

LAND AT NORTH HARLOW: GILSTON AREA CONCEPT BROCHURE

22ND MAY 2014



CITY & PROVINCIAL
PROPERTIES PLC



space craft
architects

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landscape architects



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document is submitted as part of the supporting planning case for a residentially led, mixed use development of the Land North of Harlow Town, on behalf of our client City and Provincial Properties (CPP).

CPP is one of the UK's premier developers and one of the two main landowners within the Gilston Area identified for future housing growth.

They have assembled a team of leading core advisors at this stage of the project, as listed below.

- Savills (planning consultants)
- Spacecraft Architects (masterplanners / architects)
- Alan Baxter Associates (transportation consultants)
- Churchman Landscape Architects (landscape consultants)

The aim is to make the very best of the unique opportunity to deliver a high quality and sustainable development as part of the wider masterplan for the Gilston Area, which would contribute towards meeting the District's existing and future housing needs, within East Hertfordshire District Council (EHDC) emerging District Plan plan period.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The site is approximately 114 hectares and is located north of Harlow within the Gilston Area of the District of East Hertfordshire. The site is located east and west of Church Lane, north of the A414.

The site is currently within the Green Belt and is in use as agricultural land, with some built form to include an existing farmstead (Brickhouse Farm) within the central part of the site. It is well contained by natural field boundaries to its north, the A414 to its south and a hedgerow as the site's western boundary. The surrounding area to the north, east and west consists largely of countryside, primary agricultural use and pockets of woodland.

Further to its designation as Green Belt, the site contains modest pockets of land designated as an Area of Archaeological Significance and is adjacent to two Wildlife Sites.

Other than the Grade II Listed Brickhouse Farm and associated Barn and Stable, the site does not contain any other heritage assets and it is not within a Flood Risk Zone.



Fig 1 Site Within Existing Context

3.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

The NPPF sets out the Government's current and future requirements for significantly boosting the country's supply of housing, in order to facilitate nationwide economic growth.

The National Planning Policy Framework establishes key priorities to "boost significantly the supply of housing," "meet the needs of present and future generations" and "widen the choice of high quality homes." It also places significant weight on sustainable economic growth - both in terms of new economic development and new homes.

The NPPF requires Council's to allocate land to meet objectively assessed needs in order to boost the supply of housing. Paragraph 47 states that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should use their evidence base to ensure that housing targets, based on objectively assessed needs, for market and affordable housing in the housing market area are set.

The NPPF dictates that LPAs should identify and annually update a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to ensure choice and competition in the market for land.

The NPPF also states that LPAs must identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth for years 6-10, and where possible for years 11-15.

For market and affordable housing, the NPPF states that LPAs should illustrate the expected rate of housing delivery through a housing trajectory for the plan period and set out a housing implementation strategy for the full range of housing, describing how they will maintain delivery of a five-year supply of housing land to meet their own target.

Paragraph 83 of the NPPF states that LPAs with Green Belts in their administrative area should establish Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans which set the framework for settlement policy.

It states that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in "exceptional circumstances" and "through the preparation or review of the Local Plan." If under review, it is recommended that the local authority "not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open," and "define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent."

In considering the value of Green Belt land, the NPPF identifies 5 purposes of the Green Belt . These are:

1. To check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
2. To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
5. To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

In order to meet objectively assessed needs EHDC acknowledge that they will need to release Green Belt land to accommodate their future housing requirements. Logically, it makes sense that land which contributes least to the purposes of the Green Belt should be released.

Prior to consideration within the emerging District Plan, the Gilston Area was an established residential allocation within the South East Regional Plan.

4.0 HOUSING NEED

The current Development Plan for the East Herts District comprises:

- National Planning Policy Framework (2012)
- Saved Policies from East Herts Local Plan (2007; Saved 2010)
- Various Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

The Council are in the process of preparing a new District Plan, which once adopted, will become the key document guiding the direction of planning and development within the District up to 2031.

The latest version of the emerging District Plan is the Preferred Options Consultation Document, which was published for public consultation in February 2014. Within this version, EHDC identify a minimum housing delivery target of 15,000 dwellings for the plan period of 2011 to 2031; however the planning representations that accompany the submission of this brochure question whether this target is sufficient to accommodate objectively assessed needs, the requirements of neighbouring authorities under the duty to cooperate and the historic undersupply of housing within East Herts.

Notwithstanding this, even at a minimum housing target of 15,000 units, EHDC acknowledge that consideration must be given to the release of Green Belt land within the District. To assist this, the Council have produced a number of evidence base documents including a Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) (October 2012, with an update due in Summer 2014), a District-Wide Green Belt Review – Part 1 (September 2013) and EHDC's Interim Development Strategy (January 2014). EHDC have also published an Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report (January 2014).

In order to meet the future housing needs of the District and adjoining Local Authorities, EHDC have identified, at draft Policy GA1, the "Gilston Area" a Broad Location for development in contributing a total of between 5,000 and 10,000 new homes to the year 2031 and beyond, with 3,000 new homes allocated to come forward pre-2031. Importantly, the CPP land is included within this draft allocation. In principle, EHDC's recognition of the Gilston Area for accommodating future housing growth is strongly supported. However it is considered that there is an opportunity for positively achieving in the region of 5,000 new homes within the plan period to 2031, in order to create planning certainty within EHDC's emerging District Plan and meet pressing future housing needs within the local area. These specific planning issues are addressed more comprehensively within Savills Planning Representations Document, which form part of CPP's formal representations.

5.0 PRINCIPLES OF DEVELOPMENT

Land at North Harlow, as part of the wider Gilston Area, offers a unique opportunity to deliver a sustainable development capable of providing for a significant proportion of housing needs within the emerging District Plan plan period (and beyond). In light of the housing requirement and the necessity for Green Belt release within the plan period, the Gilston Area is the only location in the district that is capable of sustainably delivering the required levels of future growth.

Based on the proposed concept outlined in Section 7 of this brochure, we consider that the wider Gilston Area could accommodate in the region of 5,000 units up to 2031, within the area identified as A and B (see figure 2). EHDC's recognition (in the emerging District Plan) for the potential for a total of up to 10,000 new homes (within and beyond the plan period for the Gilston Area) is acknowledged and generally supported.

CPP is also exploring how non-residential land uses would be incorporated within the site, and well as the wider the Gilston Area. Initial considerations indicate that the development could provide sufficient employment land to provide opportunities for the expansion of existing businesses within Harlow, attract inward investment and provide new employment opportunities for businesses in the wider area, in particular to the north within East Herts. The Gilston Area could also potentially accommodate retail, leisure and commercial uses focussed on meeting the daily needs of new residents, and providing improved access to shopping and services for those living within the neighbouring parts of East Herts as well as complementing Harlow Town Centre.

Social and community infrastructure would also be an integral part of the Gilston Area. Although precise numbers will be dependent on the eventual quantum and phasing of housing delivery, assuming a high proportion of family housing, the eventual development might generate the requirement for primary school and secondary school provision, health centre provision, and a range of other facilities including libraries, sport, recreation, pre-school care and general community provision.

KEY

- A City & Provincial Properties Land
- B Places For Peoples Land
- Indicative Development

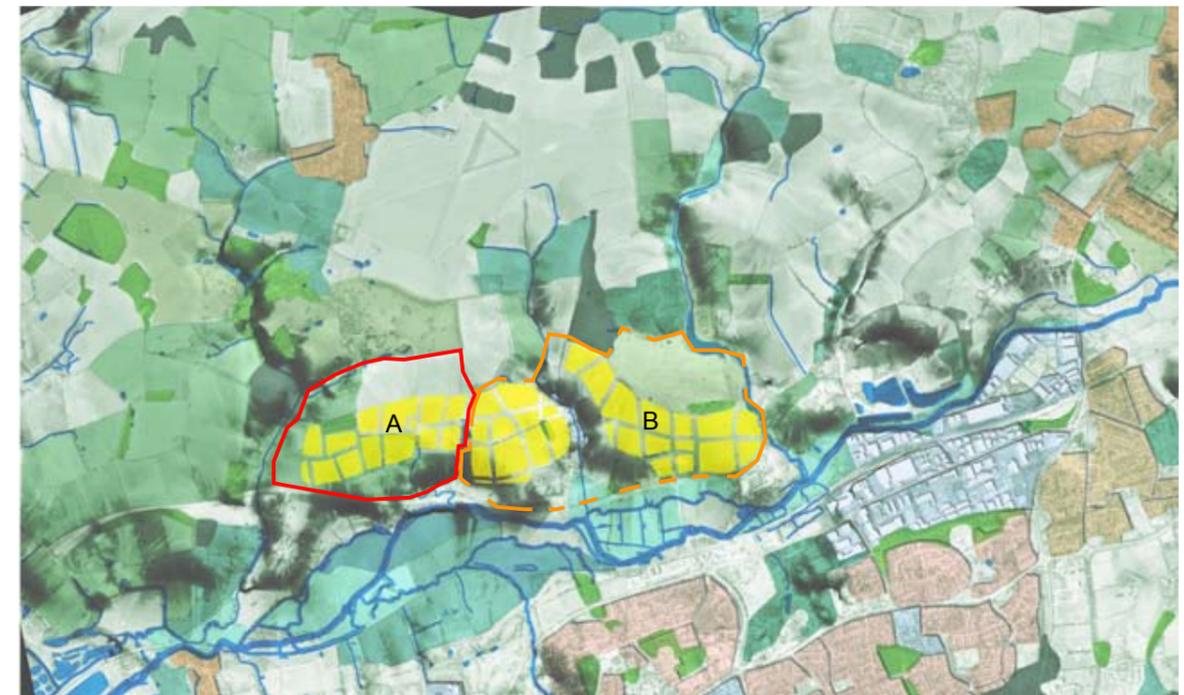


Fig 2 Plan showing indicative extent of 5000 homes



Fig 3 Examples of schemes by City & Provincial (left & centre) and Space Craft Architects.

6.0 SITE ANALYSIS



6.1 SITE ANALYSIS - MASTER PLANNING

Diagrams / drawings by Space Craft Architects.

Sir Frederick Gibbert's original design for Harlow Town was imbedded in a deep understanding and analysis of the existing landscape, in his own words "*its foundation is the form of the land - its shape*".

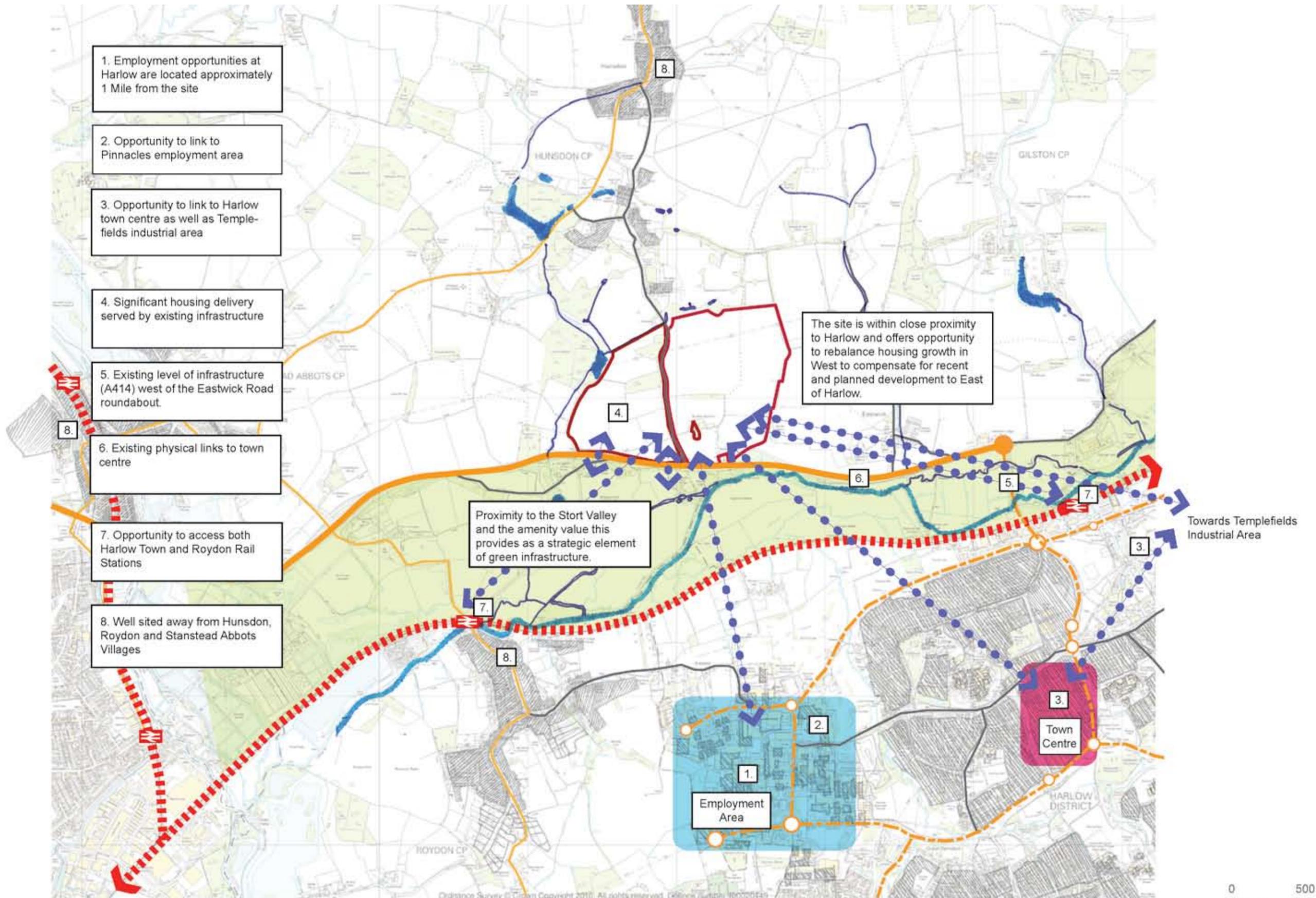
The site analysis documented on the following pages follows Gibbert's appreciation of the striking natural features of the site, whilst also exploring the opportunities and constraints of the site and its immediate and wider context.

It's findings have informed the initial response to the site, which is illustrated in section 7.0 of this report.

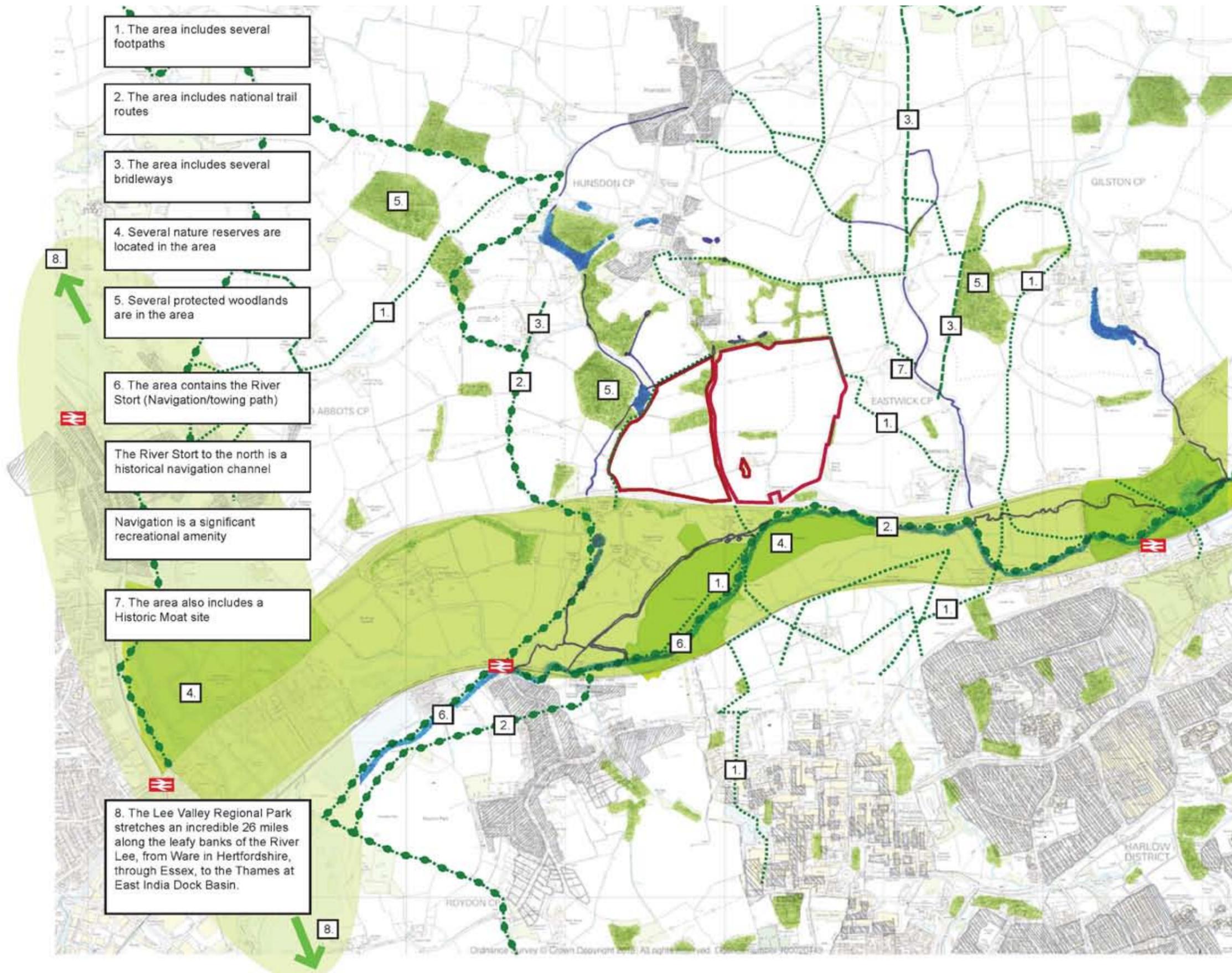


Fig 4 Existing Site overlaid with Topographical Model

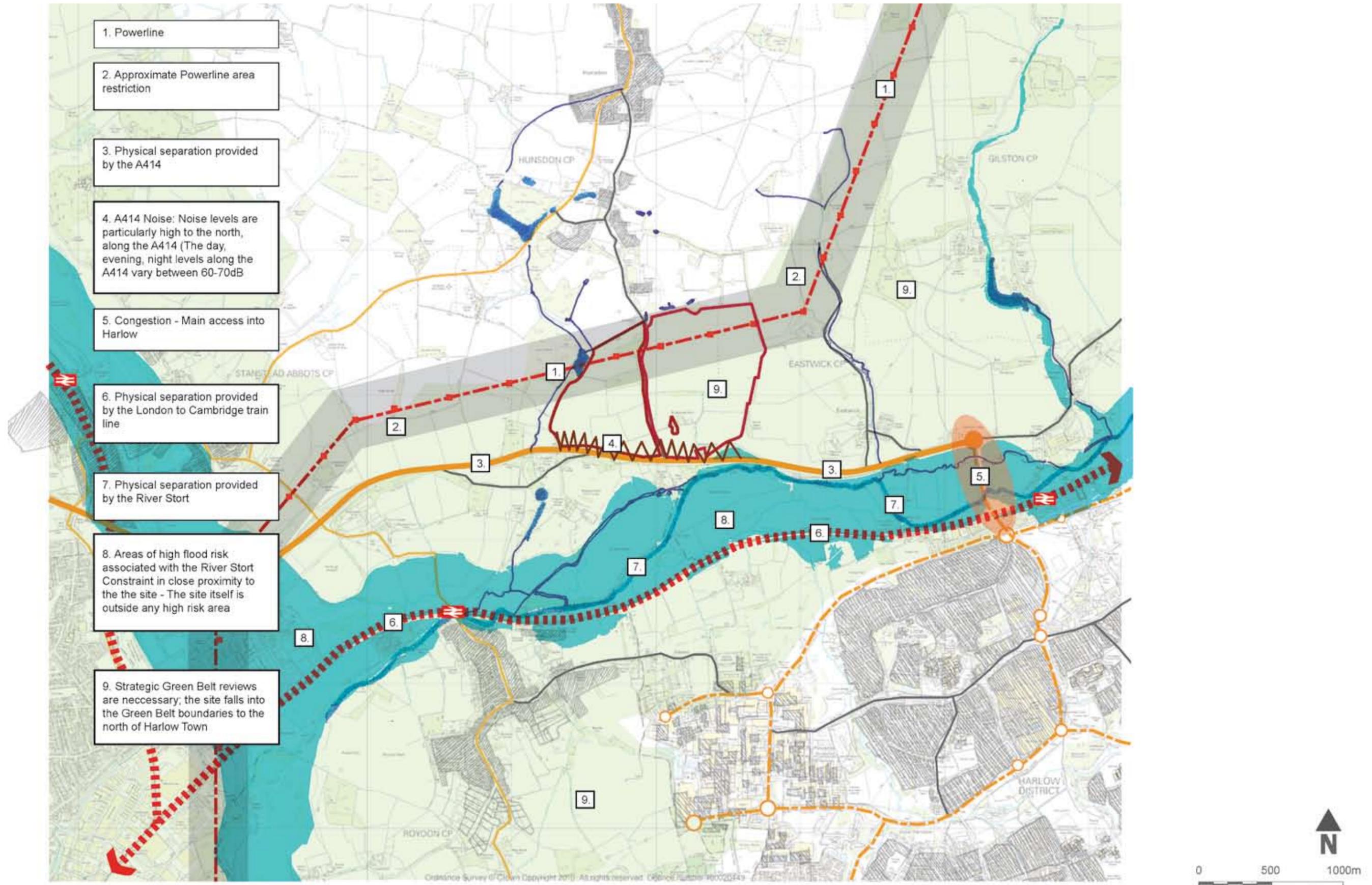
OPPORTUNITIES DIAGRAM - 01



OPPORTUNITIES DIAGRAM - 02



CONSTRAINTS DIAGRAM - 01



1. Powerline

2. Approximate Powerline area restriction

3. Physical separation provided by the A414

4. A414 Noise: Noise levels are particularly high to the north, along the A414 (The day, evening, night levels along the A414 vary between 60-70dB)

5. Congestion - Main access into Harlow

6. Physical separation provided by the London to Cambridge train line

7. Physical separation provided by the River Stort

8. Areas of high flood risk associated with the River Stort Constraint in close proximity to the site - The site itself is outside any high risk area

9. Strategic Green Belt reviews are necessary; the site falls into the Green Belt boundaries to the north of Harlow Town

WATER

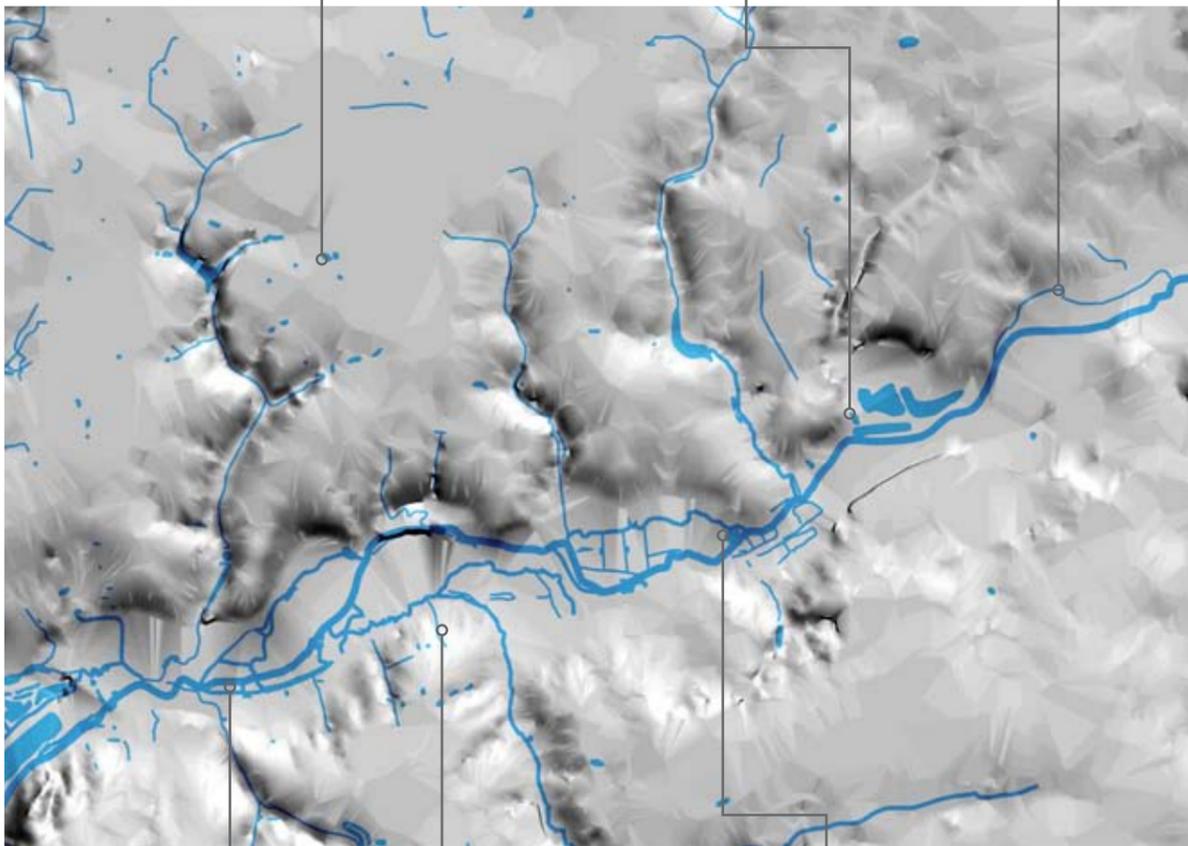
Ponds



Reservoir



Biodiversity



Stream



Brook



Wetland



STORT VALLEY

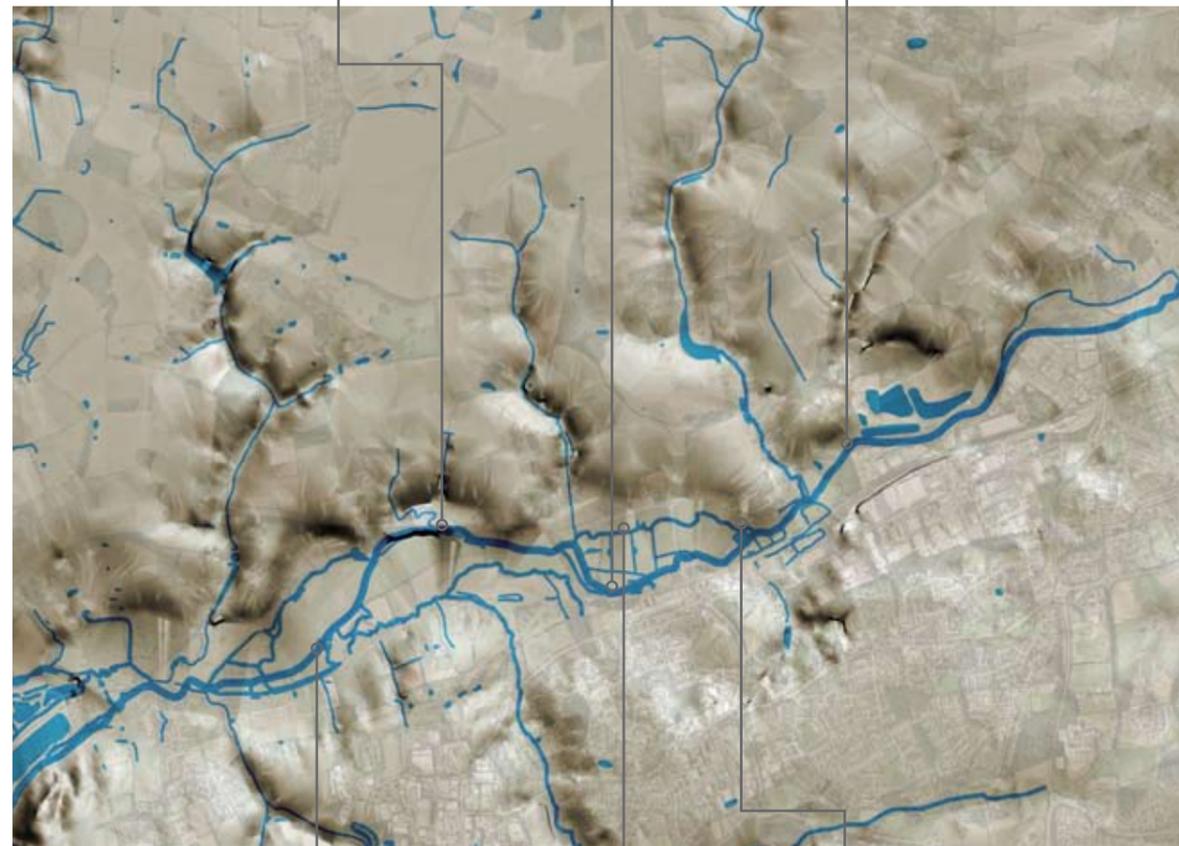
Leisure



Towpath



Marina



Mill Lock



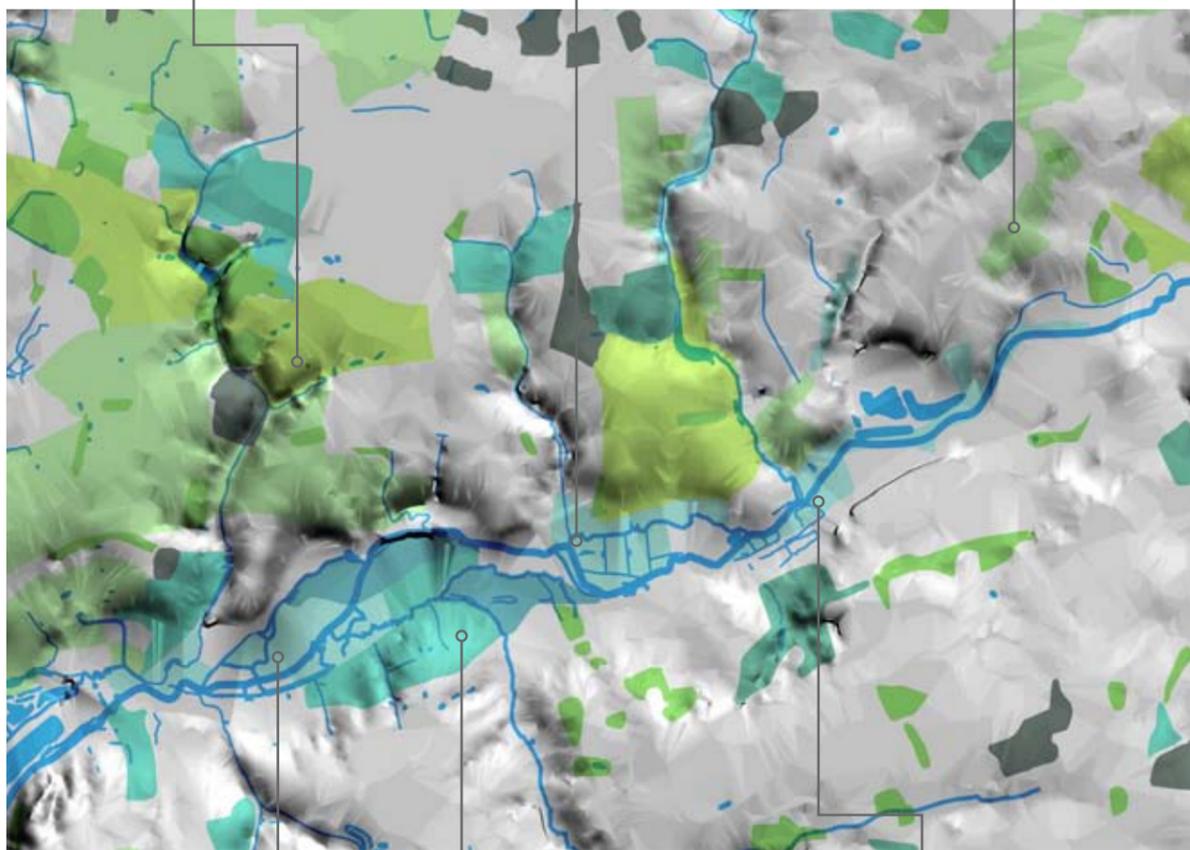
Barges



Canal



NATURE



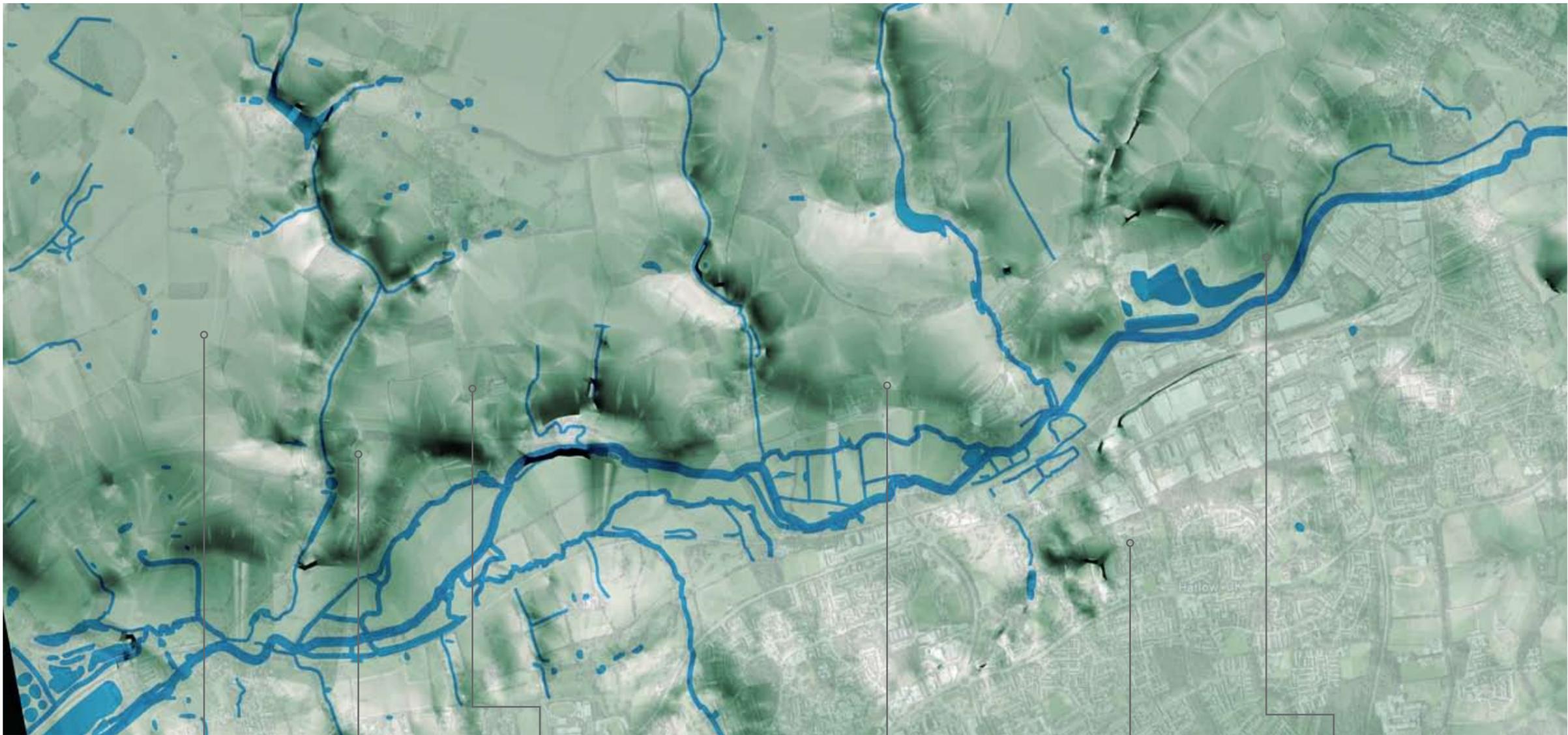
WOODLANDS



- Ancient Woodland
- Registered Common Land
- Woodland
- Enclosed Meadow Pasture
- Plantation



TOPOGRAPHY



Plateaus



Wooded Valleys



Wooded Ridges



Slopes



Ridges



Valleys



CONNECTIONS



- National Trail
- — — — Public Footpaths
- ■ ■ ■ Bridleways



ROAD NETWORKS



- Main Roads
- Secondary Roads
- Tertiary Roads



6.2 SITE ANALYSIS - TRANSPORT & ACCESS

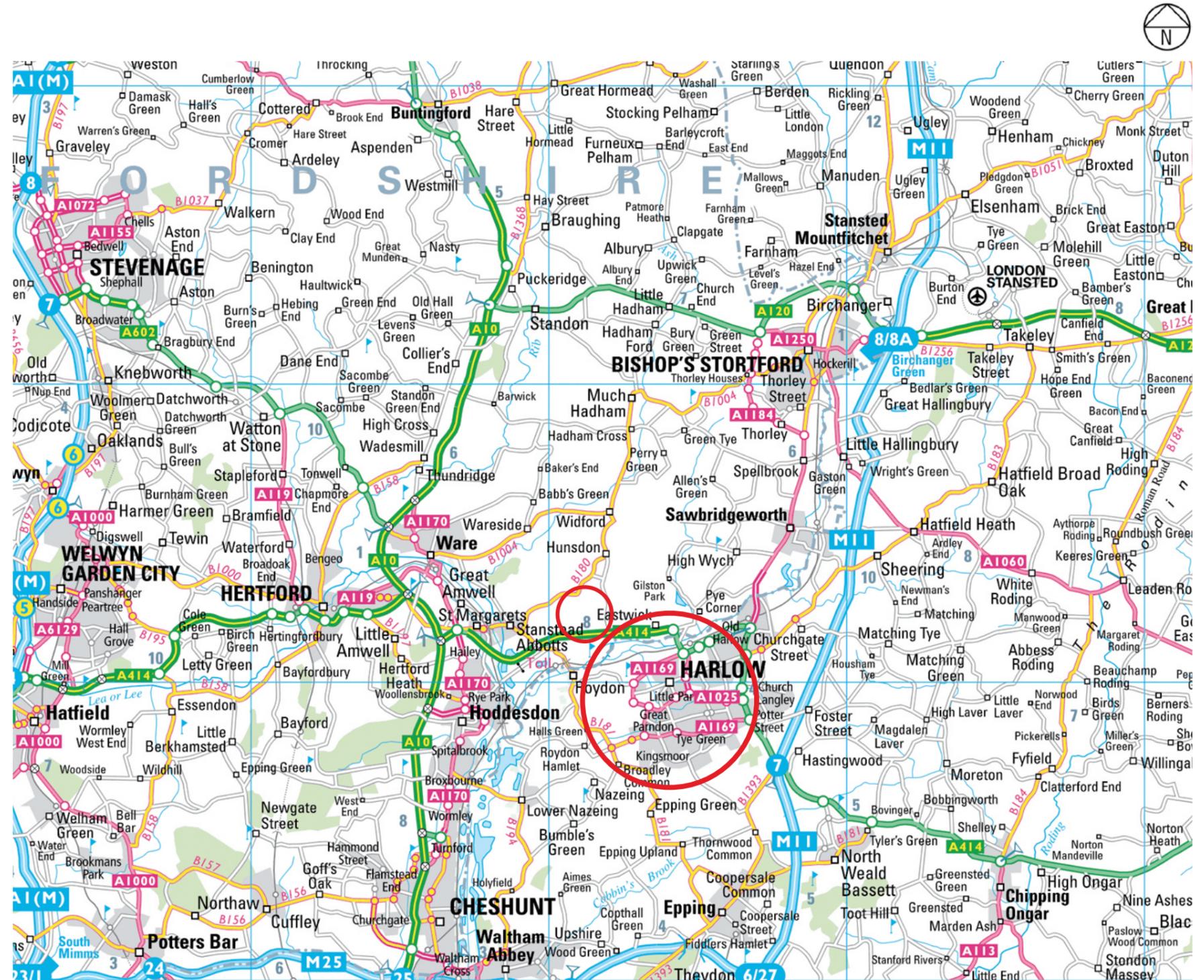
Diagrams / drawings by Alan Baxtor Associates

Strategic Context

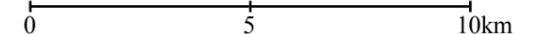
Harlow, a town of around 80,000 people, is located on the western edge of Essex, just to the south of East Hertfordshire and to the north of Epping Forest. The Stort Valley runs across the north side of the town forming the county border between Essex and Hertfordshire.

With the M11 and M25 motorways nearby, direct rail connections to London and Cambridge, and within 10 miles of London Stansted and 20 miles of London Luton Airports, Harlow sits firmly within the commuter belt around London. However, it is also a relatively strong employment centre in its own right, with a number of large health and scientific research-related employers.

The site lies immediately to the north of the A414 dual-carriageway, Harlow's principle access route to/from the west and connection to the A10 and A1(M). It is bisected by Eastwick Road, which connects from the A414 north towards Hunsdon and Widford.



Strategic location



Harlow Plan & Reality

Harlow is a 'new town' built after World War II to the masterplan drawn up by Sir Frederick Gibberd in 1947. It was built at the same time as the similar settlements around London such as Basildon, Stevenage, and Hemel Hempstead, whose aim was to ease overcrowding in the capital.

Harlow's strategic location is good, but the carefully planned internal arrangement of industrial/commercial and residential areas was deeply undermined in 1964 by the decision to route the future M11 to the east of the new town towards Stansted Airport, rather than to the west as originally planned.

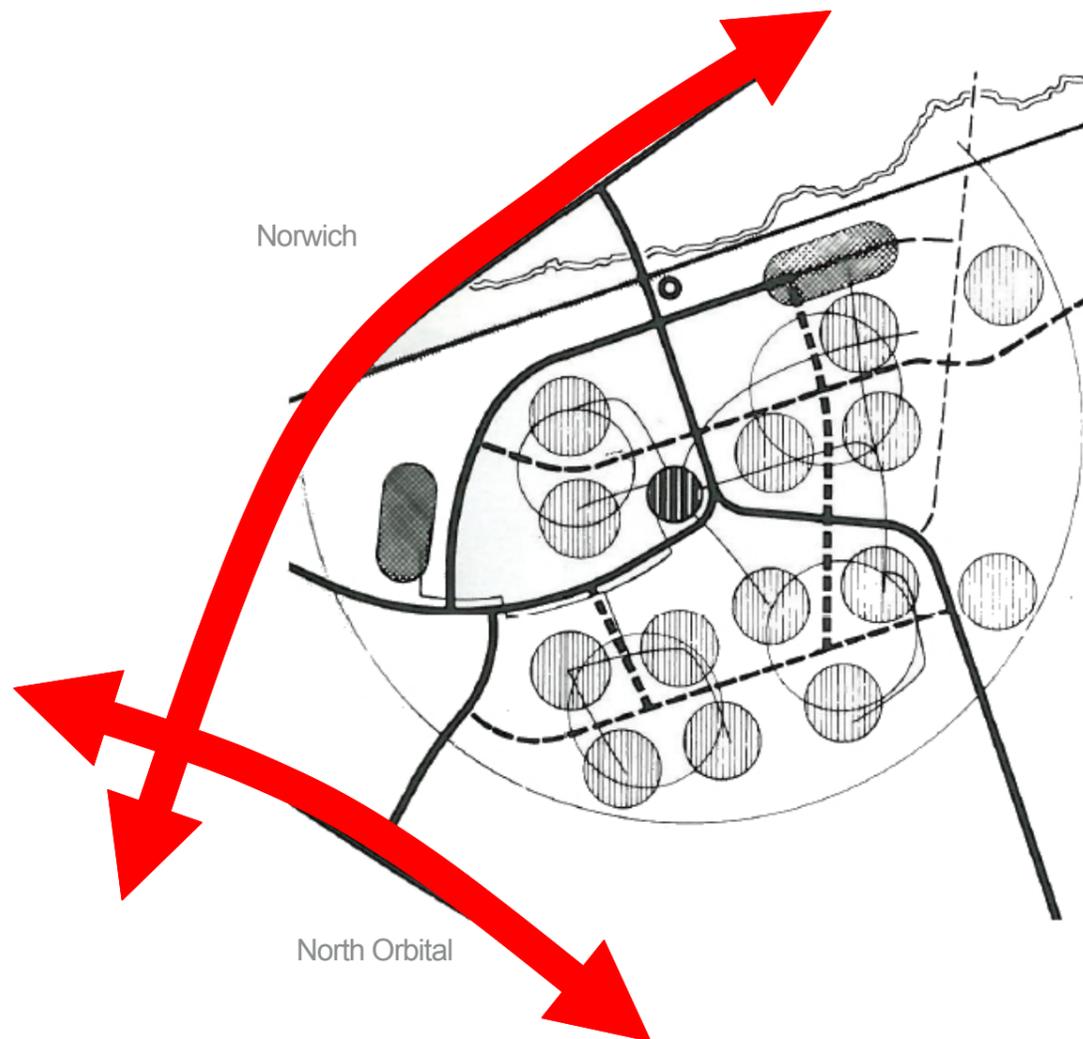
The annotated 1952 schematic plan below indicates the original arrangement of access routes and neighbourhoods, with industrial areas clustered on the north and west edges of the town, with direct access to the 'Norwich Radial' and 'North Orbital' at a number of points. Harlow was built out according to this layout, as indicated in the adjacent plan from the 1970's, but the reality of its connectivity to the strategic road network was markedly different, with a single motorway junction to the southeast of the town.

This quote, in a letter from the Harlow Development Corporation to the then Ministry of Transport, is telling:

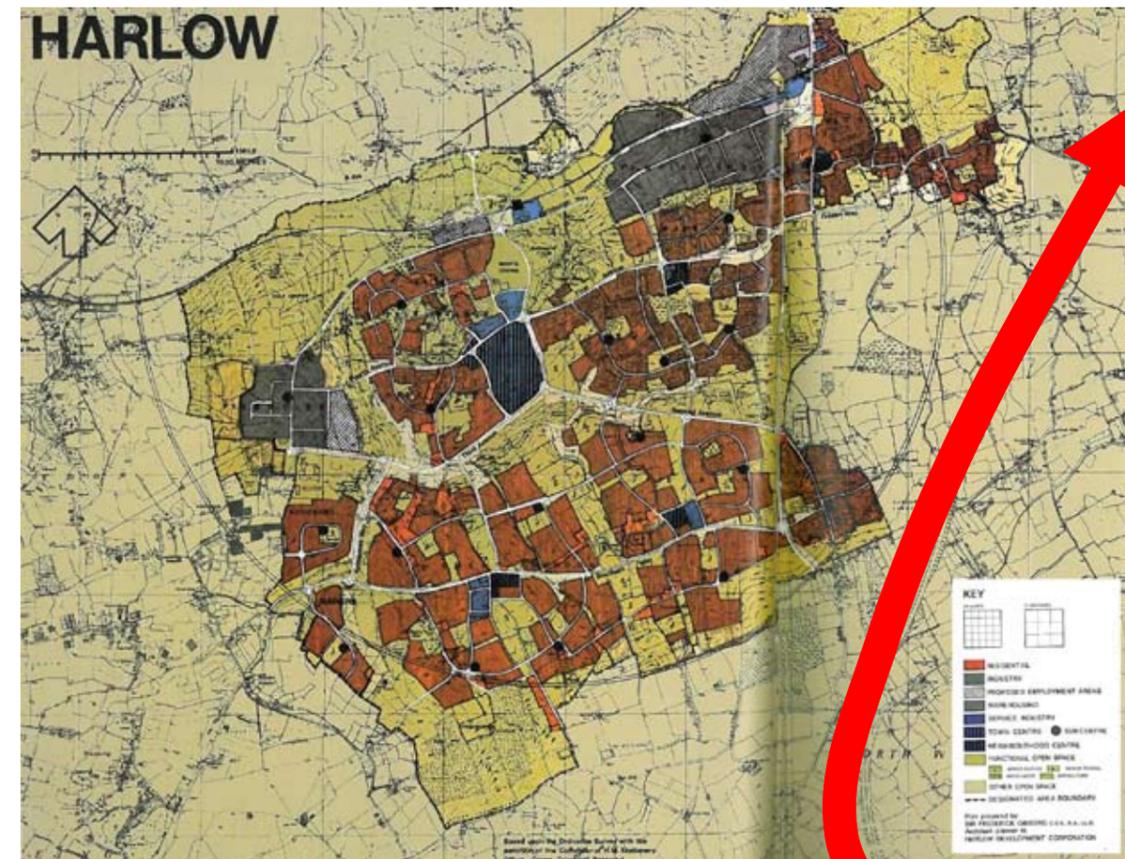
The Corporation recognises that new considerations have arisen which would make a major change in the line of the M11 road desirable. But it feels bound to point out that such a change might well destroy the fundamental traffic basis of the carefully executed Town Plan.

(cited in Aldridge, 1979: 68)

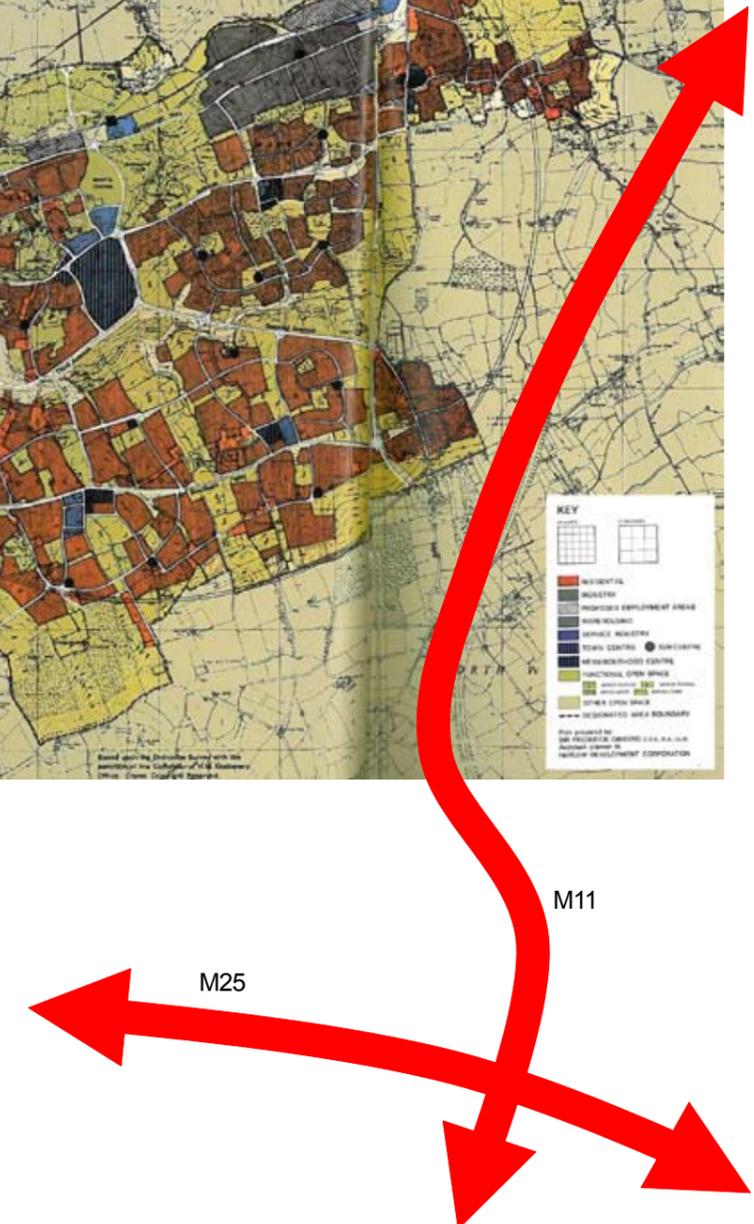
The fact that Harlow today is dependent on a single junction access to the strategic motorway network is unusual for a town of its size and character. When comparing with some of the other new towns, it is evident that there is a deficit in terms of connections, which may explain the high levels of through-traffic and peak period congestion.



1952 schematic plan



As built



Gibberd's Harlow

Overview



Motorways



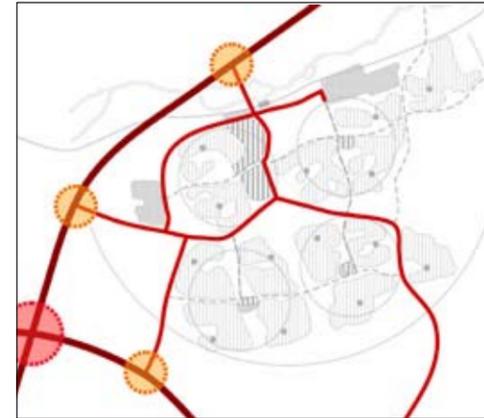
M11 located on west, with Orbital Route planned to the south west. Gibberd's Harlow lies between the two

Primary Distributors



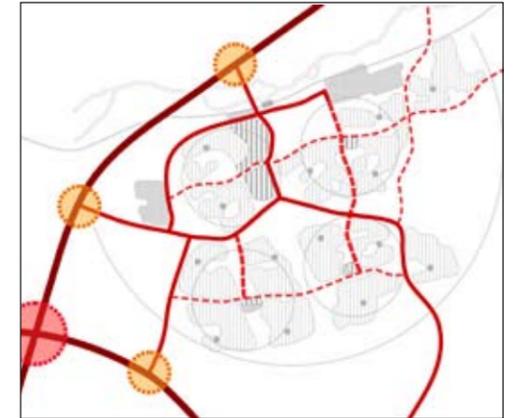
Inverted "Y" plan with dual carriage way primary distributors - permeable internal network

Motorway Junctions



Three connections with surrounding motorways, with one major intersection

Local Routes



Local routes serve to increase connectivity between neighbourhoods

Harlow Today

Overview

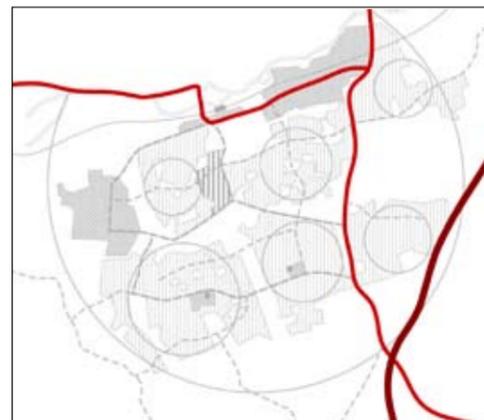


Motorways



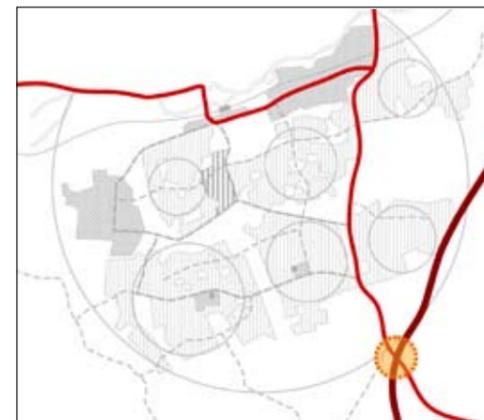
M11 built on the east, with the Orbital Route much further to the south

Primary Distributors



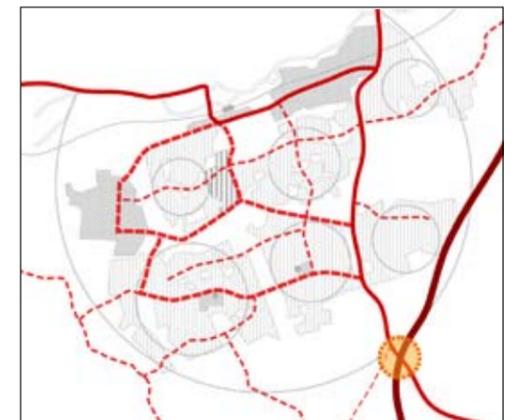
Primary distributor is a single carriageway road located on the periphery

Motorway Junctions



Only one connection with motorway

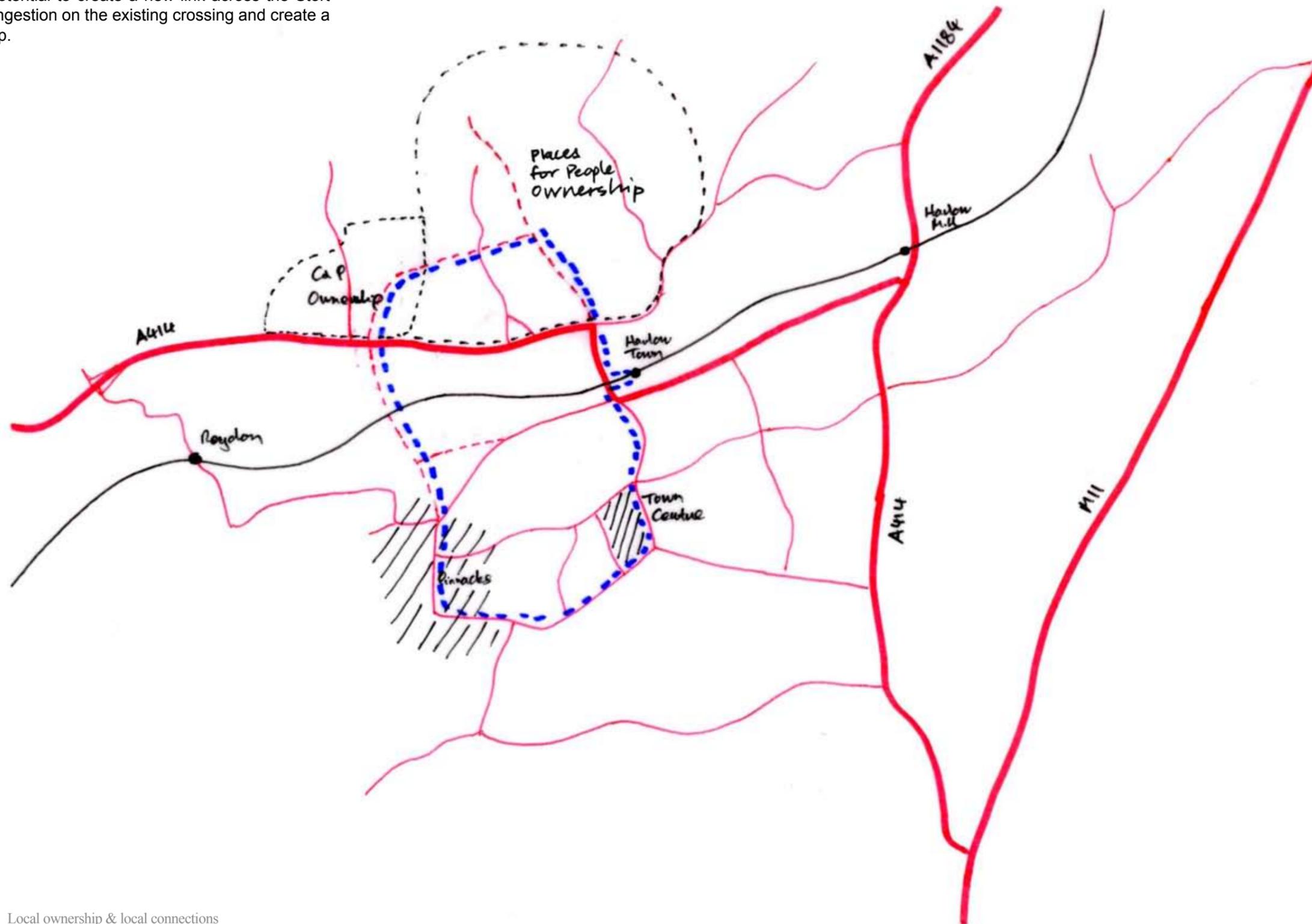
Local Routes



Local routes serve to increase connectivity between neighbourhoods

An Alternative Approach

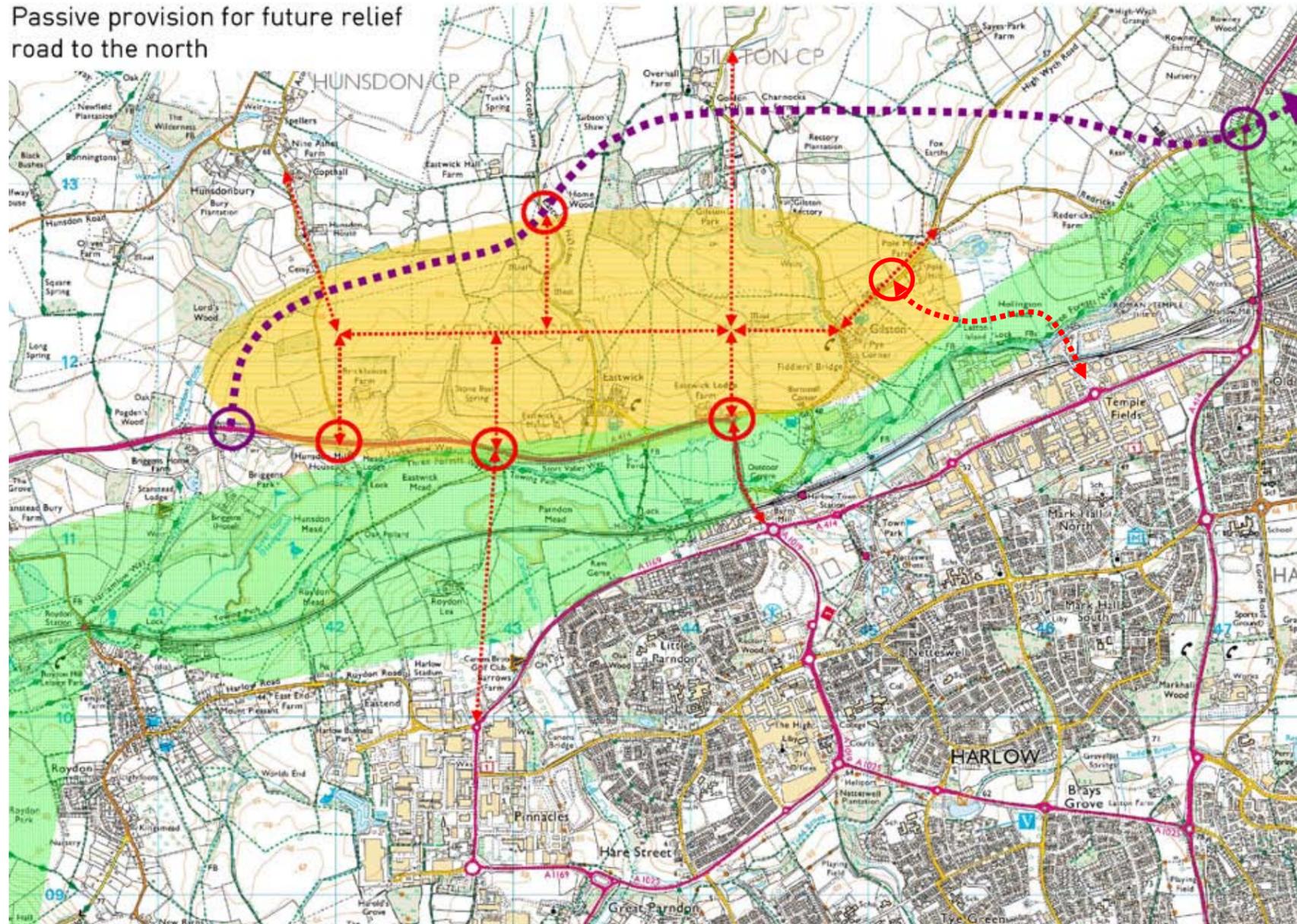
An alternative approach proposed is a spine route through Harlow North forming the principal vehicle access and public transport corridor, with the potential to create a new link across the Stort Valley to relieve congestion on the existing crossing and create a public transport loop.



Local ownership & local connections

Indicative Movement Framework

Passive provision for future relief road to the north



Building on the concept of a spine route through Harlow North, an indicative movement framework is proposed in the accompanying figure.

The principle of this framework is to hang new development off an east-west route parallel to the River Stort and A414, which would act as a focus for local movement, and activity, and form a string of new neighbourhood centres through Harlow North.

The existing grid of primary routes within Harlow would be extended north to link into this spine route and connect the two sides of the town. This would involve widening or improving the existing A414 Allende Avenue, and creating a new north-south crossing of the Stort Valley in the west to connect Harlow North towards the Pinnacles.

Three access points from the A414 would link into Harlow North – in the west at the existing Eastwick Road junction (Hunsdon Mill), in the east at the existing Allende Avenue junction, and at a new junction in between (west of Eastwick village).

While not relying on the construction of a northern relief road or bypass for access, the movement framework could passively allow for provision of such a route in the future.

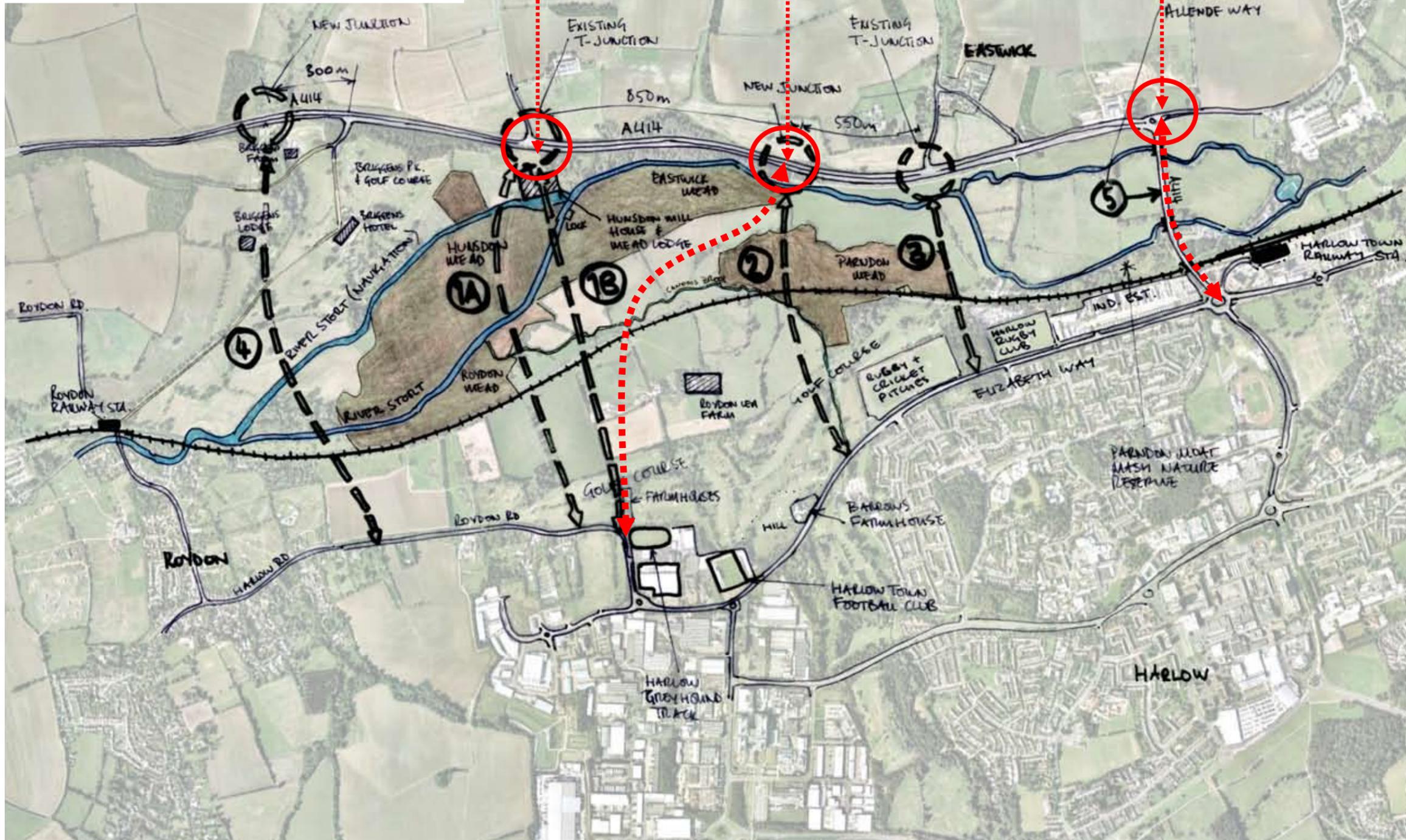
This could include allowing space for a new junction on the A414 to the west of the Harlow North development areas, with the bypass route skirting along the northern edge of the site (south of Hunsdon House) and then north of Gilston Park to a new junction with the A1184 north of Harlow Mill, and then on to a new junction with the M11.

We are aware that the provision of any new access route crossing the Stort river will need to be considered in terms of the existing valley characteristics, specifically its open aspect, natural features and amenity use. In considering options for enhanced connections we would work closely with the various stakeholders in order to ensure that the best fit with the existing features is achieved.

Potential North-South Link Options

A number of options for north-south connections to the west of the existing A414 Stort Valley crossing (Allende Way) have been identified.

For the purpose of developing a movement framework at this early stage, an alignment has been selected that is a hybrid of options 2 and 1B – connecting from a new junction on A414 (option 2) to Harlow Stadium (option 1B) as indicated below.



North-south link options

Possible Stort Valley Bridge Link

As any new north-south link would need to cross the Stort River and railway corridor it is likely that a bridge or viaduct would be required, whether the link were a walk/cycle only route, a public transport corridor or a new roadway. Precedent examples of a range of possible bridge types for this link are shown below.



Liffey Bridge, Dublin
(Competition entry – AEDAS/Alan Baxter)



Castleford Bridge, West Yorkshire
(McDowell + Benedetti/Alan Baxter)



Trestles Beach Footbridge, California
(Dan Brill Architects)

Movement Framework Options

The indicative movement framework discussed above has been developed into a set of more detailed movement framework options relating to SCA's emerging masterplan ideas. These are set out below for discussion and refinement in the next stage of work.

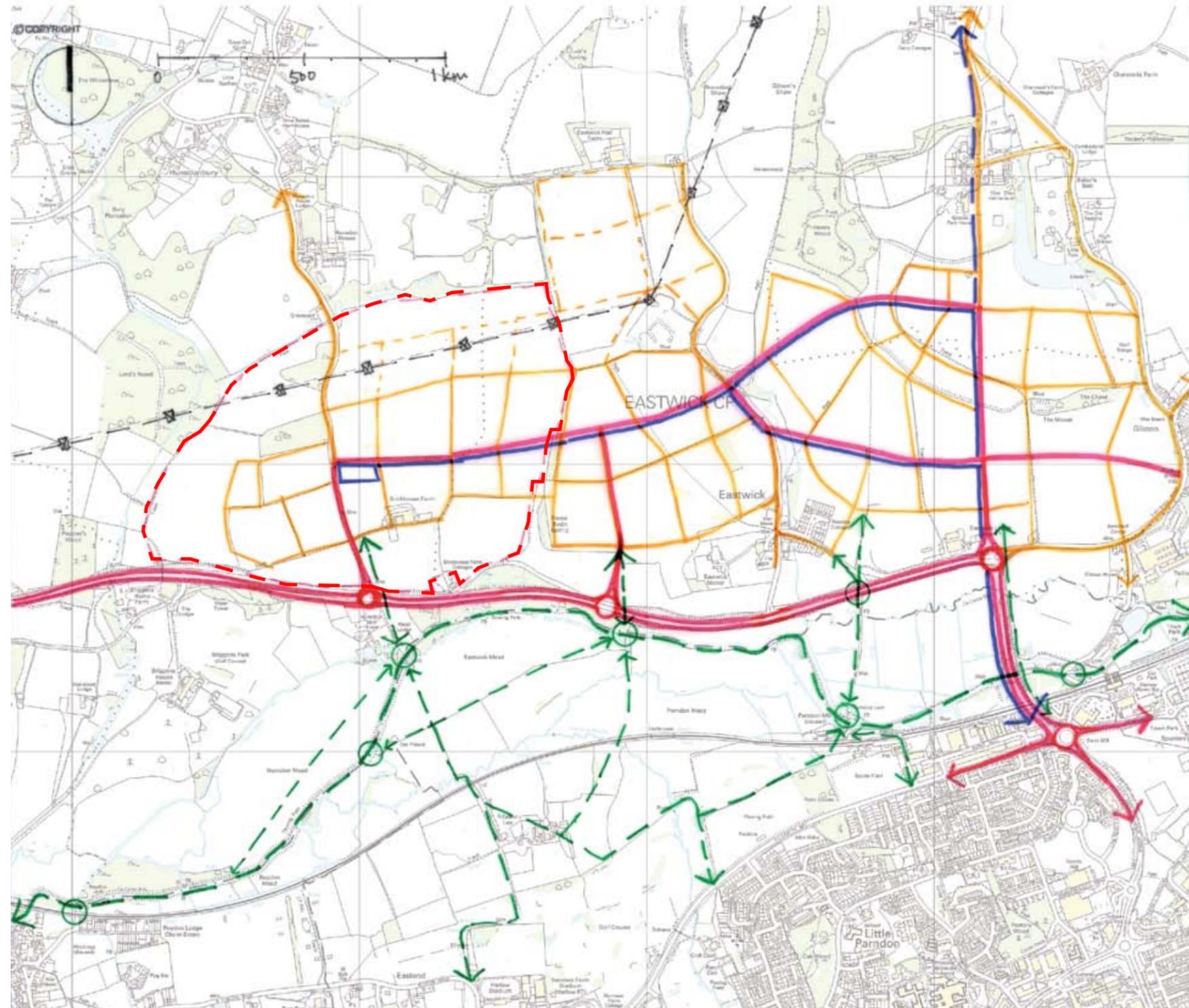
Option 1

This envisages an east-west spine route through Harlow North with public transport corridor linking to Harlow Station and beyond.

Three access points from the A414 would link into Harlow North – in the west at the existing Eastwick Road junction (Hunsdon Mill), in the east at the existing Allende Avenue junction, and at a new

junction in between (west of Eastwick village).

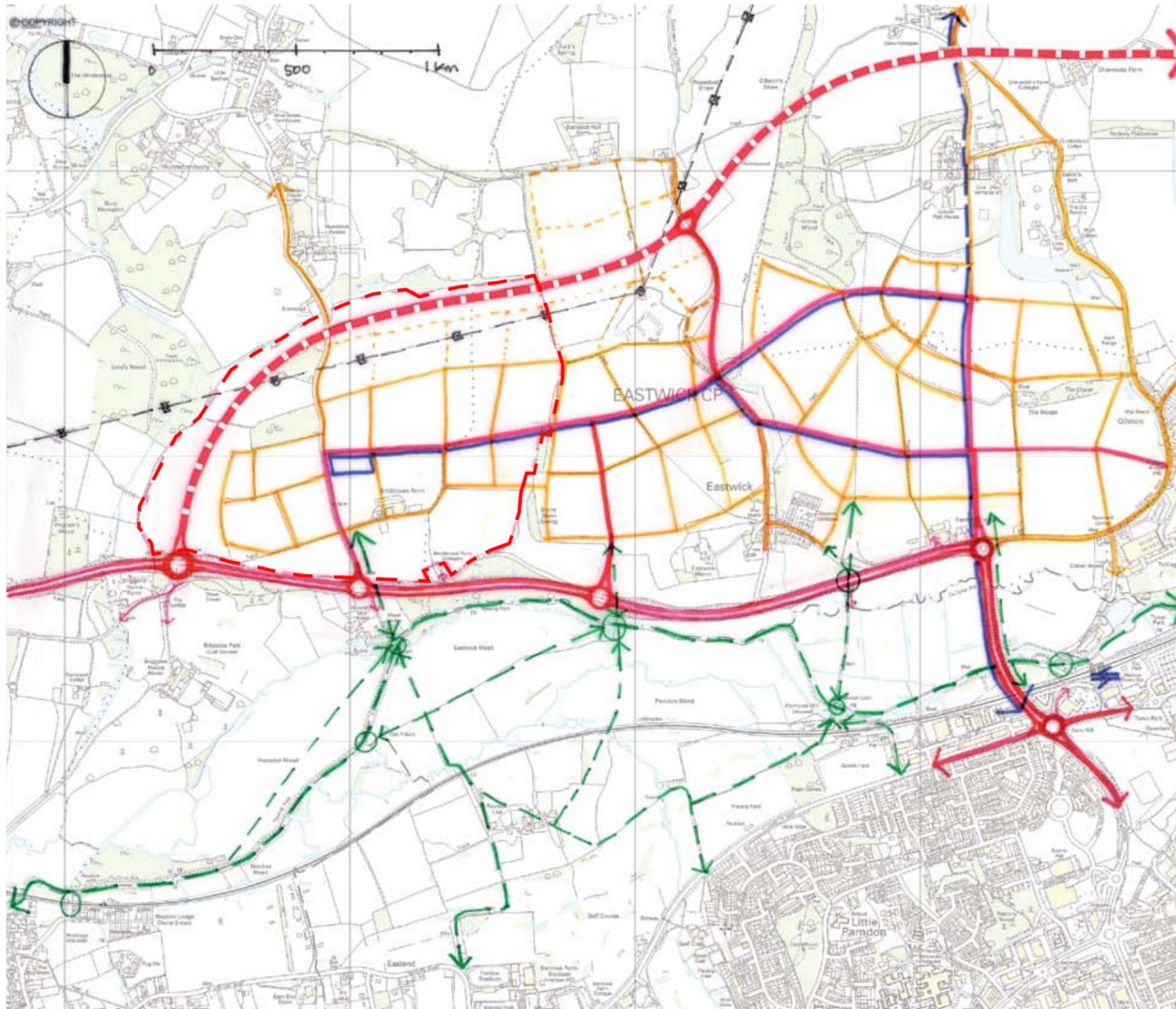
North-south links through the Stort Valley towards Harlow and the Pinnacles would be improved by walking and cycling routes with new foot/cycle bridges over the river and A414 at key locations.



Option 2

The key difference between this and Option 1 is that it allows for the incorporation of a new northern relief road/bypass from the A414 to the M11 around the western and northern edges of the site.

This includes allowing space for a new junction on the A414 in the west, with a secondary access (roundabout or priority junction) connecting the relief road into the northern part of Harlow North.

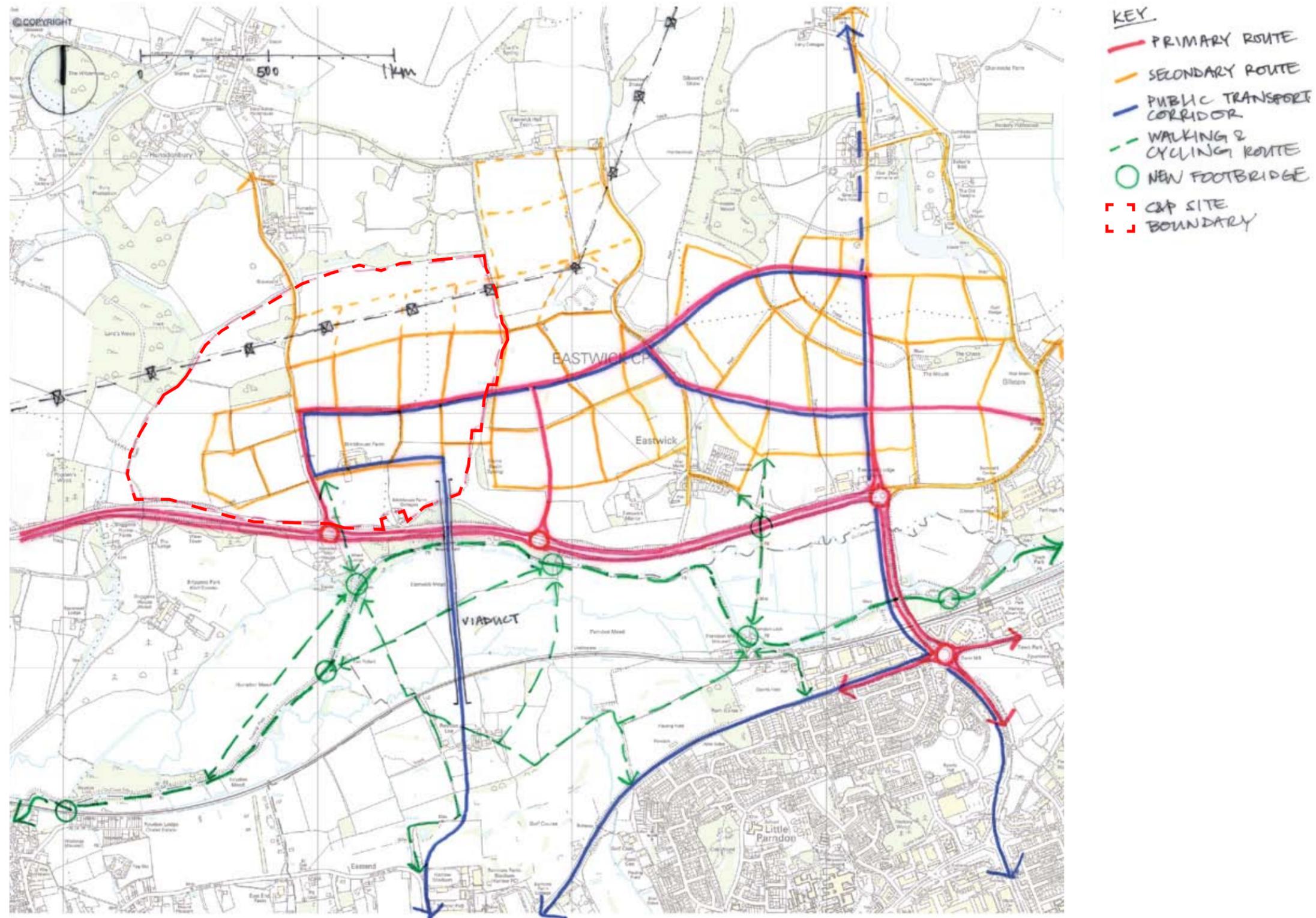


- KEY**
- PRIMARY ROUTE
 - SECONDARY ROUTE
 - PUBLIC TRANSPORT CORRIDOR
 - - - WALKING & CYCLING ROUTE
 - NEW FOOTBRIDGE
 - - - C&P SITE BOUNDARY

Option 3

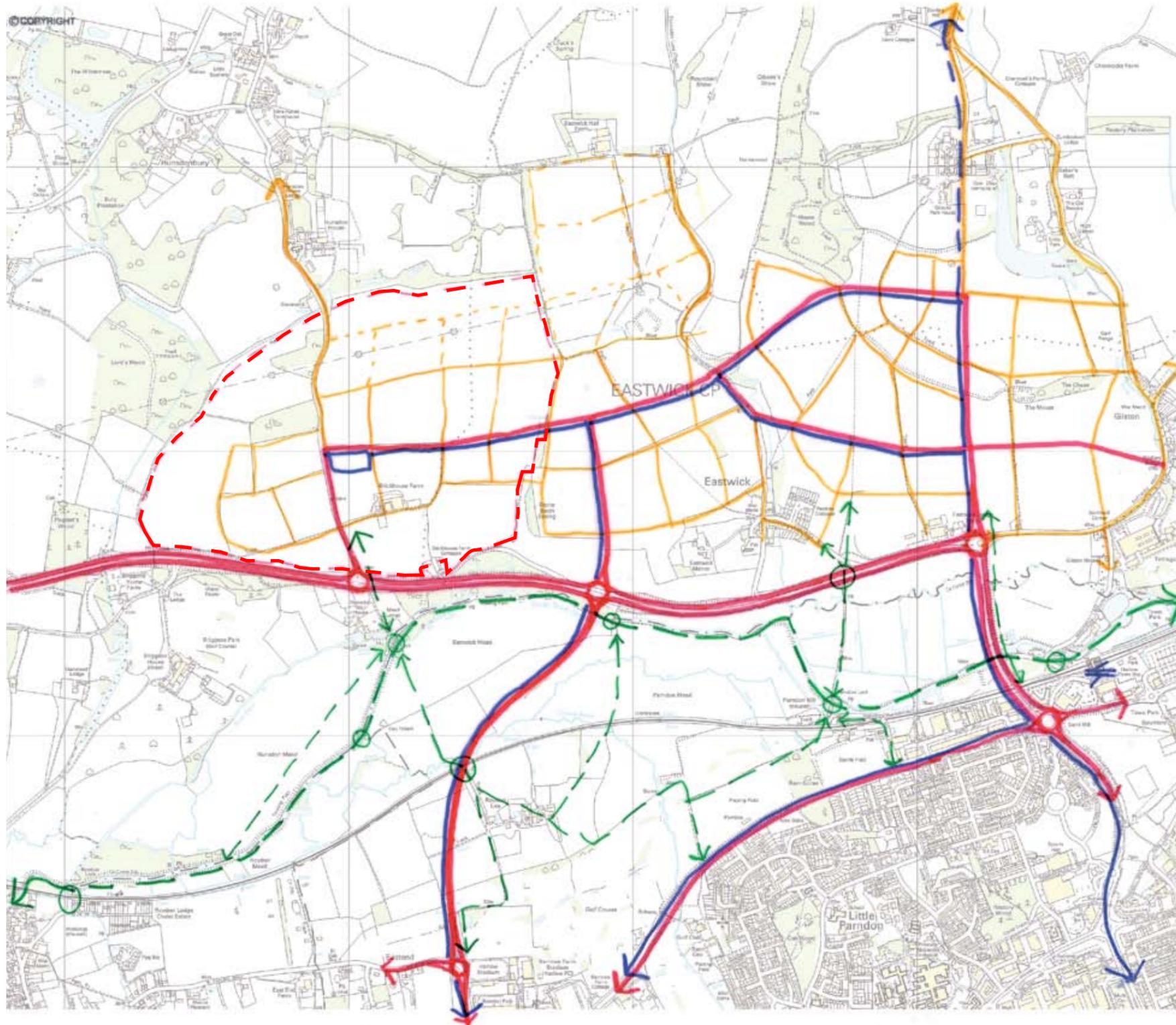
This option is similar to Option 1, but proposes the addition of a new north-south public transport link to make a more direct connection to the Pinnacles employment area and allow for a public transport loop through Harlow North.

The link across the Stort Valley could take the form of a high-level viaduct for tram or guided buses (similar to the Liffey Bridge precedent image in 6.3 above), as it would not need to connect directly to the A414.



Option 4

The final option proposes a more conventional roadway link across the Stort Valley from a new at-grade junction on the A414 via new bridges over the river and rail corridor.



- KEY**
- PRIMARY ROUTE
 - SECONDARY ROUTE
 - PUBLIC TRANSPORT CORRIDOR
 - - - WALKING & CYCLING ROUTE
 - NEW FOOTBRIDGE
 - - - CBP SITE BOUNDARY

Vision for Sustainable Travel

From the outset, any proposals for new development in North Harlow should be founded on the principles of encouraging travel by sustainable modes. These include:

- Masterplanning that is focussed creating neighbourhoods with a healthy mix of uses, where walking to local facilities is encouraged
- A comprehensive network of cycle routes and facilities linking to Harlow and the wider area
- A frequent public transport service (high quality buses or trams) with well-located, accessible stops that provides reliable connections to Harlow Station, the town centre and key employment sites
- Provision of infrastructure and parking for electric vehicles, car clubs and car sharing schemes
- Encouraging other innovative methods for reducing the need to travel (e.g. home shopping deliveries, telecommuting)



Public Transport Opportunities

Different modes of public transport are suitable to serve different purposes and locations. This matrix is intended to give a broad overview of the different types of public transport available and begin to rank them against different factors.

This has been developed as a starting point for analysis as to which mode of public transport would be most appropriate to serve the different needs of development at Harlow North.

	COST (£m/km)	CAPACITY (passengers/vehicles)	TOTAL JOURNEY DISTANCE (km)	SPEED/RELIABILITY (No. of stops)	COMMENTS
HEAVY RAIL	Dark Purple	Up to 500	~50	Dark Green	Fastest, infrequent stops, inflexible, creates physical barrier to movement
LIGHT RAIL	Dark Red	Up to 200	~30	Yellow-Gold	Fast, frequent stops, inflexible, can be integrated into streets
GUIDED BUS	Orange	Up to 100	~30	Orange	Medium speed, frequent stops, flexible, can be integrated into streets
BUS ROUTE (with bus priority lanes and at junction)	Yellow-Gold	Up to 50	~20	Dark Red	Low speed, frequent stops, very flexible, integrated into street network
BUS ROUTE (without lanes or priority)	Dark Green	Up to 50	~20	Purple	Lowest speed, frequent stops, very flexible, integrated into street network



Source data: TEST (Tools for Evaluating Strategically Intergrated Public Transport) Project working Paper 1

6.3 SITE ANALYSIS - LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

Diagrams / drawings by Churchman Landscape Architects

6.3.1 The Wider Gilston Area

1. Landscape Quality: The site is located within the Green belt in an area of rolling countryside located to the north of Harlow. The ground rises gradually from the broad and open valley of the river Stort to a low elevated plateau. The south facing valley slopes between the river flood plain and the plateau are cut by a number of small valleys formed by the Stort's tributaries, these valleys being more noticeable at the east end of the valley around Gilston Park and further east toward High Wych where the valleys broaden out to become bowls. These valleys have historically been used for access so they are now followed by small hedge lined lanes. The landscape is dominated by large arable fields subdivided by hedges and blocks of woodland. The quality of the landscape is compromised by several major man made interventions which tend to dominate the landscape. These include National Grid power lines which are located along the ridge of the valley and the A414 which forms the boundary between the Stort Valley and open countryside. Slightly to the south is Roydon & Harlow town train stations on the Stanstead Airport – London Liverpool Street Rail line, and to the immediate north west is a small airfield. The wider landscape is also interrupted at regular intervals with individual buildings and small villages, however, while these are quite frequent this retains the character of a landscape largely devoid of habitation, houses tend to be hidden in hollows or within or behind stands of trees.

2. In terms of landscape quality one has to consider the relationship between this land and the areas to the immediate south, both the Stort valley and Harlow New Town. The Stort valley is of the highest quality and is particularly sensitive to change. It would appear that use of this landscape is surprisingly light, indeed the diversity of species would appear to support this assumption. All proposals to develop on the north side of the valley will need to demonstrate how they intend to protect this resource.

3. Harlow new town is also of significance in terms of its use of landscape elements and characteristics as defining features of its development, it is notable that viewed from the north the

Town of Harlow is barely discernible, it is only the taller buildings which are visible within the wider landscape.

4. Topography: The land rises generally from the south to a slightly higher low domed plateau, the level change being 40-50 metres. Once the profile of the slope decreases to a more generally flat profile it remains fairly constant. This means that views over the flatter uplands are particularly open and any buildings or structures quite visible at distance.

5. Visibility: Due to the adjacency of this site with the flatter open Stort valley, views from the south can be quite expansive, certainly as the ground rises up to the domed plateau there are views of the valley sides from the higher ground within Harlow. However, due to the screening effects of other buildings and vegetation, views of the slopes around Hunsdon and Gilston Park are quite limited. Views from the river corridor and along the valley itself are relatively limited, with clearer directional views across the valley at a higher level.

6. Heritage: Valuable and unique heritage assets remain from the parkland estates and associated landscapes. Of particular note, Briggens House and Park set within the Stort River valley, Gilston Park House in Tudor style built in the 19th Century and the significant grade I Listed Hunsdon House dating from the 15th century. The Parish Church of St Dunstan's, also grade I Listed, has close associations with Hunsdon House. St Mary's Church to the north of Gilston Park is another Grade I Listed building of significant age from the 13th Century. The area is scattered with historic listed buildings, landscapes and scheduled ancient monuments, with clusters of mainly grade II Listed buildings within rural settlement areas. The locally defined Areas of Archaeological Significance reflects the scattered pattern of settlements and records some pockets of archaeological significance within the field networks.

7. Trees and Woodlands: A number of Ancient and replanted woodlands remain in isolated pockets. Although the woodland areas are relatively disconnected, the complex knit of field patterns lined with native hedgerows and waterway networks reinforce

their habitat value through a series of narrow connections. Many of the ancient woodlands are accessible wildlife sites, some with internal footpath access. The undulating hills north of the river corridor contain pockets of woodland, whereas the river corridor itself is more enclosed by ribbons of shelterbelts.

8. Gaps between settlements: Settlements are characteristically small, typically in villages and small farm settlements which are scattered through the open farmland setting. Arable farmed fields, alongside parkland and woodland pockets remaining from the historic estates all contribute to natural buffering between settlements typical to rural areas.

9. Green Belt Issues:

NPPF objectives for Green Belt are:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;
- To assist in urban regeneration,

The fifth objective is not considered of local relevance so is not applied to this assessment.

10. Due to settlements within this area being typically small, East Herts Green Belt Review identified retaining strategic gaps and preserving the setting and character are just as important for villages, and not just towns.

11. Green Belt within North Harlow presents the most significant contribution towards safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and preserving the setting (in particular Harlow) and the character of historic towns and villages. These contributions are considered moderate, and comparatively less to neighbouring areas to the south. Preventing neighbouring villages and towns merging is also an objective which is achieved to a similar extent but this is mainly limited to the areas around Sawbridgeworth and High Wych.

6.3.2 The City and Provincial Site

12. Landscape Quality: South facing arable farmland with a historic farm at the heart of the site. The ground slopes south down to the river valley, and along the east boundary towards the river. The surrounding landscape reflects the historic estate settings in part, but the overriding character of this site is arable open farmland. The A414 dominates the southern boundary, and the National Grid power line cuts through the upper region of the site.

13. Topography: Rolling hillside rising from the Stort river valley, with steeper inclines to the south of the site and some channels falling toward the river. Minor waterbodies present such as Stone Basin Spring, flowing toward the River Stort.

14. Visibility: Predominantly open landscape with cross valley and some more restricted views to the river corridor.

15. Heritage: Brickhouse Farm and associated barn, stable and cattle shed are of historical note and all grade II listed. Other statutorily protected heritage assets are outside of the plot, such as the prominent grade I listed Hunsdon House and Church of St Dunstan north of the site. Briggens House, Briggens Home Farm (grade II listed) and Briggen Park (grade II listed park) are sited south west of the site and other buildings of historic interest are further afield. Three non-statutory Areas of Archaeological Significance are recognised within the site, one associated with Brickhouse Farm, and one to the west boundary with Lord's Wood. The third is within the current field system and one assumes this site has been degraded through ploughing and architectural elements are not visible on the surface.

16. Trees and Woodlands: Limited woodland cover exists on site remaining as division between field boundaries. Protected ancient woodland, Lord's Wood, is outside the site alongside the west boundary.

17. Gaps between settlements : Hunsdonbury and Eastwick are both about 0.75km from the site boundary, and the grade I listed

buildings are closer than this to the north of the plot. This site is made up almost solely of open fields and some blocks of woodland.

18. Green Belt Issues: City and Provincial landholding is a smaller site and achieves the Green Belt objective to a lesser extent than The Places for People site, even though it is entirely within the current boundary of Green Belt. The plot achieves the four objectives of Green Belt to a limited extent. Specific areas within the site achieve the objectives more effectively. These areas are focused along the north west boundary. Preserving the setting and of Hunsdonbury, the nearby Area of Archaeological Significance, and ensuring sufficient gaps between the listed buildings south of the village and any future development directly south is achieved well by this small part of Green Belt.

19. This same area to the south of Lord's Wood also performs a role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, although in its current use as arable farmland encourages limited ecological enhancement to the woodland itself. There are small pockets of unprotected woodland within the site that would benefit from better connectivity to Lord's Wood, which may enhance the ancient woodland itself to a small degree. The proximity to the river corridor which hosts vulnerable and important habitats at Hunsdon Mead SSSI and Eastwick Mead wildlife site displays another means of safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, but the position of the A414 seriously interrupts this objective.

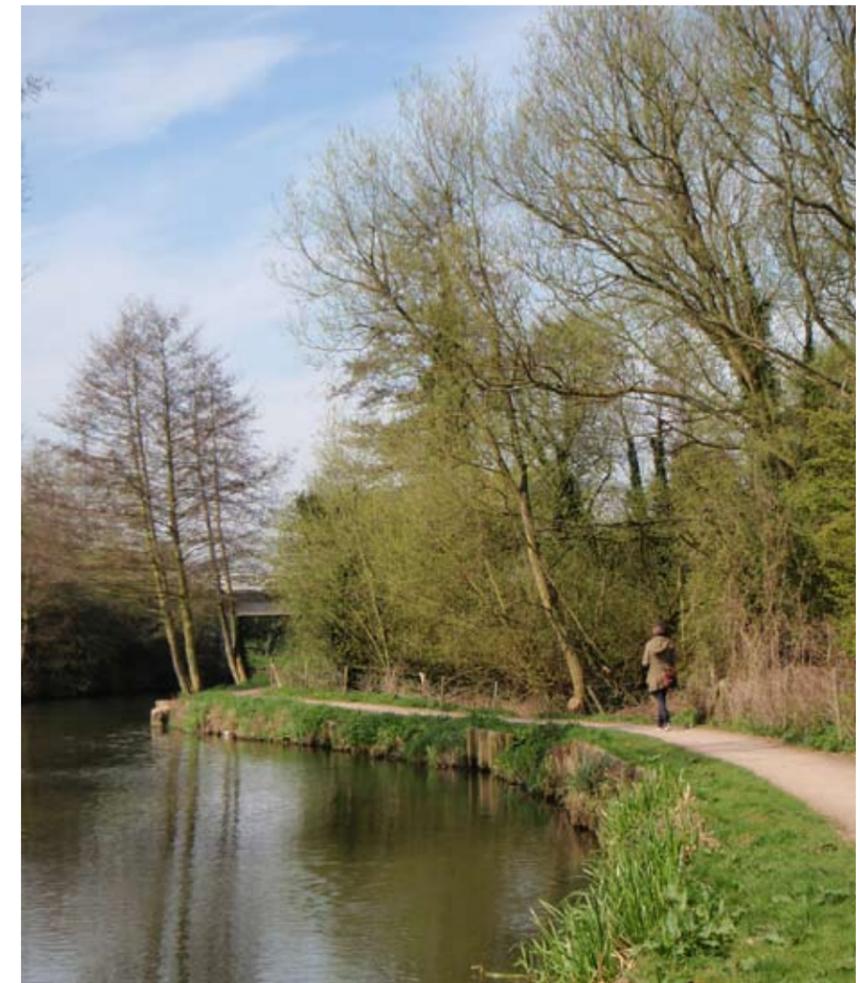


Fig 5 Towpath allong River Stort

6.3.3 The Places for People Site

20. Landscape Quality: The setting is rural and historic in nature. Undulating landscape with scenic qualities is mainly made up of arable farmland with a southerly aspect looking towards the River Stort valley. To the south the land is dominated by a more enclosed river corridor with ribbons of vegetation, and to the north large arable fields with hedgerow fringes and woodland pockets dominates. Manmade interruptions include the A414 which cuts off a small proportion of the site to the south, the national grid power line dissects the site diagonally, the airfield north west in the site and the railway line is also not far away just further south adjacent to the river.

21. Topography: The ground rises from the Stort river valley in the south of the site. These hills are crossed by several small tributaries including Fiddlers Brook which passes through Gilston Park estate. The ground plateaus to the north of the site, providing frequent longer vistas towards the River Stort valley.

22. Visibility: A small section of the site in the river valley has restricted views due to the contours and vegetation pattern, whereas the cross valley views increase as the levels rise to the north. Pockets of woodland are the main restrictions to panoramic views, with exceptions in the north and centre of the site where height and more open fields provide longer clear vistas.

23. Heritage: Several historic features are located in an island central to the site but outside its boundary. These are Gilston Park House which is a grade II* Listed building and a nearby cottage, and associated archaeological sites of the dam and cascade to the south. The remaining parts of the historic Gilston Park estate are significant to the character of the site, even though central parts of are excluded from the site boundary.

24. The Grade I Listed 13th Century church St Mary's Church, a scheduled Moat & associated deer-pen enclosure to the south of Gilston Park House sit in the plot and several Listed properties at Eastwick are adjacent to the site outside of the

boundary. Other historic features to the south of the site are Fiddlers Bridge pedestrian footbridge, and remaining parts of Parndon Hall site.

25. Several Areas of Architectural Value are scattered throughout the plot, mainly focused around settlements and farms still present and ancient woodland, with a few exceptions in open fields.

The quality and quantity of historic assets is significant but not unusual in this part of East Herts.

26. Trees and Woodlands: Several isolated pockets of ancient woodland are located within the ownership boundary. These areas of woodland mainly sit in arable fields, with little or no tree and hedgerow connections between them. Home Wood/ Gibson's Shaw ancient woodland in the centre of the site is of the largest scale, with stronger connections to the river valley and wildlife sites north of Eastwick and around Gilston Park.

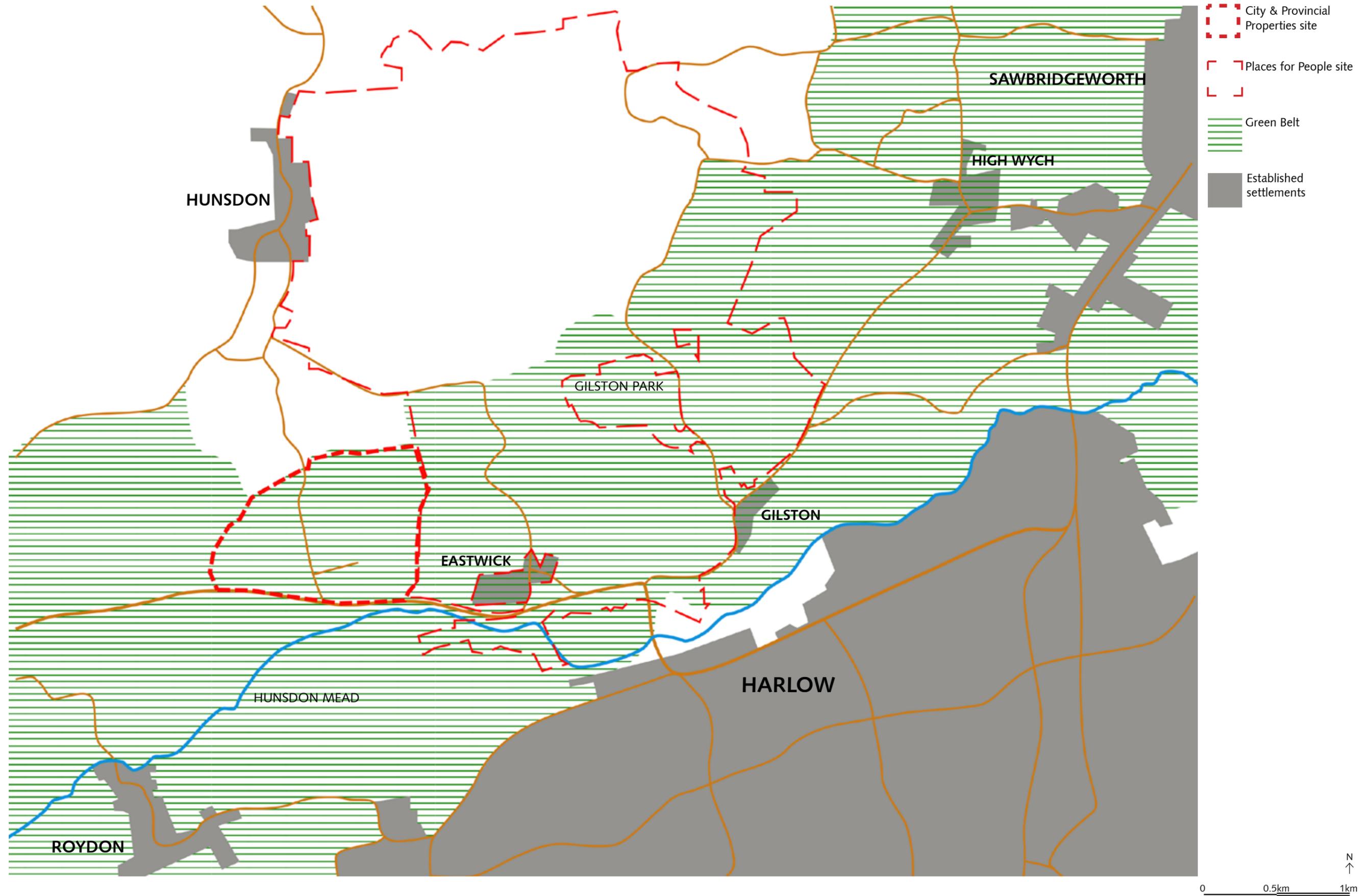
27. Gaps between settlements: This area contains only small settlements, notably Eastwick village to the south and Gilston Park in the centre (although both outside of the site boundary), and farm buildings are scattered elsewhere. The site affords generous spacing between settlements.

28. Green Belt Issues: The Green Belt contribution is moderate in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, preventing neighbouring villages and towns merging and preserving the setting and special character of historic towns and villages. In particular, protection of the setting and special character of the Gilston Park Estate area may be at risk if Green Belt was to be released. The Green Belt is at its narrowest point within East Herts which reinforces the importance of retention, also in preserving the setting of Harlow which it currently achieves well. Safeguarding the countryside from encroachment is a vital objective to the centre and north of the site to protect the ancient woodlands. The historic and ecological value of Home Wood

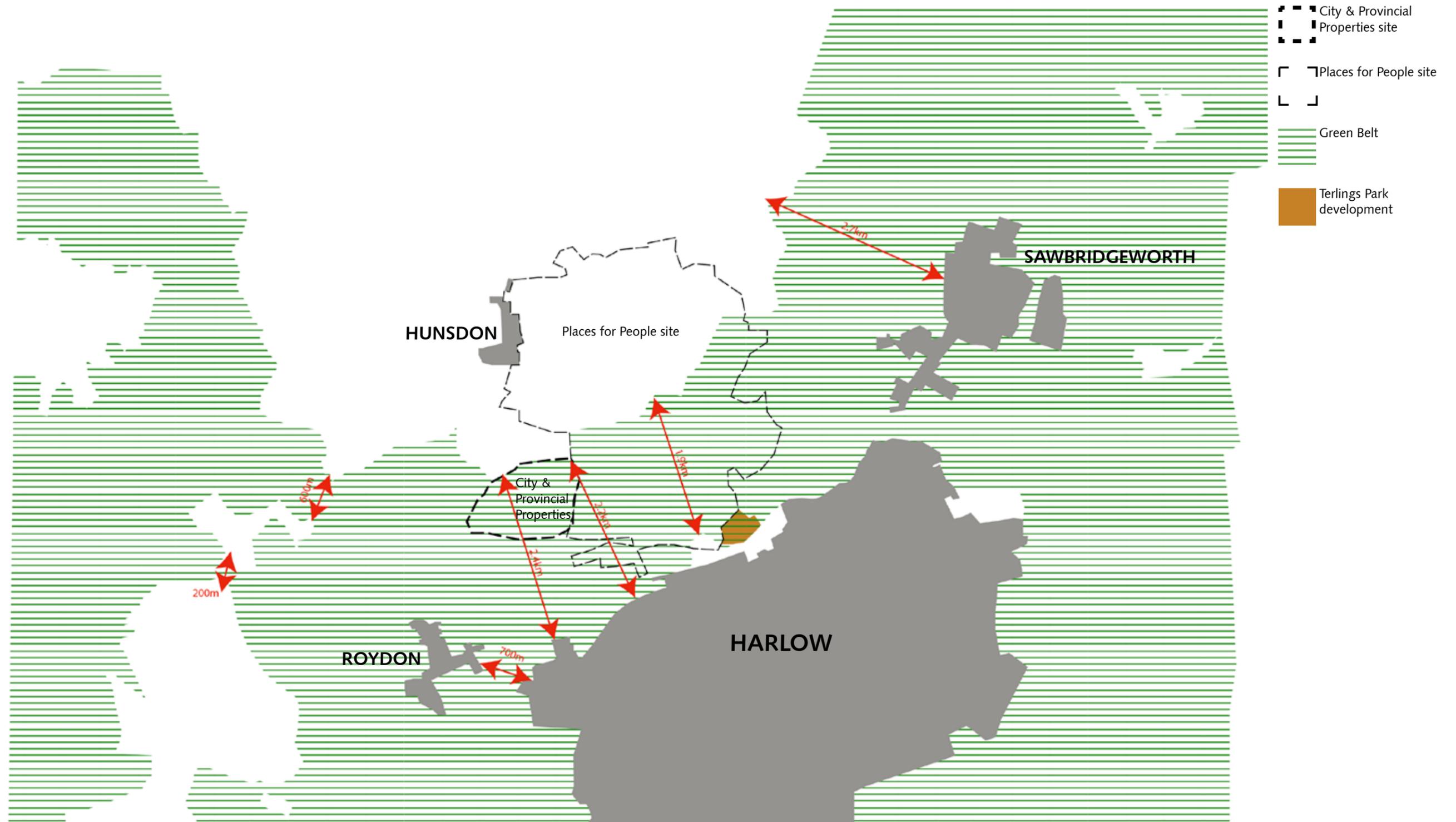
and Gibson's Shaw may be particularly vulnerable to any future development, and careful consideration should be given to prevent any loss of protection wherever possible. The series of ancient woodlands to the north require protective buffer zones and further means of strengthening their connections to prevent degradation in the event of nearby development. The northern part of the site is not within the Green Belt, and could present significant benefits as Compensatory Green Belt through the objective of protection of countryside from encroachment.

Green Belt release would pose much less risk of weakening protection if released in considered parts, with more opportunity to the north of Gilston Park but south of the ancient woodland clusters.

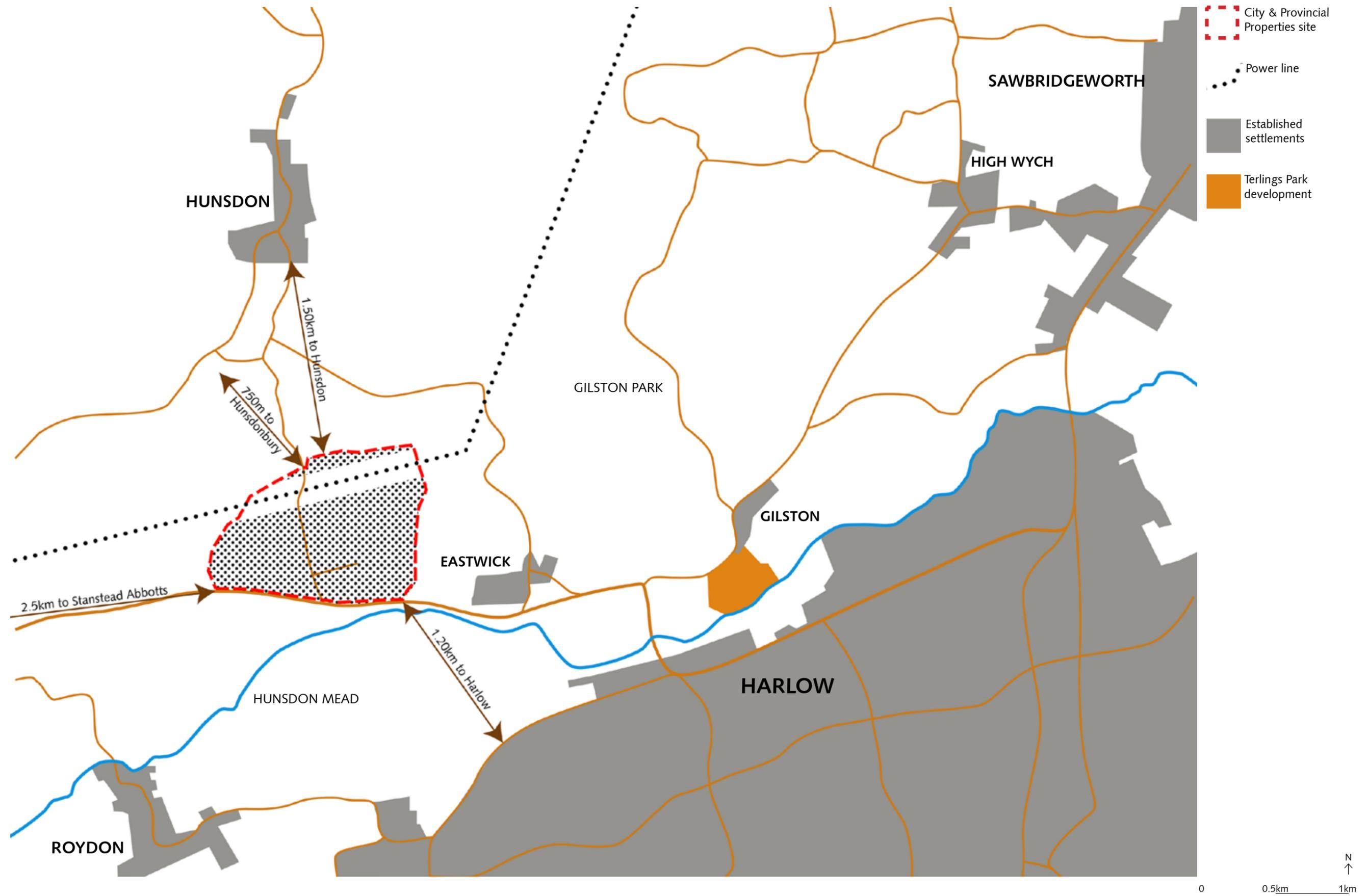
SITE LOCATION



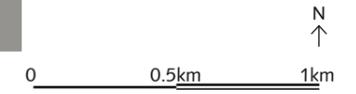
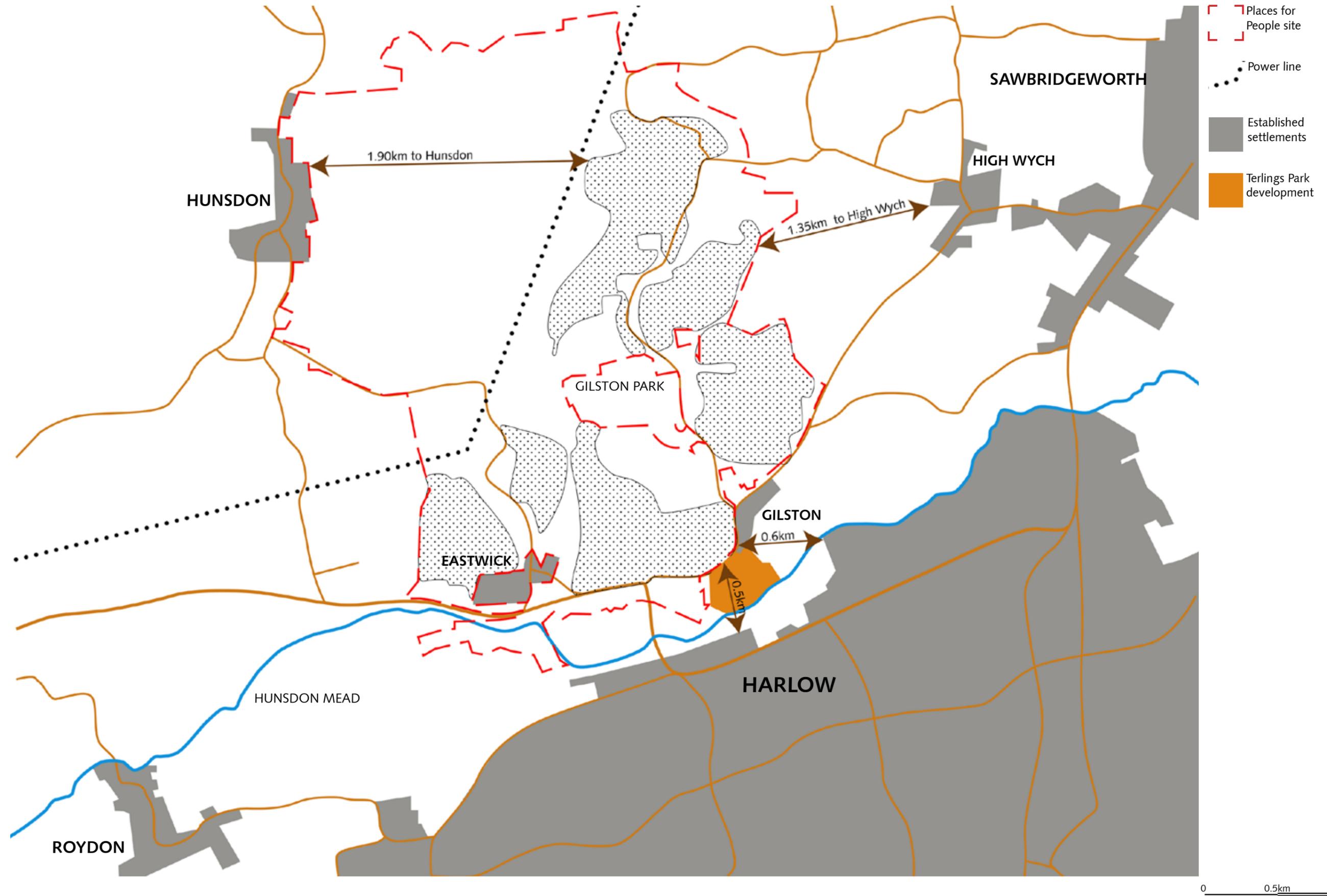
WIDTH OF GREEN BELT



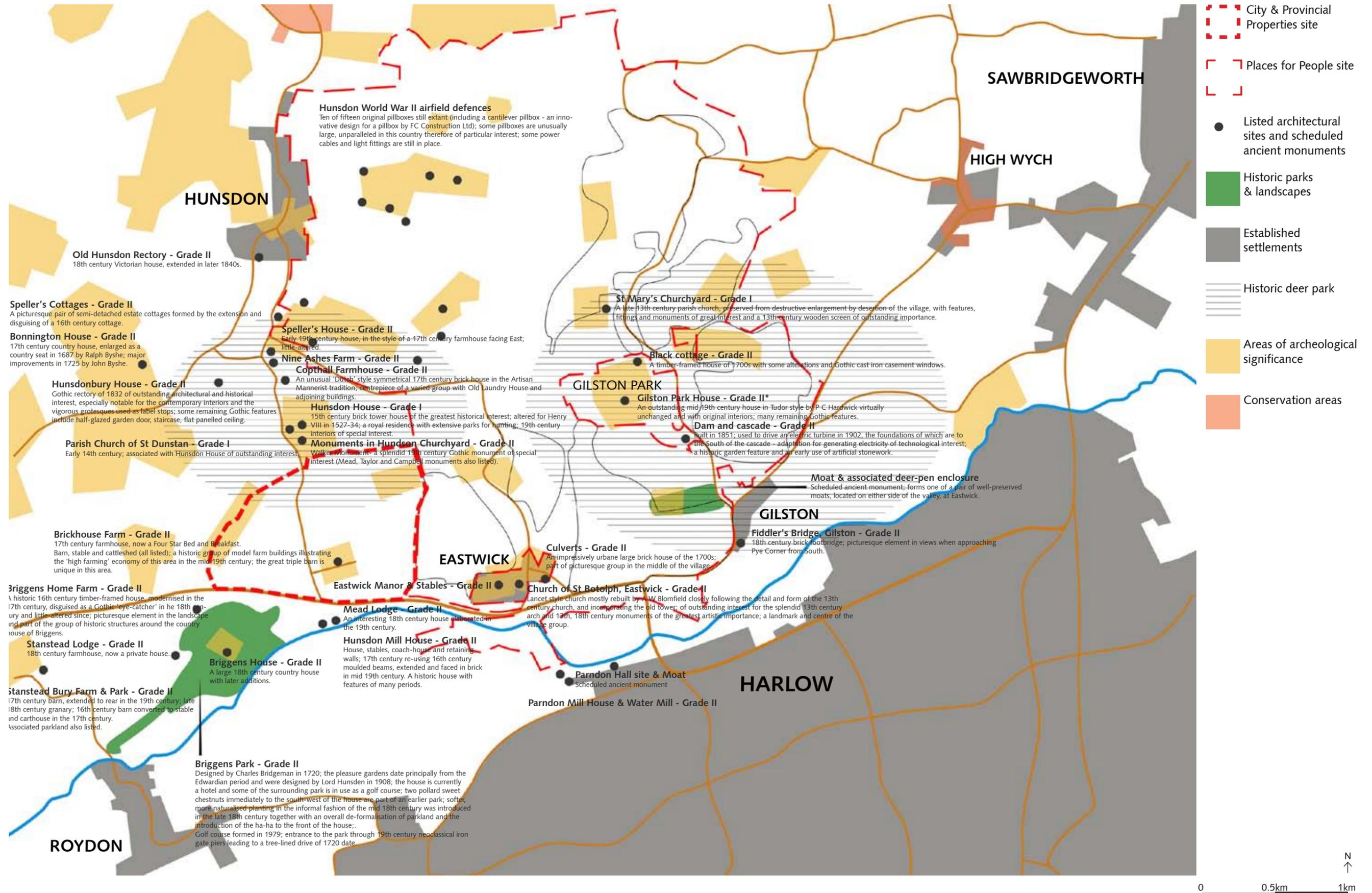
CITY & PROVINCIAL PROPERTIES: PROXIMITY TO SETTLEMENTS



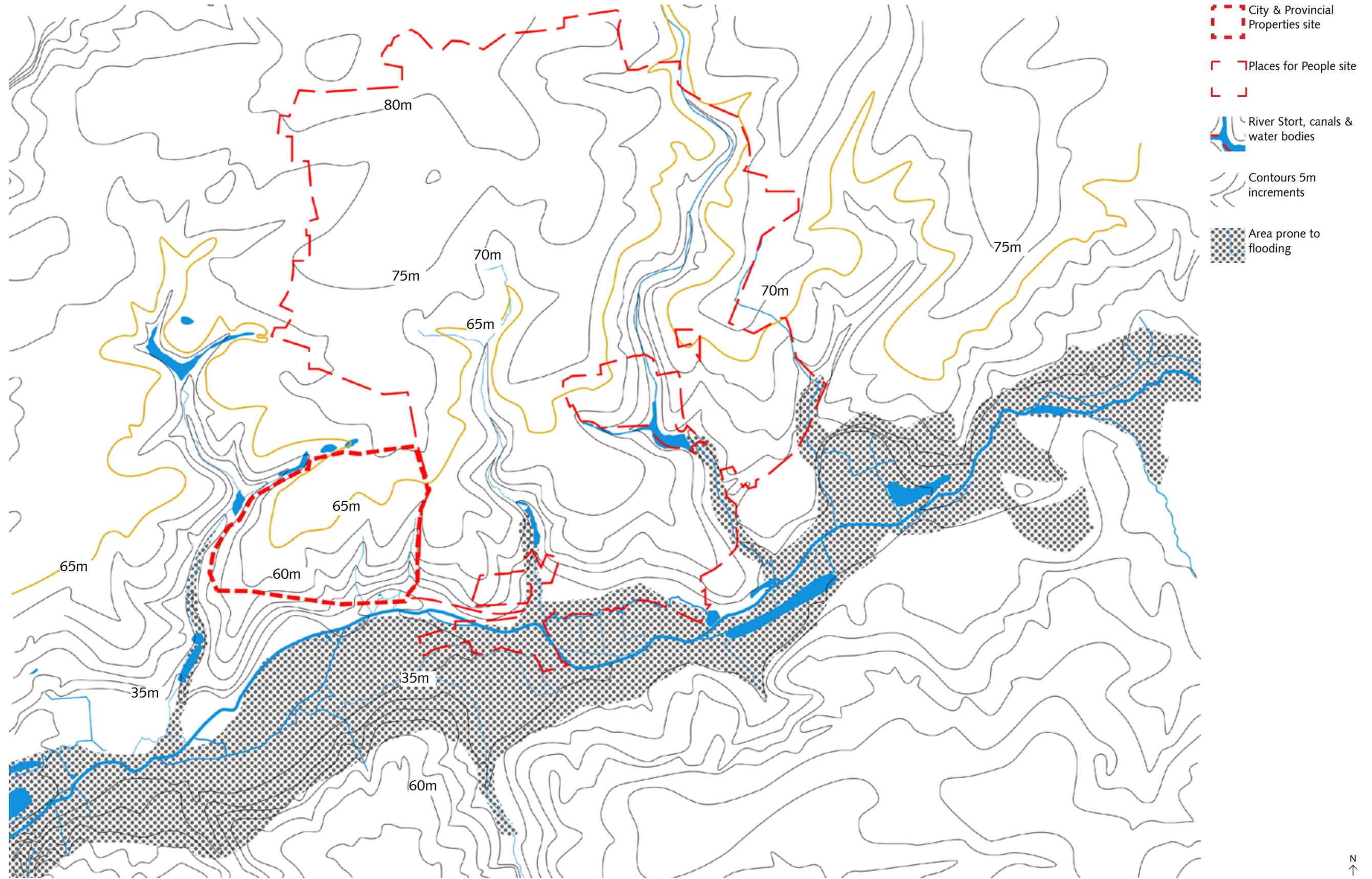
PLACES FOR PEOPLE: PROXIMITY TO SETTLEMENTS



IMPORTANT HISTORIC ASSETS



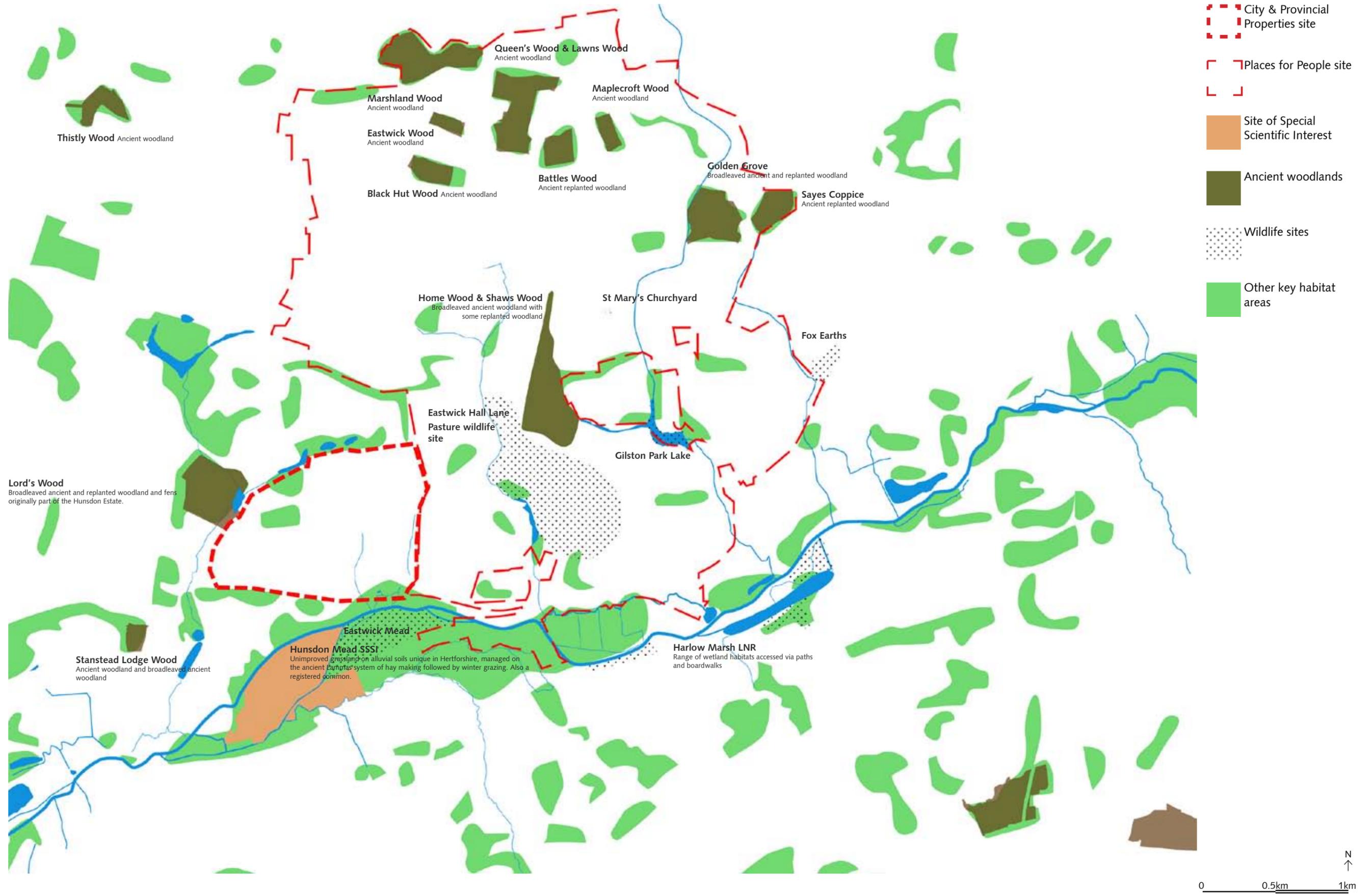
DRAINAGE & LANDFORM



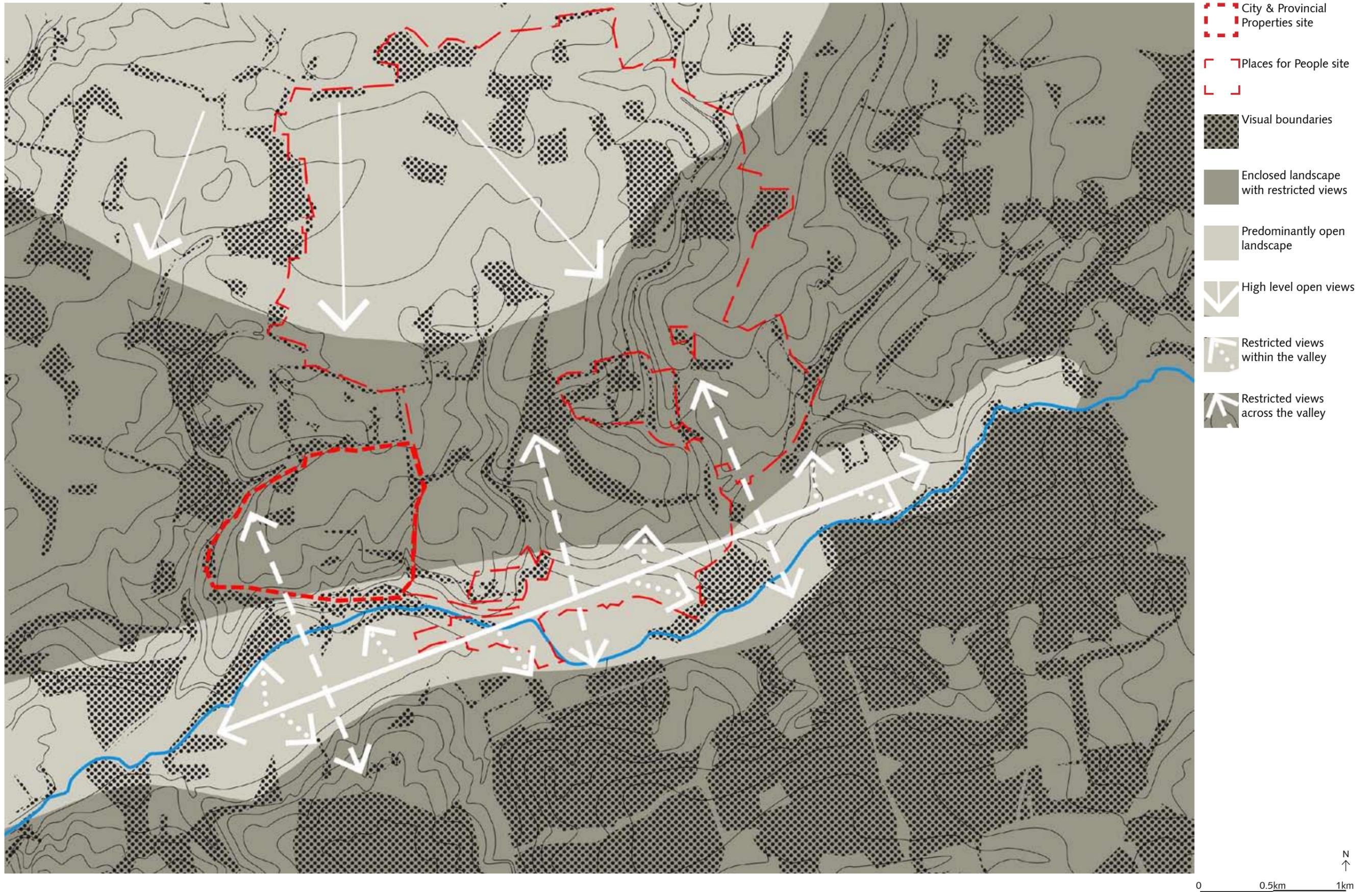
- City & Provincial Properties site
- Places for People site
- River Start, canals & water bodies
- Contours 5m increments
- Area prone to flooding

0 0.5km 1km
N ↑

ECOLOGICAL DESIGNATIONS



OPENNESS / ENCLOSURE



N
↑

0 0.5km 1km

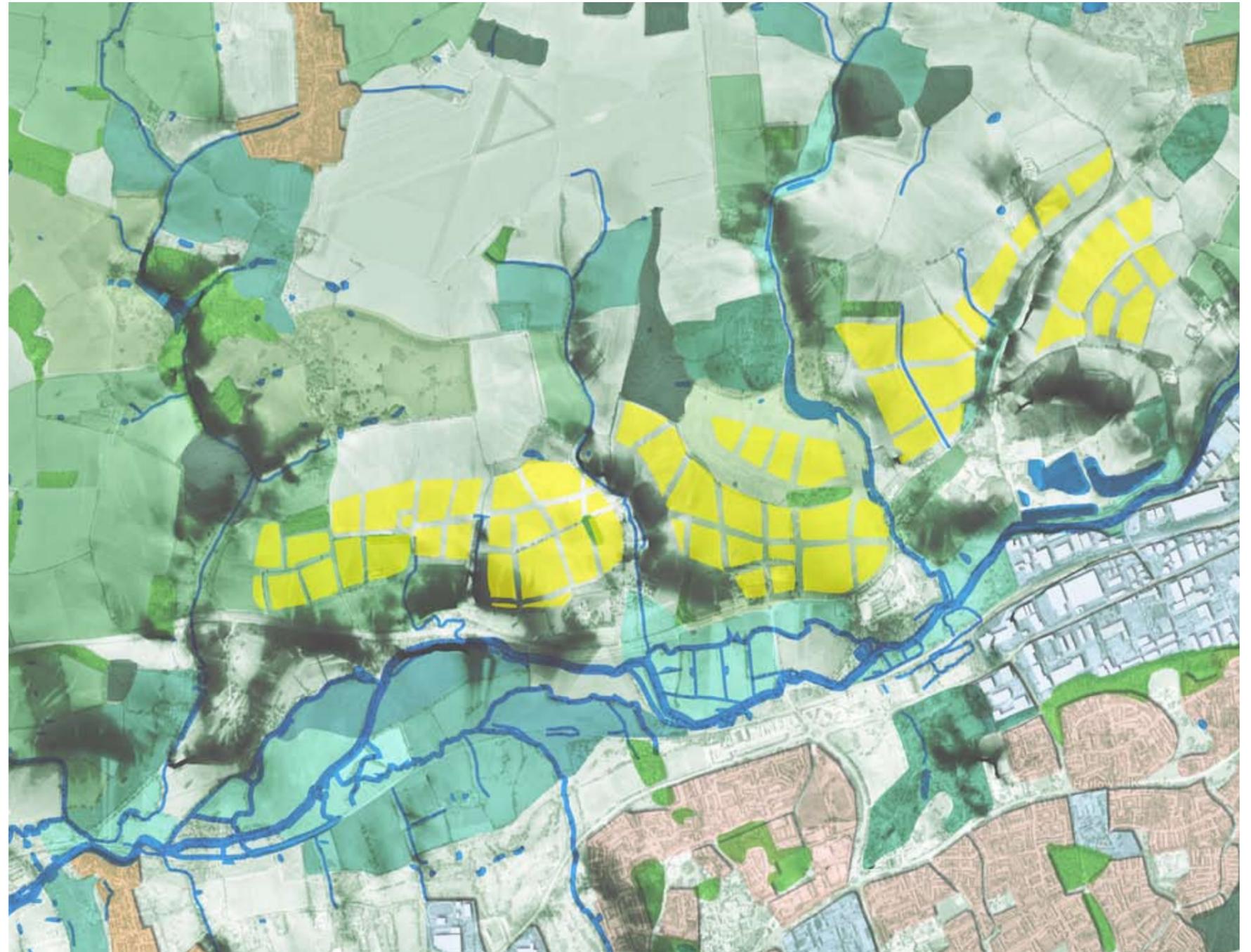
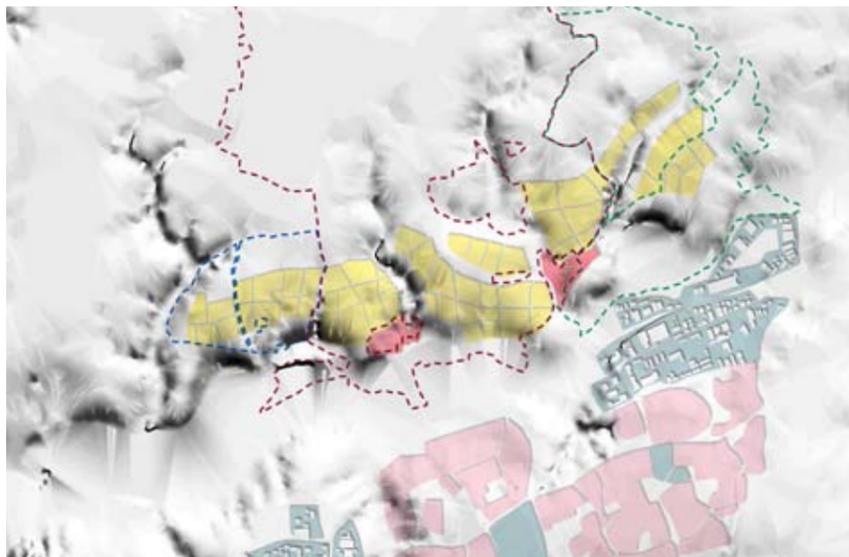
7.0 INITIAL DESIGN CONCEPTS

In June 2010, Space Craft Architects explored initial design concepts for the future development of the site on behalf of CPP.

The initial layouts were rooted in a landscape-based approach to design, focusing development on the relatively flat 'plateaus' and leaving the valleys and watercourses as open amenity spaces. This approach is very much in keeping with Frederick Gibberd's initial design for Harlow New Town.

The adjacent diagram from 2010 represents the preferred design scenarios for approximately 10,000 new homes at Harlow North. In this option development was limited to a linear zone close to the Stort River Valley, hugging the District border and minimising potentially more contentious northward growth into the Green Belt and beyond at land more disconnected from existing town centre.

The proposal consciously disregards land ownership boundaries in order to explore the most sustainable development pattern. This proposal becomes a genuinely sustainable extension to Harlow Town to ensure its future regeneration and expansion to meet future development needs in the local area whilst transforming the Stort River Valley into an urban amenity space and making best use of infrastructure and services (new and improved).



The Proposal

CPP are proposing that the identified Broad Location for Development at the Gilston Area accommodates in the region of 5,000 new homes up to 2031 in the initial form of development illustrated opposite. The proposal relates to a sustainable, residentially led urban extension with supporting social and transport infrastructure. The development incorporate affordable homes provision and a mix of housing and tenure.

The proposed extent of development is a more linear spatial approach which is considered a more sustainable, well connected proposal in relation to the existing town and its facilities. A previous study has in the past been undertaken by Space Syntex in support of the previous Ropemaker Masterplan (in relation to the regional allocation) which considered the connections to the west of the town via Pinnacles Employment Area and to the north of the A414 connecting new development within the western part of the new urban extension. Further work needs to be undertaken in relation to special connections to the existing town centre and which will form part of the future technical work to support the evolving masterplan.

The combined housing across both CPP land and Places for People's central/ southern land could potentially deliver an average (net) density of between 30-35 dwellings per hectare based on a combined residential site area of circa 140 hectares.

The NPPF encourages new proposals for residential development which optimise the capacity of sites in a manner that is compatible with the use, intensity, scale, character and grain of the surrounding area and the size of the site. Draft Policy HOU2 requires that (inter alia) the density of a development must be appropriate to the local context of the site and the character of the surrounding area and its surrounding landscape. Draft density guidelines express preference for medium average densities (30dph) for sites that are in more peripheral locations (within) and on the edge of town centre settlements with higher densities (above 30 dph) on sites (in) or near to town centres.

The initial concept plan aims to respond to these issues as a design-led approach following a very initial analysis of the site context and character of the area. The team are at concept stage only and a more detailed design needs to evolve during the coming months supported by various impact assessments.

The initial densities assume higher densities might be achieved in certain more central parts of the masterplan closest to the existing town centre and its spine road and potentially also around planned new neighbourhood centres which would be identified during the more detailed design feasibility process during the coming months.



8.0 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS

New residential development in the wider Gilston Area has the potential to deliver social and economic benefits beyond the boundaries of the East Herts District, with positive effects of the development spilling into neighbouring authorities, most notably Harlow District.

Although a full social and economic impact assessment has not yet been carried out as part of the technical work that has been developed for these landholdings, it is clear that residential development at the Gilston Area would deliver the following benefits, pre and post completion:

From the construction process, in delivering the level of future housing required in this location, this could potentially generate a significant volume of non-skilled, skilled and professional jobs in the local area.

- Future residents of the development will boost the economy by bringing increased spending power to East Herts and Harlow.
- Deliver much needed affordable housing to the District.
- Deliver improved transport infrastructure investment to the area.
- Deliver social infrastructure including new primary and secondary schools, health facilities and public open space.
- In line with the NPPF (paragraph 7) the Gilston Area could achieve all aspects of sustainable development by:
- Contributing “to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy”;
- Supporting a “strong, vibrant and health communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of

present and future generations”; and

- Contributing to “protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment”.

During the coming months, as part of the masterplan development process, a socio-economic assessment will need to be prepared to consider economic impact and future benefits.

9.0 SUMMARY & NEXT STEPS

- East Herts District Council are planning for a housing target in excess of 15,000 units within their emerging District Plan, which will require the release of Green Belt land to meet objectively assessed needs.
- Moving towards the Pre-Submission Draft of the District Plan, the initial concept now needs to be developed into a block layout masterplan to identify more exact densities, indicative housing mix, type and tenure to meet local needs and demands. This developing masterplan will need be supported by various technical assessments (socio-economic, housing demand, transport, Green Belt impact, ecological and environmental amongst other areas) to include a Housing Trajectory and Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- CPP look forward to working collaboratively with East Herts District Council, Harlow District Council, Hertfordshire County Council, key statutory consultees and stakeholders, as well as the local community to bring forward the site as the most appropriate location for sustainable development within the Gilston Area.

