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& design



# TECHNICAL NOTE: NATIONAL FOREST, GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Client

**Lagan Homes**

Project

**West of Ratby, 24/00914/OUT**

Date

**18<sup>th</sup> December 2025**

**CONTENTS**

<b>1.0</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	.....
<b>2.0</b>	<b>GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE</b>	.....
<b>3.0</b>	<b>NATIONAL FOREST CONTRIBUTION</b>	.....
<b>4.0</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b>	.....

**FIGURES**

Figure 1: Illustrative Framework Plan (P14, June 2025)

Figure 2: Green Infrastructure Plan (Dec 2025)

Figure 3: Updated National Forest Compliance Plan (Dec 2025)

Rev	Issue Status	Prepared/Date	Approved/Date
C	Final	BC/18/12/25	BC/18/12/25

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 This Technical Note has been prepared by FPCR Environment Design Ltd, on behalf of Lagan Homes.
- 1.1.2 The Note is in relation to the outline planning application submitted by Lagan Homes (Planning application ref. 24/00914/OUT to Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC)).
- 1.1.3 This Technical Note provides further information on Green Infrastructure (GI) matters. The Note explains the Proposed Development's National Forest contribution and its compliance with Policy 21: National Forest of HBBC's Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2009), and the National Forest's Guide for Developers and Planners (2014).

## 2.0 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

### What is Green Infrastructure?

- 2.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (2024) defines Green Infrastructure (GI) as:

*"A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity"*

- 2.1.2 Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) notes that GI can embrace a range of spaces and assets that provide environmental and wider benefits. It can, for example, include parks, playing fields, other areas of open space, woodland, allotments, private gardens, sustainable drainage features, green roofs and walls, street trees and 'blue infrastructure' such as streams, ponds, canals and other water bodies. GI is a natural capital asset that provides multiple benefits, at a range of scales. For communities, these benefits can include enhanced wellbeing, outdoor recreation and access, enhanced biodiversity and landscapes, food and energy production, urban cooling, and the management of flood risk.

### Development's GI Design Approach

- 2.1.3 An integral part of the Proposed Development is to create a comprehensive GI framework that delivers long term environmental, social and community benefits. The GI responds to the natural features within the Site, its location within the National Forest, and best practice guidance.
- 2.1.4 The design approach embraces the key principles of Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework in that the GI will be "*multi-functional, varied, accessible and interconnected*".
- 2.1.5 The Proposed Development retains the Site's principal GI assets, such as existing woodland, hedgerows and mature trees, and expands upon these by delivering varied and interconnected new habitats and green spaces.

### GI Aims

- 2.1.6 The following sets out the overall aims of the development's GI:

- To embrace the key principles contained within Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework (Feb 2023).
- To embrace the National Forest Strategy of delivering "Forest Green Infrastructure".
- To provide multi-functional, varied, accessible and interconnected GI which provides benefits for landscape character, biodiversity, recreation and play, water and drainage, health and wellbeing and adaptation to climate changes.
- Respect and retain key GI assets within the Site, which includes woodland, mature trees, hedgerows, Public Footpaths and Burroughs Road.
- Expand upon the Site's existing GI assets by delivering green and blue spaces that provide a range of functions, benefits and solutions. This includes new woodland, hedgerows, trees, grassland, SuDS, accessible green space, play and leisure routes.

### **GI Provision**

2.1.7 The Proposed Development's GI is identified on the Illustrative Framework Plan, June 2025, which is submitted as part of the application (**Figure 1**).

2.1.8 A Green Infrastructure Plan (**Figure 2**), which has been prepared to accompany this note, demonstrates in diagrammatic form how the GI permeates within the Site and how this creates broad corridors of functionally linked green space and habitat creation within and around the Proposed Development.

2.1.9 In total, the Proposed Development provides 17.00ha of GI, which is equivalent to around 52% of the Site. This includes the planting of new broadleaved woodland, coppices, hedgerows and tree planting; the creation of species rich, meadow and amenity grassland; ponds and drainage features; accessible 'open' green space for play and recreation; and retained Public Footpaths and new recreational routes.

## **3.0 NATIONAL FOREST CONTRIBUTION**

### **Context**

3.1.1 The Site lies within the National Forest. In Hinckley & Bosworth, the National Forest covers a small proportion of the northeastern corner of the borough and encompasses the settlements of Markfield, Bagworth, Thornton and parts of Groby and Ratby.

### **Local Policy Context**

3.1.2 Policy 21 of HBBC's Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2009) addresses the National Forest and the requirements for development within it. The Policy is set out in full below:

"Policy 21 National Forest

*To support the implementation of the National Forest to the north east of the borough, **proposals that contribute to the delivery of the National Forest Strategy (increasing woodland cover; enhancing biodiversity; developing a new woodland economy for timber products and wood fuel energy; outdoor recreational and sports provision;** and*

tourism developments, especially overnight quality accommodation linked to tourism in the Forest) **will be supported** provided that:

- The siting and scale of the proposed development is appropriately related to its setting within the Forest
- The development respects the character and appearance of the wider countryside and
- The development does not adversely affect the existing facilities and working landscape of either the Forest or the wider countryside

**Within the National Forest new developments will be required to reflect the Forest context in their accompanying landscape proposals.** Developments shall provide on-site or nearby landscaping that meets the National Forest development planting guidelines. **Landscaping will generally involve woodland planting but can also include creation and management of other appropriate habitats, open space provision and the provision of new recreational facilities.** The appropriate mix of landscaping features will depend upon the setting and the opportunities that the site presents. In exceptional circumstances, where planting and landscaping cannot be accommodated on or nearby the development site due to lack of land, a commuted sum will be negotiated. This will be towards the cost of purchasing land for planting, creating a new woodland, providing public access to it and maintaining the site for at least 5 years. Commuted sums will normally be paid to the local authority, who in partnership with the National Forest Company will decide how they should be utilised.

**Best practice guidance on the creation and future management of Forest-related planting and landscaping schemes should be followed, as set out in the National Forest Company Guide for Developers and Planners** [FPCR Emphasis Added]

### **Response to Policy 21 National Forest**

3.1.3 Core Strategy Policy 21 is clear in that whilst landscaping within developments "**will generally involve woodland planting**" it can also include the creation of "**other appropriate habitats**", "**open space provision**" and "**new recreational facilities**".

3.1.4 The Proposed Development delivers new woodland planting in accordance with the National Forest Strategy, and at the same time follows accepted best practice approaches of ensuring that the GI is varied and multifunctional so that provides a range of functions. Rather than delivering 'wall to wall' woodland across the Site, the Proposed Development specifically includes a variety of green spaces, such as open space and habitat creation, so that a wider range of benefits can be delivered.

3.1.5 The National Forest's Guide for Developers and Planners (November 2012) is specifically referred to within Policy 21. Within the section on "*Planting Guidelines*", the Guide states that for development sites over 10ha, some 30% of the Site should be "*Forest Green Infrastructure*".

### **What is "Forest Green Infrastructure"?**

3.1.6 The Guide states that "Forest Green Infrastructure" is a combination of a variety of habitats. It notes that "Forest-related green infrastructure will consist of some or all of the following elements, depending on the character of the site and its surroundings.

- *New woodland planting (ideally a minimum size of 0.25ha)*
- *Creation of woodland belts (minimum of 15m wide)*
- *Planting to form parkland-style landscapes*
- *Ecologically designed sustainable drainage systems*
- *Creation of new habitats (wetlands, reedbeds, meadows, heathlands)*
- *Incorporation and management of existing woodland, hedgerows and other habitats*
- *Greenways - landscaped footpath and cycle routes*
- *Roadside trees*
- *Development landscaping with a strong tree emphasis*
- *Incorporation of heritage features"*

### **How has the Proposed Development Responded to this?**

3.1.7 The Proposed Development GI delivers the above "Forest Green Infrastructure" elements. This includes the following:

- **"New woodland planting and woodland belts"**: New broadleaved woodland is proposed within the western and southern parts of the Site close to Wirlybones Wood and Pear Tree Wood.
- **"Incorporation and management of existing woodland"**: The willow plantation within the western part of the Site, near Pear Tree Wood, is retained together with existing mature trees and established hedgerows.
- **"Creation of new habitats"**: This includes large areas of new meadow and species rich grassland, together with new mixed species hedgerows and native tree planting.
- **"Greenways"**: A network of retained Public Footpaths and new walking and cycling routes are provided. Located within landscaped corridors, these can include varied grassland habitats, hedgerows and trees.
- **"Ecologically designed sustainable drainage systems"**: This includes drainage features that are designed with a landscape and ecological focus to include wet tolerant grassland and planting.
- **"Parkland -style landscapes"**: This comprises open areas of grassland with feature tree planting of large stature trees (when mature); and
- **"Roadside trees"**: Tree-lined and landscape streets can be included as part of the design layout.

**Policy Compliance**

3.1.8 It is considered that the Proposed Development's approach is in accordance with Core Strategy Policy 21, and the National Forest's Guide for Developers and Planners (November 2012). The Proposed Development delivers a multifunctional GI which can deliver a range of elements across the Site to reflect "Forest Green Infrastructure".

**National Forest Consultation Response, November 2024**

3.1.9 The National Forest Company responded to the application and noted that:

*“...Our preference is that National Forest planting will be met on site. Accordingly, the illustrative framework should be amended to demonstrate a minimum of 9.81ha of National Forest planting. This should include significant areas of woodland planting, and exclude the areas which due to size, location, lack of tree planting cannot be considered National Forest planting. National Forest planting should explicitly feature on the illustrative framework plan to provide assurances that National Forest planting has been appropriately considered and will be met at the reserved matters stage”*

3.1.10 A National Forest Compliance Plan (July 2025) identified 30% (or 9.81ha) of the Site for the National Forest Contribution and identified a series of large woodland areas totalling some 1.94ha, which is the equivalent to around three full size adult football pitches.

3.1.11 A Design & Access Statement Addendum (July 2025) was also submitted. The Addendum included a series of illustrative principles and photographs to show how the Site's 30% contribution and the overall GI could be designed as "Forest green infrastructure" to reflect the National Forest Strategy (see extracts on the following page).

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT ADDENDUM | Ratby  
06 PLACEMAKING  
National Forest Contributions

As part of the development's location within the National Forest, the following illustrative principles and illustrative photographs show how the site's overall green infrastructure could be designed to reflect the National Forest Strategy. It shows a variety of landscape interventions that could come forward that would provide benefits for landscape, biodiversity, recreation and health and well-being. The detailed landscape design would be developed through Reserved Matters Applications.

8

**Creating a variety of landscape habitats that promote landscape and ecology benefits.**

**Copse and individual tree planting to include large stature parkland type trees.**

**The creation of new areas of broadleaved woodland planting using locally occurring native species.**

**The creation of large areas of accessible green space with the use of wildflower meadows and species rich grassland, that provide biodiversity benefits.**

**Creating cut 'grass rides' to form a series of informal recreational walking routes.**

**The use of sculptures using woodland materials to create destinations for play and social gathering.**

**The creation of community orchards and use of fruit trees.**

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT ADDENDUM | Ratby  
06 PLACEMAKING  
National Forest Contributions

9

**Interpretation panels on local heritage, landscape or ecology that can provide an educational resource.**

**The use of timber for equipped children's play provision.**

**The creation of recreational routes and woodland walks.**

**Adopting a consistent palette of site wide street furniture based on timber products and detailing.**

**Public art/sculptures using timber and natural products that provide design features along recreational routes.**

**Coordinated and consistent wayfinding and signage with the use of timber products.**

**Natural play features based on forest related materials.**

### **National Forest Consultation Response, August 2025**

3.1.12 A further consultation response was received by the National Forest Company (August 2025). This stated that:

*.... The National Forest Contribution Area highlighted on the National Forest Compliance Plan shows limited areas of woodland planting. The western field is proposed as entirely other neutral grassland, while the southern part of the area is largely three extensive attenuation ponds. Of the woodland blocks that are proposed, the BNG proposed habitats plan shows that most are willow scrub and not new broadleaved woodland.*

*The National Forest Company would expect at least half of the 9.81ha [that being 4.90ha] of National Forest planting to be plantation woodland, ideally to the western part of the site as an extension to the existing woodland blocks..." [FPCR wording added]*

### **Design Response**

3.1.13 The applicant and the applicant's planning and environmental design team have considered the request for half of the 30% National Forest contribution to be woodland planting. This would mean 4.90ha of woodland provision, as opposed to 1.94ha currently proposed.

3.1.14 Delivering additional woodland has been explored alongside other matters, not least the statutory requirement to ensure that the application provides 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Whilst woodland creation is an environmental benefit it does not 'score' as highly as other habitats in the BNG calculations. In addition, creating more blocks of woodland lessens the ability in which to deliver 'open' areas of accessible green space for play and recreation to address HBBC Open Space requirements. Notwithstanding, delivering new woodland is part of the National Forest's overall vision, and amendments have been made to meet the National Forest Company's recommendations.

3.1.15 In conclusion, 4.90ha of woodland planting is now proposed, which is equivalent to around seven adult football pitches being planted as woodland. An updated National Forest Compliance Plan, (December 2025), (see **Figure 4**) shows the proposed woodland areas. This includes new woodland planting in the Site's western most field, near Pear Tree Wood, as well as increased woodland cover alongside Wirlybones Wood. The design of new woodland will be developed through the detailed design stage of Reserved Matters Applications, but this will be based upon a mix of broadleaved woodland species that are common to the local area.

3.1.16 **Table 1** explains how the Proposed Development accords with the request from the National Forest Company and how it delivers woodland and other "Forest Green Infrastructure".

**Table 1: The Proposed Development's National Forest Contribution**

What is the National Forest requirement for "Forest Green Infrastructure"?	Is this Delivered by the Proposed Development?	What "Forest Green Infrastructure" elements are provided within this 30%?
30% of Site	<b>Yes.</b> 30% of Site provided ( <b>9.81ha</b> )  [A further 7.19ha within the Site is dedicated as GI]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "New woodland planting and woodland belts" (<b>4.90ha</b>)</li> <li>• "Creation of new habitats and Greenways" (<b>3.94ha</b>)</li> <li>• "Ecologically designed sustainable drainage systems" (<b>0.96ha</b>)</li> </ul> <p><b>Total (9.81ha)</b></p>

3.1.17 All areas of green space across the Site that aren't proposed for woodland will be designed to provide opportunities for increased tree cover through copse, tree belts and individual tree planting. Furthermore, the built development is expected to contain tree lined and landscaped streets, such that Development will be characterised by a framework of woodland and tree planting

3.1.18 The composition of the full 17.00ha of GI across the Proposed Development, which uses the "Forest Green Infrastructure" terminology, is set out below:

**Table 2: Proposed GI across the Proposed Development**

GI Element	Amount
<b>"Incorporation and management of existing woodland "</b>  (Retained assets to include existing willow woodland as well as mature trees and hedgerows)	3.40ha
<b>"New woodland planting and woodland belts"</b>  (New broadleaved woodland areas)	4.92ha
<b>"Creation of new habitats and Greenways"</b>  (Includes amenity green space, natural and semi natural green space, habitat creation, play and recreational facilities, retained footpaths and recreational routes)	7.25ha
<b>"Ecologically designed sustainable drainage systems"</b>  (Blue infrastructure in the form of drainage features)	1.43ha
	<b>17.00ha</b>

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 The following provides a summary of the main points.

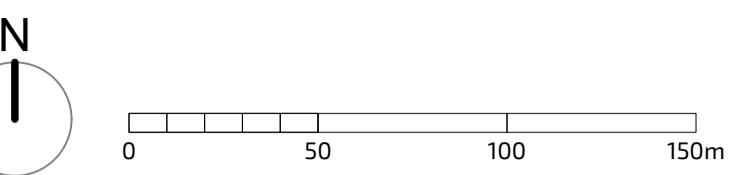
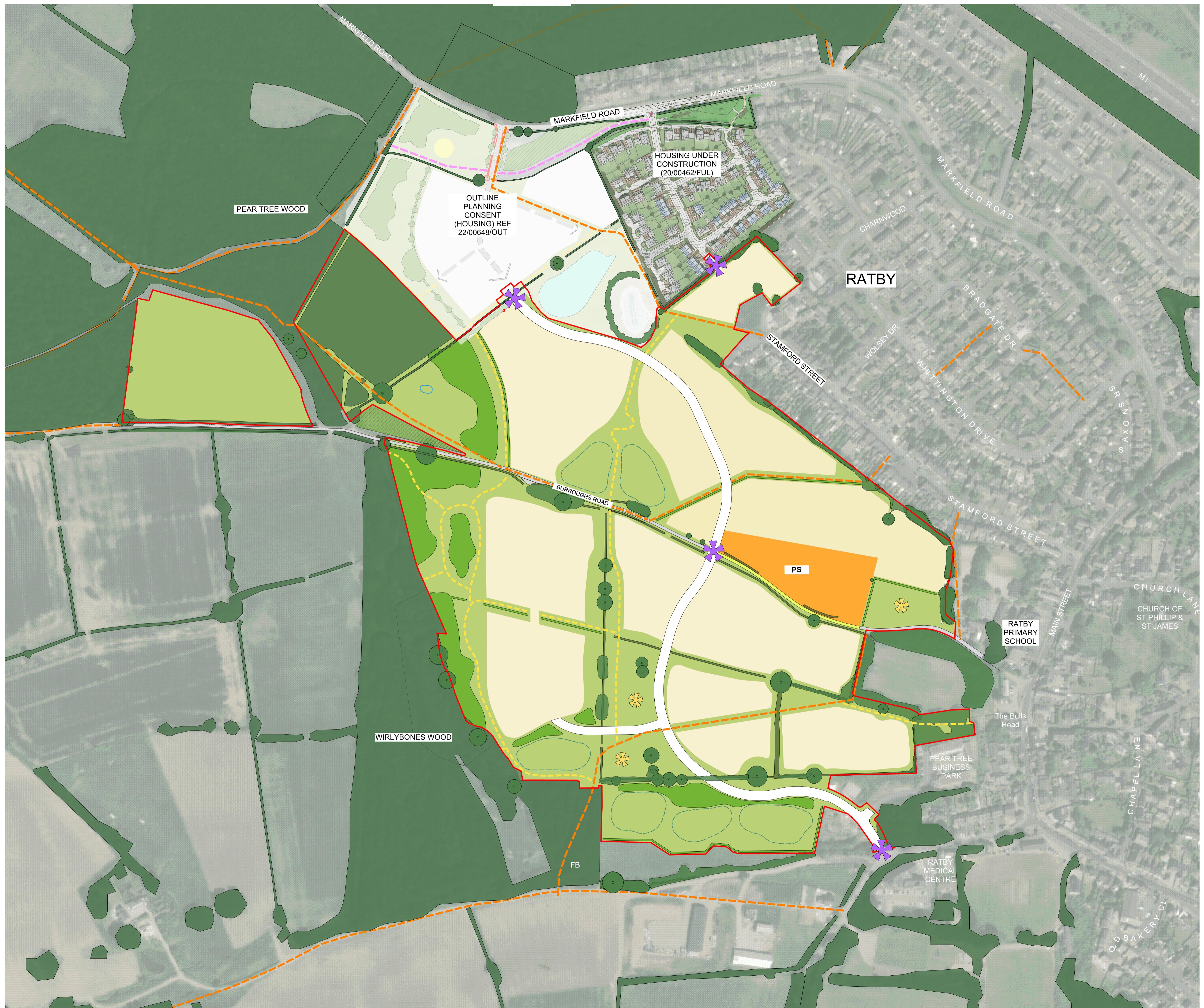
- The Proposed Development provides a comprehensive green infrastructure (GI) framework that will deliver long term environmental, social and community benefits for the new and wider community.
- Some 17.00ha or 52% of the Site is dedicated as GI.
- The GI responds to best practice principles as set out by Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework in that it will ***multi-functional, varied, accessible and interconnected***.
- HBBC's Core Strategy Policy 21: National Forest is clear in that whilst landscaping will "***generally involve woodland planting***" it can also include the creation of "***other appropriate habitats***", "***open space provision***" and "***new recreational facilities***".
- The submitted National Forest Compliance Plan (July 2025) and the updated National Forest Compliance Plan (Dec 2025) demonstrate how the Site could be laid out for "***woodland planting***", "***open space provision***", "***new recreational facilities***" and "***other appropriate habitats***" in accordance with Core Strategy Policy 21.
- The Proposed Development delivers 9.81ha or 30% of the Site as part of the Proposed Development's National Forest contribution. This delivers various elements of "*Forest Green Infrastructure*" as defined within the National Forest Guide for Developers and Planners.
- 4.90ha of new woodland planting is now provided which complies with the recommendations of the National Forest Company. This includes new woodland planting in the Site's western most field, near Pear Tree Wood, as well as increased woodland cover beside Wirlybones Wood. The design of these areas will be developed through the Reserved Matters Applications, but this will be based upon delivering a mix of broadleaved woodland species that are common to the local area.
- All areas of green space across the Site that aren't proposed for woodland will be designed to provide opportunities for increased tree cover.
- It is considered that the Proposed Development accords with Policy 21 National Forest of HBBC's Core Strategy (2009) by delivering woodland planting, habitat creation, open space provision and recreational facilities.



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Notes:

Illustrative Framework Plan based off topographical data, see drawing;  
'43724\_T\_REV4'

KEY

<span style="color:red">—</span>	Site Boundary	32.7ha
<span style="background-color: #e0e080;">—</span>	Residential Development (Residential (13.7ha) c. 470 Units @ 35 dph)	
<span style="background-color: #336633;">—</span>	Green Infrastructure (includes retained vegetation, new planting, habitat creation, accessible green space and drainage basins)	17ha
<span style="color:purple;">★</span>	Access Points (See application plans for access drawings)	
<span style="color:white;">—</span>	Primary Street - Access Road (Indicative alignment)	
<span style="color:yellow;">—</span>	Recreational Routes (Indicative)	
<span style="color:orange;">—</span>	Primary School (1FE)	1.0ha
<span style="color:blue;">—</span>	Drainage Basins	
<span style="color:blue;">—</span>	Additional Pond	
<span style="color:darkgreen;">—</span>	Existing Vegetation	
<span style="background-color: #669966;">—</span>	National Forest Planting Area (As part of Lagan Homes - 20/00462/FUL)	
<span style="color:green;">—</span>	Structural Planting (Indicative)	
<span style="color:orange;">—</span>	Existing Public Rights of Way	
<span style="color:yellow;">★</span>	Children's Equipped Play	
<span style="color:yellow;">—</span>	Section of Burroughs Road to be pedestrian-cycle only	

FIGURE 1

P14 27/05/2025 Removal of CH and EC  
P13 10/07/2024 Addition of Pond and Hedgerows  
rev date description

client

Lagan Homes Ltd

project  
(Burrough Field) Land West of Ratby, Leicestershire

title

Illustrative Framework Plan

number

10783-FPCR-XX-XX-DR-L-0007

status

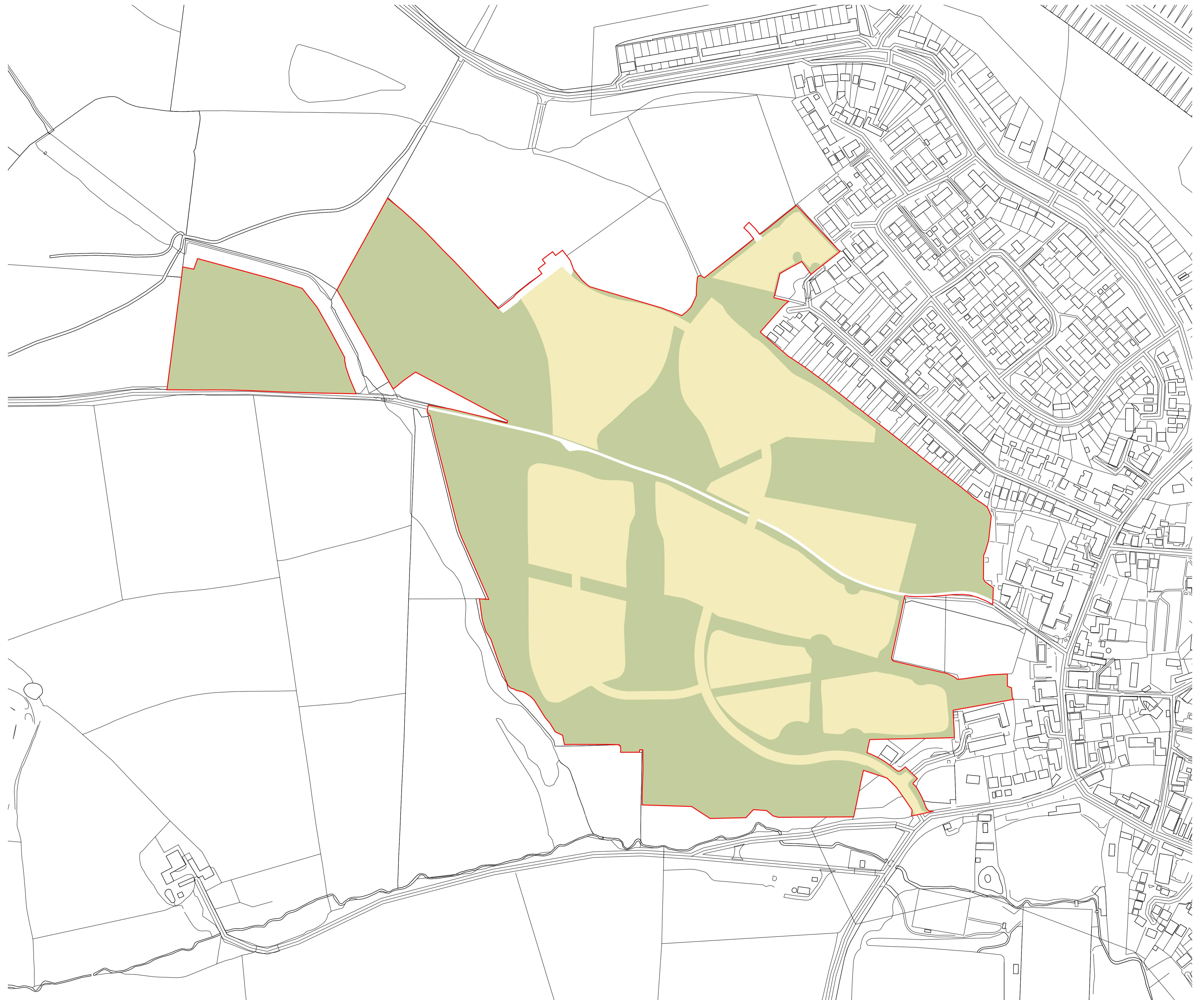
S3

scale

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rev

P14



0 25 50 75 100m

**Site Boundary**  
**Green Infrastructure**  
*(Includes retained vegetation, new planting, habitat creation, accessible green space and drainage basins)*  
**Development**

32.7ha

**17ha Delivered**

**FIGURE 2**

P02 07/11/2025 General amendments  
rev date description

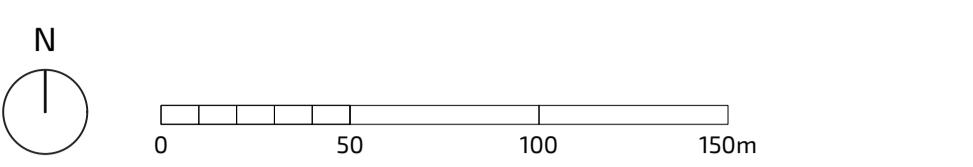
SJL BC  
dm / chk

client  
**Lagan Homes Ltd**  
project  
**(Burroughs Field) Land West of Ratby, Leicestershire**

title  
**Green Infrastructure Plan**  
number  
10783-FPCR-XX-XX-DR-L-0025  
status  
S3  
rev  
P02

scale  
1:1000 @ A1  
status  
S3  
rev  
P02

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Notes:

Site Boundary	32.39ha
Total Green Infrastructure within the site = 17ha (52% of site) (Green infrastructure comprises of retained vegetation, new planting, habitat creation, accessible green space, play and drainage basins.)	
Woodland & Woodland Belt Planting 4.92ha	
Creation of New Habitats & Greenways	7.25ha
Ecologically designed sustainable urban drainage systems	1.43ha
Existing Habitats Retained To include Incorporation & Management of Existing Woodland	3.4ha
National Forest Contribution Area 9.81ha (30% of site)	
Woodland & Woodland Belt Planting 4.91ha (Proposed Woodland & Structural Planting within the 30% National Forest Contribution Area)	
Creation of New Habitats & Greenways / Existing Habitats retained	3.94ha
Ecologically designed sustainable urban drainage systems	0.96ha

FIGURE 3

P06 18/11/2025 General Amendments  
rev date description

SJL BC  
dm / chk

client

Lagan Homes Ltd

project  
(Burroughs Field) Land West of Ratby,  
Leicestershire

title

National Forest Compliance Plan

number

10783-FPCR-XX-XX-DR-L-0020

scale

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status

S3 P06

