



CONTEXT

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1. INTRODUCTION



This Delivery Statement has been prepared by Barratt Homes North London to support the promotion of land at Chalks Farm, Sawbridgeworth as part of the emerging East Hertfordshire District Plan. This document demonstrates that Chalks Farm is a sustainable deliverable site and should be allocated for development within the District Plan.

This document has been informed by a robust evidence base and should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Transport Strategy by Odyssey Consulting Engineers
- Phase 1 Habitat Survey prepared by Southern Ecological Solutions
- Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal prepared by David Williams Associates
- Services Appraisal prepared by Odyssey Consulting Engineers
- Flood Risk Assessment prepared by Odyssey Consulting Engineers

Barratt North London

Barratt North London has high aspirations for the development at Chalk's Farm and wishes to achieve a high quality sustainable residential neighbourhood at the edge of Sawbridgeworth that will contribute towards district wide housing needs.

Barratt North London has a long and proven track record in the inception and implementation of major development projects in the area, with award winning Saffron Gardens development in Sawbridgeworth being one of them.

Building for Life.

Barratt Homes is one of the few developers committed to assess all its schemes against Building for Life criteria to ensure delivery of quality places.

Building for Life 12 is the industry standard assessment, endorsed by Government, for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods.

The 12 questions reflect the vision of what new housing developments should be: attractive, functional and sustainable places. Redesigned in 2012, BfL12 is based on the new National Planning Policy Framework and the Government's commitment to build more homes, better homes and involve local communities in planning



2. PLANNING CONTEXT

East Hertfordshire District Council (EHDC) have published the Draft District Plan intended to replace the 2007 Local Plan. This will set out the future housing requirements for the District to 2031 and put forward sites where those requirements can be met.

Chalks Farm has been identified for housing as part of the draft District Plan under policy SAWB3 to provide for 300 residential units.

As a possible location for growth that The proximity of this location to both primary and secondary education , sustainable transport opportunities and local retail and community facilities would enable new development to relate well to existing infrastructure.



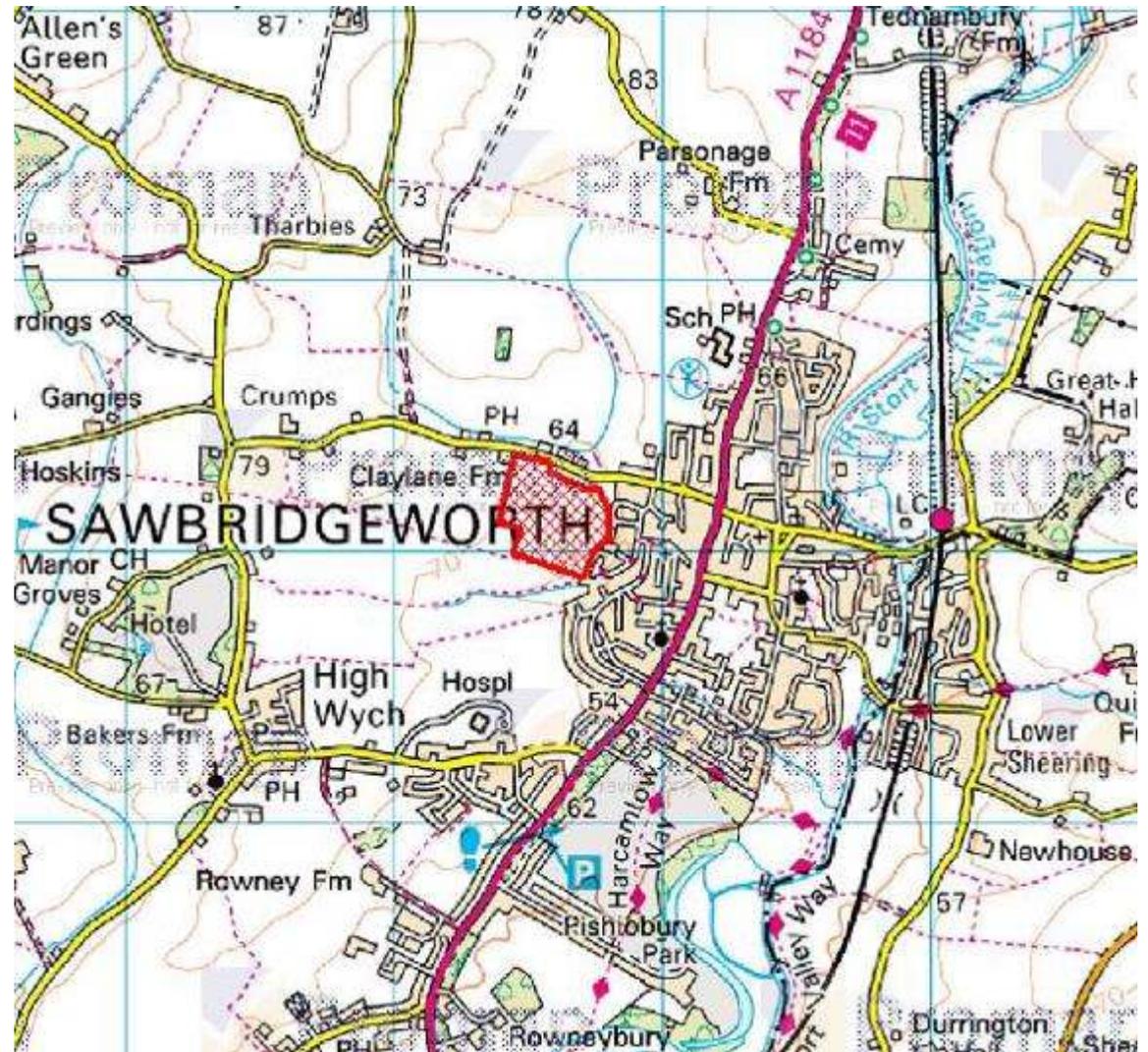
3. THE SITE

Location of the Site

The Site is just over 14 hectares in size. It is located to the south of West Road and west of Coney Cree on the Western side of Sawbridgeworth, immediately adjoining the built area of the town. The Site currently lies outside the settlement boundary of Sawbridgeworth and is shown in the current Local Plan as lying within the open countryside and Green Belt.

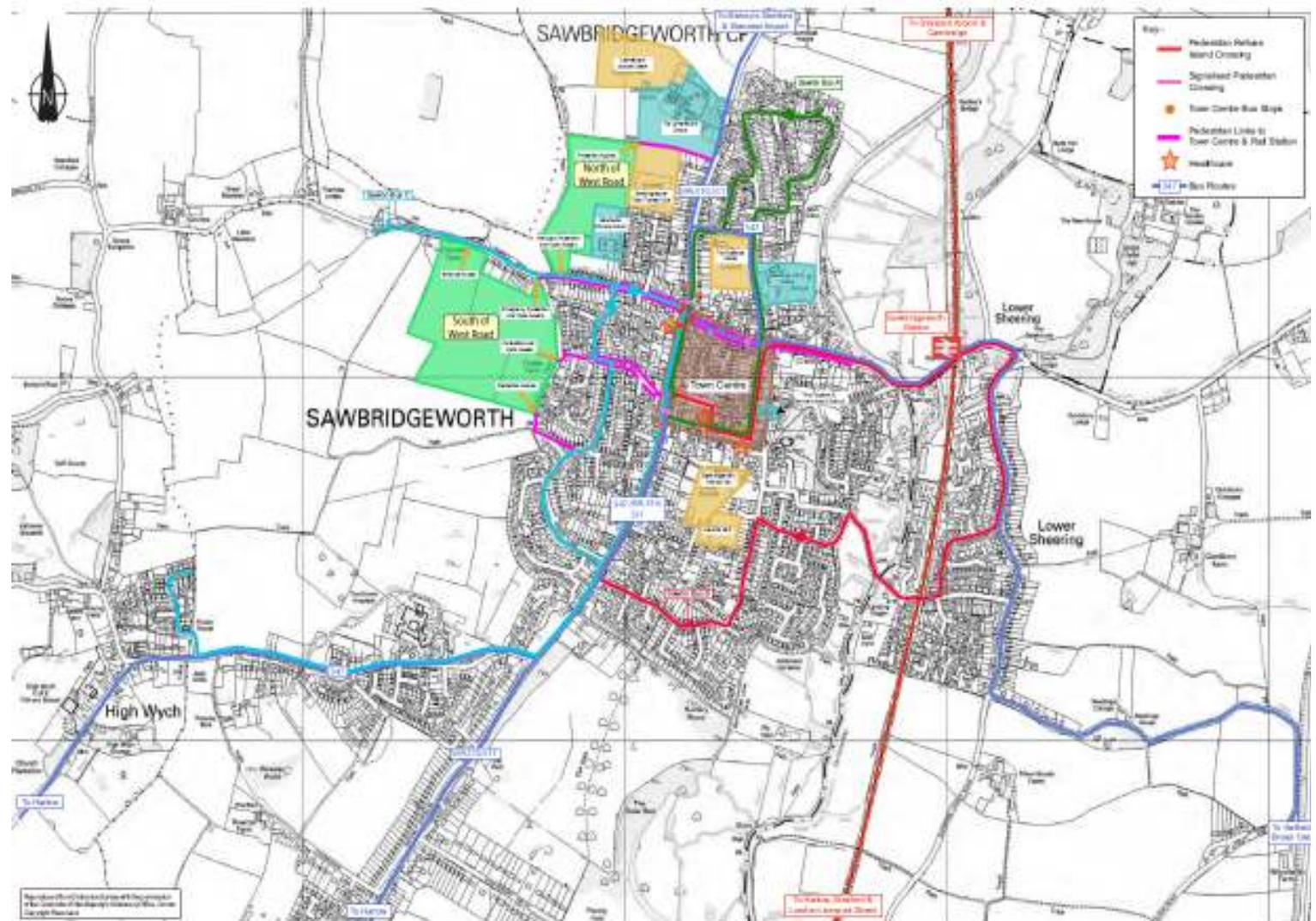
The town of Sawbridgeworth lies between Bishop's Stortford, (6.0 kilometres to the north of The Site) and Harlow (5.0 kilometres to the south of the Site). The western parts of the settlement lie on a low ridge and eastern facing slopes of the River Stort valley with the river flowing southwards to join the River Lee to the west of Harlow.

The Site comprises arable field in a landscape that is generally open with little tree cover apart from hedgerow trees following the network of local roads and subdividing fields.



The Site in Context

The site is very well connected by an existing footpath network and bus services. The footpath to the northern boundary links the site to the Mandeville Primary School and nursery and to the A1184 London Road and the town centre. The Leventhorpe Academy School and Leisure Centre is within 1.2 km and can be accessed by foot using footways along West Road and Cambridge Road. The eastern footpath provides links to the residential areas immediately to the east of the site to also link to the town centre and provide connectivity to local services and facilities including Vantorts Park and the Bullfields Centre Centre. There are bus stops within a five minute walk from the site boundaries. The main bus services at high frequency link to Bishops Stortford and Harlow and Stansted airport. Sawbridgeworth railway station is also within a 20 minute walk, with regular services to London Liverpool Street, Harlow and Cambridge. The site's location close to a comprehensive and wide-reaching network of road, pedestrian and public transport links gives it excellent accessibility.



The Site and It's Context.



View 1 (See the landscape constraints plan)



View 2 (See the landscape constraints plan)



View 3 (See the landscape constraints plan)



4 CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Evidence Base referred to in the introduction has addressed landscape, accessibility, flood risk, ecology and services to determine the constraints and opportunities in being able to deliver development at Chalks Farm. The outcome of that work is summarised below.

Landscape

(Refer to David William's Landscape Strategy)

The Site is not designated as having any particular landscape value or quality, but it currently lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt to the west of Sawbridgeworth. There are four landscape and visual issues in understanding the constraints and opportunities to development.

Impact on Landscape

Development of The Site for housing would result in a change to the character and visual appearance of The Site. However, there is an excellent opportunity to improve and enhance the built up edge of Sawbridgeworth through the provision of areas of new structural planting and open space, (including the retention of the existing hedgerow and trees) within The Site. This would minimise the landscape effects of development for housing on the locality and the Green Belt.

Impact on Existing Trees and Other Vegetation

Development of the majority of The Site would be unconstrained by hedgerows and trees, as it is mostly devoid of these features being open arable fields with field boundary hedgerows and trees.

Visibility and Public Views of the Site

Views towards The Site can be obtained from a limited number of vantage points in the immediate vicinity; and in some middle distance views to the west, north and south west. Near distant views are obtained from short sections of public footpaths and roads in close proximity where partial and glimpsed views are possible through and/or over the boundary vegetation as shown on the Landscape Constraints and Opportunities Plan.

With careful consideration given to height, form, density, scale, layout and landscaping, visual impact of the development can be minimised.

Impact on Green Belt

The EHDC Green Belt Review Part 1 supporting the Draft District Plan provides an analysis of the impact of potential development sites in relation to the principles of the Green Belt set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The Chalks Farm site falls within the development area categorised 33/84 (High Wych Slopes). The Review has been able to confirm that in terms of:

Checking the sprawl of built-up areas, development of the area will not have a significant impact due to its location to the north of High Wych Road, lying adjacent to West Road.

Preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another, there is no town to the west, but the village of High Wych lies in proximity to the south west. However, the development at Chalks Farm lies to the north and arable fields between would provide a substantial development buffer zone.

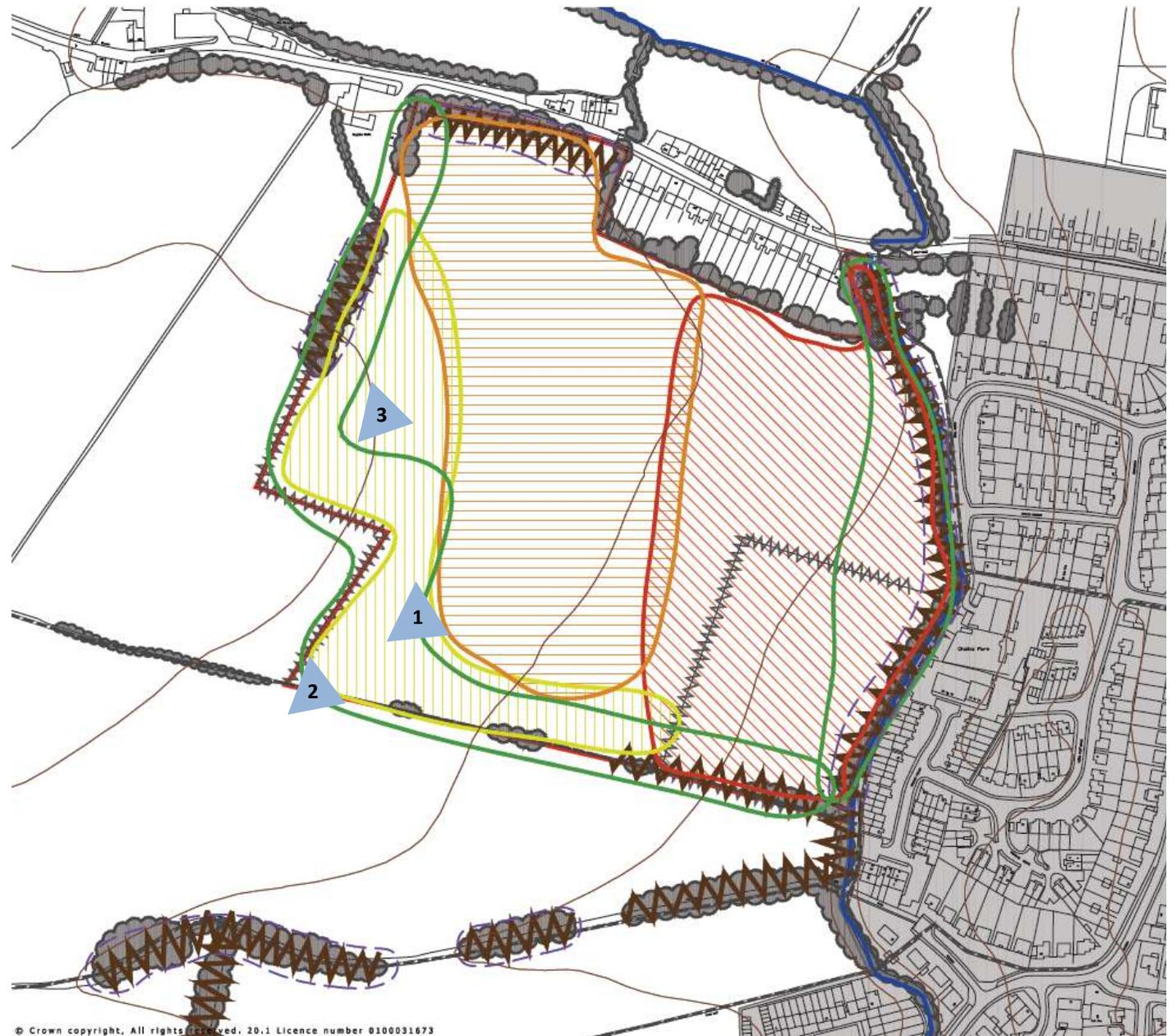
Reducing the impact on the countryside from encroachment the Rivers Nursery and Orchard is a Key Wildlife Site and of national arboricultural importance. Rivers Orchard is however located near to High Wych and is not therefore affected by the Chalks Farm development site. Furthermore Chalks Farm is bounded in part to the north and east with development. It is therefore well related to the built up area and suited to a residential addition of this scale.

Preserving the setting and special character of historic towns Sawbridgeworth is known as a compact town. The Green Belt along with a floodplain to the immediate east of the town has contributed to maintaining its form. The Chalks Farm site is not within the floodplain and, having regard to the landscape considerations set out above, development can be contained by existing boundary features supplemented by structural landscaping to reduce impact and enhance the edge of the settlement.

Landscape Constraints and Opportunities Plan

LEGEND

-  Boundary of Application Site
-  Built Up Areas
-  Contours at 5m Intervals
-  Existing Woodlands
-  Existing Tall Hedgerows
-  Existing Trimmed Hedgerows
-  Conifer Trees
-  Visually Contained Areas
-  Moderately Visually Contained Areas
-  Least Visually Contained Areas
-  Visual Barriers
-  Landscape Opportunities
-  Landscape Constraint



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Ecology

(refer to Southern Ecological Solution ecology work)

The proposed development area has been subject to ecological surveys, including:

- ▣ Desktop Study Extended Phase 1 Survey.
- ▣ Hedgerow Survey
- ▣ Reptile Survey
- ▣ Bat Survey

The site is comprised of intensively managed arable land of low ecological value. Habitats of significance are restricted to the boundaries of site (hedgerows and Sawbridgeworth Brook). These boundary habitats are of value to several protected species/ Biodiversity Action Plan species, as well as being of general biodiversity value themselves.

Any impact upon these ecologically valuable features can be mitigated through design to ensure that valuable features are retained and protected.

Providing extensive boundary planting will enhance the biodiversity value of the existing boundary habitats, as well as create new ecologically valuable habitats on site (woodland and woodland edge). This will benefit protected species such as bats, as well as biodiversity in general. It is considered that implementing these enhancements will result in a positive increase to the biodiversity value of the site as a whole.



Accessibility (refer to Odyssey Markides Transport Strategy)

- Proposed Access

The principle and location of a site access onto West Road have been agreed with Hertfordshire County Council and a junction assessment has confirmed that development of up to 300 units at Chalk’s Farm can be accommodated in capacity terms.

In terms of the local network an assessment of the key, double mini-roundabout junction in the centre of Sawbridgeworth where West Road meets the A1184 London Road has confirmed that it has the capacity to accommodate up to the 300 proposed dwellings with minor mitigation works within the highway boundary.

An assessment of existing on-street parking along West Road demonstrates that this does not unduly prejudice the movement of traffic.

- Walking and Cycling

The site is within a sustainable location with facilities and services in Sawbridgeworth within walking and cycling distance of the site including schools, healthcare and the town centre as shown on the Site In Context Map..

The site has good connectivity to the existing footway network for safe convenient access to these. As well as footways alongside a vehicular site access at West Road, there are three points of pedestrian connection along the eastern boundary to West Road, Coney Gree and Gilders, all of which provide direct routes of just five minutes walk to London Road.

- Internal Access Arrangements

The internal layout of the site would be designed so as to maximise the permeability of the site for pedestrian and cycle movement both within and to the external connections.

- Access to Public Transport

The site has access to the high frequency bus corridor of London Road with direct services south to Harlow and north to Bishop’s Stortford and Stansted Airport. West Road also benefits from being located on the ‘Sawbobus’ network;. Frequent rail services are available from Sawbridgeworth station, which is a 20 minute walk or less than 10 minute cycle ride from the site.



Flood Risk

(refer to Odyssey Markides Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy)

Following recent flood modelling of the Sawbridgeworth Brook, the majority of the site is shown to be located within Flood Zone 1, and is at low risk of flooding. An extremely small portion of the site (approximately 1% of the site area) along the eastern boundary is shown to be located within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The site is also located within an outer zone (2) of a source protection zone.

Existing ground conditions suggest that the site may not support infiltration methods of surface water disposal and rainwater from the site generally falls to the Sawbridgeworth Brook. As the site is currently Greenfield, surface water discharge to the Brook will be required to be limited.

Attenuation can be provided on site in the form of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) such as ponds, swales, permeable paving and below ground systems. These systems also have the potential to increase the biodiversity value of the site through the provision of natural habitats. By utilising SuDS and limiting surface water discharge the proposed development will not increase flood risk to the surrounding area and will have the net benefit of reducing flood risk to the surrounding area by reducing flows to the Sawbridgeworth Brook. The small strip of land within FZ2/3 is required by The Environment Agency to remain open to provide an amenity corridor adjacent to the brook.

Drainage Services

Thames Water maintains both storm and foul drainage infrastructure in the Sawbridgeworth area. Development within Sawbridgeworth will fall within the Rye Meads Waste Water Treatment Works. To accommodate future anticipated hous-

ing growth in its catchment area gradual upgrading of the trunk sewers is required. This is regardless of the specific location of any development and is accounted for in Thames Water's infrastructure plans.

Locally the Chalks Farm site can be served by the existing public foul drainage network through network reinforcement where necessary and utilising water efficient components within the new development homes.

Other Services

The site benefits from its location adjacent to existing strategic infrastructure which will enable a connection to be made to public water supply, gas, electric and telecommunication services with minimal network reinforcement to the site.



6. THE VISION

Based on the assessment of the site's constraints and opportunities summarised briefly in this document, we are able to confirm the site is achievable and deliverable. The Vision for the development at Chalks's Farm is to provide a new, vibrant, attractive neighbourhood at the edge of Sawbridgeworth.

The key aims for the new neighbourhood will be :

- To provide a landscape led development with rich and varied network of green open spaces and linear parks that will be incorporated and augment important landscape features.
- To deliver much needed housing for the district and for Sawbridgeworth.
- To promote objectives of sustainable development through layout and design.
- To create an attractive, high quality development with a great sense of place and identity.
- To create a neighbourhood that builds upon and enhances the character of Sawbridgeworth.
- To provide a safe and secure environment for all users.
- To provide a development that is well connected, readily understood and easily navigated.
- To create an environment that prioritises pedestrians and cyclists.
- To provide a range of dwelling sizes, types and mix of tenure that will offer a choice of lifestyle accessible and acceptable to all.
- To enhance and improve biodiversity and provide wildlife corridors.
- To create an attractive interface with the open countryside.
- To remediate development patterns and create plenty of links and connections to the surrounding neighbourhoods.
- To achieve a sustainable water drainage system with swales and ponds that will enhance the quality of the landscape.
- To create ample opportunities for recreation and play by incorporating different activity areas into the open space.



Landscape Led Development

A key part of the vision will be to improve and enhance the built up edge of Sawbridgeworth through the strategic use of effective landscaping and the creation of public open space.

The strategy is illustrated on the Landscape Strategy Plan. It includes the following:

- The retention of existing hedgerows and adjoining trees on the site boundaries to minimise the landscape effects of developing the site.
- The introduction of significant new belts of structural planting and landscape 'buffers' along the western and southern boundaries of the Site to provide containment and a visual screen and assist in reducing the scale of the development and assimilate it into the local and wider landscape. These would form part of the public open space to provide:
 - Play areas for toddlers and young children.
 - Pedestrian links around the development, thereby forming part of a 'green grid / green Infrastructure' network around and through the site, as well as providing links to the wider public footpath network.
 - The landscaping to maintain and support the wildlife habitat and diversity of the area.
 - Open space and landscape planting along the eastern boundary (adjoining the Sawbridgeworth Brook) to incorporate flood attenuation features and pedestrian / cycleway routes . The existing bridge over the Sawbridgeworth Brook could be enhanced and provide a direct link to route into the town. Additional pedestrian bridges will be provided.

- The provision of a comprehensive landscape scheme, including open space areas, within the housing areas and adjoining the access roads to create an attractive and pleasant environment for the new residents.



Indicative Landscape Strategy

LEGEND

-  Boundary of Application Site
-  Contours at 5m Intervals
-  Existing Woodlands
-  Existing Tall Hedgerows
-  Existing Trimmed Hedgerows
-  Conifer Trees
-  Proposed Housing Areas
-  Frontage Development
-  Indicative Access Routes
-  Indicative New Footpath Links
-  Central Green
-  Linear POS
-  Local Open Space
-  Entrance / Roadside Planting
-  Structural 'Buffer' Planting / POS
-  Habitat Enhancement / POS
-  Existing PROW retained



7. THE PROPOSALS

The development proposals comprise:

- Up to 300 residential units
- An interconnected network of green open spaces incorporating linear parks, greens, incidental open space and a buffer zone around the boundary
- Play areas
- Allotments
- Recreation facilities
- Pedestrian, cycle and vehicle routes
- Parking
- Drainage works (including sustainable ground and surface water attenuation)
- Access from West Road
- Secondary access to West Road
- Pedestrian links to the Eastern edge of Sawbridgeworth



Indicative Development Opportunities



8. CONCLUSION

This document presents our preliminary ideas as to how the site could be delivered to meet the requirements of the East Herts District Plan. It will be used as a basis for discussions with the Council, local community and key stakeholders by Barratt Homes and the landowners as the process evolves.

The vision for the land at Chalks Farm aims to create an aspirational and sustainable place for living and create a new neighbourhood at the edge of Sawbridgeworth whilst respecting the existing character of the site.

Using high quality architecture and landscape led design the site provides an opportunity to support the existing community whilst assisting the Council to meet local objectively assessed housing needs .

