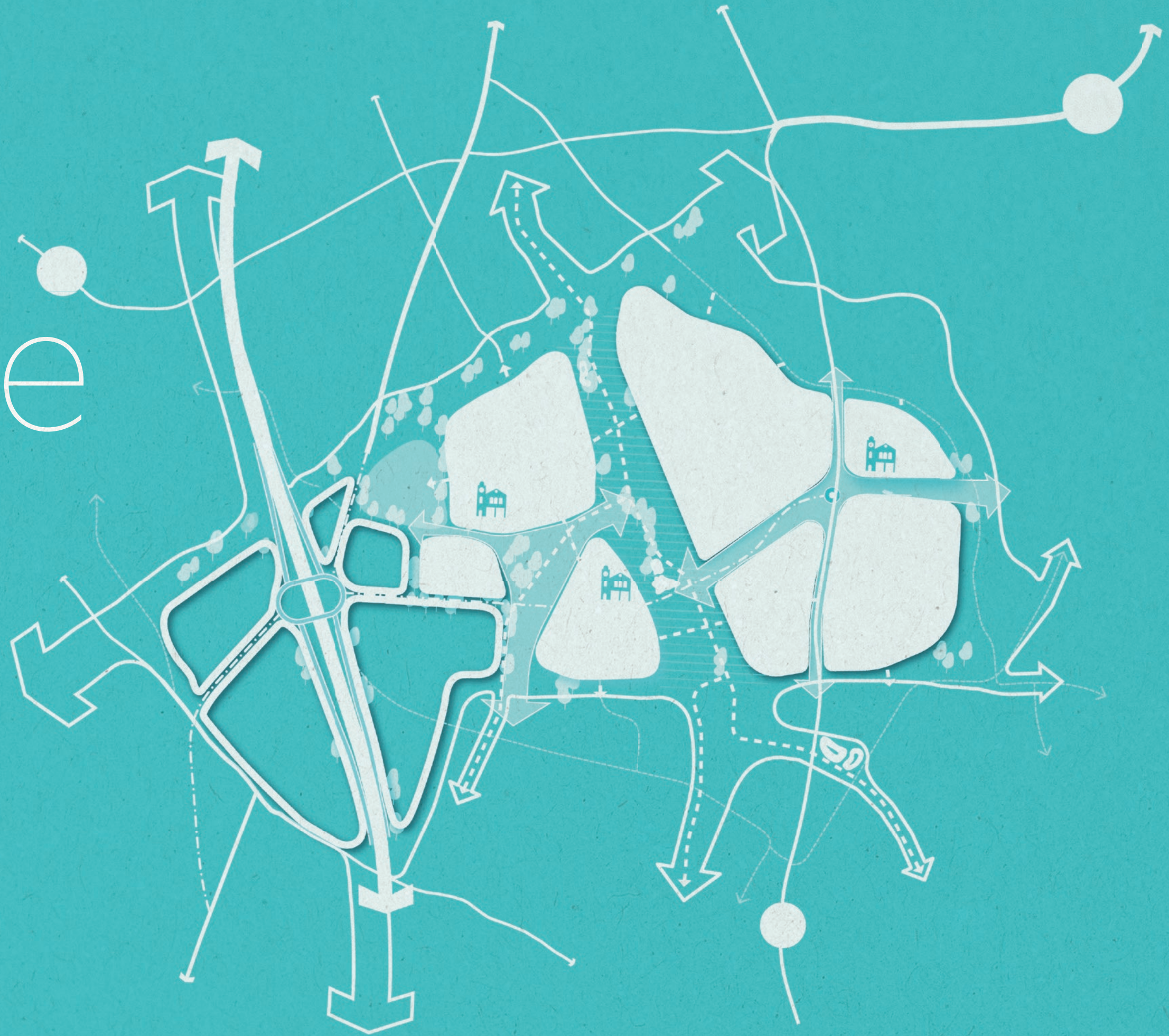


Whetstone Pastures

G A R D E N V I L L A G E

Concept Framework Plan

SEPTEMBER 2025



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CHAPTER

01

Foreword

We are pleased to share with you the Concept Framework Plan for Whetstone Pastures Garden Village. The proposal outlines a blueprint for a sustainable 21st-century community. Whetstone Pastures will be a Garden Community with resident Health and Wellbeing at its heart. This framework supports a healthy, strong, and connected community through thoughtful design of infrastructure, street-scapes, built environments, community and open spaces, community farming, and net-zero commitments.



We welcome your engagement and look forward to working collaboratively with the Councils, stakeholders, and a wide range of local community groups, harnessing your collective knowledge, creativity and skills to shape the future of the new garden community. At the back of this document you will find details of how to contribute your ideas.

Best wishes,
Jonathan Wallis
Director – Tritax Big Box

Introduction

Whetstone Pastures Garden Village was awarded Garden Village status by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in 2018 for a 937 acre (379 hectare) Site to the south of Leicester City and within Blaby District, shown on page 12 outlined in red. The land in blue is being promoted through the Harborough Local Plan and may be developed as a later phase.

Working with Blaby District Council, the Site's promoters have undertaken a masterplanning process, including design review to produce a Concept Framework Plan. We set out here the key principles that will underpin the development of Whetstone Pastures Garden Village. The Concept Framework Plan places significant emphasis on the delivery of sustainable development and builds upon the work that we presented in the Vision Document in 2020 / 2021.

The proposals will ensure that future inhabitants have the right infrastructure and services for sustainable, modern development. New neighbourhood hubs will be located within walking/cycling distance of each home, with high-quality education facilities co-located at the heart of the development. Landscape design and placemaking will underpin the proposals, with the integration of existing heritage assets, new open spaces and biodiversity enhancements that provide green spaces across the proposals and provide connectivity to existing communities.



- Surrounding Local Main Road Network
- Existing Village / Town Centres
- Existing Public Rights of Way
- Existing Sustrans Routes
- Existing Lanes
- Potential Alignment of New M1 Junction
- Strategic Road Connections
- Existing Water Bodies / Watercourses
- Extent of Green Infrastructure
- Extent of Water Management Areas
- Green & Blue Corridors
- Residential Areas
- Employment Areas
- Neighbourhood hubs
- Schools

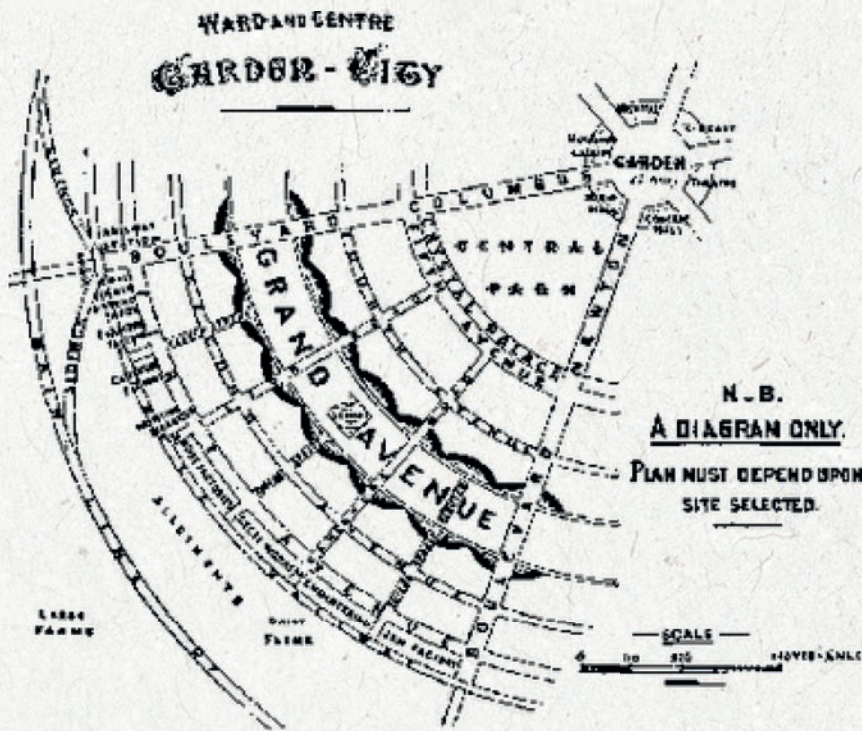
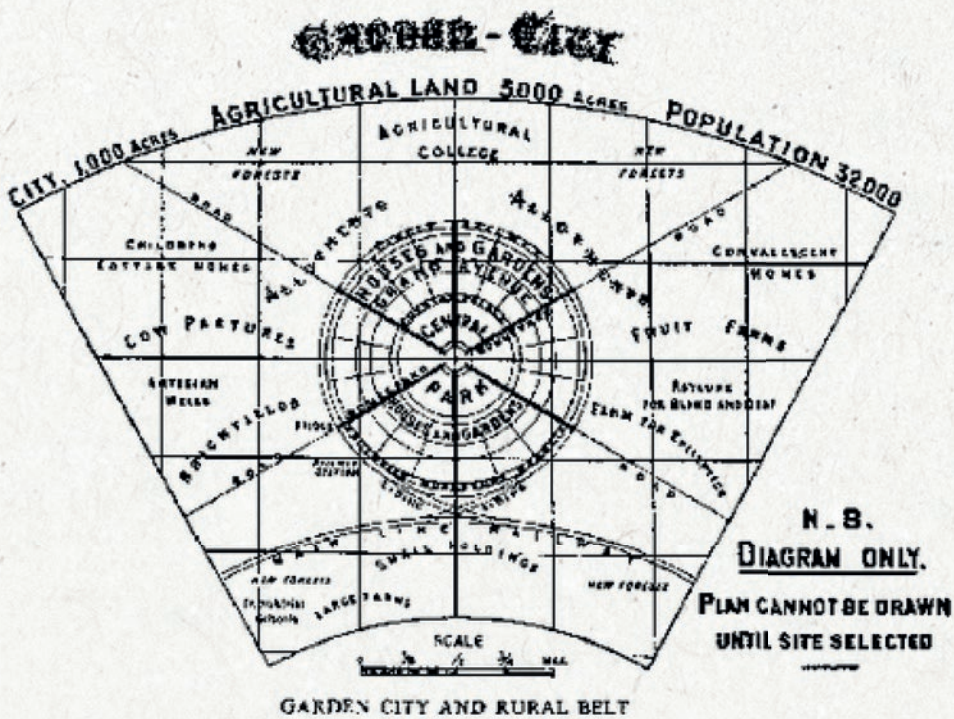
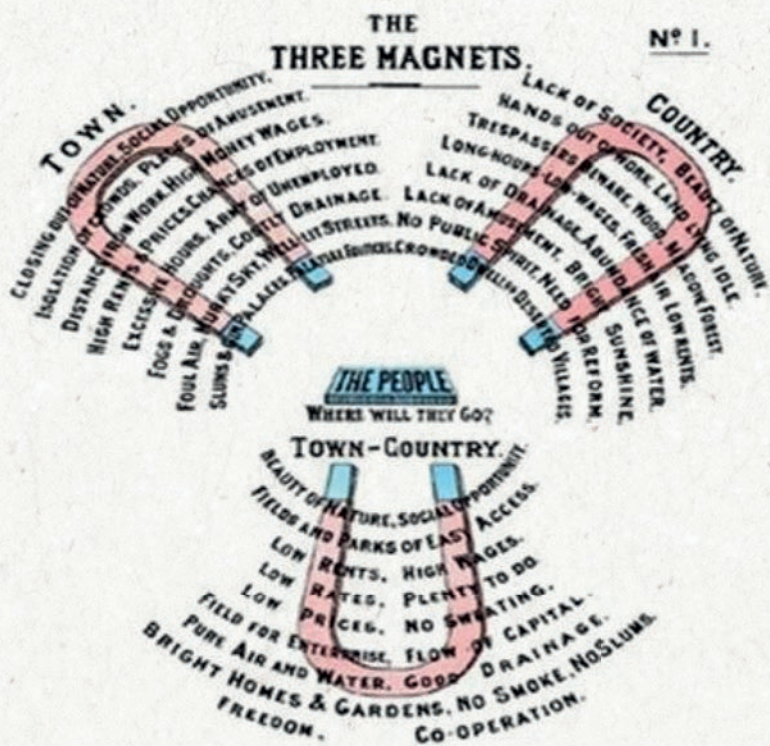
Garden City Movement

The vision for Whetstone Pastures Garden Village draws inspiration from the founding principles of the Garden City movement, initiated by Ebenezer Howard over a 100 years ago. Howard's concept was rooted in the creation of self-contained, balanced communities that integrated residential, employment, and landscape uses. Garden cities were designed to provide affordable homes and places to work and live, that offered a healthy and affordable, more affordable living environments in a contained community. The work of Ebenezer Howard led to the development of Letchworth Garden City and dozens of other garden cities worldwide, each based around a clearly planned settlement.

This legacy is reflected in the design approach for Whetstone Pastures, which seeks to reinterpret these principles in a way that is relevant to contemporary needs and future challenges. The proposed settlement will be structured to support:

- **A balanced mix of uses, including homes, employment spaces, and green infrastructure.**
- **Self-sufficiency and integration, with local amenities and services integrated on site.**
- **Access to nature and open space, promoting physical and mental well-being.**
- **A strong sense of place, shaped by locally distinctive design and community-focused public spaces.**

In line with Garden City principles, Whetstone Pastures will prioritise health, well-being, and sustainability, embedding low-carbon technologies and flexible working environments to support modern lifestyles. Innovation and technology will underpin, low carbon living and working. The development will enable a resilient community—one that reflects the enduring relevance of the Garden City movement while responding to the social, environmental, and economic imperatives of the 21st century.



The Vision

Whetstone Pastures - A Garden Community with residents' Health and Wellbeing at its heart. Creating a healthy, strong and connected community through the design of its infrastructure, streetscape, built environment, community spaces, open spaces, community farming, creative spaces and net zero commitments.

Whetstone Pastures will provide housing to meet the District's and Leicester City's unmet housing need. Residents will enjoy a high quality, attractive and safe environment which respects and enhances the special character of the existing natural and built environment. The mix of housing will reflect the needs of residents, including an appropriate balance of house types, sizes and tenures with the provision of affordable homes to meet the identified needs of the District.

The vision for Whetstone Pastures Garden Community was established in the Whetstone Pastures Vision Document August 2021. A summary of the vision is

set out below. The Vision Document underwent public consultation facilitated by the Site promoter, December 2020 - February 2021. This vision, along with the insights garnered from the consultation, has been instrumental in shaping the Concept Framework Plan and policy requirements for a strategic allocation within the emerging Local Plan.

This document is therefore complemented by the Whetstone Pastures Vision Document of August 2021 which provides a comprehensive understanding of the overarching vision and detailed proposals for the Garden Village.

A Unique Place

1. A unique identity
2. Beautifully and imaginatively designed neighbourhoods
3. Inspiring streets
4. Commitment to beauty
5. Public art
6. Flexible buildings
7. Mix of homes
8. Healthy spaces
9. Quality of place

Community and Facilities

1. Connected
2. Timely delivery
3. A community trust that maintains the garden village
4. Future proofed
5. Neighbourhood hubs
6. Community spaces

Health

1. Active lifestyles
2. Green spaces
3. Community farming and healthy eating
4. School farms
5. Healthcare
6. Health routes
7. Healthy workers

Natural Environment and Open Space

1. Maximise landscape assets
2. Connected greenspace
3. Multi-functional open space
4. Innovative water management
5. Enhancing and creating habitats

Transport and Connectivity

1. Maximising travel by bicycle and on foot
2. Gear Change 2020
3. Electric vehicle infrastructure
4. Connectivity
5. Innovative public transport
6. Sustainable transport for workers

Jobs and Skills

1. A logistics park
2. Enhancing skills and training opportunities
3. Education
4. Neighbourhood Hubs and Garden Village Centre
5. Support for home working
6. Shared workspaces
7. Reliable high-speed fibre broadband

Climate Mitigation

1. Working towards net zero Carbon 2050
2. Climate resilience, water management and green infrastructure
3. Energy education
4. Future Homes Standard
5. Energy security
6. Waste

Long-Term Stewardship

1. Governance
2. Asset management
3. Good Estate management
4. Community empowerment
5. Long-term funding
6. Communication

Whetstone Pastures Vision, 2021.

Our vision for Whetstone Pastures is to cultivate a community with resident wellbeing at its heart. We want to create a healthy, sustainable and connected place. This will be achieved through the design quality of its built environment, where streets, open spaces and net zero buildings will create a strong sense of identity and leave an enduring legacy on the site.

The new community will be set within an extensive network of attractive spaces that celebrate the heritage of the site. Three community hubs will lie at the heart of the neighbourhoods. Within these, the retention of existing heritage buildings will foster a strong sense of identity and the agricultural legacy of the site will be sustained through the delivery of a community farm. Community infrastructure, including schools, will be a key part of our proposals. The development will provide space for the performing arts and other creative activities. Those who live, work and visit Whetstone Pastures will be able to embrace a connected lifestyle, where a rich mix of uses, alongside access to a wide variety of new exciting open spaces and landscapes, incorporating existing leisure routes, will provide for the everyday needs of residents and support the growth of the community.



The status of the Concept Framework Plan

The Whetstone Pastures Concept Framework Plan is based upon the evidence base set out in the Technical Appendix and summarised in Chapter 2. These sections set out a clear set of constraints and opportunities. The Concept Framework Plan establishes the key principles that will inform the preparation of further detailed proposals while ensuring the core themes for delivering the shared vision for the development of the Garden Village are delivered.

Detailed proposals for Whetstone Pastures Garden Village will need to be shaped by further technical and design work which will involve the engagement of the public and key stakeholders. The Concept Framework Plan provides a useful tool to show how high-quality outcomes could be

achieved and forms the basis for assessing the broad development impact and mitigation as a result of the proposals. It is anticipated that the key strategic principles identified in this Concept Framework Plan will inform the site allocation policy in the Local Plan and guide the detailed design process.

The status of the Whetstone Pastures Concept Framework Plan is as an evidence-based document produced to inform plan making.

As the project moves forward through to detailed design, further testing and analysis will be required in the preparation of any future planning applications, which will include further public and stakeholder engagement.

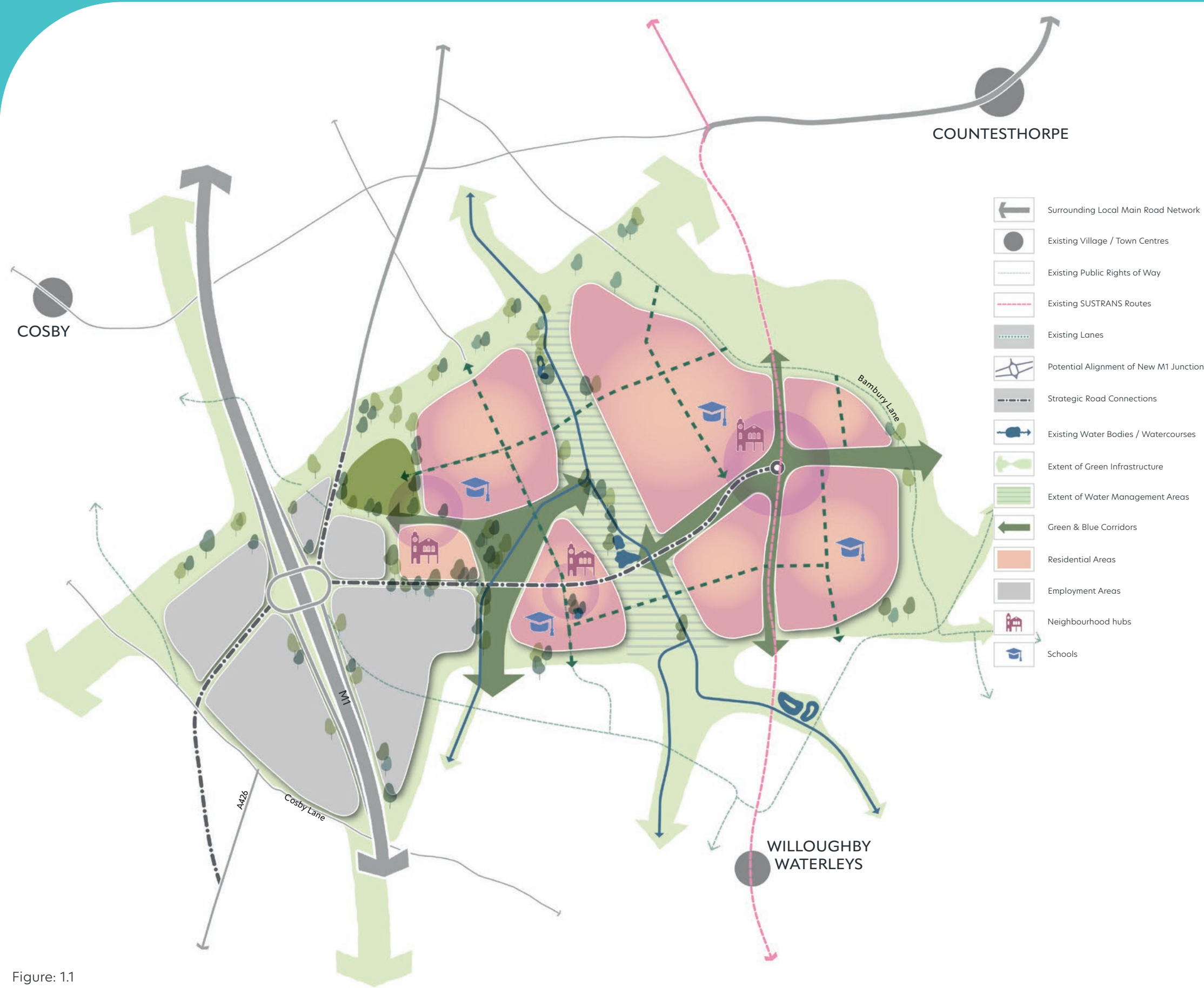


Figure: 1.1

Concept Framework Plan.

Site Location

Whetstone Pastures is located in southern Leicestershire adjacent to the M1 motorway. The Site is located around 6 miles south of Leicester City Centre.

The Site is located within Blaby District. The settlements of Cosby and Countesthorpe lie to the north-west and north-east of the Site, respectively. The village of Willoughby Waterleys lies to the south-east of the Site.

The Site is ideally located to support a mixed use garden community that can deliver a thriving place to live and work. The Site lies in the centre of the economic sub-region known as the 'Golden Triangle', the centre of UK logistics. The logistics industry makes up a significant proportion of the Leicester and Leicestershire employment market and continues to grow. The logistics sector is attracted to the area as businesses can enjoy easy access to the major motorways, ports, railways and airports, enabling deliveries to reach over 90% of the UK population within four hours. This proximity to customers allows businesses to stay competitive as well as reduce HGV miles on the road network.

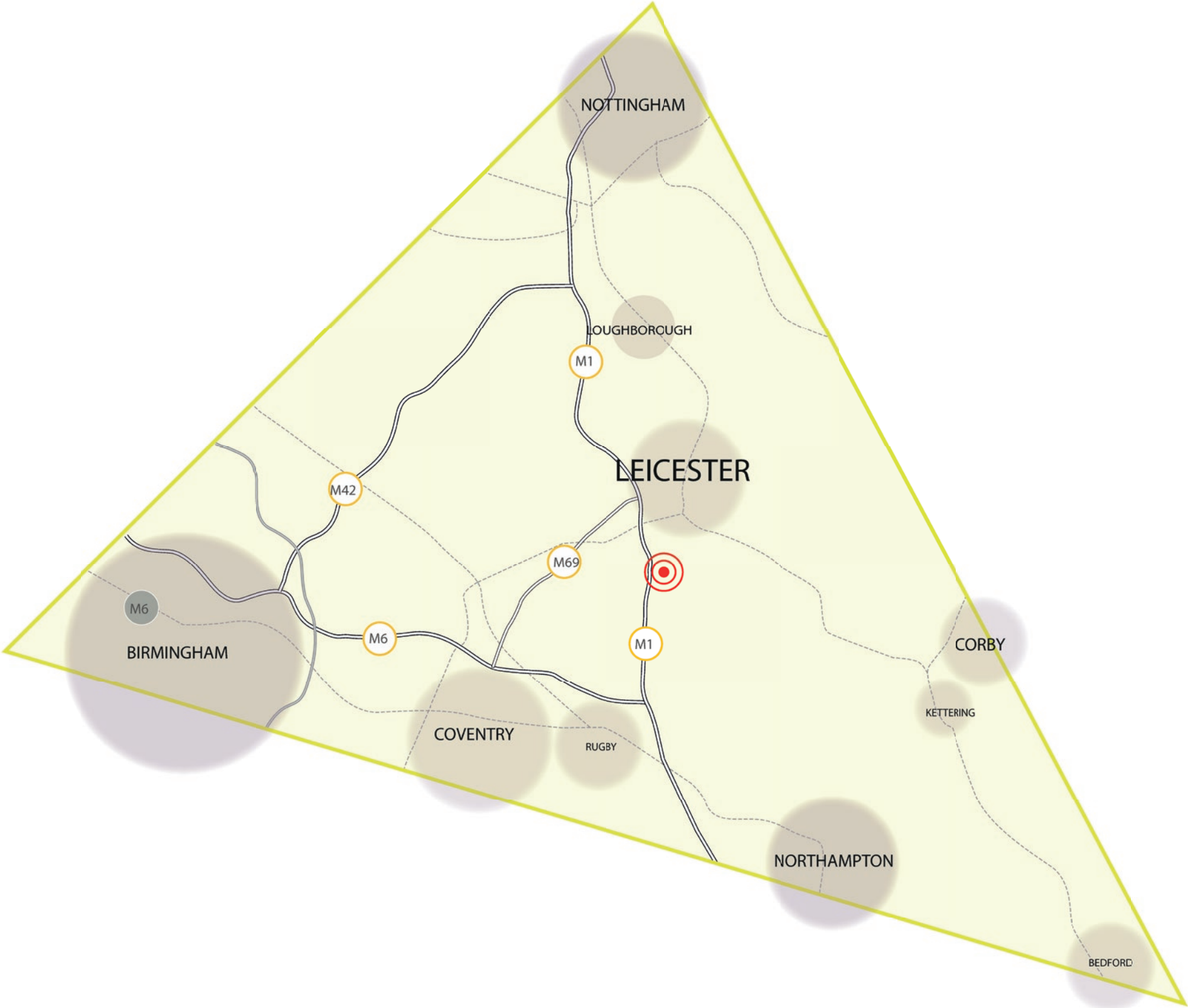


Figure: 1.2

The Golden Triangle.



Figure: 1.3

Role of this Document

The master planning process has been informed by best practice principles and the Site opportunities and constraints. Careful consideration of comprehensive studies has been undertaken spanning landscape, ecology, ground conditions, air quality, acoustics, cultural heritage, flood and drainage, topography and transport and accessibility, as well as establishing the infrastructure and community facilities required to support a sustainable community.

Beyond merely supporting the allocation of the Site, the Whetstone Pastures Concept Framework Plan serves multiple purposes including:

- **Fostering a comprehensive and collaborative partnership approach to the development of this Garden Village.**
- **Establishing foundation principles for creating a distinct sense of place through exemplary design and placemaking.**
- **Outlining development principles centred around: Transport and Connectivity, Green and Blue Infrastructure, Open Space, Sports and Recreation, Climate, Employment, Community, Digital Connectivity, Renewables, Stewardship to guide further detailed technical work and master planning.**
- **Contributing to the realisation of broader growth aspirations in Southeast Leicestershire and guiding future planning decisions.**
- **Providing an informed basis for the preparation and determination of a planning applications for the new community.**

Document Structure

This document has been written to provide a clear narrative that will guide the development framework and planning process at Whetstone Pastures. The document is divided up into several chapters, to provide an overview of the process to all stakeholders and interested parties.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Setting out the Vision and role of the document

CHAPTER 2 SITE CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Setting out the opportunities and constraints of the Site and surrounding area

CHAPTER 3 CONCEPT FRAMEWORK PLAN

Sets out the key design principles and placemaking aspirations which have guided the emerging spatial plan

CHAPTER 4 DELIVERY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Summarises how the Site will be delivered

CHAPTER 5 NEXT STEPS AND CONCLUSION

Sets out the next steps in the development journey for Whetstone Pastures

APPENDIX TECHNICAL BACKGROUND





Partnership Working

Establishing a new garden community can only be achieved through partnership with multiple stakeholders. Blaby District Council, Homes England, the landowners and Tritax Big Box have worked collaboratively to inform this Concept Framework Plan. This collaboration has established a shared vision with a series of core themes and design principles that support the objectives of the Local Plan.

Key stakeholders, including Leicestershire County Council, the Environment Agency and Natural England have been engaged in creating the Concept Framework Plan through design workshops culminating in an external design review by Design Midlands.

The Whetstone Pastures Vision Document underwent public consultation between December 2020 – February 2021, and has been a key step in shaping the emerging proposals. Consultation on the Concept Framework Plan is an important part of the development journey, and the team are committed to continue engagement as the project progresses.

Further information on how you can engage is set out in Chapter 5 – Conclusion and Next Steps – of this document.

The Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan 2018

The origins of Whetstone Pastures lay in the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan 2018 where the location of a new motorway junction on the M1 was identified; Junction 20a along with an east – west expressway. The identification of this strategic growth area presented an opportunity for a new settlement in this location. This was supported by Homes England through the designation of Whetstone Pastures as a 'Garden Village' in 2018. The Strategic Growth Plan was jointly prepared by the seven District and Borough Councils in Leicestershire, Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership, to set out a strategy for the growth and development of Leicester and Leicestershire up to 2050. It is a non-statutory strategic plan that provides a framework to guide individual Local Plans.

The Strategic Growth Plan focuses on four key matters:

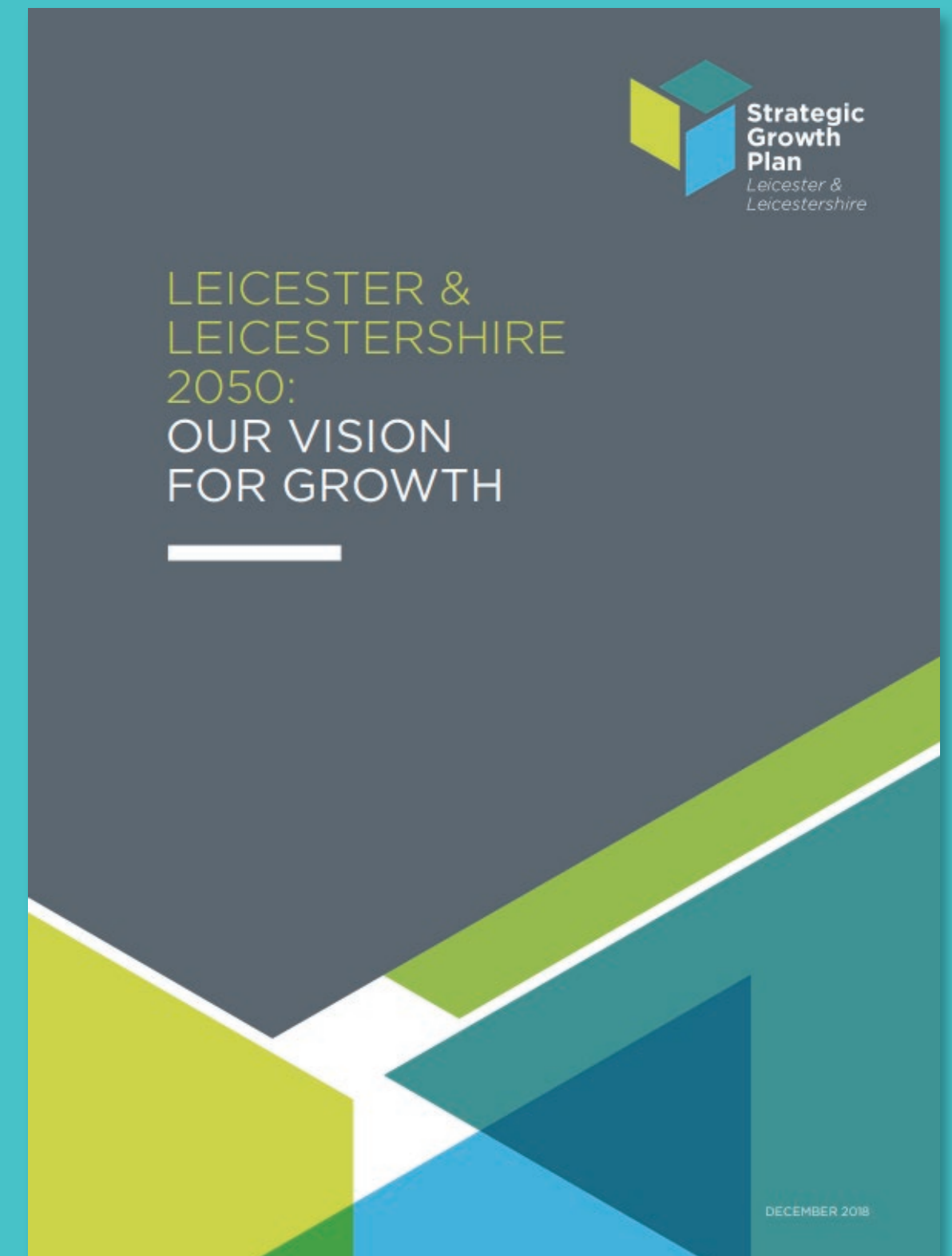
- Delivering new housing
- Supporting the economy
- Identifying essential infrastructure
- Protecting the environment and built heritage

It considers the scale of growth in terms of housing and employment land based on the evidence set out in the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment 2017.

The Strategic Growth Plan recognises that significant new development cannot be accommodated within Leicester and Leicestershire without significant investment in infrastructure and services.

It proposes:

- Focussing growth in areas close to existing employment clusters and opportunities and new infrastructure proposals.
- Focussing growth on major strategic locations and to reduce the amount that takes place in existing towns, villages and rural areas.
- Five key growth areas are identified. Those relevant to Blaby District are: Leicester city, the A46 Priority Growth Corridor and the A5 Improvement Corridor.
- Delivery of the strategic growth areas will be as 21st century garden towns, villages and suburbs. New housing and employment will be planned together with new and improved roads, public transport, schools, health services, local shops and open space.



Blaby Growth Plan

The Blaby Growth Plan sets out the ambitions of Blaby District Council for the delivery of housing infrastructure and jobs under the framework of 6 key principles which include:

- **Infrastructure led**
- **Integrated and self-sustaining**
- **Active and healthy**
- **Well designed**
- **Well connected**
- **Accessible for employment, business and skills**

The document is intended to work in conjunction with a comprehensive strategic framework, supporting service delivery and planning for the future. As well as supporting the Council's ambitions for making Blaby a great place to live the Growth Plan is promoted by Blaby District Council as the starting point for planning and place-shaping within Blaby.

Strategic Transport Evidence

The Leicester and Leicestershire Authorities commissioned a Strategic Growth Options and Constraints Mapping Study as well as a Strategic Transport Assessment Stage 1 study to inform the delivery of the Strategic Growth Plan.

The Strategic Growth Options and Constraints Mapping Study has been prepared to assist in the consideration of locational choices around delivery of the long-term vision set out within the Strategic Growth Plan to 2050 and to determine whether they offer suitable and appropriate solutions to deliver sustainable locations for new communities and economic growth.

The Strategic Transport Assessment Stage 1 was prepared by Leicestershire County Council to assess the respective transport implications of differing housing distribution scenarios between 2036 and 2051, it is intended to provide a further piece of evidence to help identify how growth should be distributed across Leicester & Leicestershire over the long term. A Stage 2 transport assessment is due to be completed late 2025.

It is advised by the commissioning authority that these studies are technical evidence, and their publication is intended to support the delivery of the Strategic Growth Plan, not dictate decision-making processes for any individual local planning authority given local plans remain of primary importance.

Blaby Local Plan Review

Blaby District Council are aiming to publish the Regulation 19 Local Plan November 2025. The Regulation 19 Local Plan has been awaiting inputs from sub-regional work which has been undertaken. Blaby District Council intend to submit the local plan for examination April 2026 with adoption of the plan anticipated for April 2027.

CHAPTER 2

Opportunities & Constraints

The preliminary studies undertaken have supported an overarching understanding of the constraints and opportunities presented at the Site. These are summarised here. A detailed summary of the constraints is provided in the Technical Appendix to this document, which provides greater detail on each of the topic areas. Considering these aspects in the round has allowed the development of a balanced Concept Framework Plan which has taken account of both constraints and opportunities to ensure a development that is deliverable, whilst retaining significant elements of its natural landscape and Site’s historic characteristics.

Site Constraints Plan

The Constraints Plan opposite at Figure 2.1 maps the constraints identified by the suite of technical assessments and reports which informs the Concept Framework Plan.

This includes:

- Topography
- Landscape and ecology
- Heritage and archaeology
- Flooding and Drainage
- Transport corridors

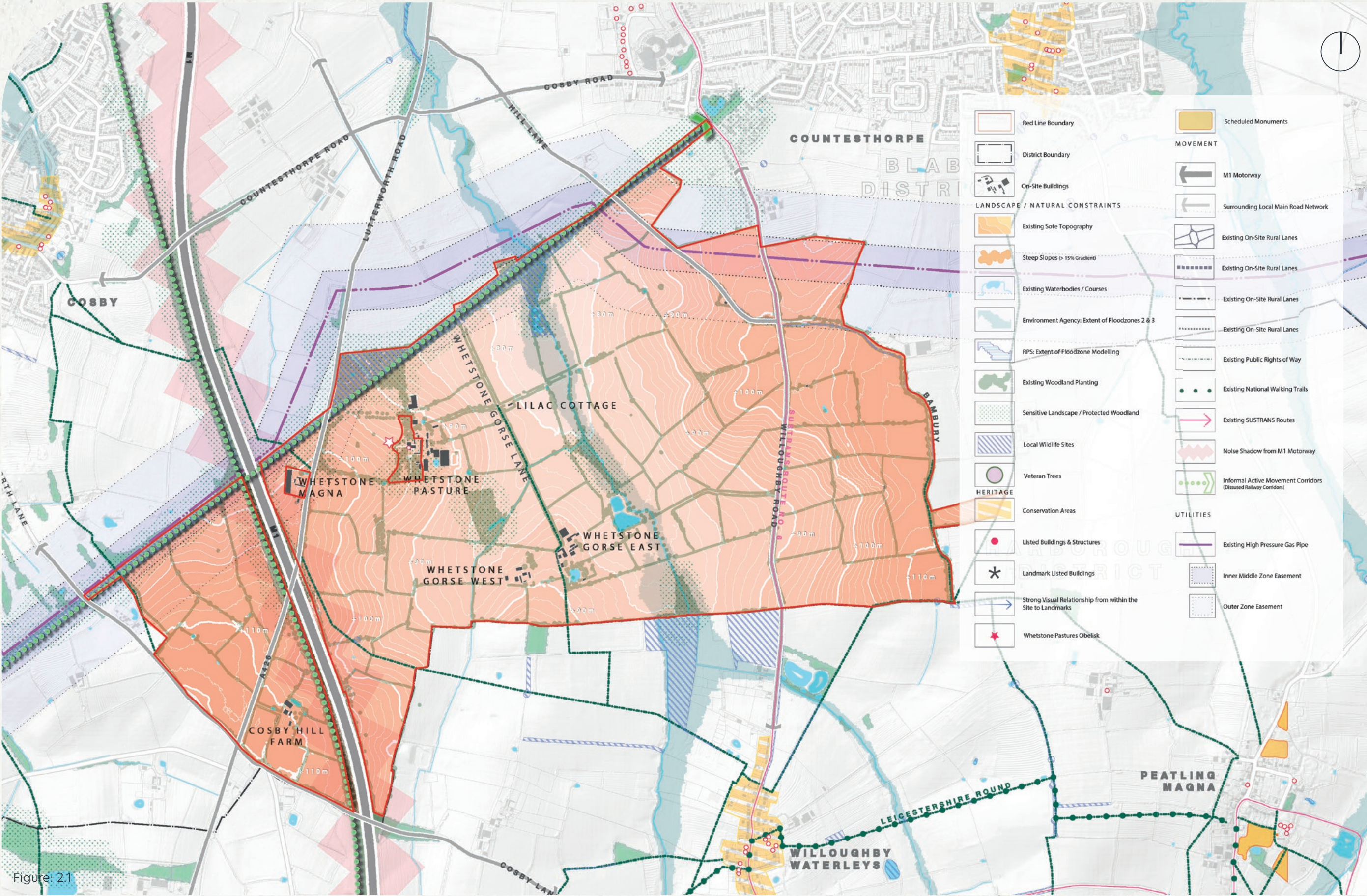


Figure: 2.1

Constraints Plan.

Site Opportunities Plan

The Opportunities Plan, (figure 2.2) maps the opportunities that the Site presents, identified by the analysis of the wider area. This has identified the green infrastructure and existing built heritage as the starting point for the design of the garden village.

This includes:

- New M1 junction
- Open space connections reinforcing existing woodland and hedgerow structures
- Water management along the Whetstone Brook Corridor
- Retention and reuse of heritage buildings
- Repurposing agricultural lanes as active transport routes

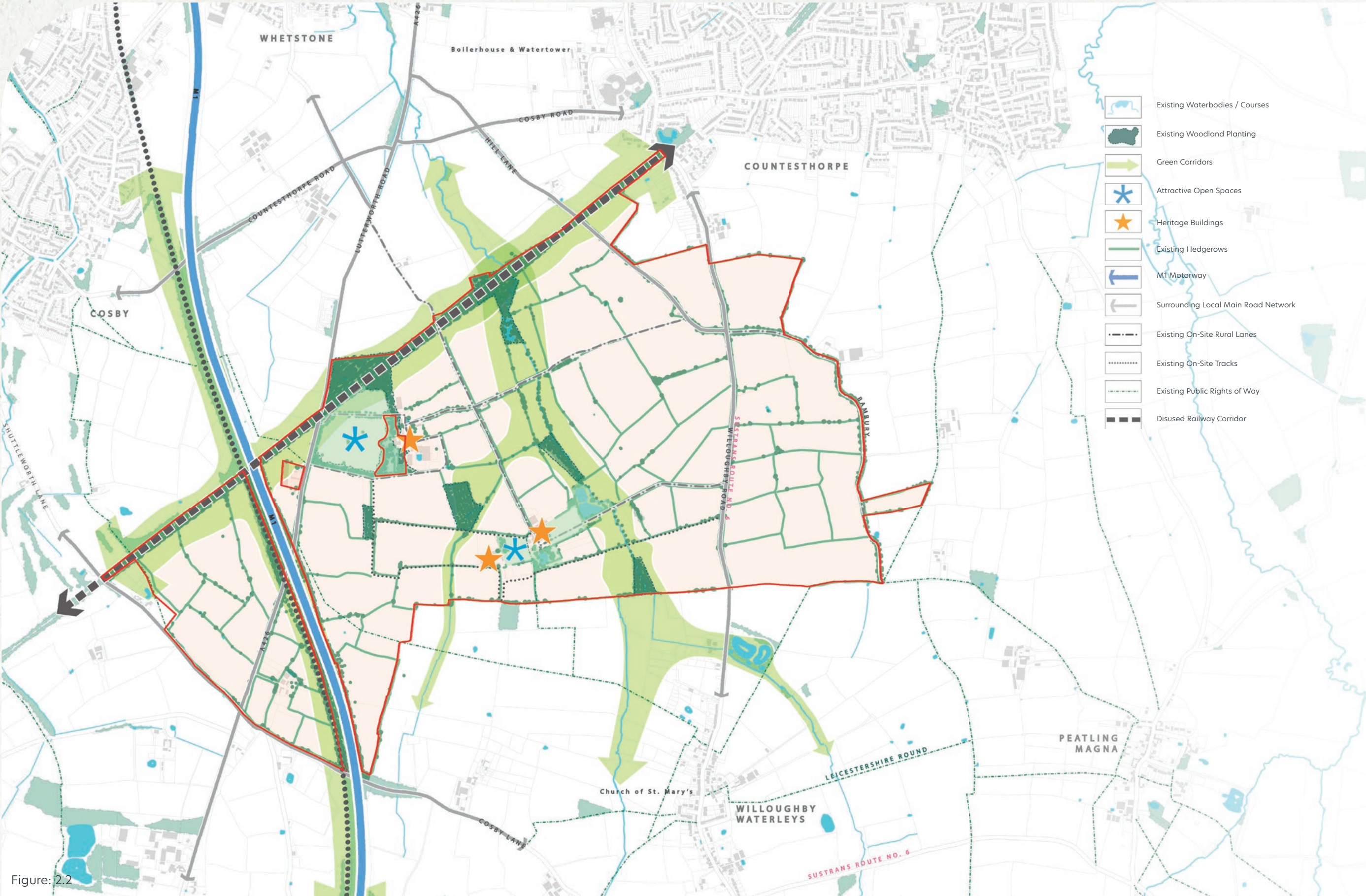


Figure: 2.2

Site Opportunities Plan.

Site Context and Background

About the Site

The Site benefits from a unique setting, defined by the historic landscape, network of lanes and the surrounding settlements and communities. All of these elements inform the Site character and the emerging development proposals.

This section provides a high level overview of the special nature of the Site alongside the findings of the preliminary studies that have been carried out for Whetstone Pastures. The studies undertaken to date are appropriate to the stage which the proposals are at in the development plan process. Technical work will continue to develop and evolve to inform the delivery of the Garden Village.

The preliminary studies have informed the Concept Framework Plan, including the location and form of development and appropriate mitigation measures. There are no constraints to the development of the Site that cannot be mitigated, and the Site is available, viable and deliverable.

This section highlights the key spatial constraints/ opportunities for the development of the land. An in depth review of the technical work can be found in the Technical Appendix.

Topography

The topography of the Whetstone Pastures will be a key influence on the respective character areas of the Site. The topography and the immediate context of the Site is characterised by a gentle and shallow valley floor formed by the Whetstone Brook, that runs south - north through the centre of the Site.

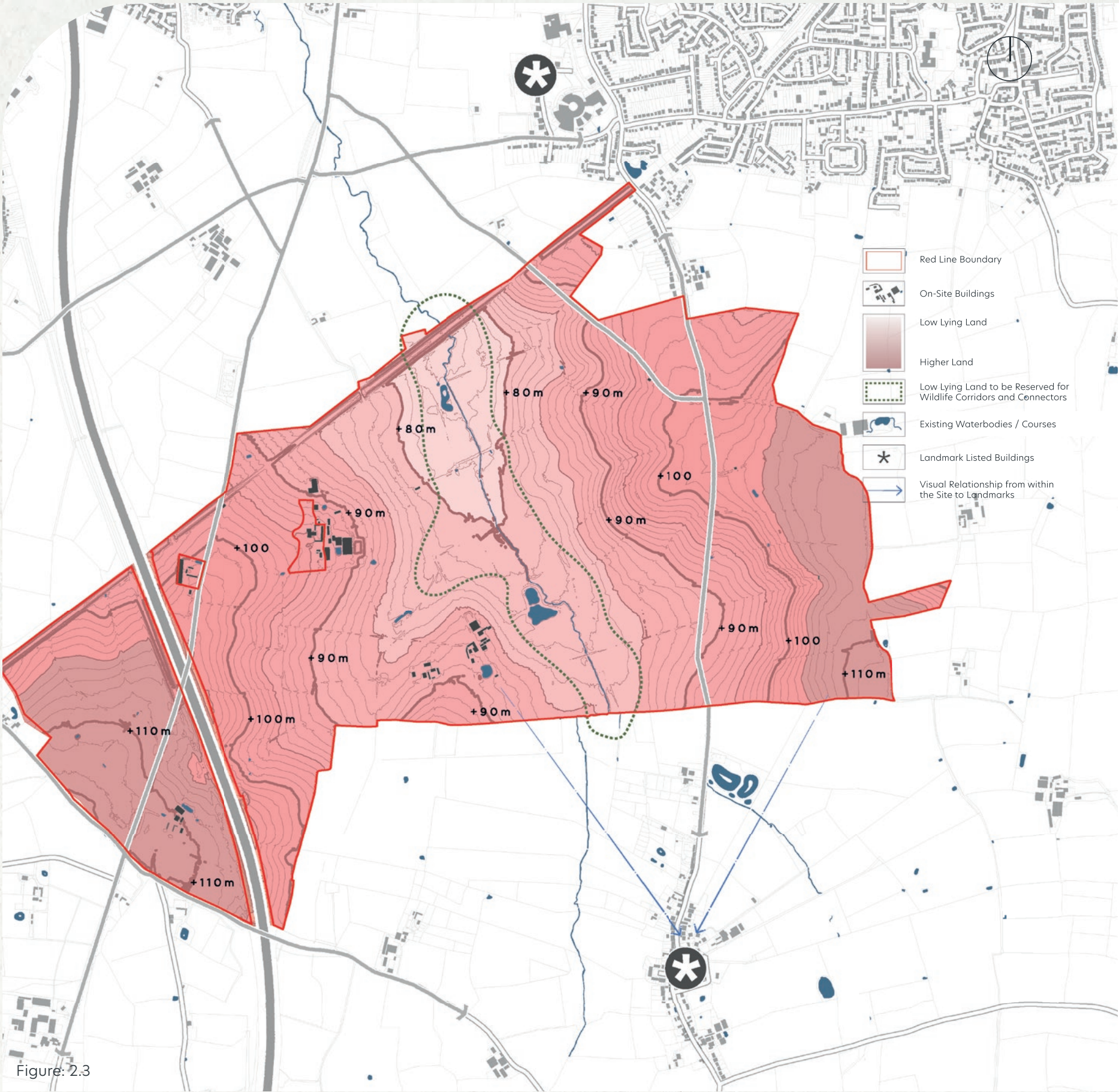


Figure: 2.3

Topography Plan.

Heritage and Archaeology

The heritage of the Site and the surrounding area has been an important consideration in the evolution of the proposals. A heritage setting assessment and archaeological desk-based assessment has reviewed the heritage assets within and adjacent to the Site.

This has identified:

- **Whetstone Pastures Residential Home (known as Whetstone Pastures House) which is Grade II listed.**
- **Six non-designated heritage assets.**
- **Willoughby Waterleys Conservation Area.**
- **No archaeological constraints have been identified.**

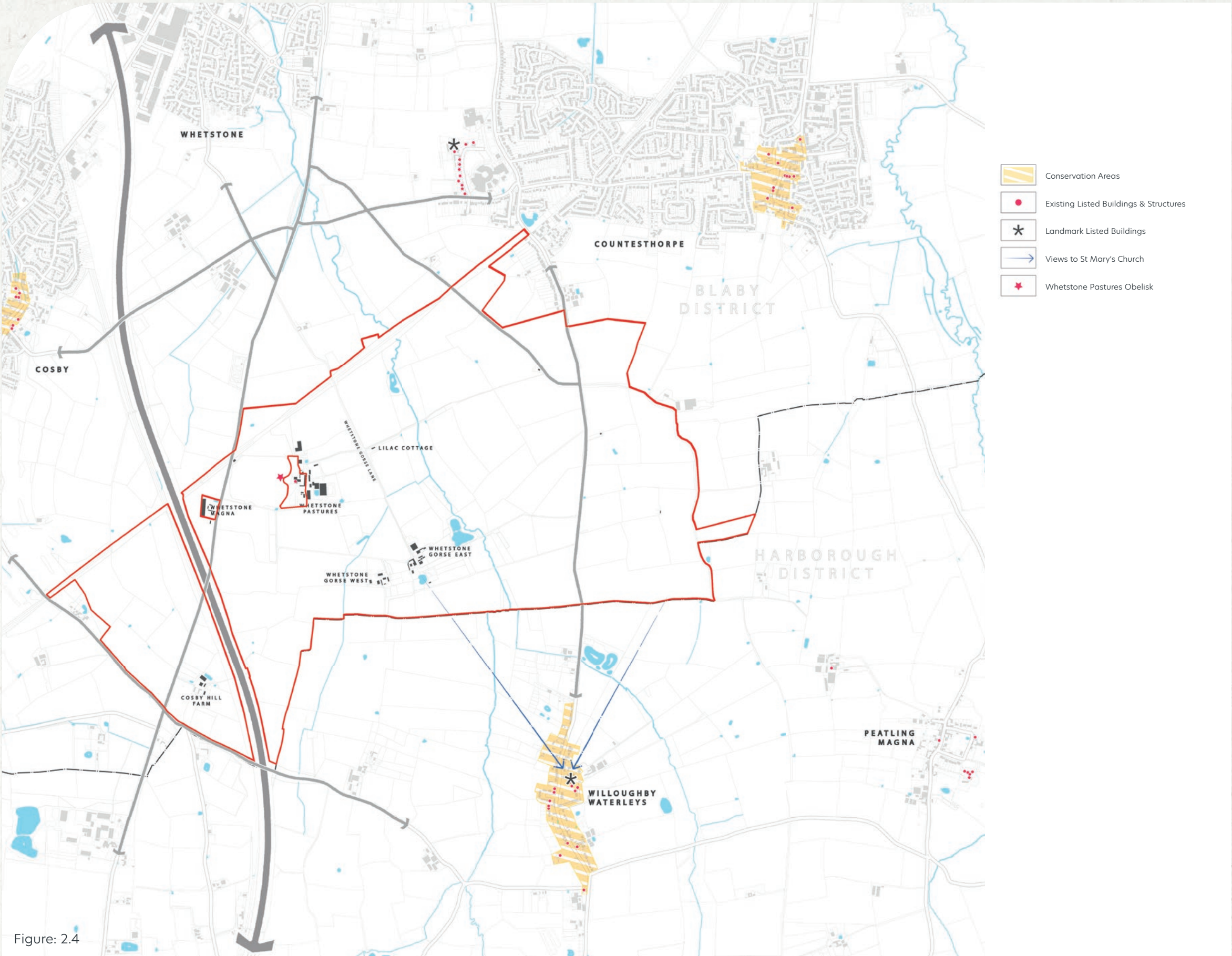


Figure: 2.4

Heritage Plan.

Landscape

The Site is characterised by a rolling landscape. Woodland blocks intersperse the fields, along with occasional ponds and Whetstone Brook, providing a wildlife corridor. A smaller watercourse also runs from the southwestern corner of the Site and connects to Whetstone Brook just to the north of the fisheries. The Site has historically been in mixed arable and pastoral agricultural use and comprises a mosaic of agricultural fields, with pasture near Whetstone Pastures House and arable land to the east, south, and west.

The Site’s landscape character has been an important consideration in the development of the Concept Framework Plan. The visual and physical character of the landscape is not considered to be exceptional at a local level and contains no features or characteristics that are not commonly found in the surrounding area or which are particularly elevated in terms of their sensitivity. There are no Tree Preservation Orders on the Site. There are a small number of woodland blocks and shelter belts, but these are not identified as ‘Ancient Woodland’. The predominant species are ash and mature oak, and there are a number of veteran or category A specimens.

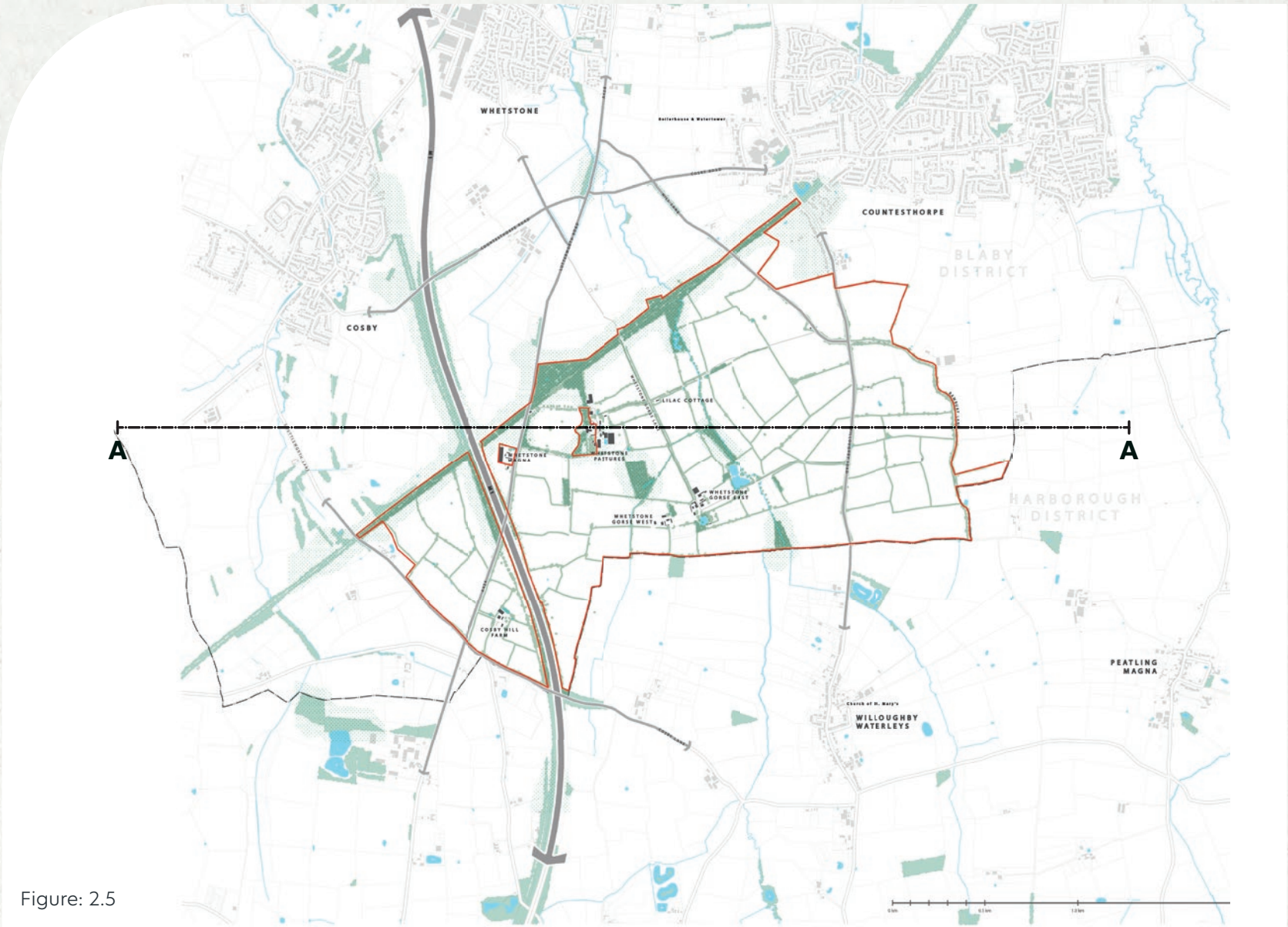
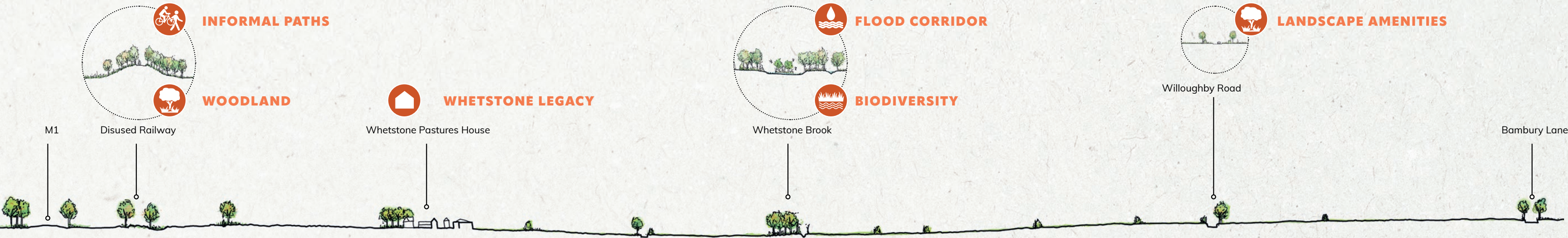


Figure: 2.5

Site Section Location.



Ecology and Natural Habitat

A suite of ecology surveys have been completed across the Site to inform the Concept Framework Plan including a desk based assessment and site surveys including an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, pilot winter bird survey, pilot breeding bird survey, badger walkover and great crested newt Environmental DNA survey.

The vast majority of the Site is under agricultural management, either through arable cultivation or pasture for grazing. The arable crops provide negligible value for on-site ecology and biodiversity. The pasture fields support improved and poor semi-improved grasslands and are of low ecological value. However, some more species rich grassland fields are present on the Site. The proposed development will achieve a Biodiversity Net Gain of 10%.

There are 6 Local Wildlife Sites and a further 5 potential Local Wildlife Site within the Site, and with two additional sites located immediately adjacent to the Site boundaries. Onsite and offsite Local Wildlife Site will need to be considered, however the Site has sufficient flexibility and capacity to retain and protect valuable features within the development layout.

Hedgerows

The Site includes an extensive network of hedgerows, the majority of which are species-poor and intensively managed. There are a small number of species-rich hedgerows with mature standard trees, many of which are associated with the existing lanes/roads within the Site.

Woodland

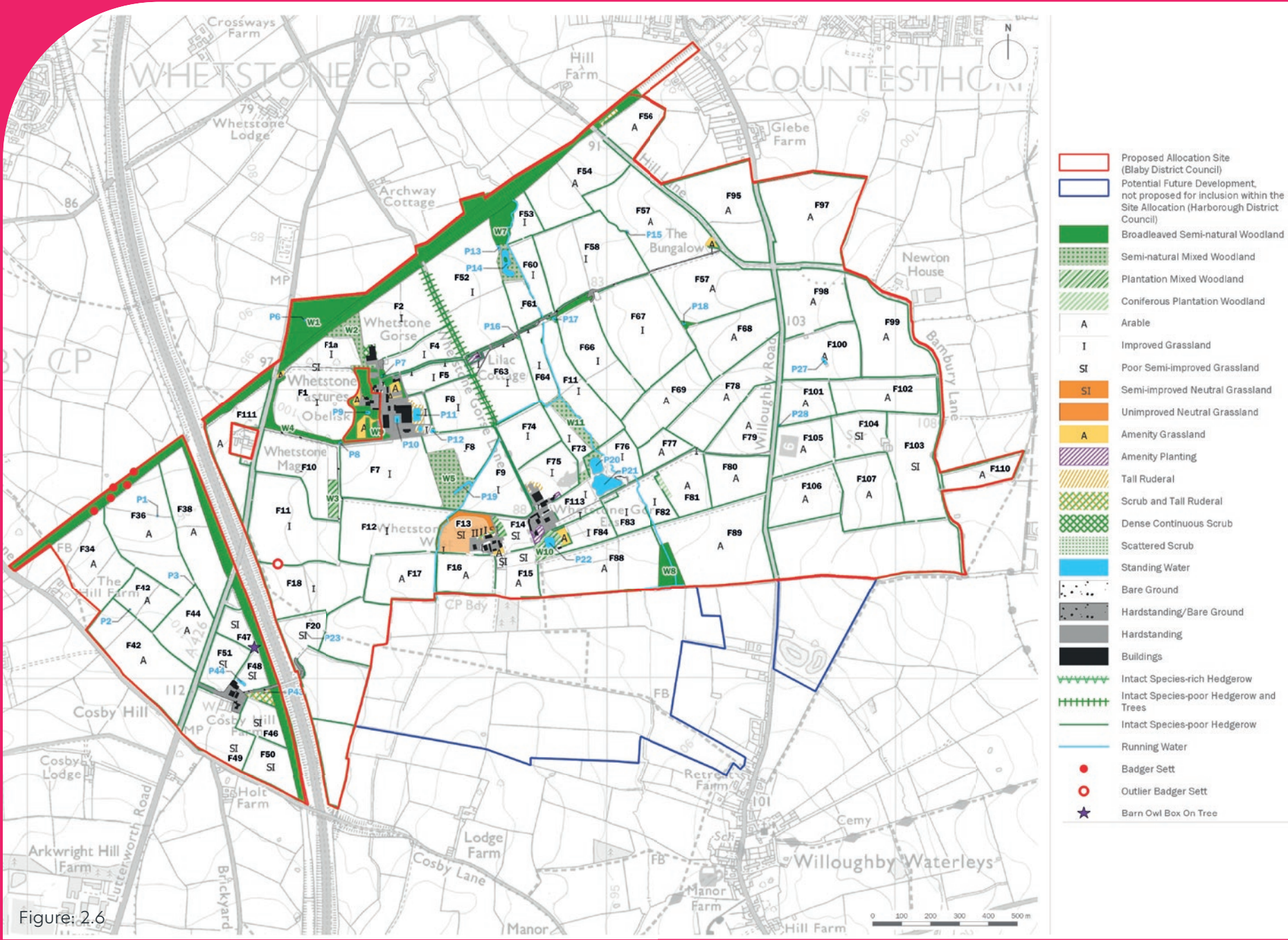
Blocks of woodland are present across the Site. This includes small blocks of semi-natural woodland and young plantation woodland. The most notable woodland feature is along the dismantled railway line, which runs along the entire northern boundary of the Site, and forms part of a Local Wildlife Site.

Aquatic Habitats

The Site is bisected by Whetstone Brook, flowing from south to north through the centre of the Site and feeding into the River Soar. There are multiple ponds present across the Site, these are typically in relatively poor condition: aquatic plant species are limited in their range and abundance, and several of the ponds were found to be dry.

Species

A preliminary suite of ecology species surveys has been completed across the Site to understand the general value of the Site for protected and priority species. Further details of the findings are set out in the Technical Appendix.



Habitat Plan.

Surface Water Drainage and Flooding

Whetstone Pastures is located within the Whetstone Brook valley, where the Whetstone Brook flows through the Site in a northerly direction. Whetstone Brook has very low flows during dry seasons, with significant flows in the winter and following large storms. The brook has a clearly defined flood plain which has been considered as part of the proposals.

Utilities

An existing National High Pressure gas main is located in close proximity to the northern Site boundary within the Site. The offset requirements are reflected in the Concept Framework Plan.

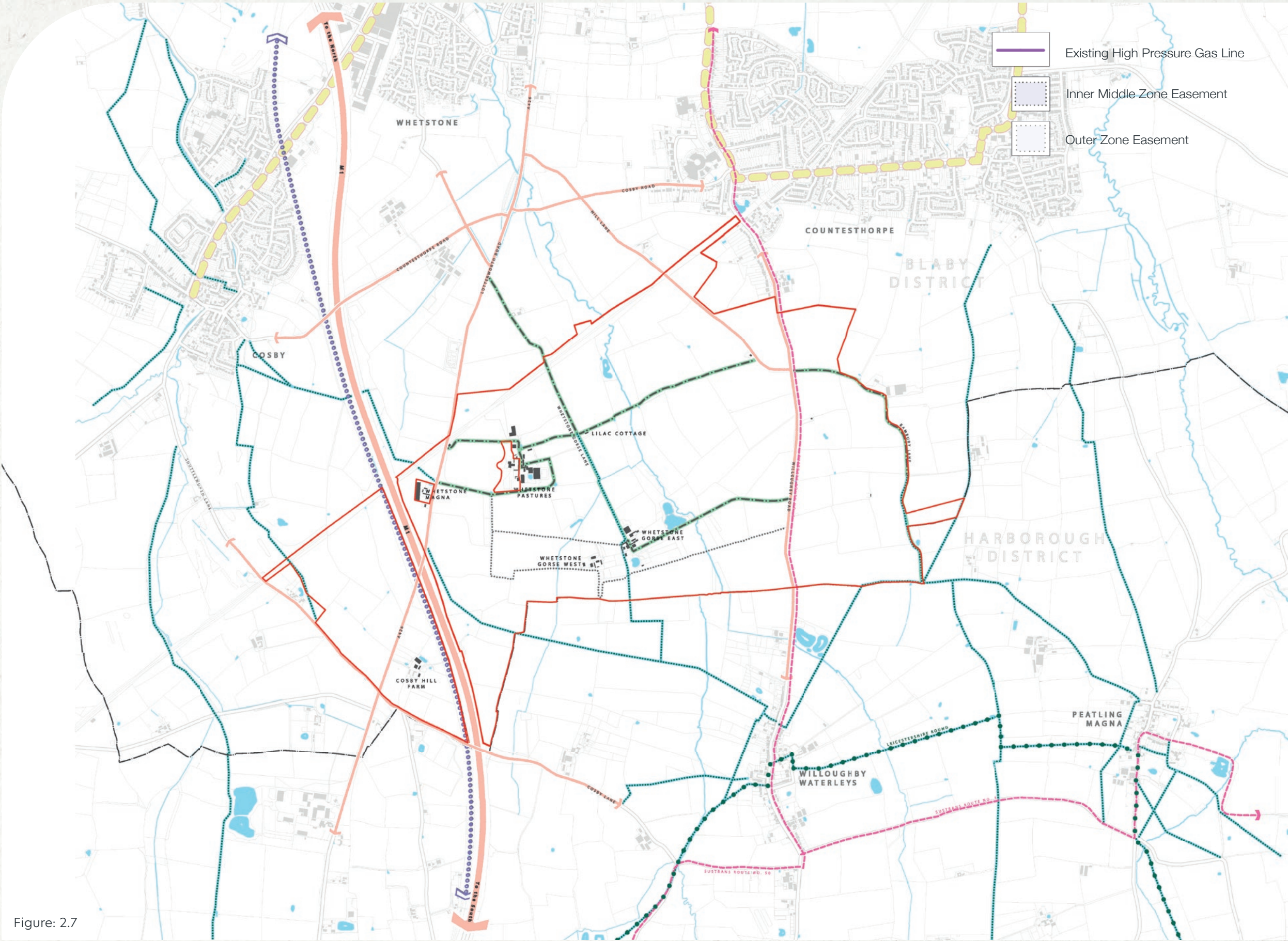


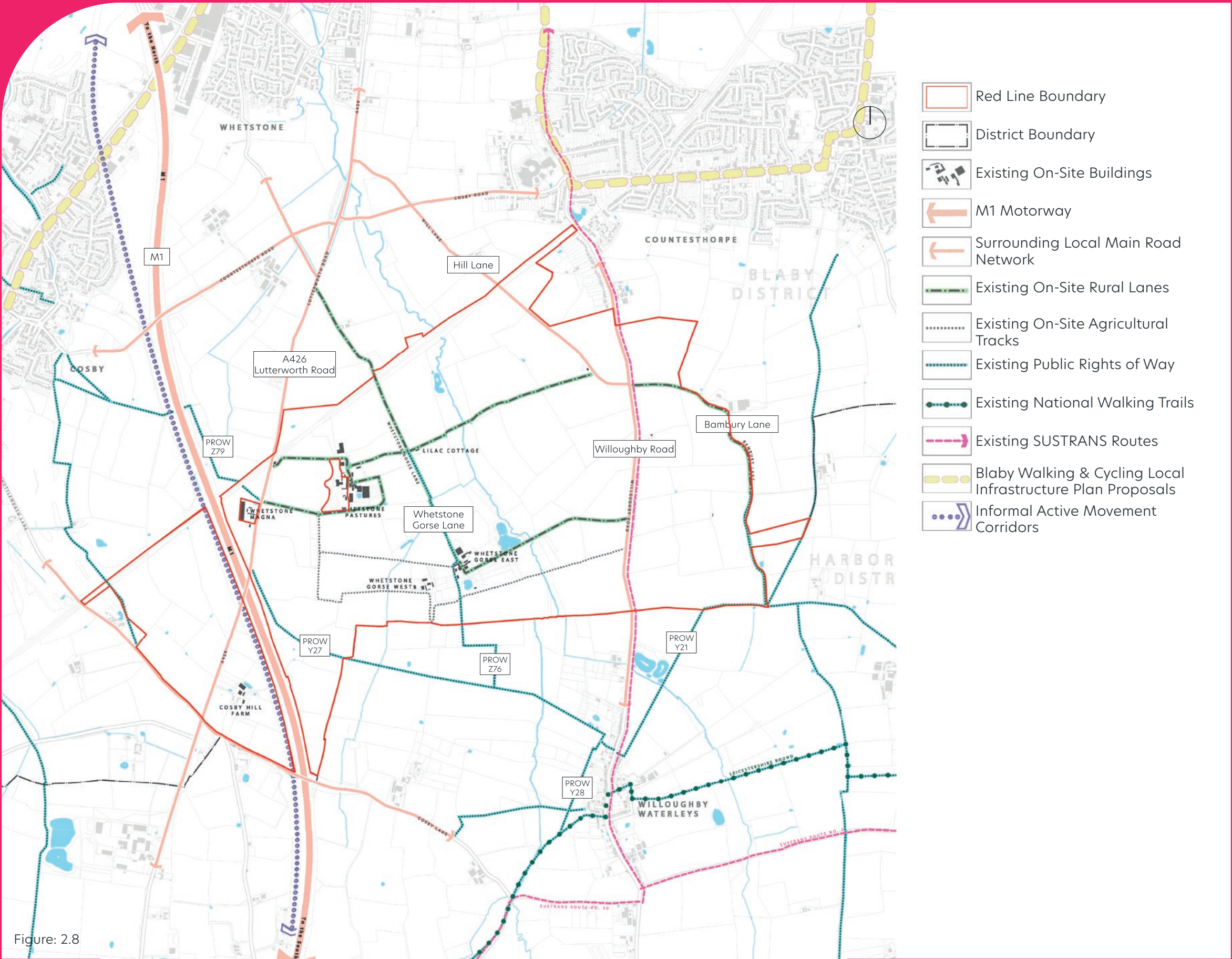
Figure: 2.7

Utility Plan.

Access & Movement

The Site is located approximately 3km to the south of Blaby and 10km to the south of Leicester City Centre. Whetstone Pastures is intersected by three roads routing in a north-south direction, the M1 motorway through the western portion of the Site and the A426 Lutterworth Road and Willoughby Road through the eastern portion of the Site. Narborough Railway Station and South Wigston Railway Station are both within approximately 5km of the centre of Whetstone Pastures and bus services close to the Site provide access to Leicester and the wider urban area.

Several Public Rights of Way and the National Cycle Network route 6 provides access to central Leicester via Willoughby Road and heads east towards Market Harborough. National Cycle Network route 50 runs south towards Gilmorton, Crick and Daventry. The proposals will consider how connections can be made to the existing and proposed walking and cycle routes, identified in the Blaby Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.



Movement Plan.

Surrounding Settlements

The proposals are being developed with regard to the Site’s setting and relationship with existing settlements. The Site lies in close proximity to Countesthorpe and Willoughby Waterleys. The delivery of Whetstone Pastures will alter the existing landscape of the Site, and mitigating any impact on adjacent settlements is a key priority.

The urban form and built character of the surrounding settlements has also informed the proposals at Whetstone Pastures Garden Village. An initial analysis of the surrounding settlements has been undertaken to inform the design principles. These are summarised over the next two pages, with additional information provided within the Technical Appendix.

Countesthorpe (1 mile from the Site)

Countesthorpe is a sprawling historic village in Blaby district with a population of 6,000. The historic core is defined by key streets and spaces, including The Square, Main Street, and Central Street. Red brick buildings with slate roofs dominate in the historic core of the settlement. Significant expansion in the 19th and 20th century has created a diversity of architectural styles.



- Non-residential Buildings
- Residential Buildings
- Key Frontages
- Secondary Frontages
- Watercourses
- Roads

Cosby (0.8 miles from the Site)

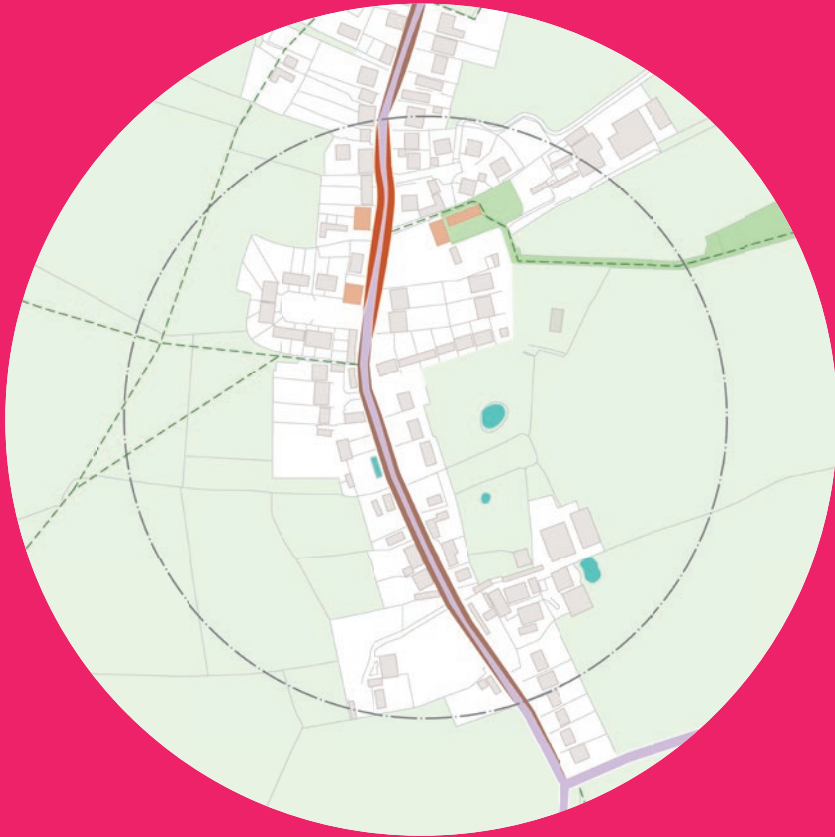
The village of Cosby has a rich history as a predominantly agricultural settlement. The village underwent significant transformation during the 19th century, marked by the rise of industrialisation. The heart of the village, centred around Main Street and the Nook, exudes a unique charm. Here, a small stream meanders amidst mature trees, creating a verdant corridor. The architecture is diverse, ranging from terrace cottages to prominent standalone structures like the church and grand detached residences. Significant growth of the settlement in the 19th and 20th century saw the emergence of diverse housing types, including terraces, spacious detached properties, and bungalows.



- Non-residential Buildings
- Residential Buildings
- Key Frontages
- Secondary Frontages
- Watercourses
- Roads

Willoughby Waterleys (0.5 miles from the Site)

Willoughby Waterleys is a small village that was traditionally an agricultural settlement. The linear Historic Core is anchored around Willoughby Road. This area features buildings set behind verdant verges, blending terraced homes with scattered detached structures like The Old Rectory and The General Elliot (former pub). 20th century infill developments are sprinkled to the east and west of Willoughby Road, these modest expansions subtly enhance the village without compromising its rustic character.



- Non-residential Buildings
- Residential Buildings
- Key Frontages
- Secondary Frontages
- Watercourses
- Roads

CHAPTER

03

Concept Framework Plan

Introduction

This chapter sets out how the principles that underpin the vision have been translated to the Concept Framework Plan. The Concept Framework Plan has evolved through engagement with the community and key stakeholders on the Vision to inform, shape and guide the design for Whetstone Pastures Garden Village, alongside the findings of the technical work set out in the previous chapter. Together, these inputs have come together as a robust Concept Framework Plan that can positively shape the lives of future inhabitants for years to come.



Illustration of integration of the historic buildings within the District Centre.

The key features that underpin the Concept Framework Plan include:

- Beautifully and imaginatively designed neighbourhoods, defined by a landscape-led approach and a close relationship with the landscape.
- Design for Health and wellbeing, creating a Garden Village where community health and wellbeing outcomes are improved and maximised.
- An approach that maintains the individual character and form of surrounding settlements Whetstone and Willoughby Waterleys, to avoid coalescence and still retain their individual form and identity.
- Two distinct residential neighbourhoods and an employment area, each with a defined character and identity which fits within the overall vision.
- The delivery of significant employment along the M1 corridor that supports a balanced and sustainable community.
- The design of buildings and the materials used will provide a balance of building designs which draws on local materials and character, from traditional to contemporary, and will reflect the individual neighbourhood character.
- The integration of existing heritage assets, including Whetstone Pastures House and where possible the former agricultural buildings.
- Existing Site features, such as the historic lanes, field boundaries and vegetation will be integrated into the proposals where possible.
- Timely delivery of key facilities and amenities, to support sustainable and healthy lifestyles.
- Delivery of a movement network which promotes active travel, public transport and minimises the use of the private car.



Figure: 3.1
Concept Framework Plan.

A Unique Place

Key Principles

In the Vision Document, we set out our objectives for Whetstone Pastures Garden Village to have a unique identity, with beautifully and imaginatively designed neighbourhoods and inspiring streets. These principles have been embedded into our approach for the Concept Framework Plan. The development of Whetstone Pastures offers the opportunity to create a settlement that actively addresses climate change whilst drawing its identity from the landscape and built heritage of the area. A clear placemaking approach underpins the Concept Framework Plan. The plan builds on the unique characteristics of the Site and surrounding area to develop and celebrate the Site’s unique character. The integration of the key features identified in Chapter 2, including the Site’s green and blue infrastructure alongside its built heritage provide the foundation of the proposals.



Whetstone Pastures will have a single coherent identity, with a clear sense of connection between areas, established through the landscape, movement network and characterful neighbourhoods. Whetstone Pastures will create inspiring places. The landscape and green infrastructure connections will support a sequence of beautiful neighbourhoods and new uplifting spaces that leave a long standing and positive legacy.

The Concept Framework Plan provides the flexibility for the place to evolve over time. The right infrastructure and stewardship will support a vibrant community from the construction of the first homes to generations to come. This approach to placemaking will secure the long-term success of Whetstone Pastures Garden Village.



The following elements are key features of the placemaking strategy:

Response to Heritage

The Concept Framework Plan has been designed to respond sensitively to the form, proportion, and character of heritage assets and surrounding settlements. Heritage assets such as Whetstone Pastures House and Whetstone Gorse East and West are co-located with neighbourhood hubs. This will ensure that the existing heritage buildings are integrated into the heart of the community and play a key role in defining the character in the area. Existing Site features, such as the historic lanes, field boundaries and vegetation will be integrated into the proposals where possible to form a key element of the public open space and active movement strategy. The landscape edges of the Site will be sensitively managed to preserve the distinct character of nearby settlements such as Willoughby Waterleys and Countesthorpe.

Creating Character

Each new neighbourhood will have a clearly defined character and identity. The new homes and existing buildings would inform the design of neighbourhoods with a distinct architectural character. The neighbourhoods would be inspired by the surrounding settlements to deliver a strong sense of identity and community pride. A clear hierarchy of spaces will be created, within each neighbourhood, with careful consideration given to the scale of the buildings, type of street, and the quality of setbacks and landscapes along them. Landmark buildings will punctuate key vistas and gateways into the Site.

Neighbourhood Hubs

The neighbourhood hubs will provide focal points within each neighbourhood, created around mixed use clusters where people can meet and create social connections. The design of these areas will focus on providing a heart to the community and provide a range of community facilities and uplifting spaces. These are important places and their early delivery will be a key component to the success of the community. Each of these neighbourhood hubs will be focal points for the community that is relative to the scale, phasing and role of the area. Three neighbourhood hubs are proposed – two in the western neighbourhood and the third in the eastern neighbourhood. Two neighbourhood hubs in the western neighbourhood will support the early delivery of commercial and community facilities in the first phase of development and the potential extension of development to the south in the future. The areas will have a defined character, using retained heritage assets to establish focal points within the scheme whilst reflecting the historic land use. They will be designed to support legible placemaking and wayfinding through building hierarchy and design cues. Development will be co-located to drive high activity levels and house community facilities and spaces alongside potential shops, schools and mixed-use employment areas.

Housing

A wide range of housing types, tenures and forms will be delivered in Whetstone Pastures Garden Village. The character and form of the housing will vary depending upon the location and will consider a range of character influences, including sustainable design and local architectural character. Each house will be designed and constructed to a high quality and have the flexibility to adapt to meet the changing needs of future occupiers. Accessible homes and neighbourhoods, and housing with care and support, will be integrated into the neighbourhoods to enable people to live independently within their community.

Employment Areas

A significant element of the Concept Framework Plan is the delivery of strategic and local employment land along the M1 corridor. 100 ha of employment land is proposed, including 15 ha for local employment.

The careful design of employment areas would balance the functional needs of the buildings and surrounding infrastructure with placemaking objectives to achieve an appropriate human scale to the development and an attractive gateway into the Site. The Site planning would support attractive and easy access to the facilities



and services in the District Centre. Strategic tree and woodland planting would be a defining feature within the employment areas, providing scale, structure and legibility to the built form, as well as improving biodiversity through native planting and connected habitats.

Landscaped 'well-being' areas, that integrate outdoor seating and outdoor gyms, in peaceful green settings would support the health and well-being of

employees as well as residents of the Garden Village. The relationship between the logistics buildings and residential properties will be sensitively managed, with attractive green routes connecting employment and residential areas. The logistics park buildings will be designed to a high standard, Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) Excellent and Energy Performance Certificate A.

Scale, Form and Density

Careful consideration has been given to the scale, form and density of development across the scheme. A variety of building forms at a range of densities are proposed across Whetstone Pastures Garden Village to deliver attractive neighbourhoods within a compact and clearly defined settlement area and support local services. An average density of 38dph is proposed across the Site, to minimise the development footprint and protect the surrounding countryside. However, the densities will vary across each neighbourhood, with higher densities proposed in the mixed-use neighbourhood areas and along key frontages to support vibrant neighbourhood hubs.

The height of buildings will be defined in the detailed design stage, with the majority of residential buildings being between 2 to 3 storeys in height. Taller buildings are proposed as landmark buildings within the district and local centres and employment buildings within the logistics park will be determined by market requirements. Anticipated residential building density is shown on Figure 3.2 and 3.3 opposite.

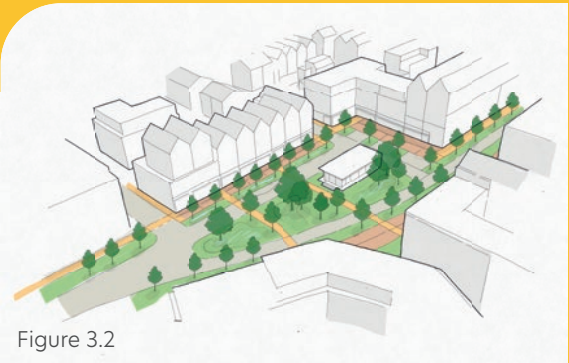


Figure 3.2

High Density.



Figure 3.2

Medium Density.



Figure 3.2

Low Density.

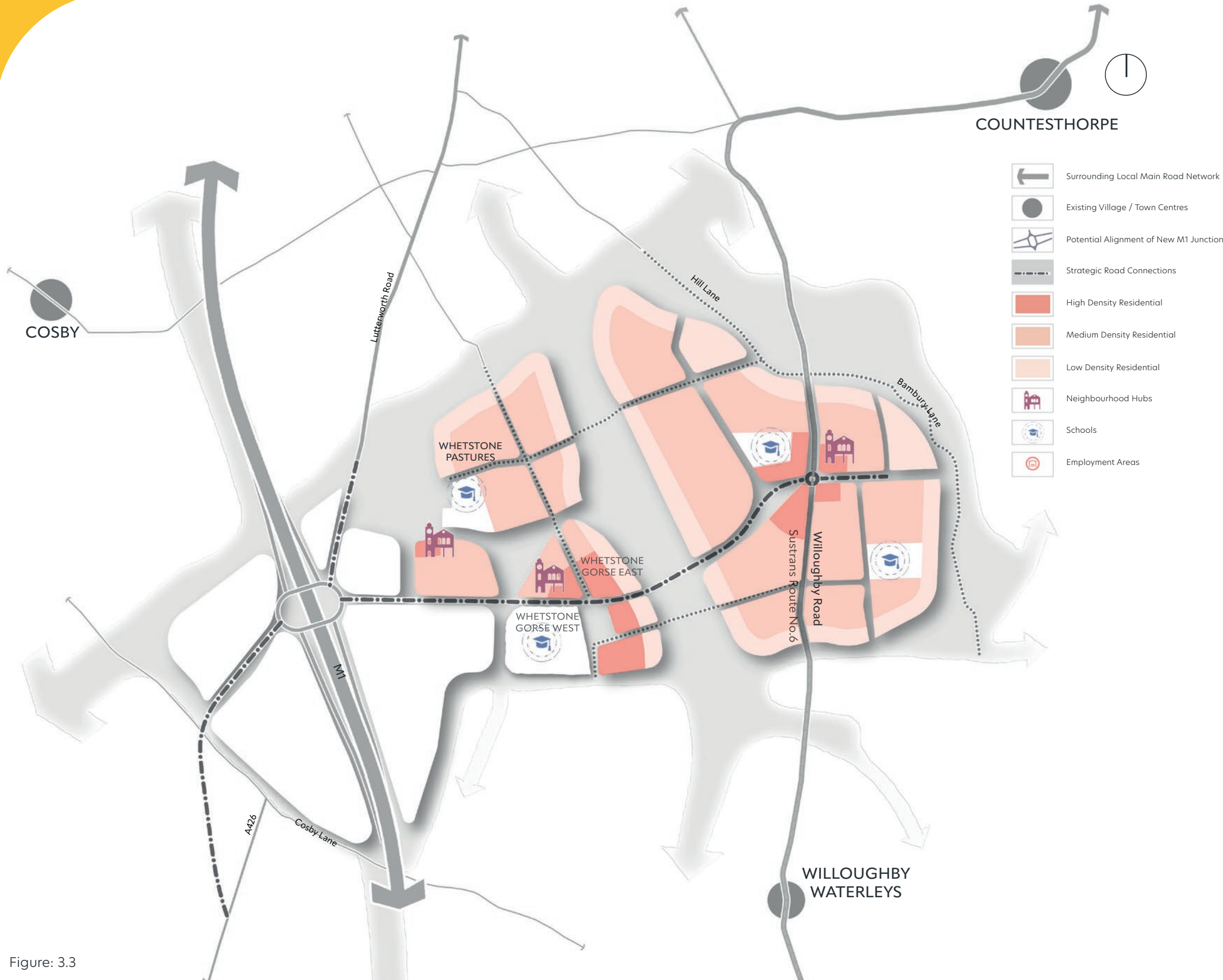


Figure: 3.3

Residential Density Plan.

Community and Facilities

Key Principles

Whetstone Pastures Garden Village will provide all the facilities required to create a thriving community in a well-connected environment. These will serve the wider community, including the residents of the surrounding villages.

The Community Infrastructure strategy aims to support the health and well-being of the community. Whetstone Pastures will help the new community embed the 5 Ways to Wellbeing into their lives, providing opportunities to: be active, keep learning, connect, give and take notice.

A balance of facilities will be provided in the neighbourhood hub areas. Key facilities such as primary schools, community facilities and local shops will be located within walking distance of most properties and easily accessible through the series of greenways which will criss-cross the Site. These will include safe routes to school and combine repurposed agricultural lanes with new footpaths and cycleways. This neighbourhood based approach will promote active travel and minimise journey lengths for shopping, leisure, education and other activities.

Two neighbourhood areas are proposed. Each of these places will provide the structure for the new communities to thrive and lead sustainable lives. It will be important that the right facilities are delivered at the right time and that there is a plan for their long-term stewardship. Chapter 4 sets out the phasing strategy for the Site, demonstrating that the proposals will be delivered when they are needed in a timely way.

The following elements are key features of the Community Infrastructure strategy:

Neighbourhood Hubs

Whetstone Pastures will be designed as a compact and connected place, designed around walkable neighbourhoods. New neighbourhood hubs will be created, providing clusters of uses where people meet and create social connections. Every home will be within a 15-minute walk of a Neighbourhood Hub enabling residents to carry out day-to-day shopping without the need of a car and schools will be accessible through safe walking and cycling routes. Three neighbourhood hubs are proposed. Each of these areas will provide the focal point for the community that is relative to the scale, phasing and role of the area. Repurposed existing and new buildings will house community facilities and spaces alongside potential shops and mixed-use employment areas. These will be designed to support legible placemaking and wayfinding through building hierarchy and design cues.

District Centre – the largest neighbourhood hub will be to the south of the Site, allowing for the opportunity for a coordinated approach with the proposals for further development to the south of Whetstone Pastures in Harborough District, which is the promoter’s additional land shown outlined in blue on the Site location plan in chapter one of this document. The heart of the area would be focused around the historic agricultural



Figure 3.4
District Centre
Illustrative Plan.



Figure: 3.5

District Centre Illustration.

buildings at Whetstone Gorse East and West, providing a focal space that draws on the area's history and heritage. A range of facilities would be provided, including a community space, secondary school, health facilities and shops. The requirements for local health care will be discussed with the Clinical Commissioning Group. On the previous page at Figure 3.4 is a possible district centre layout and at Figure 3.5 is a district centre illustration.

Local Centre - a mid-sized local centre would be located along Willoughby Road, serving the residents to the east of the Site, Countesthorpe and Willoughby Waterleys. This area would sit close to the junction with the main street that runs through the Site and include a range of shops and local services

First Phase Community Hub - A community hub will be located to the north west of the Site in the first phase of development. This is an important component of the proposals and will provide an initial focal point to the community, with facilities that can be used to bring residents, local businesses and organisations together to organise activities to improve quality of life. This would include leisure and sports facilities and a community farm which will be integrated with education, enabling shared facilities that will include school sports pitches and community facilities.

Schools

Whetstone Pastures Garden Village will provide a secondary school and three two-form entry primary schools. These will be established early on in conjunction with local centres that will help to create community cohesion and establish social links between residents. The schools will be located on or close to strategic walking and cycling routes to provide safe routes to school.

- Secondary School – this will be located to the south of the Site. This location will align with the District Centre and support the extension of the school to the south if future development comes forward in Harborough District. The location will align with the greenway structure, supporting walking and cycling to school.
- Three primary schools will be provided, depending on need. These have been configured to be in the heart of neighbourhoods, with safe routes to school provided to support active travel.



Employment

The employment area along the M1 is a key part of the proposals. The employment areas will be integrated with Whetstone Pastures through greenways, making them a clear part of the wider community. Employees within the logistics park will be within 400 metres of a bus stop and will have access to safe and comfortable walking and cycling routes as well as access to open spaces and legible routes to the services and facilities within the wider Site.

Green Spaces

The Green Infrastructure strategy set out in the next section will provide a verdant landscape setting for Whetstone Pastures Garden Village and support the health and wellbeing of the wider community.



Community Farm

A community farm is an important part of the vision that will be established as part of Whetstone Pastures Garden Village. The farm will provide a link for future generations to the agricultural heritage of the Site. It is proposed that the farm will be delivered in the early phases of development and co-located with the primary school located close to Whetstone Pastures House. It is proposed that the farm would be approximately one acre in size and include an educational space and polytunnel.

The community farm will deliver benefits directly in the production of local healthy food. It will also build social ties, support education, and enable healthy living. The delivery of the farm in the early phases of development will support a wider 'grow' strategy across the Site, with

allotments, community orchards, pocket parks providing access to grow spaces across the neighbourhoods. Links will be explored to deliver the community farm in conjunction with landowners, developers, the local education authority, Public Health England, Social Farms and Gardens charity (the School Farms Network) and the Royal Horticultural Society.



Natural Environment and Open Space

Key Principles

The Vision document identified the overarching design principles underpinning the Landscape and Open Space Strategy. Optimising the natural environment through green and blue infrastructure is a key part of the vision for development at Whetstone Pastures Garden Village, to create a distinctive place with a strong identity. A landscape strategy has been developed that illustrates how the natural green infrastructure networks and assets come together to form a cohesive and multi-functional landscape. This will enhance the existing habitat's landscape character and the setting of the area. The blue infrastructure network will be a defining characteristic of Whetstone Pastures and creative water management will reinforce a distinctive sense of place.

The starting point for the green network is the existing landscape structures that clearly define the Site. This includes the Whetstone Brook, the disused railway line, woodland blocks, significant hedgerows, and the network of ponds. Approximately 50% of Whetstone Pastures will be green open space, including gardens, supporting a new settlement where the landscape interlaces and positively defines the character of the new neighbourhoods. The proposals will provide a wide range of multi-functional spaces that support and enhance existing habitats, provide spaces for play, enable formal and informal recreation and facilitate innovative water management.

Where possible, existing water features have been retained across the development. Whetstone Brook, ditches and the existing network of ponds will be retained where possible. This green and blue network

will characterise Whetstone Pastures and will provide substantial benefits including habitats. This green and blue network will characterise Whetstone Pastures and will provide substantial benefits including habitat enhancement.

The following elements are key features of the placemaking strategy:

Habitat Enhancement and Connection

The proposals will enhance existing green spaces and create new ecological habitats. The Green Infrastructure will comprise a network of interconnected green and blue spaces focused on existing features such as the Whetstone Brook, the disused railway line, existing woodland blocks, trees and hedgerows. The design has sought to retain and enhance corridors of connectivity across the Site to ensure that dispersal routes for local wildlife are retained. A series of new green and blue corridors will connect key habitats, providing a landscape scale linked network of unique, inclusive and diverse spaces. The landscape strategy includes the creation of new habitats, including wildflower meadows, wild scrub areas, native woodland, coppice woodland, wetlands/ reed beds, and new waterbodies. The new habitats will be designed to enhance opportunities for wildlife in general and for species assemblages identified through onsite survey in particular. The landscape strategy will support the delivery of diverse new habitats and a biodiversity net gain, alongside the opportunity to introduce an appropriate mix of ages and species of planting to help secure the area's long term future against climate change.



Figure: 3.6

Green Infrastructure Plan.

Buffer Planting

The edges of the Site will be carefully considered, with a sensitive planting strategy to ensure a positive relationship with the edge of the Site and local context, while ensuring planting is in keeping with the landscape context. The landscape context of Countesthorpe and Willoughby Waterleys will be protected through the creation of landscaped green buffers of sufficient width. These will separate the villages from the new neighbourhoods preventing coalescence and ensuring they remain distinctive. Buffer planting alongside the proposed internal green infrastructure network will help to assimilate the development into the receiving landscape, creating landscape layers throughout the built form. This will ensure the roofscape is broken up with vegetation and tree canopies. Structure planting along the Site boundary will have the added benefit of screening the M1 for new residents.

Multi-Functional Open Space

A wide range of multi-functional spaces will be provided within the proposals. Strategic green spaces will be multi-functional, providing for activities and play, biodiversity, heat island cooling, and storm water storage. Much of this will be informal, natural spaces which combine with the habitat and biodiversity objectives of the Green Infrastructure Strategy. The Whetstone Brook corridor will provide the principal

open space and will combine with a range of different landscape typologies linked by functional and attractive green infrastructure corridors. These diverse spaces will provide a wide range of spaces for informal recreation, including strategic green spaces for informal play and sports activities, and leisure routes for walking and cycling, including signposted 5km and 10km trails.

Greenways

A series of Greenways have been designed that provide direct routes to key destinations within the Site, including neighbourhood hubs, schools, employment areas, leisure and open spaces, and connect the existing villages. A combination of existing Public Rights of Way and existing agricultural lanes will be repurposed to support a defined active movement network, combined with new sections to provide a fully connected network. These areas will deliver attractive, inviting and safer, car free routes, with easy access for walkers and cyclists which enhance the quality of life and wellbeing for residents, workers and visitors to Whetstone Pastures.

Children’s Play Spaces

Each neighbourhood will have destination play areas with equipment and facilities to cater for all ages. These will be located in prominent locations and within the

appropriate distances from development parcels to allow good accessibility. A range of play areas will be provided across Whetstone Pastures. These will be at a range of scales and cater for a range of ages, with a play area being located within walking distance of every home. Where possible, incidental play features such as boulders, logs and interesting landform will be introduced offering ‘play on the way’ for children in informal open spaces.

Playing Pitches

A new sports hub would be provided to the northwest of the Site, to the west of Whetstone Pastures House, in addition to other local sports provision across the Site. The sports hub would be delivered in phases to meet with the necessary demand from the creation of new homes. A combination of sports pitches, including an all-weather pitch, would support community hockey, rugby and football in the area. The layout and design of the area would be future-proofed to accommodate any additional requirements or change of activity. The proposed community facilities are likely to also include a changing facility, community clubhouse and maintenance buildings.



Allotments, Community Orchards and Community Farm

Whetstone Pastures Garden Village Community Farm will provide spaces for the community to interact and engage with the surrounding landscape. The provision of allotments, community orchards and a community farm is an important feature that will help the community to interact and take ownership of the area and surrounding landscape and has the potential to deliver a variety of social and environmental benefits. The allotments and community orchards will be well located along the Site edges, within the buffer spaces. The community farm will be integrated alongside the primary school next to Whetstone Pastures House, supporting the ongoing agricultural legacy of the land.

Pocket Parks and Incidental Green Spaces

A range of local, smaller, green spaces will be provided within neighbourhood areas, ensuring that open space is available to all residents and employees within a short (5 minute) walk. These pocket parks and incidental green spaces will be dispersed throughout the developable areas to provide opportunities for communal gatherings, informal play and recreation.

Public Realm

The public realm design is a key part of the landscape strategy, with swales and tree planting supporting the wider Green Infrastructure objectives of the scheme. Key public spaces will be centrally located in the neighbourhood hubs. These spaces will be semi-formal in character and will act as focal points within the communities. Public art would be integrated in key spaces, potentially drawing on the Site's historic use of slate.



Figure: 3.7

Landscape Uses Plan.

The following elements are key features of the Blue Infrastructure strategy:

Whetstone Brook Corridor

Whetstone Brook corridor will be retained as a blue and green corridor providing a north-south connection between Countesthorpe and Willoughby Waterleys. Whetstone Brook will form the spine of the Green Infrastructure strategy and the opportunity exists to incorporate a varied patchwork of habitats along the corridor, including potential floodplain marshes, grassland and wildflower meadows, amenity spaces and wet woodland including alder, willow and birch.

The principal components of the water management strategy will be located in the Whetstone Brook basin. This will ensure the development retains green field levels of infiltration and can manage a 1:30 or 1:100-year storm event. The Concept Framework plan identifies an area of land either side of the Whetstone Brook for water management.

Sustainable Drainage

A sustainable drainage system considerate of a site wide catchment approach to flood management and drainage which would support biodiversity and amenity as well as volume and flow control.



Whetstone Brook Section

Transport and Connectivity

Key Principles

The Concept Framework Plan has been designed to ensure a highly connected and accessible environment. A network of streets, greenways, footpaths and cycle ways will connect the Site, ensuring that key areas of the Site such as schools, employment areas and neighbourhood hubs are easily accessible.

A key objective of Whetstone Pastures Garden Village is to maximise active travel. The Concept Framework Plan is designed to be a vibrant place where residents and employees can meet their daily needs within walking and cycling distance of their homes - maximising the potential for local living by ensuring that most people can access a wide range of services, facilities and public spaces by walking and wheeling. Increased home working, digital service delivery, and new forms of flexible work and community spaces will play a key role, alongside investment in place. The right facilities, combined with a compact and connected neighbourhood structure are proposed to support this goal.

The movement network will be designed to enable access for all. Streets will be designed as positive and inspiring spaces that are easy to navigate, attractive, safe and tree lined. The design of streets will vary depending on their hierarchy and role within the settlement. In all cases the street design will be

integrated with the design of the built environment to provide a fully integrated approach. In addition, new homes will have access to an innovative public transport system and new homes will be designed with electric vehicle infrastructure to support decarbonisation.

The following elements are key features of the Movement strategy:

Active Movement

To deliver sustainable development priority will be given to the safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists of all ages and abilities through the provision of safe and attractive routes. The network of Public Rights of Way's which cross the Site will be significantly enhanced, opening up access to the Site to the wider community. Existing agricultural lanes will be repurposed as Greenways for active movement, which, combined with the new network of footpaths and cycleways, will provide over 20km of accessible routes. The active transport proposals are being developed with regards to the Blaby Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. The routes will be extended and improved to provide good connections to and through to Whetstone and Blaby as well as the proposed development south and east, to provide a comprehensive network in and around the Site.

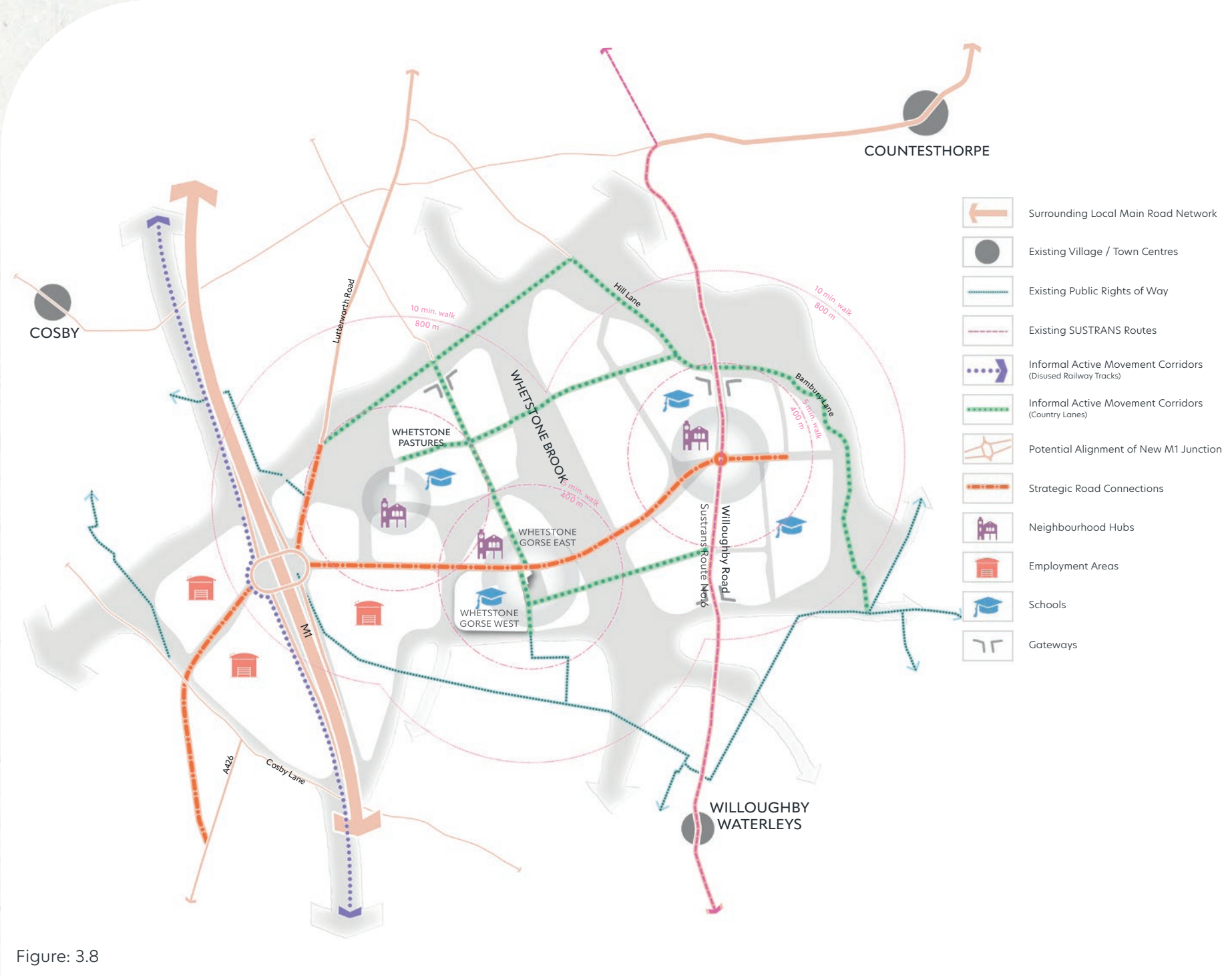


Figure: 3.8

Movement Plan.

Public Transport

Development at Whetstone Pastures will be integrated with sustainable travel initiatives in the wider south Leicestershire area. Connections will be made to facilities such as the University and hospital in the City Centre, Narborough Rail station, Whetstone and Blaby. The public transport strategy for the Garden Village will be phased with the development.

Residential Streets

Neighbourhood streets will be designed with a focus on public spaces, fostering informal community activity and interaction. The Concept Framework Plan has been designed to support a permeable network of streets. Within neighbourhood areas there will be a gentle hierarchy of streets, including a network of secondary, local and tertiary streets. Each street will have a positive pedestrian/cycle environment.

The character of streets will vary depending on the neighbourhood and context. Natural features such as trees, ponds and hedgerows will be integrated within the street structure. The use of tree planting and swales will

be used to define a hierarchy of roads, helping to provide opportunities for natural wayfinding and create a clear transition between development parcels and community space. To the east of the Site, streets will respond to topography, to follow contours and take advantage of the key views.

Strategic Connections

A key part of the proposals is the delivery of a new motorway junction on the M1. The junction forms part of the strategic movement east-west strategy set out in the Leicester & Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan (Dec 2018). The new junction will support strategic connectivity and address congestion issues on the network. The proposed junction is located to the south of Junction 21 north of Junction 20.

This motorway junction is not required at the outset for the delivery of new homes. Initial capacity modelling has confirmed that due to the nature and size of the garden village the number of residents or workers travelling external to the Site is reduced compared

to a stand alone residential development. The proposed new homes could access the strategic road and local network via a new junction onto the A426 Lutterworth Road, however to deliver any strategic scale employment a new motorway junction will be required, therefore the logistics park would need to be supported by the new motorway junction.

The secondary access road will connect the Site to the new junction and will be an important part of the movement network and will provide an important gateway into the employment land at Whetstone Pastures and the residential development to the east. The character of the route will gently transition between the employment and residential areas, where it will need to be designed as an integral part of the neighbourhood structure, using careful street design and associated planting and will create a transitional relationship between the proposed M1 junction and neighbourhoods and open spaces within Whetstone Pastures.

Further work is required on the M1 junction and the alignment of the key access roads.

Parking

Car parking (on and off road) will be well integrated into the street design. Adequate parking for visitors will be provided on-street in designated bays. Vehicular and cycle parking will adhere to the relevant highway standards. Secure and overlooked cycle parking with charging facilities would be provided close to the entrances of schools, shops, and other services and facilities.



Willoughby Road Section

Land Uses

Key Principles

Whetstone Pastures will support a mixed community with a high level of self-sufficiency. The approach is based on linking homes to business, commercial and community functions, connecting people to the places they want to go.

The careful balance of land uses will support sustainable lifestyles for residents of Whetstone Pastures. The configuration of schools, neighbourhood hubs and the employment area will ensure that the day-to-day needs of future residents are all accessible within walking and cycling distance. The spatial configuration of the land uses is influenced by the Site context, the relationship of the employment land to strategic connections and the potential new settlement immediately to the south of Whetstone Pastures in Harborough District.



The following elements are key features of the Land Use strategy:

Employment

Logistics Park

Employment in Whetstone Whetstone Pastures Garden Village will create around 8,000 – 10,000 jobs. The majority of the employment opportunities will be located within the logistics park. The Logistics park would provide hi-tech and skilled employment opportunities for workers as well as training and apprenticeship opportunities. It would be located east and west of the M1 motorway providing an interface with the M1.

Small-Scale Employment

A range of small-scale employment areas will be located within the neighbourhood hubs. This includes jobs within shops, services and schools, alongside shared co-working spaces that are designed to support homeworkers and the growth of small businesses. In addition non-strategic employment will be provided in proximity of the strategic employment development. Homes will be designed to accommodate home working, with highspeed internet access and dedicated office spaces within some homes.

Housing

Two residential neighbourhoods have been proposed within Whetstone Pastures Garden Village. This will support a mixed and balanced community, through the delivery of a wide choice of homes to meet the housing needs of Blaby District and the unmet needs of Leicester City in terms of housing types, affordability, designs and tenures. Whetstone Pastures will provide accessible homes, homes for all ages including those that require care, homes with workspace, rental and shared ownership opportunities and flexible homes that are adaptable to changing needs over a lifetime.

The development has been designed to provide a wide range of housing to attract a diverse and inclusive community. A wide range of housing typologies and tenures will be provided across Whetstone Pastures to meet the identified housing needs of the community. This will provide a range of opportunities for local young couples, families and first-time buyers to get a foot on or move up the housing ladder, be it to buy or rent. New homes will be designed and constructed to a high quality. Homes will be flexible and adaptable to different and changing lifestyles providing for a variety of needs meeting high standards of sustainability and internal space.



Climate Mitigation

Key Principles

The Concept Framework Plan provides the structure to support a low carbon and environmentally friendly community. Innovation and technology will support working towards Net Zero Carbon 2050. The sustainability strategy would underpin low carbon living and working, to provide climate resilience, reduce waste and reduce energy consumption. Strategies for minimising the environmental impact of development at all stages of the lifecycle are being established, with solutions ranging from innovative construction methods and materials, energy demand management, renewable energy production, effective transport and landscape infrastructure. This is a fast-developing area, and we will want to adapt our approach as technology evolves, to ensure we are optimising the use of technology over the lifetime of the project.

The following elements are key features of the Climate Mitigation strategy:

Low Carbon Neighbourhoods

The Concept Framework Plan has been focussed on providing the right balance of jobs, homes, facilities and amenities to support sustainable lifestyles. The employment areas and neighbourhood hubs are located within a close walking distance of all residents, meaning that shops, green spaces, health, sports and education facilities, and work are close to where people live. This not only reduces the reliance on the car, but brings significant health, well-being and community benefits.

Low Carbon Buildings - Employment

High quality buildings would be delivered across the development, using the latest sustainable design and construction technology to provide energy efficient buildings. The approach to energy and construction would vary depending on the role and type of building. The logistics park buildings will be designed using sustainable fabrication and insulation. They will meet Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) Excellent and Energy Performance Certificate A. One hundred per cent of the useable roof space of the logistics buildings will accommodate photovoltaic panels. Energy centres containing plant which will distribute electricity to the buildings alongside battery storage will be located on Site. The energy centres efficiently manage the distribution of power from Photovoltaic and grid supply.



Photovoltaic Roof Panels.

Low Carbon Buildings - Homes

New homes would be designed to meet the Future Homes Standard, with high insulation and a fabric first approach used to reduce heating demand. New homes would be net-zero carbon ready, based around connected technology and low carbon construction. Renewable energy generation such as heat pumps and solar Photovoltaic would offset operational energy consumption. Optimal AAA rated electric appliances as standard and low flow water fixtures would minimise energy and water consumption.

Renewable Energy

Renewable power generation and storage will be incorporated into the Site. This is a fast changing area, and the strategy is likely to evolve across different phases of the development. The approach will include a micro-grid and energy centres of as part of the employment area, solar panels and heat pumps.



Air Source Heat Pumps.

Environmental Enhancement

The landscape strategy underpins the Concept Framework Plan and environmental strategy. As set out earlier in this chapter, the green and blue infrastructure strategy set out a number of multi-functional spaces that support climate resilience through water management and significant habitat and microclimate improvements. The shading and cooling benefits of vegetation must be exploited at both a micro level to reduce unwanted solar gain and at a macro level to reduce any potential heat island effects. In addition, excellent access to open space will support positive health outcomes.



Electric Car Charging.

Long Term Stewardship

Key Principles

The stewardship of a garden village involves the careful planning, development, and management of the community to ensure it thrives sustainably, supports its residents, and preserves its natural and built environments. The garden village concept, originating from Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City movement, emphasises self-contained communities with a balance of homes, workspaces and green spaces. The proposals will utilise a robust, sustainable long-term stewardship scheme for the purpose of asset management within Whetstone Pastures Garden Village.

The following elements are key features of the Stewardship strategy:

Stewardship Assets

Stewardship opportunities will be assessed in regard to being the most sustainable and essential options for the community. The assets included in the stewardship model for Whetstone Pastures will include but not be limited to a community operated community farm, allotments, open space, public open space, leisure facilities and business units.

Funding

Funding for the stewardship model will be through early master developer investment and the transfer from developers of assets to the stewardship body, the detail of which will be confirmed through Outline Planning Applications in stewardship management statements. This could include but not be limited to early facilities

created on Site which will contribute to building a community such as a community hall, café and play facilities. In addition, occupiers of homes in Whetstone Pastures will pay an annual fee which will be used for the benefit of the maintenance and management of Whetstone Pastures, this will be overseen by stewardship body. To secure the service charges legal covenants will be included in plot purchaser’s deeds.

The stewardship body will seek to supplement service charges with diversification of income streams.

Community Involvement

Fundamental to the stewardship of Whetstone Pastures is communication with and involvement of the local community. Residents of Whetstone Pastures will be kept informed of changes and developments within their community as well as being made aware of how best to get involved with community decision making.

Communication between the local community and the stewardship body will be maintained through sources including a Community Development Officer appointed by the Master Developer, newsletters and a dedicated website which will keep the wider community surrounding Whetstone Pastures informed.

The Community Development Officer will facilitate local groups including a community events group and a community forum and will seek active participation from residents. In time the Garden Village may have its

own Parish Council which will manage the long-term stewardship of Whetstone Pastures.

Management

The Master Developer will create a stewardship body which will oversee different facilitators to manage and maintain the green spaces and other public realm as well as other community assets and facilities. This body will comprise the management company and the master developer. This body will be in place prior to occupation of the first dwelling. A Stewardship steering group will be formed to advise the stewardship body and will be made up of members of the local community, the Master Developer, the Community Development Officer, local authorities and other key stakeholders.

The stewardship body will be a legal entity, protecting the interests of the residents of the garden village, managing the common assets of Whetstone Pastures and being funded via monies collected from the occupier service charge as well as from the Master Developer until the point at which the service charge returns create a self-sustaining stewardship model.



C H A P T E R

4

Delivery and Implementation

Context

Whetstone Pastures was awarded Garden Village status in 2018. The Site is being promoted through the Blaby Local Plan review and can accommodate circa 4,500 new homes in Blaby District along with a logistics park of circa 320,000 sq m of commercial floor space and a further phase of development for circa 800 - 1,000 new homes being promoted in Harborough District. The development would include shops, schools, health care facilities, non-strategic and local employment opportunities, green and blue infrastructure, community facilities, leisure opportunities and new sports facilities.

The illustrative Concept Framework Plan shows one way in which the Site could be developed, approximately 50% of the Site will remain free from development, to be used for formal and informal open space and gardens. A stewardship body will be set up to deliver local community led ownership and management of assets.

Whetstone Pastures is located wholly within Blaby District but there is land adjacent to the Site, in the same land ownership, located in Harborough District, which could come forward in due course through the Harborough Local Plan. Any planning applications that are proposed on the adjacent land will be required to follow the principles set out in the Concept Framework Plan.

The Concept Framework Plan supports the allocation of Whetstone Pastures Garden Village as part of the Blaby District Local Plan review by providing additional information to be used as a benchmark when reviewing future planning applications. All future planning applications at Whetstone Pastures will also be tested

against the policies of the statutory Development Plan, including relevant policies of the Blaby District Local Plan once adopted.

In order to ensure that the Site is planned and delivered comprehensively, any application for development on part of the Site will be assessed against its contribution to the aims of the whole Site as set out in the Concept Framework Plan and will not prejudice the implementation of the Site as a whole.

Programming and build out rates

Whetstone Pastures will play a key role in contributing to meet the housing need of Blaby District and part of the unmet housing need of Leicester City.

Precise details of the anticipated programme and delivery will be discussed in more detail as the project progresses to the next stages of detailed design. Overall, Whetstone Pastures can make continued contribution to the delivery of homes of varying types and tenures that will address local housing needs.

The delivery programme is being developed, that gives special consideration to the phasing of infrastructure. This includes key community, green, blue and transport infrastructure. The timely delivery of key facilities is a key part of creating a vibrant and sustainable community.

The first phase of development will be to the north west of the Site, adjacent to Whetstone Pastures house, with access from the Lutterworth Road. The delivery of the spine road will open up development to the centre of the Site, with the final phase being to the east of Willoughby Road.

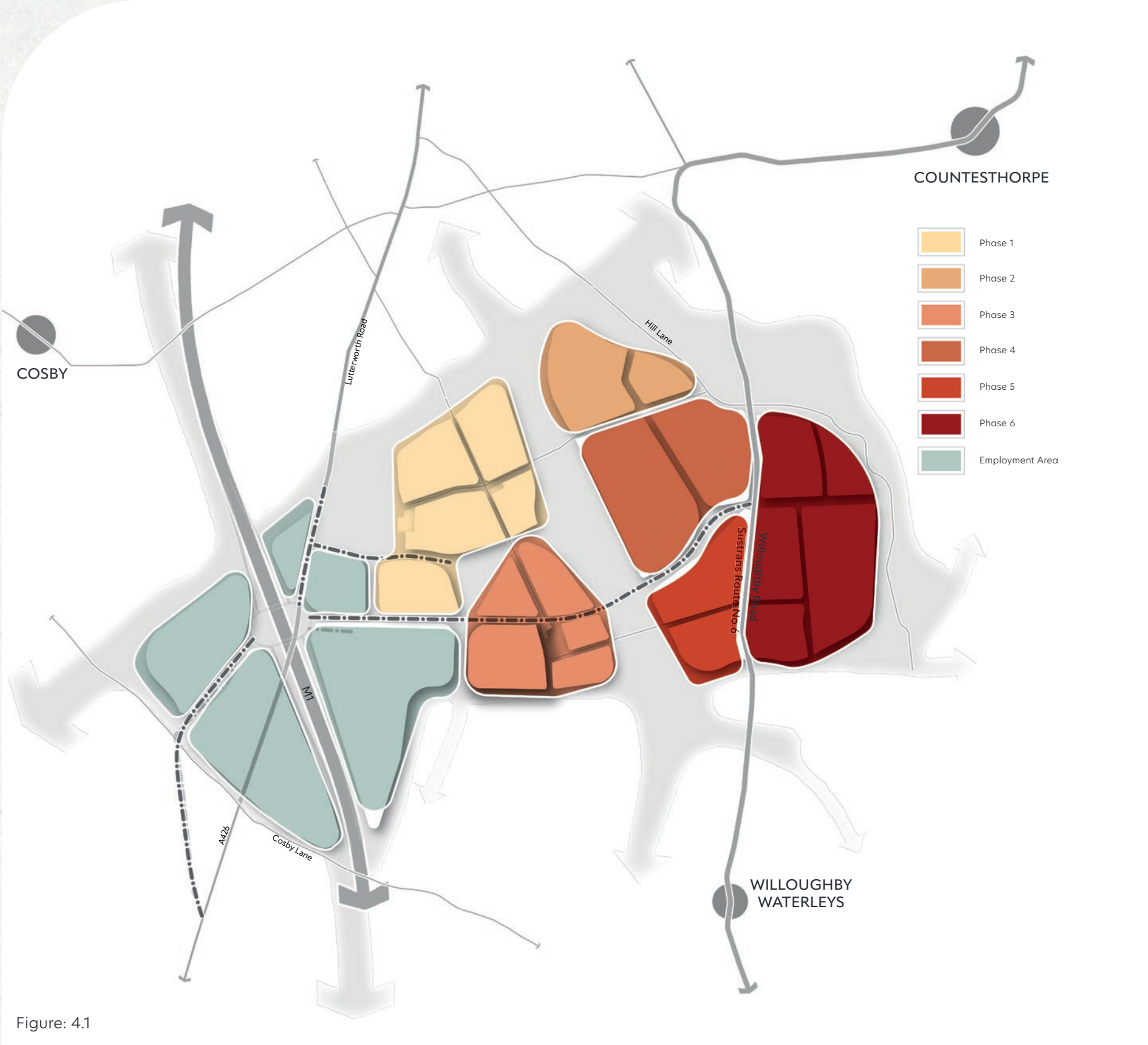


Figure: 4.1

Phasing Plan.

CHAPTER

05

Conclusion and Next Steps

Thank you for reading this document. We are committed to delivering a sustainable new community at Whetstone Pastures Garden Village. This document forms an important part in the development process. Moving forward, the principles set out in the Concept Framework Plan will be embedded into the project as it develops. We understand the key components that will secure a vibrant new community that will create an ambitious example of a sustainable garden village in Blaby.

The development team has worked closely with Blaby District Council, stakeholders and the community to develop the proposals to date. We have established a clear spatial plan to support the delivery of the Site that will have a crucial role to play in meeting the development needs of Blaby as a whole in the period to 2042 and beyond.

Next Steps

We have set out a clear programme, which considers the likely timescale to deliver Whetstone Pastures Garden Village. This is set out in the diagram on page 52.

Blaby District Council are currently preparing their Local Plan. We anticipate that Whetstone Pastures will be a key housing and employment allocation within the plan and consultation on the local plan is anticipated in November 2025.

The next step is to prepare an Outline Planning Application for Whetstone Pastures Garden Village. The role of this would be to establish the principle of development, and provide the framework that would guide more detailed planning applications across the Site. We anticipate that there will be further engagement and discussions with the Council, statutory consultees and other stakeholders as the planning application is prepared.

Public Engagement

Engaging with the community is a critical component of the development process. By actively involving local residents and stakeholders, the future development at Whetstone Pastures Garden Village can reflect a comprehensive understanding of the community's needs, preferences, and aspirations. This participatory approach fosters a sense of ownership within the community, ensuring that the development benefits and the community as a whole. Through public consultations, surveys, and workshops, the Concept Framework Plan can incorporate a diverse range of perspectives and lead to a more inclusive and resilient place. We have listened to the community during our engagement on the Vision for Whetstone Pastures Garden Village. Through this Concept Framework Plan, we have explained how the vision principles have been developed and have informed the emerging spatial plan for the Site. This document clearly sets out the work that has been undertaken to support the development of Whetstone Pastures Garden Village.

We would like to hear your views:

Whetstone Pastures is a proposed new garden village for Blaby – what should it look like?

Should it feature family-friendly parks? Improved transport links? Inspiring public spaces? Affordable homes?

This is your opportunity to help shape the final Masterplan.

Some elements are fixed – such as the motorway junction, logistics space, disused railway line, and existing constraints like the gas pipeline.

But for everything else, we want to hear your views – and the project team is listening.

You can view the draft Concept Framework Plan and share your feedback in the following ways:

In person at public consultation events on 26th and 27th September 2025:

Blaby Village Hall and District Centre – Friday 26th September, 1:30pm to 4:30pm

Willoughby Waterleys Village Hall – Friday 26th September, 5:30pm to 8:00pm

Countesthorpe Village Hall – Saturday 27th September, 9:30am to 12:30pm

Workshops:

For those who wish to provide more in-depth feedback, in-person Masterplan workshops will take place during the week beginning 13th October 2025.

Members of the public wishing to attend the Masterplan workshops can register by e-mailing the project team at contact@whetstonepastures.co.uk including name, address and specific areas of interest in the Masterplan.

Online:

View the Concept Framework Plan and submit your comments via the project website: www.whetstonepastures.co.uk

An online webinar will also be held during the week commencing 13th October 2025.

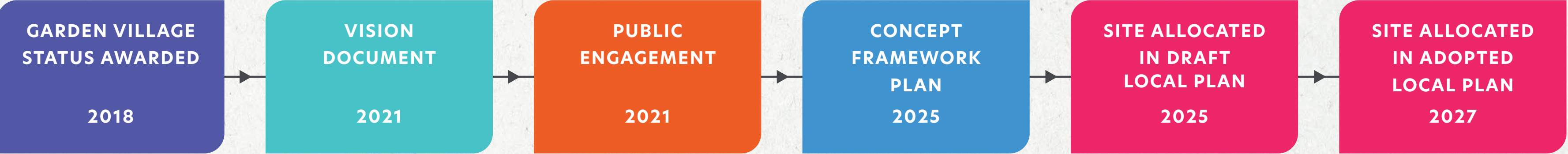
Members of the public wishing to attend the webinar can register by e-mailing the project team at contact@whetstonepastures.co.uk including name and address.

The consultation will be open from 8th September to 20th October 2025.

We will provide regular updates on the progress of the project via newsletters and its website:

<https://www.whetstonepastures.co.uk>

Next Steps



A P P E N D I X

Site Context

This section provides the key findings of each of the preliminary studies that have been carried out for Whetstone Pastures and highlights the spatial constraints/ opportunities for the development of the land. The studies undertaken to date are appropriate to the stage which the proposals are at in the development plan process. Technical work will continue to develop and evolve to inform the delivery of the Garden Village.

The preliminary studies have informed the Concept Framework Plan, the location and form of any development and appropriate mitigation measures. There are no constraints to the development of the Site that cannot be mitigated, and the Site is available, viable and deliverable.

Chapter 4 provides a summary of this information under the following headings:

- **Topography**
- **Heritage and Archaeology**
- **Landscape and Visual Character**
- **Geology**
- **Ecology and Natural Habitats**
- **Surface Water Drainage and Flooding**
- **High Pressure Gas Main**
- **Access and Movement**
- **Surrounding Settlements and Built Form**
- **Services and Utilities**
- **Minerals**

making it appropriate for large scale employment uses.

Topography

The topography of the Whetstone Pastures will be a key influence on the respective character areas of the Site. **Figure 1.1** depicts the Site landform.

The Site generally has an elevation of between 85 m above Ordnance Datum (Above Ordnance Datum) and 110 m Above Ordnance Datum. The topography and the immediate context of the Site is characterised by a gentle and shallow valley floor formed by the Whetstone Brook; this watercourse flows through the centre of the Site in a green corridor.

Key Features and Context

The Site's immediate context is characterised by the Whetstone Brook, which meanders through the centre, establishing a green corridor. To the east, a gradual rise leads to a ridge along Bambury Lane, delineating the Site and offering both a visual and physical boundary. To the west, the land descends towards Broughton Astley, providing a contrasting landscape beyond the M1.

Gradients and Terrain Analysis

The gradients across the Site are relatively gentle, with a low point to the north and centre of the Site around the Whetstone Brook. While there are steep slopes associated with the M1 embankment and former railway lines, the terrain to the west and east of the M1 is level, making it appropriate for large scale employment uses. The land to the east of Willoughby Road rises more steeply.

Development Potential

The analysis indicates that there are no significant topographical or geomorphic constraints that would limit the developable area of the Site.

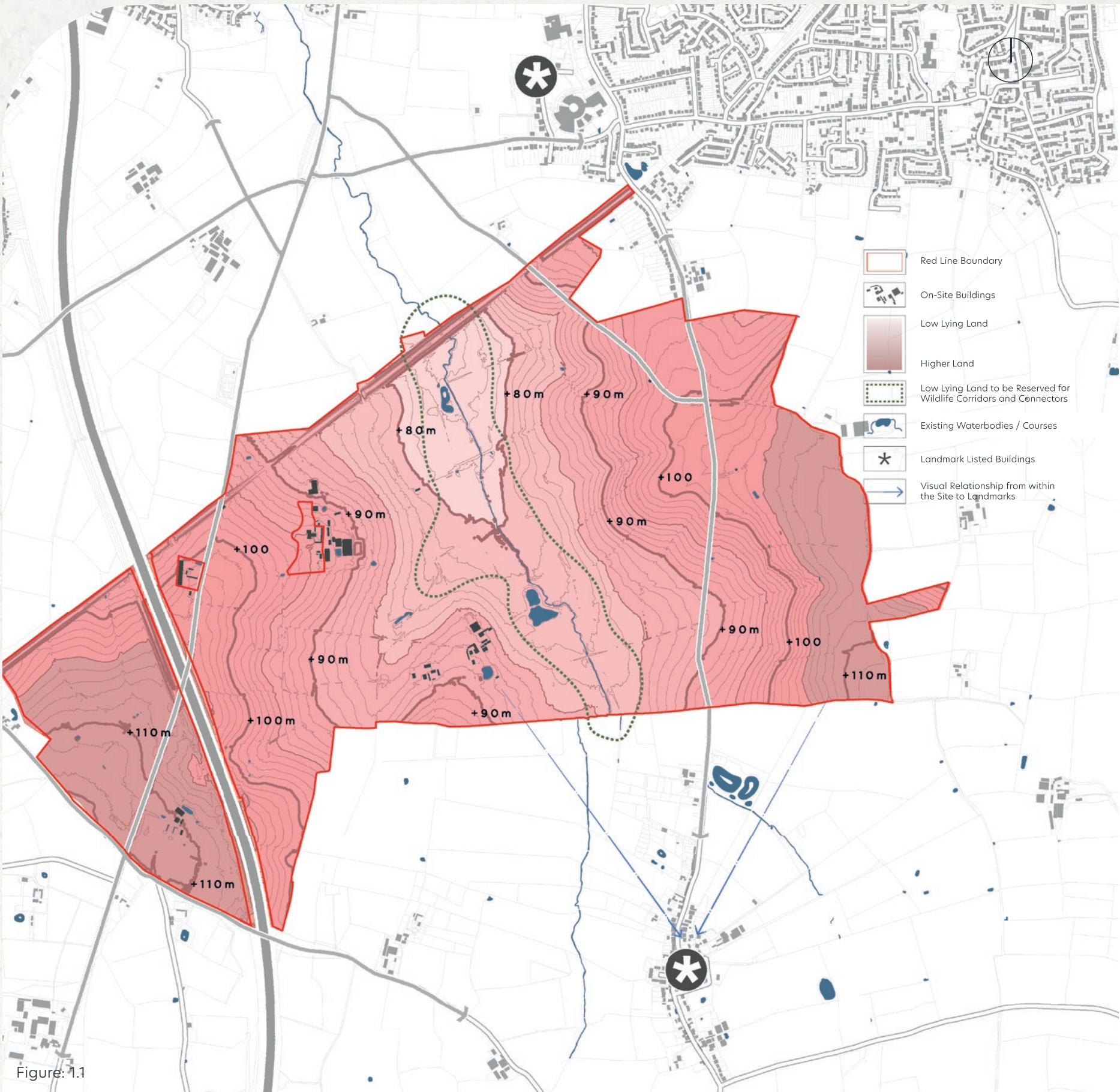


Figure: 1.1

Topography Plan.

Heritage and Archaeology

A heritage setting assessment and archaeological desk-based assessment has reviewed the heritage assets within and adjacent to the Site. This section outlines the known heritage assets present, both designated and non-designated, and emphasises the importance of their integration into the prospective Garden Village Masterplan.

Built Heritage

The Site contains one designated heritage asset, Whetstone Pastures Residential Home (known as Whetstone Pastures House) which is Grade II listed and six non-designated heritage assets as identified by the Historic Environment Record. A further 92 designated heritage assets are present within c.2km of the Site boundary. Built heritage assets are shown on **Figure 1.2** opposite.

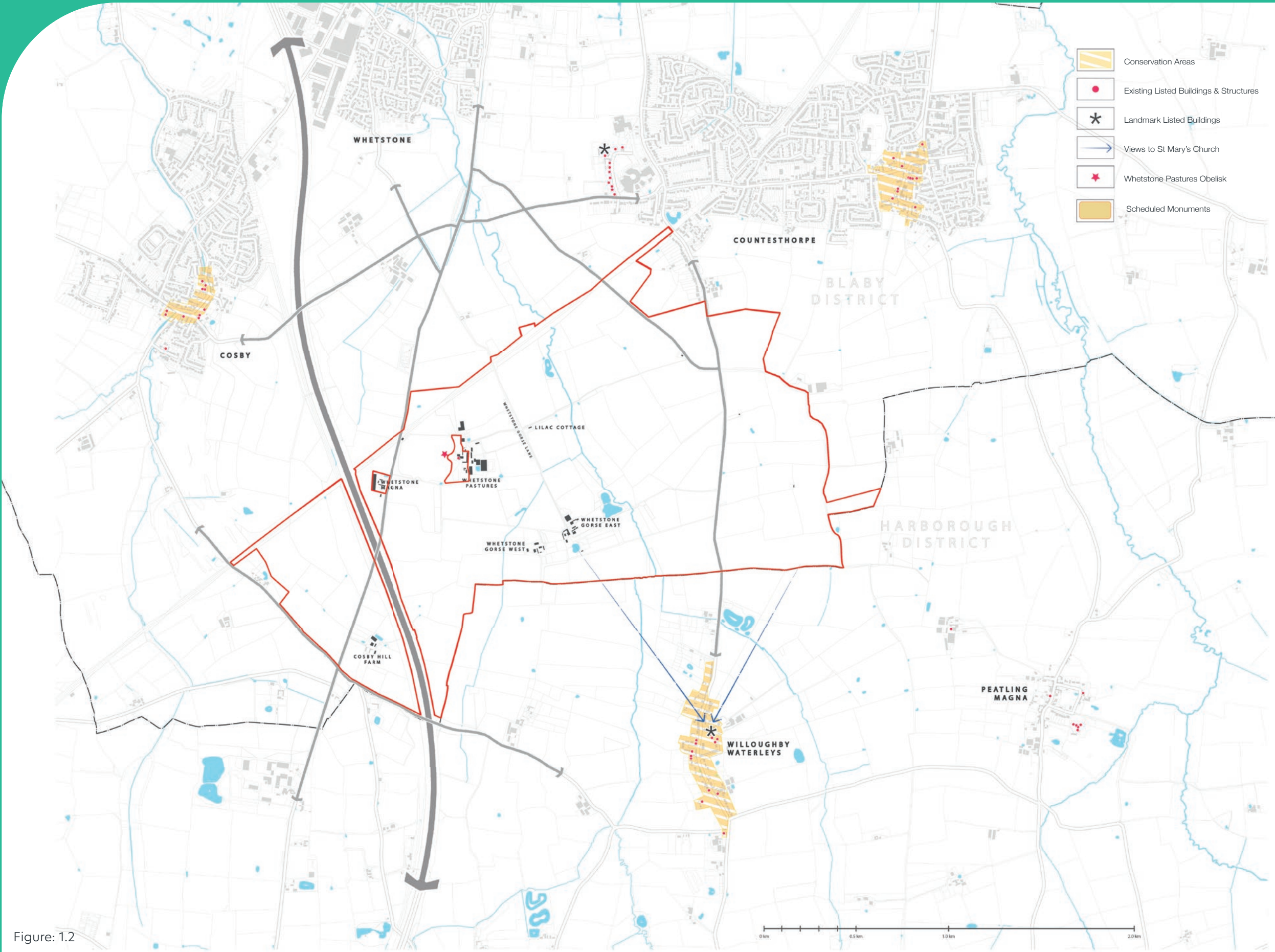


Figure: 1.2

Built Heritage Plan.

Whetstone Pastures House, Grade II (LB1386063)

The significance of Whetstone Pastures House would be affected to a small degree by the proposed development of the Site, through the loss of an area of land historically associated with the house. The physical fabric of the building, which makes the biggest single contribution to its significance, would be unaffected, as would the wider setting of the house.



Whetstone Pastures House.

Willoughby Waterleys Conservation Area

The conservation area is focused around the historic core of Willoughby Waterleys and includes 11 listed buildings. The Site forms part of the open agricultural land that surrounds the village, which is an aspect of its setting that helps to define it as a distinct historic settlement. Whilst the setting of the conservation area makes a contribution to its special interest, this is outweighed by the contribution made by its built form. The proposed development would result in housing and some employment buildings being distantly visible from the northern edge of the conservation area but would be buffered by fields ensuring that Willoughby Waterleys remains a distinct settlement. As a result of these changes there will be an effect on the special interest of the conservation area to a minor degree.



The western edge of the Conservation Area, view to the east including the church of St Mary and the cluster of listed buildings to its west.



Willoughby Waterleys Conservation Area.



View to the north from the conservation area.



Willoughby Waterleys Conservation Area.

Non-Designated Heritage Assets Present on the Site

A number of non-designated heritage assets are present within the Site. These are positive Site features, which contribute to the wider character of the area. We are planning to integrate and retain these features: two road bridges over the former Leicester to Rugby branch of the Midland Counties Railway, Whetstone Lodge Farm, Whetstone Gorse East; Whetstone Gorse West and Cosby Hill Farm.

Whetstone Gorse East and stables



Whetstone Gorse West and stables



Cosby Hill Farm



Archaeology

A desk-based assessment has been undertaken to assess the archaeological potential of the Site and its surroundings. Data from sources including the Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record, historic mapping, aerial photography, historic landscape characterisation data, and LIDAR data were analysed. Archaeological features are shown on **Figure 1.3**.

Key Findings and Interpretations

Key Findings and Interpretations Analysis of the currently available data indicates that the Site does not contain any archaeological features of such significance that their presence would constrain the development of the Site.

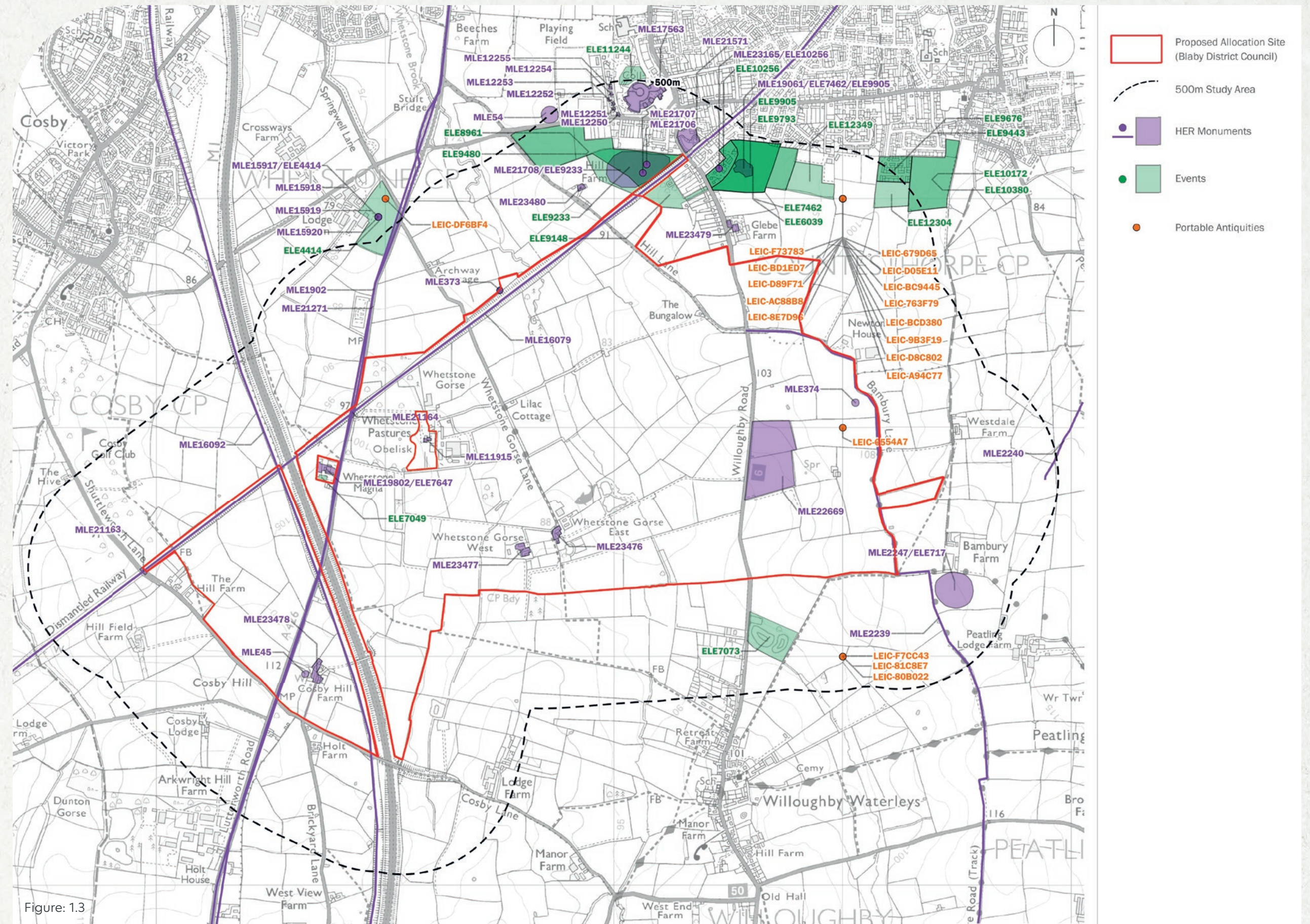
Prehistoric Period: While evidence for prehistoric activity is sparse, the river valley within the Site likely served as a transit route and hunting ground during early prehistory. Parts of the Site may also have been used for farming.

Roman Period: Limited evidence for Roman activity exists within the Site, with the possible alignment of a Roman road traversing the western area (Lutterworth Road).

Medieval Period: The surrounding villages may be Saxon in origin, and the Site is thought to have been predominantly used for agriculture during the medieval period.

Post-Medieval Period: The majority of the Site is thought to have continued in agricultural use during the postmedieval period, with the landscape divided by small farmsteads. To the east of the Site is a former World War II 'Starfish Site'.

The further development of the Concept Framework Plan will be informed by any archaeological surveys that may be required.



Archaeology Plan.

Landscape and Visual Character

Published Landscape Character and Designations

The Whetstone Pastures Site is not designated within any national, local, or other landscape designations. However, it falls within the ‘Cosby and Whetstone Rolling Farmland’ Landscape Character Area according to the Blaby Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2020). This Landscape Character Area is described as rural rolling farmland with an agricultural character, featuring gently rolling topography, the presence of Whetstone Brook, a mix of arable and pastoral land, small woodlands and conifer shelter belts, and major roads such as the M1 and A246. Minor rural lanes and access tracks also cross the landscape.

Figure 1.4 opposite illustrates the distribution of Landscape Character Areas in relation to the Whetstone Pastures Site.

Site Landscape Character

Whetstone Pastures constitutes a typical agricultural landscape with small farm complexes. Field boundaries are primarily mature hedgerows, supporting arable land use and wildlife corridors. Hedgerow trees are a common feature although there is evidence of ash dieback in some areas.

There are no Tree Preservation Orders on the Site. There are a small number of woodland blocks and shelter belts, but these are not identified as ‘Ancient’ Woodland. The predominant species are ash and mature oak, and there are a number of veteran or category A specimens.

Several trees exhibit features suitable to support roosting bats. The Site’s visual and physical character is not exceptional, with no features of elevated sensitivity.

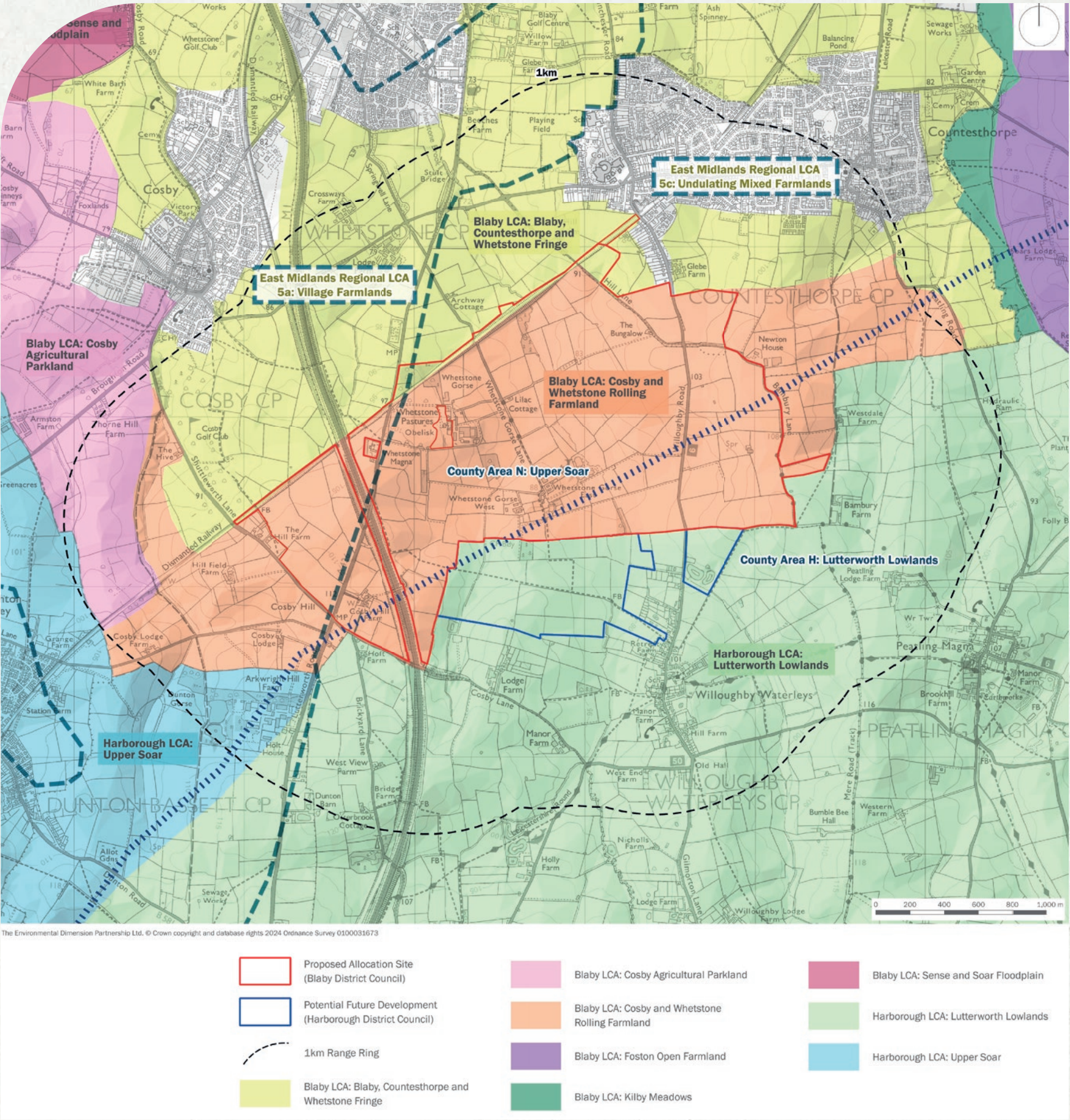
Land Use and Habitat

The Site comprises a mosaic of agricultural fields, with pasture near Whetstone Pastures House and arable land to the east, south, and west. Woodland blocks intersperse the fields, along with occasional ponds and Whetstone Brook, providing a wildlife corridor. A smaller watercourse also runs from the southwestern corner of the Site and connects to Whetstone Brook just to the north of the fisheries.

Landscape Heritage

The Site has historically been in mixed arable and pastoral agricultural use with the field pattern seen today being derived from the amalgamation of fields created mainly through piecemeal enclosures in the late 19th and early 20th century and post war agricultural improvements resulting in widespread boundary loss. The occurrence of this landscape character is common throughout Leicestershire.

Analysis of the currently available data indicates that the Site does not contain any landscape heritage features of such significance that their presence would constrain the developable area of the Site.



Landscape Character Plan.

General Visibility of the Site

Views towards Whetstone Pastures vary due to its topography and surrounding vegetation.

To the north, the Site is shielded from view by the presence of a dismantled railway, nestled within a densely wooded corridor that rises in sections. Views from the roads to the north of this feature and from the southern edges of Whetstone and Countesthorpe are largely obscured. Additionally, the undulating terrain and development in Whetstone contributes to the limited visual access from further north.

Moving eastward, some rights of way and a few farmsteads associated with Bambury Lane offer glimpses into the Site through intervening vegetation. Further east, the landscape dips towards a small watercourse near Peatling Magna before rising again, granting elevated views towards the eastern section of the Site along an elevated Public Right of Way network. Views from Peatling Magna itself are obscured by surrounding vegetation and topography.

To the south, the gently undulating landscape and woodland blocks that line the road infrastructure help to restrict potential intervisibility. Cosby Lane, running between Willoughby Waterleys and the A426, occasionally offers fleeting views towards the Site’s southern boundary, albeit filtered by vegetation along field boundaries. The Leicestershire Round Path, traversing the southern landscape, also has limited visibility towards the Site due to terrain and vegetation. An elevated ridge approximately 4km to the south provides limited views, primarily showcasing the built form of Leicester to the north.

Westward, Shuttleworth Lane borders the Site, providing transient views into the parcels west of the M1. Further afield, public footpaths to the north of Broughton Astley offer potential intervisibility, however, the dense woodland landscape obstructs views from these elevated locations.

Finally, the southern edge of Cosby, situated to the west of the Site, is also visually detached from the Site by intervening topography and vegetation, limiting views from residents and Public Right of Way users towards the western

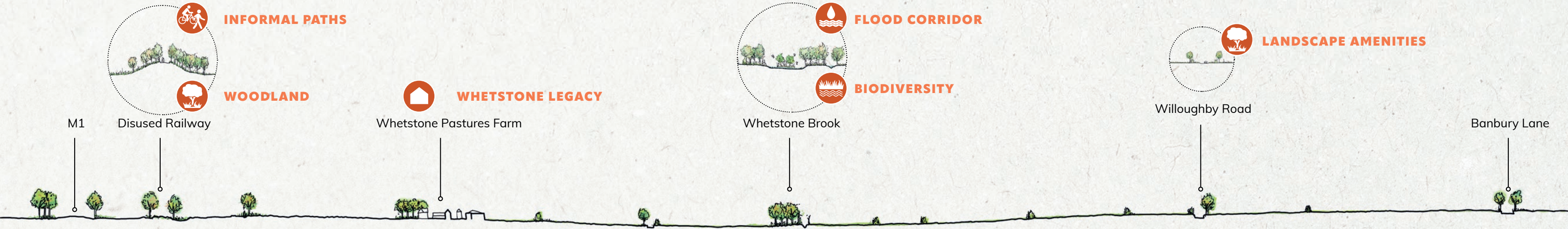
parcels of the Site. Other landscape features, detractors or constraints affecting the Site include:

- The M1 motorway
- The A426 and other minor roads
- The disused railway line passing through the northern part of the Site
- The Whetstone Brook
- Small rural ‘lanes’ criss-crossing the Site

Conclusion

In terms of the Site’s visual and physical character, it is considered not to be exceptional at a local level and contains no features or characteristics that are not commonly found in the surrounding area or which are particularly elevated in terms of their sensitivity.

The same is true for the predominant habitats, in that much of the Site comprises arable land and improved grassland of low ecological value (Site level or less). The small woodland blocks and mature trees are of local value.



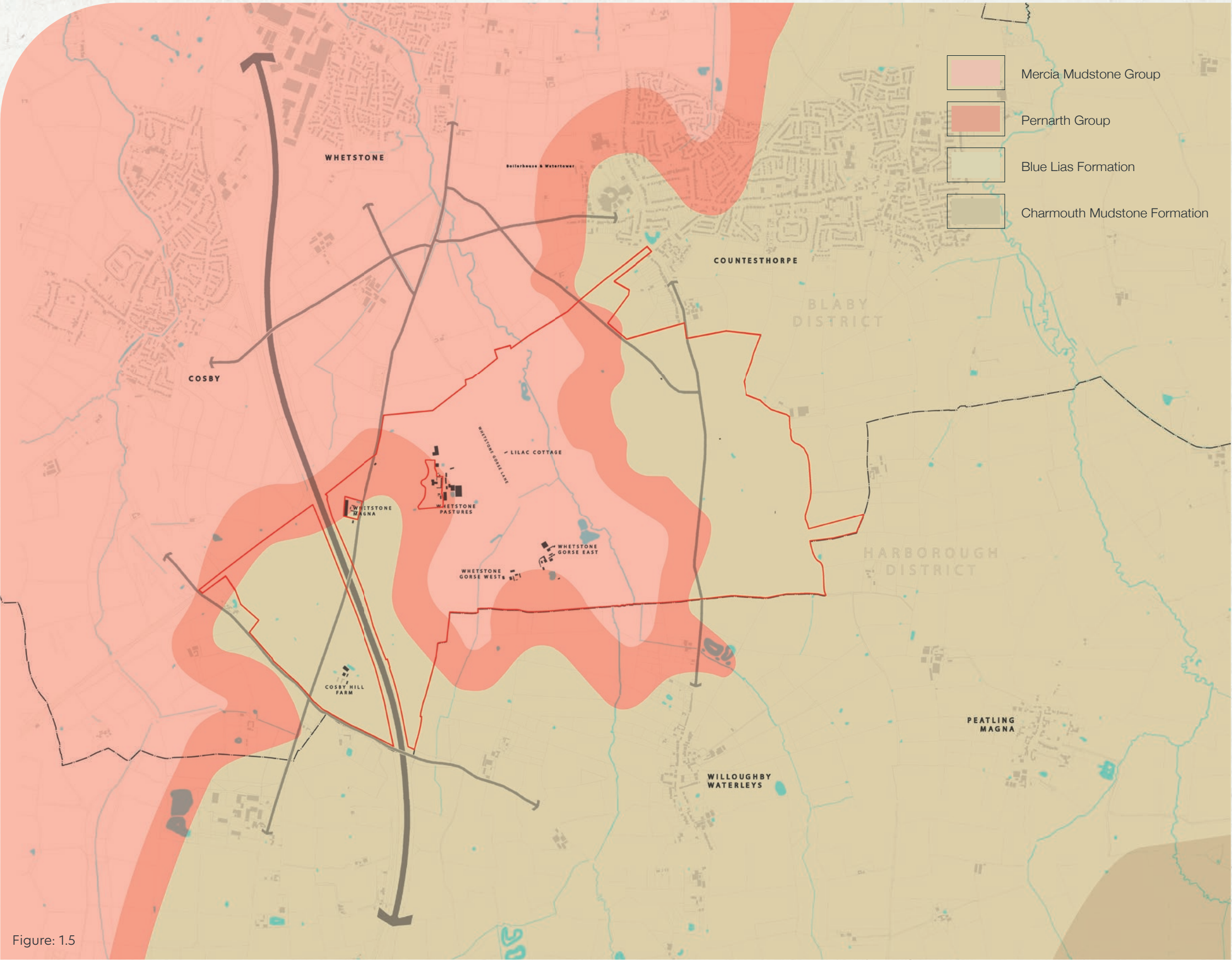
Geology

The Site’s geology consists of superficial deposits of; Mid Pleistocene Till, Alluvial Fan Deposits and River Terrace Deposits over bedrock comprising Blue Lias, Mercia Mudstone and Penarth Group.

The geological composition of Whetstone Pastures comprises various superficial deposits overlaying bedrock formations as shown on **Figure 1.5**. Mid Pleistocene Till covers the majority of the Site, while Alluvial Fan Deposits are concentrated in the central eastern area. Alluvium, associated with present-day watercourses, extends across the central and eastern portions of the Site, with River Terrace Deposits, mainly sand and gravel, overlapping the Alluvial Deposits in the south and north.

The underlying bedrock consists primarily of Blue Lias Formation, with Mercia Mudstone and Penarth Group formations also present. Blue Lias Formation dominates the west, south, and east of the Site, while Mercia Mudstone Group and Penarth Group are apparent in the north and central areas, forming an outer layer around the Mercia Mudstone Group.

Evidence of made ground is noted along the northern boundary, coinciding with a former raised railway embankment. Additionally, an elongated landfill is observed immediately east of the M1, running north to south. However, significant thicknesses of made ground are not expected elsewhere on the Site due to its historical agricultural use.



Geology Plan.

Ecology and Natural Habitat

A suite of ecology surveys have been completed across the Site to inform the CFM including a desk based assess-ment and site surveys including an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, pilot winter bird survey, pilot breeding bird survey, badger walkover and great crested newt Environmental DNA survey.

Statutory Designated Sites

There are three Site of Special Scientific Interest's located within 5km of the Site namely Narborough Bog Site of Special Scientific Interest located c3.5km north of the Site; Croft Pasture Site of Special Scientific Interest located c.4.5km north-west of the Site and Croft and Huncote Quarry Site of Special Scientific Interest located c.4.5km north-west also. No part of the Site is covered by statutory consultation zones from these Site of Special Scientific Interest and direct/ indirect impacts on these statutory designated Sites are considered unlikely given the spatial separation and lack of direct/ indirect receptor pathways from the Site.

Non-statutory Designated Sites

There are 49 non-statutory designations (notified/ candidate Local Wildlife Site and a further 42 potential Local Wildlife Site Potential Local Wildlife Site present within 2km of the Site as illustrated on **Figure 1.6**. Of the non-statutory designations identified eleven fall within the Site itself (six Local Wildlife Site and five Potential Local Wildlife Site) and with two additional Sites located immediately adjacent to the Site boundaries (one notified Local Wildlife Site and two Potential Local Wildlife Sites). Onsite and offsite Local Wildlife Site will need to be considered however the Site has sufficient flexibility and capacity to retain and protect valuable features within the development layout.

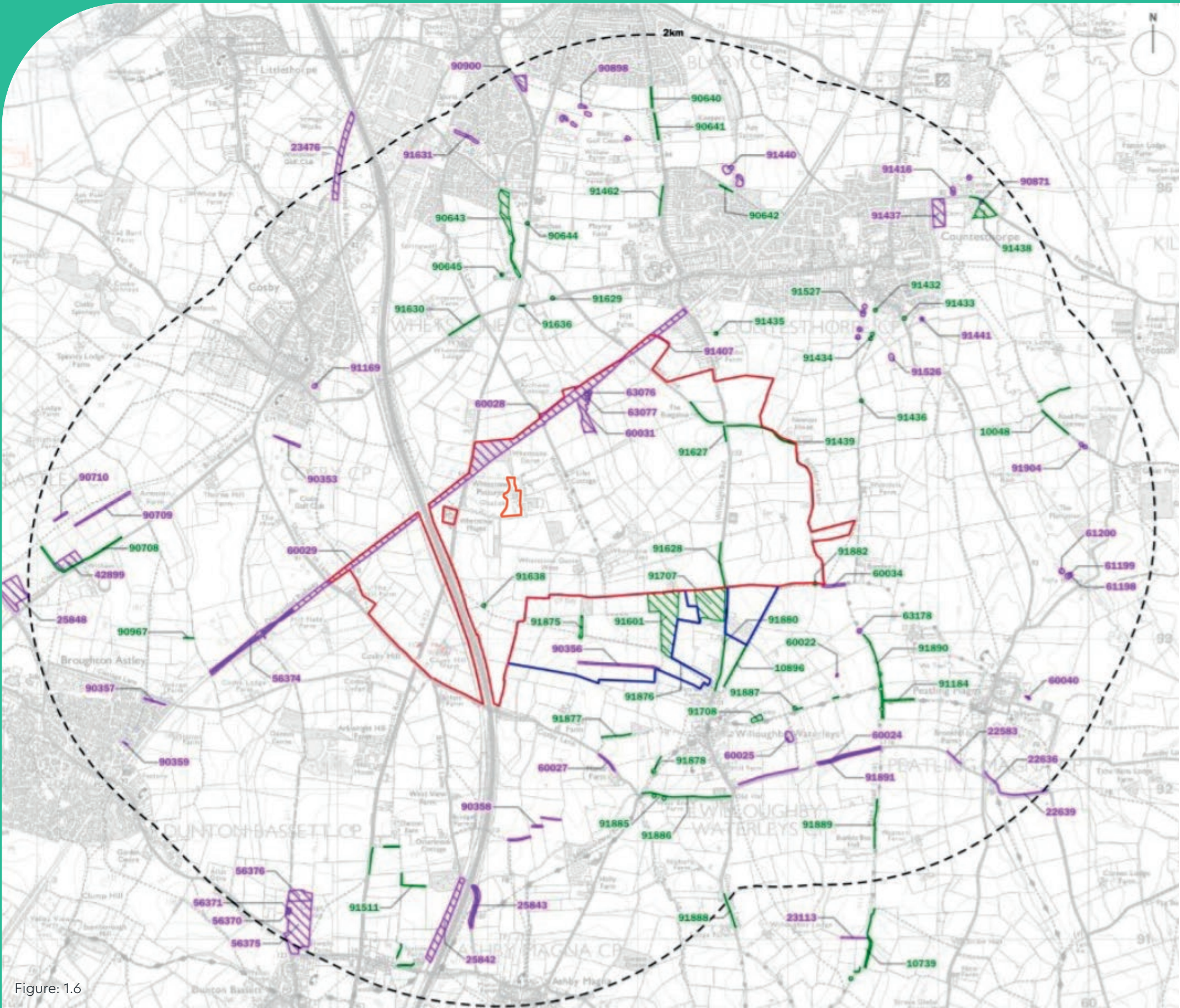
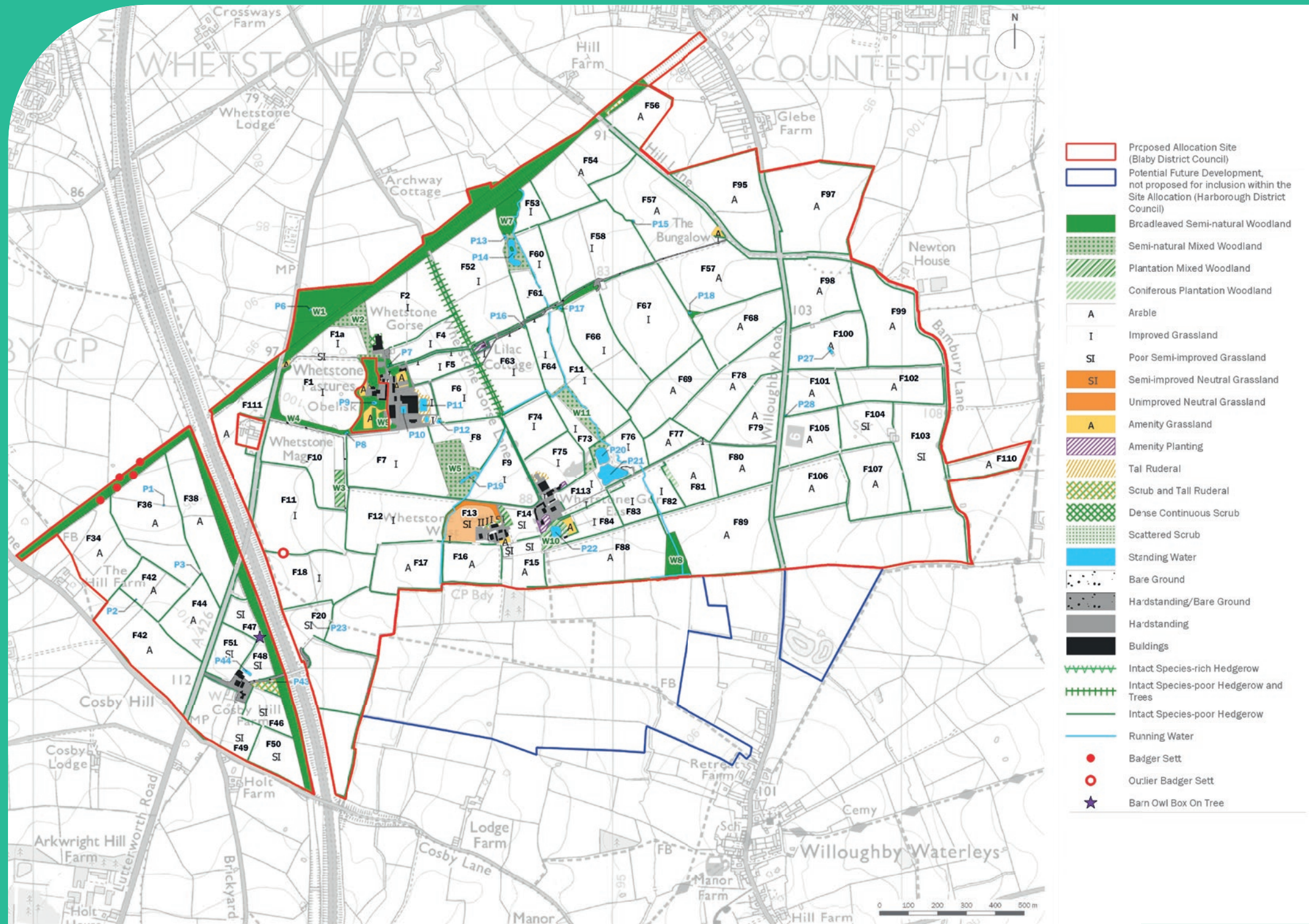


Figure: 1.6
Local Wildlife Sites within 2km.



Habitat Plan showing habitat distribution across the Site.

Habitats

Information on habitats within and around the Site was obtained during the desk study and Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey in May 2020, as illustrated on **Figure 1.7**.

Agricultural Arable Land and Grasslands

The vast majority of the Site is under agricultural management, either through arable cultivation or pasture for grazing. The arable crops provide negligible value for onsite ecology and biodiversity, and similarly, the pasture fields supporting improved and poor semi-improved grasslands in use as grazing for cattle and horses is of low ecological value. However, some more species rich grassland fields are present, predominantly in the south of the Site with local to county level ecological value based on their species richness and sward characteristics.

Hedgerows

The agricultural field boundaries are delineated by an extensive network of hedgerows, the majority of which are species-poor and intensively managed. However, there are a small number of higher quality hedgerows that are species-rich with mature standard trees, many of which are associated with the existing lanes/roads within the Site. The network of hedgerows is considered to be of Local level intrinsic ecological value. Small areas of scrub and tall ruderals are present across the Site, generally associated with boundary features and formerly disturbed ground.

Woodland

Blocks of woodland are present across the Site though most notably delineating the dismantled railway line, which runs along the entire northern boundary of the Site, as part of a Local Wildlife Site. Smaller blocks of semi-natural woodland are present within the centre and north of the Site though these are more limited in their extent, connectivity and condition. Some smaller blocks of young mixed plantation woodland are also present though these are of lower ecological value as a result of their botanical structure, diversity and condition. The woodlands overall are considered to only be of no more than Local level ecological value, except those associated with the northern Site boundary which are of County level due to their non-statutory designated status. None of these woodlands are classed as 'irreplaceable habitat'.

Aquatic Habitats

The Site is bisected by Whetstone Brook, flowing from south to north through the centre of the Site and feeding into the River Soar. Tributaries of the brook also enter the Site to the south before meeting the Whetstone Brook and continuing as a single watercourse. The condition and composition of the brook varies greatly along its length. Some sections are heavily over-shaded, some are much more open, with some steep muddy banks in places and some areas of gravel substrate. There is very little aquatic vegetation along any of its length and generally the water depth is of no greater than 0.5m.

The northern section of the brook is designated as part of the Whetstone Woodland and Brook Local Wildlife

Site and as such is considered to be of County level value. The remaining water course is considered to be of local level value.

There are multiple ponds present across the Site, typically considered to be in relatively poor condition, with encroaching scrub and evidence of eutrophication from nutrient enriched run-off from agricultural fields and grazing pasture and/or stocked with fish. Aquatic plant species were limited in their range and abundance and several of the ponds were found to be dry. The network of ponds and lakes are considered to be of local level intrinsic ecological value.



Example of one of the fishing lakes.



Example of one of the ponds of relatively poor quality- showing over-shading from encroaching vegetation and signs of eutrophication.



A stretch of the Whetstone Brook, which is relatively encroached with bankside vegetation, has only a few centimetres of slow flowing water with earth banks and a muddy substrate.



An example of a stretch of the Whetstone Brook, supporting a deeper water level, but still lacking aquatic vegetation and relatively heavily over-shaded, with no clear steep banks for burrow/holt building.



An example of a stretch of the Whetstone Brook, which is more open, but still showing a lack of any aquatic vegetation with shallow water and a slow flow rate.

Buildings

There are buildings present across the Site, which include complexes associated with Whetstone Pastures Farm, Whetstone Gorse East Farm and Cosby Hill Farm. Although buildings have the potential to support protected species (such as roosting bats and/or nesting birds), given their man-made nature, they are considered as having negligible intrinsic ecological value.

Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy

The proposed development will achieve a Biodiversity Net Gain of 10%.

Species

A preliminary suite of ecology species surveys have been completed across the Site to understand the general value of the Site for protected and priority species. The findings of these are outlined below along with a scope for further survey work which might be required to inform a planning application.

Birds

A pilot survey identified a total of 48 bird species of which 18 are of some conservation concern or are legally protected in some form. Of those, ten are listed on the Birds of Conservation Concern Red list and eight on the Amber list. In addition to being on the Red list, redwing and fieldfare also benefit from legal protection under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

The diversity and abundance of species recorded is considered to be fairly typical for a Site of this size and type, although flocks of declining farmland species were present in moderate numbers. As only a pilot survey was completed it is not possible to fully assess the assemblage present though the information gathered allows a precautionary assessment of District to County level value.

Breeding Birds

The pilot breeding bird survey identified 50 species of bird within the Site, with 9 of these listed on the Red list and 6 on the Amber list of Birds of Conservation Concern. Additionally, red kite and hobby, which are considered to be non-breeders within the Site, are also listed within Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

The overall, abundance and diversity of bird species is considered to be largely consistent with the extent and diversity of habitats onsite. The limited size of higher value habitats, such as wetland and woodland, is considered to have limited the potential for large populations of specialists, with the majority of activity associated with the arable fields and boundary hedgerows. Despite this, a number of ground nesting species are present within the Site, including skylark and small numbers of yellow wagtail. For this reason, the assemblage is considered to be of Local to District level value.

Bats

Roosting opportunities for bats are present within the Site in the form of buildings and trees, a number of which were identified as having potential to support roosting bats. Based on the habitat suitability and desk study records, it is considered likely that the Site supports a bat assemblage of at least Local level importance.

Badger

A number of active badger setts have been recorded within the Site during the Phase 1 survey, predominantly associated with the woodlands and hedgerows. Based on the surveys undertaken to date, the badger population within the Site is considered to be of up to Local level value.

Great crested newt

Suitable habitat for great crested newt is present within the Site (and wider area) in the waterbodies, hedgerows, field margins and woodlands however Environmental DNA testing of ponds in 2020 returned a positive result for great crested newt in just one of the 30 ponds sampled, located approximately 450m south of the Site. It is considered likely that the Site supports valuable assemblages of wintering and breeding birds, roosting and foraging bats and badger. Habitats are also present which could support assemblages of dormouse, otter, water vole, great crested newts, common and widespread species of reptile and some notable invertebrates potentially within higher value onsite habitats. Further surveys will be required to assess the presence/likely absence of these species/assemblages and to design an appropriate mitigation strategy, with Natural England licences secured as necessary.

Further Surveys

It is considered likely that the Site supports valuable assemblages of wintering and breeding birds, roosting and foraging bats and badger. Habitats are also present which could support assemblages of dormouse, otter, water vole, great crested newts, common and widespread species of reptile and some notable invertebrates potentially within higher value onsite habitats. Further surveys will be required to assess the presence/likely absence of these species/assemblages and to design an appropriate mitigation strategy, with Natural England licences secured as necessary.

Surface Water Drainage & Flooding

Whetstone Pastures is located within the Whetstone Brook valley, where the Whetstone Brook flows through the Site in a northerly direction. The M1 motorway runs through the Site and acts as an effective hydraulic barrier.

The area to the west of the M1 drains via local field drains and groundwater to a small stream by Thornhill Farm and ultimately to the River Soar.

The eastern section of the Site is drained by several smaller field drains and one larger stream that cuts across the western side of the valley. There are several ponds on the Site both man made agricultural ponds and semi natural ponds which are mainly located on the valley floor alongside the brook.

Whetstone Brook is a fairly fast flowing brook that has an average gradient of 1 metre drop per 160 metres of flow. These fast flow characteristics result in the Whetstone Brook going from very low flows during dry seasons to significant flows in the winter and following large storms with a clearly defined flood plain plateau surrounding the brook.

Within the Site, Whetstone Brook is classified as an ordinary watercourse, and as such the EA do not have modelled flood data for the brook and its floodplain. This means that the representation of the local flood plain extent shown on **Figure 1.8** is not accurate

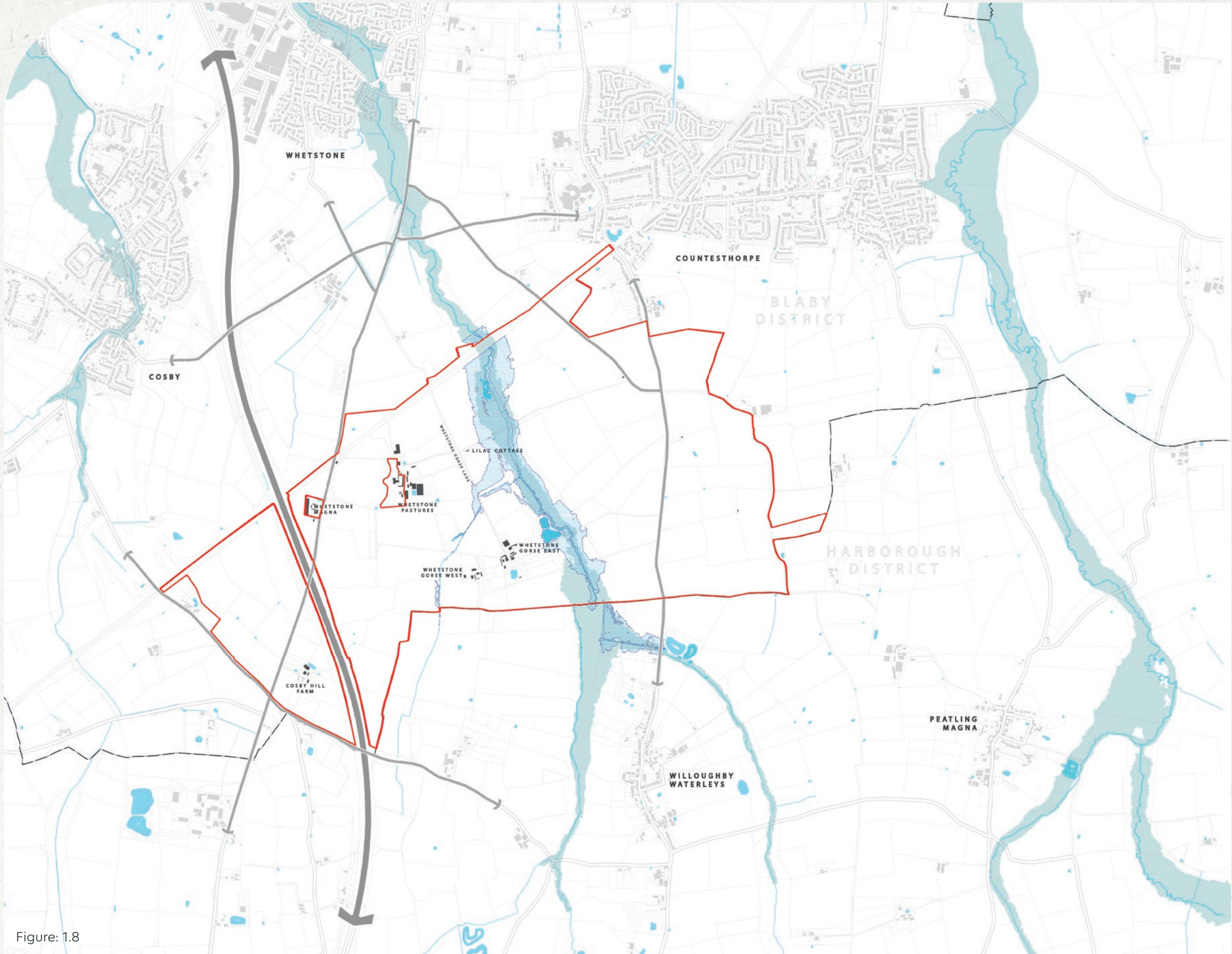


Figure: 1.8

Hydrology Plan.

High Pressure Gas Main

An existing 900mm steel National High Pressure gas main is located in close proximity to the northern Site boundary within the Site as shown on **Figure 1.9**. This is considered to be a significant constraint requiring consultation with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and National Grid. There are clear guidelines on offsets which are reflected in the Concept Framework Plan.

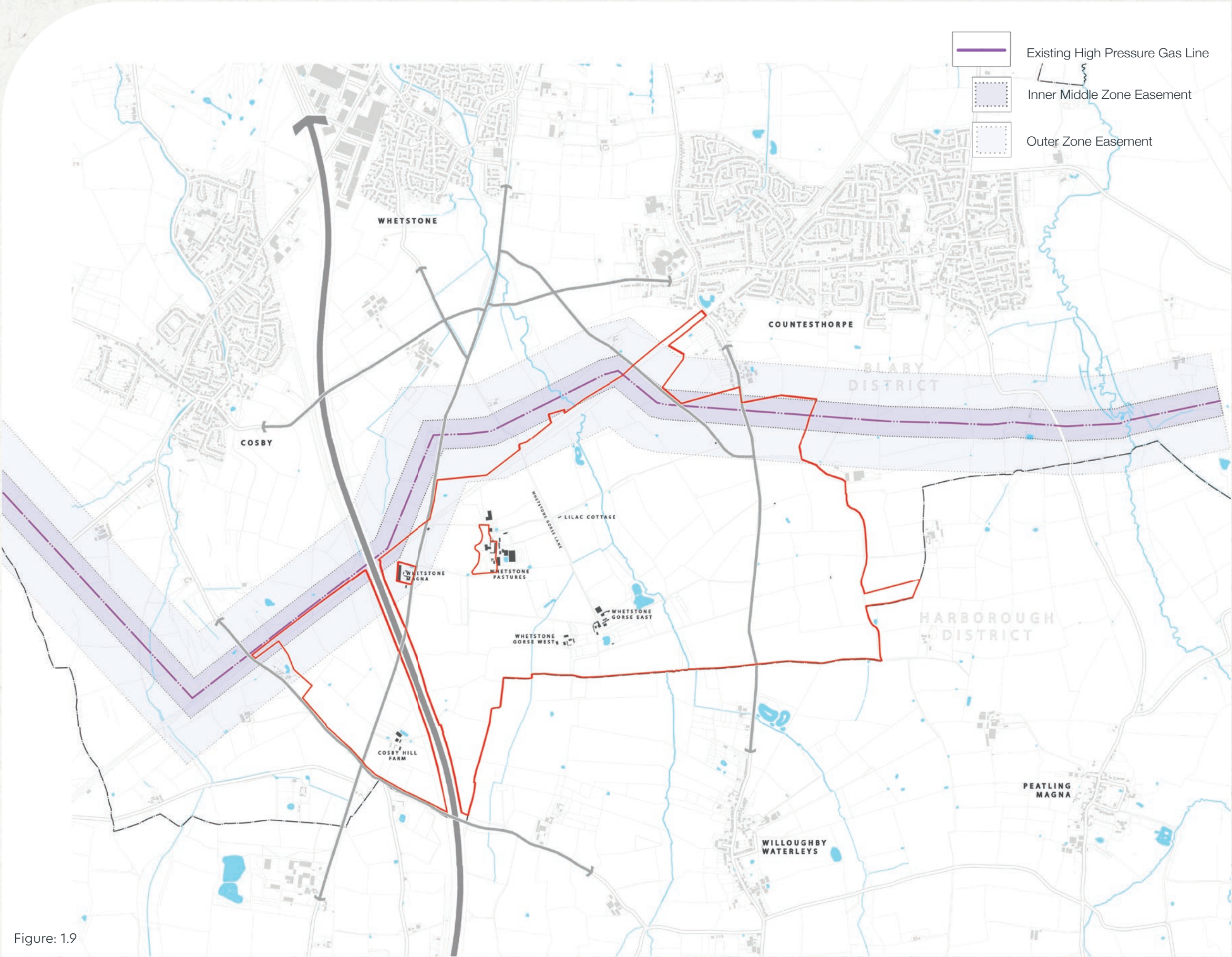


Figure: 1.9

Utility Plan.

Access & Movement

Site Location

The Site is located approximately 3km to the south of Blaby and 10km to the south of Leicester City Centre. Whetstone Pastures is intersected by three roads routing in a north-south direction, the M1 motorway through the western portion of the Site and the A426 Lutterworth Road and Willoughby Road through the eastern portion of the Site.

Strategic Highway Network

The M1 motorway passes beneath the A426 Lutterworth Road in cutting. M1 Junction 20 is located approximately a 6.4-mile drive to the south of the Site. This currently equates to approximately a 10 - 15 minute journey time both within the traditional highway peak and interpeak periods.

M1 Junction 21 is located approximately a 5-mile drive to the north of the A426 Site access.

In the vicinity of Whetstone Pastures the A426 Lutterworth Road is a single carriageway road routing north-south in the direction of Blaby, Whetstone and Leicester (including M1 junction 21) to the north and Lutterworth and the M1 Junction 20 to the south.

Lutterworth Road is an approximately 6.6m wide, two-way road that is de-restricted (national speed limit) in the vicinity of Whetstone Pastures. Approximately 2.3km to the north the A426 widens to a dual carriageway forming the Blaby Bypass, see **Figure 1.10** opposite.

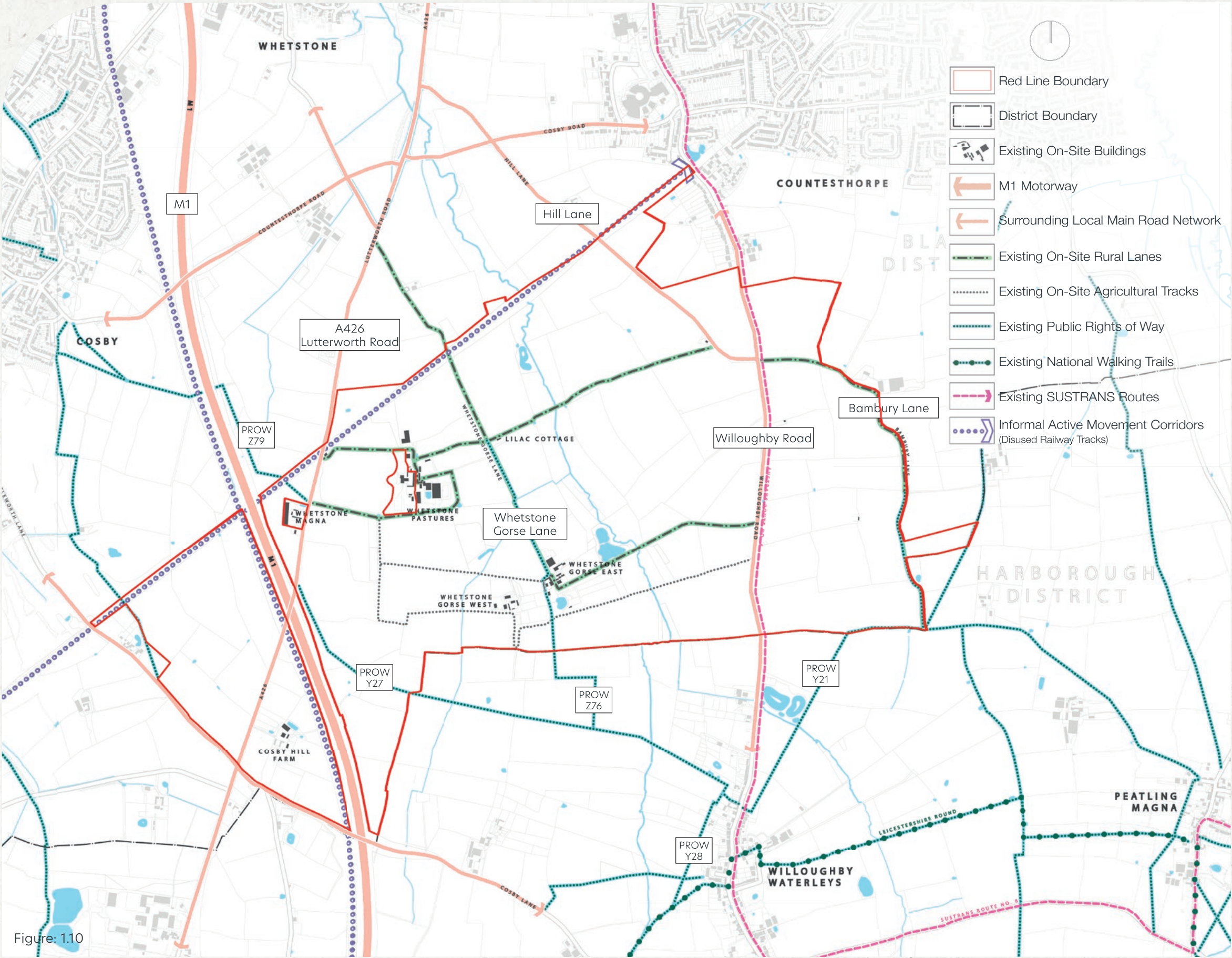


Figure: 1.10

Movement Plan.

Local Roads

Willoughby Road is a rural single carriageway road routing between Countesthorpe to the north and Willoughby Waterleys to the south. Willoughby Road is approximately 5.0m wide and is de-restricted (national speed limit) in the vicinity of Whetstone Pastures, reducing to 30mph on entry to the settlement of Countesthorpe

Hill Lane is a single carriageway road routing between Lutterworth Road to the west and Willoughby Lane to the east passing through the northern portion of Whetstone Pastures. It is a typical rural lane with narrow sections (approximately 3.7m in width) with occasional passing places along its length.

Whetstone Gorse Lane is a single carriageway road running through the centre of Whetstone Pastures, connecting the A426 Lutterworth Road to the north with a farmstead where it terminates centrally within the Site. Again, this is a typical rural lane in that it is narrow (approximately 3.3m wide) with grass verges to either side.

Walking and Cycling Network

Several Public Rights of Way and the National Cycle Network route 6 provides access to central Leicester via Willoughby Road and heads east towards Market Harborough. National Cycle Network route 50 runs south towards Gilmorton, Crick and Daventry. These routes provide walking and cycling connections alongside the quiet lanes such as Whetstone Gorse Lane which then leads onto quietways such as Springwell Lane through to Blaby, Whetstone, Narborough and Enderby and Local cycle routes 3 and 4 as shown to the right on **Figure 1.11**. The proposals will consider how connections can be made to existing and proposed walking and cycle routes, identified in the Blaby Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

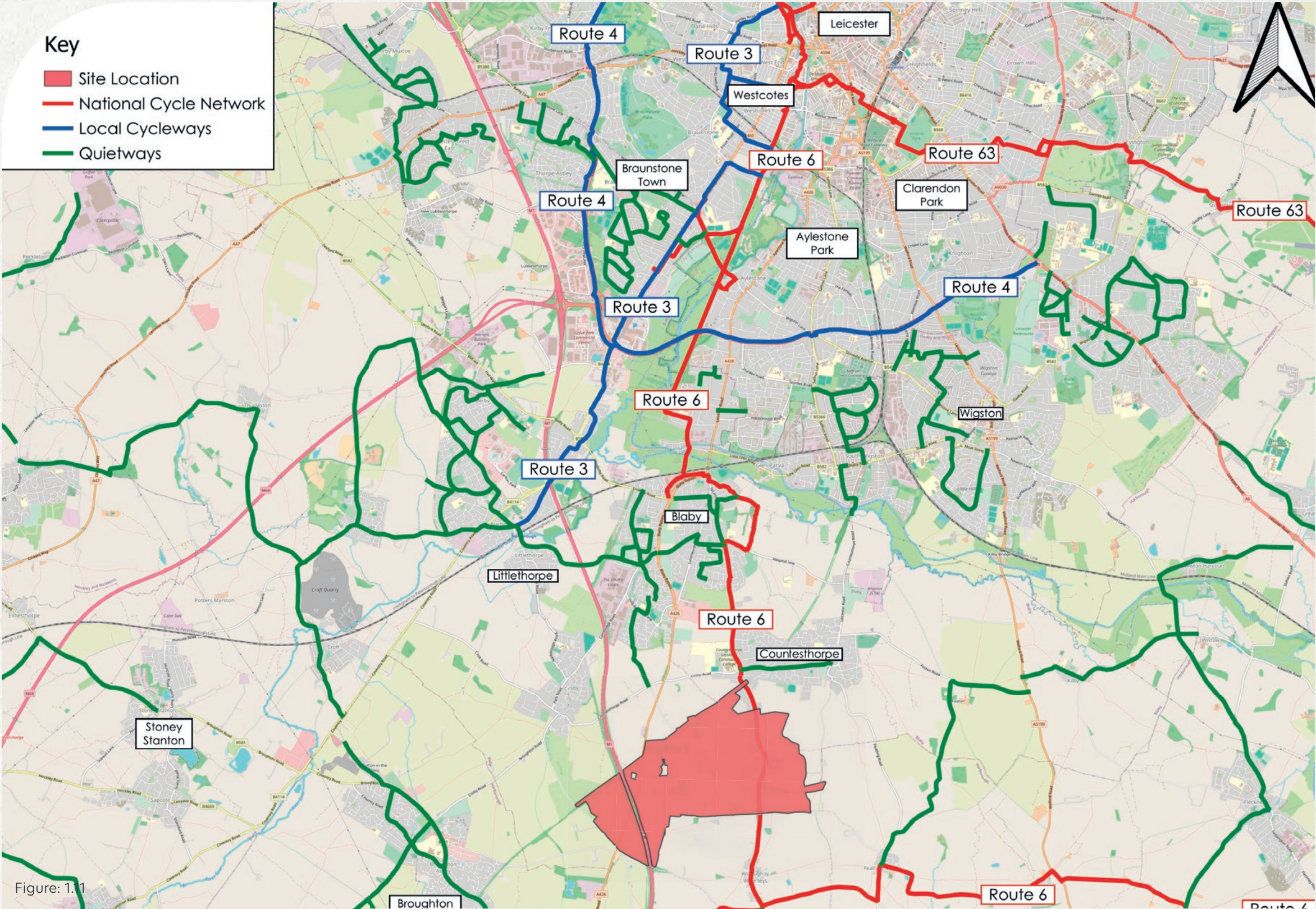


Figure: 1.11

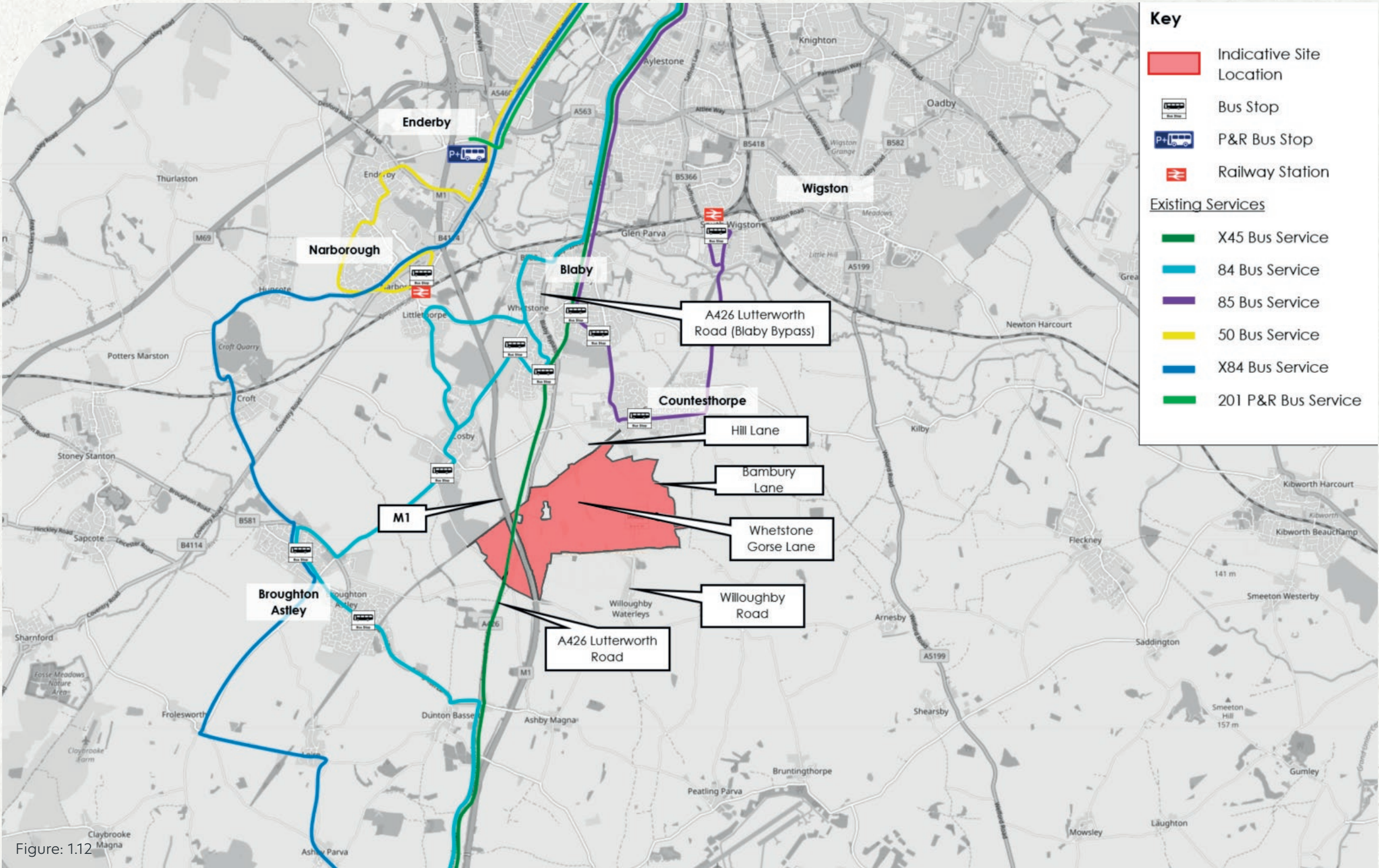
Cycle Network Plan.

Bus and Rail Services

A number of frequent public transport services are present in close proximity of Whetstone Pastures, providing access to central Leicester and the wider urban area. As shown on **Figure 1.12**.

Narborough Railway Station and South Wigston Railway Station are both within approximately 5km of the centre of Whetstone Pastures. These stations provide hourly trains in the direction of both central Leicester and Birmingham. These destinations also provide hubs to transfer onto national and high-speed services across the country.

In addition to the traditional bus services, demand response services are in place in the local area covering a wide range of settlements in South East Leicestershire including links to major employment hubs and the railway stations.



Bus Service Plan.

Surrounding Settlements

There are two existing settlements that are in close proximity to Whetstone Pastures, Countesthorpe which lies within Blaby District and Willoughby Waterleys which lies within Harborough District. The settlements of Cosby and Whetstone, again within Blaby District, are not considered to be visually impacted.

The delivery of Whetstone Pastures will alter the existing landscape of the Site, and in particular the surroundings of the villages of Countesthorpe and Willoughby Waterleys.

Further analysis of the villages adjacent to Whetstone Pastures will be undertaken as part of the future planning applications, with any necessary mitigation considered as required.

Countesthorpe (1 mile from the Site)

Countesthorpe is a sprawling historic village in Blaby district with a population of 6,000 and traces its roots back to the 11th century. The village’s historic core during the 19th Century was known for its knitted stocking production. Throughout the 20th century, rapid growth transformed Countesthorpe into a sizable residential village.

Countesthorpe’s layout comprises three distinct zones:
Historic Core: Nestled around The Square, Main Street, Central Street, and Church Street, the historic core embodies a blend of old-world charm and contemporary development. Over the years, some demolition has reshaped this area, juxtaposing older structures with car parks and modern developments.

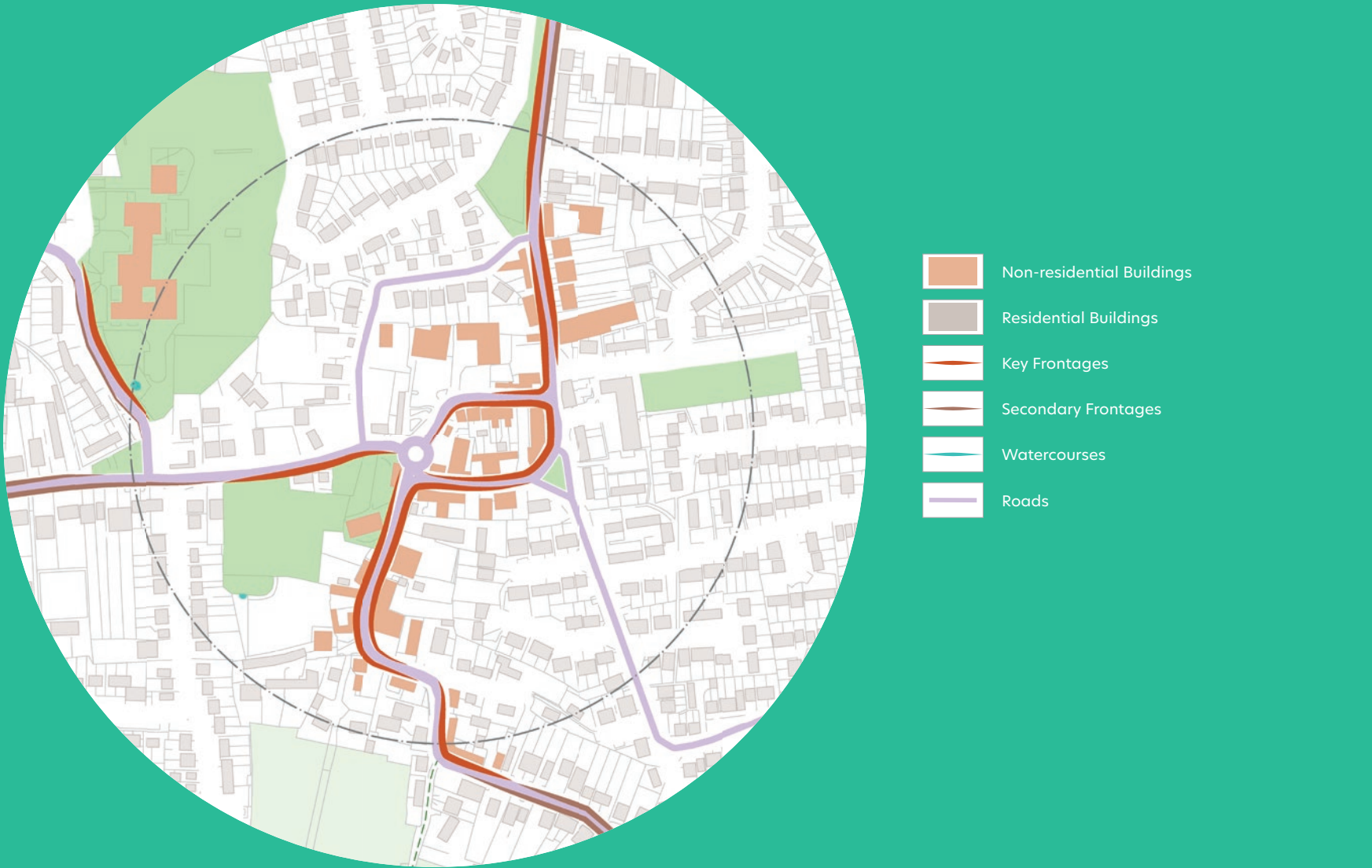
19th Century Expansion: North and south expansions in the 19th century gave rise to modest terrace housing, harmoniously lining the streetscape.

20th Century Expansion: The bulk of Countesthorpe’s expansion occurred in the latter half of the 20th century, marked by the proliferation of detached single-family homes and bungalows. Residential streets often feature wide grass verges adorned with hedgerows and mature trees, contributing to the village’s green ambiance. A small green area at the junction of Central Street and Station Road, along with an open paddock near St. Andrews Church, punctuate the village centre, enhancing its character.

Architectural Diversity

Countesthorpe boasts a diverse architectural palette, reflecting its rich history and evolving character. In the village centre, small terraces and half-timbered buildings lend unique variations to the streetscape. Building heights are generally consistent, with most structures standing at two storeys, except for the prominent St. Andrews Church tower. Towards the western periphery, detached houses set within ample grounds become prevalent, often set back from main roads.

Throughout the historic core, red brick buildings with slate roofs dominate, though some properties feature render or painted brick facades. Moving outward, architectural styles diversify, with the use of materials such as concrete tiles and pale brick.



Cosby (0.8 miles from the Site)

The village of Cosby to the north-west of the Site and within Blaby District has a population of approximately 3,700 residents. With roots tracing back to the Domesday Book, Cosby has a rich history as a predominantly agricultural settlement. The village underwent significant transformation during the 19th century, marked by the rise of industrialisation, particularly in the production of shoes and boots. This era witnessed a notable surge in population, more than doubling the village’s size. The 20th century ushered in further growth, characterised by the establishment of Council housing in the 1920s and 1930s, followed by private housing development in the latter half of the century.

Cosby’s layout encompasses three distinct zones:

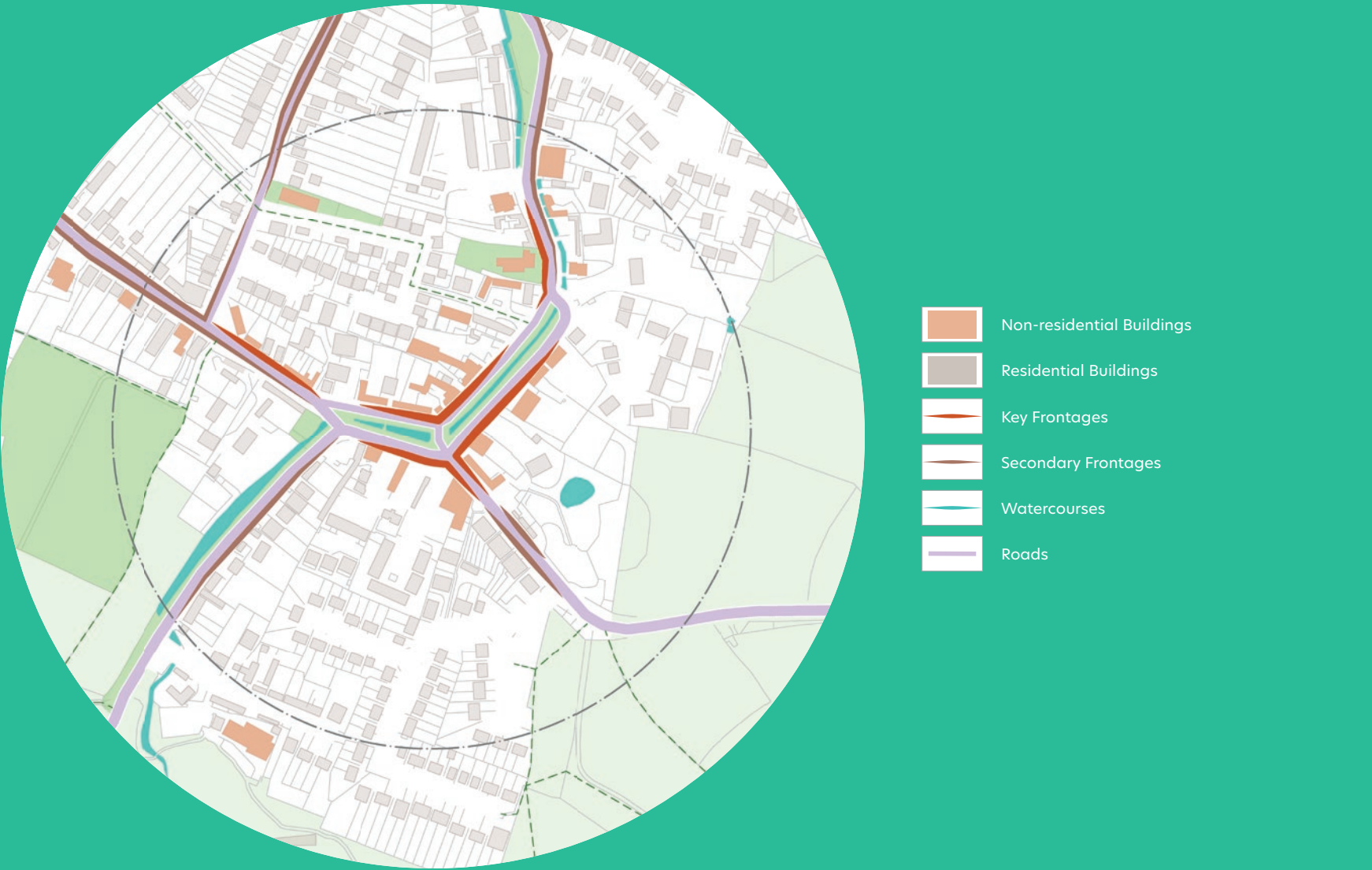
Historic Core: The heart of the village, centred around Main Street and the Nook, exudes a unique charm. Here, a small stream meanders amidst mature trees, creating a verdant corridor. The architecture is diverse, ranging from terrace cottages to prominent standalone structures like the church and grand detached residences.

19th Century Expansion: Radiating from the core, the 19th-century development comprises mainly workers’ cottages, interspersed with a few non-residential edifices. This expansion contributes to the village’s varied character.

20th Century Expansion: Witnessing considerable growth, Cosby expanded notably to the north, south, and west during the 20th century. This period saw the emergence of diverse housing types, including terraces, spacious detached properties, and bungalows. Additionally, pockets of 21st-century development dot the landscape, reflecting ongoing evolution within the settlement.

Architectural Style

The historic core of the village has a varied architectural character. While most buildings are two storeys, there are a handful of three storey historic properties and the church which has a grander scale than the rest of the settlement. The majority of historic buildings are red brick, with slate roofs, though there are also a handful of rendered properties which add variety to the street scene. The 20th century development has a varied architectural style. While the material used is predominantly brick, most buildings have concrete tile roofs, and the form and design of these areas is varied.



Willoughby Waterleys (0.5 miles from the Site)

Willoughby Waterleys is a small village in Harborough District with a population of 327 to the south of Leicester and Countesthorpe. The village was traditionally an agricultural settlement and dates back to the Domesday Book. The village has a Parish Church, but lacks wider facilities.

The village has two distinct areas:

Linear Historic Core: Anchored around Willoughby Road, this area features buildings set behind verdant verges, blending terraced homes with scattered detached structures like The Old Rectory and The General Elliot (former pub). Brick walls intermittently line the streets, adding to its quaint allure.

Infill Developments: Sprinkled to the east and west of Willoughby Road, these modest expansions subtly enhance the village without compromising its rustic character.

Architectural Style

The village has an informal character, defined by its varied architectural form and scale. Apart from St Mary's Church, the buildings are typically constructed in brick. Most dwellings are two storeys, though there are a couple of three storey buildings which add variety to the village character. The architectural style of the 20th century development varies from the more traditional buildings, with different form scale, and fenestration.



Technical Constraints Plan

The plan opposite at **Figure 1.13** is a constraints plan which maps the constraints identified by the suite of technical assessments and reports which informs the Concept Framework Plan.

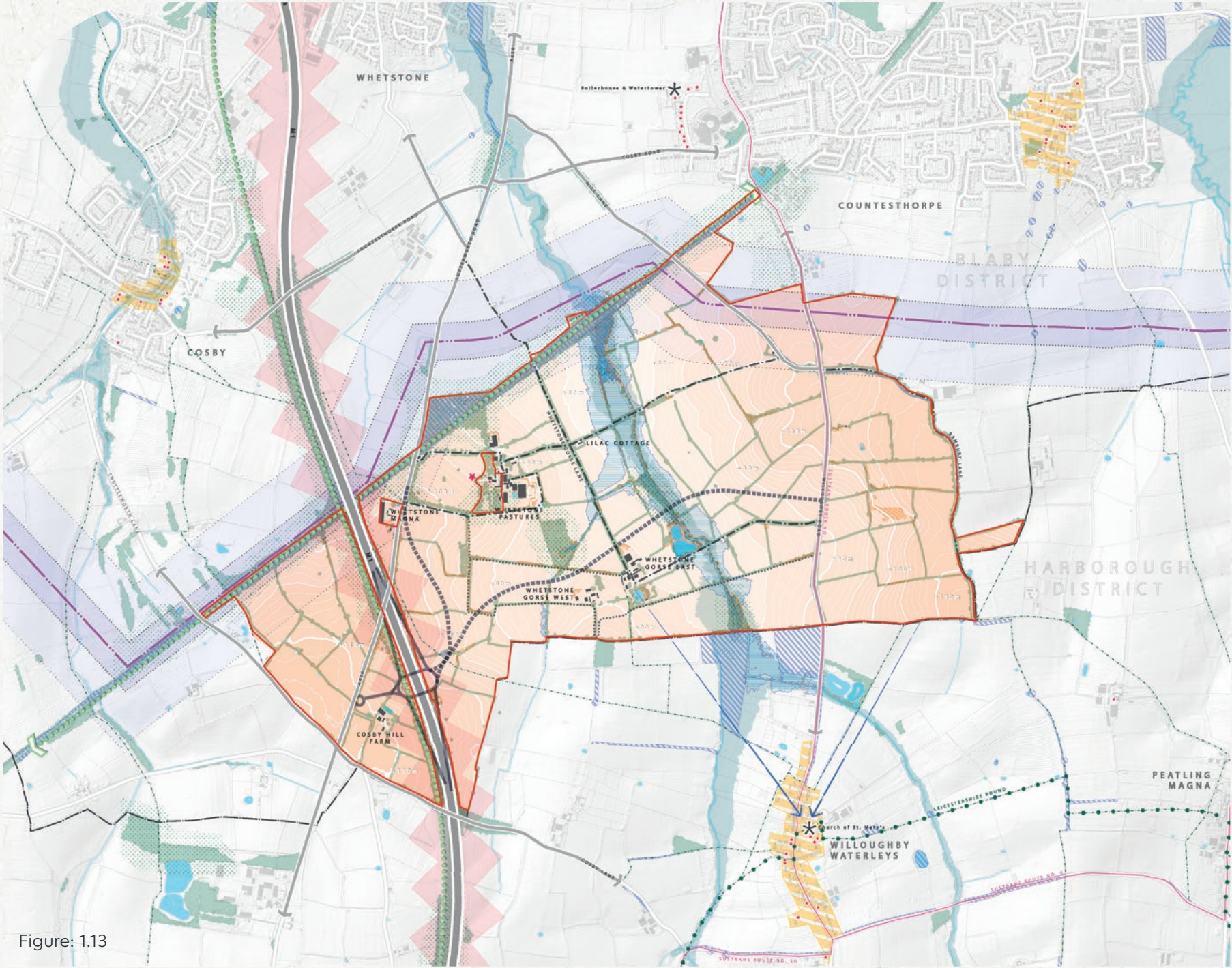


Figure: 1.13

Technical Constraints Plan.

- Red Line Boundary
- District Boundary
- Existing On-Site Buildings

LANDSCAPE / NATURAL CONSTRAINTS

- Contours
- Steep Slopes (>10% / >1:10 / > 5.71°)
- Existing Waterbodies /courses
- Environment Agency: Extent of Floodzones 2 & 3
- RPS: Extent of Floodzone Modelling
- Existing Vegetation
- Sensitive Landscape / Protected Woodland
- Local Wildlife Sites

UTILITIES

- Existing High Pressure Gas Line
- Inner Middle Zone Easement
- Outer Zone Easement

MOVEMENT CONSTRAINTS

- M1 Motorway
- Surrounding Local Main Road Network
- Potential Alignment of New M1 Junction
- Indicative Strategic Road Alignment
- Existing On-Site Rural Lanes
- Existing On-Site Agricultural Tracks
- Existing Public Rights of Way
- Existing National Walking Trails
- Existing Sustrans Routes
- Noise Shadow from M1 Motorway
- Informal Active Movement Corridors (Disused Railway Tracks)

HERITAGE CONSTRAINTS

- Conservation Areas
- Existing Listed Buildings & Structures
- Landmark Listed Buildings
- Views to St Mary's Church
- Whetstone Pastures Obelisk
- Scheduled Monuments

Whetstone Pastures

G A R D E N V I L L A G E

www.whetstonepastures.co.uk