

Site Promotion Document

Land West of Brackley

Ashfield Land Developments & Vulpes Ltd | October 2019



ASHFIELD LAND

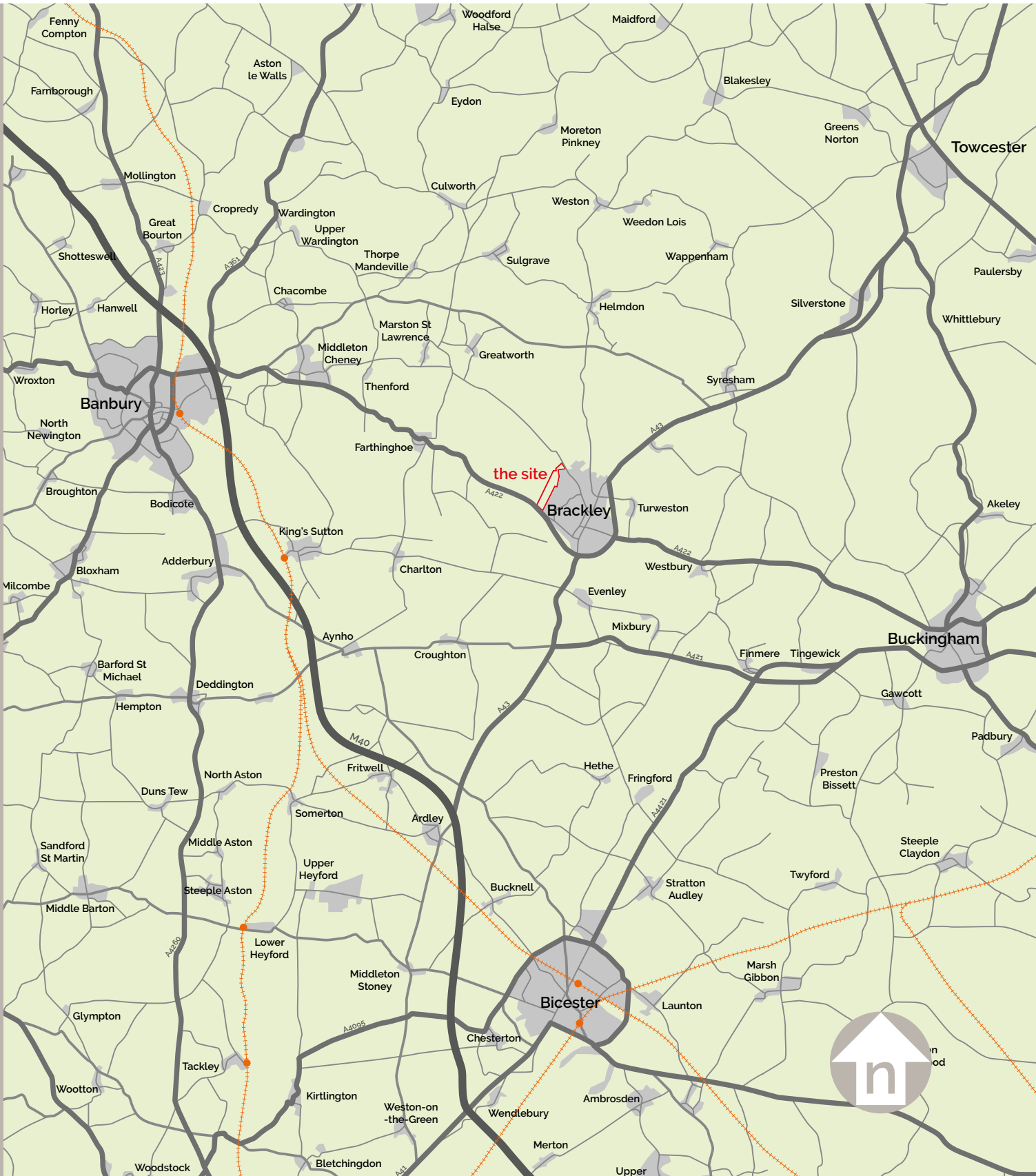


VULPES
GROUP

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The site is a sustainable extension to the north western edge of Brackley that is well located for future residential development. It is well connected to the existing amenities within the town and will provide valuable new homes within the community.

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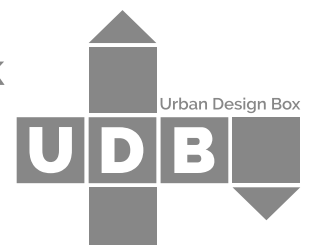
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opposite: The site sits on the north western edge of Brackley, which lies to west of Banbury, south west of Towcester, west of Buckingham and north of Bicester.

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1. Introduction



This site promotion document sets out a preliminary site analysis and a conceptual proposal for residential development on Land West of Brackley.

1.1 Purpose of this Document

1.1.1 This document provides details of the opportunity for residential development at Land West of Brackley. It sets the context for the proposal and shows why the site is suitable for sensitive housing provision.

1.1.2 The document describes the development site and its accessibility to the town centre. The document also summarises the key benefits of the proposed development to enable the site to be considered for allocation for residential development within the West Northamptonshire Local Plan.

1.1.3 The document provides headlines from the consultant team for the environmental and technical findings relating to the site and demonstrates the suitability of the site for development when assessed against the NPPF and relevant local planning policy.

1.1.4 The document presents a clear understanding of the constraints and opportunities for the site, drawn from a continually developing evidence base. Landscape and transport evidence has been recently updated, and previous ecological and drainage work has also informed the scheme. The other reports will be updated in due course, however they did not raise any significant concerns and it is unlikely that their findings will have changed.

1.2 Proposal Summary

1.2.1 The development site comprises six fields, with a total site area of 34.2 ha. The site lies on the north west edge of Brackley and approximately 1 mile (1.6km) north west of the town centre.

1.2.2 The site has the capacity to accommodate approximately 700 homes, including an element of affordable housing which will be provided in accordance with local policy and need, subject to viability. The proposals will include infrastructure and public open space and landscape areas.

1.2.3 Two access points, one from the north and one from the south of the site will provide a well connected development and will allow for phased delivery. The public footpaths crossing the site will be retained within the wider public open space provision and will be enhanced with new footpaths to provide additional connectivity with the existing community.



above: Looking south down the eastern boundary of the site

2. The Opportunity

This section provides an overview of national and local planning policy and how the site can help meet the future housing, employment and economic needs of the area.

2.1 National Planning Policy Framework

2.1.1 The Framework provides the over-arching context for the preparation of development plans and consideration for the future use of the subject site.

2.1.2 The allocation of the subject site in the new Strategic Plan for West Northamptonshire for housing development would comply with the key objectives of the Framework as outlined below.

Promoting Sustainable Development

2.1.3 The presumption in favour of sustainable development is central to the Framework's policy approach. In promoting sustainable development in the plan-making process, local planning authorities are required to positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area (paragraph 11, NPPF)

2.1.4 Local Plans are the key to delivering sustainable development and should be prepared with that objective in mind. To that end, they should be consistent with the principles and policies set out in the Framework (paragraph 16).

2.1.5 It is clear from the Framework that the Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth and significant weight should be placed on that objective through the planning system.

Plan-Making

2.1.6 Local Plans should be 'sound,' meaning that they should be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy (paragraph 35).

Housing

2.1.7 Section 5 of the Framework emphasises the Government's objective of 'significantly boosting the supply of homes.' To achieve this, LPAs should:

- Establish a housing requirement figure for their whole area, which shows the extent to which their identified housing can be met over the plan period.
- Identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites, taking into account their availability, suitability and likely economic viability.
- Identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies (paragraph 73).

Sustainable Transport

2.1.8 Section 9 of the Framework highlights the important role transport policies have in facilitating sustainable development and also in contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives and states that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making, so that:

- a. The potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed;
- b. Opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;
- c. Opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;
- d. The environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains; and
- e. Patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places.

2.1.9 Paragraph 103 goes on to state that ‘The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health.’

National Design Guide

2.1.10 The National Design Guide forms part of the Government’s planning practice guidance. The document sets out that well-designed places have individual characteristics which work together to create its physical Character. The ten characteristics identified within the document as creating a well-designed place help to nurture and sustain a sense of Community. They work to positively address environmental issues affecting Climate. They all contribute towards the cross-cutting themes for good design set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

2.2 Development Plan

2.2.1 The development plan for South Northamptonshire comprises the adopted West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (adopted December 2014) and the emerging South Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 (which is expected to be adopted imminently).

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (December 2014)

2.2.2 The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) was jointly prepared by the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (JPU) (formed of the three Councils of Daventry District, Northampton Borough and South Northamptonshire) and provides a strategic spatial strategy for West Northamptonshire over the period 2011 - 2029.

2.2.3 The JCS established a housing target of 42,620 dwellings to be delivered over the plan period, and sought to direct development to the most sustainable locations within the district in accordance with Policy S2 – The Hierarchy of Centres. Through Policy S2, Brackley and Towcester were identified as the third most sustainable locations within West Northamptonshire after the Regional Town Centre of Northampton and the Sub Regional Town Centre of Daventry, highlighting their inherent sustainability and strategic opportunities to meet housing need in this location.



above: Current informal recreational use of the field margins within the site

2.2.4 In recognition of its sustainability, the JCS identified a housing requirement of 2,160 dwellings to be delivered in Brackley throughout the Plan Period. A significant proportion of this requirement was allocated through a strategic allocation to the north of Brackley (Brackley North), which as identified through the South Northamptonshire Five Year Housing Land Assessment (2019), is substantially complete and remains one of the best delivering strategic sites within South Northamptonshire.

2.2.5 Given that the JCS was adopted in the context of the NPPF (2012), and in December 2019 the Plan will be five years old, the JPU have agreed to prepare a new Strategic Plan for West Northamptonshire. The new West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan (WNSP) will identify a spatial vision for the future of the area, extended up to 2050 and will seek to address key strategic priorities for area. While the JPU will work to prepare a new Strategic Plan, it is understood that it will be prepared in the context of the JCS and will reflect its spatial strategy and key influences on growth.

South Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2

2.2.6 The South Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2) was subject to Examination in June 2019, and is expected to be adopted by the Council later this year. Once adopted the LPP2 will assist in the application of policies and growth strategies of the JCS, defining appropriate settlement boundaries and establishing specific development management policies. While at the time of writing, the LPP2 has not been adopted, given its stage and the Inspector's interim conclusions, it can be afforded significant weight.

2.3 Policy Analysis

2.3.1 Planning policy at all levels directs new housing development to sustainable locations that are well served by public transport and are in close proximity to jobs and services. The suitability of Brackley to accommodate additional development has been recognised by the Joint Planning Unit through its position in the hierarchy which identifies it as one of the most sustainable settlements within South Northamptonshire.

2.3.2 The West Northamptonshire Joint Planning unit is currently preparing a new Strategic Plan for West Northamptonshire, which will replace the adopted Joint Core Strategy and emerging Local Plan Part 2. This will ensure the development plan remains up to date and responds to the current national planning policy context, as well as the most up to date evidence. It will also enable West Northamptonshire to meet its ambitious growth aims and opportunities to benefit from the Oxford – Cambridge growth arc.

2.3.3 Land to the West of Brackley is ideally placed to deliver a strategic residential development in a highly sustainable location, adjacent to the existing settlement. It is considered that Brackley North has been one of the best delivering strategic sites within West Northamptonshire, and Land to the West of Brackley can continue this pattern of growth and deliver up to 700 dwellings early on in the plan period.

3. Context



This chapter sets the development site within its context and analyses its accessibility to local facilities.

3.1 Strategic Location

3.1.1 Brackley is located within the South Northamptonshire Council area. It is approximately 18km (11 miles) east of Banbury, 18km (11 miles) south west of Towcester, 11km (7 miles) west of Buckingham and 18km (11 miles) north of Bicester,

3.1.2 The M40 lies approximately 12km (8 miles) to the west of Brackley, providing access north towards Birmingham and south towards London.

3.1.3 The closest train stations are in Banbury and King's Sutton, with services to London, Reading and other regional settlements. There are several bus services accessible from the site, for further details please see section 4.3.

3.2.3 The south western boundary of the site is formed of tall trees on a raised bank, which was formerly a railway line, which lies between the site and the A442.

3.2.4 The majority of the south eastern boundary of the site is formed by mature trees which separate the site from an area of public open space which runs behind the gardens of the existing residential properties to the south east.

3.2.5 Brackley Rugby Club lies adjacent to the northern part of the south eastern boundary. There is also an access road to Brackley Grange from Halse Road in this location.

3.2.6 The north eastern boundary of the site is formed of a low hedgerow adjacent to Halse Road.

3.2.7 The majority of the north western boundary is formed of mature trees and hedgerows running along the field boundaries. The northern part of the north western boundary is currently undefined, running through an agricultural field.

3.2.8 There is an existing public footpath crossing the site, running alongside one of the east-west orientated hedgerows that cross the site. The footpath links the residential area of Brackley with the wider countryside.

3.2 The Site

3.2.1 The site is situated on the western edge of Brackley, with easy access to the shops, school and other facilities within the area. To the east of the site lies existing residential development, the A442 lies to the south of the site, and to the north and west lie agricultural fields.

3.2.2 The site consists of six irregular shaped fields, separated by a series of hedgerows. The majority of the boundaries of the site are comprised of mature trees. The site is currently in agricultural use.



above: Regional Context

3.3 Local Facilities

3.3.1 Brackley has an excellent range of facilities including doctors, pharmacies, public houses, shops, a post office, community buildings, schools, parks, churches and sports facilities.

3.3.2 The closest primary school is Bracken Leas Primary School, which is located on Pavillions Way, 0.7km (0.4 miles) south east of the site. The closest secondary school is Magdalen College School, which is located on Waynflete Avenue, 1.4km (0.8 miles) south east of the site.

3.3.3 The Buckingham Road Industrial Estate is located on the south eastern side of Brackley and provides a range of employment opportunities.

3.3.4 There are several green public open spaces (POS) and sports facilities situated within close proximity of the site including Brackley Leisure Centre and Brackley Rugby Club. There are a number of walking paths located throughout the local area, including crossing the site, providing convenient access to the countryside for leisure activities.



The Site



Built Up Area



High Street



Primary School



Secondary School



Employment Area



Leisure Centre



Formal Public Open Spaces



Woodland



Future Development



Principle Trunk Roads



Principle Distributor Roads



Minor Distributor Roads



Existing Bus Routes



New Multi-Modal Route



Existing Pedestrian Route



Potential Pedestrian Links



Sports Facilities



Community Facilities



Food Store



Healthcare



Church / POW



Post Office



Public House



Library



above: Local Facilities Plan

4. Site Analysis

This chapter identifies the physical characteristics of the site and sets out how these will inform the design of the development.

4.1 Evidence Base

4.1.1 The following chapter highlights the key technical considerations for the site and has been drawn from a continually evolving evidence base. Given that the site has been promoted through the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and South Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2, our clients have a range of technical documents and a clear understanding of the site's key constraints and opportunities. Given that some of these documents are more than two years old, our Clients have instructed an update of technical documents to clearly demonstrate that the site is suitable for development and deliverable now.

4.1.2 The following section introduces the technical information which has been updated to date (Highways and Landscape), with overarching recommendations on Drainage and Ecology which remain relevant. As we have identified above, the evidence base documents will continue to be updated and will shape and inform the refinement of the Concept Masterplan.



4.2.2 The proposed internal highway layout would be designed to reflect modern guidelines as appropriate, in order to make it safe and efficient and to provide permeability for future residents.

4.2.3 It is envisaged that the road serving the scheme could provide a link between Halse Road and the A422 for traffic associated with the development and also to alleviate traffic on Halse Road between the Brackley North Strategic Urban Extension (SUE) and the town centre. It could also potentially facilitate a circular bus route serving the town centre, Land at Brackley West and the SUE.

4.2 Access & Movement

4.2.1 It is anticipated at this stage that a new roundabout access arrangement could be provided on Halse Road to provide access to the north of the site. A modified version of the existing Banbury Road roundabout with an additional forth arm could be formed to serve the scheme from the south.

top: Southern site entrance from the A422

bottom: Looking south down Halse Road towards the northern site entrance

opposite top: View across the sloping southernmost field of the site

opposite bottom: View across northernmost field from access road to Brackley Grange

4.2.4 There is an existing public footpath that runs through the centre of the site in east to west direction, linking with one of the footpaths serving the existing housing provision along the eastern boundary of the site. This route should be upgraded in order to form a strong pedestrian and cycle link connecting with Prices Way.

4.2.5 The masterplan for the development will be designed to prioritise the movement of pedestrians and cyclists ahead of the movement of vehicles. A number of shared space and quiet streets will be provided, without segregated space for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. These streets will be designed to constrain vehicular speeds and therefore to provide a safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

4.2.6 The site provides a natural extension to the existing residential area. Connections to Prices Way and Harris Close would be delivered to provide pedestrian access in to the site. The development could be integrated with the adjacent residential area, providing connections to local bus stops and facilities.

4.3 Public Transport

4.3.1 There are four principal bus routes within the vicinity of the site. Bus stops are located on Pavillions Way (approximately 450m walking distance from the northern access junction) are served by the 500 and the X91. Bus stops are also located on Pavillions Way (approximately 750m walking distance from the centre of the site) and these are services by the 80, X80 and X91. Service 500 offers a half hourly service between Brackley town centre and Banbury Mondays to Saturday and hourly on Sundays.

4.3.2 Banbury Railway Station is approximately 11.5 km to the north-west of the site and can be reached by public transport (500 bus services and a 320-metre walk from the bus stop) and car trips. King Sutton railway station is located approximately 13.4 km from the site. These railway stations connect with London and other regional settlements.

4.3.3 It is proposed that a 7.3m wide bus route is delivered within the development, linking Halse Road to the A422 as well as improving and providing a wider level of choice to existing residents who live off Humphries Drive.





4.4 Landscape

4.4.1 An initial assessment has been undertaken of potential landscape and visual effects if development were introduced on the site. These are set out in full in the accompanying Outline Landscape and Visual Appraisal.

4.4.2 A number of design principles have been established in relation to the landscape and visual opportunities and constraints, to help reduce the 'impact of change' on the surrounding area's landscape character and visual amenity:

- Key landscape features that should be retained and enhanced, including the native hedgerows and intermittent trees which delineate historic field boundaries, the small block of woodland and the existing tree belts to the western boundary.
- The western boundary tree belts should form part of an open space corridor creating a defensible settlement edge, similar to that of the existing settlement edge.
- Within the northernmost field, residential development should be of high quality and low density. It should be set back from the northern boundary to allow for a positive frontage and an attractive gateway to the town.
- The entrance from Halse Road should be designed to minimise the urbanising influence on the rural approach to Brackley from the north.
- Open space should be provided to the south of public footpath VA19 to conserve some wide panoramic views looking south across the landscape from elevated areas.
- Proposed open space and public footpaths should connect with the green corridor to the east of the site.
- Development should not be higher than the equivalent of a three storey dwelling, with the majority of housing two storeys to reflect the existing settlement pattern.
- There is the potential for allotments to be incorporated within some of the green infrastructure corridors.
- New tree planting should be incorporated into the residential development to reduce the massing of built form and diversify the range of species present within the site.
- Sufficient space should be provided for street tree planting along primary routes to allow for mature avenue specimens to establish.

top: View from public footpath VA19 as it crosses the site (demonstrating open views to the south)

bottom: View taken from within the site looking back towards the settlement edge (demonstrating occasional glimpsed views of housing)



4.5 Drainage

4.5.1 The site is located in Flood Zone 1, land defined as being at low risk of river/sea flooding.

4.5.2 The area in the vicinity of the site is considered to have between a 25% and 50% susceptibility to groundwater flooding. Much of the site has geology defined as Principal Aquifers. It is recommended that the appropriate mitigation measures are considered as necessary during the construction phase.

4.5.3 Surface water mapping shows the southern corner of the site to be at high risk of pluvial flooding. A low risk flow route is also evident in the southern extent of the site. The land located immediately outside of the southern boundary is raised above the site levels. It is considered that this raised land acts as an embankment, causing water to pool in the southern corner.

4.5.4 Surface water attenuation will be required at the site, in order that water can be stored and released at a controlled rate. Storage volumes should be designed such that the 100 year storm can be accommodated within the site, including a 40% allowance for climate change.

4.5.5 Any drainage feature would need to be located outside of the 100 year floodplain extent. This could have an implication on the resulting developable area within the site boundary. The proposed access road from the roundabout joining the A422 and Banbury Road to the south-east of the site could also be affected by surface water unless suitably mitigated.

4.6 Ecology

4.6.1 An Ecology survey was previously undertaken for part of the site and identified a series of recommendations at that time, including a need to maintain existing trees and hedgerow within the development boundary as part of the development proposals. However, these surveys were undertaken over two years ago and so their findings are no longer considered to be reliable. Updated surveys are currently being prepared for land west of Brackley and will be used to inform the future development of the Concept Masterplan alongside the wider update of evidence base documents.

above: Field boundary hedgerow within the site

5. Constraints and Opportunities



Access

- Two points of access will allow for a phased development from both the north and south of the site.
- Existing footpaths cross and run adjacent to the site, with opportunities to connect to existing neighbourhoods.
- There are a number of schools and other existing facilities are within easy walking distance along safe pedestrian routes.
- Potential to create circular walks within the site and the wider area.
- There is the possibility to extend existing / new town bus loop through the site.
- Access to Brackley Grange should be maintained.

Landscape

- The existing hedgerow and treed boundaries provide a strong defensible boundary to the proposed development from the open countryside to the west.
- The existing open space and hedgerow and treed boundaries provide separation between the site and the existing residential development to the east.
- The hedgerows which separate the fields within the site could form green corridors across the site.

Site

- The site falls from a high point towards the north of the site, down to a low point along the southern boundary.
- There is an area of surface water flood risk at the south of the site which should be considered within the proposals.
- There are two sewers running along the eastern boundary of the site. Their required maintenance offsets will need to be respected within the design of the scheme.



Site boundary



Other land within the applicant's control



Access - all modes



Access - pedestrians and cycles



Access - Brackley Grange



Public Right of Way



Existing footpaths



New link road



Existing bus route



Potential bus route



Existing trees to be retained where possible



Public Open Space (off site)



Flood risk areas



Site contours



Existing foul sewer (3m offset TBC)



Existing surface water sewer (3m offset TBC)



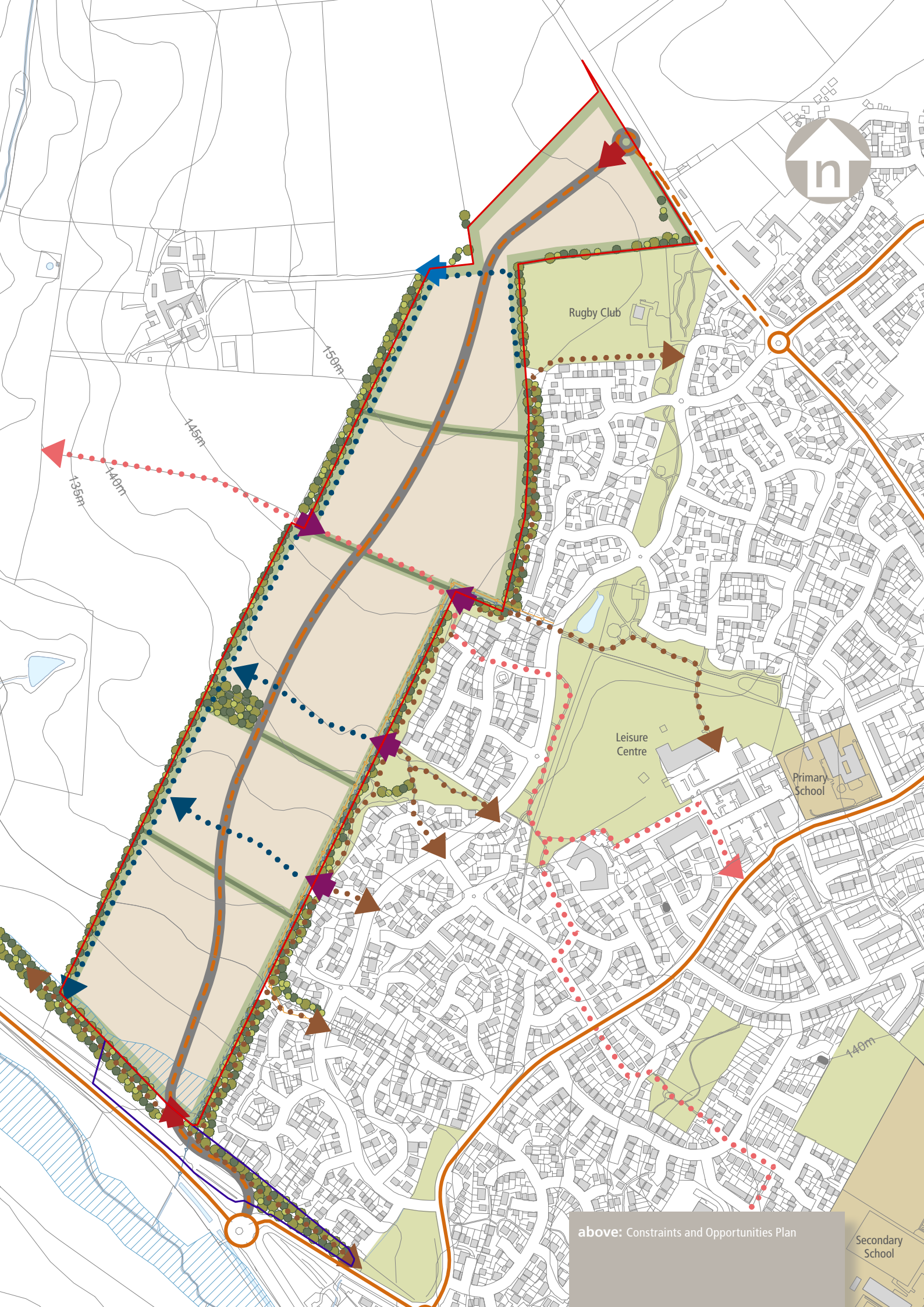
Potential development area



Potential pedestrian connections



Potential landscape buffers and new planting



above: Constraints and Opportunities Plan

Secondary School

6. Development Concept



This chapter illustrates the key ideas which will evolve through a design development process to inform a scheme that responds to the characteristics of the site and its surroundings.

6.1 Site Vision

6.1.1 The vision for the scheme is to create a development which seamlessly integrates with the existing residential area of Brackley and is well linked to the schools, shops and facilities available within the town.

6.1.2 The green infrastructure strategy for the site will play a key role in achieving this vision. A 'green spine' will be created along the western boundary, from which branch a series of green corridors which cross the site. These corridors will enhance the existing hedgerows on the site, and will link to the existing open spaces within the adjacent residential area, providing key pedestrian/cycle movement routes which link to existing routes within Brackley.

6.1.3 These corridors could have different characteristics, with the central area being focussed on creating an active arc with a trim trail, building on the sporting connections in the area. There are opportunities to explore additional

pedestrian and cyclist connectivity opportunities into the adjacent residential area which will be explored in the development of the design.

6.1.4 The site will have a primary access avenue running north to south within it, which will connect to the A422 in the south, and Halse Road in the north. This route will form the 'urban spine' from which the development parcels will be accessed, and create a new link between Halse Road and the A422 to provide new movement options for people travelling in the area.

6.1.5 The points at which the avenue and green corridors meet are an opportunity for the creation of focal points within the scheme, which will provide recognisable reference points for people navigating their way to the new homes.



above: Development Concept Diagram

6.2 Use and Amount

6.2.1 The main land use on the site will be residential development comprising up to 700 dwellings, provided at an average density of 33 dwellings per hectare. The masterplan opposite indicatively illustrates how the streets, open spaces and focal areas of the scheme could be laid out.

6.2.2 The public open space within the scheme includes recreation areas, surface water attenuation and structural landscaping.

6.3 Scale and Massing

6.3.1 The majority of the development will comprise mainly two storey buildings. 2.5 storey dwellings could be used to create variety within the street scene and 3 storey dwellings may be found along the principle routes through the site.

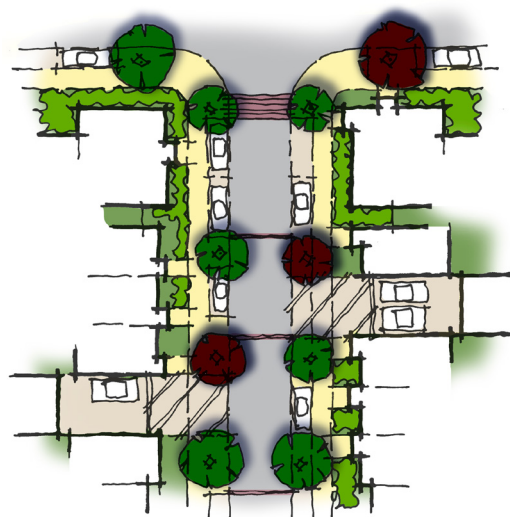
6.4 Layout and Access

6.4.1 The southern access for the site comes from a new arm on the A442/Banbury Road roundabout, with the access road running along the embankment before turning north into the site. The northern access is taken from a new roundabout along Halse Road.

6.5 Landscape

6.5.1 The scheme has been driven by the landscape strategy for the site. The landscape corridors created along the boundaries and across the site form the key pedestrian movement corridors, as well as providing a strong landscape backdrop for the residential development.

6.5.2 The main access avenue through the site will form part of the urban landscape, with trees along its length. The sketches below illustrate the potential cross section with planting and parking arrangements.





6.6 Conclusions

6.6.1 This document sets out the considerations for the site and the principles for the proposed development at Land west of Brackley.

6.6.2 The site is approximately 34.2 hectares in area and lies along the north west edge of Brackley. The site is bordered by existing residential development to the south east, by Halse Road to the north, the A422 to the south, and agricultural fields to the north west.

6.6.3 The proposals demonstrate that the site is able to accommodate approximately 700 new dwellings, along with open space, retained trees and hedgerows, informal public open space and sustainable drainage measures. The masterplan has been developed in response to the constraints and opportunities identified on the site.

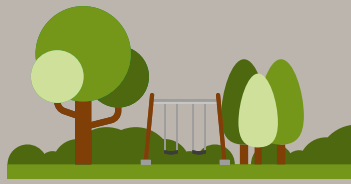
6.6.4 The proposal is well connected to its surroundings and the site represents a sustainable location for development. The site has excellent connections to existing community facilities and services in Brackley, and provides the opportunity to create a new road and public transport link between Halse Road and the A422 for the benefit of new and existing residents.

6.6.5 The green infrastructure within the site links to the existing green open spaces within the town, particularly the trim trail which joins the site to the leisure centre and rugby club. These green corridors will create additional circular walking routes improving leisure and recreation opportunities for all.

Key Benefits



A mix of family homes, including affordable properties, thus increasing opportunities for home ownership in the local area



Access to open space for leisure and recreation, including children's play space and natural green space



Cycle and pedestrian access through the site will allow safe movement and connections to and from the wider area



The team is committed to the provision of a high standard of design and construction which will enhance residential amenity



Creation of new circular walking routes and connections to the wider countryside



Increased use of new and existing bus routes as a result of new residents travelling in the area



Additional employment opportunities including full time and supply chain jobs during the construction period



The protection and enhancement of existing landscape features and biodiversity habitats



Good links to the existing shops, schools and facilities in Brackley



Section 106 agreement and CIL opportunities to benefit Brackley



Increased spending in the locality as a result of new residents coming to the area

