

**Warren Farm, Ampthill
Development Brief
For Connolly Homes PLC and Denison Investments Ltd**



January 2012

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Section 1 - Introduction

- 1.1 Background - Policy HA4 of Central Bedfordshire Council's Site Allocations Document (April 2011) allocates the land west of Abbey Lane, Ampthill (now known as Warren Farm and referred to as such in the rest of this document) for the development of a minimum of 410 dwellings.
- 1.2 Policy Requirement - The Policy states that development on the site will be subject to a number of requirements (see section 2 below), including the production of a Development Brief to guide development.
- 1.3 What is a Development Brief? - This Development Brief document is a Technical Document which will be subject to public consultation, prior to ratification by Central Bedfordshire Councils' Executive Committee. The Development Brief will then sit alongside an Outline Planning Application and assist Central Bedfordshire Council in determining the application. Design Codes would follow the grant of an Outline Planning Application as a conditional requirement.
- 1.4 Purpose of the Development Brief - The Development Brief provides the background and Policy context for the Site and its Allocation; sets out the aims for the development to deliver; and identifies the constraints and opportunities which any planning application must address.
- 1.5 Site Context - Ampthill is one of the two largest towns in the western part of Central Bedfordshire and acts as an important service and employment centre in its local area. The site is situated at the southern edge of the town between Flitwick Road and Abbey Lane, and bounded to the south by the Redborne Upper School and an area of green belt land, which separates Ampthill from Flitwick.



Figure 1.1 Warren Farm Amptill: Aerial Photograph showing site allocation and boundary

Section 2 - Background and Planning Policy

- 2.1 Policy Background - The Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan (2005), identified the Warren Farm site as safeguarded or 'white land', excluded from the Green Belt. In November 2009, Central Bedfordshire Council adopted their Core Strategy and Development Management DPD (for the Northern Area), following an Examination in Public in June/ July of the same year.
- 2.2 Core Strategy - The Core Strategy required the delivery of at least 17,950 new homes between 2001 and 2026, with 5,000 new homes required in addition to those already committed (such as those allocated in the Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan (2005)). Of these 5000, the Core Strategy stated that 250 – 500 should be provided in Ampthill (Policy CS5), with the Safeguarded Land identified as being brought forward to accommodate these new homes.
- 2.3 Site Allocations - In April 2011, Central Bedfordshire Adopted their Site Allocations DPD (for the Northern Area), following an examination in October 2010. Policy HA4 of the Site Allocations Document states:

“Policy HA4: Land West of Abbey Lane, Ampthill

Site Area: 13.65 ha

Land west of Abbey Lane, Ampthill, as identified on the Proposals Map, is allocated for residential development providing a minimum of 410 dwellings.

Section 2 - Background and Planning Policy

In addition to general policy requirements in the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD and appropriate contributions to infrastructure provision in the Planning Obligations SPD, development on this site will be subject to the following:

- The production of a Development Brief to guide development;
 - Preparation of a Transport Assessment to help identify the impact of the development on the highway network. This assessment should specifically include the impact on the A507 roundabout and town centre, and to assist in identifying and addressing any off site transport improvements;
 - Provision of adequate multifunctional open space to mitigate impacts of any additional pressure from residents of the development on the nearby Cooper's Hill SSSI and Flitwick Moor SSSI. The Development Brief will include appropriate levels and functions of open space in order to provide such mitigation;
 - Provision of a 'green corridor' alongside the A507 providing substantial landscaping and opportunities for countryside recreation;
 - Provision of suitable links including within and between the development parcels to the town centre; nearby sporting facilities; Redborne Upper School and Community College; the network of paths serving the adjoining countryside; and the proposed country park along the A507;
 - Provision of a non-vehicular connection between the development and the employment site at Doolittle Mill and Yard; and
 - Provision of a footpath through the site connecting Abbey Lane to the east and Flitwick Road to the west, which is capable of connecting to the existing network of footpaths in the locality."
- 2.4 Material Considerations - The development will also comply with the requirements of National and Local Policy, such as relevant PPGs and PPSs and the Central Bedfordshire Planning Obligations Strategy SPD (November 2009).
- 2.5 Public Consultation – The Development Brief was subject to a public consultation between 7th November and 5th December 2011. This included a two day public exhibition alongside a consultation relating to a future planning application for the site.

The results of the Public Consultation will be summarised in a Statement of Community Involvement submitted alongside a future planning application. The comments received during the consultation primarily related to the principle of development as well as detailed comments relating to any future planning application.

Section 2 - Background and Planning Policy

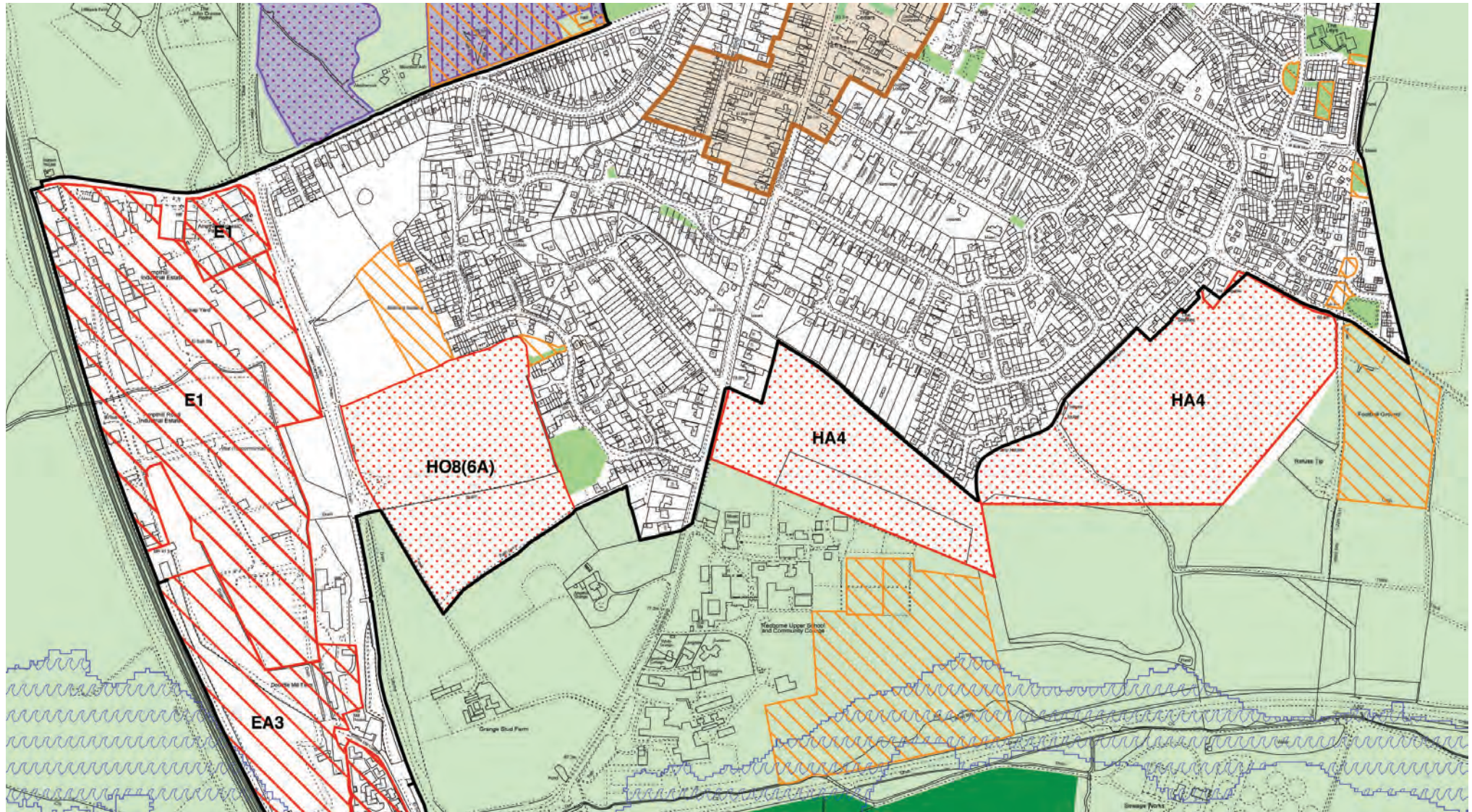


Figure 2.1 Policy HA4 land West of Abbey Lane, Amptill from CBC Site Allocations Document, April 2011

Section 3 - Proposals and Vision for the site

3.1 Delivery of Housing - Policy HA4 of the Site Allocations DPD sets a target of delivering 410 new dwellings across the site. This will include provision of a wide range of housing types and sizes based on an assessment of the need in this area in accordance with Policy DM10 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (CSDMP) DPD. Densities will vary across the site to allow the creation of different character areas in order to give the development a sense of place.

3.2 Affordable Housing – This will need to be provided as part of the scheme in accordance with Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy, with the aim being for 35% of the total number of houses to be affordable. A mix of tenures will be included including open market rent, social rented, low cost market rent and shared equity. The delivery and allocation of affordable housing will be in alignment with Central Bedfordshire Procedures.

The affordable units are to be provided in clusters or small groups of up to 20 spread across the site. The masterplan for the site will highlight indicative locations for these groups. Specific sites will then be identified at the detailed stage following the grant of Outline Planning permission. The exact tenure mix of the affordable units will be determined through negotiation with the Council and will be provided by a Registered Provider.

3.3 Planning Obligation – The promoters of the site will enter into a planning obligation in order to make contributions towards necessary community facilities and services in accordance with Policy CS2 of the CSDMP DPD. This will include the provision of additional school places where required. These contributions will be provided through entering into a S106 Agreement with the Council in accordance with its Planning Obligations Strategy SPD, or any future Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule.

As well as new school places, the planning obligation will, where appropriate, also include contributions towards sustainable transport measures, healthcare, sport and recreation facilities, local community facilities and any other requirements as agreed with the Local Planning Authority. Draft Heads of Terms are to be agreed and submitted with the Outline Planning Application.

Section 3 - Proposals and Vision for the site

- 3.4 Connectivity across the site – The scheme will need to allow for convenient movement, whilst ensuring a sense of security to allow the creation of a successful place. Routes for walking and cycling to facilitate movement to, through and around the development should be identified in the indicative masterplan. Safe access to formal and informal play areas, including natural surveillance will be a priority in the design of the scheme.
- 3.5 Integration with the existing neighbourhood – The development of the site will form an extension to an existing town and a key objective must therefore be the successful integration of the new housing with the existing community, both physically in terms of design and socially. The site adjoins existing housing along much of its northern and part of its eastern boundary and the masterplan will need to consider carefully the interrelationship between new and existing housing at these points to ensure the harmonious integration of the development with the existing built form. Good connections to existing facilities will also be important.
- 3.6 Access – Pedestrian and vehicular access will be provided at both ends of the development, from Flitwick Road and Abbey Lane. A continual through route between these access points will be provided as part of the development. This will need to be carefully considered to ensure that the road has an appropriate design speed so as not to compromise pedestrian safety or the quality of residential environment created.

Section 4 - Constraints

- 4.1 Topography – The land does not have any unusually steep or difficult to access areas, the western site falls generally from north-west to south-east at an average gradient of approximately 1 in 36. There is a total change in level of approximately 12m across the site over 430m.
- The eastern site falls generally from north to south at an average gradient of approximately 1 in 50. There is a total change in level of approximately 5m across the site over 250m. The site is crossed by a drainage ditch/ water course forming a shallow valley.
- 4.2 Existing Landscape Features – A tree-lined drainage ditch/ watercourse crosses the eastern site. The northern boundary of the western site is characterised by a drainage ditch and a belt of trees, which divide the site from the neighbouring rear gardens. The western site also contains a number of individual trees, which should be integrated into the design where possible.
- 4.3 Access – Vehicular access can be formed off Flitwick Road and Abbey Lane. Precise form and location of these junctions should be agreed with the Highways Authority.
- 4.4 Gas Main/ Easement – The Gas Main, which runs through the site, has a 6m easement, 3m either side from the centre of the pipe. Development including back gardens cannot be built within the 6m strip, which should be accessible for repair and maintenance. Any works within the 6m strip will require National Grid's prior approval. If required, the Gas Main can be diverted to suit the layout at the developers' expense.
- 4.5 High Pressure Water Main/ Easement – The High Pressure Water Main has a 9m easement, 4.5m either side of the centre line of the pipe. The pipe will need to be incorporated into the layout of the site, either in public open space or under the public highway. The pipe can be diverted to suit the layout at the developers' expense.
- 4.6 Electricity Pylons – Overhead electricity cables cross the site from north to south adjacent to the existing tree-lined drainage ditch. There is a wayleave granted which is determinable on 6 months notice. The developers should consider relocating these cables underground.



Figure 4.1 East Site North Boundary



Figure 4.2 West Site North Boundary



Figure 4.3 Junction between East and West Site

Section 4 - Constraints

- 4.7 Existing Neighbours – Proposals should include appropriate design responses to the adjoining uses:
- Residential: The site is bounded to the north by residential properties with rear gardens adjacent to the boundary.
 - School: Redborne Upper School and Community College forms the southern boundary to the western site.
 - Woodland: A commercial woodland, comprising a crop of poplar trees with a margin of native species, forms the southern boundary to the eastern site.
 - Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC): The ‘Tidy Tip’ is accessed from Abbey Lane and lies immediately adjacent to the south-east boundary of the site. It is well screened by mature trees.
- 4.8 Highways Junction Capacity – A full Transport Assessment should be submitted as part of the Outline Planning Application. The document will assess the critical highway junctions (as advised by Central Bedfordshire Council’s highway department) in the vicinity of the site. The developers will carry out mitigation measures at locations, which are predicted to operate over capacity as a direct result of the Warren Farm development. At junctions which currently operate over capacity mitigation measures will be introduced to achieve a nil-detriment situation. A Green Travel Plan will also be submitted as part of the Planning Application. The purpose of the Green Travel Plan will be to include measures proposed by the developers to promote the use of sustainable modes of transport among residents of Warren Farm and Ampthill/ Flitwick as a whole.
- 4.9 Utilities Infrastructure Capacity – Anglian Water have confirmed that there are no capacity issues at the Sewage Treatment Works and that the development can discharge via gravity into the existing public sewer network which passes through the site. Water supply to the site will be taken from either the existing main along Abbey Lane/ Oliver Street or the existing main along Flitwick Road. Reinforcement works will be required which will be carried out at the developers’ expense.

Discussions with gas and electricity providers are ongoing. The extent to which any reinforcement works are required will be assessed nearer the start of construction to ensure they are based on up to date capacity estimates, however, initial enquiries indicate significant reinforcement is unlikely to be necessary. Any reinforcement works that are required will be paid for by the developers.



Figure 4.4 Drainage Ditch looking North



Figure 4.5 Drainage Ditch looking North



Figure 4.6 View of Woodland Edge

Section 4 - Constraints

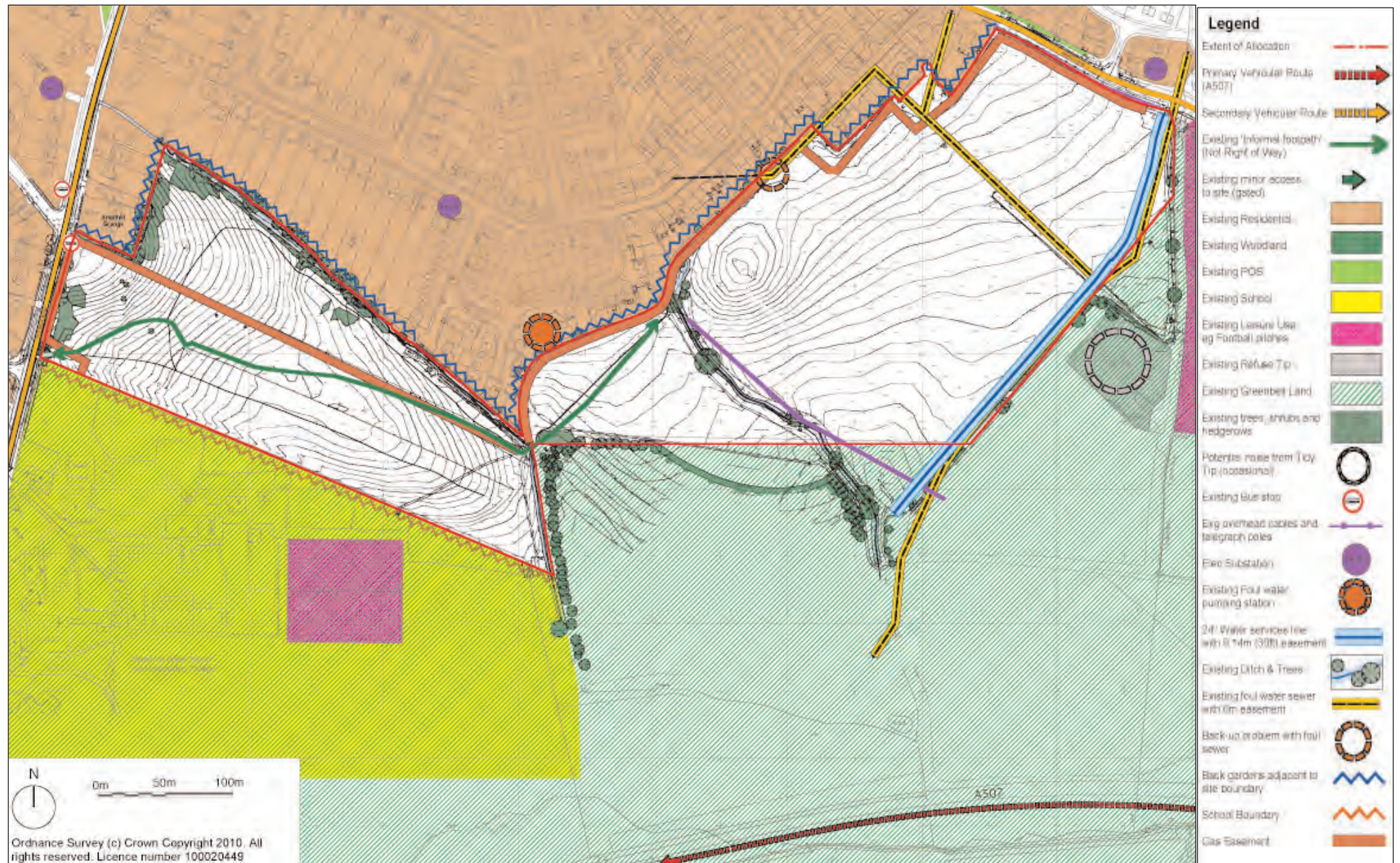


Fig. 4.4 Constraints Diagram

Section 4 - Constraints

- 4.10 Green Belt - An area of land between the two development parcels remains in the Green Belt and is shown on the constraints plan. Within that area, Green Belt policy continues meaning that inappropriate development such as residential will not be acceptable unless very special circumstances sufficient to override established plan policy can be demonstrated. However, pedestrian and vehicular links along with small-scale community infrastructure such as play facilities are acceptable to the Local Planning Authority. It will be important to ensure the space joining the two development parcels is treated sensitively and contributes to the creation of a good quality scheme across the whole site.
- 4.11 Education – Any planning application will be required to provide financial contributions as part of a S106 package towards education provision. These contributions will be required to ensure sufficient school places are made available for the pupils generated by the new development.



Figure 4.7 East Site off Abbey Lane



Figure 4.8 East Site Northern Boundary



Figure 4.9 West Site from Flitwick Road

Section 5 - Opportunities

- 5.1 New homes for Ampthill – This site provides the opportunity to deliver 410 new homes to help meet the local housing need for Ampthill. The proposals will provide a range of housing, tenures and sizes, in order to meet the needs of all sections of the local community and to promote a sustainable development.
- 5.2 Quality of Design – This is an opportunity to create an extension to Ampthill that will be a fully formed place whilst becoming an integral part of the town. It should demonstrate an understanding of the regional context, providing a variety of scale and enclosure of space. Proposals will employ appropriate variations in height, density, building types and roofscape to contribute to the creation of a rich and characterful place.

The formation of diverse characters will introduce variety, uniqueness and legibility to the development to ensure that it is distinctive, and easy to navigate. Each area should have its own sense of place whilst contributing to the creation of a holistic and coherent neighbourhood. Consideration of the transitions between character areas will be vital to maintain an overarching sense of place.

- 5.3 Open Spaces – A public open space strategy will provide opportunity for amenity, informal recreation and play as an integral part of the design. The variety of safe, overlooked landscaped spaces will be central to the definition of character areas and may include parks, informal greenways, garden courts and children's play areas. Areas and type of amenity space should be discussed with the Central Bedfordshire Amenity Officer during the design process.
- 5.4 Gateway Features – The junctions with Flitwick Road and Abbey Lane provide opportunities for high quality townscape at these important interfaces with the existing town. These areas should be considered not only as entrances to the Warren Farm development but also as part of the journey through Ampthill. They should therefore reinforce the character of the existing context.

The junction between the west and east sites is also a gateway. Built form in this area is constrained by the site allocation boundary, but there is an opportunity to use the landscape and open space to generate a more positive connection.

Section 5 - Opportunities

- 5.5 Positive Integration with Existing Community – The development will include a network of footpaths and cycle routes, which will connect with existing paths serving the adjoining area. Suitable pedestrian connections to the residential areas to the north should be provided where possible. Whilst there are no public footpaths crossing the site, a popular informal route connects the residential areas with Redborne School. This link will be improved and incorporated into the scheme.
- 5.6 Improved access to the countryside – The proposals should also make provision for pedestrian/ cycle connections from the site to the network of paths that serve the surrounding countryside.
- 5.7 Improving Existing Drainage Issues – The potential to improve existing foul drainage problems associated with the pumping station and rising main will be investigated and works undertaken to ensure that the proposed development does not exacerbate the current situation.

Section 5 - Opportunities

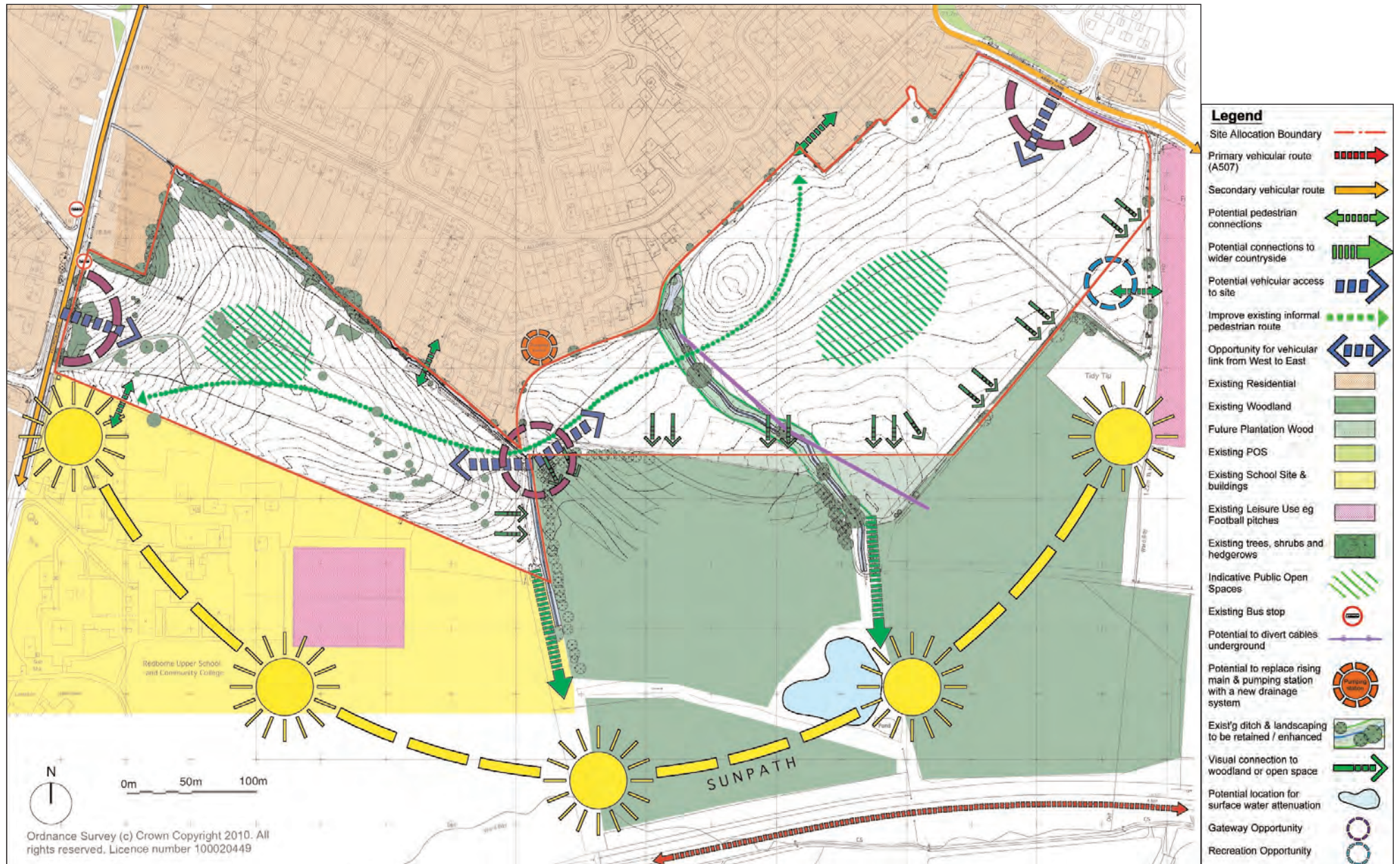


Figure 5.1 Opportunities Diagram

