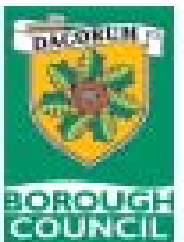


Land at North East Hemel Hempstead/ Three Cherry Trees Lane Development Brief

Supplementary Planning Document

Adopted 19th December 2006



This publication is the **Land at North East Hemel Hempstead/Three Cherry Trees Lane Development Brief, September 2006**. If you would like this information, or you would like to contact the Council in any language not listed above, please call 01442 867213.

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Land at North East Hemel Hempstead/Three Cherry Trees Lane Development Brief

Supplementary Planning Document

December 2006

This development brief has been prepared by Entec UK Ltd., with Dacorum Borough Council, St. Albans City and District Council, and the landowner English Partnerships



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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Development Brief

The purpose of this development brief is to explain to prospective developers and to landowners:

- The Council's policies for the future use of the land; and
- Development constraints and planning requirements affecting the land.

1.1.1 Aims and objectives

This development brief sets out the design framework and development aims for English Partnerships' land at North East Hemel Hempstead/Three Cherry Trees Lane (also known as 'Spencers Park') which is allocated in the Dacorum Borough Local Plan (adopted 2004) for residential uses (allocation H18). The intention is to submit a planning application for the site following adoption of this development brief. English Partnerships is the sole landowner.

The principal aim of this development brief is to achieve a comprehensive and well co-ordinated form of development that conforms with the adopted Local Plan considers the natural features and assets of the site and reflects the principles of sustainable design and construction.

The detailed objectives of the brief are summarised below:

- Provide a high quality residential development, of 350 dwellings, using materials sympathetic to the area;

- Secure an appropriate level of affordable housing;
- Create a safe and pleasant environment in which to live;
- Provide an appropriately located small retail unit and small scale social/community facility;
- Create a Neighbourhood Park for use by new and existing residents;
- Develop a network of pedestrian and cycle links to nearby local facilities such as schools and shops, to public transport routes and to employment locations;
- Ensure safe vehicular access to the site off Three Cherry Trees Lane to the north of the travellers' site and implement other necessary highway improvements;
- Retain existing trees and hedgerows as far as possible, and provide new landscaping, including buffers on the southern and eastern boundaries of the site; and
- Maintain and enhance existing wildlife corridors, such as the Nicky Line.

The Council will welcome high quality proposals that adhere to these principles. The onus will be on the developer to provide a well reasoned justification for any alternative approach within the overall framework. The brief is not intended to stifle good design, but to guide it.

Adjoining the site to the south is land allocated in the Dacorum Borough Local Plan (adopted 2004) for employment uses (allocation E4) (Specialised Technological Activities). This development brief does not cover this area, although it does show how the site could link with this site in future. Any future development at site E4 or its designation for an alternative use(s) would be the subject of specific public consultation as part of the Council's Local Development Framework.

1.1.2 Public consultation

This brief is accompanied by a Consultation Statement setting out how stakeholders and the community were involved in the preparation of the brief and Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment). A number of stakeholders have provided technical input to this brief (in accordance with Dacorum Borough Council's Statement of Community Involvement) and a stakeholder workshop was held to discuss the broad content.

1.2 Site and Location

Figures 1.1 and 1.2 show the site location and context. The proposed residential development area (Local Plan Site Allocation H18) is located at the north eastern edge of Hemel Hempstead. The site is bounded to the north by the Nicky Line footpath and cycleway, to the east by Cherry Tree Lane, to the west by Three Cherry Trees Lane and to the south by the site allocated for employment uses in the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011 (allocation E4).

The site is owned by English Partnerships and is approximately 12.2 hectares. The Borough/District boundary between Dacorum Borough and St. Albans City and District runs to the east of the residential allocation.

The site is bounded on three sides by different land uses consisting of housing to the north, employment to the south and west and farmland to the east.

Immediately to the north of the site is the Hunter's Oak housing estate. This is a small modern 1980s housing estate made up of mainly detached and semi-detached housing types. Across the B487 Redbourn Road is the established residential area of Woodhall Farm which is a large estate of predominantly 1970s housing.

The area to the west/south west consists of potential new employment uses and existing uses forming the Maylands Employment area

(industrial, warehouses and offices). There is also an existing travellers' site adjoining the south western corner of the site.

To the east beyond Cherry Tree Lane is a relatively open agricultural landscape with isolated farm buildings, overhead power lines and the M1 in the distance.

The site has a distinctive 'valley' running across it from the north east corner to the south west which is visually and spatially contained by significant tree belts which form current field boundaries.

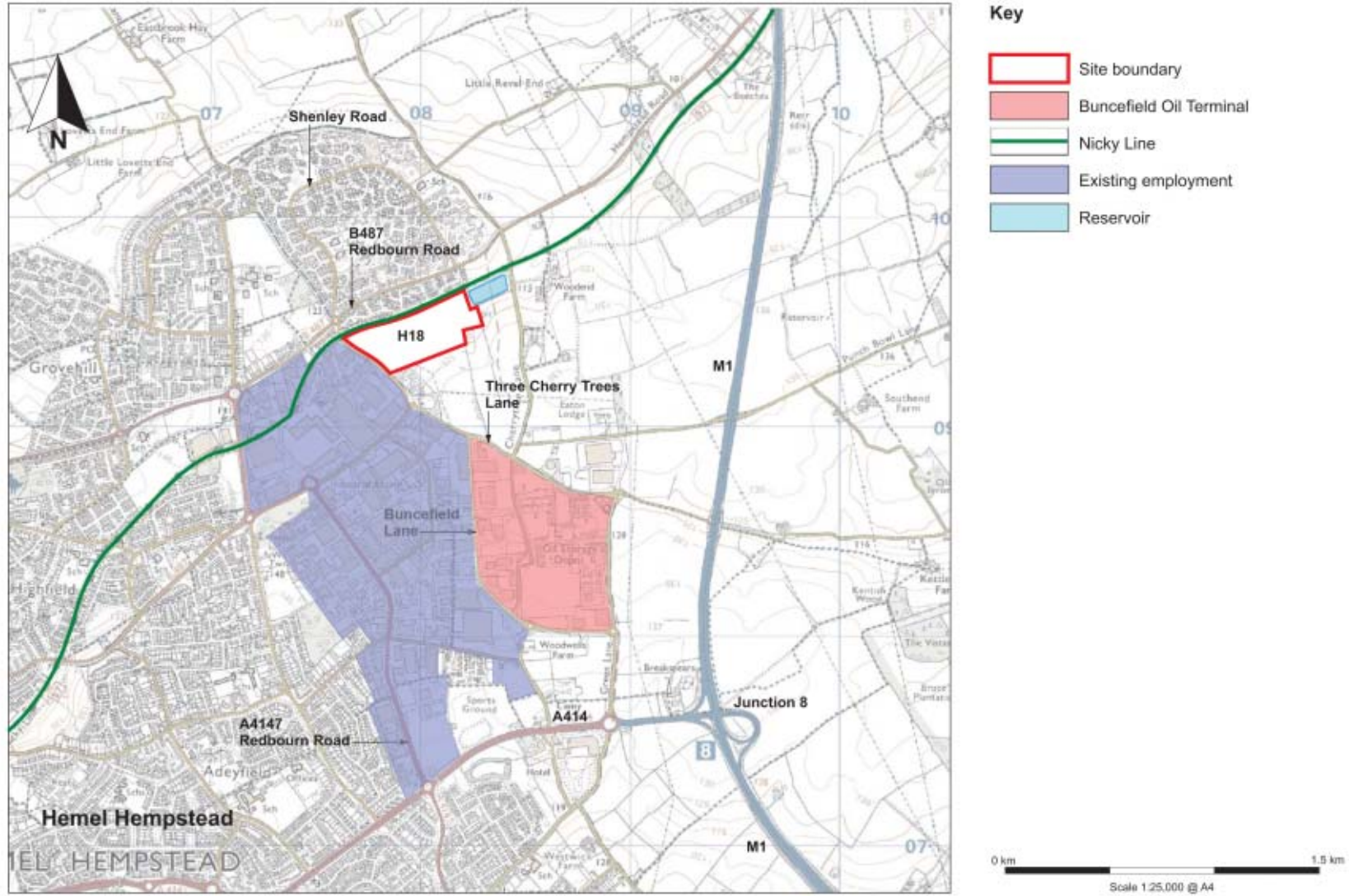
The site is currently a medium scale agricultural landscape with remnants of landscape character elements typical of the Buncefield Plateau area, such as the tall hedgerows running along Cherry Tree Lane and Punch Bowl Lane. This agricultural character links the site to its surroundings and provides the opportunity to create a sensitive urban-rural fringe to the east of the development.

To the north of the site is the Nicky Line, a prominent landscape feature containing the development area to the north whilst also linking the site to the H41 housing allocation and Woodhall Farm.

Figure 1.1 Aerial Photograph



Figure 1.2 Site Location and Context



2. Planning Context

The planning policy context for the development is set by national planning policy guidance, the development plan and supplementary planning documents and guidance. These key documents have informed development of this Brief and should be taken into account at the detailed design stage.

2.1 National Planning Policy Guidance

The following National guidance is relevant:

- Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development;
- Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing;
- Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation;
- Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport;
- Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning;
- Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation; and
- Planning Policy Guidance Note 25: Development and Flood Risk.

Draft Planning Guidance such as Draft PPS3: Housing and Draft PPS25: Development and Flood Risk should also be considered. The key points from the above documents are summarised in Appendix A.

2.2 The Development Plan

Under the new planning system the development plan comprises the approved Regional Spatial Strategy, RPG9 for the South East (March 2001), although this will be replaced by RSS14 for the East of England once this is approved. Relevant aspects of the development plan covering H18 are:

- Hertfordshire Structure Plan review 1991-2011 (Adopted April 1998); and
- Dacorum Borough Local Plan (1991-2011) (Adopted April 2004).

The Structure Plan sets out the strategic development framework for the County. It identifies a requirement for 65,000 dwellings (Policy 9) in the County between 1991 and 2011, 7,200 of which are to be in Dacorum.

The Local Plan identifies site H18, Land at North East Hemel Hempstead for 350 dwellings. The requirement is for the site to be planned with land to the south of Redbourn Road (H41) and with development on adjoining land at Three Cherry Trees Lane. The site must be developed in conjunction with a comprehensively planned transport infrastructure and off site highway improvements, including the completion of the North East Hemel Hempstead Relief Road.

There is a requirement for small scale retailing/social and community facilities to be provided, and a small Neighbourhood Park (at least 1.3 hectares). Other key policy requirements include vehicular access provided by a loop road passing through the site and connecting to Three Cherry Trees Lane to the north of the travellers' site. The development should include a network of pedestrian and cycle links to

local facilities and external routes, including safe and convenient crossing points on Redbourn Road.

Existing hedgerows and trees are to be retained and new landscaping should include buffers of approximately 30 metres on the southern and eastern boundaries of the site. There is also a requirement for an assessment of archaeological potential prior to development taking place.

Further detail on the site specific policies relating to H18 and other relevant policies can be found in Appendix A.

2.3 Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) for Area Based Policies covering land for development at North East Hemel Hempstead was adopted in May 2004. This provides detailed guidance on how the site should be developed, particularly regarding transport requirements.

Other key guidance produced by Dacorum includes the Environmental Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), Water Conservation SPD, Energy Efficiency and Conservation SPD, and SPG on Accessibility Zones. The County Council has adopted SPG relating to the design and layout of roads in new development which will need to be referred to.

Technical Studies

In addition to the above SPD/SPG, regard should be had to the Technical studies that have recently been completed or are being completed by the Borough Council. The Urban Nature Conservation Study, the Urban Design Assessment and Study of Social and Community Facilities are all of particular relevance to the proposed development.

3. Site Analysis

3.1 Key Constraints and Opportunities

This baseline analysis summarises the site opportunities and constraints identified by desk studies, correspondence with relevant bodies and supported by on-site surveys, together with discussions with Dacorum Borough Council, the adjoining district of St. Albans and Hertfordshire County Council. Figure 3.1 illustrates the opportunities and constraints of the land at Three Cherry Trees Lane and highlights the key issues to be addressed.

3.1.1 Site/urban context/character areas

- Triangular edge of town site bounded on three sides by different land uses: housing, employment and farmland.
- An existing travellers' site is located to the south west of the residential allocation, at the head of the 'valley'.

3.1.2 Orientation of adjoining areas

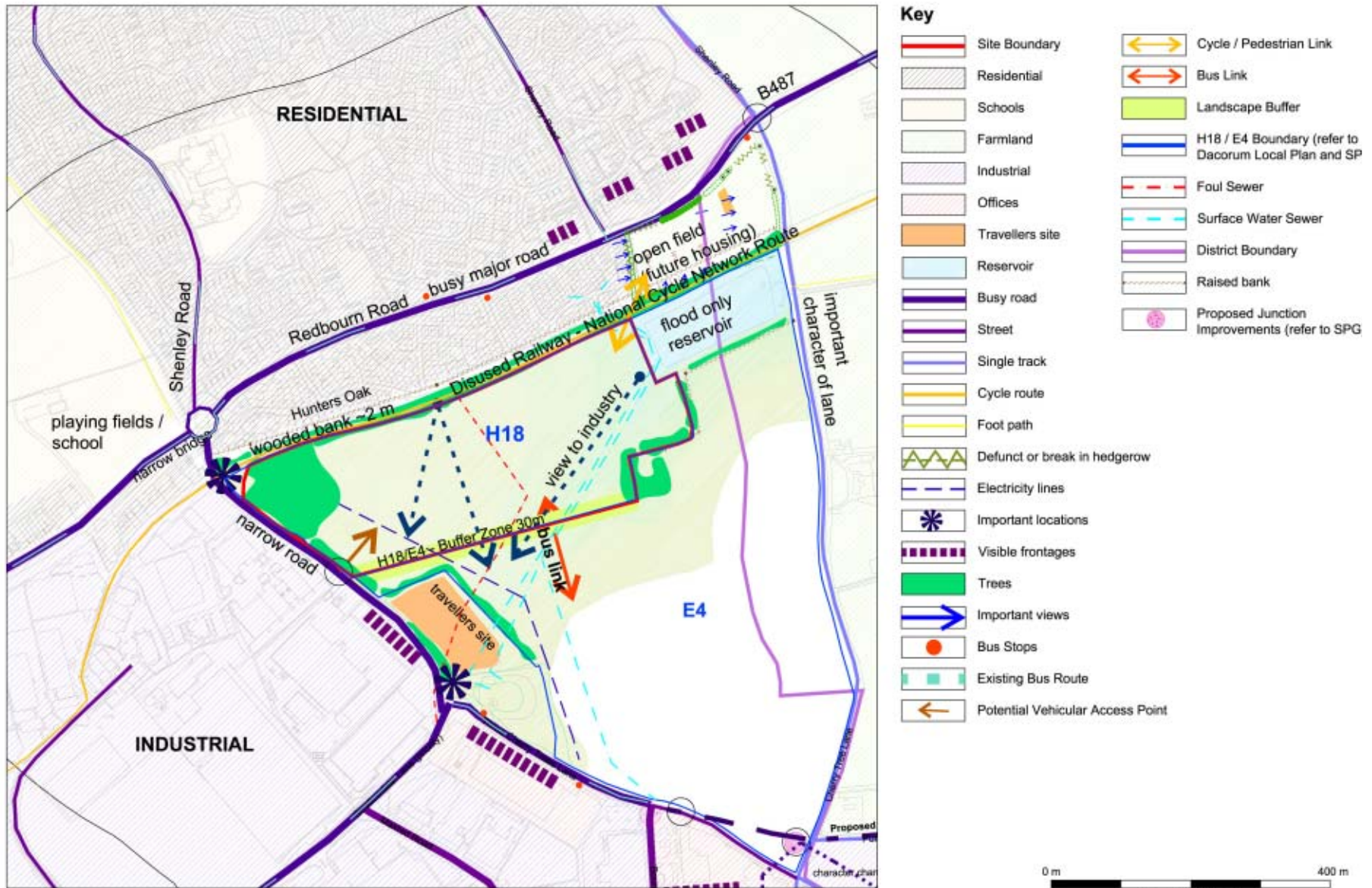
- It is mostly building backs that face the site to the north, with the exception of the middle row of houses which front onto the site.

3.1.3 Access and movement (vehicular/cyclists/pedestrian)

- Vehicular access is possible from Three Cherry Trees Lane.

- Access from Cherry Tree Lane is discouraged but there may be potential if needed for an emergency only connection near the reservoir.
- Good pedestrian and cycle links exist via the disused railway, the 'Nicky Line' to which new connections should be sensitively made.
- The site is located within walking distance of existing bus stops on the Redbourn Road and one along Three Cherry Trees Lane which are provided with lay-by facilities.
- The Woodhall Estate to the north has a high frequency bus service.
- Crossing facilities should be created on Redbourn Road to improve links to local facilities including shops, schools and the community centre in the Woodhall Estate to the north of the site.

Figure 3.1 Key Constraints and Opportunities



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3.1.4 Landscape features, topography and context

- The site has a distinctive 'dry valley' running across it from the north east corner to the travellers' site.
- There are significant tree belts on the site forming current field boundaries.
- Tall trees and mature hedgerows along The Nicky Line and Cherry Tree Lane provide strong visual and physical boundaries linking the site to the surrounding countryside.
- The surrounding land is a gently undulating landscape rising to the south and east.
- A reservoir is located in the north east corner of the site. Consideration should be given to how the proposed development can link to this, or whether a buffer zone is to be provided.

3.1.5 Landscape character

- Though partially altered by modern farming practices the site is a remnant of the traditional agricultural landscape character of the area.

3.1.6 Visual

- Views from within the site to the north east are dominated by the boundary features of the Nicky Line and Cherry Tree Lane with strong links to the surrounding countryside.
- Views to the south and west are to existing industrial development.

- Public Rights of Way to the east run along higher ground with partial glimpsed views into the site from sections of the route.
- Users of the Nicky Line have partial glimpsed views of the site for the majority of the boundary.

3.1.7 Land use and ownership

- English Partnerships is the sole landowner of the site which is within Dacorum Borough, close to the boundary with the adjoining St. Albans City and District.

3.1.8 Social/community infrastructure

- There are a number of community facilities, including schools, doctor's surgeries and shops located to the north within the Woodhall Farm Estate. The location of these facilities, including key bus routes is shown in Figure 3.2. Pedestrian links to these would be improved by creating crossing facilities on Redbourn Road.

3.1.9 Cultural heritage

- There are no listed buildings or schedule monuments within the site. Approximately 280 metres to the north east of the site there is the site of a Quaker Burial Ground and Meeting House. It is not known if there is any other cultural heritage or archaeological features within the site. It will therefore be necessary to undertake an assessment of archaeological potential prior to development of the site.

3.1.10 Ecology

- There are no statutory designated sites of nature conservation value and eight non-statutory wildlife sites within 2 kilometres of the site.
- There are a number of protected species within 500 meters of the site.
- The majority of the site habitats consist of arable fields with areas of species-poor semi-improved neutral grasslands, hedges and trees, tall ruderal, dense scrubland and broadleaved woodland. There is potential for ecological improvement in some areas.
- Possible fauna in the area includes potential bat roosts, potential for great crested newts in the reservoir and suitable habitats for reptiles although, as with badgers, there were no signs of these at the time of survey. Further surveys may be required.

3.1.11 Hydrology and hydrogeology

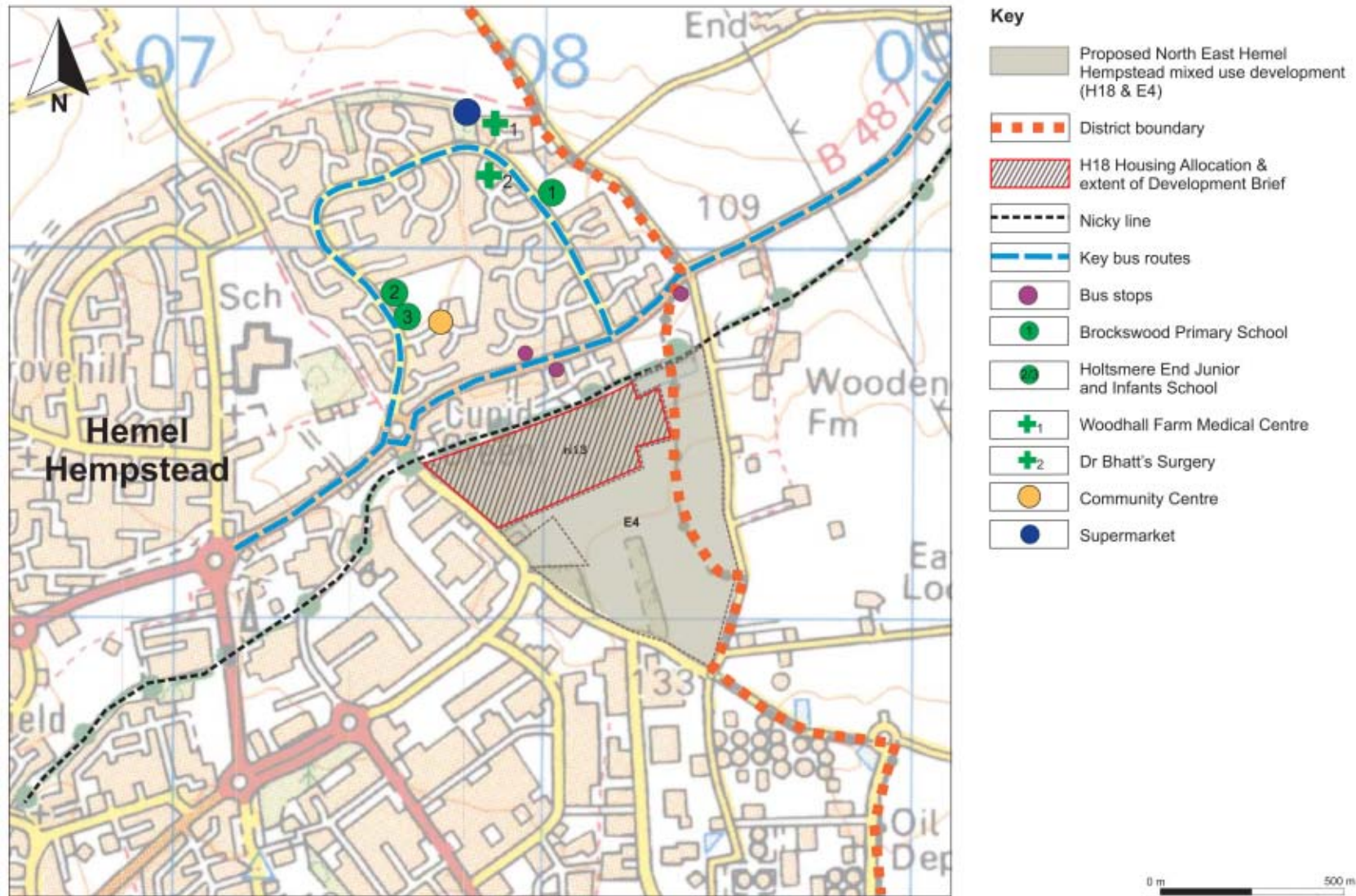
- The site lies in Flood Zone 1 (not in the floodplain) and in Groundwater Protection Zone 3, a designation given to groundwater sources used for public water supply that may be at risk from contamination.
- Whilst the site is not in the floodplain, the Environment Agency recommends that such sites be addressed by a Flood Risk Assessment focussing on any increase in surface water runoff.
- A Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) should be used to attenuate surface run-off and allow the recharge of the underlying aquifer.

- The reservoir is used for storage and attenuation of surface runoff rather than for the potable water supply system. It is located at the lowest point within the 'valley'. This receives flows from the adjacent urban areas. The reservoir itself falls outside of the development brief area.

3.1.12 Utilities and infrastructure

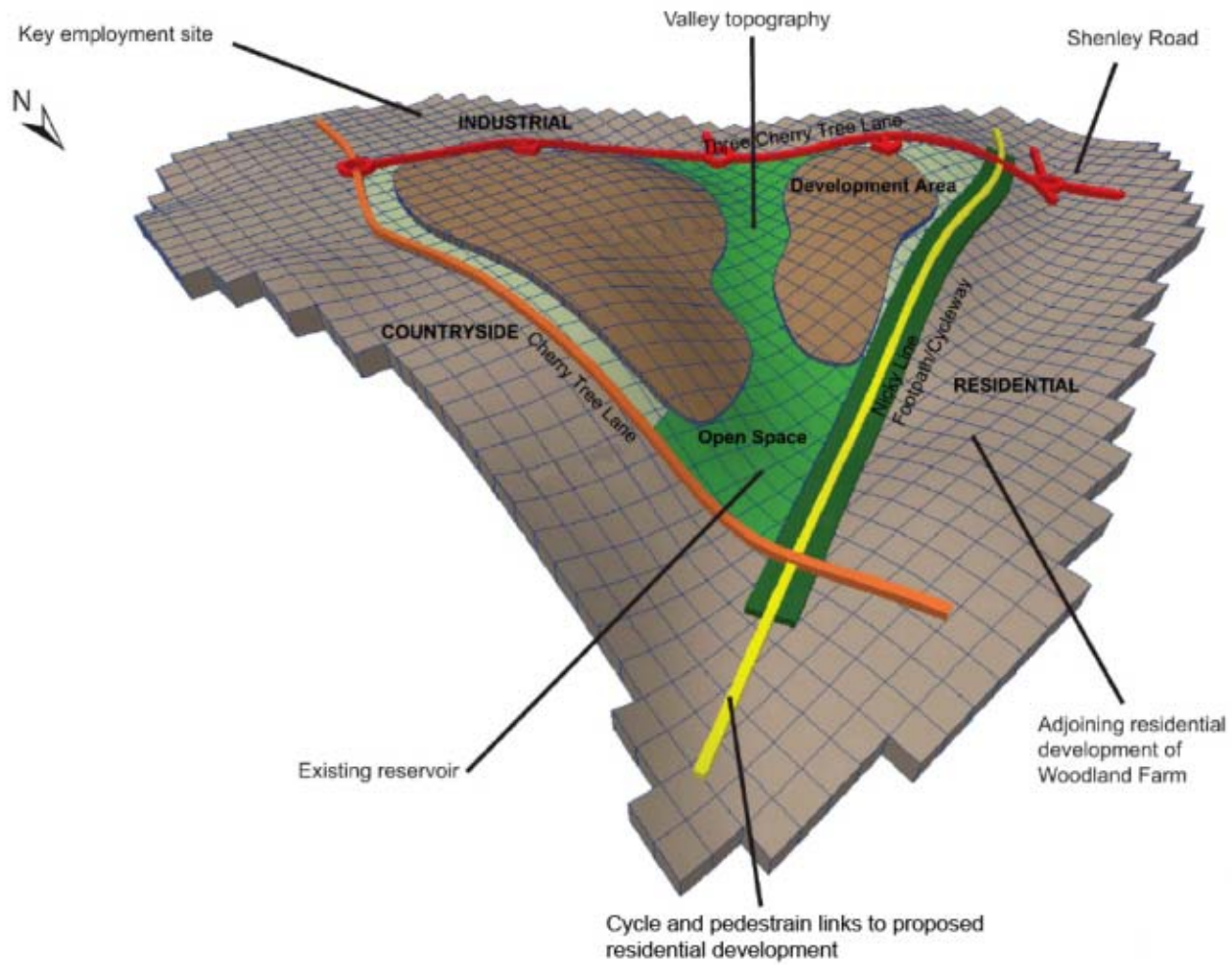
- Foul water sewers exist on the site and appear to have capacity to accommodate flows from development as proposed in the frameworks.
- Thames Water will require an easement for maintenance and emergency works for any retained or new pipe work. Whilst no buildings will be allowed to be positioned over this area, gardens, public open spaces and roads can be positioned over it.
- Surface water sewers exist on the site but have limited capacity to accept discharge. Again, easements are necessary to enable maintenance and emergency works which will affect future development layouts.
- The developers will be required to demonstrate that there is adequate capacity in relation to water supply, surface water, foul drainage waste water and sewerage treatment to serve the development and that it would not lead to problems for existing or new users. In some circumstances it may be necessary for developers to fund studies to ascertain whether the proposed development will lead to the overloading of existing waste water infrastructure.

Figure 3.2 Social/Community Infrastructure



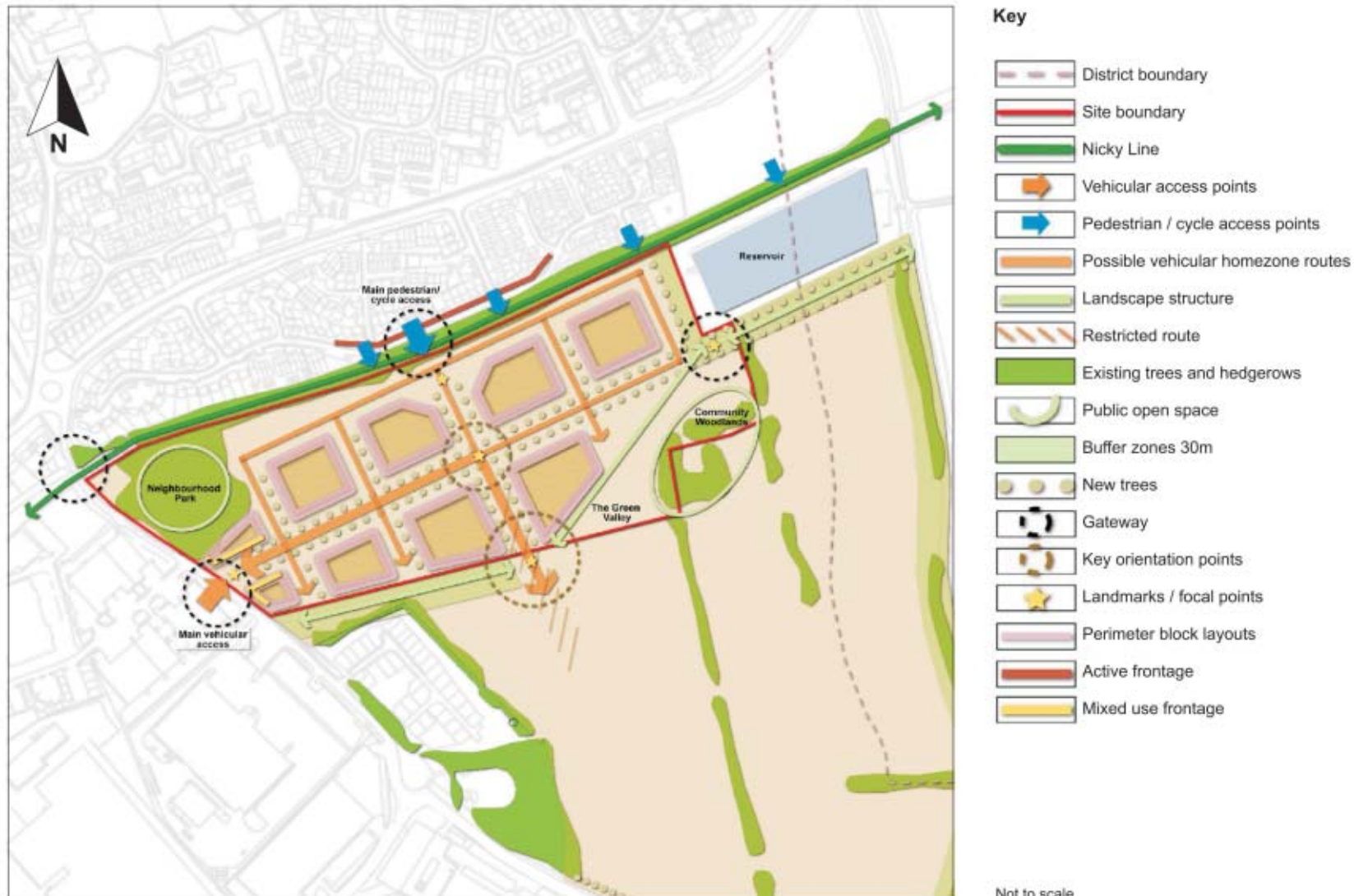
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Figure 3.3 Vision Concept



4. Design Framework and Development Concept

Figure 4.1 Indicative Layout Showing Key Development Principles



Following the baseline review and identification of opportunities and constraints, a design framework and series of development aims have been developed. Design principles and a vision concept have been developed throughout the process of reviewing the baseline information and identifying key constraints and opportunities. The vision concept is illustrated in Figure 4.1. The design objectives identified below have been established by the Dacorum 'Urban Design Assessment' for Hemel Hempstead (January 2006).

An indicative layout of the site showing key development principles is shown in Figure 4.1.

4.1 Making Connections

The design objective to be applied to this site is as follows:

- New development should be designed to provide an integrated pedestrian and transport network by creating strong internal connections as well as connections that serve access to the wider area and countryside.

Development principles are:

- **Connect...Land Use** - Provide a viable mix of residential and employment uses together with convenient retail and community uses as well as high quality recreational facilities that are in accordance with key local plan requirements;
- **Connect...Circulation** - Facilitate movement through the site along desire lines, especially to and from the residential areas, schools and community facilities to the north and the employment area to the south;
- **Connect...Landscape and Habitats** - Incorporate strong existing landscape features such as tall hedgerows and the dry valley into the development's landscape strategy to

create a strong structure and sequence of public and private open space and retain ecological corridors; and

- **Connect...Parking** - Prioritise movement for non-car users within the site to reduce car use for local journeys whilst ensuring an adequate level of car parking is provided and appropriately located to maintain the quality of urban streets and spaces.

Figure 4.3 illustrates these principles of making connections.

4.1.1 Land use requirements

- New development will provide for a diversity of housing type and tenure mix, designed to adapt to alternative uses and be flexible, in order to meet the needs of future residents. Around 50% of the total units will be affordable housing, with 75% of this as general needs rented and the remaining 25% for key worker, intermediate rent and shared ownership.
- The site must include an appropriate mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom houses and flats in accordance with Local Plan policy. At least 10% of dwellings should be life-time homes, which will be readily accessible and usable by a disabled or elderly person or capable of adaptation for such use at minimal cost.
- Development adjacent to the northern Three Cherry Trees Lane site access should provide a mix of uses and accommodate convenience (corner shop) retail at ground floor. Provision will also be made for a small scale community facility, to meet local needs.
- The overall site should integrate and expand on existing open spaces such as significant tree belts and clusters of trees and existing green spaces. The design of new

planting should draw on existing species appropriate to the area and include restocking of existing areas where appropriate. A Neighbourhood Park will be created for use by the new residents and the wider community. This should be a minimum of 1.3 hectares.

- The site should allow for a future link to the employment land to the south in order to create part of a working neighbourhood with new and existing job opportunities for the residential surroundings.
 - The boundary between the site and the employment land to the south, as defined by the Local Plan boundaries, should make use of the existing landscape structure and not lead to segregation between the two sites.
 - The Energy Efficiency and Conservation SPD requires new developments to incorporate appropriate energy efficient measures through building design, site layout and landscaping. All new developments should be built to the highest energy conservation standards and should adopt passive solar design principles to achieve this. Careful control over the height, mass and density of the built form together with consideration of siting, orientation and landscaping will directly affect energy consumption and the overall quality of the environment. New developments should be designed to be sustainable in terms of design, construction, drainage and energy/ water use and developers must meet a high BREEAM Ecohomes standard.
- 4.1.2 Circulation, demand and linkage requirements**
- The internal street layout must balance vehicular movement and prioritise pedestrian/cycle movement for local journeys.
 - Internal road layout to form a loop, with principal road of at least 6.1 metres in width.
 - The street hierarchy should allow for a central east west road, aligned with the main vehicular access point at Three Cherry Trees Lane that connects with a central north south spine. This will allow future links with the employment land to the south to be established.
 - The site should be designed with a 'homezone' approach at its core. The street hierarchy should integrate different types and volumes of usage. The central road should be designed to accommodate larger vehicles and buses whereas the streets leading from the central route should gradually reduce in size and incorporate permeable surfaces.
 - The central spine should be established on an axis aligned with the main pedestrian/cycle access to the Nicky Line and the future access point to the employment land. It should be a boulevard style street that incorporates potential bus routes and restricts private vehicles at the transition between the residential site and the future employment land.
 - The site should allow for convenient, easy cycle and pedestrian access from the Nicky Line, Cherry Tree Lane and other important links and routes adjacent to the site. This should include links to Woodhall Farm to the north where there are schools and community facilities, including provision of a safe and convenient crossing point on Redbourn Road.
 - Pedestrian/cycle entrance points should be aligned with the streets and footpaths to the north and east of the site. Internal links to quality spaces should also be created such as to the existing green space to the north west (the

Neighbourhood Park) and south east corner of the site (regenerated woodland block) and the green buffer zones to the south and east, adjacent to the reservoir.

- The main pedestrian/cycle access from or to the site along the Nicky Line should provide an imaginative solution for securing a direct physical link to the existing neighbourhoods, for example via a lightweight bridge.
- The Nicky Line is part of the National Cycle Network, as well as being of local importance. It should be improved by facilitating access for pedestrians/cyclists and providing better surface treatment that allows use in all weather. Access points should allow easy access to the route and also incorporate open areas to sit, relax and overlook the Nicky Line.
- Access points to the Nicky Line must be solely for the purpose of pedestrian/cyclist use and therefore be controlled to restrict any vehicular traffic.
- Provision will be made to allow for inclusive access throughout the site, ensuring level changes are ramped and the route is fully accessible, whilst controlling illegal vehicle use.

4.1.3 Off-street and on-street vehicle parking requirements

- Detailed guidance on parking provision is set out in Appendix 5 of the Dacorum Local Plan, in the Borough Council's 'Accessibility Zones for the Application of Car Parking Standards' (July 2002) and the County Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) for parking provision at new development (December 2000). The County Council's guidance is currently under review. At

the detailed design stage it is therefore advisable to contact the County Council with regard to current design and layout standards for parking. Dacorum's maximum parking standards by dwelling type are set out in Table 4.1.

- On-street parking should be designed as shared surfaces with appropriate landscape design, defined pedestrian routes and clear visibility from the residential development.
- Off street parking provision could be provided in the form of communal on-site parking. These areas should be well overlooked by adjoining buildings and provide for no more than 15 spaces to avoid parked cars dominating the external environment.
- Car parking provision should utilise permeable surfaces with the emphasis on green surfaces along perimeter parking areas to encourage access to frontages only.
- Larger properties could be designed with garages but these must be set behind the front building line to ensure continuous building frontage and good natural surveillance.

- Appropriate provision must be made for cycle parking in accordance with the County Council guidance. Consideration should be given to the provision of secure parking, in the form of cycle lockers or sheds as appropriate.
- Parking areas located adjacent to areas of open land should be avoided where possible. Where it is not possible to avoid such locations, then measures should be put in place to ensure that the open land is not used for overspill parking.

Table 4.1 Maximum Parking Standard by Dwelling Type (Source: Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011, Adopted April 2004)

Description Dwelling	Maximum Parking	Cycle Parking
1 bedroom/bed-sit	1.25 spaces	1 l/t space per dwelling if no garage or shed provided
2 bedroom	1.5 spaces	
3 bedroom	2.25 spaces	
4 or more bedroom	3 spaces	

4.2 Continuity and Enclosure

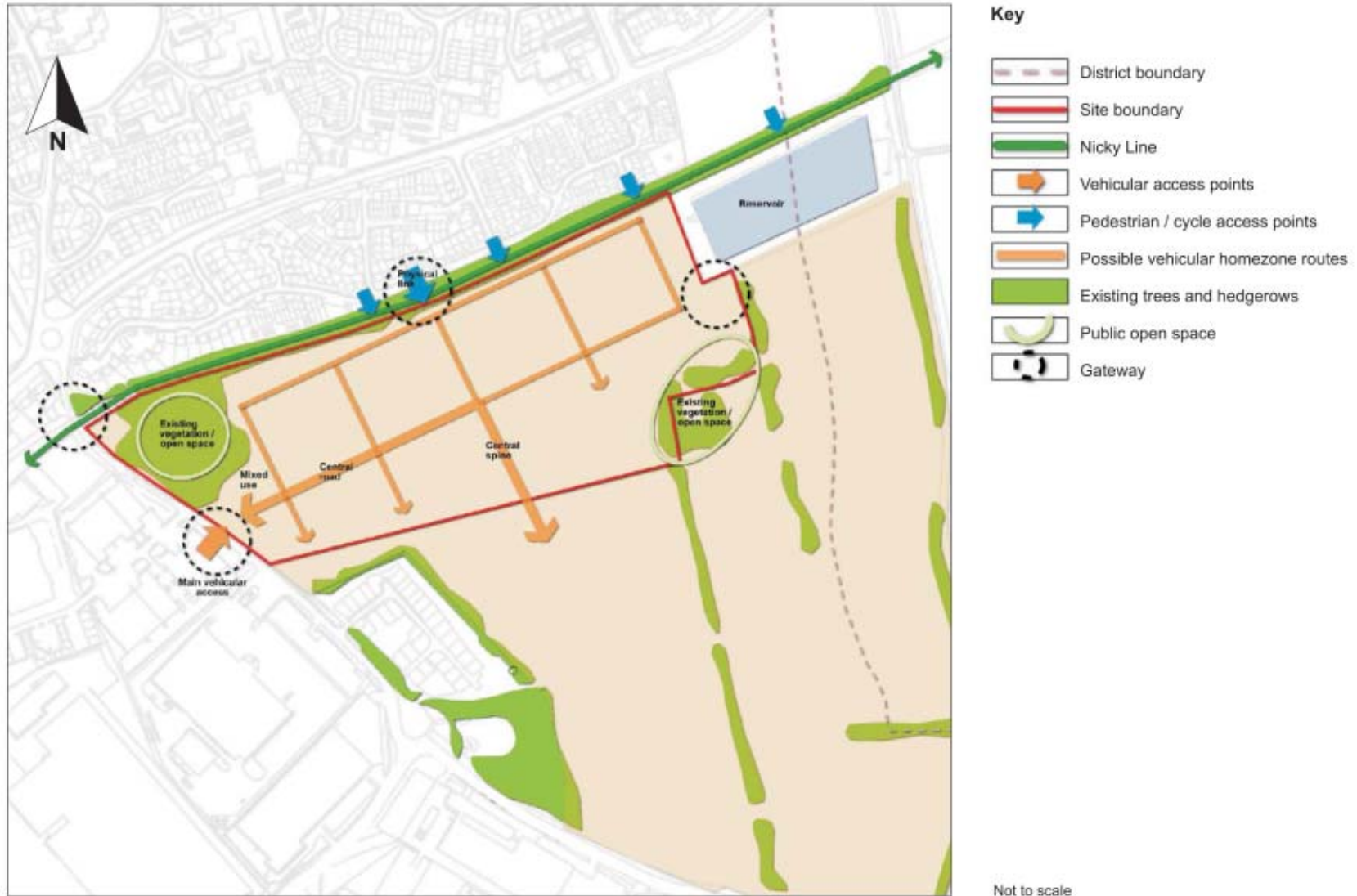
Development layouts should create strong links between built form and open spaces to ensure a well connected development that works well and creates a sense of local distinctiveness.

- The central green 'valley' links the two main development areas on the 'hilltops' and acts as a buffer zone and a link between the 'hilltops' and public spaces.

The development principles are:

- **Continuous...Morphology** - Emphasise permeability by developing an overall coherent street hierarchy together with well proportioned blocks, avoiding cul-de-sacs or dead-end roads and inactive frontages;
- **Continuous...Building Line** - Create coherence and vitality of the site with consistent building lines along streets and open space. The emphasis should be on minimum building setbacks along primary routes or spaces and with gaps at preferred entry or departure points and visual corridors;
- **Continuous...Orientation** - Create an increased sense of security and added vitality to the public realm by facing building entries and active internal uses to streets and open spaces such as the Nicky Line or onto green buffer zones; and
- **Continuous...Open Space** - Utilise all external aspects of the development to create a spatial sequence following a structured landscape strategy which draws on elements of the existing and surrounding landscape.

Figure 4.2 Making Connections



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Figure 4.4 illustrates these principles of continuity and enclosure.

4.2.1 Morphology requirements

- Development should maintain the street character and open space networks of the surrounding neighbourhoods and existing adjoining development.
- Where appropriate streets should incorporate a curvilinear layout which is quite typical for Hemel Hempstead and helps to discourage high speed and cut through traffic.
- Development should be in the form of 'walkable' perimeter blocks that ideally show a 'public face to public areas' to allow for safe routes overlooked by active building frontages. These will also offer diverse choices of routes that make walking and cycling easy and attractive.
- Public open space should be distributed throughout the site with clear links in form, structure and materials to the surrounding landscape and internal private spaces.

4.2.2 Building line, setback and gap requirements

- Buildings should create a continuous, unbroken street edge where the treatment of plot boundaries promotes a sense of ownership and privacy.
- Regular building lines, with appropriate breaks and setbacks should be strong and consistent.
- Buildings next to the vehicular site access should provide an active building line that has minimum setbacks to provide good enclosures to the road and to create a positive gateway to the site.

- Built form along the Nicky Line should create a continuous building line with a sufficient building setback to accommodate a buffer zone. It should integrate occasional gaps to allow for pedestrian/cycle routes to penetrate.

4.2.3 Building front and back/orientation requirements

- All residential buildings should be orientated to front onto the street with internal, principle living rooms designed at the front of the home to provide natural surveillance, activity and visual interaction with the wider public realm. New development should overlook well defined, actively used public space and movement corridors to encourage a safe environment.
- A variation of perimeter block designs should make a clear distinction between public fronts and private backs with fronts accommodating frequent doors, windows and primary access to development onto streets and open spaces. Backs should face private or service areas in order to provide animation and security to the public realm.
- All routes should be aligned by strong frontage with continuous active uses especially at ground floor.
- There must be a minimum distance of 23 metres between the main rear wall of a dwelling and the main wall (front or rear) of another to ensure privacy.
- The Nicky Line should be overlooked by adjacent buildings with the main building entrances and active internal rooms orientated towards it. Where gaps accommodate pedestrian/cycle routes accessing the Nicky Line, building sides should have sufficient openings to give a sense of security.

- Development along the eastern boundary should front onto the adjacent buffer zone to provide an open aspect to the east with natural surveillance and allow for attractive and valuable views to and from the open farmland.

4.2.4 Designated open space/pattern of open space requirements

- Open space should be distributed throughout the site connecting to key public spaces at the north western and south eastern corners of the site along the green valley with stretches of green incorporating existing tree rows and buffer zones along site boundaries.
 - Key public open spaces such as the Neighbourhood Park in the north western corner of the site and the improved woodland to the south east should be defined through continuity in design style with a more structured sense of place.
 - Semi private spaces should be suited to the built form to which they relate. For example the buffer zone alongside the Nicky Line should be enclosed and 'owned' by the properties immediately adjacent with clear pedestrian and cycle links for other users where appropriate.
 - Provision should be made within the site for appropriate leisure and play space. This should be in accordance with NPFA standards and include a LEAP standard facility, plus additional informal sports provision. Advice on detailed requirements can be provided by the Council's Parks and Open Space Manager. All or some of these facilities can be provided as part of the Neighbourhood Park, with the remaining provision at appropriate location(s) within the site.
- Open space within the streetscape should reflect the priority of the route in the scale and formality of its design. For example, around gateways the open space would be expected to contain a greater degree of hard, formal landscaping whereas along secondary routes a softer, more domestic approach which creates links with the surrounding countryside would be applicable.
 - Existing tall mature hedgerows along site boundaries should be retained and enhanced with under storey planting and buffer zones creating a sinuous natural edge to the development.
 - The existing security fencing and associated landscaping around the reservoir is to be retained and planting enhanced through inclusion within a landscaped buffer.

Figure 4.3 Continuity and Enclosure



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4.3 Quality of the Public Realm

Proposals for the site should result in a high quality network of outdoor spaces and public areas by addressing detailed design of public spaces and hard and soft streetscape and natural landscape elements for both public and private spaces.

- An overall open space network that integrates existing areas of ecological value, tree belts and buffer zones and encourages interaction between built and natural form in a quality public realm.

The development principles are:

- **Quality...Streetscape** - Creating a sense of security, safety and overall coherence through the positive impact of streetscape and natural elements within the site;
- **Quality...Open Space** - Creating a clear hierarchy of high quality external spaces within the development which respond to user requirements with continuous links through green corridors; and
- **Quality...Materials** - Specifying use of sustainable materials in the built form and external spaces which are appropriate to the local area.

Figure 4.5 illustrates these principles relating to the quality of public realm.

4.3.1 Streetscape requirements

- The street hierarchy should be reflected through traffic calming treatments and streetscape elements to reinforce the roles of different areas within the site.

- High quality streetscape elements for new development should contribute to the character of the site. It is important that a collective framework is applied for streetscape elements such as hard landscaping materials and street furniture. This ensures the delivery of a consistent built fabric and public realm.
- The site should be developed to '*Secured by Design Standards*'. To reach these standards developers should consult with, and take account of the advice of the Police Crime Prevention Design Unit for the area. Developers should also consult '*Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention*', which can be viewed at www.planningresource.co.uk
- A comprehensive maintenance system will be required for any flats/apartments within the site. Provision should also be made for waste management facilities to serve these units. These should be located away from the Nicky Line, conveniently positioned for residents, well screened and of sufficient size to cater for both normal domestic waste and recycling. Please refer to the Borough Council's Advice Note on The Storage of Refuse at Residential Developments (June 2006).
- The development must also incorporate appropriately sized recycling facilities in convenient locations.

4.3.2 Open space requirements

- Development should provide and protect connections to adjacent farmland and the Green Belt retaining key landscape features and views.
- A designated buffer along the adjacent farmland and the Green Belt must be established to protect the rural fringe

and existing hedgerows along Cherry Tree Lane. This should be a minimum of 30 metres wide.

- A variety of types of open space should be provided throughout the site, incorporating leisure and recreation, habitat value and civic amenity to strengthen links and distinction between areas within the development.
 - Open spaces adjacent to site access points should feature a more formal design with larger scale gateway features to complement adjacent buildings.
 - The key node where the central spine meets the green valley should act as a pivotal open space maximising links between the built form and adjacent 'natural' landscape through channelled views, sculptural art pieces and a key landscape feature.
 - The Neighbourhood Park should be a minimum of 1.3 hectares and designed so as to act as a green hub to the development serving the residents, users of employment land to the west and the wider local community. It should include elements for formal and informal recreation, wildlife habitats and small scale community events within the existing woodland structure.
 - The existing woodland block to the south east should be managed and extended to provide a counterbalance to the Neighbourhood Park which will include informal recreation elements, wildlife habitats and sculptural features.
 - The Green Valley should form the primary element of transitional open space within the development containing the built form within the existing landscape and providing a linear park style recreational facility for residents.
- Perimeter vehicular access should utilise permeable green surfacing to reinforce the semi private nature of the space as well and reduce its visual impact.
 - All residential developments must provide an area of private amenity space for dwellings. Paragraph 3.6 of Appendix 3 of the Dacorum Local Plan sets out detailed requirements for gardens and shared amenity space.

Figure 4.4 Quality of the Public Realm



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4.4 Making Places

Development should strengthen local character and achieve appropriate integration with the surrounding communities.

- A new development comprising three different development edges that are shaped by their relationship with industrial and residential uses and the countryside.

The development principles are:

- **Places...Topography** - Consider the natural topography existing on the site by for example incorporating a central green 'valley' as a green link and allowing for development on the adjacent 'hilltops';
- **Places...Density** - Inform the character of the development by sensitively responding to the three different development edges formed by the industrial, residential and countryside interfaces;
- **Places...Building Height** - Emphasise important routes, intersections or site accesses through consistent skylines or appropriate building heights;
- **Places...Architecture/Materials** - Integrate features such as modern building materials or emphasised building parts that give the site a distinctive character, form identity and sense of place; and
- **Places...Landscape** - Structure the external space within the development to provide an open space hierarchy which defines and connects the site with the surrounding landscape.

Figure 4.6 illustrates the above principles.

4.4.1 Topography requirements

- The site's topography should be utilised to create a distinct green valley to integrate existing green space with the creation of a green buffer between land allocated for housing and the employment land.
- A strong corridor should be retained along the central spine by not disrupting the long views from one 'hilltop' to the other. This will require extensive tree planting and emphasise the green valley and its lower location through the careful positioning of key buildings and structures.
- Development arrangement, mass and height should respond to the site's sloping character towards the east by integrating gaps and lower building heights to allow for views over the adjacent farmland and the Green Belt.

4.4.2 Density requirements

- Overall density of the site will be according to the local plan between 30-50 dwellings per hectare, which reflects a low to medium density according to government guidance PPG3.
- An understanding of each housing type location should be developed, to create a variation in densities with a range of housing unit types, including detached/semi-detached housing, terraced units and flats or apartments. A range of 1,2 and 3 bedroom units should be provided in accordance with the Local Plan.
- Residential development should include around 50% affordable housing within a balanced and integrated mix of size and tenure reflecting local needs. The Council generally seeks to achieve a 75/25 split with 75% general

needs rented and the remaining 25% for key worker, intermediate rent and shared ownership.

- Affordable housing should be phased and 'pepper potted' so as to be viable throughout the development and designed to the same architectural standard as market driven homes.
- Densities within the site should decrease from west to east, with higher densities close to the main access point, and existing employment land, and lower densities to the east as a transitional zone adjacent to the reservoir.
- Higher densities adjacent to the site access could be emphasised by taller, more compact built forms with a consistent building line that creates a strong arrival point to the site.
- Lower densities adjacent to the reservoir to the east should accommodate lower, more permeable building forms that allow for physical as well as visual transition to open farmland beyond.

4.4.3 Building height requirements

- Buildings throughout the site should generally be two to two and a half storeys. Taller buildings may be acceptable in certain key locations, provided they are appropriately designed and reflect the overall scale and location of the development.
- Building heights along main routes e.g. the central spine should be consistent to emphasise the importance of the route and provide vital view corridors.
- Buildings adjacent to the vehicular site access could be up to four storeys to reflect their gateway function by creating

a landmark and allowing for better orientation besides ensuring sufficient sunlight penetration.

- Built forms along the Nicky line should be restricted to a maximum of two storey high buildings in order to positively accommodate the lower lying pedestrian/cycle route. Buildings adjoining the main pedestrian/cycle access could accentuate corners and be raised to two and a half storeys to emphasise site entrances.
- Building height along the eastern site boundary should be a maximum of two storeys to allow for a sensitive transition between development land, the reservoir and the adjacent open farmland.

4.4.4 Materials and textures/architectural style requirements

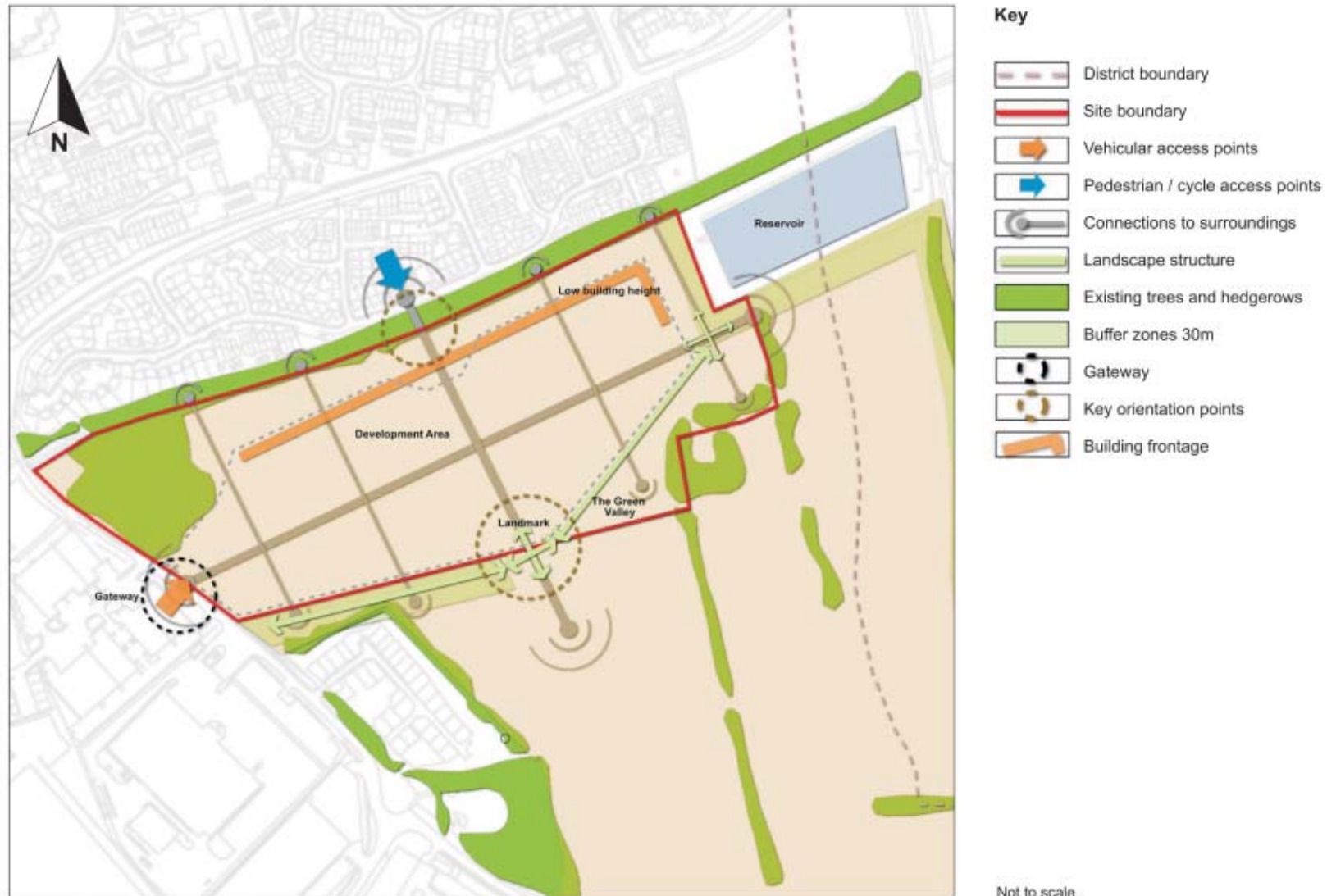
- A careful integration of the site with the surrounding built environment of Hemel Hempstead should ensure that the use of local materials promotes a high quality built fabric and environmental sustainability.
- The site's location at the fringe of Hemel Hempstead should incorporate more contemporary approaches in architectural styles.
- There should be opportunities for high-quality modern materials and styles, particularly with regard to mixed use, commercial and community buildings.
- Development will generally endorse a consistency in materials to develop a local distinctiveness within the site.
- Opportunities should be sought to integrate sustainable structures and materials into the design of development.

- Soft landscape materials will maximise creative use of locally appropriate native species, density and linear structural style.

4.4.5 Landscape requirements

- The landscape strategy should include all external space within the development to ensure strong links between built form, circulation routes, public open space and habitat features with a clear and practical hierarchy.
- Open spaces should relate clearly to their place in the hierarchy as well as the various requirements of all users delivering robust recreation and habitat provision.
- Art features, varied habitat creation, design features and street furniture should be selected and incorporated to emphasise identity of individual spaces within the overall landscape strategy.
- Lighting will be sensitively designed to incorporate low energy and solar/wind powered units to enhance security and extended use of key areas within the development whilst minimising impact on visually and ecologically sensitive receptors such as the Nicky Line and countryside to the east.
- A sustainable drainage system should serve the site providing the opportunity for additional habitat creation and recreational use, preventing 'dead' areas.

Figure 4.5 Making Places



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4.5 Legibility

Proposals for the site should create a place that is legible and easy to move around in by involving the design of streets, distinctive public open spaces and landmarks and the built form.

- A comprehensive landscape strategy that covers all external elements of the site in a coherent sequence of spaces which respond to each other and the surrounding area.

The development principles are:

- **Legible...Views** - Integrate views, vistas and gateways such as open views into the Green Belt and strong visual connection along the central spine to facilitate people's understanding of the place; and
- **Legible...Character** - Provide a clear network of streets, footpaths and public open spaces allowing for direct and convenient connections between places that respond to the site's topography, frame important views and create natural locations for landmark buildings.

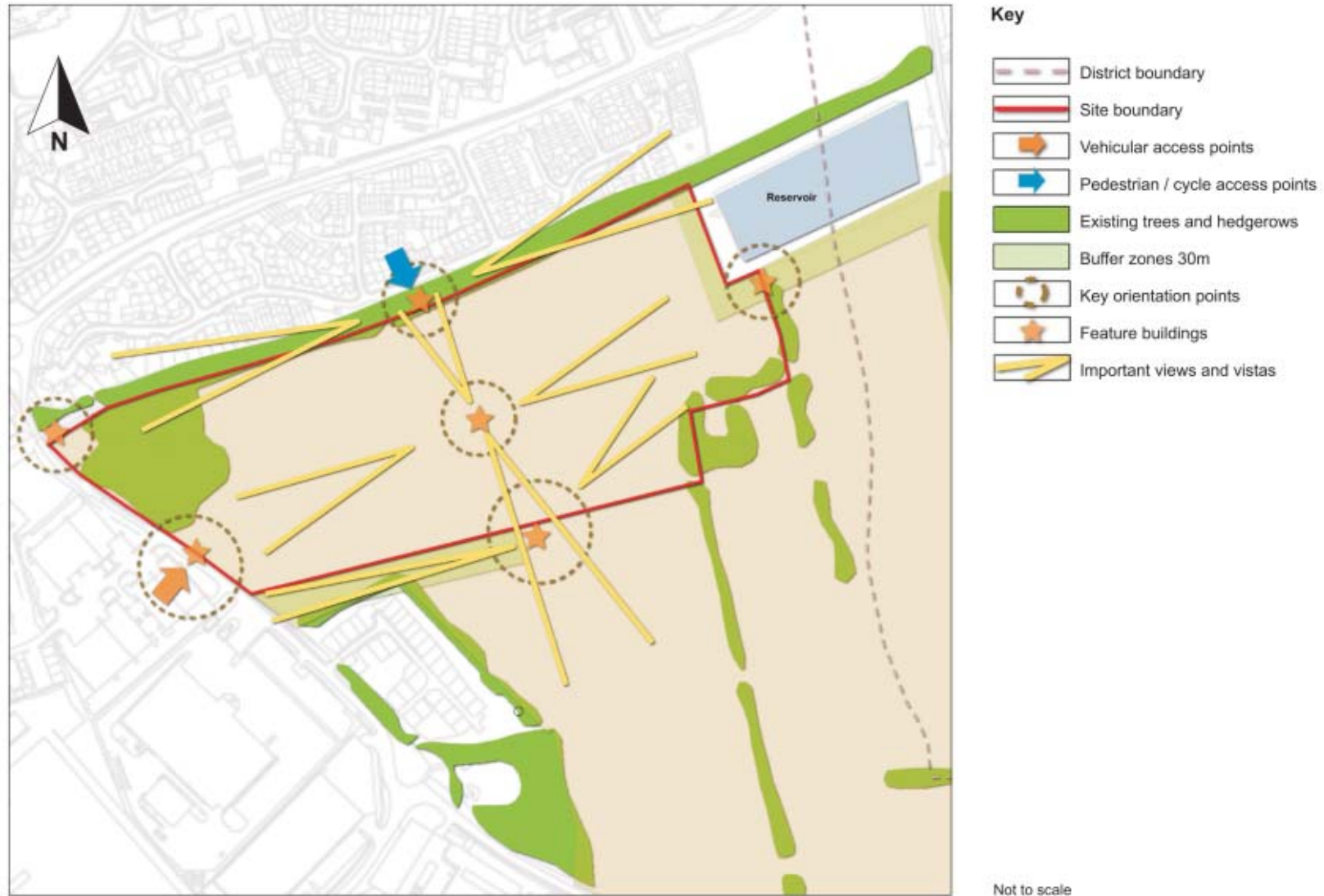
Figure 4.7 illustrates the above principles.

4.5.1 Views, vistas and gateway requirements

- Both local and wider view corridors of the surrounding countryside and adjoining development should be enhanced and protected. Varied sequences of views and vistas should be terminated by landmark buildings, landscape features or a reference point of architectural detail to emphasise sense of place.

- Vistas into and from the adjacent farmland and the Green Belt must be protected by establishing and enhancing view corridors.
- The central vehicular route should allow for a long distance view which connects the main site entrance with the open countryside to the east.
- Visual intersections where the central spine meets other routes should be regarded as key orientation points and therefore highlighted with regard to build form, frontage or open spaces.
- The green valley should allow for uninterrupted long vistas with variety in close distance views allowing for an easy and direct pedestrian/cycle route from west to east or vice versa.
- To emphasise the key node where the green valley meets the central spine, development should incorporate an appropriate landmark structure that allows for a strong orientation point within the site.
- The vehicular access to the site ought to incorporate a landmark building and a more formal style of public open space.

Figure 4.6 Legibility



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5. Implementation, Phasing and Developer Contributions

5.1 H18 Residential Site

The Borough Council requires a comprehensive planning submission for this site. Applicants should demonstrate how the application accords with the principles and details identified in this brief and with the planning requirements set out in the Dacorum Borough Local Plan and relevant Supplementary Planning Documents.

Applicants will be required to provide sufficient information and appropriately detailed plans to enable the Borough Council to assess the full impacts of the proposals. This will include:

- A supporting statement;
- Environmental Statement or Environmental Report (to include ecological assessment);
- A Transport Assessment;
- A Flood Risk Assessment/Outline Drainage Strategy;
- A Tree Survey;
- An Assessment of Archaeological Potential;
- Detailed investigations to assess any potential ground contamination;
- Species studies;

- Landscaping strategy;
- A Design and Access Statement;
- Sustainability Statement (see Appendix 1 of Local Plan); and
- Indicative Phasing Programme.

An application for residential development on the site would fall within the Town and Country Planning (Residential Development on Greenfield Land) (England) Direction 2000, so would be submitted to the Government Office if the Borough Council is minded to approve the application.

Figure 5.1 illustrates how the site should be developed in two phases, as follows:

Phase 1 - the western part of the site with access onto Three Cherry Trees Lane forms a logical first phase. The majority of mixed use elements such as the Neighbourhood Park, corner shop and community hall/facility fall within this area, enabling them to be integrated before the rest of the residential elements are developed. This will assist in creating a sense of community in the first phase. Around 182 of the 350 residential units are anticipated in this phase. The central area of open space adjacent to the Nicky Line should also be provided in this phase.

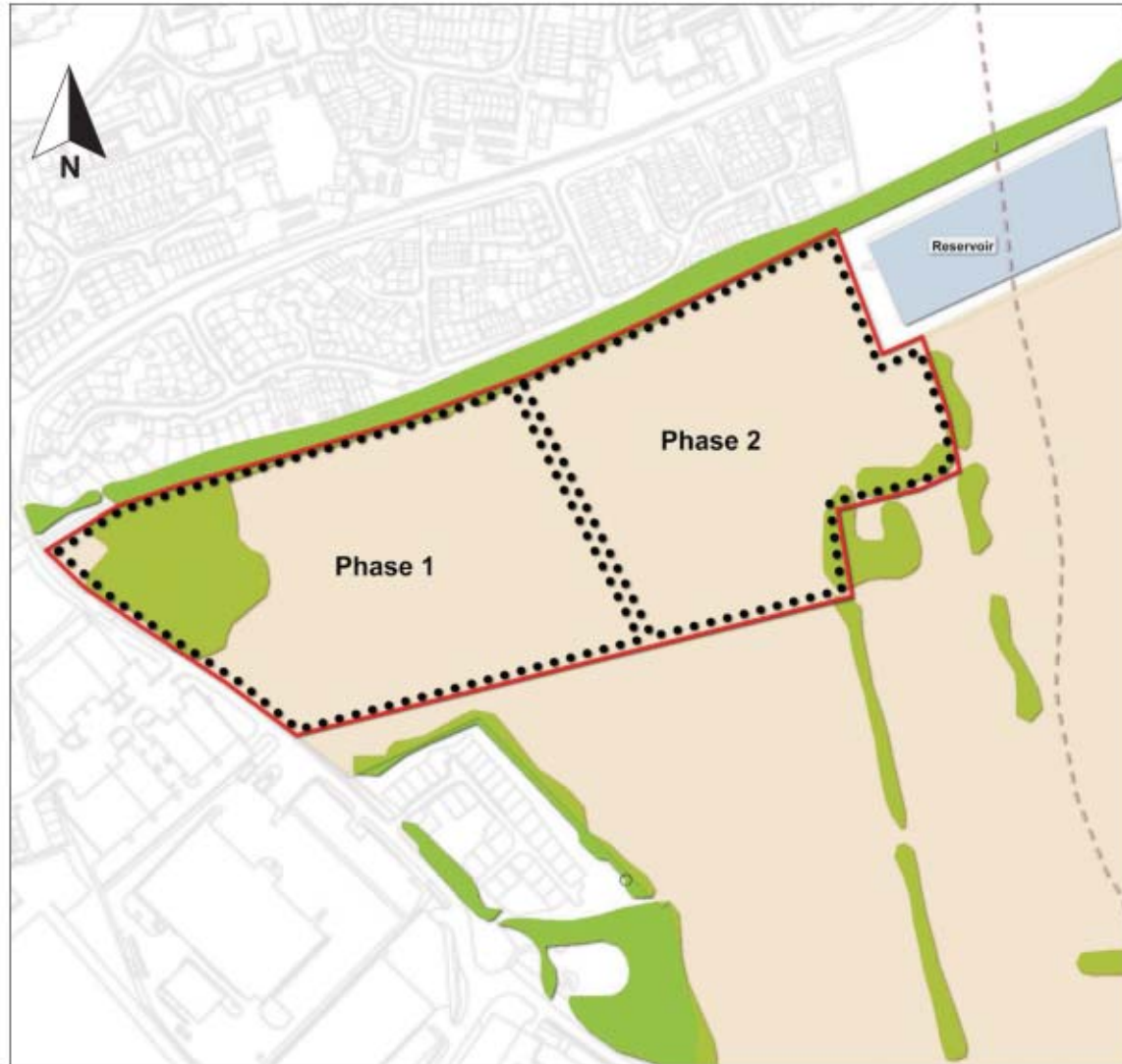
Phase 2 - the eastern part of the site would form the second phase. Around 168 of the 350 residential units are anticipated in this phase.

The precise level of developer contributions payable at each phase will be decided following detailed discussion with the Council and other relevant bodies.

The associated transport infrastructure and off-site highway improvements (see section 6.1.2) are to be either completed or provided for with realistic prospects of completion within a reasonable

timescale of commencement of the residential development. Details of phasing of these improvements are set out in section 5.1.2.

Figure 5.1 Phasing Diagram



Key

-  District boundary
-  Site boundary

Detailed boundaries of Phase 1 and 2 to be determined following consultation with the Borough Council

Not to scale

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5.1.1 Developer contributions

The following will be covered by a legal agreement:

- Affordable Housing: Provision of around 50% affordable housing. This agreement should include the range of house types and categories, including the means of provision and timing. The Council generally seeks to achieve a 75/25 split in favour of rented accommodation, with 25% made up of intermediate rent and shared ownership. This is subject to change and so agreement would be reached on the most appropriate split as part of detailed discussions on the legal agreement;
- Open Space: To include level of provision, management and timing. A commuted sum for future maintenance may be agreed, or the open space could be the subject of covenanted, long term community management arrangements;
- North East Hemel Hempstead Relief Road: This will relate to the physical construction of the junctions and link roads on and directly adjacent to the site and financial contributions to HCC for works on the public highway which are more remote from the site. See below for more details;
- Education and Other Community Uses: There is a Local Plan requirement for contributions towards local education facilities and a requirement for provision of a very small scale retail/social and community facilities. The County Council's contribution for primary and secondary education facilities will be based upon the development mix, forecast child population and the consequent impact upon local schools. Regard should also be had to the County Council's guidance on the level of contributions usually

required for libraries, and youth and childcare facilities, although this will be a matter for detailed discussions once the precise mix of unit sizes and types is agreed. Early contact is encouraged with the County Council to discuss these contributions:

- Provision of children's play space and associated facilities;
- Improvements to the Nicky Line, appropriate to the scale of development proposed. These improvements should reflect the Nicky Line Management Plan. This may be in the form of a commuted sum to assist with long term maintenance and improvements;
- The provision of fire hydrants;
- Where there is a capacity problem with water supply, surface water, foul drainage and sewerage treatment and no improvements are programmed by Thames Water, the developer will be required to fund appropriate improvements;
- Appropriate street furniture and public art; and
- Where appropriate the Highway Authority may seek contributions to promote sustainable transport measures/schemes.

5.1.2 North East Hemel Hempstead relief road

The Local Plan Housing Schedule states in relation to H18 that the site cannot be developed in the absence of a comprehensively planned transport infrastructure and off-site highway improvements, including the completion of the North East Hemel Hempstead Relief Road. These improvements are set out in the Local Plan and associated Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). The works required to provide the NERR are summarised as follows:

-
- Junction improvements to increase the capacity of A414 Breakspear Way Roundabout;
 - Widening and junction improvements on Swallowdale Lane (from Three Cherry Trees Lane to Redbourn Road);
 - Widening and junction improvements, A4147 Redbourn Road (Cupid Green to Queensway); and
 - Widening and junction improvements to complete North East Relief Road (line of existing Three Cherry Trees Lane/Green Lane).
- Phase 3 - The remote off-site improvements at Green Lane/Breakspear Way/M1 spur, at Swallowdale Lane/Maylands Avenue and at the 'Link Road'/Redbourne Way.

Further detail on the requirements for the NERR is provided in the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) 'Land for Development at North East Hemel Hempstead' (Adopted May 2004).

It has been agreed with officers at Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) that this will be delivered in two forms as follows:

- The physical construction of the junctions and link roads on and directly adjacent to the site; and
- A financial contribution to works on the public highway which are more remote from the site.

The phasing strategy agreed with Hertfordshire County Council is as follows:

- Phase 1 - Junctions at Swallowdale Lane/Three Cherry Trees Lane, at Three Cherry Trees Lane/main site access with a temporary connection linking the latter back to Cherry Tree Lane.
- Phase 2 - Cherry Tree Lane to Punch Bowl Lane and Green Lane.

5.1.3 Buncefield HSE Investigation

There is currently a 190 metre consultation zone around the Buncefield Oil Depot. The development brief site does not fall within this consultation zone being approximately 400 metres from the depot at its closest point. A part of the E4 site to the south of H18 falls within the zone. The Borough Council consults HSE on applications within this zone. At present there is no change to the HSE's planning policy on its consultation zones. However, this brief recognises that changes may occur as a result of the Buncefield Investigation and any changes in the HSE's planning advice will be fully taken into account at all stages of the development process.

6. Further Information/Contacts

Reference should be made to the various documents referred to throughout this Brief. Further discussions are likely to be necessary with statutory undertakers and utilities and other relevant contacts. Details of these can be obtained from Dacorum Borough Council. Key contacts at the Borough and County Council include:

Dacorum Borough Council

Laura Wood, Development Plans Unit - 01442 228661

Simon Warner, Development Plans Unit - 01442 228566

Claire Covington, Parks and Open Spaces Manager -
01442 228788

Kate Bowles, Housing Enabling Manager - 01442 228526

Suzy Donaldson, Housing Policy Officer -01442 228586

Nigel Gibbs, Development Control - 01442 228576

Ruth Chapman, Trees and Woodlands - 01442 228665

Hertfordshire County Council

County Archaeologist: Mr JG Smith, County Hall, Hertford - 01992 555555

Head of Historic Environment: Mr. Stewart Bryant, County Hall, Hertford, SG13 8DN - 01992 555555

Highways Design and Layout: Mr. Vetti Vettivelu, County Hall, Hertford, SG13 8DN, 01992 556120

Passenger Transport: County Hall, Hertford, SG13 8DN, 01992 556765

Contributions towards local educational facilities, library provision and childcare facilities; Jacqueline Nixon, Herts CC, County Hall, Hertford - 01992 588123

Appendix A

Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Guidance

A summary of the key points from the relevant National Guidance (Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Planning Policy Statements) is set out below.

PPS1 sets out the broad principles of planning policy with the aim of delivering sustainable development through the land-use planning system. The concept of sustainability is fundamental and will be a key consideration in the preparation of the detailed design of the site.

PPS3 sets out the need for the planning system to deliver high quality housing that is well designed and built to a high standard. It seeks to ensure that housing is developed in suitable locations which offer a range of community facilities with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure. The PPS advises Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to set out a range of densities across the plan area rather than one broad density range, although 30 dwellings per hectare net is to be used as a national indicative minimum. LPAs are advised that land should be used effectively and efficiently and should achieve a good mix and choice of housing.

PPS9 sets out key principles for LPAs, relating to preparation of plan policies and development control. It advises that the aim of planning decisions should be to prevent harm to biodiversity and geological conservation interests. It also sets out the need for development proposals to conserve or enhance biodiversity where appropriate.

PPG13 seeks to integrate land use and transport planning. It sets out the principles of sustainability in terms of 'reducing the need to travel' by locating developments close to existing services and facilities. A key

aim is to provide access to a variety of modes of transport as suitable and viable alternatives to the car.

PPG16 sets out the importance of investigating and preserving any archaeological remains prior to development taking place. **PPG17** sets out the importance of accessibility to existing and new open spaces from small children's play space, to playing fields and country parks. **PPG25** provides guidance on the importance of assessing the flood risk associated with new development. The impact of development in terms of increasing surface run off and the probability of increasing the risk of flooding elsewhere is an important consideration.

The Development Plan

The detailed requirements for the H18 site are set out in the Schedule of Housing Proposal Sites and in the SPG on Areas Based Policies covering Development at North East Hemel Hempstead.

A summary of the key Dacorum Local Plan requirements specific to the housing site (H18) is set out below:

- Housing - Net capacity 350 (site area 12.9 hectares). To be linked to land south of Redbourn Road (H41) and planned comprehensively with development for employment purposes at Three Cherry Trees Lane. Design of development to respect the character and ecological value of the Nicky Line. Mixed housing including 1,2 and 3 bedroom houses and flats. Requirement for high proportion of affordable housing (around 50% of total units);
- Pedestrian and Cycle Links - Requirement for network of pedestrian and cycle routes through the site, connecting with local facilities and external routes (particularly the Nicky Line and via employment site E4 to Buncefield Lane). Requirement for pedestrian and cycle links to

Woodhall Farm, including safe and convenient crossing points on Redbourn Road;

- Infrastructure - Comprehensive planning of transport infrastructure and off-site highway improvements, including the completion of the north east Hemel Hempstead Relief Road. Vehicular access by loop road passing through site and connecting to Three Cherry Trees Lane to north of travellers' site (detailed transport requirements set out in SPG);
- Local Facilities - Requirement for very small scale retailing/social and community facilities to be made. Contribution towards provision of additional educational facilities will be required; and
- Landscaping/Ecology - Existing wooded areas, trees and hedgerows to be retained and supplemented. New landscaping should include landscaped buffers on southern and eastern boundaries of site and landscape improvements to the setting of the balancing tank. Buffers to be 30 meters wide and contain semi-mature and mature broad leaved native trees

A summary of the main Dacorum Local Plan policies of relevance to the site are set out below:

- Policy 11: Quality of Development sets out a requirement that a high standard is expected in all development proposals. New development should make a positive contribution to protect and enhance the environment;
- Policy 12: Infrastructure Provision and Phasing sets out the need to clearly demonstrate that the necessary infrastructure already exists or can be provided, at reasonable cost and without adverse economic,

environmental or social impact, prior to the occupation of the development;

- Policy 18: The Size of New Dwellings requires Lifetime homes on sites of over 25 dwellings; at least 10% of all dwellings should be designed as life-time homes;
- Policy 21: Density of Residential Development states that densities will be expected to be in the range of 30 to 50 dwellings per hectare net. Higher densities are encouraged in more accessible locations;
- Car Parking Standards are set out in Appendix 5 of the Local Plan. This states that car parking demand should be met on-site for residential developments, although reduced provision may be acceptable for higher density developments; and
- Policy 76: Leisure Space in New Residential Developments requires development to meet a standard of at least 1.2 hectare per 1,000 population or 5% of the development area, whichever is greater.

Other policies seek to preserve trees, hedgerows and woodlands throughout the Borough and protect sites of importance to nature conservation (Policy 99 and 102). Policy 118 seeks to protect important archaeological remains and Policy 124 addresses the issue of water conservation and sustainable drainage systems.