

Skerningham
ESTATES Ltd

BANKSProperty
development with care

Skerningham

Comprehensive Masterplan
Consultation Draft

October 2023

1 | Introduction and Background

“A comprehensive masterplan including an infrastructure phasing plan shall be prepared in consultation with the community prior to the submission of any planning application relating to this site, that informs the mix of uses, layout, scale, design, provision of local and strategic infrastructure including social and community facilities and phasing of the proposed development. The masterplan shall be led by the applicant(s) and should be based on the design approach and principles established in the Council’s Design Code, a strong understanding of the characteristics of the site and its surrounds and incorporate the key principles for the development as set out in points a to i below. To ensure that a cohesive development is delivered at Skerningham, the Council will only approve planning applications that adhere with the comprehensive masterplan and the Council’s design code and deliver the necessary local and strategic infrastructure including social and community facilities at the appropriate phase of the development identified in the infrastructure phasing plan to support the coordinated provision of infrastructure and housing development.”

(Extract from Policy H 10, Darlington Local Plan, February 2022)

This Masterplan has been prepared by Lichfields on behalf Skerningham Estates Ltd and Banks Property. It provides a Comprehensive Masterplan and Infrastructure Phasing Plan for the proposed development at Skerningham.

Policy H 10 Skerningham – Site Allocation (Strategic Policy), the policy most relevant to the allocation of the site, makes clear that a Comprehensive Masterplan including an Infrastructure Phasing Plan should be prepared by the applicant(s) prior to the submission of any planning application relating to the site. It also states that the Comprehensive Masterplan should be based on the design approach and principles established in the Design Code (which is prepared or led by the Darlington Borough Council (“the Council”)).

The preparation of the Design Code, undertaken by independent consultants appointed by the Council, has been ongoing since Spring 2022. It has been informed through various workshops with the local community and stakeholders and was subject to consultation between 9 September 2022 to 17 October 2022; and 9 December 2022 to 13 January 2023. The Design Code was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document by the Council on 28 September 2023.

The preparation of this Masterplan document follows the finalisation of the Design Code. It has been prepared by the lead site promoters Skerningham Estates Ltd and Banks Property.

A draft version of the Masterplan will be made available for the community to view and comment on. The Masterplan will be made available to view via a website for three weeks (from 30 October 2023 to 19 November 2023). Participants will be able to provide comments via the built-in survey and through questionnaire surveys available at drop in events.

The delivery of Skerningham will extend beyond the current Local Plan period (2036). Whilst the Masterplan has identified the likely infrastructure requirements, given the nature and timescales for the build of the development, it should be kept under review.

The document is structured as follows:

- **Site Context**
- **Vision and Objectives**
- **Masterplan Framework**
- **Design and Character**
- **Infrastructure Requirements**
- **Infrastructure Phasing Plan**
- **Conclusion**



2 | Site Context

The Skerningham allocation is a 487 hectare site located to the north of Darlington. It will adjoin the existing communities at Beaumont Hill, Whinfield and Great Burdon. Barmpton Village is also located close to the north eastern edge of the site.

The site is bordered by the Skerne River and Barmpton Village to the north, the A167 to the west, Darlington's urban edge and the A66 to the south and agricultural land to the east. The site is also bisected by the East Coast Mainline.

The A167 and A1150 are the nearest A Roads to the development, which provide links to the town and wider locality. Access will also be gained from Barmpton Lane and Bishopston Lane. The development has been assessed in terms of its potential impact on other nearby roads and junctions, including Whinbush Way, Burtree Lane and Thompson Street East. The A1(M) (Junction 59) and the A66 are the nearest sections of the Strategic Road Network and have been assessed in consultation with National Highways.

The site is allocated for the delivery of up to 4,500 dwellings to be delivered with supporting infrastructure and facilities (as detailed in Policy H 10 a to i). However, as a result of the Golf Club's decision to remain, the capacity of Skerningham is around 3,700 new homes.

Banks Property is the lead developer for the land on the western part of the allocation, which includes land adjacent to the A167 and west of the East Coast Mainline. Policy H 10 identifies the delivery of 600 dwellings and local retail/ community facilities on this part of the allocation during the plan period.

Skerningham Estates Ltd is the lead developer for the land on the east of the East Coast Mainline. Policy H 10 identifies 1,050 dwellings to be delivered during the plan period with initial phases located on land adjoining Barmpton Lane.

Paragraph 6.10.6 in the Local Plan makes clear that these numbers are not regarded as the maximum number of homes that the site could deliver during the plan period.

The site is also a designated Garden Village following the announcement by the Government on 27 June 2019, with a key objective being to boost the delivery of new homes.

In this context, the delivery of the site could be accelerated during the plan period.



Figure 2.1 Site Location

3 | Vision and Objectives

The Vision for Skerningham is:

“To create a highly liveable and sustainable community that prioritises the people that live there; their health and well-being and overall quality of life.”

This vision is established in the Design Code which also sets out the three key objectives to achieve this vision for Skerningham.

Objectives

Healthy Living

A strong health and well-being focus, secured by nature led design, and a 20 minute walkable neighbourhood design philosophy in order to encourage walking and cycling.

This objective follows Darlington’s selection as an NHS England Healthy New Town – one of 10 sites in the country chosen to take forward principles to improve health and wellbeing.

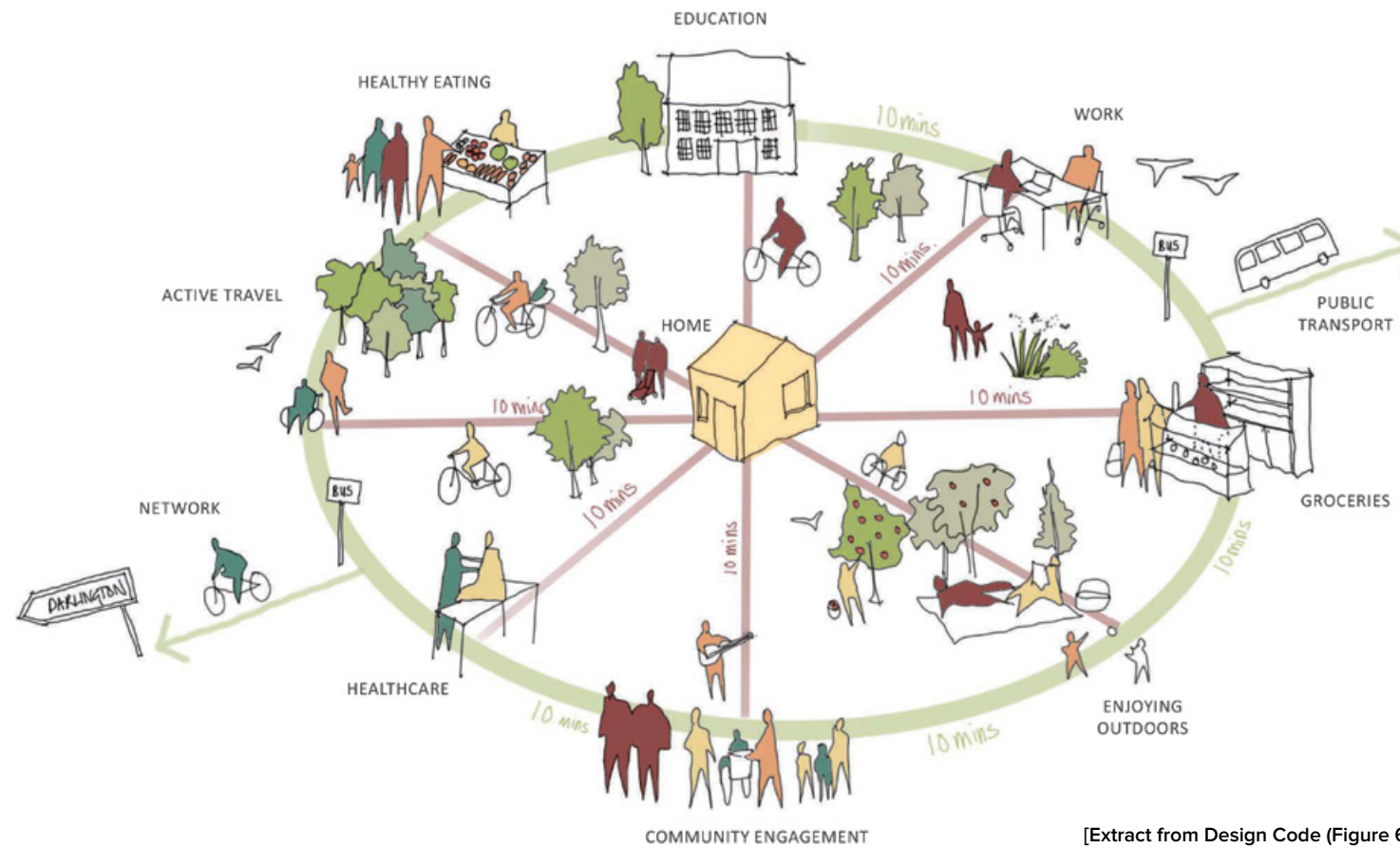
Innovation

Development will embrace the latest technologies in relation to energy, climate change objectives and digital communication. As the build out of the development will take place over an extended period of time, it will continue to adapt to the rapidly changing technology to meet this objective.

Sense of Place

Skerningham will have a strong identity and sense of place. Architecturally, the layout and appearance of development should be distinctive to Darlington.

It is also recognised from the consultation process that the local communities place high value on access to nature and wildlife and spaces for social interaction. Existing Public Rights of Way will be retained and enhanced along with the provision of new routes towards the Community Woodland to the north of the site.



Partnership Working

Following the designation of the site as a Garden Community, Homes England has retained a strong interest in the development and have contributed to the preparation of this document.

The delivery of the site infrastructure has been discussed with the relevant departments within the Council. Network Rail has also been involved in relation to the proposed crossing over the East Coast Mainline.

The lead developers for the site have worked proactively with the Council, Homes England and the local community, through various engagement events over the years, in order to listen to and understand the concerns and suggestions for the development. This has informed the vision and objectives for the development at Skerningham.



[Image from Design Code (Figure 7)]

4 | Masterplan Framework

The Local Plan includes an Illustrative Masterplan Framework for the site which includes “key principles for the development of the Skertingham site” and “broad locations for land uses and facilities”.

There are two versions of the Illustrative Masterplan Framework at Figures 4.1 and 4.2 which account for scenarios where Darlington Golf Club is relocated within the site and where it remains in its current location.

In January 2023 Darlington Golf Club announced that the Golf Club will remain in its current location. Accordingly, the Masterplan Framework in Figure 4.2 is the likely scenario moving forward and the Masterplan for the development has progressed on this basis. This has an impact on the capacity of the site which would mean a total development in the region of 3,700 dwellings. However, there are some land parcels not used by the Golf Club, which may be available for development.

Both Masterplan Framework options show the broad locations for development cells, the route of the Local Distributor Road, areas of green infrastructure and the location of the Neighbourhood Centre, schools and other community facilities.

The Masterplan (Figure 4.3 on page 7) presents the comprehensive masterplan for the site and the remaining pages in this section present the key parameters for the development.

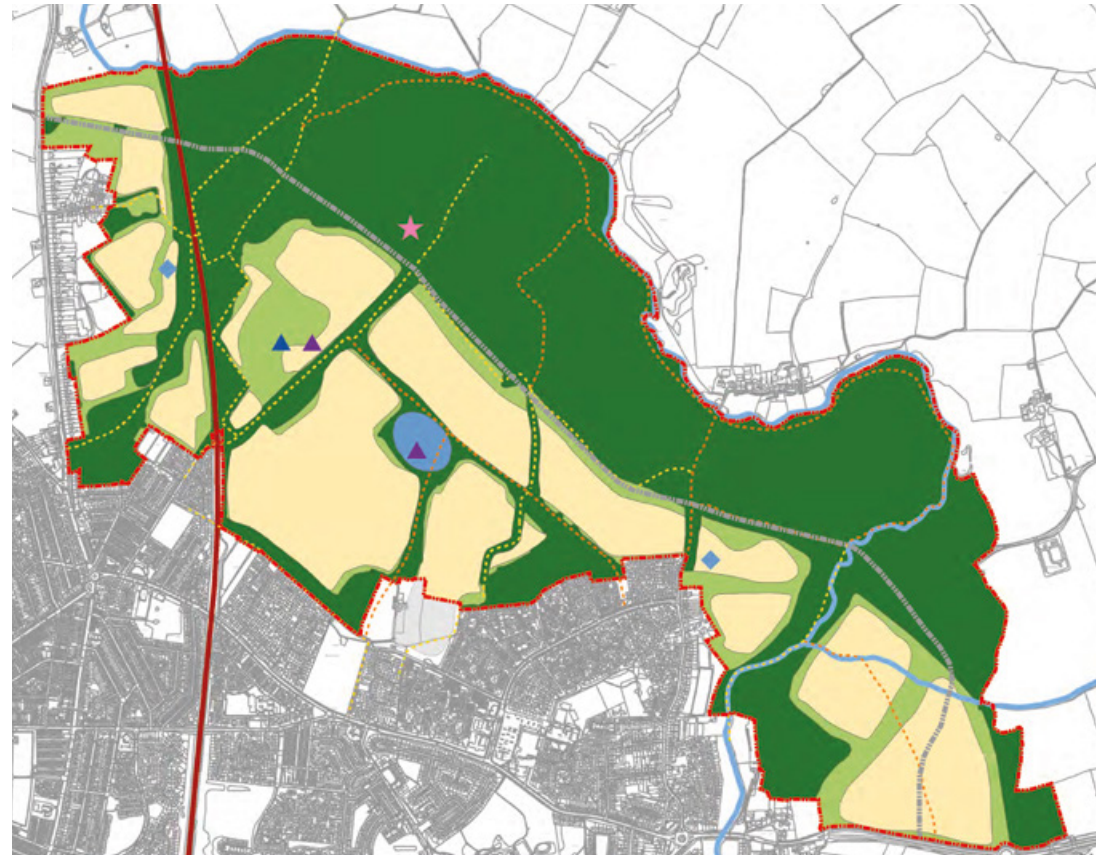


Figure 4.1 Skertingham Masterplan Framework (Extract from Adopted Darlington Local Plan February 2022 Figure 6.1)



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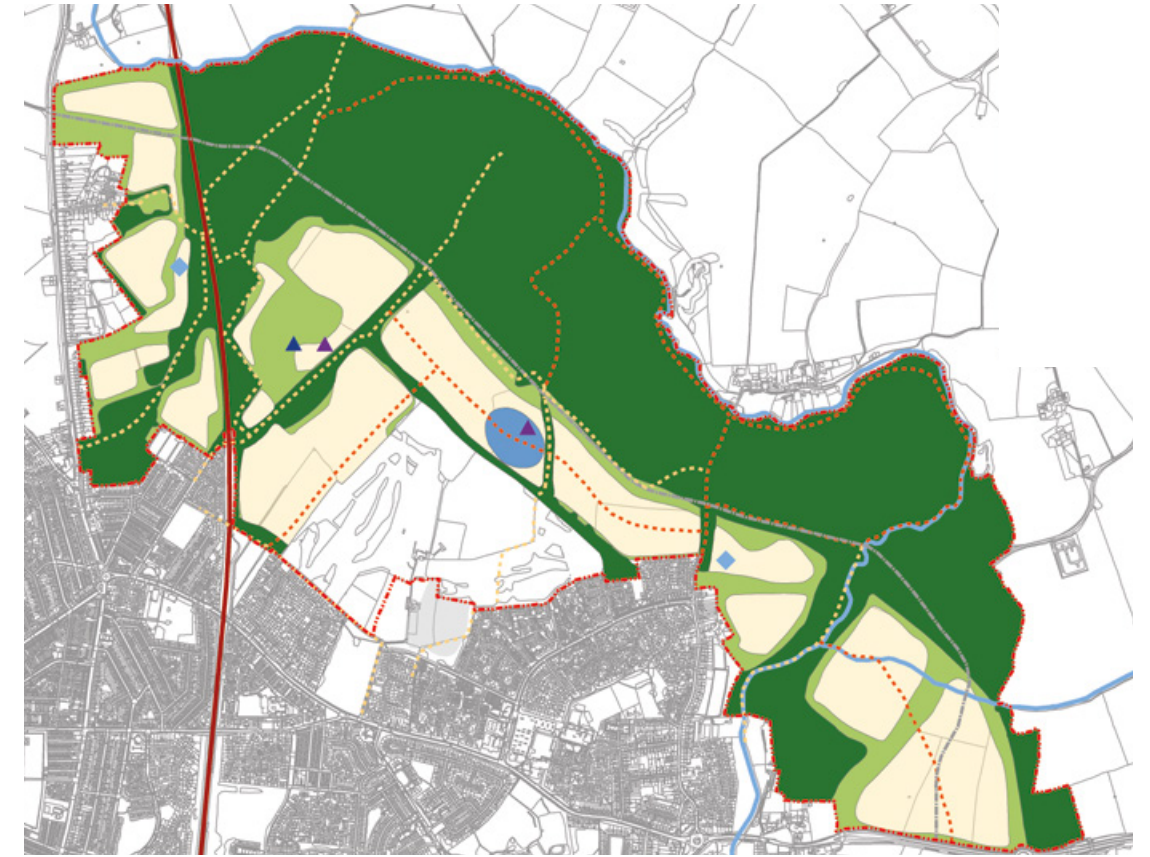


Figure 4.2 Skertingham Masterplan Framework with Darlington Golf Club Remaining insitu (Extract from Adopted Darlington Local Plan February 2022 Figure 6.2)



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Comprehensive Masterplan

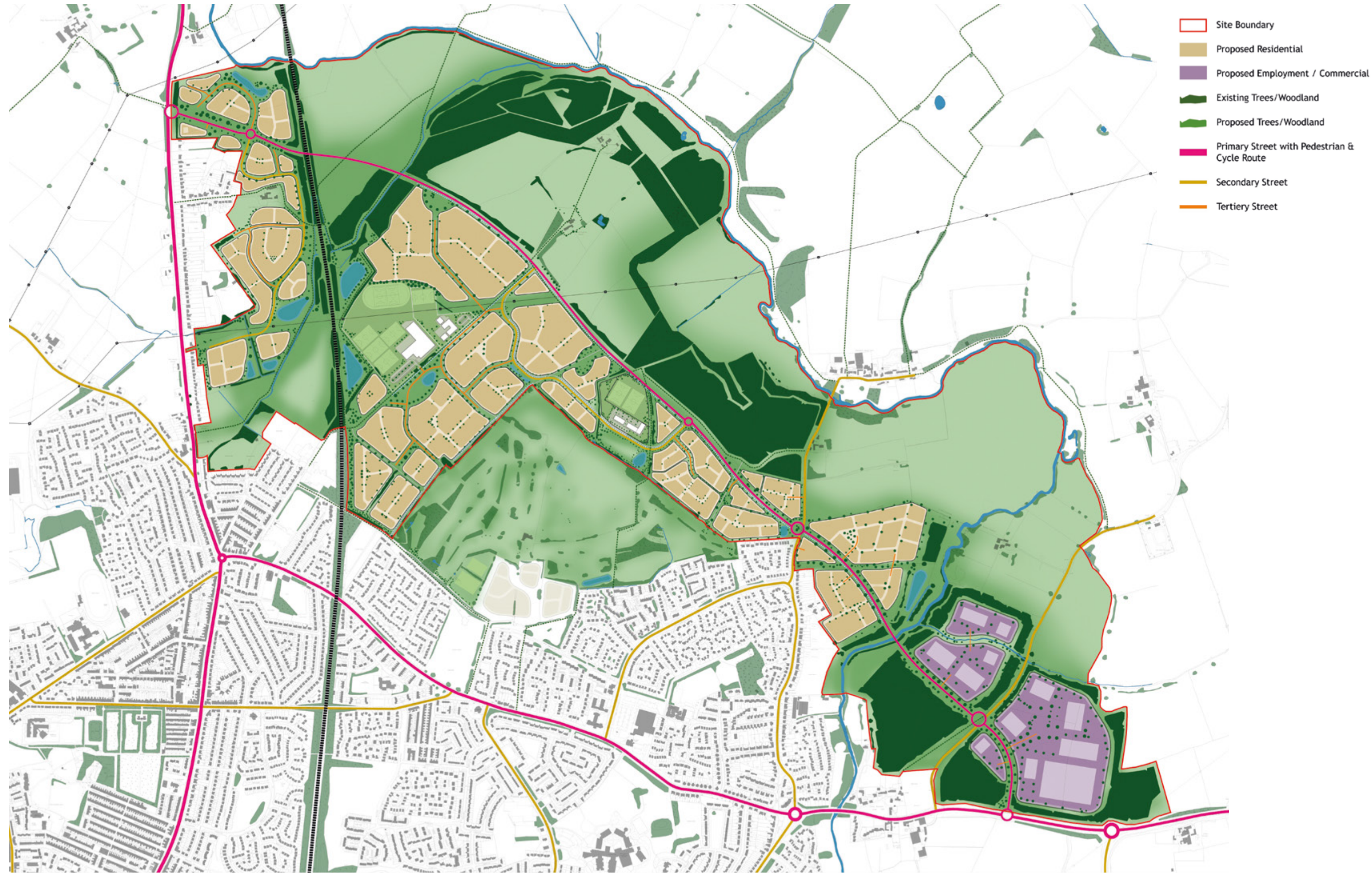


Figure 4.3 Comprehensive Masterplan

4 | Masterplan Framework

Green and Blue Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure

The development at Skerningham will be genuinely landscape-led, and it will adopt an approach that respects the topography, views and the potential for the enhancement to green and blue infrastructure. (see Figure 4.4).

Around 55% of the site area will be retained and enhanced as accessible green infrastructure, managed agricultural land and the existing Golf Club (consistent with Local Plan paragraph 6.10.12). As the Golf Club will remain in its current location, Skerningham Woods to the north of the site will remain as it is and an asset for wildlife and the community. Whilst some tree removal will be necessary in order to deliver the Local Distributor Road, its route is broadly consistent with the one shown in the Masterplan Frameworks in Figures 6.1 and 6.2 of the adopted Local Plan tested through an independent Examination in Public. The Green Infrastructure strategy will also ensure a net increase in the tree planting on the site.

Skerningham Woods to the north of the site will be retained and enhanced. The feedback from the local community demonstrates that it is an important local asset and the development will therefore focus on the enhancement of this area with further planting and creation of new public routes. As shown opposite, other Green Infrastructure will include existing and new areas of natural/semi-natural open space, managed areas of green space, playing fields (associated with schools and potentially community use agreements) and public areas of open space. Other areas will also be retained for agricultural use.

Existing public rights of way will be retained and enhanced, where practicable, which provide connections towards the retained areas of Green Infrastructure in the northern part of the site. These routes will be complemented with new active travel routes to provide connectivity between new homes and social infrastructure green spaces and other destinations.

Using existing routes and, through the creation of additional proposed paths and walkways, the Masterplan will deliver circular routes of varying distances. These routes are illustratively shown in Figure 4.5, with the longest route shown providing a loop from the southern boundary of the site up to Skerningham Woods (to the north) and via Barmpton Village to the east. Figure 6.9 shows illustrative routes associated with the play space strategy.

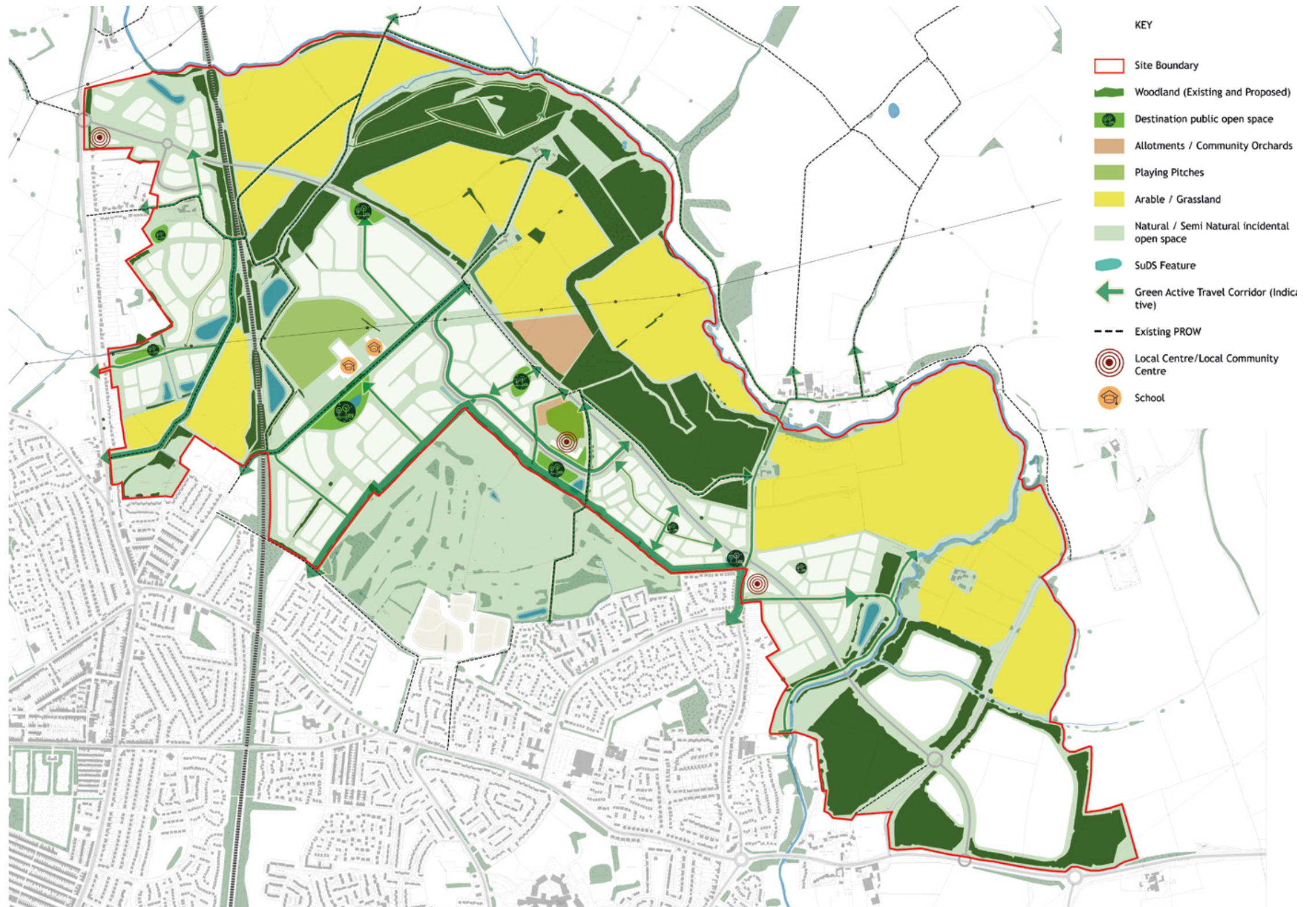


Figure 4.4 Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan

Blue Infrastructure

The River Skerne runs along the northern boundary and through the eastern area of the site. It forms a key asset for nature and wildlife and also the drainage strategy for the development.

A range of multifunctional Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) will be integrated into the development, providing stormwater filtering and attenuation, reduction of flood risk, improvements to water quality and increase to biodiversity.

Management and Maintenance

The development will include various typologies of open space and the approach to managing and maintaining this space will vary accordingly, based on defined requirements.

Skerningham will include areas where formal management of the site is required, including the areas relating to the drainage infrastructure, dedicated areas for biodiversity net gain and the managed areas identified for public use. In these areas, it is envisaged that the green and blue infrastructure will be maintained by a management company. This will be a formal agreement with the lead developers and will be funded via a service charge to the occupiers on the site.

There are other more informal areas of green space within the site such as Skerningham Woods to the north of the site. There is an opportunity for a longer-term stewardship scheme. Under this arrangement, it is proposed that the lead developers would be responsible for the delivery of initial works including the landscaping; thereafter Skerningham management companies would be established to guide the stewardship and maintenance of the Skerningham site. As part of such arrangements, residents and local community groups would input into the longer-term management and care regime.

As part of initiatives to support local food growth, the development is anticipated to provide opportunities in the form of allotments and/or other schemes which follow the Incredible Edible Model, such as community orchards and community grow zones. These provide other opportunities for community management initiatives.

For the areas of the site that are to remain in agricultural use (either during the phased build of the development or in the longer term), they will remain in private ownership (notwithstanding any relevant Public Rights of Way) and will be privately managed.

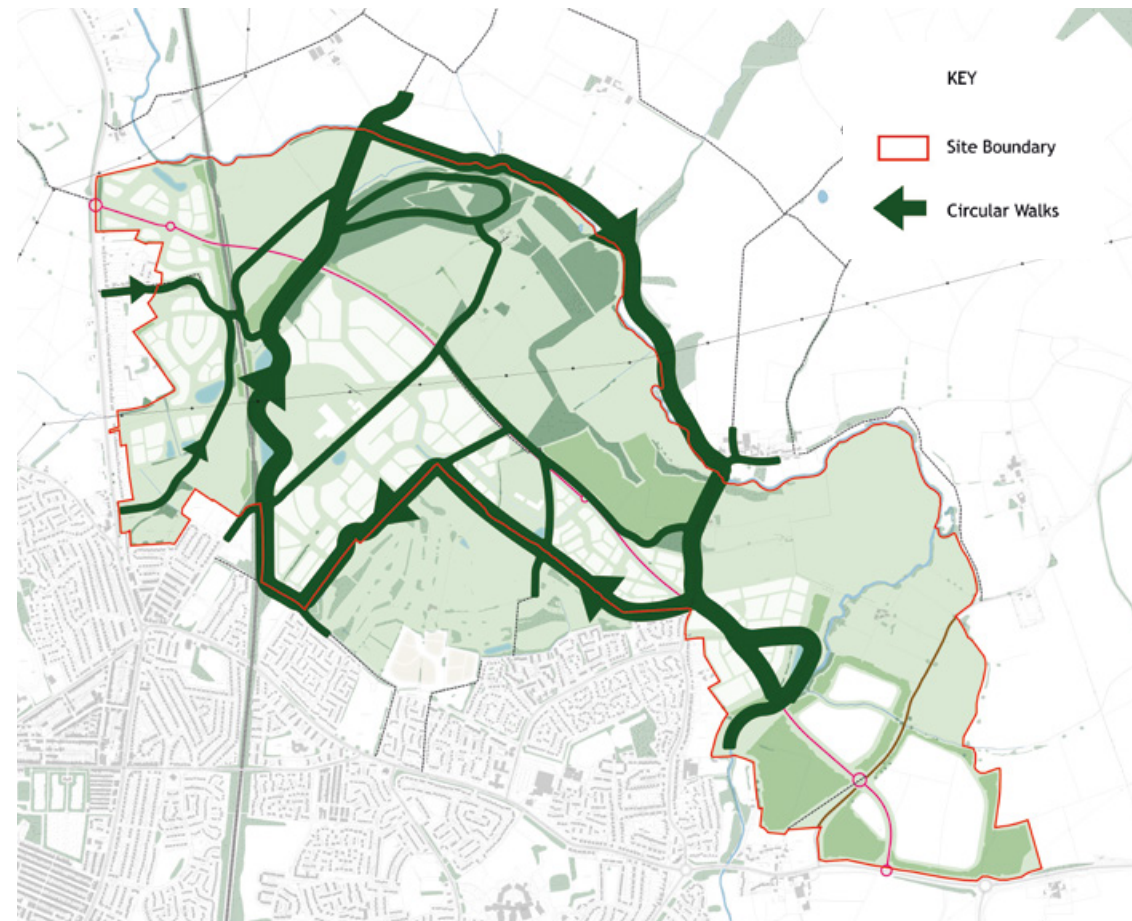


Figure 4.5 Circular Routes Plan



4 | Masterplan Framework

Access and Movement

Sustainable Travel

The development will prioritise sustainable travel as a means of movement through the site. Through the designation of the site as a Garden Village, it has been demonstrated that the site will achieve a sense of place making through the provision of supporting infrastructure alongside the delivery of new homes.

To achieve this, the starting point has been to retain and enhance the existing Public Rights of Way as assets through the site. As well as providing links to the woodland and other green spaces in the northern part of the site (which will remain as a destination for new and existing members of the local community), there is an opportunity to locate the supporting social infrastructure along these routes.

The Design Code builds on this principle further by introducing the concept of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods. Due to the size and shape of the site, it is not possible to deliver all new homes within a 20 minute round trip walking distance from the centrally located neighbourhood centre. However, there is an opportunity to provide local community facilities, such as the provision of convenience store, in other areas of the site.

The development will also maximise opportunities for cycling. Active Travel Corridors are identified which will include segregated footpaths and cycle paths which have been routed to follow the desire lines towards the key destinations within the site. The development will also follow the principles established in the Design Code, which details the specification of paths to be incorporated as part of the road hierarchy. These routes will be designed congruent of LTN 1/20 guidance.

The site benefits from existing public transport services. Development in the early phases will be accessible to existing services on the A167 (to the west) and on Whinbush Way (to the east) which provide frequent links to Darlington. During the later phases there is an opportunity to either divert or introduce new services into the site.

The development should also look at other initiatives such as the inclusion of Mobility Hubs to support sustainable travel. A Mobility Hub could include a car club, cycle storage and repair hub and/or smart lockers.

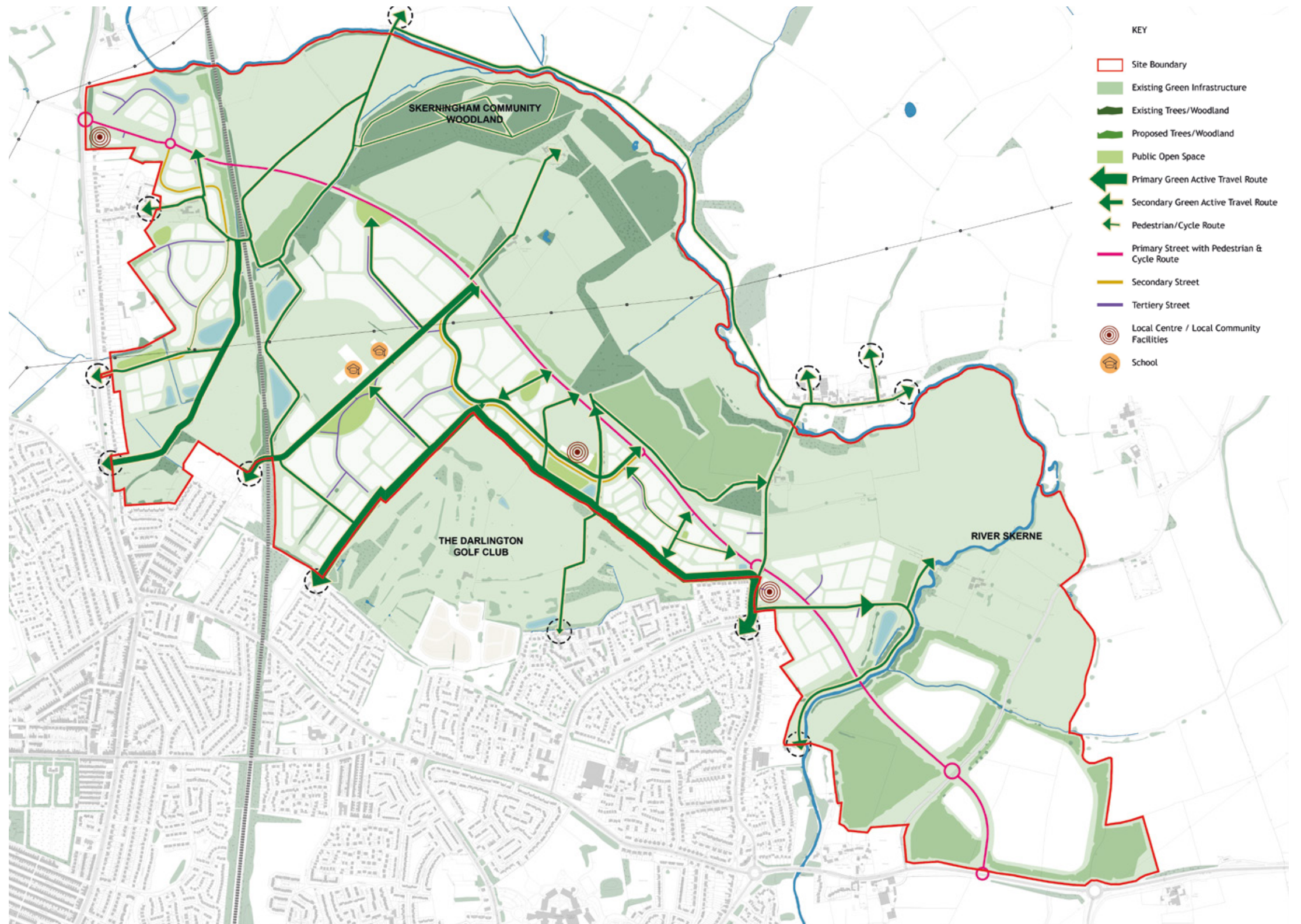


Figure 4.6 Sustainable Travel Plan

Access

The plan opposite shows the principal access points from A167, A1150 and Barmpton Lane (consistent with Policy H 10 part f).

It also shows the key pedestrian and cycle connection points between the site and existing routes.

Local Distributor Road

The illustrative route of the Local Distributor Road is shown opposite. It follows the assessment to determine the most suitable point for the crossing of the East Coast Mainline and it also responds to other constraints across the site.

It also clarifies the locations of the proposed junctions, including those with Barmpton Lane, Bishopton Lane and other access points to the development cells, following discussions with the Council's Highways team.

The Local Distributor Road will provide a connection between the A167 (to the west) and the A1150 (to the east) and will include a crossing of the East Coast Mainline and a new junction on to the A1150. Policy H 10 (part g) states that it will be achieved through the following:

- i. The section of the road between the A167 and the primary development access point shall be delivered prior to the occupation of the first dwelling on land on the western part of the allocation.
- ii. The remaining section of the road to the East Coast Mainline shall be delivered prior to the completion of the development on the western part of the allocation.
- iii. The section of the road between Barmpton Lane and Bishopton Lane shall be delivered prior to the occupation of between the 200th and 450th dwelling on the eastern part of the allocation.
- iv. The road shall be completed in its entirety (including the bridge crossing of the East Coast Mainline) prior to the occupation of between the 900th and 1500th dwelling.
- v. Precise details of the route of the Local Distributor Road will be determined at the planning application stage and a Development Consent Order as applicable.

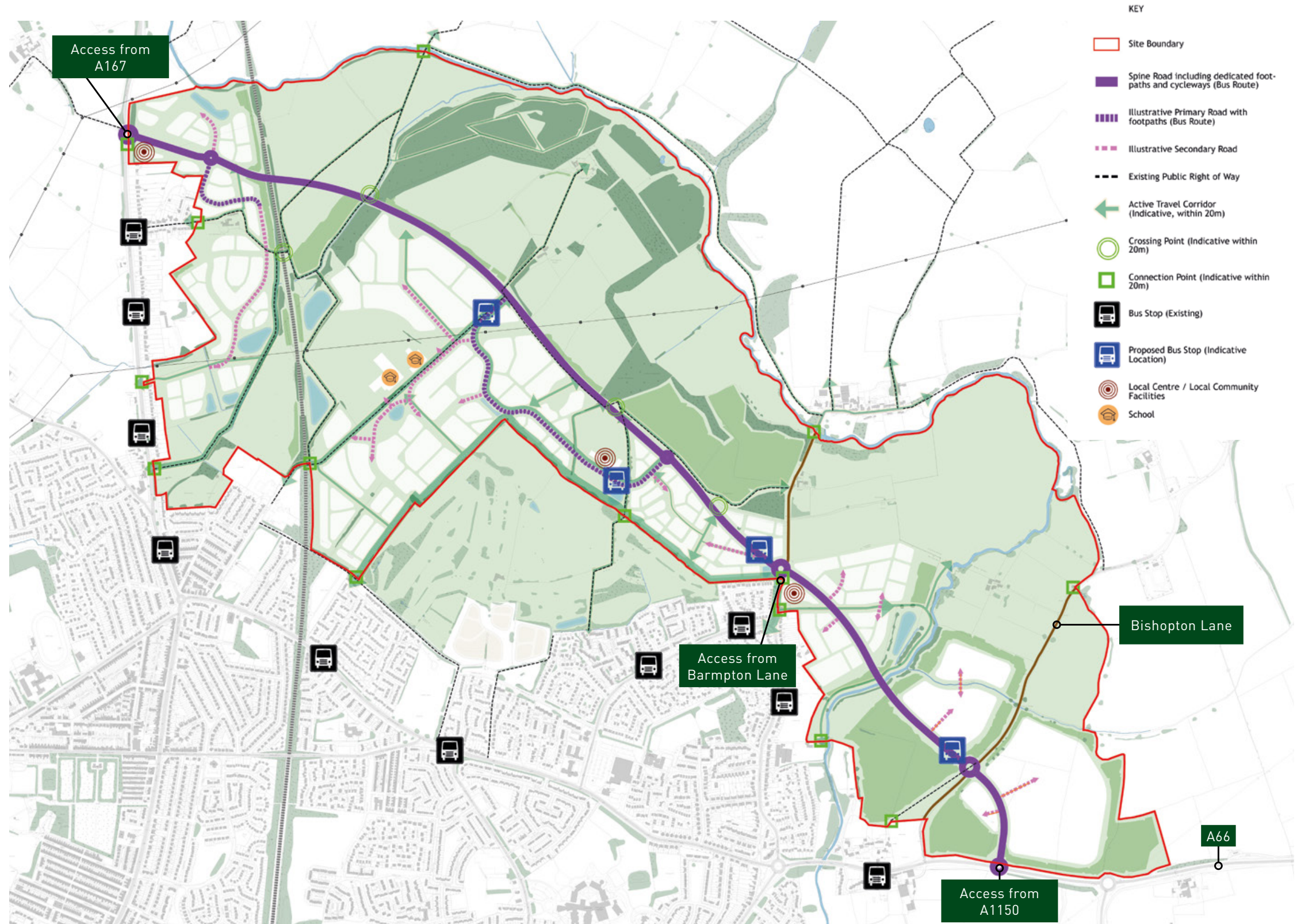


Figure 4.7 Illustrative Access and Road Hierarchy Plan

4 | Masterplan Framework

Land Uses

The plan across presents the proposed development cells and land uses.

Residential

The development cells shown provide the locations for residential dwellings (Use Class C3). Where appropriate, apartments and /or retirement properties could be provided (Use Class C2/C3).

Neighbourhood Centre and Local Community Facilities

The development will include a centrally located and well connected Neighbourhood Centre providing facilities which could include a health care facilities (GPs /Dentists), education, retail, food and drink facilities, consistent with Policy H 10 (part b).

To deliver a sense of place making, and timely delivery of social infrastructure in the Neighbourhood Centre, it is important that the phasing of the development on land to the east of the East Coast Mainline should progress from the parcels adjacent to Barmpton Lane west towards the central area of the allocation.

The Masterplan also includes the proposed locations for other Local Community Facilities across the site consistent with Policy H 10 (part c). Consistent with Figure 6.2 in the local plan, this includes a location to the west of the East Coast Mainline, and in the development cell to the east of Barmpton Lane.

School(s)

The Masterplan provides a location for the potential delivery of a primary school and a reserved space for a secondary school (5 hectares), consistent with Policy H 10 (part d). The need for schools on the site will be kept under review.

Employment and Commercial Space

The site has the potential to provide between 15-30 hectares of employment land on the south eastern corner of the site close to the A66 Little Burdon roundabout. However, this land was not assessed as part of the most recent Employment Land Review process and the Plan already makes sufficient provision for the employment needs of the borough over the Plan period on existing employment sites and new allocations, such as Central Park, Ingenium Parc and Greater Faverdale. The need to release this part of the Skerningham site for employment uses will be considered when the Local Plan is next reviewed, and as part of any future update/review of the Council's employment land evidence base.

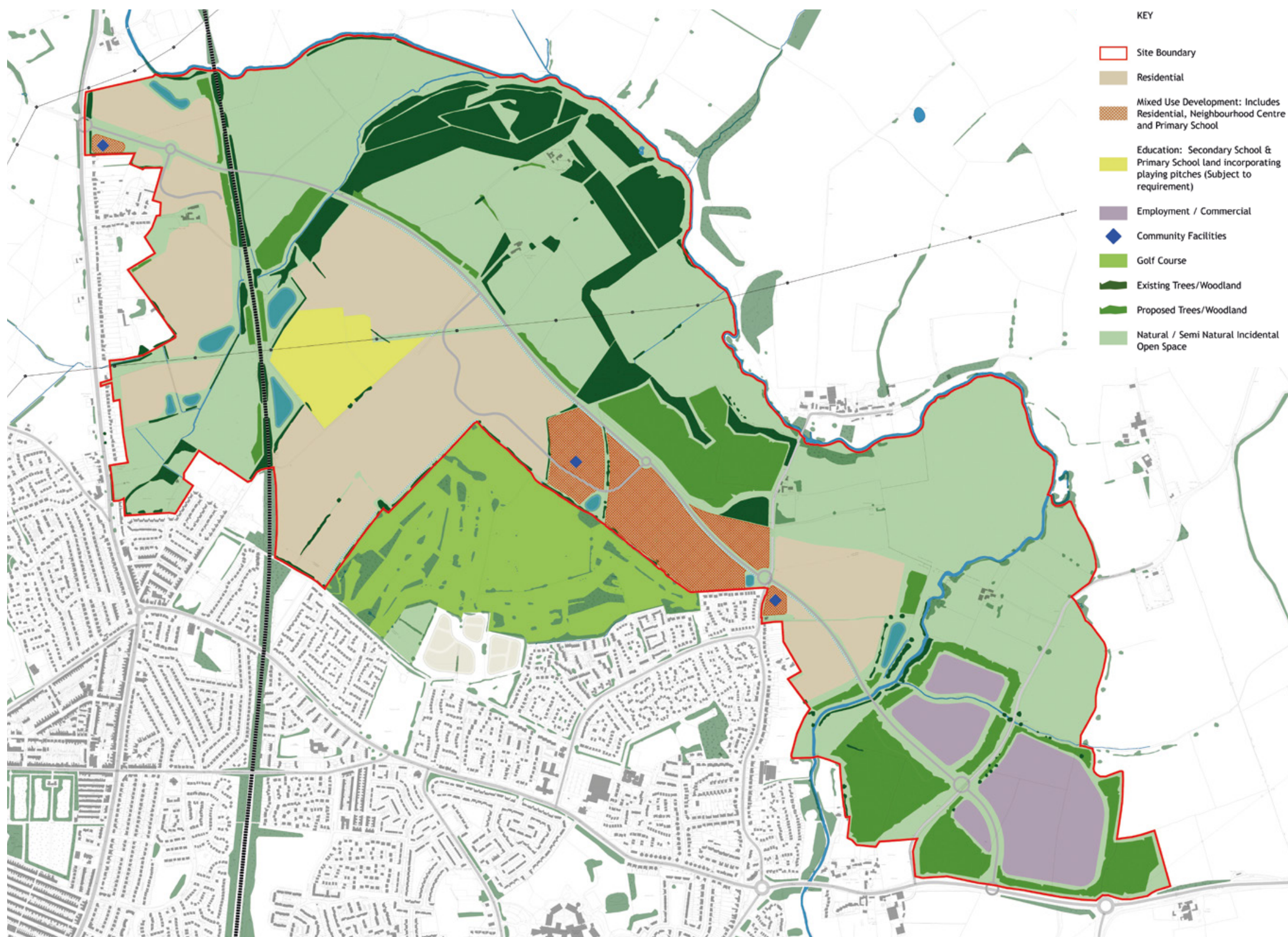


Figure 4.8 Land Use Plan

Density / Building Heights

Density

The density of development will vary across the site and respond to constraints and opportunities. Higher densities will be delivered in close proximity to the Neighbourhood Centre and other Local Community Facilities; and around other key sustainable transport infrastructure. Development will be of a lower density around the edges and more sensitive areas of the development.

Building Heights

The building heights across the site will broadly follow the approach to density. Building heights will increase above 2 storeys in locations where the density across the development increases.

This will in part respond the character area principles and respond to locations where a stronger urban form is defined.

Parcel Codes

Parcel codes should be prepared for each development cell which demonstrate how the vision and objectives, and other principles in the Design Code, can be achieved. This should be demonstrated through the submission of a Compliance Statement with each planning application.

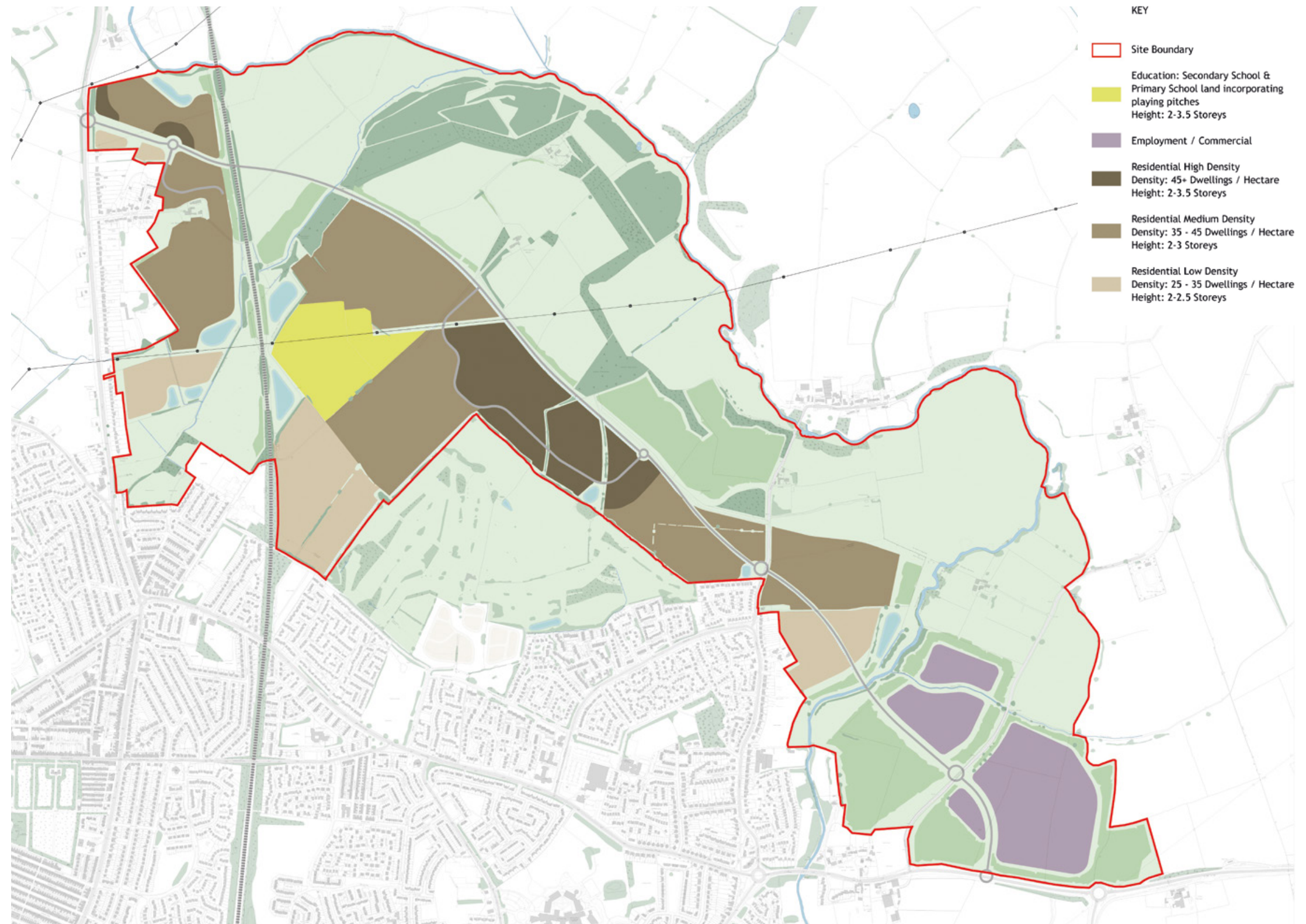


Figure 4.9 Density Plan

5 | Design and Character

Character Areas

This section of the Masterplan provides an overview of the approach to the design of the proposed development and how it will follow the principles set out in the Design Code.

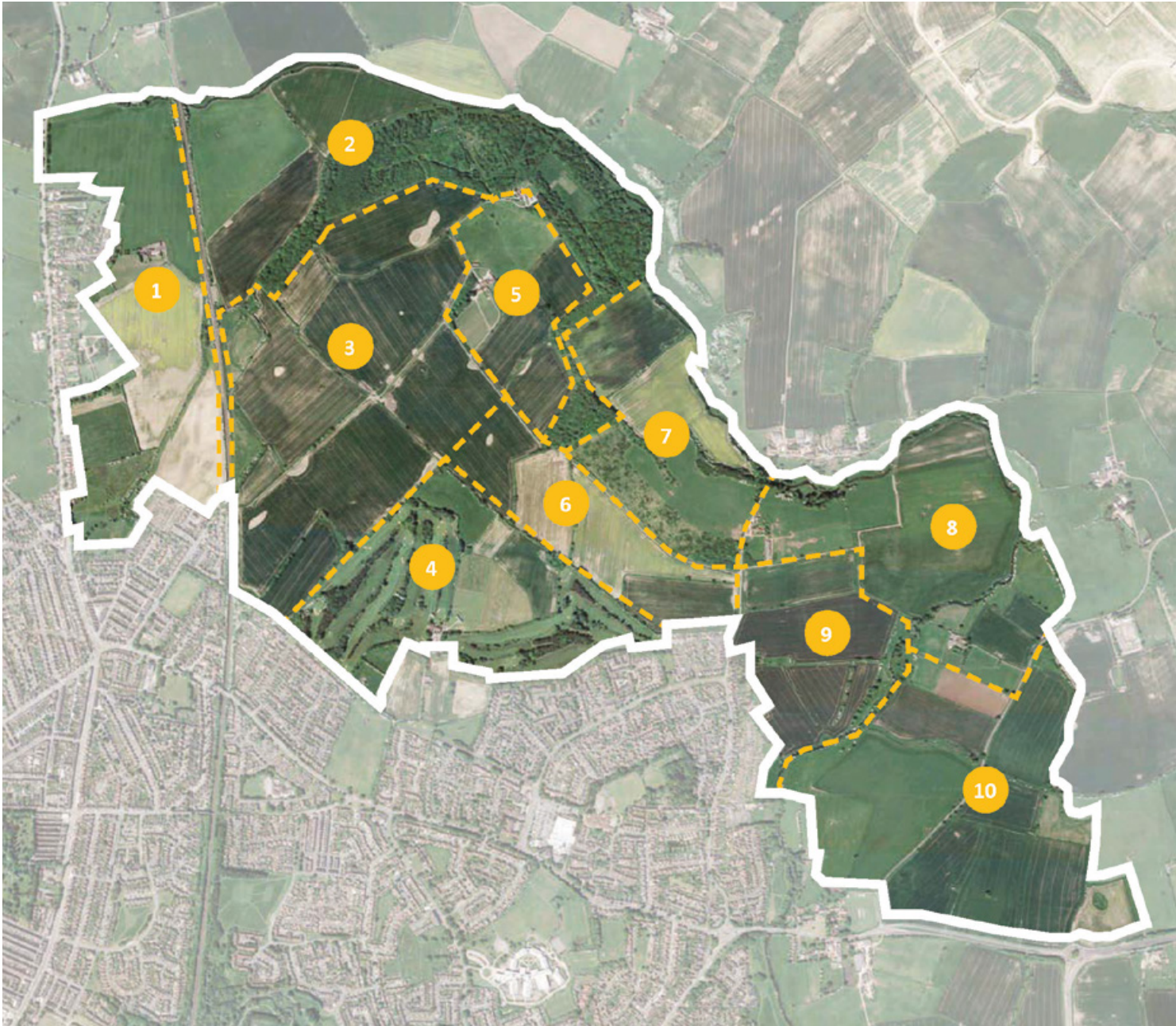
The Design Code identifies ten Character Areas across the Skerningham site as shown opposite.

The Beaumont Hill Character Area (1) is located to the west of the East Coast Mainline. The remaining nine character areas are located to the east of the East Coast Mainline.

The Design Code describes how only 45%-55% of the site is likely to be developed and four of the identified character areas relate to the areas to the north of the site which will be retained and enhanced as green space. These character areas include Skerningham Woods (2), Manor House View (5), Quarry Woods (7) and Barmpton Forest (8).

The Masterplan recognises the need to retain and enhance existing Public Rights of Way to ensure public access is maintained. There is also a need for an appropriate design response to nearby heritage assets (including Skerningham Manor) and to retain openness and separation between the development and Barmpton Village. These areas are also likely to support the strategies relating to the management of surface water, biodiversity net gain and nutrient neutrality. The Design Code also recognises that some of these areas will continue to be used for productive agricultural use.

The existing Golf Club is also identified as a character area (The Fairways (6)). As noted earlier in the Masterplan, the Golf Club is to remain in situ and the golf club will therefore be removed from the planning application boundaries.



- 1 Beaumont Hill
- 2 Skerningham Woods
- 3 Skerningham Lane West
- 4 Golf Course (The Fairways)
- 5 Manor House View
- 6 Skerningham Lane East
- 7 Quarry Woods
- 8 Barmpton Forest
- 9 Barmpton Lane
- 10 Bishopton Lane

[Plan from Design Code (page 85)]

Design and Appearance of the Development

The remaining Character Areas – Beaumont Hill (1), Skertingham Lane West (3), Skertingham Lane East (6), Barmpton Lane (9) and Bishopton Lane (10) – are generally located in the southern part of the site and will therefore be the focus for the built elements of the proposed development.

Following the principles set out in the Design Code, the majority of development will be located to the south of the Local Distributor Road (LDR). There are a few exceptions and such areas will be connected by appropriate crossing facilities. The LDR is a key part of the infrastructure and it has been informed through discussions with Network Rail in relation to the proposed location of the crossing over the East Coast Mainline. Its route has also been informed by a review of constraints.

A limited number of development cells have been identified in the Masterplan to be located to the north of the LDR, including the development cells in the Beaumont Hill Character Area. Subject to the final route of the LDR, this may also result in some development north of the LDR in the Skertingham Lane East and Barmpton Lane Character Areas.

The Design Code is clear that the development at Skertingham will avoid “becoming a monoculture in terms of architectural style or planting character”. It goes on to state that there is an “opportunity for the overall development to have a cohesive character but for a distinct identity of the individual hamlets to be defined and designed”.

One of the key objectives, in order to deliver the vision, is to create a sense of place with a strong identity, but one that architecturally is distinctive to Darlington. The Design Code states (on page 74):

“Building designs should be based on compact, simple forms which draw from the Darlington vernacular and are a contemporary interpretation of the historic designs. The form, scale and layout are to contribute to the sense of place and help create a community feel...”

Parcel Codes will be prepared for each development cell and/or block of development and submitted as part of future planning applications. The Parcel Codes will translate the key principles that have been established in both the Design Code and this Masterplan.



[Image from Design Code (page 74)]

6 | Infrastructure Requirements

Transport

Accessibility

The Design Code for the site encourages the creation of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods. The development includes the provision of a centrally located neighbourhood centre to support new development. It will also include the provision of new school(s), health hub and smaller retail/local community facilities, subject to needs.

Alongside the provision of facilities, access routes have been considered to maximise walking, cycling and public transport links. Active Travel Corridors are identified which will include segregated footpaths and cycle paths (traffic-free routes) which have been routed to follow the desire lines towards the key destinations within the site. The development will also follow the principles established in the Design Code, which details the specification of paths to be incorporated as part of the road hierarchy. These routes will be designed cognisant of the LTN 1/20 guidance.

Once complete, the development will be largely self-serving, albeit with connections to the existing services and facilities of Darlington town centre. In the short term, the early phases of the development will provide connections to the services and public transport infrastructure.

In addition to the provision and/or improvements to footpaths and cycleways both within and immediately close to the site, where required the development will provide contributions to sustainable transport measures. This will be in the form of financial contributions paid to the Council to deliver wider improvements to the pedestrian and cycle infrastructure in the local area.

The site benefits from existing public transport services. Development in the early phases will be accessible to existing services on the A167 (to the west) and on Whinbush Way (to the east) which provide frequent links to Darlington. During the later phases there is an opportunity to either divert or introduce new services into the site, which would serve the neighbourhood centre and schools in the site.

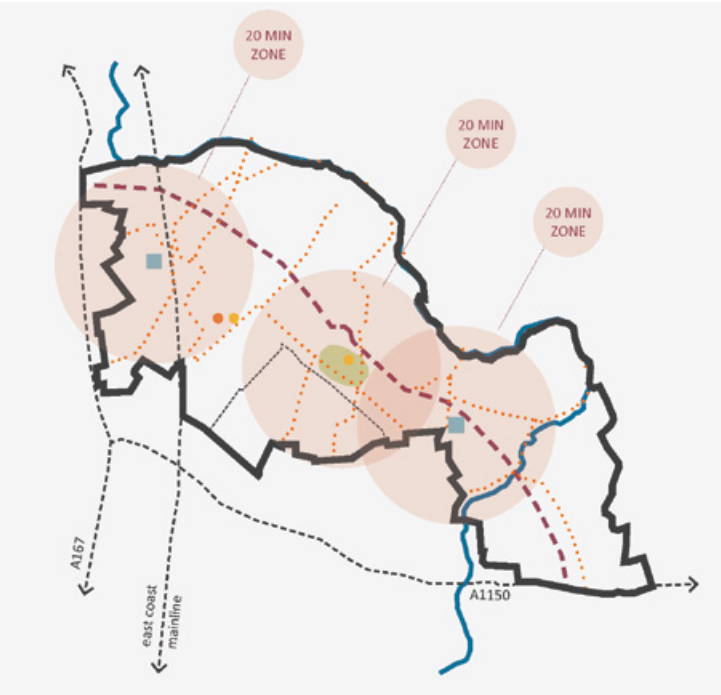


Figure 6.1 Indicative 20 Minute Neighbourhood Plan [Extract from Design Code (Figure 36)]

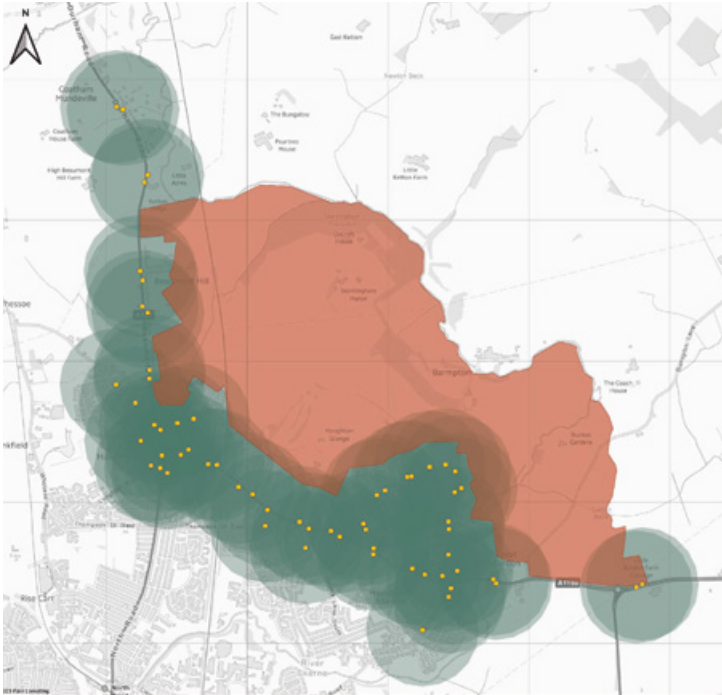


Figure 6.2 Public Transport Catchment Plan (Existing Bus Services)

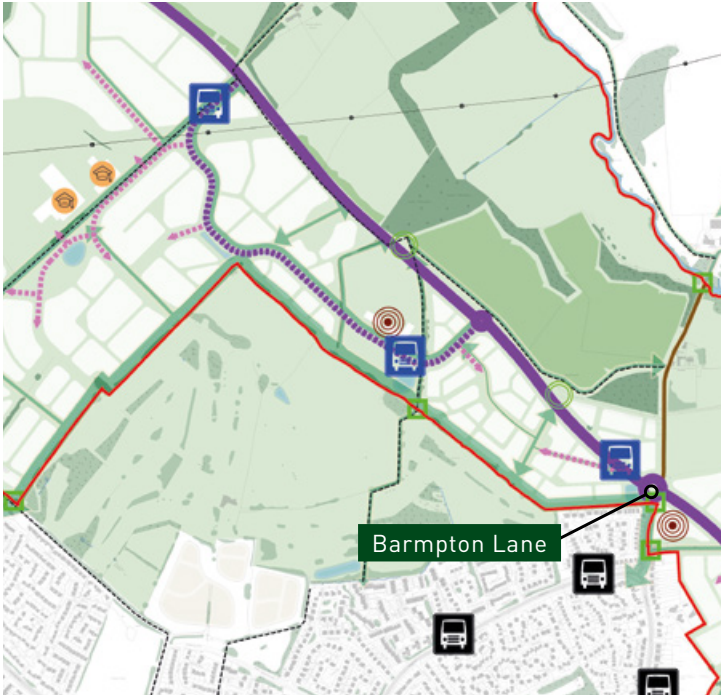


Figure 6.3 Potential Bus Extension from Barmpton Lane



Access

There are three primary access points into the site from A167, Barmpton Lane and A1150. A Local Distributor Road will connect the A167 to the A1150 and will include a bridge over the East Coast Mainline and a bridge over the River Skerne.

Local Distributor Road

The Local Distributor Road (LDR) will be delivered in the following phases:

1. The section between the A167 and the primary development access point (prior to occupation of 1st dwelling on land west of the ECML)
2. The remaining section between the A167 and the East Coast Mainline (prior to completion of land west of the ECML)
3. The section between Barmpton Lane and Bishopton Lane (prior to occupation of 450th dwelling on land east of the ECML)
4. Completion of road in its entirety (including bridge over the ECML) (prior to occupation of 1,500th dwelling)

The proposed trigger points for the various stages of the delivery of the LDR have been refined following further highway modelling work since the Local Plan was adopted.

Appropriate measures will be put in place as part of any planning permission to ensure Local Distributor Road and bridge over the ECML are delivered, as well as confirming the final routing.

In addition to the junctions with the A167 and A1150, there are likely to be junctions along the route of the LDR, including:

- A roundabout on land west of the ECML to serve the development parcels north and south of the LDR
- A roundabout on Barmpton Lane
- A roundabout (or other form of junction) on Bishopton Lane
- A roundabout (or other form of junction) in the vicinity of the Neighbourhood Centre
- A roundabout (or other form of junction) between the ECML and the Neighbourhood Centre, to serve the development cells and additional schools.

Discussions are ongoing with Darlington Borough Council and Network Rail in relation to the proposed crossing of the East Coast Mainline. The route of the LDR shown remains illustrative but includes the location of the bridge that has been identified following the technical work undertaken to date. Network Rail has been consulted on the preferred location and advised that the next stage is to gain approval in principle in relation to construction of the bridge. This should be secured as part of the development phase east of the A167.

Highway Improvements

The development will deliver wider improvements to the local highway network, including the following.

- A66/Little Burdon Circulatory Upgrade
- A1150/ Thompson Street East Roundabout Improvements
- A167/Burtree Lane Junction Improvements
- Barmpton Lane upgrade works including its junction with Whinbush Way

Discussions are also taking place with National Highways in relation to the impact of the various phases of the development on the strategic highway network. Any physical mitigation or S106 contribution will be agreed as part of the planning application process.

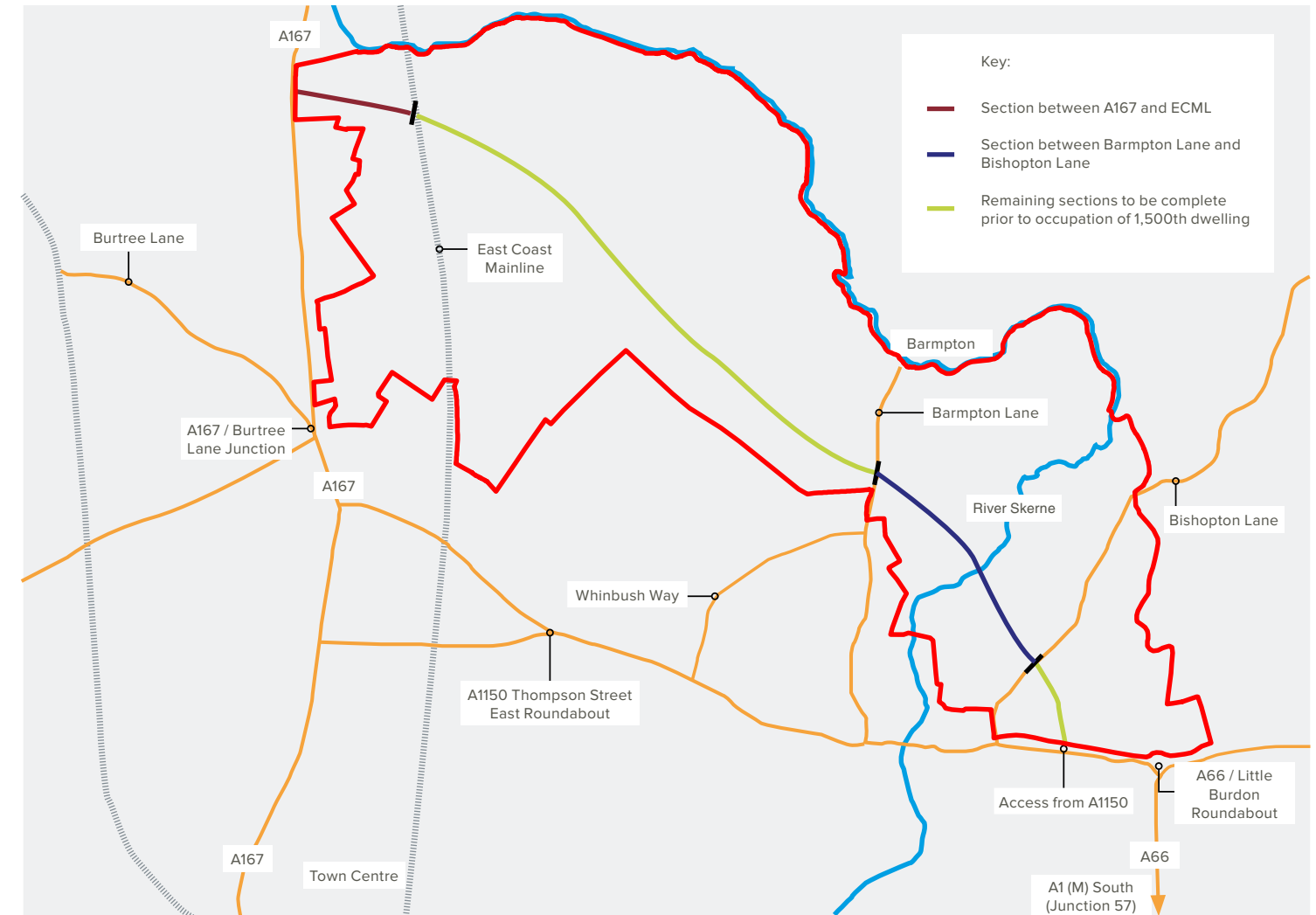


Figure 6.4 Illustrative Local Distributor Road Route and Highway Improvement Locations

6 | Infrastructure Requirements

Neighbourhood Centre and Local Community Facilities

The development will include a centrally located Neighbourhood Centre to be located in the 'Skerningham Lane East' Character Area forming a 'heart' and focal point within the development.

There are two other locations within the site where local community facilities will be provided. These are identified to be located in the 'Beaumont Hill' Character Area (to the west of the East Coast Mainline) and the second will be located east of Barmpton Lane in the 'Barmpton Lane' Character Area. The local community facilities are located in the initial phases of the development to support the early delivery of new homes on the site.

The phasing of development (in Section 7) recognises the importance of place making and the role of delivering social infrastructure to support the new communities at Skerningham. As such, from the initial phases adjacent to Barmpton Lane, the direction of development in the plan period moves west to deliver the Neighbourhood Centre in the central area of the allocation.

The provision of retail space on the site should be of a scale to complement and not conflict with existing district centres. Where local community facilities are identified, these are likely to comprise local convenience shops of circa 400sqm in size.

The design and appearance of the local centre should be distinctive to Darlington in its use of architectural style and materials. Scale and massing will help to create a defined centre (or heart) for Skerningham.

Green space and public realm should also be incorporated to help create a sense of place. There is also an opportunity to include formal play space and allotments as part of the local centre.

At upper floor levels, there is an opportunity to include apartments and/or space for business/employment uses.

Health Hub

The Neighbourhood Centre will include a Health Hub to accommodate GPs and Dentists.

In advance of the delivery of the Neighbourhood Centre (which will include a Health Hub), the development will be supported by existing services in Darlington. The nearest existing Medical Practice / GP Surgery to the site is Whinfield Medical Practice. The catchment area for Whinfield Medical Practice includes a partial area of the site (including the initial phases of land to the east of the East Coast Mainline) and is currently accepting new patients.



[Extract from Design Code (Figure 45)]

Education

The Council's assumed pupil yields are 20 primary aged children and 12 secondary school aged children per 100 dwellings respectively.

A development of up to 3,700 dwellings overall equates to a need for 740 primary school places and 444 secondary school places. As the development will take around 25 years to complete, there is a need to keep the education requirement from the development under review.

Within the current plan period, 1,650 dwellings are projected to be delivered in the period to 2036. This equates to a need for 330 primary school places and 198 secondary school places.

Policy H10 (d) requires the delivery of the first primary school before occupation of the 450th dwelling – subject to the available capacity within existing or other local schools. It requires that the timescales for the delivery of the additional primary school and secondary school would be identified in the infrastructure phasing plan and/or through the review of the infrastructure requirements prior to the occupation of the 1,650th dwelling where the education requirements and capacity levels will be considered.

The Masterplan has been prepared in consultation with the Council's Head of Skills and Employability who is responsible for managing the provision of school places. It has been confirmed the latest pupil projections data indicates that there are sufficient surplus places at both primary and secondary school levels to accommodate pupils that would be generated by the delivery of 1,650 dwellings in the plan period.

The Council's preference is to utilise the surplus of pupil places in the nearby existing schools before commencing construction of a new school.

Therefore, the need for the first primary school is not required before the occupation of the 450th dwellings and the educational need arising from the development will be kept under review. The masterplan includes land reserved for the provision of a primary school and secondary school which would come forward subject to further review.

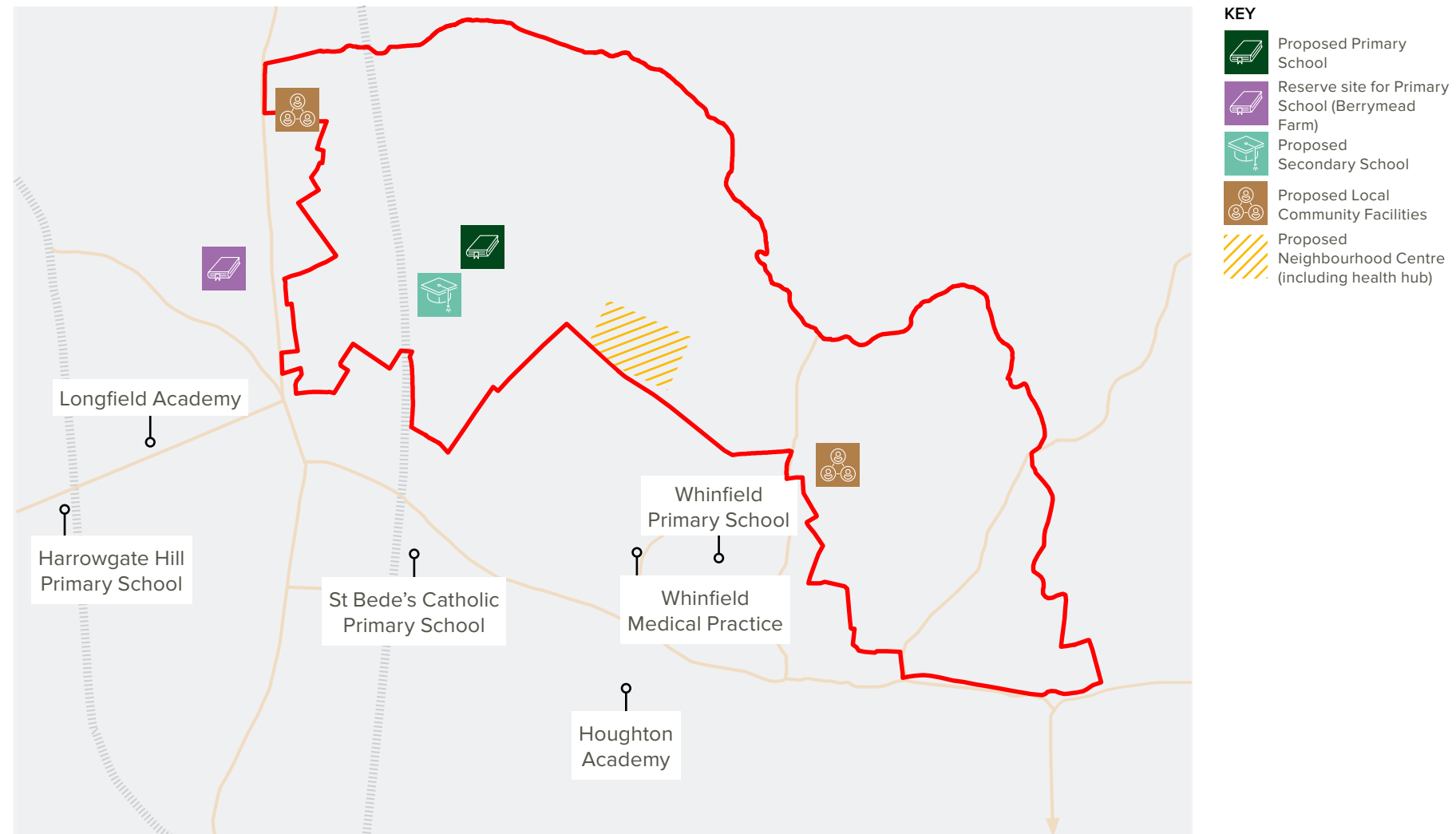


Figure 6.5: Education and Health Facilities

KEY	
	Proposed Primary School
	Reserve site for Primary School (Berrymead Farm)
	Proposed Secondary School
	Proposed Local Community Facilities
	Proposed Neighbourhood Centre (including health hub)

6 | Infrastructure Requirements

Educational Need to 2036

The education need associated with the delivery of Phases 1, 2 and 3 of the development (up to 2036) will be met by existing schools. The nearest primary school to the land to the west of the East Coast Mainline is Harrowgate Primary School and the nearest secondary school is Longfield Academy. The nearest primary school to the early phases of development on land to the east of the East Coast Mainline is Whinfield Primary School and the nearest secondary school is Houghton Academy. It is likely that the surplus capacity in these schools alone will be able to meet the educational need of the development to be delivered in the plan period.

The accessibility of these schools has been considered and the plans in Figures 5.6 and 5.7 include the likely walking routes. To the west of the site, the existing infrastructure along the A167 is good and there are existing crossing points to allow ease of crossing to Longfield Road.

To the east of the site, the development will deliver improvements to Barmpton Lane and its junction with Whinbush Way. Existing routes along Whinbush Way and Whinfield Road (A1150) are considered to be a very good standard.

The need and timing for the provision of schools on the site beyond the plan period (2036) will be kept under review and the strategy for the later phases of the development will be considered prior to the occupation of 1,650 dwellings on the site.



Figure 6.6 Walking routes to nearest existing schools from land to the east of the allocation



Figure 6.7 Walking routes to nearest existing schools from land to the west of the allocation

6 | Infrastructure Requirements

Drainage

Key principles for surface water management at the site have been established and the development should:

- Restrict surface water run off to existing green field rates.
- Allow for climate change and urban creep, resulting in future proofing against flood risk for the life of the development.
- Include SuDS and attenuation features.

Initial assessments indicate that infiltration will not be possible. Using existing topography, the development has been zoned into catchments to follow the existing directions of fall. Each zone has then been modelled to estimate the run off rate, storage requirement, and likely storage location. A range of multifunctional Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) will be integrated into the development, providing stormwater filtering and attenuation, reduction of flood risk, improvements to water quality and increase to biodiversity.

In terms of foul water, Northumbrian Water Ltd (NWL) has identified two outfall locations for foul run off from the development:

- Flows from development to the west of the ECML should discharge into the existing public sewer at Harrowgate Village.
- Flows from development to the east of the ECML should discharge into the existing public sewer on site to the west of Great Burdon.

Appropriate connections to the existing drainage infrastructure network can be achieved. NWL will carry out any upgrading works required to their network to facilitate the development which will be informed by a projected build rate from the development to aid future planning of any upgrades.

As the site is located within the Tees catchment, it is affected by Nutrient Neutrality. This is as a result of Natural England identifying the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Special Protection Area (SPA) to be in an unfavourable condition. By 2030, there is a requirement for water companies to upgrade sewage treatment works to reduce harmful nutrients from treated waste water. Until this time, there is a requirement for developments to mitigate these impacts. For the early phases of the development, this will be considered at the planning application stage.

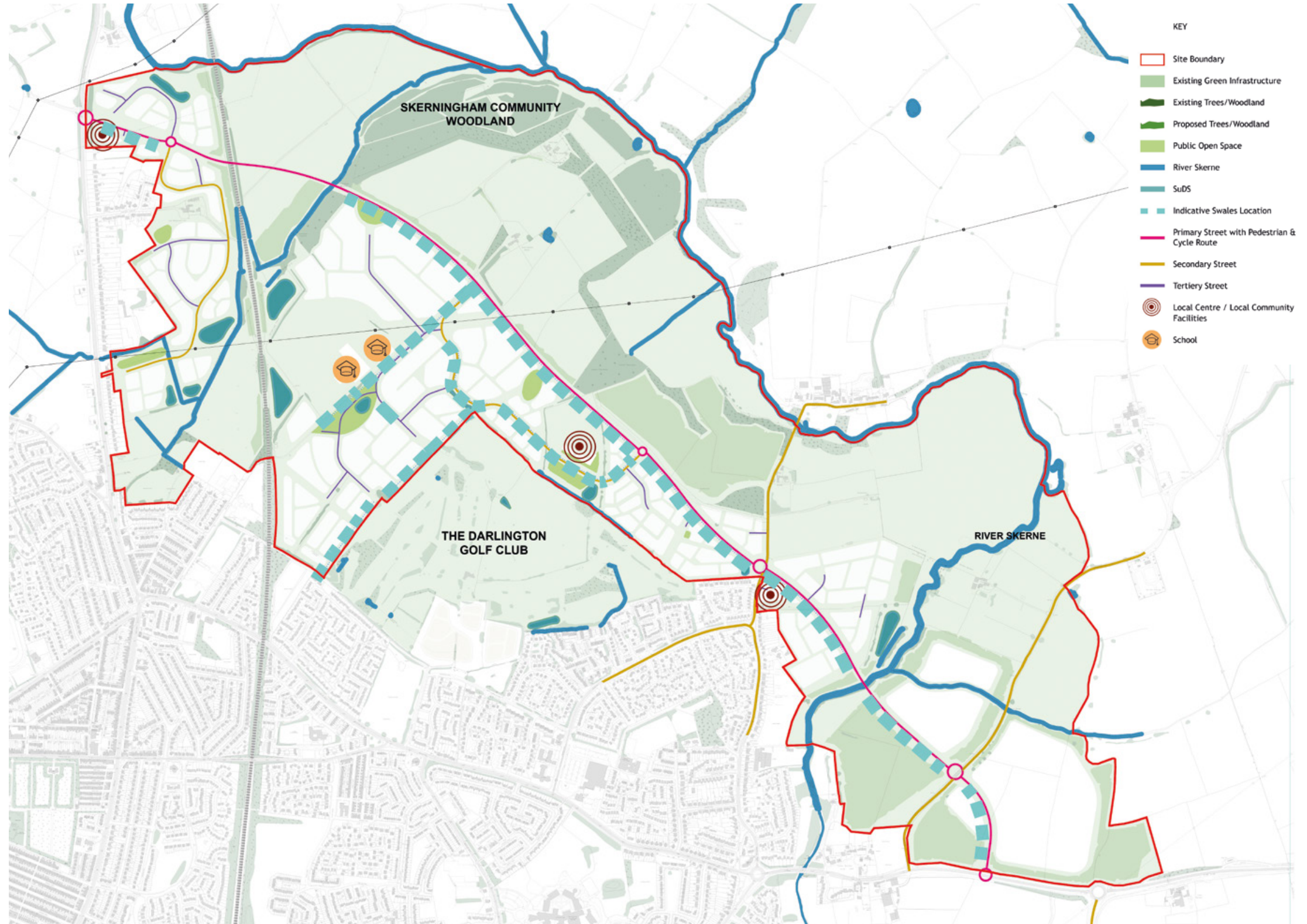


Figure 6.8 Drainage Plan

Open Space, Sports and Recreation

Around 55% of allocated area of Skerningham is likely to comprise green and/or open space. This will include the area located north of the proposed local distributor road, to the east of the East Coast Mainline and green spaces and linkages within the development to the south of the road.

It is recognised that Skerningham Woods is enjoyed by the local community and the wider area adjacent to the River Skerne will be enhanced. This will be a 'Destination Area' of open/green space in the site. The development will also include new areas of natural/semi-natural open space, managed areas of green space, playing fields (associated with schools and potentially community use agreements) and public areas of open space. Arable land will also be retained in some locations.

A key objective of the development is to promote healthy living and support the NHS Healthy New Towns initiative and this has shaped the open space and play strategy and also the opportunities that will be provided for local food growth.

The Open Space and Play Strategy includes a centrally located facility as part of the Neighbourhood Centre. Each development cell is likely to include Local Areas for Play (LAPs) with 'play on the way' provision along key connections towards the Neighbourhood Centre. The development could also include informal play features in the Skerningham Woods area to the north of the LDR.

To support local food growth, the development is anticipated to provide opportunities in the form of allotments and/or other schemes which follow the Incredible Edible Model, such as community orchards and community grow zones. Indicative areas for this provision are shown on the plan opposite.

Whilst the majority of these areas of the site are likely to be maintained via management company, there are opportunities for local community groups or trusts to take responsibility for the longer-term management and care of the food growth areas and Skerningham Woods area.

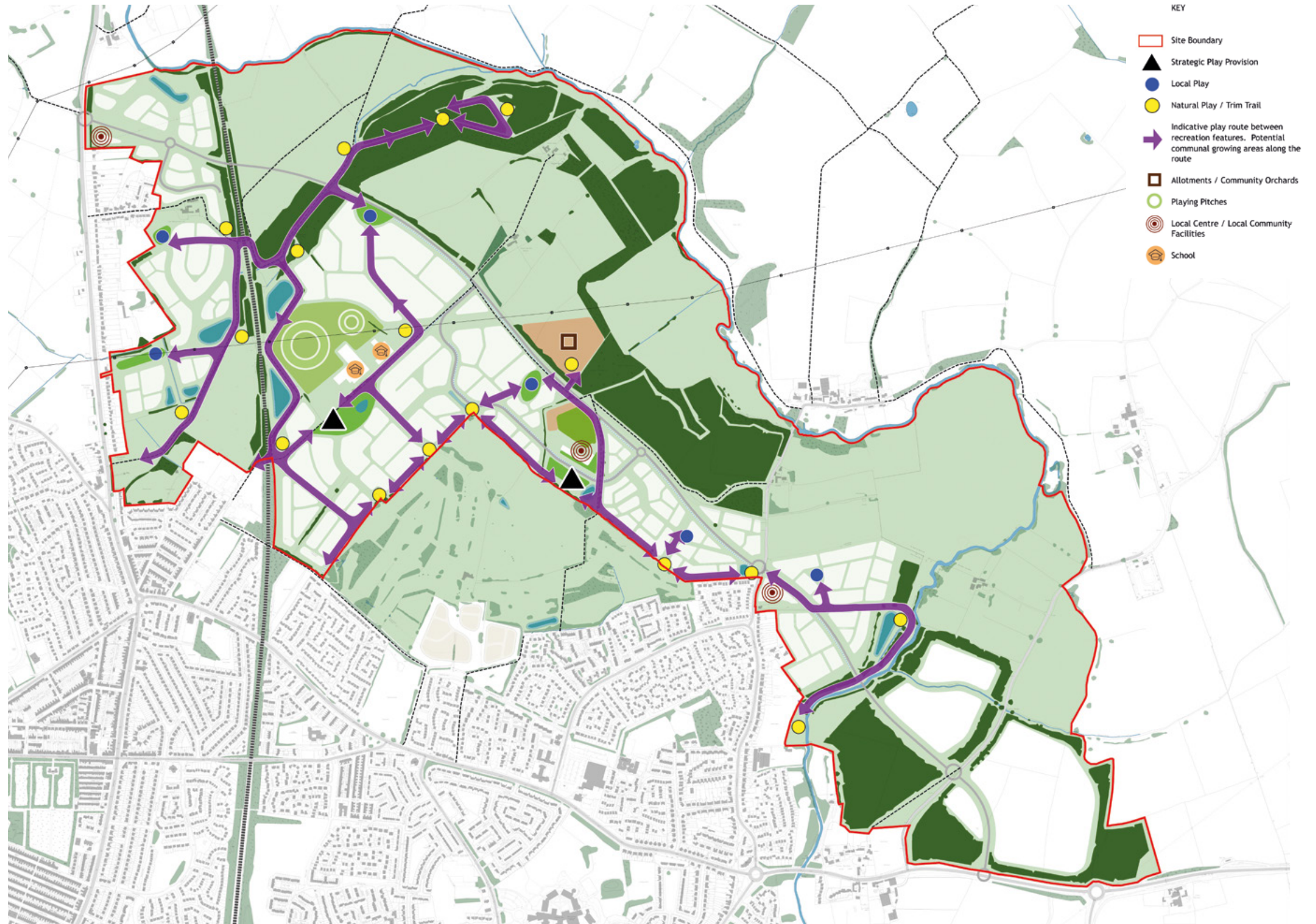


Figure 6.9 Open Space Plan

6 | Infrastructure Requirements

Biodiversity Net Gain

The development will achieve a net gain for biodiversity consistent with the requirements of Policy ENV 8 of the Local Plan and the Design Code. This will be delivered on a phased basis and each planning application should demonstrate how this will be achieved.

On land to the west of the ECML, land to the north of the site (close to the River Skerne) would be dedicated for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). There could also be further areas available adjacent to the ECML, as part of the SuDS and in other green linkages between the development cells.

On land to the east of the ECML, there is a significant area of land to the north of the Local Distributor Road that will remain as 'green' space. To support the early phases of the development, land close to Skertingham Manor will be used to deliver BNG. This area of land lies close to Skertingham Woods and is therefore a logical space to introduce further new planting and areas dedicated to nature. It is also located a distance from the early phases of development on the eastern side of the ECML, meaning it will be less likely to be subject to disturbance.

Other key areas where BNG opportunities have been identified include the areas adjacent to the River Skerne and ECML. Sustainable drainage infrastructure will be designed to provide ecological opportunities. For example, attenuation ponds, should be designed to include at least a low level of permanent water. Public Rights of Way will also be retained as green corridors through the site which could provide further opportunities for enhancement in biodiversity value.

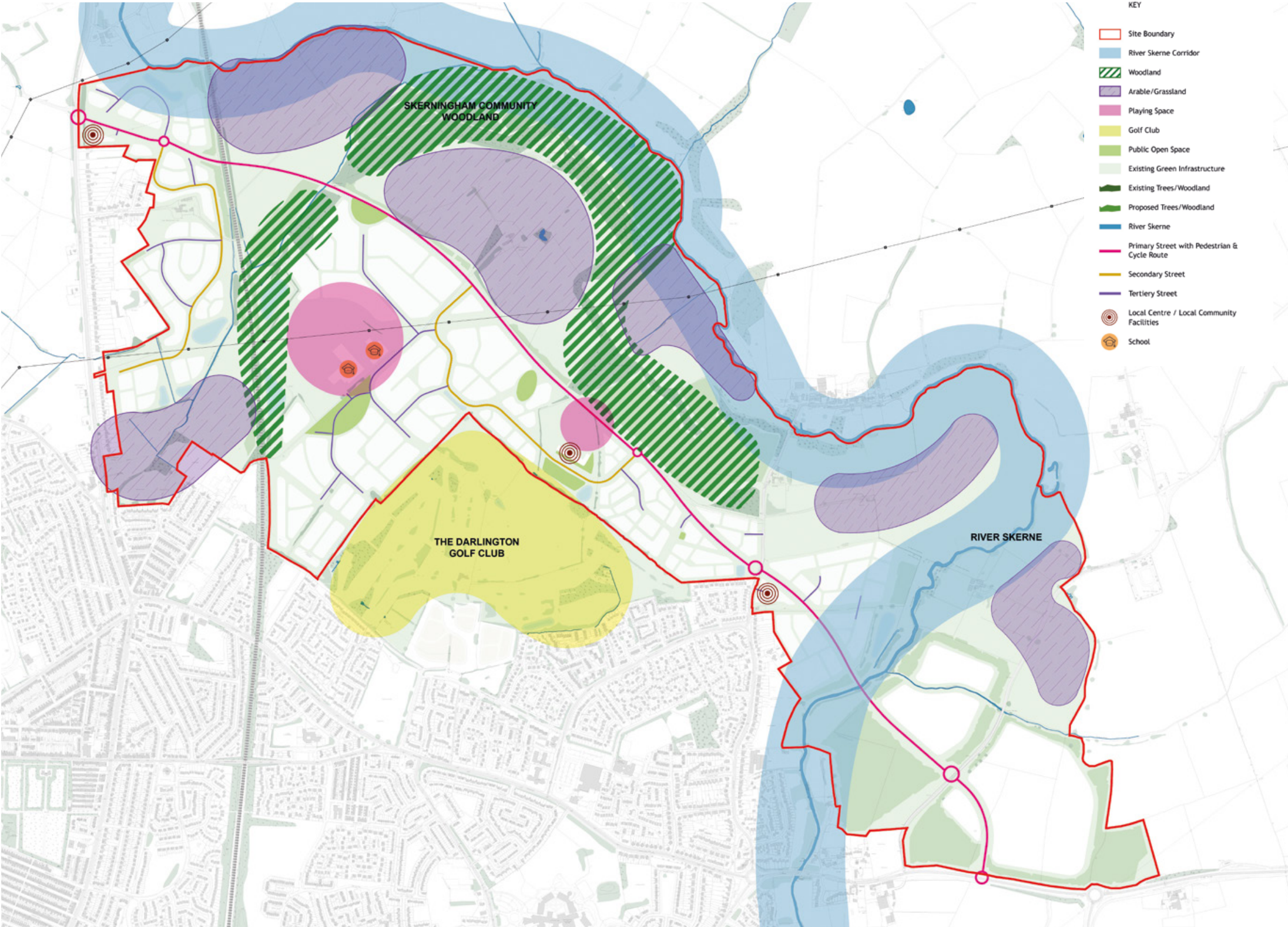
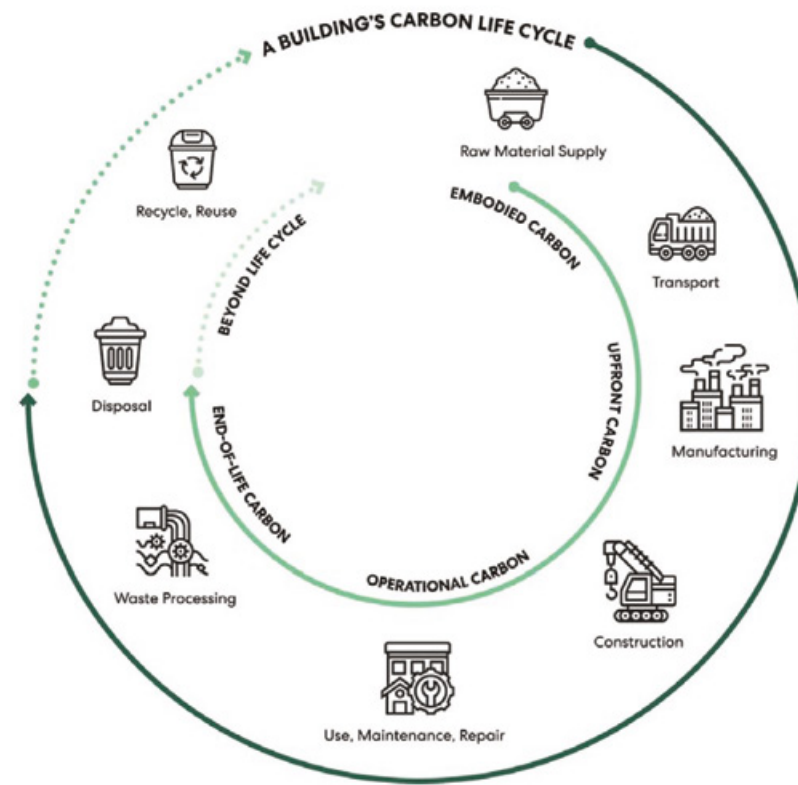


Figure 6.10 Illustrative Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy Plan



[Extract from Design Code (Figure 82)]

Employment Land and Commercial Space

The area of the site which has the potential to provide between 15-30 hectares of employment land is located to the south east corner of the site close to the A66/A1150 Little Burdon roundabout. It is proposed that this junction will provide the eastern extent to the Local Distributor Road.

The Employment Area will be served by primary route(s) to be taken directly off the Local Distributor Road.

The need to release this part of Skerningham for employment uses will be considered subject to defined commercial requirements including when the Local Plan is reviewed, during the next update / review of the Council's employment land evidence base.

The development will include further opportunities for employment. In the short term, the early phases of the development will include Local Community Facilities which could provide employment opportunities in retail. There will also be employment opportunities at the Neighbourhood Centre with the various services and facilities to be provided centrally in the site. Subject to demand, there could also be an opportunity to provide office space within the Neighbourhood Centre, potentially for businesses or flexible working space. For instance, this could be provided in the upper floor levels of a building which has retail or health related uses at ground floor level.

Digital Connectivity

Access to high-speed broadband has been identified as an objective in the Design Code. Accordingly, this is an infrastructure requirement for all development on the site.

A utilities assessment has been undertaken which confirms that there is superfast broadband capability in the local area. This provides the opportunity to install a super fast service to the development.

Given the length of the build of the development, it should also react to the technological advances that may take place over this time to ensure that residents can benefit from the latest technology available.

Working from home is a trend which is anticipated to continue and the provision of this technology will contribute to encouraging and promoting a healthy work/life balance.

In addition to ensuring that all new homes are provided with high-speed broadband, social spaces (such as those in the Neighbourhood Centre) should also provide the latest digital and communication technology to support social interaction and businesses.

Green Technology

The incorporation of a low carbon energy strategy for the development was identified as an objective in the Design Code. The development should embrace the whole life cycle approach to minimising carbon emissions during the construction and occupational phases of the development.

As a starting point, the demand for energy will be minimised by measures, including:

- Designing layouts to maximise sustainable travel and movement
- Providing supporting land uses and infrastructure within walking and cycling distance from homes
- Promoting connectivity to wider sustainable transport, including public transport and car clubs
- Orientating buildings and internal layouts to maximise opportunities for solar gains
- Incorporating a fabric-first approach to the selection of materials and products
- Encouraging the use of low-carbon technologies for energy requirements

To ensure these principles are incorporated during the construction of the development, planning conditions should be used to secure the submission and approval of a Construction Management Plan.

The changes to Building Regulations will be key to driving a reduction in carbon emissions, with a move towards the Future Homes Standard and Future Buildings Standard. Incorporation of technologies including PV panels, air source heat pumps and ground source heat pumps provide some options for meeting these standards. However, it is likely that other options will emerge that could be included as part of the energy strategy. Given the timescale for the build out of Skerningham, it is important that the development retains flexibility to adapt to the latest technology that is available.

7 | Infrastructure Phasing Plan

Phase 1 (2023 - 2030)

Residential

- Land to the west of the East Coast Mainline ('Beaumont Hill' Character Area): 450 dwellings
- Land to the east of the East Coast Mainline ('Barmpton Lane' Character Area): 450 dwellings
- Total: 900 dwellings

Other Land Uses

- Local convenience store on land west of the East Coast Mainline (up to 400 square metres) (prior to occupation of 450th dwelling)
- Local convenience store on land east of the East Coast Mainline (circa 400 square metres) (prior to occupation of 400th dwelling)

Environmental

- Enhancements to the 'Manor House View', 'Skerningham Woods' and 'Skerningham Lane West' Character Areas (including increasing public accessibility and landscaping)
- Biodiversity Net Gain, to be focussed on land to the north of the site
- Public Open Space, within the development cells, with potential for Allotments / Community Orchards on part of the land in the Manor House View Character Area
- Sport and Recreational provision
- Mitigation for Nutrient Neutrality
- Incorporation of low carbon technology into the Energy Strategy

Transport

Land west of the East Coast Mainline:

- Primary access (roundabout) from A167
- Section of Local Distributor Road between A167 and East Coast Mainline
- Pedestrian/cycle connection to A167
- Proportionate contribution towards A66 Little Burdon Roundabout
- Financial contribution for sustainable transport measures within vicinity of site
- Financial contribution towards A167/Burtree Lane Junction improvements
- Financial contribution towards A1150/Thompson Street East Roundabout Improvements

Land east of the East Coast Mainline:

- Vehicular access from Barmpton Lane (eastern side)
- Localised improvements to Barmpton Lane and its junction with Whinbush Way
- Pedestrian/cycle connection to Barmpton Lane
- Proportionate contribution towards A66 Little Burdon Roundabout
- Financial contribution for sustainable transport measures within vicinity of site
- Financial contribution towards A1150 / Thompson Street East Roundabout Improvements (if required)

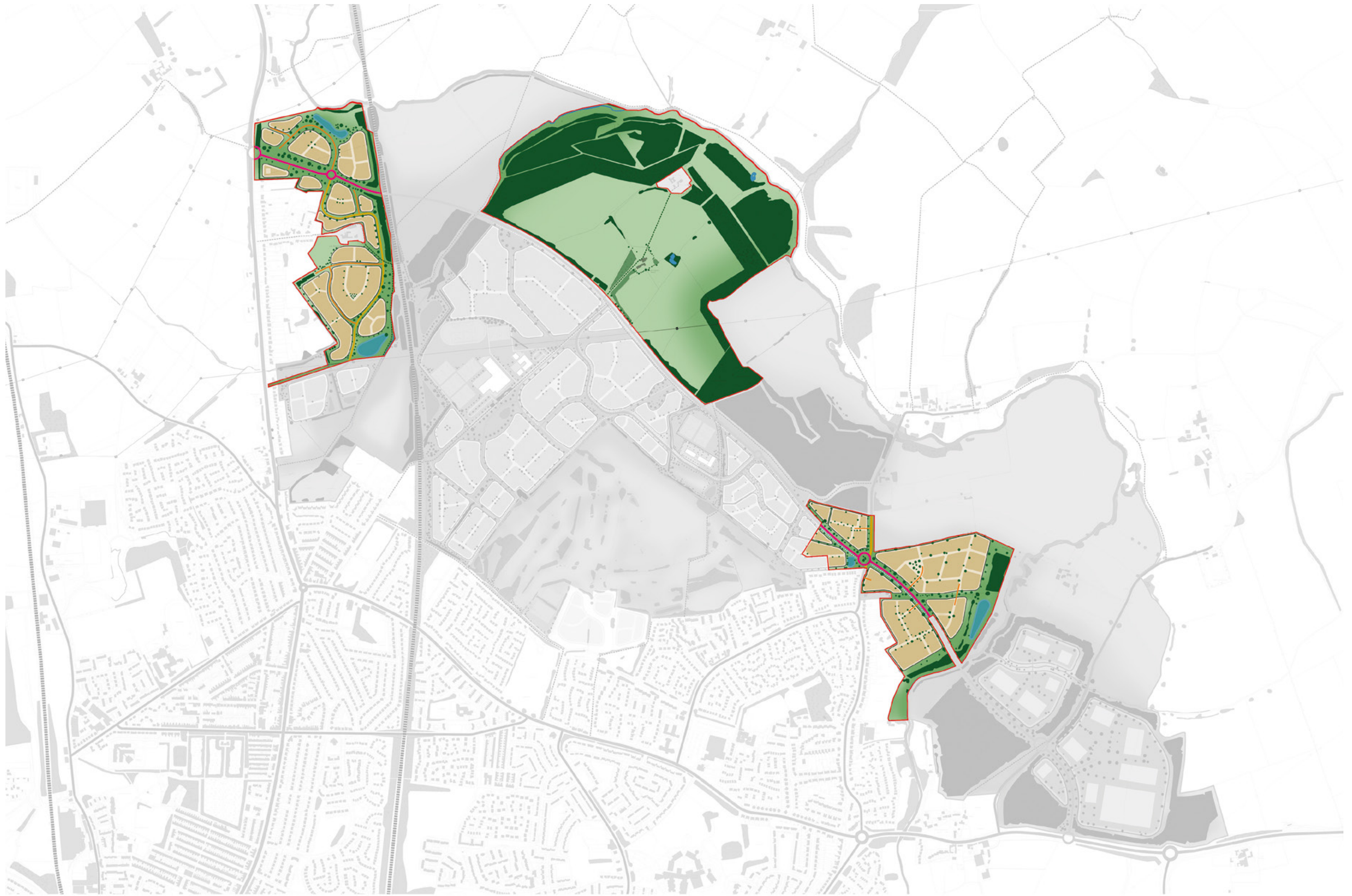
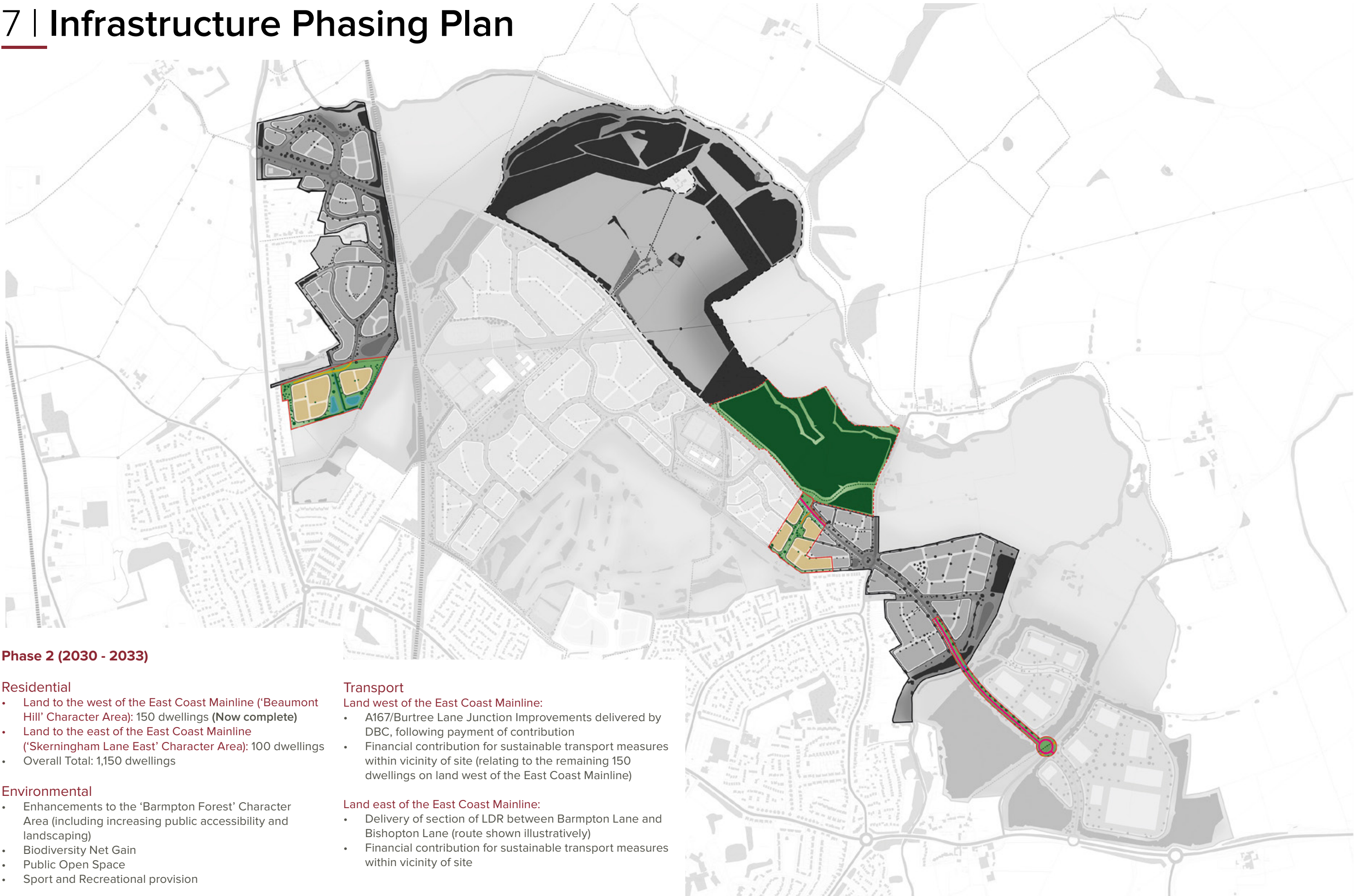


Figure 7.1 Phase 1 Plan

7 | Infrastructure Phasing Plan



Phase 2 (2030 - 2033)

Residential

- Land to the west of the East Coast Mainline ('Beaumont Hill' Character Area): 150 dwellings (**Now complete**)
- Land to the east of the East Coast Mainline ('Skerningham Lane East' Character Area): 100 dwellings
- Overall Total: 1,150 dwellings

Environmental

- Enhancements to the 'Barmpton Forest' Character Area (including increasing public accessibility and landscaping)
- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Public Open Space
- Sport and Recreational provision

Transport

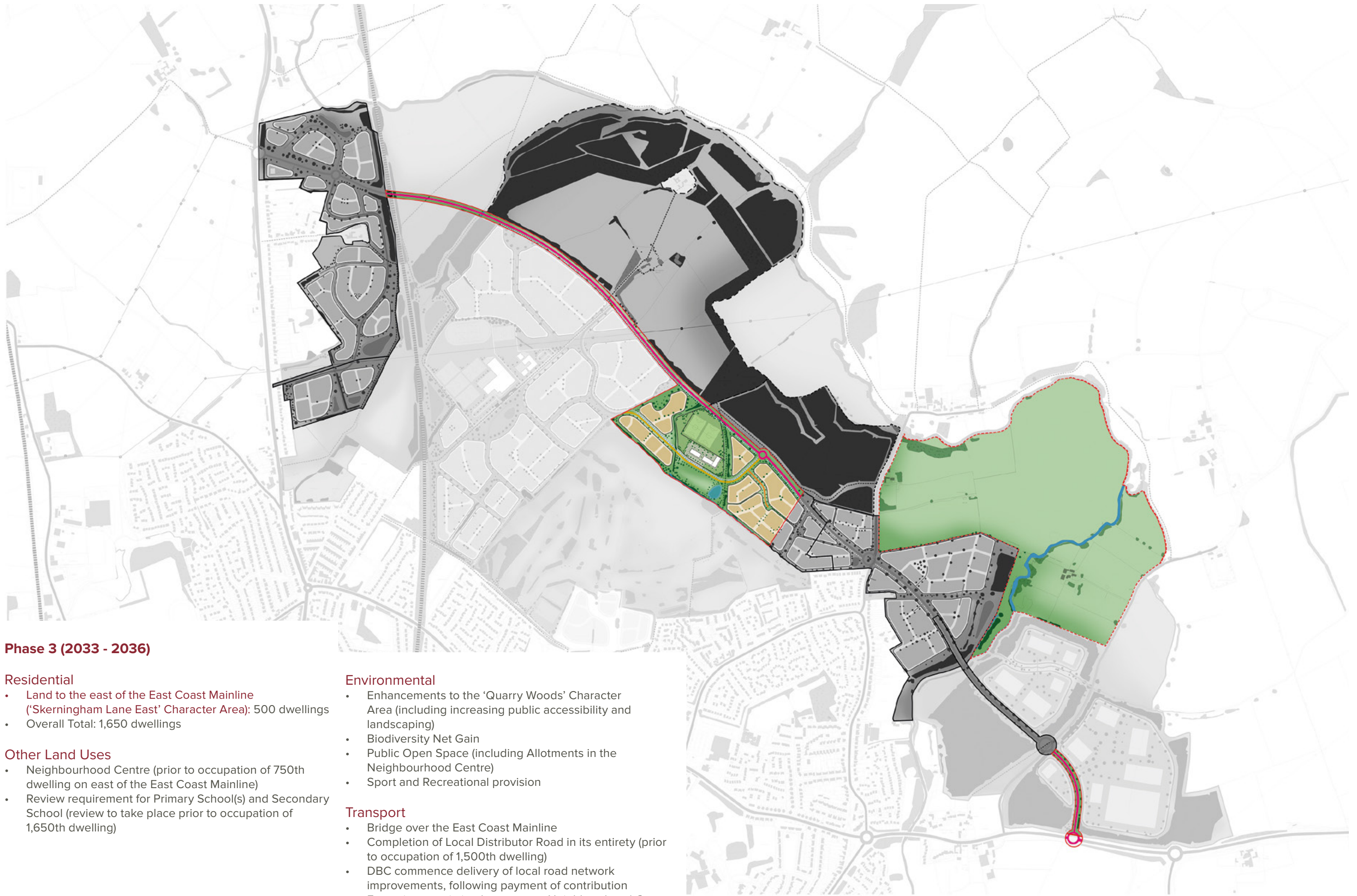
Land west of the East Coast Mainline:

- A167/Burtree Lane Junction Improvements delivered by DBC, following payment of contribution
- Financial contribution for sustainable transport measures within vicinity of site (relating to the remaining 150 dwellings on land west of the East Coast Mainline)

Land east of the East Coast Mainline:

- Delivery of section of LDR between Barmpton Lane and Bishopton Lane (route shown illustratively)
- Financial contribution for sustainable transport measures within vicinity of site

Figure 7.2 Phase 2 Plan



Phase 3 (2033 - 2036)

Residential

- Land to the east of the East Coast Mainline ('Skerningham Lane East' Character Area): 500 dwellings
- Overall Total: 1,650 dwellings

Other Land Uses

- Neighbourhood Centre (prior to occupation of 750th dwelling on east of the East Coast Mainline)
- Review requirement for Primary School(s) and Secondary School (review to take place prior to occupation of 1,650th dwelling)

Environmental

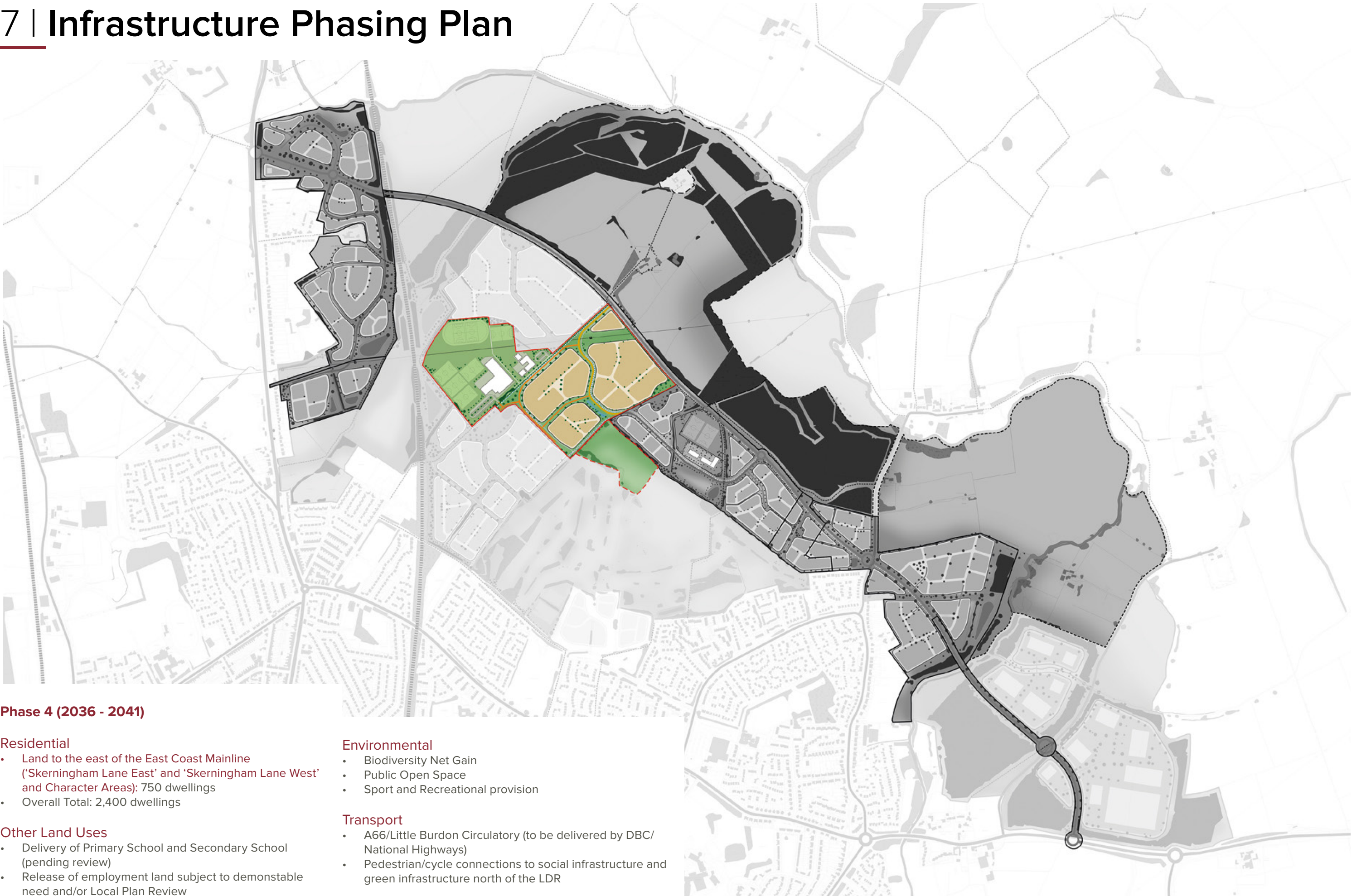
- Enhancements to the 'Quarry Woods' Character Area (including increasing public accessibility and landscaping)
- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Public Open Space (including Allotments in the Neighbourhood Centre)
- Sport and Recreational provision

Transport

- Bridge over the East Coast Mainline
- Completion of Local Distributor Road in its entirety (prior to occupation of 1,500th dwelling)
- DBC commence delivery of local road network improvements, following payment of contribution
- Extension to existing bus route to Neighbourhood Centre

Figure 7.3 Phase 3 Plan

7 | Infrastructure Phasing Plan



Phase 4 (2036 - 2041)

- Residential**
- Land to the east of the East Coast Mainline ('Skerningham Lane East' and 'Skerningham Lane West' and Character Areas): 750 dwellings
 - Overall Total: 2,400 dwellings

- Other Land Uses**
- Delivery of Primary School and Secondary School (pending review)
 - Release of employment land subject to demonstrable need and/or Local Plan Review

- Environmental**
- Biodiversity Net Gain
 - Public Open Space
 - Sport and Recreational provision

- Transport**
- A66/Little Burdon Circulatory (to be delivered by DBC/ National Highways)
 - Pedestrian/cycle connections to social infrastructure and green infrastructure north of the LDR

Figure 7.4 Phase 4 Plan



Phase 5 (2041 - 2045)

Residential

- Land to the east of the East Coast Mainline ('Skerningham Lane West' and Character Area): 700
- Overall Total: 3,100 dwellings

Other Land Uses

- Release of employment land subject to demonstrable need and/or Local Plan Review

Environmental

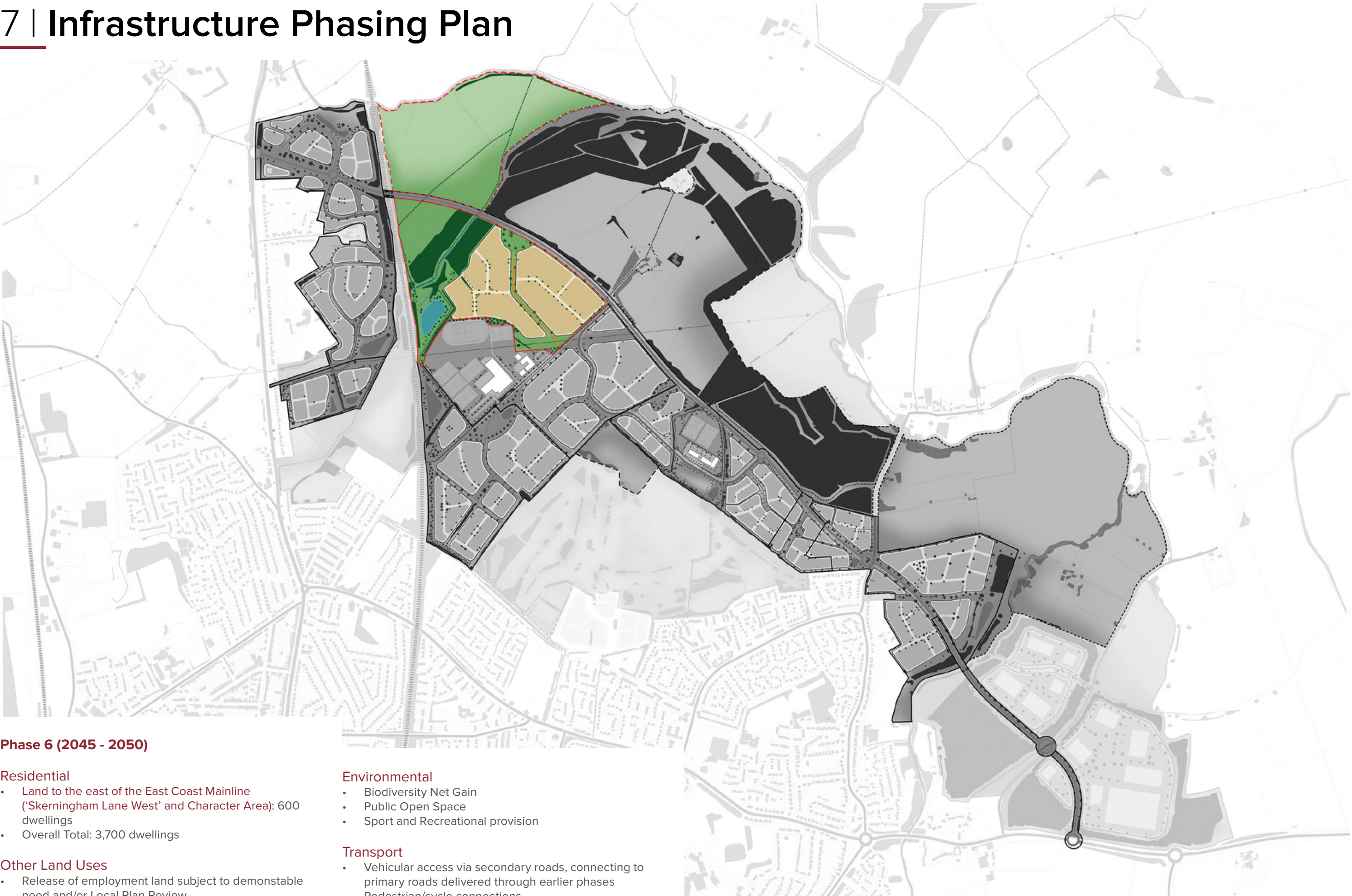
- Enhancements to the 'Skerningham Woods' Character Area (including increasing public accessibility and landscaping)
- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Public Open Space
- Sport and Recreational provision

Transport

- Vehicular access via secondary roads, connecting to primary roads delivered through earlier phases
- Pedestrian/cycle connections to social infrastructure and green infrastructure north of the LDR

Figure 7.5 Phase 5 Plan

7 | Infrastructure Phasing Plan



Phase 6 (2045 - 2050)

- Residential**
- Land to the east of the East Coast Mainline ('Skerningham Lane West' and Character Area): 600 dwellings
 - Overall Total: 3,700 dwellings

- Other Land Uses**
- Release of employment land subject to demonstrable need and/or Local Plan Review

- Environmental**
- Biodiversity Net Gain
 - Public Open Space
 - Sport and Recreational provision

- Transport**
- Vehicular access via secondary roads, connecting to primary roads delivered through earlier phases
 - Pedestrian/cycle connections

Figure 7.6 Phase 6 Plan

8 | Conclusion

The Masterplan (including infrastructure phasing plan) addresses the requirements of Policy H 10 of the Darlington Local Plan – it informs the mix of uses, layout, scale, design, provision of local and strategic infrastructure including social and community facilities and phasing of the proposed development.

It also demonstrates how the development will achieve the vision and objectives identified for Skerningham.

The Masterplan has been shaped by joint working between Darlington Borough Council, Banks Property and Skerningham Estates Ltd, with the latter two being the lead developers of the development. It has also been prepared in consultation with the community.

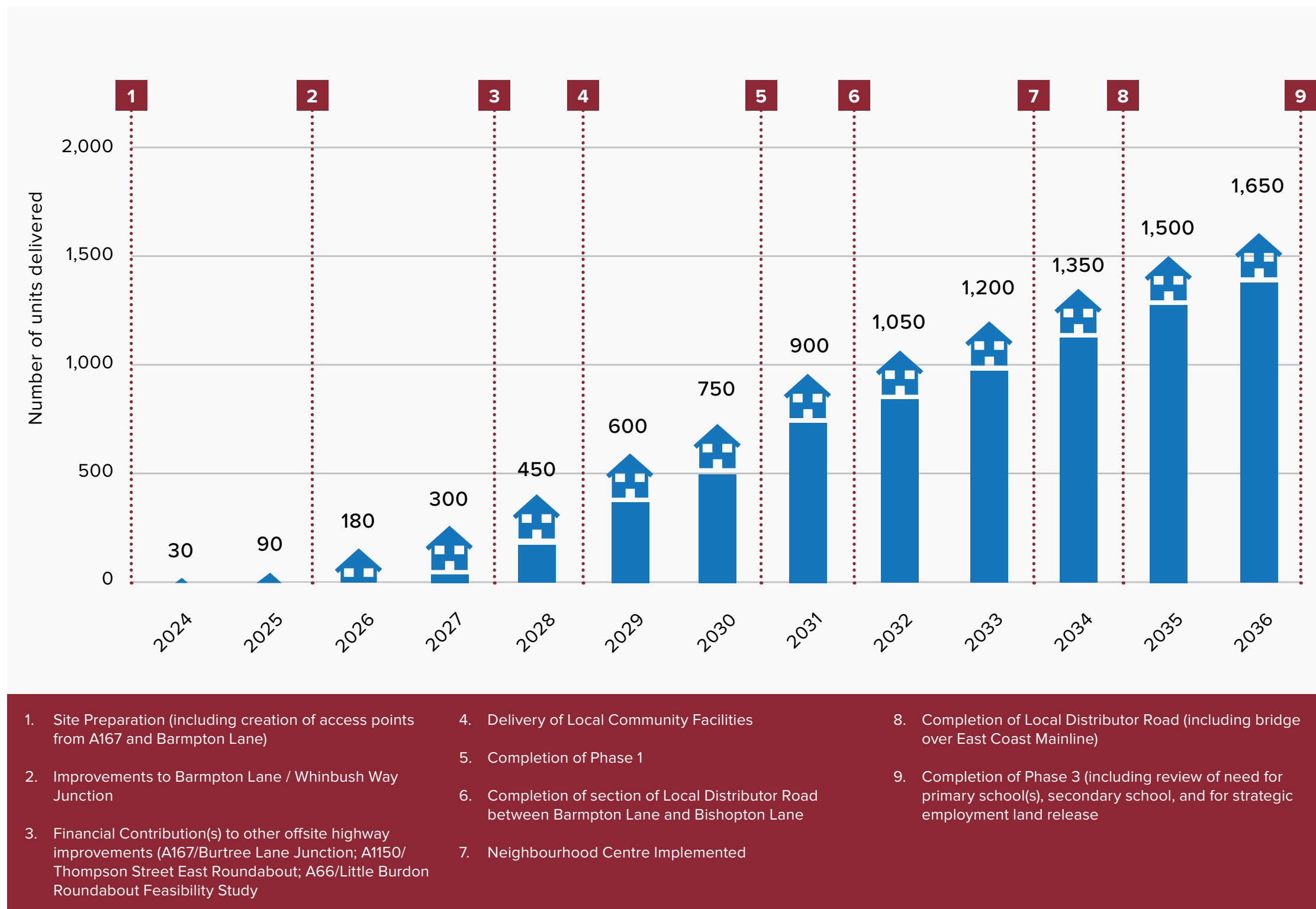
The Masterplan sets out a framework for the delivery of Skerningham and forms part of a suite of documents (including the adopted Local Plan and Design Code) which will ensure a high quality of development is achieved in line with the Garden City Principles.

The community infrastructure identified will be secured via Section 106 Legal Agreement and planning conditions as appropriate as part of the planning application process.

The delivery of the site is anticipated to be around 25 years and it will therefore exceed the current Local Plan period (which runs to 2036). Key infrastructure has been identified and is programmed within the various phases of development. Any further infrastructure required will be secured through the planning application process.

The chart opposite provides a summary illustration of when the identified infrastructure will be delivered against the housing delivery and timeline of the development.

Given the timescales involved in building out the site, the Masterplan will be reviewed from time to time as circumstances necessitate.



1. Site Preparation (including creation of access points from A167 and Barmpton Lane)
2. Improvements to Barmpton Lane / Whinbush Way Junction
3. Financial Contribution(s) to other offsite highway improvements (A167/Burtree Lane Junction; A1150/Thompson Street East Roundabout; A66/Little Burdon Roundabout Feasibility Study)
4. Delivery of Local Community Facilities
5. Completion of Phase 1
6. Completion of section of Local Distributor Road between Barmpton Lane and Bishopton Lane
7. Neighbourhood Centre Implemented
8. Completion of Local Distributor Road (including bridge over East Coast Mainline)
9. Completion of Phase 3 (including review of need for primary school(s), secondary school, and for strategic employment land release)

Figure 8.1: Delivery Trajectory

