

Landscape Strategy

The landscape is central to the identity and quality of the proposed neighbourhood.

It shapes the structure of the development, defines its edges, and creates the setting for daily life. The design draws upon the character of the surrounding countryside and the established green spaces within the village to create a rich and varied environment.

A comprehensive Landscape and Open Space Strategy has been prepared by Match Landscape Architects to ensure that green infrastructure, biodiversity and amenity are fully integrated into the masterplan.

For further detail, refer to The Landscape Design Report, Icknield Fields, Match Landscape Architects [Report Ref MTC142R02](#), dated **30th January 2026**



Proposed Illustrative Landscaping Plan - Provided by Match Landscape Architects (not to scale)

Landscape Strategy

Providing a setting for new homes and school.

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.

These features will provide both functional and ecological value, supporting wildlife and adding to the visual interest of the landscape.

- 1 New Green Link connection through centre of site along Icknield Way
- 2 Improved public right of way alignment connecting to onward route via Bedford Road crossing
- 3 Wetland habitat space within public open spaces
- 4 Primary development play area
- 5 Secondary Play Spaces
- 6 Artificial turf sports pitch
- 7 Informal nature learning spaces adjacent to school
- 8 Meadow links around the site, filling in the gaps of existing planting
- 9 Location for potential pitch expansions, Proposed as open space at day one, with space available for outdoor sports facilities
- 10 Wetland and woodland spaces providing new and diverse habitats and unique walking space
- 11 Bedford Road linear park edge
- 12 Connection to Ryder Way allotments
- 13 Tree and hedge lined streets through housing parcels



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Open Space Typologies

The masterplan provides a balanced mix of open space types.

The scheme incorporates a generous level of publicly accessible green infrastructure, which has been designed to exceed the expectations of both national policy and local planning standards. The overall layout prioritises the provision of informal open space and children's play areas in line with North Hertfordshire's adopted benchmarks as outlined in the North Hertfordshire Developers Contributions SPD.

- Neighbourhood greens and play areas.
- Naturalised open space for informal recreation and biodiversity.
- Allotments or community growing spaces (to be confirmed).
- The sports pitch and associated changing facilities.

These spaces will cater for all age groups and activities, encouraging healthy lifestyles and fostering a sense of community ownership.

As shown below, the proposal delivers a hierarchy of open spaces, including amenity greenspace, naturalised SUDS, and children's play areas, in full compliance with Policy NE6 of the Local Plan, Policy E2 and C2 of the Neighbourhood Plan and the North Hertfordshire Open Space SPD.

Key		Required based on population	Space measured	Proportion of requirement delivered
	Parks and Gardens	0.44ha	1.81ha	4.099
	Amenity green space	0.33ha	1.73ha	5.230
	Natural and Semi natural open spaces	0.99ha	4.31ha	4.336
	Outdoor Sport pitches	0.66ha	0.74ha	1.118
	Courts, Greens, Tracks & Trails	0.22ha	0.16ha	0.742
	Equipped designated play areas	0.14ha	0.24ha	1.728
	Informal Play	0.17ha	1.47ha	8.892
Total Open Space		2.95ha	10.47	3.544



Open space & Play Provision Diagram - Provided by Match Landscape Architects (not to scale)

Landscape Structure: Central Green Link

The green infrastructure forms a connected network of spaces that link the village to the wider landscape.

The Green Link is formed around the locally popular Icknield Way, that leads between Ickleford and Pirton.

A generous park-like space, the Green Link will feature open meadows, swales, a large play space, hedgerow and a new PRow spur that connects directly into the onward route, without the existing dog-leg along Bedford Road.

The footpaths will be widened and surfaced to encourage use and connect local residents to their adjacent countryside.

Additional key components include:

- A central green that provides a focal point for community life.
- Existing PRow improved and enhanced.
- New PRow link for improved connection to surrounding areas.



Precedent Images

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Green Link Typical Vignettes



Landscape Structure: Meadow Edge

Creating landscaped boundary ensuring a green edge infrastructure

The Meadow edge is very important to the development. Creating strong boundaries through reinforcing the sparse site edge green infrastructure is a key aspect.

Linear paths with seating and informal playful elements, meadows, and tree and scrub belts will provide a valuable public amenity, ecological connectivity and habitat creation, and soften views towards new housing and Ickleford from the surrounding countryside.

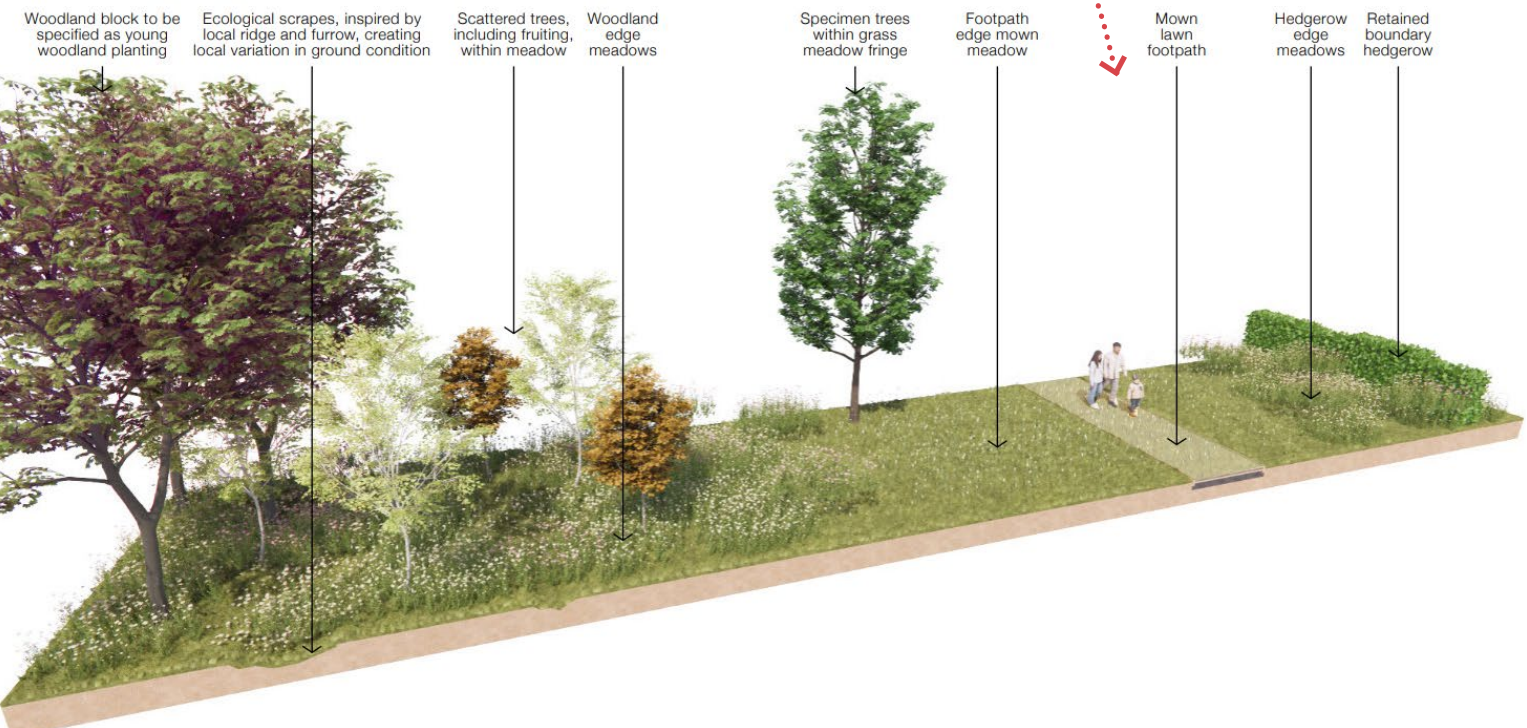
Additional key components include:

- Landscaped buffer between existing & proposed dwellings.
- Informal paths, providing connections and routes across the site.
- Creates a linear buffer and informal recreation space.



Precedent Images

Proposed Illustrative Landscaping Plan Extract - Provided by Match Landscape Architects (not to scale)



Meadow Edge Typical Vignette

Landscape Structure: Wetlands

Winding paths, pockets of wet woodland, mixed scrub and meadows

Along the lower-lying northern boundary of the site, the Wetland Park forms a continuous landscape edge that responds to existing ground conditions. A network of meandering paths weaves through areas of wet woodland, mixed scrub, and open meadow, creating a varied and immersive environment. These habitats are reinforced by a series of linear swales, ponds, and integrated SuDS features, which together support water management, biodiversity, and seasonal change across the parkland. A linear wet woodland will reinforce the green belt edge and filter views of housing.

A layered transition of woodland edge, linear swales, winding paths and meadows with scattered trees, will create ecological enhancement and a strong green belt edge.

Engaging educational features such as information boards, activity spaces, and pond dipping areas, are located adjacent to the school providing an enhanced opportunity for nature learning.

Adjacent to the school the Wetland Park will feature outdoor learning elements such as seating circles, dipping decks, woodland trails and habitat features to explore and discover. These public spaces could be accessed directly from the school to support additional nature based learning within the curriculum.

Additional key components include:

- Meandering paths and opportunities to access swales will further engage residents in natural and sustainable processes.
- Supporting children's engagement with the natural world brings benefits to learning, mental and physical health, and a child's understanding of the world.



Precedent Images



Proposed Illustrative Landscaping Plan Extract -
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Wetlands Typical Vignette

Landscape Structure: Bedford Road Edge

A landscaped buffer between new homes and the existing Bedford Road

Bedford Road Park completes a near 200m loop of the development that provides the new and existing community a valuable informal amenity space.

Similar to the Meadow Edge, the Bedford Road Park provides a buffer between new homes and Bedford Road to soften traffic impact and filter views of development from the surrounding landscape.

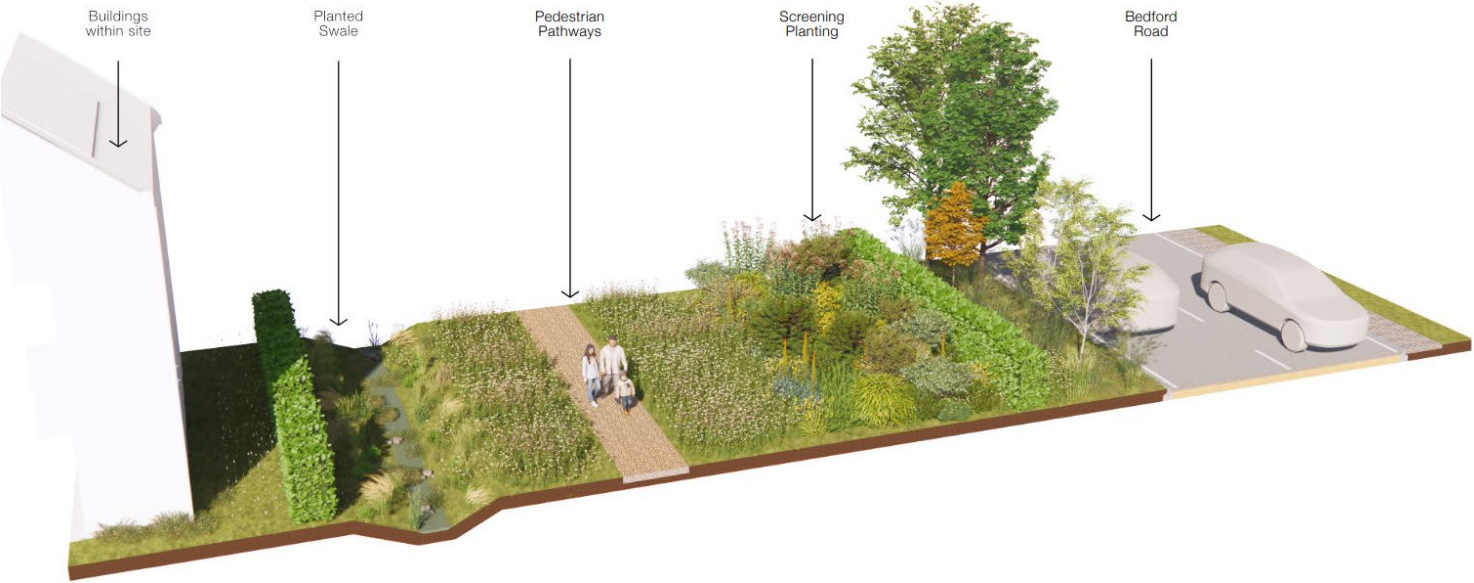
This vignette adjacent shows the housing frontage set within a meadowed landscape character. Gently dished attenuation swales run alongside the pathways, meadow planting transitions into areas of denser vegetation, hedging and trees lining Bedford Park Road.

This layered planting creates a green buffer to the adjacent homes while enhancing the visual and experiential quality of this part of the development.



Precedent Images

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Bedford Road Edge Typical Vignette

Ecology Strategy

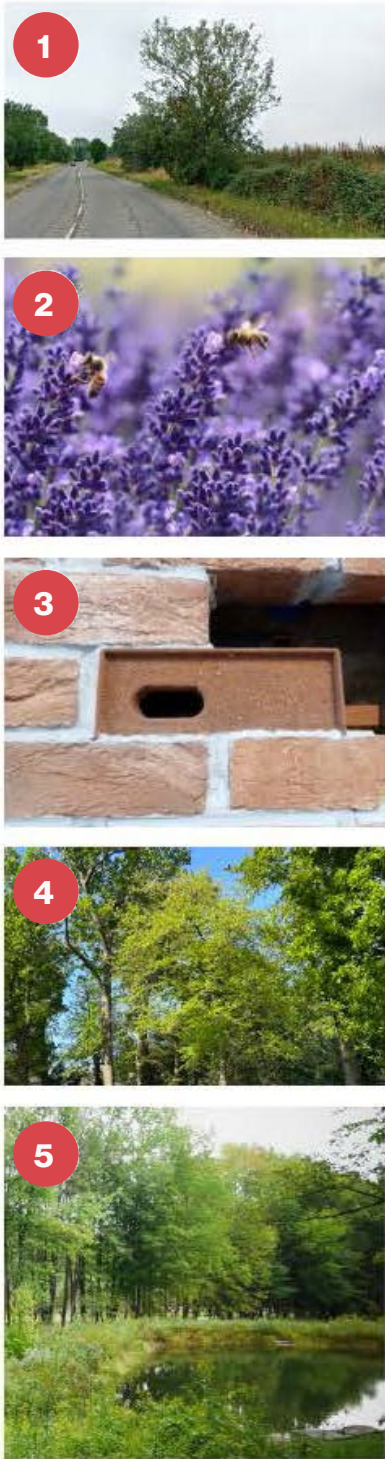
A coherent, site-wide framework for biodiversity enhancement

The ecological strategy has been developed to provide a clear and unified framework for enhancing biodiversity across the entire site, ensuring that ecological considerations are embedded within both the landscape design and the built environment. Emphasis is placed on safeguarding and strengthening existing ecological features, while also introducing a diverse range of new habitats capable of supporting species at different stages of their life cycles. Informed by the conclusions of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), the strategy promotes long-term ecological resilience and contributes to the creation of a robust, high-quality public realm that balances environmental value with everyday use.

- 1. Existing habitats; including mature trees, hedgerows and boundary vegetation, are retained and reinforced as part of the development. These features provide an established ecological baseline and are enhanced through complementary planting to provide a range of opportunities for nesting, roosting and refuge.
- 2. New habitats; are delivered through the use of native and species-rich planting to create varied ecological conditions across the site. This approach supports a broad range of species whilst contributing to landscape character, seasonal interest and long-term ecological resilience.
- 3. Habitat features within the built form; ecological value is embedded within buildings by incorporating habitat features into the fabric of the development. This ensures long-term habitat provision and distributes ecological benefits across the site.
- 4. Canopy connections; the strategy supports species movement by maintaining permeability and canopy connections across the site, whilst avoiding unnecessary barriers. Habitat continuity enables wildlife to move safely between new and retained habitats.
- 5. Green infrastructure and SuDS; are designed to deliver ecological benefits alongside water management, climate resilience and placemaking functions. Naturalised planting and habitat-led design enhances biodiversity whilst contributing to site performance.



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Supporting Reports & Technical Studies



Supporting Reports and Technical Studies

The hybrid application is supported by a comprehensive suite of technical reports, including:

- Air Quality Assessment
- Archaeological Desk Based Assessment
- Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy
- Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Preliminary Risk Assessment
- Transport Assessment and Travel Plan
- Sustainability and Energy Statement
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Tree Protection Plan & Arboricultural Method Statement
- Each of these documents provides detailed evidence to demonstrate that the development is deliverable, sustainable and policy compliant.

