

South West Rugby Design Code
Supplementary Planning Document

Draft for consultation
10/02/2025

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Version	Date
Draft for RBC cabinet	24.01.2025
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Introduction + policy context

South West Rugby

This design code applies to land within the allocation at South West Rugby. South West Rugby is allocated for an urban extension in the local plan (2011-2031), consisting of new homes, employment, and associated infrastructure.

The land within the urban extension is within multiple different land ownerships, and no overarching outline planning application is anticipated. As a result, coordination across the different land holdings and multiple planning proposals for the duration of the development will therefore be key to creating a joined up, cohesive and high-quality place. The key objectives of this design code are to coordinate the design of development across the area, and to raise the overall quality of the place.

This design code seeks to build upon existing adopted policy in the local plan and the South West Rugby Masterplan SPD. It focusses on key design characteristics, providing guidance on coordination and quality.

Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted 2019)

The local plan allocated the site for development consisting of around 5000 dwellings and 35ha of employment land for B8 uses under local plan policies DS3 (DS3.4) and DS8.

Policy DS8 required a mixed-use district centre consisting of; a convenience store and other retail uses with office or residential space above; a GP surgery; and provision for a Safer Neighbourhood Team. There is further a requirement for one secondary school, two primary schools, other local facilities and land for an onsite fire & rescue provision (now anticipated to be located off site).

Requirements for the spine road network are contained in policy DS9.

South West Rugby Masterplan SPD (2021, updated 2024)

The South West Rugby Masterplan SPD was published in order to provide guidance on comprehensive delivery of the planning objectives for the allocation. It covers masterplanning, infrastructure requirements and phasing/delivery guidance.

The SPD states preferred locations for open space, access, play areas, schools and primary roads including the spine road network along with other features.



Purpose of this document

The purpose of this guide is to expand on the South West Rugby Masterplan SPD by establishing design principles for development in the allocation. It is intended for use by applicants when developing proposals, and by development management officers when advising on pre-application proposals and when considering planning applications.

In setting out clear design expectations, the code aims to achieve:

- Higher quality development
- Conversations about design earlier in the planning process
- Conversations with local residents about places that affect them
- Clarity and a level of certainty about what will be expected on the site
- Greater predictability in the planning process
- Consistency through multiple delivery phases.

Status of this document

This design code will take the status of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which means it will be a material consideration in decision making.

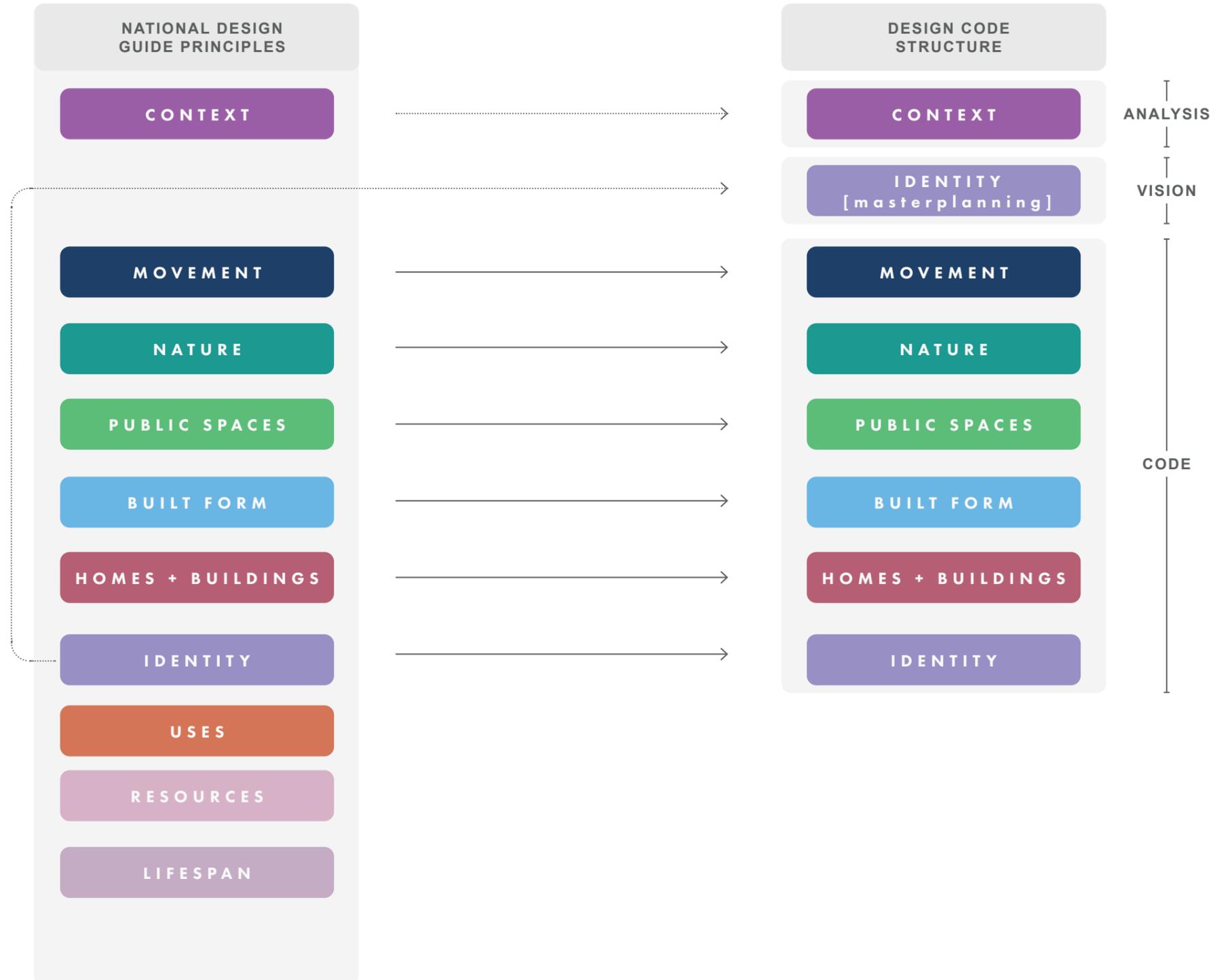
It should be read in conjunction with existing policy or guidance that is in place.

Content + structure

The content of the code is derived from guidance contained within the National Model Design Code Parts 1 + 2. Much of this guidance is centred around the ten characteristics of a well-designed place as stated in the National Design Guide.

This code uses seven out of the ten characteristics, which are deemed most relevant, impactful and appropriate for the allocation and its requirements. Those not included may be covered in existing policy or guidance, or might be more appropriate for design codes covering a larger-scale area or focusing on different design issues.

The code follows the structure contained in the National Model Design Code, with three main sections - 'Analysis', 'Vision' and 'Code'. The National Design Guide characteristics are mapped to the topic headings as in the diagram opposite.



About this document

How to use the design code

The code is structured in sections focussed on one of the design characteristics from the National Design Guide (see previous page). A number of subheadings are included under each chapter, with both site-wide and area-type guidance considered as appropriate.

Pages contain the following information:

- Key strategies/objectives for the subheading
- Code requirements, as a 'must', 'should' or 'could'
- Crossovers with other code sections, policy or guidance
- Explanatory drawings, diagrams or precedents

Code requirements take one of the following forms:

- 'Must' a mandatory requirement
- 'Should' a recommendation, where deviation requires justification
- 'Could' a measure that would add value but is not considered necessary everywhere

Developers will be expected to submit a compliance tracker with applications.

[EXAMPLE PAGE]

Section heading (National Design Guide characteristic)	Section subheading	Key strategies for the subheading	Design principles at masterplan scale. Some code sections will be further explained with drawings, diagrams and/or precedents at different scales.
BUILT FORM	Residential density	<p>These densities are averages and are intended to describe where higher or lower density development is expected to be focused. The approach includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • higher density around the district centre and associated key transport routes • mid density at the transition between the edge of Rugby and the district centre • lower density adjoining Cawston Spinney • lower density at site edges adjoining existing green landscapes such as Cawston Greenway • lower density adjoining the edge of Dunchurch and the green landscape to the south. 	
BF.20	Proposals must demonstrate their approach to density.	BF.21	Density should be calculated from the outline of each residential parcel, including the internal roads but excluding large areas of open space or play.
BF.22	Proposals should align with the density averages shown on the diagram opposite.	BF.23	Technical reasons for not achieving desired densities must be demonstrated.
<p>Also refer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Movement Nature Public spaces RBC Local Plan Policy HS1, SDC1 		<p>Key</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50+ dph 40 dph 30 dph Safeguarded land 	
<p>South West Rugby Design Code_Draft 24.01.25 Introduction Analysis Vision Code Movement Nature Public spaces Built form Homes + buildings Identity </p>		80	

Code requirements

Drawing key

Crossovers with:

- Other design code sections
- Other RBC policy or guidance
- WCC or national policy or guidance

Engagement

Who has been involved?

In developing this design code, we have engaged with:

- Members of the public
- Pupils from Bilton School
- Local Ward Councillors
- Local Parish Councillors

A summary of the engagement is included below, though further details are available in a separate report [here](#).

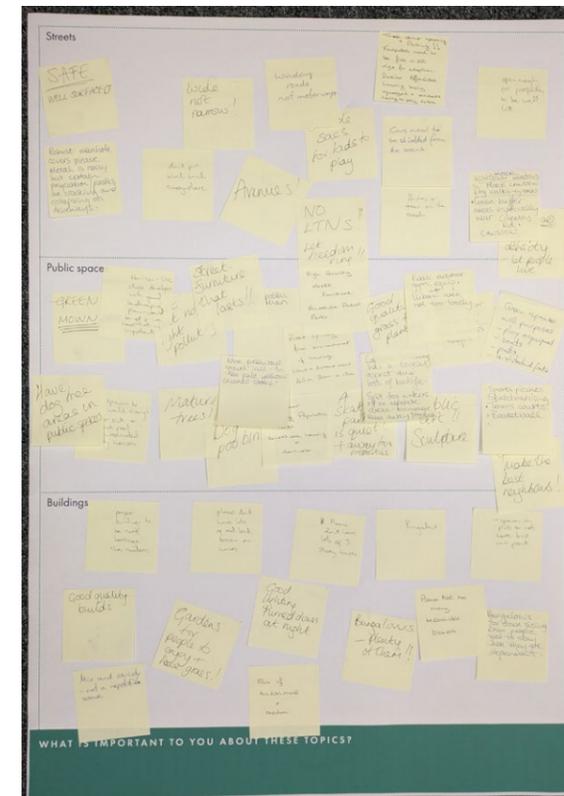
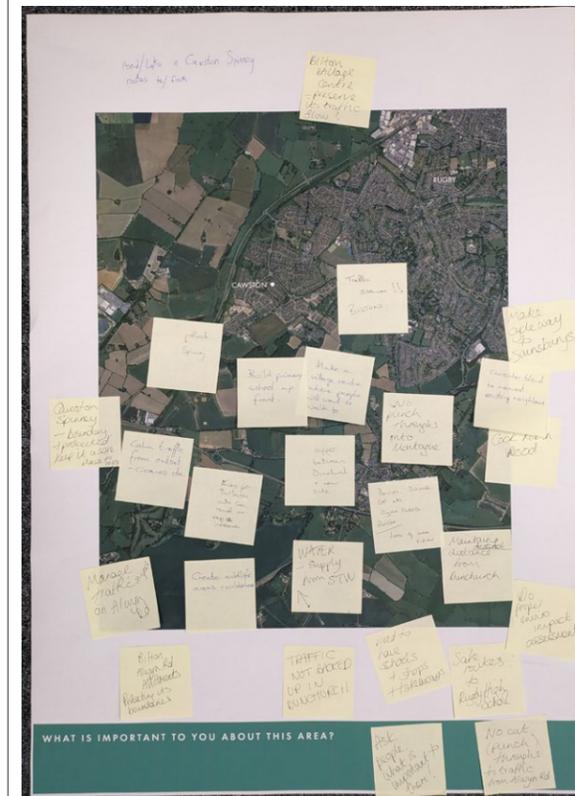
What did we consider?

At each session with representatives from the above groups, the following key questions and themes were considered:

- What is important or distinctive about the site and area
- What is important about aspects such as streets, public spaces and buildings
- An emerging vision for the site
- Emerging masterplan principles regarding landscape, movement and the built environment
- Examples of built projects with a range of design approaches

Key responses and themes that emerged

- The importance of the natural environment and access to green space
- Prioritising active travel within the urban extension, and beyond
- Access to key destinations within Rugby, such as the town centre, the train station and the hospital
- A desire for variety in built form, stemming from a response to precedent housing images that were considered 'dull' or 'bland'.



Context

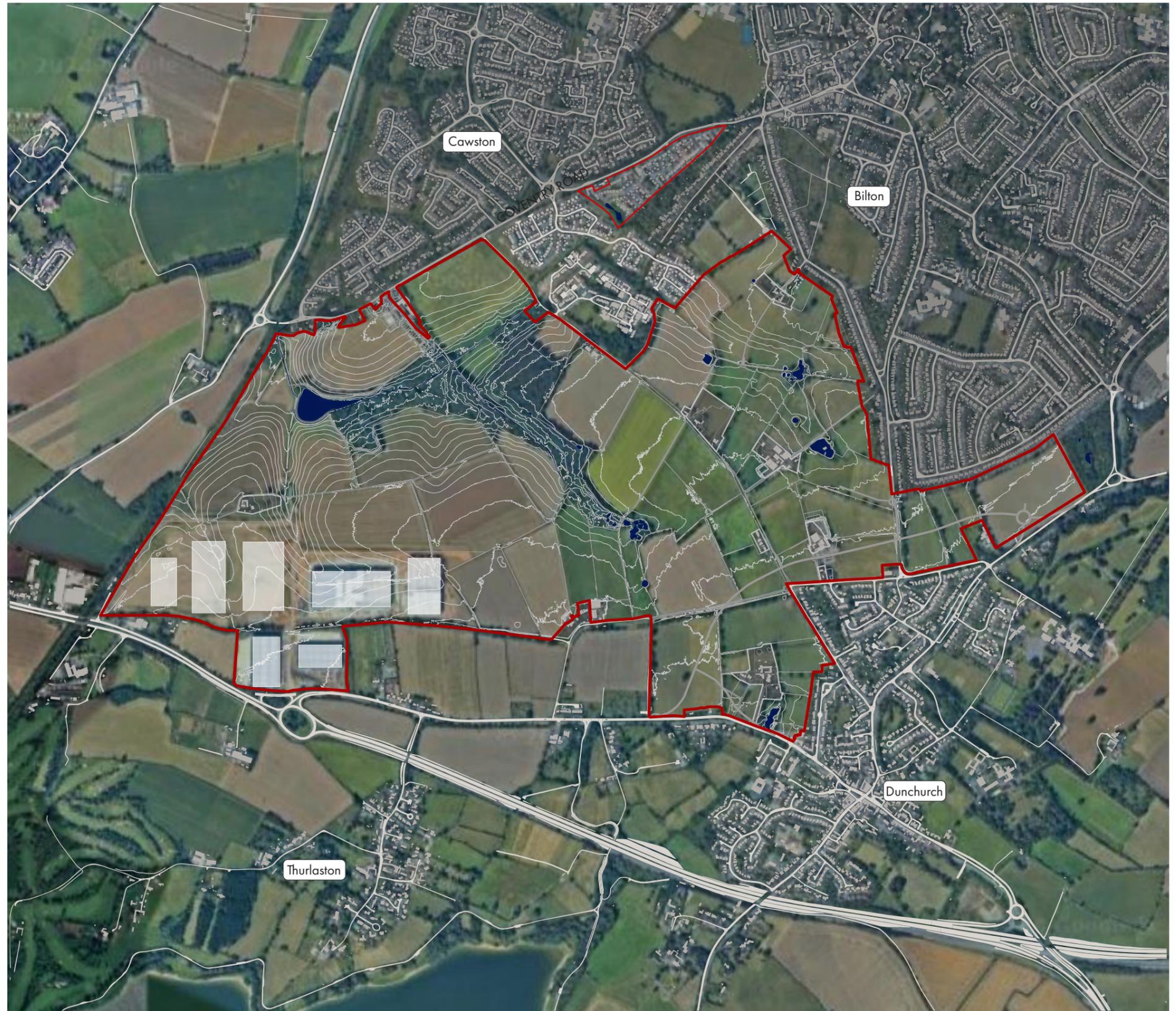
Site context

The allocation is approximately 390 Hectares (960 acres) and is predominantly in agricultural use. It is located between Cawston to the north, Bilton to the east, Dunchurch to the south, and the A4071 (London Road) and a disused railway line to the west.

The allocation is separated from the wider countryside to the south by the A45 (London Road) and the disused railway line to the west which form physical and permanent boundaries to development.

The grounds of Bilton Grange School, which are a registered Park and Garden, define the south eastern edge of the allocation, east of Dunchurch. The urban edge of Rugby is defined by the recent development at Cawston and the attractive residential streets of Lime Tree Avenue in the north east and Alwyn Road to the east.

In the south west of the site, land identified for employment development is substantially built out.



Site status

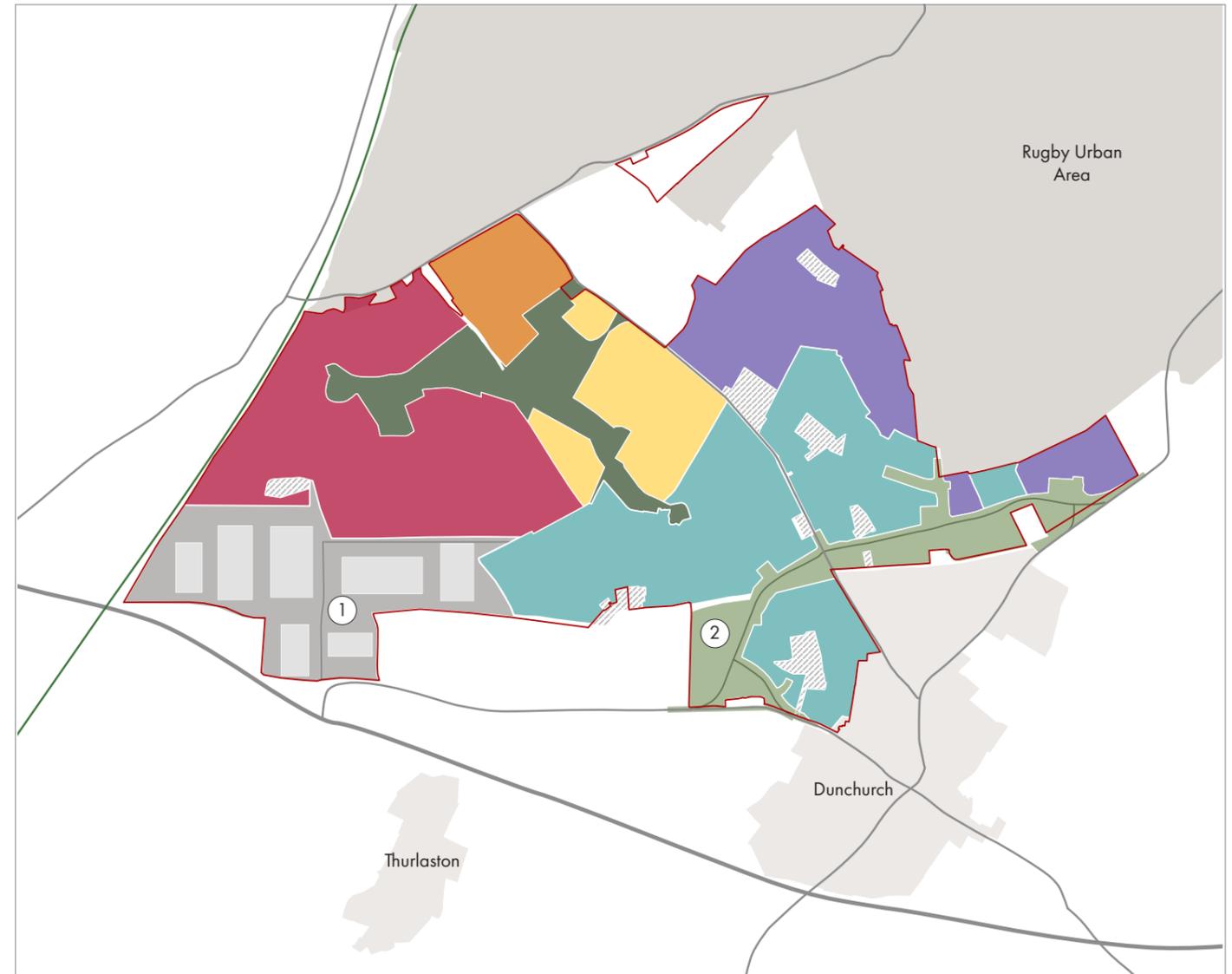
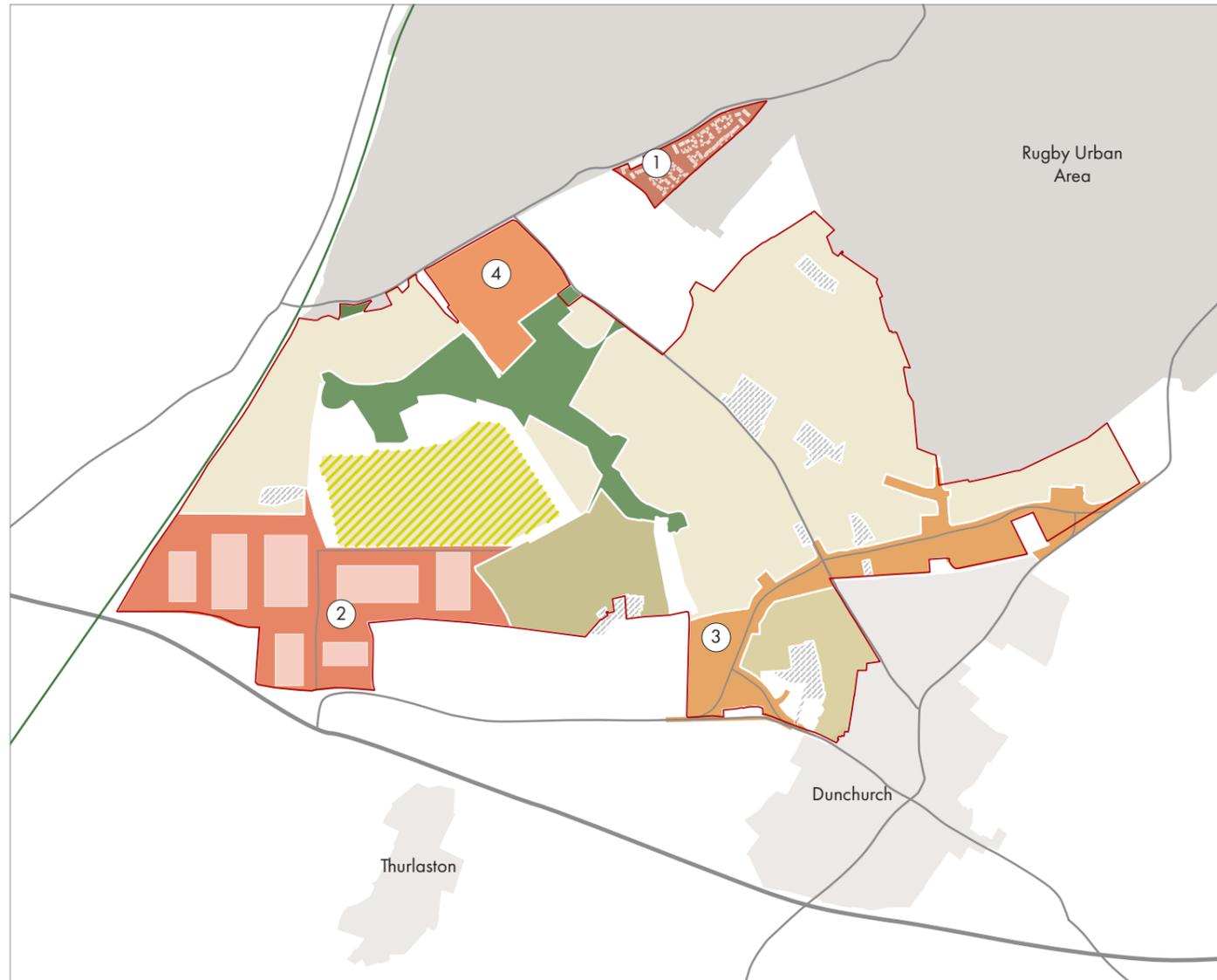
There are several landowners/developers and the site is due to come forward in several phases, with some phases already underway. These factors make co-ordination between parcels challenging and extremely important.

Planning history + allocation status

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|------------------|
| ① | Housing already built |  | Phase 03 |
| ② | Employment already built/in progress |  | Phase 04 |
| ③ | Homestead Link Road - resolution to grant planning permission, subject to completion of a legal agreement |  | Phase 05 |
| ④ | Reserved matters being considered currently |  | Safeguarded land |
|  | Existing residences | | |

Land ownership

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|---------------|
| ① | Employment already built/in progress |  | Urban + Civic |
| ② | Homestead Link Road |  | Miller Homes |
|  | Existing residences |  | Tritax |
|  | Homes England | | |
|  | Taylor Wimpey | | |



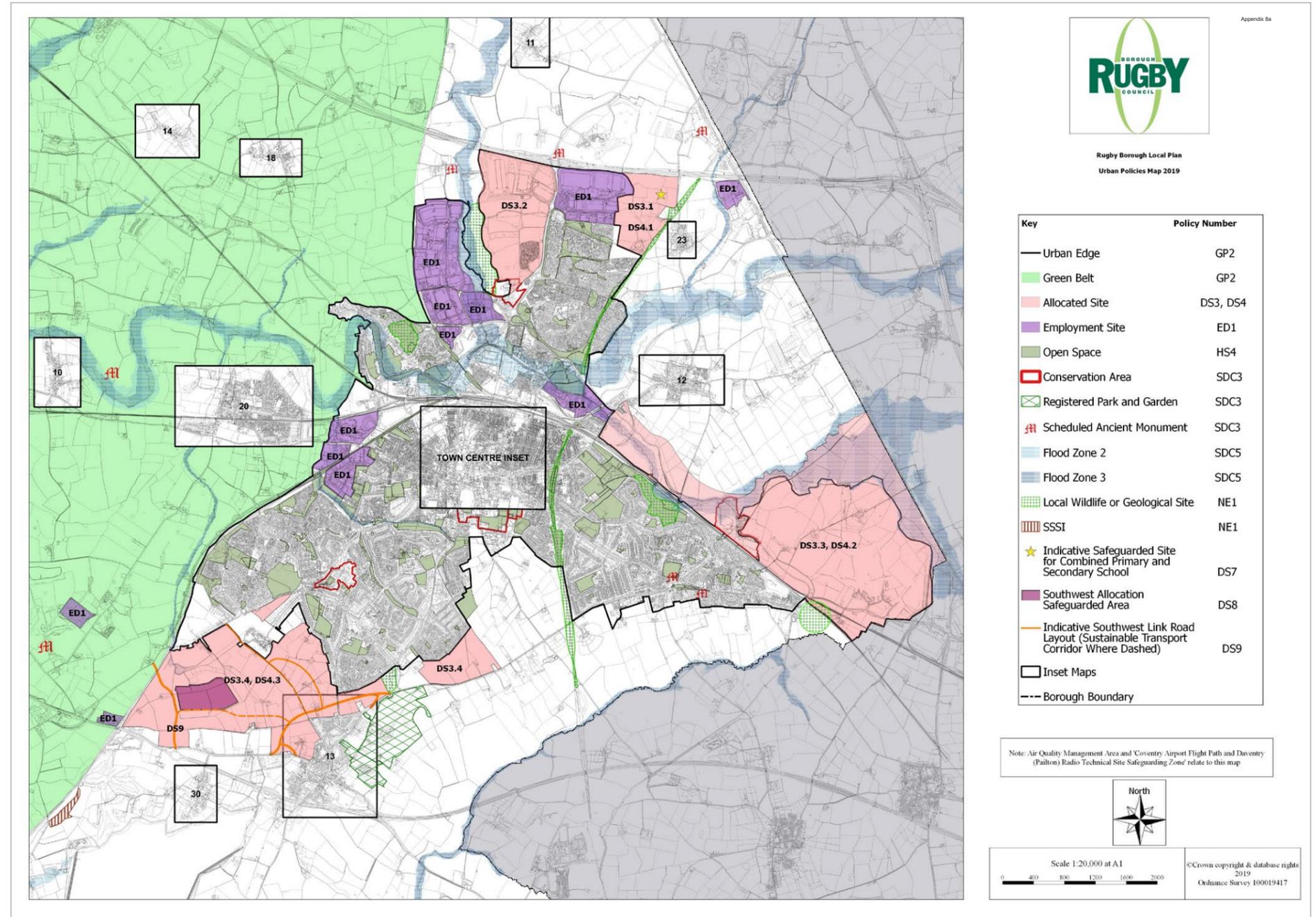
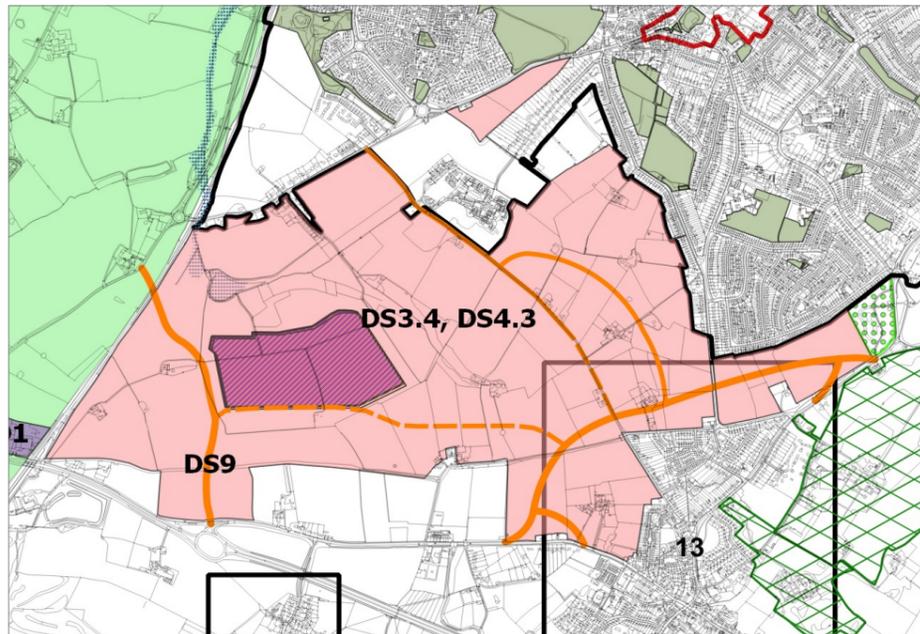
Safeguarded land

There is an area of land identified within South West Rugby as 'safeguarded land' (see extract from the local plan (2011 -2031) [policies map](#) below).

This land was 'safeguarded' for future allocation in a local plan, and is being considered through the ongoing review of the local plan. It is for the local plan to determine what type of development may be appropriate on this area, and as such the future use of this land is beyond the scope of this design code. This design code will therefore consider two possible scenarios for this land throughout:

1. Residential development
2. Employment development

Each of these two scenarios present different opportunities and challenges in how the land interfaces with the surrounding development and features such as the spinney.



Landscape environment

Much of the landscape of the allocation is characterised by open grassland and arable fields, defined by a series of established hedgerows, together with individual mature trees and small copses.

A network of ponds appear periodically within the fields.

There is a well vegetated public bridleway running east-west along Northampton Lane.

Mature ancient woodland exists within the north of the allocation known as Cawston Spinney.

Cock Robin Wood is located to the east.

The site slopes up generally from north to south.





Woodland + boundaries



Water bodies

Built environment

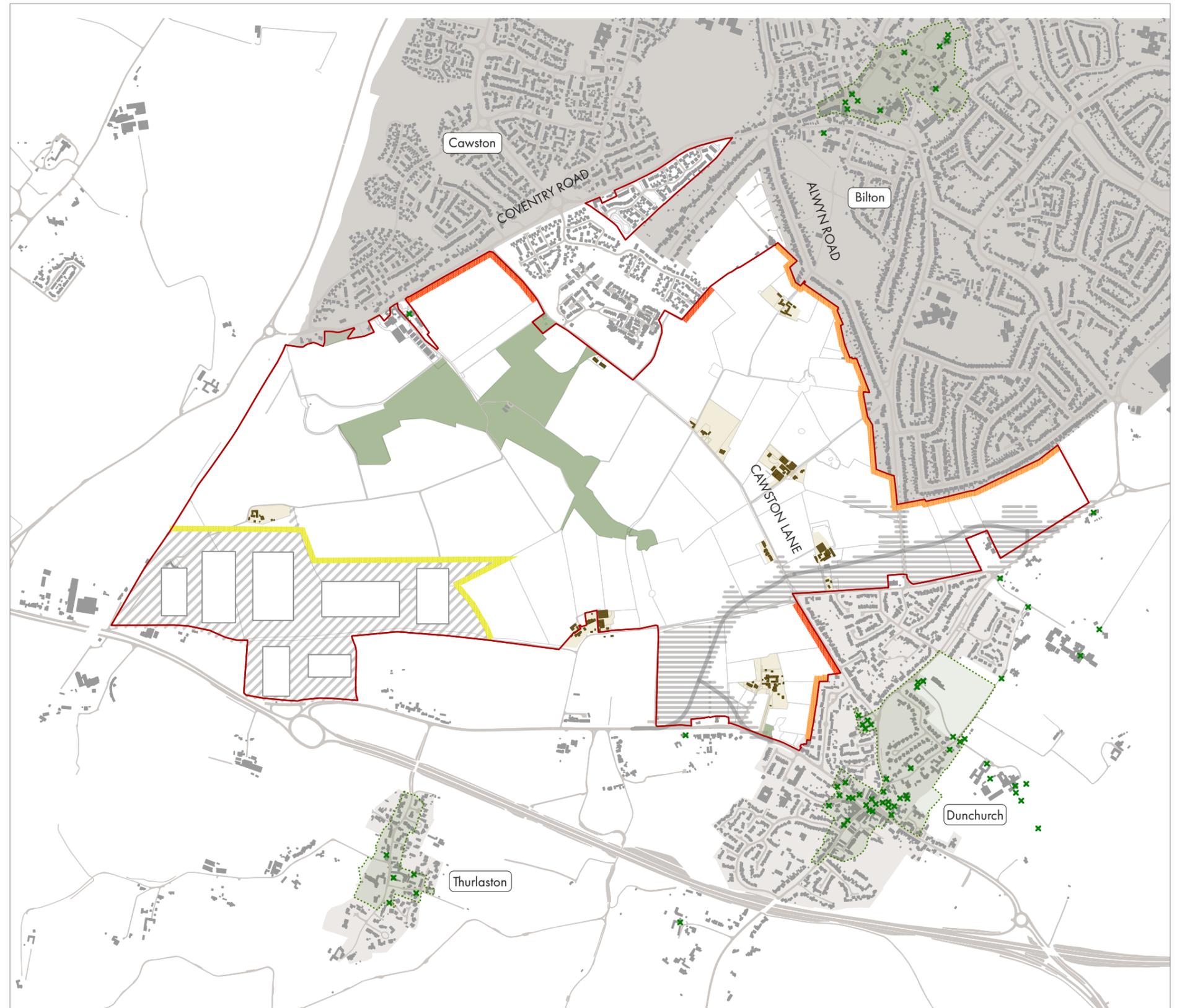
The allocation abuts the Rugby urban area, at Cawston to the north and Bilton to the east.

It further meets the settlement edge of Dunchurch. There is a requirement for development proposals to respect and maintain a physical and visual separation between Rugby and Dunchurch to prevent coalescence and protect their individual character and identity.

There are conservation areas in both Dunchurch and Thurlaston. There are a handful of listed buildings surrounding the site, with clusters in Bilton, Dunchurch and Thurlaston.

There are several existing residences which are to be retained within the site area which will need to be thoughtfully addressed.

The existing employment development at the south west of the site must be carefully considered as context to future residential development adjacent.



Site + immediate context

Steads

The site incorporates a number of existing homes and buildings, some of which are to be retained.



Employment buildings

There are several employment use buildings already built as part of the allocation.

Due to the scale and position of these buildings, they are visible from multiple places in and around the site.



Coventry Road

The site borders Coventry Road at the north, which features mostly detached and semi-detached dwellings from the 1930s. Dwellings here face the site. The majority are 2 storeys in height, set back from the road with generous driveways and grounds. There is a formality to the arrangement and style of dwellings here.



Alwyn Road

The rear of dwellings along Alwyn Road border the eastern edge of the site. The majority of dwellings at the northern end are semi-detached and likely from the 1930s, with some detached dwellings and groups from later dates interspersed. Most dwellings are 2 storeys and are set back from the road with generous driveways and front gardens to the street, giving a relative sense of formality.

Cawston Lane

The edge of Dunchurch borders the South West Rugby allocation at Cawston Lane. The dwellings here face the site. The majority are low-rise, ranging from 1-2 storeys and several with dormers, with a range of age and character. These dwellings are set back from the road, although to a lesser extent than those on Coventry Road, and are generally closer together. The wider range of dwelling age, design and scale, along with the closer relationship with the street and each other, give a sense of intimacy and informality.



Adkinson Avenue

Branching off from Cawston Lane and bordering the south of the allocation site to the west of Dunchurch is the rear of more recent development at Adkinson Avenue. This mainly consists of runs of terraces at a height of 2 storeys with relatively low storey heights interspersed with more recent semi-detached development.

Surrounding settlements/adjacent areas

Bilton

There is a relatively dense mixed-use core along Main Street, with a range of retail, facilities and services. In the immediate context of Main Street, housing is typically two storey and arranged in terraces, often with a small set back and front garden.

Historically a village, Bilton was incorporated into Rugby in the early 20th century, and the area expanded further in the mid 20th century. The history of this expansion is evident in the variation of built form in the area, with housing of various types and styles.



Cawston

The development of Cawston as known today was completed recently, and linked the original small village with the edge of Rugby. Cawston is therefore generally characterised by relatively recent housing development, and includes a local centre and number of green routes and spaces.



Dunchurch

The village of Dunchurch has a dense historic core centred on its crossroads, which is also the commercial centre of the village. This features development of a range of ages and design.

There is a concentrated area of thatch-roofed historic dwellings at The Heath to the north of the centre. There are also notable examples of high quality more modern development to the north east, characterised by the dominance of green landscape around dwellings.

The whole village is notable for its rural and green landscape characteristics, with many green open spaces such as greens and the village square.



Thurlaston

Thurlaston is a small village characterised by a primary linear route, Main Street, and smaller, more intimate lanes which branch from this.

It has a historic core which has roots in the village's agricultural background. This is in combination with later development, notably the collection of 1960s-1970s dwellings which form the entrance to the village from the north.

The village also has a 'green' character demonstrated by mature trees, green verges and generous landscaping around many dwellings.



Movement + connections

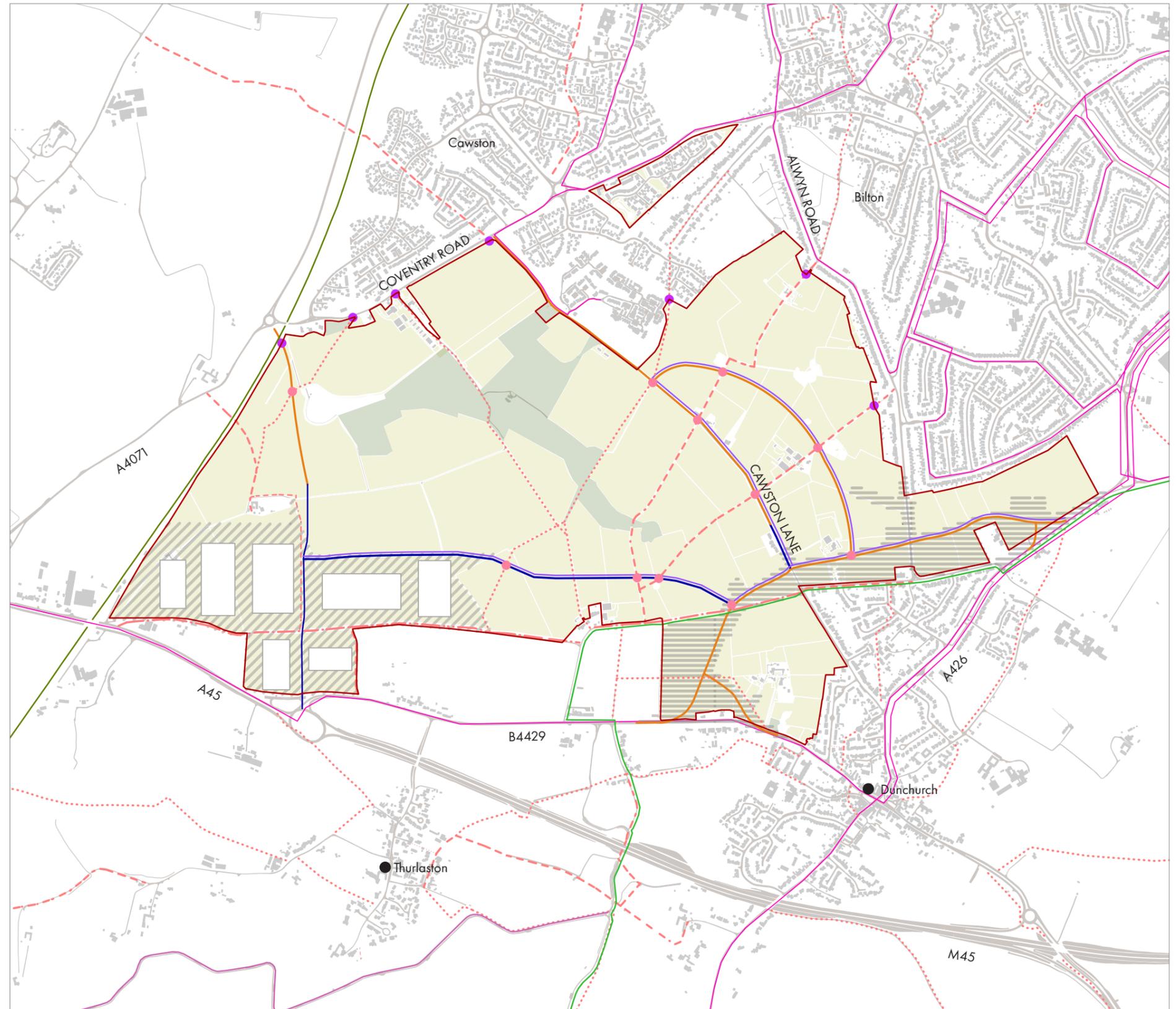
There are proposed to be several key pieces of transport infrastructure including the Homestead Link, Potsford Dam Link and Sustainable Transport Links at the south of Cawston Lane and to the employment allocation.

There are proposed new bus routes along the Homestead Link Road, Community Spine Road and Cawston Lane, and from the Homestead Link Road to the employment allocation.

There are several existing public rights of way through the site, most of which connect beyond the site further into Rugby or into other areas or features such as Cawston Greenway.

Many of these are associated with landscape features, such as hedgerows.

There will be several crossing points between different modes of transport which will need to be thoughtfully designed.





Vision

Vision statement

The vision statement sets out a broad vision for the site - the 'what' - and is accompanied by more specific design ambitions - the 'how'. These have been informed by existing policy & guidance, site characteristics and engagement with stakeholders.

The framework masterplan (see overleaf) addresses these in strategic ways, with further detail contained in the relevant sections of the code.

An attractive, engaging and enjoyable place to live, work and play with a vibrant centre that is a focal meeting place for the community. The centre meets the day to day needs of residents and supports an active, healthy, resilient community.

A place where trees, hedgerows, plants, waterways and the wider natural environment are celebrated and form an inherent part of the everyday experience. Retained landscape features including Cawston Spinney and Cock Robin Wood, alongside new greenspaces of different types, shapes and sizes for the benefit of residents and wildlife, contribute to the character of the locality. Green space to enjoy is located a short walk from home, including safe play areas for younger residents.

Where walking and cycling along high-quality links are the travel modes of first choice, with buses providing convenient and attractive connections to key destinations within Rugby and for longer distance travel. Calm, safe and greened streets provide for connections to strategic roads for longer distance journeys.

There is a cohesive variety in built form, with homes and buildings that both respect nearby settlements and contribute to a distinctive sense of place. There is a variety of different types of homes to meet a variety of different needs, and they are designed with quality and climate mitigation in mind. Transitions between different scales and uses are carefully designed and managed to create a safe, social and enjoyable environment for everyone.

Design ambitions

MOVEMENT

A permeable and connected site layout that enables seamless access through and beyond the site as a whole for all users, whilst prioritising walking and cycling. The network will reinforce existing routes and connections to services and facilities within and beyond the site, knitting into the surrounding network.

PUBLIC SPACES

A network of public spaces that provide a variety of experience and social interaction opportunities through different characters, scale and uses. Streets will be treated as public spaces for all, not just as vehicular movement routes.

NATURE

A place where the existing landscape features, such as established hedgerows and mature trees, are incorporated and enhanced as much as possible, with prominent features creating key landmarks and defining the arrangement of built form where relevant. A place where green and blue infrastructure is integrated into movement networks and public spaces.

BUILT FORM

Built form that is appropriate for and therefore representative of different uses. Built form that works alongside the movement and landscape networks to create distinct areas within the site - breaking down the scale of the development, providing a range of living opportunities and aiding wayfinding/legibility.

IDENTITY

Buildings that relate to their surroundings - referencing local buildings and areas, embedding the site in its context and providing character and a 'sense of place', while still representing high-quality contemporary design that will remain attractive into the future.

HOMES & BUILDINGS

Homes which provide high quality living conditions, with access to adequate light, ventilation, privacy and amenity, regardless of tenure or type of dwelling.

Framework masterplan

The purpose of the framework masterplan is to set out the site-wide design principles and form the basis for the more detailed strategies contained later in this document.

It combines principles and requirements from the South West Rugby Masterplan SPD with the design ambitions and principles developed in the design code process.

There are several elements in the masterplan that are 'fixed', either by requirements of the Masterplan SPD or by planning history to date. These include:

1. The presence and broad position of new link roads - Homestead Link Road, Cawston Lane + Community Spine Road, Sustainable Transport Link and Potsford Dam Link through the South West Rugby Masterplan SPD
2. Detailed proposals for the Homestead Link Road and associated landscape buffer
3. Housing to northern parcel off Coventry Road - already built
4. Employment buildings - already built
5. The retention of Cawston Spinney
6. Site for residential development + primary school with outline permission

The framework masterplan sets out a high-level layout addressing:

- Key landscape + green infrastructure
- Points of access + connection to the wider street network
- Broad position of primary streets, secondary streets and main local access roads
- Position of district centre and school(s)
- Indicative development parcels

It is expected that precise quantity, geometry and alignment of components within each land parcel will be addressed in detailed proposals.

Key

	Residential allocation		Existing farm buildings under developer ownership
	Local centre		Proposed open space
	Primary school, secondary school + associated sports areas		Existing water bodies
	Primary school		Buffer to Cawston Spinney
	Safeguarded land		Community spine road
	Community spine road		Sustainable transport corridor
	Potsford Dam link		Local access roads

