

# Firstplan



## **ROCHFORD CORE STRATEGY**

**HEARING MATTER 2:  
LOCATION AND SUPPLY OF  
NEW HOMES  
12<sup>TH</sup>/13<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2010**

**STATEMENT  
BY  
STOLKIN & CLEMENTS (SOUTHEND)  
LLP**

## **ROCHFORD CORE STRATEGY**

**POLICIES H1, H2 AND H3**

**STOLKIN AND CLEMENTS  
(SOUTHEND) LLP [9891]  
REPRESENTED BY FIRSTPLAN  
[8501]**

**REPRESENTATIONS 16197, 16199,  
16200**

# **STATEMENT**

**Firstplan Ltd.**

25 Floral Street, London WC2E 9DS

T:020 7031 8210

F:020 7031 8211

Firstplan Ref: 07217

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## **CONTENTS**

<b>SECTION 1:</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>SECTION 2:</b>	<b>BACKGROUND INFORMATION</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>SECTION 3:</b>	<b>HEARING MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED IN RELATION TO THE CORE STRATEGY</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SECTION 4:</b>	<b>SOUNDNESS OF CORE STRATEGY</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>SECTION 5:</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>11</b>

## **APPENDICES:**

<b>APPENDIX 1:</b>	<b>A VISION FOR ‘TITHE PARK’ ROCHFORD BY LDA DESIGN (APRIL 2010)</b>	
<b>APPENDIX 2:</b>	<b>SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL OF THE TITHE PARK SITE</b>	



## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Firstplan has been instructed by Stolkin & Clements (Southend) LLP (S&C) to provide a statement in relation to Hearing Matter 2 (location and supply of new homes) for the draft Rochford Core Strategy (12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> May 2010).
- 1.2 Our clients own land known as Tithe Park, which is a site of 35 hectares, and which lies immediately to the north of the existing urban edge of the Borough of Southend-on-Sea, and is bounded to the north by Poynters Lane. The site is available, deliverable, and suitable for residential development. It is owned solely by our clients and can be brought forward for development at short notice. To our knowledge there are no major obstacles to development of the site, which is currently in an agricultural use.
- 1.3 This statement clarifies S&C's position in relation to the location of housing issues raised in the Core Strategy, why we believe the draft plan is unsound as it is currently drafted, and the changes S&C propose to make it sound.
- 1.4 Relevant background information is provided in Section 2. Section 3 sets out our clients response in relation to the issues raised by the Inspector in the Pre-Examination meeting. Section 4 sets out why S&C consider the Plan to be unsound, and Section 5 provides our conclusions.



## SECTION 2: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Tithe Park site is currently identified in the Allocations DPD Discussion and Consultation Document (Regulation 25, February 2010) as option E23 and option E24 (2 of 6 options in total) for a new strategically located employment park to the south of Great Wakering.
- 2.2 An illustrative masterplan was submitted to Rochford DC (RDC) on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2008 as a means of setting out a vision for the site. A meeting was then held with Shaun Scrutton of RDC on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2008 to discuss the site. At this stage RDC indicated that this was not a location they would support. Subsequently, S&C have been promoting the site through the LDF process and the illustrative masterplan supports their Core Strategy representations.
- 2.3 The masterplan has since been revised following further consideration of the Submission Core Strategy and the position in relation to housing land supply to ensure an efficient use of land, and to provide defensible green belt boundaries. A copy of the document is attached to this statement.

### DOCUMENT 1

- 2.4 The masterplan proposes residential development with an extension to Friars Park, and provision of community uses.
- 2.5 It demonstrates how, by virtue of the site's location, the proposals will be beneficial when compared with other sites currently proposed for development in the draft Core Strategy. As an urban extension to Southend the site is more sustainable than other locations which comprise green fields with existing green belt designations. Local shops and services will also be within easy distance of Tithe Park, which can accommodate a mix of uses including additional required infrastructure such as open spaces and community facilities.



## SECTION 3: HEARING MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED IN RELATION TO THE CORE STRATEGY

- 3.1 As suggested by the Inspector, we have specifically addressed the issues raised by her following the Pre-Hearing Meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010.
- a) **Will the strategy deliver the number of new homes required to meet the RSS requirements?**
- 3.2 The RSS Policy H1 sets out a minimum housing target of 4,600 additional dwellings to be built between April 2001 – April 2021 (Annual target 250 dwellings following completions 2001-06). The 2009 AMR suggests that there have been 1,531 completions since 2001 which results in a balance of 3,069 dwellings to still be provided.
- 3.3 The SHLAA asserts that there is capacity to accommodate 1,273 dwellings between 2009 – 2024 from outstanding planning permissions and other appropriate brownfield sites - leaving an outstanding requirement of 2,477 dwellings to be built by 2024 on land which is currently allocated as Green Belt. This total figure is based on a completion rate of 250 per annum and does not take into account the level of past completions prior to 2009 which, in total, has been less than the annual 250 dwellings target.
- 3.4 The SHLAA was prepared after the Core Strategy was published, and it indicates that with the loss of green belt land to housing, the overall housing target can be met. C&S agree that release of green belt land will be needed to achieve the RSS target.
- 3.5 C&S also agree that if sufficient available and deliverable green belt land is provided for housing, then the targets will be deliverable.
- 3.6 However, what is important is not just whether the target can be met, but whether the areas identified for housing are suitable, sustainable and are the best options when considered against other potential alternative sites.
- 3.7 The Core Strategy should also consider the RSS 2031 review which will require Local Authorities to plan for housing further into the future.



b) **Is the CS consistent with PPS3 particularly in respect of the following:**

i) **the requirement to address housing delivery for at least 15 years from the date of adoption;**

3.8 Numerically the Core Strategy is based on delivering 250 dwellings per annum up to 2024; although the date of 2024 is not explicitly stated in Policy H3. Provided the Core Strategy is adopted in 2010, this will constitute a 15 year supply.

3.9 However, Paragraph 54 of PPS3 states that the five year supply of housing should be made up of sites which are available, suitable and achievable. Suitable is defined as:

**“the site offers a suitable location for development now and would contribute to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities.”**

3.10 Paragraphs 55 and 56 confirm that a developable supply should also be identified for 6 – 10 years and, where possible, 11- 15 years. To be developable, sites should be suitable for housing.

3.11 A number of the areas identified in the Core Strategy are, in our view, unsuitable for housing. The Core Strategy therefore fails to meet the requirements of PPS3.

3.12 In particular, the Core Strategy proposes a significant amount of housing for villages where there is a lack of infrastructure, lack of community facilities, greater potential for a negative impact on the existing communities and a more significant visual impact on the landscape.

ii) **bearing in mind that Green Belt releases may be necessary, does the CS provide the appropriate context and give adequate guidance for a subsequent site allocations DPD readily to identify the land needed without having to re-visit strategic considerations;**

3.13 Policies H2 and H3 set out broad locations for housing provision with the number of dwellings to be delivered, this provides for a Site Allocations DPD to identify specific sites in these areas.



3.14 However, strategic considerations should be revisited at the Core Strategy stage because the areas identified are not the best option. For example:

- The proposed extensions are out of scale with their corresponding settlements
- Many of the locations do not have good transport links and are not sustainably located in relation to schools, shops, GPs and other facilities.
- There are local wildlife sites and Ancient Woodland to the west of Hockley;
- West Great Wakering and South Canewdon are within the Crouch and Roach Farmland Landscape Area which has higher landscape sensitivity than the South Essex Coastal Towns Landscape Area (where Tithe Park is); and
- Stambridge Mills is located in Flood Risk Zone 3a

3.15 We attach an assessment of the sustainability objectives at Appendix 2.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **iii) Is there sufficient flexibility?**

3.16 Policies H2 and H3 set out broad locations for housing provision with the number of dwellings to be delivered. These broad locations can provide for a number of sites and therefore there is an element of flexibility.

3.17 However, there is no flexibility in a situation where sites do not come forward in the allocated locations and therefore the housing targets are not met. The phasing allocations in five year slots are also rigid and should be more flexible.

3.18 There is also no flexibility for providing additional housing if the RSS figures are revised during the Plan period.





## SECTION 4: SOUNDNESS OF CORE STRATEGY

4.1 For a DPD to be sound, it should be justified, effective, and consistent with national policy.

4.2 As currently drafted, Policies H1, H2 and H3 are neither justified nor consistent with national policy.

### **(i) Justified**

4.3 Our key concern is that the locations identified for the location and supply of new homes as extensions to residential envelopes have been chosen without sufficient consideration being given to all other reasonable alternatives. Furthermore, Rochford has failed to objectively justify why the areas identified for extensions to settlements in draft Policies H2 and H3 have been selected.

4.4 For the Policies to be sound they must be capable of being justified, and PPS12 advises that for a plan to be justified, it must be founded on a robust and credible evidence base, and it should be the most appropriate strategy when considered against reasonable alternatives.

### *Robust and credible evidence base*

- *The SHLAA*

4.5 The SHLAA should provide a key evidence document to inform the strategy for the location of housing. However, in this case, the SHLAA recommends sites to be included in the housing land supply on the basis that they are situated in the proposed strategic locations set out in the Core Strategy. Sites which are not in a proposed strategic location are excluded from the document. The SHLAA is therefore based on the CS and not the other way around. This must cast doubt on the veracity of the SHLAA and the strategic locations in the Core Strategy.



- 4.6 The SHLAA identifies a number of sites in the proposed strategic locations. However, the result clearly illustrates the major impact that some of the locations will have on the openness of the green belt and landscape character. For example, all of the sites identified at Canewdon (Nos. 4, 140, 165 and 193) are very open and poorly connected with the existing village. Moreover, owing to the lie of the land they will be viewed from significant distances and development will have a detrimental impact on the overall rural character of the area.
- 4.7 Other sites will also have a significant impact. For example, site 174 at west Hullbridge is a very large site which is identified for 434 – 652 dwellings. This runs the whole length of Hullbridge and it would be difficult to create defensible boundaries to the west. Whilst the SHLAA recognises that the whole site cannot be developed owing to the northern part of site in Flood Zone 2 and 3 and part of the site being within the SSSI, these considerations will need to be examined in further detail if thus is to be found a sound location for housing.
- 4.8 The potential problems could render these sites inappropriate for residential development.
- *The Sustainability Appraisal/ Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA)*
- 4.9 Paragraph 5.17 of the SA sets out that the actual locations proposed in the policy are considered to be the most sustainable options available. However, the assessment of Policy H2 at Appendix VI concedes that there is some concern regarding the quantum of development proposed for the smaller settlements of Great Wakering and Hullbridge.
- 4.10 There is no discussion of other possibilities, such as our clients' proposal to provide an urban extension to Southend and which could relieve pressure on the rural character of villages elsewhere in the District. It means that there is no robust evidence base which openly considers all alternatives.
- *The Employment Land Study*
- 4.11 The Core Strategy identifies four employment sites to be redeveloped to provide appropriate alternative uses including residential development. These sites are taken into account in the housing supply calculations. However, the Employment Land Study notes that the Rawreth Lane Industrial Estate has no vacancies and Star



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Lane is also only partially vacant. These businesses would therefore have to be relocated if the number of jobs are to be retained.

- *PPS25 Sequential Test*

- 4.12 Stambridge Mills lies within Flood Zone 3a and is justified on the basis that this is sequentially preferable to green field sites which lie within Flood Zones 1 and 2, on the basis that PPG2 sets out that development is inappropriate in the green belt. However, paragraph D5 of PPS25 sets out that:

**“Only where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zones 1 or 2 should decision-makers consider the suitability of sites in Flood Zone 3...”**

- 4.13 There are clearly other sites available in Flood Zones 1 and 2: for example the greater part of Tithe Park site where only a small area to the south east is at risk of flooding and this area can be used for open space (see masterplan).

### Most appropriate strategy when considered against reasonable alternatives

- 4.14 The proposed location and supply of housing is not the most appropriate location when considered against reasonable alternatives.
- 4.15 Rochford DC has failed to consider the currently chosen locations, either strategically, or in relation to borders with other local planning authorities. A sustainable urban extension to Southend in the location of the Tithe Park could be a preferred choice compared with the provision large housing extensions to existing villages and small towns of Rochford.
- 4.16 Paragraphs 0.6 and 3.15 of the Sustainability Appraisal comment that there is considerable leakage of spending to Southend and that Southend provides a range of employment opportunities and is within easy commuting distance of a large proportion of the District’s population.
- 4.17 This recognition means that new housing could be better related to Southend. Some of the other locations set out in Policy H2, for example, south west Hullbridge and south Canewdon are not within comfortable walking or cycling distance of a railway station. The development of Tithe Park will provide transportation benefits whereas some of the other chosen locations are unsuitable in transport terms. They will be likely to be home to commuters to Southend, London, and elsewhere, who may travel to Southend everyday by car.



- 4.18 Tithe Park is a location which accords with the sustainability objectives and provides a better option than the current locations proposed. This is set out at Appendix 2.
- 4.19 The principle of providing an extension to an urban area in a different authority has been accepted elsewhere. For example an extension comprising 5,390 additional dwellings to the south west of Milton Keynes is currently proposed in the administrative area of Aylesbury Vale DC. There is recognition in that case that by providing an urban extension, rural villages and towns can be safeguarded.

**(ii) Effective**

- 4.20 Paragraph 4.44 of PPS12 states that Core Strategies should be effective. This means that they should be deliverable, flexible, and capable of being monitored.
- 4.21 Whilst the Core Strategy may well be effective, this does not mean that it is the right approach.

**(iii) Consistent with National Policy**

- 4.22 To be considered sound the Core Strategy must comply with Government advice. The more sustainable the proposed development, and the less impact there is on open countryside, the more the proposals for the location and supply of new homes will comply with the views of Government.
- 4.23 In particular, the Core Strategy is inconsistent with the following statements of Government advice:-

PPS1 – A number of the proposed locations for housing are not sustainable. As a consequence, development will not protect and enhance the quality, character and amenity value of the countryside and urban areas; it will not avoid development in areas at risk of flooding; and it will not reduce the need to travel as set out in Paragraphs 17, 20 and 27 of the PPS.

PPS3 – Paragraph 36 sets out that the Government's policy is to ensure that housing is developed in suitable locations which offer a range of community facilities and with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure. The Core Strategy does not accord with this policy.



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PPG13 – Paragraph 4 sets out the Government’s objectives to promote more sustainable transport choices, promote accessibility to jobs, shopping and leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling and reduce the need to travel. The Core Strategy does not accord with this policy.

PPS25 – The proposed development of the Stambridge Mills site conflicts with PPS25 as there are other available sites in Flood Zones 1 and 2. The site should therefore fail the sequential test accordingly.

**(iv) Proposed Changes to make the Core Strategy Sound:**

4.24 In order to provide a sustainable and sound location and supply of new homes Policy H2/H3 should be amended to add into the table:

Area	Dwellings
Urban extension to north east of Southend	590

4.25 The allocations for the other settlements should be revised downwards accordingly: In particular, the allocations for south Canewdon, west of Great Wakering and south west Hullbridge.



## SECTION 5: CONCLUSIONS

5.1 We conclude that:

*What part of the Core Strategy is unsound?*

5.2 Policies H1, H2 and H3

*Which soundness test(s) does it fail?*

5.3 Justified and consistent with National Policy.

*Why does it fail?*

5.4 The Core Strategy does not provide for the most sustainable location of housing.

*How can the Core Strategy be made sound?*

5.5 The housing locations set out in policies H2 and H3 need to be amended.

*What is the precise change/wording that is being sought.*

5.6 Policy H2/H3 should be amended to add into the table:

Area	Dwellings
Urban extension to north east of Southend	590

5.7 The allocations for the other settlements should be revised downwards accordingly.



## **APPENDIX 1**



# A Vision for 'Tithe Park' Rochford

A low-carbon residential development with community and arts opportunities;  
delivering an ecological park

April 2010

LD&DESIGN





LDA Design  
17 Minster Precincts  
Peterborough  
PE1 1XX

Tel: 01733 310471  
Fax: 01733 553661

# Executive Summary



Stand of Willows on western boundary

- Tithe Park falls within the administrative district of Rochford but abuts the urban area of Southend to the south and west.
- The proposal can provide approximately 490 sustainable new dwellings to assist in meeting the growth required by the East of England Plan and will assist both Rochford and Southend-on-Sea to meet their housing targets.
- The proposal will be sustainable and provide Ecohomes built to a high architectural standard that will help the Authorities to meet their renewable energy targets in a landmark development.
- A large portion of the proposal will comprise of habitat-rich open space to ensure that the rural quality of the surrounding area and its biodiversity is enhanced. This will include a significant extension to Friars Park, the creation of a productive landscape area (horticulture) for therapeutic community use or allotments for the proposed residential development and the potential for a green burial or memorial landscape. The development will provide links into and will enhance the Thames Gateway South Essex Green Grid.
- Most of the site has been the subject of mineral extraction, industrial uses and landfill, and the proposals will provide new and beneficial uses.
- Tithe Park will be well connected to its surroundings and can provide public transport benefits such as improved bus services, cycle paths and footpaths.
- Tithe Park provides an opportunity to harmonise the urban and rural environments with a sustainable and inclusive community, well integrated with its surroundings.
- Tithe Park could create a new 'gateway' to Rochford focussed on the traditional barn and pond projecting an appropriately rural character.
- Tithe Park provides an opportunity to connect and harmonise the urban and rural environments with a sustainable and inclusive community, well integrated with its surroundings and biodiversity.

# Contents



Tithe Barn is a typical example of an Essex clapperboard barn

## Executive Summary

### Introduction

- Purpose of the document
- The site
- The Proposal

### The Site and its Context

- Policy and Strategic Context
- Local Facilities, Access and Movement
- Topography and Hydrology
- The Greengrid, Landscape and Environmental Designations

### A Vision for 'Tithe Park'

## List of Drawings

- Figure 1: Site Location Plan
- Figure 2: Site Features
- Figure 3: Strategic Context
- Figure 4: Access and Movement
- Figure 5: Local Facilities
- Figure 6: Topography and Hydrology
- Figure 7: Landscape and Environmental Designations
- Figure 8: Illustrative Masterplan

# 1.0 Introduction

## Purpose of the document

This report has been prepared by LDA Design on behalf of Stolkin and Clements (Southend) LLP to support the promotion of land located to the south of Poynters Lane, Rochford for the allocation of housing development and community uses in the Rochford and Southend-on-Sea Local Development Frameworks (LDF).

The purpose of this document is to outline the iterative processes that have led to the illustrative 'Tithe Park' masterplan, and in particular how the local townscape and landscape context has influenced its design. The design has been informed by an understanding of the site features, surrounding environmental resources, movement network and the overall development potential of the site.

## The site

'Tithe Park' is rectangular in shape and comprises approximately 35.26 hectares. It lies immediately north of the existing urban edge of Southend-on-Sea, as outlined in Figure 1. It is bounded to the north by Poynters Lane, a single-carriageway route and to the south by Friars Park and the residential areas of Watkins Way and Picasso Way. The site's eastern boundary comprises agricultural land whilst it is bounded to the west by a vegetated screening bund and residential development. A Public Footpath runs in a north to south direction across the site, allowing direct access to Friars Park and Poynters Lane.

Figure 2 outlines the existing site features. The site rises between 5m and 8m AOD and is presently intensively farmed and supports few landscape features. These include a relatively mature hedge which sits on a bund, running along the western boundary of the site, screening the majority of views to and from the adjacent residential areas of Kingston Avenue, Milbanke Close, Sunbury Court and Caversham Avenue.

Additional native hedgerows run along the northern and southern boundary. A number of trees and ornamental hedges are located within the site, specifically at Tithe Barn Farm, defining the northern boundary of the site along Poynters Lane and a small stand of willows adjacent to a fenced enclosure and the Public Footpath. In addition four mature willow trees are located along the eastern boundary of the site. A small pond is located within the confines of Tithe Barn, which is surrounded by trees and vegetation.

## The proposal

The proposed "Tithe Park" illustrative masterplan has been designed to respond to the constraints and opportunities presented by the site, its features, views, local and regional planning context and its cultural history, namely the black clapper-boarded Tithe Barn.

Features such as footpaths and opportunities for additional pedestrian connections into neighbouring housing areas, local centres and existing public parks have been utilised to generate a masterplan that responds and connects with its wider context as encouraged and illustrated by the Thames Gateway South Essex Green Grid.

"Tithe Park" illustrates a mix of uses including approximately 490 dwellings. The 'Tithe Barn' building is envisaged as a 'Gateway' feature for Rochford District, and could provide a venue for community education, arts and crafts, bed and breakfast or therapeutic horticultural uses.

The plan also offers to provide a significant extension to Friars Park public open space that would be managed on ecological principles and the possible alternative use for green-burial and remembrance.

It is intended that "Tithe Park" would be designed on low-carbon principles to a high architectural standard, to create a well integrated and sustainable development. The additional aims of 'place-making', enhancing and connecting biodiversity would help deliver a special and unique place to live.

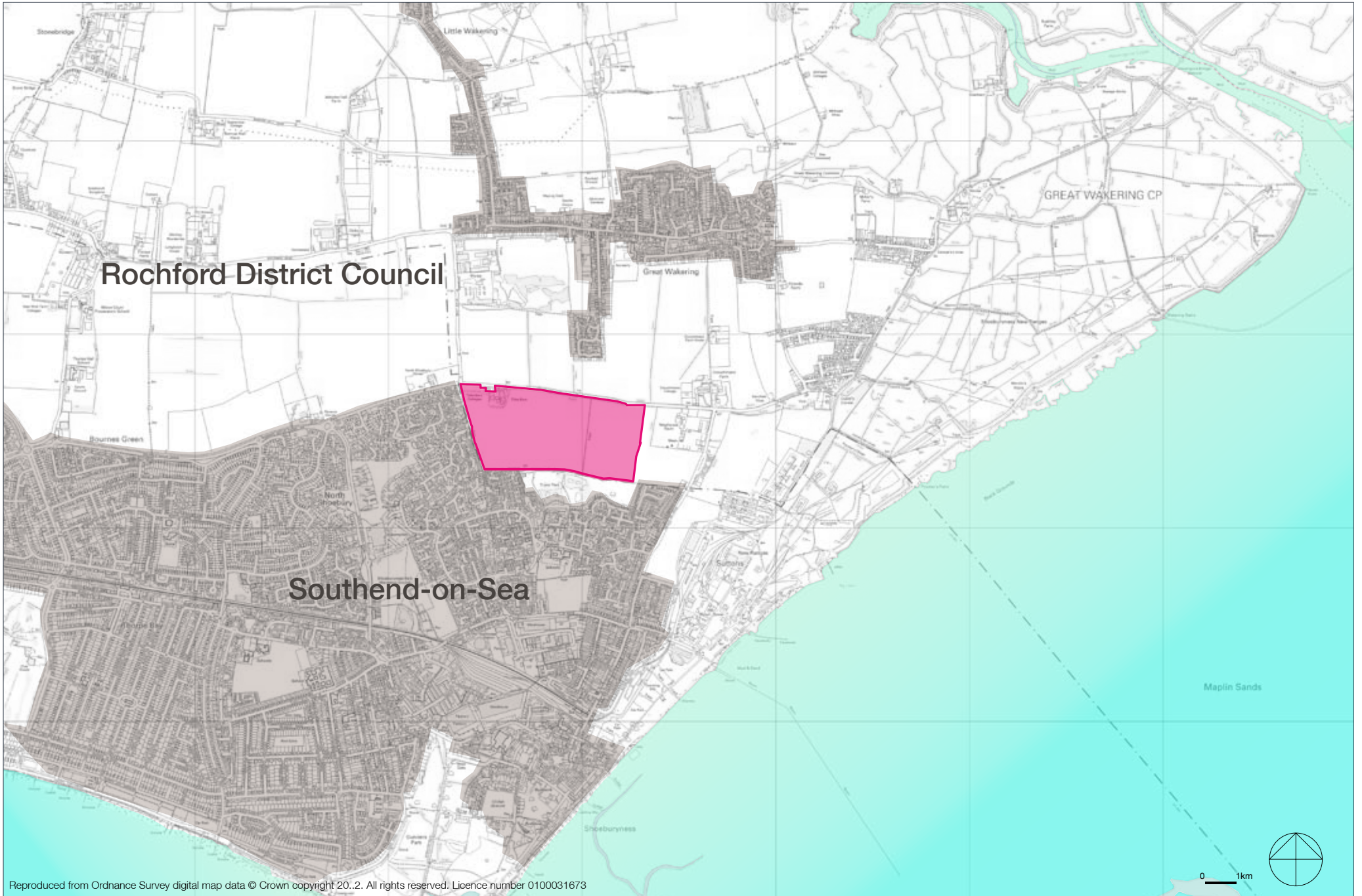


Figure 1. Site location plan



Figure 2. Site features

# 2.0 The Site and its Context

## Policy Context

The East of England Plan (paragraph 2.2) sets out the following overall spatial vision: 'By 2021 the East of England will be realising its economic potential and providing a high quality of life for its people, including by meeting their housing needs in sustainable inclusive communities. At the same time it will reduce its impact on climate change and the environment, including through savings in energy and water use and by strengthening its stock of environmental assets.'

The development of land at 'Tithe Park' will assist both Southend and Rochford to meet their respective housing and other targets. Most importantly the owners have an aspiration to provide a sustainable inclusive community with high quality energy efficient Ecohomes. Stolkin and Clements (Southend) LLP own the land and thus the scheme is deliverable.

### Need for Growth and Where 'Tithe Barn' Farm Can Fit In

Southend and part of Rochford lie within the Thames Gateway Growth Area. This represents one of the largest regeneration projects in Europe and the area will play a key part in providing for the sustainable urban growth of the South East with the aim of tackling current housing shortages in this area.

The East of England Plan (May 2008) sets high housing targets of 6,500 for Southend, and 4,600 for Rochford. Meeting these targets will involve the provision of a further 4,370 homes in Southend, and 3,790 more homes to be built in Rochford between now and 2021.

The further growth of Southend is constrained by the sea and the tight boundary which runs around the urban area. This constraint was recognised in the Southend-on-Sea Core Strategy Inspector's report (October 2007), with the Inspector noting that undeveloped land is a scarce resource in the Borough. Rochford's growth is constrained by a wide ranging Green Belt designation. There are, therefore, limited options for accommodating growth in sustainable locations.

There is a need to identify well located

development opportunities, and Tithe Park represents a sustainable location for an urban extension which can benefit both Southend and Rochford.

The Tithe Park site is well located in relation to the built up urban area of Southend abutting existing development on both its southern and western boundary. It is a large site of approximately 35 hectares and therefore capable of accommodating a comprehensive range of uses. It therefore provides an opportunity for sustainable development which can be well integrated as part of long established residential areas.

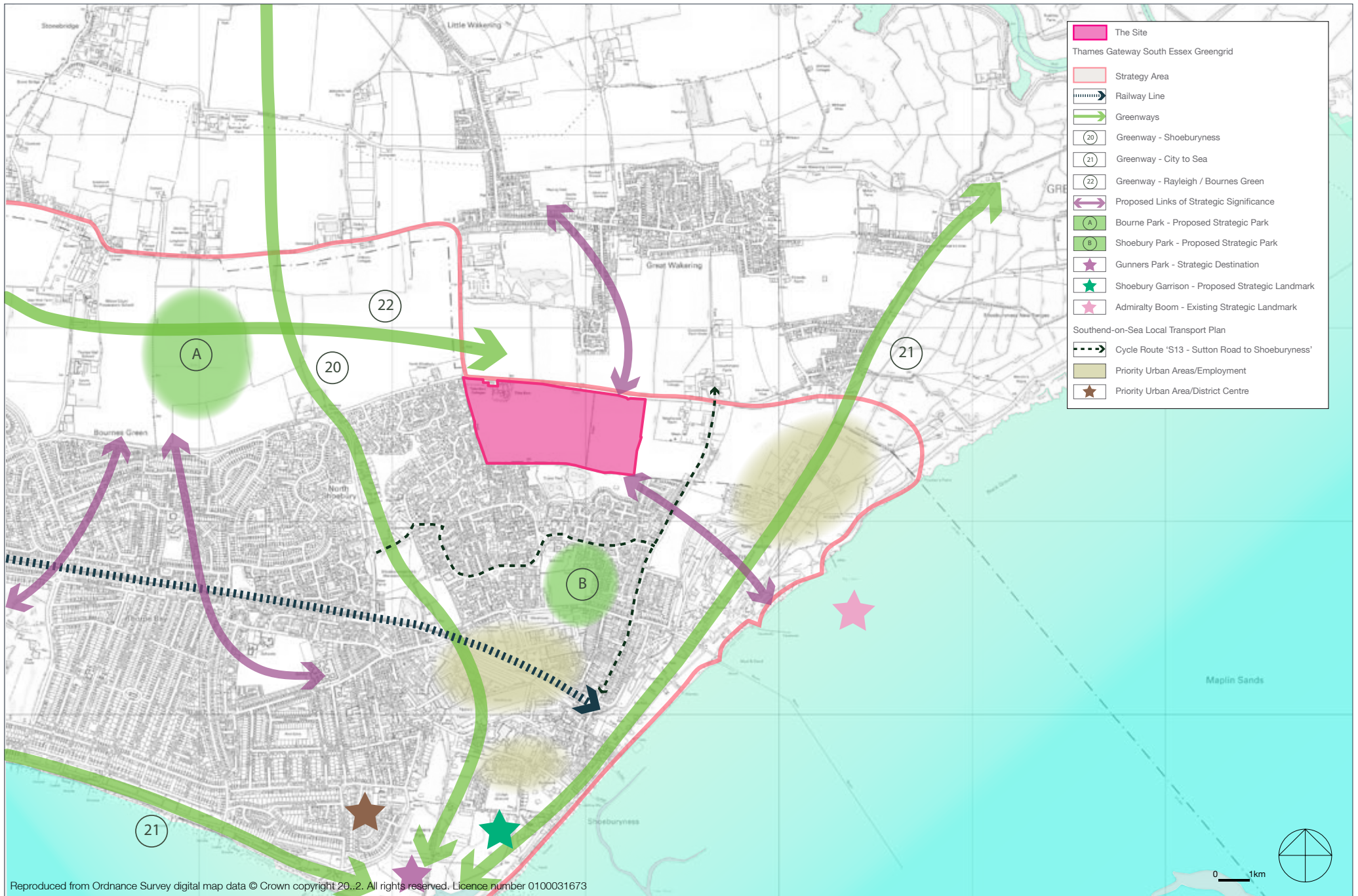
### Green Belt

The Tithe Park site currently comprises Green Belt, but careful modelling of the proposals can provide well managed and defensible boundaries which will afford future protection of the Green Belt to the north and west whilst assisting in meeting the development needs of both Rochford and Southend.

As a consequence, the redrawing of this part of the Green Belt boundary will not threaten the function and purpose of the Green Belt in either Southend or Rochford. Indeed, the proposals will serve to strengthen more vulnerable land elsewhere and ease development pressures on sensitive sites and villages. In short, the Tithe Park proposals will check the potential sprawl of any built up areas and will protect the countryside from unnecessary encroachment.

Policy KP1 of the Southend-on-Sea Core Strategy (2007) states that minor amendments to the Green Belt boundary may exceptionally be considered where this would enable delivery of specific objectives and policies in the Core Strategy which could not otherwise be achieved in a sustainable manner, and the openness of the remaining Green Belt and its ability to provide effective separation between Southend and neighbouring settlements are maintained.

Tithe Park can meet this policy because it will enable growth that cannot otherwise be accommodated, without compromising other areas of Green Belt.



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Figure 3. Strategic Context



## Sustainability

The homes to be provided will be Ecohomes which meet at least level 5 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. They will be highly energy efficient.

The East of England Plan sets out an aim that by 2010 10% of the region's energy should come from renewable sources. By 2020 this figure is to increase to 17%. Tithe Park will help Southend and Rochford to meet this aim.

Renewable energy is also recognised as an important consideration in the Southend-on-Sea Core Strategy Policy KP2: Development Principles which states that new developments should seek to reduce the use of natural resources, and that at least 10% of the energy needs of new development should come from on-site renewables.

Existing biodiversity will be identified, protected and enhanced through ecological surveys, habitat creation measures, management plans and the creation of a series of 'green-corridors' across site. This will create opportunities to increase species diversity and connect with wider ecological resources thus helping ensure ecologically sustainability.

## Housing

The scheme proposes additional homes which will assist both Southend and Rochford to meet their respective housing

targets. PPS3 requires local planning authorities to identify a 15 year supply of housing land. Rochford's Core Strategy Submission Document states that 'in order to fulfil the requirements of the East of England Plan and to meet the housing needs of the District, the council is required to allocate additional land for residential development, including land which is currently allocated as Green Belt, due to limited supply of alternative land. The Core Strategy goes on to identify 2785 additional dwellings to be delivered as extensions to residential envelopes.

The Southend-on-Sea Urban Capacity Study (2003) concluded that there is a capacity for 4893 new dwellings within the borough, significantly lower than the East of England Plan target of 6500. Both Southend and Rochford will also need to allocate more sites as, under PPS3, local authorities can no longer rely on windfall sites to meet their housing targets.

The site proposed for Tithe Park is available, deliverable and suitable and therefore meets the advice of paragraph 54 of PPS3. The type of homes to be provided will be the subject of further discussions with Rochford and Southend, particularly in the context of providing affordable homes and meeting local needs.

## Local Policies

The proposed scheme complies with the aims of the strategic policies of the Rochford Local Plan (2006). For example:

it will provide sustainable development in accordance with Policy CS1; will reduce the need to travel and provide public transport in accordance with Policy CS3; and will encourage economic regeneration in line with Policy CS5.

The proposed scheme also complies with The Southend-on-Sea Core Strategy (2007) which indicates that a Country Park will be encouraged across the Southend-on-Sea and Rochford boundary. Tithe Park can achieve this aim, linking in with the Green Grid and footpath network.

Within The Southend-on-Sea Core Strategy (2007) the area is also identified as having cross-boundary accessibility issues, with improved links into Shoeburyness. The proposals will enhance this accessibility. The proposals also comply with the broad development principles set out in Policy KP2 in that it will enhance the amenity value of the existing park to the south, thereby providing a high quality, well designed development.

Local planning policies are changing, and emerging local development frameworks will eventually supersede Local Plans. Rochford's Core Strategy Public examination is scheduled for May 2010. The policy background may therefore be different by the time a planning application is submitted.

The developers welcome this opportunity to work with both local planning authorities to ensure that any final scheme can meet the aims and aspirations of all parties.



A dutch example of a wetland meadow



Sustainable housing, Bridport, Dorset

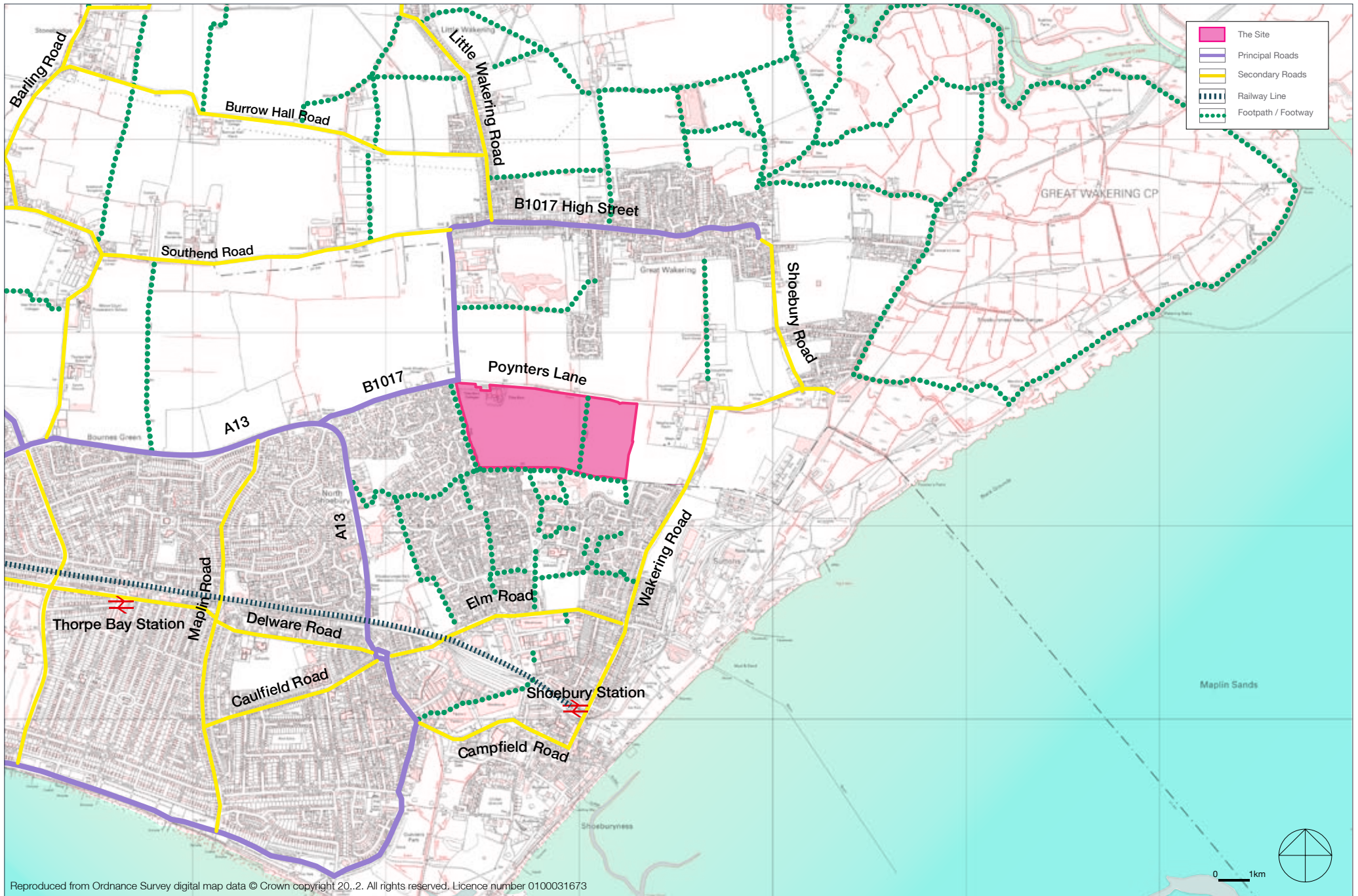


Figure 4. Access and Movement

## Local Facilities, Access and Movement

'Tithe Park' is well-served with existing pedestrian and vehicular access to surrounding areas, as outlined in Figure 4. Poynters Lane, as it passes the site is a de-restricted single-carriage way route, of approximately 5.3m width forming the northern boundary of the site. The road is unlit and has no footway provision This connects with Waking Road further east and Star Lane (B1017) further west allowing direct access to Great Waking. Vehicular access into Southend-on-Sea can be taken from the B1017 and A13. The A13 also provides direct access to the Asda superstore and local centre. Footways exist along the B1017 which benefits from a 40mph speed limit as it enters the residential area (at the junction of Poynters Lane with Star Lane).

The development would seek to preserve the character of Poynters Lane, whilst providing a footway along the northern boundary. As part of the proposal, it is suggested that the local 40 mph limit is extended along Poynters Lane to the eastern boundary of the development.

An extensive network of existing footpaths is located within the vicinity of the site, allowing easy and direct access, within an 800m radius to a number of community facilities as outlined in Figure 5. These include the shopping and associated amenities at the Asda superstore and the community amenities located within Great Waking

(including Great Waking Sports Centre and playground, Co-Op supermarket, pubs, restaurants, etc) and the playing fields located at St Georges Primary School. A number of primary and secondary schools are located within a 10 minute walk (800m) of the site, including Richmond Avenue Primary School and Thorpeden Junior School.

Currently bus routes 4 and 4a run along Poynters Lane, with bus stops situated approximately 50 metres from the north west corner of the site. These bus routes link Great Waking, with Southend, passing the Asda centre. It is intended to ensure the bus route passes through the site to increase patronage and sustainability.

Bus stops are also situated along Eagle Way to the south of the site. It is intended to encourage the bus operator to enter the site in order to serve future residents. A Travel Plan will safeguard and promote these issues.

Shoeburyness Railway Station is located to the south east of the site and within comfortable cycling distance of 'Tithe Park'. Direct train journeys to London Fenchurch Street take approximately one hour. Furthermore, this connection is set to improve with the Southend-on-Sea Second Local Transport Plan (2006 – 2011) identifying a Passenger Transport Link which will extend from Shoeburyness Rail Station in a northern direction towards the 'New Ranges'

A cycle route 'S13 – Sutton Road to Shoeburyness' is proposed within the Southend-on-Sea Second Local Transport Plan (2006 – 2011) in which it will link Southend City Centre, the Asda superstore centre located off Frobisher Way, running in a northerly direction along Waking Road to Great Waking. As part of the Green Travel Plan opportunities will be sought to provide cycle links to the local district centre, anchored by the Asda store. The site would also benefit from being in close proximity to the potential SERT Urban Transport System. This route is intended as a high quality light rail / guided bus corridor.



Poynters Lane



Footpath across site looking towards Friars Park



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Figure 5. Local Facilities

## Topography and Hydrology

'Tithe Park' is set on relatively flat land, rising from between 5m and 8m AOD as outlined in Figure 6. The EA flood zone maps indicate that the south eastern corner of the site lies within Flood Zone 3A as per Planning Policy Statement 25 - Development and Flood Risk. The Great Wakering Flood Risk Management Scheme is currently underway, which may influence this zoning. However, to take account of PPS 25, all proposed development and balancing facilities are located outside of Flood Zone 3A.

Numerous water bodies are located within and close to the site, including a small pond within the precincts of Tithe Barn Farm and the water bodies located within Friars Park and 'Wakering Landfill' County Wildlife Site. All existing water bodies on site could be retained within the illustrative masterplan, with opportunities for other water bodies being created to enhance biodiversity.



Existing ponds in Friars Park



Alder Carr habitat may be suitable for parkland extension

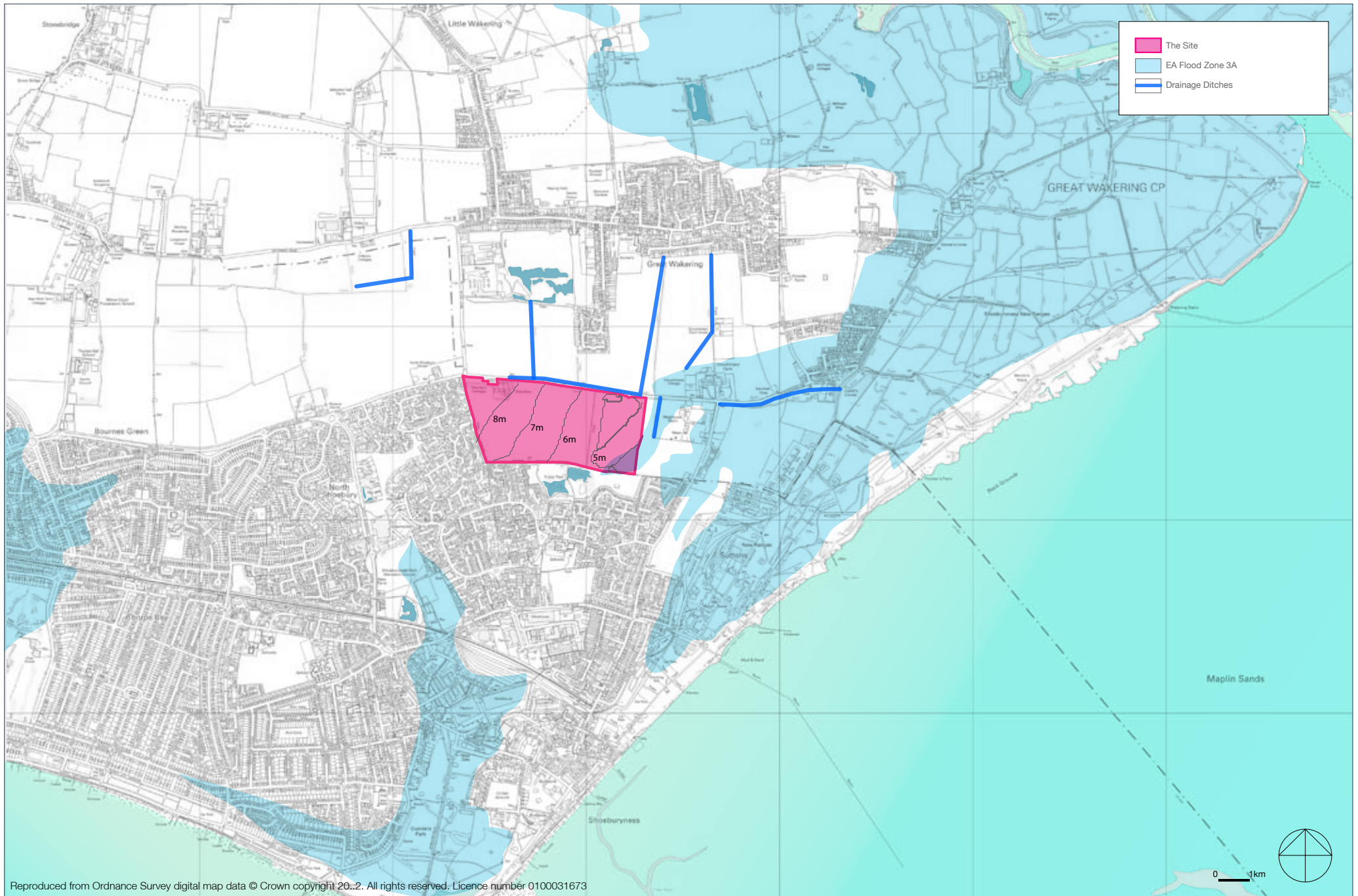


Figure 6. Topography & Hydrology

## The Green Grid, Landscape and Environmental Designations

'Tithe Park' is shown as falling within the Southend Town Sub-Regional Landscape Character Area within the Greater Thames Estuary National Landscape Character designation in Thames Gateway South Essex Green Grid document.

The Green Grid aims to achieve 'a living system threading through the urban and rural landscape, connecting places that are attractive to people, wildlife, business, and providing clean air, food, water, energy, minerals and materials'.

The Green Grid has highlighted key 'green' issues and opportunities for the Southend and Rochford strategic area, as outlined in Figure 3. These include the promotion of sustainable connections by providing new north/south greenway connections; the creation of new interconnected strategic country parks; promotion of existing landmarks and the creation of new strategic landmarks and destinations.

'Tithe Park' will benefit from many of these proposals, including direct pedestrian connections with the City to Sea / Shoreline Greenway and Admiralty Boom and a proposed new park at Shoebury. Proposed new pedestrian linkages will connect 'Tithe Park' with Great Wakering, and will indirectly create linkages further north to Foulness and the Essex estuaries.

The countryside surrounding 'Tithe Park' encompasses a wide range of natural resources, celebrated for their International, National and Local importance. These are outlined in Figure 7 and include the following:

- Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation;
- Foulness Special Protection Area;
- Foulness Ramsar Site;
- Foulness Site of Special Scientific Interest;
- Great Wakering Common County Wildlife Site; and
- 'Wakering Landfill' County Wildlife Site.

In addition, the Upper Crouch and the Crouch/Roach marshes are protected as a Special Landscape Area. 'Tithe Park' does not directly impact any of the above-mentioned designated areas and is located outside of the Special Landscape Area.

## Other Considerations

There are no Listed Buildings or Scheduled Ancient Monuments located within or in the vicinity of the site.

An Envirosearch was undertaken, which reviewed the flood risk potential, current and historical land use and sensitivity of the site. It indicated that the site was a registered landfill site and potential landfill buffer. In addition, potentially contaminative industrial uses have occurred within the site.

These include the quarrying of sand and clay (date of mapping 1898, 1961-1989), the operation of sand and gravel pits (date of mapping 1898, 1961-1989) and the manufacture of clay bricks and tiles (date of mapping 1923). In addition, two areas of potentially filled ground (pit, quarry) are located within the site (outlined on maps dating 1989). Prior to a planning application being submitted a contamination assessment will be carried out and any remediation required will be undertaken before occupation of the site.

A high pressure gas pipeline runs from Poynters lane in a north to south direction along the western boundary of the site. It turns in a westerly direction and runs between Caversham Avenue and Milbanke Close, before running south towards Eagle Way. To take account of the pipeline, an area of open space, approximately 20m wide has been provided along the western parameters of the site.



Ponds at Wakering Wildlife Site

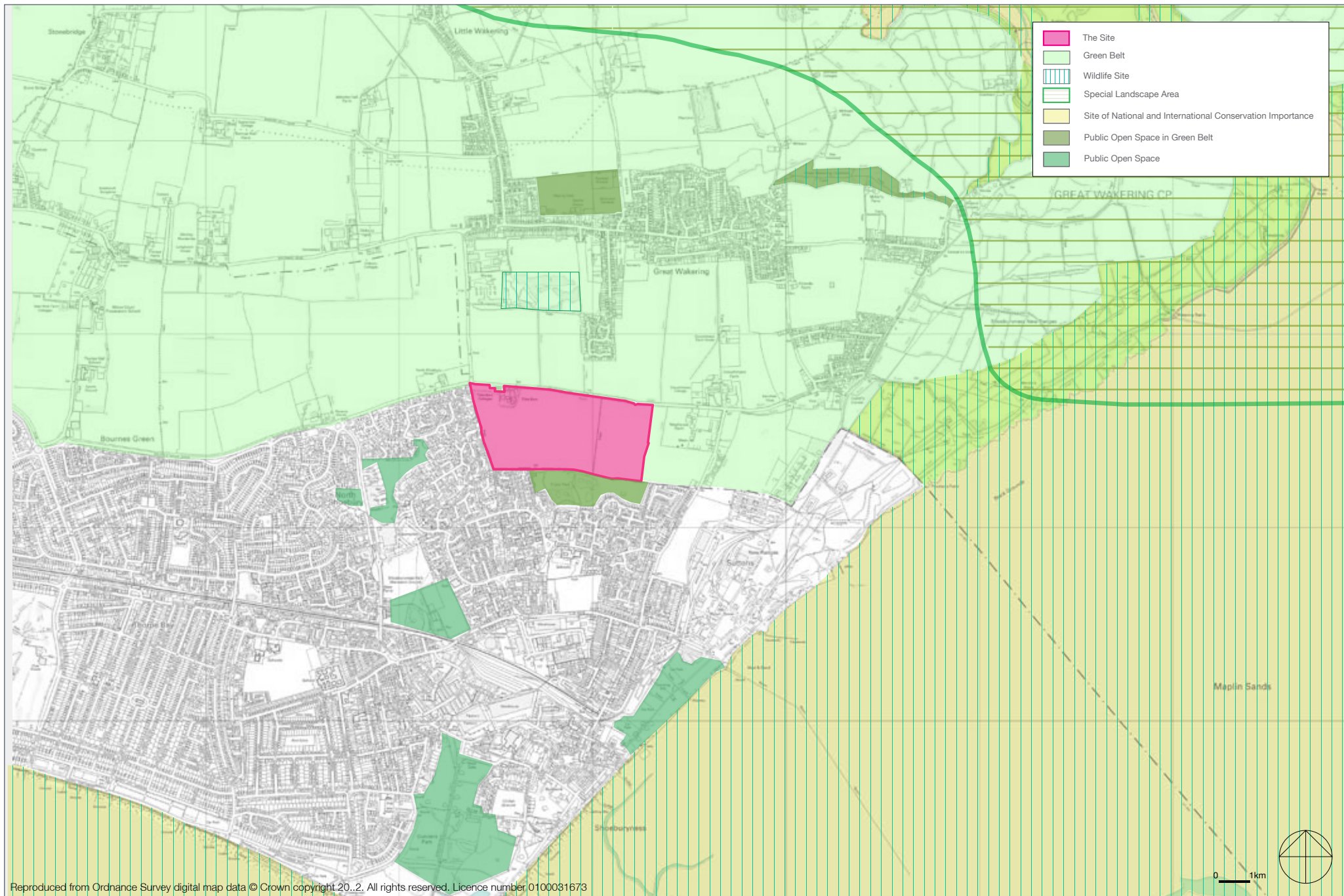


Figure 7. Topography & Hydrology



# 3.0 A Vision for Tithe Park

The Vision for 'Tithe Park' is one which incorporates a well-designed sustainable community with a 'Green' contemporary identity and strong connections to the surrounding area. An integrated approach is essential to deliver this vision with minimal environmental impact to create a truly sustainable community. As such, Figure 8 outlines the proposed Illustrative Masterplan, taking account of the following key areas:

**1. 'The Tithe Barn':** the existing black-stained clapper-board barn with its pond is a typical example of the Essex farmyard -vernacular. It is envisaged that it could form a new 'Gateway' feature to Rochford that would communicate the rural character of Rochford District that would be visible from Poynters Lane and the A13.

The Tithe Barn could possibly form the focus for a proposed community facility that would be extended to create a courtyard of new craft workshops, artists' studios and other community/educational uses. It could also accommodate the focus for a therapeutic horticultural community and associated farm-shop.

**2. A new south facing 'Village-Green'** 'overlooked by the Barn could accommodate outdoor community gatherings including fetes and performances.

**3. 'Tithe Fields':** In order to retain the rural character along the southern edge of Poynters Lane, it is proposed that the existing native hedgerow is retained and enhanced, with an area of open space adjacent to the Tithe Barn. This space could potentially function either as productive landscape (horticulture) for the Tithe Barn Therapeutic Community or allotments for the proposed residential development.

**4. 'Barn Lane':** An east-west green cycle-footpath connecting Frobisher Way green space with the proposed 'Village-Green' and the existing public footpath to Friars Park. It would be defined by new native hedgerow planting, hedgerow-trees and wide species rich verges, and overlooked by housing on its southern edge and an east-west create a 'green-corridor' across site.

**5. 'Friars Park extension':** It is proposed that Friars Park could be extended northwards and eastwards to create a larger facility and provide more connectivity to the surrounding community. The northern boundary of Friars Park could be managed to open up views across the existing ponds, and the mown grass areas managed to create a species rich meadow for informal natural -play. The park extension would be defined on its western boundary by the public footpath, and could accommodate a small pond, an extensive 'damp' balancing area with willow and alder-carr and wet-meadow habitats; thus providing a range of wildlife habitats and a network of new footpaths.

The provision of this open space will include 8 hectares of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGS) which will provide recreational opportunities.

An alternative use for the eastern end of the site could be a burial or memorial parkland landscape 'The Rochford Memorial Landscape. This meditative landscape could be managed on an ecological basis to encourage a range of grassland, woodland and wetland habitats; it could contain some woodland car-parking and a small ceremonial pavilion space.

**6. Existing Public Footpath:** This feature connects Friars Park at its southern end to Poynters Lane to the north. There could be opportunities to extend the route northwards over Poynters Lane to connect to the 'Wakering Landfill' County Wildlife Site (24Ha) and Great Wakering Sports Centre and Playing Fields further north, as indicated on the Thames Gateway South Essex Green Grid strategy.

**7. Proposed Housing:** The illustrative masterplan indicates approximately 15.85 ha of residential development. It is proposed that a range of tenures and sizes would be provided to an average density of 31 dwellings per hectare delivering approximately 490 units. The housing would be designed to low-carbon criteria in a contemporary 'green' architectural style informed by the Essex vernacular. The housing layout would deliver a permeable network of routes and spaces connecting to existing footpaths, green spaces, local schools and facilities, including the Asda superstore; most of which are within a 10 minutes' walk (800m) of the site.

**8. Access:** It is envisaged that two access points will be provided to the north-east and north-west of the site. One of the access points may be for emergency vehicles only, however this will be subject to further study.



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Figure 8: Illustrative Masterplan

## Possible land use budget

Aspect	Standard Used	Units	Total
Site Area		Ha	35.26
Residential Area		Ha	15.85
Total No. of Dwellings	31 dwellings per hectare	No.	490
Public Open Space within Masterplan		Ha	4.24
Friars Park Extension / Memorial Parkland		Ha	13.23
Community Facilities (Arts and Crafts)		Ha	0.49
Productive / Therapeutic Landscape		Ha	1.28
Screening		Ha	0.17



An example of water in the streetscape at Great Wakering

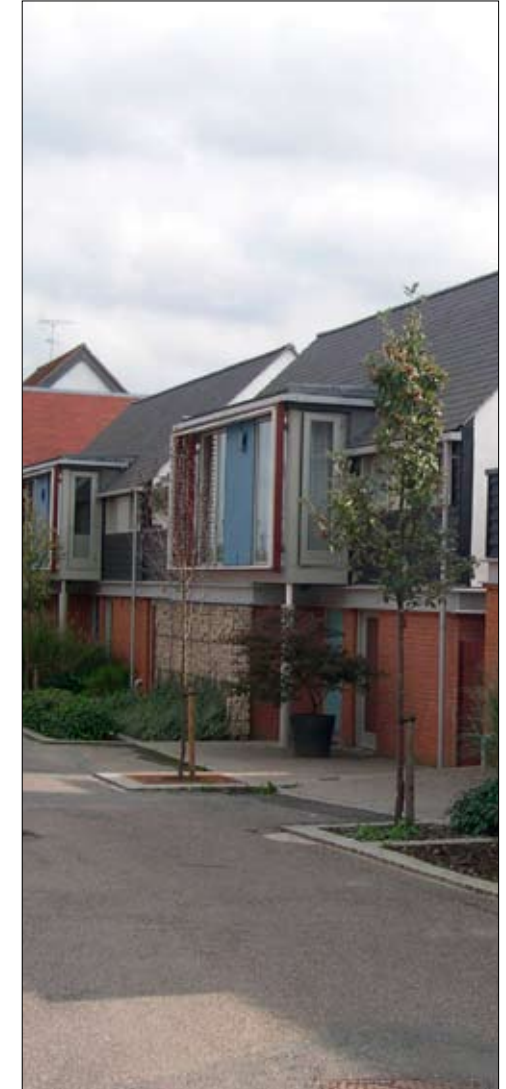
# Precedents & Inspiration



Newhall, Essex - contemporary housing based on the Essex vernacular



The new park presents opportunities for species-rich meadow



Newhall, Essex - contemporary housing based on Essex vernacular

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Aerial photographs courtesy of Bing Maps

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## **APPENDIX 2**

## APPENDIX 2

Analysis of Tithe Park in relation to the Sustainability Objectives set out in Table 3.2 of the SA

<b>Sustainability Objective</b>	<b>Analysis of the Tithe Park Site</b>	<b>Issues Raised for the Locations Currently Proposed in Policies H2 and H3</b>
<b>Balanced Communities</b>	<p>A mix of unit sizes, types and tenure will be provided in accordance with relevant planning policies.</p> <p>Provision of housing close to the facilities of Southend will meet the needs of an aging population</p>	<p>Other locations may have a negative impact on existing smaller communities.</p>
<b>Health &amp; Safe Communities</b>	<p>Will be designed to a high standard. There are a number of GPs in Southend including three GP Practices within 5 minutes walking distance at Frobisher Way, Eagle Way and Watkins Way.</p> <p>The site will provide links to the green grid and existing footpath network.</p> <p>The site will provide a large area of open space for recreation on the doorstep of the new housing</p> <p>The strong relationship to Southend is likely to result in less light pollution than a number of the more open sites with less sustainable settlement connections.</p>	<p>Canewdon only has 1 GP surgery</p>
<b>Housing</b>	<p>A mix of unit sizes, types and tenure will be provided in accordance with relevant planning policies.</p> <p>The development will be built to a high standard of design.</p> <p>The homes to be provided will be Ecohomes which will meet at least Code for Sustainable Homes Level 5.</p> <p>There is sustainable access to key services in Southend.</p> <p>Homes can be built to lifetime home standards as required.</p>	

<b>Economy &amp; employment</b>	By way of location the housing will provide accessibility to the employment opportunities of Southend without the need to travel long distances by car.	All other sites will be less well placed.
<b>Accessibility</b>	<p>Tithe Park will reduce the need to travel by providing housing in close proximity to the amenities of Southend, ensuring access to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services.</p> <p>It will encourage people to use alternative modes of transport. Currently bus routes 4 and 4a run along Poynters Lane, with bus stops situated approximately 50 metres to the north west corner of the site. These bus routes link Great Wakering with Southend, passing the Asda store. It is intended to ensure the bus route passes through the site to increase patronage. There will also be links to the existing footpath network to encourage people to walk.</p>	<p>Canewdon is recognised in SHLAA as having poor access to public transport (only 6 services and running Mon – Fri) and poor access to shops. There is one primary school but no secondary schools.</p> <p>Hawkwell has no primary schools and no GP.</p>
<b>Biodiversity</b>	<p>It is proposed that at least 8 hectares of Sustainable Alternative Green Space (SANGS) will be provided to ensure protection of any vulnerable habitats.</p> <p>The site is not known to contain any protected or priority species. However, Ecological Surveys would be conducted and submitted as part of any planning application.</p>	Smaller sites may not be able to provide adequate SANGS.
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	<p>By providing the housing as an urban extension to Southend, the villages of Rochford and their rural culture can be protected.</p> <p>Tithe Park is not known to be of special historical, archaeological or cultural value.</p> <p>It is proposed to retain 'The Tithe Barn'. This could possibly be used for a proposed community facility that would be extended to create a courtyard of new craft workshops, artist's studios and other community/educational uses.</p>	No other sites will be an urban extension of the scale proposed for Tithe Park.
<b>Landscape and Townscape</b>	<p>The site is well connected to Southend to the south and west and is an appropriate size for an urban extension. It will therefore have an acceptable impact on the landscape.</p> <p>Tithe Park will providing a high quality public realm and open spaces. For example an extension to Friars Park is proposed.</p> <p>In order to retain the rural character along the southern edge of Poynters</p>	Other sites will have more landscape impact.



	Lane, it is proposed that the existing native hedgerow is retained and enhanced, with an area of open space adjacent to the Tithe Barn. This space could potentially function either as productive landscape (horticulture) for the Tithe Barn Therapeutic Community or allotments for the proposed residential development.	
<b>Climate Change &amp; Energy</b>	The homes to be provided will be Ecohomes which will meet at least Code for Sustainable Homes Level 5.	
<b>Water</b>	This subject has not been investigated in detail. However, the development of Tithe Park will not impact on the quality of inland waters or coastal waters.  A sustainable urban drainage system can be provided.	
<b>Land &amp; Soil</b>	An Envirosearch survey has indicated that the site has potentially previously been used for the quarrying of sand & clay, operation of sand and gravel pits and clay bricks & tiles (manufacture) and filled ground. This is likely to have had some impact on the land and soil.	
<b>Air Quality</b>	As the site is sustainably located it will reduce emissions through reducing car travel, and improving use of public transport.	Other sites are less well placed.