



Whittington Way, Bishop's Stortford
Prepared by Andrew Martin - Planning, on behalf of Countryside Properties (UK) Ltd.

May 2014

Project Details

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Executive Summary

This brochure provides additional illustrative information to supplement EHDC's evidence base. It is intended to help inform the new District Plan process and in particular the draft allocation of the land south of Whittington Way for a sustainable urban extension.

AM-P submit that EHDC should meet its full objectively assessed needs and that the new District Plan should concentrate growth towards the district's main towns of Bishop's Stortford, Sawbridgeworth, Hertford and Ware. Of these, Bishop's Stortford has the most important sub-regional role, owing to its proximity to the motorway network and Stansted Airport, its thriving town centre and good range of shops, and its strong rail links to central London and Cambridge.

EHDC's new District Plan Preferred Options identifies five new housing locations in or around Bishop's Stortford, including three urban extensions to the north (2,350 - 2,600 dwellings), south (750 - 1,000 dwellings) and east (150 dwellings) of the town, plus the redevelopment of two sites within the town, at the Goods Yard (200 dwellings) and Hadham Road Reserve Secondary School Site (0 - 250 dwellings). Given the significant quantum of new homes needed in the district, 15,000 between 2011 and 2031 alone (i.e. 750 per annum), it is clear that the Bishop's Stortford sites will make a valuable contribution to addressing housing need.

However, irrespective of how new growth is accommodated in the district, the new District Plan Preferred Options is correct to propose the release of the land south of Whittington Way from the Green Belt and its allocation for a sustainable urban extension. This brochure illustrates how development could be accommodated at the site, whilst preserving the openness of the wider Green Belt.

CP supports the new District Plan's decision to:

- meet its objectively assessed need for housing;
- identify Bishop's Stortford as the most important town in the district, with its sub-regional role;
- direct new growth to Bishop's Stortford, including in the first five years of the Plan period.
- release the land south of Whittington Way from the Green Belt and allocate the site for a sustainable urban extension (including 750 - 1,000 homes); and
- recognise the scope to offer significant community benefits at the site, including a new neighbourhood centre (with local retail, health and community facilities), primary school, land for a potential secondary school, employment floorspace and public open space.



This brochure has been prepared by Andrew Martin – Planning (AM-P) on behalf of Countryside Properties (UK) Ltd (CP). The brochure provides significant information on the land south of Whittington Way, Bishop’s Stortford, and can be used to inform the evidence base to the new East Herts District Plan.

Founded in 1958, CP is a long established leader in property development and the creation of sustainable communities. The company’s vision is to create exceptional places for people to live, work and enjoy. Over the years the company has built private and affordable housing, commercial property, mixed-use schemes and mixed-tenure schemes. CP is highly successful in strategic land assembly and development, and has planned, promoted and delivered new sustainable communities which are widely regarded as examples of best practice. Local examples of these include St Michael’s Mead, Bishop’s Stortford and Great Notley Garden Village, near Braintree.

CP has an option on 53 hectares (ha) of land to the south of Whittington Way, Bishop’s Stortford. Along with several other sites in and around Bishop’s Stortford, this land was subject to a complex set of appeals and a combined Public Inquiry in 2011, involving the relocation of two schools to Whittington Way and the vacated sites being redeveloped for housing. The Secretary of State (SoS) agreed with the Inspector and dismissed all but one of the appeals on the grounds that, inter alia, it was not demonstrated that the benefits from the scheme would clearly outweigh any potential harm to the Green Belt and therefore the existing school sites would be needed for continued education purposes.

However, the District Plan review process provides an opportunity to re-assess the Green Belt on a district-wide basis; a fundamentally different process and test to that undertaken as part of the several specific and inter-related appeals considered by the SoS/Inspector.

In the wider context of the emerging District Plan and the essential requirement for the East Herts District Council (EHDC) to meet its objectively assessed housing needs to necessitate a district-wide Green Belt review, the land south of Whittington Way (hereafter referred to as “the site”) is available, suitable, achievable and therefore deliverable. Delivery of a sustainable urban extension at the site would make a notable contribution to the district’s overall housing needs and could also accommodate a potential new secondary school on-site, subject to discussions with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), to address projected shortages in secondary school places locally.

Section 2 of this brochure reviews the planning context and recognises the extent of housing need across the district. Section 3 considers the site and its surroundings. Section 4 assesses local constraints and opportunities. Section 5 reviews landscape and visual impact, with regard to the five purposes of the Green Belt. Section 6 reviews transportation and accessibility. Section 7 considers the scope to accommodate a new school on-site and the wider benefits of this. Section 7 provides conclusions and a draft master plan for a sustainable urban extension to Bishop’s Stortford.

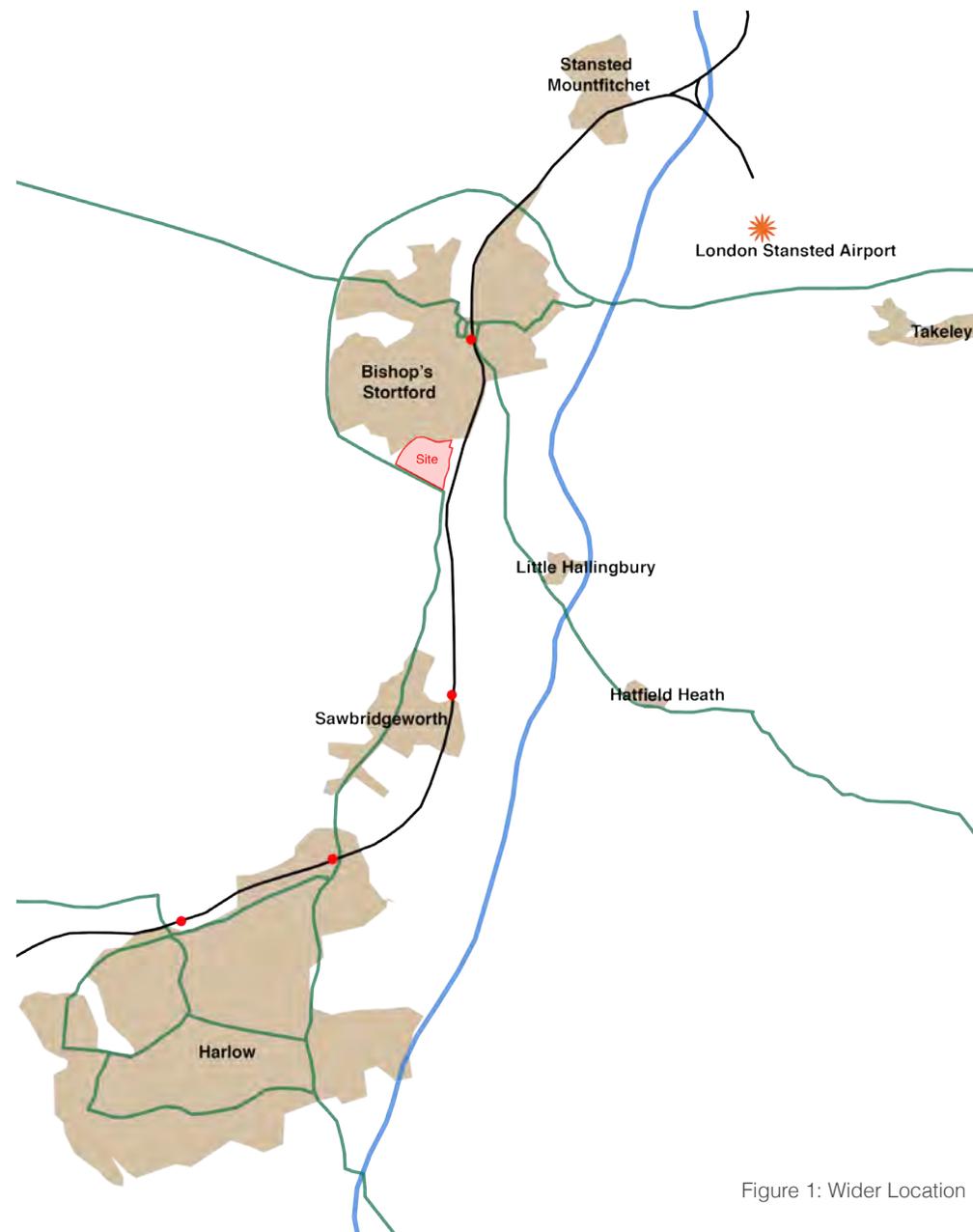


Figure 1: Wider Location

Introduction

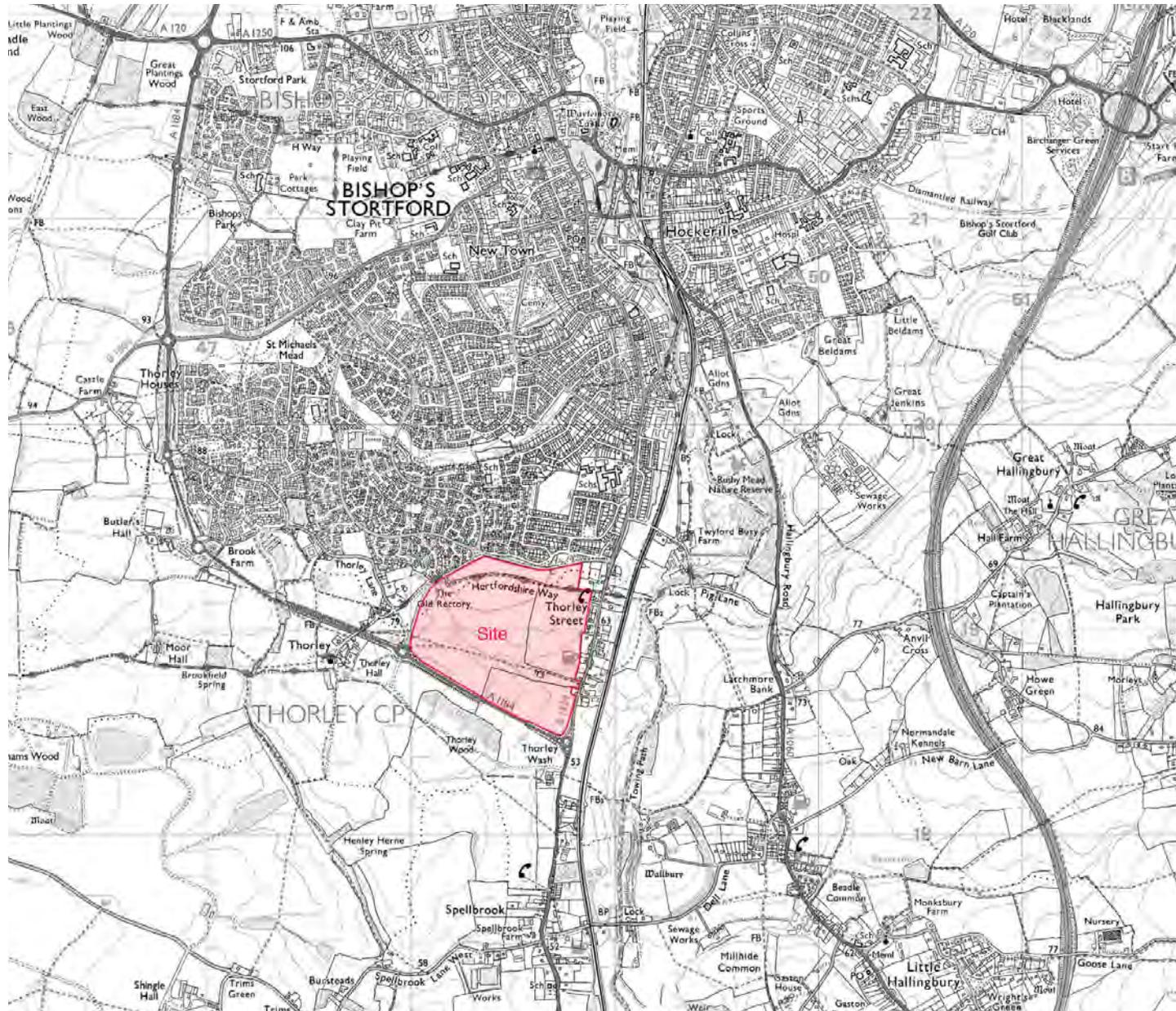


Figure 2: Site Location

There are various sources of housing need in the district and in the housing market area, including the: London Commuter Belt East Sub-Region Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Update, prepared by Opinion Research Services in March 2013; Greater Essex Demographic Forecasts (GEDF) Phase 4, prepared by Edge Analytics in January 2013; and, the Government's 2011-based household projections to 2021, published in April 2013, which EHDC has extended to 2031 assuming a similar reduction in 2021-2031 household growth, as found in other sources. These forecasts have identified a broadly similar need in the district for:

- 18,600 dwellings between 2011 and 2033 (i.e. 845 dwellings per annum), according to Figure 39 of the SHMA and its trend based projections;
- 18,231 dwellings between 2010 and 2033 (i.e. 793 dwellings per annum), according to page 76 of the GEDF and the Sub National Population Projection (SNPP) scenario presented in this; and
- 14,716 dwellings between 2011 and 2031 (i.e. 736 dwellings per annum), set out in the Government's 2011-based household projections to 2021 and extended to 2031 by EHDC.

Therefore, taking these sources of housing need together, it is clear that EHDC will need to plan for at least 736 dwellings per annum in order to meet its objectively assessed housing needs.

New District Plan

EHDC is in the process of preparing a new District Plan, which will in due course replace the East Herts Local Plan adopted in 2007.

The new District Plan Preferred Options was published on 27th February 2014, with public consultation running until 22nd May. Emerging Policy DPS2 makes provision for at least 15,000 homes in the period 2011 to 2031 (i.e. 750 homes per annum). The plan also identifies a series of specific sites to deliver the minimum of 4,321 homes sought in the first five years of the plan period following anticipated adoption (2016 to 2021).

Figure 3 comprises the Key Diagram for Bishop's Stortford (as taken from Figure 5.1 of the District Plan Preferred Options). This identifies five new housing locations in or around the town, including:

- 200 homes at the Goods Yard, adjacent to Bishop's Stortford railway station;
- 150 homes east of Manor Links, to the east of the town;
- 0-250 homes at the Hadham Road Reserve Secondary School site;
- 750-1,000 homes at a mixed use development to the south of Whittington Way, south of Bishop's Stortford; and
- 2,350-2,600 homes at a mixed use development to the north of Bishop's Stortford.

The final three locations are provided with a range of housing numbers, dependent on whether or not a new secondary school is required on any one (or more) of these sites.

Emerging Policy BISH7 identifies that 750 new homes are earmarked for the land south of Whittington Way if a new secondary school is required on site and 1,000 new homes if not. The allocation should include a new district centre (including local retail, health and community facilities), a primary school, a potential secondary school, public open space and a new 4-5 ha business park. The allocation is expected to be delivered between 2016 and 2026 and a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is to be prepared to address detailed matters of design and layout.

The next draft of the new plan, the Pre-Submission Document, is likely to be published in early 2015.

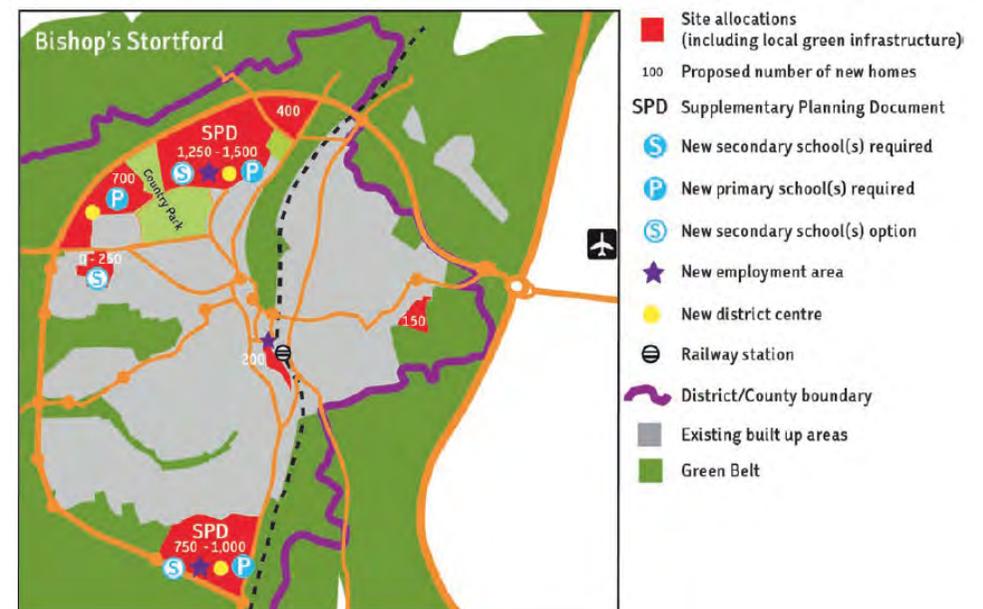


Figure 3: Key Diagram for Bishop's Stortford.

Planning Context

Appeal Decisions

The land south of Whittington Way, along with several other inter-related sites, was subject to a planning appeal in 2011/12. In summary the proposals sought to relocate Bishop's Stortford High School and Hertfordshire & Essex High School from their current sites within the urban area to the land south of Whittington Way. The existing school sites, the detached sports field at Beldams Lane and a reserve school site at Hadham Road would then be redeveloped for housing. Finally permission was sought to widen the use of the sports facility at Jobblers Wood to include Hertfordshire & Essex High School and other local organisations.

The Secretary of State (SoS) recovered all six appeals for his determination and agreed with the Inspector and dismissed the proposal at Whittington Way. Overall the SoS concluded that the benefits which would arise from relocating the two schools to Whittington Way, namely additional school capacity and other educational benefits in the form of curricula, infrastructure and administration, would not be sufficient to clearly outweigh the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and the other harm identified and that as a result very special circumstances had not been demonstrated. Having agreed with the Inspector and dismissed the proposal at Whittington Way, the SoS concluded that plans for housing at the existing school sites, the detached sports field at Beldams Lane and a reserve school site at Hadham Road also must be dismissed as these sites will be or may be required for educational purposes. The appeal at Jobblers Wood to make better use of the existing facilities was allowed.

However, there is a fundamental difference between allowing new development on Green Belt land as part of a planning application / appeal and reviewing or altering the extent of the Green Belt through a new Local Plan. The former requires proposals for what is defined as inappropriate development to demonstrate that "very special circumstances" exist to clearly outweigh any potential harm to the Green Belt. Whereas the latter is the accepted forum for drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries on a district-wide basis, taking account of the need to meet full OAN and to promote sustainable patterns of development. These principles are set out in the NPPF.

The analysis of the Green Belt undertaken as part of the planning appeal at Whittington Way was in relation to one part of the Green Belt around Bishop's Stortford. There was no comparison between the land south of Whittington Way and any other parts to the north, east or west and there was no comparison as to its quality or function relative to Green Belt in other parts of the district; nor was there any consideration of wider strategic planning considerations. Therefore the appeal decisions should be treated with caution and should be viewed in the context in which they were made.

Going forward and in planning for the period upto 2031, the District Plan and its district-wide Green Belt review need to address current and future capacity issues for school places, in line with the County Council's anticipated shortfalls. This creates a different set of circumstances to those considered by the appeals and accordingly the appeal decisions should be viewed at the point in time they were made only.

It is also notable that housing need was not an issue in the appeals, as at the time the East of England Plan (EEP) still formed part of the development plan. In the region of 736 to 845 dwellings per annum, the objectively assessed housing need is currently higher than the old and now abolished EEP figure of circa 600 - 660 dwellings per annum.

Moreover, it is clear now that Hertfordshire County Council acknowledges distinct secondary education capacity issues which require to be resolved through the Local Plan review process.

On the 23rd September 2013 Hertfordshire County Council's (HCC's) Cabinet considered a report on meeting rising demand for secondary school places in the County. The report to the Cabinet identified that six areas in the County were expected to have a shortage of secondary school places on or before September 2015. In the case of Bishop's Stortford the shortage was anticipated to be 0.9 forms of entry.

However, this figure does not account for future housing developments to meet housing needs identified in the current SHMA Update. The report to Cabinet also acknowledges that until there is clarity about the outcome of the planning applications at Bishop's Stortford North, it is not considered appropriate to bring forward school expansion plans. Bishop's Stortford North represents the largest development in the County and if approved will require new school provision to meet the additional demand for school places generated.

Other data prepared by the County Council and entitled 'Meeting the Rising Demand for School Places: September 2013 update' does attempt to quantify the likely shortfall of secondary school places, including from new development and Bishop's Stortford North. The shortage of places is provisionally forecast to rise from 0.9 forms of entry in 2015/16, through to 4.1 forms of entry in 2018/19 and to peak at 6.3 forms of entry in 2021/22. Needless to say this is a very significant shortfall and equivalent to a whole new secondary school for the town. However, the Local Plan review period is to 2031; in effect another 10 years of strategic growth. Should the LPA factor-in foreseen longer term requirements then additional education pressures are likely and appropriate planning is required.

The the land south of Whittington Way is in a position to offer a significant community / planning benefit, by making provision for a secondary school site on this land. At a meeting on 6th May 2014, representatives of HCC indicated that the County Council will be seeking a new school on the land south of Whittington Way. To be consistent with the new District Plan Preferred Options, options are presented at the end of this brochure both with and without a new secondary school on site.

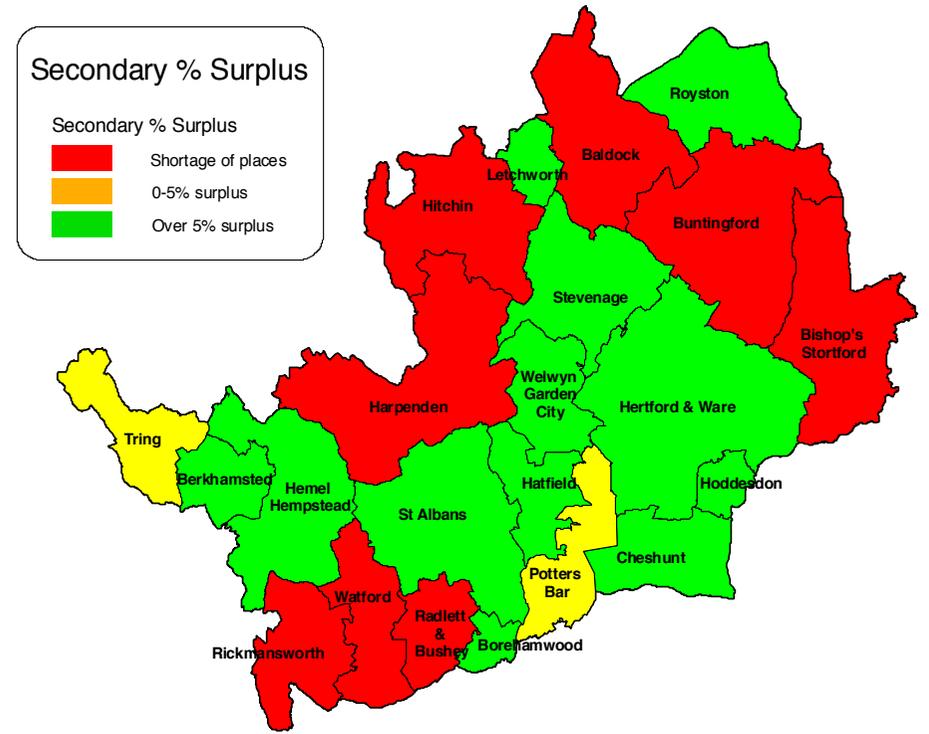


Figure 4: Secondary Planning Areas Surplus/Shortage for 2015/16 Meeting the Rising Demand for School Places: September 2013 update



The Site and Surroundings

EHDC presented a Supporting “Chapter 6” Document to its Planning Executive Panel meeting on 3rd December 2013. The Supporting Document recognises, at paragraph 6.3.1, that Bishop’s Stortford has an important sub-regional role in comparison to other towns in the district, owing to its proximity to the motorway network (M11) and Stansted International Airport, and its thriving town centre with a good range of shops. The A1184/A120 bypass generally defines the boundaries of the town.

The land south of Whittington Way is located on the southern fringe of Bishop’s Stortford and is bounded by the A1184 to the south, Obrey Way to the west, Whittington Way to the north and the rear gardens of properties along Thorley Street (B1383) to the east.

The majority of the site comprises agricultural land, set out as five irregularly shaped arable fields, separated by small hedgerows and ditches. The northern most field is bounded along its southern edge by a long distance public footpath - the Hertfordshire Way. A second public right of way crosses the southern part of the site in a similar east-west direction. The site generally slopes from its northern and western edges down to the southeast corner, at the A1184/B1383 junction.

The residential neighbourhood to the north of the site mainly dates from the 1960’s and 1970’s. The more recent Thorley Park estate to the northwest and west of the site dates from the 1980’s and 1990’s. Thorley Street to the east of the site comprises a ribbon development of various buildings dating from different periods. St Michael’s Mead and country park are situated to the west of the site and were developed in the 1990’s/early 2000’s when there was a need to accommodate growth in a similar manner as now.

The site is approximately 1.5 km to the south of the town centre, railway station and the town’s main employment area. Existing bus routes, accessible from Thorley Street or Whittington Way, link the site to these destinations.



The Site and Surroundings

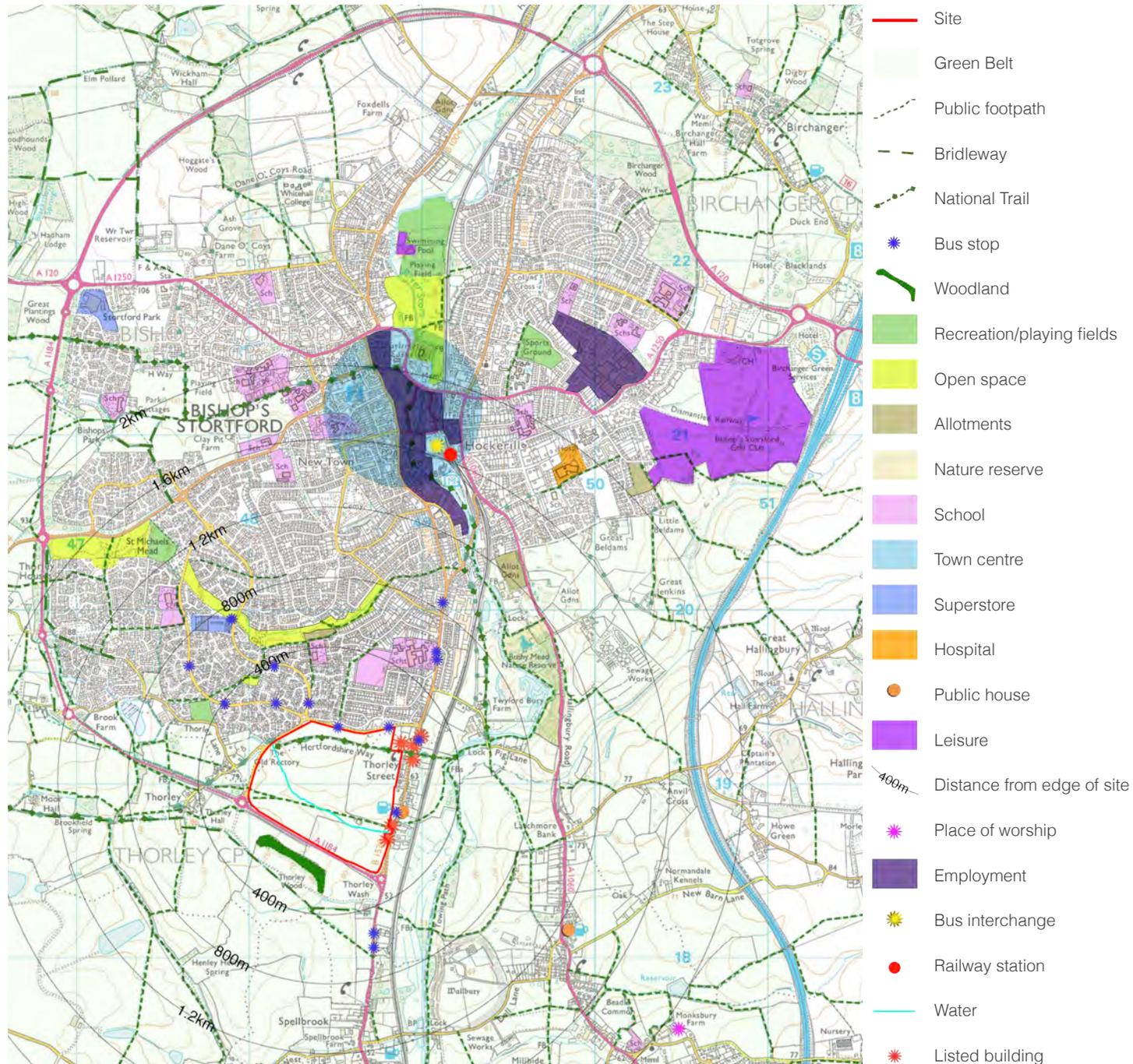
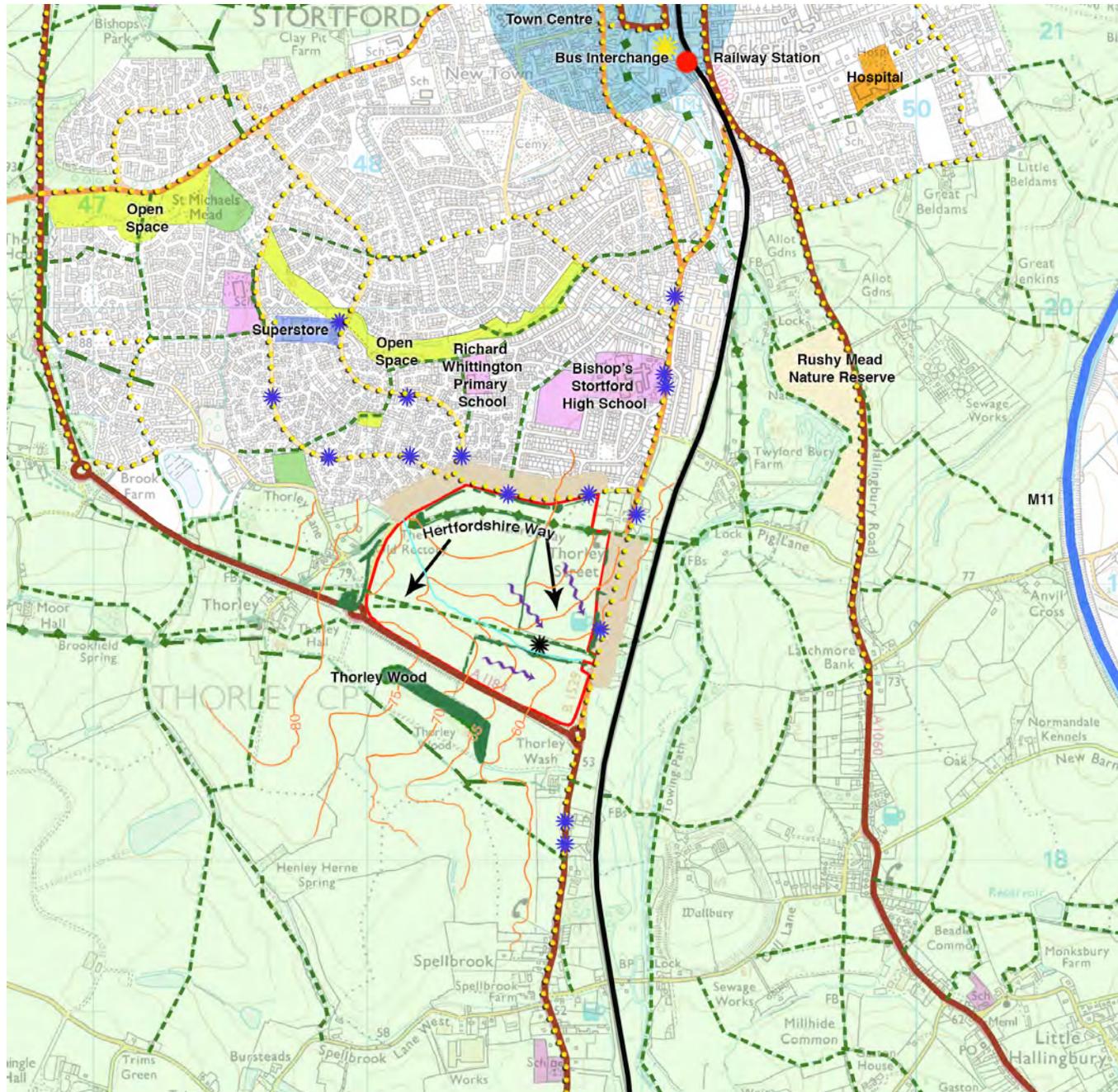


Figure 5: Context

Opportunities and Constraints

- The site abuts the edge of the existing settlement boundary of Bishop's Stortford.
- The site is within the Green Belt, however, location of development here represents a logical 'rounding off' to this part of Bishop's Stortford with potential for St James Way/A1184 and the B1383 to provide a new boundary to the settlement edge.
- The site is well connected to the surrounding areas by public footpaths. A footpath runs west – east across the site towards the southern end of the site and a section of the Hertfordshire Way runs west - east through the northern part of the site.
- There are excellent transport links.
 - There are number of bus stops adjacent to the site providing regular services to Bishop's Stortford, Stansted Airport, Hertford and beyond.
 - There is a railway station and bus interchange located in Bishop's Stortford town centre.
 - Stansted Airport is approx 6.5 km away to the north east of the site.
 - St James Way/A1184 runs along the southern boundary of the site and the B1383 along the east providing easy access to the centre of Bishop's Stortford and the M11 Motorway.
- The main shopping facilities are located in the town centre which is less than 1.6 km away. Bishop's Stortford has a good High Street and leisure facilities. There is a large superstore approx 1km away from the site.
- There are a number of Schools within close proximity of the site including Richard Whittington Primary School, 0.5km away, and Bishop's Stortford High School which is 0.8 km from the site.
- A sub station is located within the site boundary.
- Residential properties abut the site to the north and to the east. These are fairly well screened from the site by mature vegetation.
- There is an accessible area of public open space approx 1 km to the north of the site and Rushy Mead Nature Reserve 1.8 km to the east of the site. These areas are both linked to the site by the existing footpath network.
- Mature hedgerows are a notable characteristic within the site while also providing an important amount of screening. For these reasons it is recommended these should be maintained and where possible enhanced.
- The extensive views from the Hertfordshire Way should be maintained.
- Long distance views of the site are generally screened by intervening landform and vegetation.

Opportunities and Constraints



- Site
- Green Belt
- Residential abutting site
- School
- Public footpath
- Existing vegetation
- Bus routes
- ✱ Bus stops
- ✱ Sub station
- ~ Contours
- Long views from Hertfordshire Way
- ~ Slope
- Water

Figure 6: Opportunities and Constraints

Transport

Transportation

The site is very well connected by sustainable forms of transport, particularly for an edge of town location. Bishop's Stortford railway station is approximately 1.5 km to the north of the site and provides connections to London, Stansted International Airport, Harlow and Cambridge. Furthermore, there are two existing and regular (every 20-30 minutes) bus services that serve the site – the no. 333 stopping along Whittington Way and the no. 510 stopping along Thorley Street. With this in mind, there is a realistic prospect of limiting the number of trips made by the private car and promoting / reinforcing the use of public transport from any new development at this site.

The site is also served by two existing public rights of way (one being the Hertfordshire Way), running in an east-west direction, both of which provide further sustainable linkages to the surrounding area.

In terms of vehicular access, there is scope to access the site from Whittington Way, opposite Pynchbek and Bishop's Avenue, and technical information was submitted to the planning appeals in 2011/12 to demonstrate how new roundabouts could be accommodated at these locations. It should also be possible to obtain highway access from the southeast corner of the site, where it abuts Thorley Street.

From these routes the site has good connections via the A1184 and the A1060/A1250 to the strategic road network, namely the M11 and the A120. EHDC's Supporting Document suggests, at paragraph 6.3.40, that transport modelling undertaken to date shows that large-scale development at the site could require upgrades to the A120 bypass. This modelling work will need to be subject to scrutiny. However, even in the worst case scenario where upgrades are required, significant growth at the site could help fund such improvements to the highway network.

In terms of the traffic impacts, the implications of a similar quantum of traffic as would occur with a residential allocation was tested for the previous Public Inquiry for school development on the site.

At the appeal, both the local highway authority and the Secretary of State considered that the highways implications of development on this site could be accommodated with a mitigation strategy involving: (i) traffic management proposals on London Road; (ii) improvements to local bus services; and, (iii) cycle and pedestrian upgrades for key routes to local facilities.

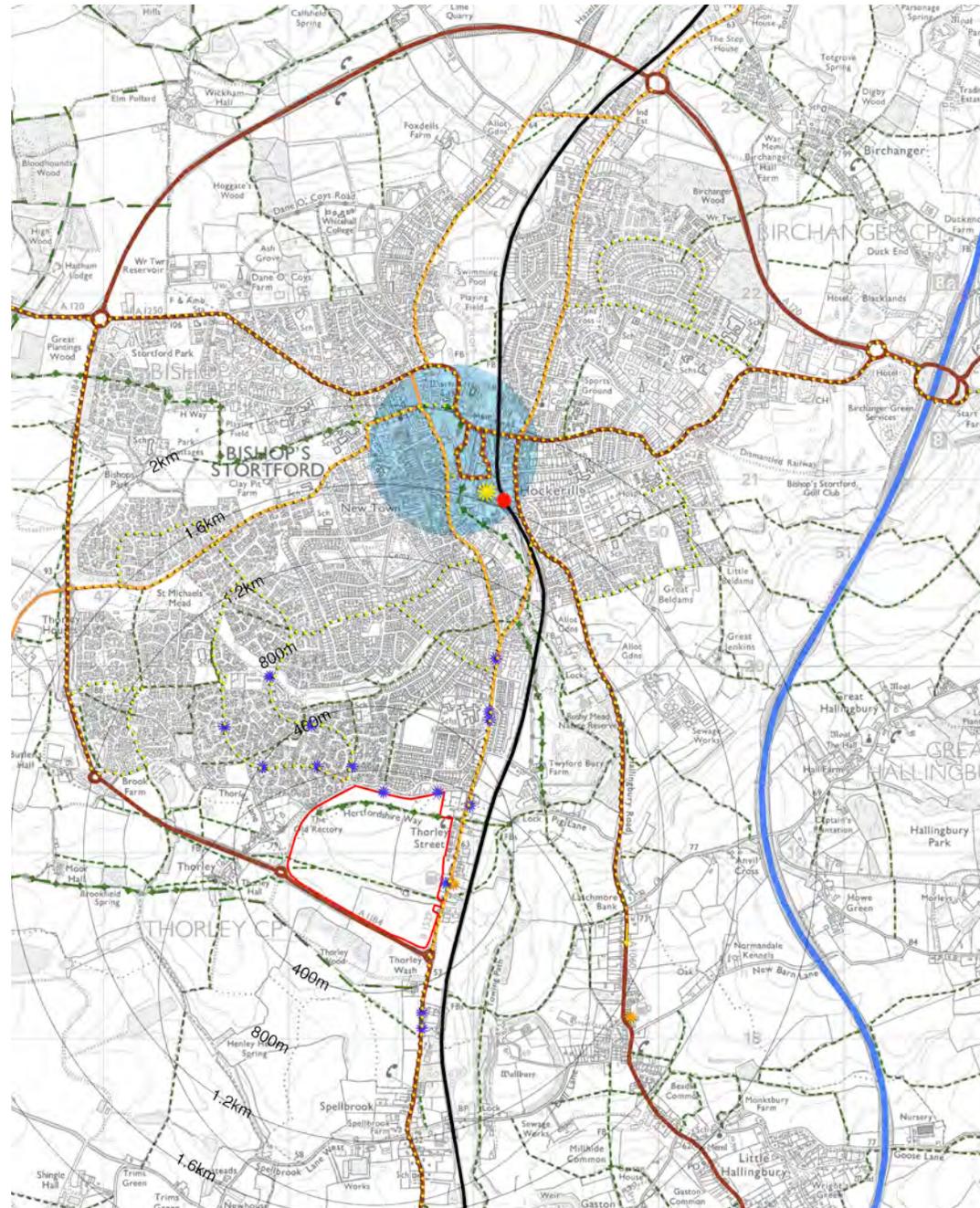
Noise

Noise assessments were carried out to support previous plans for the site, involving the relocation of two local schools. The findings were presented in an Environmental Statement: Non-Technical Summary, prepared by Vincent and Gorbing in June 2008. The noise assessments took account of current aircraft movements at Stansted Airport, as well as the proposed movements associated with the G1 planning consent to increase use of the existing runway.

The assessments found that the local noise climate was exposed to air traffic noise associated with the airport, with some flight paths passing relatively close to the southeast corner of the site. During lulls in aircraft movements, road traffic noise was noticeable in the local area. However, the assessment also found that the current levels of noise at the site comply with recommended external guideline noise levels for playing fields and noise levels at the centre of the site are even low enough to enable outdoor teaching, when aircraft are landing. Although with the G1 consent implemented the noise from aircraft landing would marginally exceed guideline levels, the assessment advises that such a small increase above the guideline value would not be detrimental to school children during outdoor teaching.

Further assessment will need to be undertaken in due course, including to appraise residential development at the site. However, the noise assessments carried out for the previous plans demonstrate the suitability of the site to accommodate built form and that outdoor noise levels will be acceptable.





- Site
- - - Public footpath
- - - Bridleway
- · - · - National Trail
- * Bus stops near to the site
- · · · · Bus routes
- * Bus interchange
- Railway station
- M11
- A roads
- B roads
- Town centre
- - - 400m
- - - 800m
- - - 1.2km
- - - 1.6km
- - - 2km

Figure 7: Transport Network

Landscape and Visual Impact

David Jarvis Associates (DJA) has assessed the site from a landscape and visual perspective and extracts and images from their work are set out below.

In landscape terms two key matters were highlighted within the 2012 appeal decision and thus formed the basis of initial capacity analysis. These were:

- the effect on the openness and visual amenity of the Green Belt; and
- the effect on the Hertfordshire Way.

However, it is important to qualify reference to the appeal decision by recognising that the strategic context in the new District Plan is very different. In planning for the period to 2031, the plan has to address profound issues including the need to meet its objectively assessed housing needs and to provide new education capacity to address a current and future shortfall of school places. This provides a very different context in which to consider landscape and visual sensitivities at the site.

Effect on the Openness and Visual Amenity of the Green Belt

To assess the visual significance of proposals on views from the surrounding area a series of ZTV's (Zones of Theoretical Visibility) were produced. For accuracy of result the site was divided in to 21 parcels. Each parcel was tested at 9m and 12m heights, the lowest parcels (under 70m AOD) were also tested at 15m in height. This data was then re-assessed during a site survey.

The modelling indicated that elevated viewpoints would be the worst effected, these include properties along Parsonage Lane and Latchmore Bank, as well as properties along the eastern and southeastern boundary.

Long distance views of the site are generally screened by intervening landform and vegetation, although this needs to be confirmed on site.

The most open views of the site are from viewpoints along the southwest boundary where a lack of hedgerow planting allows for open views down the site and across to Little Hallingbury.

A series of reverse ZTV's have also been produced. These tested for the most visible areas of the site from the surrounding study area if developed at 9- 15m heights in 1m increments. In principle the ZTV's indicate the most visible areas of the site are above 70m AOD.

The allocation of the site for an urban extension would inevitably result in the loss of greenfield land – in a similar manner to the urban extensions to the north and east of the town.

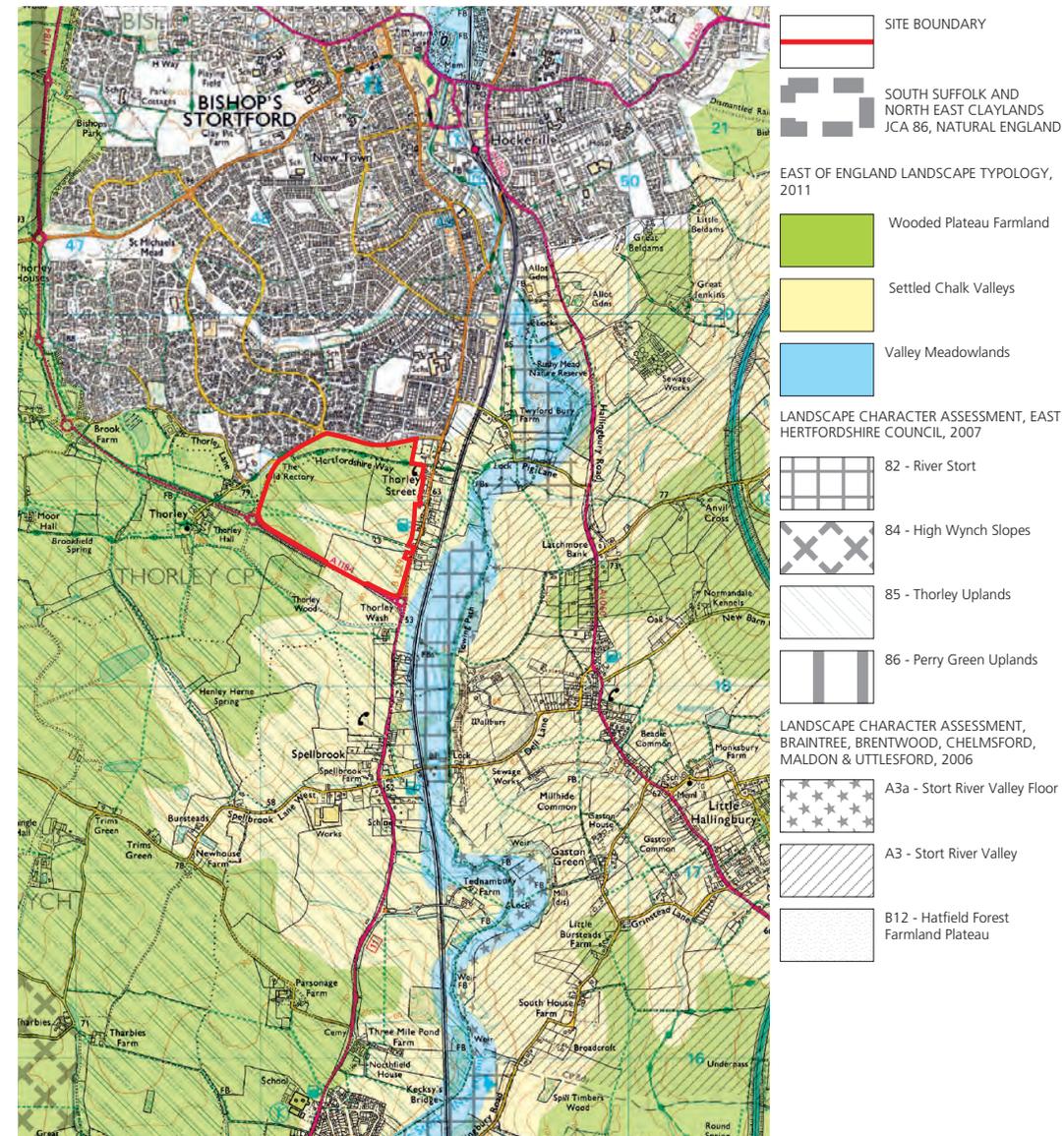


Figure 8: Landscape Character

Effect on the Hertfordshire Way

It is desirable that the extensive views from the Hertfordshire Way are maintained. To retain open views, as far as possible, development would be set back from the Hertfordshire Way, to allow views out towards the west and southwest to the wider landscape beyond.

The 2012 appeal Inspector expressed concern that the character of the Hertfordshire Way would be significantly altered by the proposals before him. Cause for concern centred on built form immediately abutting the footpath, which would cause a “significant adverse impact on the character, appearance and enjoyment of this length of the Hertfordshire Way.”

To overcome this concern and to retain the character and appearance of the Hertfordshire Way, the entire area immediately to the south of the footpath and within the site would be kept free from built form. Instead this area could be used for public open space, ensuring that the land is kept open in perpetuity and that long distance views to the west and southwest are retained.

In any event and as stated previously, the context for preparation of the new District Plan and its associated Green Belt review are very different to that in which the appeal decision was made.

Concept Plan

Draft Concept Plans have been produced based upon the initial findings outlined above and are included in the latter part of this brochure.

These include four development parcels providing land for between 750 to 1,000 homes dependent on whether or not a new secondary school is needed on site. Both incorporate development at a residential density of circa 30 dwellings per hectare (dph).

Built development could be accommodated: to the north of the Hertfordshire Way, opposite existing residential areas off Whittington Way; to the centre, east and south of the site, but set back from the southern edge of the Hertfordshire Way and behind public open space/ playing fields; and, any new school buildings towards the centre of the site, allowing playing fields to be accommodated along the west and northwest site boundaries to preserve openness and views.

Development to the south of the new public open space and immediately west of Thorley Street could be of lower density to create a softer “feathered” edge to the development. The sloping nature of the site would allow for taller buildings to be located towards the southeast corner of the site without having an unacceptable landscape or visual impact.

Mature hedgerows are a notable characteristic within the site while also providing an important amount of screening. For these reasons, it is recommended these should be maintained and where possible enhanced.

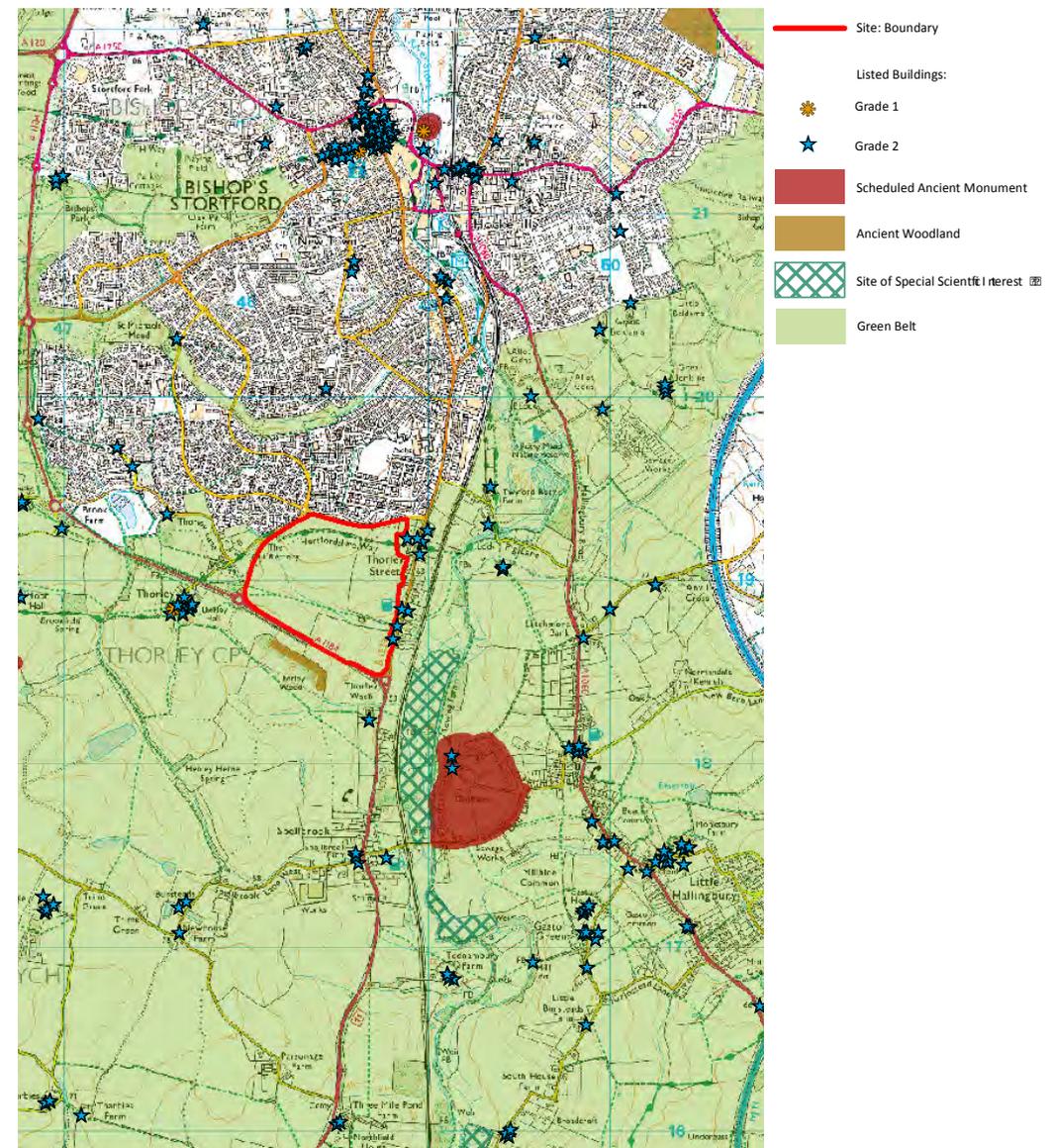


Figure 9: Landscape Designations

Landscape and Visual Impact

In terms of landscape character the draft proposals meet the following Strategy and Guidelines for Managing Change:

- where the loss of ponds and ditches is unavoidable, ensure that new features of at least equivalent nature conservation potential replace them;
- encourage the planting of individual trees along ditches and roadsides;
- all planting should be of locally indigenous species, using stock of local provenance if possible;
- encourage more planting of hedgerow trees;
- promote recognition of roadside/field ditches as potential ecological corridors;
- discourage use of herbicides, fertiliser runoff, over-zealous management; and
- encourage woodland planting, but not new hedges, as this would not reflect local landscape character.

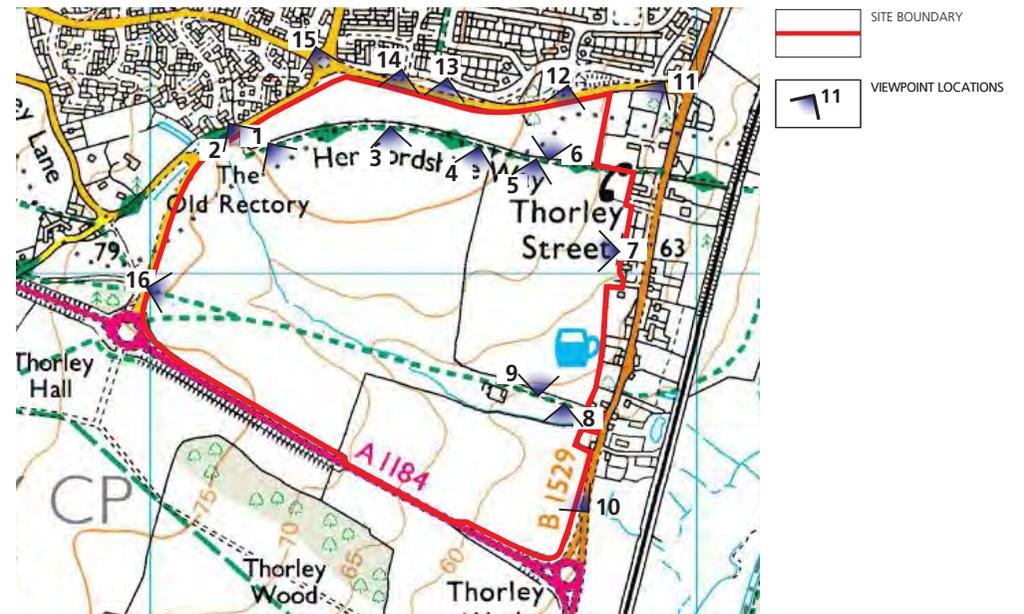


Figure 10: View point locations



View Point 1



View Point 2



View Point 3



View Point 4



View Point 5

Landscape and Visual Impact



View Point 6



View Point 7



View Point 8



View Point 9



View Point 10



View Point 11

Landscape and Visual Impact



View Point 12



View Point 13



View Point 14

Previous survey work revealed that the site is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations. A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lies some 400 metres to the east of the site, on the River Stort, but this is physically separated from the site by Thorley Street, the railway line and various properties.

Much of the site and the open land to the south comprises intensively farmed land with few semi-natural habitats. The Environmental Statement: Non-Technical Summary, prepared by Vincent and Gorbings in June 2008, finds that:

- this is extremely impoverished arable land, with predominantly dry ditches and few hedges;
- any habitats such as a stream, hedgerows and two small stands of plantation woodland are considered to be poor; and
- associated fauna is correspondingly restricted, with species of interest noted.

The site is generally thought to be poor for wildlife as it stands. Any plans for development could offer an opportunity to enhance and improve existing hedgerows and trees at the site and incorporate new landscaping areas to provide an increased variety of habitats.

Proposed Development

Development Principles

The draft allocation of the land south of Whittington Way in the new District Plan Preferred Options offers an opportunity to deliver a sustainable urban extension to Bishop's Stortford. The proposals would provide much needed new homes to address the district's identified housing needs, could accommodate a neighbourhood centre to serve both new and existing residents and provide land for a secondary school.

CP consider that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate the mix of uses identified in emerging policy BISH7, including in the region of 750 to 1,000 new homes.

The proposals provide a sustainable mix of development, in a location that is well connected to the town centre, the railway station and the town's main employment area, by two existing bus services. There should be scope to enhance / reinforce these bus services, along with other pedestrian rights of way that serve the site and its surroundings. In particular, there is scope to formalise open areas within the site and provide a new public open space alongside the existing route of the Hertfordshire Way.

The position of the site on the edge of Bishop's Stortford and within the A1184 bypass would enable new development to fill a logical gap in strategic terms. Development of the site would also create a new and clearly defined edge to the town, with the A1184 providing a strong boundary to guard against further growth to the south.

The use of new and enhanced planting would screen the proposals from the wider Green Belt to the south and west, and would seek to preserve the "green" character of the Hertfordshire Way.

Proposed Uses

A sustainable urban extension at the site could comprise either:

- 750 new homes, including affordable homes;
- a neighbourhood centre with local shops, health and community facilities;
- a primary school on site;
- land for a secondary school on-site;
- a 4-5 ha business park
- retention of the Hertfordshire Way and new formal public open space alongside its current route; and
- enhanced / reinforced local bus services.

or

- 1,000 new homes, including affordable homes;
- a neighbourhood centre with local shops, health and community facilities;
- a primary school on site;
- a 4-5 ha business park
- retention of the Hertfordshire Way and new formal public open space alongside its current route; and
- enhanced / reinforced local bus services.

The two concept plans indicate how development could be accommodated on site for each of these options.

Proposed Development



- Site
- Potential housing
- Existing vegetation within site boundary
- New planting
- Primary School
- Secondary school
- Business Park
- Playing fields/sports pitches
- ✱ Neighbourhood centre including local retail, health and community facilities
- ↖ Access
- Existing footpath
- National Trail
- Open space
- ✱ Sub station

Figure 11: Proposed Development Option A

Proposed Development

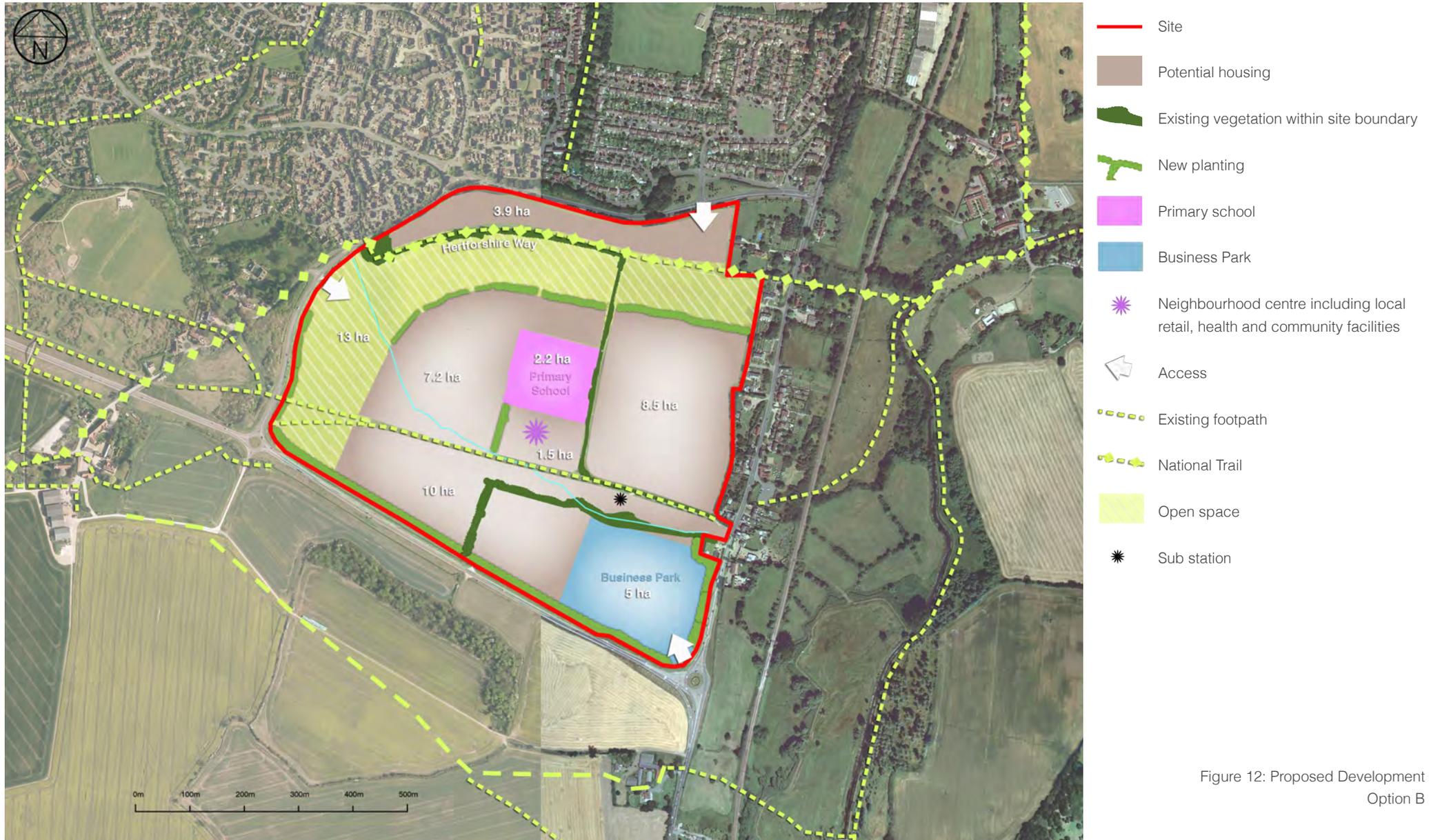


Figure 12: Proposed Development Option B

Conclusions

This brochure provides additional illustrative information to supplement EHDC's evidence base. It is intended to help inform the new District Plan process and in particular the draft allocation of the land south of Whittington Way for a sustainable urban extension.

AM-P submit that EHDC should meet its full objectively assessed needs and that the new District Plan should concentrate growth towards the district's main towns of Bishop's Stortford, Sawbridgeworth, Hertford and Ware. Of these, Bishop's Stortford has the most important sub-regional role, owing to its proximity to the motorway network and Stansted Airport, its thriving town centre and good range of shops, and its strong rail links to central London and Cambridge.

EHDC's new District Plan Preferred Options identifies five new housing locations in or around Bishop's Stortford, including three urban extensions to the north (2,350 - 2,600 dwellings), south (750 - 1,000 dwellings) and east (150 dwellings) of the town, plus the redevelopment of two sites within the town, at the Goods Yard (200 dwellings) and Hadham Road Reserve Secondary School Site (0 - 250 dwellings). Given the significant quantum of new homes needed in the district, 15,000 between 2011 and 2031 alone (i.e. 750 per annum), it is clear that the Bishop's Stortford sites will make a valuable contribution to addressing housing need.

However, irrespective of how new growth is accommodated in the district, the new District Plan Preferred Options is correct to propose the release of the land south of Whittington Way from the Green Belt and its allocation for a sustainable urban extension. This brochure illustrates how development could be accommodated at the site, whilst preserving the openness of the wider Green Belt.

CP supports the new District Plan's decision to:

- meet its objectively assessed need for housing;
- identify Bishop's Stortford as the most important town in the district, with its sub-regional role;
- direct new growth to Bishop's Stortford, including in the first five years of the Plan period.
- release the land south of Whittington Way from the Green Belt and allocate the site for a sustainable urban extension (including 750 - 1,000 homes); and
- recognise the scope to offer significant community benefits at the site, including a new neighbourhood centre (with local retail, health and community facilities), primary school, land for a potential secondary school, employment floorspace and public open space.

