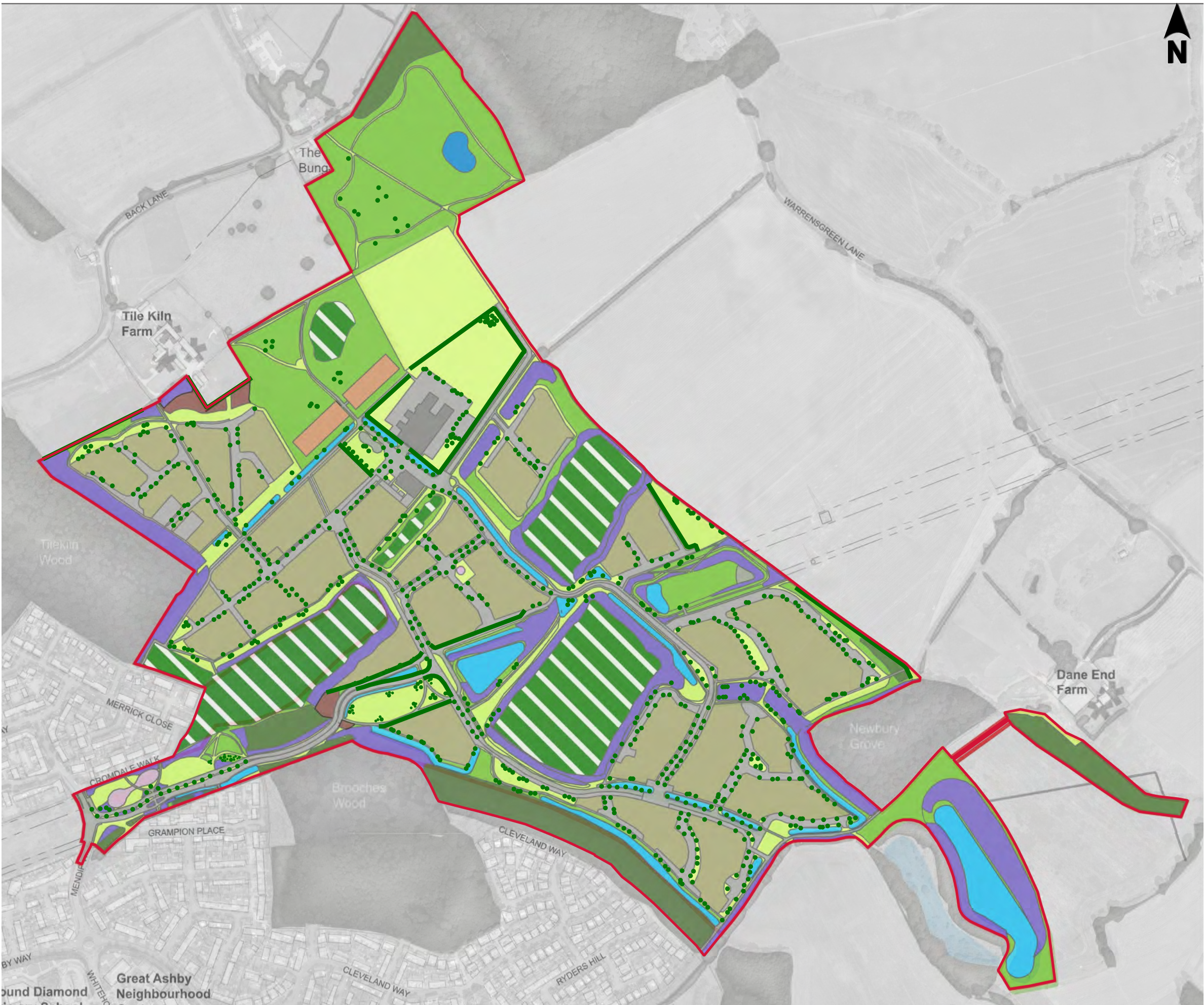


7. Development Proposals

ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY

- 7.125 The Site has been subject to a full suite of ecological survey and investigations in 2023 and 2024, following previous surveys and investigations. This work included desktop studies, habitat survey and assessment, targeted fauna and protected species surveys, and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculations. This work was used to inform the iterative design of the scheme to ensure positive ecological outcomes can be secured. Walkover updates were undertaken in 2025 to consider if the habitats have changed since, and it was confirmed that they still reflect those surveyed earlier.
- 7.126 The ecological interests of the Site are determined largely by its broad habitat composition: large arable fields enclosed by mature broadleaved woodlands with some native hedgerows, mature trees, and smaller areas of grassland.
- 7.127 Arable fields support the least ecological interest, albeit with some notable specialists such as skylark and brown hare. Built development has been largely confined to these areas, seeking to avoid the majority of potential impacts to the Site’s ecology.
- 7.128 Woodlands enclose much of the Site and are broadleaved in composition and the majority ancient in origin (present from at least 1650). Typical vegetation includes mature stand of oak, ash, field maple and hornbeam, with some beech and small-leaved lime. The understorey is often well-developed with hazel and hawthorn frequent, along with others such as Midland hawthorn reflecting the age of these woodlands. The ground flora strongly reflects both the underlying soils and ancient status of the woods, with locally abundant bluebell as well as sanicle, wood anemone, and wood meadow-grass. Small areas of recently planted or secondary woodland at the Site provide some lesser habitat interests.
- 7.129 Grasslands at the Site are largely species-poor, but provide important open habitats not well-represented locally. Smaller areas of scrub, hedgerow and mature trees also provide some structural diversity away from woodlands, contrasting with extensive open arable fields.
- 7.130 Faunal interests, with the exception of some farmland birds, are concentrated around wooded habitats and include several badger clans, bat, woodland birds and notable invertebrate species.
- 7.131 The baseline biodiversity value of the site was calculated using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool, and subsequently employed to guide good design decisions in respect of biodiversity.

- Site Boundary
- Other neutral grassland (g3c)
- Modified grassland (g4)
- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
- Other woodland-broadleaved (w1g)
- Childrens play area (u1b)
- Mixed scrub (h3h)
- Built-up areas and gardens (u1)
- Developed land, sealed surface (u1b)
- Buildings (u1b5)
- Sustainable drainage system (g 848)
- Traditional Orchard (g 27)
- Allotments (c 616)
- Ponds (priority habitat) (r1 40)
- Hedgerow (Priority Habitat)
- Trees



▲ Figure 7.15 - Habitat proposed as part of the development in order to achieve biodiversity net gain on-site

7. Development Proposals

7.132 In respect to delivering a minimum of 10% gain in biodiversity and to strengthen local ecological networks, the masterplan has been progressed to include the following:

- An additional arable field to the north of the Site, which lies strategically between grassland and parkland habitats around Tilekiln Farm, and Warrensgreen Wood and further grassland north of Warrensgreen Lane, will be utilised as part of the development. Habitat creation here will deliver in respect of Lawtonian principles ('bigger, better, more joined up'). The following habitats will be created here on lime-rich, clayey soil, to deliver in respect of the:
 - Arable reversion to neutral to lime-rich grasslands, including wetter grasslands of clay.
 - New ponds will be excavated in areas known to be subject to surface water flooding, ensuring ponds will fill and fluctuate naturally.
 - New woodland and scrub planting to extend wooded habitats at Warrensgreen Wood.
- New woodland planting south of Dane End Farm to the east of the Site to connect Newberry Wood with other wooded habitats further east.
- New hedgerows along the north eastern edge of the development to provide a habitat connection along this boundary.



▲ Tunnels under roads help prevent mammal deaths due to traffic



▲ Brush piles and deadwood along woodland edges create habitat and deter public access to the woods

- Site Boundary
- Existing 'core' habitats
- Habitat corridors (existing, strengthened & created)
- Mammal tunnel / underpass features
- Strategic habitat creation
- Bat 'hop over' vegetation
- Ancient woodland protective fencing



▲ Figure 7.16 – Ecological Mitigation Strategy

7. Development Proposals

Ecological Mitigation Strategy and Biodiversity Net Gain

7.133 The scheme has been designed to deliver in excess of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) demonstrated through use of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. This takes into account habitat retention, creation and enhancement works as proposed above, as well as the inclusion of tree-lined streets and other landscaping within the built environment. All of the above can be robustly secured through either an appropriately worded planning condition, s106 agreement and/or the control of detailed design at the relevant Reserved Matters stage.

7.134 In respect of ecological interests, the proposed development has, through iterative design sought to avoid, minimise, mitigate and ultimately compensate, through the following principles:

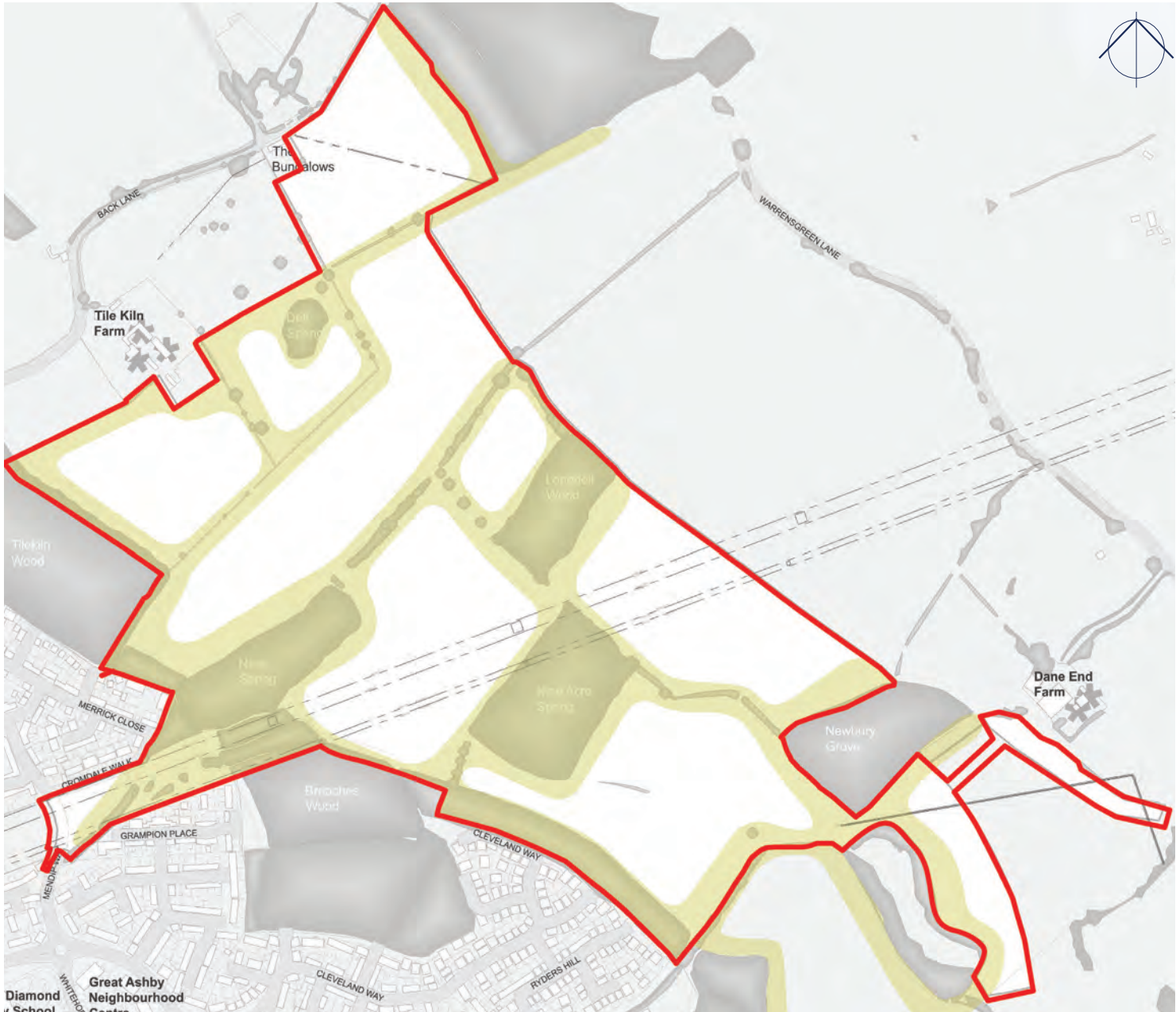
- Avoid entirely the loss of any irreplaceable woodland ancient woodland, including for vehicular access.
- Locate the vast majority of development within arable land of the lowest ecological interest.
- Reduce the potential fragmentation effects upon habitats, and associated flora and fauna through landscaping and sensitive configuration of open spaces.
- Mitigate for small scale loss of non-ancient woodland and scrub through new woodland, tree and native shrub planting.
- Compensate for any unavoidable loss of habitat, or connectivity between habitats, through new habitat creation, including the creation of links between habitat patches in the wider landscape.

7.135 The principles will be achieved through the following key ecological measures to be implemented as part of the proposed scheme:

- **Ancient woodland** buffers around all known and suspected broadleaved woodlands, comprising a combination of native shrub planting and woodland edge tall herbs and grasses.
- **Farmland Birds:** Off-site provision of ground-nesting, feeding and winter forage for a range of farmland species, such as skylark.
- **Habitats:**
 - Long-term woodland management to counter potential urbanising effects and recreational pressures.
 - Design and management of SuDS features, such as swales and basins to

- maximise their wetland and other habitat interests.
- Creation of new grassland, scrub, woodland and pond habitats across the Site to deliver a net increase in coverage of all these habitat types.

- **Bats:**
 - Design and management of bat ‘hop-overs’ across key linear habitats (hedgerows, linear woodlands) to maintain connectivity for light-shy bats.
 - Management of woodlands within the Site for bats including the provision of structural diversity and roosting sites.
 - Detailed lighting strategy for the Site to take into consideration nocturnal wildlife, including bats, specifically with regard to the latest Bat Conservation Trust guidelines, with areas which are more sensitive to lighting highlighted on the plan alongside.
- **Badger mitigation**
 - Appropriate use of Natural England derogation licence to close setts that cannot feasibly be retained, or left undisturbed, alongside development.
 - Tunnels with guide walls and sympathetic road design/speed control in close proximity to setts, and known dispersal routes to minimise traffic-related mortality.
 - Defensive thorny planting around known setts which may be subject to disturbance from additional recreation.
- **Invertebrates**
 - Both maintain existing and increase amount of saproxylic (deadwood) resource within the Site through the protection and retention of such resources.
 - Enhance and manage specific features (e.g. chalk pit at Nine Acre Spring Wood) for invertebrates.
 - Generally increase the abundance of calcareous/calculous plant species at the Site to benefit species associated with this important resource.
 - Provision of wetland and aquatic habitats (e.g. wildlife ponds) not well represented at the Site to encourage aquatic invertebrates.



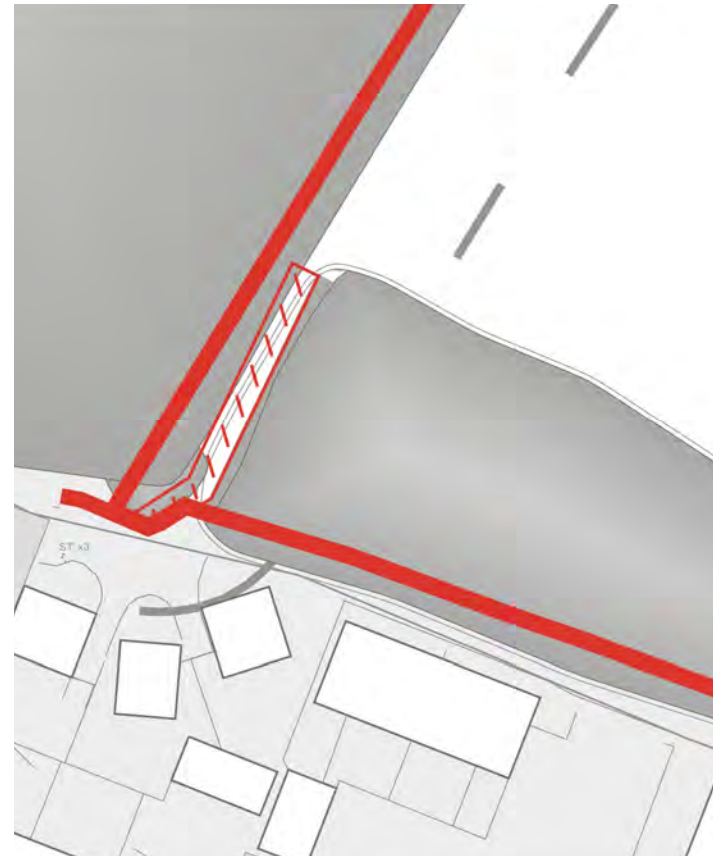
▲ Figure 7.17 – Areas where additional consideration should be given to careful lighting design are highlighted in yellow on the plan

Full and Unreserved Application

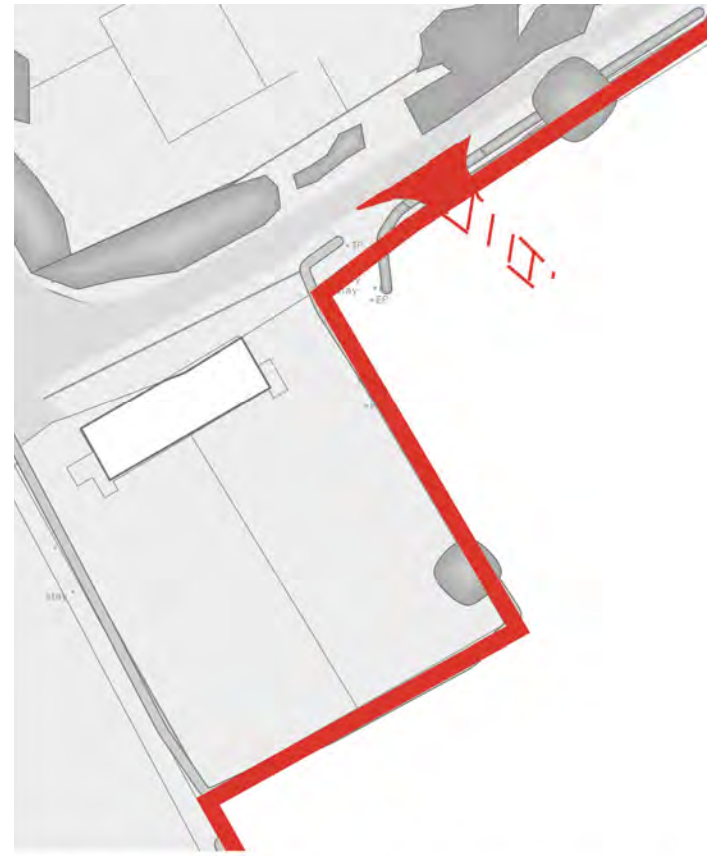


8. Full and Unreserved Application

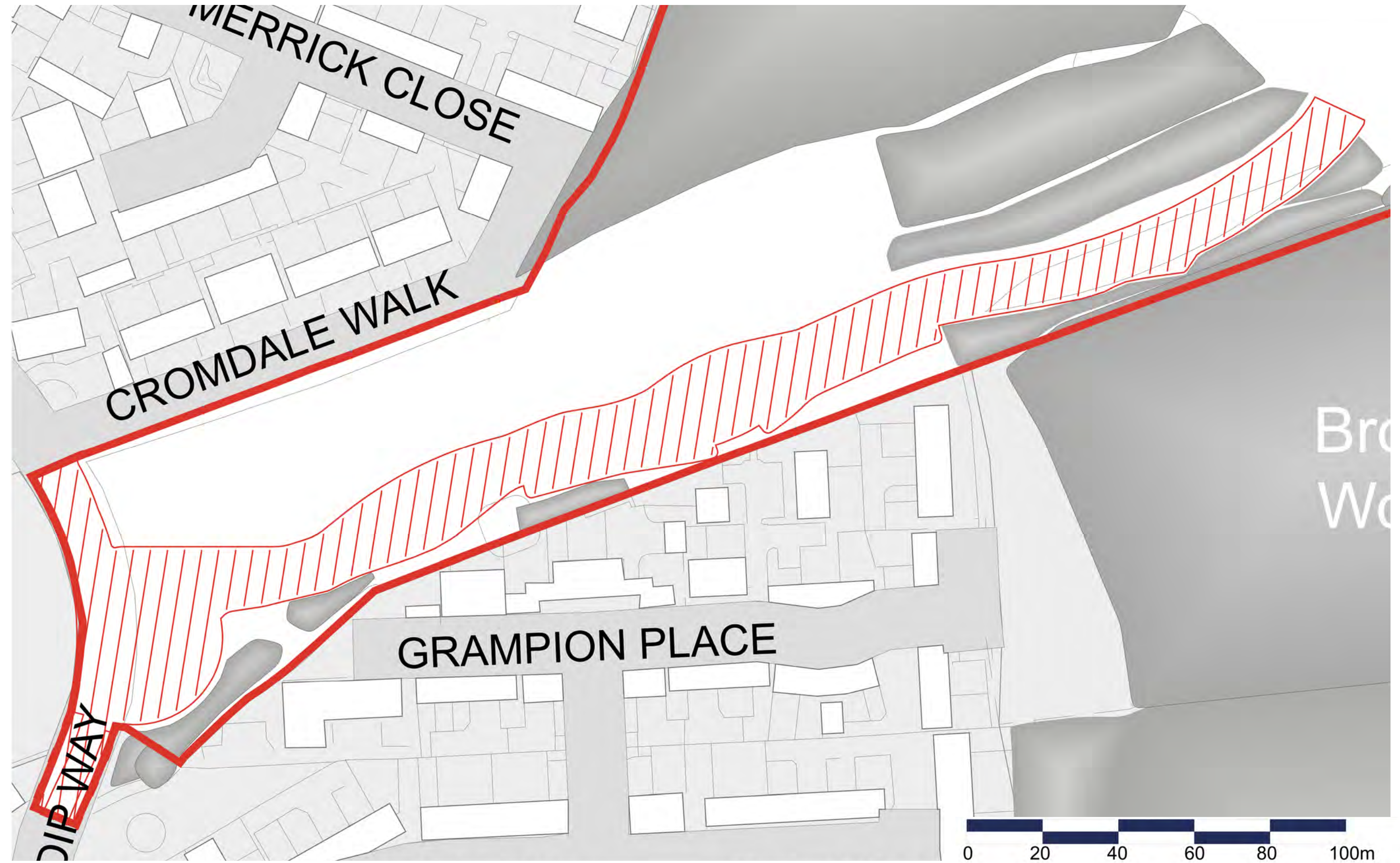
- 8.1 During pre-application discussions with the Council, it was agreed that the primary vehicular and active travel route off Mendip Way would form part of the full application, so that the detailed layout can be considered and agreed at this stage. This will ensure clarity for the various stakeholders.
- 8.2 As part of the access road, the swales serving the road are designed in detail. As the swales could be seen to comprise part of the landscape, it was agreed that the landscaping around the access road will form part of the full application.
- 8.3 In addition, the new junction onto Warrengreen Lane has been designed in detail to illustrate that it can accommodate emergency vehicles, and that access design is therefore an unreserved matter as part of the outline application.
- 8.4 Finally, in order to show that an upgraded pedestrian and cycle access can be provided into the Site off Merrick Close, that access point also forms part of the unreserved matters as part of the outline application.
- 8.5 The plans at Figure 8.1-3 show the location and boundaries of the parts of the Application which are in detail or unreserved.



▲ Figure 8.1 - Merrick Close unreserved access



▲ Figure 8.2 - Warrengreen Lane unreserved access



▲ Figure 8.3 - Mendip Way full application area

8. Full and Unreserved Application

Mendip Way Access

- 8.6

Vehicular access to the Site will be provided in the form of a priority junction from Mendip Way. The Site carriageway width will be set at 6.2m, which will increase to 7.5m on the junction bend. This width would be appropriate to accommodate bus services. It is proposed that the new access road would become major arm extension of Mendip Way, changing priority on the junction for the northern section of Mendip Way, which would become a minor arm of the proposed junction.
- 8.7

The road will be designed to have a 20mph speed limit and will include traffic calming measures to keep speeds low, whilst creating an attractively landscape environment which prioritises active travel.
- 8.8

A 3.1m wide cycleway alongside a 2m wide footway will be provided to the north of the access road, within the new parkland. This will link to pedestrian and cycle crossing points on Mendip Way and will allow access to the Great Ashby Neighbourhood Centre. The foot and cyclepath will adjoin the main carriageway, including through the area adjacent to the Ancient Woodland, to minimise tree losses. The existing pedestrian routes within this area of land beneath the pylons will be retained and connected to the new foot and cyclepath network, and crossing points will be provided over the new road to link with these paths.

Detailed Site Boundary

20mph forward visibility splay

Pedestrian crossing forward visibility splay (in accordance with LTN 2/95)

Swale and Batters

Belisha Beacon Post

Adoptable Surface Water Network

Proposed Gully

Existing Gully To Be Relocated

Proposed Swales

Adoptable asphalt carriageway

Adoptable blockwork raised table/shared surface

Adoptable blockwork shared surface/ over-run

Adoptable asphalt footway

Adoptable cycleway

Landscaping

Adoptable Swale

National Grid 12m tower stand off zone required for access and maintenance

National Grid 30m tower stand off zone, where advised any conductive material within this zone be adequately earthed

UKPN 5m stand off zone required for access and maintenance (tbc)



▲ Figure 8.4 - Means of access off Mendip Way

8. Full and Unreserved Application

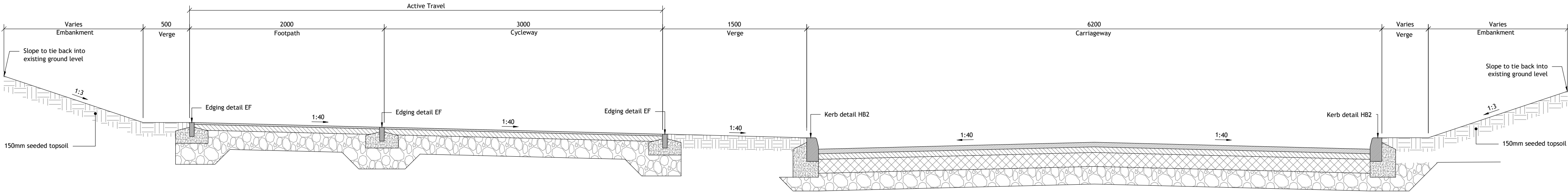
- 8.9

The layout of the access junctions, as well as the location of the active travel route, has been extensively discussed with officers from both NHDC and Herts County Council, and it has been designed in collaboration with the project landscape architects and ecologist. The access details have been considered by the utility companies in relation to the overhead powerlines, and we note that the proposed layout and lighting proposal were deemed acceptable and appropriate by these stakeholders.
- 8.10

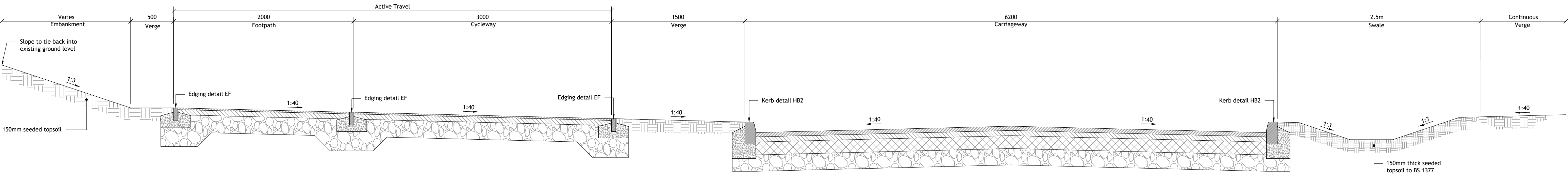
The access proposals have been tracked to show that they can accommodate a waste collection vehicle, as well as a bus. At the Reserved Matters stage, the other streets will also be designed to accommodate the necessary service and emergency vehicles.

- 8.11

Public footpath Great Ashby 011 is proposed to be rerouted for the short section where it would cross the new access road, in order to run along the new footways and via the dedicated crossing point.



▲ Figure 8.5 - Section through active travel route and street

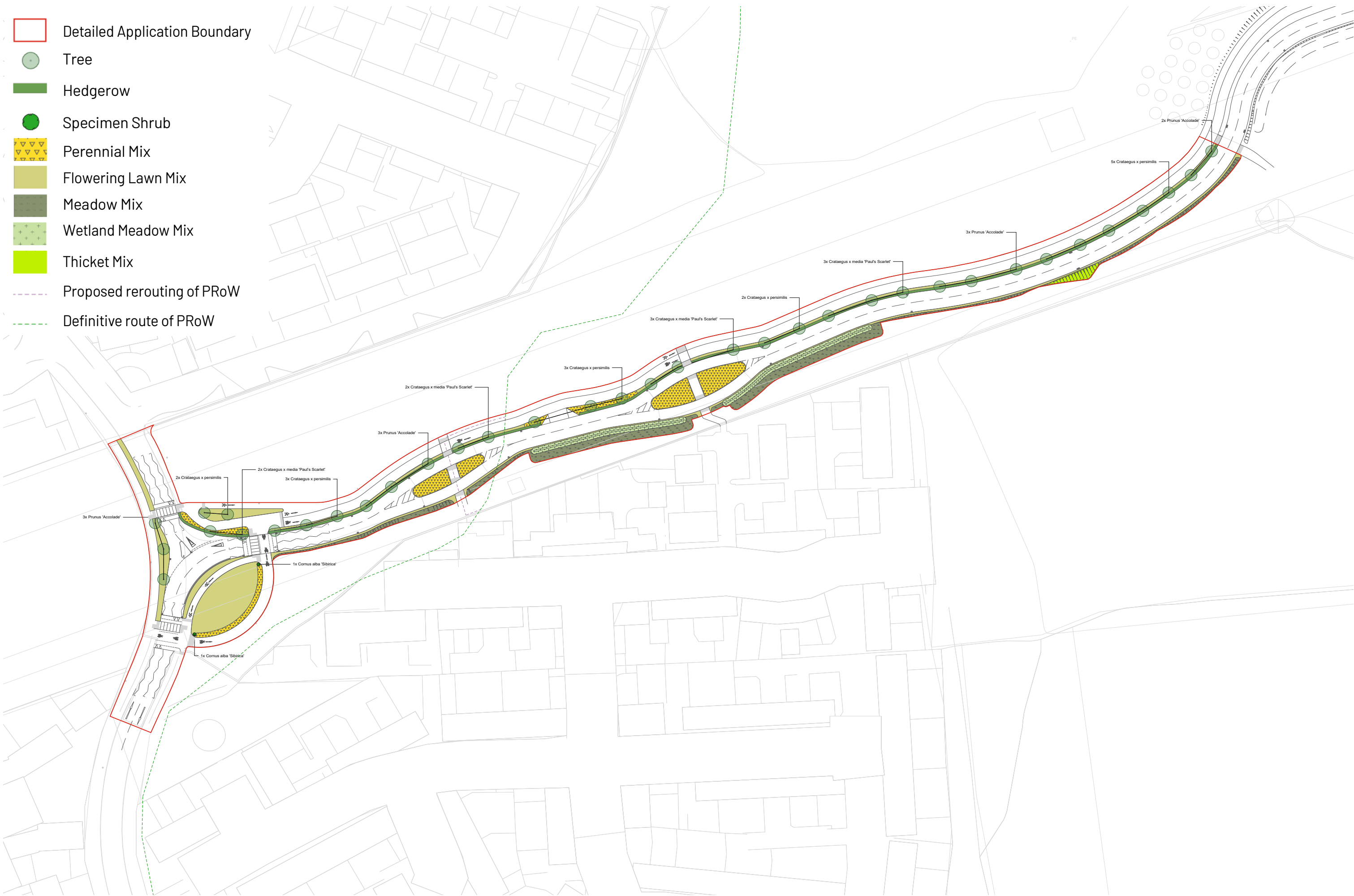


▲ Figure 8.6 - Section through active travel route, street, and swale

8. Full and Unreserved Application

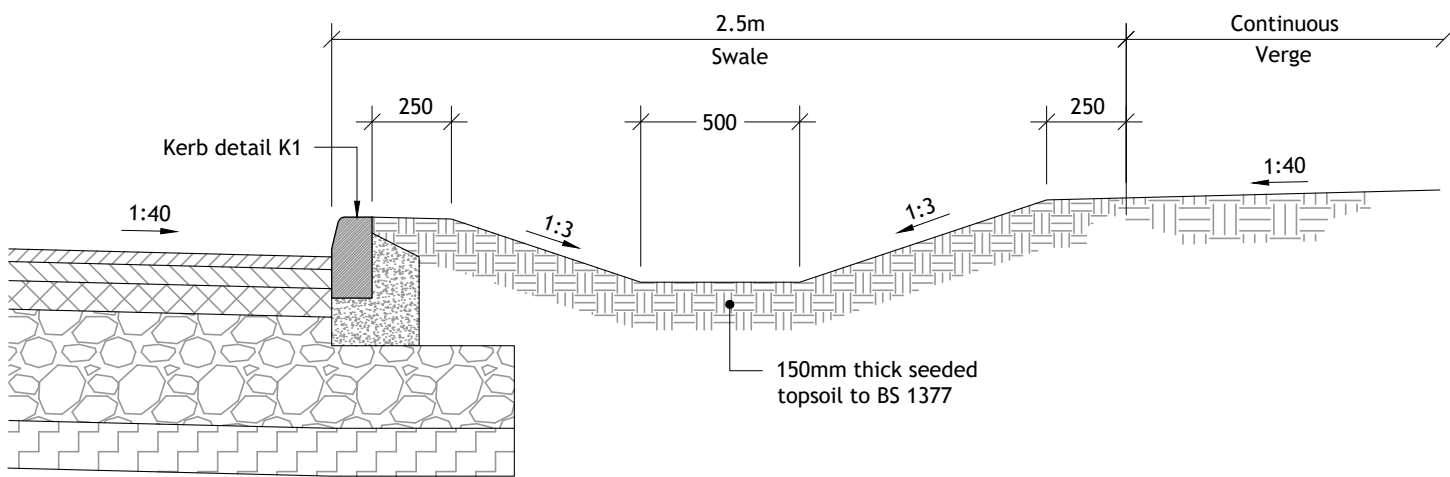
Landscape Proposals

- 8.12 As part of the full application, a planting plan has been prepared and submitted with the Application. It shows how two swales are proposed to be incorporated along the south of the access road, in order to manage surface water run-off. The plan also shows new street trees along the northern side of the road, in a 1.5m wide verge between the street and the active travel route. This verge will include lighting columns, and it is proposed to incorporate a low hedgerow within this verge, which will serve several functions:
- deter vehicles from mounting the kerb and accessing the active travel route;
 - create an attractive edge and character along the street while also serving to benefit pollinators and other wildlife through the use of plants that include flowers and berries;
 - frame the adjoining Mendip Gateway Park, and provide a low barrier to deter and limit accidental ingress onto the street from within the park, including things such as stray balls;
 - planting to be managed as a low hedge, no higher than 600mm, in order to maintain clear visibility along the street, and to allow passive surveillance over the hedge onto the active travel route, from the street.
- 8.13 The proposals also include low-level ornamental planting within the traffic-calming areas along the street, to create an attractive streetscape, whilst maintaining clear visibility.
- 8.14 The verges will be seeded with a flowering lawn mix, and the areas of banking will be sown with meadow seed mixes, to create areas of biodiversity. The swales will be sown with grass and flower seed mixes suitable for periodically wet conditions.
- 8.15 The planting proposals have been designed in conjunction with the illustrative proposals for the Mendip Gateway Park, as shown in Figure 8.7.



▲ Figure 8.7 – Landscape proposals for access off Mendip Way

8. Full and Unreserved Application



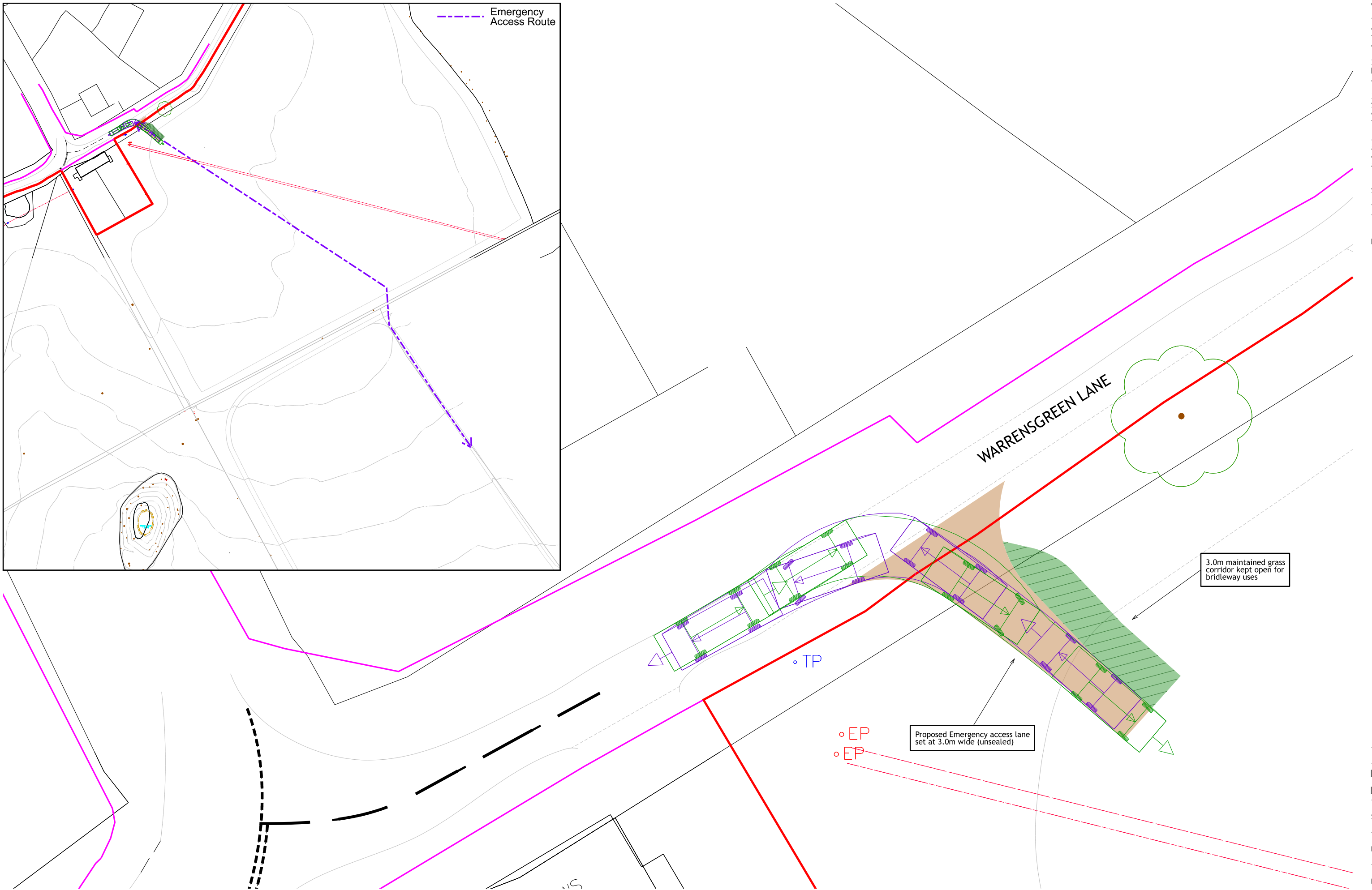
▲ Figure 8.8 - Swale section



8. Full and Unreserved Application

Emergency Vehicle Access

- 8.16 The emergency vehicle access off Warrengreen Lane forms part of the unreserved matters of the outline application. This access point into the Site off Warrengreen Lane will be controlled with a gate or bollards, and will only be for use by emergency vehicles in cases where the primary access is blocked.
- 8.17 This route will be 3m wide (and include a further 0.5m of clear land to either side to allow for overhanging of vehicles), and could be surfaced with hoggin or a reinforced grass on top of a suitable base layer capable of accommodating heavy vehicles. This route will link into the north of the development near the primary school, and will also be usable by pedestrians and cyclists. A further 3m corridor of short grass will be maintained alongside the emergency access route, in order to potentially accommodate horses. This will allow the path to be upgraded to a bridleway in the future, as part of Reserved Matters applications.



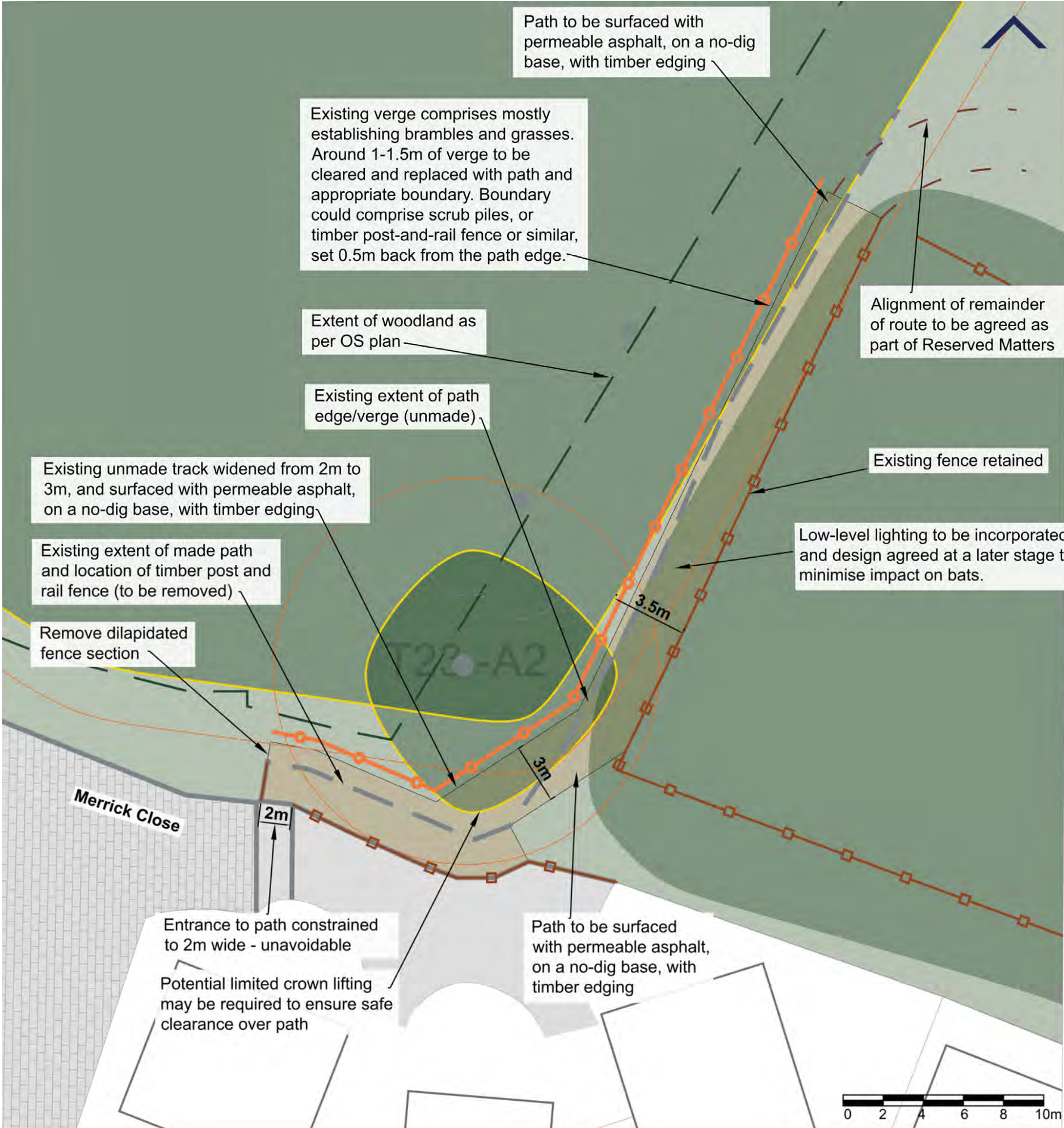
▲ Figure 8.9 - Emergency access will be off Warrengreen Lane

8. Full and Unreserved Application

Merrick Close Active Travel Access

- 8.18
- The Merrick Close active travel access forms part of the unreserved matters of the outline application, and will provide a high-quality pedestrian and cycle connection into the development from the west, improving accessibility between the existing residential estate and the proposed Community Hub area, which includes the primary school. This route is a key component of the Site’s sustainable transport strategy, ensuring safe and convenient movement for residents while promoting active travel modes.
- 8.19
- As illustrated in Figure 8.10, the proposed active travel link has been carefully designed to minimising its impact on the adjacent Ancient Woodland. To accommodate the path within this sensitive environment, limited crown lifting may be required to achieve the necessary clearance for safe passage, preserving the overall ecological integrity of the woodland.
- 8.20
- To enhance accessibility, the existing fence along the route will be removed, allowing for the pathway to be widened from 2m to 3m. The upgraded path will feature a permeable asphalt surface laid on a no-dig base with timber edging, ensuring a sustainable and low-impact construction method that protects tree roots and soil structure. Additionally, a new path edge (such as a timber railing or scrub piles) will be installed along the edge of the path to provide a clear boundary while maintaining an open and welcoming character.
- 8.21
- Further east, the alignment of the remaining section of the active travel route will be determined and refined at the Reserved Matters stage. This will ensure that the final design aligns with broader site objectives, supports connectivity, and integrates effectively with the surrounding landscape and infrastructure.

- Existing canopy of woodland and trees
- Ancient Woodland edge
- Existing road surface
- Proposed pedestrian/cycle path
- Proposed vegetation to be removed
- Existing kerbs and verge edges
- Existing fences retained
- New boundary, such as scrub piles of timber post-and-rail fence, or similar
- Root Protection Areas of Ancient Woodland
- Existing unmade ground/vegetation
- Existing route of unmade track
- Extent of woodland as per OS plan



▲ Figure 8.10 - Merrick Close Active Travel Access Plan

Illustrative Character



9. Illustrative Character

ILLUSTRATIVE SKETCHES

- 9.1 The illustrative sketches in this section show one way in which the proposed development could be designed and laid out to create areas of distinctive character. It is important to note that, as the application is in outline only, the exact layout and design will be agreed with the Council at a later stage.
- 9.2 The indicative housing mix, alongside the indicative heights plan at Figure 9.2, show one way in which 640 new dwellings can be accommodated on the development. The sketches within this Section gives an indication of how the houses could be accommodated, alongside streets, parking areas, and open spaces. They show how the new areas of open space can be designed to include a variety of areas and recreational opportunities. They also show how new habitat can be created within the development to increase the ecological value of the Site.
- 9.3 The principles shown on the these sketches result from the pre-application discussions, which were held between the Council’s Officers, HCC, other stakeholders, and the Applicant.
- 9.4 Several character areas have been explored in more detail in this section, illustratively showing how the development could be designed at the Reserved Matters stage to incorporate the key principles and vision for Ashby Woods. The sketches that follow show further detail on how Ashby Woods could be designed to deliver the proposed development within the parameters and framework as set out in Section 7. While they are not prescriptive, they do give an indication of one way the proposed development could be designed in order to appropriately respond to the various opportunities and influences of the Site, and to create an attractive and varied character within the development.



▲ Figure 9.1 - Locations of areas considered in further detail on the sketches in this section

9. Illustrative Character

ILLUSTRATIVE BUILDING HEIGHTS

9.5 The plan at Figure 9.2 shows one way in which a variety of heights could be accommodated within a layout for 640 dwellings. These indicative heights comply with the principles set out on the Building Heights Parameter Plan in Figure 7.4. A variety of roof heights will be used within the blocks, in order to create variety and rhythm, creating and reinforcing specific characters within the development. Taller buildings will also be located on corners to aid in legibility and way-finding.

- 3 storey buildings
- 2.5 storey buildings
- 2 storey buildings



▲ Figure 9.2 - Indicative building heights, showing how 640 dwellings could be accommodated on the Site



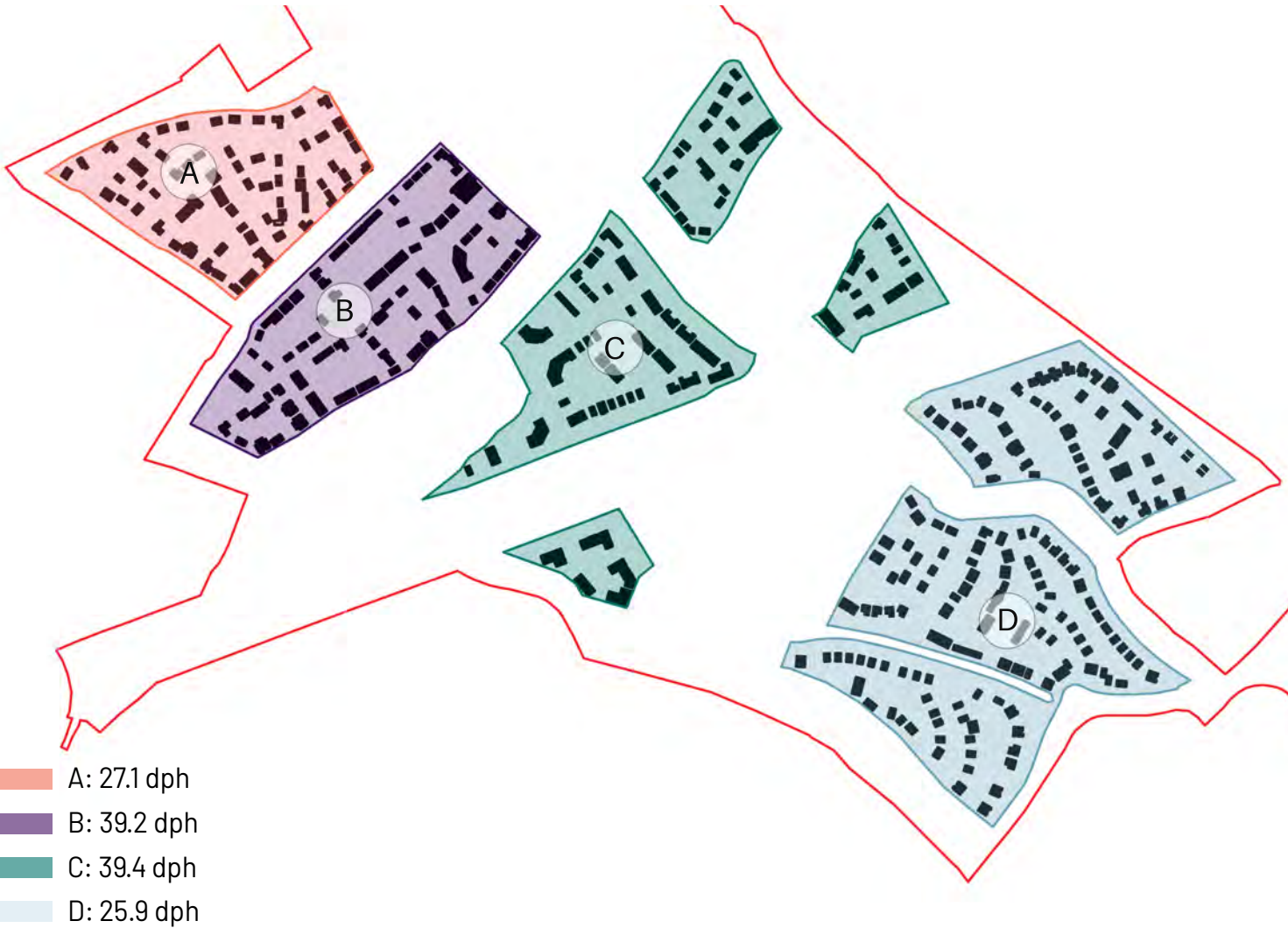
9. Illustrative Character

ILLUSTRATIVE BUILDING TYPOLOGIES

- 9.6
- As indicatively shown in Figure 9.4 the proposals include a range of house types and sizes, in order to allow a balanced and diverse community to establish, whilst also creating an interesting and varied character within Ashby Woods. A variety of buildings types will be used to create areas of varied density, with denser areas of built form located within the northern and central parts of the development, and lower density built development located towards the outer edges, as shown on the plan below.

- 9.7
- The indicative building typologies shown on the plan alongside and on the sketches which follow, comply with the Building Typologies Framework Plan at Figure 7.5.

- 9.8
- The resultant indicative densities of the various parts of the illustrative layout are shown on Figure 9.3. This shows the areas of varying density that could be accommodated across the development, whilst reflecting the principles within the Building Typologies Framework Plan.



▲ Figure 9.3 - Densities of housing as indicatively shown on the Illustrative Masterplan

Bedrooms	Average area (m²)	Amount	Parking spaces
Flats (1 &2 beds)	60-75	135	1
2b houses	82-92	85	2
3b houses	102-124	181	2
4b houses	116-172	239	2

▲ Indicative housing mix, showing how 640 dwellings could be accommodated on the Site



▲ Figure 9.4 - Indicative building typologies as shown on the Illustrative Masterplan

9. Illustrative Character

TIGHTER URBAN GRAIN

9.9 The central parts of the Site, where the land is more level and near to the Community Hub, is proposed to included denser development, set within a tighter urban grain. The sketch at Figure 9.5 shows one way in which this character can be achieved on the Site. It also shows how the primary street which accommodates the bus route, could be designed.

- 1. Continuous frontages, with mostly apartments and terraces, fronting onto the streets and active travel routes.
- 2. Parking accommodated in courts, with at least two pedestrian entrances.
- 3. Courts designed to incorporate planting and trees between parking spaces: at least one 'green' space per four parking bays.
- 4. Courts should be overlooked to allow passive surveillance.
- 5. Dwellings mostly tight to the footways, to frame the street.
- 6. Active travel route alongside bus route, with key spaces incorporating block paving to create interest and variety, and to aid in creating a legible space.
- 7. Leisure routes are to be located beyond 12m from the existing vegetation belts, where possible.
- 8. New native thicket planting to enhance existing vegetation corridors.
- 9. New native thicket planting alongside Ancient Woodland, to deter access to woods, and enhance biodiversity and habitat opportunities.



▲ Figure 9.5 - Illustrative layout of areas of tighter urban grain

9. Illustrative Character

LOOSER URBAN GRAIN

9.10 Away from the central core, the dwellings will be laid out in a looser urban grain. This will allow for more open spaces between the buildings, as well as streets which are more open in character. A greater variety of house types and heights will be located in these areas, and key buildings and taller buildings will be used in important locations to aid in wayfinding, and to create variety and interest within these areas.

9.11 The primary street and bus route will lead through some areas of looser urban grain, and shared foot and cycleways will aid active travel.

1. Larger variety of house types, styles, heights, and sizes, to create interest and offer housing to a wider range of household types.
2. Street frontages should still be framed by built form, although there will be larger gaps between buildings.
3. Parking can be accommodated in small parking courts, in dedicated bays to the front of houses, and in private driveways and garages. Where parking is located to the front of dwellings, one 'green' bay should be provided for every four parking bays, to create a green frontage and to break up the hard landscaping within these areas.
4. Streets are likely to include footways to at least one side, with cycling mostly accommodate on the street. Shared streets will be appropriate in areas of lower traffic or where there is no through-way.
5. The existing public footpaths should be accommodated along the new footways.
6. Additional structural planting and long grass margins alongside retained hedgerows.
7. Swales to be accommodated within the green corridors, and should be planted with meadow species suitable for periodically wet conditions.
8. Additional structural vegetation adjacent to the Ancient Woodland.



▲ Figure 9.6 – Illustrative layout of areas of looser urban grain

9. Illustrative Character

LOOSE SUBURBAN/RURAL GRAIN

- 9.12 Areas adjoining the more open, rural surroundings are proposed to be the lowest in density, and also the lowest in height, in order to allow more space for green infrastructure, and to create an appropriate transition to the wider, open countryside.
- 9.13 These areas will be orientated to front towards the open landscape, and also onto the green corridors within the development.
- 9.14 The dwelling and garden sizes are expected to be larger, to reflect a more suburban character, suitable for the edges of Ashby Woods.

1. Mostly detached and semi-detached houses, up to 2 storeys high.
2. The building lines are more varied, with dwellings fronting the streets, open spaces, and green corridors.
3. Parking is more often located on-plot, and houses mostly have deeper front gardens.
4. Building styles and materials will be more reflective of the vernacular.
5. Streets may have footways to one side, or comprise shared spaces.
6. Incidental areas of open space will include equipped play areas, areas for informal play, or seating and socialising spaces.
7. Trees will be accommodated in front gardens and dedicated green spaces.
8. Private drives will serve houses on the outermost edges of blocks, where there is no need for through traffic. Pedestrian and cycle connectivity will be maintained via dedicated paths and links.



▲ Figure 9.7 – Illustrative layout of loose suburban/rural grain areas

9. Illustrative Character

COMMUNITY HUB

- 9.15 The Community Hub will form the heart of Ashby Woods, and will include the primary school, community hall, and a play area. It would be adjacent to Dell Spring, providing easy access to the allotments and the wider countryside. These uses will be set around a civic space, where vehicular access will be restricted to buses and service vehicles only.
- 9.16 The buildings will create strong frontages onto the civic space, in order to frame it and provide overlooking. While the school building and the community hall are likely to be the equivalent height of a 2 storey building, the residential buildings within this space should be higher, in order to emphasise the importance of this space, and to aid in legibility and way-finding.
- 9.17 Buildings should front onto the civic space, and should be accessed from it where possible. They should be located as close to the civic space as possible, and should be designed to reflect their prominent position and frontage. The civic space should be designed to prioritise pedestrian and cycle use, with the bus route carefully designed to move along the southern edge of this space.
- 9.18 The architectural style and materials of the buildings should harmonise, to create a coherent streetscene reflective of its place within the heart of the development.
- 9.19 The area of public open space and play area should be designed to form a coherent part of the civic space, and to be usable whilst allowing sufficient space for movement within and around the space.
- 9.20 Parking should be located behind the built frontages.
- 9.21 The primary school, community hall and play area would face onto a shared open space, which would allow for a spill out of the community uses, including events such as markets. The play area would comprise of natural materials and timber benches to provide a natural transition to Dell Spring and the wider countryside. These would be set within amenity grass to provide a more active space within the Community Hub. Swales outside the primary school will be heavily planted to create attractive rain garden features outside the primary school. Formal tree planting would line the street and new hedgerows around the school would help to frame the space.



9. Illustrative Character

- 9.22 Swales will be approximately 7m wide and 1m deep (1:3 gradient banks) and planted with a mixture of perennials and grasses to provide seasonal colour and structure. Planting of swales will be mindful of ongoing maintenance requirements. A new native hedgerows will be created around the school curtilage and be planted up with native hedgerow trees. Street trees will be planted in tree pits of an appropriate size to support healthy growth and will be accompanied by tree grilles.
- 9.23 The Community Hub will make use of high quality hard landscape materials and finishes, including lighting, signage and street furniture. Consider additional activities such as table tennis and chess tables to appeal to a wider mix of generations.
1. Foot and cycle paths provide access through the development.
 2. The primary school will face onto the shared civic space, to form part of the Community Hub.
 3. Civic space outside school allows for congregating, and could be used for markets and other events.
 4. The Community Hall is proposed to be multi-functional, and will be located within the heart of the Community Hub.
 5. An equipped play area within this space will help to create a social hub and meeting space.
 6. Allotments adjacent to the Community Hub puts sustainable food and recreation at the heart of the community, and facilities can be shared between Hall and allotment users.
 7. Denser, taller housing will frame the civic space, and provide passive surveillance.
 8. Existing hedgerows retained within green corridors, and surrounded by meadow seeding.



▲ Figure 9.8 – Illustrative layout of Community Hub

9. Illustrative Character

PRIMARY FRONTAGES

- 9.24 The primary frontages will be located along the spine street within the development, as shown on the Built Form Framework Plan in Figure 7.6. These buildings will form a strong building line which is relatively continuous, in order to frame the streetscape. These houses will front onto the streets, and should be accessed off the street in order to animate the streetscene and provide passive surveillance. The houses should be located near the edge of the pavement or verges, with short or no front gardens.
- 9.25 Houses here should be designed to include details or features which emphasise the importance or hierarchy of the spine street, in order to aid way-finding and legibility.
- 9.26 Front boundaries should be marked by similar materials and be of the same style, and could include low walls or railings. Where there are no front gardens, appropriate privacy should be ensured by incorporating changes in paving type or similar, to indicate semi-private spaces.
- 9.27 Parking should mostly be located behind the blocks or between buildings, and should not extend into the streetscene, except where dedicated parking areas are designed as part of squares or in lay-bys.
- 9.28 A tight urban grain should be created, with more continuous frontages where possible. Houses will be taller, and should be designed to create a harmonious streetscene.
- 9.29 Front gardens should be short or omitted. Front boundaries should be marked by similar treatments, to aid in framing the spaces and creating continuity.
- 9.30 Parking should be limited from these area, and located in dedicated bays where provided, or be located in parking courts. Planting will likely be limited in front gardens, and the verges and proposed street trees should therefore be utilised to ensure greening of these spaces.



9. Illustrative Character

SECONDARY FRONTAGES

- 9.31 Secondary frontages, as shown on the Built Form Framework Plan in Figure 7.6, will mostly be located along the secondary streets within the development. Houses here will still form a strong frontage to frame the street, but the building line can be less rigid. There are likely to be more spaces between buildings along the frontage, although the spaces would still be relatively narrow.
- 9.32 Houses are less likely to be 3 storeys in height, but will include a variety of roof heights in order to create rhythm and interest in the streetscene, whilst utilising building heights to reinforce legibility and to mark key spaces.
- 9.33 Car parking will likely be in rear parking areas set behind the building line, or on plot between the buildings and accessed from the street. Visitor parking will be provided in dedicated parking bays on the street.
- 9.34 Houses will be set further back from the street and pavement, behind short to medium-depth front gardens. Front garden boundaries should be marked by similar treatment, such as railings, low walls, or hedges.
- 9.35 Houses should front onto the street, and should be accessed off it.
- 9.36 A larger variety of housetypes could be used along these frontages, but an overall harmony and continuity should be created to aid in creating a legible development.
- 9.37 The urban grain should be more loose than the primary frontages, and could include more spaces between buildings.
- 9.38 Parking will be in rear courts or on-plot between houses, and visitor parking should be in dedicated bays on-street.
- 9.39 Front gardens are likely to include some vegetation, with trees in verges further contributing to a softer streetscene.
- 9.40 The frontages should utilise similar design details and features, to create a coherent area of character which allows some variety within an overall palette.



9. Illustrative Character

RURAL EDGES

- 9.41 As shown on the Built Form Framework Plan in Figure 7.6, houses within the far east and south of Ashby Woods will front onto the rural edges of the development, and will aid in creating an attractive and outward facing development, as seen from the wider countryside. The houses and associated open spaces will form an appropriate transition between the settlement and the countryside beyond, and the density and heights of the buildings will therefore reduce along these edges.
- 9.42 There will be larger spaces between these houses, and the overall building like will be less formal and more organic, creating pockets of open space and openness between the built form which will start to bring the countryside in to the development.
- 9.43 These properties will mostly be accessed off private drives or courts, and car parking will mostly be on-plot between houses. Dwellings will include mostly detached and semi-detached houses to create a looser urban grain.
- 9.44 Front gardens will likely be deeper and incorporate more planting and amenity grass, further softening the space between the houses and the countryside.
- 9.45 A variety of housing and roof styles should be used to break up the building line and fragment the built mass of these houses, allowing the built edge to be softened.
- 9.46 Light coloured or white render should be minimised here, with darker brick colours favoured to aid in allowing the development to become visually recessed in views towards it. The houses need not be hidden in views from the countryside, but they should clearly be separated from it behind a hedgerow or timber fence, and tree planting.
- 9.47 Houses should front towards the countryside in most instances, to provide an attractive aspect and also passive surveillance to the green infrastructure corridors.
- 9.48 The lanes and private drives should be designed to minimise tarmac, with more textured and lighter coloured surfacing materials favoured to reinforce the difference in character between the higher density parts of the development and the houses on the rural edge.



9. Illustrative Character

WOODLAND/OPEN SPACE FRONTAGES

- 9.49 Housing on the woodland edges or along the proposed open spaces which form part of the green infrastructure network, as shown on the Built Form Framework Plan in Figure 7.6, will be located to create an attractive outlook to these open edges, and to provide passive surveillance to the routes and play areas within them.
- 9.50 A variety of house types and buildings arrangements will be utilised. Within the tighter urban grained, central parts of the development, the houses should form more continuous frontages, and parking would likely be in rear parking courts. The houses will also be higher, thereby strongly framing the woodland edges or open spaces.
- 9.51 Within the southern part of the development, houses along these edges will likely be lower and looser, with a larger variety of house types used to create a more varied building line and streetscene.
- 9.52 In some instances, these houses will side onto the open edges or woodland, to still provide some passive surveillance whilst minimising activity and lighting adjoining the woodland. Where properties back onto these open areas, it should be limited to one rear garden backing onto the space, flanked by two properties, which either front or side onto the space, to ensure continuous passive surveillance of the open corridors. Rear or side garden boundaries in these areas should comprise 1.8m high brick walls, to create an attractive edge to the development which is also secure and long-lasting.
- 9.53 More continuous building lines, with parking in rear courts, should be used in the centre of the development, and loose building lines with more variety in frontage types should be used in the south of the development.
- 9.54 Vehicular access will be more limited to these frontages, with parking more often located in courts behind the building line.
- 9.55 Property lighting should be designed to minimise spill into the adjoining areas of woodland.



9. Illustrative Character

FRONTAGE TO LISTED BUILDINGS

- 9.56 The houses within the north west of the development will be located within the vicinity of the Listed Buildings at Tilekiln Farm. The Illustrative Masterplan shows how an area of open space is proposed within the north west of the Site, with the new homes set back behind it, allowing a large separation between the Listed Buildings and the new settlement edge.
- 9.57 New structural planting, including thicket and orchard planting, is proposed in this open space, to visually separate the dwellings whilst maintaining a relatively low and open vegetation character in this area which will not overbear the Listed Buildings.
- 9.58 The houses on this edge should be lower and loosely arranged to create an organic building line, which is further softened with areas of indented open space or openness between the houses.
- 9.59 Vehicular access should be contained to the rear of the building line, and parking should be behind the building frontages. The houses should front onto the open space, and front doors should lead onto paths in the open space.
- 9.60 The houses here should be designed to be clearly subservient to the Listed Buildings. Houses will likely comprise wider frontages and be of narrower depths, and rooflines should be simple pitched. Gables towards the Listed Buildings sides would likely not be appropriate.



9. Illustrative Character

1. Softer building line with larger spaces between buildings.
2. Vehicular access to the rear of the dwellings.
3. Existing hedgerows retained and strengthened with additional native thicket planting.
4. Community Orchard incorporated within the north of the development here, to screen views between the Farm and the new homes, whilst remaining low and more open in character.
5. Wildflower meadow seeding, with mown paths to direct and control access to this area, as well as to benefit wildlife.
6. Existing public footpaths retained.
7. New leisure routes created within the areas of open space, and these should link to the public footpaths and shared streets.
8. Incidental areas for play and socialising will be created within the green corridors.



▲ Figure 9.9 – Illustrative layout near Tilekiln Farm

9. Illustrative Character

DELL SPRING

- 9.61 As shown on the Green Infrastructure Framework Plan in Figure 7.18, the proposed Dell Spring Landscape Character area is located in the north of the Site.
- 9.62 Dell Spring would retain and enhance existing long grassland, alongside the creation of new areas of neutral grassland on a former arable field. A new wildlife pond is proposed, alongside a belt of woodland planting along the northern edge. This area will be designated as an area for Biodiversity Net Gain. Mown paths would cross through the grassland, creating informal routes which reinforce a country park character. These would connect with existing public rights of way, including the Hertfordshire Way, providing strategic connections with the wider countryside.
- 9.63 Areas of grassland would be scattered with specimen trees and tree groups, reflecting the parkland character found within the wider landscape. Dell Spring would provide a natural transition between the development and the wider countryside to the north, including the parkland at Weston Park. Areas of existing woodland, including Dell Spring, would be retained. Timber railing would be provided along areas of existing woodland to deter public access for safety and habitat reasons. Allotments would be provided within the south of Dell Spring, adjacent to the Local Centre and Community Hub. The area of open space between proposed homes and Tilekiln Farm would be informal in character and include a new community orchard with meadow planting to soften the settlement edge in this location, and to provide an appropriate separation between the new homes and the Listed Buildings.

1. Retain and enhance grassland and woodland.
2. Incorporate fenced allotment area within the south, and set allotments back 12m from existing hedgerows.
3. Create new leisure route through Dell Spring, to connect to existing public footpaths. Additional mown paths will further enhance recreational access.
4. Community orchard incorporated within the north of the development here, to screen views between the Tilekiln Farm and the new homes, whilst remaining low and more open in character.
5. A natural character will be maintained in this area, to allow passive recreation, and toe offer wildlife opportunities.
6. The woodland should be bound by timber fencing or scrub piles to deter access.
7. Information boards should be installed to educate visitors on the value of the area, and how they could help to maintain its quilty and function.
8. The existing field boundaries and trees will be retained and managed.



▲ Figure 9.10 - Illustrative layout of Dell Spring

9. Illustrative Character

- 9.64 The area should retain a sense of openness across Dell Spring with enclosure created by surrounding vegetated skylines. It should retain longer views south across the plateau, locating benches in these locations.
- 9.65 Native parkland trees should be scattered in groups or as individual specimen, and trees should be located to soften views of built development from the Hertfordshire Way.
- 9.66 Opportunities for natural play and interactions with nature should be introduced.
- 9.67 Areas of undisturbed grassland and water for wildlife should be provided.
- 9.68 Existing woodland should be fenced with low railings/brush piles, and information boards explaining the history of Dell Spring and its ecological value should be introduced.
- 9.69 The landscape must respect the adjoining Listed Buildings by maintaining an informal landscape character, and through the incorporation of an orchard, as shown on Figure 9.9.
- 9.70 A new belt of woodland along the Site’s boundary with Warrengreen Lane should be planted, to filter views from the north.

