

4.5 MOVEMENT

The Site is strategically located in a highly accessible area, offering convenient links to a wide range of amenities and services within Royston town centre and High Street, which is within walking distance.

The Site benefits from good public transport connectivity, with frequent bus services operating in the vicinity. The nearest bus stops are located at Barkway Street and Baldock Street, providing easy access to the wider town and surrounding areas. Royston train station is approximately 20min walk from the Site offering easy access into Cambridge and London.

In addition, public bridleways (Royston BR13+14) are located to the west and south of the Site, providing direct routes to the town centre, London Road, and Therfield Heath, as well as access to the wider Public Rights of Way network to the south. The proposed development offers an opportunity to integrate with and extend these existing routes, thereby enhancing local connectivity.

The location of the Site is well-suited to support the proposed residential development. Situated off the existing Echo Hill, the Site location offers strong links to local amenities, transport networks, and green infrastructure.

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|---|--|
|  The Site |  Local Street Network |
|  High Street |  Bridleway |
|  Bus Route and Stops |  Public Footpaths |
|  A Road |  Royston Hospital |
|  B Road | |

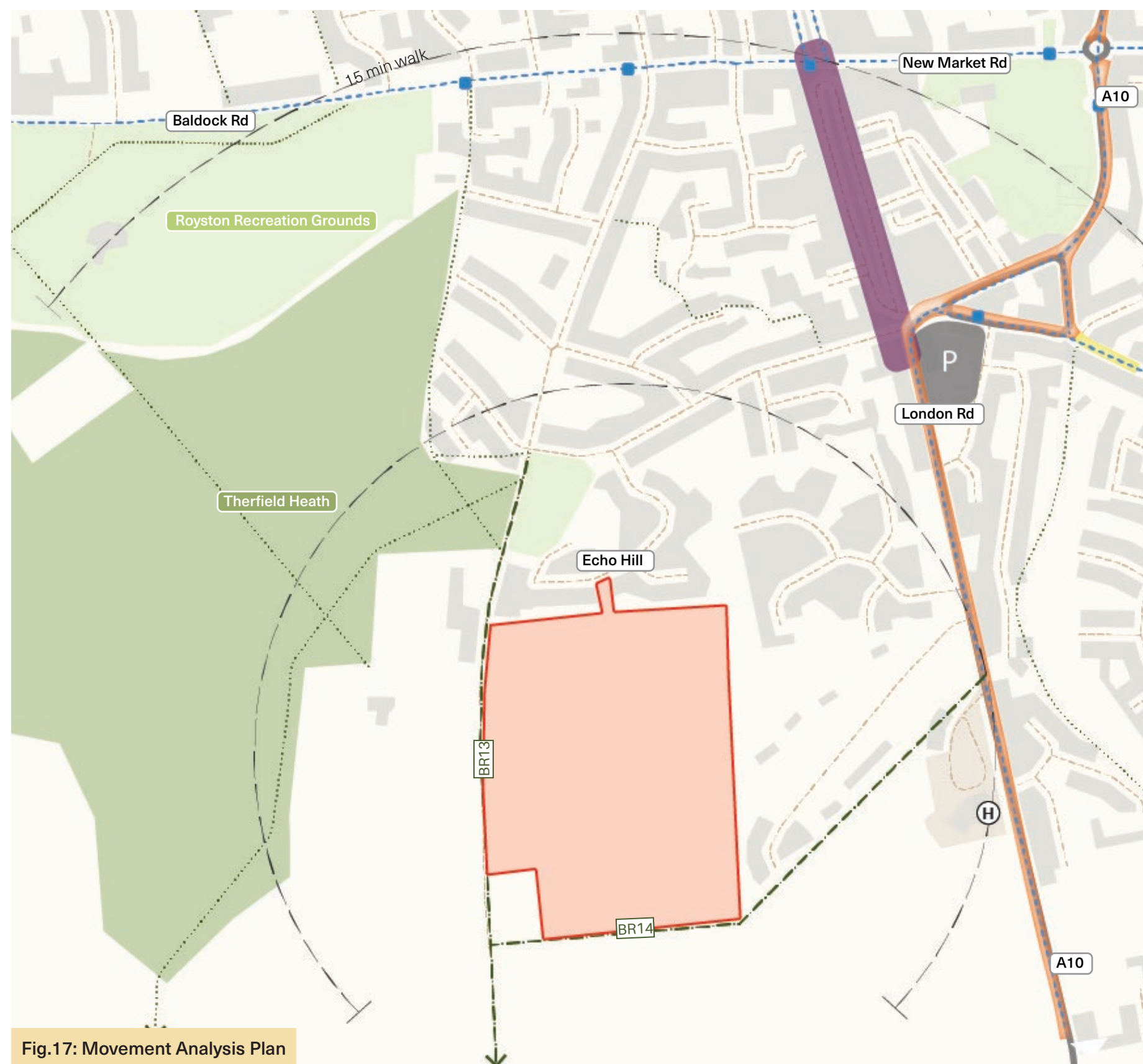


Fig.17: Movement Analysis Plan

4.6 LOCAL SERVICES

The Site enjoys convenient access to local services and amenities, all within easy walking distance. Royston High Street serves as a vibrant hub, offering a diverse selection of shops, cafes, restaurants, healthcare facilities, and other essential services that support the community. The nearby industrial areas also provide additional employment opportunities.

Key healthcare facilities include Royston Hospital, located approximately 250m east of the Site, and Royston Health Centre, situated around 1km to the north east. A variety of educational institutions are within close proximity, including nurseries, primary schools, and secondary schools. Tannery Drift First School, the nearest is approximately 950m from the Site, while Studlands Rise First School and St Mary's Primary School are within 1.5km.

The town is home to several places of worship, burial grounds, and the Priory Memorial Gardens, all contributing to a strong sense of place and community identity. Additionally, extensive open spaces and recreational facilities, such as Therfield Heath and Royston Recreation Grounds to the west, promote an active and engaged lifestyle for residents.

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|--|--|
|  The Site |  Bridleway |
|  High Street |  Public Footpaths |
|  Parks and Open Space |  Food and Beverage |
|  Therfield Heath |  Sports and Leisure |
|  Primary Street Network |  Places of Worship |
|  Royston Hospital |  Post Office |
|  Town Centre |  GP Surgeries |

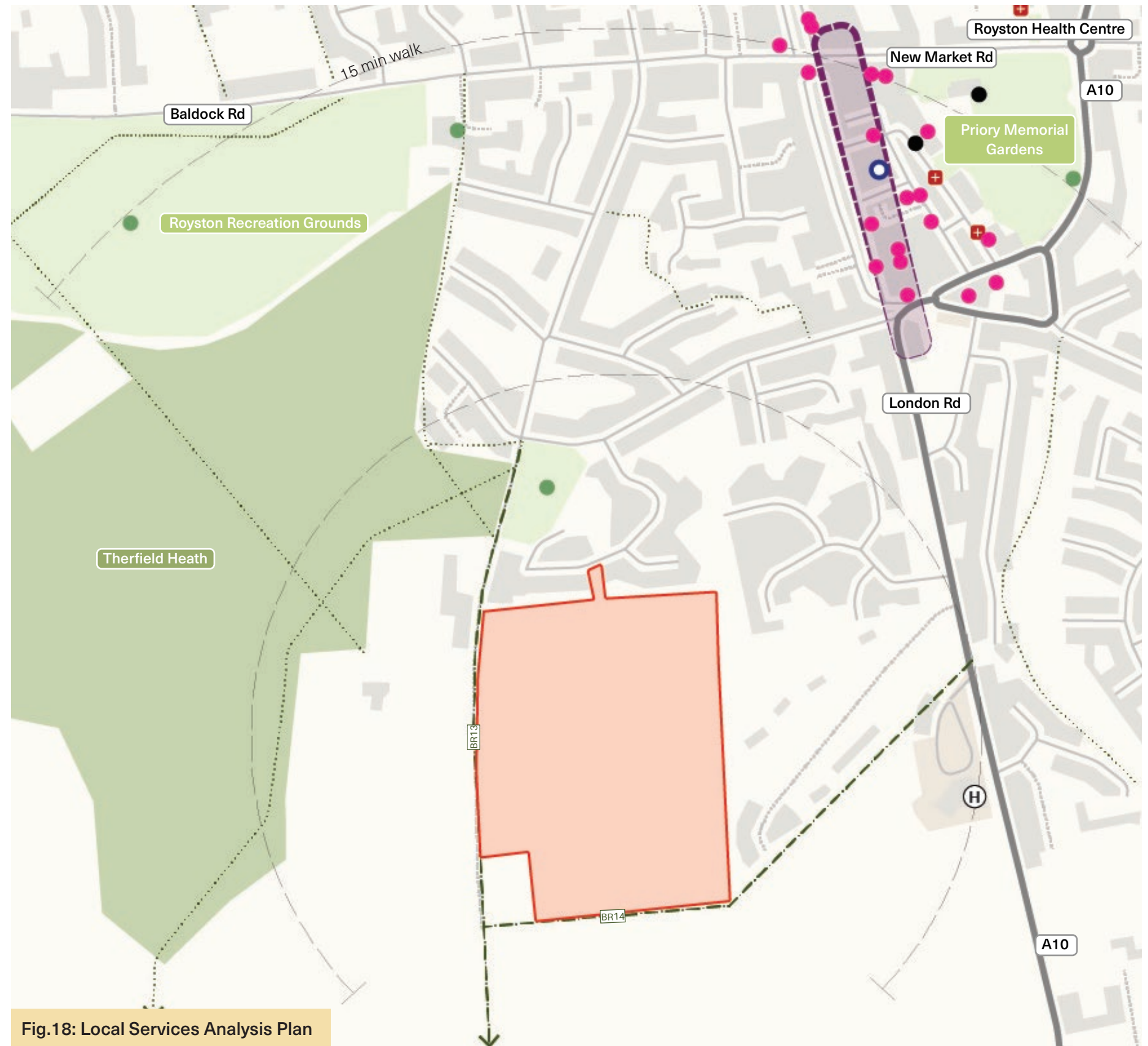


Fig.18: Local Services Analysis Plan

4.7 ECOLOGY

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has been prepared to assess ecological constraints and opportunities related to development on the Site. This included a desk study and field survey, incorporating a UK Habitat Classification survey completed in February 2025. No international statutory designations cover the Site, but two national designations (Therfield Heath SSSI and Holland Hall Railway Cutting SSSI) and one local designation (Therfield Heath LNR) exist within 3km.

The Site consists mainly of grassland, with freely draining lime-rich soils, ideal for calcareous habitats. Ancient Woodland or notable trees are not present on Site, but eight hedgerows on the Site are S41 Habitats of Principal Importance, serving as essential foraging and refuge sites for various species. These will be retained and protected from development to mitigate any impacts.

Floral diversity is notable, with 339 records of significant plant species identified, though no clear calcareous indicator species were recorded. The Site has the potential for ecological enhancement and biodiversity net gain.

The Site provides suitable habitat for various fauna, including bats, great crested newts, reptiles, and badgers. Existing hedgerows offer critical foraging and navigational features for bats. Badgers may find suitable sett creation habitat on-site.

Bird populations, including farmland species and possibly barn owls, may utilise the Site. Ecological enhancement measures, particularly through green infrastructure provision, will be incorporated into development plans to maintain and improve biodiversity.

Overall, the proposed development will have minimal ecological constraints, with the key habitats such as hedgerows being retained and protected and proposed areas of landscape enhancement to improve biodiversity.

4.8 ARBORICULTURE

An Arboricultural Assessment has been undertaken to assess the impact of the proposed development on the Site's existing trees and hedgerows. The survey was completed in May 2025 and included a total of fifty-six individual trees, twelve groups of trees, and six hedgerows.

The key arboricultural features on the Site include a concentration of trees along the existing bridleway (Briary Lane), which runs south from Sun Hill. These trees, predominantly sycamore, are found in linear groups, with two notable clusters: one forming the boundary to Therfield Heath and the other positioned along the residential edge, enclosing an area of grass. While the trees in these groups have some imperfections, they contribute significantly to the rural character of the area and offer visual amenity and ecological value.

The Site also contains a number of individual trees within the front and rear gardens of 24 Echo Hill. These trees are of low arboricultural significance due to their small size and condition. They consist primarily of fruiting species typically found in small domestic gardens.

The proposals aim to retain and protect the majority of the existing trees along the Site's boundaries. However, some hedgerow removal will be necessary for access and infrastructure purposes. Specifically, sections of hedgerows will need to be removed to accommodate the internal access road and footpath connections.

The structural vegetation to be removed for the development is generally considered lower grade in terms of arboricultural value, meaning its loss should not raise significant concerns. Mitigation for these losses will be provided through extensive new tree planting as part of the landscaping strategy, which includes large areas of public open space and proposed Green Infrastructure, enhancing the tree cover on-site and within the local area.

The proposed development will have minimal arboricultural constraints, with the majority of existing trees being retained and protected. The development will result in a net gain of tree cover, benefiting both the Site and the surrounding locality.



Fig.19: Hedges and woodland along the north eastern edge



Fig.20: Existing hedgerow between field parcels

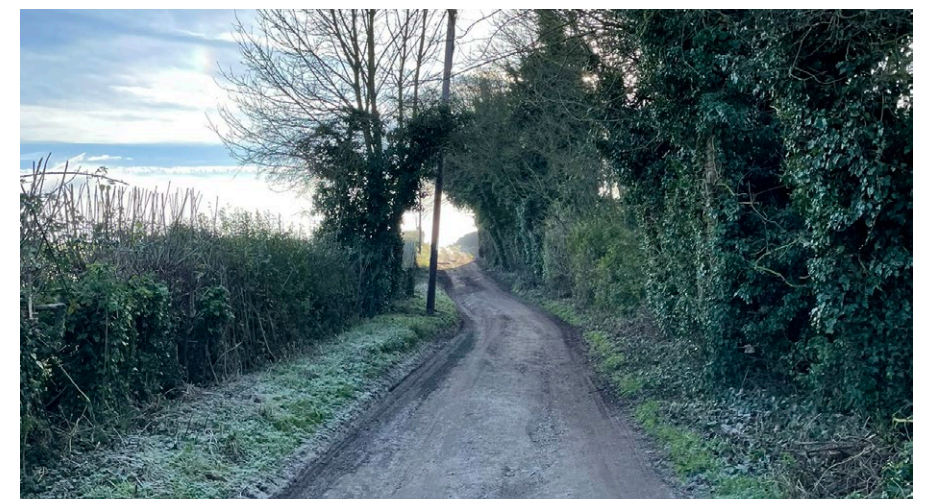


Fig.21: Bridleway 13, looking north, and hedgerows along the western boundary of the Site

4.9 SITE INFLUENCES

The Site presents a range of environmental influences, with a gently sloping topography and established vegetation along its boundaries.

Access to the Site is proposed to be achieved from Echo Hill, requiring the removal of the property at 24 Echo Hill, with no works proposed to Briary Lane. This bridleway along Briary Lane, along with a Public Right of Way to the south, forms part of a designated Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and provides strong opportunities for pedestrian connectivity. There is also potential to incorporate new pedestrian routes through the Site, enhancing connectivity to nearby Public Rights of Way.

The Site is visible from surrounding residential properties on Echo Hill, Layston Park and Royse Grove, as well as from sections of Briary Lane and public footpaths in the far east of Therfield Heath. Where possible, existing mature vegetation will be retained and enhanced through new planting. Development will be set back from key boundaries to maintain visual buffers and protect ecological features.

The Site's varied topography allows for sustainable drainage features to be integrated into the layout. The southern and western areas offer opportunities for new public open space and habitat creation, including chalk grassland, scrub, and woodland planting, contributing to local biodiversity and linking with the wider green infrastructure network.

- Site boundary: 8.97ha
- Existing Vegetation
- Bridleway (Royston BR13 + BR14)
- Public Footpath
- Opportunity for Link to the Existing Footpath Network
- Opportunity for Woodland Corridor Extension
- Long Views
- Opportunity for Public Open Space with Long Views
- Sensitive Edges/Interaction with the Existing Houses
- Opportunity for SuDS
- Existing Vegetation 12m Protection Zone
- 0.5m Contours
- Opportunity for Access through an Existing Property



Fig.22: Site Influences Plan



Fig.25: Briary Lane, north of the Site, with views towards Royston



Fig.27: Upper topography with views over Royston



Fig.26: Bridleway 13 and hedgerows on the western boundary



Fig.23: Topography and hedgerow between field parcels



Fig.24: Northern edge and relationship with surrounding development

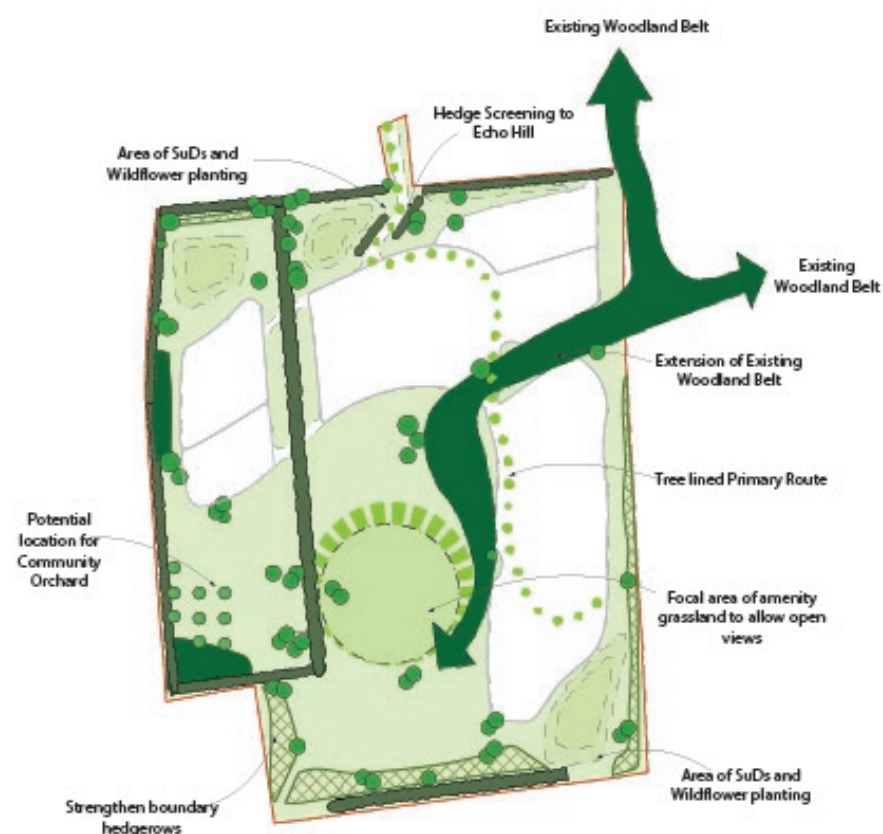


Fig.28: Woodland along eastern boundary

05

DESIGN EVOLUTION

5.1 DESIGN PRINCIPLES



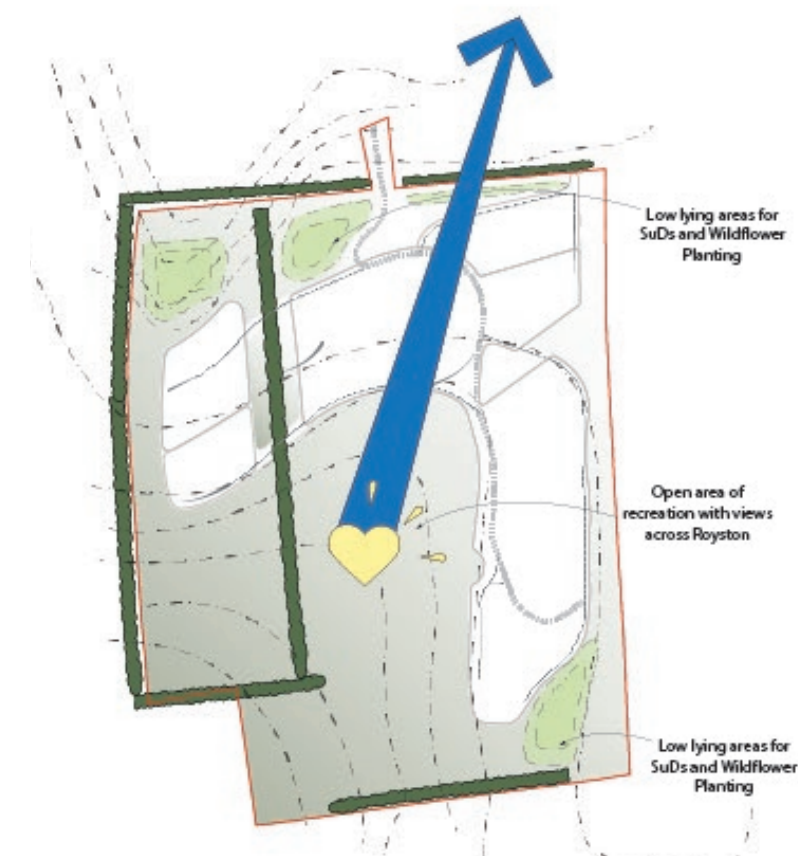
Enriched Green Infrastructure

- Strengthen existing boundary hedgerows to create a robust settlement edge and natural boundary treatment.
- Introduce areas of landscape enhancement, incorporating a blend of green and blue infrastructure for ecological resilience.
- Establish walking routes integrated into the landscape, connecting natural play areas, a potential community orchard, and the broader footpath network.



Connected Movement Framework

- Define a legible primary route with a tree-lined road that enhances wayfinding and visual identity.
- Activate focal areas with public seating, and amenity planting to foster interaction and vibrancy.
- Develop a well-structured hierarchy of streets and mews that reflect and strengthen the town's historic street character.



Topography Driven Layout

- Frame open spaces to create natural view corridors, connecting the development to the surrounding landscape.
- Utilise the Site's sloping terrain to shape an enclosed street network, while preserving the character of the adjacent SSSI.
- Reinforce hedgerows and integrate woodland planting that follows the terrain, reinforcing privacy and preserving biodiversity.

DESIGN PROPOSALS

06

6.1 DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The Development Framework Plan presents a set of proposals for a residential development covering 3.01 hectares, designed to accommodate approximately 84 dwellings at a density of 28 dwellings per hectare (dph).

Access to the Site is provided via Echo Hill, a primary route connected to a network of secondary routes and private drives. Along the primary route, key focal points enhance the local character and sense of place by incorporating doorstep public spaces, framed views of key buildings, and wayfinding elements. Pedestrian links will be provided around the Site and to the adjoining footpaths west and south of the development, which allows easy access to Therfield Heath and Royston town centre.

A green corridor along the eastern and northern edge will incorporate retained and new trees and hedgerows, with homes fronting onto it for natural surveillance and visual interest. Boundary vegetation will be enhanced to define the settlement edge and soften longer-range views.

A central and southern landscaped area will provide a multifunctional open space and will offer long views across the Site. proposed built form will be lower than 111AOD, which helps to preserve views across the Site and minimises visual impact.



Fig.29: Development Framework Plan

6.2 ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN

The Illustrative Masterplan presents a potential layout that reflects the core design principles of the scheme, and illustrates how 84 dwellings could be accommodated on the Site.

A varied building line introduces an appropriate transition to the surroundings and creates an attractive settlement edge. Private drives ensure a low-traffic housing edge, reinforcing the edge-of-settlement context.

Focal points are accentuated through shared surfaces and planting, creating a pedestrian-friendly environment whilst softening the built form and aiding legibility. Hedges and tree planting frame the access point, creating a gateway into the neighbourhood.

The well-defined open space in the south benefits from natural surveillance and contributes to a strong sense of place. The landscape is further enhanced by new SuDS, thicket and tree planting, complementing the retained vegetation and enriching the ecological value.

