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# Introduction + policy context

## South West Rugby

This design code applies to land within the allocation at South West Rugby. South West Rugby is allocated for an urban extension in the local plan (2011-2031), consisting of new homes, employment, and associated infrastructure.

The land within the urban extension is within multiple different land ownerships, and no overarching outline planning application is anticipated. As a result, coordination across the different land holdings and multiple planning proposals for the duration of the development will therefore be key to creating a joined up, cohesive and high-quality place. The key objectives of this design code are to coordinate the design of development across the area, and to raise the overall quality of the place.

This design code seeks to build upon existing adopted policy in the local plan and the South West Rugby Masterplan SPD. It focusses on key design characteristics, providing guidance on coordination and quality.

## Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted 2019)

The local plan allocated the site for development consisting of around 5000 dwellings and 35ha of employment land for B8 uses under local plan policies DS3 (DS3.4) and DS8.

Policy DS8 required a mixed-use district centre consisting of; a convenience store and other retail uses with office or residential space above; a GP surgery; and provision for a Safer Neighbourhood Team. There is further a requirement for one secondary school, two primary schools, other local facilities and land for an onsite fire & rescue provision (now anticipated to be located off site).

Part of the local plan allocation at South West Rugby was granted planning permission on appeal in 2017 for up to 860 dwellings, and is substantially built. This development is known as Ashlawn Gardens. This area can be seen on the policies map on p11, labelled as DS3.4.

Requirements for the spine road network are contained in policy DS9.

## South West Rugby Masterplan SPD (2021, updated 2024)

The South West Rugby Masterplan SPD was published in order to provide guidance on comprehensive delivery of the planning objectives for the allocation. It covers masterplanning, infrastructure requirements and phasing/delivery guidance.

The SPD states preferred locations for open space, access, play areas, schools and primary roads including the spine road network along with other features.



Figure 1: Drawing locating the allocation site within the borough and wider geographical context.

# Purpose of this document

The purpose of this guide is to expand on the South West Rugby Masterplan SPD by establishing design principles for development in the allocation. It is intended for use by applicants when developing proposals, and by development management officers when advising on pre-application proposals and when considering planning applications.

In setting out clear design expectations, the code aims to achieve:

- Higher quality development
- Conversations about design earlier in the planning process
- Conversations with local residents about places that affect them
- Clarity and a level of certainty about what will be expected on the site
- Greater predictability in the planning process
- Consistency through multiple delivery phases.

## Status of this document

This design code will take the status of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which means it will be a material consideration in decision making.

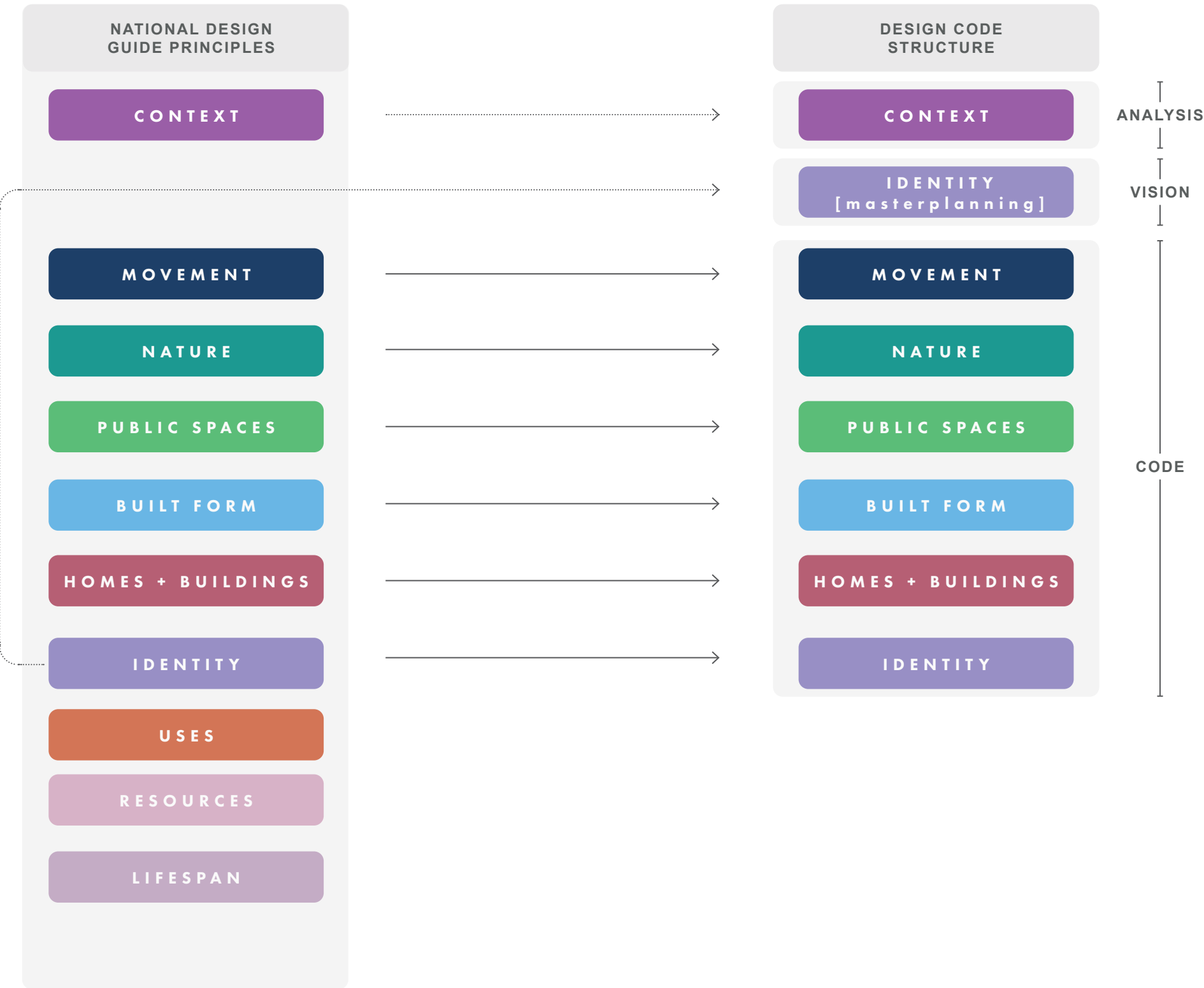
It should be read in conjunction with existing policy or guidance that is in place.

## Content + structure

The content of the code is derived from guidance contained within the National Model Design Code Parts 1 + 2. Much of this guidance is centred around the ten characteristics of a well-designed place as stated in the National Design Guide.

This code uses seven out of the ten characteristics, which are deemed most relevant, impactful and appropriate for the allocation and its requirements. Those not included may be covered in existing policy or guidance, or might be more appropriate for design codes covering a larger-scale area or focusing on different design issues.

The code follows the structure contained in the National Model Design Code, with three main sections - 'Analysis', 'Vision' and 'Code'. The National Design Guide characteristics are mapped to the topic headings as in the diagram opposite.



About this document

How to use the design code

The code is structured in sections focussed on one of the design characteristics from the National Design Guide (see previous page). A number of subheadings are included under each chapter, with both site-wide and area-type guidance considered as appropriate.

Pages contain the following information:

- Key strategies/objectives for the subheading
- Code requirements, as a ‘must’, ‘should’ or ‘could’
- Crossovers with other code sections, policy or guidance
- Explanatory drawings, diagrams or precedents

Code requirements take one of the following forms:

‘Must’	a mandatory requirement
‘Should’	a recommendation, where deviation requires justification
‘Could’	a measure that would add value but is not considered necessary everywhere

If development proposals do not comply with design ‘musts’, it is the responsibility of the team proposing the scheme (the developer and their design team) to explain why any mandatory (‘Must’) or recommended elements (‘Should’/‘Could’) are not met, and demonstrate that the proposals do not conflict with the overall aim of the South West Rugby Design Code.

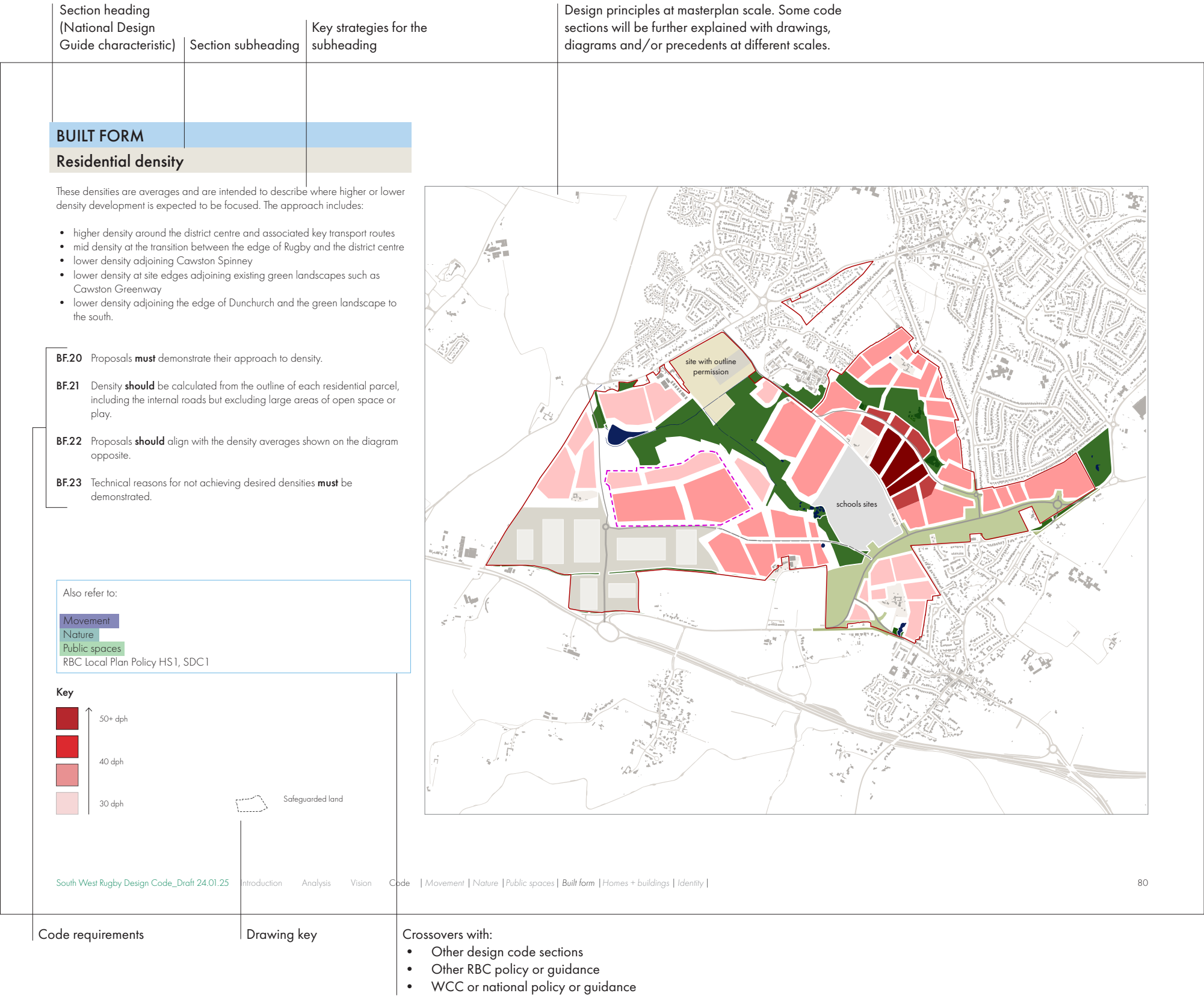
Departures from the Design Code will only be considered when a rationale for not complying with mandatory design fixes or recommended design practices can be clearly demonstrated as a positive intervention that has placemaking benefits, or responds appropriately to changing legislation, circumstances and technological advancement. It may also be necessary to depart from some aspects of the Design Code in light of unforeseen site conditions or ground investigations. Any such noncompliance will be subject to agreement with RBC.

Developers will be expected to submit a compliance tracker with applications.

Precedents

Precedent photographs are used throughout this code to illustrate ideas and principles in each section. They are intended to illustrate a particular point (as described) and it should not be assumed that replication of other features will be acceptable.

[EXAMPLE PAGE]



South West Rugby Design Code\_Draft 24.01.25

Introduction | Analysis | Vision | Code | Movement | Nature | Public spaces | Built form | Homes + buildings | Identity |

Figure 2: Example design code page.



## Engagement

## Who has been involved?

In developing this design code, we have engaged with:

- Members of the public
- Pupils from Bilton School
- Local Ward Councillors
- Local Parish Councillors

A summary of the engagement is included below, though further details are available in a separate report [here](#).

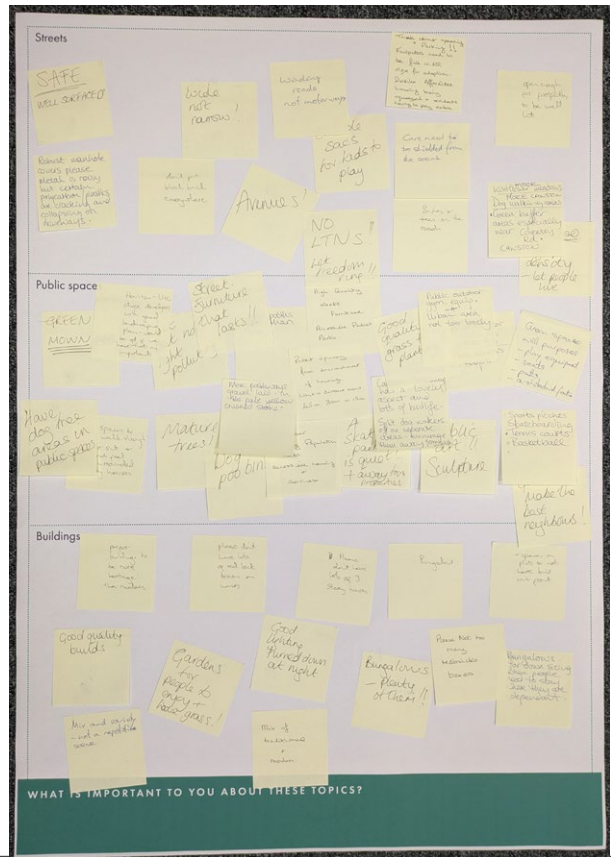
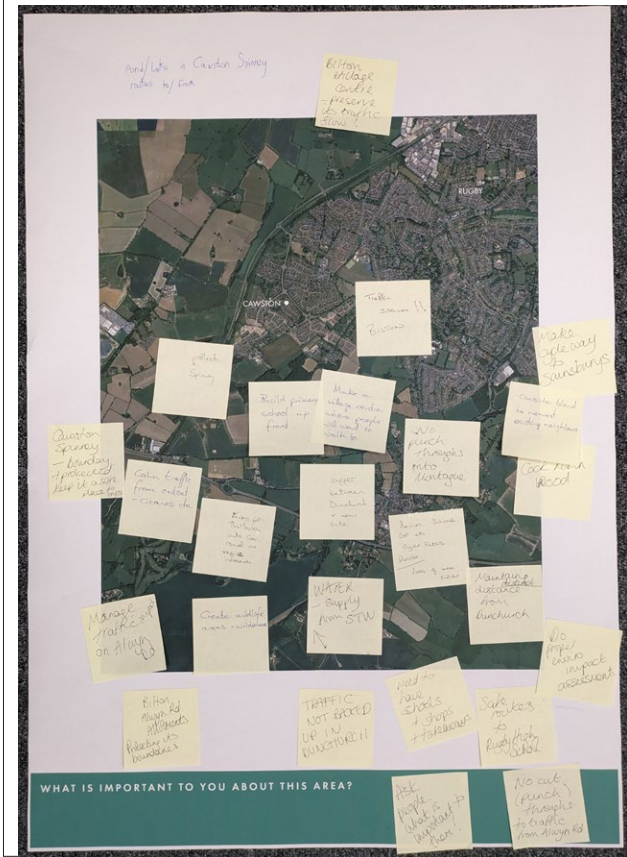
## What did we consider?

At each session with representatives from the above groups, the following key questions and themes were considered:

- What is important or distinctive about the site and area
- What is important about aspects such as streets, public spaces and buildings
- An emerging vision for the site
- Emerging masterplan principles regarding landscape, movement and the built environment
- Examples of built projects with a range of design approaches

## Key responses and themes that emerged

- The importance of the natural environment and access to green space
- Prioritising active travel within the urban extension, and beyond
- Access to key destinations within Rugby, such as the town centre, the train station and the hospital
- A desire for variety in built form, stemming from a response to precedent housing images that were considered 'dull' or 'bland'.



ANALYSIS



# Context

## Site context

The allocation is approximately 390 Hectares (960 acres) and is predominantly in agricultural use. It is located between Cawston to the north, Bilton to the east, Dunchurch to the south, and the A4071 (London Road) and a disused railway line to the west. Named the Cawston Greenway, this now forms part of the active travel network.

The allocation is separated from the wider countryside to the south by the A45 (London Road) and the disused railway line to the west which form physical and permanent boundaries to development.

The grounds of Bilton Grange School, which are a registered Park and Garden, define the south eastern edge of the allocation, east of Dunchurch. The urban edge of Rugby is defined by the recent development at Cawston and the attractive residential streets of Lime Tree Avenue in the north east and Alwyn Road to the east.

In the south west of the site, land identified for employment development is substantially built out.

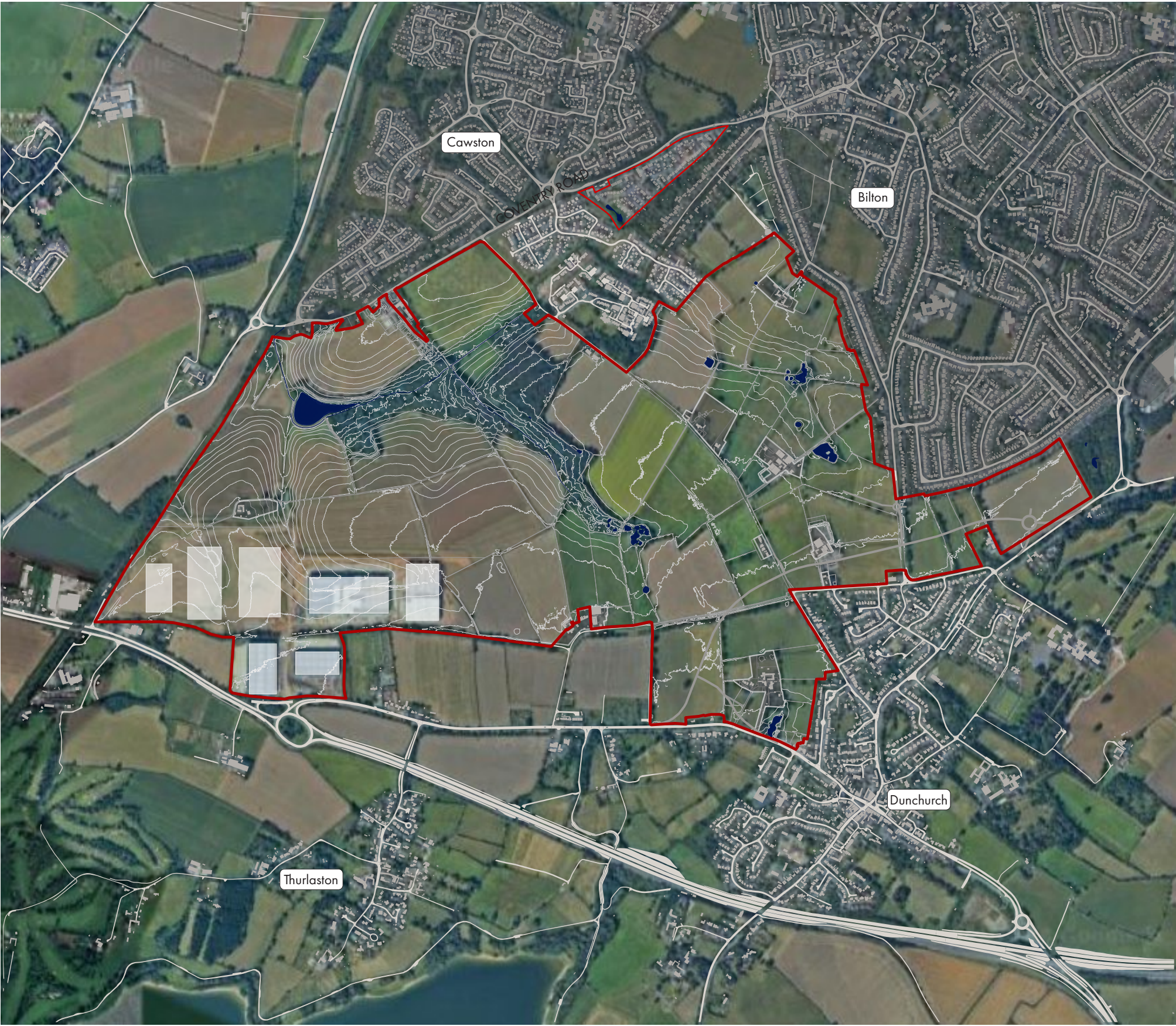


Figure 3: Aerial photograph and drawing of the site and immediate context.



# Site status

There are several landowners/developers and the site is due to come forward in several phases, with some phases already underway. These factors make co-ordination between parcels challenging and extremely important. Figure 5 below shows land ownership at the time of writing, though this is likely to change over time.

## Planning history + allocation status

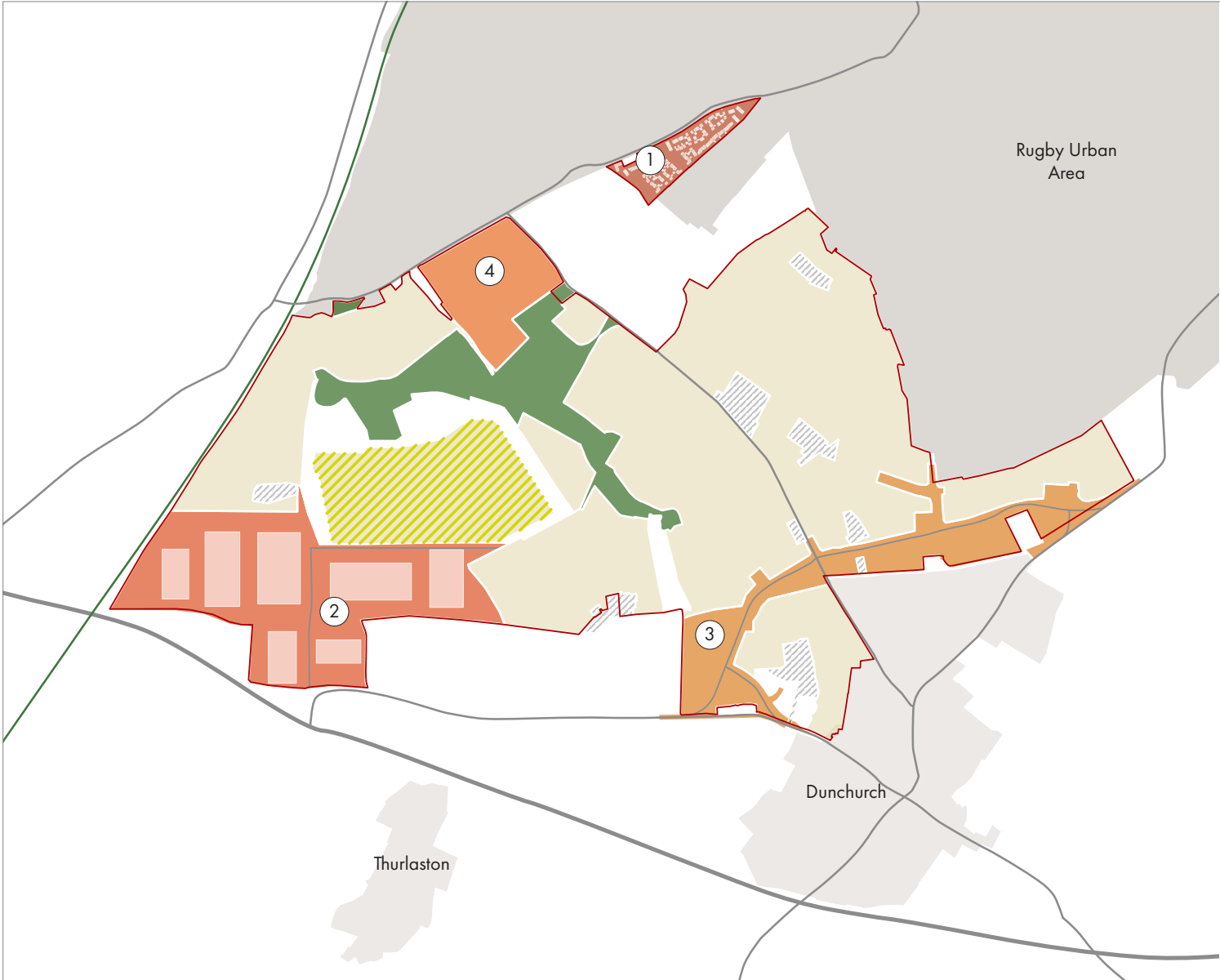


Figure 4: Drawing demonstrating site progress and planning history at the point of writing.

## Land promotion

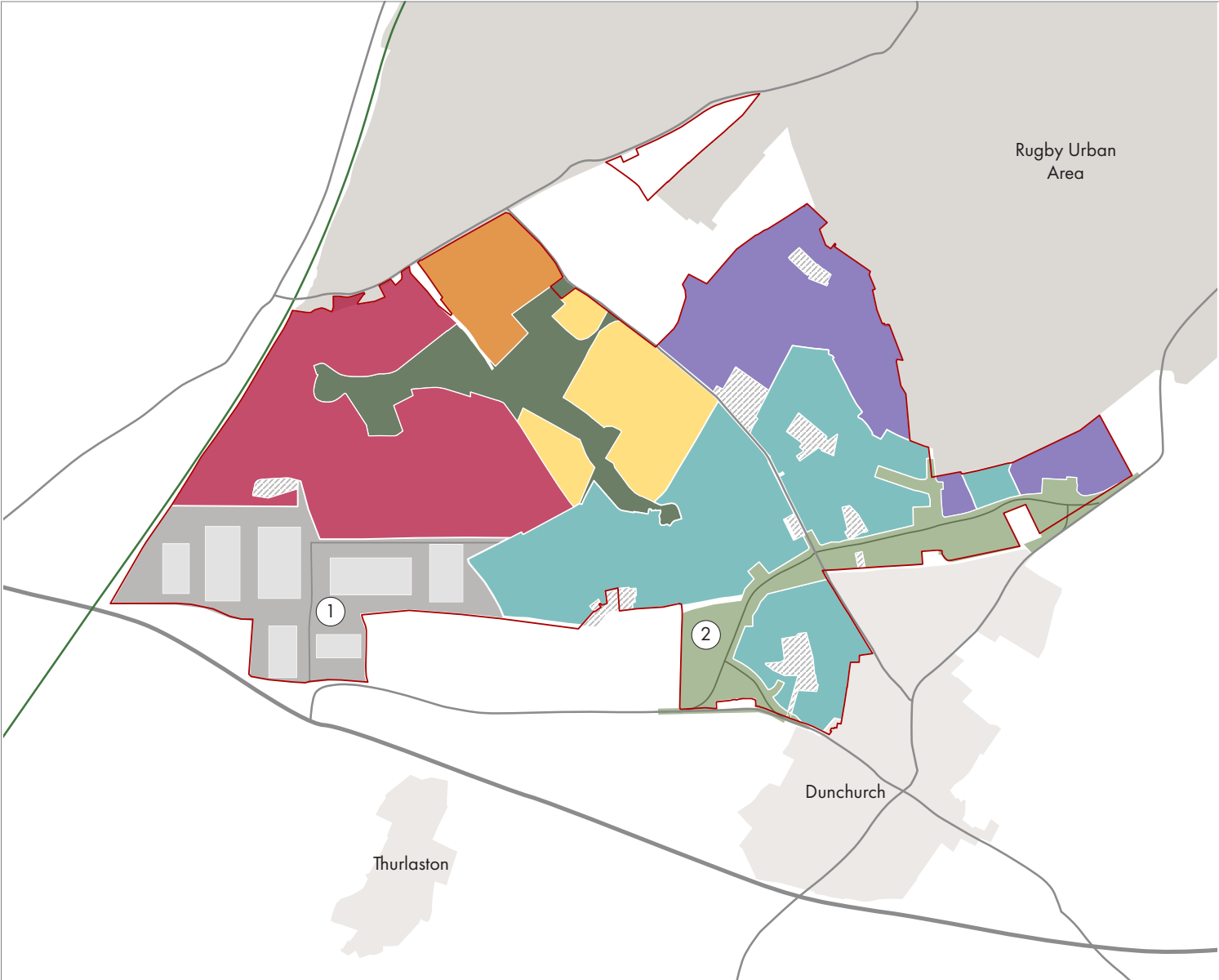
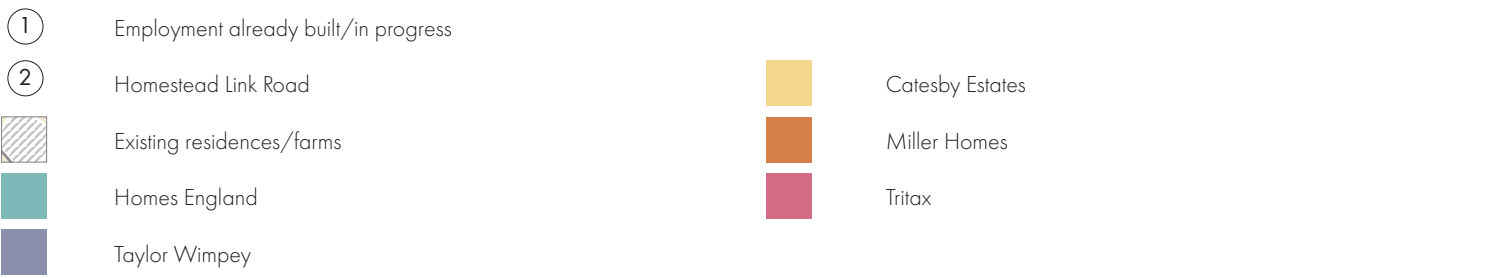


Figure 5: Drawing demonstrating land promotion parcels at the point of writing.



# Safeguarded land

There is an area of land identified within South West Rugby as ‘safeguarded land’ (see extract from the local plan (2011-2031) [policies map](#) below).

This land was ‘safeguarded’ for future allocation in a local plan, and is being considered through the ongoing review of the local plan. It is for the local plan to determine what type of development may be appropriate on this area, and as such the future use of this land is beyond the scope of this design code. This design code will therefore consider two possible scenarios for this land throughout:

- 1. Residential development
- 2. Employment development

Each of these two scenarios present different opportunities and challenges in how the land interfaces with the surrounding development and features such as the spinney.

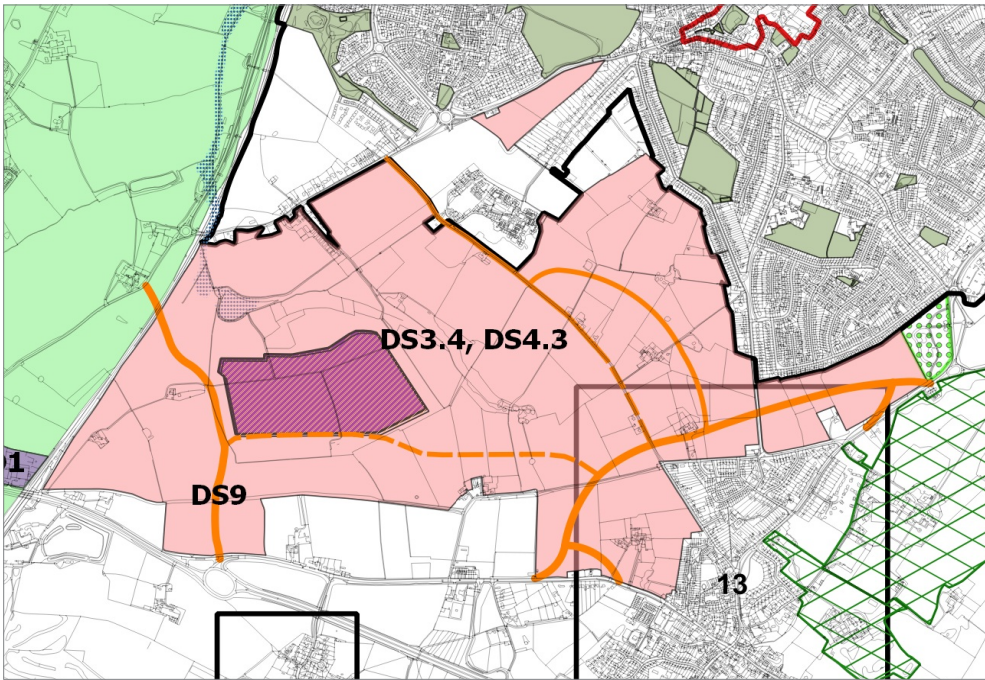


Figure 6: South West Rugby site from Local Plan (2011-2031) policies map.

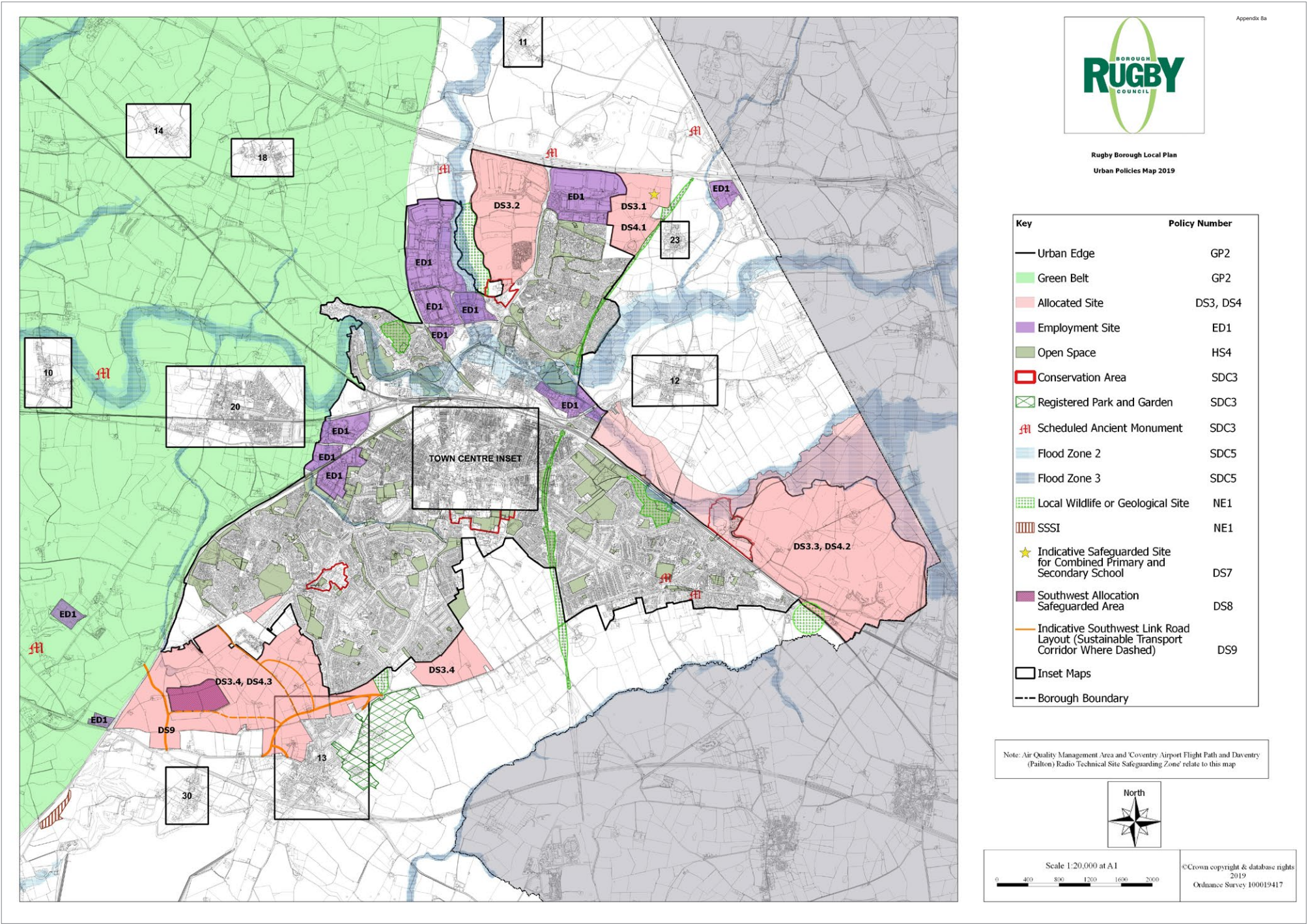


Figure 7: Local Plan (2011-2031) policies map.



# Landscape environment

Figure X (right) gives an overview of the existing landscape environment.

Much of the landscape of the allocation is characterised by open grassland and arable fields, defined by a series of established hedgerows, together with individual mature trees and small copses.

A network of ponds appear periodically within the fields.

There is a well vegetated public bridleway running east-west along Northampton Lane.

Mature ancient woodland exists within the north of the allocation known as Cawston Spinney.

Cock Robin Wood is located to the east.

The site slopes up generally from north to south.

The site of the completed employment buildings also feature landscape bunds as set out in the approved plans.

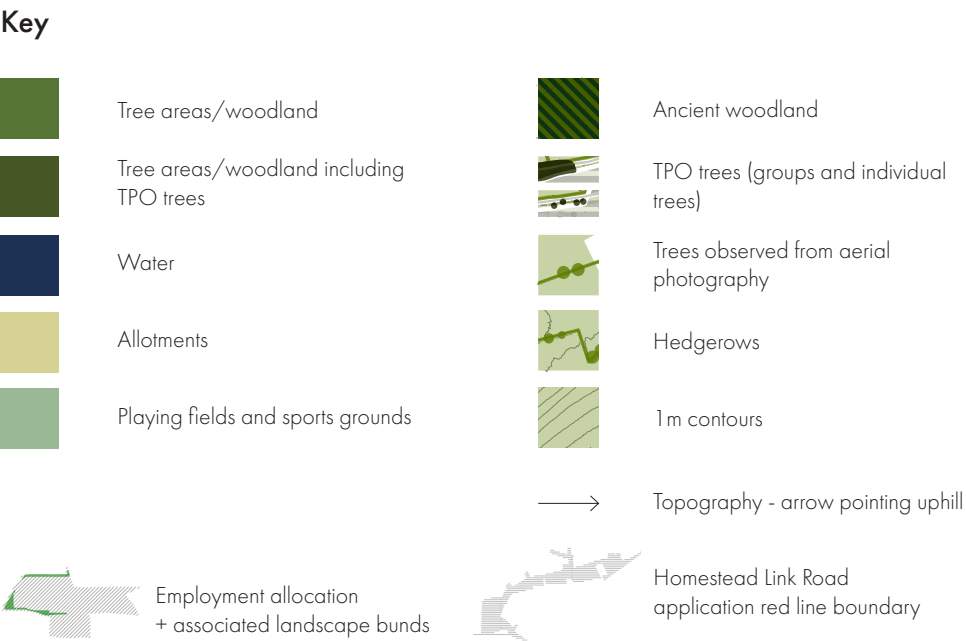


Figure 8: Landscape environment overview.





Woodland + boundaries





Water bodies



# Built environment

The allocation abuts the Rugby urban area, at Cawston to the north and Bilton to the east.

It further meets the settlement edge of Dunchurch. There is a requirement for development proposals to respect and maintain a physical and visual separation between Rugby and Dunchurch to prevent coalescence and protect their individual character and identity.

There are Conservation Areas in both Dunchurch and Thurlaston. There are a handful of Listed Buildings surrounding the site, with clusters in Bilton, Dunchurch and Thurlaston. There are two registered Parks and Gardens to the east of Dunchurch, the grounds of Bilton Grange School and Dunchurch Lodge immediately to the south of Bilton Grange. The setting of some of these designated heritage assets extends into the wider rural landscape and potentially includes areas of the allocation.

Any impacts from the allocation upon the heritage significance of affected heritage assets will need to be carefully considered through the design process.

There are several existing residences which are to be retained within the site area which will need to be thoughtfully addressed.

The existing employment development at the south west of the site must be carefully considered as context to future residential development adjacent.

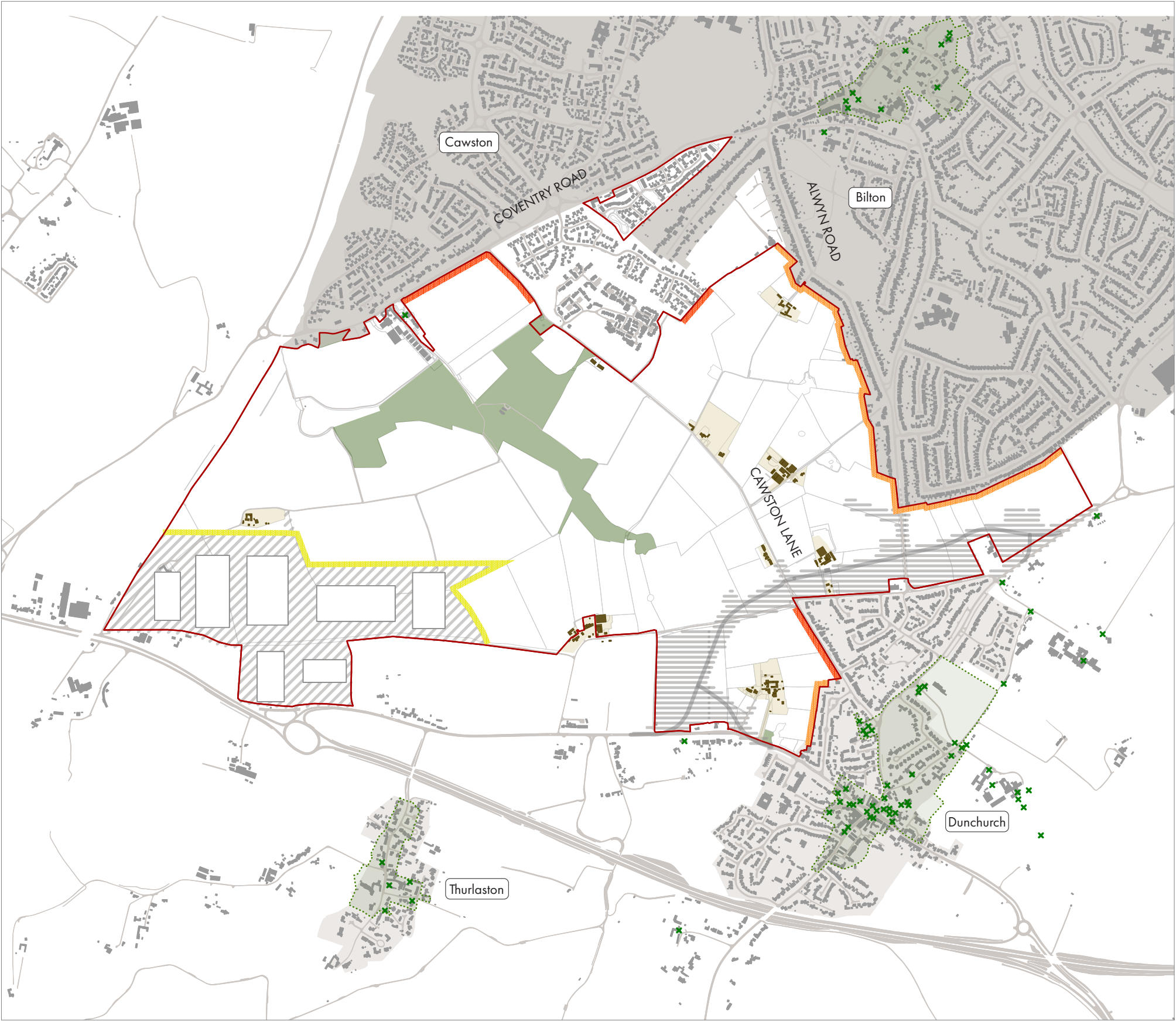


Figure 9: Built environment overview.



# Site + immediate context

## Steads

The site incorporates a number of existing homes, some of which are to be retained. In addition there are a number of existing farm buildings that range in their quality and condition. The existing buildings present opportunities to enhance the character and identity of the development.



## Employment buildings

There are several employment use buildings already built as part of the allocation.

Due to the scale and position of these buildings, they are visible from multiple places in and around the site.



## Coventry Road

The site borders Coventry Road at the north, which features mostly detached and semi-detached dwellings from the 1930s. Dwellings here face the site. The majority are 2 storeys in height, set back from the road with generous driveways and grounds. There is a formality to the arrangement and style of dwellings here.



## Alwyn Road

The rear of dwellings along Alwyn Road border the eastern edge of the site. The majority of dwellings at the northern end are semi-detached and likely from the 1930s, with some detached dwellings and groups from later dates interspersed. Most dwellings are 2 storeys and are set back from the road with generous driveways and front gardens to the street, giving a relative sense of formality.

## Cawston Lane

The edge of Dunchurch borders the South West Rugby allocation at Cawston Lane. The dwellings here face the site. The majority are low-rise, ranging from 1-2 storeys and several with dormers. with a range of age and character. These dwellings are set back from the road, although to a lesser extent than those on Coventry Road, and are generally closer together. The wider range of dwelling age, design and scale, along with the closer relationship with the street and each other, give a sense of intimacy and informality.



## Adkinson Avenue

Branching off from Cawston Lane and bordering the south of the allocation site to the west of Dunchurch is the rear of more recent development at Adkinson Avenue. This mainly consists of runs of terraces at a height of 2 storeys with relatively low storey heights interspersed with more recent semi-detached development.



# Surrounding settlements/adjacent areas

## Bilton

There is a relatively dense mixed-use core along Main Street, with a range of retail, facilities and services. In the immediate context of Main Street, housing is typically two storey and arranged in terraces, often with a small set back and front garden.

Historically a village, Bilton was incorporated into Rugby in the early 20th century, and the area expanded further in the mid 20th century. The history of this expansion is evident in the variation of built form in the area, with housing of various types and styles.



## Cawston

The development of Cawston as known today was completed recently, and linked the original small village with the edge of Rugby. Cawston is therefore generally characterised by relatively recent housing development, and includes a local centre and number of green routes and spaces.



## Dunchurch

The village of Dunchurch has a dense historic core centred on its crossroads, which is also the commercial centre of the village. This features development of a range of ages and design.

There is a concentrated area of thatch-roofed historic dwellings at The Heath to the north of the centre. There are also notable examples of high quality more modern development to the north east, characterised by the dominance of green landscape around dwellings.

The whole village is notable for its rural and green landscape characteristics, with many green open spaces such as greens and the village square.



## Thurlaston

Thurlaston is a small village characterised by a primary linear route, Main Street, and smaller, more intimate lanes which branch from this.

It has a historic core which has roots in the village's agricultural background. This is in combination with later development, notably the collection of 1960s-1970s dwellings which form the entrance to the village from the north.

The village also has a 'green' character demonstrated by mature trees, green verges and generous landscaping around many dwellings.





# Movement + connections

There are proposed to be several key pieces of tranport infrastructure including the Homestead Link, Potsford Dam Link and Sustainable Transport Links at the south of Cawston Lane and to the employment allocation.

There are proposed new bus routes along the Homestead Link Road, Community Spine Road and Cawston Lane, and from the Homestead Link Road to the employment allocation.

There are several existing public rights of way through the site, most of which connect beyond the site further into Rugby or into other areas or features such as Cawston Greenway.

Many of these are associated with landscape features, such as hedgerows.

There will be several crossing points between different modes of transport which will need to be thoughtfully designed.

Key

PRoW - bridleway

PRoW - footpath

PRoW - restricted byway

PRoW - rerouted as a result of planning applications

National Cycle Route 41

Proposed road network

Employment allocation

Proposed sustainable transport link

Existing bus route

Proposed bus route

Key crossing point

Key link beyond site

Homestead Link Road application red line boundary

A detailed map of the Cawston area showing proposed transport infrastructure. The map includes a network of roads: A4071 to the west, A45 running horizontally, B4429 running horizontally below A45, A426 to the east, and M45 at the bottom right. Public Rights of Way (PRoW) are shown in various colors: red dashed for bridleways, red dotted for footpaths, red dash-dot for restricted byways, and red dotted-dot for rerouted paths. A green line represents National Cycle Route 41. A brown line indicates the proposed road network. A grey hatched area represents the employment allocation. A red line boundary outlines the Homestead Link Road application area. A blue line shows the proposed sustainable transport link, and a purple line shows the proposed bus route. Existing bus routes are shown in pink, and key crossing points are marked with red dots. Key links beyond the site are marked with purple dots. The map also shows the locations of Cawston, Bilton, Dunchurch, and Thurlaston.

Figure 10: Movement + connections overview.

South West Rugby Design Code

Introduction   Analysis   Vision   Code

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VISION

# Vision

## Vision statement

The vision statement sets out a broad vision for the site - the ‘what’ - and is accompanied by more specific design ambitions - the ‘how’. These have been informed by existing policy & guidance, site characteristics and engagement with stakeholders.

The framework masterplan (see overleaf) addresses these in strategic ways, with further detail contained in the relevant sections of the code.

*An attractive, engaging and enjoyable place to live, work and play with a vibrant centre that is a focal meeting place for the community. The centre meets the day to day needs of residents and supports an active, healthy, resilient community.*

*A place where trees, hedgerows, plants, waterways and the wider natural environment are celebrated and form an inherent part of the everyday experience. Retained landscape features including Cawston Spinney, Fox Covert, Boat House Spinney and Cock Robin Wood, alongside new greenspaces of different types, shapes and sizes for the benefit of residents and wildlife, contribute to the character of the locality. Green space to enjoy is located a short walk from home, including safe play areas for younger residents.*

*Where walking and cycling along high-quality links are the travel modes of first choice, with buses providing convenient and attractive connections to key destinations within Rugby and for longer distance travel. Calm, safe and greened streets provide for connections to strategic roads for longer distance journeys.*

*There is a cohesive variety in built form, with homes and buildings that both respect nearby settlements and contribute to a distinctive sense of place. There is a variety of different types of homes to meet a variety of different needs, and they are designed with quality and climate mitigation in mind. Transitions between different scales and uses are carefully designed and managed to create a safe, social and enjoyable environment for everyone.*

## Design ambitions

### MOVEMENT

A permeable and connected site layout that enables seamless access through and beyond the site as a whole for all users, whilst prioritising walking and cycling. The network will reinforce existing routes and connections to services and facilities within and beyond the site, knitting into the surrounding network.

### PUBLIC SPACES

A network of public spaces that provide a variety of experience and social interaction opportunities through different characters, scale and uses. Streets will be treated as public spaces for all, not just as vehicular movement routes.

### NATURE

A place where the existing landscape features, such as established headgerows and mature trees, are incorporated and enhanced as much as possible, with prominent features creating key landmarks and defining the arrangement of built form where relevant. A place where green and blue infrastructure is integrated into movement networks and public spaces.

### BUILT FORM

Built form that is appropriate for and therefore representative of different uses. Built form that works alongside the movment and landscape networks to creates distinct areas within the site - breaking down the scale of the development, providing a range of living opportunites and aiding wayfinding/legibility.

### IDENTITY

Buildings that relate to their surroundings - referencing local buildings and areas including heritage assets, embedding the site in its context and providing character and a ‘sense of place’, while still representing high-quality contemporary design that will remain attractive into the future.

### HOMES & BUILDINGS

Homes which provide high quality living conditions, with access to adequate light, ventilation, privacy and amenity, regardless of tenure or type of dwelling.

# Framework masterplan

The purpose of the framework masterplan is to set out the site-wide design principles and form the basis for the more detailed strategies contained later in this document.

It combines principles and requirements from the South West Rugby Masterplan SPD with the design ambitions and principles developed in the design code process.

There are several elements in the masterplan that are ‘fixed’, either by requirements of the Masterplan SPD or by planning history to date. These include:

1. The presence and broad position of new link roads - Homestead Link Road, Cawston Lane + Community Spine Road, Sustainable Transport Link and Potsford Dam Link through the South West Rugby Masterplan SPD
2. Detailed proposals for the Homestead Link Road and associated landscape buffer (future substation shown in grey)
3. Housing to northern parcel off Coventry Road - already built
4. Employment buildings - already built - and associated landscape bunding
5. The retention of Cawston Spinney, Fox Covert and Boat House Spinney
6. Site for residential development + primary school with outline permission

The framework masterplan sets out a high-level layout addressing:

- Key landscape + green infrastructure
- Points of access + connection to the wider street network
- Broad position of primary streets, secondary streets and main tertiary streets
- Position of district centre and school(s)
- Indicative development parcels

It is expected that precise quantity, geometry and alignment of components within each land parcel will be addressed in detailed proposals.

Key

Residential allocation

Local centre

Primary school, secondary school + associated sports areas

Primary school

Safeguarded land

Community spine road

Cawston Lane

Potsford Dam Link

Secondary street

Existing farm buildings under developer ownership

Existing water bodies

Woodland

Ancient woodland

Proposed open space

PRoW (all types)

Sustainable transport corridor

Tertiary streets

Modal filter

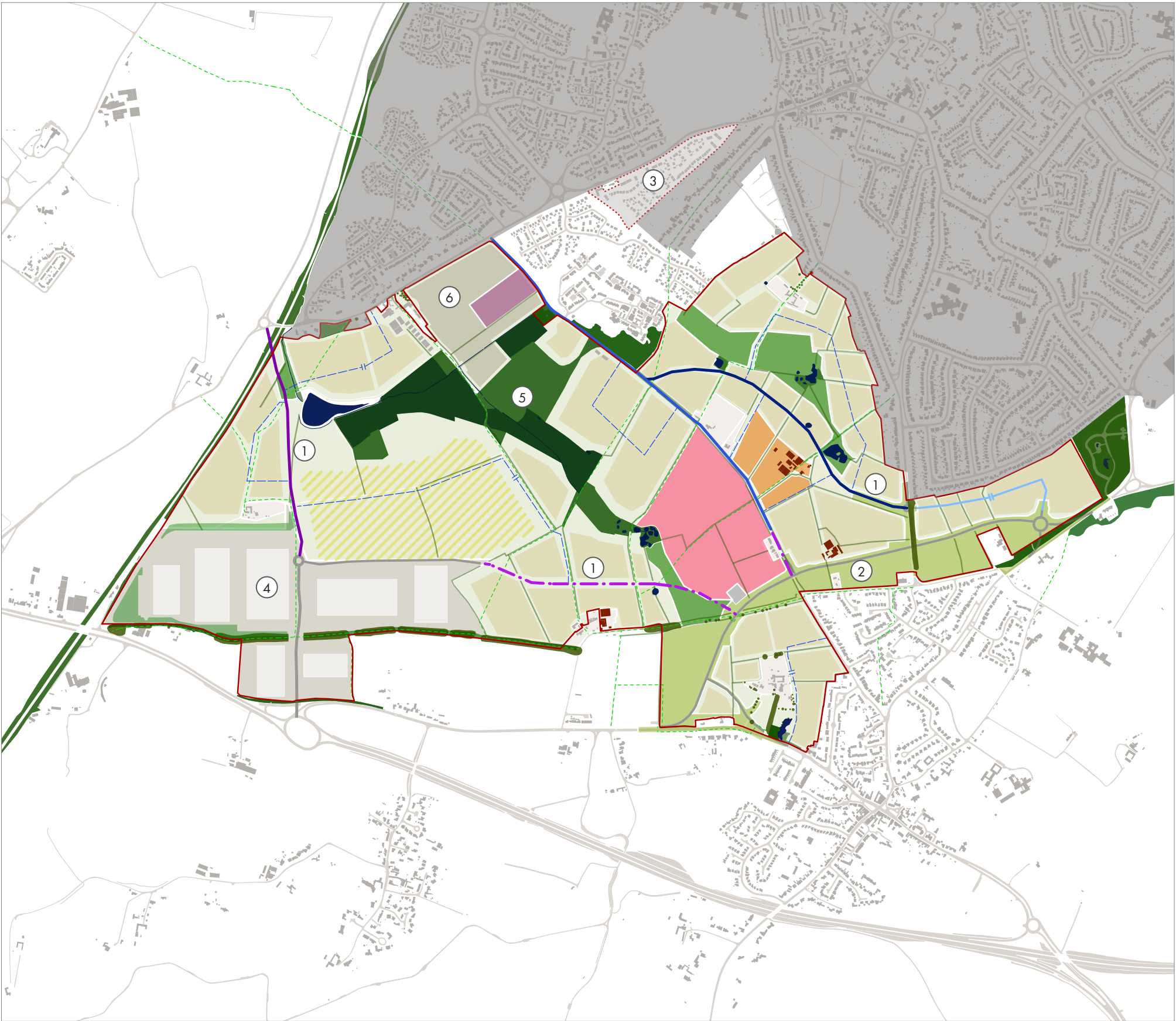


Figure 11: Framework masterplan