



# LAND WEST OF OLD NORTH ROAD

## KNEESWORTH

PRE-APP REPORT | SEPTEMBER 2025



# CONTENTS

1

2

3

4

5

6

## INTRODUCTION

Background.....	04
Role of the Pre-App Report.....	04
The Site.....	04
About Gentian.....	09

## THE SITE & CONTEXT

Village Context.....	11
Village Growth.....	12
Sustainable Location.....	13
Movement Network.....	19
Flood Risk & Drainage.....	21
Heritage.....	22

## PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework.....	24
National Design Guide.....	24
National Model Design Code.....	24
The Development Plan.....	25
Other Design Policy.....	28

## OPPORTUNITIES

Challenges & Opportunities.....	30
---------------------------------	----

## CONCEPT DESIGN

Design Principles.....	32
Concept Design.....	33
Aspiration Images.....	34
Illustrative Masterplan.....	36

## SUMMARY

Development Summary.....	39
Health Impact Assessment Summary.....	40

1

# Introduction

# INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND

The Land West of Old North Road, Kneesworth Pre-App Report ("Pre-App") has been prepared by RAMP Studio, on behalf of Gentian in support of seeking an Outline Planning Application.

## ROLE OF THE PRE-APP REPORT

This Pre-App Report illustrates the development potential of the 6.4ha site, the key design and sustainability principles and the Health Impact Assessment findings, at high level, that can underpin a new landscape-led residential development at Kneesworth. It demonstrates the steps taken to appraise the context of the proposed development, and how the proposed development concept takes that context into account.

## THE SITE

The site extends to 6.4ha and comprises a large open arable field, enclosed by established hedgerows along three boundaries. A mature tree belt is located in the north-western corner, contributing to the site's green character. To the north, the site is bounded by existing residential development along Swinnell Close. The eastern boundary is defined by the Old North Road (A1198), which forms the main road frontage. To the south, the site adjoins the rear gardens of residential properties and a cluster of large glasshouses. The western edge of the site remains open, providing a transition into the surrounding agricultural landscape. There are glimpsing views into the site from the Old North Road.

The site is centred at National Grid Reference TL 34510 44054.

## KEY

 Site



Existing Site Location



View from the eastern boundary looking southwest at the houses and glasshouses that back onto the site



South western corner of the site looking towards the main Old North Road frontage with houses at Swinnell Close



View looking north along the open western boundary to the site



North western corner looking south across the site

# GENTIAN

## ABOUT US

Gentian are involved in infrastructure and real estate development. Our UK-wide public sector infrastructure projects focus on NHS hospitals, including retail schemes, car parks, key worker accommodation and green technology initiatives. We also specialise in town centre regeneration and roadside retail and drive-thru property development throughout the UK.

Our real estate development team located in Winchester, focuses on identifying prime locations for development opportunities throughout the UK. We develop on a selective basis where there is a strong commercial rationale and appetite for delivery.

Alongside our dedicated team of experts, architects, design consultants and building contractors, we strive to make a positive impact both with our developments and in the communities surrounding them.

Gentian are committed to leaving a positive legacy in the areas that we develop. We donate £10,000 to local communities through our social enterprise fund. This is normally organised through liaising with local stakeholders including town/parish councils.

For more about Gentian visit <https://www.gentian.co.uk>



2

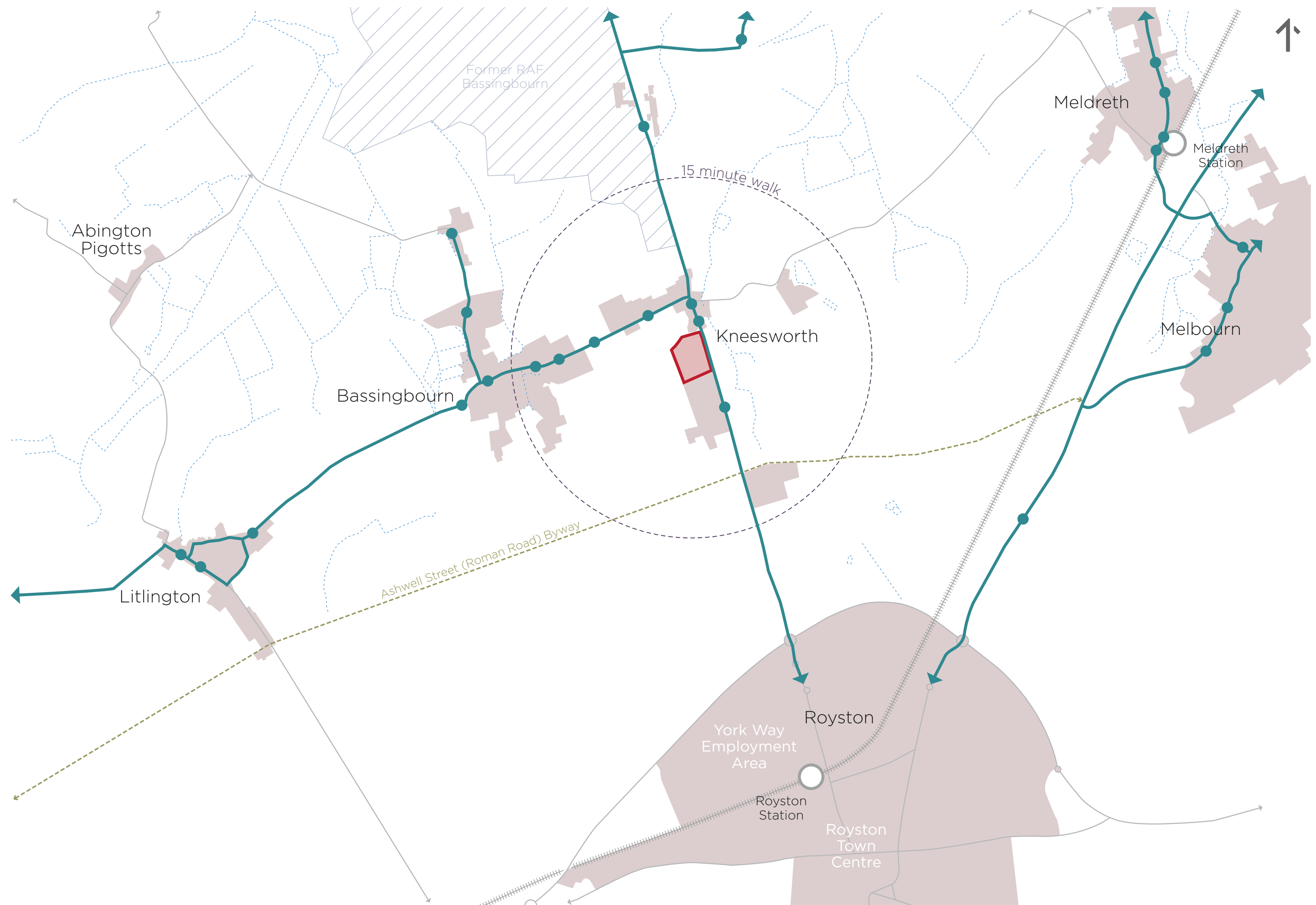
# The Site & Its Context

# VILLAGE CONTEXT











## BASSINGBOURN-CUM- KNEESWORTH VILLAGE SETTING

Kneesworth is a small rural village situated in South Cambridgeshire, approximately 16 kilometres southwest of Cambridge and 3.2 kilometres north of Royston. The village lies along the A1198 Old North Road, a historic Roman road known as Ermine Street, which connects it to nearby settlements and regional transport networks. Kneesworth is closely linked to the neighbouring village of Bassingbourn, located immediately to the west, with which it shares several community facilities and services. Bassingbourn was formed by the joining together of several older hamlets.

The village is characterised by its linear form and agricultural surroundings, with a mixture of residential properties, farmland, and local heritage assets. It is set within the gently undulating landscape typical of the Cambridgeshire countryside, providing a tranquil setting while remaining accessible to larger urban centres.



### KEY

- |   |             |   |   |
|---|-------------|---|---|
|  | Site        |  | Popular Leisure Route                                 |
|  | Settlement  |  | Strategic Attractors                                  |
|  | Local Route |  | 15 Minute Walk Distance from Site (as the crow flies) |
|  | Bus Route   |  | Railway & Station                                     |
|  | Bus Stop    |  | Watercourse   |

Context Plan




# VILLAGE GROWTH

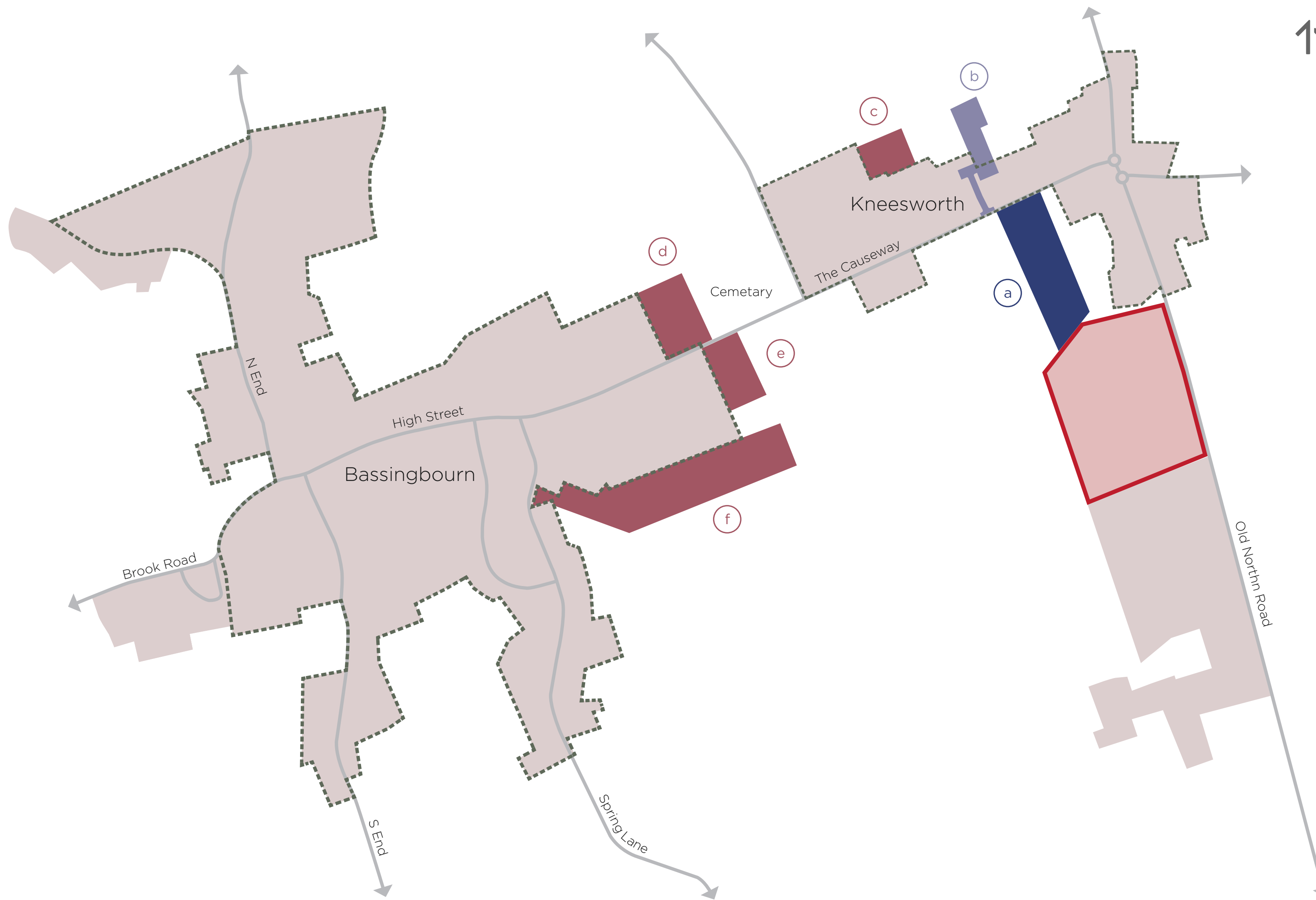
Over recent years, Bassingbourn-cum-Kneesworth has grown through a series of small to modest housing developments that have incrementally expanded the village's footprint. One of the most recent developments is a scheme for nine self-build homes south of The Causeway, which was granted planning permission following an appeal. This residential development is located just to the north of the proposed site.

Overall, these developments have had the effect of bringing the two villages closer together.

- (a)** Land South of The Causeway - 9 Self-build dwellings (22/04153/OUT)
- (b)** Land To The Rear of 159-163 The Causeway - 9 Custom/Self-build dwellings 24/03943/OUT
- (c)** Appletrees - 20 dwellings (S/1199/13/OL)
- (d)** Bassingbourn Reach (Robinson Gardens) - 26 dwellings (S/1566/16/OL)
- (e)** The Causeway (Windmill Close) - 20 affordable dwellings (S/1614/08/F)
- (f)** The Hawthorns (Muncey Grove) - 30 dwellings (S/1745/16/OL)

**KEY**

-  Site
-  Settlement
-  Settlement Boundary



# SUSTAINABLE LOCATION

There are a good range of local destinations and facilities within walking distance of the site within and around Kneesworth, Bassingbourn and the larger centre of Royston.

## EDUCATION

There are several schools and nurseries within a sustainable less than 20-minute catchment (bus, cycling or walking) from the Site. Bassingbourn Primary School and Bassingbourn Village College are the closest schools to the site at Bassingbourn.



## KEY

- Site
- Nursery / Pre-School
- Primary School
- Middle / Secondary School
- Specialist School

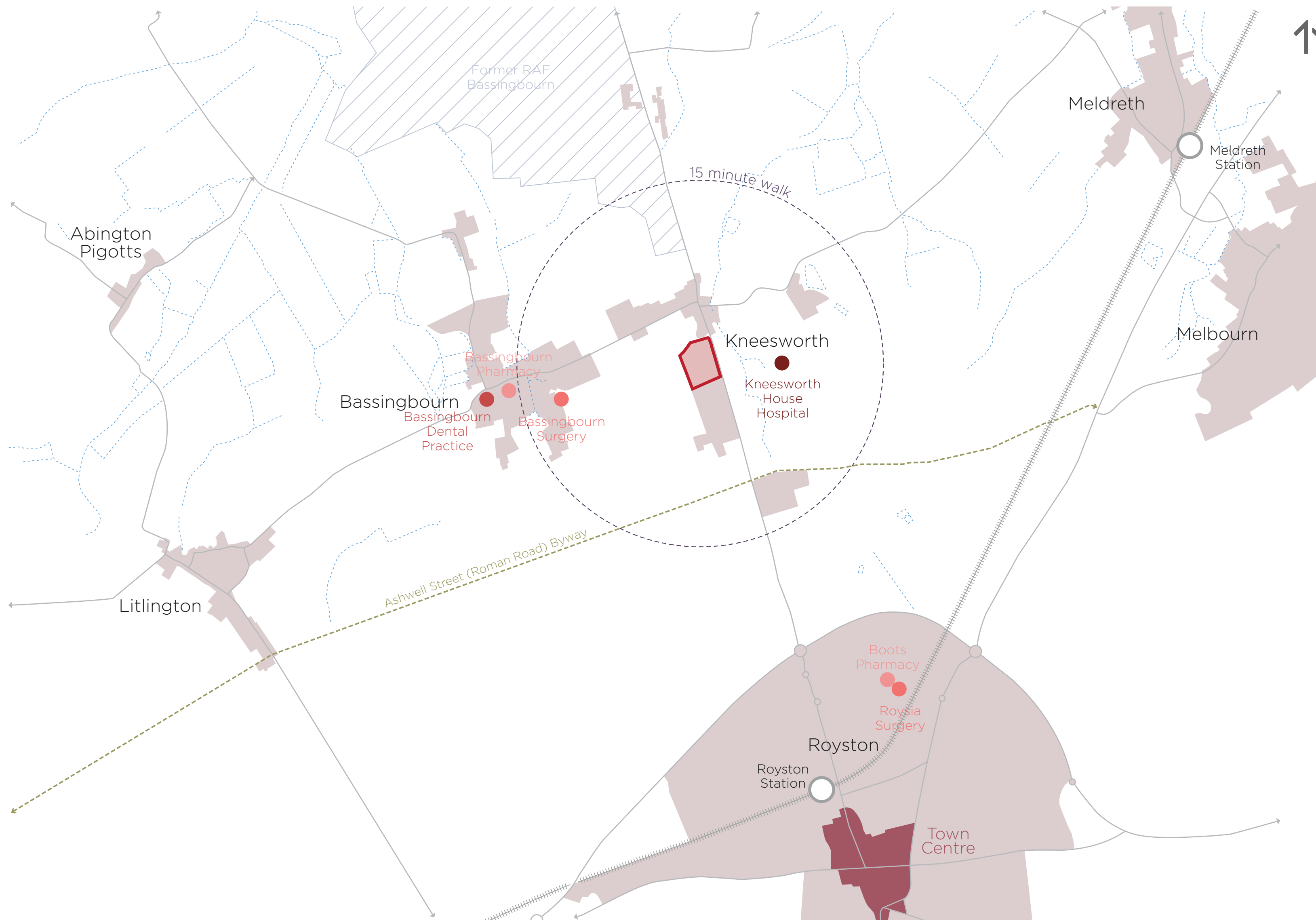
Education Destinations

HEALTH

Bassingbourn and Royston have several GP surgeries, pharmacies, and dental practices to choose from with the main option being Royston Hospital to the south of the town centre. The hospital is within a 10-15 minute bus journey from the Site, depending on traffic and the specific bus service.

KEY

- Site
- Pharmacy
- GP
- Dentist
- Hospital (Rehabilitation)



Health Destinations

GROCERIES AND HOSPITALITY

There are multiple grocery and convenience shopping options (Spar/Post Office, Tesco, Aldi and M&S Foodhall) within a 15-minute bus journey from the Site. Kneesworth, Bassingbourn and Litlington offer good food and beverage options. There are also several local pubs within walking distance of the Site, including The Hoops on The Causeway and The Belle.

The widest choice of shops and places to eat and drink can be found in Royston town centre.



KEY

- Site
- Groceries / Foodstore
- Pub / Restaurant

Groceries and Hospitality Destinations

COMMUNITY AND WORSHIP

There are multiple community and worship options within Bassingbourn, local villages and Royston. Within nearby Bassingbourn there are the two community destinations of The Old School Community Centre, with Book Cafe and library, and Knutsford Community Facility.



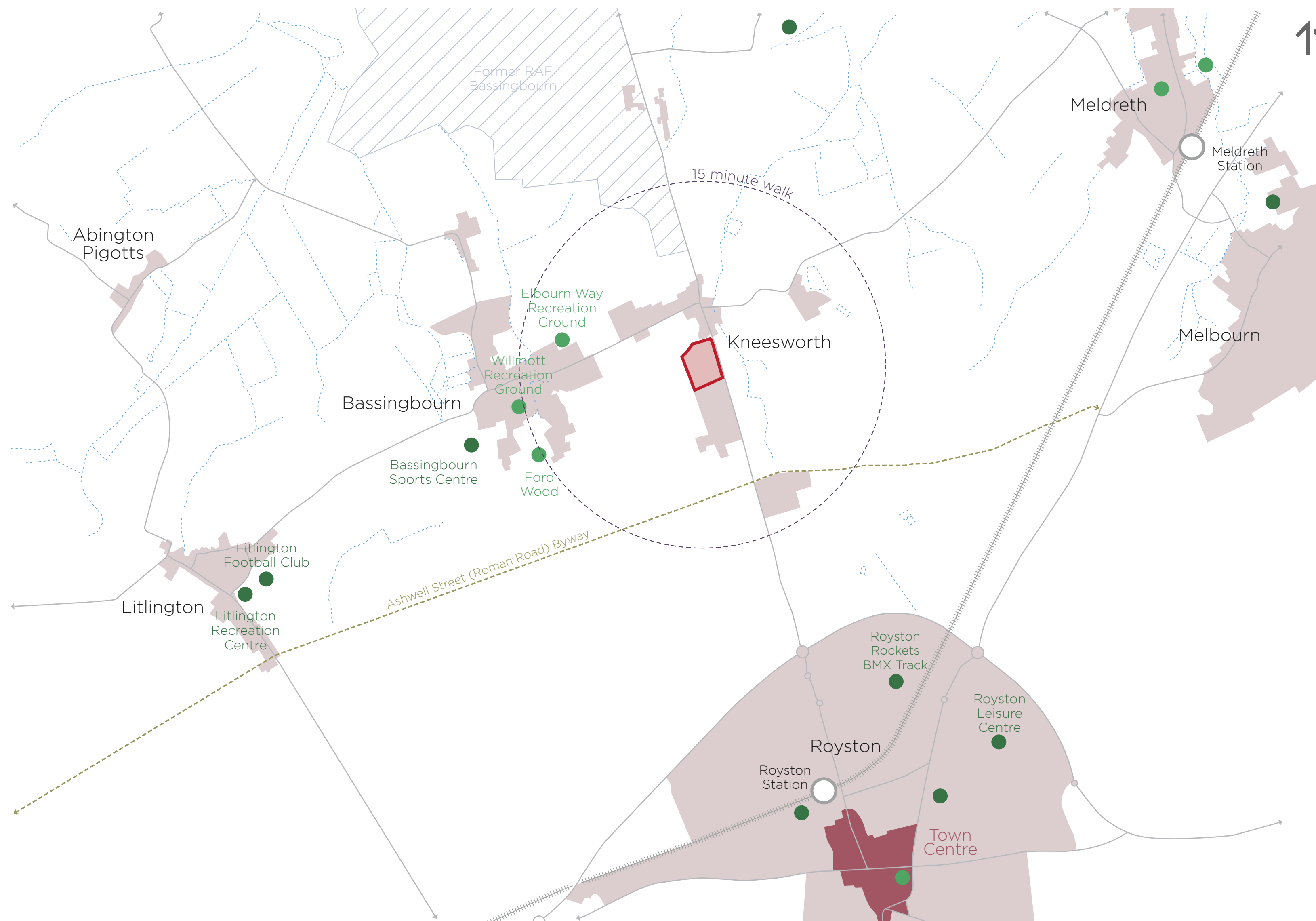
KEY

- Site
- Community Centre / Hall
- Place of Worship

Community and Worship Destinations

LEISURE AND OPEN SPACE

The Site benefits from easy access to the surrounding countryside, local open space provision, and leisure facilities within the surrounding settlements. Elbourn Way and Willmott Recreation Grounds together with Ford Wood lie within a 15-minute walk from the Site. Surrounding leisure / sport facilities include Bassingbourn Sports Centre and the multiple options within Royston.



KEY

- Site
- Open Space
- Leisure Centre / Club

Leisure and Open Space Destinations



Old North Road speed gate towards the northern boundary of the Site



Old North Road as it approaches Kneesworth village



The impressive Parish Church of St Peter & St. Paul, Bassingbourn



Bassingbourn War Memorial



The Hoops, Bassingbourn



Village Sign

# MOVEMENT NETWORK

## WIDER MOVEMENT SETTING

The plan on this page shows the Site in its wider movement context. The Site has good levels of pedestrian, cycle, public transport and vehicular accessibility. It is currently accessed via Old North Road which represents one of the main approaches into the larger centre of Royston to the south.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORT







The Site benefits from both bus and rail public transport connections being close to the site. The closest bus stops are located c.150m north of the Site boundary, with the south west corner of the Site being c.480m from the stops.

Royston Railway Station provides access to services on the Great Northern and Thameslink routes, which serve destinations including Cambridge, Brighton, and London Kings Cross.

## PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY (PROW)

The Site is located in an area which benefits from a comprehensive PROW network.

## KEY

	Site		Bridleway
	Settlement		Byway: Popular Leisure Route
	Local Route		Byway
	Bus Route		15 Minute Walk Distance from Site (as the crow flies)
	Bus Stop		Railway & Station
	Footpath		Watercourse



Wider Accessibility

**CYCLING**

There are no official cycle routes near the Site. The closest is a byway to the south, where cycling should be allowed, and some national cycle network routes in Royston.

**LOCAL MOVEMENT SETTING**

**WALKING**

The Site is located in an area which benefits from a footway network on both sides of Old North Road along the Site frontage. The width of this does vary.

The footway network on the site side of Old N Road is on both side of the carriageway between the site and Tudor Court, but south of this the footway is only on the eastern side of the road until the entrance to Highfields Business Park. South of this the footway is on the western side of Old N Road and extends all the way to the A505 junction.


The footway connections to the north are on both sides of the carriageway and there is an uncontrolled crossing point (with tactile paving) that assists crossing to/ from the closest bus stop to the site. The footway between Kneesworth and Bassingbourn is continuous along the northern side of The Causeway and High Street.

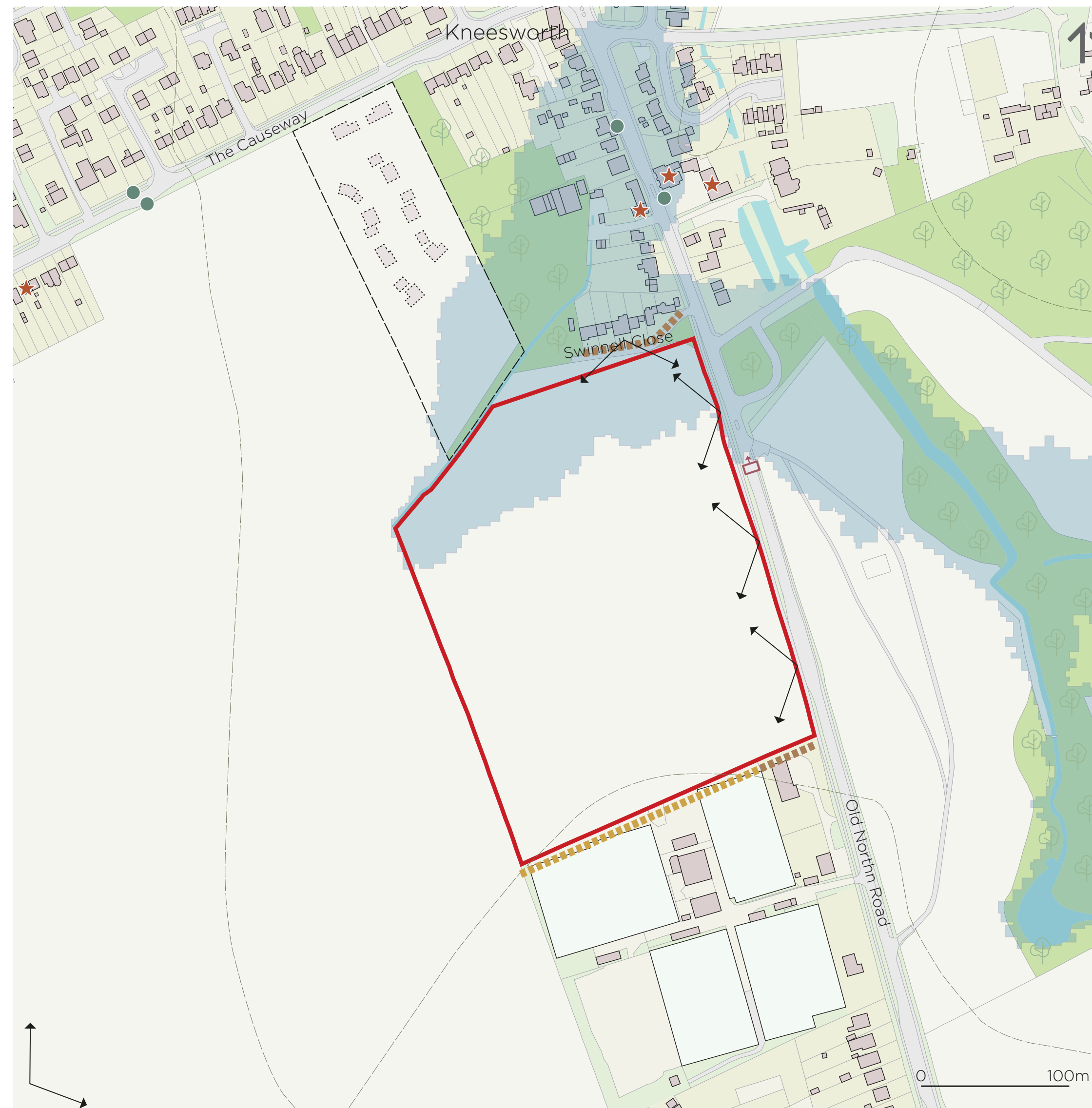
**VEHICLE ACCESS**

The Site fronts Old North Road. The posted speed limit on Old North Road along the southern part of the Site frontage is 40mph. This changes to 30mph c.100m from the northern boundary of the Site. The change to 30mph is reinforced by signs and 30mph roundels.

To the immediate north of the Site, Swinnell Close provides access to a small number of dwellings (6).

**KEY**

-  Site
-  Bus Stop
-  Village Gate - Speed Limit



Local Access


# FLOOD RISK & DRAINAGE

The Government's Flood Map for Planning shows the northern part of the Site to fall within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The data also reveals some areas of potential flooding associated with surface water along the eastern and northern boundaries. The northern part of the Site is subject to river flooding. It will therefore be important that development proposals take this into account and locate built form outside of this area.

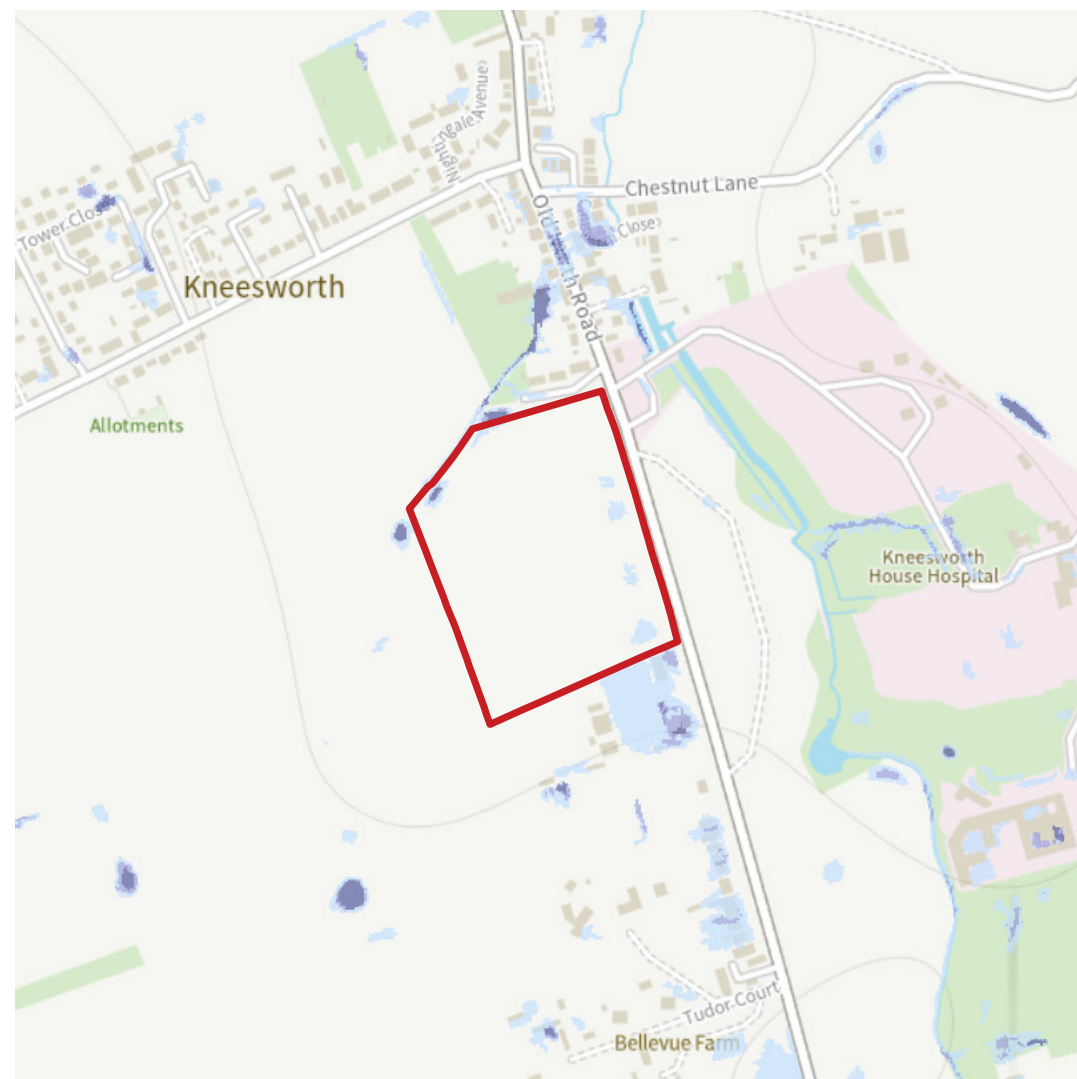
The risk of flooding for the area can be summarised as:

- The yearly chance of Surface Water Flooding: **Very low** staying at **Very low** between 2040 to 2060.
- The yearly chance of Rivers and Sea Flooding: **Very low** staying at **Very low** between 2036 to 2069.

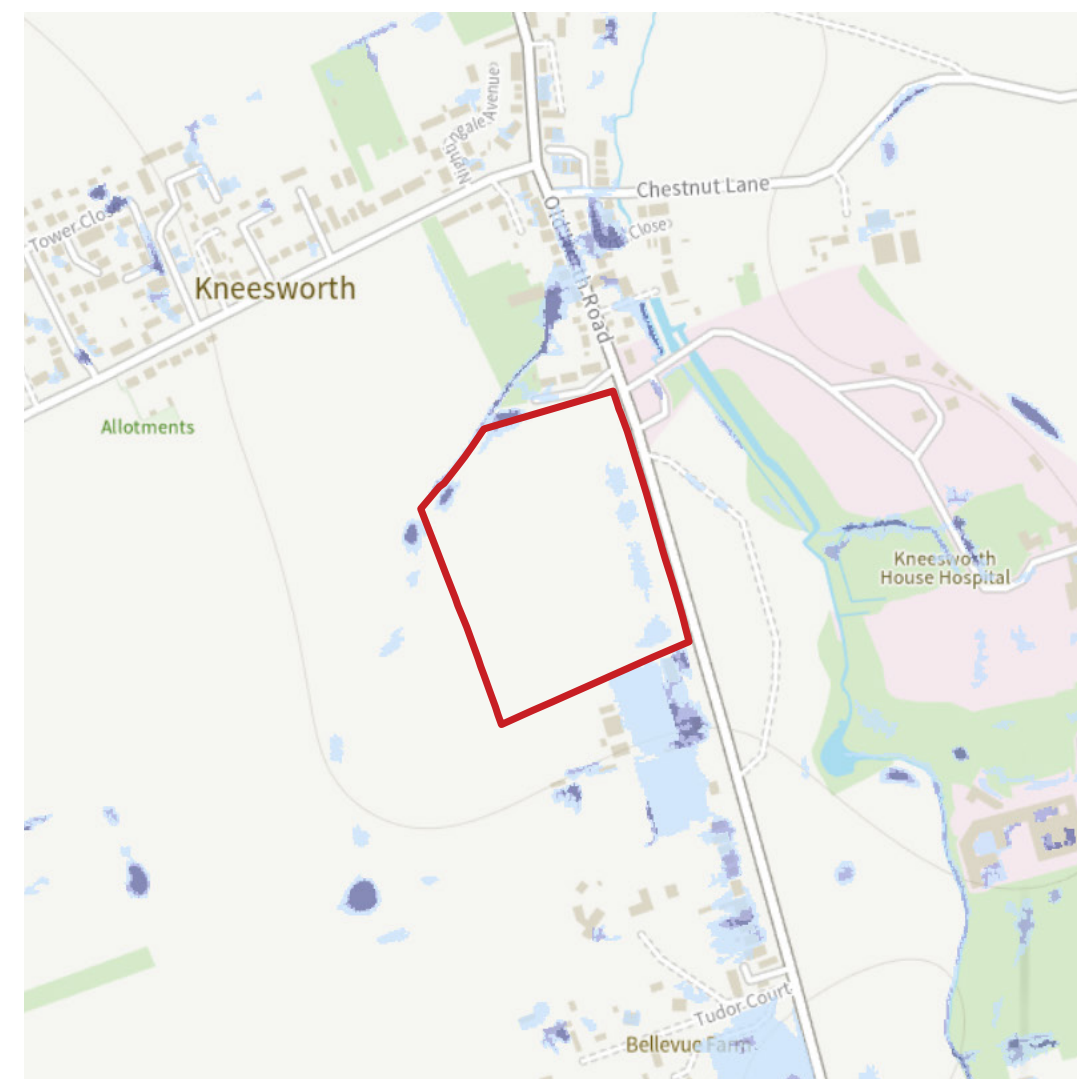
KEY

-  Site
-  High Chance
-  Medium Chance
-  Low Chance

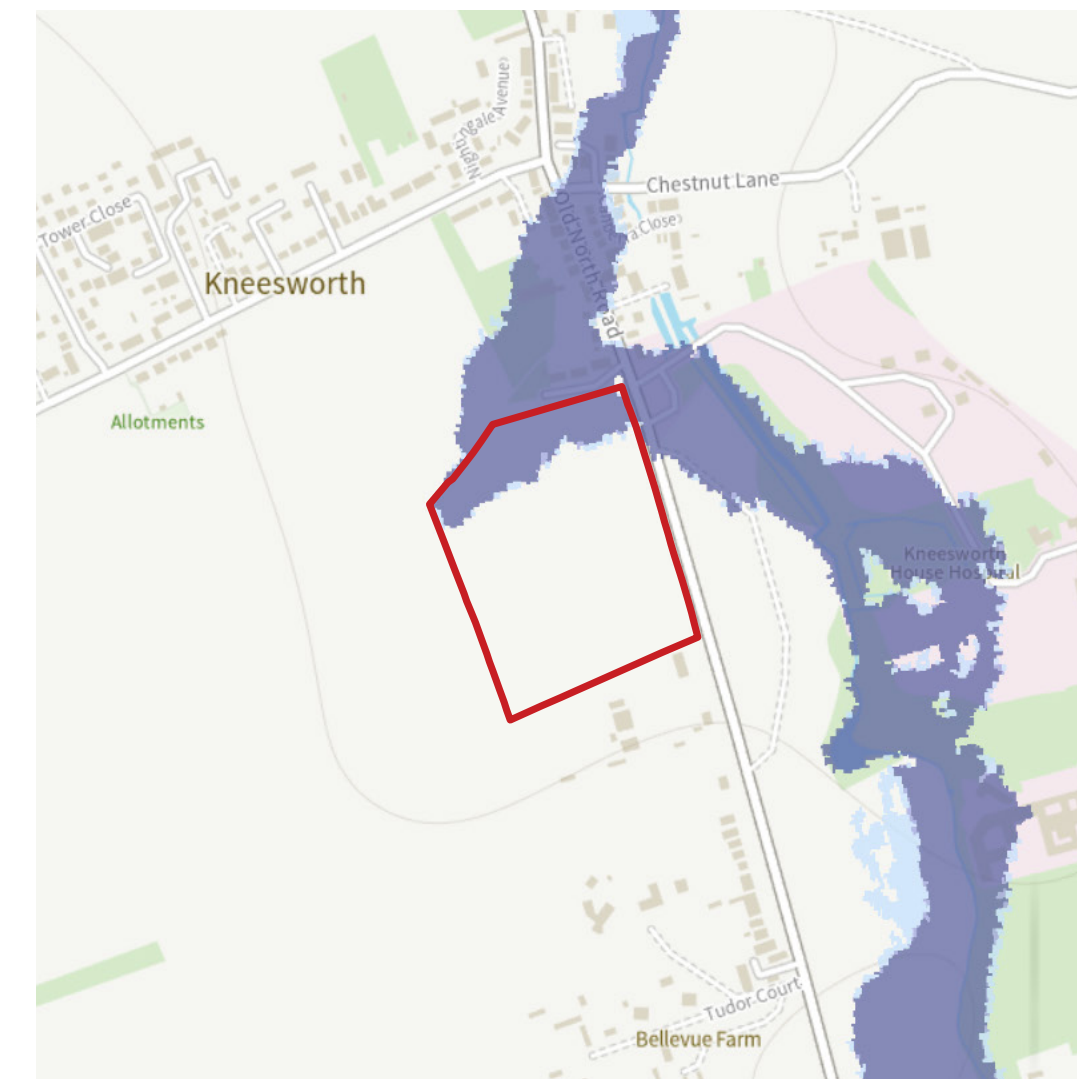
Ordnance Survey is ©  
Crown copyright and  
database rights 2025  
OS AC0000807064



Surface Water Map: Yearly chance of Flooding



Surface Water Map: Yearly Chance of Flooding Between 2040 & 2060



Rivers & Sea Map: Yearly chance of Flooding



Rivers & Sea Map: Yearly Chance of Flooding Between 2036 & 2069

# HERITAGE

There are no heritage designations covering the Site.








There are a number of historical features and buildings in the wider area. These include a number of listed buildings along Old North Road.

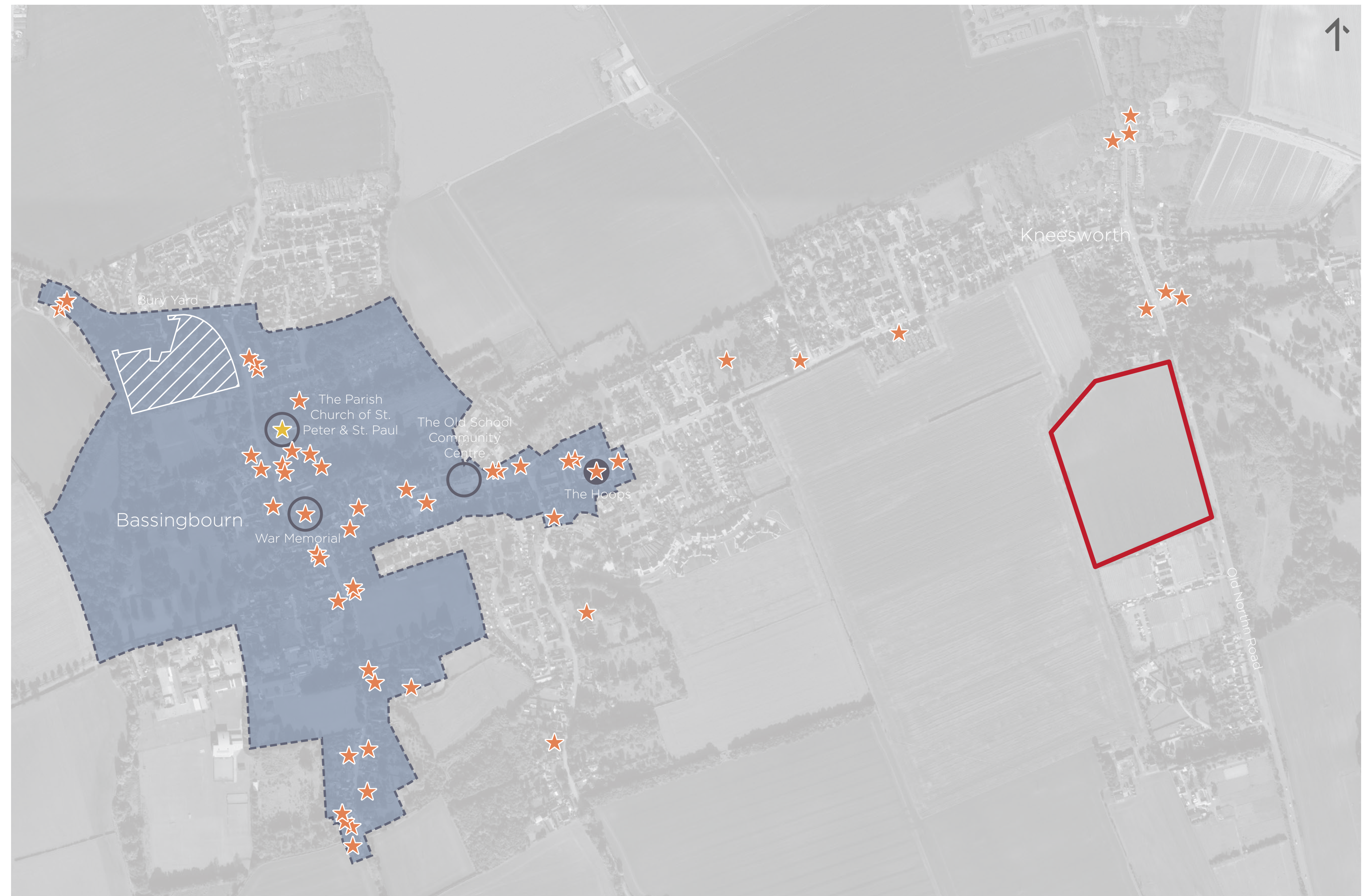
The nearest Scheduled Monument is Bury Yard moated site adjacent to Milldyke, a medieval moated site, in the village of Bassingbourn. The monument includes a roughly D-shaped outer ditched enclosure within which is situated a rectangular moat.

The nearest Conservation Area is at Bassingbourn.

Local landmarks include the striking Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul, a good example of a large medieval village church. Other notable landmarks are the War Memorial at the junction of Brook Road and North End, on the western edge of Bassingbourn, and the spire of the Old School Community Centre.

The Hoops PH serves as a focal point with notable architectural and historic interest.

- KEY
-  Site
  -  Listed Building (Grade I)
  -  Listed Building
  -  Scheduled Monument
  -  Conservation Area
  -  Landmark
  -  Focal Point Within The Village



Heritage Plan (Source: Basingstoke & Deane Interactive Maps/Conservation Area Maps)

3

**Planning  
Policy**

# PLANNING POLICY

## NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)

The NPPF is a key document that sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It aims to provide a framework for sustainable development and guide local planning authorities in making decisions about land use.

In terms of design, the NPPF emphasises the importance of good design in creating sustainable, well-functioning places. It encourages local planning authorities to ensure that developments are visually attractive, promote a strong sense of place, and respond to local character. Design should enhance the built environment and be inclusive, accessible, and well-integrated with the surrounding community. The NPPF stresses the need for developments to be well-planned to enhance social, environmental, and economic outcomes, promoting health, well-being, and safety.

**“The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities...”**

[NPPF, para 131.]

Paragraph 135 sets out what well-designed places will achieve:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

## NATIONAL DESIGN GUIDE (NDG)

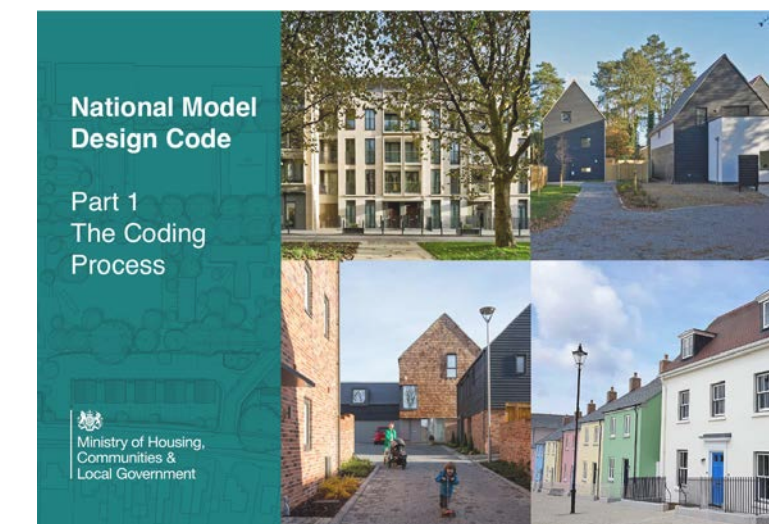
The NDG provides guidance on good design in the planning and development process. It aims to create high-quality, well-designed places that respond to local context, are sustainable, and promote community well-being. The guide outlines ten key characteristics of good design:



## NATIONAL MODEL DESIGN CODE (NMDC)

The NMDC provides detailed guidance for local authorities and developers to create well-designed, sustainable, and contextually appropriate places in England. It complements the NPPF and NDC by offering a more detailed, step-by-step approach to designing places.

This document helps in shaping new development by ensuring that designs are consistent with the desired vision and reflect the local community's needs, ensuring high standards of place-making and environmental sustainability.



THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL PLAN ADOPTED 2018

This local plan provides a vision for the district's growth and development up to 2031. It seeks to balance growth with the preservation of local character and the enhancement of quality of life for communities.

The relevant design-related policies are listed below but not detailed in this Pre-App Report as they will be covered in detail in the separate Planning Statement.

Of particular relevance to this Pre-App is Policy HQ/1 Design Principles. The Policy sets out 15 criteria for successfully achieving high quality design. A copy of the policy is set out on the following page.

Policy HQ/2; Public Art and New Development also encourages the provision or commissioning of public art that is integrated into the design of development for schemes comprising 10 or more dwellings.

Within the SCLP Kneesworth is identified as an Infill Village, with neighbouring Bassingbourn a Minor Rural Centre.



South Cambridgeshire Local Plan  
Adopted September 2018

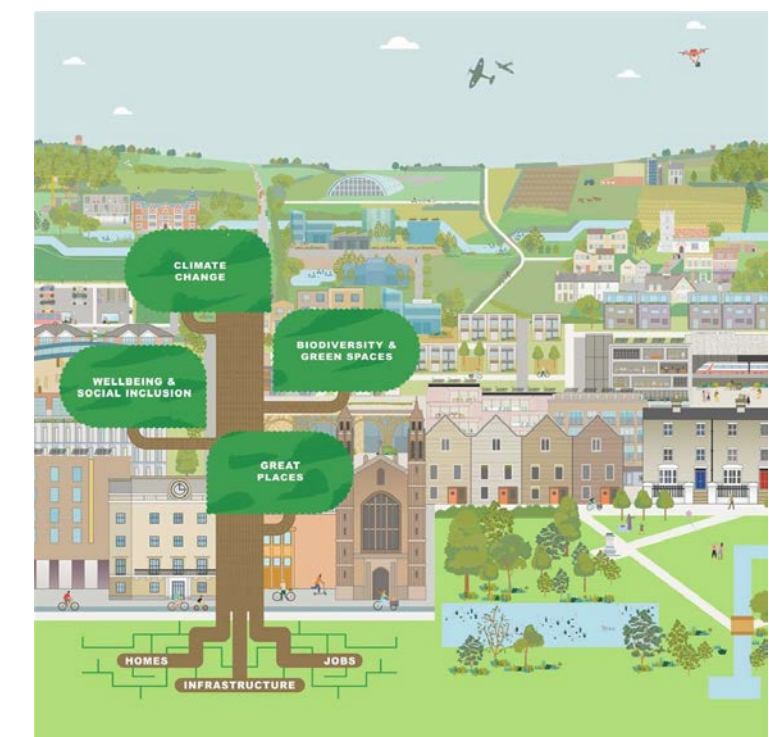


- S/1: Vision
- S/2: Objectives of the Local Plan
- S/3: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- S/6: The Development Strategy to 2031
- S/9: Minor Rural Centres
- S/11: Infill Villages
- CC/1: Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change
- CC/3: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy in New Developments
- CC/4: Water Efficiency
- CC/6: Construction Methods
- CC/7: Water Quality
- CC/8: Sustainable Drainage Systems
- CC/9: Managing Flood Risk
- **HQ/1: Design Principles**
- HQ/2: Public Art and New Development
- NH/2: Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character
- NH/4: Biodiversity
- NH/6: Green Infrastructure
- NH/14: Heritage Assets
- H/8: Housing Density
- H/9: Housing Mix
- H/10: Affordable Housing
- H/12: Residential Space Standards
- SC/4: Meeting Community Needs
- SC/7: Outdoor Play Space, Informal Open Space and New Developments
- SC/9: Lighting Proposals
- SC/10: Noise Pollution
- SC/12: Air Quality
- TI/2: Planning for Sustainable Travel
- TI/3: Parking Provision
- TI/8: Infrastructure and New Developments
- TI/10: Broadband

LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

The council is working on a Greater Cambridge Local Plan: the 20-year master plan for the Greater Cambridge area. The emerging GCLP is aiming to guide sustainable development in the area up to 2041. It focuses on addressing climate change by promoting low-carbon, well-connected communities; enhancing biodiversity and green spaces; and fostering social inclusion and wellbeing through the provision of affordable homes, jobs, and infrastructure.

As of May 2025, the emerging GCLP is in the preparation phase, with a revised timetable aiming for submission by December 2026 under the current national planning system. This timeline was adjusted following government confirmation in December 2024 of the transitional date for plan submissions.



#### SCLP Policy HQ/1: Design Principles

1. All new development must be of high quality design, with a clear vision as to the positive contribution the development will make to its local and wider context. As appropriate to the scale and nature of the development, proposals must:

a. Preserve or enhance the character of the local urban and rural area and respond to its context in the wider landscape;

b. Conserve or enhance important natural and historic assets and their setting;

c. Include variety and interest within a coherent, place-responsive design, which is legible and creates a positive sense of place and identity whilst also responding to the local context and respecting local distinctiveness;

d. Be compatible with its location and appropriate in terms of scale, density, mass, form, siting, design, proportion, materials, texture and colour in relation to the surrounding area;

e. Deliver a strong visual relationship between buildings that comfortably define and enclose streets, squares and public places, creating interesting vistas, skylines, focal points and appropriately scaled landmarks along routes and around spaces;

f. Achieve a permeable development with ease of movement and access for all users and abilities, with user friendly and conveniently accessible streets and other routes both within the development and linking with its surroundings and existing and proposed facilities and services, focusing on delivering attractive and safe opportunities for walking, cycling, public transport and, where appropriate, horse riding;

g. Provide safe and convenient access for all users and abilities to public buildings and spaces, including those with limited mobility or those with other impairment such as of sight or hearing;

h. Ensure that car parking is integrated into the development in a convenient, accessible manner and does not dominate the development and its surroundings or cause safety issues;

i. Provide safe, secure, convenient and accessible provision for cycle parking and storage, facilities for waste management, recycling and collection in a manner that is appropriately integrated within the overall development;

j. Provide a harmonious integrated mix of uses both within the site and with its surroundings that contributes to the creation of inclusive communities providing the facilities and services to meet the needs of the community;

k. Ensure developments deliver flexibility that allows for future changes in needs and lifestyles, and adaptation to climate change;

l. Mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change on development through location, form, orientation, materials and design of buildings and spaces;

m. Include high quality landscaping and public spaces that integrate the development with its surroundings, having a clear definition between public and private space which provide opportunities for recreation, social interaction as well as support healthy lifestyles, biodiversity, sustainable drainage and climate change mitigation;

n. Protect the health and amenity of occupiers and surrounding uses from development that is overlooking, overbearing or results in a loss of daylight or development which would create unacceptable impacts such as noise, vibration, odour, emissions and dust;

o. Design-out crime and create an environment that is created for people that is and feels safe, and has a strong community focus.

2. Larger and more complex developments will be required to submit Masterplans and Design Codes to agree an overall vision and strategy for a development as a whole that demonstrates a comprehensive and inclusive approach.

#### NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

An Area has been defined for Bassingbourn-cum-Kneesworth and the Neighbourhood Plan is now being prepared.

The Neighbourhood Plan is still in the early stages, and no design policies have been developed yet.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE QUALITY CHARTER FOR GROWTH

The Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth is a strategic framework designed to guide sustainable and high-quality development across the region. It is built around four core principles, which together, present 36 criteria for delivering quality in new developments:

- Community
- Connectivity
- Climate
- Character

These principles aim to foster inclusive and vibrant communities, ensure strong transport links, promote environmental sustainability, and encourage distinctive, well-designed places. It is actively used by the Cambridgeshire Quality Panel to assess major proposals, ensuring that growth in the area is both forward-thinking and rooted in local identity.

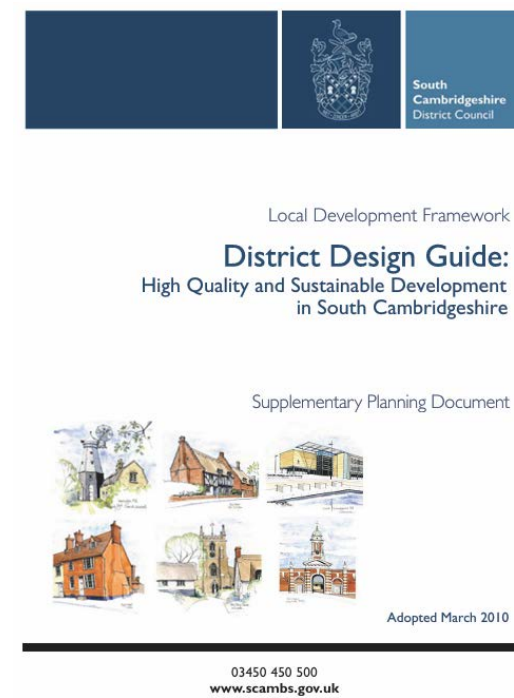
CHARTER FOR GROWTH PRINCIPLES

Community	Connectivity	Climate	Character
Places where people live out of choice and not necessity, creating healthy communities with a good quality of life	Places that are well-connected enable easy access for all to jobs and services using sustainable modes	Places that anticipate climate change in ways that enhance the desirability of the development and minimise environmental impact	Places with distinctive neighbourhoods and where people create 'pride of place'
↓	↓	↓	↓
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Community involvement throughout the process is crucial</li> <li>2. Housing in all tenures should allow for changes in needs and lifestyles</li> <li>3. People should be encouraged to take active roles in the development and continuing management of their community</li> <li>4. The 'social infrastructure', such as health, education, and leisure is just as important as the physical infrastructure of roads and utilities</li> <li>5. There should be a mixture of formal and informal green space</li> <li>6. Initial and on-going community development support</li> <li>7. Public spaces should encourage social interaction with a clear allocation of responsibilities for managing communal spaces</li> <li>8. Community (and other key) buildings should be designed to be flexible</li> <li>9. Space should be made available for local shops and services to set up</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Public transport in place at the start of the development</li> <li>2. Public transport should integrate with existing transport systems</li> <li>3. Linkages with existing and potential employment opportunities should be recognised</li> <li>4. New developments should contribute to the wider environmental goals</li> <li>5. The streets, footpaths and other links on major urban extensions should be designed as a user hierarchy</li> <li>6. Easy mobility for all</li> <li>7. Bus stops should offer well designed waiting areas</li> <li>8. Parking management such as charges and the provision of car sharing/car clubs should be used</li> <li>9. Road design should include permeable surfaces</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Major new developments should enable residents and workers to adopt sustainable lifestyles</li> <li>2. Environmental targets should be challenging and where possible go beyond the minimum standards</li> <li>3. New development should not be located in areas of unacceptable environmental risk</li> <li>4. Arrangements for sustainable waste management should be built into new developments</li> <li>5. The utilities should be engaged in a collaborative design process to help promote energy and water conservation</li> <li>6. Public buildings, housing and neighbourhoods as a whole should be designed to anticipate climate change</li> <li>7. Biodiversity and wildlife should be encouraged through a network of green spaces and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems</li> <li>8. Sustainable energy partnerships or trusts should be encouraged to cut energy use</li> <li>9. Trees and planting should be used extensively</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Existing landform and features of the site should be used to create varied and memorable townscapes</li> <li>2. An overriding masterplan should aim to provide the vision for the development</li> <li>3. Fully-skilled masterplanners should be retained for the duration of the project to ensure that the overall vision is maintained</li> <li>4. Densities and massing should vary, to provide the full range of house types that are needed</li> <li>5. Creative thinking, simple designs- well built, using high quality materials and careful detailing - are often the most successful and durable approaches</li> <li>6. Open space requirements should be integrated with buildings throughout the scheme</li> <li>7. The creation of good landscapes is as important as the creation of good townscapes</li> <li>8. All buildings should be flexible and adaptable</li> <li>9. Car and cycle parking, storage and waste recycling should be integrated within the design of the new homes</li> </ol>

### SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS (SPDS)

The following SPDs have been created to give extra guidance to help explain and support the policies in the Local Plan. Many of these have now been replaced by the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018, but they can still be taken into account when making planning decisions.

- Greater Cambridge Health Impact Assessment SPD (2025)
- Planning Obligations Strategy SPD (2023)
- Greater Cambridge Biodiversity SPD (2022)
- Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design & Construction SPD (2018)
- Cambridgeshire Flood & Water SPD (2016)
- RECAP Waste Management Design Guide SPD (2012)
- **District Design Guide: High Quality and Sustainable Development in South Cambridgeshire SPD (2010)**
- Open Space in New Developments SPD (2009)
- Trees and Development Sites SPD (2009)



### OTHER DESIGN POLICY

#### BUILDING FOR A HEALTHY LIFE

Is a set of design principles developed to support the creation of sustainable, healthy, and well-connected communities. It provides guidelines for developers, architects, and planners to design places that promote physical, mental, and social well-being.

The framework aims to deliver places that not only meet basic living needs but also promote healthier, happier lives, with a strong emphasis on environmental sustainability, accessibility, and connectivity.



### BUILDING WITH NATURE

Is a framework that promotes the integration of nature into the design of urban environments to create sustainable, healthy, and resilient communities. It provides guidelines for developers, planners, and designers on how to incorporate green infrastructure and nature-based solutions into their projects.



### TECHNICAL HOUSING STANDARDS

The Technical Housing Standards are a set of guidelines established by the UK government to ensure that new homes are built to a consistent and high-quality standard, promoting safety, functionality, and comfort.

#### MANUAL FOR STREETS AND MANUAL FOR STREETS 2

Guidance on the design and layout of streets, focusing on creating safe, attractive, and accessible environments for all users. The focus is on creating street environments that prioritise pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport users, alongside cars.

Together, Manual for Streets 1 and 2 aim to create streets that balance the needs of different users while promoting sustainable, healthy, and attractive communities. The guidance encourages street designs that foster social interaction and well-being, reducing car dependency and supporting a variety of transport modes.

#### SECURED BY DESIGN

Aimed at reducing crime and increasing safety, Secured by Design is a police-led initiative that ensures developments meet design standards that reduce the risk of crime. For garden communities, it involves incorporating features such as well-lit streets, clear sightlines, secure entry points, and community spaces that promote safety.

4

# Challenges & Opportunities

# CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

## CHALLENGES

The plan (right) summarises the current site challenges. Key considerations include retaining the hedge-lined frontage to Old North Road, in terms of access and ensuring that new housing is not built in the northern part of the site that is at risk of flooding.

The edges of the site should be planned carefully, especially where it borders the open countryside to the west.

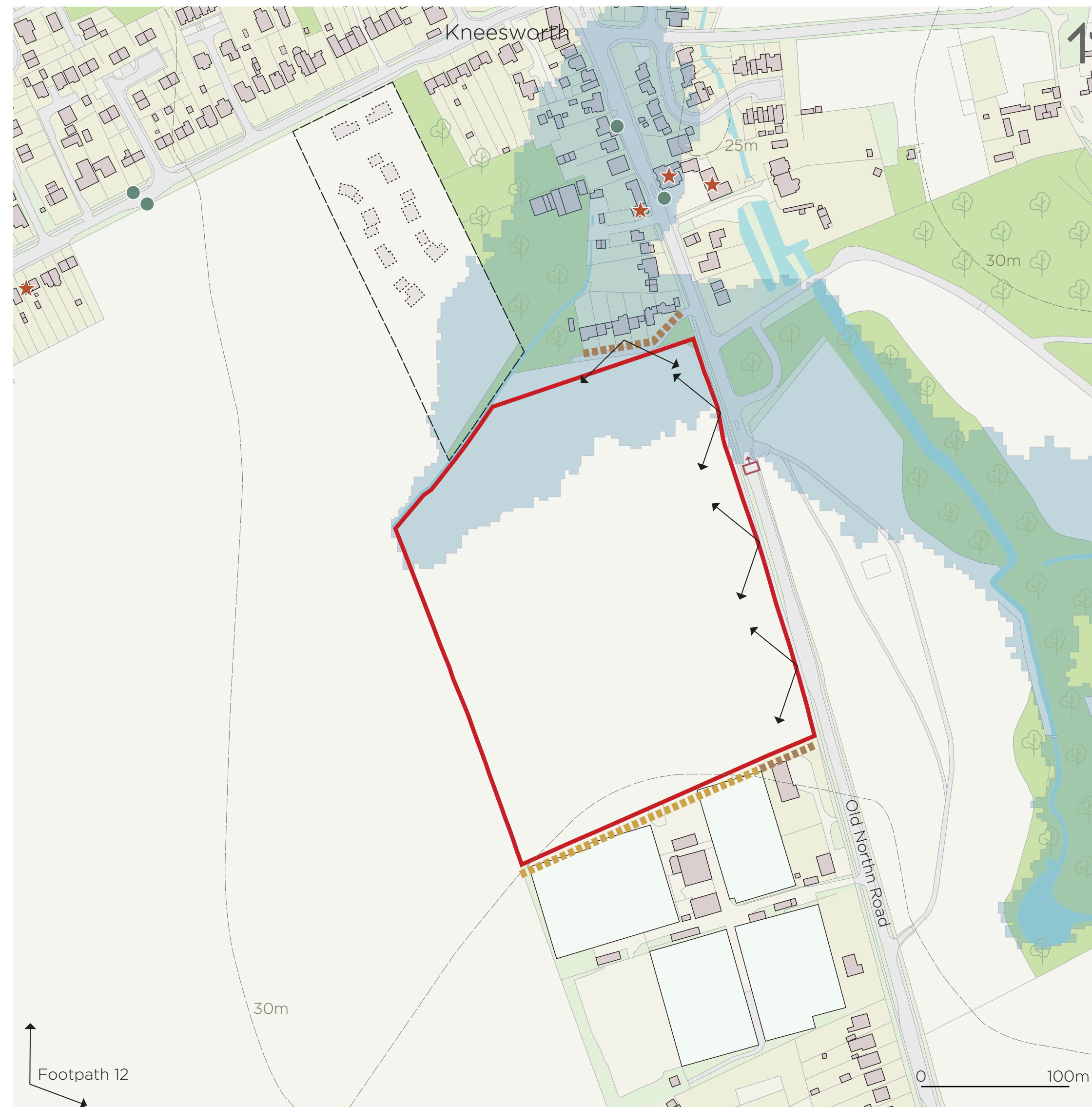
## OPPORTUNITIES

A new housing development along this part of Old North Road can maintain the linear settlement character and form of villages close to Cambridge. There is an opportunity to create a well-balanced and attractive place to live by offering a mix of house types and sizes to meet a variety of needs. By keeping the existing hedge along the main road, the development can maintain a green, rural feel and soften its impact on the surroundings at the same time as creating a well-defined frontage (approach) to the village.

Keeping houses away from the northern edge of the site will help protect nearby homes and avoid areas that could flood. It also leaves room for planting, wildlife habitats, and sustainable drainage features like basins or ponds to manage rainwater. Laying out the homes in a similar way to nearby villages, with tree-lined streets, will help the development fit in with the local area by reflecting the size, shape, and style of traditional buildings, and using materials, colours, and textures that match the local character.

### KEY

- |   |                                     |   |  |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|--|
|  | Site                                |  | View Into Site   |
|  | Potential Access Point              |  | Village Gate - Speed Limit                                 |
|  | Potential Pedestrian & Cycle Access |  | Key Interface Between Existing & New Residents             |
|  | Bus Stop                            |  | Key Interface With Adjoining Commercial Uses (Glasshouses) |
|  | Listed Building                     |  | Watercourse  |
|  | Area at Flood Risk                  |  | Contours - 5m Intervals                                    |
|  | Housing Approval As Yet Unbuilt     |   |  |



Site Challenges

5

**Concept  
Design**

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The Land West of Old North Road represents an opportunity to create a useful addition to the Kneesworth housing offer, through a carefully contained development which respects and preserves the existing settlement pattern.

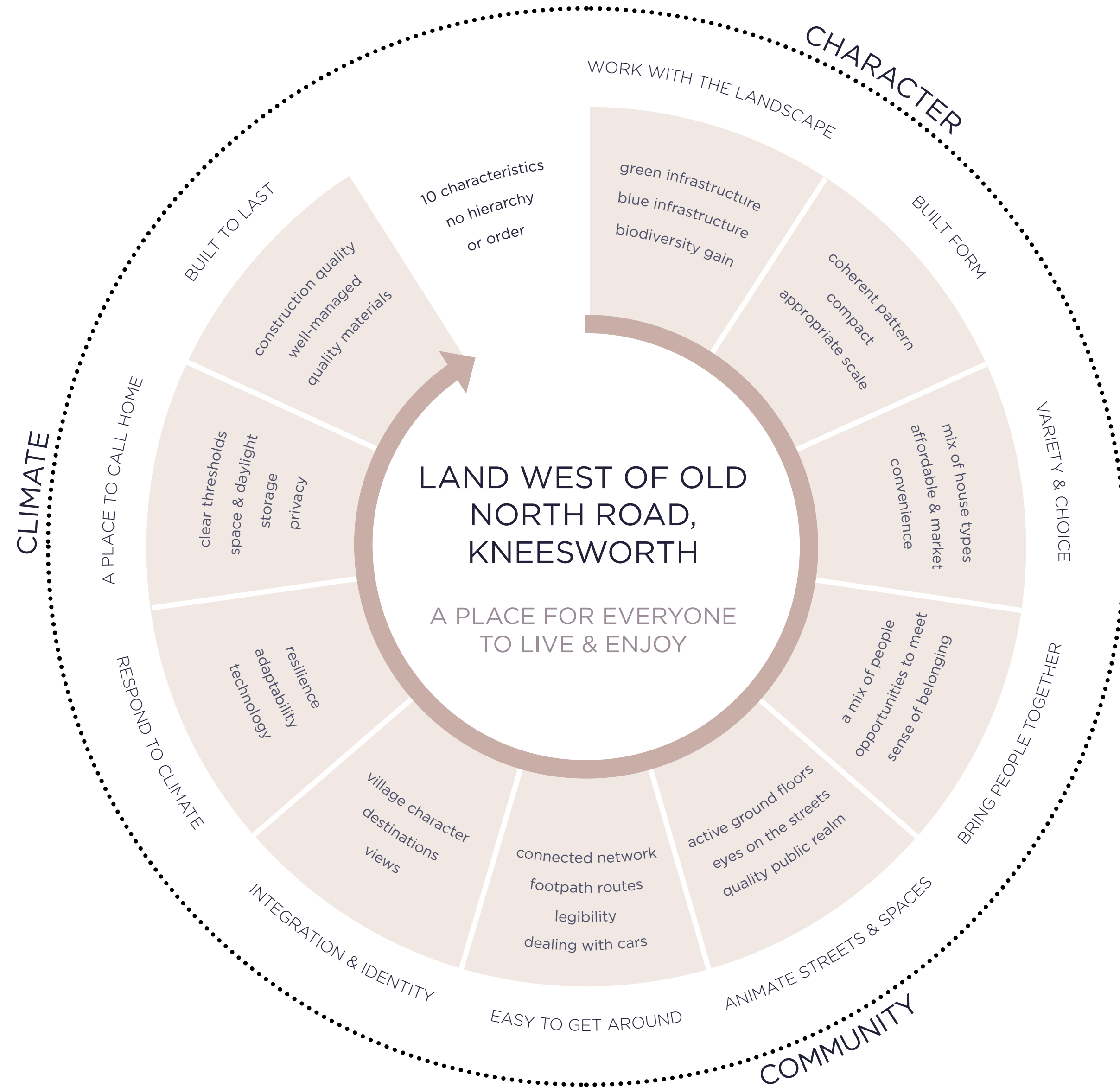
New homes can be closely integrated with existing development, evidenced by the fact that they will be within 10-15 minutes walk of Bassingbourn village centre and range of local facilities across the village and larger centre of Royston to the south. It will be structured around a network of high quality streets and open spaces, and offering a variety of up to 140 new homes.

As the Concept Design shows new public open space is proposed across the northern part of the site where it will provide an opportunity to complement and integrate into the wider green infrastructure network, develop a range of different habitats and bring significant biodiversity improvements.

As the National Design Guide describes, well-designed places have individual characteristics which come together to create character; nurture and sustain a sense of community; and address climate change.

At this early stage we have identified ten key principles which are representative of an overall approach to development which places landscape-led design excellence at the heart of the masterplanning process. The principles are presented opposite.

All will be important; responding to the challenges of meeting housing demand alongside the objective to create a well-considered extension to the village that is a combination of a vibrant, healthy, sustainable, convenient, resilient and attractive neighbourhood.



# CONCEPT DESIGN

## KEY

- |   |  |   |                                      |   |  |
|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|--|
|  | Site - 6.4ha                           |  | Housing Aspect                       |  | Indicative Marker Building                       |
|  | Residential Developable Area - 4.2ha   |  | Proposed Green Space - 2.2ha         |  | Equipped play space - LEAP (400m2 Activity Zone) |
|  | Spine Street                           |  | Indicative Tree Planting             |   |  |
|  | Residential Street / Lane              |  | Proposed Feature Tree                |   |  |
|  | Gateway                                |  | Potential Community Orchard          |   |  |
|  | Proposed Pedestrian/Cycle Entrance     |  | New Hedgerow - Western Edge          |   |  |
|  | Proposed Pedestrian and/or Cycle Route |  | Proposed SuDS Feature - Basin / Pond |   |  |

## ACCESS & MOVEMENT

- T1** Proposed Old North Road access point - simple priority junction
- T2** Potential new pedestrian and/or cycle link to the village - with route behind existing frontage and retained hedgerow
- T3** Pedestrian path through green space
- T4** Potential emergency vehicle link

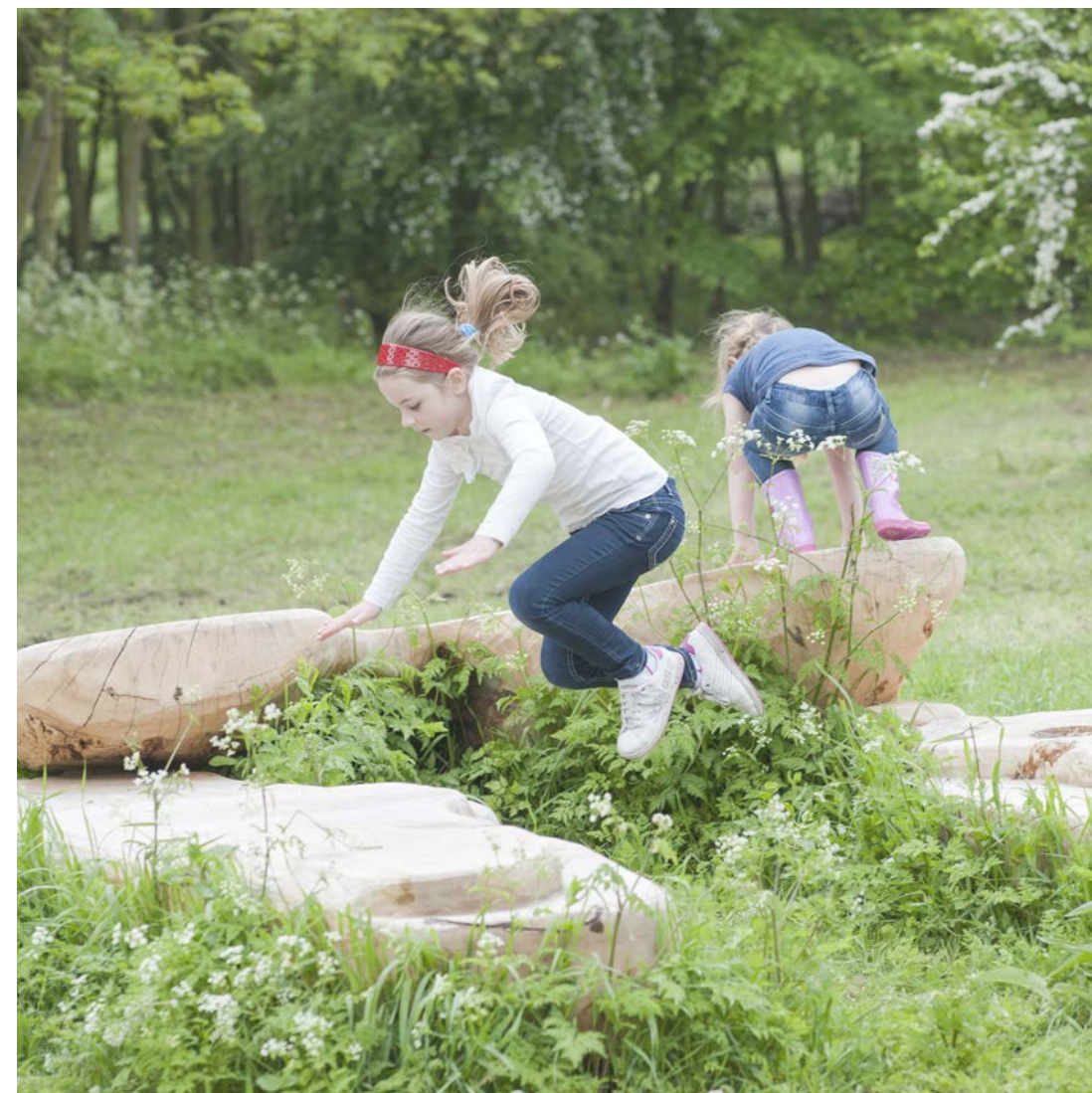
## LANDSCAPE SPACES

- L1** New public green space including tree planting, SuDS features, pedestrian paths and seating
- L2** Enhanced woodland belt planting to screen development and make a valuable contribution to biodiversity
- L3** New hedgerow and planting to define western edge

## RESIDENTIAL PLACES

- R1** Main street defined by tree planting and hedgerow with housing setback
- R2** Frontage to make the most of the opportunities to overlook green space and the woodland belt
- R3** Potential for traditional village green to act as focal point within residential area
- R4** Housing aspect east west to create positive address with adjacent glasshouses and housing





## DESIGN ASPIRATIONS

- Birch Copse
- Well-Defined Streets
- Informal Natural Play
- Country Cottage Garden
- Shared Surface Streets



# DESIGN ASPIRATIONS

- Countryside Walks
- SuDS & Wet Tolerant Plants
- Housing Overlooks Green Space
- Tree-Lined Streets & Routes
  - Wildflower Meadow



# ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN

The Illustrative Masterplan demonstrates one potential approach to accommodating a residential-led development of 140 dwellings, designed in line with the concept framework and parameters established at this stage.

The layout is based on a series of traditional perimeter blocks arranged along tree-lined streets. A principal area of open green space is located to the north, incorporating new planting, pedestrian routes, SuDS features (including basins), a community orchard, play space, and areas designed to support biodiversity. Within the residential neighbourhood, homes along the southern boundary are arranged on an east-west alignment, providing active frontages to the main road and overlooking adjacent open space to the west. The masterplan also identifies an emergency vehicle link to Old North Road.

The existing boundary hedgerows and planting will be reinforced, with an additional hedge introduced along the western edge of the site. A series of proposed feature trees are positioned to provide focal points and to terminate views along key streets and lanes. Together with the primary green space, these landscape features will contribute to enhancing biodiversity across the scheme.



### INDICATIVE HOUSING MIX

The plan on this page illustrates an indicative housing mix for approximately 140 dwellings. The precise mix will be confirmed through any subsequent planning application. An indicative distribution of affordable homes is also shown.

#### KEY

- 1 Bed Dwelling (32)
- 1 & 2 Bed Apartments (10)
- 2 Bed FOG (4)
- 2 Bed House (36)
- 3 Bed House (31)
- 4 Bed House (27)
- Proposed Affordable Dwelling



Illustrative Housing Mix

6

# Development Summary

# DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY

The site is in a sustainable location, close to both Kneesworth and the neighbouring village of Bassingbourn. Together, the two villages offer schools, shops and a variety of local facilities – all within a comfortable walking distance. The area is mostly flat, making it well-suited to cycling. Local job opportunities include the hospital, local schools, military barracks, and The Wireless Station Industrial Estate. Royston, a larger nearby town to the south, offers additional employment and services.

The site itself is currently an open field next to Old North Road, bordered by housing to the north and a mix of homes and businesses to the south. The proposed development is modest in scale and sits close to the existing edge of the village. With the existing hedgerow along the main road retained, homes set back from the street, and new tree planting included, we believe the development would sit comfortably in the landscape without causing harm to the wider area.

The Concept Design (page 33) and Illustrative Masterplan (page 36) within this Pre-App Report show a design responsive to the local village and wider countryside context, creating a positive walkable environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

New green open space and planting incorporates sustainable drainage features, new foot-cycle paths and naturalised play space for community use.

Attractive streets and spaces will be created by enclosing them with buildings and a strong landscaping scheme. Designing dwellings that turn corners well will help with people finding their way around, as well as maximising surveillance of public spaces.

In respect of health impacts associated with the proposals, a Health Impact Assessment is provided on the next page.

Overall, the proposals for up to 140 dwellings will enhance the vitality of the rural community of Bassingbourn-cum-Kneesworth. They will help the village to grow and thrive, supporting local services, in a way that crucially, maintains the historic linear form of the village and ensures the gap and separation between the village and larger centre of Royston to the south.

INDICATIVE LAND BUDGET	
<b>Total Site Area</b>	<b>6.4ha</b>
Proposed Residential Developable Area	4.3ha
Potential Housing Yield (based on average 30dph)	140 Dwellings
Local Population (2.4 persons/household)	303
Proposed Public Open Green Space* (inc. existing vegetation)	2.1ha

\*Standards Based on Recreation & Open Space Study (2013):

Outdoor Sport (Off-Site)	= 0.48ha
Children's Playspace	= 0.24ha
Informal Open Space	= 0.12ha
Allotments & Community Orchards	= 0.12ha
<b>Total On-Site Requirement</b>	<b>= 0.48ha</b>

# HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

## HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

**Flooding:** A Flood Risk Assessment will be prepared and the recommendations of the report will be incorporated into the design and layout of any scheme.

4.2ha of the site is within Flood Zone 1.

2.2ha of the site is within Flood Zone 3.

**Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS/green roof etc):** An on site SUDS scheme is proposed. This will be within an allocated green area to maximise the biodiversity opportunities.

**Contaminated Land:** The site is an arable field, there is no contaminated land within the site boundary.

**Noise:** A noise report will be prepared for any planning application where applicable. It is not considered that this should be a constraint which will limit any development.

**Air Quality:** An air quality report will be prepared for any planning application where applicable. It is not considered that this should be a constraint which will limit any development.

**Overheating:** This will be addressed through the orientation of dwellings on the layout as well as with construction methods.

**Waste Management:** Construction waste will be disposed of using sustainable methods.

There will be a s106 contribution towards on site bin provision.

**Safe Construction:** A Construction Environmental Management Plan will be prepared and agreed with the planning permission.

## HEALTHY HOUSING/ HEALTHY HOMES

**Internal/External Space:** All dwellings will meet the national space standards. All dwellings will be served with gardens. There will be communal green space for all to enjoy both visually and physically.

**Housing Types and Sizes:** The development will be Policy compliant, led by the Local Authorities housing officer as well as market demand.

**Affordable Homes:** We envisage being able to deliver 40% affordable housing on site through a mix of tenures.

**Accessible Homes:** Accessible housing will be provided on site, subject to market demand and local authority requirements.

**Homes for Gypsies and Travellers:** This is not required on the site.

**Active Travel and Inclusive Mobility:** The site is located at the edge of the settlement, within walking distance to the goods and services in Bassingbourn cum Kneesworth. The topography of the site and the surrounds is flat, meaning goods and services are accessible through various modes of transport.

**Promoting Walking and Cycling:** The site will include a circular walk around the biodiversity area, which will link up to the footpaths throughout and surrounding the site.

All dwellings will benefit from safe and secure cycle parking.

**Connectivity:** The site is well connected to the surrounding area. An existing footpath runs into the adjacent settlements of Bassingbourn and Kneesworth. There is a bus stop in close proximity of the site. The main road, Old North Road, runs adjacent to the site.

**Safe Travel:** There will be a footpath network throughout the site.

Reduced vehicle speeds and traffic calming methods could be agreed across the site

**Cycle Parking Infrastructure:** All dwellings will benefit from safe and secure cycle parking.

**Inclusive mobility:** The site will be accessible to all modes of transport. The road and footpath network will be built to Cambridgeshire County Council Standards.

## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

**Access to Open Space:** The development will provide 2.2ha of open space (the equivalent of 5.4 football pitches).

**Outdoor Play and Recreation:** A children's play space (LEAP) will be provided on site.

**Indoor Recreation and Sport Space:** An off site contribution to be agreed with the LPA.

**Safety and Crime Prevention:** Pre-application advice to be received from Police/security consultant.

**Open and Recreational Space Management:** Management Company to be agreed via s106.

## ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

**Local Spaces for Growing Food:** An on-site community orchard is proposed.

**Retail Choices:** The additional population will improve the viability and vitality of the local high street and village centres.

## VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

**Health Care Facilities:** The proposed development will improve the health and well-being of the residents by providing secure modern housing and a pleasant living environment and surrounding area.

**Education Facilities and Childcare Services:** The site is in close proximity to the existing educational services. An education contribution could be agreed.

**Social Facilities:** Affordable housing will be provided on site to assist those on the associated housing lists.

**Cultural Facilities:** The proposal will provide s106 contributions towards cultural facilities.

**Employment Opportunities:** Jobs will be created through the construction phase. The dwellings could be designed to create improved home working environments

**Compatible Land Uses:** The proposed residential uses and green infrastructure are entirely compatible with adjacent land uses comprising residential, agricultural fields and commercial greenhouses.

## DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESS TO TELECOMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE

**Broadband infrastructure and internet connection:** Appropriate services will be brought to the site to ensure broadband is available to residents. The speed will be dependant on service providers.

**Mobile network coverage:** This will be provided by operators. The houses should be constructed in a way that does not cause issues to mobile network.

Document Check	
Author	SR
Checked by	CM
Project No.	2520
Document Ref	Old North Road, Kneesworth
Status	Pre-App

All plans are reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Map with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. © Crown Copyright and database rights 2025. OS AC0000813445.

The contents of this document must not be copied or reproduced in whole or in part without the written consent of RAMP Studio.

**RAMP Studio**

Incuhive, Grigg Lane, Brockenhurst, Hampshire, SO42 7RE  
+44 (0) 7799 133904 | +44 (0) 7557 147242  
[www.rampstudio.co.uk](http://www.rampstudio.co.uk)