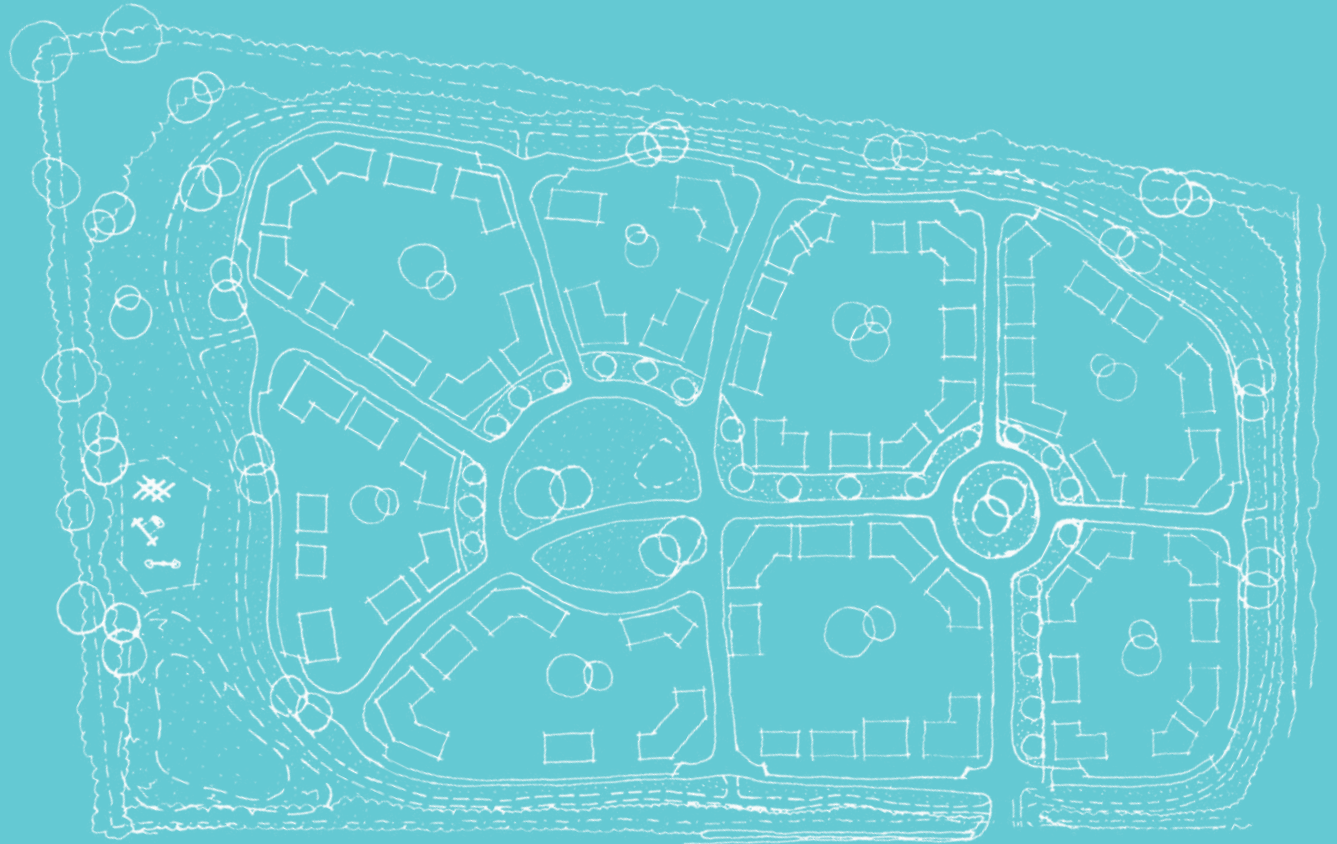




St John's College
University of Cambridge



Vision Document

February 2020

Land North of Whitwell Way, Coton



St John's College
University of Cambridge

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CAMBRIDGE ROAD

ST PETERS RD

BROOKLANE

WHITWELL WAY

SILVERDALE AVE



M11

A14

01. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This document has been prepared by Savills Planning & Urban Design Studio on behalf of St. John's College, Cambridge.

The purpose of this document is to support the submission of representations to the joint Local Plan for SCDC and the City, for the delivery of a residential development on land north of Whitwell Way, Coton.

The site totals approximately 5.291 hectares (13.07 acres) and comprises an arable field.



South Cambridgeshire District

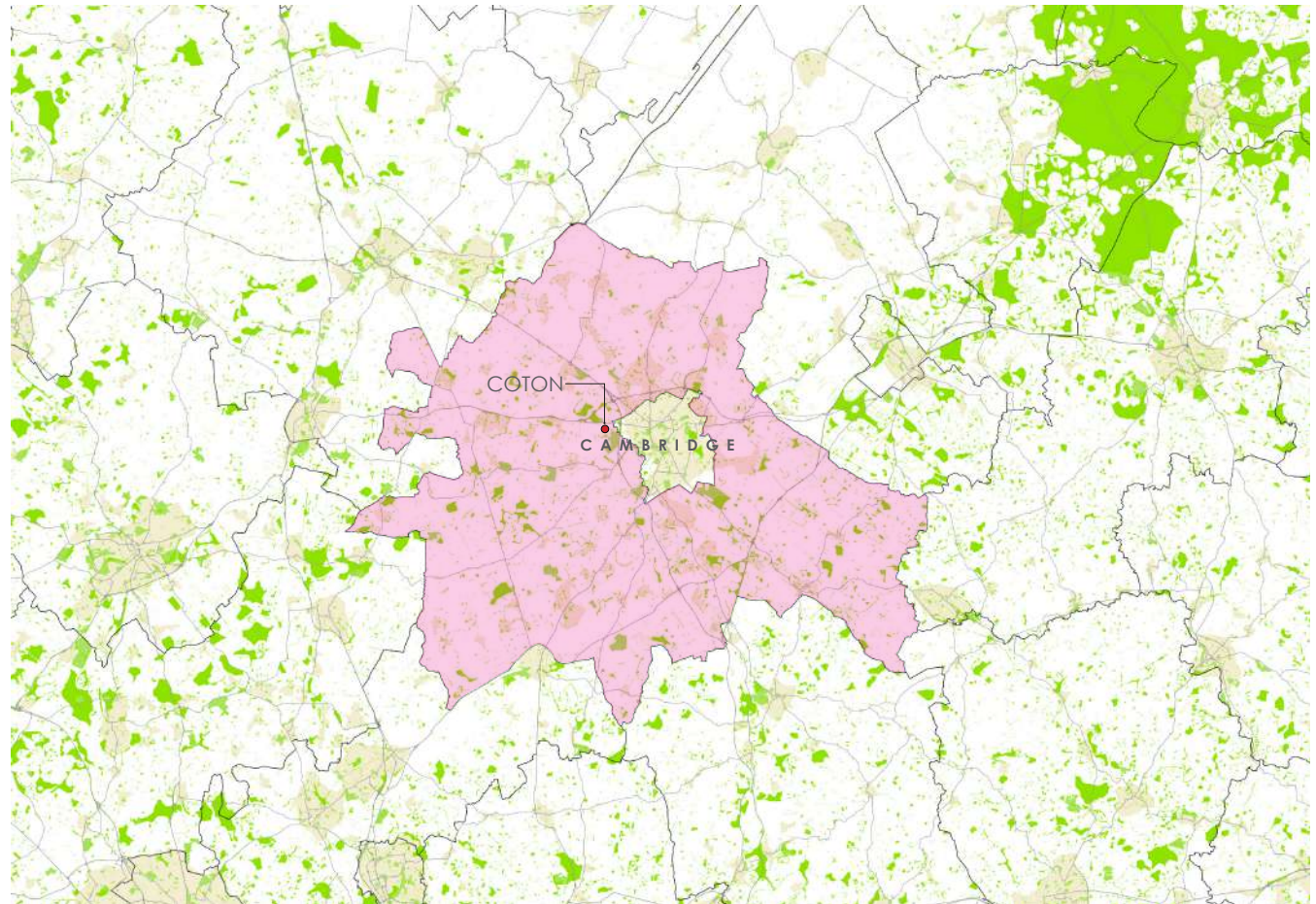


Figure 1.1: South Cambridgeshire District boundary.



It has been estimated that the site has the potential to deliver up to 120 new homes, although this is subject to further, more detailed technical analysis and consultation.

The new scheme would promote active lifestyles and a sense of wellbeing through the provision of new public open space, which will create an attractive setting for the new homes.



Aerial photograph showing site boundary.



Existing vegetation along the eastern boundary of the site

The site's southern boundary

Whitwell Way



View along the southern boundary of the site looking north east across the site.

02. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

2.1 Planning policy context

Coton is defined as a Group Village in the existing adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 in recognition of its level of services, facilities and employment. In the context of future development potential and the need to reassess development strategy given the new Local Plan, it is considered that the village's sustainability credentials will be enhanced as part of the Cambourne to Cambridge Better Public Transport Project and Comberton Greenway Project, including improved cycling and walking facilities. Further details of these projects are included later in this Vision Document.

As part of a new blended housing strategy including developments of varying scales, a review of the existing Green Belt boundary to help sustain services and facilities in the village, to take advantage of improved sustainable transport options, and to deliver much needed affordable housing to help meet local needs, Coton has a role to play in ensuring that the housing need for the Greater Cambridge area can be met in a sustainable manner.

The site is not within a conservation area, and the nearest listed buildings are some distance away beyond Church End to the east. The site is all within Flood Zone 1 in terms of fluvial flood risk. Parts of the site are at low risk of surface water flooding with the remainder being at very low risk with the exception being a very small part of the southwestern corner which is at medium and high risk. There are opportunities to significantly enhance biodiversity as part of the generous proposed landscaping on the edge of and within the site. The site is currently within the Green Belt.

The Green Belt serves five purpose:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

In considering this site in relation to these purposes, development of this site would result in “encroachment” into the countryside (i.e. beyond the existing village boundary as identified in the 2018 Local Plan). The existing development beyond the southern and eastern boundaries to some extent restricts the extent to which the proposal would be perceived to ‘sprawl’. It would not lead to towns (or any settlements) merging into one another. The generous proposed landscaping provides the opportunity to ensure that the setting and special character of Coton and Cambridge are, as a minimum, preserved. This development could form part of a blended strategy that includes urban regeneration to meet the identified need, and need not therefore prejudice such a strategy.

St John's College owns other land around the village and around Cambridge which provides the opportunity for a dialogue in relation to potential compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land. The College also owns land adjacent to the existing school which is also proposed for development and which provides the opportunity for a dialogue to ensure that the education needs arising from these two sites and for the village as a whole can be met.

A new Local Plan will include development on land that was previously protected from development, and this development would provide social, economic and environmental benefits to outweigh this harm.

03. ASSESSMENT

3.1 Wider context

Coton lies about 2.3 miles (3.7 km) to the west of Cambridge, with the M11 lies approximately 0.7 mile (1.12 km) to the east of the centre of the village. The A1303 (Madingley Road) runs approximately 0.5 mile (0.8 km) to the north of the site.

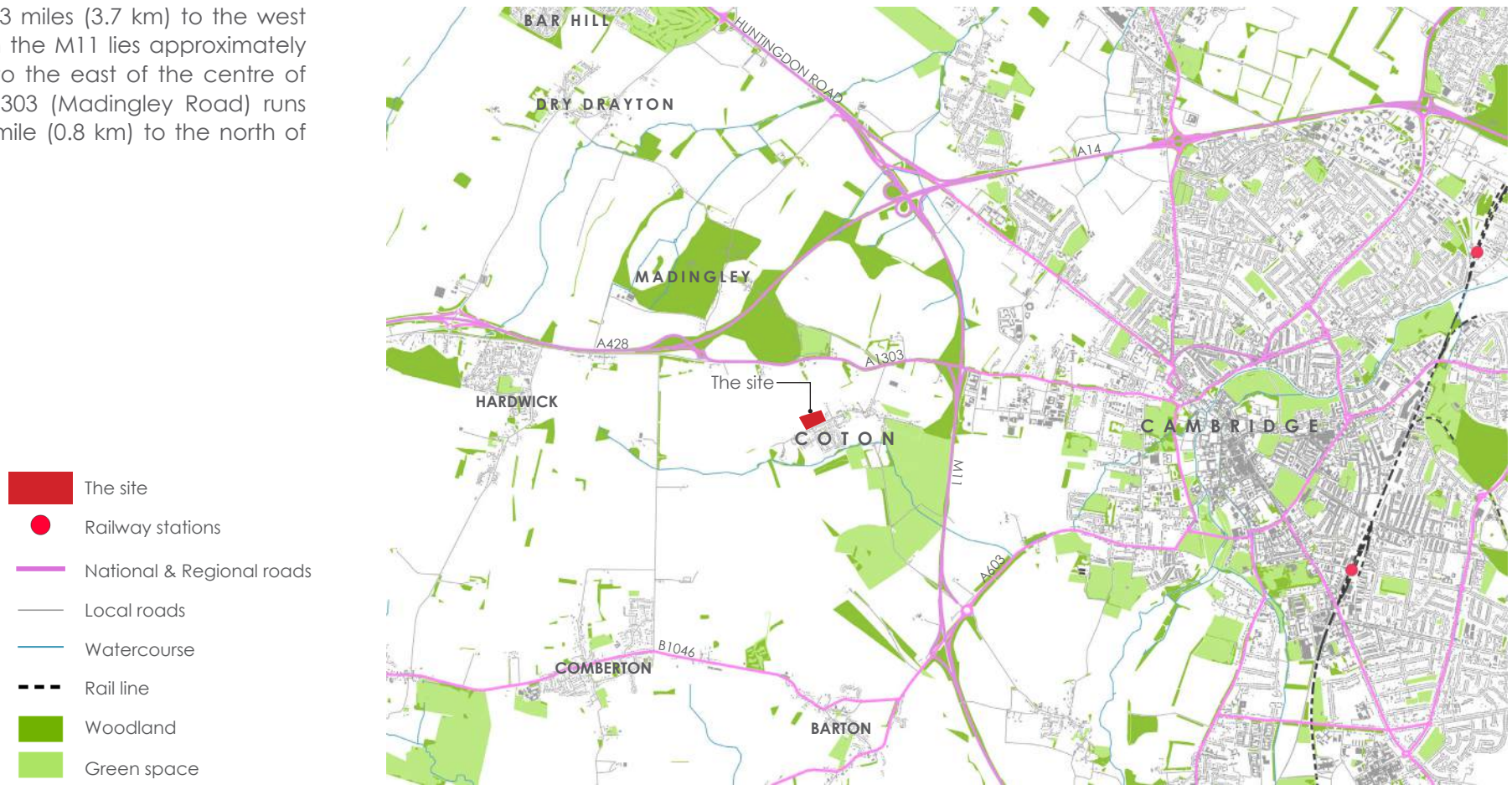


Figure 3.1: Wider context plan.



3.2 The site

The site totals approximately 5.291 hectares (13.07 acres) and occupies a single semi-rectangular shaped land parcel to the north of Whitwell Way.

The eastern boundary of the site is formed by the existing mature hedgerow which separates the site from the adjoining land to the east. The southern boundary of the site is defined by the existing scattered hedgerow which separates the site from Whitwell Way.

The site is bound to the west by the existing ditch with a number of mature trees standing along this boundary of the site.

The vast majority of the northern boundary of the site is undefined with two mature trees occurring at the north westernmost corner of the site.

 Site boundary: 5.291 ha



Figure 3.2: Aerial photograph showing site boundary.



3.3 Architectural context

Coton has originally developed along High Street to the east of the site. Examples of how the combination of architecture, streets and public and private spaces create places can be found along the historical core. A rich pallet of architectural detailing, materials, colours and variation in buildings types, scale and height all combine to create sense of character and place.

As we move away from the historical core towards the west, the pattern and form of development changes.

We have considered the character of several of the village's residential areas in more detail, in order to inform the layout and design of the development proposals.



Figure 3.3: Coton figure ground plan.



Character area A: High Street/ Historic Core



Buildings are mostly 2 storey in height, and they are traditionally set back from the pavement with small front gardens. Painted brick is the predominant building material, with the presence of buff brick at some buildings. More traditional architectural features include sliding windows, pitched roofs, thatched roofs and plain dark roof tiles are evident in most of the buildings along High Street.

Roofscape is rhythmically animated by chimneys of varying heights and, occasionally, dormer windows.

Character area B: Whitwell Way



Predominantly 2 storey semi-detached which are constructed from red brick. Dwellings are set back behind deep front gardens and on-plot parking.

Roofs are generally pitched with red and brown pantiles and chimneys of varying heights.

Architectural features include white uPVC windows and front doors simple canopies. Boundaries generally marked by low brick walls or timber fences with some vegetation present.

Character area C: Silverdale Avenue



Predominantly 2 storey terraces which are constructed from buff or red brick. Front gardens are deep providing the opportunity for plants and hedgerow planting to mark boundaries between properties.

Roofs are generally pitched with brown pantiles and chimneys of similar heights.

Architectural features include white uPVC windows and front door canopies.

3.4 Community facilities & services

The site's location means that new sustainable development can be created that is able to take full advantage of the local services and facilities that are already available. The proposal will look to maximise the opportunities these services offer to create a sustainable development.

Coton benefits from a number of local services and facilities including a church, a public house and a Village Hall. Coton Church of England Primary School is located within a 5 minute walk to the east of the proposed site. Harvest View Bed & Breakfast is located to the west of the site with the Coton Orchard Garden Centre which is located to the east of the site, within a 10 - 15 minute walk.

Key services and facilities are highlighted on Figure 3.4 opposite.



The Plough is located to the east of the site, within a 10 minute walk.



Coton Orchard Garden Centre is located to the east of the site, within a 10 - 15 minute walk.



Saint Peter's Church is located along Whitwell Way to the east of the site, within a 5 minute walk.



Cambridge American Cemetery And Memorial is located to the north of the site, within a 10 - 15 minute walk.

- Site boundary
- 1 Harvest View Bed & Breakfast
- 2 Whitwell Cottage Farm
- 3 The Plough
- 4 Coton Orchard Garden Centre
- 1 Coton Church of England Primary School
- 1 Saint Peter's Church
- 2 Coton Village Hall
- 3 Cambridge American Cemetery And Memorial
- 1 Coton Cricket Club
- * Existing allotments site



Figure 3.4: Coton key services and facilities.



3.5 Movement

Highway network

Coton is located to the west of the M11 which provides the main highway route north south. The A1303 (Madingley Road) runs approximately 0.5 mile (0.8 km) to the north of the site and provides a direct access to Cambridge City Centre to the east and the A428 to the west.

The proposed site is currently accessed off Whitwell Way to the south, with this road links to High Street and Cambridge Road beyond.

Walking & cycling accessibility

In addition to the existing adopted pavements which run along the main vehicular routes throughout the village, there are a number of dedicated Public Rights of Way around the village providing access to the wider countryside.

The closest Public Rights of Way runs to the east of the site leading to a wider network of public footpaths. Improved cycling routes through to Cambridge are proposed as part of the Comberton Greenway Project.

Accessibility to public transport

The public transport accessibility of the site is linked to the existing Whippet No 8 bus service, which links Coton with Cambridge. This has 3 services each day, stopping on High Street within a 5 minute walk (400m) of the site. The site's public transport accessibility will potentially be further enhanced through the proposed Cambourne to Cambridge Better Public Transport project which is intended to provide reliable and sustainable services bypassing general traffic congestion. We understand this project remains under scrutiny in terms of delivery but it is the case that, if implemented, it will assist in the site's accessibility credentials.

Cambridge train station is located approximately 3.5miles (5.6km) to the south east of Coton and provides regular services to London Kings Cross, London Liverpool Street, Brighton, Norwich, Stansted Airport, Peterborough and Birmingham New Street.

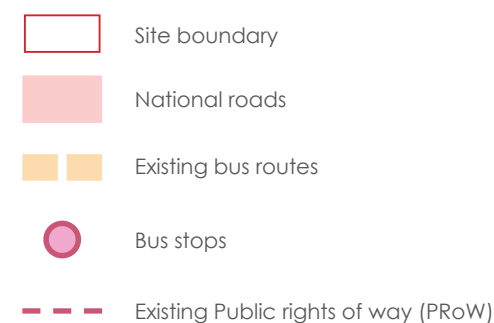




Figure 3.5: Existing bus routes, bus stops and Public Rights of Way.



3.6 Cambourne to Cambridge Better Public Transport Project & Comberton Greenway Project

Whilst appreciatory this project is still under review, the Phase 1 route proposals for the Cambourne to Cambridge Better Transport Project involves an off-road alignment between Madingley Mulch and the city centre via Coton as indicated. It therefore provides access to key employment areas in West Cambridge and the city centre, allowing interchange with other public transport services providing access to key employment areas in north-east Cambridge, Cambridge Biomedical Campus and other locations.

Whilst the detailed design has not yet been finalised, but potentially there could be bus stops where the proposed route crosses Cambridge Road, immediately to the north east of the village. These would be within a 10 minute walk of the site (up to 800m), which, given the large number of high quality, frequent bus services provided, is considered a reasonable walking distance. The Cambourne to Cambridge Better Public Transport project will also provide a shared footway / cycleway alongside the route, accepting that the proposals are currently the subject of further local review.

The proposals, if delivered, would enhance the already good cycle connectivity that Coton has with Cambridge, via a car-free cycle route over the M11 into the West Cambridge site. Most of Cambridge City Centre is within 3 miles from the site, and the University's key employment location at West Cambridge and the North West Cambridge ("Eddington") development are less than 2 miles from the site. The Cambridge Biomedical Campus and the north-east Cambridge (including the Cambridge Science Park, Cambridge Business Park and St John's Innovation Park) are within 5 miles of the site.

These are easy cycling distances, based on Department for Transport guidance which notes that, for commuter journeys, cycling distances up to 5 miles are not uncommon. The site at Coton therefore has appreciable potential to have good accessibility by cycling to key employment areas in Cambridge.

Overall, the site has good potential to meet several key national and local transport objectives. These are enhanced by the Cambourne to Cambridge Better Public Transport project and the Comberton Greenway Project.

Subject to further assessments, the site has the potential to:

- Reduce the need to travel, particularly by private car;
- Provide vehicular access directly onto the local road network; and
- Promote a cycling and public transport strategy focussed on providing high quality connections with nearby Cambridge via the Comberton Greenway and the proposed Cambourne to Cambridge Better Public Transport projects, helping to reduce the potential vehicular impact associated with the development.

 Cambourne to Cambridge Phase 1 preferred route

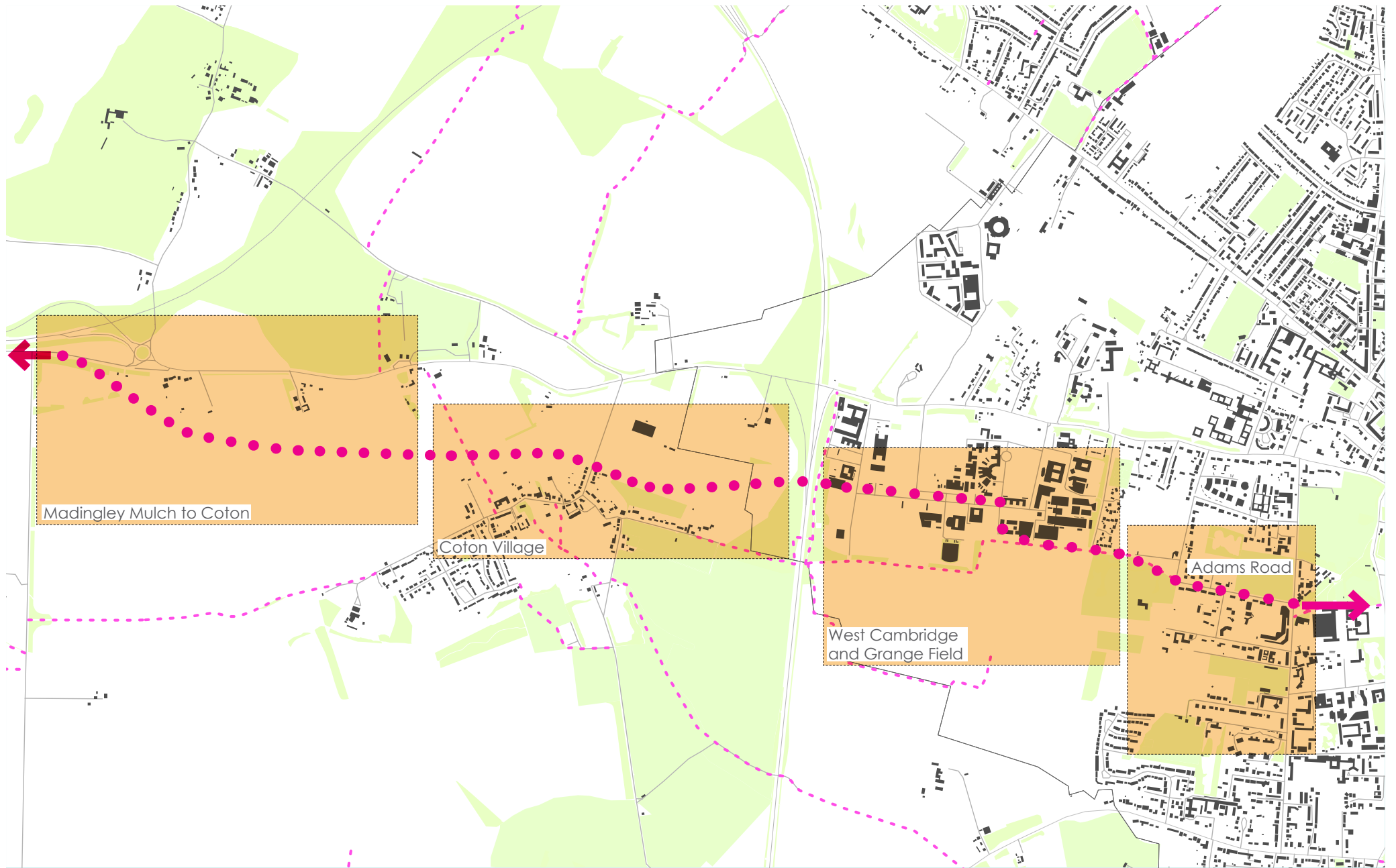


Figure 3.6: Cambourne to Cambridge Phase 1 Preferred Option - Greater Cambridge Partnership Joint Assembly - January 2020.



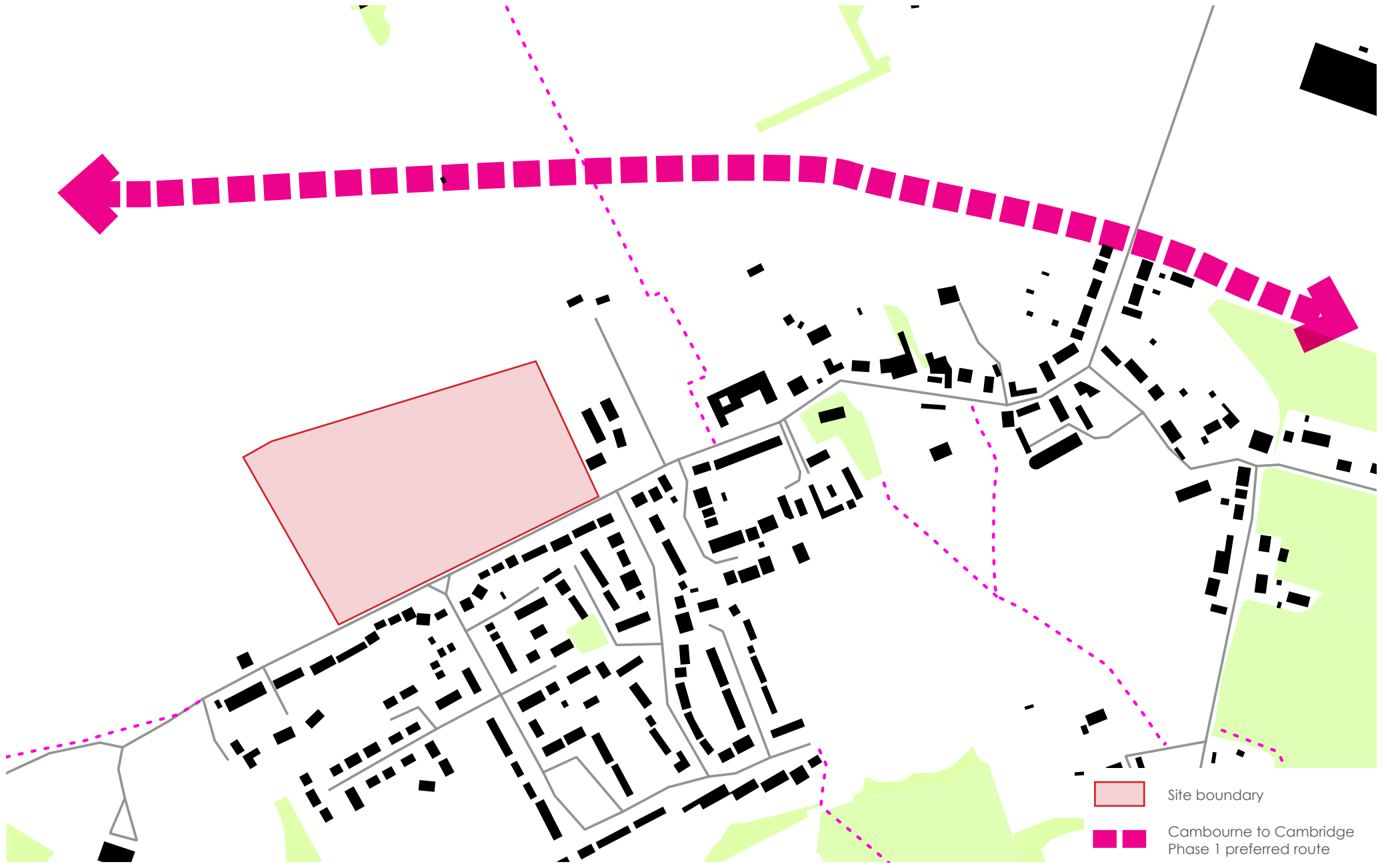


Figure 3.7: Cambourne to Cambridge Phase 1 preferred route - Coton Village context.

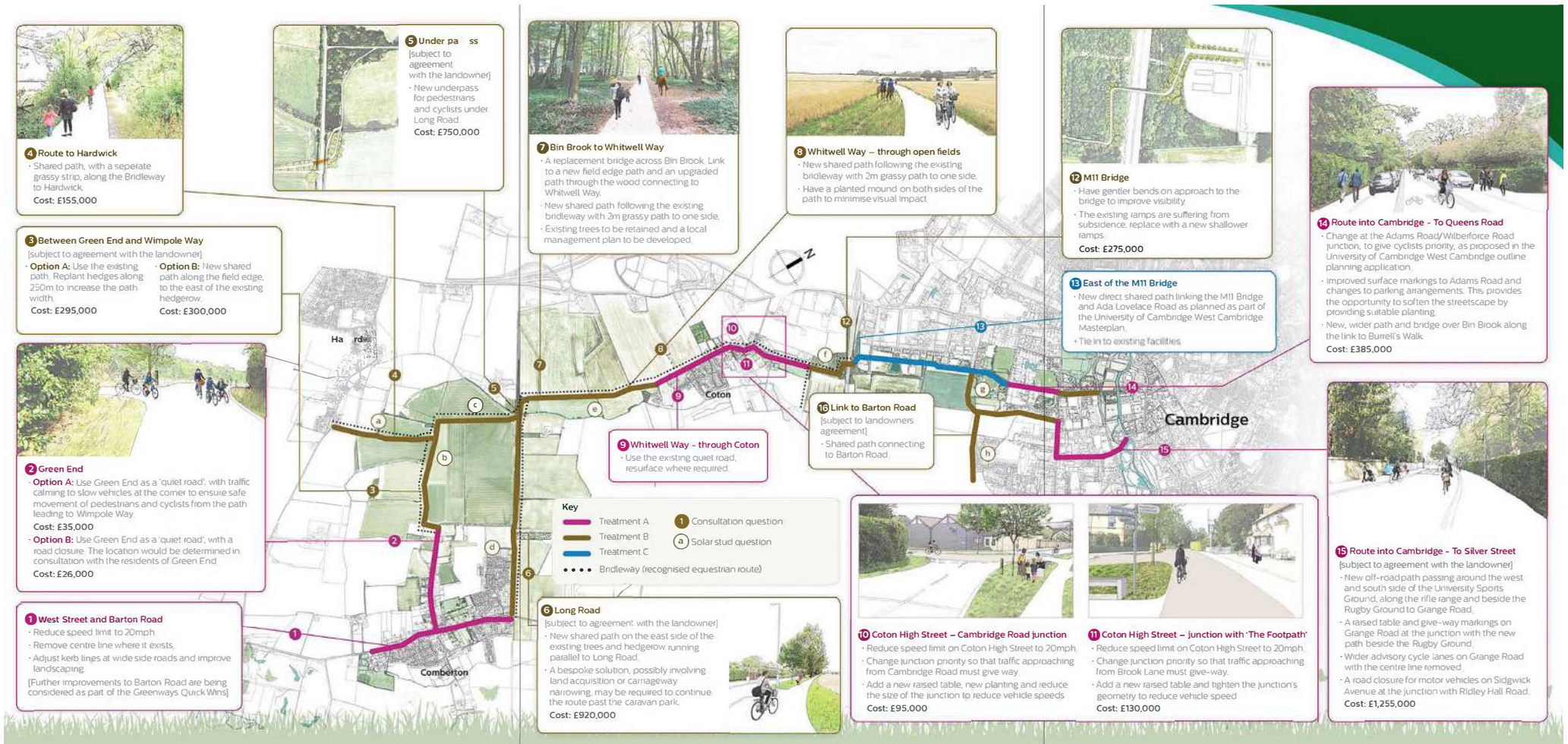


Figure 3.8: Comberton Greenway Consultation - Greater Cambridge Partnership.

04. EVALUATION

3.7 Baseline site analysis

The opportunities and influences associated with the proposed development have been identified following the assessment of the site and its surroundings.

These are listed below and illustrated on Figure 4.1 opposite. This assessment of the site and its surroundings has informed the design proposals.

Opportunities

- Provision of high quality, sustainable, and sensitively designed new housing, with the site able to accommodate up to 120 new homes with associated green infrastructure.
- Create a carefully planned new residential led development that is well-related to the existing settlement of Coton.
- Whitwell Way is proposed to form part of the Comberton Greenway cycle links. Safe cycle and pedestrian links along Whitwell Way to connect to the existing school site to the east of the site can be provided.
- To provide new children's play area which will form attractive focal point for new and existing residents.
- Provide new area of public open space with tree, thicket, and meadow planting along the western boundary of the site to help filter views of the proposed development, but to also form an integral part of the site's green infrastructure network.

Influences

- The new dwellings should be outward looking onto Whitwell Way and the proposed public open spaces.
- New boundary vegetation to include new tree and thicket planting which will create a landscaped edge to the development. In particular along the undefined northern boundary of the site, setting the entire site in a landscaped framework.
- The site falls to a low point in the south western corner. Where this low point occurs will define the location of the potential attenuation basin.
- Existing boundaries vegetation to be retained where possible, with new tree, thicket, and meadow planting to compensate the removal of vegetation to facilitate the access to the site.

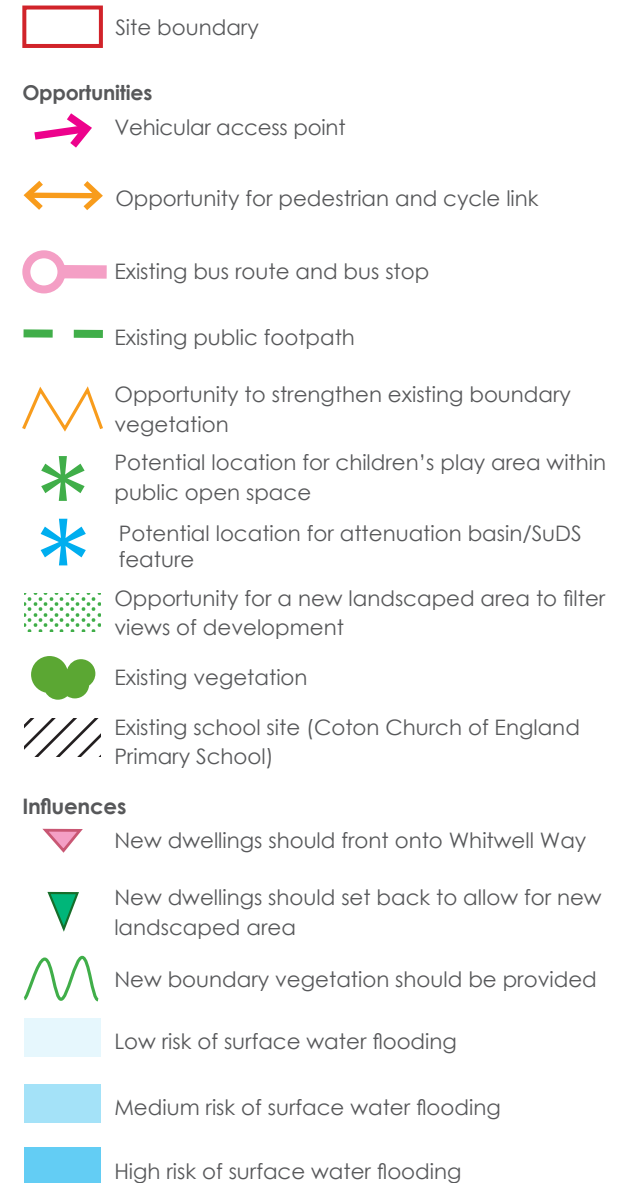




Figure 4.1: The opportunities and influences plan.



05. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

4.1 Vision - Place making approach

The vision is to create a sustainable new living environment, with new homes that are accessible to everyone, an inclusive place which makes everyone feel comfortable, safe and secure, a place where people want to live, which promotes an active lifestyle and sense of wellbeing. The proposals will provide ready access to public open space and the wider countryside. It will deliver a wide range of choice of new, sustainable, high quality housing, including affordable housing.

The proposed development will deliver a high standard of housing design irrespective of price or tenure. The scheme will focus on establishing a strong sense of community.

- **Positive identity** to ensure that the new development responds to the site and contextual opportunities, so fully integrating with its surroundings and defining new spaces.
- **Viable and sustainable place**, which is deliverable and contributes in a positive way to the long term economic viability of the area.
- **A connected place** which links and integrates with the existing community of Coton.
- **Welcoming place** which helps to foster a strong scene of place and community.
- **Delivering best practice** in development which is responsive to the environmental constraints, including the existing mature vegetation.
- **Quality homes** for a wide range of local needs, space to live and play, good access to facilities, public transport and a place people can be proud of.

A placemaking approach has been adopted to ensure that the development responds positively to the context and opportunities of the surrounding area and the site. Building on this, a strong vision has been developed which brings new site-specific ideas into play, as well as drawing on best practice. The concept is driven by the objective of creating a strong sense of place and community, fully integrated and linked into the immediate surroundings and the village of Coton.



5.1 The development framework plan

The development framework plan has been produced to help illustrate the potential for development with appropriate green infrastructure, public open space and children's play provision. The concept is based upon the analysis of the site and local surroundings.

The Development framework plan shows the site boundary, the means of access into the site, the areas of retained and new landscaping and the location and extent of the proposed land uses, including the amount of built development.

A number of design principles have influenced the development proposals for the site, including:

- Provide up to 120 dwellings, offering a range of dwelling types, sizes and tenures.
- Creation of a high quality, sustainable new neighbourhood that integrates successfully with the existing settlement edge.
- Creation of a place that is accessible to everyone, which makes everyone feel comfortable, safe and secure and a place where people want to live.
- To promote active lifestyles and a sense of wellbeing through the provision of new public open space that includes new landscaping, two children's play areas and new recreational routes.
- Create a 'place' which will become a destination in its own right with the provision of open space facilities that will encourage existing residents to visit the site.





Figure 5.1: The development framework plan.

5.2 The Concept Masterplan

The initial Concept Masterplan provides a vision for how the design principles could be realised to create a sustainable, high quality and distinctive new neighbourhood that fits with the existing community. The initial Concept Masterplan shows how the proposed primary street through the new development will connect to Whitwell Way to create a development that will form an integrated and highly accessible part of the wider Coton village.

It is envisaged that the new homes will overlook Whitwell Way to provide overlooking and attractive aspects along the road. New homes will set back from the site's boundaries to allow for new areas of public open spaces. These areas will include new tree and thicket planting, which will create a landscaped edge to the development. In particular, a relatively wide area of public open space with tree, thicket, and meadow planting along western boundary of the site will be provided to help filter views of the proposed development and to create an attractive edge to respect the adjoining countryside.

In addition, a new Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) will be included together with areas for informal recreation.

A new vehicular access point will be provided from Whitwell Way. Whitwell Way is proposed to form part of the Comberton Greenway cycle links. Safe cycle and pedestrian links along Whitwell Way to connect to the existing school site to the east of the site can be provided.



Key spaces with priority for pedestrian movements





Figure 5.2: The Concept Masterplan.



5.3 Access strategy

The site has extensive frontage with Whitwell Way which is a single carriageway road subject to a 30mph speed limit. There are ample opportunities to deliver an appropriate site access junction from Whitwell Way into the site which meet highways design criteria, and an indicative priority T-junction layout has been prepared to demonstrate this. A secondary, emergency point of access would be provided into the site along Whitwell Way, and this could be in the form of a shared footway / cycleway access. A new footway would be introduced along the northern side of Whitwell Way, within the highway boundary, to provide an appropriate pedestrian connection to the Coton Primary School located within a 5 minute walk of the site.

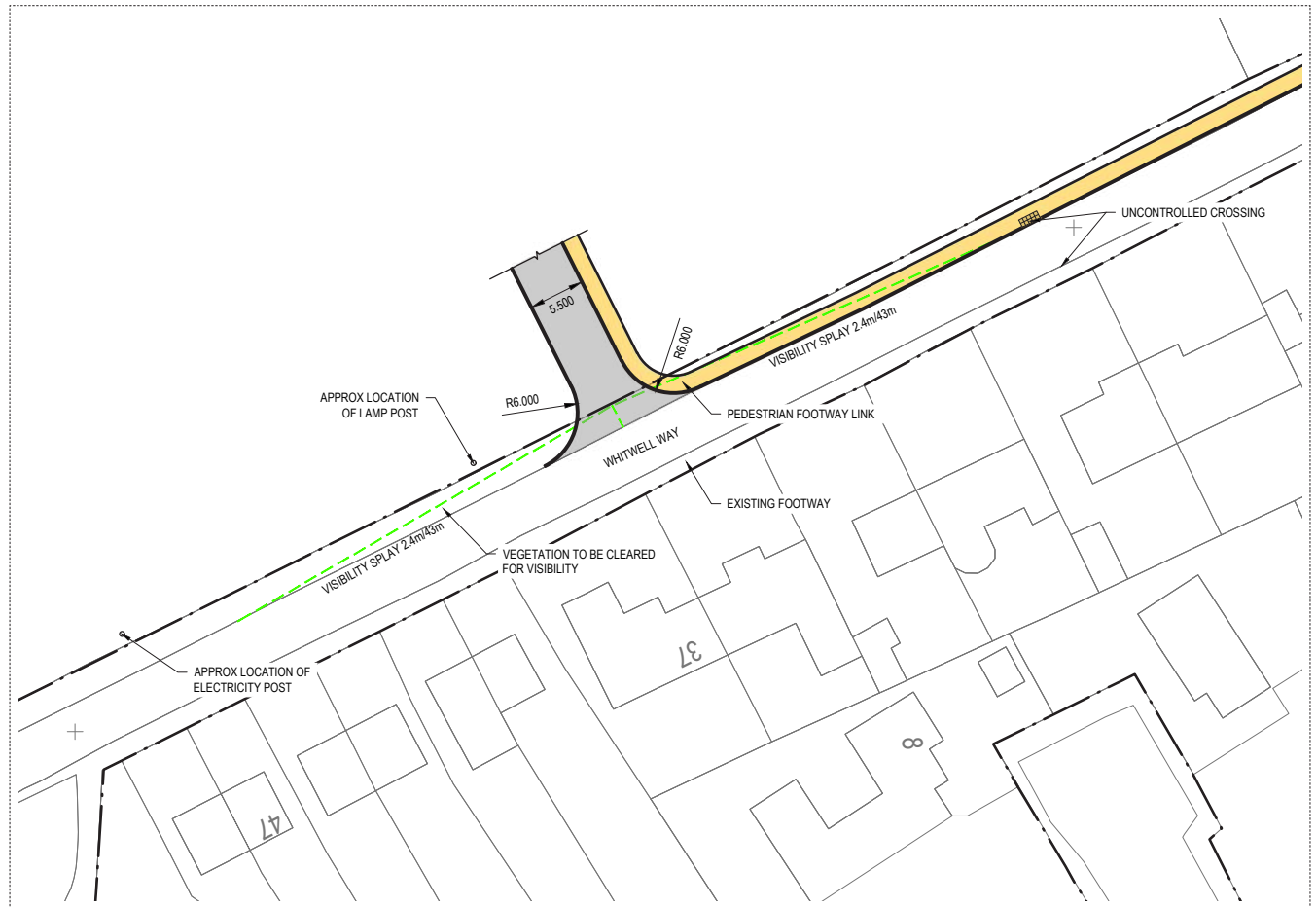
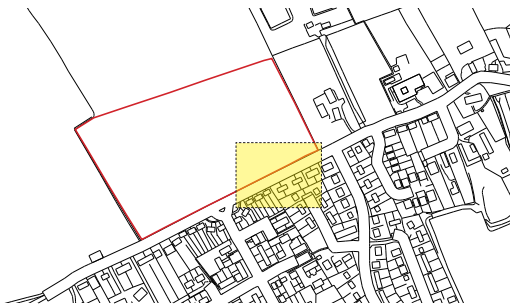


Figure 5.3: Potential site access arrangement.









5.4 Land uses and density

The site covers an area of 5.291 hectares. The proposals within the site encompass the following uses:

Residential Development Area - up to 120 dwellings (3.4 hectares)

The development accommodates a residential development area measuring approximately 3.4 hectares, providing for up to 120 dwellings. The average net density for the development area is 35 dwellings per hectare (dph).

The housing mix will include a range of house types, sizes and tenures. 40% of the homes will be affordable and these will be fully integrated within the market housing, and be of a type and size that meets local needs.

-  Site boundary: **5.291 ha**
-  Proposed residential area: **3.4 ha**
-  Green infrastructure: **1.891 ha**
-  Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)
-  Local Area for Play (LAP)
-  Proposed attenuation basin/SuDS feature

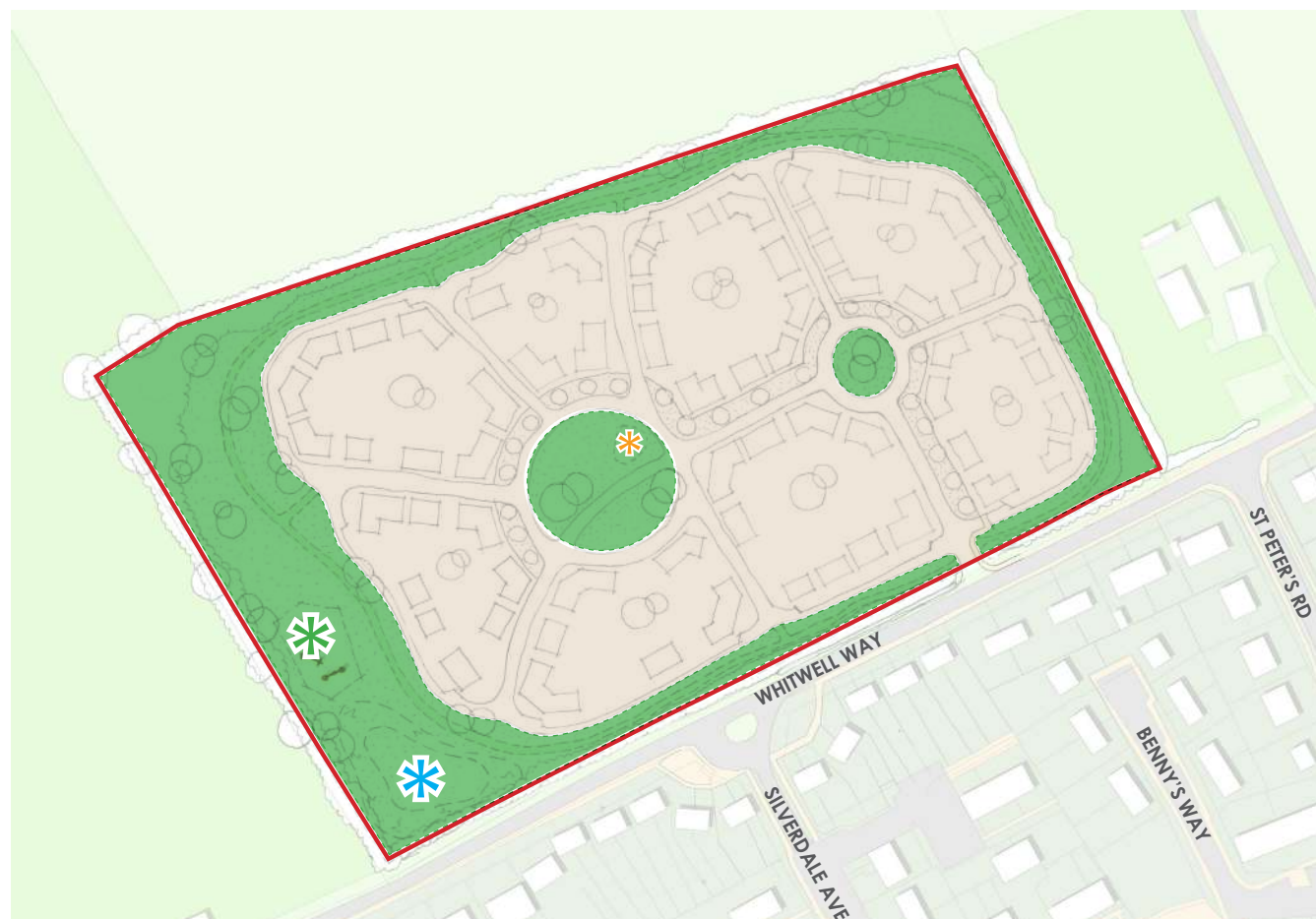


Figure 5.4: Land use plan.



Green infrastructure - 1.891 hectares

The initial concept masterplan delivers a coherent green infrastructure framework that conserves the existing vegetations and aims to establish a variety of new landscape features. Overall, approximately 36% of the site will remain as green infrastructure and comprise areas of retained trees and hedgerows, new landscaping, public open space, the creation of a central green, children's play areas, and SuDS feature.



The initial concept masterplan shows how the green infrastructure network is fully integrated with the new homes to provide a range of multi-functional green spaces that are easy to access.

New play facilities are proposed within the development to provide benefits to new and existing residents alike.



New public open space overlooked by proposed properties for natural surveillance.

-  Site boundary
-  Proposed informal and amenity green space
-  Proposed vehicular access
-  Opportunity for pedestrian and cycle link
-  Proposed recreational route
-  Existing vegetation
-  Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)
-  Local Area for Play (LAP)
-  Proposed attenuation basin/SuDS feature



Figure 5.5: Green infrastructure plan.



Peripheral open space

The peripheral open space is a ribbon of natural and informal landscaping creating a sensitive and natural green buffer along the proposed site boundaries. This landscaped open space will provide an important transition between the proposed built development and the open countryside. The peripheral open space will offer a flexible and versatile leisure space for all to enjoy. A space for people to walk, relax and meet. A Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) is proposed along the western boundary of the site together with areas for informal recreation.



Figure 4.1: Illustrative section A - A.

Central green

The proposed central green will provide more convenient access to green infrastructure facilities. This will create greater opportunities for social interaction, a greater feeling of safety with 'eyes on streets' and the opportunity to adopt healthier lifestyles.

It is envisaged that the central open space will accommodate a Local Area for Play together with areas for informal recreation.



Central green overlooked by proposed properties.



06. DELIVERY

6.2 Delivery

The land North of Whitwell Way, Coton has the potential to deliver up to 120 new homes together with associated green infrastructure, walking, cycling and vehicular access, sustainable drainage and flood attenuation feature, public open space and landscaping.

6.1 Next steps

St. John's College is committed to undertaking consultation and engagement with the Councils, other key stakeholders and the general public prior to submission of any planning application.



07. CONCLUSION

7.1 Summary

In conclusion, there are no overriding technical constraints which would prevent the development of the site. Clearly the proposals would require the removal of the site from the Green Belt as part of a comprehensive review of Green Belt boundaries in the context of the preparation of the new Local Plan.

This is a high level early stage visioning document. Early assessments have informed our thinking and the next stages would allow for more detailed assessment, analysis and design.

The document has illustrated an indicative framework through the initial concept masterplan which could form the basis of future development proposals. This has been built up in response to an appreciation of the context of the local area, demonstrating a credible and compelling opportunity to develop the site.

This work can be the starting point of refinement and detailing, based on further assessment of potential constraints and technical feasibility.

We invite the Councils and other key stakeholders to consider the clear merits of this development opportunity.



