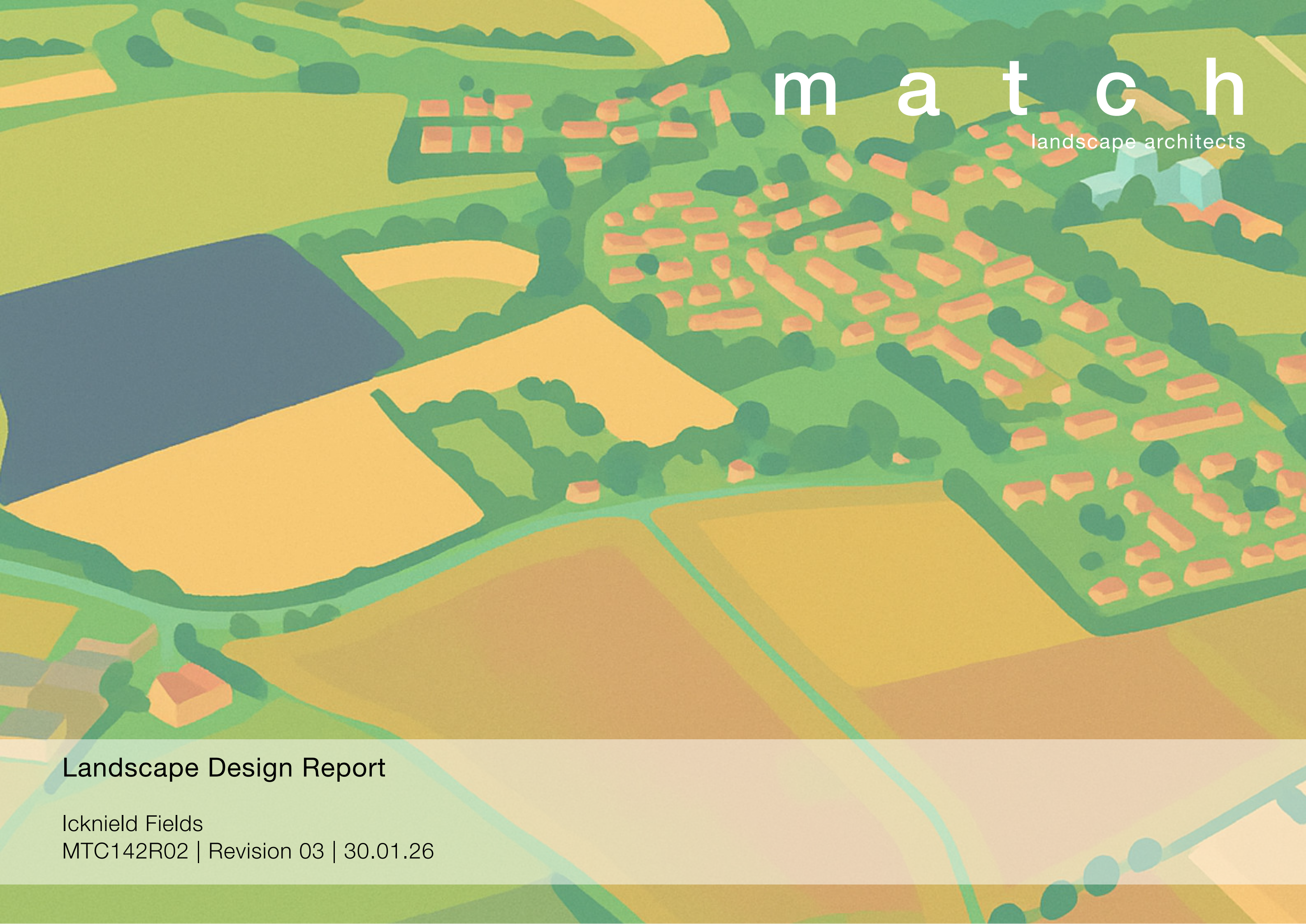


A stylized, isometric illustration of a landscape. It features rolling green hills, a large blue body of water on the left, and a cluster of orange-roofed houses in the center. The style is flat and graphic, with bold outlines and a limited color palette of greens, yellows, oranges, and blues.

m a t c h

landscape architects

Landscape Design Report

Icknield Fields

MTC142R02 | Revision 03 | 30.01.26

Introduction

MTC142R02 | Landscape Design Report | Revision 03 | 30.01.26

This Landscape Design Report has been produced on behalf of Bugler Homes Ltd. to provide a landscape design for Icknield Fields, Land at Pound Farm, Ickleford, SG5 3RS.

Description of Development

Hybrid application for a mixed-use development to provide a total of up to 230 dwellings, a residential care home (Use Class C2), an Independent Special School (ISS) and new sports pitch, with access from Bedford Road, landscaping, parking and SuDS comprising:

Phase 1 – Application for full planning permission for the erection of 100 dwellings, an ISS, new sports pitch and associated parking, landscaping, open space and SuDS;

Phase 2 – An outline application on the remaining part of the site for the erection of up to 130 dwellings, a residential care home (Use Class C2) and associated works with access from Bedford Road (all matters reserved apart from access).

Revision 03 - Updated for planning.

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1. Local Context

The site sits at the north west edge of Ickleford, with Bedford Road aligning the eastern boundary. Comprising a single field, the site is dissected by Icknield Way, which leads between Ickleford and Pirton to the west.

The application area is bounded by arable fields to the north and west and an allocated housing site beyond Bedford Road to the east. The field associated with the site continues south along the eastern

half of the southern boundary, with the western portion bounding Ickleford, including the Ryder Way Allotments that sit centrally amongst housing.

Land falls around 10m from south to north, with a ditch at the low point along the northern boundary.

The western boundary has good vegetation cover along Bedford Road. Other boundaries are less well defined with broken tree and hedgerow cover to part of the west and south, and little green infrastructure definition to other.

The site is within two green belt designations and a SSSI impact zone related to Oughtonhead SSSI.



2. Planning Context

The following pages introduce key planning documents and their influence on landscape design.

Local Plan 2011-2031

The local plan provides county-wide policies informing development and prioritises protecting and enhancing green infrastructure, biodiversity, and landscape character. It promotes sustainable, high-quality public realm design and the integration of nature within development. Key policies are:

- NE2 Landscape: Ensures development respects local landscape character, protects key features, and includes long-term maintenance to enhance visual quality and environmental integrity.
- NE6 New and Improved Open Space: Supports developments that create or enhance open spaces meeting local needs, incorporating landscape buffers and sustainable design with clear management plans.
- D1 Sustainable Design: Encourages developments that integrate green infrastructure, retain vegetation, use SuDS, and enhance public realm through high-quality, sustainable design responding to local character.

Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2035

Policies specific to Ickleford provide key guidance for establishing a design and ensuring proposals are in keeping with the Parish landscape. The plan's overarching goal is to preserve Ickleford's rural landscape, protect views, and sustain biodiversity within and around open spaces. Key policies relating to the site's landscape design are:

- Policy E2: Protecting the Landscape - All developments must protect and enhance the landscape, including chalk streams, trees, hedgerows, and water features. Landscape analysis must accompany planning proposals.
- Policy E3: Rural Character - New development must reflect the village's rural setting, maintaining natural features, scale, and openness.
- Policy C2: Recreation and Green Spaces - Any loss of green or recreational space must be compensated with equivalent or better provision. Enhancements to existing open spaces are encouraged.
- Related to open space - Developments must meet existing Local Plan standards for open space and contribute to improved access, management, and design.



Policy D1: Sustainable design

Planning permission will be granted provided that development proposals:

- Respond positively to the site's local context;
- Take all reasonable opportunities, consistent with the nature and scale of the scheme, to:
 - create or enhance public realm;
 - optimise the potential of the site by incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS);
 - reduce energy consumption and waste;
 - retain existing vegetation and propose appropriate new planting;
 - maximise accessibility, legibility and physical and social connectivity both internally and with neighbouring areas;
 - future proof for changes in technology and lifestyle;
 - design-out opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour; and
 - minimise the visual impact of street furniture and parking provision;
- Have regard to the Design SPD, and any other relevant guidance;

Policy C1: Community Facilities

The provision of new community facilities will be supported.

Policy E4: Biodiversity

Development should protect and enhance existing natural features of sites and habitats, and provide at least 10% net gain in biodiversity.

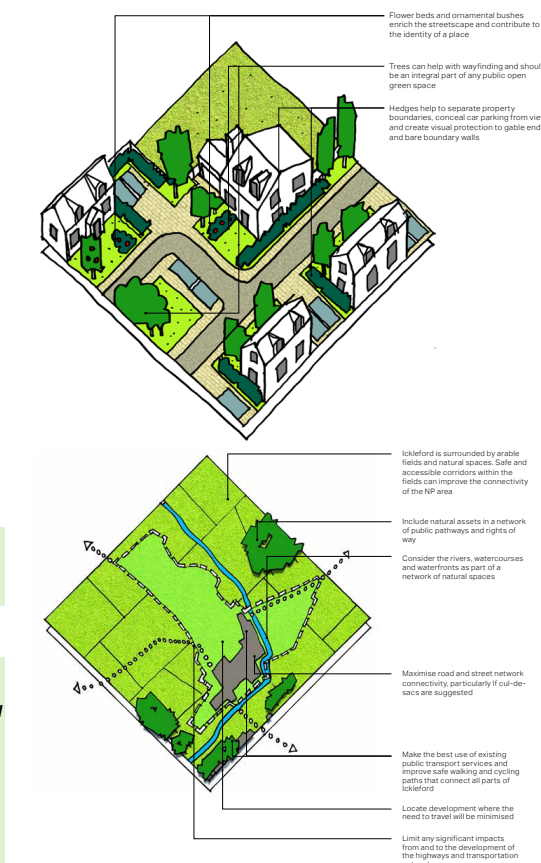
As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should:

- provide proportionate species-related measures;
- incorporate appropriate native species into landscaping schemes; and
- establish links with existing wildlife corridors and deliver sustainable drainage solutions.

Ickleford Design Code Final Report 2023

Parish-specific coding is provided for the borough on all general aspects of urban design. Guidance on development arrangement, connectivity, SuDS, public realm and nature. The design will follow the coding principles set out in the design development.

Key reference points for the masterplan and landscape design:



- MO.01: Create countryside links that encourage public access and integrate contextually relevant natural features.
- MO.03: Ensure the developments have legible layouts for intuitive wayfinding.
- NA.02: Create interconnected green spaces that promote access to the countryside and biodiversity enhancement.
- NA.04: Integrate SuDS as part of the spatial design for the benefit of placemaking, ecological enhancement and to limit discharge or rain water into the wider system, including chalk streams.
- NA.05&06: Biodiversity enhancements and compliance with BNG legislation
- NA.07 Retain existing trees and propose new planting as part of place structure.
- NA.08 Where space permits propose species diverse native mixes of new woodland planting in wavy rows.

3. North Herts' Sustainability and Climate Change Strategies

North Herts have published a suit of documents that set out their approach to climate change, sustainability and biodiversity enhancement, and green space management. These are briefly summarised below and will be used as reference points for the landscape design

NHDC-1506 NHDC Sustainability Strategy 2025-30_V5

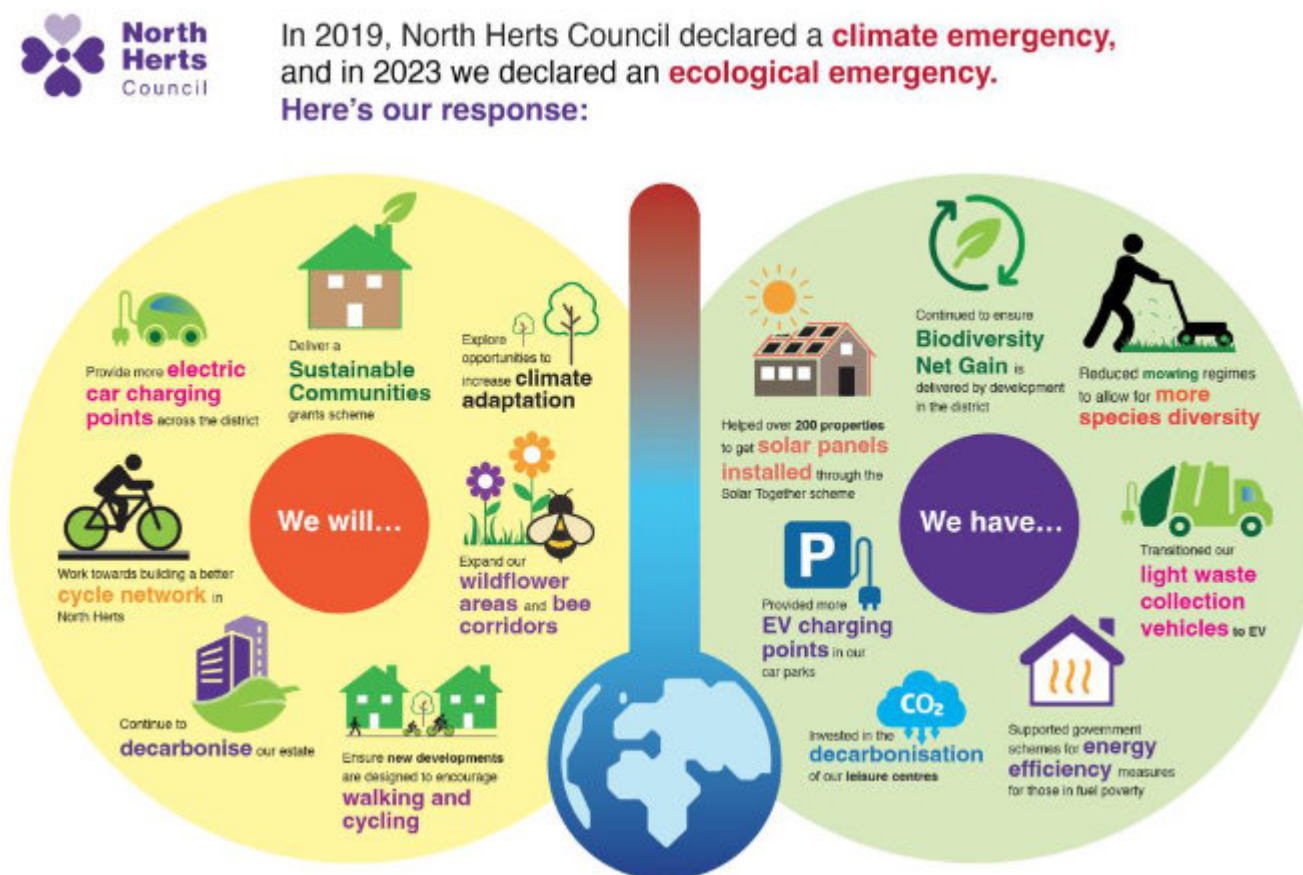
This document provides guidance on the council's aspirations and actions around climate change, biodiversity and sustainability. This sets a tone that can be responded to with the development to support North Herts in their sustainability challenges.

NHDC-811 NHDC Climate change Strategy 2022-27_V3

This document establishes the council's position on the climate challenge and discusses actions to be taken in addressing climate change. This includes 'Inspiring the Community', which involves encouraging sustainable lifestyles of the North Herts' citizens. A sustainable approach to this development will help further these aspirations.

Green Space Management Strategy 2022-2027

This strategy sets out goals for the management of (predominantly) North Herts' green space. This serves as a useful reference point for the LPA's aims and types of spaces they might maintain should any of the development's open spaces be considered for adoption.



4. Landscape Themes

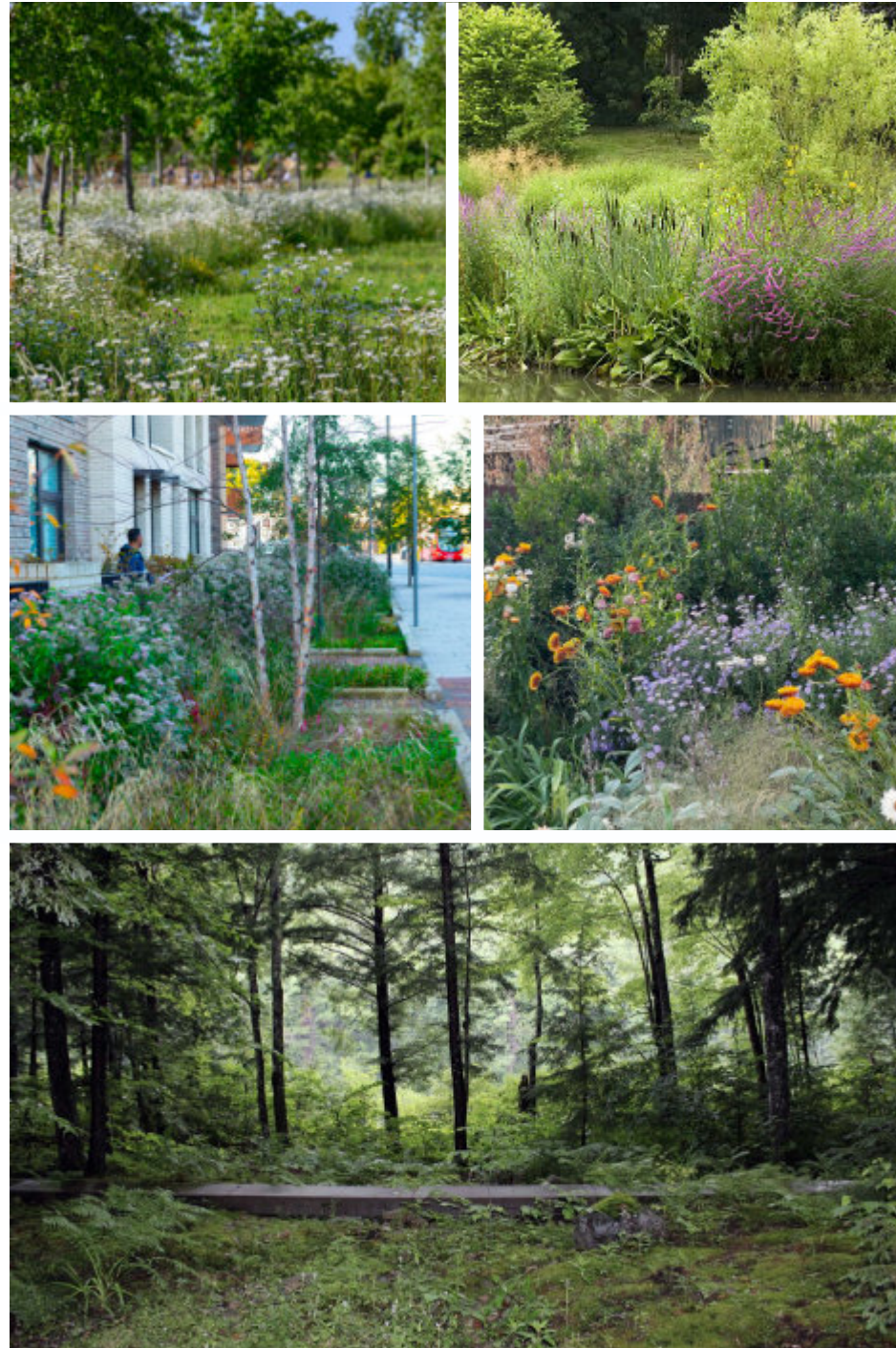
Sustainable and Verdant Streets and Spaces

Celebrating and expressing climate resilient design throughout the build environment, including native planting, habitat creation, recycled materials, and visible and active sustainable drainage.



Green Infrastructure and Habitat Diversity

Habitat creation through varied and interconnected landscapes. A tapestry of species rich planting layers weave through the site to benefit local fauna.



Landscape Connections

Landscape spaces that connect people with the natural world through play and informal social recreation, sensory planting, opportunities for foraging and growing, and countryside links.



5. Key Moves

Public Right of Way Links



Public rights of way between Pirton and Ickleford provide access to the countryside but dog-leg oddly at Bedford Road, with the highway section unpleasant in character. Inline with Design Code aspirations, development offers an opportunity to make stronger countryside connections, including with the local allotment.

Key	
	Existing public right of way
	No onward public route
	Local landscape destinations
	Positive strategic PROW connection
	Beneficial strategic open space links

Primary Street



A new road network could contribute to marking an arrival at Ickleford proper (misaligned with an IC3 junction), and redefine the current PROW access point. A lane within the development would connect to Ryder Way allotments.

Key	
	Ickleford arrival moment
	Primary lane allowing connection to allotment

Reinforced Green Belt Edge

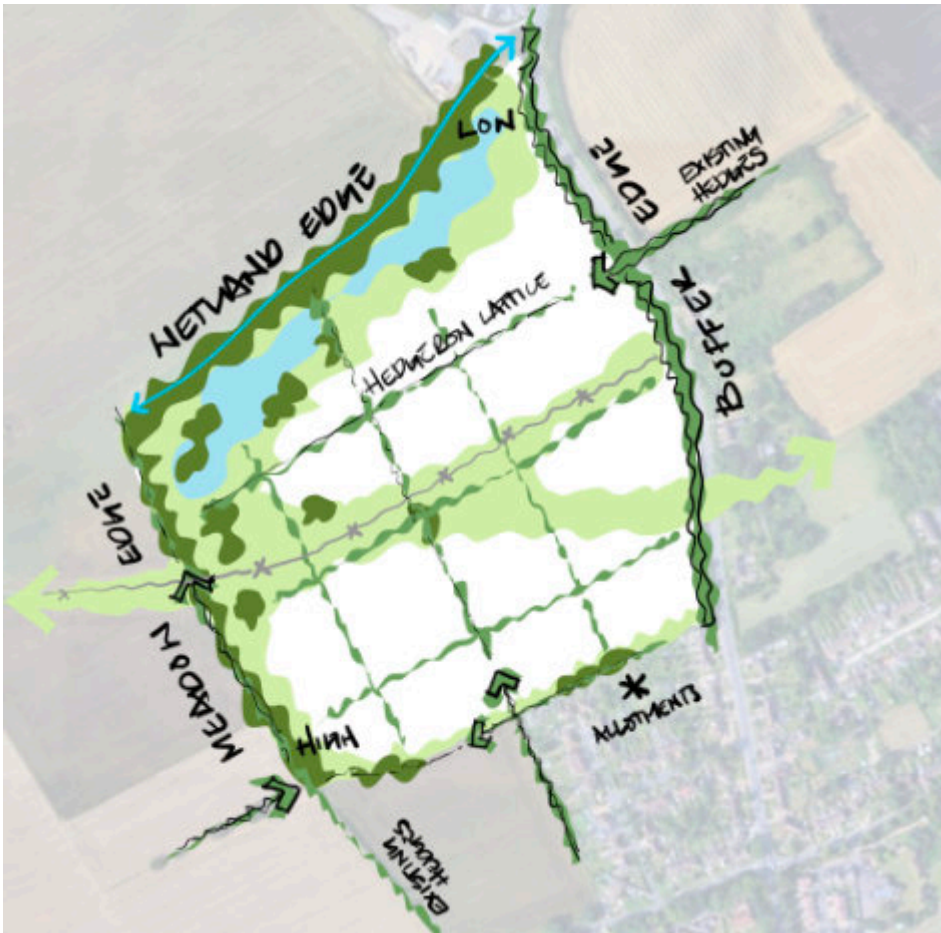


Reinforcing a new green belt edge with green and blue infrastructure at a currently open edge, safeguards future encroachment and softens views of Ickleford's suburban fringe. This also creates the opportunity for informal amenity, water management and biodiversity enhancement.

Key	
	Green belt wrapping around site
	Green and blue infrastructure reinforcing green belt
	Road edge buffer

6. Key Moves Continued

Green Infrastructure Strategy



Largely devoid of landscape features, the site presents an opportunity for ecological repair through the creation of a diverse network of green infrastructure and habitats. Meadows along key routes, a hedgerow lattice connecting adjacent GI corridors, wetland areas at low points and tree belts at boundaries will provide significant biodiversity enhancement.

- Key
- Wet-woodland at low edge
 - Meadow edges
 - Bedford Road Buffer
 - Green link through site
 - Scattered trees
 - Hedgerow lattice connecting to adjacent hedgerows

Development Parcels



Fitting with the green infrastructure network, housing parcels and the SEN school will connect to the landscape and facilitate ecological connectivity.

- Key
- Residential parcel
 - School location
 - Formal sports associated with school
 - Primary and secondary streets

Open Space Network



Led by green infrastructure, a series of ecologically rich, interconnected public open spaces are proposed, set around an improved PROW. Wet woodlands, landscape learning spaces, meadows, play areas, parkland walks and green streets become the woven tapestry of landscape-led open spaces and community amenities.

- Key
- Public open space links across and around site
 - Green link as part of wider countryside network
 - Meadow edge linear park
 - Wet-woodland park
 - Green lanes
 - Primary play
 - Secondary play
 - Educational landscape

7. Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy proposes a series of interconnected public green spaces developed to enhance local biodiversity, the community's access to nature, and provide a sympathetic setting for new homes and a special educational needs (SEN) school.

The open spaces will be discussed in 4 subtly distinct character areas that establish a patchwork of landscape and habitat types: Green Link, Bedford Road Park, Wetland Park and Meadow Edge

1. New development access point at the edge of Ickleford.
2. Improved public right of way alignment connecting to onward route via Bedford Road crossing.
3. Green Link through centre of site along Icknield Way.
4. Wetland habitat space within public open spaces.
5. Primary development play area.
6. Meadow links around site, filling in gaps of existing planting.
7. Connection to Ryder Way allotments.
8. Secondary play spaces.
9. Bedford Road linear park route
- 10.SEN school facility
- 11.Artificial turf sports pitch
- 12.Wetland Park along northern boundary
- 13.Nature learning spaces adjacent to school
- 14.Location for pitch expansions, proposed as open space at day one, with space available for up to 2 additional sports pitches
- 15.Tree and hedge lined streets through housing parcels



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