



Hertfordshire

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PB1 Enfield Chase Planning & Development Framework



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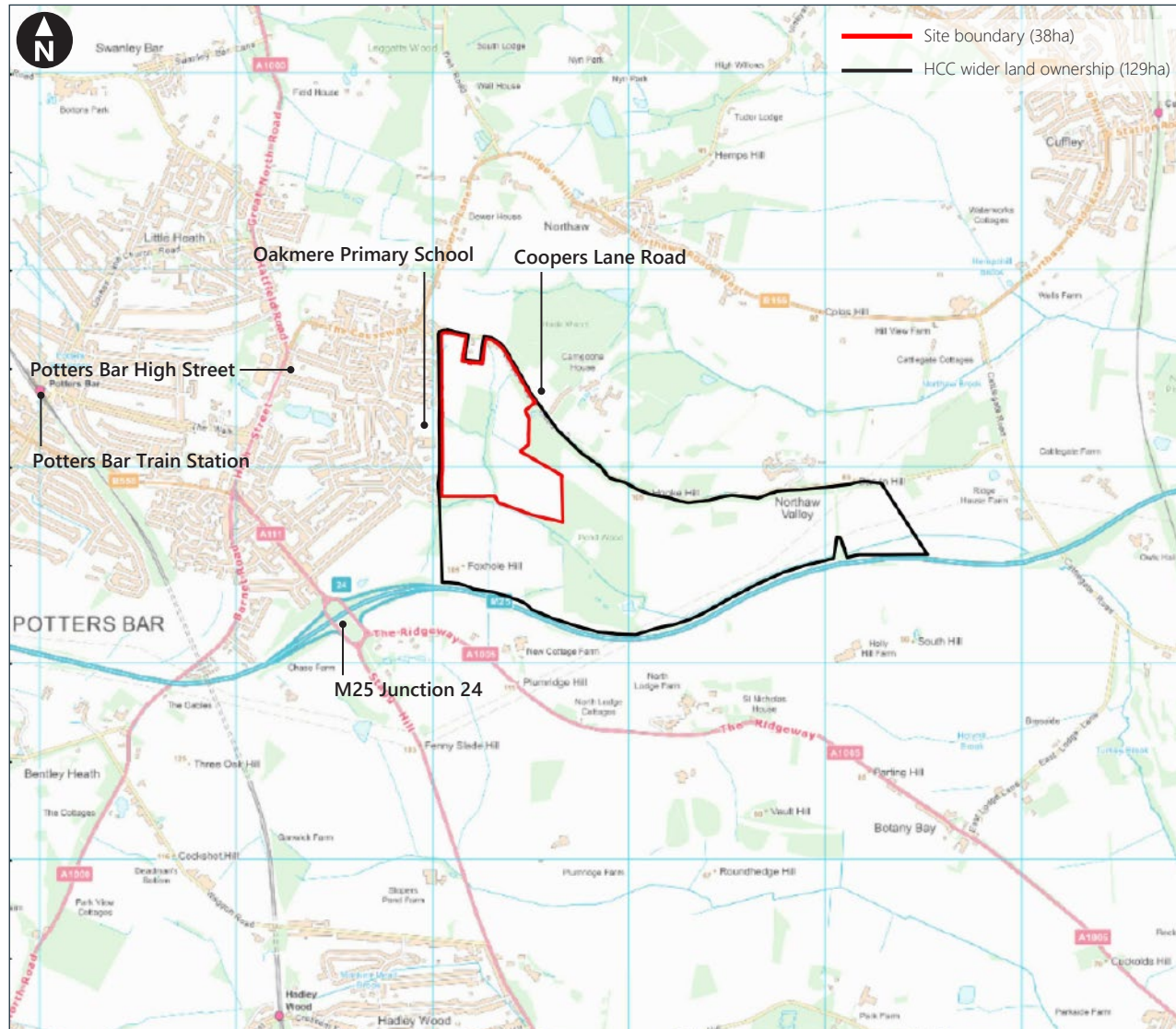
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1. Introduction

Figure 1.1 The Site and HCC's wider landholding



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Background and purpose

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (WHBC) are currently seeking to identify additional sites - including Green Belt sites - to meet its Full Objectively Assessed Housing Needs (FOAHN) as part of the ongoing examination of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan. Within this context, WHBC has made a request to Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) to provide new information to help demonstrate the development potential of its 167-hectare (ha) landholding east of Potters Bar, known as Enfield Chase.

In response to this request, and on behalf of HCC, Wood has undertaken a comprehensive review of the Site's opportunities and constraints, consulted with officers at HCC and WHBC on the Site's potential, and determined that an area within Enfield Chase measuring approximately 38ha site immediately adjacent to Potters Bar (refer Figure 1.1), offers the potential to deliver a sustainable urban extension of approximately 600-700 new homes (of which 30% would be affordable), alongside a range of benefits for the town, including improvements to Oakmere Primary School and supporting healthy lifestyles through enhanced access to the countryside.

This report demonstrates how this development opportunity might be realised.



Whilst the Site lies in the Metropolitan Green Belt, this report demonstrates how land at this location can be successfully removed from Green Belt without undermining its intended purposes. Specifically, the report highlights how new Green Belt boundaries can be established east of Potters Bar using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent, and, in line with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) objectives, how the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land in the wider area.

Overall, the report demonstrates why the Site is available, viable and deliverable. It lies within the single ownership of HCC, who also has its own delivery vehicle 'Chalkdene Developments'. The development proposals that are presented in this report have been assessed against the NPPF and informed by a comprehensive review of the Site's opportunities and constraints, plus feedback following engagement with officers at HCC and WHBC.

Structure

- **Section 2** provides the overarching planning context for the submission, including how the Site has been considered in previous stages of the plan-making process.
- **Section 3** appraises the Site's key opportunities and constraints, also addressing issues previously raised in WHBC's 2019 Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA).
- **Section 4** provides an initial masterplan framework, summarising the key benefits that could be secured for Potters Bar and the wider area.
- **Section 5** provides a summary and conclusions.

2. Planning policy context

Green Belt

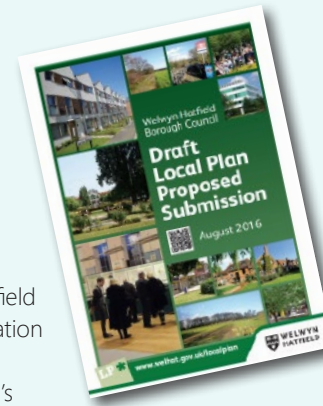
The Site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt. National planning policy sets out the great importance the Government attaches to Green Belts, with the fundamental aim of Green Belt to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open (2019 NPPF133). Once established, Green Belt boundaries *“should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans”* (2019 NPPF136, emphasis added). WHBC is making the case that the ‘exceptional circumstances’ exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries (2019 NPPF137) principally to ensure that FOAHN can be met as part of its local plan review.

In reviewing Green Belt boundaries as part of plan-making the NPPF sets out the need to *“promote sustainable patterns of development”* and where it is concluded that the release of Green Belt land is necessary then authorities should *“also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of Green Belt land”* (2019 NPPF138). Providing greater accessibility to Green Belt land, upgrading and enhancing the landscape and provision of community forests are also key NPPF objectives (2019 NPPF141 & 142). Once established, Green Belt boundaries should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period (2019 NPPF136). Responding to the objectives of national Green Belt policy is central to our proposals, as explained in the following sections.

WHBC’s new Local Plan 2016-2036

In May 2017 WHBC submitted the new Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan (WHLP) for examination. A central part of the WHLP is to ensure that the FOAHN can be met, with the draft plan currently seeking to deliver 16,000 homes, at 800 dwellings per annum (dpa), 2016-2036¹. The examination has highlighted the need for additional sites, including the exceptional circumstances for additional Green Belt land release.

With a view to introducing the Site to the examination process as a potential Green Belt allocation to help meet the Borough’s housing needs, WHBC has therefore asked HCC to submit its proposals for Enfield Chase for further consideration by officers and Members. This report represents HCC’s submission.



Previous treatment of the Site as part of the WHLP process

To date the Site has not been included as part of the WHLP or put before the examination because it was rejected as part of the 2019 HELAA, principally for the following reasons.

“at this plan making stage it is considered that insufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that a suitable vehicular access to the site, meeting the requirements of the highway can be achieved or that the impact of development on the Chequers Mead House Meadows and Pond Local Wildlife Site can be avoided or appropriately mitigated.”

The 2019 HELAA pre-dated the detailed analysis and proposals set out in this report. This report provides further evidence in support of an overarching access strategy for the Site and how the impact of development on Chequers Mead House Meadows and Pond Wood Local Wildlife Site (LWS) can be mitigated to support WHBC’s further consideration of the Site for inclusion as a potential allocation.

Neither vehicular access nor the presence of the respective LWSs constitute insurmountable constraints to development as explained in the following sections.

¹The FOAHN is currently under review, with latest examination submissions suggesting a range of 715-800dpa up to 2032, with 715dpa 2032-2036 (EX203A and EX204).

3. Opportunities and constraints

Introduction

This section provides an overview of the Site's key opportunities and constraints, with respect to the following topics.

- Sustainability and accessibility
- Ecology
- Topography
- Landscape and visual
- Green Belt
- Other environmental and technical considerations

The opportunities and constraints have informed an appraisal of development options and are summarised on a plan at the end of this section.

Sustainability and accessibility

Overview

Potters Bar is a sustainable location for new homes, being a key centre for retail and employment, benefiting from frequent and direct rail services into London Kings Cross, Moorgate and Welwyn Garden City. By enhancing connectivity between the Site and Potters Bar there are significant opportunities to deliver a sustainable urban extension to the town that encourages walking and cycling and is served by public transport.

Maximising pedestrian and cycle connectivity to Potters Bar, public transport (bus & rail) and key services and facilities

The Site is well-located given its proximity to the existing urban area, in particular Oakmere Primary School and frequent bus services - notably service PB1 (on Chace Avenue) - which serves the High Street and Potters Bar train station which provides direct access into London. Potters Bar train station is just a 10-15 minute cycle ride or bus journey via service PB1 from Chace Avenue.

Figure 3.1 provides an overview of services and facilities in Potters Bar, with **Figure 3.2** showing 400m isochrones to the nearest bus stops.

To fully realise the benefits of the Site's location our assessment has identified the need to provide a strong and well-designed pedestrian/cycle connection on its western boundary, to not only access Oakmere Primary School and bus services on Chace Avenue, but also to provide a more direct pedestrian/cycle route to Potters Bar High Street. This would complement existing pedestrian/cycle routes via Coopers Lane Road and The Causeway, and the informal recreational route to the south connecting the Site with Park Avenue.

Figure 3.3 identifies existing pedestrian/cycle connectivity between the Site and Potters Bar and the extent of the opportunity to create an additional connection, utilising land within the ownership of HCC associated with Oakmere Primary School and the existing Youth and Community Centre. This would be the key sustainability link / corridor between the Site and the town and could be further enhanced as part of a phased redevelopment of Oakmere Primary School and Youth and Community Centre (providing a dual use new and enhanced facility).

The School currently has capacity to accommodate the pupil place demand arising from a development of circa. 700 homes but the buildings are dated, their construction is flat roofed with a limited economic life remaining. Furthermore, the school is split in to two main buildings which is considered an inefficient arrangement for daily management and running of school activities. The adjacent Oakmere Youth and Community Centre is a flat roofed construction and of a similar condition to the school.

Preliminary discussions have already taken place with the Local Education Authority (LEA) regarding how the adjacent residential scheme could act as the catalyst for redevelopment of the existing school to create a new school that is fit for purpose. These discussions have involved preliminary consideration of redevelopment options involving a potential land swap whereby land for a new dual-use school and community centre is included as part of the residential scheme and the existing school/community centre site is part redeveloped for homes alongside secure sustainable connections with Chase Avenue and Potters Bar. Overall, these proposals could act as a catalyst for wider regeneration in this part of the town.

Discussions have also taken place and are ongoing with HCC's Passenger Transport Team on the opportunity to provide enhanced bus services to the Site in order to extend the ability for all residents, particularly those on the easternmost part of the Site to be within 400m of a bus route. Opportunities currently being explored include the following.

- Diversion of the PB1 service - which currently routes along Chace Avenue, west of Oakmere Primary School - into the Site.
- Provision of a new service which could enter the Site via Coopers Lane Road.
- Taking the scheme forward as part of pilot project for Demand Responsive Transit (DRT).

Any bus service could enter the Site via Coopers Lane Road and leave via the same route with an internal loop provided as part of the masterplan, or it could connect through to Chace Avenue via a new link between HCC-owned land at Oakmere Primary School and the Youth and Community Centre.

All options would involve a level of subsidy to help sustain the service in the early years of the development scheme.



Coopers Lane Road - looking west to edge of Potters Bar



Coopers Lane Road - looking east towards access to Chequers Mead

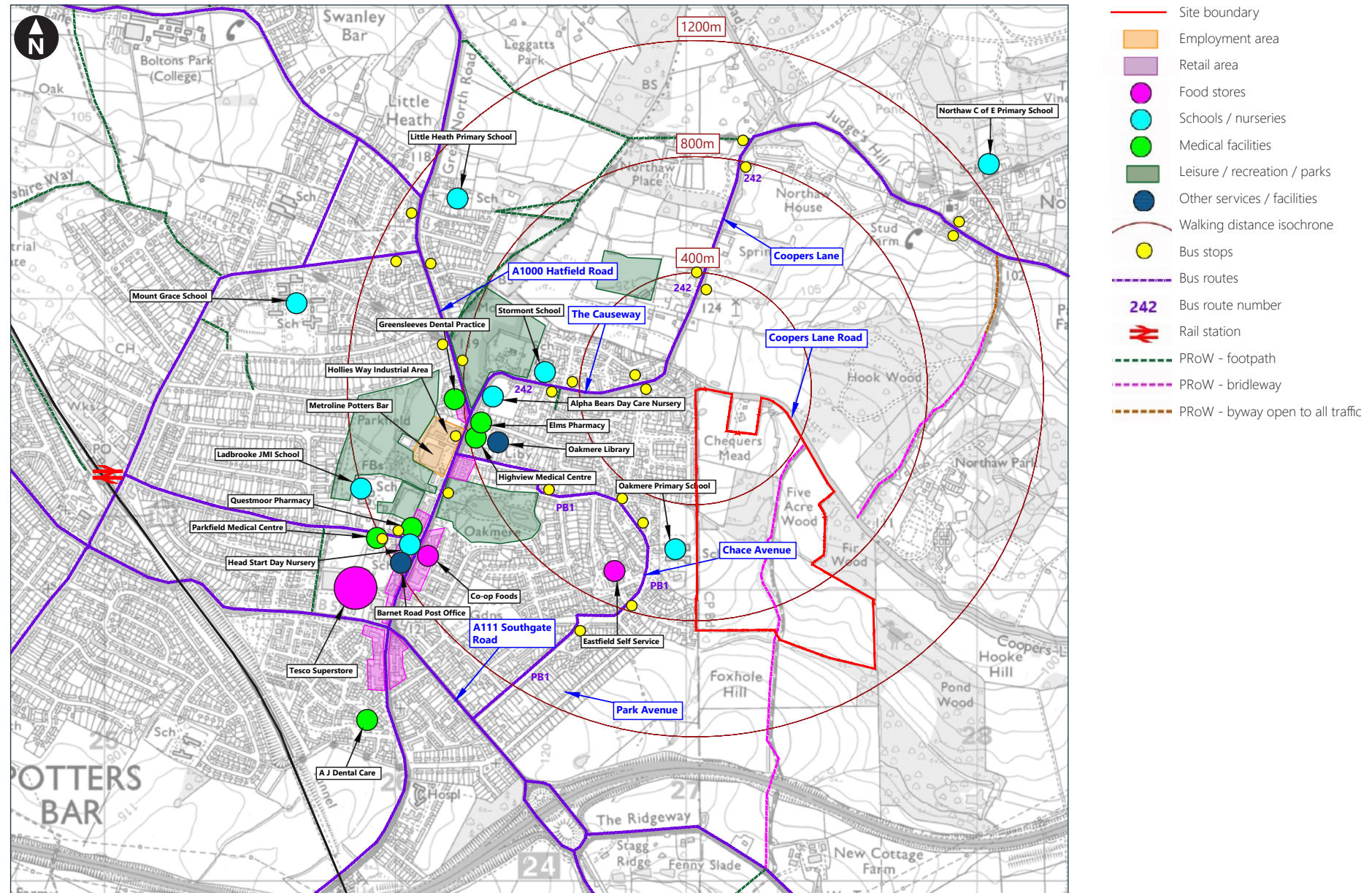


Public transport in Potters Bar



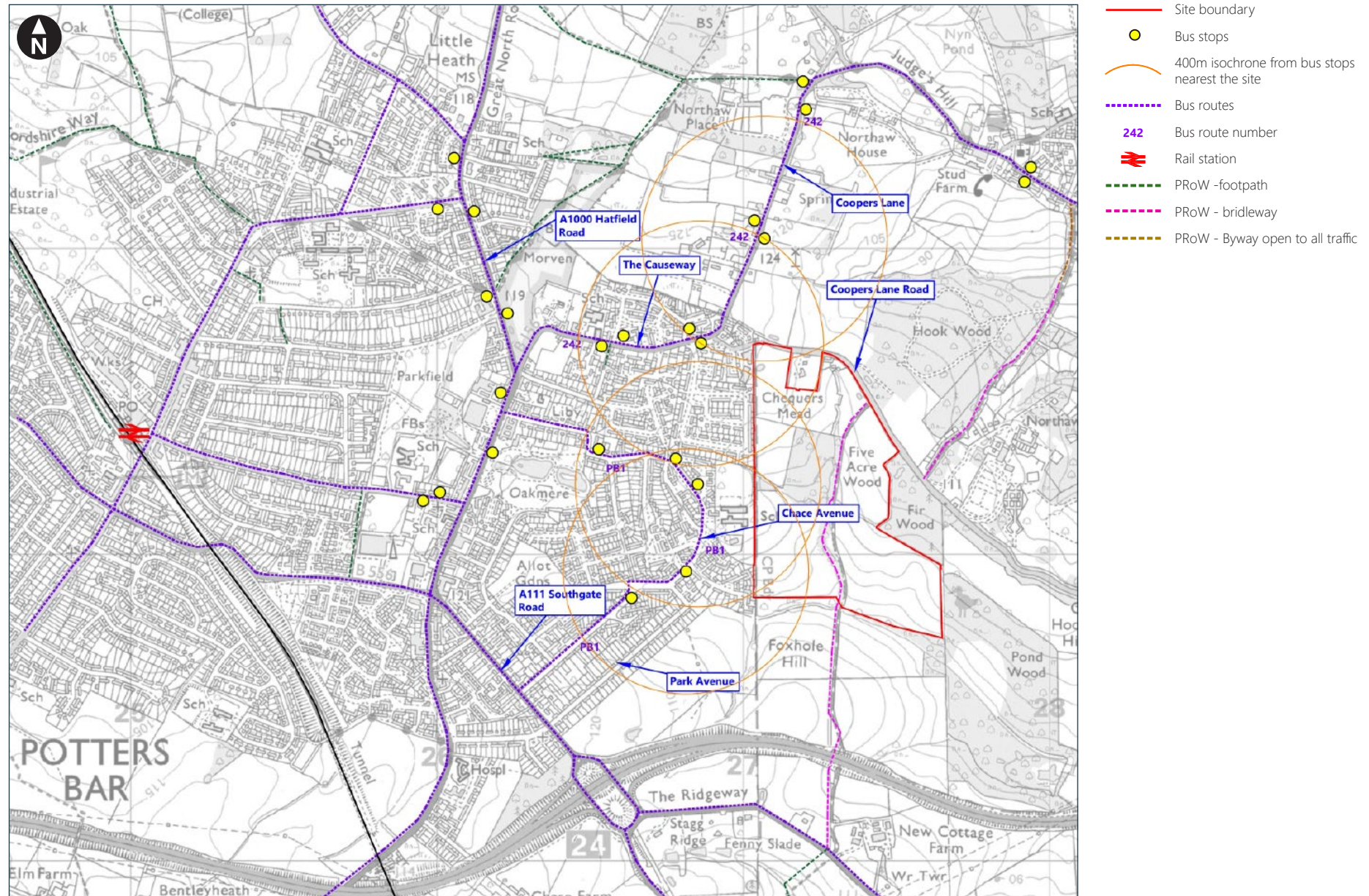
Bus stop on Chace Avenue - service PB1

Figure 3.1 Location of services and facilities in Potters Bar



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Figure 3.2 Nearest bus stops to the Site (400m isochrones)



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Recreational routes, rights of way and access to the countryside

Bridleway 14 routes through the south on a north-south alignment, providing wider access to the countryside to the east via Bridleway 17. Bridleway 14 can be accessed via Coopers Lane Road to the north, via a permissive route into Potters Bar, linking with Park Avenue to the west of the Site, or via The Ridgeway A1005, south of the M25. There is a clear opportunity to further improve accessibility between Potters Bar and the wider countryside as part of any development proposals for the Site, linked to the provision of the west-east connection associated with Oakmere Primary School. Furthermore, safer access can be provided to the northern entrance to Bridleway 14, avoiding the need for pedestrians to walk on carriageway. Where the existing footway ends on the southern side of Coopers Lane Road, walkers and cyclists can be diverted into the Site to connect into this bridleway and wider network of recreational routes.

Securing deliverable points of access

Various vehicular access options have been considered to serve the Site, with a principle point of access identified via Coopers Lane Road (Figure 3.3 and 3.4). This access can be delivered on land within the control of HCC, including the adopted highway, with 70m visibility splays, consistent with a 30mph restricted road. Provision of this point of access would complement a wider opportunity to reduce traffic speeds on Coopers Lane Road (to 30mph) via the introduction of additional street lighting, frontage development, traffic calming, new signage and gateway features signalling arrival into Potters Bar.

For development above 300 dwellings HCC has identified the need to provide an additional access for pedestrians, cyclists and emergency vehicles. There is a clear opportunity for the pedestrian/cycle link between the Site and Chace Avenue via Oakmere Primary School and the Youth and Community Centre to also function as an emergency access. Alternatively, a further access on to Coopers Lane Road, could function as an emergency access as well as a secondary vehicle access if required, subject to an extension of the 30mph speed limit, traffic calming and other design measures to create a new gateway into Potters Bar.

Figure 3.3 Overview of access opportunities

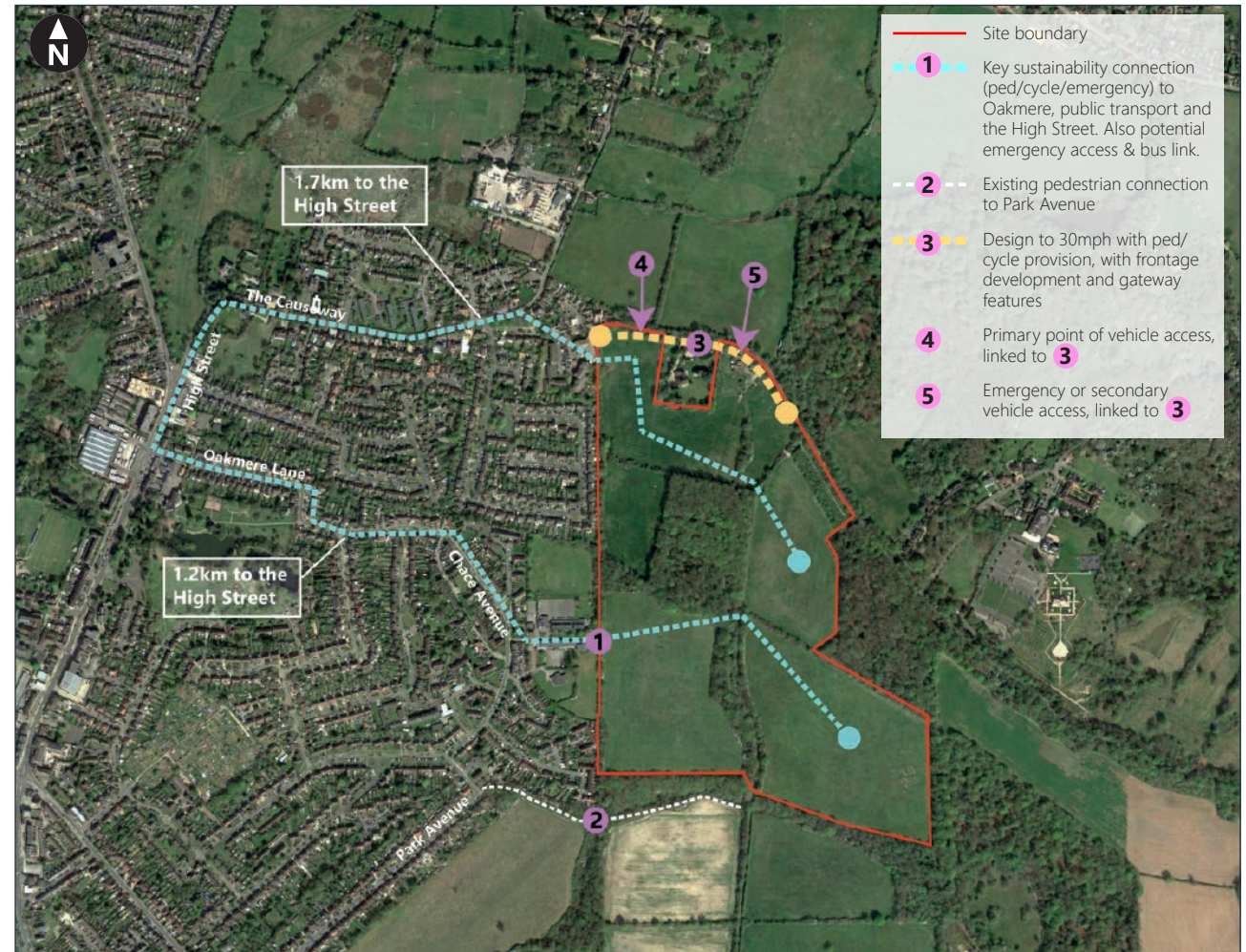
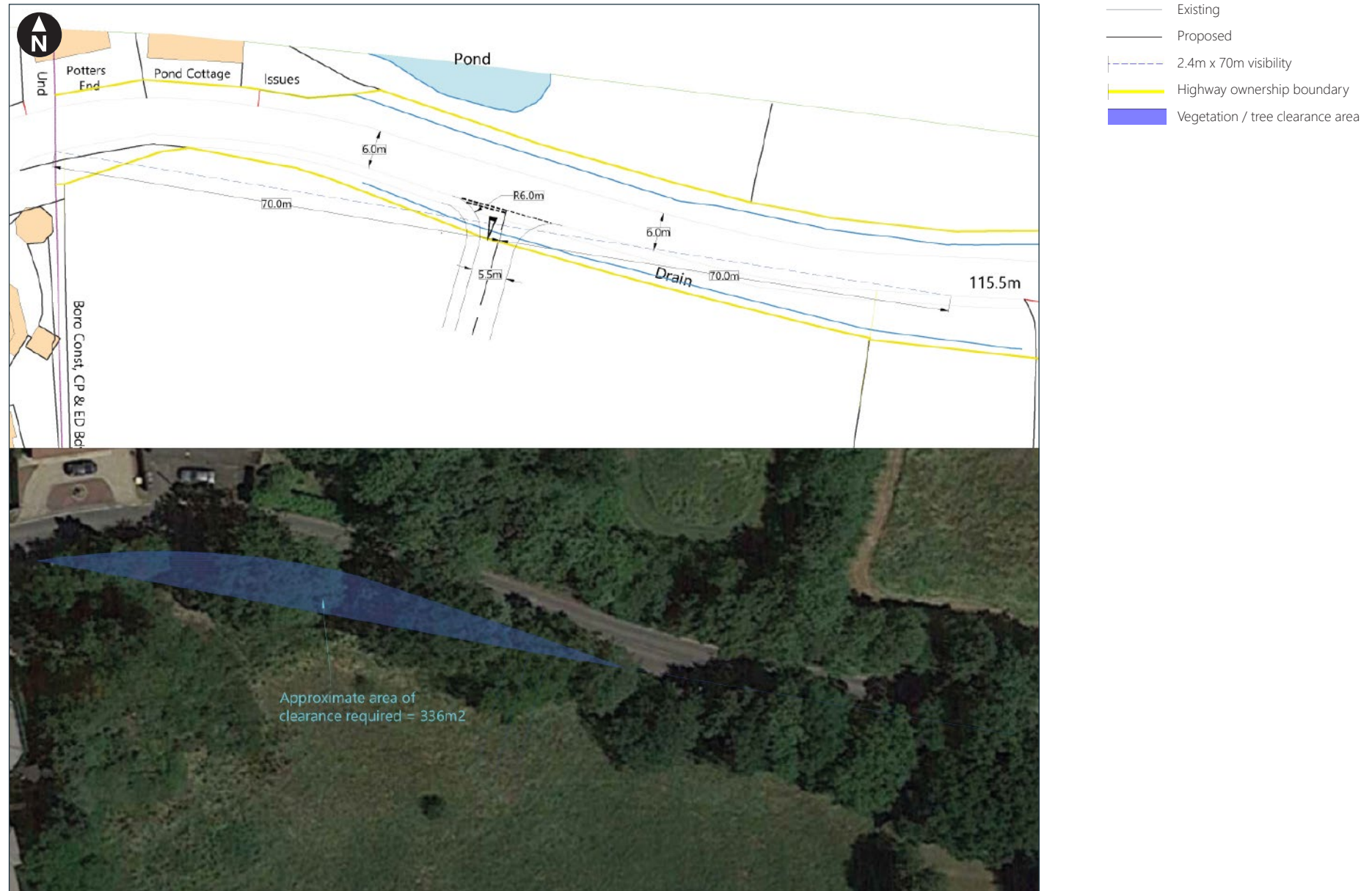
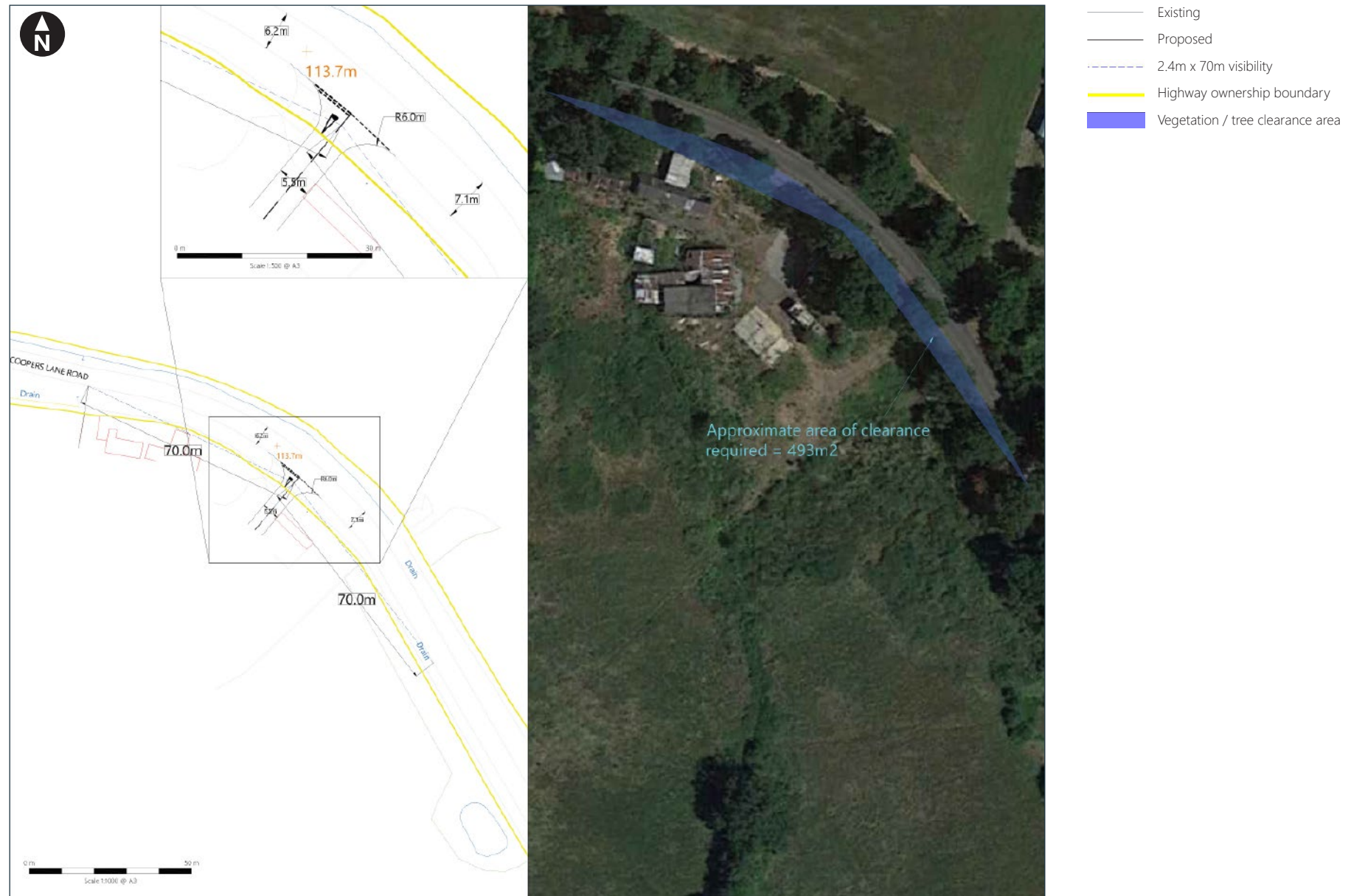


Figure 3.4 Preliminary design for principal vehicular access off Coopers Lane Road



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Figure 3.5 Preliminary design for emergency vehicular/secondary access design off Coopers Lane



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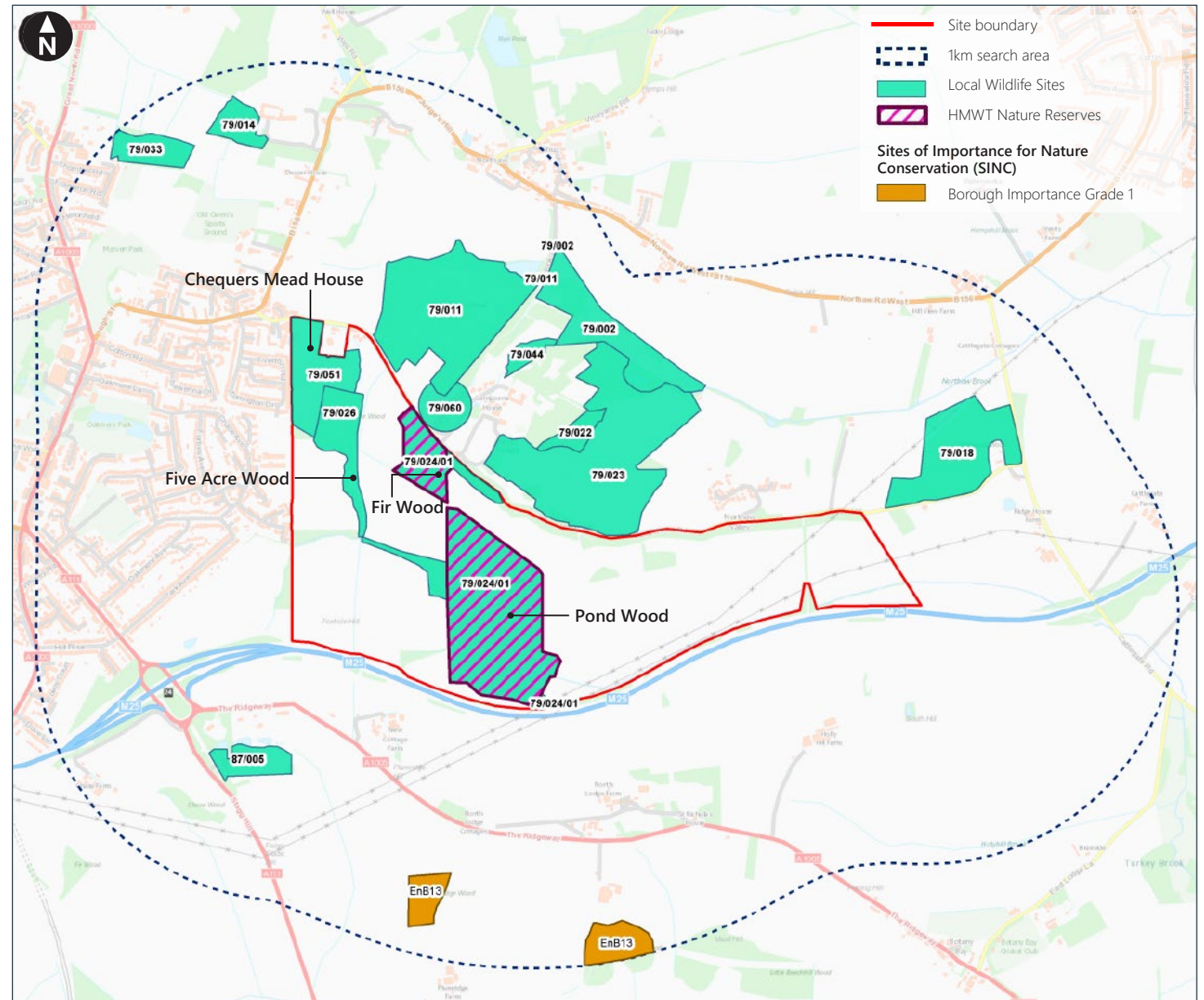
Ecology

Statutory & non-statutory ecological designations

The Site contains no statutory designated ecological sites.

The northern part of the Site contains two non-statutory Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) – Chequers Mead House LWS and Five Acre Wood LWS, as shown on Figure 3.6. Two further LWSs lie outside of the Site boundary to the east: Fir Wood and Pond Wood. Both Pond Wood and Fir Wood are nature reserves, with Pond Wood also designated as Ancient Woodland.

Figure 3.6 Local Wildlife Sites and other non-statutory ecological sites



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Protected species and priority habitats

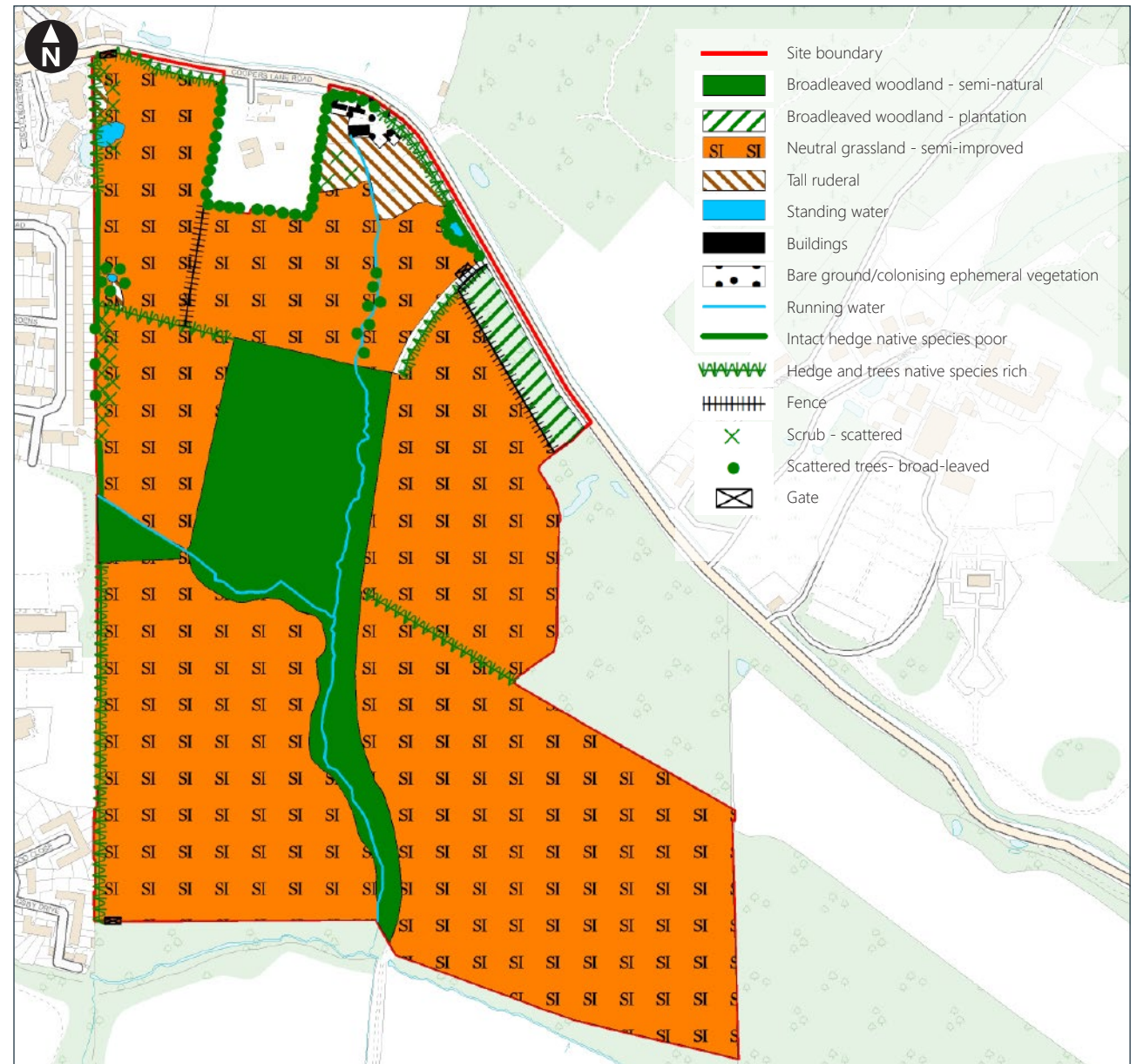
A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has been undertaken for the site by a Wood ecologist, informed by a desk study and phase 1 habitat survey on the site on 5th June 2020. This has identified the potential presence of protected species including bats, badgers, reptiles, invertebrates and great crested newts.

On-site habitats comprise semi-improved neutral grassland, broad-leaved woodland and plantation, hedgerows, scrub, water courses and ponds, mature trees and dilapidated buildings. These habitats are identified on **Figure 3.7** and are considered of high nature conservation value.

The areas of woodland and the hedgerows are priority habitats and should be retained and protected wherever possible. A detailed tree survey has not yet been carried out, albeit there are veteran trees on-site, both within the woodland and within the hedgerows.

Although the semi-improved neutral grassland is not classified as a priority habitat, it supports a variety of grasses and flowering plants, such that it is also considered to be of high intrinsic nature conservation value, both in itself and particularly as a result of the abundance of invertebrate species that it supports.

Figure 3.7 Habitats



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Implications & opportunities

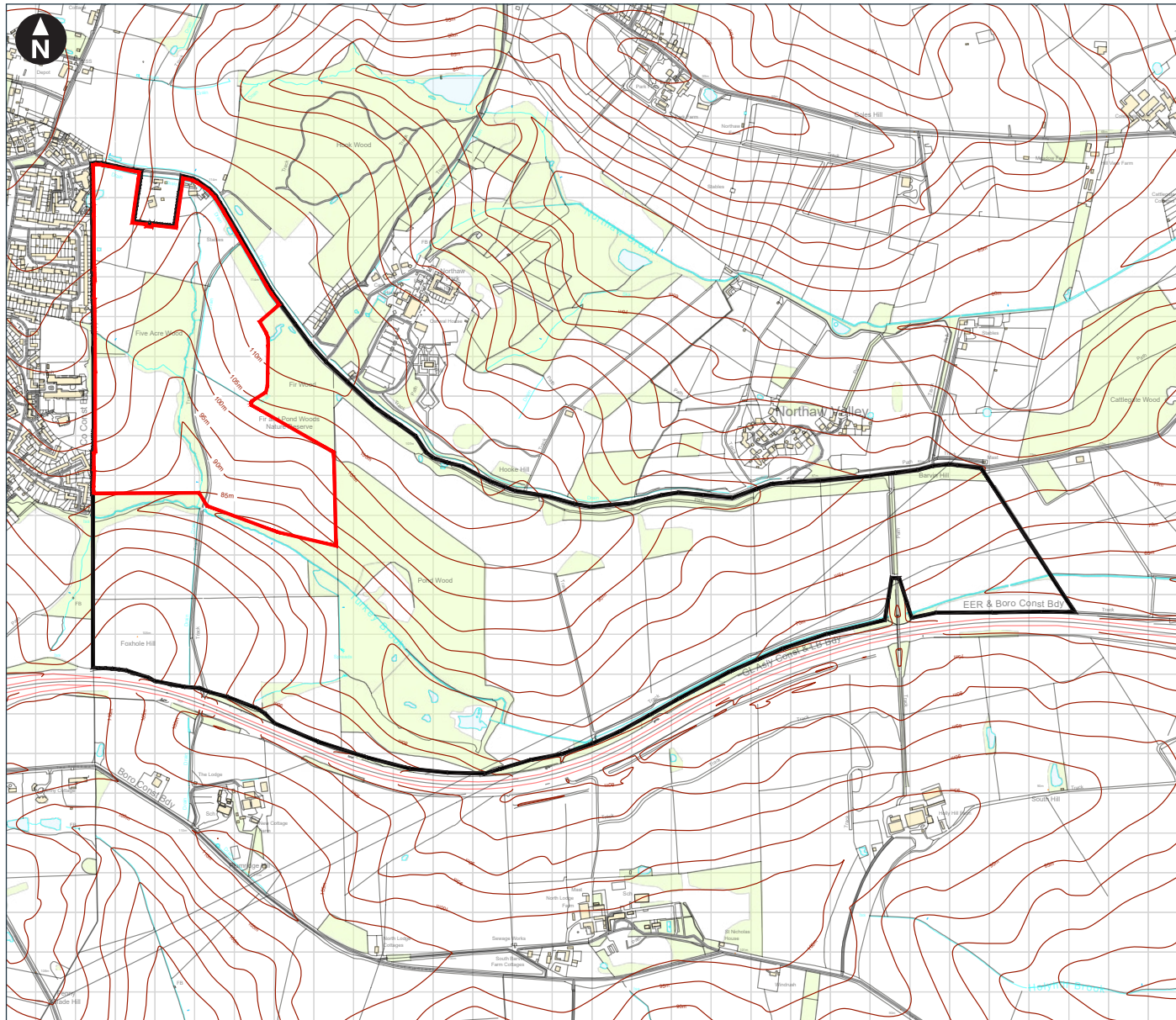
The Site contains no statutory designations, with the two on-site LWSs at the lowest end of the NPPF hierarchy in terms of protected sites. Chequers Mead House LWS would need to be lost to accommodate development but there is a clear opportunity to retain Five Acre Wood and provide an appropriate stand-off to this existing woodland (15m buffer is Natural England's standing guidance). The nature reserves of Fir Wood and Pond Wood adjoining the Site's eastern boundary would also be retained and will be further enhanced as part of HCC's carbon offset planting planned to commence in 2020.

Whilst there are no statutory designations on the Site, it has clear ecological value with respect to both habitats and protected species, habitats which would be lost as a result of developing the Site. As well as direct impacts associated with the introduction of development, the introduction of new residents could also lead to recreational pressure on retained habitats within the Site (Five Acre Wood) and Fir Wood and Pond Wood which lie beyond the Site boundary. As a consequence the following will need to be addressed should the Site be allocated for development.

- Delivering biodiversity offsetting to secure a 10% net-gain on HCC's wider 129ha landholding. The extent of HCC's wider landholding adjacent to the development is highly beneficial in terms of the County's ability to deliver an offsetting scheme on land within its control and in close proximity to habitat that will be lost. Offsetting is therefore a deliverable and realistic prospect.

- Undertaking a full suite of ecological surveys to inform further masterplanning, alongside engagement with the county ecologist and the local wildlife trust, to inform the detail of the offsetting scheme ultimately provided and content of the ecological management plan.
- A woodland management plan that would provide an appropriate and proportionate management regime to include woodland restoration, enhancement and subsequent management necessary to ensure that the woodland is safeguarded for future generations as a valued natural capital asset in the local community.
- A recreation management plan that supplements aspects of the woodland management plan to ensure that recreational opportunities in the area are improved, included improved public access to the countryside, while protecting sensitive new and established local ecological habitats.

Figure 3.8 Topography



Topography

The Site sits at 115-120m AOD to the north, adjoining Coopers Lane Road, dropping to 100-10m at Five Acre Wood, and then down to 85m AOD at Turkey Brook (**Figure 3.8**).

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Landscape and visual

Visual context

The Site is visually well contained given robust and established field boundaries, comprising hedgerows and mature trees, to the north, south, east and west. Views from Potters Bar, which adjoins the western boundary of the Site are limited to residential properties (two and three-storey development) which back on to the Site (residents of Coningsby Drive, Honeywood Close, Featherstone Close, Chace Avenue, Stamford Close, Park Avenue) and staff, students and members of the public using Oakmere Primary School and adjacent Youth and Community Centre. The presence of extensive hedgerow and tree planting along the Site's western boundary limits views into the Site from these areas at ground level. From the north, there are views of the Site from motorists and other users of Coopers Lane Road.

Other known visual receptors include users of the existing rights of way, particularly Bridleways 14 and 17, and the passive link through to Park Avenue to the west, alongside users of the existing woodland (Five Acre Wood, Fir Wood and Pond Wood). East of Fir Wood and Pond Wood views of the Site from the wider route of Bridleway 17 and PRoW13 are limited.

Appendix A provides an overview of views across the full extent of HCC's landholding in this location.

Landscape features & context

The Site contains semi-improved natural grassland (former farmland), existing trees and woodland (refer Figure 3.10). Additional woodland planting is scheduled to take place immediately adjacent to the Site from 2020, comprising approximately 38,000 trees, to be delivered in partnership with the Forestry Commission associated with HCC's carbon offset scheme.

The landscape to the west of the Site is dominated by the built form of Potters Bar. The eastern edge of Potters Bar forms the western edge of the Site and includes a combination of suburban style properties along various cul-de-sacs and side roads, many of which have their backs facing the Site, meaning that the boundary is marked by fence lines and boundary vegetation. A belt of mature trees forms the boundary between Oakmere Primary School and adjoining Youth and Community Centre and the Site.

To the north the landscape is similarly to the Site, a combination of woodland and agricultural fields, although in this area the woodland is characteristically part of parkland landscape of former estates e.g. Northaw Park and Nye Park. The village of Northaw is located approximately 1km to the north of the Site, although the intervening topography and woodland cover means that no visual relationship between the two was identified on Site.

Coopers Lane Road is a rural road that marks the northern boundary. The road is bound by woodland belts and blocks to both the north and south and has a markedly woodland character. Although the woodland belts along the road are typically wide, with mature planting, restricting views southwards, at the far north western extent of the road, to the west of Bridleway 14, the woodland belt is not as wide, and becomes a tall hedgerow with occasional hedgerow trees. The hedgerow is punctured in a couple of location e.g. by the access to the now abandoned stables, by the entrance to a care home (Scimitar Care Hotel) and a field gate north of the Scimitar Care Hotel. A combination of the narrower belt of vegetation, and the occasional access points, create a slightly less 'wooded' character to the road at its north western extent.

To the west of Bridleway 14, the woodland belt along Coopers Lane Road is wider with fewer breaks and interruptions, particularly along the southern boundary with the Site. Along the northern side of the road, there are two access points which create a break in the woodland cover, one to Northaw Park (now the Oshwal UK HQ) and one to a private housing estate,

Designations

The Site does not sit within any national landscape designations.

Beyond landscape designations, part of Pond Wood – to the east - is designated as 'Ancient Woodland'. Woodland in other parts of the Site is not covered by the Ancient Woodland designation but would appear to be of a similar age and quality. Ancient Woodland is afforded protection under 2019 NPPF175(c). WHBC records do not indicate any presence of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). A tree survey will need to be undertaken to inform detailed masterplan proposals for the Site.

Details of the two LWS designations are set out in the **Ecology** section.

Landscape character and sensitivity

WHBC undertook a Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) in 2005. This covered the entire District. The Site and its surroundings were identified as falling within LCA 53 '*Northaw Common Parkland*.' LCA 53 is described as being a landscape where '*a strong historical and cultural pattern is evident*' and where '*large blocks of woodland and high hedgerow create a strong sense of enclosure*.' This aligns with the general characteristics of the Site and HCC's wider landholding (refer to **Figure 3.9**).

The LCA notes that accessibility within the LCA is poor with informal recreation being limited and some public footpaths being inaccessible. However, the opportunity to provide enhanced accessibility for informal recreation is a clear opportunity that can be realised here, as set out in the **Sustainability and accessibility** section.

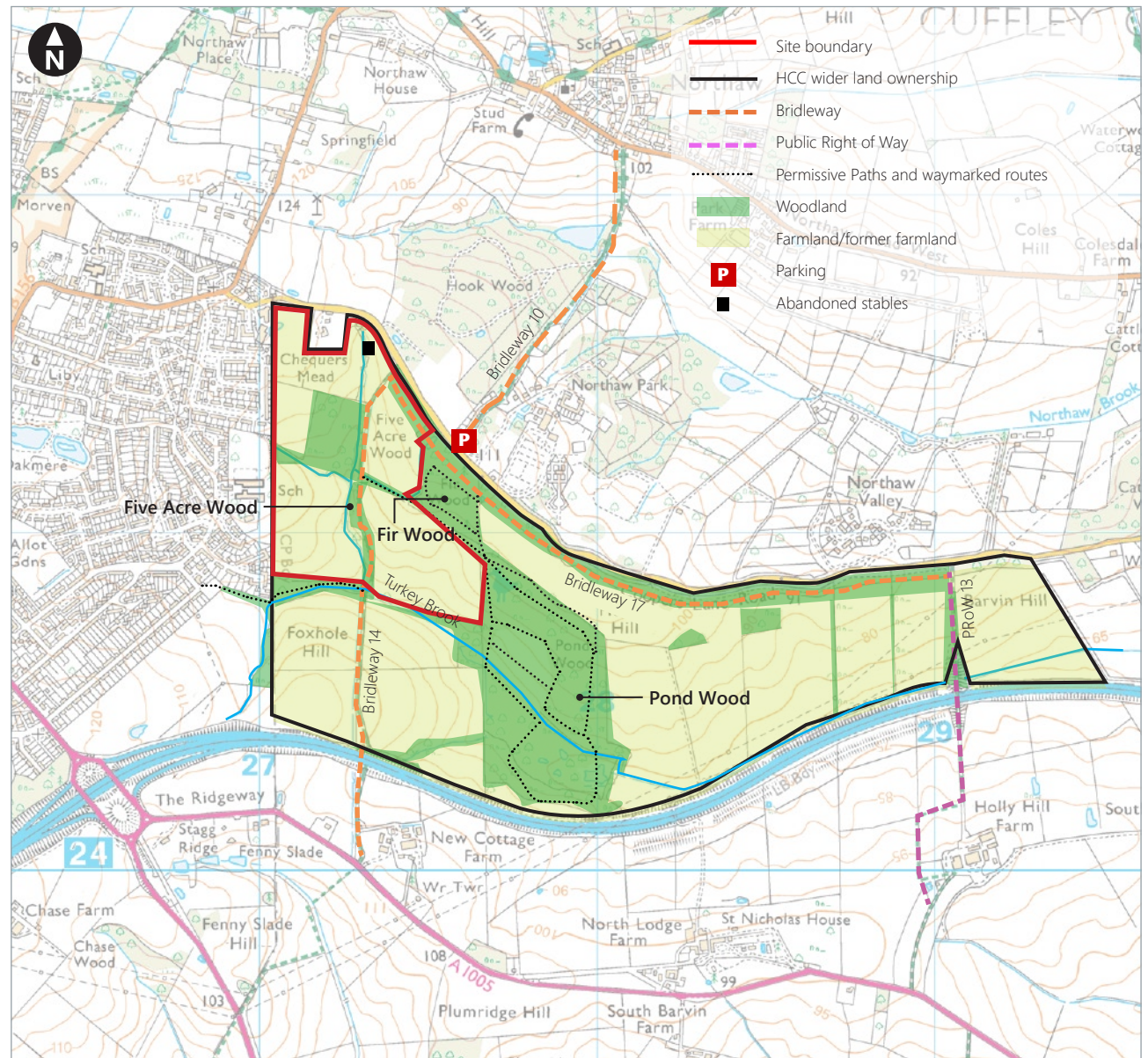
WHBC's 2019 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment identifies the Site as lying within an area with 'medium-high' sensitivity and sets out a range of mitigation measures to help minimise the impact of built form on the landscape, from preserving the existing landform pattern of slopes and dips, maintaining the organic and irregular field pattern and frequent blocks of deciduous woodland and hedgerows along field boundaries and lanes to minimising the impact on PRoWS. There are clear opportunities to reflect these mitigation measures as part of any scheme.

Summary & implications

The Site does not sit within a nationally designated landscape and is visually well-contained, with receptors limited to the immediate Site boundaries and users of the recreational routes within the Site itself. The combination of recreational routes, LWS and woodland (including Ancient Woodland to the east) do however constitute sensitive landscape receptors. Views from these receptors and other identified receptors in this section will all need to be considered as part of a comprehensive Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) in support of a future planning application should the Site be allocated for development.

Any masterplan will need to be landscape-led, retaining and incorporating existing landscape features (field boundaries, mature woodland blocks and recreational routes) as far as possible into a Green Infrastructure framework that links into the wider landscape. This proposed GI framework can also connect with and be complemented by the County Council's carbon offset tree planting already planned, which will all provide a strong landscape and visual setting to the development and an important ecological and recreational resource.

Figure 3.9 Landscape features



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Green Belt

As set out in the **Section 2 (planning policy context)**, Green Belt is afforded significant protections under national planning policy, albeit boundaries can be reviewed where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified. WHBC is seeking to demonstrate such exceptional circumstances as part of its local plan review and ongoing examination, principally to meet its FOAHN. This report is in direct response to a request for details on the Site's development potential by WHBC.

Fundamentally, a review of the boundary in this location would not compromise the five purposes of the Green Belt (2019 NPPF134 – (a) to (e)), particularly given the strong and defensible existing boundaries - Fir Wood and Pond Wood to the east and M25 to the south. The environmental considerations outlined in the previous sections already lead to the conclusion that development should be contained close to Potters Bar and certainly extend no further than Fir Wood and Pond Wood, which constitute a strong and defensible eastern boundary to Potters Bar, a boundary that is to be further strengthened following the introduction of extensive new woodland already planned as part of HCC's carbon offset scheme. This would constitute a clear and defensible boundary which is capable of enduring beyond the plan period as the NPPF requires (2019 NPPF136).

With respect to the five purposes in 2019 NPPF134, a Green Belt review would not lead to the unrestricted sprawl of a large built-up area (purpose (a)), nor would it risk the merging of towns (purpose (b)). Encroachment into the wider countryside would clearly be limited through the establishment of a longer-term defensible boundary which the existing landscape provides (purpose (c)). Its release from the Green Belt would not impact on a historic town (purpose (d)). With respect to purpose (e) it could support urban regeneration objectives through helping to facilitate the redevelopment of Oakmere Primary School and adjoining area.

Furthermore, given the Site's proximity to services and facilities, public transport and, in particular, frequent rail services into London, future development in this location presents a clear opportunity to promote sustainable patterns of development in line with NPPF Green Belt objectives (2019 NPPF138).

One of the biggest opportunities is then to enhance accessibility to the countryside and improve the wider quality of Green Belt land in support of 2019 NPPF141. By bringing forward the Site and also utilising HCC's wider landholding there are opportunities to:

- Improve access to the countryside for Potters Bar residents via new and enhanced connectivity to Bridleway 14 and wider network of recreational routes, as set out in the **Ecology section**.
- Provide additional habitat creation and enhancement linked to an extensive biodiversity offsetting package, as outlined in the **Sustainability and accessibility** section, which is likely to comprise new tree and woodland planting.
- The above would complement the ~38,000 trees already proposed by HCC as part of its carbon offset scheme.



Other environmental and technical considerations

Other environmental and technical considerations to consider as part of proposals for the Site include the following.

- **High pressure gas main:** the alignment of this pipeline broadly follows the route of Bridleway 14 and comprises 'inner' and 'outer' zones (Figure 3.10) which will be subject to HSE consultation with reference to their Land Use Planning Methodology. The pipeline operator, Cadent, will also need to be consulted to incorporate the appropriate easements, typically 6 metres, which should be straightforward given the pipeline's alignment along the bridleway – a route which is to be retained and kept free of development.

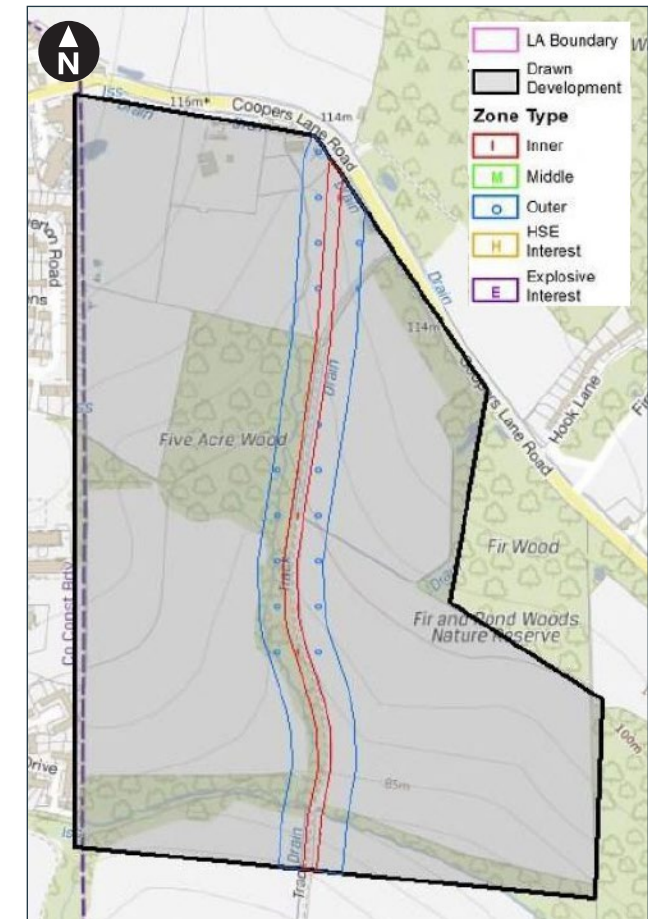
Under the HSE methodology, residential development, estate roads and access roads would attract a 'Do Not Advise Against', except for residential development in the 'inner zone', although there are straddling rules in cases where such development would impact on less than 10% of a development scheme, as is likely to be the case here.

- **Drainage:** the site slopes south towards Turkey Brook therefore naturally lends itself to the incorporation of sustainable drainage features on the southern edge of the Site, incorporated within the wider green space network and provision of ecological habitats.
- **Noise:** noise from the M25 will need to be assessed and surveyed at application stage, however given distance to the Site - 400m from the Site's southern boundary to the M2 - and intervening topography, existing and new landscaping (including HCC's carbon offset scheme), this is not expected to be a significant constraint.
- **Air quality:** the Site is not in immediate proximity to an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), however air quality assessments will need to be undertaken at application stage should the Site be allocated for development, addressing the Site's relationship with Hertsmere AQMA 6 on Potters Bar High Street.

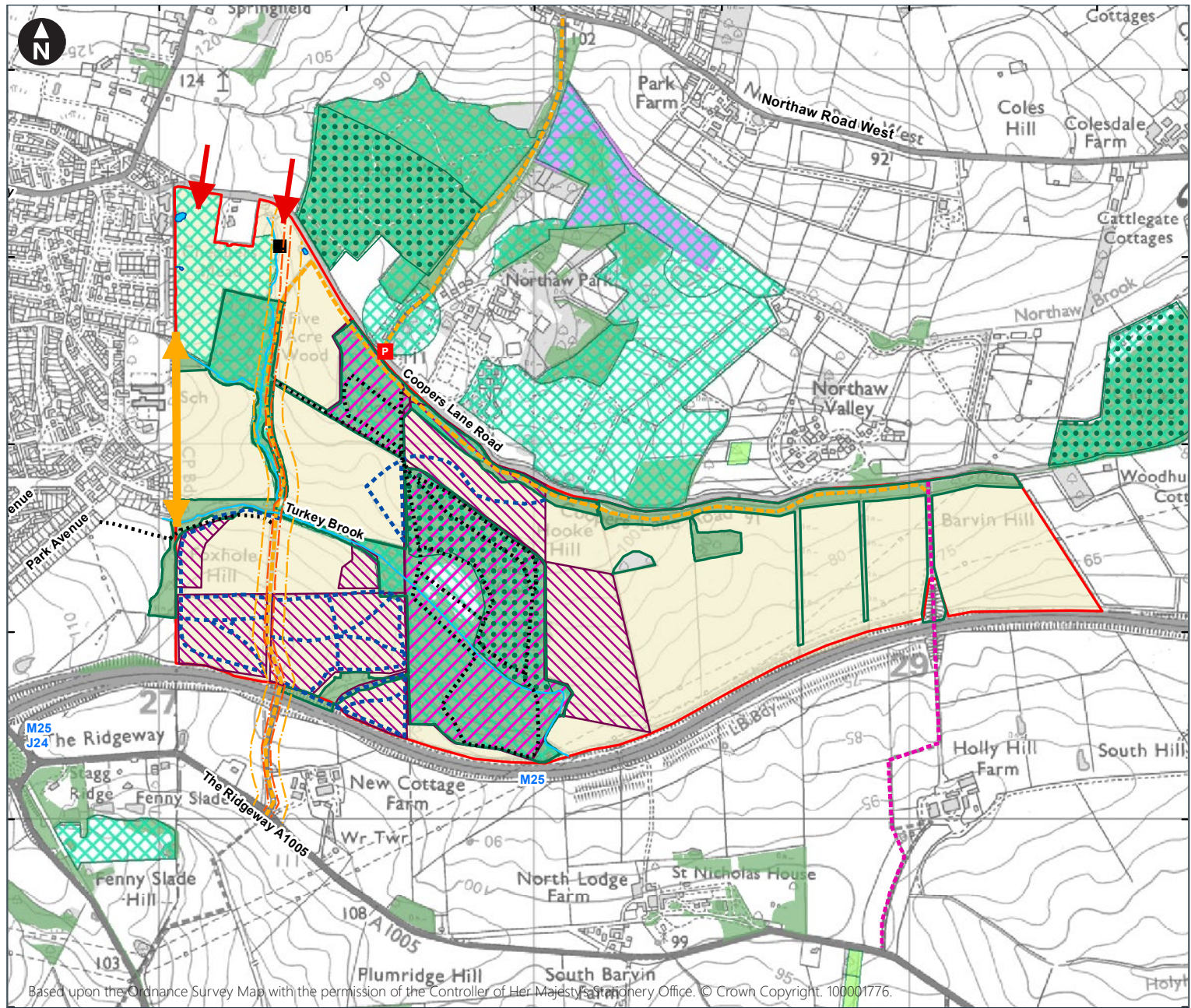
Summary

Wood has undertaken an extensive review of the site's key opportunities and constraints, which are summarised on Figure 3.11. Should the site be proposed for allocation and release from the Green Belt there are no insurmountable environmental or technical constraints to development.

Figure 3.10 Inner and outer gas consultation zones



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- Site boundary
 - HMWT Nature Reserves
 - Local Wildlife Sites
 - HCC proposed woodland paths
 - PRoW 13
 - Permissive paths and waymarked routes
 - Bridleway
 - Farmland / former farmland
 - HCC proposed woodland planting
 - Woodland
 - Running water
 - Standing water
 - P Parking
 - Abandoned stables
- High pressure gas main**
- Inner zone consultation area
 - Outer zone consultation area
- Priority Habitats**
- Deciduous woodland
 - Good quality semi-improved grassland
 - Traditional orchard
 - Ancient semi-natural woodland
- ← Main access options via Coopers Lane Road
 - ↔ Ability to provide ped/cycle link to Potters Bar and Oakmere Primary School

Figure 3.11
Summary opportunities and constraints plan

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4. Masterplan framework

Overview

This section provides an overview of the masterplan framework which has been developed for the Site in response to the opportunities and constraints identified in **section 3**.


Summary and benefits

The masterplan presented in **Figure 4.1** encompasses the following features and benefits.

- 600-700 homes, with 30% affordable homes, plus the ability to meet specific local needs as part of the housing mix, for example extra care accommodation for elderly residents of Welwyn Hatfield Borough or Hertsmere District
- A positive and well design pedestrian and cycle connection through to Chace Avenue, utilising adjoining HCC-owned land associated with Oakmere Primary School and the Youth and Community Centre. This link could be further enhanced as part of the phased redevelopment of Oakmere Primary School and Youth and Community Centre to provide more modern accommodation which is fit-for-purpose. A new and enhanced dual-use facility could be provided for education and youth/community services as a focal point for the new neighbourhood, which also acts as a catalyst for wider regeneration in this part of Potters Bar. Figure 4.2 presents an indicative concept as to how this opportunity could be realised as part of a wider land-swap.
- A robust and defensible Green Belt boundary to the east of the town – centred on Fir Wood and Pond Wood - that is readily recognisable and likely to be permanent, plus also offers the opportunity for safeguarded land to be identified in the Local Plan to help ensure that new Green Belt boundaries endure beyond the plan period, enabling longer term housing needs to be met and providing WHBC with flexibility. This safeguarded land could include land to the south of the Site, beyond Turkey Brook.
- Biodiversity offsetting to deliver a 'net-gain' on HCC's wider landholding. HCC owns a further 129ha of land with potential to incorporate new habitats, complementing the woodland planting (circa, 38,000 trees) already proposed as part of HCC's carbon offset scheme. This would also align with NPPF objectives to enhance the value of the Green Belt's ecological, landscape and recreational value.
- An extensive green space network within the scheme (one third of the scheme being set aside for green uses), supporting improved accessibility to the countryside for new and existing residents in the Potters Bar area, particularly between the eastern edge of the town and Bridleway 14, and connectivity to wider recreational routes. This would support healthy lifestyles and the address the objectives of 2019 NPPF138 and 141 (to enhance the beneficial use of and accessibility to the Green Belt).
- Incorporating of sustainable drainage features to the south of the Site, adjoining Turkey Brook, as part of the wider green space network and linked to new on-site habitat provision.

Figure 4.1 Masterplan framework



- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
|  Site Boundary |  Water Courses |  HCC Proposed Path |  HCC Proposed Woodland (Carbon Offset Scheme) |
|  Bridleway |  Suds |  Existing Path |  Development-Related Green Infrastructure |
|  Proposed Path |  Existing Trees |  Roads |  Wider HCC Land Ownership (To Support Biodiversity Offsetting) |
| | |  Residential | |

Masterplan detail (supporting Figure 4.1)



- 1 New community facility / replacement accommodation for Oakmere Primary School
- 2 Ped/cycle connection through to Chace Avenue
- 3 15m stand-off to existing woodland
- 4 Natural green space, habitats and drainage adjoining Turkey Brook
- 5 Main vehicular access
- 6 Emergency access/secondary vehicle access
- 7 Frontage on to Coopers Lane Road
- 8 Recreational routes and connectivity to existing bridleway
- 9 Public open space / amenity green space

Land use budget

Table 4.1 Land use budget

Land use	Amount (ha)
Residential (gross) / (net)	26.2 gross / 18.3 net
Community use, including new accommodation for Oakmere Primary School/community facility	1.1
Green infrastructure	10.7
Total site area	38
Wider HCC land ownership (to support biodiversity offsetting)	129

Figure 4.2 Indicative concept for redevelopment of Oakmere Primary School and Community Centre site



- 1 New dual-use primary school & community hub
- 2 Playing fields & play area
- 3 Ped/cycle link, emergency access and potential bus route
- 4 New residential development
- 5 Parking

Figure 4.3 Overview of access strategy



400m isochrone to new/diverted bus service

Access strategy

Accessibility and connectivity to Potters Bar by sustainable modes – walking, cycling and public transport – underpins the whole access strategy for the scheme, realising the benefits of the Site's proximity to key services and facilities, adjoining bus routes and rail services into London Moorgate and Kings Cross, which is just a 10-15 minute cycle ride or bus journey (via service PB1).

Achieving a new pedestrian/cycle link through HCC-owned land at Oakmere Primary School and Community Centre would underpin the sustainable access strategy. This link could be enhanced as part of a wider scheme to redevelop and regenerate the existing school site, replacing the old and inefficient accommodation and providing something more modern and fit-for-purpose. With the school having capacity to accommodate pupils from the proposed development, this is a considerable community benefit for existing and future residents that can be realised should the scheme come forward. Discussions with the LEA have already commenced and can be taken forward should the site be proposed for allocation.

The western part of the scheme will be within 400m walking distance of service PB1, with the opportunity to further enhance bus provision through funding the diversion of PB1 or supporting a new bus service through the scheme. Discussions with HCC's Passenger Transport Team are ongoing to agree a public transport strategy for the scheme.

A point of vehicular access is possible off Coopers Lane Road (see **Figure 3.4**), deliverable within the adopted highway and extent of HCC's land ownership. The access would sit within improvements to Coopers Lane Road, designing the route to 30mph, reducing traffic speeds, introducing traffic calming, providing frontage development and new gateway features into Potters Bar. A further access can be delivered to the east (see **Figure 3.5**), functioning as an emergency access or secondary vehicle access should this be required.

The overarching access strategy is summarised on **Figure 4.3**.

Green infrastructure strategy

The masterplan presented in **Figure 4.1** is landscape-led, prioritising the retention of existing landscape features and receptors, including Five Acre Wood within the Site, Fir Wood and Pond Wood which adjoin the Site, and existing boundary trees and hedgerows as far as possible, features which help to visually contain the Site to views from further afield (see also viewpoint analysis in **Appendix A**). Fir Wood and Pond Wood, in particular, also provide a strong, defensible and enduring Green Belt boundary to development further east of Potters Bar.

Limited removal of trees and hedgerows is required along Coopers Lane Road to deliver the proposed point of access and create frontage, as well as removal of planting on the western boundary where the Site adjoins Oakmere Primary School and the Community Centre to facilitate the new pedestrian/cycle link, albeit this can be more than compensated for as part of the wider offsetting package. Compensating for the loss of Chequers Mead House LWS and existing habitats on the Site will also be fundamental to any scheme coming forward for development. The loss of habitats needs to be balanced against a pressing need for homes and the community benefits it is possible to achieve (including redevelopment of Oakmere Primary School) as well as the ability to deliver a 'net gain' in biodiversity.

As explained in the Ecology section, HCC's extensive landholding south and east of the Site is a significant advantage, with the ability to deliver a 10% net gain a deliverable and realistic prospect.

Discussions with the county ecologist are underway regarding offsetting calculations and the extent of offsetting required. Should the site be allocated for development a comprehensive package for offsetting, woodland management and recreational management will be agreed, in consultation with key stakeholders including both the county ecologist and local wildlife trust, encompassing the key principles identified in **Section 3 (opportunities & constraints)**.

Central to the green infrastructure strategy is improved access to the countryside for Potters Bar residents, principally via the new link via the Oakmere Primary School/Community Centre site and improvements to Coopers Lane Road to link up with Bridleway 14. Alongside new routes planned as part of HCC's tree planting proposals, this presents a unique opportunity, particularly in supporting the objectives of 2019 NPPF141.

Deliverability

Subject to removing the Site from the Green Belt, this is a suitable and sustainable opportunity for development. HCC is committed to its delivery, evidenced by the investment it has made to date and progress in its discussions with key stakeholders to help inform the masterplan, not least with HCC highways, public transport and ecology officers, as well as the LEA.

The Site sits within the single ownership of HCC, and fundamental features of the masterplan, including points of access, pedestrian/cycle links and biodiversity offsetting, are achievable on HCC-owned land. Alongside Wood, Cushman & Wakefield are already instructed to advise on the viability of these emerging proposals. A high-level viability assessment has already been undertaken to demonstrate that a scheme in this location would be financially viable.

5. Summary and conclusions

This report sets out how it is possible to deliver a new residential neighbourhood east of Potters Bar and contribute towards local housing needs in response to a request from WHBC. Following an extensive review of the Site's opportunities and constraints, a masterplan framework has been developed which demonstrates how 600-700 new homes can be delivered alongside a range of benefits for Potters Bar, increased accessibility to the countryside to the potential redevelopment of Oakmere Primary School as a new 'dual use' facility and focal point for the new neighbourhood.

Given the Site's lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt responding to the objectives of national Green Belt policy has been central to HCC's masterplanning approach. As has been demonstrated here, taking land out of the Green Belt at this location would not compromise its intended purposes (2019 NPPF134), easily identifiable and robust new boundaries could be readily established that could endure beyond the plan period (2019 NPPF136), and that the scheme would result in a sustainable patterns of development in accordance in overriding objectives of the NPPF (2019 NPPF138).

HCC's separate commitment to plant circa. 38,000 trees on its wider landholding adjoining the Site, alongside improved access to the countryside also supports the objectives of both 2019 NPPF138 (regarding compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of the remaining Green Belt) and 2019 NPPF141 (planning positively to enhance their beneficial use of the Green Belt, including for recreation, landscape enhancement, visual amenity and biodiversity). In terms of national Green Belt policy there are therefore clear and unique opportunities to be realised alongside the Site's development, opportunities which can be tied into any policy for the Site should it be proposed for allocation.

HCC is keen to explore the benefits and opportunities presented by the Site further with WHBC, Hertsmere Borough Council, the local community and other key stakeholders to further develop the development proposals set out in this report.



Delivering new market and affordable homes



Enabling a new dual-use school and community hub



Providing extensive green space, ecological habitats, woodland and children's play

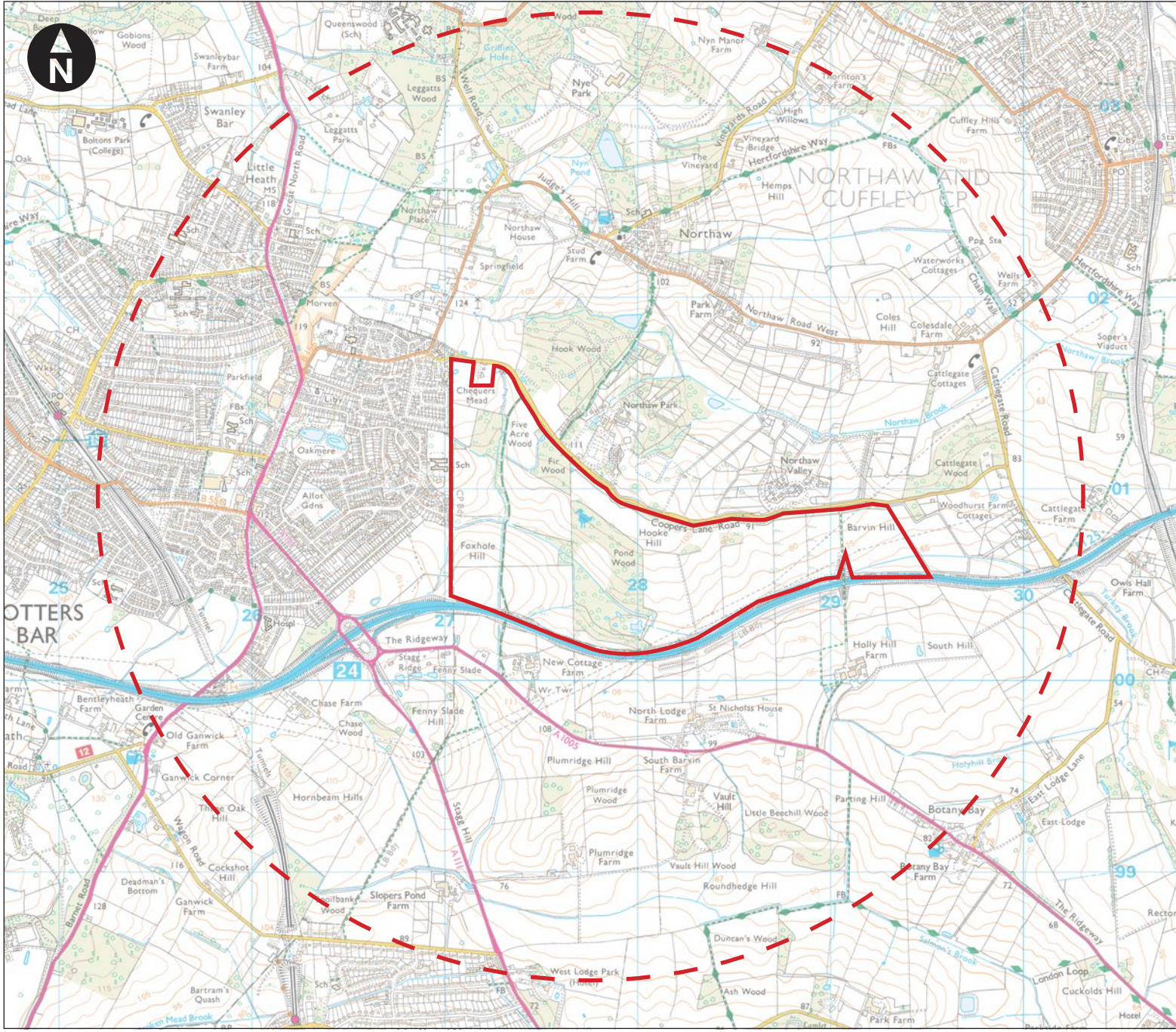


Enhancing recreational routes to support healthy lifestyles

Appendix A

Viewpoints and site photographs





- Key
- HCC land ownership boundary
 - Study Area

0 km 2 km

Scale 1:30,000 @ A3

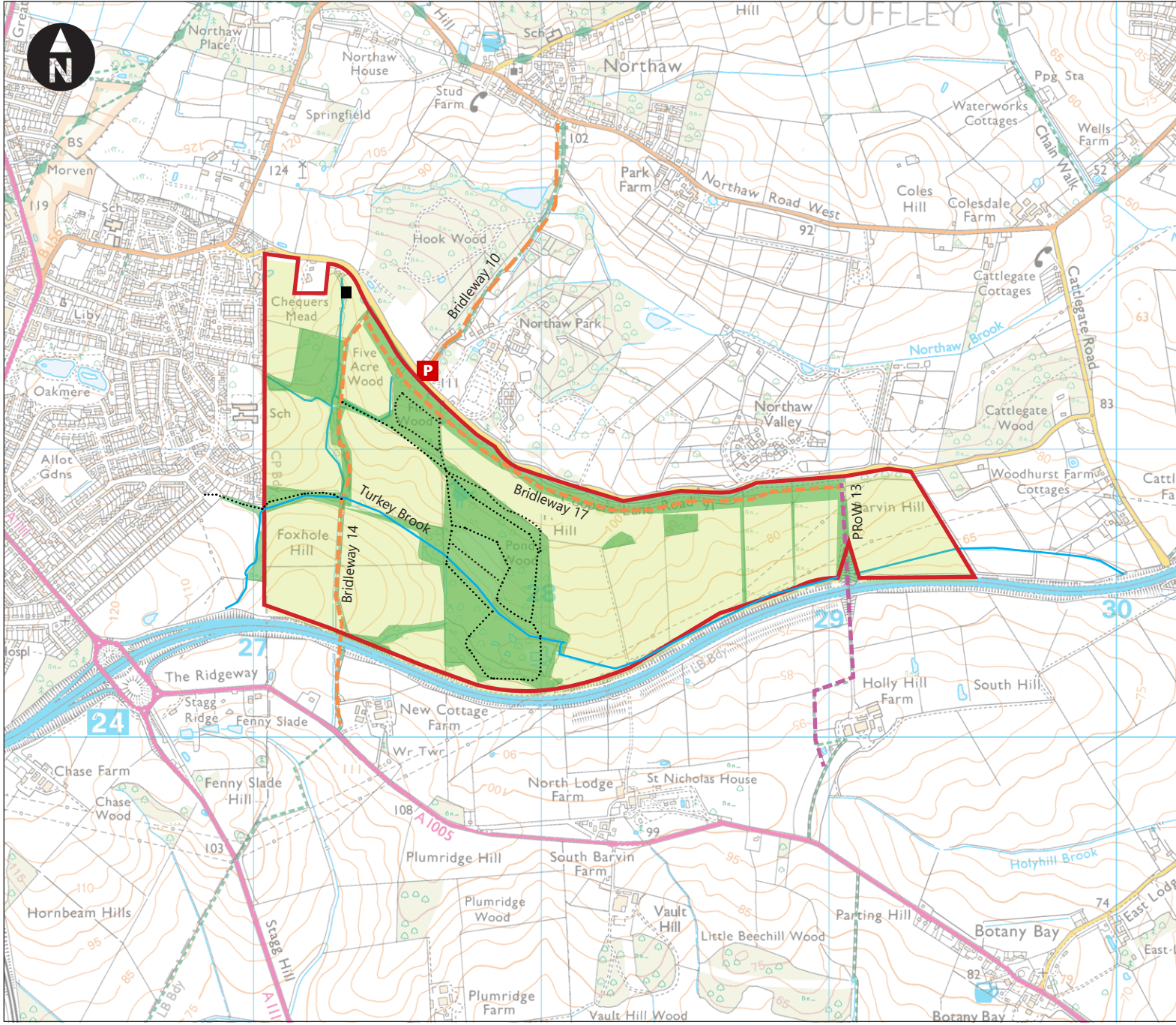
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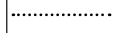

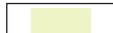


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Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Figure 1.1
Site boundary and Study Area

July 2020





- Key
-  Bridleway
 -  Public Right of Way
 -  Permissive Paths and waymarked routes
 -  Woodland
 -  Farmland/former farmland
 -  Parking
 -  Abandoned stables

0km 1km

Scale 1:20,000 @A4

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Figure 1.2
Key Landscape Features of the Site

July 2020





1. Fir and Pond Woods Nature Reserve is publicly accessible, with numerous waymarked walks.



2. Bridleway 17 looking west, at a point north of Fir Wood



3. Stone kerbs around trees along the route of Bridleway 17, north of Fir Wood.



4. Evidence of the woods being used for informal play/forest school type activities was identified.



5. Fields immediately north and south of Turkey Brook are steep in parts.



6. The paths through Fir and Pond Woods occasionally pass through more open areas e.g. this area of meadow and willow plantation along the banks of Turkey Brook.



7. Turkey Brook.

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Figure 1.3
Key Landscape Features of the Site

July 2020



wood.



1. Bridleway entrance off Coopers Lane Road



2. Mature tree planting is a characteristic feature of views along Coopers Lane Road



3. An example field gate off bridleway 14, into the adjacent fields. The gateways are typically narrow and surrounded by mature trees.



4. A narrow stream/ditch in the north west corner of the Site, close to the abandoned stables, which connects to Turkey Brook.



5. Fir Wood.



6. The Site's topography is undulating, steeply in places.



7. Existing gated access to the abandoned stables.

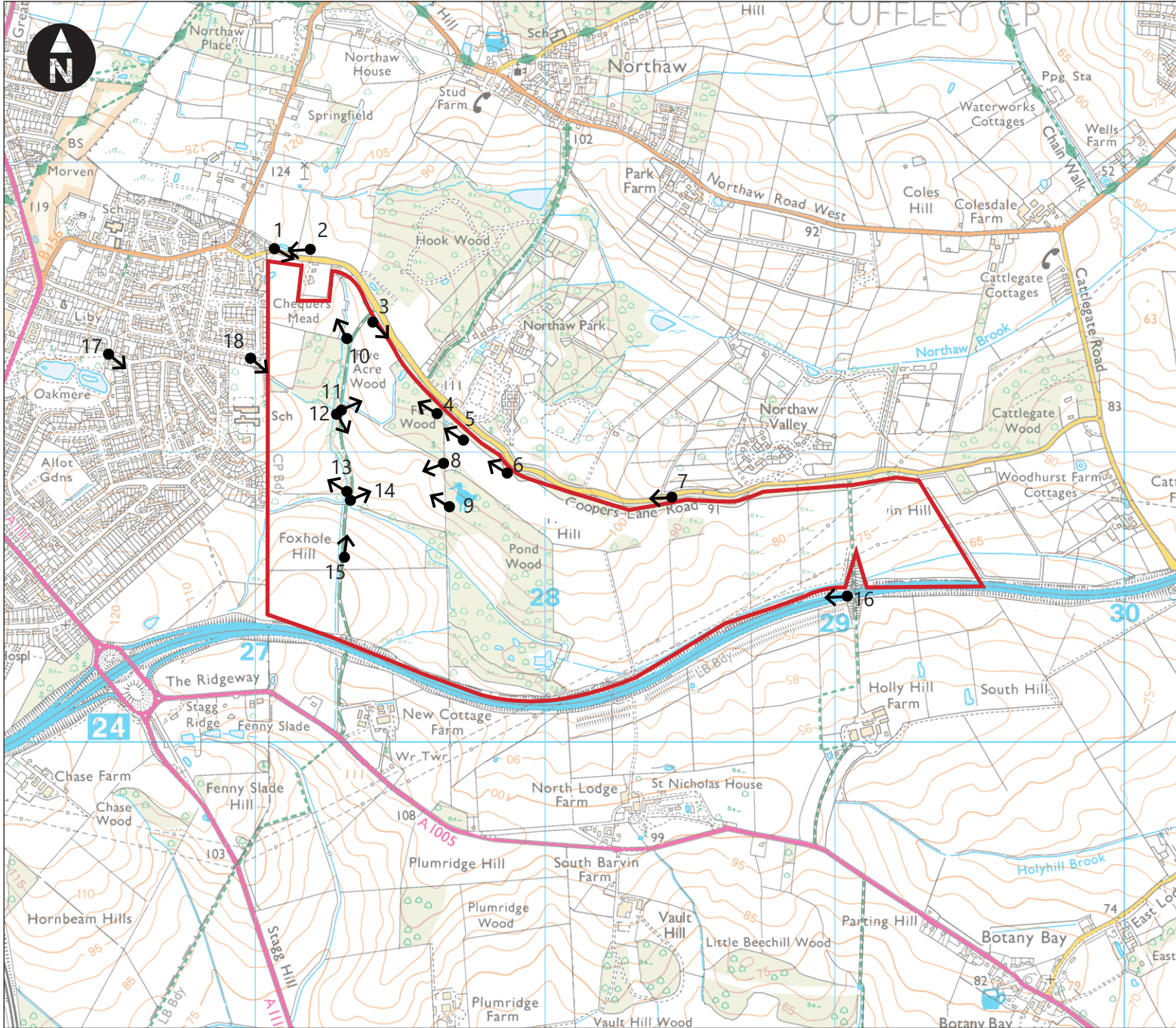
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Figure 1.4
Key Landscape Features of the Site 2

July 2020



wood.



Key



Viewpoint location



Scale 1:20,000 @A4

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Figure 1.5
Viewpoint Location Plan

July 2020



Viewpoint 1: From Coopers Lane Road looking East



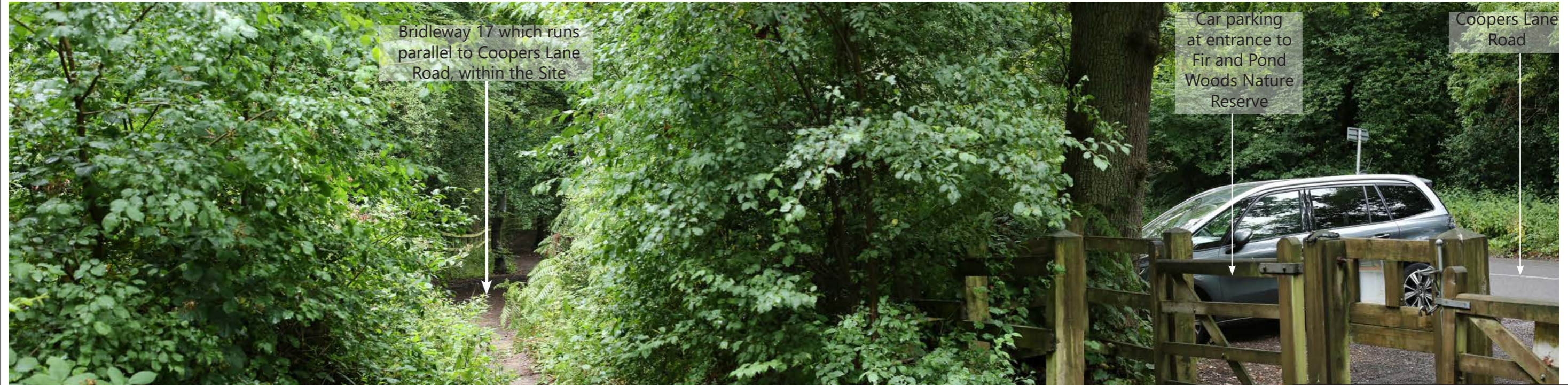
Viewpoint 2: From Coopers Lane Road looking east



Viewpoint 3: From Coopers Lane Road, adjacent to entrance to Bridleway 14, looking east



Viewpoint 4: From the entrance to Fir and Pond Woods Nature Reserve, looking west



Viewpoint 5: From Bridleway 17 looking south and west, towards Fir Wood and Pond Wood



Viewpoint 6: From the entrance to Fir and Pond Woods Nature Reserve, looking west



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Enfield Chase
Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Figure 1.8
Viewpoints 5 and 6

July 2020



wood.

Viewpoint 7: From Bridleway 17/Coopers Lane Road looking south and west



Viewpoint 8: From the edge of Fir and Pond Woods Nature Reserve, looking south and west



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Figure 1.9
Viewpoints 7 and 8

July 2020



wood.

Viewpoint 9: From waymarked footpath on the western edge of Pond Wood, looking westwards towards Potters Bar



Viewpoint 10: From Bridleway 14, looking north west towards the North West corner of the Site



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Figure 1.10
Viewpoints 9 and 10

July 2020



wood.

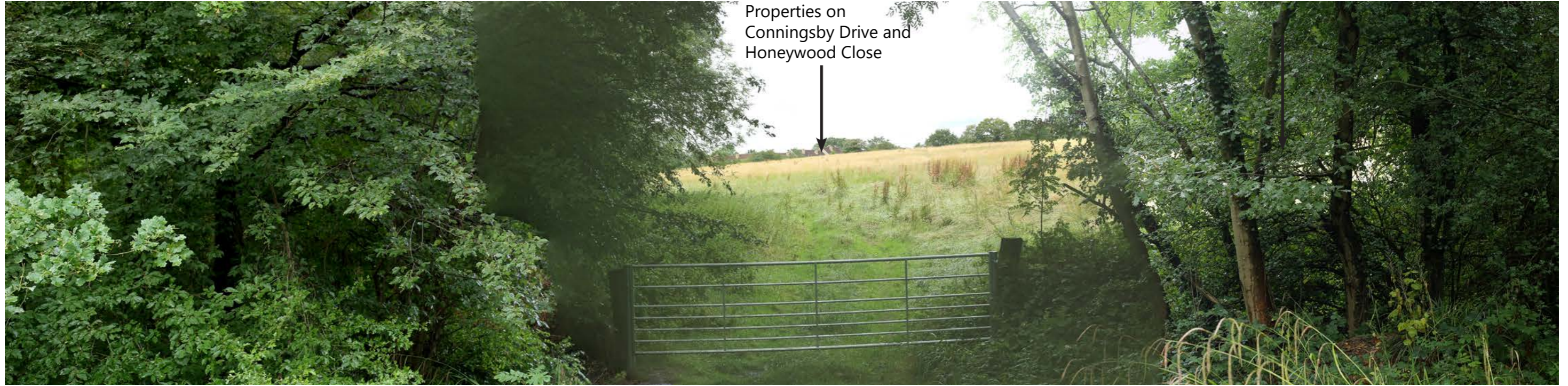
Viewpoint 11: From Bridleway 14 looking North East



Viewpoint 12: From Bridleway 14, looking South East, across the Site towards The Ridgeway



Viewpoint 13: From Bridleway 14 looking north west through a gateway into one of the pastoral fields



Viewpoint 14: From Bridleway 14 looking north east through a gate opening, towards Fir Wood and Pond Wood



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Figure 1.12
Viewpoints 13 & 14

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wood.

Viewpoint 15: From Bridleway14, south of Turkey Brook, looking north.



Viewpoint 16: From PRoW 13 crossing over the M25, looking west and north west, across the M25 and towards the Site.



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Figure 1.13
Viewpoints 15 & 16

July 2020



Viewpoint 17: From Chance Avenue looking East, over intervening existing housing, towards the Site



Viewpoint 18: View South and East, across properties on Torrington Drive, towards the Site.



The background of the image is a solid green color. It features three overlapping circles of varying shades of green. One circle is a light green and is positioned at the top center. A second circle is a medium green and is positioned in the lower-left quadrant. A third circle is a darker green and is positioned in the lower-left quadrant, overlapping the second circle. The word "wood." is written in white, lowercase letters in the top right corner.

wood.