



Bishop's Stortford Neighbourhood Plans for Silverleys and Meads Wards and for All Saints, Central, South and Part of Thorley Parish (1st Revision) 2021-2033

Policies Summary

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Policies Summary

INTRODUCTION

This document contains the policies (but not the preliminary supporting text) is the 1st revision of the two Neighbourhood Plans for Bishop's Stortford. The revisions to both plans were prepared as the same time, and together cover the whole of the town of Bishop's Stortford and part of the parish of Thorley. The policies have been rearranged for ease of reference when commenting on or preparing planning applications.

HISTORY

The Neighbourhood Plan covering Silverleys and Meads wards of Bishop's Stortford was 'made' (ie adopted) in 2015. The Neighbourhood Plan for All Saints, Central, South and part of Thorley was made in 2017. The first revisions to both plans, which this document relates to, were prepared concurrently, and made in August 2022.

In making the concurrent revisions to both policies which were similar between the plans were revised so that they were identical. These were, in fact, the majority of the policies in both plans and bring them together simplifies the planning environment for the town. In addition, a new section on Climate Change was introduced, policies on Green Infrastructure and Transport strengthened and other minor revisions were made. The site-specific policies for the major development sites were brought up to date.

The plans cover the period 2022-2032.

DEFINITIVE MADE PLANS

This document contains the policies from the definitive made plans. The actual definitive documents are available on the Bishop's Stortford Town Council Website (follow 'Neighbourhood Planning')

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These policies apply to the whole of the Civil Parish of Bishops Stortford (and a part of Thorley Parish) and represent the majority of the policies in both plans

Section 2 - Designated locations (Page 73 of 160)

Some of the 'common policies' refer to a list of 'designated locations' to which they apply (eg specific green spaces or targeted areas for transport improvements). This section comprises a list of the designated locations

Section 3 - Site specific policies (page 79 of 160)

There are a small number of major development sites for which very specific policies apply (in addition to the Common Policies). These appear here

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These define areas referenced in the plans (including the 'Designated Locations') and set out the special character of spaces designated within the 'Green Infrastructure' policies

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Policies Summary Section 1 – Common Policies

These policies apply to the whole of the Civil Parish of Bishops Stortford (and a part of Thorley Parish) and represent the majority of the policies in both plan

3 Policies

3.1 CLIMATE CHANGE

3.1.1 Introduction

3.1.1.1 This first revision of the Neighbourhood Plan specifically recognises the importance of tackling climate change both in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to minimise future global climate change, and planning for the unavoidable local impacts of climate change. Every planning application should be assessed through the prism of the necessity to do everything possible to reduce the impact of climate change.

3.1.2 Objective: To enable Bishop's Stortford to make a significant contribution to reducing climate change and to respond to East Herts District Council's commitment to support the whole of the District in becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

3.1.2.1 To quote from the recent report, 'UK housing: Fit for the future?' from the Committee on Climate Change (CCC): "The technology exists to deliver homes that are low-carbon, energy efficient and climate-resilient, with safe air quality and moisture levels. The costs are not prohibitive, and getting design right from the outset is vastly cheaper and more feasible than having to retrofit later."

3.1.2.2 Since the East Herts Local Plan was adopted in 2018, a number of local initiatives have been taken in relation to climate change.

Herts County Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019 and adopted a new Sustainable Hertfordshire Strategy in early 2020. East Herts Council declared a Council Change Motion in July 2019. The policies below are in line with and will help to achieve the national targets set by the Climate Change Act. They look forward to an intention by East Herts Council to adopt similar policies.

3.1.2.3 New developments must therefore be planned for low carbon emissions from now, even if the initial costs are increased. Retrofitting is more expensive in the long run, so it is essential to adopt the right approach from the beginning.

CC1 – Carbon Emissions

Every development should contribute to reducing or lowering greenhouse emissions in use. Encouragement will be given to proposals which go further and contribute no greenhouse emissions (net zero carbon).

3.1.2.4 A carbon reduction plan should be submitted as part of any major development application.

3.1.2.5 Local sources of clean energy are a low impact way to provide a sustainable method of reducing reliance on finite fossil fuel reserves and should therefore be encouraged. These would contribute to climate change mitigation by decarbonising part of the energy supply. They could be part either of a new-build or a retrofit in a renovation project, or as an entirely separate scheme. Developer contributions will be sought to fund new schemes.

CC2 – Small scale energy production schemes

Proposals for individual and community scale sustainable and renewable energy regeneration, particularly solar photovoltaic panels, local biomass facilities, anaerobic digesters and wood fuel products will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- the siting and scale of the proposed development is appropriate to its setting and position in the wider landscape
- the proposed development does not create an unacceptable impact on the amenities of local residents;
- the proposed development does not have an unacceptable impact on the biodiversity of the area.
- the proposed development does not compromise the ‘essential purposes’ of the green belt.

3.1.3 Objective: To build resilience in the town to unavoidable climate change, mitigate climate change effects, moderate or avoid harm and exploit beneficial opportunities.

3.1.3.1 Much of the existing building stock has poor energy characteristics and improvements which address this should be encouraged.

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3.1.3.2 There is a potential conflict between such improvements and considerations of aesthetics and conservation and there is a risk that insufficient weight is given to climate change in such cases. This risks preserving the visual characteristics of buildings which are not fit for purpose for a future which will be severely compromised by the effects of climate change, an objective which ultimately is fruitless. Policy CC3 is designed to redress this balance so that addressing climate change is considered to be paramount unless the effects of so doing are overwhelmingly adverse.

3.1.3.3 Alterations to existing buildings must be designed with energy reduction in mind and comply with sustainable design and construction standards. The sensitive retrofitting of energy efficiency measures and the appropriate use of micro-renewables in historic buildings will be encouraged, including the retrofitting of listed buildings, buildings of solid wall or traditional construction and buildings within conservation areas, whilst safeguarding the special characteristics of these heritage assets for the future.

CC3 – Modifications to Existing Buildings

a) Modifications to existing buildings the principal effect and purpose of which mitigates the negative impacts of climate change are supported unequivocally, unless the development can be shown to result in significant harm to the street scene or the amenity of neighbouring properties.

b) For the avoidance of doubt the policy in a) applies to listed buildings unless the proposed development causes material and irreversible harm to the significant historical structure or to the historic appearance as viewed from the public highway. Harm to the appearance which is not readily visible from the public highway, reversible harm to the historic

structure or harm to the parts of the building which are not of historic significance will not qualify as 'significant' harm other than in exceptional circumstances.

3.1.3.4 Buildings also need to be protected against the effects of future climate change, including rising temperatures, scarcity of water and increased flood risk.

3.1.3.5 The Committee for Climate Change report warns about the resilience of our buildings to the effects of climate change: "Efforts to adapt the UK's housing stock to the impacts of the changing climate: for higher average temperatures, flooding and water scarcity, are also lagging far behind what is needed to keep us safe and comfortable, even as these climate change risks grow. Around 4.5m homes overheat, even in cool summers; 1.8 million people live in areas at significant risk of flooding".

CC4 –Design for the Future Climate

Every development should be designed to be resilient to the unavoidable local impacts of climate change. These impacts should include all those anticipated at the time of the development for its design life. These design measures should avoid unacceptable impacts on neighbouring properties.

3.2 HOUSING AND DESIGN

3.2.1 Introduction

3.2.1.1 Bishop's Stortford has a range of architectural styles that present an attractive and recognisable local character.

3.2.1.2 Although each housing estate retains a character typical of the period in which it was built, subsequent infill and modernisation have resulted in an enormous variety of styles and appearances.

3.2.1.3 The District Plan 2018 establishes the amount of development required to meet

needs in Bishop's Stortford and across the district. This is not something that can be meaningfully influenced by the Neighbourhood Plan.

3.2.1.4 The Neighbourhood Plan focuses instead on shaping how development is brought forward to ensure that growth which complements and enhances the unique character of the town can take place in a way which does not undermine the main purpose of the Green Belt in preventing uncontrolled urban sprawl.

3.2.1.5 The policies on Housing & Design should be applied in conjunction with the Climate Change policies in the preceding section.

3.2.2 Objectives

3.2.2.1 The objectives underlying the policies in this chapter are grouped under the headings below:

- Promote an attractive and harmonious living environment recognising the town's heritage
- Promote high functionality and quality within the living environment
- Provide housing for all and create community cohesion
- Identify, protect and enhance archaeological sites

Objective: Promote an attractive and harmonious living environment recognising the town's heritage

3.2.2.2 Bishop's Stortford has a blend of character liked by its residents and well represented within both Neighbourhood Areas. Some areas feature generous gardens and on the edge of the built up areas open spaces allow the town to blend gradually into its rural hinterland. In these areas it is

expected that any developments will enhance this transition through the use of Garden City principles. The ongoing presence of a Green Belt transition together with the town bypass creating its own boundary will help to keep the scale and character of Bishop's Stortford as a historic market town and to prevent urban sprawl.

3.2.2.3 Hertfordshire is the home of the Garden City and, although the character of the Town was never intended as such, the predominance of green open spaces towards the edge accord with those of a mature Garden suburb. The Garden City approach to planning balances lower density of development often around the edge of towns with relatively higher density towards the centres. It also incorporates its own green infrastructure (e.g. gardens, parks, landscaping) so as to create a smooth transition between that and the rural hinterland beyond, with gardens of a size commensurate with the scale and type of dwelling.

3.2.2.4 Comments from local residents show support for lower density developments and show support for the view that landscaping and trees create an attractive environment.



Figure 1 – Development Areas Identified in the District Plan

3.2.2.5 East Hertfordshire District Council has a Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) process to identify and appraise sites that come forward through a consultation process with landowners and other stakeholders.

3.2.2.6 It contains a number of commercial and other areas with premises that are no longer fit for purpose, or that are poorly sited for good connectivity to the transport network. Priority should be given to using such 'brownfield' sites for housing, provided suitable alternative premises arise elsewhere

in the Town and that opportunities for increasing the extent and quality of local employment are forthcoming.

3.2.2.7 All development must comply with Regulation 10(1)(b) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 as amended which requires that in local plans and supplementary planning documents, regard be had for the objectives of preventing major accidents and limiting the consequences of such accidents for human health and the environment. Within the Neighbourhood area there is the potential for land allocation to encroach on

the consultation zones around a National Grid Gas PLC pipeline detailed in Appendix 4.



HDP1 – Residential development and redevelopment

Brownfield re-development shall be supported subject to the achievement of high quality design that meets the requirements of other policies and does not compromise to an unacceptable level the amenity value in either neighbouring properties or for the future occupiers of the proposed development.

3.2.2.8 Bishop's Stortford should only receive the very best, attractive and sustainable development. Building for a Healthy Life 12, a Government-backed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods, is an effective way of achieving high quality through compliance with policy. The standard sets out twelve criteria to assess the quality of a development scheme.

3.2.2.9 The District Plan 2018 acknowledges the value of lifetime homes. Proposals coming forward in Bishop's Stortford should follow the Building for a Healthy Life 12 principles and aim to be exemplary, ideally scoring twelve out of twelve greens when assessed against these criteria. In this context a 'green' against a specific criterion means that all relevant recommendations for that criterion are met.

3.2.2.10 Appendix 3 contains a summary of the AECOM Heritage and Character

Assessment for the Neighbourhood Area divided up to describe the land and townscape features of each sub-area. As developments arise in any sub-area, it is expected that the Key Character Management Principles applicable for that sub-area will guide developers in designing suitable buildings, streets and spaces for their location and to identify areas without a positive style where a more innovative approach can be used.

3.2.2.11 The National Planning Policy Framework places considerable importance to the setting of heritage assets, not just the assets themselves, and this is particularly important where a large number of listed buildings create a unique historic character that extends beyond the boundary of the Conservation Area.

3.2.2.12 For sites near to or in the Conservation Area, it is expected that planning decisions will reflect the advice given in Historic England's publication 'The Historic Environment in Local Plans' or whatever advice supersedes it, in conjunction with the Bishop's Stortford Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA). The CAA is expected to guide developers in designing new buildings as appropriate for their historic settings. It also identifies many unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the area and which do not enjoy the same protection as listed buildings. Such buildings need to be properly maintained and preserved to keep the essential character of the area.

HDP2 – Setting and character of buildings, streets and spaces

a) For all development proposals in, and adjacent to, the Conservation Areas, schemes must follow the relevant styles and materials set out in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal. Proposals for such schemes will be expected to demonstrate that the significance of the historic setting has been

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considered and sensitively factored into the design. Schemes involving the demolition of unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area, as denoted in section 7 - Management Proposals in the Conservation Area Appraisal, will not be supported except where the contribution from replacement buildings is comparable or better, or where the public benefit of the replacement scheme in terms of its appearance and design or the viable use of the site outweighs the harm.

b) Developments will be expected to be of high quality and to sit well within their setting. Proposals for major schemes shall, unless demonstrably unviable:

- Follow the Character Management principles described in Appendix 3, depending on the Townscape Character Area (TCA) of the site.
- Be accompanied by a Building for a Healthy Life 12 (formerly Building for Life 12) Assessment. The expectation is that schemes will score green or amber against all applicable criteria. An amber score will only be acceptable where it is accompanied by a clear justification in terms of local circumstances or viability explaining why a green score cannot be achieved.
- Demonstrate that buildings, streets and spaces relate well to their location and surroundings, particularly in prominent areas.
- Preserve routes of existing roads and lanes to provide continuity with the history and morphology of the local area, unless this is demonstrably not viable.
- c) Innovative designs of a high quality can be used, where it can be demonstrated that they also contribute positively to the immediate surroundings.

3.2.3 Objective: Promote high functionality and quality within the living environment

3.2.3.1 The achievement of high quality through good design, whether on the detailed scale within homes or on the wider scale for, say crime prevention, is encouraged by looking to meet or exceed current standards as they evolve. Best practice design principles shall be followed to ensure current and future functional and service needs are anticipated, thereby avoiding subsequent disruptive changes and contributing to the sustainability of the neighbourhood in the long term.

3.2.3.2 Sport England with Public Health England have produced Active Design guidance detailing how good urban design practice can deliver built environments that are enjoyable to live in and encourage healthy lifestyles.

3.2.3.3 The aim is for new development to deliver homes that are fit for purpose. This can relate to simply having enough space, for example for visitors and guests to promote social interaction, for bikes and push chairs to encourage sustainable transport and to store sorted waste awaiting collection under the multiple wheelie bin local policy. Consultation has revealed that homes need more space and it is recommended that the Nationally Described Space Standard in the optional DCLG Technical Housing Standards is used.

3.2.3.4 Recent changes in local lighting times have resulted in concerns about night time safety and security within Bishop's Stortford. It is important that the quality of lighting in new developments is able to allay those fears.

3.2.3.5 In order to mitigate the impacts of new development on climate change, development proposals should demonstrate how they will ensure that new dwellings and

business premises include energy-saving and carbon dioxide reducing measures that at least match, and ideally exceed, proposed regulations.

3.2.3.6 Some residents of the town have complained that unadopted roads in recent new developments have needed costly arrangements for road maintenance that could be avoided if built to a proper standard.

3.2.3.7 The Environment Agency have said that the Town is part of a wider area under 'severe water stress' and recommend the DCLG Optional Technical Standard for Water Efficiency should be applied through NP policy. Although the District Plan 2018 covers water conservation generally, the local nature of the issue argues for its specific inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan.

3.2.3.8 Following the May 2016 House of Commons rejection of the Lord's amendment on SUDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems), where they suggested removing the automatic right of developers to connect to public sewers for surface water and encourage SUDS on every development, the Lords accepted an amendment. This now means the Secretary of State must carry out a review of the planning legislation, government planning policy (introduced in April 2015) and arising local planning policies concerning sustainable drainage.

3.2.3.9 The Stort river runs through the Neighbourhood Plan area and has a history of flooding in the town centre and of water runoff towards its flood plain, so it is vital that developments follow SUDS water management principles to minimise any adverse impact. A hierarchy of Sustainable Urban Drainage appears in the District Plan 2018 in Table 23.1.

HDP3 – Design standards

a) In addition to other applicable criteria for design assessment, development will be required to meet all of the following criteria unless they include a clear justification for not meeting the standard:

- For all significant developments¹, developers must demonstrate how the first nine principles of active design as detailed within Sport England's, Active Design Guidance (2015) have been addressed by using the Active Design checklist.
- Street lighting should achieve the standard as described in the Secured by Design publication 'Lighting Against Crime' or subsequent documents which explicitly supersede this.
- b) On sites where the orientation of the buildings can reasonably facilitate roofs which face 45 degrees or less either side of due south, developers must consider the incorporation of solar energy generation. On all sites the use of solar energy or other sources of renewable energy will be supported, where it does not conflict with other development plan policies.
- c) All roads on new developments will be expected to meet the criteria for adoption set out by the Highways Authority.
- d) All schemes are expected to follow the principles described below:-
- Development must utilise the most sustainable forms of drainage systems in accordance with the SUDS hierarchy, unless there are practical engineering reasons for not doing so.
- Development should aim to achieve greenfield run-off rates and ensure that

¹ See Appendix 2 - Glossary

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- surface water run-off is managed as close to its source as possible.
- Drainage should be designed and implemented in ways that deliver other policy objectives of this Plan, including water use efficiency and quality, biodiversity, amenity and recreation. The provision of balancing ponds as part of an area of public open space for recreation or wildlife should be designed to ensure the safety of other users of the space. Where SUDS are provided as part of a development, applicants should detail how it will be maintained in the long term.
- Where practicable, SUDS should be designed to ensure the sustainable drainage networks have the additional capacity required to cope with infrequent adverse weather conditions and therefore reduce flood risk.

3.2.4 Objective: Provide housing for all and create community cohesion

3.2.4.1 The future housing mix policy within the District Plan 2018 is identified through the West Essex and East Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment Sept 2015 (SHMA), which sets out the Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN) over the Plan period, forecasting requirements to 2033.

3.2.4.2 The District Council also uses other sources of information to forecast housing demand within the District, including its own Housing Needs survey of residents carried out in Q4 of 2014 to identify current and future demand within the District and sub-areas. The key finding from that survey for Bishop's Stortford (based on 180 respondents) is that it has a strong demand for affordable housing, particularly amongst 'concealed households' (those not living independently but who wish

to do so), indicating a lack of affordable homes within the area.

3.2.4.3 Comments from local residents shows the following:

- Strong preference for 2-3 bedroom homes
- Positive demand for bungalows
- Less preference for 4/5 bedroom homes
- Positive demand for shared ownership



3.2.4.4 The fact that the Town is only 15 minutes travel time to the major employment centre of Stansted Airport and less than 45 minutes to London and Cambridge along the M11 corridor means that housing demand is likely to exceed the District average. Feedback from local people, particularly young people starting families, shows difficulty in obtaining a place to live is a major concern.

3.2.4.5 The 2011 Census figures also show that the Town has more families with one or two dependent children and less two to three bedroom homes, compared to the East Hertfordshire District average. This argues for housing mix to be weighted away from four or five bedroom homes towards those with two or three bedrooms. Paragraph d) of policy HDP4 indicates how supply for smaller family houses could be increased by building small bungalows as part of the housing mix.

3.2.4.6 The high demand for housing coupled with the large difference between

affordable home provision policy and the current provision clearly supports the need for a pragmatic and sensitive approach to dwelling mix policy implementation. This needs to take account of the local conditions driving demand and the nature of the area itself to avoid damaging both its character and social fabric.

3.2.4.7 The policy for Dwelling Mix Strategy requires an assessment to be carried out by developers of how the mix they propose meets with local needs, within the whole of Bishop's Stortford, for schemes above a certain size. The assessment should be part of the Design and Access statement and will be reviewed as part of the East Herts Council's formal decision making process for planning applications, taking into account local factors such as affordability and availability of market homes and the trend of affordable housing waiting lists. To avoid the 'leakage' of affordable properties back into the open market, only schemes that allow the retention of affordable homes through buyback by providers, or other appropriate measures will be supported.

3.2.4.8 The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 obliges Planning Authorities to keep a register of those seeking to acquire land to build a home. It is expected that the register for East Hertfordshire will be used as a guide to the demand for such land when assessing the proportion of market housing allocated for this type of building in new developments as they come forward.

HDP4 – Dwelling mix strategy

This policy applies to residential development comprising major development (see Glossary).

a) Developers are required to submit a Dwellings Mix Strategy as part of the Design and Access Statement with any planning

application. The strategy must clearly demonstrate how the proposed development addresses the objectively identified needs within Bishop's Stortford. This must cover all the needs including those for all forms of market and 'affordable' housing.

- b) On schemes referred to above, the proposal shall show how it meets the criteria and requirements set out in the East Herts Affordable Housing SPD May 2020 or successor document.
- c) Proposals must demonstrate that unfulfilled demand for bungalows has been considered. Subject to viability, and the achievement of appropriate density across the whole scheme, an element of bungalow development will be encouraged.
- d) Proposals shall demonstrate that alternative types of purchase funding such as self-build for market housing, have been considered. The Self-build Register should be used to assess the level of demand in an area to determine the proportion of land given over to such type of building, along with other relevant factors such as the size, position, accessibility and terrain of the site.

3.2.4.9 As a commuter town primarily for London, but also for Cambridge, Bishop's Stortford sometimes suffers from a lack of "community". Provision of 'Lifetime Homes' is a way to encourage stability and social cohesion by making it easier to avoid unnecessary uprooting of households to 'upscale' or 'downsize'. Wheelchair adaptable housing standards, applied through building regulations M(2), have superseded the Lifetime Homes definition, and the District Plan 2018 advocates a flexible approach to the proportion of homes built to this standard. However, the case for building a significant proportion of wheelchair adaptable homes remains.



3.2.4.10 Integration of such accommodation into residential areas is encouraged to promote security, diversity, inclusion and community cohesion, as recommended during consultation with housing providers.

HDP5 – Building for the community

a) Housing for Older and Vulnerable

People will be expected to be:-

- In a suitable location where access to a choice of sustainable travel options is available;
- Within walking distance, on a safe and level route or within easy reach by passenger transport, to town centre shops and services;
- Well integrated with existing communities through the sharing of space and public access to services;

b) Where new community facilities are being constructed in association with residential development the timing of their commissioning should ensure they are available for the new and existing community from the start of occupation or, where it can be clearly demonstrated that this is not viable or practicable, in accordance with an agreed phasing policy which will deliver facilities at the earliest stage at which it would be viable.

3.2.5 Identify, protect and enhance archaeological sites

3.2.5.1 Bishop's Stortford has numerous archaeological sites dating from the early prehistoric through to the Later Iron Age, Roman and Medieval periods. Existing Local and District Plans have the policies to ensure that new development sites with archaeological potential can be investigated to determine if important archaeological remains ('heritage assets') are present. These policies are considered sufficient to enable appropriate mitigation measures (further surveys, excavations, etc.) to be put in place.

3.2.5.2 Bishop's Stortford Museum should take priority on exhibiting any remains found, unless the find is of such scale and importance that it needs its own premises to conserve and display the finds.

HDP6 – Archaeology

Should new archaeological finds occur, or be expected to occur, as part of a development, that are worthy of reclamation or display, an appropriate contribution will be sought from the developers towards the costs of whatever methods are deemed by Hertfordshire County Council and/or Bishop's Stortford Museum to be most appropriate to curate, reclaim or display the finds.

3.3 CONTRIBUTIONS TO COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

3.3.1.1 Bishop's Stortford has a range of infrastructure needs and on-going

requirements. In order to make sure there is a consistent approach to community infrastructure and to ensure that the objectives within the Neighbourhood Plan are supported with any future development proposals, financial contributions should be made accordingly.

CI – Contributions to Infrastructure and Community Facilities

Where policies in the Neighbourhood Plan require contributions to new or improved community infrastructure or community facilities, they will be made through planning obligations in accordance with Policy DEL1 of the East Herts District Plan 2018 where they comply with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 and any subsequent amendments to them.

3.4 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

3.4.1 Introduction

3.4.1.1 Green infrastructure is described in the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) as ‘a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.’

3.4.1.2 East Herts District Plan 2018 includes a fuller definition in Appendix C Glossary as follows:

'Green Infrastructure is a strategic network of multi-functional greenspace, both new and existing, rural and urban, which supports natural and ecological processes and is integral to the health and quality of life in sustainable communities. It provides habitats for and aids migration of wildlife, flood water storage, urban cooling and local access to shady outdoor space as well as creating attractive spaces for recreation.'

3.4.1.3 Bishop's Stortford includes a rich and wide variety of green space resources, such as parks, play areas, sports fields, allotments, woodland, meadows and the River Stort. These make up the larger part of the town’s green infrastructure but smaller features such as hedgerows, small groups of trees, public gardens, watercourses and connecting paths also play an important part in forming a green infrastructure network.

3.4.1.4 The rapid expansion of the town has increased the demand on its existing green spaces and will continue to do so. This is having detrimental impacts on some locations, for example on Southern Country Park on the south west side of town where footpaths can become difficult to traverse in wet weather because of heavy use, despite the efforts of the volunteer team spreading wood chippings on a regular basis.

3.4.1.5 East Herts District Plan policy BISH1 provides for a minimum of 4,426 new homes in Bishop's Stortford for the plan period of 2011 to 2033. That represents an increase in population of about 10,000 on the 2011 population of about 38,000: a greater than 25% increase. The large areas of farmland being given over to development is inevitably reducing habitats, views across countryside and the sense of space. A recent and controversial case has been the felling of a line of mature trees on Whittington Way to form accesses and frontage for the St James' Park development.



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3.4.1.6 Additional green infrastructure and careful management of what the town already has will be needed to address this pressure.

3.4.1.7 Climate change is recognised as causing a number of problems including prolonged periods of heat stress and drought, and increased storminess and flood risk.

3.4.1.8 It is widely recognised that green infrastructure can contribute to climate change management. The NPPF states in clause 154 that 'New development should be planned for in ways that: ... avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks are managed through adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure;...’.

3.4.1.9 National and local government initiatives and policies are being directed at reversing the degradation of our natural environment and to reducing and managing climate change, as seen in the NPPF clause 149 et seq. and in East Herts District Plan 2018, for example in its Vision and Strategic Objectives for 2033 item 11. 'The District's rich and varied green infrastructure centred in the river valleys will have been reconnected and enhanced and its multi-functionality protected providing increased resilience to changing climates, improved ecological connectivity and new spaces for recreation and leisure.'

3.4.1.10 Local green infrastructure can contribute in a small way to limiting climate change and more substantially to increasing local resilience.

3.4.1.11 Developers need to play their part in achieving this vision. Development proposals that demonstrate commitment to provision of high quality green infrastructure by obtaining

accreditation under the Building With Nature scheme will be welcomed (see: <https://www.buildingwithnature.org.uk/how-it-works>). Developers should aim to achieve the 'Good Award' standard as a minimum.

3.4.1.12 The objectives and policies set out below seek to contribute at the local level.

3.4.2 Objectives

3.4.2.1 The objectives underlying the policies in this chapter are organised under the headings below

- In a time of climate emergency, protect and enhance the contributions that green infrastructure makes to reducing climate change and adapting to it.
- Protect and enhance green infrastructure for the many benefits it provides.
- Protect and enhance wildlife and biodiversity, including the River Stort
- Protect and enhance access and connections to green infrastructure and the surrounding countryside and the River Stort
- Provide essential community facilities
- Maintain and enhance the flood mitigation function of green infrastructure

3.4.3 Objective: In a time of climate emergency, protect and enhance the contributions that green infrastructure makes to reducing climate change and adapting to it.

3.4.3.1 The need for urgent action to address climate change has been recognised by all levels of government. Hence a new section on Climate Change is included in the revised Neighbourhood Plan (see above) requiring developers to implement climate change mitigation and adaption measures in

their proposals to which reference should be made.

3.4.3.2 In Bishop's Stortford the consequences of climate change include the increased risks of drought, heat stress, pressure on water supplies and flooding. This is recognised in the Town Council's constitutional policies on Climate Change which apply to the land and properties the Council owns, manages or is responsible for. Its policies are aimed particularly at

- Reducing energy consumption and using renewable sources and
- Reducing water consumption and planting drought-resistant plant species in its parks and green spaces.

3.4.3.3 Local concern about climate change and the need to address it is also evidenced by the Bishop's Stortford Climate Change Group. This was formed in 2015 with the purpose of increasing understanding of and encouraging action on the issue. One of the group's priorities is to support tree planting in the area.

3.4.3.4 Green infrastructure can help mitigate and adapt to climate change. East Herts District Plan 2018 recognises this in its climate change policies, for example in clause 22.2.2 which describes measures to address overheating including: '*providing green infrastructure including woodlands, orchards, street trees and green landscaping, parks, sports grounds, allotments, and green roofs.*'

3.4.3.5 Policy BISH7 The Goods Yard II.(f) requires '*landscaping and tree planting to reduce urban heat island effects.*'

3.4.3.6 East Herts District Council's Sustainability SPD 2021 also describes the multi-functional role that green infrastructure has to play in enhancing environmental sustainability, place shaping, health and

wellbeing. It focusses particularly on how it is essential to the district's resilience to climate change.

3.4.3.7 Green infrastructure contributes to mitigating and adapting to climate change in a variety of ways, for example by providing:

- Opportunities for recreation and movement from place to place that reduces the need for travel by car
- Woodland management and tree planting that absorbs carbon, improves air quality and provides shade
- A wide variety of habitats for nature that has been displaced or is under threat including water-based habitat
- Space for sustainable drainage and flood risk mitigation
- Land for local food production reducing food miles

3.4.3.8 Developers are already required by various District Plan policies to provide or contribute to elements of green infrastructure such as play areas, sports facilities, allotments, sustainable drainage systems and retaining existing green infrastructure.

3.4.3.9 East Herts Sustainability SPD March 2021 states in clause 4.21 that "it is essential that new provision complements existing green infrastructure. Protecting and enhancing existing green infrastructure is key, mature trees and woodlands should be retained and enhanced wherever possible."

3.4.3.10 Building on the above, Policy GIP1 below encourages developers to increase the long-term resilience of their developments and the wider community by including a meaningful enhancement of green infrastructure provision in their proposals from the outset of the design process.

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3.4.3.11 Much as it would be useful, it is difficult to devise a 'one fits all' method of measurement for enhancing green infrastructure on a site due to

- the variety of its components,
- their differing value in particular local contexts, and
- the varied condition of sites pre-development (ranging from brownfield sites have no existing green infrastructure to sites that might be well provided for with some components).

3.4.3.12 Initial proposals for seeking a percentage increase in the area of green infrastructure have therefore been amended to require developers to demonstrate how their proposals would enhance existing green infrastructure, both qualitatively and quantitatively, having regard to the requirement to increase biodiversity in accordance with policy GIP5.

GIP1 – Utilising Green Infrastructure to mitigate and adapt to climate change

a) All major developments shall provide a meaningful enhancement of the green infrastructure within the development site and connections to the green infrastructure network around the site (green infrastructure being defined in the NPPF 2021), unless it can be clearly shown that this is not technically deliverable or financially viable.

b) The green infrastructure on a site shall be, as far as reasonably practicable, publicly accessible so that the benefits can be enjoyed by all.

c) Proposals for major developments should include:

- an assessment of existing green infrastructure on the site (form, extent/quantity, benefits provided by it),

- proposals for retaining and enhancing green infrastructure on the site, assessed both quantitatively and qualitatively, to achieve the meaningful increase required by clause a) above, having regard to the net gain in biodiversity required by policy GIP5 below.
- assessment of climate change benefits and resilience of the infrastructure, and
- proposed arrangements for future long term maintenance of all green infrastructure during and post completion of development.

3.4.4 Objective: Protect and enhance green infrastructure for the many benefits it provides.

3.4.4.1 As noted in the NPPF, green infrastructure contributes to promoting healthy and safe communities. Accordingly, protection of green spaces and other features from inappropriate development is provided by various measures and designations in the planning system. Of particular application at a local level is the opportunity provided by the NPPF clause 102) for local authorities to designate valued and significant green areas as Local Green Spaces, '*for example, because of their beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of wildlife*'.

3.4.4.2 The Neighbourhood Plan made in 2015 designated a few such sites.

3.4.4.3 East Herts Council have also used the District Plan 2018 to designate as Local Green Space several areas of Bishop's Stortford which it refers to as 'green wedges' or 'fingers'. They can be found on the District Plan policy maps on East Herts Council's website and will be seen to be large areas that extend from the edges of the town towards the urban centre.

3.4.4.4 Following the Hearing Sessions of the District Plan examination, East Herts District Council was asked to consider further its approach to these designations and did so by way of a *Local Green Space Note*. This describes how it had been a long-standing policy intention to protect these green wedges from inappropriate development and that this had been done in 1991 by way of Green Belt designation, the principle of which was carried through the 1999 and 2007 Local Plans.

3.4.4.5 The *Local Green Space Note* also commented on the character of each of the proposed wedges describing their proximity to residential development; the footpaths, desire lines and Public Rights of Way that run thought them; the green routes they provide; and the open settings afforded to the conservation area and listed buildings.

3.4.4.6 The varied land uses within the wedges was also described including equipped play spaces, informal recreation areas, allotments, pocket woodlands, river environments, sports fields, school grounds and naturalised areas. The Council concluded that despite their size they still have a very local character and use. Their designation as Local Green Space was confirmed in the adopted District Plan.

3.4.4.7 Many people have spoken of the value to them of green spaces during the covid-19 pandemic when restrictions on travel and opportunities for social contact were reduced. Revision of the Neighbourhood Plan presented an opportunity to review the sites that had been designated in the original Neighbourhood Plan and the District Plan and this has resulted in the addition of many more, including smaller areas meeting generally more local needs.

3.4.4.8 The locations of these additional Local Green Spaces are shown in the Policy

Maps. Descriptions of their character and special value to the local community are given in the same document, demonstrating their compliance with the NPPF 2021 clause 102 which requires that such designations should only be used when the green space is: '*a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves; b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.*'

3.4.4.9 The descriptions of the proposed Local green Spaces also identify where the sites contribute to the local wildlife network and '*wildlife corridors and stepping stones*' that form connections in the network, as referred to in NPPF Clause 179.

3.4.4.10 East Herts green wedges include 4 of the Town Council's allotment sites, 5 of its equipped play areas as well as some sports fields and parks. The Neighbourhood Plan extends those designations to include other areas in the town of similar value to the community including the other allotments and play spaces.



3.4.4.11 A number of other, generally smaller, green spaces are listed under policy GIP2 as '*Other Green Spaces*'. These may not meet the description of Local Green Space as set out in the NPPF but are nevertheless

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considered to be of local significance and value. Plans and descriptions of these spaces are also given in the documents referred to above.

3.4.4.12 Designation of these spaces is supported by the responses to a preliminary survey conducted in late 2020 for revision of the Neighbourhood Plan.

GIP2 – Local Green Spaces and other green areas

a) The Designated Locations listed in Policy SI1 in the 'Neighbourhood Plan for All Saints, Central, South and part of Thorley – Part 1 Introduction and Site Specific Policies' are designated as 'Local Green Spaces' in accordance with the NPPF. Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts.

b) Development which adjoins a designated Local Green Space (whether designated in East Herts District Plan or the Neighbourhood Plan), must preserve and enhance wildlife corridors to a width to allow sufficient biodiversity and habitat conservation having regard to best practice and advice from Natural England and/or other appropriate expert organisations.

c) There are a number of other areas that have value as green spaces within the urban environment, albeit of less significance than designated Local Green Spaces. These areas are listed in the Designated Locations of policy SI1 in the 'Neighbourhood Plan for All Saints, Central, South and part of Thorley Parish – Part 1 Introduction and Site Specific Policies'. In recognition of their value, for example, as open spaces, landscape features, barriers to noise, pedestrian or cycle routes, or wildlife

pockets or corridors, any development of these 'other green areas' will be permitted only if the value and function to the community of the land will be retained in the development or will be provided on other land within the proximity of the community they serve.

d) Development neighbouring Local Green Spaces and other green areas referred to above (including those designated in East Herts District Plan) should respect entranceways and approaches to these areas and where possible situate buildings to overlook the areas to provide passive surveillance.



3.4.4.13 Increased use of green spaces, particularly during the covid-19 pandemic, has also brought its challenges. Peoples' needs vary with some looking for peace and quiet in an outdoors environment whilst others want to exercise and let off steam. Policy GIP3 seeks to encourage proposals for enhancing green infrastructure for leisure whilst recognising the need to strike a balance between competing uses, including allowing space for nature to thrive.

3.4.4.14 East Herts District Plan policy NE4 describes the range of functions that Green Infrastructure can have and the need for it to be protected and enhanced. It refers in particular to the potential adverse impacts of

providing lighting (which might benefit people) on nocturnal wildlife.

3.4.4.15 The River Stort is a great asset for the town but is under-used as a landscape feature and for leisure use, a view raised consistently by local residents. Whilst steps have been taken to rectify this situation in recent years, more could be done for which Policy GIP3 welcomes proposals.

3.4.4.16 Waterside Stortford is a collaboration between the County, District and Town Councils and other local and environmental stakeholders. It has established a riverside and countryside trail along the River Stort from the relatively new Bat Willow Hurst Country Park at the northern extent of the town to Thorley Wash Nature Reserve in the south. Signboards have been erected along the route but there are sections where accessibility could be improved (for example for buggies and wheelchairs).

3.4.4.17 The River Stort Partnership is hosted by Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and comprises public, private and charitable organisations with interests in the river. Its aim is to improve the river for wildlife and people and in order to promote this has prepared the River Stort Catchment Management Plan. The plan identifies a number of projects aimed at improving the natural environment and opportunities for people to enjoy it. One such is the Towpath Project which is described as one of several '*to help improve and activate the Stort at Bishop's Stortford*' and proposes to provide a new towpath surface for shared use. Another is the Stort Navigation Reedbed project which aims to restore and connect habitats up and downstream of the town.

3.4.4.18 The Stort is a globally rare habitat and the Town Council has committed in its Constitutional Policies 4.4 conservation of its

habitat and promotion of biodiversity in its activities.



GIP3 – Improve green infrastructure for leisure

a) Proposals that seek to improve the use of existing and new green infrastructure will be supported subject to the proposals achieving a balance between its potentially conflicting range of uses (such as for recreation, exercise, peace and quiet and space for nature) and compliance with other policies. Such proposals could include:

- Provision of seating, preferably from natural products
- Improved signage
- Weather-protected information boards
- Facilities to support guided visits for schools, e.g. mooring points, hides and study centres

b) Proposals that seek to improve the leisure usage of the River Stort and that are compliant with the aims of the Stort Catchment Plan and the River Lea Catchment Partnership and Waterside Stortford will be supported subject to compliance with other policies. Such proposals could include;

- improvement of the canal and riverside paths,
- access and signage and
- biodiversity enhancement initiatives.

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3.4.4.19 It is increasingly being recognised that green infrastructure needs to be maintained well and considered as a network rather than as isolated pockets. It is only in treating it as a network that its full potential can be realised, providing for example, routes for people to walk or cycle from place to place away from traffic, connections to the countryside, and passage for wildlife. Policy GIP4 requires developers to take this into account in their design and management proposals.

3.4.4.20 The NPPF recognises this in clause 175 requiring that plans should: '*take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure....'*

3.4.4.21 Similarly, the District Plan 2018 Policy NE4 refers to Green Infrastructure as: '*A diverse network of accessible, multi-functional green infrastructure across the district*' and requires that development proposals should:

- '*Avoid the loss, fragmentation and functionality of the green infrastructure network, including within the built environment, such as access to urban waterways.*' And
- '*Maximise opportunities for improvement to the green infrastructure network in accordance with the Council's Green Infrastructure Plan, its Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan, Living Landscape Schemes, locally identified Nature Improvement Areas and any future relevant plans and programmes as appropriate.*'

GIP4 – Green space management and building the green infrastructure networks

a) Developers will be expected to cooperate with the establishment of appropriate long-

term arrangements for the management of green infrastructure which forms part of any major development. The developer will, where appropriate, be required to provide financial contributions to support initial costs and/or transfer land to an appropriate body, by agreement with the planning authority. These obligations will be set in line with District Plan policy DEL2.

b) Where green infrastructure is being provided on new developments which are adjoining or proximate to existing designated Local Green Spaces (whether designated in East Herts District Plan or the Neighbourhood Plan), the design and nature of the development green infrastructure and its management arrangements shall be coordinated with those of the Local Green Space.

c) Where appropriate and feasible, development shall incorporate a network of spaces and corridors for wildlife to move across the site and into the networks in the surrounding areas.

3.4.5 Objective: Protect and enhance wildlife and biodiversity, including the River Stort

3.4.5.1 It is widely accepted that the biodiversity of nature in our environment has been degraded over many years and that we need to enhance what remains.

Hertfordshire's State of Nature report 2020, produced by Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust and based on recording of species since 1970, identified 20% of Hertfordshire's species as being of 'conservation concern'. Half of these have been subject to population decline, including some that have become extinct in the County during that period or are considered to be threatened.

3.4.5.2 Nationally, Government has recognised the ongoing decline of habitats

and species and have responded with the Environment Act (2021). The Act includes proposals for a mandatory net biodiversity gain on development sites with a 10% targeted increase.

3.4.5.3 East Herts District Council adopted its Sustainability SPD in March 2021. The SPD includes a chapter on biodiversity outlining the emphasis in the District Plan 2018 on delivering a net gain in biodiversity across East Hertfordshire. It notes that, whilst major development offers the greatest opportunities for large-scale biodiversity net gain, enhancing biodiversity can be delivered at a variety of scales, from householder applications right up to large urban extensions. The SPD describes ways in which this can be achieved and requires that an agreed biodiversity metric calculation should be used to assess the impact of the development. It states that a minimum 10% net gain in ecological units should be achieved.

3.4.5.4 Hertfordshire County Council's Sustainable Hertfordshire Strategy 2020 aims to improve biodiversity on County Council land by 20% by 2030, a more ambitious target than that set in the Environment Act and in East Herts SPD. The strategy also includes the County's ambition to improve wildlife countryside by 20% by 2050.

3.4.5.5 If the County's objectives are to be achieved, new development needs to play its part. In support of these initiatives, Policy GIPS requires developers to make increased provision for wildlife habitats and biodiversity in their proposals for sites in Bishop's Stortford from the outset of the design process.

3.4.5.6 Hertfordshire Local Nature Partnership, Herts Environmental Records Centre and Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust

have produced 'Guidance on applying 'Hertfordshire Ecological Networks' within the planning system'. This will help developers and their consultants identify sites and species for ecological enhancement. Appendix 1 in this document provides a county wide image of ecological data. The map shows areas of Bishop's Stortford that are high or medium priority for habitat creation as well as habitat that falls under the protection of S41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Updated and site specific information and guidance can be obtained from the bodies referred to above in addition to that available on the DEFRA Magic natural environmental data website (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk>).

3.4.5.7 Local interest and involvement in biodiversity enrichment is evidenced by Southern Country Park on the south west edge of the town. The country park was created as mitigation for St Michael's Mead housing scheme. It is owned by East Herts District Council and maintained by Herts County Council's Countryside Management Service with local assistance provided by a 20 strong volunteer group from the Friends of Southern Country Park.

3.4.5.8 The park is managed for people and nature. In 2020 an area of amenity grass was harrowed and re-seeded with wildflower seed. In previous years, disease resistant elms have been planted to contribute to recovery of this tree species and encourage white-hairstreak butterflies.

3.4.5.9 The Aims and Objectives for the Southern Country Park as outlined in its Greenspace Action Plan 2018-2023 include the following:

- Manage the plantations to maximise biodiversity

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- Improve the diversity and wildlife value of grassland habitats
- Protect and enhance the valuable aquatic habitats to improve biodiversity
- Manage the hedgerows to maximise biodiversity

3.4.5.10 Wildlife surveys to monitor progress and help determine future actions are undertaken by Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, East Herts' contractors and the Friends group.

3.4.5.11 Another local scheme is the Firs Greenspace Action Plan 2017-2022 which covers a historic avenue of trees and grassland to the west of the town centre, the aims of which include protecting and enhancing its biodiversity.

3.4.5.12 Other sites that could offer opportunities for biodiversity enhancement include school playing fields, verges and some of the smaller green spaces within the older housing estates. More flexible management of grassed areas, with some areas left unmown, and creation of wildflower meadows can provide enhancement of biodiversity at relatively little cost.

3.4.5.13 Trees along the verges of streets and paths provide a range of benefits including enhancing the street scene, providing shading and extending the network of green infrastructure for wildlife. Examples in Bishop's Stortford include Thorley Hill, Thorley Park Road and, of more recent construction, Mercers Avenue on St Michael's Mead. Designs that incorporate these features in development as part of green infrastructure provision will be welcomed, as will initiatives by residents to promote tree planting on existing streets where there is adequate space and maintaining authorities are supportive.



GIP5 – Protect wildlife and increase biodiversity

a) In any new development, mature trees and hedgerows shall be retained as far as practical. New planting and other initiatives shall be incorporated as an integral part of the scheme to promote biodiversity. New hedgerow planting should contain a variety of species appropriate to the area. Woodland planting must accord with the appropriate National Vegetation Classification (NVC). Existing mature trees should continue to be part of any development proposal unless it is demonstrated that it is necessary for them to be felled or an arboricultural survey clearly demonstrates that they are not worthy of retention. Replacement tree planting should be undertaken on a minimum of a one-for-one basis. Native species must always be given preference as plants of local origin tend to establish and survive better and support more wildlife. Monocultures should be avoided.

b) Watercourses are a vital asset and therefore must be retained as part of any development affecting them, and enhanced for biodiversity. Proposals must show how the watercourse is to be incorporated as a vital asset within a development but must also ensure that wherever possible an appropriate buffer zone is incorporated between the built form and the watercourse unless circumstances dictate otherwise. Only native species may be planted in the buffer zone. Where possible, the re-naturalisation of

modified watercourses will be expected. A new development that may result in deterioration of an existing watercourse will not be supported.

- c) Where significant new development restricts natural habitats, corridors for wildlife movement will be protected or created in order to benefit local biodiversity. The design of wildlife corridors will have regard to current best practice and advice from Natural England and/or other appropriate expert organisations.
- d) In order to protect and enhance wildlife in the area and to increase biodiversity, opportunities to incorporate new wildlife habitats and routes of passage of wildlife (for example bat and bird boxes and holes or gaps in fences for hedgehogs) into significant new developments must be sought. Features for bats and birds must be integrated into the fabric of buildings of new development to ensure permanent gains. All building bordering green space will be expected to incorporate integrated features for wildlife. Guidance should be sought from Natural England where habitats of wildlife and protected species (e.g. badgers) are affected.
- e) Assessment of biodiversity gain shall be in accordance with the Environment Act 2021.
- f) The minimum net gain shall be 10% in ecological units or biodiversity value respectively.
- g) If it is not feasible or proportionate for a development to achieve the required 10% increase in biodiversity value on-site alone, compensation, which in most cases should be a last resort, should, if possible, take the form of increasing biodiversity at location(s) off-site within the Neighbourhood Plan area or on nearby land. Publicly owned land within Bishop's Stortford should be considered preferentially for siting of biodiversity offsets to provide the net increase required by clause

- f) above subject to agreement being obtained with the public body responsible for the land in question.
- i) Development proposals should include an assessment of the following undertaken by a competent ecologist:
 - an assessment of existing habitats and biodiversity value of the site,
 - proposals for retaining and enhancing existing habitats and for achieving the meaningful increase required by clause f above,
 - assessment of the resilience of the improved biodiversity to climate change,
 - and proposals for long term maintenance of habitats during and post completion of the development,
 - proposals for measuring and monitoring compliance.
 - recommendations for managing green infrastructure in ways that would enhance biodiversity.

3.4.6 Objective: Protect and enhance access and connections to green infrastructure and the surrounding countryside and the River Stort

3.4.6.1 The benefits to health and wellbeing of walking and cycling have been appreciated by many people during the covid-19 pandemic; particularly so when the available routes enable them to enjoy green spaces and nature.

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3.4.6.2 The Neighbourhood Area provides many opportunities for walking, riding and cycling but the existing green spaces are not as well known or used as much as they could be. Whilst some progress has been made in the last 5 years, there remains a need for further improvement of existing footpaths and cycle paths, a requirement to improve the linkages or connections between them into and across the town and into the countryside, and for improved signage and promotion.

3.4.6.3 Furthermore the substantial expansion of Bishop's Stortford provided for in the District Plan 2018 is resulting in a number of rights of way and other paths being enclosed by development, reducing the enjoyment and sense of closeness to nature they give. The loss could be mitigated by keeping paths as open as possible and by incorporating space for nature such as wide verges and hedges and trees along the way.

3.4.6.4 Safe and attractive routes are essential for children to get to school and to encourage people to walk or cycle to local facilities and the town rather than get in a car. In earlier developed areas this can be difficult to achieve but in new development it should be a priority.

3.4.6.5 For example, in the older residential estates on the western, Thorley side of the town, many of the footpaths away from the roads are narrow, dark and enclosed by high garden fences. They are uninviting and potentially unsafe. On the other hand, the footpath/cycleway on the St Michael's Mead development that links this residential area with Manor Fields Primary School is a good example of a wider route with grass verges and trees at intervals.

3.4.6.6 Proposals that facilitate improved or new connections between existing and proposed developments, green spaces and the surrounding countryside will be supported.

3.4.6.7 New initiatives should complement the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) prepared by Herts County Council Rights of Way Service for the period 2017/18 to 2027/28 dated July 2017 or updated version at the time of the application and take account of Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs Rights of Way circular 1/09 Guidance for Local Authorities. The routes of rights of way can conveniently be found at www.rowmaps.com.



3.4.6.8 Where appropriate, paths should connect with the Waterside Stortford's trail and the Parks and Beyond circular walks which take in five of East Herts managed open spaces in Bishop's Stortford.

3.4.6.9 Development of new areas can compromise the enjoyment people get from the rural character of footpaths. Developers should retain as much as possible of the rural nature of country paths within their sites.

GIP6 – Enhancement of footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths

Working with local and national associations such as the Bishop's Stortford & District Footpaths Association, East Herts Ramblers, East Herts Footpaths Society and the British Horse Society, proposals to ensure that existing footpaths and bridleways are well maintained and signposted and that new footpaths are created and officially designated will be supported.

- b) The character and setting of existing public rights of way (PROWs) must be protected in terms of safety, directness, attractiveness, convenience and rural ambience. No new obstructions to PROWs should be introduced and any amendments should follow the guidelines in the relevant Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Rights of Way circular 1/09 Guidance for Local Authorities version 2 dated October 2009 or as updated at the time of the application.
- c) Bridleways for horse riders should be protected and proposals should seek, where possible, to create new cycle paths so as to provide safe and effective routes across the Neighbourhood Area. New and existing cycle tracks should be linked with the National Cycle Network where possible.
- d) Footpaths across the Neighbourhood Area should provide an accessible and safe way for all residents and visitors to enjoy the rural hinterland of Bishop's Stortford. Footpaths should use surfaces appropriate to the habitat: tarmac in well-used routes; well-drained and overlaid with bark for more rural settings and none for casual paths across grassy spaces.
- e) As part of any major development proposal, developers should identify deficiencies in existing PROW and other pedestrian and cycleway links within the area surrounding a site that would be used by future occupiers. Where possible, proposals should incorporate measures to maintain and enhance this network.
- f) Proposals for the improvement of access to public green spaces will be supported (including access for those in wheelchairs and scooters, those who are frail and unable to walk in a robust manner and those with babies in buggies). Measures to regrade paths through the green spaces for this purpose will be supported.

3.4.7 Objective: Provide essential community facilities

3.4.7.1 Most allotments in Bishop's Stortford are currently managed by the Town Council. Demand has outstripped supply in recent times and residents can find themselves waiting for many months for a plot on the more popular sites, despite efforts over recent years to manage demand by reducing plot size and evicting tenants who do not tend plots adequately.

3.4.7.2 New development will cause the demand to increase which must be matched by increased supply. Allotment holders and considerations of sustainability favour allotments close to the communities they serve.

3.4.7.3 Town Council policy BSP010 sets out the rationale and standards for developer contributions and the justification for the rate of contribution. This rate caters for the demand expected from the new build only (based on the rate of demand actually experienced elsewhere in the Town) and does not attempt to deal with the existing deficiency.

3.4.7.4 At the time of writing, Policy BSP010 states that allotments should normally be provided on site for developments of 500 homes or greater. The previous neighbourhood plan policies allowed developers of smaller sites to make a financial contribution instead. This can result in under-supply of allotments for new residents. To address this issue, policy GIP7 is amended to require allotments to be provided on sites for developments of 350 homes or greater. At the land provision rate of 0.24ha per 1,000 population stipulated, the smallest allotment site would be approximately 0.2 ha.



3.4.7.5 Community orchards have increased in popularity in recent years. The East of England Apples and Orchards Project lists many community orchards in Hertfordshire and Essex which, it reports, can range in size from a dozen trees to more than a 100, most of which are managed primarily for amenity value and for the benefit of local wildlife.

3.4.7.6 A few of these within 30 miles or so of Bishop's Stortford are described below:

- Rivers Heritage Site and Orchard, Sawbridgeworth: based on a historic garden nursery site with about 560 trees, on land leased to Sawbridgeworth Council.
- Ongar Community Orchard: a converted, small disused allotment owned by Epping District Council, planted with 25 fruit trees and wild flowers.
- Great Chesterford Community Orchard: promoted by the Parish Council and based on land donated to the community from a Section 106 agreement, planted in 2017 and 2018 with over 100 trees.
- Roydon Community Orchard: a small orchard planted in 1995 on unused allotment plots maintained by the Roydon Society on land owned by the Parish Council.

3.4.7.7 It can be seen that community orchards can take various forms and operate under a variety of structures.

3.4.7.8 Consultations during preparation of the neighbourhood plan revisions have shown that there is interest in setting up an orchard in Bishop's Stortford and people who would like to volunteer to help run it. Policy GIP7 supports the creation of such a facility if a suitable site can be found. If this is arranged as part of a larger development, the orchard could form part of the development's green infrastructure and contribute to increasing biodiversity of the site.



GIP7 – Improving/expanding allotments

- a) To support the population increase arising from new developments, developers of 10 residential units or more will be required to either:
- Provide space with appropriate facilities for new allotments or
 - Contribute towards the expansion and/or improvement of existing allotments.
- b) For developments in excess of 350 dwellings (or groups of adjacent developments which together amount to more than 350 dwellings) it will be expected that land either on or immediately adjacent to the development site is provided, unless there are clear over-riding site specific constraints or other planning policy requirements that take priority. The land shall be prepared by the developers (including facilities, fencing, land

preparation, soil improvement if required) and transferred to the allotment authority (currently the Town Council) at no cost. The provision of space for new allotments will be at the rate of 0.24ha per 1,000 population. Vehicular access will be required and the site must be chosen accordingly.

c) For smaller developments it will normally be expected that contributions will be made towards existing allotments. Where there is available land – particularly where it is part of the proposed development area – this could include the expansion of the existing allotments. Financial contributions will be calculated based on the cost of acquiring and facilitating space at the same rate as for on-site provision.

d) Proposals for creation of a community orchard for Bishop's Stortford as part of a large development or as a stand-alone development will be supported subject to the following:

- That community support for running such a facility (including the establishment of an appropriately constituted volunteer group committed to being actively involved) has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Town Council.
- That the land on which the orchard is to be established is appropriately located for its intended use.
- That, if it is part of other development, it is additional to provision of allotments in accordance with the preceding clauses.

3.4.8 Objective: Maintain and enhance the flood mitigation function of green infrastructure

3.4.8.1 It is widely considered that flood risk is increasing due to climate change. In addition, it is more appreciated that flooding can arise from several different sources

whereas previously consideration of the risk at inland locations was largely focussed on flooding from rivers. When flooding does occur the costs and disruption can be high and distressing to property owners.

3.4.8.2 While the River Stort provides a wide variety of opportunities for leisure activities and is a key feature of the town, it also creates a flood hazard which must be well managed and not exacerbated by new development.

3.4.8.3 The 'flood map for planning' showing the likelihood of fluvial flooding on the GOVUK website, when viewed in January 2021, shows significant areas of the town in flood zones 2 and 3 (between 1% and 0.1% and greater than 1% annual probability of flooding respectively).

3.4.8.4 Some residential, institutional and commercial properties are shown to be at risk, mostly in flood zone 2.

3.4.8.5 Flood maps in East Herts District Council's Level 1 and 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment – Historic Flood Map and Flood Zones Final Addendum March 2017 show a similar extent of flood risk areas and flood zones whilst additionally identifying functional flood plain where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood.

3.4.8.6 The Historical Flood Map shows areas of flooding along the River Stort that cover similar areas to the flood zone map, confirming the reality of the risk. Another map shows the potential for the increase in flood risk resulting from possible climate change scenarios, these mainly impacting on the northern part of the river flood plain.

3.4.8.7 The SFRA also produced a map of 30, 100 and 1000 year surface water flood extents. These show extensive areas at risk of flooding for all three probabilities that would affect infrastructure and property.

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3.4.8.8 A recent occurrence makes the point. In August 2020, heavy rain resulted in Dane Street being closed and flood water in South Street "lapping at the doors of shops" (Bishop's Stortford Independent 14 August 2020).

3.4.8.9 The valley of the River Stort through the town is steep sided exacerbating the risk to property in the lower valley floor. It is essential therefore that new development, which is often sited on the higher ground, avoids increasing flood risk by limiting its surface water discharges.

3.4.8.10 Green infrastructure can be used to provide sustainable surface water drainage and flood risk management in a way that has multiple benefits. In particular, ponds and open watercourses are more sustainable to construct; blockages and other problems are more readily identified and remedied; in general they are easier to modify or enlarge if changes (for example in climate predictions) make it desirable; and they provide many of the same benefits for the community and nature as other green infrastructure.

3.4.8.11 Southern Country Park on the south west side of the town is a good example of this on a large scale. Its lake provides essential water attenuation and flood risk management functions and captures pollutants and silt from upstream drainage systems. At the same time, it has become a wonderful recreational and wildlife asset as described in East Herts Southern Country Park Greenspace Action Plan 2018-2023 and recognised by its Green Flag Award.

GIP8 – Flood mitigation

a) Development will only be permitted in Flood Zones 2 or 3 (as defined by the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) or other responsible authority) where it has been demonstrated that it meets the requirements

of the NPPF in relation to the Sequential Test and the Exception Test and a site specific flood risk assessment, or other tests specified by the Lead Local Flood Authority and in the District Plan have demonstrated that the risk of flooding has been minimised and reduced where possible and that any residual flood risk can be safely managed. Flood risk assessments must include climate change allowances in accordance with national guidance on river flows and rainfall intensity.

b) All development must comply with or exceed the minimum standards for flood risk protection and mitigation from all sources of flooding required by the LLFA and its strategy and policies given in LFRMS 2 2019-2029 dated 18 February 2019 or as updated at the time of the application.

c) Development will be permitted only if it protects and maintains the run-off control and flood risk mitigation functions of existing green infrastructure and shall utilise existing and/or new green infrastructure to provide sustainable above ground solutions for its own drainage unless it can be clearly demonstrated

- that this is not technically or operationally viable and that any surface water drainage issues resulting from the development can be alternatively mitigated;
- or that it would adversely affect the environment or safety.

d) Where ponds or basins are used to provide control of run-off and flood risk mitigation, they must be designed to have permanent open water features to provide increased biodiversity unless demonstrably contrary to LLFA's requirements for drainage of the development. Developers should consider centralising drainage attenuation and flood risk mitigation infrastructure where feasible, for example in relation to the topography of the site and the scale of the development, to

create lakes or large ponds that can be incorporated into parks (for example as at Southern Country Park) for the wide range of environmental and recreational benefits and less fragmented management arrangements that can be achieved.

3.5 TRANSPORT

3.5.1 Introduction

3.5.1.1 Transport has a vital role to play in facilitating the future sustainable development of Bishop's Stortford. With significant housing and population growth now committed for the Plan period it is essential that the revised Neighbourhood Plan supports the objectives of the District Plan and HCC's Transport Plans, both revised in 2018, to address the challenges that this will bring.

3.5.1.2 The initial consultation carried out for these revisions showed that 90% of respondents believe that problems have continued to get worse in the past 5 years and that the main cause of this is the traffic impact of new development in and around the town – mentioned by 80% of respondents. Other concerns, cited by more than half of respondents, were the increasing use of residents' vehicles, the lack of safe cycle routes and footpaths, on-street parking and the resulting problems of air quality and the impact of constant construction roadworks. More than one-third of residents are also concerned about resulting increases in rat-running in residential areas to avoid congestion.

3.5.1.3 High levels of car ownership and use and an underdeveloped sustainable travel network have contributed to a reliance on car transport in the area and resulting congestion at peak periods. The strategic transport context within which the traffic impact of

major development in Bishops Stortford must be considered was set out in the East Herts District Plan Support document TRA 001 prepared in January 2017 and based on HCC's Comet and Essex CC's transport models and showed the challenges facing the strategic traffic impact of development on the town. It showed the overwhelming east, south-east and north-east bound direction of a.m. peak outbound and p.m. peak inbound trips, because "*the town has a close interaction with the A120 (towards Essex) and M11 corridors .. (and) ... the interaction with the rest of the district is relatively limited.*"

3.5.1.4 Figure 2 plotting a.m. peak outbound trips from Bishop's Stortford – abstracted from TRA001 - clearly shows:

- That the greatest existing (a.m.) peak outbound movements are eastbound to M11 J8 and Stansted Airport;
- The very limited use of the western/northern by-pass to either westbound destinations or by-passing the town to reach destinations to the east, south or north;
- The creation of London Road/Thorley Street / Pig Lane / Hallingbury Road / Beldams Lane / Dunmow Road (or Church Road, Uttlesford) as an informal south-eastern 'rat-run-by-pass' route to J8 and Stansted Airport – with flows significantly greater than the western by-pass;
- Significant northbound movement via Stansted Road and southbound via London Road towards Harlow and routing through the town centre and Hockerill junction.

Figure 2 excludes inbound commuter traffic to the town centre and mainline rail station and school trips which further compound the existing level of congestion in and around the town. The potential for significant traffic impacts of development under construction

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and committed – nearly all of which is to the west, south or in the centre of town – and the need for major highway capacity improvements, mitigation and modal shift are therefore among the major challenges for the Neighbourhood Plan.

3.5.1.5 Community concern about the traffic impact of new development has also been reflected in the level of objections about congestion, accessibility, parking, cycle and footpath access, bus services and other transport issues expressed at project exhibitions, masterplan meetings and in objections to development applications. For example, 1,433 objections were made to the Bishop's Stortford South application in 2018 – most including transport objections. Nevertheless, the consent granted required no mitigation of network impacts on existing residents and there is public concern about the lack of response to community consultation and of the opportunity to bring local knowledge of traffic issues to the scoping of transport assessments.

3.5.1.6 NPPF paragraph 40 requires local planning authorities to "*encourage applicants ... to engage with the local community and ... non-statutory consultees, before submitting their applications*". District Plan policy DES1 now therefore requires masterplans to be prepared and approved before significant applications are made to "*be collaboratively prepared, involving ... town and parish councils and other relevant key stakeholders ... (and) ... informed by public participation*." Transport policies in the Neighbourhood Plan will encourage direct community collaboration in the earliest stages of masterplan-making, scoping of transport assessments and identifying mitigation measures.

3.5.1.7 Finally, there is also significant concern that, since the making of the current Neighbourhood Plan, the adoption of the East

Herts District Plan; HCC's Local Transport Plan 4 and the associated preparation of a draft Growth and Transport Plan for the Eastern Herts corridor (EAGTP); and EHC's Transport Options Study for Bishop's Stortford, have not provided a clear Transport Strategy for a town under significant development pressure. Whilst these plans have set challenging – and widely supported – sustainable travel objectives, they do not provide a clear or achievable strategy to improve accessibility and connectivity. What is required is a strategy for the town's transport improvement to manage vehicular traffic while supporting modal shift to improve accessibility and connectivity.

3.5.1.8 It is not the role of the Neighbourhood Plan to set a sustainable transport strategy for the town but in response to these plans – and in particular to the emerging EAGTP - the community has advocated making use of the existing capacity of the by-pass to better manage strategic traffic demand through the Eastern Area corridor, inter-town and even intra-town movements between the growth origins and destinations. This also creates an opportunity to reduce travel demand on the remaining town network and to mitigate impacts, calm traffic and provide capacity for sustainable walking, cycling and improved bus services on the town networks.

3.5.1.9 The Neighbourhood Plan therefore advocates and supports policies which promote this strategic approach and set out strategic transport priorities for developer contributions and other investments which make best use of the existing capacity, mitigate and manage travel demand arising from new development and invest in routes for walkers and cyclists into and within the town centre to encourage modal shift.

3.5.2 Objectives

3.5.2.1 The objectives underlying the policies in this chapter are to:

- Support solutions to congestion and poor air quality
- Create and promote sustainable travel networks
- Provide vehicle and cycle parking to support sustainable travel objectives
- Manage traffic speeds and promote road safety
- Contribute to Improve town accessibility and connectivity.

3.5.3 Objective: Support solutions to congestion and poor air quality

3.5.3.1 Traffic, parking and other transport problems were one of the key issues for the existing Neighbourhood Plan. The initial consultation carried out for this revision cycle showed that 80% of respondents believed the traffic impact of new development in and around the town has deteriorated in the last 5 years. There is also concern about the lack of response to community consultation on this and on the mitigation of impacts.



Figure 2: AM Peak Outbound Trips from Bishop's Stortford (East Hertfordshire Local Plan Support- Do Minimum Model Run Report, January 2017, [part of] Figure 32)

3.5.3.2 It was recognised in the transport assessments for the District Plan that major developments now under construction in the town and in the adjacent District of Uttlesford (the southernmost settlements of which look to Bishop's Stortford as the local shopping, leisure, education and rail hub) and the permitted growth of Stansted Airport will significantly increase the demand on the constrained road network of the town including a number of routes and hotspots that experience high levels of congestion at peak times.

3.5.3.3 The NPPF 2021 provides clear sustainable transport policy guidance for plan-making and decision-taking including at:

- Paragraph 104 which says that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed; opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued; and the impacts of traffic can be identified, assessed and taken into account – “including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating adverse effects”.
- Paragraph 105 which says that “development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable”. This recognises that locations can be made (more) sustainable by mitigation.
- Paragraph 110 which says that, in assessing applications for development, it should be ensured that opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or

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have been – taken up and that any significant impacts on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion) or highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree. It is clear therefore that transport impact assessments should be able to demonstrate that sustainable modes shifts have been included and proposed mitigation measures assessed to establish that residual capacity, congestion and safety impacts can be acceptably mitigated.

- Paragraph 111 which says that development may be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or “the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe”. The ‘residual’ impact is after mitigation measures and ‘cumulative’ impact is inclusive of impacts of all other committed developments impacting the assessed network have been taken into account in the traffic impact assessment. The requirement to prevent or refuse development on highways grounds if the conditions of paragraph 111 are met is absolute and does not form part of a ‘planning balance’ assessment of the application.

3.5.3.4 The East Herts District Plan adopted in December 2018 now contains only three transport policies. TR1 promotes sustainable transport taking account of the Local Transport Plan. Policy TRA2 reflects the general provisions of the NPPF on assessment of the impacts of development proposals in terms of acceptability in safety terms and repeats that development should not “*result in any severe residual cumulative impact*” without setting out how this is defined or assessed. TRA2(c) however adds an important

policy on not having “a significant detrimental effect on the character of the local environment”. This reflects LTP4 policy 5 on affecting the rural or residential character of a road but explains that “*mitigation measures should not only achieve their transport objective but also respect the character of the area and not have a significant adverse effect on the wider environment and the amenity of local residents, e.g. through unacceptable trip generation levels, displacement parking, etc.*” Policy DES1 on masterplanning also highlights the importance of considering transport issues from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals and with the involvement of the local community. DES1(II) says that “*The Masterplan will be collaboratively prepared, involving ... town and parish councils and other relevant key stakeholders. The Masterplan will be further informed by public participation.*”

3.5.3.5 HCC’s Local Transport Plan 4 was adopted in May 2018 and now provides 23 updated transport policies which will apply throughout the Neighbourhood Plan Area; guidance on transport assessments and Travel Plans, including the application of a new User Hierarchy to assess applications and mitigation and prioritise transport investments; and sets out a programme of Growth and Transport Plan (GTP) preparation (including one for Eastern Herts covering transport investment in the Neighbourhood Plan Area). Key policies on assessment of transport impacts include:

- **Policy 1** on the creation of a Transport User Hierarchy to encourage greater use of sustainable transport modes by applying it to assess developments and transport investments in the following priority order:
 - Reduce travel demand
 - Pedestrians and cyclists

- Passenger transport users
- Powered 2-wheeler users
- All other motor vehicle users
- **Policy 5 on Development Management** including application of the LTP Transport User Hierarchy(5a); mitigation and resisting “development where the residual cumulative impact of development is considered to be severe” (5d); and resisting “*development that would ... severely affect the rural or residential character of a road or ... affect safety on rural roads, local roads and rights of way especially for vulnerable road users*” (5g)

Since the LTP, unlike the Neighbourhood Plan, does not form part of the statutory Development Plan, LTP policies which are key to the delivery of Neighbourhood Plan objectives will be incorporated where appropriate.

3.5.3.6 In view of continuing community concern about the transport impact of new development it is important that this revision of the Neighbourhood Plan should adopt policies which reinforce and operationalise NPPF, District Plan and LTP4 policies on assessment and mitigation of development proposals and masterplanning which have all been adopted since the existing Neighbourhood Plan was made.

3.5.3.7 Policy TP1 therefore amends the approach of TP1 in the existing Neighbourhood Plan to require Transport Assessments, Transport Statements and Travel Plans to assess impacts based on DfT and HCC guidance with the scope of the assessment agreed by the organisations collaboratively preparing the Masterplan as identified in District Plan Policy DES1. The assessment should be based on a local Transport Evidence Base in line with National Planning Practice Guidance, which draws on current local traffic

surveys, reference modelling of locally agreed junctions and networks and existing modelling data and results from assessments of committed developments including those impacting the local network from areas and Districts surrounding the Neighbourhood Plan Area. In the event the assessment shows that the proposed development has a significant cumulative impact on network capacity and congestion, it should go on to identify mitigation measures and demonstrate how they will mitigate impacts to an acceptable degree. If the residual cumulative impact is still severe then development should be refused on highways grounds in line with NPPF guidance.

3.5.3.8 The revised Neighbourhood Plan also introduce a new policy which focuses on the traffic impacts of development on the amenity of existing residents. Existing assessment approaches focus primarily on the peak hour capacity of junctions and the network, congestion and consequent queuing delays and the safety of road users. Impacts on resident's amenity and the character of residential streets is affected by queues (which in turn affects resident's air quality – see Policy TP2) but primarily by increases in the traffic flow – primarily in the peaks but also throughout the day. Transport assessments of capacity and congestion are underpinned by forecasts of flow on all modelled links but the impact of these flows on rural or residential links where existing or potential future flows are high (including known rat-runs) and usually well recognised by the community are either not modelled or not presented in terms of impacts on resident's amenity. This omission is in spite of recent recognition of the issue in LTP4 Policy 5(g) and District Plan policy TRA2(c). Neighbourhood Plan Policy TP1(e) therefore explicitly requires traffic assessments to consider impacts on and mitigation of the

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amenity or safety of local residents and other vulnerable users such as walkers and cyclists and on the rural or residential character of a road and to resist development where the residual cumulative impacts is severe.

3.5.3.9 Finally it is recognised that the innovative policy TP1(g) of the existing Neighbourhood, which describes a mechanism for monitoring and reviewing conditions and obligations where development consents are granted on major developments, has now been taken up by HCC and applied in conditions and the s106 of the development consents for District Plan policy sites BISH5 and BISH7. The importance of mitigation is recognised throughout the revised current policy TP1 – not only measures applied in response to trip generation from the development site but also mitigation of off-site impacts. Revised policy TP1(f) therefore strengthens the policy on monitoring of impacts and mitigation. The intention of the revised policy is not to be prescriptive in respect of how mitigation is to be achieved, rather it is to be clear as to the circumstances in which mitigations must be considered and included within proposals.



TP1 – Assessing transport impacts and mitigation of development on traffic congestion and resident amenity

a) All major proposed developments shall be supported by a Transport Assessment (for significant developments) or Transport Statement and a Travel Plan which shall

ensure that suitable and safe access can be maintained or achieved by predicting the level of traffic generated, the impacts of this on congestion and the impact on the capacity of the local highway network as required by the DfT's Transport Assessments and Statements Guidance, 2014. The Transport Assessment and Travel Plan shall be carried out as part of the Masterplan process for such developments and the scope shall be agreed by the organisations collaboratively preparing the Masterplan as identified in the District Plan Policy DES1. The Transport Assessment and Travel Plan will also be submitted to support any consequent planning application.

b) Transport modelling undertaken as part of a Transport Assessment will predict traffic flows, delays and queues and the cumulative impact of the development and other committed developments within the local network on junction capacities and resulting local highway network congestion. This should be based on a local Transport Evidence Base developed in line with National Planning Practice Guidance in plan making and decision taking. This shall take due account of actual local conditions including traffic surveys no more than 3 years old, reference modelling of future background traffic levels, transport modelling data and results from committed developments impacting the local network (including relevant modelling and development data from the adjoining authorities of Essex CC and Uttlesford DC) and employ appropriate junction and network modelling techniques as required by the current Transport Assessment Guidance or as otherwise required by the Highways Authority.

c) In the event that the Transport Assessment shows that the proposed development has a significant cumulative impact (as currently defined in paragraph 110 of the NPPF) on the

transport network in terms of capacity and congestion, the assessment shall identify and demonstrate how the impacts can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree. Development shall be prevented or refused on highways grounds if, after any cost-effective mitigation has been demonstrated, the residual cumulative impact on the road network is still considered to be severe.

d) Travel Plan Statements or Full Travel Plans meeting the requirements of Hertfordshire CC's 'Travel Plan Guidance, March 2020' shall be prepared for all developments identified in Appendix A of the Guidance, taking into account the requirements of District Plan Policy TRA1, LTP Policy 5 and the NPPF with regard to sustainable transport. Where appropriate, the Travel Plan shall be based on the results of the Transport Assessment and mitigation plans to inform the objectives, targets and measures in the Plan.

e) Development will also be resisted where the residual impacts of development would either severely affect the amenity of local residents through unacceptable trip generation levels, the rural or residential character of a road or other right of way, or would severely affect safety on rural roads, local roads and rights of way especially for residents and vulnerable road users. This shall include other routes which are important for sustainable transport, active travel or recreational use.

f) In the event that the requirements described in c) and d) are met, the approval of any application for which a Transport Assessment or Statement has been carried out will be conditional upon the establishment of monitoring and review mechanisms contained within appropriate planning conditions or obligations. Prior to the first occupation of the development, the developer will be required to submit a Monitoring Framework Report for

approval to Herts County Council in consultation with East Herts District Council. The monitoring framework shall show how trip generation from the development and its predicted impact on flows and junction capacities will be measured based on the Transport Assessment submitted with the application. A schedule of traffic surveys to be then conducted at incremental levels of the development's occupancy will also be agreed. Periodic Monitoring Reports shall then be submitted to the Highways Authority and where the Report reveals that the number of vehicle movements arising from the development and the predicted impact on flows and junction capacities exceeds the forecasts identified in the Monitoring Framework the developer will be expected to pay a pre-agreed sum of money from a mitigation contingency fund (also pre-agreed).

3.5.3.10 Air Pollution is a public health issue and is of concern to Bishop's Stortford residents with more than half of those responding to the initial consultation survey for revision of the Neighbourhood Plan identifying it as one of the 5 main traffic related problems in the town.

3.5.3.11 The NPPF Para 186 requires planning policies and decisions to "*sustain and contribute towards compliance with relevant limit values and national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) and Clean Air Zones, and the cumulative impacts from individual sites in local areas*".

3.5.3.12 East Herts District Plan December 2018 includes policy EQ4 Air Quality requiring all developments to minimise air quality impacts and include mitigation measures where there are negative impacts; noting that development will not normally be permitted where adequate mitigation cannot be provided.

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3.5.3.13 Policy EQ4 also requires all applications to take account of East Herts Air Quality Planning Guidance Document the current version of which is dated 2016. Whilst the NPPF clause 186, Policy EQ4 and the Air Quality Planning Guidance Clause Appendix 2 clause 4.1 state that cumulative impacts must be taken into account, clauses 4.6 and 4.7 of the latter describe three scenarios where cumulative impacts will occur but suggests likely ways for addressing only the first two of these, both of which involve a single developer or partnership. No methodology is suggested for dealing with a series of unrelated developments. Clause 4.1, however, is clear that assessments must take account of "*cumulative air quality impacts of committed developments (i.e. those with planning permission)*". The post development air quality analysis must therefore include the cumulative impact of all committed but not yet built developments taking due account of the state of completion of such developments at the time that the pre-development air quality base line condition is established.

3.5.3.14 East Herts Council adopted a Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in March 2021. The SPD will support the implementation of policies in the District Plan including setting out technical guidance.

3.5.3.15 Section 6.1 of the SPD covers air quality and considers emissions from a range of sources, not just traffic, although the latter is acknowledged to be the main source of air pollution in East Herts. Detailed information is given on:

- national and local policy
- the sources and nature of air pollution
- its impacts on health (26,000 – 36,000 deaths every year are estimated by Public

Health England to be attributable to human made air pollution)

- minimum standards required of new development (including air quality neutral status)
- submissions to be made with planning applications
- design (including 'greening' – see comment below)
- emissions from transport and prioritising sustainable transport
- mitigation measures, off-setting and planning contributions
- technical requirements for impact assessment

3.5.3.16 Clause 6.30 of the SPD states that "*while there is conflicting evidence as to whether green infrastructure can help reduce concentrations of NO_x, it is acknowledged that certain types of shrubs and trees are effective for trapping particles.*" Public Health England are said to support green infrastructure provision as an intervention to improve outdoor air quality and public health.

3.5.3.17 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) are areas where air quality objectives have been exceeded and which are declared by way of an order issued under Section 83(1) of the Environment Act 1995. Air Quality Action Plans (AQAP) set out how local councils intend to improve the air quality in those areas. Designation of an AQMA is an acknowledgement of concern in relation to public health, particularly with people who are exposed to the conditions therein, such as residents or frequent passers-by. The consequences of living in such an area are increasingly being recognised including a recent Coroners verdict which found that air pollution had made a material contribution to the death of a child in London.

3.5.3.18 Hockerill junction has been designated as an AQMA since 2007. The area concerned is shown on Figure 3 in East Herts Air Quality Planning Guidance 2016 Appendix 1 and encompasses commercial and residential properties around the junction of Dunmow Road, Hockerill Street, London Road and Stansted Road. The area is also a key movement corridor for pedestrians and cyclists accessing the town centre, railway station and local schools. Nitrogen dioxide levels were reported in the first neighbourhood plan as being almost twice the prescribed limit in the European Union Air Quality Directive and in breach of obligations to comply with this standard. The legal annual mean limit is 40 micrograms of NO₂ per cubic metre of air. The 2018 Air Quality Annual Status Report for East Herts which was based in validated statistics from 2017 showed '*distanced corrected*' NO₂ levels having fallen closer to the legal limit (the highest levels were 56.3 on London Road and 45.6 on Dunmow Road). This followed a steady reduction in the previous 3 years. It is possible that the annual mean dropped further in 2020 due to the reduction in traffic resulting from the coronavirus pandemic measures. It would be wrong to be complacent about this however as the major developments in Bishop's Stortford will undoubtedly increase traffic at the junction. The AQMA remains in place.

3.5.3.19 Consequently, impact on air quality is a material consideration and should be given significant weight in determining whether:

- Proposed mitigation is capable of achieving no further deterioration in air quality at Hockerill junction.
- Planning permission should be refused.

3.5.3.20 In its Annual Report for 2019/20 Appendix A Summary of Achievements, East

Herts reported that "*the council is committed to improving air quality and tackling air pollution, particularly at Hockerill Junction in Bishop's Stortford. The council has declared this an Air Quality Management Area to coordinate everyone's efforts on tackling the issue*". The report went on to describe installation of some electric charging points at the council's car park on The Causeway car park as a contribution to tackling the problem.

TP2 – Improving air quality

- a) All developments will be expected to comply with East Herts District Plan 2018 policy EQ4 whilst taking into account Policies 19 and 20 of LPT4 to increase sustainable travel behaviour and the adopted East Herts Sustainability SPD with assessments (where required) being carried out in line with the SPD as material considerations in improving air quality.
- b) The planting of trees in conjunction with new development which reduce or absorb air pollution from traffic will be supported throughout the Neighbourhood Area.

3.5.4 Objective: Create and promote sustainable travel networks

3.5.4.1 From the earliest stage of plan-making, consideration of transport issues should identify and pursue opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use, as set out in NPPF paragraph 104. As the town grows it is critical for the community that residents have good access to a wide range of facilities. The proximity of facilities and travel options available to access them will significantly influence whether people use their cars or choose to travel more sustainably, on foot, bicycle or public transport.

3.5.4.2 Whilst it is not always possible to ensure that every new resident is an

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acceptable distance from the full range of facilities, a sustainable development will ensure that the majority of residents are close to the majority of facilities and with sustainable travel routes to access them. This supports paragraph 105 of the NPPF which states that significant development should be in locations which "*are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes*".

3.5.4.3 For entirely new neighbourhoods, where the facilities are an integral part of the development, this is a matter of layout and masterplanning. For lesser developments which use facilities already present, care must be taken to ensure that pedestrians and cyclists can follow the shortest possible path rather than necessarily following vehicular paths which are frequently circuitous. This may involve the creation or retention of pedestrian/cycleway 'cut throughs' for example. For all developments there need to be sustainable travel options for accessing offsite community facilities and green infrastructure.

TP3 – Create walking and cycle friendly neighbourhoods

a) All major developments should increase the attractiveness of walking and cycling and should:

- Include walking and cycle routes as part of the layout and design, with priority to cyclists at junctions; and should not include the introduction of gated communities without permeability for walkers and cyclists;
- Provide direct routes between housing and community facilities;
- Connect with adjacent routes and key destinations including:

- Routes to enable pedestrians and cyclists to access local green spaces and the countryside around the town
- Routes that support cycle commuting to / from key local destinations including: station, airport; Stansted Mountfitchet; the Hadhams; Ware; Harlow; Sawbridgeworth; Canfield /Takeley.
- Make a financial contribution towards signage for routes to community facilities and key destinations.
- Ensure routes are accessible for people using wheelchairs or mobility scooters.
- b) To ensure new communities are walkable, development proposals, unless demonstrably impractical, should apply the following Department for Transport (DfT) guidelines and adopt measures to achieve the following reasonable walking distances between housing and new and/or existing community facilities:
 - Bus Stops (from which key services can be accessed within 30 minutes) – 400m
 - Food Store – 800m
 - Primary School – 800m
 - Doctors – 800m
 - Local Play Areas – 800m
 - Secondary School – 1000m
- In line with EHDC's Sustainability SPD, a maximum walking distance of 800m from Bishop's Stortford station is sought.
- c) Major schemes should provide for the early implementation of sustainable travel infrastructure to enable sustainable travel patterns to be established from the outset of occupation.
- d) Developers of major schemes will be expected to outline any deviation from these guidelines and justify such deviation and the

impact of the design on sustainability of travel options within the site and between the site and the surrounding area.



3.5.4.4 Despite the relatively compact nature of the town, cycling and walking are underused modes. This is due to poor cycling infrastructure, narrow streets and pavements, high traffic flows resulting in perceived safety issues, the topography of the town and high levels of car ownership. The availability of e-bikes has made cycling a realistic option in the town.

3.5.4.5 In order to give people real choice about travelling sustainably, as required by paragraph 105 of the NPPF, cycle routes will need to feel safe throughout an entire journey, with parking available at key destinations. Whilst promotion of cycling and walking through Smarter Choices Campaigns is important we also need to build a high quality, safe and convenient cycling and walking infrastructure throughout the town.

3.5.4.6 The provision of routes and paths that connect people with key destinations throughout the town will make a significant contribution to mitigating traffic and congestion challenges as the town's population grows as well as bringing health and environmental benefits. Therefore, an ambition for the town is that all key destinations are connected by a direct, legible and integrated network of walking and cycling

routes. The policies that follow seek to maximise opportunities to achieve this.



TP4 – Develop a connected town for pedestrians and cyclists with priority for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport in the town centre

- a) Any major development shall deliver pedestrian and cycle improvements, appropriate to the size, scale and location of the scheme, that enable people to travel from the development to key destinations around the town such as the town centre, railway station, main employment areas, schools, health services and out of town retail centres.
- b) Where barriers such as busy roads, the river or railway tracks hinder significant movement by foot or cycle, applications that include measures to navigate these barriers through solutions such as bridges or other crossing facilities at road level will be expected.
- c) There will be a strong presumption against development which results in the loss of any existing cycle or pedestrian crossing over a road, railway or river unless a suitable alternative is provided.
- d) Where possible, cycle routes should be traffic free or segregated physically or by line markings. Cycle lanes should not be created on roads where roadside parking would be allowed alongside them. Routes should aim to keep road crossings and changes in level to a minimum and cycle routes should avoid unnecessary gradients. Routes should normally be suitable for those with

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wheelchairs, frames, buggies or other mobility aids.

e) In line with section 8 of EHDC's Sustainability SPD, motorists are required to give way to cyclists at junctions on shared use paths or on roads. On main roads junctions this may include provision of raised tables, advance stop lines or a cycle phase at traffic lights.

f) Cycle routes should be built to high quality design standards such as the NCN (National Cycle Network) Standards or London Cycle Design Standards and, to the extent that is consistent with the viability of the development, include the following features:

- All season use.
- Sealed surface.
- Width in keeping with recommended guidelines and standards as mentioned above.
- Suitable for leisure and utility use.
- Lighting.
- Suitable for wheelchair and mobility scooter users.
- Clear signage and communication of routes.
- Integrated with public transport nodes.
- Removal of existing barriers reducing accessibility and no new ones added.

g) Major development schemes should provide for the early implementation of sustainable travel infrastructure or initiatives that influence behaviour to enable green travel patterns to become established from the outset of occupation.

h) Development that seeks to support or contribute to the following proposals will be encouraged:

- Designated Locations as defined in section policy SI1 of the Bishop's Stortford 'Neighbourhood Plan for All Saints, Central South and part of Thorley Parish – Part 1 Introduction and Site Specific Policies'.
- Recommended routes and improvements identified through the Town Council approved Bishop's Stortford Cycle and Walking Masterplan Study conducted by Sustrans (2016).
- Routes to enable pedestrians and cyclists to access local green spaces, the countryside around the town and Hatfield Forest as a key local leisure site
- Routes that support cycle commuting to key local destinations: station; airport; Stansted Mountfitchet; Hadhams; Ware; Harlow; Sawbridgeworth; Canfield/Takeley.

3.5.4.7 Community feedback has shown continuing concern with bus service provision in Bishop's Stortford including problems relating to reliability, routing, lack of real time information, congestion on roads causing bus delays, unconnected train and bus timetables and the availability of cheap car parking. These all impact on the ability to offer bus travel as a meaningful alternative to the car and impact on those who do not have access to a car. Additionally, a number of bus stops are poorly located contributing to increased congestion in the town centre.

3.5.4.8 Paragraph 104 of the NPPF calls for opportunities to promote public transport use at the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals and goes on, in para 110, that applications for development should give priority to "facilitating access to high quality public transport". HCC's Local Transport Plan LTP4, adopted in 2018, has therefore established a 'User Hierarchy' for evaluating applications and identifying transport investment priorities which ranks

bus travel above all other transport modes apart from walking and cycling.



3.5.4.9 Increasing bus use in Bishop's Stortford requires provision of a regular, reliable service, close to where people live, supported by real-time information and high quality equipment and facilities from which the town centre, rail station and commuting destinations can be accessed. It is also important that Bishop's Stortford has an effective transport interchange between buses, trains and other modes of transport – including cycling and walking. Redevelopment of the bus and train station interchange into an efficient transport hub equipped for passengers in all weathers would present a modern gateway to the town, attractive to residents and visitors alike.

TP5 – Better Bus Travel

a) Significant developments should normally be served by a regular bus service to the town centre and major commuting destinations. Where new residential development is not within 400 metres of an existing bus stop from which key service destinations can be accessed within 30 minutes, then developers may be expected to fund net additional bus services and supporting technology to provide real-time service information, through a planning obligation or otherwise. Such subsidy should ensure that the service continues to run from commencement until beyond the full occupation of the development.

b) Bus stops shall be of an appropriate high standard of design and shall include but not be limited to:

- being fitted for the display of Real Time Information.
- being fitted with 'all weather' seating and shelter.
- being accessible for people with disabilities.

c) In order to achieve improvements in facilities and services and a co-ordinated service plan for Bishops Stortford as a cross boundary public transport hub, facilities provided under this policy shall have regard to the Hertfordshire County Council's Intalink Bus Strategy 2019, the Quality Partnership and be delivered in cooperation with Essex CC and service providers.

d) Where the encouragement of public transport use is proposed as a mitigation measure for any development, the use of developer contributions to enhance existing key bus corridors by the provision of appropriate priority bus measures (excluding bus lanes where only a single carriageway is available), will be supported.

3.5.4.10 2010 School Census data³ indicated that the main mode of travel to school among primary age children was walking. For secondary school children the main mode of transport is bus. Nevertheless 35% and 23% of journeys to primary school and secondary school respectively were made by car and it is noticeable that congestion levels around the town are higher during school term periods. Cycling mode share was low and only marginally increases between primary (1.8%) and secondary school (2.8%). HCC are

³ 2010 School Census data (Urban Transport Plan-Stage 1 report, Steer Davies Gleave)

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undertaking further work to obtain baseline school travel data in the County in support of school travel planning.

3.5.4.11 HCC's Local Transport Plan 4 notes that "*increases in journey length for education trips and increases in 'trip-chaining' where people combine trips for two or more journey purposes, such as dropping off children to school, commuting and shopping, is making it harder to achieve modal shift away from cars.*" LTP4 Policy 3 (c) therefore supports the preparation of school travel plans to encourage behavioural change.

3.5.4.12 Local Authorities have a duty to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport⁴. The vision for Hertfordshire County Council is to increase opportunities for children and young people to make journeys to schools and colleges by sustainable means by encouraging schools to adopt school travel plans and promoting the Modeshift STARS scheme.

3.5.4.13 Within the Town there are a number of important school pedestrian travel routes that are perceived as having poor and unsafe crossing facilities and/or excessive traffic speed.

3.5.4.14 The developers of significant residential developments are expected to work with local schools to identify appropriate traffic mitigation measures and support school travel plans.

TP6 – Safer, sustainable school travel
a) For significant and larger major developments, developer contributions specified within appropriate Planning Obligations such as S106, will be sought to

ensure that the residents of new developments can travel safely by sustainable modes to schools that serve their area. Proposals that include any or all of the designated elements in (b) below will be encouraged.

- b) There will be a strong presumption against development that does not include or does not provide funding for any of the following designated elements where it is reasonable to expect (given the location and nature of the development) and viable to do so.
- Street design measures in the vicinity of schools to improve safety of children traveling to school on foot and by bike.
 - Safe school drop off and pick up zones.
 - Funding or part funding of new or diverted school bus or school shuttle services especially if there is a lack of alternative sustainable travel choice.
 - Improvements to enhance the safe passage of pedestrian and cycle traffic through Designated Locations listed in policy SI1 in the Bishop's Stortford Neighbourhood Plan for All Saints, Central, South and part of Thorley Parish Part 1.

3.5.5 Objective: Provide vehicle and cycle parking to support sustainable travel objectives

3.5.5.1 In addition to high quality routes, high quality cycle parking is required to make cycling a genuine transport option, as set out in paragraph 104 of the NPPF. Cycle parking needs to be provided within the development site and additional parking provided at community destinations off site, to take into account the additional cycling generated by the new development. Cycle parking needs to be secure, covered and in a safe location for the cyclist.

⁴ Department for Education Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance, July 2014 (Updated December 2016)

TP7 – Cycle parking

a) Sufficient, secure and waterproof cycle and, where appropriate, powered two-wheeler storage facilities shall be provided for users of new residential, educational, health, leisure, retail, employment and business developments (to be determined on a site specific basis). These should be positioned in easily observed and accessible locations.

b) In addition to meeting the requirements of East Hertfordshire Vehicle Parking Standards for cycle parking on the development, major developments are also expected to make financial contributions towards the provision of cycle parking at key destinations such as schools, the railway station, the town centre and leisure centres.



3.5.5.2 Community feedback has highlighted that residential parking and other factors affecting its use is a problem in the town.

There are a range of issues:

- Increased demand for parking as the town grows.
- Insufficient off-road parking on new and existing developments leads to parking on roads impacting on traffic flow and pedestrian/cycle safety.
- A lack of off-street residents parking which is contiguous with, and part of, each numbered property.
- Poorly designed parking courts.

- A lack of residential electric vehicle charging facilities.

These problems of residential parking are compounded by non-residential parking issues such as commuter and town centre workers parking in residential streets which can cause problems. Residential Parking Zones and restricted parking schemes are being considered to address this.

3.5.5.3 The dimensions of garages are often too small to accommodate a car, together with bicycles and some storage space. Many planning and highways authorities recognise this and require specified minimum dimensions for a garage to be counted as a parking space.⁵

3.5.5.4 Parking courts have proved unpopular and, where poorly designed, lead to a poor visual appearance due to ambiguous responsibilities for maintenance, unattractive expanses of hard surfacing or cars, and a poor street scene. Residents have complained about the inconvenience created by a separation between parking and the corresponding property, particularly when heavy objects must be transported.

3.5.5.5 NPPF Para 104(e) acknowledges that "... streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places". The District Council's currently adopted Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 'Vehicle Parking Provision at New Development' dates from 2008 and an updated version is currently in preparation. The Council's adopted

⁵ For example Essex 7m x 3m

Basingstoke: 6m x 3m

Burgess Hill: 7m x 3m

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Sustainability SPD also provides that new development should include an electric vehicle charging scheme designed to provide the infrastructure to enable present or future charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles. This policy applies these new higher design standards to new residential development wherever and as soon as appropriate.

TP8 – Residential parking

a) Off-street parking which is contiguous with, and part of, each numbered property is strongly preferred. Parking courts may be permitted provided that they:

- Are built to Secured by Design standards or equivalent and adequately lit.
- Serve a small number of properties, for example no more than five, except in the case of flats where a single block or two closely adjacent blocks may be served.
- Are overlooked by surrounding dwellings.
- Are clearly visible and easily accessible from the property served.
- Are aesthetically pleasing and complement the street scene both when full and partially empty.
- Have a sense of place and are designed to encourage ownership.
- Have regard to any design guide published in association with this plan.

b) The road layout at the approaches to parking courts must be designed so that residents will be encouraged to use them in preference to parking on the street. This will normally be achieved by ensuring that:

- The entrance to parking courts precedes the dwelling when approached from the distributor road or other access serving the development.

- The distance to be travelled from the distributor or access road to the parking space is comparable with or less than the distance to the 'on street' parking opportunity nearest to the property.
 - Access to the parking court is easy to negotiate and that parking spaces are sufficiently wide that they are easy to use.
 - The walking distance between the vehicle and the dwelling to which it belongs (or to the relevant entrance to the block in the case of flats) must normally be no more than 20m via a paved route.
- c) Applications for conversions and/or demolition and rebuild of garages for living accommodation will be supported only where it can be demonstrated that adequate off road parking is provided for the sole use of the property in accordance with the provisions of the District Council's adopted or, where appropriate, emerging Supplementary Planning Document 'Vehicle Parking Provision at New Development'.
- d) Applications for residential development that includes a reliance on parking on existing streets shall not be permitted if this would result in a material adverse impact on the safety of road users including cyclists and pedestrians.
- e) Applications for major residential developments should include an electric vehicle charging scheme designed to provide the infrastructure to enable present or future charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in accordance with EHDC's Sustainability SPD.



3.5.5.6 The future increase in the town's population and housing growth within and beyond the Neighbourhood area will inevitably put pressure on already stretched parking availability for workers, commuters, shoppers and visitors – particularly in the town centre. A balance is therefore required that results in adequate parking provision to maintain and enhance the vitality of the town whilst at the same time encouraging the use of sustainable travel modes.

3.5.5.7 Community feedback has also highlighted that parking is a problem in the town. There are a range of issues:

- Increased demand for parking as the town grows.
- Sub-optimal use of parking spaces, for example allocated contract car parking spaces for commuters are often unused and unavailable to the public at weekends.
- Concentration of car parks and access to them in the north of the town centre which worsens congestion in key hotspots.
- Lack of town centre parking accessed from the south of the town.
- Inefficient entry and exit arrangements that contribute to congestion problems.
- Insufficient off-road parking on developments leads to parking on roads impacting on traffic flow and pedestrian/cycle safety.

- Commuter, town centre workers and long-term airport related parking in residential streets can cause problems.

3.5.5.8 NPPF paragraph 104(e) highlights that "*patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes and contribute to making high quality places*". It also places significant emphasis on measures to stimulate town centres and enhance their viability. District Plan Vehicle Parking Provision Policy TRA3 reflects these objectives and requires that non-domestic car parks for users of educational, health, leisure, retail, employment and business developments:

- Provide sufficient secure, covered and waterproof cycle and powered two-wheeler storage facilities;
- Provide charging points for low and zero carbon vehicles at public car parks associated with major developments (including those for Park and Ride facilities); and
- At non-domestic private car parks, the Council will assess whether it should also be available for shared public use having particular regard to the needs of the primary user.

The Neighbourhood Plan supports these District Plan policies to reduce car parking demand and make more efficient use of existing and new capacity in the town in support of sustainable travel objectives.

3.5.5.9 The District Plan Town Centre policy BISH2 also references Bishop's Town Centre Planning Framework prepared in 2017. This makes no policy recommendations but notes that:

- A 2015 Parking Demand Study found that by 2021, parking demand would exceed supply by around 280 spaces - further

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- exacerbated by future development in the town to 2026.
- The supply of short stay car parking in the town centre will be increased in line with demand, as a result of housing growth.
 - A new public short-stay car park at the station will help to provide car parking for this area of the town centre.
 - The Old River Lane (ORL) site is well-located for car parking and could provide for future parking demand but would need to be carefully mitigated, but...
 - ...went on to recommend a new multi-storey car park to the north of Old River Lane to increase car parking capacity in the town centre and serve the central shopping area.

The new 546 space multi-storey car park to the north of Old River Lane received consent in 2019 and is now complete (2022) but the redevelopment of the existing ORL (Policy BISH8) is unresolved and is subject to preparation of, and consultation on, an SPD in 2022.

3.5.5.10 The Town Centre Planning
Framework recommendations appear to have the potential to fuel short term supply-led demand for town centre car parking significantly in excess of the 2015 Parking Demand Study at a time when activity levels appear to be in decline or uncertain for many traditional town centre uses. At the same time there are a number of policy initiatives in support of the Local Transport Plan's sustainable travel objectives including:

- EHDC's support for Shaping Stortford's bid to HCC in December 2020 for Sustainable Travel Town status. This bid included a change in the Council's parking and spatial planning policies, including the abolition of free parking provision in the town centre

and no net gain in parking spaces both on-street and in off-street facilities.

- The Bishop's Stortford Park and Ride Feasibility Study for EHDC in 2018 assessed the potential demand for a Park & Ride service against the costs of operation. It concluded that multiple edge-of-town sites produced town centre traffic reduction benefits based on the anticipated demand from town centre retail and work (but excluding rail commuter) trips but is unlikely to be financially viable without significant reductions in town centre car parking capacity and increases in charges. Whether the socio-economic and sustainability policy benefits would attract funding subsidies for a public or privately funded project was not assessed.

3.5.5.11 In the light of these findings and changing policy directions, the Neighbourhood Plan supports sustainable travel policies and initiatives to manage public parking in the town by reducing both demand and net additional supply in the town centre and supporting alternatives including mode switching (including cycles and electric vehicles), pricing policies, shared public use and park and ride initiatives where they are financially or economically viable.

TP9 – Parking in and around the town

a) Developments resulting in the net loss of public car parking spaces in the which are designed to serve the town centre will be permitted where an appropriate level of mitigation measures are provided which encourage modal shift away from car use or otherwise result in a reduction in demand resulting from the development. Reductions in the number or significant changes in the location of existing car park spaces should be justified by past and forecast usage statistics provided to the developer by the car park owning authority or other owner.

b) Developments leading to the increase of public parking provision on existing parking sites (for example by over- or under-ground multi-decking) will be supported provided:

- They are designed to be in keeping with the surrounding area or as a piece of quality architecture in their own right contributing positively to the aesthetics of the building stock in Bishop's Stortford and
- There is a demonstrated need, based principally on considerations of town centre vitality, which will not realistically be fulfilled by modal shift.

c) Effective traffic demand management in the town centre in the next five years will be strongly supported where viable to do so through parking measures including:

- parking restrictions on new developments and changes of use,
- edge-of-town park and ride facilities to intercept rail commuters and other long stay town centre users, and
- other parking demand management approaches.

Financial contributions will be sought from developments to support the viability of such approaches where they encourage modal shift and sustainable travel.

d) Short period free parking places, sponsored by or integral to new retail developments outside the town centre consistent with the NPPF sequential test, will be supported, where appropriate. Reserved places for disabled parking close to shops and other facilities should be an integral part of any development which includes parking spaces.

e) Applications for non-domestic development or changes of use that include a reliance on parking on existing streets shall not be permitted if this would result in a material

adverse impact on the safety of road users including cyclists and pedestrians.

f) Applications for major non-domestic development should include an electric vehicle charging scheme designed to provide the infrastructure to enable present or future charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in accordance with EHDC's Sustainability SPD.

3.5.6 Objective: Manage traffic speeds and promote road safety

3.5.6.1 Road safety continued to be raised as a concern by residents during the consultation process. The problems of speeding traffic are compounded by narrow or non-existent pavements and a lack of suitable crossing points which act as barriers to pedestrian and cycle movement and are also constraints for those with reduced mobility. Reducing vehicle speeds and introducing traffic calming measures can also reduce carbon and other emissions.

3.5.6.2 Given the high levels of car ownership and use in the area, creating and managing neighbourhoods so that traffic speeds and road layouts are safe is fundamental. Policy 15 of HCC's Local Transport Plan 4 commits the council to manage the network to achieve appropriate speeds in the interests of safety, other road users, and the environment through its Speed Management Strategy which introduces zonal rural speed limits and increases the number of roads that could have 20mph speed limits. This approach should be applied when assessing and mitigating the impact of new development and prioritising investment on the existing highway network of the town.

3.5.6.3 In the case of new development, District Plan policy TRA2 reflects the requirements of the NPPF paragraph 110(b) that development proposals should ensure

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that "*safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users*" and this should include a design speed of not more than 20mph for new roads outside main access routes in line with HCC's Roads in Hertfordshire: Highway Design Guide.

3.5.6.4 The addition of significant new housing developments will require careful design to create a safe environment for all road users. In addition, the increase in traffic volumes generated by these developments may potentially have a detrimental impact on road safety in key areas which form part of the wider travel network. HCC's Local Transport Plan 4 contains a commitment to develop a methodical and proactive 'Safe Systems' approach to identifying safety issues and improvements on the network which, when developed, has the potential to be applied to guide road infrastructure design in the town.

3.5.6.5 In the case of new development, District Plan policy TRA2 reflects the requirements of the NPPF paragraph 110(b) that development proposals should ensure that "*safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users*". NPPF paragraph 108(c) also goes on to say that any significant impacts on highway safety of the network should be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree and this policy is designed to promote road safety at new developments and across the town as a whole.

TP10 – Traffic speeds within new developments

New residential developments shall include a readily understandable street hierarchy with a design speed of not more than 20mph for roads outside main access routes. It must also enable their use by refuse, emergency and delivery vehicles. In order to achieve this, the use of alternative strategies is encouraged, including the use of shared spaces and speed-

activated signage. Traffic calming and other measures should be designed to achieve appropriate speeds in the interests of permitting safe passage by all road users and reducing carbon emissions.

TP11 – Promote road safety

- a) All development applications requiring a Transport Assessment or Statement and Travel Plan as required in Policy TP1 above will include an analysis of the impact of the development on road safety. The road safety assessment will be based on an analysis of traffic flows and accident data for the local highway network including identified safety hotspots.
- b) The transport and safety assessments shall identify works to mitigate unacceptable road safety impacts based currently on the Department for Transport's Manual for Streets and, when appropriate, HCC's Local Transport Plan 4 Policy 17(b) to develop a 'Safe Systems' approach to co-ordinate a mix of safer roads, speeds, vehicles, and road users.

3.5.7 Objective: Contribute to improve town accessibility and connectivity

3.5.7.1 It is important that the planning system supports transport investment in Bishop's Stortford as a vital part of making the town an attractive place to live, work, play, visit and shop. The District Plan commits the town to high levels of growth in the plan period and, given that the cumulative impact from development will place additional demands on accessibility, connectivity and ease of movement in the town, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks developer contributions to the necessary transport infrastructure to achieve this.

3.5.7.2 This principle is set out in paragraph 55 of the NPPF 2021 which says that "*local*

planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations". Planning obligations should only be used where it is not possible to address unacceptable impacts through a planning condition. Paragraph 56 goes on to say that planning obligations must only be sought where they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; directly related to the development; and fair and reasonable in relation to the development in order to ensure that it remains viable.

3.5.7.3 District Plan Policy DEL2 commits the Council to use a range of planning obligations on these terms to provide infrastructure including that for sustainable transport modes and highway improvements. Such obligations are usually, but not exclusively, required in the form of financial contributions. The policies are quite clear that such financial contributions must be related to the direct effects of a given development, rather than being put into a pot to fund general improvements.

3.5.7.4 In East Herts financial contributions are sought under Section 106 of the Town Town and Country Planning Act and by HCC using their Planning Obligations Toolkit in order to secure financial contributions towards the provision of infrastructure and services. Paragraph 25.3.3 of the District plan says the "*District Council will also give consideration to introducing a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in order to support the provision of future infrastructure schemes*" and, if so, the Neighbourhood Plan could be future-proofed through a commitment to identifying projects which could be funded through the neighbourhood portion of CIL should the charging schedule be adopted during the plan period. However, in the

absence of CIL, there is currently no mechanism for Town or Parish Councils to collect financial contributions via s106 agreements. The policy will therefore allow Bishop's Stortford Town and Thorley Parish Council to be consulted on and influence the District Planning Authority's s106 negotiations with the developer.

3.5.7.5 District Plan Policy TRA1 (II) says contributions may be required towards the facilitation of strategic transportation schemes identified in the Local Transport Plan and other related strategies. Local Transport Plan 4 requires HCC to prepare the Eastern Area Growth and Transport Plan (EAGTP) which will set out a comprehensive transport investment packages, programmes and projects by prioritising investment proposals from the LTP and other relevant adopted local transport and active travel strategies for the area. The Consultation Draft of the emerging EAGTP has been reviewed in early 2021 and issues raised on the need for a clearer sustainable transport strategy and revised intervention priorities to support the objectives of this revision cycle of the Neighbourhood Plan. A revised GTP is expected to be adopted later in the year.

3.5.7.6 Policy TP12 therefore supports planning obligations seeking developer contributions to improve town accessibility and connectivity including:

- transport improvements to be delivered through District Plan site allocations BISH3 – BISH10 and identified traffic and transport mitigation measures required as part of planning consents for development at those sites; and
- sustainable transport projects and programmes in the finally adopted EAGTP and other relevant adopted strategies including:

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- Bishop's Stortford Transport Options Report
- Bishop's Stortford Parking Study
- Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Framework
- East Herts Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Bishop's Stortford Walking & Cycling Strategy (SUSTRANS)

TP12 – Financial contributions to improve town accessibility and connectivity

- a) Financial contributions will be sought from developers utilising s106 agreements and HCC's planning obligation toolkit to mitigate traffic impacts of development, promote sustainable transport and deliver improvements in the neighbourhood area to town accessibility and connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists, bus and vehicle users which are identified in approved transport investment programmes.
- b) Should East Herts District Council introduce a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) during the Plan period The Town Council and Thorley Parish Council would seek to identify projects which could be funded through the neighbourhood portion of CIL. Otherwise they will seek to influence the relevant Planning Authority's negotiations on planning obligations with the developer to ensure that development finances unspecified transport mitigations and improvements sought through Neighbourhood Plan policies on a case-by-case basis.

3.6 EDUCATION

3.6.1 Introduction

3.6.1.1 Schooling in Bishop's Stortford is generally recognised to be high quality.

3.6.1.2 However, recurring concerns about education in Bishop's Stortford are:

- There are not enough school places to feel confident that one's child can get into the nearest school (primary) or the preferred school (secondary).

- There is insufficient Adult education and Vocational training in the town.

3.6.1.3 The location of primary and secondary schools in the town is shown in figure 3.

3.6.1.4 The area is well served in relation to the number of secondary school places available. However, their high quality leads to high popularity and many families outside the town seek secondary school places in Bishop's Stortford. Hertfordshire County Council data indicates that 52% of the 2021 student intake to Bishop's Stortford schools (excluding Bishop's Stortford College, which is an independent fee-paying school), totalling 523 pupils, were residents of the town.

3.6.1.5 Currently, all primary and secondary schools are at, or near capacity in Bishop's Stortford and forecasts suggest that demand is likely to increase in line with housebuilding. New primary and secondary schools are planned or under construction to accommodate the increased population which will arise.

3.6.2 Objectives

3.6.2.1 The policies in this section seek to achieve the following objectives:

- Support the creation of sufficient new school places to accommodate population growth.
- Maintain or improve current high standards of education in the Neighbourhood Area.
- Enable the provision of vocational training, adult education and wide community use.

3.6.3 Objective: Support the creation of new school places to accommodate population growth

3.6.3.1 At present there is both a perceived and an actual shortage of primary and secondary school places in the area, although, the perceived shortage is greater than the actual shortage. Any new development must take the need for extra school places into account.



3.6.3.2 The location of new schools locations together with the access arrangements should minimise vehicular congestion and traffic impact. New developments must be informed by travel plans which include measures to encourage the use of transport other than private cars.

EP1 – School availability

Development will be permitted if sufficient local primary school places exist or are made available for all additional children arising from a development and adequate secondary school places exist or are made available in Bishop's Stortford in schools

that are reasonably accessible from the proposed development location or the developer makes contributions (whether financial or otherwise) requested by the Education Authority, to enable any shortfall in provision caused by the development to be addressed.

EP2 – New secondary school places

Proposals for developments which create new secondary school places to serve new developments, taking account of guidance from Hertfordshire County Council, and which are easily accessible, will be welcomed.

EP3 – New primary schools

Proposals for new primary schools to serve new developments, taking account of guidance from Hertfordshire County Council will be welcomed.

EP4 – Pre-school and early years

Proposals which provide pre-school and/or early years' places will be welcomed.

EP5 – Travel plans

The location and access arrangements of new schools should minimise vehicular congestion and traffic impact. Proposals which incorporate travel plans that include measures to encourage the use of transport other than private cars will be supported.

3.6.4 Objective: Maintain or improve current high standards of education in the Neighbourhood Area

3.6.4.1 Planning should enable new schools and existing schools to maintain the high standards currently enjoyed by Bishop's Stortford. In part, this means that existing schools must be able to maintain high quality buildings.

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3.6.4.2 The aesthetic design of any new school buildings should take into account other prominent buildings and geographical features. The design and appearance of new schools or improvements to existing schools should be in keeping with the innovative, creative and important work which occurs inside them.

EP6 – High quality design

Proposals for new or renovated educational buildings must complement local features and demonstrate a high quality aesthetic. They must be fully accessible to all and incorporate full consideration with respect to sustainability.

3.6.5 Objective: Enable the provision of vocational training, adult education and wide community use

3.6.5.1 Consultation feedback indicates dissatisfaction with the level of adult and vocational training available in the area and new development provides the opportunity to ensure that the appropriate facilities are available.

3.6.5.2 Space is precious. Therefore developments must include, within their building design, opportunities for multiple and flexible use.

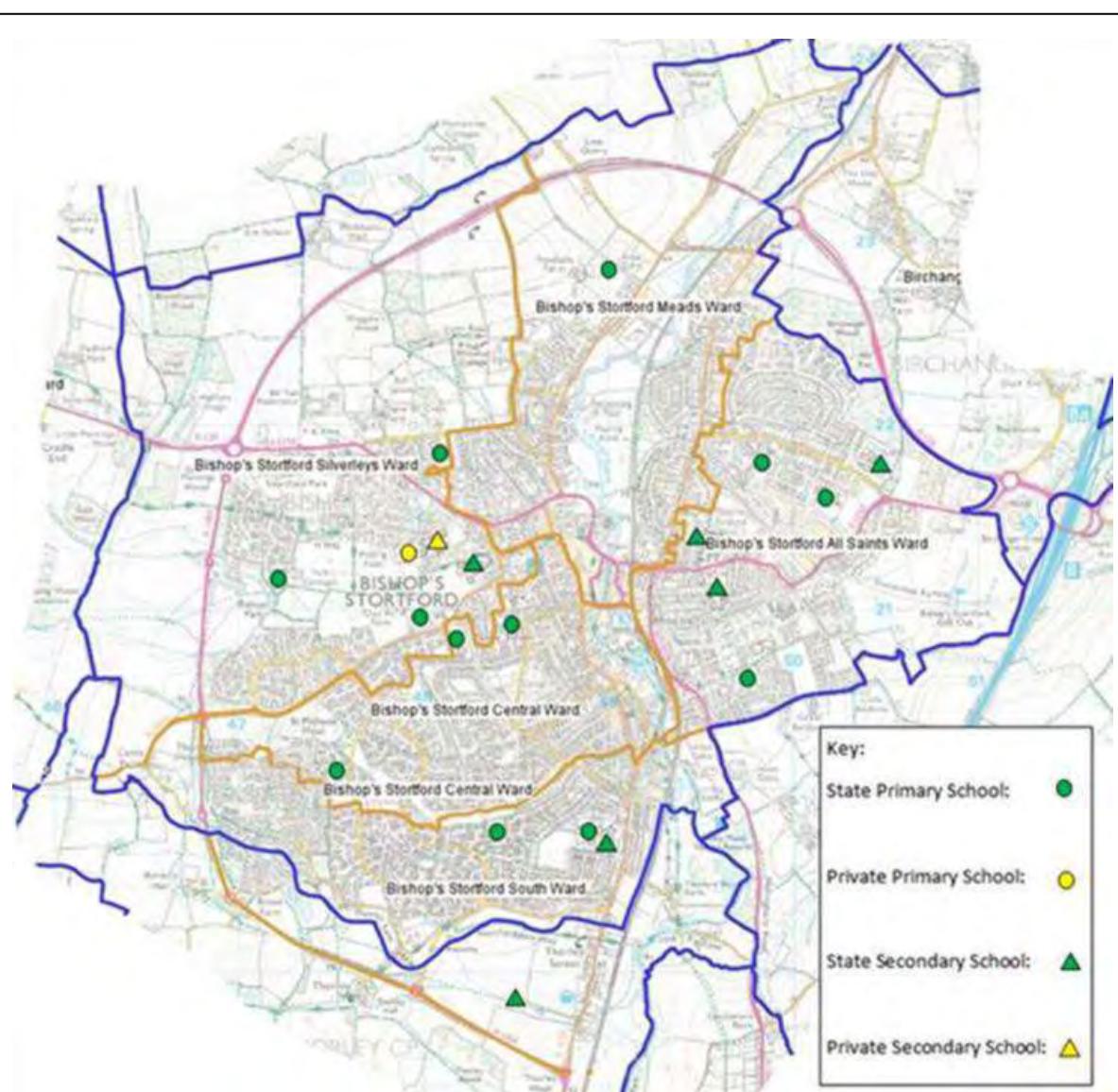


Figure 3 - Location of Schools

EP7 – 16-19 Vocational Education, Adult Education and Community use

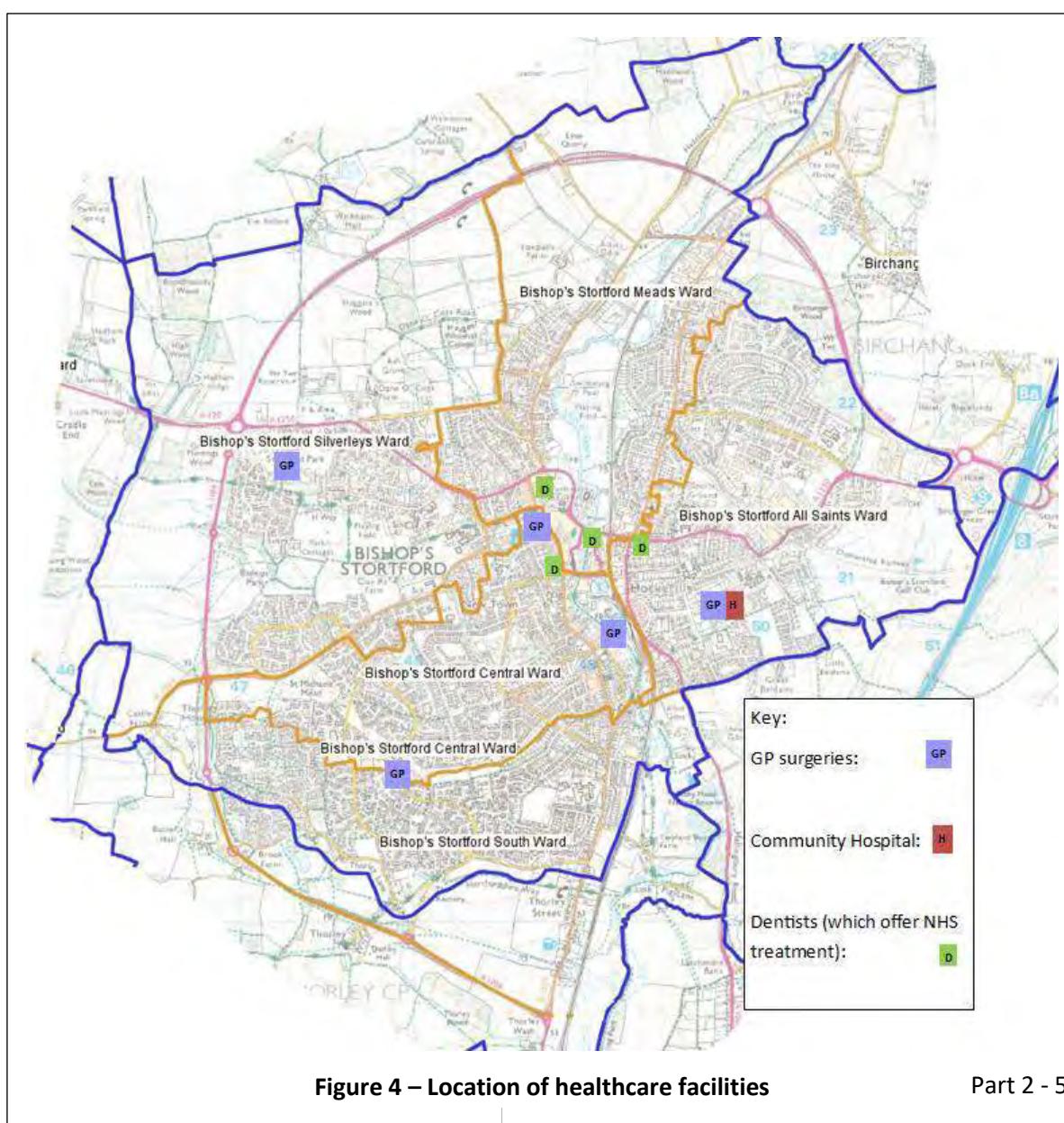
- a) Proposals for dedicated facilities for 16-19 vocational education or training or training for those with special needs, whether on a new or existing site, will be encouraged, provided they are consistent with the requirements of all other policies.
- b) Additional secondary schools should not be considered unless it has first been demonstrated by the developer that the 16-19 vocational education and training needs can be met locally.
- c) Proposals for new school accommodation

will be required to be designed to accommodate adult and vocational education and/or community use outside of school hours unless it can be demonstrated that this is either not practical or not viable.

3.7 HEALTH

3.7.1 Introduction

3.7.1.1 Primary health care in the town is already stretched and while praising the quality of the medical care provided, many residents complain about difficulties with getting timely appointments with GPs. There



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are also concerns about a lack of mental health services, A&E facilities and care for the elderly. The expansion of the town and the ageing population will put additional strain on these facilities. However, the Health Profile published in June 2015 by Public Health England showed that the health of people in East Herts is generally better than the England average.

3.7.1.2 The annual patient surveys carried out by the practices (e.g. Church Street) shows patients were unhappy with the numbers of GPs available, the state of the premises of Church Street and South Street, and with the appointments systems.

3.7.1.3 Responsibility for the three practices in Bishop's Stortford lies with the Stort Valley and Villages Locality Group which is also responsible for two in neighbouring areas. Public health is the responsibility of Herts County Council and the East Herts Draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy may be viewed on the East Herts District Council web site.

3.7.2 Objectives

The policies in this section seek to achieve the following objective:

- Provide reasonable access to health services for residents of all ages

3.7.3 Objective: Provide reasonable access to health services for residents of all ages

3.7.3.1 The 2014 report from Herts Healthwatch contained an analysis of the GP/Patient ratios for the five GP practices in the Locality Group. For the three practices in Bishop's Stortford, the average ratio was 1:2019, well above the national average of 1:1800. The practices have reported their problems in recruiting new GPs and it is clear that progress needs to be made on this issue

for them to be able to offer an improved service.

3.7.3.2 The South Street practice, in 2012, made a proposal to move its main surgery to the Silverleys sports complex site but this was not approved, mainly due to issues of sustainability. An alternative proposal was made by a developer to move the main practice to Tanner's Wharf and this was approved by EHDC but was not a favoured option for the practice.

3.7.3.3 The local practices are in joint discussions to identify possible strategies for the future which will improve the service to patients and will cope with the increased demand arising from new development all around the town, while allowing for the reality of constrained NHS budgeting. Feedback from residents confirms the view that some of the present GP premises are not fit for purpose and that purpose-built premises will be required in the future, including for any major new development.

HP1 – Accessible GP practices

- a) Any new development of 10 residential units or more must, by means of financial contributions or otherwise, support the provision of facilities so that new residents have access to a GP practice within a reasonable distance, subject to agreement with the healthcare provider and unless the existing services are already capable of providing this service to the new residents.
- b) For developments of over 500 dwellings appropriate provision must be addressed as part of the development proposal. This may be through onsite provision or financial contribution to local offsite provision where onsite provision is not viable. Applicants must engage with the relevant health authorities at the earliest possible stage.

- c) Contributions should take account of East Herts policies for community infrastructure contributions and the effect of contributions on the viability of development.
- d) Development of a new central location for the services currently provided at South Street and Church Street practices will be supported subject to other applicable policies.

3.7.3.4 In addition to GP services, there is a need for high quality specialised provision for care of the elderly, the mentally ill, and the mentally and physically disabled. Most of the elderly residential services are provided by private care homes which where possible should be sited in residential areas and specifically built for purpose.

3.7.3.5 Residents have stated a need for an Urgent Care Centre at the Herts & Essex Hospital to alleviate some of the pressure on A&E at Princess Alexandra Hospital in Harlow and to provide an improved service to residents of Bishop's Stortford. NHS England is aiming to ensure that through working with health and social care colleagues they can provide integrated care and problem solving for individual patients, thereby keeping people out of acute hospitals and reducing the reliance on urgent care services.

HP2 – Services for the elderly, disabled and for mental health

Proposals for development which improve specialist care for the elderly, the physically and learning disabled and mental health services will be encouraged.

3.8 SPORT, LEISURE & COMMUNITY

3.8.1 Introduction

3.8.1.1 Access to a variety of high quality sport, community and leisure facilities, both indoor and outdoor, enhances the integration

and sustainability of communities, and is a vital ingredient in the development of good physical and mental health of residents.

3.8.1.2 Unfortunately, the current level of provision of sport, leisure and community facilities within the town are seen by many involved in the organisation of such activities, to be less than adequate. Organisations and clubs, however, prosper within the town, due in no small part to the enthusiasm of members and supporters and the high standard of coaching which is available in many sports.

3.8.1.3 Any expansion of the town needs to ensure that all facilities, both existing and new, are developed to be both accessible and adequate to meet the needs of the towns increasing numbers of residents. The Neighbourhood Area contains various indoor and outdoor facilities of varying degrees of accessibility and quality.

3.8.1.4 The local topography and the nature and size of the town's future expansion suggest that if the community's needs are to be met then the surrounding Green Belt must be used to accommodate sports facilities, with suitable restrictions to ensure that the essential openness of the Green Belt is still preserved.



3.8.1.5 Expansion of the town will involve the building of new local community centres and create a clear need for the town's arts facilities to be further developed by increasing the capacity of existing facilities (within the

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constraints of listed building consent) or building a new and larger capacity arts facility.

3.8.2 Objectives

3.8.2.1 The policies in this section seek to achieve the following objectives:

- Provide standards-compliant community facilities to meet the needs of the residents
- Encourage appropriate use of Green Belt for sensitively designed outdoor sport, leisure and community facilities

3.8.3 Objective: Provide standards-compliant community facilities to meet the needs of the residents

SLCP1 – Provision of outdoor sporting and leisure facilities

a) Contributions to new or enhanced outdoor and indoor sports, leisure and community facilities (including appropriate ancillary buildings) will be required as set out in policy of CFLR1/CFLR7 of EHDC District Plan.

b) The provision of facilities under this policy will have regards to any Bishop's Stortford or neighbourhood strategy that is in place at the time and the balance between manageability, which favours centralised facilities, and

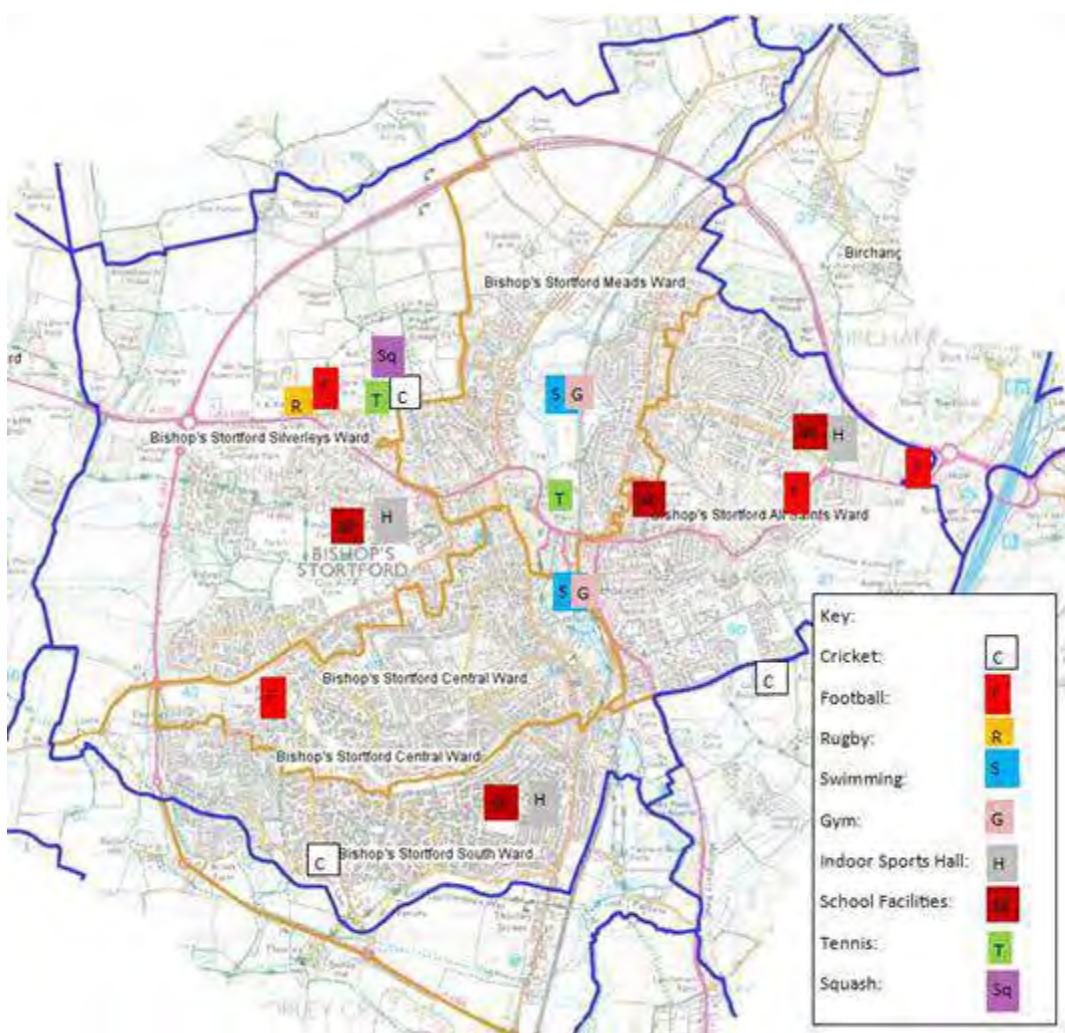


Figure 5 – Location of principal sports facilities

locality, which favours distributed facilities.

c) The mix of facilities (in terms of sports provided for) will be determined in consultation with the local planning authority, Bishop's Stortford Town Council, Thorley Parish Council (if appropriate), local sports clubs and other stakeholders.

d) Any proposals for new or enhanced community sports facilities must be inclusive (i.e. suitable for residents with disabilities) and comply with Sport England design guidance, be accompanied by an adequately-sized car park having regard to the likely modes of transport to and from the venue as well as nearby parking availability. Sites which are accessible by public transport, walking and cycling will be more strongly supported.

SLCP2 – Development or expansion of multi-purpose facilities

a) Proposals for developments in sustainable locations that enhance existing facilities, whether indoor or outdoor, by way of increasing their utilisation or capacity for multiple use and/or level of public access, will be strongly encouraged, where they do not conflict with other neighbourhood, local or national planning policies.

b) Provision for shared use must be considered in any such development, unless this has a material adverse effect on the viability.

c) New community halls should comply with design guidance set by both Sport England and the Charity Commission (Sport England: Village and Community Halls Design Guidance Note, reference 1038, January 2001 and Charity Commission: Village Halls and Community Centres, reference RS9, December 2004) or updated guidance that supersedes it unless a clear justification for departing from it is provided in terms of viability, the nature of the site, or user needs is provided.

d) Any proposals that result in the loss of buildings or land currently allocated for sports use will not be supported unless:

- an assessment has been undertaken which clearly shows that the facility is no longer needed in its current form; OR
- the resulting loss would be replaced by an enhanced facility in terms of both quality and location; OR
- the site is to be used for an alternative community facility, the need for which clearly outweighs the loss.

SLCP3 – Development and enhancement of specified facilities

a) The development of a new or improved swimming pool complex and the expansion or enhancement of additional facilities that are needed to serve the town's population, will be supported where they do not conflict with other neighbourhood, local or national planning policies.

b) Proposals by educational establishments to construct or expand sports and leisure facilities with the specific intention of making such facilities available for use by all the community will be supported. The conversion or adaptation of facilities to increase their availability and alternative uses throughout the year will be encouraged.

SLCP4 – Community leisure and arts facilities

a) Proposals for a new and larger capacity arts facility at an accessible and preferably central location will be supported as should any proposals which enhance existing arts facilities within the constraints of listed building consent, subject to other applicable policies.

b) Any proposals that result in the loss of buildings or land currently allocated for community use will not be supported unless:

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- an assessment has been undertaken which clearly shows that the facility is no longer needed in its current form; OR
- the resulting loss would be replaced by an enhanced facility in terms of both quality and location; OR
- the site is to be used for an alternative community facility, the need for which clearly outweighs the loss.

3.8.4 Objective: Encourage appropriate use of Green Belt for sensitively designed outdoor sport & leisure facilities



SLCP5 – Development of sports facilities in the Green Belt

Except in areas designated as 'Local green Spaces' the development of outdoor sports facilities in the Green Belt will be permitted provided:

- The demand for such facilities is clearly established.
- The design, massing and materials are such as to create a harmonious relationship with the surrounding landscape and environment.

3.9 BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT

3.9.1 Introduction

3.9.1.1 Bishop's Stortford is a relatively small market town but is the largest town in East Hertfordshire, in close proximity to Stansted Airport and the M11. It is well served by rail to London and Cambridge and by road in most directions. It has excellent schools, a thriving community and good employment opportunities both in the town and through commuting. The main employment in the town itself is in distribution services, light industry, office based, leisure services and retail. Bishop's Stortford is in the heart of the London- Stansted-Cambridge corridor. Research published by the LSCC Growth Commission in 2016 showed that the economic growth rate of the corridor was 20% higher than nationally 1997 - 2014. Two recent studies by Wessex Economics and DTZ have concluded that Bishop's Stortford has the greatest potential of all the settlements in the District in terms of employment growth particularly in terms of B1 office space and land.

3.9.1.2 The Bishop's Stortford Town Plan (2010) identified the need to improve professional and white collar job opportunities. 'Business Stortford' was established as an outcome of the Town Plan to attract companies from the UK, Europe and beyond to Bishop's Stortford in order to bring more of these types of jobs to the area. The initiative was set up by Bishop's Stortford Chamber of Commerce and includes a 'Welcome Programme' to fast-track a company's relocation or expansion to Bishop's

Stortford.



3.9.1.3 Bishop's Stortford is due to change over the plan period therefore a degree of flexibility regarding use of land and buildings will be increasingly required. Reasonable proposals for change of use of existing facilities should be supported to ensure modernisation opportunities ensure an up to date and sustainable employment provision.

3.9.1.4 The location of industrial areas both new and existing needs to be carefully considered. Existing industrial areas were originally near the edge of town however with subsequent development and expansion of Bishop's Stortford these sites are now located more within the town and often bounded by residential areas.

3.9.1.5 Consideration should be given to development of new business areas on the edge of or outside the current boundaries of the town and conversion of the existing sites to residential development. Support for a change of use proposal would be based on a suitable alternate location of employment facility being available prior to the change of use to match or exceed the existing location. Any proposed new industrial areas towards the East of the town may need to be developed in conjunction with input from both Uttlesford District Council and Essex County Council.

3.9.1.6 There is a clear demand for high quality office and retail premises around the

town however several existing properties have often remained empty for months or years in some instances. Retention of these properties as business is preferred as the economy improves. Approval of change of use would require full justification.

3.9.1.7 Retail activity throughout the nation is changing fast with an increasing use of online purchasing and preference for larger, high variety shopping centres. In addition, the town has seen a shift in emphasis from traditional independent type shops to service based retail such as hairdressers and cafes.

3.9.1.8 New retail facilities will result in increased competition for existing retailers. Where this competition has a detrimental effect, a possible change of use proposal for such properties should be supported where appropriate. The NLP report referred to below suggests that the Goods Yard is considered to have the potential to accommodate further retail development within Bishop's Stortford, and could absorb any residual capacity.



3.9.1.9 Proposed development in the Neighbourhood Area should enhance business and employment diversity and aligned with the 'Bishop's Stortford' construction aesthetic provide both a contemporary place to work along with a building that suits the surroundings. A healthy and thriving retail environment in the town centre is paramount to the town's success as a living community

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and any mechanism to support this cause is to be supported.

3.9.2 Objectives

3.9.2.1 The policies in this section seek to achieve the following objectives:

- Create new employment opportunities for local residents while protecting amenities for residents
- Create a welcoming, prosperous and dynamic town centre through attractive, integrated refurbishment and development
- Support development in the town and commercial areas to ensure sustainable employment diversity

3.9.3 Objective Create new employment opportunities for local residents while protecting amenities for residents

3.9.3.1 The need for a business incubation hub has been identified through consultation with the local business community. In Bishop's Stortford self-employment is in line with the district, county and national average (6%, source: 2011 Census) and for many, the need to have small, cheap business premises which offer the opportunity to network with other business professionals is crucial to the ongoing success of their business. It will be important that a variety of stakeholders contribute to the identification of a suitable location.

3.9.3.2 The purpose of creating new employment opportunities is to provide employment for local people and bring workers into the Neighbourhood Area. Access to supporting facilities from their place of work will enable people to link work and other activities minimising additional trips outside of the working day. This contributes to sustainability and an improvement in amenity

by reducing the need to undertake additional car journeys.

BP1 – Provision of a business incubation centre

Proposals for the provision of a business incubation centre will be supported. This should be similar to a scaled down version of the Harlow Enterprise Hub providing a centrally located managed facility with 10-20 rooms including meeting rooms. It should seek to address the following considerations:

- On-site parking facilities, good public transport links, cycle storage and links to the pedestrian and cycle network.
- The facility should be appropriate for the needs of small 'start-up' type business activity including street level access.

3.9.3.3 The provision of thriving local retail facilities which are amply supported by the community where they are presently unavailable would be of benefit to the community.

BP2 – Local retailing facilities

Proposals for local retail facilities which provide services to large-scale residential development will be supported. These local centres must provide for an appropriate mix of A1 to A5 use classes. Residential accommodation above the shops should be provided if possible. Any proposed development would be aligned with RTC1 of the District Plan 2018 or its successor policy but must not be at a scale that detracts from the offer in Bishop's Stortford town centre.



3.9.3.4 There is a need to improve digital connectivity within Bishop's Stortford, both for businesses and residents. The investment in the business infrastructure can create opportunities that are of wider benefit to the community and therefore such opportunities to provide collective benefits should be taken where they arise.

BP3 – Provision of business communication infrastructure

a) Up to date business communication infrastructure for the town is paramount and developers must ensure the following in any new development:

- That the necessary infrastructure is provided to enable new houses and development to connect to the highest broadband speed available in the area.
- In edge of town areas consider supporting the installation of public Wi-Fi internet facility for the benefit of all new development.

b) Installation of mobile communication equipment is to be supported when installed in such a manner as not to be prominent.

c) The provision of electric car charging points will be encouraged in all new business developments and will be a requirement for all major business developments.

3.9.4 Objective: Support development in the town and commercial areas to ensure sustainable employment diversity

BP4 – Mixed developments

The following will be supported subject to other applicable policies:

- Proposals which seek to enhance the employment opportunities in the town by providing a diverse mix of retail and commercial facilities.
- Developments and refurbishments that modernise existing employment facilities without detracting from the local building style.
- The regeneration or redevelopment of existing industrial sites to commercial business facility.

BP5 – Edge of town development

The following will be supported where possible and subject to applicable policies:

- the development of new industrial and/or commercial business uses at the edge of the town.
- the re-location of current industrial areas within the town or near the town centre to the edge of town, with access from the bypass (A120 and A1184), to enable change of use of those areas to residential.

3.10 TOWN CENTRE

3.10.1.1 The town centre still has the character of a historic market town. Whilst it has suffered, like many others, from a movement towards online and out of town shopping, the occupancy rates remain high. The Neighbourhood Plan contains policies which seek to ensure that the centre remains

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a vibrant and attractive focus for both retail and other activities.

3.10.2 Objectives:

- Create a more attractive pedestrian environment reconnecting with the river.
- Promote a holistic parking strategy balancing the needs of residents, businesses and visitors with the impact on the environment.
- Produce a framework for retail between national chains and independent shops.
- Identify flexible and adaptable employment uses to support the town's economy.
- To provide a balanced mix of residential, cultural, leisure and business uses within the Town Centre.

3.10.3 Objective: Create a welcoming, prosperous and dynamic town centre through attractive, integrated refurbishment and development

3.10.3.1 Bishop's Stortford town centre is described in the East Herts District Plan 2018 as the "largest shopping centre in the District". However, most residents of the town want it to remain as a historic town centre, whilst expecting it to be improved in terms of quality, diversity and use of resources, such as the river.



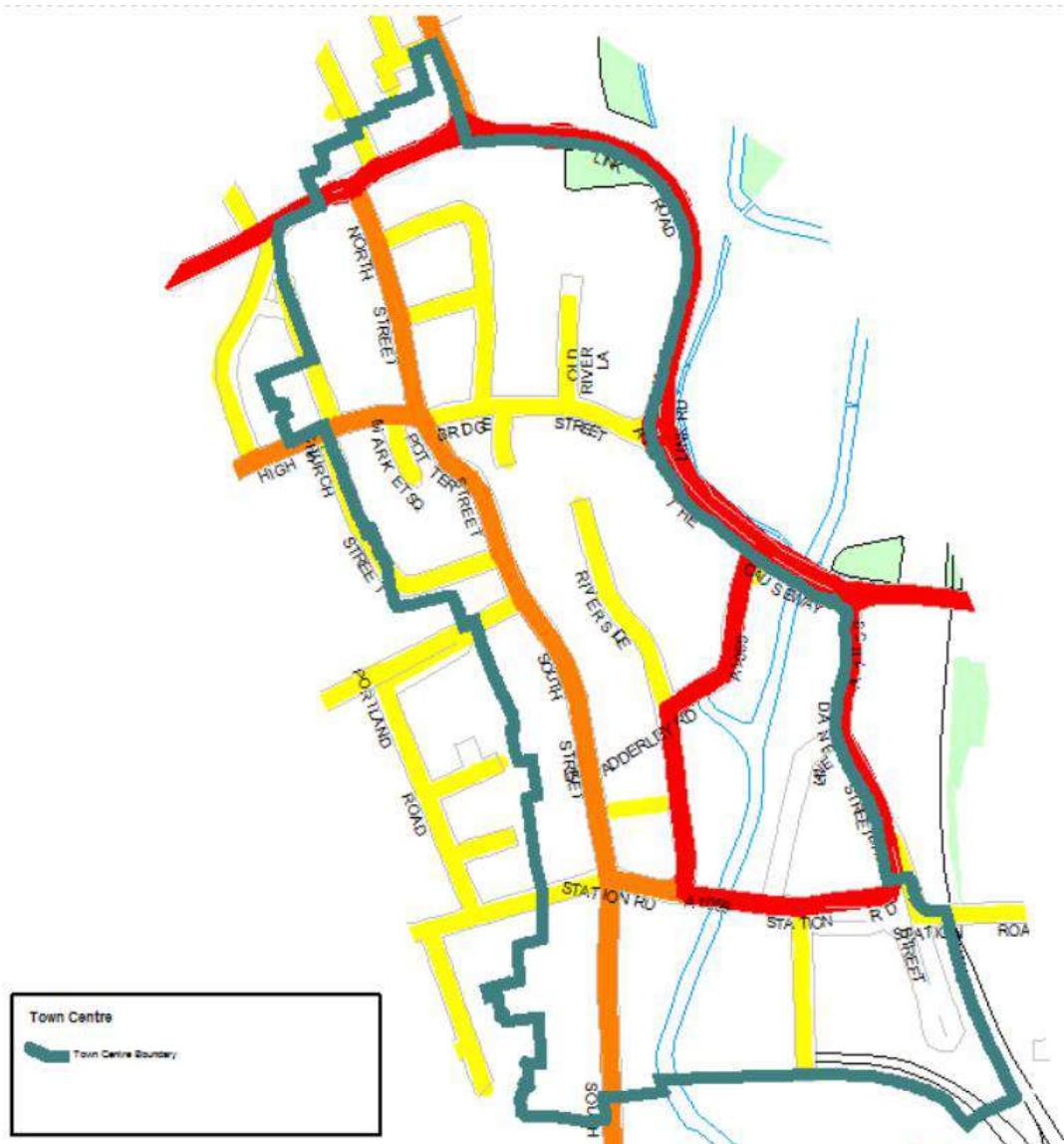


Figure 6 – Town Centre Boundary

3.10.3.2 Whilst the town centre buildings are relatively well maintained and a somewhat limited range of shops and enterprises present, there are some vacant premises and evidence of churn that present challenges for the appearance of the town centre. Evidence from the online town centre survey of shops and businesses carried out in November 2013 suggests that increasing the range and scale of good quality retail shops, particularly, is the best way to encourage footfall and bring the revenue needed to maintain the fabric of the town centre.

3.10.3.3 It is also important that the retail offering for the town centre remains located where the main shop frontages are now and does not lose vitality and accessibility by being distributed over a wider area. Most of the recognised town centre is within the Bishop's Stortford conservation area and this should provide a useful reference point for maintaining the character and standard of buildings generally within the town centre. Issues of parking in the town centre are addressed in the Transport Policies section.

3.10.3.4 National policy aimed at reversing the decline of town centres over recent years

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is likely to bring opportunities and challenges to the nature of our town centres. Any new development must be appropriate for the town as a whole and for the town centre in particular.

3.10.3.5 The town centre has attracted a number of large blocks of flats in recent years, still not fully occupied. So, whilst residential dwellings can be advantageous in bringing more people to the town centre, this type of imposing building is not liked by residents of the town and will not be favoured.

3.10.3.6 The primary shop front area of the town centre is bisected by a through route for vehicle traffic along South Street, Potter Street and Market Street. This leads to a barrier to pedestrian movement and undesirable levels of noise and air pollution as well as discouraging use of the street market.

3.10.3.7 The town centre with its many listed buildings, narrow pavements and hills is not easily accessible and has poor facilities for those of reduced mobility. There is a need to go beyond the statutory minimum, and East Herts Council policy, provision for such individuals when considering the merits of new developments.

TC1 – Town Centre Planning Framework

Development proposals in Bishop's Stortford Town Centre, as defined in Figure 6 above, should have regard to the Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework and demonstrate broad compliance with the design guidance.

TC2 – Future development of the town centre

Significant⁶ commercial or retail development will be considered against the following criteria:-

- New retail uses close to, or adjoining, existing primary retail frontages as defined in Table 1 below will be supported as will changeable modular structures.
- Proposals within or adjacent to the Conservation Area will be expected to harmonise with the aesthetic character of existing buildings. Elsewhere in the Neighbourhood Area, more innovative styles can be adopted with emphasis on light and space.
- Proposals that seek to reduce the volume of traffic flow and instances of stationary traffic along South Street will be encouraged. Contribution towards transport improvements should be in line with Hertfordshire County Council's recommendation's and seek to promote sustainable modes, encouraged through effective travel planning.
- Developments that go beyond the minimum provision for those of reduced mobility, for example by including disabled toilets under the Disability Rights UK 'Radar' scheme, or by providing suitable premises for motorised scooter hire, will be favoured.

TC3 – Prosperity and character of the existing town centre

a) A flexible approach to change of use will be encouraged to secondary shopping frontages as defined in table 1 below, as per RTC4 of the District Plan 2018. Where it contributes to a range of services aimed at supporting a strong

⁶ See Appendix 2 – Glossary for definition.

base of quality retail shops concentrated, as far as possible, close to the primary retail frontages.

b) Community services such as the library, post office, tourist office, CAB, GP surgery etc. will be encouraged to remain in the town centre area.

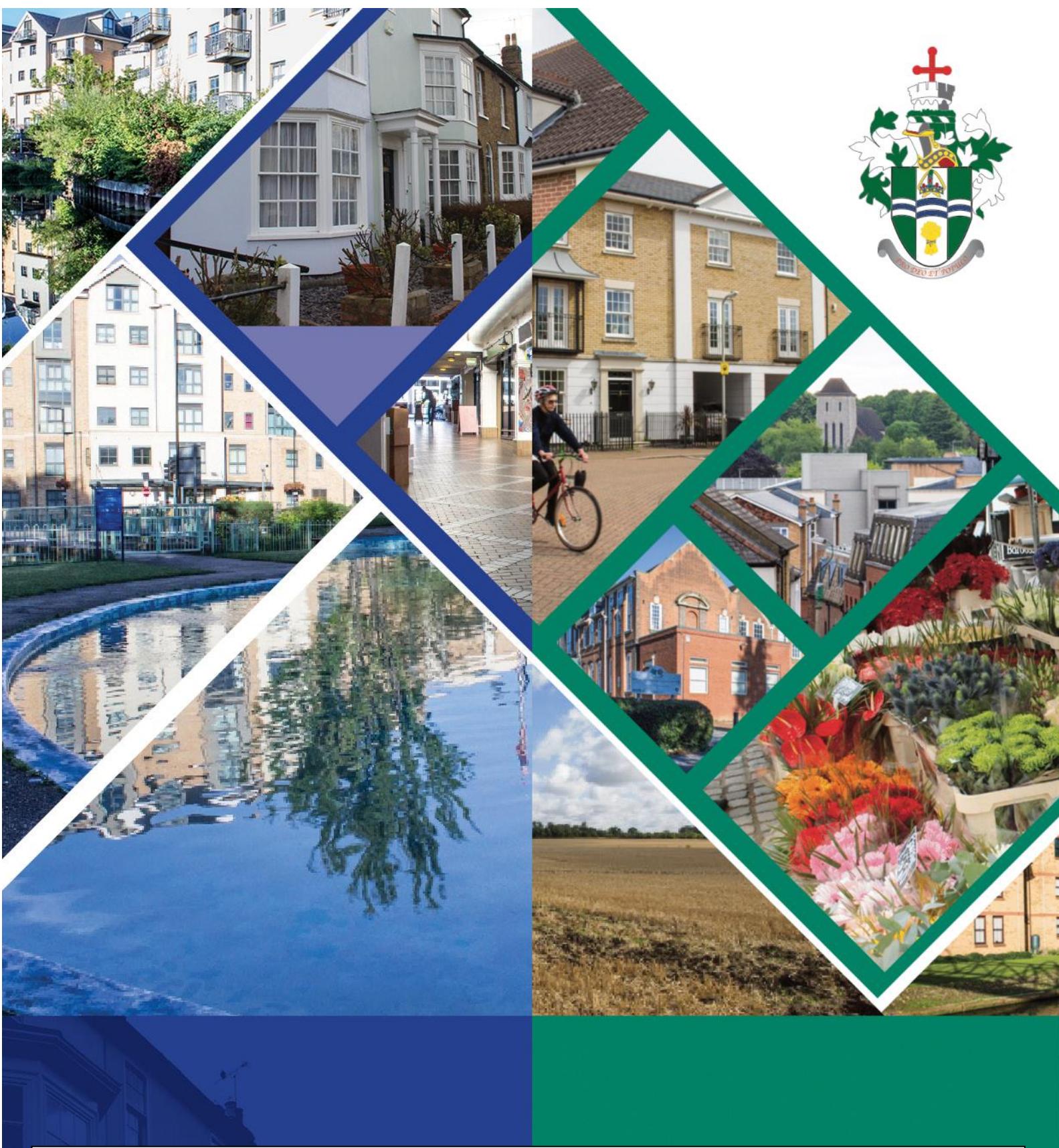
c) Temporary concessions will be considered for 'pop-up shops' and similar short term or seasonal enterprises, providing they do not conflict with the character of the town centre and of the time of the application support the vitality of the high street, aimed at meeting a target of at least 90% occupancy.

d) The street market operating two days a week in North Street, Market Square, Potter Street and South Street should be supported wherever possible as a valuable contribution to the vitality of the town centre.

Table 1 – Bishop's Stortford Retail Frontages

Primary Frontages	Secondary Frontages
1-3, 3a-13, 13a, 17 Bridge Street (Odd)	12-22 Bridge Street (Even)
2, 2a-10 Bridge Street (Even)	12-18 Church Street (Even)
2 High Street (Even)	1-25 Church Street (Odd)
1-19 Jackson Square (All)	1-13 Devoils Lane
14-16 Market Square (Even)	1-15 Florence Walk (All)
1-9 Market Street (Odd)	1-4 Hadham Road (All)
2-4, 10-34 North Street (Even)	4-10 High Street (Even)
1-23 North Street (Odd)	1-7 High Street (Odd)
9-15 Palmers Lane (Odd)	2-12 Market Square (Even)
	1-3 Market Street

1-35 Potter Street (Odd)	(Odd)
2-34 Potter Street (Even)	5-9 Newtown Road (Odd)
1, 1b-37 South Street (Odd)	38-42 North Street (Even)
2a, 2b, 2c-12, 12a-16, 16b-32, 32a-34 South Street (Even)	25-31 North Street (Odd)
	2-5 Riverside Walk (All)
	2-10 South Street Centre (All)
	39-45, 45a-47, 47a-79, 79a South Street (Odd)
	36-92, 92a-96, 100-102, 102a South Street (Even)
	1-5 Station Road (Odd)
	2-16 Station Road (Even)
	1-12, 12a-14, 19 Sworders Yard
	6 The Causeway
	1-5 The Dells



Bishop's Stortford Neighbourhood Plans for Silverleys and Meads Wards and for All Saints, Central, South and Part of Thorley Parish (1st Revision) 2021-2033

Policies Summary Section 2 – Designated Locations

BISHOP'S STORTFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS FOR SILVERLEYS AND MEADS WARDS AND FOR ALL SAINTS, CENTRAL, SOUTH AND PART OF THORLEY PARISH (1ST REVISION)

DESIGNATED LOCATIONS

In this section the 'designated locations' which are referred to in several policies are defined

Designated Locations – Policy GIP2(a)

The Firs Allotments

Bishop's Stortford Rugby Football Club Grounds

Northolt Avenue Play Area

Open Space Adjacent to Cannons Mill Lane

Farnham Bourne Brook

Birchanger Wood

The Firs

The Spinney

Burley Road Play Area

The Baron's Play Area

Dimsdale Crescent Play Area

Knebworth Court Play Area

Wilson Close Play Area (Rhodes Avenue)

Nightingales' Play Area

Ward Crescent Allotments

Hallingbury Road West Allotments

Haymeads Lane Allotments

London Road Allotments

Thorley Street Allotments

Central Green at Turners' Crescent, St Michael's Mead, Thorley

Landscaped Garden at Mercer's Avenue, St Michael's Mead, Thorley

Landscape Green Space at The Carpenters, St Michael's Mead, Thorley

Landscaped Garden on Millner's Way, St Michael's Mead, Thorley

Thorley Wash nature reserve (part thereof within Neighbourhood Plan Area)

Trinity Close Play Area

Parsonage Field

Thorley Cricket Ground

Ward Crescent Green and Play Area

Waytemore Road Green and Play Area

Designated Locations – Policy GIP2(c)

Apton Road Pond

Cox's Garden on Havers estate

The Green: a square bounded by Audrey Gardens, Mary Park Gardens and Bishops Avenue

Thorley Verge

Nettleswell Gardens at Rhodes Centre

Old Cemetery and New Cemetery

Area adjacent to Rushleigh Green and the Ridings

Established mature woodland between Thorley Lane East and Broadleaf Avenue

Boundary Strip to St Michael's Mead bounded by A1184 (St. James' Way), Mercer's Avenue, Moor Hall Lane and rear of Housing on The Shearers

Boundary Strip to St Michael's Mead bounded by A1184 (St James' Way), B1004, Mercer's Avenue and rear of housing on Blacksmith's Close and Tailors

Area of Woodland at Entrance to St Michael's Mead on Moor Hall Lane

Green Space at end of Alder Close

Green Space near corner of Sainsbury's, Thorley between 66A Ashdale and 29 Irving Close

Skelley's Wood

Green Space at rear of Northgate Multi-Storey Car Park (Under Construction)

Small Wooded Area East of Waitrose Immediately South of the Causeway

Grassed Area at back of Cock Inn, Hockerill

Designated Locations – Policy TP4h

Improving links to areas outside the A120 bypass road, in towards the town centre, to schools and across the railway line to Grange Paddocks and the Meads.

Maintaining existing bypass crossings for pedestrians and cyclists.

New crossings and improved pavement along the Hadham Road, particularly at the town centre end.

Forming a continuous cycle and pedestrian link between the eastern end of the ASRs and the bus/train station along the Stort Valley, using existing routeways where appropriate to do so.

Maintaining and improving the footbridge over the railway line between Grange Paddocks and Cannons Close (Johnson's Crossing) and similarly at King's Court.

Maintaining the rail crossing at Cannons Mill Lane for pedestrian, cyclist and non-ambulant use.

Safety improvements to the pavements on the North side of the river bridge in Station Road, so that pedestrians can pass each other safely and without having to step into the road.

Safe and connected routes from the Bishops Stortford South / Thorley area (potential to include use of The Firs and Thorley Wedge routes); Manor Links; Parsonage Lane area; Bishops Stortford North; and Bishop's Park to the town centre and station.

Improved permeability through the Goods Yard and improved pedestrian routes between the railway station and local schools.

Improved signage and route quality for pedestrians from the station to the town centre.

Safety improvements to the pavements on the South side of the river bridge in Station Road, so that pedestrians can pass each other safely and without having to step into the road.

Provide safe pedestrian and cyclist crossing facilities at or near to Hockerill junction.

Routes that support cycle commuting to key local destinations: including the station; centralised primary healthcare services at Herts and Essex Community Hospital; local employment areas (including industrial estates); Stansted Airport; Stansted Mountfitchet; Hadhams; Ware; Harlow; Sawbridgeworth; and Canfield/Takeley.

Improved connections to the River Stort and improvements to the River footpath/towpath including the enhancement of this route for both leisure and utility use.

Town centre pedestrianisation schemes to improve pedestrian priority and amenity.

Identify and maximise routes that improve sustainable travel access to employment areas such as the town centre, Twyford Road, Woodside, Raynham Road Industrial Estate, Stortford Hall Industrial park, Millside Industrial Estate

Designated Locations – Policy TP6b

Hockerill junction.

London Road/B1529/Hallingbury Road/Crescent Road.

London Road/Thorley Street.

Dunmow Road.

Goods Yard area.

Whitehill/Great Hadham Road (where there are accesses to 4 schools in close proximity)



Bishop's Stortford Neighbourhood Plans for Silverleys and Meads Wards and for All Saints, Central, South and Part of Thorley Parish (1st Revision) 2021-2033

Policies Summary Section 3 – Site-specific policies

**BISHOP'S STORTFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS FOR SILVERLEYS
AND MEADS WARDS AND FOR ALL SAINTS, CENTRAL, SOUTH AND
PART OF THORLEY PARISH (1ST REVISION)**

SECTION 3 - SITE SPECIFIC POLICIES

There are a small number of major development sites for which very specific policies apply (in addition to the Common Policies). These appear below

There are a number of major development sites for which very specific policies apply (in addition to the Common Policies). These appear here as follows

The Goods Yard

Land South of Bishop's Stortford

Bishop's Stortford High School Site

Bishop's Stortford East of Manor Links

3.2 THE GOODS YARD

3.2.1 Introduction

3.2.1.1 The Goods Yard site has been an area of undeveloped brownfield land on the edge of the town centre between the railway and River Stort that has provided much needed station parking for a number of years. Until recently the site was divided by a spur of fenced off railway track that prevented any meaningful use of the site other than for a

number of fragmented car parks forcing circuitous routes for pedestrians using the bus, railway station or nearby facilities.

3.2.1.2 The site was allocated for potential development in the East Herts Local Plan (2007) as BIS15 and included in the District Plan (2018) BISH7.

3.2.1.3 In July 2018 planning permission (in part outline, in part full) was granted for a major comprehensive mixed use scheme, including around 600 residential units. Development is underway on parts of the site. The remainder of this section was drafted at an earlier stage. Owing to a number of changes in circumstances, a revised Masterplan has been prepared, and adopted by the District Council in March 2022. The revised scheme will need to be the subject of further planning permission(s). It therefore makes sense for the time being for the contents of section 3.2 to be retained.

3.2.1.4 Planning of the site should be addressed in a comprehensive manner generally following 'Building for Life' and 'Active Design' good practice guidelines as mentioned in HDP2 and HDP3, but more specifically policies set out in this chapter.

3.2.1.5 Sensitive re-development presents a huge opportunity to provide a welcoming gateway to Bishop's Stortford and to greatly improve the accessibility of the town centre from the southern side of the town. Coupled with improvements to surrounding areas there is the chance to transform the site from a barren vista of cars into a vibrant contributor to the life and soul of the town. This was one of the most important findings from the Focus Group session about the development of the Old Goods Yard site held in February 2015.

3.2.1.6 There are considerable challenges, not least because of the shape and location of the site, proximity to road, rail and river

and the variety of dominant, largely unattractive architectural forms nearby. It should be recognised that the development can only go ahead if it is viable and sustainable, especially when taking into account the need to increase current parking levels and other potential developments in the town centre, notably that of Old River Lane.

3.2.1.7 Many passengers already drive from the Essex and Hertfordshire villages and park at the station. The Herts County Urban Travel Plan for Bishop's Stortford (2012) includes a map which shows the distribution of season ticket holders using Bishop's Stortford station. This is included in the Evidence Base as it shows car parking needs to cater for those coming from well outside Bishop's Stortford itself.

3.2.1.8 The two maps below show the location and detail of the site.



Figure 2 – Goods Yard Location

3.2.1.9 The long term vision for the site is that it should provide an attractive and innovative Gateway to Bishop's Stortford, recognising its contribution to the heritage of the town.

3.2.2 Objectives

3.2.2.1 The policies in this chapter which support that vision are grouped under the objectives below.

- Create a welcoming and pleasant public realm, enhancing the river environment and acknowledging the longstanding links of the area with travel and transport

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- Provide a transport interchange to promote better connections between all means of transport
- Improve vehicle access routes to the site and connections with the rest of the town
- Provide sufficient car and cycle parking for users throughout the period covered by the Neighbourhood Plan
- Provide easy and safe pedestrian and cycle links to and from the site

3.2.2.2 Policies elsewhere in this Plan, most notably (but not exclusively) in the sections related to Housing & Design, Green Infrastructure, Transport, also apply to this site and contribute towards achieving these objectives.

and cannot be used in isolation. Furthermore the scale of the objectives is such that schemes using only part of this site, other than as part of a comprehensive masterplan for the development of the whole site to be implemented in full, will not be supported.

3.2.3 Objective: Create a welcoming and pleasant public realm, enhancing the river environment and acknowledging links with travel and transport



Figure 3 – Goods Yard Plan

3.2.2.3 Each policy in this section addresses each objective as part of an integrated approach to re-development of the whole site

3.2.3.1 Visitors to Bishop's Stortford arriving at the train or bus station are currently faced with an unappealing scene of parked cars surrounded by a variety of

large buildings of uncertain use. New development should seek to transform this current landscape into one that is attractive and encourages people to stay whilst being easy to pass through en-route to the town centre or other parts of the town.

3.2.3.2 Full use should be made of the river and towpath with moorings to improve their connection, as well as views towards St. Michael's Church and the old Maltings buildings across the river to enhance the ambience of the area. The development should call on themes that reflect the historic links of the area with travel and transport, particularly the railways, but also acknowledging association with the river and canal, the nearby coaching route through Hockerill and the present day connection with Stansted Airport.

3.2.3.3 There is a contrast in surrounding buildings between the part of the site to the north of the Stort footbridge where large, ugly commercial buildings and the dull John Dyde flats dominate, compared to the southern end opposite the Maltings where a very traditional flavour is present. Building style should recognize this disparity, and use appropriate styles as described in policy GY1 generally in accordance with the character management principles described for the AECOM Character Assessment, a summary of which appears in Appendix 3. The Oct 2015 focus group mentioned 'The Weave' building in York as an impressive example of innovative, modernistic styling that could be suitable for the northern end of the site. The curved forms and woven styles echo local themes in a way that could be done for a landmark building in Bishop's Stortford drawing on the transport and industrial heritage of the area. South of the

Stort footbridge, building height must be in keeping with existing building height and to keep sight of the river.

3.2.3.4 The low lying nature of the site and its proximity to the river mean any development must be subject to a full flood risk assessment in accordance with Government and District Plan policies in force at the time to protect the improved public realm.



GY1 – Improved public realm

a) Schemes that address all of the following under a comprehensive masterplan for development of the whole site will be supported. A phased approach to the development of the whole site will be considered, provided that infrastructure improvements associated with each phase be completed first .

- An attractive and welcoming appearance, particularly to those arriving in the town in the train station area, providing a memorable gateway to Bishop's Stortford taking account of the important views from the railway station entrance towards the old Maltings buildings, the river and St Michael's Church and maintaining a clear sightline to one or both of these buildings if at all possible having regard to the development as a whole. Development must be of a high quality that

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demonstrates an understanding of local history and acknowledges the vernacular style and materials to the south of the Stort footbridge, as well as the scale of nearby buildings to the north of it.

- People friendly features within the built environment such as seats, tree and shrub planting, water features, sculptures, informal meeting places etc. to enhance the appeal of public places and through ways. Such features should reflect the historic links of the area with the river and railway industry and their contribution to the town's heritage using a common palette of materials, street furniture and signage.
- Green spaces to improve existing unmanaged scrubland to the south of site, preserving and enhancing existing riverside habitats. A sensible balance should be sought between managed leisure areas, such as pocket parks or play areas, and a lightly maintained natural environment. Mature trees should be kept wherever possible or, if feasible, lifted for use elsewhere.
- Continuous public access to an active river frontage with features such as cafes, recreational areas and moorings to encourage engagement with the river.
- Downwards gradation of building height towards the river/towpath to avoid canyoning of river bank within the site and to maximise sunlight at ground level. South of the Stort footbridge, buildings should be generally lower than on the northern part of the site.
- A full implementation of all flood protection and mitigation measures recommended as the result of the required flood risk assessment to avoid longterm adverse impact on the improved public

realm.

- Use of the concept of 'shared space' between pedestrians, cyclists and motorists, where appropriate, and with traffic calming, to improve safety and create a relaxed introduction to the town.
 - An attractive area including greenery, cafes, public space and small scale retail allowing passers-by to pause and relax. Possible locations for such an area are opposite the Leisure Centre forecourt or the railway station forecourt
 - Suitable surfaces and gradients should be used to enable reasonable wheelchair and motor scooter-access to all areas combined with pedestrian and cycle routes wherever possible.
- b) North of the Stort footbridge bold, innovative styling acknowledging local heritage can be used. An iconic building(s) with height using modern materials to create interesting forms would be permissible, providing this graded towards, and did not overshadow, the river.
- c) A small scale development to further improve the existing train station facilities that does not increase its existing area by more than 50% will be considered provided it conforms with other policies in this Plan and allows development of the whole site.

3.2.3.5 Bishop's Stortford is already the primary retail centre for East Hertfordshire. The primary shop front areas are in North Street, South Street and Jackson Square. In contrast, the Goods Yard site with large numbers of people passing through (the railway station had almost 3 million users in 2012/3) and close to flatted residential areas will be able to support a balanced offering of small scale retail outlets, service shops and more informal cafes and restaurants.

3.2.3.6 It is inevitable that the majority of housing on the site is flats and it has been seen from the popularity of the recent Churchill development of retirement flats in nearby South Street that this type of provision is well liked by older people. The Goods Yard development is close to the town centre as well as public transport connections and will have its own service/retail offering and communal areas making it attractive to those looking for a smaller property with easy access to most amenities. For the same reasons, those of all ages with mobility issues could find a home in the development suitable and appealing for them. Other groups, such as young professionals, wanting an attractive, high quality home less than an hour from the centre of London would also find such homes attractive. Both market housing and affordable housing should be built to a high standard suitable for both older and disabled residents.

3.2.3.7 A number of attempts have been made to re-locate the South Street surgery which is in unsuitable premises for a modern practice and the presence of an easily accessible local medical centre within the development is suggested. Significant numbers of people attending the consultation days suggested this location as a suitable new site for the practice, although the NHS decision making body may favour another location, yet to be confirmed. Re-locating the surgery with an associated pharmacy within the development would, however, increase footfall outside of the busy commuter times and help viability of the scheme.



3.2.3.8 The Business & Employment study (Wessex Economics, Town Wide Employment Study for Bishop's Stortford, for East Herts Council 2013) shows there is a demand for high quality office space close to the town centre as older, unsuitable premises are converted to other uses or replaced. However, although the District Plan BISH7 strongly recommends office space as a use of the site, the continued availability of the Charringtons offices suggest a conservative approach to further large scale provision of new office space without clear justification. Bishop's Stortford no longer has a major hotel and its position close to Stansted airport and other transport links suggest that a modest hotel operation could be viable. Hotel use would increase activity outside the busy travelling time and contribute to the sustainability of the development. Light industrial uses are no longer suitable for this site due to the poor road access and adverse impact on the nearby river and homes.

3.2.3.9 Results from the Bishop's Stortford Neighbourhood Plan All Saints, Central, South and Part of Thorley Questionnaire showed that 55% of respondents would increase their usage of the town centre were more public conveniences available. Thus, the provision of public conveniences in a development as large as this, is considered very important.

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GY2 – Site Uses

a) Only comprehensive schemes that include and address all of the following will be supported:-

- Residential provision for around 600 dwellings, or whatever lower limit supersedes this in the draft District Plan once it is made;
- Built to a high standard with easy access for those of all ages and abilities;
- Dwellings to be sited away from the railway line and any busy vehicle access points allowing for suitable noise and air pollution mitigation;
- Shop premises aimed at secondary shop front uses such as small scale retail, service and food outlets for both passing trade and local patronage.

b) Schemes that include the following will also be supported, unless further evidence based investigation by developers can demonstrate they are unsuitable or unnecessary:-

- Office space (B1 Business) of high quality;
- Local medical centre, not a main hub;
- Hotel, located close to the transport interchange;
- Buildings that, because of their scale, position or mix of uses, can benefit from a renewable energy source;
- Public conveniences available to all.

3.2.4 Objective: Provide a transport interchange to promote better connections between all means of transport

3.2.4.1 The railway station is the sixth busiest in the Hertfordshire commuter belt, just behind Elstree and Harpenden, with almost 3 million journeys starting or finishing there in 2012/3 (HCTS 2012 Appendix D 53). It is on the main line between Cambridge and London which also services Stansted Airport and use will grow substantially with the large scale residential developments planned in Bishop's Stortford and over the adjacent Essex border.

3.2.4.2 The hive of activity and traffic congestion seen around the station in the morning and evening peak periods indicate that movement between the different modes of travel could be far more efficiently organised and encourage greater use of sustainable means of transport. Currently, the bus standings are separated from the train station entrance with both having poorly defined and restricted pedestrian and cycle connections to them, crossing or close to taxi and car park traffic.

3.2.4.3 It is strongly recommended that the area close to the railway station forecourt is formally recognised as a transport interchange and the development of the site which includes this area provides just such an opportunity. Transport for London, who have had to deal with the same challenges many times within the capital, have a template guide 'Interchange Best Practice Guidelines' that could be used during the design and delivery process to tailor the best possible solution for Bishop's Stortford.

3.2.4.4 Schemes are normally tailored to meet the following criteria:-

- Efficiency – operational use, movement to and within, sustainability
- Usability – accessibility, safety and security
- Understanding – wayfinding, information, legibility
- Quality – built design, urban realm, sense of place

All four criteria should have equal importance in the design of proposed solutions.

GY3 – Transport interchange

- a) Only schemes that follow best practice (e.g. the TFL 'Interchange Best Practice Guidelines' reference guide) will be acceptable. The interchange must be safe and efficient to use for all types of users and usages.
- b) The catchment area when assessing current and future needs for those arriving in vehicles (private cars, taxis and buses) is defined as that bounded by points halfway between Bishop's Stortford railway station and the next nearest mainline station with dedicated parking for rail users of more than fifty cars. The catchment area for pedestrians is defined as within the town boundary, extending to 10 miles for cyclists.
- c) Developers will be required to establish current and future usage through an independent assessment, taking into account additional use due to all relevant development schemes within the catchment area that at the time of assessment:-

- have planning approval but await execution, or
- are under planning application, or
- are specified as likely to be delivered within the lifetime of the District Plans of East Herts and Uttlesford.

- d) The transport interchange must be close to the train station entrance and allows easy

movement between the different modes of transport, notably bus, train, taxi, cycling and walking (including wheelchairs and mobility scooters) with the following features:-

- be safe, well lit, and have high quality, weather proof waiting areas as well as a generally open layout to enhance the user's perceptions of personal security;
- be configured in such a way to enable the introduction of intelligent transport systems, e.g. dynamic bus stand allocation, with up-to-date real time information and timetables that are well positioned and accessible remotely using mobile devices;
- have signage provided in a position and format that is easily read by all, including the partially sighted and those unable to stand;
- have dedicated space for efficient taxi rank operation, separate from private car access to parking;
- have cycle parking/storage as near as possible to the train station entrance;
- have private car drop-off/pick-up points to site at London Road and Dane Street train station exits, and at the proposed new southern car access point.

3.2.5 Objective: Improve vehicle access routes to the site and connections with the rest of the town

3.2.5.1 Currently, the only access to and from the site for private vehicles (approximately 1,000 spaces for public and residential parking plus set down and pick up), buses in and out of the bus station and taxis to and from the railway station, is via two entrances/exits onto Station Road within less than 100 metres of each other, one of which is a narrow one way street with alternating, traffic light controlled flows. Congestion,

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particularly in the evening as trains arrive, is routine and, although it does eventually subside outside the peak morning and evening periods, the restricted access greatly exacerbates the situation.

3.2.5.2 Furthermore, cars approaching the town centre from the south have only two reasonable options when looking for parking, one via South Street onto Adderley Road or via the Hockerill junction onto the Causeway or Station Road, both of which enter or cross the one-way system. The Hockerill junction is already an air quality monitoring area where recognised acceptable levels of pollution are regularly exceeded. Unless an additional access to the site is made, the additional traffic load created by increased use of the Goods Yard development plus large scale residential developments elsewhere in the town and surrounding districts will increase standing traffic and pollution levels at all the known pinchpoints. It should be noted that the NPPF Planning Practice Guidance states that air quality is relevant to planning decisions where a development would 'Significantly affect traffic in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development site or further afield', which is almost certainly the situation here.

3.2.5.3 Fortunately, the extent of the site southwards to London Road at Tanners Wharf provides an opportunity to mitigate the impact of the increased traffic flows by creating a new two way access point to parking on the site. This would avoid the need to use the Hockerill junction and Station Road for vehicles coming from the South. Failure to provide such an access away from the town centre road system would effectively mean any development of the site would not be acceptable due to the resulting increase in congestion and air pollution.

3.2.5.4 Notwithstanding the above recommendation, sound traffic modelling, as described in TP1, must be used to inform any decisions about changes to road layout and junctions around the site.

GY4 – Vehicle connections to and from the site

- a) Sound traffic modelling, in accordance with TP1, shall be used to determine the changes to road configurations and connections around the development.
- b) Unless such traffic modelling can demonstrate wait times and pollution levels will be within the limits set in TP1 at all junctions affected by the development, only schemes that provide the following access solution will be acceptable:
- Two-way southern car access to the site for parking from London Road near Tanners Wharf, minimising interruption to traffic flow on London Road.
 - Two-way car access to the site for parking from Station Rd, minimising interruption to traffic flow on the one-way system.
- c) Schemes that additionally have a north-south throughway link between London Road and Station Road will be preferred.
- d) Schemes that restrict or prevent full development of the site or future access to the site from London Road near Tanners Wharf will not be supported.

3.2.6 Objective: Provide sufficient car and cycle parking for users throughout the period covered by the Neighbourhood Plan

3.2.6.1 In the Bishop's Stortford Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire 2014 improved car parking was top of the improvements that would encourage people

to visit the town centre more and better cycle parking was a significant reason for people to want to leave their cars at home when making journeys within the town.

3.2.6.2 Although the car and cycle parking currently on or around the Goods Yard site are for those using the station, it is essential that increased needs for car parking stemming from the development are fully accommodated and that car parking demand particularly is not pushed out into the other town centre car parks.

3.2.6.3 The catchment area when assessing both car and cycle parking must cover a reasonable area for both types of use and take account of future developments within those areas.

GY5 – Car and cycle parking

a) Only development schemes that address the need for car and cycle parking now and in the foreseeable future as determined in accordance with Policy GY3 parts b) and c).

b) During the construction phase of development for the site, car and cycle parking capacity must be maintained at the current level and, if any part of the scheme comes into use such that demand increases, capacity must be increased accordingly within that phase.

c) Suitable cycle parking must be provided in accessible and secure locations within the development for those visiting its facilities, ideally close to where cycle links already exist or are proposed.

d) Car parking must be attractive and of good quality (not exposed steel girder construction). It should also be of a design that feels safe and secure to use even at quiet times of the day with clear separation between cars and those on foot, particularly at vehicle entrance and exit points.

e) All possible steps should be taken at the design stage to ensure that the car entrance and exits operate efficiently and do not cause unnecessary delays.

f) Schemes that additionally include car parking that uses the noise blighted area alongside the railway line will be particularly welcome.

g) Depending on the siting of car parking, and unless traffic modelling can demonstrate they are unnecessary or unsuitable, elevated vehicle access to car parking should be provided from

- Station Road bridge over the railway line and
- London Road between the Tanners Wharf traffic lights and the mini roundabout junction with Hallingbury Road.

3.2.7 Objective: Provide easy and safe pedestrian and cycle links to and from the site

3.2.7.1 There is already a high level of pedestrian traffic to and from the railway station, bus station and other nearby facilities, such as the leisure centre, as well as the area being a through route for school children coming from one side of the town to nearby secondary schools (as noted in the Feb 2015 Focus Group).



3.2.7.2 The towpath running from Swarder's Field through to Twyford Lock and beyond is also a popular route for both leisure and those

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walking to the town centre from the south particularly. Existing safe cycle access is limited apart from the River Stort cycle and footbridge. It is essential that these routes are maintained and improved to make development of the site acceptable and to encourage modal shift towards sustainable forms of transport.

3.2.7.3 Although just outside the Neighbourhood Area, every opportunity must be taken to link with the proposed new footbridge over the river alongside Station Road.² Other key connection points are marked on the map below (Fig 10). It is recognized that some of these points are just outside the site boundary and do not always have good onward routes to the main destinations within the town. As such, they are good candidates for improvement using S106 developer contributions to mitigate increased pollution from additional traffic as the result of development.



GY6 – Pedestrian and cycle links

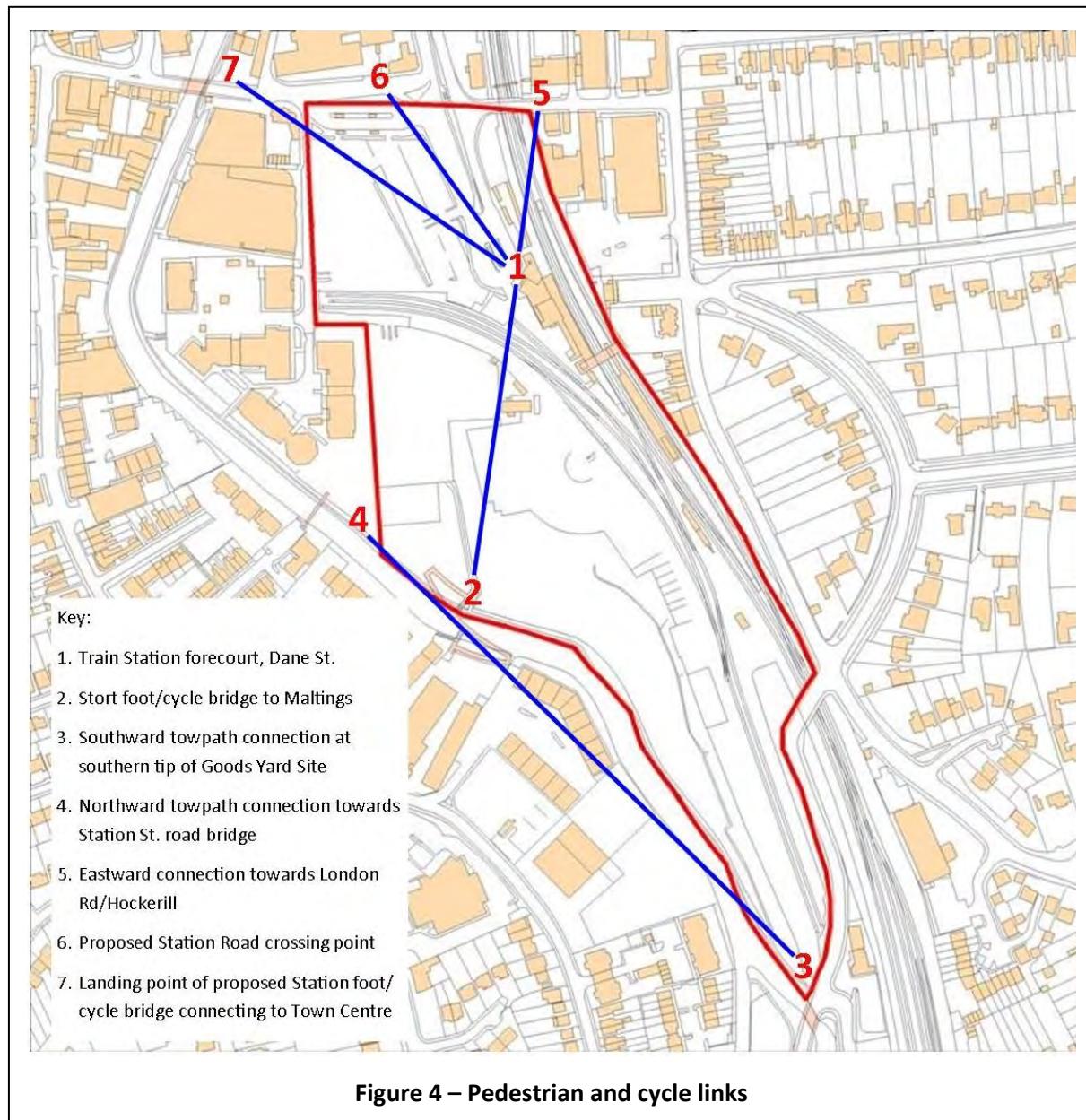
a) Only schemes that address and include the following will be supported:-

- Pedestrian/cycle throughway from the train station forecourt in Dane Street

² HCC Planning Reference ITP13060 Station Road Bridge Widening scheme.

(shown as 1 in Fig 4) to the River Stort cycle footbridge (2 in Fig 4).

- Pedestrian/cycle route along tow path following the river bank from southern tip of site (3 in Fig 10) towards the John Dyde flats and Station Road Bridge (4 in Fig 4), keeping an appropriate soft edge to the riverbank.
 - Pedestrian/cycle throughway from the train station forecourt in Dane Street (1 in Fig 4) towards London Road/Hockerill (5 in Fig 4).
 - Pedestrian/cycle way from the train station forecourt in Dane Street (1 in Fig 4) to a point on Station Road opposite 'The Fountain' (6 in Fig 4).
 - Pedestrian/cycle throughway from the train station forecourt in Dane Street (1 in Fig 4) to town centre using an enhanced riverside pathway under the Station Road river bridge linking to the proposed new footbridge over the river alongside Station Road (7 in Fig 4), unless further evidence based investigation by developers can demonstrate this is not feasible.
- b) Schemes that do not provide pedestrian links that are capable of convenient connection to the new Station Road footbridge will not be supported.
- c) In keeping with TP3, schemes that follow circuitous routes, or that pass through car parking or its access space will not be supported.
- d) Schemes that do not comply with the standards defined in TP4 will not be supported. It is expected that developer contributions will be forthcoming to improve footpath and cycle way routes outside the site to mitigate the inevitable adverse impact on traffic and hence pollution in the surrounding area.



3.3 LAND SOUTH OF BISHOP'S STORTFORD

3.3.1 Introduction

3.3.1.1 The area referred to in the 2018 District Plan as BISH5 'Land South of Bishop's Stortford' (also colloquially known as 'Bishop's Stortford South') is allocated for 750 homes, a secondary and primary school. Supporting infrastructure, access, a neighbourhood centre, care home and a business park are also proposed. It lies predominantly within Thorley Parish. The site is bounded by the London Road/Thorley Street main access route into Bishop's Stortford to the east; St James Way ring road to the south; Whittington Way access road to Twyford and Thorley Park estate to the north and Obrey Way - a narrow link road from Thorley Park to St James Way on the west. Both the London Road/Thorley Street and St James Way are busy roads into and out of Bishop's Stortford town.

3.3.1.2 The site has open views to the east/south east looking towards the Hallingburys and drops 20 metres from Obrey Way to London Road/Thorley Street. This site is the first view of the 'gateway' to Bishop's Stortford on the left when approached from the south and when developed it should give a favourable impression of the town's character. New roads should ensure existing views and vistas are maximized – for example the views to the east and south east and views towards the church at Thorley.

3.3.1.3 Immediately adjacent to the site, separated by Obrey Way, lies the Green Flag rated Southern Country Park. This is a very well used recreational facility for all ages and includes a teenage activity area, dog agility equipment area, fishing lake, marshland bird sanctuary, conservation areas for wildlife and

many different pathways used for health walks and the public in general. It attracts people from a wide area and can be accessed by car in Thorley Lane East off Obrey Way.

3.3.1.4 The Hertfordshire Way right of way runs across the site and has open uninterrupted views to the east and south east. There is also a footpath which runs between Obrey Way and Thorley Street. The site includes ancient hedgerows and a small brook river that runs from Obrey Way to the London Road/Thorley Street into the River Stort flood plain and area of Special Scientific Interest. Both the hedgerows and the footpaths have established trees and flora with the expected wildlife in both.

3.3.1.5 As this site is at the southern edge of Bishop's Stortford and the nearest community facilities at Thorley Neighbourhood Centre are more than the DfT's guidelines for reasonable walking distances it will be necessary to incorporate such facilities to promote social cohesion and encourage walking and to reduce car usage.

3.3.1.6 A hybrid planning application was approved in December 2019 for the allocated site following a masterplan process. The detailed part of the application, as approved, is for 142 homes and a new north-south spine road connecting Whittington Way and St James Way. The proposed secondary school and access arrangements also have detailed planning permission.

3.3.2 Objectives

3.3.2.1 The policies in this section seek to achieve the following objectives:

- Ensure that development is delivered in accordance with the Parameter Plans approved as part of the hybrid application and the planning conditions and S106 obligations unless otherwise agreed.

- Ensure that in implementing the development protection is given to local features including landscape and neighbouring green spaces

3.3.2.2 Policies elsewhere in this document, most notably (but not exclusively) in the sections related to Housing and Design, Green Infrastructure, Transport, also apply to this site and contribute to achieving these objectives.

3.3.3 Objectives:

- **Ensure that development is delivered in accordance with the Parameter Plans approved as part of the hybrid application, planning conditions and S106 obligations.**
- **Ensure that in implementing the development protection is given to local features of the landscape and neighbouring green spaces.**

BSS1 – Implementation and Delivery of Site Allocation

Any proposals for material changes to the outline planning permission (3/18/2253/OUT) for 608 homes (including parameter plans) will require the approval of a revised Masterplan and potentially an Environmental Impact Assessment (subject to confirmation of a Scoping Opinion) and transport assessment if relevant.

BSS2 –Setting and character of buildings

- a) Housing around the west and south west boundaries to be no higher than two storeys with styles and palettes to complement the local landscape and adjacent developments at Thorley Park, Twyford estate and Thorley Street.
- b) The interior area of the housing development is to be no higher than 2.5 storeys except around the central community facilities where well designed 3 storey properties would be permitted.
- c) Design and layout should ensure that views of the open countryside to the east and south are maintained from some key focal locations (for example major community facilities) near the centre of the development unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this is not realistically practicable.
- d) Proposals encompassing the creation of discrete neighbourhoods of distinct character for a planned development of this size would be supported.
- e) Only development proposals that meet or exceed the energy efficiency requirements of District Plan policy DES4 (or any subsequent policy superseding it) will be supported.
- f) The design, height, massing and materials of any envisaged community and commercial buildings must be in keeping with the area, particularly housing in Thorley Street, and have adequate parking.
- g) mitigate loss of amenity to houses to the west of London Road, Thorley Street – especially the listed buildings – a buffer zone with suitable screening would be expected.

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h) schools should form attractive visual features of the site that are in keeping with surrounding houses and be no higher than three storeys.

BSS3 – Community facilities

- a) This site is detached from the nearest community facilities at Thorley Neighbourhood Centre and more than the Department for Transport's guidelines for reasonable walking distances. Any proposals for the development of this site must enable social interaction and public services for the local community: local shops, a community hall, outdoor meeting places, allotments, health services and facilities that are accessible to all. They should be in suitable locations, served by a choice of sustainable travel and be of an appropriate scale and flexible design to enable multiple uses throughout the day.
- b) Proposals must include inter-connected green spaces/recreational areas within the site which should be commensurate with and proportional to the numbers and types of occupants anticipated.

BSS4 – Access/egress to site

- a) The developer must consult with Hertfordshire Highways Department for travel plans and a traffic study to ensure the extra traffic associated with this site does not impact unfavourably on the surrounding areas.
- b) Access points should be modelled and designed to minimize extra traffic flows through the residential area of Thorley Park.
- c) The access road off St James Way that has planning approval will be the sole access/egress to the majority of the residential areas, schools and business park. The access road to the business park should be separate from access to the housing area to avoid any extra traffic within the housing area. Cyclists and pedestrians should have access to development from Whittington Way.
- d) The developer will be expected to construct or pay for the construction of safe, level access across Obrey Way to the Southern Country Park and to the footbridge to St James Church, Thorley.
- e) The location and access to new educational facilities should not cause congestion within the development and surrounding areas. Buses, coaches and cars must have an adequately sized, dedicated off road drop-off and pick-up area.

3.3.4 Objective: Ensure that in implementing the development protection is given to local features of the landscape and neighbouring green spaces

BSS5 – Hertfordshire Way and green spaces

- a) The Hertfordshire Way crosses this site and its open aspect and some views to the open countryside must be maintained. This is used as a Bridleway and the minimum width should be 3m. Fencing adjacent to the footpath, if any, must be low visual impact and the design and layout of the site such that the open aspect is maintained and views not obstructed by built structures. To protect the existing flora & fauna a 10m wildlife corridor either side of the right of way should be maintained unless it is demonstrated that other appropriate measures would be more effective in terms of protecting and enhancing biodiversity.
- b) Maintenance of the Hertfordshire Way would be the responsibility of the developer for the first 10 years after which the developer must agree with the Planning Authority responsibilities for maintenance thereafter.
- c) The ancient hedgerow to the south of the site and two copses of mature trees must also be preserved.
- d) Water courses should not be culverted and treated as a feature above ground and must be protected to conserve the SSSI east of London Road and any wildlife in situ.

3.4 BISHOP'S STORTFORD HIGH SCHOOL SITE

3.4.1 Introduction

3.4.1.1 The proposal for Bishop's Stortford High School to move received formal support from Hertfordshire County Council on 11 July 2016. The school is moving to a new site on the development at Bishop's Stortford South. Plans for redevelopment of the School site have now received a resolution to grant outline planning permission on 4 November 2020 for up to 223 dwellings under application reference: 3/18/2253/OUT.

3.4.2 Objectives

3.4.2.1 The policies in this section seek to achieve the following objectives:

- Ensure new housing is in keeping with surrounding area
- Ensure the inclusion of sustainable leisure, recreational and other public facilities on site

3.4.3 Objective: Ensure new housing is in keeping with surrounding area

BSHS1 – Setting and character of buildings

- a) New housing should make the best possible use of available land whilst respecting the character of the area with styles and pallets to complement the local landscape and adjacent housing.
- b) Only development proposals that meet or exceed the energy efficiency requirements of District Plan Policy DES4 (or any subsequent policy superseding it) will be supported.

3.4.4 Objective: Ensure the inclusion of sustainable leisure, recreational and other public facilities on site

BSHS2 – Connectivity

- a) Proposals for development of this site must ensure good pedestrian and cycle links to the surrounding development.
- b) Consideration must be given within the application area to enhancing connectivity at either end to exploit opportunities for developing the Spinney as a sustainable route from the southern edge of town into the town centre.

3.5 BISHOP'S STORTFORD EAST OF MANOR LINKS

3.5.1 Introduction

3.5.1.1 The District Plan amends the Green Belt boundary east of Manor Links and allocates development of around 50 dwellings (BISH9). Planning permission for residential development was granted in February 2021 (3/20/0245/FUL).

3.5.1.2 The areas of Manor Links, Cecil Close and Shortcroft which directly adjoin the proposed development consist of large low rise mature bungalows and two-storey houses on large plots with open aspect to the proposed development site and a sense of space broken by a selection of mature trees. Mayes Close and Norris Close would experience traffic and footfall should the development proceed.

3.5.1.3 With around 50 new homes there will be extra pressure on the existing already busy surrounding roads. This pressure is due

to school traffic twice a day plus traffic to and from the town centre and to the M11 and airport along the Dunmow Road. The household recycling centre in Woodside Industrial Estate plus industrial vehicles to this site also generates considerable traffic.

3.5.2 Objective

3.5.2.1 The policies in this section seek to achieve the following objective:

- Ensure any development sits comfortably within the surrounding area, presents favourable vistas, provides community facilities which include open spaces and play areas and has adequate traffic planning and mitigation

3.5.2.2 Policies elsewhere in this document, most notably in the sections related to Housing and Design, Green Infrastructure, Transport also apply to this site and contribute to achieving this objective

3.5.2.3 In accordance with HDP1 the development should be designed and built on Garden Village/City principles to blend with other adjacent developments and to create a soft edge between it and the surrounding Green Belt area.

3.5.2.4 In accordance with HDP5 there is an opportunity to supply much needed bungalows capable of being adapted if necessary. There is also a need to provide easily accessible sheltered and supported housing.

3.5.3 Objective: Ensure any development sits comfortably with the surrounding area, presents favourable vistas, provides community facilities which include open spaces and play areas and has adequate traffic planning and mitigation

fund a formal crossing suitable for pedestrians and cyclists at Dunmow Road where Manor Links exits to provide a safe route for pedestrian traffic from this development.

BSEM2 – Master-planning, setting and character

a) Housing is to be no higher than two liveable storeys with styles and palettes to complement the local landscape and adjacent development of Manor Links, Shortcroft, Mayes Close, Cecil Close and Norris Close. Properties immediately adjacent to Manor Links should be a single liveable storey to meet community needs and to form a smooth transition to the adjacent green belt.

b) The design and layout of the site must:

- include open spaces to enable social interaction for the local community
- Be sympathetic to wildlife and maintain natural ditches and culvert. There should be opportunities for preserving and enhancing on-site assets and maximising opportunities to link into existing assets and enhance biodiversity. Consideration should be given to maintaining some of the existing scrubland as a wildlife haven.
- Preserve the route of the disused railway line to protect wildlife.

c) The access point to the site must be selected following appropriate traffic modelling to ascertain the safest route. Manor Links, Shortcroft, Dunmow Road and Parsonage Lane and schools' traffic must be specifically considered.

d) Unless traffic modelling shows that it is impractical the developer must construct or



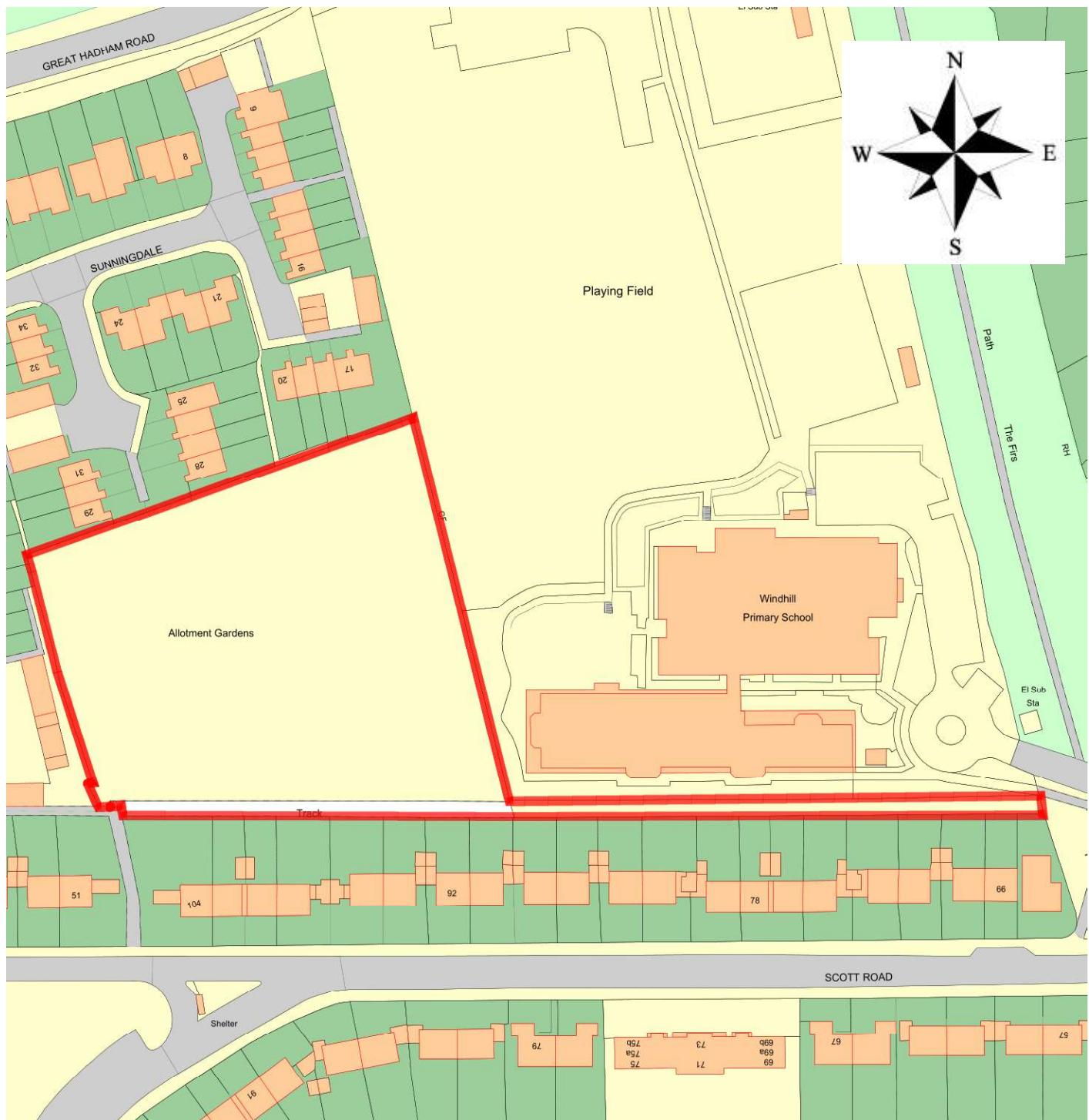
Bishop's Stortford Neighbourhood Plans for Silverleys and Meads Wards and for All Saints, Central, South and Part of Thorley Parish (1st Revision) 2021-2033

Policies Summary
Section 4 - Policy Maps & Table of areas etc.

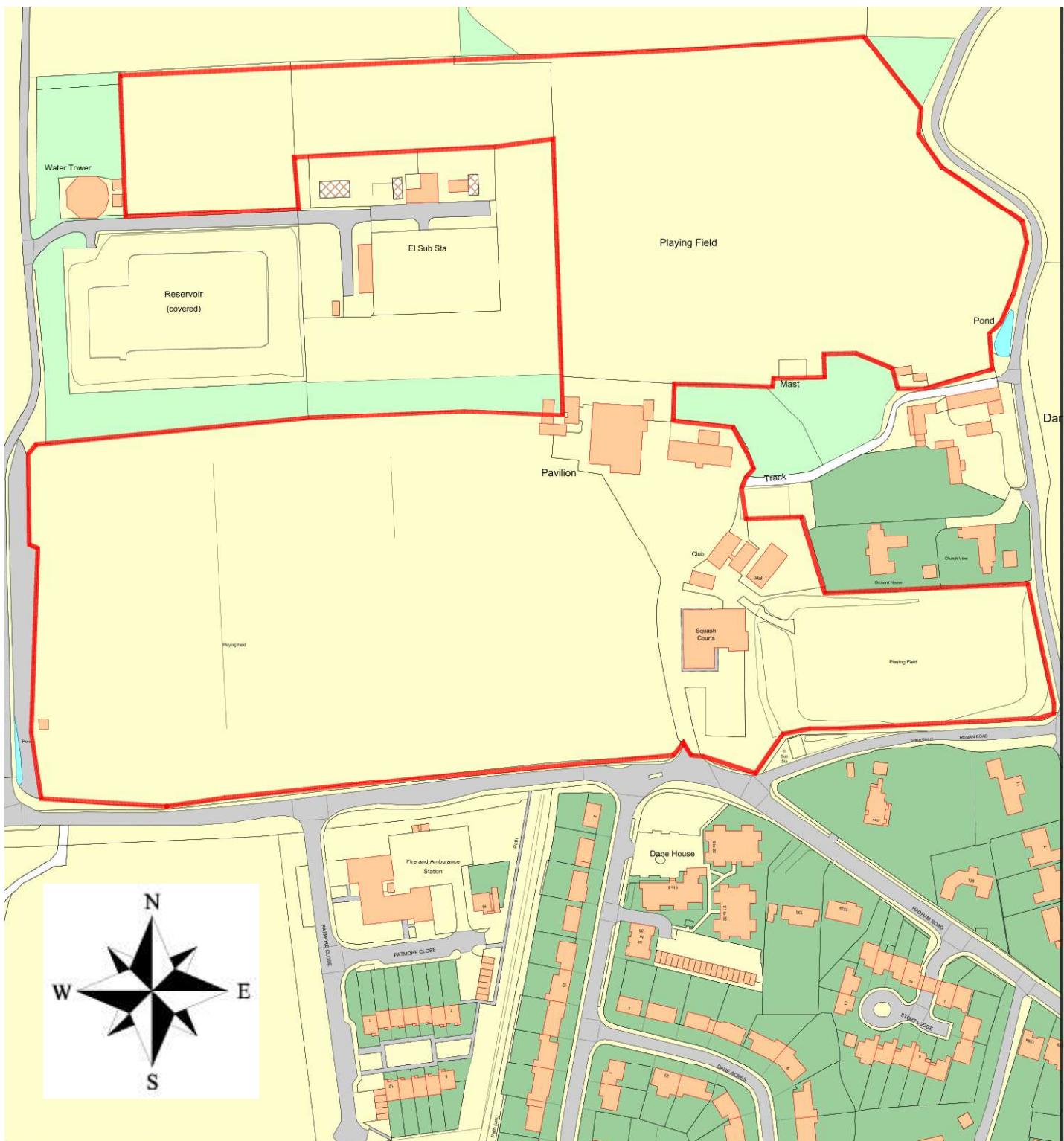
6 Policy Maps

6.1 POLICY MAPS FOR POLICY GIP2(A)

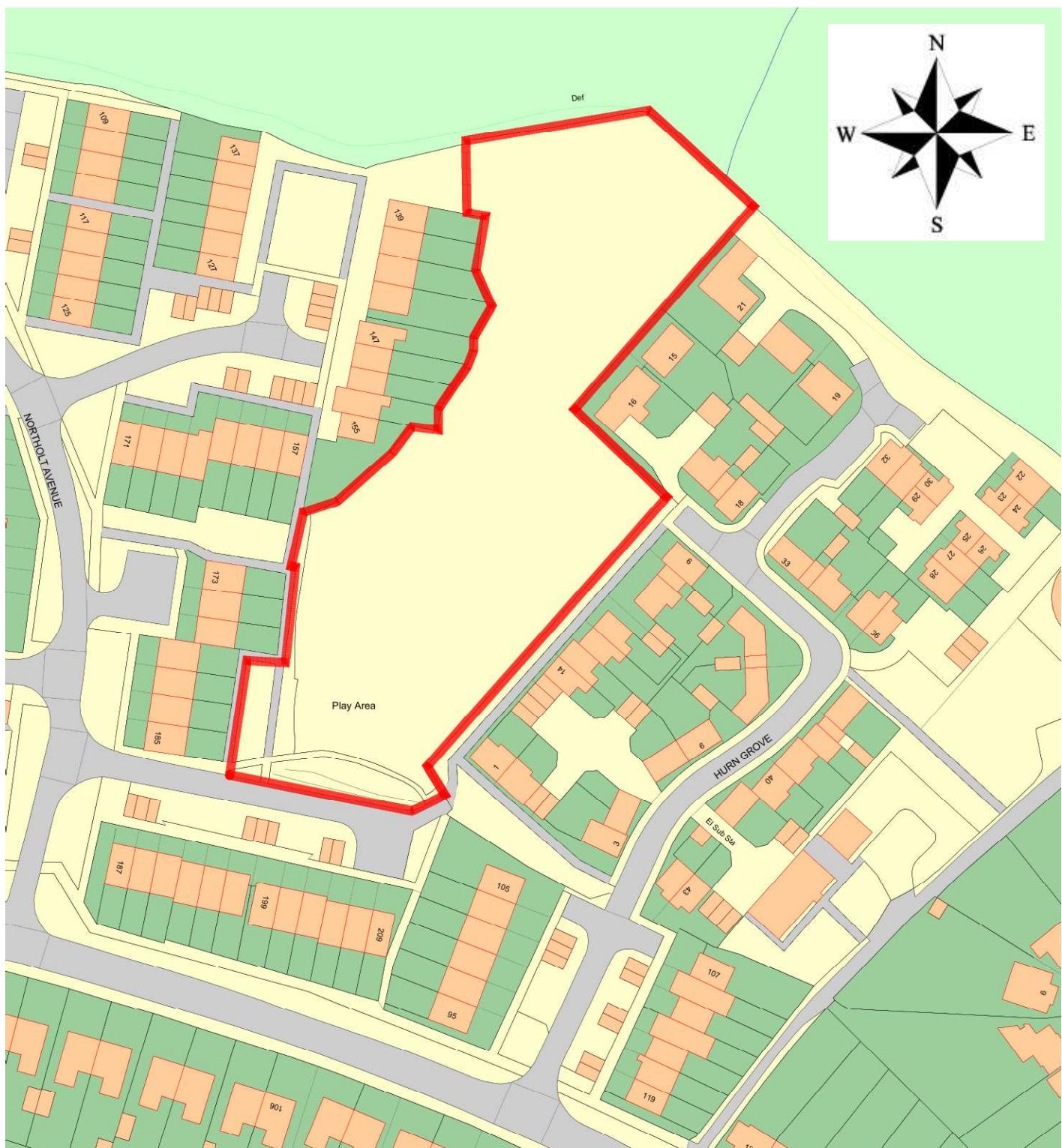
6.1.1 The Firs Allotments (1:1250)



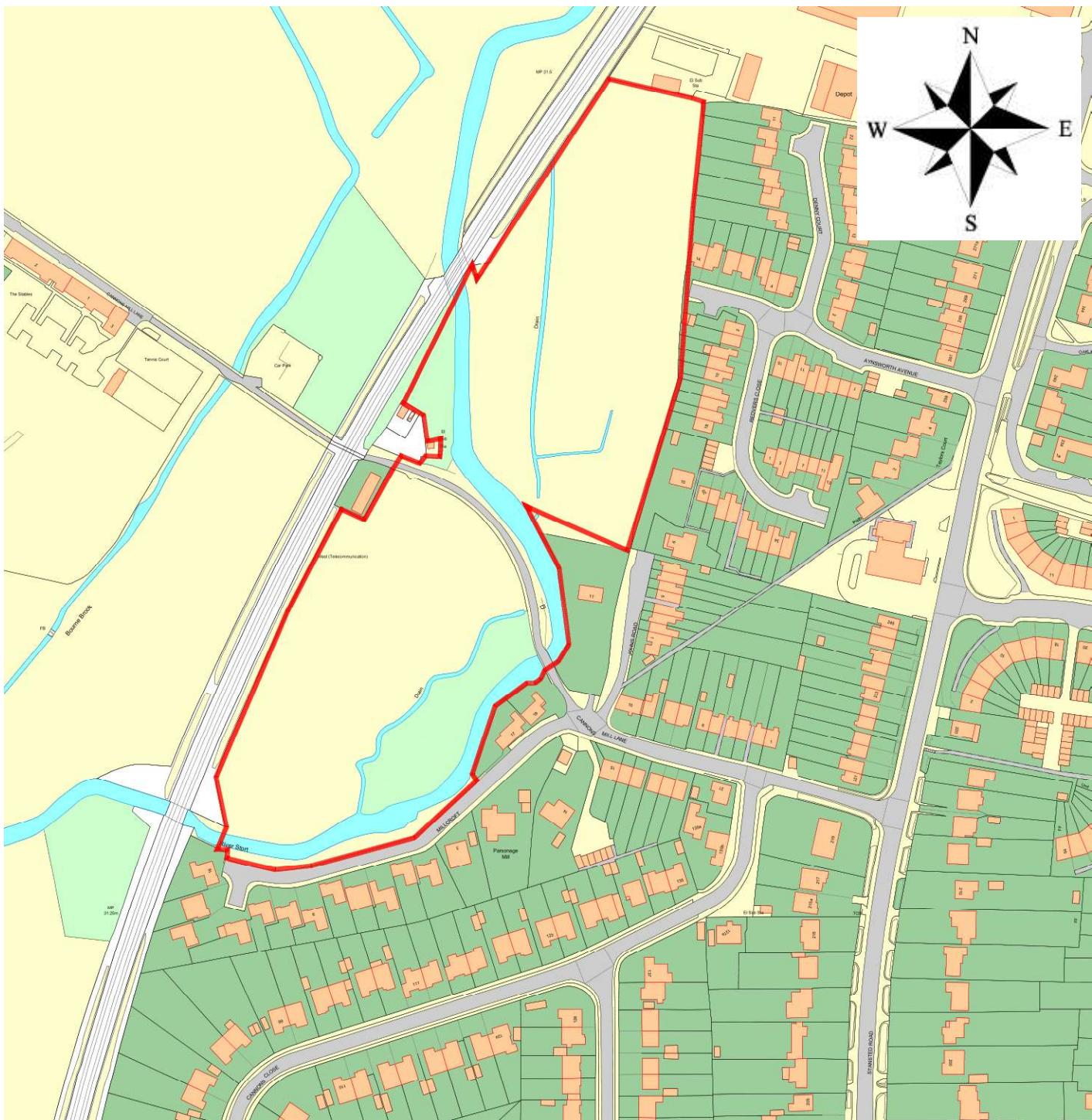
6.1.2 Bishop's Stortford Rugby Football Club Grounds (1:2500)



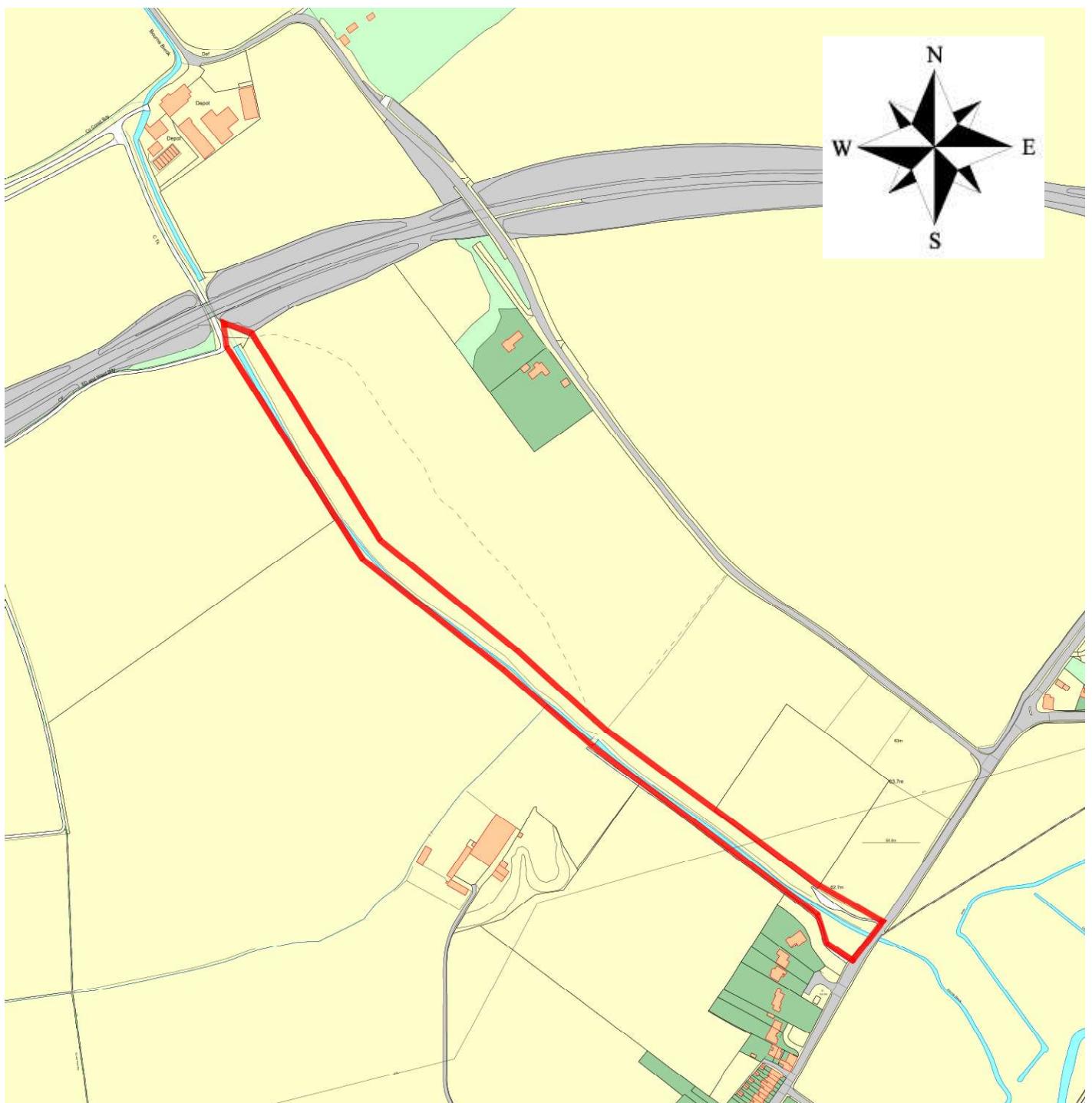
6.1.3 Northolt Avenue Play Area (1:1250)



6.1.4 Open Space Adjacent to Cannons Mill Lane (1:2500)

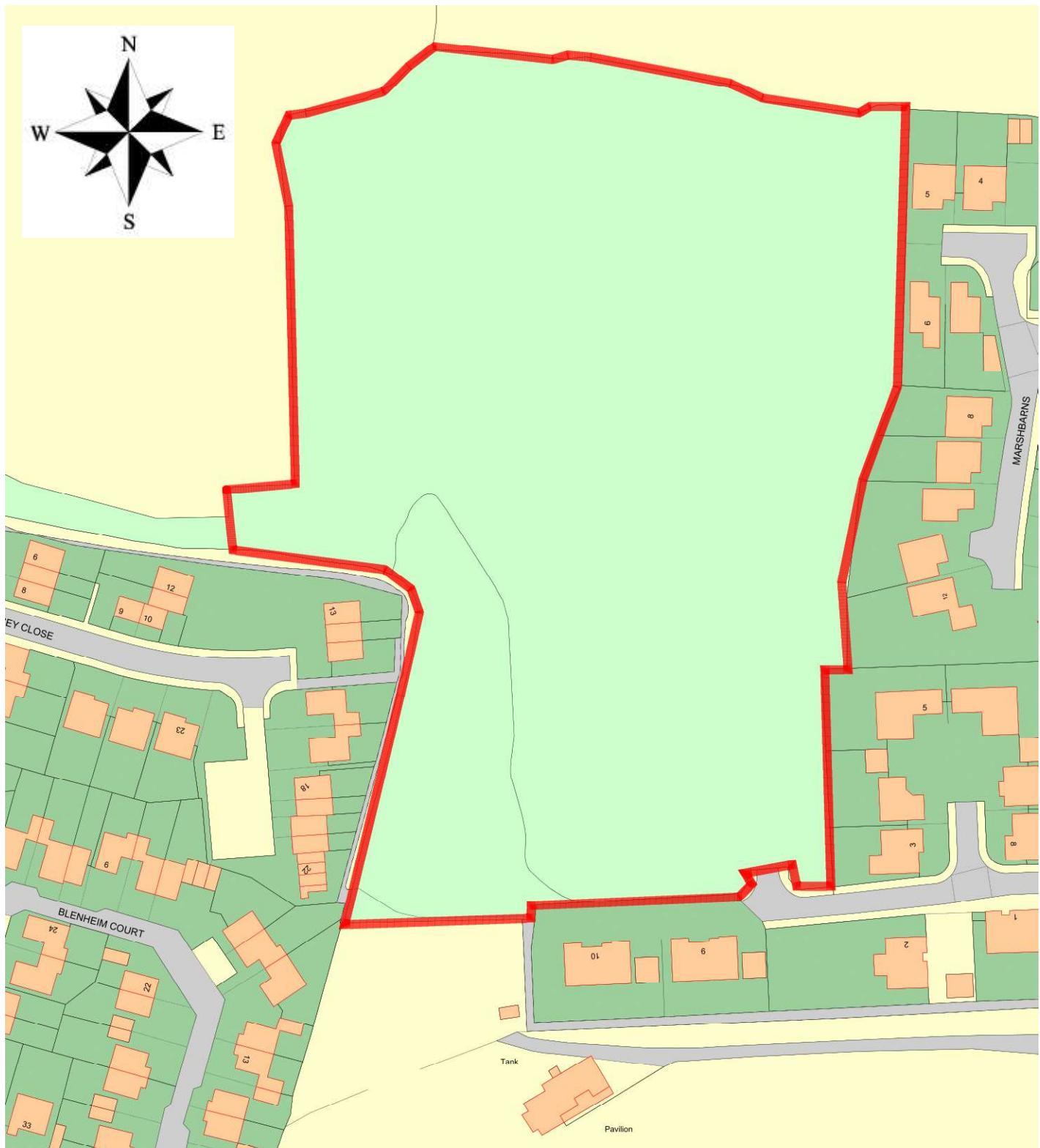


6.1.5 Farnham Bourne Brook (1:5000)

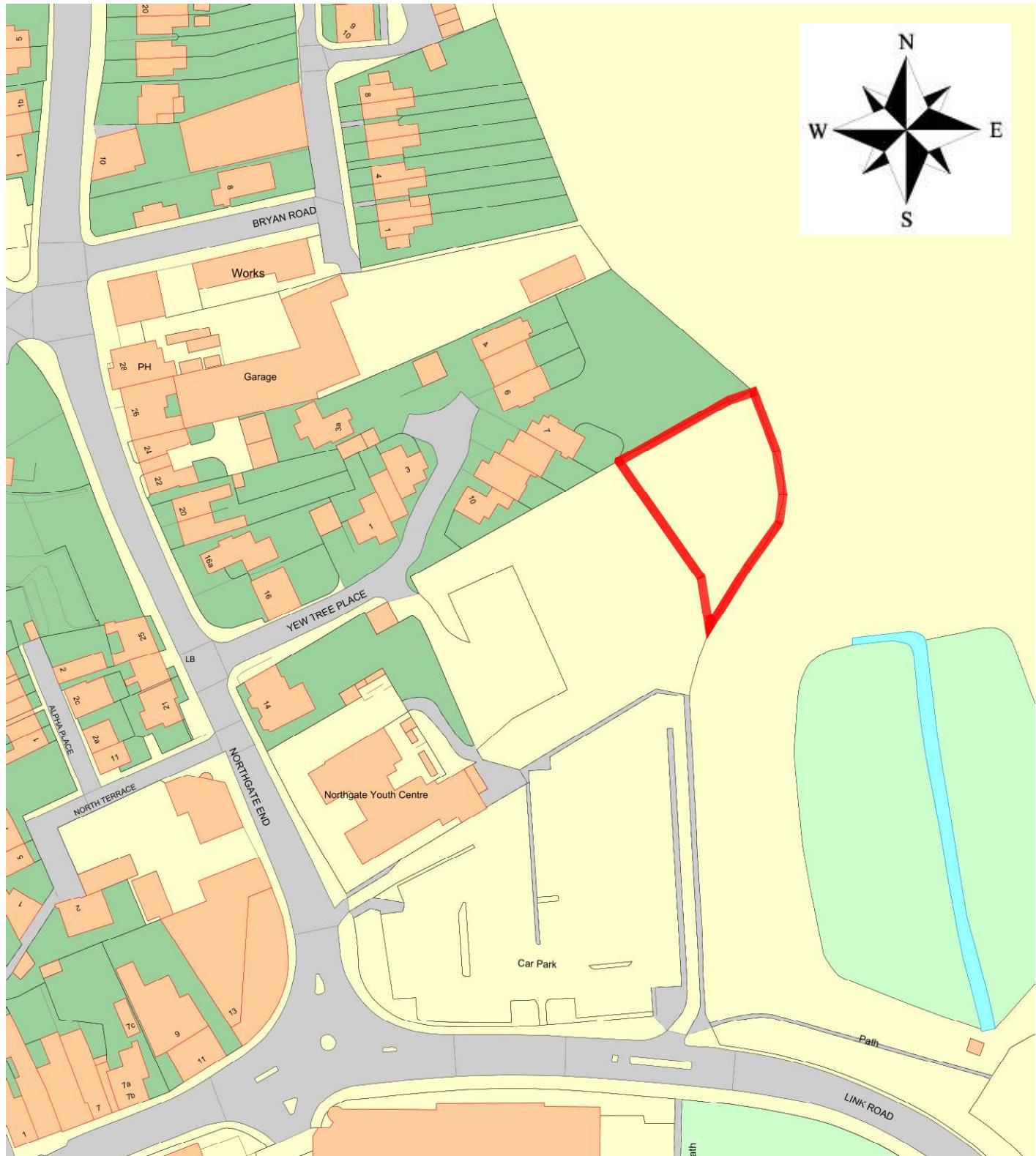


6.2 POLICY MAPS FOR POLICY GIP2(C)

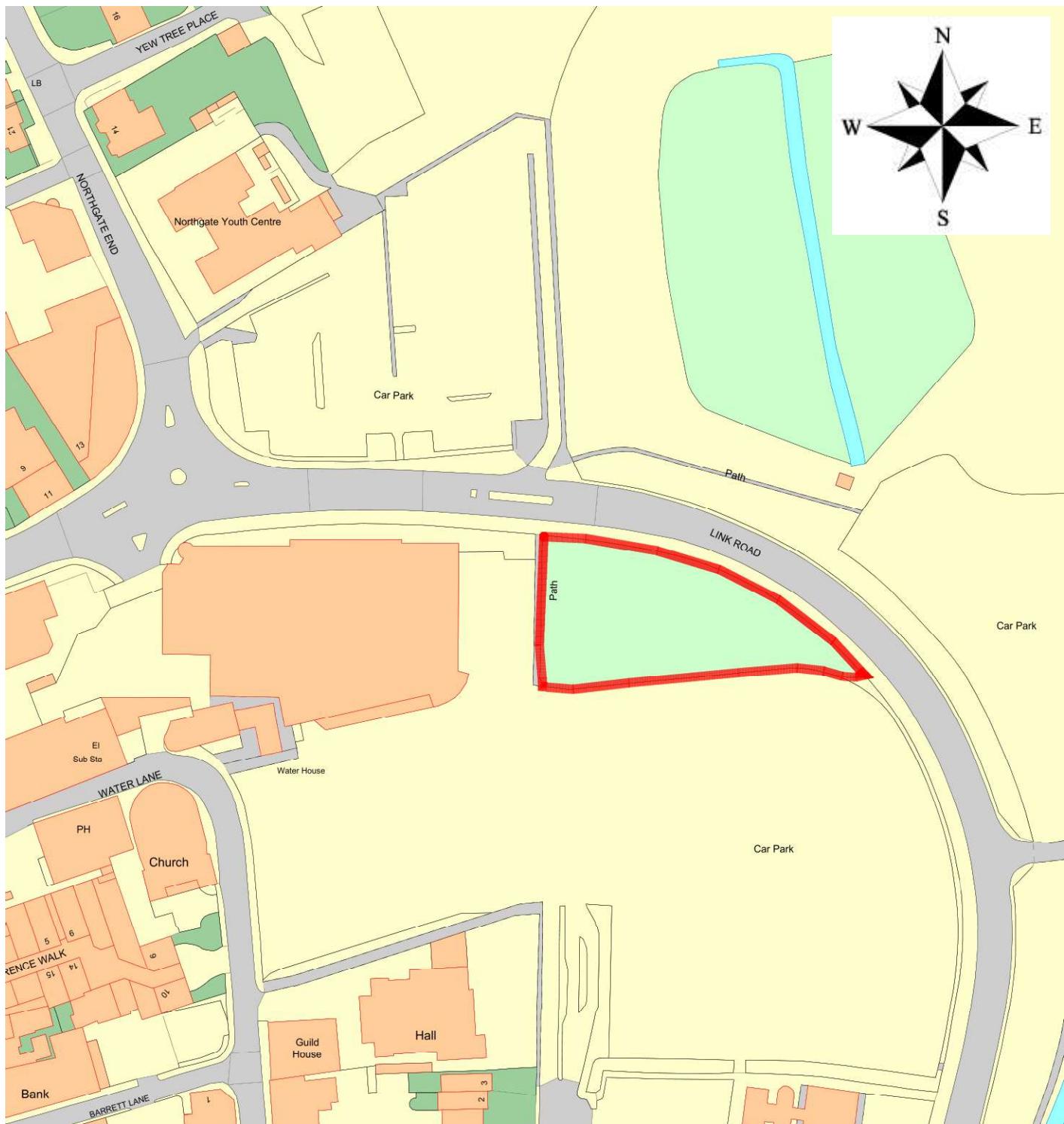
6.2.1 Skelley's Wood (1:1250)



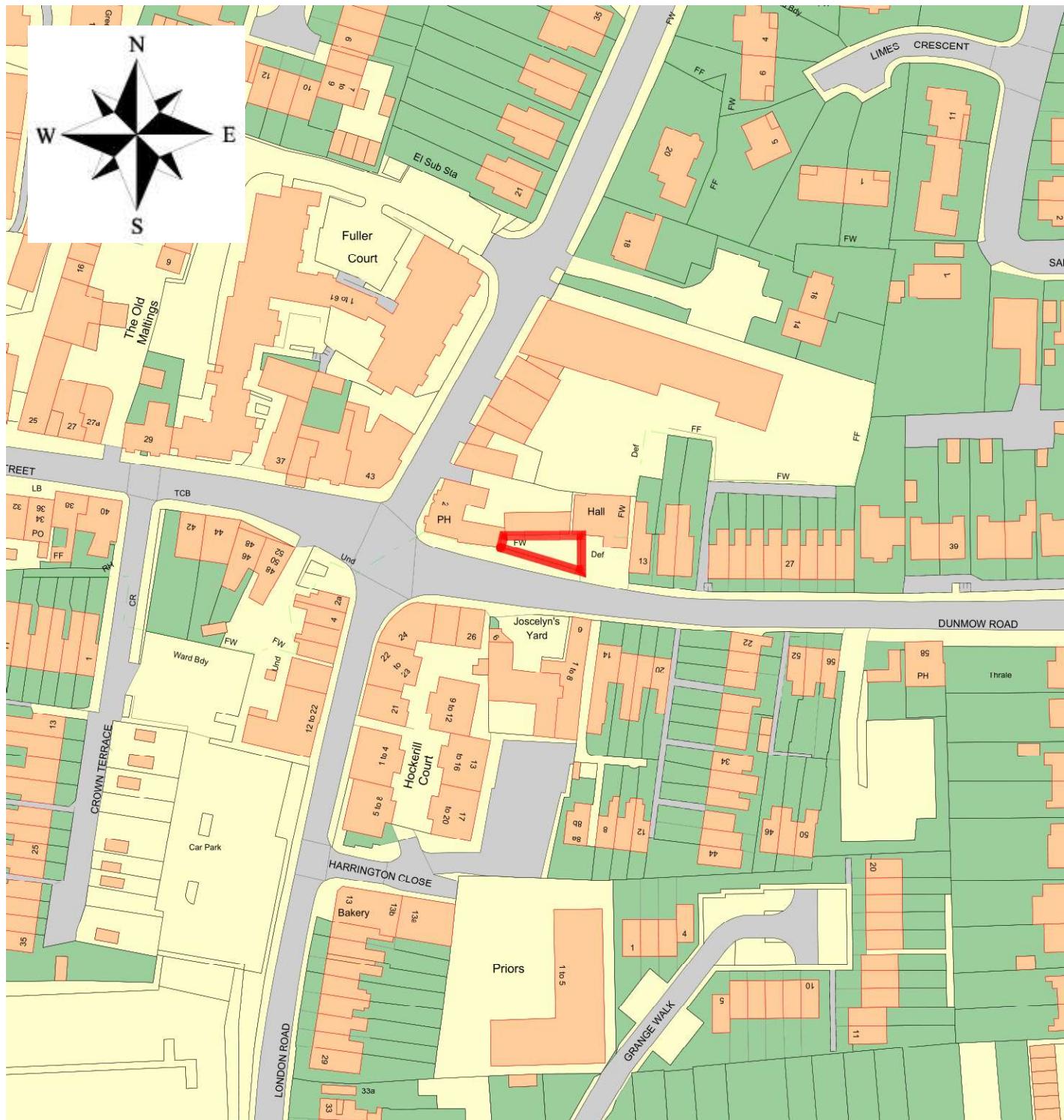
6.2.2 Green Space at rear of Northgate Multi-Storey Car Park *Under Construction) (1:1250)



6.2.3 Small Wooded Area East of Waitrose Immediately South of the Causeway (1:1250)



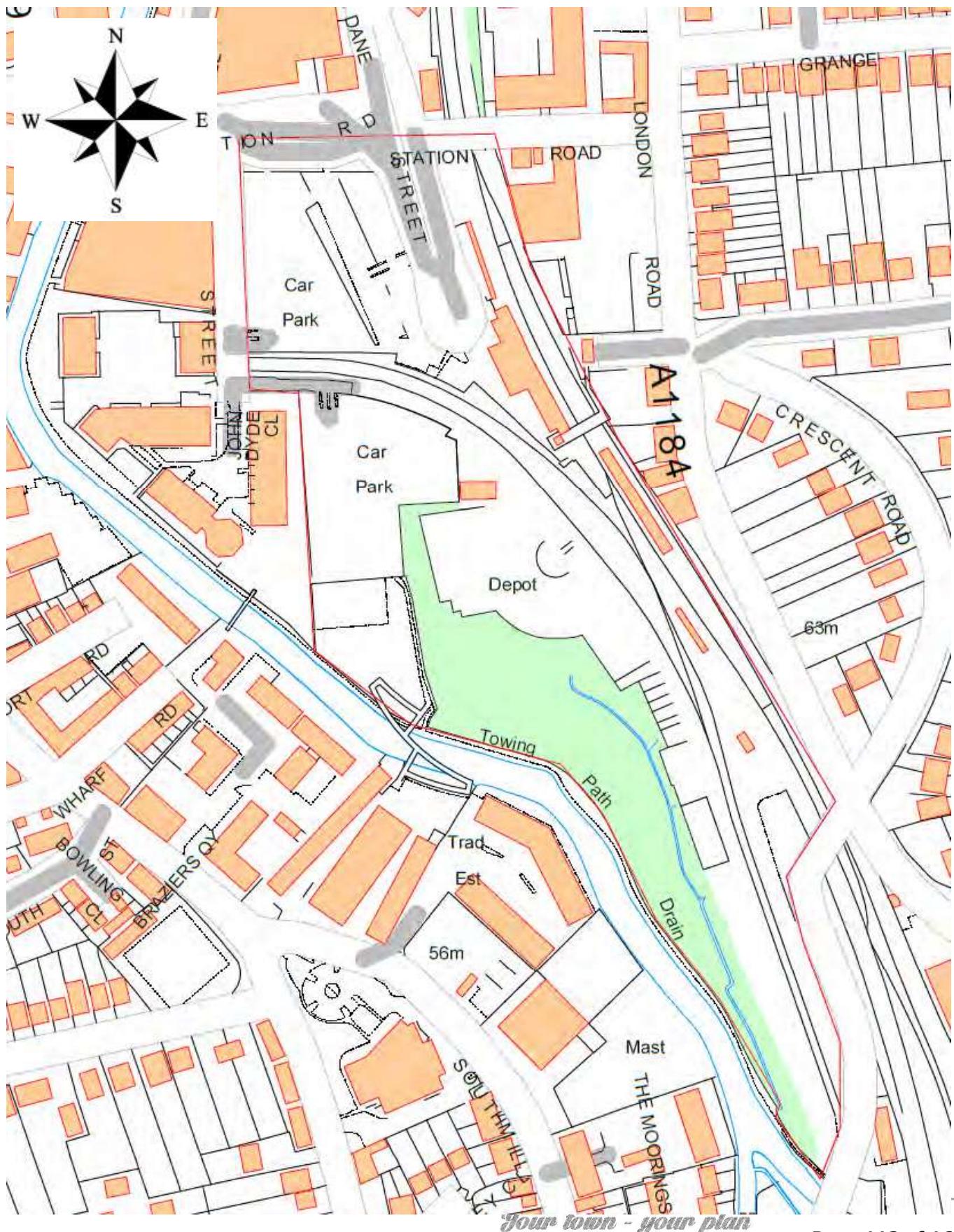
6.2.4 Grassed Area at back of Cock Inn, Hockerill (1:1250)



6 Policy Maps

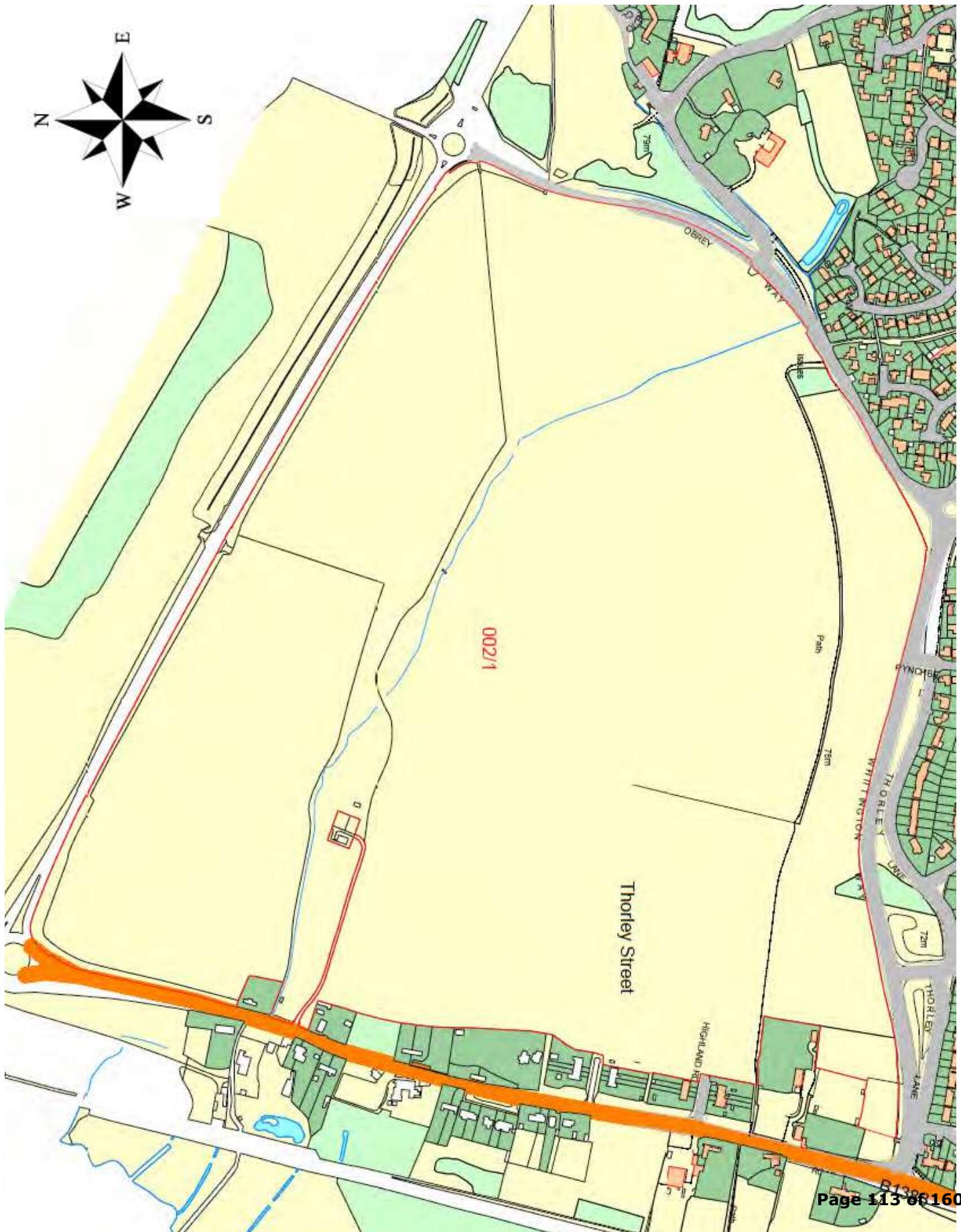
6.1 POLICY MAPS FOR THE GOODS YARD (GY)

6.1.1 The Goods Yard (1:2500)



6.2 POLICY MAPS FOR LAND SOUTH OF BISHOP'S STORTFORD (BSS)

6.2.1 Land South of Bishop's Stortford (1:5000)



6.3 POLICY MAPS FOR BISHOP'S STORTFORD HIGH SCHOOL SITE (BSHS)

6.3.1 Site of Bishop's Stortford High School (1:2500)



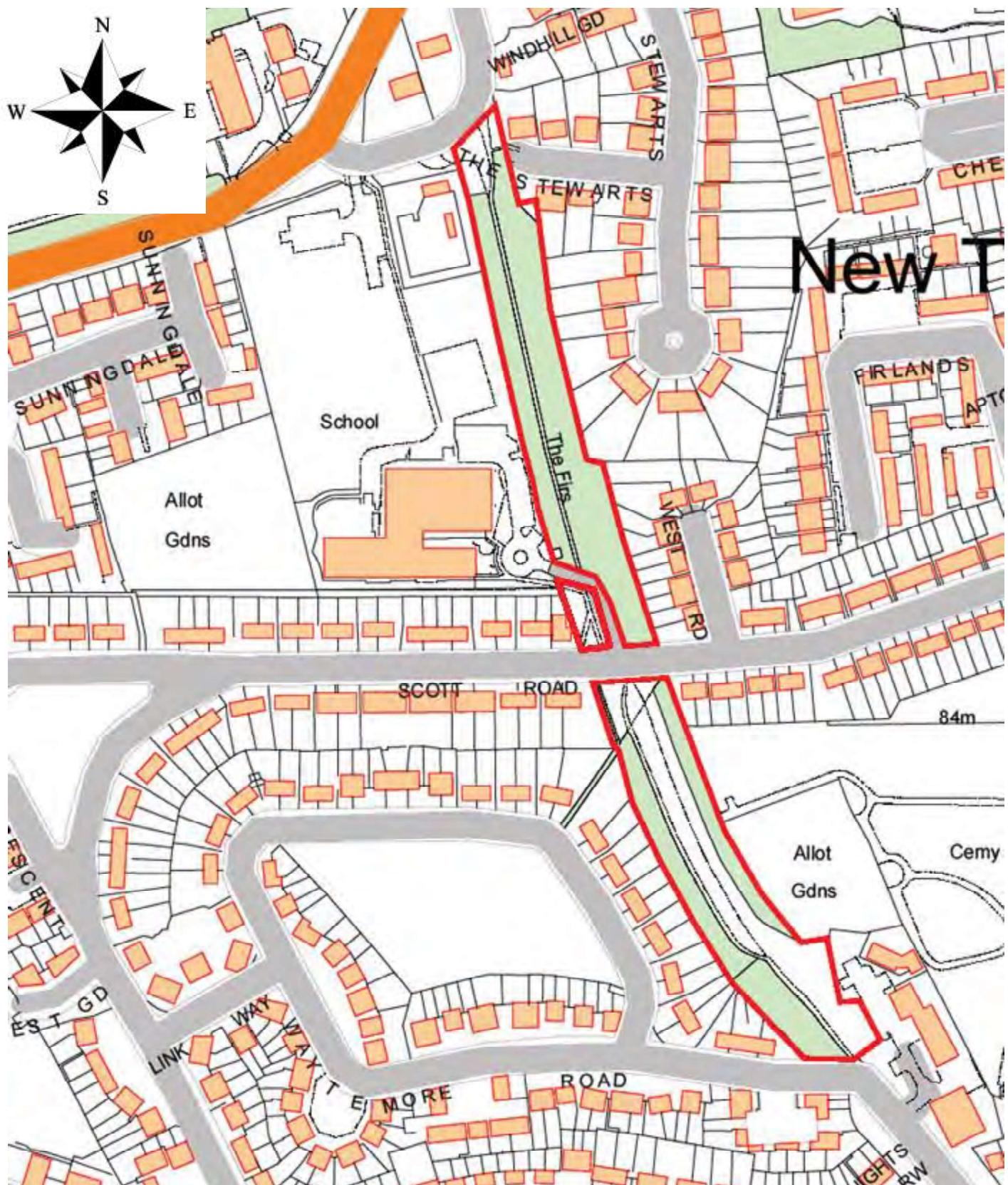
6.4 POLICY MAPS FOR POLICY GIP2(A)

6.4.1 Birchanger Wood (1:2500)

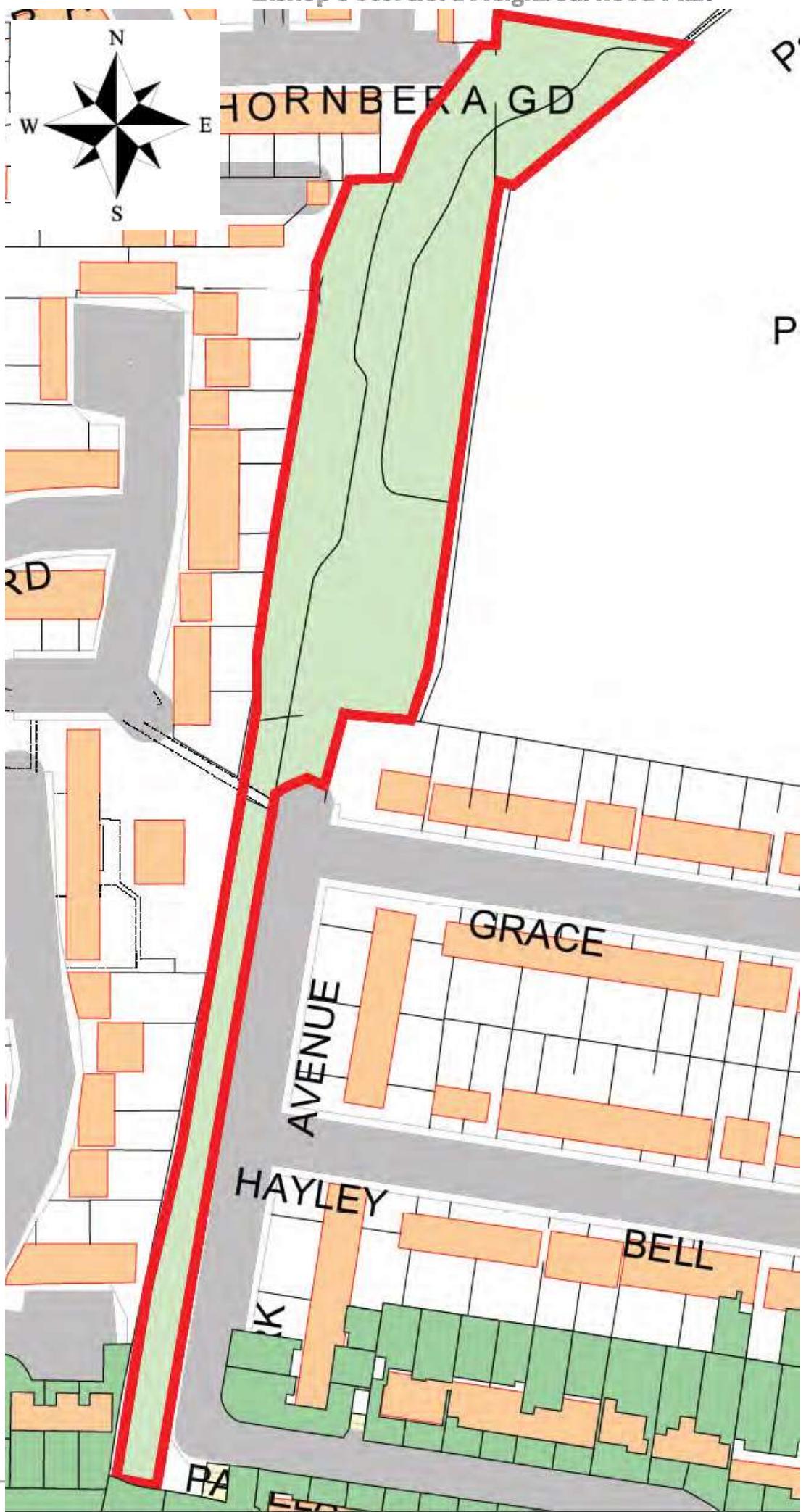
6.4.1.1 Note: only that part of Birchanger Wood lying within the Neighbourhood area is shown



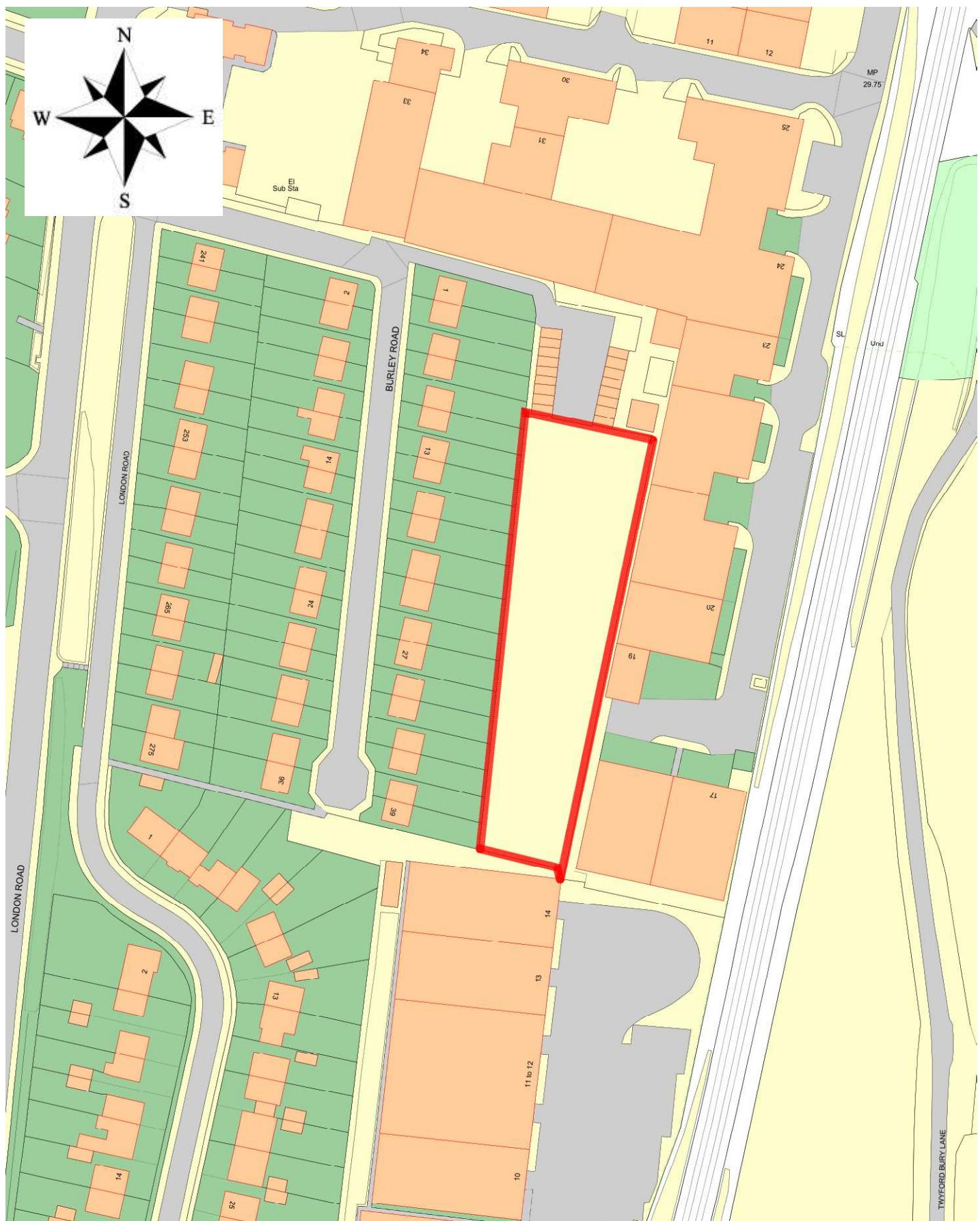
6.4.2 The Firs (1:2500)



6.4.3 The Spinney
(1:1250)



6.4.4 Burley Road Play Area (1:1250)



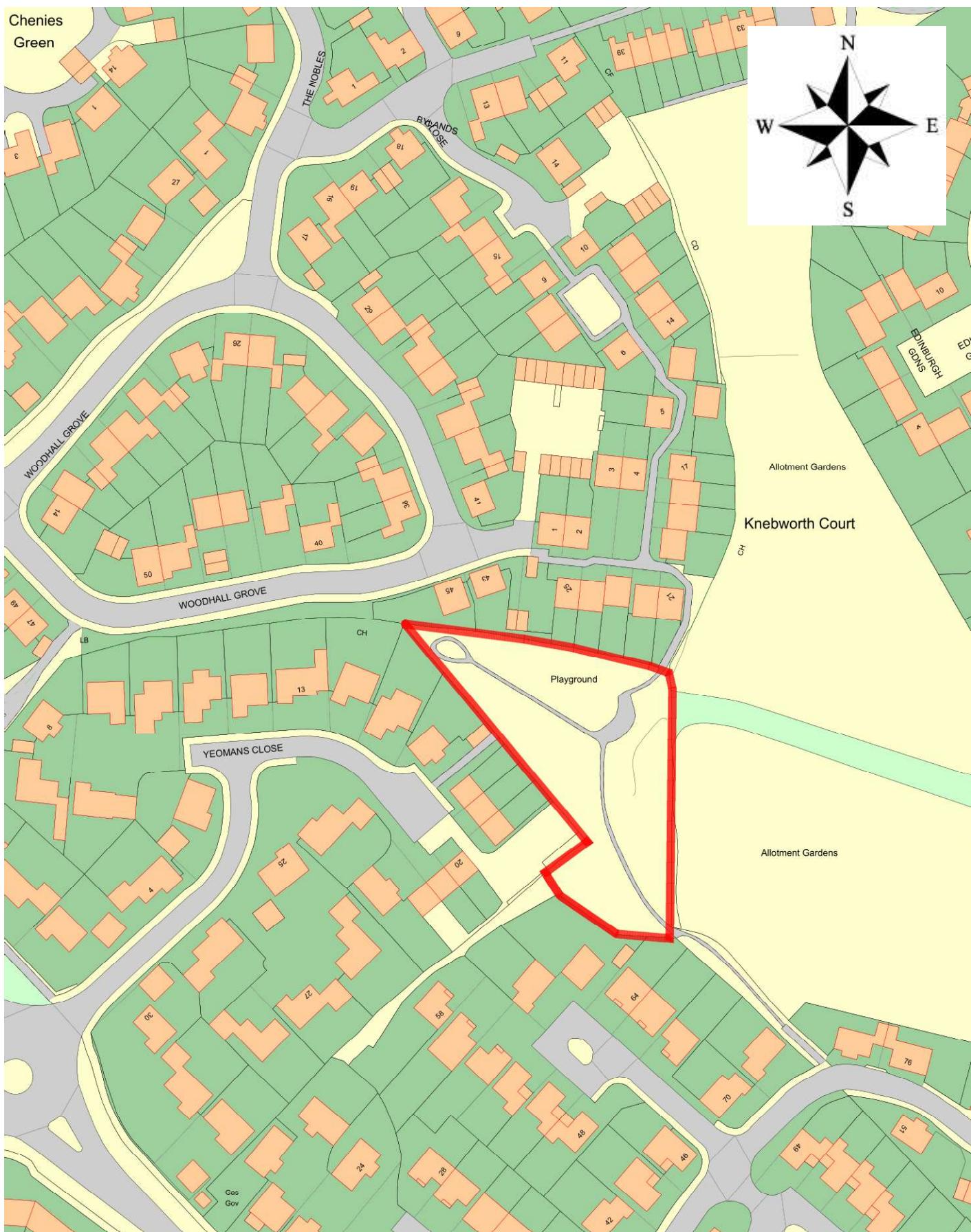
6.4.5 The Baron's Play Area (1:1250)



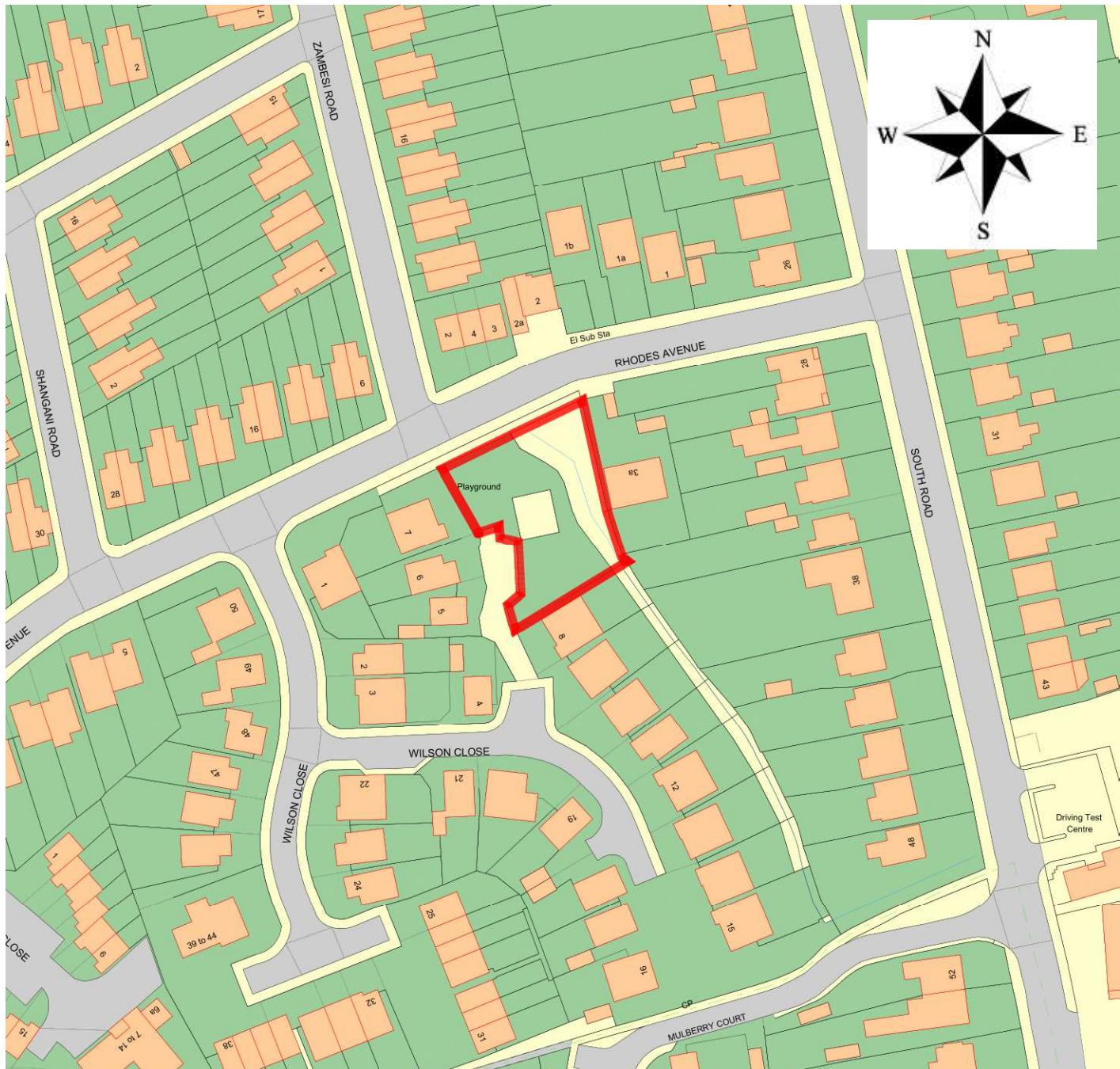
6.4.6 Dimsdale Crescent Play Area (1:1250)



6.4.7 Knebworth Court Play Area (1:1250)



6.4.8 Wilson Close Play Area (Rhodes Avenue) (1:1250)



6.4.9 Nightingales' Play Area (1:1250)

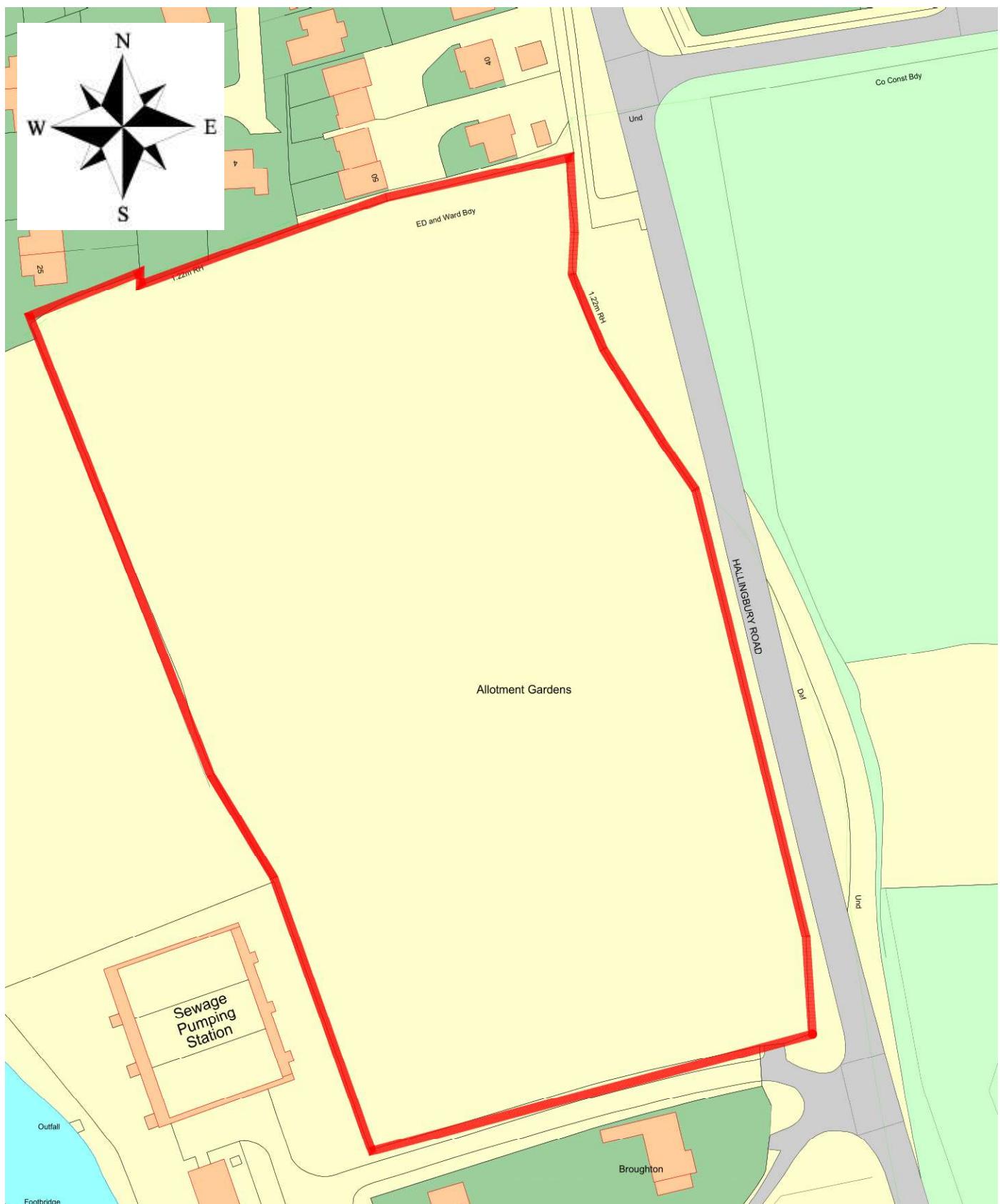


6.4.10 Ward Crescent Allotments (1:1250)



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6.4.11 Hallingbury Road West Allotments (1:1250)

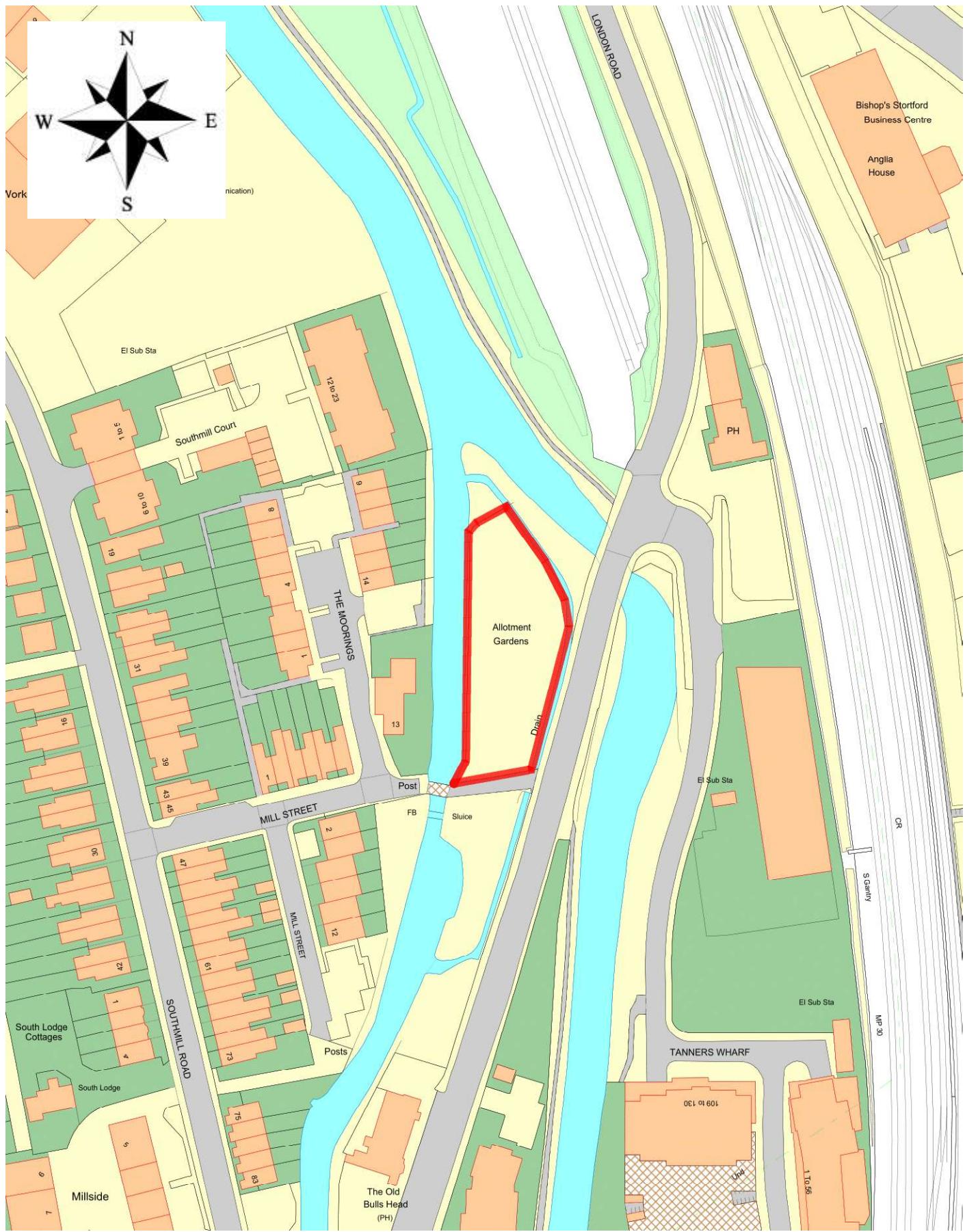


6.4.12 Haymeads Lane Allotments (1:1250)



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6.4.13 London Road Allotments (1:1250)

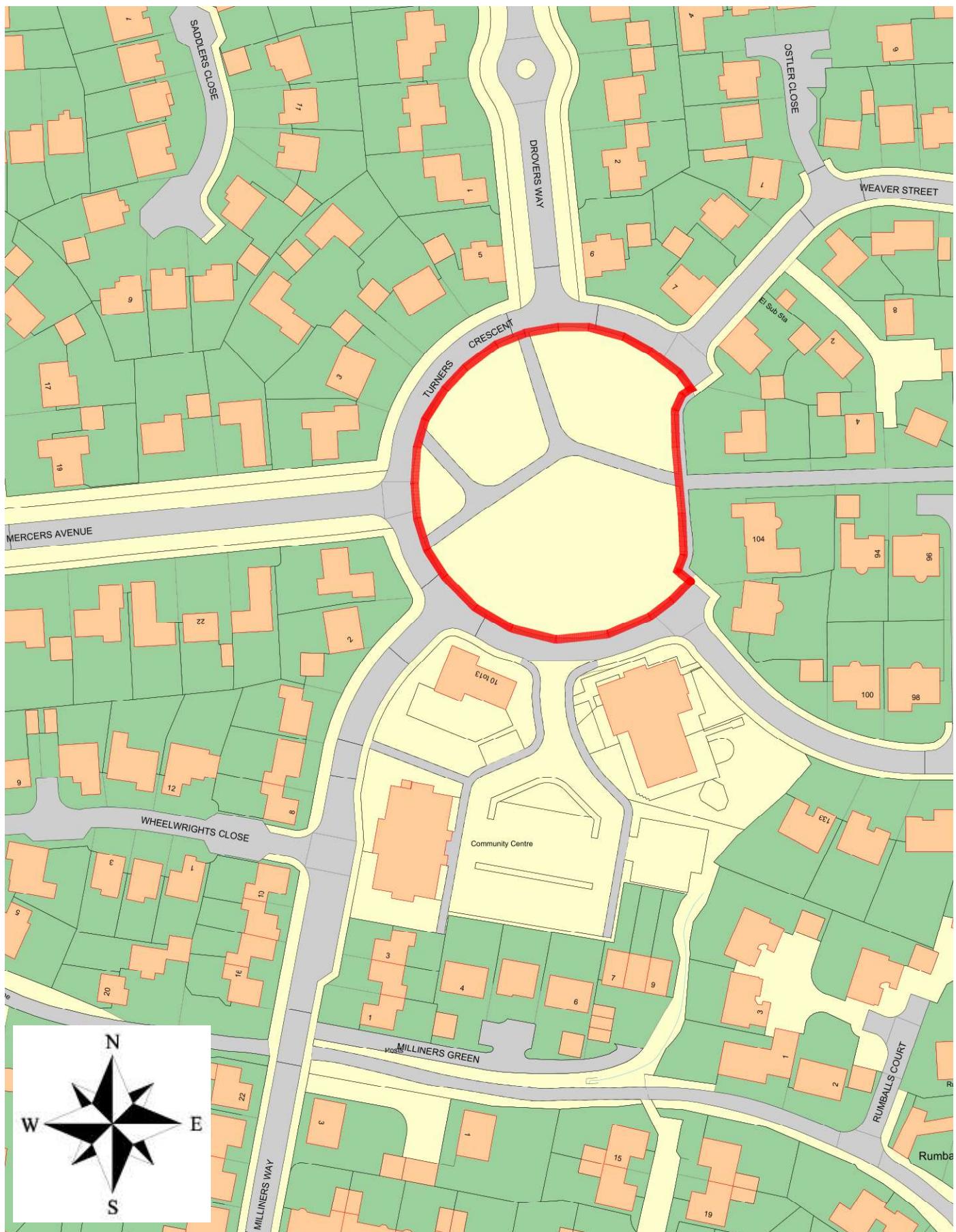


6.4.14 Thorley Street Allotments (1:1250)

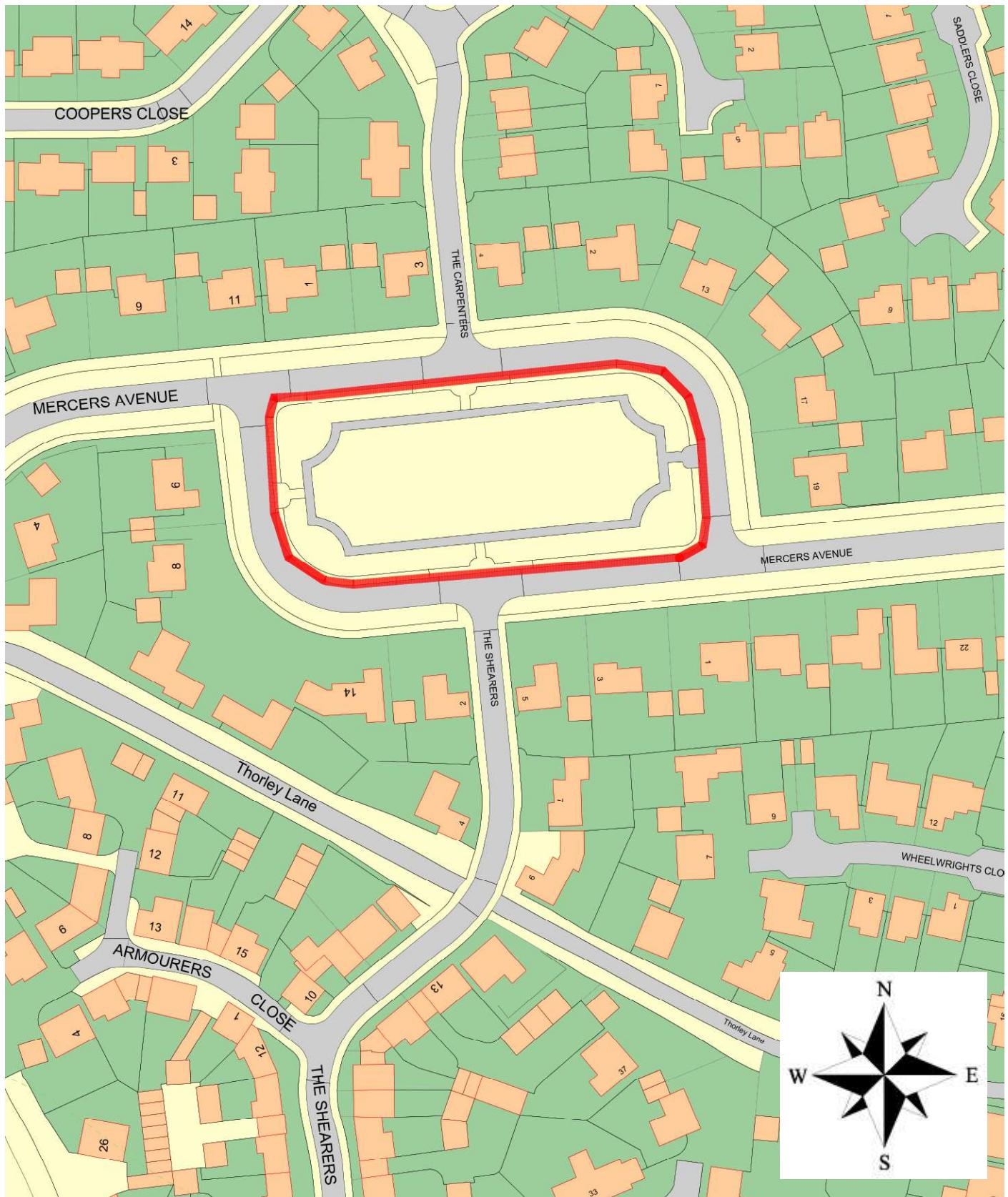


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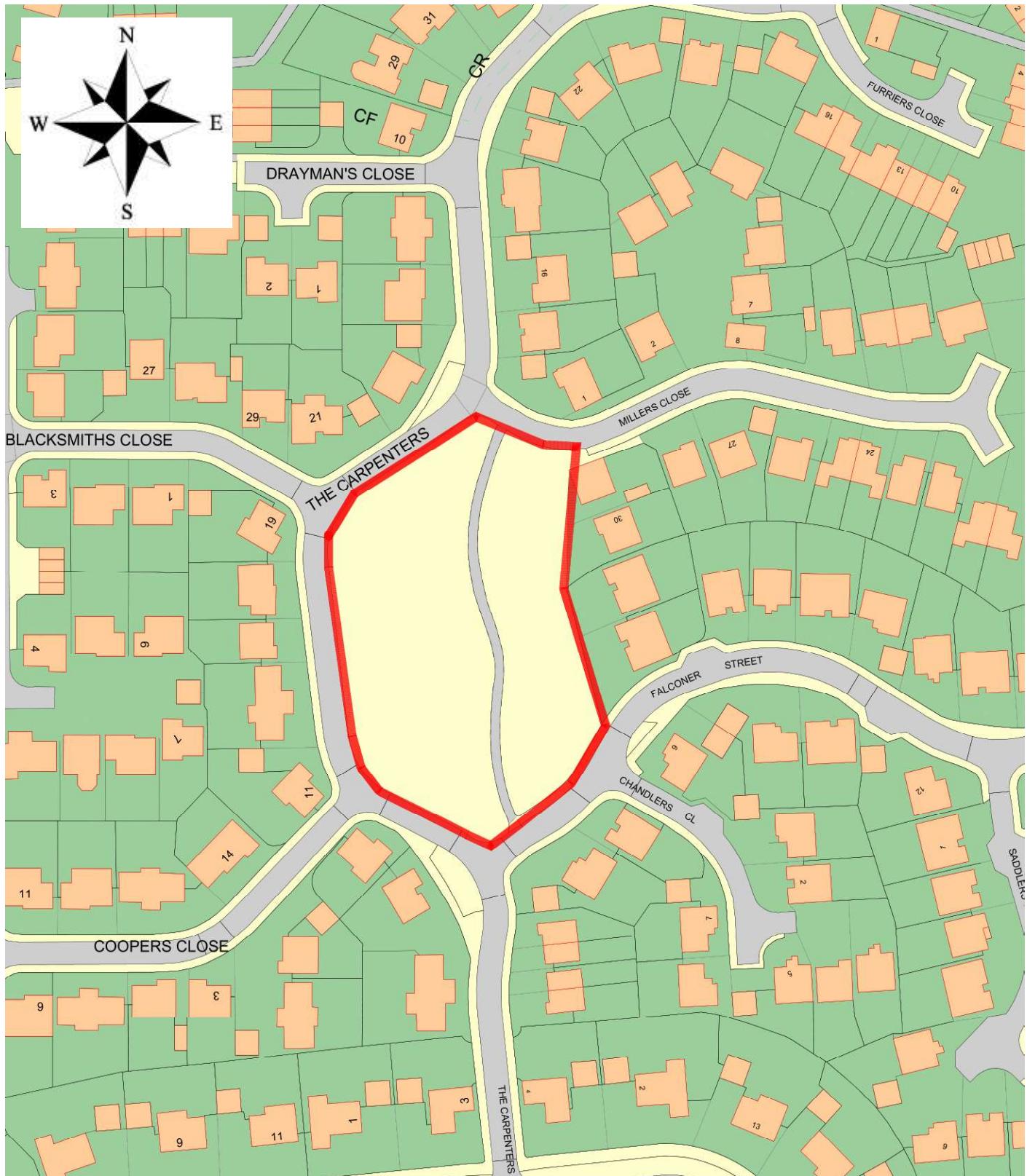
**6.4.15 Central Green at Turners' Crescent, St Michael's Mead, Thorley
(1:1250)**



6.4.16 Landscaped Garden at Mercers Avenue, St Michael's Mead, Thorley (1:1250)



6.4.17 Landscaped Green Space at The Carpenters, St Michael's Mead, Thorley (1:1250)

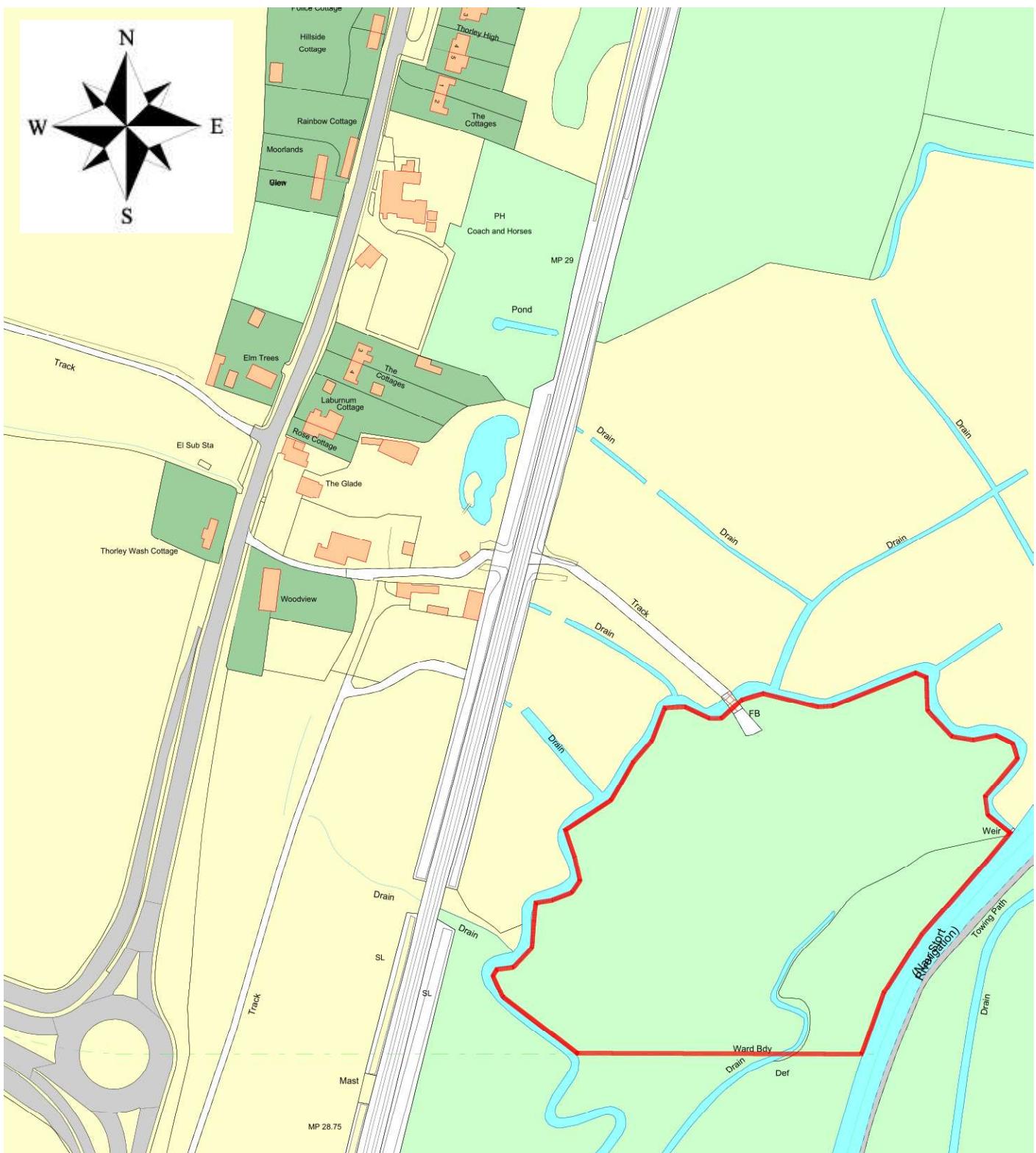


6.4.18 Landscaped Garden on Millner's Way, St Michael's Mead, Thorley (1:1250)

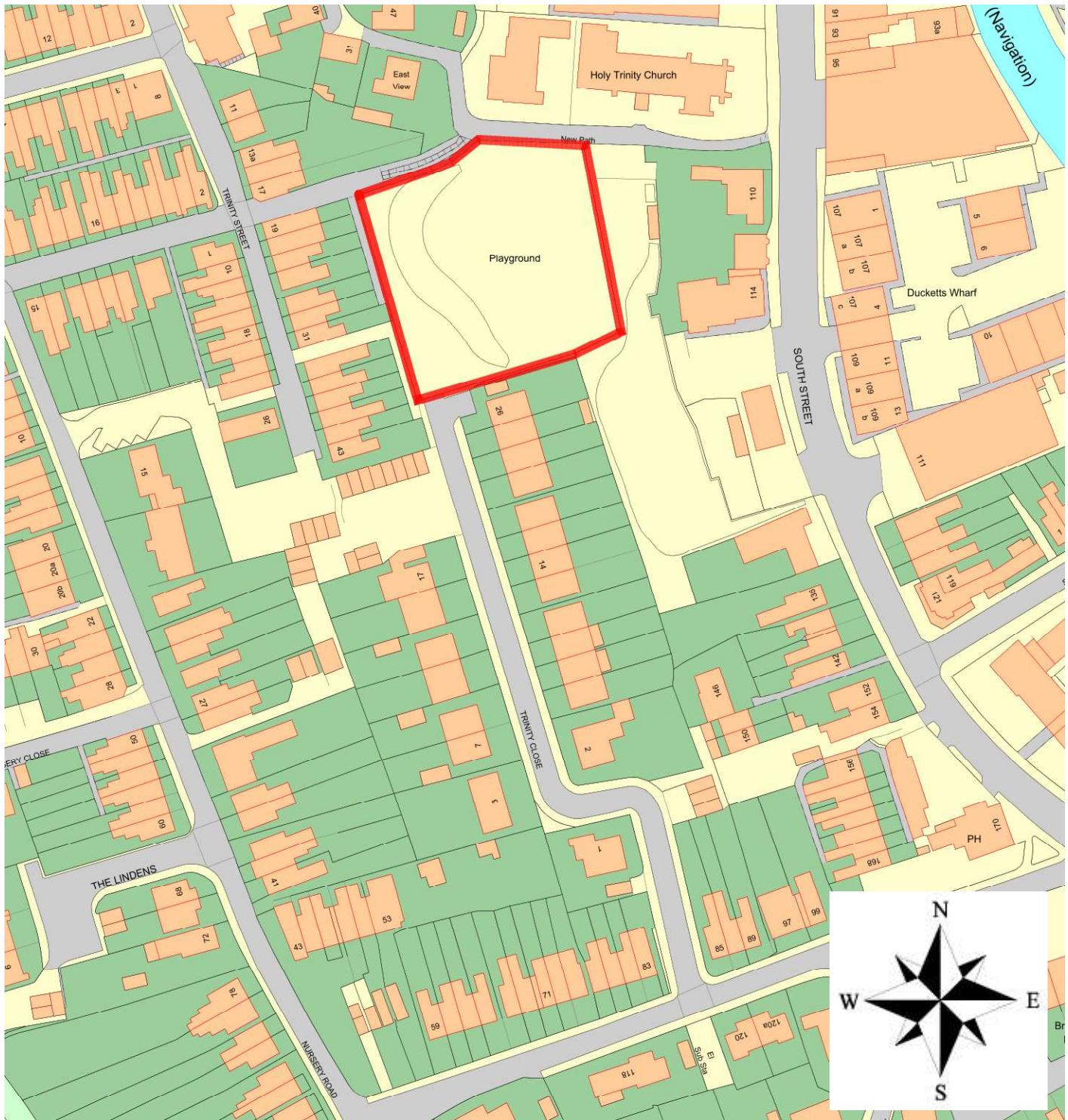


6.4.19 Thorley Wash Nature Reserve (1:2500)

6.4.20.1 Note: only that part of Thorley Wash Nature Reserve lying within the Neighbourhood Area is shown



6.4.20 Trinity Close Play Area (1:1250)



Bishop's Stortford Neighbourhood Plan

All Saints, Central, South & part of Thorley

6.4.21 Parsonage Field (1:1250)



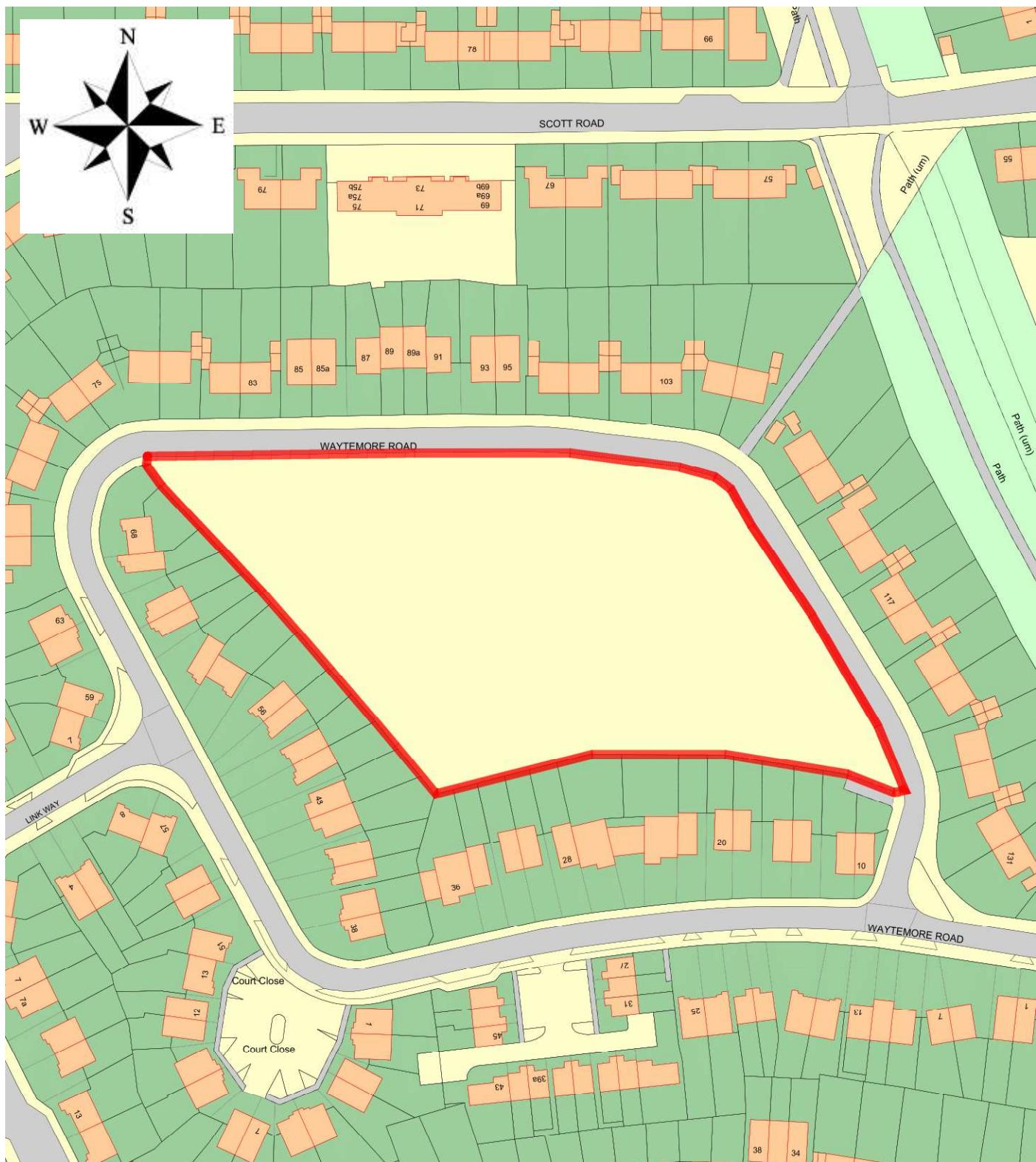
6.4.22 Thorley Cricket Ground (1:1250)



6.4.23 Ward Crescent Green and Play Area (1:1250)

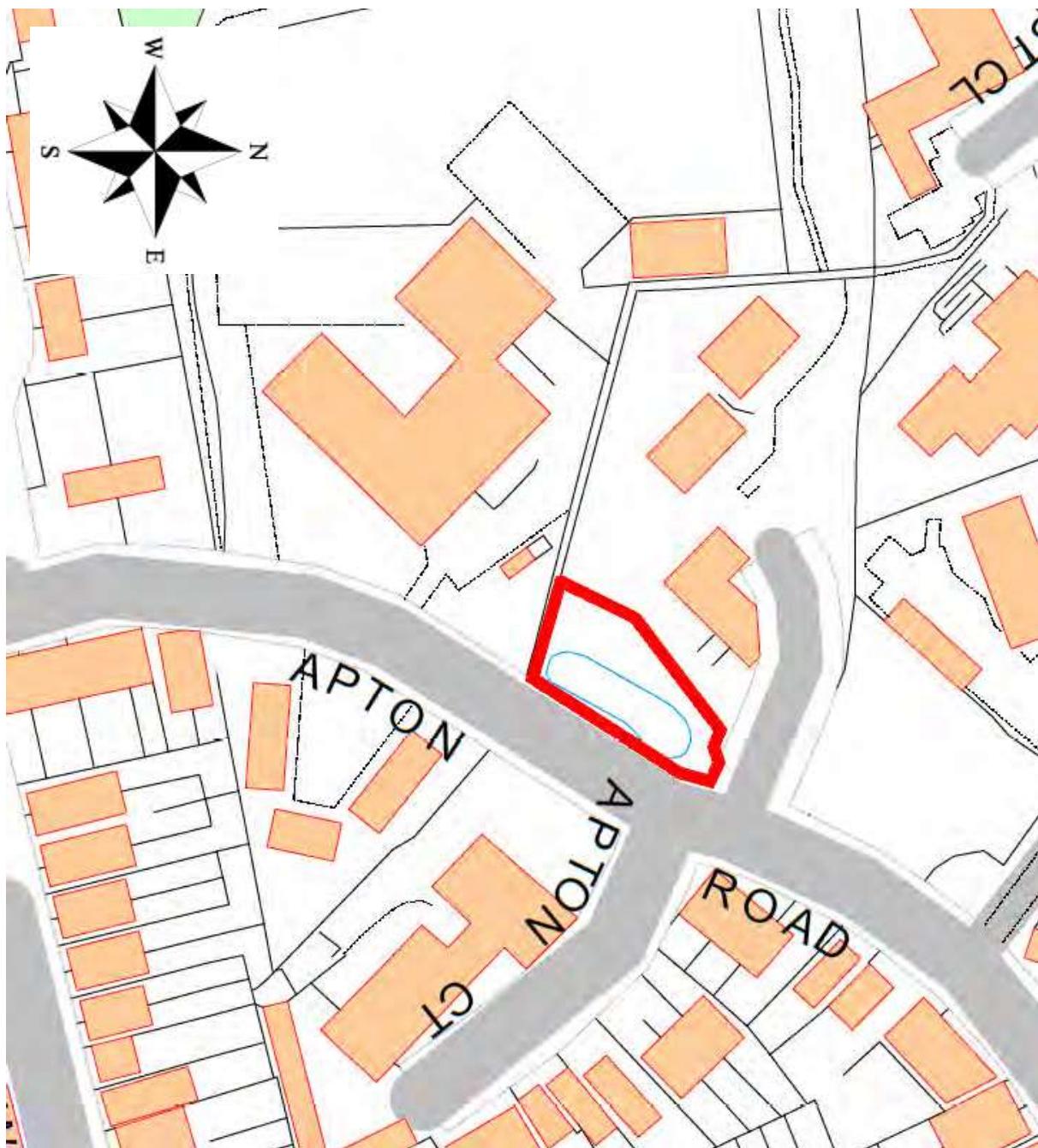


6.4.24 Waytemore Road Green and Play Area (1:1250)

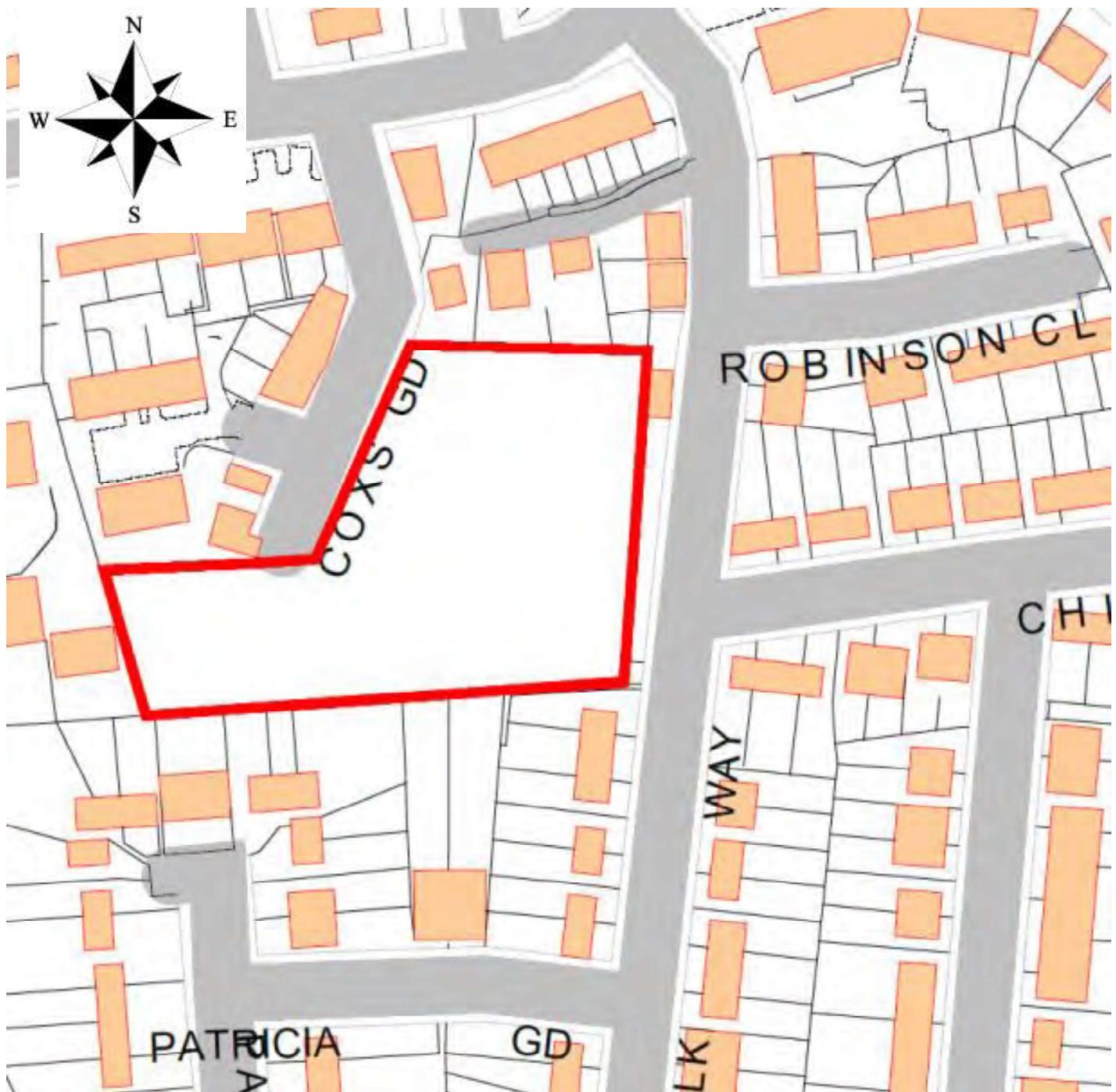


6.5 POLICY MAPS FOR POLICY GIP2(C)

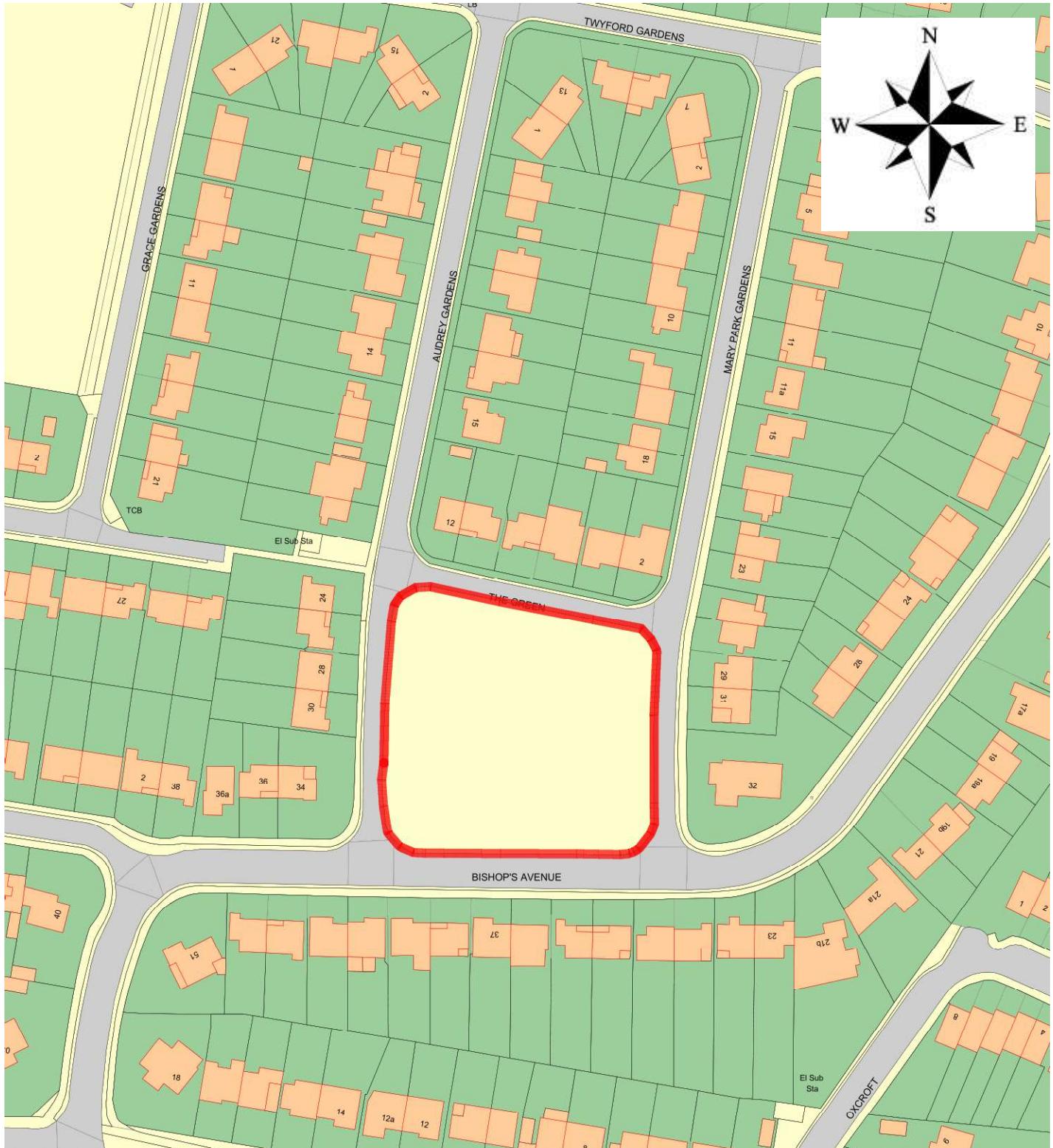
6.5.1 Apton Road Pond (1:1250)



6.5.2 Cox's Garden on Havers Estate (1:1250)



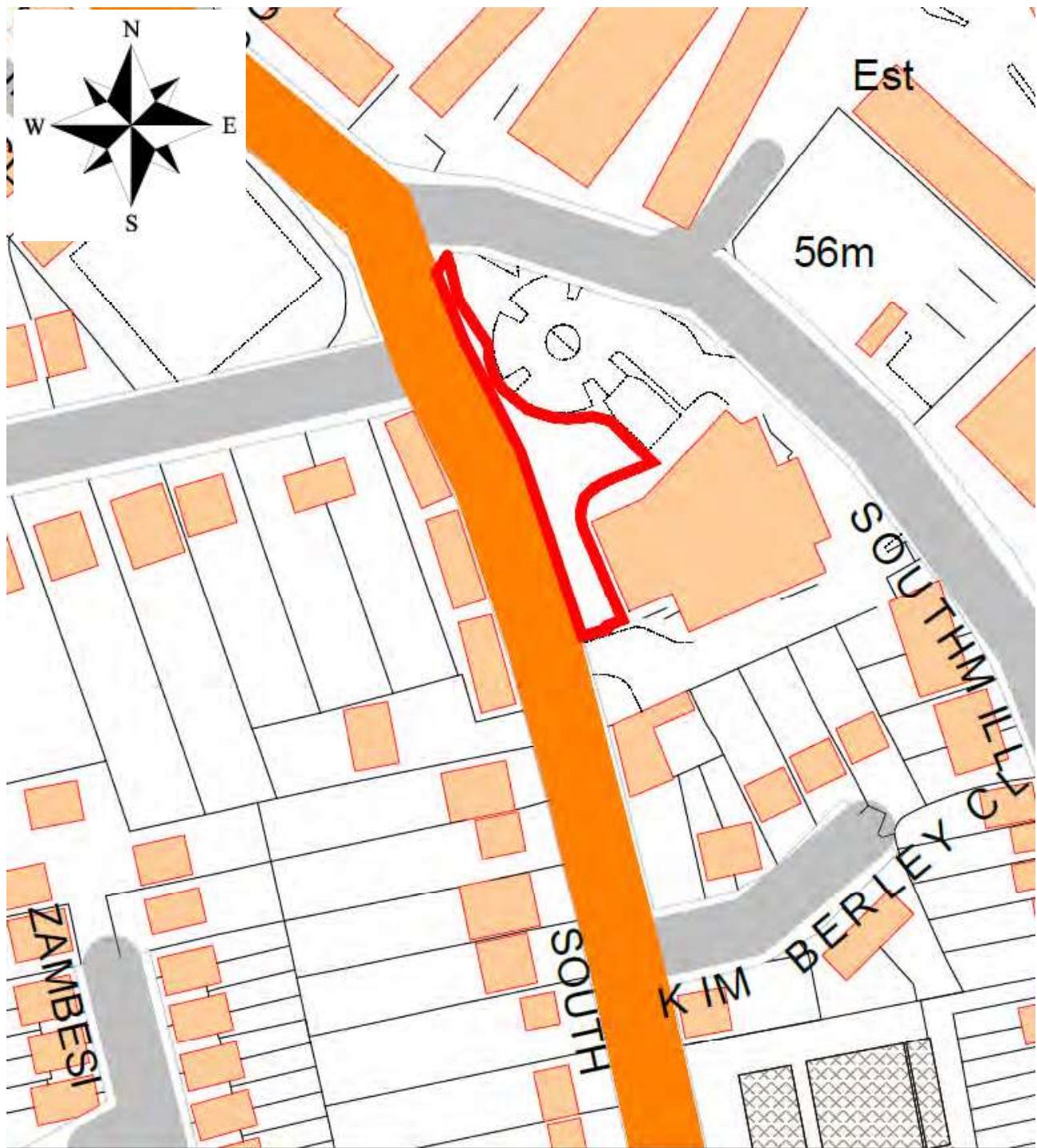
6.5.3 The Green: a square bounded by Audrey Gardens, Mary Park Gardens and Bishops Avenue (1:1250)



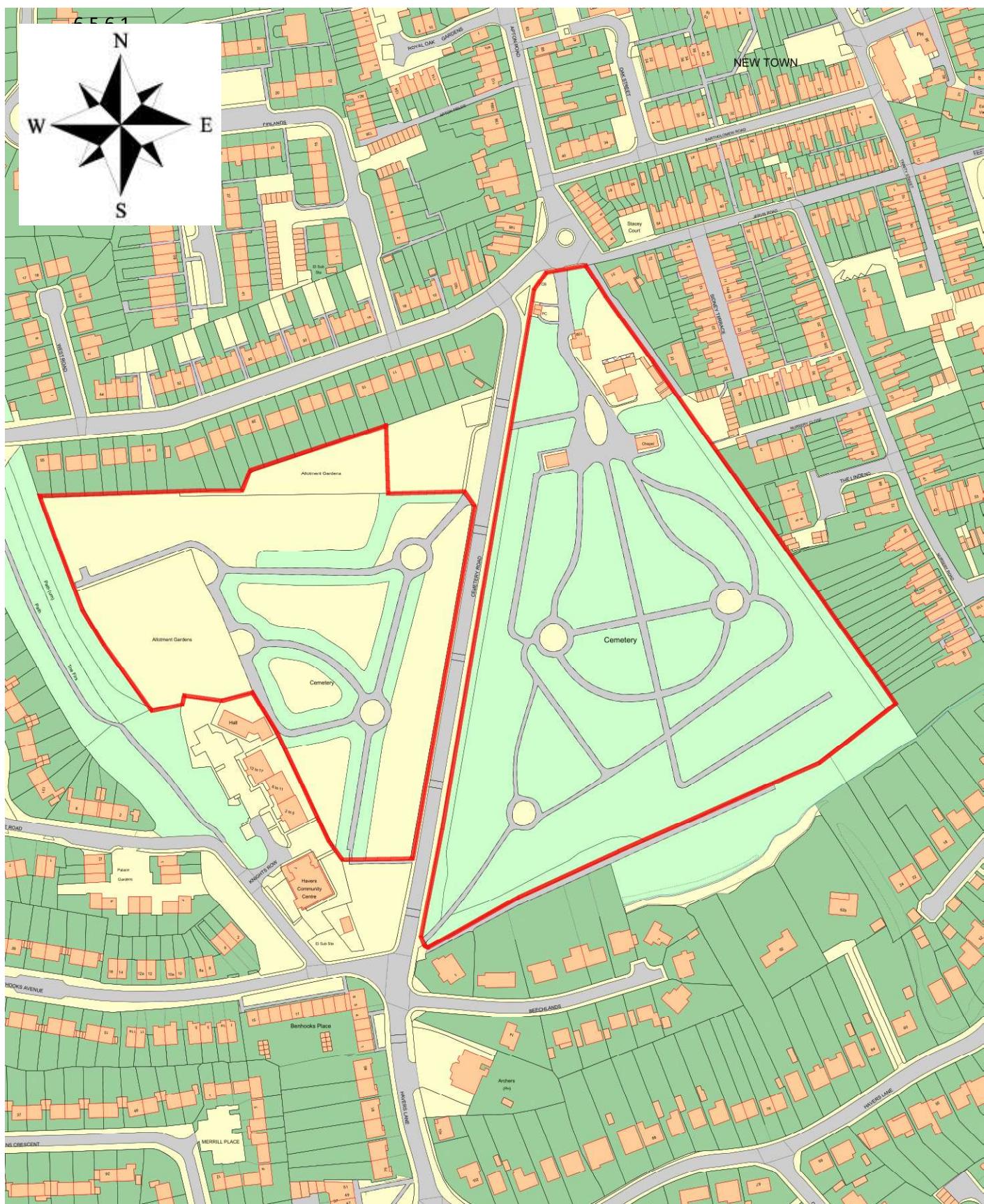
**6.5.4 Thorley Lane Verge
(1:2500)**



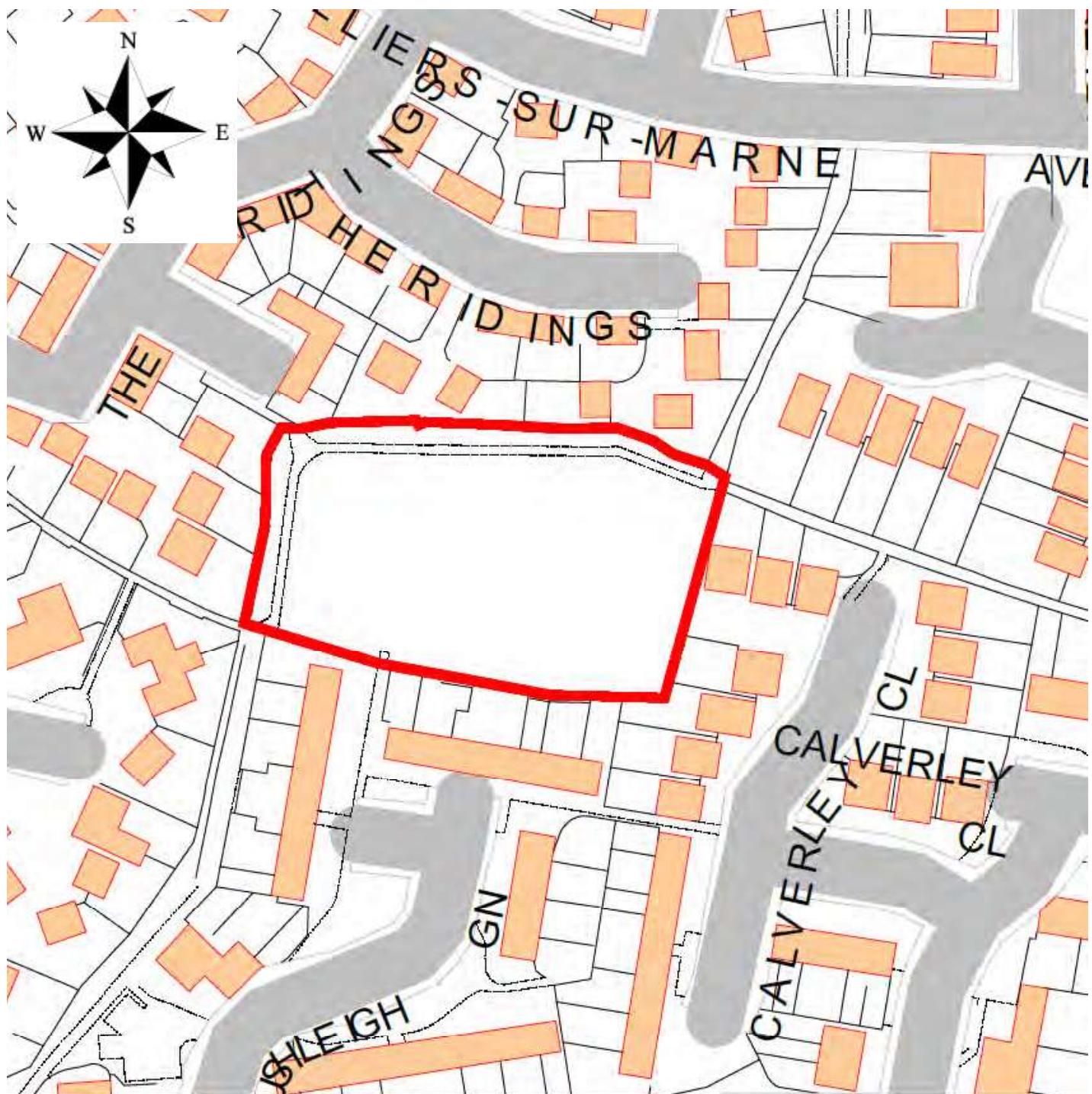
6.5.5 Nettleswell Gardens at Rhodes Centre (1:1250)



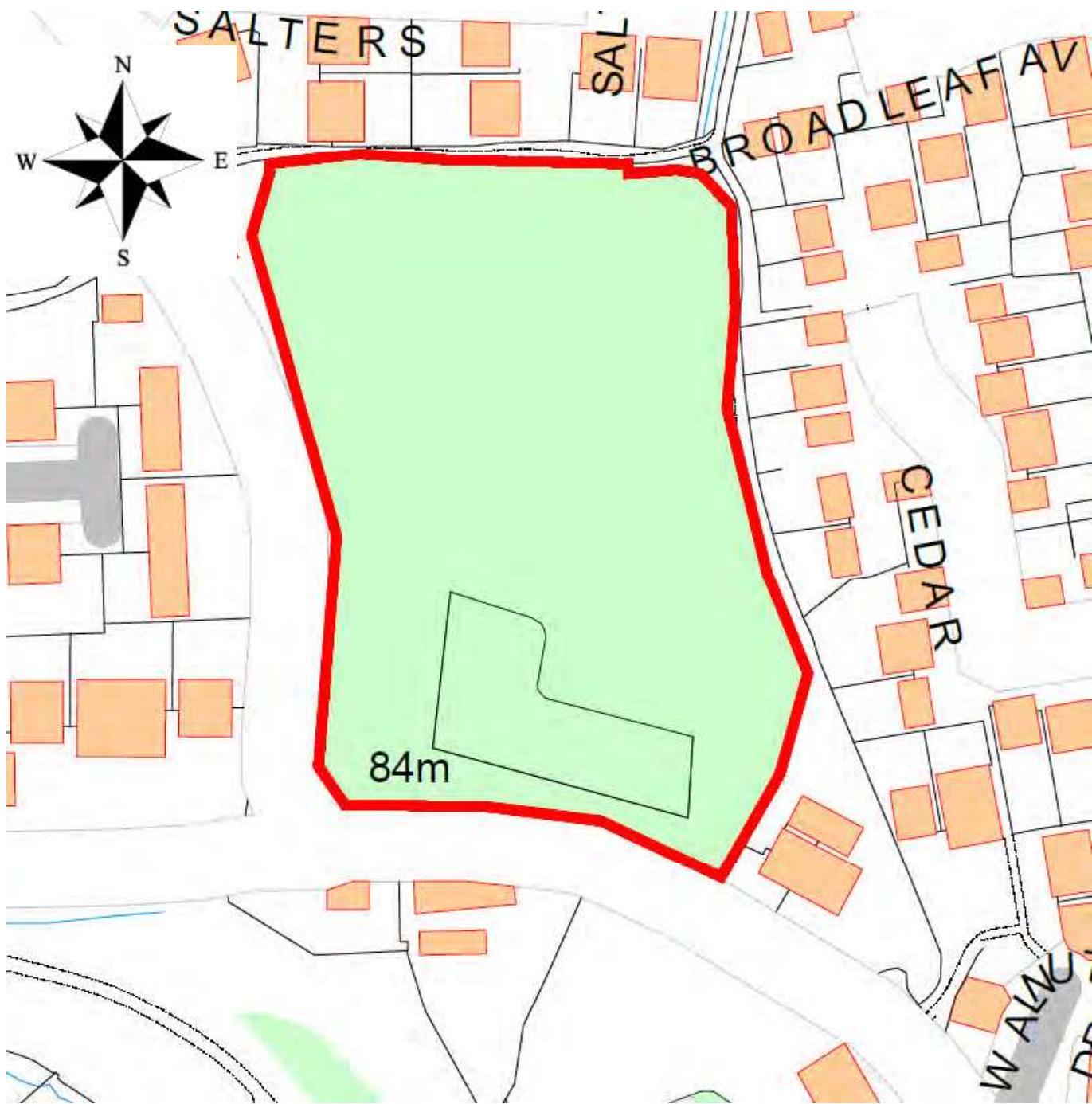
6.5.6 Old Cemetery and New Cemetery (1:2500)



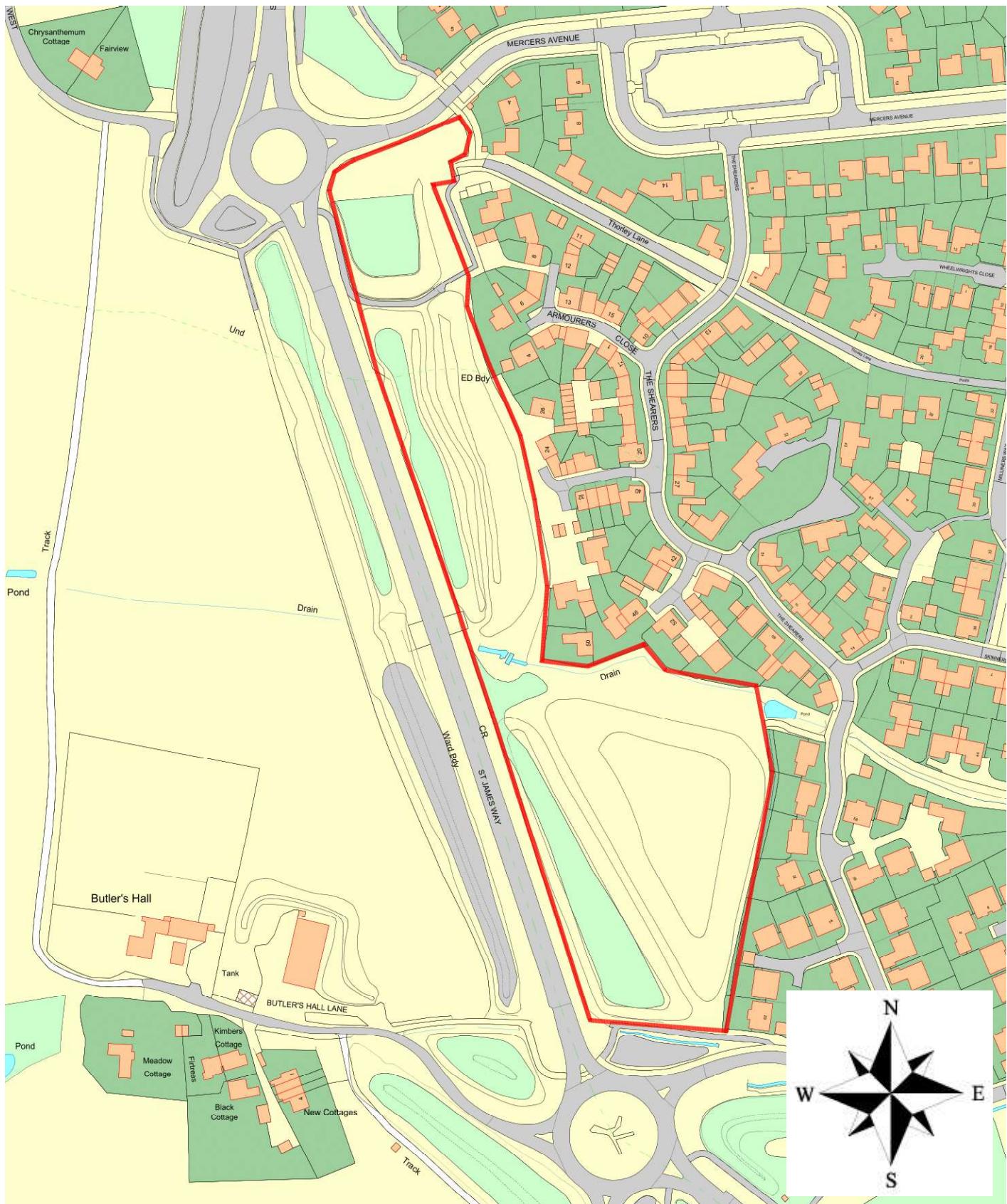
6.5.7 Area adjacent to Rushleigh Green and the Ridings (1:1250)



6.5.8 Established mature woodland between Thorley Lane East and Broadleaf Avenue (1:1250)

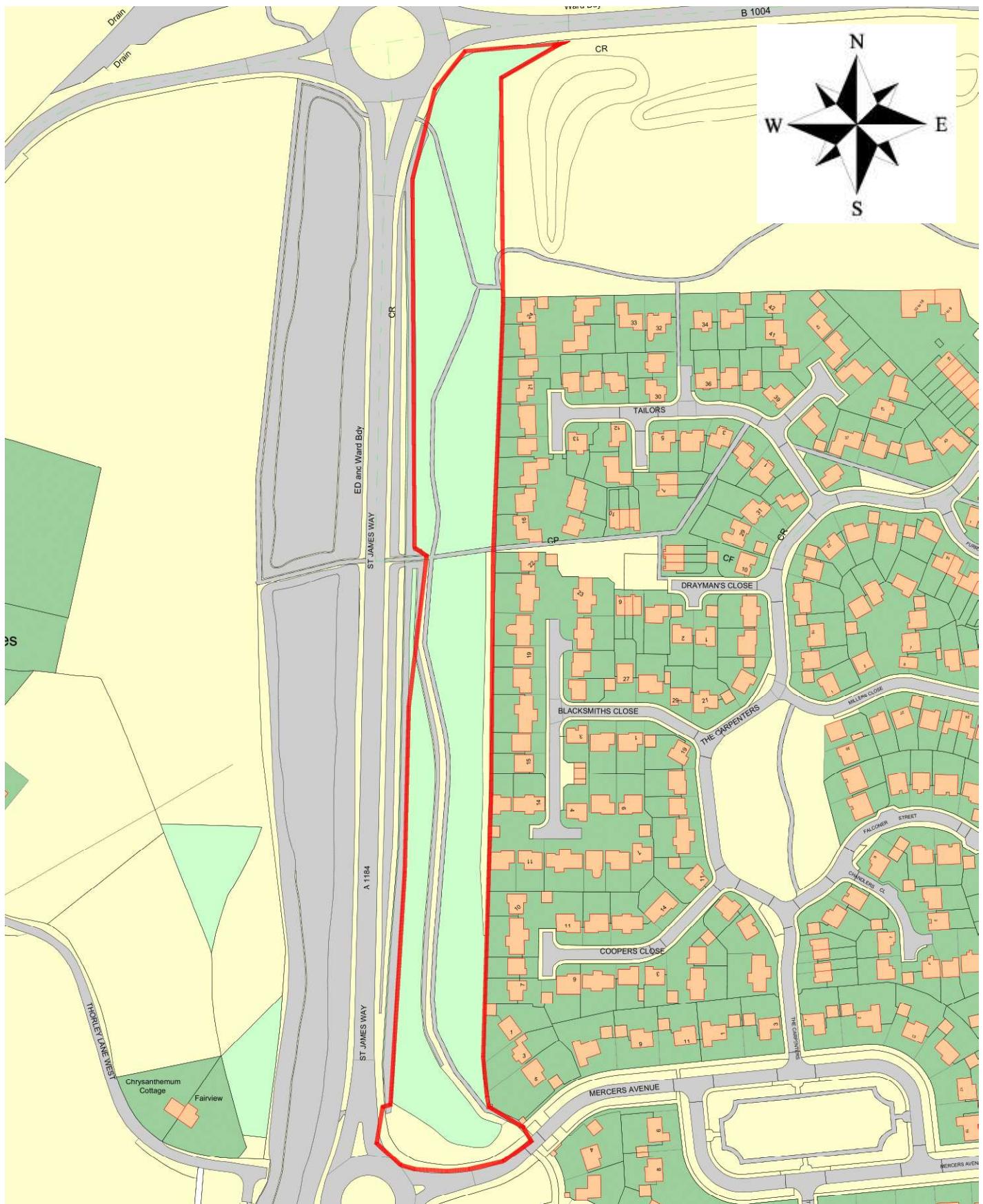


6.5.9 Boundary Strip to St Michael's Mead bounded by A1184 (St. James' Way), Mercer's Avenue, Moor Hall Lane and rear of Housing on The Shearers (1:2500)

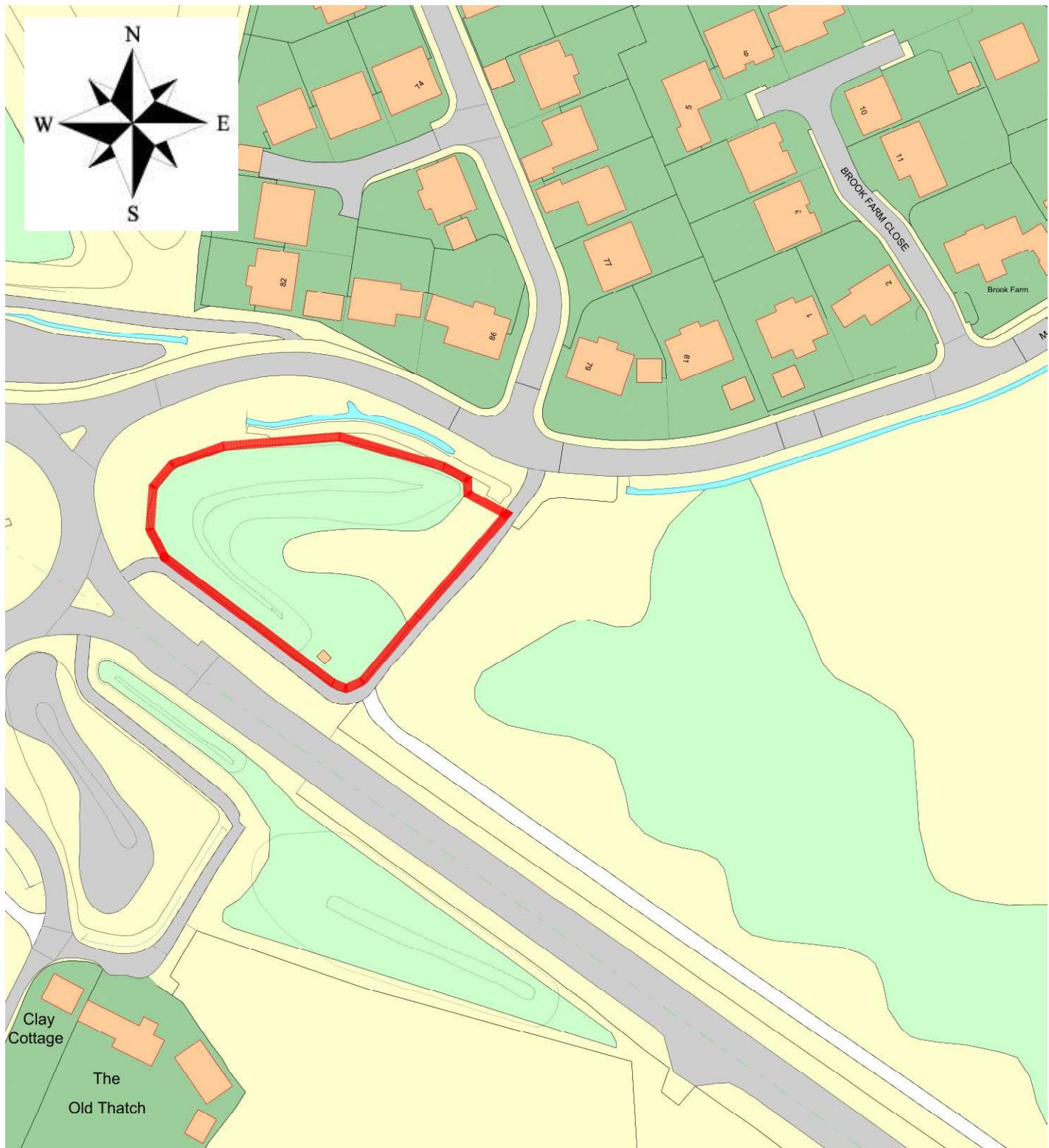


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6.5.10 Boundary Strip to St Michael's Mead bounded by A1184 (St James' Way), B1004, Mercer's Avenue and rear of housing on Blacksmith's Close and Tailors (1:2500)



6.5.11 Area of Woodland at Entrance to St Michael's Mead on Moor Hall Lane (1:1250)



6.5.12 Green Space at end of Alder Close (1:1250)



6.5.13 Green Space near corner of Sainsbury's, Thorley between 66A Ashdale and 29 Irving Close (1:1250)



6.3 TABLE OF AREAS, CHARACTER AND SPECIAL VALUE (GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE)

Abbreviations:

EH DP 2018	=	East Herts District Plan 2018
EH OSA 2017	=	East Herts Open Spaces Assessment October 2017
EH SFRA 2016	=	East Herts Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2016
BSNP1 2014	=	Bishop's Stortford Neighbourhood Plan for Silverleys and Meads Wards 2014-2031
BSNP2 2016	=	Bishop's Stortford Neighbourhood Plan for All Saints, Central, South and part of Thorley 2016-2032
LGS	=	Local Green Space
LAP	=	Local Area for Play (designed for children up to 6 years)
LEAP	=	Local Equipped Area for Play (caters for younger children beginning to play independently)
NEAP	=	Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (caters predominantly for more independent older children)

Location (area)	Character and Special Value
The Firs allotments (0.68 hectares)	Community allotments operated by the Town Council serving the residential areas that surround it. Open space outlook for the houses that overlook it on 3 sides. With hedges and trees around the edges providing wildlife habitat. Connected via its grassed and hedge lined access track and across Windhill 21 playing field and forest school area to The Firs wildlife corridor (see separate entry below). Identified as Allotment Space in EH OSA 2017. Designated as Open Space in EH DP 2018.
Bishops Stortford Rugby Football Club grounds, Silver Leys (9.68 hectares)	Land held in trust which has been Bishop's Stortford Rugby Club's home ground since 1928. The club caters for teams of all ages with over 500 players participating and attracts large numbers of supporters to first team games. There are also indoor sports facilities used by other sports clubs and meeting rooms used by the community. The grounds are bounded by hedges and trees and provide open space adjacent to the residential areas that will, when complete, abut it on the north, west and south sides. On the east side it links with East Herts designated Whitehall/Hoggate's Wood green wedge. It is crossed by a footpath that joins a bridleway on its western boundary that leads north into the countryside beyond the urban area. Some of the area is designated as Open Space in EH DP2018
Northolt Avenue play area (0.77 hectares)	Play area and small grassed park serving the residential areas that surround it on 3 sides. Its north side abuts Birchanger Woods (see separate entry below). Hedges and trees on all sides offer wildlife habitat and connect with the woods. An important amenity space in this north east residential area as evidenced by Amenity Green Space mapping in EH OSA 2017. Designated as Open Space in EH DP2018
Open space adjacent to Cannons Mill Lane (3.22 hectares)	Open grassland and scrub with trees in some areas forming part of the flood plain meadows of the River Stort: within flood zones 2 and 3 according to EH SFRA 2016. Includes a loop of the river and smaller drains. Extends the meadows and wildlife areas that are part of East Herts designated Castle/Grange Paddocks green wedge into the residential area on the east side of the railway.
Farnham Bourne Brook	Watercourse, banks and hedges forming a wildlife corridor linking the River

(1.70 hectares)	Stort and East Herts designated Castle/Grange Paddocks green wedge with countryside beyond the A120 bypass. Part of the flood plain: within flood zones 2 and 3 according to EH SFRA 2016. Designated as a 'green lung' in BSNP1 2014. In due course the watercourse will become an important open space corridor through the developments that are proceeding apace on both sides of it (Bishop's Stortford North and St Michael's Hurst) and will be integrated into the proposed Farnham Bourne Park. In a future revision of the NP it is expected that the designation will be extended to include the park and attenuation ponds for the developments.
Skelley's Wood (2.27 hectares)	Woodland (former orchard) on edge of proposed residential development that will enclose it to the north and west, with existing housing to the east and Bishop's Stortford College sports field to the south. Hertfordshire Way footpath runs along the southern edge. On the south side it abuts green belt and East Herts designated Stortford Park green wedge as adopted in EH DP 2018. Wildlife habitats with links to the countryside through the hedgerow corridors in the green wedge. Identified as Natural and Semi-natural Green Space in EH OSA 2017. Designated as Open Space in EH DP 2018 (along with a field to the north west of the wood which is now proposed for development by Herts County Council).
Green space at rear of Northgate End multi-storey car park (under construction) (0.10 hectares)	Open space of grass and trees to be retained as part of Northgate End multi-story car park scheme currently under construction. On opposite bank of the River Stort to East Herts designated The Castle/Grange Paddocks green wedge as adopted in EH DP 2018. In floodplain of the River Stort: within flood zones 2 according to EH SFRA 2016.
Small, wooded area east of Waitrose immediately south of the Causeway (0.16 hectares)	Small, wooded area on the edge of the existing ground level car park and adjacent to Waitrose foodstore. This site has outline planning permission for development (Old River Lane development: ref. 3/10/1964/OP) but the proposals retain the wood which provides some natural softening to the urban environment. In floodplain of the River Stort: within flood zones 2 according to EH SFRA 2016.
Grassed area at back of Cock Inn, Hockerill (0.01 hectares)	Small, grassed area with seating allowing socialising in an otherwise density built and busy environment.

6.6 TABLE OF AREAS, CHARACTER AND SPECIAL VALUE (GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE)

Abbreviations:

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LEAP	=	Local Equipped Area for Play (caters for younger children beginning to play independently)
NEAP	=	Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (caters predominantly for more independent older children)

Birchanger Wood (7.01 hectares)	Ancient wood believed to be remnant of 'wildwood' never cleared for agriculture, rich in wildlife with 126 species of trees, flowers and grasses identified. Now owned by charitable trust, Birchanger Wood Trust 2018, to conserve, protect and improve the wood. Managed in part by volunteers and used for community projects including education. In green belt as adopted in EH DP 2018. Identified as Natural and Semi-Natural Green Space in EH OSA 2017: an important area for the north east area of the town. Designated as LGS in BSNP2 2016.
The Firs (1.37 hectares)	Historic avenue of lime and pink chestnut trees, grass and bushes managed in part by an informal Friends Group of volunteers. Wildlife corridor that extends the East Herts designated Stortford Park wedge southwards into residential areas and connects with the town cemetery open spaces. Well used by local community as pedestrian and cycle link between several schools to the north and the residential areas, community centre and neighbourhood centre to the south. Subject of The Firs Greenspace Action Plan 2017-2022. The southern half of The Firs corridor is designated as Open Space in EH DP 2018. The whole corridor is identified as Natural and Semi-Natural Green Space in EH OSA 2017. Designated as LGS in BSNP2 2016.
The Spinney (0.78 hectares)	Woodland strip and scrub forming a wildlife corridor and separating the residential areas of Thorley and Bishop's Avenue, with paths linking the two and a pedestrian and cycle routes to Thornbera Gardens and Thorley Park Road. Also used by dog walkers and an informal play area for children. Identified as Natural and Semi-Natural Green Space in EH OSA 2017. Designated as LGS in BSNP2 2016.

Burley Road play area (0.28 hectares)	Open green space and recreation and play areas serving a residential area that is isolated to some extent by the busy B1383 London Road on the west side and commercial buildings and the railway on the east and north. Identified as a LEAP in EH OSA 2017: the only children's play area within the catchment zone for housing in this area; and the local provision for teenagers. Designated as Open Space in EH DP 2018.
The Baron's play area (0.05 hectares)	Small local play area with trees surrounded by housing on 3 sides and The Harvest Moon pub on the other. On footpath route through the local housing to Thorley Community Centre. Also adjoins the East Herts designated Thorley Park green wedge. Identified as a LEAP in EH OSA 2017. Designated as Open Space in EH DP 2018.
Dimsdale Crescent play area (0.40 hectares)	Open green space and recreation and play areas serving a residential area on the eastern edge of the town. Identified as a LEAP in EH OSA 2017: the only children's play area within the catchment zone for housing in this area; and the local provision for teenagers. Designated as Open Space in EH DP 2018.
Knebworth Court play area (0.24 hectares)	Open green space and recreation and play areas and small woodland providing wildlife habitat. Connected by paths to adjacent residential areas and on pedestrian route to Thorley neighbourhood centre. Identified as a LEAP in EH OSA 2017. Designated as Open Space in EH DP 2018.
Wilson Close play area (Rhodes Avenue) (0.09 hectares)	Small open green space and recreation and play areas with trees and hedges along the edge providing wildlife habitat. Connected by paths to adjacent residential areas and on pedestrian route to Thorley neighbourhood centre. Identified as a LAP in EH OSA 2017 with no LEAP covering this area of housing. Designated as Open Space in EH DP 2018.
Nightingales' play area (0.04 hectares)	Small open green space and recreation and play areas with trees and low hedges providing wildlife habitat. On edge of residential development with Herts and Essex hospital car park on one side. Omitted from EH OSA 2017 but listed on East Herts website of Parks and Open Spaces in Bishop's Stortford. In a housing area that has no other LAP or LEAP provision.
Ward Crescent allotments (1.46 hectares)	Community allotments operated by the Town Council serving the residential areas that surround it. Also the location of the Bishop's Stortford Allotments and Gardens Association store and shop. Open space outlook for the houses that overlook it. With hedges and trees around the edges and across the centre providing wildlife habitat. Identified as Allotment Space in EH OSA 2017. Designated as Open Space in EH DP 2018.
Hallingbury Road West allotments (2.54 hectares)	Community allotments operated by the Town Council serving the south east side of the town. With hedges and trees around the edges providing wildlife habitat and directly connected to countryside to the east. In green belt as adopted in EH DP 2018. Identified as Allotment Space in EH OSA 2017. Designated as Open Space in EH DP 2018.
Haymeads Lane	Community allotments operated by the Town Council serving the east side of the

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allotments (2.02 hectares)	town. With hedges and trees around the edges providing wildlife habitat and directly connected to open space of Bishop's Stortford Golf Club to the east. Identified as Allotment Space in EH OSA 2017. Designated as Open Space in EH DP 2018.
London Road allotments (0.12 hectares)	Small area of community allotments operated by the Town Council serving the London Road area. With trees all around the edges providing wildlife habitat and connecting directly to the River Stort. In flood plain of the River Stort: within flood zone 2 according to EH SFRA 2016. Identified as Allotment Space in EH OSA 2017. Designated as Open Space in EH DP 2018.
Thorley Street allotments (0.44 hectares)	Small area of community allotments operated by the Thorley Parish Council serving Thorley Street and the south of the town. With some trees and hedges providing wildlife habitat and connecting to River Stort wildlife corridor across the railway. In green belt as adopted in EH DP 2018. Designated as Open Space in EH DP 2018.
Central green at Turners' Crescent, St Michael's Mead, Thorley (0.41 hectares)	Open space, central hub of St Michael's Mead residential area including play area, landscaped green and connecting paths providing opportunities for socialising and play. With children's nursery and community centre adjacent and on footpath/cycleway route connecting St Michael's Mead with Thorley neighbourhood centre and Manor Fields Primary School. Identified as Amenity Green Space in EH OSA 2017. Designated as Open Space in EH DP 2018.
Landscaped garden at Mercer's Avenue, St Michael's Mead, Thorley (0.43 hectares)	Open space, public garden within residential area providing opportunities for community socialising in a quiet space. Trees and hedges provide some wildlife habitat. Connecting paths to residential areas on all sides. Identified as Amenity Green Space in EH OSA 2017. Designated as Open Space in EH DP 2018.
Landscaped green space at The Carpenters, St Michael's Mead, Thorley (0.44 hectares)	Open space within residential area providing opportunities for community socialising. With connecting footpath through an avenue of trees that with low bushes provide some wildlife habitat. Identified as Amenity Green Space in EH OSA 2017. Designated as Open Space in EH DP 2018.
Landscaped garden on Milliner's Way, St Michael's Mead, Thorley (0.20 hectares)	Public open space on two sides of access road within residential area with trees, planted beds and seating used for community socialising. Provides open outlook for 3 storey houses around it. Trees and low hedges provide some wildlife habitat. Connecting paths to residential areas on all sides. Designated as Open Space in EH DP 2018.
Thorley Wash nature reserve (part thereof within neighbourhood plan area) (2.66 hectares)	Part of wetland reserve managed by Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust that lies within BSNP2 2016. Part of the river corridor and floodplain of the River Stort: within flood zones 2 and 3 according to EH SFRA 2016. SSSI with public footpath access from A1184 just south of A1184/Thorley Street junction and beyond to the River Stort towpath. The towpath provides a direct link into the town centre and The Meads for an extended recreational route. In green belt as adopted in EH DP 2018. Identified as Natural and Semi-natural Green Space in EH OSA 2017. Designated as Open Plan 2018.Space in East Herts District
Trinity Close play area (0.23 hectares)	Open green space and recreation and play areas serving a residential area on 3

	sides. Some trees/bushes on boundaries provide wildlife habitat. Identified as a LEAP in in EH OSA 2017: the only children's play area within the catchment zone for housing in this area. Designated as Open Space in EH DP 2018. Designated as Other Green Space in BSNP2 2016.
Parsonage Field (1.64 hectares)	Open green space and recreation and play areas serving surrounding residential areas. Public footpath traverses the field. Some trees and bushes around boundaries provide wildlife habitat. Identified as a LEAP with teenage provision in EH OSA 2017. Designated as Open Space in EH DP 2018. Designated as Other Green Space in BSNP2 2016.
Thorley Cricket Ground (1.53 hectares)	Open space, Thorley Cricket Club ground; also used for general recreation by local residents. Surrounded by housing on 3 sides with Southern Country Park on the other. Path across the ground connects residential areas with the park. Trees and hedges around the boundary provide corridors for wildlife. In green belt as adopted in EH DP 2018. Identified as Amenity Green Space in EH OSA 2017. Designated as Open Space in EH DP 2018. Designated as Other Green Space in BSNP2 2016.
Ward Crescent play area 6.6.1.1 (0.36 hectares)	Small open green space and recreation and play areas with a few trees and some low planting, surrounded by housing. Identified as a LEAP in in EH OSA 2017: also with teenage provision. Designated as Open Space in EH DP 2018. Designated as Other Green Space in BSNP2 2016.
Waytemore Road green and play area (0.83 hectares)	Open green space and recreation and play areas with a few trees and some low planting, surrounded by housing. Identified as a NEAP in in EH OSA 2017: also with teenage provision. Designated as Open Space in EH DP 2018. Designated as Other Green Space in BSNP2 2016.
Apton Road pond (0.07 hectares)	Small wildlife area with trees and undergrowth around a small pond in urban area to the west of the town centre, adjacent to St Michael's primary school. Designated as Other Green Space in BSNP2 2016.
Cox's Garden on Havers estate (0.58 hectares)	Open space; grassed area with trees, bushes and hedges on 3 boundaries. (Area of old tarmac in the south west corner is subject to planning application for preschool nursery: ref. 3/19/0898/CPO). Within residential area, provides open view to houses overlooking it. Designated as Open Space in EH DP 2018. Designated as Other Green Space in BSNP2 2016.
The Green: a square bounded by Audrey Gardens, Mary Park Gardens and Bishops Avenue (0.33 hectares)	Open space; grassed area with a few trees within a residential area, providing an open outlook for the houses around it and opportunities for informal recreation. Identified as Amenity Green Space in EH OSA 2017: the only such for this residential area. Designated as Open Space in EH DP 2018. Designated as Other Green Space in BSNP2 2016.

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Thorley Lane verge (1.18 hectares)	Grassed verge with hedges and many mature trees. Separates residential development to the north from the busy Whittington Way road and will be of increased importance as a wildlife corridor once the Bishop's Stortford South development currently under construction on the opposite side of the road is complete. Identified as Natural and Semi-natural Green Space in EH OSA 2017. Designated as Other Green Space in BSNP2 2016.
Nettleswell Gardens at South Mill Arts (previously Rhodes Arts Centre) (0.07 hectares)	Small garden area at South Mill Arts Centre (previously known as Rhodes Arts Centre) that enhances the setting of the centre and provides some wildlife habitat in this busy area. Designated as Other Green Space in BSNP2 2016.
Old Cemetery and New Cemetery (5.98 hectares)	The main cemetery sites in the town that have many mature trees and areas of wild flower planting, providing a quiet place for contemplation and a wildlife haven. Identified as Cemeteries in EH OSA 2017. Designated as Open Space in EH DP 2018. Designated as Other Green Space in BSNP2 2016.
Area adjacent to Rushleigh Green and the Ridings (0.50 hectares)	Grassed area with a few trees in middle of residential area and footpaths linking to the housing areas around and Thorley neighbourhood centre. Identified as Amenity Green Space in EH OSA 2017. Designated as Open Space in EH DP 2018. Designated as Other Green Space in BSNP2 2016.
Established mature woodland between Thorley Lane East and Broadleaf Avenue (1.29 hectares)	Wild and mature woodland with residential areas all round. On Moor Hall Lane, a very quiet road used by local walkers and cyclists. The south west corner abuts the Southern Country Park and provides a continuation of the wildlife habitat provided by the park. The northern half is identified as Natural and Semi-natural Green Space in EH OSA 2017 (It is not clear why the southern half was omitted). Designated as Other Green Space in BSNP2 2016.
Boundary strip to St Michael's Mead bounded by A1184 (St James' Way), Mercer's Avenue, Moor Hall Lane and rear of housing on The Shearers (2.93 hectares)	Landscaped open space with trees and bushes providing buffer between A120 and housing. Paths connect to the adjacent residential areas and a bridleway runs along the strip between Southern Country Park and St Michael's Mead Northern Parkland. There are also bridleway and footpath links from this strip to the wider network in the countryside to the west. Wildlife corridor and habitat. In green belt as adopted in EH DP 2018. Identified as Natural and Semi-natural Green Space in EH OSA 2017.
Boundary strip to St Michael's Mead bounded by A1184 (St James' Way), B1004, Mercer's Avenue and rear of housing on Blacksmith's Close and Tailors (2.22 hectares)	Landscaped strip with trees and bushes providing buffer between A120 and housing. Paths connect to the adjacent residential areas and a bridleway runs along the strip between Southern Country Park and St Michael's Mead Northern Parkland. There are also footpath links from this strip to the wider network in the countryside to the west. Wildlife corridor and habitat. In green belt as adopted in EH DP 2018. Identified as Natural and Semi-natural Green Space in EH OSA 2017.
Area of woodland at entrance to St Michael's Mead on Moor Hall Lane	Dense young woodland providing buffer between St James' Way/Moor Hall Lane roundabout and continuation of wildlife corridor between Southern Country

(0.29 hectares)	Park and boundary strip to St Michael's Mead residential area. In green belt as adopted in EH DP 2018. Identified as Natural and Semi-natural Green Space in EH OSA 2017. Designated as Open Space in EH DP 2018.
Green space at end of Alder Close (0.03 hectares)	Small open amenity space with trees on edge, crossed by footpath from Alder Close to join main footpath/cycleway route from St Michael's Mead to Manor Fields primary school and Thorley neighbourhood centre. Area for parents and children to wait when dropping off/collecting children from rear access to Manor Fields primary school.
Green space near corner of Sainsbury's, Thorley between 66A Ashdale and 29 Irving Close (0.01 hectares)	Small open amenity space with trees adjacent to footpaths running down the side of Thorley neighbourhood centre and connecting the centre to residential areas to the south of Thorley. Provides a break between the busy frontage to the neighbourhood centre and adjacent housing. An application to obtain planning permission for a retail kiosk on this site was refused by East Herts in March 2020 (ref. 3/20/0038/OUT) following objections from many local residents.

