

Grange Farm, West Cambridge

Vision Document

January 2016



St John's College
University of Cambridge

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VISION STATEMENT

“To secure a new sustainable high quality residential development on the edge of the City embracing sustainable development principles across the whole of the scheme”

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

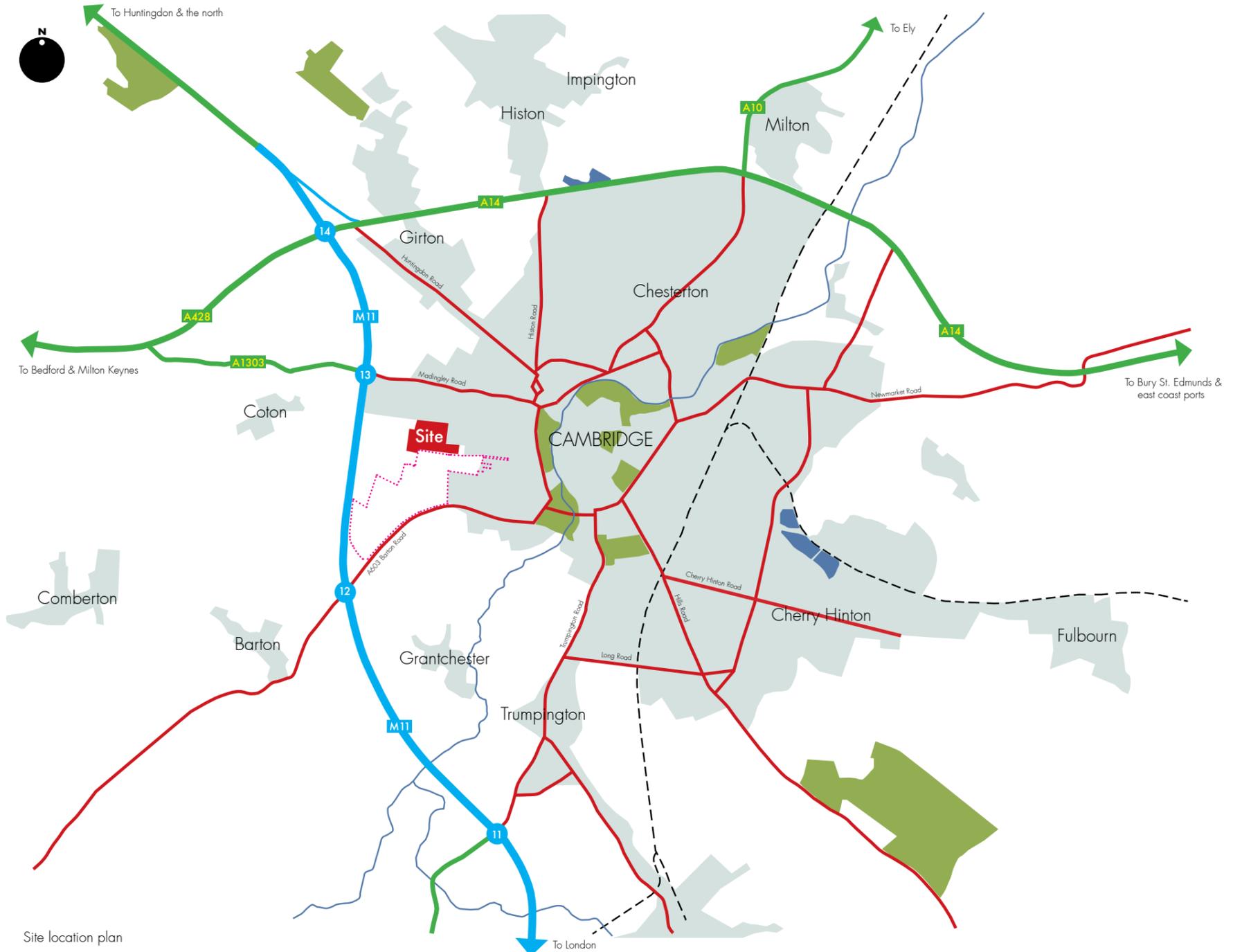
Savills Planning Team in Cambridge is instructed to provide planning and masterplanning/urban design advice on behalf of St John's College, Cambridge in respect of the promotion of the College's landholdings at Grange Farm, Cambridge.

The promotion of the site takes place in the context of the decision of Cambridge City Council to review its adopted Cambridge Local Plan dated 2006. On behalf of the College, Savills have made representations at all stages of the Local Plan in respect of the Grange Farm site. The preparation of this Vision Statement is part of the continuing case for promotion of the land in question.

This Vision document demonstrates how a new sustainable development in West Cambridge can be delivered to address twin objectives of new housing within Cambridge to meet requirements for growth and, at the same time, bring forward a new sustainable location for development that ensures sensitive integration into the landscape.

The proposed housing site is shown on the diagram opposite. This is the site owned by St. John's College. The land immediately south is being promoted by North Barton Road Land Owners Group (North BRLOG).

The St. John's College land is capable of being delivered on its own - it does not depend upon any other land coming forward. In the event of the Inspector acknowledging that land needs to be released from the Green Belt to meet housing needs, it is the case that the college land and the North BRLOG land can be linked together by connecting roads, pathways and cycleways.



Site location plan

BACKGROUND

2.0 Background

St John's College, Cambridge is one of the largest and oldest Colleges in Cambridge. The work of the College is based on the four areas of education, religion, learning and research and the investment placed in each of these sectors is matched by the importance placed upon the College to continue to make best use of its assets and resources (including its land ownerships) to raise funds to inject back into the College.

As one of the largest Colleges in Cambridge it is also a major landowner on the western side of Cambridge. Its landownership at Grange Farm is shown in plan opposite although there are other parcels of land which the College own but are not part of this site specific promotion.

The land in question lies on the northern edge of the site that is being promoted by the North Barton Road Land Owners Group (North BRLOG) which comprises the University of Cambridge, Corpus Christi, Jesus and Downing College. It is important for the Inspector to note that the St John's College land is not formally part of the representations that have been made by North BRLOG but for the purposes of a holistic approach, plans at the end of this document show the potential connections with the Barton Road land in the event that the Inspector would support all the land coming forward for development.

We would re-affirm that the Grange Farm site is capable of being delivered without the need for other land coming forward. In the circumstances where the Inspector considers a certain amount of land only needs to come forward on the edge of the countryside, then the Grange Farm site provides the opportunity to secure a site of some 400 - 500 new homes.

St John's College has put together a consultancy team to cover the necessary technical developments at this stage to promote the site at

the Local Plan stage.

Savills – planning and masterplanning/urban design
The Landscape Partnership – landscaping
The Landscape Partnership – ecology
WSP – transport and infrastructure
Cambridge Archaeological Unit – archaeology

The site promoted for residential development by St John's extends to some 17.90 hectares and is located immediately south of the West Cambridge employment site and the Coton footpath and to the west and south of the Cambridge University Sports Ground at Wilberforce Road. The site is adjacent to the proposed allocation of a student accommodation site at Wilberforce Road which is also in the ownership of St John's College.

The proximity of the site to existing and further planned employment opportunities at the West Cambridge site, in addition to new opportunities afforded at North West Cambridge, is an important factor. Additionally and importantly the proximity of the site to the City Centre and all its attendant services and facilities, together with other employment opportunities and the nature of road and pathway connections, provides the case for an accessible and sustainable location for development.

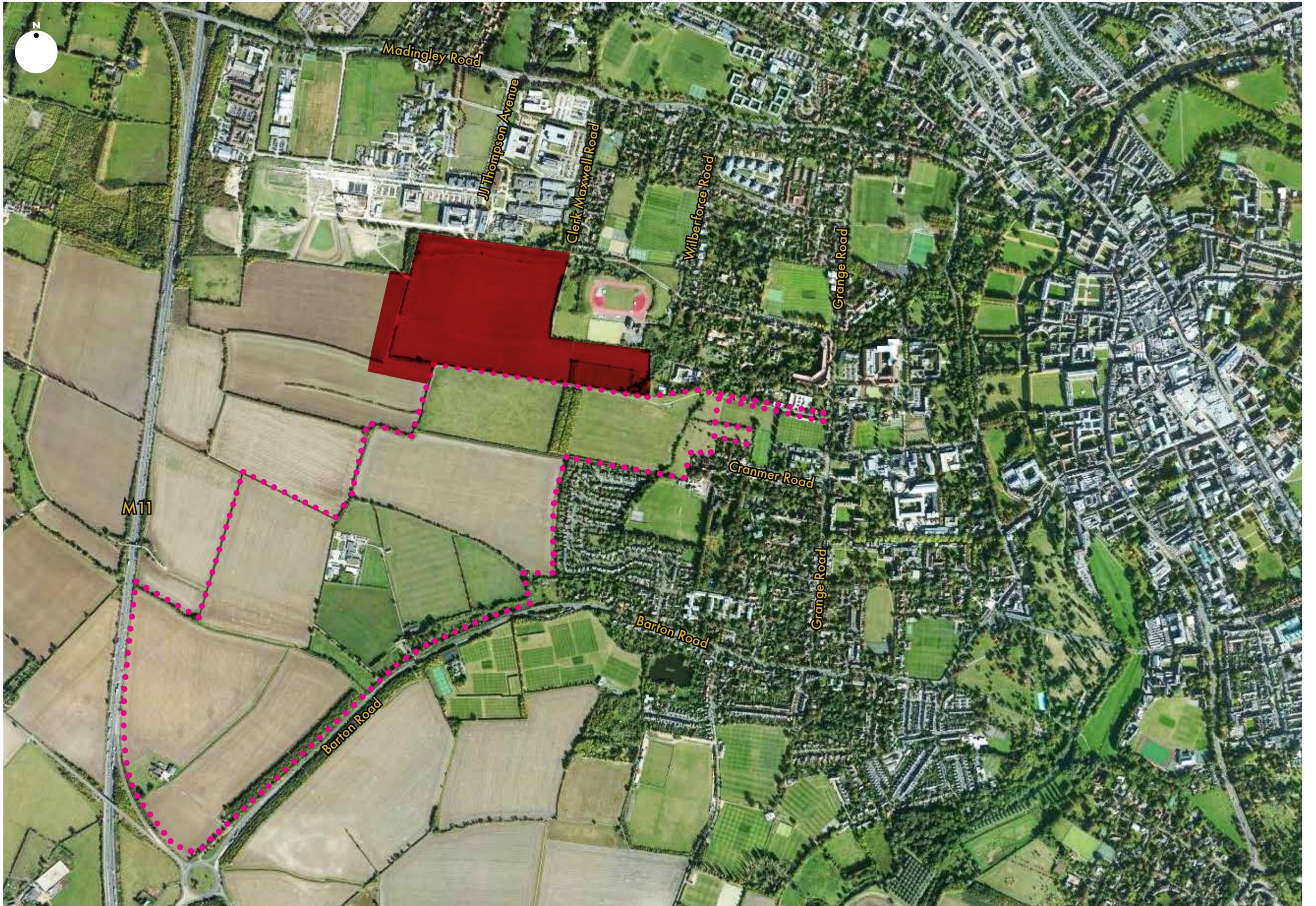
The site mainly comprises arable fields comprising low lying and sloping ground with hedgerows forming many of the boundaries of the three broadly rectangular fields that comprise the site area.

It is the field immediately south of Coton footpath and immediately west of the University Sports Ground that is being promoted for residential development. The other two parcels are intended only to provide scope for structural landscaping proposals to address the wider views into and out of the site.



Key

-  Proposed Grange Farm development site
-  North Barton Road Land Owners Group (North BRLOG)



St John's College ownership

SITE CONTEXT & ANALYSIS

3.0 Context & analysis

WIDER CONTEXT

The Grange Farm site is located in a highly sustainable location. The site will have direct access to the University's West Cambridge Site which houses a number of University departments and research institutions. The site also houses the new University Sports Centre which offers membership to the community as well as University students and staff.

The city centre is located within 2km to the east and is accessible by a regular public transport service and dedicated cycle and footpath routes. The existing pedestrian and cycle network also provides safe and convenient access to the west over the M11 to Coton village, Coton Countryside Reserve and beyond.

The site also has easy access to the M11 (J13), the A14, Cambridge railway station and the wider strategic transport network.

Further analysis of the site is provided in the following pages.

- Key**
- Proposed Grange Farm development site
 - North Barton Road Land Owners Group (North BRLOG)
 - The University's West Cambridge site
 - Coton Countryside Reserve
 - Cambridge city centre
 - Railway station
 - ✱ Committed strategic development sites



LANDSCAPE

A landscape and visual appraisal has been carried out by The Landscape Partnership in relation to St John's College land at Grange Farm including the two fields to the west towards the M11.

This document examines the appropriateness of for development on the site and concludes that the eastern part of the site is the least sensitive visually and is well suited to built development. There would be no significant effects on existing landscape features and mature hedges to the boundaries could be fully retained in any development. The assessment also concludes that there is scope to provide a robust landscape buffer to the west of the proposed development area to maintain a rural edge to the west of Cambridge in the event that the housing site comes forward on the eastern parcel.

A number of opportunities and constraints have been identified in this assessment. These include retaining views towards landmark buildings in Cambridge including the University Library. There is also the opportunity of introducing two to three storey residential buildings on the northern boundary of the site to help reduce the massing and scale of the five storey development on the southern edge of the West Cambridge site. Strategic native tree planting adjacent to the perimeters of the residential development area could provide strong visual enclosure of development as seen from the west in the medium term circa 10-15 years. There is also scope to provide enhanced public access and connectivity between existing rights of way and the Coton Reserve.

The panoramic photographs on page 10 provide a visual reference of the site. The photographs were taken in August 2014.

ECOLOGY

A Phase I Habitat Survey has been carried out across the site in order to provide an overview of the ecological value of the site and to identify any constraints to potential development and mitigation requirements that might be needed. The site consists of an arable field with areas of ruderal vegetation, improved grassland and broad leaved woodland. There are also hedgerows and trees marking the majority of the site boundary.

Overall the habitats on the site are assessed as lower value at the Parish/neighbourhood scale. The same applies to the plants across the site.

The site has the potential to support bats, reptiles and birds and further surveys are recommended in this regard.

In ecological terms it is considered that the site can be developed with the appropriate mitigation measures and the relevant surveys being carried out.



Photo key plan



1. Looking east back towards the site from the Harcamlow Way cycle/footpath. (also known as Coton footpath)

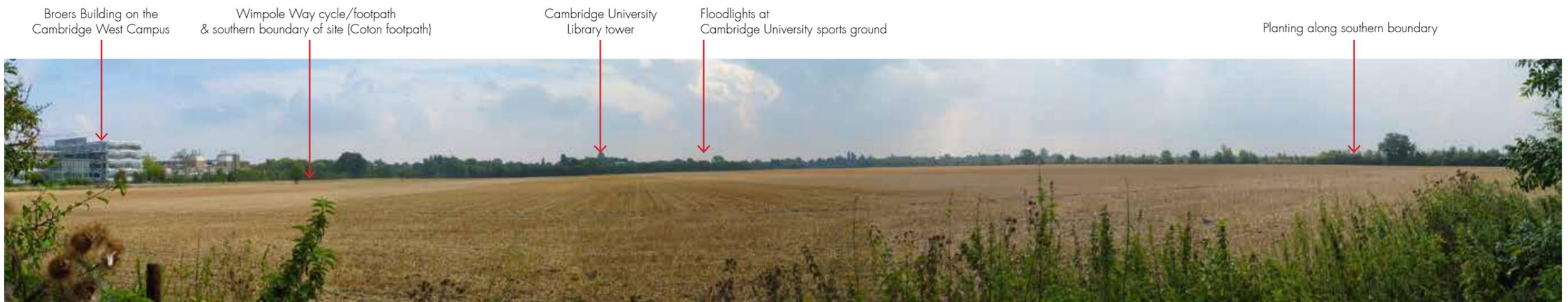


2. View from the Wimpole Way cycle/footpath looking south west across the site.

Access to Cambridge West from Wimpole Way cycle/footpath (Coton footpath)



3. View from the Wimpole Way cycle/footpath looking south across the site. (Coton footpath)



4. View from the Wimpole Way cycle/footpath looking east towards the city centre (Coton footpath)

A CONNECTED PLACE

An Access Strategy has been prepared for the development of the site. The development of this site will provide links to West Cambridge University Campus off Maddingley Road and provide for a wider integrated range of activity improving sustainability in this part of Cambridge.

The main vehicular access from the site to Maddingley Road would be via Clerk Maxwell Road whilst cycling and walking links will be created by Garratt Hostel Lane and Maddingley Road. In addition there will be a bus loop through the site that links the Maddingley Road University Cambridge West site with Addenbrookes Hospital and the City Centre. This site will also have the opportunity to provide connections with the surrounding countryside and public rights of way network.

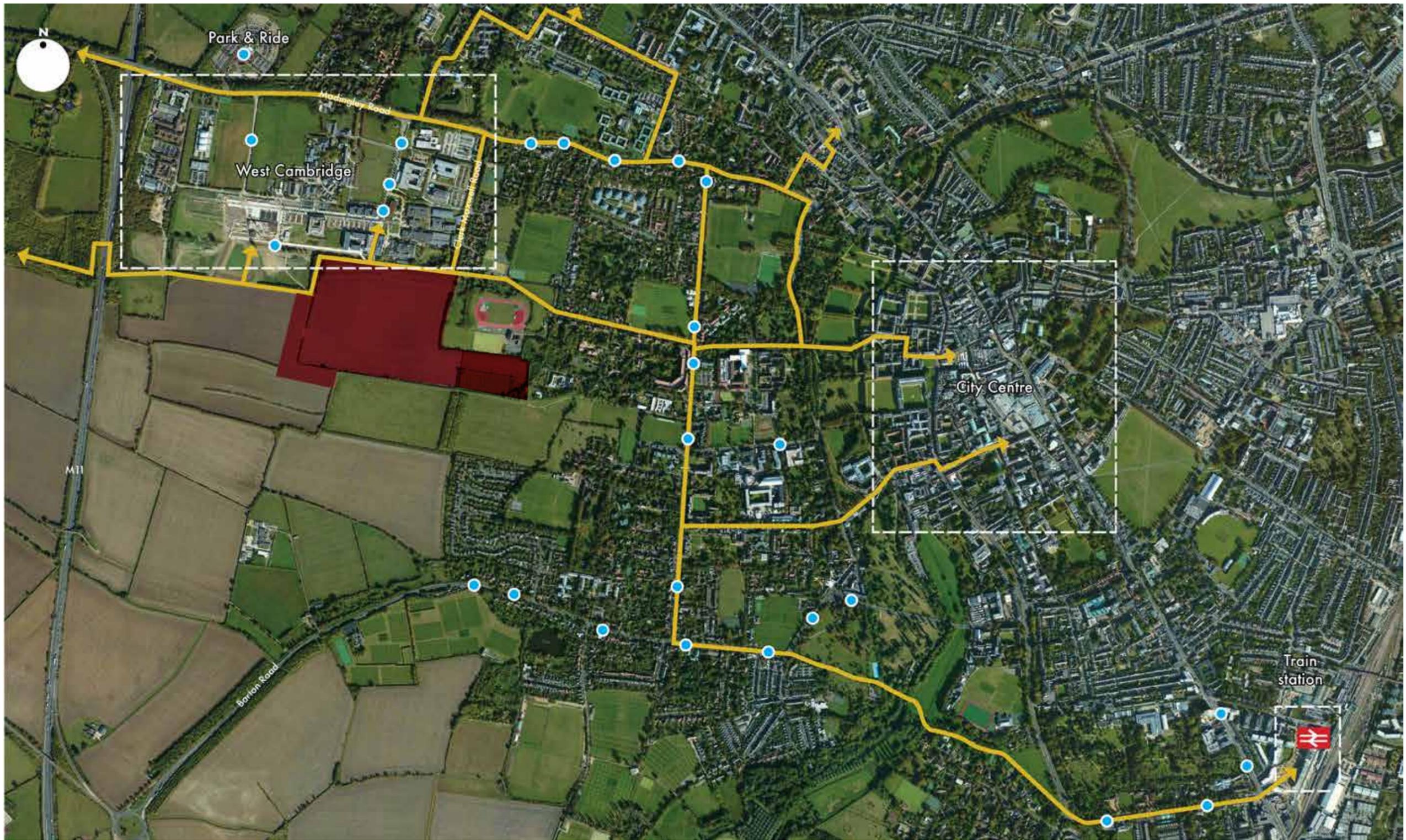
Overall in principle it is considered that the site can provide suitable bus based public transport accessibility with some re-routing of existing services and upgraded pedestrian links to improve existing and new bus stops.

In terms of cycle provision the strategy would include the provision of cycle lanes on Clerk Maxwell Road. The strategy could also include the provision of part of the orbital cycle route around Cambridge with a north south connection for cycles from Clerk Maxwell Road directly south towards the southern site boundary and also connecting to the footpath to Coton.



Cambridge City existing bus routes





Cycle & pedestrian connectivity and bus stops

CONCEPT DESIGN

4.0 Vision - A placemaking approach

The vision for the scheme is to create a sustainable new living environment, based around a fully integrated new community with new homes that are accessible to everyone, an inclusive place which makes everyone feel comfortable, safe and secure, a place where people want to live, which promotes an active lifestyle and sense of wellbeing, a place that future residents are proud to call home. The scheme will provide ready access to essential facilities including open space, leisure, landscape and amenity areas. It will deliver a wide range of choice of new, sustainable, high quality housing, including affordable housing.

The proposed development will deliver a high standard of design across all elements of the scheme including housing, irrespective of price and tenure. The scheme will focus on establishing a strong sense of community, with accessibility to jobs and community facilities.



The proposal for Grange Farm will deliver a sustainable, landscape and environmentally design led scheme, which is based on some key objectives of good placemaking:

Positive identity to ensure that the new development responds to the site and contextual opportunities, so fully integrating with its surroundings and defining new spaces.

Viable and sustainable place, which is deliverable in the long term and contributes in a positive way to the environmental, social and economic viability of the area.

A connected place which links and integrates with its immediate surroundings and the wider area.

A welcoming place which, through high quality design fosters a strong sense of place which maximises a sustainable way of life for the community and minimises the need to travel.

Delivering best practice and innovation by utilising new technologies and ideas that will reduce energy demands and ensure that the environmental effects of the proposal are minimised.

Quality homes for a wide range of local needs, space to live and play, good access to facilities, public transport and a place people can be proud of.

A sustainable landscape, by creating green corridors and space around the existing landscape features for biodiversity and ecology.

A placemaking approach has been adopted to ensure that the development responds positively to the context and opportunities of the surrounding area and the site. Building on this, a strong vision has been developed which brings new site-specific ideas into play, as well as drawing on best practice. The concept is driven by the objective of creating a strong sense of place and community, fully integrated and linked into the immediate surroundings, and the city of Cambridge.



A SUSTAINABLE APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

Our proposal for development aims to deliver a sustainable and well designed urban extension to Cambridge based upon the need for the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in March 2012 confirms that there are three dimensions to sustainable development; economic, social and environmental. These give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

- **“an economic role** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and co-ordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
- **a social role** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and,
- **an environmental role** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.” (Paragraph 7 of the NPPF, March 2012).

Such dimensions can be translated into key objectives for a new sustainable housing site.

- The need to secure new homes to meet in full the objectively assessed housing needs of the area.
- Securing new development in a way that preserves the important aspects of the existing landscape and natural habitat and provides integration with the new environment.
- Creates a new sustainable neighbourhood by providing an enhanced network of footpath and cycle routes that build and expand upon existing provision in order to integrate with existing development.
- Delivering a high quality design that fosters a strong sense of community whilst providing access to the countryside, safe secure play areas and a place where people want to live.
- Providing transport choices where a range of sustainable transport choices is available.
- Promoting best practice and innovation in sustainable development techniques to ensure that the environmental impact of development is minimised.

The opportunity exists for this site to contribute to the objectively assessed housing needs for the City which have been the subject of detailed analysis by G L Hearn who have also acted on behalf of the Barton Road Land Owners Group and the promoters behind “Cambridge South”.

The need for new housing should not be in dispute and it is considered that this Examination should respond positively to the opportunities for growth in sustainable locations, including areas in the Green Belt around Cambridge, including the Grange Farm site.

The proposed housing site is located within the Cambridge Green Belt on the edge of the City in what we consider to be a highly sustainable location close to the city centre. With Cambridge continuing to be a focus of growth, this site presents an opportunity to deliver much needed residential development in a very sustainable location.

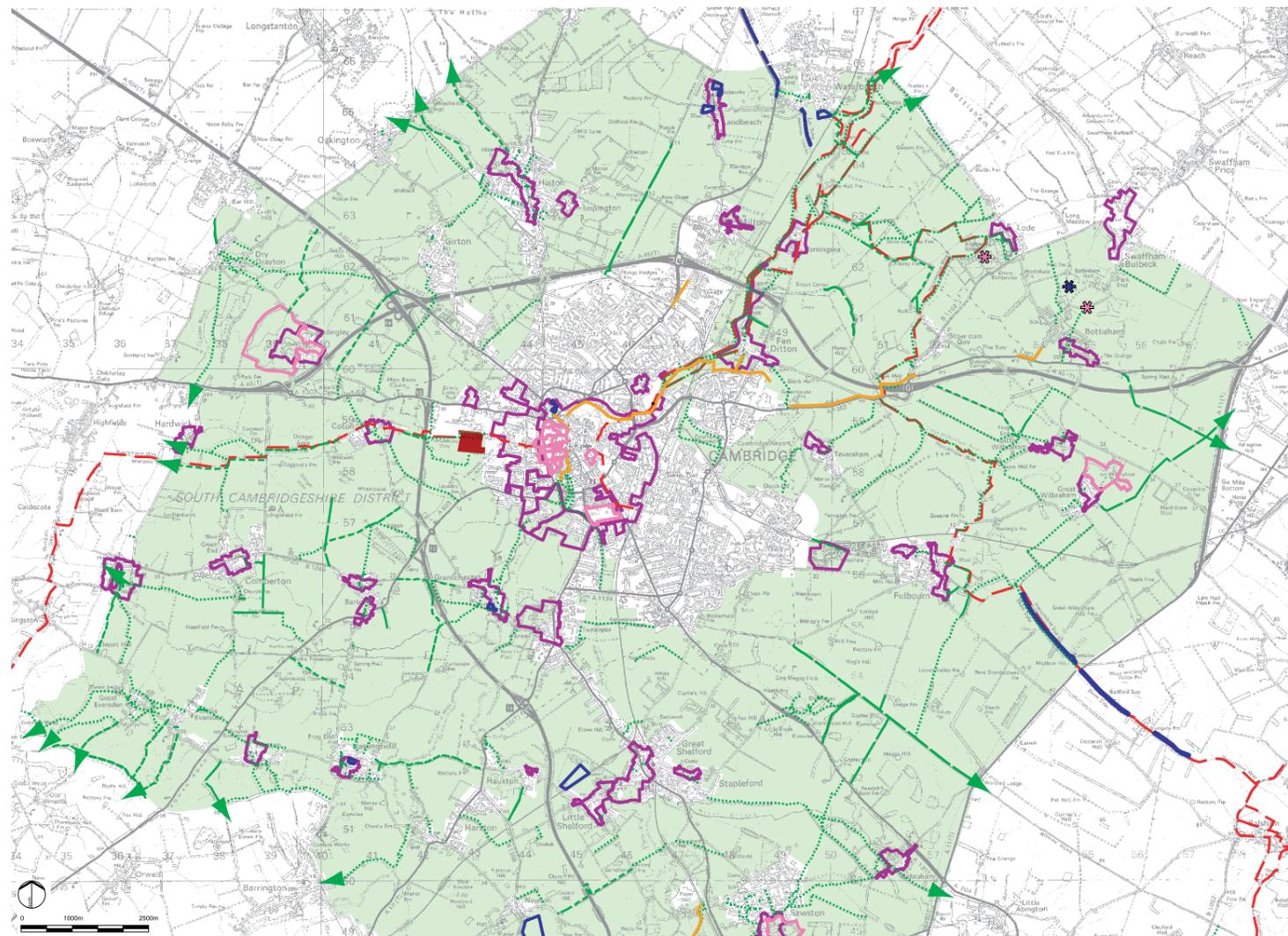
As stated earlier in this document, work jointly commissioned by the College and other landowners has demonstrated that further housing numbers are needed to be delivered and thus the Council must address this through new residential allocations.

We accept that a balance must be made between protecting certain critical areas of land from development whilst meeting housing needs. However, it should not be the case that the Green Belt designation around Cambridge should prevent new allocations being made. Indeed the City Council has already identified 3 locations within its administrative boundary which it is seeking to remove from the Green Belt so it would appear that the Council in principle do not object to allocations being made within the designation. However, the scale of the need for new housing in sustainable and viable locations is significant and warrants a serious consideration of the role of the Green Belt given the importance of addressing housing need.

Whilst it was the case that policies of disposal in the 1990’s were pursued in the Cambridge area which meant that some of the development pressures were directed away from the edge of Cambridge, the change in approach in 2003 led to the City Council to develop a plan which sought to release a large number of urban extensions. Whilst the approach addressed some issues of housing demand it is quite clear that it has been insufficient – the safeguarding of the airport for future development seems illogical given the recent investment in international flights and the ever increasing profile of the airport to both the business and pleasure air traveller.

It remains the case that the delivery of housing in the City is unable to meet supply. Housing prices continue to rise rapidly leaving many with no possibility of house purchase – demand for housing continues unabated and it is critical that new allocations are made within this Plan. A tightly drawn Green Belt around the City which forces significant amounts of development to unsustainable locations beyond the Green Belt is not appropriate. Whilst there is certainly scope for a balanced approach it is considered that the need for new housing numbers over and above that identified in the Submission Version of the Plan needs to be catered for in and on the edge of Cambridge. New housing on the edge of the City provides the opportunity for people to live and work in one of the growth centres in the UK and to ensure that the alignment of jobs and homes is at a level where commuting is minimised as far as possible.

We consider the Grange Farm site provides the case for a sustainable extension to Cambridge given its proximity and relationship to the City allowing for a range of sustainable transport choices other than the motor car.



Extract from the Cambridge Green Belt Study 2002 - Cultural & Access Designations Plan

DEVELOPING THE CONCEPT

The concept diagram opposite begins to illustrate how the key principles and structure of a landscape and environmentally led masterplan can be delivered.

The concept is designed around a network of multi-functional green spaces. As well as creating a strong landscape setting and a link to its surroundings, the spaces will provide areas for rest and play to be enjoyed by everyone and the opportunity for creating of new areas of ecological habitat. The spaces will also allow open vistas east towards the city centre.

Open spaces and recreation will be integral to the development, providing the opportunity for a healthy more active lifestyle for all ages and abilities.

The main vehicular access from the site to Maddingley Road would be via Clerk Maxwell Road. The scheme could also provide vehicular and pedestrian links to any possible future development to the south and west.

The concept maximises the opportunity of linking with the existing network of footpaths, cycle paths and public transport network enabling a real alternative to the private car. New pedestrian and cycle links will also be created throughout the scheme.



- Key**
- Study area
 - Existing development
 - Existing road network
 - Existing footpath/cycleway network
 - Existing bus stops
 - Existing mature planting
 - ➔ Proposed vehicular access
 - - - ➔ Proposed emergency, pedestrian & cycle access
 - Proposed development parcels
 - Proposed green spaces

ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN

The illustrative masterplan opposite contains the following design characteristics based on earlier analysis and concept masterplan:

- 1 New access from Clerk Maxwell Road
- 2 400 - 500 new high quality, sustainable homes providing a mix of unit types and tenures, including affordable homes
- 3 Greenway corridor (30m wide) along northern boundary creating a landscape feature and providing an important area for informal open space and biodiversity
- 4 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) to be incorporated within the scheme where possible
- 5 Outward looking development blocks framing streets and green spaces
- 6 New area of public realm and the opportunity to introduce other uses such as a small retail outlet to address lack of current facilities. ■
- 7 Linear green spaces providing safe and secure pedestrian and cycle movement and links to the existing cycle network, West Cambridge University Campus, public transport and the wider countryside
- 8 Integrated children's play spaces throughout the scheme
- 9 New structural planting to be provided along site boundary.
- 10 Area for sports recreation
- 11 Secondary/emergency access which can also provide an additional combined cycle & footpath.



Illustrative masterplan

TRANSPORT OPPORTUNITIES

The option opposite refers to the proposed inclusion of a new bus priority route connection Cambourne to Cambridge and which was the subject of consultation in the context of the City Deal in 2015. A series of options were consulted upon to which St. John's College responded, supporting an alternative option which was based on a route along the A428 connecting to the Madingley Park and Ride then connecting into the West Cambridge site and crossing the Coton footpath and then potentially emerging onto Grange Road.

The route shown in this document is purely indicative since the consultation document provides little detail other than broad matters of principle. Importantly, in the circumstances where such a route comes forward, it is entirely appropriate that any proposed development at Grange Farm should exploit this opportunity to connect into the corridor and better enhance its sustainable qualities. The plan is therefore illustrative but acknowledges that a route through the St. John's College land at Grange Farm enables connectivity to new proposed residential development on the edge of the City. Whilst the plan incorporates the proposals of the bus priority route, the absence of the latter does not jeopardise the credentials of the site coming forward as a high quality residential development on the edge of Cambridge.



Key
 Study area
 Illustrative 'Bus Priority Route'

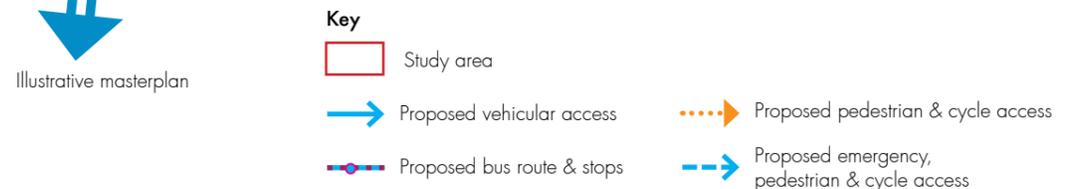
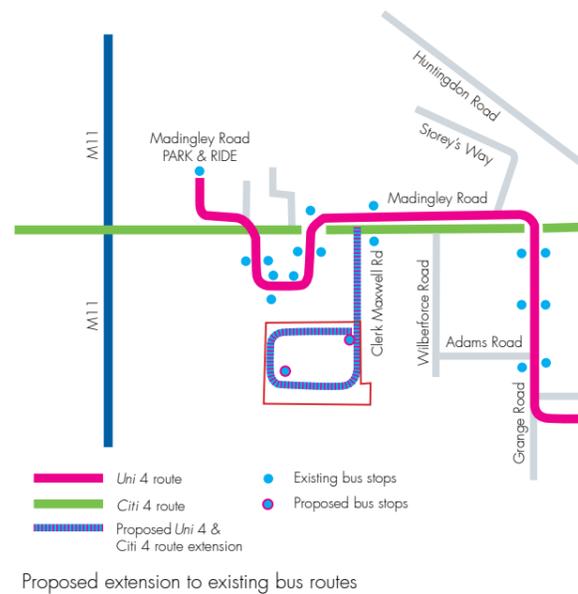


MOVEMENT STRATEGY

The following drawing illustrates a movement strategy in the absence of any future new bus priority route.

A new primary access is proposed into the site from Clerk Maxwell Road, linking through to Madingley Road. The primary street will run along the eastern boundary and create a clear loop through the site and the opportunity to extend the existing bus services through the site. The street network could also be extended at a later stage to any potential future development to the south.

There will also be a network of pedestrian/cycle paths through the site. These will provide safe and secure access to areas of open space and children's play spaces as well as connection to the existing wider network.



LANDSCAPE & OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

Landscape and open space form a key element of the overall design strategy for the site, through a network of green spaces and pedestrian friendly corridors and streets. The scheme has been designed to maintain existing trees and hedgerows.

In addition to providing safe and secure cycle and pedestrian routes the green corridors will accommodate other key areas of open space, including a series of children's play spaces (Local Areas for Play - LAP) and a substantial area of community leisure and recreation space along the northern boundary. The scheme provides an area for sports activities and a local equipped area for play (LEAP) for older children. They could also provide the opportunity to introduce areas for food growing the form of small allotments spaces.

The scheme will play its part in continuing to encourage a more active and sustainable lifestyle for all ages and abilities and one which is sensitive to the environment.

This holistic approach to creating a place which promotes healthy lifestyles will mean that it will continue to enhance Cambridge as a healthy and enjoyable place to live and work.



- Key**
- Study area
 - 'Greenway' corridors
 - Children's play spaces (LAP's)
 - Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP's)
 - Area for sports



Landscape and public open space strategy plan

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

At the heart of the vision statement is the delivery of an environmentally sensitive design response to the existing context and landscape character of the site and its surroundings. An important element in delivering this vision is the creation of the green spaces within the scheme, the largest being the 'greenway' corridor along the northern boundary.

The greenway corridor will compliment and extend the existing Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) within the West Cambridge scheme. In addition it will provide an important new area of informal recreation and open space and create the opportunity for biodiversity and new habitat creation. It will also maintain and enhance the existing character of the Wimpole Way cycle path (Coton footpath).

The section and illustration begin to illustrate how this green space could look and be incorporated within a future masterplan.

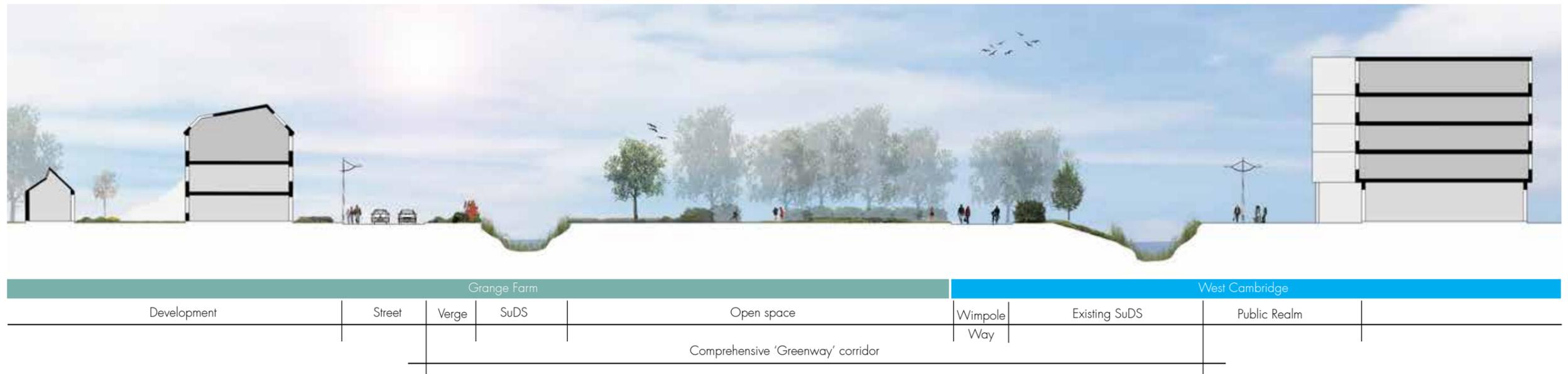




Illustration of the proposed greenway corridor along the northern boundary extending to the Wimpole Way cycle path (Coton footpath).

CONCLUSION

5.0 Conclusion

SUMMARY OF THE SCHEME

The indicative masterplan opposite has been produced to provide an initial vision of how the site could be developed having regard to the issues, opportunities and design principles within this document.

The proposal will deliver a sustainable scheme, creating a high quality place of an appropriate density and scale. The future built form will adopt key urban design principles to ensure that the future community will have a high quality environment to live and play which includes quality design, open space and a mix of housing tenures available to all members of the community.

The development will provide:

- ✓ 400 - 500 new high quality, energy efficient homes offering a range of type and tenure to suit all including a proportion of affordable homes;
- ✓ A landscaped lead scheme based on a strong conceptual design that has emerged through site led and context analysis;
- ✓ Provision of a small retail unit for local shopping;
- ✓ A design which is based on the latest urban design and 'place-making' thinking and best practice that seeks to create a real sense of community and wellbeing;
- ✓ A range of new areas of public open spaces which can be enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities;
- ✓ A scheme which introduces real and practical measures to maintain and enhance the environment and opportunities for biodiversity - including the Sustainable Urban Drainage System, the Greenway corridors and strategic areas of community open space;
- ✓ A development that is connected to its surroundings by providing new pedestrian connections to existing routes through the site;



Illustrative masterplan

