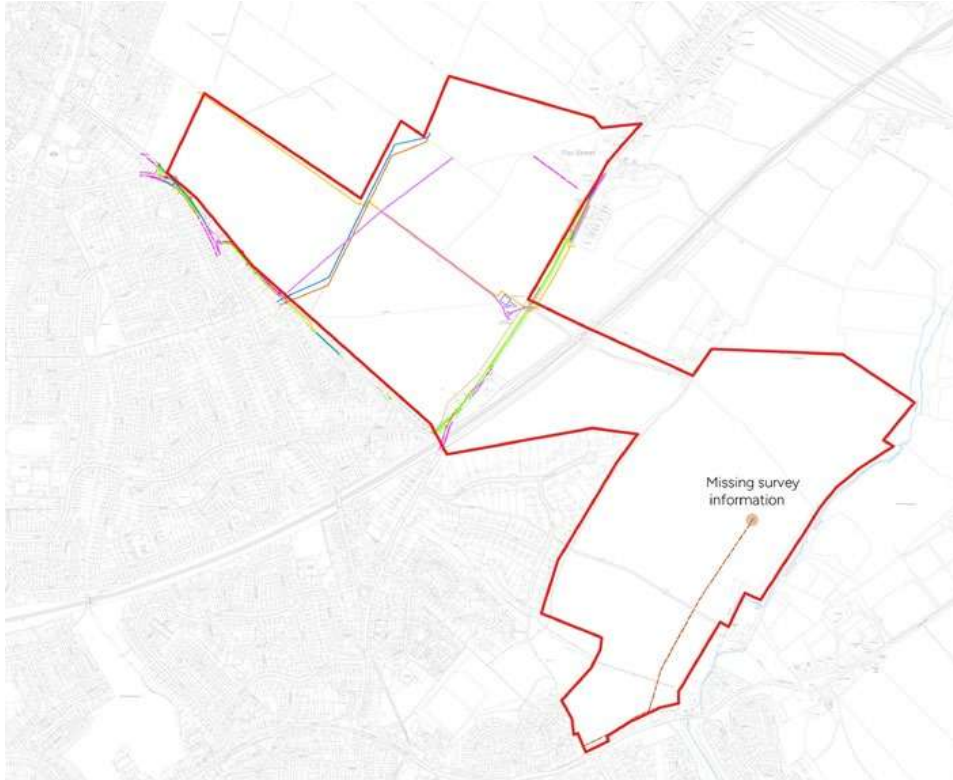


4.2 Active Travel

The site area hosts a number of active travel routes. There are several public rights of way connecting from St Johns Road to Harwich Road, and from Harwich Road to Welsh Wood and Walls Wood. A network of informal routes also spurs from these PRoWs connecting to Bullock Wood and Salary Brook. The site also benefits from the Colchester Orbital navigating through the core of the area.

The site is serviced by the 2 and 2A bus route with 6 stops located along St Johns Road as well as the 102,104 and which run along Parsons Heath and Harwich Road and the 14 on Bromley Road. The 721 bus route connects Bromley Road to Harwich Road.

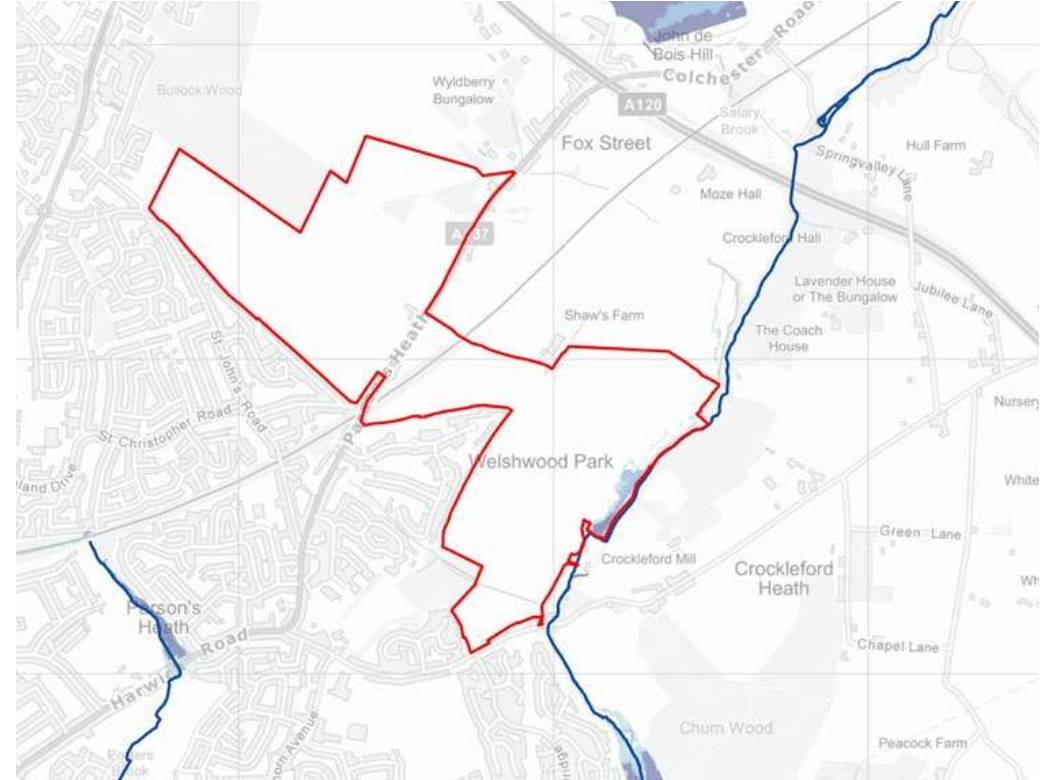
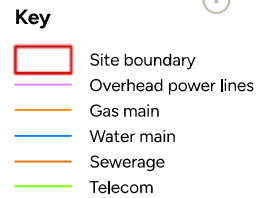




4.3 Utilities

Routing of existing utilities across the site is fairly localised and situated around existing routes through the site. On the western side of the site however, overhead power cables run from St Johns Road to the northern boundary.

On the eastern side of the site, a high pressure gas main runs close to the eastern boundary. The development framework response in this area should consider this routing and react to the appropriate stand offs.

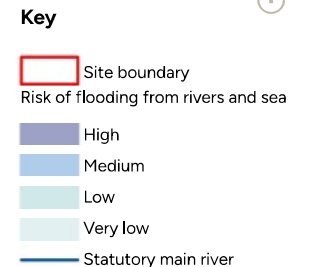


4.4 Flood Risk

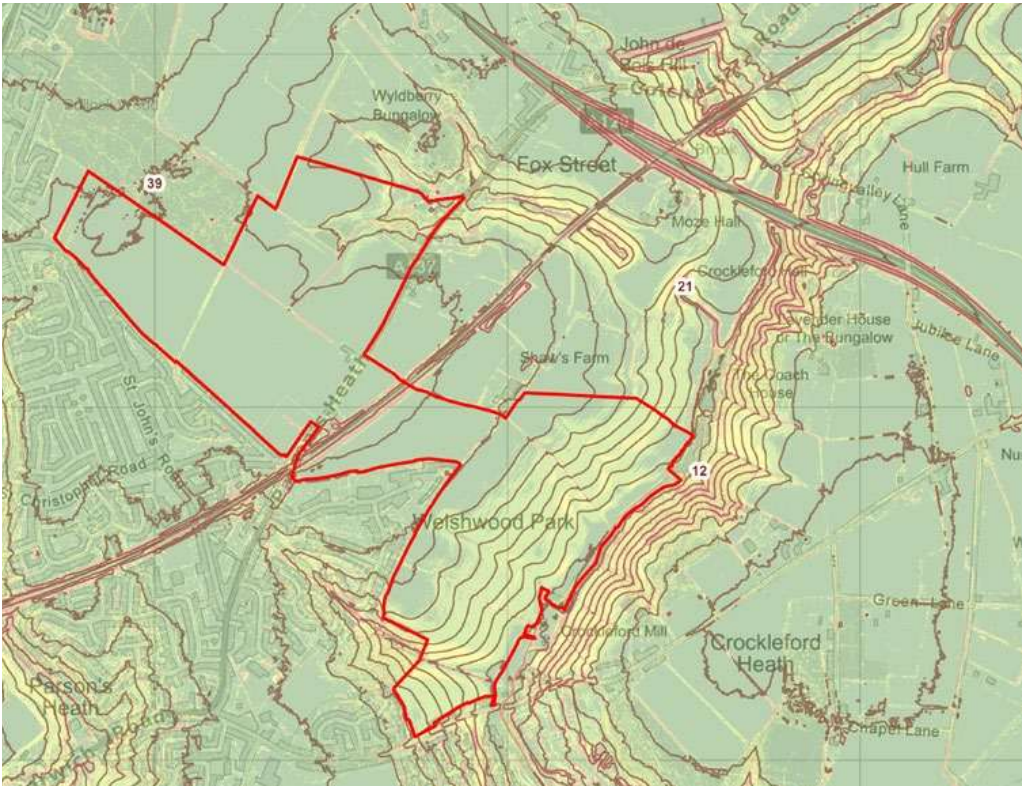
The majority of the site is subject to generally low to no flood risk within Flood Zone 1. However, there is some low to medium risk of flooding associated with the adjacent watercourse, Salary Brook, particularly in the low-lying areas along the eastern edge.

With regards to surface water flooding there are localised pockets where there is a higher risk, namely areas running along site ditches, existing drains are areas of low topography.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be designed to be multifunctional, providing ecological benefits and allowing for the early integration of green-blue infrastructure.

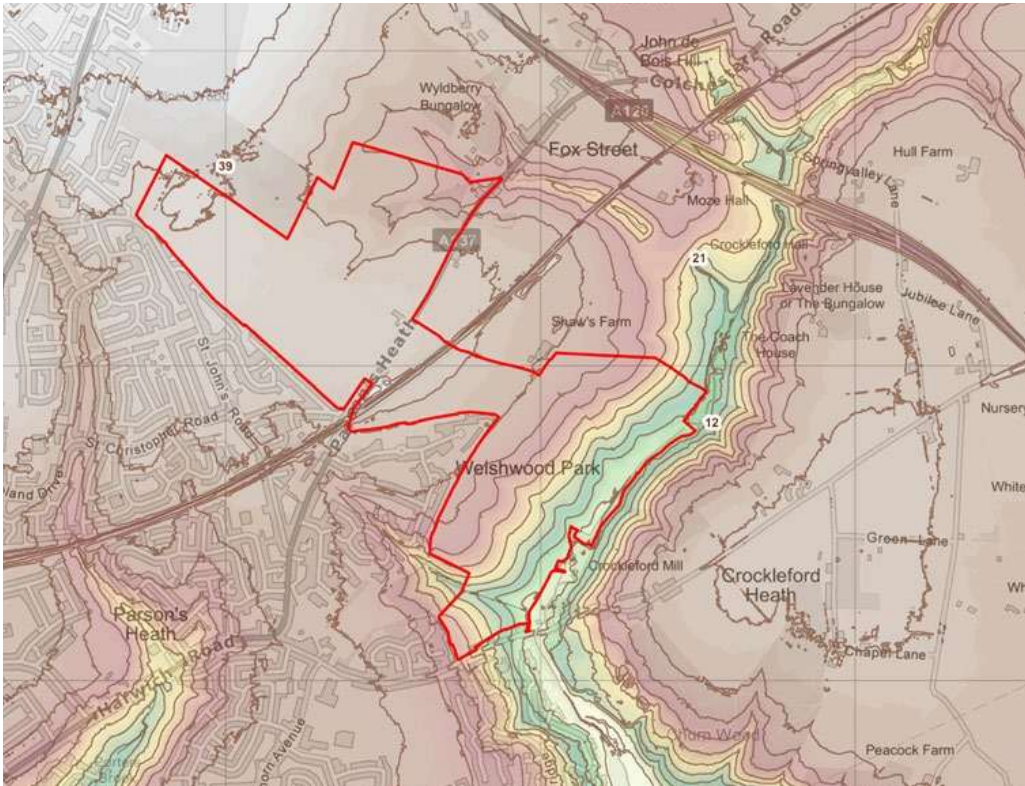
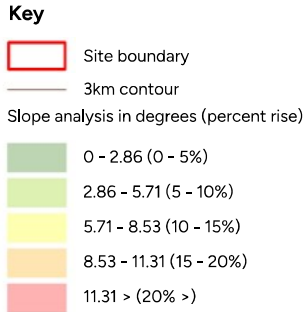


4. Technical Analysis



4.5 Slope

The western area of the site is relatively flat, with land gently sloping downward to the northeast. In contrast, the eastern area features steeper gradients as the terrain descends toward the valley bottom of Salary Brook. This natural slope facilitates effective drainage toward the watercourse located at the site's eastern boundary.



4.6 Elevation

The site features a varied topography, with elevation ranging from approximately 12 metres along the south-western boundary to 39 metres at its northern extent. This gradient is consistent with the broader landscape character of north-east Colchester, where gently undulating terrain is typical. The elevation change across the site presents valuable opportunities for thoughtful design interventions. It allows for the creation of stepped layouts that can enhance visual interest and maximise outward views, particularly from higher ground. Additionally, the natural slope can be strategically utilised to manage surface water drainage, directing flows efficiently and sustainably through the site.



4.7 Local Designations

The site boundary is situated on the north-eastern edge of Colchester, largely across arable farmland. There are no local designations within the site; however, several designations are adjacent to the site and within the immediate area.

Colchester has a number of heritage assets dating back to Roman times. The city centre features most of the listed buildings and conservation areas; however, there are a small number of Grade II listed buildings within close proximity to the site, notably Fen Farm, St John's Church, The Rovers Tye Farmhouse and Moze Hall.

A number of natural environment assets are also present in the vicinity of the site, including Bullock Wood, a designated ancient woodland on the north-western edge of the site, which is classified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The ancient woodland, Welsh Wood, bounds the south-eastern side of the site, which is also designated as a local nature reserve. Additionally, Walls Wood and Churn Wood offer nearby ancient woodlands, and High Woods provides access to a country park.

Key Information

- There are no local designations within the site. The designated buildings within a 2km radius comprise mainly Grade II listed farmhouses, barns and cottages which can offer design cues for future development at North-east Colchester;
- The site is bordered by a number of natural environment assets. As well as providing an appropriate interface with these areas, the proposals present an opportunity to provide enhanced interconnectivity between them.

Key

- Site boundary
- Ancient woodland
- Site of Specific Scientific Interest
- Local Nature Reserve
- Country Park
- Conservation area
- Scheduled monument
- Grade I listed building
- Grade II listed building
- Grade II* listed building
- Parks & gardens

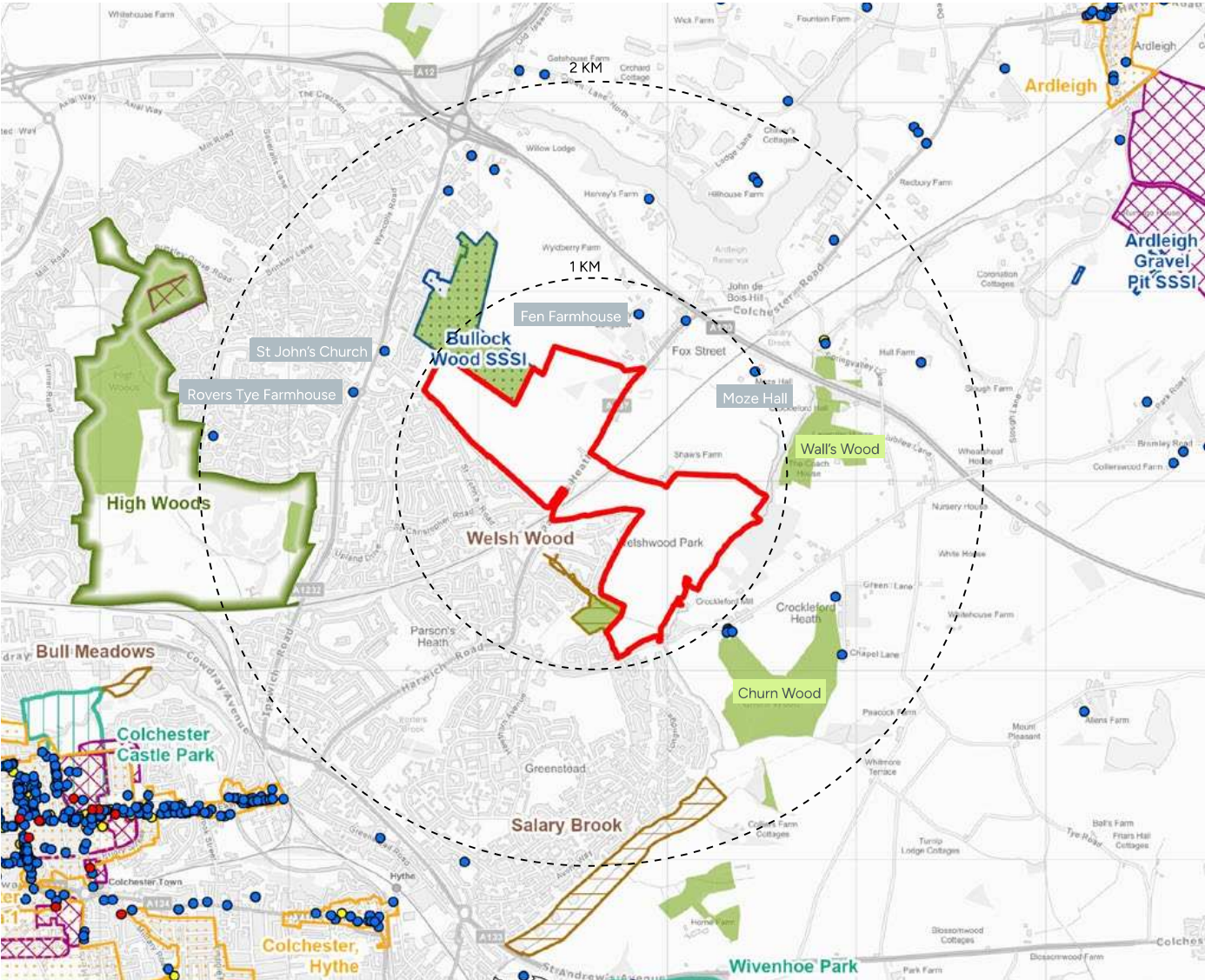


Figure 17 Local designations

4. Technical Analysis

4.8 Site Constraints

In recognition of the characteristics of the site and the location, a full technical team has been appointed. An iterative and coordinated process has ensured a robust approach.

The baseline analysis has identified a series of site constraints and opportunities which are identified on the following pages. The bullets below summarise the known site constraints and these are illustrated on the adjacent plan.

Green Infrastructure

- Bullock Wood, Welsh Wood and Salary Brook present a sensitive environment;
- Strong linear features (mature hedgerows and field trees) navigate both the eastern and western areas of the site;
- Existing informal rewilding areas on the western site

Environment

- Important ecological corridor along Salary Brook;
- Low to medium flood risk on lower laying parts of the eastern site;
- Steeper topography on the eastern site;

Access and Movement

- A137 and railway line present constraint to east-west movement;
- Potential traffic noise from A137;
- Current absence of pedestrian infrastructure extending along Harwich Road;
- Existing track from Bromley Road to site could form emergency access;
- Steeper topography on the eastern site will have to be considered within street layout;

Utilities

- Several utilities cross the site where easements should be applied;
- A gas and water corridor traverse the eastern section of the site where a 20m exclusion corridor has been defined.;
- Overhead power cables are found across the site;

Built Form

- Some existing buildings on Harwich Road;
- Sensitive edge with Welsh Wood Park development.



Figure 18 Established oak trees frame walking routes to Salary Brook



Figure 19 Absence of pedestrian infrastructure extending along Harwich Road



Figure 22 Varied topography to eastern parts of the site



Figure 21 Existing track access from Bromley Road



Figure 20 Overhead power cables along PRoW towards Harwich Road

Key Information

- The site presents a number of key physical and environmental constraints, including sloping topography and proximity to SSSI and Salary Brook;
- There are also a number of utility pipelines dissecting the site which require appropriate offsetting, particularly along the eastern areas of the site;
- With a considered design-led approach and mitigation measures, these barriers to development can be lowered.

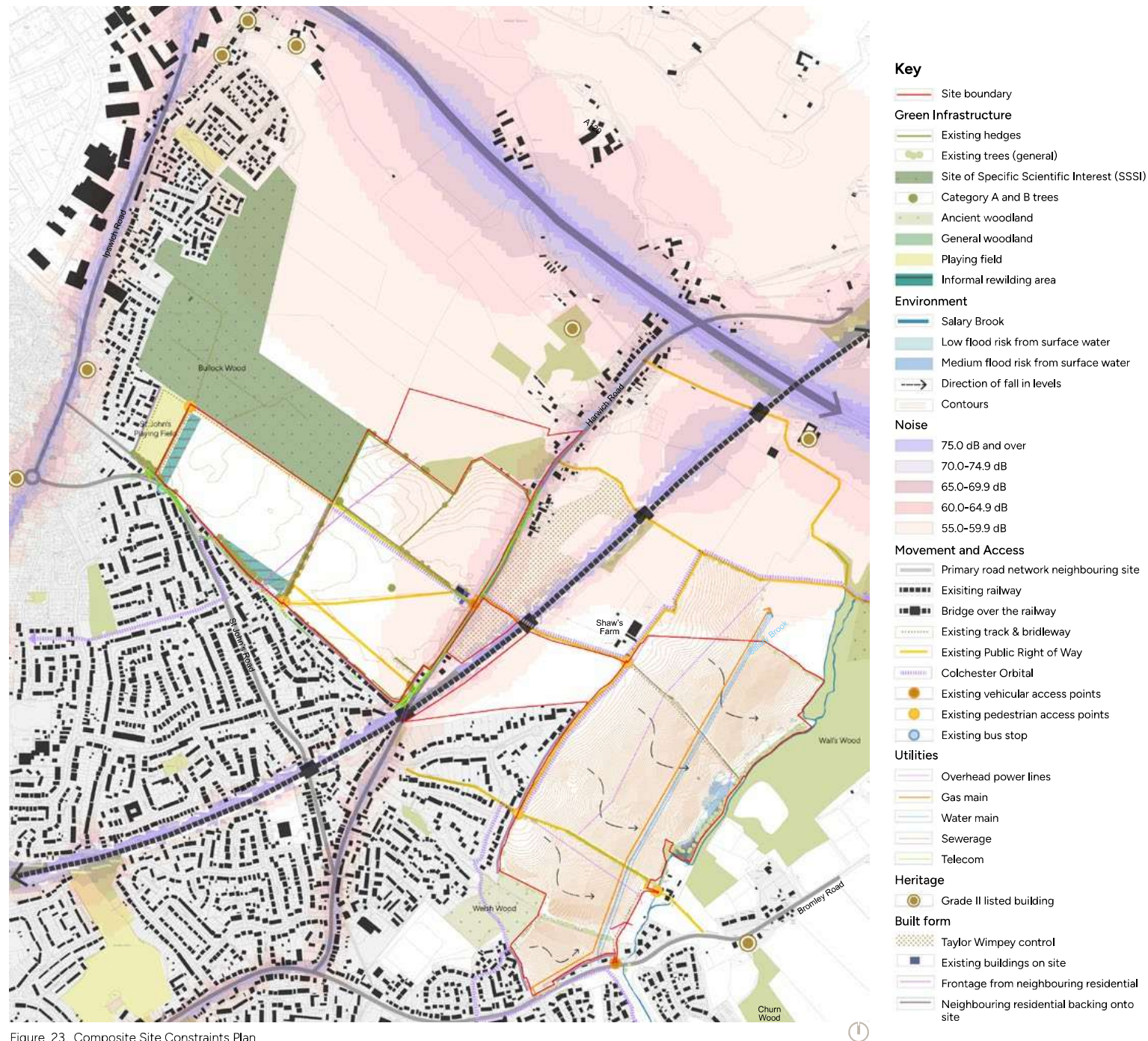


Figure 23 Composite Site Constraints Plan

4. Technical Analysis

4.9 Site Opportunities

The baseline analysis has identified a series of opportunities. The bullets below summarise the opportunities for the site to connect into the existing community and support new and existing residents. The opportunities for future development are illustrated on the adjacent plan.

Green and Blue Infrastructure

- Retain existing landscape features (hedgerows, trees);
- Create a series of green corridors and links based on existing PRoW locations and pedestrian desire lines to enhance connectivity and support active travel;
- Respond sensitively to the adjoining SSSI and landscape character, creating a distinctive local identity that respects the site's natural setting;
- Retain and enhance existing rewilding areas;
- Enhance ecological corridor of Salary Brook;
- Pockets of green spaces across the site will create amenity and place space;

Access and Movement

- Utilise traffic calming measures along A137 to enhance pedestrian safety when crossing the road;
- Existing pedestrian access from St John's Road;
- Potential new ped/cycle access from Dunthorne Road;
- Wayfinding is encouraged to navigate the network of pedestrian and cycle routes;

Built Form

- A new local centre can serve both existing and new communities and potentially include school and local amenities;
- Built form should utilise existing elevation and slopes to enhance views, create stepped layouts and manage water flows;
- Where possible, new homes should front and frame green spaces and existing natural features, similar to neighbouring development at Lancaster Approach;
- Frontage onto Harwich Road will signal an approach into Colchester and a change in environment.



Figure 24 Built form could front onto and frame proposed and existing green spaces



Figure 27 Existing landscape features should be retained and celebrated where possible



Figure 26 Wayfinding to support a network of walking routes



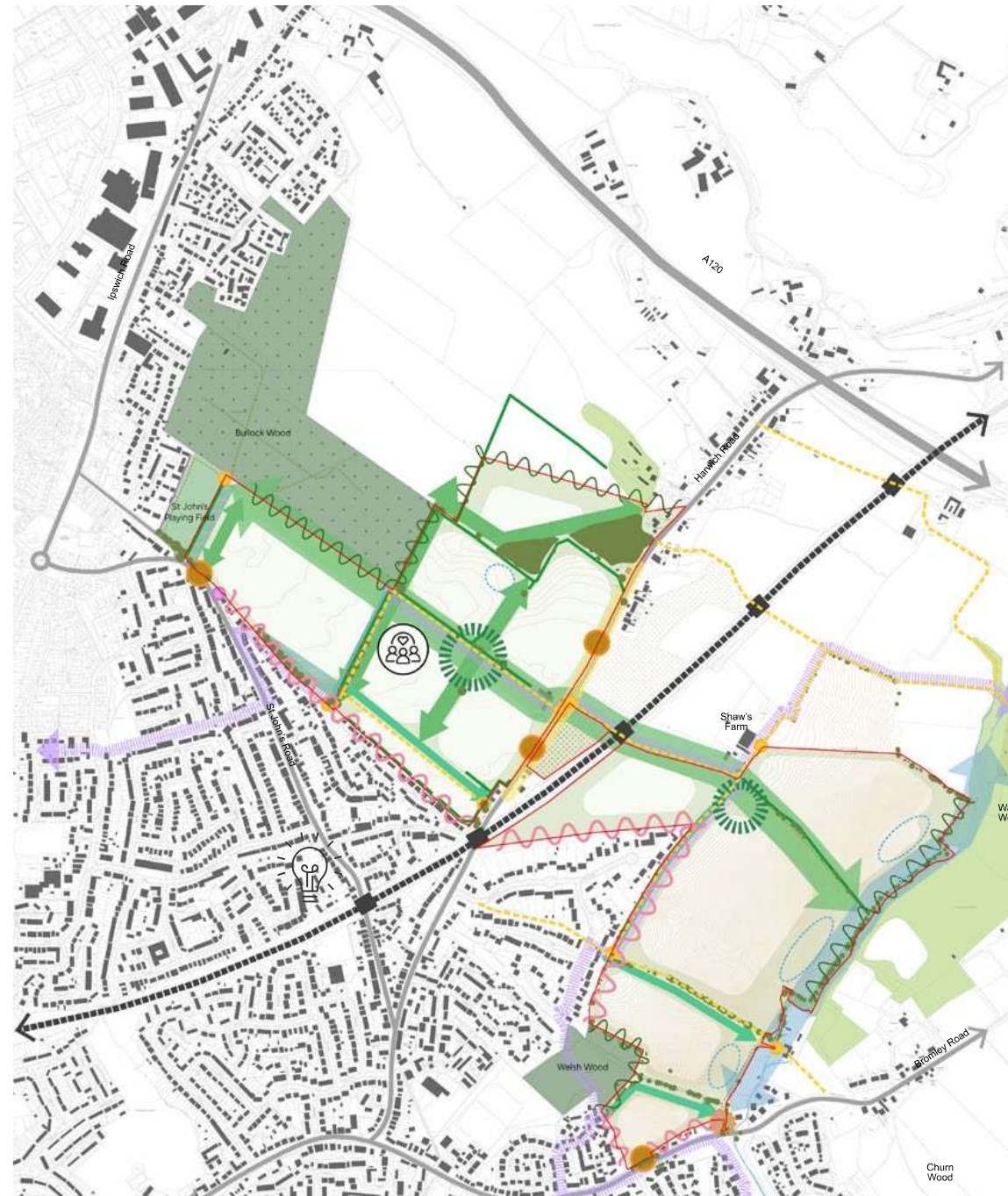
Figure 25 A new community centre to allow residents to connect



Figure 28 An enhanced network of routes will boost site permeability

Key Information

- The site presents a number of positive features and opportunities to support a new sustainable neighbourhood;
- A new local centre will put a lot of existing residents within reach of good local living facilities
- Future development will not only create a community offer for new residents, but will also support existing residents of St Johns Road and Welshwood too;
- The site is well positioned for active and sustainable travel, connecting seamlessly into an existing popular network of routes;
- The site is surrounded by a number of key landscape features such as Bullock Wood SSSI, Welsh Wood and Salary Brook which should be respected through design;
- Primary frontage along Harwich Road is a key opportunity for the site, as it signals a transition into the urban fringes of Colchester.



Key

- Site boundary
- Green Infrastructure**
 - Existing hedges
 - Existing trees
 - Site of Special Scientific Interest
 - Local Nature Reserve
 - Existing Woodland
 - General green open space
 - Informal rewilding area
 - Salary Brook
 - Potential enhanced ecological corridor
 - Potential for focal point green space

Movement and Access

- Primary road network neighbouring site
- Existing railway line
- Primary green corridor / community connector route
- Enhanced ped / cycle corridors
- Existing PRoW
- Colchester Orbital
- Proposed vehicular access points
- Pedestrian access points
- Relocated bus stop
- Traffic calming zone

Built form

- Taylor Wimpey control within PP9 boundary
- Taylor Wimpey control beyond PP9 boundary
- Potential new local centre - inclusive of school and local amenities
- Opportunity for an enhanced landscape edge
- Opportunity to enhance interface with existing housing

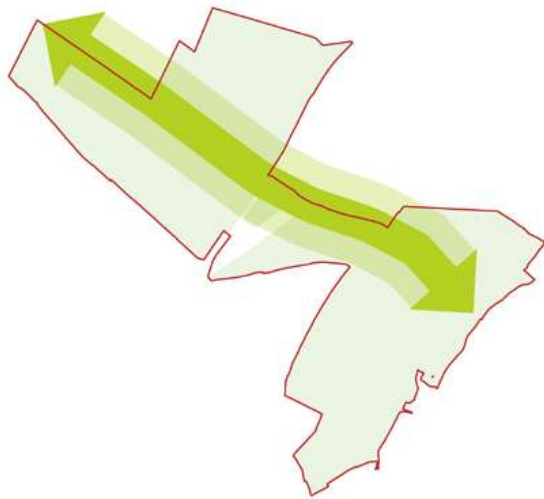
Figure 29 Site opportunities plan



5. Masterplan Framework

5. Masterplan Framework

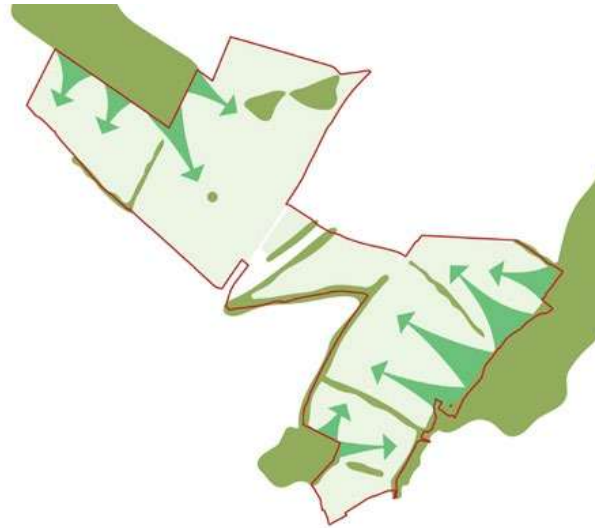
5.1 Design Principles



East-West Green Corridor

A continuous east west green corridor will form the primary structuring element of the masterplan and repair the severance created by road and rail.

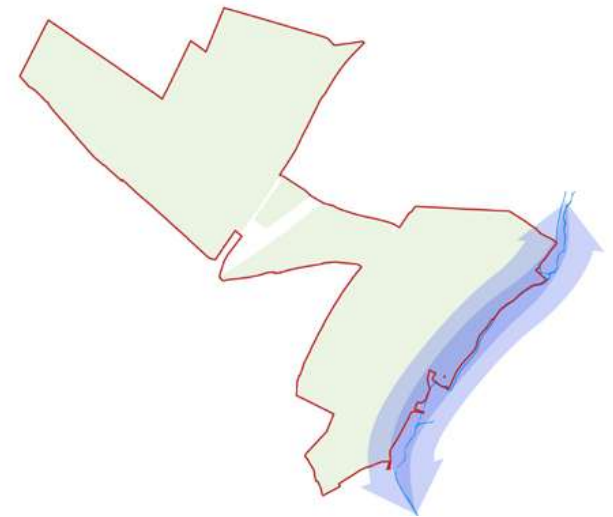
The corridor will create a strong spatial spine that connects landscapes, neighbourhoods and movement routes across the site. It will support walking and cycling, enhance ecological connectivity and provide a unifying identity for the development, linking surrounding green assets and communities.



Anchored by Woodland that Permeates the Development

Existing and new woodland will anchor the spatial structure of the masterplan, creating a landscape-led approach to development.

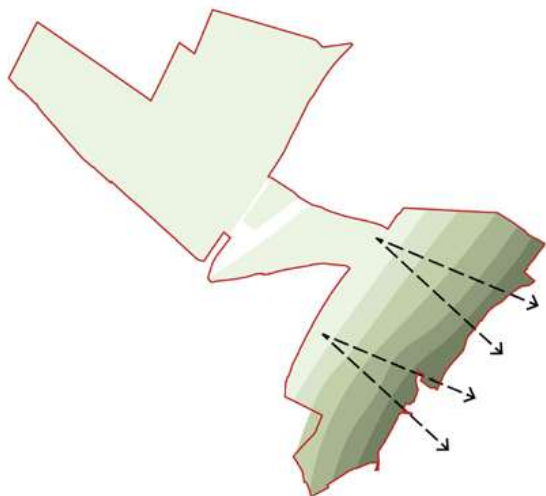
Woodland fingers and green buffers will permeate the site, avoiding urban sprawl and homogeneous development, shaping streets, public spaces and neighbourhood edges. This approach will ensure that nature is embedded within daily life, offering climate resilience and a strong sense of place.



Salary Brook – A Corridor for Nature

The Salary Brook will be celebrated as a key natural asset and enhanced as a multifunctional nature corridor. Its setting will be protected and enriched to support biodiversity, water management and recreation.

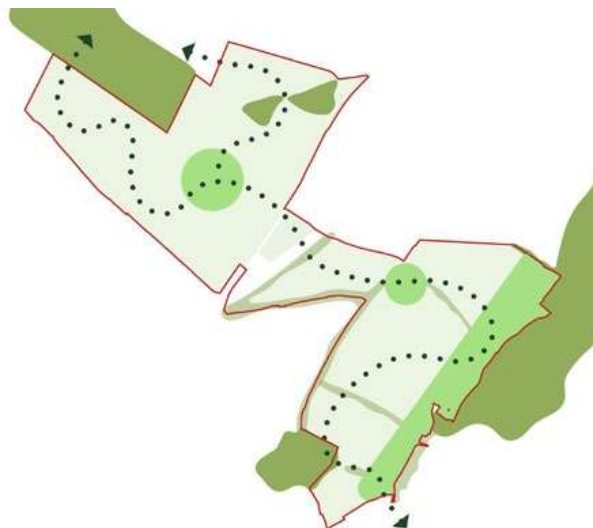
Natural banks, habitat creation and public access routes will transform the brook into a living landscape that connects people with nature while contributing to flood resilience and ecological value.



Respond to Topography and Views

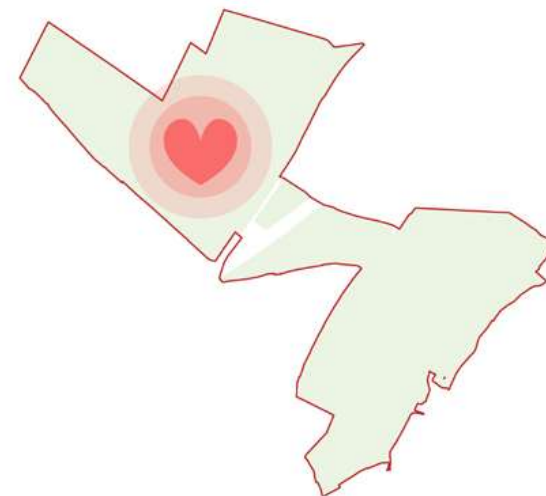
The masterplan will respond sensitively to the site's topography, using land form to shape development character and layout. Buildings, streets and public spaces will be arranged to respect the natural contours, minimise earthworks and frame long-distance views.

Higher points will be used to create landmarks and vistas, while lower areas will support green infrastructure and landscape functions.



Access to Nature for All

Every resident will have easy, safe and inclusive access to a range of natural spaces, from doorstep greens and pocket parks to larger landscape areas and nature corridors. The masterplan will ensure that no neighbourhood is isolated from green infrastructure, promoting health, wellbeing and everyday interaction with nature for people of all ages and abilities.



A New Neighbourhood Heart

The masterplan will be structured around six distinctive neighbourhoods, each with its own character, identity and relationship to the surrounding landscape. While unified by shared design principles and infrastructure, each neighbourhood will reflect its local context, scale and function, supporting diversity, legibility and a strong sense of belonging.

A centrally located neighbourhood hub will form the social and functional heart of the development. This hub will accommodate local services, community facilities, employment opportunities and public spaces, creating a lively and accessible focal point. Designed as a walkable destination, the hub will reinforce local identity and reduce the need for car travel.

5. Masterplan Framework

5.2 Masterplan Framework

The North-East Colchester proposed allocation has been identified for a new community which would include up to 2,000 new homes, a 2-form entry primary school and a new local centre. The diagram overleaf illustrates the initial masterplan framework for the area. It has been formed from the vision and design principles for the site, which are underpinned by a robust technical understanding of site constraints and opportunities. The framework aims to provide the following in support of the Local Plan:



Movement and Connectivity

- Provide **appropriate, safe, multi-modal access points** for new development, ensuring vehicle routes do not encourage “rat-running”;
- Multi-modal focus around the new social and community infrastructure with an emphasis on **sustainable travel**;
- Use design to discourage short, unnecessary trips into the road network and make the easy default for travel to be **walking, wheeling or cycling along well-connected path networks and well-designed bus penetration** (subject to operator discussions);
- Maximise connectivity within and outwith the site area though linking to the existing **Public Rights of Way** and the **Colchester Orbital Route**;
- Enhance connectivity within the site through provision of a **green active travel corridor** between designated sites;
- **Permeability** should be a guiding principle on development of the development framework.



Urban Design and Character

- Promote **integration** between the existing urban edge and the new development through the layout design, **sensitive treatment to existing edges** (whether new development edges are back-to-back or overlooking), how access and connectivity is designed and through retention of existing assets wherever possible;
- Provision of approximately **2,000 new homes** within a design-led masterplan with a variety of mix and typology which can meet local need. Densities should be mindful of the need to use land sustainably alongside respecting the local context;
- Development should **fit comfortably** within the landscape, through an assessment of scale and visibility, accounting for topography and inter-visibility with existing development;
- Lower densities are anticipated along some of the keys edges such as the eastern edge of the site next to Salary Brook;
- **Affordable housing** should be tenure blind and located within reasonable distance of bus stops, pathways and local service provision.
- Local and national policy is to **conserve and enhance heritage assets** from their setting. The site benefits from having no cultural designated assets within it.



A New Neighbourhood

- Provision of a **new local centre** which includes retail, commercial and community facilities. This should be located to serve the new community created within the site as well as the existing and should be easily accessible by sustainable means. This could include a mobility hub;
- Land that could accommodate a **two-form entry primary school** (2.1ha site) which can be co-located with the local centre, and should be easily accessible from within the development by walking, wheeling and cycling. Sports provision, including a playing field and MUGA, can also be provided in conjunction with the local centre and school, rationalising parking (which should not dominate any street scene), and optimising management options;
- The local area provides opportunities for **walking and running**; existing established routes should be brought into the masterplan and protected and enhanced;
- **Enhanced open space**, in line with council policy, can be provided across the masterplan area as part of the blue-green infrastructure and offering opportunities for active and amenity space whilst designed to enhance biodiversity where possible. Development should overlook and address open space.



Landscape and Biodiversity

- Blue and Green Infrastructure should be considered across the whole site area, encompassing the Salary Brook eastern edge corridor, Bullock Wood, Welsh Wood and Wall's Wood and **accounting for as many of the lines of existing trees and hedgerows as possible**. This existing network will be further developed and enhanced through the open space network and SuDS design across the site;
- Create a **rich habitat network** through close working between the ecologist, arboriculturist and landscape architect. Adopt sound principles of protecting species habitat, providing buffers to the mature woodland areas of 15m and creating linear networks within multi-functional green space;
- The **water quality** of Salary Brook should be protected and biodiversity value enhanced through close working between landscape architect, engineer and ecologists;
- **Species selection** should be mindful of both the biodiversity crisis and climate change;
- Bullock Wood is positioned along the north-western boundary of the site should be given an appropriate 15m buffer from developable areas.

Masterplan Framework Key Features

The masterplan framework has sought to integrate placemaking from the outset to respond to existing landscape features and promote a distinct identity and strong sense of place. The framework aims to support a new community which seamlessly integrates into the surrounding landscape and existing neighbourhoods.

1. Future development will offset from Bullock Wood, allowing for a 15m wide corridor with walking routes and incidental play, and a soft, informal green residential edge to the ancient woodland;
2. Retention and enhancement of existing ecological assets in form of 'rewilded' meadows are to be integrated into the development;
3. Local Centre comprising a mix of uses (i.e. shops, office space) and land for a 2-form entry primary school, located centrally and accessible via active travel routes;
4. New local park centred around an existing mature oak tree which will act as a focal point for the new and existing residents;
5. Sustainable drainage network with attenuation basins in the site's natural low points, creating opportunities for wetland habitat linked to existing woodland;
6. Settlement edge reinforced by boundary tree planting to limit views into the site and the creation of a 'green pocket neighbourhood';
7. Potential for a nature school to support landscape delivery and long term stewardship;
8. Introduction of traffic-calming measures to Harwich Road to improve walkability and the creation of a new safe crossing at the intersection with active travel corridor;
9. New park and play area capitalising on views across the Salary Brook corridor;
10. Lower density houses will frame open space and frontage onto Salary Brook;
11. Reinforced Salary Brook corridor with new tree planting, attenuation ponds and enhanced pedestrian paths;
12. Retained public rights of way and new 15m buffer to Welsh Wood residential area to protect amenity and strengthen green infrastructure;
13. New access to be taken from Bromley Road with emergency access if needed.



Figure 30 Masterplan Framework

5. Masterplan Framework

5.3 Spatial Strategies

5.3.1 Accessibility and Movement

The accessibility and movement strategy sets a hierarchy of routes across the site which connect to existing routes and communities. It considers access requirements for all users, inclusive of pedestrians, cyclists, public transport, specialist service vehicles and private vehicles.

The key principles of the accessibility and movement strategy include:

- Increasing the permeability of the site, allowing for stronger east west connections by foot or by cycle;
- Potential to explore bus routing through the western areas of the site connecting St Johns Road to Harwich Road;
- New access points from Harwich Road and St John's Road;
- Retention of the existing PRoW network, where possible, with two routes to the west of the site potentially requiring re-routing;
- Additional pedestrian and cycle access points to Dunthorne Road;
- The street network allows for vehicular movement across the site with private lanes fronting on to primary areas public open space;
- Pedestrians and cyclists will be offered great off road opportunities, however they should also still be accommodated for within the primary and secondary routes.



Figure 34 Strong connections by foot and cycle



Figure 33 Shared pathways



Figure 32 Integration of existing PRoW network

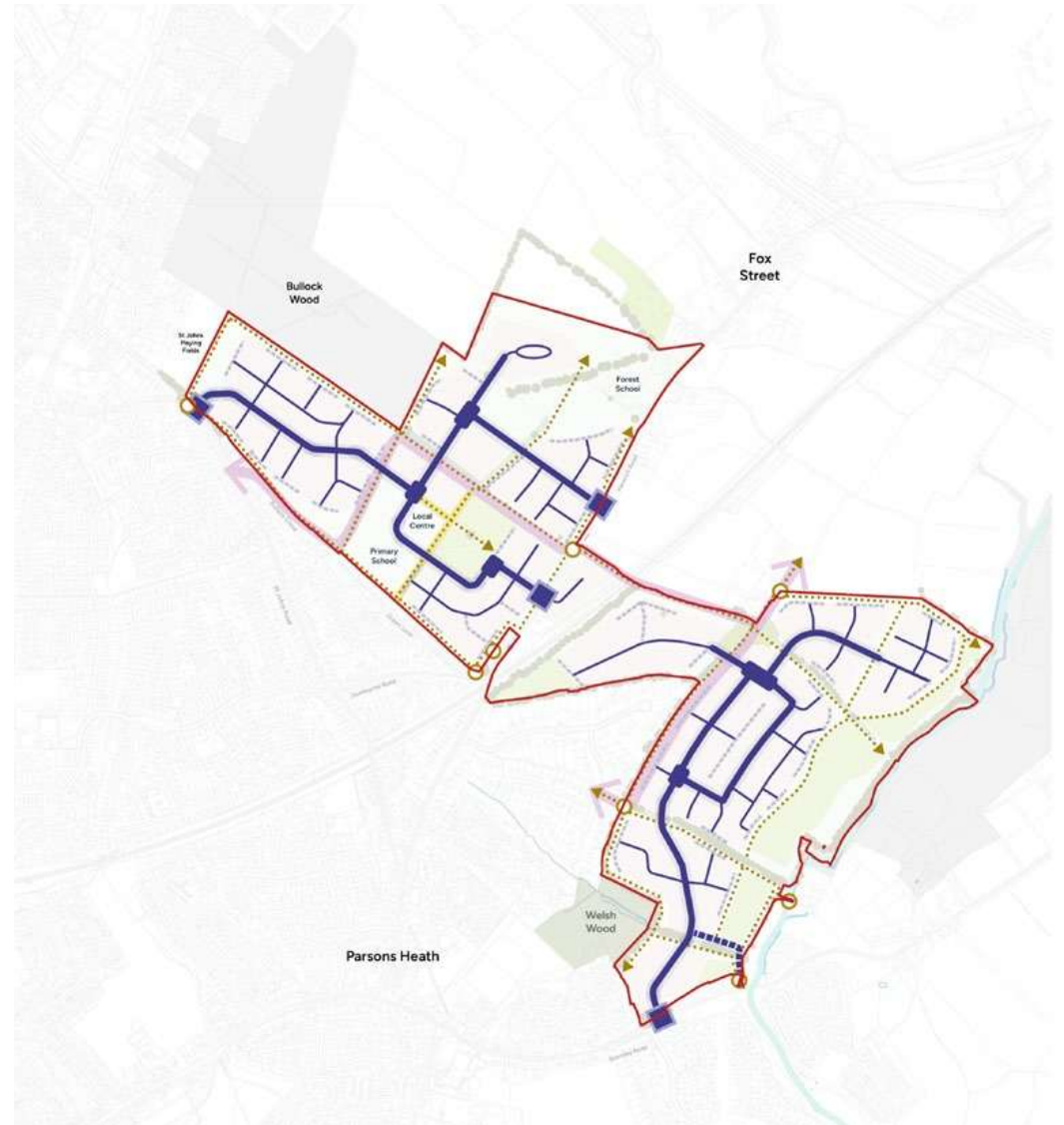


Figure 31 Accessibility and Movement Strategy Plan

5.3.2 Sustainable Travel

The hierarchy of routes set out in the accessibility and movement strategy aims to prioritise walking and wheeling as well as public transport to encourage sustainable travel across the site, reducing the impact of vehicle dominated development.

These routes have been highlighted within the sustainable travel strategy plan opposite.

The key principles of this strategy include:

- Retaining the existing PRow network wherever possible, with only two routes in the western part of the site requiring potential realignment;
- Delivering an enhanced pedestrian and cycle network focused on a primary active-travel corridor linking St John's Playing Fields to Salary Brook;
- Providing a secondary active-travel route connecting Bullace Close with Dunthorne Road and Harwich Road, supported by a wider network of formal and informal paths that link the local centre with surrounding communities;
- Maintaining the established alignment of the Colchester Orbital through the site;
- Exploring the potential for a bus route running through the site, connecting St John's Road to Harwich Road.



Figure 38 Parking integrated into the street scene



Figure 37 Enhanced pedestrian and cycle network



Figure 36 Building on the existing PRow network



Figure 35 Sustainable Travel Strategy Plan

5. Masterplan Framework

5.3.3 Green and Blue Infrastructure

The site sits within a varied landscape setting. Future development should seek to harmonize with the surrounding landscape and existing landscape features. The green and blue infrastructure strategy brings together existing woodland, hedgerows, trees, with new play spaces, amenity areas, community growing spaces, SuDS features, natural and semi-natural habitats, and a connected path network. Their design and placement have been informed by technical inputs and the ambition to create an integrated network that supports both residents and biodiversity. Development should take a holistic approach, embedding green infrastructure, public realm and play throughout the site.

The key principles of the strategy include:

- Informal green routes will run through development parcels, with potential integration of SuDS; exact SuDS and basin locations to be confirmed at later stages;
- Existing hedgerows and mature trees are retained where possible and shape the alignment of green and active-travel corridors;
- A connected sequence of green spaces will link St John's Playing Fields to Salary Brook, with a larger focal space at the local centre;
- Nodal points along green routes will create interest for walkers and cyclists;
- Opportunities for a forest school within existing woodland may be explored;
- Boundary treatments and landscape buffering will ensure a sensitive transition to adjoining Tendring Council land;
- Approximately 40% of the site will be retained as green space, supplemented by additional POS within development parcels.



Figure 41 Informal green routes through the development



Figure 40 Opportunities for a forest school



Figure 39 Green Infrastructure Strategy Plan

5.3.4 Land Use Considerations

The Landuse Strategy for the site has been dictated by the Draft PP9 Requirements which suggests up to 2,000 new homes, a local centre and land for a 2-form entry Primary School.

Key principles of the landuse strategy include:

- Positioning the local centre at the heart of the western side of the site, creating a natural draw into the site from surrounding neighbourhoods;
- Providing a 1 ha local centre capable of accommodating convenience retail and a range of community amenities;
- Ensuring community uses and the proposed school benefit from strong frontage and visibility along the primary route from Harwich Road;
- Establishing a central area of public open space that complements the local centre and acts as a focal point for community activity;
- Exploring opportunities for natural play. Beyond the core development area, there is an opportunity for a forest school within the existing woodland off Harwich Road;
- Delivering active-travel routes that link key areas of open space and play, encouraging movement and informal 'play along the way'.

Area Type	Gross Area (ha)	%
Residential Development	49.91	51.20
Local Centre	1.52	1.60
Education	2.10	2.20
Primary Highways	5.86	6
Public Open Space	38.12	39.10
Total site	97.50	100

Figure 46 Breakdown of landuses within site



Figure 45 Areas of public realm to complement the local centre



Figure 44 Local centre at the heart of masterplan



Figure 43 Opportunities for natural play

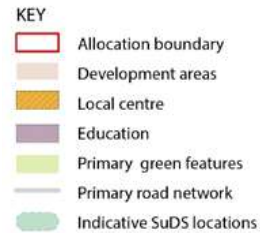


Figure 42 Landuse Strategy Plan

5. Masterplan Framework

5.3.5 Urban Design

The urban design strategy for the site provides guidance on how buildings, streets and spaces combine to create a coherent, responsive and legible new residential environment.

The strategy plan opposite is not prescriptive but indicates the key relationships, in certain locations where particular focus on urban design considerations will help to create a design-led response to the site.

The key principles of the strategy include:

- Residential frontage along Harwich Road to create a strong sense of enclosure and arrival, signalling an approach into a more urban area;
- Informal residential frontage provided along pedestrian and cycle routes;
- Frontage onto strategic green spaces and key landscape features, including Bullock Wood and the Colchester Orbital;
- Green spaces framed by development to support passive surveillance and natural overlooking;
- Long-range views from the eastern side of the site to be considered;
- Primary gateways to the site from Harwich Road;
- Secondary gateways provided from St John's Road and Bromley Road;
- Green nodes signify areas where active travel routes meet at points of interest should be complimented by signage and wayfinding;
- Sensitive boundary treatments and appropriate offsets applied where the site adjoins existing residential areas;
- Sensitive boundary treatments along the transition zone with Tendring Council land to ensure a coherent edge condition.



Figure 50 Views framed by houses



Figure 49 Green spaces framed by development



Figure 48 Sensitive boundary treatments



Figure 47 Urban Design Strategy Plan

5.3.6 Density and Scale

The masterplan framework proposes that the site could accommodate up to 2,000 residential units. This can be achieved through the provision of a range and mix of house types and varying building heights to ensure a vibrant urban character is delivered.

A variety in density will provide housing diversity to satisfy the local market but also contribute the placemaking and create a diverse community. Locations for lower, medium, and higher density residential types have been identified in the strategy plan opposite.

The density bands help to establish a principle within which a suitable density range will be delivered. This ensures the deliverability of the development and that it can adapt to market influences.

The distribution of densities across the site has been considered so that lower densities are generally in the eastern and western parts of the site responding to the existing landscape features. The densities increase moving towards the proposed location of the Local Centre, while maintaining some lower densities adjacent to larger areas of open space. Some medium density is also proposed around primary routes across the site.

Future design stages will explore typologies in line with Colchester and Essex design guidance, but built form should reflect the wider built context.



Figure 54 Lower density along the edges



Figure 53 Semi-continuous frontage defines primary street



Figure 52 Quiet residential street

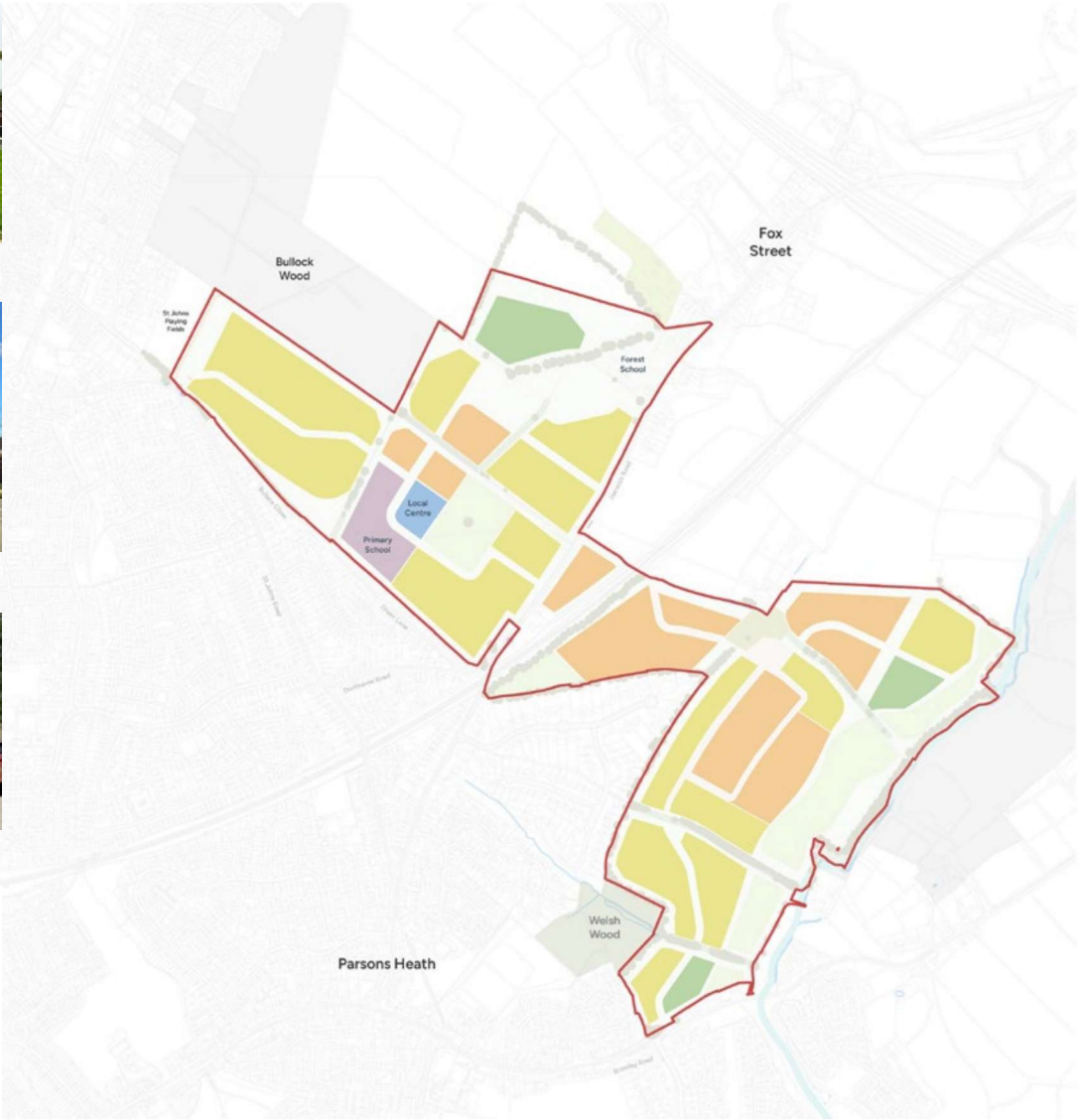
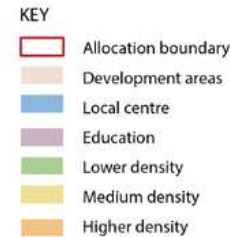


Figure 51 Density and Scale Strategy Plan

5. Masterplan Framework

5.4 Summary

The Masterplan Framework Document sets out a clear vision for the future development of North-East Colchester, forming the basis of representations to Colchester City Council's Local Plan Preferred Options consultation. It establishes shared objectives, spatial principles and development aspirations that align with national and local planning policy, including the emerging requirements of Policy PP9.

The document demonstrates that North-East Colchester can be sensitively developed in response to the distinctive character of Bullock Wood, Welsh Wood and the wider landscape. It outlines how the area can deliver a high-quality, natural extension to the existing community while meeting identified needs for housing, infrastructure, employment, green space, environmental protection and community facilities, in line with the direction of the emerging Local Plan.

The North-East Colchester draft allocation is proposed to accommodate a new community comprising up to 2,000 homes, land for a two-form-entry primary school and a new local centre. The concept is shaped by a clear vision and set of design principles, supported by a strong technical understanding of the site's constraints and opportunities.

The site is influenced by assets such as Bullock Wood, Welsh Wood and the Salary Brook corridor, together with mature hedgerows, field trees and areas of informal rewilding. Technical analysis has identified several key constraints, including topographical variation, utility infrastructure and limited accessibility. However, through a carefully considered, design-led approach and the application of appropriate mitigation measures, these constraints can be effectively addressed to enable a well-integrated and high-quality development.

The masterplan framework establishes a landscape-led approach to placemaking, creating a distinctive identity and a community that integrates seamlessly with its surroundings. The design response has been shaped around existing natural assets, rewilded meadows, and reinforced woodland and brook corridors forming the backbone of the green infrastructure network.

5.5 Key Benefits



A centrally located Local Centre will provide a mix of uses, including shops, workspace, and land for a two-form-entry primary school, all connected by active travel routes.



Movement improvements include, a new active travel network, traffic-calming on Harwich Road, new safe crossings, enhanced pedestrian paths, and retained and enhanced public rights of way to connect into surrounding neighbourhoods.



New parks and play spaces, such as the central local park and areas overlooking the Salary Brook corridor enhance recreation and community life.



The new community could deliver a wide range of dwelling types, including affordable housing, and sizes to respond to identified local housing needs.



Sustainable drainage features, including attenuation basins and wetland habitats, are integrated into natural low points. Boundary planting will create a soft settlement edge, while opportunities for a forest school support long-term stewardship.



Figure 55 Masterplan Framework

