



Colchester City Council Preferred Options Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation 2025

Representations by Welbeck Strategic Land IV LLP

Introduction

1. These representations to the Colchester City Council Preferred Options Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation 2025 (the Consultation document) are submitted on behalf of Welbeck Strategic Land IV LLP (Welbeck Land). To reflect the on-line portal, the representations have generally been structured by reference to the individual policies albeit the order in this Statement has been changed to reflect the priorities of Welbeck Land. This includes Welbeck Land's interest in part of the proposed housing allocation east of School Road, Copford (Policy PP29).
2. A draft update of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 16 December 2025. Clearly, this draft NPPF has not informed the Preferred Options. However, there is a clear direction of travel. However, the 'direction of travel' identified in the draft NPPF echoes various Government statements concerning planning reforms. The key amendments included in the draft NPPF relevant to the assessment of the planning application are:
 - A permanent presumption in favour of suitably located development.
 - Building homes around stations.
 - Securing a diverse mix of homes.
 - Embedding a vision-led approach to transport.
 - Streamlining local standards.

General Drafting

3. As a general observation, there are a number of urban design and layout related policies (e.g. Policies PC6 and PC7) which could be combined to create a single policy concerning high quality development for all forms of development. Similarly, there is duplication of the content of some policies relating to green infrastructure where some rationalisation would be helpful (Policies ST2 and GN1).



4. There will shortly also be national development control policies, and these should be adopted. For example, there is little merit in including a heritage policy (Policy EN6) which could be at variance with national policy and similarly there should be no need for a Biodiversity Net Gain policy repeating the statutory requirements (Policy EN2).

Paragraph 1.2: Plan Period

5. The indicated end date of the emerging Local Plan is 2041. However, paragraph 22 of the NPPF is clear that strategic policies should look ahead over a minimum 15-year period from adoption, to anticipate and respond to long-term requirements and opportunities, such as those arising from major improvements in infrastructure. The Council's own Local Development Scheme (LDS) (March 2025) indicates adoption of this Local Plan in May 2027 which is clearly not going to equate to a 15-year period (i.e. 2027 to 2041 is 14-years).
6. Further, it typically takes 18-months from submission of a local plan for examination to its adoption. According to the LDS, the submission of this Local Plan is scheduled for August/September 2026 which means adoption will not be until later 2027/early 2028. Against this context, to ensure that there is a 15-year period the Local Plan should be establishing strategic policies that endure until 2043.
7. It is noted that there will be changes to how local plans are produced and the preparation of this Local Plan will need to react to the new Regulations due in January 2026. Although the Minister of Planning has provided some advanced information, the precise effect of the new Regulations will need to be considered by the Council, and this may well cause a further delay in the preparation of this Local Plan. This potential delay in publishing, for example, the Regulation 19 version of this Local Plan re-enforces the need to plan for a longer time period.
8. The plan period should be extended up-to 2043 and additional housing and employment allocations identified. There will be a need to update the evidence base to this new end date.



Policy ST5: Colchester's Housing Need

9. Welbeck Land acknowledge that the Council is seeking to adopt the housing requirement established by the standard method introduced via the NPPF and the Planning Practice Guidance in December 2024. However, reflecting Welbeck Land's objection to the plan period, the housing need calculated by the standard method should be 23,400 dwellings rather than 20,800 dwellings. Based upon the Council's claimed supply, there is a shortfall of some 2,294 dwellings being planned for.
10. The standard method derives the minimum number of homes that a plan should seek to provide during the plan period. Whatever the final housing requirement then this should be expressed as a minimum number of dwellings. Further, there is still a need to make an assessment as to the number of new homes that can be provided within an area. The housing requirement may be higher than the identified housing need, and the merits of planning for higher growth should be considered.
11. The Consultation document should consider whether more than 23,400 dwellings can be delivered during the period up-to 2043 through the allocation of additional housing land.

Policy ST5: Housing Supply

12. As an objection, Welbeck Land has 4 concerns associated with the claimed housing land supply at Policy ST5 which are, in part, linked to the requirements associated with other policies in the Consultation document.
13. Firstly, the housing requirement and the capacity of allocated sites should be expressed as a net gain in new dwellings. There needs to be clarity on this point because of the potential loss of residential units for some of the regeneration areas.
14. Secondly, the assumed annual windfall delivery appears to be high (Table ST5.1). Windfall sites are a finite supply, and the effect of the emerging policies will constrain the ability for windfall sites to continue to come forward at the same current rate. There should be an assumption that no more than 100 dwellings per annum will be delivered on windfall sites.



15. Thirdly, greater work is required to determine the capacity of the proposed allocations (Table ST5.2 and related site-specific policies). The Consultation document includes policies that require, for example, potentially larger areas of greenspace to, for example, meet Biodiversity Net gain, tree canopy and nature recovery requirements and for schemes to include more space for tree planting, private amenity areas and play space. The footprints of individual dwellings are going to be larger if M4(3) standards are to be delivered. A further consideration is the approach towards the density of development established by emerging Policy PL4.
16. For these reasons, Welbeck Land questions whether the stated capacity of some of the allocations is actually achievable even before the site-specific requirements. Prior to carrying forward the emerging allocations into the regulation 19 version, the Council (alongside the landowner/developer) of each site should undertake simple capacity testing exercises.
17. The final concern is whether it is necessary to allocate sites of less than 10 dwellings, particularly within the Colchester urban area (Table ST5.2 and related site-specific policies)? It would normally be expected that such small sites would not be formal allocations except, perhaps, in Neighbourhood Plans.
18. The Council should critically examine the allocations being proposed and any further allocations to enable the plan period to be extended up-to 2043 and replace current potential allocations which are unlikely to be deliverable (e.g. Marks Tey Growth Area).

Policy ST7: Infrastructure Delivery and Impact Mitigation

19. Welbeck Land notes that Policy ST7 refer to that at the time of the Local Plan's adoption, every allocation will be considered to be viable, based on information provided to the Council. There are 3 concerns related to the statement which amount to an objection to this policy.
20. Firstly, the other policies contained in the Consultation document impose significant construction, management and related costs on development, especially housing schemes. For example, to comply with emerging Policy NZ1 would cost an additional circa £10,000 per house. It is acknowledged that is an additionality for Net Zero in the Viability Assessment but this is not considered to be sufficient. The need for extensive areas of



greenspace would incur a cost to both layout and establish an appropriate mechanism for funding future management. These costs are under estimated in the Viability Assessment. Other costs related to policy requirements include Biodiversity Net Gain (Policy EN2, other construction standards (Policy NZ2 and renewable energy (Policy NZ4).

21. Secondly, without further clarification, is there the potential for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to be charged against allocated sites at a future date? Such an approach would undermine any viability considerations at the time the Local Plan is adopted. It should be made clear that the intention is for allocated sites not to pay CIL.
22. Finally, the Infrastructure Audit Delivery Plan has not yet been finalised to establish what funding would be sought from a particular allocation. The Plan is an extensive 'wish list' that remains at a high level and no specific costs stated for individual allocations. This also feeds back into the typology approach of the Viability Assessment which does need to consider the implications of such costs.

Policy PP29: Land East of School Road, Copford

23. For clarity, Welbeck Land has an interest in the land directly south of Copford contained by School Road, Hall Road, Pits Wood/Footpath 4 Copford. The extent of the land interest is shown on Drawing No. 101 Rev D accompanying these representations.
24. Welbeck Land is supportive of Copford being identified in the Settlement Hierarchy as a Medium Settlement. This classification reflects the local facilities which are available and the accessibility to higher order facilities. Also, a key point is that Copford sits on a transport corridor with access to bus services and Marks Tey railway station. NPPF paragraph 110 identifies that significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This approach was reinforced in the Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) published on 18 November 2025 whereby 'Unleashing development around rail stations' was identified as a way to secure growth:

"First, development of the right quality and density around train stations enables working families to benefit from greater opportunities to live in close proximity to transport hubs – saving them time and money – alongside unlocking more opportunities for jobs, education, and sustainable growth.



"That is why – as part of a revised, more rules-based National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – the Government intends to provide a "default yes" to suitable planning applications for development within a reasonable walking distance of well-connected stations. This will give greater certainty for housebuilders, allow development to be approved more quickly, and unlock tens of thousands of new homes during this Parliament."

25. The WMS is a significant material consideration. Although not yet policy, the draft NPPF takes forward unleashing growth around railway stations in emerging Policy S5(h) whereby:

"Development for housing and mixed-use development which would be: within reasonable walking distance of a railway station which provides a high level of connectivity to jobs and services; physically well-related to a railway station or a settlement within which the station is located; is of a scale which can be accommodated taking into account the existing or proposed availability of infrastructure; and where the development would not prejudice any proposals for long term comprehensive development in the same location."

26. Welbeck Land is supportive of a residential allocation on land east of School Road, Copford. However, Welbeck Land objects to the extent of the proposed allocation, specifically residential development occurring to the south of Pits Wood/Footpath 4 Copford. Instead, this part of the allocation should be deleted and additional land allocated to the north of Pits Wood/Footpath 4 Copford (i.e. all the Welbeck Land interest which is in single rather than four multiple ownerships). The reasons for this amendment are set out below.
27. A Vision Document, which includes an Illustrative Masterplan, is provided to show how the amended allocation for circa 300 dwellings could be brought forward for development. This is a case whereby the capacity has been thoroughly tested through a comprehensive series of technical and environmental assessments which have informed the master planning exercise, including ecology, landscape, heritage, flooding and drainage, transport and odour.
28. The benefits of the amended allocation are summarised on the accompanying infographics and illustrate:
- The multiple versus single land interests.
 - The difference gap to Copford Green.
 - The greater greenspace provision associated with Welbeck's proposal.
 - Resulting settlement form.
 - Influence of known flooding.



The explanation for amending the allocation is set out more fully below

29. In the alternative, if additional housing land is required to be allocated then all the Welbeck Land interest should be allocated in addition to the land south of Pits Wood/Footpath 4 Copford. However, the concerns raised by Welbeck Land would still apply to the land south of Pits Wood/Footpath 4 Copford

Land Ownership

30. The draft allocation is under four ownerships. The amended allocation proposed by Welbeck is in single ownership. There are clear benefits in the amended allocation with respect to deliverability because single land ownership removes collaboration and negotiation hurdles associated with multiple owners and allows for co-ordinated infrastructure delivery. These factors would significantly reduce the risk and certainty that allocation at School Road would be delivered with a positive contribution to the housing land supply within the first 5-years of the plan period.

Avoiding Coalescence and Protecting the Setting of Designated Heritage Assets

31. The Colchester Local Plan Section 2 identifies that due to the close proximity of Marks Tey to Copford it is important to seek to prevent coalescence between these settlements to ensure that they retain their individual identities. Development is also discouraged in the most northern part of Copford, adjacent to the A12, to protect local amenity, open spaces and risk from flooding. Further, growth to the east is discouraged where the character is more rural or is open countryside.
32. To the south the main comment in the Local Plan is about protecting the setting of the Copford Green Conservation Area. The proposed allocation would have the potential to extend in a linear form built development towards the Conservation Area. The Council's Heritage Impact Assessment (January 2025) references that this parcel of land forms part of open landscape setting of Conservation Area requiring assessment.
33. However, for the amended allocation proposed by Welbeck Land the Heritage Impact Assessment does not refer to any issues related to the setting of the Conservation Area because there would be at least a 600 metre separation distance between the area and any built forms of development. The setting of this Conservation Area and its heritage



significance would not be harmed by the proposed development. The same applies to the setting of the Listed Buildings where the Heritage Impact Assessment records they are some distance from the allocation site and mostly located in the existing built-up areas.

Respecting Existing Settlement Form and Reduction in Landscape Impact

34. Containing development to the north of Pits Wood/Footpath 4 Copford also has less physical and visual impact on the landscape, in particular the gap between Copford and Copford Green. The linear development fronting the west side of School Road would not be consolidated thereby significantly reducing the visual and physical gap between Copford and Copford Green. Instead, the amended allocation would effectively round-off the existing settlement pattern. This reflects the intention of Policy CE1 of the Copford with Easthorpe Neighbourhood Plan which seeks to ensure that the 3 villages within the Parish maintain their separate character and distinctive rural identity, including their landscape setting. Growth solely on the Welbeck land would better respect the topography of the surrounding area, be contained by well-established boundaries including Pits Wood.

Veterans Accommodation

35. In addition to circa 300 dwellings, the Welbeck Land amended allocation would deliver up to 50 flats for occupation by armed forces veterans, in particular former members of the Army who have a strong presence in Colchester.

Surface Water Flooding

36. Keeping the housing allocation north of Pits Wood/Footpath 4 Copford would mean that it would not extend on to a significant area of land which is susceptible to surface water flooding. This is confirmed by the Environment Agency's on-line resource and is situated in the vicinity of the village hall.

Village Hall

37. Welbeck Land also consider that the amended allocation would not need to plan for a replacement village hall. The principle of a replacement village hall would run counter to the intention of emerging Policy NZ2 which favours retaining and refurbishing building because of concerns related to embedded carbon.



Greater Provision of Open Space

38. The amended allocation can deliver circa 5-hectares of multi-functional open space which would be available for use by both the future residents and the local community. This open space would be more accessible to the local community and would be some 2.18-hectares more than the amount of open space that can be accommodated in the draft allocation.

Summary

39. Overall, Welbeck's land interest located to the east of School Road is a more sustainable and deliverable option to accommodate some 300 dwellings plus up-to 50 flats to accommodate veterans at Copford compared to the proposed allocation. Policy PP29 should be amended to include the land identified on Drawing No. 101 Rev D. It is a logical, sustainable and deliverable scheme.

Policy ST3: Spatial Strategy

40. Welbeck Land is supportive of Copford being identified in the Settlement Hierarchy as a Medium Settlement. This classification reflects the location of Copford, its accessibility by public transport and the local facilities which are available.

Policy NZ1: Net Zero Carbon Development (in operation)

41. Objection is made to Policy NZ1 which is seeking to bring in Net Zero way ahead of the Government's target date of 2050. It should be a matter for the Building Regulations to determine the construction standards of buildings and their subsequent energy use. Other than a somewhat righteous reference to "*It therefore falls to the planning system to ensure new development addresses carbon emissions in operation*" there is no consideration given to the practicalities of seeking to implement the standard which fails to reflect national technical standards and their cost implications, which have been estimated to be £10,000 per house. Such matters affect deliverability and viability of development proposals.
42. The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that new development should be planned to help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings in plans should reflect the Government's policy for national technical standards. Indeed, the consultation



document accompanying the draft National Planning Policy Framework specifically refers to:

"The [national] policy as drafted would limit local standards for energy efficiency, as we are concerned that varying standards across local plans make it difficult for the construction sector to adapt and deploy energy efficiency technologies at scale. If this specific restriction were to be taken forward following consultation, we intend to use secondary legislation to commence section 43 of the Deregulation Act 2015 to amend the Planning & Energy Act 2008 to make clear that local plans should not set higher energy efficiency standards for residential development."

43. Policy NZ1 should be deleted and reference only made to national technical standards being the baseline against which proposals will be assessed. This approach is highlighted in the draft NPPF against which it is envisaged this emerging Local Plan will be examined.

Policy NZ2: Net Zero Carbon Development – embodied carbon

44. In addition to the comments made in respect of Policy NZ1, objection is made to Policy NZ2 because of a lack of clarity. What does "to the satisfaction of the local planning authority mean"? Objection is raised to this open ended statement which will inevitably be open to different interpretations. A clearer statement is required in the policy to assess applications against.

Policy NZ3: Wastewater and Water Supply

45. Welbeck Land recognise that potable water can be a scarce resource. However, it is unclear how achieving 80 litre per person per day (LPPD) of water usage, some 30lppd below current national standards, can and will be achieved? National standards should continue to be adopted and hence this objection to Policy NZ3.

Policy H1: Housing Mix

46. Objection is raised to Policy H3 because the mix sought for both market and affordable housing in the Table reflects a specific moment in time. It is inevitable the housing need, in terms of the size of dwellings, will inevitably change of the plan period. Accordingly, the policy requirement should be the housing mix should generally align with the latest published Strategic Housing Market Assessment or other evidence which may be produced, whether by the Council or applicants. It should also be recognised that there can be no



'one size fits all' approach to every housing site because there are site-specific and location specific factors which need to be taken into account.

Policy PC4: Development Density

47. The principle of an efficient use of land to maximise the density of development within certain specified parameters is supported by Welbeck Land. However, if a higher density scheme can be accommodated on a site in accordance with the criteria, it should be unnecessary for there to be the need to demonstrate public benefits. The appropriate density of development should be solely about urban design consideration and, as an objection, the last part of Policy PC4 should be deleted.
48. It is worth recording that the density of development is likely to be lower than what has been achieved over the past 20-years because of the other policy requirements contained in the Consultation document relating to matters such as greenspaces, private amenity spaces, tree retention and canopy cover, tree planting, space for water, Biodiversity Net Gain, M4(3) standards, adoptable roads etc. More land will be needed to accommodate the same quantum of development and hence there is a need for testing the capacity of the proposed allocations.

Policy PP17: Land South of A12, Marks Tey Growth Area

49. Although Welbeck Land is supportive of growth related to Marks Tey railway station, there is a significant doubt whether the circa 2,500 dwellings associated with the Marks Tey Growth Area envisaged to contribute to the housing land supply plan period will be capable of delivery (Policies ST5, PP17 and PP18).
50. As recorded at paragraph 12.17 of the Consultation document, large areas of land have previously been promoted for development in and around Marks Tey but these have come to nothing. This is primarily because infrastructure improvements are required in order to support development at the scale, in particular improvements to the highway safety and capacity associated with the A12 and A120. Paragraph 2.19 recognises significant upgrades to the A12 and A120 are required but these will need to be agreed with the highway authority and National Highways.



51. Correctly, the Colchester Local Plan Review: Further Transport Evidence (October 2025) assumes that neither the A12 widening scheme nor the proposed A120 scheme come forward by 2041 (rather than the 2043 advocated by Welbeck Land). However, whilst the February 2025 Transport Evidence did also assume no A120 improvements, it did include the A12 improvement. It is unclear from the Further Transport Evidence what the implications are of the proposed 2,500 dwellings at Marks Tey without the A12 improvement works. It appears that “*extreme congestion*” would occur.
52. The prospect of significant upgrades to the road infrastructure have significantly receded with the abandonment in July 2025 of the A12 upgrade between Chelmsford and Marks Tey and the A120 improvement between Marks Tey and Braintree. It is both unclear and uncertain whether housing development comprising 2,500 dwellings, plus the additional employment land, can be fully delivered during the plan period without significant highway improvements.
53. Policy PP17 should be deleted and alternative housing allocations sought at lower capacity, including additional growth at Copford, which would not rely upon major improvements to the A12 and A120, including their junction at Marks Tey.

Policy PP18: Land North of A120, Marks Tey Growth Area

54. Although Welbeck Land is supportive of growth related to Marks Tey railway station, there is a significant doubt whether the circa 2,500 dwellings associated with the Marks Tey Growth Area envisaged to contribute to the housing land supply during the plan period will be capable of delivery (Policies ST5, PP17 and PP18).
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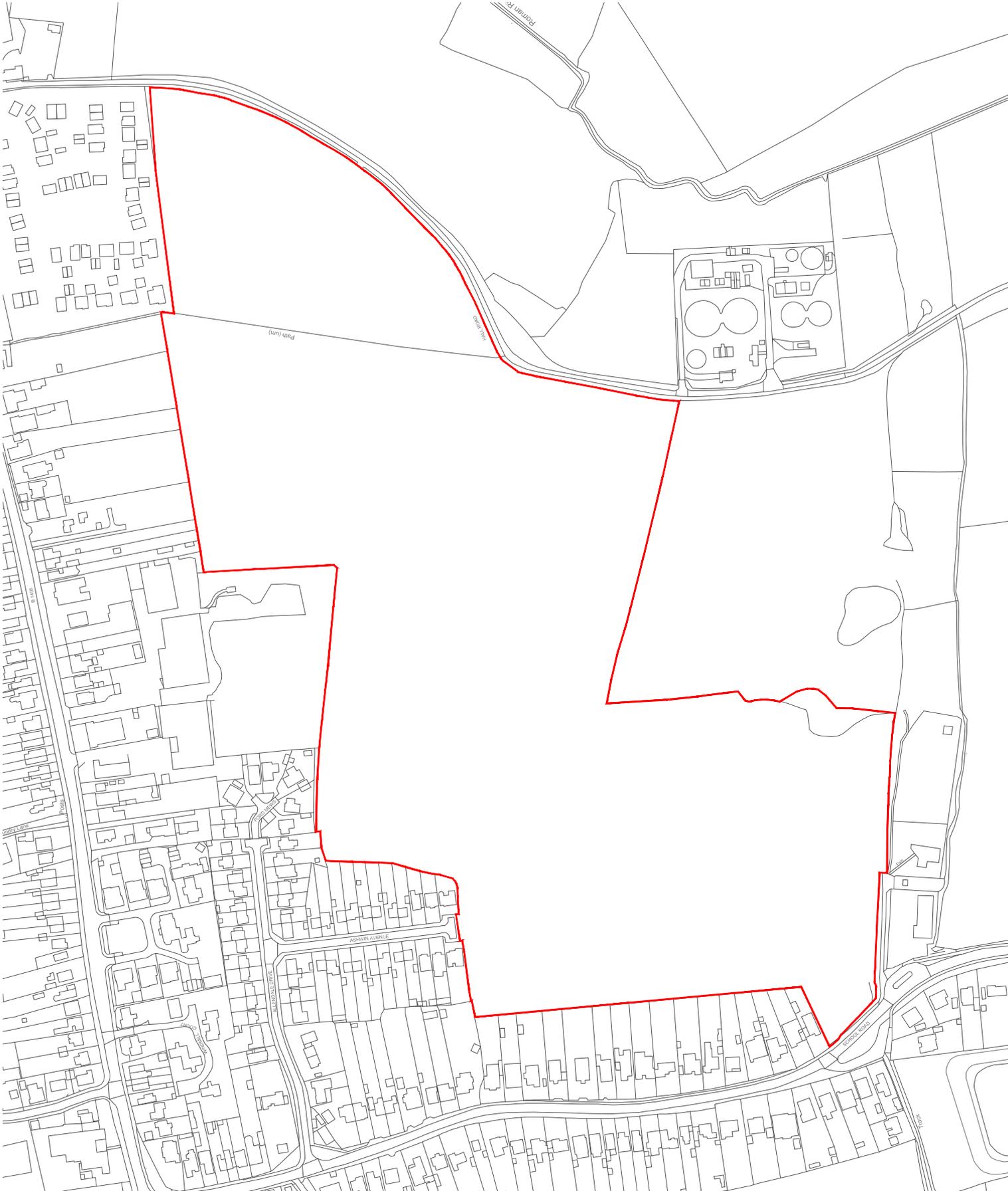
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58. Policy PP18 should be deleted and alternative housing allocations sought at lower capacity, including additional growth at Copford, which would not rely upon major improvements to the A12 and A120, including their junction at Marks Tey.

Policy PEP5: Land South of A12, Marks Tey

59. Although Welbeck Land objects to Policies PP17 and PP8 due to highway concerns, the opportunity to retain the proposed employment allocation south of Marks Tey is supported and should be explored in isolation in terms of any impacts on the highway network. The Further Transport Evidence does not allow this to be undertaken.
60. There is significant logic in an employment allocation south of Marks Tey because of its relationship to the strategic highway network, the ability to access the east coast ports and accessibility to employees by active and sustainable travel modes.

Version: Final
Date: 14 January 2026



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Key:
 - - Site Boundary (17.2b/cv4.06-c)

Rev	Date	Description	Drawn	Check
D	12.05.25	Revised site boundary	CR	AB
C	12.02.25	Revised site boundary	CR	AB
B	10.02.25	Revised site boundary	CR	AB
A	10.02.25	Revised site boundary	CR	AB
.	14.07.20	First Issue	CR	AB

Client: **Weilbeck Land**



Project:
**Land east of School Road
 Copford, Colchester**

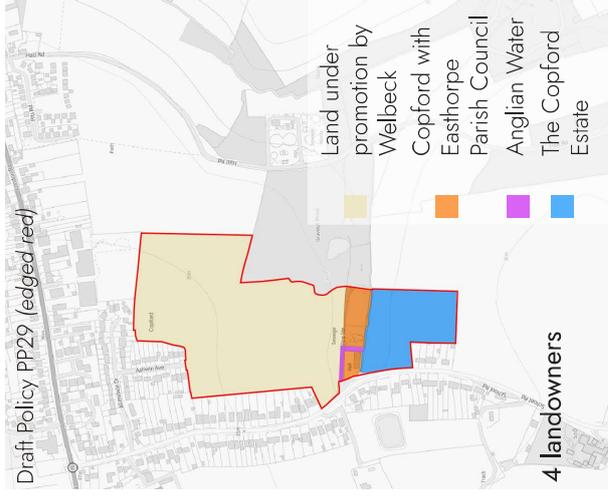
Drawing Title:
Site Boundary Plan

Drawing No. **101** Job Ref. **20.2001**
 Scale @ A3 **1:2500** Revision **D**
 Scale Bar 0 20 40 60m

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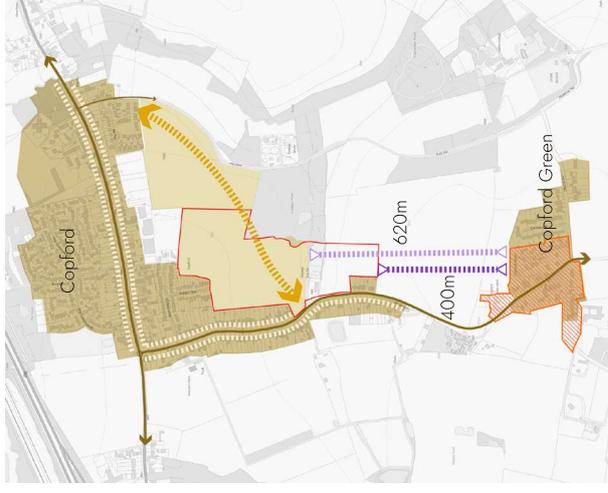
Land East of School Road, Copford | Why our Site?

1. Land Ownership

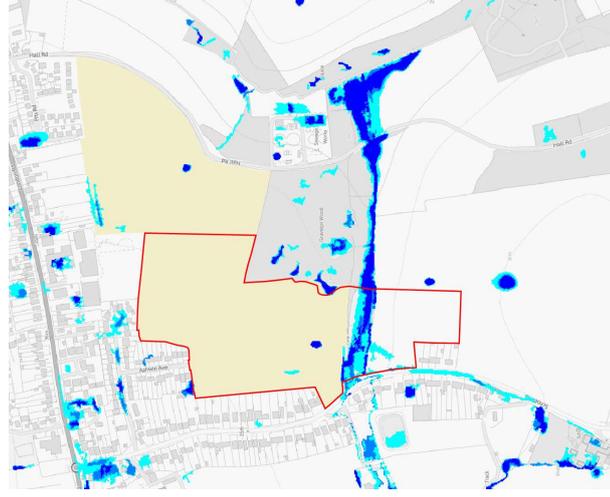


Draft Policy PP29 reduces the gap between Copford and Copford Green to 400m.

2. Settlement form



3. Flooding



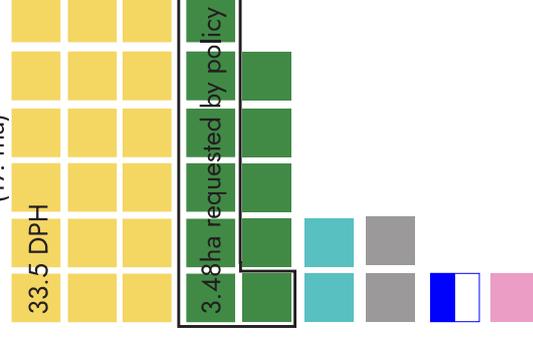
Draft Policy PP29 - the majority of the land owned by the Parish Council is at risk of surface water flooding.

This could pose a constraint to development and sever the allocation into two island parcels.

4. Public Open Space & Density

*1 square = 0.5ha

Welbeck's Alternative Proposal (17.4ha)



Residential area
Allocation PP29 - High density as result of low capacity of the site for residential area

Public open space
Welbeck's proposal - Extra 2.18ha of POS, equivalent to 45 olympic swimming pools

SuDS
Main road infrastructure

Flood area

Veterans accommodation



WELBECK LAND

Land East of School Road Copford

Pre-Application Design Statement

June 2025





WELBECK LAND

PROJECT TEAM

MASTERPLANNING & ARCHITECTURE

Boyer

PLANNING CONSULTANT

STAR - Planning and Development

DRAINAGE, NOISE, UTILITIES AND TRANSPORT

SMA

LANDSCAPE & VISUAL

FPCR

ECOLOGY

The Ecology Partnership

Produced by

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Project code: 20.2001

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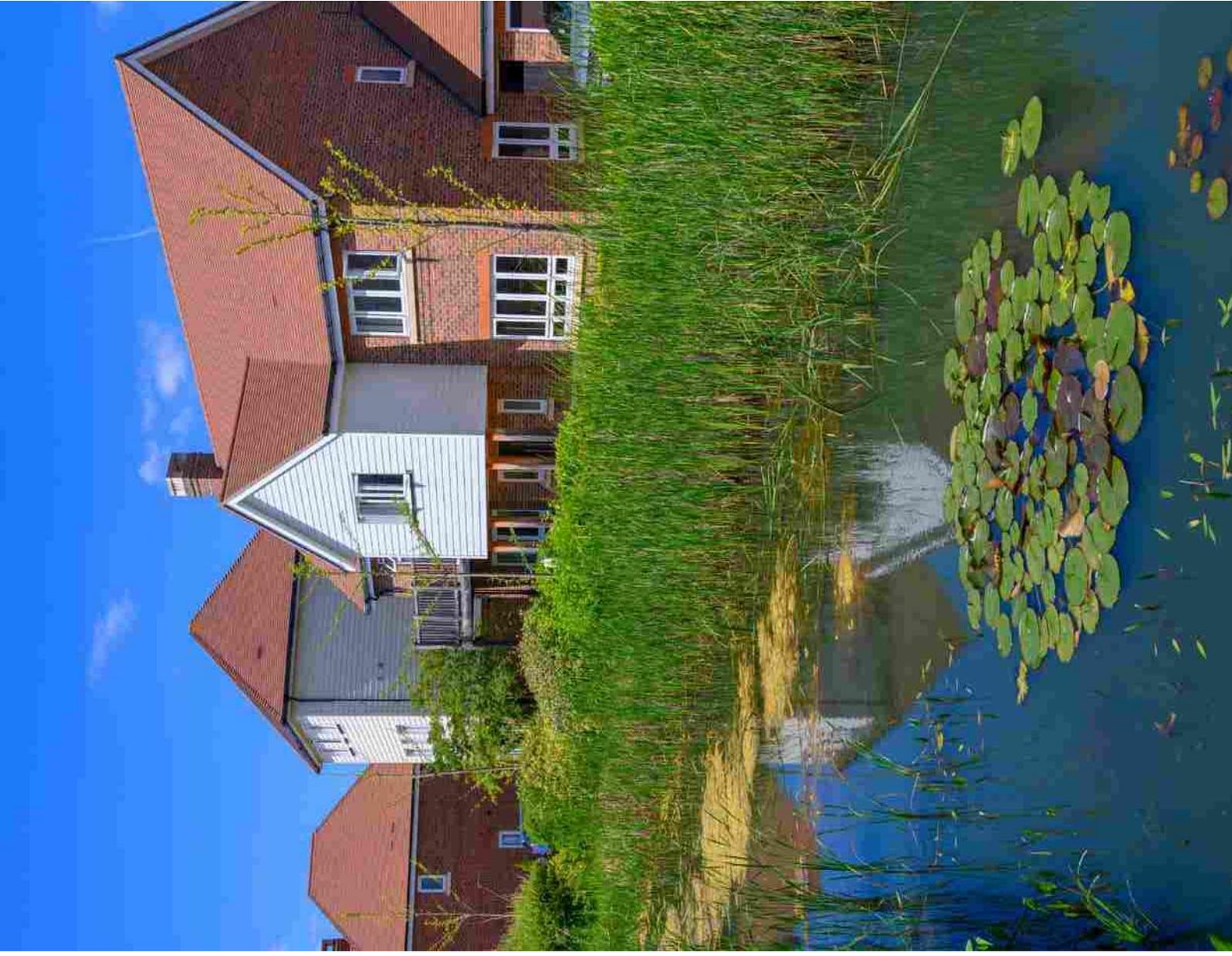
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Pre-application Design Statement is being submitted by Welbeck Strategic Land IV LLP to Colchester Borough Council (CBC) to provide information on the evolving development for Land East of School Road - a site proposed for residential use on the southern edge of Copford. The purpose of this Design Statement is to seek pre-application advice that will guide further design development of the proposal.

This statement is the culmination of the work collectively produced by the consultant team and sets out our vision to bring forward a resilient, sustainable and nature led development on this site. The proposal will unlock land for a new publicly accessible open space to complement the existing green infrastructure network around the site, provide opportunities for habitat creation and mitigation, strengthen existing landscape, provide amenity space, multi-functional drainage and naturalistic play. The proposed scheme will deliver up to 300 high quality new homes including affordable and adaptable homes aligned with local need and Policy standards along with infrastructure improvements within the site and in the wider context. The proposal will include accommodation for around 44 homes for veterans and military leavers in the form of an Entrain Space/ Residential which comprises accommodation and community space on the ground floor that will be accessible to the public.



Site location

Copford



A12

London Road

Ashwin Ave

School Road

Hall Road

The Site

Pits Wood Local Wildlife Site

Copford Village Hall

17.42 HA
43.04 ACRES
TOTAL SITE AREA

Fig 1. Aerial View of Site

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The opportunity

Welbeck Strategic Land IV LLP was established over 25 years ago and developed a particular expertise and reputation for unlocking complex planning and funding situations to realise development potential across the Midlands and southern England. A responsible and specialist strategic land promotion business, Welbeck's projects are located throughout southern England ranging from large urban extensions to residential schemes of around 50 dwellings.

Working collaboratively with stakeholders is an essential part of our approach. Welbeck Land oversees the entire planning process from start to finish and seeks to work very closely with local communities, planning officers and councils to create the most mutually beneficial schemes.

This Pre-Application Design Statement supports a proposal for a site approximately 17.42 hectares (43.04 acres) on Land East of School Road in Copford, as shown on the plan in Fig 1. The proposal has been informed by detailed technical analysis and surveys undertaken by the project team. This has led to a robust understanding of the site that has underpinned the design principles and the evolving masterplan.

CBC is encouraged to consider the characteristics of the wider site which is in a sustainable location and is well contained, along with Welbeck's collaborative approach and commitment to legacy. It is clear that the site is available, suitable and deliverable, will unlock local benefits and will help meet the housing needs of Colchester Borough as a whole.

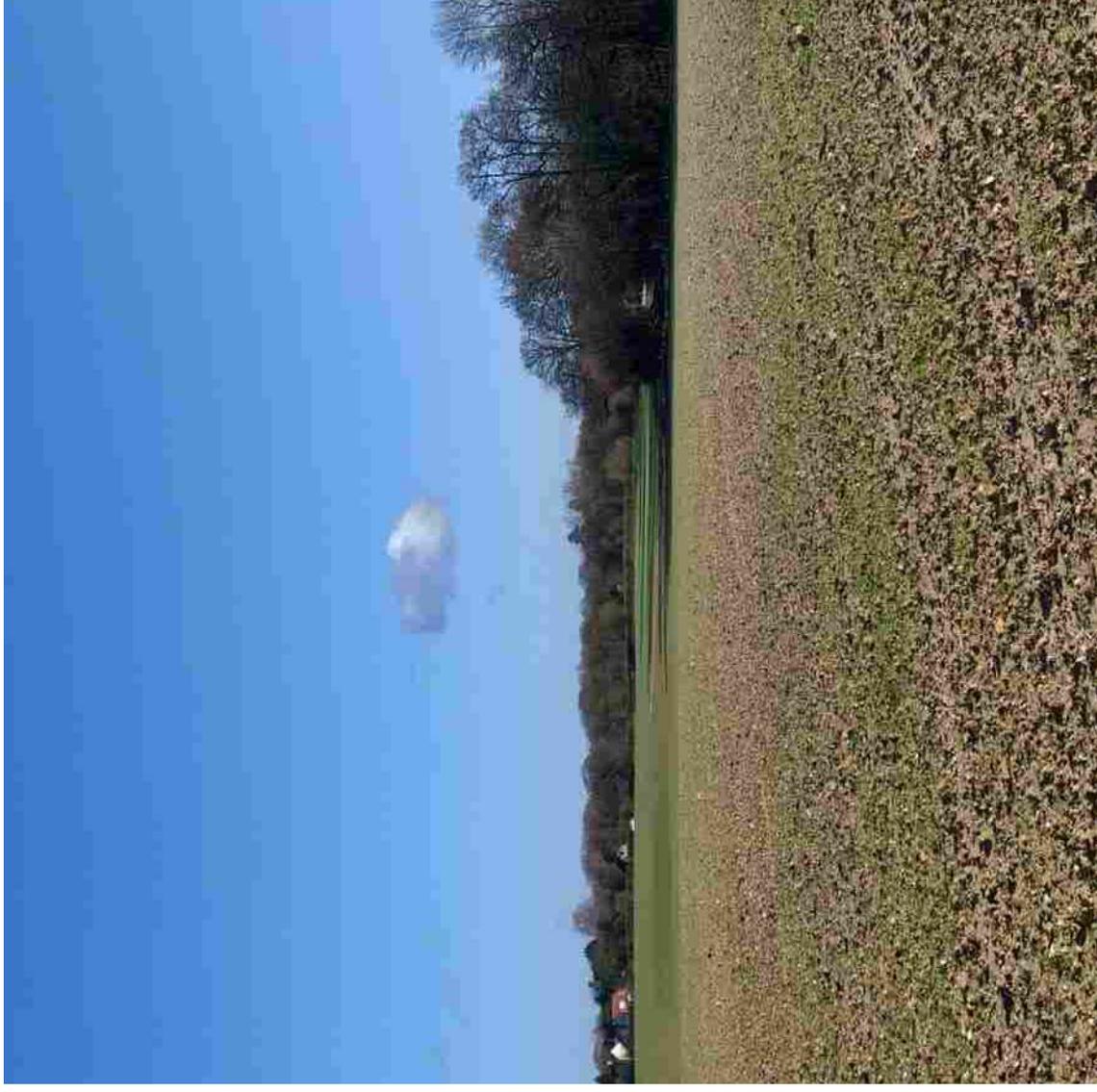


Fig 2. Site photograph taken from the south western end of the site

2. THE VISION

The Site - Inspired to bring together nature and community and deliver high-quality homes in a highly sustainable setting. The development will enhance existing landscape assets and biodiversity, ensuring their longevity for the future.

The Placemaking Charter demonstrates Welbeck Land's commitment to placemaking and resilience on this site through 6 founding principles. This Charter approach is focused on community cohesion and sustainability providing access to homes for all via genuine affordability.

Our Placemaking Commitment

Context & Identity



The proposal will create a green and, healthy neighbourhood in a sustainable setting, all whilst retaining the inherent identity and charm unique to the local area.

Movement & Integration



Proposed network of routes and linkages will deliver safe connections for pedestrians and cyclists, linked to the wider network.

Nature & Spaces: Healthy & Well-being



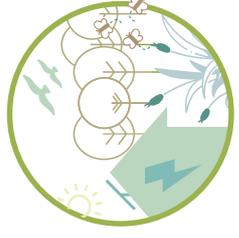
The proposal will unlock private land and transform it for the local community's health, well-being and nature enhancement.

Affordable new homes



The proposal will provide high quality new homes across all ages with a balanced mix to suit the local needs.

Homes, Buildings & Resources



The site will be planned for the future, designed to minimise its environmental impact and maximise sustainability, moving from non-renewable energy sources to greener sources.

For the Community: Legacy & Stewardship



The proposal is committed to a 'People First' approach to community engagement, ensuring proposals are shaped by, and for the community.



Fig 3. Artists impression of proposed development facing the open space (indicative)

3. THE CONTEXT

3.1. Facilities & Wider Accessibility

The site is located on the south eastern edge of the settlement boundary of Copford. Located off School Road, the site is approximately 800m (a 10 minute walking distance) from the centre.

Public Transport - Marks Tey railway station is accessible on foot, cycle (dedicated cycle parking is provided) and bus services. Direct rail services operate from Marks Tey to the centre of Colchester, London Liverpool Street, Ipswich and Chelmsford. The nearest existing bus stops to the site are located along the B1408, London Road and School Road. Bus services 70, 71a, 71b, 71c and 71x provide a route between Colchester and Chelmsford with a 30 minute frequency Monday to Friday and a bi-hourly service on weekends.

Footpaths and cycle links - To the east of the site is National Cycle Route 1 which provides a traffic free route from Stanway to Colchester. There is a public footpath which crosses the eastern part of the field and about the site's southern boundary/within Pits Wood.

Surrounding uses - Within a 5-10 minutes walking distance the site has access to local shops and facilities including Copford Village Hall and adjacent sport pitches and playground, small businesses and a primary school.

A wider range of facilities is distributed along London Road towards Stanway and the western fringe of Colchester. Tollgate and Stane Retail Parks are less than 10 minutes cycling from the site and easily accessible by bus. The plan on next page demonstrates the connectivity of the site within easy walking and cycling distances.



Marks Tey Train Station



Sainsbury's supermarket, Stanway



Bus Route 71 : Colchester to Chelmsford via Copford



Copford Primary School



Marks Tey Hotel



The Alma: Pub on School Road

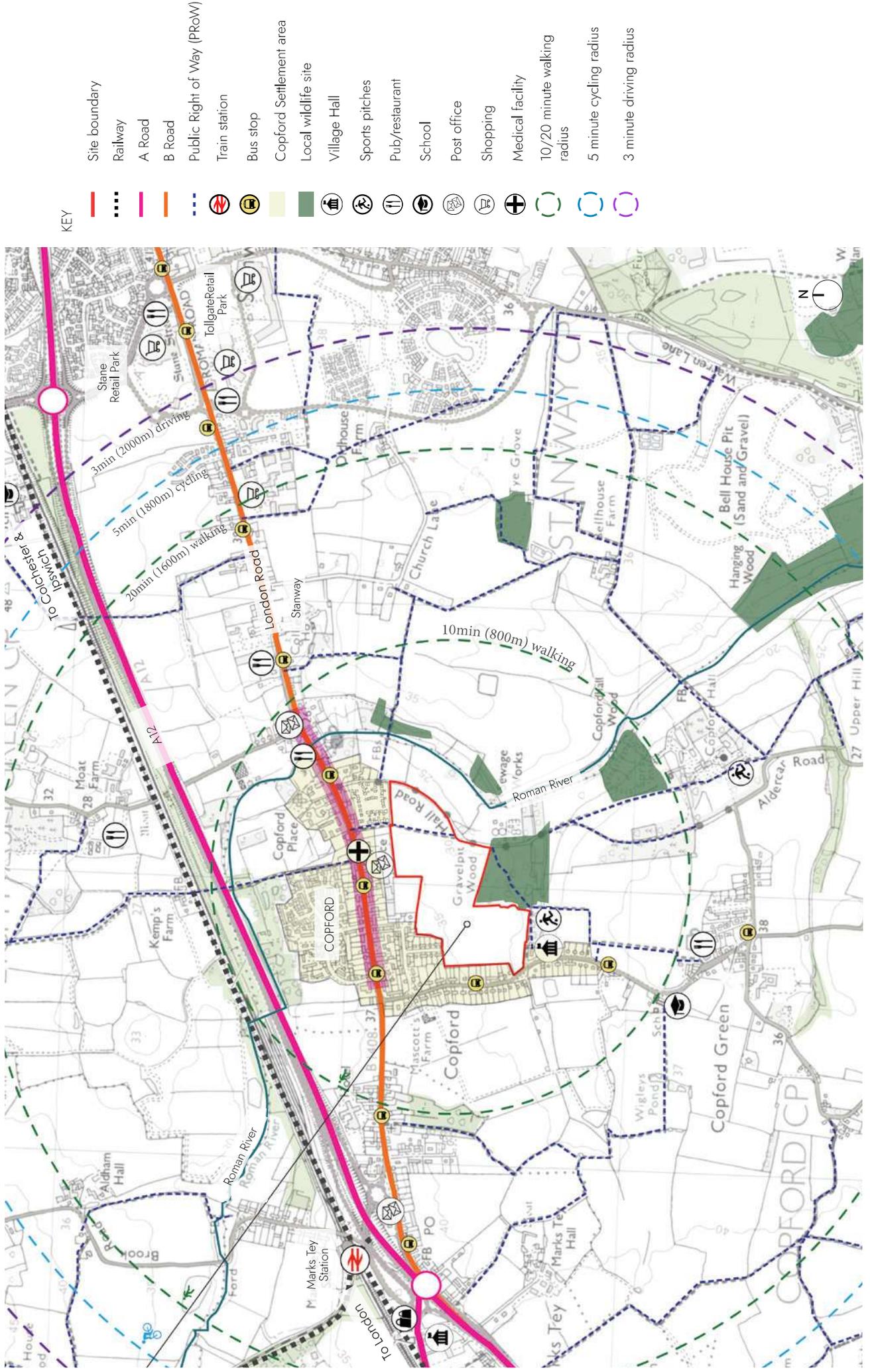


Fig 4. Local facilities and accessibility map

3.2. Site photographs



Fig 5. Hall Road looking south - with site on the right hand side



Fig 6. Location of the proposed primary access viewed from inside the site towards the School Road



Fig 8. Location of proposed secondary access

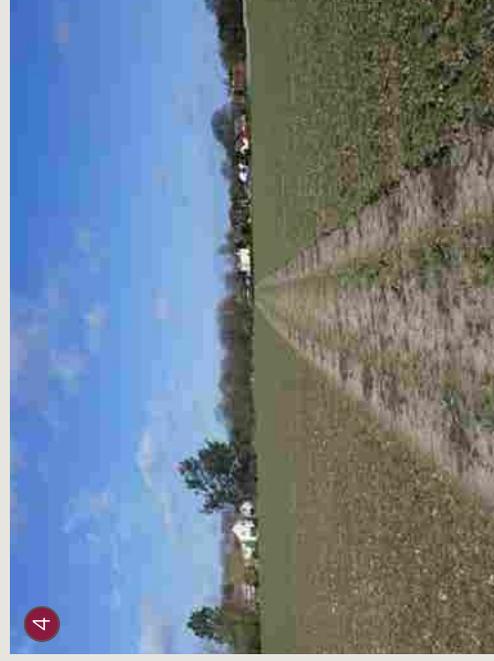


Fig 9. View from PROWs towards north



Fig 7. Site location plan

3.3. Heritage

There are no known designated or non-designated archaeological heritage assets recorded within the site.

A review of historic mapping has indicated that the field has remained undeveloped since at least the 18th century. Past and present agricultural use are considered to have had a potential below ground impact upon archaeological deposits which may be present within the site. Evidence of some early Iron Age activity was recorded during a trial trenching evaluation on the parcel of land west of Hall Road. It is considered that there is a medium to high potential for archaeological deposits from the Prehistoric and Roman periods to survive within this field. Even if they exist, the field and development site are unlikely to contain any extensive archaeological deposits of high significance or value which would require preservation in situ.

There are four Grade II listed buildings and one Grade II listed bridge located within circa 260 metres of the field boundaries. Copford Green Conservation Area is located under a mile south along School Road with limited views towards the site. However, the proposed residential development on this site would not affect the setting and significance of these designated heritage assets due to distance and intervening development and vegetation.

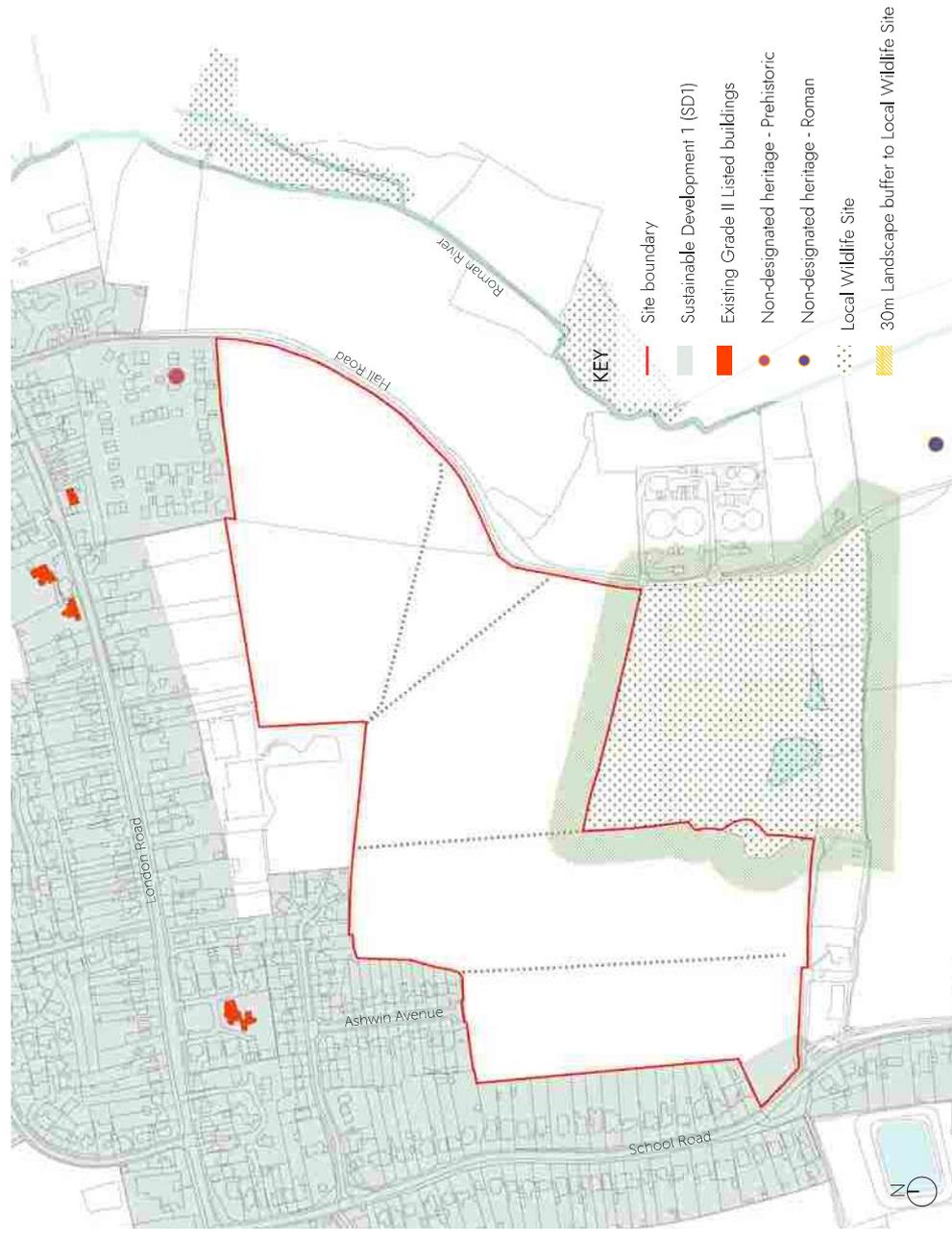


Fig 10. Heritage features plan

3.4. Landscape Character

The landscape character area in which the site sits offers the following guidelines, “ensure that any development on the edges of Marks Tey and Copford responds to traditional settlement patterns and uses design and materials, which are appropriate to local landscape character” and landscape guidelines “strengthen and enhance hedgerows with hawthorn where gappy and depleted; and conserve historic lanes and unimproved roadside verges”.

The site and study area according to the historic maps was previously subdivided into small fields. This pattern no longer exists. The key landscape features in and around the site are mixed hedgerows adjacent to Hall Road and Pits Wood to the south east. Other boundary vegetation comprises gappy hedgerows and ornamental planting associated with neighbouring residential properties.

The landscape constraints and opportunities are summarised on the plan to the right.

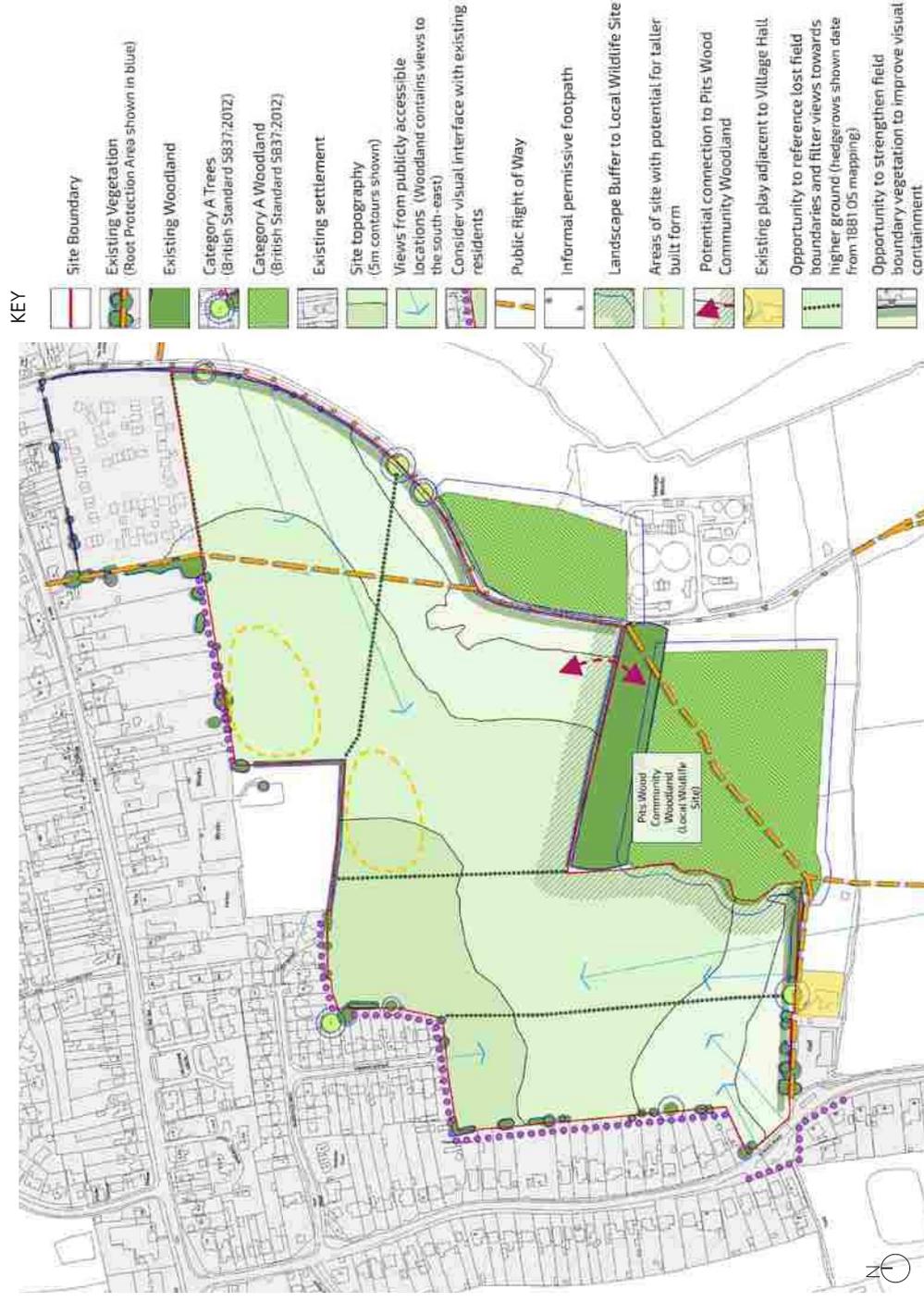


Fig 11. Landscape Constraints and Opportunities Plan

3.5. Topography and Views

The site falls gently from a highpoint of approximately 35 metres AOD, adjacent to the existing edge of Copford, to approximately 30 metres AOD in the south west corner of the site adjacent to the Village Hall. This is shown below along with key views.



Fig 12. Plan showing the topography of the site and study area



Fig 13. View A north-east from School Road



Fig 14. View B north-west from Footpath 128_4



Fig 15. View C west from Hall Road

3.6. Ecology

There are a number of statutory sites of International and European designation which fall within a 15km radius, this includes Abberton Reservoir Special Protected Area (SPA) and Ramsar, Blackwater Estuary SPA/Ramsar, Colne Estuary SPA/Ramsar and Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Due to the potential increases in recreational activities on these sites, consideration of the Essex Coast Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) will be made in respect of this development, whereby financial contributions will be made to future management. Onsite recreational opportunities through unlocking land for a large open space will reduce the need for future residents to regularly visit such sites and this space will include designated walks and areas of off-lead exercise for dogs. The measure will ensure that the designated sites are not significantly affected by the development proposals.

Neither the field nor the development site are the subject of any national or local ecological designations. The arable field is of low ecological value. The boundary hedgerows are of low value under Hedgerow Evaluation Grading System (HEGS), but they are considered as a habitat of

principal importance under the NERC Act (2006), and will be retained. Five mature trees around the perimeter of the field have some potential for bat roosting which have been retained and safeguarded in the proposal.

Pits Wood Local Wildlife Site (LWS) runs adjacent to the southern boundary. This is an area of mature woodland dominated by pedunculate oak with some hazel and silver birch. Flora includes areas of native bluebell and primrose. Pits Wood provides opportunities for roosting, but most importantly foraging and navigational linkages to the wider area. This feature has been safeguarded as part of the proposal. Two waterbodies are present within Pits Wood, but a Habitat Suitability Index survey assessment has indicated they have below average potential for Great Crested Newts. Additional species specific surveys have been undertaken which show that the species utilising the site are common and widespread with the exception of barbastelle bat *Barbastella barbastellus* which is an Annex II species.

The scheme will be assessed under DEFRA's Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Metric to ensure a net gain of 10% can be concluded. This will be

achieved through the creation of diverse habitats of ecological value on site or through the purchase of offsite units or a combination of both.



3.7. Access and Connectivity

The proposal will encourage pedestrian/cycle priority movement and low vehicle speeds; appropriate on and off-street parking for cycles and vehicles; safe and attractive mobility corridors throughout the development to connect with existing pedestrian/cycle routes; and the provision of permeable links for pedestrians and cyclists.

New footpaths are proposed within the site and around the public open space area and a footpath



Fig 19. Proposed access

link is proposed onto Hall Road to the east of the site. The Hall Road footpath will link into a new footpath constructed as part of the new Keepers Way residential development to the north east of the site. The existing public rights of way footpath passing through the site will also be retained and enhanced.

The primary all-modes access is proposed via a priority junction from School Road in the south west corner of the site. School Road provides access to the centre of Copford to the north and the primary school to the south. This is subject to a 30mph speed limit adjacent to the site and whilst there is an incline to the immediate north of the proposed access, the surrounding area is relatively flat which is conducive to safe walking, including along the footway to the primary school.

A 3.7m wide pedestrian/cycle/ emergency access link is proposed via Ashwin Avenue, to the north west of the site. This alternative pedestrian/cycle route will provide a convenient link, and provide a benefit to the wider community.

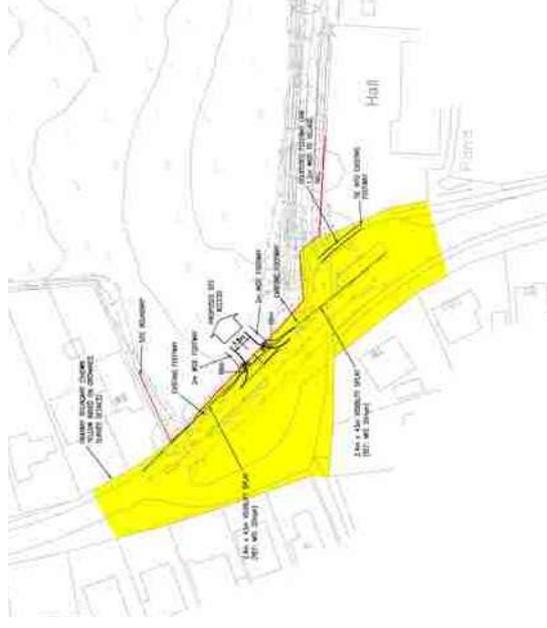


Fig 18. Proposed all-modes access off School Road



Fig 17. Proposed pedestrian/cycle/emergency access off Ashwin Avenue

3.8. Utilities and Wastewater

Utilities and Services: There are existing foul water sewers crossing the site which will be retained, subject to the approval of Anglian Water. The proposed dwellings can be connected to these sewers. Contact has been made with utility and service providers. With some localised reinforcement which would typically be expected, there are no insurmountable issues to provide electricity, water, gas and telecommunications to the proposed dwellings.

Wastewater Works: Copford wastewater treatment works is located to the east of Pits Wood. Development adjacent to such works can give rise to concerns associated with odour complaints. As part of the assessment process, Welbeck Land commissioned an odour report to determine the offset required to any proposed housing. A contour arc to define the 1.5 ouEm-3 line has been identified and the assessment has concluded that outside this contour, housing is appropriate. Beyond the 1.5 ouEm-3 odour contour line to the east, open space and recreation uses are acceptable and hence proposed.

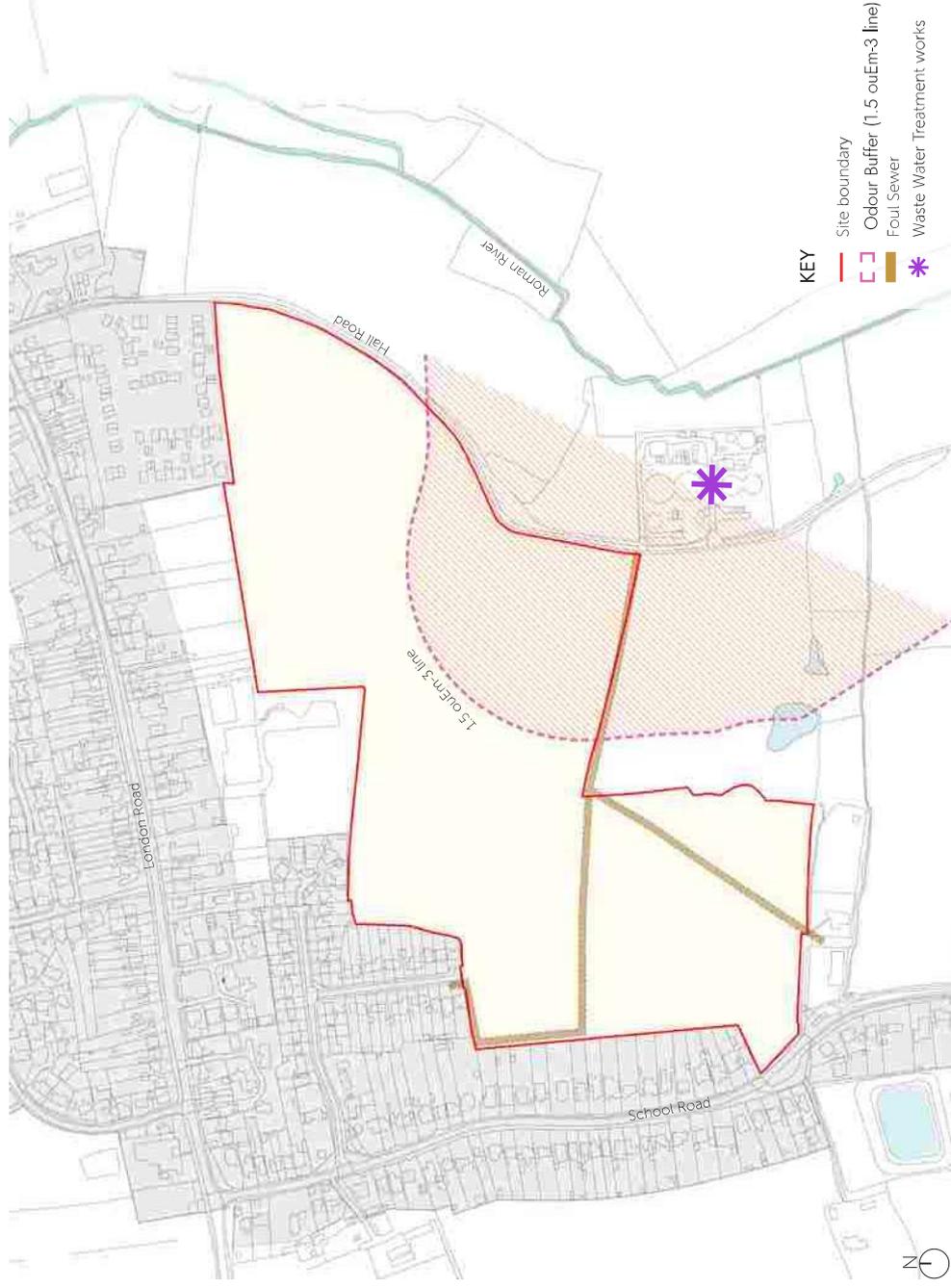


Fig 20. Location of existing foul water sewers and the 1.5 ouEm-3 line in context to the Waste Water Treatment works

3.9. Flood Risk and Drainage

Flooding: The entirety of the site is located within Flood Zone 1. The nearest area of fluvial flooding is to the east of Hall Road associated with Roman River. The Environment Agency’s web resource indicates that there is an area of surface water flooding in the south west corner of the site but this is not a constraint to housing development. A sustainable surface water drainage system has been proposed as shown on the masterplan.

Drainage: Infiltration testing undertaken indicates that there is little to no infiltration potential at the lowest areas of the site, therefore, an infiltration-only drainage strategy is not deemed suitable.

A series of SuDS features within the site such as swales and attenuation basins will be used to manage and treat surface water runoff from the site, with a controlled discharge to the local watercourse via the existing drainage ditch along the development site’s southern boundary to ensure runoff rates and volumes are kept to existing. More localised SuDS features such as rain gardens, downpipe planters and porous paving will also be considered at detailed design stages when required.

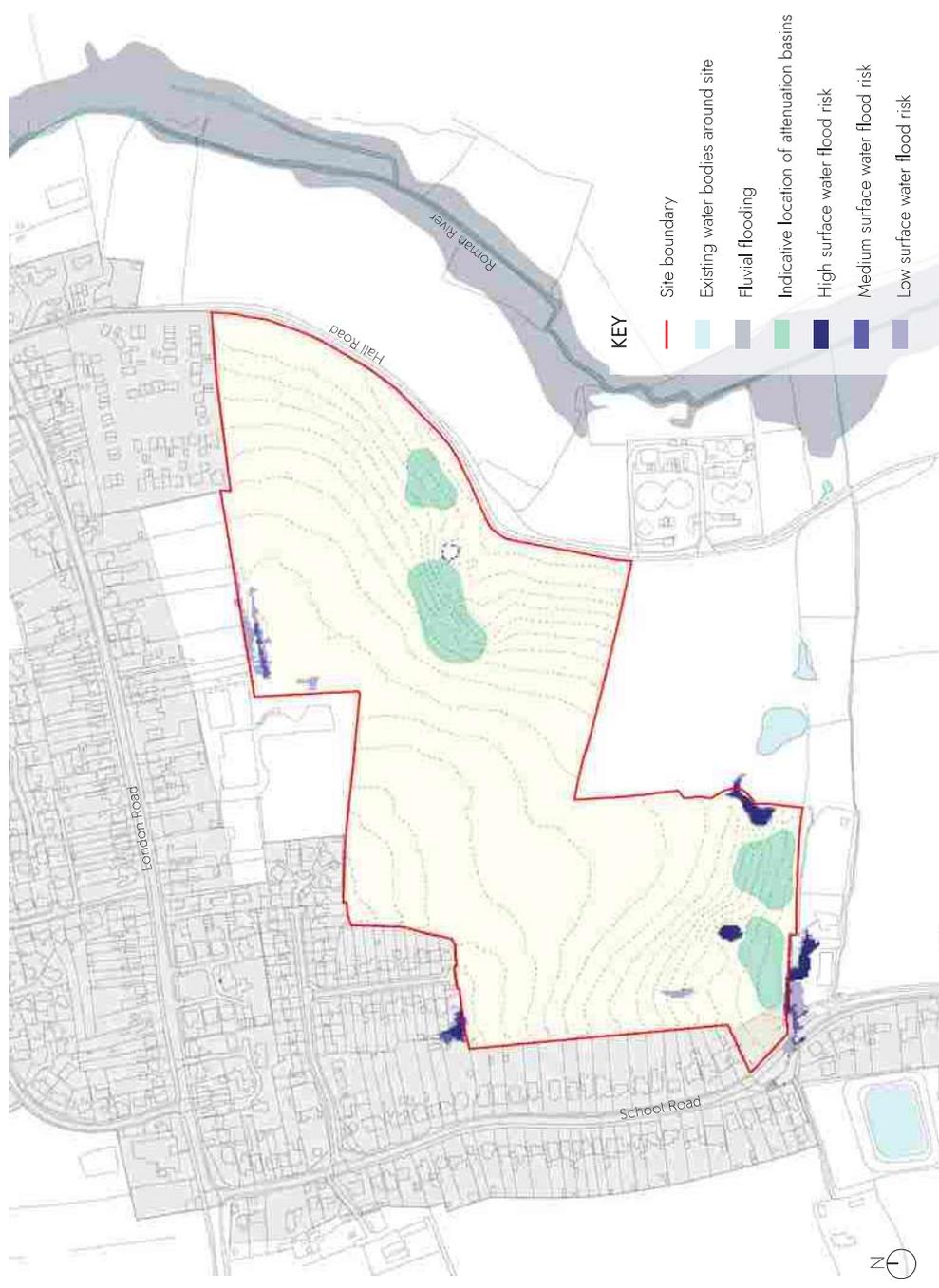


Fig 21. Flooding and drainage

3.10. Summary of Site Characteristics and Opportunities

A summary of the site characteristics are included in the plan overleaf. This has been informed by a thorough analysis of various landscape character areas, designations, the topography of the area and key views, technical matters, and relationship of the site and wider area with the settlement and built form of Copford.

From this assessment, the following opportunities have evolved that have shaped the proposals on this site. These opportunities are -

- Reinforce vegetation to existing boundaries, reinstate former field boundaries and provide improved habitat connectivity through the site.
- Create a new green framework to reinforce landscape character and mitigate views from the surrounding landscape context to the east and south.
- Link Copford to it's Village Hall and create a green heart - the open space referred hereon as Copford Common for the whole community to enjoy. This will be designed as a high quality landscape and will include natural open space, play area, orchards, SuDS and green routes, where everyone can come together, relax, play and enjoy views of the surrounding landscape. This open space will be linked to the wider network of public footpaths so it's easily accessible and will bring the community together.
- Create a place-led development and ensure the proposed development edge facing Copford Common is of high quality materials and architecture and positively addresses the surrounding landscape.

RIGHT SCALE & SIZE

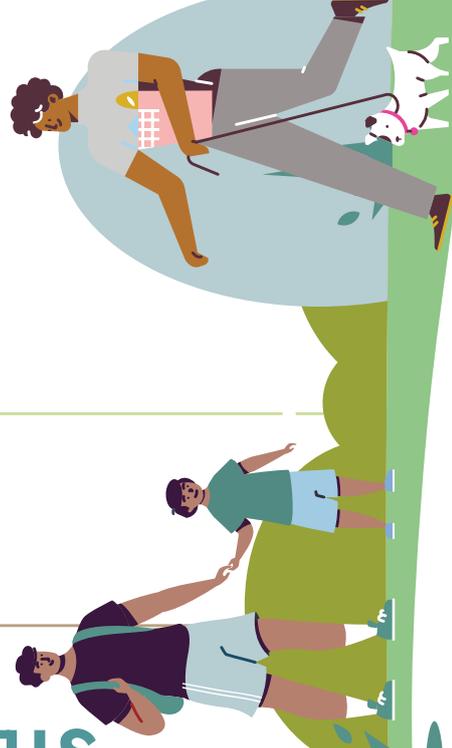
LOCAL COMMUNITY

LOW CARBON MOBILITY

STEWARDSHIP

NATURE ENHANCEMENT

CLIMATE RESILIENCE



KEY

- Site boundary
- Contour line (0.5m intervals)
- Bus route
- Lost field boundaries (hedgerows shown date from 1881 OS mapping)
- Public Rights of Way - Footpath
- Sustainable Development 1 (SD1)
- Existing Grade II Listed buildings
- Non-designated heritage - Prehistoric
- Non-designated heritage - Roman
- Local Wildlife Site
- 30m Landscape buffer to Local Wildlife Site
- Odour Buffer (1.5line)
- Existing water body
- Proposed ponds
- Flood Zone 2 and 3 (River Roman)
- High risk flood (surface water)
- Foul Sewer with 6m Easement
- Cat A Woodland
- Cat A Trees
- Cat B Trees
- Other Trees
- Root Protection Area
- Budger setts with buffer areas
- Potential location for higher buildings
- Consider visual interface with existing residents
- 5m planted strip to consider interface with existing residents
- Views from publicly accessible locations
- Potential connection to Pits Wood Community Woodland
- Waster water treatment works
- Potential vehicular access
- Potential pedestrian access
- Potential pedestrian/ cycle/emergency access

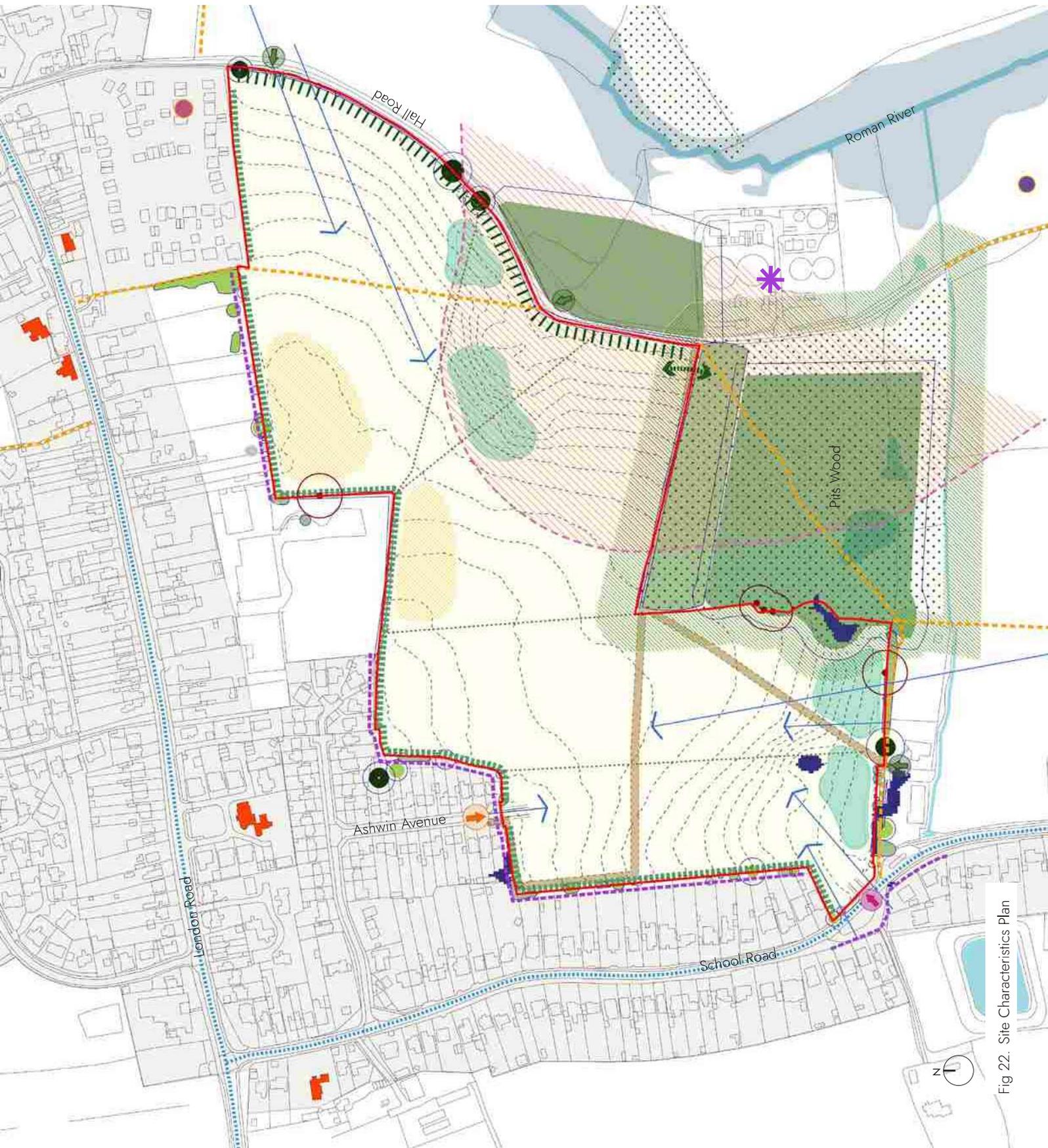


Fig 22. Site Characteristics Plan

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1. Design principles

The proposed masterplan for Copford is underpinned by a series of design principles which will help shape an integrated and context responsive development and will make a sympathetic transition between the settlement edge and the wider rural countryside.

The site will unlock private land for a community open space called Copford Common. This open space will have a multi-functional role incorporating ecology features, planting to filter views and mitigate visual impact, SuDS, play areas, orchards along the way and pedestrian/cycle routes linking into the wider network, along with strengthening existing landscape assets and provide new green corridors. A series of north-south green fingers will connect the development built pockets to the open space and will help nestle the roofscape into the wider landscape.

A winding tree lined street will be designed as a place rather than engineered highways and will link to the development parcels. This will act as a safe route designed with crossings and tree planting.

The development will respect the grain of the existing settlement and will create character areas with appropriate densities. A looser grain will be provided in the eastern part of the site whereas higher densities will focus along the main road and the western edges.



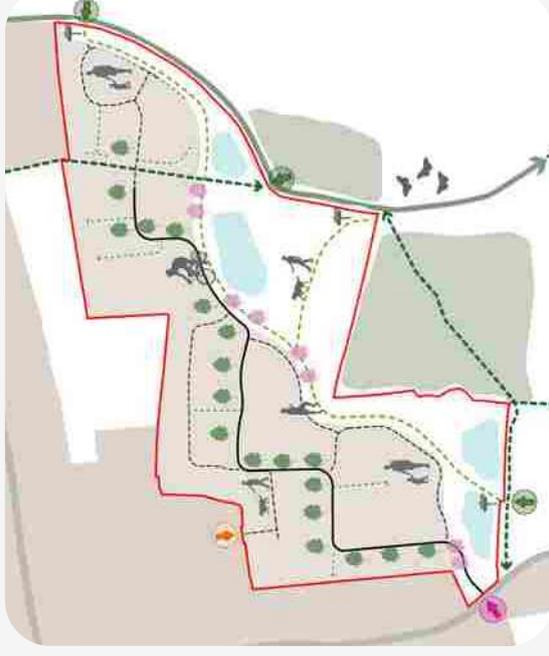
A. Landscape responsive



Key objectives include -

- Retaining all existing landscape and ecology assets with additional enhancement to create a robust network
- Unlocking private land to create Copford Common - a multi functional open space along the southern half of the site for the existing and new community to enjoy along with biodiversity enhancement
- Introducing north south running hedges linking development parcels with Copford Common and creating green corridors within the development; tree lines will help soften the proposed roofscape in the wider landscape
- Safeguarding Gravelpit Wood with required buffer and additional structural planting towards the south western part of the site.

B. Movement and permeability



Key objectives include -

- A winding tree lined street weaves through the development parcels designed for pedestrian and cycle priority movement along with safe crossings and change in surface texture
- A hierarchy of streets and paths to achieve permeability and legibility through the development
- Linking School Road to Hall Road through the site for pedestrians and cyclists
- A pedestrian/cycle/emergency access point from Ashwin Avenue to ensure site benefits are within easy reach of the existing community as well as access to facilities south of the site such as the Village Hall and Primary School.

C. Context responsive built form



Key objectives include -

- Linear grain along the main road with greater enclosure to the south west
- Looser grain further east to reflect the rural character along Hall Road
- Entrains space/ Residential proposed aligned with grain of neighbouring employment use
- Majority of homes will be a maximum of two storeys with key buildings reaching 2.5-3 storeys

4.2. Indicative Development Framework Plan

The Indicative Development Framework Plan for the site is evolving and is informed by a robust heritage, landscape and technical analysis as set out in this document. The developable area does not have major constraints.

The proposed scheme will follow the design principles recommended by the National Design Guide and the Essex Design Guide and will not only provide for high quality local homes but also substantial social and environmental benefits through the delivery of approximately 14 acres of green open space and unlocking land to provide accommodation for 44 homes for veterans and military leavers in the form of an Entrain Space/ Residential which includes community space on the ground floor that will be accessible to the public.

The proposal will create and boost the local and wider network of green routes for the community and will provide for public open spaces encouraging social interaction and inclusion.

A summary of the proposed land uses is set out below -

LAND USE	HECTARES	ACRES		
Total site area	17.42	43.04		
Residential development area (excluding main road access)	8.95	22.12		
Entrain Space/ Residential	0.61	1.51		
Open space provision	5.66	13.99		
Estimated number of new homes (excluding veterans homes)	Up to 300			
Typology	Standard Required (per/1000pop)	*Required for 345 (ha)	Provided (ha)	Provided (ac)
Parks and Public Gardens	0.25	0.21	0.39	0.96
Natural and Semi-natural Green Space	3.07	2.54	3.78	9.34
Amenity Green Space	1.35	1.12	1.33	3.29
Play	0.03	0.02	0.04	0.10
Allotments(Orcharas)	0.14	0.12	0.12	0.30

* Calculation based on a 300+44 (veterans dwellings) proposal considering a population factor of 2.4pers/unit - i.e. 826pop

KEY

- 1 Proposed all-modes access from School Road with entrance framed by proposed trees and new orchard planting, with lined trees and verges
- 2 Pedestrian/cycle/emergency access from Ashwin Avenue
- 3 Enhanced native tree/hedge planting along south western part of the site to mitigate views from the south; potential for a Pocket Park to function alongside the existing Village Hall
- 4 Minimum 20m planted strip to mitigate views from Hall Road and wider countryside integrated as part of site wide amenity space
- 5 Green fingers running in a north-south direction as new native trees and hedgerows to create multi-functional green corridors
- 6 Land for proposed accommodation for veterans, providing 44 flats and a commercial space - Entrain Space/Residential
- 7 Copford Common - multi-functional open space with enhanced ecological role, creating an interface with proposed development; with SUDS, orchards and play space (LEAP) along the existing public footpath
- 8 A minimum 5m planted strip at the interface with existing residents providing privacy and reducing views
- 9 Low density grain creating a soft settlement edge to the east with a pedestrian and cycle access to Hall Road
- 10 Proposed pedestrian/cycle link crossing the site east to west and linking into the wider green routes network





Fig 23. Indicative Development Framework Plan

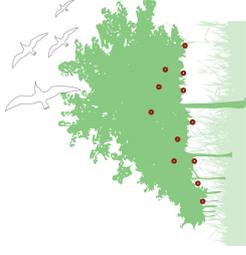
4.3. Sustainability and Climate Change

Delivering sustainable development is a fundamental goal for Colchester City Council which targets to become carbon neutral 2030 as set out in the Climate Emergency Declaration (2019).

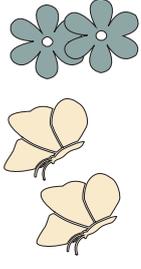
Welbeck Land is committed to reduce carbon emissions and provide greener alternatives for their proposals. The masterplan for Copford will be designed as per best practice principles advocated by the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. The proposed residential dwellings will be fully compliant with current and future Building Regulations and will be powered by renewable green technologies. All homes will adhere to the National Development Space Standards (NDSS), and capable of easily adapting to satisfy the needs of its residents through all stages of life. Construction materials will be responsibly sourced and use of renewables and low carbon energy generation will be of utmost importance.



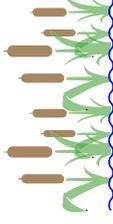
Delivery of Copford Common - a new community open space



New native trees and native hedgerows



10% biodiversity net gain (BNG)



Creation of swales & attenuation ponds to reduce off-site flood risk and mitigate climate change impact



Existing public footpath retained and network of new routes to link up with wider network



Community Car Club (hybrid/electric) available for long distance travels and to reduce carbon emissions



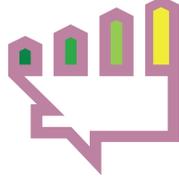
Fast Electric vehicle Charging for all homes and visitor spaces



Naturalistic play space designed for existing and new residents, potential for trim trail



Rainwater collection and grey water recycling



Up to 300 homes for local needs including 30% affordable homes. Homes with Solar PV and Electric Heating systems (NO GAS)



Ecofriendly design for veterans building with cafe/commercial space



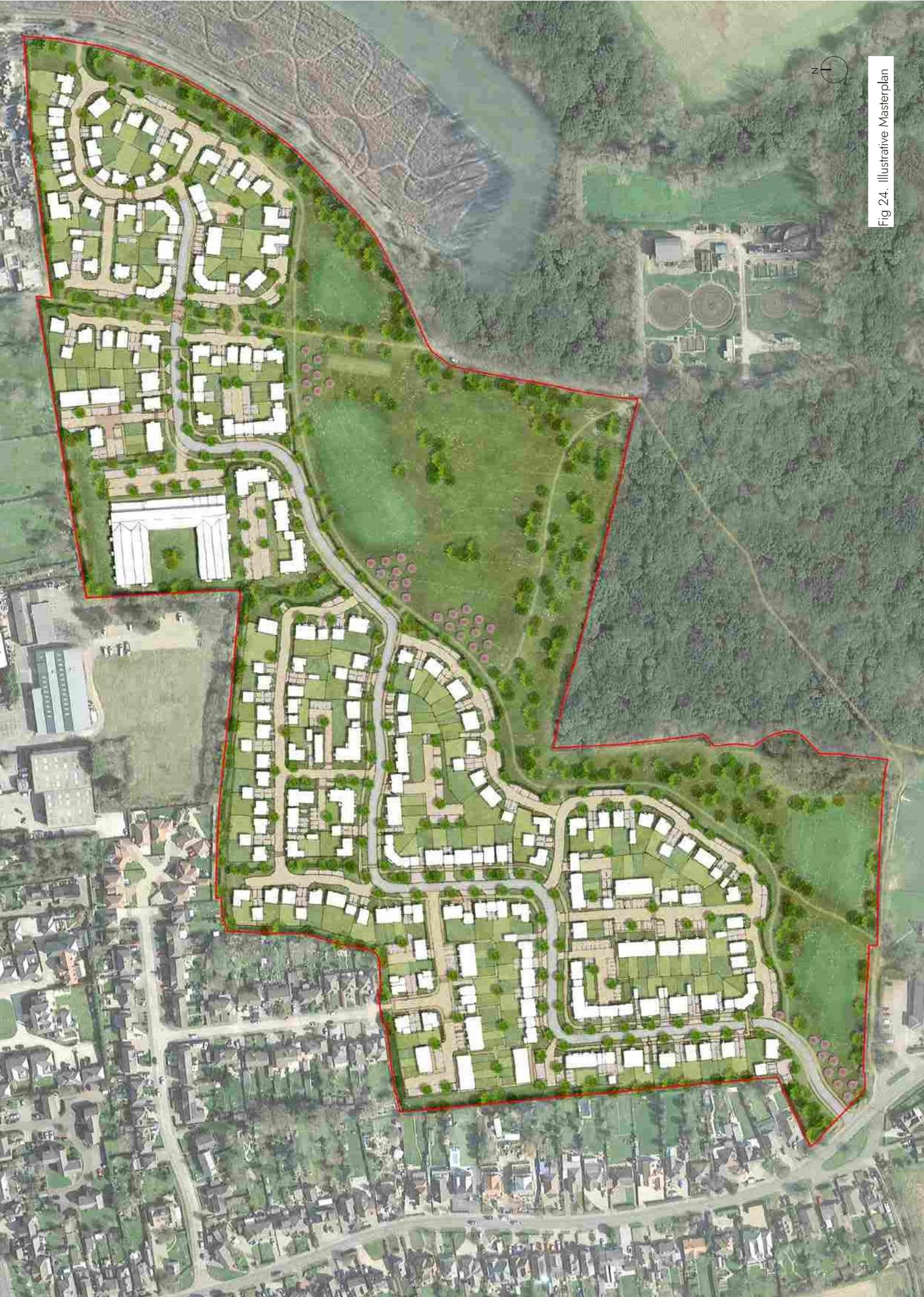


Fig 24. Illustrative Masterplan

5. WAY FORWARD

This document has demonstrated through a comprehensive landscape and context led masterplan that the proposal on Land East of School Road in Copford can create a resilient future for the site. The proposal underpinned by the Placemaking Charter will deliver on local economic and community infrastructure including land for veterans accommodation/ residential, deliver on significant open space and nature enhancement and provide low carbon affordable homes to meet local housing needs whilst retaining the distinct identity of Copford as a settlement.

The land for the site is available, viable, suitable and deliverable. The site is free from major constraints and is in a sustainable location next to the settlement boundary. Land east of School Road will nestle within its landscape setting, protect and celebrate its local identity and shape into a place which leaves a legacy.

Welbeck Land is committed to working with officers and the local community to ensure the placemaking aspirations of this site are met and together we create a context responsive place.

Now more than ever, high quality, sustainable and resilient design and development is needed to ensure that we create a durable future for our communities. The proposal is not just about incremental units, it is our vision to safeguard a resilient future for Copford.





WELBECK LAND

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Boyer



Chartered Practice