



LAND AT CAMBRIDGE ROAD HARDWICK

**Delivering
Sustainable
Growth**

Hill Residential Ltd and Chivers Farms (Hardington) LLP



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Executive summary

This Developing Framework Document demonstrates that Land at Cambridge Road, Hardwick, has the potential to deliver high quality and sustainable growth on an arterial and direct public transport link into Cambridge and is in a unique position to deliver on the themes and objectives of the new local plan. The site should therefore be identified for housing in the Greater Cambridge Partnership Local Plan.

The document demonstrates that the site is suitable, available and deliverable with respect to the provision of a sustainable housing development that has potential to help meet local housing need and also deliver significant improvements to the village and its community.

Specifically, the document demonstrates that the site is located adjacent to existing facilities, including the village primary school, and provides a unique opportunity to deliver a new walkable neighbourhood whilst also restoring the nucleated form of the village with a new community heart at its core.

The development framework demonstrates the development potential of the site and the opportunity to create a high quality, sensitively

planned and sustainable new neighbourhood with limited impact on the local environment.

Specifically, the document also demonstrates that new housing would:

- Be contiguous with the existing settlement edge and benefit from excellent public transport links.
- Have excellent pedestrian and cycle links to nearby shops and community facilities on Cambridge Road and the local Hardwick Community Primary School, thereby promoting the concept of a walkable neighbourhood.
- Benefit from attractive leisure and public amenity both within the site and the immediate locality.
- Provide a strong landscape setting based on the site's landscape features, such as the existing boundary hedges, and not harm the objectives and purposes of the Cambridge Green Belt in this location.
- Achieve significant natural capital gains and diversification of the open space offer in the village.

It also demonstrates that the site is a logical location for the release of green belt, being visually contained

and benefiting from strong, well-defined landscape boundaries that will provide a robust new defensible green belt boundary, which can be augmented with additional landscape structure planting.

Based on the initial analysis of the site and its context, some preliminary design principles have been developed. Hill will engage with local residents, the parish council and planning authority to discuss and develop these further to ensure a sensitive design response is achieved.



1.0 Introduction

Purpose of the document

This Development Framework Document has been prepared on behalf of Hill Residential, in respect of Land off Cambridge Road, Hardwick (herein referred to as ‘the site’) and is submitted to the council in support of representations submitted by Hill.

This document provides an initial introduction to the village of Hardwick, its attributes and deficiencies. A further summary environmental analysis of the site and its context, including its contribution to the Cambridge Green Belt and the local landscape’s visual amenity is also provided.

The document concludes with our vision and conceptual layout for the proposed residential site allocation, with specific emphasis on how the site is well placed to address the environmental and social challenges that the district will experience over the life of the new local plan and beyond.

The vision therefore explores how the four key themes of the new local plan could be addressed through an appropriate development framework and the highest design standards.

The conceptual vision and the formative influences described within, follow preliminary technical assessment.



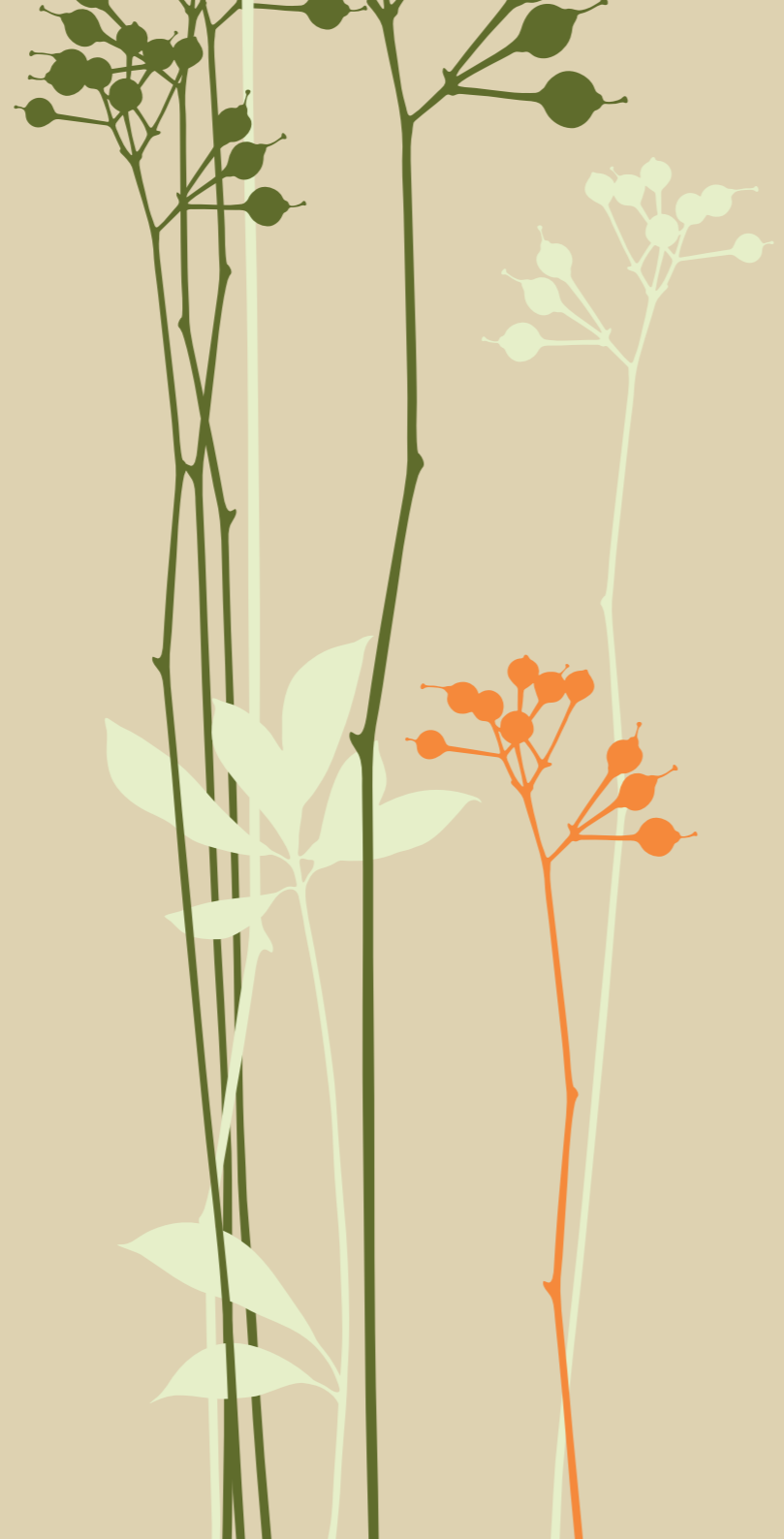
We have extensive experience of delivering bespoke, high quality developments with organisations from many different backgrounds in the public and private sectors. We carefully select our partners to ensure we are totally committed to the combined cause of the project. We will bring together expertise and experience giving us flexibility, speed of response and a coherent approach to unlock the potential of the site.

Hill is a major housebuilder delivering in excess of 1,500 homes per annum throughout the south east of England. Our principal development offices are in London and Cambridge.

For over 20 years, Hill has delivered many award-winning housing developments, achieving or exceeding a wide range of important design and quality criteria. Hill has established a reputation for creating high quality, award winning developments, distinguished by inspirational design, creative use of materials, sustainable strategies and meticulous attention to detail.

Hill was founded in 1999 on partnering principles, and working collaboratively lies at the heart of our business. As a developer, we actively seek out opportunities for collaborative working and joint ventures are a core element of our business activity. Working in partnership with landowners, local authorities and other housing partners is key to everything we do successfully. We believe that by coming together to produce projects, we can combine the skill sets and resources of our teams with our partners to outperform all participants’ objectives and goals.





2.0 Hardwick

Hardwick is a village of approximately 2,700 people located on a broad low ridgeline in the Clayland Hills. Unlike the Gog Magog Hills to the east, the Clayland Hills are relatively well settled. Hardwick is one of a linear string of settlements between Cambridge in the east and Cambourne in the west which historically have grown along a key arterial route into the city. The following section provides a brief introduction to the village, its key characteristics and attributes.

2.0 Hardwick

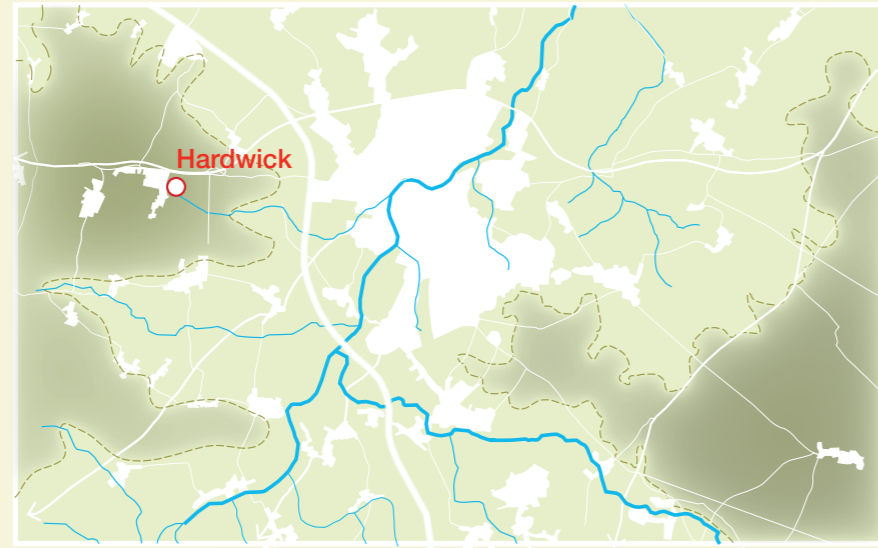
A village that is well connected

Hardwick lies to the south of the A428 between Cambridge and Cambourne about 5 miles to the west of Cambridge.

Hardwick is a 'Group Village' as defined in the adopted 2018 South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (Policy S/10), having services and facilities which allow 'only some of the basic day-to-day requirements of their residents to be met without the need to travel outside the village.' The site, however, provides a clear and demonstrable opportunity to significantly improve the village's community and retail facilities whilst also delivering the most sustainable growth.

The local plan should re-examine the adopted framework in favour of supporting development sites on principal transport corridors, focussing growth in the most accessible locations.

Hardwick lies on an arterial and direct bus route into Cambridge city. The service is frequent (approx. every 20 minutes) and takes approximately 28 minutes to Cambridge city centre. Future infrastructure improvements include a high-quality public transport link between Cambourne and Cambridge. The combined authority has announced that it will deliver this link as part of its plans for a Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro (CAM). This will provide high quality public transport connections between Hardwick, Cambridge and the wider sub-region, further enhancing the village's potential to support sustainable growth.



OPPORTUNITY: Hardwick is in a strategically strong location for development with recent and future infrastructure improvements opening up the potential to provide sustainable growth while fostering a diversified and vibrant rural economy.

2.0 Hardwick

A village with two distinct townscapes

Hardwick has expanded greatly since the 1960s. Historically, the village consisted of a small and dispersed cluster of residential properties to the south. Limes Estate, built in the 1970s, more than doubled the size of the village and there are now approximately 1,020 households.

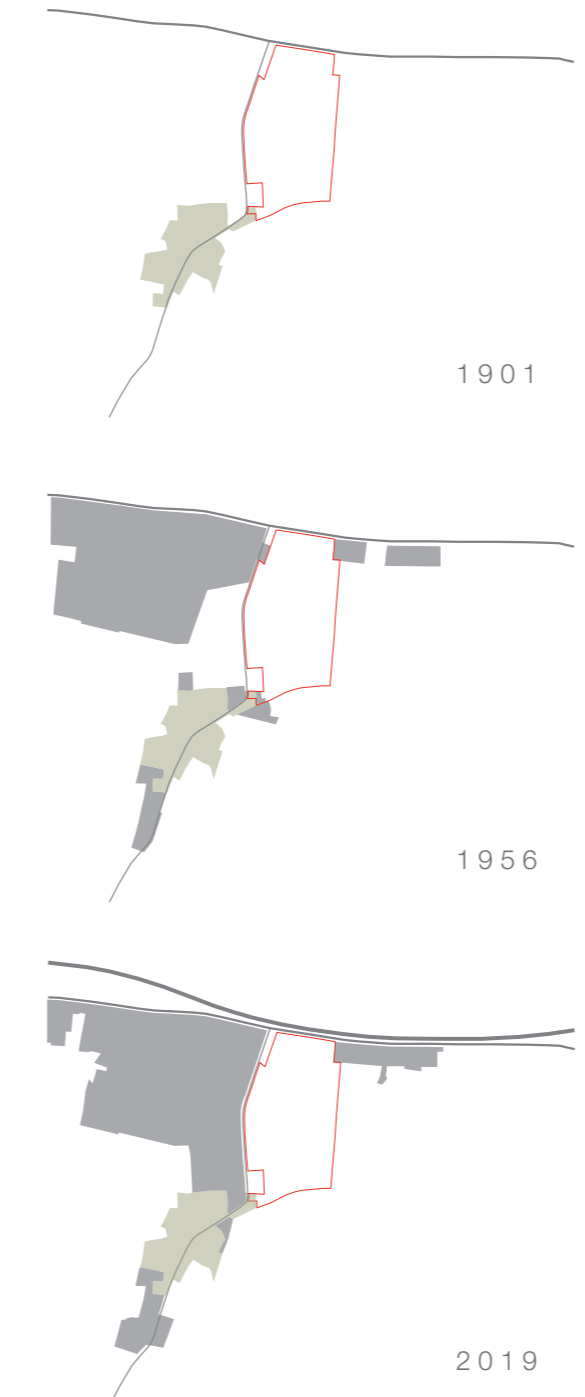
This rapid growth was focussed in a landholding to the north of the historic core, between Cambridge Road and St Neots Road. Growth was unbalanced, resulting in the loss of the nucleated form of the historic settlement.

The fabric of the historic and modern developments were equally poorly integrated. A single vehicular route connects the two developments. This transition is weak and relatively abrupt meaning that the historic core to the south of the village is perceived almost as a separate entity severed from the suburban development to the north.

Hardwick remains a village characterised by two distinct townscapes; **the historic core** and **post-war suburban development**.



OPPORTUNITY: Potential to restore the villages nucleated growth pattern and distinctiveness by reflecting and responding to the historic cores townscape and features of the architectural vernacular.



Historic growth

- A low density, historic element consisting of a loose grain of residential properties which share a varied relationship with Main Street, often with a substantial setback.
- The architectural vernacular is varied with many properties typical of South Cambridgeshire.
- Properties are set within an established and strong landscape structure of mature street trees and hedgerows.
- Strong sense of place and character typical of rural Cambridgeshire, contributing to the distinctiveness of the district.

Post war development

- A low density, suburban townscape typical of post-war development.
- Weak streetscene with little soft landscape and ancillary open spaces with limited function or amenity value.
- Architectural style displaying very few features in common with the typical local vernacular.
- Weak sense of place which contributes little to the distinctiveness of the district and has a weak relationship with its rural setting.

2.0 Hardwick

A village lacking a unified heart

Facilities are generally poor for a settlement of its size. The village currently has a primary school, sports pavilion and single convenience store. The village also currently has no community centre although one will be delivered in the near future following funding through S106 contributions.

Hardwick's un-nucleated recent growth pattern has resulted in the principal vehicular access to the village following the settlement's northern and eastern settlement edge. The village's primary school is also located on the settlement's edge and so activity and footfall are concentrated along the two peripheral roads. Local amenities, as a result, are limited and also located around the periphery of the village (along Cambridge Road and St Neots Road).

Retail units are also dispersed over a large area rather than within a centralised and concentrated hub meaning that the village currently lacks a unified heart.

The site is uniquely located to assist in restoring the village core and has the ability to integrate the isolated line of residential development along St Neots Road into the village.



OPPORTUNITY: Potential to internalise the village main street (Cambridge Road) and create a nucleated heart at the centre of the expanded settlement while supporting a centralised location for a new community centre and further retail and employment space.

A village with limited opportunities for recreation

Opportunities for active recreation in the village are currently limited. A single recreation ground on Egremont Road provides formal sports facilities and play but other open space typologies are lacking, meaning that only narrow subsets of the population are well served with appropriate open space. Generally, there is an overall deficit of open space for a settlement of its size.

Implementation of a large area of naturalistic open space, together with numerous connected parcels of amenity greenspace, allotments and varied play facilities will significantly improve the wider green infrastructure and make a considerable contribution to addressing localised open space deficiencies.

OPPORTUNITY: Redress the significant deficit in open space in the village by providing diversified and complementary semi-natural green space, formal recreation and edible landscapes while reconnecting the community with the rural landscape.





3.0 The site

The site comprises two agricultural fields adjacent to the north eastern edge of the settlement.. The following section demonstrates how the site's specific physical attributes allow for significant sustainable development capacity.

3.0 The site

Environmental Context

With the exception of green belt, the site is not covered by any form of environmental designation and, although there is an area of registered park and garden to the north east of the site, the proposals would have no effect on its visual amenity, character or setting.

Land at Cambridge Road also has limited potential to harm ecologically valued sites or heritage assets.

The site lies to the north of the Port Way / Whitwell Way; identified as a key long distance recreation route linking the wider landscape to the historic core of Cambridge. There are two links to the trail from the south of the village / historic core but limited direct connectivity from the post-war development to the north.



OPPORTUNITY: With the exception of its green belt designation, the site is unconstrained by statutory protection. Localised resources including trees and ecological assets are concentrated along the site boundaries and could be integrated into the development.



St. Neots Road and the A428 corridor beyond, following the site's northern boundary

3.0 The site

Visual openness

A preliminary landscape and visual appraisal found that the local pattern of topography, vegetation and development limits the extent to which the proposed site is visible in the landscape. Views are largely restricted to locations within 1km of the site boundary. Although a small number of views are available from the wider landscape, it was determined that, where they occur, the pattern of landform and landscape structure, or viewing distance itself, significantly reduces the degree of visual effect.

Inter-visibility with the site is limited to two adjacent public roads / residential streets and a small number of locations on three public rights of way directly to the south of the site, within 0.8km of the boundary. The site has a broad and gentle south westerly aspect, falling more steeply towards the southern boundary. It is this slope that is most exposed to views from these locations.

Simple measures, such as excluding development

OPPORTUNITY: Preliminary landscape and green belt appraisals have concluded that the site has a relatively high capacity for development and could include significant compensatory improvements to the Cambridge Green Belt.

from the south western slope, could ensure that only land which is the most visually contained is developed.

Green belt purposes

Locally, the principal purpose of the Cambridge Green Belt is to preserve the setting and special character of Cambridge and to prevent the merging of communities with each other and the city.

Development of the site will not adversely affect the unique character of Cambridge or its setting and it will not cause settlements to merge.

Equally, in relation to the special character of Cambridge, development will not affect key views towards Cambridge from the surrounding countryside. Neither will it affect the city's soft green edge or the physical separation, setting, scale and character of the green belt villages.

Finally, removing the site from the edge of the

Cambridge Green Belt and restoring a strong landscape boundary will have no effect on the rural character of green belt surrounding Cambridge.

The site also provides an opportunity for the creation of strong new woodland boundaries as well as scope to provide much needed open space provision and habitat diversification.

From this preliminary assessment the site performs poorly against both the NPPF and Cambridge Green Belt purposes. We suggest that the site can provide new strong green belt boundaries provision without prejudicing the remaining Cambridge Green Belt.



Visual amenity and openness

3.0 The site

Accessibility

Existing community facilities including the primary school and convenience store on the periphery of the village currently have a significantly under-utilised catchment. The site itself is almost entirely within a 500m catchment of these community facilities and, uniquely, has the potential to deliver a large amount of growth within a particularly small walkable neighbourhood.

Access to the site is possible from two aspects directly onto the primary road network, providing opportunities for pedestrian and cycle links to the south of the village, off site footpath network and cycleway on St. Neots Road.

The village's principal access is via Cambridge Road, a street with a relatively indistinct character and which creates a poor sense of arrival to the village.

OPPORTUNITY: The site is uniquely placed to support new growth within a 500m walking zone of the existing primary school and local retail facilities.



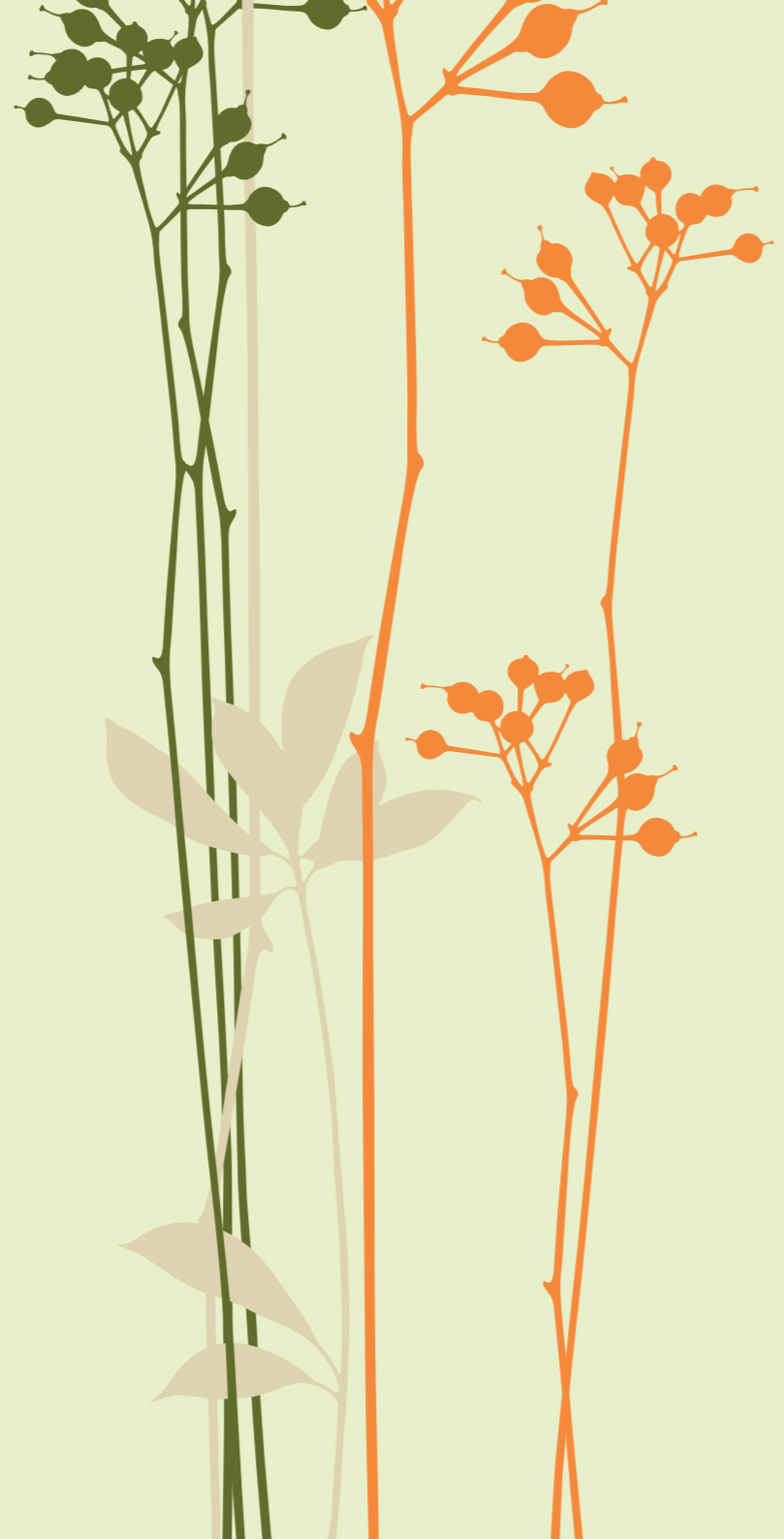
1 Linear development on St. Neots Road with a weak association with the village. Development of the site will provide new pedestrian and cycle links between outlying development and central village facilities.

2 Site interface with Cambridge Road at Bin Brook provides opportunities to create segregated cycle way links between the north and south of the village through new green infrastructure.

3 Peripheral primary road adjacent to the site boundary currently provides access to the village and community facilities. Cambridge Road is a single carriageway with limited on street or central parking. Despite limited traffic numbers, the road experiences poor flow during peak times, particularly at school drop, due to the number of cars parked in the highway adjacent to existing facilities.

4 Limited inter-visibility with the surrounding countryside. Boundary vegetation on Cambridge Road obstructs views out of the village meaning that the settlement's visual relationship with the wider countryside is weak. Creation of sympathetic visual and physical links to the countryside will enhance the settlement's sense of place.





4.0 The opportunity

An initial appraisal of the existing settlement and its local environment has revealed that the site has a high capacity for development. Its location adjacent to existing community facilities and existing sustainable transport corridors can support sustainable growth but also deliver substantial benefits for the existing community.

4.0 The opportunity

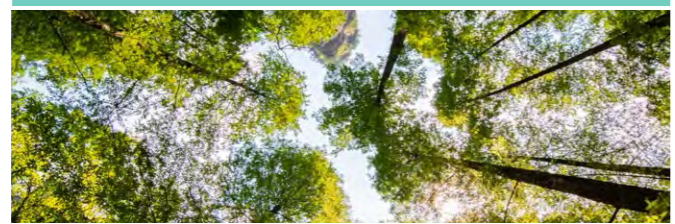



Sustainable growth in South Cambridgeshire

The dynamics of modern-day communities and economies has evolved. Awareness of macro scale environmental issues has improved over the latter half of the last century and there is now a pressing need for the new local plan to balance the opposing forces of delivering growth with climate change and the degradation of our natural environment.

Using space efficiently has become an increasingly pertinent design principle. Solutions should now permeate through all tiers of strategic planning and design; through appropriate growth strategies, setting demanding sustainability standards and supporting growth where the cohesiveness and viability of existing communities can also be improved.

In this same light, we have explored a vision which makes the most resourceful use of space and so intensifies land use without compromising the very foundation of the area's distinct character.

Multi-functional, high performance landscapes delivering significant natural capital gains should underpin the master plan framework and weave through a fabric of highly efficient and varied mixed use, low car development.

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Responding to climate change</p> <p>How the plan should contribute to achieving net zero carbon, and the mitigation and adaptation measures that should be required through developments.</p>  | <p>Promoting wellbeing and equality</p> <p>How the plan can help spread the benefits of growth, helping to create healthy and inclusive communities.</p>  |
| <p>Increasing biodiversity and greenspace</p> <p>How the plan can contribute to our 'doubling nature' vision, the improvement of existing green spaces and the creation of more.</p>  | <p>Delivering quality places</p> <p>How the plan can protect what is already great about the area, and design new developments to create special places and spaces.</p>  |

Sustainable growth in South Cambridgeshire

Land at Cambridge Road, Hardwick, has the potential to deliver high quality, sustainable development in Greater Cambridge. New transport infrastructure improvements and shifts in travel culture provide new opportunities to explore low car developments, thereby maximising the site's natural capital potential. This should be a key principal of future development.

The result will be new opportunities to re-imagine the street with a much greater emphasis on the community, with active living is at its heart.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
|  <p>Direct sustainable transport links to Cambridge with future infrastructure enhancements likely.</p> |  <p>Provide new facilities to support local economic growth and social sustainability.</p> |  <p>Opportunity to diversify housing offer, fostering a diversified population demographic and social characteristics.</p> |
|  <p>Opportunity to improve circulation, traffic management and parking for central facilities.</p> |  <p>Wider landholding with potential to deliver off site enhancements including additional footpath links to the existing network.</p> |  <p>Opportunity to create low car streets, with greater focus on play, habitat creation and community cohesion</p> |
|  <p>Site with limited ecological value and potential to achieve a significant net biodiversity gain.</p> |  <p>Well placed to address the communities public open space deficiencies.</p> |  <p>Potential to deliver growth where the contribution of the site to the Cambridge Green Belt purposes is limited.</p> |



5.0 The vision

Hill envisages an exemplar and bespoke residential development. The vision seeks to positively respond to the region's environmental, social and economic challenges by delivering the most sustainable growth and significant improvements to the settlements infrastructure and facilities.



- 1 New village heart
- 2 Central multi-functional village green
- 3 Formal recreation
- 4 Country park
- 5 Secondary gateway to the village
- 6 Green links

The vision

Our vision is to create a place that enlivens and enriches the existing village and has a strong emphasis on place-quality, the highest sustainability credentials, community infrastructure and a mixed and balanced demographic.

5.0 The vision

Augmenting the community

Land to the north east of Hardwick will be a vibrant, high quality and distinctive extension to the existing settlement, reflecting the special character of the surrounding area.

The development will apply best practice design and will pioneer new environmental, social and community ideals to realise the vision. Providing a supportive environment, both built and socially, will create a healthy and active rural community that people will want to live in.

The vision responds first to the existing village and community, exploring benefits that could be delivered, addressing deficiencies and local needs. The Hardwick Village Plan (December 2018) provides a summary of local opinion, identifying key aspects of the village that could be improved.

The site is perfectly located to address many of these community needs including the delivery of new community facilities, improvement to Cambridge Road and diversification and expansion of the recreation offer in the village.




Sustainable transport links to Cambridge

1



New local centre with retail, employment space, community centre and health care facilities

4




350-400 new low-carbon homes

7




Low car development with dissociated parking including smart EV charger ready homes

2



Emphasis on pedestrian and cycle movement

5



Off site footpath and field margin enhancements

8



Significant net biodiversity gain.

3



New country park in addition to policy compliant public open space provision.

6



Compensatory improvements to green belt including recreational and biodiversity enhancements

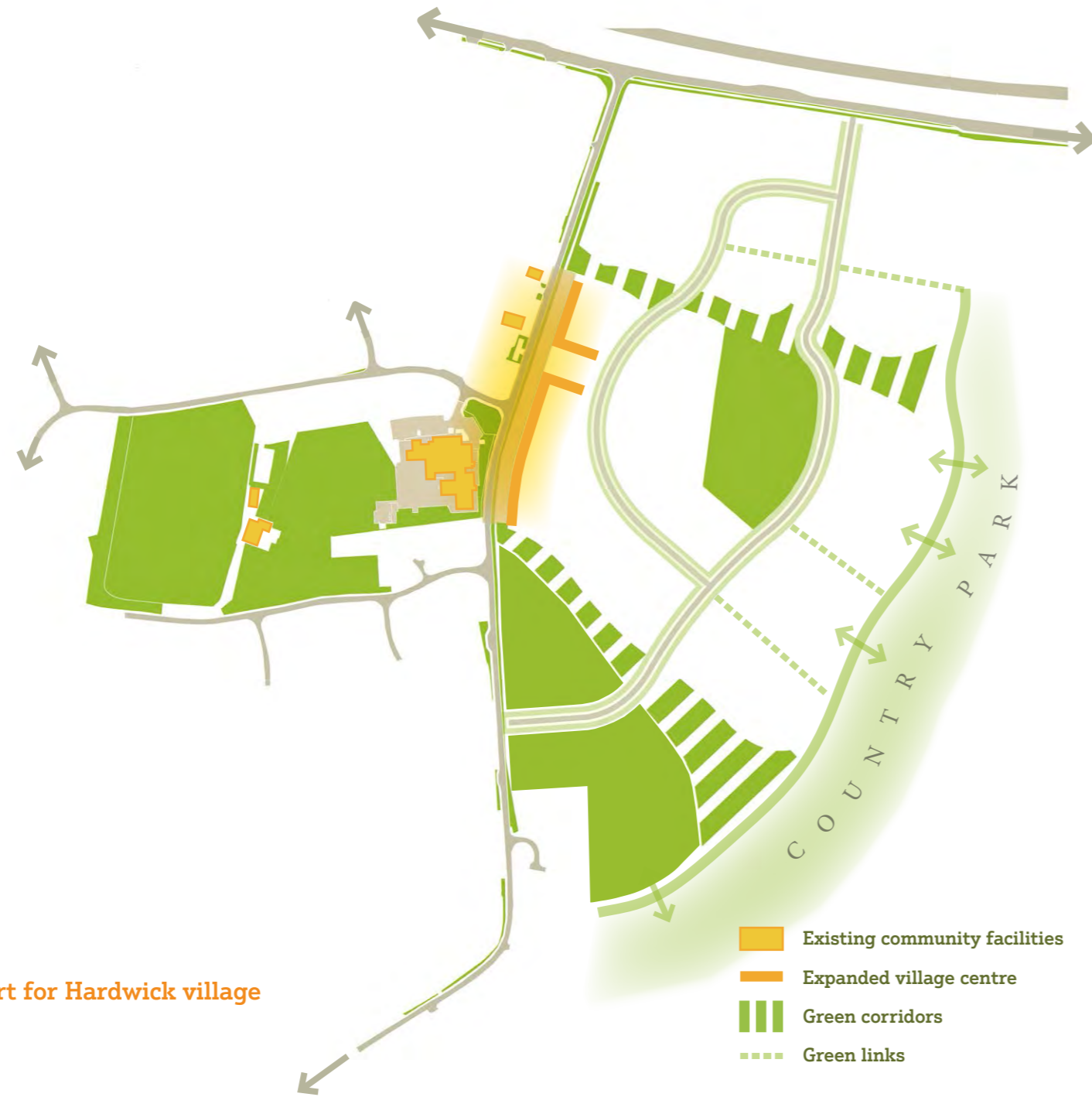
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5.0 The vision

Creating a village centre and connecting the village with the countryside

The new village centre will become the social heart, where residents from the new and existing communities can meet and come together. Opportunities for residents to invest time to foster community ownership and stewardship, will strengthen community spirit and, coupled with a wide choice of housing, specifically aimed at different and local demographics, a mixed, vibrant rural community will be able to thrive.

The centre will incorporate new community facilities including retail and cafe space, community centre and potential health care facilities brought together in a new nucleated heart and set within a high quality public realm designed to enhance the distinctiveness and character of the village. New infrastructure improvements including off street centralised parking, traffic calming measures and improved footpath and cycleways will significantly improve the street scene.



A new heart for Hardwick village

A new heart for Hardwick village

- 1 Mixed housing tenures and typologies
- 2 Existing retail unit on Cambridge Road
- 3 New off highway parking for improved village centre
- 4 New community facilities including health care facilities
- 5 New retail and cafe / restaurant space
- 6 Direct green links to the new country park and central green space



5.0 The vision

Low traffic and walkable neighbourhoods

Our vision is to create an integrated and well connected neighbourhood that is in harmony with its natural setting.

The mobility strategy will seek to create quiet and safe streets by restricting and disassociating parking from the home, extensive networks of cycle and pedestrian routes to the village facilities and harnessing the excellent public transport links to Cambridge.

Naturalised green space will permeate through the development connecting the new and existing neighbourhood with the open countryside. Networks of quiet green streets will create doorstep spaces for safe play and social interaction.

Importantly, the built infrastructure should be flexible, allowing for further reductions in parking, adaptability to more efficient or novel car charging technologies or provisions for autonomous vehicle hubs. Concepts will explore likely shifts in lifestyle or transport habits and potential opportunities for further urban greening and public amenities that may reveal themselves over the lifetime of the new local plan.



- 1 **Mixed housing tenures and typologies** set within a high quality, multi-functional public realm designed to meet the needs of all generations and to encourage social mixing, reduce isolation and foster social inclusion and mobility, critical for a rural community.
- 2 **Prioritising cycling and walking** including a centralised community centre and a network of connected, flexible community spaces including gardens, orchards and hubs ensuring cohesion at all levels of the community from the individual street to the wider village.
- 3 **Community hubs** including a centralised community centre and a network of connected small community gardens, orchards and hubs ensuring cohesion at all levels of the community from the individual street to the wider village.
- 4 **Low car development.** All homes to be provided with infrastructure smart EV charger points in compliance with the Automated and Electric vehicle bill.
- 5 **Edible landscapes and urban greening** to achieve social mixing and foster social inclusions and mobility. Vertical on plot gardens, small community garden clusters and centralised hubs for education and propogation of ideas and plants.

5.0 The vision

Natural capital gains

The vision seeks to ensure that the structure and diversity of the site's natural resources, including air quality, hydrology, geology and habitats, function holistically with the greatest realisable and definitive capital gains for the local and wider communities.

Ultimately, our aim is to create an environment which makes the most positive and unique contribution to the wellbeing of the community.

Our concept explores a framework and sets principles which could make these aims achievable through habitat connectivity, complementary and contiguous green infrastructure legibility and preservation and enhancement of existing site resources.

As a landscape and ecologically-led scheme, the green infrastructure network would be a vital element of the proposed design. The elements of the landscape scheme come together to create a neighbourhood that reflects the site's edge of settlement location and the importance of its interface with the open landscape.



1 Water sensitive urban design principles to ensure efficient and adaptable water storage, reuse and recycling. Floodwater attenuation should serve to enrich the environment's amenity value whilst also serving to diversify habitat structure and enhance biodiversity potential. Recycling and reuse of greywater on site together with community initiatives to improve understanding and appreciation of this sensitive resource.

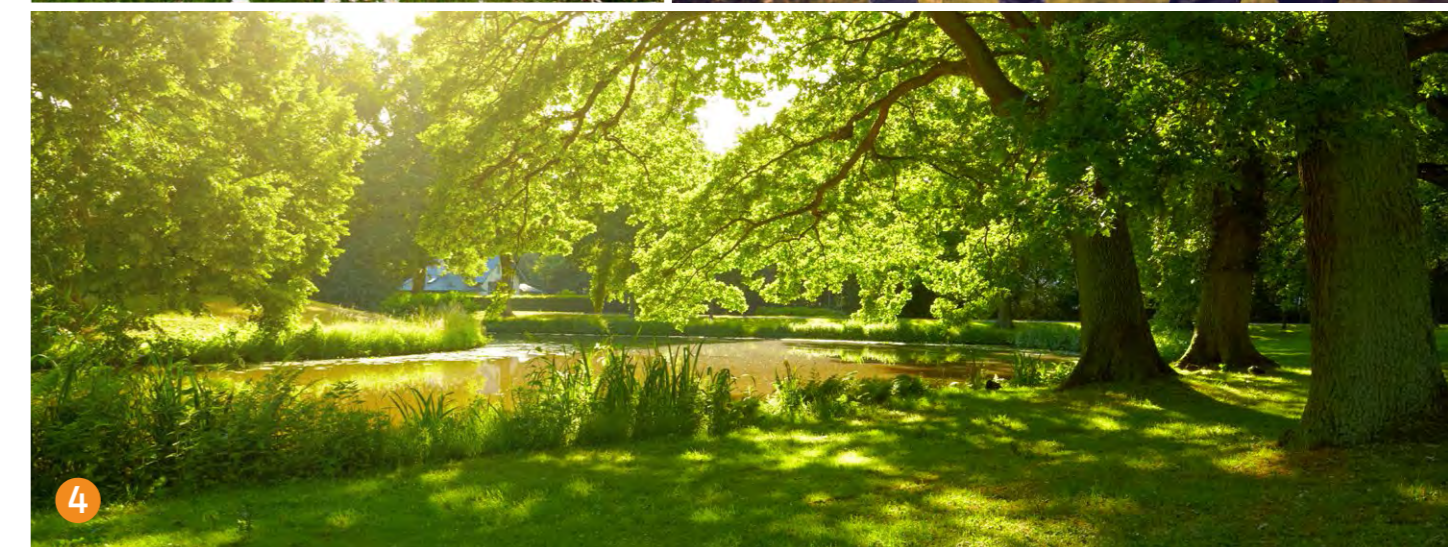
2 Biodiversity net gain achieved through preservation of existing habitats on site and significant enhancement of open land retained for public open space. Emphasis on creation and diversification of priority habitats and species.



3 Connecting the community with the countryside through corridors, direct links and a countryside park affording views over the open countryside.



4 Extensive planting of deciduous trees to help sequester carbon emissions. Structural planting including linear woodland blocks along the Bin Brook, augmented boundary vegetation, parkland trees and scrub consisting entirely of native species.





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