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EFDC

/

**STRATEGIC  
MASTERPLAN  
FRAMEWORK**

/

**NORTH WEALD  
AIRFIELD**

March 2023





— Masterplan Area

••• North Weald Airfield Boundary

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Illustrative Site Layout Plan



# Executive Summary

This document sets out the vision, objectives and framework to guide employment related development within the North Weald Airfield Masterplan Area. Its purpose is to shape proposals that will come forward through future planning applications, which are expected to consider and respond to the place-shaping principles and design parameters identified within this document.

The development of this Masterplan responds to the requirements of Policy SP2 (Place Shaping) and Policy P6 (North Weald Bassett) of the Epping Forest Local Plan 2011-2033. Whilst it focuses on providing guidance in relation to future development proposals for site allocation NWB.E4A (North Weald Airfield) and site designation NWB.E4B (Bassett Business Park and Merlin Way Industrial Estate) it has done so having had regard to the wider airfield site and its operation as defined in the Local Plan. Policy P6 provides for the provision of 10ha of additional employment floorspace within Use Classes E(g) (Offices, Research and Development, Light Industrial), B2 (General Industrial) and B8 (Storage and Distribution) together with the protection and intensification of existing employment floorspace within the eastern part of the airfield. The policy also identifies a number of site specific requirements including the provision of a new access from Epping Road to the airfield, new and improved public rights of way and cycle links, and preserving or enhancing of the Grade II listed Control Tower and its setting. The policy also seeks to protect the existing airfield uses and therefore the Masterplan has been developed to ensure that airfield activities are not unacceptably impacted by any future development, but the wider airfield does not form part of this Masterplan.

This Masterplan relates to part of the existing airfield and includes the main entrance from Merlin Way, the Control Tower and some existing hangars to the south of the site. It also includes a number of existing businesses and the North Weald Airfield Museum, which are accessed from Epping Road.

The site is located adjacent to the village of North Weald Bassett and in close proximity to the North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area, which will provide for a minimum of 1,050 homes and associated development. An opportunity also exists to create SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace). The northern part of the Masterplan area (covered by NWB.E4A) has good access to the strategic

highway network with immediate links to the A414 and Junction 7 of the M11. Existing bus services operate along the B181 (Epping Road) and a number of Public Rights of Way are located within the immediate vicinity of the Masterplan area.

The development of the Masterplan has been supported by a number of environmental and technical assessments and responds to comments made through the consultation and engagement activities undertaken at key stages of its development. The assessments have included work on design, transport, aviation safeguarding, market demand, ecology, flood risk and drainage, noise, air quality, energy and sustainability, landscape and arboriculture. Working with local stakeholders including North Weald Bassett Parish Council, the operators of the airfield itself and the developers of the North Weald Bassett Masterplan, a baseline position of the site has been established. The site opportunities and constraints have been fully examined and discussed with key stakeholders. The consultation that has taken place to inform this document has included meetings, workshops and virtual exhibitions with a range of key stakeholders including the relevant highways authorities, the North Weald Bassett Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, North Weald Parish Council and the wider community. The framework, principles and parameters set out in this Masterplan have evolved from this work and are articulated through the Illustrative Site Layout Plan presented within this document.

Although it is acknowledged that, based on policy requirements, development brought forward by planning applications have scope to propose different design and layout solutions, this Masterplan sets out one development option to achieve the potential quantum and form of development that would fulfil site allocation requirements as set out in the adopted Local Plan. It also presents potential solutions to address environmental and technical matters so that any future applicant is clear as to what is required when preparing proposals for the site. This includes delivering the employment floorspace through a mixture of small, medium and large units - with the smaller units being located at the south of the site adjacent to the village to limit HGV traffic and the larger units located to the north of the site, where the main vehicular access is provided and HGV movements can be directed immediately to the strategic transport

network. Aviation operation requirements may determine where new-build development can be introduced and the height of proposed buildings. The Masterplan has indicated an option based on current Obstacle Limitation Surfaces (OLS) requirements but an alternative approach may be appropriate subject to further assessment at the planning application stage.

New security measures are required to separate the employment area from the operational airfield and a new air traffic control tower and fire station will be required. A new main access at the north of the site will provide the primary route into the employment area for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians, with a secondary route and access point off the existing roundabout on Merlin Way to the east of the site. The southern access point to Epping Road will serve just a small portion of the southern part of the site and the existing museum together with opportunities to provide a bus route to connect the site with the wider area. The listed building status of the existing air traffic control tower will be respected and has the potential to be repurposed as a community or café facility.

The landscape-led approach to the Masterplan ensures that ecology, tree retention, landscape and drainage considerations have influenced the siting of the proposed development parcels, areas of new planting, no-build areas and detention ponds. A green route is illustrated by the potential development option layout, to demonstrate how utilising opportunities and constraints can provide a secondary pedestrian and cycle route and open space for future users to enjoy. This route also links to the North Weald Bassett Masterplan area and to the wider Public Rights of Way network. The 'BREEAM Communities' approach to integrating sustainable design into masterplanning has also underpinned the development of this document.

This Masterplan has been produced to inform the development of future planning applications for the site to ensure that any proposed development acknowledges the Council's vision, Local Plan policies and guidance and to support the delivery of the District's employment needs whilst ensuring the continued operation of the airfield, as well as protecting the site's unique heritage, its environmental value and the village setting.

# 1 Introduction

## Overview and Purpose of this Document

1.1. This Strategic Masterplan has been prepared in accordance with Policy SP2 and P6 of the adopted Epping Forest District Local Plan 2011-2033 (the Local Plan) to guide and inform the development of land at North Weald Airfield for the provision of employment uses. The Masterplan Area forms part of the existing airfield and includes the main entrance from Merlin Way, the Control Tower and some existing hangars to the south of the site. It also includes a number of existing businesses and the North Weald Airfield Museum which are accessed from Epping Road. Development and employment at North Weald Airfield features in the County Council, Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP), and the UK Innovation Corridor plans for growth.

1.2. The development of the Masterplan has been informed by a range of consultation activities and has been endorsed by the Council as local planning authority. This endorsed Strategic Masterplan will be taken into account as an important material consideration in the determination of any planning applications within the masterplan area.

1.3. The Local Plan vision for North Weald Bassett is that it will become more self-sufficient, enabling the settlement to realise a long-term future as a larger provider of employment, housing and services within Epping Forest District. It also seeks aviation related uses, complemented by a mix of employment and leisure uses to boost the commercial offer and sustainability of North Weald Airfield. Land at the airfield (Local Plan Site Allocation Ref. NWB.E4A) has been allocated for 10ha of new floorspace for Use Class E(g), B2 and B8 employment uses. The existing employment areas of Bassett Business Park and Merlin Way Industrial Estate are designated in the Local Plan for the protection and intensification of the existing employment uses (Site designation NWB.E4B). These two sites comprise the area covered by this Masterplan to provide coherent guidance for development proposals in the short, medium and long-term to be brought forward.

1.4. There are a number of policies in the Local Plan which are of particular relevance. These include Policy SP2 (Place Shaping) and Policy P6 (North Weald Bassett). The Local Plan policy context is discussed in more detail later in this Chapter.

1.5. The most up-to-date Trajectory for the delivery of Local Plan Employment Allocations indicates that 5ha within the North Weald Airfield site allocation will be delivered between 2022/23 - 2026/27 and a further 5ha between 2027/28 - 2031/32. This Masterplan has therefore been produced in accordance with Local Plan Policy SP2 (Place Shaping) and P6 (North Weald Bassett) and its requirement for the development of a Masterplan for site allocation NWB.E4A and NWB.E4B. Its purpose is to shape proposals that will come forward through future planning applications, which are expected to consider and respond to the place-shaping principles and design parameters identified within this document.

1.6. A Neighbourhood Plan for North Weald Bassett is currently being developed. The emerging Neighbourhood Plan supports the continued operation of the Airfield for aviation and related activities and the provision of new buildings within the employment area, as set out in the Local Plan, that are of a scale and form that does not unacceptably compromise aviation activity.

## The Vision for North Weald Airfield

1.7. The vision for the site is:

***'to create a new, highly sustainable and modern employment area which respects the Airfield's proud history, whilst realising its long-term future as a key employment location.'***

1.8. The site is located within walking distance of the centre of North Weald Bassett and in close proximity to bus services and existing Public Rights of Way (PRoW) as well as being located in close proximity to Junction 7 of the M11, providing easy access onto the strategic highway network. The new community proposed as part of the North Weald Bassett Masterplan area is also a short distance away to the north east providing opportunities for new connections between the two sites. The Masterplan therefore aims to maximise these opportunities to support sustainable transport choices.



Former entrance into the Airfield from the B181 Epping Road

Aircraft at North Weald Airfield

1.9. The creation of new employment floorspace through a combination of new development and the regeneration of existing floorspace will attract ambitious investment, provide significant local employment and entrepreneurial opportunities boosting the local economy so that North Weald Bassett can become self-sufficient. Dependent on the types of businesses that decide to take up space at North Weald Airfield there is the potential for between circa 1,600 and 2,900 new jobs to be based at the site.

1.10. Development proposals for the site should demonstrate that the use of new technology is supported, that they respond to the climate emergency, encourage sustainability, and celebrate the history of the airfield, and preserve or enhance existing heritage assets and the surrounding natural environment.

1.11. Proposals should reflect the local history of the airfield and its importance to the local community. Masterplan proposals must link the existing village of North Weald Bassett to the Airfield.

1.12. The site is located within the UK innovation Corridor and Digital Innovation Zone. The Council supports the UK Innovation Corridor and UK Digital Strategy ambitions and delivering on initiative priorities will lead to securing investment and jobs from key industries such as ICT and digital. The Masterplan areas location within the UK Innovation Corridor and Digital Innovation Zones presents a suitable location for advanced ICT, AI, data processing and storage, and advanced manufacturing and Life Sciences Industries, complementing the offer from the London to Cambridge corridor.

1.13. Through the provision of a range of different building typologies there is the potential to provide a mixture of offices, Research and Development, manufacturing and storage and distribution space that will be attractive to prospective occupiers across these sectors. Recognising the climate emergency there should be a focus on attracting business that provide low carbon (or “green”) goods and services or innovative solutions to address emissions, such as sourcing renewable power for operations, where possible.

1.14. Importantly, the development of land at the Airfield offers the opportunity to address a recognised shortage of space within Epping Forest District suitable for established businesses that have outgrown their existing accommodation, ensuring that such companies are able to stay within the district rather than relocate

elsewhere. At the same time the provision of smaller units will help to provide incubator spaces for new businesses reflecting the particular character of the local economy which is made up predominantly of micro and small businesses.

1.15. Subject to funding being identified, there is the potential to establish a business innovation centre at the Airfield. This would provide opportunities to support businesses located at the Airfield and within the wider local area to develop the local economy. This, along with the opportunity to provide ancillary communal facilities at the Airfield such as a café / restaurant and conferencing facilities either as part of such a centre or as standalone facilities, would also create mutually beneficial opportunities for collaboration between future occupiers.

1.16. New ancillary facilities at the Airfield would also offer benefits to local residents and attract the wider community to use these facilities.

1.17. To achieve the objectives of the vision, development proposals should demonstrate that they:

- Respect North Weald Bassett village and its characteristics whilst embracing the planned expansion of the village.
- Separate aviation and non-aviation uses whilst providing flexibility in the masterplan to incorporate a variety of alternative development layout options, and unit typologies to react to market demands.
- Will not unacceptably impact Airfield operations.
- Create opportunities within the development for existing businesses to relocate to modern, fit for purpose units.
- Celebrate and promote the Airfield’s history.
- Provide a welcoming, vibrant and attractively landscaped environment for users and visitors to enjoy.



**Illustrative Site Layout**





## National and Local Plan Policy Context

1.18. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides guidance on the use of masterplans to set clear expectations for the quality of the places to be created, land used efficiently whilst creating beautiful and sustainable places, and how this can be maintained. The masterplan accords with the Local Plan which the NPPF requires to provide a positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings, with a key objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development via effective engagement between planmakers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees.

1.19. This document and the masterplanning approach it takes to the site must have regard to the requirements of relevant Local Plan policies and guidance. These include:

- Policies SP1 (Spatial Development Strategy), SP2 (Place Shaping), SP6 (The Natural Environment, Landscape Character and Green and Blue Infrastructure), E1 (Employment sites), T1 (Sustainable Transport Choices), P6 North Weald Bassett, DM1 Habitat Protection and Improving Biodiversity, DM5 Green and Blue Infrastructure, DM9 High Quality Design and DM22 (Air Quality). This list is not exhaustive, and it is stressed that the Local Plan should be read as a whole).
- EFDC Strategic Masterplanning Briefing Note - October 2018
- Epping Forest Air Pollution Mitigation Strategy
- EFDC Sustainability Guidance & Checklist / Major Developments - March 2021
- EFDC Green Infrastructure Strategy - April 2021

1.20. The Epping Forest District Local Plan (Submission Version 2017) was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination on 21 September 2018. Following the Examination into the Local Plan, including through consultation on Main Modifications the Local Plan was adopted on 06 March 2023.

1.21. Local Plan Policy SP2 (Place Shaping) sets out the principles of place making and Local Plan Policy P6: North Weald Bassett sets out specific requirements for development proposals within North Weald Bassett, including for the Airfield. In developing this Masterplan, regard has been had to the following Parts of Policy P6:

### **Employment Sites**

C. *In accordance with Policies SP1 and E1 the following existing sites are designated for employment uses:*

*(iv) NWB.E4B - Bassett Business Park and Merlin Way Industrial Estate.*

D. *In accordance with Policies SP1 and E1 the following site is allocated for B2/B8 Use Class / offices, research and development and light industrial (within Use Class E) employment uses:*

*i) NWB.E4A – North Weald Airfield*

### **Sustainable Transport Choices**

F. *In accordance with Policy T1, all development proposals must demonstrate how they will respond to the need to make provision for, and improve and promote use of existing, cycling and walking networks and access to passenger transport services. The Strategic Masterplans for North Weald Bassett and North Weald Airfield must incorporate measures to promote and encourage the use of sustainable methods of transportation and provide viable alternatives to private car use. Such measures are to be planned in consultation with Essex County Council (and relevant passenger transport providers) through the production of the Strategic Masterplans. The measures should provide for, and encourage, more sustainable travel patterns by contributing toward integrated walking and cycling, and public transport connectivity to the wider areas, including Epping and Harlow. The proposed measures need to be underpinned by feasibility evidence that demonstrates the delivery of modal shift away from single occupancy private car use by way of sustainable travel measures.*

*New development must be served and supported by appropriate on and off-site infrastructure and services. Development should deliver and/or contribute towards the delivery of infrastructure where this is necessary and fairly and reasonably related to the development having full regard to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan Schedule and it's wider infrastructure objectives.*

G. *Development proposals in North Weald Bassett will be expected to deliver and/or contribute proportionately towards infrastructure items as required, including:*

*i) appropriate education provision including early years, primary school and secondary school places;*

*ii) appropriate provision of health facilities;*

*iii) the provision of walking and cycling facilities, providing linkages both within the site and to key destinations;*

*iv) enhancements to public transport provision or other initiatives which reduce the need to travel by car;*

*v) highways and junction upgrades;*

*vi) upgrade and improvement of utility infrastructure including water, waste water, solid waste, gas, electricity and telecommunication where necessary; and*

*vii) improvements and provision of green and blue infrastructure and open space throughout the settlement.*

### **Air Pollution**

H. *The development of sites within North Weald Bassett have the potential to produce air pollution that could impact upon air quality in the District, including the Epping Forest. All development proposals will need to demonstrate that they are in accordance with Policy DM2 and Policy DM22 and should have regard to the Council's adopted Air Pollution Mitigation Strategy for the Epping Forest. This includes, where necessary, the provision of financial contributions for the purposes of implementing air pollution mitigation initiatives and undertaking air quality monitoring and any necessary future air quality assessments.*

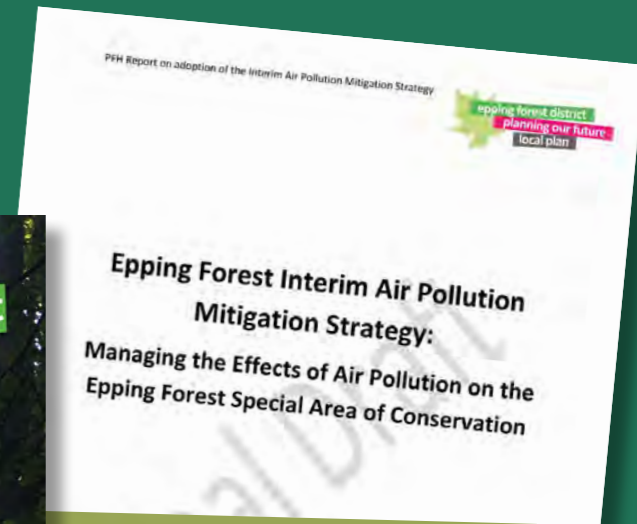
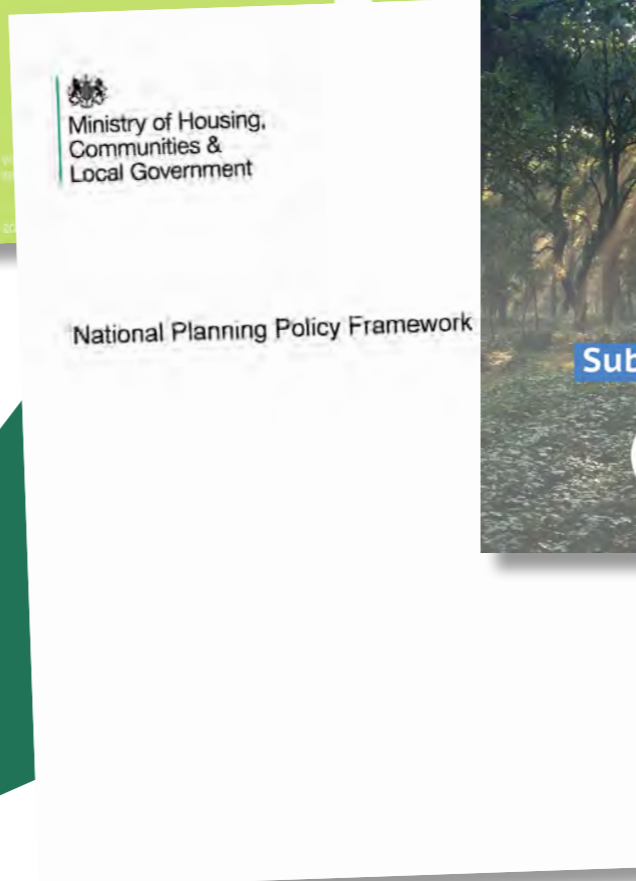
N. Planning applications at North Weald Airfield should be accompanied by a Masterplan for the North Weald Airfield which demonstrates that the development requirements set out in this policy have been accommodated and which has been endorsed by the Council. The endorsed Strategic Masterplan will be taken into account as an important material consideration in the determination of any planning applications.

O. In addition, to requirements set out in parts A-L, the Strategic Masterplan must make provision for:

- i) Community uses to the east of the main runway.
- (ii) Retention and expansion of aviation uses to the west of the main runway;
- (iii) Approximately 10ha of additional employment land of B2 B8 office, research and development and light industrial (within Use Class E) uses to the East;
- (iv) A new access from Epping Road to service the west of the site.
- (v) preserving or enhancing the special architectural or historic interest of the Grade II listed Control Tower and its setting;
- (vi) Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace the location of which will be determined through the Strategic Masterplanning process; and
- (vii) new and improved Public Rights of Way and cycle linkages with the surrounding area including East to West connectivity between the two Masterplan Areas.

P. The Strategic Masterplan and subsequent applications should be considered and informed by the Quality Review Panel and be subject to public consultation, including in respect of Masterplans, consultation with all those with a development interest within the defined area.

Relevant Local Plan policies and guidance



## Government 'Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future' (2017) and UK digital Strategy (July 2022)

1.22. The foreword to the Governments 'Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future' states that the way we live our lives as workers, powered by new technologies, citizens and consumers is being transformed across the world. The Industrial Strategy sets out how the Government wishes to build a Britain fit for the future - how it will help businesses create better, higher-paying jobs with investment in the skills, industries and infrastructure of the future. It seeks to ensure that Britain and its citizens can embrace and benefit from the opportunity of technological change.

1.23. The Strategy focuses on the importance of the five foundations of productivity: ideas, people, infrastructure, business environment, and places. These align with the Governments vision for a transformed economy and are in response to global forces that will shape the UK's rapidly changing future, and which the UK must embrace to ensure that all the opportunities they present are harnessed. A number of 'Grand Challenges' are highlighted, including the thrust to commit to putting the UK at the forefront of the artificial intelligence and data revolution. The Strategy comments that the world is undergoing a technological revolution. Artificial intelligence (AI) will transform the way we live and work, from the way we diagnose and treat cancer to the security of online transactions. It emphasises that this fourth industrial revolution is of a scale, speed and complexity that is unprecedented. The additional value to the UK economy is stressed. It is further highlighted that embedding AI across the UK will create thousands of good quality jobs and drive economic growth. AI could add £232bn to the economy by 2030. To benefit from the opportunities, the Government identifies the need to prepare to seize them.

1.24. The UK Digital Strategy applies the principals outlined in the Industrial Strategy. The Digital Strategy applies this framework to the digital economy across the whole country. In this regard the Government wishes to boost the UK's world-leading digital sectors and overcome barriers to growth and innovation, creating more of the high-skilled, high-paid jobs of the future. The Strategy

is formed into a number of strands, two of which include; the Government's aim to build a first class digital infrastructure for the UK and making the UK the best place to start and grow a digital business. It comments that for businesses to thrive and grow, Government needs to create the conditions and set the framework for investment in widespread and up-to-date infrastructure. Digital infrastructure is a critical component of this: digital connectivity is now a utility, and modern life is increasingly impossible without it. Connectivity drives productivity and innovation and is the physical underpinning of a digital nation. The proposed development would build upon the success of existing investments from leading international tech companies mentioned in the Strategy, to help UK firms work smarter and faster.

## UK Innovation Corridor & Digital Innovation Zone

1.25. The site is located within the [UK Innovation Corridor](#) (UKIC) which links London, as a global finance and creative tech hub, and Cambridge, as a platinum-grade knowledge hub, and a region containing cutting-edge clusters of commercial innovation. It is described as a symbiotic network of supply chains that reaches out beyond the region, throughout the UK and around the globe, making the UKIC a highly advanced sci-tech superhighway. The UKIC notes the secret to the region's success as being its connectivity with the city axis of London and Cambridge - being only 60 miles apart, hot-linked by the M11 motorway, and 1 hour by train - which is networked with prized international rail and flight links. Stansted Airport - serving 180 destinations in 38 countries, sits at the heart, with London City Airport and St Pancras International, all connecting the region with the rest of the world.

1.26. The UKIC recognises that growth of the area can only be fully achieved through co-operation because the drivers of growth cut across municipal borders - it spans 16 Local Authorities, London, three Counties and four LEP areas. It is these partnerships, together with the GLA, Businesses, Institutions and National Government that are driving the UKIC into the future. Epping Forest District Council is one of UKIC's collaborators and supports its vision and aims including to promote the UK's Innovation Corridor as a unique region with a world-renowned reputation for leading the way in advanced technology and bioscience.

1.27. Epping Forest District is located within the Essex and Hertfordshire Digital Innovation Zone (DIZ) which has been created jointly by organisations from business, health, education, local authorities and the voluntary and community sector, each with a key role in making sure that west Essex and eastern Hertfordshire is ready to respond to the challenges and opportunities ahead. The multi-award winning DIZ covers the geographic region of the majority of Innovation Core (part of the UKIC). The vision for the DIZ is "to be the best connected place of its type in the UK. A place of innovation and inclusion. A place where the benefits of digital investment are harnessed, maximised and shared across residents, commuters, businesses and borders". Building on the region's innovative legacy, the local authorities, health, education, voluntary, and private sectors work in partnership to future proof the region's economic prosperity to ensure it has the infrastructure to support the digital needs of businesses and public services.

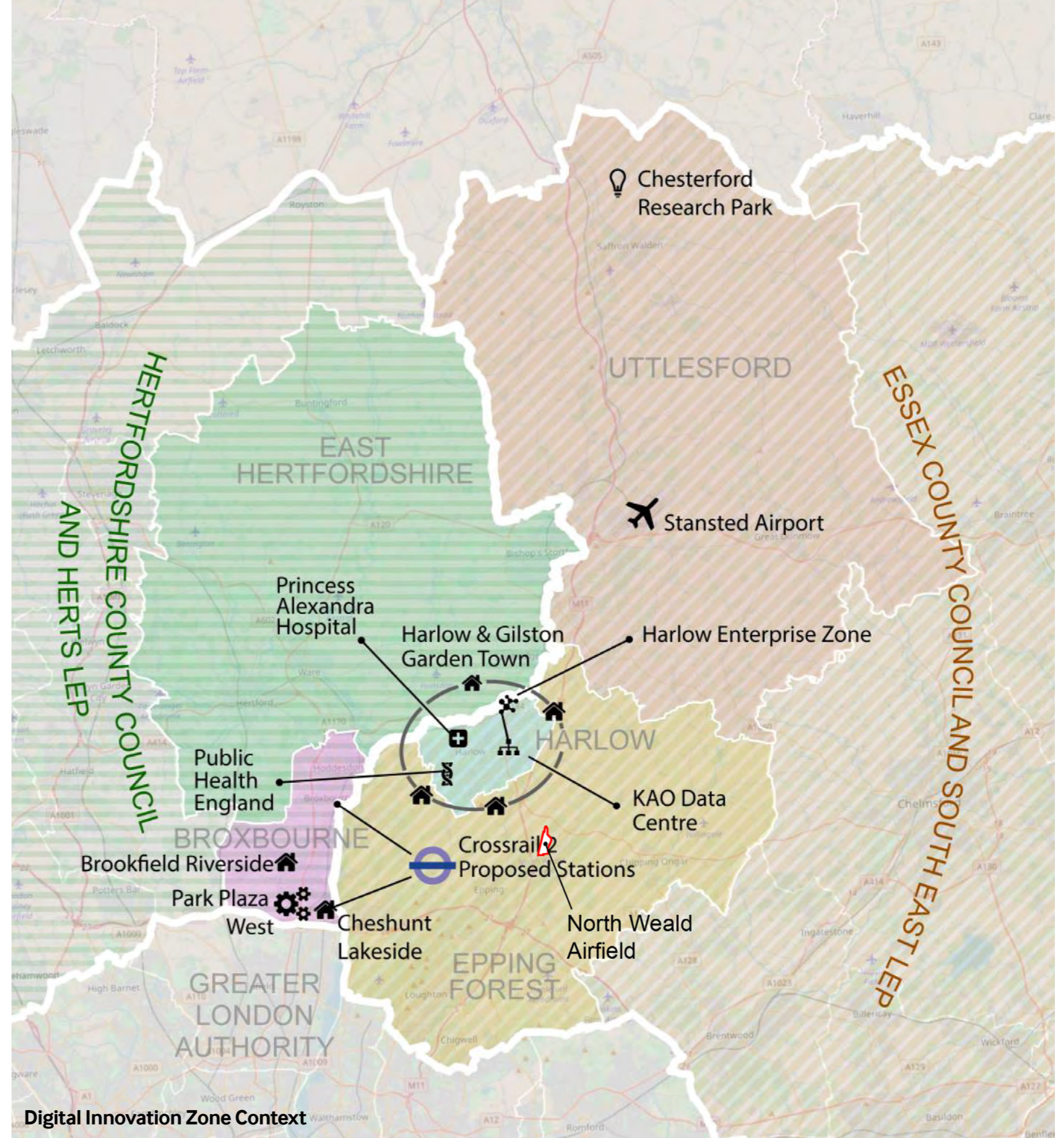


Essex and Hertfordshire Digital Innovation Zone (DIZ)

1.28. The DIZ notes one of its major assets is its location between two major international digital centres in London and Cambridge. It is also home to a number of major leading international businesses and organisations involved in advanced ICT, AI, data processing and storage, advanced manufacturing and life sciences e.g. Public Health England’s headquarters in Harlow, London Stansted Airport, the Harlow Enterprise Zone, KAO Data and other significant data centres, and research assets such as Chesterford Research Park. The DIZ also contains a number of large sites that could accommodate new or expanding digital businesses eg. Park Plaza West, Bishops Stortford North and South, and North Weald Airfield (the subject of this Masterplan).

1.29. The area also has very high levels of broadband and digital accessibility making it an ideal location for businesses, that are both sustainable and focused on future needs and the next use of technology. In a recent comparison by Compare the Market, Harlow comes 7th in the UK for fastest broadband speed and Epping Forest is considered one of the places in the UK with the best digital connectivity (2018 article in the Financial Times) following a £24 million investment in the area. In October 2021, Epping Forest District had the highest percentage of Gigabit capable coverage in Essex at 83%, with superfast connectivity at 98%.

1.30. Epping Forest District Council and Essex County Council supports the UK Innovation Corridor, DIZ and national Government Industrial and Digital Strategy ambitions, which will provide opportunities and partnerships for future development. Delivering on initiative and policy priorities will lead to securing investment and jobs from key industries such as ICT & digital. The Masterplan areas location within the UK Innovation Corridor and Digital Innovation Zones presents a suitable location for advanced ICT, AI, data processing and storage, advanced manufacturing and life sciences Industries, complementing the existing offering in the London to Cambridge corridor



## 2 Background & Context

### The Site and its Location

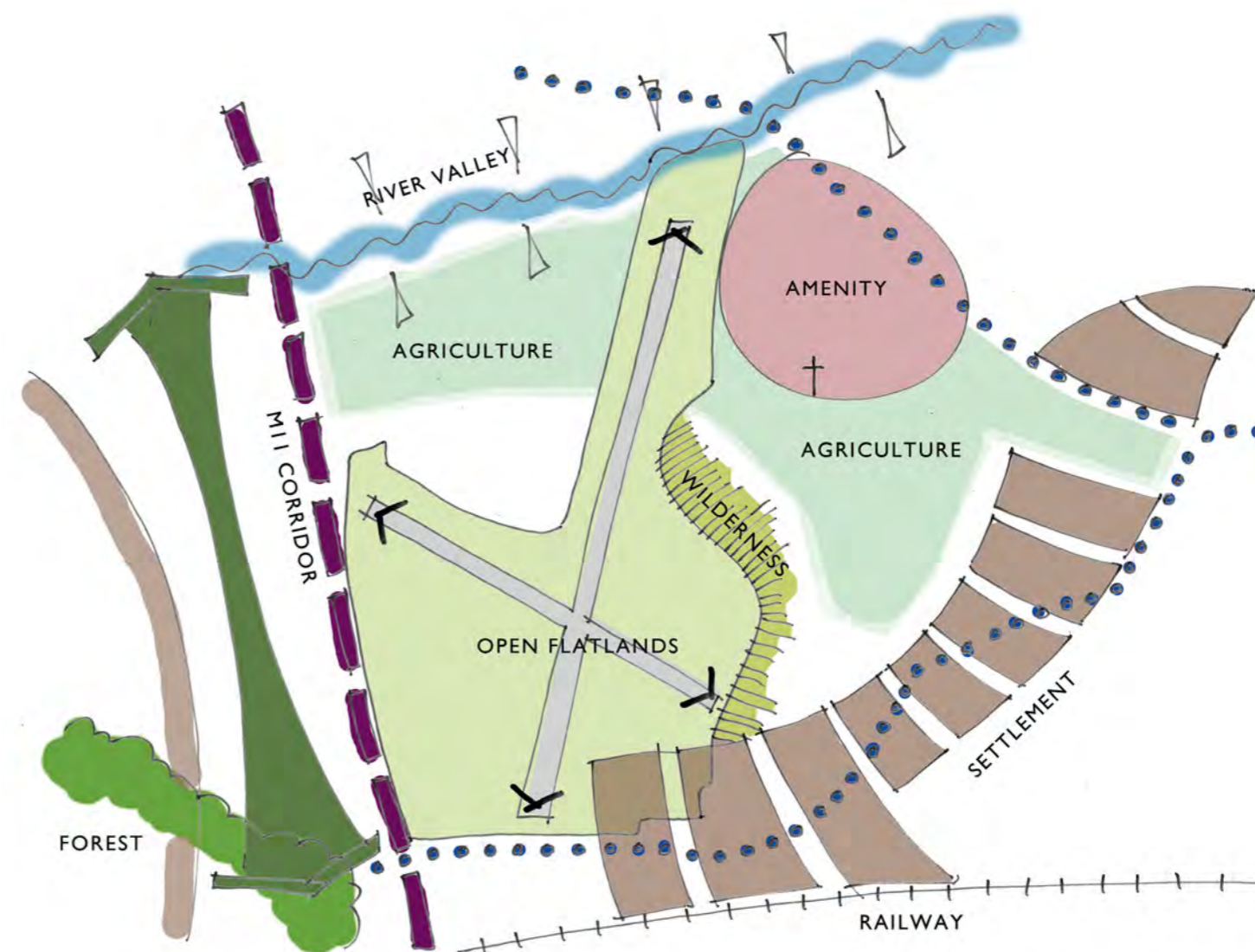
2.1. The Masterplan site is located to the west of North Weald Bassett and currently forms part of North Weald Airfield. The site is roughly rectangular in shape and occupies an area of approximately 41.2ha.

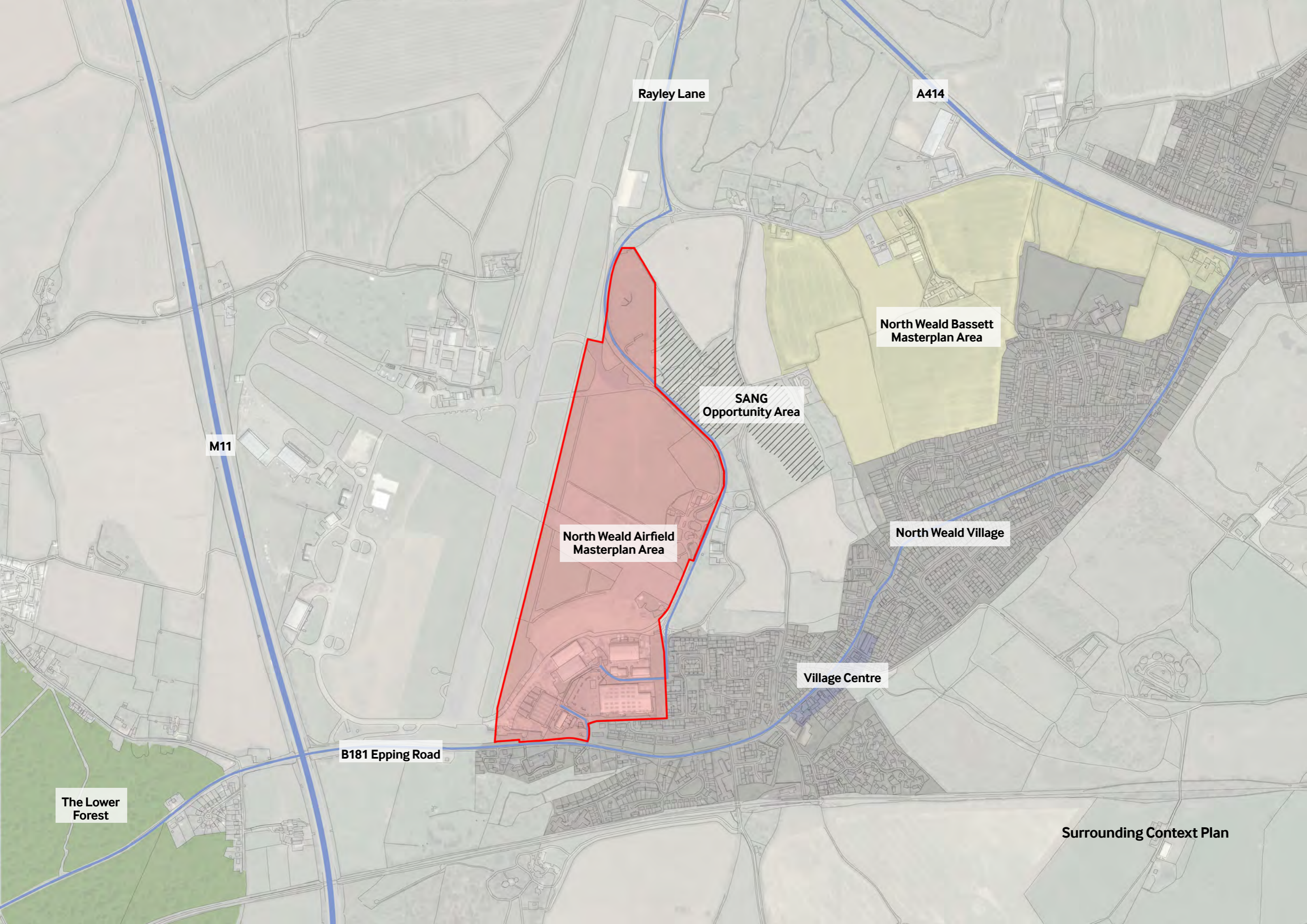
2.2. The Airfield itself is bounded to the north by agricultural fields and is in close proximity to the A414, which provides direct access to Junction 7 of the M11 which is located to the west. Merlin Way forms the eastern boundary and runs on a north to south alignment from its roundabout junction with Rayley Lane and Vicarage Lane West, which serve various existing industrial units.

2.3. To the south, the site is bounded by the B181 Epping Road as well as the edge of the existing settlement of the village. The B181 connects North Weald Bassett with Epping to the south-west.

2.4. Ground levels vary across the site, generally sloping upwards from north to south. The Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (Epping Forest SAC) lies some 5km to the southwest of the site whilst The Lower Forest, which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is some 800m to the west.

2.5. The North Weald Airfield Control Tower is located close to the existing main entrance to the site from the east and is a Grade II listed building of architectural and historic interest.





Rayley Lane

A414

North Weald Bassett  
Masterplan Area

SANG  
Opportunity Area

North Weald Airfield  
Masterplan Area

North Weald Village

Village Centre

B181 Epping Road

The Lower  
Forest

Surrounding Context Plan

M11

## Existing Uses at North Weald Airfield

2.6. Existing uses at the Airfield are varied across the site with the northern section largely comprising grassed soft landscaping and open fields.

2.7. The control tower and gatehouse, as well as a number of maintenance buildings, are located in the centre of the site as well as the North Weald Airfield Fire & Rescue Service building. A number of these uses will need to be re-located as part of the implementation of the Masterplan.

2.8. A former airfield runway is located across the centre of the site and has been used for vehicle parking as well as supercar driving experience days out. This area has also been used as a space for the weekly local North Weald Market.

2.9. The southern portion of the site is occupied by a number of existing hangar and warehouse buildings with an electricity substation also present. A variety of commercial and logistical uses are provided within this area as well as accommodating a number of independent local businesses.

## North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area

2.10. The North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area is located to the east of the Airfield and is allocated in the Local Plan for a minimum of 1,050 new homes.

2.11. The development will also include a new local centre, a variety of community uses, the provision of health facilities and education provision.

2.12. The development will also improve existing, and provide new, public open space, together with an area of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) between the two Masterplan Areas in order to avoid any adverse effects on the integrity of the Epping Forest SAC and The Lower Forest SSSI.

2.13. New and improved cycle and pedestrian links will also be provided connecting into the existing movement network including the Millennium Walks.

2.14. The North Weald Bassett Masterplan is required to facilitate opportunities for new east / west connections linking the North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area to the North Weald Airfield Masterplan Area.



North Weald Bassett: Draft Illustrative Concept Plan (Prepared by Terence O'Rourke, 2019)



## Surrounding Development

2.15. To the southeast of the site located on the Former Parade Ground is a housing development, Blenheim Gardens, which includes a mixture of 2, 3 and 4 bed houses and apartments, some of which front onto Merlin Way.

2.16. A four-storey apartment block is located at the Merlin Way roundabout entrance to the Airfield which overlooks this part of the site.

2.17. The Bassett Business Centre is located on the southern part of the site and accessed via Hurricane Way. It includes a number of existing buildings of a variety of scales and materials.

2.18. To the south between the business units and Epping Road is a small area of two storey post war housing which is accessed via Blenheim Way.

2.19. To the west of the site is the active Airfield, which, as well as the operational runway, includes a number of hangars of varying scale serving the Airfields requirements as well as being a base for the Essex and Hertfordshire Air Ambulance.

2.20. Moving further north along Merlin Way there are a small number of units including a Gym and Pistol Club located off Siskin Way. There is also a 5-a-side football facility plus some residential units located to the north of the site off Rayley Lane.



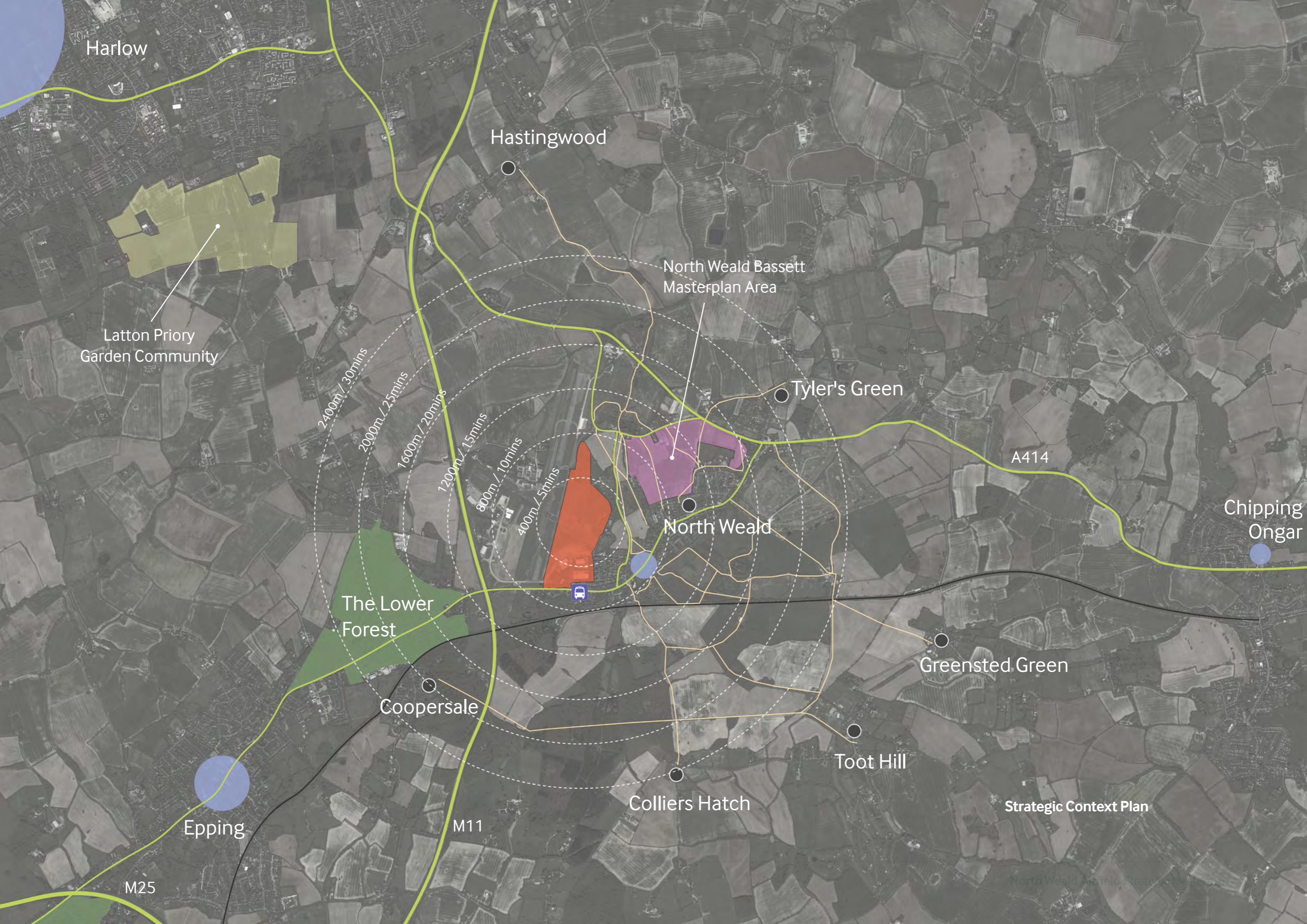
Housing development located directly to the south east of the airfield



Existing hanger building located airside



Existing Hanger 1 structure located within the southern part of the site



Harlow

Hastingwood

North Weald Bassett  
Masterplan Area

Latton Priory  
Garden Community

Tyler's Green

A414

2400m / 30mins  
2000m / 25mins  
1600m / 20mins  
1200m / 15mins  
800m / 10mins  
400m / 5mins

Chipping  
Ongar

North Weald

The Lower  
Forest

Greensted Green

Coopersale

Toot Hill

Colliers Hatch

Epping

M11

Strategic Context Plan

M25

North Weald Area Local Strategic Masterplan

## Accessibility & Connections

2.21. North Weald Airfield has good accessibility to the local highway network and is reasonably well connected to the existing public transport network and the local footpath and Public Rights of Way network.

2.22. However, it is clear that the proposed uses and quantum of development at the site has the potential to generate a significant number of new vehicle trips. There is therefore a focus on developments that can demonstrate less need for vehicle movements and supporting the enhancement of Sustainable Transport Choices as required by Policy T1 and P6 of the Local Plan including bus service enhancements, and the provision of improved cycle and walking links to both the surrounding area, including the North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area, and to key destinations including Harlow and Epping. New access points and capacity enhancements to the existing road network will also be required.

### Highway Network

2.23. The site is served by a number of gated entrances, with some signed for emergency access, which include the following:

- A414 / Weald Hall Lane to the north of the site
- Rayley Lane - circa 350m south of the A414
- Merlin Way - 100m south of its junction with Rayley Way
- Merlin Way - a further 500m south of its junction with Rayley Way
- A main Merlin Way access to the control tower and associated offices
- Via the Merlin Way / Siskin Way roundabout
- Via the southernmost point of Merlin Way
- Via Hurricane Way (close to B181 Epping Road)

2.24. Merlin Way, which runs north / south along the eastern boundary of the site links directly onto the A414 via Rayley Lane. The A414, which is a Primary Road network provides a link between Chelmsford to the east and Harlow to the northwest. The A414 provides direct access onto the M11 via Junction 7.

2.25. The B181 Epping Road, which runs to the south of the site, connects North Weald Bassett to Epping to the southwest and also provides a link to the M25.

### Public Transport

2.26. The site's nearest bus stop is located along the B181 Epping Road. The bus stop is served primarily by the 420/420a services. The 339 (Heritage service) and 620 (one bus a day Monday-Friday) also services this stop.

2.27. Harlow Town Rail Station is the nearest train station located approximately 8km to the northwest of the site and accessed via the A414. Harlow Town Rail Station and all trains serving it are operated by Abellio Great Anglia. The station provides regular trains between London (including to Stratford and the wider London Underground Network), Cambridge and Stansted Airport. The West Anglia Mainline serves this station as well and provides links to London, Stansted and Cambridge.

2.28. Epping London Underground Line Station is located approximately 4.3km to the southwest of the site. The station is

served by the Central Line and provides services through London to Ealing Broadway, North Acton, Northolt, West Ruislip, White City, all of which connect with Greater London's extensive public transport networks. Epping London Underground Line Station can be accessed via a number of local bus services which run along the B181 Epping Road.

2.29. The Epping Ongar Railway Line is a heritage service which has a station at North Weald Bassett but does not have a direct connection into the operational part of Epping London Underground Line Station.

### Pedestrian and Cycle Routes

2.30. A pedestrian footway runs along Merlin Way and in and around the Hurricane Way access. These footways connect to the wider network that serves the village of North Weald Bassett and the local bus stops on the B181. There are currently no formal cycle paths within the proximity of the site or in the village of North Weald Bassett. A number of existing Public Rights of Way are located in close proximity to the site.

North Weald Railway Station (heritage line used for tourist purposes)



## Heritage Considerations

2.31. Historically, the settlement pattern of the area surrounding the site was rural, characterised by scattered farmsteads and small villages. The graphic below shows the development evolution of the site and its changing character over time.

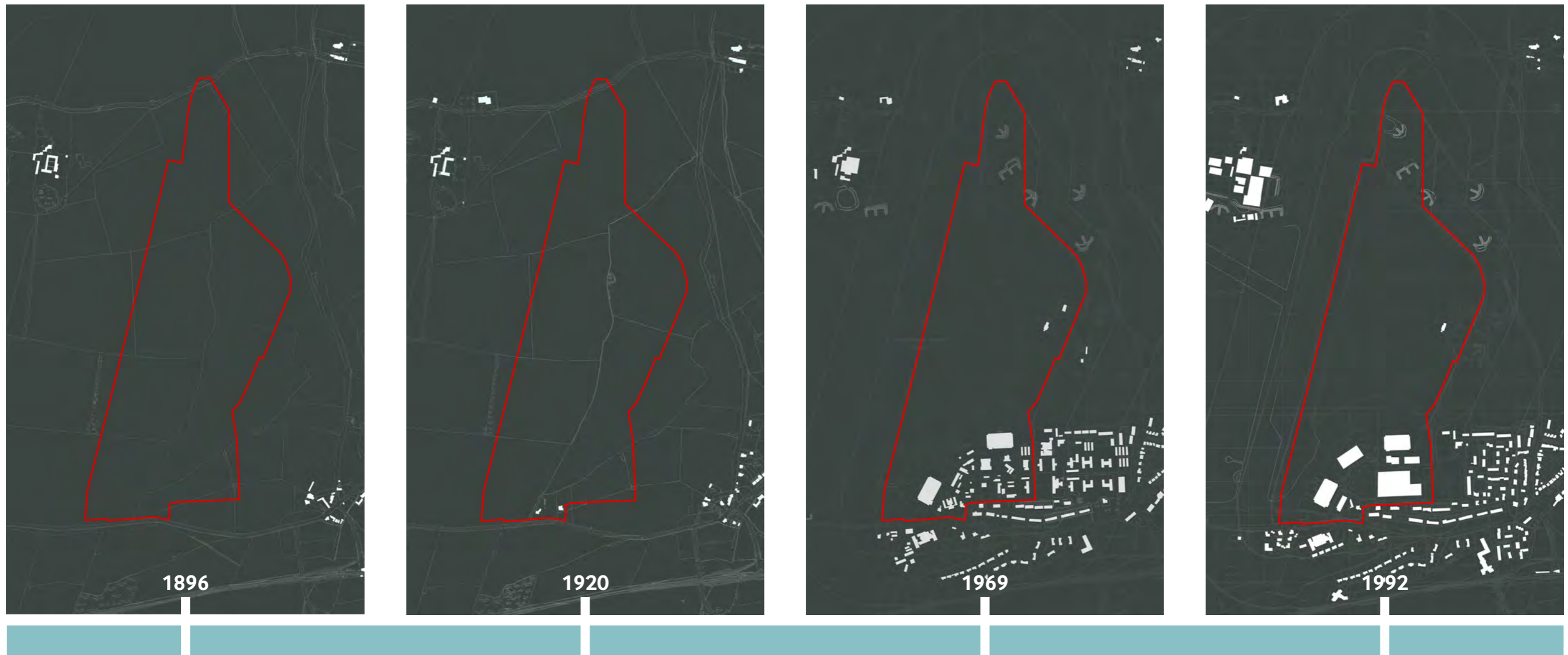
2.32. North Weald Airfield has evolved over its history, following the wider trends of aircraft technology and military aircraft operations.

The airfield opened in 1916 as a Royal Flying Corps Station. During the Second World War, the airfield played an important role as the key base within 'E Sector', defending London during the Battle of Britain. In the immediate post-war decades, the airfield supported squadrons of early jet aircraft.

2.33. While military aircraft and their operation are generally representative of a given period's most advanced technology, the built development of the Airfield in some respects also reflects the

limited resources that were available during the Second World War and the post-war decades, which saw the wider relative economic decline of Great Britain. As a result, North Weald Airfield contains buildings and features that belong to different periods of activity, which were constructed, altered and retained on a utilitarian basis.

2.34. The Control Tower of North Weald Airfield is located within the site boundary and is a Grade II Listed Building (ref. 1413519). 91.7% of all listed buildings are Grade II, with this being the lowest grade of three categories.



2.35. The Control Tower was completed after world war operations, in 1952 and is a type 5223a/51 model that formed part of the modernisation programme of a number of former Second World War airfields during the early stages of the Cold War.

2.36. The significance of the Control Tower lies in its architectural and historic interest and the extent of its surviving original fabric. The Tower is one of seven control towers of this type to be built that demonstrates how the design of control towers developed due to increased dependence on electronic navigational aids after the Second World War.

2.37. The building has a distinct historic interest as belonging to a period of intense change in aircraft technology and of evolving new threats in the form of the Soviet Union. The North Weald Airfield Control Tower has group value with Norway House (the Former Officer's Mess) which is also designated as Grade II and is located on Epping Road approximately 700 metres to the southwest of the tower.

2.38. Norway House was built by the Air Ministry's Directorate of Works and Buildings, in the 1920's. It is thought to be one of the earliest buildings completed as part of the Trenchard Home Defence Expansion Scheme.

2.39. St Andrews Church, Grade II\*, is located approximately 860m to the northeast of the Control Tower, enveloped by mature tall trees and was constructed in 1330 with its west tower added c.1500.

2.40. Only the upper most part of the tower of the Church is visible to varying degrees from the Airfield, which has a historical association with the church through the war graves within the churchyard. It is considered that this relationship contributes to the historic interest of the church, though no part of the site is visible from the churchyard or from Vicarage Lane to the immediate south of it.

2.41. To the south of St Andrews Church lies the Grade II Church Cottage, a 17th Century timber framed building. The Cottage is enclosed within its own small garden and has no visual relationship with the Airfield.

2.42. Located approximately 1.3km to the southeast of the Airfield lies the North Weald Redoubt, a London mobilisation centre

constructed in the 1890's and is designated as a Scheduled Monument. It is visible from the airfield as an essentially indistinguishable hill crest on the skyline. The Airfield site is visible in long range views from the footpath that links the Scheduled Monument with the western side of the village.

2.43. The Airfield as a whole contains a number of non-designated heritage assets that are included on the Essex Historic Environment Record. These surviving historic structures and features have a group value as part of a single airbase of historic interest rather than individual significance.

2.44. Archaeological evaluation and any subsequently required mitigation will be implemented prior to development.



Norway House (former Officer's Mess)



North Weald Airfield Control Tower

## Landscape, Topography, Views & Trees

### Landscape

2.45. North Weald Airfield, in common with other Battle of Britain Airfields, is generally an open landscape, containing grass runways, with concentrations of buildings at points around the Airfield perimeter and clustered within the southern part of the site.

2.46. The landscape between and around these buildings was also relatively simple in form and appearance and generally comprised specimen trees within mown grassland. Areas of more detailed / ornamental plantings were largely confined to small planting beds adjacent to the entrances of important buildings. Climbers were also notable features on the Officer's Mess Building and clipped hedges were also present.

2.47. Today, this typical and simple landscape of specimen trees in grass seems to be more or less confined to the area immediately north of the existing Hangar 1 and alongside the former Station Office adjacent to the former entrance to the airfield off Epping Road.



Specimen trees set behind the existing memorial at the Airfield entrance



Existing trees along the western edge of the Airfield



Tree lined area to the south side of Hangar 1



Group of trees located to the north side of Hangar 1



Existing tree screening along the edge of the site



View looking north towards St Andrews Church Tower



View from the east looking across the Airfield site

### Topography

2.48. North Weald Airfield is of a relatively level terrain from west to east, however the site rises from north to south. The area of the site to the north of Merlin Way varies between 75m and 79m AOD.

2.49. The top end of the Airfield lying immediately to the south of Merlin Way measures approximately 79m AOD and rises when moving south with the southern area ground levels varying between 95m and 97m AOD at Epping Road. The central area of the site including the Airfield Control Tower is approximately 84m AOD.

### Views

2.50. A number of long distance views are available across the site from publicly accessible locations from the north, south, east and west. To the south of the site, within the small, private development of 'Roughtallys', there are limited views through to the Airfield, albeit these are filtered by existing intervening trees.

2.51. Near distance views are available to occupants of neighbouring residential properties within Blenheim Square and bordering Merlin Way. Views are also available for occupiers of the residential properties to the south of Blenheim Way, albeit these look towards the existing Bookers store building.

2.52. Within the site, there are expansive views looking west across the active Airfield, as well as elevated views from within the Control Tower looking north, east and west.

### Trees

2.53. Existing trees are generally located along the eastern boundary of the site with larger groupings located within the southern area clustered around the existing buildings and hangars. A large group of trees is located at the southeastern boundary providing a partial buffer to the existing residential development.

## Land Quality

2.54. A number of potential pollutants have been identified that may still be in-situ upon completion of the proposed development. These relate in particular to the historic use of the site as an RAF Airfield and recent operations within the hangars that currently occupy the site. The presence of potential contaminants and ground gas will require further investigation prior to redevelopment of the site. Considering the historic operational airfield use during the war it is also recommended that an unexploded ordnance (UXO) desk-based assessment be carried out prior to any site investigation or construction works.

## Noise Considerations

2.55. Noise levels within the part of the site adjacent to the existing residential area, are compliant with those that would normally be permissible with respect to local planning policy and good practice. Prior to the detailed design of development, a baseline survey should be carried out in order to determine the noise levels within the development. The results of the survey should then be used to determine the requirements for façade design to secure suitable internal noise environments and the design and location of areas for external amenity. It is considered that with appropriate design and mitigation, the development can meet the requirements of national and local policy with respect to noise.

2.56. Representative baseline sound levels at the nearest noise sensitive receptors (NSRs) were determined through a combination of recent high-level surveys carried out and historic data available for the site. A 3D noise model of the site was built to assess road traffic noise and industrial noise related to the proposed development at the NSRs.

2.57. The initial BS 4142:2014+A1:2019 assessment for industrial noise showed that a low impact is predicted at all NSRs. To support this assessment, additional considerations were made with regards to the absolute sound levels and potential changes in the ambient sound levels due to contributions from the industrial noise sources related to the proposed development. The predicted change in the ambient sound levels is unlikely to cause a material noise impact at NSRs both during daytime and night-time. It is therefore considered that the initial BS 4142:2014+A1:2019 assessment of low impact at all NSRs remains valid.

2.58. An initial assessment on changes in road traffic on the highway network as a result of the proposed development has been undertaken. The outcome of the assessment has indicated that moderate impacts are predicted for any NSRs directly along Vicarage Lane (west of A414) in the long-term and negligible impacts are predicted for all NSRs located directly along all other road sections considered within the assessment. For any NSRs, future or existing, which are located further away from Vicarage Lane (west of A414) negligible to minor impacts are predicted.

2.59. There are no vibration sources in the vicinity of the site and the proposed development will not introduce any new vibration sources. Therefore, no vibration related impact is predicted for the proposed development.

2.60. The key conclusions from a noise and vibration perspective in relation to the Airfield site are:

- With regards to façade incident noise levels at the part of the site adjacent to the existing residential properties it is considered that with appropriate design and mitigation, the development can meet the requirements of national and local policy with respect to noise.
- The industrial noise related to the proposed development is indicated to result in a low impact at all existing or future NSRs.
- The road traffic on the highway network due to the proposed development has the potential to result in moderate only for the NSRs directly along Vicarage Lane (west of A414) in the long-term. For any NSRs, future or existing, which are located further away from Vicarage Lane (west of A414) negligible to minor impacts are predicted. Negligible impacts for all NSRs located directly along all other road sections of the surrounding road network. Further assessments will need to be undertaken as part of the planning process.
- No vibration impact is predicted to be caused by the proposed development.
- No vibration impact is predicted for any future sensitive uses of the proposed development.







## Air Quality

2.61. The impact of the operational development on the local area from an air quality perspective must be considered, including any effects on the Bell Common Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and on the Epping Forest SAC in particular. The operational impact of the proposed development on existing receptors in relation to human health, is predicted to be 'negligible' taking into account changes in pollutant concentrations and absolute levels.

2.62. There are known issues relating to the effects of atmospheric pollution on the integrity of the Epping Forest SAC. The primary contributor is from road traffic. The concern arises from existing substantial baseline traffic flows and the resulting queues, combined with the age and mix of vehicle types that currently use roads in close proximity to the Forest. Development allocated through the Local Plan, together with other plans and projects and a growth in background traffic levels will result in an increase in vehicles using roads in close proximity to the Forest, and therefore, there is forecast to be an increase in pollutants of concern (being nitrogen dioxide and ammonia) relative to a situation without that growth. Whilst it is expected that there will be some improvement in air quality through the introduction of new technologies, the Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment 2022 modelling forecasts that this on its own will not be sufficient to reduce the level of air pollution to acceptable levels by the end of the Plan period. Policy DM2 of the Local Plan provides the framework against which planning applications will be assessed.

2.63. Planning applications will need to be supported by sufficient information to enable the Council to conclude that the proposals would not result in an adverse effect on the integrity of the Epping Forest SAC. Such information may include the identification of specific avoidance or mitigation measures and how they would be secured and delivered. To help applicants identify such measures, the Council has developed and adopted an Air Pollution Mitigation Strategy (APMS) for the Epping Forest which planning applications should have regard to. The APMS includes a number of specific measures and how they would be delivered to ensure that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Epping Forest SAC in relation to atmospheric pollution. This reflects the findings of the HRA 2022 that new development within the District has the potential to increase pollutants of concern within the Epping Forest SAC, primarily arising from emissions of nitrogen dioxide and ammonia from additional vehicles using roads in close proximity to it. The APMS has taken account of the need for development proposals to be assessed both alone and in combination with other plans and projects and therefore provides a strategic approach to the identification and delivery of mitigation and monitoring measures.

Epping Forest

## Environmental Context

### Flood Risk

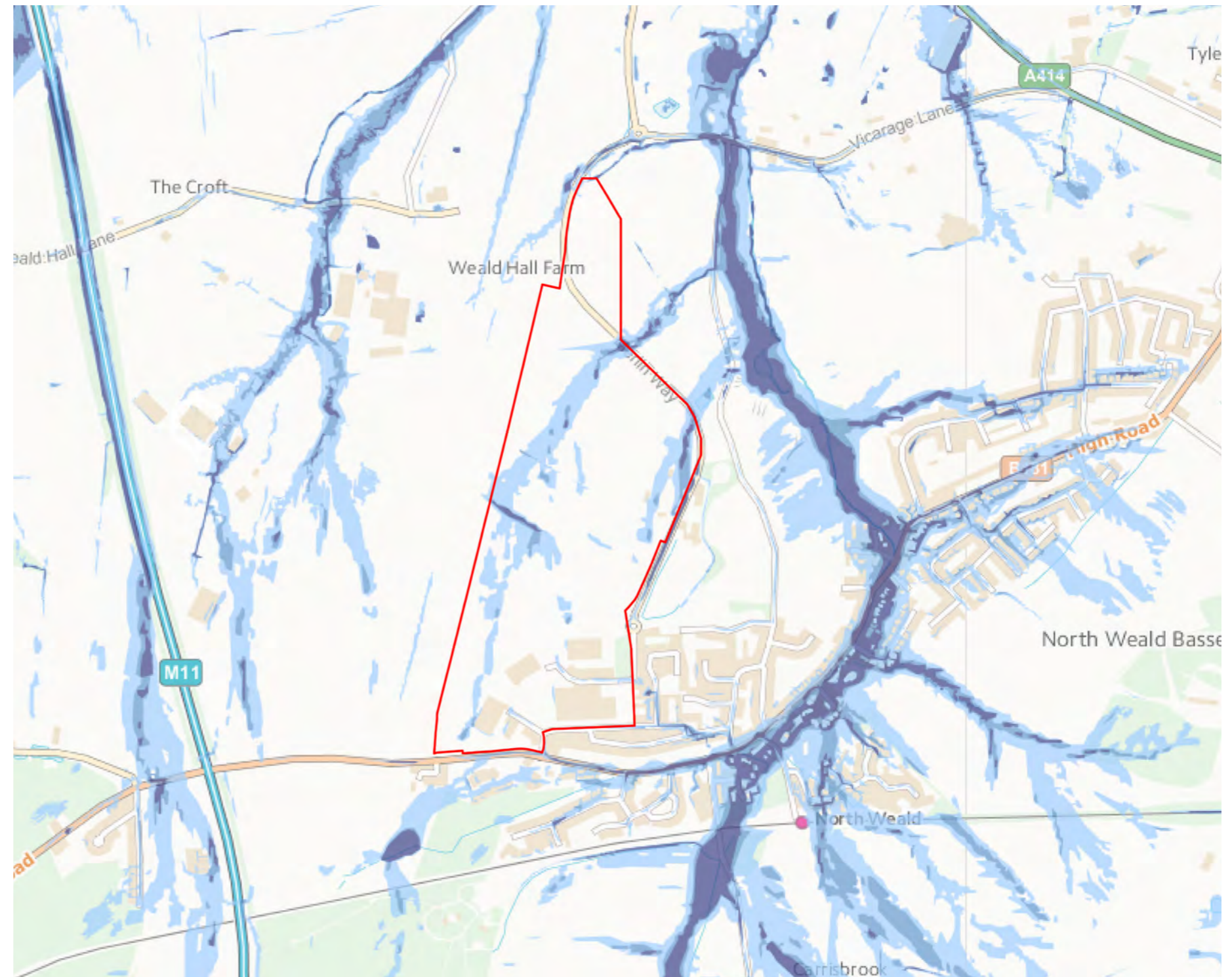
2.64. The Masterplan site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore classified as being of a low risk of flooding from fluvial sources. No ordinary watercourses are present within the site area and the Airfield is not considered to be at risk of flooding from tidal sources due to its inland location.

2.65. However, areas along the western half of the site and to the northeast behind the Control Tower are at risk of surface water flooding. The surface water flood risk map opposite shows two overland flow pathways through the site where an area of ponding is thought to occur where the pathway is blocked by Merlin Way. Any built development located within these areas will need to consider additional mitigation measures.

### Drainage

2.66. A suitable foul water network controlled by Thames Water is located close to the southeastern boundary and as such, a foul water network connection could be agreed.

2.67. The southern end of the site will likely be able to make a gravity connection into the existing Thames Water sewer. The northern area will likely require a pumped solution to drain foul water off site into the Thames Water sewer network.



Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Map

● High ● Medium ● Low ○ Very Low

### Ecology and Biodiversity

2.68. A number of statutory and non-statutory designated sites are located within 2km of the Airfield including the Local Nature Reserves (LNR) of Church Lane Flood Meadow, Roughtalleys Wood, and the Weald Common Flood Meadows, and Ongar Radio Station and St Andrew's Church Yard Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs). These are all located to the east of the Airfield. The Lower Forest (SSSI) is located approximately 800m to the west of the site. The Epping Forest which is both an SAC and a SSSI is located some 5km to the southwest of the site at its closest point.

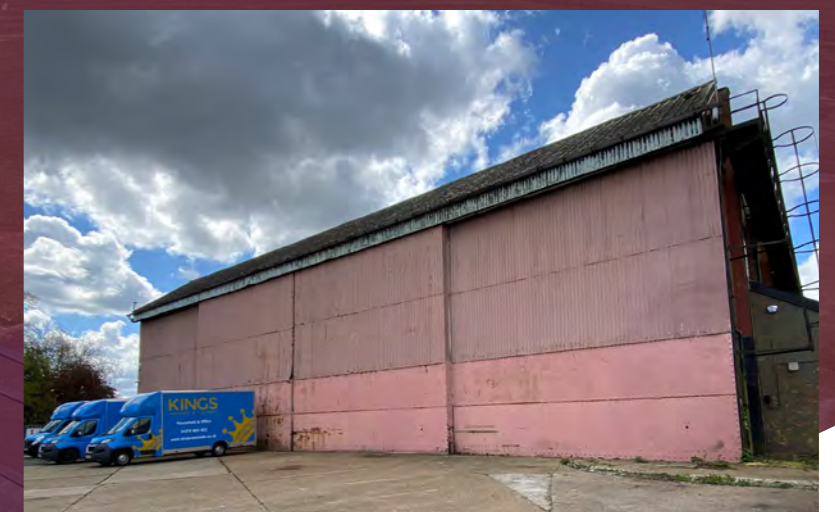
2.69. The Airfield site does have habitat potential for various species. To the north of Merlin Way, there is an area of semi-improved grassland and scrub which has the potential to be used by reptiles and amphibians. Also, across the former Airfield area, which now consists of short-mown grassland, there is potential for this to be used by flocks of wintering birds. On other parts of the site which contain areas of longer grassland, woodland and scrub, it was noted that these areas have the potential to support nesting birds.

2.70. With regard to the existing buildings contained on the site, only one (Hangar 1) is considered to have high potential for bat roosts. Two others are considered to have medium and low potential.

2.71. Given the preliminary findings, it would be recommended that further species surveys be carried out as part of the future planning application process which would also include additional recommendations in respect to the enhancement of the ecology of the site.



Short-mown grassland area  
across the airfield



Hangar 1 - Bat Roost Potential

## 3 Engagement

### Consultation

3.1. During November and December 2020, a three week public consultation was undertaken to share the emerging Strategic Masterplan proposals for the site and to engage with the local community and listen to stakeholder comments.

3.2. The images opposite include the promotional flyer and consultation website. A total of 1,267 separate comments were collected from the 73 individual online and paper feedback forms.

3.3. A statutory and public consultation ran for 8 weeks between December 2021 and February 2022. The aims for the public consultation were to inform on the changes to the Strategic Masterplan; to gather feedback on the updated plans through a variety of engagement events and to inform key stakeholders of the next steps (endorsement and planning application stage). Two virtual public engagement events took place on 11th and 19th January 2022 (52 attendees). An in-person drop-in event was held on 29th January 2022 (75 attendees). 201 feedback forms were received in addition to eight responses from statutory consultees.

3.4. A dedicated website was also launched in November 2020 to share the Strategic Masterplan and project updates which has received over 6,900 visits since its launch.

### Responses to Consultation

3.5. Throughout the public consultation events, respondents expressed a desire to understand more about the Strategic Masterplan and the development process moving forward, with priorities given to preserving the sites rich heritage and maintaining the identity and village character of North Weald Bassett.

3.6. Respondents expressed concern regarding the existing road infrastructure and the potential increase in traffic congestion and pollution as a result of the future development of the site.

3.7. There were also a number of comments around the future operation of the Airfield and how the proposals would accommodate any changes in this as well as general comments on the site layout and design approach.

3.8. In addition, there was also particular interest and comments regarding the environmental and sustainability considerations including the potential option for a wider green buffer between the proposed development and the village edge at the southeastern part of the site. There were also a number of questions relating to phasing for the development and the next steps regarding the planning application process.

3.9. Further details of the consultation process and the comments received can be found within the accompanying Statement of Community Involvement which forms part of the supporting information prepared in developing the Masterplan.

### Stakeholder Engagement

3.10. Ahead of the consultation events, a number of one-to-one meetings with local stakeholder groups were held during November 2020 and late 2021 / early 2022 to discuss the emerging Strategic Masterplan for the site.

3.11. The meetings encouraged early conversations to understand local aspirations and to share the project's development objectives and vision for the site. The project team was able to share the project's progress with over 85 stakeholders.

3.12. Stakeholder meetings were held with the following groups: Parish Councillors and other Elected Members, the North Weald Bassett Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, existing site tenants, Epping Forest District Youth Councillors, Countryside Properties (one of the developers of the North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area) and Saunders Markets.

3.13. Support was shown for the development proposals across the various meetings from the stakeholder groups especially in light of the local job opportunities to be created, the range of employment units to be provided and the active travel improvements that would be brought to the area. A number of comments were raised with particular regard to potential impacts on the existing highway networks, the phasing of the development, the need to protect and enhance the historic airfield features, the sustainability objectives for the Strategic Masterplan and the need to mitigate potential environmental impacts as much as possible.

# North Weald Airfield

## PUBLIC CONSULTATION

**Epping Forest District Council is seeking your feedback on the emerging proposals for the North Weald Airfield Strategic Masterplan**

Epping Forest District Council are in the beginning stages of preparing a Strategic Masterplan for the North Weald Airfield employment site which will guide future development at the site.

We are undertaking consultation with the local community to hear your aspirations and priorities for the site and to gather your feedback on the emerging strategic masterplan proposals.

This is an opportunity for you to input on the process ahead of statutory consultation.

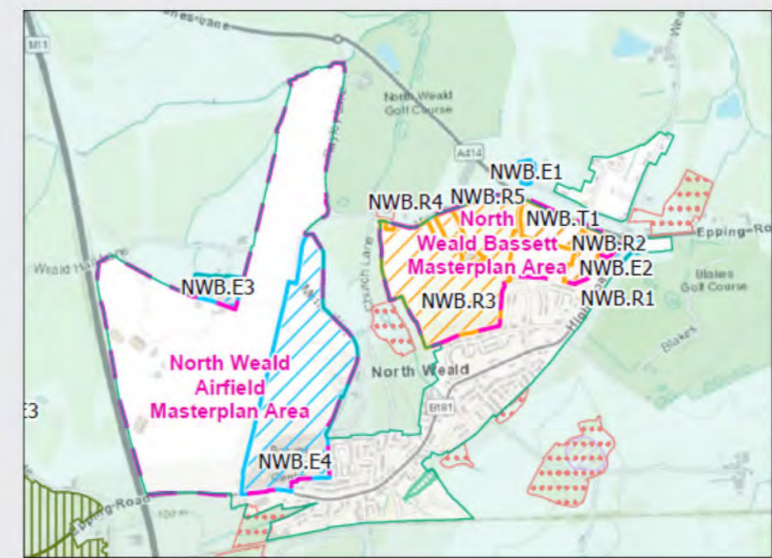
See the back page for details on how to have your say



**The Emerging Epping Forest District Local Plan**

Land at North Weald Airfield is identified as New Employment Site Allocation NWB.E4 in the emerging Local Plan for:

- 10ha of additional Business, General Industrial and Storage or Distribution floorspace
- Retention and expansion of aviation uses
- New access from Epping Road
- Phased development with planned trajectory of 5ha by 2022/23 to 2026/27 and a further 5ha by 2027/28 to 2031/32



Excerpt from emerging Local Plan

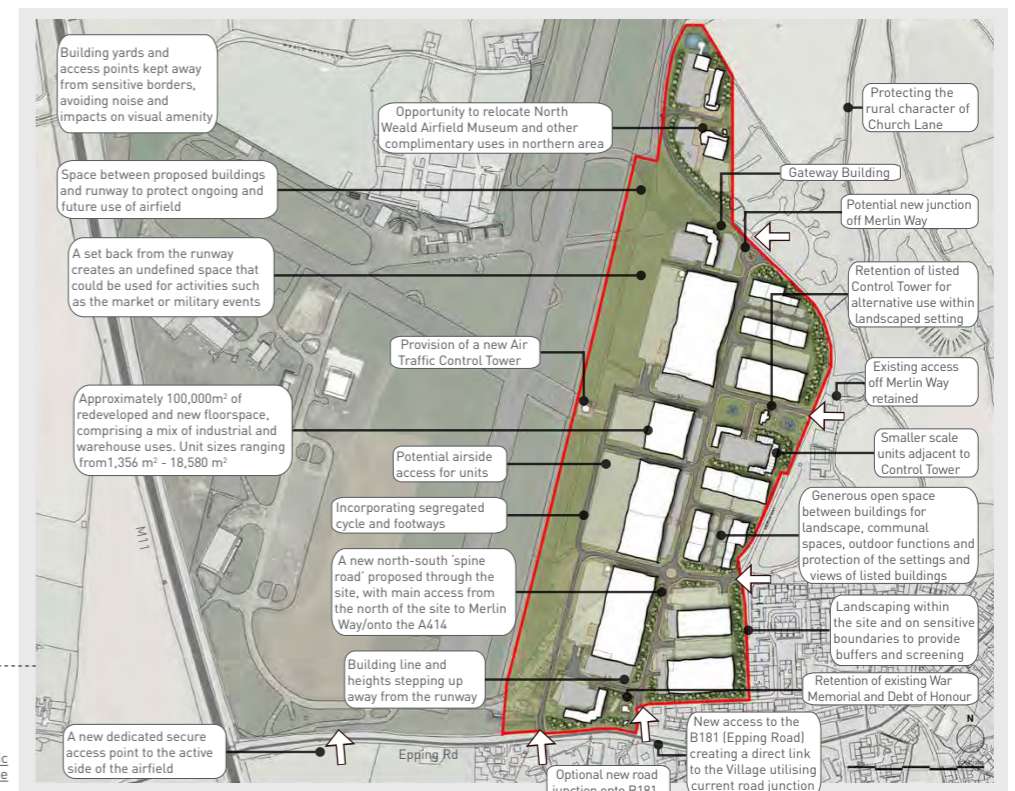
**Emerging Strategic Masterplan — Draft**

The emerging plan has been developed taking all considerations and principles into account. It is used here for illustrative purposes to show how the masterplan could be shaped. Ultimately what will be carried forward in the Strategic Masterplan is a set of parameter plans to guide future development that set out the uses, quantum of development, block layout, scale and massing, access and movement, street widths, public realm open spaces, landscape character, tree planting, views and vistas, protected buildings and settings.

**✘ We would like to understand what people like about the emerging strategy, and any considerations, suggestions or questions.**

**Key**  
 — North Weald Airfield employment site  
 ↔ Access to the site

Provisional layout to be included in the emerging Strategic Masterplan for the North Weald Airfield employment site



## Public Consultation

Public Consultation is running for 8 weeks to cover the busy holiday period:

**Wednesday 8 December 2021 - Sunday 30 January 2022**

To view the online exhibition, the draft masterplan and the illustrative layout, please visit:

[www.nwairfieldconsultation.co.uk](http://www.nwairfieldconsultation.co.uk)

### Provide your feedback

Fill out the feedback form on the project website or pick one up and submit it at North Weald Library before **Sunday 30 January 2022**.

### Meet the masterplan team

Due to government guidance cautioning against face-to-face gatherings, the previously advertised drop-in exhibitions at Queens Hall on 15 and 19 January will no longer run.

We will instead be holding two Zoom meetings on 11 and 19 January, where Council and the design team will present on the updated masterplan, and attendees will have an opportunity to ask the team any questions.

As these meetings will be in place of our in-person events, it is important to note that this is another way the team can record your feedback as part of the consultation.

If you would like to request a separate Zoom meeting with the team, please send us an email.

If you have any questions about the consultation, please contact:

020 7729 1705 [northwealdairfield@soundingsoffice.com](mailto:northwealdairfield@soundingsoffice.com)



## Phasing and delivery

### Phase 1

It is proposed that this phase would include:

- Development would commence with the construction of the new Airfield Control Tower and associated infrastructure on land to the west of the site.
- Construction of the new Energy Centre within the northern parcel.
- Highway changes required along the northern stretch of Merlin Way, such as a reconfigured junction into the site to emphasise the primary access point.
- The proposed surface water attenuation ponds and landscape enhancements within the northern parcel.

### Phase 2

It is proposed that this phase would include:

- The northern third of the main site which would likely consist of the larger unit sizes within the development.

### Phase 3

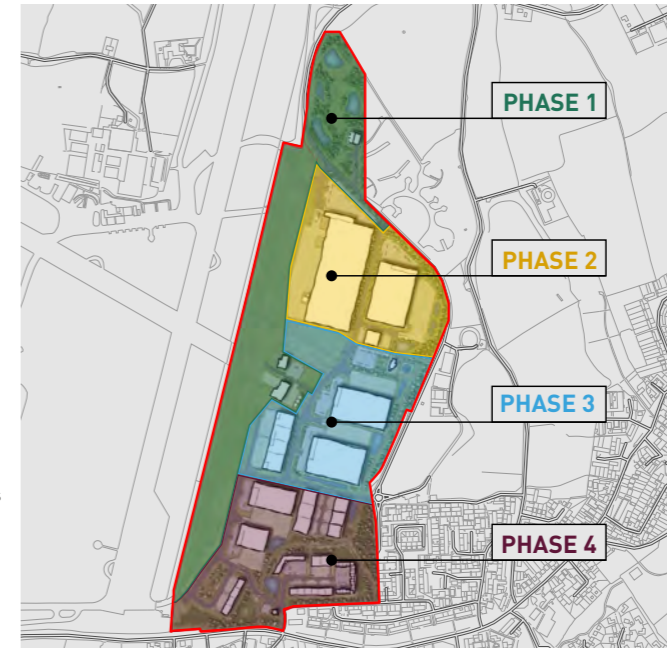
It is proposed that this phase would include:

- Works to the Control Tower.
- Completion of the primary route through the site and any works required to Merlin Way.

### Phase 4

It is proposed that this phase would include:

- Delivery of the southern third of the site.
- Smaller unit typologies proposed such as new office space and small scale light industrial uses adjacent to the existing residential area.



## Design evolution

Following detailed analysis and evaluation, including the undertaking of further technical work, constraints and opportunities as constraints and opportunities analysis has resulted in a number of amendments to the original illustrative layout, shown in the first stage of consultation towards the end of 2020.

Illustrative masterplan layout option - November 2021



### Design Changes

- 1 Removal of development in the northern most part of the site, except for the new energy centre, and for this area to become a wildlife enhancement area.
- 2 Understanding the Airfields requirements for the site including the need for safeguarded land, emergency access arrangements and height restrictions.
- 3 Removal of north/south vehicle route and replacement with two access points off Merlin Way serving the northern two-thirds of the site and a separate access point serving the southern area.
- 4 Relocation of smaller units to the south of the site.
- 5 Conversion of the Control Tower into an alternative use which could include a community facility or ancillary use.
- 6 The need to retain and enhance the existing site vegetation within the southern part and along the eastern boundary of the site.
- 7 Introduction of green route providing additional cycle and pedestrian route through the site via a landscaped area.
- 8 Inclusion of attenuation areas for drainage.



Initial illustrative masterplan concept shown in November 2020

## Sustainability Objectives

The airfield site redevelopment will need to meet the requirements of national and local planning policies.

Amongst these are the need to respond to the Council's 2019 declaration of Climate Change Emergency, and its target of becoming Net Zero Carbon by 2030. The following opportunities have been explored for integrating sustainable design:

- LANDSCAPE LED DESIGN
- SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC WELLBEING
- TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT
- RESOURCE AND ENERGY
- LAND USE AND ECOLOGY



Electric Vehicle Charging Point



Cycle Parking



Local bus networks



Filwood Green Business Park, Bristol – An example of an environmentally friendly employment development

3.14. A number of technical workshops took place during 2021 where all relevant planning considerations were discussed including with the highway authority. These included transport, noise, air quality, energy and sustainability, flood risk and drainage, landscaping, ecology and heritage.

3.15. Additional consultation was undertaken with the operators of the Airfield itself to fully understand their requirements in light of the development proposals, including a new Air Traffic Control Tower and fire station, a new secure boundary and internal access road in addition to reconfirming airfield safeguarding requirements. This engagement has resulted in understanding all matters of importance which have subsequently fed through to the site evaluation and design strategy and objectives set out within this plan.

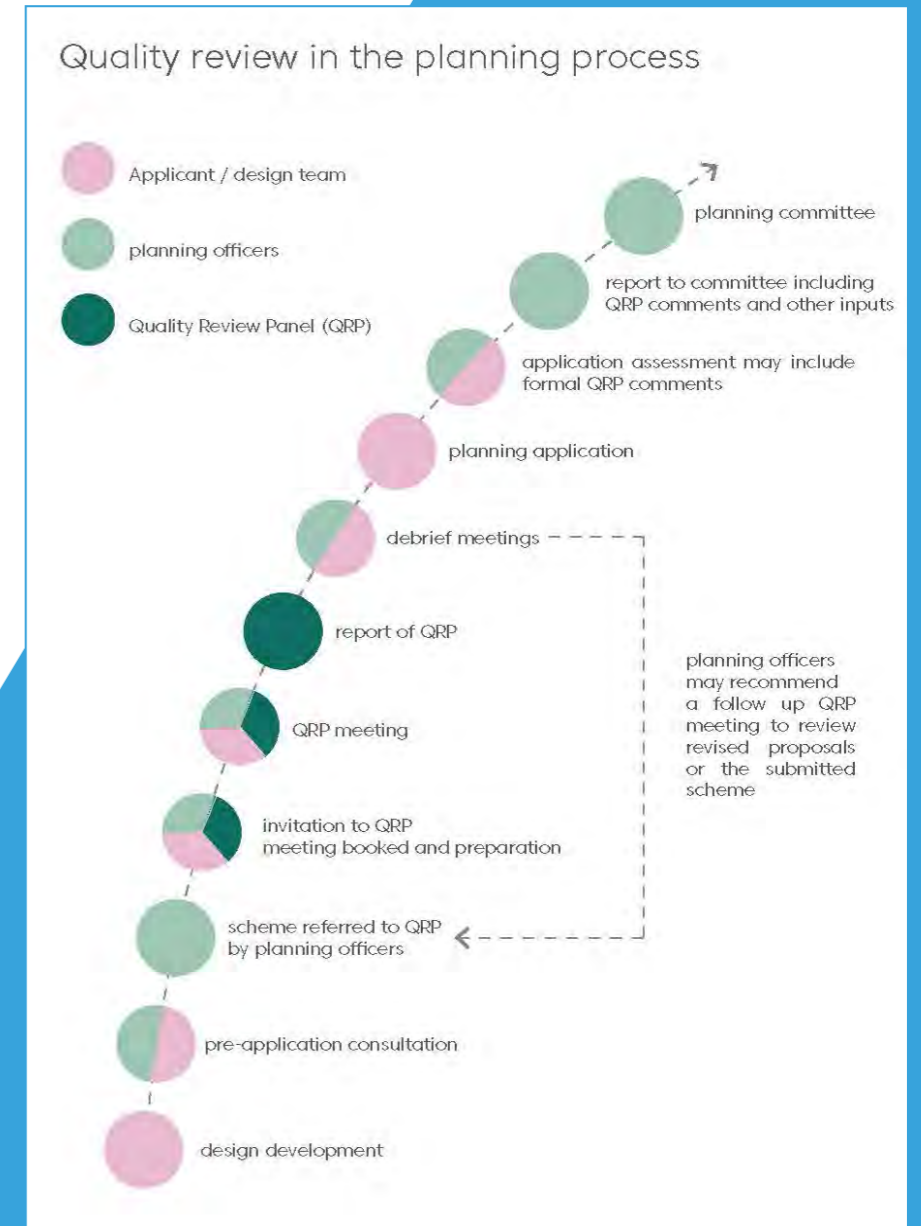
3.16. Further details can be found within the accompanying Statement of Community Involvement.

### Quality Review Panel

3.17. A meeting with the EFDC Quality Review Panel was held on the 4th December 2020 to review the current progress. The Panel's comments addressed the strategic level on the early design stage of the proposals.

3.18. The Panel encouraged the Masterplan to be more aspirational in terms of the vision set out for the development and building on the concept of entrepreneurial green growth. In addition, the Panel highlighted that there should be engagement with the neighbourhood planning process already underway in the area.

3.19. A second QRP was held on 12th November 2021 where a draft of this document and a revised illustrative site layout plan were presented. The Panel noted the progress made since the previous meeting and commented that the Masterplan should be landscape-led and support the creation of a distinctive place informed by the context and history of the site. The Panel made suggestions on the design, layout and introducing active frontages to the units fronting public areas. They also commented that further consideration of pedestrian and cycle routes through the site and connectivity to the wider area was required. These comments have been considered as part of the development of this Plan and are outlined within the accompanying Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).



Quality review planning process

## 4 Site Evaluation

4.1. Following an initial review of the site and its surrounding context, a number of constraints and opportunities have been mapped on the plan opposite, including potential Airfield requirements and considerations, which have informed the development of the strategy for the site included in this Masterplan.

### Considerations & Opportunities

#### Heritage

4.2. The Control Tower is Grade II listed and provides views looking west across the Airfield and also to the north towards the Grade II\* Church Tower of St Andrews Church. There is an opportunity to increase public access to the Tower and conversion to an alternative use, which could include a new community facility or cafe.

4.3. Within the southern part of the site, a number of existing buildings have historic value including the Airfield Museum and Hangar 1, but neither buildings are listed heritage assets.

#### Airfield Requirements

4.4. Subject to airfield operational requirements, a new Airfield Control Tower and associated emergency and rescue uses may be required to be provided within the site, including clear visibility splays from the new Control Tower as well as a security fence and internal perimeter access road. If these facilities are located elsewhere, the area indicated on the plan opposite would no longer be required for this purpose.

4.5. Emergency access links to the new Airfield perimeter road will also need to be incorporated into the site layout. This includes providing direct access out onto Merlin Way and beyond and will be required to comply with minimum emergency response times.

4.6. Obstacle Limitation Surfaces (OLS) restrictions cover the site which, subject to airfield operational requirements, may limit building heights within the site, particularly the western part of the development area. There will also be potential noise issues associated with the Airfield from the west which will need to be considered as part of any development proposals.

#### Environmental

4.7. There are a number of category A and B trees within the site. A large number of these are located in various clusters within the southern area, set around the existing building footprints. There

are also a number located along the eastern boundary in addition to some hedgerow planting, with a large grouping located at the southeastern edge, which acts as a partial buffer to the neighbouring residential area.

4.8. Within the northern parcel, this area includes semi-improved grassland as well as a small number of good quality trees. Land to the east of this parcel and Merlin Way has been identified by the Council as providing a potential opportunity for the creation of a new SANG.

4.9. There are no landscape designations within the site, however to the east and south are the Church Lane Flood Meadow LNR and Roughtalleys Wood LNR. The Weald Common Flood Meadows LNRs are located further south.

4.10. Parts of the site are currently at risk of surface water flooding, concentrated towards the western part of the site where two overland flow pathways lead to an area of ponding. The site generally consists of a level terrain, however it does gently slope upwards from north to south.

#### Highways & Movement

4.11. Merlin Way bounds the site to the east and currently provides various access points into the site. There is also a vehicular access point serving the southern part of the site from Epping Road.


























4.12. The northern part of the site is very well connected to the existing Primary Road network with direct access out to the north towards the M11 via the A414, which should be encouraged as part of the redevelopment of the site.

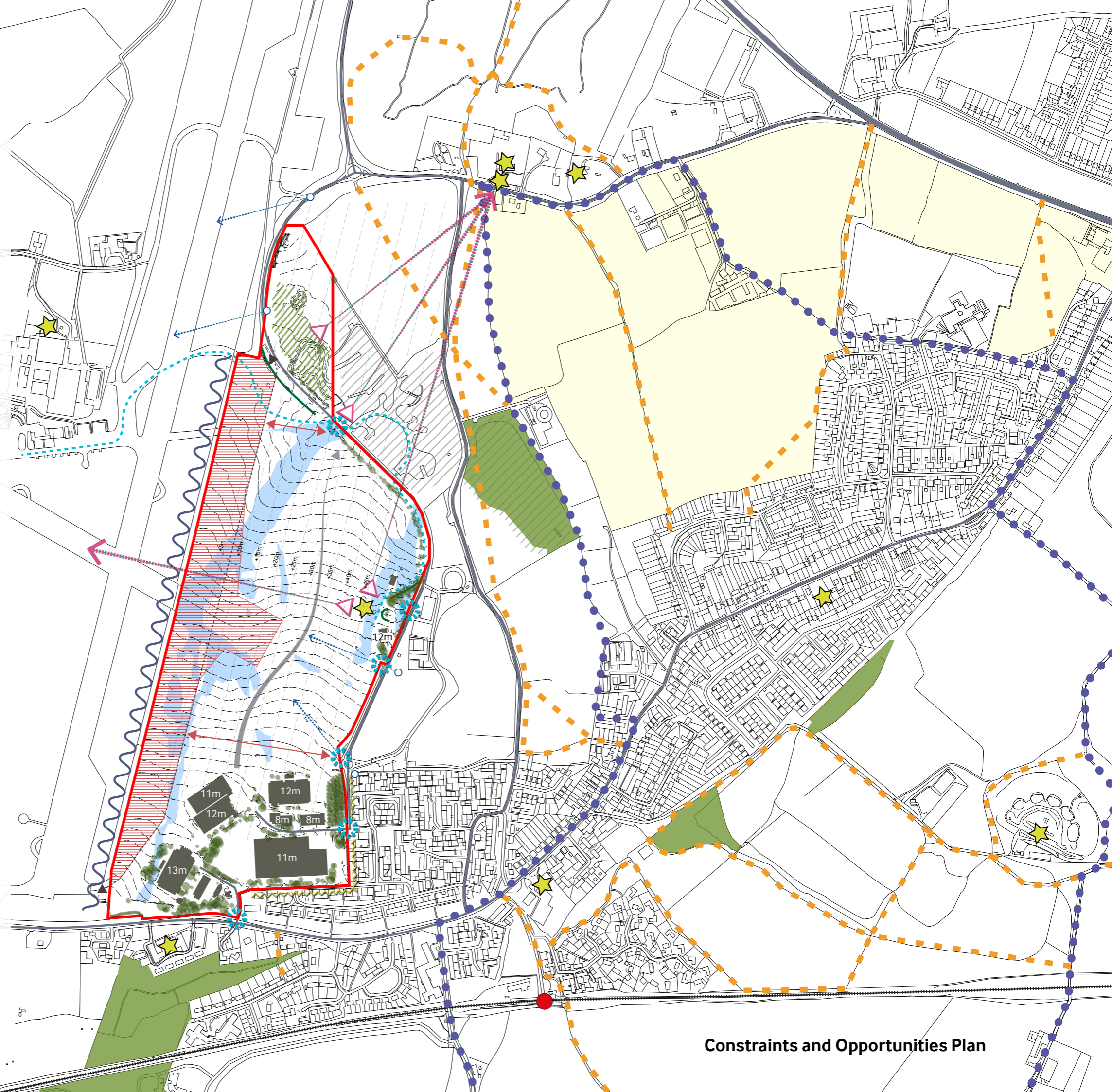
4.13. To the east of the site there are a number of existing PRow routes as well as the Millennium Walk 1. This provides opportunities to expand the local pedestrian and cycle network and connect to the North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area and the village centre. Bus services between Ongar and Harlow via Epping operate along the B181 Epping Road and can be accessed from the site.

#### Built Environment



























4.14. There are a number of existing buildings on the site of varying scale and quality, mainly located within the southern third of the site. The boundary between the site and the existing residential area to the southeast is exposed in parts and will need to be reinforced as part of the site proposals to protect the amenity and living conditions of existing residents.

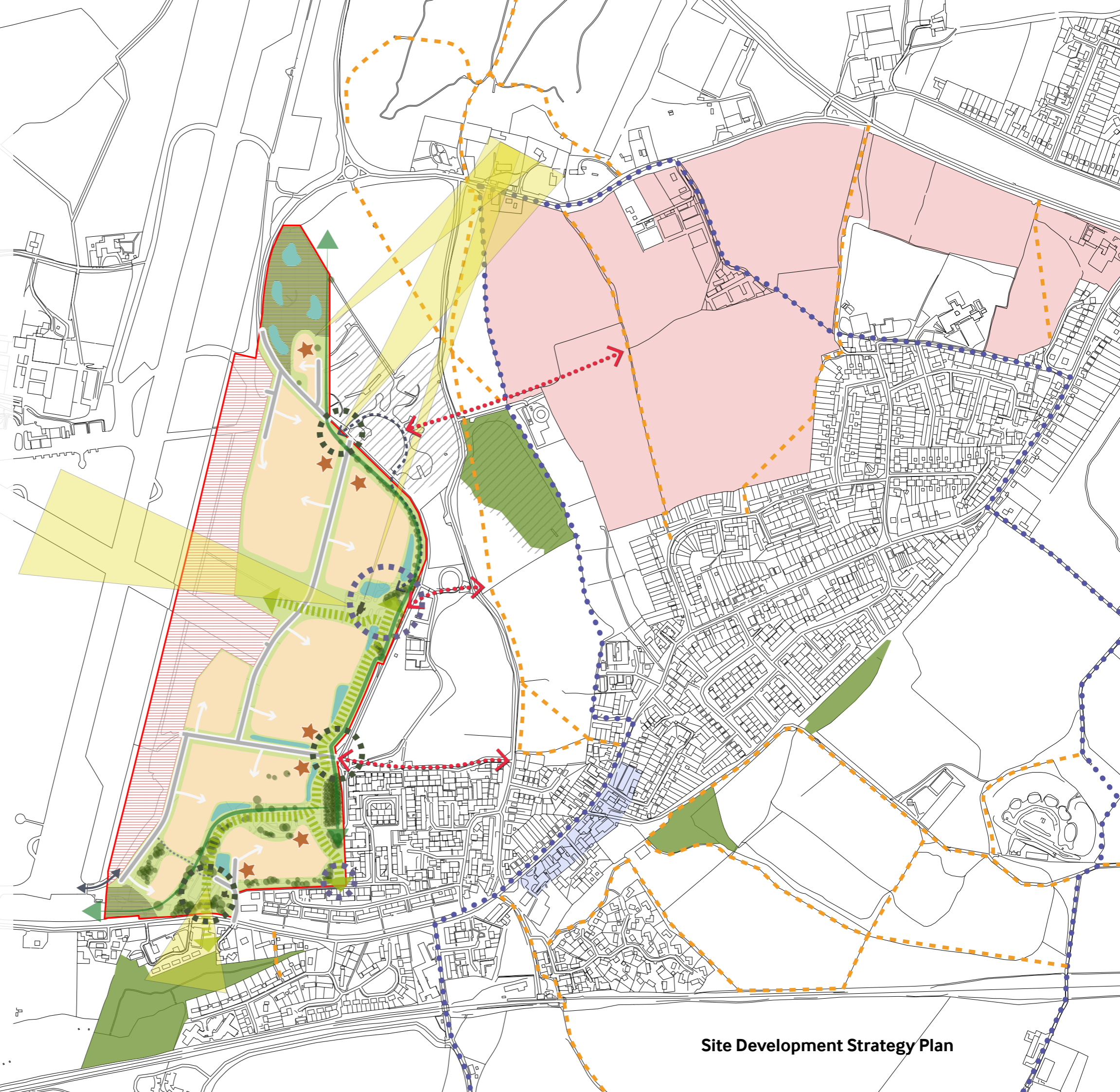


-  Site Redline Boundary
-  Existing Buildings
-  Existing Trees & Hedgerows to be Retained
-  Existing Access Points
-  Former Airfield Access
-  Potential Safeguarded Land for New ATC
-  OLS Lines
-  Airfield Perimeter Road
-  Airfield Indicative Access Links
-  Listed Buildings
-  PRow
-  Millennium Walk 1
-  Existing Highway Network
-  Views of Heritage Assets
-  Landscape Views
-  Surface Water Flooding
-  Sensitive Edge
-  Airfield Noise
-  Semi Improved Grassland
-  Local Nature Reserve / Wildlife Site
-  Site Topography
-  Site Fall Direction
-  Railway Line and Station
-  SANG Opportunity Area
-  North Weald Bassett Urban Extension



**Constraints and Opportunities Plan**

-  Site Redline Boundary
-  Development Parcels
-  Green Open Space
-  Primary Highway Network
-  Secondary Access Roads
-  Existing Buildings to be Retained
-  Potential Safeguarded Land for New ATC
-  Existing Category A & B Trees
-  Green Pedestrian / Cycle Corridor
-  SANG / NWB Pedestrian and Cycle Links
-  Former Airfield Access Heritage Trail
-  Key Views
-  PRow
-  Millennium Walk 1
-  Bus Link
-  Pedestrian / Cycle Access Point
-  Vehicular Access Point
-  Proposed Airfield Access
-  Ecological Habitat Corridor
-  Detention Basins
-  Landscape Enhancement Area
-  Key Building / Frontage
-  Local Nature Reserve / Wildlife Site
-  North Weald Village Centre
-  SANG Opportunity Area
-  North Weald Bassett Urban Extension



Site Development Strategy Plan

## Site Development Strategy

4.15. The plan opposite illustrates a potential development strategy for the site that responds to the constraints and Airfield requirements identified previously and considers how to realise the site's opportunities.

### Employment Development Parcels

4.16. A number of potential development parcels are provided across the site, providing for a range of building footprints and unit typologies.

4.17. The southern parcel is self-contained and includes its own access point from Epping Road. This parcel would likely be suitable for smaller employment uses such as office buildings and / or light industrial uses that would be appropriate adjacent to the existing residential area.

4.18. Moving further north, larger units could be accommodated within the site such as B8 use class (Storage and Distribution) uses. Any units located within the northern part of the site must be mindful not to adversely affect the setting of the existing Airfield Control Tower.

### Sustainable Movement

4.19. A new north / south green pedestrian and cycle route is proposed through the site which would connect from the southern entrance point next to the retained Airfield Museum building to the Airfield Control Tower following the existing tree groupings along the eastern site boundary.

4.20. This new link could continue north linking into the former airfield access track to create a new heritage trail which itself would connect into a new east / west link towards the North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area, and the existing PRow network, including the Millennium Walk. An additional pedestrian / cycle access point could also be included at the southeastern corner of the site providing a more direct route to North Weald railway station which would provide opportunities to enhance the visitor experience by linking to, and celebrating, the site's heritage. It would also provide opportunities to link into any potential improvements to walking and cycling connections within the wider area including to Epping.

4.21. A bus link should be provided through the site to connect with the wider area. A bus gate (or similar) will be required in order

to restrict through access to buses only. Electric Vehicle Charging Points will be required to be provided across the site for vehicles and bikes.

4.22. Planning applications should be supported by a HGV Route Management Strategy which incorporates approaches that direct such traffic to the Strategic Road Network.

### Environmental

4.23. The new green link through the site will be supported by additional landscaping. Areas to the north and southwest would also be subject to landscape improvements. An ecological corridor could also be provided following the route of the green link which would connect these areas of landscape improvements and could also link to the area identified as providing an opportunity for delivering SANG. Opportunities for biodiversity net gain will be available along these corridors.

4.24. A network of detention basins is proposed across the site, located within areas of open space to address surface water drainage requirements as part of a SuDS solution. The detention basins would need to be relatively small in size to minimise the risk of bird strikes at the active Airfield.

### Placemaking

4.25. The existing Control Tower offers the opportunity for conversion to an alternative use to provide for its future preservation. For example, this could include a community facility or cafe for the site which would support the requirements of Local Plan policy and support the objective of increasing public access to the building. The existing views looking west should be retained, together with the protection or enhancement of the towers setting.

4.26. The number of vehicular access points into the site should, if possible, be reduced to create clearly defined entrance points, with a primary access from the north defined by key building elevations and frontages as well as a secondary access point to the southern part of the eastern boundary.

4.27. The existing access will be retained from Epping Road to serve the southern development parcel with the opportunity to create an enhanced entrance experience incorporating the Airfield Museum and memorial. Glimpsed views could be retained within this entrance area across to Norway House to the south to provide a visual link to the former Officer's Mess building.

## Net Zero Carbon Development

4.28. Opportunities to deliver a net zero carbon development should be maximised including through the use of fuel cells, ground source heat pumps, photovoltaics and Anaerobic Digestion where possible, including directly or indirectly connected energy from renewable generation.

4.29. This should be supported by a new energy centre which could be located within the northernmost part of the site, located to the north of Merlin Way.



# 5 Design Objectives & Evolution

## The Vision & Development Objectives

5.1. The overarching vision for the site is to create a new, highly sustainable and modern employment hub which responds positively to the site constraints and Airfield requirements whilst providing a desirable place for people to work and visit and enjoy the rich Airfield heritage that fully realises the opportunities of the site.

5.2. The key objective is to deliver a development which is well integrated into its surroundings and is accessible and welcoming to all, through the provision of new connections and routes which extend the existing movement network and provides a new community asset for the residents of North Weald.

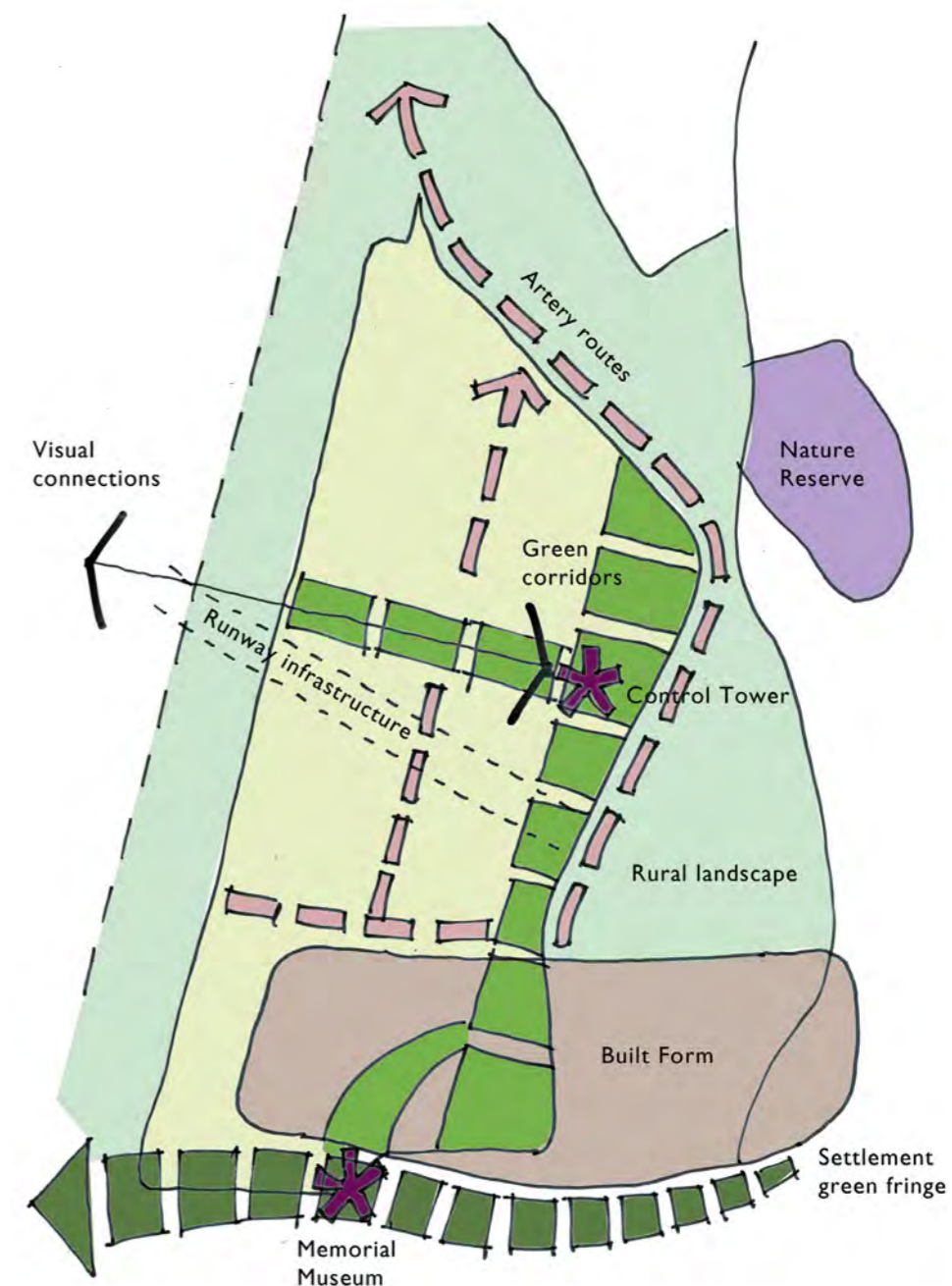
5.3. The redevelopment of the site will provide the area with a mixture of new employment building typologies across a variety of scales covering B2, B8 and E(g) uses (formerly B1) to meet the needs and requirements of the local and regional economy.

5.4. Community uses are required to be provided within the site. This could be achieved through the conversion of the existing Control Tower into a new viable use as well as the dedication of an area of space for the continuation of existing outdoor community uses on the site such as the weekly North Weald Market and car boot sale. The Masterplan also supports the retention of the existing Airfield Museum.

5.5. To advance the vision and development objectives to support the Strategic Masterplan, a series of design frameworks have been produced. These comprise a:

- **Land Use Framework** - this indicates development parcels and their uses that will help to deliver the vision and development objectives;
- **Green Infrastructure Framework** - this provides an indication of the overall network of green and blue infrastructure;
- **Movement Framework** - this deals with movement patterns in the area and includes provision for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport services in order to maximise access to the site by Sustainable Transport Choices whilst providing for vehicles (including HGVs); and

- **Placemaking Framework** - this addresses the potential urban form and the design components to help shape the development.



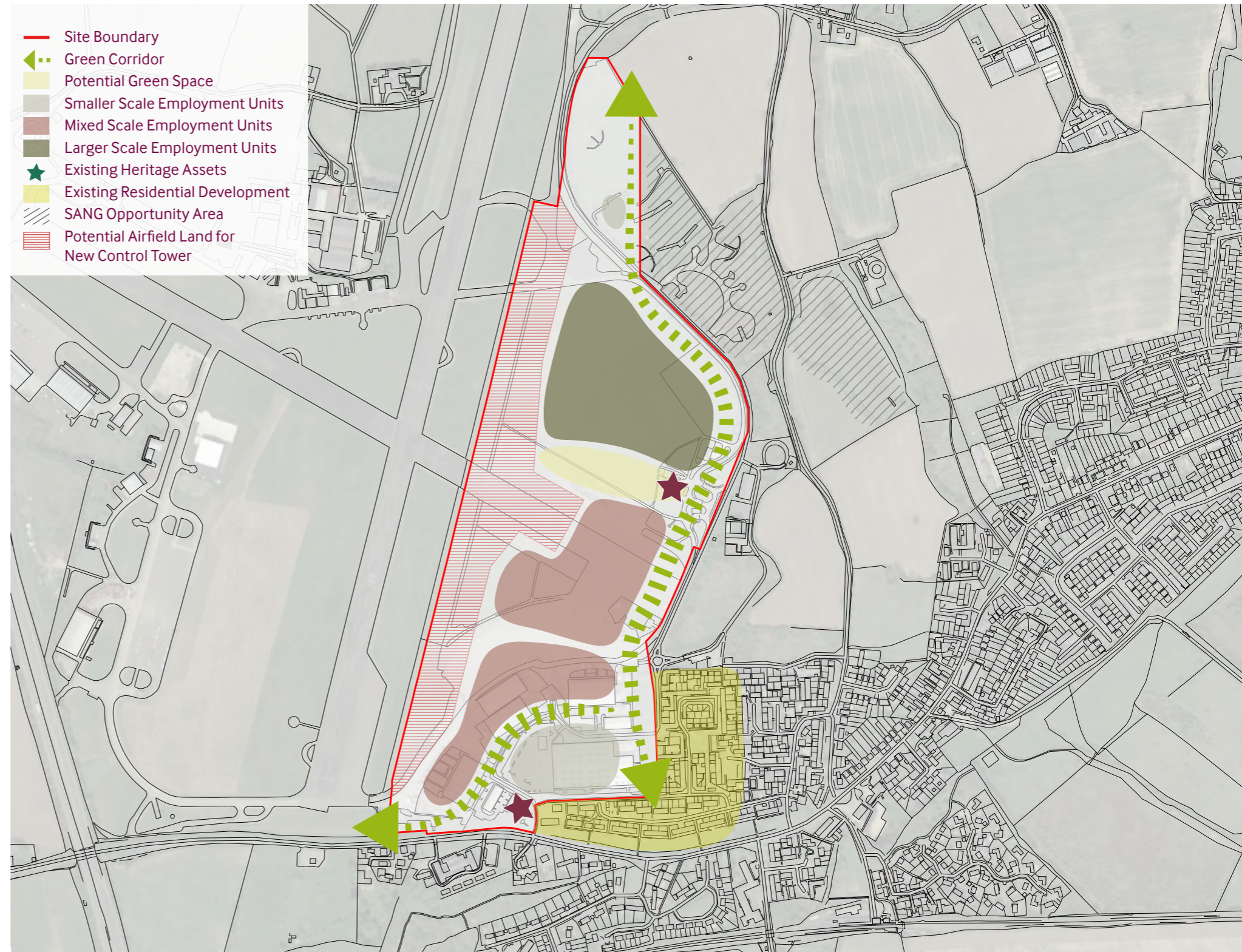


North Weald Airfield Memorial

## Land Use Framework

5.6. The land use framework identifies where potential development parcels can be located within the site and the types of uses that would be appropriate. It envisages that:

- larger units more associated with B8 employment uses will be located towards the northern part of the site as this area is set away from the existing residential uses to the south and southeast and is well located for highway access to the M11 via the A414,
- smaller units, of an appropriate scale and use, will be located adjacent to existing residential areas. This includes E(g) uses (Office, Research and Development and Light Industrial), and will be located towards the southern end of the site with opportunities for small scale B2 uses (General Industrial) to be located adjacent to the operational parts of the Airfield,
- community and ancillary uses will be located across the development site, potentially at the former Airfield Control Tower and open spaces around the site.
- the existing Airfield Museum should be retained in its existing location with the opportunity for additional community development, an extension to the Museum or amenity green space,
- a new north / south green corridor containing open space, a pedestrian and cycle route and ecological benefits will be provided through the site.



## Green Infrastructure Framework

5.7. The Green Infrastructure Framework helps integrate the proposed development into its landscape setting and provides new opportunities within the site to connect the development into the wider Green Infrastructure network. This includes:

- the provision of a new north / south green link running through the site connecting into a new east / west pedestrian and cycle link which would link into the existing PRoW network and the Millennium Walk route, the North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area, and to Epping Road and Roughtalleys Wood to the south,
- green spaces located closer to the village would improve pedestrian linkages and accessibility, which could provide a range of uses including community space, general public open space, or recreational areas with potential for views across the Airfield to the west,
- the creation of new landscape enhancement areas, one within the area to the north of Merlin Way which would provide ecological opportunities, detention basins and landscape improvements and provide the potential to link in to the SANG Opportunity Area, with another opportunity within the southwestern area of the site that would provide opportunities to utilise and enhance the existing vegetation,
- the enhancement of existing boundary vegetation along the eastern boundary to provide an ecological corridor and to soften the developments edge.

5.8. Future development proposals will need to have regard to wider opportunities for improving Green Infrastructure in and around North Weald Bassett and to the wider area as identified in the complementary work prepared in relation to Green Infrastructure in North Weald Bassett by the Council.

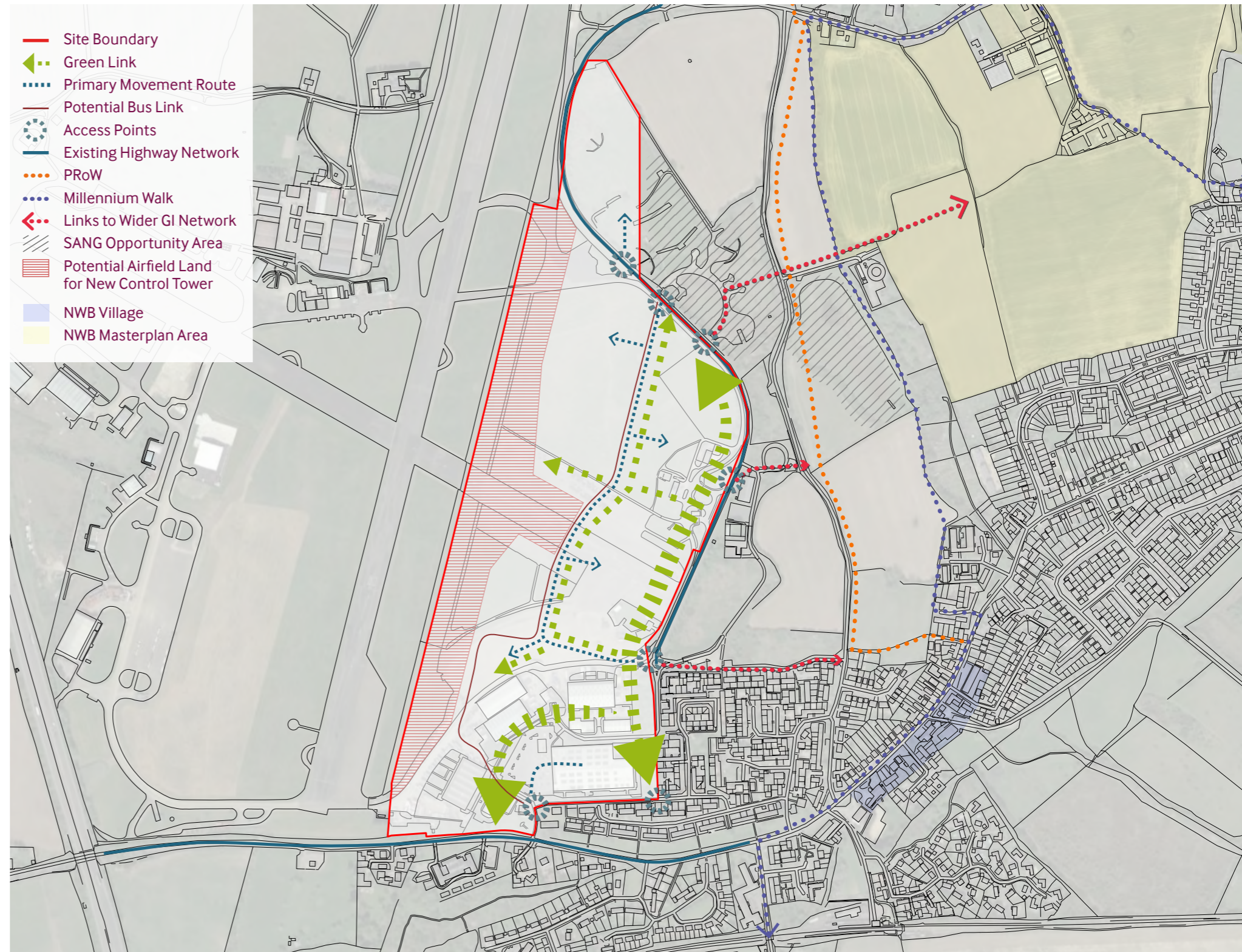


## Movement Framework

5.9. The Movement Framework sets out the existing surrounding movement network and identifies new opportunities to integrate the site into it. This includes:

- maximising the opportunities for HGVs and general site vehicle traffic to use the northern access into the site, which would be the more direct route to and from the M11,
- the creation of a new bus route through the site, including a bus only section allowing for a through route from Epping Road to Merlin Way to then link in with the wider area,
- the provision of new north / south pedestrian and cycle routes throughout the site, including a green link which would connect into a new east / west link to the North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area,
- a new pedestrian and cycle access within the southeastern corner of the site to allow for a more direct route towards North Weald train station (which lies on the Epping to Ongar Heritage Line),
- the remodelling of the existing Control Tower access point as a pedestrian and cycle only entrance which would connect into the existing PRoW network to the east,
- the re-introduction of the former airfield access as a new heritage trail which could become a continuation of the proposed north / south green link and connect into the new east / west link towards the North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area.

5.10. The development of more detailed proposals should have regard to Policy T1 and P6 of the Local Plan.

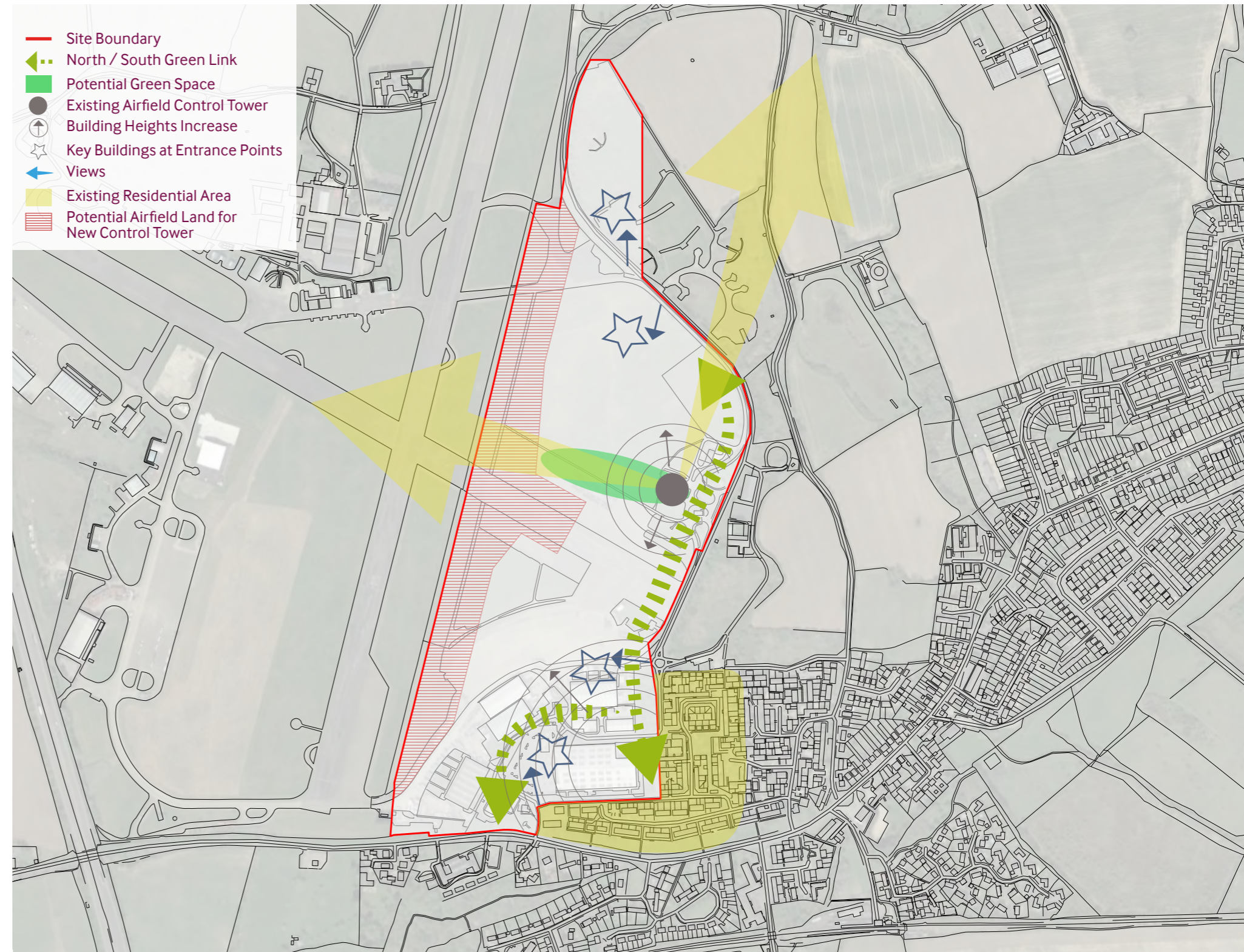




## Placemaking Framework

5.11. The Placemaking Framework considers how building heights and form, key views, building frontages and entrance / gateway features will help shape the development of the site to create a strong sense of place within the scheme. This includes:

- the consideration of building heights and form within the vicinity of the listed Control Tower. The Tower is 12m in height above ground level which is comparable to typical building heights of medium scale B2 and B8 units that may be proposed within the central to northern part of the site,
- the retention of views across to the Airfield and of surrounding heritage assets,
- celebrating the Control Tower along the new north / south green link,
- providing strong elevational / frontage treatment of buildings at key entrance points into the site as well as along the primary movement network.



## Sustainability Objectives

5.12. The redevelopment of the airfield site will be designed to meet key sustainability objectives which reflect national and local planning policies.

5.13. The Masterplan includes sustainability requirements and principles that will need to be addressed early on in the design process to respond to the Council's declaration of a Climate Change Emergency in 2019.

5.14. Strategic sustainability advice has been provided throughout the development of the Masterplan utilising the three pillars of sustainability; economic, social and environmental, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); following specifically [EFDC's Sustainability Guidance - Major Developments \(March 2021\)](#), the Council's [Climate Change Action Plan \(April 2022\)](#) and the principles of BREEAM Communities.

5.15. The Council's Sustainability Guidance for major developments is intended to help applicants meet an ambition of achieving Net Zero by 2030, as well as building strong and integrated communities across new and existing places. BREEAM Communities is a way to improve, measure and deliver the social, environmental and economic sustainability of large-scale development plans by integrating sustainable design into the masterplanning process. By integrating the principles of BREEAM Communities within the masterplanning process, opportunities for integrating sustainable design will have been explored.

5.16. BREEAM Communities consists of five core technical categories which consider different aspects of the design process and assesses how these have informed the framework masterplan.

### Governance

5.17. The aim of this category is to ensure that positive community and stakeholder involvement has helped to inform the shaping of the Masterplan. To support this aim, the following steps took place within the masterplanning process.

5.18. Engagement of key stakeholders was carried out throughout the early design process in order to engage in discussions around the design approach, strategy and vision for the site.

5.19. Throughout the masterplan design stages consideration has been given to appropriate design alterations based on consultation feedback which support and align with the sustainability principles for the development. Following the development of initial design ideas and concepts, a consultation portal was established to enable the local community and any other interested parties to view the current progress and proposals and provide comments and suggestions.

5.20. The site will be developed for employment uses together with the provision of community facilities. Following consultation and discussions with key stakeholders,

potential opportunities for community involvement in the further development of initiatives have been identified such as in relation to the potential future use of the listed Control Tower and to support the retention and celebration of the existing Airfield museum. The new publicly accessible green link running through the site could also incorporate an Airfield heritage trail with links to the Epping - Ongar heritage railway line at North Weald station. There is also the opportunity to accommodate the community market within the site.

### Social and Economic Wellbeing

5.21. The aim of the BREEAM Communities approach is to create a healthy economy (supporting the creation of employment opportunities and thriving business), ensure a socially cohesive community and minimise the impacts of environmental conditions on the health and wellbeing of occupants.

5.22. Green sector and higher skilled, knowledge based jobs will be encouraged by targeting particular sectors / types of business. The District has existing strengths in the following sectors that offer potential for 'green' jobs which could be located at the site:

- Construction
- Digital, Data Processing, AI, ICT and Creative
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Logistics

5.23. A mix of unit sizes provided for within the Masterplan will allow opportunities to attract potential significant investment from global companies wishing to locate in the UKIC/DIZ, new start-ups and grow on space for existing businesses (the district has a relatively high proportion of SMEs).

5.24. Opportunities will be explored for the creation of a business innovation centre within the site. This would provide both training and business support, as well as offering a further opportunity for occupiers of the units to meet and socialise which can help to nurture knowledge transfer and collaboration.

5.25. Construction activities would generate employment opportunities for local skilled trades people, and there is potential for building companies to develop the local skills base through apprenticeships and links with local construction training providers. The redevelopment of the site could create full time

**1/**  
**EFDC**  
**SUSTAINABILITY**  
**GUIDANCE &**  
**CHECKLIST**  
**/**  
**MAJOR**  
**DEVELOPMENTS**  
**(+10 units)**

ADOPTED - MARCH 2021

Epping Forest District Council  
Climate Change Action Plan 2021

Draft for Consultation - Version 7, August 2021

Epping Forest District Council | Climate Change Action Plan 2021

equivalent jobs over the construction period as a whole. Where possible, developer(s) would recruit local contractors. Additionally, there are opportunities further down the construction supply chain, with use of local suppliers for materials and equipment. Any development that comes forward will be expected to be supported by an employment, skills and training plan to show how both the construction and operational phases of the development will benefit the local community and borough.

5.26. Opportunities for the provision of usable green and blue space have been identified and should be developed further as part of detailed proposals to ensure that they are properly incorporated throughout the site including green corridors and detention basins. The Masterplan includes an area which could accommodate the existing outdoor market and be used by employees on the site and local residents, along with the existing control tower building. The control tower could be used as a community facility which would ensure the development relates to local character whilst reinforcing its own identity.

5.27. Consideration should be given to incorporating smart city principles in order to create an interactive, high quality public realm with the use of real time data and support Government Industrial and Digital Strategy, UKIC and DIZ objectives. The use of data, and the ability to attract suitable occupiers in line with these objectives will allow continued improvement and growth within the masterplan area.

5.28. The smart city concept describes the use of data and technology to improve the performance of infrastructure networks and create more liveable urban areas. However, the benefits go much further. Technological innovation can support local authorities as they work collaboratively to develop integrated plans which cover a wide range of people, places and issues.' (UK Parliament Research Paper - Smart Cities 2021).

5.29. Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) will be incorporated to manage surface water run-off up to and including the 1 in 100 year plus 40% climate change event. The techniques illustrated at this stage - detention basins and permeable paving - will also provide water quality benefits.

5.30. The Masterplan has been designed to ensure there is a strong north / south wildlife corridor that will help feed into wider biodiversity networks off site, particularly to the east. In developing detailed proposals regard should be had to avoiding increased opportunities for bird strikes.

5.31. Detailed design approaches should ensure that noise levels mitigate noise impacts at sensitive receptors to acceptable levels. The uses in the site are not especially sensitive to noise so mitigation from existing sources may not be required. However, this will be reviewed at the planning application stage.



Filwood Green Business Park, Bristol - Example of environmentally friendly employment development

## Resource and Energy

5.32. The aim of this resource and energy category is to secure reductions in carbon emissions and ensure wise use of natural resources.

5.33. Preliminary work has been undertaken to inform the development of the Masterplan in relation to achieving the most deliverable and effective approach to maximising energy efficiency.

5.34. The main energy demand for the site is likely to be electricity based on the proposed building typologies and uses. Opportunities for both on site and off site power generation from renewable energy sources should be explored.

5.35. The greatest Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) savings are likely to be achieved through the inclusion of a combination of technologies – in particular, fuel cells, horizontal Ground Source Heat Pumps (GSHP), Photovoltaics (PV) and Anaerobic Digestion, however Power Purchase Agreements from off site renewables can also make a material contribution to reducing emissions.

5.36. A detailed Energy Report (which considers the energy hierarchy: Be Lean, Be Clean, Be Green) should be produced at the planning application stage. Consideration should be given to undertaking an Overheating Assessment, an analysis of waste heat on site and the possibility of a heating network.

5.37. The development proposals should aim to target BREEAM Outstanding for all site units in line with the EFDC Sustainability Guidance.

5.38. As part of the planning application stage, assessments should be undertaken to determine if there is an opportunity for any material from the existing infrastructure on the site to be repurposed or reused following any demolition works.

5.39. In line with the Council's Sustainability Guidance a Whole Life Carbon (WLC) Assessment should also be undertaken, with carbon emission reduction in line with the targets set out within the BREEAM checklist. This process should help to inform the development of planning application proposals.

5.40. There is the potential for rainwater harvesting to be included within the scheme. This could be in the form of water butts for external irrigation and rainwater harvesting tanks for use in flushing toilets and so on.

5.41. In line with the Council's Sustainability Guidance, new developments should promote circular economy outcomes and aim to be net zero waste.

## Land Use and Ecology

5.42. The aim of this land use and ecology category is to improve ecological biodiversity. The development is located on previously developed land with an identified number of potential pollutants linked to its historic Royal Air Force (RAF) Airfield use. Further investigation should be carried out prior to any redevelopment of the site and that any contamination found will be addressed in line with an agreed remediation strategy.

5.43. The majority of the site is currently of limited ecological value comprising mainly short-mown amenity grassland, hand standing and buildings. There is therefore the opportunity for the Masterplan to deliver ecological enhancement including through the use of SuDS and green roofs and walls where appropriate (although it is acknowledged that proposals need to respect potential impacts on the safe operation of the Airfield i.e increased potential for bird strike, and therefore may be limited). The Masterplan has been designed to ensure there is a strong north / south wildlife corridor that will link into the wider biodiversity networks off site, particularly to the east. The combination of new habitat creation, improved management of retained habitats and the use of green roofs and walls where appropriate means that the development of the Masterplan site is capable of achieving biodiversity net-gain.

5.44. The design approach has sought to put landscape and, the site's characteristics and special qualities, at the forefront by gaining a thorough understanding of the landscape context. The Masterplan maximises opportunities to retain existing trees, provides for an appropriate built form which responds to the settlement and Green Belt edge characteristics of the site through the positioning of new buildings, and to cater for biodiversity (green links), cultural heritage interests, drainage and circulation routes.

5.45. The SuDS design should consider the CIRIA pollution hazard indices (for proposed land uses) and pollution mitigation indices (for proposed SuDS features). This will help ensure that an appropriate level of treatment is provided for surface run-off. The use of rainwater harvesting is recommended for irrigation purposes, where appropriate.

## Transport and Movement

5.46. The aim of this category is to create an efficient and safe system for movement as well as maximising opportunities to make journeys by means other than the car. Detailed development proposals will need to demonstrate that they are in accordance with Local Plan policy including Policies T1 and P6.

5.47. An initial review of access opportunities has been undertaken to inform the Masterplan. This has led to proposals to maintain two points of access from Merlin Way and a third access from Epping



Cycle store with green roof

Road to the south. There would be no connection through the site between the B181 Epping Road and Merlin Way other than for public transport. Opportunities for supporting access for all modes have been identified. This includes the provision of enhanced pedestrian and cycle access points and links with North Weald Bassett, the surrounding residential areas and further afield.

5.48. Public Transport connections should be strengthened. Opportunities to integrate bus services with the North Weald Bassett Masterplan site to provide an attractive public



Sustainable bus route

transport offer to key destinations including Epping London Underground Line Station and the rail stations at Harlow and Harlow Mill should be explored.

5.49. Electric Vehicle Charging Points, cycle parking and facilities (including shower and changing facilities) should be provided as part of any proposals as well as promoting other measures to reduce car trips. It is also recommended that the development has live public transport updates (which could link with the smart cities initiative).

5.50. Planning applications will need to be supported by a number of transport related documents including a Transport Assessment, a detailed Travel Plan which supports reductions in vehicle use, a Route Management Strategy and details of how the site will be serviced.

5.51. Parking provision should be in accordance with Essex County Council's adopted parking standards, but the level of provision should strike a balance between that necessary for the effective operation of the site and achieving a reduction in the use of road vehicles.

5.52. By integrating the overarching objectives of BREEAM Communities within the Masterplanning process, the following sustainability principles have been developed that should underpin any future proposals for the Airfield site:

#### Governance

- The development of detailed proposals should maintain stakeholder and community involvement. This could include in relation to the future of the listed Air Traffic Control Tower, the integration of the Airfield Museum including as part of a heritage trail as well as the design of new green links through the site and the relocation of the community market within the site.

#### Social and Economic Wellbeing

- The redevelopment of the Airfield should support the creation of jobs by targeting particular sectors / business types including construction, digital, data processing, AI and ICT and creative industries, advanced manufacturing and logistics and the green economy.

- Site proposals should explore opportunities for creating a 'business innovation centre' that would provide training and business support and a forum for business to share knowledge and collaborate.
- The site has the potential to bring economic benefits during the construction phase through employment opportunities for local skilled tradesmen and opportunities to develop the local skills base. This benefit would continue through to the operational stage where the mix of employment uses and range of unit sizes would support a variety of employment opportunities. Employment opportunities for local people should be promoted.
- Development proposals should incorporate green and blue spaces for both users of the site and the local community to access and enjoy and should also create green links into the wider Green Infrastructure network.
- Community uses should be provided to the east of the main runway in accordance with Local Plan Policy P6.

#### Resource and Energy

- The redevelopment of the site should seek to achieve BREEAM Outstanding for all new units. Proposals should aim to demonstrate compliance with the Council's Sustainability Guidance for Major Developments.
- The scheme should comply with the Energy Hierarchy principles as set out within the Council's Sustainability Guidance (Be Lean, Be Clean & Green and Be Seen) and should also promote circular economy outcomes and aim to be net zero waste.
- In line with the Council's Sustainability Guidance a Whole Life Carbon (WLC) Assessment should also be undertaken, with carbon emission reduction in line with the targets set out within the BREEAM checklist.
- An energy strategy should be developed for the site which should aspire to deliver a net zero carbon development through the use of various renewable technologies available such as fuel cells, ground source heat pumps, photovoltaics and Anaerobic Digestion, and the potential for off site renewable energy sources to be utilised via power purchase agreements.

### Land Use and Ecology

- Development proposals should deliver ecological enhancements through the provision of a network of new green spaces and corridors, new ecological habitats, landscape enhancement areas, SuDS features and subject to not compromising airfield safety, green roof and walls where appropriate.
- Proposals should include opportunities to link into the wider biodiversity network including to the area identified as providing an opportunity for a new SANG to the east. A biodiversity net-gain of equal to or greater than 10% should be targeted.

### Transport and Movement

- HGV access into the site should be primarily routed to / from the north via Merlin Way directly onto the strategic highway network.
- No through access from the B181 Epping Road to Merlin Way will be permitted other than for public transport.
- Development proposals should be supported by a Transport Assessment and Route Management Strategy.
- Development proposals will be required to provide electric vehicle charging points, cycle parking and facilities (including shower and changing facilities) as well as promoting other measures to reduce car trips through Travel Plans supported by a Travel Plan coordinator(s).

- Include opportunities for providing live public transport information as part of the development proposals.
- Work with the developers of the North Weald Bassett Masterplan site to maximise opportunities for the provision of enhanced public transport services between the two Masterplan sites and key destinations including Epping London Underground Line Station and rail stations including Harlow and Harlow Mill.



## How Consultation Has Influenced the Masterplan

### Stage 1 Consultation

5.53. An initial illustrative site layout option (opposite) was prepared to help establish potential capacity for the site and was tabled as part of the first stage of consultation towards the end of 2020.

5.54. Although it is acknowledged that there is potential for radically different layouts to be achieved, the purpose of this plan was to open up a dialogue between stakeholders to consider one such development option proposing a configuration for the site and its uses.

5.55. The initial plan also helped to inform the scoping of opportunities and constraints arising from the proposals.

### Stage 2 Consultation

5.56. Following more in-depth analysis and evaluation, supported by constraints and opportunities mapping, as summarised earlier in this document, and a review of the comments received as part of the Stage 1 consultation, a number of potential changes were made to the initial layout and principles for the Masterplan.

5.57. During the Stage 2 consultation a total of 1,267 comments were received from the 73 online and printed feedback forms submitted.

5.58. During this stage, most of the comments received were in relation to local aspirations for the site and the need for more detail to aid understanding of the proposals and any potential impacts.

### Stage 3 Consultation

5.59. Following the changes to the original illustrative layout, a Stage 3 period of consultation was undertaken, which ran from December 2021 to February 2022 on the updated masterplan.

5.60. During the third stage of consultation, more than 1,500 comments were received via stakeholder meetings, on-line meetings, an exhibition event, feedback forms and responses from statutory consultees.

5.61. A detailed report has been published alongside the Strategic Masterplan which sets out the breadth of comments received through these consultation stages and how the Strategic Masterplan where appropriate, has evolved in response.



Initial Illustrative Layout Concept 2020



Revised Illustrative Layout Option 2021

## 6 Strategic Masterplan

### Key Features of the Illustrative Masterplan

6.1. The indicative layout shown on the Illustrative Strategic Masterplan opposite would support the delivery of a range of uses on the site as required by policy.

6.2. The Masterplan provides for both the regeneration of existing employment premises together with a significant quantum of new employment floorspace across a mix of B2, B8 and E(g) uses. This would support a range of sectors including but not limited to construction, digital, data processing, AI, ICT and creative industries, logistics and manufacturing and provide a mix of units types and sizes to attract significant high calibre investment and create opportunities for both new start-ups and grow on space for existing businesses.

6.3. A new dedicated north / south green link will run through the Airfield site connecting into a new east / west pedestrian and cycle route which will link into the North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area. The central highway routes will also provide for pedestrian and cycle movement across the site, linking onto the wider movement network.

6.4. The dedicated green link will be routed along the eastern boundary of the site via the Control Tower which, subject to the relevant permissions being granted, could be converted to an alternative use creating a feature and focal point within the site.

6.5. Existing access points will be reconfigured with the northern access becoming a primary entrance into the site with the southern most Merlin Way roundabout junction becoming a secondary access point. There may also be an opportunity for a potential future access link at the southwestern corner of the site into the Airfield, which should be considered as part of the site layout design.

6.6. Emergency access points connecting into the internal Airfield highway network will also need to be included within the layout design of the site. These should be developed in tandem with the operational requirements of the Airfield.

6.7. New pedestrian and cycle access points will be created throughout the site to link the site into the wider movement network including the existing PRoW's to the east as well as the Millennium Walk. A new access will be included at the southeastern corner which will provide a more direct route to North Weald train station to support access to the site to support the celebration of the sites heritage as part of the visitor offer linked to the Epping Ongar railway as well as to the wider movement network.

6.8. The layout facilitates the opportunity to operate a new bus route through the site to connect it to the existing village, the North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area and key destinations in the wider area to support reductions in private car use.





















6.9. Existing vegetation including Category A and B trees are retained where possible with new planting provided to reinforce the existing landscape, particularly along the eastern site boundary following the new green route and to enhance the landscape buffer to the residential development to the southeast.

6.10. Areas of landscape enhancement are provided within the northern parcel including adjacent to the SANG Opportunity Area as well as at the southwestern corner linking through to the Airfield along the southern site boundary. This will provide opportunities for biodiversity net gain and wildlife habitat improvements.

6.11. A network of smaller SuDS detention basins have been indicated within the natural and semi-natural green amenity spaces to allow for surface water run off as well as additional biodiversity enhancements.

6.12. A new energy centre could be located within the northern parcel to help deliver a net zero carbon development including the use of fuel cells, ground source heat pumps, photovoltaics and Anaerobic Digestion, and linkages to off site renewable energy generation explored.



-  Site Redline Boundary
-  Employment Parcels
-  Green Space
-  Amenity Space
-  Potential Safeguarded Land for New ATC
-  Airfield Development Area
-  Control Tower & Museum Buildings
-  Existing Trees/Vegetation to be Retained
-  Proposed Vegetation
-  Detention Basins
-  Pedestrian / Cycle Route
-  Pedestrian / Cycle Access
-  Primary Vehicular Route
-  Secondary Vehicular Route
-  Vehicular Access
-  NWB Pedestrian and Cycle Link
-  Existing PRoW
-  North Weald Village Centre
-  SANG Opportunity Area
-  North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area



## 7 Design Parameters

7.1. The following section sets out a range of matters which will need to be articulated through the detailed design of any development proposals. The Council will expect planning applications to be supported by a sufficient level of detail to demonstrate that the site as a whole will be developed in a cohesive manner which responds to the requirements of the NPPF. In particular, the development of the site should result in the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places. It should reflect the fact that good design is a key aspect of all sustainable development in order to create a better place in which to work and for people to visit recognising the historic interest and on-going functioning of the wider airfield. The illustrative Strategic Masterplan, supported by the identified design parameters, provides the framework for developing detailed development proposals.

7.2. The most appropriate method of ensuring that the principles established within this Strategic Masterplan result in the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places will be to ensure a Design Code is established alongside an Outline Planning Application. In doing so, regard should be had to the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code.

### Employment Land Use

7.3. The Masterplan facilitates the provision of new and replacement employment floorspace set within a highly sustainable, modern, landscape-led setting.

7.4. The local economy has key strengths within the construction, finance and insurance, data processing, AI and ICT, digital and creative, advanced manufacturing and logistics sectors and the development of the Airfield offers opportunities to accommodate businesses within all of these sectors. This is enhanced by the site's location within the UK Innovation Corridor and Digital Innovation Zone.

7.5. Over 90% of companies within the local economy are micro and small businesses. Recognising the need to provide space for both new businesses and established businesses looking to grow, the development of the airfield should provide both a range of unit sizes and types of accommodation. Where feasible, units should be flexible so that they can be subdivided or combined to accommodate the needs of occupiers.

7.6. Given the scale of unit sizes proposed, larger and logistics operations locating to the Airfield are anticipated to be focused on providing 'last mile' consolidation or unique services that require suitable clearance heights to be provided. Without these heights the masterplan may fail to meet the needs of such occupiers.

7.7. Units that are located a suitable distance away from existing and proposed residential properties should be allowed to operate on a 24/7 basis to ensure that they provide the flexibility that potential occupiers require.

7.8. There is the potential to provide a business innovation centre as part of the development of the Airfield. This would be of particular benefit to both businesses located at the Airfield and the wider local economy. Such a centre would provide the opportunity to provide a range of business support services including advice to both new and growing businesses, as well the opportunity to encourage networking, professional development and collaboration.

7.9. Other facilities that support businesses and employees based at the site should be provided including café / restaurant uses, conferencing facilities, a gym, and a crèche. Such ancillary uses, whether included as part of a business innovation centre or as standalone facilities, will assist in making the proposed development a welcoming and attractive environment for future occupiers and their employees increasing the attractiveness of the site to both potential developers and end users. Consideration should be given to making such facilities available to the wider public to support the provision of access to a wide range of facilities for existing and new residents in North Weald Bassett and to support the long term viability of such uses.

7.10. Subject to the operational needs of the airfield, which may require these new facilities to be located elsewhere on the airfield, the Masterplan Area also includes some 8.5ha of land to provide for a potential new Air Traffic Control Tower, and a new emergency services building including firestation, storage, an internal access road and security fence.

### Employment Land Use Parameters

- The provision of new and the replacement of existing employment floorspace should be provided across the site through a range of building typologies to allow for a mix of Offices, Research and Development, Manufacturing and Warehousing space to meet local opportunities within the construction, finance & insurance, AI and ICT, digital, data processing, creative, advanced manufacturing and logistics sectors.
- Larger building footprints more associated with B8 uses should be located within the northern part of the site, whereas smaller unit sizes providing E(g) uses that are more appropriate to be located adjacent to existing residential areas should be focused within the southern area of the site. Buildings for Use Class B2 (General Industrial) purposes could be located within the southern area in locations immediately adjacent to the operational part of the Airfield.



Illustrative Site Sketch

## Building Heights, Scale & Massing

7.11. The site contains a mix of existing buildings including the listed Control Tower and ancillary units, a variety of hangar and warehouse typologies and a number of smaller scale units such as the Airfield Museum (located in the former station office).

7.12. Existing residential development is located to the southeast of the site and is typically characterised by two storey dwellings. However, there are a number of larger buildings also within this area including a four-storey apartment block which faces onto the site.

7.13. The importance of considering how any proposed development will meet the operational requirements for the types of business proposed, balanced against integrating into its context

and considering the setting of the listed Control Tower is of key significance. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate as part of their application how the submitted scheme has addressed potential impacts on heritage, airfield Obstacle Limitation Surface (OLS), urban design and other considerations.

7.14. It is envisaged that in principle, units will step up in height moving away from the Control Tower to preserve its setting and that lower heights will be proposed to respond to adjacent residential uses. Placemaking must form part of the strategy for height to guide visitor experience and respond to hard and soft landscape spaces. In addition, passive design principles such as orientation of buildings and overshadowing must be considered as these will also have implications for height.

## Building Heights, Scale & Massing Parameters

- Proposals must consider the location of the listed Control Tower, the Airfield's potential OLS height restrictions and the relationship to the existing residential area to the southeast when determining building heights and form.
- Proposals must respect the existing settlement edge along the southeast corner of the site by siting buildings of a smaller scale, mass and building footprint along this edge and progressively increase scale and mass of buildings as distance from the settlement edge increases.
- Development should consider the setting of the listed Control Tower building.
- The form, layout and height of any proposed development will require assessment of potential impacts on heritage, airfield Obstacle Limitation Surface (OLS) and other considerations via the planning application process.

Example Building Typologies



## Character & Layout

7.15. The wider area to the west of the site is an active Airfield rich in Battle of Britain history which provides opportunities to celebrate this heritage and provide improved accessibility to the site.

7.16. The landscape-led Masterplan should provide a mix of character areas that have regard to the heritage of the site whilst enhancing the landscape setting by integrating green links and spaces within the development and beyond.

7.17. These character areas should relate to the positive characteristics of the site and the surrounding area but should also maximise the opportunities of the site. This includes:

- Respecting and facilitating the operational activities of the Airfield and protect its future;
- Respecting the rich heritage of the site, the existing landscape characteristics and the surrounding uses, and the scale, detailing and materials of existing development within the vicinity of the site;
- Carefully managing the differences in building heights across the site taking into consideration existing views and heritage assets; and
- Including amenity areas and public green spaces that draw people together to create a sense of place and enhancing the visitor experience to the site.

7.18. To the south, development should be of a more residential scale set within the existing landscape features within this part of the site offering a network of amenity spaces for users of the site linked by a new dedicated green route.

7.19. Towards the centre of the site, there are opportunities for larger units set within a landscape framework. This area is likely to have a more commercial character which should consider the setting of the listed Control Tower supported by green links and spaces connecting it into the wider movement network.

7.20. The northern part of the site lends itself to the larger unit typologies more typically associated with employment sites. This would provide opportunities for utilising a strong materials palette to develop entrance / gateway feature buildings into and within the site.

7.21. Parcels of development across the site should be set within a new landscape framework providing green links and spaces between the building parcels leading to a permeable and legible, well connected development.

7.22. Buildings should utilise passive design layout principles including orientation and form, material efficiencies, solar gain and continuous insulation where possible.

7.23. The site layout also needs to consider any implications as a consequence of potential Obstacle Limitation Surface (OLS) and Airfield operational restrictions that are in place. This will impact where particular buildings can be located due to height restrictions as well as the requirement for emergency access routes connecting the Airfield to Merlin Way.

### Character & Layout Parameters

- The development of the site should be landscape-led and provide distinct character areas that relate to the positive characteristics of the Airfield and the surrounding area and maximise the unique opportunities of the site.
- The layout and form of proposals should utilise passive design principles where possible within the design approach.
- Proposed site layouts will need to consider the OLS and Airfield operational restrictions that may be in place.
- The site layout must consider the setting of the listed Control Tower.



## Building Form & Frontages

7.24. Building form and frontages will contribute to the character and identity of the site and are a key design consideration in determining the overall quality of the development.

7.25. Consideration needs to be given to the internal layout of buildings in order to offer opportunities for frontages to overlook key spaces and routes across the site.

7.26. Within the central part of the site, where the listed Control Tower is located, active building frontages and high-quality elevation façades and treatment should be encouraged, in order to support social interaction within this area of the site.

7.27. Open public and green spaces should be overlooked and where possible opportunities for interaction between these spaces and buildings surrounding them should be encouraged.

7.28. The key pedestrian and cycle routes proposed across the site including the central north / south primary movement route and the green corridor located along the eastern boundary should be overlooked in order to provide natural surveillance of these links.

7.29. Active building frontages that generate activity and provide engagement between building interiors and the outside space should be orientated to front onto key routes and spaces across the development.



Illustrative Primary Movement Route Cross Section



Illustrative Green Corridor Cross Section

### Building Form & Frontages Parameters

- The site layout should carefully consider the location and form of the proposed building units in order to provide active frontages to main routes and green spaces where possible across the scheme.
- The primary north / south movement route running through the centre of the site, the green corridor located along the eastern boundary and areas of public open space throughout the site should be overlooked by the proposed development in order to provide natural surveillance and encourage social interaction within these routes and spaces.
- Where active frontages cannot be provided along key routes and spaces, consideration should be given to unit elevation design such as the use of green walls to provide interest.
- Consideration should be given to the internal layout of proposed buildings in order to offer opportunities for frontages to overlook key spaces and routes across the site.
- Active building frontages that generate activity and provide engagement between building interiors and outside spaces should be orientated to front onto key routes and green spaces across the development.



Indicative Sketch of Primary Highway Route

## Materials & Appearance

7.30. The appearance of the development needs to reflect the high-quality sustainable design aspirations of the site.

7.31. Existing buildings within the southern area do not have a single prevailing style and are in general a mixture of hangars and warehouse units of varying quality, with the exception of the Airfield Museum building, which is more residential in scale.

7.32. The residential area to the southeast of the site includes a variety of post war architectural styles including a modern housing estate adjacent to the site on Merlin Way.

7.33. It is therefore envisaged that proposals will utilise a modern, lightweight materials palette. A small considered palette will help to create a cohesive development with variations focused on key buildings and frontages at terminating vistas and gateways to add variety and aid legibility.

7.34. The development should respect local materials, colours, style and detailing of existing structures and the surrounding area where it would add value and help integrate the development into its local setting.

7.35. Architecturally, the development should complement the Control Tower and contribute to the overall character and identity of the scheme.

### Materials & Appearance Parameters

- A well considered, small materials palette for the development and the public realm should be used which reflects the high quality and sustainable design aspirations of the site.
- The palette should respect local materials, colours, styles and detailing where relevant to help integrate the scheme into its local setting.
- The architecture used within the design of the site should respect and complement the listed Control Tower and contribute to the character and identity of the development.

- 1 Translucent Polycarbonate Cladding
- 2 Profiled Metal Cladding
- 3 Tarmac Finish to Car Park Areas
- 4 Curtain Wall Glazing
- 5 Feature Metal Flashings
- 6 Profiled Metal Cladding
- 7 Paladin Weldmesh Security Fencing
- 8 Rooflights
- 9 Architectural Glazing
- 10 Profiled Metal Cladding with Back Lighting





## Landscape, Views & Trees

7.36. The landscape strategy should seek to retain existing features of landscape importance as well as provide an appropriate design response to the key landscape characteristics and special qualities of the site, which encompass biodiversity, heritage and people.

7.37. Proposals should seek to retain existing trees and provide for new trees and planting to define the settlement edge and boundary with the Green Belt. The strategy should provide for supporting the above characteristics through the positioning of new buildings, and to cater for biodiversity, the preservation or enhancement of heritage assets, site drainage and circulation routes.

7.38. The approach to landscaping within Battle of Britain Airfields was relatively simple in its form and appearance and comprised specimen trees within mown grassland, with areas of more detailed or ornamental plantings largely confined to small planting beds adjacent to the entrances of important buildings. Climbers were also notable features on certain key buildings and clipped hedges were also present.

7.39. Within the scheme, a new north / south green link is proposed which will follow parts of the former Airfield access used during WWII. The route could incorporate land to the north of Merlin Way. This would create an opportunity to link with the North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area, PRoW and Millennium Walk and could form part of a heritage trail around the site. There is also an opportunity to re-establish a sense of importance to the former entrance to the site from Epping Road and also the setting of the Airfield Museum. This area would also form the beginning of the proposed green link.

### Landscape, Views & Trees Parameters

- Maintain and enhance the green corridor along the southeastern edge of the site and extend this along Merlin Way to the north, linking with areas on the opposite side of the road, including those identified as an opportunity for providing SANG, where features associated with the former airfield remain such as the former Airfield access, within an area already exhibiting some biodiversity interests with its mix of rough grassland and scrub.
- Consider the setting to the Airfield Control Tower (Grade II listed) and its visibility to the Airfield.
- Retain and supplement existing trees and groups of trees. Where these evoke the character of the former Battle of Britain era Airfield, such as alongside Hangar 1 within the southern part of the site, the simple landscape character of trees in grass should be retained. Elsewhere, and where these retained trees would form important parts of Green Infrastructure corridors across the site, such as along the south and southeastern edge, undertake further tree planting using a variety of native and / or ornamental species (including species likely to be more tolerant of climate change and with greater carbon storage characteristics) to supplement the retained trees.
- Establish a new north / south green link which could follow parts of the former Airfield access used during WWII, and land to the north of Merlin Way. There are also opportunities here to link with the North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area, PRoW network and the Millennium Walk.
- Provide a contemporary interpretation of the 'simple' landscape of specimen trees within grass typically associated with Airfields of this era, with areas of more detailed planting focused at key parts of the scheme such as building entrances or areas of focused user activity. Proposals should respect the cultural heritage significance of the Airfield and maximise the environmental opportunities of the site.



Short-mown grassland area across the airfield

## Biodiversity & Ecology

7.40. The majority of the site is of limited ecological value therefore there is an opportunity to deliver ecological enhancements and biodiversity net gain (BNG) of equal to or greater than 10%.

7.41. A new north / south green link is proposed which would include a wildlife corridor that will help feed into the wider biodiversity networks off site, especially to the east where there are opportunities to provide a SANG. Also, utilising the use of SuDS as well as sustainable building design features such as green walls will, when combined with new habitat creation and the improved management of retained habitats, be expected to achieve BNG on site.

### Biodiversity & Ecology Parameters

- The redevelopment of the site must aspire to deliver BNG as part of the proposals of equal to or greater than 10%. Opportunities include the provision of a new north / south wildlife corridor which would form part of a new green link feeding into the wider biodiversity network including to the SANG Opportunity Area to the east.
- Utilising the use of a comprehensive SuDS network across the site as well as incorporating building design features such as green walls will support new habitat creation and help deliver BNG.
- Proposals for the site should look to retain and enhance the habitats of higher ecological value, especially the 'wilder' existing habitats to the north of Merlin Way.



Example BNG Enhancements

## Heritage

7.42. The development of the Strategic Masterplan has been influenced by the location of the Grade II listed Control Tower and explores how this heritage asset could be used in the future to ensure its longevity. Such uses could include a new community facility or cafe acting as a key destination within the site.

7.43. The proposed green route would link to the Control Tower as well as potentially the former airfield access link, which provides an opportunity for a new heritage trail to be created through the site beginning at the Airfield Museum in the south. This could then link to the Epping - Ongar heritage railway line which has a station at North Weald.

7.44. The arrangement of the new built form should support these proposed heritage uses within the site as well as considering the setting of the Control Tower

### Heritage Parameters

- Proposals for the site must include flexibility to mitigate against any potential impact on the existing Built Heritage. This would include the provision of a new long term viable use for the Grade II listed Control Tower, and the establishment of a new 'Heritage Trail' through the site, to raise public appreciation of the Airfield's rich history and improve accessibility to its key features.
- Further measures include public engagement programs and providing information sources, both on the Heritage Trail and by other means, such as through educational outreach, digital sources and information sharing, should also be considered.



Existing Air Traffic Control Tower

## Energy & Utilities

7.45. Any future energy strategy for the site should aspire to deliver a net zero carbon development through the use of various renewable technologies available such as fuel cells, ground source heat pumps, photovoltaics and Anaerobic Digestion, or off site opportunities via renewables power purchase agreements.

7.46. The overall design of the development and the individual buildings should identify and apply the best technologies to maximise the energy efficiency of the site. Any utility strategy for the site should dovetail with these ambitions but also deliver the resilience of grid connections to support both demand and onsite generation.

7.47. It is known that the electrical infrastructure in the area has limited capacity for further connections, and will therefore require reinforcement to supply a development of this nature. This provides the opportunity to fully integrate the site's requirements with the electrical network, facilitating the deployment of electrical low carbon technologies in place of traditional fossil fuel solutions.

7.48. The onsite electrical network should be a smart managed network, incorporating high voltage distribution with localised substations to satisfy the requirements of individual plots and the wider network. This will be designed to accommodate a wide range of technologies including heat pumps, distributed generation, energy storage and vehicle charging.

7.49. To support the smart network and future occupier requirements, a robust telecoms infrastructure is required.

7.50. There are a number of providers in the area to enable this with a consolidated below ground ducting installation likely to be required.

7.51. Whilst the use of gas is becoming increasingly difficult to justify from a carbon perspective, there may be specific process requirements for this fuel. A suitable connection point has been identified close to the site should a specific requirement necessitate this.



Example Fuel Cell Storage Structure

### Energy & Utilities Parameters

- A comprehensive energy strategy should be developed for the site which explores net zero carbon development options. This could utilise technologies such as the use of fuel cells, ground source heat pumps and photovoltaics or off site renewable energy facilities to deliver a carbon neutral development.
- When undertaking the architectural design of any proposed buildings, the highest sustainability standards should be achieved.
- Due to the limited capacity of the existing local electrical network, there is an opportunity to overhaul and fully integrate the site's requirements with a new electrical network for the Airfield facilitating the deployment of low carbon technologies.

## Drainage & Flood Risk

7.52. The site is located within the Environment Agency's Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at a low risk of fluvial / tidal flooding. The majority of the site is at a 'very low' risk of surface water flooding, with the site almost entirely unaffected by a 100 year rainfall event. The areas which may be at risk in a 1000 year rainfall event are generally indicated to be impacted to shallow depths only and this would be largely mitigated through the installation of a new surface water drainage system.

7.53. A network of SuDS detention basins is proposed to be included across the site and should be designed so as to maximise wider benefits, in addition to the provision of surface water detention. Such benefits include improving water quality, biodiversity, amenity and water efficiency opportunities, holistically improving the site's environment.

7.54. The drainage hierarchy has been considered and as infiltration is unlikely to be suitable, given the underlying low permeability geology, discharge to a watercourse(s) will be required. The development of the site should achieve a 1 in 1 year greenfield runoff rate for all events up to and including the 1 in 100 year plus 40% climate change storm event.



### Drainage & Flood Risk Parameters

- Drainage would be primarily provided in detention basins which should be spread out across the site so as to help reduce the risk of bird strikes. Permeable paving should be incorporated across vehicle parking and yard areas associated with the proposed employment uses. Such features would help to manage rainfall as close to the source as possible.
- Additional SuDS measures such as green roofs and walls, rainwater harvesting, water butts and filter drains should be considered as part of future development proposals.



Example SuDS Measures

## Movement & Access

7.55. It is proposed to provide two points of access from Merlin Way and a third from Epping Road to serve the southern employment parcel. There will be no link through the site from Epping Road to Merlin Way (other than for public transport, walking and cycling). Both the size of the units and the type of uses are likely to result in only limited numbers of HGV movements. There may also be an opportunity for a potential future access link at the southwestern corner of the site through to the Airfield, which should be considered as part of the site layout design.

7.56. Emergency vehicular access points will need to be provided at specific intervals along the western boundary connecting into the internal Airfield highway network via access gates through the secure perimeter fence. These should be developed in tandem with the operational requirements of the Airfield.

7.57. There are also opportunities for new and reconfigured pedestrian and cycle access points into the site which could link with the North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area and surrounding residential areas. These routes can also connect into the existing movement network surrounding the site including PRow's and the Millennium Walk.

7.58. Public Transport connections should be improved. Opportunities to provide a new bus route connecting the Airfield with the North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area and key destinations should be brought forward. A route through the whole site should be provided with a bus gate provided to connect the southern and northern employment areas.

7.59. As part of the proposal, the provision of electric charging points, cycle parking and facilities should be provided as well as promoting other measures to reduce car trips. It is also recommended that the development has live public transport updates (which could link with the smart cities initiative).

7.60. Parking provision should be in accordance with Essex County Council's adopted parking standards, but the level of provision should strike a balance between that necessary for the effective operation of the site and achieving a reduction in the use of road vehicles.

### Movement & Access Parameters

- Two vehicular points of access should be maintained from Merlin Way including the potential reconfiguration of the northern point as a primary access. The existing access point off Epping Road will be maintained to serve the southern employment parcel.
- New and reconfigured pedestrian and cycle access points into and through the site should be provided, connecting into the wider movement network.
- A new bus route through the site to connect the development to the North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area and the train station should be explored in collaboration with the developers of the North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area. Electric vehicle charging points and cycling infrastructure are required to be provided.



Example Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure



## Movement Strategy

7.61. The likely distribution of new vehicle movements associated with the development of the site, is such that the A414 / Rayley Lane roundabout junction will likely to see the greatest level of impact on capacity.

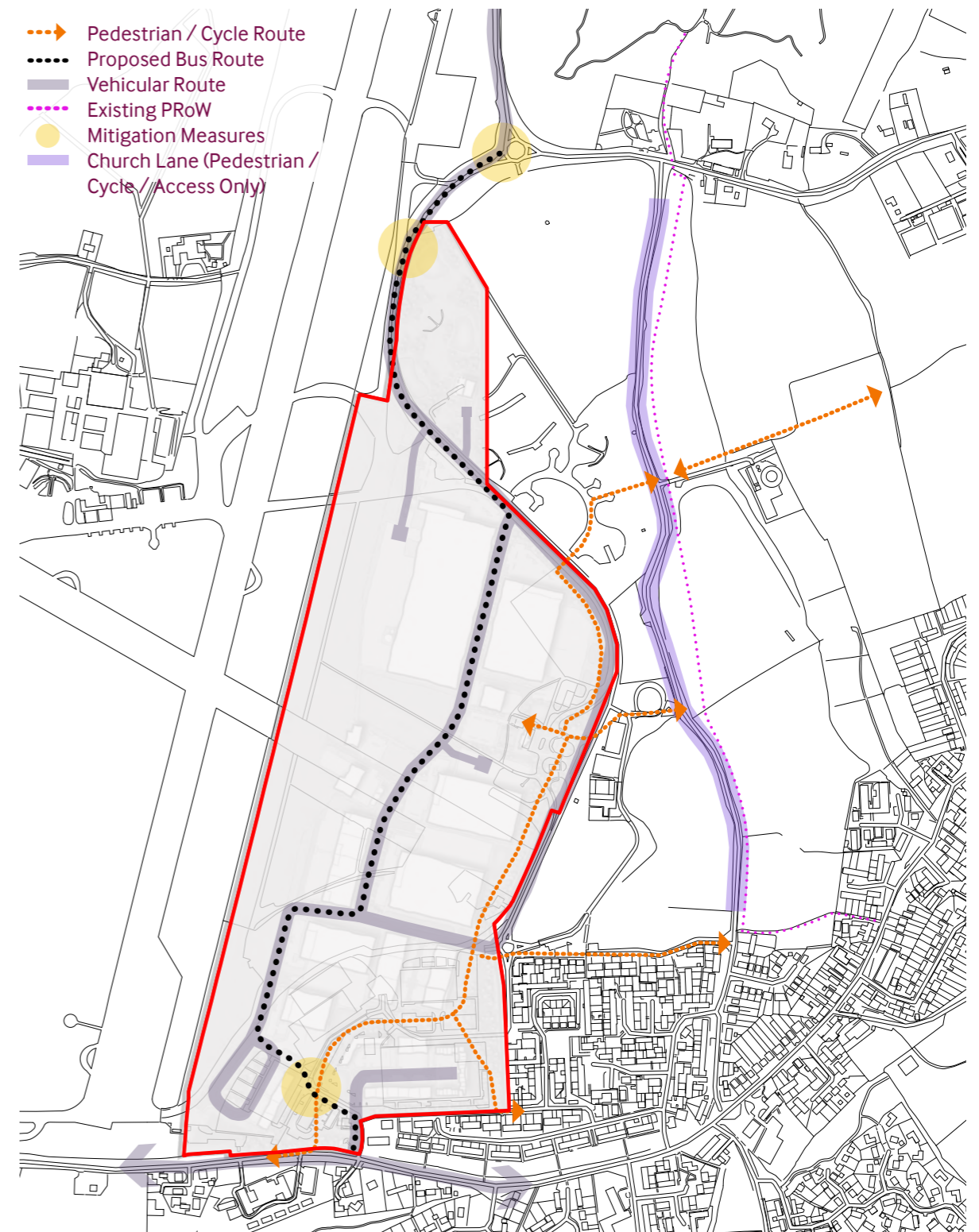
7.62. It has also been highlighted as part of the consultation process with local stakeholders the issues with site traffic, particularly HGVs, using local village routes to enter the Airfield instead of the main access via Merlin Way. Any planning application will need to be supported by a Transport Assessment, Travel Plan and Route Management Strategy.

7.63. There are a number of measures that should be introduced as part of any future planning application(s) to address potential highway impacts, including:

- Widening of the approach roads to the A414 / Rayley Lane roundabout;
- Re-prioritising Merlin Way at the junction with the northern entrance into the site to encourage HGV traffic to use this route;
- New signage located along the A414 and Rayley Lane to direct HGV and other site traffic to use the correct entrance point into the site;
- The partial closure of Church Lane to vehicle traffic to support the creation of a green walking and cycling route; and
- Whilst maintaining the point of access from Epping Road to serve the southern employment parcel, use controls / barriers to ensure there will be no access through the site from Epping Road other than for public transport, pedestrians and cyclists.

### Movement Strategy Parameters

- Two vehicular points of access should be maintained from Merlin Way including the potential reconfiguration of the northern point as a primary access. The existing access point off Epping Road will be maintained to serve the southern employment parcel.
- New and reconfigured pedestrian and cycle access points into and through the site should be provided, connecting into the wider movement network.
- A new bus route through the site to connect the development to the North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area and the train station should be explored in collaboration with the developers of the North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area. Electric vehicle charging points and cycling infrastructure are required to be provided.



Movement Strategy Plan

## 8 Phasing & Delivery

### Sequencing of Development and Phasing

8.1. Although underpinned by the operational requirements of the airfield, it is proposed that development would commence with the construction of the new Airfield Control Tower and associated infrastructure on land to the west of the site, shown as Phase 1 on the plan opposite.

8.2. Phase 1 could also include the construction of the proposed new Energy Centre within the northern parcel as well as the highway changes required along the northern stretch of Merlin Way, such as a reconfigured junction into the site to emphasise the primary access point.

8.3. The proposed surface water detention basins and landscape enhancements within the northern parcel could also be delivered as part of this early phase of development.

8.4. It would then be envisaged that the development would come forward in a number of phases working down from north to south. This approach would support the ability to provide for the re-location of existing businesses operating within the southern part of the site.

8.5. Phase 2 would include the northern third of the site allocated for new employment floorspace (NWB.E4A) which is likely to consist of the larger unit sizes within the development for Use Class B2 and B8 purposes.

8.6. The third phase would cover the central section of the site including works to the Control Tower as part of its conversion into an alternative use.

8.7. This phase would also allow for the completion of the primary route through the site and any works required to Merlin Way.

8.8. The fourth and final phase would be to deliver the southern part of the site which currently accommodates a number of existing businesses. This area is more suited to smaller unit typologies such as small scale office space, research and development and light industrial E(g) uses adjacent to the existing residential area.

8.9. An element of B2 (General Industrial) floorspace could be located adjacent to the western boundary abutting the operational part of the Airfield.

8.10. The parcel of development proposed within the southeastern corner, which includes its own access, could be delivered as a standalone phase at any stage during the build out programme.

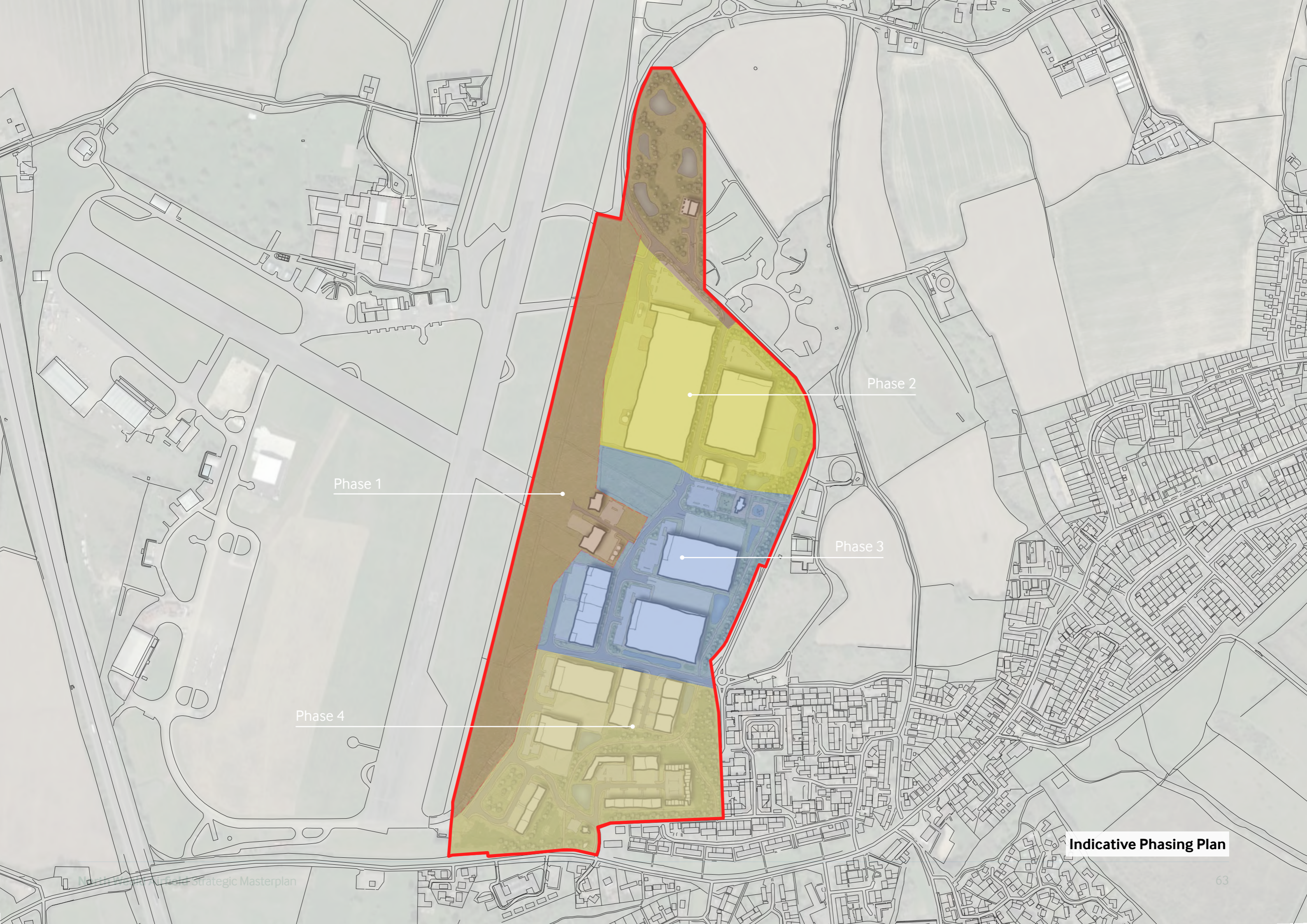
8.11. The secondary highway network, main site surface water drainage, foul drainage and utility services will be sequenced to be delivered in stages as required to service the development parcels for the various phases.

8.12. The timing and phasing of any new bus service to serve the site will be subject to discussions with Essex County Council as the Public Transport Authority and bus service operators. It is likely that revenue funding will be required to support any service in the early years of operation.

8.13. Landscaping and ecological works, including the provision of the new green link through the site, will follow in sequence with the development of each phase.

8.14. The Council's [Infrastructure Delivery Plan](#), which sits alongside the Local Plan, will help to inform the range of infrastructure requirements necessary to support the development of the site. The Masterplan identifies an initial range of evidence needed to be undertaken to support any planning application. The full list of requirements to support any planning application is set out in the Council's Local Validation Checklist. Where necessary, legal obligations will be sought in order to secure the provision of infrastructure and other requirements both on-site and off-site, amongst other things. In accordance with EFDC's Green Infrastructure Strategy any development would need to show how the stewardship principles are incorporated into the scheme or maintenance plans. This could include stewardship on movement and wayfinding, tree planting and green spaces.





Phase 1

Phase 2

Phase 3

Phase 4

**Indicative Phasing Plan**

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EFDC  
/  
**STRATEGIC  
MASTERPLAN  
FRAMEWORK**  
/  
NORTH WEALD  
AIRFIELD

