

Growing Baldock

Design and Access Statement



February 2026

Urban&Civic

Hertfordshire



Contents

Introduction 4

 Purpose and Structure of the Design and Access Statement 7

 Post Outline Design Approval 8

1.0 Context..... 10

 Site Location..... 10

 Planning Policy Context 13

 Design Policy Guidance..... 18

 Understanding Baldock 20

 Local Design Context..... 30

2.0 Design Development and Parameters..... 38

 Design Evolution 39

 OPA Development Parameters 50

3.0 Masterplanning and Placemaking56

Built Form and Place Identity.....	58
Places: Bygrave Road Corridor	64
Places: Local Centre	66
Places: Active Travel Spine.....	68
Places: BA2	70
Gateways: North Road	72
Gateways: A505.....	74
Gateways: Clothall Road.....	75
Edges: Bygrave Common.....	76
Edges: Railway Edge	78
Edges: A505 Edge.....	79
Strategic Green Infrastructure Places: Bygrave Common	82
Strategic Green Infrastructure Places: Eastern Park	84
Strategic Green Infrastructure Places:	
Green Space East of Clothall Common	85
Strategic Green Infrastructure Places: Bygrave Common	82
Strategic Green Infrastructure Places: Urban Open Land.....	86
Strategic Green Infrastructure Places: Walls Field	88
Strategic Green Infrastructure Places: Weston End	89
Movement and Access	94
Sustainability	114
Illustrative Masterplan	116
Phasing and Implementation	118

4.0 Strategic Masterplan Compliance 120

Introduction

0.1 This Design and Access Statement (DAS) has been prepared in support of an Outline Planning Application (OPA) for the 'Growing Baldock' development comprising residential and commercial land uses together with education provision, access, green space and associated infrastructure on land to the north and east of Baldock, on behalf of the applicant Urban&Civic Baldock North Ltd (U&C) and Hertfordshire County Council (HCC).

0.2 The Growing Baldock site falls within the jurisdiction of North Herts (NHC) and is allocated for development in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan (2022). It comprises of four of the Local Plan site allocations namely:

- **BA1** – the main allocation area east of North Road and north of the railway
- **BA2** – land to the south of Clothall Road
- **BA3** – land to the east of Baldock, north of the Urban Open Land (see below)
- **BA10** – linear strip of land between Royston Road and the railway

0.3 Three further areas of land are incorporated into the OPA boundary:

- **Urban Open Land** – land between Clothall Road and BA3
- **Walls Field** – open green space to the east of Baldock town centre which is also a Scheduled Monument
- **Land to the west of North Road** – a small parcel of land within HCC ownership west of North Road, adjacent to BA1 and south of the Ivel Springs Local Nature Reserve (LNR)



▲ Figure 1: The Growing Baldock site

0.4 A Strategic Masterplan (SMP) for Growing Baldock has been prepared in accordance with Local Plan policy SP9, approved by NHC and is now a material consideration in the preparation of this OPA. Reference to compliance with the SMP is made throughout this DAS, culminating in the detailed analysis in section 4.

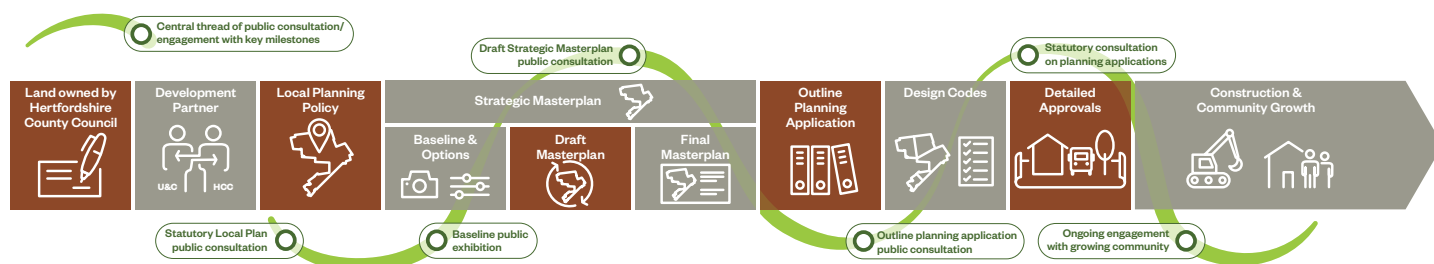
0.5 This OPA seeks outline planning permission (OPP) for a development that represents a significant growth of Baldock (by around two thirds of its current size). The development is known as 'Growing Baldock' to reflect the joint vision of growing the existing town in a way that ensures it is connected to and an integral part of Baldock. Achieving connectivity and integration with the town therefore runs through all aspects of the proposed development.

0.6 The development will comprise up to 3,200 homes, primary, secondary and SEND education provision, a significant area of employment land, alongside strategic areas of green infrastructure, interwoven by a movement network that prioritises active and sustainable travel movements and connectivity to the station and town centre, including two crossings of the railway. The formal description of development is as follows:

Outline planning application with all matters reserved except for means of highway access into the development from North Road and Clothall Road: for up to 3,200 homes, up to 16ha of employment, waste and leisure infrastructure, a mixed use local centre, up to 1 secondary school, up to 2 x primary schools, up to 1 SEND school, health hub, green infrastructure (including parks, formal sports provision, play, habitat areas, informal open space and structural planting), internal street network, access junctions and railway crossing, public transport infrastructure, pedestrian/cycle network (including PRow diversions, active travel routes, mobility hubs and crossing of the railway), utilities and drainage infrastructure (including diversions of existing and provision of new infrastructure, pumping stations, sustainable drainage, primary substations, rising main/strategic sewer and renewable energy infrastructure), ground remodelling/earthworks and any necessary demolitions.

0.7 The OPA seeks outline planning permission with all matters reserved with the exception of access in relation to the key site access junctions. The scheme parameters are set out in the Parameter Plan and accompanying Development Specification. These documents, plus the detailed access plans and the design principles within the DAS define the design components that will be approved as part of the OPA. The process of design approval post OPP is explained in the section below from paragraph 0.14.

0.8 The SMP, the OPA, this DAS and the design principles embedded within it are the culmination of an extensive and iterative design process, informed at every stage by community and stakeholder engagement, as articulated in Figure 2 below. Section 2 of this DAS and the separate Statement of Community Engagement explains how feedback from the community has directly shaped the development for which OPP is now sought.



▲ Figure 2: Growing Baldock timeline

Purpose and Structure of the Design and Access Statement

0.9 This DAS, submitted as part of the OPA, articulates the development proposals in a clear and legible way, and demonstrates how the design responds to the site's context, and how it has evolved from the original design concept through to the development scheme now submitted. It also provides a set of clear Design Principles which future development, approved pursuant to this OPA, will have to accord.

0.10 The government's Guidance to Making an Application in the Planning System (2021) states that Design and Access Statements *"provide a framework for applicants to explain how the proposed development is a suitable response to the site and its setting and demonstrate that it can be adequately accessed by prospective users"*.

0.11 The DAS is informed by best practice guidance including:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government;
- Planning Practice Guidance, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government;
- National Design Guide, 2021, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government;
- Building for a Healthy Life, 2020, Homes England;
- Streets for a Healthy Life, 2022, Homes England;
- Active Design, 2023, Sport England; and
- Secured by Design Principles

0.12 These principal guidance documents have been used, alongside local policy, guidance, and design documents to inform the proposals.

0.13 The DAS illustrates the evolution of the application proposals in a logical way, exploring the design and access matters including green infrastructure, built form and place identity, movement and connectivity and sustainability. It is split into four main parts:

Part 1: Context

This section explores the physical, visual, social and economic context of the site and the surrounding area, identifying key characteristics and principles to inform the design, as well as opportunities afforded by the context. The assessment of context also explores key considerations to which the design proposal must respond, such as drainage and ecology.

Part 2: Design Development

This section details the design development and evolution process that have shaped development proposals.

Part 3: Masterplanning and Placemaking

This section sets out the site-wide and key places and spaces development principles, exploring illustrative proposals for the green infrastructure and open spaces, access and connectivity, and built form character, layout, and density.

Part 4: Strategic Masterplan Compliance

Assessment of the OPA scheme and parameters against the vision, frameworks and framework plans set out within the approved SMP.

Post Outline Design Approval

0.14 A bespoke approach to securing design quality post OPP has been discussed with NHC planning and design officers and is set out in Figure 4 overleaf.

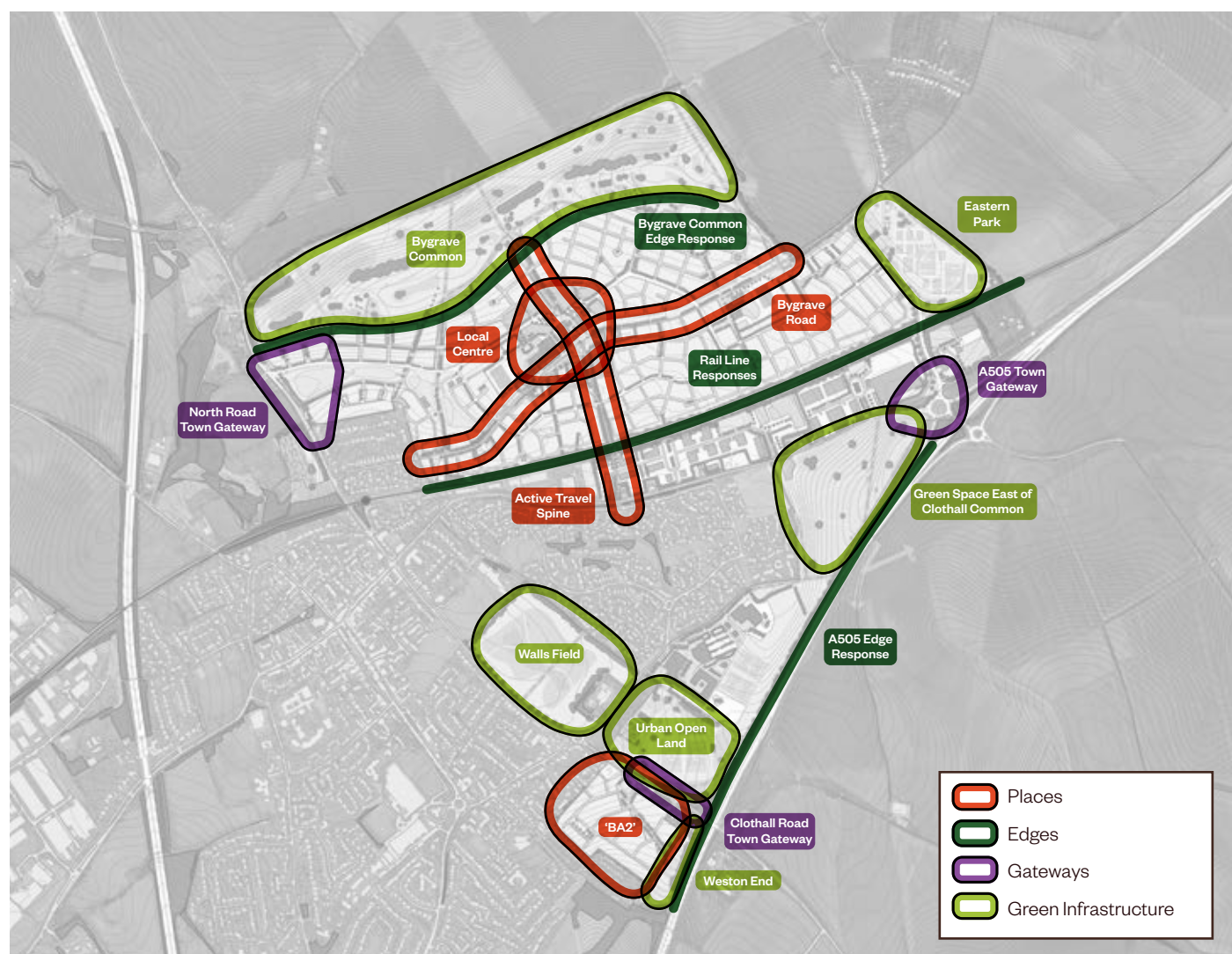
Tier 1: Outline Design Principles

0.15 The DAS includes a series of site wide principles which apply to all development. These principles are set out in section 3 of the DAS highlighted within labelled brown boxes. They are also appended to and form part of the Development Specification. It is intended that adherence to the site wide principles will be conditioned as part of the OPP.

0.16 The DAS also articulates a series of more detailed design principles in relation to key places and spaces (see Figure 3) as follows:

- **Places** – Local Centre, Bygrave Road, Active Travel Spine and BA2
- **Edges** – A505, rail line and Bygrave Common
- **Gateways** – North Road, Clothall Road, A505
- **Green Infrastructure** – Bygrave Common, Walls Field, Urban Open Land, Eastern Park, green space east of Clothall Common and Weston End

0.17 These key places and spaces principles are included throughout section 3 of the DAS within clearly labelled boxes and will apply to development within these areas. More detailed principles are set out in relation to BA2 for reasons set out below.



▲ Figure 3: Key places and spaces

Tier 2: Allocation Specific Design Principles

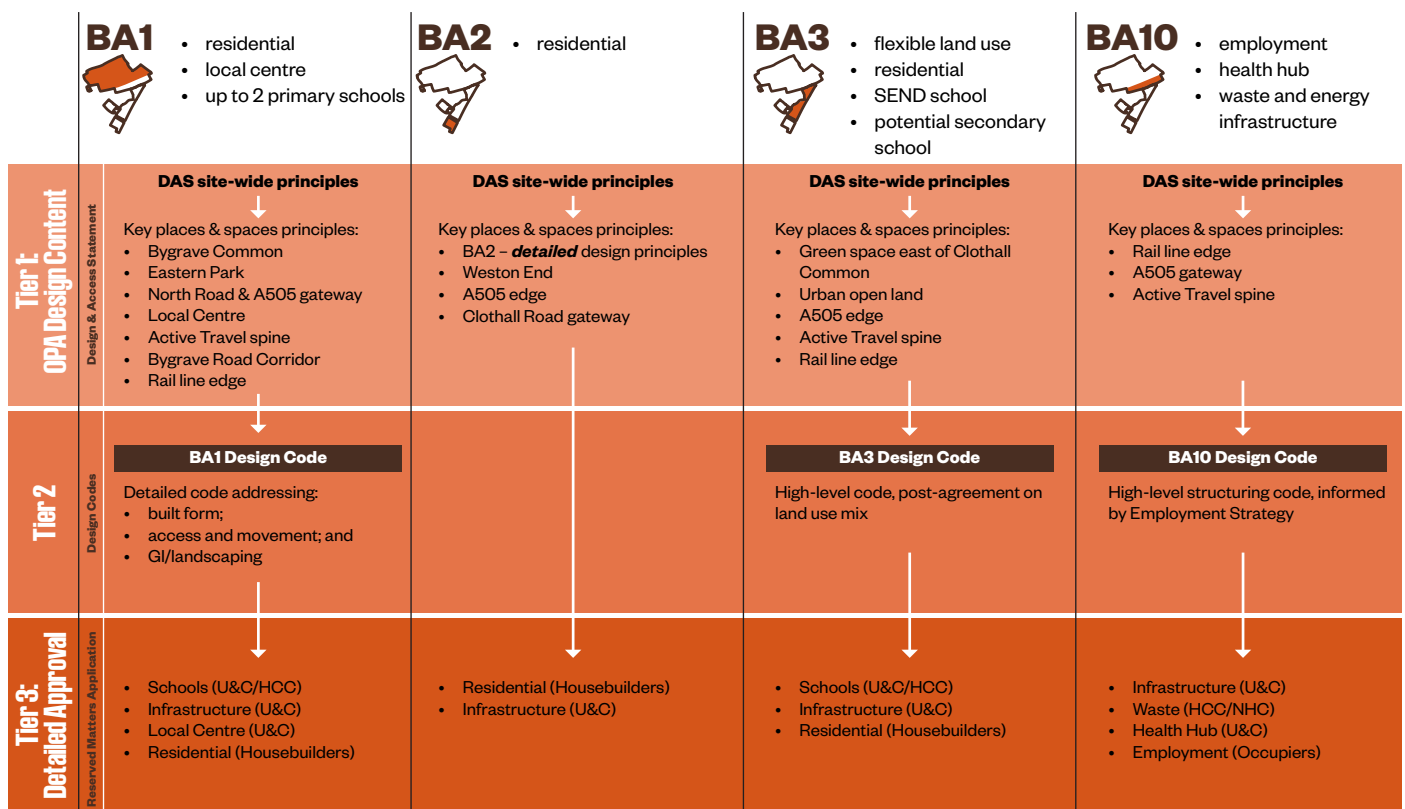
0.18 Post OPP approval, further design material will be submitted in relation to some, but not all of the separate site allocations, as set out in Figure 4. BA1, as the principal and largest site allocation will be subject to a condition requiring the approval of a BA1 Design Code prior to approval of any reserved matters applications (RMAs) within this area. This will be a detailed code addressing three themes: built form, access and movement and green infrastructure. The code will define character and place identity across BA1 and provide detailed 'rules' for residential and commercial developers to design to.

0.19 BA2 will be the first residential parcel to be built as it can be delivered without any upgrades to the foul water drainage network, and as it is physically separate from the remainder of the Growing Baldock site and thus can be readily brought forward as an early phase. The approach to design approval therefore aligns with the need to expedite this parcel, and as such, more detailed design principles are included within this DAS (in section 3), allowing a RMA to be prepared and submitted directly post issue of the OPP, in accordance with these principles, and without requiring a design code. This parcel will likely be delivered by one housebuilder, who will prepare an RMA demonstrating design quality in alignment with the principles.

0.20 As set out later in the DAS, the final land use mix within BA3 (and the Urban Open Land) will not be known until later in the delivery programme, once a decision upon the location and quantum of additional secondary school provision is agreed by the relevant parties. Consequently, a Design Code will only be required (by condition) once that mix is decided and will be high level only, reflecting the fact that it is a relatively small parcel likely to be delivered by only one housebuilder (if residential is included), plus education uses.

0.21 BA10 is likely to be delivered gradually and will be subject to its own Design Code, which again would be conditioned. Given the relatively straightforward nature of the employment land uses proposed, a high-level code is considered appropriate, setting out the approach to frontages and entrances, access and parking, massing and built form and green infrastructure and landscaped setting.

0.22 Where a Design Code is in place (for all allocation sites apart from BA2), RMAs will need to align with these Codes and demonstrate compliance as part of the application documentation.



▲ Figure 4: Post OPA Design Approval

Part 1:

Context

Site Location

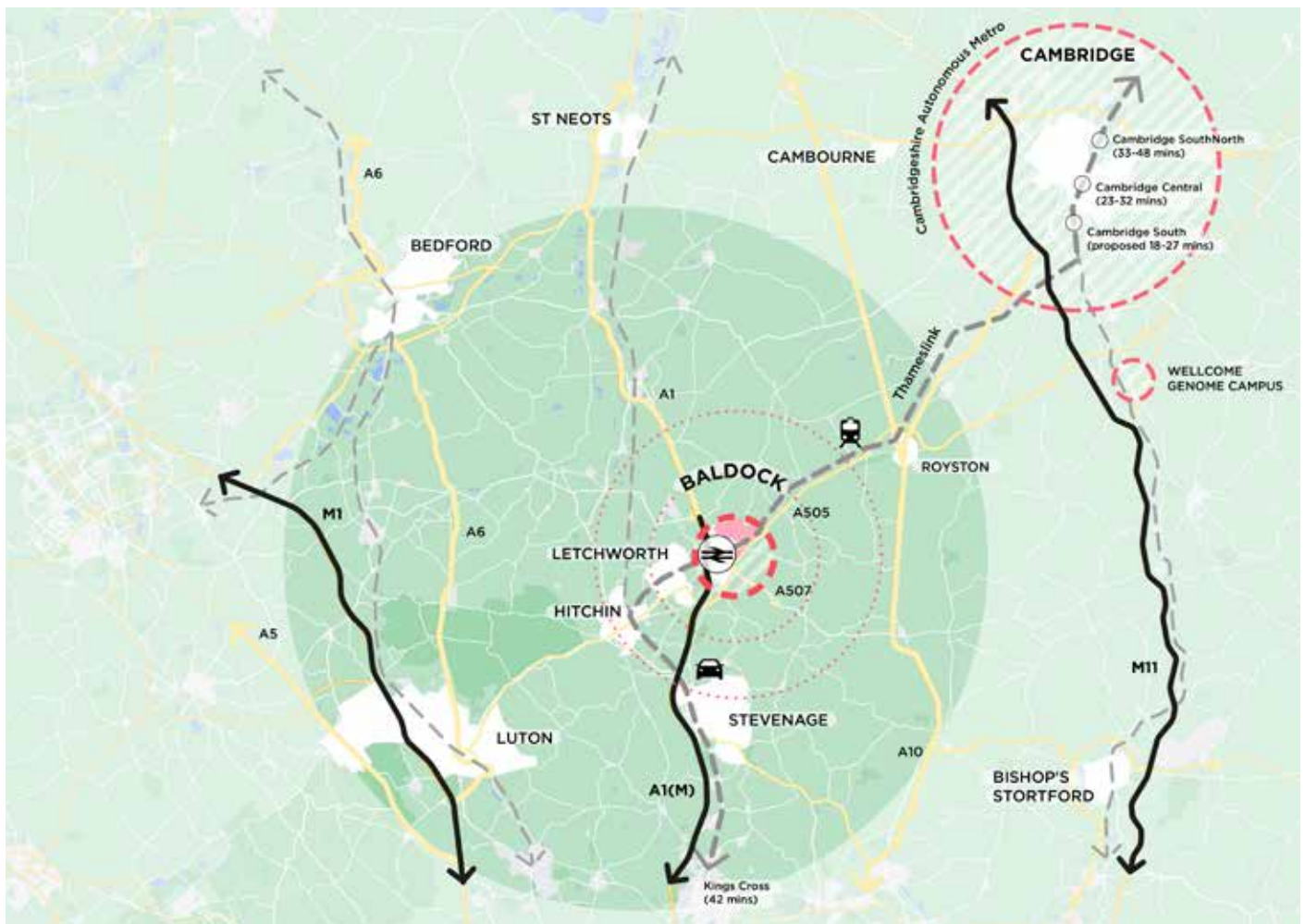
1.1 The site is c.220 hectares in size and located to the north and east of the historic market town of Baldock (population c.10,000), within the administrative area of North Hertfordshire. It benefits from a well-connected strategic location on the A1 and lies to the north of Stevenage and immediately to the east of Letchworth Garden City and Hitchin. Once an important coaching town, it has been bypassed twice: first by the A1(M) and more recently by the A505 Baldock Bypass, which opened in 2006.

1.2 The Growing Baldock site comprises a series of parcels of predominantly agricultural land immediately adjoining the urban area. The northernmost, and largest component of the site (BA1) lies to the east of North Road, which connects to the A1 junction to the north (the A1 runs in parallel to North Road to the west of the site) and Baldock town centre to the south. Baldock railway station, which provides direct rail connections to Letchworth Garden City and onwards to London is to the south and west of the site.

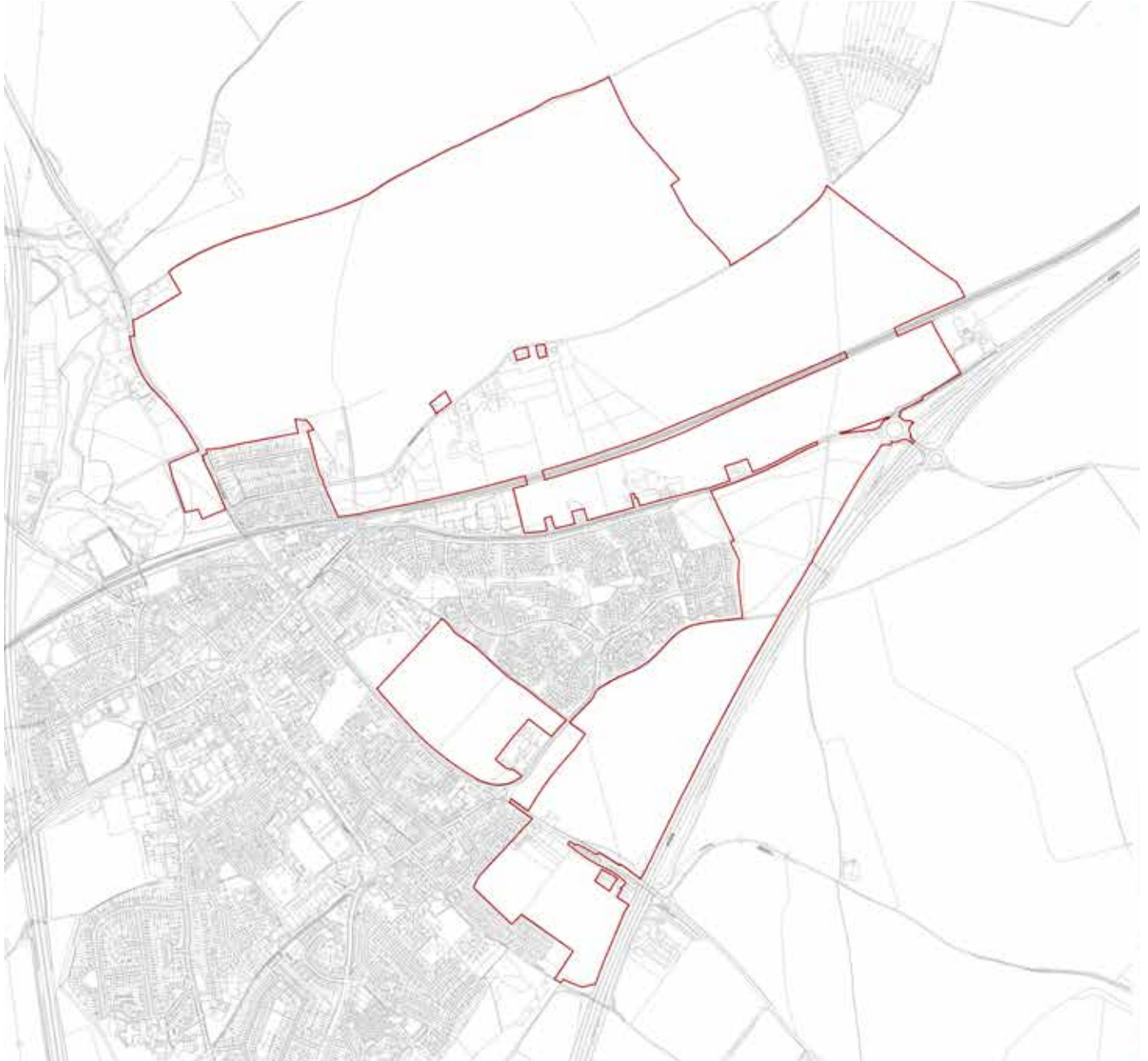
1.3 The southern boundary of BA1 is defined by the railway line and the eastern and northern edge by existing field boundaries and footpaths. Bygrave / Ashwell Road runs through this part of the site, from North Road to the village of Bygrave to the north east.

1.4 A narrow strip of land between the railway to the north and Royston Road to the south, forms the central portion of the Baldock development area (BA10). This area incorporates a number of small businesses and private homes. The remaining portion of the Baldock site wraps around the eastern side of the settlement (BA3 and the Urban Open Land), bound to the west by existing development area and to the east by the A505, which travels south west beyond Baldock to connect to A1(M) junction 9 further south. Clothall Road dissects this part of the site (BA2), as it runs north west towards the town centre. The Walls Field Scheduled Monument forms part of the site, between the Urban Open Land and the town centre.

1.5 The majority of the site is given over to agricultural tenancies and is therefore rural in character, with field boundaries defined by hedgerows / trees of varying age and quality. A network of public rights of way and bridleways traverse the site.



▲ Figure 5: Strategic Context



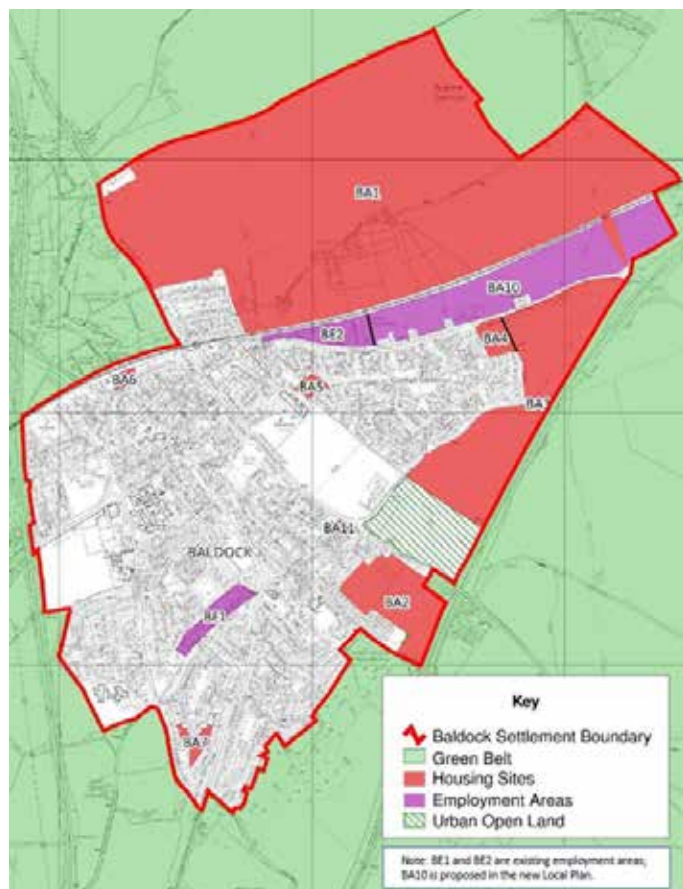
▲ Figure 6: OPA site boundary

Planning Policy Context

North Hertfordshire Local Plan (2011–2031)

1.6 The adopted North Hertfordshire Local Plan allocates land to the north and east of Baldock as a sustainable extension to accommodate up to 3,300 homes, employment, local centres, schools and community facilities, sustainable transport connections and green infrastructure. The Local Plan identifies the Baldock site as a sustainable extension made up of a series of allocations: BA1 (North of Baldock) for 2,800 homes; BA2 (Land southwest of Clothall Road) for 200 homes and BA3 (Land south of Clothall Common) for 245 homes. BA4, to the east of Clothall Common is allocated for 50 homes but does not form part of this OPA, benefiting from a separate planning permission (ref: 21/01882/FP).

1.7 Policy SP8 (Housing) identifies that of the 2,800 homes allocated at site BA1, approximately 1,400 of these will be delivered by 2031. This policy also requires sites to deliver up to 40% Affordable Housing where this is viable, with a broadly even split between smaller (1–2 bed) and larger (3+ bed) properties.



▲ Figure 7: North Herts Local Plan Baldock site allocations

1.8 The key components of the BA1 allocation comprise:

- A new mixed-use local centre/s and additional neighbourhood level provision. Including approximately 500m² convenience retail provision and 1,400m² of comparison retail and food and beverage floorspace;
- Structural planting for integration into the landscape and reinforce defensible Green Belt boundaries (north and east);
- A new link road connecting the A507 North Road to the A505 Baldock bypass including a new bridge across the railway;
- Sustainable transport measures including ped/cycle rail crossing (Ashville Way); upgrades to Baldock station; sensitive integration of Bridleway Baldock 034 / Bygrave 002, the use of Bygrave Road / Ashwell Road from the southwestern edge of the allocated site to the link road as a sustainable transport corridor;
- Comprehensive integration into existing transport and road networks;
- 28 serviced plots for self-build development;
- Provision of an appropriate site for a care home for older people (Use Class C2) in accordance locational criteria in Policy HS4;
- A community hall and GP surgery;
- Up to 6 forms of entry (FE) of additional primary-age education provision;
- Up to 8 forms of entry (FE) of additional secondary-age education provision;
- Address existing surface water flood risk issues (south of Ashwell Road);
- Appropriate mitigation, compensation and/or enhancement of key features of biodiversity including Ivel Springs Local Nature Reserve, Bygrave Road local wildlife site and other identified protected species and priority habitats;
- Built development to be contained to the south and south-west of the ridgeline that generally extends eastwards from the A507 south of Blackhorse Farm and southwards from Ashwell Road; and
- Sensitive treatment of heritage assets and their settings (Views of St Mary's Church, Ivel Springs Scheduled Monument).

1.9 Policy SP3 allocates BA10 for 19.6 hectares of employment land, setting site specific criteria for this area including controls on HGV movements through access design, use of SuDS, landscaping to enhance ecological value and create a defensible Green Belt boundary, noise mitigation, framing of views to St Mary's Church and use of green roofs to soften the transition from rural to urban.

1.10 Design related site specific policy criteria for BA2 also include noise mitigation in relation to the A505, landscaping to form a defensible boundary and mitigating against any impact on the Weston Hills Local Nature Reserve. In relation to BA3, the Local Plan requires the delivery of a southern link road between Royston Road and Wallington Road/Clothall Road, connectivity with the adjacent BA4 site and Clothall Common, noise mitigation measures in relation to the A505, realignment of the existing PROW and the incorporation of SuDS.

1.11 Policy CGB5 relates to the Urban Open Land within which planning permission will only be granted for outdoor sport or outdoor sport recreation uses or landscaping, essential transport infrastructure or other earthworks associated with the development of adjoining allocated sites. Any such use is to be low intensity in nature and should maintain the openness and respect the transition from rural to urban.

Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan (2021)

1.12 The Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan was 'made' in June 2021 and now forms part of the Development Plan for North Hertfordshire. Several general policies are relevant to the design of the Growing Baldock development as follows:

- **G2 Strategic Green Space** – to conserve the green lung at the heart of Baldock (Walls Field and the Urban Open Land) by maintaining the predominantly open character of the land and views out to the countryside;
- **G3 Well Designed Places** – development to demonstrate a high standard of design and relate sensitively to its immediate context and wider Baldock;
- **G4 Sustainable Design** – development to achieve high levels of energy efficiency, resilience to rising temperatures and sustainable use of resources;
- **E1 Transport and Air Quality** – allocation sites not to be permitted if resulting in severe residual cumulative impact on local road network. Development to provide or contribute to safe and convenient active travel routes, bus services and EV charging;
- **E2 Green Infrastructure and Outdoor Recreation** – allocation sites to provide a range of publically accessible green space in accordance with NHC standards. Specific criteria are introduced in relation to SuDS, community use of school sports facilities, the location of sport and informal open space to serve the new and existing community, respond to local need, incorporate street trees, ensure play areas are overlooked and demonstrate appropriate management arrangements are in place.

1.13 Policy E5 relates specifically to land to the north of the railway (i.e. BA1) and requires:

- Visual and physical gap of at least 170m between Lower Bygrave and the development;
- Planting at the periphery of the development;
- Minimises visual impacts from long distance views;
- Relates sensitively to residential edges;
- Retains landscape and built features that contribute to the site's history and character;
- Use the route of Bygrave Road for a pedestrian and cycle connection;
- Minimise potential for increased traffic flows through Upper and Lower Bygrave; and
- Make provision for indoor community facilities.

1.14 Policy E6 (Royston Road) requires that allocation sites BA3, BA10 (and BA4) contribute to creating a high quality and distinctive gateway into Baldock, relate sensitively to existing housing, incorporate a landscape buffer between BA10 and the railway and make the corridor a focus for sustainable and active travel.

1.15 Policy E7 (Cambrai Farm and land south of Clothall Common) relates to BA3 and BA2 and sets requirements for landscape buffers to the A505, prevents the development of the green space to the east of Clothall Common and establishes planting between the Park Homes and development in BA2.

1.16 In addition to its planning policies, the Neighbourhood Plan provides design guidance for new developments. Four key objectives have been identified for the Neighbourhood Plan as follows:

- Sustain and strengthen Baldock's character as a historic and vibrant market town, and the rural character and separate identities of Bygrave, Clothall and Luffenhall;
- Ensure that new development is well designed, maintains and reflects important features of Baldock and its surroundings, and is resilient to climate change;
- Secure the right infrastructure and facilities needed to serve the expanded town, and to avoid unacceptable impacts from new development;
- Ensure that Baldock grows in a way that builds strong connections between all parts of the town (and maintains good connections with neighbouring villages and countryside), and which provides homes, services and job opportunities that cater for both existing and new residents.

North Hertfordshire Design SPD (2011)

1.17 This SPD establishes 9 key urban design principles that apply to all development: character, continuity and enclosure, quality of the public realm, ease of movement, legibility, adaptability, diversity, quality of private space and sustainability.

1.18 Design principles for Baldock, which focus predominantly on the town centre, emphasise the need for development to be of a high quality of design in keeping with the character and sense of place of Baldock. New buildings should enhance the existing fabric through the use of similar materials and sympathetic designs, scale, height, massing and proportions. The SPD identifies the importance of maintaining views through and beyond the town to St Marys Church spire, as the dominant landmark within the town centre.

North Hertfordshire Sustainability SPD (2024)

1.19 The Sustainability SPD provides guidance on the sustainability expectations for development setting three standards of sustainability that can be achieved: bronze, silver and gold. Whilst many aspects of the guidance relate to detailed aspects of design, some are relevant to the design of development at OPA stage. These include considerations of parcel layout and form, achieving healthy placemaking through the creation of compact neighbourhoods, maximising active travel, providing healthy homes and enabling healthy play and leisure.

North Hertfordshire Developer Contributions SPD (2023)

1.20 The SPD sets out NHC's approach to securing the infrastructure required to support development in the district. Policy SP7 of the adopted Local Plan requires developers to make provision for infrastructure deemed necessary to accommodate additional demands resulting from the development. The SPD recognises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and highlights instances where contributions are sought towards schemes which deliver upon the design aspirations of the Local Plan such as through sustainable material sourcing.

North Hertfordshire Design Code

1.21 At the time of writing, NHC are preparing a Borough Wide Design Code in accordance with the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023). Any update to this OPA may need to respond to the emerging Design Code, if published as planned later in 2025.

Hertfordshire Place and Movement Planning and Design Guidance (2024)

1.22 This highway planning and design guidance sets out the standards that will apply to alterations and additions to the highway network in Hertfordshire. It adopts an overall sustainability principle with a clear emphasis on supporting integrated transport that places walking and cycling at the top of the user hierarchy. The tenets of good design are articulated: creating local character, building at higher density particularly around transport nodes, locating key destinations near to where people live and can reach them by walking and cycling, and establishing development that naturally manages vehicle speeds and are more permeable for sustainable and active modes than the private car.

Draft Hertfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (2025)

1.23 The consultation draft Hertfordshire LNRS maps where the most important actions to help recover nature in the county are needed. It identifies protected areas of high nature value alongside strategic priorities for nature and priorities and actions for 10 identified habitat groups. Strategic priorities for the Herts Chalk Area Focus Area (within which the site is largely located) are set out including opportunities for chalk grassland habitat creation and enhancement.

Growing Baldock Strategic Masterplan

1.24 Local Plan policy SP9 requires the preparation of a Strategic Masterplan for the Baldock site allocations which will form an important material consideration in the determination of a future outline planning application (OPA) for the site. The Growing Baldock SMP was approved for this purpose at the North Herts Full Council meeting in June 2025.

1.25 The Strategic Masterplan sets out a vision for Growing Baldock (Figure 8) and a series of framework plans and principles relating to:

- land use;
- movement;
- green infrastructure;
- urban design;
- biodiversity; and
- sustainability.



▲ Figure 8: Strategic Masterplan Growing Baldock Vision

1.26 The Strategic Masterplan covers the entirety of the Baldock sustainable extensions sites, hereafter referred to as 'the site', including the North Hertfordshire Local Plan Baldock allocations known as B1, BA2, BA3 and BA10.

1.27 The outline planning application (OPA) for the development has been prepared in parallel with production of the Strategic Masterplan, to ensure that the two dovetail and that the OPA aligns with the vision and principles set by the Strategic Masterplan.



▲ Figure 9: Strategic Masterplan Framework Key Principles

Design Policy and Guidance

1.28 The Planning Statement submitted as part of this application provides further detail on additional policy and guidance used to inform the proposals. In addition, the design proposals developed for this application have been informed by a number of design focused national and local policy and guidance documents including:

The National Design Guide, 2021, MHCLG

1.29 The National Design Guide (NDG) illustrates how well-designed places can be achieved, building upon the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which sets out 10 characteristics reflecting the basic principles of good design, working together to form high quality places that afford healthy lifestyles and support and nurture communities. The NDG states that:

“Well-designed places and buildings come about when there is a clearly expressed ‘story’ for the design concept and how it has evolved into a design proposal” which “inform and address all ten characteristics”.

1.30 The DAS tells that story, and how the principles from this and other guidance, including the draft Design and Placemaking PPG, have informed the application proposals.

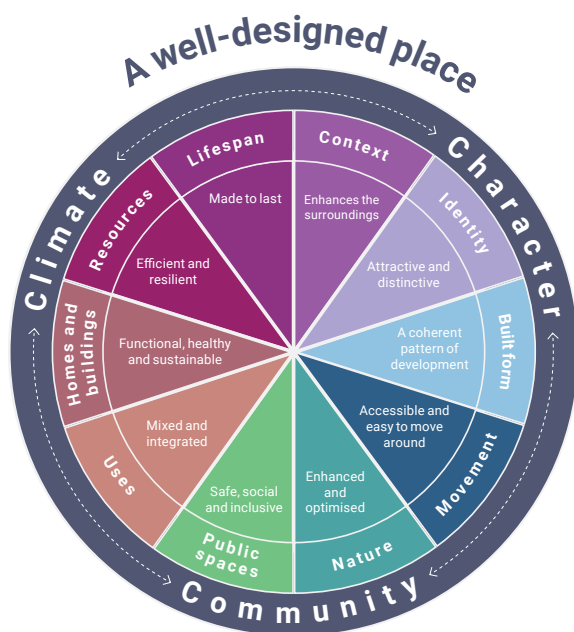
Building for a Healthy Life, 2022, Homes England

1.31 The Building for a Healthy Life toolkit evolves principles set out in the earlier Building for Life 12, 2015. It highlights the qualities of successful places through 12 considerations that inform design and placemaking decisions right from the start of the design process.

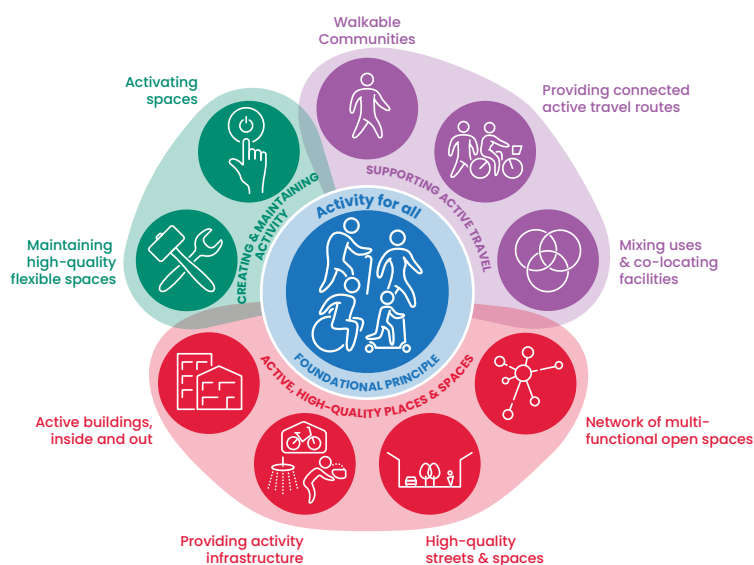
1.32 The toolkit looks to inform decisions to create healthy places for people and nature, supported by exemplars that reflect the principles, and poorer examples of what not to do. The guidance, produced in partnership with Homes England and NHS England, allows stakeholders to assess the quality of a scheme, using a traffic light marking system, against each consideration listed throughout the toolkit.

Active Design, 2023, Sport England

1.33 Active Design sets out how the design of our environments can help people to lead more physically active and healthy lives. It's about helping to create 'active environments' through the promotion of ten Active Design Principles which have helped to shape and inform the design and layout for Baldock:



▲ Figure 11: National Design Guide Ten characteristics of well-designed places



▲ Figure 10: Ten Principles of Active Design

Manual for Streets, 2007, and Manual for Streets 2, 2010, DfT

1.34 Manual for Streets, and Manual for Streets 2, provide practical guidance on the planning, design, layout and approval of new residential streets as well as modifications to existing streets. The aim of both documents is to increase health and quality of life through good design creating streets and associated spaces that are safer, more people-orientated, and promote active and sustainable forms of travel. The guidance aligns closely with the aims of making Baldock a well-designed, healthy and inclusive place for future communities.

Planning History

1.35 Two outline planning applications were submitted to North Hertfordshire Council by Hertfordshire County Council in 2017. The applications broadly covered the Growing Baldock site divided into the areas north and south of the railway (north – 17/O4420/OP, south – 17/O4417/OP). These applications were supported by a range of technical information and an Environmental Statement and Transport Statement that considered the cumulative impacts of both schemes. The applications have now been withdrawn.

1.36 Planning permission has been secured, via appeal, for the development of allocation site BA4, immediately to the west of BA3, on Royston Road (ref: 21/O1882/FP). The scheme includes 42 homes and associated green and grey infrastructure (see Figure 12). A realigned watercourse will run along the eastern boundary with BA3 between the approved back gardens of residential properties. An east west footpath to the south of the Royston Road bund is also approved. The OPA scheme will need to ensure connections are made to this route and that appropriate access is maintained for the approved substation, adjacent to the proposed bus access into Clothall Common that forms part of the Growing Baldock sustainable transport offer.



▲ Figure 12: Approved BA4 layout

Understanding Baldock

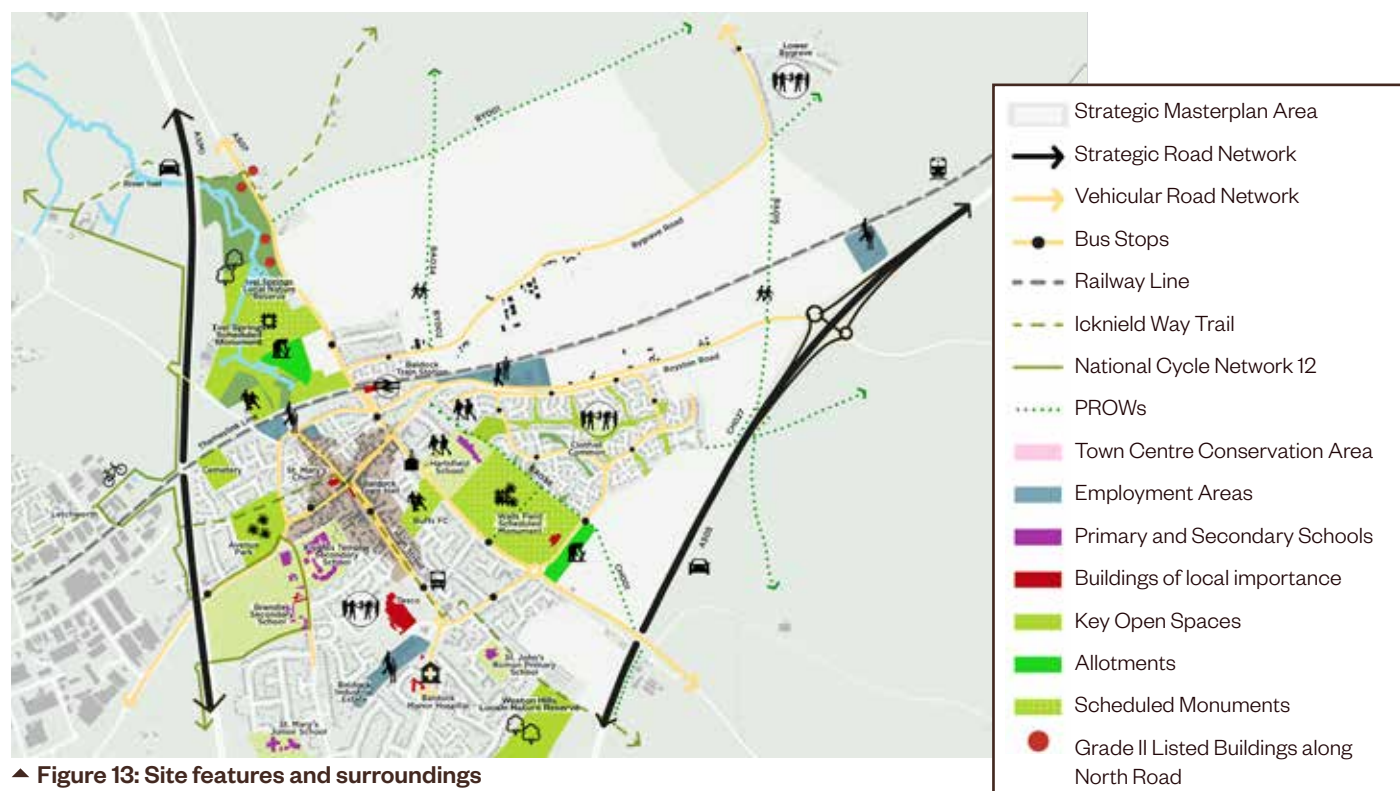
1.37 A suite of technical baseline assessments has been carried out by a fully qualified consultant team and the findings used to inform the design proposals. A brief summary of each is provided on the following pages. For more detailed information please refer to the supporting material submitted with the planning application.

Site Description

1.38 The Baldock site comprises a series of parcels of predominantly agricultural land immediately adjoining the urban area. The northernmost, and largest component of the site (BA1) lies to the east of North Road, which connects to the A1 junction to the north (the A1 runs in parallel to North Road in the vicinity of the site) and Baldock town centre to the south. The southern boundary is defined by the railway line and the eastern and northern edge by existing field boundaries and footpaths. Bygrave / Ashwell Road runs through this part of the site, from North Road to the village of Bygrave to the north east.

1.39 A narrow strip of land between the railway to the north and Royston Road to the south, forms the central portion of the Baldock development area (BA10). This area incorporates a number of small businesses and private homes. The remaining portion of the Baldock site, incorporating BA3, BA2 and the Urban Open Land wraps around the eastern side of the settlement, bound to the west by existing development area and to the east by the A505, which travels south west beyond Baldock to connect to the next A1 junction further south. Clothall Road dissects this part of the site, as it runs north west towards the town centre.

1.40 The majority of the site is given over to agricultural tenancies and is therefore rural in character, with field boundaries defined by hedgerows / trees of varying age and quality. A network of public rights of way and bridleways traverse the site.



Landscape Character and Visual Considerations

1.41 Baldock is a compact and historic market town, set within the rolling chalk landscape of north Hertfordshire. Visually, the settlement of Baldock lies in a bowl, with relatively distant views across the town from elevated positions on the surrounding chalk ridgelines and scarp slopes.

1.42 More extensive views of the site and beyond to St Mary's Church are possible from the Public Right of Way network. Existing, large, pale buildings along Royston Road (at Ashville Trading Estate) – along with the Letchworth retail and business park – serve as detracting features in views from the surrounding countryside, when looking back towards Baldock. Electricity pylon towers dominate the skyline in views from the north and west.

1.43 Other large scale infrastructure features are present and visible within the wider landscape including the Cambridge railway line and Baldock A505 bypass, with their alignments partly picked out by flanking existing vegetation, along with associated bridges over the A505, the Weston Hills tunnel and signage at the Royston Road junction.

Design considerations

1.44 It will be important to locate and scale development appropriately to respect local character and topography, and minimise adverse impacts on longer distance views. This can be achieved by considering landscape buffering along the site's boundary with the A505 and railway lines and structural buffer planting and landscaping on the northern and eastern edges of BA1, beyond which the landscape is more rural, elevated and visually sensitive. Retain views towards St Mary's Church from key locations within the site, including bridleway Bygrave 001 on the ridgeline and green space east of Clothall Common.



▲ Top: Landscape north of the railway line
Bottom: Western end of Bygrave Road looking east

Biodiversity and Ecology

1.45 The site includes a range of habitats of varying quality and ecological value, including amenity grassland, dense scrub, hedgerows and trees, improved and semi-improved grassland, tall ruderal and woodland. There is direct evidence of nesting birds on or immediately adjacent to the site and habitats present within the site have the potential to support bats, reptiles, common amphibians, badgers and other notable and priority species such as hedgehog and brown hare. The Bygrave Local Wildlife Site incorporates a small part of the Bygrave Road verge towards the eastern end of BA1. The green space east of Clothall Common, where spoil from the construction of the A505 remains, has self-colonised and is now an area of ecological value.

1.46 The site supports a diverse assemblage of breeding birds, including an onsite population of corn bunting of county importance for this species. The ditches, amenity grassland, improved grassland and semi-improved grassland on site are all thought to be of limited ecological value, whilst areas of semi-improved grassland were considered to be of moderate ecological value at a local level. Within the south of the site, a large area of neutral semi-improved grassland is considered to be of high suitability for reptiles.

1.47 Two Local Nature Reserves (LNR) are located adjacent to the OPA site: Ivel Springs LNR to the north west, beyond North Road, and Weston Hills LNR to the south of BA2. The consultation draft Hertfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) (2025) identifies strategic priorities in relation to the site, including supporting the delivery of new chalk grassland habitats and managing existing grass and heathland to maintain biodiversity.

Design considerations

1.48 The proposed development should retain and where possible enhance areas of ecological interest including the Bygrave Road LWS and the green space east of Clothall Common, establishing a network of green corridors and spaces to connect areas of habitat and ecological interest connecting to the LNRs and incorporating newly created habitat areas. These should include SuDS features, woodland and wildflower grassland and areas of rough calcareous grassland with scattered trees and scrub. Planting schemes should incorporate a diverse range of native and climate resilient species that maximise carbon storage and sequestration contributing to BNG targets.

Trees and Hedgerows

1.49 A BS:5837 Tree Survey has been undertaken of the site. This reports that the majority of the site is arable farmland with existing hedgerows and trees associated with field boundaries and farmsteads.

1.50 There are no Ancient Woodlands, Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or veteran trees located on Site. The tree survey identified multiple broad-leaved and coniferous trees on site the majority of which are category B (moderate quality) and category C (low quality). There was only one category A tree (high quality) identified, a Common Walnut on the north western boundary of BA2.

Design considerations

1.51 There is an opportunity to increase hedgerow, tree and scrub cover across the site as part of the green infrastructure network with category A and the majority of category B trees retained and incorporated into the layout of the proposed development where possible. Identified existing native hedgerow field boundaries of moderate value (category B) should also be retained and incorporated into the proposed development layout where possible including along the northern site boundary, and the North Road and Clothall Road boundaries.



▲ Green space east of Clothall Common



▲ Figure 14: Biodiversity and ecology



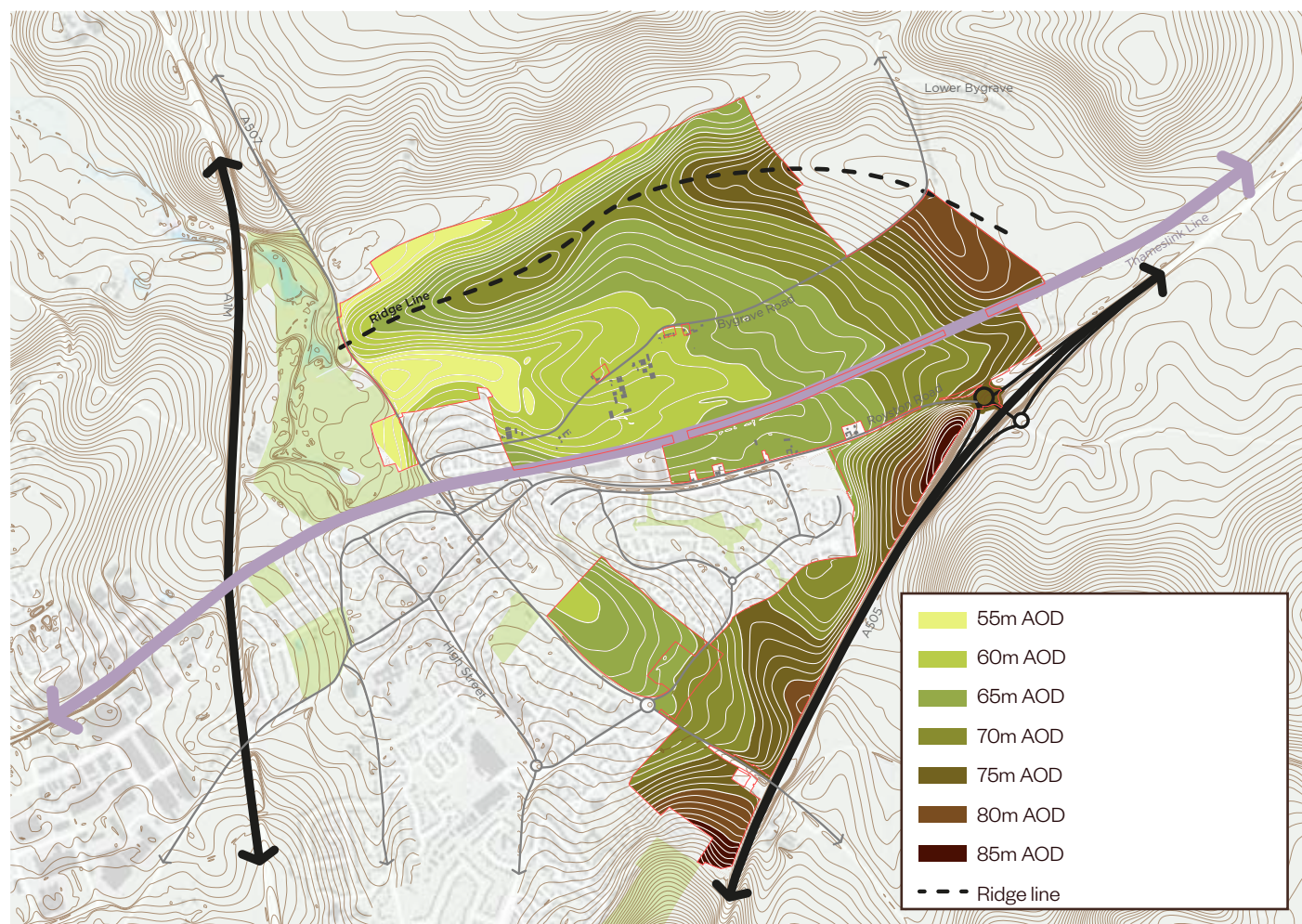
▲ Ivel Springs Local Nature Reserve

Topography

1.52 The site's topography is influenced and characterised by the rolling chalk landscape of north Hertfordshire. The northern part of the site is defined by a ridgeline of natural chalk line running east-west, dropping towards the west and the course of the River Ivel. The southern part of the site generally falls from south to north from a high point of c.90m AOD at the south western corner, to c.72m AOD at Clothall Road and c.68m AOD at Royston Road. The central area falls from east to west from a high point of c.83m AOD at the eastern boundary, down to c.61m AOD next to Laymoor Farm. The northern part of the site falls from east to west from a high point of c.80m AOD at the eastern boundary, to c.57m AOD at North Road.

Design considerations

1.53 Development to respond to localised variations in topography, in particular the ridgeline in the northern part of the site, which represents a natural northern edge to the development area. Development to utilise and respond to topography and existing landform, with development positively addressing open space and boundary edges strengthened through landscape and green infrastructure.



▲ Figure 15: Topography

Water and Drainage

1.54 The site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore suitable for development. There are no surface water sewers on the site. There is a foul water rising main crossing the northern part of the site, the risk of flooding from which is considered to be negligible. The site is also at very low risk of flooding from groundwater or artificial sources.

1.55 The majority of the site is at also at very low risk of surface water flooding, with the exception of two areas on the southern part of the site and an area adjacent to North Road and Bygrave Road in the northern part of the site.

1.56 The River Ivel is a chalk stream which runs to the west of the proposed development. The underlying bedrock in the Baldock area is chalk which acts as an aquifer storing large quantities of groundwater. Where the bedrock hits the surface, springs form and give rise to chalk streams. The Ivel Springs are located to the north and west of the site between Norton Road to the west, North Road to the east and the railway line to the south.

1.57 As the streams rely on groundwater to feed them they are therefore susceptible to seasonal fluctuations and over-abstraction. It is understood that the River Ivel suffers from the current water abstraction rate and often runs dry. At present, the site is mainly greenfield farmland and so there is currently an element of infiltration to the subsoil charging the aquifer but there is also a significant amount of rainfall being absorbed by the planting and so "lost".

Design considerations

1.58 SuDS features to be located in areas of greatest surface water flood risk, generally at the lowest points of the site, with the integration of overland flows into landscape design and green infrastructure and removal of boundaries and land regrading to reduce any potential for localised flooding. Drainage Strategy to consider potential to help recharge the aquifer through infiltration, where possible.



▲ Railway line

Air Quality and Noise

1.59 The main existing constraint on the development with respect to noise sensitive uses is noise from road traffic. The principal road affecting the development site is the A505 which is adjacent to the south-east of the development site. There is also a railway line running through the site which provides domestic services between Baldock and Royston and imposes a noise constraint on the site. The railway line runs variously at grade, in cutting and on embankments along the length of its route through BA1.

Design considerations

1.60 Layout and mix of land uses to consider location of noise and air pollution generating features with the potential of rail / road noise on residential areas in particular as a factor in the distribution of land uses, green space, and landscape buffers, taking into account any mitigation measures identified in the noise and air quality chapters. These may include site layout, landscaping, building orientation, façade design and location of external amenity areas in key locations such as adjoining the railway line and close to the A505.



▲ Royston Road

Heritage and Archaeology

1.61 There is one Scheduled Monument within the site: Walls Field, a Romano-British small town and Late Iron Age settlement off Clothall Road, west of the Urban Open Land. This area is currently experienced as green space in agricultural use and is not a visually tangible historic feature. Its settings is characterised by the surrounding built form of Baldock.

1.62 There are no further designated heritage assets or non-designated assets within the site, but there are a number of listed buildings, scheduled monuments and a conservation area within the vicinity of the site. These include:

- **Baldock Conservation Area** – in relative proximity to the south west of the site. The site forms part of the open landscape setting surrounding Baldock and its conservation area, but it is not appreciable from within it as outward views are prevented by topography and intervening built form.
- **Scheduled Monument** – Settlement site south of Blackhorse Farm (Ivel Springs) currently experienced as green space and not a visually tangible historic feature. Its setting is characterised by the surrounding built form of Baldock.
- **Listed buildings** – four listed buildings are located outside the conservation area, along North Road. The Grade 1 listed Church of St Mary is visible from within the site although the site does not form part of the church's setting.

1.63 In terms of archaeology much of the site has already been the subject of archaeological investigations in relation to previous planning applications including the Baldock bypass and the two extant OPAs for the site, in the form of both geophysical surveys and trial trenching. This has been supplemented by extensive further trenching and geophysical surveys in the past two years.

1.64 The vast majority of recorded archaeology within the site relates to Late Iron Age and Roman agriculture, to the east of the contemporary settlement, including ditched enclosures, fields and trackways and an area of possible settlement.

Design consideration

1.65 Care will need to be taken to ensure that development proposals do not impact the setting or the context within which the designated heritage assets around the site are appreciated. This could include maintaining areas of green space, as appropriate, around assets or areas of archaeology and retaining viewing corridors from within the site towards any prominent assets, St Mary's Church in particular.

Utilities

1.66 There are two overhead powerlines (11KV) located within the site: one running along the western boundary, adjacent to North Road, and a second in the southernmost parcel of the site south of Clothall Road. 33KV undergrounded cables are present along the northern edge of the site and routed partly across the site, broadly along the route of the existing footpath, linking to Bygrave Road. A further 33KV cable runs along the northern side verge of Royston Road, transecting the central part of the development site. An 11KV cable is located on the southern side of the railway line. There is no gas mains apparatus present within the site.

1.67 A water main is routed within the carriageway and verge of North Road on the northwestern edge of the development. Similarly, water mains are routed along the northern side of Royston Road and the site side verge of Bygrave Road, to provide connections to the existing properties. The southern part of the site is dissected by a number of existing water mains of varying sizes.

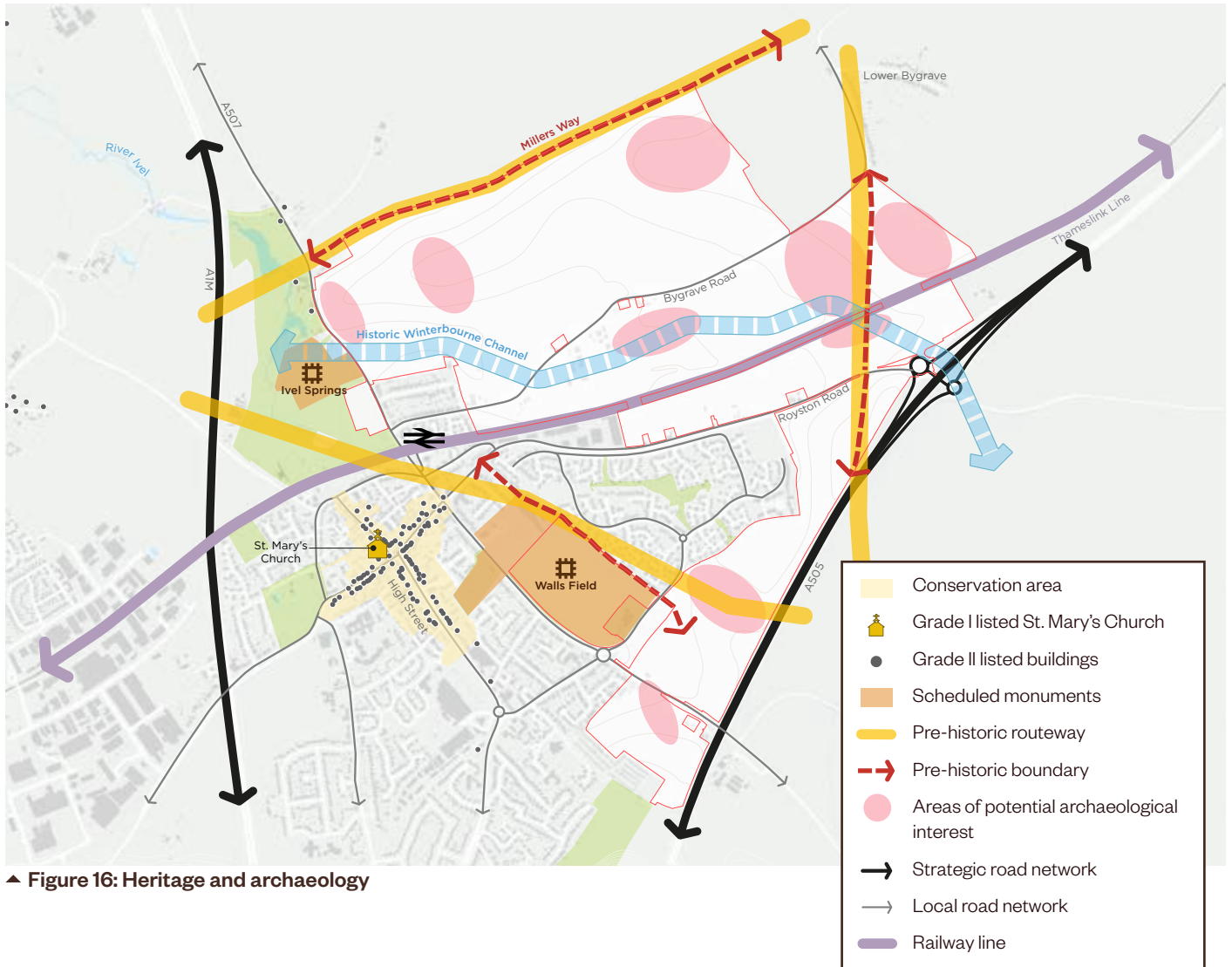
1.68 A foul rising main crosses the BA1 site from north east to south west, which discharges into the gravity foul sewer in Bygrave Road.

Design considerations

1.69 Accommodating underground and overground utilities, and any necessary easements, will need to be addressed as part of the layout of the development proposals, within movement corridors for example, areas of open space or at the periphery of development parcels.



▲ Overhead powerlines in northern part of site



Public footpath across Walls Field

Access and Movement

1.70 Baldock is a compact town which provides a range of facilities and services for existing residents within walking / cycling distance. Baldock is in close proximity to farmland and rural villages connected by a network of Public Rights of Way (PRow) predominantly bridleways. The National Cycle Network does not run directly through Baldock, but Route 12 does reach the western extent of the town. Elsewhere, there is limited cycle infrastructure in the town, with routes leading into the town also impacted by high traffic volumes, including HGVs.

1.71 Baldock is served by multiple bus services with the most frequent connecting the town centre, Knights Templar School and South Baldock into Letchworth Garden City. Services to the east of the town are more infrequent, with the most regular services operating hourly. At present services run along North Road and Clothall Road which are closest to the site, with less frequent services along Bygrave Road to Bygrave.

1.72 Baldock Railway Station, located to the south west of the site, is on the Hitchin to Cambridge Line and served by the Thameslink and Great Northern franchises. Services provide connections to Cambridge, London and the south east. The A1(M), A507 and A505 connect in the area surrounding Baldock, with Junctions 9 and 10 providing connections to the A1(M). This provides regional connections to London, Cambridge and into the Midlands.

1.73 The application site sits within the established network of streets, footpaths and bridleways serving the north and eastern part of Baldock. Bygrave Road bisects the largest part of the site running east from the A507 North Road which defines part of the site boundary. The rail line also bisects the site creating a potential barrier to north/south movement.

1.74 Other parts of the site are accessed from North Road, Clothall Road, Wallington Road and from Royston Road. The latter is a key route providing access from the strategic highway network the (A505) and towards the town centre and beyond to Letchworth. The Whitehouse Street junction experiences congestion and queuing at peak times, as do other parts of the town.

1.75 Outside the site, many parts of Baldock experience congestion and traffic due to relatively high traffic volumes, creating worsening conditions for pedestrians and cyclists, exacerbated by inadequate footway/cycleway provision in some places, such as under the railway bridge on North Road. A significant proportion of the traffic within Baldock (c. 50%) passes through without stopping in the town, contributing significantly to the traffic issues experienced, whilst bringing no economic benefit to the town.

Design considerations

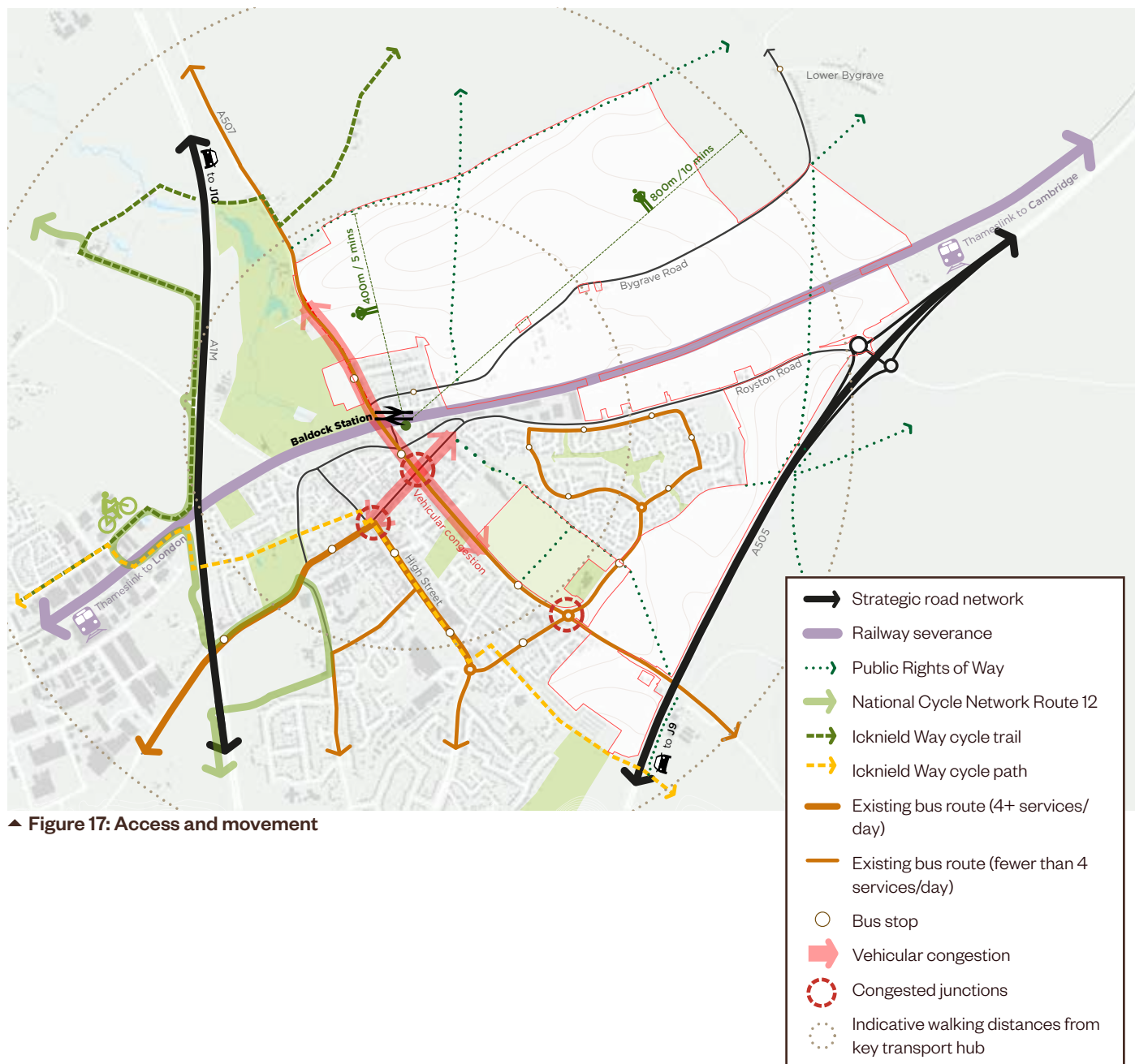
1.76 Ensure the proposed development prioritises walking, cycling and public transport whilst ensuring appropriate level of access by all modes. Enhance connectivity to the railway station. Retain and enhance the PRow and bridleway network within the site particularly for active travel, walking and cycling. Remove existing physical barriers to active travel by providing crossings over existing infrastructure that causes severance such as the railway. Improve travel choice across the town by reducing through traffic, providing new crossings of the railway, improved road crossings and safer infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists, enhanced bus services and mobility hubs (including bike/scooter hire, EV charging and public transport).



▲ Baldock railway station



▲ Railway bridge over A507 North Road/Station Road



Local Design Context

Historic Growth

1.77 Baldock has a rich history, dating back to prehistoric times, with traces of human life evident from Palaeolithic and Neolithic eras. Human settlement in Baldock took advantage of the fertile farmland, available water supply and trade from the prehistoric trackway known as the Icknield Way (Royston Road).

1.78 Roman settlement saw the core of Baldock located to the east, followed by growth in the Medieval period further west, with the introduction of a marketplace, a parish church (St Mary's) and the medieval system of open-field strip agriculture. Baldock then developed as a major coaching town, with the Great North Road bringing trade through Baldock from London and beyond.

1.79 Bygrave Common remained open land through the 17th-19th Century, with the open fields of the Medieval period largely maintained in the absence of the Enclosure Act in this area. The introduction of the Great Northern Railway in the 19th century severed the site, interrupting historic local connections, but improving journey times between Baldock and other centres of population.

1.80 During the early 20th Century, the focus of development shifted to the west, towards the newly constructed garden city Letchworth, with east-west movements becoming more prevalent, with the growth in car usage introducing congestion at the heart of the town. The introduction of the A1(M) and A505 Baldock Bypass alleviated congestion but caused severance with the town's rural hinterland.

Design considerations

1.81 Retain historic routes and PROWs through the site, for example The Icknield Way and Bygrave Road, taking opportunities to embed archaeology and the site's history into the layout. Reinforce the prominence of a key local landmark at St Mary's Church by allowing for vistas and lines of sight. Consider opportunities to restore historic connections severed by the railway, particularly north-south routes between different parts of the site.

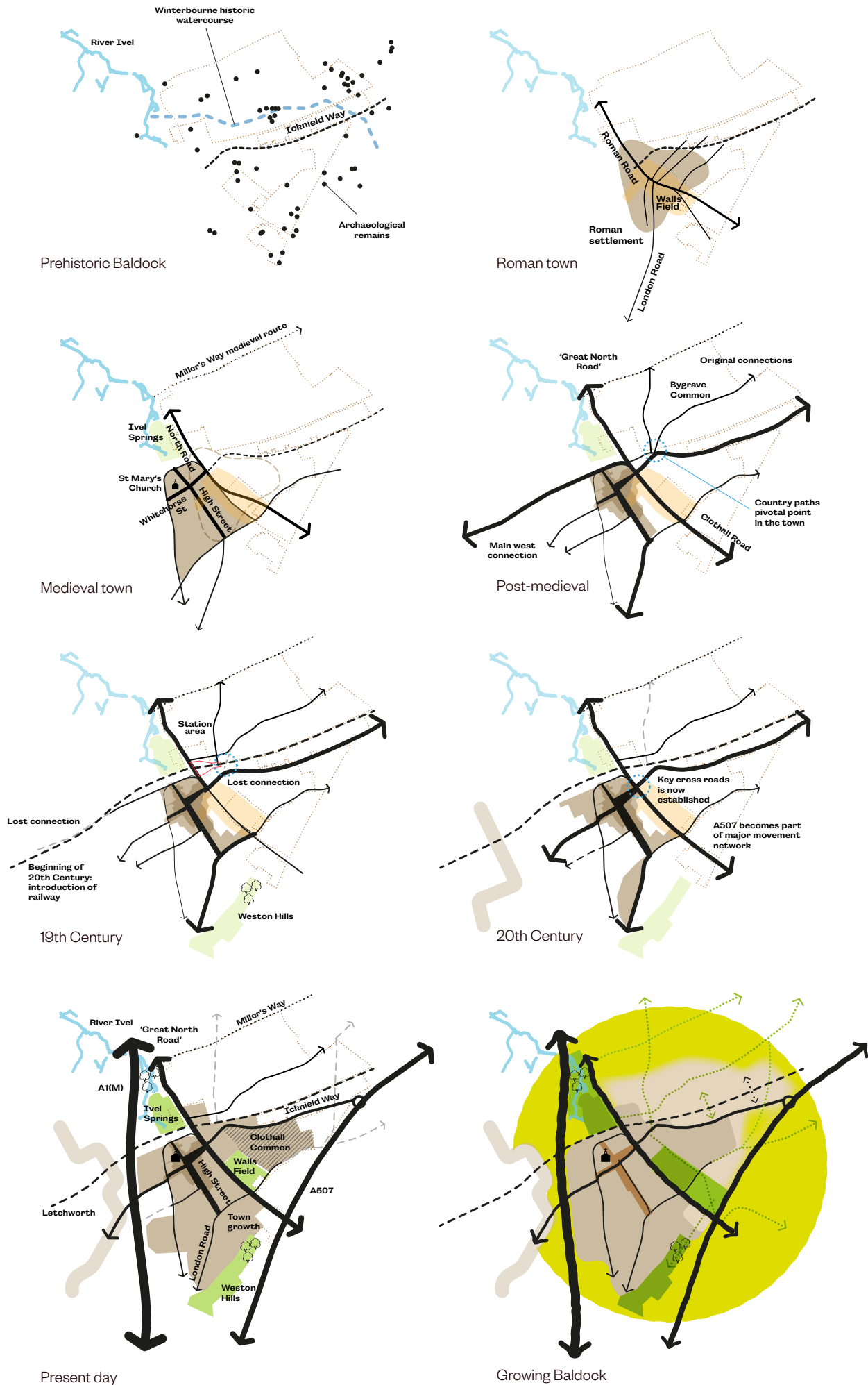


▲ St. Mary's Church



▲ 'Historic' Baldock





▲ Figure 18: Historic growth of Baldock

Townscape and Character

1.82 Baldock exhibits a range of townscape and place characteristics. Typically, it is the older and more historic parts of Baldock (town centre, historic high density, historic low density zones) that offer most in terms of distinct townscape and character, with later and more contemporary areas of development (medium density residential, education, and employment and out-of-town zones) being more suburban or commercial in character rather than being distinctive to Baldock.

1.83 The key elements of the town centre, historic high density and historic low density zones are summarised on the following pages:



▲ Figure 19: Townscape and character

TOWN CENTRE ZONE		
Grain of the area	Street scene and public realm	Vernacular
• Presence of large, grand town houses; • Timber-framed houses built on narrower, originally medieval plots; • Civic buildings enriching identity of the place; • Mews typologies creating significant new density within the centre; • Mostly three and four storeys (with the steeple of St Mary's Church to the north of the High Street as dominant landmark); • Building accommodating long rear wings as a legacy of Baldock's function as a stage coach stop between London and the North	• Strong building line; • Generous public realm allowing for spill-out uses; • Importance of active frontages and human scale proportions; • Carriage arches, typical of Baldock, representing a distinctive feature of the town, and one which reveals its history	• Homogenous character, predominantly Georgian (typical Georgian tall sash windows with smaller panes and smaller windows on the upper floors); • Presence of fine historic buildings, classical facades with tower of St Mary's Church supporting a 'Hertfordshire spike' and Town Hall with a prominent tower sited at the crossroads; • Typical materials: red bricks, with some earlier timber-framed houses and rendered fronts; • Presence of a modified Gothic Style in Butterfield House, with red bricks and bands of black bricks



HISTORIC HIGH DENSITY ZONE		
Grain of the area	Street scene and public realm	Vernacular
- Predominantly terrace houses with some detached and semi-detached houses; - Mostly two storeys buildings and a significant amount of later infil, including flats; - Denser grain	- Perimeter block streets; - Semi-continuous building line; - Importance of sense of enclosure and human scale proportions; - Predominant horizontality of street scene; - Carriage arches, typical of Baldock, representing a distinctive feature of the town, and one which reveals its history	- Mostly Victorian terraces with a mixture of 17th, 18th, and 19th century terrace dwellings; - Typical materials: coloured brickwork, timber-framed houses and timber cladding; - Typical elements: high-pitched roofs, visually strong window frames, dormers, ornate gables



LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL ZONE		
Grain of the area	Street scene and public realm	Vernacular
- Distinct character area covering much of the southern half of the settlement - Low density residential areas with a semi-rural quality; - Semi-detached and detached typologies with blocks of flats in a number of places; - Regular perimeter block layouts; - Majority of two storeys with the occasional bungalow, in general predominant domestic scale	- Presence of generous front and back gardens accommodating mature planting and dense shrubbery - Some private garages along the streets; - Tree-lined generous pavements	- Residential developments dated from the 1930s through to the last decade; - Typologies span several historical periods, including inter-war, post-war and recent suburban developments; - Typical materials: bricks and plainly rendered houses, in cream or range of pale oranges colours, with some more modern, rendered semi-detached houses, some timber and plastic cladding; - Typical elements: bay windows, doorways, pitched and hipped roofs (often long so as to be a prominent feature of the building), large gables facing the street, flat recessed windows on upper storeys



Design considerations

1.84 Build upon positive existing design elements which are found in Baldock, introducing an appropriate of building typologies to help achieve a characterful, legible and sustainable place. Utilise and re-interpret local materials: brickworks, timber cladding, and stone details with a locally typical palette of warm colours. Consider typical building heights: 2/3 storeys, with variations in roofscape (orientation, pitched, hipped etc) to achieve legibility, breaking up volumes and responding to context.

Density

1.85 Typical residential densities in Baldock range from 25 to 45 dwellings per hectare, while maximum buildings heights within the town centre reach 3.5 to 4 storeys. The denser residential areas (such as in the town centre) present roughly the same density as zones with a mix of modern apartment blocks and houses. This creates a stronger sense of enclosure and demonstrates how sustainable and appropriate densities can be achieved in Baldock.

Design considerations

1.86 It will be important to utilise different typologies and layout designs to achieve a range of different densities, appropriate to different character areas, including higher density and mixed-use zones, as well as areas with a more 'semi-rural' character with lower densities towards the periphery of development particularly adjoining open spaces and rural edges.

Local facilities

1.87 Facilities within Baldock are identified on the plan at Figure 20 and detailed further with the socio-economic chapter of the Environmental Statement. Baldock town centre is the principal retail centre closest to the site with a largely thriving High Street. Baldock has a lower proportion of comparison goods retail than the District and UK averages but has a strong provision of non-retail services and food/beverage outlets. A large Tesco superstore located to the south of the town centre meets much of Baldock's convenience retail needs.

1.88 There are 17 nursery organisations within a 2-mile walking distance from the edge of the Site, four of which are co-located with primary schools. They comprise day nursery centres, pre-school playgroups, school nursery classes and out-of-school nurseries. The roll size of most of these providers has exceeded their capacity according to their respective Ofsted Inspection Reports, indicating high demand for nursery care and education services.

1.89 In terms of primary education provision there are 6 school within 2 miles of the site, the nearest being St John's RC Primary School being 0.3 miles away. For secondary education provision the Knights Templar School in Baldock is within a 3-mile radius from the edge of the site. In addition, there are two special educational needs schools within a 3-mile radius, Brandles School in Baldock, and Woolgrove School in Letchworth.

1.90 Baldock has 7.64ha of open space provided per 1,000 population, as of 2016, which is lower than the average in North Hertfordshire. The predominant type of open space in Baldock is natural and semi-natural green space (35.59ha), while the lowest types of provision are provision for children and young people (0.98ha) and green corridors (1.68ha). Compared to other areas in the District, the provision of amenity greenspace and green corridors in Baldock is the lowest but does have the highest provision of allotments.

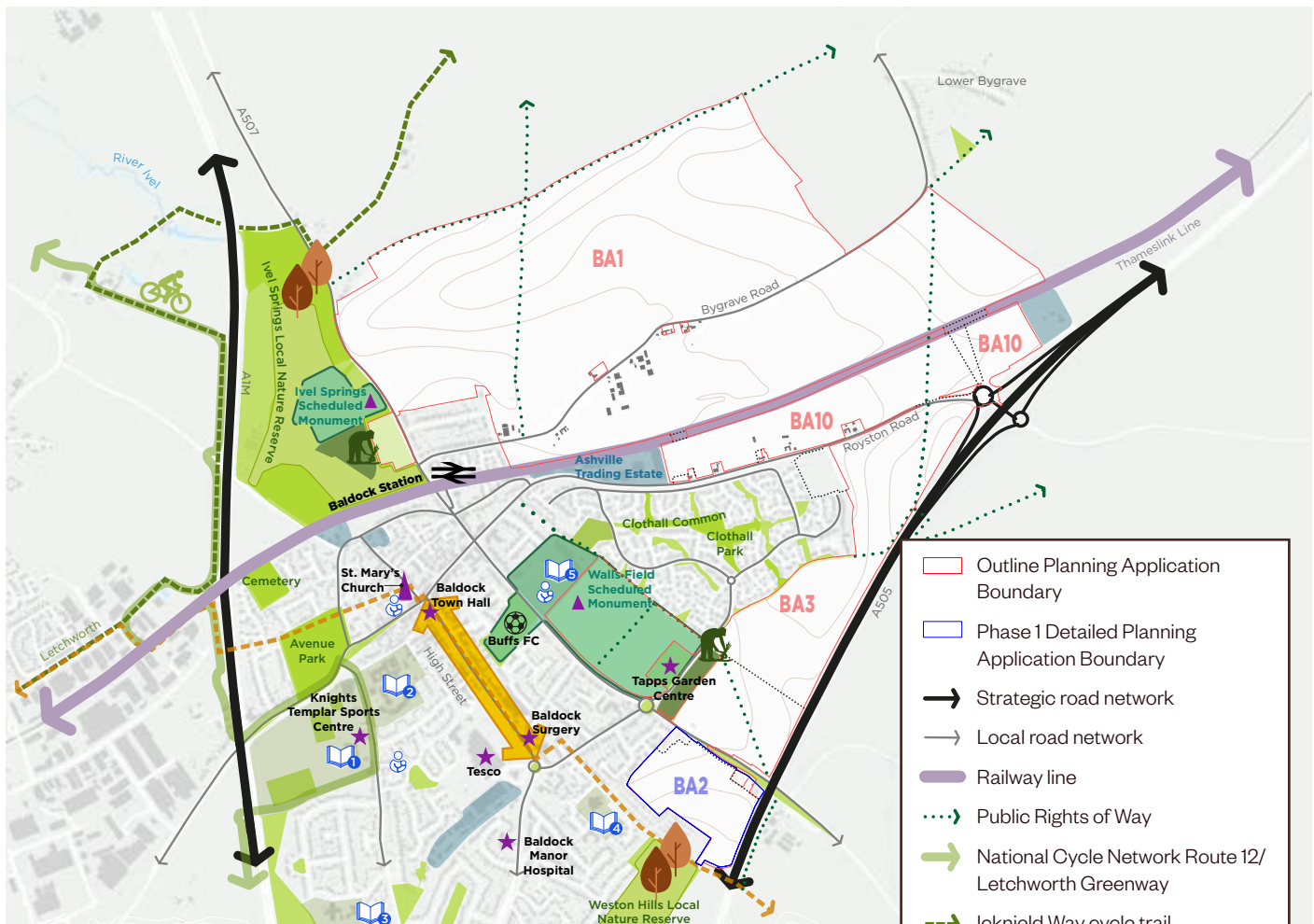
1.91 In North Hertfordshire, there are 10 GP practices grouped into two primary care networks (PCNs). The site falls within the Icknield PCN and is within the catchment area of two GP surgeries. The closest surgery 1.3 miles away from the centre of the site. It accommodates 1,583 patients per GP, lower than the national average of 2,257 patients per GP, according to the March 2025 record, and is currently accepting new patients. There are 6 Dental Practices within 3 miles of the centre of the Site, the closest being 0.6 miles, three of which are currently accepting new NHS patients.



▲ Hertsfield School



▲ Knights Templar School



▲ Figure 20: Key Facilities

Design considerations

1.92 It will be important to provide enhanced pedestrian and active travel routes to nearby services around the site, particularly the town centre and healthcare facilities. On-site provision of services should complement and not detract from those provided in the town centre. Formal and informal open space and play provision and wider green infrastructure networks should link into existing networks where possible providing for the needs of the existing as well as future residents.

Part 2:

Design Development and Parameters

2.1 This section of the DAS presents the process through which the design and access proposals have been developed and refined informed by stakeholder and community engagement. This process has culminated in a high-quality scheme that clearly and positively responds to its context and policy, guidance and best practice. The design evolution has been shaped by an understanding of the features and characteristics of the site and its context as part of Baldock. The following pages illustrate this design evolution.

Design Evolution

Bid Masterplan

2.2 U&C prepared the Indicative Masterplan at Figure 21 to support the bid to HCC to become development partner in 2021. This established many of the design principles that remain within the OPP parameters that are being applied for today: namely the locations of strategic green infrastructure areas (Bygrave Common, Urban Open Land, Walls Field and green space to the east of Clothall Common), the location of the principal area of development between Bygrave Common and the railway, the local centre in the heart of BA1, with schools in close proximity, Bygrave Road as a key active travel east-west route and the development access linking North Road and the A505.



▲ Figure 21: U&C Bid Indicative Masterplan

SMP Baseline Consultation (2023)

2.3 As set out in section 1, following the selection of U&C as development partner, the site has been subject to a comprehensive SMP process involving baseline, options testing and final SMP stages, alongside regular consultation events and stakeholder design and options workshops.

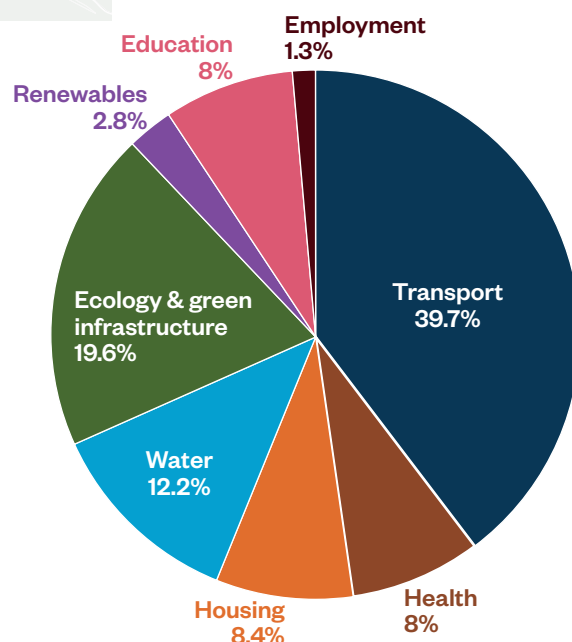
2.4 A public consultation event was undertaken in March 2023 to verify the baseline and provide the Baldock community with the opportunity to comment on the team's understanding of the site, its context and the needs of town. A plan of emerging combined opportunities and ideas to inform the masterplan was presented at this consultation (Figure 22).



▲ Figure 22: March 2023 Public Consultation Plan

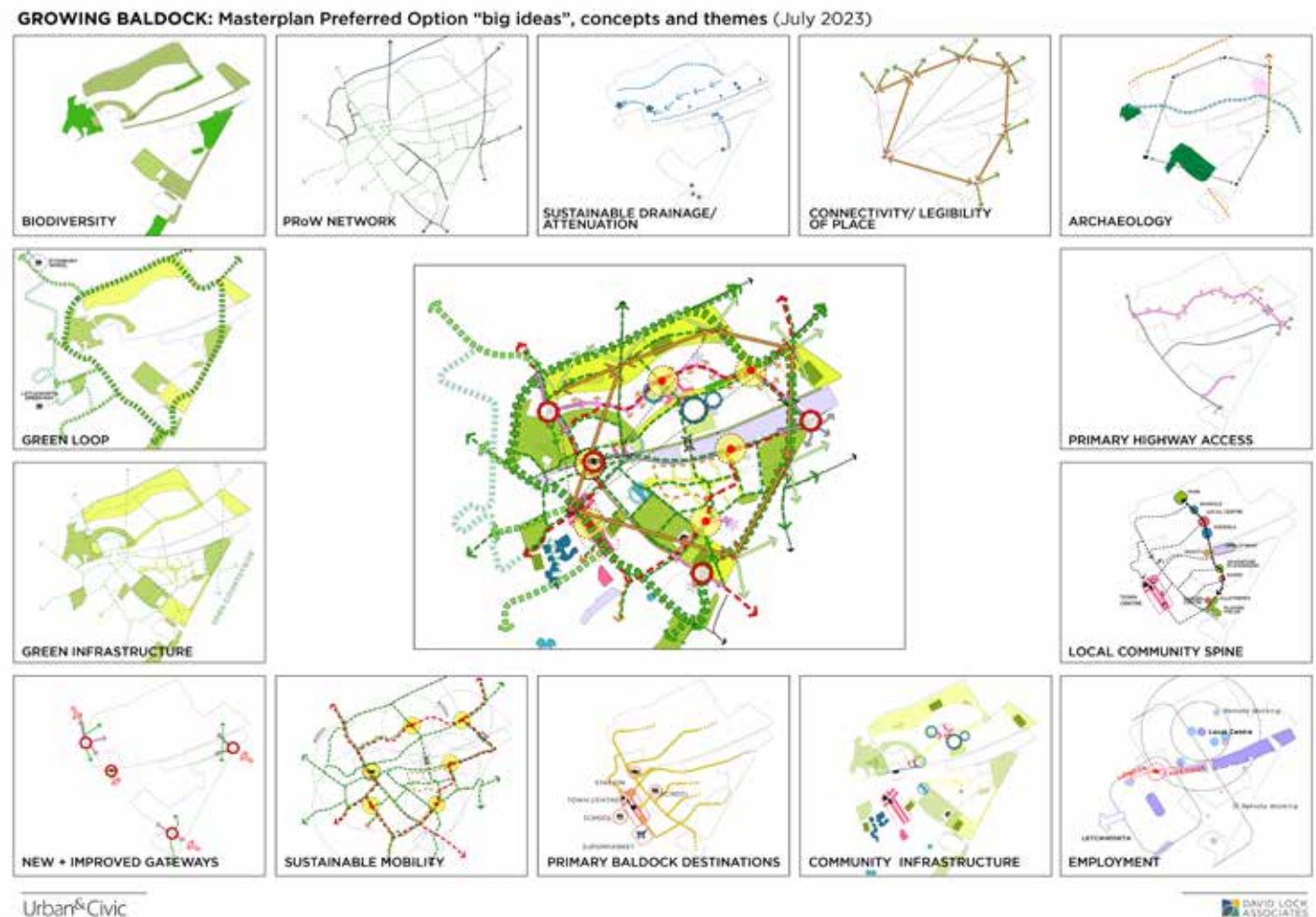
2.5 The majority of feedback, summarised at Figure 23, reinforced the baseline position that was presented and understood by the development team, emphasising the importance to the local community of issues of traffic and congestion, water supply and the River Ivel and the need to strengthen community provision through the new development.

Figure 23: Key Topics Raised at March 2023 ▶
Public Consultation from 400 comments



Design Review 1 (July 2023)

2.6 The emerging SMP (see Figure 24) was considered by a Design South East Design Review Panel in July 2023.



▲ Figure 24: Design Review Panel Masterplan Preferred Option Big Ideas – July 2023

2.7 The Panel provided 7 key recommendations which are set out in the table below, alongside a summary of how they have been addressed and secured in the OPA.

Design Review Panel Recommendation	Growing Baldock Design Response	How secured in OPA
Discuss the potential for eastern station entrance and active travel rail bridge crossing with Network Rail	Eastern station entrance and Active Travel underpass (rather than bridge) explored with Network Rail as key part of active travel proposals	Station entrance and underpass shown on Parameter Plan
Clarify the non-residential requirements of the masterplan, including employment types and secondary school provision	Employment mix, primary schools and flexible options for secondary school now set out in OPA	Land uses shown on Parameter Plan Legal agreement to secure education uses
Develop a mini-masterplan of the community hub area to define its function and spatial relationships'	Primary school previously shown in this location moved closer to Local Centre, so this space is now envisaged as a gateway from the new station entrance, rather than a community hub	Station entrance shown on Parameter Plan
Identify areas of the masterplan which could support higher density development, including low car or car free blocks where appropriate	Design principles developed to identify where higher density development might be appropriate: in the Local Centre, along the Active Travel routes and around the eastern station entrance.	Design principles in DAS
Revisit the design of the new link road. Explore options that seek to prioritise active travel and/or seek to relieve traffic on Royston Road	Link road will be a 'development access' also functioning as a strategic movement corridor. Active travel will be prioritised along its length and throughout the wider development.	Parameter Plan identifies indicative alignment of link road. Street hierarchy in DAS
Continue to develop the green infrastructure strategy to define the landscape character of key urban spaces and the active travel routes	Green infrastructure design principles to capture landscape character within the development, along active travel routes and in strategic green spaces	Design principles in DAS Green Infrastructure Strategy
The proposal must produce a clear strategy that details how the development will minimise embodied, operational and transport related carbon emissions, and optimise the use of renewable energy	Ambitions for the sustainability of the development have been discussed with NHC and HCC and are now captured in the OPA	Design Principles in DAS Sustainability and Energy Statement

SMP Preferred Option

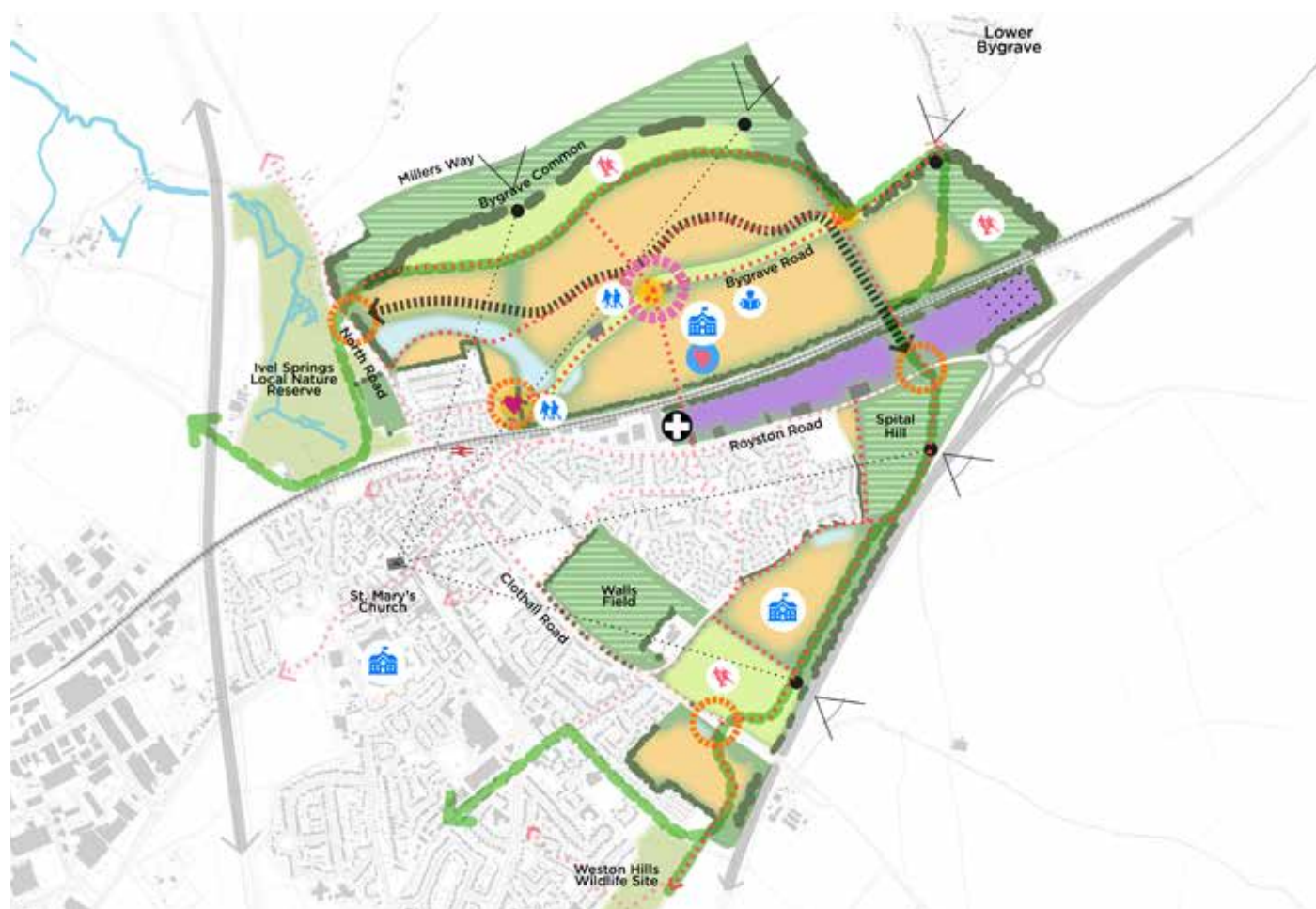
2.8 Having established a set of masterplan fixes through the baseline stage, verified by the public consultation event, the options stage tested a range of masterplan variables including the development access, options for crossing the railway, station improvements and secondary school provision. This process resulted in a preferred option masterplan as at Figure 25 below.



▲ Figure 25: SMP Options Report Preferred Option Masterplan (2023)

SMP Consultation (November 2023)

2.9 A further public consultation event was undertaken in November 2023 at which the draft SMP was presented (see Figure 26), alongside the emerging 'Big Themes' that formed a key part of the final SMP. At this stage, further progress had been made on options for secondary school provision, the vision for Growing Baldock, the movement and green infrastructure strategies and the 'One Baldock' approach.



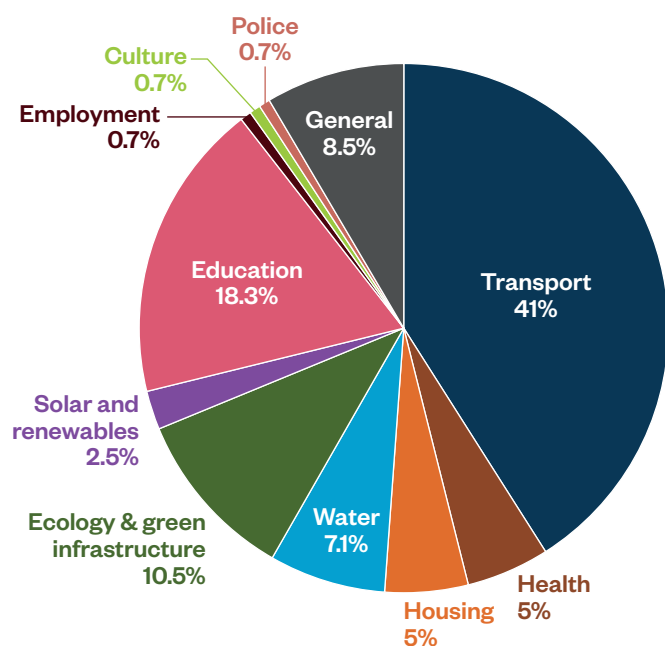
▲ Figure 26: November 2023 Public Consultation Composite Framework Plan



▲ Preferred options consultation, November 2023



2.10 The key topics raised by the community are shown in Figure 27.



◀ Figure 27: Key Topics Raised at November 2023 Public Consultation from over 300 comments



▲ Preferred options consultation, November 2023

