

# Wixams East

*Vision Document / October 2021*



*L&Q Estates is a  
‘Place Maker’ – the  
golden thread that  
runs through all our  
developments.*

L&Q Estates has been in the business of identifying, promoting and acquiring land for over 60 years. Throughout this journey we have gained experience of working with a wide range of people, creating communities that work for everyone.

With significant financial resources, combined with the experience and expertise to assemble land, promote and secure planning and deliver the infrastructure required, L&Q Estates is at the forefront of facilitating much-needed housing and commercial development in the UK.

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# 01

## Introduction

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*This document has been prepared on behalf of L&Q Estates and sets out a Vision and future aspirations for Wixams East, an exciting residential led development opportunity to the east of Wixams.*



### Document Scope & Purpose

The purpose of this document is to promote Wixams East through the Bedford Borough Council 'Call for Sites' process, demonstrating the opportunity afforded by the Site to provide a sustainable extension to Wixams to meet the needs of existing and future communities.

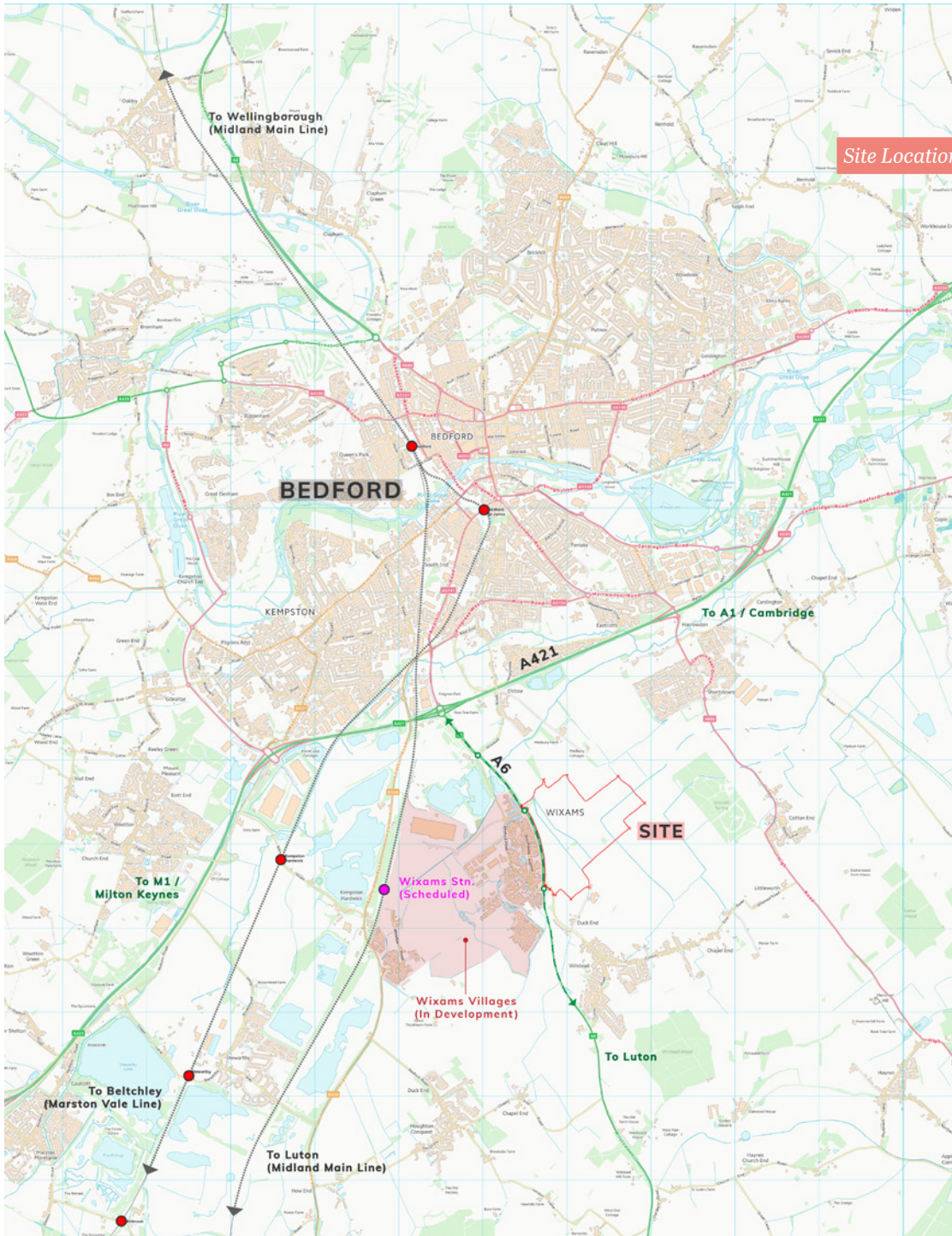
Bedford Borough Council's Draft Plan Strategy and Options and Draft Policies Consultation identifies four emerging preferred options for where development will be focused over the plan period.

Wixams East would support the delivery of all four of these options. The sustainability appraisal shows that Option 2a performs better than the others because it concentrates most growth at rail-based locations at Stewartby/Kempston Hardwick. We are supportive of this conclusion. Option 2a is also not reliant on the creation of a new settlement which takes longer to deliver over the plan period due to the amount of infrastructure required from the outset.

L&Q Estates is promoting land to the East of Wixams which would support the delivery of Growth Strategy Option 2a.

The following Vision Document for Wixams East provides more detail on how this Site fits within the growth strategy.

The proposals presented in this document are deliberately conceptual in its application and do not seek to pre-determine a final outcome but serve to set the tone and general direction of future discussions.



Site Location Plan

### Site Location

The Site is located adjacent to the new neighbourhoods at Wixams, approximately three miles to the south of Bedford.

It is located in close proximity to the scheduled Wixams Station on the Midland Main Line, which will provide direct connections to Bedford and other significant regional destinations such as Wellingborough, Kettering, and Luton.

Numerous local pedestrian and cycle links provide convenient and sustainable access from the Site to key local destinations, including facilities and services at Wixams, employment opportunities, and the countryside beyond.

The A6 abuts the Site's western boundary and provides a direct connection to Bedford and the strategic road network.

## 02

# Continuing the Wixams Legacy

*Wixams represents the very best of what L&Q Estates can achieve – taking a contaminated industrial site and transforming it into an aspirational new village community.*



In total, including the expansion area, Wixams will provide 4,500 new homes, 2,400,000 sq ft of employment and 100,000 sq ft of retail space in addition to four primary schools, a secondary school, 300 acres of landscaped parkland, 15km of cycleways, and new play facilities.

The first phase of this new settlement, known as Lakeview Village, is now complete, providing 950 homes with 25% affordable housing, a new primary school, village shops, community hall and recreational facilities for residents.



Housebuilding is now well underway in phase two (Harrowden Green) and phase four (Willow Park), again enabled by infrastructure installed by L&Q Estates. Design work is now concentrating on the delivery of the social and retail heart of the development in the shape of a new town centre.



Since funding Lakeview School, which was opened in 2012, L&Q Estates has contributed a further £8.8million towards the creation of Wixams Tree Primary School and Wixams Academy, both officially opened in October 2017. With further investment in excess of £40million in infrastructure to date which has included the provision of a realigned and dualled A6, re-remediation of the former bomb-making factory and extensive ground remodelling, creating a number of lakes which provide a focus for development and further enhance the environment.

The sale of land to multiple housebuilders, all working to a strict design code, has resulted in the delivery of a high-quality new village which sets the standard for the rest of the development. The success of the development has resulted in the local authority allocating further expansion land to the south of the village for future development.

***Wixams East presents the opportunity to deliver the next chapter of the Wixams story...***



*Wixams Composite Plan 2021*



# 03

## The Opportunity

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*Wixams East is located in a logical and sustainable location for future growth, providing easy access into Bedford for cyclists and pedestrians, as well as services and facilities at Wixams, existing and future employment opportunities, the scheduled Wixams Station, and the countryside beyond.*

The significant work that has gone into delivering the four “villages” of Wixams has laid the foundation for a highly sustainable new community to the south of Bedford. Wixams East now offers the opportunity to build on those foundations by carefully expanding the settlement to accommodate further, and much needed, sustainable growth without undermining the urban design principles that underpin the Wixams success story.

The delivery of new settlements from scratch is often challenging, Wixams being no exception in taking 10 years from initial concept to outline planning permission and a further 15 years to build out the circa 1,800 dwellings now occupied. Wixams East would constitute an expansion of Wixams to avoid the lengthy time it takes to deliver new settlements from scratch. Wixams East will not require the delivery of significant primary infrastructure as this is already in place. This will enable the delivery of homes in the early years of the plan period. Wixams East will benefit from two direct access points, much the same as Wixams, and this will allow

for multiple outlets to deliver new homes simultaneously. Once up and running it is expected that at least four outlets can be accommodated (there are currently 6 on Wixams) which will be delivering between 200 – 250 dwellings per annum.

Wixams East will benefit from its proximity to the existing services and facilities at Wixams in the early years, but will deliver primary education, day-to-day shopping, community and recreation facilities on-site as part of the development proposals. Home working, co-working and mobility hubs will also be provided to address the move to more flexible working practices. It is important to provide the opportunity for people to work in an agile way and this will be embedded in the design ethos of the development.

Retail is undergoing significant restructuring and there is presently insufficient commercial demand for the full scale of retail as masterplanned for the new town centre. The evolving design code for the Wixams town centre will ensure that sufficient space and flexibility is designed into the town centre to

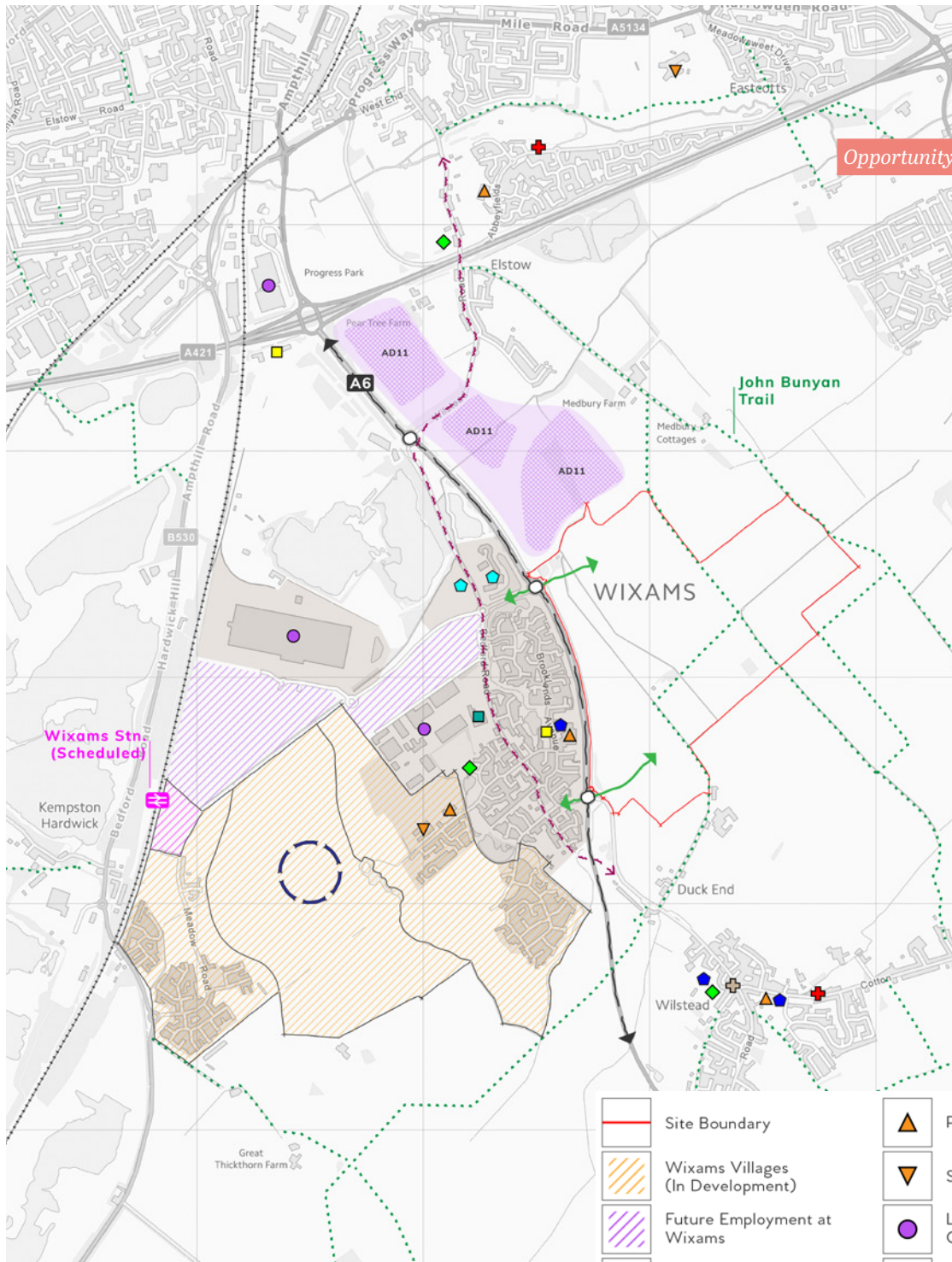
ensure it is capable of expanding and adapting to the changing needs of the High Street. The additional homes at Wixams East will add further local retail demand to ensure the delivery and vitality of the new High Street.

Further opportunities at Wixams East include the size of the site and the amount of green infrastructure which will allow any requirements for biodiversity net gain to be met or exceeded on site.

The provision of a Neighbourhood Centre will open up the opportunity for high quality social and community infrastructure to support a mixed use and vibrant place

Most importantly, Wixams East is very well placed to provide easy access for residents to get to the new Wixams train station including through means of active travel.





Opportunity Plan

Destination (distance)	Walking	Cycling
Wixams Station (2.6km)	28 mins	8 mins
Wixams Town Centre (2.4km)	26 mins	7 mins
Lakeview Village Hall (1.5km)	16.5 mins	4.5 mins
Wixams Retirement (1.0km)	11 mins	3 mins
Wilstead Branch Surgery (2.7km)	28 mins	8 mins
Elstow School (3.5km)	38.5 mins	10.5 mins

Table showing approximate accessibility via existing and future routes to key local destinations (from centre of site)

- Site Boundary
- Wixams Villages (In Development)
- Future Employment at Wixams
- Future Wixams Railway Quarter
- Future Wixams Town Centre
- Policy AD11 - Employment Allocation
- Public Right of Way
- Key Local Cycle Route (Wilstead to Bedford)
- Access Opportunity and Link to Wixams Villages
- Primary School
- Secondary School
- Local Employment Opportunity
- Retirement Village / Care Facility
- Community Centre
- Food Store
- Garden Centre
- Leisure Centre / Recreation
- Doctor's Surgery
- Pharmacy

## 04

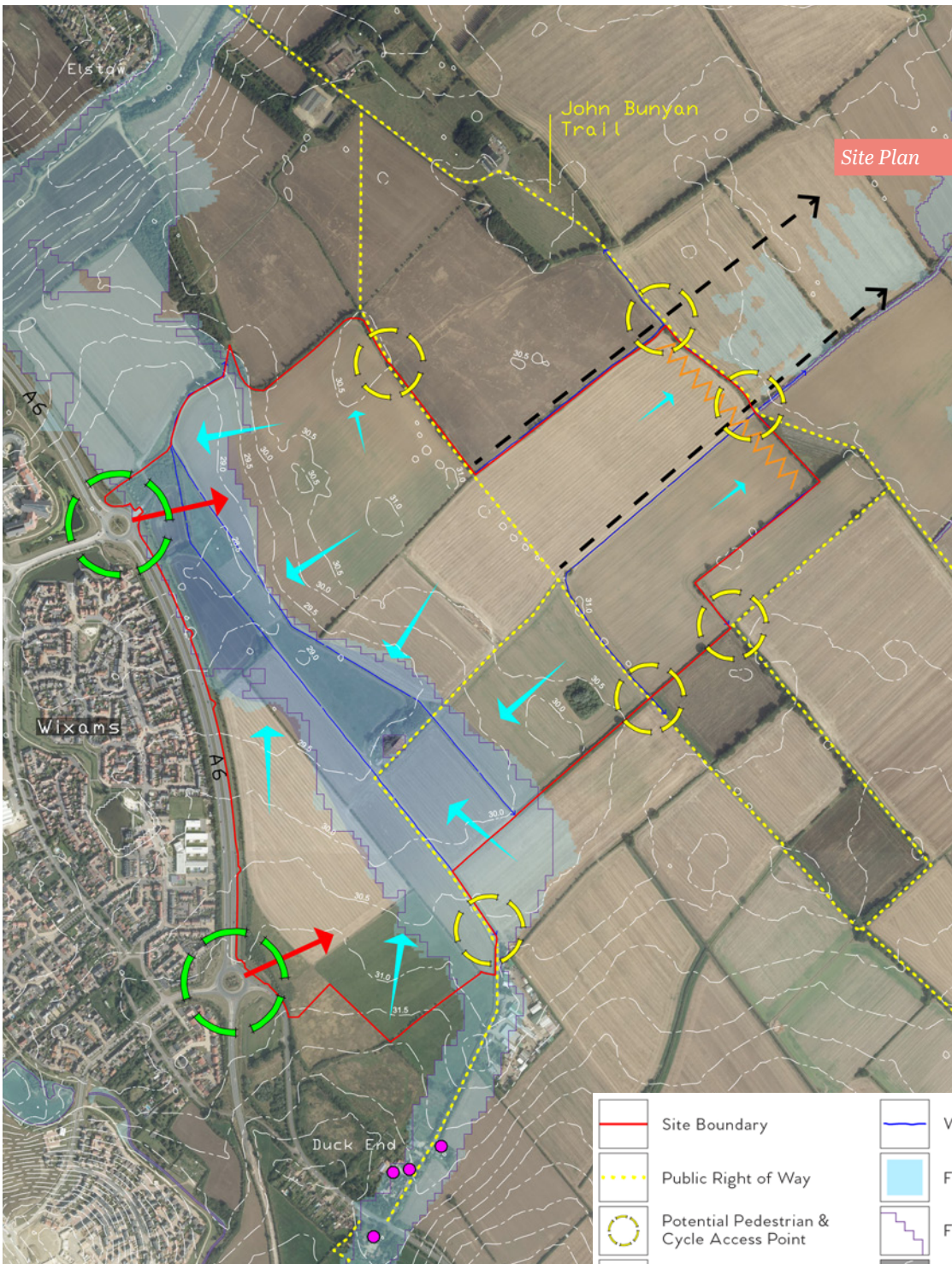
# Understanding the Site

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*Wixams East comprises approximately 110ha of mainly agricultural land, forming large fields with planted boundaries. It is located in close proximity to Wixams, with significant opportunities.*

Initial analysis of the Site's strategic, physical, and environmental characteristics has helped to shape the emerging proposals, which are reflected in the Concept Plan, demonstrating its deliverability. The main Site opportunities include:

- Several Public Rights of Way cross the Site, connecting to local destinations and the surrounding countryside.
- The Site is not considered to make any contribution to the heritage significance of any identified heritage assets. Any impact arising from the Site's development would be through the introduction of built form within their wider contextual surroundings, which could be mitigated through appropriate design and landscape proposals.
- Existing historic landscape features, such as copses, hedgerows, and waterways, will be retained and enhanced to guide developable areas.
- Development proposals to the east of the Site by the historic John Bunyan Trail bridleway are to be set back with a landscape buffer. Direct connections to this recreational route could also form view corridors to better reveal the significance of the Grade II\* listed Cardington Sheds as a prominent landmark on the skyline.
- Development proposals near to Duck End would have a lower density and scale to sustain the existing character along the lane, with opportunities to incorporate elements of the local vernacular.
- The majority of the Site is located in Flood Zone 1 - 'Low Probability'. However, there is an area of the Site located in Flood Zone 2 and 3, which provides opportunity for extensive parkland amenity space and biodiversity benefits.
- Land in the centre and the southwest of the Site slopes down towards the watercourses crossing the Site from south to north. The lowest point lies in the northwest corner at approximately 28.7m AOD. Land towards the east of the Site is generally flat, falling slightly towards the east.
- Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) will aim to enhance existing habitats and create new habitats within the Site, particularly for aquatic flora and fauna, to be located near to existing watercourses.
- Opportunity to ensure long-term biodiversity net gains through habitat enhancement and creation within a green infrastructure network.
- Access into the Site will be provided via two roundabouts on the A6, with opportunities to prioritise safe and easy movement for pedestrians and cyclists into Wixams and the scheduled Wixams Station
- The client holds control of land adjacent to the roundabouts to ensure suitable access proposals can be delivered.
- Proposals will provide appropriate mitigation to reduce the adverse impacts of noise from the A6.



Site Plan

- |                                                                                     |                                                |                                                                                       |                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
|  | Site Boundary                                  |  | Watercourse / Dry Ditch |
|  | Public Right of Way                            |  | Flood Zone 2            |
|  | Potential Pedestrian & Cycle Access Point      |  | Flood Zone 3            |
|  | Enhancement Opportunity for Ped/Cycle Movement |  | Contours (0.5m)         |
|  | Potential Vehicular Access                     |  | Slope Direction         |
|  | Listed Building                                |                                                                                       |                         |
|  | Long-Distance Views to Cardington Sheds (II*)  |                                                                                       |                         |
|  | Development Set Back to John Bunyan Trail      |                                                                                       |                         |



View to the Cardington Sheds from the John Bunyan Trail

# 05

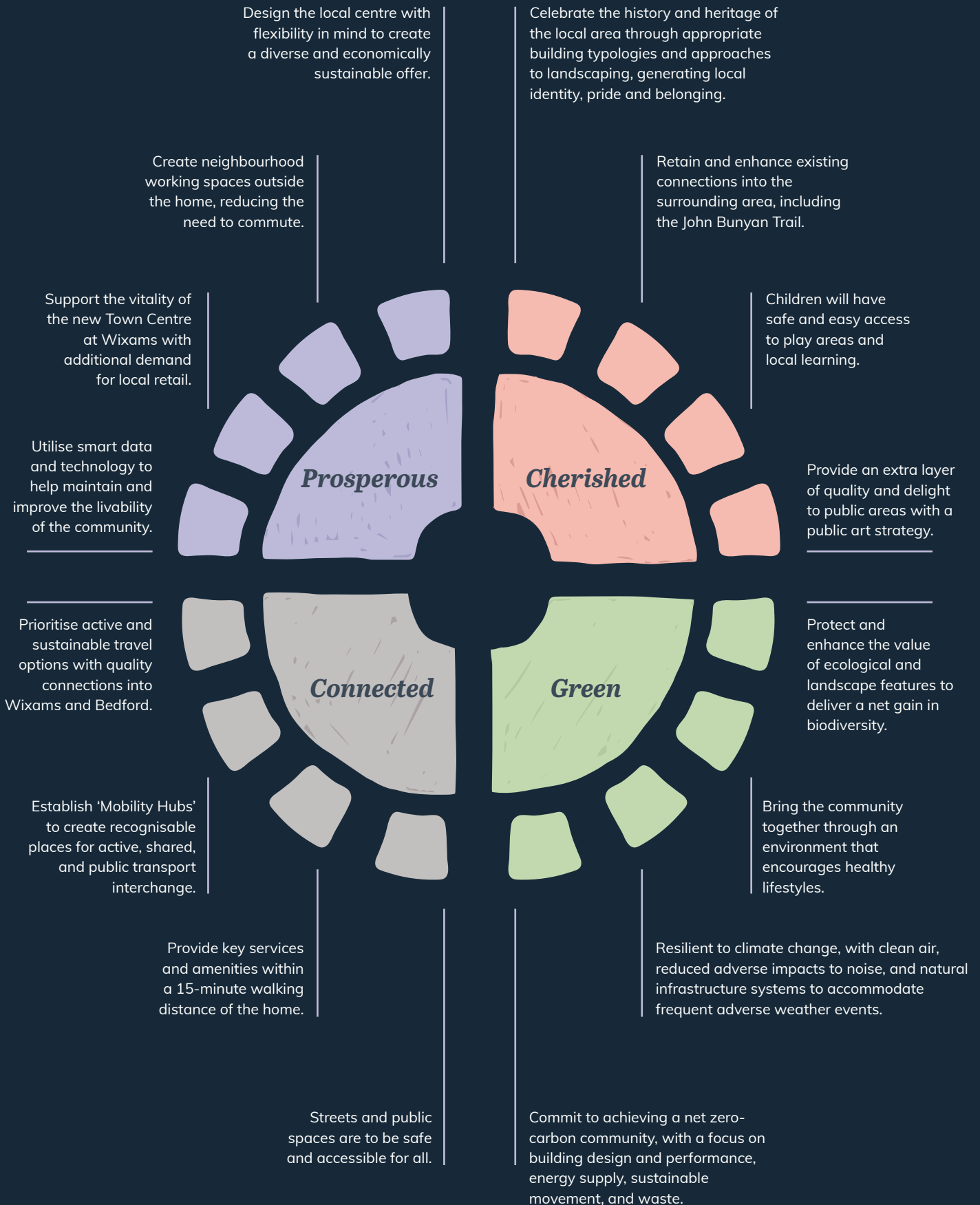
## Our Vision

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*The vision for Wixams East has been shaped by the placemaking opportunities of the Site and the aspiration to bring forward the emergence of a sustainable, net zero-carbon, contemporary extension to Wixams.*

*The following themes and guiding principles set a framework against which future decisions can be made to deliver our vision, which have been influenced by the clear policy direction of Bedford Borough Council to become “a greener, more sustainable, more attractive and prosperous place to live”.*





# 06

## Emerging Concept

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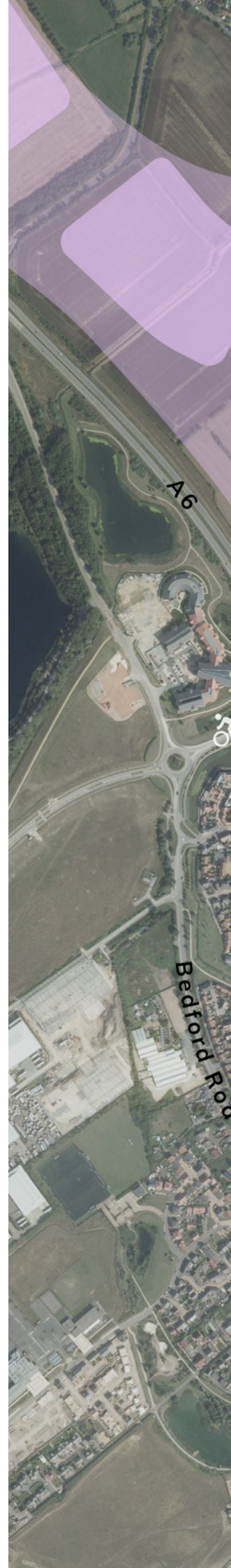
*The Concept Plan demonstrates an emerging spatial framework for the delivery of a sustainable, net zero-carbon, contemporary extension to the Wixams that will meet the specific needs of the location and its population.*

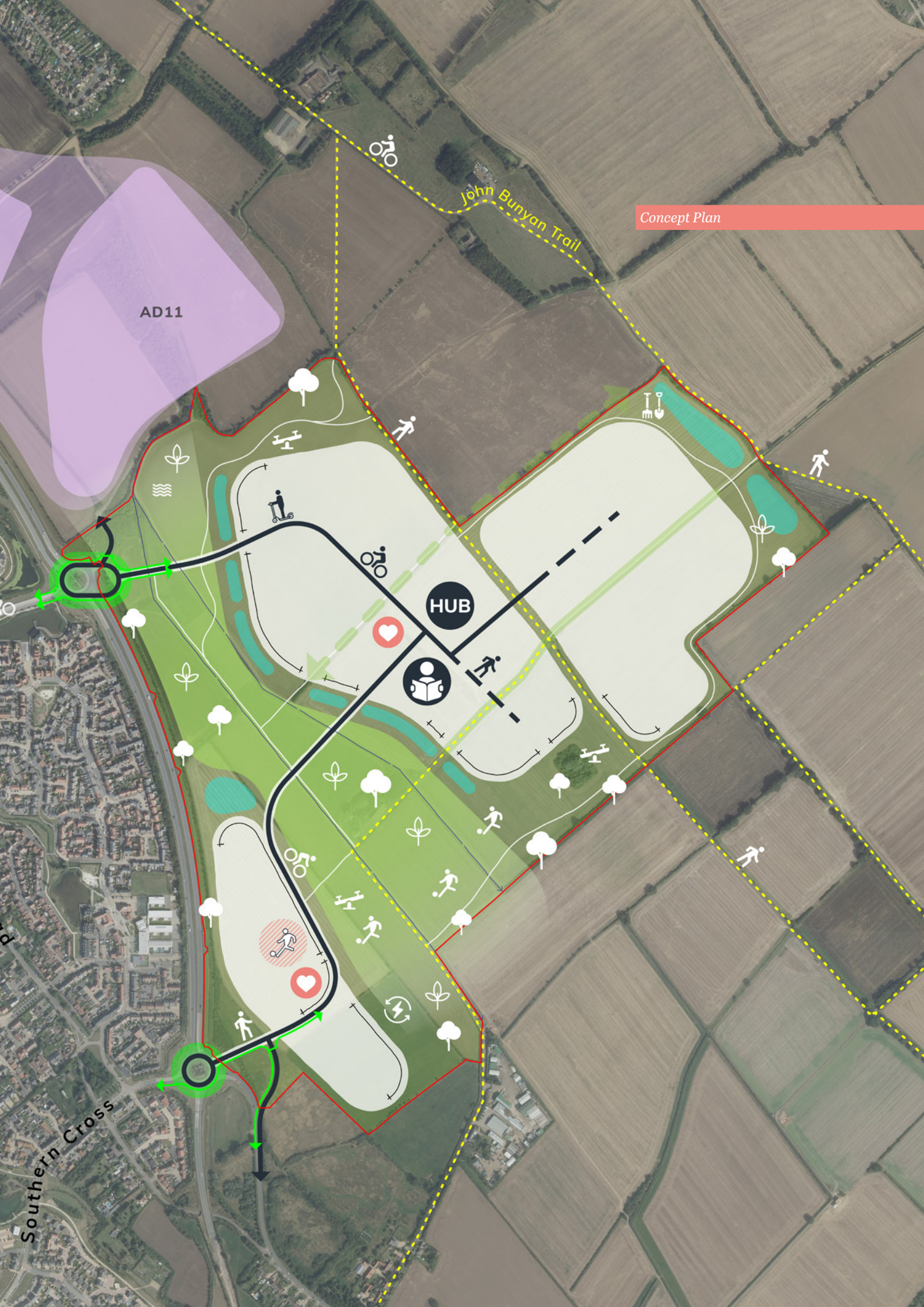
Distinctive natural features underpin the structure of the emerging concept, and the basis for the creation of new parks and spaces that will provide civic amenity, and links into the surrounding countryside. The most significant of which, is the creation of Wixams Forest Park: an active, distinctive, extensive, beautiful, and biodiverse green corridor that will provide a significant new local destination for existing and future communities.

At the heart of Wixams East is a new Neighbourhood Centre, to comprise local employment, working spaces, retail and leisure facilities, a school, new homes, and a 'mobility hub'.

Other features of the emerging proposals that would bring benefit and value to the local area include:

- Up to 1,800 new homes including affordable homes for local people that work towards a net zero-carbon future.
- Movement infrastructure that prioritises pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport.
- Improvements to the A6 roundabouts that will ensure safe and convenient movement for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Opportunity to improve the John Bunyan Trail, which provides a direct leisurely route into Bedford.
- Direct connections to the John Bunyan Trail via enhanced green corridors, which also provide long-distance views to the Grade II\* listed Cardington Sheds.
- Opportunity to deliver a sports and wellness centre to comprise rehabilitation facilities, sports provision, and other recreational features, in the setting of the new parkland.
- Smart infrastructure, such as EV charging stations, air/water quality sensors, and smart transport systems to help maintain/improve the livability of the community.
- Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS).
- Land for community agriculture where residents and pupils can grow, consume, and even sell locally produced food.
- Access to nature and the surrounding landscape.
- Recognisable local character.





AD11

John Bunyan Trail

HUB

Southern Cross

# 07

## Creating a Place for People

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*The emerging proposals aim to create a sustainable, connected, and vibrant place where people will want to live, work, and visit. A contemporary residential-led extension to Wixams that is locally distinctive and that people will feel proud of and inspired by.*







# Sustainable

*Wixams East will support the Council’s vision for sustainability to be at the heart of new development, which includes tackling climate change, adapting to and mitigating its effects, encouraging residents to live and work locally and to make more sustainable travel choices, and securing a net-gain in both biodiversity and environmental quality.*

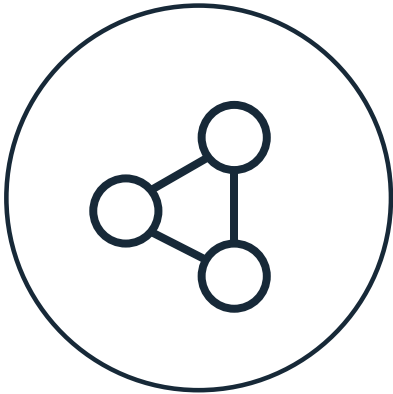


The new development will support the journey to net zero-carbon through an enabling framework that focuses on four key contributors of our emissions: building & infrastructure design and performance; connectivity; energy supply; and waste. The aspiration is for Wixams East to provide an exemplary urban extension, which champions net zero-carbon development. This could include the delivery of an energy hub on-site, to generate sustainable energy supply for the new development.

A principal pillar of the emerging proposals is an overarching aim of the development to ensure that long-term net gains to biodiversity are delivered both in terms of habitat enhancement and creation as well as for protected species. The goal of achieving significant net gains will have beneficial ripple effects on numerous other aspects of the

development, including residential well-being and achieving a net zero-carbon development, and on the wider community, by providing long-term and functional habitats for local people and wildlife.

Wixams East will deliver a walkable neighbourhood by providing primary education, day-to-day shopping, inclusive community places, shared working spaces, recreational facilities, and attractive open spaces within easy and convenient access to residents, reducing the need to commute. Where longer journeys are necessary, measures and infrastructures will support access to public transport, electric vehicles, and electric bikes and scooters.



# Connected



*Wixams East will integrate cohesively with the existing local movement network, deliver streets and spaces that encourage active and sustainable travel choices, and provide supporting digital and physical infrastructures including a ‘Mobility Hub’ to establish a truly connected place.*



The new development will incorporate existing public paths that cross the Site into an attractive and permeable movement network that encourages people to live, shop, and socialise locally. Opportunities will also be taken to enhance other local routes, identified by Bedford Borough Council, that will support pedestrian and cycle movement to further local destinations.

a key role in meeting sustainability objectives, supporting active travel, reducing car dependency, connecting to Wixams and Bedford, providing vitalised public realm, and encouraging social interaction. There are a range of components that could be tailored to the site, including e-scooters, bike parking, electric vehicle charging, community concierge last mile delivery, bus stops, public artwork, digital information pillars, and adjustments for disabilities.

Access to the Site will be provided via two improved roundabouts on the A6, which will prioritise safe and easy movement for pedestrians and cyclists into Wixams and the scheduled Wixams Station.

Connectivity into Wixams will also have a positive impact on the vitality of the Wixams Town Centre, by adding further local retail demand from new local residents.



A ‘Mobility Hub’ at Wixams East, co-located with the Neighbourhood Centre, will establish a recognisable place for active, shared, and public transport interchange, supplemented with enhanced facilities and information features to both attract and benefit the traveller. It will play



# A Great Place

*Wixams East will deliver a wide range of high-quality places and spaces for future and existing communities to enjoy, which builds on the successful delivery of new neighbourhoods at Wixams and is shaped by the placemaking opportunities of the Site and the surrounding area.*



The creation of a central greenspace described as Wixams Forest Park will be a key space for Wixams East as well as a regionally significant resource for people in the existing Wixams community and beyond. It will perform as a multi functional green heart with the same high quality of landscape design associated with the greenways at Wixams.

Closely related to the Forest Park will be the Neighbourhood Centre which will provide opportunities for a Mobility Hub, Co-Working Spaces, Education Provision, Community Facilities and an Energy Centre. The Energy Centre will provide a Sustainable District Heat Network based on the best technology at the time of delivery.



The two access point from the A6 will be designed as memorable gateways through the distinctive quality of built form but also the integration with planting, public art and landscaping.

As well as connecting well into Wixams and other wider destinations, internally Wixams will be based on a permeable network of streets, footways and cycle paths. These will often be part of internal greenways running along the line of retained hedgerows but also linking key destinations such as the Forest Park with the John Bunyan Trail.

We would seek to create a place with plentiful character prompted by distinctive qualities of the site by developing different types of architectural treatment, scale, density and built form for different areas of the site to make it a memorable place to live.





### Wixams Forest Park

One of the key proposals for Wixams East is Wixams Forest Park. This will provide a regional park that will complement the local greenways provided at Wixams so that collectively there is a comprehensive open space offer at Wixams as a whole. Key elements of the Park include:

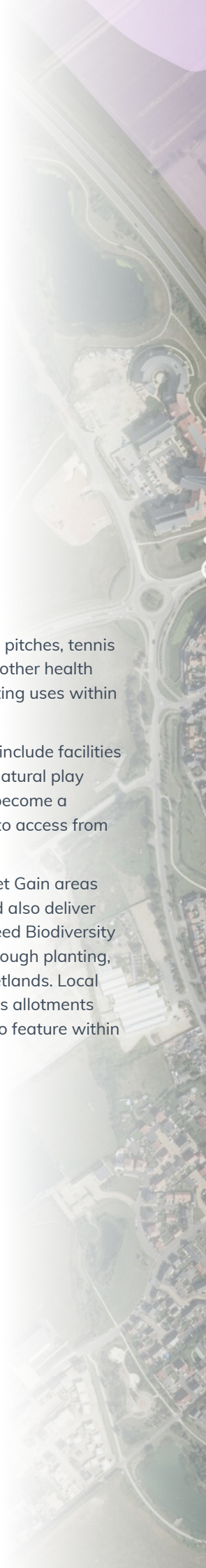
Woodland Planting to help meet the Forest of Marston Vale Policy in the area. An extensive area of woodland planting would act as an exemplar leisure offer but also support carbon sequestration and better mental health as people interact easily and accessibly with nature.

Recreational trails - this could include trim trails, mountain bike routes through the woodland and leisure routes interspersed with bird hides and interpretive signage to support learning from nature.

Sport facilities - Sports pitches, tennis courts, sports hall and other health and well being supporting uses within or adjacent to the Park

Play areas - this could include facilities for all ages and more natural play equipment that could become a destination for people to access from wider communities

Ecology/Biodiversity Net Gain areas - the Forest Park would also deliver the opportunity to exceed Biodiversity Net Gain standards through planting, meadow areas and wetlands. Local food production such as allotments and orchards could also feature within the Park.



AD11



# 08

## Key Benefits

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*This document demonstrates how a sustainable, net zero-carbon, and contemporary residential led development could be delivered at Wixams East. It sets out an emerging vision and design approach that would provide the following key benefits:*

- Significant and well needed high quality new market and affordable housing delivered in a coherent manner.
- To continue to build on the legacy of a successful new community at Wixams and have the opportunity to continue its organic growth.
- Provision of new facilities - Wixams East can provide new areas of open space, schools, community facilities, and housing both for residents but also for the wider community.
- Wixams East also has the benefit of being in close proximity to existing employment as well as proposed future employment, Wixams station, access to the A6 and active travel connections to key public rights of way including the John Bunyan Trail.



AD11

AD11

AD11

Local Cycle Route  
(Wilstead to Bedford)

John Bunyan  
Trail

Emp

Wixams Stn.  
(Scheduled)

HUB

Play

Recreation

Recreation

Greenway

Secondary Sch.

Sch.

Sch.

Play

Sch.

Greenway

Play

Play

Recreation

Play

Play

Recreation

Greenway

Play

HUB

Sch.

Play

Recreation

WIXAMS  
EAST

Sch.

Sch.

Recreation

Play

