



# Local Allocation LA1 Marchmont Farm

## Draft Masterplan

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Cabinet Version



Homes &  
Communities  
Agency

**gleeson**



## **Contents**

Foreword

1. Purpose
2. Context
3. Analysis of the site
4. Development Constraints and Opportunities
5. Masterplan Requirements
6. Indicative Layout
7. Delivery
8. Supporting documents



# Foreword

Six 'Local Allocations' (Green Belt sites identified for housing development and other associated uses) were identified in the Council's strategic plan, called the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy was adopted in September 2013. Further detail on these sites is provided in the Pre-Submission version of the Site Allocations document, upon which the Council is now consulting.

The landowners, in partnership with the Council, have prepared draft master plans for each Local Allocation. These masterplans add further detail to the site requirements set out in the Site Allocations document; providing further information on the design and layout of the sites. The Council is taking the opportunity to seek feedback on these master plans at the same time as the Site Allocations consultation.

## **Do I need to comment?**

Many people have already given feedback on these sites through consultation on the Core Strategy or through other consultation events. These responses, where appropriate, have been used to help prepare the draft master plans.

You are invited to comment on the draft master plan to help ensure that, as far as is possible, the final version continues to reflect your views and those of the local community.

## **Do I need to comment?**

Many people have already given feedback on these sites through consultation on the Core Strategy or through other consultation events. These responses have been used to help prepare the draft master plans.

You are invited to comment on the draft master plan to help ensure that the final version continues to reflect your views and those of the local community.

## **What can I comment on?**

The principle of allocating these sites is now firmly established and the Council can only consider comments on the details of how they will be delivered.

If you are objecting to parts of the master plan, it would be helpful if you could say what changes you would like to see to the text or accompanying maps.

## **How do I comment?**

Please submit comments online using Dacorum Borough Council's consultation portal.

Alternatively, comments can be sent to the Strategic Planning and Regeneration Team at Dacorum Borough Council using the comments form that is available. You should use a separate form for each of the different masterplans you may wish to comment on

Copies of the master plans, together with the Pre-Submission Site Allocations document, comments forms and background information can be found on the Council's website [www.dacorum.gov.uk](http://www.dacorum.gov.uk), at local libraries or at Borough Council Offices subject to

opening times. Comments can be sent electronically or by post, as appropriate, to one of the following addresses:

By consultation portal: <http://consult.dacorum.gov.uk/portal/>  
Email forms to: [strategic.planning@dacorum.gov.uk](mailto:strategic.planning@dacorum.gov.uk)  
Post forms to: Strategic Planning and Regeneration  
Dacorum Borough Council  
Civic Centre  
Marlowes  
Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire  
HP1 1HH

All comments received will be publicly available.

The deadline for comments to be received by the Council is \*\*\*\*INSERT\*\*\*\*.

### **Next Steps**

All comments received on the draft master plans will be considered and reported to the Council's Cabinet, together with any recommended changes to their content. It is hoped that the master plans will be adopted by the Council at the same time as the final Site Allocations DPD. This is expected to be in Spring 2016.

### **Any further questions?**

If you have any further questions regarding any of the issues raised in this document please contact the Strategic Planning and Regeneration team on 01442 228660 or email [strategic.planning@dacorum.gov.uk](mailto:strategic.planning@dacorum.gov.uk).

# 1. Purpose

- 1.1 This master plan has been prepared jointly by Dacorum Borough Council and Gleeson Developments Ltd, with assistance from Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design. It has the support of the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).
- 1.2 The Marchmont Farm site is one of a number of sites where the principle of housing development has been established through Dacorum's Core Strategy. The emerging Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) will add detail about the development of the site. The Site Allocations DPD will also remove the site from the Green Belt and set a new Green Belt boundary.
- 1.3 The purpose of this master plan is to supplement the Site Allocations DPD by setting development principles and a framework through which a high quality residential scheme can be delivered on the site. It is also intended to demonstrate how the planning requirements set out in the Site Allocations DPD can be delivered and will guide future planning applications, and has been prepared:
  - To explain new settlement and Green Belt boundaries;
  - To outline requirements for the planning and delivery of the area;
  - To outline layout possibilities;
  - To facilitate discussion of the above with the public;
  - To provide justification for the planning requirements; and
  - To guide future planning application(s).
- 1.4 The master plan has been prepared in consultation with, and contribution from, key stakeholders. These stakeholders include the local Highway Authority, Thames Water, Hertfordshire Constabulary, the Environment Agency, Grovehill Futures, the Gypsy and Traveller Unit at the County Council and Hertfordshire Gypsy and Traveller Empowerment (GATE).
- 1.5 Discussion with local residents during production of the masterplan has helped to understand local aspirations and concerns for development on the site. The input of stakeholders and residents has helped to shape the contents of the master plan and the development principles within it.
- 1.6 There are three main landowners of the site, comprising the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), Gleeson Developments Ltd, and Dacorum Borough Council. The Council also own and manage Margaret Lloyd Park, which is adjacent to the site and will be extended as part of the plans. The extent of the area covered by this master plan is shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Site Location Plan - Local Allocation LA1 Marchmont Farm, Hemel Hempstead**





## 2. Context

### Planning Policy

- 2.1 The following section sets out the planning policy context within which the master plan has been prepared, and which will in turn inform future planning application(s) on the site. This includes existing national planning policy, saved policies from Dacorum Borough Local Plan (1991 – 2011), the recently adopted Core Strategy, and the emerging Site Allocations DPD.

#### National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) adopted in 2012 represents the planning policy consideration at the national level. It supersedes all previous national Planning Policy Guidance and Planning Policy Statements. The Council's Core Strategy was prepared in the context of the NPPF and is compliant with it.

#### Core Strategy

- 2.3 Dacorum Borough Council's Core Strategy was adopted on 25th September 2013 and contains the main strategic policies which will guide development in the borough.
- 2.4 Marchmont Farm is designated as a Local Allocation within the Hemel Hempstead Place Strategy in the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy states that Hemel Hempstead will accommodate up to 8,800 new homes up to 2031. These will be spread across the town, with the largest sites being in the town centre, East Hemel Hempstead and the Allocations at West Hemel Hempstead (LA3), the Old Town (LA2) and Marchmont Farm (LA1). The table below summarises key principles for the development:

#### Core Strategy Extract

<b>Location reference</b>	LA1
<b>Site location</b>	Marchmont Farm
<b>Proposals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Around 300 new homes</li><li>• Extend Margaret Lloyd Park</li></ul>
<b>Principles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A mix of two storey and three storey housing including around 40% affordable homes.</li><li>• A contribution must be made towards educational and community facilities.</li><li>• The layout, design, density and landscaping must create a soft edge with the adjoining Green Belt boundary.</li><li>• New strategic landscaping to mitigate impact of new development on the Gade Valley and help ensure its separation from Piccotts End.</li><li>• Impact on the local road network mitigated through the promotion of sustainable travel options, including pedestrian links to the local centre.</li></ul>
<b>Delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The proposal will be delivered as an allocation in the Site</li></ul>

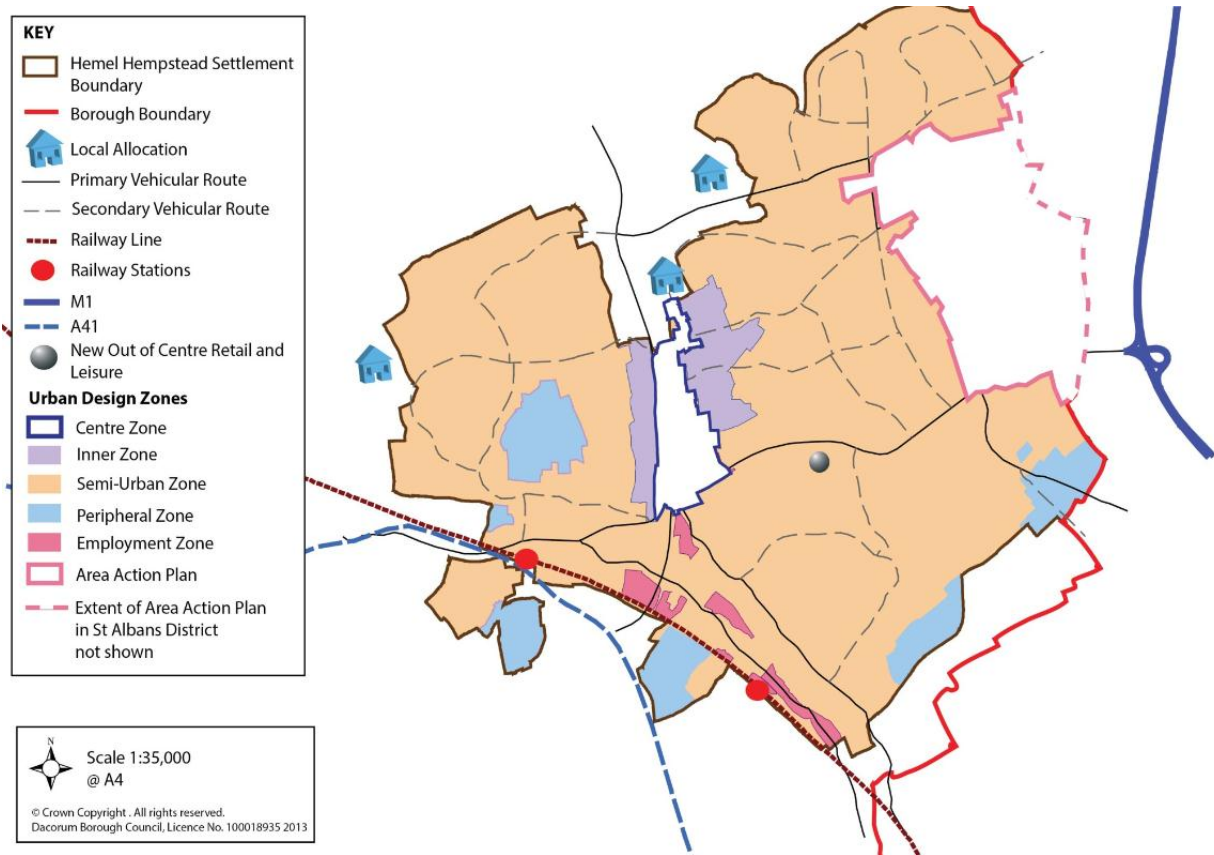
	Allocations DPD where detailed planning requirements will be established.
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2.5 In addition, the following policies from the Core Strategy are the most relevant for Marchmont Farm:

- Policy CS1: Distribution of Development
- Policy CS3: Managing Selected Development Sites
- Policy CS4: The Towns and Large Villages
- Policy CS8: Sustainable Transport
- Policy CS9: Management of Roads
- Policy CS10: Quality of Settlement Design
- Policy CS11: Quality of Neighbourhood Design
- Policy CS12: Quality of Site Design
- Policy CS13: Quality of the Public Realm
- Policy CS18: Mix of Housing
- Policy CS19: Affordable Housing
- Policy CS23: Social Infrastructure
- Policy CS25: Landscape Character
- Policy CS26: Green Infrastructure
- Policy CS27: Quality of the Historic Environment
- Policy CS28: Carbon Emission Reductions
- Policy CS29: Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy CS35: Infrastructure and Developer Contributions

2.6 Policy CS5: Green Belt will apply until the site is formally removed from the Green Belt (i.e. until the Site Allocations DPD is formally adopted).

**Figure 2: Extract from Core Strategy – Hemel Hempstead Vision Diagram: Built**



## Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011

- 2.7 Although the Core Strategy has been adopted, some of the Local Plan policies are still 'saved' (i.e. they remain operational). These saved policies will gradually be superseded as the Council produces further DPDs and supplementary guidance.
- 2.8 The following saved Local Plan policies are particularly relevant to the development of the Marchmont Farm site:
- Policy 12: Infrastructure provision and phasing (partly superseded by Core Strategy Policy CS35)
  - Policy 13: Planning conditions and planning obligations
  - Policy 18: The size of new dwellings
  - Policy 21: Density of residential development
  - Policy 51: Development and transport impacts
  - Policy 54: Highway design
  - Policy 57: Provision and management of parking
  - Policy 111: Height of buildings
  - Policy 113: Exterior lighting
  - Policy 129: Storage and recycling of waste on development sites
- 2.9 Some elements of the appendices to the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011 have been superseded by the Core Strategy policies. However, for simplicity they are retained in their entirety, until updated and superseded by subsequent DPDs or decisions.
- 2.10 The following Local Plan appendices are particularly relevant to the development of the Marchmont Farm site:
- Appendix 1: Sustainability checklist
  - Appendix 3: Layout and design of residential areas
  - Appendix 5: Parking provision
  - Appendix 6: Open space and play provision
  - Appendix 8: Exterior lighting
- 2.11 The Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPDs will take precedence where there is any conflict in content.

## Supplementary guidance

- 2.12 The Council has adopted a number of documents to supplement Local Plan and Core Strategy policies. These documents are used as material planning considerations in deciding planning applications. Where there is a conflict between their content and that of a DPD, the DPD will take precedence. The main documents relevant to the development of the Marchmont farm site are as follows:

### *Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)*

- Accessibility Zones for the Application of Car Parking Standards – now incorporated into the Area Based Policies SPG (2004).

### *Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)*

- Planning Obligations (2011). Note: the sections relating to affordable housing contributions have been superseded by the Affordable Housing SPD. The guidance will be updated on adoption of the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- Affordable Housing (2013)

### Site Allocations

- 2.13 Dacorum Borough Council is consulting on the Pre-Submission version of the Site Allocations DPD at the same time as this draft master plan for the Marchmont Farm site. The Site Allocations DPD includes a policy for the Marchmont Farm site, together with a vision, an indicative layout and a series of development principles. These are reflected and elaborated on by this master plan.
- 2.14 Where there is any conflict between the requirements of this master plan and the Site Allocations DPD, the Site Allocations DPD will take precedence.
- 2.15 Comments received on both consultation documents will be considered by the Council before the Site Allocations DPD is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for public examination or the Marchmont Farm master plan is adopted.

### Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.16 Grovehill Futures is a neighbourhood forum, formed in early 2014 and are working towards producing a Neighbourhood Plan for Grovehill. The Plan area will include the Local Allocation at Marchmont Farm. The Neighbourhood Plan is to be consulted on at its 'issues and options' stage in September 2014.
- 2.17 The Forum have been consulted at various stages of the master plan preparation and comment provided on concepts and principles for the new development. In the future, Grovehill Futures will be eligible to obtain monies from the contributions through CIL, and a greater proportion of CIL is allotted to the Forum once that have the benefit of an adopted Neighbourhood Plan in place.

### Community Infrastructure Levy

- 2.18 Dacorum Borough Council have published a draft charging schedule which requires all new buildings which are over 100sqm gross internal floorspace to contribute to the new CIL. Subject to the outcome of the examination of CIL, it is expected that some of the infrastructure to support the Marchmont Farm site will be secured through CIL, with a limited number of contributions secured through the current S106 mechanism (see section 7 for further information).

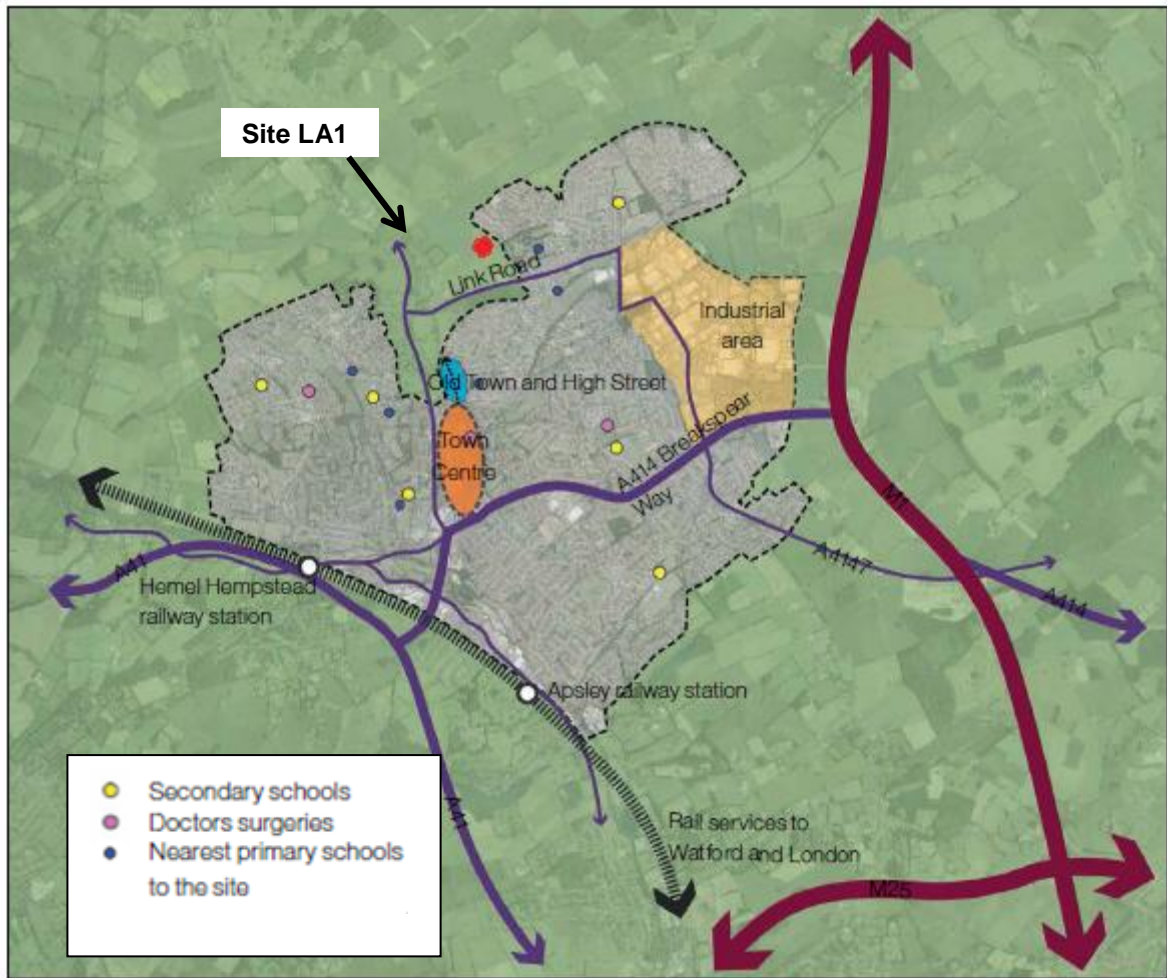
## **Location and surrounding**

- 2.19 There is evidence of settlement at Hemel Hempstead from Roman times, in the form of early Roman villas and burial grounds. The next significant phase of development for the town occurred during the 17 and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, when due to its location on the shortest route between London and the industrial Midlands, the settlement grew into a small market town. The town's largest period of growth was in the 1950s when it was developed as a New Town. Today Hemel Hempstead's population stands at approximately 82,000 inhabitants.

### Grovehill

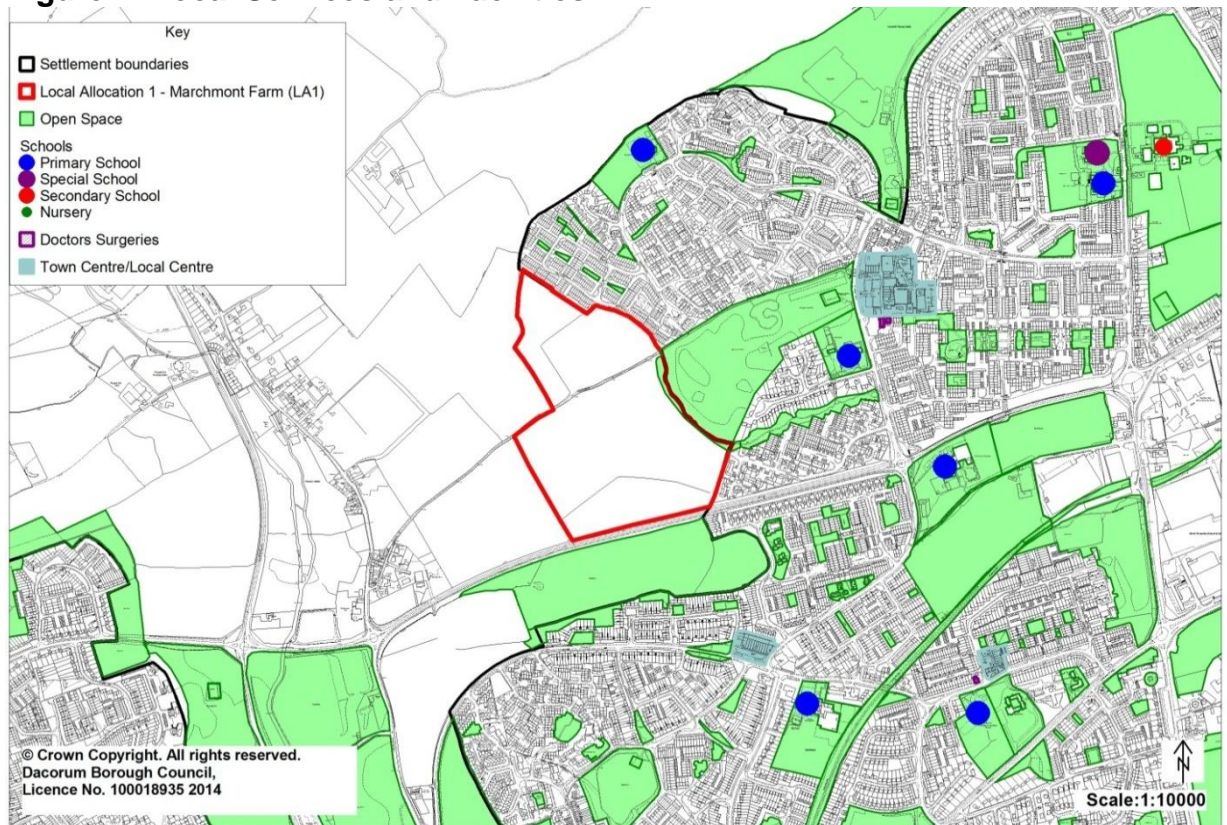
- 2.20 The Grovehill area was the second neighbourhood of the New Town development of Hemel Hempstead. The two phased development was completed in the early 1970s and comprised largely of residential development, primarily built in the latter phase, with large open spaces incorporated into the area. Henry Wells Square provides the 'heart' of the Grovehill neighbourhood and provides local amenities including a supermarket, a chemist, a post office and a medical and dental surgery.
- 2.21 Further facilities and services are located in Hemel Hempstead town centre and Two Waters and Apsley to the south of the site.
- 2.22 The site is also close to the hamlet of Piccotts End and the Old Town of Hemel Hempstead. Both are designated as Conservation Areas.

### **Figure 3: Site in the Context of Hemel Hempstead**



- 2.23 Marchmont Farm is currently used for agriculture uses and lies adjacent to the northern edge of the settlement boundary along Link Road (A4147). To the north east of the site lies the existing Grovehill residential development, to the south is Link Road and to the west agricultural land with a western boundary edged by dwellings in Piccotts End.
- 2.24 The site lies approximately 1.5 miles north east of the Hemel Hempstead town centre, 3 miles north of Hemel Hempstead railway station and 3 miles north west of junction 8 on the M1. There are 5 schools within 1 mile of the site, the closest (Aycliffe Drive Primary School, Pre-School and Nursery) being 0.5 miles way. The closest secondary school is The Astley Cooper Secondary School. There is a parade of local shops at Henry Wells Square 0.5 miles east of the site located in Grovehill.

**Figure 4: Local Services and Facilities**



## Proposal

- 2.25 The development will include between 300 and 350 homes, accompanied by open space and sustainable transport and green links. The number of units assumed for the site within the Site Allocations DPD is slightly higher than originally in the Core Strategy (which specified 'around 300'). This is a result of further testing of site capacity through the master plan and Site Allocations processes.
- 2.26 The development will also secure 40% of the units as affordable housing (through a Section 106 agreement) and make other contributions towards on and off-site infrastructure as required (see section 7).

### **3. Analysis of the site**

3.1 This section of the masterplan sets out a site analysis of the Marchmont Farm site and covers the following:

- Archaeology;
- Ecology and trees;
- Landscape and topography;
- Flood risk and drainage
- Highways and access
- Infrastructure, services and utilities

3.2 This information has been used to inform the development principles and indicative layout plan in section 6.

#### **Archaeology**

3.3 A desk based archaeological assessment was undertaken of the site by CgMs in October 2004. The study did not identify any statutorily protected sites within the assessed area.

3.4 The report concluded that there is a low potential for evidence on site dating to the Prehistoric, Saxon/early Medieval or Medieval periods. However there is a moderate potential for the presence of stray finds dating to the Roman period. It concluded that no overriding archaeological constraints are identified which would prevent the allocation of the site for housing.

3.5 In August 2013 a preliminary targeted field evaluation was undertaken of the site. No significant archaeological features or artefacts were present in the trenches and no features which could be related to geophysical anomalies were found. The natural soil sequence was recorded in all the trenches and no modern disturbance was observed. The Historic Environment Advisor at the County Council has advised that further limited archaeological field evaluation should be undertaken to inform the detailed design of the site (i.e. at the planning application stage), to determine what, if any, mitigation is required.

#### **Ecology and Trees**

3.6 A phase 1 habitat survey was undertaken of the site by LDA Design in October 2004 which found no statutory environmental designations within 2km. The survey did identify three County Wildlife Sites within 2 km, although it is not anticipated that the development will have any significant impact upon these. An updated survey conducted in July 2012 by LDA found no material changes from the previous study.

3.7 The majority of the site is improved grassland, with some areas of semi improved grassland to the north and east. In terms of species richness, these are only of local importance and therefore can be retained in situ.

3.8 A badger sett has been recorded on site. Surveys will therefore have to be undertaken at the planning application stage and prior to any development taking place. As all trees and hedgerows are to be retained, the impact upon bats,



breeding birds and reptiles will be limited. However, surveys will need to be undertaken to support a planning application.

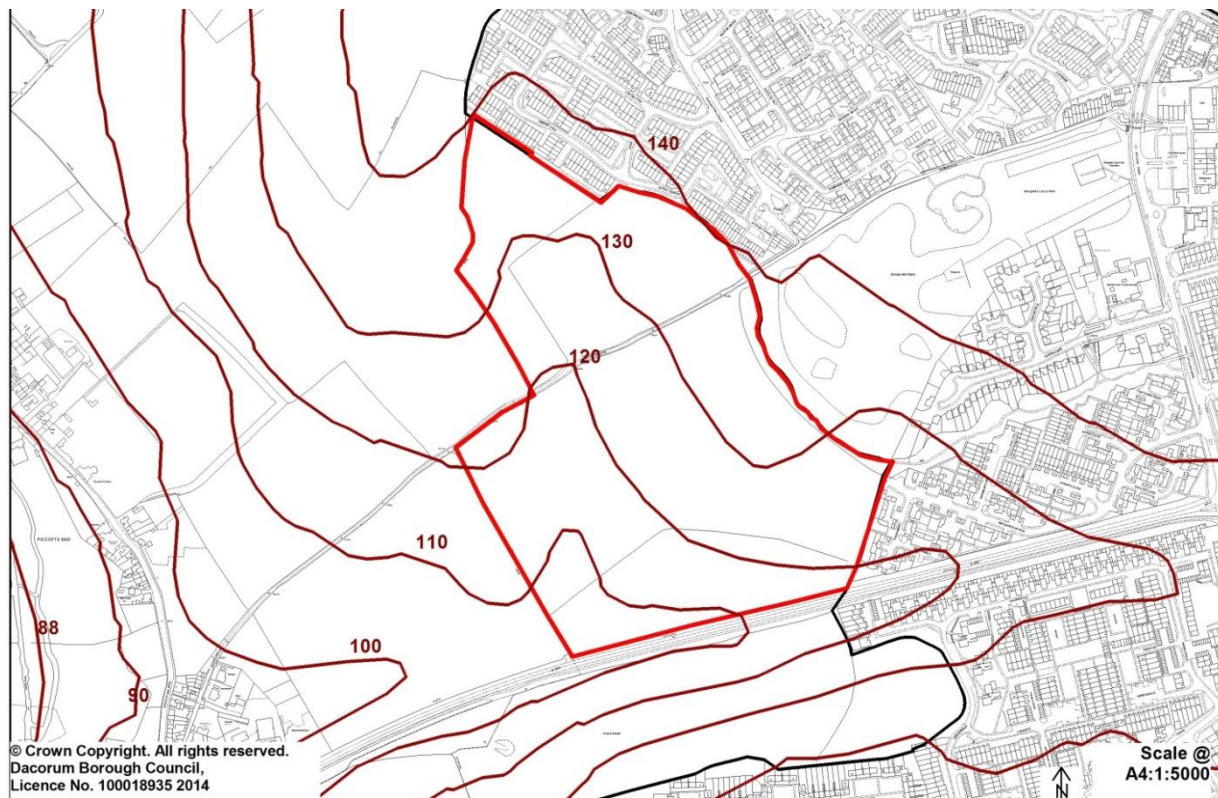
- 3.9 It is recommended that any existing ecological corridors through and around the site to Howe Grove, Margaret Lloyd Park and the wider countryside are maintained.

### Landscape and Topography

- 3.10 A detailed landscape assessment for the Marchmont Farm site was undertaken by LDA Design in November 2004 and updated in June 2012. The reports conclude that despite the changes to landscape character and the landscape/visual context of the site, there is still capacity to accommodate additional development.

- 3.11 The site forms part of a wider landscape tract (the Upper Gade Valley) which is Area 8 of the Dacorum Borough Council's Landscape Character Assessment SPG (May 2004). Efforts should be taken to conserve and strengthen the landscape character. The site is screened in some edges and is elevated in places. However this is not a prominent element in the setting of Hemel Hempstead and Piccotts End. If the development follows the requirements of the master plan, the site is capable of being integrated to the overall landscape character of the area and to maintain an appropriate landscape buffer between the site and Piccotts End. The site boundary has been defined as in the Site Allocations DPD in order for the development at Marchmont Farm to nestle into the landscape, behind the ridge line as shown on the Site Topography in Figure \*\*.

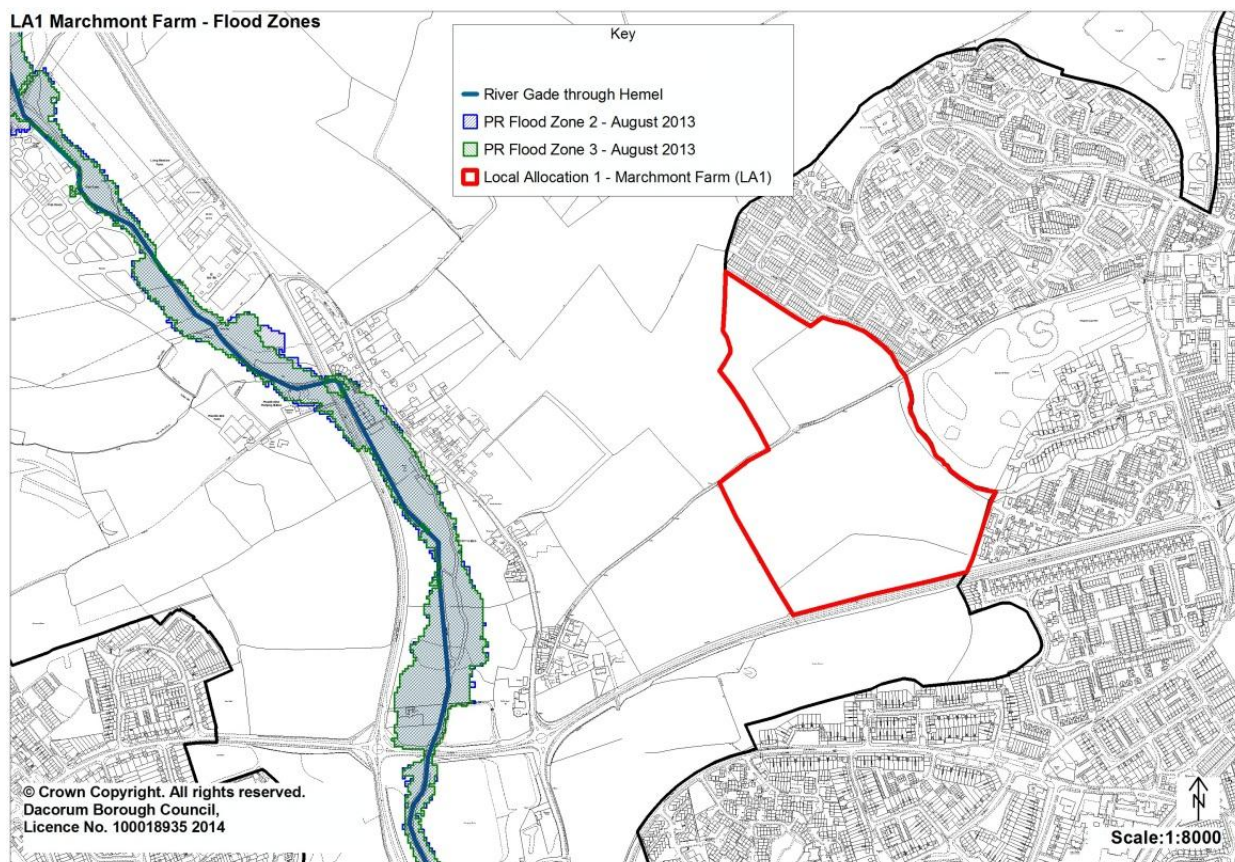
**Figure 5: Site Topography**



## Flood Risk and Drainage

- 3.12 The site does not fall within any of the flood risk zones designated by the Environment Agency. The closest of these zones centres on the River Gade, adjacent to the western boundary of Piccotts End Road, is located 0.5 miles from the site. However this should not impact development on the site due to the topography of the site. Sustainable drainage will need to be taken into account to manage the quality and quantity of surface water run-off. The forthcoming Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) Approval Body (SAB) will determine applications for these drainage systems alongside the planning application for the new homes.

**Figure 6: Site in relation to Designated Flood Zones**



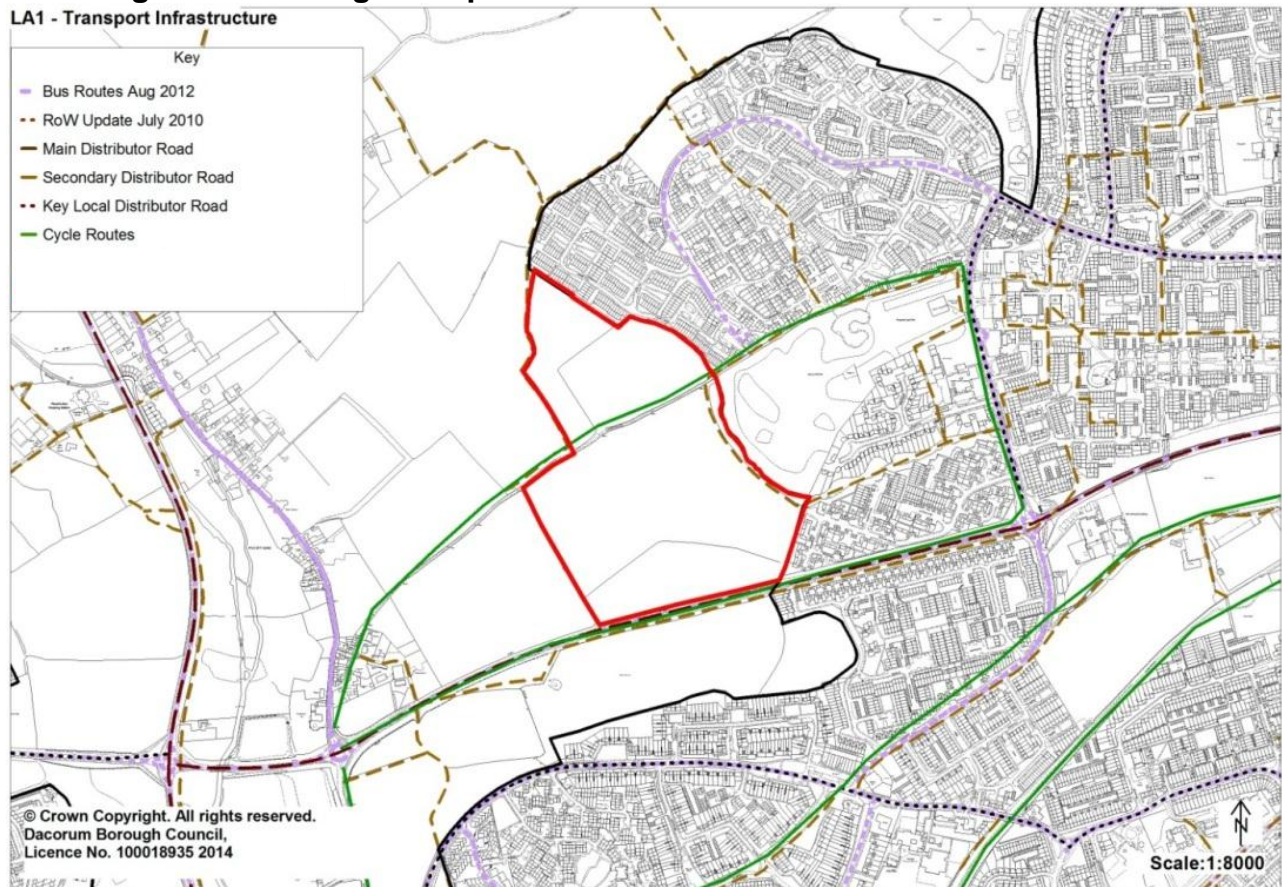
## Highways and Access

- 3.13 There has been a high level of traffic modelling undertaken for the whole of Hemel Hempstead, taking into account the quantum of new development in and around the town proposed in the Core Strategy. This has not highlighted any significant issues that cannot be resolved through off site highway improvements. Specific transport proposals are included in the Site Allocations DPD to address the management of the roads and sustainable transport measures. In addition, more detailed technical work has been done to look at the Local Allocation site itself.
- 3.14 The option of a priority junction access or roundabout onto Link Road (A4147) has been assessed. The access point would have capacity for the proposed number of residential units. Provisions for pedestrians and cyclists to reach existing routes will be required across the Link Road. Piccotts End Lane runs

through the site and provides a connection for pedestrians and cyclists to Piccotts End on the west and Henry Wells Square and bus services to the east in Grovehill. The existing road networks should be well integrated into the new road layout and roads within the site should be designed in accordance with the principles of the Manual for Streets Design guide<sup>1</sup>.

- 3.15 There will also be a need for a new bus stop to serve the new development. The existing bus stops are located in adjoining residential areas. The highway authority requires all new residential development to be within 400m walking distance of a bus stop.

**Figure 7: Existing Transport Infrastructure**



### Infrastructure, Services and Utilities

- 3.16 A utilities assessment has confirmed that no utility services or infrastructure cross the site (above or below ground) but a range of service connections exist close to the site boundary.
- *Electricity:* There is no EDF cabling within the site. There is an existing high voltage cable in the Link Road to the south of the site as well as a low voltage cable in the residential roads in Grovehill. However there appears to be no significant issues involved in establishing an electricity supply to the site.

<sup>1</sup> Department for Transport, Manual for Streets (2007)  
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/manual-for-streets>)

- *Gas:* There are no Transco mains or associated apparatus within the site. However there is a low pressure main to the east of the site and a low pressure main in the carriageway of Marlborough Rise. Gas connections can be provided to the site.
- *Water:* Thames Water and Veolia has water mains and associated apparatus on the boundary of the site. Foul and surface water sewers run along the southern and eastern boundaries of the site.
- *Telecommunications:* There are no BT mains or apparatus within the site however, there is to the south of the site. An underground network exists in the east side of Grovehill. However this is not envisaged as a constraint to development.
- *Foul Drainage:* Thames Water has indicated that there is capacity at the main waste water treatment works serving Hemel Hempstead, although the connecting pipe network may need localised upgrading (see section 7 regarding delivery). Further studies will be necessary to identify capacity constraints within these existing networks.
- *Local Services:* The Infrastructure Delivery plan highlights that there is scope for the development at Marchmont Farm to contribute towards improving services and facilities. There is a severe deficit of community facilities in the Grovehill and Woodhall area. It was not considered that the development could support on-site provision of education, retail and community facilities, and there is an overall emphasis on supporting the services and facilities in Henry Wells Square and generally in Grovehill.

## 4. Development Constraints and Opportunities

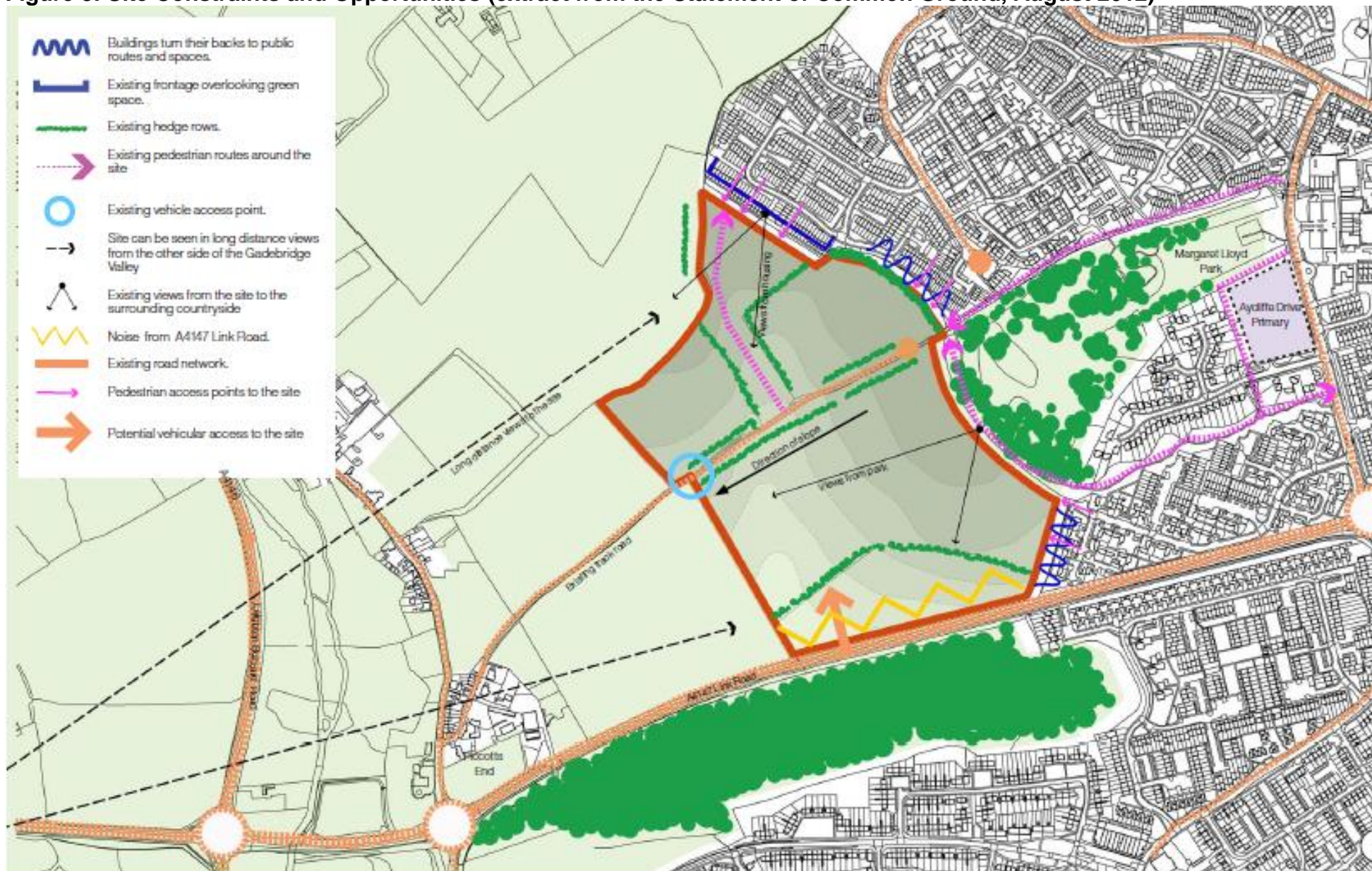
- 4.1 The Marchmont Farm site presents an opportunity to deliver between 300 and 350 homes and help support the regeneration of the Local Centre at Henry Wells Square, Grovehill.
- 4.2 The site is relatively unconstrained in comparison with other large development sites. However there are some characteristics that have influenced the content of this master plan and will need to be taken into account when considering future planning applications.

### Constraints

- The land form and slopes as it affects:
  - a. Surface water run-off and drainage; and
  - b. The visual impact of new development in the Gade Valley;
- The existing road network, particularly:
  - a. The character of roads on the edge of Grovehill; and
  - b. The impact of new access points on the Link Road;
- The main hedgerows and wildlife corridors, including:
  - a. Links to Howe Grove Local Nature Reserve; and
  - b. The character and use of Piccotts End Lane;

These constraints and opportunities are highlighted in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Site Constraints and Opportunities (extract from the Statement of Common Ground, August 2012)



## Landscape Objectives

- 4.3 A clear landscape (and green infrastructure) strategy is an important element of the master plan for this site. The following landscape objectives will be used to guide the site layout and design.

**Landscape objective 1: Establish a permanent defensible Green Belt boundary that is appropriately “soft” and separates the Green Belt from the new edge of Hemel Hempstead**



*High Wood – an example of significant landscaping between fields and Woodhall area*

**Landscape objective 2: Use native species and follow the pattern of existing fields to create this boundary**



*Existing landscape along northern boundary of the site.*

**Landscape objective 3: Retain views to Piccotts End from Grovehill along the A4147**



*View from east end of Link Road towards Piccotts End, with Marchmont Farm site to the right.*

**Landscape objective 4: Retain open land on the prominent ridgeline shoulder (spur) of the site and plant new trees here**



*View from the lowest part of the site next to Link Road, looking north eastwards*

**Landscape objective 5: Respect the site's topography by aligning development with existing contours and by careful siting of new planting, e.g. to retain views to Grovehill Wood (in Margaret Lloyd Park)**



*View from the highest point of the site, with Margaret Lloyd park to the left and Howe Grove to the right*

**Landscape objective 6: Retain the integrity of Piccotts End Lane by avoiding unnecessary crossing points, by protecting hedgerow trees along the lane and through new planting**



*View across the site along Piccotts End Lane with Margaret Lloyd Park in the distance*

**Landscape objective 7: Ensure careful planning of the interface of the development with existing development and open space**



*View across the existing boundary of Grovehill West with Margaret Lloyd Park*



**Landscape objective 8: Use (and extend) the existing hedgerow pattern as a basis for establishing compartments for development**



*Looking south towards Howe Grove, showing distinctive field patterns with hedgerows*

**Landscape objective 9: Maintain open space and habitat links between Grovehill and the wider farmland landscape, including Howe Grove**



*View from northern corner of the site, looking north*

## 5. Master Plan Requirements

- 5.1 This master plan sets out a framework for the form that the new development will take. It includes the key requirements for when the detailed plans are drawn up as part of the subsequent planning application for the site. The challenge is to create a place that complements and enhances Grovehill Neighbourhood and fits into the landscape.

### **Vision**

- 5.2 The following vision has been established for the Marchmont Farm site. It sets out how the development will look and relate to the wider town and countryside beyond.

#### **Vision**

The new part of Grovehill will be an attractive place in its own right. Its character and appearance will complement and enhance Grovehill. The development will be integrated with the rest of Grovehill through the use of the local centre and other shared services, facilities and open space. Pedestrian and cycle routes will permeate the neighbourhood.

The new area will be an inclusive community, designed to be safe and secure. There will be a mix of homes, accommodating both smaller households and family homes. Development will be spacious and will allow views of the countryside in the Gade valley. Open space will permeate the neighbourhood, providing links between Margaret Lloyd Park, Howe Grove and the wider countryside.

### **Development Principles**

- 5.3 A series of development principles have been established for this site. These must be followed when drawing up the detailed planning application for this site. They will also be used by the Council as a basis upon which to assess this application.
- 5.4 For this site the Development Principles are grouped into the following sub-headings:
- Homes
  - Design
  - Green Space
  - Landscape
  - Utilities and Services
  - Transport

### **Homes Principles**

- **Accommodate between 300 and 350 homes**
- **Deliver a mix of two storey and three storey housing including 40% affordable homes**
- **Provide for family homes and larger, more spacious properties within a range a provision**
- **Incorporate 5 pitches for gypsies and travellers at the site with good access to the primary road network**

- 5.5 The site has been identified to deliver between 300 and 350 new homes, as part of an extension to the existing Grovehill neighbourhood.
- 5.6 40% of the total homes will be affordable. This should comprise 75% rented and 25% shared ownership or other forms of intermediate housing (excluding shared equity housing). All affordable homes will be provided as a mix of sizes and types (flats and dwellings) to reflect local needs. At present there is an equal need for 1, 2 and 3 bedrooms.
- 5.7 Accommodation to provide supported housing and independent living (e.g. for the elderly and people with learning, physical and mental disabilities) may contribute towards the affordable housing element of the proposal either for social/affordable rent or shared ownership.
- 5.8 The Council expects affordable housing to be indistinguishable from market housing in terms of design, and to be dispersed across the site. They should be designed to the Homes and Community Agency design and sustainability standards (<http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/ourwork/design-and-sustainability-standards>) or their equivalent. The Council will work with Registered Providers to ensure, where feasible, a proportion of homes are delivered to meet lifetime homes standards.
- 5.9 The detailed mix of tenure and type of housing will be informed by the latest advice and technical work set out in the Council's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) ([www.dacorum.gov.uk/ahspd](http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/ahspd)), and the most up to date local housing needs information. Early liaison with a Registered Provider and the Council's Strategic Housing team is essential.
- 5.10 A gypsy and traveller needs assessment was completed in January 2013 together with Three Rivers District Council. There is a need to provide homes for gypsies and travellers, and Marchmont Farm is an acceptable location in planning policy terms, provided that certain criteria are met. Together with the requirements of Core Strategy Policy CS22 and relevant Government guidance, the site must be: separated from existing residential areas; small-scale; and designed to a high standard with an open frontage similar to other forms of housing.
- 5.11 The site will be designed to accommodate 5 pitches. It will have easy access from the Link Road, and be designed to have mature screening for the privacy and amenity of residents. The site should be designed in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government design guidance or any

## ***Design***

### **Design Principles**

- **Secure high quality architectural design**
- **Limit buildings to two storeys, except where a higher element would create interest and focal points in the street scene**
- **Use traditional materials where feasible**
- **Ensure sufficient, well-locate parking**
- **Arrange buildings and routes to achieve natural surveillance, good pedestrian access to facilities and an attractive relationship to open spaces**
- **Secure the best possible sustainability standards in design and construction**

- 5.12 The new housing development will be immediately adjacent to Grovehill. Whilst a close relationship to adjacent areas is an important aspect of the master plan, the new housing should exhibit its own character and design.
- 5.13 The site is located in close proximity to the Piccotts End Conservation Area. The road and the main built form of the conservation area run north to south, and separated from Marchmont Farm by open green fields. The topography is noticeable here, with the conservation area sitting at a much lower level than the site. Although much of the housing development would not be visible from Piccotts End Road, the new housing would be closely linked via the Link Road and Piccotts End Lane. Use of traditional styles, materials and layout should be used to reflect the style of the conservation area.
- 5.14 The issue of the development's visibility should be mitigated by careful siting of taller buildings and prominent roof forms to parts of the site that are more discreet, such as those at lower levels. The level of street lighting will be appropriate for a semi-rural location, and the type will be in line with the standards of the Highway Authority, who are increasingly moving towards improved technology.
- 5.15 Development will be required to comply with the highest standards of sustainable design and construction. The requirements on principles of sustainability are contained in Policies CS28, CS29 and CS30, and Table 10 of the Core Strategy, relating to reducing carbon dioxide emissions, energy and water efficiency, and other factors of environmental sustainability. Developers will be expected to complete a Sustainability Statement and carbon compliance check in support of the development. Further advice on how to meet the requirements can be seen in the Core Strategy and Hertfordshire's Building Futures Design Guide.

## **Green Space**

### **Green Space Principles**

- **Meet Council standards for all types of open space as a basic aim**
- **Design and manage the open space for clear, identifiable purposes**
- **Arrange the open space to ensure a pleasant, coherent and wildlife friendly network linking to Hunting Gate Wood and Howe Grove**
- **Enlarge Margaret Lloyd Park**

- 5.16 Margaret Lloyd Park to the south of Grovehill will be extended into the site. The existing park is substantial, with open space, mature and significant trees and vegetation, and a play area to the Aycliffe Road frontage. The development will provide a new play area (referred to as a LEAP or 'Locally Equipped Area of Play'), which is expected to be within the extension to the park, adjacent to the new homes.
- 5.17 The rights of way through and around the site should be retained and integrated into the housing development. There should be minimal crossings of Piccotts End Lane to preserve habitat potential and landscaping. Green links should also be created between the countryside, Margaret Lloyd Park and Howe Grove

### ***Landscape***

- 5.18 A buffer should be provided between the new housing and the countryside, in a similar way to the boundary around the Woodhall area of Grovehill. The development will incorporate landscaping along the edges of each block of housing, and existing hedgerows will be retained wherever possible. The hedgerow corridor along Piccotts End Lane will help to maintain the views across the valley, from Margaret Lloyd Park and Piccotts End, while continuing to provide an important non-motorised route through. The use of native species and mature vegetation will be key to the character of the development. The Landscaping scheme for the proposals will be drawn up with the landscaping aims and objectives set out in this master plan.

### **Landscape Principles**

- **Soften views of housing from the countryside by use of planting, by retaining appropriate hedges and by siting open space carefully (particularly in views from Howe Grove and across the Gade valley)**
- **Provide a soft edge to the countryside and ensure visual and physical separation from Piccotts End**
- **Provide pleasant footpath and cycle access through the site to link with the surrounding countryside.**

## ***Utilities and Services***

- 5.19 A main objective of housing development in this location is that the additional people living in the area can become part of the community of Grovehill, and support the services that currently exist at Henry Wells Square. The need for new development to support existing retail and community facilities is essential in assisting the new development being socially integrated within the wider Grovehill neighbourhood..
- 5.20 Part of the requirement for the developers in providing homes at this site is to contribute financially towards existing education and community services in Grovehill.
- 5.21 Appropriate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) will be implemented within any new development where technically feasible. This will ensure that the drainage concept and design is considered at an early stage, allowing space to manage surface water, improve water quality and provide amenity and biodiversity value. Pre application discussion on the drainage strategy and SuDS design is recommended with Hertfordshire County Council (the SuDS Approving Body (SAB)) and Dacorum Borough Council (the local planning authority). At this site, consideration should be given to the following aspects in relation to surface water management:
- the topography of the site;
  - enabling water to infiltrate across the site; and
  - safeguard the area at the foot of the hill for a potential overflow during extreme weather events.

### **Access to Services Principles**

- **Link to existing networks**
- **Provide extra capacity where needed to serve the development**
- **Co-ordinate the design of land drainage with the landscape and open space**
- **Work with Thames Water, and others if appropriate, to ensure sufficient sewerage and sewage treatment capacity**

## ***Transport***

- 5.22 There must be good pedestrian and cycle links from Marchmont Farm into Grovehill, to support the aims of social cohesion. An initial Transport Assessment has shown that vehicular access is not practical through to existing residential areas. The Highway Authority has confirmed it is sufficient to have one access from Link Road into the site with a roundabout.
- 5.23 There is already good access from to the site to existing bus routes and stops, but there is a need for an additional bus stop to serve the new homes together with the need for the road within the site to accommodate full size buses in the future. Depending on the more detailed requirements for the location of the new bus stop, a crossing may also be needed for the Link Road. Vehicular access along Piccotts End Lane and directly from Laidon Square have been discounted from the master plan
- 5.24 There will also be good foot and cycle ways into existing residential areas, including Lomond Road, Laidon Square and Marlborough Rise. The footpath along Margaret Lloyd Park is currently well used but needs surfacing and lighting enhancement. This would enable greater use during night time, and cater for the additional use from the new homes. There are a number of other footpaths and access points around the perimeter of the site that can be connected to for a good level of integration.
- 5.25 Piccotts End Lane will be retained as a footpath and cycleway, which is an excellent link between Grovehill and Piccotts End. The lane will inevitably need to be crossed by the new road into the site, and care should be taken to treat any crossings in an appropriate way for the level of movement expected. A more detailed transport strategy will be required for these aspects.

### **Transport Principles**

- **Plan good pedestrian access to Henry Wells Square and to key services, such as bus stops and community facilities**
- **Plan good cycle access with the rest of Grovehill and Piccotts End, and to key services**
- **Take the main vehicular access from East –West Link Road (A4147)**
- **Support offsite road junction improvements where appropriate**
- **Plan secondary access points where the local highway authority consider feasible**
- **Accommodate bus access if feasible.**

## 6. Indicative Layout

- 6.1 The principles that are important to the success of the development are represented on the indicative layout plan below. The spatial principles are agreed and should be followed. However, there is some scope for the detailed design and internal road layout to be amended as part of a full planning application.
- 6.2 The indicative layout plan has been established to address the development principles. These should be incorporated into the plans that are submitted for subsequent planning applications. Where details have not been established on the spatial layout, the planning application should appropriately address these, reflecting the development principles for the site. Such items will include the design of individual buildings and the surfacing of roads. Some matters will be subject to the policy guidance in place at the time.
- 6.3 Illustrative drawings of a typical block layout and a street view are shown following the indicative spatial layout. These are used to show visually the general density of the development, and how it might integrate with the style and composition of the rest of Grovehill. This will be subject to the planning application and the particular design of homes at that stage. The layout has been drawn up with primary and secondary frontages incorporated into the road layout. The solid red line along the main arterial road will be the primary frontage, which is used to define public and open spaces. Secondary frontages create a quieter street with more restricted views and give a greater perception of privacy and security. The typical block layout indicates what the development may look like, with the street view showing aspects of a secondary frontage, such as street trees and on street parking,

### Supporting information:

- 6.4 In addition to plans and drawings the following supporting studies would usually be required as part of the planning application process (depending on the validation requirements at the time of submission):
- Neighbourhood Notification Sheet
  - Planning Statement
  - Sustainability Appraisal
  - Energy Statement
  - Site Waste Management Plan
  - Tree Survey/Arboricultural Report
  - Environmental Impact Statement
  - Transport Assessment
  - Archaeological Assessment
  - Protected Species Survey and Assessment
  - Land Contamination Assessment Phase 1 Report
  - Lighting Assessment
  - Open Space Assessment
  - Design and Access Statement with Crime Prevention Measures
  - Safer Places Statement
  - Affordable Housing Statement



- Planning Obligations – Draft Heads of Terms

6.5 Further advice relating to validation requirement, together with any specific requirements for this site, is available from the Council's Development Management team.

**Figure 9: Indicative Spatial Layout**



**Marchmont Farm Masterplan**

**Preferred option**  
**Indicative Spatial Layout**

drawing no. 5428 / 01  
scale NTS  
date March 2014



# Typical Block Layout

Scale: 1:1000



Location plan for typical block layout



# Typical Block Aerial View



## Street View Secondary Street

For location in  
master plan see  
symbol on plan:  
① →



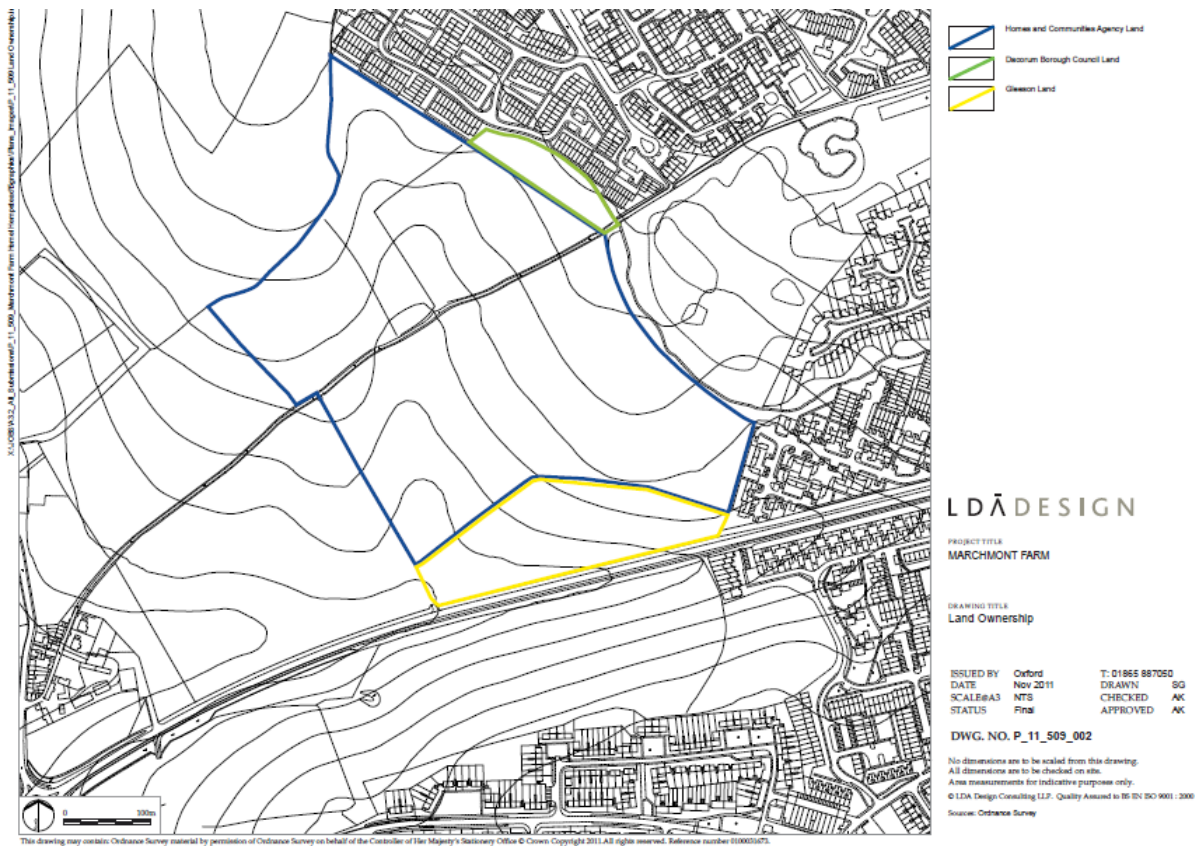
## 7. Delivery

- 7.1 This master plan will be used as a framework to help guide future development on the site. It elaborates on the requirements set out in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD), which in turn forms part of the new Local Plan for Dacorum.

### Site Ownership

- 7.2 The site is currently under the ownership of three parties: Gleeson Developments Ltd, the Homes and Communities Agency and Dacorum Borough Council. The extent of these ownerships is illustrated in Figure 10.

**Figure 10: Land Ownership**



### *Phasing*

- 7.3 In accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS3: Managing Selected Development Sites and Site Allocations Policy LA1: Marchmont Farm, the site is scheduled to come forward for development in the second half of the Core Strategy period i.e. after 2021. The first housing completions are expected within 15 months of the grant of outline consent or under a year from the grant of full planning permission. Hemel Hempstead is an active housing market area and it is anticipated that the development would take between four and five years to complete. The development will be completed by 2031 to ensure its contribution to the Core Strategy housing target.

- 7.4 The primary access for both the development and construction traffic would be from the Link Road. The logical sequence of development phasing would therefore see the vehicular access in place when development commences and the land south of Piccotts End Lane developed first, followed by the land to the north of the lane.
- 7.5 Details of proposed phasing will be determined as part of the planning application.

*Planning Obligations*

- 7.6 There are no known or identified abnormal development costs which would undermine the ability of this site to pay appropriate contributions towards infrastructure either through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or Section 106<sup>2</sup>. The costs of providing a new junction on Link Road have been included in the viability assessment of the site carried out to inform the development of CIL. The main items identified to be funded as a result of the impact of the proposed development from either a Section 106 agreement or CIL include:
- *Affordable housing* - provision will be in accordance with the details in the Housing section of the development principles and the Council's Affordable Housing SPD. The individual composition of the tenure will be determined at the time of the application;
  - *Junction arrangements from the site onto Link Road* – this is expected to be in the form of a roundabout. Precise configuration to be determined following advice from the Highway Authority at the planning application stage.
  - *Other local junction improvements* – as advised by the Highway Authority;
  - *Contributions towards sustainable transport* – as advised by the Passenger Transport unit at the County Council;
  - *Improvements to the footpath and lighting along Margaret Lloyd Park* – to improve safety and security of links from the site to the facilities at Henry Wells Square;
  - *Education contributions* - for local primary school provision and other educational needs;
  - *Healthcare contributions* – for local services as advised by NHS Hertfordshire; and
  - *Contribution towards improved community facilities at Henry Wells Square* - to help mitigate the impact of an increased local population on the existing neighbourhood centre in Grovehill and improve local facilities.

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<sup>2</sup> It is anticipated that CIL will be in place at the time the application is submitted, however in the event of any changes to legislation Section 106 agreements will be used to secure funding for infrastructure requirements.

## 8. Supporting documents

8.1 The following background documents have helped with the preparation of the master plan:

- Report on LA1 Workshop, Fera Urbanism, July 2013
- Dacorum CIL Viability Study, DBC, July 2013
- Desk Based Archaeological Assessment for LA1, CgMs, October 2004
- Trial Trench Report for LA1, August 2013
- Geophysical Survey Report for Dacorum Area, Stratascan, June 2013
- Phase 1 Habitat Survey LDA Design, July 2012
- Landscape Visual Assessment, LDA Design, November 2004, update June 2012
- Landscape Character Assessment SPG, DBC, May 2004
- Issues and Options Neighbourhood Plan, Grovehill Futures, September 2014
- Transport Strategy, Vectos for Gleeson Developments Ltd, December 2013

8.2 The documents can be viewed on Dacorum Borough Council's website: <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-strategic-planning/local-planning-framework/site-allocations/localallocations/la1-marchmont-farm-hemel-hempstead>