

25 January to 5pm 8 March 2021
'Call for Sites 2021' Site Identification Form

St Albans City and District Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan 2020-2038. The 'Call for Sites' is an early opportunity for individuals, landowners and developers to suggest sites within the District for development over the next 15-20 years. The site suggestions received by us will be used to inform the preparation of the new Local Plan 2020-2038.

You are invited to put forward any new sites that you would like the Council to consider in its Housing Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA). These should be capable of delivering 5 or more dwellings, or economic development on sites of 0.25 hectares or more (or 500 square metres of floor space or more). The Council will take account of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) submissions previously received since 2009 and therefore there is no need to resubmit these unless circumstances have changed. Sites from previous SHLAAs will form part of the Council's assessment. Proposed land uses can include:

- Housing
- Gypsy & Traveller Housing
- Mixed Use
- Employment
- Renewable and low carbon energy and heat
- Biodiversity Improvement / Offsetting
- Green Belt Compensatory Land
- Land for Tree Planting
- Other

To enable sites to be mapped digitally, please provide GIS shapefiles of your site, where possible.

The consultation period runs for six weeks between Monday 25 January to 5pm on Monday 8 March 2021.

Unfortunately, we cannot treat any of the information you provide as confidential.

It is important to note that not all sites received through the 'Call for Sites' will be appropriate for consideration as part of the Housing Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA). As a general rule:

We encourage you to submit sites that are likely to become available for development or redevelopment between now and 2038.

Please do not submit sites that:

- Are already included as a housing allocation in the St Albans District Local Plan Review (November 1994) – i.e. sites that are listed in 'saved' Policies 4 and 5.

- Have already been submitted to the Council for consideration via previous 'Call for Sites' and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) processes (unless information is updated/changed).
- Already have planning permission for development, unless a new and different proposal is likely in the future; or
- Are situated outside St Albans City and District's administrative area.

If you wish to update information about a site previously submitted please complete the form below.

Please return the **form and site location plan** to the Spatial Planning and Design Team. We strongly encourage digital submissions via our online portal.

By online consultation portal:

<http://stalbans-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/>

By e-mail to: planning.policy@stalbans.gov.uk

By post to: St Albans Council Offices, St Peters Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 3JE

Due to COVID-19; offices being shut and officers working from home; submissions by post are discouraged.

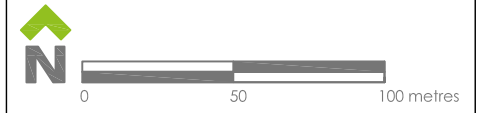
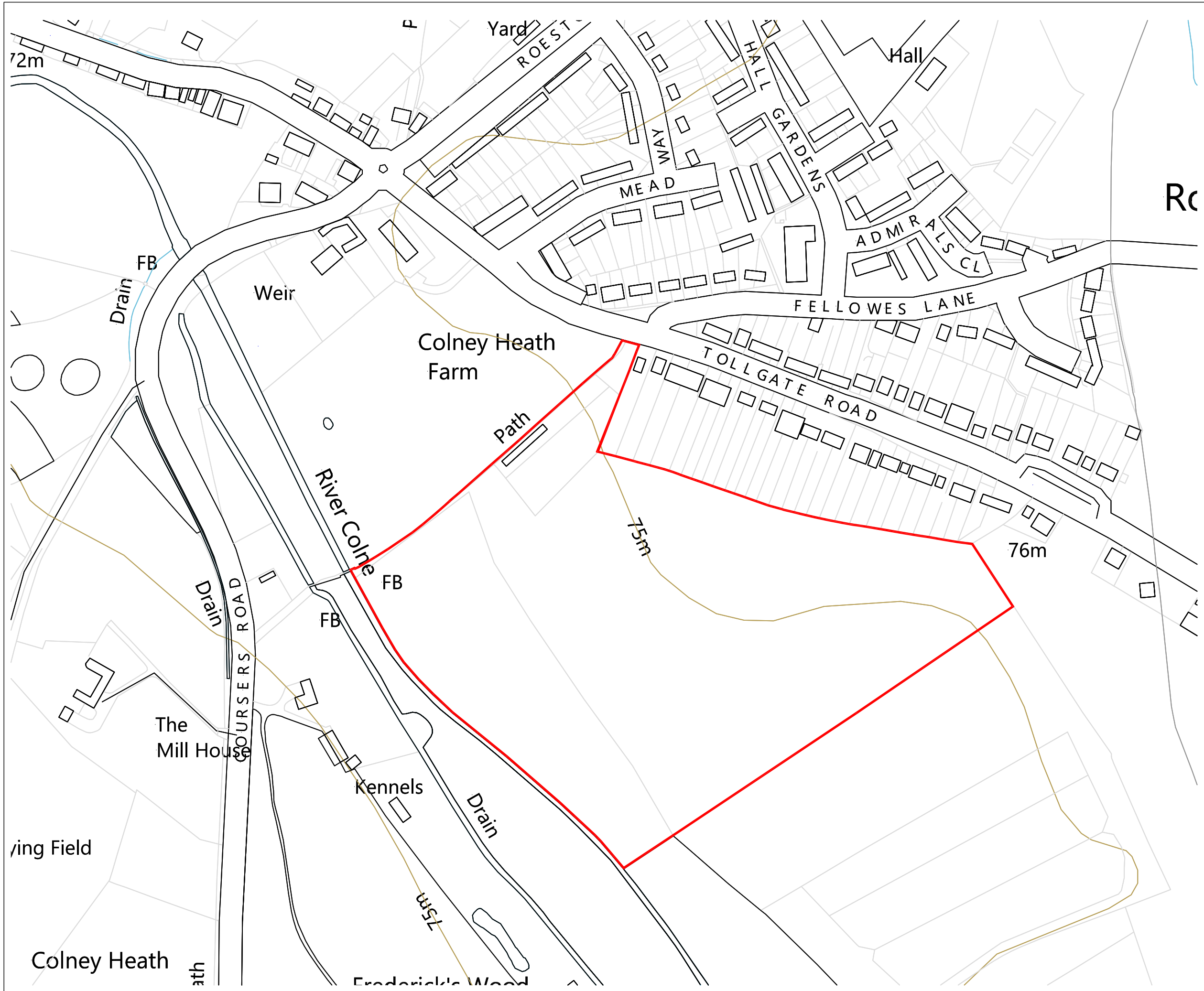
Your Details	
Name	Simon Andrews
Company/Organisation	DLA Town Planning Ltd
Address	5, The Gavel Centre, Porters Wood, St Albans
Postcode	AL3 6PQ
Telephone	██████████
Email	████████████████████
Your interest	<input type="checkbox"/> Site Owner <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning Consultant <input type="checkbox"/> Registered Social Landlord <input type="checkbox"/> Local Resident <input type="checkbox"/> Developer <input type="checkbox"/> Community <input type="checkbox"/> Other

Site Details					
Requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivers 5 or more dwellings or; • Provides economic development on sites of 0.25 hectares or more (or 500 square metres of floor space or more) 				
Site address/location (Please provide a map showing the site boundary)	Land rear of 42-100 Tollgate Road, Colney Heath, AL4 0PY (see attached site location plan)				
Site area (in hectares)	7.62ha				
Coordinates	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Easting</td> <td></td> <td>Northing</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Easting		Northing	
Easting		Northing			
Site Location Plan Attached	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No				
GIS mapping shapefile attached (in .shp file format)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
Landownership (please include contact details if known)	<div style="background-color: black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; height: 15px; width: 60%;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; height: 15px; width: 80%;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; height: 15px; width: 65%;"></div>				
Current land use	Equestrian				
Condition of current use (e.g. vacant, derelict)	Active				
Suggested land use	<input type="checkbox"/> Housing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gypsy & Travellers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mixed Use (please specify) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Renewable and low carbon energy and heat <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity Improvement / Offsetting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Green Belt Compensatory Land <input type="checkbox"/> Land for Tree Planting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)				
Reasons for suggested development / land use	The site is suitable for residential development and would make a sensible addition to the village of Colney Heath. See attached Vision document for further details.				

Likely timescale for delivery of suggested development / land use	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-5 Years <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6-10 Years <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 11-15 Years <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 15+ Years
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Site Constraints	Contamination/pollution issues (previous hazardous land uses)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Environmental issues (e.g. Tree Presentation Orders; SSSIs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Flood Risk	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (See report)
	Topography affecting site (land levels, slopes, ground conditions)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Utility Services (access to mains electricity, gas, water, drainage etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
	Legal issues (For example, restrictive covenants or ownership titles affecting the site)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Access. Is the site accessible from a public highway without the need to cross land in a different ownership to the site?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (If no please provide details of how the site could be accessed. Without this information the site will not be considered to be deliverable).

	Other constraints affecting the site	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (If yes, please specify) <input type="checkbox"/> No
Planning Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Planning Permission Granted <input type="checkbox"/> Planning Permission Refused <input type="checkbox"/> Pending Decision <input type="checkbox"/> Application Withdrawn <input type="checkbox"/> Planning Permission Lapsed <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Application Advice <input type="checkbox"/> Planning Permission Not Sought <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Other comments	Please include details of the above choice below (for example planning reference numbers and site history) See attached Vision document for further details.	



Site Boundary: 7.72ha

Rev	Date	By	Description
 Dixies Barns, High Street, Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT t 01462 743647 e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk w csaenvironmental.co.uk			
Project	Land at Colney Heath		
Title	Site Location Plan		
Client	Vistry Group		
Scale	1:2500 @ A3	Drawn	SG
Date	March 2021	Checked	RR
Drawing No.	CSA/3925/109	Rev	-

By email to planning.policy@stalbans.gov.uk

Spatial Planning Team
St Albans City and District Council
Civic Centre
St Peters Street
St Albans
Hertfordshire
AL1 3JE

8 March 2021

My Ref: 17/102

Dear sir/madam,

**RE: ST ALBANS LOCAL PLAN 2020-38 – CALL FOR SITES
LAND REAR OF 42-100 TOLLGATE, COLNEY HEATH**

I write in response to your Call for Sites in association with the new Local Plan covering the period 2020-38. I am instructed by Vistry Group - promoters of the above site and working with the landowner to promote the site for residential development.

Vistry Group was formed in January 2020 and is made up of Vistry Housebuilding – featuring the Bovis Homes and Linden Homes brands - and Vistry Partnerships, which is the partnerships and regeneration section of the business. The Tollgate Road site was previously promoted by Linden Homes and was assessed in the SHLAA with the reference number SHLAA-GB-CH-519.

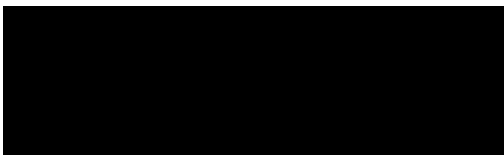
You will be aware that land adjoining this site is also being promoted for development (SHLAA-GB-CH-524). The Tollgate Road site could either come forward as a separate site on its own or in association with a larger development including the adjacent land.

This Call for Sites submission consists of the following:

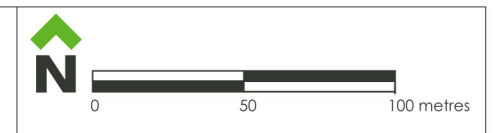
- Completed pro forma
- Site location plan
- Vision document (CSA Environmental, March 2021)
- Concept Masterplan (CSA Environmental, August 2020)
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CSA Environmental, October 2020)
- Landscape and Visual Overview and Green Belt Assessment (CSA Environmental, October 2020)

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this site with you in due course. in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Yours faithfully



Simon Andrews
Strategic Planning Manager



- Site Boundary: 7.72ha
- Potential area for residential development: 3.85ha (135 - 155 dwellings @ 35/40 dph)
- Potential location for a children's play area (20m buffer required)
- Potential open space to serve the new development
- Potential seating/picnic area
- Potential location for SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) features
- Dwelling frontages
- Potential vehicular access points
- Potential spine road throughout the development
- Potential secondary streets
- Potential recreational routes through the development
- Potential mown path
- Existing public footpaths
- Existing vegetation
- Green Belt
- Existing waterbodies and water courses
- Listed Buildings
- Colney Heath Local Nature Reserve
- Existing bus route and bus stops
- Fluvial flood zone 2 (Source: Environment Agency)
- Fluvial flood zone 3 (Source: Environment Agency)

A	08.03.2021	JC	Red Line amendment
Rev	Date	By	Description

CSA
environmental

Dixies Barns, High Street,
Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT

t 01462 743647
e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk
w csaenvironmental.co.uk

Project	Land at Colney Heath		
Title	Concept Masterplan		
Client	Vistry Group		
Scale	1:2500 @ A3	Drawn	RC
Date	August 2020	Checked	RR
Drawing No.	CSA/3925/105	Rev	A



VISION DOCUMENT

LAND AT COLNEY HEATH
MARCH 2021

Prepared by:



Office Address:

CSA Environmental
Dixie's Barns, High Street, Ashwell, Hertfordshire, SG7 5NT

Office Telephone Number:

01462 743 647

On behalf of:

Vistry Group

Disclaimer

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	Date:	Prepared by:	Authorised by:	File reference:
1st Issue	12.01.2021	JC	RR	CSA_3925_03_DRAFT
Rev A	05.03.2021	SP	RR	CSA_3925_03_A
Rev B	08.03.2021	SP	RR	CSA_3925_B



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VISION STATEMENT



PREFACE

The Vision Document promotes the development of Land at Colney Heath (the Site). It demonstrates how the Site could be brought forward as a comprehensively planned development to deliver a high quality, exciting and sustainable new neighbourhood for around 155 new homes, including new affordable housing.

The proposals shown are set within a network of green infrastructure, to include new landscaping, children's play provision, and new routes for walking, which allow the new development to successfully integrate into the wider community.



01. INTRODUCING THE SITE



01. INTRODUCING THE SITE

This Vision Document supports the promotion of Land at Colney Heath for around 155 new homes.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Vistry Group is working with the landowner of Land at Colney Heath, to promote the Site for residential development. The 7.72 hectare (Ha) Site presents an exciting opportunity to create a sustainable new neighbourhood to address the future housing needs of both Colney Heath and the wider district.

St Albans City and District Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan, which will guide and shape planning decisions over the period 2020 to 2036. The new Local Plan will include policies allocating sites for new housing. The purpose of this Vision Document is, therefore, to demonstrate that the Site represents a logical and sustainable residential development opportunity which should be allocated for new housing.

The Vision Document shows that there are no technical impediments which would preclude the development at Land at Colney Heath. It also demonstrates how environmental constraints such as flooding and ecology could be mitigated at the detailed design stage.

Vistry Group and the Site owner now welcome further discussion with St. Albans City and District Council, and local stakeholders, as we look to realise this exciting development opportunity, and secure the delivery of much-needed new homes.

The Vision Document articulates the development potential of the Site, describes the Site's characteristics and technical considerations, and assesses its sustainability performance. The document covers the following:

- **Planning Policy Context** – Describes the current planning position in St Albans City and District Council.
- **Site and Surroundings** – Sets out the Site's context and describes how Colney Heath represents a sustainable location for development.
- **Opportunities and Constraints** – Identifies the opportunities and constraints that will shape the Site's development.
- **The Vision** – Outlines the overall Site vision, and the Site's delivery potential.

Regional Context

Colney Heath is located at the south easterly most extent of the District, bordering Hertsmere. This large Hertfordshire village, sits within a triangular parcel of agricultural and wooded land, defined to the east by the A1M; to the north by the North Orbital Road, which connects the A1M at Hatfield to the M1 at Hemel Hempstead to the west; and to the south by the A1081 and a section of the M25.

The village itself is divided into two areas, with the northern part located around the High Street in the west and the other located around Tollgate Road, to the south east of the village. Together, these two roads connect and form the main thoroughfare through the village.

The University town of Hatfield is located approximately 2.2 miles (3.5km) to the east of Colney Heath, with the centre of St Albans located approximately 3 miles (4.9km) to the north west. The larger towns of Hemel Hempstead, Watford and Welwyn Garden City are all within 10 miles (16km) of Colney Heath, offering opportunities for employment, travel and education. The nearest train stations are located at Hatfield and Welham Green which provide services to London Kings Cross, Cambridge and beyond.

The Site itself is located on the south eastern edge of Colney Heath adjacent to Tollgate Road. The existing settlement edge is located to the north east, with the route of the River Colne running to the south west, agricultural land extending to the south east, with a horse paddock to the north west. The Site is currently located within the Metropolitan Green Belt, relevant Saved Policy of the St Albans District Local Plan Review is Policy 1.

As part of the Emerging Local Plan process, the Planning Inspectorate has provided new criteria for the scale of sites which may be suitable, in principle, for release from the Green Belt and therefore appropriate for new residential developments. The Site at Colney Heath fit this criteria.

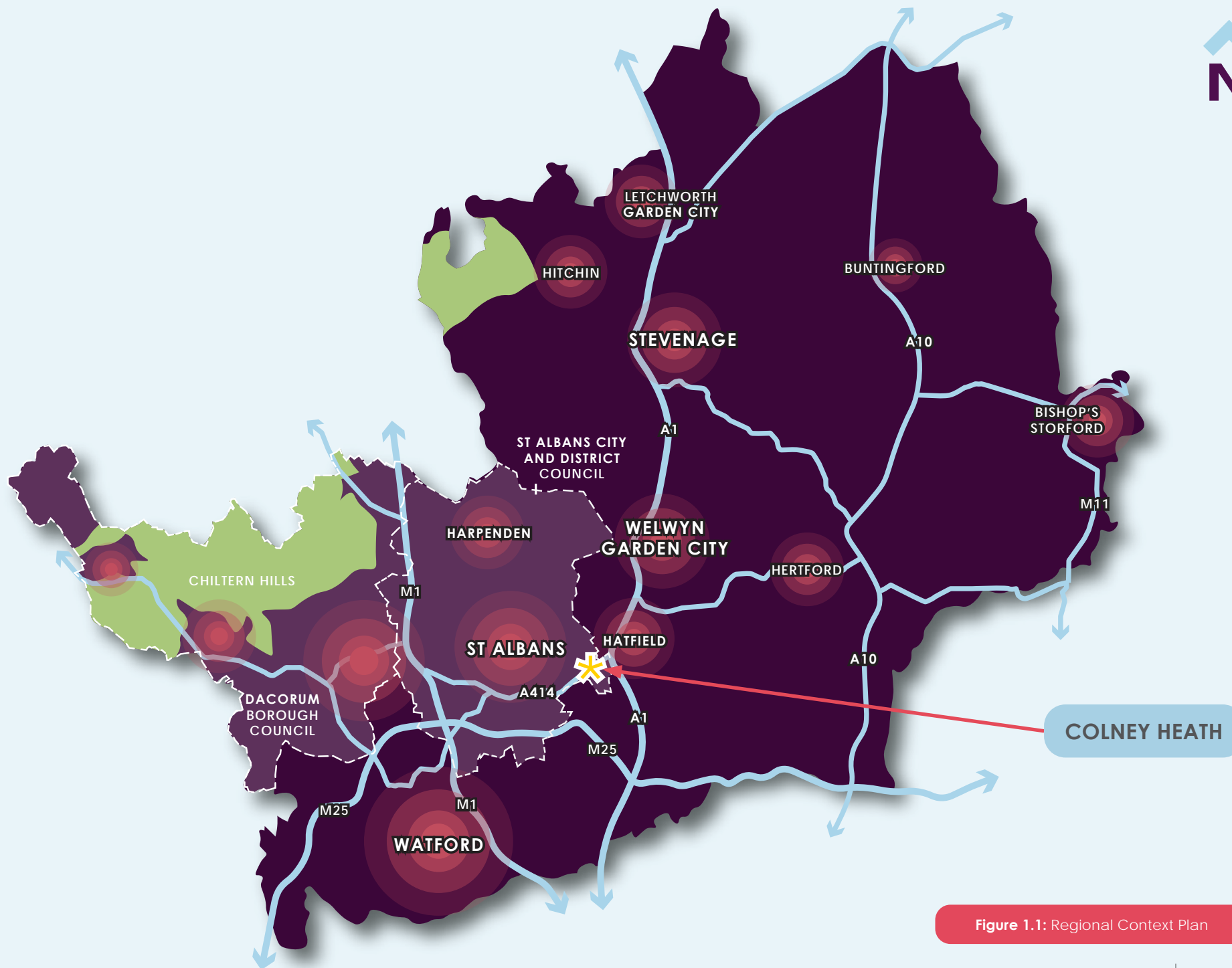


Figure 1.1: Regional Context Plan

Introducing Vistry – Who we are

Vistry Group brings together the well-recognised brands Bovis Homes and Linden Homes, and the newly named Vistry Partnerships (formerly Galliford Try Partnerships). Vistry Partnerships is the Group's affordable homes and regeneration specialist. Working in close partnership with housing associations, local authorities, and government agencies, it is one of the UK's leading providers of affordable housing and sustainable communities.

With developments from Northumberland to Cornwall and Cheshire to Norfolk, Vistry Group will be delivering around 12,000 private and affordable homes a year across the country, positioning it within the top five housebuilders in the UK by volume.



Vistry House design:

Vistry Group is one of the country's leading housebuilders, with well-known brands that have an established reputation for quality that runs through their homes' design, build, specification and customer service. The range of properties across the Linden and Bovis Homes brands is wide and flexible - with designs that can be adapted to the changing needs of the market, the customer and the environment in which we build.

We build homes based on the following key design principles:

- **Arrival:** from designing external elevations and creating attractive street scenes through to maximising the flow and size of the rooms to meet modern lifestyle needs, we aim to create well-designed places that are functional, accessible and sustainable;
- **Proportion:** the relocation of cloakrooms and kitchens has enabled deeper windows to be used on the property fronts creating well-proportioned, balanced elevations that maximise solar gain;
- **Light:** the size, positioning and number of windows has created bright and airy homes which relate positively to the private and public spaces around them;
- **Movement:** careful consideration has been given to the flow and layout of new homes to accommodate today's lifestyles and facilitate flexibility in the way rooms can be used;
- **Quality:** the homes have been created to embrace modern design and styling, whilst retaining the classic architectural traditions on which Vistry, through Bovis Homes and Linden Homes, has built its heritage and brand since 1885.



Vistry Building Sustainability:

We've improved the thermal efficiency of the walls, windows, and roofs by refining our designs and using proven, effective materials

We've used the latest energy efficient heating and hot water systems that will reduce CO2 emissions

We've introduced some of the latest features designed to encourage lower water consumption



1.2 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

The Development Framework

The Adopted Development Plan for St Albans City and District Council, comprises the Saved Policies of the District Local Plan Review 1994, the Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan 2007, the Waste Core Strategy 2012 and the Waste Site Allocations July 2014. The Site is currently located within the Green Belt and the relevant Saved Policy of the St Albans District Local Plan Review is Policy 1 (Metropolitan Green Belt).

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

A key Government planning priority is to significantly boost the delivery of new housing. The NPPF recognises that small to medium scale sites, such as Land at Colney Heath, which are unconstrained and do not require significant upfront infrastructure can be built out relatively quickly. The proposal at Colney Heath would therefore make a positive early contribution to the continuous delivery of housing, as there is a significant identified housing need in the District, and the Council's strategic policies are more than five years old.

To promote sustainable development in rural areas, Paragraph 78 of the NPPF states that housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. The Site at Colney Heath meets these national criteria.

Other Material Considerations - Emerging Local Plans

St Albans City and District Council is currently in the process of bringing forward a new Local Plan. A replacement Local Plan was submitted for examination in March 2019 and the initial hearings took place in January 2020. Following a lengthy pause in the Examination process, the Inspectors recommended that the submitted Local Plan should be withdrawn.

This requires the production of a new Local Plan and Sustainability Appraisal together with a new spatial strategy, based on a standard methodology of around 900 new homes per annum. In addition, further homes will also need to be found to replace the dwellings previously anticipated to be delivered from the draft Park Street Garden Village allocation, which has been removed.

In reaching their determination on the emerging Local Plan, the Inspectors provided high level spatial guidance on what a replacement new Local Plan should seek to achieve and the potential scale of sites which may be suitable, in principle, for additional release from the Green Belt. In particular, the Inspectors highlighted the need for a greater mix of housing sites to ensure balanced delivery. The inclusion of small and medium-sized sites, alongside strategic-scale development, will produce a more robust housing land supply and greater diversity of delivery. In this regard, the Site at Colney Heath meets all of the relevant criteria identified by the Inspectors.

Suitability and Sustainability of the Site Location

Colney Heath has a range of local shops, services and facilities, which are all easily accessible from the Site via non-car modes. Colney Heath is also accessible to St Albans, the largest town in the District, which provides a wider retail offer and a wider range of employment opportunities, leisure, and other facilities.

In addition to the availability of nearby public transport options, there are also good opportunities to promote long term sustainable cycling routes from the Site to nearby key employment locations and larger settlements. These locations include Hatfield and the nearby Acrewood Park industrial and commercial estate, to the north of Colney Heath. The Site is in a sustainable location and therefore suitable for residential development.

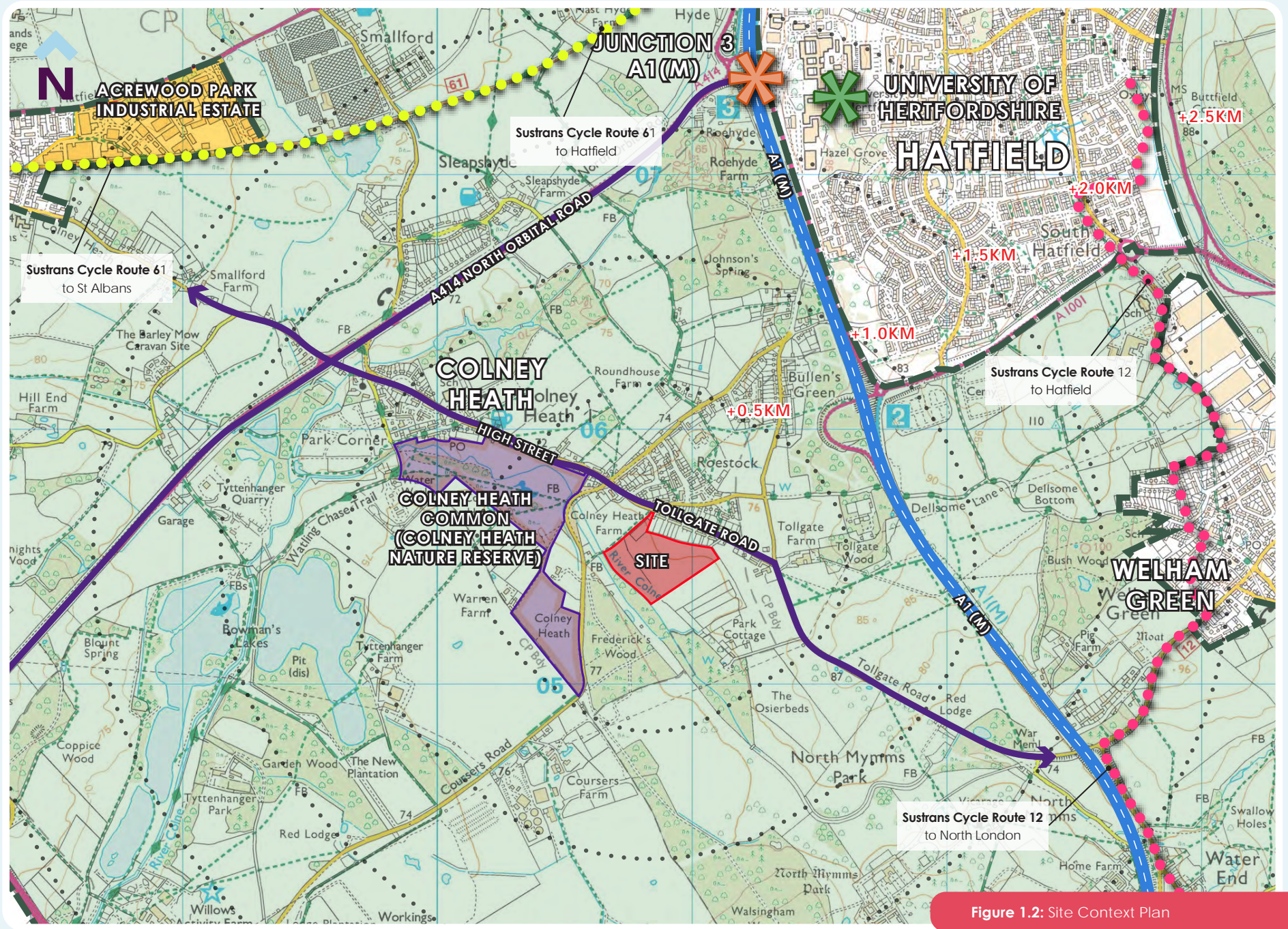


Figure 1.2: Site Context Plan

Acceptability of Green Belt Impact

The Green Belt Review Purposes Assessment was undertaken by Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM) in 2013 on behalf of St Albans City and District Council, Dacorum Borough Council, and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council. The Site lies within Green Belt parcel 'GB34 – Green Belt Land between Hatfield and London Colney'.

The assessment found that parcel GB34 makes a 'limited or no' contribution to purpose 1 (checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas); a 'partial' contribution to purposes 2 (preventing neighbouring towns from merging) and also purpose 4 (preserving the setting and special character of historic towns); and a 'significant' contribution to purpose 3 (assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment). The assessment notes that the parcel contains some built development, including ribbon development. It also notes that a minor reduction in the gap would be unlikely to compromise the separation of 1st tier settlements. It notes that the level of openness is generally high, especially in the south, but with linear built development at Colney Heath, and the A1(M) forming a major urban influence. The Councils Green Belt study is however an overview, and does not take into consideration the specific Green Belt functions of smaller sites.

The proposed development will be very well contained, and would immediately adjoin the existing settlement. The proposed development could be delivered without significant impact to the functions of the Green Belt.

The development of the Site at Colney Heath would therefore not be prejudicial to the maintenance of the Green Belt elsewhere in the District, and exceptional circumstances exist to justify the release of the Site for residential purposes.

The NPPF does not provide an exact definition of exceptional circumstances. However paragraph 137 of the NPPF sets out a number of criteria to ascertain whether exceptional circumstances will exist to justify releasing land from the Green Belt. These include: the intensity of the assessed need, inherent constraints on the supply of land for sustainable development, and the difficulties in achieving sustainable development without impinging on the Green Belt.

The Site at Colney Heath provides an excellent opportunity to help address an existing, intense, assessed housing need in a District where sustainable development, sufficient to meet the new housing requirement, can only be realised via the planned release of additional Green Belt land.

Why this Site?

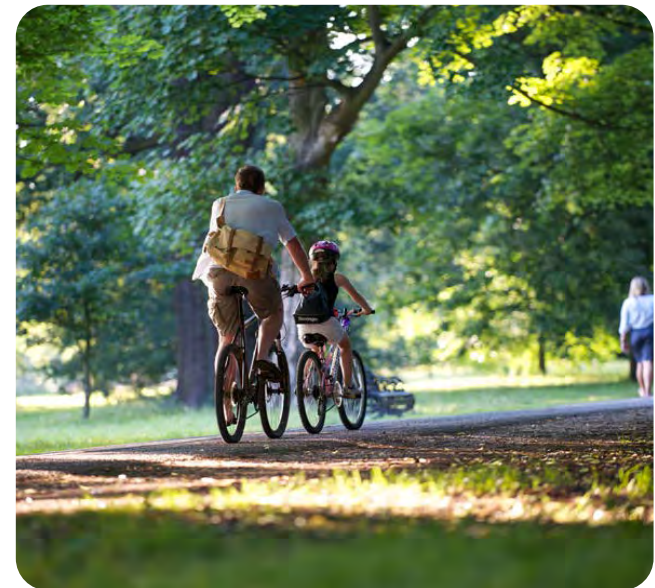
The Site at Colney Heath, is a highly deliverable and logical development option for the planned, sustainable growth of Colney Heath, by virtue of its low local Green Belt impact and its excellent connectivity, both within Colney Heath and further afield.

Whilst other development options are also available, the development impacts of this particular Site, both upon the primary purposes of the Green Belt in this part of the district and the wider landscape are minimal. As such, the Site represents a development option which can reduce the need to release Green Belt land in other, more sensitive locations, where the landscape impacts of new development, and the function of the Green Belt are more critical.

In addition, the location of the Site at Colney Heath is well placed to take advantage of the nearby proximity of the Sustrans Cycle Route 61 and 12, for sustainable access to both the Hatfield and St Alban's employment areas and the nearby Acrewood Park industrial and commercial facility, north of Colney Heath.

Summary of Key Planning Attributes and Benefits

- The Site will provide a range and mix of housing types, including smaller homes for first time buyers and downsizers.
- Any technical issues to new development can be easily and appropriately addressed.
- Opportunity to release the Site from the Green Belt and create a new robust Green Belt boundary, without conflicting with the first four Green Belt purposes, as defined within the NPPF.
- The Site has no statutory or non-statutory landscape designation and is not a 'valued landscape'. The proposed scheme can provide landscape and ecological enhancements, including new areas of public open space and green corridors.
- The Site will enable the provision for around 155 new homes, including 40% new Affordable Homes.
- Significant and positive effects on local economic output, through construction jobs and the local service sector economy, with a boost to local economic viability.
- The creation of new cycle and pedestrian routes through the Site to provide long term sustainable connections to key employment areas and Colney Heath local facilities.
- Availability of contributions to help improve and enhance existing play provision and Colney Heath Common.
- A net gain in biodiversity.







02. A SUSTAINABLE LOCATION

02. A SUSTAINABLE LOCATION

An assessment of the Site demonstrates its sustainable location.

2.1 SETTLEMENT CONTEXT

The village can be traced back to Roman times due to its location on the way to St Albans, but it was not until the 18th Century that a handful of buildings were known to exist, still evident along the High Street.

In 1865 a branch line from Hatfield to St. Albans Abbey railway station was built with a station serving Colney Heath, opening in 1879. The line was closed in 1968, with the route today now a walkway and cycle route.

The older and more historic housing streets of the High Street and Tollgate Road, the principal thoroughfares through the village have been infilled with modern development.

A number of local services and facilities are located within Colney Heath, catering for everyday practical needs. These would be available and accessible to future residents of the Site by walking, cycling and the use of the existing public transport network. The amenities in Colney Heath include a post office, two public houses and a takeaway establishment, a local car dealership and garage, and Colney Heath Junior School and Nursery.

















Figure 2.1 opposite, illustrates the offering of facilities at Colney Heath. Two bus services pass along the High Street and Tollgate Road: No. 312 runs between Bell Bar and Hatfield, with the No. 230 connecting Welwyn Garden City and St Albans. There are two bus stops located just to the west and east of the

proposed Site access point along Tollgate Road, therefore, residents will have access to frequent bus services which provide access to a further range of community services, facilities, wider transport links, and employment opportunities.

Welham Green has a railway station, which is located approximately 1.7 miles (2.8km) to the east of the Site. The railway provides regular services to a number of destinations, including Cambridge, Hatfield, Potters Bar, East Barnet and into London Kings Cross. It is accessible from the Site via the two aforementioned bus services.





-  Site Boundary
-  Green Belt
-  Colney Heath Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
-  A1(M)
-  Main vehicular routes and bus stops
-  Public Footpath
-  Bridleway
-  Education facilities
-  Grocery/convenience store
-  Religious facilities
-  Public house/restaurant/eatery
-  Public open space
-  Post Office
-  Community facilities
-  Sports facilities
-  Hairdressers

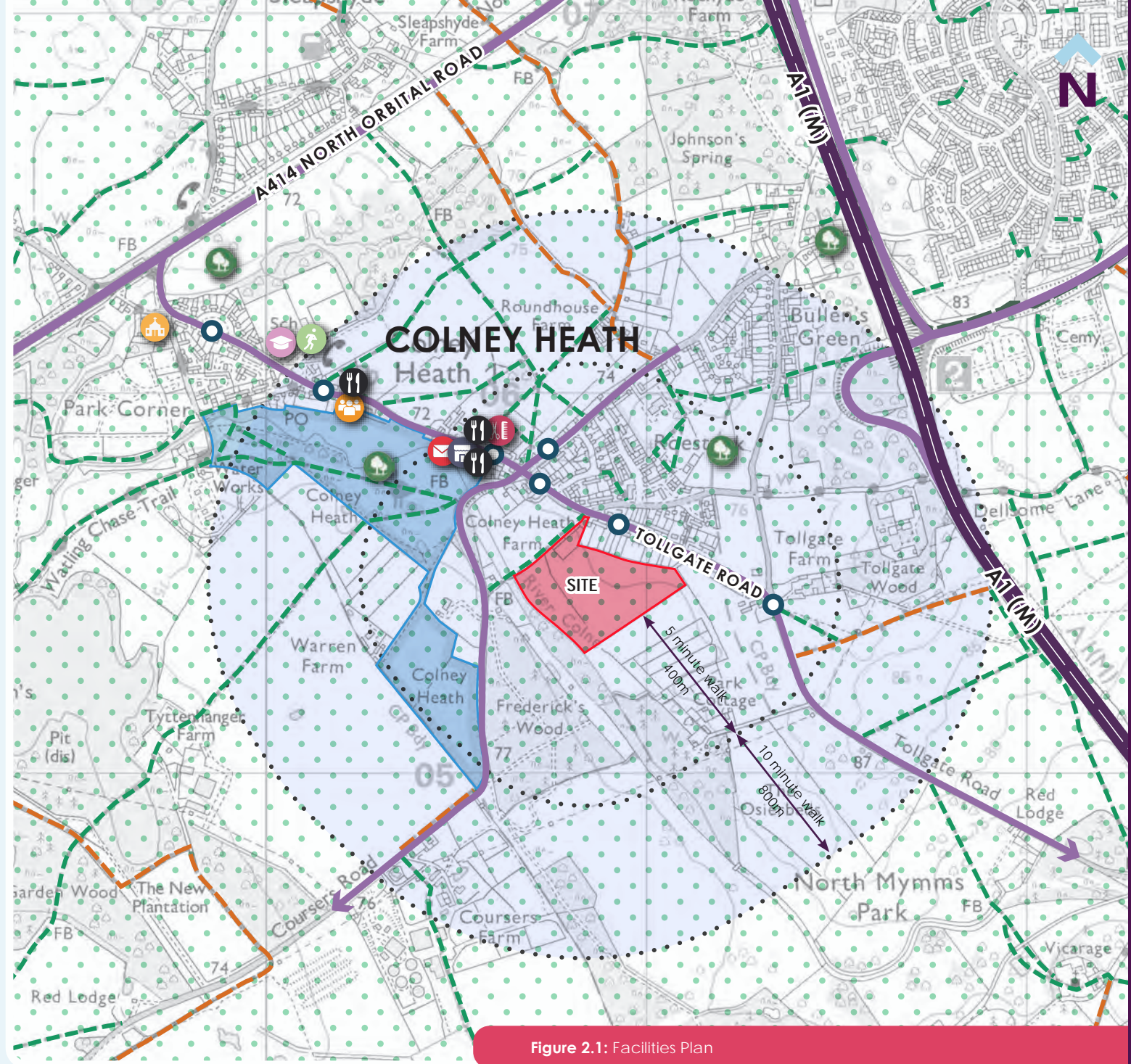


Figure 2.1: Facilities Plan

2.2 THE SITE AND ITS IMMEDIATE CONTEXT

The Site sits to the south of Tollgate Road and comprises two fields of horse grazing and the property known as the White Barn (east of Colney Heath Farm). The existing settlement at Colney Heath extends northwards and eastwards from the Site, with woodland and agricultural land extending to the south and west.

The Site is bound by the wooded course of the River Colne to the south west; a paddock for horse grazing to the north west; Tollgate Road to the north east, and the rear gardens of the linear development further south along the road to the east; and further paddocks to the south and south east. The farmyard at Colney Heath Farm, including the Grade II Listed farmhouse and associated Listed barn, are located within 180m of the north western Site boundary.

The horse paddocks, which make up the entirety of the Site, are mostly bound by post and wire fencing, although there are some remnant hedgerows between the fields. South of the public footpath, and roughly in the north eastern extent of the Site, is a linear stable block and manège, with associated storage containers and trailers. The stables are accessed via a concrete track off Tollgate Road, just to the north of the northernmost property, which bounds the Site.

There is very little structural vegetation of note within the Site itself. A short section of intact hedgerow and a mature tree can be seen on the far eastern Site boundary, with the rear garden boundaries of the adjoining properties comprising a mix of fencing and vegetation.

The Site's frontage along Tollgate Road is marked by the existing current access to the stables, with a timber post and rail fence extending to the west and properties along Tollgate Road to the east, with a footway and the road beyond.





BARN NORTH OF COLNEY HEATH FARMHOUSE 3
COLNEY HEATH FARMHOUSE & ATTACHED BARN 2

B

B

B

Followes Lane

TOLLGATE ROAD

* EXISTING MANÈGE AND STABLE BLOCK

COURSES ROAD

RIVER COLNE

1 MILL AT MILLHOUSE

RIVER COLNE





-  Site Boundary
-  Public Footpath
-  Grade II Listed Buildings
-  Bus Stops

Figure 2.2: Site Features and Accessibility Plan



A photograph of a residential development. In the foreground, there is a field of wildflowers, including white daisies and red poppies, enclosed by a wooden fence. A young tree stands on the left side. In the background, there are several brick houses with red roofs and white window frames. The sky is blue with some clouds.

03. SITE OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS

03. SITE OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

An assessment of the Site shows its suitability for new housing.

3.1 TECHNICAL STUDIES

Detailed specialist surveys are being undertaken to assess the Site's ability to accommodate a sustainable residential development, taking into account landscape, ecology, drainage, noise and highways features. Although these studies are yet to be finalised, initial findings have not identified any issues that would prevent a successful, high quality proposal from coming forward in this location.

3.2 LANDSCAPE AND VISIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Public Rights of Way

Public footpath Colney Heath 033 sits adjacent to the Site's north western boundary and runs in a roughly east-west direction, which defines the extent of the proposals and links the junction of Tollgate Road and Fellowes Lane in the east, to Coursers Road to the west of the river.

Tree Preservation Orders

There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) within or immediately surrounding the Site. This was confirmed by viewing the St Albans City and District Online Mapping Service on 26th October 2020.

Topography

The Site is relatively level, sloping down gently from the east towards the river in the west. The land around the Site is similarly very gently undulating.

Quality, Visibility and Suitability to Accommodate Development

Views of the Site are mostly from the immediate surroundings, with very limited middle-distance views available. Views of the Site from the surrounding area are well contained by the existing settlement to the east and the woodland to the west.

The stables and barn within the Site are similarly ordinary in character, and not of any architectural or historic value or interest. There are no structural landscape features on the Site of value, with only small lengths of remnant hedgerow remaining. The public footpath affords views of the Site available from it. The Site is not covered by any designations for landscape or historic character of quality.

The Site lies in close proximity to two Listed Buildings, and the adjoining river and woodland are pleasant features within the local landscape.

As the Site is well contained, both physically and visually, the proposed development will not have a material effect on the wider townscape or countryside. The proposed structural vegetation along the southern boundary will ensure a strong, well defined edge to the settlement in this location, and will also aid in assimilating the new development into the existing landscape and townscape, in the limited instances where it is visible from the middle distance to the south.












Green Belt Release

The existing settlement at Colney Heath is a Green Belt Settlement, and the proposed development would form a logical extension to the settlement. The new houses along with the adjoining settlement could be retained wholly within the Green Belt, without significant impact on its functions.

An assessment of the Site against the Green Belt purposes was undertaken by CSA Environmental (as set out within the Landscape Overview), which found that:

- **A planned development can be accommodated at the Site without resulting in unrestricted sprawl and the Site is considered to make a weak / no contribution to this Green Belt purpose.**
- **The Site is considered to make a weak/no contribution to preventing neighbouring towns from merging.**
- **The Site is considered to make a relatively weak contribution to assisting the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment.**
- **The Site makes a weak / no contribution to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns.**

The assessment against the Green Belt functions shows that the Site can be developed without material effects on the purposes of the Green Belt.

-  Site Boundary
-  District Boundary
-  Green Belt
-  Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
-  Site of Special Scientific Interes (SSSI)
-  Registered Parks and Gardens (REG)
-  Sleapshyde Conservation Area
-  Ancient Woodland
-  Ancient Replanted Woodland
-  Grade I Listed Buildings & Structures within 1.5km
 1. Tyttenhanger House
 2. North Mymms Park with Adjoining Garde Walls and ha-ha
-  Grade II Listed Buildings & Structures within 1.5km (Outside Conservation Areas)
 3. Ye Old House
 4. Church of St Mark
 5. London Coal Duty Marker
 6. Group of 3; The Crooked Billet Public House, Apsley Cottage & 94 High Street
 7. Group of 5; London Coal Duty Maker on Colney Heath, Queens Head Public House, London Coal Duty Maker adjoining south corner of garden to Queens Head Public House, Barn at Colney Heath Farm & Colney Heath Farmhouse
 8. 68 Roestock Lane
 9. The Grove
 10. Group of 2; Roehyde Farmhouse & adjoining Barn and Stable
 11. Mill at Mill House
 12. London Coal Duty Marker at Southern Boundary of Parish
 13. Barn 60 metres north west of Courses Farmhouse
 14. Ice House at North Mymms Park

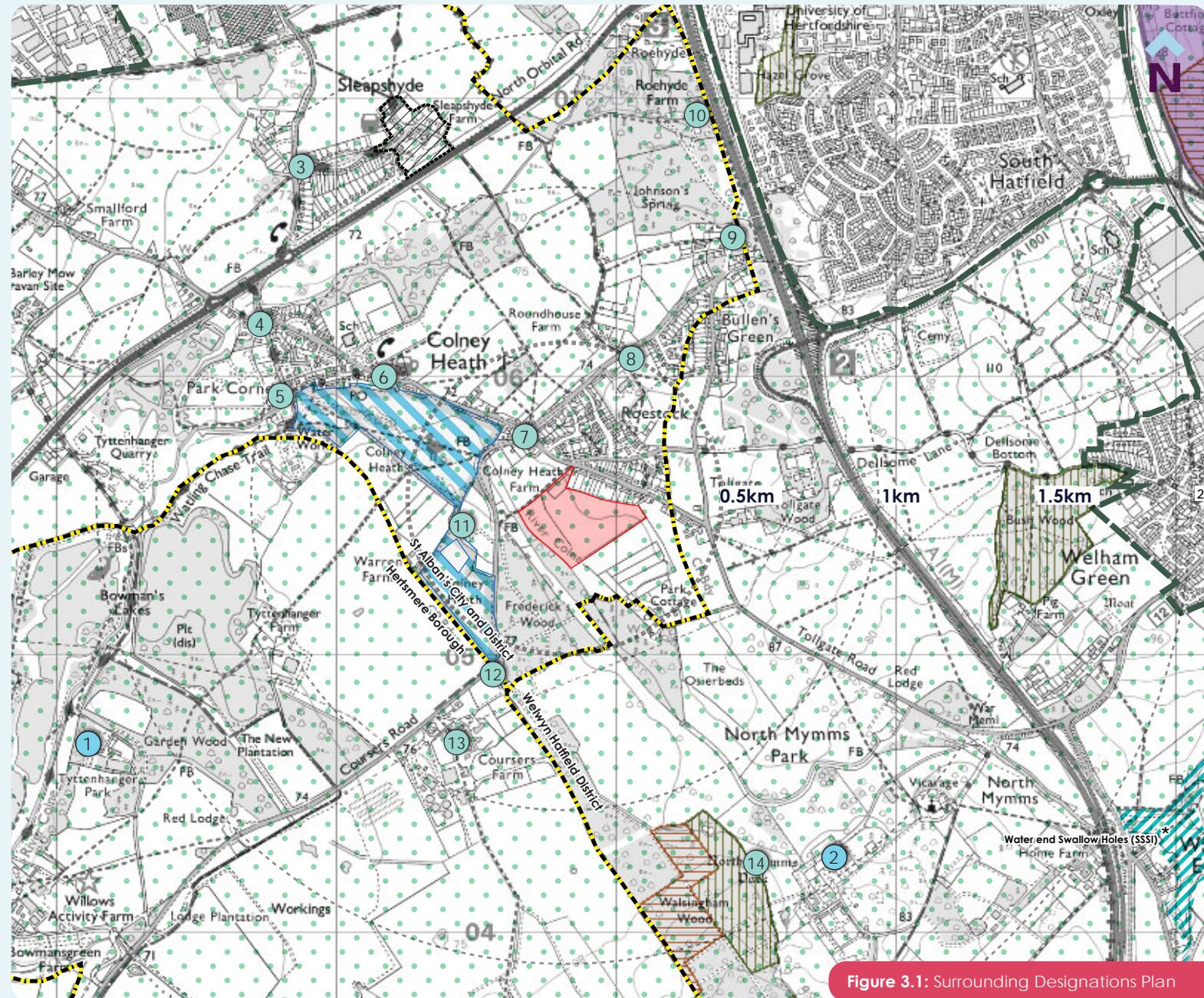


Figure 3.1: Surrounding Designations Plan

3.3 HERITAGE

There are no designated heritage assets located within the Site. There are however, some designated heritage assets located in the close proximity and within the wider area of Colney Heath, as follows:

- **Grade I Listed Buildings and Structures:** **Tythenhanger House and Park is located approximately 1.8km to the west of the centre of the Site and North Mymms Park approximately 1.55km to the south east. There is no intervisibility between these heritage assets and the Site, due to intervening vegetation and landform.**
- **Grade II Listed Buildings within c. 200m of the Site:** **There is a group of five located at the junction of Tollgate Road, High Street, Coursers Road and Rosestock Lane; London Coal Duty Marker on Colney Heath, Queens Head Public House, London Coal Duty Marker adjoining south corner of garden to Queens Head Public House, Barn at Colney Heath Farm and Colney Heath Farmhouse. There is also another Grade II Listed building at Mill House located to the west of the Site's western boundary.**
- **Further afield there are nine Grade II listings within 1.5km of the Site, again there is no intervisibility between these assets and the Site.**

These designated heritage assets are separated from the Site by intervening built form and the surrounding landscape. A visit to the Site and its surrounding context identified that there would be some intervisibility with the two Listed Buildings at Colney Heath Farm and Farmhouse to the north west of the Site. As a result of this intervisibility, mitigation measures should be considered and implemented to help reduce the potential visual impact the proposals could have on these assets, as well as respecting their setting.



Grade II Listed: Crooker Billet Public House



Grade II Listed: 17th Century Colney Heath Farmhouse & Barns

3.4 HIGHWAYS AND ACCESS

Vehicular access into the Site is proposed to take the form of a priority 'T' junction from Tollgate Road, replacing and enhancing the existing access serving the stables. As part of the access proposals a new 2.0m wide footway could be created to extend from Tollgate Road into the proposed development. The footway would also create a safe and easy access to the two bus stops which are located to the west and east of the proposed access point along Tollgate Road.

Given the Site's relationship with the existing public footpath along the north western boundary, the opportunity exists to provide two new pedestrian access points linking into this right of way. This will encourage new residents to walk to nearby destinations within Colney Heath, thus maximising the integration of the new homes with the existing settlement.



View of existing access to the stables along Tollgate Road, which will form the proposed Site access point

3.5 FLOODING AND DRAINAGE

Due to the close proximity of the River Colne on the south western boundary of the Site, the Environment Agency's Flood Map shows that a portion of the Site falls within Flood Zones 2 and 3. This means these parts of the Site have a chance of flooding of greater than 3.3%. Surface water flood risk mapping also indicates the potential for the accumulation of surface water ponding at the low points within the Site. However, this risk of flooding from surface water and groundwater is assessed as being a localised risk, which can be readily mitigated as follows:

- **Raising finished floor levels of dwellings.**
- **Site layout to be designed to avoid the localised low spots within the Site.**
- **The implementation of an appropriately designed surface water drainage scheme to enable any potential overland flows to be conveyed safely across the Site without affecting property.**

Any future planning application would be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). The Assessment would demonstrate that following construction of the development, the risk of flooding on the Site and potential risk of flooding elsewhere would not increase and the surface water drainage from the development will accord with Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) principles, in compliance with current national and local standards. The Concept Masterplan illustrates how SuDS drainage basins can be incorporated into the development proposals for the Site.

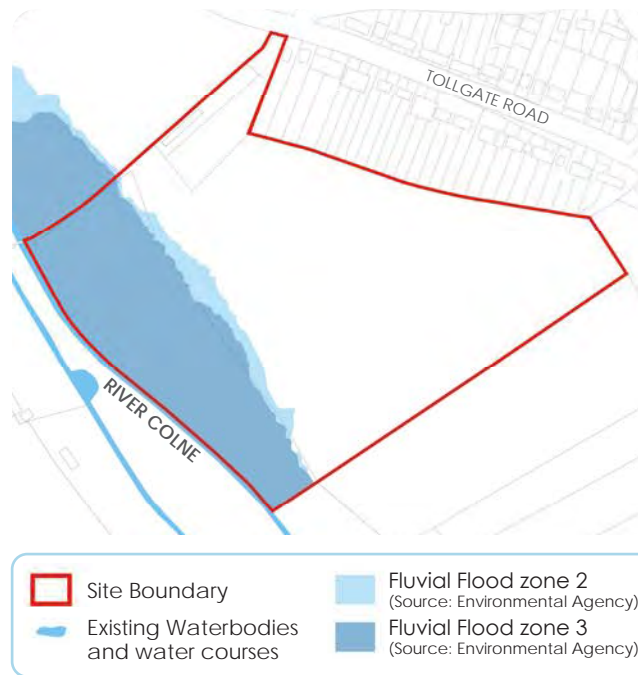


Figure 3.2: Flood Plan

3.6 ECOLOGY

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the Site has been undertaken to identify potential ecological constraints to development, inform recommendations for design, highlight opportunities for ecological enhancement, and determine any additional investigation/survey work necessary. The PEA identifies two main ecological considerations which should be considered in bringing forward development on the Site.

The first of these considerations is that the Colney Heath Farm Meadows Local Wildlife Site (LWS) lies within the boundary of the Site and is proposed to be retained within public open space. However, restoration of the habitats within the LWS will be required, alongside mitigation for anticipated recreational impacts. Detailed botanical work is recommended to determine the nature and condition of the grasslands present across the

Site and within the LWS, and to support a robust assessment of potential impacts. Subject to findings of this survey work and where a significant proportion of this grassland is to be lost to development, substantial habitat creation or restoration may be required to mitigate for its loss and ensure a net gain in biodiversity is achieved.

The second of the identified ecological constraints is the proximity of the Site to Colney Heath Local Nature Reserve (LNR), which is circa.100m to the west and north west of the Site. Mitigation would therefore be necessary to address the envisaged increase in visitor pressure to this protected site.

To promote adherence to the NPPF, saved policies of the City and District of St Albans District Local Plan Review and the forthcoming St Albans City & District Local Plan 2020-2036, the PEA identifies further ecological enhancement measures in order to maximise the Site's biodiversity value. These include:

- **Habitat restoration in line with the Hertfordshire Ecological Network Map, including acidic open/neutral grassland or wetland.**
- **Incorporation of native plant species and those of wildlife importance within the landscaping scheme to provide foraging opportunities for birds, invertebrates and bats.**
- **Provision of new bat roosting and bird nesting opportunities within new buildings and retained mature trees (numbers and specification to be determined at detailed design stage).**
- **Provision of wildlife ponds to increase availability of aquatic habitats for great crested newts and other amphibians within the area.**
- **13cm 'Hedgehog Cut-outs' will be cut/built into all new timber fencing erected between private gardens to enable small mammals and other wildlife to disperse through the Site and forage.**

3.7 SUMMARY OF SITE'S OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

The specific features and characteristics of the Site described in the preceding pages have been drawn together to prepare an initial Opportunities and Constraints Plan for the Site. These are illustrated in Figure 3.3 on Page 25, and are summarised below:

OPPORTUNITIES

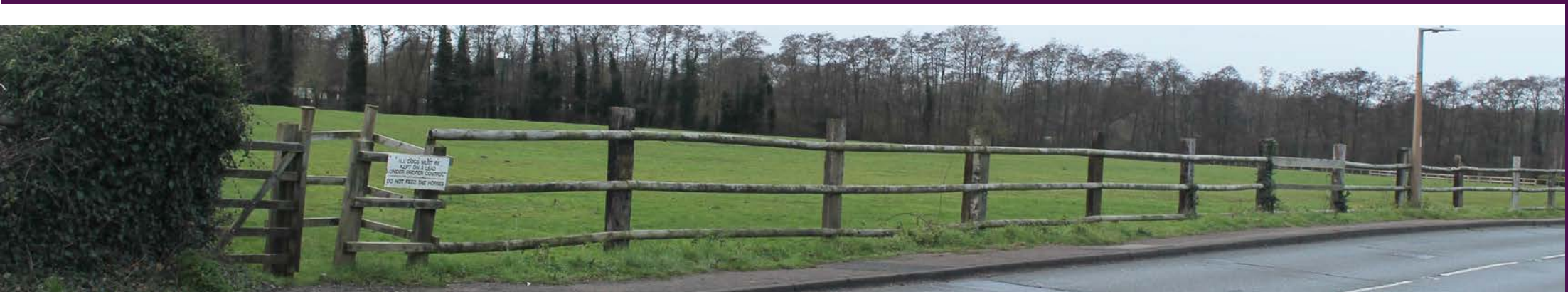
- To provide high quality, sustainable and sensitively designed new market and affordable homes, to support the services and facilities of Colney Heath and the surrounding area.
- Creation of a distinctive development which draws upon the local vernacular.
- The Site represents a logical extension to Colney Heath being well contained between the existing areas of housing along Tollgate Road, the River Colne and landscape features
- Provision of a new vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access point from Tollgate Road.
- Opportunity for pedestrian links to the existing public footpath which abuts the Site, to maximise integration with both Colney Heath and the local sustainable transport network.
- Opportunity for a large area of public open space along the Site's north western boundary, planted with thicket and tree planting, will help filter views of the proposed development, as well as respecting the setting of the Listed Buildings at Colney Heath Farm.
- Opportunity to provide new thicket and tree planting to significantly increase tree cover within the Site and its boundaries and set the entire development within a strong green framework. In particular, the Site's south eastern boundary will be planted with dense thicket and tree planting to define the revised Green Belt Boundary.
- Opportunity to provide a range of ecological enhancement measures to maximise the Site's biodiversity value. Enhanced green corridors around the boundaries of the Site to improve wildlife connectivity.
- New dwellings proposed along the Site's northern boundary will be set within deeper gardens, backing onto the rear gardens of properties adjacent to Tollgate Road, to help respect the setting of these homes.
- To provide a children's play area located within the north western part of the Site, with connections to the public footpath, maximising its accessibility for existing and new residents alike.
- To provide two sustainable drainage basins (SuDS) in the lower parts of the Site, which can form an integral part of the development's green infrastructure, providing ecological benefits and habitat creation.

CONSTRAINTS

- The proximity of the Site to the Listed Buildings at Colney Heath Farm and the public footpath which abuts this boundary means dwellings should be set back from this boundary within a large area of open space enhanced with tree and thicket planting to filter views, mitigating the impact the proposed development could have on these assets.
- A part of the Site lies within Colney Heath LWS so the development proposals will need to respect these areas and retain them within areas of open space as far as practicably possible. Ecological enhancement measures will also be considered to mitigate impacts of increased footfall at the nearby LNR at Colney Heath.
- Parts of the Site fall within Flood Zone 2 and 3, necessitating consideration of sustainable drainage features and the location of residential development to avoid these areas.
- Existing properties along Tollgate Road back onto the Site. The proposed new homes should be set back sufficiently to respect the amenity of the existing properties.



The development has the potential to create a locally distinctive development which draws upon the local vernacular



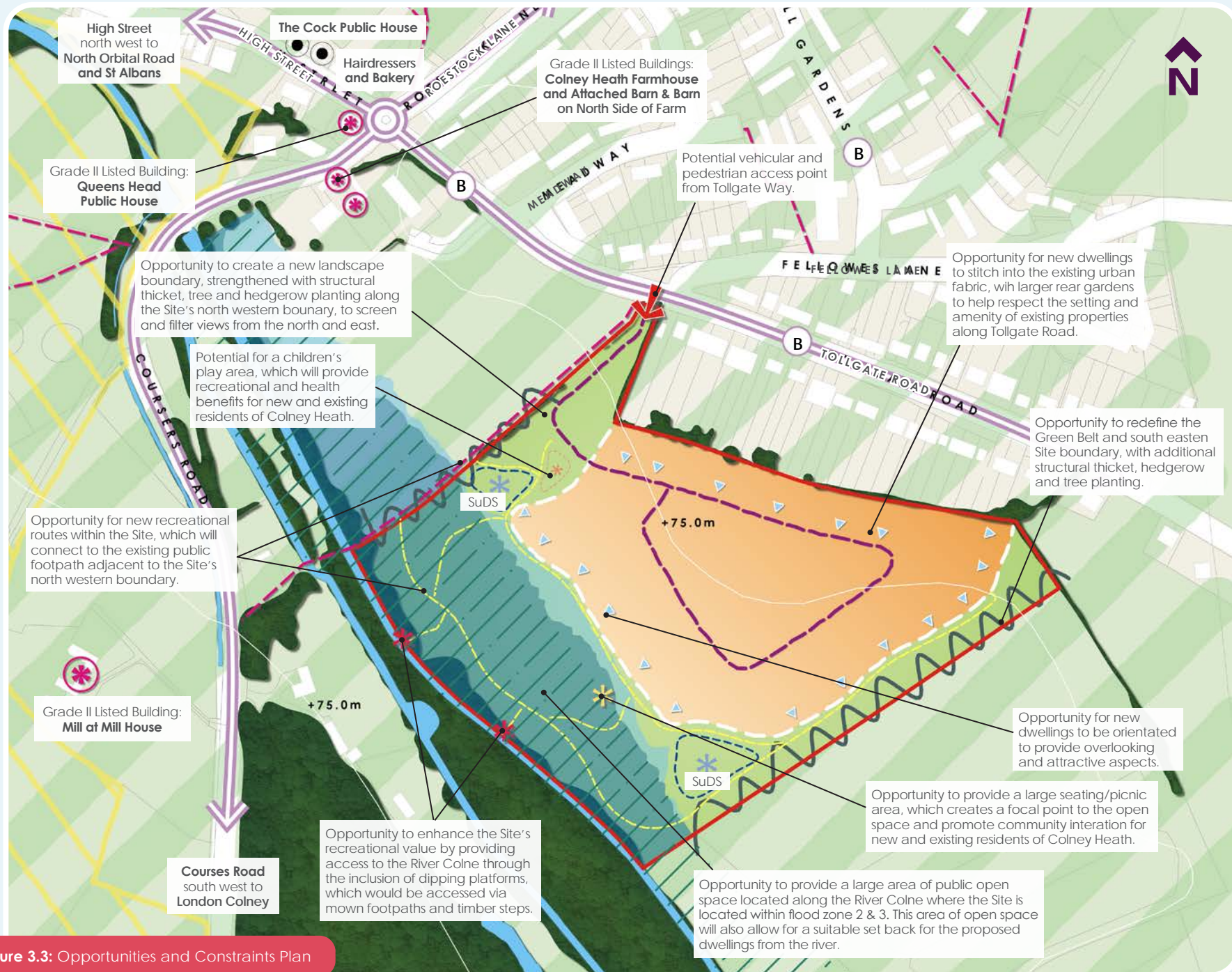


Figure 3.3: Opportunities and Constraints Plan



Site Boundary: **7.72a**



Potential area for residential development and contours: **3.85ha**



Potential location for a children's play area (20m buffer required)



Potential open space to serve the new development



Potential structural landscape to define Site boundaries



Potential seating/picnic area



Potential location for SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) features



Dwelling frontages



Potential vehicular access points



Potential indicative vehicular route through development



Potential recreational routes through the development



Potential recreational access to River Colne



Existing public footpaths



Existing vegetation



Green Belt



Existing waterbodies and water courses



Listed Buildings



Colney Heath Local Nature Reserve



Colney Heath Farm Meadows Local Wildlife Site



Existing bus route and bus stops



Fluvial Flood zone 2
(Source: Environment Agency)



Fluvial Flood Zone 3
(Source: Environment Agency)