

Thame

Neighbourhood Plan Masterplanning Report

Final Report
April 2024

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Introduction

01

1. Introduction

Through the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Programme led by Locality, AECOM was commissioned to provide design support to Thame Town Council (TTC). Following the preparation of the Design Codes for Thame, AECOM has been commissioned to provide masterplans for seven key sites in the Neighbourhood Area. This document should be read as part of the Neighbourhood Plan policies that guide the assessment of future development proposals and encourage high-quality design, along with the Design Code.

1.1 Introduction and overview of the brief

This document provides a vision for how the sites in the Neighbourhood Area should come forward. These design concepts are high level and illustrative, prepared to demonstrate how the design principles that the Neighbourhood Forum wishes to promote could be applied on the sites. We have not undertaken technical studies on topics such as ecology, ground conditions, traffic or drainage (although AECOM specialists have inputted into design development). It is expected that full co-design exercises are undertaken by applicants on the sites. This report is just a step in that direction, enabling stakeholders to progress from an informed position.

1.2 Objectives

The main objective of this document is to develop masterplanning guidance that will inform any future development on the identified sites. There are six identified sites for housing and two for employment. Two

housing sites at Oxford Road are shown as one allocation, which is outlined in more detail later on in the document.

This will be undertaken by the following steps:

- Review of relevant policy and documentation. The existing policy and planning guideline documents constitute the base to understand the objectives and aims for the Area, incorporating the Local Plan, SODC's supplementary guidance documents and Character Area Appraisal and the existing and revised Neighbourhood Plan;
- Extraction of Design Codes. The overarching design principles are distilled from the review of the relevant policy documentation and Design Codes; and
- Production of Masterplans. The masterplans comprise a design response for each site, along with key design principles, which any future proposed development should take the indicative concept plan into consideration.

1.3 Process

Following an inception meeting and a site visit with a member of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, the following steps were agreed with the Group to produce this report:

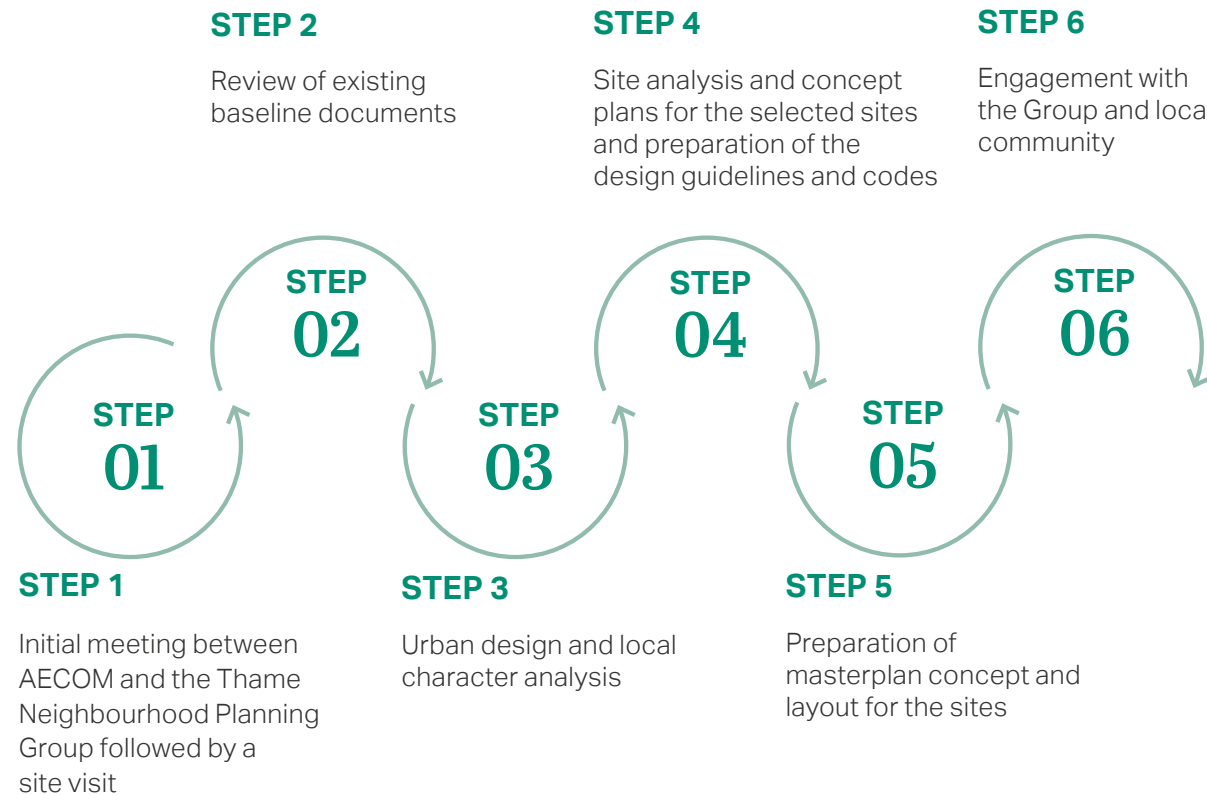
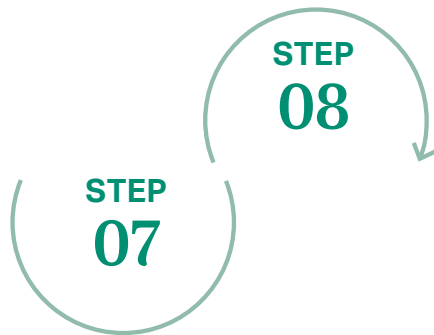


Figure 01: Key steps

STEP 8

Final report submitted



STEP 7

Draft report prepared and submitted

1.4 Importance of good design

As the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (paragraph 131) notes, 'good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities'.

Research, such as for the Government's Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (now part of the Design Council; see, for example, The Value of Good Design) has shown that good design of buildings and places can improve health and well-being, increase civic pride and cultural activity, reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and reduce pollution.

1.5 Study area

South Oxfordshire

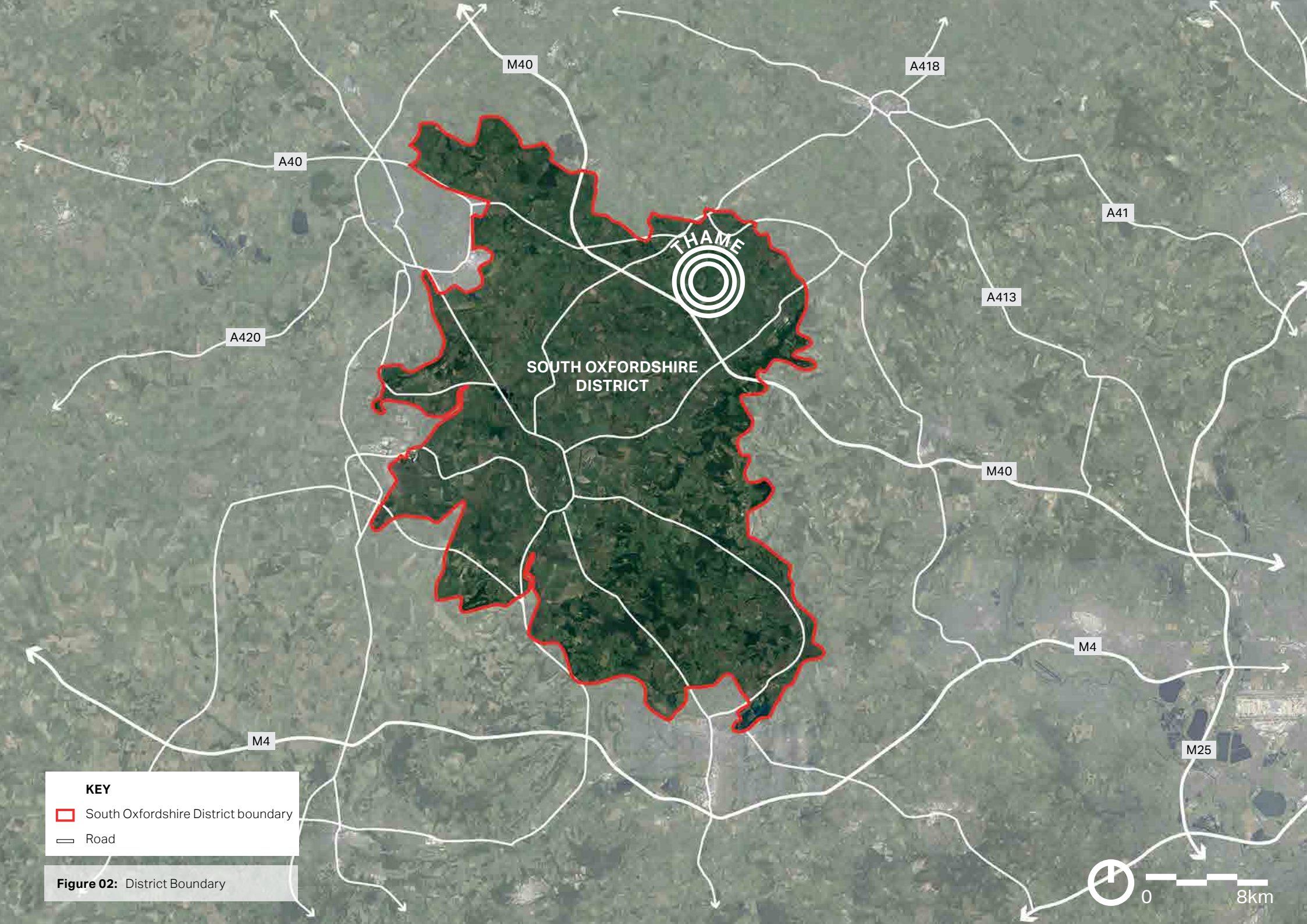
South Oxfordshire is an exceptionally beautiful area, rich in architecture of different periods, styles and materials with almost half of the district designated as a National Landscape. As well as respecting and enhancing the existing natural and built environment of South Oxfordshire, the Council expects the design of new development to be similarly outstanding for the benefit of local residents, visitors and future generations. South Oxfordshire has been named the best place to live in the UK countryside in 2016.

The district of South Oxfordshire covers nearly 670km². Its boundaries reach from the edge of the city of Oxford in the north west along the borders of Buckinghamshire and Berkshire to the outskirts of Reading in the south. It has four main towns: Didcot, Henley, Thame and Wallingford, with Didcot becoming increasingly dominant as the main urban centre.

Much of the district is rural in nature, with much of the land being in agricultural use. The main exception to this is the south east where the wooded Chiltern Hills rise sharply from the Thames Valley. Most of the southern end of the district sits in either of the Chilterns or North Wessex Downs National Landscapes. The north east of the district forms part of the Oxford Green Belt. In total, around 70% of the district has a Green Belt or National Landscape designation.

Thame is a civil Parish located in the county of Oxfordshire and in the northeast of the district of South Oxfordshire.

Within the District, Thame is a key local centre for nearby villages both in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire and significant growth in South Oxfordshire has been largely focused upon Thame, alongside Didcot, Wallingford and Henley-on-Thames.



M40

A418

A40

A41

THAME

A413

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT

A420

M40

M4

M4

M25

KEY

 South Oxfordshire District boundary


 Road

Figure 02: District Boundary



0 8km

1.6 Study area

Thame and Moreton

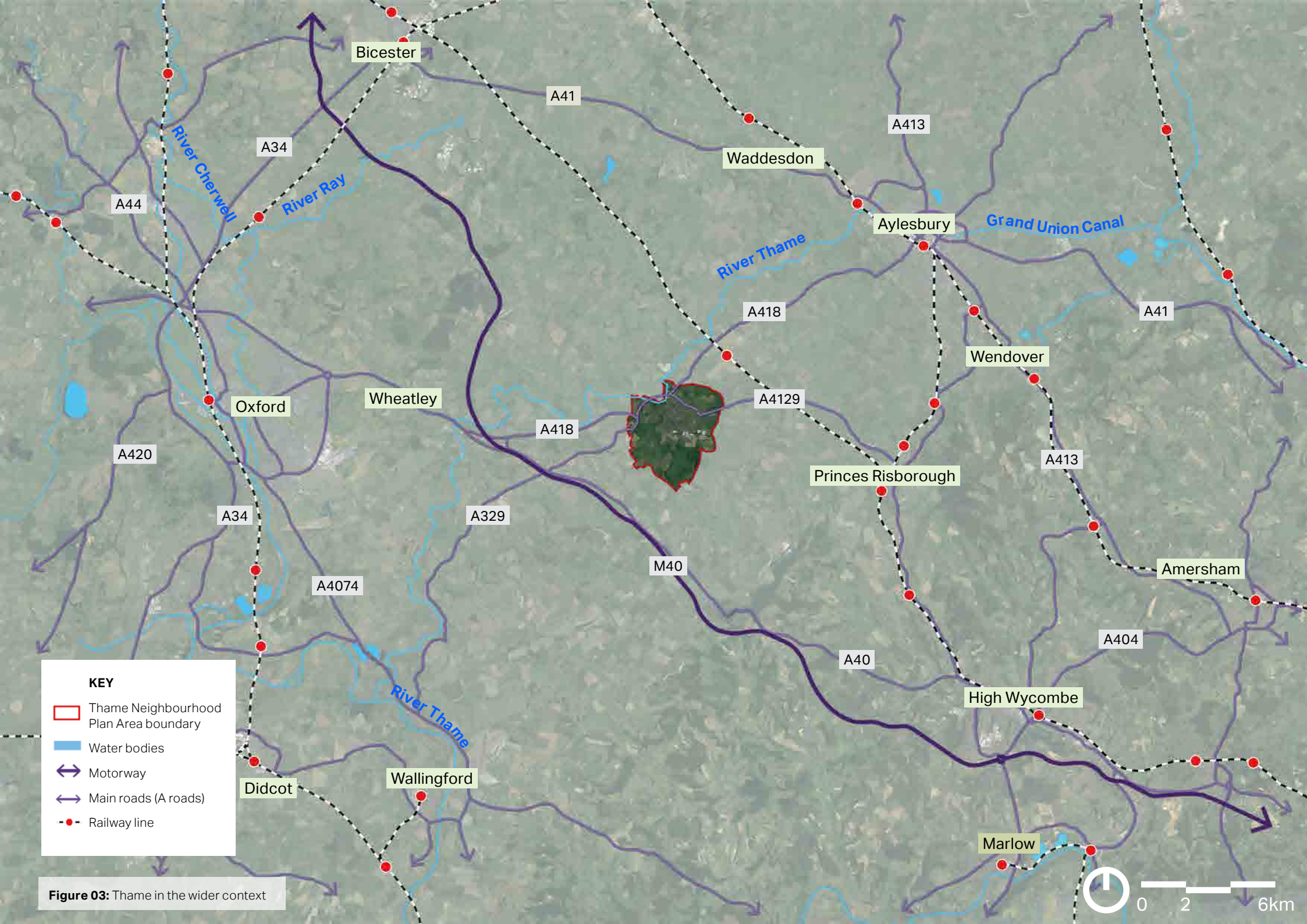
The Neighbourhood Plan Area boundary includes the town of Thame and the hamlet of Moreton.

Thame is an historic market town with a population of around 12,555 and Moreton is a hamlet, located 1 mile (1.6 km) southwest of Thame.

The South Oxfordshire Local Plan categorises Thame as a 'Town' and Moreton as an 'Other village' in the Settlement hierarchy.

The settlements are conveniently located within the regional context, with the large town of Aylesbury being 10 miles to the north-east and the city of Oxford 14 miles to the west.

Both settlements have good connections to the national motorway network, with junctions 6 and 7 of the M40 each approximately 6 miles away. The nearest railway connection is Haddenham and Thame Parkway, 2 ½ miles to the north-east, with trains half hourly to London or Birmingham via the Chiltern Line.



KEY

- Thames Neighbourhood Plan Area boundary
- Water bodies
- ↔ Motorway
- ↔ Main roads (A roads)
- · - Railway line

Figure 03: Thames in the wider context



1.7 The sites

A total of seven sites are considered in this report, shown on the table to the right.

The sites selected are based on a shortlist from the initial list of sites promoted through the South Oxfordshire SHELAA and or the Call for Sites, undertaken by Thame Town Council. The site selection was also advised by comments received during two rounds of consultation.

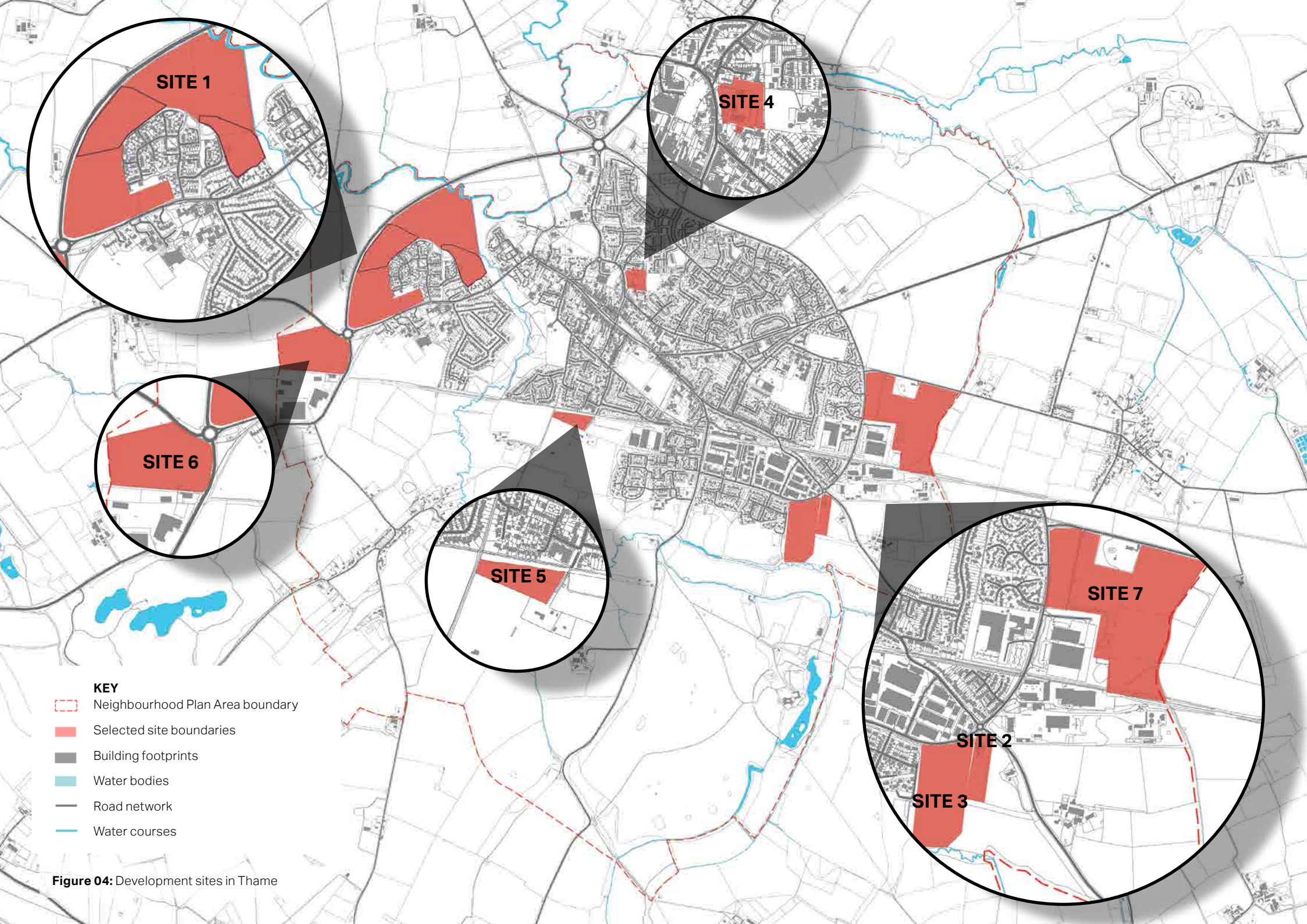
The identification of those sites as being suitable for potential allocation does not imply that the site should or will be allocated in the neighbourhood plan or that planning permission would be granted for development on any of the sites.

In general, it is important that any future development emphasises and reflects the rural nature of the parish and suggests schemes that sit sensitively between the rural surroundings.

| Site | Approximate Site area (ha) | Approx homes | Site allocation ref (TNP2 Policy GDH1 - Housing allocations) | Proposed use |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|--|------------------|
| 1. Land at Oxford Road | 25 | 100 | GDH1d | Residential only |
| 2. Diagnostics Reagents | 1.3 | 25 | GDH1b | Residential only |
| 3. Land south of Wenman Road | 5.7 | 60 | GDH1a | Residential only |
| 4. Cattle Market | 1.28 | *1 | GDR1 | Mixed use |
| 5. Land at Windmill Road | 1.5 | 30 | GDH1c | Residential only |
| 6. Land at Rycote Lane | 7.8 | N/A | GDE1 | Employment |
| 7. Land at Howland Road | 15.5 | N/A | N/A | Employment |

1 The potential for development of the Cattle Market site is well established, having been allocated in TNP1 and saved as an allocation in TNP2. The site has potential to accommodate a wide mix of uses, including residential. The quantum and mix of development is to be determined through the detailed masterplanning process as part of or as a precursor to a planning application. TNP2 does not specify a development quantum, allowing for flexibility in the design process, though does strongly support delivery of new homes as part of any development of the site. As and when delivered these will contribute to meeting the housing requirement for Thame.

Table 01: Site allocations that have / are awaiting planning permission from TNP2, policy GDH1



KEY







-  Neighbourhood Plan Area boundary
-  Selected site boundaries
-  Building footprints
-  Water bodies
-  Road network
-  Water courses

Figure 04: Development sites in Thames

Policy context

02

2. Policy overview

This section outlines some key policy and design guidance that should be considered in future development in the Thame Neighbourhood Plan Area. The following guidelines have been produced at national, district or Parish level and are presented in chronological order.

2023 - National Planning Policy Framework

DLUHC

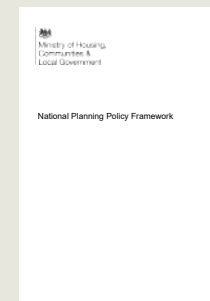
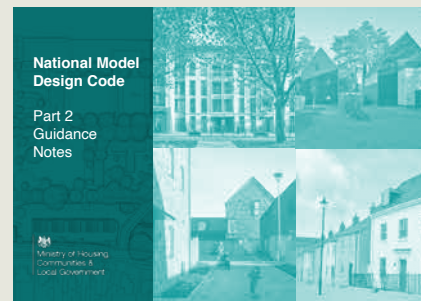
Relevant national planning policy is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, July 2023). The NPPF was updated in July 2023 to include reference to the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code and the use of area, neighbourhood and site-specific design guides. Paragraph 126 states that: "the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve and outlines that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities."

2021 - National Model Design Code

DLUHC

The National Model Design Code contains two parts: Part I which covers the coding process and part II which includes the guidance notes. This document provides guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote well-designed places. It sets out the key design parameters that need to be considered when producing design guides and recommends methodology for capturing and reflecting views of the local community.

NATIONAL LEVEL



2019 - National Design Guide

DLUHC

The National Design Guide sets out the government’s ten priorities for well designed places and illustrates how well-designed places can be achieved in practice. The ten characteristics identified includes: context, identity, built form, movement, nature, public spaces, uses, homes and buildings, resources and lifespan. The Guide also reinforces the National Planning Policy Framework’s objective in creating high quality buildings and places. The document forms part of the government planning practice guidance.

2020 - Building for a Healthy Life

Homes England

Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) is a revision on Building for Life 12, the government-endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. The BHL toolkit sets out principles to help guide discussions on planning applications and to help local planning authorities to assess the quality of proposed (and completed) developments, but can also provide useful prompts and questions for planning applicants to consider during the different stages of the design process.

2007 - Manual for Streets

Department for Transport

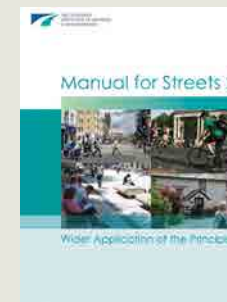
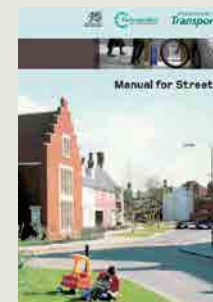
Development is expected to respond positively to the Manual for Streets, the Government’s guidance on how to design, construct, adopt and maintain new and existing residential streets. It promotes streets and wider development that avoid car dominated layouts but that do place the needs of pedestrians and cyclists first.

2010 - Manual for Streets 2

Department for Transport

Wider Application of the Principles (MfS2) forms a companion guide to Manual for Streets (MfS1). Whilst MfS1 focuses on lightly-trafficked residential streets it also states that, ‘a street is defined as a highway that has important public realm functions beyond movement of traffic.

NATIONAL LEVEL



Emerging Joint Local Plan

South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils have come together to work on an emerging Joint Local Plan which will guide the kinds of new housing and jobs needed and where they should go, informing planning application decisions for the districts. Preferred Options Consultation for the emerging Joint Local Plan was launched 10 January 2024 and runs through until 26 February 2024. The JLP will replace the SOLP once adopted and will be the first local plan to cover both districts.

2022 - Joint Design Guide

South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District

South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District Councils' have prepared a Joint Design Guide. The Guide is a Supplementary Planning Document, and replaces the previous South Oxfordshire Design Guide. The Guide provides guidance on how new development should be designed and constructed to the highest quality and includes a number of overarching key design objectives along with more specific design principles, covering place and setting; natural environment; movement and connectivity; space and layout; built form; climate and sustainability. The Design Guide provides valuable high level District guidance, which this local Design Code will complement.

2021 - Street Design Guide

South Oxfordshire County Council

The Street Design Guide was adopted in 2021 and replaces the Residential Road Design Guide (2002 / Second Edition 2015). It focuses on the role of streets in creating social and connected places and in doing so, it provides guidance for developers and designers. It sets out guidance in relation to hierarchy of routes and detailed design elements.

2020 - South Oxfordshire Local Plan (SOLP) - South Oxfordshire District Council

South Oxfordshire District Council adopted their Local Plan (a blueprint for development up until 2035) in December 2020. There are various relevant policies in the Local Plan relating to Thame, covering housing (Chapter 4 Delivering New Homes), employment (Chapter 5 in 5 (Employment and Economy) and retail Chapter9 (Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres). The SOLP defines Thame as a 'Town' and Moreton as an 'Other village' in the Settlement hierarchy. The Local Plan sets out allocations for items like housing for Thame.

2023 - Trees, planning and Development

Trees and design Action Group Trust

A guide for delivery covers the planning, delivery and monitoring trees in developments throughout the UK. There are two guide; Section 1 which provides a better understanding of the many financial, social and environmental benefits trees offer new developments and how to secure them. The Section 2 looks beyond new developments and focuses on developing a strategy for a local urban forest to deliver the benefits that trees provide equality across an urban environment.



2022 - Thame Neighbourhood Plan 2

Thame Town Council

The revised Thame Neighbourhood Plan (NP) is currently being prepared in order that it correctly reflects recent changes to planning policy at a district, county and national level that have taken place since the NP was established in 2013. The policies in the previous NP now have limited impact and relevance to planning applications in Thame. As a part of this exercise, consultation on the revised NP began in August 2021, and this includes vision, objectives and site selection. The sites that were assessed were those submitted through the South Oxfordshire SHELAA and or the Call for Sites undertaken by Thame Town Council. The revised NP period starts in 2022 and extends to at least 2037, therefore comprising a planning period of a minimum 15 years.

2022 - Thame Housing Needs Assessment

Thame Town Council

The Housing Needs Assessment was prepared (March 2022) and provides an indication of the likely need for different types and sizes of new homes in Thame, based on demographic change. It summarises that Thame has a relatively high proportion of ownership tenures when compared to the national and district average. The current housing type mix is well-balanced, with detached, semi-detached, and terrace all accounting for between 20% and 30% of the total mix, and the proportion of flats and bungalows are lower (at around 17% and 7%, respectively).

2021 Thame Character Area Study

Troy Planning

This document was prepared to support TNP2 and forms part of the evidence base. It outlines the growth and development of Thame over time and identifies several character areas within Thame and describes the features of each of them.

2020 - Thame Green Living Plan

Thame Town Council

Adopted by the Town Council in July 2020, the Green Living Plan is a ten-year plan for a cleaner, greener Thame. The document forms a background document and indicates where actions might be incorporated within policy or which might comprise a wider project or aspiration for Thame. It covers five broad areas related to green living and recommends a series of actions that can be taken within each.

2013 - Thame Neighbourhood Plan

Thame Town Council

Alongside the Local Plan, the Thame Neighbourhood Plan (July 2013) forms part of the development plan for the area against which development decisions will be made.

LOCAL LEVEL



2.1 Policy review

The following section sets out specific areas of policy that are relevant to this masterplanning exercise in more detail.

South Oxfordshire Local Plan

Policy TH1 sets out an overall strategy for Thame, stipulating that the Council will support development proposals that:

- i) deliver homes in accordance with Policy H3;
- ii) strengthen the retail offer within Thame Town Centre;
- iii) improve the attraction of Thame for visitors and businesses;
- iv) improve accessibility, car and cycle parking, pedestrian and cycle links;
- v) support schemes that enhance the quality of the town's environment and conserve and enhance the town's heritage assets;
- vi) provide new employment opportunities and improve the stock of existing employment areas; and
- vii) provide new, or enhanced

community facilities that meet an identified need.

Policy STRAT 5 deals with residential density and outlines that development should accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of uses. Density should be informed by criteria as follows:

- i) the capacity of the site and the need to use land efficiently in accordance with Policy DES7: Efficient use of resources;
- ii) the need to achieve high quality design that respects local character;
- iii) local circumstances and site constraints, including the required housing mix, and the need to protect or enhance the local environment, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, heritage assets, and important landscape, habitats and townscape;

- iv) the site's (or, on strategic allocations, the relevant part of the site's) current and future level of accessibility to local services and facilities by walking, cycling and public transport; and
- v) the need to minimise detrimental impacts on the amenity of future and/or adjoining occupiers.

The policy also stipulates that a net density of 45dh is appropriate when it is consistent with the settlement it relates to (in Sites well related to existing towns and villages and served by public transport or with good accessibility by foot or bicycle. And that the design of a site needs to pay careful attention to the existing character of a local area and any local circumstances, taking account of a range of social and environmental constraints, accessibility and amenity issues.

Policy H3 sets out future growth projections. It sets out a minimum target of 1,518 new homes to be built in Thame between 2011 and 2037. As of 1 April 2020, 1,179 houses have been marked as 'completions and commitments', leaving a minimum of 339 homes needing allocation.

Policy H9: Affordable Housing outlines that a 40% Affordable Housing policy will come into effect for all developments 'with a net gain of 10 or more dwellings'. For sites within a National Landscape, the 40% Affordable Housing policy will come into effect on sites of a 'net gain of five or more dwellings or where the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more'.

Policy H11: Housing Mix requires that future housing developments should deliver a mix of housing types and sizes.

Policy H13: Specialist Housing for Older People specifies that the construction of specialist housing for older people will be encouraged if the proposed locations have 'good access to public transport and local facilities. H13 also discusses that provision for specialist housing for older people should come from Thame's 1,518 housing development allocation.

There are also a number of Design related policies in the Local Plan, some of which are highlighted on this page.

Policy DES1: Delivering High Quality Development states that all new development should be high quality and should accord with a number of design principles relating to a wide variety of design and environment factors.

Policy DES2: Enhancing Local Character stipulates that all new development must be designed to reflect the positive features that make up the character of the local area and should both physically and visually enhance and complement the surroundings.

Policy DES7: Efficient Use of Resources states that new development is required to make provision for the effective use and protection of natural resources including the efficient use of land with densities in accordance with STRAT5. Proposals which seek to deliver higher quality and higher density which minimises land take will be encouraged.

Thame Neighbourhood Plan 2 (TNP2)

The revised NP is currently being prepared. An outline of the main proposals are outlined below.

Vision

“Thame must maintain its character as a real market town.”

Objectives

1. The compactness and walkability of Thame should be retained, with new homes within comfortable travel distance, by foot and by bike, from the town centre and other social and community facilities located around the town;
2. The sensitive environment around Thame should be respected, with areas of new growth avoiding areas of nature conservation and flood risk;
3. Growth should avoid impacting on the landscape setting of Thame, retaining proximity to the surrounding countryside;
4. The separate identity of Thame and outlying villages, including Moreton, to the south, and Towersey, to the east, should be retained;

5. New development should be well integrated with the existing built form, contributing to the achievement of integrated communities; and
6. New development should respect the historic growth and evolution of Thame.

In August 2021, alongside the consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan’s vision, objectives, and site selection, consultation on Thame’s character areas was undertaken. The purpose of this was to help understand residents’ views on the character area within which they live: what they considered to be positive features of the area, what concerns they had about new development, how this might be shaped and how character might be strengthened or enhanced. The consultation also sought to understand the views on the character areas which have town-wide significance, including the historic core (town centre) and employment areas. This consultation allowed for an evaluation of the effectiveness of policies in respect of design quality and character of the built environment, to identify those qualities that new development should be sensitive and respond positively to.

Respondents were asked if they had any other comments on the character of Thame as a whole. The key themes that emerged from the responses were:

- The need to maintain Thame’s identity as a market town / avoid losing its identity as a market town;
- Support for improving cycle and pedestrian connection both into Thame Town Centre and the surrounding countryside;
- Support for the above point was linked to the high number of concerns over increasing traffic in the town centre and the prioritisation that seems to be given to vehicles;
- The desire to introduce more pedestrianised and outdoor seating areas on the High Street; and
- The importance of Thame’s connection to the surrounding countryside, with many suggesting this connection should be reinforced, particularly through improvements to the Phoenix Trail; and
- The need to be environmentally conscious and for the Neighbourhood Plan to respond to the Thame Green Living Plan.

Thame Character Area Study (TCAS)

The TCAS identifies eight character areas within Thame. The areas reflect those in TNP, with some minor amendments to reflect the subdivision of certain sites, and to account for new housing and employment areas that have been constructed since the TNP was made. The character areas are as follows:

1. Historic Core
2. Lea Park
3. Southern Thame
4. Chiltern Vale
5. Moreton Village
6. East Thame
7. Post 2013
8. Employment Area

Thame Green Living Plan (TGLP)

The TGLP explains that despite compelling scientific evidence, warnings and increasing levels of concern, most people remain uncertain as to what can and should be done about the climate emergency.

As such, the TFLP covers a number of 'major themes', which explain the broad approach to the plan. These are:

- Street level pollution and air quality;
- Travel and traffic;
- Sustainable energy;

- Water;
- Green spaces and land use; and
- Towards a circular economy.

It then goes on to set out a series of 'recommended actions' that individuals and community groups can enable, to reduce carbon emissions. Many of these are relevant to the design code and masterplanning documents, therefore the proposals in the TGLP are referred to throughout this document.

Street Design Guide (SDG)

The SDG sets out a number of specific objectives which are critical in delivering high quality streets and places. It stipulates that the street design within the context of a masterplan should:

- Prioritise sustainable and active travel to help reduce congestion;
- Design streets and places in a way that reduces car use while promoting sustainable active travel modes to help combat the climate emergency. This means creating streets that are linked, well connected, safe and attractive for walking and cycling;
- Provide a clear and permeable hierarchy of streets, routes and spaces which are inclusive and create safe and convenient ease of movement by all users;

- Ensure local services and facilities beyond the development are easily accessible by sustainable and active modes of travel;
- Be built to last and to meet the County Council's maintenance needs;
- Understand and addresses the needs of all potential users to ensure inclusive design;
- Ensure a sufficient level of well-integrated and imaginative solutions for car and bicycle parking and external storage including bins;
- Take into account all relevant County Council/District Council Design Guides - including County Council School Design and Process documents in a holistic manner, ensuring streets are designed through multidisciplinary collaboration; and
- Be informed by a contextual analysis of the area.

It then goes on to set out a number of design principles, which are drawn from local and national planning policy such as the National Design Guide. These principles and qualities apply equally to the design of quality streets and are as shown in the table on the next page:

| Principles | What is high quality? |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Movement and access | Ensuring movement corridors are safe and welcoming for all, including the elderly and disabled. |
| Ease of movement | Ensuring places can be easily understood including a legible street hierarchy. |
| Diversity | Providing variety, choice and sensory richness. |
| Sustainable travel | Ensuring places are easy to get to and move through for sustainable modes, and encourage physical activity. |
| Legibility | Masterplans should promote walking, cycling and public transport as the first choices for movement. |
| Adaptability | Anticipating the need for change as travel behaviour and technology change. |
| Sustainability | Minimise the impact on our environment and reduce carbon emissions. |
| Designing for future maintenance | Designing streets and spaces so that their quality can be maintained over time and will age well using robust materials. |
| Good streets and spaces | Creating streets which act as attractive outdoor spaces including high quality green and blue landscape infrastructure. |
| Well designed buildings | Constructing sustainable buildings appropriate to their function and context to help enhance streetscapes considering landforms, orientation and massing. |
| Innovation | Designed to be adaptable to future technologies and innovations. |

Table 02: SDG Design Principles

Joint Design Guide (JDG)

South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District Councils have prepared a Joint Design Guide, which was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document in June 2022. As such, it replaced the South Oxfordshire Design Guide. The Guide provides guidance on how new development should be designed and constructed to the highest quality and includes a number of overarching key design objectives along with more specific design principles, covering place and setting; natural environment; movement and connectivity; space and layout; built form; climate and sustainability. The Design Guide provides valuable high level District guidance, which this local Design Code will complement.

Local character analysis

03

3. Local character analysis

This chapter describes the local context and key characteristics of Thame and Moreton. It is important that all development proposals, whether big or small are based on an understanding of the context of these settlements, so that they integrate with the surrounding area well.

Therefore, development proposals should clearly demonstrate an understanding of that context and how it has been addressed in the preparation of the design and any related planning submissions. Context refers to the current (and sometimes future) conditions within an area across a range of issues including history and heritage, morphology, green space, movement and landscape setting. The following pages in this section consider these matters, in the context of Thame and Moreton, in more detail.

We have undertaken a character assessment of the two settlements and our findings are set out on the following pages.



Figure 05: Example of grand Victorian manor house, with typical red brick finish and stone window casing



Figure 06: Typical attractive run of Victorian terraces, with bay window and contrasting brick detailing



Figure 07: The Six Bells pub on the High Street, dating back to the 1600s

3.1 Route pattern and connectivity

Thame is a well connected town, owing to its well conserved historic layout.

Public transport

Thame is a well-connected town, having at least three bus operators - Arriva, Z&S, and Carousel - with routes running through the area, making it a convenient place to travel within and to nearby cities and towns.

The closest railway station is Haddenham and Thame Parkway, which lies just outside of the NA boundary and provides trains half hourly to London or Birmingham via the Chiltern Line.

Active travel

Thame is walkable due to its compact nature – from one side to another on certain routes. The Phoenix trail provides an excellent walking and cycling route, with a direct link to Lord Williams Upper School and the leisure centre at the west end of town. Cycling is also possible, as the

topography is fairly flat, and the Phoenix trail provides a cycle link to Princes Risborough (7 miles). There are few dedicated cycle routes and so most cyclists use streets to get around. It is possible to cycle to the station, 15min, but this is again, along the street network and this is considered a dangerous route.

However, not all parts of the town connect well into the town centre. As identified in the LP, Lea Park is poorly connected, with indirect and sometimes unattractive pedestrian and cycle routes, and car access only from the ring road.

Street layout

Thame is enclosed by the bypass, (A418 and A4129), which encircles the northern side of the town. The bypass provides convenient access to nearby settlements such as Chinnor and Haddenham, as well as the M40. In theory, it also draws traffic away from the town centre, but this is not necessarily the case. The bypass has its issues, as it acts as a barrier between Thame and its built and natural surroundings, particularly for those on foot. It cuts the town off from the countryside

setting and nearby settlements to the north and in this part of the town, has resulted in the settlement layout being particularly inward looking.

As highlighted in the TGLP: “there is only one traffic light controlled pedestrian crossing (to the skateboard park) between the Oxford Road roundabout and the Phoenix Trail crossing. There is no safe crossing on the old Crendon Road and pedestrians and cyclists face a hazardous route to cross to Long Crendon or the Miller’s Way route to Haddenham via Moorend Lane. It is little better by the Rugby Club and the potential health hub site.”

The streets in Thame are mixed in character, comprising the historic routes within the Conservation Area, such as the High Street, which forms the backbone of the town, forming a long, linear route running from north-west to south-east. A number of secondary residential roads and cul-de-sac access streets and estates are encircled by the ring road, which forms an edge to the town.



KEY

- Neighbourhood Plan Area boundary
- A roads
- Local roads
- Cul-de-sacs
- Phoenix Trail
- Bus stops
- Bus route
- Woodland
- Water body
- 20 minute walking distance
- Footpath
- Bridleway

Figure 08: Route patterns in Thame Neighbourhood Plan Area



3.2 History and heritage

Thame has a rich heritage spread widely across the Neighbourhood Plan Area. Some of those notable elements are:

Evolution

Thame has its origins in Anglo Saxon England and as such, the original town developed around St. Mary's Church at the western end of today's High Street.

In the early thirteenth century 'New Thame' was planned by the Bishop of Lincoln and established the historic town centre as it is today, including the Buttermarket and Cornmarket and the wide High Street. By the mid 13th century, Thame was a growing market town on the main road between London and Oxford.

Over the following centuries, Thame generally maintained and enhanced its prosperity, with the town growing along either side of the High Street.

By the end of the 18th century the town had extended north along Aylesbury Road and east along Wellington Street. The last century has seen Thame grow from a population of 3,000 in 1901 to around 12,555 today (according to the latest ONS figures).

Conservation Areas

The Thame Conservation Area still retains much of the original morphology which was established in the twelfth century. This is characterised by a linear high street, which widens out into a market place and is lined with long, narrow burgage plots.

Most of Moreton is designated as a Conservation Area.

Listed buildings

Thame has over 200 listed buildings, and most of them are within the Conservation Area, with almost all the buildings along the full extent of the High Street being Listed, or a 'Building of Local Note'. These

classifications also feature on buildings spurring off the High Street, such as East Street and Nelson Street. Away from the High Street, there are a number of classified buildings to the north west of the conservation area, such as St Mary's Church and The Tithe Barn.

Moreton has 11 listed buildings.

Registered park and garden

Thame Park is an historically important landscape and as such is designated as a 'registered park and garden'. It is also a County Wildlife Site due to the grasslands and woodland within it.

Scheduled monument

There is one scheduled monument in Thame, which is the 'Moated site E east of Moorend Lane'. It is located in a small area of open space, off Cromwell Avenue.



KEY

- Neighbourhood Plan Area boundary
- Road network
- Listed buildings:
- Grade I
- Grade II*
- Grade II
- Scheduled monument
- Conservation area
- Thame Park
- Woodland
- Waterbody

Figure 09: Heritage designations in Thame Neighbourhood Plan Area



3.3 Land based designations

There are a number of land-based designations and some areas of green infrastructure within the Neighbourhood Plan Area, which define its rural character. Despite this, Thame does have an acknowledged shortage of natural areas of green infrastructure, such as woods, grassland and wild flower meadows and orchards. As highlighted in the TGLP this restricts access to a wide variety of green spaces and also places increasing pressure on the limited public open space that does exist.



Figure 10: War Memorial, Upper High St



Figure 11: Playground, Thame Park



Figure 12: Flat landscape to the south of Thame

Built and Landscape Character Areas

The 2016 South Oxfordshire Design Guide (SODG) identifies Thame and Moreton to be located within the 'Clay Vale' character area within the wider district. The SODG describes the broad characteristics of the land form and the landscape within the Clay Vale' area as being:

"Situated on high ground made up of sandstones and mudstones. Settlement pattern is strongly influenced by physical factors. The heavy clay soils and a risk of flooding have traditionally discouraged settlement on areas underlain by the Gault Clay." (page 20, SODG 2016)

The SODG goes on to describe the broad characteristics of the landscape within the Clay Vale area as follows:

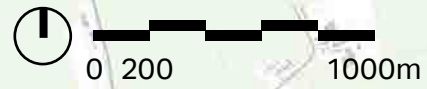
"The area embraces the lowland agricultural landscape of the central clay vale, which lies between the hills of the mid-vale Ridge and the chalk of the Chiltern Hills. The landscape character is remarkably unvarying, dominated by gently rolling or undulating land form." (page 20, SODG 2016)



KEY

- Neighbourhood Plan Area boundary
- Road network
- Open space
- Local green space
- Priority habitat deciduous woodland
- TPO
- Ancient woodland
- Cuttle Brook nature reserve
- Thame Park
- Important Open Space
- Water body
- View toward the Cuttle Brook from Oxford Road

Figure 13: Land based designations in Thame Neighbourhood Plan Area



Land based designations cont'd

Landscape Character Areas

Within the Clay Valley, the South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment defines more detailed character areas, as follows:

- Thame is within the 'Urban area';
- The land to the east of Thame is within the 'Undulating open vale'; and
- Moreton is within the 'Undulating semi enclosed vale'.

Local green space

There is a wide range of local green spaces dispersed throughout the town, including the Kingsey Road and Windmill Road allotments, Thame showground, skatepark, ASM stadium / Meadow view park, Cricket academy, tennis club and bowls club.

Important open space

There are several areas of 'important open space' as classified by SODC in Thame. These are located within the centre of Thame and comprise the three recreation areas (the Southern Road Recreation Area, Queen Elizabeth Circle and Elms Park) and

the various other spaces including the grounds of St Mary's Church, the Millennium Wood and a section of Cuttle Brook to the north of the LNR area.

Priority habitat

Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERCA 2006), a priority habitat is any habitat published on the 'list of the living organisms and types of habitat which in the Secretary of State's opinion are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

There are five areas of open space which are designated as priority habitat to the western side of Thame, all of which are located along the route of the Cuttle Brook. These comprise a range of semi-natural habitat types that are defined as either being threatened or requiring conservation action.

Woodland priority habitat

There are two main areas of woodland priority habitat within Thame, which are located along the River Thame and the Cuttle Brook. There are several additional areas to the south of Thame around Thame Park and Moreton.

Tree Preservation Orders

There are a range of TPOs throughout the town, but none in Moreton.

Local nature reserve (LNR)

Cuttle Brook is a 13 hectare LNR, which is located to the west of Thame, beside the Southern Road Recreation Ground. It features a diverse range of habitats, including the brook and its banks, scrub, woodland, meadows, reed beds, hedges and sedge beds.

Nature reserves

The Cuttle Brook Nature Reserve is located in the west of Thame, a few minutes walk from the town centre. It provides a habitat for various species as well as an area for informal recreation for local people.



Figure 14: Small pocket park, Pickenfield



Figure 16: Thame Bowls club



Figure 17: Thame Cricket Club Pavillion and St Mary's church



Figure 15: Chinnor Road footpath (leading only to the County Council's Children's Assessment Centre).



Figure 18: Small amenity space, Thame Meadows



Figure 19: Southern Road Recreation Ground

3.4 Topography, views and flooding

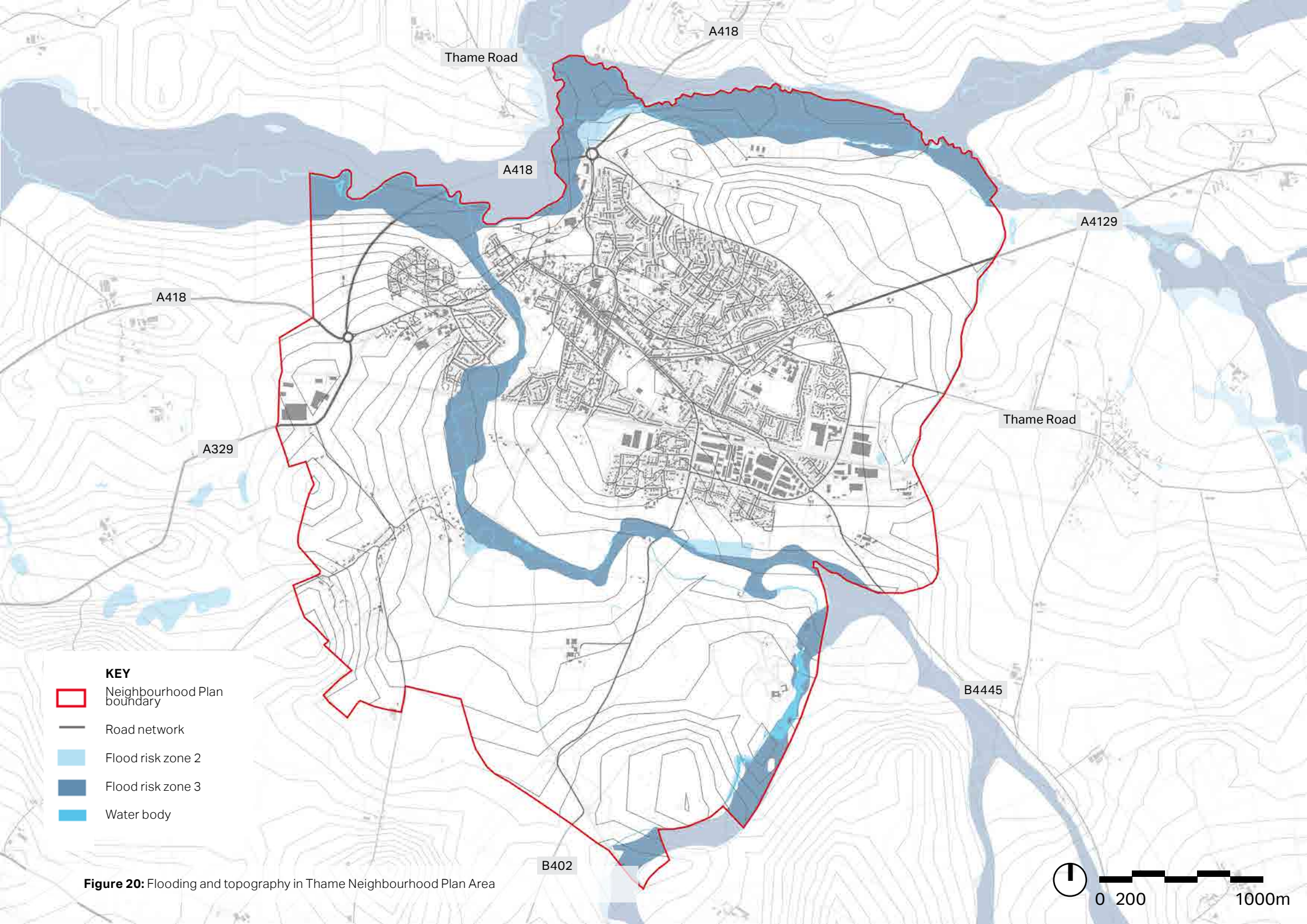
Flooding

The River Thame flows to the north of the town and is connected to Cuttle Brook. There is a flood plain associated with both waterways, which the Environment Agency Flood Zone mapping shows is Flood Zone 1; being an area of Low Probability of flooding, outside both the 1 in 100 (1% Annual Exceedance Probability, AEP) and 1 in 1,000 (0.1% AEP) year flood events. Thame Park is also located in the flood plain.

Topography

The lowest point of the landscape is along the valleys of the Cuttle Brook and River Thame, at around 65 AOD (Above Ordnance Datum). The town itself is relatively flat, lying between approximately 70m and 75m AOD. In the wider context, beyond the town the land rises again south of Cuttle Brook Valley, towards high points within Thame Park and Horsenden Hill and rises significantly to the north towards a high point at Long Crendon and Notley Abbey.

One of the defining characteristics of Thame is its setting in the landscape and its flat topography. As such, the town is contained within the surrounding landscape and the tower of St Mary's Church is a prominent, constant landmark.



3.5 Health and wellbeing

Facilities

Thame has a strong agricultural base with regular cattle and farmers' markets held in the town. The high street in Thame is where the majority of facilities are located, with Thame being well served by a range of supermarkets, cafes, restaurants, and pubs. This excellent range of independent shops, pubs and eateries and events such as the Thame Food Festival attract visitors to the town.

Thame is also well served by a good range of educational facilities, including nurseries, three primary schools, and one secondary school.

Thame has a significant amount of industrial (B2) and warehouse (B8) floorspace, much of this being located within the south-eastern part of the town. Office accommodation (B1) is more limited, but there are some converted buildings in the town centre providing local businesses with office space. This is reflected in the NP, which outlines a need for modern office accommodation, with demand for small flexible units.

Sense of community

Thame has a very active community life, representing many different groups and organisations, including Thame Museum, Library, Theatre, Leisure centre and a number of churches and facilities for informal and formal sports, such as the football and rugby grounds.

There is a strong feeling of identity among the residents of Thame and Moreton. Both settlements have a heritage of community spirit and participation in local life, including having a voice on issues of new local development. This is in part, influenced by its rural setting and its convenient access to the many different areas of open space surrounding the settlements, which helps to create opportunities for residents to connect with each other, enhancing their physical and mental well-being.



Figure 21: Montesson Square



Figure 22: One of many cafes along the High Street

KEY
Neighbourhood Plan Area boundary

- Road network
- Water bodies
- Employment
- Health care
- Retail/ commercial
- Church
- Pub/ restaurant
- Community
- Education
- Allotment
- Sports ground

- 1** Lord William's Upper School
- 2** Saint Joseph's Primary School
- 3** Barley Hill Primary School
- 4** John Hampden County Primary School
- 5** Thame museum
- 6** Library
- 7** Theatre
- 8** Leisure centre
- 9** Football ground
- 10** Rugby ground

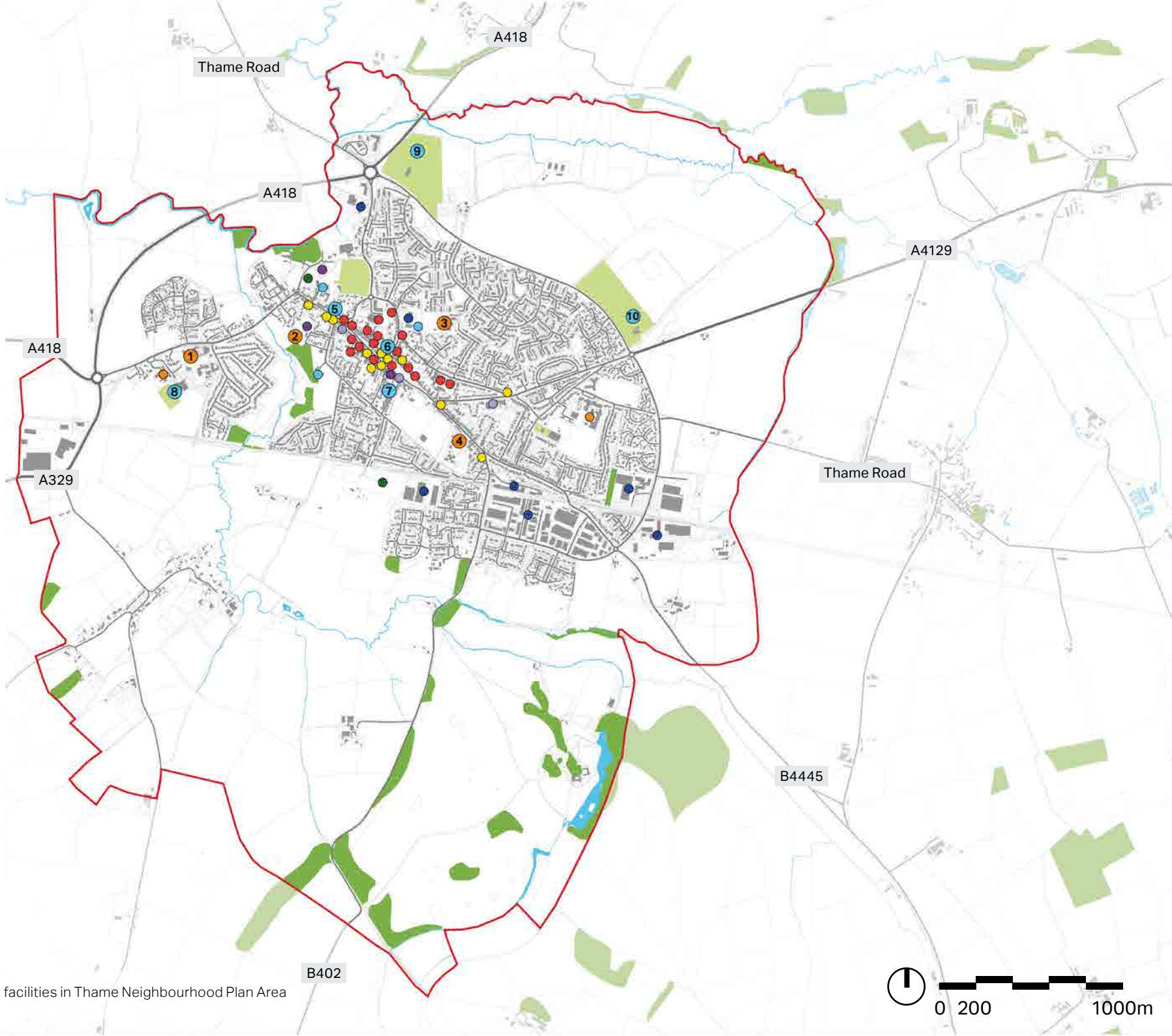
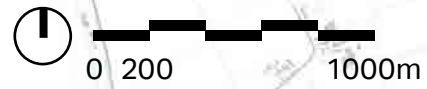


Figure 23: Local amenities and facilities in Thame Neighbourhood Plan Area



3.6 Built and spatial character

The Joint Design Guide (2022) sets out a number of design principles that development needs to adhere to within each section. The principles emphasise the importance of contextual analysis in ensuring that new development complements the built and landscape setting.



Figure 24: High St



Figure 25: Thame High Street



Figure 26: Butter Market



Figure 28: Thame High Street / Butter Market



Figure 27: The Thatch pub, High Street



Figure 29: High St parking

Thame is a market town, with a rich historic past, reflected in the well-preserved historic buildings in the central conservation area, which collectively form a strong identity.

Spatial character - streets and public realm

The street layout within the town centre is linear; the long medieval, boat shaped High Street and market place define the distinct morphology of the town. Streets run perpendicular to that, moving away from the high street in a linear pattern, to the north and south. Away from the town centre, the street pattern is looped and circuitous;

generally being dominated by vehicular movement and car parking. This is representative of the pattern of development of the majority of northern Thame towards the end of the 20th century.

Spatial character - traffic and parking

As outlined in the Thame Green Living Plan (TGLP), there are various pressure points that have resulted in heavy traffic and parking dominating the public realm within the town centre.

This includes recent growth of the town, which has resulted in a great increase in traffic

and parking. Additionally, Thame acts as a service centre for a large number of local villages, including Haddenham, which has a population of around 7 - 8,000 but has very few facilities. There is little choice for villagers other than private vehicles.

The wide High Street, used for holding markets, is more regularly used for car parking, which is provided on street and as a series of car parks along the stretch of the road. Many side streets off the high street are also lined with parked cars, causing increasing aggravation in many areas.

Away from the town centre and within Moreton, car parking is generally provided on plot.

TNP2 aims to enable improvements of active travel routes into the Town Centre for its residents, to help alleviate the pressure of vehicle use.



Figure 30: Junction of Bell Lane and High Street

3.7 Built and spatial character cont'd

Built character - pattern and layout of buildings

The pattern of development in the centre is higher density and tight knit and reflects the town's original medieval structure, being characterised by a linear layout. Narrow individual frontages along the high street run perpendicular to deep burgage plots. Residential properties in and around the high street have regular, deep narrow plots.

Away from the centre, to the north and east (part of the significant expansion of Thame during the 1980s) the pattern of development is lower density and therefore comprises small to medium width, shallow plots set out in an organic and loose layout, with roads tending to be curved and plots generally being wide and spaced out.

More recent 21st century development to the south and west of the town displays a mix of structure, but generally tends to be more linear and tight knit, better reflecting the town's historic morphology.



Figure 31: Thame figure ground plan



Figure 32: Northern end of High Street



Figure 33: The Swan and car park, Upper High Street



Figure 34: Thame Town Hall

Built character - building lines

Residential properties in the conservation area tend to have no protruding features, due to continuous building lines, which also tend to be close to the pavement, creating an enclosed street scene.

Built character - building heights and rooflines

Building heights in Thame are without exception, low rise. The spire of St Mary's Church is a visible landmark from most places in the town. The town centre is generally two storeys, but occasionally rises to three stories, sometimes four. These buildings are most frequently Georgian properties located along the high street and around the market square, providing enclosure.

Rooflines tend to be flat and gabled, but there are a number of unique rooflines on the high street which provide visual interest.

Away from the town centre building heights are consistently two stories, sometimes

rising to three stories, with a small amount of 2.5 storey housing built in the last ten years.

Aside from the residential properties, there are some large commercial buildings sited on Wenman Road, and across Thame Park Road behind housing. These tend to be two stories, but some rise to three. While large in footprint, these buildings do not tend to have a significant impact on the townscape, beyond their immediate location.

Built character - views

As previously mentioned, Thame is contained within the surrounding landscape and therefore views of the town from the surrounding rural edge are predominantly of the low lying roofline, through landscaping. Within the town, the tower of St Mary's Church is a prominent landmark in the townscape.



Figure 35: Shop and grand Georgian residence, junction of High Street and Southern Road



Figure 36: View from the Buttermarket*.



Figure 37: Traffic in the town centre



Figure 38: Front facing gables, High St



Figure 39: Grade II listed Lloyds bank building, built in 1890 in the Dutch style, Cornmarket

3.8 Built and spatial character cont'd

Built character - typologies

The majority of typologies in the town centre are terraced houses, with the occasional detached or semi-detached dwelling.

Beyond the town centre, typologies are more uniform, being detached, linked and semi detached. Exceptions to this are the historic residential areas close to the High Street, such as North St, Nelson St and Park St, which feature mainly high density terraces.

Built character - materials and boundary treatments

Thame has a wide palate of materials. Buildings were traditionally timber framed, with brick frontages added in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The historic core displays a predominance of stone, brick in a variety of patterns and colours, thatch, render, tile and timber framing (both medieval and Edwardian). Slate has also been used since the 1800s on the roofs. Brick is the most prominent material used and is often detailed with the use of contrasting silver grey infill with red brick details. The use of stone and render provide contrast and variety,

Boundaries are varied throughout the town, but railings and stone walls are the most commonplace in the historic town centre. Hedges, either behind walls or on their own predominate towards the rural edge in the suburbs. Some stone walls, with brick or tile capping provide a distinct character.



Figure 40: Door colours add variety and interest



Figure 41: Use of contrasting brick to accentuate window openings



Figure 42: Feature door, Upper High St



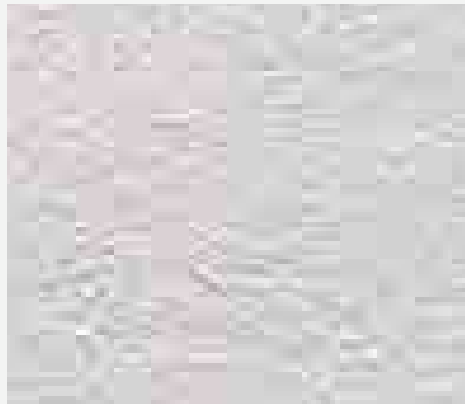
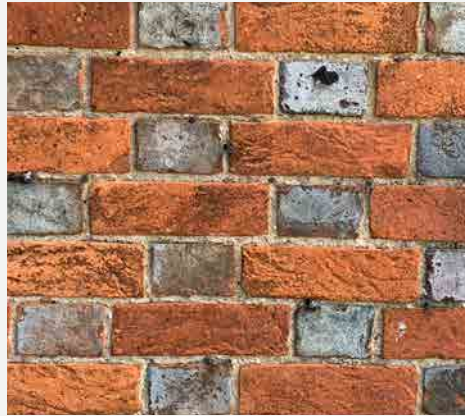
Figure 43: Victorian terraces



Figure 44: Typical medieval building, Church Road



Figure 45: Use of contrasting brick pattern to create decorative interest



NB: All the photos above are taken in Thame.

The sites overview

04

4. Sites overview

As presented in section 1.7, the seven sites in this masterplanning document are shown, opposite. These sites were identified in the recent consultation of the new Neighbourhood Plan (TNP2). Residents have been consulted on the shortlist of these suitable sites, that have been identified as potential allocations in TNP2. These sites have been submitted through the South Oxfordshire SHELAA and or the Call for Sites undertaken by Thame Town Council.

As previously mentioned in the introduction, the design studies are high level and illustrative, prepared to demonstrate how the design principles that the Town Council wishes to promote could be applied on the sites. We have not undertaken technical studies on topics such as ground conditions, traffic and drainage (although AECOM specialists have inputted into design development). It is expected that full co-design exercises are undertaken by applicants on the sites. This report is just a step in that direction, enabling stakeholders to progress from an informed position.

| Site | Approx site area (ha) | Approx homes | Site allocation ref (TNP2 Policy GDH1 - Housing allocations) | Proposed use |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|--|--------------|
| 1. Land at Oxford Road | 25 | 100 | GDH1d | Residential |
| 2. Diagnostics Reagents | 1.3 | 25 | GDH1b | Residential |
| 3. Land south of Wenman Road | 5.7 | 60 | GDH1a | Residential |
| 4. Cattle Market | 1.28 | *1 | GDR1 | Mixed use |
| 5. Land at Windmill Road | 1.5 | 30 | GDH1c | Residential |
| 6. Land at Rycote Lane | 7.8 | N/A | GDE1 | Employment |
| 7. Land at Howland Road | 15.5 | N/A | N/A | Employment |

1. The potential for development of the Cattle Market site is well established, having been allocated in TNP1 and saved as an allocation in TNP2. The site has potential to accommodate a wide mix of uses, including residential. The quantum and mix of development is to be determined through the detailed masterplanning process as part of or as a precursor to a planning application. TNP2 does not specify a development quantum, allowing for flexibility in the design process, though does strongly support delivery of new homes as part of any development of the site. As and when delivered these will contribute to meeting the housing requirement for Thame.

Table 03: Site allocations that have / are awaiting planning permission from TNP2, policy GDH1

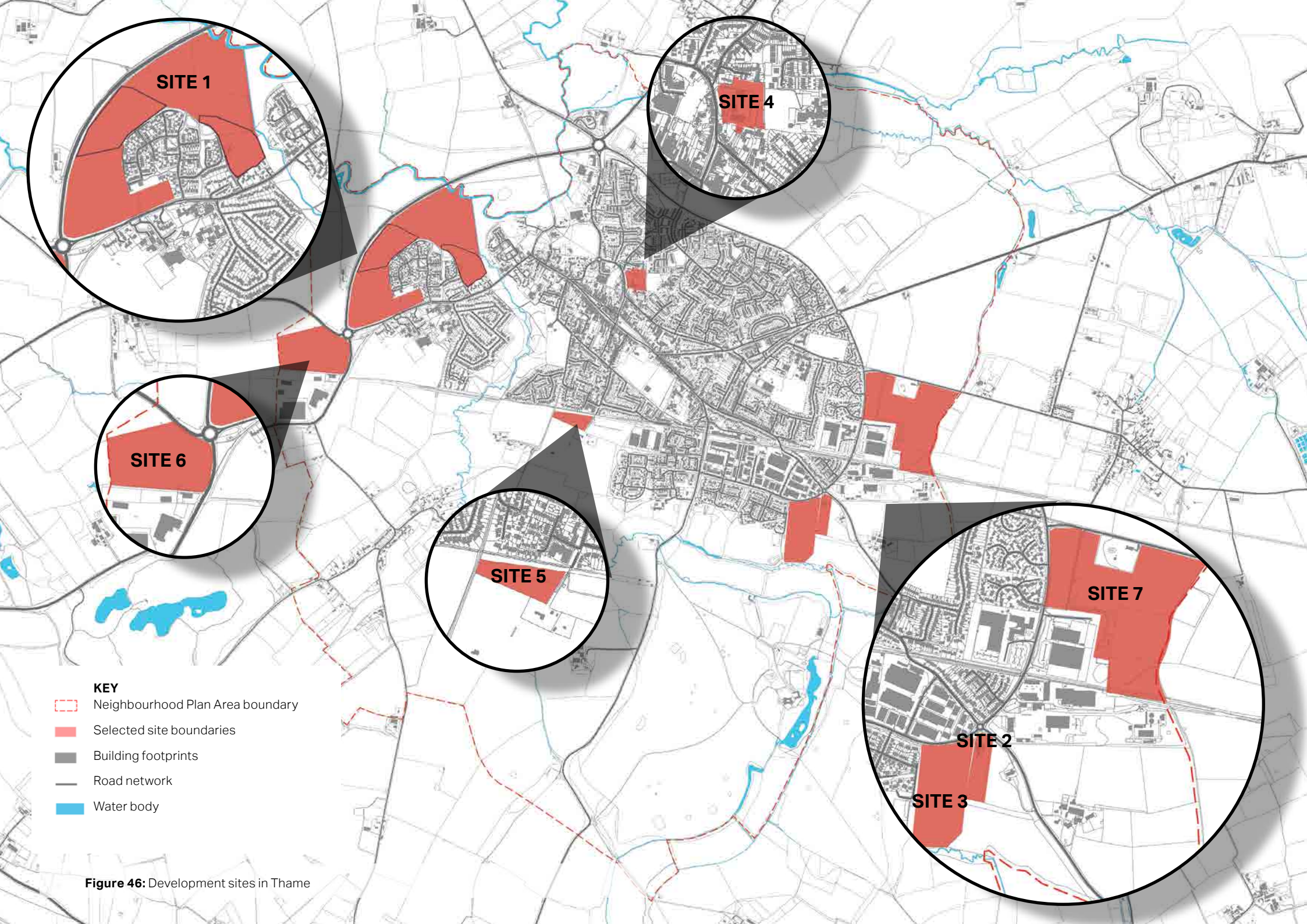


Figure 46: Development sites in Thame

Site 1: Land at Oxford Road

05

5. Oxford Road site context

This section sets out the baseline context for the Oxford Road site and specifically, the Reserve site. It presents the planning context, along with a high level site analysis, which sets out the main constraints and opportunities to development.



Figure 47: Site boundary

Site context

The site is located in the western entrance to the town and north east of the junction of the A418 and the Oxford Road. The Cuttle Brook Nature Reserve is to the south-east; to the north lies the River Thames which separates SODC from AVDC; and to the south of Oxford Road lies the Lord Williams School and some late 20th century suburban development.



Figure 48: Site location



- KEY**
- Site boundary
 - Conservation area
 - Water body
 - Residential
 - Retail/ pub/ restaurant
 - Community/ religious
 - Education
 - Employment/ business
 - Car parking
 - Cuttle Brook nature reserve
 - Trees
 - Green space
 - Open space

Figure 49: Site context

5.1 Relevant planning context

The overall site is also referred to as 'Site F' and was allocated in TNP1 under Policy HA6 (see Figure 51). The site is now allocated for approximately 100 homes in TNP2 as 'Land at Oxford Road' (see Figure 50)

5.2 Site land uses

The site comprises three main development areas, along with two non developable areas to the south west and north east. This is shown on Figure 53, overleaf and is subdivided as follows:

1. Committed housing - Site F

This site has been constructed and is known as Thame Meadows.

2. Potential housing area east - Site F Phase 2

The eastern reserve site is located to the east of Thames Meadows. A full planning application for 77 new homes has been submitted by Bloor Homes, the developer and housebuilder of Thame Meadows (Site 1 - committed housing). Planning permission has not yet been granted.

3. Potential housing area west - Site F Phase 3

This part of the site is the western reserve site and comprises the area that is assessed in this document over the following pages. It is located to the north west of Thame Meadows

4. Non developable area east

This area comprises the flood plain (1 in 1000 year chance of flooding). This part of the site will form an accessible area of open space, as part of the application for Site F Phase 2 and Phase 3.

5. Non developable area west

This area is non developable due to archaeological constraints (this is covered in more detail on the following pages).

Therefore, the two remaining residential development areas are Potential housing area east and west. It is expected that there will be a joint arrangement for the provision of public open space between these two sites (currently under discussions held between the developer and District Council).



Figure 50: TNP2 Survey Sites summary (Figure 8)



Figure 51: TNP1 concept masterplan for the site (Figure HA6)

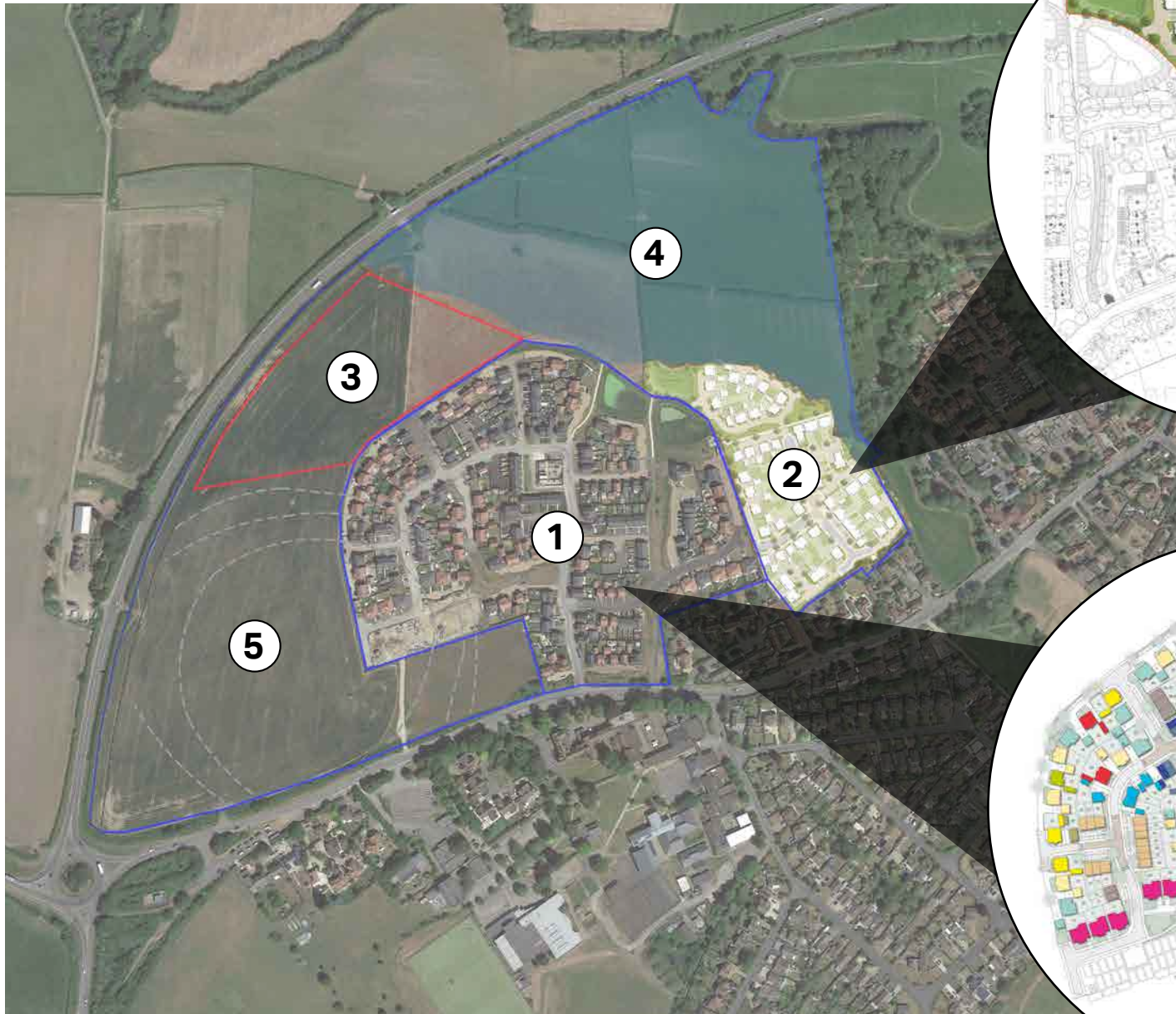


Figure 52: Site land use areas

AECOM



Figure 54: Housing Area East layout



Figure 53: Thame Meadows layout

5.3 Site photos

This page focuses on the potential housing area west only.



Figure 55: Site boundary with viewpoints



Figure 56: Playspace, Roman Way



Figure 57: Linear park, Roman Way



Figure 58: Linear park, Roman Way



Figure 59: View north towards the site from Causeway Close



Figure 60: View west from Causeway Close



Figure 61: View north from Offa Place

5.4 Site features

The following pages focus on the two remaining residential development areas (potential housing area east and west), as outlined on the previous page

Access and movement

There are no official PROW running through either sites; however there is good pedestrian connectivity surrounding the sites. There is a permissive footpath network throughout the area, which provides an excellent network of walkable routes. A footpath (PRoW) along Sycamore Drive, to the south of the site, provides pedestrian access to Lord Williams School, Thame Leisure Centre and the Phoenix Trail (National Cycle Route). Beyond that, there is an excellent footpath network through the countryside towards Moreton and beyond. To the north of the site, the Bernwood Jubilee Way and Thame Valley Walk are both accessible from Thame Bridge, which lies less than 1km to the east of the site.

Existing landscape features

Both sites are currently agricultural fields. On the western site, a hedgerow demarcates the western edge of the site and provides screening along the A418. There are no trees on this site. There are some tree groups and an east west hedgerow on the eastern site. Buckinghamshire County Council

recognizes the site's potential views towards the ring road and local landscape, stressing the need to heed the Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment¹. They also support planting initiatives to shield views from the open countryside.

Flooding

The western site is within Flood Zone 1 - low probability within flood risk terms. The boundary of flood zone 2 forms the edge of the eastern site.

Topography

The site levels rise gently from north to south, with the highest part of the sites being to the south. The levels reach a high point to the south of the western site on Christmas Hill.

Archaeology

Initial high level archaeological investigations have demonstrated that the site contains archaeological remains equivalent to a scheduled monument, in the form of a circular earth henge, across its south western extent. These remains comprise a Neolithic causewayed enclosure and later prehistoric, Roman and Saxon occupation activity. The extent of this site and the associated buffer zone are outside of the site.

¹ [Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment](#)

Views

Important views are east towards the Cuttle Brook and also of the Listed Town Farm and Barns. Levels drop gently away towards the river valley to the north of the sites, which provides some views towards a highpoint in the land form around Lopemedede Farm and the southern edge of Long Crendon and beyond.

Views westwards are limited, due to the belt of planting along either side of the A418.

View's southwards are towards the Thames Meadows development, and to the south west there are views of open countryside, due to this part of the site being on higher ground than the reserve site.

Noise

The site abuts the A418 on the western boundary, A corridor of screening is planted either side of the road. A generous buffer along the edge will be required. It is recommended that this is a minimum of 15m from the site boundary.

Built form

The site abuts Thames Meadows on the south eastern edge, which provides a strong and positive frontage to the site. Properties along the northern edge of this built neighbourhood overlook the western site and this will need to be taken into account, so that there is a positive frontage relationship between the two sites.

- KEY**
- Comprehensive site boundary
 - Approximate individual site boundary
 - Water body
 - Key destination
 - Vehicular access
 - Permissive footpath
 - Bus route
 - Bus stop
 - Noise
 - Overlooking
 - Listed building
 - Grade I
 - Grade II*
 - Grade II
 - Bernwood Jubilee and Thame Valley walk
 - Footpath
 - Phoenix Trail
 - Views
 - View toward the Cuttle Brook from Oxford Road
 - View toward listed Town Farm Barns
 - Conservation area
 - Cuttle Brook nature reserve
 - Local green space
 - Open space
 - Flood zone 2
 - Flood zone 3
 - Tree and hedges
 - Archaeology zone



Figure 62: Site features

5.5 Design vision

The vision for the site is for an extension to Thame Meadows, providing the last two pieces of the jigsaw for the new community in the north west of Thame. It will provide an important gateway into this part of Thame.

The development will be rooted in and shaped by its landscape context and will respect the heritage of the site, incorporating new, high-quality housing that reflects the existing vernacular of the site and surrounding area.

Everyone will have access to green open space in the new community, but nature must be protected. It will feature a range of new areas of natural open space, encouraging community interaction and reflect the close proximity of the surrounding countryside. This setting will provide existing and future residents invaluable time to spend outdoors and will create an attractive setting for new homes. Tree-lined streets incorporating green pockets will become safe places where children can play outside.



Figure 63: Convenient pedestrian and cycle links (Alexandra Park Manchester)



Figure 64: Well integrated marshland (Watercolour, Redhill)



Figure 67: Accessible wetland area (Horsell Common, Surrey)



Figure 68: Overlooked play area for children (Cane Hill, London)



Figure 66: Wildflower meadow planting, Daws Heath nature reserve, Essex



Figure 69: A small focal space helps people explain where they live and navigate (Ingress Park)



Figure 65: Wildlife friendly scrub grassland, Lincolnshire Wolds

5.6 Design concept

The concept plan, right is a comprehensive proposal for the site and therefore includes site east and site west, along with a new area of parkland. As stated earlier in this document, this masterplan concept represents one way in which the two sites could come forward, in response to high level site analysis.

The design principles described, right, relate to the overall concept plan, including both sites and the parkland area. Applicants will need to prepare full technical appraisals and will be expected to broadly align with the design principles.

Development layout

A perimeter block pattern of development is proposed, mirroring the layout of Thame Meadows and referencing the traditional morphology of the Victorian streets of the town.

This outward looking pattern of development will clearly define the surrounding open space, public spaces within the site and private spaces, such as back gardens. This will encourage 'eyes on the street', allowing residents with opportunities for social connection and minimising opportunities for anti-social behaviour.

These layouts provide views out of the site towards the parkland and the existing residential area. This will aid legibility, providing residents with clear visual anchors. The sites have been arranged to preserve and safeguard the existing views overlooking the established network of open spaces and to work with the site contours. Specifically, the layout of site west is designed to ensure that it does not impede any views of the Parkland, as well as the area with potential Heritage value.

Similarly, the layout of site east takes into careful consideration the view from Oxford Road towards the Cuttle Brook to the north and the listed Town Farm to the south-west. These views need to be protected and the layout should ensure that there is a need to provide a gradual transition of built form towards the countryside.

Open space

Both sites provide a green corridor along the edges, and site west provides a generous planted corridor which will visually screen the development from the A418.

An overlooked pocket park on western site should incorporate a play area, to allow children to play safely close to their home. Both sites include a small lagoon, which provides localised surface water flood alleviation.

A large area of parkland, incorporating the areas subject to sensitive views, is provided within the flood plain, with the network of permissive footpaths along the field boundaries maintained. This parkland could take the form of Multi Functional Green Infrastructure (MFGI), which includes both established and new green spaces that thread through and around communities, linking built areas to the wider rural surroundings. The parkland should become an accessible wetland area via raised boardwalk paths. This would manage water levels, support biodiversity and create a place for people to connect with each other and with nature. It could take the form of raised walkways over rush pastures and wet grasslands alongside patches of grassland and wildflower meadows.



KEY

- Site boundary
- New trees
- Existing tree / hedgerow
- Retention of the visual link in line with TNP policy ESDQ21 and the View toward the Cuttle Brook from Oxford Road
- View toward listed Town Farm Barns
- View
- Frontages:
 - Primary frontage
 - Secondary frontage
 - Tertiary frontage
- Key building
- Pocket park with play area
- Streets:
 - Primary
 - Secondary
 - Tertiary
- Development area
- Existing network of open space
- Archaeological area
- Accessible parkland with wetland habitat
- Existing permissive path
- New permissive path

A meaningful corridor that would allow for landscaping and noise mitigation measures

Lower density edge to reflect the rural setting

Area of Potential Heritage Value

Figure 70: Design concept

Planting

Tree-lined streets will provide solar shading and a pleasant, green setting for new development. New planting along the western boundary of the site will provide a buffer to the A418. Existing trees and hedgerows will be retained.

Use and Scale

The proposed new housing should be varied in type, with some limited changes in scale to mark 'key landmarks' at the corners of development blocks. This will ensure that the development responds to the historic form and characteristics of Thame.

Density

Given the site's location on the edge of the town, it should be developed at an average net density of 30dph, which reflects the proposed density of Thame Meadows and which is in accordance with the TNP1 and the SOCS Policy CSH2, which specifies a minimum net density of 25 dwellings per hectare.

The net developable area of Site West is 2.4ha (this includes streets and local public spaces) and therefore the approximate development capacity is between 60 and 72 homes. The net developable area of Site East is 1ha (this includes streets and local public spaces) and therefore the approximate development capacity

is between 26 and 31 homes. Despite the SODC Local Plan position in respect of higher densities, it is clear from a desktop assessment of local character, landscape and heritage features, that a lower density scheme would be responsive to the built and landscape setting of the area. This is reflective of feedback received from SODC in respect of heritage, landscape and ecology.

Access

The entrance into the site is proposed via two points on Causeway Close and Henge Crescent on Site F. These are enclosed by key corner buildings, which provide enclosure and a strong gateway.

Movement

It is important to provide routes away from flood risk zones and any new routes should be sufficiently attractive to promote leisure activities. All footpath should be usable in all weather conditions.

The two points of access provide a looped main street, creating good connectivity. Beyond that, there is a simple, connected layout that follows the perimeter block layout. This provides clear views in and out of the development, rooting the development in its surrounding context.

These secondary streets will be narrower than the main street, providing a clear hierarchy.

Footpath connectivity is extremely important, given the close proximity of the Cuttle Brook. There must be a well connected network of walking and cycling paths, as shown on the concept plan, ensuring that the comprehensive Oxford Road site encourages and allows residents to walk and cycle. Active travel will be promoted, with a cycleway provided on one side of the main street.

Parking

Every new house will have access to safe, secure cycle parking. Parking is provided in line with Oxfordshire County Council standards (2022) as follows:

| Type | Maximum allocated | Maximum unallocated |
|-------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1 bed | 1 | 0.0 |
| 2 bed | 2 | 0.3 |
| 3 bed | 2 | 0.4 |
| 4 bed | 2 | 0.5 |

Table 04: OCC Parking requirements

**Site 2: Diagnostics
Reagents**

06

6. Diagnostics Reagents site context

This section sets out the baseline context for the Diagnostic Reagents site. It presents the planning context, along with a high level site analysis, which sets out the main constraints and opportunities to development.

6.1 Site context

This site is 1.15ha and is located in the eastern entrance to Thame, in the south east of the town. It lies to the south of Wenman Road and to the west of Chinnor Road. A corridor of recent new housing to the west of the site provides a logical context for development of this site.

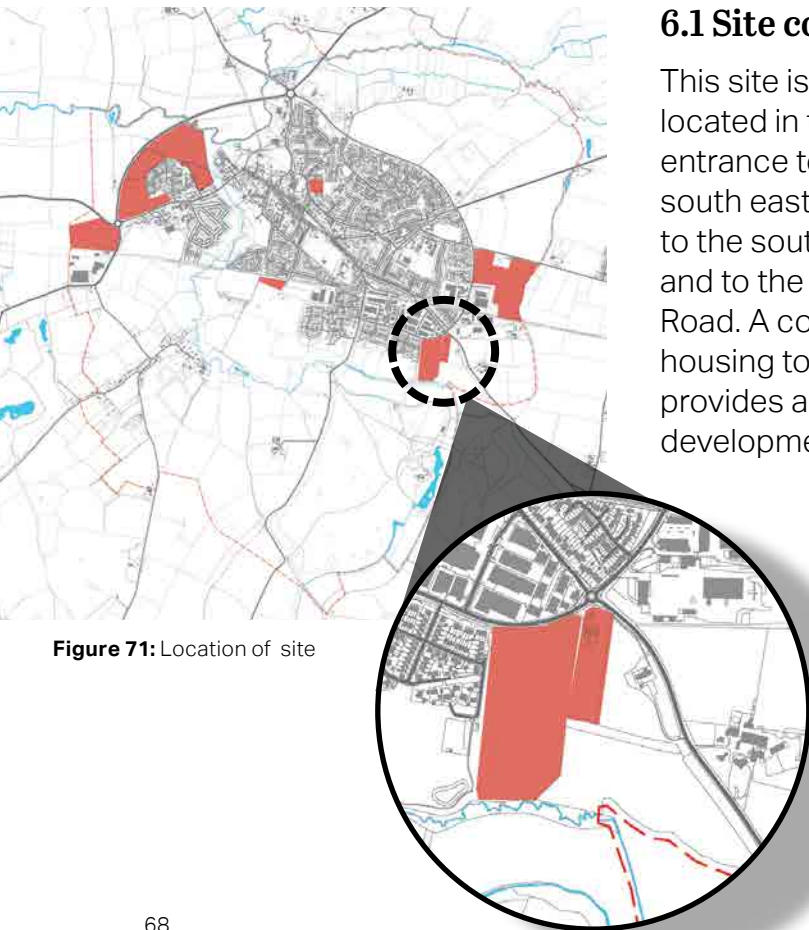


Figure 71: Location of site



Figure 72: Site boundary



KEY

- Site boundary
- Water body
- Flood zone 2
- Flood zone 3
- Trees
- Open fieldland

Figure 73: Site features

6.2 Site photos

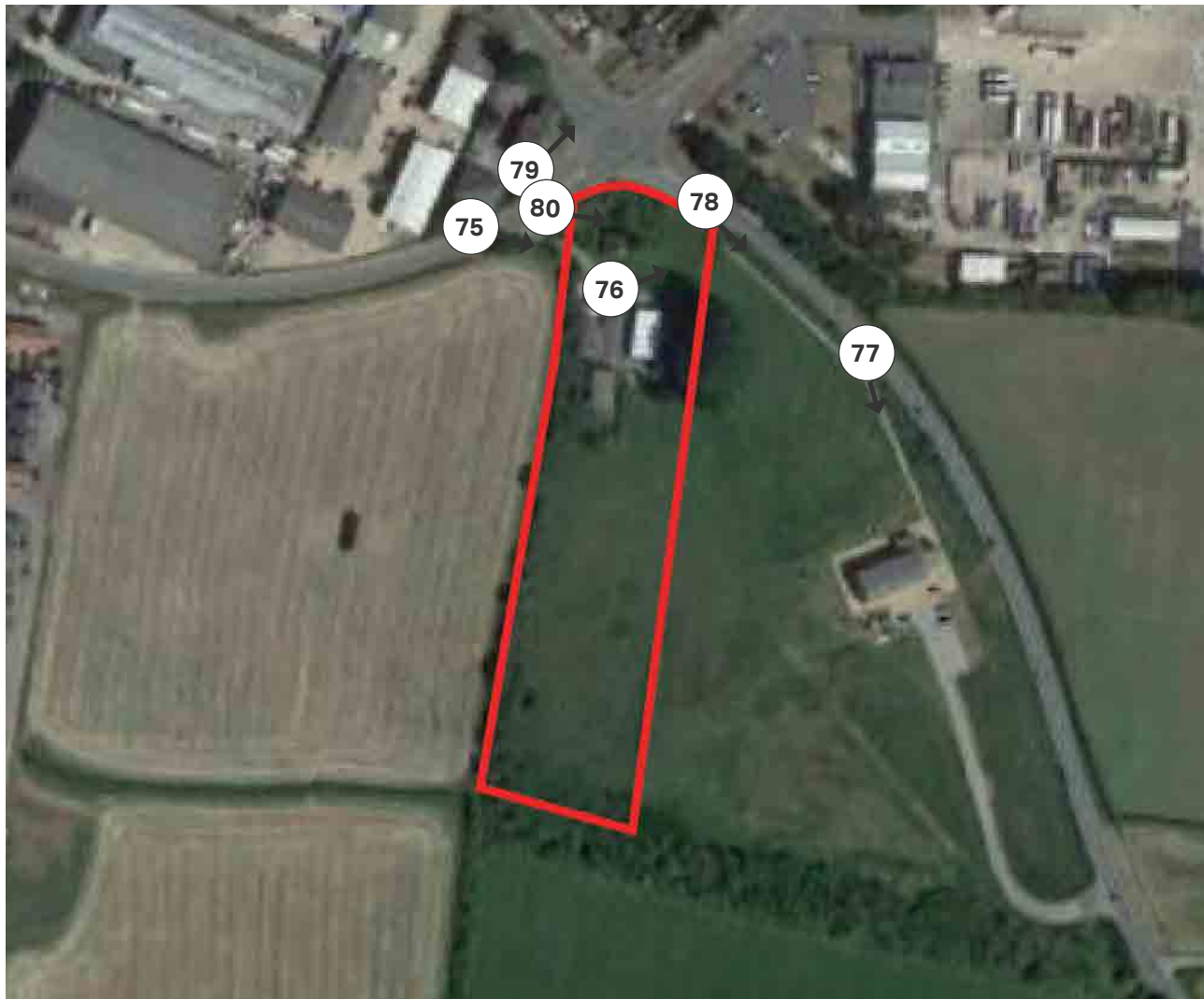


Figure 74: Site boundary



Figure 75: Existing site entrance



Figure 76: View looking towards Chinnor Road from existing site



Figure 77: View south from footpath parallel with Chinnor Rd



Figure 78: View south down Chinnor Road



Figure 79: Chinnor Rd / Wenman Rd junction



Figure 80: View west of Diagnostic Reagents property from Chinnor Road

6.3 Relevant planning context

The Diagnostic Reagents site did not feature in TNP1, but has been submitted through the SHELAA / Call for Sites process, as part of the site selection process for TNP2 (Figure 81 - see below).



Figure 81: Figure 12 from TNP2

The site is an extension to Sites C and Reserve Site C (Land south of Wenman Road), which are now built out and have achieved outline planning permission (respectively).

TNP 1 stipulated that a comprehensive masterplan for all of the allocated sites to the south of Thame should be prepared. In accordance with this a comprehensive masterplan was prepared with the outline application for site D, together with a design brief, which was approved by Thame Town Council and SODC in 2013. This is shown, to the right.

This evolved into a concept masterplan for Site C, which featured in the TNP1, also shown, right.

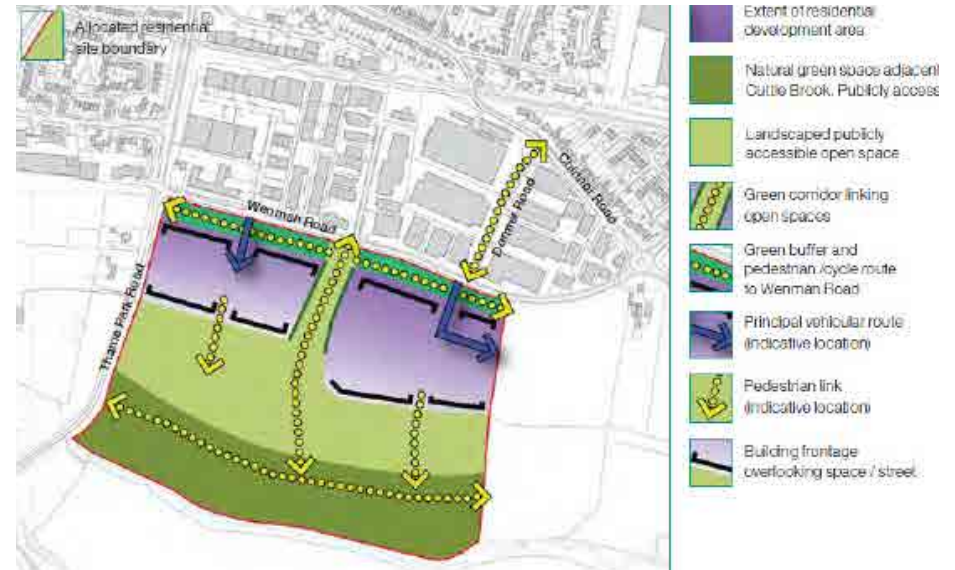


Figure 82: TNP1 Concept masterplan for Site C



Figure 83: Comprehensive masterplan



Figure 85: Site in context of recent and planned development

6.4 Site features

Access and movement

The site is not currently publicly accessible, however there is excellent footpath connectivity surrounding the site. Reserve Site C provided a continuation of the footway / cycleway to the south of Wenman Lane, which provides connectivity to the town centre and Phoenix Trail. The pedestrian link along Cuttle Brook would also be accessible via Reserve site C.

Levels

The site levels drops gently from north to southeast, with the lowest point being south of the site along the Cuttle Brook valley. The topography of the site does not represent a constraint to development of the site.

Existing landscape features

The site comprises part of one large field, which is demarcated by natural landscape features along all sides. These consist of a treed hedgerow along the western edge; a thick tree belt along the southern edge; scrub and hedgerow along the northern edge; and a broken hedgerow along the eastern edge with a fence. There are a cluster of trees in the northern part of the site, providing screening from the Diagnostic Reagents buildings.

Flooding

The site is within Flood Zone 1. Flood Zone 2 is located to the south of the site, along the Cuttle Brook corridor. Development is not proposed within this area.

Built form

On the site itself, there is a cluster of five industrial buildings, immediately to the south of a small residential property called Worcester Cottage. Beyond the site there are several immediately neighbouring buildings. Reserve Site C is located to the immediate west of the site, which has planning permission and will therefore be constructed in the future. Beyond the Site C Reserve site, is a corridor of recently constructed development, like the Site C Bellway development. The site's most prominent neighbours are the range of industrial buildings to the north of Wenman Road.

Services

An overhead electrical line is located to the west of the site along the northern edge of Reserve site C. The line terminates on the western edge of this site, in between the two southern most Diagnostic Reagents buildings.

A GPSS pipeline runs below ground diagonally across the site from north-east to south-west. The retention of this is required in any development layout, with a 3m easement from either side of the pipeline.

Views

The land form on the site drops away and then rises back up beyond it, allowing views towards the woodland in Thame Park and Sydenham Hurst.



- KEY**
- Site boundary
 - Water body
 - Residential
 - Employment/ business
 - Site access
 - Pedestrian desire line
 - Phoenix Trail
 - Footpath
 - Bus route
 - Bus stop
 - Views
 - Overhead electrical line
 - GPSS pipeline
 - 3m easement
 - Thame park
 - Flood risk zone 2
 - Flood risk zone 3
 - Trees
 - Open space

Figure 86: Site features

Diagnostic reagents design proposals

6.5 Design vision

The site will deliver the last piece of the jigsaw in the development of southern Thame. It will feature high quality homes which sit within a strong landscape structure, retaining and enhancing the natural assets of the site. The neighbourhood will promote sustainable modes of travel, linking up with the existing green infrastructure along the Cuttle Brook. It will provide a wide range of homes and will cater for a wide variety of individuals.



Figure 87: Tree lined avenue, which encloses the street and provides shelter, Great Notley, Braintree



Figure 88: Safe and pleasant footpaths (source: <https://unsplash.com/>)



Figure 89: Housing overlooking open space, with natural grasslands providing invaluable space for wildlife (Beaulieu, Chelmsford)



Figure 90: Playground provide opportunities for residents to connect, Stratford, London



Figure 91: Informal play area which is well overlooked (Great Notley, Braintree)

6.6 Design concept

Access

The entrance into the site is proposed on the site of the existing access track to Worcester Cottage and the Diagnostic Reagents buildings, immediately to the west of Wenman Road and Chinnor Road. It is a simple T junction access arrangement.

Movement

An active travel corridor along the northern edge of Reserve Site C will continue into the site, providing a continuous walking and cycling link and connecting up with Chinnor Road.

Access into the two development areas is provided via a simple loop access around the northern development block, with a tertiary route linking up with a simple private drive access to the southern development block.

Parking

Every new house will have access to safe, secure cycle parking. Parking is provided in line with Oxford County Council standards.

Development layout

The northern edge of the new development follows the pattern of development to the west of the site and should be medium density terraces / semi detached houses. The southern edge of new development should be more informal and lower density. The heights of houses should be limited to 2 storeys.

The layout of the new development will facilitate views through and from the development southwards towards Cuttle Brook and the existing woodland edge.

Use and scale

New development on this site would provide a positive gateway into the eastern part of the town, reflecting the existing built up pattern of development.

The existing Diagnostic Reagents buildings will be demolished.

Density

The average proposed density is 30dph, in line with Reserve Site C. The net developable area is 0.75ha (this includes streets and local public spaces) Therefore approximately 23 new homes are proposed, which reflect the existing urban edge established by the adjacent sites.

Open space

A green corridor along the southern edge maintains a buffer to the countryside beyond, matching the development pattern of Reserve site C to the west. A small play area would work well in this location.

An area of open space is maintained along the alignment of the central easement, where the GPPS pipeline easement.

Landscaping

A landscaped corridor with retained tree planting along Wenman Road will provide a soft edge to the development and will screen the industrial frontage to the north of the site.

Significant new tree planting and a carefully designed eastern edge will be required to protect views when travelling to and from Chinnor on Chinnor Road.



Figure 92: Design concept

**Site 3: Land South
of Wenman Road**

07

7. Land south of Wenman Road site context

This section sets out the site and planning background for the Land south of Wenman Road site, as well as outlining a high level concept plan for the site, which is in keeping with the outline planning application for the site, which was submitted in 2021

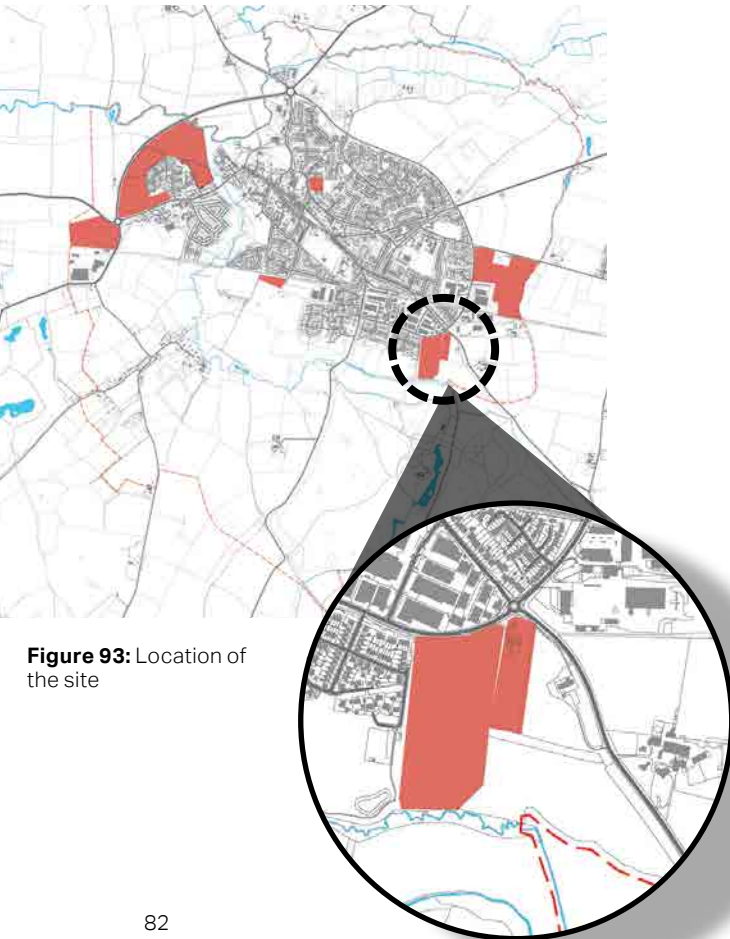


Figure 93: Location of the site

7.1 Site context

This site comprises agricultural land and is 5.86ha in area. It is located in the south eastern part of Thame. It lies to the south of Wenman Road and to the west of Chinnor Road.

Relevant planning content

The site was allocated in the TNP1 as Reserve Site C and is allocated in TNP2 under Policy GDH1a: Land to the south of Wenman Road.

TNP1 stipulated that a comprehensive masterplan for all of the allocated sites to the south of Thame should be prepared. In accordance with this a comprehensive masterplan was prepared with the outline application for site D, together with a design brief, which was approved by Thame Town Council and SODC in 2013. This is shown on the previous section about Diagnostic

Reagents. The comprehensive masterplan informed a concept masterplan, which featured in the TNP1, shown, below.

The site has an outline planning permission for 57 homes.

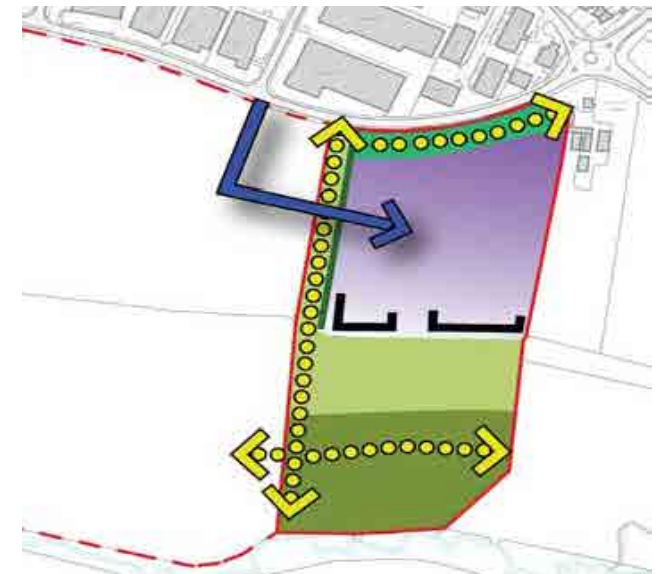


Figure 94: TNP1 Concept masterplan for Reserve Site C

7.2 Site concept

The site concept for the site, right, is in keeping with the outline planning application for the site and follows the morphology of the Diagnostic Reagents site. It features approximately 60 homes and a landscape corridor along the gas pipeline, which is subject to an easement along its alignment.



Figure 95: Reserve Site C Masterplan



Figure 96: Concept masterplan

Site 4: Cattle Market

08

8. Cattle Market site context

This section sets out the baseline context for the Cattle Market site. It presents the planning context, along with a high level site analysis, which sets out the main constraints and opportunities to development.

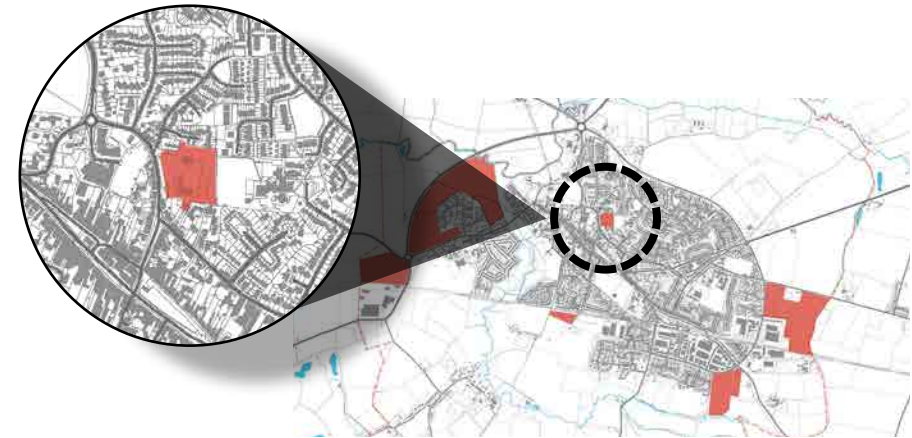


Figure 97: Site in context of Thame

8.1 Site context

The Cattle Market site is arguably one of the most important sites in the town, because of its location and the fact that it is one of few sites that can provide significant retail floorspace.

The site extends to approximately 1.28ha in area and is located behind the town centre, to the east of North Street, which provides access and egress into the site. Surrounding land uses are mixed: Barley Hill Primary School is located to the east of the site; Waitrose and smaller footprint retail to the west; and housing to the north and south.

It is owned by SODC and has been in operation since 1949 and is privately operated by a co-operative of local farmers, who hold a weekly Farmers Mart on the site.

Development of the site must ensure that it contributes positively to the vitality of the town centre.



Figure 98: Site boundary



KEY

- Site boundary
- Residential
- Retail/ pub/ restaurant
- Community/ religious
- Education
- Trees
- Green space
- Car parking

Figure 99: Site context

8.2 Site photos



Figure 100: Site boundary with viewpoints



Figure 101: View north along eastern boundary



Figure 102: Looking south from Racquets Fitness Centre



Figure 103: Site entrance, looking up North St



Figure 104: View east towards south eastern corner of the site



Figure 105: View of Cattle Market



Figure 107: View of car park



Figure 106: Existing access to private car park



Figure 108: Site entrance, looking east

8.3 Relevant planning context

The relevant policy background for the site is set out in the existing Thame NP (TNP1), which identifies the site for mixed-use development.

Specifically, Policy WS14 from the TNP1 (redevelop the Cattle Market site for mixed use) states that the development of the site may include:

- Up to 3,000 sq m of retail in the following classes: A1 (excluding food supermarkets); A2 financial and professional services; and A3 restaurants and cafes;
 - Residential uses including dwellings at upper floor levels. Residential may only form a minor element of any mixed-use scheme as the main role of this site is to support the town centre;
 - Office uses (Classes B1a or A2), including office uses at upper floor levels;
 - Residential and non-residential institutions (Classes C2 and D1) and community facilities (Class D2);
 - Public car parking spaces; and
 - Improved pedestrian links along North Street to the High Street.
- Additionally, Policy WS15 (Ensure that redevelopment of the Cattle Market site incorporates key principles to relate it positively to the wider town) stipulates that proposals for redevelopment of the Cattle Market site must ensure that:
- New development must create a positive building frontage onto North Street that respects the character and scale of the surrounding area, including the Conservation Area;
 - The development must be designed to respond to views northwards along North Street, so creating a visual link between it and the High Street;
 - New development must be located to define and overlook the pedestrian link next to Barley Hill Primary School; and
 - Pedestrian routes through the Cattle Market site must be designed to provide a direct and safe walking network.

Fig 8.8 from the TNP1 (right) sets out the spatial principles for redevelopment of the Cattle Market site, which were established with the community in 2011.



Figure 109: Site boundary in context of recent and planned development

8.4 Operational issues

Operational issues

Leases

There are various operational issues concerning the redevelopment of the site, due to the leases associated with the existing land uses on the site, namely the Cattle Market and the Racquets Fitness Centre. The Cattle Market operator has an existing plan to relocate, but their lease has been extended to 2025. They have full planning permission for a relocation. The Racquets Fitness Centre, on the other hand, have a long lease and therefore must be incorporated into the proposals as an assumed retained use. From a design and operational standpoint, it would be preferable to secure vacant possession, but this is likely not feasible in the short term. Therefore, the layout must allow for the retention of this use.

Parking provision

There is an existing parking area on the site, which is open all week and provides overspill car parking for the town centre, and is also used by parents collecting children from Barley Hill Primary School. It provides a total of 119 spaces (with 7 of those being disabled). The car park is relatively well used and produces significant revenue for SODC (however it has been noted that this is somewhat offset by the operational costs). It is understood that parking of some sort will need to be maintained on the site, however this can be restricted to small scale provision (potentially residential and visitor). Ultimately, active travel needs to be promoted through this development.

Consultation

The consultation on TNP2 established the following themes with the local community:

- Respondents noted that the site currently provides vital parking in Thame, being used by parents collecting children from school as well as for overflow parking for those visiting the town centre;
- There were several comments made that suggested the site should be redeveloped for community use, for example to create an arts centre; and
- The importance of the Cattle Market was disputed among respondents: while some felt it added to the character of Thame, others had no issue with it being removed, however most noted that it should be relocated somewhere fairly nearby.



Figure 110: Site boundary, Sites Summary, TNP2

8.5 Site features

Access and movement

Currently the site features a looped access system, with access and egress provided at either end of the western site boundary onto North Street. This provides access to the Cattle Market and a well used public car park, which wraps around the eastern and northern site boundary.

A footpath running on a horizontal axis along the northern edge of the site provides access to Barley Hill primary school and the Lea Park residential area to the east of the site. This is a popular desire line, as it also provides access to Waitrose to the west and then beyond, southwards to the High Street, via Greyhound Walk.

There is a bridleway (PROW) to the north of the site running along Moorend Lane, which extends eastwards beyond the A4129 and links up with the wider walking and cycle network to the east of the town.

There is also a footpath (PROW) providing access to St Marys Church, via the south eastern corner of the cricket pitch.

Levels

The site levels rise gently from north to south, with the highest part of the site being to the south eastern corner at 71m AOD.

The topography reaches a high point to the south of the site on Barley Hill.

Existing landscape features

There is a well-established corridor of trees in front of an attractive stone wall, which forms the western site boundary, along North Street.

The school playing fields along the eastern boundary provide a pleasant, green edge and feature mature trees and a continuous hedgerow.

Flooding

The site is within Flood Zone 1 – low probability within flood risk terms.

Noise

The site borders the B4445 on its western edge. Trees will be planted on both sides of this road to create a screening corridor. A suitable buffer zone along this boundary will be necessary to mitigate the adverse effect of noise pollution on the future development.

Views

The site is fairly well enclosed, due to the built form surrounding it and the trees along the eastern and western boundaries.

KEY

























-  Site boundary
-  Water body
-  Tall building
-  Key destination
-  Vehicular access
-  Pedestrian desire line
-  Noise
-  Overlooking
-  Buildings of note
-  Listed buildings
-  Grade I
-  Grade II*
-  Grade II
-  Bridleway
-  Footpath
-  Bus route
-  Bus stop
-  Views
-  Wall
-  Conservation area
-  Car parking
-  Green space
-  Scheduled monument
-  Tree



Figure 111: Site features

Edges and overlooking

The site has a mix of built form and landscaping along its boundary edges. In terms of built form: Barley Hill Primary School is located to the east of the site; Waitrose and smaller footprint retail to the west; and housing to the north and south. As mentioned above, trees mark the eastern and western site boundaries. As such, there is overlooking on the north (Abingdon Close) and southern edges from residential properties due to the lack of vegetation.

The houses on the western part of Abingdon Close - at the egress point of the site - have direct views into the site due to their orientation: they front onto the site at this point. Further east houses back onto the site and therefore are further away from the site boundary due to the rear gardens, so overlooking is less of a consideration.

The southern edge is an inactive frontage formed by the backs of buildings, with limited, but some issues of overlooking. This edge comprises a small car park and three buildings; a small two storey office block; the rear frontage of a two storey block of flats, with some vegetation; and a

four storey block of flats, beyond the south eastern corner of the site. This building in particular has views into the site.

There are some views into the site along the western edge (North St), particularly by the site access and egress points, where there is no vegetation to filter views. These overlooking issues will inform the layout of the site proposals.

Built form

The site is brownfield and is located directly to the eastern boundary of the conservation area and as such, the built form immediately surrounding the site is predominantly historic in character. There are a significant number of Grade II listed buildings within the conservation area, along the High St and North St. Closer to the site, there is a cluster of architectural buildings of note along Moorend Lane.

Housing along North Street, Moorend Lane and Wellington Street consist of small, two storey Victorian terraces, faced with red brick or a light render. The exception to this is a three storey former Victorian warehouse on the corner of Wellington Street and

North St, now converted into apartments, which acts as a landmark. Some of the terraces along North St feature front facing gable rooflines, which adds interest in the streetscape. Residential properties along these streets area tend to have no protruding features, due to continuous building lines, which also tend to be close to the pavement, creating an enclosed street scene.

Post war housing is located to the north and east of the site, which is consistently two storey in height and suburban in nature. Housing in these areas feature low pitched roofs and building lines which are more undulating and building lines set back from the street, creating an informal character.

Within the site itself, there are three buildings associated with the cattle market, which are small scale industrial warehouses; low in scale and wide in footprint. Beyond that, there is a large two storey building on the eastern boundary, which is currently used for health and fitness uses.

A small toilet block is located in the south western corner of the site.



Figure 112: St Mary's Church



Figure 113: Victorian properties along North Street



Figure 114: Buildings of note along North Street



Figure 115: View east along Abingdon Close

8.6 Design vision and objectives

Thame Cattle Market will be a diverse and healthy new community which delivers the highest standards of development. The development will combine Thame's heritage and the unique setting of the site, to create a unique and adaptable living and working environment, which focuses on connection.

Cattle Market design objectives:

Healthy

- Well connected active travel routes, encouraging people out of the car;
- Mobility hub, providing transport choices for a healthy community; and
- Local food production area in the south east corner, close to the school, mobility hub and main square.

Adaptable

- A flexible multi-functional community square allowing for meanwhile or pop-up uses;
- An adaptable community hub building at its heart, focused on social connection; and
- Flexible employment opportunities with adaptable live/ work units.

Sustainable

- Founded on active travel principles, supporting climate change mitigation; and
- Self-sufficient neighbourhood in a town centre location, with facilities supporting day to day needs close by or on site.

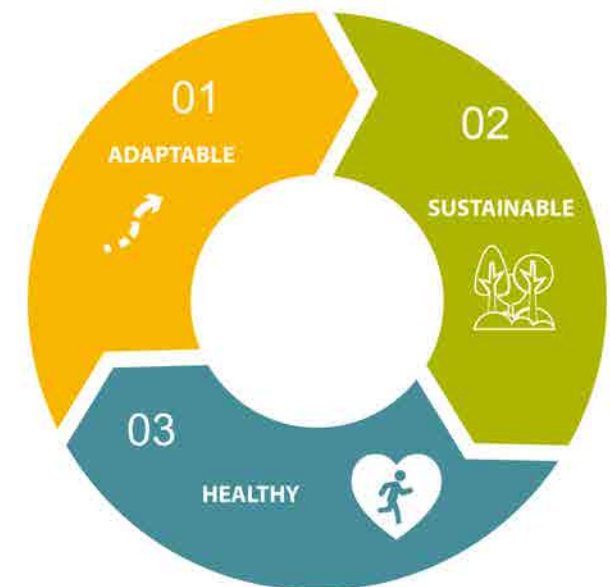


Figure 116: Design objectives



Figure 117: Integrated and attractive parking solution creates potential for social connection (Clay Farm, Cambridge)



Figure 118: Flexible meeting space (source: Adobe Stock)



Figure 119: Active travel provision (Kings Cross, London)



Figure 120: A vibrant and inclusive market square (source: Adobe Stock)



Figure 121: Working from home (source: Adobe Stock)



Figure 122: Corner building with higher scale creates a landmark building. Articulation features addresses the corner. (Somewhere in the UK)

8.7 Design concept - strategic themes

The concept masterplan for Cattle Market needs to be visionary but also flexible, given the operational factors involved in the various land uses on the site. It should consider these strategic themes.

Structure

Many factors are at play in the urban structure of Thame, including: its heritage; its topography; its architecture; its street layout; and the requirements of the people who lived here. Taking references from all of this is important and useful in embedding the new neighbourhood at Cattle Market in its place.

There are various factors which influence the urban structure of Thame and which the potential redevelopment of Cattle Market must respond to. Some examples of this are the towns' heritage, topography, built form and street layout. In addition to these town wide elements, the layout of the new community must respond to the site's location and setting, as well as the retained and proposed uses on the site.

The structure of the new community needs to respond to the site's location and setting, alongside the proposed and retained uses on the site.

Density

Government policy has, over the last 20 years, encouraged an increase in density to support public transport and create more efficiency in the use of land. This will continue to be the case in the future. As with the proposed structure, the sites' density and form should not just seek to just replicate its surroundings, but instead respond to the site's unique circumstances and the vision and objectives for the new community. Therefore, the design response should focus on higher densities (40 dph+), given its proximity to the high street and the proposed uses on the site.

Urban fabric

As with structure and density, there is the opportunity to create housing for current and future needs. Development on this site should refer to the elements of the existing vernacular, to root it in place, but should not be pastiche.

New homes should provide the opportunity to adapt over time and be designed to accommodate the needs of those who choose to work from home.

It is key that new homes should form part of and overlook the street and /or public space, to enable overlooking. Homes should have access to public open space – not just private back gardens.

Active travel

It is generally accepted that active travel (walking and cycling) should be promoted wherever possible and should be encouraged to form part of longer trips via public transport. Relevant guidance documents on this matter include the Manual for Streets (MfS) and more recently the TCPA's 20-minute neighbourhood model, both of which promote active travel and walkable neighbourhoods. The benefits of this approach are that residents are encouraged to become more active, which improves their mental and physical

health; residents tend to use local facilities and green spaces more regularly; traffic is reduced, and air quality improved; and people see more of their neighbours, strengthening community bonds. The guide defines 20 minutes as the maximum time that people are willing to walk to meet their daily needs and that the 20 min journey represents an 800m walk from home to a destination and back again (10 minutes each way).

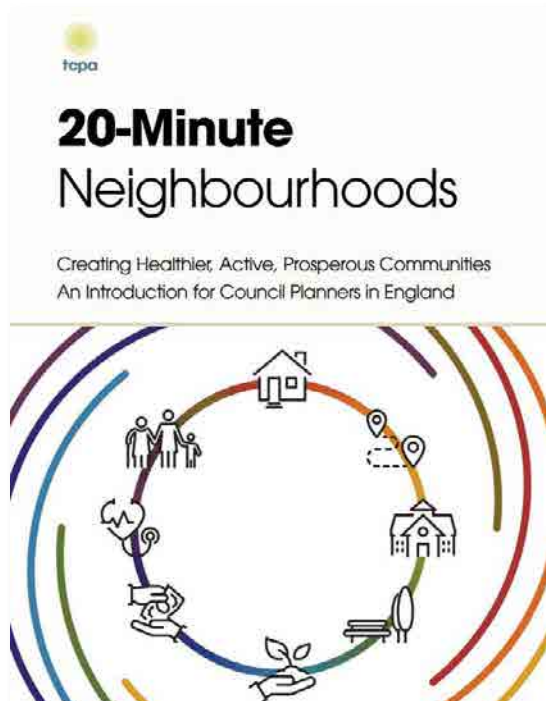


Figure 123: 20 minute neighbourhood

The impact of Covid has made the 20-minute neighbourhood even more pertinent, with access to local facilities and green and natural space being so important for wellbeing.

Therefore, the active travel principles for the site are:

- People of all ages must have easy access to safe, secure and direct routes through and beyond the site. They should be overlooked. These accesses should link the town centre, the school, or nearby public transport;
- The provision of a safe and high quality pedestrian / cycle links to Haddenham parkway station;
- Cycle hire schemes (alongside electric bikes and scooters) could help encourage active movement within the town;
- Footway/cycleway retained, connecting up to Haddenham Parkway; and
- Footway/cycleway pulled away from North st.

Parking

Parking requirements should be considered at the outset of the design. Insufficient and poorly designed parking can have negative impacts on how streets function and can create a cluttered public realm, but if designed well, it will slot into the streetscape. Parking and servicing on the site needs to be accommodated in ways that are convenient and safe but also unobtrusive.



Figure 124: Parking within a screened and attractive space (Paris, France)

8.8 Design concept - community hub

COVID19 has placed the UK under great strain but has also reminded us of the value of certain elements of the places in which we live: green spaces and parks, local shops and services and local walks. All of these elements allow us to interact with our family, friends and local community, which is essential for our overall wellbeing.

The community hub will be located at the heart of the new community and will be designed to be 24 hour use, occupying visitors during the day, and residents in the evening. It will be flexible and adaptable, allowing for changing ways of working and living. The community heart should consider including the following:

1. Flexible workspace

Flexible working is becoming more important to many and an increasing trend and this is likely to continue at an accelerated pace. This has resulted in those people experiencing working days without the time hungry commute and many have now begun to question the logic in travelling long distances every day to do

work that could just as easily be done from home. Many employees are now home based but will require/ prefer affordable and flexible working environments with the possibility to interact with others and share knowledge. This applies across all ages, from the millennial generation right through to retirees, who are wishing to prolong their careers using flexible and digitally enabled working practices in the face of increasing retirement ages.

Therefore, a co-working space offer could provide the environment for entrepreneurial businesses such as these to prosper and grow in the town. Many of us feel isolated and unmotivated when working consistently from home, and co-working environments provide the opportunity to meet other people from different industries, increasing motivation and facilitating the exchange of knowledge.

Development for flexible retail / service uses (e.g., health, financial services or banking hubs) would be supported over development primarily designed for food / drink led outlets



Figure 125: Flexible workspace within a cafe (source: <https://www.pexels.com/>)



Figure 126: Work hub spaces for the community (source: <https://www.pexels.com/>)

2. Growing / community uses

As described above, flexible work spaces are increasingly popular and can be coupled with a community-based space, such as an art centre / community centre / yoga studio. It is equally feasible to have flexible spaces / rooms within the community hub, that allows for all of the above at different times of the year. The hub will likely be run as a collaboration between public and community organisations but may have the involvement of private sector bodies such as small businesses and transport operators.

The development should accommodate some element of community growing garden. Provision of these facilities not only promotes healthy lifestyles, it also encourages community connection, physical activity, interaction with nature and provides opportunities for outdoor education. Local produce could be sold on site, increasing access to fresh fruit and vegetables. There could also be an educational link with the school.



Figure 127: Growing gardens with overlooking from Accordia Housing (Marmalade Lane, Cambridge)



Figure 128: Compact growing gardens within public realm (source: <https://www.pexels.com/>)



Figure 129: Co-location of facilities, Tibbys Triangle, Southwold



Figure 130: Local food production (source: <https://www.pexels.com/>)



Figure 131: Community shop, Southampton



Figure 132: Retail overlooking community square, Eddington Square, Cambridge

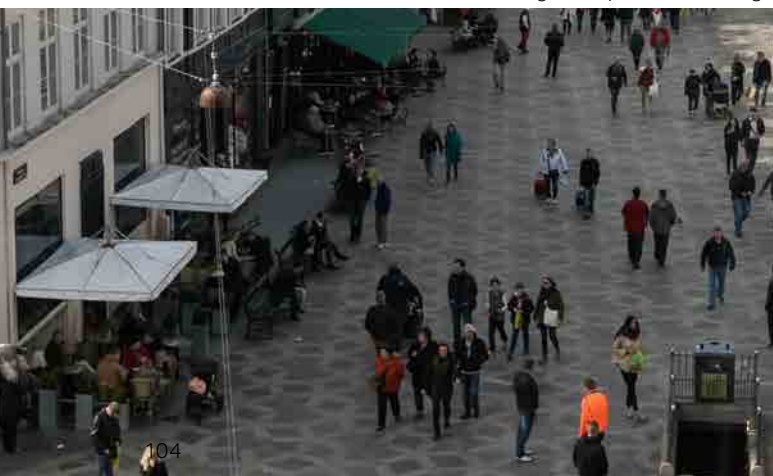


Figure 133: Small scale retail providing active frontage (source: Adobe Stock)

3. Retail / food and drink facilities

Despite the fact that in recent years, the way in which people shop has evolved, with the rise of online based shopping habits, Thame retains a strong retail offer. Thame town centre is the hub of its surrounding community and retains a thriving weekly market. The pandemic has resulted in an acute shift to living locally; and so even more people are shopping, working and exercising in their local community.

New development on the site should help to bolster the local economy by a focus on widening the mix of uses, creating a diverse and adaptable design with an amenity-first approach, so that it becomes mixed-use and community led. The site should allow for the provision of small retail units at the ground floor of residential footprints, overlooking the public realm or the street, providing overlooking and active frontages. Apartment buildings could be designed with higher floor to ceiling ratios, providing an adaptable ground floor which could accommodate a shop or community space.

Active frontages bring life and vitality to streets and public spaces. Introducing regular doors, windows, front gardens and front parking, providing it does not dominate, can stimulate activity and social interactions. Narrow frontages



Figure 134: Pop up food and drink cart, Southbank

with a vertical rhythm can create a more attractive and interesting streetscape, while articulation on façades and use of bays and porches can create a welcoming feeling.

The development should also allow space in the public realm for pop up retail / food and drink.

In addition, a budget supermarket use should be proposed along the site frontage, acting as a gateway and providing for day to day retail needs. (Policy TC4 of the SODC 2035 Local Plan).

Another model to consider is the community shop, which trade primarily for community benefit and their interests are linked into community control. They have the advantage of supporting local producers and suppliers (potentially providing a front door/ shop window for their services) as well as creating local employment. Community shops often host the local post office or are co located with a café or a community building.

4. Mobility hub

We are living in a time of unprecedented changes in transportation and mobility. While the car will continue to have its place for the short-term future, this site must accommodate alternative modes of transport. Therefore, the following trends should be considered during the detailed design process:

- Vehicle electrification could have a major impact on the design of places in the future e.g. fewer parked cars and less need for car storage;
- The sharing economy and the rise of on demand mobility, hail and ride services;
- Behavioural shifts away from car reliance due to costs, environmental awareness, and a shift in the way people work and live;
- An increasing reliance on public transport and shared mobility within younger generations;
- The street should be designed as a space, not a road. Streets have many different functions to accommodate, but when balanced, they can – and should - provide a sociable function.

Mobility Hubs are now being planned all over the country and a number of micro hubs around Thame are being proposed as part of the TNP2.

The site should include a mobility hub, which will promote a shift in the way people travel and provide a focal point for the new neighbourhood. It will be a place to pick up deliveries, have a coffee, repair your bike, charge your electric bike and will provide information and help for those who are mobility impaired. This should be at the heart of the scheme in the community heart. It should include a food and drink element – somewhere for people to stop and connect – and also include public conveniences with showers, to promote those working on the site or in the town centre, to adopt active travel patterns of commuting.



Figure 135: EV charging point (source: Adobe Stock)



Figure 137: Electric bicycle (source: Adobe Stock)



Figure 136: Streets designed as spaces, Eddington, Cambridge

5. Greenspace

The importance of place over individual components of the built environment is fundamentally important when it comes to placemaking. Greenspaces and the public realm is fundamental in placemaking, because these crucial spaces offer opportunities for social interaction and play (formal and informal); and provide opportunities for physical activity and interaction with nature. It is now widely acknowledged that access to nature and green space has an extremely therapeutic effect on the mind, amongst many other things.

The rising trend in local food production is a response to a number of factors including: the increasing cost of food; a response to food safety concerns; a desire to eat more organic food; and a preference for food to be grown more locally using more sustainable practices and without the long (and recently disrupted) supply chains. Furthermore, fresh, nutritious fruit and vegetables and the activity involved in growing and harvesting them can be a great way to achieve healthy and active lifestyles – as can the interaction with nature itself. They can also provide opportunities for community interaction and bring together local people and businesses as well as people of all ages.

There is a growing recognition of the key influence designing for play has on wellbeing and in creating a socially cohesive environment. Play can help address fundamental human needs for interaction, movement and exercise and creates a focal point for the community. Welcoming and stimulating places to play can make a real difference to children's lives.

The development at Cattle Market should therefore consider the following elements:

1. A small green space, centrally located on the key desire line between the town centre, school and existing homes to the east and north. Opportunity for elements of play in this space. Also providing a buffer to existing residential;
2. Community growing garden, with visual links from the village green, school and retirement housing;
3. Wildflower / grassland planting along grass strip along North St;
4. Existing trees retained, to provide enclosure, screening, amenity and cooling; and
5. A green wall along the edge of the community building.



Figure 138: Green living wall (source: <https://www.greenroofs.com/directory/livewall/>)



Figure 139: The 'Missing link' rain gardens scheme, Vauxhall - a series of green spaces to promote walking and cycling



Figure 140: Dianthus, wildflower meadow



Figure 141: Orchard (source: Adobe Stock)



Figure 142: Bird and bat boxes work well in small spaces



Figure 144: Communal spaces provide opportunities for outdoor learning and events (source: <https://teenstotrails.org/blog>)



Figure 143: Small ponds are excellent for wildlife and also work well in confined urban spaces

8.9 Design concept - Option 1

The design concept features the following elements, which are shown on the plan, opposite:

1. Identifying a promising potential location for retail/mixed-use development, offering an enticing opportunity to incorporate a small supermarket alongside residential flats above;
2. Emphasizing the importance of maintaining a key view to the corner building, strategically positioning it to serve as a focal point within the urban landscape, enhancing visual appeal and architectural coherence;
3. Committing to providing public access to the Racquets Fitness centre, recognizing its significance as a community asset and ensuring inclusivity and accessibility for all residents and visitors;
4. Envisioning a well-designed public space, thoughtfully integrated and enhanced by the surrounding developments, creating a harmonious and inviting environment that encourages social interaction and community engagement;
5. Retain access to the car park;
6. Highlighting the importance of retaining the Racquets Fitness Centre as a community hub while proposing an upgrade to the building facade, aiming to enhance aesthetics and functionality while preserving the facility's vital role within the community;
7. Recognizing the opportunity for mixed-use development, leveraging the site's potential to integrate residential, commercial, and recreational elements, thereby maximizing land use efficiency and community benefits;
8. Ensuring the retention of access by foot to the school, prioritizing pedestrian-friendly environment to promote safe and convenient mobility for students and pedestrians;
9. Committing to retain car parking, acknowledging its importance in meeting the needs of site occupiers, residents, visitors and businesses within the area;
10. Introducing enhancements to the rear of parking and servicing areas for the new development, incorporating tree planting for shade and intimacy, thereby creating a more inviting and environmentally sustainable urban environment. This area can act as a mobility hub;
11. Introducing a new residential development overlooking the car parking and servicing area, strategically enhancing the visual appeal and functionality of the route from North Street to the school, thereby creating a more attractive and cohesive space; and
12. Ensuring the establishment of safe and attractive walking links to local landmarks and places of interest, fostering connectivity and accessibility while promoting community engagement and exploration.



KEY

- Site boundary
- New trees
- Existing tree
- Key frontage
- Secondary frontage
- Key building
- Street
- Development area
- Parking
- Potential open space
- Main vehicular access
- Secondary vehicular access
- Potential connection
- Desired line
- Bridleway

Figure 145: Site concept - Option 1

8.10 Design concept - Option 2

The design concept features the following elements, which are shown on the plan, opposite:

1. Propose retail and mixed-use development, integrating the opportunity for a small supermarket alongside residential spaces above, fostering a dynamic blend of commercial and residential functionalities within the urban landscape;
2. Ensure a key view to the corner building, strategically positioning it to enhance aesthetic appeal and architectural prominence within the surrounding environment;
3. Reconfigure the route into the site, meticulously planning pathways and thoroughfares to optimize accessibility and traffic flow, thereby enhancing the overall efficiency and convenience of the development;
4. Retain access to the car park;
5. Proposing a comprehensive mixed-use development strategy, leveraging the synergies between various functions to meets diverse community needs;
6. Maintain the Racquets Fitness centre as a community hub within the short-term/long-term development plot, acknowledging its significance and potential contribution to the overall appeal and functionality of the site;
7. Envision a mixed-use development scheme that integrates residential, commercial, and recreational elements that caters to diverse community needs;
8. Preserve access by foot to the school, prioritizing pedestrian-friendly environment to facilitate safe and convenient mobility for students, and visitors alike;
9. Cultivate a civic space with adequate landscaping, meticulously designing greenery and open areas to create an inviting and tranquil environment that is harmoniously integrated with the surrounding developments;
10. Incorporate landscaped areas within the car parking zone, blending functionality with aesthetics to create a visually pleasing and environmentally sustainable parking solution; and
11. Explore the mixed-use development opportunity in the northern part of the site, leveraging its strategic location and potential for synergy with existing and proposed amenities to maximize overall value and utility.



Figure 146: Site concept- Option 2

**Site 5: Land at
Windmill Road**

9

9. Land at Windmill Road site context

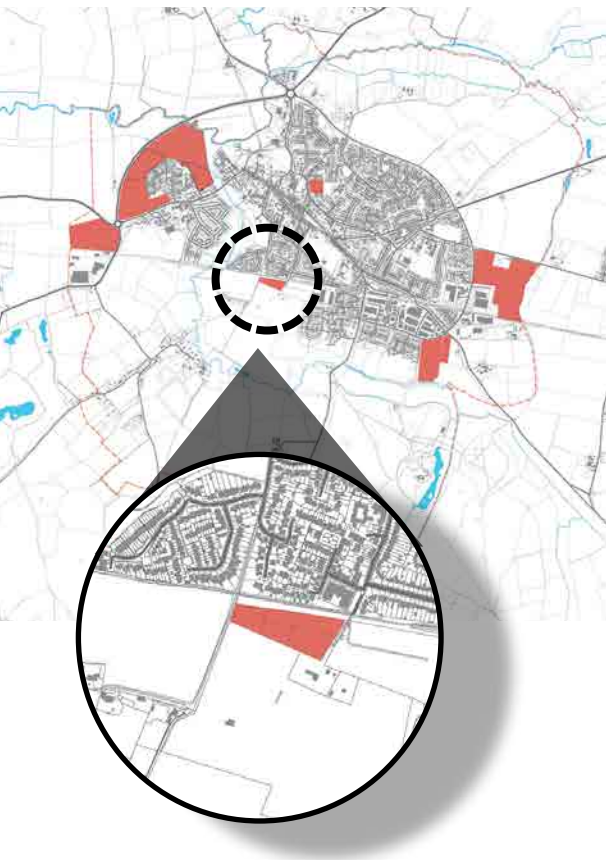


Figure 147: Location of site

9.1 Site context

This section sets out the planning context and site proposals for the Land at Windmill Road site.

Site context

This site is located in the south of Thame, to the west of Windmill Road and directly to the south of the Phoenix Trail.

Relevant planning content

The site is allocated in the TNP2 for 30 homes and has granted planning permission for 31 affordable homes at 26th January 2013. The site layout has been designed and approved through close collaboration with SODC landscape and urban design officers.



Figure 148: Approved planning application masterplan

Site concept

The site concept for the site, right, is in keeping with the outline planning application for the site and features approximately 30 homes. It is based on a simple layout which provides natural surveillance onto three areas of open space, which are well distributed throughout the site, to allow all residents easy access to outdoor space.

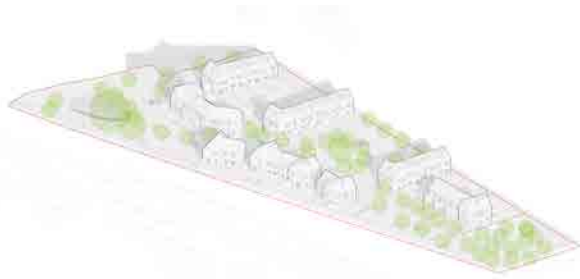


Figure 149: Axonometric of application layout



Figure 150: Concept masterplan

**Site 6: Land at
Rycote Lane**

10

10. Rycote Lane site context

For large-scale, non-residential development such as employment, understanding the context of the site and attention to detail and build quality is just as important as with residential applications, particularly because they tend to be large structures or 'big boxes' and often on greenfield sites.

Thame has a significant amount of industrial (B2) and warehouse (B8) floorspace, much of this being located within the south-eastern part of the town. Office accommodation (B1) is more limited. Therefore, two sites are being considered for new employment in the town; Rycote Lane and Howland Road.



Figure 151: Site in context of Thame



Figure 152: Site boundary

10.1 Site context

This site is approximately 7.8ha and is located in a gateway location on the western edge of the town. It has good access to the strategic road network, such as the M40, being located at the junction of the A418 (Thame Rd) and Rycote Lane. It is also well served by bus services (Sapphire 280 service by Arriva which links to Thame Oxford and Aylesbury) and cycle routes, being close to the Phoenix Trail (part of the National Cycle Network, which delivers a traffic-free route between Thame and Princes Risborough) and next to national cycle route (NCR) 57, which runs westwards all the way to Oxford.

The site is directly adjacent to existing employment (Menlo Industrial Park which incorporates ASM and the former Gregory Distribution Land) and therefore is a logical location for further employment. It is also set back from the main residential area in Thame, reducing any potential impacts on existing residents.



Figure 153: Site context

10.2 Site photos



Figure 154: Site with viewpoints



Figure 155: View westwards across site from Rycote Lane



Figure 156: View north towards Christmas Lane and site beyond



Figure 157: View towards north east of site and Thame Rd beyond

10.3 Relevant planning context

Land at Rycote Lane was submitted through the Call for Sites exercise and is adjacent to land that was allocated in the first TNP. The site boundary that was submitted in the Call for Sites is shown, right. Note that this is different to the site boundary now being promoted.

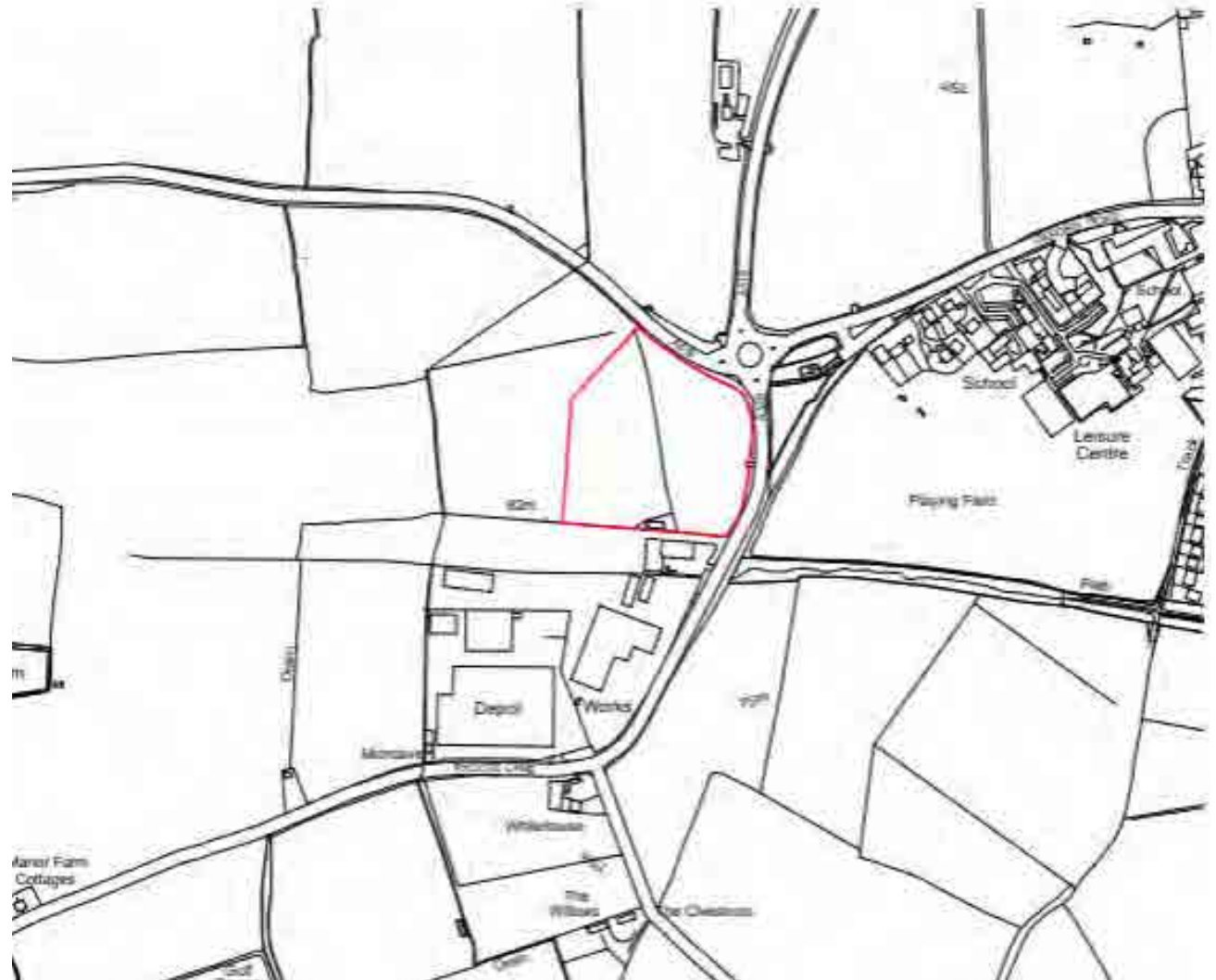


Figure 158: Site boundary

10.4 Site features

Access and movement

The site is not currently publicly accessible, however there is excellent footpath connectivity surrounding the site. The NCR 57 runs along the A418 to the north of the site. There are a number of PROW providing walking links into the town centre and to the Cuttle Brook nature reserve.

Levels

The site is located on a high point in the landscape at 80m AOD.

Existing landscape setting

The site is located in a key gateway location to the west of Thame. It is located opposite the playing fields associated with Lord Williams school, on an elevated point in the landscape, which is open and visible. As such, it is considered a sensitive site from a landscape setting perspective.

Existing landscape features

The site is part of two agricultural fields, with a continuous hedgerow along the centre of the site, demarcating the two. The site is edged by a low-level hedgerow to north and east along the carriageway edge and as such, is visible from Rycote Lane and the A418. There is a small cluster of trees in the north eastern corner at the roundabout junction of the A418, which provides interest and some enclosure

Flooding

The site is within Flood Zone 1 – low probability within flood risk terms.

Built form

The site has not been previously developed and there are no existing buildings on site. Beyond the site there are several large industrial buildings as part of Menlo Industrial Estate.

Archaeology

Some evidence of archaeological interest has been found on the eastern part of the site, but the extent or significance is not yet known.

KEY





















-  Site boundary
-  Water bodies
-  Key destination
-  Pedestrian desire line
- Listed building:
-  Grade II
-  Footpath
-  Phoenix Trail
-  Bus route
-  Bus stop
-  Conservation area
-  Green spaces
-  Open space
-  Structural planting
-  Flood risk zone 2
-  Flood risk zone 3
-  Residential
-  Employment/business
-  Community/religious
-  Education
-  Administrative boundary



Figure 159: Site features

10.5 Site specific landscape design guidance

This section has been taken from, and provides a summary of, the recommendations from the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment which AECOM have prepared separately.

General Synopsis

- This landscape has a simple land form cover and has some ability to accommodate change. The intact field boundaries will, in places, partially help to screen development;
- The scale of the development will be visible from the surrounding area. There are some screening opportunities afforded by the land cover of trees and woodlands. In some limited areas the development could be visually contained by the vegetative network. However, generally this is an open landscape with views both inward and outward; and
- In addition to this, the function and the activity of the people experiencing the view and the extent of their interest will influence the views and the visual amenity that they experience. The most sensitive receptors are listed buildings residents, communities and people using the PRoW networks, which have traditionally traversed through an open farmland landscape, with open views to the wider farmland and beyond. Development will impede views and they will become less attractive. Mitigation may be able to address or reduce this impact in time. However the value of this open, essentially uncluttered landscape is a worthy and valuable trait in itself.

Landscape Visual and Value Assessment

The development would impact on the local character and the entrance area to Thame. This entrance it is an important part of the town's gateway.

Locally the site would be visible from the A418 and the A329 and there would be a noticeable change in a large proportion of the views from these routes. Potentially there are middle distance views due to the limited topography changes and the vegetation cover, which is generally limited to the field edge and not particularly dense.

The development would interrupt the flat landscape and would be a noticeable feature particularly with the upper sections of the building development closer to the A418/A329 link. Therefore, it is assessed that the area has a Medium acceptance of development.

For additional background, please also refer here to:

1. SODC's Landscape Character Assessment;
2. AECOM Rycote Lane and Howland Road - Landscape Sensitivity Assessment; and
3. Nicholsons Lockhart Garratts' LVIA, on behalf of Castle Trustees.

In addition to the mitigation measures outlined in the promoters masterplan for the site, the following mitigation measures are proposed.



Figure 160: Landscape guidance

Screen belt planting

1. Ensure screening to development edge from listed buildings near Abbey Farm approx 710m north west from the western boundary;
2. Ensure screening to development edge from listed buildings near Manor Farm approx 650m south west from the western boundary;

3. Use native species of local provenance wherever possible; and where possible severed hedgerows and tree lines will be reconnected using appropriate native species; and
4. Woodland planting should strengthen hedges and tree cover. (Hawthorn and field maple form a suitable species palette).

Layout / interface

5. Ensure new development creates a sensitive interface with the adjacent rural area - avoid stark transition.

Building scale

6. In order to protect the views the area which sits on high point should be allocated to buffer planting; and
7. Consider views from PROW and the nearby residential area in relation to building scale.

Rycote Lane design proposals

10.6 Design vision

Rycote Lane will deliver much needed high quality new employment in the town. It will knit into the landscape setting, via existing and new greening within the site and on the buildings themselves. Existing landscape features within and surrounding the site will be essential in ensuring that the development feels well integrated.

10.7 Design concept

Access and movement

The entrance into the site is proposed via the A329. One access is preferred.

Parking

Parking areas are located to the south of the site in the highest point to avoid impacting on views.

Where necessary, additional parking is provided to the side and rear of each unit, with servicing to the rear and side.

Development layout

The siting of the employment blocks is laid out to follow the contours of the site, with buildings located at lower points wherever possible. Proposed building height within the most elevated areas will be kept low, with the Ridge Heights below those in the Menlo Estate. As such, buildings create a sensitive interface with the adjacent rural area and are located to limit visibility of the development from nearby publicly accessible areas, spaces and routes.

New buildings along the A329 are sited to allow windows and entrances to overlook this road, which will maximise surveillance from the road and enclose the 'private' car parking areas behind them.

Development area

Seven new employment units are proposed - ranging from 7,500-25,000sq ft - providing a total of c.112,500 sqft of new employment space (based on single storey development).

Scale















The proposed scale should be no more than three storeys in scale to ridgeline for B1/2 and two storey for a larger footprint.

Open space and landscaping

A generous open space buffer along the north and western site boundaries should be provided, due to the sensitivity of this site within the landscape setting. A generous landscaped corridor should be proposed along the site boundaries (in accordance with the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment), including new and retained tree planting along the A329, which will provide a soft edge to the development and will filter views of the development. Woodland planting in association with the development will strengthen the hedges and reduce exposure of the development. It is recommended to use native species of local provenance and reconnect severed hedgerows and tree lines using appropriate native species. Propose buffer planting to the south western part of the site where the site is at the high point.



KEY

-  Site boundary
-  New structural landscaping
-  Landscape buffer area
-  Existing hedgerow
-  Existing tree belt
-  Key corner building
- Streets:
 -  Primary
 -  Secondary
-  Development area
-  Open space
-  Buffer planting
-  Car parking
-  Servicing area
-  Drainage pond

Appearance of potential buildings

- The perception of new buildings in the landscape is governed by tonal contrast with its surroundings. This can be especially noticeable when viewed at a distance, where paler colours stand out to the darker background. Generally, for a structure / surface to visually recede when viewed against a certain backdrop, the colour finish must be of a tonality that is equal to, or a degree darker than, the dominant background tonality.
- Colours are selected to either camouflage or integrate the development into the landscape and therefore must follow the tonality of the surrounding landscape. However, integration rather than accentuation should be the aim.
- Similar colours should be used on new buildings to retain a sense of visual cohesion, while using the local landscape palette to select lighter colours. This will help the development relate better to its setting, by reducing the amount of contrast, whilst at the same time, reinforcing local distinctiveness and sense of place.
- In highly visible locations or within locally important views consideration - in this case from PRow and Listed buildings - care must be given to the tonality of the receiving landscape.



Site 7: Howland Road

11

11. Howland Road site context

This site is 15.5ha and is located in a gateway location on the eastern edge of the town. It has direct access to the strategic road network, being located adjacent to Towersey Road and the B4012. The site is north of the well established existing employment / industrial part of the town (Thame Business Park) and therefore development of the site would represent a natural continuation of existing employment area. The overall size of the site could cater for any future development pressure and reduce the need for multiple sites to come forward for development.

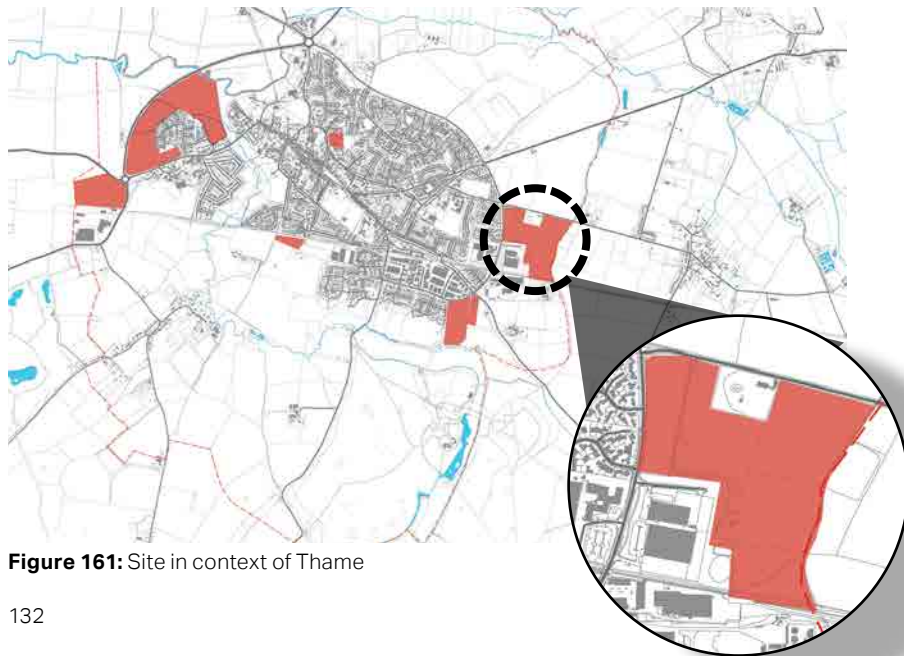


Figure 161: Site in context of Thame



Figure 162: Site boundary

11.1 Site context

This site is also well served by bus services (40 service by Carousel Buses which links to Thame to Stokenchurch and High Wycombe) and cycle routes, being close to the Phoenix Trail (part of the National Cycle Network, which delivers a traffic-free route between Thame and Princes Risborough).

The site consists of arable and pasture fields, with the majority of the external and internal field boundaries bordered by hedgerows.

Relevant planning context

This site had been submitted as a single site to South Oxfordshire's SHELAA. Within the Call for Sites the land was shown three separate parcels for individual or joint consideration.



Figure 163: Site context

11.2 Site photos



Figure 164: Site boundary with viewpoints



Figure 165: View south along B4012, with the site to the left



Figure 166: View south along B4012, at the entrance point to Windles Group



Figure 167: Typical example of housing west of the site



Figure 168: View south into site from Towersey Road



Figure 169: Edge of housing onto Howland Road at junction of Cheshire Road



Figure 170: View south west towards settlement edge from northern boundary of site



Figure 171: View south down private track to Cotmore Wells farm

11.3 Site features

Access and movement

The site is not currently publicly accessible, however there is excellent footpath connectivity surrounding the site. The Phoenix Trail runs along the southern boundary of the site and there is a well collected network of PROW providing walking links into the town centre. A private track provides access to Cotmore Wells Farm. There are two existing access points into the Howland Road business park (which is outside of the site boundary) from the B4012.

Levels

The site levels rise gradually from west to east, where there is a ridgeline of 75m AOD, as indicated on the plan.

Existing landscape features and setting

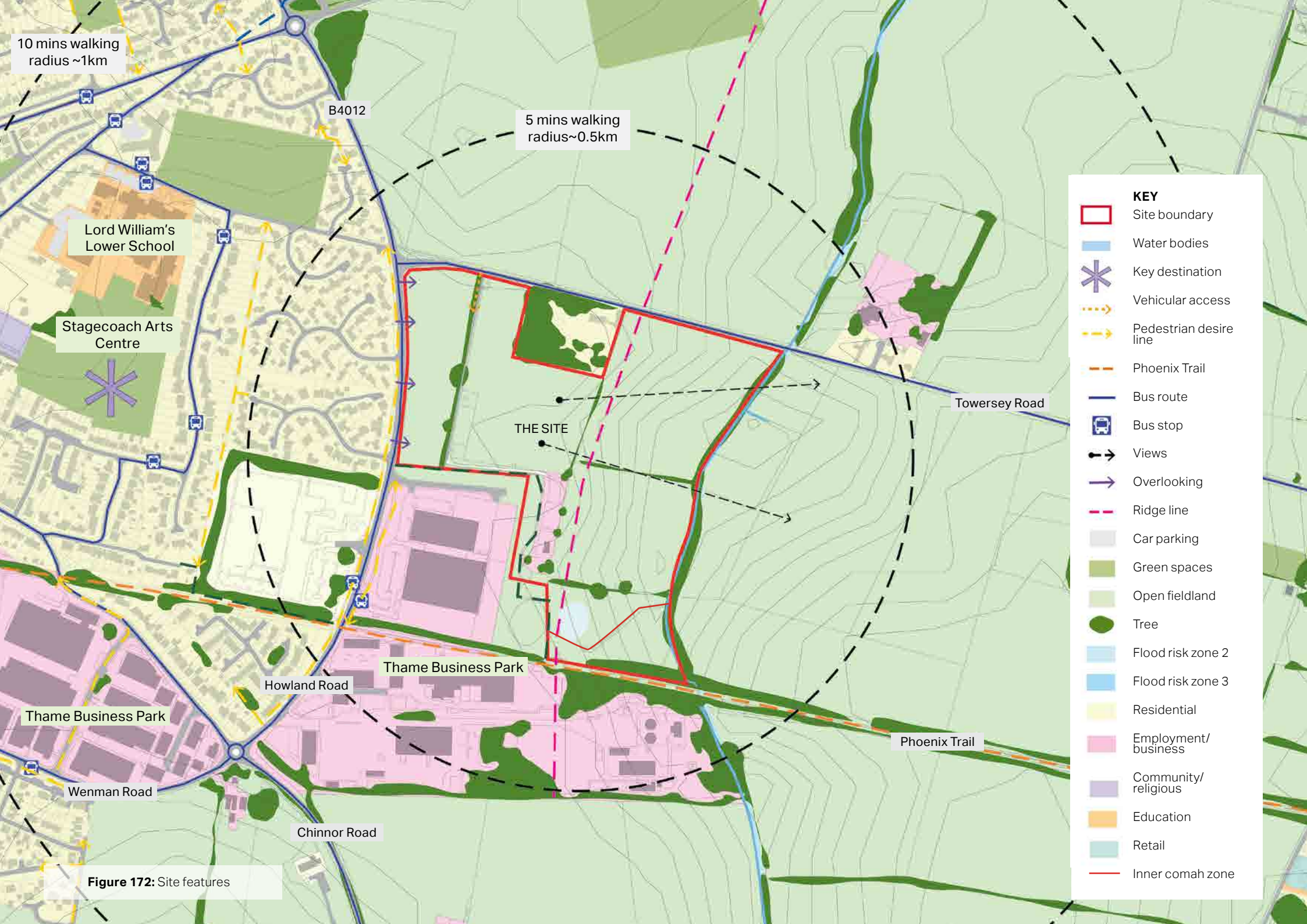
The site comprises five fields, which are dissected by natural field boundaries, such as hedgerows and trees. The eastern part of the site is further dissected horizontally by hedgerows. A small copse to the centre north is outside of the site boundary, which provides some enclosure. The eastern boundary of the site is meandering and is demarcated by a corridor of trees along the existing watercourse. The Farm is well screened by natural vegetation.

Flooding

The site is within Flood Zone 1 and therefore is not at risk of flooding.

Built form

The site has not been previously developed, however there is an existing residential building on the site. Beyond the site there are several large industrial buildings as part of Howland Road Business Park.



10 mins walking radius ~1km

5 mins walking radius ~0.5km

Lord William's Lower School

Stagecoach Arts Centre

THE SITE

Towersey Road

Thame Business Park

Thame Business Park

Howland Road

Phoenix Trail

Wenman Road

Chinnor Road

Figure 172: Site features

- KEY**
- Site boundary
 - Water bodies
 - Key destination
 - Vehicular access
 - Pedestrian desire line
 - Phoenix Trail
 - Bus route
 - Bus stop
 - Views
 - Overlooking
 - Ridge line
 - Car parking
 - Green spaces
 - Open fieldland
 - Tree
 - Flood risk zone 2
 - Flood risk zone 3
 - Residential
 - Employment/business
 - Community/religious
 - Education
 - Retail
 - Inner comah zone

11.4 Site specific landscape design guidance

This section has been taken from, and provides a summary of, the recommendations from the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment which AECOM have prepared separately.

General Synopsis

- This landscape has a simple land form cover and has some ability to accommodate change. The intact field boundaries will, in places, partially help to screen development that are susceptible to loss or degradation.
- This landscape has a positive rural character in good condition and with features worthy of conservation. It will be more susceptible to change because of the potential impact on their legibility and upon features and combinations of elements which may be difficult to replace. This also applies as this landscape has a semi-natural habitat and valued natural features such as woodland and hedgerows with good connectivity
- The scale of the development will be visible and there are only some screening opportunities afforded by the land cover of trees and woodlands. In some areas the development could be visually contained by the vegetative network. However generally this is an open landscape with extensive views both inward and outward.
- In addition to this, the function and the activity of the people experiencing the view and the extent of their interest will influence the views and the visual amenity that they experience.

Landscape Visual and Value Assessment

The magnitude of landscape change in relation to the potential development of this site is assessed as medium, as elements such as the open nature of the landscape will be lost.

The main value of this landscape is that it prevents the coalescence of the fragmented areas of development between the eastern edge of Thame and the commercial/residential development along Howlands road leading to the village of Towersey.

The magnitude of visual change is also assessed as medium, as there would be a noticeable change to a proportion of the view.

While PRow/ Phoenix Way have a high sensitivity to change the proportion of the view is limited and potentially screened by existing and proposed vegetative belts.

Therefore, the area has a Medium acceptance of development.

For further background information, please refer to:

1. SODC's Landscape Character Assessment notes that this area's sensitivity and states that development should be limited;
2. AECOM Rycote Lane and Howland Road - Landscape Sensitivity Assessment; and
3. Webb Gray Masterplan for Howland Road.

In addition to the mitigation measures outlined in the promoters masterplan for the site, the following mitigation measures are proposed.

1. Screen belt planting matrix

The screen belt along Towersey Road should consist of a mixture and a combination of shrubs, fast growing trees, and dense long-lived trees. A multi layered structure, of mainly native species, should be proposed, with dominant trees, sub-dominant trees, a shrub layer, and a peripheral “woodland edge”. In detail, the outside row of a screen belt should consist of dense shrub, the next row of a fast-growing tree species which will allow the screen belt to quickly gain height. The third row should comprise long-lived trees that will allow the screen belt to remain effective for a long time. The fourth and fifth rows, which would sit closest to the development should be made up of tall dense crowned trees that retain their foliage throughout the year.

Where there is limited space, a three-row screen belt should be sufficient.

2. Visual separation

The land within this area provides a visual separation and prevents the coalescence of the residential areas of Cotmore Wells and the residential and commercial zone (tool hire) on the B4012. The continuation of strip planning along the Thame Road will create a more urban and developed feel to the semi-rural landscape.

3. Additional buffer mitigation

As per the cross section overleaf, additional buffer mitigation is proposed, that will help prevent the coalescence of the residential/development areas. It is proposed that a recreational walkway is also incorporated into this buffer belt.



Figure 173: Site context

Howland Road design proposals

Howland Road will deliver a logical extension to the employment areas within southern and eastern Thame. The development will encourage active travel and will be constructed to the highest standards of energy efficiency. The concept, right, has been prepared in consultation with the promoters of the site, and, as such, follows the main principles of their layout.

11.5 Design concept

Access and movement

Access into the site is proposed via the existing access from Howland Road, providing direct access to the larger units. Access to the smaller unit on the north western corner of the site is provided via Towersey Road. An active travel corridor could be provided within the landscape corridor along Howland Road.

Parking and servicing

Parking is provided to the rear or side of each business unit, with office frontages being as close to the road as possible. Servicing is provided to the rear.

Development layout

The siting of the employment blocks are laid out organically with open space corridors in between the developable areas and generous swathes of new planting, forming landscape buffers to screen the development from adjacent housing.

There are small and medium sized units on the layout at present, which are less intrusive than larger B8 units. Particular care should be taken with the siting of any large structures, such as B8, which typically

have limited active frontages. The use of windows, materials (such as green walls) and architectural detailing should be used to add interest to what might otherwise be large, blank façades, and locate entrances, glass façades, cafeterias, offices or signage along the street frontage. Windows should also face public areas.

Development area

Six new employment units, varying from 30,000 sqft - 100,000 sqft are proposed, providing a total of c. 300,000 sqft new employment space.

Open space

Various areas of open space are provided to provide a parkland environment for employees and to provide landscape buffer areas. An ecological enhanced area is proposed in the south east corner.

Landscaping

All existing trees and hedgerows are retained. New, structural planting is provided along the street frontages to screen and soften the appearance of the new office blocks. Tree planting is also proposed within the site.

11.6 Design concept



- KEY**
- Site boundary
 - New structural landscaping
 - Landscape buffer area
 - Existing hedgerow
 - Existing tree belt
 - Key corner building
 - Streets:
 - Primary
 - Secondary
 - Development area
 - Open space
 - Car parking
 - Servicing area
 - Drainage pond
 - Inner Comah zone
 - Ecological enhanced area

Masterplan concepts overview



Figure 174: Masterplan concepts in Thame

Next steps

12

12. Next steps

The Design Code and Masterplan will be a valuable tool in securing context-driven, high quality development in Thame, especially on potential sites that might come forward in the future. They will give more certainty to both developers and the community in securing developments that are designed to the aspirations of the community and potentially speed up the planning process.

The report also proposes some conceptual masterplan frameworks for some particular sites which could be an important tool to enable discussions concerning future development and potential opportunities. Those frameworks should be considered in conjunction with the Design Guidelines and Codes.

The opposite table summarises the various ways that this document can be used by each actor in the planning and development process.

| Actors | How they will use the design guidelines |
|---|---|
| Applicants, developers, & landowners | As a guide to community and Local Planning Authority expectations on design, allowing a degree of certainty – they will be expected to follow the Guidelines as planning consent is sought. |
| Local Planning Authority | As a reference point, embedded in policy, against which to assess planning applications. The Design Guidelines should be discussed with applicants during any pre-application discussions. |
| Town Council | As a guide when commenting on planning applications, ensuring that the Design Guidelines are complied with. |
| Community organisations | As a tool to promote community-backed development and to inform comments on planning applications. |
| Statutory consultees | As a reference point when commenting on planning applications. |

Table 05: Delivery

**Rycote Lane and Howlands
Road - Landscape
Sensitivity Assessment**

13

13. Rycote Lane and Howlands Road - Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

This landscape sensitivity study was prepared on behalf of Thame Town Council (TTC). Following the preparation of the Design Codes for Thame, AECOM were commissioned to provide masterplans for 5 key sites. In addition the TTC requested us to give a high level assessment of landscape sensitivity of two of these development sites. This document should be read in conjunction with the Neighbourhood Plan Policies.

The purpose of this study was to identify potential landscape and visual effects that may arise from each of the proposed development of the Rycote Lane and Howland Road sites. The sites identified are for employment and the study provides some high level landscape sensitivity advice on the appropriate extent of development on both of them.

1. Rycote Lane - consider the potential to accommodate 3.5ha of employment land or a smaller scale scheme (2ha). This is a large scale non residential development. The site has not been developed previously and there are no buildings on the site;
2. Howland Road- This site is 15.5 ha and is located to the eastern edge of the town. The site is located to the north of an established industrial park. The study will consider the potential to accommodate a development density of approximately 40% to give a much more relaxed environment and enable the

creation of generous green corridors and landscaping buffers. The advice is provided in the form of a written, illustrated appendix of the masterplan report and maps based on a baseline landscape and visual sensitivity appraisal of the existing sites and its wider landscape context, informed by desktop research. It will provide an independent, professional appraisal of the landscape sensitivity and visual sensitivity of the areas where the development could be sited.

Landscape effects derive from changes in the physical landscape which may give rise to changes in its important characteristics and thus its character, and how this is experienced.

Visual effects relate to the changes that arise in the composition of available views as a result of changes to the landscape, to people's responses to the changes, and to the overall effects with respect to visual amenity

An assessment is then made on the capacity of sites to accept development in landscape and visual terms and some additional mitigation measures have been proposed.

As part of the background to this sensitivity assessment we have reviewed the following documents:

- Thame Neighbourhood Plan Consultation 2 (February 2022);
- Nicholas Lockhart Grant - Landscape and Visual Appraisal for Ryton Lane (April 2022);

- South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2017);
- An Approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to informal spatial planning and land management- Natural England (2019);
- Assessing Landscape Value outside National Designations Landscape Institute, Technical guidance Note 02/21;
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third edition – Landscape Institute (2013);
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – 2023;
- Chilterns National Landscape Management Plan (2014-2019); and
- National Character Area No : 108 Upper Thames Clay Vales (2014).

This is a desk based assessment only.

13.1 Rycote Lane

13.1.1 Rycote Lane site location plan

The site is located on the western edge of Thame bordered by the A329 to the west and to the south the A418. The Site central grid reference is SP 69152 05659.

The site consists of 2 agricultural fields, which are bordered by well established hedgerows with some limited blocks of tree planting. These vegetation belts provide some visual containment of the site.

The site is located on the main arterial route into the western side of Thame town.



Figure 175: Site in context of Thame



Figure 176: Site boundary

13.1.2 Rycote Lane - landscape character

To be read in conjunction with Chapter 8 Rycote Lane Analysis and Masterplans



Figure 177: Landscape Character: View looking south from the A418. (Taken from Google Map: Image Capture July 2022)



Figure 178: Landscape Character: View along the A329 looking north-west (Taken from Google Map: Image Capture July 2022)



Figure 179: Landscape Character: View along the A418 looking west (Taken from Google Map: Image Capture July 2022)

13.1.3 Rycote Lane - site specific design guidance

Depending on building heights potentially medium / long range views from PRow

Ensure screening to development edge from listed buildings near Abbey Farm approx 710m from the western boundary.

Car parking and planting buffers are proposed to respect the high level of the land.

Ensure screening to development edge from listed buildings near Moreton Farm approx 650m from the western boundary.

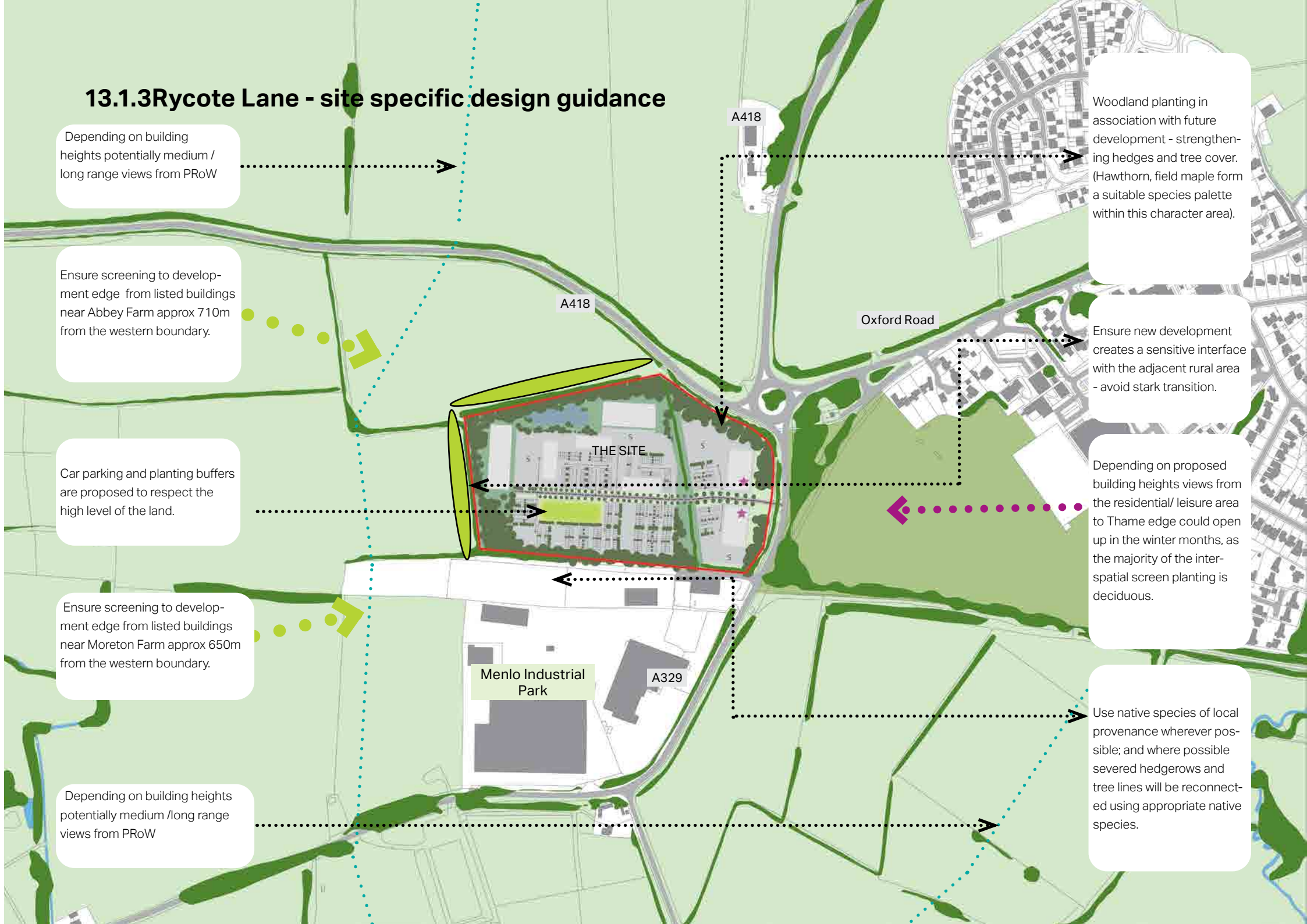
Depending on building heights potentially medium / long range views from PRow

Woodland planting in association with future development - strengthening hedges and tree cover. (Hawthorn, field maple form a suitable species palette within this character area).

Ensure new development creates a sensitive interface with the adjacent rural area - avoid stark transition.

Depending on proposed building heights views from the residential/ leisure area to Thame edge could open up in the winter months, as the majority of the inter-spatial screen planting is deciduous.

Use native species of local provenance wherever possible; and where possible severed hedgerows and tree lines will be reconnected using appropriate native species.



13.1.4 Rycote Lane - generic design guidance

Embedded Design Guidance

- Ensuring that soil structures are protected where land would be used temporarily, such as for compounds, re-grading areas etc. so that when it is returned to the existing land use, it is in a suitable condition;
- Ensuring that valued trees, woodland, existing vegetation and other landscape features are protected and retained wherever possible, in accordance with BS5837:2012. Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction;
- Stripping, handling and management of soils to be in accordance with DEFRA (2009) Construction Code of Practice for the sustainable use of soils on construction sites; and Considerate Construction management;
- Design for maintenance, giving due consideration to the maintenance costs and implications, liabilities and access arrangements for all landscape areas;
- Avoid loss or damage to landscape features (e.g. hedges, hedgerows, individual trees) where possible within the constraints of the design;
- Road run is to go through a stilling process to allow suspended solids to settle out; and
- Use native species of local provenance wherever possible; and where possible severed hedgerows and tree lines will be reconnected using appropriate native species.

General Synopsis

- This landscape has a simple landform cover and has some ability to accommodate change. The intact field boundaries will, in places, partially help to screen development;
- The scale of the development will be visible and there are only some screening opportunities afforded by the land cover of trees and woodlands. In some limited areas the development could be visually contained by the vegetative network. However generally this is an open landscape with views both inward and outward;
- In addition to this, the function and the activity of the people experiencing the view and the extent of their interest will influence the views and the visual amenity that they experience. The most sensitive receptors are listed buildings residents, communities and people experiencing outdoor recreation as is within the PRow; and
- These have traditionally traversed through an open farmland landscape, with open views to the wider farmland and beyond. Development will impede views and they will become less attractive. Mitigation may be able to address or reduce this impact in time. However the value of this open, essentially uncluttered landscape is a worthy and valuable trait in itself.

13.1.5 Rycote Lane - development response

| Criteria | Description |
|---|--|
| Landscape Sensitivity | |
| Scale | Large scale landscape, with a generally simple, regular and uniform land pattern. Site consists of two agricultural fields (4.4 hectares) The site boundary is vegetated and consists of a well maintained native hedgerow with small belts of mature trees to the field edge. The western edge of the boundary is open and forms part of a larger agricultural area. To the south is the industrial park. The northern boundary of the site is contained by the A418 and the eastern boundary by the A329. |
| Landform | A large proportion of managed hedgerows and field boundaries. A flat , expansive landscape with a uniform landform. Intermittent locally elevated areas. Intact field boundaries will help screen but will also be susceptible to loss or degradation from development. Please see Figure 16 :Land Based Designations in Thame Neighbourhood Plan Area |
| Landcover | Large scale arable fields with limited features. Mixed arable and pastoral land. Limited areas of woodland .Site bordered on 2 sides by the A418 and the A329. |
| Man made influences | Transport corridor to the north and east, with a network of local roads linking villages and farmsteads. |
| Aesthetic, perceptual and experiential | |
| Scenic Quality and Character | Even though the landscapes have not got a high scenic quality with a high concentration of special qualities it has a positive agricultural character that is susceptible to change. There will be a loss of the landscape character integrity and scenic value. |
| Remoteness and Tranquillity | Limited tranquillity as the site is adjacent to the busy road corridors of the A418 and the A329. There is also a an industrial development to the south. |
| Overall Landscape Value - Medium. Has a medium susceptibility to change. Medium local value, undesignated landscape with common place elements in good condition. Tranquil with few detracting elements. | |
| Visual Sensitivity | |
| Skylines and Settings | For the most part the skylines are uninterrupted. Apart from the road lighting infrastructure close to the roundabout. Undeveloped rural skylines are particularly susceptible to development . Long range views limited by field edge vegetation and the occasional copse. Potentially long range views from localised elevated areas. Listed buildings with potential views of the development to the west. |
| Movement | Movement from a local network of rural roads. .Site bordered on 2 sides by the A418 and the A329, which feeds into the Oxford road . This roads runs through the leisure, commercial and residential areas on the western outskirts of the market town of Thame. Please see Figure 10 : Route Patterns in Thame Neighbourhood Plan Area. |
| Visibility, Key Receptors | The landscape is open with views limited by boundary vegetation to the field edge and by topography. Elevated area from within the site will potentially have medium reaching views. Intervisibility with the adjacent sensitive designations listed buildings, PRoW. |
| Views to-from important Landscape and Cultural Heritage Features | Potentially views from several PRoW short to medium distance. To the north and in the distance there lies the Bernwood Jubilee Way and Thame Valley Walkway. There are numerous listed buildings within Abbey and Moreton Farms. These could potentially be visually impacted on by the works. Please see Figure 11: Heritage Designations in Thame Neighbourhood Plan Area and Figure 26 Local amenities and facilities in Thame Neighbourhood Plan Area. |
| Overall Visual Sensitivity - Users of the PRoW will have an interest in the view with prolonged viewing opportunities and a high value placed upon the view. Transient views along the local road network | |
| Overall landscape visual and value assessment | |
| Development Response | The development would impact on the local character and the entrance area to Thame. This entrance it is an important part of the towns gateway. Locally the site would be visible from the A418 and the A329 and there would be a noticeable change in a large proportion of the view. Potentially there are middle distance views due to the limited topography changes and vegetation cover is generally limited to the field edge and not particularly dense. The development would interrupt the flat landscape and would be a noticeable feature particularly with the upper sections of the building development closer to the A418/A329 link . It is assessed that the area has a Medium acceptance of development. |

13.2 Howland Road

13.2.1 Howland Road site context

The site is located at a gateway location south of Howlands road on the eastern outskirts of Thame. This site is 15.5ha.

The site consists of arable and pasture fields, with the majority of the external and internal field boundaries bordered by hedgerows.

Strategically the site is well linked to the road network and has a well established commercial/residential district to the south.

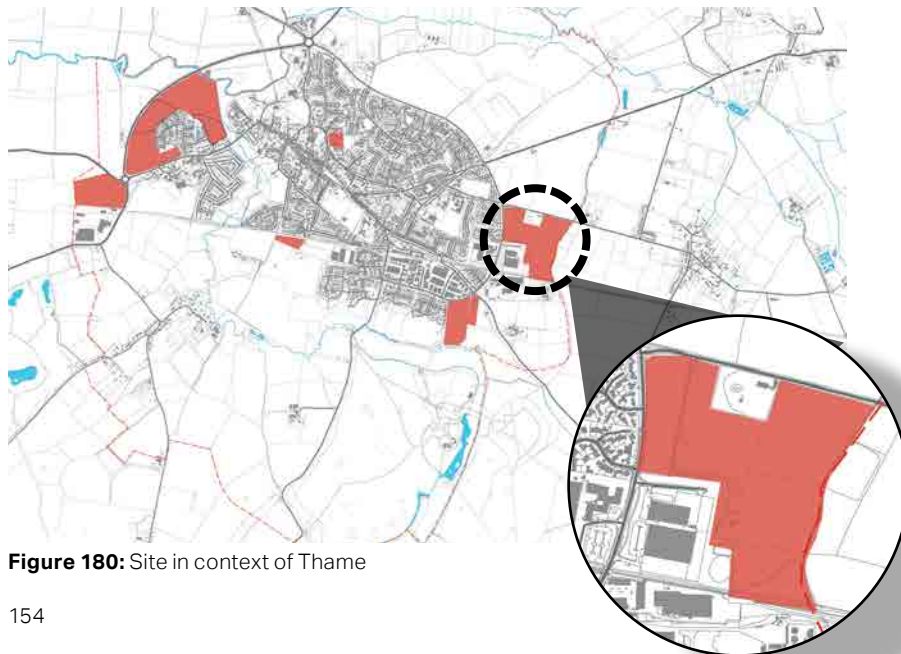


Figure 180: Site in context of Thame



Figure 181: Site boundary

13.2.2 Howland Road - landscape character

To be read in conjunction with Chapter 9: Howland Road Analysis and Masterplans



Figure 182: Landscape Character: View looking south west from the B4012 (Taken from Google Map: Image Capture August 2022)



Figure 183: Landscape Character: View along Howland Road looking north-east (Taken from Google Map: Image Capture August 2022)



Figure 184: Landscape Character: View looking east along farm access track off Townsey Road (Taken from Google Map: Image Capture August 2022)

13.2.3 Howland Road - site specific design guidance

SCREEN BELT PLANTING MATRIX

The screen belt will consist of a mixture and a combination of shrubs, fast growing trees, and dense long-lived trees. A multi layered structure, of mainly native species, is proposed.

The species consist of dominant trees, sub-dominant trees, a shrub layer, and a peripheral "woodland edge". In detailed design the outside row of a screen belt consists of dense shrub, the next row consists of a fast-growing tree species that will allow the screen belt to quickly gain height. The third row should be made up of long-lived trees that will allow screen belt to remain effective for a long time.

The fourth and fifth rows that would be closest to the development are made up of tall dense crowned trees that retain their foliage throughout the year.

As there is limited space in some sections the third and fifth row are dropped and go with a three-row screen belt.



The land within this area provides a visual separation and prevents the coalescence of the residential areas of Cotmore Wells and the residential and commercial zone (tool hire) on the B4012. The continuation of strip planning along the Thame Road will create a more urban and developed feel to the semi-rural landscape

As per the cross section overleaf, additional buffer mitigation is proposed, that will help prevent the coalescence of the residential/development areas. It is proposed that a recreational walkway is also incorporated into this buffer belt.

In addition to the mitigation measures outlined within the Webb Gray plans in Appendix B. The following mitigation measures are proposed.

13.2.4 Howland Road - mitigation response

Boundary Planting to development edge along Towersey/Howland Road

N.B. This table provides examples of plant species appropriate for Howland Road development. A wide variety of species should be used, for biodiversity and to address plant biosecurity and climate challenges. Additional species should be included which have similar spatial and character to the examples shown here.



| Description of Planting Works | Species Composition | | | Planting Specification |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--|
| | Trees- deciduous 40% | Trees - Evergreen 40% | Shrubs - Evergreen 20% | |
| Woodland edge screen | | | | |
| Belt of continuous woodland (20-30m wide)-To contain mix of broadleaf and evergreen trees/ shrubs. | English oak | Scots pine | Hawthorn | Trees |
| To provide low and high screening between the new development and adjacent residential areas and the wider landscape. | Hornbeam | Yew | Blackthorn | Use 60-90cms stock planted at 2.5m spacing |
| Native seed/fruit bearing species to provide foraging habitat for mammals and birds and nectar-rich species to attract bees, butterflies and moths; | Small-leaved lime | | Holly | Shrubs |
| | Field maple | | Hazel | Positioned in pockets along edges. |
| | Rowan | | Spindle | Use 40-60cms stock at 2m spacing in informal layout. |
| | | | Wayfaring | |

13.2.5 Howland Road - generic design guidance

Embedded Design Guidance

- Promote sensitive maintenance of hedgerows, including coppicing and layering when necessary, to maintain a height and width appropriate to the landscape type;
- Strengthen the field pattern by conserving hedgerows and sympathetically maintaining;
- Minimise the visual impact of intrusive land uses at the fringes of towns, villages and farms with the judicious planting of tree and shrub species characteristic of the area. This will help to screen the development and integrate it more successfully with its surrounding countryside;
- Ensuring that valued trees, woodland, existing vegetation and other landscape features are protected and retained wherever possible, in accordance with BS5837:2012;
- Stripping, handling and management of soils to be in accordance with DEFRA (2009) Construction Code of Practice for the sustainable use of soils on construction sites; and Considerate Construction management;
- Ensure new development creates a sensitive interface with the adjacent rural area - avoid stark transition;
- Conserve the woodland blocks and apply an appropriate management strategy to enhance ecological interest; and
- Use native species of local provenance wherever possible; and where possible severed hedgerows and tree lines will be reconnected using appropriate native species.

General Synopsis

- This landscape has a simple landform cover and has some ability to accommodate change. The intact field boundaries will, in places, partially help to screen development that are susceptible to loss or degradation;
- This landscape has a positive rural character in good condition and with features worthy of conservation. It will be more susceptible to change because of the potential impact on their legibility and upon features and combinations of elements which may be difficult to replace. This also applies as this landscape has a semi-natural habitat and valued natural features such as woodland and hedgerows with good connectivity;
- The scale of the development will be visible and there are only some screening opportunities afforded by the land cover of trees and woodlands. In some areas the development could be visually contained by the vegetative network. However generally this is an open landscape with extensive views both inward and outward; and
- In addition to this, the function and the activity of the people experiencing the view and the extent of their interest will influence the views and the visual amenity that they experience.

13.2.6 Howland Road - development response

| Criteria | Description |
|--|---|
| Landscape Sensitivity | |
| Scale | Site consists of a number of pasture fields. The majority of the site boundaries are bordered by a well maintained native hedge. Some boundary areas are open with just a post and rail fence to the perimeter. |
| Landform | Vegetation is limited to the field boundary edge, with some boundaries consisting of mature tree specimens. Along Howland Road looking east there is a local land rise and a significant band of vegetation limits views to the wider landscape. Around the residential areas off Towersey Road there are significant bands of screen vegetation to the west and south of the residential areas. Internal field boundaries are well formed and maintained. In areas they consist of hedgerow trees. The industrial areas off the Howland Road (B4012) have some limited screening to the northern, eastern and western boundaries. A band of screen vegetation although not significant forms the boundaries between adjacent industrial/ commercial zones to the south. Please see Figure 16 : Land Based Designations in Thame Neighbourhood Plan Area. |
| Landcover | Medium to small scale arable fields with limited features. Mixed arable and pastoral land. Mature hedgerow and hedgerow tree vegetation limited to boundary edge. |
| Man made influences | On the eastern urban fringe of Thame. On the northern side is Towersey road, linking Thame to the village of Towersey. Along the southern boundary is the Phoenix Trail which is part of the National Cycle Network. Running along the urban fringe is Howland Road (B4012). This circles the eastern extents of Thame and borders the residential /commercial zones in the town. |
| Aesthetic, perceptual and experiential | |
| Scenic Quality and Character | Even though the landscapes has not got a high scenic quality with a high concentration of special qualities it has a positive agricultural character that is susceptible to change and helps prevent the coalescence of the commercial, districts and the ribbon development along Towersey Road/ Thame Road to the village of Towersey. There will be a loss of the landscape characters integrity and scenic value with the loss of open green landscape. |
| Remoteness and Tranquillity | Busy urban fringe landscape, busy road network encircles the eastern section of the town. Further east the road network becomes local with more localised traffic moments |
| Overall Landscape Value - Medium. Medium local value, undesignated landscape with common place elements in good condition. | |
| Visual Sensitivity | |
| Skylines and Settings | Skylines to the east and interrupted by residential and commercial development and associated infrastructure. Topography is flat and views are limited by infrastructure and bands of vegetation that coalesce to give the impression of a well vegetated landscape. |
| Movement | Busy B road (B4012) skirting the town edge, including access roads to industrial/ commercial units. Further east a farm track access routes and country roads with access to residential development off Thame Road and to the village of Towersey. Please see Figure 10 : Route Patterns in Thame Neighbourhood Plan Area. |
| Visibility, Key Receptors | The landscape is open with medium views limited by topography, boundary vegetation to the field edge. Locally elevated area from within the site will potentially have medium reaching views. Some intervisibility with the adjacent sensitive designations. |
| Views to/from important Landscape and Cultural Heritage Features | Phoenix Trail (Route 57) borders the site to the south and is part of the National Cycle Network. This section between Princes Risborough and Thame is 7.5 miles long. A PRoW (383/13/30 and 383/13/40) borders the commercial development to the north and east. This PRoW ties into another route to the west of the site (383/13/10). Please see Figure 11 : Heritage Designations in Thame Neighbourhood Plan Area and Figure 26 Local amenities and facilities in Thame Neighbourhood Plan Area. |
| Overall Visual Sensitivity - Users of the PRoW/ Phoenix will have an interest in the view. | |
| Overall landscape visual and value assessment | |
| Development Response | Magnitude of landscape change is assessed as medium as elements such as the open nature of the landscape will be lost. The main value of this landscape is that it prevents the coalescence of the fragmented areas of development between the eastern edge of Thame and the commercial/residential development along Howlands road leading to the village of Towersey. Magnitude of visual change is assessed as medium as there would be a noticeable change to a proportion of the view. While PRoW/ Phoenix Way have a high sensitivity to change the proportion of the view is limited and potentially screened by existing and proposed vegetative belts. It is assessed that the area has a Medium acceptance of development. |

About AECOM

AECOM is the world's trusted infrastructure consulting firm, delivering professional services throughout the project lifecycle — from planning, design and engineering to program and construction management. On projects spanning transportation, buildings, water, new energy and the environment, our public- and private-sector clients trust us to solve their most complex challenges. Our teams are driven by a common purpose to deliver a better world through our unrivalled technical expertise and innovation, a culture of equity, diversity and inclusion, and a commitment to environmental, social and governance priorities. AECOM is a *Fortune 500* firm and its Professional Services business had revenue of \$13.2 billion in fiscal year 2020. See how we are delivering sustainable legacies for generations to come at [aecom.com](https://www.aecom.com) and [@AECOM](https://twitter.com/AECOM).

