

GREAT WHADDON

Ideas for co-creating a beautiful and green new area for Trowbridge

September 2023







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1 INTRODUCTION



1.1 About this report

Over several generations, the instinctive, and empirically not unreasonable, assumption of the British people has become that new development will make existing places worse, will scar the landscape and spoil existing towns and villages. Too often this has been true.

Here to the east of Trowbridge, we do not wish to do this. We wish to work with local neighbours, landowners, schools, small businesses and Wiltshire Council to co-create a beautiful place of which we can all be proud and in which it is easy to lead a happy, healthy and sociable life: a green and walkable new neighbourhood. A place to live and a great place to go to school.

This very early stage report does not pretend to have all the answers.

It is the start of a journey, not the end of one. It is a possible vision, a possible approach and some thoughts and questions for the future, no more.

We look forward, we hope, to working with you to create desperately needed new homes in a way that gives to Wiltshire and Trowbridge and which does not take away.

1.2 The team

We do not wish this to be a 'normal' new development so this will not be a 'normal' team.

The team will be led by Lightwood who are a land promoter working with landowners, neighbourhoods and councils to deliver new homes. Lightwood are particularly committed to seamlessly using technology to deliver sustainable new places: be that renewable energy, electric vehicles or first class internet infrastructure. Lightwood are striving to be truly world class in creating better and more beautiful places to live and work creating a legacy of which we can all be proud.

The vision, masterplanning and co-design process will be led by Create Streets. Create Streets are a social enterprise with an associated charity, the Create Streets Foundation. They were set up in 2013 to change the way we create places in this country.

Create Streets research the relationships between design with wellbeing, physical health, social connectedness, sustainability and popular support for development. They put that research into practice by working with community and

neighbourhood groups and with councils, landowners and developers.

Create Streets' director, Nicholas Boys Smith, has taken an active and influential role in the debate about planning and placemaking in England and internationally. He was co-chair of the influential Building Better Building Beautiful Commission alongside the late Sir Roger Scruton which led to a series of changes in the national planning system and has recently been asked to chair the advisory board of the Government's new Office for Place.

One community housing lead has said of their work, "When I see Create Streets' work I see hope."

In order to ensure the best expert advice on specific matters, Lightwood and Create Streets' work will be advised by:

- The Abley Letchford Partnership for engineering (transport, flood risk, drainage and utilities)
- Ethos for ecology
- EDP for landscape and heritage
- Rocke Associates for planning

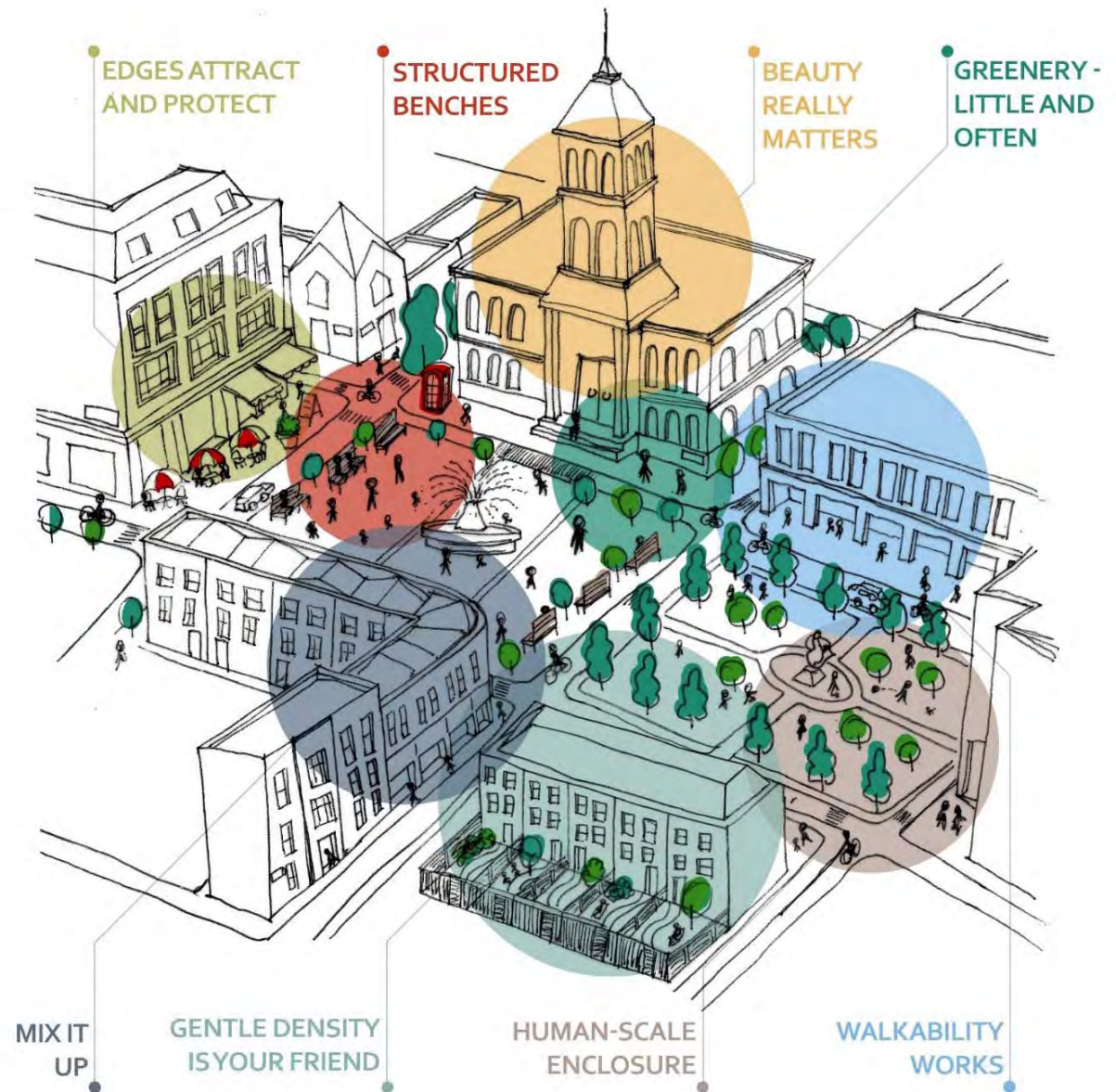
1.3 Design philosophy

What makes for popular places?

Good and popular places are not the same everywhere but they do rhyme. Good design is not subjective. Where people want to be, where the want to live is discoverable via polling, behavioural studies or pricing data. This is our starting point: the evidence on what makes for popular, happy, walkable, sustainable and loveable places which we have studied, for example, in our books, *Heart in the Right Streets*, *Beyond Location* and *Of Streets and Squares*. As you can see below this leads to a hypothesis about what normally makes for good local centres, village greens or neighbourhood streets for most people most of the time.

Engage 'wide'. Engage 'deep.' Engage meaningfully.

However, this is only a starting point. We then like to work with existing residents, future residents and other local 'stakeholders' to work up a vision and a masterplan that 'feels like it's always been there', that chimes with the local vernacular and which nestles in the landscape. We do this by asking as many people as possible what they like and what they dislike in existing towns and villages



and how existing places might be improved. We also work more deeply in co-design sessions with those who are able to spare the time before sharing the results of our collective work more widely.

Questions we like to ask.

In all that we seek to do we ask:

- Would we want to live or work here?
- Are we creating a beautiful place which actually improves the landscape and the ease or joy of living in this neighbourhood or parish?
- Will children be able to walk or cycle safely to school?
- Will it be easy to know your neighbours but also to spend time alone with your family?
- Are we creating a green place with trees and hedgerows as well as streets and homes?
- Are we creating a conservation area of the future?

Three scales of place.

We approach projects at three scales:

- Child’s eye view, looking at street design
- Human’s eye view, looking at the site layout
- Bird’s eye view, looking at beyond the red line

At this early stage of the design process, we are at the “bird’s eye” stage but all layers will be explored throughout the process to ensure the highest quality placemaking.



The three scales of place inform how we apply our design principles.



We believe in green spaces little and often, streets with varied characters and mixed-use neighbourhood centres.



Streets should be tree lined and parking must be well integrated.

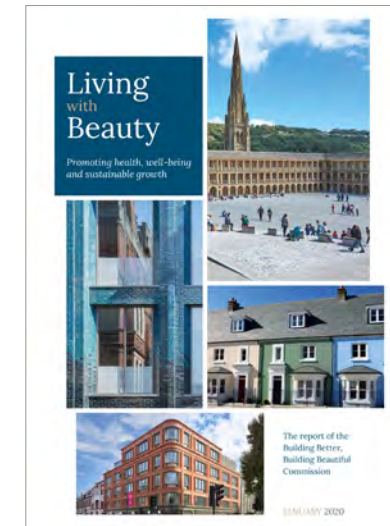
2 PLANNING AND HERITAGE

2.1 Planning and placemaking context

Over the last 18 months, there have been important changes in the English national planning framework which place far more focus on places which are popular, beautiful and sustainable and which increase the local biodiversity. Although these changes do have formal weight in decision-making, they have not fully percolated down to local plans set by county or district councils so they have only had slight effect on actual “housing schemes.” This possible vision is one of the very first in the country to be written “in the spirit” of these reforms. Amongst the key changes are:

- **January 2020:** The publication of the independent Building Better Building Beautiful Commission in January 2020 with its underpinning ethos that the planning system should ask for beauty, refuse ugliness and promote stewardship for the long term good of people, prosperity and planet.
- **July 2021:** Publication of the new National Model Design Guide to help councils and parishes visually define good design.

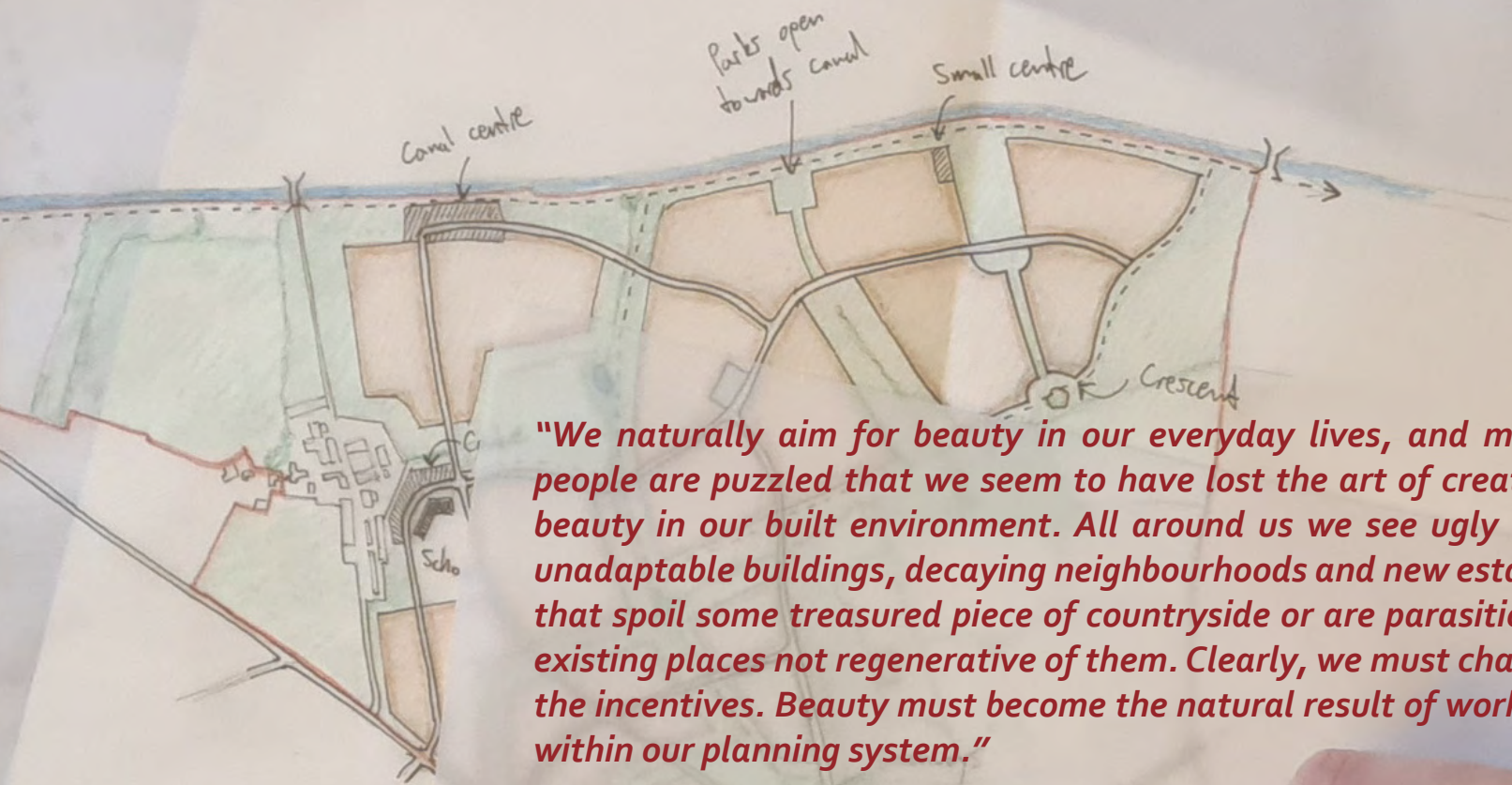
- **July 2021:** Changes to the document government planning in policy in England, the so-called National Planning Policy Framework, to put more emphasis on:
 - requiring beauty and placemaking alongside sustainable development;
 - making it easier to turn down scheme which are poorly designed and not locally popular;
 - asking local planning authorities to produce their own design codes which reflect local preferences;
 - asking for new streets to be tree-lined; and
 - requiring ‘biodiversity net gain’ and access to nature through design.



Living with Beauty, the final report of the Building Better Building Beautiful Commission



The new National Model Design Code



"We naturally aim for beauty in our everyday lives, and many people are puzzled that we seem to have lost the art of creating beauty in our built environment. All around us we see ugly and unadaptable buildings, decaying neighbourhoods and new estates that spoil some treasured piece of countryside or are parasitic on existing places not regenerative of them. Clearly, we must change the incentives. Beauty must become the natural result of working within our planning system."

**Building Better Building Beautiful Commission,
Living with Beauty, 2020**



Bradford-on-Avon: a beautiful piece of Wiltshire



Looking south from the canal towards Marsh Farm

2.2 Local Plan review

Emerging Local Plan consultation

In early 2021, Wiltshire Council consulted on the emerging review of its Local Plan. The consultation was not described as a Draft Plan, although it did contain a series of area and settlement strategies and potential site allocations.

At Trowbridge, the consultation documents explained why land to the north east of the town was the favoured next strategic growth location. Two potential allocations of 500 homes and 2,100 homes were identified and the land use mix included two primary schools, a secondary school and local centres. The smaller site extended between the Kennet & Avon canal to a rail line and the River Avon. The larger allocation extended south from the canal to Whaddon Lane and then continued to the A361, west of Trowbridge Rugby Club. Concept Plans were published by the Council to illustrate one way that the land could be developed and how the proposed housing numbers could be achieved.

Lightwood commented on the proposals for the 2,100 home site on behalf of the Oatley and Cradock families (the two largest landowners within the site). Lightwood made a series of observations on the extent of land available for 'built' development, and how the removal of land

for consideration would have knock on effects for concept planning and the access strategy. Lightwood also advised that the Council's concept fell short of enabling development to self-serve in terms of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG). Some 40ha of SANG was required for a 2,100-home development and this is critical to deliverability.

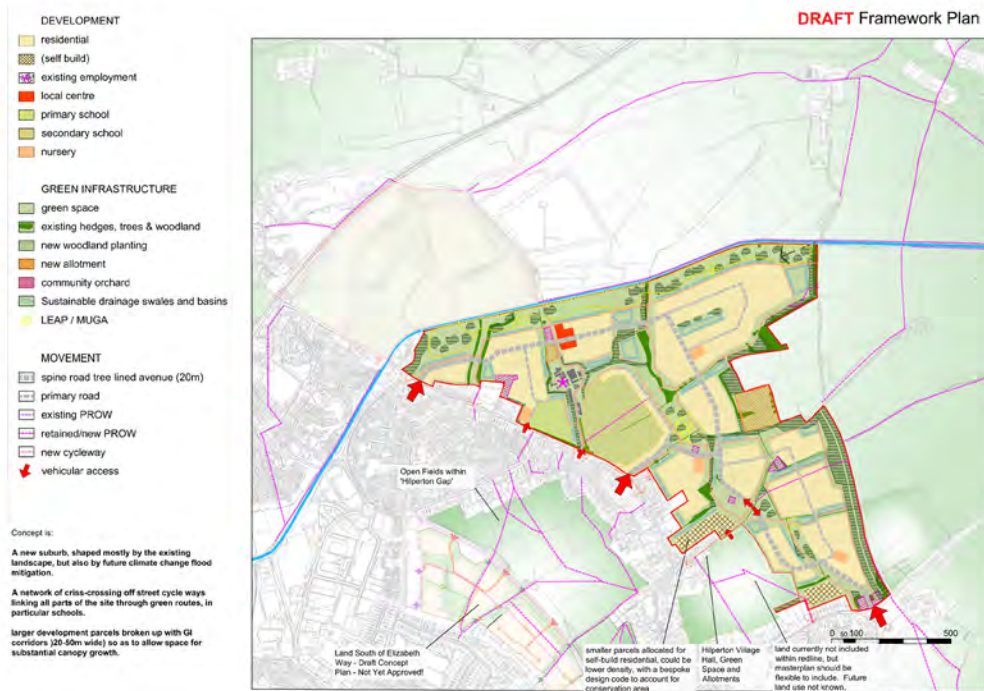
Lightwood also identified the full extent of the Oatley land ownership (either side of the A361) and observed that the Sustainability Appraisal of the land at Trowbridge options was positive about the likely lack of significant negative effects of development in this wider area. Lightwood observed that between the A361 and A350 the Hag Hill area could form a strategic SANG to serve the proposed development (similar in scale and function to Southwick Country Park) and that a wider development concept would enable the SANG to be stitched into the proposed site. Lightwood's commentary was accompanied by a series of high-level optioneering plans to illustrate this wider comprehensive approach.

At the time, potential 'bridging land' between the proposed allocation and land south of the A361 was not known to be available and therefore it was

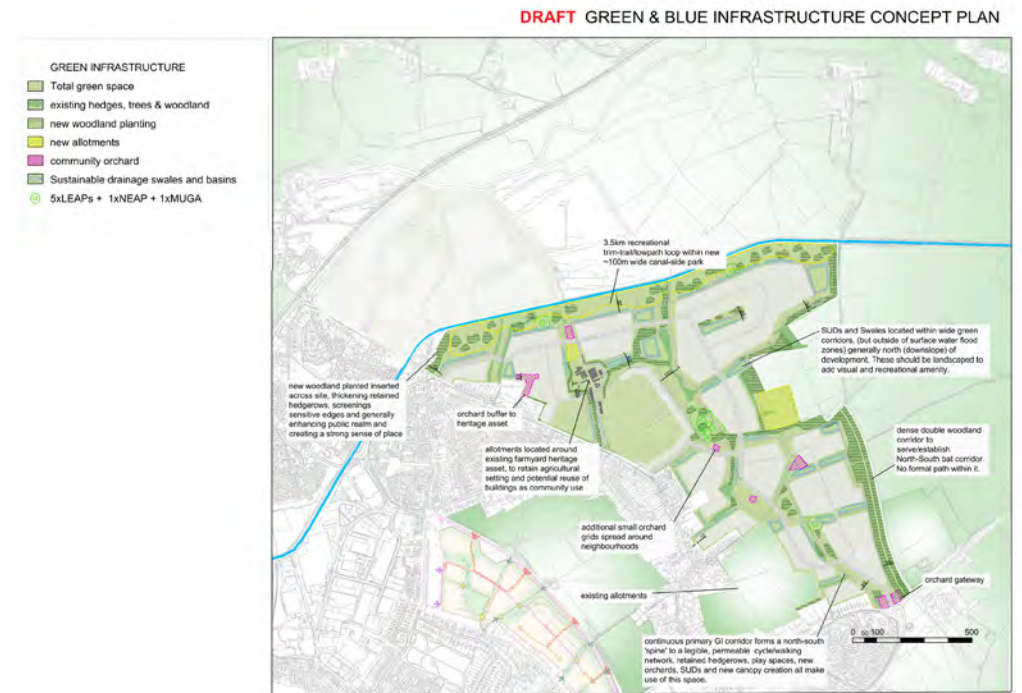
not assessed by the Council. This is the very large field that wraps around Trowbridge Rugby Club. The landowner (Pike) also owns land within the proposed allocation. On this basis the land to the south of the A361 was judged by the Council's SA to be disconnected/ standalone. The availability of the wider Pike land has since been confirmed and Lightwood has assembled it.

In Autumn 2021, Lightwood approached Create Streets to demonstrate its commitment, and that of its landowners (who have long connections with the land), to the achievement of a positive place-making legacy. Create Streets was tasked with assessing how 'bigger could be better'. This investigative report is part of a process to ensure that the new Local Plan is constructed in a way that optimises the placemaking and potential of this part of Wiltshire, and to ensure that what is/could be planned can be delivered. Following a series of site visits and internal debate, a masterplanning vision for Great Whaddon was prepared and supplied to Wiltshire Council in late April 2022. This allows for up to 3,000 homes and 58ha of SANG.

The intention was that this would act as a platform to launch a process of collaborative thinking with the Council, albeit little transpired.



The council's draft framework plan.



The council's draft green and blue infrastructure plan

Pre-submission Local Plan (Autumn 2023)

In July 2023, Wiltshire Council agreed to consult on the version of the Local Plan that it intends to submit for examination. Consultation is scheduled to run between the 27th of September and the 27th of November 2023. Policy 53 proposes to allocate land for 600 homes between Whaddon Lane and the A361, and Policy 54 proposes that all the land between the A361 and A350 be delivered as a country park. Policy 52 speaks of a larger growth area being considered in a further review of the plan, whereas Policy 3 advises that significant additional urban extensions will be identified.

As presented, the Local Plan and the evidence base that was taken to Council for a decision in July sign-posts that the allocation of 600 houses is the first phase of a more strategic level of change for this part of Trowbridge/Hilperton/Staverton. There is a realisation from those who follow planning matters that a 65ha country park is a somewhat disproportionate expectation for 600 homes (65ha of SANG would enable 3,400 homes). The 'small print' on the Policy 53 concept plan reads 'Phase 1' and there is a bus route that leads to 'nowhere'. Site '5' in the Planning for Trowbridge Document is a single entity, spanning the byway, and is not split

into separate stand-alone parcels. The evidence base also speaks of strategic development being part of the delivery strategy for a diversion and new bridge at Staverton and a new secondary school.

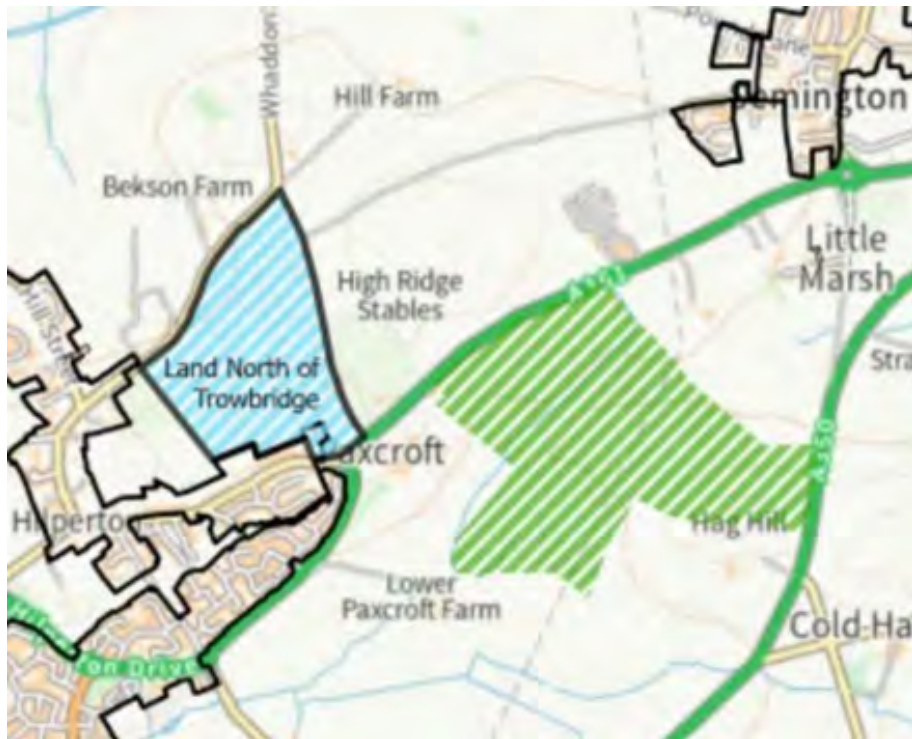
Where cross plan period growth areas present themselves, initial phases and land use mixes should come forward based on a strong overall long-term vision and concept plan. Such opportunities command a strategic and coordinated approach. The previous Local Plan consultation understood the pure town planning case for setting out a strategic vision for new growth points at the district's key settlements. Delivery was to be phased across plan periods, but an overall framework for co-ordinated change (if change was to happen) was to be established early. Such approaches can also enable more early infrastructure wins.

It is not the purpose of the Great Whaddon Vision Document to present a commentary on the Council's decision making; this will appear in formal representations on the Plan. However, one key issue is that the Plan period is two years too short, meaning that it needs to be more specific about how and where another 4,000 homes can

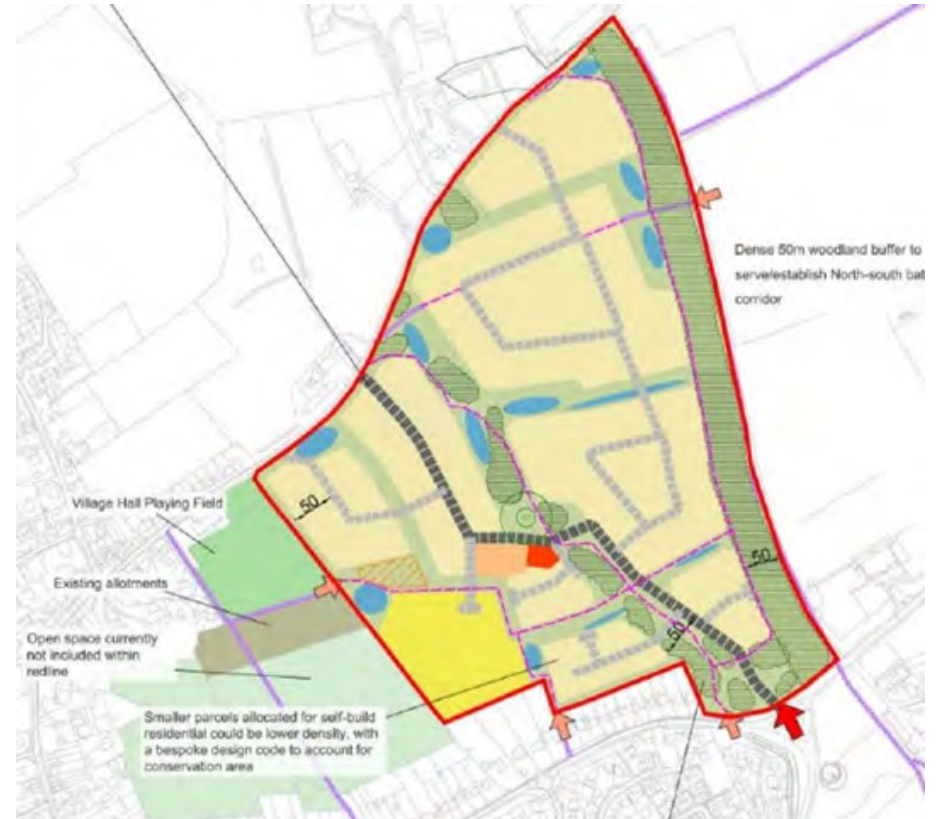
be accommodated. Having regard to the evidence base (and the difference between the emerging and Pre-submission Plan) it is clear that Trowbridge (and Melksham) are best placed to respond to that additional need.

A larger initial phase is justified and would achieve wider planning outcomes. A new secondary school site could immediately improve the overall sustainability of this part of the town, but the approach of the Plan could see its opening delayed by a decade. There are no additional sports pitches for local clubs, yet there are local needs for additional capacity beyond that which can be provided by the town council's 3G pitch. It may be the case that these assets are best situated on part of the land earmarked as a country park (and which other land near the canal could compensate for, thereby providing parklands of different characters and locations).

In the absence of the Council 'painting a picture' of the strategic opportunity for people, this Vision document gains additional significance in setting out the full concept for a 'Great Whaddon' concept, and to inform further thinking on design approaches and delivery matters.



Policy Area 53 (Blue/Housing) and Policy Area 54 (Green/Parkland)



Policy 53 Concept Plan (Wiltshire Council)

2.3 Site location

The site is on the edge the village of Hilperton to the north east of Trowbridge on the southern edge of the Cotswolds. As the county town of Wiltshire, Trowbridge has a range of shops, services and employment opportunities and is well connected to Bristol and Bath.

2.4 Local heritage and context

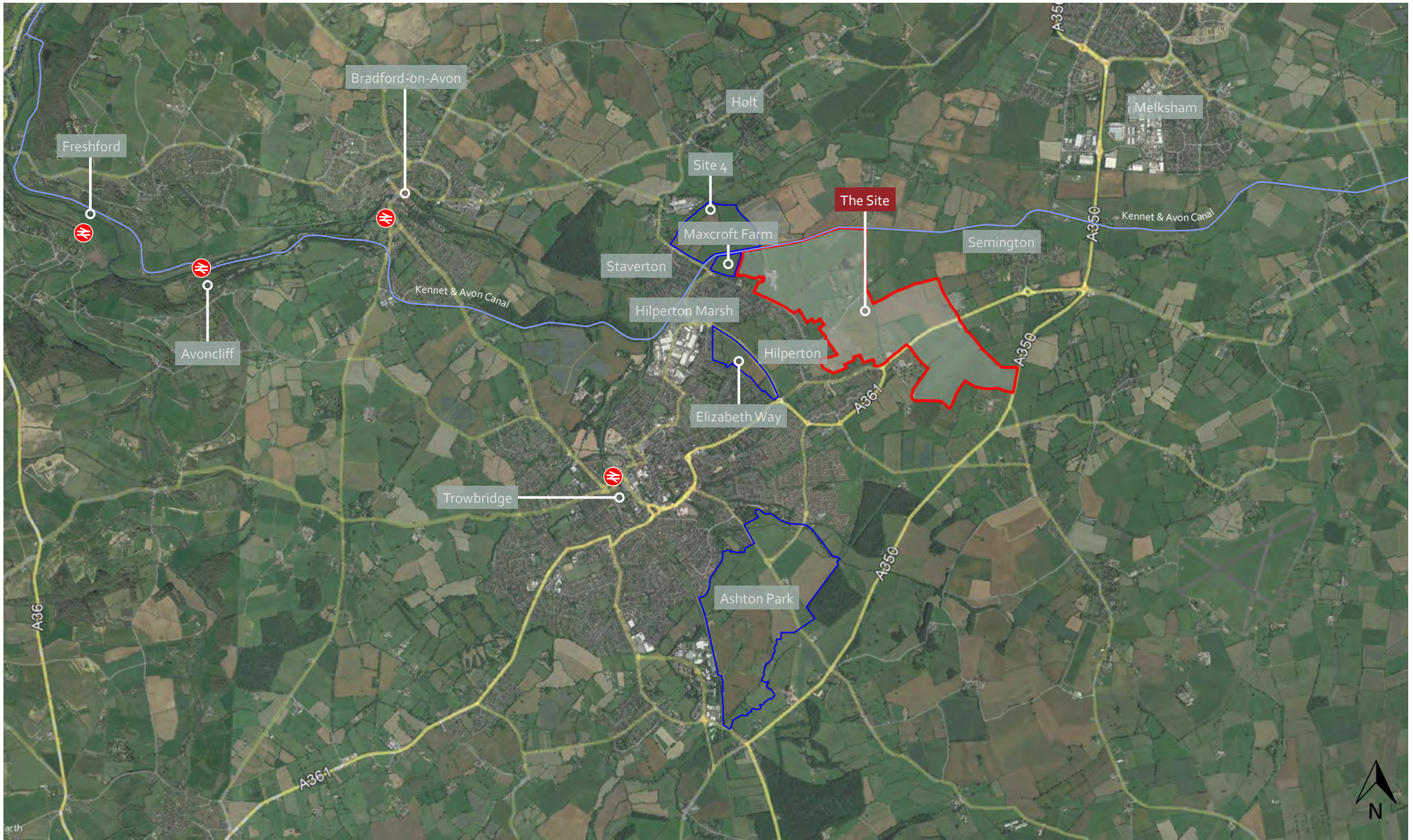
The local area contains many beautiful historic towns and villages that provide strong vernacular precedents for the design of a new community and the homes within it, as outlined within this section.

Trowbridge

Wiltshire's County Town has some incredibly impressive streets and buildings, most notably in the town centre and County Hall itself, one of the very last Neo-Georgian buildings in Britain, completed in 1940. Some buildings or street sections stand in comparison with Bradford or parts of Bath. The town centre and neighbouring streets are not nearly as flourishing as one would hope, however.



Aerial plan of Trowbridge Town Centre and a range of the historic buildings found within it.



Site context

We always start by exploring an existing place, its neighbourhoods, villages and landscape. We ask not just 'what is the current character' but 'how has the character evolved', 'how could the neighbourhood be improved' and 'are there some aspects of the past whose loss is regrettable' and 'which might be re-instated?' Here is some of our initial work.

Hilperton and Hilperton Marsh



In the 1887 Ordnance Survey map, the countryside surrounding Hilperton Marsh Farm was sparsely populated with a patchwork of small fields, orchards, a nursery and hedgerows. Small wharfs

stand beside the canal, as does the King's Arms Inn. Most homes, and Pound Farm, run in a linear pattern south of Horse Road. St Mary's Church stands in proud isolation opposite.



Fifty years later in 1939 the parish is not transformed. There are slightly more homes off Horse Road. A line of semi-detached redbrick house have recently marched north along Hill Street from Hilperton. The village and its near namesake hamlet have nearly joined but are still separated by a field.

Hilperton itself was more substantial but also linear



Aerial plan of Hilperton Conservation Area.



Historic cottages on Hill Street.



Historic terraces on Church Street.



A mixture of soft and hard boundary treatments on Hill Street.

with homes stretching along Hill Street, Whaddon Lane and Church Street into Trowbridge Road and Devizes Road. To this day, St Michaels church, the school and the pub are quite distant from each other. Between, stand many beautiful homes built at different times from a range of materials, most prominently Bath stone and red bricks. Pavements are not over-generous.

Today, there are many new homes to the north of the historic street of Horse Road in Hilperton Marsh and to the south and south east of Devizes Road in Hilperton.



Post war homes along Hill Street.

Hilperton is part of the continuous urban area of Trowbridge, connected via Hilperton Marsh to the north and more recent development between Devizes Road and the A361 to the south. The Hilperton Gap means that the core of Hilperton is less of Trowbridge than Hilperton Marsh, but the functional connectivity is equally strong.

Through all the changes of the last 80 years, the King's Arms Inn still stands at the crossroads near the Kennet & Avon Canal even though the crossroads is now a roundabout and where there were once wharfs and industrial buildings there are now car parks.



Recent development at Millards Close.

Holt

To the north, beyond the River Avon, is the village of Holt. Set around a fine village green bordered by elegant houses, and with shops and a pub around the green, Holt is an attractive precedent both architecturally and in the compact way the village is designed.



Holt village green is well enclosed on all sides.



Though there is variation in architectural detail and style, the materials palette creates a sense of unity.



The village green provides an attractive setting for surrounding homes.



A mature tree anchors the village green.

Bradford-on-Avon and Bath

Not far away are two of England's very finest towns, Bath which needs no introduction, and Bradford-on-Avon which is not internationally famous but with its Bath stone and dramatic location bridging the Avon is increasingly popular as a place to live and retire.



Bradford-on-Avon has a unique topography but provides a wonderful precedent of townscape and a well enclosed high street.



Bradford-on-Avon town centre.



Aerial plan of Bath city centre.

3 SITE

3.1 Site overview

The site is 182 hectares of farmland besides Hilperton village, north east of Trowbridge. The site is being promoted as a new community of over 2,500 homes with shops, two schools, a pub and other facilities by Lightwood Strategic on behalf of the landowners.

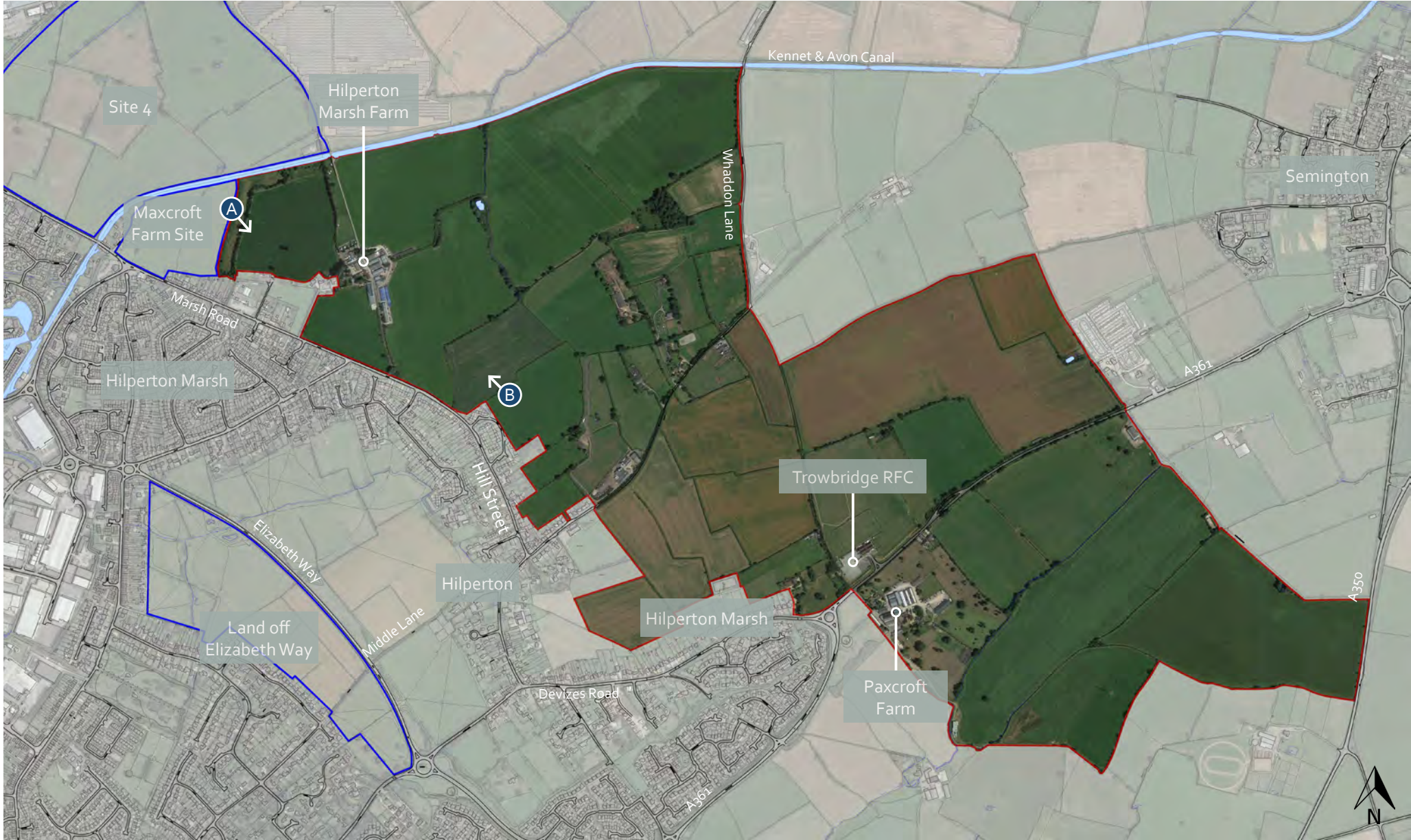
The northern boundary is the Kennet & Avon Canal. The southern boundary follows the course of the A350. In the east the boundary is defined by existing field boundaries. In the west it borders existing properties facing Hill Street.



Looking south west from Hilperton Marsh Farm business park towards Hilperton.



Looking north across the site towards the Kennet & Avon canal.



Site Aerial

3.2 Site photos



The topography rises gently from the canal toward the south east.



The footpath through Hilperton Marsh Farm to the canal.



The site contains a number of mature trees.

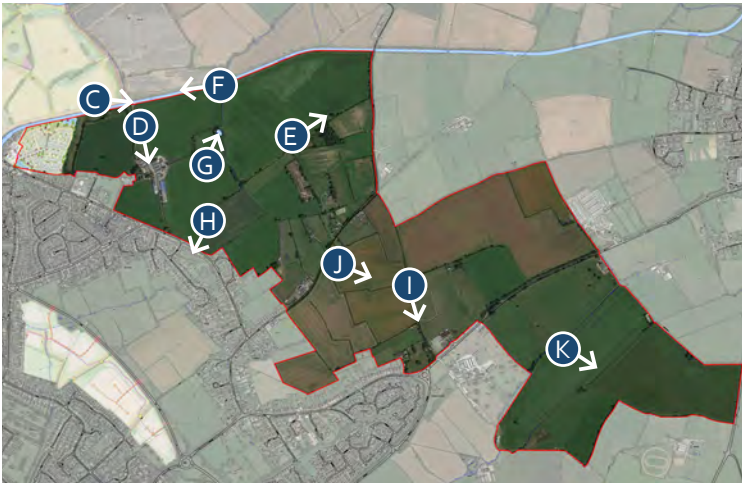


Photo location plan



The canal is a popular amenity for local residents.



Existing ponds will be retained in areas of open space.



Homes along Hill Street overlook the site's western boundary.



The existing byway is a direct route along the site.



Most of the site is agricultural land bordered by hedgerows.



Hag Hill, along the southern edge of the site, is a distinctive local landmark and affords open views of the surrounding countryside.

4 SITE FEATURES AND OPPORTUNITIES

4.1 Site features

The site contains a number of natural and heritage features that have been sensitively incorporated into the emerging concept plan. This section provides an overview of the constraints detailed in the technical surveys undertaken to date and outlines the teams design response.

Ecology

The landscape surrounding Trowbridge is of high importance for bats. In particular there is an established relationship for Bechsteins between Biss Wood and Green Lane Wood and the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC). A landscape scale issue can be dealt with most successfully through landscape scale mitigation.

The emerging concept for the site responds to this through:

- The creation of a 50m wide bat super highway from the A361 to the canal comprising cattle grazed grassland either side of linear woodland. This would be further buffered by 15m for the avoidance of light spill.
- Retaining existing hedgerows, mature trees and woodland within open space and






















greenways.

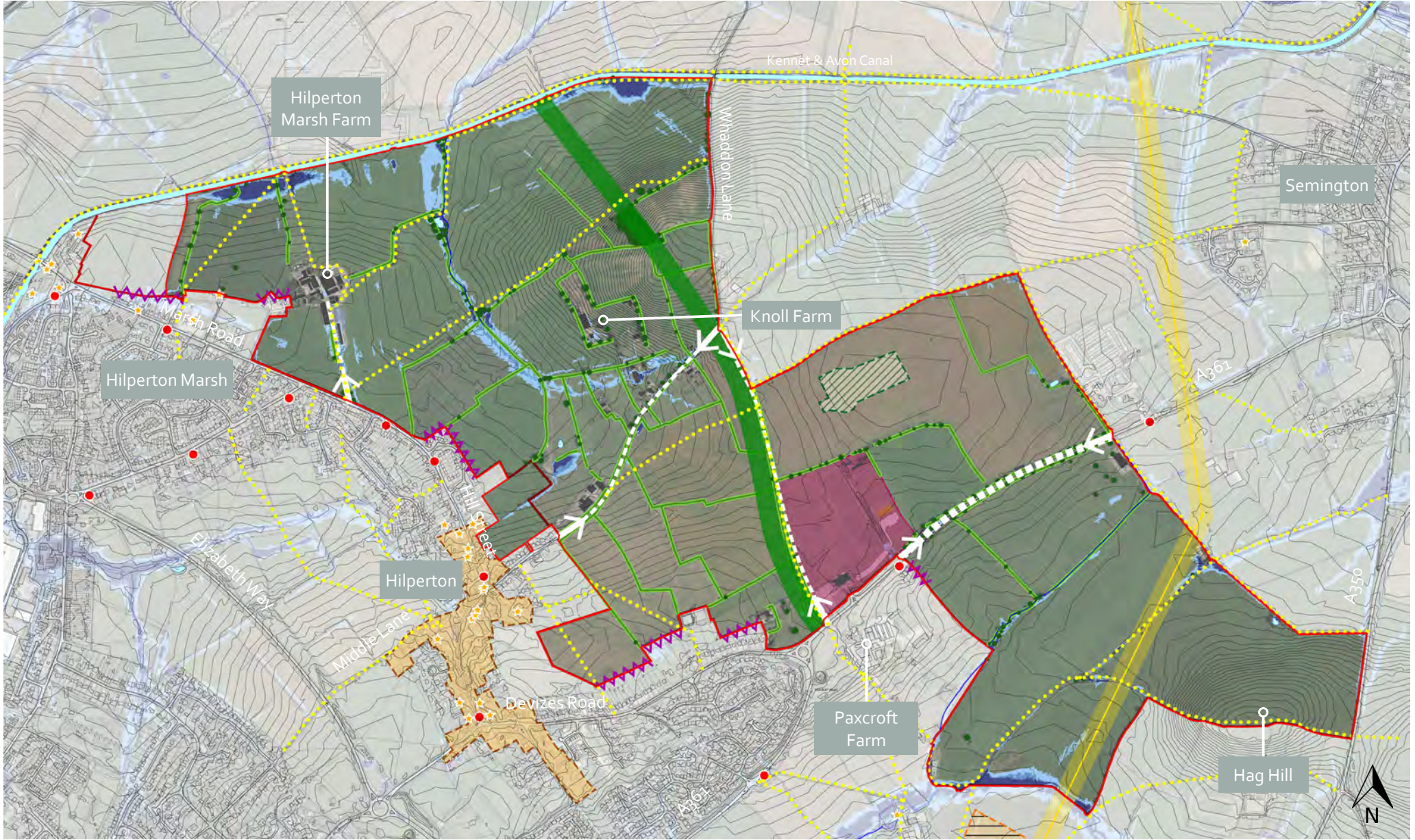
- Planting additional areas of trees, orchards and woodland to create new habitat and strengthen biodiversity.

From 2023, the achievement of 10% biodiversity net gain will be mandatory. Planning at a landscape scale enables the flexibility to fully mitigate the baseline biodiversity value of the site, whilst also enabling a measurable 10% net gain. Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace and other land can be used to recover the baseline biodiversity value of the area. The bat super highway would be 'ring fenced' as bat specific mitigation and enhancement.

Topography, Landscape and Views

Between the canal, Hilperton Marsh, Hilperton, and Whaddon Lane (south) much of the site is relatively flat and low-lying (30-45m). To the east the land rises to a localised high point at Knoll Farm (64m). To the south of Whaddon Lane the site intersects with a ridge of Cornbrash Limestone that runs between Trowbridge and Semington. The land rises up and away from Hilperton towards the byway west of Trowbridge Rugby Club, in the vicinity of which it plateaus at around 62m. Further

Key	
	Site boundary
	Woodland / trees
	Hedgerows and 5m buffer zone
	50m wide bat corridor
	Surface water (pond, stream, canal)
	Surface water flood risk 1:30 yr
	Surface water flood risk 1:100 yr
	Surface water flood risk 1:1000 yr
	Site contours (1m intervals)
	Power lines and 30m easement (each side)
	Public right of way
	Vehicular access point
	Road / lane
	Bus stop
	Hilperton conservation area
	Listed building
	Scheduled monument
	Site of potential Bronze Age / Roman / Anglo Saxon sunken feature
	Rugby club and sports pitches
	Existing buildings on site
	Rear gardens backing on to site



Site features plan

4 SITE FEATURES AND OPPORTUNITIES

north (outside the site), the land falls past Hill Farm to the canal. Within the site, the land falls south east to level off at 45-50m on Paxcroft Farm before rising towards Hag Hill (73m) and the A350.

The site and its immediate context is representative of the local landscape character type and area. The presence of generalised landscape fabric features including agriculture, field pattern scale and field boundary treatments make up the predominance of the site, but is not entirely divorced from the settlement nor urban influences such as major transport corridors.

Several public rights of way, including the canal, within and in the immediate environs of the site, provide many experiences of the land. A number of existing homes within and in close proximity to the site also experience close ranging intervisibility with at least part of it. The site can also be experienced from the A361 and Hill Street.

The undulating nature of the area alongside the presence of vegetated field boundaries and urban forms limits the extent of views available from the wider landscape, however longer distance views are possible of different parts of the site from higher ground. Sometimes, the site can be

seen set within the context of the north east part of Trowbridge, in other locations (such as from Whaddon) the existing development does not feature in those views.

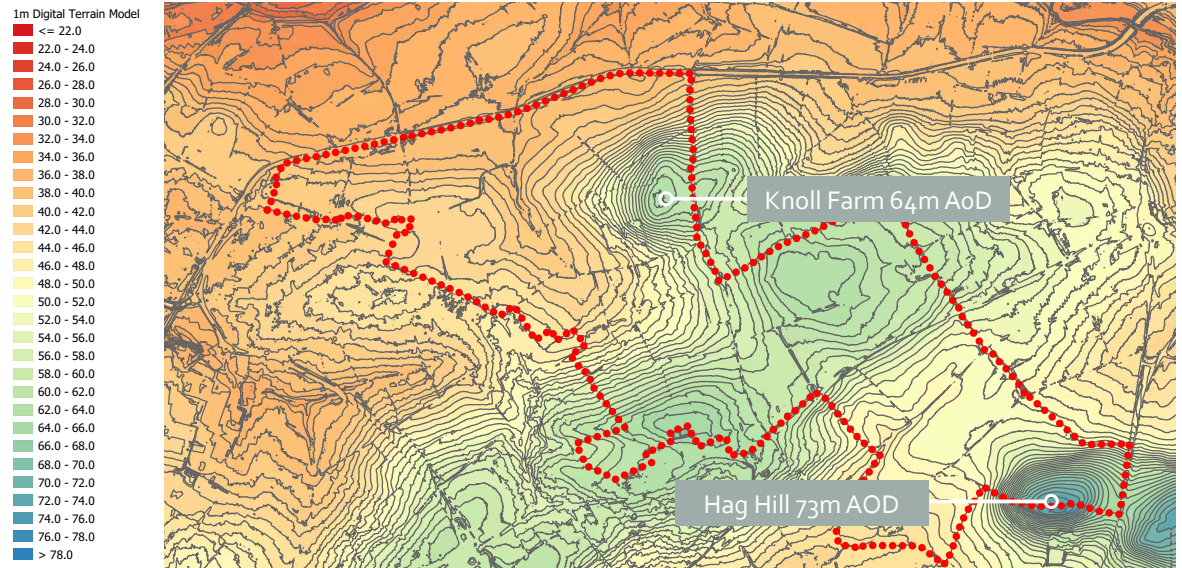
The emerging concept plan will:

- Generally leave open higher ground within the site either as formal or informal open space. This might include the planning designation known as "Suitable Alternative Natural Green

Space" or "SANG" as well as school playing fields.

- Provision parkland and open space at high points within the site to enable views into the surrounding countryside.
- Create development blocks that work with the topography and the contours.
- Be mindful that the height, massing and density of buildings is sensitive to their setting.

The concept as a whole will be further developed



Site topography

alongside a Green Infrastructure Strategy. This has already begun to identify landscape character areas. For example, a 'canal edge marshes' zone would be suitable for the provision of marshland features such as wet meadow, with the addition of wet woodland Alder and Willow species.

Heritage and Archaeology

The site does not include any statutory designations or include land within the boundary of such a designation. However, a number of designated heritage assets are located within the site's wider surroundings. A Heritage Baseline (EDP March 2022) documents the key concept planning considerations. There is a group of assets near Paxcroft Farm and the canal overbridge, a group of assets within Hilperton Conservation Area and the CA itself, a group of assets at Whaddon and the 'shrunken settlement' of Paxcroft to the south east. The value of Hilperton Marsh Farm and Paxcroft Farm have been considered as non-designated assets.

A non-designated Iron Age/Romano-British settlement north of Trowbridge Rugby Club, which was identified from cropmarks, a geophysical survey and trenching as part of the Lowland

Pilot Study (2015, 2016), has been described as a "relatively typical example of a small enclosed farmstead, originating in the Late Iron Age and continuing until the later 2nd century AD".

The emerging concept plan will:

- Create an arrangement of land use to maintain the setting of designated assets, with open space typologies featuring in locations where built development would cause harm or perceived harm.
- Seek to avoid or minimise harm to non-designated archaeology, notably near the Rugby Club.
- Create a form of development that is in keeping with this part of rural West Wiltshire.

Flood Risk and Drainage

The Kennet & Avon Canal runs along the northern boundary of the site. The north of the site is drained by ditches which pass under the canal and then to the River Avon. To the south, Paxcroft Brook runs across the site and connects back to Trowbridge.

Surface water floodzones are minor and mostly to the south of the canal or along the course of brooks, drainage ditches and hedges.

The emerging concept plan will:

- Celebrate the canal front through the creation of parkland with recreational routes along its southern edge. This could also include marshland in lower lying areas of the site to maintain the Site's natural hydrology.
- Create linear blue-green corridors that run through the site along existing hedgerows and water courses to manage stormwater.

Transport and Access

Public Rights of Way through the site connect into Trowbridge and the surrounding countryside. A National Cycle Route (NCR4) runs along the tow path of the Kennet & Avon Canal adjacent to the site's northern boundary.

The site is served by two buses that run along the western edge (Marsh Road / Hill Street) and the southern edge (A361).

Whaddon Lane is a vehicular access route that is also popular for walking, running and cycling. The A361 divides the site and currently does not have any pedestrian crossing facilities.

The emerging concept plan will:

- Merge development with the Hilperton to Melksham (via Semington) Active Travel Scheme
- Strengthen existing pedestrian and cycle links and create attractive new recreational routes and direct connections to facilities between the site and wider area.
- Provide an enhanced public transport service to key local centres.
- Include measures (through highways design and urbanism) to calm traffic on the A361.
- Consider the closure of Whaddon Lane to vehicles to the east of Hilperton Village Hall (whilst allowing for alternative access arrangements to existing properties).

Existing Buildings

The neighbourhood contains farm buildings, business premises and the very well used Trowbridge Rugby Club. How these interact with any new streets and buildings will need to be very carefully considered in conjunction with existing users.

Rear gardens of homes along Hill Street and Devizes Road border part of the site. Again this will warrant careful consideration.

The emerging concept plan will:

- Position local centres close to the business park and rugby club as these are focal spaces for the local community with high levels of activity.
- Locate areas of green space along the western boundary of the site to provide a buffer with existing homes, whilst also providing new space for recreation.

Utilities

32KV Power lines run across the base of Hag Hill. These normally have a 30m no-build area on either side to keep homes away from power lines. Whilst the land between the power lines and the break of the slope at Hag Hill could be developed, it is most probable (given the need for publicly accessible open space) that new homes and gardens would not extend east of the power lines.





The potential country park at the south of the site

4.2 Opportunities

Canal

The canal is a great feature and a lovely bit of countryside with attractive paths on either side. It can help create a truly memorable place. It is already a popular place to walk, run or cycle. This can be preserved by leaving a healthy buffer between homes and the canal. Might it also be improved by a canalside pub or restaurant?

Very careful consideration would need to be given to the canal's ecology and sensitivity shown to existing residents living in canal boats.



Kennet & Avon Canal in Newbury

Existing Business Parks

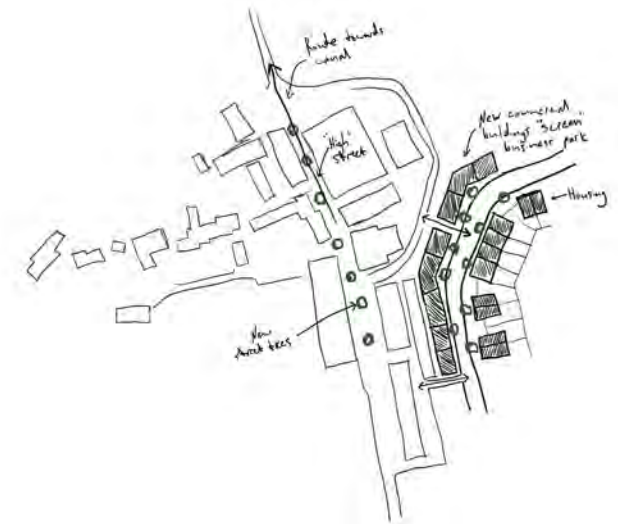
The site is an exceptional circumstance thanks to being anchored by two existing popular business parks along the east and southern boundaries. There is rightfully a lot of pride about the success of these locations.

Host to a wide range of businesses, there is a long waiting list, proving the need for more business premises in the area. The site can continue to upscale tenants by building a greater variety of units in order to offer further progression for businesses to grow locally rather than moving further afield.

This is a "good problem to have" and a possible solution is to 'screen' the existing business park with a new mixed-use centre.



Hilperton Marsh Farm business park



Green Infrastructure

The need for Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace is an opportunity to create a new country park for Trowbridge to serve the northern part of the town. To the south, Southwick Country Park, linked to the Hope Nature Centre, is a very popular asset, but the achievement of a northern green infrastructure 'pole' would serve both existing and new residents.

The environs of the site are also notable for sports pitch provision (Trowbridge RFC and the new 3G pitch on the town council's land). Development would normally increase the need for additional sporting facilities and these could even stretch to a site for a new leisure centre for Trowbridge, or at least a 'satellite' facility should a brownfield location be of insufficient size to meet all the town's needs.



Hilperton Marsh Farm business park



Looking north west from the south of the site, the A361 passing below



Looking westwards from the south of the site, the A361 passing on the right

5 A POSSIBLE VISION



PRINCIPLE 1

A beautiful and popular **new neighbourhood** for Trowbridge and Hilperton



PRINCIPLE 2

Two new local centres which are good places to meet and in which businesses can thrive and grow



PRINCIPLE 3

A beautiful piece of Wiltshire which combines the best of the old with the best of the new



PRINCIPLE 4

A good place to live and to grow up with two new schools



PRINCIPLE 5

A **garden neighbourhood** with ready access to the countryside, to the Kennet & Avon Canal and with a new country park and hedgerows throughout



PRINCIPLE 6

A neighbourhood in which it is **natural, safe, easy and enjoyable** to get around by foot and by cycle

Movement Principles



PRINCIPLE 7

It is irrational to use a car to get into Trowbridge. It is **safe, easy, direct and enjoyable to cycle** to Trowbridge along either the canal or Middle Lane



PRINCIPLE 8

A good new **bus service** linking the new neighbourhood, Hilperton and Trowbridge

6 CONCEPT PLANNING

6.1 Site concept and key features

This section illustrates the scale of the opportunity on the site and a broadly based 'end state' spatial strategy growth of this part of Trowbridge. Critically, the concept does not view the byway west of the Rugby Club as the logical 'ending point' for the growth of the area. This is especially so, given the other constraints around the town, including Green Belt to the west. Land to the west of Trowbridge will be required at some point but not before north east Trowbridge is fully utilised as a broad location. It may be that the delivery of both areas overlaps.

Our concept planning is informed by a series of baseline technical studies (ecology, landscape and visual, heritage and archaeology, drainage, transport and highways). Information will continue to be gathered to inform and evaluate the evolution of the concept plan, masterplanning and outline and reserved matters planning applications. This process will include Design Coding and 'co-design' opportunities for those who have an interest in, or are likely to be affected (to various degrees) by the proposal.

Our concept planning is 'aware' of the evolving proposals for the Site 4 allocation to the north of the Kennet & Avon canal and of Barratt Homes' layout

for Maxcroft Farm, off the Texaco roundabout. In our assessment the whole area needs a unified infrastructure plan, both spatially and in terms of phasing and delivery. Key issues are the provision of accessible green space (the "SANG" strategy), highways (as always) and the spacing of primary schools and local centres, and how this relates to what already exists in the area.

A large site always presents a number of challenges in integrating a myriad of necessary functions with planning policy, local needs and demand, and sensitivity to context and ecology. To say it is a blank state is therefore not accurate. Far from it. Nonetheless, it is a special privilege to create something new on land previously never built on, and which may currently be valued by local residents for precisely that reason.

Designing a new place is therefore an enormous responsibility, perhaps one generally not appreciated enough in the housing industry, but not one taken lightly by Lightwood, Create Streets and the Oatley family, as long term legacy landowners. We believe passionately in creating beautiful, sustainable new places which can be loved by their residents and may even improve what was there before.

The beautiful Wiltshire countryside is on the doorstep and both Trowbridge and Hilperton are strong anchors in which to create a new place. Numerous good examples of urbanism can be found in the local area and beyond within beautiful villages like Holt and further afield Bradford-on-Avon and Bath, to which Trowbridge residents often travel to for shopping and entertainment.

A site of this size requires attention to many aspects, some due simply to the nature of the size, others a result of local planning requirements.

Design principles for key features:

Landscape

This is a lovely part of the country, with rolling hills and far reaching views northwards and southwards. Retaining the best views has been a priority of the design. A potential canalside country park (despite that land being set aside for housing in the Council's plans), and another at Hag Hill, would preserve perhaps the most commanding and interesting views afforded from within the site.

Hedges

It was once common to rip out hedges before starting new construction. Thankfully, we have a more sensitive approach to hedges today, but it is still very important to balance the need to preserve hedges with the principles of good urban design.

Green spaces

Large open spaces at the periphery of new housing are vitally important to liveable places with plenty of space for outdoor activities. Equally important are green spaces among houses, such as parks and greens. We include those, too, integrated with the network of hedges and linked to the larger green spaces and countryside.

Centres

A place cannot be full of life without places for people to congregate. A place cannot be sustainable if one needs to drive for every daily errand. A place cannot be healthy if exercise is not part of daily life. A place cannot be thriving if shops and places of business are not integrated with homes.

For these reasons, centres large and small should be located within easy walking or cycling distance, and be true mixed-use places with shops, dining, entertainment, and places of business to ensure activity throughout the day. Two larger centres at the east and west of the site are joined by potential smaller centres.

Schools

We believe schools, especially primary schools, should be the heart of a community, located within centres along a network of green walking and cycling routes, and close to green areas giving the option for forest schools. The spatial distribution of existing and proposed primary schools across the entire area will need to inform concept options.

The propensity of different age groups to walk and cycle reflect the additional flexibility that exists for secondary school sites (especially if connections are good). The sheer scale of these sites (and future proofing) needs to be considered when trying to create a successful urban townscape. Large schools can be potential disrupters to other urban design objectives, yet still need to be accommodated.

Canal

The canal is a real asset, a long stretch of attractive waterway embedded at the north edge of the site. The ecological role of the canal will need to be respected, but this can be achieved whilst improving existing routes and developing new ones to the south, including the option of new crossing points. There is an opportunity to create a destination near the canal such as a new pub or café. Equally it could provide a nice outlook for some workspace. Local examples such as The Barge Inn in Bradford-on-Avon, or the Glove Factory in Holt, come to mind.





Looking downhill towards the canal from the south east corner of the potential Whaddon Meadow Country Park



Looking westwards from the north east of the site, along the canal

6.2 Strategic options

The following strategic options encapsulate some of the 'big moves' that we have considered, whilst at the same time presenting an urban structure that reflects Create Streets principles. Against each option there is scope to 'push, pull, and twist' (i.e sub-options) before settling on an optimal solution.

Compared to the Council's plans, both these options limit development close to Hilperton and its conservation area, preferring instead to expand beyond the byway and across the A361 to make for a more coherent urban form and vastly expanded green spaces and amenities.

Option A

This option includes primary schools in the east and west, a secondary school north of the A361 and additional residential blocks south of the A361.

Strengths

- All schools are located alongside one of the main centres, creating destinations for children and parents in the morning and afternoon.
- All schools are easily accessible along the network of green walking and cycling lanes without needing to cross the A361.
- Residential blocks south of the A361 create a gateway into the new large and accessible country park, known as a "SANG".

Challenges

- The A361 between the edge of the site and the Devizes Road roundabout would need to be 'treated' by highway works: signage and calming development to reduce speeds and introduce safe crossings to residential development and the SANG to the south east.

Option B

This option also includes primary schools in the east and west but the secondary school is south of the A361, with some differences in residential blocks.

Strengths

- Both primary schools located in close proximity to one of the main centres.
- No residential blocks south of the A361 mean there is no division between the housing areas of the site.
- There is additional space south of the A361 for sports pitches, allotments or other amenities.
- Retention of more openness south east of the A361.

Challenges

- The secondary school must contend with teenagers crossing the A361 and this will need to be made safe as in Option A. The Council has achieved this at Melksham Oak and the A365 and at Abbeyfield Chippenham and the A4.
- There is a reduced town and country interface between housing and a country park on the boundary of the Hag Hill SANG.



Kennet & Avon Canal

Whaddon Lane

A361

Semington

Hilpert Marsh Farm

North SANG

Site 4

Future primary school

Maxcroft Farm site

Marsh Road

Hilpert Marsh

Secondary School

Primary School

Green Fields

Hill Street

Hilpert

Rugby Club

South SANG

Elizabeth Way

Land off Elizabeth Way

Middle Lane

Devizes Road

Paxcroft Farm

Hag Hill

Option A

Scale in metres
0 50 100 200



Kennet & Avon Canal

Whaddon Lane

A361

Semington

Site 4

Future primary school

Hilpert Marsh Farm

North SANG

Maxcroft Farm site

Marsh Road

Primary School

Hilpert Marsh

Primary School

Primary School

Rugby Club

Secondary School campus and other pitches

South SANG

Land off Elizabeth Way

Elizabeth Way

Hilpert

Hill Street

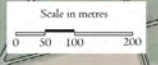
Middle Lane

Devizes Road

Paxcroft Farm

Hag Hill

Option B



Affirming the Strategic Opportunity

The strategic optioneering for the emerging vision illustrates the scale of the opportunity on offer to shape the future growth of Trowbridge/Hilperton for the existing community and future residents.

The placemaking process will evolve as more and more interested parties become involved in visioning, concept planning and masterplanning. The plans in this document are concept plans, not full masterplans, designed to communicate suggestions and proposals. Nothing is completely set in stone, although many of the core elements are considered to have merit as a firm foundation for further work and debate.

Our vision for a beautiful and green new neighbourhood at 'Great Whaddon' could deliver:

- 2,750-3,000 new homes
- Two new primary schools and a secondary school
- A range of shops, employment and community facilities

- Generous open space including around 65ha of SANG, other parkland, green ways, orchards, village greens and sports pitches/facilities
- New active travel links
- Improved public transport services



Kingston Farm in Bradford-on-Avon is a fantastic example of vernacular new homes.



Our vision is for a neighbourhood where homes are set within attractive green spaces and tree lined streets (Poundbury).

6.3 Centres and movement

Centres

As the neighbourhood grows, several pulses of activity may develop over time. One already exists at the business park, providing a natural location for an expanded centre. A second hub of activity could be in the east of the site, with smaller hubs throughout the site. These could be just a corner shop or cafe.

Paxcroft Farm, off the A361, also has expansion potential for small business activity. It too is in Oatley ownership and would receive investment in line with their business planning and linked to development across the wider site.

An accessible and natural green space (or “SANG”) will be within a 10 minute walk of either centre and the main centres themselves a 15-20 minute walk or 5-10 minute cycle from each other.

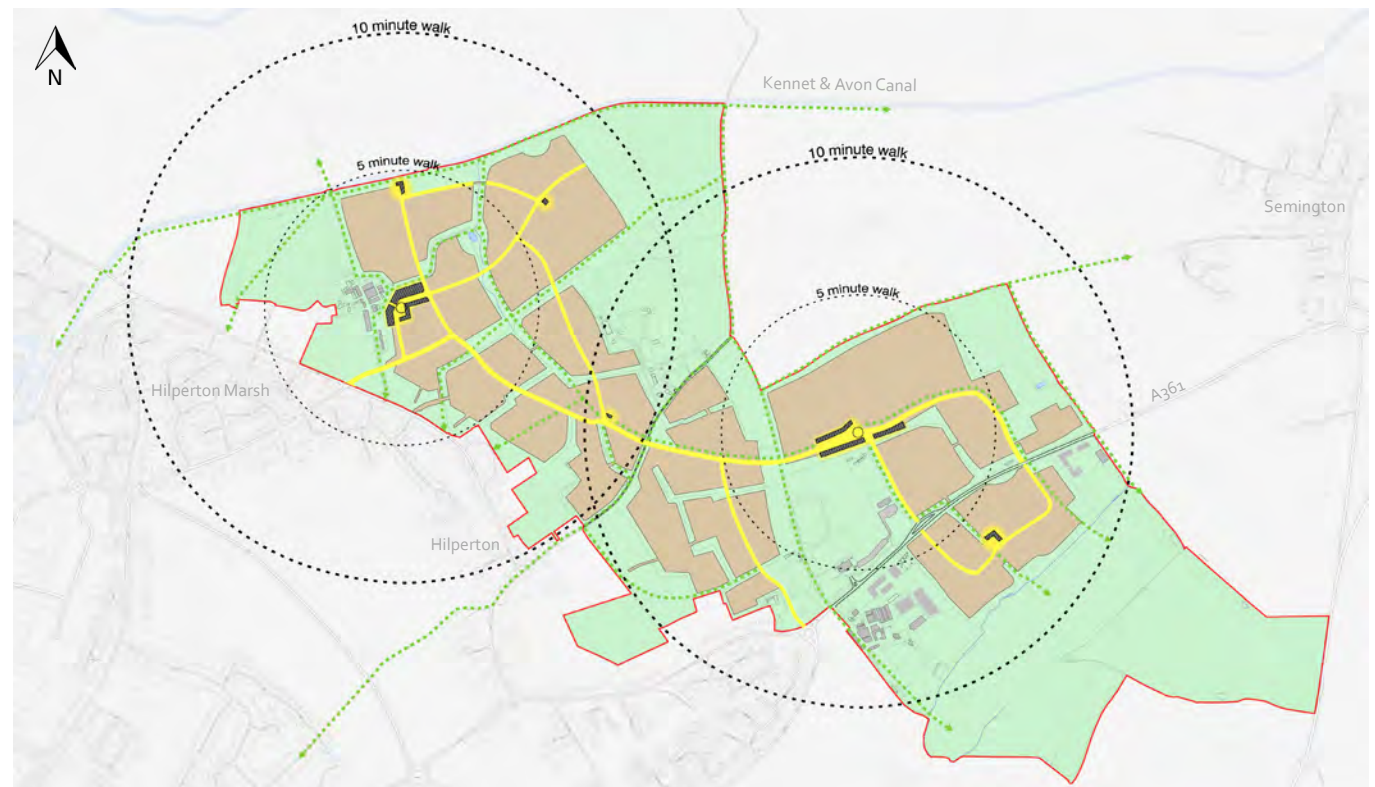
Green corridors

It should be easy and enjoyable for residents of all ages, but particularly children, to get around the site. A network of green walking and cycle routes will criss cross the neighbourhood, some following existing public rights of way. Others might be new paths following historic hedgerows and connecting neighbourhood centres to schools and homes.

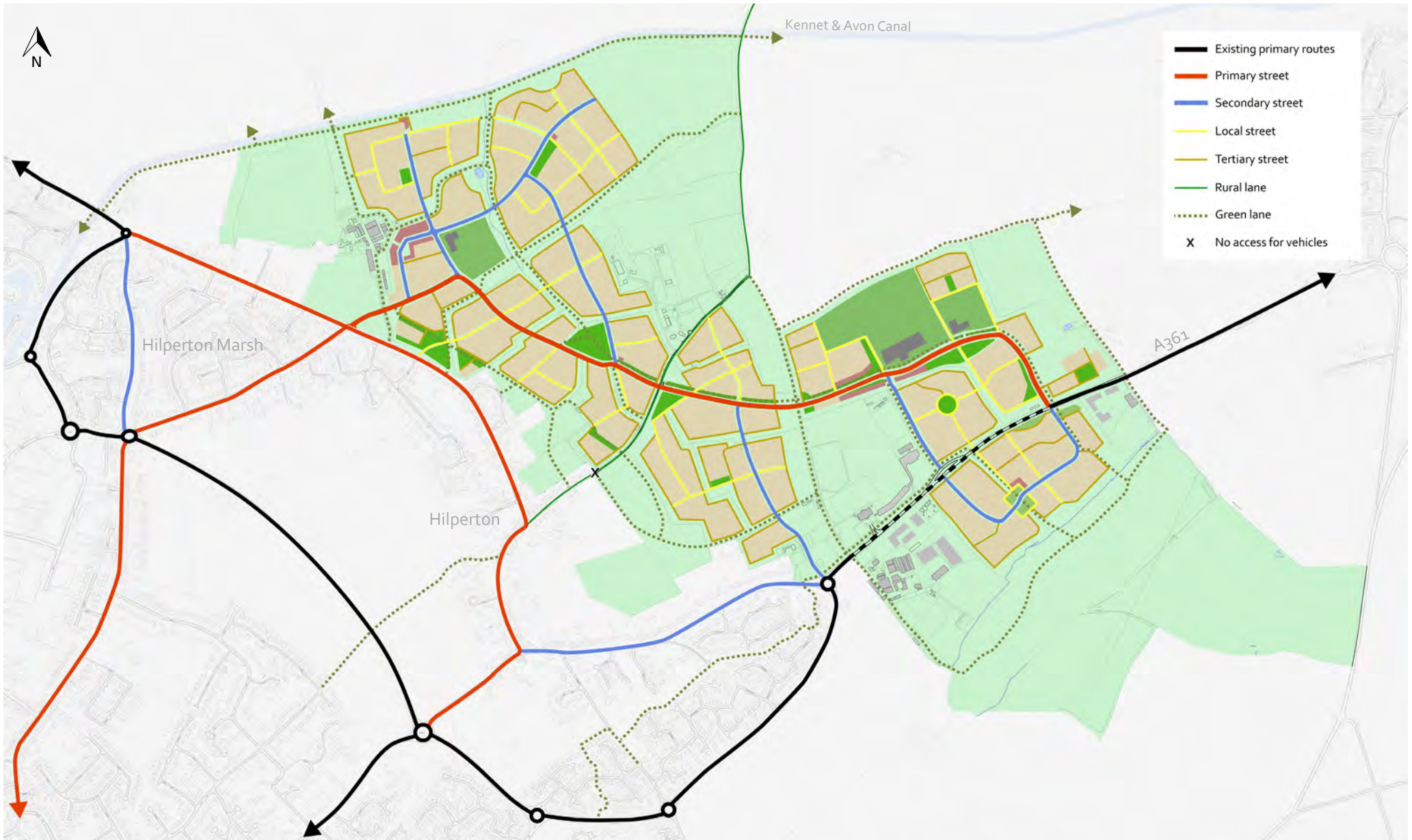
Movement

It is important that the new neighbourhood be integrated into Trowbridge and neighbouring communities. Green corridors within the site will be linked with routes beyond the site into

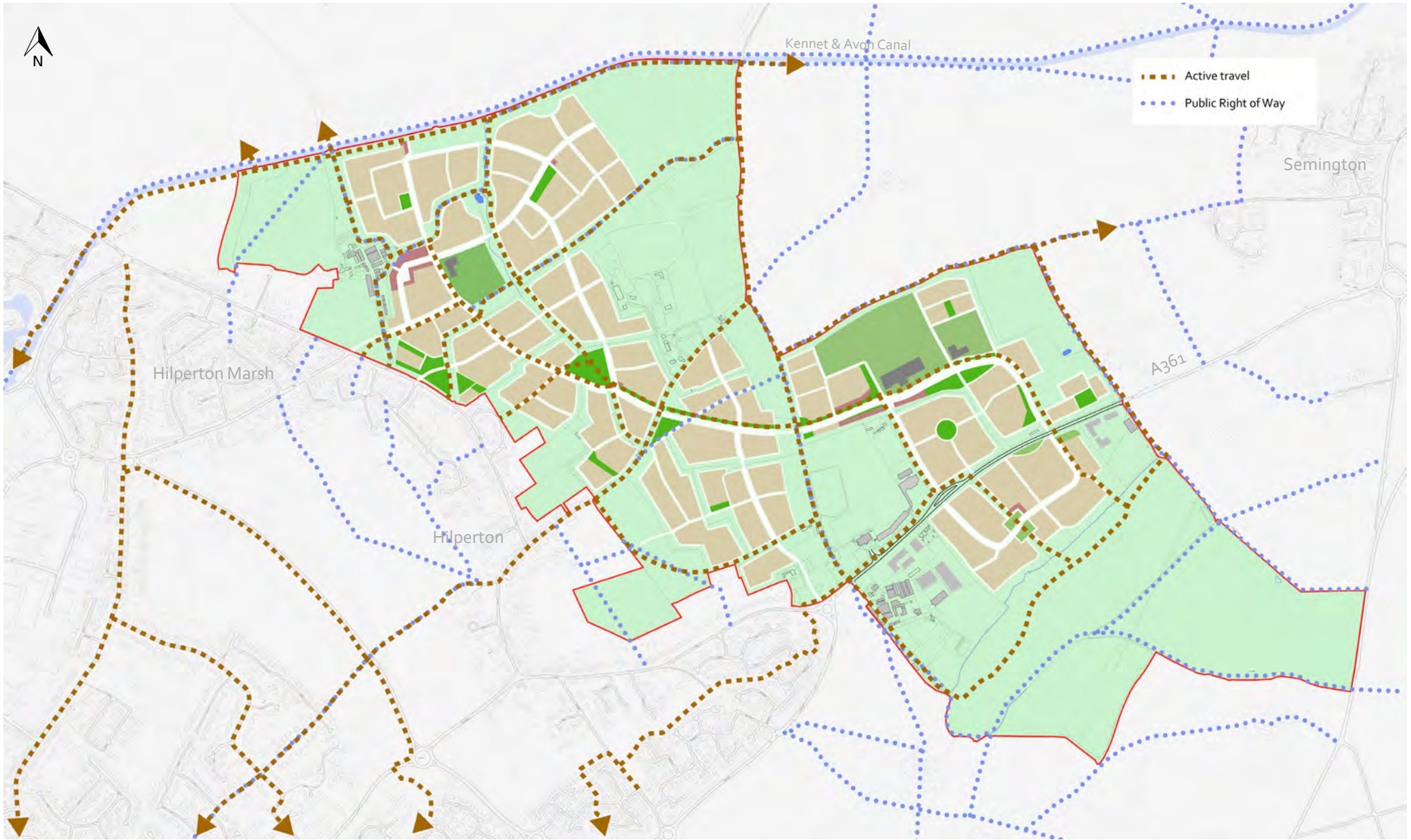
Trowbridge and into the countryside. Bus routes could be rerouted into the site and made more frequent to provide a viable alternative to private cars.



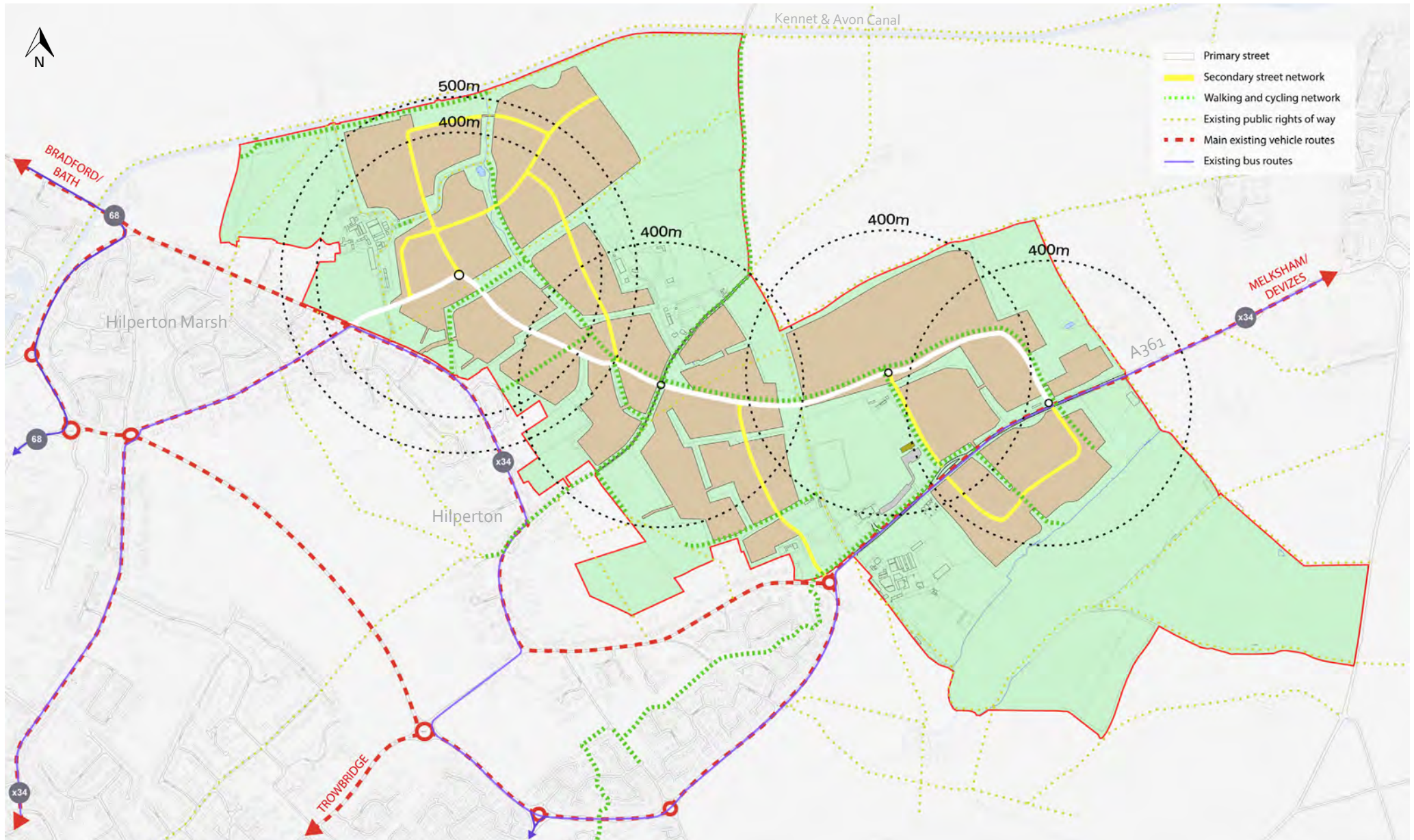
Locations of possible centres and approximate 5 and 10 minute walking distances.



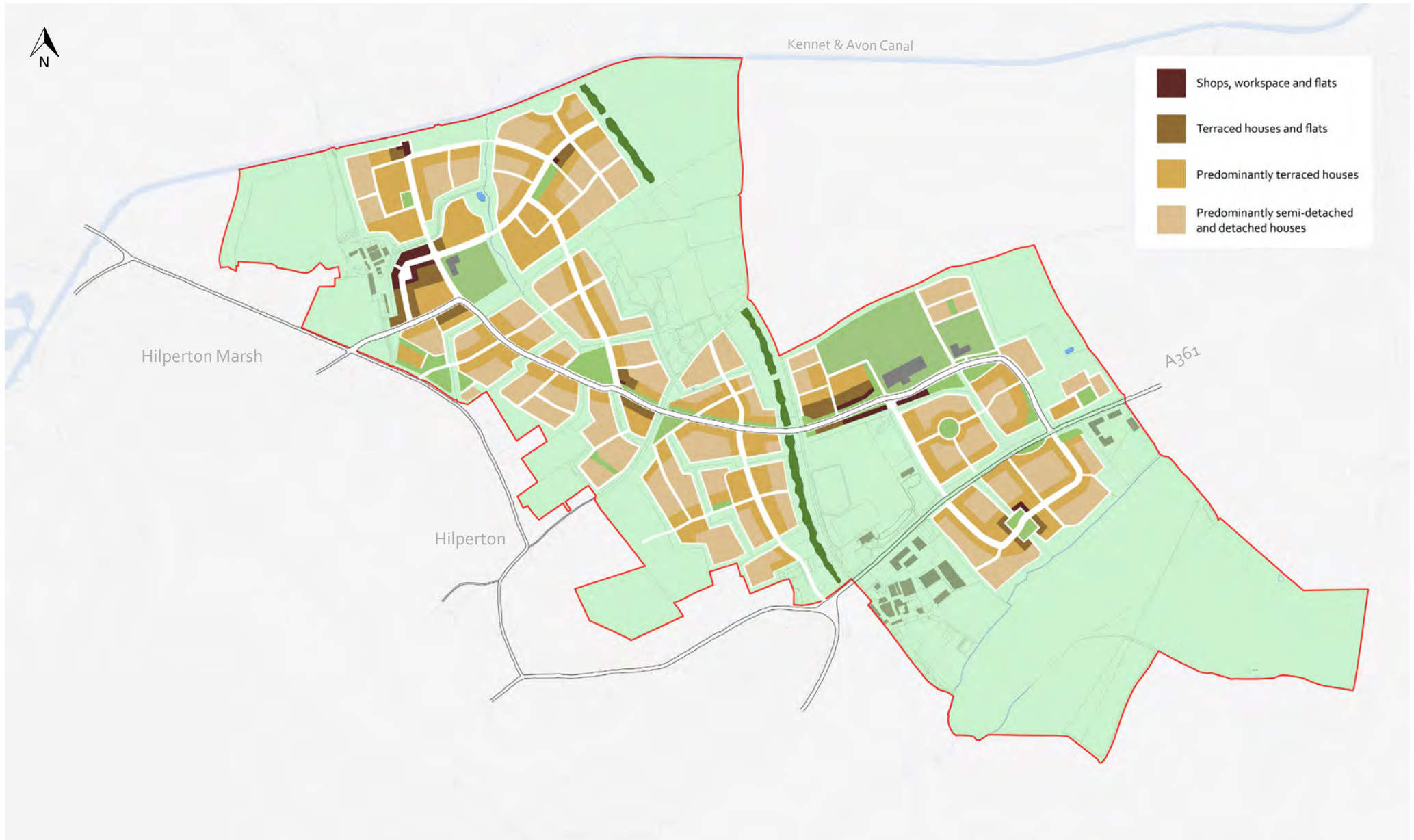
Potential street hierarchy



Existing public rights of way and potential active travel routes within and beyond the site.



Existing and possible movement and bus routes inside and beyond the site. The majority of residents would live within 400m of an efficient, direct bus route.



Map of potential uses, ranging from higher density mixed-use areas to lower density residential only areas.



Potential neighbourhoods and neighbourhood names and larger green spaces.



Looking east towards the byway and potential location of the main centre and secondary school



Looking south towards Hag Hill and the potential country park, or "SANG", at the south of the site

7 CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Over several generations, the instinctive, and empirically not unreasonable, assumption of the British people has become that new development will make existing places worse, will scar the landscape and spoil existing towns and villages. Too often this has been true.

To end at the beginning, here to the east of Trowbridge, we emphatically do not wish to do this. We wish to work with local neighbours, landowners, schools, small businesses and Wiltshire Council to co-create a beautiful place of which we can all be proud and in which it is easy to lead a happy, healthy and sociable life: a green and walkable new neighbourhood. A place to live and a

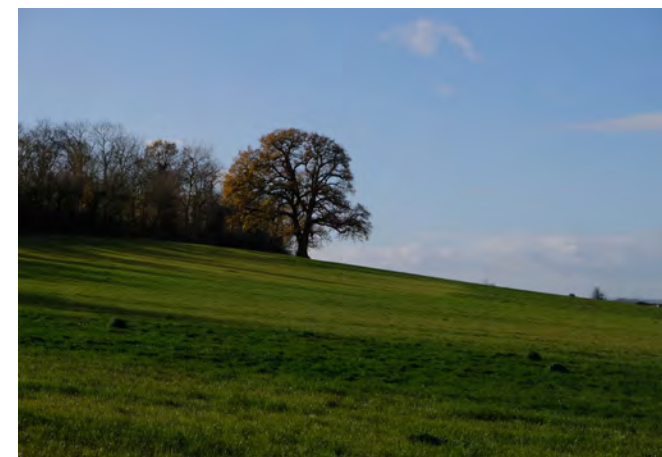
great place to go to school.

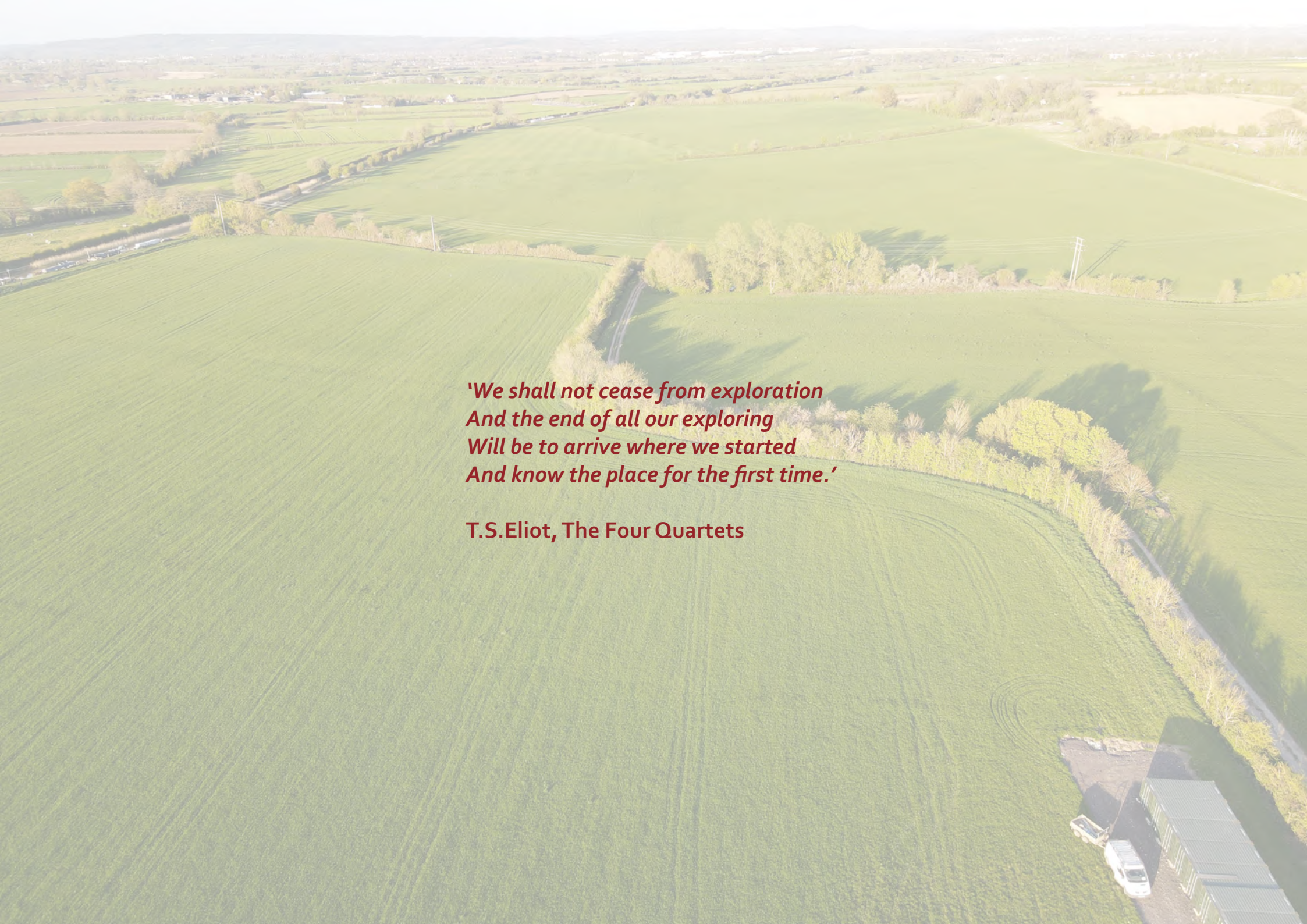
This very early stage report does not pretend to have all the answers. It is the start of a journey, not the end of one. It is a possible vision, a possible approach and some thoughts and questions for the future, no more.

This report is based on an evolving understanding of the issues and opportunities. This will continue. To take one example, as we learn more about the site's sustainable urban drainage requirements, some blocks of homes, streets and gardens may need to contract or change. We will probably also find new opportunities for green links.

However, we can say from the work done so far on this 'possible Vision' and "concept plan" that a larger development area (in other words a larger Local Plan allocation) does give more scope to create a beautiful and popular new neighbourhood through a judicious integration of planning policy, masterplanning, architectural design and delivery. This can be to the optimal benefit of people, prosperity and the environment during the plan period and beyond.

We look forward, we hope, to working with you to create desperately needed new homes in a way that gives to Wiltshire and Trowbridge and which does not take away.



An aerial photograph of a vast, green agricultural landscape. A long, narrow path lined with trees runs through the center of the field. In the foreground, a large, dark-colored building with a corrugated metal roof is visible, with a white van and a yellow tractor parked nearby. The background shows a distant town and rolling hills under a clear sky.

*'We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.'*

T.S.Eliot, The Four Quartets

GREAT WHADDON

Ideas for co-creating a beautiful and green new area for Trowbridge

