

Site Assessment Report

Rolls Park, Chigwell

**Published by Chigwell Parish Council as part of the
evidence base for the Chigwell Neighbourhood Plan**

FINAL

March 2018

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1.0 Introduction

Purpose of Report

1.1 This report has been produced on behalf of the owner of land at Rolls Park, Chigwell, Mr. J Murphy. It supports the proposed allocation of the Rolls Park site for a housing scheme, a community park scheme and the delivery of an off-site community facility scheme in Policy CHG2 of the submission version of the Chigwell Neighbourhood Plan. It is published by the Parish Council in the evidence base of the Neighbourhood Plan and has been used to refine the policy and to inform the assessment of the site in the Sustainability Appraisal of the Plan.

1.2 It sets out the planning context for the proposal along with a description and analysis of its main features and design principles. It includes an illustrative masterplan to help inform the reader of the effects of the proposal, which are then explained in greater detail in respect of landscape, ecology and transport. Finally, it sets out how the proposal meets the 'very special circumstances' tests to justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt in line with national planning policy.

1.3 Once the Neighbourhood Plan has been examined and made, and the allocation is confirmed, it is expected that the report will form the basis of the range of documents to be submitted as part of a planning application for the proposals.

Background

1.4 Chigwell Parish Council is the 'qualifying body' for the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, which is being undertaken within the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations, as amended. The Plan sets out a positive vision for the Parish that emphasises the protection and improvement of community assets alongside housing development proposals as important means of making the local community more sustainable.

1.5 The Parish Council has long seen the merits of developing this last part of the original Grange Farm camping complex as a crucial means of securing significant public benefits. It has supported in principle the previous attempts by the owner to obtain planning permission for these ends. During the process of preparing the Plan, the Parish Council has discussed with the owner this new opportunity to resolve a longstanding ambition – to replace the inadequate Victory Hall community building with a modern, multi-purpose 'community hub' for the benefit of the whole Parish. That £6.5m proposal can only be financed through enabling development using Green Belt land that can only be justified on 'very special circumstances' grounds.

1.6 This is very much in line with the aspirations of the Government in establishing the neighbourhood planning system through the Localism Act of 2011. That system, as enshrined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance, enables local communities to assert their planning judgement in balancing competing policy objectives to shape the future of their areas. As such, the Parish Council considers the policy meets the 'basic conditions' of making a neighbourhood plan and has submitted it for independent examination. For his part, the owner of the land has committed to making this vision a reality and has confirmed his support for Policy CHG2 in the Neighbourhood Plan.

1.0 Introduction



Site location plan

2.0 Planning Context

2.1 The site lies in the local planning authority area of Epping Forest District Council in the county of Essex. It has a recent planning history and its planning context is set by national policy (via the National Planning Policy Framework of 2012) and by the current development plan, i.e. the Combined Policies of the Epping Forest District Local Plan 1998 and the Alterations 2006.

Planning History

2.2 The land has been subject to previous, albeit very different, proposals in the last decade. In September 2008, planning permission was refused on appeal to develop the site to provide 116 affordable homes (APP/J1535/A/08/2072646). The Inspector's decision letter provided four main reasons: the 'very special circumstances' test did not outweigh the harm of inappropriate development in the Green Belt; the scheme would not be accessible to sustainable means of transport; the site had not been identified as part of the sequential assessment; and the site was unsuitable for affordable housing. It is noted that the Neighbourhood Plan proposals have sought to successfully address each of these reasons.

2.3 In March 2009, the applicant submitted a revised application (EPF/541/2009) for 20 open market homes with a unilateral undertaking to secure a £7m financial contribution from the scheme towards the cost of replacing the Chigwell County Primary School in the vicinity of the site. The application was withdrawn in June 2009.

2.4 It is noted that applications on the adjoining Grange Farm/Trust land (of which this site was formerly a part), have been consented for housing schemes of a similar scale to that proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan and using much the same 'very special circumstances' case (EPF/2190/05, EPF/2430/07 and EPF/1862/15).

Policy Context

National Policy

2.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) of 2012 contains a number of policy statements of direct relevance to this proposal:

§16 - neighbourhoods should develop plans that support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans, including policies for housing and economic development, plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development in their area that is outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan.

2.6 The Neighbourhood Plan is serving this precise purpose, by enabling the local community of the Parish to exercise their planning judgment on balancing the need for local development against the need to protect the Green Belt from harm. The proposal is consistent with emerging Local Plan spatial strategy in seeking to minimize the release of land from the Green Belt for housing development.

§30 - local planning authorities should therefore support a pattern of development which, where reasonable to do so, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport.

§34 - Plans and decisions should ensure developments that generate significant movement are located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised. However this needs to take account of policies set out elsewhere in this Framework, particularly in rural areas.

2.7 The land lies less than 100m from the northern edge of Chigwell village. Although the housing scheme will inevitably lead to car trips – there is higher car ownership across the Parish including its main urban areas - the new Chigwell Parish Bus Service will serve the site and will considerably improve the accessibility of the land by public transport. This will serve not just the residents of the housing scheme but will also enable those living elsewhere in the Parish, and further away through linked trips, to access the new community park scheme (and the adjoining Grange Centre) by public transport. The NPPF recognises and makes an allowance for the realities of car ownership and usage in rural areas like Chigwell.

§47 - To boost significantly the supply of housing, local planning authorities should: use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with the policies set out in this Framework, including identifying key sites which are critical to the delivery of the housing strategy over the plan period; identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five year's worth of housing against their housing requirements.

2.0 Planning Context

2.8 Although not promoted on housing supply grounds, the housing scheme will make contribution to meeting the objectively assessed need for new homes in the District. In doing so, it will reduce the need to find either less suitable sites for release from the Green Belt that cannot deliver the same range and scale of public benefits or to develop precious and scarce urban open land within the urban areas of the Parish. Moreover, the land is immediately available and the housing scheme can be delivered in full in the next five-year housing supply period, helping boost local housing supply.

§69 - The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Planning policies and decisions, in turn, should aim to achieve places which promote: opportunities for meetings between members of the community who might not otherwise come into contact with each other, including through strong neighbourhood centres which bring together those who work, live and play in the vicinity; and safe and accessible developments, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.

§70 - To deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should: plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as meeting places, cultural buildings) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments; and ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.

2.9 The policy has been modified for submission to enable the District Council to adopt a flexible approach to the mix and tenure of the homes within the framework provided by the NPPF and its Local Plan.

2.10 The community park scheme will add to the range of social infrastructure to serve the local community and may enhance the overall Grange Centre recreational proposition in due course. Most importantly, the financial contribution that will enable the delivery of a new Chigwell Community Hub in the centre of the village will transform community cohesion here.

§80 - Green Belt serves five purposes: to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

§81 - Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity.

§87 - As with previous Green Belt policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

§88 - When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

2.11 The proposal is by definition 'inappropriate' development in the Green Belt, as it is not proposed to seek the release of the land from the Green Belt. It is considered that the 'very special circumstances' are present that outweigh the harm of development to the Green Belt. In addition, the community park scheme will positively enhance the Green Belt and create new opportunities for public access and recreation in this location.

§114 - Local planning authorities should: set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure;

§118 - When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles: development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be permitted; opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged;

2.12 The delivery of a community park that will deliver new biodiversity areas and a Suitable Accessible Natural Greenspace, will lead a significant biodiversity gain from the proposal.

2.0 Planning Context

§125 - By encouraging good design, planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

2.13 The housing scheme and its access will avoid where possible and otherwise minimize any light pollution.

§173 - Pursuing sustainable development requires careful attention to viability and costs in plan-making and decision-taking. Plans should be deliverable. Therefore, the sites and the scale of development identified in the plan should not be subject to such a scale of obligations and policy burdens that their ability to be developed viably is threatened. To ensure viability, the costs of any requirements likely to be applied to development, such as requirements for affordable housing, standards, infrastructure contributions or other requirements should, when taking account of the normal cost of development and mitigation, provide competitive returns to a willing land owner and willing developer to enable the development to be deliverable.

2.14 The proposal has been informed by and committed to by a willing landowner. He accepts that in order to meet the 'very special circumstances' test he must commit to providing this range of public benefits. He has confirmed that the proposal is viable in providing a reasonable return.

The Development Plan

2.15 At present, the development plan for this area is primarily formed by the Combined Policies of the Epping Forest District Local Plan 1998 and the Alterations 2006. The most relevant of these are identified below. Each is addressed elsewhere in this report:

- CP6 - Achieving Sustainable Urban Development Patterns
- CP9 - Sustainable Transport
- GB2A - Development in the Green Belt
- GB7A - Conspicuous Development
- GB19 - Grange Farm, Chigwell
- NC4 - Protection of established habitat
- NC5 - Promotion of nature conservation schemes
- H3A - Housing Density
- H4A - Dwelling Mix
- H5A - Provision for Affordable Housing
- H6A - Site Thresholds for Affordable Housing
- H7A - Levels of Affordable Housing
- H8A - Availability of Affordable Housing in Perpetuity
- RST1 - Recreational, sporting and tourist facilities
- DBE1 - Design of new buildings
- DBE4 - Design in the Green Belt
- DBE5 - Design and layout of new development
- DBE6 - Car parking in new development
- DBE7 - Public open space
- LL1 - Rural Landscape
- LL2 - Inappropriate rural development
- LL7 - Planting protection and care of trees
- LL10 - Adequacy of provision for landscape retention
- LL11 - Landscaping schemes
- ST1 - Location of development
- ST2 - Accessibility of development
- ST4 - Road safety
- ST6 - Vehicle parking
- ST7 - New roads and extensions or improvements to existing roads

2.16 The District Council is currently preparing the Epping Forest Local Plan for the period to 2033, which will replace all of the current policies. The Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) version of the Local Plan was published in December 2017 and the District Council is aiming to submit the plan for examination in spring 2018. The new plan is therefore likely to be adopted in 2019.

2.0 Planning Context

2.17 This latest version of the Local Plan also contained a series of policies that are relevant to this proposal and, again, each is addressed elsewhere in this report:

- SP2 Spatial Development Strategy 2011-2033 – most notably, allocating land in Chigwell for approx. 376 new homes and making provision for additional housing site allocations by neighbourhood plans
- SP3 Place Shaping – setting out a series of development principles
- SP6 Green Belt and District Open Land – defining proposed Green Belt boundary changes, restating the purpose of the Green Belt and proposing new District Open Land designations (as an equivalent to Local Green Spaces)
- SP7 The Natural Environment, Landscape Character and Green Infrastructure - setting out a series of development principles
- H1 Housing Mix and Accommodation Types - setting out a series of principles for the mix of housing types and tenures
- H2 Affordable Housing – requiring a minimum of 40% of homes on sites of more than 10 homes to be delivered as affordable homes
- T1 Sustainable Transport Choices – a series of principles guiding the location and transport arrangements of new development
- DM2 Epping Forest SAC and the Lee Valley SPA - expecting all relevant development proposals to assist in the conservation and enhancement of the biodiversity, character, appearance and landscape setting of the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- DM3 Landscape Character - requiring proposals not to cause significant harm to landscape character, the nature and physical appearance of ancient landscapes, or geological sites of importance
- DM4 Green Belt – restating the national policy provisions for development in the Green Belt defined by SP6
- DM5 Green & Blue Infrastructure – setting out the principles for protecting, enhancing and creating new assets
- P7 Chigwell- proposing 11 housing site allocations to deliver the target homes of Policy SP2 in accordance with a vision for the Parish
- Policy D1 Delivery of Infrastructure – setting out the principles by which new infrastructure is provided alongside new development
- D2 Essential Facilities and Services and D4 Community, Leisure and Cultural Facilities – resisting the unnecessary loss of essential facilities and services that meet community needs and support well-being
- D6 Neighbourhood Planning – setting out the relationship between neighbourhood plans and the Local Plan

Summary of Development Plan Policy

2.18 Aside from the Green Belt location of the land, the various features of the proposed allocation are all consistent with a series of development plan policies. The land is no further from the commercial and public facilities in Chigwell village than many other, well-established outer edges of the village and will benefit from a new public transport service. Housing development here is therefore consistent with current and emerging policies aimed at directing schemes to sustainable locations. Its housing mix and tenure proposals are in line with all the policy requirements, and the proposed design concept and principles are all in line with the various place shaping, green infrastructure and other design policies.

2.19 Crucially, the proposed allocation provides an opportunity to transform the quality of community facilities in the village and to provide a recreational and biodiversity asset that has Parish-wide value, to help the Local Plan manage its effects on the Epping Forest SAC. Individually and together, these public benefits are of a scale that the local community considers to be sufficient to provide the 'very special circumstances' required of the development plan to justify 'inappropriate' development in the Green Belt.

Strategic Land Availability Assessment

2.20 The land was included in the most recent Strategic Land Availability Assessment report of January 2017 as site reference SR0147 (known as 'Land North of Grange Farm'). Before that, the same land was assessed by the District Council in its Epping Forest Site Suitability Assessment report of October 2016.

2.21 It is noted that the assessments contained some factual and analytical errors that likely played a significant part in the District Council considering the land as unsuitable for development. Most importantly, the assessment looked solely at the suitability for housing development alone and assumed the whole 4.16 Ha site would form the developable area. In addition, some of the environmental constraints and other sustainability measures were incorrectly attributed to the site.

2.22 The assessment did not therefore consider the significantly smaller developable area that is now part of the proposal, and nor did it consider the role of the remaining non-developable area in delivering recreational and biodiversity benefits.

2.0 Planning Context

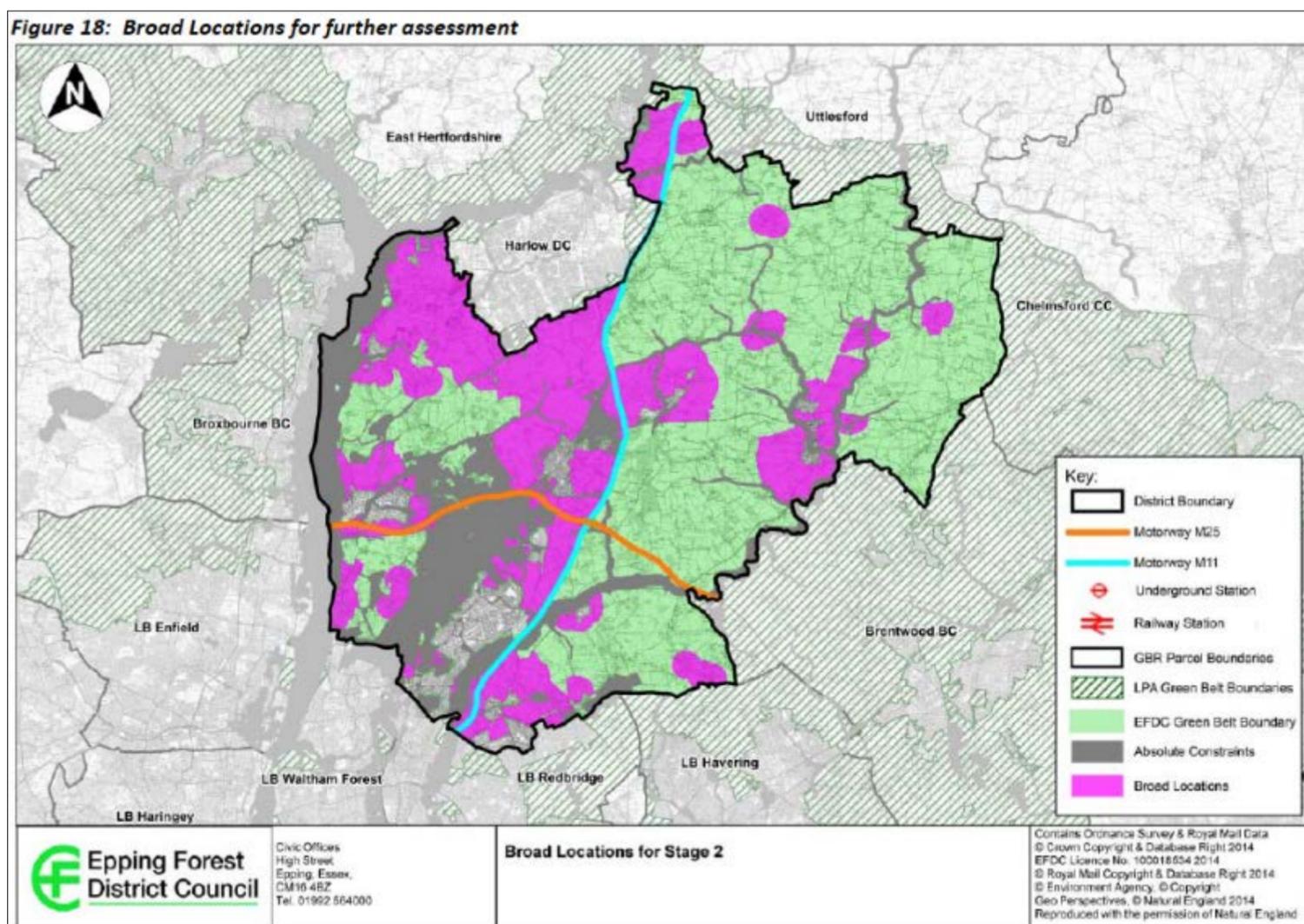
Green Belt Review

2.23 The Green Belt Review for Epping Forest was carried out in two stages: the Stage One report was published in June 2015 and the Stage Two report in August 2016. The land was located in Parcel DSR035 in the Stage One report, a parcel that covered almost all of the land in the Parish surrounding Chigwell village and Chigwell Row.

2.24 The report concluded that the parcel makes a strong contribution to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas but only a moderate contribution to preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another. Along with almost all the Green Belt parcels in the District, the parcel was considered to make a strong contribution in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment but no contribution to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns. As a result, the parcel was one of three that was given the highest score in the aggregate assessment. Despite this, the report identified the majority of the parcel (including the proposal land) as a 'broad location' for review in Stage Two.

2.25 In the detailed assessment of the parcel in the report, it is important to note some key insights, notably:

- A very strong defensible boundary is formed to the west of the parcel by the M11 as well as Abridge Road and Gravel Road
- Views into the parcel from the M11 are limited by vegetation. The gap created by the River Roding flood plain between Chigwell and Loughton is apparent from Chigwell Rise (B170) as it rises from the crossing of the M11, and intermittently from High Road and Abridge Road although is often obscured by vegetation and buildings. The overall perception of the gaps between towns is variable, with vegetation restricting views in many instances.
- A reduction in the gap is not likely to compromise the separation of the towns in physical terms with the M11 acting as a strong boundary to coalescence.
- Visual links between Chigwell Village and Buckhurst Hill/Debden/Loughton are for the most part restricted by the M11. Although, in some places the topographic variations, particular toward Chigwell Rise and Chigwell Lane, do allow for some views of the towns.
- Given that there is existing evidence of ribbon development, north of Chigwell, it is unlikely that the topography in the area could prevent encroachment of development. The parcel has been encroached by approximately 0.11% (0.88 hectares) north of Chigwell.

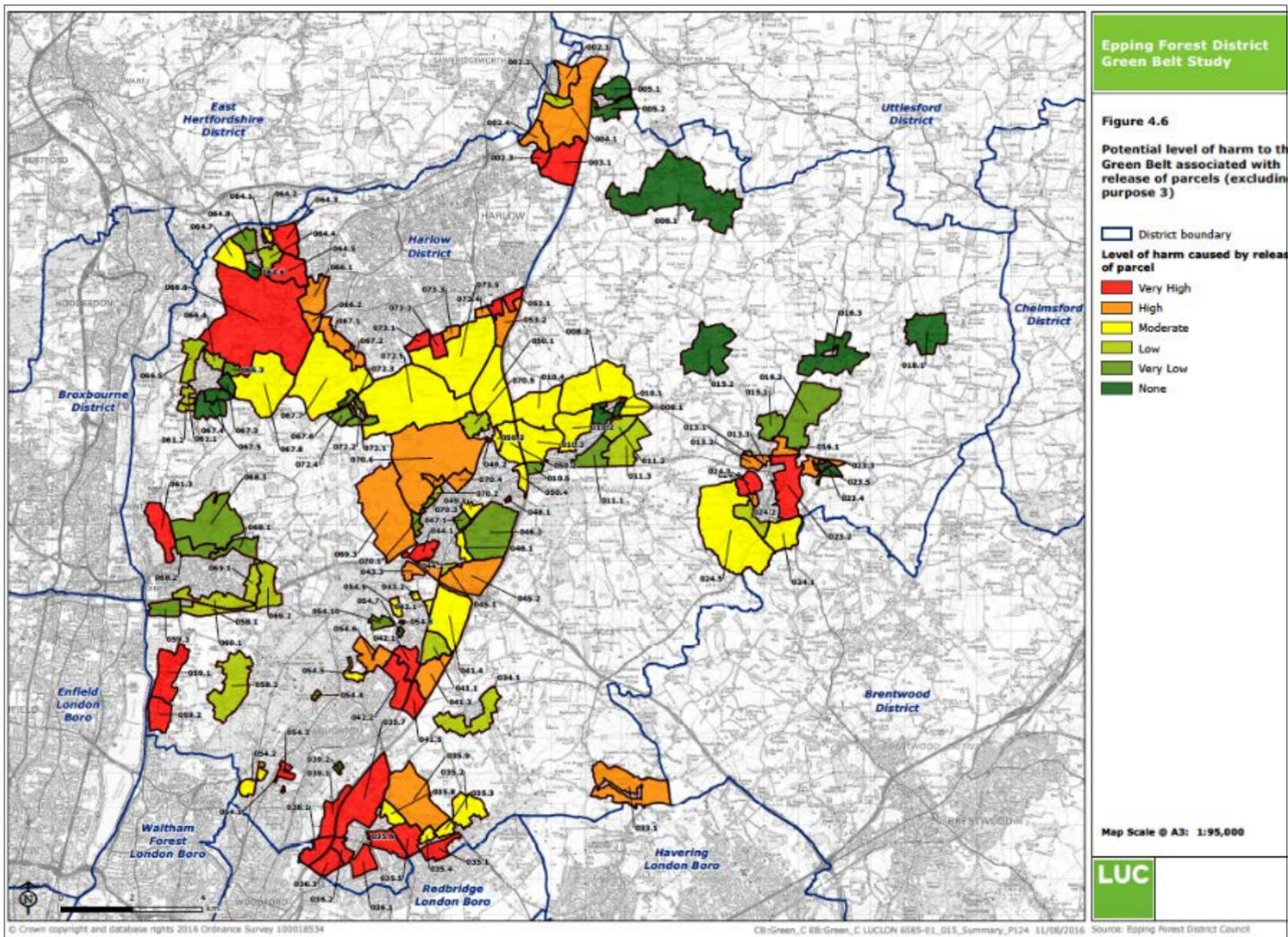


2.0 Planning Context

2.26 In the Stage Two report, the land forms part of Assessment Parcel 035.7 that extends from Chigwell Lane in the north around the western edge of Chigwell village to the Underground line embankment in the south. It is one of the largest Parcels in the report and the proposal land forms only a very small part of the Parcel towards its northern edge just beyond the village boundary.

2.27 The report concludes that the Parcel scores the same as the larger Stage One parcel, which is not surprising, given that there is little difference between the two parcels in their definition. As a result, the 'summary of harm' to the Green Belt from development is assessed as 'very high'.

2.28 As noted in section 6.0 of this report, however, this Parcel is far from uniform in its character and its contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt. Whilst many areas of the Parcel do adhere to the summary conclusion of the report, this specific area does not.



2.0 Planning Context

Chigwell Neighbourhood Plan

2.29 The Neighbourhood Plan has reached the submission stage, whereby it will shortly be examined. It contains the following policy:

Policy CHG2: Enabling Development at Rolls Park, Chigwell

Proposals for a mixed development scheme at Rolls Park, as shown on the Policies Map, will be supported, provided:

- i. The scheme comprises a housing scheme, a community park scheme and the delivery of an off-site community facility scheme;***
- ii. The housing scheme comprises the minimum number of homes to enable the financing in full of the off-site community facility scheme of Policy CHG5, subject to an agreement with the planning authority on the approach to delivering affordable housing and to the provision of a viability appraisal at the planning application stage;***
- iii. The housing scheme accords with the following principles:***
 - a. The layout is confined to no more than 2Ha on that part of the site adjoining the existing Rolls Park complex of buildings and divides the scheme into three small development zones within that part of the site;***
 - b. the landscape scheme retains the existing mature trees on the edge of the developable area as part of an effective landscape buffer; and***
 - c. the layout, the landscape scheme and the public park are arranged in a way to prevent any future extension of the scheme into the Green Belt;***
- iv. The community park scheme will comprise:***
 - a. a new public park and footpaths laid out in the form of a Natural Green Space to complement the adjoining Grange Farm Country Park to contribute to the Epping Forest SAC mitigation strategy; and***
 - b. a new Scout Hut with ancillary outdoor recreational uses;***
- v. The delivery of the off-site community facility scheme will comprise a new Parish Community Hub on land to be made available for this purpose by the Parish Council, including multi-purpose facilities, a Parish Office and Library, which will be completed and available for occupation prior to the occupation of the final dwelling of the housing scheme; and***
- vi. A satisfactory highways access is achieved.***

2.30 The policy was included in this same general form in early consultations with the local community on the emerging Plan and in the Pre-Submission Plan of September 2016. There has been healthy support for the proposal from the local community, which does not regard the developable area of the land as essential to the Green Belt and does consider the public benefit of delivering the Community Hub proposal as significant. None of the statutory bodies objected to the proposal. However, the District Council stated that it does not consider the policy meets the 'basic conditions' of a Neighbourhood Plan in respect of national and local Green Belt policy.

2.31 The main modification of the policy has been to remove an indicative housing capacity number from the policy itself and to leave the matter to a subsequent planning application to determine. This will enable the land owner and local planning authority the flexibility to negotiate a satisfactory approach to the provision of affordable housing and to balance any requirement with the overall quantum of development.

2.32 The Plan has had to await the completion of an agreement between Natural England and a number of local planning authorities on how to manage and mitigate the effects of new development in this sub-region on the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation. Although there is more work to be done with Natural England, the District Council has been content with the approach it has taken in its new Local Plan (as evidenced by its Habitats Regulations Assessment), hence it proposes to submit its plan for examination shortly.

2.0 Planning Context

Supplementary Planning Documents

Essex Design Guide

2.33 The most recent iteration of the famous design guide was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance in 2005. It contains a wide variety of guidance to inform the design requirements of planning applications, primarily for housing development.

2.34 The proposals prepared to support the evidence for Policy CHG2 have adhered to this guidance and will deliver a high quality development scheme, as outlined in this report.

Essex County Council Parking Standards

2.35 The Parking Standards were adopted in 2009. They set out how parking provision should be made in development proposals across Essex. In the case of housing (C3) developments, they require a minimum of:

- One vehicle space per 1 bedroom dwelling
- Two vehicle spaces per 2+ bedroom dwelling
- 0.25 vehicle spaces per dwelling for visitor/unallocated provision
- 1 powered, two wheeler space, + 1 per 20 car spaces for first 100 car spaces
- 3 bays laid out for disabled vehicles or 6% of total capacity, whichever is greater
- 1 secure covered cycle space per dwelling or none if garage or secure area is provided within curtilage of dwelling

2.36 The proposed scheme has provided car parking spaces in accordance with this guidance.

3.0 Analysis

3.1 The proposals comprise a number of elements and this section provides greater analysis of those details.

The wider context

3.2 The site is located on the northern side of Chigwell village adjacent to the M11 on gently sloping ground that falls away to a low point along the River Roding valley. To the north of the river valley is the larger settlement of Loughton with a retail/commercial park straddling Chigwell Lane which connects the two settlements around junction 5 of the M11.

3.3 Chigwell is on the urban fringe with a setting to the south and west that is defined by the character typical to the outer London suburbs. To the east and north of Chigwell the landscape character is rural and agricultural with smaller scattered settlements amongst a patchwork of fields and copses all of which are within the Green Belt.

3.4 To the north west of Chigwell and the Rolls Park site on the northern side of the M11 is the Roding Valley Nature Reserve which is connected by a footbridge across the M11 to Grange Farm, a recently developed local community asset with leisure, sporting, recreational and educational facilities. Together these open spaces and facilities provide a significant green infrastructure network managed by the Essex Wildlife Trust that serves Chigwell and the surrounding settlements.

3.5 There is a new development to the south of the site off Grange Farm Lane which is nearing completion; 'Chigwell Village', which is a gated development of forty three four and five bedroom homes. The Grange Farm community facilities, developed by the Grange Farm Trust were funded through the sale of the land for the 'Chigwell Village' development.

Accessibility

3.6 Access to the site is currently via an existing junction off the northern end of the High Road. This junction will be redesigned to provide a safe, compliant access for the development and the Transport and accessibility report in section 7.0 sets out the options for this junction along with proposals a road layout within the site.

3.7 Pedestrian and cycle connections are available from the western boundary of the site giving access to the village centre and amenities via the Chigwell Meadow footpaths and Grange Farm Lane with distances of 0.6 miles to Chigwell Primary School, 1.0 miles shops post office and pub, and 1.2 miles to Chigwell station which is on the central line.

Setting and views

3.8 The site is well contained on all sides by established tree belts with a slope down to the M11 from a high point of 50m AOD at the entrance to a low point of 35m AOD. Although there are incidental views northwards from the high point on the southern end of the site, the site it is generally not visible from the surrounding area.

3.9 The setting of the site and the impacts of development in terms of views and openness are considered in more detail in the landscape appraisal in section 6.0 which has informed the overall analysis and design approach and the formulation of the policy for the allocation of the site.



analysis: the context

3.0 Analysis



Grange Centre



'Chigwell Village'



Chigwell Meadows



The High Road



Chigwell Meadows

3.0 Analysis



Access to Rolls Park



Existing access through Rolls Park



Footpath network in Chigwell Meadows



Chigwell Meadows footpath along western boundary



Grange Farm Lane at Grange Centre entrance

3.0

Analysis

The site

3.10 The site comprises two distinct parcels of land connected by a 10m opening where the parcels meet. For the purposes of this report the southern parcel which is proposed for residential development is referred to as Parcel 1, and the northern parcel which is proposed for public open space and community uses is referred to as Parcel 2.

3.11 These parcels have the following key features:

Parcel 1

3.12 The southern parcel, Parcel 1 is proposed for residential development and is broadly rectangular with an area of 1.91 hectares.

3.13 Access is via the existing roadway that enters the site from Rolls Park in the south eastern corner **(A)**. Along the eastern boundary there is a group of existing residential buildings **(B)** on the adjoining Rolls Park land adjacent to the entrance. The remainder of the eastern boundary **(C)** is an established deciduous tree belt with some unmanaged understory growth. The southern boundary **(D)** is defined by a 2m high timber fence with an established deciduous tree belt.

3.14 The western boundary to Chigwell Meadows **(E)** also has an established and continuous deciduous tree belt apart from a 5m gap where it meets the southern boundary. Alongside this tree belt within the site is an additional line of more recently planted *Leylandii* Cyprus offset by about 4m. There are incidental views and glimpses beneath the tree canopy along this boundary through to the footpath in Chigwell Meadows that runs adjacent to this boundary. There is the potential along this boundary for pedestrian access linking the site with the Chigwell Meadows footpaths.

3.15 The northern boundary **(F)** is similar to the western boundary with a combination of deciduous tree belts and more recently planted *Leylandii* with a clear gap and visual connection into the northern parcel where the two parcel meet.

3.16 There are no established trees within the site and the landscape character is one of overgrown scrub and grass. The perimeter tree belts are subject to a number of individual tree preservation orders.

Parcel 2

3.17 The northern parcel, Parcel 2 is proposed for public open space and community uses and is an irregular dogleg shape backing onto the M11 with an area of 2.25 hectares.

3.18 Access to this parcel is via the connection to Parcel 1 **(G)** with the potential for additional pedestrian access to Chigwell Meadows via the existing footpath that runs alongside the western boundary **(H)**. The southern boundary **(I)** is a continuation of the northern boundary of Parcel 1, with a similar character continuing to the western boundary with Chigwell Meadows.

3.19 The northern boundary **(J)** is heavily overgrown within the dogleg area adjacent to the M11 and is largely inaccessible with dense scrub, trees and undergrowth. The interior landscape character of this parcel is also one of overgrown and unmanaged scrub and undergrowth. There are open fields to the east and west of this parcel with the western fields used as paddocks by the Chigwell Riding Trust. Views out of this parcel are restricted to glimpses at the perimeter into the adjoining fields.

3.0 Analysis



analysis: the site

3.0 Analysis: Parcel 1



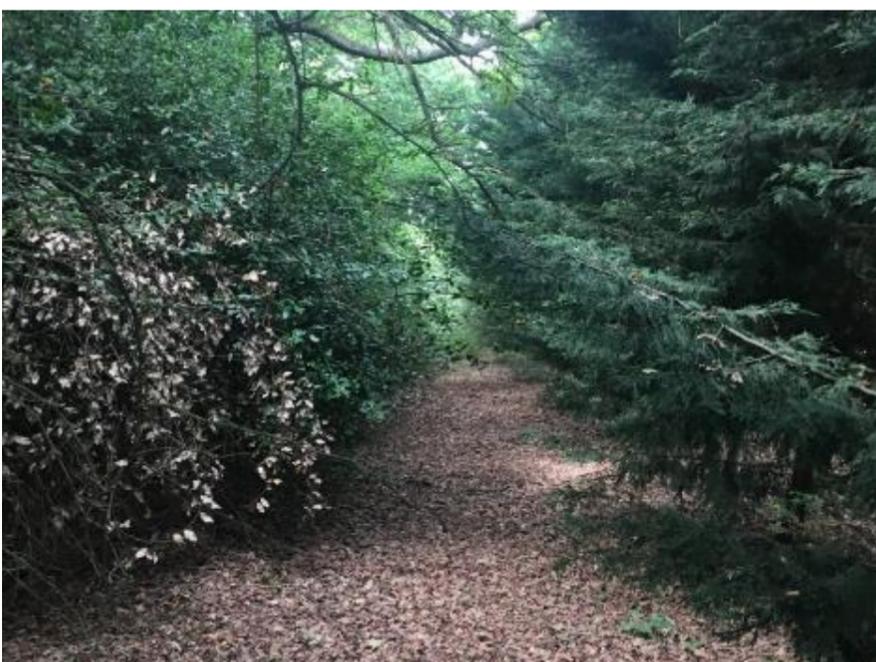
View north including eastern and western boundaries



Western and southern boundaries



Southern boundary



Western boundary tree line



Incidental views through western boundary

3.0 Analysis: Parcel 2



View north including eastern and western boundaries



Overgrown northern boundary



View north-east to adjoining fields



View of southern boundary and gap through to Parcel 1

4.0 Design Principles

4.1 The proposals have adopted a series of design principles in accordance with the Essex Design Guide and other relevant guidance.

Landscape, access and setting

4.2 Both parcels have a strong, established tree belts with a number of attractive mature trees. These provide visual enclosure and in terms of the wider setting and visibility the site is well screened and development at two storeys will have a negligible impact in terms of the openness of the Green Belt. The site as a whole has two distinct relationships to its setting which should be recognised and reflected in any design proposals.

4.3 To the north east of the site where the landscape character is defined by the wider rural setting, it will be necessary to create a boundary and a strong settlement edge that will clearly define the limits of development and constrain extension into the green belt. The retention and reinforcement of the existing tree belts and planting along the eastern and northern boundaries provides a strong starting point for achieving this.

4.4 To the south west of the site, the recent and ongoing 'Chigwell Village' and Chigwell Grange developments along with the Grange Farm Centre and facilities, including Chigwell Meadows, creates a stronger link between the site and the activities and functions of the village which the development should recognise and address through layout and connectivity.

4.5 It will be important to achieve a balance in the relationship of the development to Chigwell Meadows along the western site boundary that is appropriate to the open natural character of the Meadows whilst focusing the development towards the village and its activities.

4.6 Although the existing landscape screens the site, consideration should be given to reinforcing the visual containment of development on the high ground at the southern end of parcel 1.

4.7 Based on this analysis and the supporting technical reports the following have been used as key principles for developing a design approach and informing the policy for the allocation of the site:

- The layout should retain and protect the existing deciduous tree belts and provision should be made for their long term management and reinforcement where appropriate.
- The perimeter landscape structure should be extended into parcel 1 to further screen the higher ground to the south
- Consideration should be given to the removal of the Leylandii on parcel 1 as they are not compatible with the character of the native deciduous species.
- The development should seek to establish a positive relationship with the village centre and provide connections that will encourage pedestrian and cycle access to the local amenities.
- The layout and character of the development should create a positive relationship with the setting and functions of Chigwell Meadows with provision for visual and pedestrian connectivity.

4.8 The following diagram outlines the approach to landscape, access and setting:

4.9 A new access **(A)** lane will be provided along the western boundary with pedestrian and cycle links **(B)** to the existing footpaths in Chigwell Meadows. The access road will terminate at the north western corner of the parcel **(C)**. Access beyond this point will be restricted to the area proposed for the scout facilities **(D)** in the new community park. The tree belts along the northern, eastern and southern boundaries **(E)** will be retained, managed and reinforced with new tree planting of an appropriate species. The Eastern tree belt will be extended into the site **(F)** reinforcing the visual containment of the higher ground and creating a distinct development zone. The existing deciduous tree belt **(G)** along the western boundary will be retained, managed and reinforced with new tree planting of an appropriate species. The Leylandii within the site along the western boundary will be removed to create an opportunity for a positive relationship between the development and the Meadows including pedestrian connections and incidental views to provide oversight.

4.0 Design Principles



design principles: landscape access and setting

4.0

Design Principles

Layout, massing and character

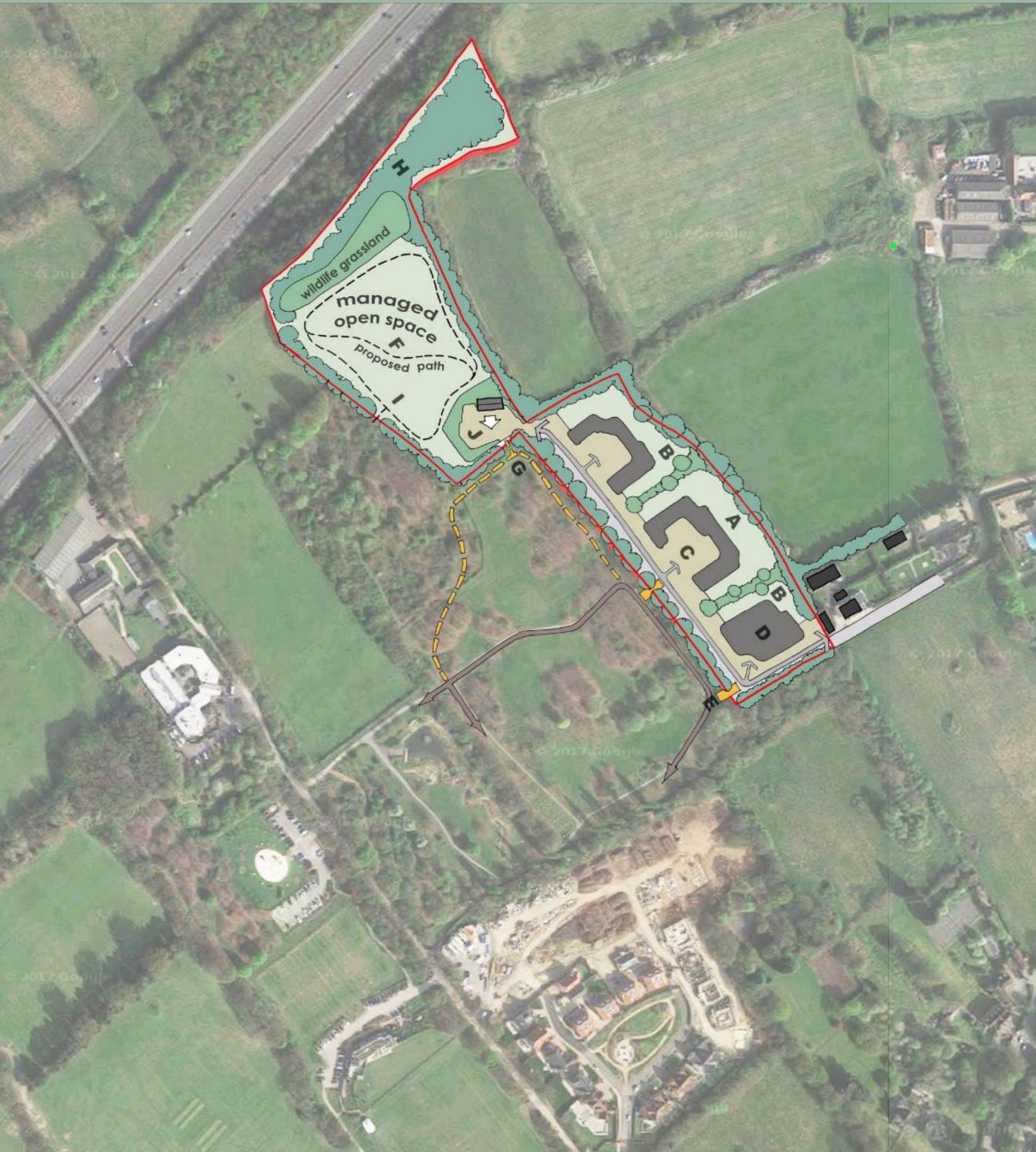
4.10 The layout will offset buildings from the northern and eastern boundary tree belts creating a landscape buffer of private open space (A) to reinforce the tree belt and prevent any extension of the development. The eastern tree belt will be extended into the site (B) to define three development zones creating 'compartments' to increase the visual containment of the development. Building layout and orientation (C) will be focused towards Chigwell Meadows and the village. Building layout, massing and design will be used to create roofscapes and elevations along the northern and eastern boundaries that are appropriate to the rural setting and settlement edge. Building layout, massing and design in the southern development zone (D) will be used to provide a sense of arrival into the development, with the potential for a pedestrian/cycle link (E) to Chigwell Meadows at the existing gap along this boundary.

4.11 The community park (F) will be laid out and managed to function as a SANG with the potential to become an extension to Chigwell Meadows and the wider green infrastructure network. Provision will be made for pedestrian links (G) from the community park to Chigwell Meadows in locations to be agreed with the Grange Farm Trust. The northern tree belt (H) will be retained as a buffer to the M11 with the scrub managed to maintain open grassland for wildlife.

4.12 The main interior space of the community park will be managed to maintain an open feel and limit the amount of tree cover. Within this space surfaced paths (I) will be provided through and around the open space with the potential for links to Chigwell Meadows and the scout facilities. The scout facilities (J) will be located to keep access and parking at the entrance to the site and maintain a more naturalistic landscape in the open space to the north. The perimeter tree belts will be retained and managed to keep the existing sense of enclosure and the character of this space as a landscape 'compartment'.

4.13 Together these two sets of design principles create a framework for the development of a scheme that will be sympathetic to the sensitivities of the wider setting and an integral part of the life and fabric of the village.

4.0 Design Principles



design principles: landscape access and setting

5.0 Illustrative Masterplan

5.1 An illustrative masterplan has been produced to help inform the technical appraisals and to demonstrate how these principles might translate into development. This illustrative masterplan is not intended to address all the technical issues and standards that would be required for determining a planning application, such as parking but to provide a reference for drafting a policy for the neighbourhood plan and to demonstrate that the site is capable of delivering the type and quantum of development proposed. It is also intended to show how a high quality development that is sympathetic and appropriate to this setting can be delivered through the design principles outlined in this document.

5.2 These proposals are intended to create a positive addition to the village by being a connected part of it rather than a gated development and by providing community amenities and open spaces that will serve the wider village community.

5.3 On the following pages the two parts of the scheme; the housing development and the community park are considered separately along with the design principles proposed for each part to illustrate how this positive relationship could be achieved between this scheme, the village and its setting.

KEY

- A. Rolls Park
- B. Access road into the development
- C. Housing development of around 45 dwellings
- D. Community park
- E. Scout facilities
- F. Chigwell Meadows
- G. Existing footpaths

5.0 Illustrative Masterplan



illustrative masterplan

5.0 Illustrative Masterplan

Housing Scheme

5.4 The illustrative masterplan shows a mix of housing types that will accommodate a combination of parking layouts helping the scheme sit comfortably within this context. These include in-curtilage parking on the larger plots, small scale landscaped parking squares and on street parking. This approach is in line with Essex County Council's Parking Standards, design and Good Practice (September 2009) and the site and layout have the capacity to meet the requirement for 2 spaces per dwelling (assuming all dwellings are a minimum of two bedrooms), plus the allowance for visitors.

5.5 In terms of sustainability, the development is laid out to safeguard ecology and it will improve the natural habitat. The layout principles provide the opportunity for a south west orientation of buildings and roofs as part of a passive design approach and solar collectors.

5.6 Housing development will be limited to the southern parcel of land and the development will be accessed from the existing entrance into the land from Rolls Park **(A)**. The development will not exceed two storeys in height. The development will be served off an access Lane **(B)** along the western boundary giving access to the scout facilities **(C)** in the new public open space area. The layout will have buildings set off from the northern and eastern boundary tree belts with a landscape buffer of private gardens and reinforced understorey planting **(D)** preventing any extension of the development. Building massing and design will be used to create a roofscape and elevations **(E)** that are compatible with the eastern and northern boundaries and wider setting. Building layout and design will be used to focus frontages westwards **(F)** towards the village.

5.7 The design will provide active frontages **(G)** with positive oversight of the access Lane within the development and the footpaths alongside the site in Chigwell Meadows without impacting the existing character of the Meadows. The landscape along the western boundary **(H)** will be managed with low levels of lighting along the access lane to protect and enhance the setting of the existing trees and Chigwell Meadows. Provision will be made for pedestrian and cycle connections **(I)** between the development and Chigwell Meadows to connect to local amenities and provide an alternative route to the village. The layout of roads and parking within the development will be designed to create a safe pedestrian environment and accommodate a 'shared surfaces' approach. Building layout and design will protect the amenity of the existing Rolls Park buildings **(J)**.

KEY

- A. Entrance
- B. Access lane
- C. Scout facilities
- D. Reinforced landscape buffer
- E. Massing and design compatible with eastern and northern boundaries
- F. Layout focussed towards Village
- G. Active frontages
- H. Boundary managed to protect setting
- I. Provision for pedestrian /cycle connections
- J. Rolls Park buildings

5.0 Illustrative Masterplan



illustrative masterplan: housing development

5.0 Illustrative Masterplan

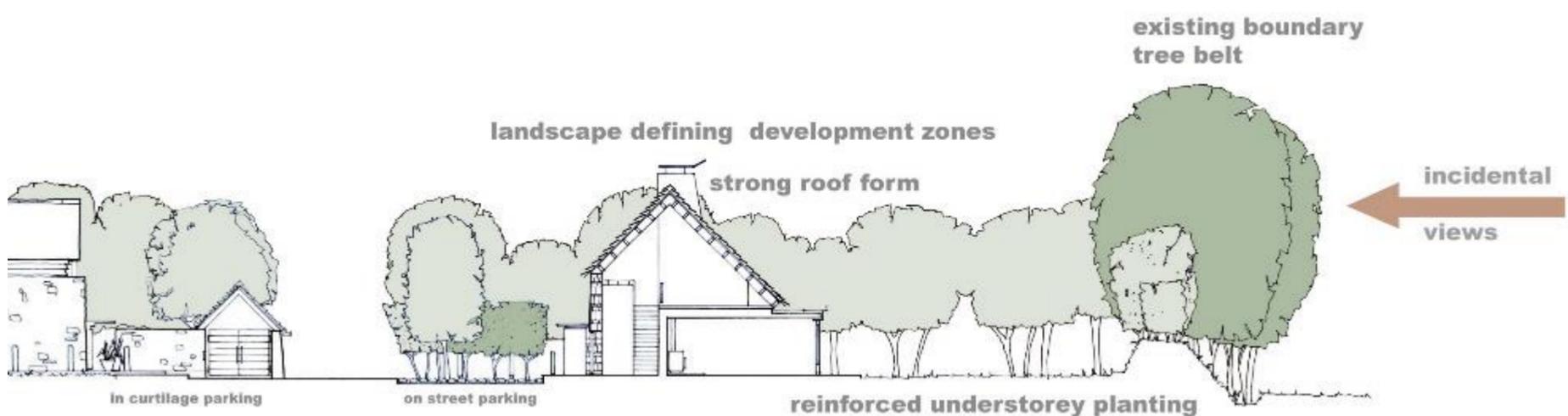
Section study

5.8 The development of this site will create a new edge to the settlement which will need to respond to the setting of the eastern and northern boundaries. Although the development will be visually contained by the existing tree belts, as set out in the landscape section of this report, a section study has been included to illustrate how the development principles could be translated into a more detailed design response along these boundaries.

5.9 The section is taken through the eastern boundary and shows a 'barn' building type with a simple and robust roof form that is of a scale compatible with the rural edge setting. This gives the opportunity for a continuous roofscape as an unobtrusive backdrop along this tree line should there be any incidental glimpses of the site through the deciduous trees during the winter months. The building design could also include a lowered eaves line along this boundary as suggested in the section.

5.10 Other solutions and building types could be equally appropriate and the intention is not to fix the detailed design but to illustrate how the proposed design principles could be developed and to act as a guide for the detailed design. Reference images have also been included to illustrate roofscapes and building forms and types that might be compatible with the site and the design principles.

5.11 The proposals are compatible with the Essex Design Guide (2005) in terms of the approach to layout, permeability and sustainability and the Guide would be used to inform detailed design proposals.



5.0 Illustrative Masterplan



5.0 Illustrative Masterplan

Community Park

5.12 The northern parcel of land will be given over to community functions and public open space that can operate as a SANG. Vehicle access to this parcel will be limited to serving the scout facilities only and will be via a controlled access **(A)** from the Lane within parcel 1. Scout facilities **(B)** will be provided at the southern end of the parcel including a small parking area for their use. The main body of this parcel **(C)** will be laid out and managed as a SANG in line with the recommendations set out in Section 7.0 of this report and will include a network of footpaths **(D)** that are linked to the development, the scout facilities and Chigwell Meadows in locations to be agreed as part of the detailed design process.

5.13 The tree belt along the northern boundary **(E)** will be retained and managed as part of the SANG and as a buffer to the M11 with the scrub area along this boundary **(F)** will be planted and managed to create a grassland habitat as part of the northern buffer. A wildlife pond **(G)** will be created of a in the corner of the site with the potential to form part of a wider SUDs strategy for the development.

KEY

- A. Controlled access
- B. Scout Facilities
- C. Community park
- D. Footpaths
- E. Buffer to M11
- F. Grassland habitat
- G. Wildlife pond

5.0 Illustrative Masterplan



illustrative masterplan: open space/park

6.0 Landscape Appraisal

6.1 This section describes the landscape and visual characteristics of the application site in the context of location and setting, providing a baseline against which the potential landscape and visual impacts of landscape change associated with the proposed development can be assessed.

6.2 Landscape and visual effects are independent but related issues; landscape effects are changes in the landscape as a resource in its own right; changes to its character and quality arising from the impact of development, while visual effects relate to effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.

Application Area Setting and General Landscape Description

6.3 Landscape Character Assessment is an objective method for describing landscape, based on the identification of generic landscape types (e.g. Open Downland) and more specific landscape character areas (e.g. Marlborough Downs). The approach identifies the unique character of different areas of the countryside without making judgements about their relative worth. Landscape character areas are classified based on sense of place, local distinctiveness, characteristic wildlife, natural features and nature of change.

6.4 The generic 'national' landscape character of the area is defined by Natural England National Character Area 111; North Thames Basin (NE466). The area comprises *'a diverse mixture of large urban areas, smaller urban settlements, as well as remote villages and hamlets surrounded by agricultural lands, grasslands/heathlands and woodlands.... The Northern Thames Basin is a large and diverse landscape with a(n) overarching character of agricultural land, interspersed with woodland, dissected by rivers and influenced by the urban areas of North London.*

6.5 The local landscape character area may be described with reference to two piece of work undertaken by Chris Blandford Associates, (CBA), on behalf of Epping Forest District Council entitled 'A District Wide Landscape Character Assessment' (2010) and 'A Settlement Edge Landscape Sensitivity Report', (2010).

District Wide Landscape Character Assessment

6.6 The aim of the first CBA study was to provide a comprehensive District-wide assessment of landscape character within the study area to inform land use planning and land management decisions, including as a technical evidence base to inform the Local Development Framework, (now New Local Plan), currently in preparation.

6.7 Section 3 of the report provides the detailed 'profiles' of the Landscape Character Types and Areas within Epping Forest District. The Epping Forest Landscape Character Types and Areas Map describes the site as lying within Landscape Type G; Wooded Ridges and Valleys, Area G3; Chigwell.

The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type (G) are:

- *Series of small valleys which are encapsulated by minor ridges, resulting in an undulating landform;*
- *Strong historic continuity, resulting from intact historic field systems, scatters of veteran trees and patches of ancient woodland;*
- *Frequent patches of woodland which provide an intermittent sense of enclosure within views across the landscape;*
- *Strong sense of tranquillity in places, at distance from major road corridors;*
- *A series of narrow, rural road corridors cross the landscape, and are often lined with mature hedgerows and deciduous trees.*

6.0

Landscape Appraisal

6.8 The key characteristics of the Landscape Character Area (G3) are

- *A gently undulating patchwork of predominantly arable fields, which are delineated with mature hedgerows, often containing hedgerow trees;*
- *Sense of tranquillity is strong throughout much of the area (at distance from the M11 road corridor in the west, which introduces a source of noise and movement);*
- *Field pattern is generally small-scale and interspersed with small pockets of deciduous woodland which provide an intermittent sense of enclosure within views;*
- *To the south of the area there is a strong urban character as a result of the adjacent urban edges of Hainault and Grange Hill. The large nucleated settlement of Chigwell also contributes to settlement pattern within the area;*
- *The reservoir and water works to the north of Chigwell Row also introduces a built, human element to the area.*

6.9 Overall character is describes as follows;

This Landscape Character Area encompasses a gently undulating patchwork of predominantly arable fields. Mature hedgerows line field boundaries and often contain trees, which are key landscape features within views across the area. Pockets of deciduous woodland frame open views across the patchwork of small fields. Views to the urban edges of Hainault and Grange Hill contribute to recognisable sense of place. Sense of tranquillity is strong throughout much of the area (at distance from the M11 road corridor in the west, which introduces a source of noise and movement).

6.10 Sensitivities to change are noted as;

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this Landscape Character Area include the network of hedges and hedgerow trees; and the small-scale, historic settlement pattern. Framed views across this area are visually sensitive to potential new development, particularly large-scale or tall vertical elements. As a result of the above factors, overall this Landscape Character Area is considered to have low to moderate sensitivity to change.

6.11 Suggested landscape planning and management guidelines are;

- *Ensure that any new development within the farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive buildings styles;*
- *Maintain characteristic framed views across the area;*
- *Ensure that any new development within the farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive buildings styles;*
- *Maintain characteristic framed views across the area.*

Settlement Edge Landscape Sensitivity

6.12 The aim of the second CBA study was to provide a comprehensive District-wide assessment of landscape to provide a landscape sensitivity study of areas around the principal settlements to inform policy within the Epping Forest District Local LDF. It also outlined the extent to which these areas of landscape contribute towards the purposes of including land within the Green Belt and how they contribute now, and potentially in the future, towards Green Belt objectives.

6.13 Section 15 refers to Chigwell/Chigwell Row and notes that

15.1.1 Chigwell and Chigwell Row settlements are situated in the south of Epping Forest District, to the south of Abridge and southwest of Stapleford Abbots. Both settlements are surrounded by Chigwell Wooded Ridges and Valleys Landscape Character Area (G3). '

15.1.2 To the north of Chigwell a patchwork of small to medium fields surrounded by mature hedgerows, containing some hedgerow trees overlies gently sloping land which falls to the northwest.....

6.0

Landscape Appraisal

15.1.3 Between the two settlements of Chigwell and Chigwell Row, landscape setting comprises a gently undulating patchwork of small fields delineated by hedgerows (often containing hedgerow trees).

6.14 The report finds that land to the north of Chigwell including the proposed site at Rolls Park lies within Setting Area 2, described as an area of Medium Landscape Sensitivity. This defines land that the assessment considers to have a significant role in contributing to the structure, character and setting of the settlement. The report notes (at 15.6.1) that, *"Further assessment work would, however, be needed to examine site-specific landscape and visual sensitivities"*. The contribution to the openness of Green Belt is assessed as moderate with the general sense of openness and landscape setting providing separation between settlements.

The Site and Immediate Surrounds

6.15 Land immediately to the west of the site comprises Grange Farm. The Grange Farm Centre is situated on site and provides community facilities including functions rooms, sports changing and administrative office space providing a home to the Essex Wildlife Trust. The associated 90 acre (36.4 ha.) area of public open space incorporates circular walks, nature trails, sports pitches and recreational facilities centred around Chigwell Meadows, (refer to LDA Photo-viewpoints 07 & 08). To the north-west a footbridge crosses the M11 motorway and links with Roding Valley nature Reserve SSSI. New housing borders the south-eastern boundary.

6.16 The M11 motorway runs along the northern site boundary running broadly north-east to south-west and passing the site in cutting. The road is not visible from land to either side of the cut section however, the road corridor provides a clear physical edge to the site and the noise from it is a significant element in determining local landscape character. To the east of the site a series of agricultural fields sloping gently eastwards towards the A1168 Chigwell Lane. The fields are characterised by their small size and well established hedgerows with mature specimen trees which block local views. Land to the south of the site comprises open fields subdivided by well-established mature hedgerows bounded by Chigwell High Road connecting Chigwell Village in the south to Junction 5 of the M11 in the north.

6.17 The site itself comprises two connected, but visually discrete parcels of land sloping northwards from a high point of 50.0m AOD in the south to a low point of approximately 35.0m AOD in the north. The site is visually contained by mature tree belts on all sides which are a landscape legacy from its historic use as a sports and camping centre. The northernmost lower lying irregularly shaped parcel of approximately 2.25 ha. abuts the M11 Motorway running in cutting immediately to the north. The land within the lower, northern land parcel is well contained by perimeter hedgerows with mature trees. Land within this part of the site is essentially scrubland with patches of unmanaged grassland interspersed with brambles and emergent trees and shrubs including dense thickets of blackthorn.

6.18 The southern, upper parcel of land measures approximately 1.91 ha. It is roughly rectangular and situated on rising ground to the south east of the lower parcel. The land within the upper land parcel comprises an area of unmanaged field which is slowly reverting scrub with blackthorn from the eastern boundary hedgerow slowly encroaching into the field. There is some evidence of areas of hardstanding and established garden boundaries within the upper part of the field. There are well established mature field boundaries on all four sides. The western boundary comprises an outer hedge incorporating mature trees, several of which are protected by TPO's, together with an inner hedge-line of Lawsons Cypress trees which form a dense screen. The northern, eastern and southern boundaries comprise mature native hedgerows which also provide dense screening but are generally less imposing as landscape features. The eastern boundary hedge contains some elm regeneration which has died back and would benefit from a programme of selective thinning and replanting.

6.19 There are a cluster of residential buildings to the south east corner of the upper parcel of land at Rolls Park Farm, with access onto the High Road via an extended driveway. There are no public rights of way crossing or in close vicinity to the site. In landscape terms the most sensitive site boundary to both upper and lower land parcels is to the east, with adjoining open fields, and to a lesser extent to the west, alongside Grange Farm.

Photo-viewpoints

6.20 Photo viewpoints 01 – 06, located with reference to LDA fig 1, illustrate the primary landscape characteristics of both parcels of land. The key features of each Photo-viewpoint are;

Photo-viewpoint 01; Looks north-west from the upper part of southern land parcel with established boundary hedgerows incorporating mature trees providing substantial screening and enclosure to left and right. The site slopes towards the M11 Motorway then rises again with housing on distant slopes with southerly views towards the site.

Photo-viewpoint 02; Looks south-west along the southern site boundary to the southern land parcel with established mature hedgerow planting behind vertical board boundary fence.

Photo-viewpoint 03; Looks south from mid-way within southern land parcel towards southern boundary vegetation.

Photo-viewpoint 04; Looks north from mid-way within southern land parcel showing inner line of Lawsons Cypress planted along western boundary and illustrating the highly enclosed nature of the site.

Photo-viewpoint 05; Looks south from the northernmost point of the southern land parcel showing unmanaged grassland and scrub regeneration.

Photo-viewpoint 06; Looks south from within the northern land parcel illustrating well established hedgelines with mature trees providing substantial boundary screening.

Visual Appraisal of the Site and Surroundings

6.21 The approximate visual envelope of those parts of the site where significant new development is proposed, that is, the surrounding area from existing site elements is 'visible', has been assessed from an initial desktop analysis of O.S. base information together with an analysis of views out from the study area boundaries to surrounding areas. Where necessary, or appropriate, further site investigation, including walking public footpaths, vehicular routes and areas of public open space, confirmed the actual extent of visual influence. Predicted changes within and to the existing visual envelope can be used to assess the magnitude and extent of potential visual impacts. Field and photographic surveys were carried out on 16 August 2017 in clear but overcast conditions with vegetation in full leaf.

Approximate Visual Envelope

6.22 The LDA fig 1 identifies the estimated extent of the existing visual envelope. The site is unusually well contained visually with site visibility confined to a restricted area of distant views, (in excess of 3.0km), of the upper part of the southern parcel of land from residential homes to the north. These properties are visible in centre of view on (Photo-viewpoint 01). There are no clear reciprocal views from this location from publicly accessible viewpoints.

6.23 There are some extremely restricted filtered close range views from Grange Farm open space immediately alongside the western site boundary (represented on (Photo-viewpoint 07)). Extended views from further westwards are blocked from both the boundary planting and established vegetation blocks within Grange Farm Park (Photo-viewpoint 08). There are no views of either parcel of land from any other location and because of the low visibility of the site and the extremely limited visual envelope, there are no representative viewpoints with clear views towards the site from publicly accessible land.

The Development Proposals

6.24 The proposal is for the development of two land parcels to the north of the village centre that are under the same ownership. The southern parcel is being proposed for a residential development; the northern parcel is to be given over as a community park that may form an extension to the existing country park that adjoins the sites (and will also qualify as a Natural Green Space to contribute to the delivery of mitigation measures for the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation(SAC)). The community park will include a new scout hut and facilities for the local scout group.

6.25 In developing the current proposal, the following landscape design strategies have been adopted;

- A solution is proposed in which the built footprint has been designed with reference to, and in a way that is consistent with, the grain of the existing landscape, in particular with regard to the existing field and boundary pattern which has been retained and reinforced. Where the proposed development abuts open land, additional reinforcement planting will be provided to give clear definition of the new urban edge, and provide a strong landscape feature.
- The established landscape framework could be managed to provide enhanced boundary planting over time through selective removal of the inner conifer belt and replacement with native stock.
- Tree planting within the southern development parcel will sub-divide the site internally and provide filtering of identified long distance views to the north of the site.
- The main housing area would be accessed from the east and cars would be restricted to within the southern development parcel. The proposed access road alignment has been routed to tie in with the existing landscape pattern, utilising the line of an existing access and with removal of landscape features such as mature trees and hedgerow avoided. Hedgerow and tree planting designed to screen the access road would be provided.
- Buildings have been positioned within the site to allow sufficient space for new boundary planting to develop over time and for tree planting within the main body of the site.
- Housing would provide a defined edge to Grange Farm Centre, mirroring the way in which recent development abuts the open space to the south.
- Substantial landform change has been minimised and mounding has been avoided;
- The lighting of surfaced paths, roads and hard standings will kept at low level where possible, and inside rural-edge tree belts;
- A dedicated community park on the northern parcel of land would provide new community facilities providing a substantial buffer of open space between new development and adjacent land. Areas of grassland would be retained and together with suitably managed new native planting this would provide opportunities for recreation and conservation.
- There is an opportunity to provide fully integrated footpath linkages between the housing area, the proposed public open space, and Grange Farm Centre, extending the existing network of open space.
- The northern parcel of land has potential for use as Natural Green Space, which is intended to provide mitigation for the potential impact of residential development on the Epping Forest SAC by preventing an increase in visitor pressure on nearby areas of recognised ecological importance and sensitivity.

Landscape and Visual Appraisal of the Development Proposal

6.26 In addition to considering the visual envelope of a proposal, the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' notes that weight should also be given to the sensitivity of visual receptors, together with the magnitude of the visual effect. Potential measures to mitigate adverse effects should also be considered. 'Visual receptor' means the particular person or group of people likely to be affected at a specific viewpoint.

6.27 With reference to the baseline studies, the following primary landscape receptors have been identified;

Primary landscape types and character units - *Natural England landscape Character Area Type 111: North Thames Basin and CBA Landscape Character Type G: Wooded Ridges and Valleys Area G3: Chigwell*

Primary landscape characteristics - *settlement pattern and landform*

Individual landscape elements or groups of elements defining specific site character - *field pattern, boundary vegetation and Grange Farm Centre adjacent to site*

6.28 The predicted landscape impacts on identified receptors are assessed as follows:

Primary landscape types and character units -

Natural England Landscape Character Area Type 111: North Thames Basin - given the scale of the proposal there would be no significant adverse strategic landscape impacts upon the wider Landscape Character Type.

CBA Landscape Character Type G: Wooded Ridges and Valleys Area G3: Chigwell - there would be no significant adverse strategic landscape impacts upon the wider character area. There would be some negative local impacts associated with the introduction of additional built form and associated loss of open fields however this would be partially offset by landscape benefits associated with the proposed new community open space and tree planting.

Primary landscape characteristics –

Settlement pattern - there would be minor change associated with the loss of open land to development, however, the proposal would be consistent with the pattern of recent housing development in the locality and would result in only limited impacts on the scale, landform and pattern of the local landscape.

Landform - there would be no significant change to existing landform

Field pattern - there would be a loss of the open fields associated with the proposal.

Boundary vegetation - would remain as existing with potential for improvements through managed change to the existing cover.

Grange Farm Centre adjacent to site - the proposal would be located alongside the Grange Farm Centre boundary, but physically separated by established vegetation. There would be some new pedestrian linkages between areas but no perceptible change to the character adjacent open space.

6.0 Landscape Appraisal

6.29 Given the above, and based on the desktop and site assessments, it is concluded that the development as proposed would give rise to negligible landscape change in terms of strategic impacts on recognised character areas, with opportunities to substantially mitigate localised landscape impacts through appropriate detailing of the proposed architectural solution and associated landscaping.

Visual Appraisal of the Development Proposal

6.30 Visual impacts will occur within the visual envelope described on LDA fig 1. These are extremely limited in magnitude and extent, being limited to two high sensitivity visual receptors:

- Group 1 - private residences to north of site within or along the edge of the identified primary visual envelope
- Group 2 - recreational open space users at Grange Farm Centre within the identified primary visual envelope

6.31 In addition to considering the visual envelope of a proposal and the sensitivity of the visual receptor group, the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' notes that weight should also be given to the magnitude of change. With respect to receptor Group 1, the private residences to the north of site within or along the edge of the identified primary visual envelope, the magnitude of change associated with the proposal would be negligible/very low. The proposal would not give rise to a discernible change in the overall nature of the existing view. With respect to receptor Group 2, the recreational open space users at Grange Farm Centre within the identified visual envelope, the magnitude of change associated with the proposal would be very low. The proposal would not give rise to anything other than minor changes to existing views within the identified visual envelope at close range.

General Conclusion

6.32 The proposals set out an approach to development in terms of layout, massing and setting that responds to the site and its relationship to adjoining land uses and the illustrative masterplan and associated design principles provide a means for guiding and assessing detailed design proposals as they come forward.

6.33 There would be minimal landscape impact associated with the proposal as envisaged. There would be little or no strategic impact on the primary landscape character units. The local landscape character will be conserved and where possible enhanced, as the locally distinctive pattern and species composition of natural features such as trees, hedgerows, woodland and field boundaries would be retained with minimal change. Site boundaries between the proposed development and the wider landscape could be sensitively managed with minimal impact. The locally distinctive character of nearby settlements and their landscape settings would be unaffected. Existing skylines would be unaffected by the proposals. There would be no loss of important views or loss of visual amenity. Finally, the proposed development would be proportionate to its site and would sit within an existing landscape framework.

6.34 There would also be minimal visual impact associated with the proposal as envisaged. The existing visual envelope is very tightly drawn and primary visual impacts would occur within the site itself with little or no adverse effects on the wider landscape. The retention, reinforcement and management of perimeter trees and hedgerows would ensure the development would remain visually contained.

6.35 As a result, there would be no discernible loss of openness in the Green Belt in the context of the landscape setting of the area. Given the visually contained nature of the site the proposed development would give rise to negligible visibility of new built form within beyond the site, either locally or in terms of wider more distant views.

6.36 It is concluded that there is no reason in principle, on landscape grounds, why the proposal should not be developed as proposed subject to adoption of the design principles set out in this report and standard landscape conditions requiring submission of a landscape scheme for external hard and soft landscaping.

6.0 Landscape Appraisal



PHOTOVIEWPOINT 01



PHOTOVIEWPOINT 02

PHOTOVIEWPOINTS	SHEET 1	LANDESIGN ASSOCIATES CHARTERED LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS. THE OLD FORGE, LOWER SOUTH WRAXALL, BRADFORD-ON-AVON, WILTSHIRE. BA15 2RZ. TEL. (01225) 866739.
ROLLS PARK, CHIGWELL		



PHOTOVIEWPOINT 03



PHOTOVIEWPOINT 04

PHOTOVIEWPOINTS	SHEET 2	LANDESIGN ASSOCIATES CHARTERED LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS. THE OLD FORGE, LOWER SOUTH WRAXALL, BRADFORD-ON-AVON, WILTSHIRE. BA15 2RZ. TEL. (01225) 866739.
ROLLS PARK, CHIGWELL		

6.0 Landscape Appraisal



PHOTOVIEWPOINT 05



PHOTOVIEWPOINT 06

PHOTOVIEWPOINTS

SHEET 3

ROLLS PARK, CHIGWELL

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PHOTOVIEWPOINT 07



PHOTOVIEWPOINT 08

PHOTOVIEWPOINTS

SHEET 4

ROLLS PARK, CHIGWELL

LANDESIGN ASSOCIATES

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7.1 The primary ecological matters that have influenced the design are the objective of providing a net biodiversity enhancement in accordance with the relevant national and local planning policies set out in the previous sections, and the need to ensure there would be no adverse effect on the nearby Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation. This appraisal has been informed by ecological surveys of the site, evaluation of desktop information, and the local planning history and context (including the latest developments in the neighbourhood and district planning process).

Baseline Conditions and Ecological Context

7.2 The site comprises two fields that have largely been left un-managed (in an agricultural sense). They have therefore developed a mosaic of grassland and scrub upon a site that was presumably once managed as meadow or pasture. It appears that the site has, in the past, been agriculturally improved (perhaps with the use of artificial fertilisers) and the vegetation is therefore relatively species-poor when compared with traditionally managed meadows and pasture. Where there is open grassland it has a tall, rank sward dominated by coarse grasses such as cock's foot, with large amounts of perennial rye-grass.

7.3 At the northern end of the site there is an area of dense scrub that abuts the embankment of the M11 motorway. This is dominated by common shrubs including hawthorn and blackthorn with large amounts of bramble. The field boundaries consist of hedgerows and lines of trees.

7.4 The site is in a landscape characterised by small, regularly-shaped fields divided by hedgerows. This pattern is fairly consistent across the rural areas of the parish, and there is little woodland cover in the surrounding area. On the other side of the M11, to the north-west of the site, the most prominent landscape feature is the floodplain of the River Roding, and the river itself. The river has a meandering, wooded channel and the floodplain contains one of the largest areas of species-rich grassland in Essex, with hay meadows, floodplain meadows and marsh. This area is designated as a Local Nature Reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest.

7.5 The wider landscape is characterised by urban areas to the south, east and west, and open countryside to the north-east. The large expanse of woodland in Epping Forest is the dominant landscape feature to the north-west of the site.

Biodiversity Enhancement

7.6 The development parcel is situated on land of limited ecological value. The habitats here are common and widespread in the parish and at a national level. The loss of biodiversity as a result of development of this land is therefore small. There will be a loss of approximately 1.5 ha of species-poor, agriculturally improved grassland. This habitat provides foraging and sheltering habitat for wildlife including amphibians, birds and bats, and potentially for reptiles such as common lizards or slow-worms. The hedgerows around the boundary of the site will be retained, and it is these that provide the greatest ecological value for the site.

7.7 In order to provide a net enhancement for biodiversity, the development will include provision for the enhancement of the retained habitats. In the case of hedgerows, this will include management to maintain a dense, bushy structure and promote the flowering and fruiting of the shrubs (i.e. by cutting back only every few years). In the case of open grassland, it will be managed to gradually reduce fertility by regular cropping of the grass. A twice-yearly cut (once in early spring and once in late summer) will promote the flowering of the grassland species and removal of the arisings will prevent the build-up of leaf litter and over time will reduce the nutrient load. Further enhancement will be provided by opening up scrub in the northern land parcel to create more areas of open grassland within a scrub mosaic, and the creation of a wildlife pond in the corner of the site.

Epping Forest SAC

7.8 It is an established principle that residential developments have the potential to result in ecological effects on land parcels distant from the site itself by various mechanisms, not least of which can be an increase in visitor numbers to wildlife hotspots. Where these effects can occur on European designated sites it is necessary to assess whether adverse effects are likely to occur, through a process known as Habitats Regulations Assessment.

7.9 The first stage of a HRA is the "screening test", otherwise known as the "likely significant effect" ("LSE") test. The second stage of a HRA, to be applied only where a plan or project has failed the screening test, is known as "appropriate assessment".

7.10 It is noted that an HRA Screening Assessment report has now been completed for the Neighbourhood Plan. It concludes:

4.5 With the inclusion of specific reference to Policy DM2 of the Local Plan in the Neighbourhood Plan, the uncertainty over the potential for effects on the SAC is addressed. The mitigating measures in the Neighbourhood Plan are in this way linked to those in the Local Plan, so that as long as the latter remain sound, the former is likewise made sound.

4.6 The reliability of this approach to mitigation is supported by the acceptance of this type of mitigation strategy in other districts where recreational pressures and air quality issues on SAC features are the standard approach e.g. Thames Basin Heaths and Ashdown Forest.

4.7 It is therefore considered that, on the basis of the objective evidence available at the time of writing, the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan would be unlikely to have a significant effect on the SAC. Subject to the recommendations in this report, there is no likely significant effect as a result of the Chigwell Neighbourhood Plan.

8.0 Transport

Access

8.1 The design of the site access is dependent on both the number of vehicle movements likely to be generated by the proposed residential development and therefore the number and type of residential units proposed together with any constraints on the form of access possible within the site and highway land.

8.2 The potential access options presented in what follows would of course be subject to detailed analysis and design if the proposals were to move forward. The Neighbourhood Plan policy provides for a development that is likely to be between 30 and 45 dwellings but the maximum figure has been rounded up to 50 dwellings for the purposes of this report and the related calculations. There are a number of configurations that would work for a development of 50 dwellings and those presented here are indented to demonstrate that access is possible for the scale and nature of the proposals.

8.3 If access to Chigwell Lane is to be achieved, the junction proposed is a mini roundabout which is illustrated on the Access Plan at the end of this section. In addition to the roundabout it would be beneficial to deploy traffic calming measures on both approaches and to improve pedestrian facilities close to the junction. The junction itself together with the other measures would serve the development but would also act as a gateway to Chigwell village and as speed reduction measure. A mini roundabout of the size proposed would typically have a capacity of between 2500 to 3000 vehicles per hour. The High Road currently has a peak hour two-way flow of approximately 1000 vehicles. (See Essex County Council -Traffic Counts on the following pages). This is well under the expected capacity of the proposed mini- roundabout.

8.4 Residential trip rates vary in terms of location, public transport accessibility and the size/tenure of the residential units proposed. Logically, a large house, in a rural location with limited access to public transport will be judged to have the highest trip rate per day. In Essex, similar large house developments have used a daily trip rate of 9 to consider traffic impacts. As a worst case, if the mini roundabout was provided to serve 50 large units this would mean 450 trips per day. The peak hour is normally assumed to be 10% of the daily flow, so 45 vehicles would enter and leave the site in the peak hours. This would have little impact on the junction and existing traffic conditions.

8.5 In considering a mini roundabout it was shown that the worst case of 50 units would have no real impact on the highway condition and there would still be additional capacity at the junction to accommodate both normal traffic growth and additional development arising in the area without the need for further improvements. The roundabout would also offer a 'gateway' feature for Chigwell village slowing vehicles travelling in both directions.

8.6 Depending on the final number of dwellings it is possible that a simple priority junction would suffice as a means of access with the newly introduced signalled junction a short distance away allowing natural breaks in the traffic to facilitate right turns in and out of the site with a minimal risk of delays to traffic on the High Road. This option will be tested further at the detailed design stage.

8.7 However, it may also be possible to secure an access through third party land to a new junction with High Road. This provides a suitable, alternative to the Chigwell Lane option and will be investigated further in preparing the transport assessment to support a planning application in due course.

8.0 Transport

PROJECT 15222 CHIGWELL
LOCATION J01 - A113 High Rd / Station Rd, Chigwell
DATE Tue 29 May, 2023
WEATHER (am) Cloudy, dry, min 9°C
WEATHER (pm) Clear, dry, max 19°C
INCIDENTS No reported incidents
DATASET 60 minute intervals



ORIGIN: A113 High Road (north)

A to A

A113 High Road (north) to A113 High Road (north)

	CAR	LGV1	LGV2	MSV	HGV1	HGV2	PSV	MB	CYC	TOTAL
07:00										
08:00										
09:00										
10:00										
11:00										
12:00										
13:00										
14:00										
15:00										
16:00										
17:00										
18:00										
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

A to B

A113 High Road (north) to Station Road (east)

	CAR	LGV1	LGV2	MSV	HGV1	HGV2	PSV	MB	CYC	TOTAL
07:00	6	2	0	1	0	0	4	0	0	13
08:00	10	0	1	1	0	0	5	0	0	17
09:00	13	2	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	19
10:00	8	0	1	0	1	0	3	0	0	13
11:00	7	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	11
12:00	11	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	14
13:00	7	1	4	1	0	0	3	0	0	16
14:00	15	1	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	21
15:00	15	1	0	1	0	0	3	0	1	21
16:00	12	0	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	17
17:00	10	2	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	17
18:00	6	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	10
TOTAL	120	11	7	4	1	0	41	1	2	187

A to C

A113 High Road (north) to A113 High Road (south)

	CAR	LGV1	LGV2	MSV	HGV1	HGV2	PSV	MB	CYC	TOTAL
07:00	117	11	46	4	3	4	0	3	3	191
08:00	180	10	11	3	7	3	2	3	2	211
09:00	302	16	21	17	5	0	0	4	0	360
10:00	272	12	12	4	5	1	0	0	0	306
11:00	296	14	22	5	3	0	0	3	0	343
12:00	302	14	26	4	5	1	0	2	1	355
13:00	273	13	15	1	3	1	0	3	0	309
14:00	245	11	15	4	3	1	1	1	0	281
15:00	358	3	19	6	5	0	0	0	0	391
16:00	348	12	18	3	0	0	1	3	0	380
17:00	317	6	17	3	1	0	1	5	0	350
18:00	325	4	15	2	1	0	0	0	0	349
TOTAL	3718	126	235	51	41	13	5	27	8	4242

ORIGIN: Station Road (east)

B to A

Station Road (east) to A113 High Road (north)

	CAR	LGV1	LGV2	MSV	HGV1	HGV2	PSV	MB	CYC	TOTAL
07:00	15	0	1	0	0	0	6	1	0	23
08:00	34	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	38
09:00	20	2	5	0	1	0	4	0	0	30
10:00	36	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	1	42
11:00	33	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	37
12:00	27	1	1	0	1	0	3	0	0	33
13:00	25	0	2	0	0	0	3	1	0	31
14:00	27	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	31
15:00	32	1	3	0	0	0	3	0	1	40
16:00	22	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	1	28
17:00	13	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	0	18
18:00	12	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	15
TOTAL	296	5	19	0	2	0	39	2	3	368

B to B

Station Road (east) to Station Road (west)

	CAR	LGV1	LGV2	MSV	HGV1	HGV2	PSV	MB	CYC	TOTAL
07:00										
08:00										
09:00										
10:00										
11:00										
12:00										
13:00										
14:00										
15:00										
16:00										
17:00										
18:00										
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

B to C

Station Road (east) to A113 High Road (south)

	CAR	LGV1	LGV2	MSV	HGV1	HGV2	PSV	MB	CYC	TOTAL
07:00	30	1	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	41
08:00	70	3	3	1	1	0	2	0	0	80
09:00	35	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	40
10:00	29	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	35
11:00	41	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	44
12:00	35	2	6	0	1	0	0	0	0	44
13:00	27	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	28
14:00	36	2	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	43
15:00	28	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	33
16:00	36	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	39
17:00	27	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	30
18:00	34	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	36
TOTAL	437	14	38	4	5	0	2	0	0	502

ORIGIN: A113 High Road (south)

C to A

A113 High Road (south) to A113 High Road (north)

	CAR	LGV1	LGV2	MSV	HGV1	HGV2	PSV	MB	CYC	TOTAL
07:00	117	6	18	7	1	0	1	2	0	152
08:00	452	7	13	0	5	3	0	3	1	485
09:00	143	13	13	8	6	0	0	0	0	183
10:00	108	9	20	4	0	2	0	1	1	145
11:00	269	25	30	5	4	1	0	4	0	328
12:00	167	25	16	4	3	1	0	2	0	212
13:00	268	16	23	4	4	1	2	3	1	312
14:00	104	17	10	0	4	0	0	2	0	137
15:00	417	13	13	0	5	1	1	1	0	451
16:00	355	23	17	3	2	0	0	0	1	401
17:00	142	17	19	2	2	0	1	5	1	189
18:00	134	10	17	2	1	0	0	1	0	165
TOTAL	4085	179	190	39	37	9	3	24	3	4578

C to B

A113 High Road (south) to Station Road (east)

	CAR	LGV1	LGV2	MSV	HGV1	HGV2	PSV	MB	CYC	TOTAL
07:00	13	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	16
08:00	27	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	32
09:00	26	3	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	34
10:00	19	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	25
11:00	26	2	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	33
12:00	30	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31
13:00	22	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	24
14:00	21	3	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	28
15:00	31	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	36
16:00	28	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	33
17:00	22	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	27
18:00	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	39
TOTAL	306	21	22	4	3	0	2	0	0	358

C to C

A113 High Road (south) to A113 High Road (south)

	CAR	LGV1	LGV2	MSV	HGV1	HGV2	PSV	MB	CYC	TOTAL
07:00										
08:00										
09:00										
10:00										
11:00										
12:00										
13:00										
14:00										
15:00										
16:00										
17:00										
18:00										
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

ORIGIN SUMMARY

ENTERING FROM A

A113 High Road

	CAR	LGV1	LGV2	MSV	HGV1	HGV2	PSV	MB	CYC	TOTAL
07:00	323	13	46	5	3	4	3	5	3	406
08:00	400	10	11	4	7	3	5	1	2	446
09:00	315	18	21	12	5	0	4	4	0	379
10:00	280	12	11	4	6	1	3	0	0	317
11:00	303	15	22	5	3	0	3	3	0	354
12:00	313	14	26	4	5	1	3	2	1	369
13:00	280	14	19	2	3	1	3	3	0	325
14:00	260	12	15	4	3	1	3	2	0	302
15:00	373	4	19	7	5	0	3	0	1	412
16:00	353	12	19	3	0	0	3	3	0	397
17:00	327	8	17	3	1	0	5	5	1	367
18:00	329	5	13	2	1	0	3	0	0	351
TOTAL	1858	137	242	55	42	11	46	28	10	2129

ENTERING FROM B

Station Road

	CAR	LGV1	LGV2	MSV	HGV1	HGV2	PSV
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8.0 Transport

Internal Layout

8.8 The Essex Design Guide has a guide to what type of layout is appropriate for either the road network the development is served from and what the internal layout should consist of depending on the number of units served. The most relevant extract from the Guide (p122) is shown on the following page.

8.9 The proposed development proposes an approach road of between 5.8 and 6.8 metres wide that will run from the junction with the High Road to the main site to the rear of existing residential properties. It can be seen from the extracted table on the following page that this width of approach road falls into road type categories 4, 5 and 6. It is clear from this that the site can be served adequately for both access scenarios and will allow a compliant internal site layout to be designed. Any access road provided will be designed to accommodate larger vehicles and will be subject to traffic calming where it is appropriate to do so. An indicative layout for the Access road is also shown on the Access Plan at the end of this section.

8.10 Beyond the access road the Internal site layout can be configured to meet current Essex Design Standards for residential estates based on a review of the Illustrative Masterplan layout. A loop road providing easy access to off street parking and servicing vehicles could easily be accommodated. The nature of the design will be dependent on the number and tenure of the units proposed but there is no technical reason that a suitable layout cannot be provided.

8.11 The number of units proposed and shown indicatively in the illustrative masterplan can clearly accommodate the parking requirements set out in the currently applicable standards (2 spaces per dwelling - assuming all dwellings are a minimum of two bedrooms), plus the allowance for visitors - Essex County Council's Parking Standards, design and Good Practice (September 2009)). Importantly it is also clear that the parking can be provided in a manner that is compliant with the requirements of the Essex Design Guide.

8.12 Although being served by the new Chigwell Parish Bus Service and being within a reasonable walking distance of both the London Underground and bus services, the level of parking provided may be at the higher end of the permitted standards. It can however be accommodated on site either within the curtilage of individual units or in small parking courts in line with the recommendations of the Essex Design Guide.

Pedestrian and Cycle Accessibility

8.13 The advice provided by Essex County Council and nationally in the document Manual for Streets, is that all new residential sites should wherever possible be permeable to the surrounding cycle and pedestrian networks. Whilst those opportunities are limited for the proposed site they do exist via Chigwell Meadows and Grange Farm Lane. The proposed site offers that permeability through specific access to those existing routes and by creating an environment within the site, sensitive to the needs of both pedestrian and cyclists, (level access, shared surfaces, self-enforcing speed reduction and good visibility/lighting) the proposed site will comply with the relevant guidance and policy, and promote more sustainable modes of transport.

Conclusions

8.14 From a highways perspective the site is capable of being developed for a housing scheme of up to 45 dwellings. In terms of access, the layout and detail will depend on the final number and mix of dwellings with these proposals providing the basis for a suitable access and the potential for as suitable alternative access.

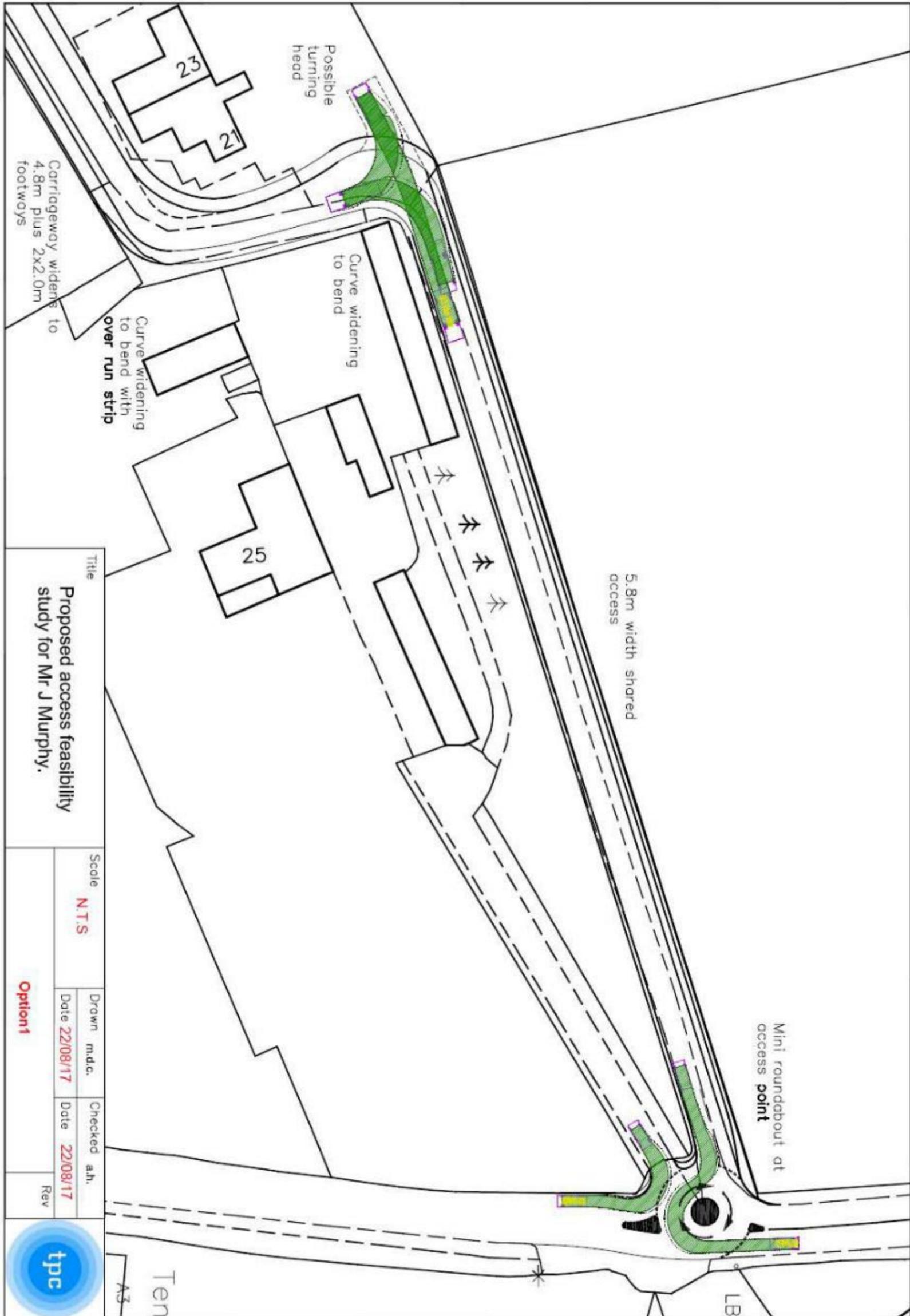
8.15 The nature of the internal layout will also be dependent on the number and mix of units proposed but there is no technical reason to suggest at this stage that a suitable configuration cannot be designed.

8.0 Transport

Road Type	Description	Max no. of dwellings served	Min. carriageway width & footway requirement	Design speed	Comments
1	Local Distributor		7.3 or 6.75m & 2 x 2m footways. Buses to use either half lays or stand on c/way. Central pedestrian refuge crossing islands require local widening	50kph 30mph	Multi-purpose road Min.3m verges required. Frontage access only by parallel service roads /drives
2	Link Road		6.75m & 2 x 2m footways. Bus route requirements as for road type 1 but with additional local widening adjacent to bus stop	50kph 30mph	Links neighbourhoods and serves non-residential uses. Regularly accessed by vehicles over 7.5t.
3	Feeder Road	700 400 link or loop 200 cul de sac	6m or 5.5m both with 2 x 2m footways	30kph 20mph	Direct in or out of 30kph (20mph) area. May serve non-residential uses
4	Minor Access Road	200 link or loop 100 cul de sac	4.8m with 2 x footways (of which 1 should be 2m wide) or 1 x 2m footway if fewer than 25 dwellings are served	30kph 20mph	No access restrictions
5	Minor Access Way	50 link or loop, 25 cul de sac	Combined pedestrian/vehicular surface 4.8m (including a verge) Max length 150m (cul de sac)	30kph 20mph	To be used only in situations where the adjacent dwellings are provided with sufficient off street parking
6	Minor Access	100 link or loop 50 cul de sac	Combined pedestrian/vehicular surface 5.8m. Maximum length 150m (cul de sac)	30kph 20mph	Urban character. Tabled entrance approach Gateway feature may be necessary
7	Mews	100 link or loop, 50 cul de sac or more if garages located outside mews	Combined pedestrian/vehicular surface 5.8m. Max. length 150m (cul de sac)	30kph 20mph	Urban character Special Junction detail Special surface finish
8	Mews Court	40 link or loop, 20 cul de sac or more if garages located outside mews	Combined pedestrian/vehicular surface 4.8m. Max. length 50m (cul de sac)	30kph 20mph	Urban character Special Junction detail Special surface finish
	Parking Square		Combined pedestrian/vehicular surface 4.8m vehicleway	20kph 10mph	Urban character. Tabled approaches.
9	Mixed use street		6.5m carriageway comprising of two 3m running lanes with 0.5m central over-runnable strip 2 x 2m (min) footways. Bus route	30kph 20mph	Serves residential and non-residential uses. On-street parking in bays. Street trees required. Details in The Urban Place Supplement
	Play street		Combined pedestrian vehicular surface	15 kph 10mph	Urban character/tailed approach entrance gateway. Details in The Urban Place Supplement



8.0 Transport



Access Plan

9.0 The Green Belt Tests

Justifying Inappropriate Development in the Green Belt

9.1 The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy, as set out in §79 of the NPPF, is to keep land permanently open. Its §87 states that inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Its §89 states that new buildings will be inappropriate and lists exceptions including buildings for agriculture, outdoor sport and recreation and limited development including extension, alteration, or replacement of existing buildings. The Local Plan Policy GB2A adopts a very similar approach to national policy and this has been maintained in Policy DM4 of the Pre-Submission Local Plan.

9.2 The Rolls Park proposal must therefore be justified as inappropriate development in the Green Belt that is otherwise suitable by way of 'very special circumstances', as allowed for by NPPF §87. §88 of the NPPF makes it clear that in the event of the Council having to consider a planning application, 'substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt'. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations'.

Green Belt Contribution

9.3 Before considering the weight attached to the matters which together make up the 'very special circumstances', it is firstly important to establish the degree of harm to the Green Belt caused by the impact of the development and to identify any other harm caused.

9.4 In respect of the harm to the Green Belt, the landscape analysis contained in this report concludes that the impact of development in the defined developable area of the land will be 'less than moderate'. This is due to the limited contribution that the developable area makes to the essential purposes of the Green Belt by way of its weak visual relationship with the wider area, notwithstanding that the wider, non-developable part of the site makes a significant contribution to that purpose. The proposed design strategy ensures that there will be no increase in the visibility of the developable area from public vantage points elsewhere in Green Belt or from the settlements on the other side of the valley.

9.5 This report also concludes that there will be no more harm caused by traffic movements than from any other development of this scale and type on the edge of the village. Traffic movements generated by the housing scheme and attracted by the community park scheme can be effectively managed through improvements to the junction with High Road and to the access road. Further, the new Chigwell Parish Bus Service will serve both schemes with a regular service connecting them with Chigwell, Grange Hill and Chigwell Row. It also concludes that there will be a significant biodiversity net gain by way of the community park scheme proposals on the non-developable area.

Very Special Circumstances

9.6 There are two public benefits, that combine to form the 'very special circumstances' to justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Chigwell Community Hub

9.7 The most significant public benefit arising from the housing scheme is the financial contribution (through a S106 Agreement) of £6.5M for the delivery of a new Chigwell Community Hub in the village. The Hub is intended to serve as a multi-purpose, all-inclusive facility to cater for the existing and anticipated needs of the local community. This building is envisioned to be accessible to a wide variety of groups within Chigwell, with the flexibility to adapt to any future community requirements. This facility will embolden a resilient, enduring and positive relationship with other community agencies and local residents alike.

9.8 It is estimated by the Parish Council that the total cost of construction and furnishing is in the region of £6.5 million. The varied administrative aspects of this project will be the sole responsibility of the Parish Council, whilst an agreement with Essex County Council to move the Library provision on the site, the Chigwell Men's Club and the Victory Hall association will be drafted which will allow these organisations to maintain the parts of the Hub under their jurisdiction.

9.9 As noted in the Neighbourhood Plan and its evidence base, it is the very fact that the land is in the Green Belt and requires the 'very special circumstances' test to be passed, that has provided the Parish Council with the leverage to make this demand of the land owner. The scale of the financial contribution is well beyond what would be reasonable for a housing scheme of this size, were the land not to have this policy constraint.

9.0 The Green Belt Tests

9.10 The Hub will be self-financing via an arrangement where the facility may be chartered on an hourly basis. Similarly, the cafeteria will also be self-funding via a contract between a nominated provider and the Parish Council. The rental income is expected to be approximately £30,000 p.a. This projected income is based upon a £20.00p hourly charge for use of the auditorium, with a minimum weekly usage at 30 hours weekly. The activities will include; keep-fit classes, Yoga sessions, Choral singing, theatre, training, lectures, indoor sports, music concerts, art lessons.

9.11 The arrangement with Essex County Council will be made whereby a 'peppercorn' rent will be established, this will exclude the intrinsic maintenance costs of the relevant floor-space. In addition, a profit-share from the disposal of the existing library building could supplement the project's income. The Chigwell Club will continue under a similar agreement as it has with the Arthur Lewis Foundation and the current Chigwell Parish Council building is currently earmarked for the introduction of a dedicated doctors surgery which is currently lacking in the whole of Chigwell with this provision provided out of area.

9.12 A Cafeteria providing refreshments and snacks aimed at senior residents will be run within the hub, again this establishment will be managed to insure it remains monetarily neutral. The Public library, will continue to be managed and maintained by Essex County Council, providing similar, but enhanced services to those which presently exists. This Community Hub is within walking distance of Chigwell Underground Station and will also be served by the new Chigwell Parish Bus Service.

9.13 The financial contribution from the developer of Rolls Park is the only viable means by which the Parish Council can realise this project. It already has a Public Works Loans Board facility, which it does not wish to extend, given that to cover this cost will lead to an increase in its precept of 60%. It does not have the reserves to contribute any significant sum to meet this cost. Given the owner of the Rolls Park land has willingly offered to deliver this capital sum (and to manage the delivery of the construction project), the Parish Council has not needed to consider other means by which local development may help meet this cost via S106 Agreements or a future Community Infrastructure Levy. In both these cases, it is not considered that sufficient development will be consented in the Parish to generate any significant contribution to meet this cost.

9.14 The project has been a longstanding ambition of the Parish Council. The current facilities do not meet the modern needs of the local community and any further incremental improvements are no longer possible or viable. In pursuit of the Neighbourhood Plan Policy CHG5, which makes provision for the Community Hub proposal, the Parish Council has submitted an outline planning application for the scheme.



9.0 The Green Belt Tests

Natural Green Space

9.15 The community park scheme will deliver a new Natural Green Space in line with Policy GB2A (and DM4) of the Local Plan, that is considerably larger for this type of mitigation measure than is normally necessary for a housing scheme of this size. The 2.0Ha Space proposed here will meet much, if not all, of the mitigation need arising from the whole Parish over the plan period.

9.16 In due course, it may be desirable to connect the community park scheme to the adjoining 'Chigwell Meadows' at the Grange Farm Centre through a pedestrian link. The Meadows are an 8 Ha area of trees and flower-lined walkways managed by the Essex Wildlife Trust. The owner has been in discussions with the owners, the Grange Farm Trust, to agree an access arrangement for this purpose and will the management of the community park scheme with the Wildlife Trust in due course.



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Weighing the Harm and the Very Special Circumstances

9.17 The harm caused to the Green Belt by way of an 'inappropriate' development scheme in this specific location in the Green Belt has been assessed as 'less than moderate'. The nature of the development proposal is such that this harm will not be increased by the scheme and all other forms of potential harm arising from the scheme will either be avoided, will be minimal or can be satisfactorily mitigated.

9.18 On the balancing side of the weighting equation are two public benefits that combine to form the 'very special circumstances' for 'inappropriate development' in the Green Belt. The first – the financial contribution to delivering the Community Hub proposal – is accorded significant weight, as there is no viable, alternative means of the community securing this benefit in the plan period. The second – the on-site provision of a 2 Ha community park that qualifies as a Natural Green Space to contribute to the mitigation of harmful recreation effects on the Epping Forest SAC arising from new housing development in the wider area – is accorded moderate to significant weight, as there are likely to be few other means of delivering this provision on other sites in the Parish in the plan period.

9.20 It is therefore considered that the weight attributed to the 'very special circumstances' is greater than that attributed to the harm to the Green Belt and the proposal is therefore consistent with national and local planning policy on the Green Belt.

FINAL
March 2018