

Manor Oak Homes welcomes you to Gray's Lane, Hitchin

This is a **public consultation event** for a landscape-led residential development scheme for land at Gray's Lane, Hitchin, comprising **60 residential dwellings**, including market and affordable homes, public open space and a new **Community Woodland**.



Land at Gray's Lane / Crow Furlong is proposed for allocation for housing development in the new **North Herts Local Plan 2011 - 2031** and we are proposing to submit an **Outline Planning Application** later this year.

This consultation has been organised to inform the local community of the emerging proposals and **to give you the opportunity to ask questions and make comments**. At this point, the scheme is not fixed and could be amended following comments received during this consultation.

The exhibition boards will be available on our website:

www.manoroakhomes.co.uk/project/grays-ln-hitchin/

About the Site:

The site is located to the north of Pirton Road and extends to around 4.24 hectares. It is located in the Green Belt on the western boundary of the built-up area of Hitchin.

For the purposes of description, the site can be split in two. The northern half comprises a single field in pastoral use, enclosed by hedgerows and trees. It is proposed for release from the Green Belt and identified for residential development in the emerging North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (Site HT6). The southern half comprises deciduous woodland.

The site is located neither in nor immediately adjacent to any conservation area, listed buildings or ecological designations. Two trees on site are protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO 129: T1 & T2) but these, together with the woodland cover of the site, would be retained as part of the proposals. The site lies in Flood Zone 1 where there is a low risk of flooding.

For this scheme, we are proposing:

40% of the proposed dwellings will be affordable housing.

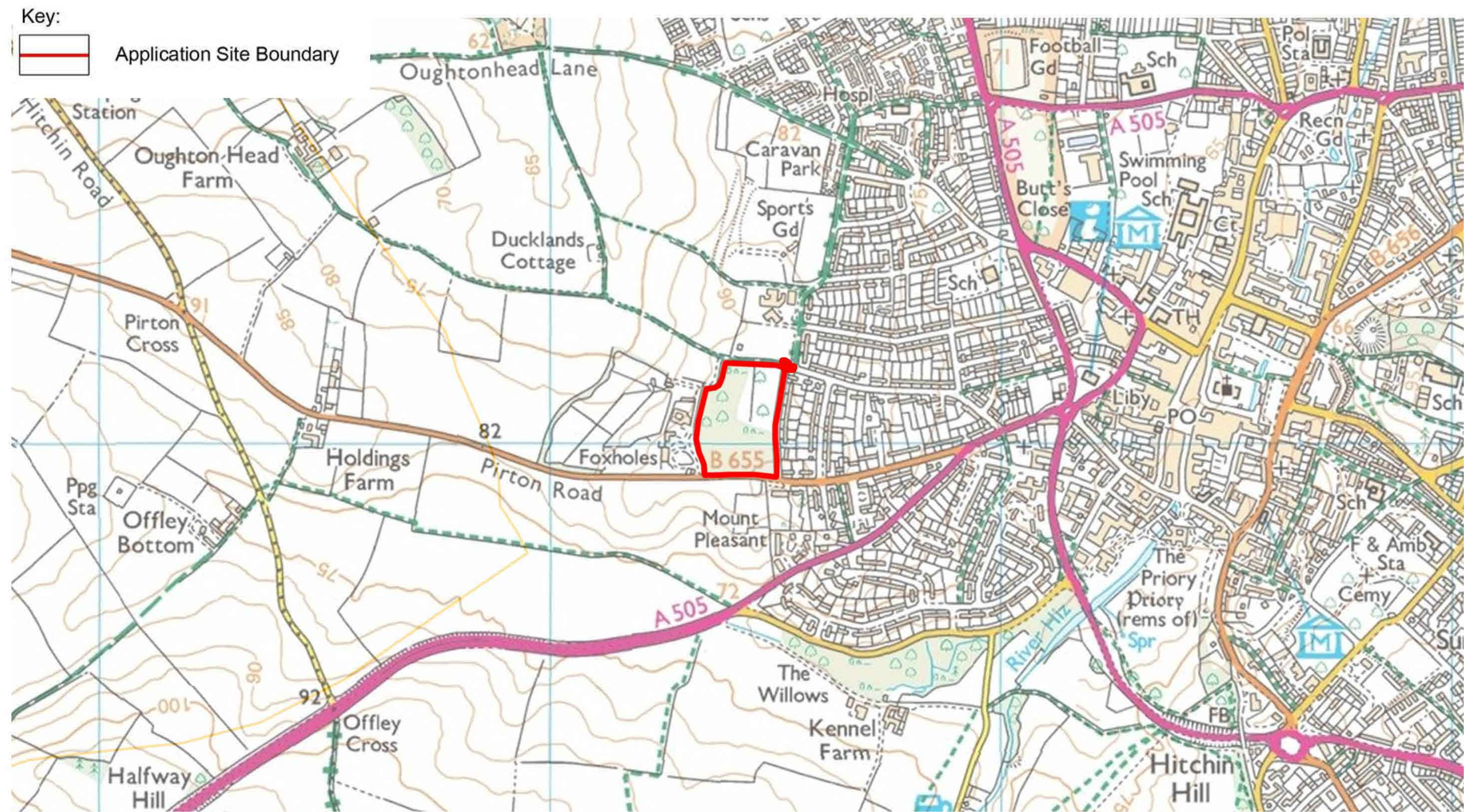
The areas of proposed **Public Open Space total 2.63 Hectares** and include a new Community Woodland (62% of the total area)

Access to the site is from an existing field gate in the North Eastern corner of the site at the junction of Gray's Lane with Crow Furlong.

Traffic calming may be proposed on site as part of the development via use of subtle changes of surface finish and texture

1. INTRODUCTION

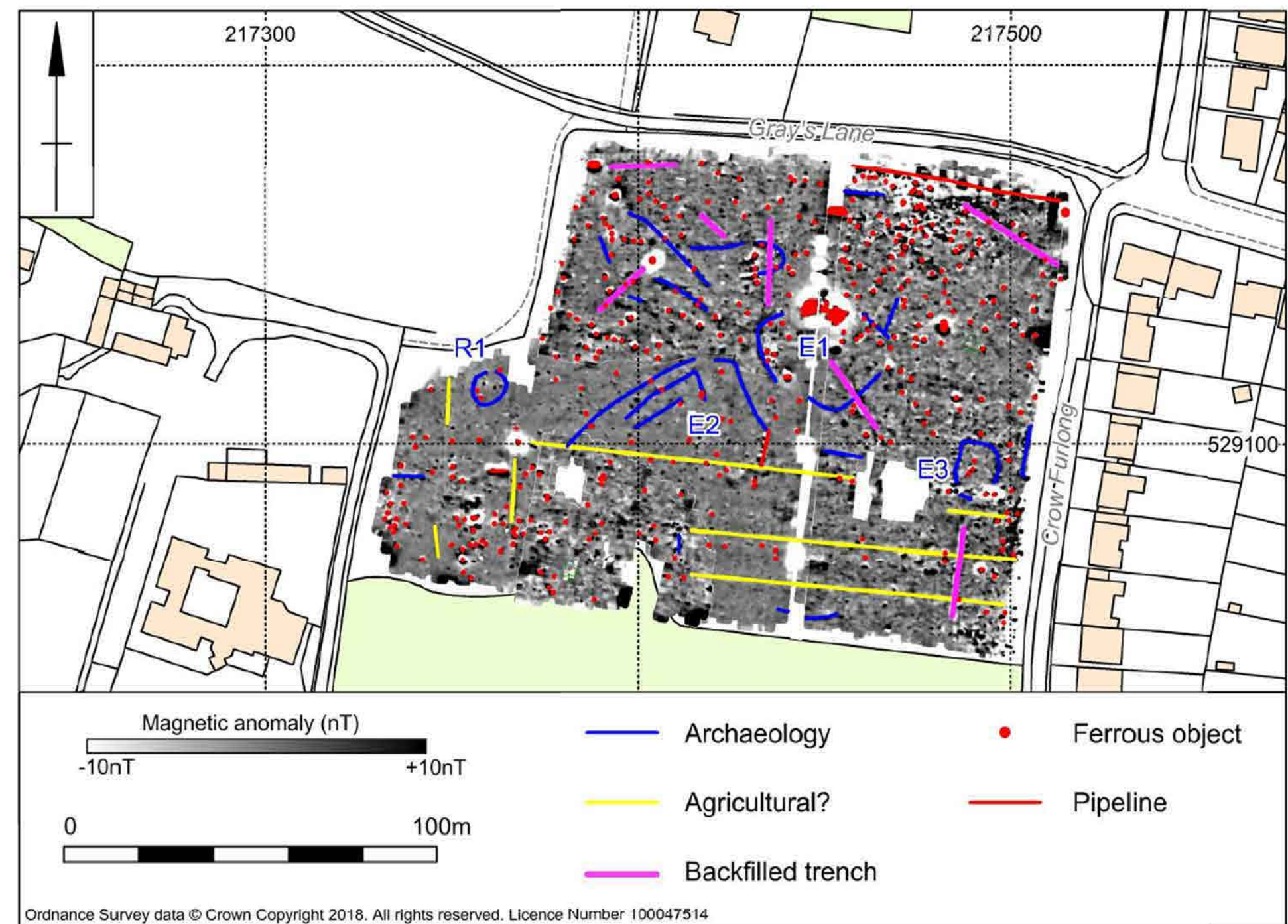
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Archaeology:

Both trial trenching and a Geophysical survey have been completed as part of our due diligence. Few culturally significant finds were found in the trial trenching.

The Geophysical survey revealed the site may contain enclosure ditches, a possible roundhouse, and associated remains dating from the middle Iron Age to the early Roman period. These are mostly concentrated in a broad swathe across the central and north-western parts of the site, with only a few features of doubtful archaeological interest located elsewhere.

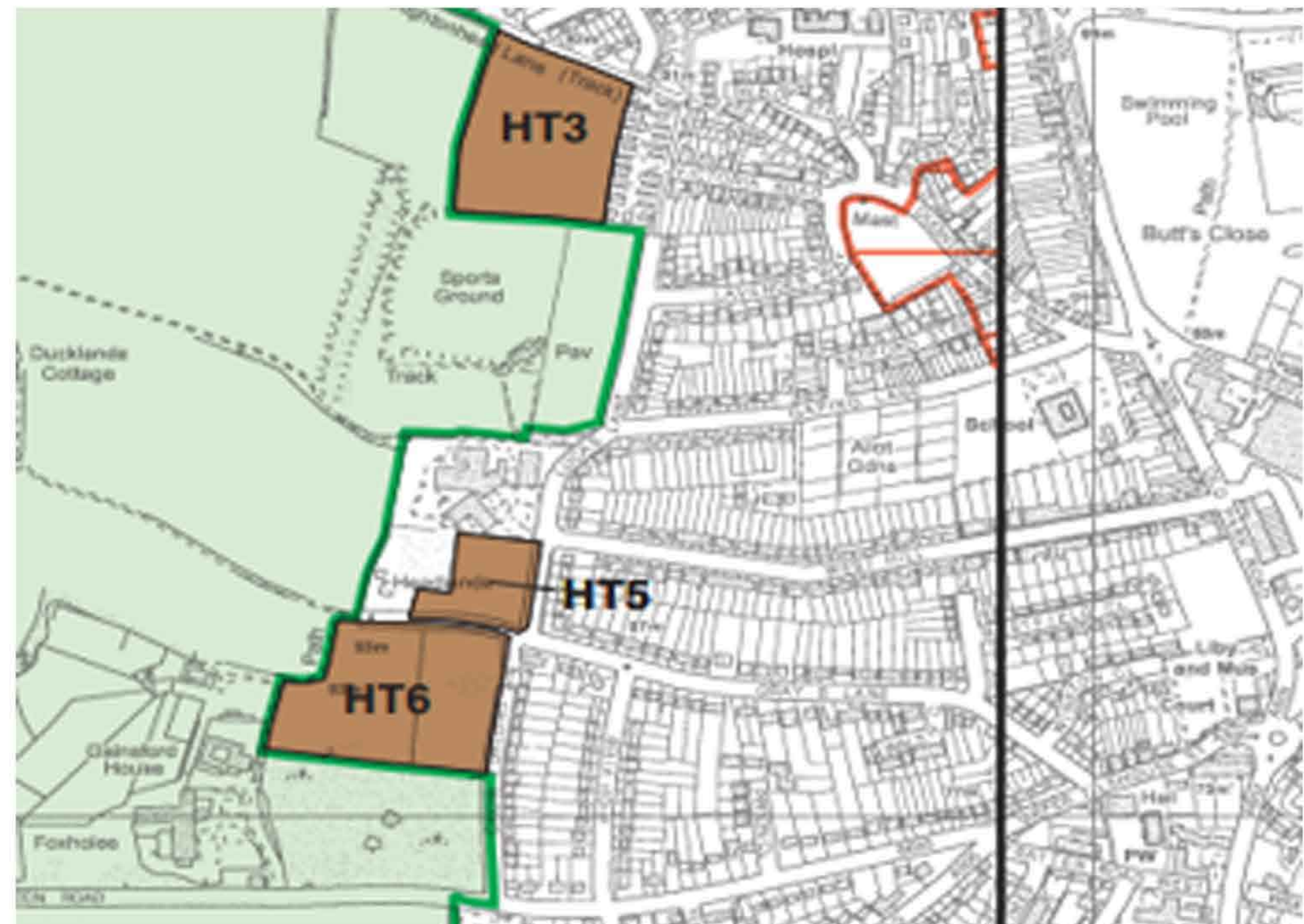


Planning Background:

North Hertfordshire District Council are currently preparing a new local plan to cover the period up to 2031. The plan is at an advanced stage of preparation having been examined by an independent inspector earlier in the summer. The Inspector's Report is expected imminently with the Council expecting it to be found sound. The advanced stage of the plan means that it will be given significant weight in determining planning applications.

The northern part of the site is proposed for allocation as a housing site (Site HT6) for approximately 53 dwellings – see the extract from the emerging Local Plan Proposals Map below. The proposed new houses would be located only on the northern part of the site covered by the housing allocation.

Pre-application discussions have taken place over the last 18 months with officers at North Herts District Council, together with other statutory consultees, including Hertfordshire County Council, The Environment Agency and the Lead Local Flood Authority. These discussions have been positive confirming that there are no impediments to the development of the site and that our proposals would meet the requirements of HT6. Discussions have also taken place with the owners of the land immediately to the north, which is also proposed for allocation as a housing site (Site HT5). As a result of this, a joint access arrangement serving both sites has been agreed.



2. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT & ARCHAEOLOGY

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The site and its surroundings have been assessed to identify their key landscape characteristics and how they relate to the wider context. This information has been used to inform the layout, associated Public Open Space and any views into or out of the site.

The site is located alongside Crow Furlong where adequate separation must be retained with some possible additional planting. The site comprises several typical field hedge boundaries and denser landscaped boundaries in other locations.

Some significant trees have been identified and would be retained. Each Root Protection Area (RPA) has been determined by an Arboriculture expert with no built form within.

There is an opportunity to create new pedestrian links into the existing woodland to the south. This area will be transformed into a new community asset containing nature trails and a play area for children.



View of the Site from North West corner



View of the site from the South West corner

3. SITE APPRAISAL

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The planning application will seek outline planning permission for the principle of a development of up to 60 dwellings with the details to be submitted at a later stage via a reserved matters submission. It will be supported by an Illustrative Layout, which shows two storey built form focused in the centre of the northern part of the site and set in from site boundaries with plots generally arranged in perimeter blocks providing natural surveillance and a strong, varied street scene and no rear alleyways.

The total site area is **4.24 Hectares** (10.47 Acres)

2.63 Hectares of the site would be provided as Public Open Space, including a new **Community Woodland**.

The development will provide the following house types:

Market Dwellings: (60%)

2 Bedroom	2
3 Bedroom	19
4 Bedroom	15
Total:	36

Affordable Dwellings: (40%)

1 Bedroom	8
2 Bedroom	8
3 Bedroom	8
Total:	24

This is an illustrative mix and may be subject to change following further discussions. Other features of the scheme include:

Access via an extension of Gray's Lane to the north-west, which will provide access to both this site and that to the north.

Pedestrian and cycle access via the main access off Gray's Lane and from the south via a new access in the south east corner of the site enabling direct public access into the community woodland.

Provision of car and cycle parking in line with the Council's adopted standards.

Retention and enhancement of existing landscaping and planting, including protected trees.



4. ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN

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KEY WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Entire area managed as coppice with standards. Coppicing undertaken on five year rotation, established as pockets to diversify woodland structure and maintain continuous canopy cohesion. Woodland to become open access, allowing for informal recreational use by existing and future residents, and the wider community of Hitchin. Management regime to be undertaken on a five year rotation, with strategic thinning and restocking of standards including Field Maple and Wild Service trees as appropriate. Proposed tree and shrub planting and selective thinning will ensure woodland diversity, providing additional habitats for local wildlife and increased biodiversity. Bird and bat boxes to be located throughout the woodland, to be affixed to suitable retained trees to enhance nesting opportunities for birds and bats in the local area. Habitat / log piles to be located within the site, created from coppice arisings and selective removal of dangerous trees.

The existing woodland to the south will be retained, improved and enhanced as part of a wider woodland management plan. Residential properties will be offset from the northern edge of the woodland and orientated to face the woodland creating a high quality, soft edge to the proposals with improved access and opportunities for woodland themed children's play elements.

The key trees identified (including the TPOs) will be retained and protected, with appropriate woodland management methods implemented such as pocket clearance for regeneration on a five-year rotation to maintain canopy cover, restocking of standards for improved longevity to the woodland and retention and enhancement of ecological features as part of an overall strategy. This aims to provide an improved space that will be made publicly accessible, providing community benefits within the locality as well as enhancements to localised biodiversity and increased longevity of the woodland.

- Key:
- Site Boundary
 - Existing Key Standard Trees
 - Existing Key Standards with TPOs
 - Potential Pedestrian Access Locations
 - Proposed Informal Bark Chipping Path Providing Route Through Space and Created from Site Clearance Works
 - Areas Retained with Minimal Initial Works for Ecological Benefit Opportunities for Woodland Fringe Planting with Native Species Opportunities for Open Space / Clearings within Woodland to Create Glades for Increased Habitat Creation
 - Illustrative Locations for Bat Boxes
 - Illustrative Locations for Bird Boxes
 - Illustrative Locations for Log Piles Created from On site Clearance Works
 - Location of Internal Viewpoint
 - Illustrative Location for Children's Play Spaces / Trim Trail. (Natural Woodland Themed Equipment)
 - Illustrative Location for Seating Opportunities
 - Proposed Information Board (Providing Public with information on Woodland and Management Principles being Undertaken)

5. PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

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Key Landscape Objectives:

- The landscape proposals have been informed by the site constraints and opportunities, and policy objectives to ensure that an appropriate and high quality landscaped setting is achieved.
- The western, northern and eastern site boundaries will be protected and enhanced with extensive tree, shrub and hedgerow planting, which will assist in integrating the proposals and the existing settlement edge of Hitchin into the localised landscape. Built form has been pulled away from the western boundary to restrict and limit views from the AONB to the west.
- Public open space designed for informal recreation and communal amenity breaks up the development and will retain the only protected tree on site, the setting of which will be improved by new tree and shrub planting and wildflower grassland.
- The proposed streetscenes will be defined by soft landscaping, to include feature trees, ornamental and architectural shrubs, amenity lawn and formal hedge planting. This will establish a series of verdant streetscapes within a robust and diverse landscape setting that is well suited to the developments locality.

6. LANDSCAPE & BIODIVERSITY

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Flood Risk

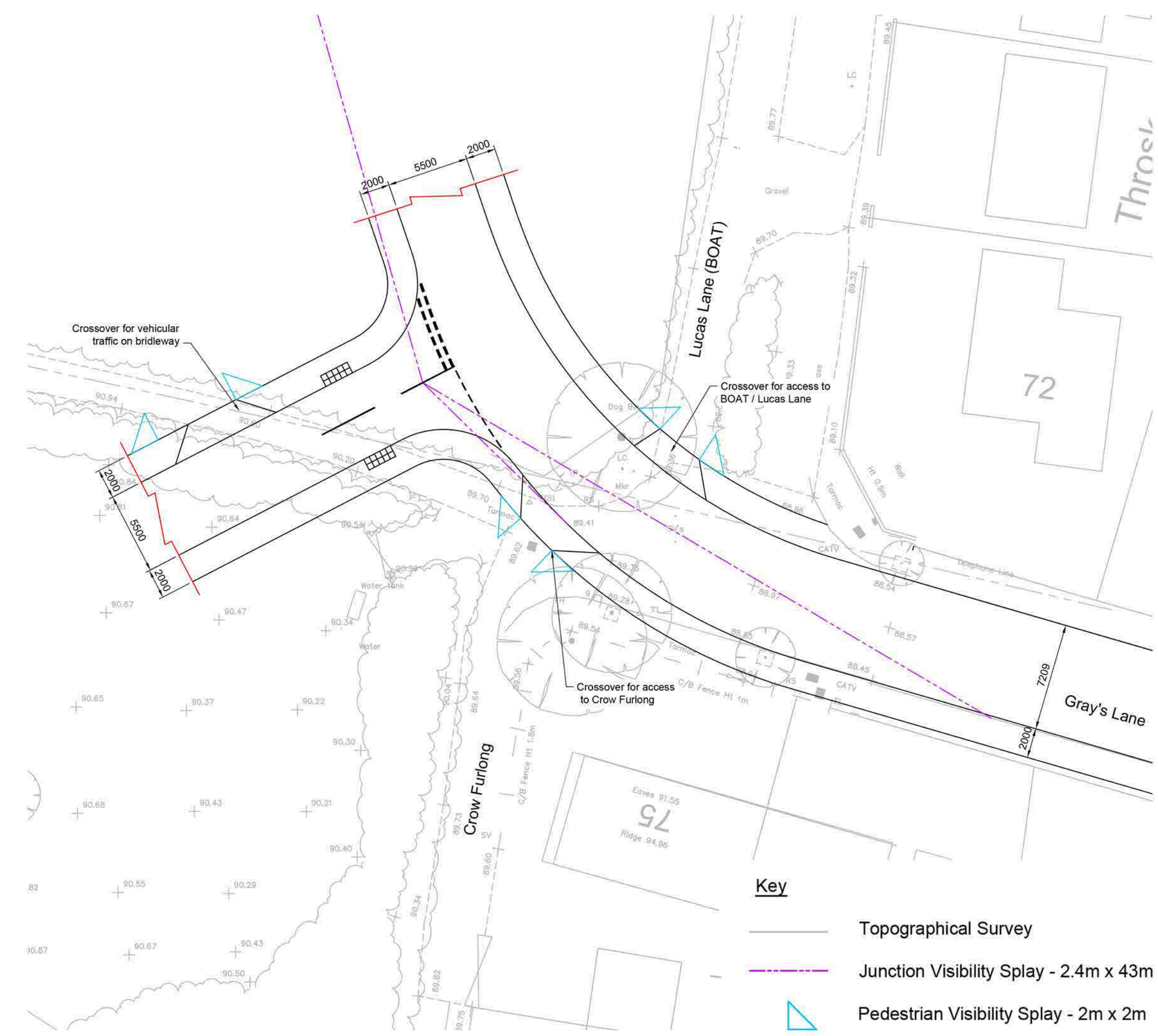
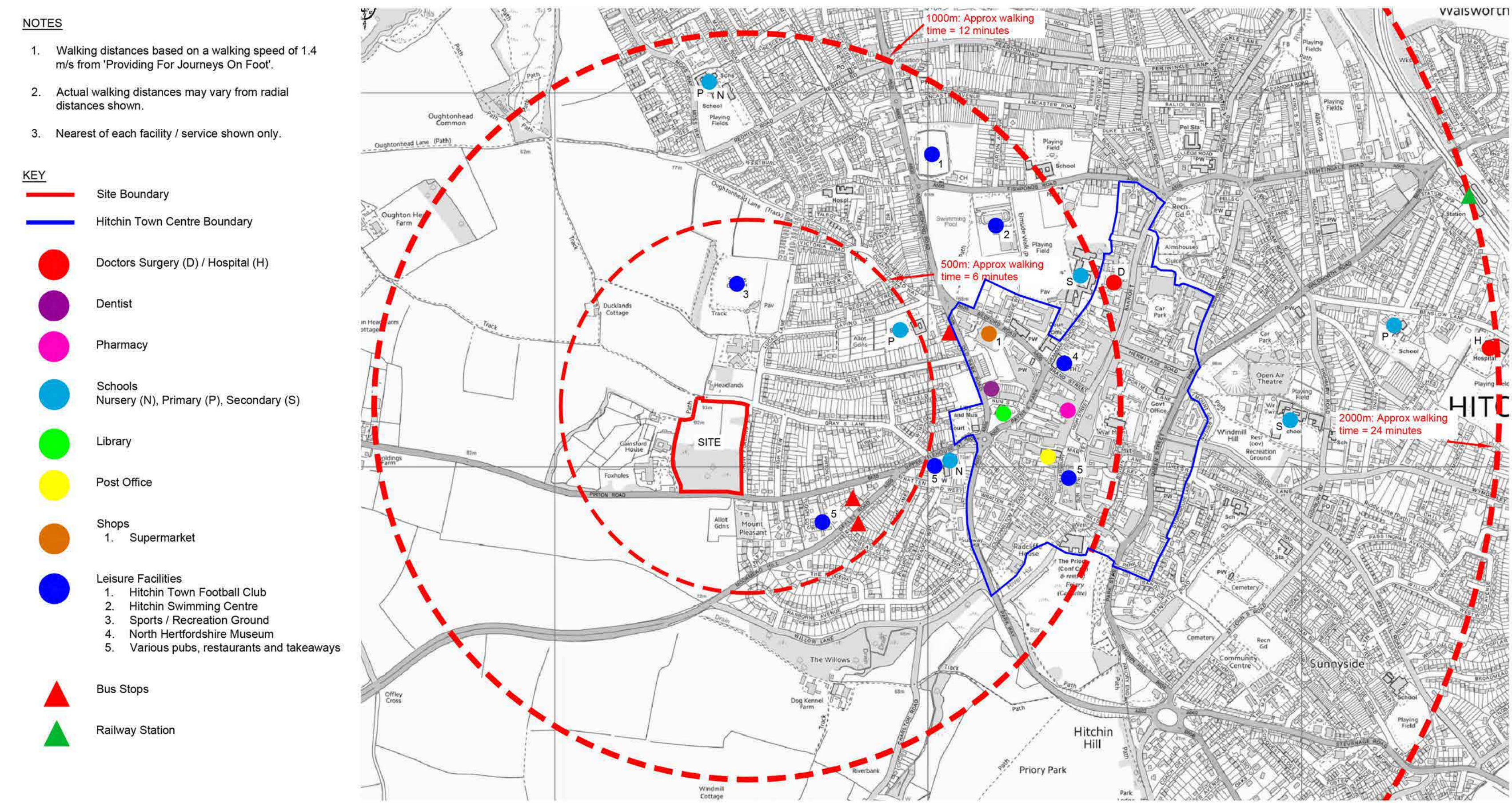
The proposed development site is located within Flood Zone 1 and therefore at a low risk of flooding from rivers. The developable area of the site is located in an area at very low risk of flooding from surface water. The risk of flooding from groundwater and sewers is considered low.

Drainage

The drainage for the site will be designed in line with current legislation:

- Building Regulations;
- Sewers for Adoption;
- National Planning Policy Framework

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) will be utilised. Infiltration testing shows that soakaways are not viable. Surface water will be attenuated via tanked permeable paving and will discharge to Thames Water’s surface water sewer in Gray’s Lane. Surface water will be restricted to the greenfield equivalent rate of 4.4 l/s to ensure surface water runoff from the site does not increase as a result of the proposed development. All private drives will incorporate permeable paving, therefore providing treatment of surface water to meet water quality objectives.



Accessibility

The proposed development is located in a sustainable location and is within acceptable walking and cycling distances of local facilities, including education and health services.

Parking

Car and cycle parking for the development will be provided in line with guidance set out in North Hertfordshire’s Vehicle Parking at New Development Supplementary Planning Document (September 2011).

Proposed Access Design

The proposed development will be accessed via an extension of Gray’s Lane to the north-east of the site. This road will extend into the draft allocated site to the north (HT5) with a simple priority junction.

Properties by Number of Bedrooms

Properties by Tenure

House Types:

The housing mix has been designed to be in accordance with local need and information contained within the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Local Policy.

New properties will address the open countryside. Dwellings to the North West corner and along the new Community Woodland will front out, providing a strong and traditional development edge providing passive surveillance to the new public open space.

The affordable housing will be provided in 2 distinct clusters addressing different parts of the site for added variety and enjoyment.

Manor Oak Homes thanks you for your attendance.

Engagement with the local community is an important part of the planning process and your views are important to us.

A PDF version of these exhibition boards can be found on our website at the following address:

www.manoroakhomes.co.uk/project/grays-ln-hitchin/

Thank you for attending.



KEY		
Four + Bedroom	15	
Three Bedroom	27	
Two Bedroom	10	
One Bedroom	8	



KEY		
Affordable Units	24 (40%)	
Private Units	36 (60%)	

House types will reflect local style and detailing. Corner units could be dual aspect with two active frontages to provide a more active and well surveyed street scene.

This illustration is representative of the proposed street scene. It provides an idea of the overall form and scale of the development, but does not seek to provide a 'finished' look due to the outline nature of the planning application.



Illustrative Street Scene addressing the Community Woodland

8. HOUSING MIX & DESIGN

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