

# × **Sandy Park Farm**

PHASE TWO OUTLINE SUBMISSION  
Design and Access Statement

*Prepared on by LHC Design on behalf of The Pratt Group*



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## CONTROL

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# × 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of The Sandy Park Farm Partnership by LHC Design.

The Statement supports an Outline Planning Application for a mixed-use development of up to 158 dwellings and 17,567m<sup>2</sup> of mixed use/employment floor space, associated infrastructure and amenities and the demolition of existing buildings and structures at Sandy Park Farm, off Old Rydon Lane, Exeter.

The application site is approximately 7.89 Hectares in size.

## 1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The statement describes the nature and extent of the proposal. It explains how the proposal has been formulated and evolved from consideration of the factors that shape the proposed development and how the proposal responds to context, represents best practice in the design of mixed-use environments and accords with planning policy. It also provides an illustration of how a sustainable and deliverable scheme could be achieved.

The statement is part of a suite of documents that provide further detail on specific areas of the application.

## 1.3 THE APPLICATION

This outline planning application follows the principles of the Newcourt Area Masterplan and seeks to help deliver an allocated site within part of the Exeter City Council emerging Local Plan.

It aims to bring forward mixed use/employment uses, and new homes which will deliver much needed open market and affordable housing for Exeter as well as supporting local facilities and creating jobs within the Newcourt Urban Extension.

The application and illustrative masterplan shows a scheme which demonstrates sustainable development with a high quality environment and locally distinctive characteristics.

The application reserves all matters for future consideration with the exception of access.

The land immediately to the south of the site is under the same ownership and benefits from an extant Resolution to Grant Planning Permission for Outline (All Matters Reserved Except Access) development comprising residential development (for up to 392 residential dwellings with associated infrastructure) subject to a Section 106 Agreement (Planning Reference: 14/1451/OUT). This application forms an extension to the southern parcel, forming a cohesive and coordinated development.

The proposal is in a highly sustainable location within the city, and is within close proximity to the nearby Digby Halt and Newcourt railway stations, retail, employment and educational facilities, all of which are within walking distance.

## 1.4 SITE IN CONTEXT

The site is an irregular shaped area of predominantly arable farmland with nine dwellings of previously converted farmhouses/barns, outlying barns and sheds and a small commercial premises of offices and stores with hardstanding/storage areas as shown on the Site Layout Plan.

The existing dwellings are occupied as is the commercial premises. The land is farmed.

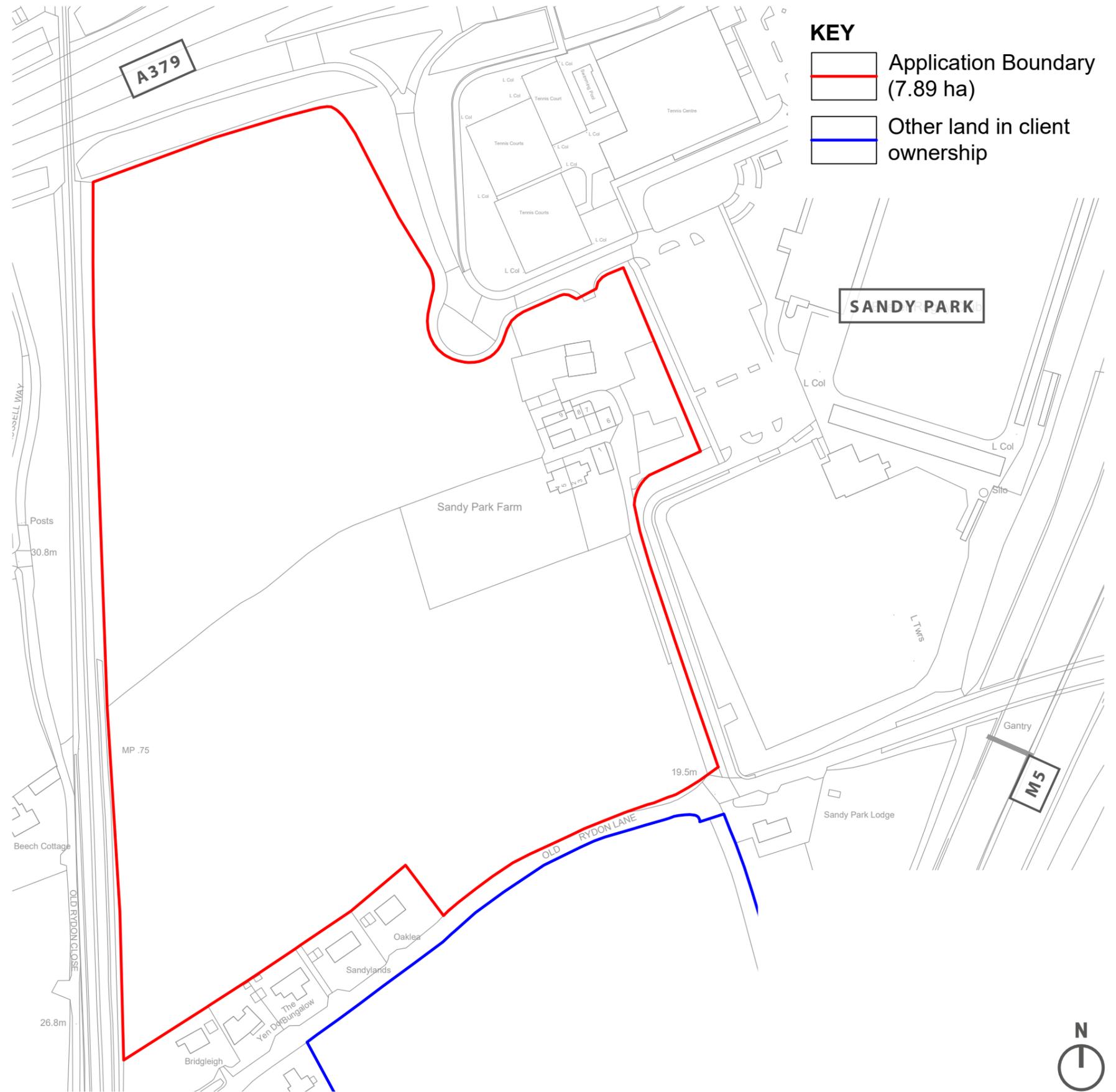
The site is located to the southeast of the city centre near to J30 of the M5.

It is bounded by the A379 to the north, the Exeter to Exmouth railway line to the west, David Lloyd Leisure Centre and Sandy Park stadium to the east and Old Rydon Lane to the South. Also along the southern boundary are private dwellings fronting Old Rydon Lane.

Beyond the immediate boundaries, the site is broadly surrounded by new development;

- *The Newcourt residential areas are located to the west with Ikea and King's Heath to the north-west.*
- *To the north is the residential area at Apple Lane with Digby Halt station and Sowton Industrial Estate beyond.*
- *To the East is the M5 motorway, Clyst Road and East Devon.*
- *To the south-east is the Marriott Courtyard hotel.*
- *To the south-west is Newcourt railway station.*
- *Fields to the south of Old Rydon Lane below the site have received a Resolution to Grant Planning for residential use (392 dwellings).*

# × 1.0 Introduction



↑ Figure 1. Site Location Plan

# × 2.0 Factors Influencing Proposal

## 2.1 NATIONAL DESIGN GUIDE (NDG)

The scheme has been designed with reference to the 10 characteristics outlined in the National Design Guide: Context, Identity, Built Form, Movement, Nature, Public spaces, Uses, Homes and Buildings, Resources and Lifespan.

Future Reserved Matters applications will continue to respect these NDG characteristics to ensure delivery of a neighbourhood that:

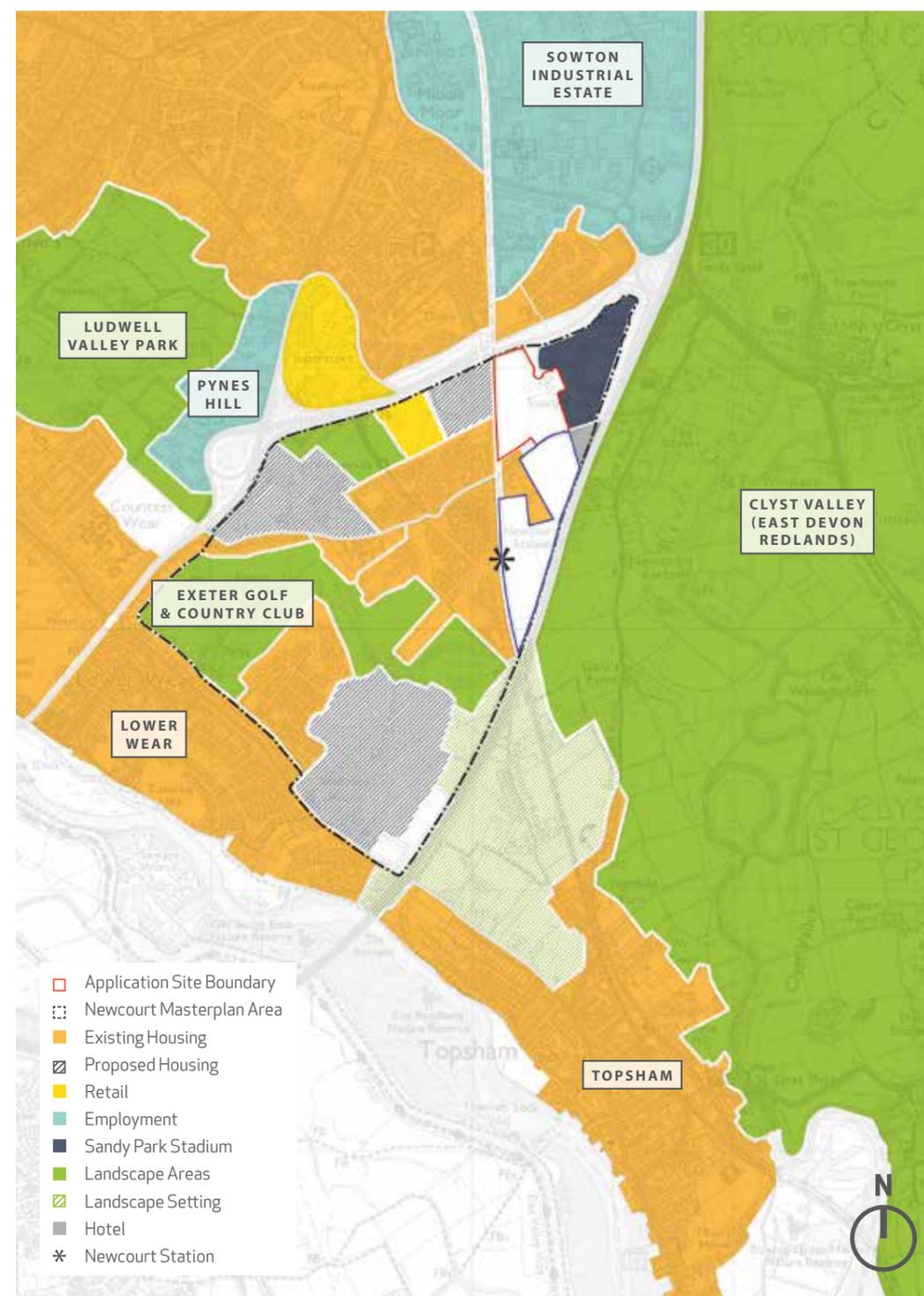
- Is an evolution of the local area and is integrated into the context of the area;
- Has a clear identity - with all components working in harmony, creating a sense of place for all who live, work and visit;
- Is accessible, permeable, navigable, memorable and well laid-out;
- Is safe for all and promotes activity, social interaction and inclusion;
- Respects & enhances existing natural features adding to the biodiversity and natural health of the place by providing quality public open spaces;
- Balances the built and natural environments;
- Has homes that are comfortable, functional, accessible, efficient, light and airy;
- Reduces resource requirements and has longevity.

## 2.2 EXETER LOCAL PLAN ALLOCATION & DESIGN BRIEF

The site is allocated in the Newcourt Masterplan Strategic allocation and Exeter City Council's emerging Local Plan Full Draft Oct 2023 (site 140).

From the McMurdo Planning Statement accompanying this application:

- Site 140 and site 89 are allocated for employment uses (Policy EJ6) and residential uses respectively;
- Policy EJ5 supports provision of local services within employment areas. To create a serviced, supported, vibrant and sustainable neighbourhood a mix of uses together with employment is proposed hence this proposal uses: "Mixed use/Employment";
- Site 89 has a Resolution to Grant Planning Permission (RTG) for housing (392 dwellings);
- Access from the A379 to site 89 requires a new spine road which bisects site 140;
- The huge scale & large massing of the recently opened 8-storey Marriott hotel adversely impacts the provision of dwellings immediately west (on site 89);
- The David Lloyd Leisure Centre and Sandy Park stadium are modern, clad, large building forms with extensive paved areas. The recently built 8 storey Marriott hotel dominates the skyline in the vicinity and beyond. These structures and associated works in particular affect the site's setting. Especially, given that the scale and massing of this recently built hotel adjacent to the site may adversely impact the provision of dwellings immediately to the west the Masterplan. It is better from a planning perspective to deliver mixed use development immediately west of the dominant mass of the Marriott, to help break up and reduce the impacts that it would have on development;
- Furthermore, it is better to develop housing to the west of the new spine road with the mixed use/employment to the east and north. Together these changes hit higher tier policy notes by delivering mixed use development which maximises development densities and optimises the efficient use of land.



↑ Figure 2. Existing Land Use Plan

# 2.0 Factors Influencing Proposal

## 2.3 NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER

Whilst the site itself is agricultural in nature, the surrounding area has changed in character over recent years.

Since 2000, the Newcourt area has been developed from a semi-rural area into a successful and sustainable urban extension of Exeter.

To the west, development has predominantly comprised residential development of suburban medium density housing mostly two-storey up to four storeys high with new roads and cycleways.

In addition, Newcourt railway station has been built together with a new Ikea store.

Some rural character has been retained and enhanced such as good green open spaces, hedgerows and mature trees.

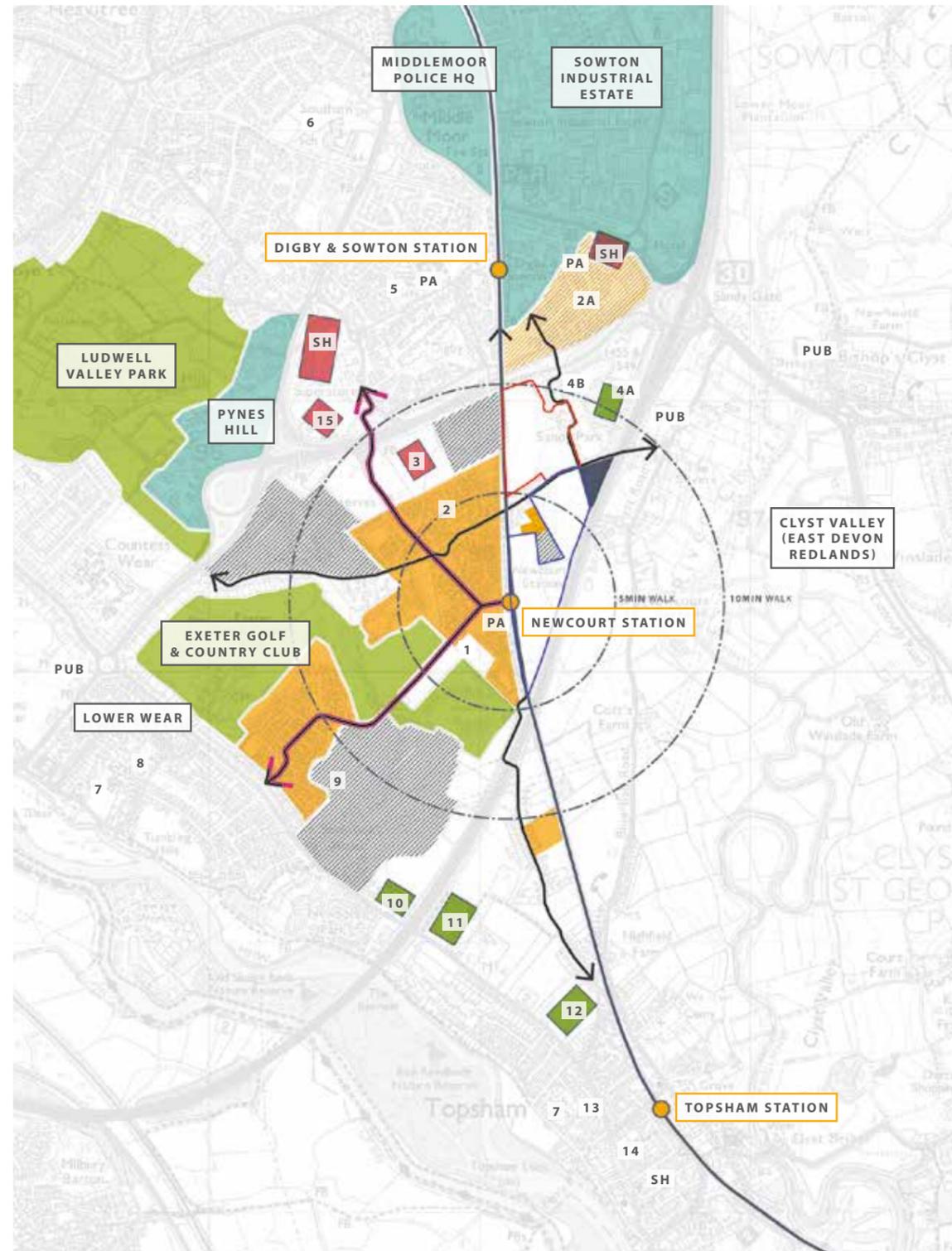
Old Rydon Lane which, whilst still affording vehicle access to existing houses is to become a quieter 'green lane' with mature hedges and trees along its sides promoting a viable wildlife corridor. Old Rydon Lane to the west connects to Old Rydon Close (now a pedestrian & cycle route) and Newcourt Way along which the J bus service runs.

To the east, the David Lloyd Leisure Centre and Sandy Park stadium have been built. These are modern, clad large building forms with extensive paved parking areas. The recently built 8 storey Marriott hotel dominates the skyline to the south-east of the site.

To the east of the M5 motorway the land falls to the Clyst Valley, which is characterised by rolling farmland falling to the River Clyst, which meanders through its floodplain. Native hedgerows form field boundaries and there are loose groups of native and non-native mature trees predominately on field boundaries and in the grounds of existing properties.

Clyst Road runs parallel with the M5 approximately 200 metres west of the site boundary. Several historic and more recent residential properties line Clyst Road, along with small scale commercial activity including the Blue Ball Public House, Martin's Caravans, Clyst Works and Newcourt Barton.

The village of Clyst St Mary is within walking distance.



← Facilities Plan

### KEY:

- 1 Newcourt Community Centre
  - 2 Newcourt Housing
  - 2A Bishops Court Housing
  - 3 Ikea Superstore
  - 4A Sandy Park Stadium & Leisure Centre & Hotel
  - 4B David Lloyd Leisure Centre
  - 5 Clyst Heath Primary School
  - 6 St Peters Secondary School
  - 7 Countess Wear Community School
  - 8 Local Medical Centre & Nearby Post Office
  - 9 Trinity Primary School and Future Local Centre
  - 10 Topsham Football Club
  - 11 University Cricket Club
  - 12 Topsham Rugby Club & Topsham Cricket Club
  - 13 Topsham Library
  - 14 Topsham Swimming Pool
  - 15 Tesco Superstore
  - Pub Local Pub
  - Pa Play Area
  - Sh Topsham Shopping
- 
- Application Site Boundary
  - Adjacent existing proposal
  - ▨ Proposed Housing
  - ▨ Existing Housing
  - Retail
  - Employment
  - Newcourt Housing
  - Sports Grounds
  - Consented Hotel
  - Rail Stations
  - Key Pedestrian/Cycle Routes
  - Bus Route
  - Potential Vehicular Link

↑ Figure 3. Neighbourhood Facilities Plan

# × 2.0 Factors Influencing Proposal

## 2.4 LOCAL FACILITIES AND CONNECTIONS

Existing local centres at Omaha Drive and Glasshouse Lane are within walking distance.

The Blue Ball Pub is to the east on Clyst Road within walking distance.

Existing schools all of which are accessible via existing pedestrian and cycle routes:

- Trinity Primary School at Seabrook Orchards
- Clyst Heath Primary & Nursery
- Clyst St Mary Primary
- St Peter's CofE Secondary
- Stansfield Academy

Major employment centres at Pynes Hill and Sowton are in close proximity.

Leisure facilities are within walking and cycling distance including playing fields on the northern edge of Topsham, proposed playing fields at Seabrook, David Lloyd Leisure Centre and numerous play areas in new residential developments within Newcourt.

The main play area for Newcourt is located immediately to the west of the Newcourt station, and the Newcourt Community Centre is located on Omaha Drive. A new multi-use games area (MUGA) at the housing site off Ikea Way which is under construction.

There is a good range of existing local facilities and good proximity to existing local: employment, retail, education, healthcare, leisure, open spaces, and play areas.

## 2.4.1 Neighbourhood Connectivity

The site borders the Sandy Park Way roundabout to the north.

This affords primary motor vehicle access to & from the site, connecting to the A379 in both directions.

Old Rydon Lane runs west to east on the southern boundary of the site. It is a one-way B standard road with LPA & LHA desire for it to be retained as a quiet 'green' road. The site can connect to it.

To the east Old Rydon Lane crosses the M5 to link with Clyst Road leading to J30 of the M5, East Devon and Topsham.

Old Rydon Lane links to Newcourt Way to the west affording direct access from the site to the heart of the Newcourt area and beyond to Countess Wear/Kings Heath. It also joins Old Rydon Close to the west of the railway bridge affording good cycle and pedestrian access to the north.

Opposite Old Rydon Close are the "Twenty-Steps" pedestrian and cycle stairs leading through Newcourt to Newcourt station, the local centre and play areas as well as schools beyond and Topsham Road.

To the north the Malcolm Baker bridge crosses the A379 affording good connectivity for cyclists and pedestrians to Digby Halt station, King's Heath, Tesco and the adjacent retail park, Pynes Hill, Sowton Industrial Estate and the wider Exeter area beyond.

The National Cycle Network is in close proximity via Newcourt Road, Topsham.

The site has good existing connectivity with the local Newcourt and wider Exeter area and beyond via a range of transportation modes.

## 2.5 SITE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The site is on the eastern edge of the urban area of Exeter, within the Devon Redlands National Character Area (NCA). The Character Profile describes the character of the area as:

*'The Devon Redlands have a very strong, unified character; the underlying red sandstone and consequent red soil dominate the landscape through ploughed fields, cliffs and exposures, and are visually evident in the traditional stone and cob farmsteads, hamlets and villages that are scattered across the area. Not only does the soil visually characterise the area but its fertility also makes it the agricultural heart of Devon. Mixed agriculture has shaped this landscape since medieval times, an era that left a dense pattern of deep and narrow lanes imprinted on the landscape. The gently rolling hills that feature across the area support a network of hedgerows enclosing relatively small fields that are either grazed or under arable cultivation. Hedgerow trees and small copses often give a wooded appearance to the hills. The valleys in between are flat bottomed and open into extensive flood plains across the central part of the Redlands. Here, more 'shrubby' hedgerows or fences enclose larger arable or grazed fields.'*

The National Character Appraisal recognises that the city of Exeter is a regional centre with a significant amount of planned growth to the east. The character of this part of the NCA is fast changing.

Land in the east of the area rises to the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths, an area of extensive open access lowland heath, designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and part of the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

# × 2.0 Factors Influencing Proposal

## 2.6 SITE CONSTRAINTS & OPPORTUNITIES

### 2.6.1 Topography

The site gently slopes from its north boundary at the A379 to Old Rydon Lane at the southern boundary. The A379 is at a lower level to the site but has an existing wide road connection from the signal-controlled junction leading up to the roundabout at Sandy Park Way.

### 2.6.2 Archaeological Investigations & Heritage Assessment

#### AC Archaeology

The site is in a landscape in which there is known evidence for prehistoric and Romano-British settlement and funerary remains, including the remains of a prehistoric round barrow, evidence for prehistoric settlement in the form of enclosure ditches and gullies associated with round houses, concentrations of prehistoric pits and prehistoric and later field systems. Based on discussions with the Exeter City Council Archaeology Officer, further archaeological mitigation will be required via a condition of planning permission likely to comprise:

- *A further stage of trial trenching to establish the date and function of some of the remaining anomalies identified by the geophysical survey within the southern part of the site and whether any buried features are present that were not recognised by the geophysics. Further open-area or strip, map and sample excavations are likely to be required.*
- *Archaeological excavation of the main areas of archaeological interest on the site (at this stage this comprises the ring ditch and associated features), as well as any further concentrations of remains that may be identified by the further stage of trial trenching above.*
- *Appropriate analysis, reporting and archiving of the results.*

Impacts of the proposed development upon the setting of designated heritage assets within the vicinity of the site have been assessed and it is considered that the setting and significance of these assets will remain unaffected by the proposed development.

### 2.6.3 Geotechnical Assessment

#### Ruddlesden Geotechnical

Foundations on most of the site will be traditional strip, trench-fill or pad at a minimum depth of 0.90m below the deeper of existing or proposed ground levels, deeper or wider if loose/soft superficial deposits are present. Laboratory testing classified the soils as being non-shrinkable across most of the site, but soils of low and medium volume change potential exist.

A CBR value of 3% is recommended for preliminary road pavement design.

In-situ soakaway testing indicates that the ground is of relatively low permeability. Although some infiltration drainage may be possible, some off-site discharge is likely.

A preliminary contamination risk assessment shows that levels of contamination recorded are not potentially harmful to human health or to the water environment.

Based on the results of this preliminary investigation, no further action or specific remedial measures are required.

No radon protection measures are required. No additional ground gas protection measures are necessary.

A condition of planning permission is recommended to ensure further additional investigation work is undertaken to confirm both the geotechnical and contamination recommendations including; windowless sample boreholes with in-situ SPT testing, laboratory testing to confirm the volume change potential for foundation design, soakaway testing, CBR testing, contamination sampling in northeast of the site and any made ground encountered as part of future investigation and/or construction activities, to confirm the absence, or otherwise, of contamination in this area of the site, and laboratory testing if significant earthworks are needed.

### 2.6.4 Arboricultural Assessment

#### Aspect Tree Consultancy

Arboricultural impacts have been assessed as being moderate to low.

The proposals involve construction of new buildings with associated parking areas and new road access, with space for the retention of most of the existing trees and hedges.

Moderate to low quality trees and hedgerow sections are proposed for removal.

Incursions into the RPAs of one elm and a group of field maples have been prioritised for protection measures. This is with use of No dig surfacing and tree protection fencing.

Targeted pruning works are proposed to the oak to provide clearance of branches and for safety management.

The proposals adhere to locally adopted policy, national policy and guidance relating to trees and development.

A condition of planning permission is recommended to ensure tree retention and protection measures during development and construction are implemented and monitored in accordance with a pre-commencement Tree Protection Plan & Arboricultural Method Statement(s) which are agreed and in place with reporting to the LPA monthly.

# × 2.0 Factors Influencing Proposal

## 2.6.5 Ecological Assessment

### EAD Ecology

#### Baseline Designated sites

The site does not lie within or adjacent to any statutory designated sites of nature conservation importance. Four European-designated sites are present within 10km of the site and two nationally designated sites are present within 5km of the site. These are the Exe Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar Site (approximately 1.8km south of the Site at its nearest point) and the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Special Protection Area (SAC) and East Devon Heaths SPA (approximately 7.3km south-east of the Site). The Exe Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) occurs approximately 1.8km south of the Site at its nearest point, and Bonhay Road Cutting SSSI, a geological SSSI, occurs approximately 4.9km northwest of the Site.

Seventeen non-statutory sites of nature conservation importance occur within 2km of the site. Most of the site makes up part of an Exeter Green Space site and part of the site makes up part of a Biodiversity Network 'Tier B' site.

#### Habitats

The site comprised predominately of an arable field and semi-improved neutral grassland bordered by dense scrub, fences, species-poor and species-rich hedgerows. A complex of buildings occurred, with amenity grassland, hardstanding, poor semi-improved grassland, ephemeral/short perennial, plantation broadleaved woodland, scattered scrub and trees.

#### Protected / Notable Species

The following were recorded on Site: Six notable plant species, Japanese knotweed, rhododendron, three-cornered garlic, slow worm, common lizard, a range of widespread bird species, badger, bats (roosting, foraging and commuting). The site also provided potential habitat for common/widespread invertebrate species, common amphibians (the presence of great crested newt was considered unlikely) and hedgehog.

## Avoidance, Mitigation, Compensation and Enhancement

The proposed development comprises residential, employment and commercial development, along with associated landscaping and infrastructure. All existing buildings within the Site would be demolished. The proposed development would include the following features:

- *Retention and enhancement of the majority of existing hedgerows;*
- *New landscape planting within the public open space, including native shrub/tree planting, wildflower meadow seeding, and creation of native hedgerow;*
- *Wetland seeding/planting around the attenuation basins; and*
- *Provision of bird, bat and insect boxes within the fabric of new buildings and on retained trees;*

Measures are proposed for designated sites, habitats and species to avoid, mitigate and compensate adverse effects during and post-construction. A Construction and Ecological Management Plan (CECoMP) would be produced to detail these measures and ensure delivery during the construction phase. A Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) would be produced to detail these measures and ensure delivery in the long-term.

## Residual Effects

There would be no residual negative effects on any statutory designated sites of nature conservation importance; no effects on the integrity of European-designated sites would occur. Effects on the non-statutory Exeter Green Space and Biodiversity Network site ('Tier B') would be short-term and negative at the Parish level, changing to neutral in the medium-term (not significant). The effect on badgers would be long-term and negative, significant at the Sub-Parish level (not significant). All other residual effects on habitats and species would neutral or positive in the medium to long-term. A net gain in biodiversity could be achieved.

## Conclusions

The proposed development of the site would accord with biodiversity planning policies set out in the NPPF, and the Exeter Core Strategy and Local Plan (Saved Policies). The proposed development could be undertaken in accordance with the ecological hierarchy of avoid, mitigate, compensate and enhance and would avoid 'significant harm'. A net gain in biodiversity could be achieved. The proposed development would comply with legislation regarding statutory designated sites and could be undertaken in accordance with the legal protection of protected species.

## 2.6.6 Flood Risk & Drainage Assessment

### Pell Frischmann

#### Baseline Designated Sites

The Site is within Flood Zone 1, an area with low probability of flooding from fluvial/tidal sources.

Mapping indicates that most of the Site area generally has a 'very low' risk of surface water flooding.

The Site is at a low risk of groundwater flooding according to the SFRA and geological data.

There is generally considered to be a low risk of flooding from all other sources.

Infiltration techniques alone are unable to cope with all the surface water run-off from the Site. It is recommended that infiltration techniques are included in conjunction with other techniques.

Consultation with South West Water has agreed the surface water run-off can be discharged into the surface water system and the foul water can be discharged into the combined sewer.

A drainage proposal has been developed using permeable paving and subbase drainage beneath all the commercial carparks before discharging into the proposed SWW surface water network at equivalent greenfield runoff rates.

The proposed development has the potential to provide betterment in terms of post development surface water runoff through the use of SuDS techniques.

# × 2.0 Factors Influencing Proposal

## **2.6.7 Air Quality Assessment**

### SLR

The Proposed Development is found to be 'medium risk' in relation to dust soiling effects on people and property, and 'low risk' in relation to human health impacts. Providing effective mitigation measures are implemented, residual effects from dust emissions during the construction phase would be 'not significant'.

Impacts associated with operational phase vehicle movements are predicted to be negligible at all existing receptor locations and therefore the residual effects will be 'not significant'.

Pollutant concentrations predicted at future on-site receptor locations are below the relevant air quality objectives and therefore the Site is considered to be suitable for its proposed use.

## **2.6.8 Acoustic Assessment**

### SLR

The site is influenced by dominant road traffic noise. The initial site noise risk assessment has been categorised, in the worst case, as 'medium risk' on the future occupants of the new noise sensitive development because of road traffic noise incident from Old Rydon Lane to the south. For all other dwelling façades, lower incident sound levels have been directly established.

Stage 2 assessment has reviewed a good acoustic design process, internal ambient noise levels, external amenity areas and other matters. Commensurate design specifications have been established considering current industry guidance. It has been realised that suitable internal and external amenity standards can be readily achieved by the scheme. Consideration has also been given to proposed music concerts at Sandy Park Stadium, (planning ref 23/0875/VOC). From the analysis of the Site layout, in context with the locations of the existing residential dwellings nearby the site, it is considered that the planning application associated with music concerts at Sandy Park Stadium need not be a reason to delay the approval of the Site for the proposed uses herein identified.

On the basis that design guidance within this report has been adopted, it follows that any significant adverse noise impacts will be avoided in the finished development as to accord with overarching national and local planning requirements for new residential development.

A recommendation is made to the decision maker to grant with noise conditions if necessary to ensure that significant adverse effects will be avoided for the proposed dwellings, by use of a commensurate scheme of control as outlined within this report.

## **2.6.9 Transport Assessment**

### SLR

The development site is situated in an accessible location, within easy walking and cycling distance of a wide range of public transport, education, retail and healthcare facilities.

Pedestrian and cycle access to the site is good, with the site located in an area with a network of segregated pedestrian routes offering high levels of permeability. The National Cycle Route (NCN) 2 passes to the southwest of the site.

Public transport access to the site is also good, with nearby bus and rail stations providing regular services. This will be supplemented by a Mobility Hub within the site.

The Exeter City Council residential parking standards are contained within the Residential Design Guide SPD. As this is an Outline application, the exact development quantum and parking provision per unit is unknown; any future Reserved Matters application will provide car and cycle parking in line with standards.

PIA data has been examined in the vicinity of the application site and it is unlikely that development traffic would adversely affect the road safety record. It is considered that there are no overriding safety issues in the vicinity of the site that would be exacerbated by the proposals.

Vehicular access will be from Sandy Park Way via the existing roundabout, with vehicles able to enter and exit the site in forward gear. Vehicular access within the site will be from a north south spine road from the roundabout with side roads serving buildings.

The worst-case traffic generation of the proposed development will generate 229 vehicle trips in the AM and PM peak hours. This is significantly lower than the level of traffic which has been assessed and accommodated in relation to other development proposals in the vicinity and in relation to highway network improvements, given that the site's allocation would give rise to higher levels of traffic.

Junctions on the nearby highway network have either been designed to accommodate trips associated with the site's allocation, or the level of development traffic forecast to use those junctions would not be material in terms of their safety and operation.

All connections to existing highways have been thoroughly checked to ensure they only occur on existing adopted highway land and not on any third party land.

All visibility splays have been designed to comply with LHA requirements.

Bus, Refuse vehicle and Fire tender swept path analysis has all been checked to ensure no clashes or over-running.

The application site is compatible with both local and national transport policy at all levels.

Based on the findings within the TA and in the context of the guidelines within paragraphs 110 & 111 of the NPPF, there is no basis for highway and transportation objections to the proposals. The impacts of the proposed development will not be severe in operational terms or unacceptable in relation to highway safety; therefore, the presumption in favour of the development contained in the NPPF and DfT Circular is not outweighed by any highways/traffic-related issues.

A detailed and coordinated Travel Plan has been included to provide a long term strategy to encourage sustainable travel. A condition of planning will be required to ensure the Travel Plan is in place.

# × 2.0 Factors Influencing Proposal

## 2.6.10 Site Constraints Summary

From the findings of all Consultants' reports there are no significant nor specific constraints found which prevent development of the site.

The requirement for further (Conditioned) investigatory/confirmatory investigations and/or protections as outlined in each report is acknowledged and anticipated.

## 2.6.11 Site Opportunities Summary

The site is located to the southeast of Exeter city centre in a highly sustainable location within the city, and is within close proximity to existing facilities: rail stations, retail, employment, education, leisure and open spaces/ play areas all of which are within walking distance.

Opportunities exist to create a sustainable mixed-use development which will provide much needed housing and employment for the area, whilst enhancing accessibility to the existing facilities in the area.

The site is well connected to a range of existing travel modes:

- *Digby Halt and Newcourt rail stations providing regular services to Exeter and the wider rail network.*
- *The neighbourhood bus routes at Newcourt, Tesco and Sowton*
- *The network of pedestrian and cycle routes.*

There is an opportunity to enhance the existing pedestrian & cycle network by providing well designed connections & new permeable routes through the site.

Old Rydon Lane has been partially downgraded to a one-way system and cycle contraflow to enhance its attractiveness as a key green infrastructure corridor providing a good east-west sustainable transport corridor linking East Devon to the city centre.

There are few existing trees on the site and where possible, these will be retained.

The site falls from east to west, with higher parts of the site adjacent to the railway and Old Rydon Lane. Existing gradients do not present a significant challenge for construction or accessibility.

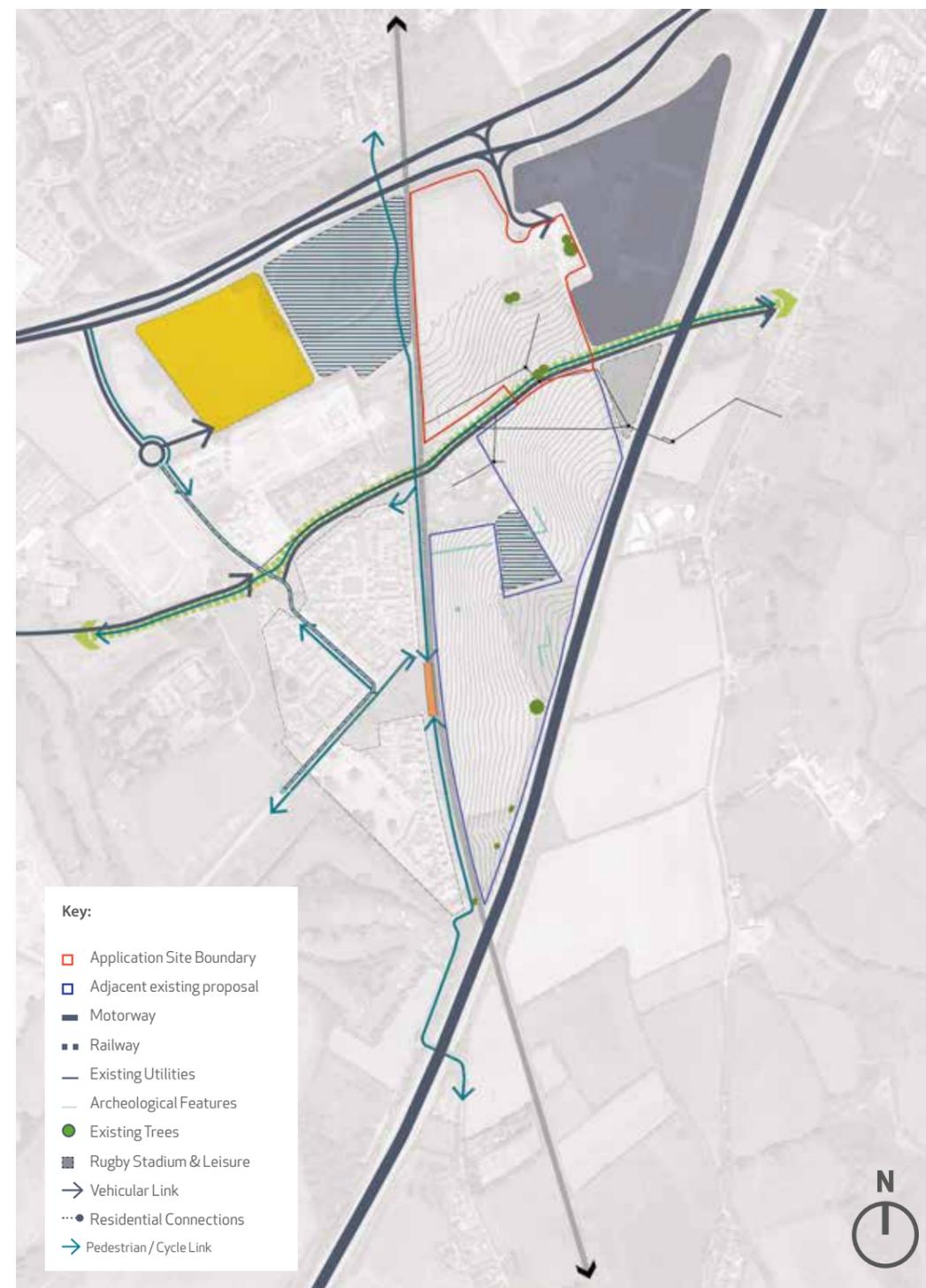
The existing topography on the site allows for the provision of Sustainable Urban Drainage as part of an integrated site drainage and green infrastructure design.

Existing services run east west through the southern part of the site. These can be incorporated within the street arrangement and open space network.

The site is enclosed to the north, east and west by the A379, motorway and railway. Locating development away from the railway, A379 and motorway to minimise noise impacts will provide good levels of residential amenity for dwellings.

The site has the potential to facilitate and enhance connections to the existing green infrastructure network within Newcourt and the wider area. A strong landscape led development has the potential to reinforce the urban edge of Exeter when viewed from the M5 motorway, Clyst Valley and higher ground to the east. Existing hedgerows and marginal semi-improved grassland are the primary ecological features on the site. Retention and enhancement of them through careful long-term management allows their integration into a broader, site-wide green infrastructure network.

The proposed development presents opportunities to implement relevant parts of the Newcourt Masterplan and Exeter and East Devon Green Infrastructure Strategy.



↑ Figure 4. Opportunities & Constraints Summary Plan

# × 3.0 Design Evolution

## 3.1 VISION

“The development of the site creates an opportunity to provide a high quality mixed-used extension to Exeter, which integrates well with existing neighbouring areas.

The scheme will meet identified housing need whilst providing vital employment space complemented by a mix of other uses, through the creation of an attractive urban extension. It will deliver high quality green spaces and streets that provide connections between existing and proposed development and the wider landscape.

It will create a strong sense of place, with well-designed, attractive buildings and spaces, set within reinforced and enhanced existing flora and fauna, creating an increase in biodiversity through the delivery of enhanced green corridors that link to the wider countryside, native planting and wildflower verges.”



Green Cycle Routes



Encourage Biodiversity



Safe Environment



New Native Planting



Homes for Families



Encourage Wildlife



High Quality Open Space and Play



Street Trees



High Quality Employment Space



Shared Surface



Sustainable Urban Drainage



Contemporary Architecture

# × 3.0 Design Evolution

## 3.2 DESIGN CONCEPT

The proposal has been developed following analysis of the site constraints and opportunities. An initial Parameters Plan directs the design process and this leads to an evolved Concept Plan.

The scheme will reflect the shape, orientation and layout of the site.

The north south spine road access will bisect the site.

The layout will need to provide connectivity to the surrounding areas through vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access points on the northern boundary of the site, and onto Old Rydon Lane.

This allows separation of and zoning of mixed use/employment and residential development. Such zoning has clear benefits:

- *It allows the adjacent uses to complement and be harmonious with the existing Sandy Park facilities;*
- *The scale and massing of buildings east of the spine road can give an acoustic buffer against stadium noise;*
- *It produces the opportunity to design strong attractive and interesting architectural frontage along both sides of the spine road;*
- *It allows mixed use/employment areas to be better overlooked during evenings/night times so reducing the potential for crime;*
- *It delivers a more integrated neighbourhood where residents can work, live and enjoy good amenity;*

Important existing landscape features are retained within a connected green infrastructure network.

The mixed use/employment zones can be focused on the northern part of the site, near to the site entrance and to the east of the spine road, sitting adjacent to the industrial style buildings at Sandy Park.

Up to 4 storey mixed use/employment buildings are considered acceptable in the northern area of the site, relating to the neighbouring A379, whilst creating a gateway to the site.

Space is available for a main green area integrating a retained tree. This gives an attractive areas for landscaping, habitat, amenity walking and a pond feature.

Residential development is located west of the spine road.

The street network serving houses can run from east-west, providing a southerly aspect for the majority of dwellings and supporting the use of photovoltaics/solar thermal.

The main green links with the landscape/habitat areas along the railway line.

The main green then visually flows to the east of the spine road and allows space to be provided for a central formal plaza area incorporating the mobility hub.

The proposed design creates a strong green infrastructure network that retains existing site features and integrates them into a site wide landscape design. The landscape scheme, which is explained in more detail in section 4.6, integrates biodiversity enhancement, noise mitigation and drainage into a high quality network of open spaces that provide the setting for the proposed residential development.

The existing green infrastructure corridors along the railway, eastern boundary and Old Rydon Lane are strengthened and reinforced, and a generous green wedge is proposed through the centre of the site, linking the railway and the motorway. A north - south green link is also proposed to provide structural planting within the new development.

The landscape will be carefully designed to provide wilder areas adjacent to the primary green infrastructure corridors to provide habitat for existing biodiversity (including slow worms, invertebrates and bird species).

Space is available for a Leap play area.

3 storey flats and townhouses can provide a strong frontage to the spine road and main green area.

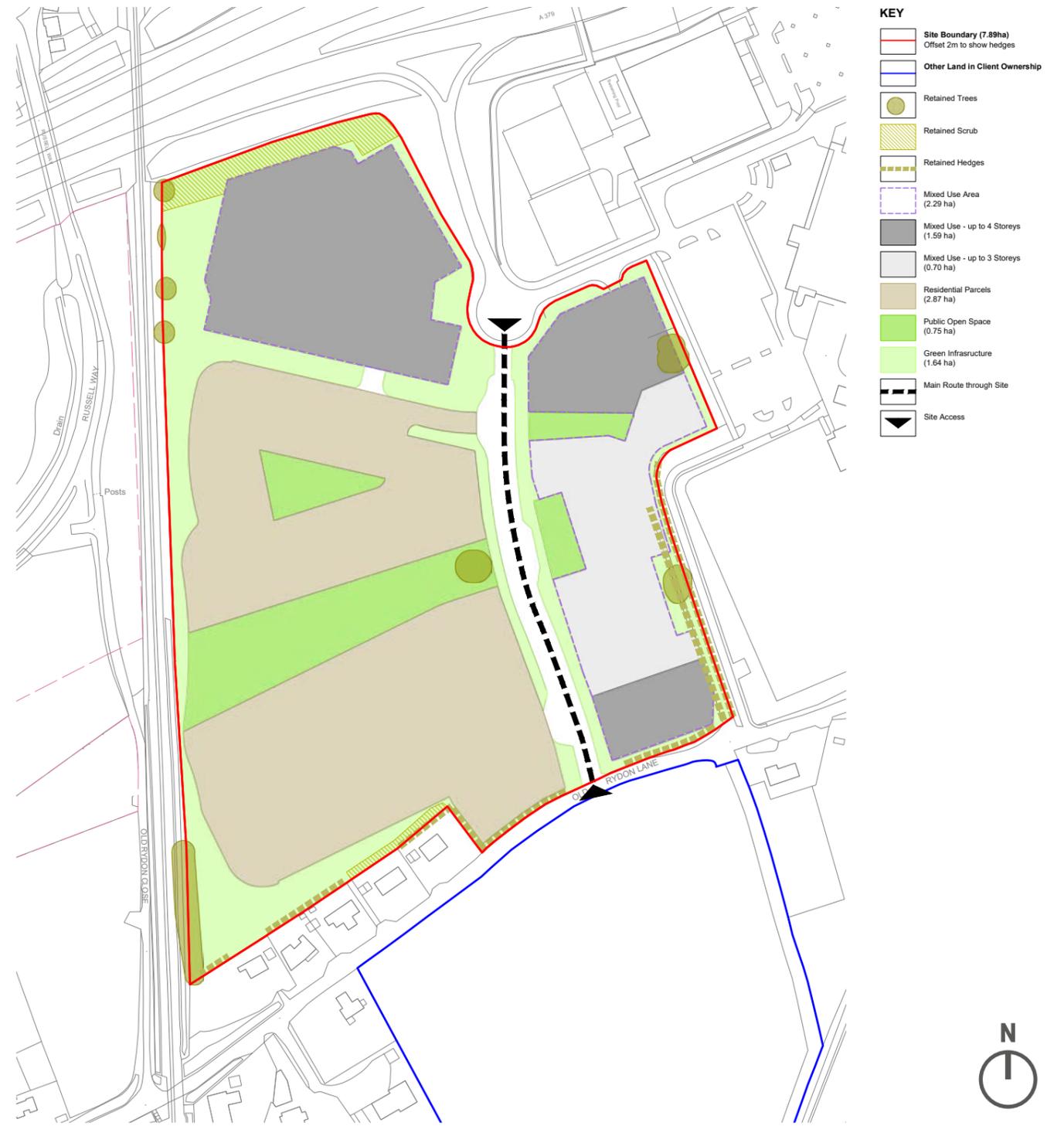
The remainder of the site can be 2 storey with a mix of terraced, semi-detached and detached houses to provide the proposed mix of dwellings.

Architectural designs have not been developed at this stage, but it is proposed that the scheme will reflect local character through the use of high quality, locally distinctive materials, but could be of a contemporary design that, combined with the robust landscape structure, creates a strong identity for the site.

# × 3.0 Design Evolution



↑ Figure 5. Concept Plan



↑ Figure 6. Land Use Parameters Plan

# × 4.0 The Proposal Details

## 4.1 THE ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN AND SITE LAYOUT PLAN

### 1 Site Access from A379

The proposed access from A379 links to a pedestrian, cyclist and emergency vehicles only junction onto Old Rydon Lane. This actively promotes non-vehicular modes at Old Rydon Lane. The line of the link road informs the design team as to land use zoning within the site.

### 2 Commercial & Residential Zoning

The north-south alignment of the link road bisects the site. It is considered better allocation and design to split the proposed land uses of mixed use/employment and residential into blocks logically created by access roadways. Thus the mixed use/employment areas are proposed at the north of the site and to the east of the link road. This is more appropriate given the industrial-style of adjacent stadium, leisure centre, conferencing & hotel. Residential use is then sited to the south of the site and west of the road.

### 3 Travel Modes

Good provision for footpaths and cycleways is incorporated. The spine road has been designed to allow for future buses. Old Rydon Lane acts as a quiet green cycle and footpath route to Newcourt Station. Connection to footpaths and cycleways at the roundabout gives access to Digby Halt rail station, King's Heath, Sowton and beyond. A Travel Plan is included to encourage the use of sustainable transport.

### 4 Green Corridor

Old Rydon Lane currently acts as a one way road for motor vehicles (two way for pedestrians and cyclists). It has the potential to become a green wildlife corridor providing enhanced habitat along its length. Such an enhanced landscape provides a key green biodiversity link east west.

### 5 Central Main Green Space

A high quality green space which runs east-west is provided, with an existing retained focal tree retained at a key point in the development.

### 6 Attenuation Ponds

A pond within the main green creates interesting landscape character and is designed to maximise landscape and wildlife benefits, as well as storing surface water runoff. Other ponds are shown also.

### 7 Other Green Spaces

Other smaller green spaces, overlooked by surrounding dwellings, provide local green space in each part of the development. One of these can accommodate a LEAP play facility.

### 8 Green pedestrian connections

Off-road pedestrian routes provide amenity walking connections within the site.

### 9 Landscape Buffer and Wildlife Corridor (to railway and Old Rydon Lane)

Native hedge planting will define the site boundaries and provide inter-connected biodiversity corridors. A minimum 2m wide area of semi-improved grassland will be provided adjacent to the hedges to maximise biodiversity benefits.

### 10 Central Flexible Space - Plaza

At the central point of the development, a flexible landscaped space has been provided. This could be a mix of hard and soft landscaping and could provide space for seating and a nodal space for bus and sustainable travel modes (mobility hub) serving the wider development.



↑ Figure 7. Illustrative Masterplan

# × 4.0 The Proposal Details

## 4.2 AMOUNT AND USE

The Site Layout Plan provides up to 158 dwellings. The indicative housing mix is drawn from requirements of Exeter's Housing Need Assessment.

There is also 17,567m<sup>2</sup> of mixed use/employment floor space (net), in the northern and eastern parts of the site, wrapping along the eastern boundary to reflect the neighbouring uses.

## 4.3 ACCESSIBILITY

### Site Access from A379

Vehicular access will be via the A379 on the northern boundary of the site, off the existing roundabout which currently serves Sandy Park Way. Vehicular access arrangements are fully explained in SLR's Transport Assessment, part of this application.

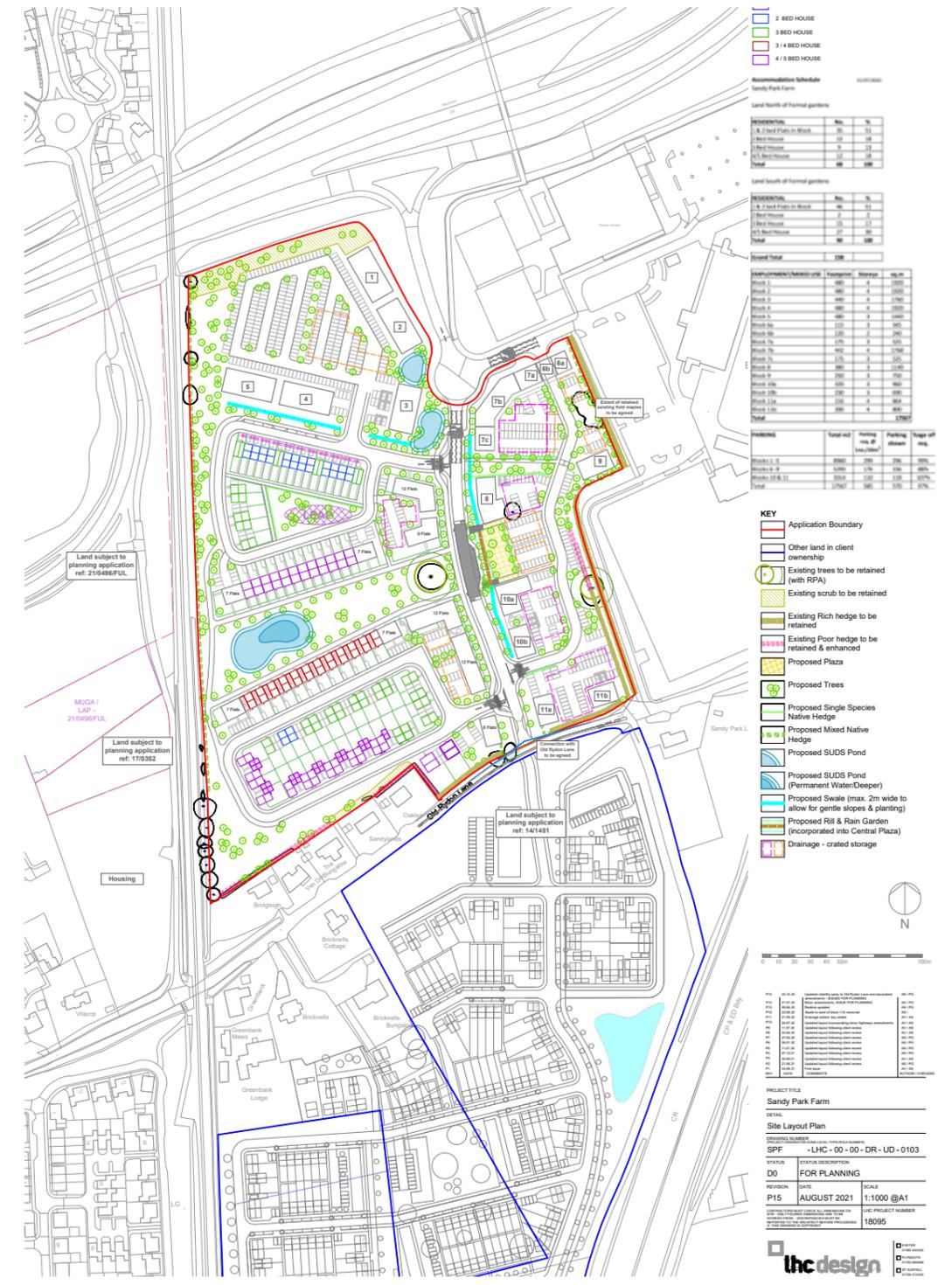
Within the site, a connected network of streets will provide a variety of options for vehicle, pedestrian and cycle movement through the site. Streets will be designed to have active frontages, clearly defined public and private areas and with a clear hierarchy from the main access route to pedestrian dominated shared space residential lanes.

### Travel Modes

The Masterplan and Site Layout demonstrate good provision and connectivity of footpaths and cycleways to the existing network. Old Rydon Lane is linked to provide cycle and pedestrian access and emergency vehicle access. This gives good access for cycle and pedestrian access to Newcourt station, Old Rydon Close and Newcourt Way bus services. Connection to the existing adopted footpaths at the roundabout on Sandy Park Way gives good cycle and pedestrian access to Digby Halt rail station, Sowton, King's Heath and beyond via the Malcolm Baker bridge.

A high quality public space (Plaza) at the heart of the mixed use/employment area will create a new destination, providing potential for small scale retail, leisure and service support to the employment and residential areas. The space will provide a strong connection to foot and cycle links, allowing visitors to move easily between the mixed use/employment and residential areas and public transport hubs.

The spine road has been designed to accommodate buses with a central Mobility hub incorporated for future bus provision. All roads have been designed to accommodate refuse vehicles and fire tenders. A detailed Travel Plan for the development has been submitted to promote other forms of transport to all residents and occupiers.



↑ Figure 8. Site Layout Plan including quantum of development

# × 4.0 The Proposal Details

## 4.4 SCALE AND MASSING

The proposed commercial development will be up to 4 storeys high in key locations. This will reflect the scale of the neighbouring uses, whilst providing strong landmark buildings, and attractive frontages.

The residential development will be predominately 2 storey, with 3 storey flats & town houses along the main spine road and fronting the main green.



↑ Figure 9. Storey Heights Plan

## 4.5 LANDSCAPE STRATEGY (including Green Infrastructure Statement, Open Spaces & SuDS)

The landscape strategy for the proposed development has been developed from a thorough understanding of the site's existing opportunities. The landscape design will enhance the existing landscape and ecological assets and weave the proposed development into the tapestry of existing landscape. This will strengthen the existing natural environment and also anchor the proposed development into the context of the site and the surrounding landscape.

The Landscape Strategy is formed of 5 key elements:

1. *Green Infrastructure and Ecological Corridors*
2. *Open Spaces*
3. *Main Access Spine Road*
4. *Pedestrian and Cycle Links*
5. *Sustainable Urban Drainage*

### 4.5.1 Green Infrastructure Statement & Ecological Corridors

A key feature of the landscape strategy has been to ensure connectivity with the wider landscape including the Exe Riverside Valley Park, Ludwell Valley Park and Clyst Valley.

Existing trees and hedgerows have been retained where possible. Existing boundary hedgerows will be enhanced where necessary with new mixed native hedges proposed, providing a robust green infrastructure link around the boundaries of the site. The existing chestnut in the heart of the development forms a focal point, linking the central open main green and the formal plaza.

The landscape design will integrate existing ecological habitats and green infrastructure into the landscape framework of the site. This will reinforce existing wildlife corridors and provide new links between the railway and across the development. The key habitat areas within the proposals are the boundaries abutting the railway line and the existing boundary hedgerows.

The railway boundary habitat will be strengthened with a continuous stretch of mixed native scrub and native wildflower meadow.

The proposals include mix of native trees, structure planting, hedgerows, wildflower and wetland meadows, as well as more ornamental specimen trees, shrubs, herbaceous and wildflower planting.

Lighting will be carefully designed to avoid light spill onto key wildlife corridors to protect important bat feeding and commuting areas.

Landscape Buffer and Wildlife Corridor (to railway and Old Rydon Lane)

Native hedge planting will define the site boundaries and provide inter-connected biodiversity corridors. A minimum 2m wide area of semi-improved grassland will be provided adjacent to the hedges to maximise biodiversity benefits.

### 4.5.2 Open Spaces

#### Central Open Space (Main Green)

The central main green creates a green infrastructure link running east-west across the development, linking the ecological railway corridor through to the central formal plaza space. This central green space framed with avenues of trees that reinforce views to the wider landscape, comprises a more natural and native area to the west, a large area of level, open amenity grass, and more formal to the east around the existing chestnut, linking into the formal plaza.

#### The Plaza – A Central Flexible Space

At the central point of the development, a flexible landscaped space has been provided. This could be a mix of hard and soft landscaping integrated with the rill and rain garden that form part of the sustainable urban drainage. It could provide an attractive space including seating and the nodal space for bus and sustainable travel modes (Mobility hub) that serves the wider development.

#### Other Green Spaces

Other smaller green spaces, overlooked by surrounding dwellings, provide local green space in each part of the development.

A new Play Area (Leap) is centrally located within the residential

# × 4.0 The Proposal Details

development, close to the central open space and offers new trees, wildflower and amenity grass areas. Additional smaller areas of open space have been provided throughout the development.

## Attenuation Ponds

Attenuation ponds within the open spaces will create an interesting landscape character here and will be designed to maximise landscape and wildlife benefits, as well as storing surface water runoff.

### 4.5.3 Main Access Spine Road Landscape

The spine road, incorporating a shared pedestrian and cycle link on one side, is lined with generous verges of street trees and ornamental perennial wildflowers offers colourful, visual interest, as well as being beneficial to insects. The swale, rill and rain garden on the eastern side adjacent to the commercial area offers further interest and ecological benefits.

### 4.5.4 Pedestrian & Cycle Links

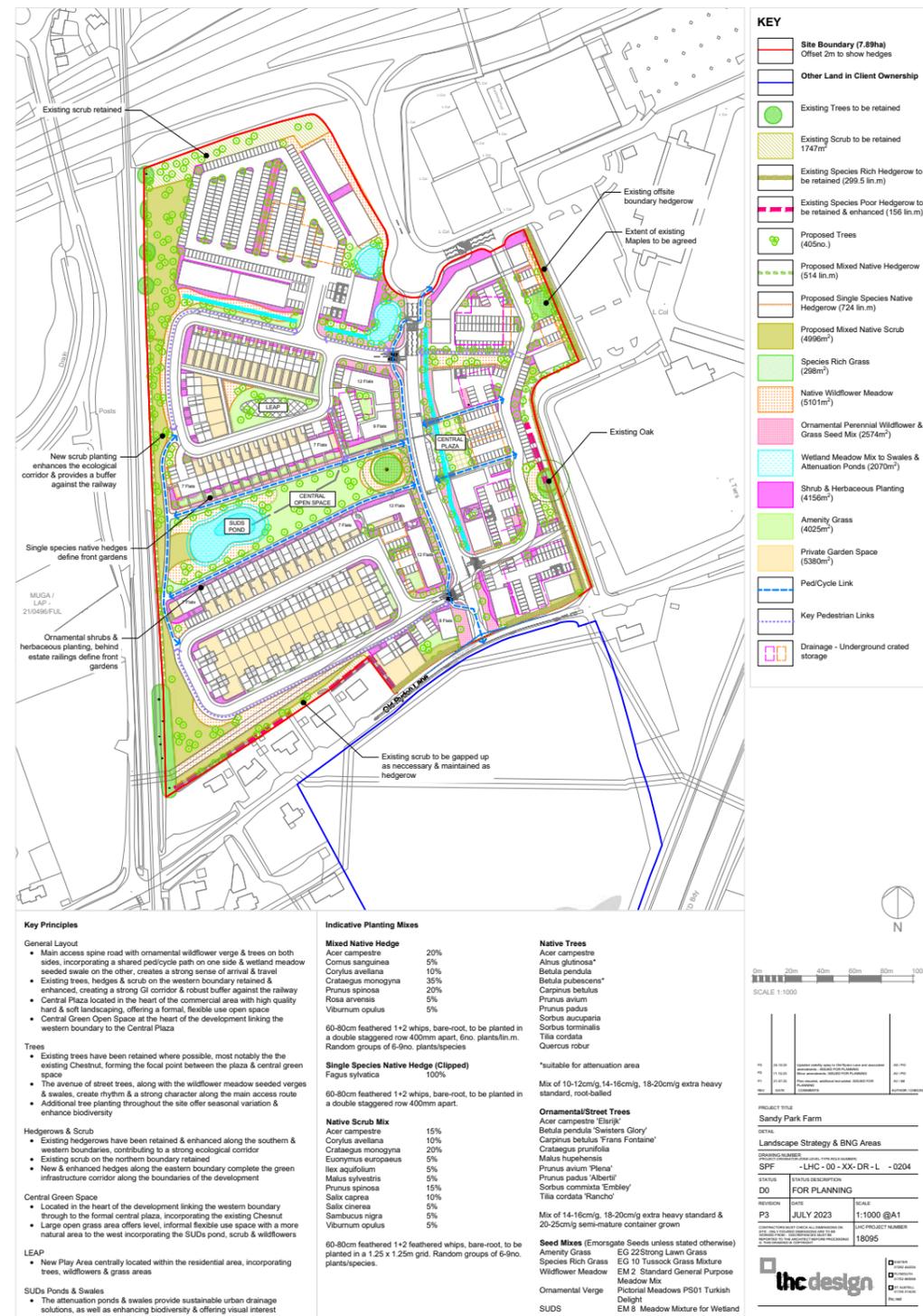
The proposal seeks to deliver pedestrian and cycle routes that link into the existing network, maintaining and promoting greener modes of travel. The proposals offer strong pedestrian and cycle links throughout the development, linking the key areas of open spaces

## Green pedestrian connections

Off-road pedestrian routes will provide direct green connections to the wider area and central open spaces within the scheme.

### 4.5.5 Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDs)

A range of sustainable drainage systems have been incorporated into the landscape design, including ponds and swales which provide amenity, visual interest and enhance biodiversity. Additionally, a rill and rain garden has been incorporated into the formal, central plaza space.



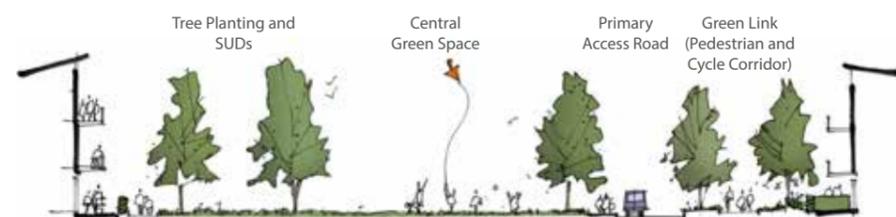
↑ Figure 10. Landscape Strategy Plan

# × 4.0 The Proposal Details

## 4.6 PARKING STRATEGY

Parking provisions within the proposed application site each respective land uses will be in accordance with ECC policy, including the 'Sustainable Transport Supplementary Planning Document (March 2013)'.

The proposed parking strategy for the residential element meets the requirements of Exeter's Residential Design SPD with a mix of allocated and unallocated parking that provides adequate parking for new residents and visitors.



↑ Figure 11. Illustrative Section - Central Green Space



↑ Figure 12. Illustrative Section - Typical Residential Street

## 4.7 APPEARANCE

The layout has been configured to ensure new homes front onto streets and public spaces, with clear definition between public and private realms.

The Strong landscape infrastructure, explained in 4.6 above, will define the character of the development, creating a robust network of green spaces that link the different parts of the development and connect existing housing to the west of the railway to surrounding areas and the wider landscape.

Streets will be high quality spaces with an appropriate scale and clear definition of public and private spaces.

Where proposed on street parking will be integrated into defined parking areas, with tree planting to create an attractive streetscape.

The proposed architectural design will draw on best aspects of local context with careful design to ensure good active frontages and a positive streetscape.

Sustainable Design will be achieved in accordance with the requirements of Core Strategy and Residential Design SPD.

## 4.8 SECURED BY DESIGN STATEMENT

The layout and arrangement of buildings has been evolved with Secured by Design principles in mind. Giving the entirety of the site to Employment use would have created a night-time 'dark-zone' which would be unsecure and could attract crime. Instead, the siting of housing to the west of the spine road allows the night-time buildings east of the spine road to be well overlooked, thus reducing the potential for crime.

The layout establishes the principles that will be taken forward at Reserved Matters stage so that the scheme will have appropriate boundary treatments and well positioned doors and windows to define boundaries and ensure spaces are well overlooked.

The variety of houses and mixed use/employment proposed will help to increase the likelihood of activity and occupation throughout the day. Together with a range of parking solutions, attractive streets, central Mobility Hub and used through routes - the neighbourhood should become an active, vibrant, safe and secure place to live and work.

Residential parking courts have been included to serve apartments to ensure residents have ownership and these spaces are clearly defined and not part of the public realm.

Future Reserved Matters applications will provide further more detailed information on secured by design measures.

# × 4.0 The Proposal Details

## 4.9 SUSTAINABILITY & ENERGY EFFICIENCY STATEMENT

Carbon Reduction, Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Design is constantly evolving.

Future Reserved Matters applications will provide more detailed information on sustainability.

### 4.9.1 Macro Considerations (Whole Site)

The site is shown to be in a sustainable location, within the identified Newcourt Masterplan area.

There is excellent potential to connect to adjacent areas and local facilities using sustainable transport modes. Site connectivity to adjacent uses and the wider area will facilitate sustainable transport options for local people.

The mix of uses on site will provide accessible employment and allied facilities & services within easy walking and cycling distance of new and existing nearby dwellings.

The proposed development will provide a variety of employment opportunities in the mixed use/employment areas and dwellings to meet local community needs including affordable housing and a range of house types and sizes.

The proposed landscape and drainage design incorporates features to deliver biodiversity gain and provide high quality public open space for existing and future residents. Use of native species and wildlife friendly planting throughout.

Buildings should be designed to achieve modern sustainability goals and secure high quality living environments – internally and externally.

The layout incorporates the following features to create the basis for a sustainable/climate-resilient development over and above the site's already demonstrated sustainable location:

- *Predominately east west orientated housing streets - providing south facing plots with sunny gardens and interiors and potential for photovoltaic panels;*

- *NDSS compliant footprints and good sized plots to give potential for a fabric first approach and non-fossil fuel heating, (air source heat pumps etc.);*
- *Retained and new tree planting for shading;*
- *Areas for habitat creation and water management;*
- *Inclusion of electric car and bike charging points;*
- *Well integrated cycle and walking routes to encourage the use of more sustainable modes of transport;*
- *A centrally located Mobility Hub for future bus service provision to encourage more sustainable modes of transport;*

### 4.9.2 Micro Considerations (Elements on Site)

Layout and Building design principles in future reserved matters applications will include:

- *A fabric first approach to carbon reduction;*
- *Consideration of use of appropriate renewable technologies, including a combination of air-source or ground-source heat pumps, solar PV panels and battery storage;*
- *The scheme to meet Future Homes Standards;*
- *Layout of commercial and residential dwellings, key rooms and roofs to make best use of the south facing slope and solar orientation;*
- *Flexibility in relation to internal room layouts and structures (enable potential roof conversion and consider Lifetime Homes provision),*
- *Provision of EV charging and bike storage for all dwellings, and consideration of car share and bike share facilities,*
- *Incorporation of hedgehog/vertebrate passes, nest, bat, bird and insect boxes and bricks within the houses, garages and boundary walls/fences,*
- *Use of modern methods of construction to ensure energy efficiency, high build quality and minimising of waste.*

## 4.10 WASTE AUDIT STATEMENT

This application is not supported by a Waste Audit Statement. It will be required to comply with Para 8 of the National Planning Policy for Waste and Policy W4 of the Devon Waste Plan to ensure waste generated by the development during both construction and operational phases is managed in accordance with the waste hierarchy, with a clear focus on waste prevention.

A condition of planning will require the submission of a comprehensive waste audit statement in accordance with Policy W4: Waste Prevention of the Devon Waste Plan at future reserved matters stage.

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