



# Design and Access Statement

Staplegrove East Urban Extension, Taunton

April 2016



# Foreword

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This Design and Access Statement explains the outline proposals for the urban extension at Staplegrove East.

The proposal has a mix of uses including residential, employment, a local centre, a school, a variety of different public open spaces (including sports pitches), pedestrian routes and improved transport linkages.

To ensure a sustainable development is delivered, it is crucial that a range of uses are provided for the site.

The proposal has been designed to be sensitive to setting and balance the environmental, ecological, and topographical requirements for the site. It has been informed by consultation with key stakeholders and local community.

This development forms part of the wider North Taunton Development, and should be considered alongside proposals for Staplegrove West.

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# Document Structure

The purpose of this document is to describe the evolving design process and key design principles leading to a proposed scheme for the application site.

This report contains a description of the proposed development and provides a number of illustrations of what the scheme could look like based on an indicative masterplan as part of the outline application. This document should be read in conjunction with all of the other application documentation.

It is important to note that this report does not provide a fully developed architectural design for the site. The material is indicative only and is intended to be illustrative and provide sufficient information to support the outline application. Detailed information will be submitted in the future as part of a reserved matter application in line with the principles established in the outline application.

The structure of this document is separated into different parts to help explain the proposals. The following sections are included:

## **1.0 Introduction**

This section provides an overview of the site and the proposed development.

## **2.0 Assessment**

This section analyses the physical, social and economic policy context. Both the immediate surroundings and the wider context are considered. This section also evaluates the technical information from the site and the constraints and opportunities are identified.

## **3.0 Existing Surrounding Character**

This section of the report looks at the urban grain of the immediate surrounding to the site. It analyses the density and dispersal of dwellings in order to gain an understanding of the urban form.

## **4.0 Involvement**

This section provides an overview of the community involvement, and how the feedback has informed the design.

## **5.0 Design Evolution**

This section explains how the layout has developed and the preferred layout agreed for the site.

## **6.0 Design**

This section presents the vision and design strategy, as well as the proposal in the form of the illustrative masterplan and parameter plans.

## **7.0 Access**

This section explains the pedestrian, cycle, public transport and road infrastructure network. The street hierarchy is set and street characters are proposed.

## **8.0 Green Infrastructure, Play Areas and Recreation**

This section discusses the landscape strategies for the site and the provision of green infrastructure for the site. The ecological mitigation is also presented in this section.

## **9.0 Character Areas**

In this section the site is divided into proposed character areas, and an overview of each character area is presented. This section is designed to provide a flavour of the characters and will be expanded upon in the Design Code (Refer to chapter 1.4 for information on how the Design Code document is used as part of the design process).

## **10.0 Delivery and Phasing**

This section indicates the proposed phasing of the site and explains the mechanisms for delivery of the Spine Road and the development.

## **11.0 Conclusion**

## **12.0 Appendix**



# Project Team

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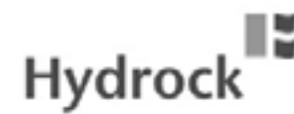
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# 1.0 Introduction

*This section provides an overview of the site and the proposed development.*

- 1.1 Introduction and Site Location
- 1.2 Land Interests
- 1.3 Development Overview and Vision
- 1.4 Design Process
- 1.5 Planning Background
- 1.6 Site Allocation and Development Management Plan (SADMP)
- 1.7 The Site Boundary
- 1.8 Development Principles



## 1.1 Introduction and Site Location

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of PM Asset Management Ltd (“PMAM”) in support of an Outline Planning Application for a mixed use urban extension development on land at East Staplegrove, Taunton, Somerset.

### The Proposal

The proposed development comprises of:

- Up to 915 dwellings;
- 0.7ha of land for a mixed-use local centre (including convenience store, other convenience retailing, financial/professional services, restaurants and cafés, a public house, take-away, community hall building, and place of worship);
- 1ha of land for employment uses (Use Classes B1(b) research and development of products or processes, B1(c) light industry, B2 general industry, and B8 storage or distribution) and other employment generating uses;
- Site for a 2.5ha, 2-form entry primary school and pre-school facilities;
- Provision of appropriate infrastructure including Spine Road to connect with A358 Staplegrove Road and Kingston Road;
- Five accesses comprising:
  - a. Roundabout at Spine Road/Kingston Road junction;
  - b. Crossing and associated access at Whitmore Lane;
  - c. Crossing and associated access at Rectory Road;
  - d. Roundabout at Spine Road/Staplegrove Road junction;
  - e. Access off Corkscrew Lane; and
- Public open space (including extension of the existing Green Wedge), a scheme of sustainable drainage system (SUDS), appropriate landscape buffers and planting belts.

### Taunton

Taunton is set on the M5 corridor, 34 miles north of Exeter, and 50 miles south of Bristol, with main line Inter City and Cross Country services to London (less than 2 hours), Plymouth, Bristol and the North.

Taunton lies to the west of the M5, between Bridgwater (to its north), and Wellington (to its south). It belongs to the county of Somerset.

### The Site Location

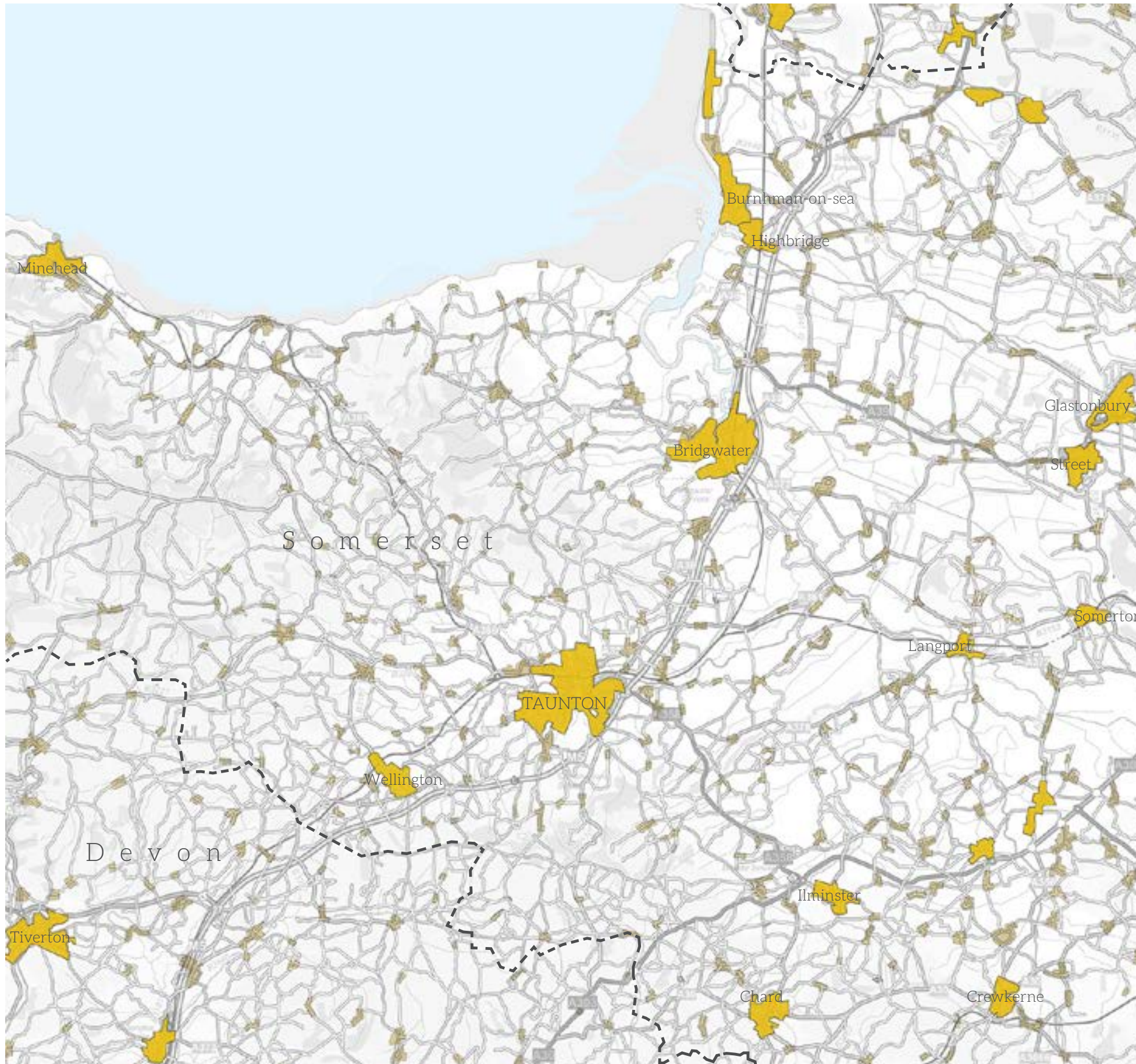
The site is located to the north of Taunton, 2.5km from Taunton Town Centre and 1.5km from Taunton Railway Station. The site sits north of Staplegrove and Whitmore Area, with the Pyrland Estate located to the east, and the Quantock Hills to the north.

The site covers an area of approximately 80 hectares including 69 hectares of land proposed for the Staplegrove East development and 11 hectares for the section of Spine Road that lies to the west of Staplegrove East.



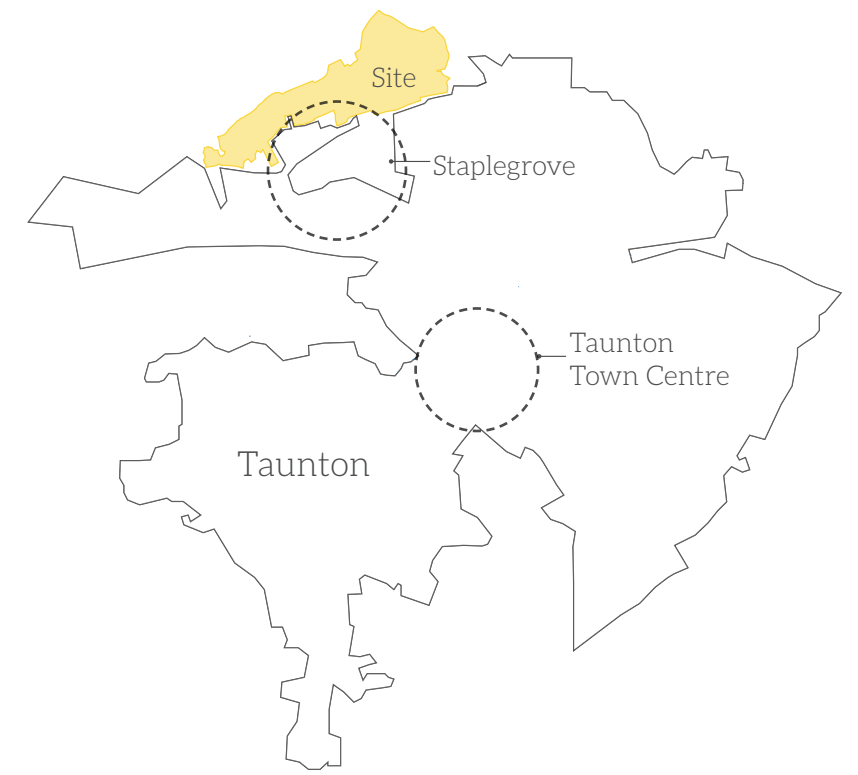
Location of Taunton within the south-west





- Key**
- - - County Boundary Line
  - Large Settlement
  - Smaller Settlement

Location of Taunton within the wider context



Map of Taunton locating Staplegrove and the location of the site





## 1.2 Land Interests

### Broad Location for Development

Core Strategy policy SS6 identifies Staplegrove as a location for:

*“A mixed-use urban extension of between 500 – 1,500 dwellings, likely to be commenced after 2015.*

*A Masterplan will need to be prepared to co-ordinate the development and ensure it provides the necessary physical, social and green infrastructure required.*

*Likely facilities within the extension could include a new local centre; primary school; community hall; doctor’s surgery; affordable housing; employment; and improved bus, cycle and pedestrian facilities.”*

Policy TAU2: Staplegrove in Taunton Deane Borough Council’s (TDBC) emerging SADMP allocates the Comprehensive Development to deliver around 1,500 new homes; affordable housing at 25% of total provision; a new mixed-use local centre comprising a convenience store and other services such as restaurants and cafés; community hall building; a primary school and at least 2ha of serviced employment land.

### The Comprehensive Development

The site forms part of land that is identified as a Broad Location in the adopted Core Strategy and as an allocation within the emerging Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (SADMP) Development Plan Document (DPD). A ‘Framework Plan and Development Brief’ for the comprehensive development covering the entire allocation (the “Comprehensive Development”) has been prepared, following extensive community consultation, and subsequently endorsed by TDBC.

The application site is being promoted by PMAM on behalf of the landowners alongside land at West Staplegrove (“Staplegrove West”), which is in the control of Ptarmigan Land Limited (“Ptarmigan”) (see image to the right for ownership boundaries). Staplegrove West is the subject of a separate planning application. However, it should be noted that PMAM and Ptarmigan have worked closely in the development of both sites (Staplegrove East and Staplegrove West), to ensure that a sustainable, balanced and coordinated solution is presented for development at Staplegrove. The Proposed Development in combination with Staplegrove West make up the Comprehensive Development.

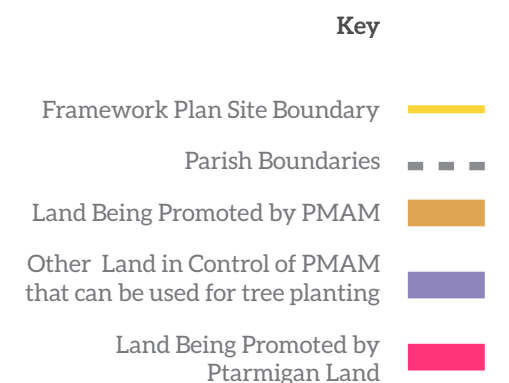
Land between Manor Road, the A358 Greenway Road and Gipsy Lane comprises part of a Green Wedge that the Core Strategy proposes to extend north and which effectively creates separation between Staplegrove East and Staplegrove West; the land safeguarded as Green Wedge falls within the Application Site.

The Core Strategy Key Diagram also proposes a new road, which is to traverse the Comprehensive Development land, between the A358 Staplegrove Road and Kingston Road. For the purposes of this DAS, the new road is termed the ‘Spine Road’.

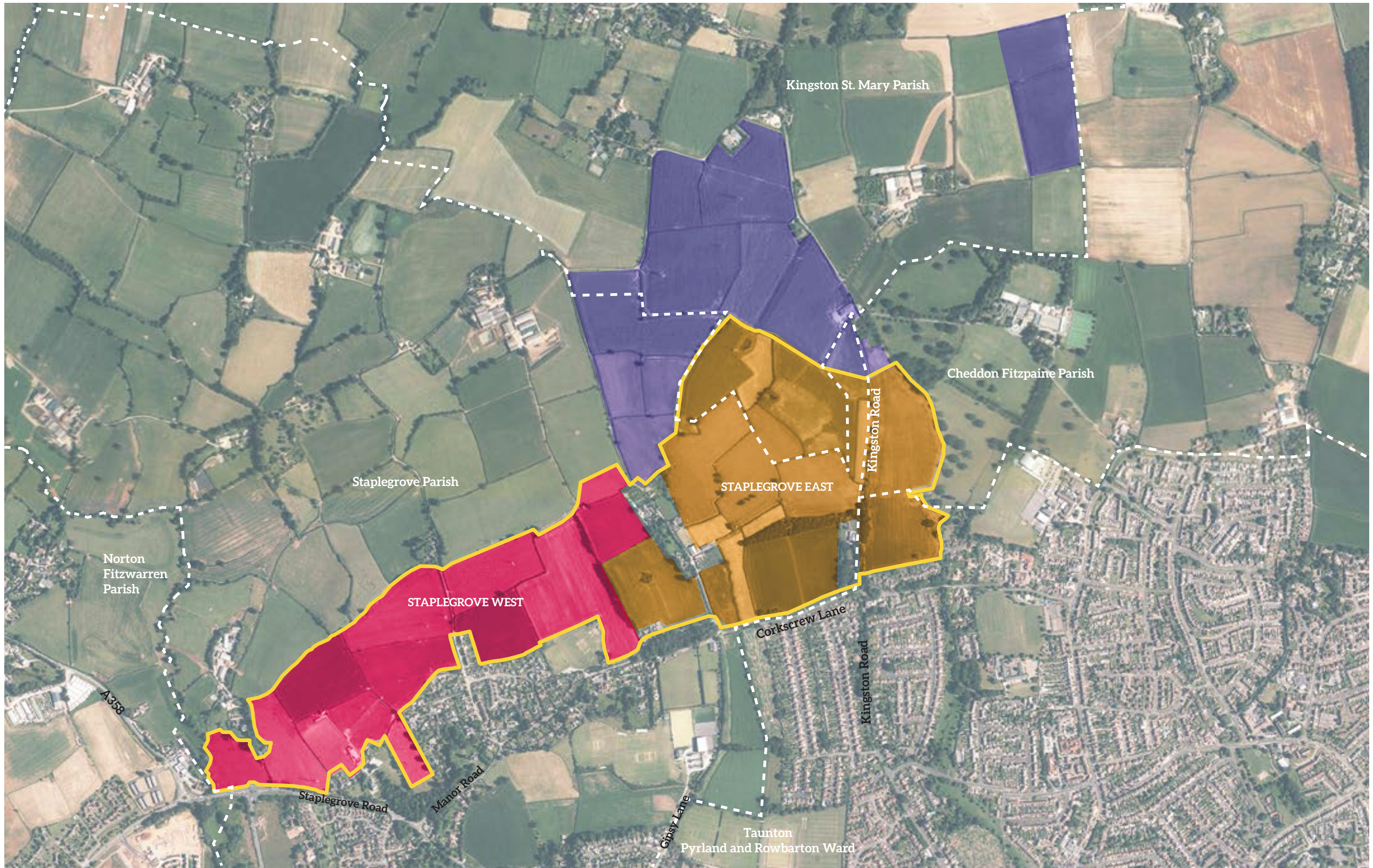
### Staplegrove West

Ptarmigan has submitted an outline planning application for a mixed use urban development comprising up to 713 dwellings including affordable housing, 1ha of employment, appropriate infrastructure and public open space on land at Staplegrove West (reference 34/16/0007).

Outline permission (with all matters reserved except for access) for a residential, mixed-use urban extension to include up to 715 dwellings, 1ha of employment land (Use Classes B1(b), B1(c), B2 and B8) together with green infrastructure, landscaping, play areas, sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) and associated works. An internal spine road is proposed to connect the A358 Staplegrove Road and Taunton Road (Kingston Road).







The site, ownership and parish boundaries





## 1.3 Development Overview and Vision

The vision for this application is to provide a high quality, landscaped development. To achieve this vision the proposed development includes:

- 915 homes
- A two-form primary school
- A local centre, which could include shops, community uses and other amenities
- Employment
- A wide variety of public open spaces and green infrastructure
- Improved connections and linkages

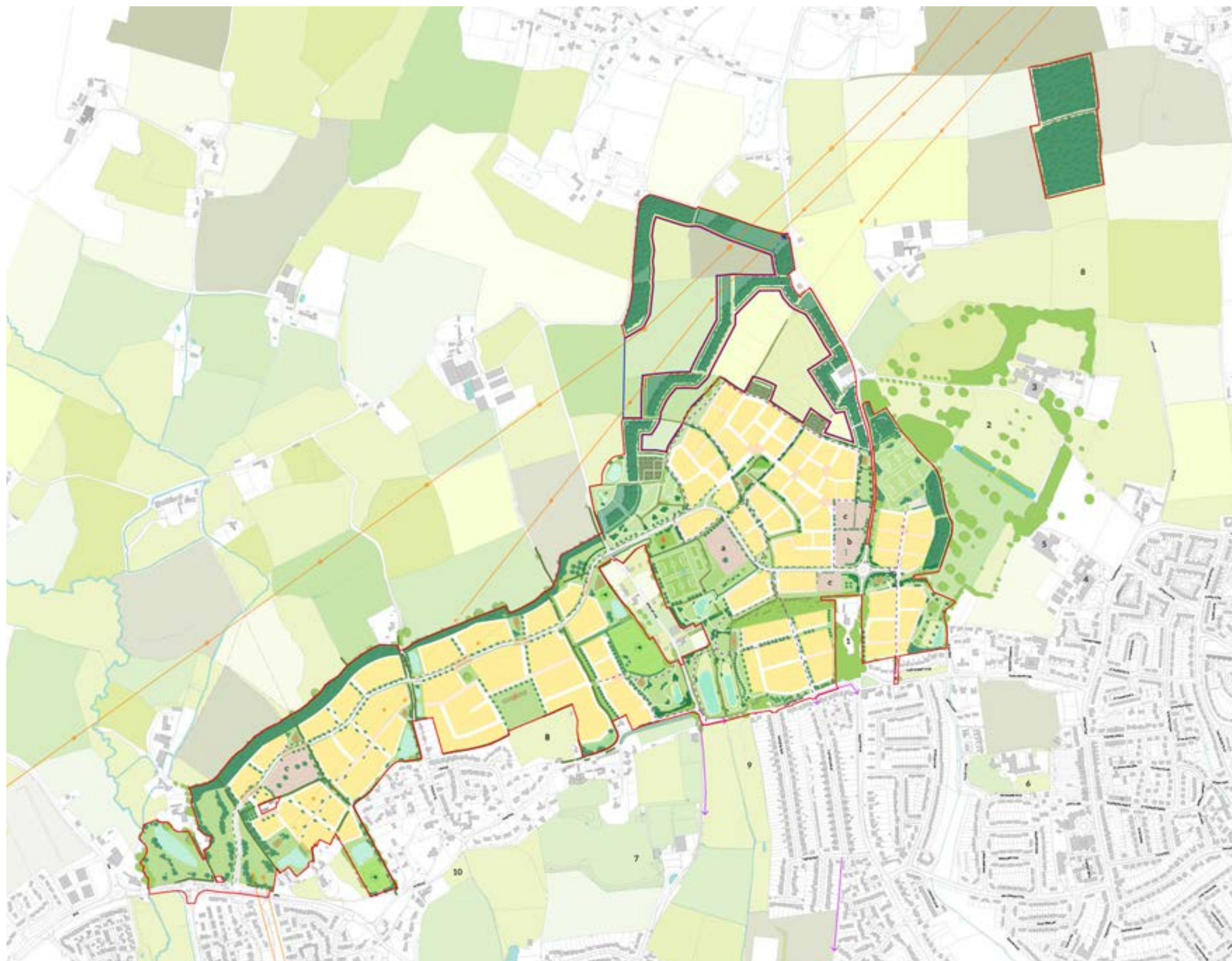
The scheme will be designed to encourage more sustainable lifestyle decisions including walking, cycling and the use of public transport. The strategy of providing local amenities and facilities, as well as a wide network of public open space, will encourage a sustainable development that remains attractive to residents, visitors and the wider community.

The following factors will be promoted to ensure a successful mixed use scheme is achieved. These include:

- **A Distinctive Place:** Creating an environment that has its own sense of identity whilst retaining positive characteristics of the local environment. Making a place that people can understand and negotiate with ease.
- **Permeability:** Creating sustainable connections within the development and to the wider area.
- **Sustainable Transport:** Encouraging walking and cycling and making public transport widely available. Designed to reduce resource consumption and promote the use of environmentally friendly materials.
- **Landscape Enhancement:** Safeguarding and enhancing the existing landscape framework and mitigating the impact upon existing wildlife. Sustainable drainage designed to blend with the existing landscape features.

The vision will be achieved by meeting the following aims:

- The creation of a sustainable environment for living with a mix of residential accommodation to reinforce a diverse and vibrant community.
- A sustainable development which responds to best practice and current Building Regulations to minimise energy use, sustainably manage water, responsibly source materials and manage waste and ecology.
- A place with a varied character that responds to the local vernacular and built context in a contemporary way to provide a distinctive sense of place.
- Use of the strong existing landscape framework including trees and hedgerows form the basis for a green infrastructure led masterplan that shapes the morphology of the scheme and results in a scheme that responds to and integrates with the landscape context.
- A development which preserves and enhances biodiversity by retaining natural features on the site, reinforcing them by creating opportunities for new habitat areas.



- Key**
- Site boundary —
  - Other land in ownership boundary —
  - Residential development parcels
  - Shared surface urban spaces
  - Indicative active frontages
  - Existing trees to be retained ●
  - Existing hedgerows to be retained —
  - Open space
  - Strategic northern tree belt - bat mitigation and visual screening
  - Proposed orchard planting
  - Proposed shrub planting
  - Proposed hedgerow —
  - New tree planting ●
  - Attenuation ponds
  - Proposed allotments
  - Equipped areas of play / youth activity areas ⊗
  - Proposed playing pitches
  - Spine road —
  - Proposed strategic pedestrians routes - - -
  - Existing Public Rights of Way (PROW) - - -
  - Existing power lines —
  - Existing pylons
  - Power lines grounded - - -
  - School a
  - Local centre b
  - Employment c

Illustrative masterplan showing the comprehensive development



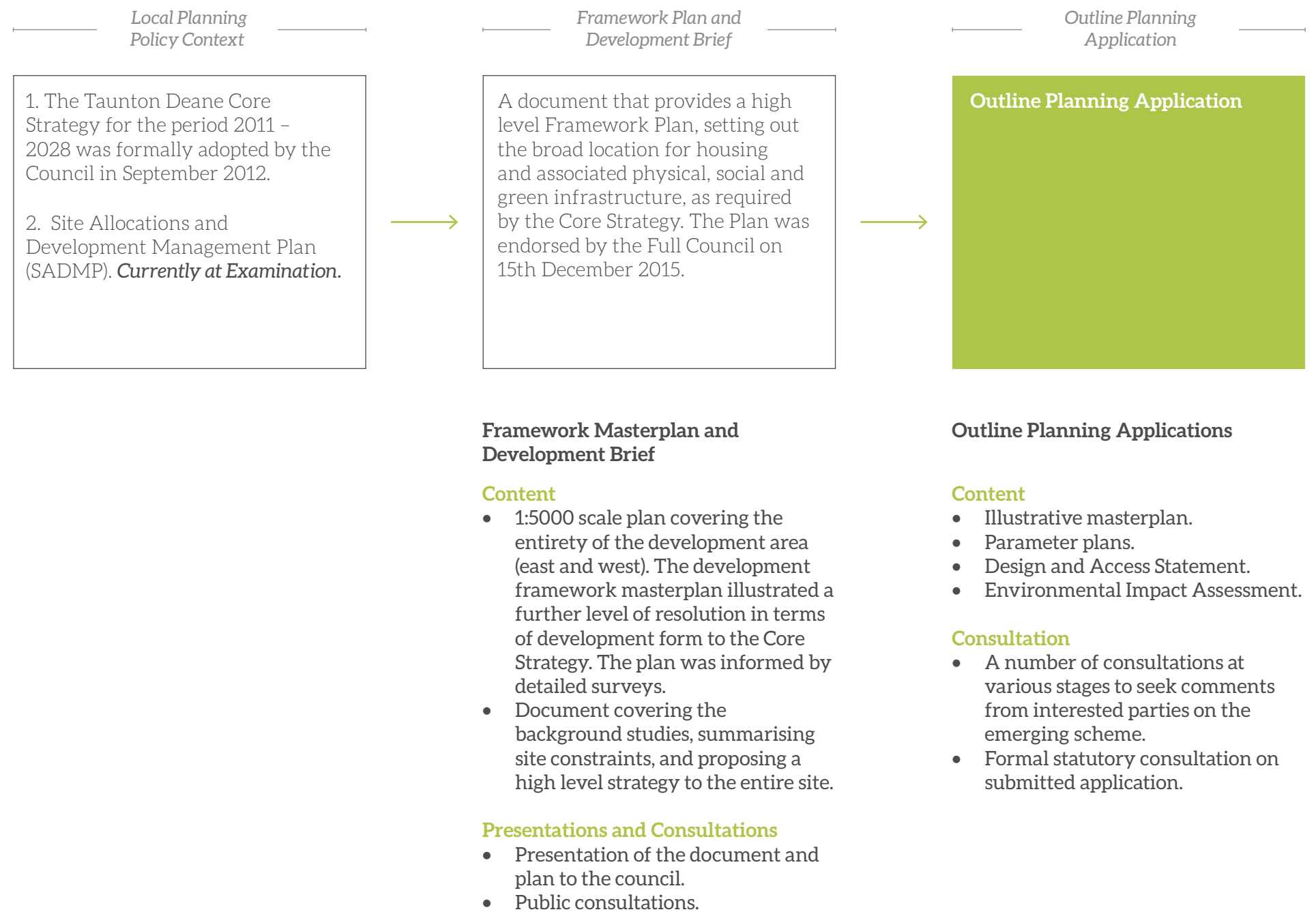


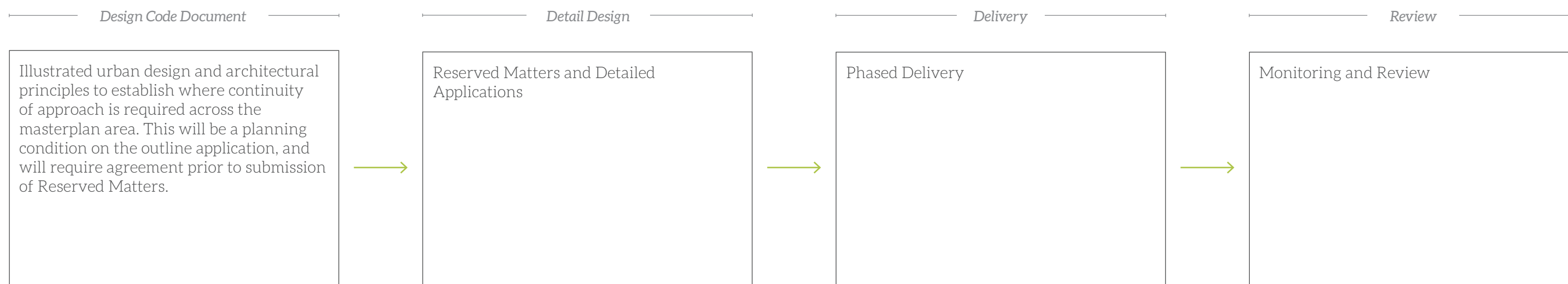
## 1.4 Design Process

A clear design process that ensures continuity, a comprehensive approach to design, and a focus upon quality, is an important pre requisite of ensuring that a successful neighbourhood is designed and built. This will require attention and flexibility throughout the period of delivery.

The design process outlined here proposes an approach for achieving these objectives and therefore a better foundation for securing a successful new place.

The preparation of more detailed design information comprising urban design and architectural principles prior to the submission of detailed proposals will ensure that there is a consistent approach to the design of key structuring elements across the masterplan area. These elements will build upon the principles established in this document and come together to shape the overall character and appearance of the area. The detailed design information referred to above will not necessarily restrict variety, if it is felt to be appropriate, but will ensure that the area feels like an integrated community.





**Urban Design and Architectural Principles**

**Illustrative content**

- Character analysis and identification of character areas.
- Reinforcing the structure.
- Block types and principles, parking, boundaries, public realm codes for character areas, architectural guidelines.

**Reserved Matters and Full Planning Application**

**Content**

- Detailed design in accordance with Taunton Deane validation requirements.
- Demonstration of compliance with policy, outline planning application, and the urban design and architectural principles.

**Consultation**

- Planning application consultation.

**Phased Delivery**

To be developed in a number of phases in accordance with agreed phasing programme and delivery of community and transport infrastructure.

**Monitoring and Review**

Review effectiveness of design process to ensure that successful built development is being achieved. Adapt guidance as appropriate and in accordance with changing circumstances.

## 1.5 Planning Background

The Taunton Deane Core Strategy for the period 2011 – 2028 was formally adopted by the Council in September 2012. It sets out a vision for Taunton Deane and strategic objectives, spatial strategy and policies for meeting that vision. It also reflects the strategic objectives of the ‘Sustainable Community Strategy’ as well as national planning policy.

The Plan specifies the locations and quantity of growth to be accommodated within the Borough up to 2028 and identifies strategic site allocations, including mixed-use urban extensions, along with broad locations for growth where the actual extent of development had yet to be determined. As detailed on page 5, the Core Strategy identifies Staplegrove as a broad location for a mixed-use urban extension of between 500 – 1,500 dwellings. Within the explanatory text, the policy sets out that a new local centre, primary school, community hall, doctor’s surgery, affordable housing, employment opportunities and improved bus, cycle and pedestrian facilities are also to be provided. A Masterplan will need to be prepared to co-ordinate the development and ensure it provides the necessary physical, social and green infrastructure required.

The development areas are proposed to be accessed by a new road from Staplegrove Road to Kingston Road, which would provide an alternative route to enable the reduction of through traffic on Manor Road and environmental enhancement of Staplegrove Village Conservation Area.

### Taunton Deane Borough Council Site Allocations

Following the adoption of the Core Strategy, TDBC has commenced work on a new Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP). The SADMP document will form part of the Council’s suite of statutory plans which comprise the basis for determining planning applications across Taunton Deane. The SADMP is now at an advanced stage, with the Examination sessions now complete. The Council are awaiting the Examiner’s Report.

Draft policy TAU2 sets out the detailed requirements for the Staplegrove allocation.



Taunton Deane site allocations and development management plan preferred option for Staplegrove





## 1.6 Site Allocation and Development Management Plan (SADMP)

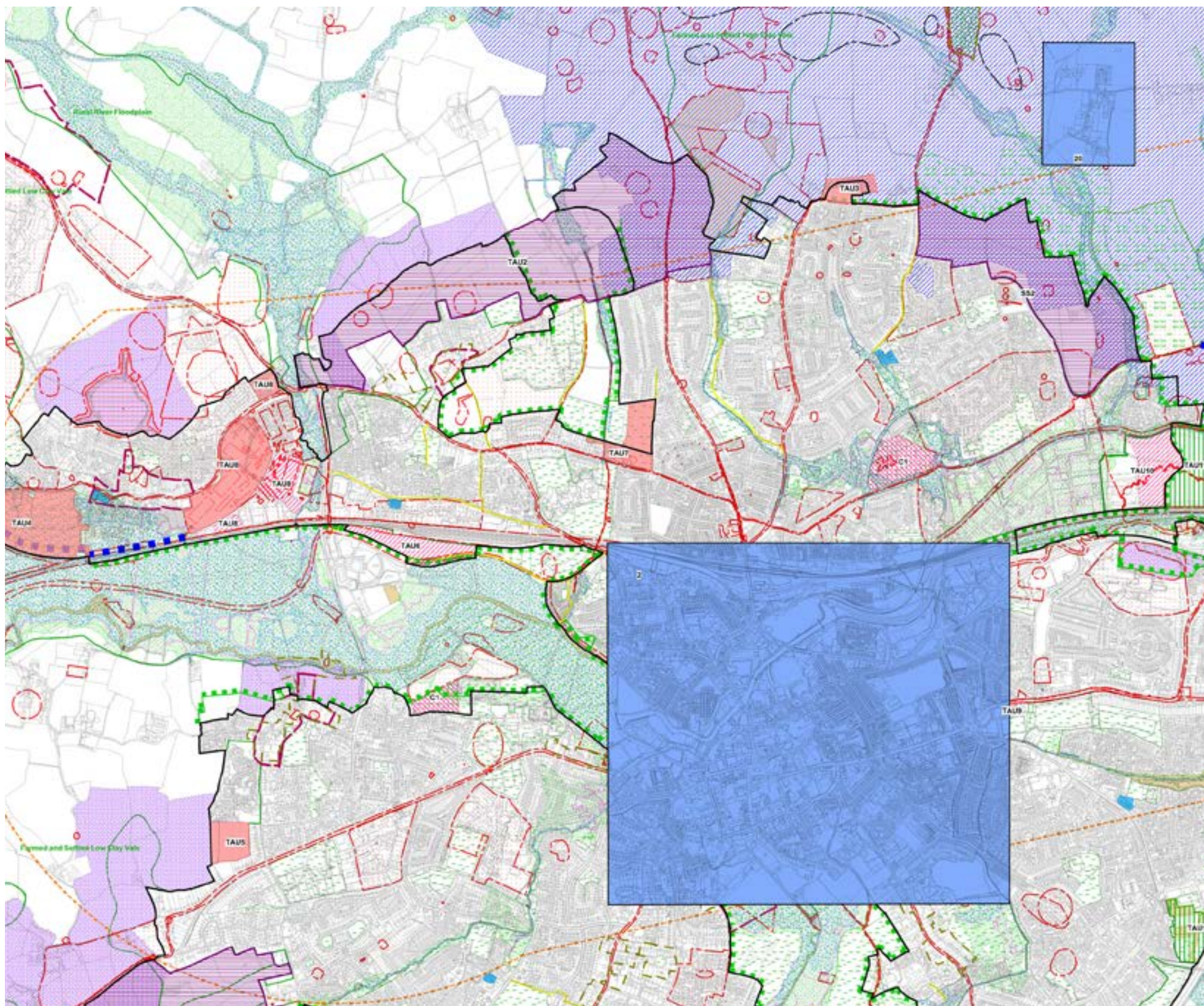
### Taunton Deane Borough Council, Draft Site Allocations and Development Management Plan

Policy TAU2: Staplegrove

Within the area identified on the Proposals Map at Staplegrove, new neighbourhoods will be delivered. A comprehensive and coordinated approach to development will be required. Any planning application will need to be accompanied by a masterplan and phasing strategy with associated infrastructure, prepared by the developers in conjunction with the Borough Council and other stakeholders. The masterplan and phasing strategy should include:

- Phased delivery of around 1,500 new homes at a net density of 35-40 dwellings per hectare;
- Affordable housing at 25% of total provision in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CP4: Housing;
- A new mixed-use local centre at the intersection of radial and orbital routes adjacent to Kingston Road, comprising a convenience store (A1) of up to 500m<sup>2</sup> (gross); 500 m<sup>2</sup> of other convenience retailing (A1), financial/professional services (A2), restaurants and cafés (A3); at least one public house (A4), takeaway (Class A5) and a community hall building (comprising of main hall, storage, kitchen, toilets) and associated parking, together with 0.25ha of land for a place of worship. Residential or office uses should be provided on upper floors;
- A minimum of 2 hectares of serviced employment land comprising Class B1 b and c., Class B2 and Class B8 use;
- A 2.5ha site for a 14-class, 2-form intake primary school with pre-school facilities;
- An extension of the existing Green Wedge on either side of Mill Lease Stream, between Corkscrew Lane and the open countryside north of the existing 132kV power lines;
- Multi-functional green space (including; allotments, children's play, playing fields, recreational areas, amenity space) in line with the relevant standards;
- Diversion of or placing underground the existing 33kV power lines between the A358 and Rectory Road;
- Strategic SUDS infrastructure;
- A new Northern Link Road extending from the Silk Mills Road roundabout on the A358 to Kingston Road, with provision for a future eastern extension around North Taunton;
- Closure of Corkscrew Lane and Manor Road, other than for local access.
- Design and travel planning measures to achieve a significant shift to more sustainable forms of transport including, within residential areas, a maximum 20mph design speed and shared surface streets;
- Provision of connected streets designed to be suitable for cycling and walking and, where appropriate, additional measures to ensure that cycling and walking are safe and attractive means of transport;
- Good cycle connections to existing cycle routes, in particular towards the town centre via Gypsy Lane, Clifford Avenue/ The Uppers, Bindon Road, and along the route of the Northern Distributor Road;
- Provision of direct and safe walking routes to access existing bus services on the A358 and Kingston Road, and allowance for future provision of new local bus services within the development;
- Sensitive incorporation of the route of the West Deane Way;
- Protection of the Rag Hill special landscape feature by not allowing built development to break the skyline;
- Off-site woodland planting in accordance with the Hestercombe House SAC Appropriate Assessment to mitigate the impact of the development on Lesser Horseshoe bats. The off-site habitat should be functional prior to the commencement of any development;
- Landscape buffers and planting belts, including a belt along the outer edges of the development areas, facing bat activity from Hestercombe SAC;
- Provision of public access to enhanced parkland south of the former Pyrland Hall;
- Detailed design codes prepared for individual areas within the development.





**Key**

Taunton Deane District Boundary	
Settlement Limits SP1, SB1	
Housing/ Housing-Led Allocation	
Employment Land Allocation	
Mixed Use Allocation	
Proposed Road	
Area Reserved for Green Spaces	
Conservation Areas	
Green Wedge	
Proposed Cycle Route	
Bat Consultation Zone Hestercombe House SAC	
Recreation Space	
Area of High Archaeological Potential	
County Archaeological Sites	
Local Wildlife Sites	
Special Landscape Features	
Flood Zone 3b	
Flood Zone 3a	
Flood Zone 2	

SADMP Inset Map 1 Taunton, Taunton Deane Borough Council





## 1.7 The Site Boundary

### Two Development Scenarios

The Environmental Statement which is submitted as part of the Outline Planning Application considers two development scenarios:

- The Comprehensive Development, comprising Staplegrove East and Staplegrove West; and
- Without Staplegrove West, comprising Staplegrove East, but excluding the proposed mixed use development at Staplegrove West.

This Design and Access Statement will present the design concepts and strategies for Staplegrove East only, but the assessment of the site will include the site boundary of the comprehensive development.

### The Framework Plan Boundary and the Application Boundary

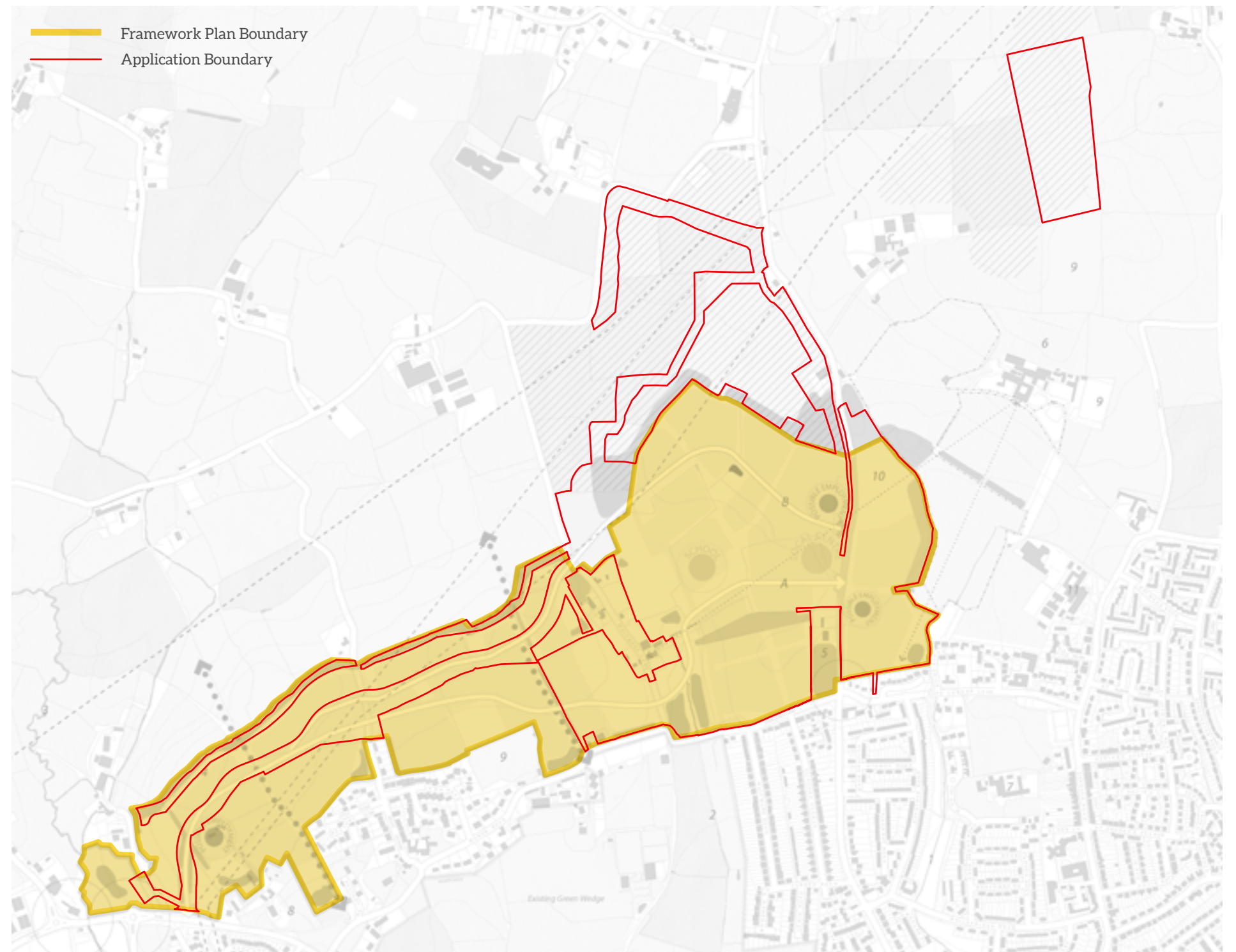
The Framework Plan boundary is shown on the opposite page. This plan shows a boundary which includes a similar but more informed boundary to the SADMP boundary. Required tree planting for the bat mitigation is shown as green to the north of the boundary.

The application boundary is slightly altered to this in order to include the tree planting areas. The development areas have not increased, they remain within the Framework Plan boundary.

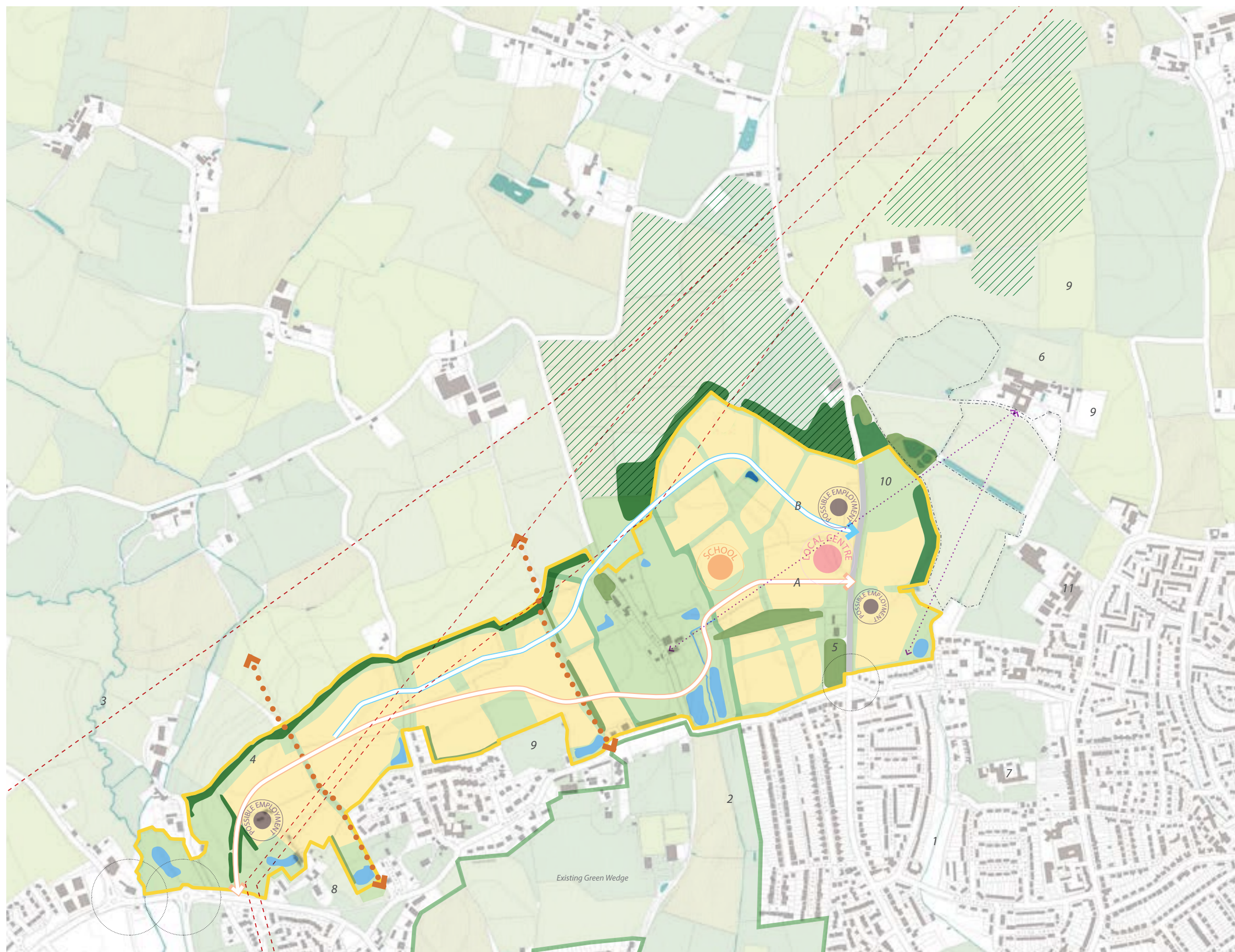
The application boundary also excludes the Staplegrove West proposal, but includes the whole length of the Spine Road, any mitigation planting required for the Spine Road on the west, and the tree planting proposed as part of Staplegrove West.

The diagram to the right shows the difference between the two boundaries, the yellow being the Framework Plan boundary and the red being the Application boundary.

For the purpose of the analysis diagrams in Sections 2, 3, 4 and 5, the Framework Plan boundary will be used.







- Boundaries**
- Framework Plan Boundary
  - Pyrland Estate Local Wildlife Site
- Constraints**
- Interesting Views
  - Existing Power Lines - Some of which will be grounded
- Proposed Development**
- Proposed Development Areas
  - Proposed Main Road Option A
  - Proposed Main Road Option B
  - Existing PROWs
  - Future Mitigation works to be confirmed
- Existing Landscape Features**
- Existing Tree Belt
  - Existing Pond
- Proposed Landscape Features**
- Proposed Tree Belt
  - Proposed Green Space
  - Indicative Location for Tree Planting/ Bat Mitigation and Landscape Integration
  - Proposed Pond
  - Green Wedge (extent to be confirmed)
- Location List**
- 1 Kingston Stream
  - 2 Mill Lease Stream
  - 3 Back Stream
  - 4 Rag Hill
  - 5 Okehills
  - 6 King's Hall School
  - 7 Wellsprings Primary School
  - 8 Staplegrove House
  - 9 Existing Sports Field
  - 10 Proposed Sports Field
  - 11 Taunton Academy

Framework Plan, September 2015





## 1.8 Development Principles

The development proposals will reflect current government guidance on creating high quality development and improving the design quality of the urban environment and in particular draw upon guidance within the following documents:

- National Planning Policy Framework (2012)
- National Planning Practice Guidelines
- Taunton Deane Core Strategy (2012)
- Taunton Deane Local Plan (saved policies) (2004)
- Emerging Taunton Deane SADMP (2015)
- By Design (2000) CABE
- Manual for Streets (2007)
- Manual for Streets 2 (2010)
- Car Parking - What Works Where, English Partnerships (2006)
- Building for Life 12 (2015)
- Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play (2008) FIT
- Urban Design Compendium 1 and 2, Homes and Communities Agency (2013)
- Building Bulletin 99: Briefing Framework for Primary School Projects, DfES

The above documents set out objectives to create sustainable and well-designed efficient development, planned to respond positively to its context and promote environmentally friendly activity patterns. To this end an opportunity exists to produce a unique proposal. The scheme must respect its setting and strive for quality in design of the built environment. Design of the public realm will be paramount, creating a sense of place that reinforces civic pride and promotes a community spirit.

The principal points to be achieved in meeting these objectives are:

- 1. Identity:** Creating an environment that has its own sense of identity whilst retaining positive characteristics of its local environment.
- 2. Legibility:** Making a place that people can understand and negotiate with ease.
- 3. Permeability:** Creating sustainable connections within the development and to the wider area.
- 4. Sustainable Transport:** Encouraging walking and cycling and making public transport widely available to reduce social exclusion.
- 5. Energy Conservation:** Settlement designed to reduce resource consumption and promote the use of environmentally friendly materials.
- 6. Landscape Enhancement:** Safeguarding and enhancing the existing landscape framework and mitigating the impact upon existing wildlife.
- 7. Sustainable Drainage:** Provision of SUDS features designed to blend in with the existing landscape features.
- 8. Green Infrastructure:** Retention of landscape features and functions, retention and enhancement of ecological habitats, integration of access functions and SUDS.

How these principles have been addressed will be demonstrated in the Reserved Matters Design Proposals.





The design was informed by guidance set out within various documents.





# 2.0 Assessment

*This section analyses the physical, social and economic policy context. Both the immediate surroundings and the wider context are considered. This section also evaluates the technical information from the site and the constraints and opportunities are identified.*

2.1 Location

2.2 Historic Context

2.3 Landscape Context

2.4 Movement and Access

2.5 Facilities and Amenities

2.6 Site Photographs

2.7 Site Analysis

2.8 Assessment Summary

## 2.1 Location

### The Site

The site encompasses parts of three parishes and one ward on the northern edge of Taunton in Somerset: Staplegrove Parish; Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish; Kingston St Mary Parish; and Taunton, Pyrland and Rowbarton Ward. These straddle the southern aprons of the Quantock Hills overlooking the broad valley of the River Tone that meanders west-east through the centre of Taunton towards its confluence with the River Parrett near Bridgwater.

Taunton Town Centre is located approximately 2.5km from the site, and the railway station is located approximately 1.5km (about an 18 minute walk) from the site.

The site is bounded by Dodhill Road in the north; to the east is the parkland of Pyrland Estate where Pyrland Hall, now King's Hall School, a Grade II\* Listed building sits; winding lanes including Hope Corner Lane and Corkscrew Lane to the south; and in part a public footpath to the west. The Staplegrove West site lies immediately to the west.

Kingston Road traverses the eastern area of the Application Site, running in a broadly north-south alignment. Whitmore Lane traverses the western area, also following a broadly north-south alignment.

The site is located on agricultural land comprising irregularly shaped and sized fields that are generally enclosed by mature hedgerows, hedgerow trees and woodland.

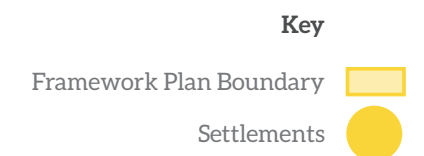
### Surrounding Context

The Taunton settlement boundary is located to the south of the site, and includes areas such as Whitmore Area and Staplegrove. A number of settlements surround Taunton including Kingston St. Mary located to the north of the site, and Cheddon Fitzpaine located to the east of the site.

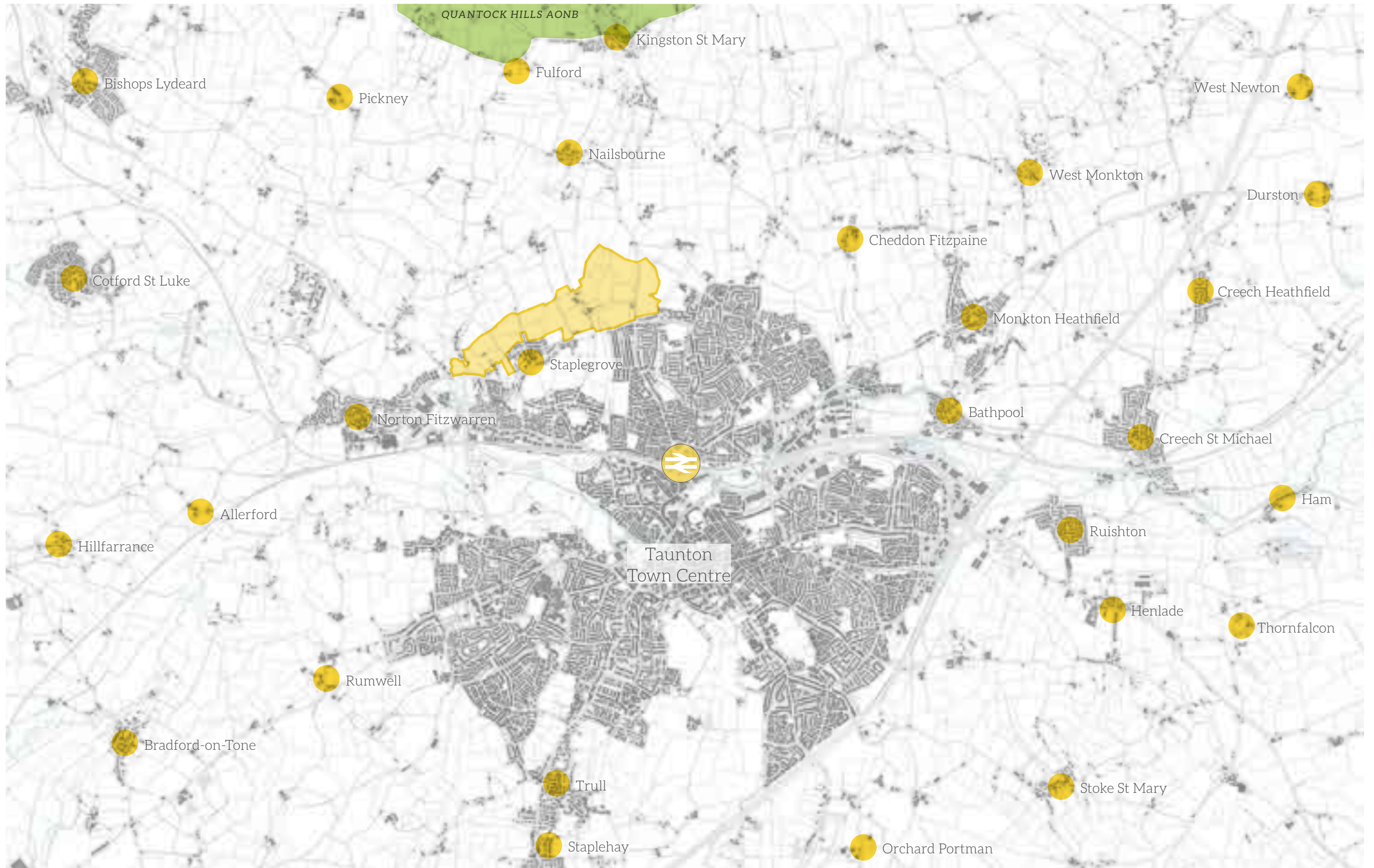
The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is located to the north.



Taunton town centre







The site and the surrounding



## 2.2 Historic Context

The historic growth pattern of the site and Taunton is shown through a series of plans on the opposite page. The diagrams show how Taunton has grown from the centre into almost three distinct directions, with strong divisions created by the green wedges.

The diagrams also show how Taunton has grown into the surrounding area of Staplegrove. The existing green wedge helps to keep a separation between the mass of Taunton and Staplegrove.

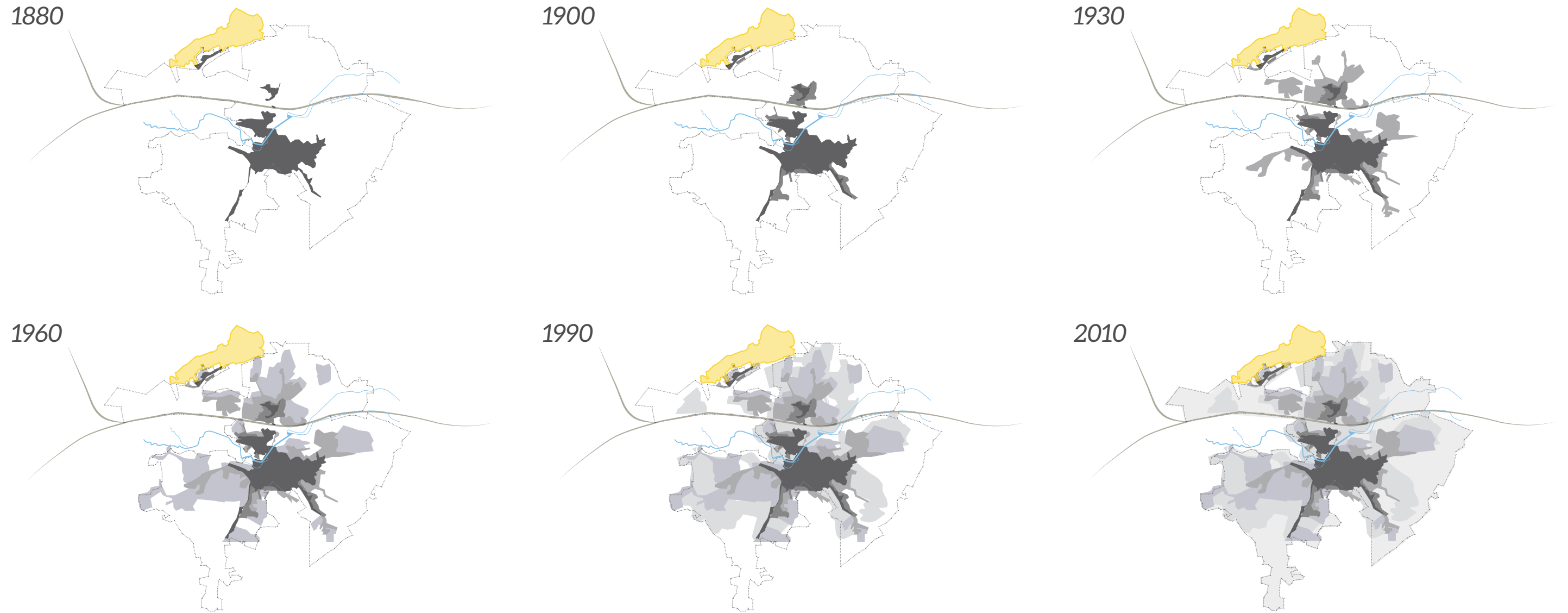
### Landscape History and Development of the Site

The present pattern of fields, drainage, buildings and highways was well established by c. 1839-41 and had probably been finalised by the end of the 17th century. It was created through the ad hoc clearance of woodland around the village of Staplegrove and homesteads such as Slapes and Staplegrove Mills, a process that had probably started in the later Middle Ages and ran in tandem with the rationalisation of the natural drainage system and the excavation of ponds to act as sumps, some of which had been in-filled by the mid 20th century. Those homesteads were connected by pedestrian tracks – holloways – the more heavily used of which became formalised as public highways by the mid 19th century. The cleared woodland was – and has been – used solely for arable and pastoral agriculture.

The most recent stage in the landscape’s evolution has been the establishment of extra-urban houses at Pyrland Hall in the mid 18th century, Okehills and Staplegrove House during the early 19th century and residential development extending northwards from Staplegrove and around Whitmore Farm during the 20th century. Of those, only Pyrland Hall was set within a formally designed landscape.



Timeline of Taunton’s growth and development



Pattern of Taunton's growth and development

**1842** Railway reaches Taunton.

**1901** Population: 19000 +  
Electric trams begin running.

**1935** Taunton is made the county town of Somerset.

**1975** A motorway is built past Taunton.

**2011** Population: 64,621



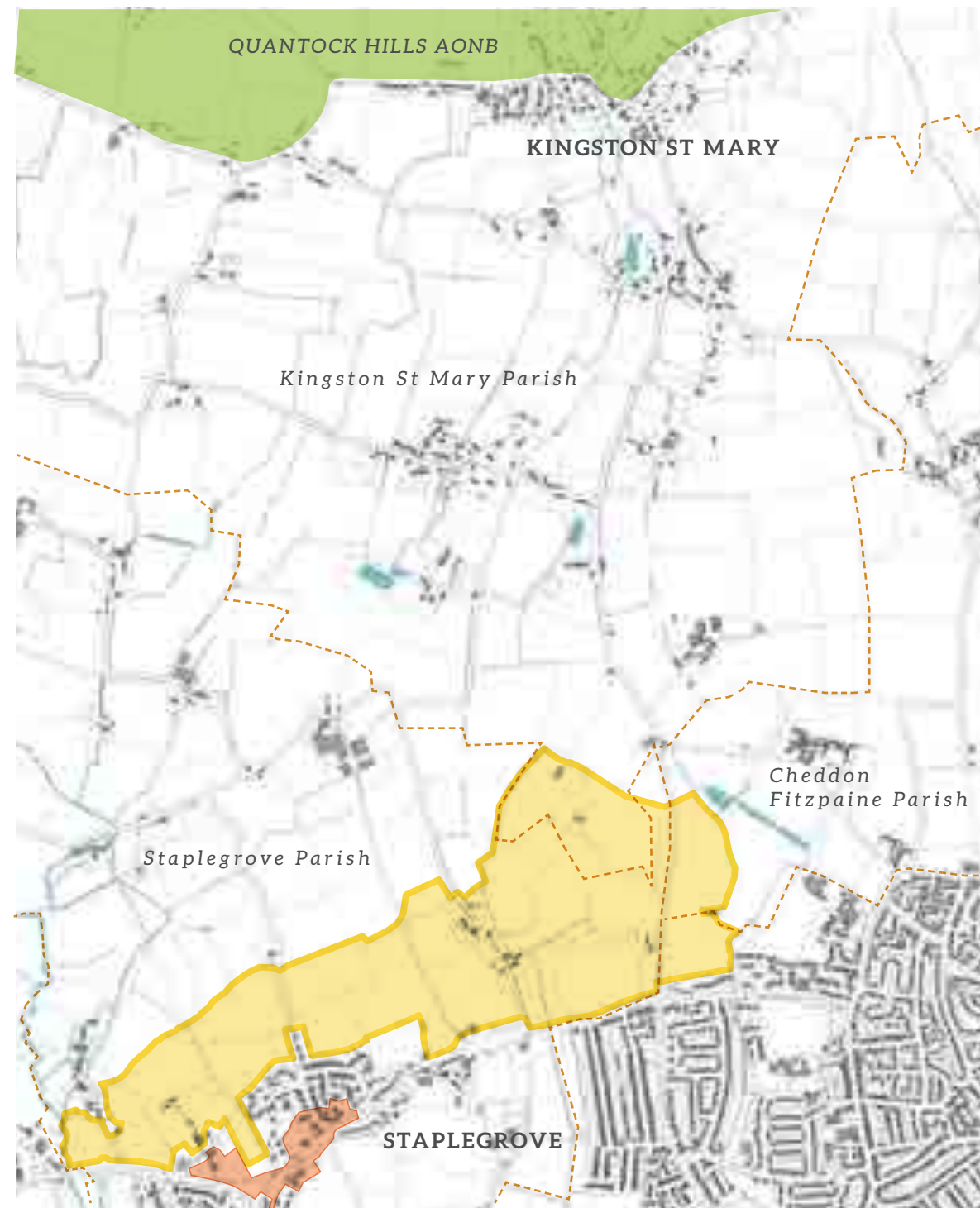


## 2.3 Landscape Context






Taunton is situated on the River Tone, between the Brendon, Quantock and the Blackdown Hills. It is located in the area known as the Vale of Taunton Deane.


### AONB

Taunton lies in between two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, The Blackdown Hills, and the Quantock Hills. The site at Staplegrove can be seen from the Quantock Hills AONB, therefore the design and layout of the proposed development is visually integrated with the receiving landscape through the use of the natural topography and the design and layout of the built form, tree belts and associated infrastructure.



The site in relation to the AONB

Key	
Framework Plan Boundary	
Site Boundary	
Parish Boundaries	
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	
Staplegrove Conservation Area	

Key (opposite page)	
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	



Surrounding Areas of Natural Beauty





## 2.4 Movement and Access

### Existing Vehicular Routes

The site is divided by three vehicular routes of varying size. To the east is Kingston Road, along the centre Whitmore Lane, and to the west is Rectory Road.

Along the southern boundary the site is bound by a network of winding roads as well as Staplegrove Village. These roads are (from the west to east), Staplegrove Road, Manor Road, Corkscrew Lane, and Hope Corner Lane.

Kingston Road to the east of the site, and Staplegrove Road to the west, connect the site to the town centre. Kingston Road also connects the site to Kingston St Mary to the north.

### Existing Bus Routes

First Somerset and Webberbus provide bus connections to Kingston St Mary, Taunton and other surrounding areas from near the site.

Service 18 is operated by Webberbus and services 25 and 28 are operated by First and serve the western part of the site. Service 1 operated by First, and services 23 and 23b operated by Hatch Green Coaches serve the eastern part of the site. Hatch Green Coaches also provide a school service (613) serving Bridgwater College from Staplegrove.

### Public Transport

Taunton railway station is located to the south of the site, near Taunton town centre. It is on the Bristol - Exeter line, the Reading - Exeter line, and the Cross-Country route. The West Somerset Railway (heritage railway), which used to be the route to Minehead, also runs from Taunton.

### Existing Pedestrian and Cycle Routes

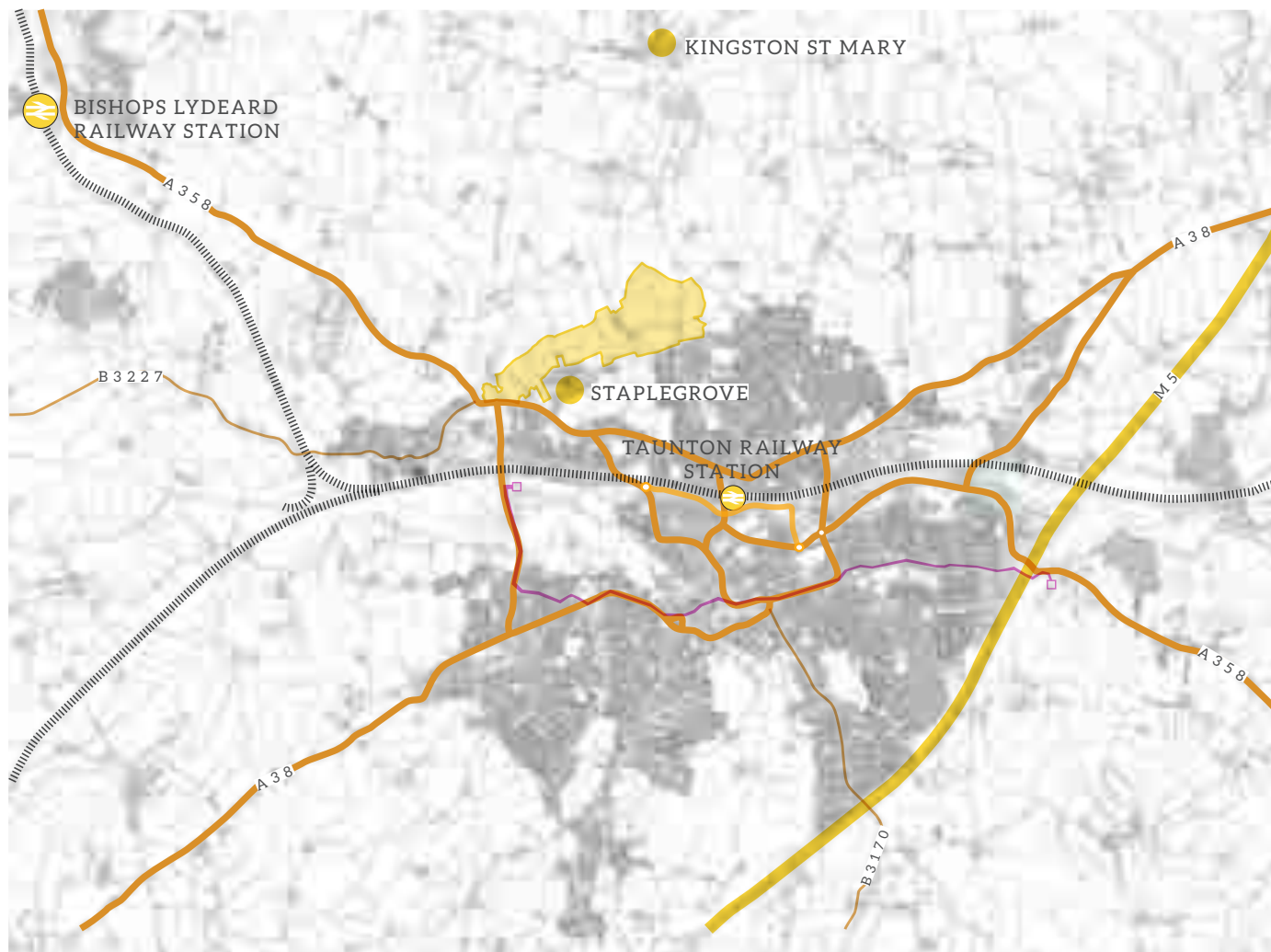
The site has a network of pedestrian footpaths running south-north. The West Deane Way is a 72km circular walk in the Vale of Taunton Deane. This Public Right of Way connects Taunton, surrounding areas and the Quantock Hills AONB. The site and its surroundings are not serviced by designated cycle paths.












*There are two public rights of way that cross the site, one of which is the West Deane Way*



*Kingston Road running through the eastern part of the site*











**Key**

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
|  Framework Plan Boundary |  Motorway |  Northern Inner Distributor Road (NIDR) |
|  Railway                 |  A Road   |  Park and Ride Route                    |
|  Railway Station         |  B Road   |  Park and Ride Terminal                 |

Main access routes - Taunton



**Key**

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|  Framework Plan Boundary |  Public Footpath |  Bus Route                       |
|  A Road                  |  Bus Stop        |  Route Number Servicing Bus Stop |
|  Road                    |   |  Bus Direction (One way Loop)    |

Main access routes - Staplegrove





## 2.5 Facilities and Amenities

Taunton has a wide range of facilities and amenities including retail, sports and leisure uses, healthcare, schools, community facilities etc. The site is connected to the town centre by Kingston Road.

The centre of Taunton is located about 2.5km from the proposed site. A wide variety of high street shops, restaurants, cafés, a library, and other facilities can be found in this location.

Taunton Railway Station is located approximately 1.5km from the site and provides links to surrounding cities including Bristol, Reading, and Exeter.

The site is located in close proximity to the existing green wedge which houses the Taunton Vale Sports Club. The proposal will connect to the existing green wedge through the proposed green wedge by a network of cycle and pedestrian routes.

Staplegrove Village has a number of facilities including a post-office, school, hospital and convenience store. The proposed Spine Road would connect the new development to Staplegrove and would allow access to these facilities.

### Retail

There are a number of large food stores in Taunton, including Sainsbury's, Morrisons, M&S and Lidl in the town centre. Out of centre stores include Tesco, Asda and a second Sainsbury's. The nearest foodstore to the site is the Morrisons on Deller's Wharf which is approximately 1.5km from the site.

There are a number of smaller convenience stores in closer proximity to the site including a Co-operative Food and a Tesco Express.

### Education

There are a number of primary schools located near the site including Wellsprings Primary School to the south-east, Staplegrove CoE Primary School to the south-west, and Kingston St. Mary CoE Primary School located approximately 2km north of the site. The Taunton Academy, a secondary school, is located to the east of the site. There are also two independent schools in close proximity to the site including King's Hall School, which sits within the Pyrland Estate to the east of the site, and Taunton School to the south of the site.

### Employment

The town centre has a wide range of employment uses.

### Healthcare

There are a number of health services, hospitals and clinics. The nearest, The Somerset Nuffield Hospital is around 2km from the site. The closest NHS hospital is Musgrove Park Hospital which is about 5km from the site.



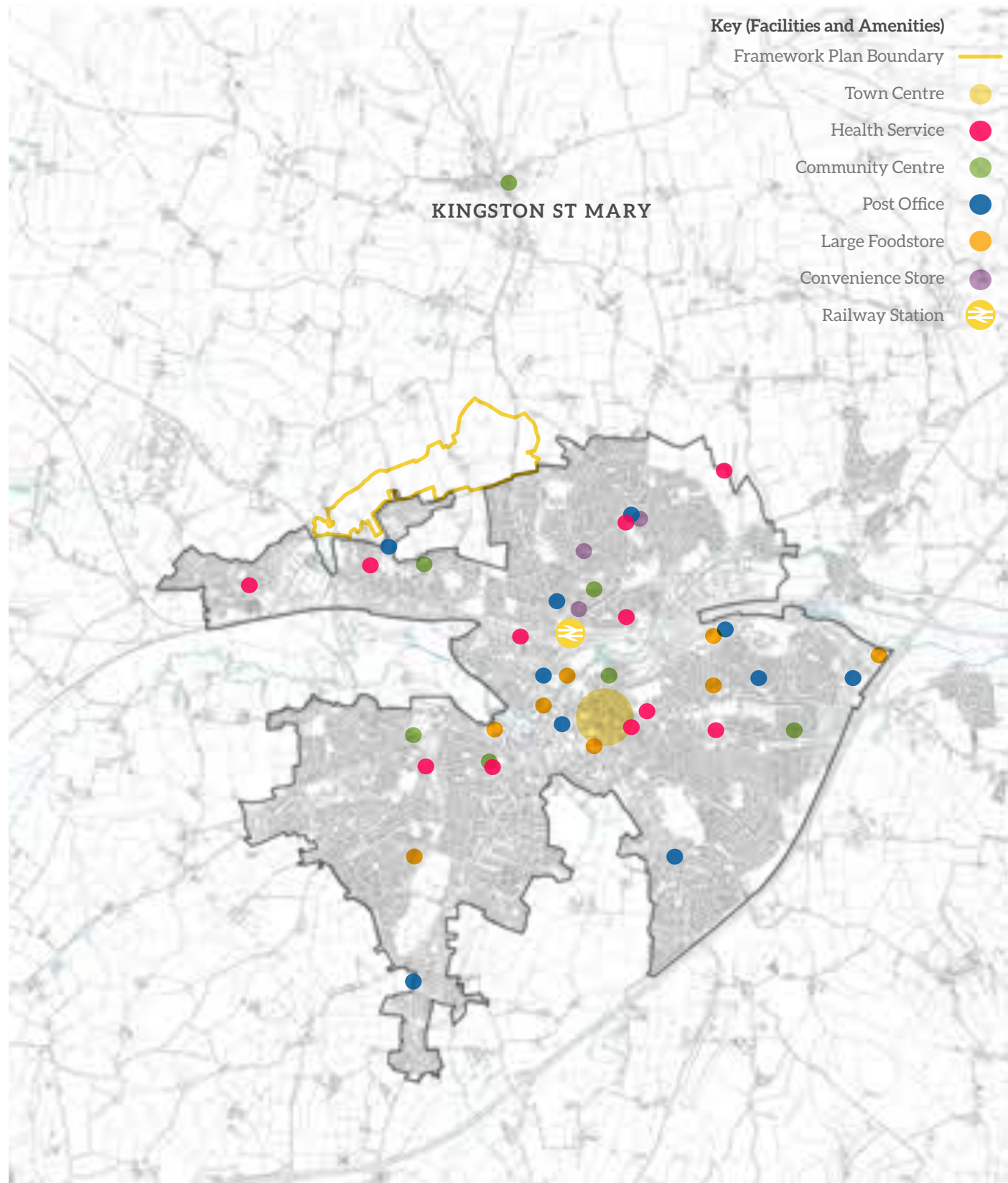
1 Taunton Academy



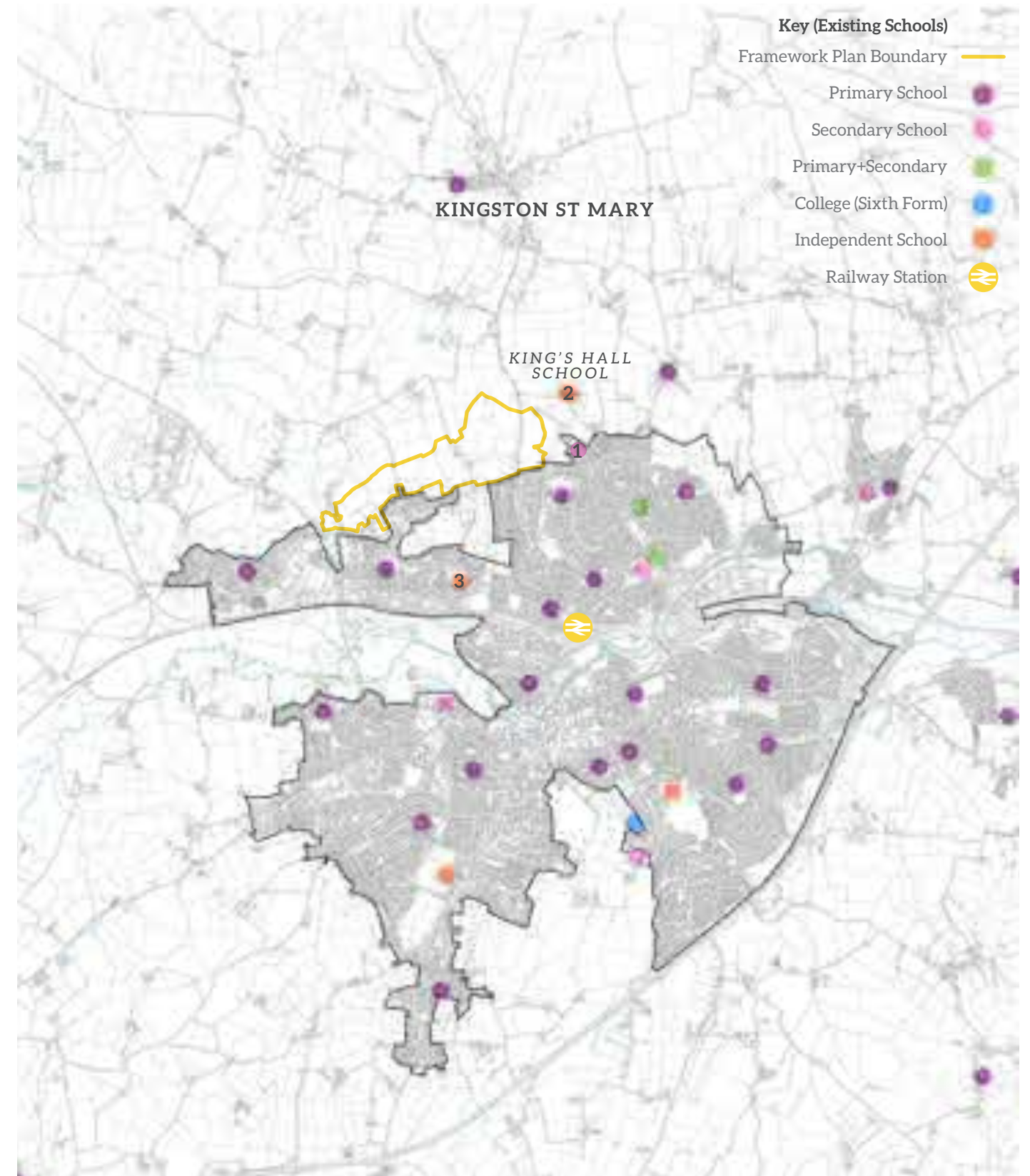
2 King's Hall School



3 Taunton School



Facilities and amenities - Taunton wide



Existing schools - Taunton wide







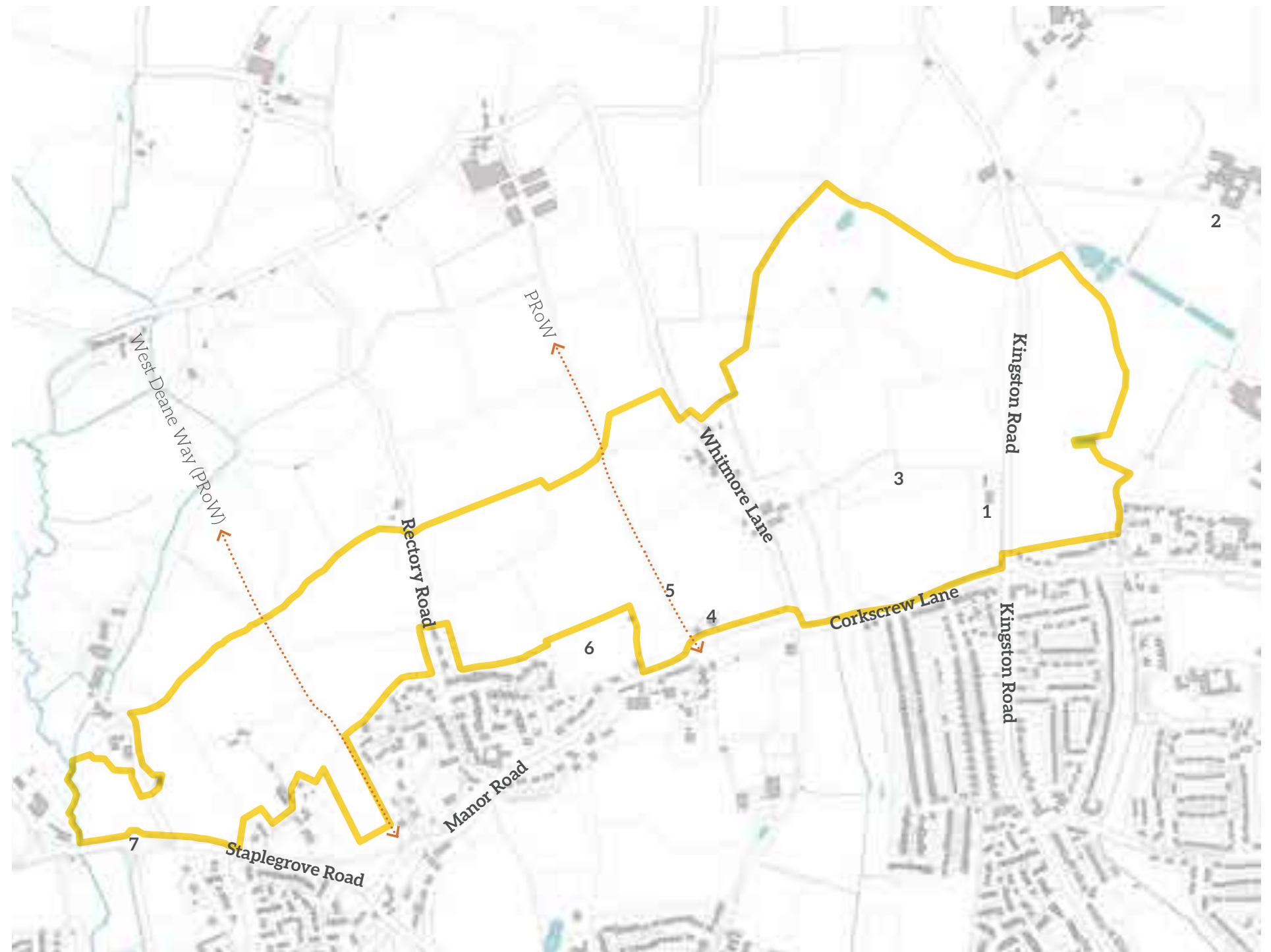
## 2.6 Site Photographs

The following section includes a number of key site photographs. This information identifies the variety of characteristics across the site including landscape, topography, existing infrastructure and buildings.

This section should be read in conjunction with the Nicholas Pearson Associates' visual impact assessment information that forms part of this application

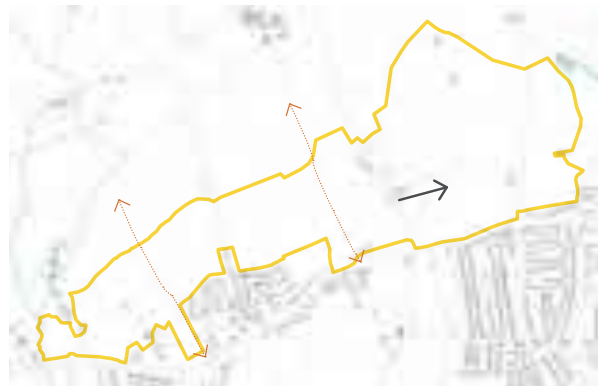
**Key**

-  Framework Plan boundary
-  PRoW
- 1. Okehills
- 2. Pyrland Estate
- 3. Tree belt within National Trust Ownership
- 4. Village World
- 5. Line of Poplars
- 6. Existing Sports Field
- 7. Silk Mills Roundabout

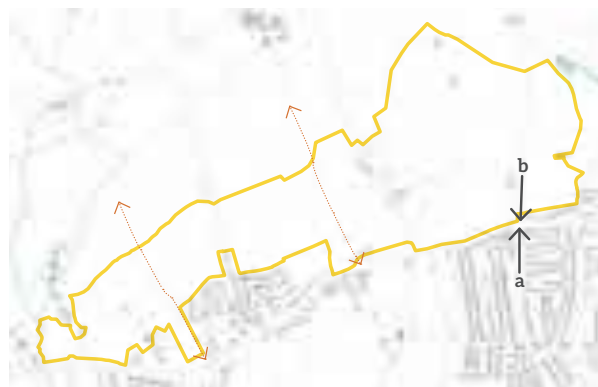


Surrounding roads and existing features

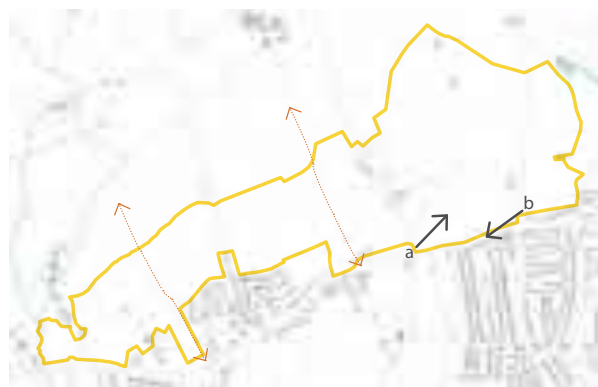




View from Whitmore Lane looking towards the tree belt within the site. The Pyrland Hall can be seen in the distance.



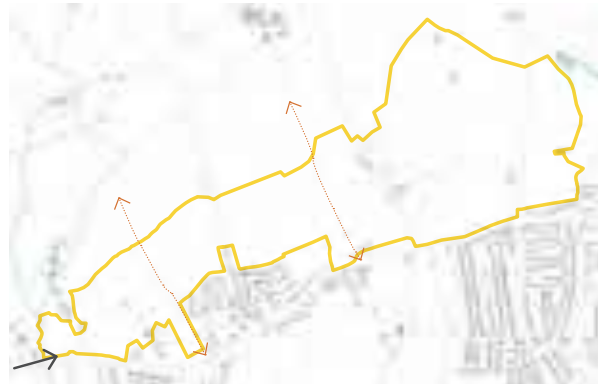
View A is looking along Kingston Road. View B is looking towards the Kingston Road/ Hope Corner junction. The Okehills boundary is to the right.



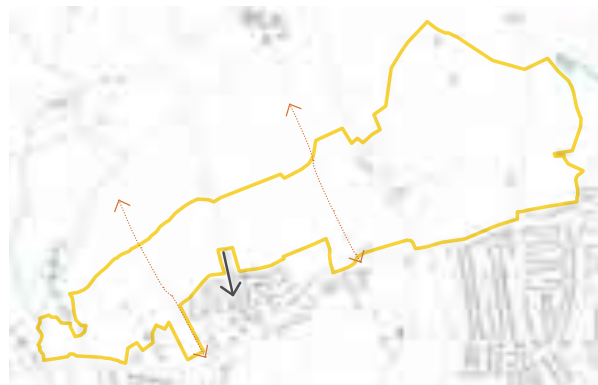
View A looks along Corkscrew Lane towards Okehills, with the site to the left and the existing allotments to the right. View B looks at the existing properties along Corkscrew Lane.



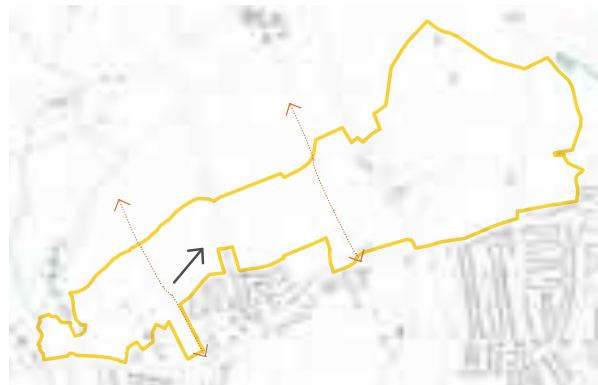
## 2.6 Site Photographs



The Silk Mills roundabout can be seen in this photo, with the existing pylons dominating the photo to the right. The site rises at the roundabout to the pylons. The change in level here is a constraint for the new junction.



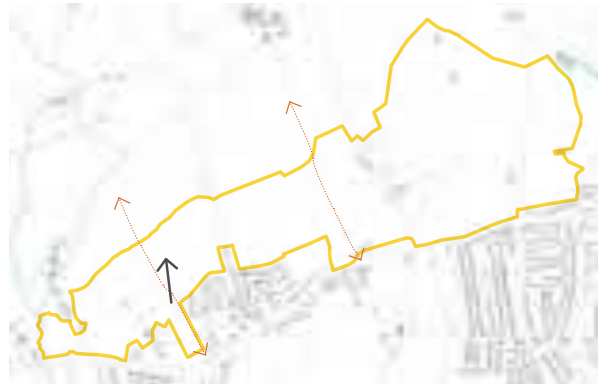
This view looks down Rectory Road, with the existing properties to the left, and the site boundary to the right defined by an existing hedge.



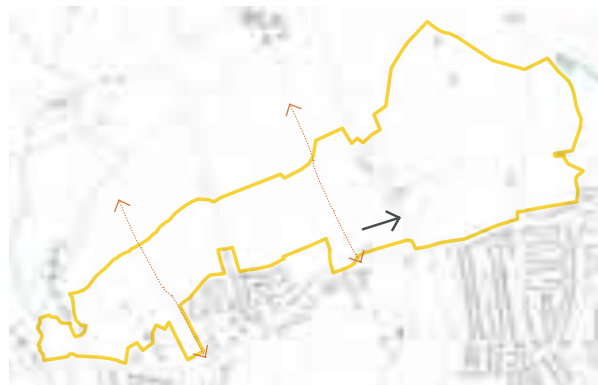
This view is from the existing West Deane Way and looks to the east. The existing pylons can be seen in the distance. Rectory Road transects the site and can be seen with the existing properties sitting along it.



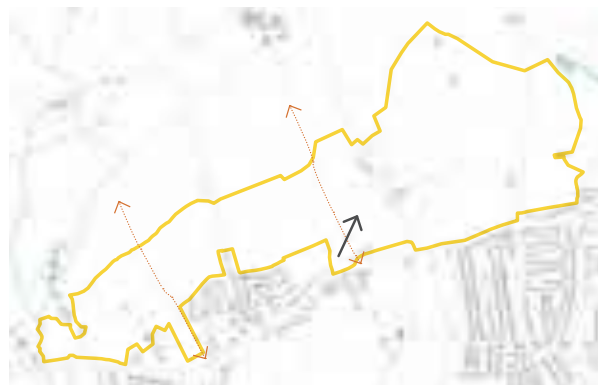




This view looks across the site towards the Quantocks, from West Deane Way. The existing properties along Rectory Road can be seen to the right.



This view is taking from Village World and looks across Whitmore Lane towards Okehills (which can be seen in the distance).



The line of Poplars can be seen in this image, with the PRoW next to them. To the left of the image is the boundary to the existing sports field.



## 2.7 Site Analysis

To identify the necessary infrastructure, the project team have looked in detail at existing and potential constraints and opportunities for the site.

As with any development, it is crucial that a thorough understanding of the site is obtained. This understanding then has to be balanced with the proposed uses. Following the undertaking of these processes, the opportunities for the site and subsequent realisation of the overall vision is achieved.

### Constraints

A summary plan of the constraints can be found on the opposite page.

By analysing the site information and reflecting on potential uses, the following items are considered as the primary constraints for the site:

#### 1. Highways and Access

Any buildings must have a clear and logical access that relates well to the existing and consented highways infrastructure.

#### 2. Visual Impact and Relationship to Existing Landscape

The visual impact of any development should be considered. Consideration needs to be given to views.

#### 3. Overhead Pylons

The pylons and overhead power lines are a large constraint to development on the western side. On the eastern site, the southern most power line constrains the site.

#### 4. Ecology

Careful consideration must be given to the existing environment and species on the site. Where possible, the existing biodiversity must be sustained and enhanced.

### Opportunities

Based on the constraints of the site and content of development, the following design opportunities exist:

#### 1. Green Wedge

The Green Wedge running from south to north through the site

#### 2. Connectivity

The provision of a new road running from west to east.

#### 3. Local Centre

The creation of a local centre with a mixed used activity which can also act as an employment hub.

#### 4. Two-form School

The provision of a school with facilities that are enhanced by the landscape.

#### 5. Improved Transport links

Provision of a new bus route as well as cycle and pedestrian routes that promote sustainable transport.

#### 6. Public Open Space

The provision of a variety of public open spaces for different activities

#### 7. Green Routes and Corridors

Green corridors running through the site act as connecting links.



*Veteran trees on site to be retained and incorporated in POS and school*



*Pylons on site to be removed, and power lines to be grounded*



*Grade II\* Listed Pyrland Hall*



- Key**
- Boundaries
    - Framework Plan Boundary
    - Quantock Hills AONB
  - Services
    - Power Cables
  - Ecology
    - Approx. Bat Consultation Zone
    - Local Wildlife Site
    - ★ Hestercombe SAC
  - Hydrology
    - Flooding Zone 2
    - Flooding Zone 3
  - Landscape Features
    - Ridge Line
    - ↔ Important Views
    - Access
    - Public Footpath
  - Heritage Constraints
    - Conservation Area
    - Grade II Listed Building
    - Grade II\* Listed Building
  - Points of Interest
    - 1 Kingston Stream
    - 2 Mill Lease Stream
    - 3 Back Stream
    - 4 Rag Hill
    - 5 Okehills
    - 6 King's Hall School
    - 7 Wellsprings Primary School
    - 8 The Taunton Academy
    - 9 Kingston St Mary Primary School



Summary constraints map 1:15,000@A3



## 2.7 Site Analysis

### 2.7.1 Topography and Landscape Features

#### Topography

The landform of the Application Site generally falls from east to west from a high point of approximately 46 metres above Ordnance datum (AOD) adjacent to Kingston Road in the north east to 40 metres AOD on land between Corkscrew Lane and Whitmore Lane.

The application site encompasses a broad ridge, Rag Hill, orientated SSW-NNE that fans out into a roughly level terrace at its northeast end. Its steepest gradients are at its south western end, where it overlooks the relatively wide and flat-bottomed valley of the tightly meandering Back Stream that flows south towards the River Tone and is itself joined by westward flowing tributaries running along the northern edge of the ridge. Of the many surface watercourses that cross the site, the Back Stream is the only one flowing through its natural course: the Mill Lease Stream and the Kingston Stream that flow north-south across the eastern half of the site, together with all their tributary drains, flow in artificial channels. The interior of the site is divided into c. 27 irregularly shaped and sized fields and paddocks, bounded by mature hedges, recent fences and a large number of drainage ditches. Many of the fields contain or share ponds but there are no other surface features or earthworks visible.

#### Site Character

The site encompasses parts of three parishes on the northern edge of Taunton in Somerset: Staplegrove; Cheddon Fitzpaine; and Kingston St Mary, of which the former is the larger component. These straddle the southern aprons of the Quantock Hills overlooking the broad valley of the River Tone that meanders west-east through the centre of Taunton towards its confluence with the River Parrett near Bridgwater. The wider landscape is predominantly one gentle south-facing slope dissected by the westward and southward-flowing tributaries of the River Tone. In this case, that geomorphological model is augmented by an interrupted ridge running SW-NE along the axis of the application site, cut by (from west to east) the Back Stream, Mill Lease Stream and Kingston Stream and the thoroughfares that run alongside them.

The geological base is predominantly of Mercia Mudstone, with outcrops of Morte Slate and Otter Sandstone extending towards the site from Kingston St Mary and Cheddon Fitzpaine to the northeast.

Within the application site the mudstone is partially masked by localised remnants of River Terrace sands and gravels that form the interrupted axial ridge. That varied geological base supports shallow 'brown soils' typically c. 300mm thick, the characteristics of which will vary between the different parent materials.

The site area is currently divided into c. 27 fields and paddocks delineated by well-established boundaries, drainage ditches, footpaths and public highways, that surround the named farms and homesteads of Hillmeade, Whitmore Farm, Staplegrove Farm and Okehills.

The land under the control of the promoters can be described as follows:

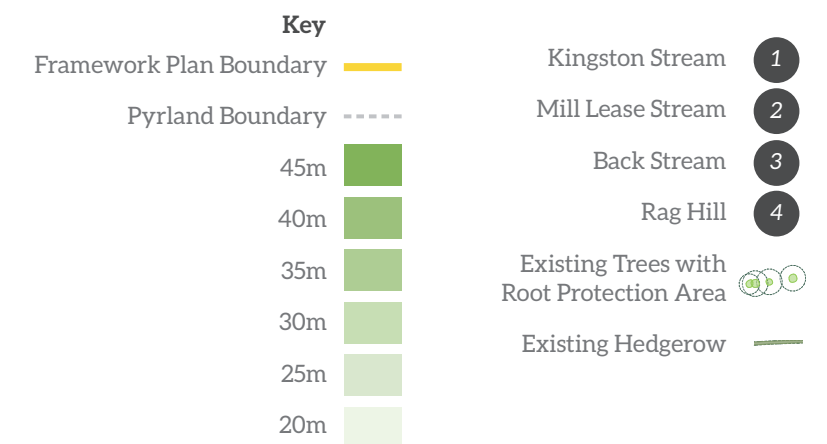
- The landscape character locally is defined by tightly clipped and long established native species hedges, some aligned with seasonal watercourses / ditches. Sporadically located mature oak trees protected under TPO (Tree Preservation Order) are within some hedge lines. Occasional oak trees within the fields mark the lines of former hedgerows.
- The low lying area between Okehills and Rag Hill incorporates subtle topographic undulation which generally declines towards the Mill Lease Stream near to Whitmore road. To the north, views to the Quantocks can be gained and to the south, the settlement limit of Taunton is in parts visible between treed areas.
- The variety of seasonal crops grown across the site (particularly tall miscanthus) can alter the availability of views out from the site depending on the height of the crop / the time of the year.



Photograph showing veteran trees and line of poplar trees in the background



Photograph showing the tree belt within the site







Topography and landscape features 1:7500@A3





## 2.7 Site Analysis

### 2.7.2 Ecology

The site is dominated by grazed pasture, arable fields and boundary hedgerows. Hestercombe House and Gardens, located to the northeast of site, is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its maternity colony of lesser horseshoe bats. The whole site is within the boundary of Natural England's SSSI Impact Risk Zone and the eastern section is within Taunton Deane's Bat Consultation Zone. Pyrland Park Local Wildlife Site is located adjacent to the east of the site, important for its veteran parkland trees.

Extensive bat surveys have therefore been carried out over 2013, 2014 and 2015 to provide a clear understanding of the extent of bat activity on the site. In summary, by far the majority of the bat activity recorded was for Common Pipistrelle bats with only low levels of activity by Lesser Horseshoes. Other species recorded included Noctule, Soprano Pipistrelle, Barbastelle Greater Horseshoe and Myotis species. Surveys carried out to date have identified that the development should incorporate some green corridors and buffer planting alongside suitable replacement foraging habitat.

Additional ecological surveys carried out include those for badgers, breeding birds, dormice and great crested newts. Both dormice and great crested newts have been recorded on the site and appropriate mitigation will be put in place to ensure these species are protected and new habitats are created for them.

The masterplan has been designed to avoid the removal of the majority of the hedgerows with trees and ponds retained within to compliment the design. New trees and hedgerows would also be planted across the site and meadow areas and SUDS introduced which will provide additional opportunities for wildlife. An area of off-site woodland will be created including a bat roosting structure to encourage lesser horseshoe bats. Other ecological measures will include installing bird and bat boxes, dormice boxes and hibernacula for amphibians and reptiles, and a lighting strategy will be formulated to provide safe lighting levels that will minimise any adverse effect on wildlife behaviour.



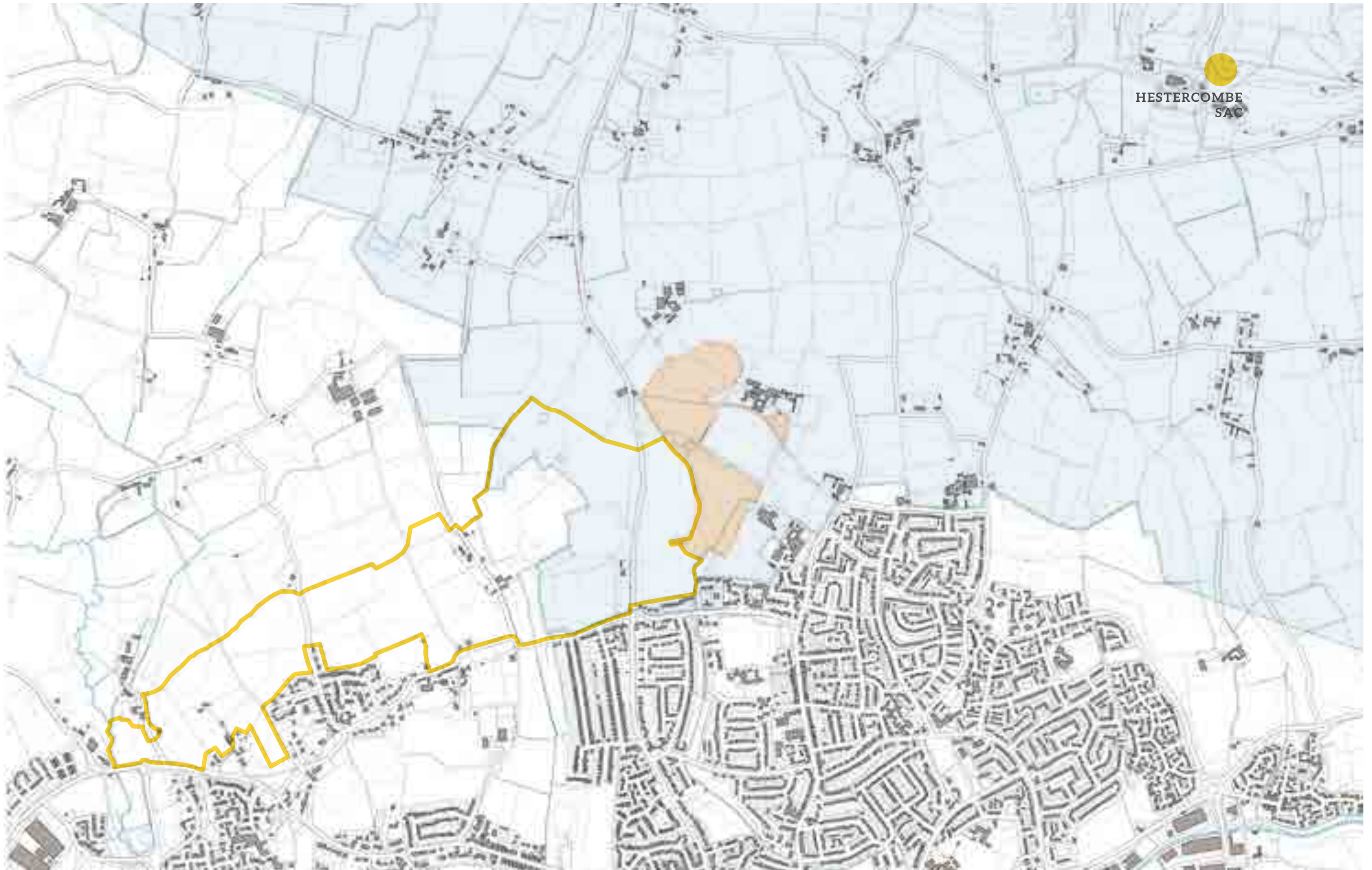
*Lesser horseshoe bat*



*Dormouse survey*







The Hestercombe Special Area of Conservation 1:12,500@A3



## 2.7 Site Analysis

### 2.7.3 Heritage and Archaeology

#### Cartographic Data

The pattern of fields, watercourses and highways has remained essentially unaltered since c. 1840, the only change being one of amalgamation of fields. Only four of the fields had historically significant names at the time of the Tithes surveys of c. 1839-41.

Of the buildings within or immediately adjoining the application site, the following were present in c. 1839-41: the pre-20th century buildings at Staplegrove Mills; Staplegrove House; all but one of the pre-20th century buildings at Whitmore Farm; and Okehills. The remainder were all built after 1839-41.

#### Heritage Assets

There are a number of Grade II Listed Buildings and one Grade II\* Listed building within the immediate surrounding of the application site. The site also lies to the north and around the Staplegrove Conservation Area.

Pyrland Hall is a substantial mid 18th century ‘country house’ of Palladian-inspired design, now used as a school (Kings Hall School). It is set within parkland and wooded grounds that restrict views from the application site, and vice versa, but those grounds extend westwards to the eastern edge of the application site.

Staplegrove House and Okehills are early 19th century Regency villas. Both are surrounded by mature garden tree planting that restrict visual appreciation of them from the public highway or from within most of the site. Okehills, is partially visible from the west through a gap in the mature garden tree planting that also allows sight of the fields to the west of it.

The other buildings, with the exception of St John’s parish church in Staplegrove village, are of vernacular forms of late 17th – 19th century date. Staplegrove Mills is a large building of mixed residential and industrial form set within a modern farm complex at the base of the steep-sided valley of the Back Stream and not, therefore, intervisible with most of the application site. Hope Corner House is a similarly large building, surrounded on all but its northwest sides by 20th century residential developments and visually separated from the application site to its northwest by the mature garden tree planting at Okehills.

Slapes and Smoky are modest vernacular roadside dwellings approximately half a kilometre north of the application site and the cluster of buildings at the centre of Staplegrove village and ‘Kibby’s further to the southwest of them, are also separate from the application site.

#### Archaeological Potential and Significance

A concerted programme of iterative investigation has been undertaken in relation to the allocation site in respect of both archaeology and cultural heritage. This comprises: desk-based heritage appraisal, detailed settings assessment, geophysical survey, evaluation trenching and environmental impact assessment for both Staplegrove West and East.




This assessment work, which has been undertaken in full consultation with relevant heritage consultees, has provided a comprehensive understanding of the archaeological potential of the allocation site, and of the potential impact of any development on archaeology and cultural heritage.

The key archaeological findings have been a probable Roman settlement on Rag Hill, a group of prehistoric (Bronze Age) cremations and associated features to the west of Whitmore Lane, possibly relating to a former barrow, and a number of earlier prehistoric (Neolithic) pits and ditches, largely of an agricultural nature, and largely located within the east of the allocation site.

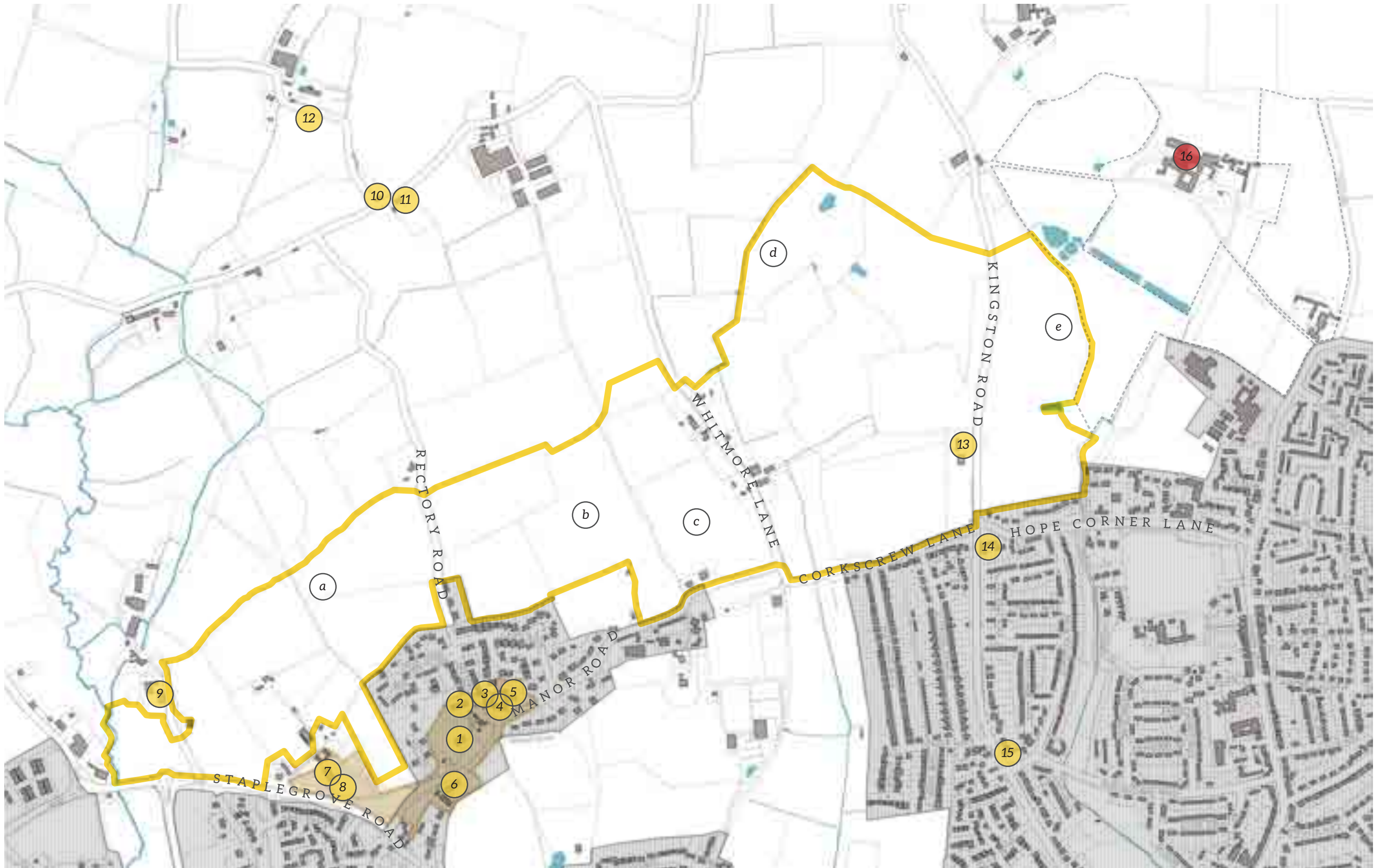
Throughout the assessment process, TDBC, Historic England, the site promoters and their consultants have worked closely to develop a proportionate, design-led heritage mitigation strategy in accordance with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990), Policy ENV4 (as proposed to be modified), and the National Planning Policy Framework (2012).

A heritage Statement of Common Ground, supported by a Heritage Conservation Strategy, has been agreed, setting out in detail the proposed mitigation measures in respect of cultural heritage. This Heritage Conservation Strategy, and the mitigation measures it sets out, form a requirement in respect of any future development within the allocation site under the terms of amended TDBC Policy TAU2: Staplegrove.

In respect of archaeology, mitigation will comprise the stripping of the topsoil around the significant features identified during the geophysical survey and trial trenching, and the excavation of these and any associated features. In respect of cultural heritage, key mitigation measures are proposed in relation to Pyrland Hall, Okehills and Yarde Farmhouse, and will largely comprise a programme of strategic screening, sensitive architectural design and elements of restoration in relation to Pyrland Hall.

<b>Key</b>	
Framework Plan Boundary	
Settlement Boundary	
Conservation Area	
Pyrland Boundary	-----
<i>Grade II Listed Buildings</i>	
Church of St. John and Various Tombs	1
The Old Rectory	2
Pomeroy’s Farmhouse and Adjoining Barn	3
Norwood & Farm Buildings	4
Steading Hay	5
Kibby’s	6
Staplegrove House	7
Gates to Staplegrove House	8
Staplegrove Lodge	9
Slapes	10
Smokey	11
Stonehouse Farm	12
Okehills	13
Hope Corner House	14
Wellsprings	15
<i>Grade II* Listed Buildings</i>	
Pyrland Hall	16
<i>HER Assets</i>	
Roman Settlement	a
Prehistoric Ditches	b
Bronze Age/Prehistoric Cremations	c
Neolithic/Prehistoric Pit/Ditch	d
Neolithic/Prehistoric Field Systems	e





Heritage and Archaeology 1:7500@A3



## 2.7 Site Analysis

### 2.7.4 Hydrology and Geology

#### Flooding

The wider landscape is predominantly one gentle south-facing slope dissected by the westward and southward-flowing tributaries of the River Tone. In this case, that geomorphological model is augmented by an interrupted ridge running SW-NE along the axis of the application site, cut by (from west to east) the Back Stream, Mill Lease Stream and Kingston Stream and the thoroughfares that run alongside them.

The steepest gradients of the site are at its south-western end, where it overlooks the relatively wide and flat-bottomed valley of the tightly meandering Back Stream. The Back Stream flows south towards the River Tone and is itself joined by westward flowing tributaries running along the northern edge of the axial ridge.

Of the many surface watercourses that cross the site, the back Stream is the only one flowing through its natural course: the Mill Lease Stream and the Kingston Stream that flow northsouth across the eastern half of the site, together with all their tributary drains, flow in artificial channels.

A review of the publicly available Environment Agency Maps shows that the area surrounding Mill Lease Stream is in Flood Zone 3, with some areas in Flood Zone 2.

The proposed development will integrate Sustainable Drainage Systems into the green infrastructure to control and treat surface water runoff. All systems will be sized to accommodate the 1 in 100 year plus 30% climate change rainfall event.

#### Geology











The geological base is predominantly of Mercia Mudstone, with outcrops of Morte Slate and Otter Sandstone extending towards the site from Kingston St Mary and Cheddon Fitzpaine to the northeast. Within the application site the mudstone is partially masked by localised remnants of River Terrace sands and gravels that form the interrupted axial ridge. That varied geological base supports shallow 'brown soils' typically c. 300mm thick, the characteristics of which will vary between the different parent materials.



Photograph showing water feature on site



Photograph showing pond to be retained as part of POS

Key	
Framework Plan Boundary	
Flooding Zone 2	
Flooding Zone 3	
Kingston Stream	
Mill Lease Stream	
Back Stream	
River Terrace Sand and Gravel	
Sandstone	
Mudstone	
Alluvium	





Flooding and Geology 1:7500@A3



## 2.7 Site Analysis

### 2.7.5 Utilities

#### Electricity

There are two existing overhead high voltage lines traversing the site from southwest to northeast. There is also a low voltage overhead line running to the south. The existing overhead cables across the site will need to be rerouted or grounded within the development or residential development avoided in the easement area (30m).

#### Gas

There is a gas main in Kingston Road to the east as well as a gas mains running along the footpath to the west boundary of the site and in Corkscrew Lane. The existing gas mains may be left in position, although some lowering or protection measures may be required at new road access locations.

#### Water

There are a number of large distribution mains on the site, with existing services running adjacent to the east and south of the site. The large water remains will be left in position.

The northern area of the Application Site is traversed by three high voltage (HV) overhead power lines supported on steel lattice pylons that cross the landscape along a southwest to northeast corridor. A localised network of low voltage overhead lines occur in the southwest corner of the Application Site.

A water main runs in a north-south alignment to the east of Whitmore Lane, with a spur extending toward the eastern boundary of the Application Site from the rear of agricultural buildings off Whitmore Lane, and to the north of Okehills off Kingston Road.

A gas main occurs in the northwest corner of the Application Site, running in a southwest to northeast direction from Whitmore Lane beneath the northernmost HV power line.

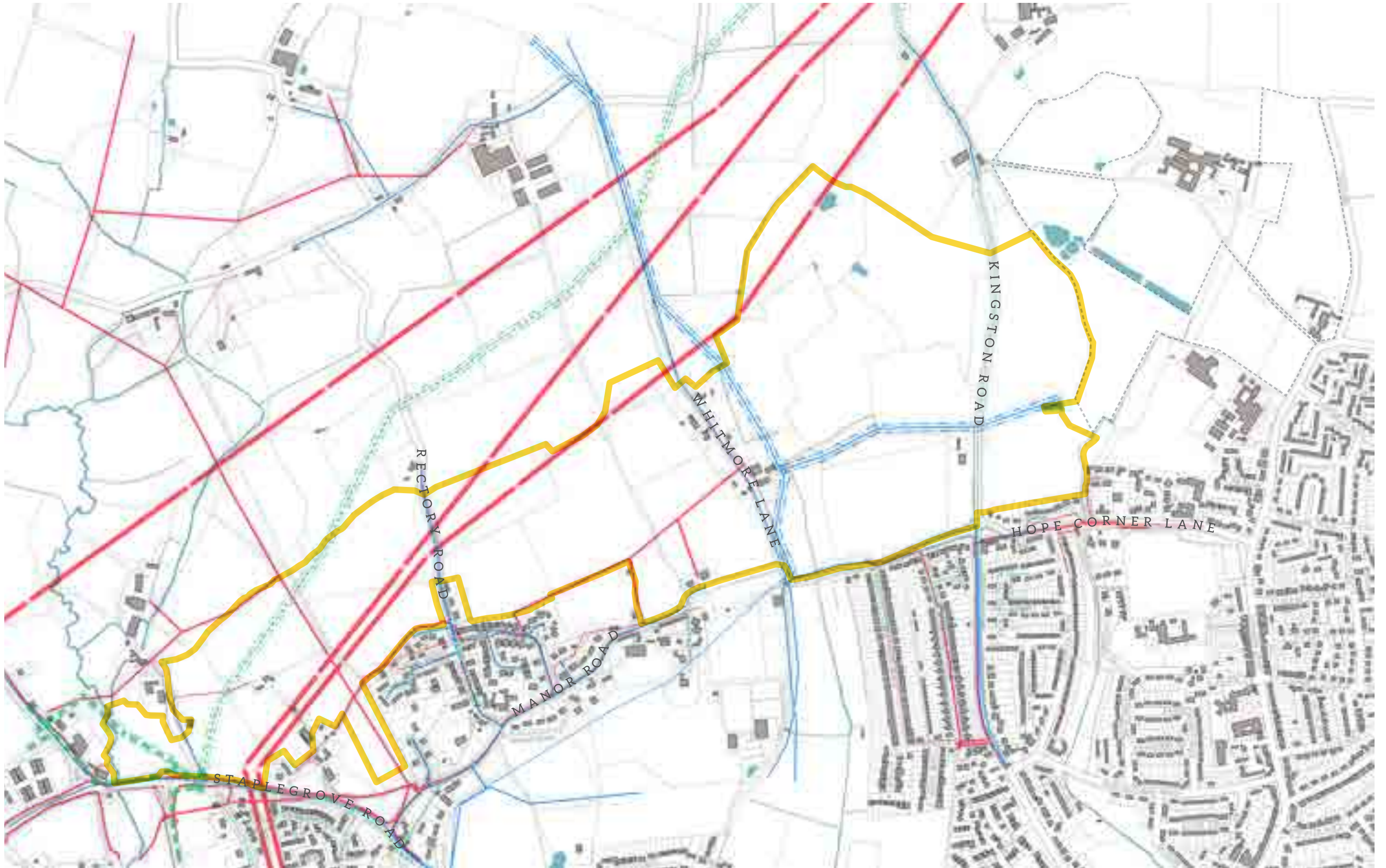
Strips of land both sides of the HV power lines and along the western boundary of Kingston Road, together with a rectilinear parcel of land southwest of Upper Cheddon, are encompassed within the Application Site. These areas comprise arable land bounded by hedgerows with intermittent trees.



Photograph showing pylons and power lines to the north of the site

Key	
Framework Plan Boundary	—
Pyrland Estate Boundary	- - - - -
Gas Mains	•••••
Gas Mains Easement	- - - .
Power Cables High Voltage	—
Power Cables Other	—
Power Cable Easement	- - - .
Pylon	⊠
Water Mains	—
Water Mains Easement	- - - .





Existing Utilities 1:7500@A3





## 2.8 Assessment Summary

### Guidance

Key characteristics of the landscape are likely to be adversely affected by built development at Raghill and the Green Wedge. TDBC recommend the following constraints to development to mediate impact. Landscape sensitivity indicates some potential for development, however this must be limited and small in scale.

### Development must:

- Not threaten the character of the Green Wedge, particularly the transition between countryside and Taunton.
- Not impinge upon the setting, slopes and ridge-line/skyline of Raghill.
- Respect the subtle but sensitive slopes and undeveloped ridge-line immediately east of Westerkirk Gate.
- Maintain clear views of the open space to the tree-lined horizon beyond.
- Not compromise the setting, function, visual and recreational amenity of the Public Rights of Way crossing the area (especially the West Deane Way).
- Not undermine the views across the Green Wedge to the conservation area of Staplegrove (particularly from the cycle path that runs along Mill Lease Stream).
- Not interrupt or fragment the watercourse and immediate setting of the Mill Lease Stream.
- Respect the existing hedgerow network, mature oak trees and tree-lined roads.
- Respond to the character of the existing urban edge.
- Not threaten the setting to the parkland landscape of Pyrland Hall.

Landscape Character Assessment of Taunton's Rural Urban Fringe Sensitivity & Capacity Study: Final Draft Report 2005

### Effects

To ensure the site is integrated and provides minimal disruption to the surrounding landscape, the following should be considered in the design:

- Acknowledging the value of visual amenity, particularly in relation to new public green open spaces associated with development proposals.
- Assessing the intervisibility and visual relationship between

the site and the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the Historic Pyrland Hall Estate and adjacent neighbourhoods.

- Acknowledgement of historic or interesting views and viewpoints.
- Utilising topography, tree belts and open space to visually integrate development into the landscape.

### Local Character Area

#### Key Characteristics

- Medium scale agricultural landscape defined by a gently undulating terrain of subtle valleys & small hills.
- Prominent landform of Raghill; providing & restricting views.
- Well-drained, slowly-permeable loamy soils (Keuper Marls soil geology).
- Elevation of 30-50m.
- Dominance of pastoral land use as well as some cereal & arable crops.
- Two minor north-south watercourses; Kingston Stream & Mill Lease stream.
- Strong hedgerow network, largely intact, which follows ancient & enclosed field patterns.
- Mature hedgerow oaks are a feature, including pollarded oaks. There are few field trees.
- Tree cover increases on Eastern side with the woodland belt towards Pyrland Hall.
- Concentration of power lines/pylons.
- Low settlement density consisting of small hamlets & dispersed farms.
- Buildings are of the traditional style; sandstone, brick, slate.
- Recreational amenity in the form of Public Rights of Way, West Deane Way, connects Quantocks to Taunton.

Landscape Character Assessment of Taunton's Rural Urban Fringe Sensitivity & Capacity Study: Final Draft Report 2005

### Condition and Strength of Character

The characteristics of Low Vale are generally of good condition and quality. The Landscape Sensitivity is judged to be moderate because, despite a reasonable intactness of field patterns, hedgerows, proximity to the Quantocks, it is fragmented by the pylons & overhead wires.

The Staplegrove Farmed and Settled Low Vale has a moderate-high visual sensitivity. This is due to areas of higher ground, like Rag Hill, providing views in and out of the area, and views in to the site from the Quantocks (Blackdown Hills AONB) etc. Views are interrupted by the abundance of pylons, which reduce visual integrity and amenity to some degree.

### Sensitivity to Built Environment

The lower lying parts of the landscape could accommodate development but the higher, undeveloped ridge-line and Western slope of Raghill would be adversely affected by built development, deemed to be highly sensitive.

Overall Raghill is considered to be a prominent and important landform in the character area due to its elevation on the edge of Staplegrove village. Its visibility from the townscape, the adjacent floodplain and the hills to the north make it highly sensitive visually.

There is little tree cover but the mature hedgerow trees are an important landscape resource and positive contributor to overall landscape character.

The agricultural nature of the land use provides an important buffer between the urban area and the open countryside. The existing recreational use, footpaths and playing fields, provide valuable open space.

The electricity pylons are considered to have a negative influence on the landscape, interrupting landscape character and visual amenity.

Listed buildings and setting should be respected in any development. The setting to the conservation area within Staplegrove could be affected by development, including views to and from the church and should be considered in any development.





*Pyrland Estate with King's Hall School at the end of the tree avenue*



*Row of poplar trees within site to be retained*



*Some of the pylons and power lines to be grounded*



*St. John the Evangelist Church, Staplegrove*

*View of Rag Hill from Kingston St. Mary*









# 3.0 Existing Surrounding Character

*This section of the report looks at the urban grain of the immediate surrounding to the site. It analyses the density and dispersal of dwellings in order to gain an understanding of the urban form.*

- 3.1 Surrounding Character Analysis
- 3.2 Character Area 1 - Staplegrove, Staplegrove Road
- 3.3 Character Area 2 - Staplegrove, Manor Road
- 3.4 Character Area 3 - Whitmore Area
- 3.5 Character Area 4 - Whitmore Lane
- 3.6 Character Area 5 - Pyrland Estate
- 3.7 Character Area 6 - Taunton Town Centre
- 3.8 Summary

## 3.1 Surrounding Character Analysis

### Introduction

It is critical to assess the immediate and wider surrounding context. This analysis will inform the Design Code for future development proposals.

Six distinct Character Areas have been identified:







- 1) Staplegrove, Staplegrove Road
- 2) Staplegrove, Manor Road
- 3) Whitmore Area
- 4) Whitmore Lane
- 5) Pyrland Estate
- 6) Taunton Town Centre

Each Character Area is analysed under a series of headings, assessing the area at varying scales, as applicable. This analysis begins with a holistic overview, focusing on settlement patterns and urban form. Following this, a set of detailed analysis addresses urban space and built form (see Table 1).

### Key

 Framework Plan Boundary

 Area under analysis

- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  Staplegrove, Staplegrove Road |  Whitmore Lane       |
|  Staplegrove, Manor Road       |  Pyrland Estate      |
|  Whitmore Area                 |  Taunton Town Centre |

Scales of Analysis		
<b>Settlement Pattern</b>	Urban structure	e.g. urban grain, density, pattern
	Open space network	e.g. types, location, size, connections
	Major infrastructure	e.g. major roads
	Walkable catchments	e.g. local facilities
<b>Urban Form</b>	Street form	e.g. size, landscaping, parking.
	Plot form	e.g. size, orientation.
	Building location	e.g. orientation, position, overlooking, overshadowing.
	Building lines	e.g. frontage, continuity, set back distances.
	Edge treatments	e.g. boundaries, landscaping.
	<b>Built Form</b>	Building massing
Building types		e.g. detached, semi-detached, terraced.
Building frontage		e.g. architectural style, proportion, rhythm, materiality.
Townscape features		e.g. eave lines, rooflines, chimneys.
Soft landscape		e.g. lawns, verges, planting beds, trees.
<b>Landscape &amp; Public Realm</b>	Public buildings	e.g. types, boundary treatment, landscape features, access, parking.
	Open space	e.g. types, boundary treatment, landscape features, access, parking.
	Public routes	e.g. cycle paths, footpaths, sizing, paving, kerbs.

Table 1. Overview of character area analysis





Character Areas: wider surrounding context

Character areas: immediate surrounding context



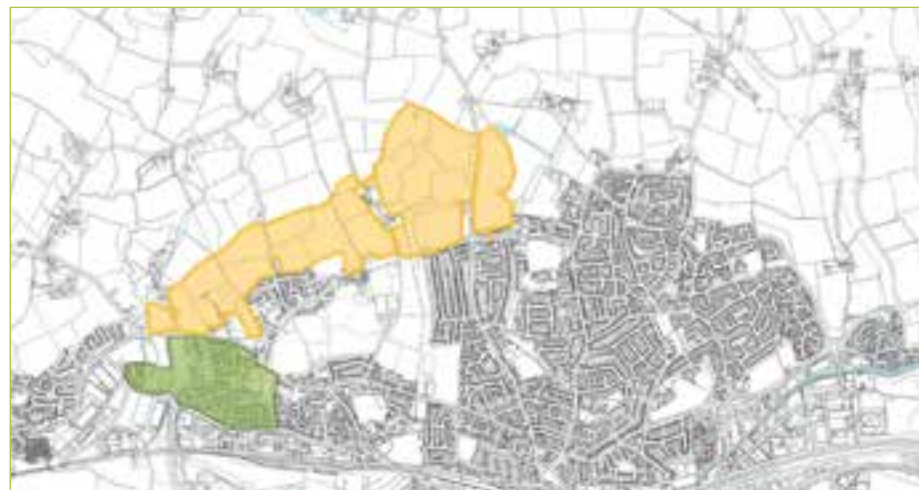
## 3.2 Character Area 1 - Staplegrove, Staplegrove Road

### Introduction

The first Character Area is situated towards the south-west corner of the site boundary. The area is bound by Staplegrove Road to the north, and Bindon Road to the south. The area includes Somerset Nuffield Hospital and Staplegrove Village Hall.

### Settlement Pattern

<b>Urban structure</b>	The convoluted street network contains a number of cul-de-sacs, feeding off Hudson Way, Darwin Close and Showell Park.
<b>Open space network</b>	Open green spaces can be found towards the edges of this character area. Towards the centre lies a large green, accessible from Nash Green and Mill Rise.
<b>Major infrastructure</b>	The Character Area is bound by the A358 to the north and the A306 to the south.
<b>Walkable catchments</b>	The Somerset Nuffield Hospital is situated at the centre of the Character Area, with a walkable catchment zone extending across the area. The Staplegrove Village hall is situated towards the east of the Character Area, with a walkable catchment zone of five minutes failing to cover the main residential area.



Character Area 1: Staplegrove, Staplegrove Road



Figure ground, 1:10,000 @ A3





Facilities and walkable catchments

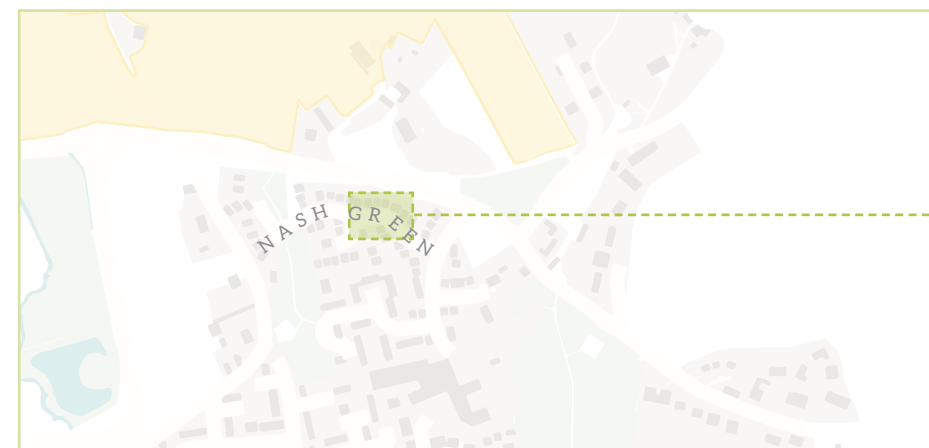


## 3.2 Character Area 1 - Staplegrove, Staplegrove Road (contd.)

### Urban Form

Nash Green is a residential street towards the north of the Character Area.

<b>Street form</b>	Streets are typically two-way carriageways with pedestrian footways on both sides. Grass verges and street trees are common, particularly at junctions and bends in the road. Across the area, parking is predominantly off-street.
<b>Plot form</b>	Plots vary in orientation across the Character Area, generally running parallel to the street. Plots typically offer narrow frontage.
<b>Building location</b>	Properties are orientated towards the street, with front and back gardens.
<b>Building lines</b>	Properties are set back from the road, with small front gardens and off-street parking. Generally, building lines are continuous, running parallel to the street.
<b>Edge treatments</b>	Boundaries are predominantly landscaped, with hedges and shrubs separating public and private spaces.



Analysis of urban form: Nash Green, Plan 1:200 @ A3







Analysis of urban form: Nash Green, Section, 1:100 @ A3

## 3.2 Character Area 1 - Staplegrove, Staplegrove Road (contd.)

### Built Form

Showell Park is a residential street towards the east of the Character Area.

<b>Building massing</b>	Properties are typically two-storeys, with single-storey garages to one side and single-storey entrance porches at the front.
<b>Building types</b>	Across the Character Area there is a variety of house types, however, houses are predominantly detached.
<b>Building frontage</b>	Roofs are typically cross gabled, with the major eave and ridge lines parallel to the street. The intersecting gable forms a gabled elevation to street. Façades are red brick, render or a combination of both. Roofs are red or dark brown pantiles.
<b>Townscape features</b>	Eave and ridge lines are generally continuous across the street. Chimneys contribute to the roofscape.
<b>Soft landscape</b>	Front gardens are typically used for off- street parking. Small areas of shrubs line the edges of each garden.



1 Typical house along Showell Park



2 Use of red brick and render along Showell Park



3 Typical roof detail along Showell Park



4 Typical elevation details along Showell Park





5 Analysis of built form: Showell Park

## 3.2 Character Area 1 - Staplegrove, Staplegrove Road (contd.)

### Landscape & Public Realm

The Character Area includes a number of key public facilities.

<b>Public buildings</b>	Key public buildings are set back from the road, with car parks addressing the street. Vehicular access is often prioritised over pedestrian routes. Raised planting is used to mark entrance points.
<b>Open space</b>	To the east, a designated grass play area is provided. The space is recognisable as a play area, with specialised equipment. Mature trees line the edge of this space, whilst retaining ease of access. A pedestrian route is provided, linking across the site.
<b>Public routes</b>	Cycle paths are provided along key public routes, often separated from the road by a grass verge. Across the area, good pedestrian footpaths are provided. Mature trees, grass verges and shrubs contribute positively to the public realm. Generally, public routes are provided with sufficient lighting.



1 Taunton Nuffield Hospital



2 Play area viewed from Hudson Way



3 Roundabout at Staplegrove Road



4 View from roundabout towards Silk Mills Lane





5 Analysis of landscape and public realm: Staplegrove Village Hall

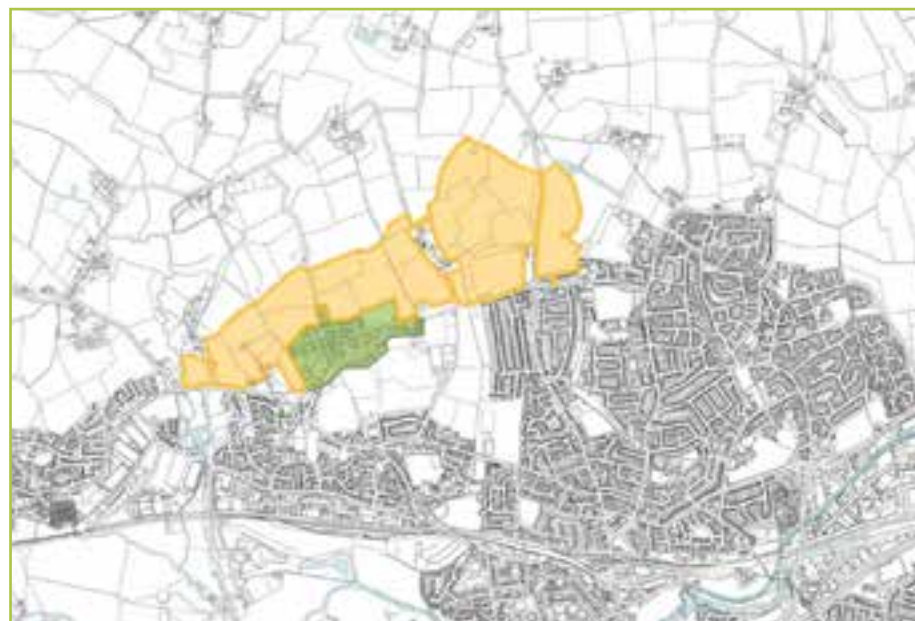
## 3.3 Character Area 2 - Staplegrove, Manor Road

### Introduction

The second Character Area is situated towards the southwest of the site boundary. The area is bound by the site boundary to the north, and Manor Road to the south. The area includes St. John's Church.

### Settlement Pattern

<b>Urban structure</b>	The street network contains a number of cul-de sacs, feeding off Rectory road and Lawn Road.
<b>Open space network</b>	The area contains a good proportion of open green spaces, including a play area and sports grounds.
<b>Major infrastructure</b>	The Character Area is bound by Manor road to the south.
<b>Walkable catchments</b>	St Johns Church and the adjacent playground are situated to the west of the Character Area, with a walkable catchment zone extending across the main residential area. The sports grounds are situated to the east of the Character Area, with a walkable catchment zone extending across the main residential area.



Character Area 2: Staplegrove, Manor Road



Figure ground, 1:5000 @ A3





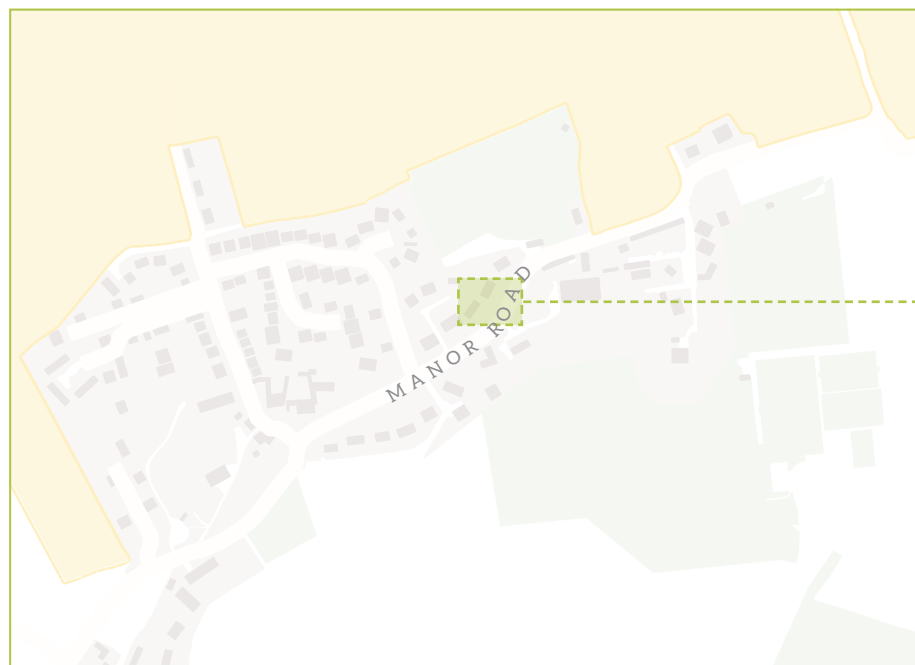
Facilities and walkable catchments

### 3.3 Character Area 2 - Staplegrove, Manor Road (contd.)

**Urban Form**

Manor Road runs along the south edge of the character area.

<b>Street form</b>	Roads are typically narrow two-way carriageways. Pedestrian footways are not always present, often forming a route along one side of the road only. Across the area, grass verges line the roads and form boundaries to front gardens. Parking is predominantly off-street due to the narrow forms.
<b>Plot form</b>	Plots vary in orientation across the area, often running parallel to the street. Plots typically offer wide frontage.
<b>Building location</b>	Properties are orientated towards the street, with front and back gardens.
<b>Building lines</b>	Properties are set back from the road, with large front gardens and off-street parking. Generally building lines are continuous, running parallel to the street.
<b>Edge treatments</b>	Boundaries are often landscaped, with hedges and shrubs separating public and private spaces.



Analysis of urban form: Manor Road, Plan 1:200 @ A3







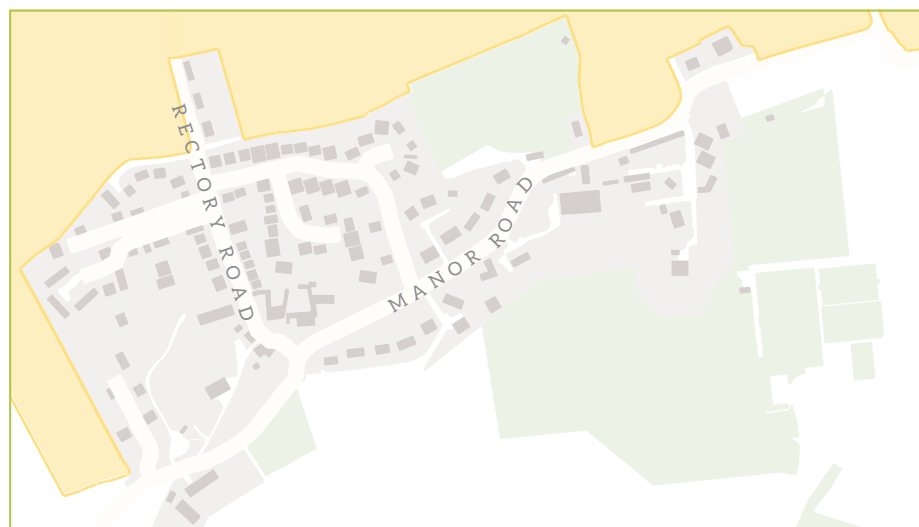
Analysis of urban form: Manor Road, Section 1:100 @ A3

### 3.3 Character Area 2 - Staplegrove, Manor Road (contd.)

#### Built Form

Rectory Road is a residential street towards the east of the Character Area.

<b>Building massing</b>	Properties are typically two-storeys, with smaller single-storey elements. Some properties have extended into the roof space, incorporating dormer windows into the roofscape.
<b>Building types</b>	Across the Character Area there is a variety of house types, however, houses are predominantly detached. There are a large number of bungalows along Manor Road.
<b>Building frontage</b>	Roofs are typically cross gabled, with major eave and ridge lines parallel to the street. The intersecting gable forms a gable elevation to street. Hipped roofs are a common feature across the area. Façades are render or exposed stonework. Roofs are slate tiles or pantiles in red or dark brown.
<b>Townscape features</b>	Stone boundary walls are a feature in this Character Area. Chimneys contribute to the roofscape.
<b>Soft landscape</b>	Hedges are used to mark property boundaries. Wild plants inhabit the road edges, softening the stone boundary walls.



1 View down Rectory Road



2 Stone wall detail along Rectory Road



3 Feature stone wall along Rectory Road



4 Rendered façades along Rectory Road





5 Analysis of built form: Rectory Road

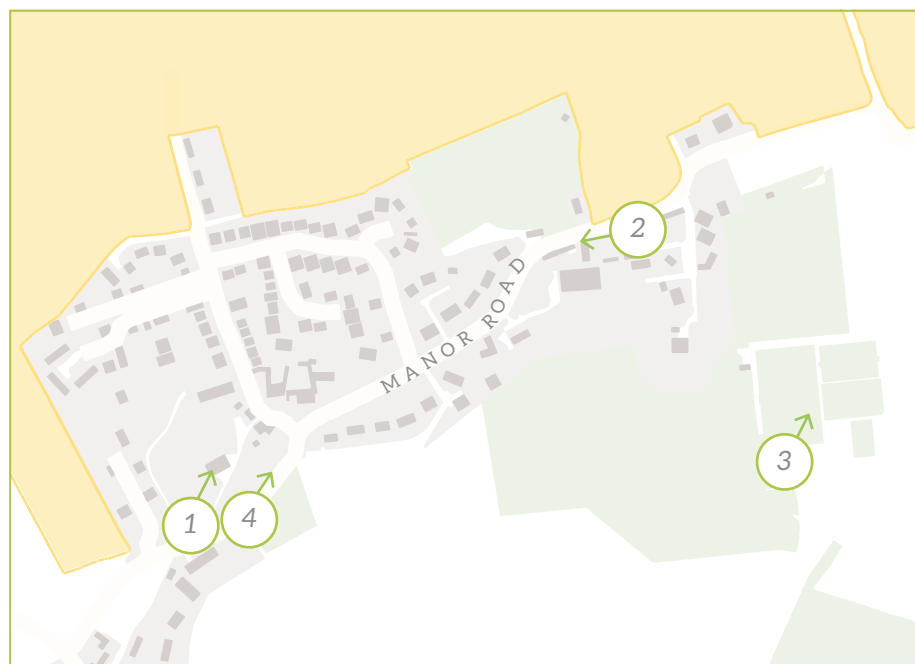


## 3.3 Character Area 2 - Staplegrove, Manor Road (contd.)

### Landscape & Public Realm

The Character Area includes a number of key green spaces and facilities.

Public buildings	Vehicular access is often prioritised over pedestrian routes, with large car parks situated near main entrances. Grass banks and planting are used to soften edges.
Open space	To the west, a designated play area is provided, with seating for accompanying adults. The space is recognisable as a play area, with specialised equipment and surfaces fitting to intensity of use. A stone wall forms a strong boundary to this area, which is adjacent to a busy road. Subsequently, pedestrian access is restricted.
Public routes	Vehicular access is often prioritised over pedestrian routes. Pedestrian footways are not always present, often forming a route along one side of the road only. Across the area, wild plants inhabit the road edges, contributing positively to the public realm.



1 St Johns Church



2 View down Manor Road



3 Taunton Vale Sports Club



4 Play area along Manor Road





4 Analysis of landscape and public realm: playground adjacent to St Johns church

## 3.4 Character Area 3 - Whitmore Area

### Introduction

The third Character Area is situated towards the southeast of the proposed site. The area is defined by the site boundary to the north, and Wellsprings Road to the south. The area includes Wellsprings Primary School and The Taunton Academy.

### Settlement Pattern

<b>Urban structure</b>	The street network is well connected, with few cul-de-sacs.
<b>Open space network</b>	The area contains a number of open green spaces at its edges. These include allotments, Wellsprings Primary School sports ground and a play area.
<b>Major infrastructure</b>	The Character Area is bound by Manor Road to the south.
<b>Walkable catchments</b>	St Johns Church and the adjacent playground are situated to the west of the Character Area, with a walkable catchment zone extending across the main residential area. The sports grounds are situated to the east of the Character Area, with a walkable catchment zone extending across the main residential area.

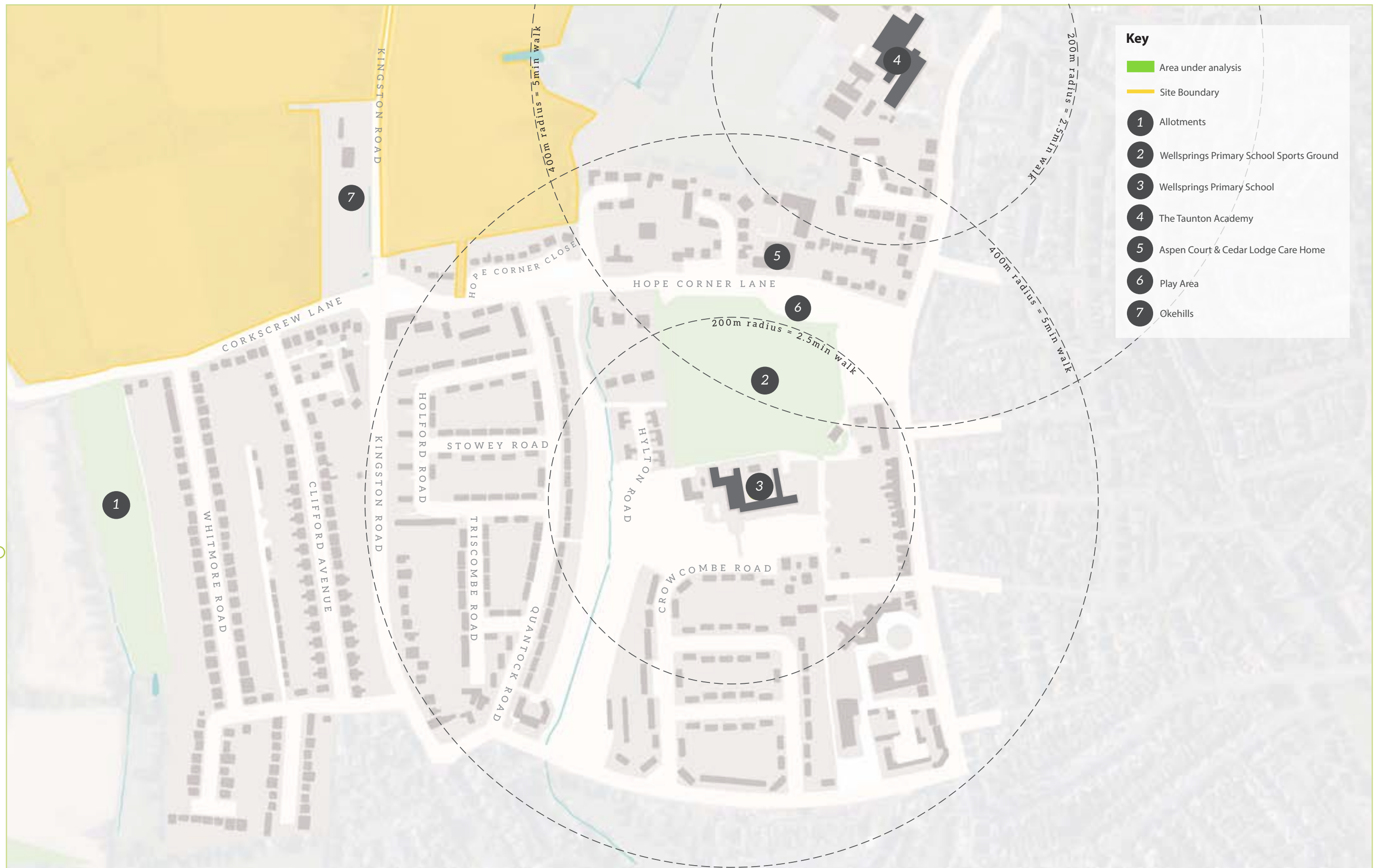


Character Area 3: Whitmore Area



Figure ground, 1:10,000 @ A3





**Key**

- Area under analysis
- Site Boundary
- 1 Allotments
- 2 Wellsprings Primary School Sports Ground
- 3 Wellsprings Primary School
- 4 The Taunton Academy
- 5 Aspen Court & Cedar Lodge Care Home
- 6 Play Area
- 7 Okehills

Facilities and walkable catchments

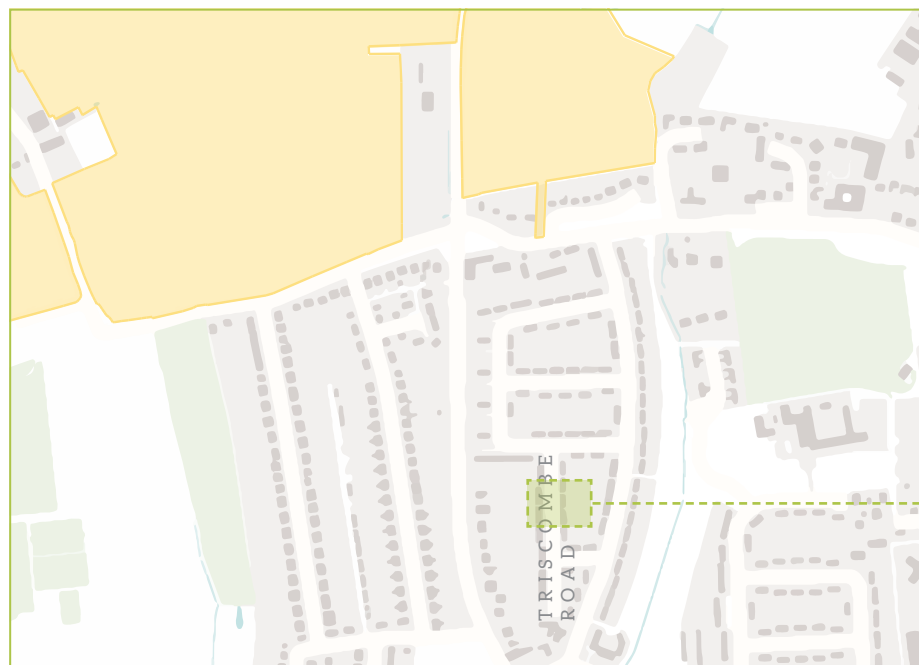


### 3.4 Character Area 3 - Whitmore Area (contd.)

**Urban Form**

Triscombe Road is a residential road towards the centre of the Character Area.

<b>Street form</b>	Streets are typically narrow two-way carriageways with pedestrian footways on both sides. Grass verges and street trees are common. Off-street parking is available in some parts of the Character Area. However, in other parts, on-street parking obstructs the pedestrian footways.
<b>Plot form</b>	The majority of plots are east-west orientated, offering wide frontage.
<b>Building location</b>	Properties are orientated towards the street, with front and back gardens.
<b>Building lines</b>	Properties are set back from the road, with small front gardens and off-street parking. Generally building lines are continuous, running parallel to the street.
<b>Edge treatments</b>	Boundaries are predominantly landscaped, with hedges and shrubs separating public and private spaces.



Analysis of urban form: Triscombe Road, Plan 1:200 @ A3







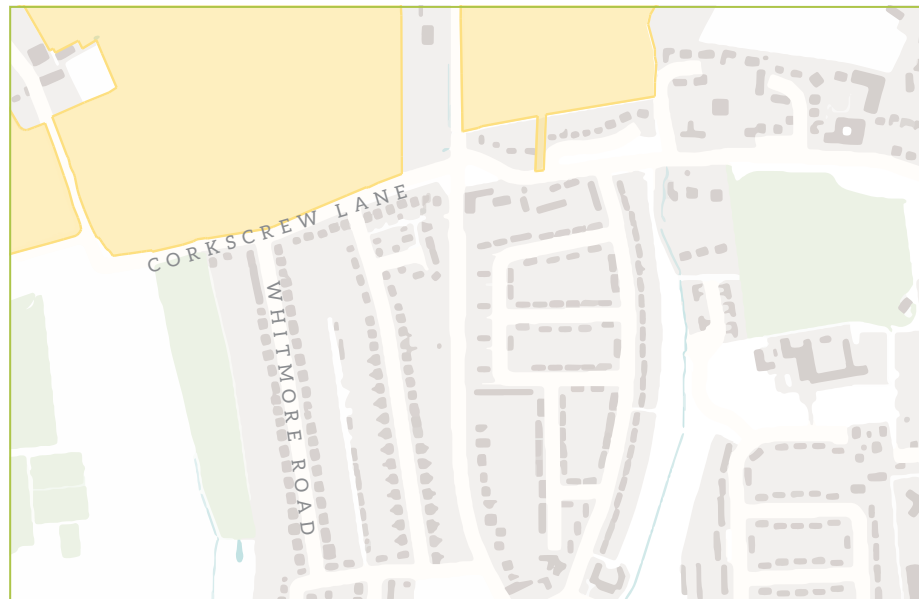
Analysis of urban form: Triscombe Road Section, 1:100 @ A3

## 3.4 Character Area 3 - Whitmore Area (contd.)

### Built Form

Whitmore Road is a residential street towards the west of the Character Area.

<b>Building massing</b>	Properties are typically two-storey. Many properties have extended into the roof space, incorporating dormer windows into the roofscape.
<b>Building types</b>	Houses are predominantly pairs of semi-detached units. Along Corkscrew Lane there are a number of detached bungalows.
<b>Building frontage</b>	Roofs are predominantly hipped, with eave lines parallel to the street. Many houses have intersecting gable roofs, forming a gable elevation to the street. Pairs of bay windows are a common feature. Façades are red brick, render or a combination of both. Roofs are red or dark brown pantiles.
<b>Townscape features</b>	Chimneys contribute to the roofscape.
<b>Soft landscape</b>	Hedges and trees overhang boundary walls and fences, softening the street edge.



1 Typical street elevation along Whitmore Road



2 Gable elevation along Whitmore Road



3 Boundary wall along Whitmore Road



4 Roof detail along Whitmore Road





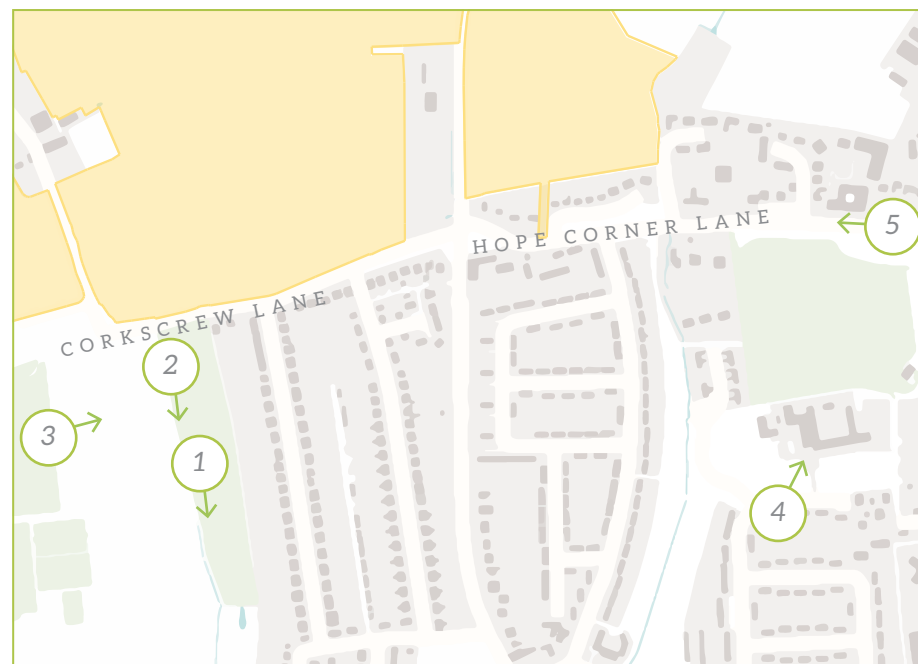
5 Analysis of built form: Whitmore Road

## 3.4 Character Area 3 - Whitmore Area (contd.)

### Landscape & Public Realm

The Character Area includes a number of key public facilities spaces.

<b>Public buildings</b>	In some cases, key buildings are set back from the road, with car parks addressing the street. Mature planting surrounds key public buildings, providing a buffer to the adjacent roads.
<b>Open space</b>	To the east, a designated play area is provided, with seating for accompanying adults. The space is recognisable as a play area, with specialised equipment and surfaces fitting to intensity of use. A hedge forms a boundary to this area. To the west, an area for allotments is provided. Natural planting defines the edges of this space, providing a buffer to the adjacent road.
<b>Public routes</b>	Along key public routes, mature trees, grass verges and shrubs contribute positively to the public realm. Generally, these routes are provided with sufficient lighting.



1 Allotments along Corkscrew Lane



2 View into allotments from Corkscrew Lane



3 Bend in Corkscrew Lane



4 Wellsprings Primary School as seen from Crowcombe Road





5 Analysis of landscape & public realm: Aspen Court and Cedar Lodge Care Home, Hope Corner lane

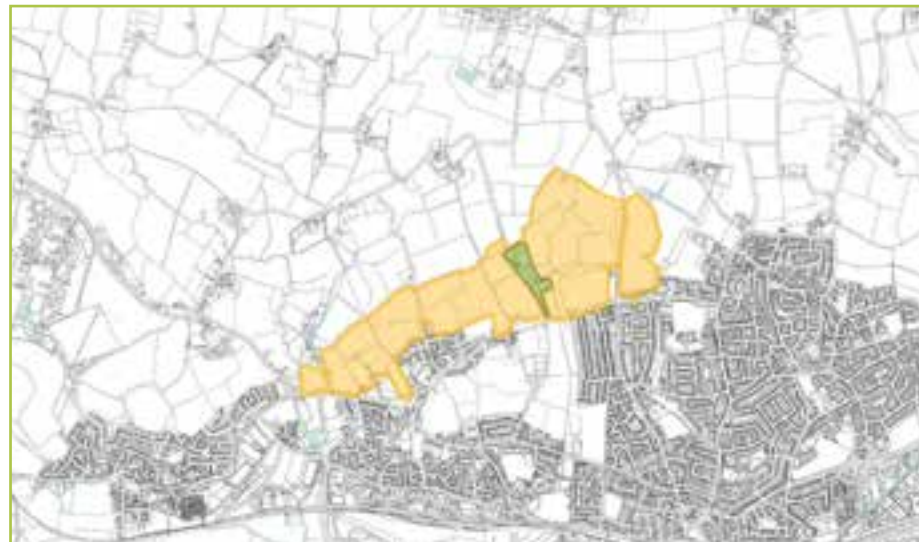
## 3.5 Character Area 4 - Whitmore Lane

### Introduction

The fourth character area is situated along Whitmore Lane, which extends into the centre of the proposed site.

### Settlement Pattern

Urban structure	The lane is sparsely populated, with a small number of residential units and clusters of agricultural buildings.
Open space network	The lane is surrounded by open green space.
Major infrastructure	Whitmore Lane connects Langford Lane at the north, to Corkscrew Lane at the south.



Character Area 4: Whitmore Lane

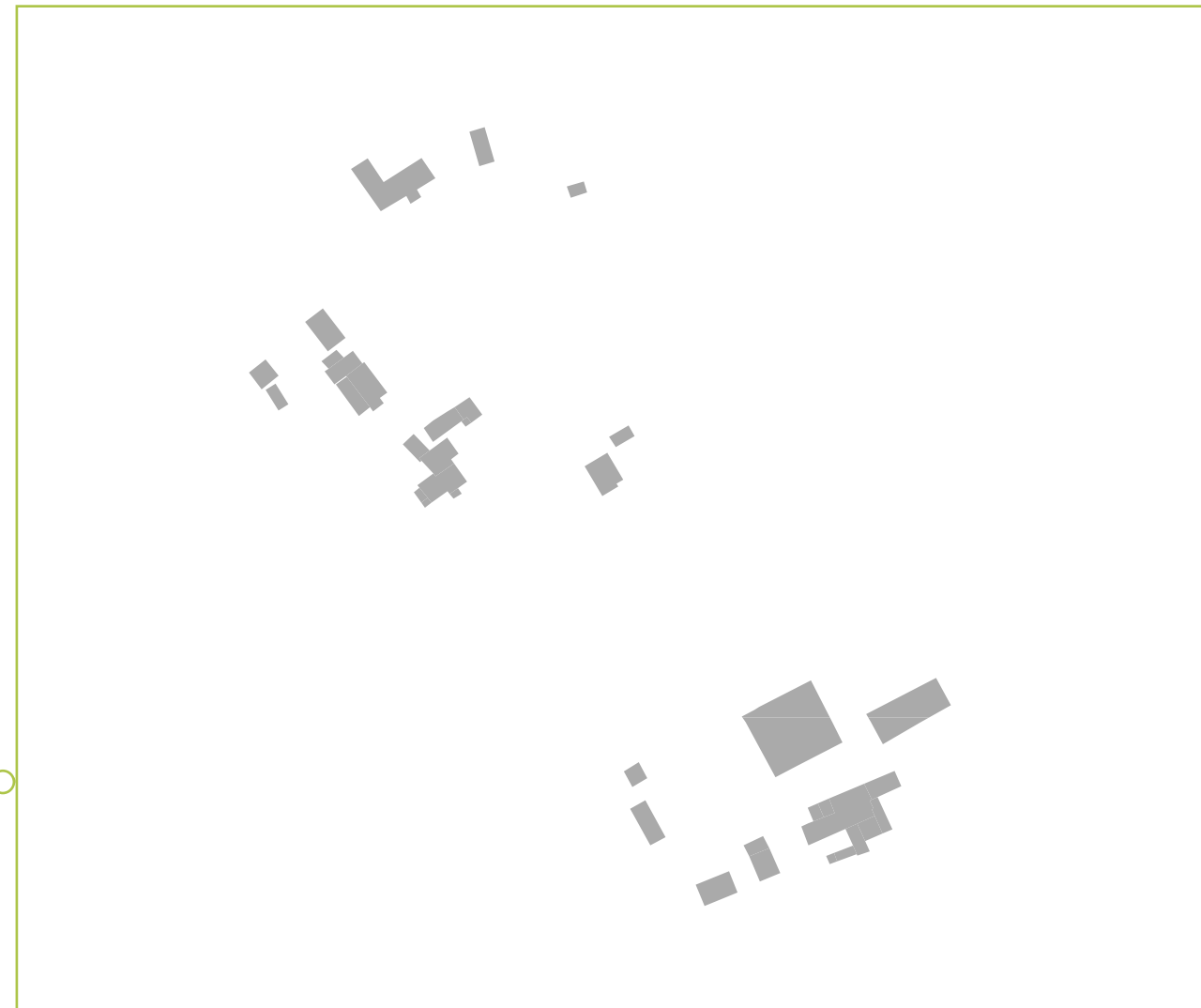
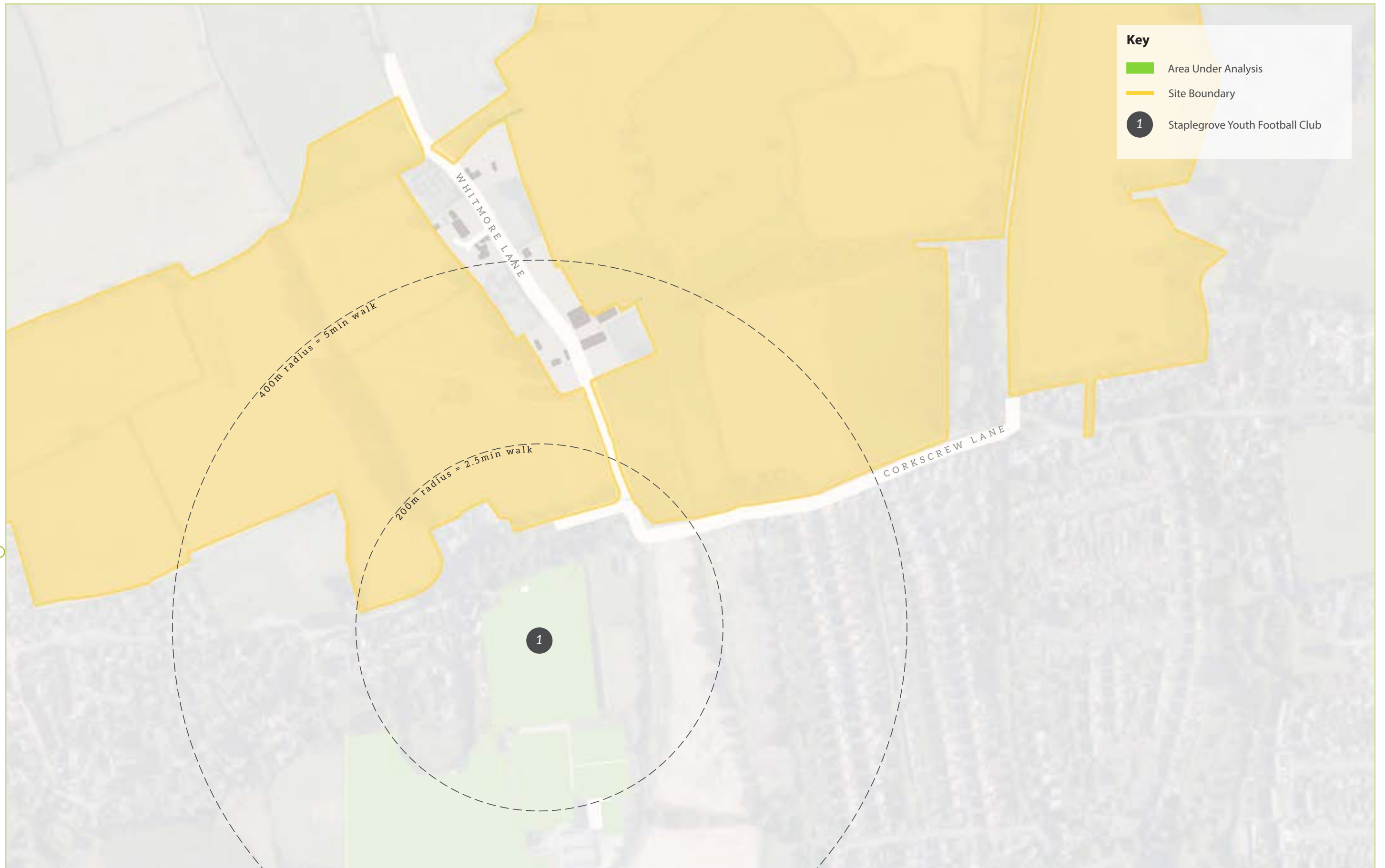


Figure ground, 1: 2000





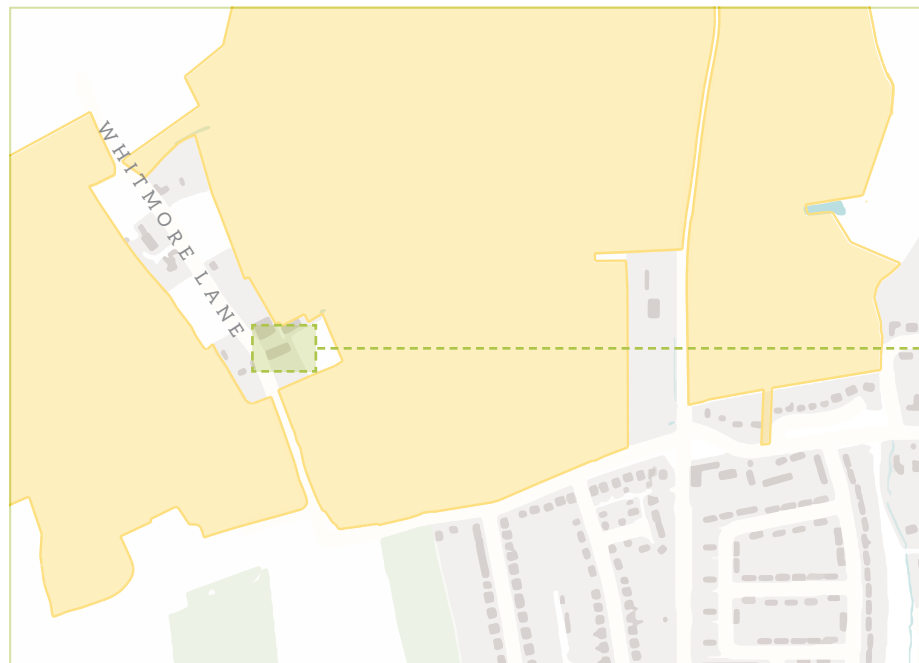
Facilities and walkable catchments



### 3.5 Character Area 4 - Whitmore Lane (contd.)

**Urban Form**

<b>Street form</b>	Whitmore Lane is a narrow two-way lane with no pedestrian footways. Grass verges and wild planting line the street. Due to the narrow form, off-street parking is available.
<b>Plot form</b>	Majority of plots are northeast - southwest orientated, typically offering wide frontage.
<b>Building location</b>	Residential units are generally orientated towards the lane,. Agricultural buildings form inward looking clusters, detached from the lane.
<b>Building lines</b>	Many properties are set back from the road, with front gardens and off-street parking. Generally building lines are not continuous.
<b>Edge treatments</b>	Boundaries are predominantly landscaped, with hedges and shrubs separating public and private spaces.



Analysis of urban form: Whitmore Lane, Plan 1:200 @ A3







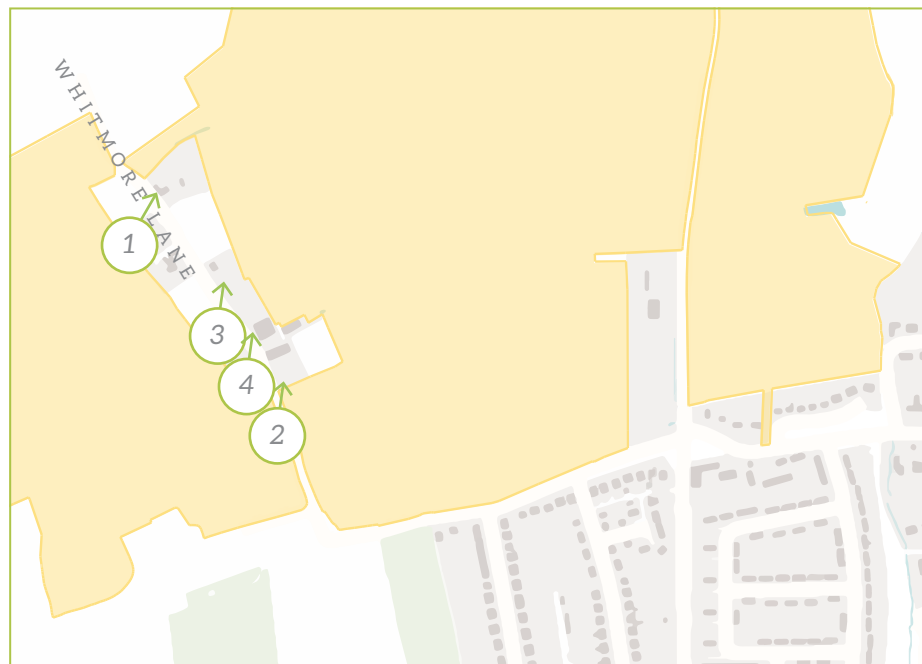
Analysis of urban form: Whitmore Lane, Section 1:100 @ A3

## 3.5 Character Area 4 - Whitmore Lane (contd.)

### Built Form

Whitmore Lane is comprised of agricultural barns and residential units.

Building massing	Properties are typically two-storeys, with some single-storey agricultural buildings.
Building types	Buildings are predominantly detached.
Building frontage	Roofs are a mix of hipped or gable. Façades are stone, red brick, render or a combination. Roofs are red pantiles, with corrugate metal used on the agricultural buildings
Townscape features	Chimneys contribute to the roofscape.
Soft landscape	Wild planting inhabits the road edge, with green verges and mature trees softening the edge.



1 Rendered façade along Whitmore Lane



2 Agricultural barns along Whitmore Lane



3 Boundary wall along Whitmore Lane



4 Agricultural barn along Whitmore Lane





5 Analysis of built form: Whitmore Lane

## 3.6 Character Area 5 - Pyrland Estate

### Introduction

The fifth character area is the Pyrland estate, situated to the west of the proposed site. The 13 hectare estate includes the grade II\* listed Pyrland Hall, a substantial mid 18th century 'country house' of Palladian-inspired design. The property is currently used as King's Hall School.

Pyrland estate is historically and culturally significant as:

- A listed, mid eighteenth century, Georgian mansion and park.
- The home of some prominent individuals in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Somerset politics and society, including George Deane, the Yea family and Richard Meade-King.
- The home of Arthur Malet who played a significant role in the colonial history of Bombay.
- An important Second World War military headquarters.

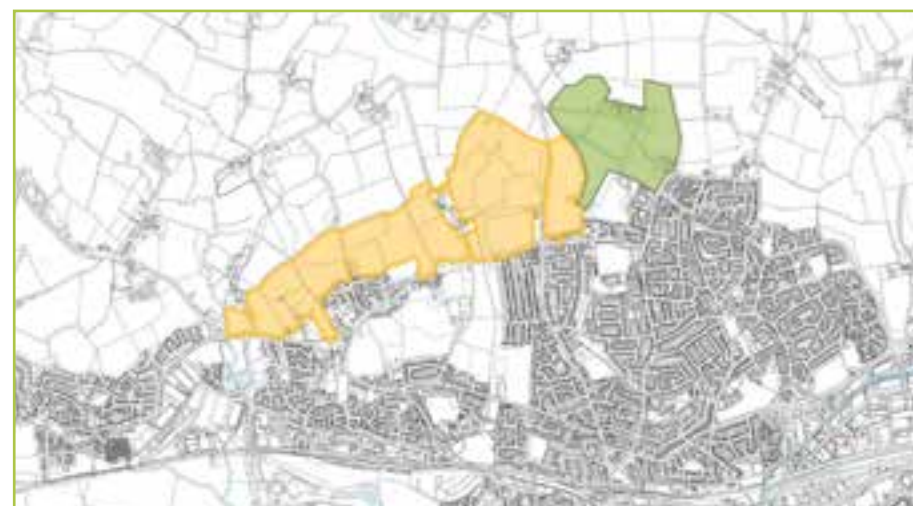
Despite the adjacent development of The Taunton Academy, subdivision of ownership, change of use to a public school, and peripheral encroachment by housing development, the core features of the Pyrland mid 18th century landscape remain intact, including:

- A modest grazed landscape park.
- A major axial view and formal avenue trees, enhanced with attractive three quarter landscape views to both sides of the avenue.
- A system of managed water bodies and formal water gardens.
- Some original parkland iron railings and gates.
- Good field archaeology reflecting the known history of the park.

Any development along the western edge of the proposed site will require careful consideration, ensuring that the historic parkland, and its setting, are fully respected.



*Pyrland Estate, formal avenue trees*

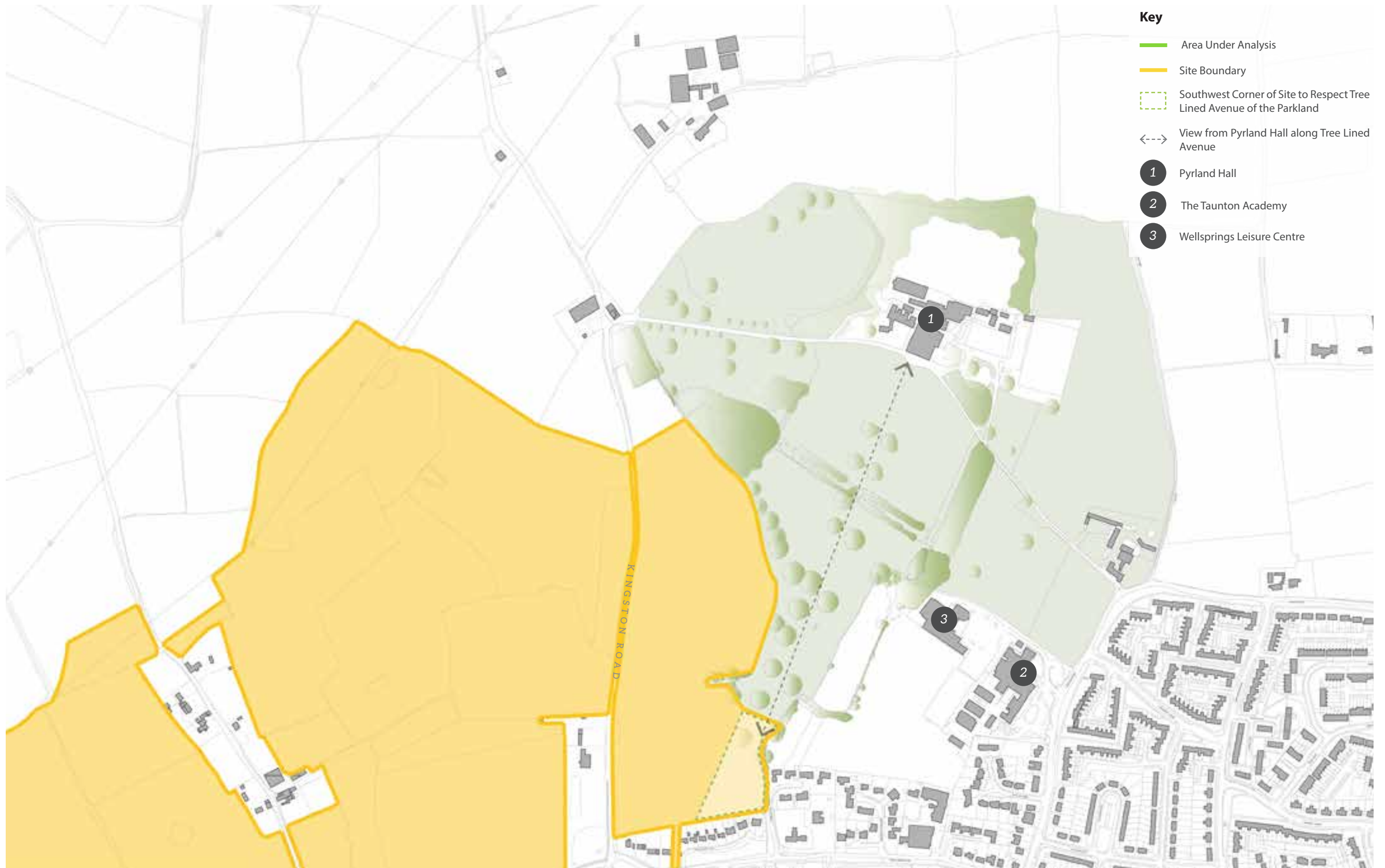


*Character Area 5: Pyrland Estate*



*Pyrland Estate, formal avenue trees towards Pyrland Hall*





Pyrland Estate, Plan 1:5000 @ A3



## 3.6 Character Area 5 - Pyrland Estate (contd.)

### Landscape & Public Realm

Pyrland estate forms an important landmark and open green space. National Trust owned farmland surrounds the estate.

Public buildings	The core features of the Pyrland mid 18th century landscape remain remarkably intact.
Open space	Extensive lawns and wooded grounds contribute positively to the area, obscuring direct views into and out of the estate, notably from the proposed site. The central parkland area is in good condition. The peripheral areas have suffered tree loss due to arable cultivation, whereas trees in the western park appear to have been damaged by soil compaction and overgrazing. Some of the avenue trees have too been lost. The ponds are generally intact, but overgrown by adjoining trees. Many field boundaries have been replaced by modern fences.



1 Tree vista on King's Hall School ground



2 Narrow 3/4 View of Pyrland Hall (King's Hall School)



3 Pyrland Hall (King's Hall School)



4 Aerial view of Pyrland Hall (King's Hall School)





5 Analysis of landscape & public realm: Pyrland Hall (King's Hall School)

## 3.6 Character Area 5 - Pyrland Estate (contd.)

### Landscape & Public Realm

Adjacent development, including The Taunton Academy, Wellsprings Leisure Centre, housing and power lines have weakened the character of the Pyrland Estate.

<b>Public buildings</b>	Buildings adjacent to the estate range from 2-3 storeys. Many of the adjacent developments introduce contemporary materials and forms.
<b>Open space</b>	Mature trees and hedgerows at boundary edges provide some visual buffering. During the winter months these are less successful.



1 The Taunton Academy (Community School)



2 Housing along Cheddon Road



3 Power lines to north of Pyrland Estate



4 Wellsprings Leisure Centre





5 Analysis of landscape & public realm: the Taunton Academy



## 3.7 Character Area 6 - Taunton Town Centre

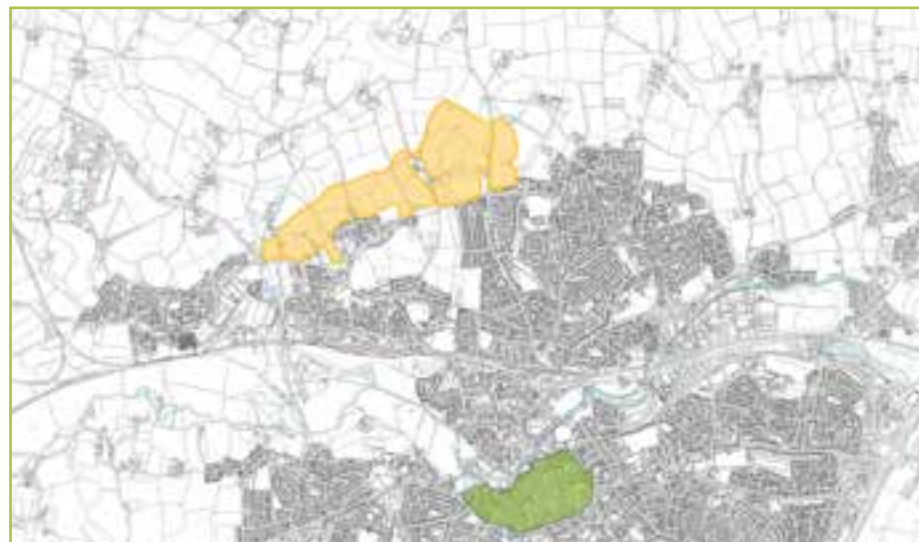
### Introduction

Analysis of Taunton Town Centre is critical in understanding the treatment of public space, notably commercial units.

### Landscape & Public Realm

The Character Area includes a number of key public facilities.

Public buildings	Commercial units address the street, creating active frontage onto the high street.
Open space	Areas of lawn are often enclosed by building edges.
Public routes	Wide pedestrian footways are provided, encouraging pedestrian activity. Mature street trees, hanging baskets and planters contribute positively to the public realm. Generally, public routes are provided with sufficient lighting. Cycle paths and storage are provided along key public routes.



Character Area 6: Taunton Town Centre



1 Active frontage in Taunton town centre



2 Raised lawn in Taunton town centre



3 Cycle storage in Taunton town centre



4 Street trees in Taunton town centre





5 Analysis of landscape & public realm: Taunton town centre

## 3.8 Summary

The analysis undertaken of the six character areas has helped to inform the design of the illustrative masterplan, and will inform more detailed design proposals for the site.

Each of the character areas that have been studied exhibit a number of attributes that contribute to their quality and character. A summary of the character analysis is set out in the table to the right.

Relevance of Character Areas	
Staplegrave, Staplegrave Road	This area presents several characteristics, which could be carried forward into the design principles of low-density areas of the new development. For example, the use of landscaped boundaries and on-street tree planting demonstrates how green elements can contribute to a pleasant street character. Detached housing, set back from the street, creates a low density grain with lots of private defensible space. A maximum dwelling height of 2.5 storeys is seen in this area. The local material palette could also be emanated, with red brick, rendered walls, and red/dark brown roof tiles all common in this area. House orientation is typically cross-gabled, with eaves-lines running parallel to the street. This is a trait which could prove relevant in the design of street spaces in the new development. The use of dedicated footpath and cycles routes should be used widely throughout the new development.
Staplegrave, Manor Road	The Manor Road area presents a traditional village character. Here it is seen how a good proportion of public open space can be effective in producing a pleasant feel to an area. However, vehicular routes are prioritised over pedestrians in many places, presenting a public realm which is less safe to navigate on foot. In the new development, this should be avoided, and pedestrian and cycle routes should be comprehensive and easy to use. Boundaries in the Manor Road area are often softened with planting, mediating the transition between public and private space. The local material palette could also be carried forward to the development: exposed stone, rendered walls, slate roofs or red/dark brown roof tiles are all prevalent in this area. Houses here tend to be two storeys, with some single storey dwellings. This scale of built elements should be considered in the new development, especially along boundaries where existing dwellings meet the development.
Whitmore Area	This character area presents an efficient and well-connected street network - two traits which should be aimed for in the new scheme. There are many recognisable public open spaces, connected by a walkable street network. This, alongside plentiful street planting, mature trees and softened planted boundaries, shows how green elements should be used to create an inviting streetscape. The typical dwelling height in this area is two storeys. In terms of parking, there are parts of the Whitmore Area in which on-street parking interrupts the pedestrian route. This should be avoided, with parking either in private off-street spaces, or designated on-street bays.
Whitmore Lane	Whitmore lane cuts directly through the proposed development, and its distinctive character should be retained. It is extremely low density, and is surrounded by open green space. This connection to wider green space should be considered in the new development. Buildings are typically set back from the lane, with the boundaries softened by extensive planting and trees. These transitions between public and private space should be treated in a sensitive manner. The material palette which is apparent in this area could be used to inform the design of the new development: exposed stone, red brick, render and red roof tiles are all present.
Pyrland Estate	Forming an important boundary to the east of the development area, the Pyrland Estate presents a sensitive edge condition which must be handled appropriately. Existing tree planting buffers should be utilised and enhanced where possible, in order to visually screen the estate from the development.
Taunton Town Centre	The town centre in Taunton presents an exemplar for an active street frontage and 'high street' character. Pedestrians and cyclists are well catered for, with dedicated cycle lanes and cycle parking. This should be a key design principle in all areas of the proposed development. Tree planting is brought into the busy streetscape, along with areas of lawn for public use. Buildings can be up to 3 storeys in order to create a 'high street' feel.

Summary of Character Area analysis



