

**SHEPHERDS GROVE,
STANTON & HEPWORTH
STRATEGIC EMPLOYMENT ALLOCATION**

AP41

West Suffolk

MASTERPLAN

Approved 4th November 2025



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF MASTERPLAN

The purpose of this Masterplan is to:

- set out a ‘vision’ for the development of Shepherds Grove, in accordance with LP10 ‘Masterplans’ of the adopted West Suffolk Local Plan (2025). The requirements of a Masterplan are set out in Appendix D of the Local Plan.
- provide a framework masterplan which informs the amount of land available for development, phasing arrangements, location of uses, access arrangements, mix, design and scale of buildings and landscaping
- the preparation of this Masterplan follows modifications to an earlier application which included a number of roadside uses such as a takeaway and pub or restaurant. These are no longer part of the proposals.

Location

Shepherds Grove is located 2.5km (1.5 miles) east of the centre of the village of Stanton, south of the A143 Bury Road, which runs between Bury St Edmunds and Diss at this point (see Figure 1).

The Parish of Stanton has a population of 2,822 (mid-year 2020). The nearest other villages in this part of rural north Suffolk are Hepworth (to the north), Wattisfield (to the east), and Walsham Le Willows (to the south).

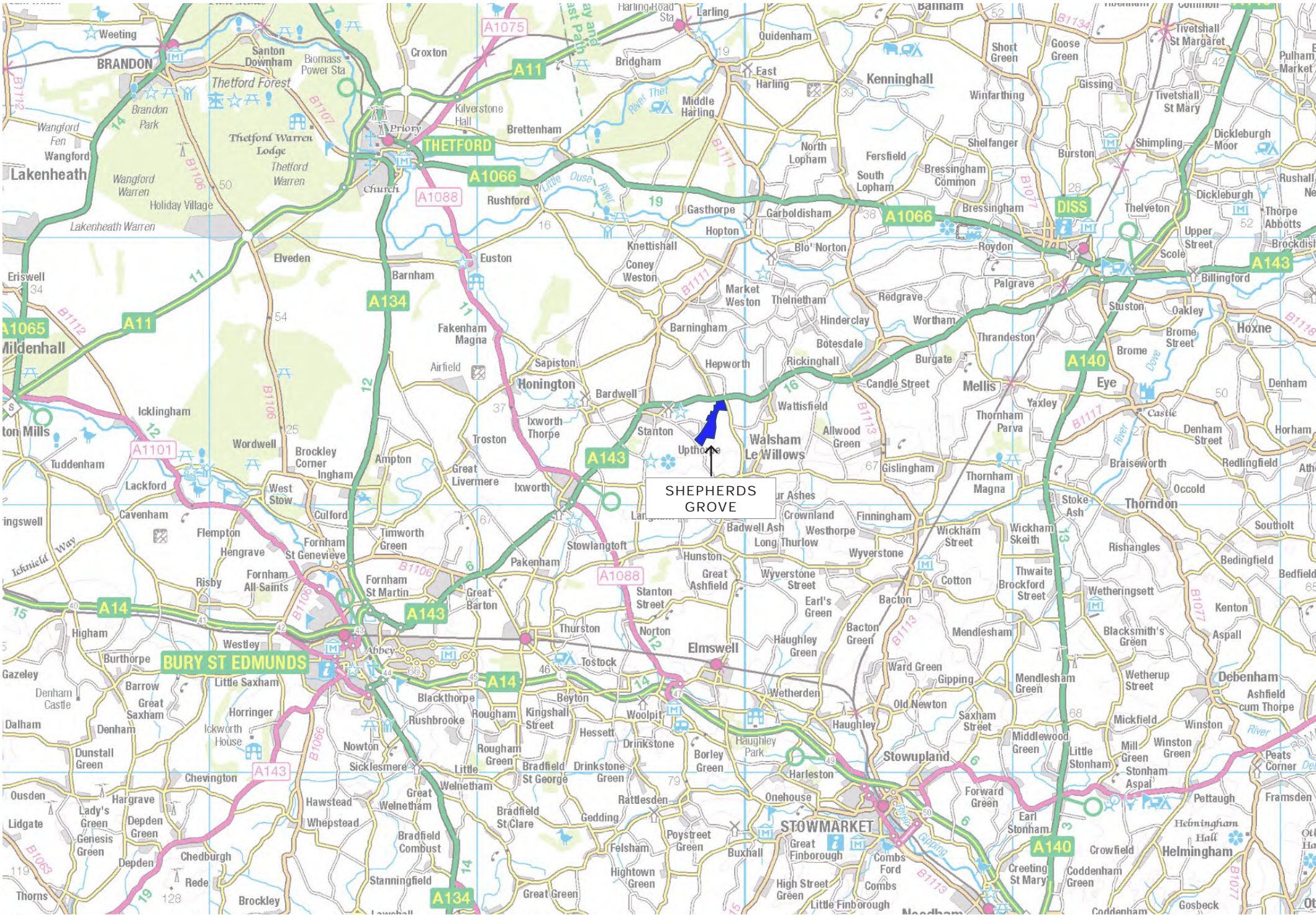


Fig. 1: Sub-regional Context Map of the Site Location

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.2 SHEPHERDS GROVE - LOCATION AND CHARACTER OF WIDER AREA (STANTON)

Context

Shepherds Grove is a former RAF Airfield comprising approximately 37 hectares site, currently used for a variety of purposes, including: industrial, warehousing, storage and other commercial uses. These uses developed during the 1970s and 1980s and are located in two distinct areas – Shepherds Grove East, and Shepherds Grove West – which are separated by an area of brownfield land that is now cleared of buildings, structures and hardstandings.

To the north, Shepherds Grove is bounded by the A143 Bury Road, and to the east by Sumner Road which leads from the A143 southwards to Walsham Le Willows. The area to the north and east is predominantly in agricultural use with a scattering of residential properties along the A143 and the villages of Hepworth to the north and Wattisfield to the east. To the south, Shepherds Grove adjoins open countryside in arable use, interspersed by woodland blocks which limit views of the southern portion of the site. To the south-west, Shepherds Grove West industrial estate adjoins the hamlet of Upthorpe and Shepherds Grove Park (a residential park homes site). To the west (north of Shepherds Grove West), the adjoining land is also in agricultural use with a few scattered residential properties along the south side of the A143 (see Figure 2).

At the present time, access to Shepherds Grove West industrial estate from the A143 can only be obtained via Upthorpe Road and Grove Lane through the village of Stanton. This includes all commercial vehicles and HGVs. Shepherds Grove East industrial estate is accessed via two separate entrances from Summer Road to the east.

The proximity of Shepherds Grove to the A143 and A14 (at Bury St Edmunds), allows good access to the wider strategic road network which in turn provide access to/from the local ports of Harwich and Felixstowe.

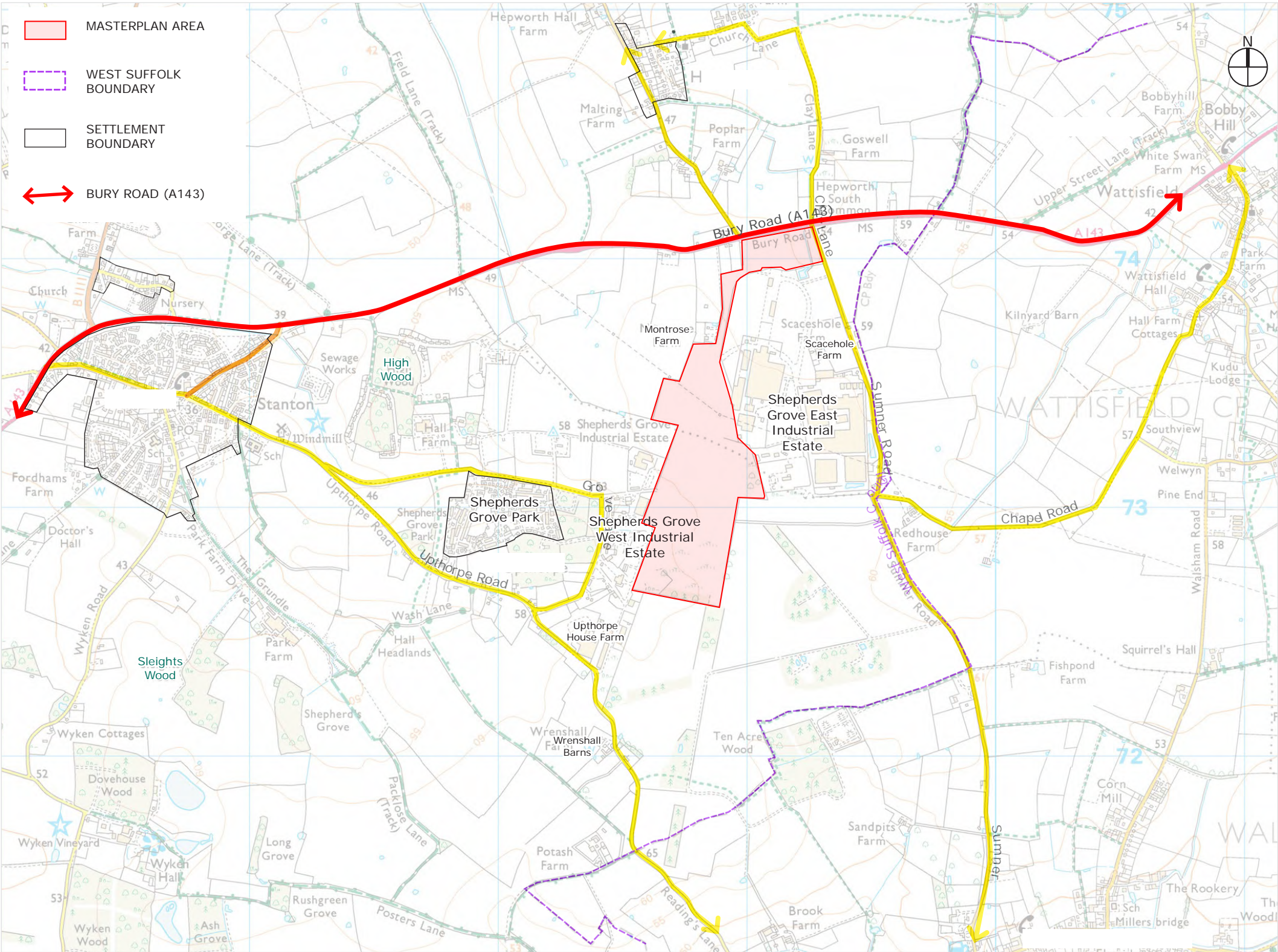


Fig. 2: Site and Surroundings Plan

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.3 SHEPHERDS GROVE - SITE HISTORY

Shepherds Grove is a former World War II airfield (RAF Shepherds Grove) and during the last years of the war, it was used as a base for Stirling bombers. However, it was in fact built for the United States Air Force (USAF) in 1943. The airfield became an RAF support base in 1944 and in May 1946 the station was used as a satellite of RAF Watton Radio Warfare Establishment. The base was used by Bomber Command and Transport Command which involved dropping supplies and troops including SOE operations dropping small units of SAS men into occupied territories.

The base also took part in Operation Varsity in 1945, which saw allied forces cross the River Rhine into Germany. It was the largest airborne operation to be conducted on a single day and in one location involving more than 16,000 paratroopers and several thousand aircraft. The station was put on “care and maintenance” in 1950, but was then loaned to the USAF in 1951. They used the station to base several jet fighter squadrons during the “Cold War” period. In 1959 Shepherds Grove became an RAF “Thor” Missile Base. The missiles were removed in 1963 and the “undeveloped” areas of the airfield were returned to agricultural use. Two industrial estates were developed on those “built” areas of the airfield, utilising some of the original airfield buildings – particularly in the area now known as Shepherds Grove West.

1.4 PLANNING HISTORY

Outline planning permission for industrial and commercial development (B1, B2 and B8 uses without floor area or hours of use restrictions) was granted for the Masterplan Area in May 2000, subject to a Section 106 Agreement, and was renewed in 2004. These permissions have since lapsed. A further planning permission was granted on the same site in July 2006 for a distribution centre comprising 114,900 square metres (1,236,772 sq.ft) of B8 floorspace plus ancillary offices, parking and service areas, and a new roundabout access on the A143. This permission was also subject to a Section 106 and Section 278 Agreements (in respect of the road improvements). This permission (LPA Ref: SE/02/1747/P), which was obtained by IKEA for a new distribution centre, expired on 6th July 2011.

In January 2021 planning permission was granted for improvements to the eastern section of Grove Lane (immediately north of Shepherds Grove West Industrial Estate) – LPA Ref: DC/20/1891/FUL, with these works subject to a Section 278 Agreement dated 20th July 2022.

In December 2022 Jaynic submitted a hybrid planning application for the use of 37 hectares of land at Shepherds Grove for employment and commercial uses and including vehicular access and structural landscaping. This application was refused in April 2024, largely due to the inclusion of some ‘higher value uses’ without a justifying viability appraisal. The application reference is DC/22/2190/HYB.



Fig. 3: Google Earth historical photo dated 1945



Fig. 4: Google Earth historical photo dated 1999

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.5 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

The site is allocated in the West Suffolk Local Plan 2024-2041 (2025) under policy AP41. The policy is set out below:

Policy AP41 Shepherds Grove, Stanton and Hepworth

A site of 31 hectares known as Shepherd’s Grove, as shown on the policies map, is allocated for employment uses.

The amount of land available for development, phasing arrangements, location of uses, access arrangements, mix, design and scale of buildings and landscaping will be informed by a masterplan for the site. Applications for planning permission will only be determined once the masterplan has been agreed by the local planning authority. This masterplan will be prepared by the site promoters and be subject to public engagement with the local community and key stakeholders in accordance with the statement of community involvement.

There should be a range of suitable uses to include:

- Offices
- research and development
- light industrial
- general industrial
- storage and distribution.

Provision of start-ups will be supported.

Any uses which do not accord with the spatial strategy, such as housing or retail development, will not be permitted on the site. In order to ensure the employment allocation meets the employment needs over the plan period, proposals for nonemployment uses will only be considered if it can be demonstrated it is no longer required in a review of the allocation in a subsequent local plan.

Archaeology

An archaeological evaluation will be required in accordance with policy LP39.

Sustainable travel

A transport assessment and travel plan will be required as part of any application for development on the site.

The development will be expected to provide the necessary road infrastructure, including a new roundabout access on the A143 Bury Road and link road through to Grove Lane at Shepherds Grove west.

Green and blue infrastructure

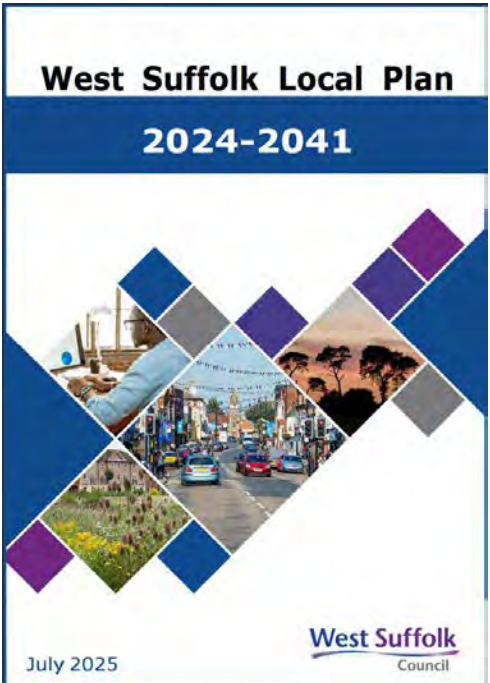
Green and blue infrastructure within the site should include:

- Strategic landscaping including to reduce the impact of proposals from the surrounding countryside, to form a landscape framework and setting for the new development, and to soften the impact of new development on adjacent users and the business park environment.
- Sustainable drainage systems features.
- Existing hedgerows, trees and the woodland to the south-east corner are to be retained and enhanced with appropriate buffers.

Infrastructure

There are a number of water mains within the site that should be considered as part of any development.

Fig. 5: West Suffolk Local Plan 2024-2041 (2025)



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.5 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) is a key document in guiding planning and development across England. It sets out the Government’s planning policies and provides a framework for local authorities and developers to follow when preparing planning proposals and masterplans. The NPPF aims to create a balance between economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion, ensuring that development is both effective and sustainable.

Chapter 6 of the NPPF titled Building a strong, competitive economy states in paragraph 85 that [s]ignificant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

The NPPF (2024) in paragraph 41 encourages applicants to engage with the local community before submitting applications.

The NPPF also encourages, at paragraph 11c, local planning authorities to approve development proposals that accord with up to date development plans without delay.

Key aspects of the NPPF, such as the delivery of sustainable transport, the creation of green spaces, and the promotion of high-quality architecture and early consultation will be integral to the masterplan’s design and implementation.

Masterplan Protocol

The Masterplan Area is allocated under policy AP41 Shepherds Grove, Stanton and Hepworth of the recently adopted West Suffolk Local Plan (2025) which states that

“... Applications for planning permission will only be determined once the masterplan has been agreed by the local planning authority. This masterplan will be prepared by the site promoters and be subject to public engagement with the local community and key stakeholders in accordance with the statement of community involvement...”

Policy LP10 Masterplans of the Local Plan (2025) states the following:

“A masterplan is required for proposals where it has been identified in a site allocation policy within the local plan and on any site by virtue of size, location or proposed mix of uses is justified by the local planning authority.

The detailed requirements for masterplans are set out in appendix D.

A masterplan shall have been through the agreed process of consultation and approved prior to the determination of any related planning application.

Appendix D of the West Suffolk Local Plan (2025) sets out the document format and detail for a Masterplan stating that the Masterplan should include parameter plans which set out the requirements below:

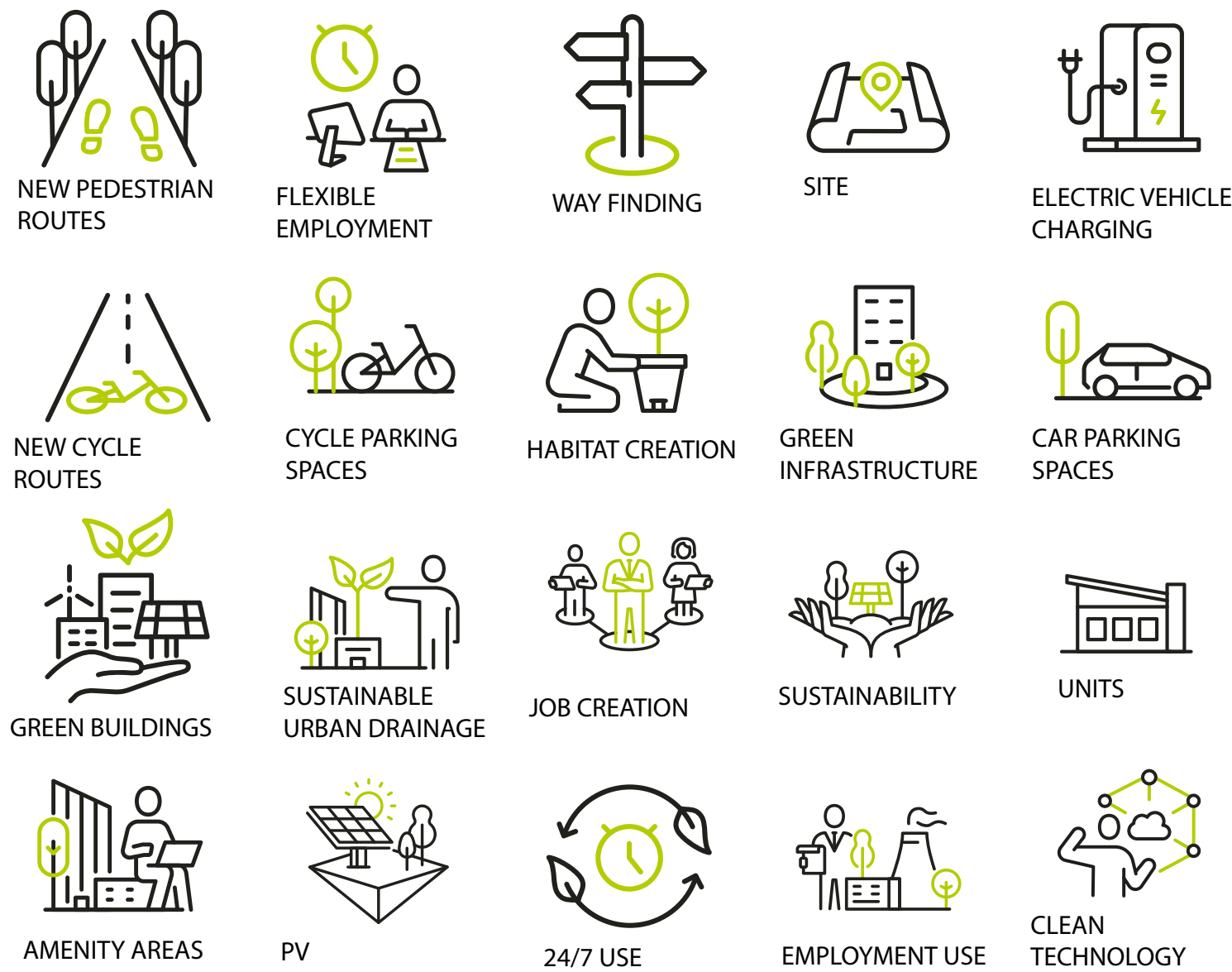
- Vision and principles
- Land use and layout
- Movement and accessibility
- Green and blue infrastructure
- Context and character
- Sustainability, resilience and climate change
- Infrastructure and facilities
- Phasing and implementation

Given that the process of preparation of this new Masterplan for the allocation commenced before the revised Protocol for the preparation of Masterplans was endorsed by the Council, this Masterplan is to be reviewed against the April 2019 protocol. This was agreed with the Council formally in writing with the Case Officer on the 31st March 2025. It was also agreed at the commencement of this Masterplan that a Concept Statement was not required.

2.0 DESIGN VISION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The vision for Shepherds Grove, Stanton and Hepworth is to **create a highly sustainable, high quality commercial development and to support and enhance the site as well as facilities and services in the surrounding area.** The Masterplan proposals provide a new roundabout access from the A143 to serve the Masterplan Area and both existing industrial estates (Shepherds Grove East and Shepherds Grove West), which will improve highway safety at the junction of Summer Road and the A143. Crucially, the new access road will also remove the need for HGVs to go through Stanton village (past the local primary school) to access Shepherds Grove West.



2.2 DESIGN & PLACE-MAKING OBJECTIVES

- Develop an attractive and sustainable employment development that will integrate the existing employment areas of Shepherds Grove East and Shepherds Grove West to create a contemporary business park.
- Integrate new development with Stanton through the creation of improved connectivity between the Masterplan Area and the village.
- Create an attractive, principal entrance into the Masterplan Area defined by new buildings with strong framework landscaping focused on a new roundabout on the A143.

2.3 MOVEMENT & ACCESS OBJECTIVES

- Provide clear and legible connections for commercial vehicles, cars, cyclists and pedestrians, through the development of a hierarchy of routes that will encourage safe and convenient movement into and through the Masterplan Area.
- Establish a new primary entrance into the Masterplan Area from the A143, which will also help resolve the existing highway safety issues at the junction with Sumner Road and at the local primary school.
- Improve pedestrian and cycle links from the Masterplan Area to Stanton, via Grove Lane, and to local bus stops, thereby encouraging the use of sustainable transport options.
- Improve the existing access into the Masterplan Area from Grove Lane, linking up with the main 'spine' road running northwards to the A143.
- Provide access from the A143 for commercial vehicles into the Masterplan Area (including Shepherds Grove West), so that HGVs would no longer need to go through Stanton (past the local primary school) when travelling to/from the A143.

2.0 DESIGN VISION

2.4 LANDSCAPE & OPEN SPACE OBJECTIVES

- Preserve existing landscape features of value that are currently within the Masterplan Area.
- Establish a strong landscape and ecological framework across the site with new buildings located in an attractive natural setting, recognising the semi-rural location.
- Establish strong, well landscaped 'buffer-strips' to the countryside edges of the developable land within the Masterplan Area:
 - to help reduce the visual impact of new buildings in wider views from the adjoining open countryside
 - to form a landscape framework and setting for the new development
 - to soften visual impact of new development on adjacent users and the business park environment.
- Create a variety of attractive, well-landscaped spaces within the developable areas of the Masterplan Area, reflecting the business park environment.

2.5 SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES

- Seek to minimise any environmental impacts created by the development of the 'available land' within the Masterplan Area.
- Incorporate strategies to ensure that all new development is designed to be as sustainable as possible, through the promotion of energy, waste and resource efficiency.
- Design a sustainable surface water drainage strategy for the developable land within the Masterplan Area.
- Promote sustainable modes of transport (cycling, walking and public transport) through the development of connections within the Masterplan Area that link with existing services and facilities in Stanton and the surrounding area.
- Design and locate new buildings to maximise solar gain, wherever possible, and to incorporate features that will create renewable energy on site, through the use of solar panels, for example.
- Utilise low water demand technologies within new buildings wherever possible, such as grey water recycling and rainwater harvesting.
- The statutory Biodiversity Net Gain Metric will be used to demonstrate compliance with local/national planning policy and the Environment Act 2021.
- Promote the contribution of green infrastructure to 'place-making' in order to enhance the character and distinctiveness of the area.



Fig. 7: Indicative view of industrial units and landscape buffer

3.0 ASSESSMENT

3.1 OVERVIEW OF SITE (VISUAL CONTEXT)

The Masterplan Area is located approximately 2km east of the centre of the village of Stanton and immediately south of the A143. The area was formerly a WWII RAF airfield. Opposite the northern boundary is an arable field and an existing residential property at the junction of Bury Road and Clay Lane (Turnpike Farm). Sumner Road runs southwards from the A143. To the south of Shepherds Grove East, arable fields adjoin the area, with a strong tree belt separating the area from these fields. A tree lined concrete access road leads to Sumner Road between the fields in this part of the south-eastern boundary.

Arable fields adjoin the southern boundary of the area, screened by tree belts along the Masterplan Area's boundary and scattered woodland blocks in the wider landscape. Existing industrial and commercial buildings at Shepherds Grove West are located to the south west of the Masterplan Area, bound by Grove Lane north of the industrial estate.

To the west of Shepherds Grove West Industrial Estate, beyond an area of woodland and scrub, is a large well established 'residential park homes' site known as Shepherds Grove Park. Beyond this, Grove Lane continues westward, to meet Upthorpe Road and the village of Stanton approximately 1.5km west of the Masterplan Area.

The countryside to the north, north-west, and north-east is mainly arable fields with a scattering of farmsteads and small residential properties. A group of these, made up of The Firs, Homestead, Homeward, and Montrose Farm, adjoin the Masterplan Area's north-west corner along the A143.

A number of villages are dispersed through the wider, mainly arable landscape, with the closest villages being Hepworth approximately 0.5km to the north, Wattisfield, approximately 1.5km to the east and Walsham le Willows approximately 1.7km to the south. Blocks of woodland are a feature of the wider landscape, with large fields bound by scattered hedgerow trees and limited topographical undulation.

The Masterplan Area extends approximately 37 hectares, comprising three distinct sections: a smaller northern parcel immediately south of the A143; a linear strip of land linking the northern and southern parcels; and a larger southern parcel between Shepherds Grove East and West.

The smaller northern parcel is roughly rectangular in shape and is bounded on the northern and eastern sides by a ditch and a 'gappy' hedgerow and for most of the western side by an outgrown hedgerow with mature trees. The southern boundary is marked by a post and rail fence, with some trees and brambles at the southeastern corner, while the southwestern corner is open to the linking strip of land between the two larger areas. The interior of this part of the Site comprises bare land, with a ditch and a hedgerow close to, and parallel with Summer Road, and there is a line of post mounted overhead cables which reach into the southern part of the area.

The narrow, linking strip of land is bounded to the north and west by an outgrown hedgerow and mature trees, and to the east by a post and rail fence. The interior is open, comprising bare land, with two lines of post mounted overhead cables crossing the area.

The southern larger parcel is irregular in shape and bounded to the north and east by an outgrown hedgerow with some mature trees. The majority of the western boundary is marked by a 1.8m high concrete post and wire fence, with intermittent vegetation and some stretches of hedgerow. Much of the concrete road, which leads east to Sumner Road, is open to the field to the north with the exception of a short section closest to Sumner Road where there is an outgrown hedgerow. A hedgerow and a narrow shelter belt of trees extend along the southern side of the concrete road, with the shelter belt continuing along the rest of the south-eastern boundary to the southeastern corner of the Site. A wider tree belt and woodland block enclose the southern boundary.

The interior of the Site comprises bare land, with a metal pylon close to the northern part of the eastern boundary, with overhead electricity cables stretching to the northwestern part of this parcel. A line of post mounted overhead cables also crosses the northern part of the parcel on a southwest to northeast axis. In a limited number of areas, there are small sections of remnant tarmac relating to the area's previous use as an airfield.



Fig. 8: Aerial view of the site looking north

3.0 ASSESSMENT

3.1 OVERVIEW OF SITE (VISUAL CONTEXT)



Fig. 9: Aerial view showing site photo orientation



Photo 1 - view west from Summer Road



Photo 2 - view east from site towards Summer Road



Photo 3 - view west along the southern boundary



Photo 4 - view north from southern boundary



Photo 5 - view southeast from site



Photo 6 - view east towards site



Photo 7 - view south from site



Photo 8 - view west along northern boundary



Photo 9 - view towards site from Bury Road

3.0 ASSESSMENT

3.2 TOPOGRAPHY

Historic use of the Shepherds Grove site as an airfield means that the land is generally flat with no significant changes in level – although the Masterplan Area does rise gently southwards from around 56 metres AOD at the A143, to around 60 metres towards the centre of the Site. The highest point in the surrounding area is 65m AOD – at the entrance to Potash Farm on Upthorpe Road, to the south of Shepherds Grove (the southern extent of the original airfield).

The majority of the wider area lies on a 'plateau' at around 60 metres AOD, which is located between Stanton, Walsham le Willows and Wattisfield, with limited and gentle undulations. This leads to a very gentle rise in the landform to the south and south-east of the Masterplan Area, while the landform gradually falls to the north and north-west.

The gently undulating terrain and slightly elevated position combined with existing vegetation and built form generally limit visibility of the Site to areas within 1.5km of the Masterplan Area.

3.3 LANDSCAPE

Shepherds Grove is located within the 'ancient plateau claylands' typology, as described in the Suffolk and West Suffolk Landscape Character Assessments (Ancient plateau claylands being a sub-area of the Stanton Clay Farmlands in the West Suffolk LCA). The key characteristics of these areas are described as:

Gently rolling plateau of arable clay farmland; predominantly large open fields dissected by a network of narrow enclosed lanes and small tributaries, interspersed with scattered blocks of woodland (including some ancient woodlands); dispersed settlement pattern of loosely clustered villages and isolated farmsteads; the former WW2 Shepherds Grove Airfield is the focus of employment uses along the A143 corridor which serves as the primary through route across the centre of the LCA.

The West Suffolk Council's strategic guidance for the Stanton Clay Farmlands and Ancient Plateau Claylands sub-area note a key force for change in the area should be ensuring 'large scale commercial and mixed use development associated with the former Shepherds Grove Airfield is carefully integrated with extensive woodland planting ...'. Suffolk County Council Landscape Guidance for the Ancient Plateau Claylands areas also notes that one of the key forces for change in these areas is the redevelopment of former airfield sites to new uses. In terms of development management, Suffolk County Council's Guidance notes that in most cases a specific masterplan approach is the most effective way to deal with the development of these sites. This can allow for strategic planting schemes to be implemented to mitigate the visual impact of long-term growth on the site, rather than dealing with proposals and mitigation on a piecemeal basis.

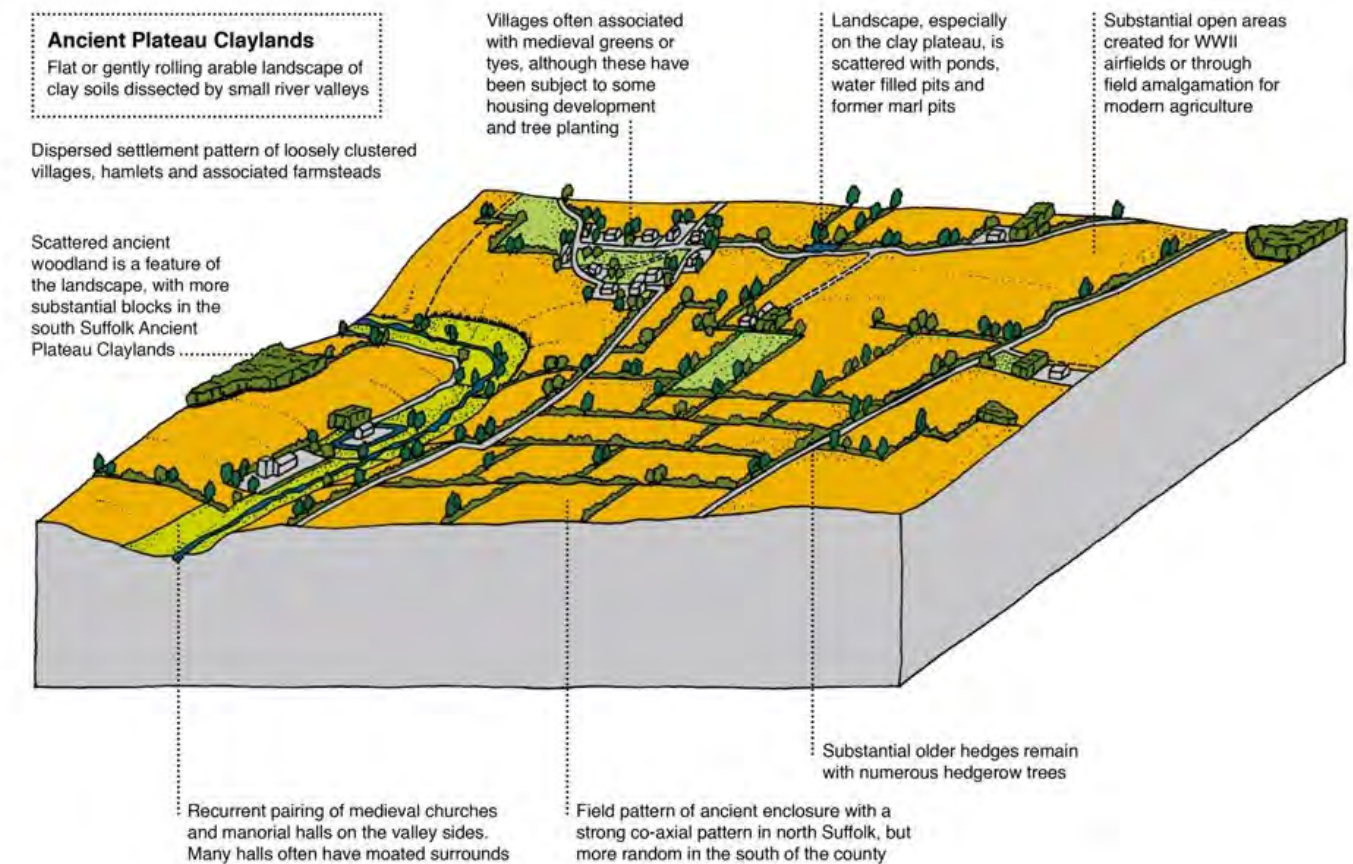


Fig. 10: Diagram illustrating the Ancient Plateau Claylands typology

3.0 ASSESSMENT

3.4 VISUAL INFLUENCE

As identified by Local Planning Policy, the Masterplan Area is planned for employment with a range of potential commercial and industrial uses. Figure 11 depicts the estimated area of visual influence taking into consideration the development potential of the site along with screening effects of topography, built form and areas of vegetation. Due to the nature of these features, the extent of visual influence is generally limited to areas of the surrounding countryside within 1.5km of the Masterplan Area. The majority of the affected area consists of arable fields where there is no public access, however within the public domain there would likely be views from:

The North, including:

- portions of the A143 north of the site and approaching from the east and west
- residential properties near the site's north-east and north-west corners
- areas along the south-east edge of Hepworth including portions of Church Lane, Clay Lane and Footpaths W310 002 and W310 003.

The East, including:

- portions of Sumner Road east of the site and from the built up area within Shepherds Grove East
- portions of Chapel Road and to a lesser extent Walsham Road east and south-east of the site.

Central Development Area, including:

- portions of Grove Lane and the built up area within Shepherds Grove West
- portions of Footpath W90 015 near Hall Farm
- the southern portions of Field Lane and George Lane to the north-west.

For the purposes of the visual analysis, the Masterplan Area has been considered in three parts:

- A northern development area along the A143.
- A central development area opposite Shepherds Grove Industrial Estate East.
- A southern development area opposite Shepherds Grove Industrial Estate West.

Northern Development Area

Views would be principally seen from the A143 immediately north of the site with partially screened or filtered views from the south-east edge of Hepworth and the scattered farmstead and residential properties to the north and west of the site.

The A143 is a busy rural highway serving local residents as well as receptors travelling through the area. Proposed buildings and a new roundabout would be immediately apparent to receptors passing the Site on the A143 and would have an urbanising effect, however this would be limited to a short section of the highway immediately north and east of the Site and would be seen in context of existing industrial development already present in the area. The height of proposed buildings in the northern development area would be limited to 12m and the urbanising effect would reduce over time as the proposed framework planting around the Site establishes and matures.

The proposed development would also be visible from the south-east edge of Hepworth and surrounding public rights of way, however development would be partially screened and filtered by existing vegetation and the proposed framework planting around the site.

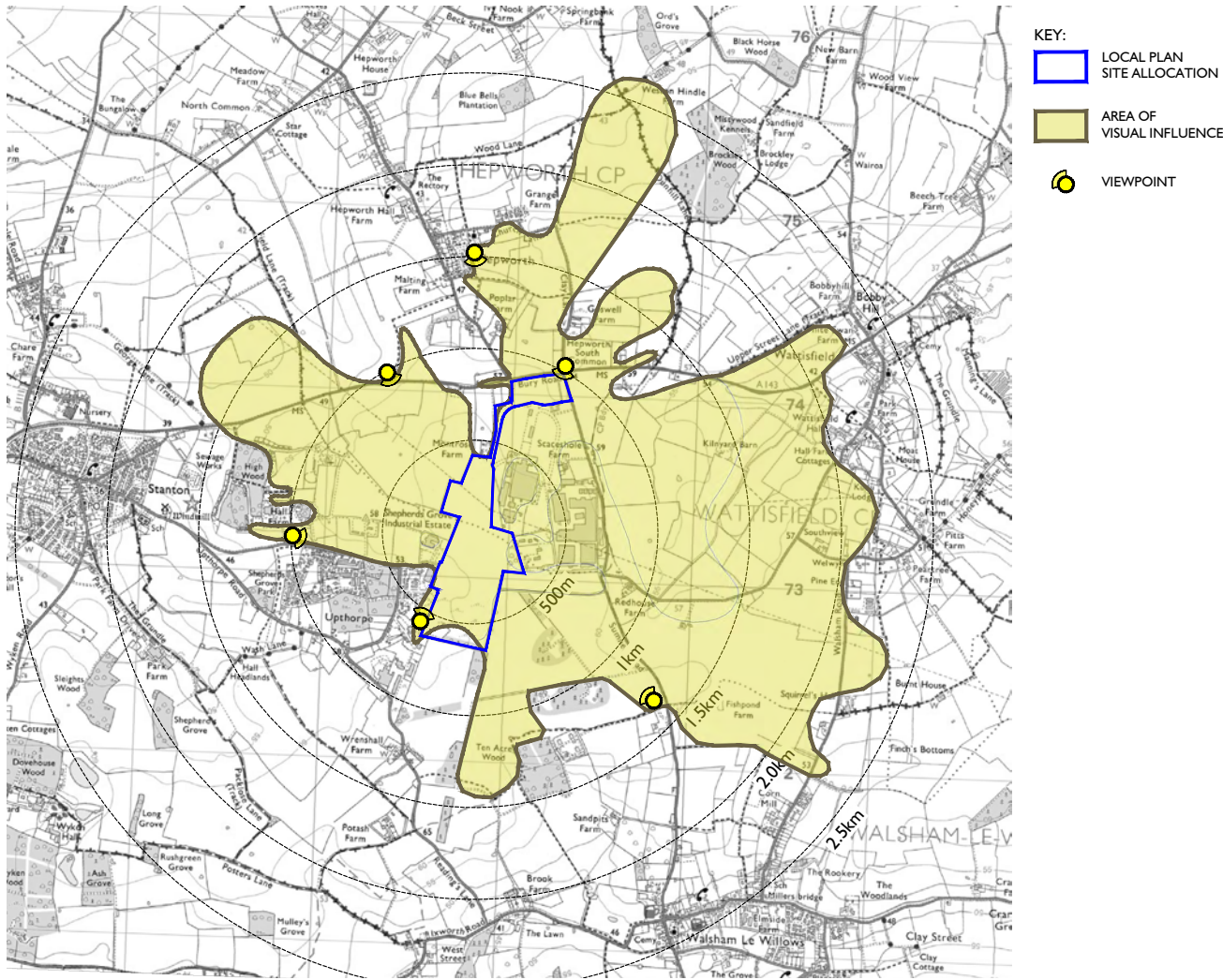


Fig. 11: Visual Influence

Central Development Area

Views would principally be seen from the A143 to the north-west and from areas of the countryside to the west around Hall Farm and Grove Lane. Gently undulating terrain and existing vegetation would help to limit views to the upper portions of development and, where visible, development would be seen in context of existing industrial development in Shepherds Grove Industrial Estate.

Southern Development Area

Development within the southern area of the site is relatively well contained by existing vegetation and built form and would likely only be glimpsed from a limited area of the countryside.

Refer to the supporting Landscape & Visual Context report for further information on the Masterplan proposal's visual influences. These have been taken into consideration in the development of the Masterplan, identifying the site's most sensitive boundaries which have in turn informed the proposed framework landscaping around the site perimeter to mitigate views into and out of the site.

3.0 ASSESSMENT

Fig. 12: View looking southwest from the junction of A143 and Sumner Road



Fig. 13: View on the south-east edge of Hepworth looking south from Footpath W310 001

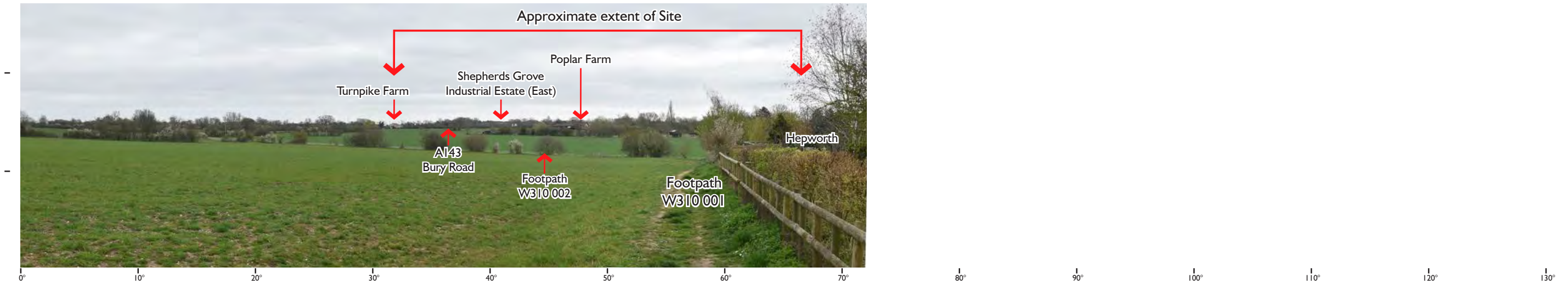


Fig. 14: View west of the Site looking southeast from the A143 layby



3.0 ASSESSMENT

Fig. 15: View west of the Site looking east from Footpath W490 015 near Hall Farm

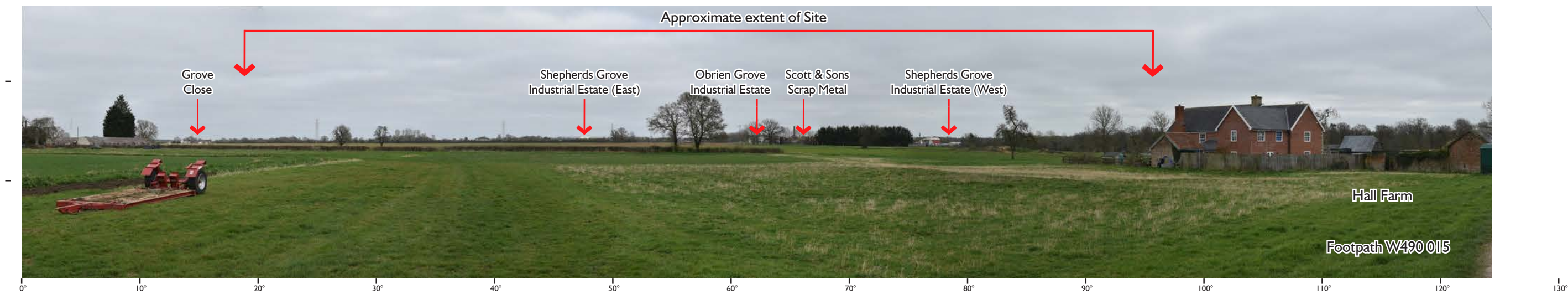


Fig. 16: View from the southwest corner of the Site in Shepherds Grove Industrial Estate West looking northeast

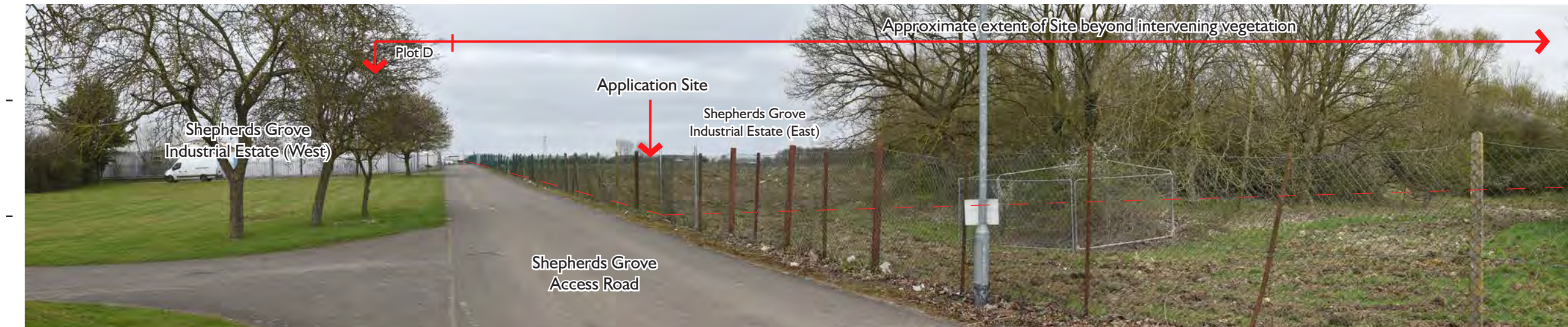


Fig. 17: View looking northwest from Footpath W539 005 near Sumner Road



3.0 ASSESSMENT

3.5 ECOLOGY & BIODIVERSITY

The site is dominated by bare ground with a periphery of regularly managed grassland and has not changed since the previous survey in 2021. Hedgerow dominates the site boundaries with an area of dense scrub along the eastern boundary. Three distinct areas of woodland were recorded on site with two areas close to the southern boundary and a third area extending eastwards from the eastern edge of the site. Several ditches, both wet and dry, dissected the site.

Designations

The site itself is not subject to any ecological designations. There are four sites of national importance within 5km of the application site:

- Stanton Woods SSSI 1.35km south-west of the site.
- Westhall Wood and Meadow SSSI 3.5km east of the site.
- Weston Fen SSSI 4.2km north of the site.
- The Gardens, Great Ashfield 4.5km south of the site.

Each of the sites were designated for the significance of the constituent habitats which support an assemblage of notable plant communities.

Furthermore, Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service provided details of two non-statutory designated sites within a 2km radius of the site. Of these, 'Roadside Nature Reserve 156' was the closest at 1km from the site. Both non-statutory sites, are considered important at a county level, and were assessed as not having relevance to the development due to an absence of functionally linked habitat.

No impacts are anticipated in respect of nature conservation designations.

Habitats

The updated Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey in May 2024 found that none of the habitats within the site had significantly changed since the previous survey in 2021.

Other developable areas within the Masterplan Area are dominated by bare ground and semi-improved grassland, which has been maintained through regular cutting dissuading both scrub encroachment and development of more species-rich swards. A larger area (1.3ha) of broad-leaved plantation woodland exists to the east of Shepherds Grove West and contains cherry, field maple, sycamore, hazel, oak, elder, blackthorn, willow and ash with a common ground flora;

A number of hedgerows are present around the perimeter of the site, including both managed and unmanaged sections, with a modest range of woody species. The hedgerows are considered to be of some ecological importance and therefore should be retained and enhanced where possible.

Any future planning application will be supported by an up to date Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) that outlines the direct and indirect impacts upon designated sites and protected and notable species, as well as the mitigation and enhancement measures necessary to ensure biodiversity is protected during the course of the development and enhanced following occupation.

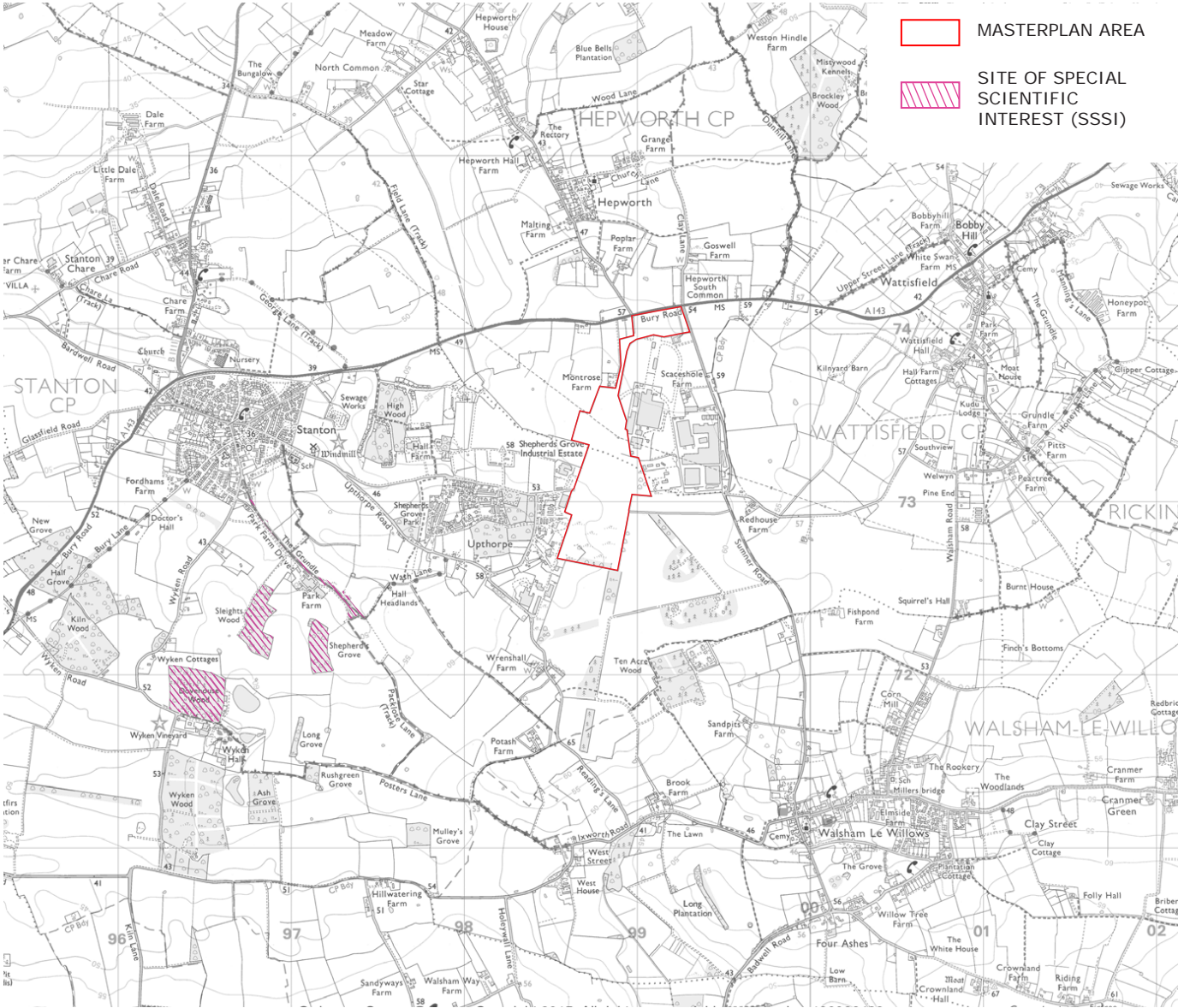


Fig. 18: Diagram illustrating the land available for development in context of SSSI sites

3.0 ASSESSMENT

3.5 ECOLOGY & BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) was implemented by the Environment Act 2021 and became mandatory in February 2024 for all planning applications to provide a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity, measured against pre-development figures. It is an approach to planning and development that aims to ensure development leaves the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was before.

BNG requirements should enhance and create natural habitats and help towards building the resilience of wildlife and its ability to adapt to climate change.

Any development of the Masterplan Area will ensure that at least the minimum 10% biodiversity net gain is met in line with the biodiversity gain hierarchy. This is echoed under Policy SP8 Biodiversity Net Gain of the West Suffolk Local Plan (2025) that developments should achieve a net gain of at least 10%.

This net gain can be met on or off site in accordance with the BNG hierarchy which is set out below:

For onsite habitats of medium, high or very high distinctiveness:

- First avoid adverse effects
- Where unavoidable, mitigate those adverse effects.

Compensate for adverse effects to all onsite habitats by:

- Onsite habitat enhancements;
- Creation of new habitats onsite;
- Registered offsite biodiversity gain; and
- Purchase of statutory biodiversity credits.

Such mitigation is likely to take the form of creating/ restoring smaller areas of more ecologically diverse habitats as part of open space, structural landscaping and/ or drainage features, such as wildflower grassland areas, wildlife ponds/wetlands, woodland planting and hedgerows.

With regards to any BNG provided off site, then locally defined ecological networks identified in the local nature recovery strategy (LNRS) could be explored as an option of the delivery of off-site.

Protected Species

Following detailed Phase 2 Protected Species Surveys, a reptile mitigation strategy will safeguard and provide mitigation for the low population of grass snakes previously identified on site and a precautionary method of works to safeguard the badgers and their sets. Also, if required following further assessment, a bespoke Farmland Bird Mitigation Strategy can provide off-site mitigation for ground nesting birds.

Through the future implementation of recommended ecological measures, all significant negative impacts as a result of the scheme upon protected and notable habitats and species would be mitigated in line with relevant wildlife legislation as well as National and Local Planning Policy related to biodiversity.

Sensitive Lighting Scheme

Retained trees, hedgerows, woodland and protected species on-site will be protected from potential indirect impacts of increased artificial lighting via the implementation of a wildlife-friendly lighting scheme. This lighting scheme will limit the impact of light pollution beyond the site as well.

It is acknowledged that artificial lighting, which will be required by the development for operational and security purposes, careful design and sensitive locations will be chosen with options to reduce light spill by using LEDS and compact fluorescents (FCLs) and light shields to minimise glare and light trespass.

This will maintain ‘dark zones’ and avoid direct lighting of ecologically sensitive features such as tree canopies.



Fig. 19: Images illustrating ecological and biodiversity features

3.0 ASSESSMENT

3.6 FLOOD RISK

The Masterplan Area is located on the north and east of a plateau upon which the former airfield was constructed. This area is higher than the surrounding land and hence is not at risk of flooding from fluvial or reservoir failure flooding.

The ground conditions in this area are clays of the Lowestoft Diamicton which are impermeable and not suited to Ground water infiltration.

The site falls to the west and north towards a number of local watercourses which flow away from the site.

There are areas of surface water flood risk shown on the mapping for the area. In the high-risk storm (1in 30-year event) the surface water flood risk within the site is limited to isolated low points within the development. There is water trapped by local low spots, with no flow routes from them. In the medium risk storm (1 in 100-year event) these areas are slightly more extensive but still have no flow routes associated with them. In the low-risk storm (1 in 1000-year event) flow routes in the south-west and north of the site have developed. These flow routes are limited in area and the masterplanning process will take note of these areas to ensure that the flows are not inhibited by development. Public Open Space provision within the development can be tailored to facilitate these extreme flood routes.

This Masterplan Area is at very low risk of flooding from all water sources and is therefore suited to all types of development in flood risk terms with the exception of surface water flow path areas that can be accommodated within the Masterplan Area.

Surface Water Flooding in Hepworth

During the public consultation for the Masterplan, respondents from Hepworth raised concerns around the impact the development might have on the existing flooding issues experienced within the village.

The surface water outfalls from the site, one of which flows to the north, through Hepworth, will be restricted to the 100% Annual Exceedance Probability (1 in 1 year) green field run off rate for all rainfall events up to and including the 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (1 in 100 year) with climate change.

This will reduce flows downstream of the site and therefore will reduce flood risk offsite in Hepworth by capping the outflow from the development at this low rate. The development will also provide pollution mitigation as required by the Lead Local Flood Authority policies.

Therefore, Jaynic is of the stance that flooding will be reduced rather than exacerbated by the proposed development. This will be reviewed by SCC Lead Local Flood Authority when the hybrid planning application is submitted for determination.

A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy will support the application.

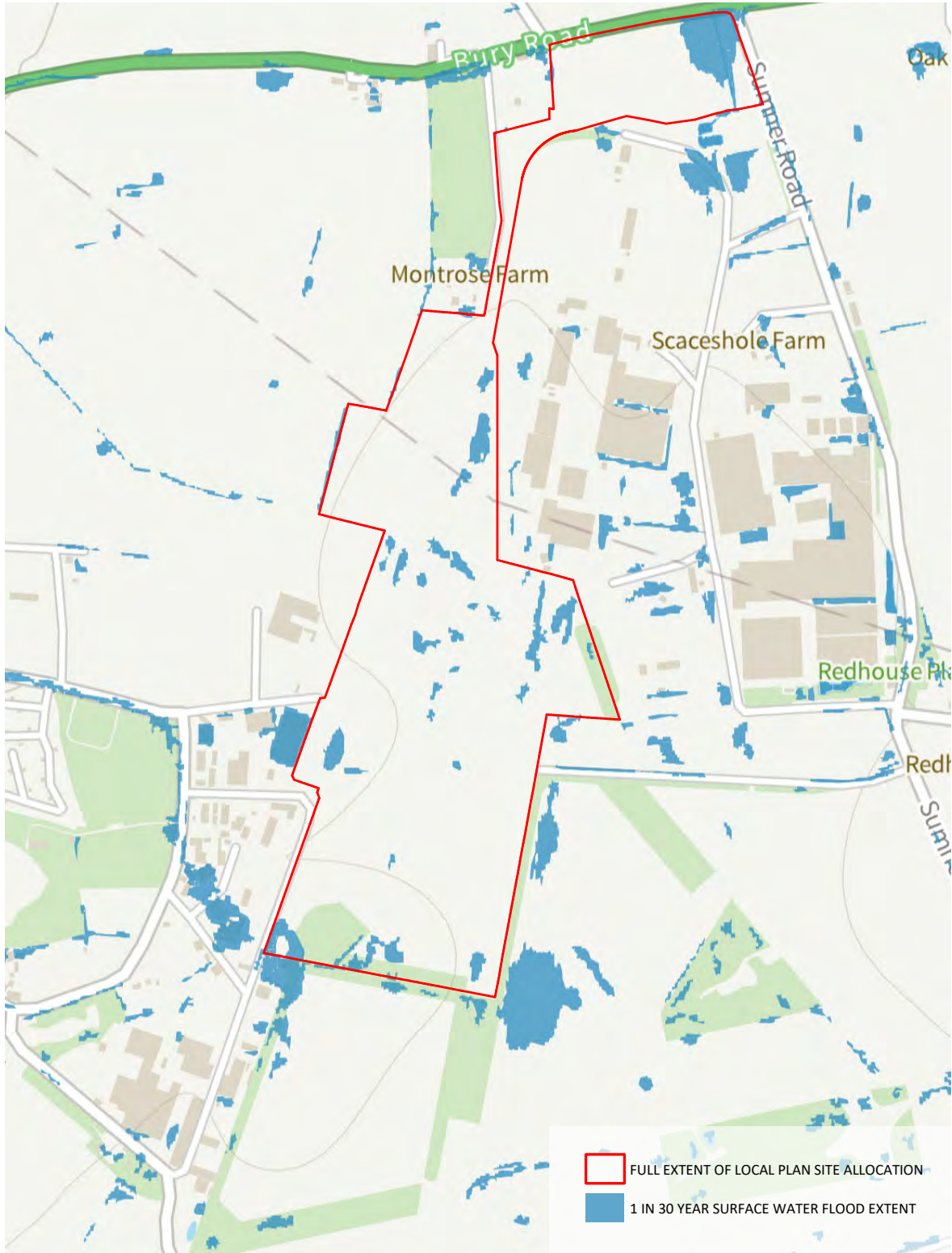


Fig. 20: Flood risk map surface water (1-30 year event)

3.0 ASSESSMENT

3.7 ACCESS & TRANSPORT

Shepherds Grove West is currently accessed from either Grove Lane or Upthorpe Road (via Stanton to the west), or via Reading's Lane from the south. The developable land to the east of Shepherds Grove West can also be accessed via a private service road leading from Sumner Road.

The A143 Bury Road, which runs immediately to the north of the Masterplan Area, is a primary distributor road between Bury St Edmunds and the A14 trunk road to the south-west, and Diss and Great Yarmouth to the north-east.

It is categorized as a 'strategic lorry route'. SCC Highways states that "[a]ll movements crossing Suffolk should use these, with those starting or ending in the county using them in preference to local lorry routes".

The introduction of a new roundabout junction on the A143 will also provide a new access road to serve Shepherds Grove West, which will provide an overall access strategy that will benefit the local road network by removing the need for HGVs and other large commercial vehicles to go through Stanton village.

The previous planning application was supported by in depth capacity assessments which indicated that a roundabout junction would provide sufficient capacity to accommodate the level of traffic generated by the earlier proposals, and the existing traffic from Shepherds Grove Industrial Estates.

An up-to-date Transport Assessment will support the application and in addition, where required Jaynic will be required to provide a Road Safety Audit Stage One and a Road Safety Audit Stage Two as was required for the previously determined application.

Pedestrian and cycle facilities will be provided at the new roundabout to provide links to the existing bus facilities located to the west along the A143.

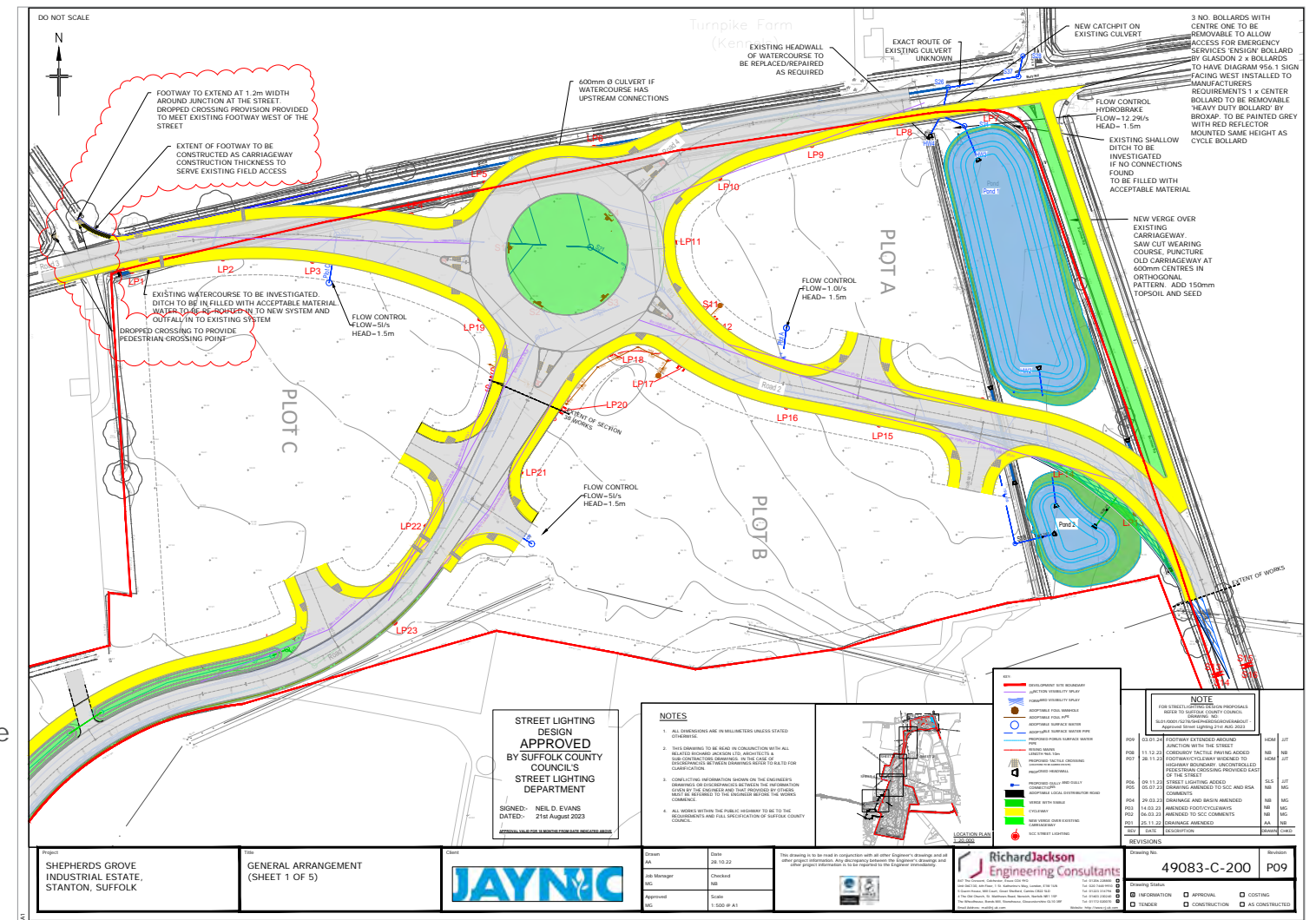


Fig. 21: Indicative layout of proposed new roundabout on A143

Figure 21 identifies the roundabout solution and access proposals approved by SCC Highways for the previous application. For the purposes of a future application a similar roundabout access solution will be submitted for approval.

A S278 agreement is in place between Jaynic and SCC Highways for the improvements and introduction of a pedestrian cycle way between the western boundary of the Masterplan Area and the Grove Lane/Upthorpe Road junction. This S278 agreement was extended in January 2025 until July 2030.

The new highway infrastructure proposed as part of the development includes a direct route between Shepherds Grove West and the A143, Grove Lane will be much safer for cyclists as it will carry less HGV traffic than current.

A previous traffic count on Upthorpe Road shows circa 145 HGV movements per day and the new direct connection to the A143 will significantly reduce this number as well as ensuring that the new HGV traffic created by the development will not adversely impact the village. Therefore, the HGV situation currently experienced by residents of Stanton will be greatly improved.

3.0 ASSESSMENT

3.7 ACCESS & TRANSPORT

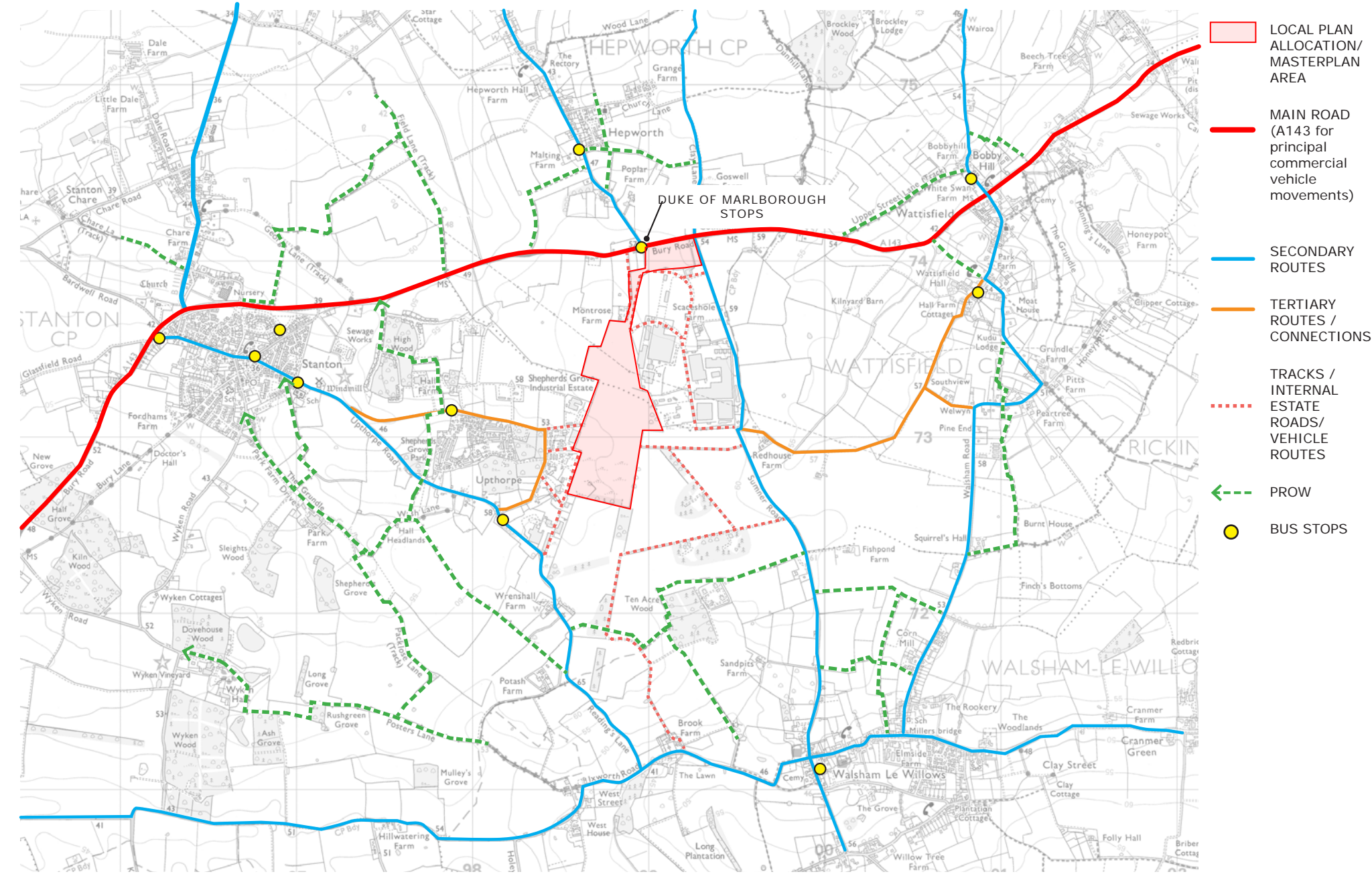
The scheme will include continuation of the footpath/cycleway providing a connection to the existing bus stops at Shepherds Grove Park. This then allows a continuous pedestrian route from the Masterplan Area into Stanton village, utilising the existing footpath beyond Shepherds Grove Park to the west. It is envisaged that the footpath/cycleway between S278 works and Shepherds Grove Park will be provided to the north of Grove Lane via a proportionate S106 highways contribution, with no works commencing prior to payment being made.

Through the construction of the new infrastructure which will include a direct route between Shepherds Grove West and the A143, Grove Lane will be much safer for cyclists as it will carry less HGV traffic than current. A previous traffic count on Upthorpe Road shows circa 145 HGV movements per day and the new direct connection to the A143 will significantly reduce this number.

The bus stops in closest proximity to the Masterplan Area are shown on figure 22.

The closest stops to the northern part of the site are the Duke of Marlborough stops located on the A143 Bury Road. These are served by route 70/70A/73 which connects Diss, Garboldisham, Stanton and Bury St Edmunds via intermediate villages Monday to Friday. There are a total of 5 bus journeys a day along the service. There are also existing bus stops on Grove Lane, near to Grove Park where route 73 also operates. The development proposals will provide an upgrade to the footpath to enable pedestrian access to these sustainable connections. Further services can be sought from the Memorial bus stop in the centre of Stanton village including route 70/70A. All bus services are operated by Simmonds.

As the proposals progress towards a planning application, a Transport Assessment will be produced, with the scope to be agreed with Suffolk County Council's Highway Authority. This will include a detailed review of accessibility, including facilities in Stanton, sustainable transport opportunities, trip generation,



distribution and assignment of development trips on the network. Recent traffic counts and assessments of local junctions have been undertaken to update the assessment.

Travel Plans will be prepared and then agreed with SCC. The Travel Plans will set out routes for business trips that avoid local villages unless these trips have destinations in these villages.

The design and layout of new uses within the site will be developed to ensure permeability for walking, cycling and vehicular traffic. 'Swept path analysis' will be undertaken to demonstrate that refuse vehicles and fire tenders can be adequately accommodated within the proposed development areas.

Fig. 22: Map illustrating the existing routes & connections

Public Transport

- Route 73: Diss > Barningham > Bardwell > Stanton > Bury St Edmunds departs Stanton towards Bury St Edmunds at 07:34 and 10:04 from Shepherds Grove Café stop. The bus returns to Stanton Shepherds Grove Café stop at 14:14, 16:59 and 18:51.
- Route 70/70A: Diss > Worthing > Rickinghall > Ixworth > Bury St Edmunds departs Stanton Memorial stop from 07:08 until 18:08 10 times a day and returns respectively from 08:48 to 19:13 11 times a day. On Saturday's there is a service from 07:58 to 17:58 hourly which returns hourly from 08:58 to 19:13.

3.0 ASSESSMENT

3.8 LOCAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The village of Stanton is located approximately 2km west of the Masterplan Area and provides a good range of local services and facilities, such as community primary school and pre-school, two convenience stores (including a CO-OP), post office, public house, hairdressers, fish and chip shop, bakery, petrol station, village hall, recreational, sport and play facilities, a healthcare centre and veterinary practice, as well as good accessibility to Diss and Bury St Edmunds via the A143.

Whilst the development will not adversely impact on any of the existing infrastructure such as the primary school and doctors’ surgery, the employees of the proposed development are likely to utilise other facilities such as the village shop and petrol station and increase spending within the village which will positively economically impact the existing village facilities and services.

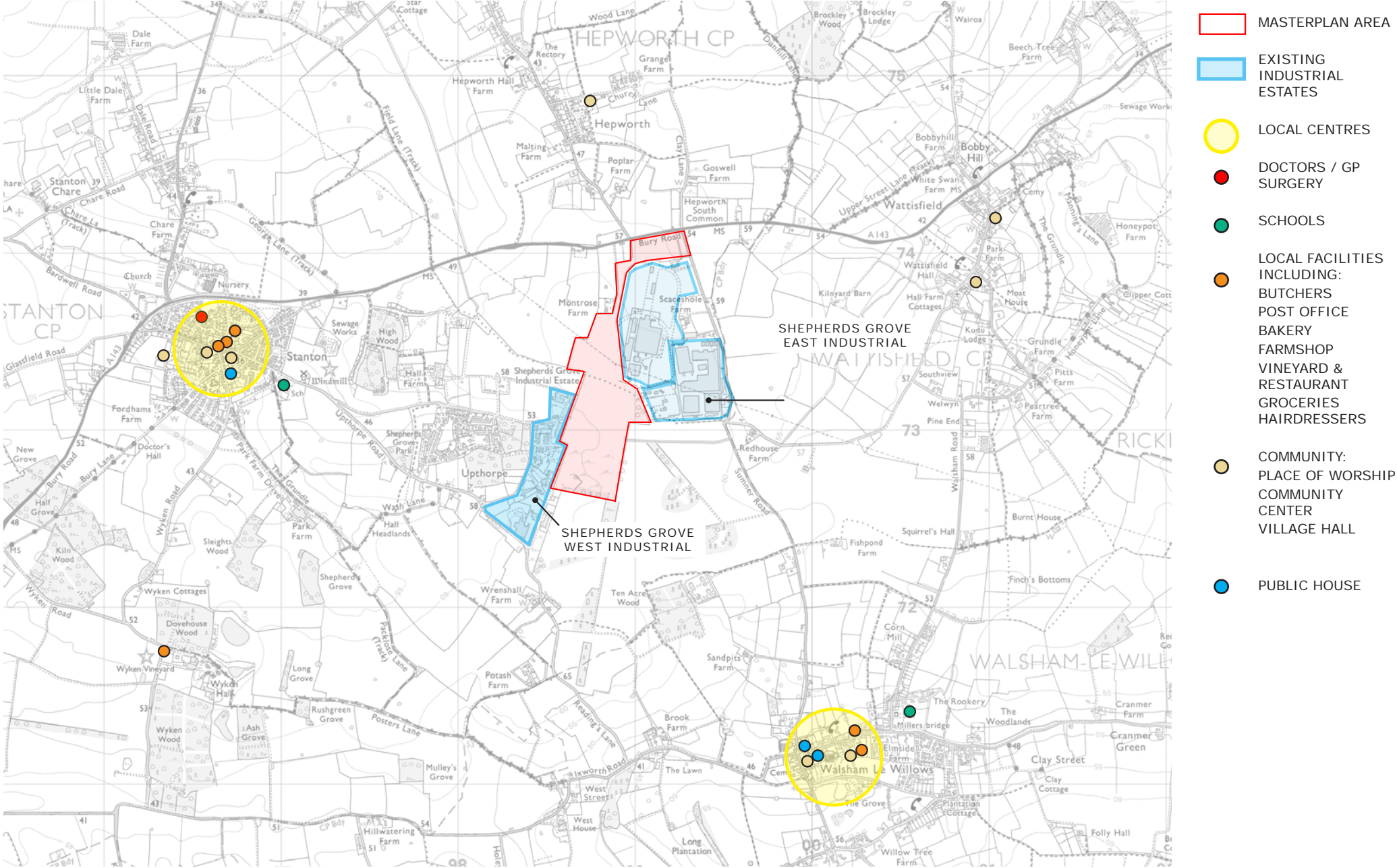


Fig. 23: Map illustrating the existing local services

3.0 ASSESSMENT

3.9 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Conservation Areas

The Masterplan Area is not located within, or adjoining, any Conservation Areas (see Figure 24). The nearest Conservation Areas are located at Stanton (2km to the west), Wattisfield (1.5km to the east), and Walsham Le Willows (2km to the south-east). While there are a number of Listed Buildings in the surrounding villages, there are no Listed Buildings within the Masterplan Area and only four Listed Buildings within 500 metres of the boundary of the Masterplan Area - Redhouse Farmhouse, High Elm Farmhouse, The Poplars, and Aspen Hall, which are all Grade II listed.

In accordance with national and local planning policy and guidance, a desk-based assessment has been undertaken to clarify the archaeological potential of the study area. The Grade II Listed Buildings of Aspen Hall, The Poplars, Redhouse Farmhouse, Wrenshall Farmhouse, High Elm Farmhouse, and Pond Farmhouse are located within 700m of the study site. It has been assessed that the proposed development will not lie within the settings of these listed buildings or impact the significance of these designated heritage assets.

Archaeology

Between 2020 and 2022, multiple phases of archaeological investigation were undertaken within the Masterplan Area. In 2020/21, the initial phase of archaeological evaluation consisted of a geophysical survey and extensive trial trenching which identified a localised potential for Prehistoric remains of archaeological interest within the north-east corner of the study site. Such remains were then the subject of a targeted programme of archaeological mitigation which resulted in the excavation and preservation by record of the Prehistoric remains present.

Following completion of the archaeological fieldwork programme, the residual potential for remains of archaeological interest to be present within the Masterplan Area is considered to be negligible. On this basis, it is considered that no further archaeological investigations will be required.



Fig. 24: Diagram illustrating the existing heritage context

3.0 ASSESSMENT

3.10 OVERHEAD LINES

The central part of the Masterplan Area is crossed by high-voltage electricity cables set on pylons, which run approximately east-west through the area (see Figure 27 constraints plan). The pylons are located on the edges of the Masterplan Area. However, this significant constraint still imposes a requirement for 'off-setting' of any built development, and/or replacement lines being set underground.

A series of lower-level electricity lines on timber posts runs south-west to north-east through the same part of the site.

3.11 ADJOINING LAND USES

The majority of the land adjoining the Masterplan Area is currently in agricultural production (mainly arable), although there are also some small blocks of woodland and plantations particularly to the south-east of the area.

There are also several detached residential properties set within large plots close to the boundary of the Area, with the closest properties to the undeveloped parts of the site being: Montrose Farm; The Firs; Turnpike Farm; Scaceshole Farm; and The Whitehouse.

3.12 LAND QUALITY

Agricultural land within and adjoining the Masterplan Area is classified as Grade 3 on the Agricultural Land Classification Map (Eastern Region), produced by Natural England. Grade 3 agricultural land is noted as being of 'good to moderate' value, on a scale of 1 – 5 with Grade 1 being 'excellent' and Grade 5 being 'very poor'. However, it should also be noted that those undeveloped parts of the Masterplan Area currently in (or last used for) agricultural purposes, is limited to the area close to the A143 only, and that these fields are small, isolated parcels of land that would be unattractive to contract farmers and therefore of questionable viability as part of a larger agricultural operation.

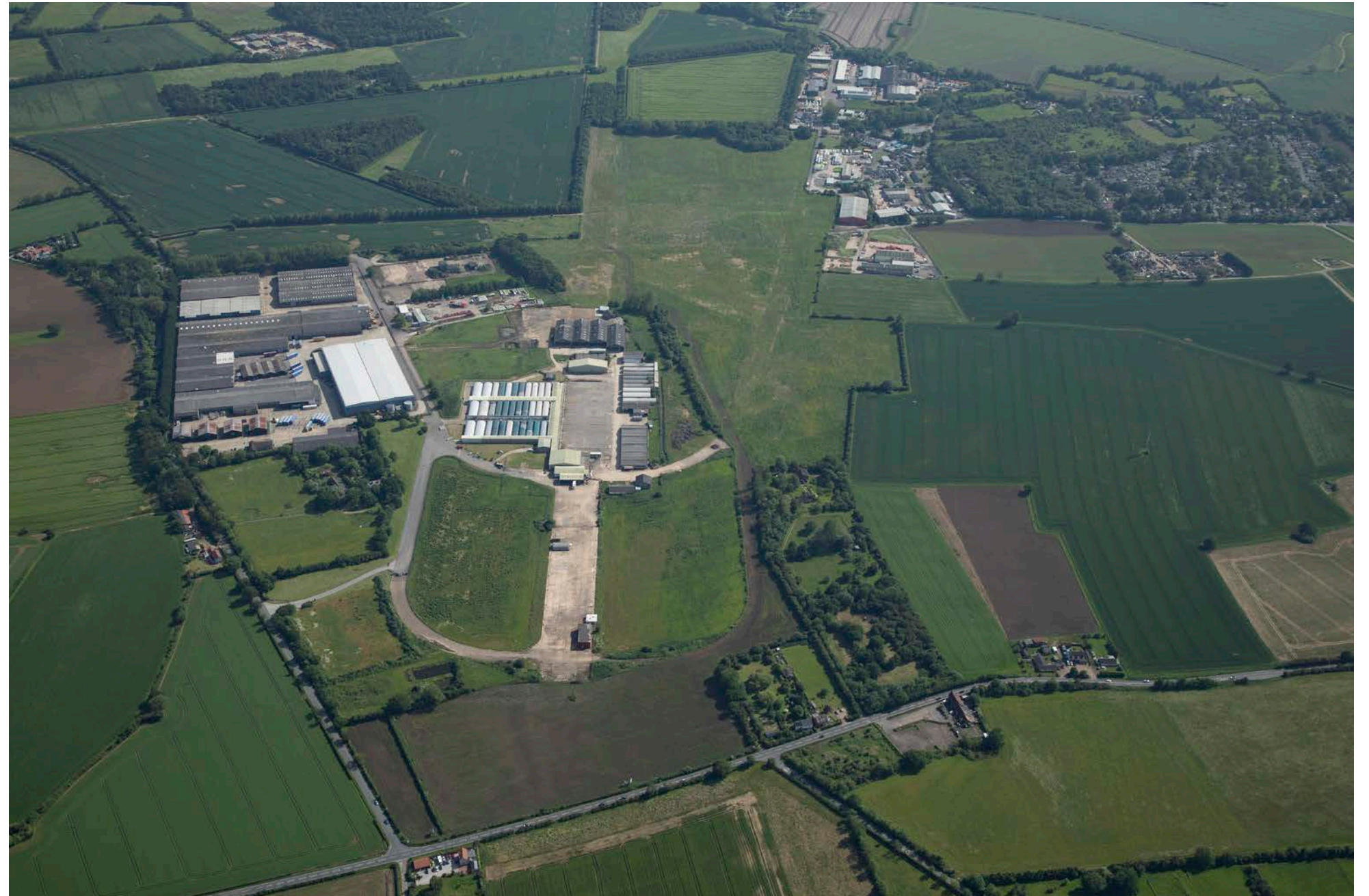


Fig. 25: Aerial view of the site looking south