

MARKS TEY PARISH COUNCIL

SETTLEMENT SPATIAL PLAN

Report_FINAL v3

8th January 2026

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

National planning policy places a strong emphasis on significantly increasing housing delivery to address the ongoing housing crisis. In this context, the emerging Colchester City Council Local Plan identifies Marks Tey as a key 'growth area', indicating that the village is likely to experience increased development pressure over the plan period. As a result, there is a heightened likelihood of both planned growth and speculative planning applications coming forward within and around the parish.

In response to these pressures, Marks Tey Parish Council is proactively exploring how future growth could be managed and shaped in a coordinated and locally informed way. To support this, the Parish Council has undertaken a scenario planning approach, which considers a range of potential development scenarios for Marks Tey.

This process enables the Parish Council to assess possible future outcomes, understand the implications of different growth patterns, and engage with stakeholders in identifying a preferred and sustainable growth strategy.



Aerial of Marks Tey Parish

THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This report summarises the scenario planning workshop held with Marks Tey Parish Council in November 2025. It provides an initial evidence base to inform the Parish Council's engagement with Colchester City Council's Local Plan consultations and to support a more robust and consistent response to speculative planning applications.

The work represents an important first step in establishing an ongoing dialogue between the Parish Council, local stakeholders and decision-makers. Through this process, the Parish Council seeks to develop positive and constructive relationships that will help ensure future growth is planned and delivered in a way that reflects local priorities and secures long-term benefits for the community.

WHAT IS SCENARIO PLANNING?

Scenario planning is a structured approach to considering the long-term future of a settlement. Rather than attempting to predict a single outcome, it explores a range of plausible ways in which a settlement could evolve. This enables informed decision-making about growth and change by testing alternative development pathways and understanding their potential implications.

Scenarios are typically presented as coherent and plausible narratives, designed to support consideration of complex and often difficult planning decisions. They allow for the comparison of trade-offs between different approaches, including the relationship between the scale and distribution of growth, the capacity of existing services, and the provision of new infrastructure. By setting out these alternatives in a clear and comparable way, scenario planning supports a more strategic understanding of how different choices may shape a settlement over time.

This approach is particularly valuable where a settlement is required to accommodate growth but has flexibility in how that growth is delivered. Scenario planning enables different development scales to be tested alongside alternative spatial strategies, helping to identify options that best balance local character, sustainability and infrastructure capacity.

Importantly, scenario planning moves beyond a narrow, site-by-site assessment that can result in the selection of the 'least constrained' sites in isolation. Instead, it promotes a holistic understanding of growth, allowing consideration of when and where a step change in supporting infrastructure may be required and ensuring that infrastructure provision is planned as an integral component of development rather than as an afterthought.

2.0 ANALYSIS

Scenario planning is informed by an analysis of the planning, spatial and infrastructure context of the settlement. This includes consideration of statutory and environmental constraints, as well as local community perspectives relating to identity, sense of place and future priorities. Taken together, these factors provide a clear and consistent framework against which alternative approaches to growth and change can be assessed and compared.

PLANNING

At the time of writing (December 2025) revisions to the NPPF have recently been released for consultation, which provided greater definition to the MHCLG statement on 18th November 2025 that housebuilding near well-connected train stations will receive a default “yes” in future if they meet certain rules. The new NPPF is expected to be adopted by Summer 2026, this has implications for Marks Tey meaning development pressures are even greater.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Marks Tey has a Neighbourhood Plan, made in 2022 but did not address new development as none was proposed in the former Local Plan. Pressure for housing and CCC’s stance on developing areas with good transport links is thus going to require significant revisions to the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the overall principles of the Neighbourhood Plan still apply.

DEVOLUTION

Greater Essex is likely to become a series of unitary authorities. However, this is unlikely to affect the current local plan process, but they may have an effect in future 5 year reviews.

LOCAL PLAN

Colchester City Council’s Local Plan Review is due to be submitted to SoS Aug/Sept 2026. The 5 Year Housing Land Supply currently stands at 5.05 years with a Housing Delivery Test at 110%. The Regulation 18 Preferred Options recognise Marks Tey as on a key transport corridor designating it as a **key area for growth** with two housing led land allocations proposed (**Fig.1**).

- It notes it having ‘a good range of facilities and an opportunity through development to grow and reconnect the village and improve infrastructure to support the scale of growth promoted.
- It recognises the need for development to demonstrate that additional vehicular movements on the A12 and A120 can be safely accommodated and the potential role of the Marks Tey Neighbourhood Plan in any future development.
- The Preferred Options also allocates additional land in Marks Tey for employment use.

Other land was put forward and a number of sites are being actively promoted. (**Fig.2**).

The Preferred Options proposes two land allocations for housing led development (**Fig.1**).

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

Proposes a mixed-use development including commercial uses, approximately 1,500 new dwellings, and a mix of other uses which support a sustainable community

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

Proposes a development of approximately 1,000 new dwellings with a mix of other uses which support a sustainable community with development should be limited to land to the south of the larger site identified on the policies map within the plan period.

NOTE: The Land North of A120 has been promoted for a Garden Village scale development but is considered to have limited development potential within the plan period due to infrastructure constraints.

Policy PEP5 allocates Land South of A12, Marks Tey for employment uses (coloured purple).

Policy PEP6 safeguards the Anderson's Site, Marks Tey for employment uses.

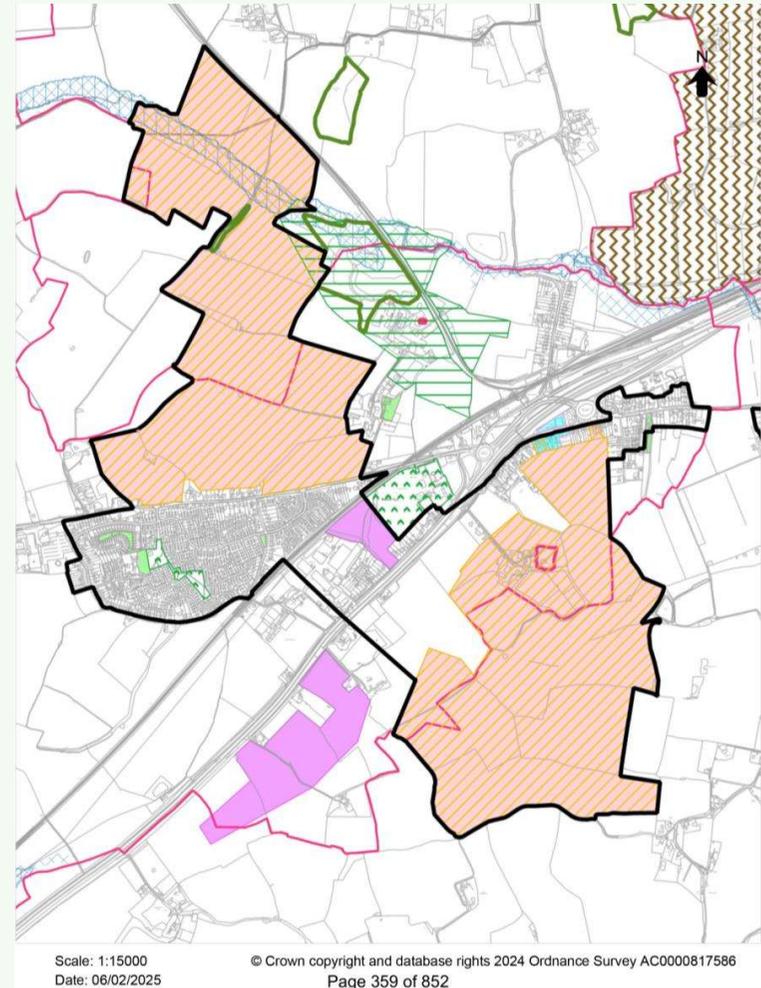


Fig.1: Preferred Options Plan

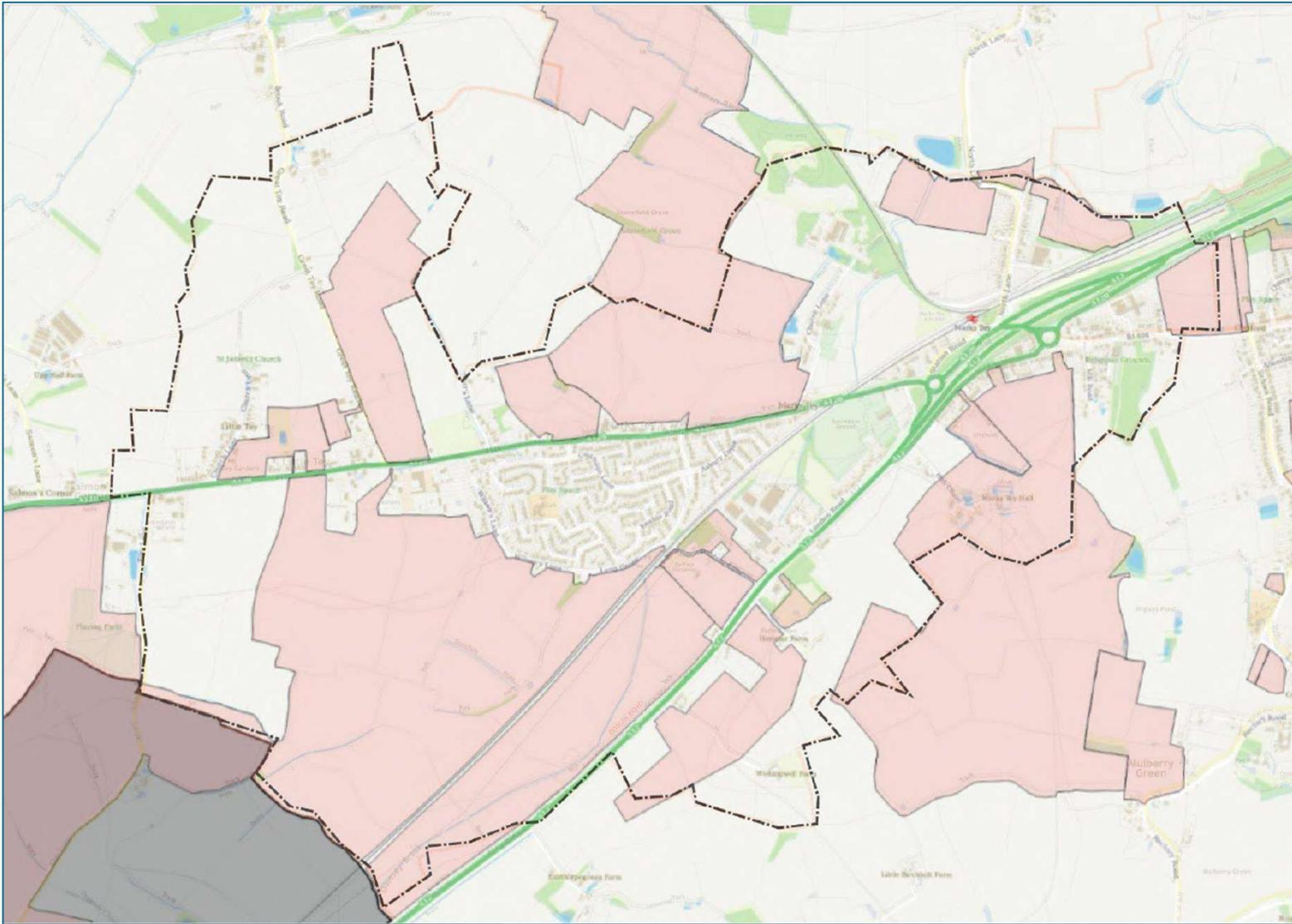


Fig. 2: 2023 Call for Sites

DEMOGRAPHICS

Compared to national averages, Marks Tey (Fig.3) has:

- A slightly older population compared to England’s average
- Higher than average 2-3 person households
- High levels of travel for work
- Also high levels of Work from Home
- High levels of employment

FUNCTIONALITY

The strategic infrastructure of the A12 and rail line split the village into Old Marks Tey to the east from New Marks Tey to the west, and create a significant barrier to movement which influences how the settlement operates on a day-to-day basis. Existing facilities have been mapped on ArcGIS (Fig.4).

Old Marks Tey’s facilities include a convenience shop, garage and several food outlets. New Marks Tey functions has the community infrastructure, with the primary school, village hall and recreational ground forming an important hub for social and community activity.

Marks Tey railway station, located between the two parts of the village provides a strategic connection to the wider area. However, despite its central location, the severance created by the A12 and A120 limits accessibility, connectivity and its function as a single, cohesive village, with implications for future growth planning.

Marks Tey

Population

2022

2,600
people

57,144,400 people in England
Rounded to the nearest 100 people

Source: Office for National Statistics -
Mid Year Population Estimates

Small area: Output area

Number of households

2021

1,100
households

23,436,100 households in England

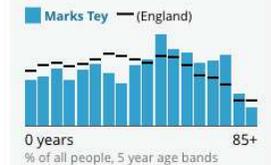
Rounded to the nearest 100 households

Source: Office for National Statistics -
Census 2021

Small area: Output area

Age profile

2022



Source: Office for National Statistics -
Mid Year Population Estimates

Small area: Output area

Household size

2021

■ Marks Tey | (England)

1 person in household
26.4% (30.1%)

2 people in household
38.9% (34.0%)

3 people in household
16.0% (16.0%)

4 or more people in household
18.6% (19.9%)

% of all households

Source: Office for National Statistics -
Census 2021

Small area: Output area

Distance travelled to work

2021

■ Marks Tey | (England)

Less than 10km 23.4% (35.4%)

10km to less than 30km
18.9% (14.4%)

30km and over 8.1% (4.3%)

Works mainly from home
32.3% (31.5%)

Other 17.3% (14.5%)

% of people aged 16 years and over in employment

Source: Office for National Statistics -
Census 2021

Small area: Output area

Economic activity status

2021

■ Marks Tey | (England)

Economically active: In employment 59.1% (57.4%)

Economically active: Unemployed 2.8% (3.5%)

Economically inactive 38.1% (39.1%)

% of people aged 16 years and over

Source: Office for National Statistics -
Census 2021

Small area: Output area

Fig. 3: Demographics



11/12/2025

Marks Tey context – see online map and graphic: <https://arcg.is/a98qr1>

Fig. 4: Functionality

SPATIAL EVOLUTION

The historic OS mapping from the 1910's (**Fig.5**) and 1950's (**Fig.6**) shows the impact the road and rail infrastructure has had on Marks Tey creating physical separation and defining boundaries. The A12 and railway line divides Marks Tey into two main settlements; 'Old Marks Tey' to the south on the Colchester side, and 'New Marks Tey' to the north with the A120 forming its northern boundary. Despite their proximity to each other, this separation and the environment along the A12 prevents them being perceived or used as 'one place'. As the quality of pedestrian and cycle connectivity is so poor access, even for short journeys is reliant on car use which is subject to traffic conditions.

MARKS TEY TODAY

The recent aerial plan (**Fig.7**) shows Marks Tey today. *Old Marks Tey* is centered to the east side of the A12 interchange junction along the London Road with a mix of shops and business fronting onto London Road taking advantage of the accessible location and the A12 passing trade. It has some new housing and a historic centre with the listed and dilapidated Marks Tey Hall. Old Marks Tey is connected to the station by a footbridge across the A12 and road crossings to the A120 interchange. Some 200m to the east the village of Copford, Copford with Eastbourne Parish is a larger settlement by area, but not population with its own amenities including a school.

New Marks Tey sits in a wedge between the A120 and the railway line separated from the A12 by a 300m strip of mainly employment uses, some housing and green fields fronting Old London Road between the railway line and the A12 which form a buffer to the A12 and part of the countryside setting to the southern edge of New Marks Tey. The Parish Hall, playground and recreation facilities are located in this strip at the eastern end of the village. At the western edge of New Marks Tey is the hamlet of Little Tey. The majority of housing is 1970's suburban development planned around cul-de-sacs with a school and open space at the centre. Lanes running around the perimeter have an open aspect with a footbridge across the railway line providing access from the small groups of housing along the Old London Road which front onto the A12.

Although the Parish Hall is on the edge of the village and the station is within 1km, the width of the footpaths, the heavy traffic, and the general environment severely limit pedestrian and cycle connectivity with most journeys being made by car.

There are three smaller settlements within the parish: Little Tey to the west of New Marks Tey on the northern side of the A120 along Church Lane terminating at St James the Less; around St Andrews Church to the east of New Marks Tey on the northern side of the A120 along Church Lane; and North Lane to the north of the station up to the Roman River.

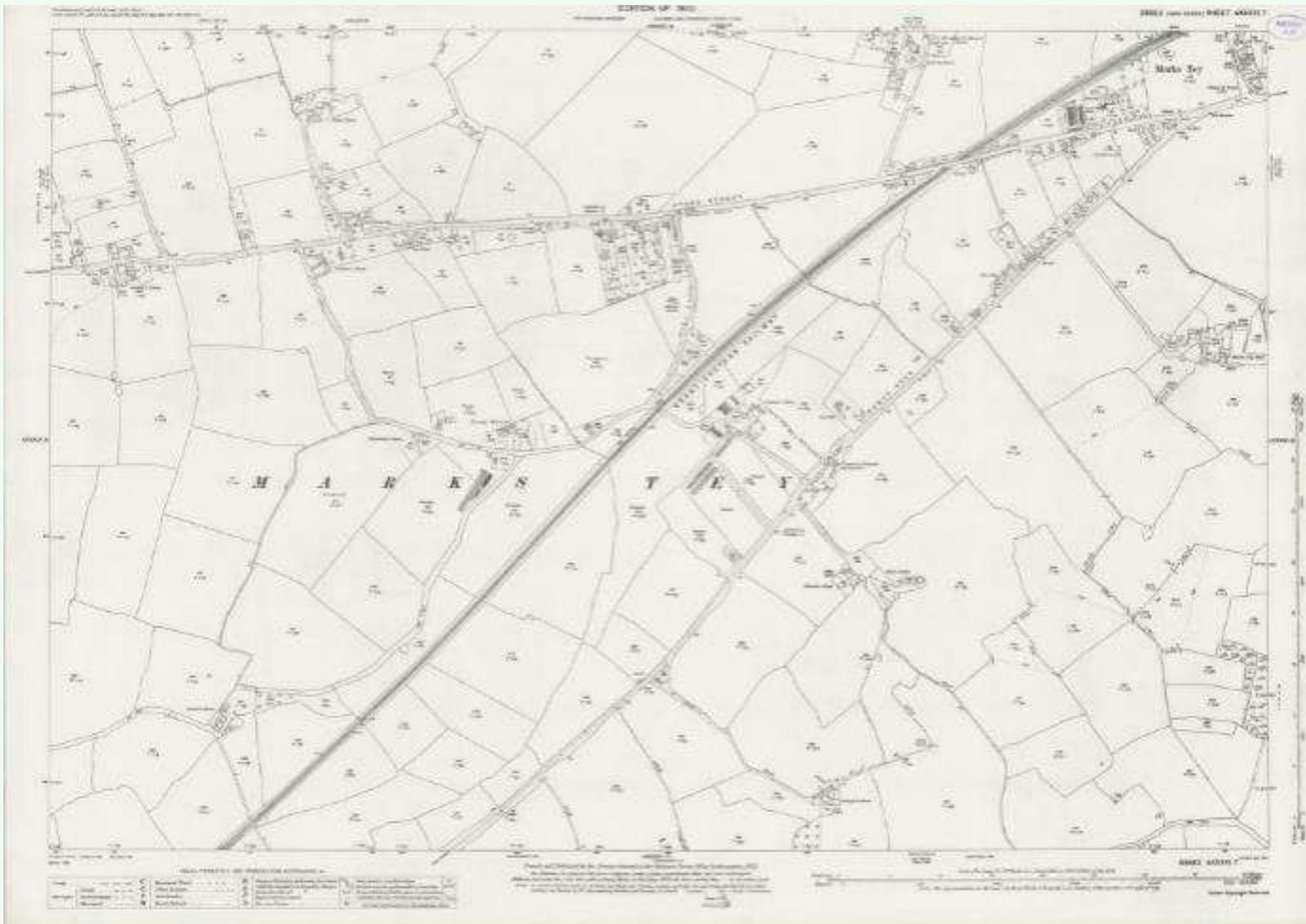


Fig. 5: OS 1910's

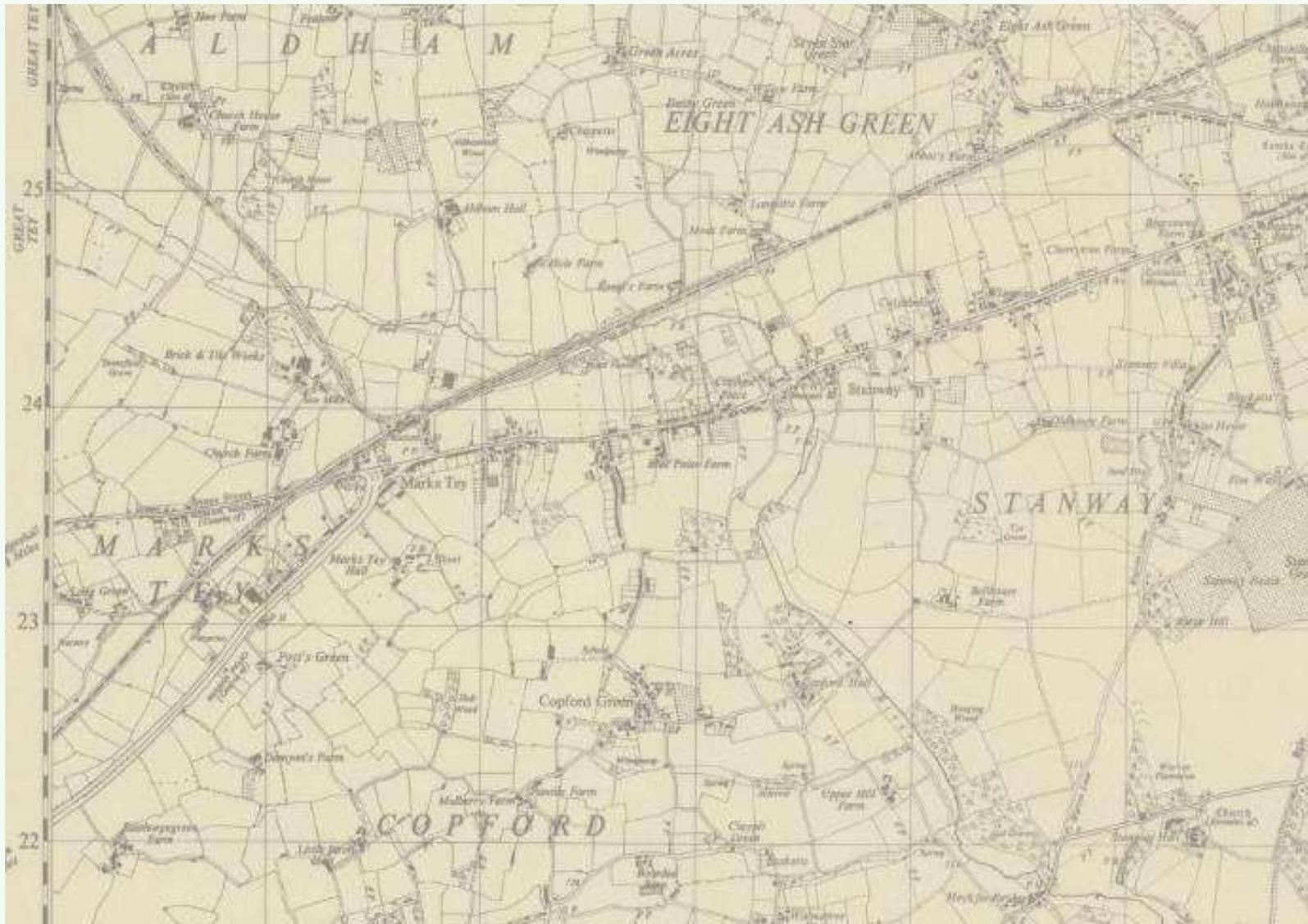


Fig. 6: OS 1950's

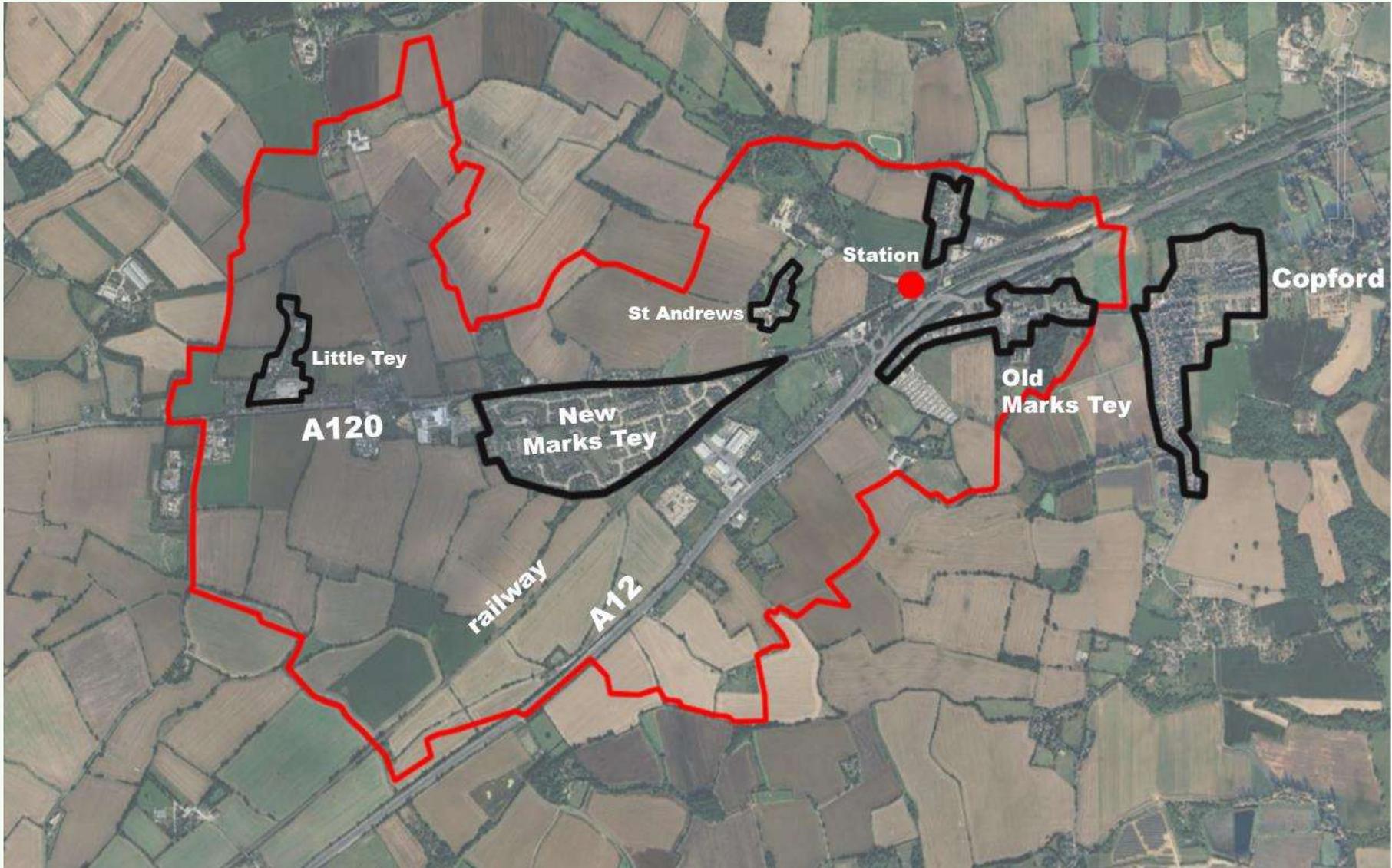


Fig. 7: Marks Tey today

3.0 SCENARIOS

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

During the workshop the following were discussed as key considerations for assessing and rationalizing the scenarios:

INFRASTRUCTURE

The impact of the road and rail infrastructure, particularly the A12 on the two main settlements; Old and New Marks Tey defines them as separate places with separate identities. Their physical separation is reinforced by the environment created by the noise, visual impacts, impermeability and air quality of the A12. As well as the separation between the two main settlements, the infrastructure and its environment also affects connectivity between the settlements and the station, making it a less sustainable transport node than its proximity would suggest.

It would be unrealistic to expect change to this infrastructure significant enough to address these issues and create a single Marks Tey settlement and centre.

A key consideration therefore is how can 'cohesion' between the two parts be improved if it is accepted they will remain as separate places.

The gap between the A12 and railway line provides a buffer and a setting for New Marks Tey.

Consideration needs to be given to the effects of further employment uses in this gap and the impacts on New Marks Tey. Any residential development within this space would suffer from poor connectivity with both Old and New Marks Tey, and the poor noise and air quality environment along the A12. New Marks Tey is also heavily affected by traffic loads and the environment along the A120. Given the location and layout of the Marks Tey interchange and railway, the opportunities to address this are limited without undertaking significant development.

A key consideration therefore is what level of development would be acceptable to deliver the changes to the A120 needed to improve New Marks Tey.

ACCESSIBILITY

Infrastructure affects access between Old and New Marks Tey, and them functioning together effectively. The short distances between the two parts of Marks Tey are deceptive, especially for those living around the school and Little Tey. Despite the relatively short distance between New Marks Tey and the Old Marks Tey London Road shops being around a 20 minute walk/5 minute cycle ride, the environment of the A12, the need to negotiate the roundabout and bridge, and the general quality of that journey for pedestrians and cyclists to access the shops limits the use of the London Road facilities and convenience shopping to car journeys..

The same applies to pedestrian/cycle connectivity between both Old and New Marks Tey and the station which should be a natural focus for providing additional community facilities.

A key consideration therefore is how can pedestrian cycle connectivity be improved.

PLACE AND IDENTITY

Although there are differences between Old and New Marks Tey in terms of their character and facilities, they are broadly similar in scale. Significant development of only one or other would create a hierarchy, a primary settlement with a greater presence and concentration of facilities, risking the minor, undeveloped settlement being left behind.

A key consideration therefore is how should development be distributed to ensure neither Old or New Marks Tey are left behind.

SETTING

Both Old and New Marks Tey enjoy a rural setting which is a valued part of their character. New Marks Tey has views and access to footpaths around its southern boundary with views to the north although their quality and access to this is compromised by the A120.

The three smaller settlements which sit to the north of the A120 are all standalone within an open setting and with views to the north.

Old Marks Tey also has views from its southern boundary, with the A12 restricting views and access to the north. Given the proximity of Copford to the east there is also the issue of maintaining a green gap for separation and the prevention of coalescence.

A key consideration therefore is where development should take place to minimize the impacts on the valued aspects of the rural setting and potentially improve access to it.

THE A120

The A120 has significant impacts on both parts of Marks Tey. It generates significant traffic movements around the London Road junction with the A12 which contributes to the poor pedestrian environment and increased car use, and its substandard pavements and boundary to New Marks Tey restrict its use for short journeys by foot or cycle.

It creates a hard boundary to New Marks Tey limiting the expansion of the settlement to the north.

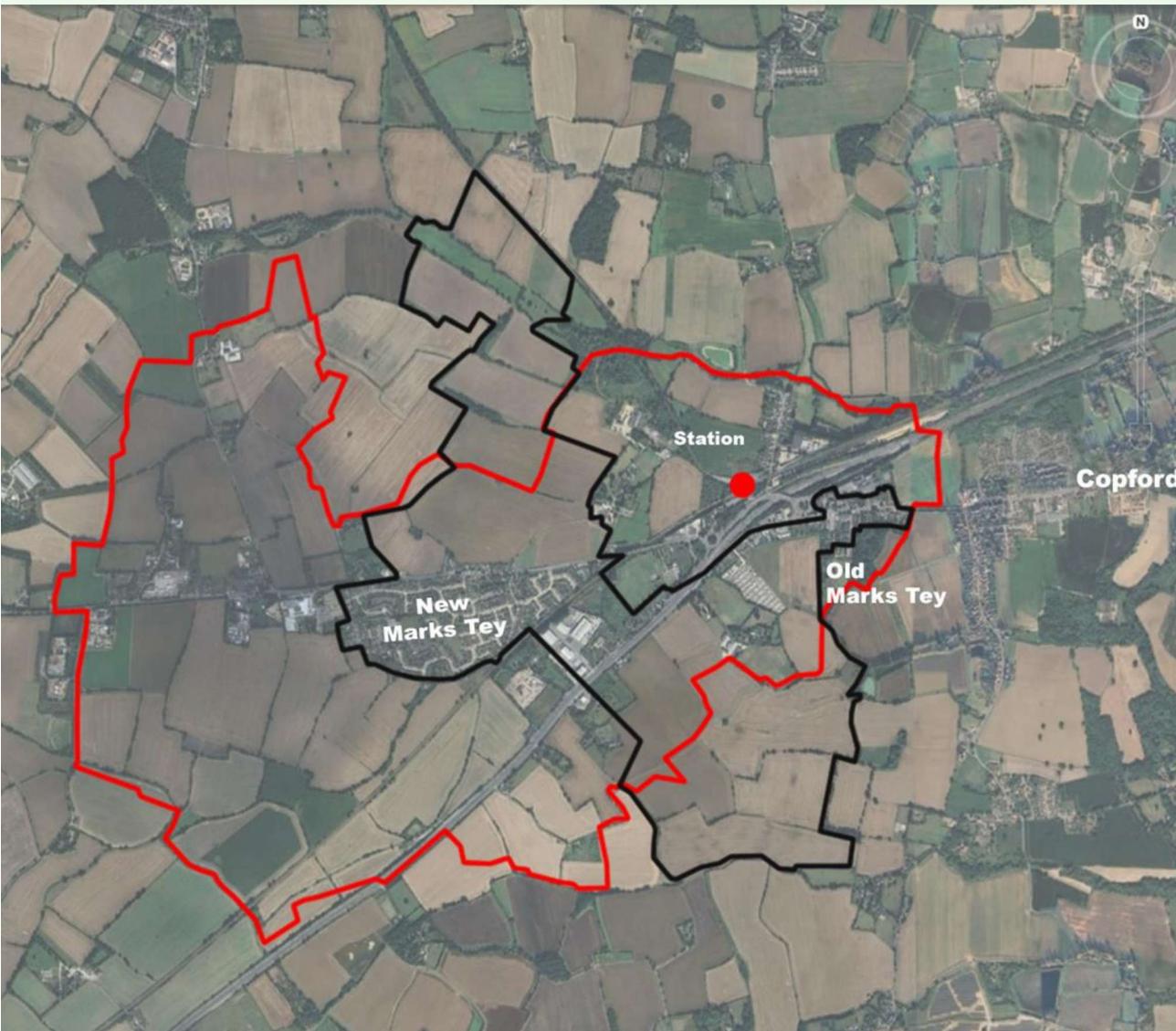
Local plan proposals

The area outlined in black is proposed for the allocation of up to 2,500 new homes. It extends beyond the parish boundary which is outlined in red. The proposals are for approximately 1,500 new dwellings to the south of the A12 at Old Marks Tey, and 1,000 new dwellings to the north of the A12 and New Marks Tey. The policies note that *development potential within the plan period is limited because of infrastructure constraints, including significant upgrades to the A12 and A120, but that growth is also ‘...an opportunity to reconnect the village.’*

Observations

- Both areas have a capacity well in excess of the 2,500 new homes proposed.
- The policies do not include proposals for how ‘... *reconnecting the village*’ will be achieved or make provision for upgrades to the A12 and A120.
- The allocations do not include land to create sustainable transport links to the railway station.
- This next round of development will fix the direction and long term pattern of growth of Marks Tey.

The following slides show alternative growth scenarios considered by the parish council.



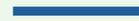
alternative scenarios

The following are alternative growth scenarios considered by the parish council. The plans show notional development areas to compare patterns of development and the likely direction of future growth. The locations of local centres and ped/cycle routes are indicative based on standard development practice.

Key considerations:

- Can there be greater **cohesion** between the different parts of Marks Tey?
- What level of development would be acceptable to deliver improvements to the **A120**?
- How important is improving the **pedestrian/cycle environment** and **connectivity**?
- How should **development be distributed**?
- What impact will the distribution of development have on the **identity** of Marks Tey?
- How much of an issues is **coalescence**?

Key



notional development area



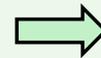
notional first phase



local centre



key ped/cycle travel route



direction of future growth



focus

#1: local plan

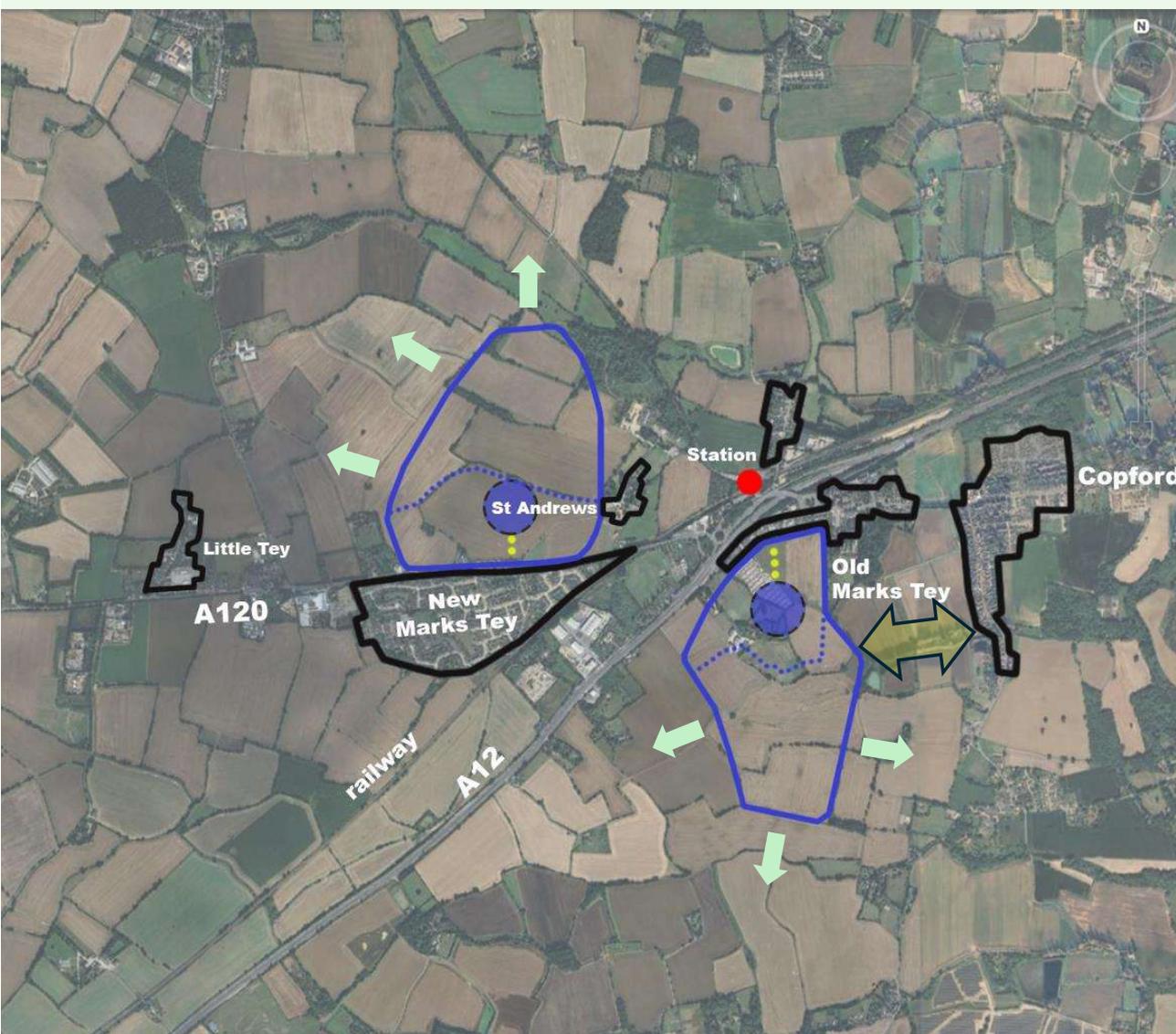
Based on development of Old and New Marks Tey within local plan footprint.
C. 2,500 new homes in total.

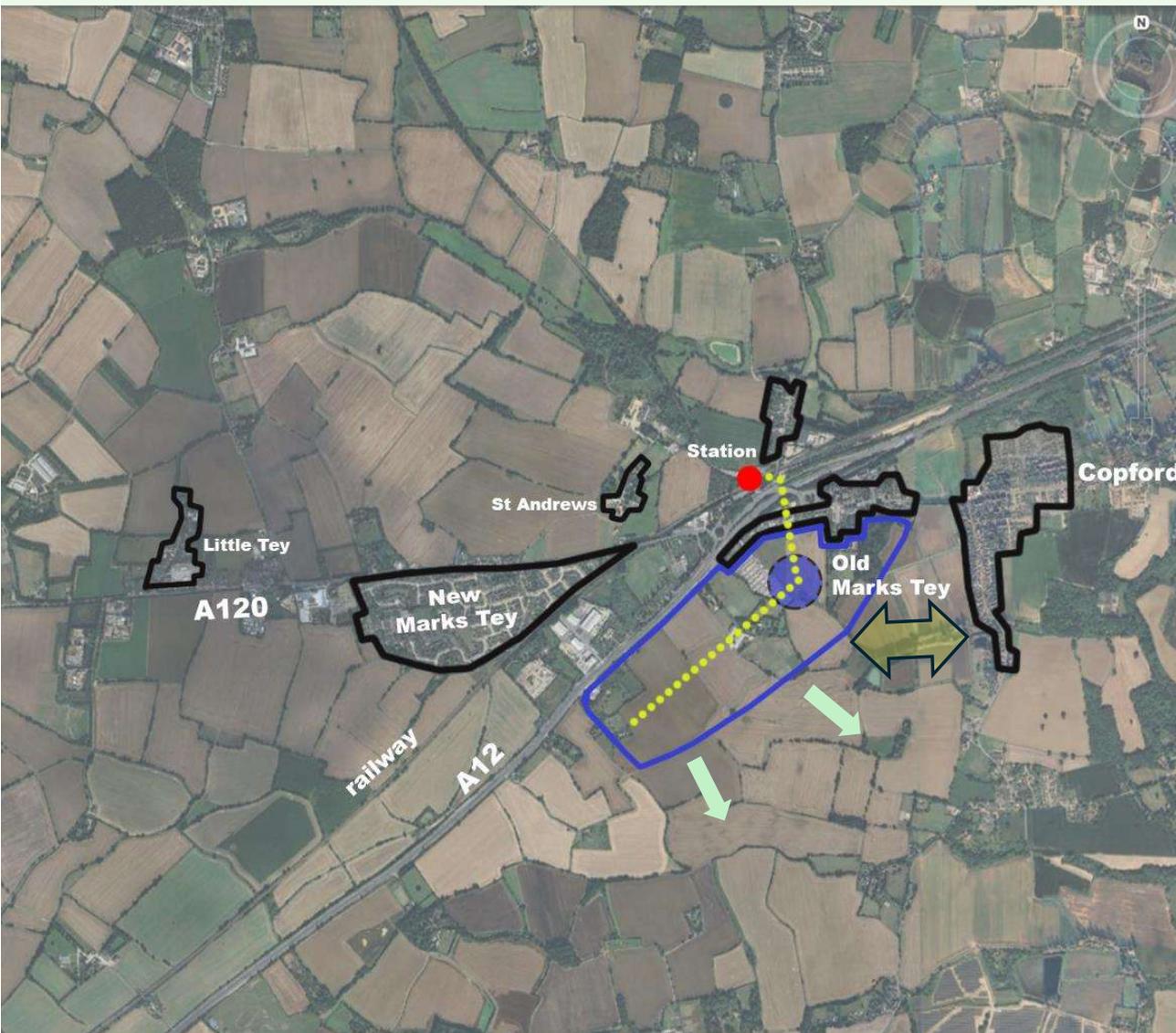
Positives

+ New facilities for Old and New Marks Tey

Negatives

- No improvements to A120
- No land to connect New Marks Tey to the station
- Development extends beyond parish boundary
- New facilities remote from each side
- Pressure for coalescence with Copford
- Future growth patterns reinforces separation





#2: old Marks Tey

Based on development and new facilities around Old Marks Tey only. Layout planned to be within parish boundary and deliver c. 2,500 new homes in total.

Positives

- + New facilities for Old Marks Tey
- + Minimises additional traffic on A120

Negatives

- No improvements to A120
- No new facilities for New Marks Tey
- New facilities remote from New Marks Tey
- New Marks Tey becomes the minor settlement
- Pressure for coalescence with Copford

#3: new Marks Tey

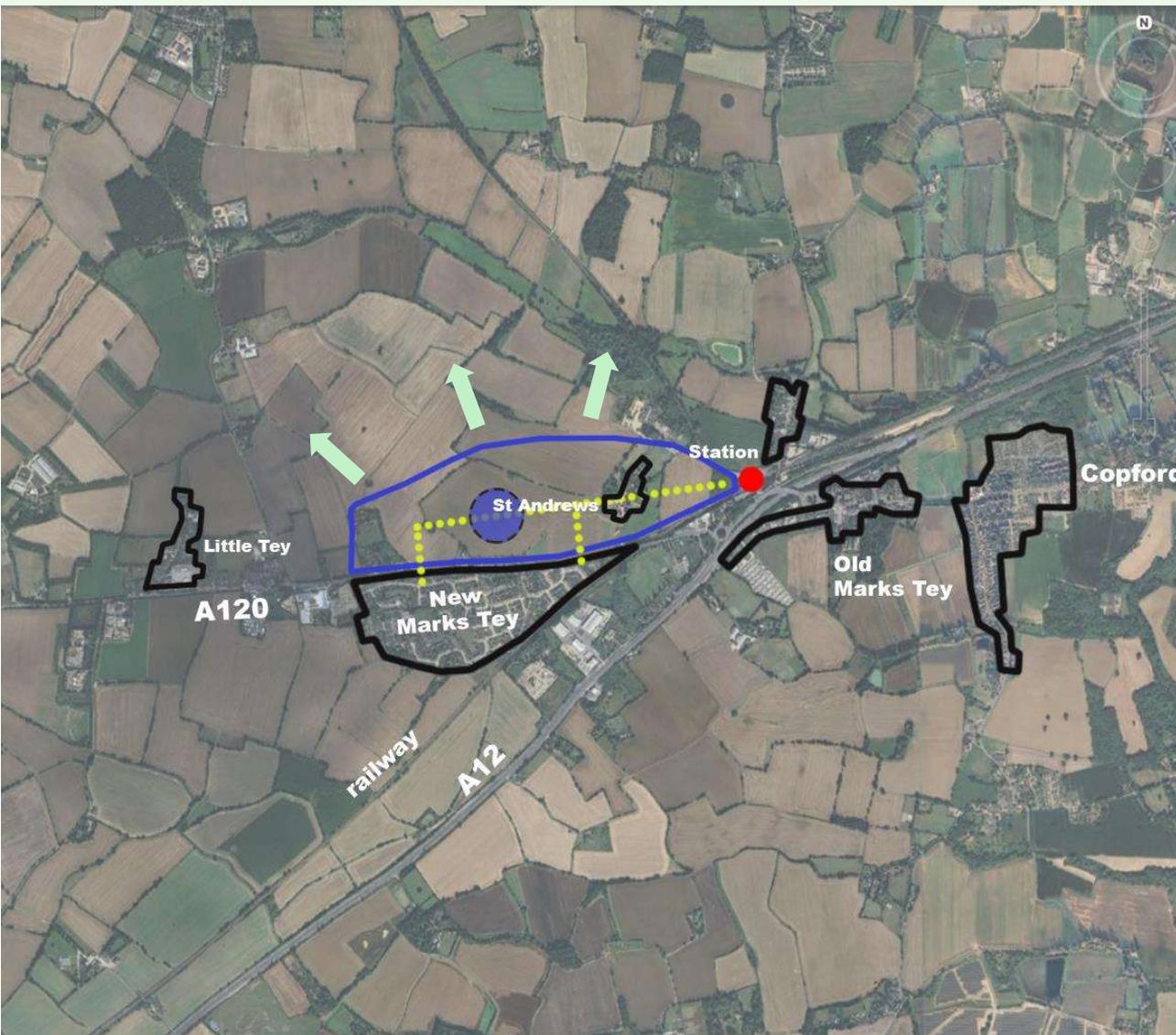
Based on development and new facilities to the north of New Marks Tey only with a ped/cycle link to the station. Layout planned to be mostly within parish boundary and deliver c. 2,500 new homes in total.

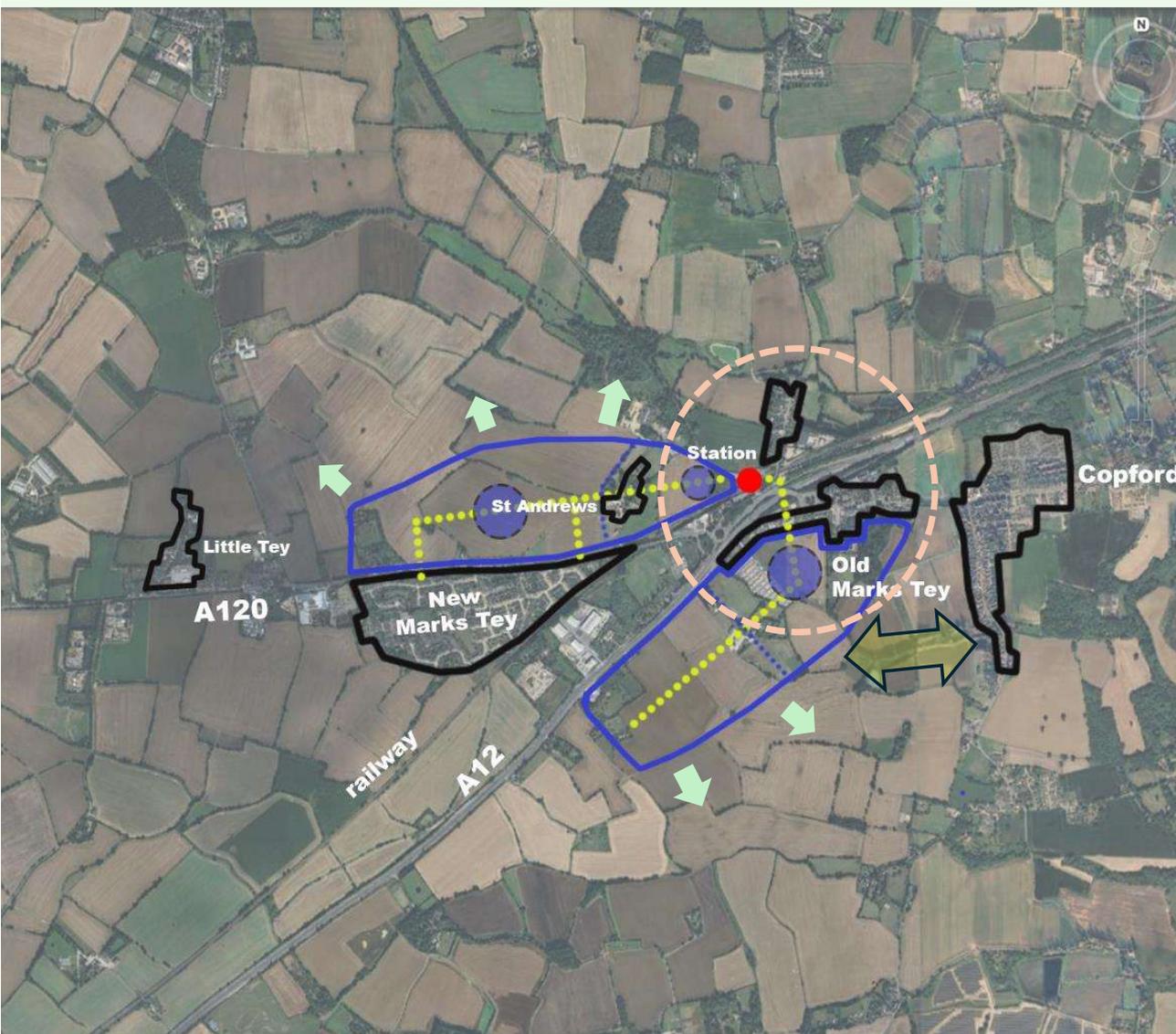
Positives

- + New facilities for New Marks Tey
- + Ped/cycle link to station
- + Future expansion possible to the north
- + Reduced pressure for coalescence with Copford

Negatives

- No improvements to A120
- No new facilities for Old Marks Tey
- New facilities remote from Old Marks Tey
- Old Marks Tey becomes a more minor settlement
- Future growth reinforces separation





#4: old + new Marks Tey

Based on development in New and Old Marks Tey with new facilities in both and ped/cycle link to station. Layouts planned within parish c. 2,500 new homes in total.

Positives

- + New facilities for New and Old Marks Tey
- + Maintains balance between New and Old Marks Tey
- + New Marks Tey ped/cycle link to station.
- + Improved station + facilities as shared focus

Negatives

- No improvements to A120
- Split infrastructure reduces benefits of scale and connectivity
- Additional future growth reinforces separation
- Pressure for coalescence with Copford

#5: A120 by-pass

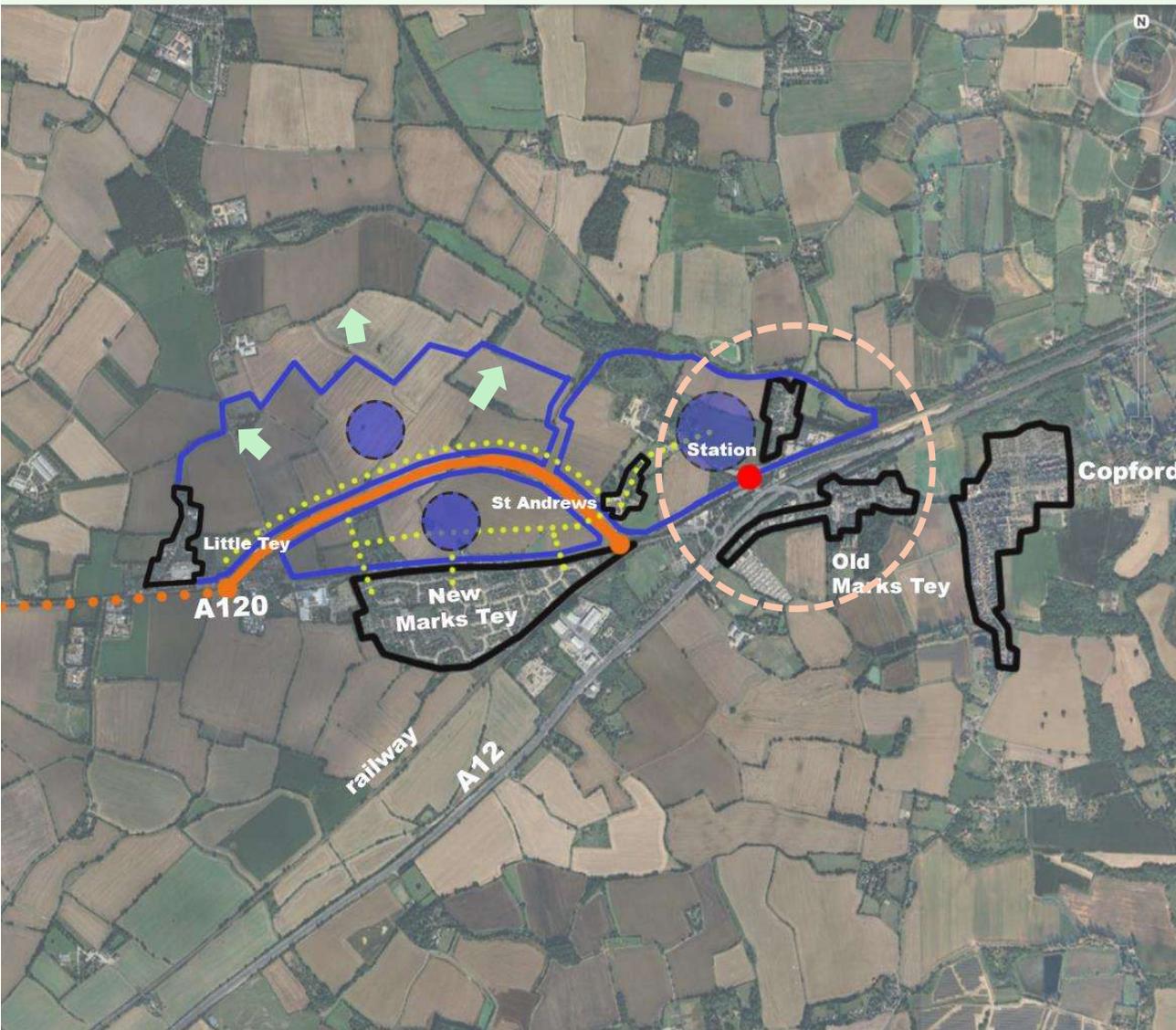
Based on phased development with a boulevard 'by-pass' to the A120. Includes station + new hub c. 7,000+ new homes.

Positives

- + A120 by-passes New Marks Tey
- + New facilities for New Marks Tey
- + New station quarter with Park & Ride
- + Focus and facilities for Old Marks Tey
- + Reduced pressure for coalescence with Copford

Negatives

- New Marks Tey becomes part of a larger settlement
- Requires phased delivery of boulevard by-pass
- Old Marks Tey becomes a more minor settlement



#6: re-route A120

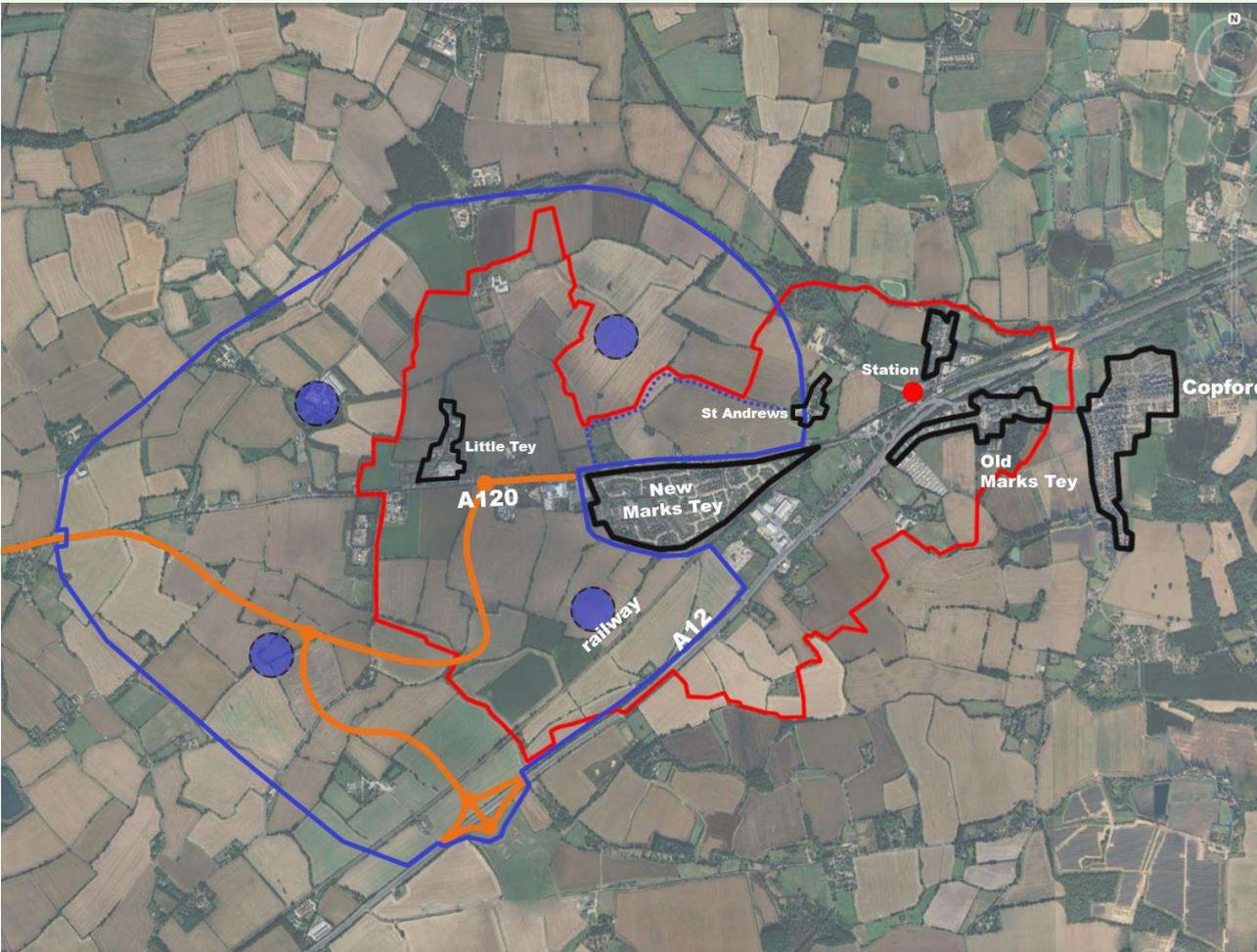
Based on L&Q Cirrus G120's West Tey proposals. New settlement with significant infrastructure c. 20,000 new homes.

Positives

- + A120 by-passes New Marks Tey with new junction onto A12
- + Significant facilities for New Marks Tey
- + Reduced pressure for coalescence with Copford

Negatives

- New Marks Tey becomes part of a detached 'new town'
- New Marks Tey loses its rural setting
- Excludes connection to the station
- Coalescence with Coggeshall
- New facilities remote from Old Marks Tey
- Old Marks Tey becomes a more minor settlement



4.0 SUMMARY

OBSERVATIONS

The working assumptions for comparing the scenarios included identifying the long-term factors that would shape Marks Tey – think 2040 onwards.

It was assumed that the LPA's stance stays the same – keen to develop around key transport hubs – and Marks Tey remains a focus for this. It was also assumed that National Planning Policy remains as is and its key commitments are implemented.

NOTE: NPPF updates to be reviewed when published.

Any opportunities for increasing connectivity and creating a shared identity between Old and New Marks Tey, given the A12 and railway line are very limited meaning they are more likely to remain as two settlements rather than becoming one village.

The expansion of New Marks Tey to the north (#5) has comparative benefits as a long-term strategy over the other scenarios provided a good connection to the station can be delivered and the section of the A120 which passes through settlement improved.

Re-routing the A120 (#6) would result in North Marks Tey being absorbed into a new town and losing its identity. However, (#5) does not prevent this scale of infrastructure change in the future.

There is potential for a smaller expansion of Old Marks Tey (within Marks Tey boundary) whilst maximizing development to the north of New Marks Tey (#5) to capitalize on development gain, the proximity of old Marks Tey to the station, and increase vitality to Old Marks Tey. This retains all future options but reduces the development pressure on Copford.

NEXT STEPS

This report will be used to liaise with landowners, site promoters and infrastructure partners to validate the assumptions behind these growth scenarios. This should include:

- Landowners of land not included in the call for sites
- Adjoining Parish Councils
- Colchester City Council
- Essex County Council

The Parish council should then agree the scenario(s) it wishes to consult on through a local community engagement exercise, and a final report will be produced to provide an evidence base for representations to the Local Plan.

MARKS TEY
SETTLEMENT SPATIAL PLAN

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8th January 2026

ONH
Planning for Good