

# WELCOME

Thank you for visiting our public consultation event for development on land north of Blackberry Lane, Soham

## ABOUT MANOR OAK HOMES

Manor Oak Homes specialises in the promotion of development opportunities across the East Midlands, East Anglia and South-East.

The company’s approach to the planning of its sites is one that is constraints driven and seeks to leave no stone unturned.

The team has a strong design ethos, focussing on high quality and a sensitive approach to development right from the start of the process.

Sustainability is very high on the agenda of Manor Oak Homes and has always been of key importance to the company when selecting sites and seeking to deliver new homes that are carbon-zero ready and meet the needs of the future.

## PLANNING POLICY & BACKGROUND

The development plan for the area comprises the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan adopted in April 2015. This document identifies the number of new homes needed in East Cambridgeshire up to 2031 and sets out a spatial strategy for delivering these new homes including the identification of specific sites for development. The spatial strategy identifies Soham as a market town and focus for growth.

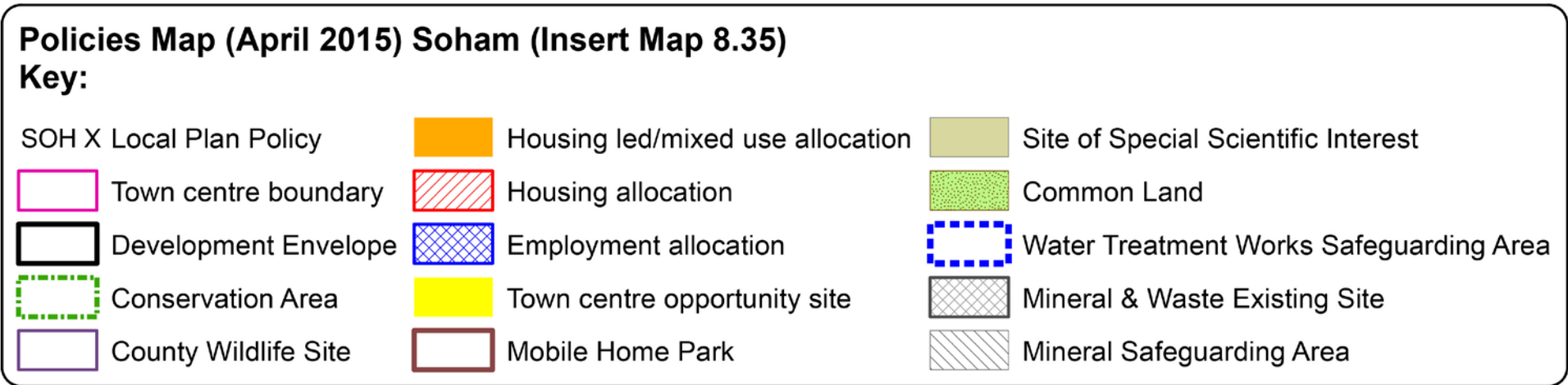
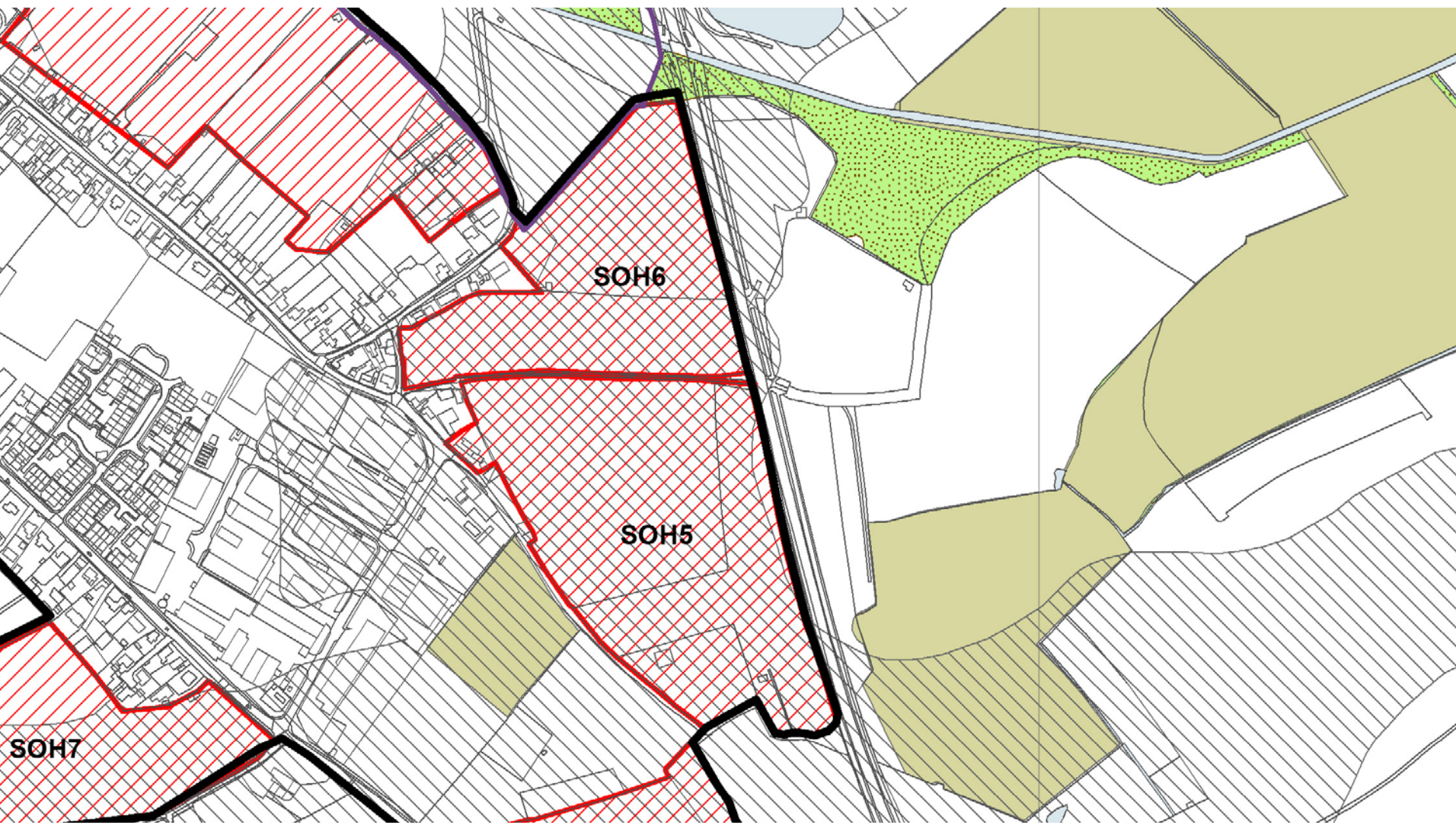
Policy SOH6 of the Local Plan allocates the application site and the field immediately adjoining it to the north for the development of **up to 100 dwellings**. It sets out detailed criteria for the development to meet including the delivery of **30% affordable housing**, the provision of **0.7 hectares (ha) of public open space** and maximising the retention of hedgerows and trees.

The application site forms approximately half the total area allocated by Policy SOH 6 and it is therefore expected that it will deliver approximately half of the allocation. In this respect, due to specific site considerations, the proposal is for slightly less than half the number of homes allocated and an increase in open space provision.

In addition to Policy SOH6, the Local Plan allocates several other sites for development to the south and east of Soham. These sites include land to the south of Blackberry Lane that is allocated by Policy SOH 5 and is currently being developed by Orbit Homes.

As part of the planning permission for the Orbit Homes development they are required to provide vehicle access up to the site boundary with Blackberry Lane so that a connection can be provided into land to the north. It is proposed that highways access into the application site be provided via this connection.

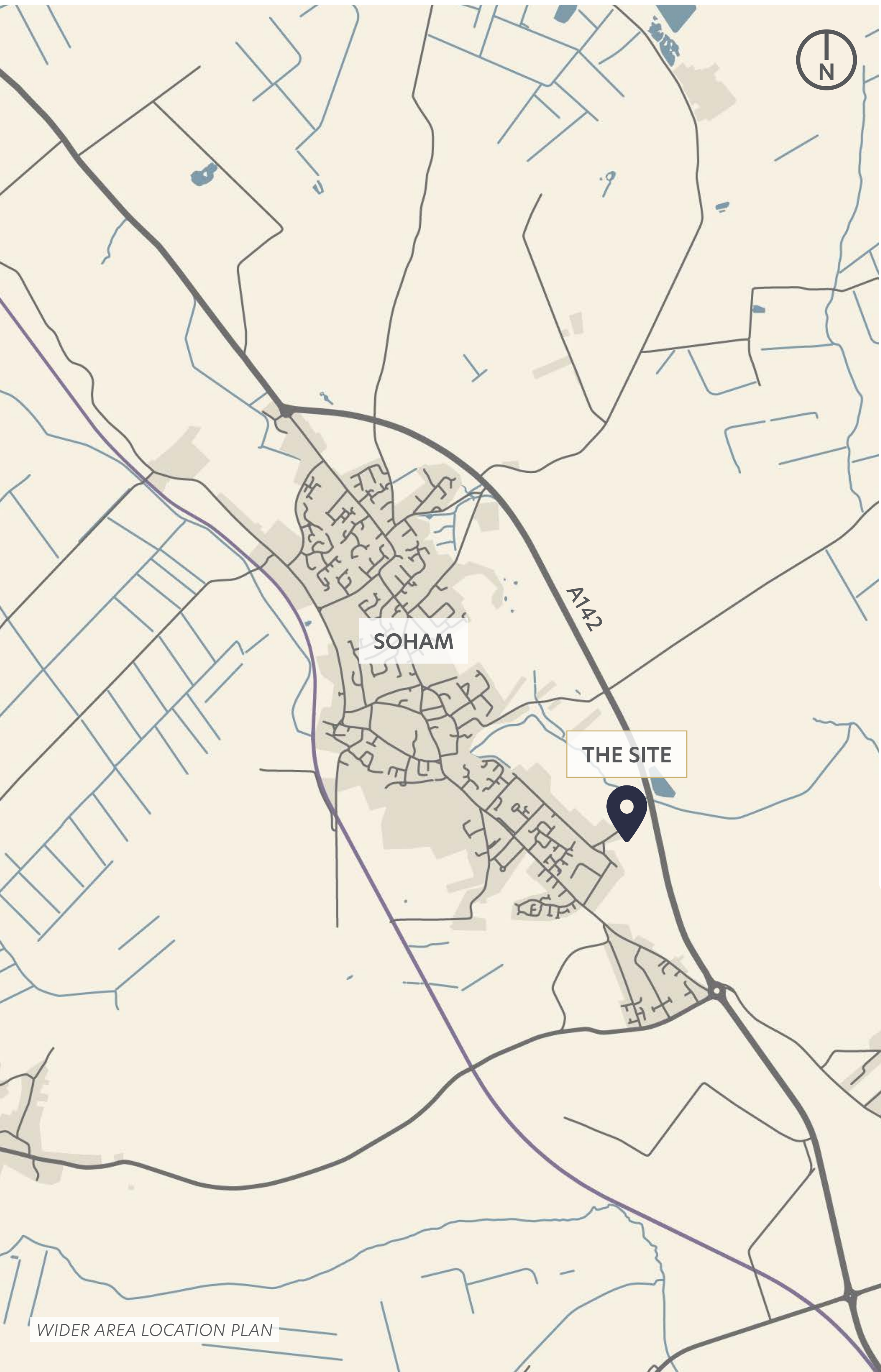
In addition to access considerations, the planning permission on Land South of Blackberry Lane highlights the need to mitigate noise impact from the A142. The agreed approach for this site was to incorporate a 5m high barrier along the road comprising a 2.5m high bund and 2.5m high living willow screened acoustic fence. A similar approach is proposed for the application site.



## PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS

We submitted a pre-application advice request to East Cambridgeshire District Council and received a response in November 2023. The advice received through this process has been assessed and will be reviewed in light of comments received to this consultation before the application proposals are finalised. An account of the pre-application advice received will be submitted with any planning application.

## PROJECT TEAM





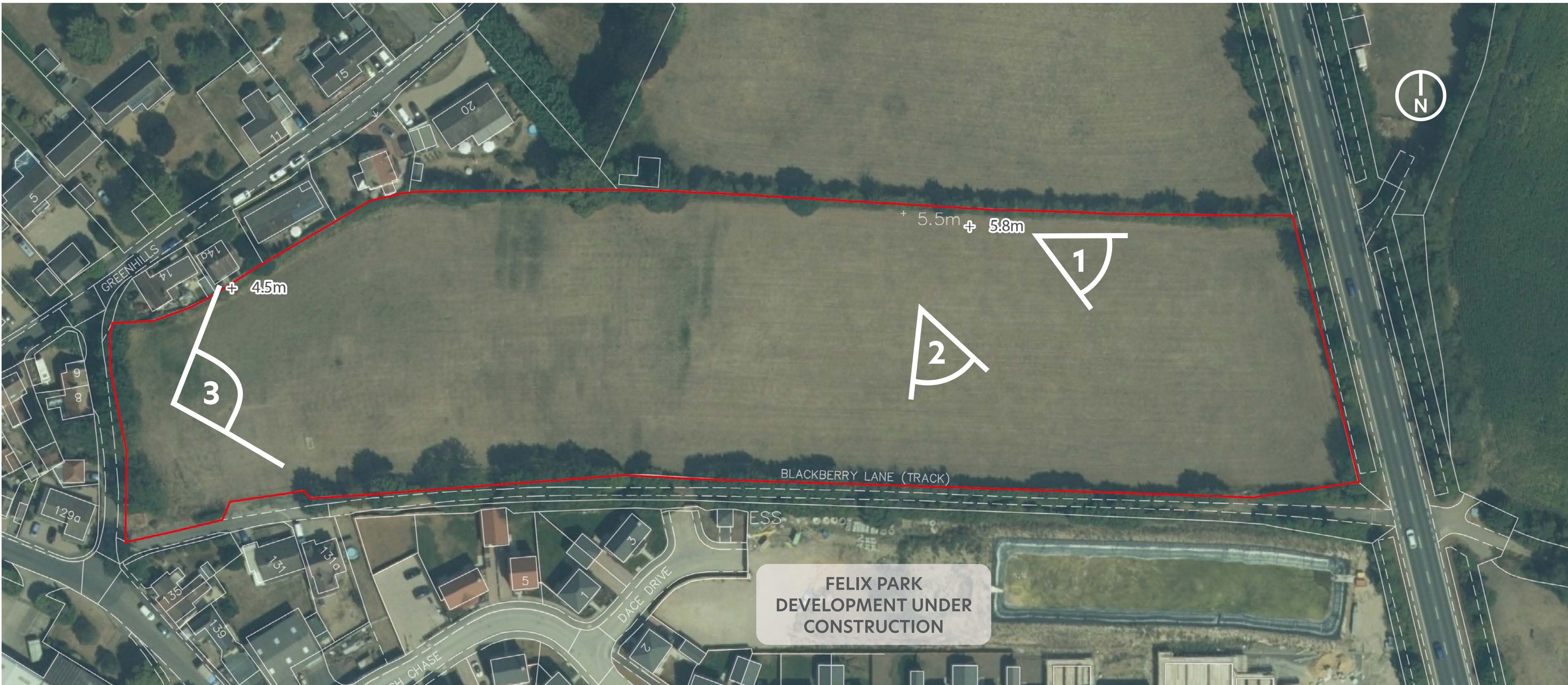
# THE SITE

The site is located in the east of Soham and to the north of Blackberry Lane. Key site features and photographs of the site are presented below

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## SITE FEATURES

- The site is generally level, with a change across the site of c.1m. The high point is across the centre with the low point in the northwest corner.
- Northern boundary defined by established hedgerow, tree planting and closeboard fencing associated with dwellings along Greenhills
- Eastern boundary delineated by existing dense tree and shrub planting, a timber post and rail fence with the A142 beyond.
- Western edge defined by Greenhills, with dwellings opposite and established tree and hedgerow planting.
- Blackberry Lane byway and dwellings in the Felix Park development form the southern boundary, which is defined by dense tree and hedgerow planting.
- Vegetation along the southern boundary creates visual separation from the Felix Park development to the south.



VIEW OF EASTERN BOUNDARY WITH A142 BEYOND



VIEW SOUTH TOWARDS FELIX PARK DEVELOPMENT UNDER CONSTRUCTION



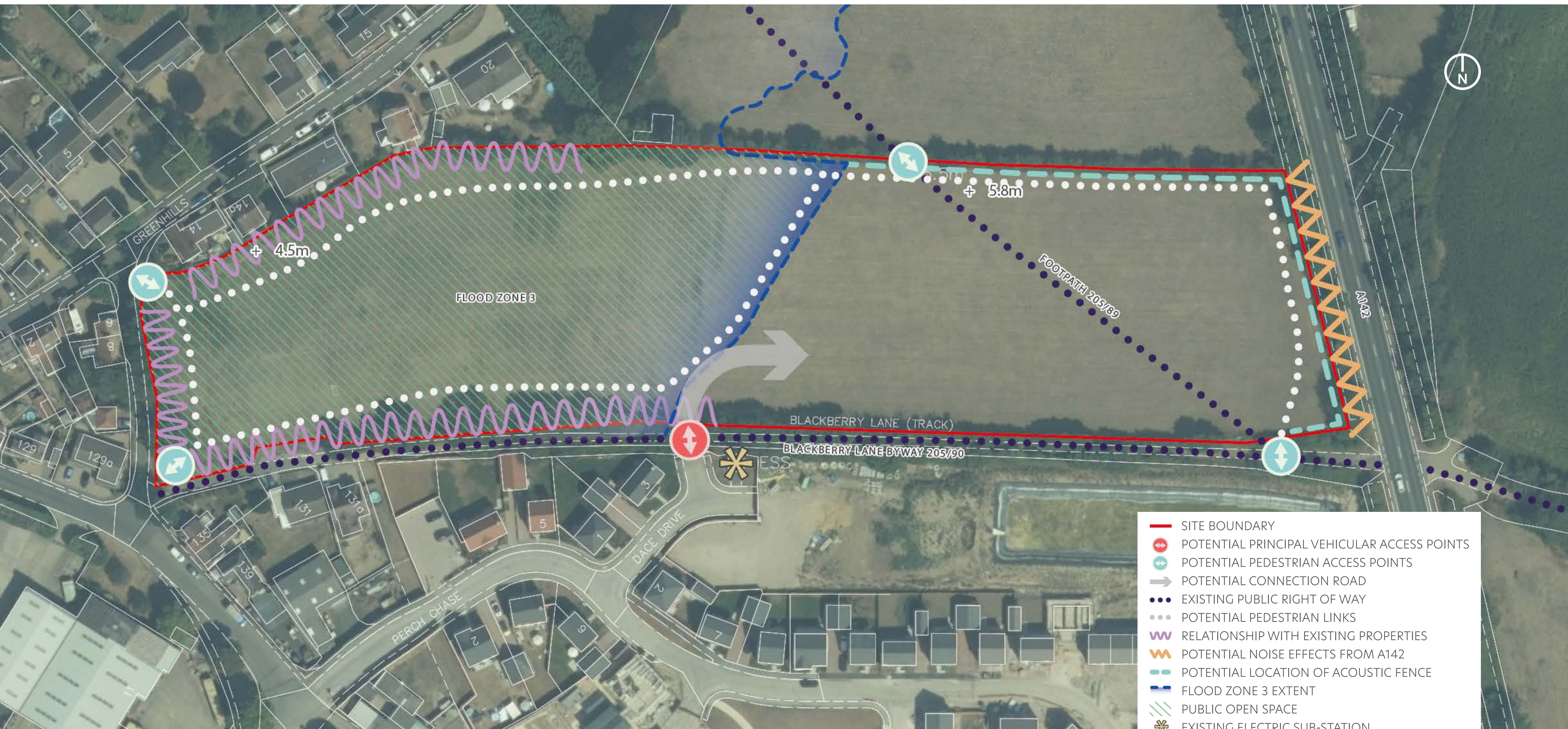
PANORAMIC VIEW OF SITE TOWARDS NORTH, EAST & SOUTH - REAR OF DWELLINGS ON GREENHILLS TO LEFT - NORTHERN AND EASTERN BOUNDARY IN CENTRE - SOUTHERN BOUNDARY TO RIGHT WITH FELIX PARK BEYOND



# OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS

Specialist consultants have undertaken technical assessments to ascertain the constraints and opportunities of the site

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## FLOODING & SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE

- Much of the site is covered by a Flood Zone 3 designation denoting a 1 in 100 (1%) or greater chance of flooding each year from rivers.
- A high water table requires an engineered solution to control surface water discharge into local watercourses.

## NOISE

- Noise bund and acoustic barriers to provide noise mitigation from the A142, similar to the approach taken on the Felix Park scheme to the south.

## ECOLOGY

- Existing hedgerows and trees along the boundary will be retained and enhanced where possible.
- There is an opportunity to enhance biodiversity on site through proposed habitat creation, leading to a biodiversity net gain.

## HIGHWAYS & ACCESS

- Opportunity to utilise Dace Drive within the Felix Park development for principal vehicular access to the site.
- Potential access into the site would extend this spur, with a 5.5m width and 2m wide pavement arrangement.
- The existing Public Right of Way (205/89) crossing the site diagonally from the northwest will be diverted but will retain connections to Blackberry Lane byway.

## URBAN DESIGN

- Due to the flooding constraints, built form is limited to the eastern part of the site.
- Opportunity to create a considered arrangement of dwellings whilst respecting natural and physical constraints.
- Existing residential amenity to be protected, with proposed dwellings respecting the setting of existing homes.
- Opportunity to use primarily outward facing development block structure creating enclosure to areas of public open space within and surrounding the scheme.

## TREES

- Trees and hedgerows will be retained where possible, and those trees deemed to be of high quality will be retained to form key focal points within the scheme.

## LANDSCAPE & TOPOGRAPHY

- Level change across the site of c.1.3m. High point of 5.8m AOD adjacent to the northern boundary. Low point of 4.5m AOD in the northwest corner.
- Opportunity to enhance and reinforce existing boundary vegetation through additional landscape buffer planting.
- Views towards and from the surrounding countryside are limited.
- Flood Zone 3 land to be used as public open space parkland, creating opportunities for relaxation and recreation for residents and visitors.



# LAYOUT & DESIGN

## Concept Masterplan Proposed dwelling character

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### CONCEPT MASTERPLAN

Key principles of the masterplan include:

- Up to 35 dwellings in a variety of tenures.
- 30% of total dwellings to be affordable.
- Dwellings to be principally 2 storey in height
- Footpath 205/89 retained and diverted through site.
- Access off Dace Drive within Felix Park to the south.
- Footpath connections link into wider public right of way network.
- Existing high quality trees and hedgerows retained and reinforced with additional planting
- Landscape-led scheme with green spaces providing play area and opportunities for relaxation & recreation and creating a natural setting for dwellings.
- 2.5m high bund with 2.5m high natural acoustic fence runs parallel to the eastern boundary to provide noise mitigation.
- 2.2m - 3m high temporary acoustic fences are proposed along the northern boundary. These will be removed should dwellings within the future northern land development provide appropriate noise mitigation.
- Outward facing perimeter block structure creates strong frontage and provides natural surveillance to spaces.

### DWELLING CHARACTER

#### Parkland Villas

Proposed detached homes overlooking the western parkland public open space are influenced by the villas of Soham. These dwellings have a more traditional character and are set within larger plots behind good sized front gardens.

Proposed dwellings draw influence from the architectural styles of Soham. Different character areas are proposed to create variety and interest within the scheme:



SOHAM VILLA EXAMPLES

#### Landscaped Inner Lanes

The town centre streets of Soham have influenced the appearance of dwellings on the landscaped inner lanes. Proposed homes have a traditional character with contemporary detailing and are set behind small front gardens to create an intimate village aesthetic.



SOHAM TOWN CENTRE DWELLING EXAMPLES

#### Eastern Edge

Dwellings adjacent to the eastern boundary are influenced by Soham's terraced streets, with a continuous frontage. Proposed dwellings have traditional forms with contemporary detailing to create a distinctive appearance.



SOHAM TERRACED STREET EXAMPLES



# HIGHWAYS, LANDSCAPE & ECOLOGY

Additional information relating to access for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.  
Proposed landscape and ecology strategies for the site

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## HIGHWAYS & ACCESS

Primary vehicular and pedestrian access is proposed via an existing road spur - Dace Drive - within the Felix Park scheme to the south.

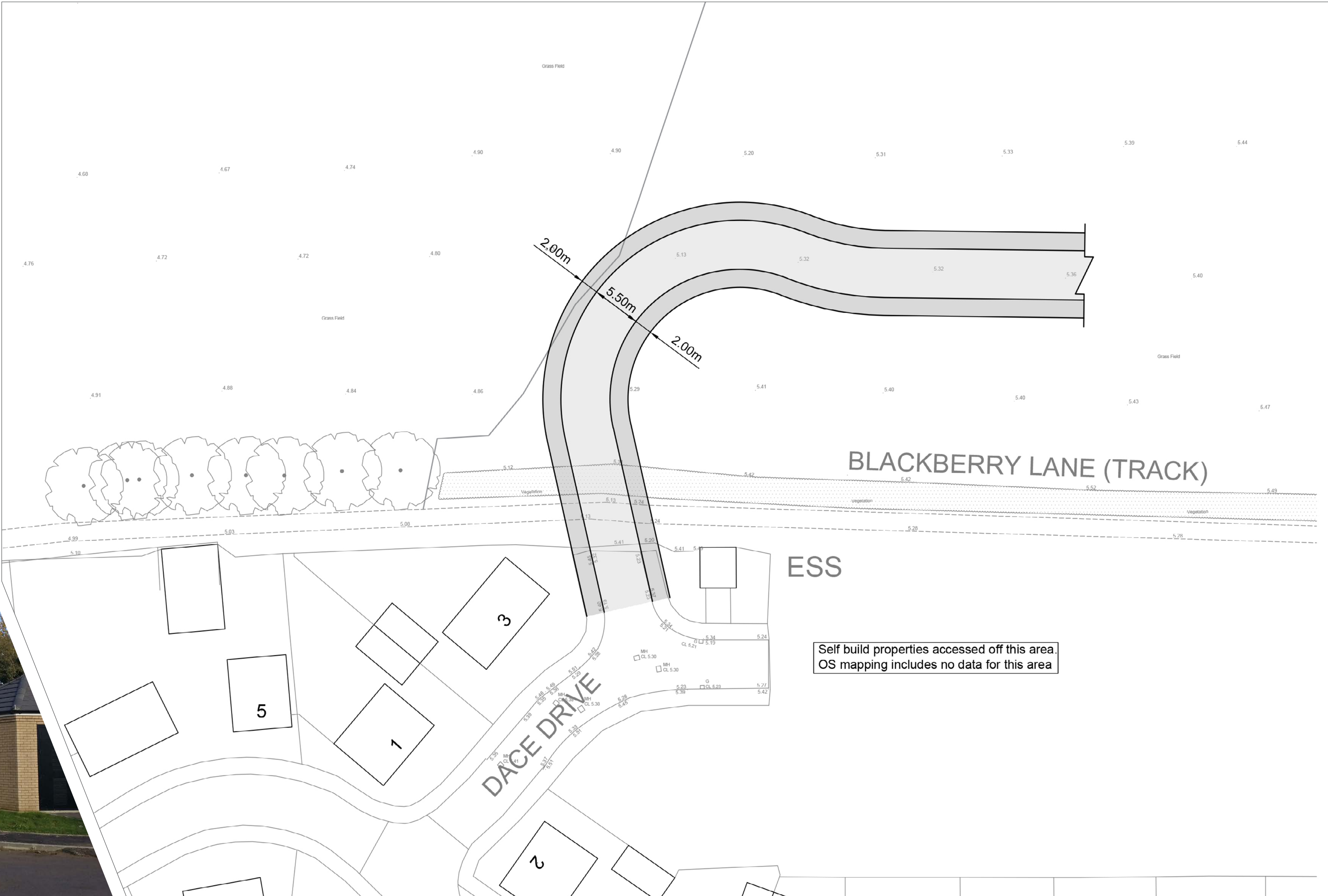
Dace Drive currently comprises a 5.5m wide carriageway with footways either side. The proposed access road would continue the carriageway width of 5.5m with 2m pavements.

Alongside safe vehicular access and egress, this access point allows safe pedestrian and cycle access to the services and amenities of Soham town centre to the west.

The existing Public Right of Way (Footpath 205/89) entering from the northwest will be diverted south, parallel to the western-most development parcel through the area of Public Open Space. It will then link into the proposed principal access, allowing access to Blackberry Lane byway and the wider footpath network.



DACE DRIVE SPUR AS EXISTING



PROPOSED ACCESS ARRANGEMENT

## LANDSCAPE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- Grass verges are provided along streets where possible to allow for the planting of formal street trees.
- Variety of tree species proposed to enhance tree diversity and reduce future bio security risks.
- Existing boundary vegetation to be retained and used as a backdrop, encouraging ecological connections.
- Creation of well designed, overlooked areas of public open space, creating a safe, green framework for residents to enjoy.
- Each landscaped area offers public, private and/or biodiversity value.
- Planting species will be traditional in colour and structure and focus on providing ecological benefits.
- New species-rich grasslands and variety of tree species within proposed open spaces. Hoggin footpaths lead residents through the surrounding open space.
- Connections with the existing Public Right of Way network enhances routes for users.
- Principal street planting to include low formal clipped evergreen hedgerows and seasonal ornamental shrubs.

## ECOLOGY STRATEGY

The site is currently dominated by uniform agricultural grassland, which offers little wildlife value.

The landscape proposals have been designed to provide an attractive greenspace for people that is also of value for wildlife, delivering substantial Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

Ecological features include:

- Creation of flower-rich grassland attractive to butterflies, bees and other pollinators.
- Native tree and scrub planting providing increased cover and habitats for wildlife.
- New species-rich native hedgerows.
- Enhancements for fauna including bat boxes, bird boxes, hedgehog runs, bee bricks and habitat piles.





# WIDER SITE ALLOCATION

## Indicative Masterplan for Policy SOH6 Allocation

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The allocation is split over two separate land ownerships. However the Council have requested that an overall masterplan is prepared that covers both parcels of land.

### POLICY SOH6 ALLOCATION

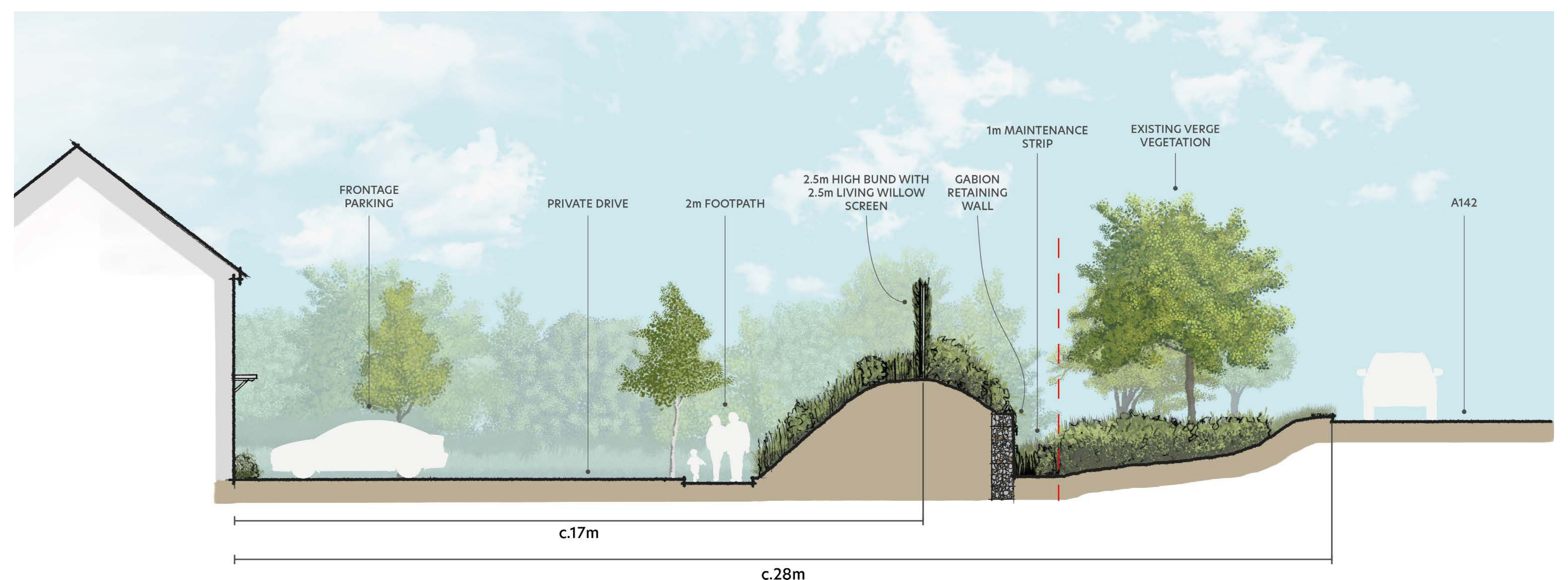
- The site is allocated within the East Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan 2015 under Policy SOH6.
- The Council suggests the site can accommodate up to 100 units.
- However, much of the allocation is located within Flood Zone 3. Therefore built development is restricted to the land outside this area.
- The adjacent indicative layout presents a potential development arrangement for the allocation.
- This has the potential to deliver a total of up to 75 units:
  - Up to 35 on the southern site; and
  - Up to 40 on the northern land.

### INDICATIVE MASTERPLAN

- Provision of an expansive area of Public Open Space Parkland across the allocation.
- Parkland to accommodate walking and cycle routes, play trail, tree planting and space for recreation and relaxation.
- Continuous noise attenuation bund and natural acoustic fence parallel to the A142 along eastern boundary (see below indicative sketch section).
- Once noise attenuation bund is provided on the northern land, temporary acoustic fences on southern land can be removed.
- Continuation of access road from southern parcel providing access to the northern land.
- A considered approach to masterplanning both parcels with a cohesive design language and street arrangement throughout.
- An outward facing organic parcel structure that respects natural assets, providing overlooking of streets and spaces.
- Masterplan respects the Flood Zone 3 boundary, with dwellings located outside of this area.
- An additional emergency access point located off Greenhills in the northwest.
- Retention of existing hedgerows and surrounding boundary vegetation.
- Existing Public Right of Way (205/89) retained and incorporated into proposed pedestrian and cycle links.
- A variety of dwelling tenures, including affordable units in accordance with Local Authority Planning Policy.
- Creation of key spaces within development blocks to provide legibility and create opportunities for visually distinctive dwelling design.
- Engineered solutions to drainage and the management of surface water.



INDICATIVE MASTERPLAN FOR POLICY SOH6 ALLOCATION



INDICATIVE SKETCH SECTION THROUGH POTENTIAL BUND



# NEXT STEPS

THANK YOU FOR VIEWING OUR  
ONLINE PUBLIC EXHIBITION

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Should you have any feedback  
for the team, we would love to  
hear from you. Please send any  
comments or suggestions to:



**EMAIL:** [INFO@ARPLANNING.CO.UK](mailto:INFO@ARPLANNING.CO.UK)



**POST:** ARMSTRONG RIGG PLANNING  
THE EXCHANGE  
COLWORTH SCIENCE PARK  
SHARNBROOK  
BEDFORD  
MK44 1LZ

You can also make comments on our website:



**WEB:** [WWW.MANOROAKHOMES.CO.UK/PROJECT/SOH-073/](http://WWW.MANOROAKHOMES.CO.UK/PROJECT/SOH-073/)



YOUR FEEDBACK IS VALUABLE TO US AND  
WILL BE CONSIDERED IN THE PREPARATION  
OF PLANS TO BE SUBMITTED WITH THE  
PLANNING APPLICATION

We have entered into pre-application discussions with the Local Authority and  
will be submitting an outline planning application in Autumn 2024