

Supplementary Committee Agenda



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Cabinet Monday 18th March 2024

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

Time: 7.00 pm

Democratic Services: V Messenger (Democratic Services)
Tel: (01992) 564243

14. NORTH WEALD BASSETT STRATEGIC MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK (Pages 2 - 14)

(Place – Cllr N Bedford) To agree to formally endorse the North Weald Bassett Strategic Masterplan Framework (C-051-2023/24).

Please see Appendix A (Final Draft Strategic Masterplan Framework, part 4) attached.

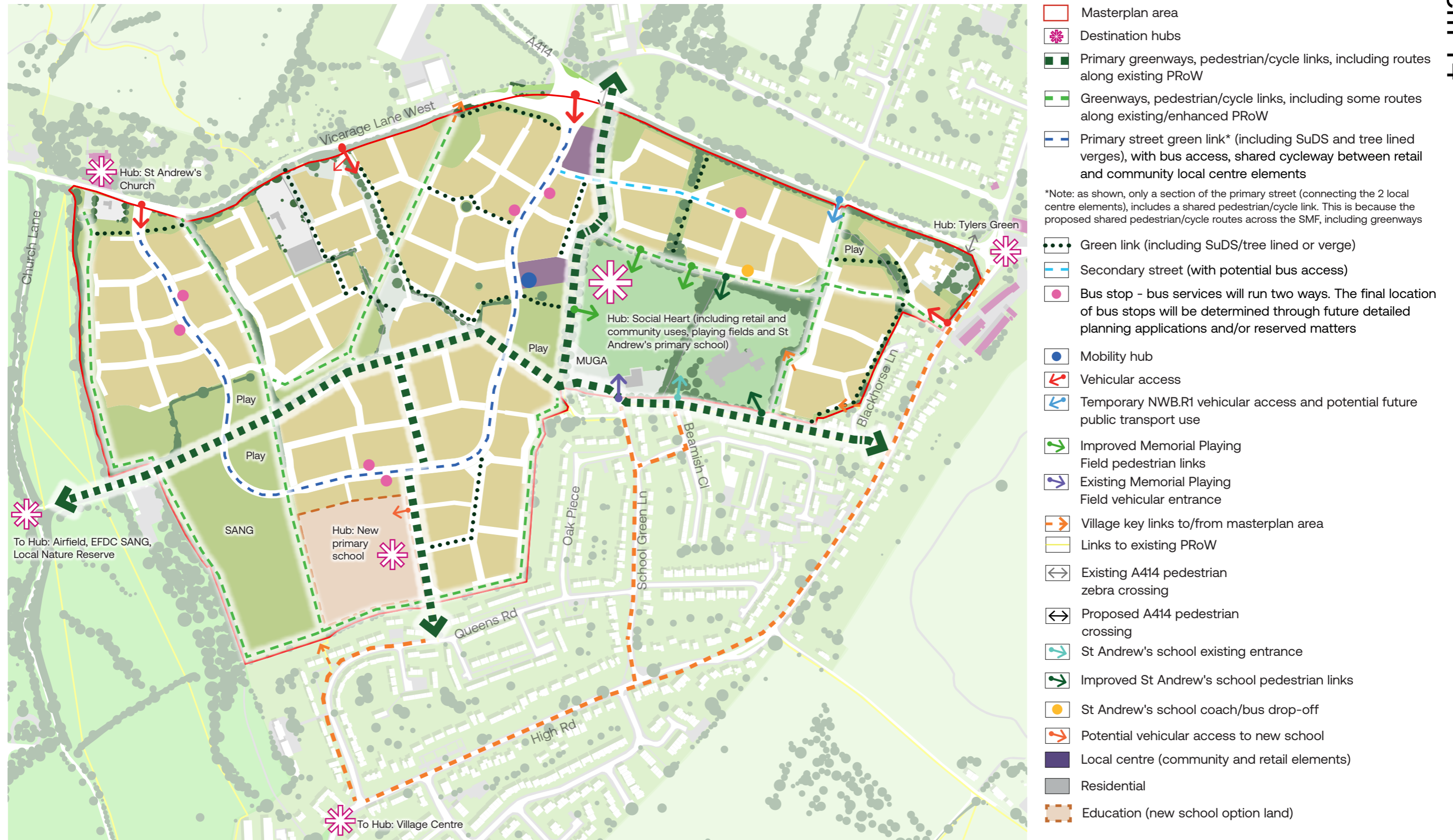


Figure 6.8 - Access and movement framework (illustrative and indicative)

Key destination routes

Figure 6.9 illustrates the SMF proposal alongside both the North Weald Airfield Strategic Masterplan and the wider village setting of North Weald Bassett.

The key destinations indicated are listed below, with icons to illustrate modes of travel (including active travel). Please refer to the access and movement framework plan which distinguishes where cycle access is provided through shared footpath/cycleways.

Proposed routes as part of the SMF should be well-overlooked and feature clear wayfinding/signage elements. The use of public squares and safe crossing points over roads will help promote active travel users over motor vehicles. For further information on the proposed greenways through the SMF please refer to the landscape character information in chapter 7.

- 1 Existing village centre (shops and facilities located on The High Road)
- 2 Enhanced Social Heart for the village (including the local centre comprising of St Andrew's primary school, Memorial Playing Fields, new health, community and retail elements)
- 3 New primary school within NWB.R3 land
- 4 Church Fields natural open space, play and SANG area (with links to wider SANG and local nature reserve)
- 5 North Weald Airfield (both its aviation and enhanced employment uses)
- 6 Tylers Green (including retail, pub and employment)
- 7 St Andrew's church and North Weald Bassett cemetery



Figure 6.9 - Key destination routes

Recreational routes

In addition to the more direct active travel routes that connect the key destinations in the village, the SMF should include well-connected recreational routes (figure 6.10).

Recreational routes are active travel focused, for pedestrians and cyclists. They vary in width but include 3.5m wide shared cycleway/footpaths and 2m wide footpaths. Please refer to the access and movement framework plan for further information.

These routes include proposed greenways and existing public rights of way. Potential users of these routes could include walkers, dog-walkers, joggers or anyone wanting to take an alternative, attractive and overlooked route through the SMF.

The illustrative recreational routes do not include the full extent of potential routes through existing and proposed street form.

Recreational routes could include features such as 'play on the way', trim trail or outdoor gym equipment, public art (potentially referencing the history of North Weald Bassett) or paving distance details to enable distance to be judged for runners.

For further information on the proposed greenways through the SMF please refer to the landscape character information in chapter 7.



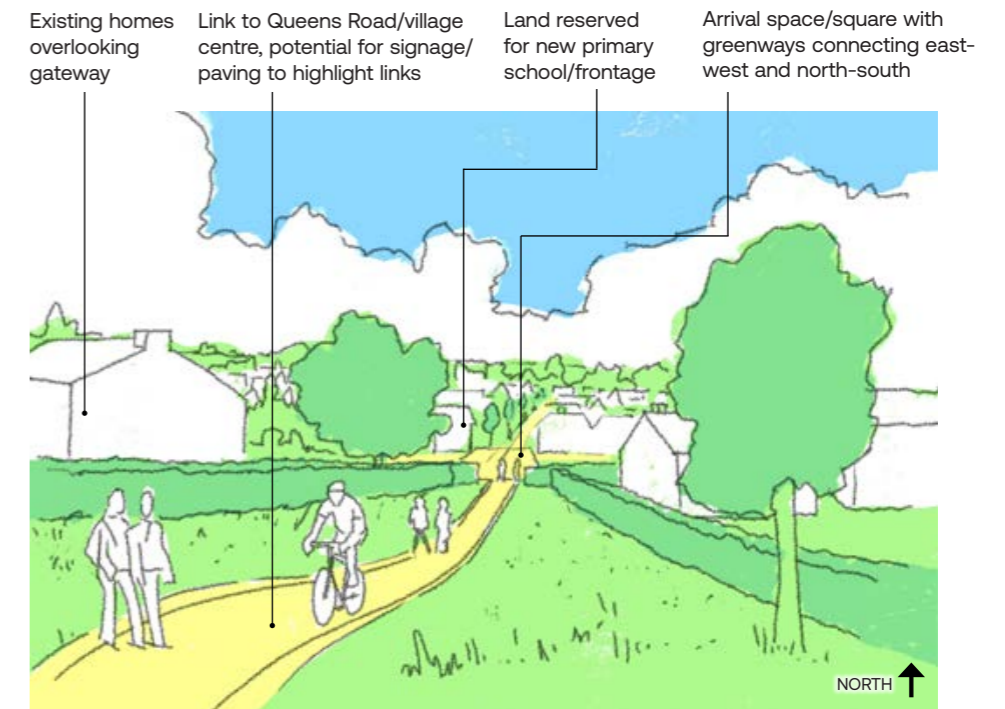
Figure 6.10 - Recreational routes

Pedestrian/cycle integration with the existing village

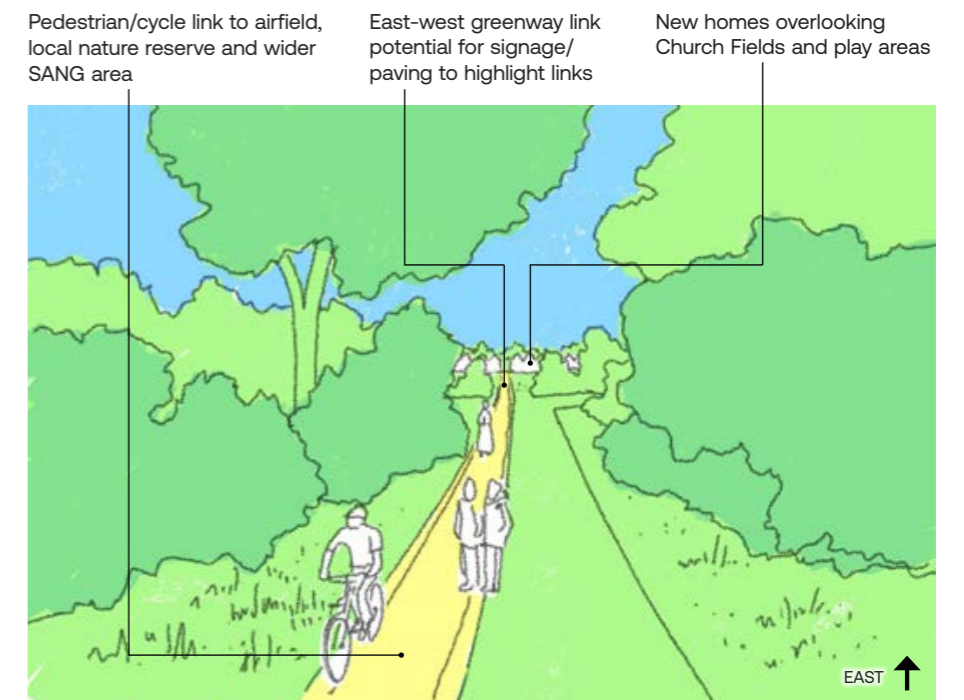
A key component of the SMF is that the proposal integrates with the existing village, providing clear and safe pedestrian routes to connect destinations across the village, both existing and proposed (figure 6.11).

There are multiple points of pedestrian connectivity and gateways which link into the internal greenway network (referenced as GC1-10, see page 119), including new accesses and retained PRow links. Refer to the access and movement framework plan for distinctions between shared cycle/footpaths.

	Link	Destination	Distance/time	Icons (Pedestrian, Bicycle, Car, Bus)
1	Southern pedestrian / cycle gateway	High Road	400m / 5 minute walk	○ ○
2	Pedestrian / cycle link to airfield	Airfield	400m / 5 minute walk	○ ○
3	School green lane	High Road	400m / 5 minute walk	○ ○ ○
4	Byway along southern edge of Social Heart	High Road	400m / 5 minute walk	○ ○
5	High Road link to masterplan	High Road	Immediate	○ ○ ○
6	New A414 pedestrian crossing	Northern part of village	Immediate	○ ○
7	Vicarage Lane W. link to St Andrew's church	Church, PRow north	Immediate	○ ○ ○ ○



1. Southern pedestrian/cycle gateway, linking to Queens Road and High Road/existing village centre, with existing and proposed homes overlooking

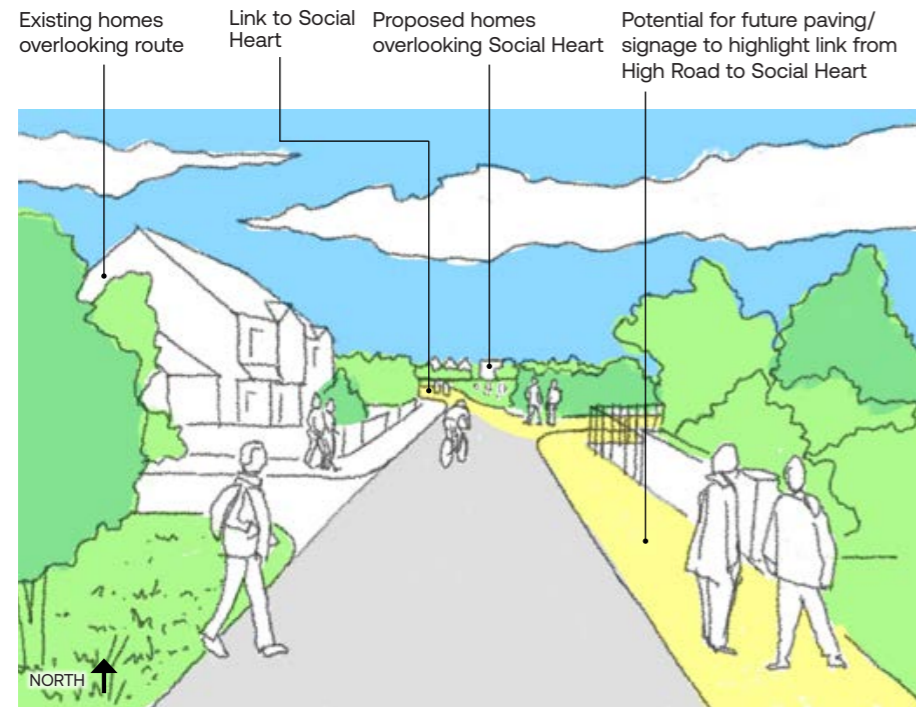


2. Pedestrian/cycle link to airfield, local nature reserve and wider SANG area

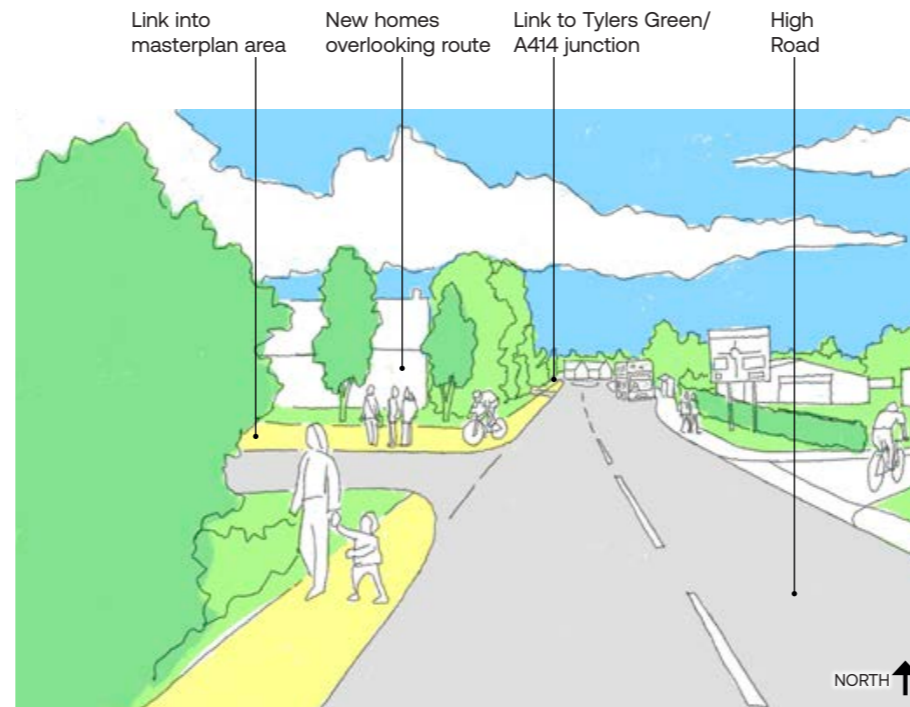


Figure 6.11 - Pedestrian/cycle integration with existing village

Figure 6.12 - Sketches of key integration links



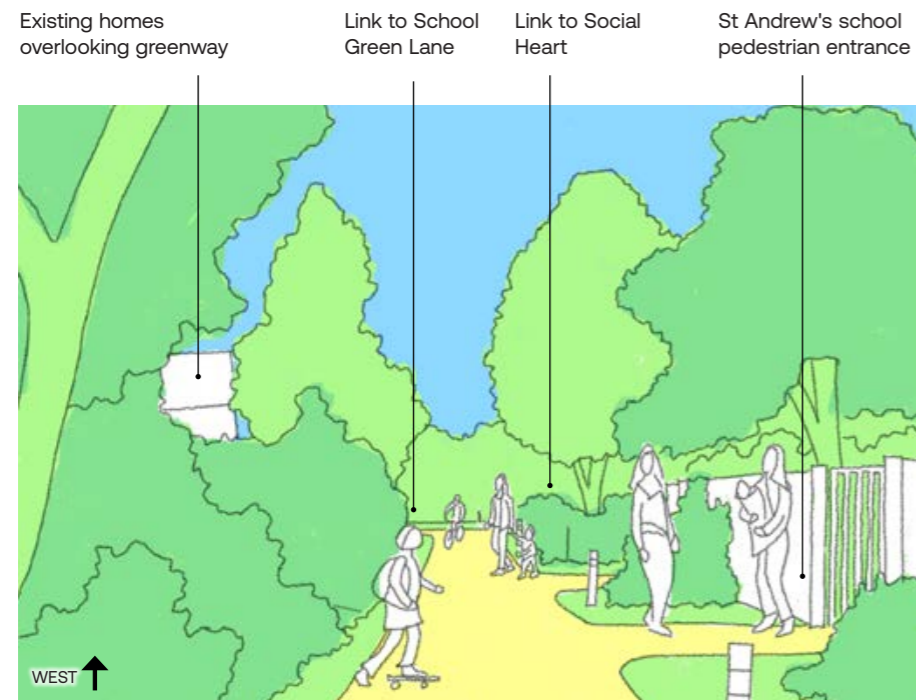
3. School Green Lane - connecting the High Road to Social Heart and St Andrew's school, important pedestrian/cycle link



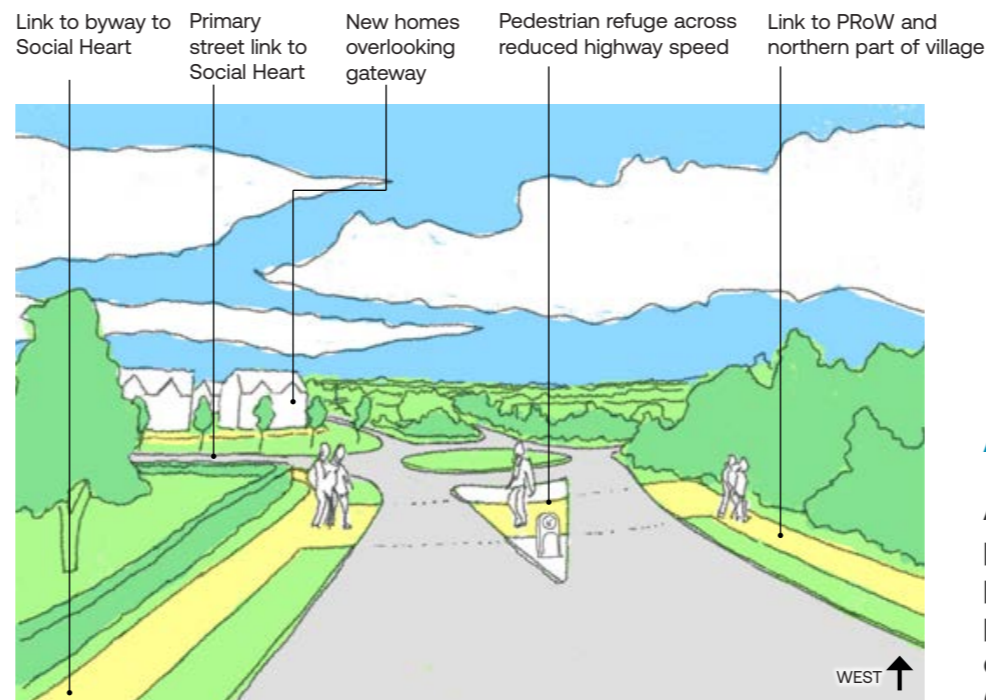
5. High Road link into masterplan area (connecting to NWB. R2)



7. Vicarage Lane West link to St Andrew's church and wider PRoW



4. Byway along southern edge of Social Heart and St Andrew's school



6. New A414 pedestrian crossing - with reduced highway speed limit

Additional points of pedestrian connection

As per the access and movement mandatory spatial principles plan (figure 5.3, p71), in addition to these 7 links, pedestrian connections should be retained from the existing points of PRoW at Queens Road and Blackhorse Lane and connecting Vicarage Lane West to the linear park/bee line (from green corridor 3).

Byway motor vehicular use

Byways 78 and 83 run along the southern edge of the Memorial Playing Fields and St Andrews primary school, and are used by motor vehicles. It is recommended that these byways are subject to restrictions on motor vehicle use to encourage pedestrian and cycle use as part of the active travel strategy for the SMF area.

Although any restrictions to use will need to be agreed/carried out by ECC, it is suggested that motor vehicle use is restricted, with the exception of properties that require access from the byway. Figure 6.13 below illustrates the areas where the byway should remain unrestricted to motor vehicle use.

Proposed cycle routes

The proposed shared cycle routes are illustrated in figure 6.8 and include:

- East to west links across the SMF, connecting from the Airfield Masterplan to the High Road
- The byway from the northern edge of the site connecting from the A414 and local centre (retail element) running south through the Social Heart to the pedestrian gateway and Queens Road
- A variety of other cycle routes through both the open space provision and built form.

Importantly, the existing footpaths would be upgraded to bridleway and an additional network of routes provided allowing for both east/west and north/south movements across the site in a safe and car free environment.

Proposed cycle routes should be designed in accordance with LTN1/20 (July 2020) guidance note. It is envisaged that the majority of cycle routes will be shared (3.5m wide) due to the volume of use, number of options provided and the semi-rural village location, regarding which LTN1/20 states:

“requirement for separation from fast moving motor vehicles still applies” however. “A well constructed shared use facility designed to meet the needs of cycle traffic – including its width, alignment and treatment at side roads and other junctions – may be adequate where pedestrian numbers are very low”.

Additional guidance on design, lighting and construction can be found within the LTN1/20 note.

In addition, a bus/coach drop-off should be provided in this location (within NWB.R1) to allow buses/coaches to stop for St Andrew's primary school use. For this reason, the route for buses should be designed with an appropriate width carriageway. This bus access will also benefit the wider area by allowing buses to avoid using School Green Lane, which is narrow and often busy with school traffic.

Retaining existing links

Through the enhancement of connections through the SMF area, users will still be able to access the surrounding network of Public Rights of Way. There is potential to improve signage and/or surfacing for parts of these routes, highlighting links within the village and aiding wayfinding. It is also the intention to upgrade most of these routes to bridleway in order to facilitate pedestrians and cyclists.

Likewise, key connections through the existing street network will provide important links, such as Queen's Road, with potential for additional signage along these routes.

St Andrew's primary school new links

As part of the required education element of the P6 Local Plan policy, there are 2 options - to expand the existing primary school or build a new primary school within the SMF area.

For either options, pedestrian and cycle links should be improved to the existing school, with potential for a new pedestrian access on its southern edge, and potential for new pedestrian accesses on its northern edge, on the boundary with NWB.R1 development area.

Mobility hub

The SMF is intended to be a walkable 15 minute neighbourhood, as part of the wider village of North Weald Bassett.

The proposed pedestrian and cycle network will create exceptional and direct active travel corridors through the community, linking to key destinations and a range of activities.

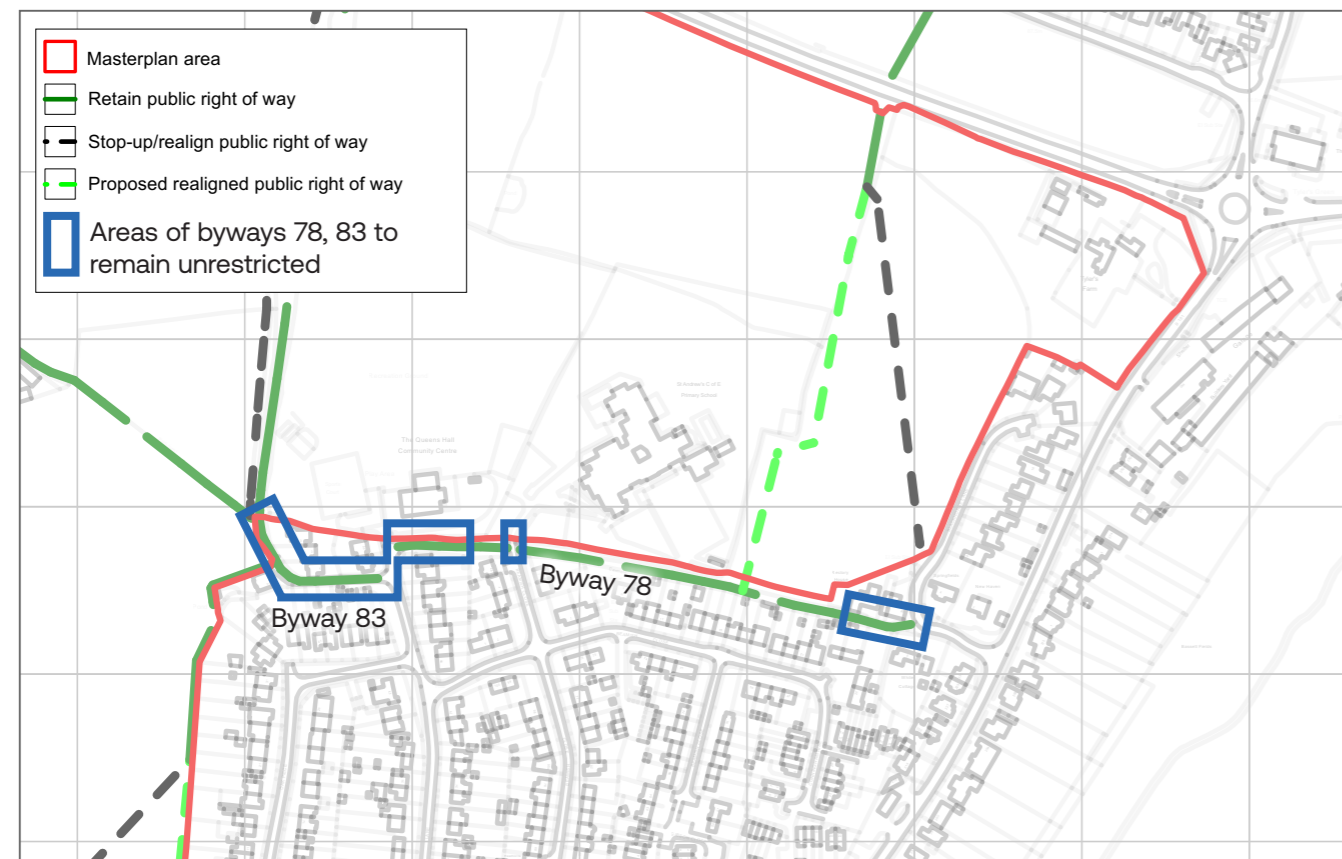


Figure 6.13 - Proposed restrictions to byway access

Active travel offers the greatest opportunity to facilitate local living and village life, helping to achieve social, health and environmental goals.

A mobility hub is part of this wider network. It can take many forms, a place you depart from or your final destination, a stop gap along the way to where you are heading. They can include EV and e-bike sharing points, charging points, and parcel collection points focused around the bus stop. It is the optimum place to combine multiple facilities, such as the Social Heart, with an ongoing footfall enabling complementary uses and ensuring the robustness of the Local Centre.

For more information on the the Local Centre please refer to the land use framework (p90).

Bicycle and scooter parking

Well designed, secure bicycle/scooter parking must be provided at key areas of open space and community infrastructure (including the Social Heart and Church Fields), as well as located at intersections of key routes to provide convenience and to support the aspirations for sustainable modes of travel across the SMF.

Parking storage within the home should also be provided as part of future masterplans, related to house typologies and ease of access.

Vehicular and highway strategy

This part focuses on proposals for the provision of vehicular access to the SMF

area, the broad configuration of the main spine roads through the development, identifies where off-site highway improvements are required and how public transport opportunities can be brought into the SMF area to reduce the need to rely on the car for all journeys.

The illustrative masterplan has been designed to allow permeability between allocation sites and the existing residential areas, helping to promote sustainable travel. This includes better connections to St Andrews primary school, the Social Heart and also to the south to Queens Road and the High Road beyond, as well as north across the A414 to Vicarage Lane East.

It is proposed that four vehicular accesses be formed to serve the SMF area, although it is recognised through design that the majority of traffic will utilise the proposed roundabout on the A414 (serving NWB.R3 and NWB.R1).

These additional accesses would be principally taken from the north via either the A414 or Vicarage Lane West, to access the strategic highway network rather than through existing residential streets. In this way it will be easier to manage traffic distribution around the village.

Parcel NWB.R2 will feature a minor access off the High Road to solely serve its allocated homes.

Parcels NWB.R4 and R5 benefit from a shared existing vehicular access from Vicarage Lane West. NWB.R5 features an additional existing vehicular access from Vicarage Lane West which will be closed.

The indicative access locations are shown in the access and movement framework

plan. The final siting and design of these access locations will be the responsibility of individual developers and brought forward as part of future planning applications of the five development sites.

Roundabout on A414/Vicarage Lane W.

A proposed new roundabout on the A414 / Vicarage Lane West junction is intended to provide vehicular access to sites R3 and R1 where the majority of new homes will be built. This roundabout would help to reduce vehicle speeds on the A414 as it passes through North Weald. It will incorporate a splitter island on the A414 arm with dropped kerbs and tactile paving to allow for an easier and safer crossing over the A414 to connect the two parts of the village and enable public transport providers to access the SMF area. The final roundabout design should retain an access to the existing agricultural access track north of the A414.

Importantly it allows development movements to exit the SMF area in an eastwards direction, which would minimise the need for a 3km detour along Vicarage Lane West, Rayley Lane and the A414 or unnecessary rat-running through Church Lane and Wellington Road.

The roundabout should be sited largely “offline” of the A414 to minimise operational impact on the A414 during construction. The design option shown in the framework plans and illustrative masterplan provides a configuration where a single access is provided into the SMF area and a spur into Vicarage Lane West. A public transport only exit is proposed out of Vicarage Lane West (east bound). This solution largely reflects the current arrangement whereby

general traffic cannot rejoin the A414 from Vicarage Lane West, but does not preclude the opening up of Vicarage Lane West to all traffic movements if this is considered of benefit to the village and acceptable to the highway authority.

Vicarage Lane West priority junction

A proposed new priority junction is proposed towards the western end of Vicarage Lane West to serve the development. This access forms part of the main loop road from the new A414 roundabout through the heart of the development and then back onto Vicarage Lane. The loop road will be constructed at 6.75m wide to facilitate buses. The primary purpose of this second access is to both allow ease of access for emergency services and also complete flexibility/permeability for future bus penetration. As an example any routes from Harlow could enter the site via the priority junction and exit onto the roundabout.

A414 access to NWB.R1

As part of the SMF area, a temporary access strategy has been considered specifically for NWB.R1 serving this site directly from the A414. The purpose of this temporary access is to facilitate the development of this site until a permanent access is provided from the new access roundabout and road into site NWB.R1 from site NWB.R3.

The layout shown in the framework plans and illustrative masterplan includes how a priority junction could be provided within the constraints of highway land and the site.

At a future date this access could be utilised specifically for public transport use, assisting in delivering an important part of an overall strategy that seeks to deliver high levels of access to public transport and improved options for any potential future school access improvements at this part of the SMF area.

M11 Junction 7 improvements

From discussions held with National Highways and ECC Highway Authority there is a potential requirement to contribute as part of a Section106 agreement towards M11 Junction 7 upgrade works. Any contribution would be proportionate alongside other major developments within the District and Neighbouring Authorities. The scope of the potential upgrades to Junction 7 will be defined through discussions with National Highways and ECC Highway Authority.

Primary street/spine road through the SMF and other vehicular access locations

To serve new homes within the majority of the SMF area, a central spine road is proposed.

The R3 site is the largest of the development sites and would provide additional facilities, where two vehicular accesses are required. It is proposed that the spine road runs through the centre of the R3 site as shown in Figure 6.8 to connect these two access locations.

The proposed alignment of the spine road has been designed to thread between existing mature trees, sit on the flattest parts of the site and provide long distance public

views of St Andrew's Parish Church.

In accordance with ECC's Highways Technical Manual it is proposed that the spine road has a speed limit of 20mph with a 6.75m carriageway width suitable for bus use, with 2m wide footways both sides, widening in the vicinity of the bus stops.

To provide access to the R1 site, it is proposed that an access road is created from the spine road running through R3. This road through R1 would also be 6.75m being designed to be suitable for buses and an access for coaches to St Andrew's Primary School utilising a new bus/coach drop off-area on the southern edge of R1 to alleviate traffic on School Green Lane and Beamish Close.

The access roads from the spine roads and in sites R2, R4 and R5 would also be designed to have a target speed of 20mph. The street types for these residential access roads would be designed as access, minor access, mews court or shared private drives in accordance with ECC's Highways Technical Manual.

Local streets

A network of local streets, including shared surfaces will create a legible structure of connected development parcels. All highways elements should be designed in accordance with ECC Highways Technical Manual. Public realm design should demonstrate how they are inclusive, safe and how the street can form a place as well as a conduit for movement. This could include streets that are flexible in their uses, for example Play Streets.

Accessible Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points

Proposals should provide adequate access to EV charging points in accessible locations for visitor use. The positions could include:

- Social Heart
- Local centre (retail element)
- Near mobility hub (local centre, community element).

There is also potential for EV Car Clubs, with designated parking zones for these vehicles.

Each of the dwellings where parking is provided will also benefit from EV charging.

Car parking

Detailed proposals for car parking should be presented in the context of the sustainable movement strategy, with active travel and public transport promoted above short car trips. Where appropriate, opportunities for a lower level of car parking provision should be considered, subject to policy requirements (as of 2024 ECC are reviewing their parking standards) with a view to promoting sustainable modes of travel, and creating attractive, pedestrian focussed streets and spaces where the car does not dominate. Car parking should incorporate access for people with disabilities. This reduced parking particularly applies to the high level of visitor parking ECC standards currently seek (25%).

Off-site highways improvements

Traffic surveys around North Weald Bassett were undertaken in June 2018 (pre-pandemic), with a weekday morning and evening peak period junction turning counts and one week of 24/7 automated volume and speed surveys. These traffic surveys were then combined with earlier surveys undertaken by ECC and EFDC to verify the results and also understand the extent of background traffic growth.

The survey data reveals the peak times when people are using the road network, the broad direction local people are travelling and which road traffic junctions are operating at or near to capacity. Currently approximately:

- 29% residents travel south towards Epping Forest
- 65% residents travel north towards Harlow and the M11
- 6% residents travel east towards Ongar and Chelmsford.

High level traffic modelling undertaken to inform the local plan indicates traffic associated with development in the SMF area will not result in any severe queuing or delays locally with local highway improvements.

The following road junctions which likely require upgrading include:

- The Vicarage Lane West/A414 off slip
- The Talbot PH Roundabout

The upgrades required involve lane widening

and capacity improvements. These junction upgrades will be funded through developer contributions by Section 106 agreements linked to individual planning permissions or S278 Agreements and delivered by the developer.

The final speed and weight limit for Vicarage Lane West will be determined by Essex County Council in consultation with the Parish Council. This will largely depend on the final access solution chosen for the Vicarage Lane West arm of the roundabout. As currently proposed the road would likely be subject to a 30mph or 20mph limit (subject to a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO)), with weight restriction prohibiting all HVGs other than for access and buses. It is also envisaged that the A414 speed limit between the two roundabouts along the site frontage would reduce from derestricted (60mph) to 40/30mph.

In order to re-affirm the likely improvements necessary new junction counts have been undertaken in early July 2023 to allow previous assumptions and modelling to be updated.

Public transport

A key objective of this SMF is to enable public transport to be provided to the SMF area to reduce the need to rely on the car for all journeys.

The spine road is to be designed to have a 6.75m carriageway width suitable for bus use. The introduction of a new roundabout on the A414 makes it possible to allow bus services to enter into the SMF area and importantly exit in an eastward direction

without having to take a 3km detour. This option allows bus penetration into the SMF area providing a bus stop within 400m/5minutes walking distance of each property. The extension of existing bus services into the SMF area offers increased patronage and assists the continued viability of bus services within North Weald, together with the opportunity for new bus services. In all likelihood bus services would be able to enter the development earlier, allowing for greater penetration by utilising a left slip off the A414 through site R1.

The village of North Weald is served by a number of existing bus routes running along High Road, including frequent services for routes 420 and 420A, and five services a day in either direction for route 13C. Special services include routes 620 and 491 which both run on schooldays only (provided by First Essex and Stephenson's of Essex respectively). The village of North Weald is connected by two-way regular services to nearby towns and villages, operating with an average of three-to-four services in either direction per hour, providing connections to Epping, Harlow, Thornwood and Ongar.

This enables the opportunity for existing bus routes serving North Weald Bassett to be extended into the SMF area. Through consultation with the local bus operator, they have indicated that with additional development in North Weald, there may be sufficient bus patronage to justify the reinstatement of a direct bus route to Harlow in addition to the existing bus service to Harlow via Epping. In addition, peak hour hopper bus connections are being explored between North Weald and Epping station via Coopersale and Fiddlers Hamlet.

Bus stops within the SMF are shown on

figure 6.8 indicatively, but should be located at the Social Heart, Church Fields, in the north west corner of NWB.R3 and within NWB.R1 to ensure sustainable modes of travel catchment areas are provided.

North Weald Airfield, Church Lane and relationship to SMF

The Epping Forest Local Plan requires a new vehicular access to be constructed for the North Weald airfield to serve the west of the site.

This SMF has been based on a presumption that Merlin Way remains a cul-de-sac and that Church Lane remains as a cut through to the village to reflect the endorsed Airfield SMF.

Further options to introduce traffic calming that disincentivise the use of Church Lane could be evolved in the future.

The provision of bus services to the new development would be dealt with by planning obligation contained in a Section 106 agreement attached to any planning permission, where:

- The developer is legally obliged to seek and enter into a Bus Service Agreement with a bus operator, to provide bus services to the development
- A financial contribution is made towards the initial subsidising of bus services with the aim that the service becomes self-sustaining at the end of the development subsidy.

6.6 Land use and community infrastructure

Summary

The land use and community infrastructure framework is illustrated opposite, and described over the next few pages.

Policy P6 of the Local Plan allocates land for development at North Weald Bassett for a minimum of 1,050 homes. Alongside these new homes, the Local Plan requires new development to provide new primary school provision, health facilities and a local centre including retail and community spaces.

At the centre of the SMF is a mixed-use Social Heart for the village comprising a mix of active uses and residential dwellings to ensure activity and footfall. This new Social Heart will become a focal point for the village, located at an intersection of key pedestrian routes and built upon the foundation of the existing Memorial Playing Fields and St Andrew's primary school.

The new homes will be supported by a wide range of community, health, retail and educational uses within the Local Centre, which is split into 2 parts to enable the retail element to be located alongside the A414, and providing the sufficient passing trade to make the retail element robust. Additionally, this staggered location means that the new retail elements do not compete with the existing retail catchments of the village centre and Tylers Green.

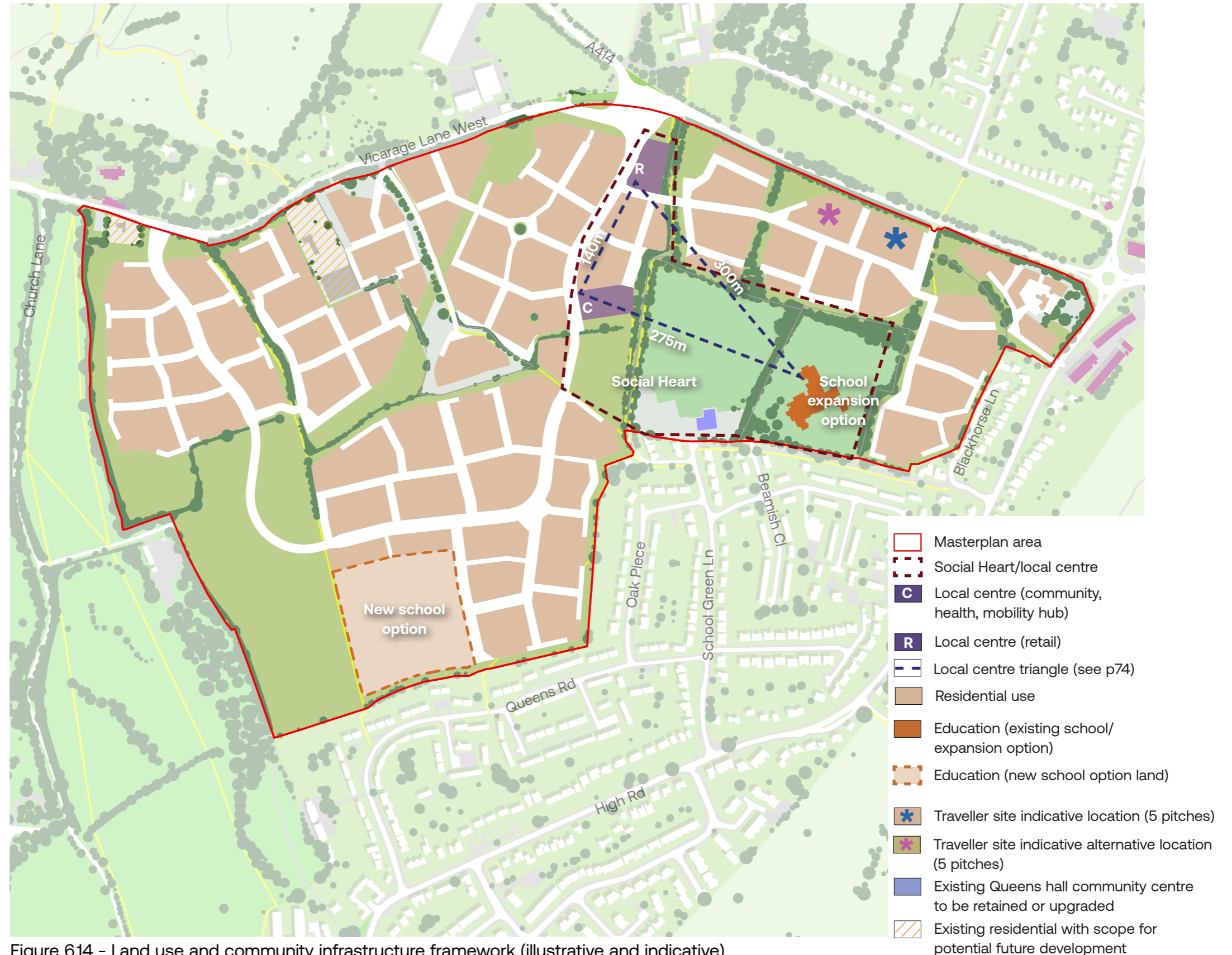


Figure 6.14 - Land use and community infrastructure framework (illustrative and indicative)

Using the green and blue infrastructure and access framework presented in chapter 6.4 and 6.5, this part of the SMF sets out a proposed framework to guide development across the SMF area. The key features of the SMF having regard to the Local Plan requirements are set out below.

The land use and community infrastructure framework has been used to calculate the indicative net development area for each of the 5 development sites is measured as:

- NWB.R1 - 5.045ha (excluding the 0.35ha 5 pitch traveller site)
- NWB.R2 - 0.673ha
- NWB.R3 - 18.584ha (excluding the 2.1ha school option site and local centre)
- NWB.R4 - 0.514ha
- NWB.R5 - 0.947ha.

Social Heart and Local Centre

The Social Heart will play a key role in the identity of the new homes at North Weald Bassett, establishing a focal point within the village for community, social, health and sporting uses. It forms a vibrant local centre, meets a local need, acts as a destination and will transform the Memorial Playing Fields into a hive of activity.

Policy P6 requires new employment floor space, appropriate education provision (class F1), a local centre including retail, community and health uses (class E, F2).

The Social Heart is the overall local centre. It is formed of the Local Centre (community

and retail elements), Memorial Playing Fields and St Andrew's primary school, either in its current form or with new forms of entry.

The indicative framework illustrates the following design and place making principles:

- The Social Heart to be located around the Memorial Playing Fields, central to the SMF and village, and located at the intersection of key pedestrian/cycle routes
- As set out in chapter 6.5, a high standard of public transport, walking and cycling provision will be required for the Social Heart, including accessible bus stops, disabled parking and bicycle/scooter parking
- Potential for St Andrew's primary school to be extended to meet the education policy requirement, or for a new 2fe primary school to be built located on the south western corner of NWB.R3.

The local centre will form the Social Heart for the village, providing a much needed social hub at the intersection of existing and proposed pedestrian and cycle routes through the village.

It is important to refer to these separate elements as a single local centre together. The retail element will be well connected to the larger part of the local centre by the proposed primary street and enhanced byway connecting them, as shown in figure 6.15.

However, the best location for the community part of the local centre does not necessarily apply to the retail element of the local centre (as required by the Local Plan).

This will require additional passing trade to be robust and sustainable. Therefore, it is proposed that the retail element of the local centre is offset by approximately 200m to the north, to maximise its location on the A414.

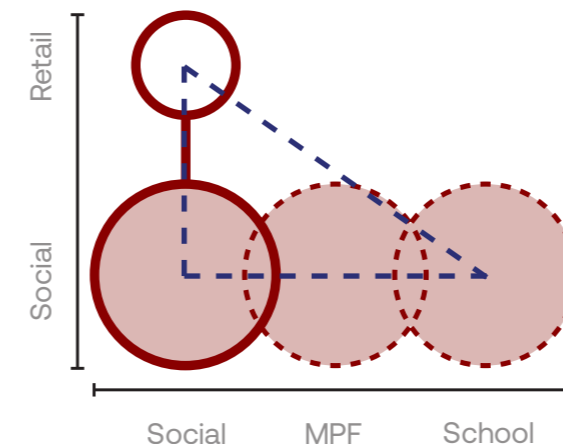


Figure 6.15 - Form of Social Heart/local centre

Location of local centre (community element)

The design goal in providing new community facilities is to ensure that they are well

located to serve not only residents living within new development but also easily accessible to existing residents living in the village. The provision of this space has an important function in integrating the new development into the wider North Weald Bassett community.

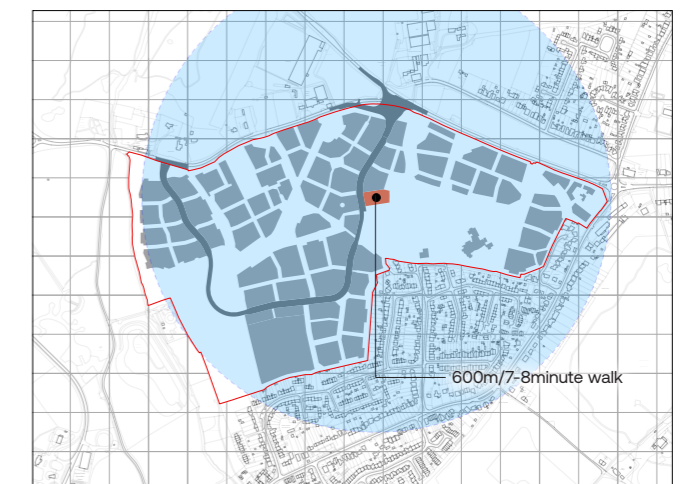


Figure 6.16 - Proposed local centre (community element) location

To establish the best location for the provision of new community facilities, the following objectives have been set to guide this masterplan:

- i. To maximise accessibility for the majority of residents, the community facilities should be located in a central location within the SMF area close to the existing community.
- ii. The community facilities should be located on the wider pedestrian/cycle network to make it easily accessible.
- iii. The community facilities should be located close to a main spine road such that disabled users could easily drive to the facility.

The application of these objectives results in the best location for new facilities to be adjacent the Memorial Playing Fields (forming a Social Heart) as shown on figure 6.15 This location maximises the number of people living within a 600-metre radius, it would be located on the intersection of multiple pedestrian footpaths, easily accessed from the new spine road through site R3 and close to existing civic spaces.

Local centre - community element quantum

EFDC's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) seeks an additional 551 sq m of community and youth space to be provided across North Weald, Thornwood and associated rural apportionment.

There are a number of potential occupiers in the village, including North Weald Parish Council and Chelmsford Diocese who have identified an aspiration for a new building. To provide maximum community benefit, it is suggested this building be multi-purpose such that it is suitable for a range of end-users and clubs. The end users of this space and design of the building will be subject to further discussion with community service providers.

The Local Plan suggests a requirement for an additional 360m² of GP space is also required, and this is included within the proposed community hub. Land has also been reserved for new health care facilities, if required by the Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board and local health care providers. The local centre could also contain a small office/meeting place. In addition, a mobility hub could be located within the local centre, offering e-bike and e-scooter charging, at a key intersection of

pedestrian and cycle routes. An illustrative layout for the local centre (community) is shown in figure 6.18 on page 93.

Local centre (retail element)

The provision of a local centre with retail space needs to be carefully balanced against any adverse impact on the village centre and other retailers and service providers around North Weald Bassett.

There are two considerations that need be addressed in this SMF in relation to the retail element of the local centre as follows:

1. Location of the retail part of the local centre, and;
2. The amount of retail space to be created.

To be commercially attractive to retailers, the retail element of the local centre needs to be sited in close proximity to and be easily accessible to the maximum number of people whilst also benefiting from pass-by trade.

To minimise competition with the village centre, which provides a range of services to the village, care needs to be taken to ensure that the retail catchment of the new shops minimises overlapping with that of the village centre.

Two widely recognised guides on sustainable development, provide guidance on the distance of new homes to local shops as follows:

Sustainable Settlements – Guide for planners, designers and developers (by Hugh Barton, Geoff Davis and Richard Guise), 1995. This suggests a standard for 80% of homes to be located within 400m to local shops and that all new dwellings be located within 800m.

Shaping Neighbourhoods – Guide for health, sustainability and vitality (by Hugh Barton, Marcus Grant and Richard Guise), 2003. This updated the above to take account of population density. Assuming a population density of 100 people per hectare (equating to approximately 40 dwellings per hectare), the recommended distance to a local centre is 600m.

Using these guidelines, it is considered that a catchment of 600m be used as the starting point for the new shops. The optimum location for the local centre is shown on figure 6.17, taking account of

the existing village centre and real-world necessity to be located near a highway (to create the required footfall and retail critical mass). This location would maximise the number of people with a 600 metre radius of the local centre, minimises duplication with the village centre catchment and improves access to local shops for residents in the north of the village.

Based upon this proposed location, only a small proportion of both the existing and new North Weald Bassett residents would not be within 600m, but nearly all residents would be within 700m of a local centre. This

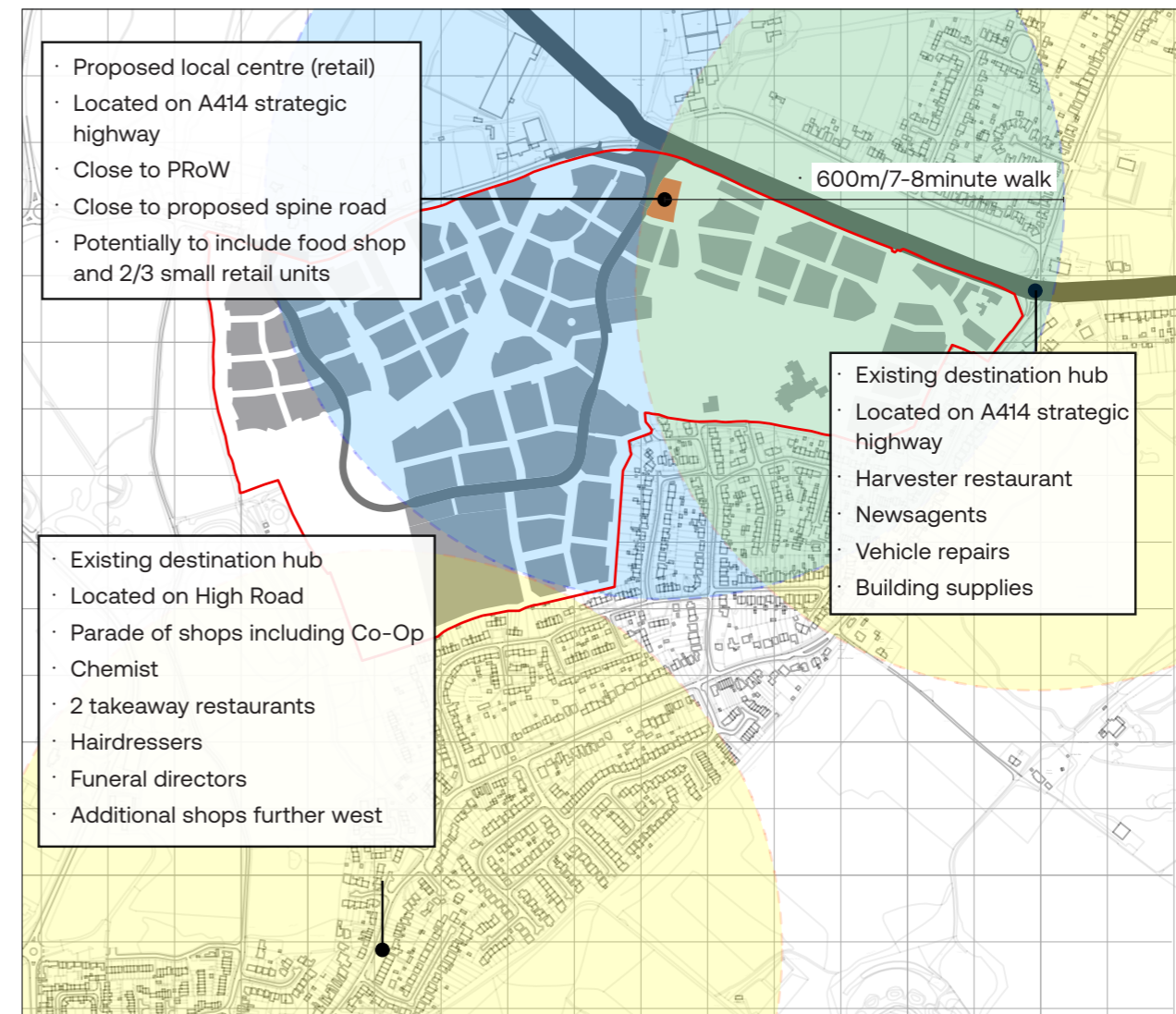


Figure 6.17 - Proposed local centre (retail element) location

proposed location of the retail element of the local centre is considered the best and most balanced compromise of walkability, local need and retail viability.

Local centre - retail element quantum

It is proposed that the new shops should have a secondary function to the village centre and the number of retail units to be created should be less than is currently available on the High Road. This currently comprises around 1,271m² retail floorspace in a series of small shops with a Co-op store and 536m² in café/pub/hot food/takeaway use.

It is therefore proposed that the retail element of the local centre provides for around up to 675m² of floorspace. This would be suitable for a small convenience food retail shop and two or three additional units for local service providers or food uses together with car parking, all together requiring an area of approximately 0.22 hectares. These uses classify as E(a), E(b) and F2 with the ability to include sui generis uses such as a take-away.

The provision of the new shops will be dependent on retail operator interest. It is proposed that this be managed by a suitable planning obligation, where there is a requirement to market the local centre site for a period of two years to retailers on commercial terms. An illustrative local centre layout is shown opposite.

Connection between local centre elements

The retail element and community element of the local centre should not feel separated, despite being 120m apart. This can be achieved through the following design responses:

- Making the distance between the two elements as close as possible through the design of the primary street
- A green connection along the primary street, with a 5m wide tree lined verge
- A unity in architectural and landscape design treatment, in terms of form, materials etc
- Use of wayfinding elements, signage etc.

These elements are shown in figure 6.18 opposite.

Potential future upgrade of QE hall and 'Meanwhile Uses' in the local centre

To support the early activation of the Social Heart consideration should be given to 'meanwhile interventions' to create activity and provide amenity/services at an early stage of the development

Any future community building **must not** compromise the future viability of the existing Queens Hall community building.

Located within the Memorial Playing Fields, the existing QE community hall could also be upgraded in the future.

Some of the local centre community uses could be located in the upgraded and enhanced existing building to avoid duplication of uses.

95% of the businesses in Epping Forest are Micro or Small businesses, therefore there may be future opportunity to include business 'incubators' for enterprise within the local centre.



Figure 6.18 - Proposed connection between retail and community elements of local centre