

2.10 Accessibility

A Transport Assessment (TA) has been prepared by RGP to accompany the planning application.

Existing highways network

Codicote Road is a two-way single-carriageway road (approximately 6.5 metres wide) across the frontage of the Site. It is subject to a 40mph speed limit directly outside the Site. The Site is currently accessed by vehicles via a central point of access across the Site frontage. The Site access is formed as a vehicle crossover with access gates set back from the edge of the public highway. It is not considered that the Site and surrounding highway network has any underlying accident problems that would warrant further detailed assessment.

Sustainable transport connections

The Site is located between Codicote and Welwyn, both sited within an attractive walking distance of the Site. Both local centres offer a range of day-to-day facilities and essential amenities suitable for a prospective resident of the Site.

A number of accessible routes are available to reach local amenities, particularly to those in Welwyn, which prospective residents would likely see as attractive alternatives to the use of the private car.

Pedestrians and cyclists

A footway runs along the southern side of Codicote Road across its entirety, connecting the Site to Codicote and Welwyn. A footway is also provided along the northern side of the carriageway, albeit intermittently between the two centres. As illustrated (rightt), there are several designated Public Right of Way (PROW), including footpaths and bridleways, within proximity to the Site. This includes routes across Singlers Marsh, providing quieter traffic-free routes into the centre of Welwyn.

A further route between the Site and Welwyn is provided along Fulling Mill Lane. This road serves as a lightly trafficked and slow-speed access road alongside Singlers Marsh, serving a small number of dwellings, and also offering an attractive and popular alternative route to the main Codicote Road.

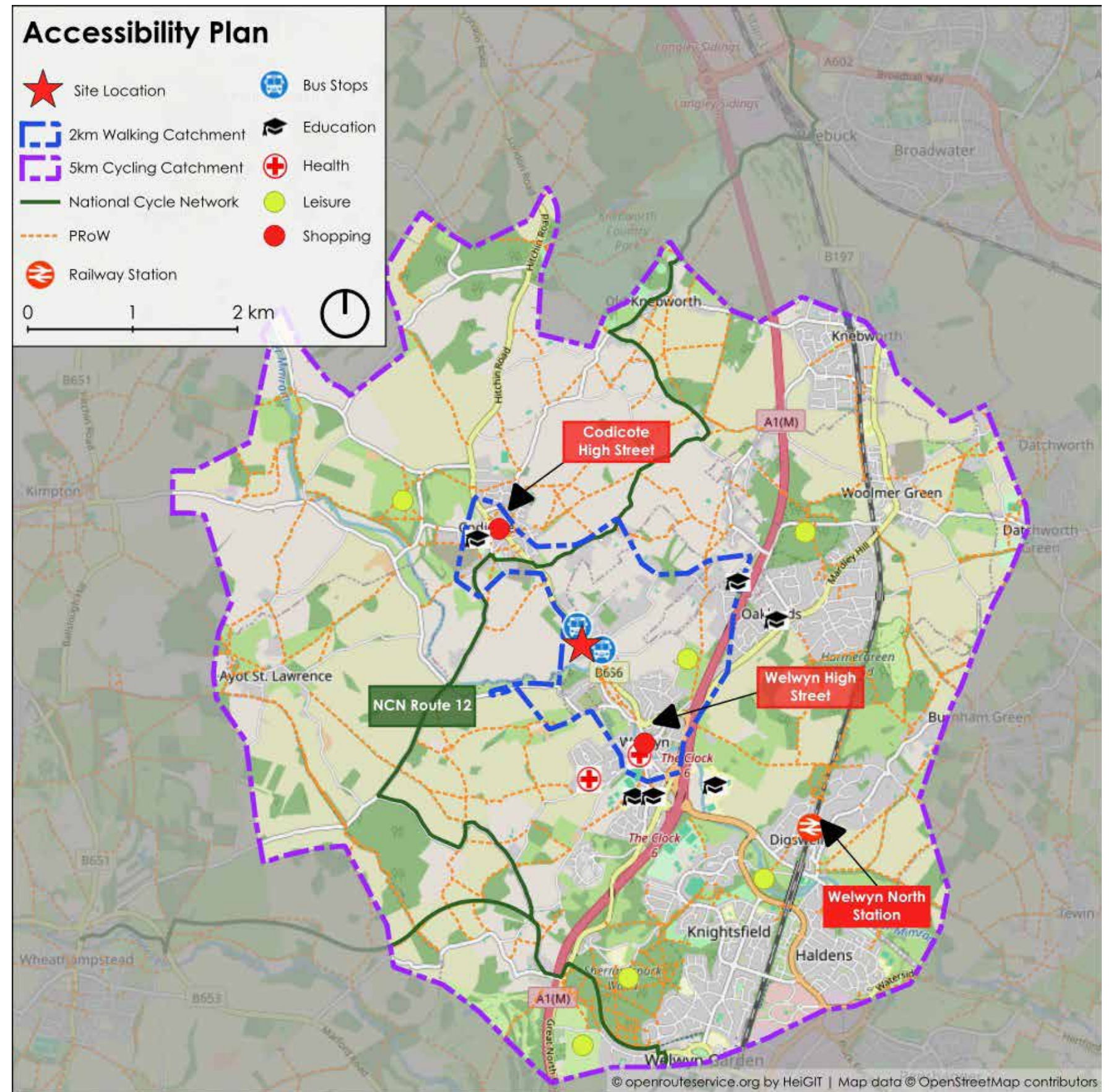
National Cycleway Route (NCR) 12 is located circa 850 metres north of the Site on the southern boundary of Codicote, also accessible to the west via quieter rural lanes. Several additional routes are also available to the south, including NCR 57 and NCR 61.

Public transport

The nearest bus stops to the Site are located on Codicote Road, with the westbound bus stop positioned at the eastern edge of the Site, and the eastbound bus stop positioned approximately 100 metres further east. Bus routes 215 and 815 provide connections to Codicote (4 mins), Welwyn (3 mins) and Digswell Monday to Friday. Bus routes 314 and 315 provide services to Welwyn Garden City, Welwyn, Codicote and Hitchin Monday to Saturday. The routes offer around 16 services per day between the hours of 07:00 and 20:00 hours in both directions.

There are a number of additional bus routes and stops within walking distance in Welwyn village centre. These provide wider connections as well as linking to local train stations.

The nearest train station is Welwyn North, located in Digswell and circa 3.3km from the Site (40-minute walk or 10-minute cycle). The station provides services into Cambridge and London with circa 2 trains per hour into each location.



Site accessibility plan (RGP)

A Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been prepared by Arthian Ltd. to inform the proposals. Please refer to the complete LVA report submitted as part of the application for full details of the landscape and visual implications of the application.

The report concludes:

The landscape character of the Site and the Danesbury Settled Slopes Landscape Character Area (LCA 133a) is assessed as having a Medium-High sensitivity to the type of development proposed. The Site lies on the north-western edge Of Welwyn, and to the west of the B656 Codicote Road, and is influenced by residential development to the east and its former use as a Farm Shop. These existing elements diminish the rural character of the Site, contributing to a semi-urban fringe context.

The Proposed Development would introduce additional built form, infrastructure, and planting, resulting in the loss of some existing tree cover and areas of both rough and semi-improved grassland. The Site is moderately well enclosed, with boundary vegetation offering a degree of visual containment from surrounding areas. As such, the perceived extent of change from nearby areas would be limited. The resulting effect on the Site's landscape character is assessed as Moderate adverse, and Minor adverse for the wider LCA. These effects would be most noticeable in the early years before new planting matures. Over time, the proposed planting would positively contribute to the already established and retained landscape fabric and character by enhancing green infrastructure and improving the visual integration of the development into the surrounding landscape.

Views of the Proposed Development would be restricted to a limited number of locations, primarily at close range, with the exception of mid-distance filtered views from higher ground to the southwest (Viewpoint 8). While there is no private 'right to a view,' visual amenity impacts for nearby residents can be a material consideration in planning decisions.

The Site is located within the Green Belt. Given the extent of existing vegetation both within and to the perimeter of the Site, and the enclosure provided within the wider landscape due to the combination of the undulation topography and areas of woodland within close proximity to the Site itself, there is little visibility from the Site or immediate areas to the wider landscape, and as a whole, the Site reads as an area of the existing urban edge and not the wider rural landscape.

Notable effects are anticipated for some residents of the dwellings that lie to the east of Codicote Road and immediately adjacent to the north-east corner of the Site, where Moderate-Major adverse effects may occur at Year 1 due to the proximity of new development. Views from Public Rights of Way (PRoW's) are primarily limited to a section of Footpath Codicote 023 to the south-west where an elevated section of the footpath is aligned with the Site, before it turns and continues into a shallow valley. The worst-case level of effect for users of this footpath is assessed as Moderate adverse at Year 1, observed from a location that is elevated with open views of the western edge of the Site and where filtered views of the Proposed Development are considered likely. Over time, the establishment of proposed planting would help to integrate the development into the local landscape context, reducing visual effects for both residents and PRoW users.

Winter views, when deciduous vegetation is not in leaf, have been considered. While visibility of the Proposed Development would be marginally increased, this would not materially alter the overall assessment of effects, which would remain broadly consistent with summer conditions (refer to individual viewpoint assessments).

In conclusion, the landscape in the vicinity of the Site and the wider area is considered to have the capacity to accommodate the scale and nature of the Proposed Development without overriding adverse visual or landscape effects.



LVA site visibility viewpoint 7 (Arthian Ltd.)

**Former Big Cat Sanctuary
Codicote Road, Welwyn**



3. Design Framework

3.0 Design Framework

3.1 Introduction

This section sets out the key policies and guidance which form the framework within which the design of the scheme has been developed.

Further considerations include the relevant policies of the Planning Practice Guidance and Supplementary Planning Guidance.

For more detailed planning information please refer to the Planning Statement which accompanies the application.

3.2 National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in 2012 and has been updated on a number of occasions since, the latest being in December 2024. The document sets out national guidance relating to design. Paragraph 131 states:

“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. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process..”

Paragraph 135 explains that planning decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- 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.

More detailed guidance on design was provided in March 2014 (updated in October 2019) within the Government's Planning Practice Guidance. The Guidance explains that planning should promote:

- Local character (including landscape setting)
- Safe, connected and efficient streets
- A network of green spaces (including parks) and public places
- Appropriate security measures and address crime prevention
- Access and inclusion
- Efficient use of natural resources
- Cohesive and vibrant neighbourhoods

A well designed place is defined as one which is functional, supports mixed uses and tenures, is adaptable and resilient, has a distinctive character, is attractive and promotes ease of movement. Public spaces should be lively. Guidance is provided on layout, building form, scale, details and materials.

Chapter 12 of the NPPF emphasises the importance of achieving well-designed places, particularly those that respond to local character and history, and are visually attractive through high-quality architecture and appropriate landscaping.

3.3 The National Design Guide

The National Design Guide was initially published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in September 2019 and updated in January 2021. It is a response to the “Living with Beauty” report published in January 2020 by the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission.

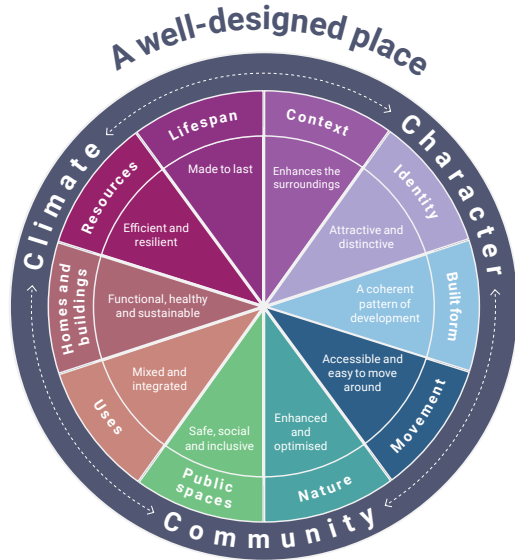
This guide illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. It forms part of the Government’s collection of planning practice guidance and should be read alongside the separate planning practice guidance on design process and tools.

The National Design Guide addresses the question of how we recognise well-designed places, by outlining and illustrating the Government’s priorities in the form of ten characteristics. The choices made in the design process contribute towards achieving these characteristics and shape the character of the place.

The 10 characteristics of the National Design Guide

Well-designed places have individual characteristics which work together to create its physical distinctiveness. The ten characteristics highlighted in the National Design Guide help to nurture and sustain a sense of community and work to positively address environmental issues affecting climate. They all contribute towards the cross-cutting themes for good design set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The ten characteristics which are set out in the Design Guide and will be extensively considered in the design development of this scheme are:

- Context
- Identity
- Built form
- Movement
- Nature
- Public spaces
- Uses
- Homes and Buildings
- Resources
- Lifespan



3.4 Local planning policy

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031 (Adopted 2022).

The North Hertfordshire Local Plan, adopted in November 2022, sets out the long-term strategy for growth and development across the district to 2031. Its overarching vision is to deliver sustainable, attractive and vibrant communities, balancing growth with environmental protection and local character.

A central priority of the Plan is the delivery of new housing, including a mix of high-quality homes and affordable housing, with a range of tenures to meet identified local needs as well as contributing to the wider housing market. The local plan identifies a requirement for 11,500 homes to be built between 2011 and 2031 to meet the needs of North Hertfordshire.

Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan 2016–2036 (Adopted 2023)

The Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan, adopted in October 2023, establishes a long-term strategy to deliver a vibrant, prosperous and sustainable borough, building on its strong connections to London and Cambridge and its Garden City heritage.

Emerging plans

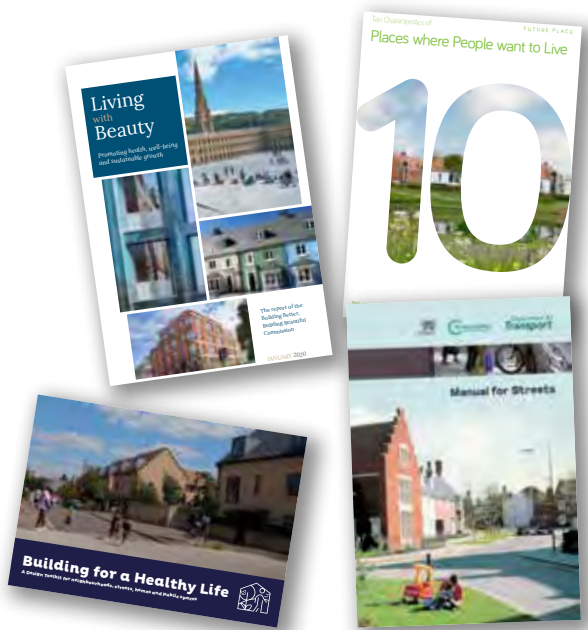
North Hertfordshire Council is preparing a new Local Plan to succeed the adopted 2022 Plan, covering growth beyond 2031 (likely into the 2040s). It is currently at early scoping and consultation stage (2026), considering future housing, infrastructure, and spatial strategy, with adoption anticipated around 2028/29 although at this early stage, the emerging plan carries very limited weight.

3.5 Design guides

3.0 Design Framework

The emerging development proposals have been designed with reference to a number of relevant design guides as follows:

- Manual for Streets (2007) (MfS 2, September 2010);
- Secured by Design;
- Living with Beauty (2020);
- Building for a Healthy Life (2020); and
- Places Where People Want to Live (2018).



3.6 Site considerations

When bringing forward proposals, both the application Site's considerations and opportunities are evaluated.

These help to shape the development to ensure that the proposals fully respect and respond to the natural features of the area.

The application Site considerations are:

- Location of existing access from Codicote Road.
- Existing trees, hedgerows and areas of woodland.
- Areas of potential flooding from surface water.
- Setting and amenity of Listed building at 44 Codicote Road and Beechholme 54.
- Topography of Site, gradual fall from north to south.

KEY

-  Site boundary
-  Existing access
-  Trees and hedgerows
-  Site buildings/ structures
-  Surface water flooding areas
-  Flood zones 2 and 3
-  Relationship with neighbouring properties
-  Listed building
-  A category tree root protection areas (RPAs)
-  B category tree root protection areas (RPAs)
-  Site contours at 1m intervals (estimated)
-  Slopes (pointing down)
-  Boundary between North Herts and Welwyn Hatfield
-  Electricity cables

3.0 Design Framework



Site constraints plan

3.7 Site opportunities

- Provision of new homes to meet housing need.
- Creation of high quality homes in keeping with the character of the surrounding context.
- Improved access from Codicote Road.
- Provision of new footpath and cycle links to improve connectivity with the surrounding area whilst also promoting sustainable modes of travel.
- Enhancement of existing habitats to attract a wide variety of wildlife species.
- Provision of attractive open spaces.
- Additional planting to strengthen boundaries and deliver enhanced visual screening.

The development of land at Codicote Road seeks to ensure that impacts on the local environment are minimised and the area is enhanced. The vision for the new development is to achieve the following:

- Thriving, attractive place which sits comfortably within its context, protects the countryside to the west and enhances the neighbouring areas.
- Sustainable community with a rich demographic mix.
- Contemporary living and working environment which responds to the topography and respects the location of the Site within its context.
- Coherent and high quality inclusive public realm that takes account of the needs of all users.

KEY

- Site boundary
- ➔ Existing access
- Existing trees and hedgerows retained
- Listed building
- Boundary between North Herts and Welwyn Hatfield
- Potential development parcels
- Public open space
- - - ➔ Potential access routes
- - - ➔ Glimpsed long distance views towards west



Site opportunities plan

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**Former Big Cat Sanctuary
Codicote Road, Welwyn**



4. Design Process

4.1 Pre-application consultation

Howarth Homes are committed to engaging with the local authority, stakeholders and residents at an early stage of the design process in order for their comments and views to be taken on board through the design evolution. A programme of consultation has been undertaken alongside the preparation of sketch layouts to develop the proposals. The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) compiled by Terrapin group and submitted with the application contains complete details of the extent of consultation that has taken place.

4.2 Pre-application meetings with NHDC and WHBC

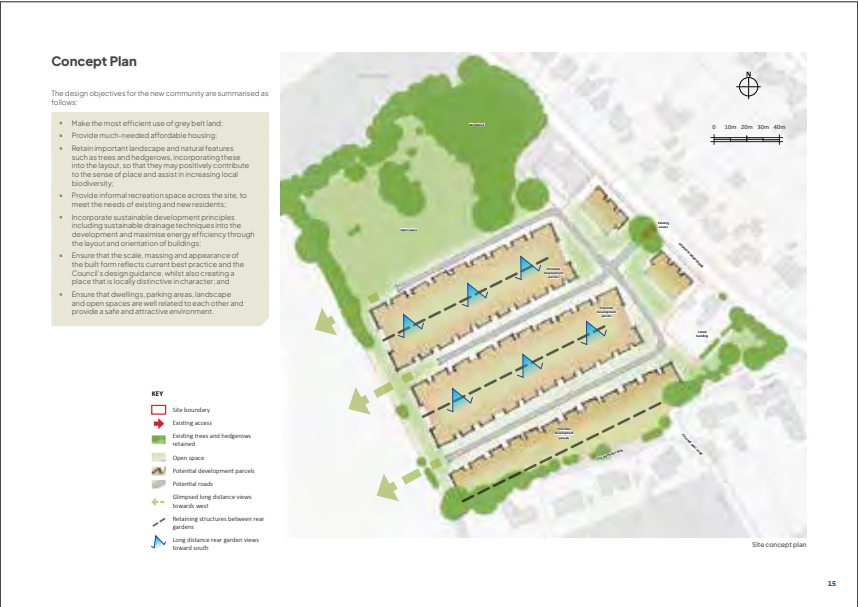
A pre-application meeting was held with Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council on 19 June 2026 and a further meeting was held North Hertfordshire District Council on 23 June 2026. A document was presented to explain the rationale behind the conceptual design for the Site.

Whilst no formal written responses were issued following these discussions, both meetings provided a valuable opportunity to present the emerging proposals and obtain officer feedback on the key principles of development.

Matters discussed included:

- The principle of residential development on the site;
- The proposed site layout and design approach;
- The scale and density of development;
- Affordable housing provision;
- Access, movement and connectivity considerations;
- Environmental and landscape matters; and
- The proposed Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) process and programme.

The discussions were constructive and assisted in shaping the evolution of the proposals prior to the submission of the planning application. The feedback received indicated broad agreement with the overall development principles, subject to the detailed assessment of technical and environmental matters through the planning application process.



Extracts from the document submitted prior to the pre-application meeting with NHDC

Consultation activities

The Applicant has actively engaged with and encouraged feedback from local residents, businesses and community stakeholders throughout the public consultation process, using multiple channels to receive detailed quantitative and qualitative feedback, including:

- Public consultation including a dedicated website and newsletter
- Public drop-in exhibitions on Wednesday 3rd June 2026, 4pm–7pm, and Saturday 6th June 2026, 10am–1pm.
- Online surveys hosted on the dedicated consultation website.

The consultation process resulted in:

- 494 newsletters being issued;
- 333 visitors to the website;
- 49 attendees to the public exhibition;
- 44 feedback forms being received; and
- engagement with more than 382 people.

The pre-application engagement process formed an important part of the evolution of both the proposed development and the Applicant’s planning strategy.

Consultation feedback

Feedback received through the public consultation events, stakeholder discussions and online engagement exercises was carefully reviewed alongside ongoing technical assessments. A number of recurring themes emerged, particularly in relation to traffic impacts, drainage, local infrastructure capacity and the level of detail that should accompany any future planning submission.

Applicants response to feedback

In response to these issues, the Applicant undertook further technical work and progressed the proposals beyond the level originally envisaged at the outset of consultation. This process informed the decision to pursue a full planning application, enabling detailed design information and supporting technical assessments to be submitted from the outset.

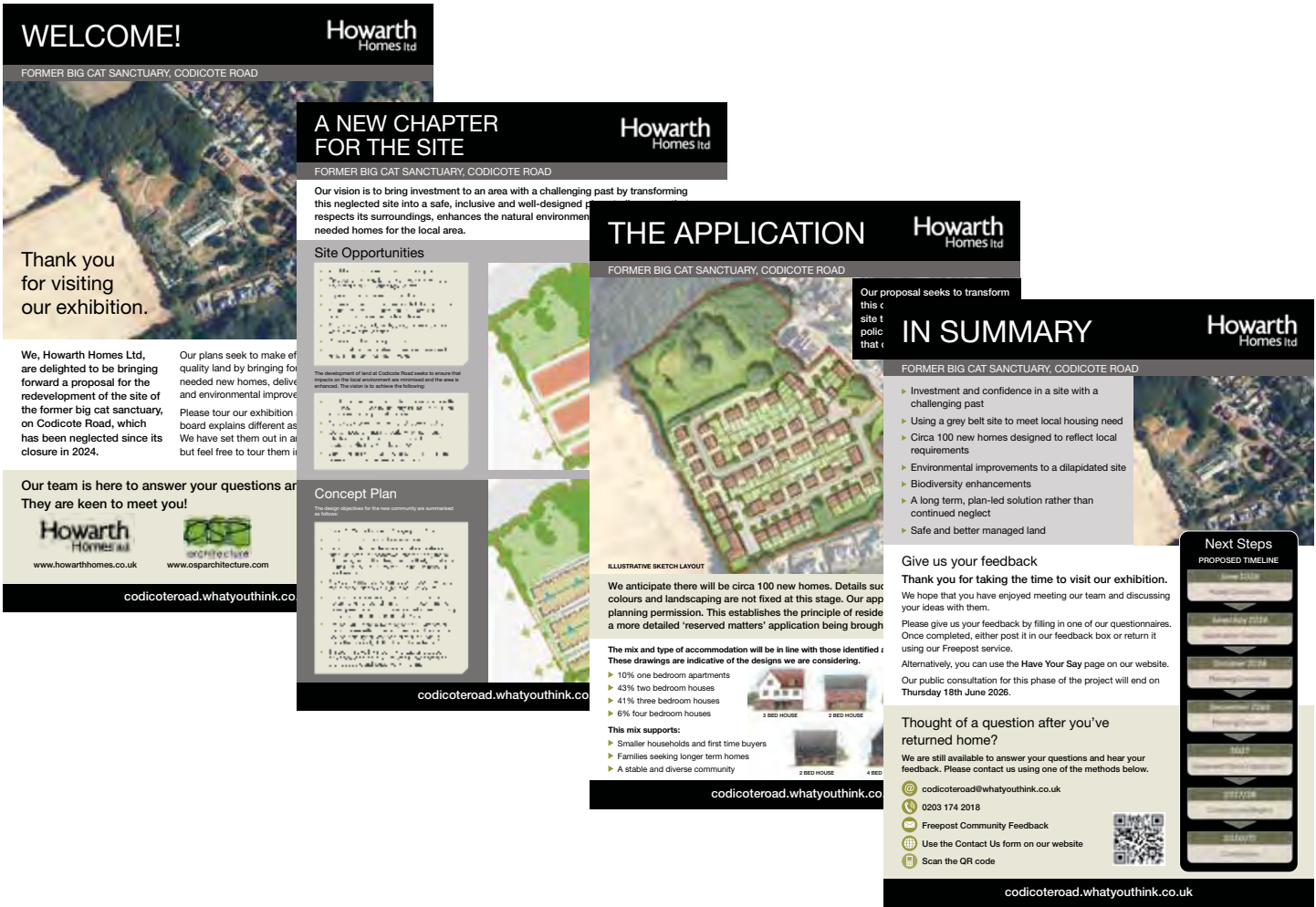
The full application approach has provided the opportunity to develop and refine the scheme in greater detail and to respond more comprehensively to the matters raised through consultation. In particular, detailed assessments have been prepared in relation to key issues identified by consultees, including transport, drainage, environmental impacts and residential amenity. This has allowed the Applicant to demonstrate how the development can be accommodated whilst addressing the concerns raised during the engagement process.

Consultation feedback also reinforced the importance of providing clarity regarding the form, appearance and operation of the proposed development. The progression to a full planning application therefore seeks to provide local communities, stakeholders and decision-makers with a more complete understanding of the proposals and their likely effects.

Furthermore, given the site’s location across the administrative boundaries of North Hertfordshire and Welwyn Hatfield, the engagement process highlighted the importance of ensuring a coordinated approach between the two local planning authorities. This has informed the Applicant’s ongoing discussions with both councils during preparation of the application.



Public consultation event in progress on the 4th & 6th June



Examples of the display boards used as part of the public consultation event on the 4th & 6th June

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**Former Big Cat Sanctuary
Codicote Road, Welwyn**



5. Proposals

5.1 Design concept

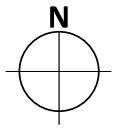
- To help maintain some of the existing character of the Site, as many of the existing boundary trees and hedgerows, and the existing woodland to the north of the Site has been retained.
- The layout has been designed to address the existing Site topography, with roads following the contours of the Site and using split-level houses, helping to minimise the use of retaining structures where possible.
- To better relate to the existing surrounding context, landscape buffers have been provided to the southern and eastern boundaries and around the adjacent listed building and flats on Codicote Road.
- Additional pedestrian links have been provided around the development parcels.
- The 2.5 storey apartments have been located in the lowest part of the Site, helping minimise the impact, especially on views from the west.

Birds eye view of the Site from the south (Google) ►



5.2 Concept plan

5.0 Proposals



0 10m 20m 30m 40m



KEY

- Site boundary
- ➔ Existing access
- Existing trees and hedgerows retained
- Open space
- Potential development parcels
- Potential roads
- ➔ Glimpsed long distance views towards west
- - - Retaining structures between rear gardens
- ▲ Long distance rear garden views toward south

5.3 Design principles

An iterative process has progressed the concept towards outline design status. The following design principles have informed the development of the proposals:

- Delivering a scheme which embodies the characteristics of the area;
- making optimum use of the land for the delivery of new homes, with development form and density appropriate to the location;
- delivering a development with a range of house sizes, types and tenures in response to local need;
- conserving and enhancing the landscape, ecology, heritage and natural resources around the application Site with green corridors and linkages;
- respecting the amenity and setting of the neighbouring listed building and other surrounding residential development;
- maximising the linkages between the application Site and surrounding area and provide opportunities for walking and cycling;
- developing an inclusive, safe and secure residential environment; and
- providing adequate on-site arrangements for vehicular access, servicing and parking, including the emergency services and statutory authorities.

5.4 Site layout

The proposal will aim to create a new residential neighbourhood, with a soft development edge and views out to the wider countryside. It will provide safe, accessible routes through the development to the green open space for new and existing residents to enjoy.

The proposed Site layout provides the following:

- 109 dwellings of high quality design in keeping with the character of the surrounding area;
- an accommodation mix of 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedroom houses and apartments in accordance with local housing need;
- a density of 27.25 dwellings per hectare gross based on a Site area of 4.0 hectares;
- 50% of the proposed homes to be affordable tenure;
- creation of a new access junction from Codicote Lane;
- provision of cycle and pedestrian links through the application Site to provide connectivity with the surrounding areas;
- a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) with swales and ponds;
- the retention of the existing boundary tree belts and hedgerows and additional planting (trees, hedgerows and shrubs);
- on-site open space and children's play facilities; and
- long distance views to the west though view corridors within the Site.



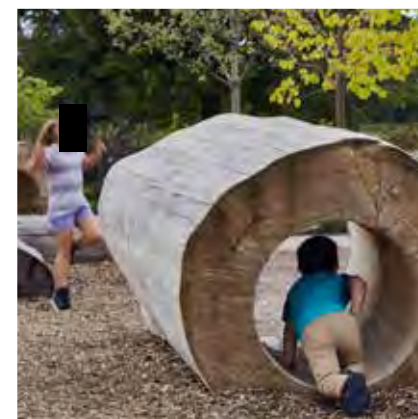
Enhanced pedestrian links providing access to public footpaths and the surrounding area



Green open spaces to be enjoyed by residents and the local community



Sustainable drainage ponds and swales capture and hold excessive rainfall



A variety of on-site children's play facilities



Potential for biodiversity gains through the creation of extensive new green infrastructure



Much needed, high quality homes designed to reflect the context of the local area



0 10m 20m 30m 40m



Catchpole
Wood

Open Space

CODICOTE ROAD (B656)

Play Area

44 Codicote Road
(Grade II Listed)

OLD NURSERY WAY

FULLING MILL LANE

5.5 Amount and tenure

The proposals incorporate a diverse range of dwelling sizes including one bedroom apartments and two, three, four bedroom houses, as set out below.

Unit Type	Quantity	%
1 Bedroom apartment M4(3)	10	9.2
2 Bedroom house	44	40.3
3 Bedroom house	49	45
4 Bedroom house	6	5.5
Total Dwellings	109	

KEY

1 Bedroom apartments

2 Bedroom houses

3 Bedroom houses

4 Bedroom houses



Dwelling size distribution plan

5.6 Tenure

5.0 Proposals

50% of the new homes will be provided as affordable dwellings in a range of tenures as detailed below.

Private	Quantity
2 Bedroom house	14
3 Bedroom house	34
4 Bedroom house	6
Total	54

Shared Ownership	Quantity
2 Bedroom house	14
3 Bedroom house	2
Total	16

Affordable Rent	Quantity
1 Bedroom apartment (WC)	10
2 Bedroom house	16
3 Bedroom house	13
Total	39

KEY

Private

Shared Ownership

Affordable



Tenure distribution plan



Illustrative view along entrance avenue



Key plan



Illustrative view east towards Codicote Road



Key plan

The composition of the various building elements within the overall design is critical to the coherence of the street scene and the achievement of the required quality of urban design within the development.

The dwellings will use a unifying palette of materials, but variations in form, size and style will give the proposals a distinctive character. The architectural detailing is guided by the existing buildings in the surrounding area.

The proposals will complement the local vernacular of the immediate surrounding areas using established materials, details and features. Key materials will be red and yellow coloured brickwork with brick details such as banding, window headers and cills. The roofs will grey tile. Secondary materials (occasional use only) will be black coloured boarding at first floor level. Flat roofed porches will be used throughout.

Materials palette



Red multi stock brick



Yellow coloured brick



Grey plain tile roofs



Black coloured boarding

Architectural details



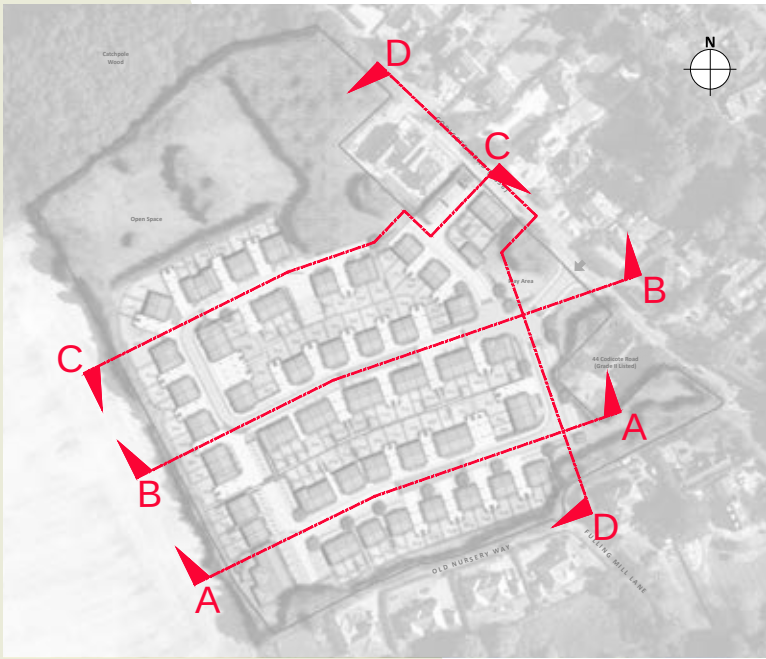
Flat roof porch



Brick window headers & cills



Building materials distribution plan



Key Plan



Illustrative street scene on A-A



Illustrative street scene on B-B





Illustrative street scene on A-A



Illustrative street scene on B-B

