

# VISION AND DELIVERY DOCUMENT LAND AT WILLINGTON, BEDFORDSHIRE

August 2020



**URBAN DESIGN STUDIO** 

## **Quality Assurance**

Site name: Land at Willington

Client name: Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd

Type of report: Vision and Delivery Document



## Date: October 2018

Reviewed and revised by:

Signed:



Date: October 2018 + August 2020

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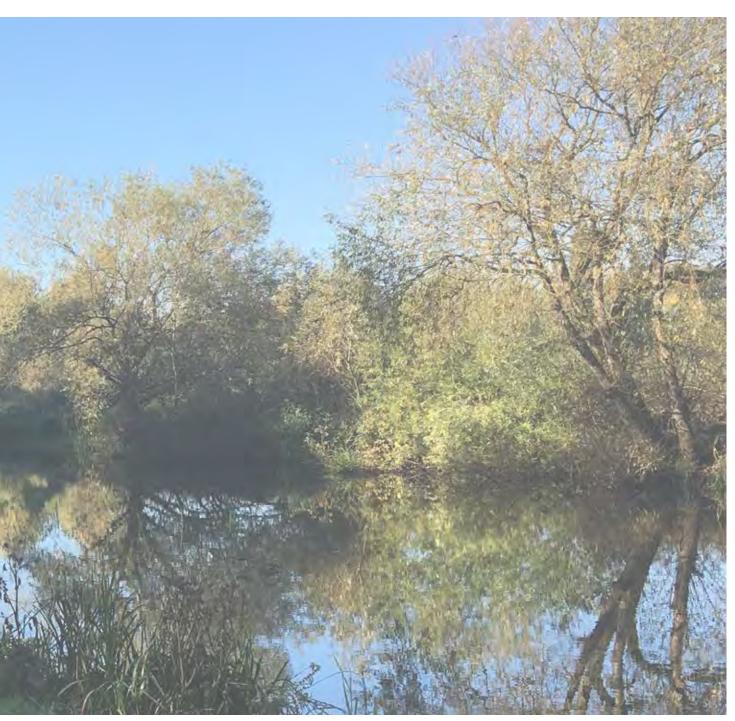
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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The introduction gives a high-level overview of the project, outlining the purpose of the visioning document. On behalf of Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd, this document has been prepared to demonstrate the development potential of a parcel of land on the western edge of Willington, Bedfordshire.

The vision and delivery document will demonstrate the process of analysis and evaluation which has been undertaken in order to determine the physical qualities of the proposal site, pertinent planning requirements and the relationship between the site and its wider context.



Figure 1; Site Location Plan showing surrounding Public Rights of Way



Figure 2; Site Location Plan with 2km radius



This document aims to demonstrate how, through a clear understanding of the site and its context, a clear master plan strategy has been developed for the site, culminating in the definition of design principles upon which the proving master plan is based. These principles include access and circulation, landscape and open space and drainage.

The document will comprise of the following sections:

#### INTRODUCTION

An introduction to the purpose of the document, and a brief outline of the site and the proposals.

## **SITE CONTEXT**

A description of the site in its local and wider context, highlighting local amenities, including schools, doctors and transport connections.

## **PLANNING CONTEXT**

The planning context provides a summary of the planning framework through which the site has been proposed for development, and which policies have been considered as part of the submission.

#### **BASELINE STUDY**

An assessment of the site's mapping data including historical, topographical and flood risk mapping to determine the key considerations and constraints of the site

## **MASTER PLAN STRATEGY**

Within this section, the opportunities and constraints of the site are established, leading to a clear rationale to inform the emerging design.

## **FINAL PROPOSALS**

The design principles to which the final illustrative master plan is based upon are defined, including access and circulation, landscape and open space, planting mitigation and site drainage.

## CONCLUSION

A summary of the main features of the proposals and how they respond to the local context of the site are included within this section. The conclusions and benefits of the site are included.

## 1.2 THE PROPOSALS

The master plan strategy proposes up to 150 dwellings arranged across the eastern portion of the site, set within sensitively landscaped structural planting to mitigate visual impacts of the proposed development.

The proposed layout responds to its location on the settlement edge of Willington. The existing village built form is strongly rectilinear, focused on Bedford Road, the main through route, and Balls Lane, Station Road and Church Road, with services distributed through the village. Like the existing form of the village the proposed development contains primarily detached and semi-detached properties set within generous private plots.

Further detail on the proposed master plan will be provided in Section 6.0.

## LEGEND

1	Proposed Site Access
2	Proposed upgraded Roundabout
3	Willington Fields Open Space
4	Proposed Residential Development
5	Public Right of Way
6	Pedestrian Route
7	Village Green and Natural Play Space
8	Linear Green and SuDS corridor
9	Bedford Road Landscape Frontage



Figure 3; Illustrative Master Plan





# 2.0 SITE CONTEXT

This section of the document gives an overview of the site location, local amenities and connectivity.



Figure 4; Site Location Plan

The site is located on the western edge of Willington, disected by a public right of way which runs roughly north-south through the centre of the site.

The northern site boundary is defined by the rear boundaries of residences fronting Church Road, with the southern site boundary defined by the Bedford and District Handicapped Riders Association.

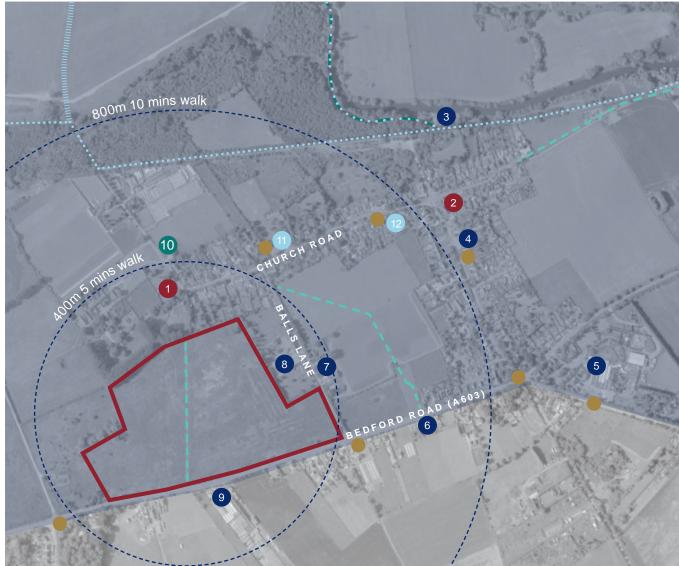
To the south of the site runs Bedford Road, the primary route through the village. Seemingly open land to the west is in fact a Hanson Ready Mixed Concrete Facility.

• Site Area: approx. 14ha

• The site is accessible off Bedford Road to the south and Balls Lane to the east.

## LEGEND

Site Location



## LEGEND

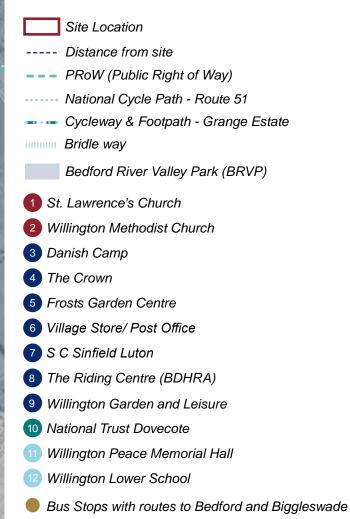
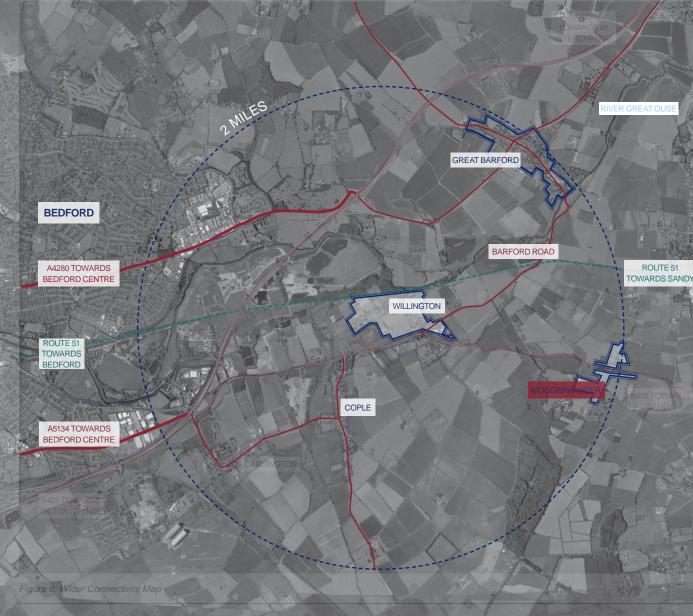


Figure 5; Site Location Plan

## 2.3 WIDER CONNECTIVITY



Willington is well connected, with the A603 connecting west to Bedford and east towards Sandy. Bedford town centre is a 15 minute drive from Willington where you can connect to the Bedford Midland railway line to London St Pancras and the East Midlands.

Bedford has a further Train station 'Bedford St John's' which connects on the Marston Vale line westerly towards Woburn Sands.

The major trunk road A421 is a 3 minute drive connecting west towards Milton Keynes and the M1, and east towards the A1 interchange.

Bus Route 73 runs every 30mins connecting Willington west to Bedford and east to Biggleswade.

Cycle route 51 connects regionally to the university cities of Oxford and Cambridge, and locally into Bedford and Sandy

LEGEND

Approximate site location,



Cycle (route 51)

River Great Ouse



Figure 7; Bedford River Valley Boundary Plan

Figure 8; Bedford River Valley Framework Plan

The Bedford River Valley Park forms part of a regional park (868ha) being created east of Bedford. The aim is to deliver green infrastructure that will facilitate the creation of new habitat and recreational uses along the Great River Ouse floodplain.

The framework plan observed in figure 8 has been informed through a public and private initiative, working with stakeholders including landowners, governmental bodies and local residents to deliver environmental, social and economic benefits to the area.

Bedford Borough Council published the initial aspiration for the River Valley park in 2002;

<sup>6</sup>When development opportunities arise, within the area defined on the Proposals Map, the Borough Council will seek the creation of the Bedford River Valley Park as an area where opportunities exist for landscape enhancement, nature conservation, recreation and increased public access whilst protecting sites of acknowledged archaeological importance'.

## LEGEND

Site Location

Bedford River Valley Park



#### Figure 8; Willington Fields West Boundary Map

Willington Fields to the west of the village are predominantly set to semi-improved grassland with sporadic tree and scrub cover.

This area has been identified as a constituent part of the wider Bedford River Valley Park (BRVP) that forms part of immediate landscape character surrounding the site.

Gravel extraction is a typical industry of Willington Fields and the surrounding area. Subsequent bodies of water post extraction are key indicators of the industrial heritage, and form a key character and recreational opportunity.

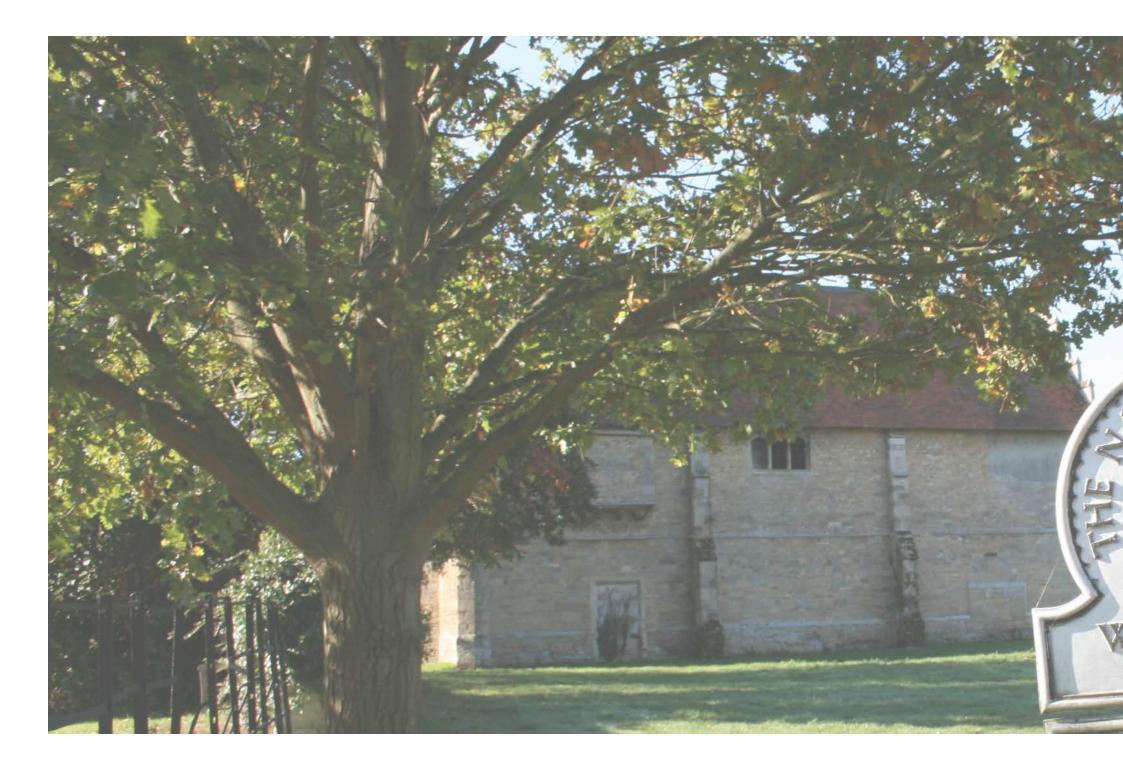
## LEGEND

Site Location

Bedford River Valley Park (3.5 square miles)

Willington Fields

Willington Settlement Policy Area Boundary





# 3.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

This section of the document summarises the relevant planning policy associated with the site and this type of development, including planning related mapping.

## The site lies adjacent to the current settlement boundary of Willington, as set out on the policies map.

The site is also identified as lying within an area covered by saved policies AD24 and AD26 and Policy 36S, which cover:

- AD24 Green Infrastructure Opportunity Zones
- AD26 Bedford River Valley Park
- 36S Forest of Marston Vale

As addressed in more detail later in this document, the site does not lie within or adjacent to any other constraining designations such as areas of flood risk or conservation areas.

The location adjacent to the settlement boundary provides an opportunity to provide a logical extension to the village and an enhanced gateway, as is demonstrated by the analysis and proposals in this Vision document.

The proposed development can also build on the site's location within a Green Infrastructure Opportunity Zone, helping to realise the wider strategic aspirations for the area.

Saved Policy AD24 sets out that:

"The opportunity zones reflect those areas in the borough where there is the greatest potential to maintain and enhance the multi- functional nature of green infrastructure across the five themes of landscape, historic environment, biodiversity, accessible green space and access routes".

Within the Lower Great Ouse River Valley Park Area in which the site lies, priorities of the policy are to create a new country park, countryside attractions, and the creation of green access routes which link Bedford to Willington through the river corridor. Through the release of land for development, the delivery of improvement to the wider landscape in line with these policy aspirations, on land within Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd's control can be realised.

The Forest of Marston Vale area seeks to deliver environmentally led regeneration. Alongside the creation of new public open spaces and the creation of enhanced green access routes, development on the site also creates opportunities to contribute towards the target of 30% woodland cover.

The adopted Local Plan (2030) identifies Willington as one of 8 Rural Service Centres. Policy 4S sets out that each Willington is expected to accommodate between 25 and 50 new homes, under its Neighbourhood Development Plan, helping to contribute to meeting housing need in the area.

Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan is advanced, it has yet to be examined and adopted and the Local Plan Review will need to revisit Rural Service Centres for additional growth to meet the growing housing needs. It is important to note that the 25-50 housing requirement in Willington was identified at a time where there was a lower housing requirement for Bedford Borough than that proposed in the new Standard Methodology outlined in the Housing White Paper published on 6th August 2020. The previous requirement of 25-50 dwellings was also based on the capacity of local services, particularly the local school, which appear to have greater capacity than currently acknowledged to support additional housing development.

It is also noted that the Draft Neighbourhood Plan currently identifies the site as a Local Green Space (LGS). Limited evidence has been provided to demonstrate how the criteria which underpinned this emerging designation was applied to each site and my client contends that this site does not meet the tests to qualify as a LGS as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have not considered how development on part of the site could open up the remainder for significant public gain and enhance its contribution to the wider Green Infrastructure ambitions of Willington and the Forest of Marston Vale. Development could include the provision for public access to the site which is not currently available except for a single public right of way.

The constraint to development also fails to acknowledge the potential of specific sites to deliver the wider policy objectives for Bedford Borough. Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd's representation, therefore, makes a case that for the plan to be positively prepared it should seek to make allocations where they can be tied into the delivery of these wider objectives, such as implementation of the River Valley Park and the aims of the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) for the Oxford to Cambridge Growth Corridor. To this end, this Vision document sets out how Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd's land could realise up to 150 homes, whilst also highlighting the opportunities and benefits that a larger development would provide for the enhancement to local Green Infrastructure, Public Open Space and Public Rights of Way.

## LEGEND



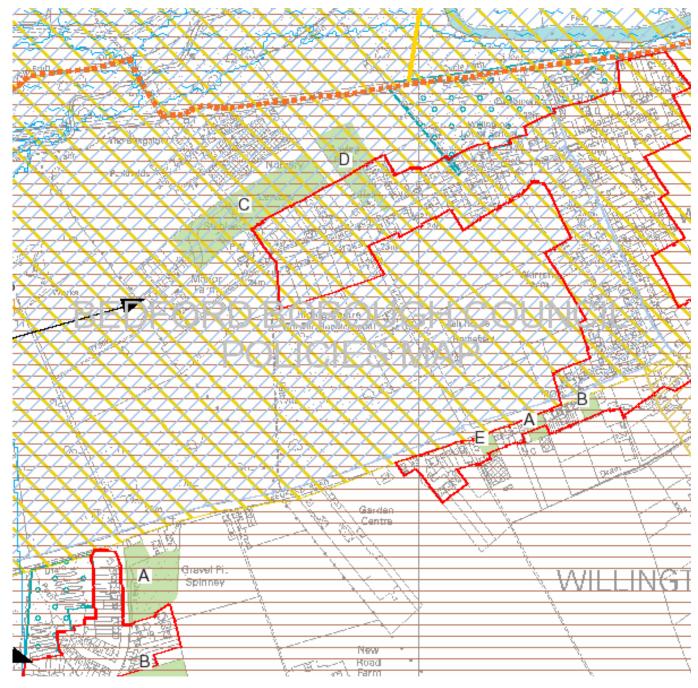


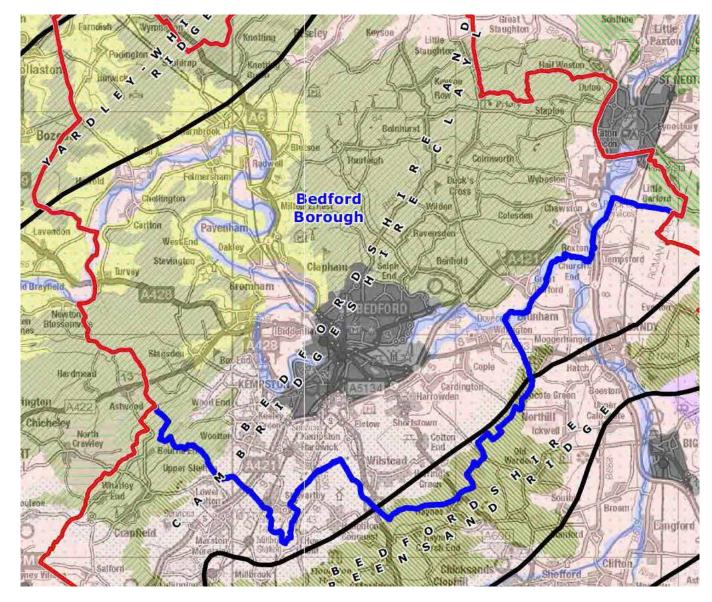
Figure 9; Policies Map Extract, prepared by Bedford Borough Council





# **4.0** BASELINE STUDY

The baseline study of the site includes site topography, designations and historical mapping to inform the opportunities and constraints of the site.



#### Figure 10; National Landscape Character Map

#### NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The site is located within the National Character Area 55: Bedfordshire and Cambridge Claylands. National Character Area 55 can be characterised as:

"...a broad, gently undulating, lowland plateau dissected by shallow river valleys that gradually widen as they approach The Fens NCA in the east."

## LEGEND



Key Characteristics of NCA 55 include:

- 'The majority of the Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands NCA is sparsely populated.
- Settlements are generally located along the river valleys, and more recently along major road and rail corridors.
- Tranquillity within the NCA has declined, affected by visual intrusion, noise and light pollution from agriculture, settlement expansion and improvements in road infrastructure.
- Many areas retain a rural feel and there are numerous opportunities for nearby communities to enjoy quiet informal recreation.
- The NCA faces significant challenges around accommodating levels of future growth and managing water resources, both within the NCA and impacts that this can have further downstream in other NCAs while, at the same time, protecting and enhancing its character and increased demand for leisure and recreation'.

# STATEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES SEO:

SEOs have been prepared for the character area, which offer guidance on relevant critical issues, which could aid in achieving sustainable growth with increased security to the environmental future. The SEO's for NCA 55 which will be relevant in guiding the development of the site include: SEO 1: Maintain and manage a sustainable and productive claylands arable landscape, while managing, expanding and linking woodlands, hedgerows and other semi-natural habitats to benefit biodiversity, improve soil and water quality, and ameliorate climate change by promoting good agricultural practice.

SEO 2: Protect aquifers and enhance the quality, state and structure of the River Great Ouse, its valley and tributaries, habitats, water bodies and flood plain by seeking to enhance their ecological, historical and recreational importance while taking into account their contribution to sense of place and regulating water flow, quality and availability.

SEO 3: Plan and create high-quality green infrastructure to help accommodate growth and expansion, linking and enhancing existing semi-natural habitats. Regenerate the post-industrial landscapes of the Marston Vale and Peterborough to improve and create new opportunities for biodiversity, recreation, timber and biomass provision while strengthening sense of place, tranquillity, resilience to climate change, and people's health and wellbeing.

## **REGIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**

Landscape East summaries the Regional Landscape Character Type '*Lowland Village Farmlands*' as:

"...is a well settled, low lying landscape which is often crossed by major river corridors. The high density of settlement, intensive agriculture and major transport infrastructure mean that this is often a busy, rural landscape'.

Key characteristics of Regional Landscape Character include:

- Landform 'A generally low lying, gently rolling topography, although some areas adjacent to lower lying levels can appear elevated;
- Natural/water features This landscape is drained by small streams which are visually indistinct.
  Occasionally there are gravel extraction lakes (eg Hemingfords and Buckden) along the River Great Ouse and within the Ivel valley in Bedfordshire;
- Ecological character A productive, intensively farmed agricultural landscape, with patches of wet woodland, reedbed and wet grassland along river valleys and in damp, low-lying hollows;
- Enclosure pattern 'Medium/large scale, regular field pattern, defined by well trimmed hedgerows.
  Field systems include a mix of rectilinear & sinuous patterns, reflecting the process of planned surveyor enclosure from common fields;
- Settlement pattern A dense, largely nucleated, rural settlement pattern composed of small towns (eg. Biggleswade), villages and outlying farmsteads. Larger towns (eg Bedford) often exert an urbanising influence on this landscape; and
- Historic development A landscape dominated by the late enclosure of common fields. Large pockets of earlier enclosure also exist, created from common fields. All fieldscapes have experienced significant modification during the 20th Century'.

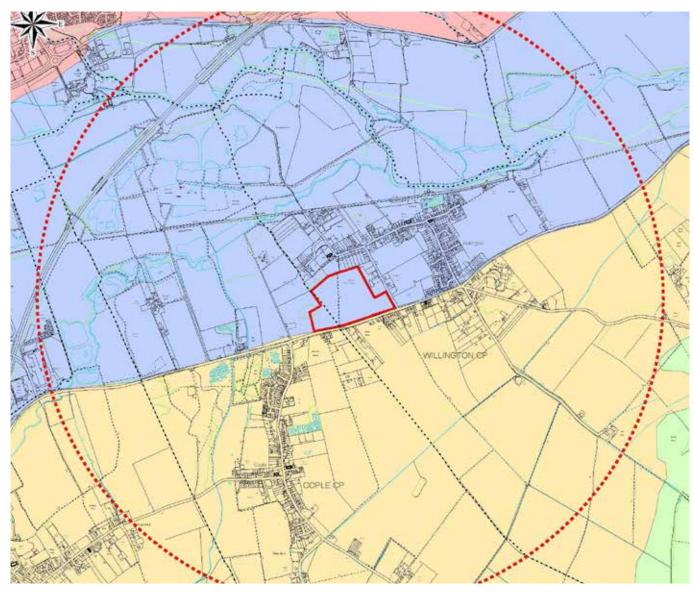


Figure 11; Local Landscape Character Map

The Bedford Borough Landscape Character Assessment was prepared by LUC (May 2014) for the Bedford Borough Council. The assessment identifies 6 Landscape Character Types (LCT) which are further detailed into Landscape Character Areas (LCA). The following are relevant to the site.

# LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE 4: CLAY VALLEYS

'Shallow, fairly wide valleys defined by the Rivers Ouse. Strong visual connectivity with the adjacent Clay Vales landscape type (predominantly due to the flat landform and areas of arable land use)'.

## LEGEND



The LCT key characteristics are:

- 'Shallow, fairly wide valleys defined by the Rivers Ouse;
- Lowland landscape with an elevation generally occurring between 30-40m AOD;
- Strong visual connectivity with the adjacent Clay Vales landscape type (predominantly due to the flat landform and areas of arable land use);
- Mixed land use of arable land and improved pasture contained within medium sized fields;
- Restored sand and gravel workings create an ecological and recreational resource;
- Extensive tree planting linked to the on-going restoration of mineral sites, for example, as part of the Forest of Marston Vale's Bedford River Valley Park proposals;
- The adjacent towns of Bedford, Sandy and Biggleswade impart urban fringe characteristics on the landscape;
- Busy transport corridors, including the A421 and A1, dominate the landscape both visually and aurally; and
- Settlements are typically small to medium scale, dispersed and linear with a mix of building ages and styles. There is a considerable amount of modern development; and
- Historic market gardening presence glasshouses occurring throughout the valleys

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 4A: GREAT OUSE CLAY VALLEY

"...Contrasting character is created by open, gently rising slopes with strong visual links with the surrounding higher ground of the Clay Farmland and Clay Vales character areas, and by areas of more mixed and semi-enclosed landscape with large areas of open water and associated wetland habitat, the legacy of mineral extraction, now used for leisure and recreation."

Key Characteristics of Local LCA 4a include:

- 'Restored sand and gravel workings create an ecological and recreational resource, with quarrying continuing north of Willington;
- Bedford River Valley Park between Bedford and Willington is an on-going green infrastructure project of significant scale. Extensive tree planting linked to the on-going restoration of mineral sites; and
- The course of the river is marked by riverside vegetation, including willows'.

## THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES ARE CONTAINED WITHIN THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Landscape Management:

 'Enhance and restore hedgerows by replanting and consistent management and resist development that will result in further loss/fragmentation of hedgerows and hedgerow trees;

- Ensure that leisure facilities are designed to retain and enhance the rural character and biodiversity interest of the river and wetlands.
- Take opportunities to plant new woodlands (in particular wet woodlands) that will screen major road corridors or large scale development on the edges of towns (delivering aspirations of the Forest of Marston Vale in relation to the Bedford River Valley Park)'.

Future development should:

- 'Retain the separation of individual villages avoid linear development along roads merging settlements;
- Ensure enabling development and infrastructure proposals as part of the implementation of the Bedford River Valley Park respect and enhance the river valley landscape and context. Consider visual impact of enabling development in terms of massing, rooflines, scale, materials and visual appearance;
- Conserve the rural settings of the towns and villages and enhance the settlement edge for instance by appropriately designed woodland planting to foil large scale development; and
- Explore options for improving recreational opportunities and public access to the river'.

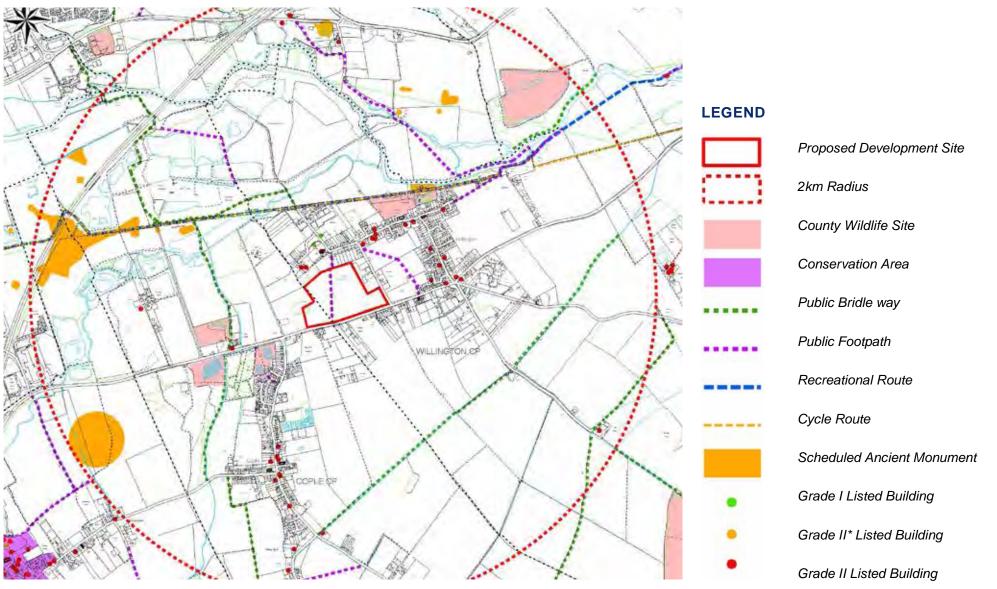


Figure 12; Landscape Designations Map

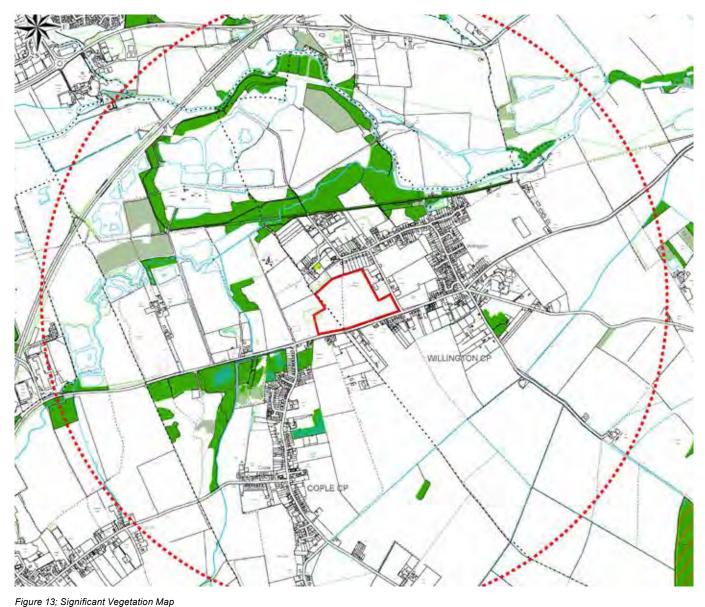
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Land at Willington has a Public Right of Way present on the site, running roughly northsouth through the centre of the site. Any development brought forward will need to respect this designation, and those evident within its context.

Designations within 2km of the site include:

- Three county wildlife sites are within close proximity to the western edge of the site, associated with Cople Pits with another to the north west, associated with Danish Camp;
- A network of bridleways which are well connected with each other, creating a convenient network of recreation routes;
- A number of Public Rights of Way surrounding the site which connect with bridle way routes, and improve the general connectivity of the area;
- Recreational users share the national cycle route from Bedford and heads east where it diverts from this alignment and follows the Great River Ouse;
- National cycle route 51 provides links locally to Sandy and Bedford, nationally to Oxford and Cambridge;
- Scheduled Ancient Monument can be observed to the north east and north west of the site, the former featuring 'The Docks' which is a moated site and dock, and later featuring a series of Neolithic and Bronze Age mortuary complex sites; and
- Listed buildings are situated to the north of the site boundary, the most notable being the Grade I designation assigned to the 'Stables' and 'Dove Cote'.

Although not shown on the designations map adjacent, the site is also part of a Community Forest surrounding Bedford.



The significant vegetation present within 2km of the site is largely associated with the Bedford River Valley Park (BVRP) to the north of the site, and with the western edge of Cople, to the south west of the site.

Significant vegetation immediately adjacent to the site is limited, however this is reflected in the BRVP identifying this area as the 'Willington Fields' character typology.







Figure 14; 1888 Historic OS Map

# 1888

- The site sits within close proximity to a series of farms, including wider patchwork of fields and gravel pits.
- The village core, including St. Lawrence Church and the methodist church can be observed to the north-east of the site.
- A footpath dissects the site, connecting northwards to the village core and church, south to the village peripheral.
- A school an be observed to the north of the site.
- The 'Linear Development' form of the village is already defined.



Figure 15; 1902 Historic OS Map

# 1902

- Little in the way of development can be seen since 1888.
- A gravel pit can be observed to the site's north eastern corner.
- A Dovecote to the north of the site remains from the previous historic map of 1888.

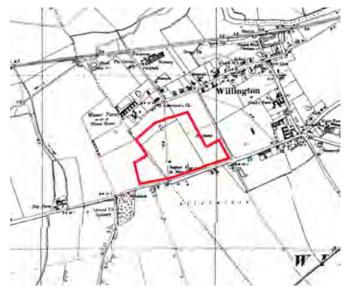


Figure 16; 1938 Historic OS Map

# 1938

- Significant housing development has taken place since 1902. Willington village has grown, particularly to the north and east of the site boundary. The road into the village core and the road adjacent to the site south boundary show a marked increase of plots.
- Allotments can be observed to the east of the site, although they no longer remain today.
- The development of a nursery business can be seen to the north of Willington, this site remains today.

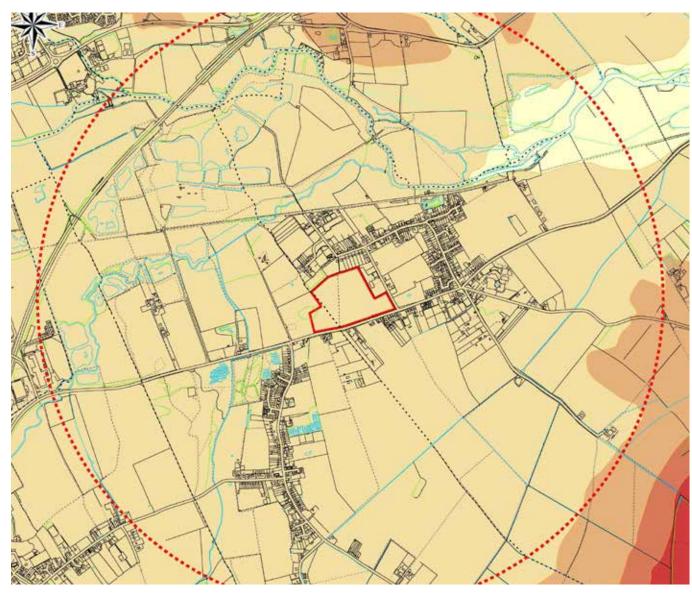
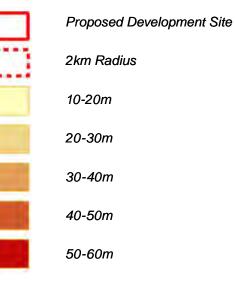


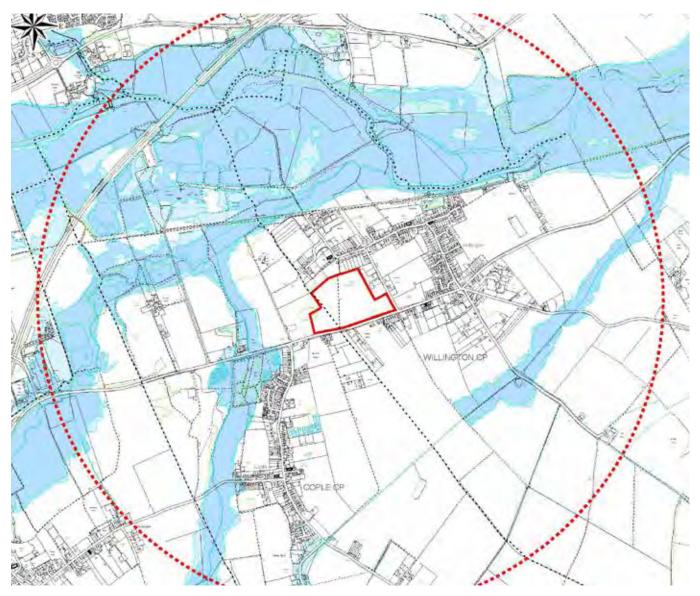
Figure 17; Topography Map

Located within the 20-30m topography band, the site sits within a relatively level topographical zone associated with the alignment of the River Great Ouse and its affluents.

Land form increases in gradient in a south easterly direction, however due to intervening development this is not visible from the site.







#### Figure 18; Flood Risk Map

The site is located within Flood Risk Zone 1, which is assessed as having a less than 1:100 annual probability of river or sea flooding.

All flood risk within the site context is associated with existing water courses, primarily in the north and west of the site, associated with the River Great Ouse and its tributaries.



Proposed Development Site

2km Radius

Flood Zone 3

Flood Zone 2

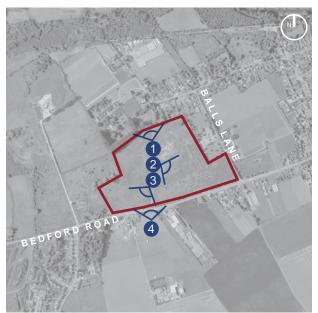


Figure 19: Map indicating existing site views 1-4



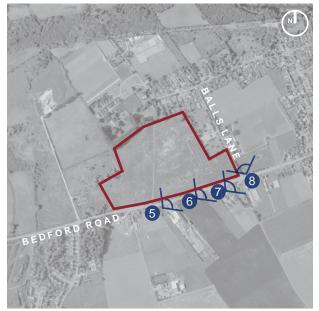




Figure 20: Photographs 1-4 of Site Characteristics



- Taken from the Public Right of Way (PRoW) facing north, the view provides a glimpse of St. 1 Lawrence's Church through the trees marking the northern boundary. An existing house can be observed marking the exit point of the PRoW.
- This view is taken again from the PRoW, facing south-easterly towards the Bedford Road. 2 Existing dwellings of Willington can be observed in the background, across the largely open scrubland containing sporadic tree arisings.
- Taken relatively centrally along the PRoW, across the south-western edge of the site 3 revealing the level landform allowing relatively uninterrupted views of existing settlement on the Bedford Road (A603), although boundary vegetation provides some screening.
- This view is taken from Bedford Road (A603), looking north towards the PRoW entrance. 4 Grass scrubland makes up the predominant vegetative cover across the site, with views of St. Lawrence's Church and existing dwelling of Willington village.



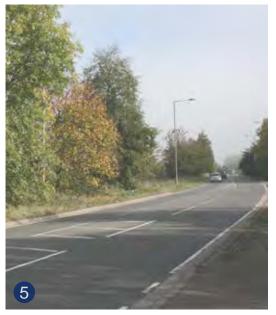


Figure 21: Map indicating existing site views 5-8

- 5 Taken from the Bedford Road, heading east, the existing boundary treatment of the site displays a mix of deciduous trees largely obscuring views into the site.
- 6 This view is again taken from the Bedford Road, facing east. The site's vegetative boundary can be seen to open to a greater extent as it moves further into the village. Opposite the site a footpath can be observed, providing a connection eastwards towards the village store and access to a bus stop.
- Taken at the Bedford Road and Balls Lane intersection, displaying the termination of the northern footpath that runs along the roadside boundary, connects directly to the PRoW and further east into the village of Willington.
- 8 This view is facing north along Balls lane with the eastern boundary of the site shown. In the foreground the existing footpath termination can be seen, and the background the vegetative boundary of the The Riding Centre can be seen to offer existing screening capabilities.







Figure 22: Photographs 5-8 of Site Characteristics





# 5.0 MASTER PLAN STRATEGY

This chapter proposes a suitable master plan strategy for the site including access, open space and developable area, with the key aims and objectives for the development stated. Through the baseline mapping and assessment of the site, a number of opportunities and constraints have been identified which provide a framework within which the proposed development will be brought forward. The opportunities and constraints of the site include:

#### SITE BOUNDARIES

- The site sits within the surrounding Bedford River Valley Park (BRVP) and categorised as 'Willington Fields'. The western extents of Willington Village form the northern and eastern site boundary, this creates a sensitive boundary and consideration will be required to ensure adequate distance between existing and proposed dwellings is provided.
- The Riding Centre, Bedford Disabled Horse Riding Association (BDHRA) is to the north east of the site, sensitive boundary treatments will be required;
- Balls Lane forms part of the eastern boundary and is the main access into the village when approaching from the west, access into the site will be required from this road.
- The southern site's boundary is adjacent to the Bedford Road (A603), with the south easterly edge forming the village edge character, the south westerly edge forming rural edge character.
- To the west of the site, the boundary is defined by vegetation as part of Willington Fields character area.

#### LEVELS AND DRAINAGE

• The landform is generally level in nature.

- To the east and north of Willington Fields, Elstow Brook forms part of the existing drainage network connecting into the Great River Ouse north of Willington.
- There is an opportunity to create a Sustainable Drainage Strategy (SuDS) to both slow and treat surface water run off that will create opportunities for additional biodiversity.

#### **ACCESS AND CIRCULATION**

- There is an existing Public Right of Way (PRoW) dissecting the site from the Bedford Road (A603) towards St. Lawrence's Church. There is an opportunity to strengthen pedestrian access within the site, which will provide major benefits to the existing residents, creating greater linkages in the west of the village, and improving access to the BRVP.
- Opportunity to position vehicular access from Balls Land and upgrade the Balls Lane / Bedford Road junction, currently a 'drive over' roundabout.

#### LAND USE

• The land is currently scrubland and grassland, with intermittent tree and hedge vegetation along the boundaries.

#### VEGETATION

- There is an opportunity to introduce vegetation throughout the site, including within public open space and road corridors, improving habitat and biodiversity.
- There is an opportunity to increase boundary

vegetation, to help screen views and provide definition appropriate to the rural edge character of the development.

- There is an opportunity to reinforce the visual character of the sites south boundary through the use of "*village*" and "*rural*" vegetative boundary typologies.
- There is an opportunity to use strategic vegetation placement to provide a visual break to the building frontages akin to existing Willington Village Open Space along the Bedford Road (A603).
- Opportunity exists on this site to regenerate degraded landscapes near large urban populations through tree planting, helping contribute to the target of 30% woodland cover 2031 as set out in policy AD25, Forest of Marston Vale.

#### **PLAY SPACE**

• There is an opportunity to create a natural play area within the site, linking with the wider BRVP aspirations to include Natural Play opportunities.

#### LEGEND

Proposed Development Site Existing Primary Road (A603) Existing Secondary Road Existing Dwelling and Frontages Route 51 Cycle/ Pedestrian Public Right of Way (PRoW) Existing Pedestrian Route Proposed Pedestrian Connection Views towards St. Lawrence's Church Views towards BRVP Existing Vegetation Sensitive Visual Boundary Existing roundabout Proposed Site Entrance Significant Cultural Buildings Village Edge Character Willington Settlement Policy Boundary The Riding Centre (BDHRA) Willington Fields Existing Village Open Space



Figure 23; Opportunities and Constraints Diagram

Following an appraisal of the site it has been determined that the proposed master plan design for this previously developed site should seek to:

- Enhance Green Infrastructure This site offers the opportunity to support the strategically planned GI network as outlined in the Bedford Valley River Park and policy AD24 – Green Infrastructure Opportunity Zones. This infrastructure provision will be designed to ensure that the open space is a multi- functional resource which delivers enhanced quality of life for residents and visitors to Willington, whilst creating a biodiverse and rich habitat which aids in the transition between the village and its wider rural hinterland.
- Create a Landscape led Master Plan The incorporation of a strong landscape and open space structure will be key in minimising the impact of development upon neighbouring areas, whilst contributing towards a development with equitable access to green space.
- Natural Play Space Play space has been proposed in the north of the site, to benefit both the proposed residents, and also those residents in the north west of the village. The location of the play space has been chosen to reinforce the cluster of community facilities around St Lawrence's Church, closely aligned with the north- south Public Right of Way running through the site.
- Enhance Vegetation Primary areas of vegetation on the site are associated with the site boundaries.
  Opportunity to reinforce this structure should be taken, capitalising the maturity that this vegetation offers, whilst creating a strong 'green' structure

into which the development will be positioned. This provides the opportunity to create recreational routes around the boundaries of the site, whilst improving the biodiversity and habitat opportunities on the site.

- Protect the Public Right of Way Protecting the Public Right of Way (PRoW) which runs through the site will be key in considering the form of development brought forward, and this alignment will be respected and maintained, with upgrades proposed as part of the master plan proposals brought forward. Protection of this route will be complimented by a number of proposed recreational routes creating a circuit through the site.
- Site Access Proposed site access will be provided from Balls Lane, with a proposed upgrade to the roundabout on the intersection of Balls Lane and the A603 to improve speeds along the A603, and improve the safety of access to Church Road beyond.
- New Gateway for Willington The proposed development will define the entry to Willington along the A603, by reinforcing the existing vegetation along its south western alignment, which gives way to glimpsed views behind toward the south-east. This will improve the perception of entry to the village, and will likely help control vehicular speeds, in association with proposed upgrades to the Balls Lane / Bedford Road intersection.
- New Residential Development Proposed residential development will be located in the eastern part of the site. This location affords the opportunity to 'enclose' the built form of Willington, and improve the perceived journey through a village for travellers along the A603.

#### LEGEND

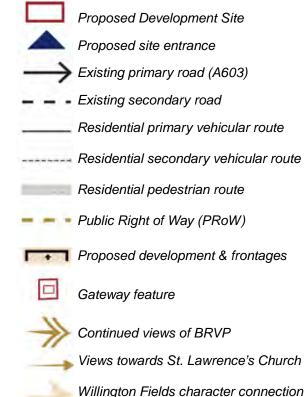




Figure 24; Master Plan Strategy Diagram





## 6.0 FINAL PROPOSALS

This chapter proposes a suitable master plan for the site, including access, open space and developable area, with the key aims and objectives for the development stated.

An illustrative master plan for the site is proposed and explained.

The master plan proposes up to 150 dwellings arranged across the eastern portion of the site, set within sensitively landscaped structural planting to mitigate any impacts of the proposed development.

The proposed layout responds to its location on the settlement edge of Willington. The existing village built form is strongly rectilinear, focused on Bedford Road, the main through route, and Balls Lane, Station Road and Church Road, with services distributed through the village. Like the existing form of the village the proposed development contains primarily detached and semi-detached properties set within generous private plots.

The main features of the proposed development include:

- Bedford Road (A603) Upgrades As part of the proposed development, upgrades to the roundabout on Bedford Road (A603) are proposed. With the detail to be finalised, this comprises an upgraded roundabout designed to slow overall traffic speeds along this route.
- Site Access Vehicular Access for the development is proposed to be taken off Balls Lane, to limit interference with the through flow of traffic along the A603. Pedestrian access is proposed at a number of points throughout the development, where it fronts onto highways land.
- Public Right of Way (PRoW) The alignment of the existing PRoW will be respected and retained, with proposed upgrades to the alignment to reflect the strategic connection this route creates with the

Bedford Valley River Park to the north of the site.

- Green Infrastructure A comprehensive Green Infrastructure Strategy has been considered as part of the wider site master plan. The western open space will be considered as a part of the 'Willington Fields' typology, a natural or semi-natural open space area and part of the Bedford Valley River Park, which can be further developed to reflect the aspirations of the Willington Green Infrastructure Strategy. As part of this strategy we would encourage the linkage of this open space and PRoW with the PRoWs to the west of the site, and BVRP beyond. Vegetative buffers have been added around the boundary of the development, with generous and well linked pedestrian paths proposed to increase the accessibility of these spaces to the public, whilst reinforcing the 'rural edge' of the settlement, as identified in the local character area.
- Proposed 'Village Green' and Play Space A proposed 'Village Green' and Play Space has been located to the north east of the PRoW, which will include open kick-about space and natural play features. This has been located adjacent to the PRoW to maximise the ease of access for existing residents, in addition to providing access for residents of the proposed development. The village green typology will extend down the western side of the proposed development, providing space for drainage corridor, linking Bedford Road and the PRoW alignment in the north.
- Bedford Road Frontage The Bedford Road frontage to the site will play a key role in creating a new gateway entry to Bedford. Proposed vegetation along this route will reinforce the existing rural nature of the 'Willington Fields' typology on the south western boundary of the site. This will give way to a more

urbanised influence in the east of the site, reflecting the detached and semi-detached nature of dwellings to the south of the A603. An existing setback to the east of Balls Lane will be continued into the site, providing a pedestrian connection disconnected from Bedford Road, leading to the generous open space in the west of the site.

 Improved Drainage Features - Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) have been proposed to the west of the proposed development, which could provide the opportunity to decrease the speed and volume of rainwater run-off, whilst creating valuable habitat and biodiversity corridors.

#### LEGEND





Figure 25; Illustrative Master Plan

The outline accommodation schedule gives an indication of the types of housing, open space provision and strategic planting proposed in the master plan.

HOUSING SCHEDULE			
	NUMBER	POLICY OCCUPANCY RATE	PROJECTED TOTAL OCCUPANCY RATE
HOUSES			
2 Bed (semi-detached)	30	1.9	57
3 Bed (semi-detached)	60	2.6	156
3 Bed (detached)	12	2.6	31.2
4 Bed (detached)	39	3.2	124.8
5 Bed	9	3.7	33.3
Total	150		402.3

Figure 25; Outline Accommodation Schedule

	POLICY COMPLIANT ALLOWANCE (HA) (PER 1000 POPULATION)	POLICY COMPLAINT AREA (HA) (PROJECTED OCCUPANCY OF 402.3)	ACTUAL ALLOWANCE (HA) (PER APPENDIX 6 POLICY AD28 OPEN SPACE STANDARDS)
Outdoor Sports Space	1.12 ha	0.45	Assumed offsite provision
Equipped Natural Play	0.25 ha	0.10	0.062
Allotments	0.35 ha	0.14	Assumed off site provision
Informal and amenity green space	0.50 ha	0.20	0.58
Accessible natural green space	0.50 ha	0.20	5.96
Parks and Gardens	0.50 ha	0.20	0.58
Total		1.29 ha	7.182 ha



Figure 26; Open Space Allowance Table

Site access will be created by a single point of vehicular access off Balls Lane on the eastern boundary, with a variety of pedestrian connections encouraging sustainable transport options within the environs of Willington.

- Vehicular Access Will be provided off Balls Lane, with proposed upgrades to the roundabout on the intersection of Balls Lane and A603 to improve road network safety.
- Pedestrian Connections A comprehensive network of pedestrian links are proposed throughout the site, through Willington Fields and new vegetated boundaries to improve pedestrian links between south west and north west Willington.
- Public Rights of Way (PRoW) The existing PRoW which runs roughly north-south through the site will be retained and upgraded, integrated into the wider pedestrian network.

#### LEGEND

	Existing public highways
	Proposed improved roundabout
	Proposed site entrance
4	Primary vehicular route
	Secondary vehicular route
	Shared drive (vehicular route)
>	Public Right of Way
	Proposed pedestrian access route

The Green Infrastructure strategy has been informed though a combination of local policy zones, including AD24, and pertinent regional and local landscape character recommendations to create a network of natural and semi-natural open spaces which can help to combat urban and climatic challenges incorporating both green and blue infrastructure to create a valuable resource for Willington.

The Green Infrastructure strategy aims to bed the proposals into the context of Willington, with proposed boundary woodland aiming to increase site woodland cover as identified in policy AD24. The following green infrastructure typologies combine to form the site wide strategy:

#### **GREEN CORRIDOR**

Connecting the site with its local context through the creation of a green corridor that runs from the southern boundary to the north of the site, linking to the existing PRoW.

The planting characteristics within this typology will allow for the opportunity for strategic tree planting, with native species encouraging habitat creation, building on the proposed BRVP site wide strategy.

#### SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS (SUDS)

A swale is proposed to the west of the development and follows in an indicative north-south direction within the green corridor. This provides the opportunity to create an attractive and biodiverse waterside in proximity to the development, whilst slowing run-off rates from the proposed development, and treating water quality

#### AMENITY VILLAGE GREEN

Amenity spaces aim to offer predominately informal spaces for community interaction. These spaces are located along the green corridor, with a reactive relationship to the SuDS channel as it moves northwards towards the play space, where this widens to allow a greater area of open space surrounding the natural play zone.

#### NATURAL PLAY

The provision for a play area will be located to the north of the site, enabling use of the park by both existing and new residents of Willington. The park will align with natural play philosophy as identified within the BRVP public consultation. Potential exists to link the SuDS strategy with the natural play area to increase seasonality and diverse opportunities for unprogrammed play within the space.

#### **WILLINGTON FIELDS**

This area forms a key part of the setting of Willington, and has been identified for sensitive enhancement of the semi natural environment, through careful strategic tree and fragmented woodland planting, with potential upgrades to the existing scrubland and grassland. In addition, this semi-natural landscape will provide a natural buffer between active recreation and the wider BRVP. Any opportunity to link the proposed open space with PRoW links into the BRVP to the west should be explored within emerging strategic GI plans.

#### **BEDFORD ROAD CORRIDOR**

The site's south boundary is adjacent to Bedford Road (A603), and currently displays two natural edge characteristics. To the east, the edge condition is semi open in nature, with trees breaking views into the site. Continuing to progress west, the site becomes enclosed to a greater degree, with limited views into the site. These two edge types with be further enhanced through the careful placement of a widened vegetation buffer to enhance the experience of a gateway on entry to the western edge of Willington.







Figure 30; Green Infrastructure Strategy Diagram



Figure 27; Green Corridor key plan



Figure 28; Seasonality is key to the success of the corridor



Figure 29; Seasonality within the landscape



Figure 30; Opportunity to provide foraging opportunities for fauna.



Figure 31; Informal recreation routes

#### Key characteristics include:

- Connection with the Bedford River Valley Park 'Willington Field' Typology.
- Opportunity to meaningfully connect the village core with its rural edge, including promoting safe access.
- Opportunity to create strategic woodland blocks, mitigating the visual effects of the proposed development, whilst increasing opportunity for native flora.
- Increasing diverse habitat opportunities for native fauna.



Figure 32; SuDS Corridor key plan





Figures 33; SuDS Corridor textures



Figure 34; Boardwalk to engage with riparian zone



Figure 35; Drainage as an integral part of the landscape amenity value

#### Key characteristics include:

- By creating a drainage spine through the site, opportunity is created to engage with the hydrological process.
- Boardwalks, wooden bridges and informal crossing points enable access whilst engaging with riparian zones.
- Increased opportunity for habitat and improved biodiversity, whilst slowing the rates of run-off from the site and potentially improving water quality.



Figure 36; Amenity village green key plan



Figure 37; Opportunity to exercise pets



Figure 38; Low Wildflowers encouraging biodiversity

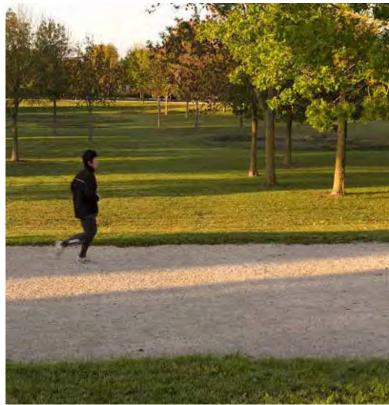


Figure 39; Informal recreation and leisure opportunities



Figure 40; Curvaceous pathways Key characteristics include:

- Informal spaces will be created to provide opportunities for informal community recreation and play.
- Largely set to lawn, opportunity for the inclusion of Wild Flowers, naturalised bulb and tree planting will create a parkland setting.
- The retention of view lines through the park will be paramount to increase the perception of safety.





Figure 42; Landform used for creative play



Figure 43; Natural Play in action



Figure 44; Stimulating play environment created through landform

#### Key characteristics include:

- The creation of areas for natural play aims to engage children with their natural surroundings through play, rather than creating a prescriptive environment.
- By using landform, strategic planting, water, strategic artwork and land sculpture the intention is to enhance sensory stimulation.
- Plating should be child friendly, bright, colourful and encouraging the use of specimens which can be eaten as a way of raising seasonal awareness.



Figure 45; Willington Fields and Semi-natural open space key plan



Figure 47; Field and meadow typologies at Trumpington Meadows Country Park



Figure 46; Opportunity to improve incidental seating



Figure 48; Existing Meadow typology on the site to be protected and retained



Figure 49; Existing Meadow typology to the west of the site Key characteristics include:

- The existing field typology to the west of the site should seek to be maintained. Although not strictly defined within the BRVP Master Plan, improving the safety and accessibility of this area will support the overall aim of the park.
- Further opportunity to add biodiversity will be encouraged within this semi-natural open space.
- Selective tree planting is proposed to mitigate visual impact of the proposed residences.



Figure 50; Bedford Road corridor key plan



Figure 51; Existing Bedford Road corridor to be enhanced



Figure 52; Existing Bedford Road corridor to the east of Balls Lane



Figure 53; Opportunity to provide meaningful vegetation



Figure 54; Opportunity for flowering Lawn to improve biodiversity



Figure 56; Opportunity for glimpsed views through trees as on this previous Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd scheme at Somerdale Key characteristics include:

- The Bedford Road Corridor provides the opportunity to define the entry to the village of Willington.
- Additional native tree planting to the west of the site will limit visual impact yet emphasise the rural character of the area.
- More open views will be encouraged to the east, with glimpsed views through to the proposed detached and semi-detached dwellings behind, mirroring the existing built form on the southern side of Bedford Road.





# 7.0 CONCLUSION

We have undertaken a comprehensive review of the site's constraints, the opportunities for development, its setting and location to inform the strategic vision for Land at Willington.

The Built Form of the development has been carefully considered in positioning development within the site boundary, to ensure the scale and form of development brought forward is appropriate for the existing form of Willington. Key consideration is given to the existence of a Public Right of Way, the setting of St Lawrence's Church and the strategic connection of the site to the wider Bedford River Valley Park Master Plan, especially the Willington Fields typology.

The proposed master plan achieves 150 new dwellings, which will feature private gardens complimenting the proposed public open space and nature play facilities, which will add to the community assets of Willington.

The comprehensive GI strategy aims to create a network of natural and semi natural landscapes with the dual aim of ensuring a pleasant residential environment, whilst providing extensive ecological enhancements and improved connectivity for the existing, and new, citizens of Willington.



Figure 57; Contextual Master Plan

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