



OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT REPORT

LAND AT PIRTON

Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 3RA

Proposed residential development for 30 dwellings with landscaping, public open space, play provision and new public walking connections.



Indicative open space, access and rights of way strategy (extract from LAP OPAROW 001 Rev A).

Document Control

Report title	Open Space Assessment Report
Project	Proposed Residential Development — Land at Pirton, Hitchin SG5 3RA
Development	30 dwellings with landscaping, open space, play and public walking routes
Drawing assessed	Indicative Open Access and ROW Plan — LAP OPAROW 001 Rev A, August 2026
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Organisation	PSK Rural Limited
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Executive Summary

Overall assessment

The open space and access strategy is strongly aligned in principle with current national, North Hertfordshire and Pirton neighbourhood policy. It treats green infrastructure, play and pedestrian movement as an integrated part of the development rather than residual landscaping, and provides a new direct connection to Pirton and Footpath 15 alongside a circular recreational walking network.

The proposal comprises 30 dwellings arranged around an internal arterial road, with landscaped open space, a playground, mixed scrub and managed grassland. A 320 metre walking circuit will pass through mown rides within the mixed scrub and across/along grassed areas maintained to facilitate pedestrian access. A mid-way cross-link will enable residents to choose between a shorter and longer circuit. A separate pedestrian pathway will provide an open-access pedestrian connection from the application site, across land owned by the applicant, towards Pirton village and Footpath 15.

The strategy responds particularly well to the August 2026 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) policies on well-designed places, walking and public rights of way, healthy communities and multifunctional green infrastructure. It is also consistent with North Hertfordshire Local Plan Policies D1, SP10, SP12, NE1 and NE6, and directly advances Pirton Neighbourhood Plan Policies PNP11 and PNP12 by improving safe pedestrian connectivity and access to the countryside.

North Herts Council's Developer Contributions SPD, adopted in June 2026, now uses the Fields in Trust 2024 standards as a guide to the quantum of open space. For an indicative population of 72 people (30 dwellings × 2.4 persons per dwelling, using the SPD's commonly accepted occupancy factor elsewhere in the document), the headline benchmark is approximately 0.4068 ha across all open-space categories. This calculation is a screening benchmark only. The supplied indicative plan does not contain a measured schedule of open-space areas and therefore a definitive quantitative compliance statement cannot yet be made.

The application package will be strengthened by a measured open-space schedule identifying the areas attributable to amenity greenspace, natural/semi-natural greenspace and play; a detailed play specification; path widths, gradients and construction; and a long-term landscape, play and access management plan. Public access to the new routes and open spaces will be secured in perpetuity through an appropriate planning/legal mechanism.

1.0 Introduction and Scope

1.1 Instruction

PSK Rural Limited has prepared this Open Space Assessment in support of the proposed residential development of 30 dwellings on land at the northern edge of Pirton, Hertfordshire. The assessment is based principally on the Indicative Open Access and ROW Plan, drawing LAP OPAROW 001 Rev A dated August 2026, and on the open-space and access strategy described by the applicant.

1.2 Purpose of the assessment

The purpose of the report is to assess whether the proposed open-space, play and pedestrian access strategy provides an appropriate policy response for a development of this scale and location. It considers the proposal against the current national and local planning framework, identifies the relevant quantitative standards, evaluates the quality and functionality of the proposed spaces and sets out the detailed matters that will be addressed at the planning and implementation stages.

1.3 Assessment basis and limitations

The drawing is indicative and is not accompanied by a dimensioned open-space schedule, detailed landscape specification, play equipment schedule or definitive public rights of way legal plan. Consequently, this report distinguishes between matters that can be assessed now in principle and matters that will require confirmation through detailed design. References to Footpath 15 follow the submitted plan; its definitive legal alignment and status will be checked against Hertfordshire County Council's Definitive Map and Statement where required.

2.0 Site and Development Context

2.1 Site context

The site lies on the northern edge of Pirton and forms part of the transition between the built village and surrounding arable farmland. The indicative plan shows the residential area immediately north of the village edge, with Holwell Road running along the eastern side and wider agricultural land to the north and west. This edge-of-settlement context makes the quality of landscape structure, access to the countryside and integration with existing pedestrian routes particularly important.

2.2 Development concept

The proposal is for 30 dwellings served by an internal arterial road. Open space is distributed around and within the development so that it performs several connected functions: informal recreation, children's play, landscape integration, biodiversity enhancement and pedestrian movement. The approach intentionally connects the new neighbourhood to Pirton rather than creating a self-contained estate.

2.3 Key open-space components

- A centrally accessible playground/open-space area within the residential layout.
- A continuous approximately 320 m recreational walking circuit through the landscaped perimeter, available to residents of the development and the wider Pirton community.
- Mown rides through the proposed mixed scrub, providing informal paths while retaining a predominantly natural/semi-natural character.
- Mown routes across and along grassed areas, creating legible pedestrian movement without unnecessary hard surfacing.
- A mid-way interlinking route allowing a shorter circuit as well as the longer outer loop.
- A separate pedestrian pathway will provide an open-access pedestrian connection from the application site, across land owned by the applicant, towards Pirton village and Footpath 15.



Figure 1 — Indicative Open Access and ROW Plan: development area, playground, open-access walkways and link to Footpath 15.

3.0 Open Space and Access Strategy

3.1 Multifunctional green infrastructure

The proposal is landscape-led. The open spaces are not simply visual margins around the housing: they combine habitat

creation, informal recreation, play and movement. This is consistent with contemporary green-infrastructure policy, which favours connected spaces capable of delivering several environmental and social functions simultaneously. The mixed scrub can provide ecological structure and a softer settlement edge, while mown rides enable public use without converting the entire area to intensively managed amenity grass.

3.2 Circular walking route

The approximately 320 m circular route is a significant benefit of the scheme. It creates an everyday walking opportunity directly accessible from residents' homes and available to existing Pirton residents. The mid-way interlinking path gives users a choice between a short and a longer walk, supporting a wider range of ages, abilities and time available. The route also gives functional purpose to the perimeter landscape and encourages passive surveillance and regular use of the open space.

3.3 Mixed scrub rides and mown grass routes

Within the proposed mixed scrub, paths will be formed as mown rides rather than continuous hard surfacing. This approach can preserve the natural character of the planting, create varied habitat edges and reduce the urbanising effect of extensive paving. Across grassland, routes will similarly be kept open by an appropriate mowing regime. The detailed management plan will define ride widths, cutting frequency, seasonal management, vegetation clearance and inspection so that routes remain obvious and usable throughout the year.

3.4 Village link and Footpath 15

A separate pedestrian pathway will provide an open-access pedestrian connection from the application site towards Pirton village and Footpath 15. This turns the development's internal open space into part of a wider walking network.

3.5 Playground and informal play

The playground is located within the development and adjacent to the principal movement network, which provides the basis for convenient access and natural surveillance. Detailed design will determine whether the space is treated as a Local Area for Play (LAP), Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP), or a combined/integrated play space having regard to the North Herts Developer Contributions SPD and current Fields in Trust guidance. Natural play elements, seating and landscape features can complement formal equipment and make the space attractive to a broader age range.

4.0 Planning Policy Framework

4.1 National Planning Policy Framework — August 2026

The current NPPF was published in August 2026. Its revised policy structure places particular emphasis on liveability, nature, movement, public space, health and connected green infrastructure. The following policies are directly relevant to the open-space strategy:

National policy	Relevance to proposal	Assessment
DP3 — Key principles for well-designed places	Requires development to respond to context and, where relevant, incorporate/connect accessible multifunctional green infrastructure; provide good connections to the wider settlement; prioritise walking, wheeling and cycling; and create safe, inclusive public spaces supporting play, social interaction and healthy lifestyles.	Strong alignment
TR8 — Public rights of way	Requires protection and enhancement of the rights-of-way network and encourages opportunities to extend, link or improve routes, including new direct and circular routes and improved access to green space and countryside.	Strong alignment
HC1 — Planning for healthy communities	Promotes connected, high-quality, inclusive and accessible opportunities for play, sport and informal recreation and supports local standards informed by national best practice.	Positive
HC3 / HC4 — Facilities serving new development / public health benefits	Requires needs arising from new development to be understood and gives substantial weight to new or improved facilities and development providing demonstrable health and social-interaction benefits.	Positive
N2 — Improving the natural environment	Supports landscape integration, ecological networks and use of green infrastructure/nature-based solutions to secure multiple benefits including biodiversity, climate resilience, water management and recreation.	Strong alignment

4.2 North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031

The North Hertfordshire Local Plan was adopted in November 2022 and remains part of the statutory development plan. The following policies are material to this assessment:

Local Plan policy	Application to the scheme
SP10 — Healthy Communities	Supports appropriate recreation provision and the protection, enhancement and creation of physical and green infrastructure to foster healthy lifestyles.
SP12 — Green infrastructure, landscape and biodiversity	Supports a strategic multifunctional green-infrastructure network, landscape and biodiversity enhancement and new/improved open space.
D1 — Sustainable Design	Requires development to respond positively to context, enhance public realm, retain/include vegetation, maximise accessibility, legibility and physical/social connectivity, and design out crime/antisocial behaviour.
NE1 — Strategic green infrastructure	Protects and enhances strategic green infrastructure, resists fragmentation and supports creation of new links and long-term management, including rights-of-way networks and walking/cycling connections.
NE6 — New and improved open space	Supports open space that meets needs arising from development, improves provision/quality/accessibility and provides appropriate buffers; on-site provision requires long-term maintenance and management.

4.3 Pirton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2011–2031

The Pirton Neighbourhood Development Plan was made in April 2018 and forms part of the development plan. Its transport and connectivity policies are particularly supportive of the proposal's pedestrian network.

Policy PNP12 — Connectivity

The policy requires development, where appropriate to its scale and opportunity, to add to, link with and improve the safe network of cycle routes and footpaths within Pirton and giving access to the countryside. It also seeks improved access for walkers to public footpaths in the Parish. The proposed Village link to Footpath 15, together with the new circular and cross-link walking routes, directly advances this objective.

Policy PNP11 requires safe vehicular and pedestrian access and adequate safe pedestrian links to principal village facilities, including provision for users with visual and mobility impairments. The detailed design of the village link, crossings and internal pedestrian connections will therefore address inclusive access, visibility and safety.

4.4 North Herts Developer Contributions SPD — June 2026

The June 2026 Developer Contributions SPD is a material consideration and contains the Council's current open-space standards. It confirms that the previous 2020 Fields in Trust guidance has been superseded by the Fields in Trust Standards 2024. The SPD states that all schemes will have regard to the standards as a guide and that local circumstances, existing provision, quality, accessibility and site-specific priorities are relevant. It also expects long-term management of on-site open space.

4.5 North Herts Design Code SPD — June 2026

The North Herts Design Code SPD, adopted in June 2026, sets requirements for the design of neighbourhoods, open spaces, streets and buildings and supplements Local Plan Policies SP9 and D1. Detailed landscape and reserved-matters design will demonstrate conformity with the Code, particularly in relation to the legibility, accessibility, surveillance and landscape character of public spaces and routes.

4.6 Hertfordshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Hertfordshire County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan provides the county-level context for improving the rights-of-way network and promoting walking, cycling and wider access for health, recreation and sustainable travel. The development's new connection to Footpath 15 and its publicly accessible circular routes are consistent with those objectives, while the definitive legal status of existing routes remains a matter for the County Council's Definitive Map and Statement.

5.0 Quantitative Open Space Assessment

5.1 Current North Herts benchmark

The Developer Contributions SPD (June 2026) sets out the following guide quantities. For screening purposes only, this assessment applies a population of 72 residents, derived from 30 dwellings × 2.4 persons per dwelling. The factor of 2.4 is described elsewhere in the SPD as a commonly accepted occupancy factor; the Council may use a different method once the final dwelling mix is known.

Open-space category	SPD standard (sq m/person)	72-person benchmark (sq m)	Benchmark (ha)	Indicative scheme response
Parks and Gardens	8	576	0.0576	The Residential Development area extends to 1.6873 ha. For the proposed 30 dwellings equating to a low density of 17.77 dwellings per ha which thereby provides sufficient area for Parks and Gardens within the Residential Development Area in addition to the other landscaped areas of open space contained within the entire site area.
Amenity Green Space	6	432	0.0432	The Indicative Plan includes provision of at least 432 sq.m. of amenity green space.
Natural / Semi-Natural	18	1,296	0.1296	The Indicative Plan includes provision of 5000 sq.m. of accessible native species scrub planting and further areas of native species rich.
Equipped Designated Play Areas	2.5	180	0.0180	Playground shown; detailed typology, activity-zone size and specification to be confirmed. Satisfied through the indicative provision of 745 sq.m. of playground.
Informal Play Provision	3	216	0.0216	Open grass/play landscape and natural play opportunities can contribute. Satisfied through the indicative provision of 745 sq.m. of playground.
Outdoor Sports	16	1,152	0.1152	No formal sports pitch/court shown however provision can be made within either the Residential Development Area and/or the indicative playground area.
Allotments	3	216	0.0216	No allotments shown however provision can be made on site.
TOTAL	56.5	4,068	0.4068	Headline screening total; not a requirement for every category to be delivered separately on-site. The site area is able to accommodate the policy requirements for each open space category.

Table 1 — Indicative application of the June 2026 North Herts open-space guide quantities to 30 dwellings (72-person screening population).

5.2 Interpretation for a 30-dwelling scheme

The SPD standards are a guide to identifying the scale and type of provision that may be required; they are not a requirement to reproduce every typology as a discrete on-site parcel irrespective of context. For a development of 30 dwellings, the most important on-site functions are likely to be accessible amenity space, natural/semi-natural green infrastructure, informal play and a suitably designed play area, complemented by safe pedestrian connections. Formal outdoor sports and allotment needs can be considered against existing local provision and, where necessary and policy-compliant, through off-site measures or contributions.

The current indicative drawing does not provide specific area measurements for each open-space typology. It would therefore be premature to state that the proposal meets the 0.4068 ha headline benchmark. However, the indicative plans show 745 sq.m. of playground as well as 1358 sq.m. of grassed open space surrounding the playground illustrates that A final planning or reserved-matters package will include a measured schedule separating usable amenity greenspace, natural/semi-natural greenspace, equipped and informal play and any other relevant category. This will avoid double counting and allow the Council's standards to be transparently tested.

Important counting principle

The Developer Contributions SPD indicates that structural/peripheral landscaping and standalone footpaths/cycleways will not normally be counted as usable open space unless they are integral to a larger functional open-space area. The final schedule will therefore measure spaces by their principal usable function and will not rely on path length alone to demonstrate quantitative compliance.

5.3 Play-space benchmark

For 72 indicative residents, the SPD benchmark equates to 180 sq m of equipped designated play and 216 sq m of informal play. The SPD identifies minimum activity-zone sizes of 0.01 ha for a LAP, 0.04 ha for a LEAP and 0.10 ha for a NEAP. North Herts also encourages larger, integrated play spaces where a LAP function can be sensitively incorporated into a LEAP. The detailed playground design will therefore be agreed having regard to the Council's preferred typology for schemes in the 21–100 dwelling range, accessibility, buffers to homes, natural surveillance and the opportunities for natural play within the wider landscape.

6.0 Qualitative Open Space Assessment

Assessment theme	Finding	Reasoned assessment
Accessibility and connectivity	Very positive	The walking network has a clear external destination (Pirton/Footpath 15) and an internal recreational function. Short and long loop choices improve usability.
Health and active travel	Very positive	A 320 m everyday walking circuit and direct village connection facilitate routine physical activity without a car journey.

Assessment theme	Finding	Reasoned assessment
Community benefit	Very positive	Routes are intended to be open to existing Pirton residents as well as occupiers of the new homes, extending the benefit beyond the development itself.
Play and social interaction	Positive	The playground is integrated with the open-space and movement network. Detailed typology, age range, seating and natural play will be confirmed.
Landscape integration	Positive	Mixed scrub and grassed areas provide a softer edge between housing and arable land and reduce reliance on hard-landscaped recreational space.
Biodiversity / multifunctionality	Positive	Mown rides allow recreation within a predominantly naturalistic scrub structure. Habitat objectives and BNG requirements will be coordinated with access management.
Legibility and surveillance	Positive subject to detail	The route network is simple and connected. Play space and key path approaches will be overlooked where practicable, with entrances and wayfinding clearly defined.
Inclusive access	Positive subject to detail	The Village Link will provide the principal firm route. Detailed gradients, widths, crossfalls, thresholds and resting/seating opportunities will be designed for inclusive access.
Long-term durability	Positive subject to management	The combination of hard-surfaced main link and low-intensity mown routes is appropriate if backed by a robust inspection and maintenance regime.

Table 2 — Qualitative assessment of the proposed open-space and access network.

6.1 Public health and everyday recreation

The greatest strength of the scheme is that walking is designed into the place as an everyday activity rather than treated as a leisure trip requiring travel to a separate facility. The full circuit offers a meaningful short walk, while the central interlink lets a user shorten the route. This is appropriate for children with carers, older residents, dog walkers, mobility-limited users who prefer a shorter circuit and residents taking short exercise breaks.

6.2 Integration with the wider community

Public access for Pirton residents materially increases the social value of the open space. The connection to Footpath 15 creates a practical link between the new neighbourhood, the village and the existing public path network. This directly reflects NPPF TR8 and Pirton PNP12, which promote links, extensions and circular routes rather than isolated internal paths.

6.3 Landscape and ecological compatibility

A route through mixed scrub can be compatible with habitat creation provided access intensity and management are designed together. Rides can create ecotone habitat and a varied walking experience, while keeping the bulk of the scrub undisturbed. Detailed ecological design will define planting composition, habitat widths, seasonal cutting, dog-management measures if required and any areas where public access needs to be channelled or restricted for habitat protection.

7.0 Detailed Design and Delivery Principles

7.1 Path hierarchy and surfacing

Route	Indicative treatment	Detailed design principle
Primary village / Footpath 15 link	Compacted hoggins on a suitable engineered sub-base	Firm, visually recessive all-weather pedestrian route; inclusive width and gradients to be confirmed; positive drainage and erosion control at gradients/low points.
Circular route through mixed scrub	Mown rides	Clear maintained width, legible entrances and seasonal cutting regime; retain wider scrub structure and habitat edges.
Circular route through grass	Mown grass path	Regular cutting to maintain an obvious route; manage wet/soft areas; coordinate with meadow/grassland objectives where relevant.
Mid-way cross-link	Surface to match the landscape zone it crosses	Shortens the walking circuit and improves choice; junctions to be clearly visible and waymarked where needed.

7.2 Inclusive access

The village link connection will be designed as the most consistently accessible route, with a firm and stable surface, appropriate clear width, manageable gradients and crossfalls, flush thresholds and drainage that avoids ponding and rutting. Where the naturalistic mown routes are inherently more seasonal, the distinction will be clear so users can make an informed choice. Seating/rest points can be incorporated at suitable locations without cluttering the rural landscape.

7.3 Play design

The playground will be designed as a coherent landscape space rather than an isolated fenced compound unless fencing is required for safety. The detailed scheme will provide age-appropriate challenge, inclusive play opportunities, natural play and informal seating. Visibility from nearby paths and dwellings will support natural surveillance while appropriate separation and planting will protect residential amenity.

7.4 Safety, lighting and wayfinding

Entrances to the open-space network and the village link will be obvious and legible. Wayfinding can be simple and rural in character, using restrained marker posts or signs at choice points. Any lighting proposed near the residential/play area will be carefully directed. Continuous lighting through the mixed-scrub circuit is not assumed and will only be introduced if justified by safety and ecological considerations.

7.5 Management and maintenance

A Landscape and Open Space Management Plan will secure the long-term quality of the spaces and routes. It will identify the responsible body, funding arrangements, inspection regimes, maintenance standards and response times. The plan will cover

at least the following matters:

- mowing frequency and target widths for grass paths and scrub rides;
- scrub establishment, thinning, coppicing or rotational management where required;
- tree and hedgerow establishment, replacement and safety inspections;
- path grading, topping-up, drainage and edge repairs;
- play equipment and surfacing inspections in accordance with the manufacturer and applicable standards;
- litter, dog-waste and general cleanliness arrangements;
- signage, seating and furniture inspection/repair;
- ecology/BNG management requirements and any seasonal constraints; and
- public liability, reporting arrangements and periodic review of the management plan.

7.6 Securing public access

The routes shown as “open access” are proposed public-access routes but will not become statutory public rights of way merely because they are shown on the plan.

The planning permission and associated legal arrangements will therefore secure public access and maintenance in perpetuity, whether by Section 106 obligation, transfer/lease to an appropriate body, estate-management covenant or, if agreed with Hertfordshire County Council, formal dedication or creation of a public right of way. Existing Footpath 15 will remain subject to its definitive legal status and any required protective measures during construction.

8.0 Policy Compliance

Policy	Scheme response	Assessment
NPPF DP3	Accessible multifunctional GI, connection to wider settlement, walking priority, inclusive public space and play.	Strongly compliant in principle
NPPF TR8	New circular routes and direct link to an existing public footpath/countryside network.	Strongly compliant in principle
NPPF HC1, HC3 and HC4	On-site recreation/play, everyday physical activity and wider community access.	Positive
NPPF N2	Landscape integration and mixed scrub used as multifunctional green infrastructure.	Positive subject to ecological detail
NHLP SP10	Green infrastructure and recreation foster healthy lifestyles.	Positive
NHLP SP12	New multifunctional green infrastructure and improved open space.	Strongly compliant in principle
NHLP D1	Connectivity, legibility, public realm and planting integrated into layout.	Positive subject to detailed design
NHLP NE1	Strengthens walking network and creates managed green-infrastructure links.	Positive

Policy	Scheme response	Assessment
NHLP NE6	Provides new accessible open space with capacity for long-term management.	Positive; quantum schedule required
Pirton PNP11	Safe pedestrian links and inclusive access toward village facilities.	Positive subject to detailed accessibility/highway design
Pirton PNP12	Adds to and links the footpath network and improves access to countryside routes.	Direct and strong policy support
Developer Contributions SPD 2026	Play, amenity/natural space and management aligned with current standards.	Positive; measured schedule and play typology required
North Herts Design Code 2026	Landscape, open space and streets conceived as integrated place-making elements.	Positive subject to reserved-matters detail

Table 3 — Summary policy compliance assessment.

8.1 Planning balance

The open-space strategy provides a coherent package of public benefits: doorstep play; convenient everyday walking; a choice of circular route lengths; a public connection to the existing path network; multifunctional mixed scrub and grassland; and access for the wider village community. Those benefits respond directly to the strongest themes in the current NPPF and Pirton's neighbourhood policy. They are also capable of helping assimilate the development into the countryside edge by placing a usable green framework around the housing.

The remaining matters are matters of detail rather than matters that undermine the strategy in principle. In particular, the final proposal will quantify the open spaces by policy typology, settle the detailed play hierarchy and provide an enforceable management/access mechanism. Subject to those details, the open-space and access component of the proposal can be given significant positive weight in the assessment of the development.

9.0 Conclusion

Conclusion

The proposed open-space and access strategy is considered appropriate and policy-responsive for a 30-dwelling edge-of-village development. It creates a connected, publicly accessible and multifunctional green network that supports recreation, health, play, biodiversity and integration with Pirton and the surrounding countryside.

The key distinguishing feature is the combination of the approximately 320 m circular route, its shorter mid-way option and the separate Village Link connection to Pirton and Footpath 15. Together these routes deliver precisely the type of direct, circular and countryside-linked walking opportunities promoted by NPPF TR8 and Pirton Neighbourhood Plan Policy PNP12.

The mixed scrub, mown rides, grassed walking areas and play space also accord with NPPF DP3 and N2 and North Hertfordshire Policies SP10, SP12, D1, NE1 and NE6 by treating green infrastructure as an accessible, multifunctional and managed part of the place. The strategy therefore provides benefits both to future occupiers and to the existing Pirton community.

As part of preparation and submission of future Reserved Matters, the following information will be provided to the Council for approval:

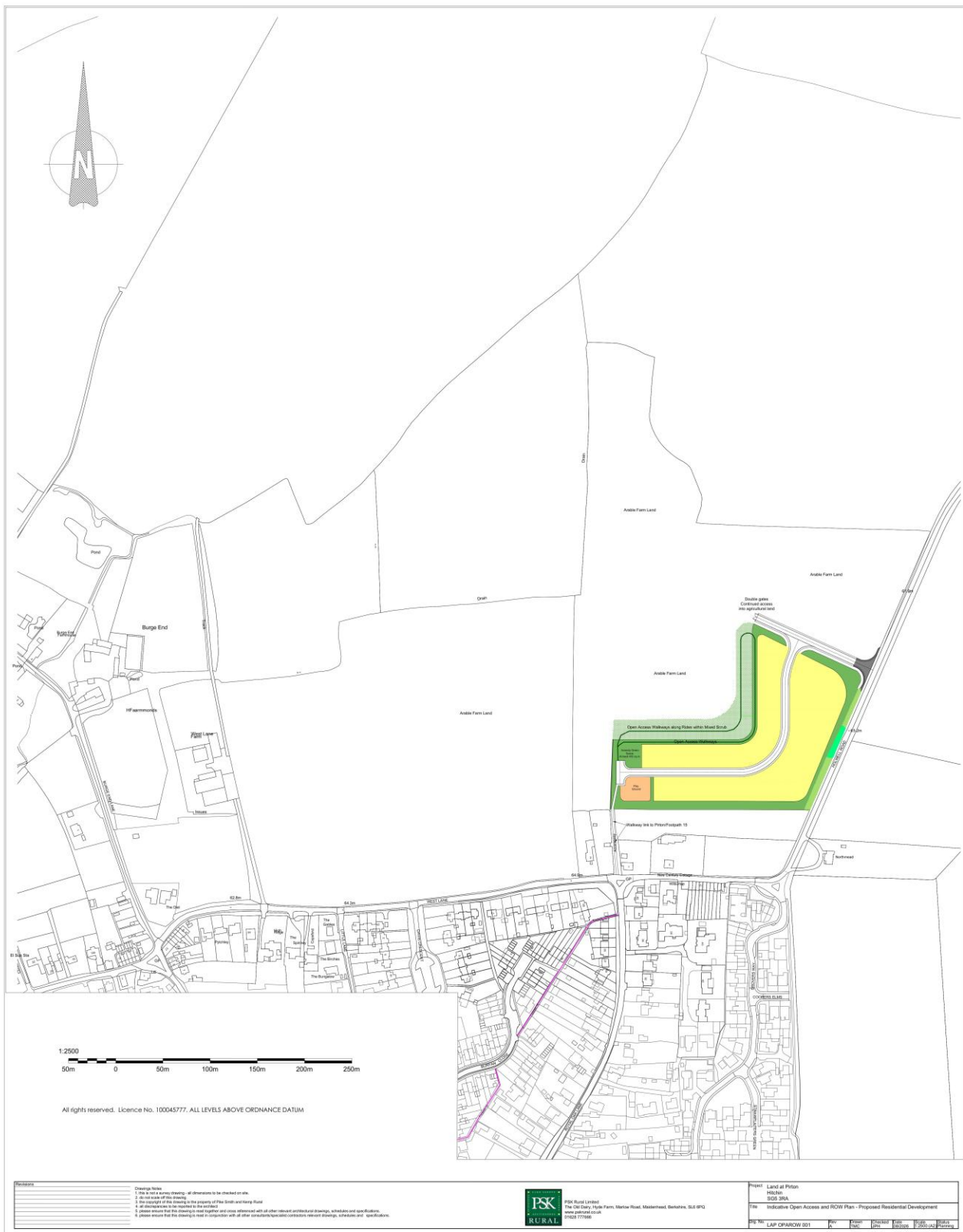
- a dimensioned open-space schedule by policy typology, clearly identifying usable areas and avoiding double counting;
- a detailed playground plan identifying the agreed LAP/LEAP or integrated play function, activity zone, buffers, equipment/natural play and seating;
- path specifications confirming widths, gradients, surfacing, drainage and inclusive-access measures, particularly for the village link;
- a detailed landscape/ecology plan coordinating public access with mixed scrub, grassland and biodiversity objectives;
- a Landscape and Open Space Management Plan establishing inspection, maintenance, replacement and funding responsibilities; and
- a Section 106/other legal mechanism securing public access and long-term management in perpetuity, together with confirmation of the definitive status/alignment of Footpath 15.

Subject to these detailed matters, PSK Rural concludes that the proposed open-space and pedestrian-access strategy represents a strong component of the development and is consistent with the direction of current national and local planning policy.

Appendix A — Indicative Open Access and ROW Plan

Drawing: LAP OPAROW 001 Rev A — Indicative Open Access and ROW Plan, Proposed Residential Development, Land at Pirton, Hitchin SG5 3RA, August 2026. The plan identifies the playground, open-access walkways, mown routes through mixed scrub and the link to Footpath 15.

Appendix Figure A1 — Submitted Indicative Open Access and ROW Plan (not to scale in this report reproduction).



Appendix B — Policy Sources and Benchmark Note

Policy status and web sources were checked for this report in September 2026. The principal documents relied upon are listed below.

1. National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026). Current national planning policy; relevant policies include DP3, TR8, HC1, HC3, HC4 and N2. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework>

2. North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031. Adopted 8 November 2022; relevant policies include SP10, SP12, D1, NE1 and NE6. <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/north-herts-local-plan-2011-2031>

3. Pirton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2011–2031. Made 27 April 2018; relevant policies include PNP11 and PNP12. <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/pirton-neighbourhood-plan>

4. Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document. Adopted June 2026; Section 9.2 provides current open-space standards and play guidance. <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/developer-contributions-supplementary-planning-document>

5. North Herts Design Code. Adopted June 2026; requirements for neighbourhoods, open spaces, streets and buildings. <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/north-herts-design-code>

6. Hertfordshire County Council — Rights of Way. County rights-of-way information, Definitive Map context and Rights of Way Improvement Plan. <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/countryside-access/rights-of-way/rights-of-way.aspx>

7. Fields in Trust — Standards. National benchmark standards referenced by the 2026 North Herts Developer Contributions SPD. <https://fieldsintrust.org/insights/standards>

Benchmark calculation note

Dwellings	30
Indicative occupancy factor	2.4 persons per dwelling
Indicative population	72 persons
Total North Herts guide rate	56.5 sq m per person
Headline screening benchmark	4,068 sq m (0.4068 ha)

This benchmark is an indicative screening calculation, not a substitute for the Council’s final assessment based on the approved dwelling mix, detailed measured layout, current evidence of local provision and any case-specific requirements. The final open-space schedule will identify what is delivered on-site and any residual need that the Council considers appropriate to address off-site.