



Sharpness

A New Village, A New Growth Point

Stroud's 21st Century Garden
Settlement to Meet Tomorrow's Needs

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document has been produced in support of Stroud District Council's Local Plan Review, which highlights the option of planning a new Growth Point to meet the District's housing and employment requirements at land at Sharpness.

It sets out the background, rationale and vision for a new community at Sharpness comprising up to 5,000 dwellings, new employment provision, a new service centre comprising retail provision, community facilities, and health facilities, education including new primary school, expansion of the existing primary school and the opportunity for a new middle school, renewable energy initiatives, and extensive green infrastructure including open space and SANG opportunities.

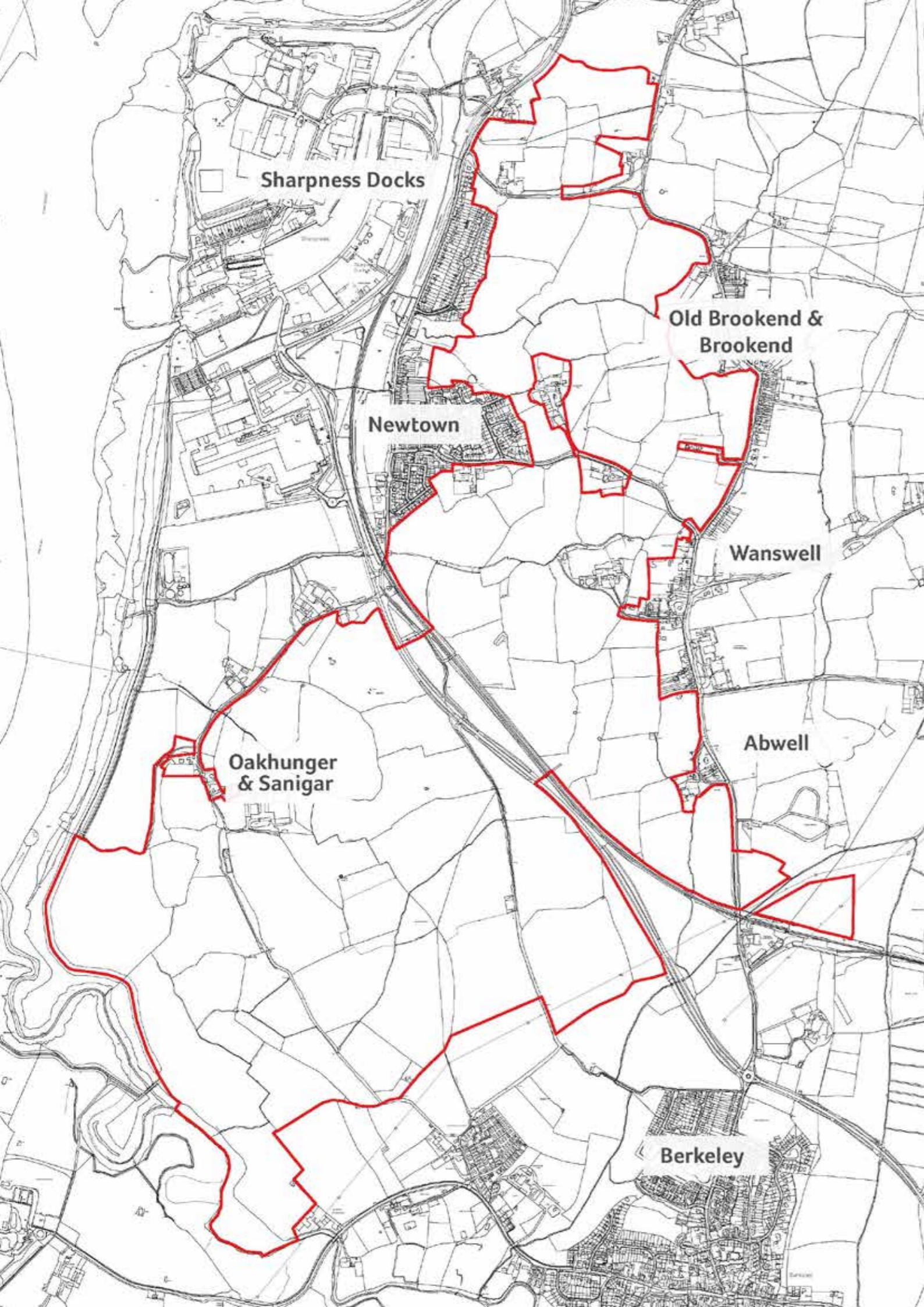
The site is being promoted by both the GreenSquare Group and Lioncourt Strategic Land as part of a joint venture partnership.

The GreenSquare Group is a longstanding Cooperative and Community Benefit Society, registered with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) as a social landlord. As well as investing in the delivery of new affordable rented housing and developing private housing for rent and sale, the GreenSquare Group operates with a strong community involvement in its governance.

Lioncourt Strategic Land are one arm of the Lioncourt Group, which comprises Lioncourt Homes and Lioncourt Strategic Land. Formed 10 years ago, they are based in Worcester. Lioncourt Homes is rated as a five-star HBF quality Housebuilder (2015, 2016, 2017) and as won the HBF Small Housebuilder of the year award 2016. Lioncourt Strategic Land Limited have experience in promoting a range of sites through the planning system and seek to actively engage with landowners, local authorities, stakeholders and local communities to develop the most appropriate delivery solutions for strategic sites.

The continued promotion of Sharpness as a new Growth Point comes at a time where there has been a fundamental shift in national planning policy, with new settlements based on garden city principles being placed at the heart of the planning agenda. A report for HM Government by Lord Matthew Taylor has evidenced the failure of previous town planning solutions that simply 'bolt-on' large new suburban housing estates to existing towns and cities. Instead, the case has been made that economic growth, social progression and environmental enhancements are better delivered through the comprehensive and holistic planning of new settlements based on Garden City principles of the late nineteenth century. Those principles have now been firmly embraced in national planning policy. In Stroud District, Sharpness therefore represents a truly unique opportunity for an exceptional growth point for sustainable development fit for 21st Century living.





1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sharpness provides a unique and exceptional growth point to secure sustainable development to meet the District's needs to 2036 and beyond. Several factors favour Sharpness above alternate locations;

- The allocation of Sharpness as a 'growth point' offers the opportunity for a quick review of the Local Plan as it can align with the existing development plan strategy for the District with only modest amendments;
- A new growth point option provides clarity on the numbers of homes that will be delivered over the plan period on an annual basis, relative to the delivery of supporting infrastructure;
- A growth point option provides certainty and reduces risk in relation to land ownership, particularly as growth over the plan period can be properly planned for and released on a phased basis to meet a planned delivery trajectory in a realistic way, with input from the local planning authority;
- Study area's proximity with major employers, existing and proposed, and is supported by GFirst LEP's Growth Hub Strategy;
- The site falls outside designated Green Belt and is not subject to any other statutory landscape designations;
- GreenSquare's core values are symmetrically aligned with Garden Settlement principles. There is a genuine ethos and motivation to deliver a lasting positive legacy to be proud of;
- Study area's topography is one that is relatively discreet and can accommodate a Garden Settlement without resulting in 'sprawl' or 'coalescence';
- The location lends itself for phased organic development of vernacular character;
- Existing transport links provide a sound base for improved public transport infrastructure; A38 and M5 in close proximity;
- Transportation infrastructure improvements can be delivered to coincide with the priorities of the emerging, neighbouring, West of England Transport Plan; and
- There is overwhelming Government support for new Garden Settlements.

2.0 VISION FOR SHARPNESS

The regeneration of Sharpness is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity; an opportunity to properly plan and deliver a new sustainable, self-contained and thriving settlement that offers the best of town and rural living based on 'Garden City' principles.

Sharpness is rich in history and character, and ripe with possibility. Best of all, the scale of the opportunity is matched by the scale of our ambition; a thriving community with places to work, play, socialise, shop and learn.

A place that is strongly rooted in its heritage and landscape; that offers ample green spaces for leisure, food production, wildlife and sport.

A place where it is practical and pleasurable to use public transport or to cycle or walk.

A community that allows its residents to live more sustainable lives.

Sharpness Growth Point will challenge existing ways of working and thinking to push the boundaries of residential led design quality to create a highly desirable new place to live in Gloucestershire.

The aim is to achieve a high-quality development with strong identity, activity and 'sense of place'. Sharpness will join other the other desirable areas of Gloucestershire as a place people will want to live and as a destination worth visiting and become an exemplar of national significance for creating large new settlements.

We wish to build on the core principles that define a Garden City and adapt them for contemporary living at Sharpness; good employment prospects, relative wealth for its inhabitants and good communications and merge it with the best elements of the countryside; a healthy and affordable setting.

Key Objectives Include:

- Deliver up to 5000 new homes in a sustainable setting based on 'Garden City' principles, with a far ranging housing stock, including opportunities for custom build and self-build;
- Provide upto 15 hectares of enhanced and diversified employment opportunities, to include a dedicated high quality business park, attracting investment in the local area and new business. Encouraging new technologies and development of the brownfield sites around the port through enhancing the local workforce alongside the encouragement of small businesses, social enterprise and home working within the development;
- Create a strong community with a new local centre with food store, secondary school, small shops and offices, doctor's surgery, library community hub and market square as the focal point for community activities;
- Create other small neighbourhood hubs to include village shops and community facilities located in existing and new neighbourhoods with additional primary schools and improvements made to the existing Newtown Primary School;
- Promote recreation and sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods and people, including priority routes for pedestrian and cycle movements and access to high quality public transport facilities;
- Create a strong green infrastructure network creating opportunities for food production and orchards and with suitable alternative natural greenspace and enhanced habitat opportunities to avoid any disturbance of the Severn Estuary Special Protection Area;
- Create an opportunity to provide a permanent home for Sharpness AFC.



3.0 WHAT ARE THE PRINCIPLES THAT SHAPE A GARDEN SETTLEMENT?

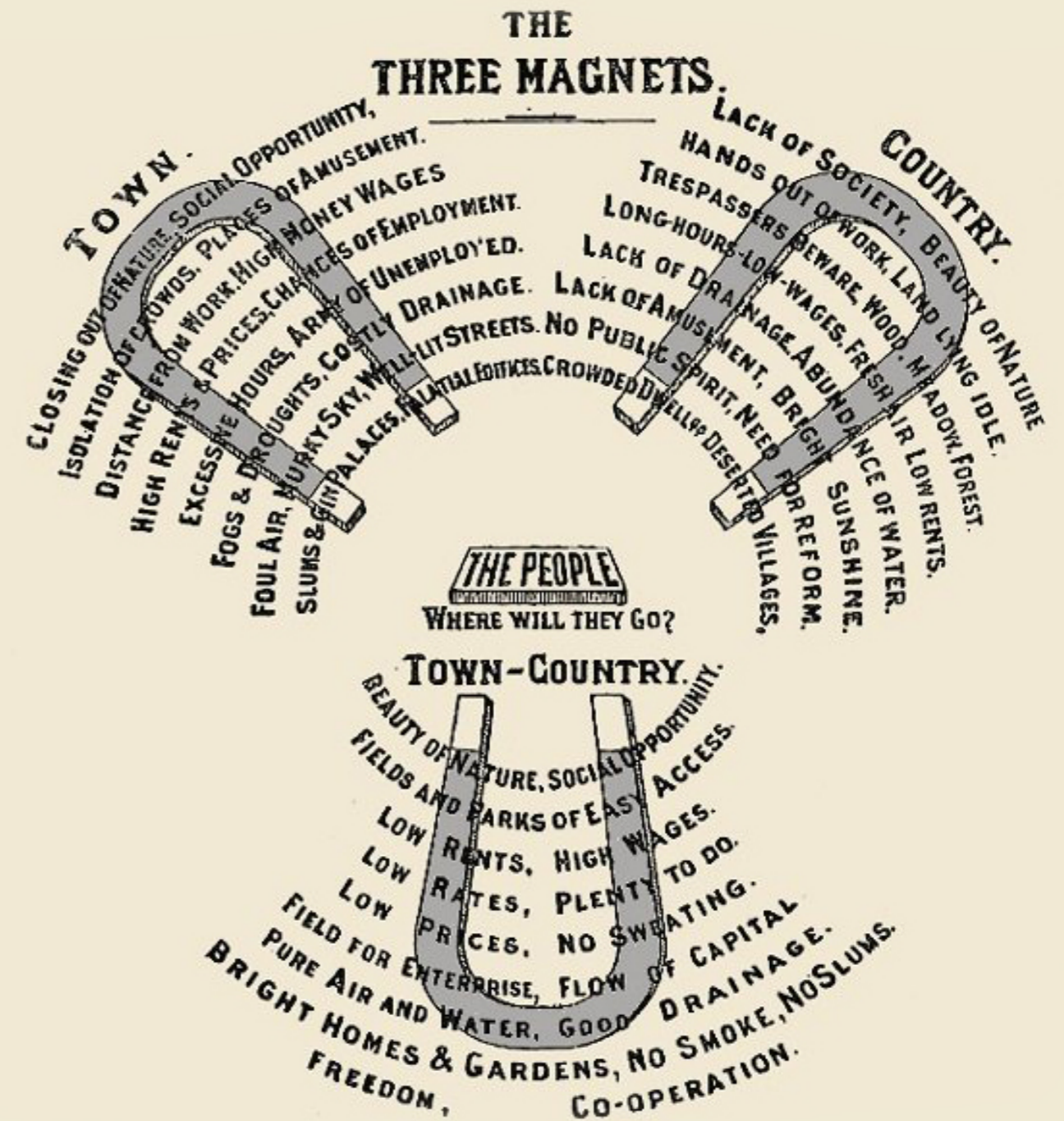
The notion of a Garden Cities was established by Sir Ebenezer Howard in 1898, through the publishing of his book 'Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform', which was republished as 'Garden Cities of Tomorrow' in 1902. At its core, it upheld that "the advantage of the most energetic and active town life, with all the beauty and delight of the country, may be secured in perfect combination" through Garden Cities. That town planning philosophy is as important today as it was then.

Howard's vision gave rise to the Garden City Movement (founded in 1899) and fundamentally changed the terms of debate in urban planning, which then gave rise to both the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) and New Towns Movement. The Town and Country Planning Association is as valid today as it ever was, and has been instrumental in moving contemporary national planning policy towards new garden village settlements as a solution to our housing crisis.

Ebenezer Howard illustrated ideas through the diagram of the 'Three Magnets', in which the "chief advantages of the Town and of the Country are set forth with their corresponding drawbacks, while the advantages of the Town and Country are seen to be free from the disadvantages of either."

Howard's principle was that there "should be an earnest attempt made to organise a migratory movement of population from our overcrowded centres to sparsely-settled rural districts" through Garden Cities, as they form complete sustained urban economies, comprising of industry, orchards, offices, shops and housing, which complements the landscape and agricultural land surrounding.

This unique merger of the best characteristics of Town and Country are the underlying principal features of a Garden Settlement. As the Garden Settlement grows, "the free gifts of Nature - fresh air, sunlight, breathing room and playing room - shall be still retained in all needed abundance... and life may become an abiding joy and delight."



4.0 THE REVIVAL OF GARDEN SETTLEMENTS

Over the past few years there has been growing attraction to the creation of new places based on Garden Settlement principles as a solution to England's housing crisis.

In June 2011, the TCPA published 'Re-imagining Garden Cities for the 21st Century', which set the case that the Garden City principles could help overcome the stigma of building new communities that have too many poor developments and inadequate infrastructure provision. The document sets out that "we must find a way to move forward into a new era of building attractive, resilient and sustainable places. Where better to start this journey than to rediscover and re-imagine the high-quality, collaborative and pioneering spirit of the Garden Cities for the 21st century."

The National Planning Policy Framework was published in March 2012, where Paragraph 52 states:

"The supply of new homes can sometimes be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or extensions to existing villages and towns that follow the principles of Garden Cities."

In February 2015, Lord Matthew Taylor, who advises the Government and has advised a number of successive UK Governments on planning policy, published 'Garden Villages: Empowering Localism to Solve the Housing Crisis'. That Report sets out "many small new 'garden communities' are needed (as well as some larger ones) if we are to scratch the surface of the housing problem in a locally responsive way reflecting the principles of localism." It went on to note "a single new garden village in each rural English local authority would create around a million extra homes – the homes we need, with the space and gardens, infrastructure, services and employment that people want, all without destroying the places we know and love." - Lord Taylor

In response to Lord Taylor's Report the Government has given a green light to a wave of new "garden villages" across the country.

Furthermore, the Chancellor's autumn 2017 budget has highlighted the need to significantly boost house building in the UK to 300,000 new homes a year, an amount not achieved since 1970. As part of this proposal, the government has pledged to create 5 new 'garden' towns.

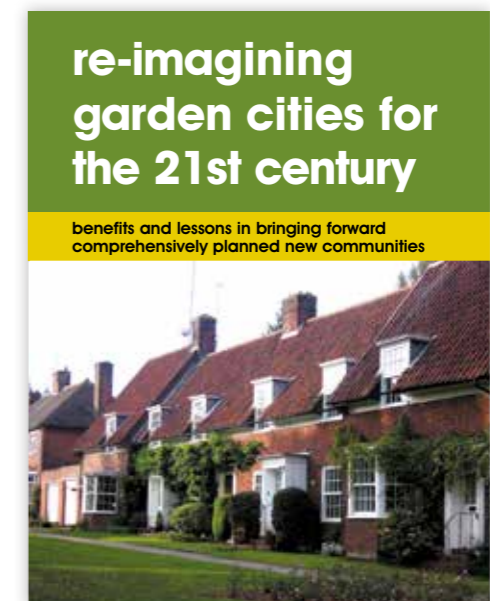
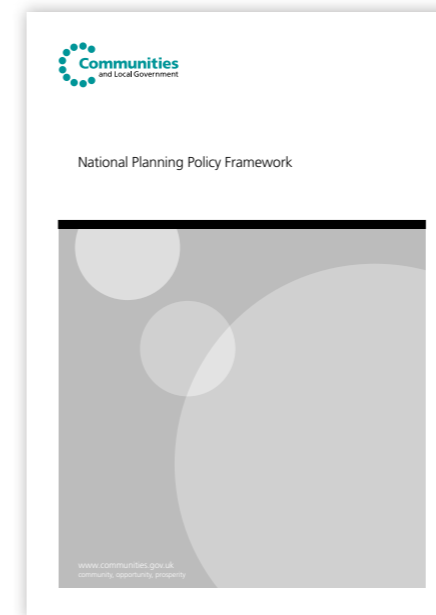
It is clear that a practical town planning solution to address our housing crisis is the renaissance of Garden Settlements. That solution can be delivered to address Stroud District's search for a new sustainable growth point to meet its housing and employment needs to 2036 and beyond.

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development and as such the Framework identifies three dimensions to sustainable development; economic, social and environmental which are explained as follows:

An economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;

A social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and

An environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.



5.0 WHAT WE WANT TO DO

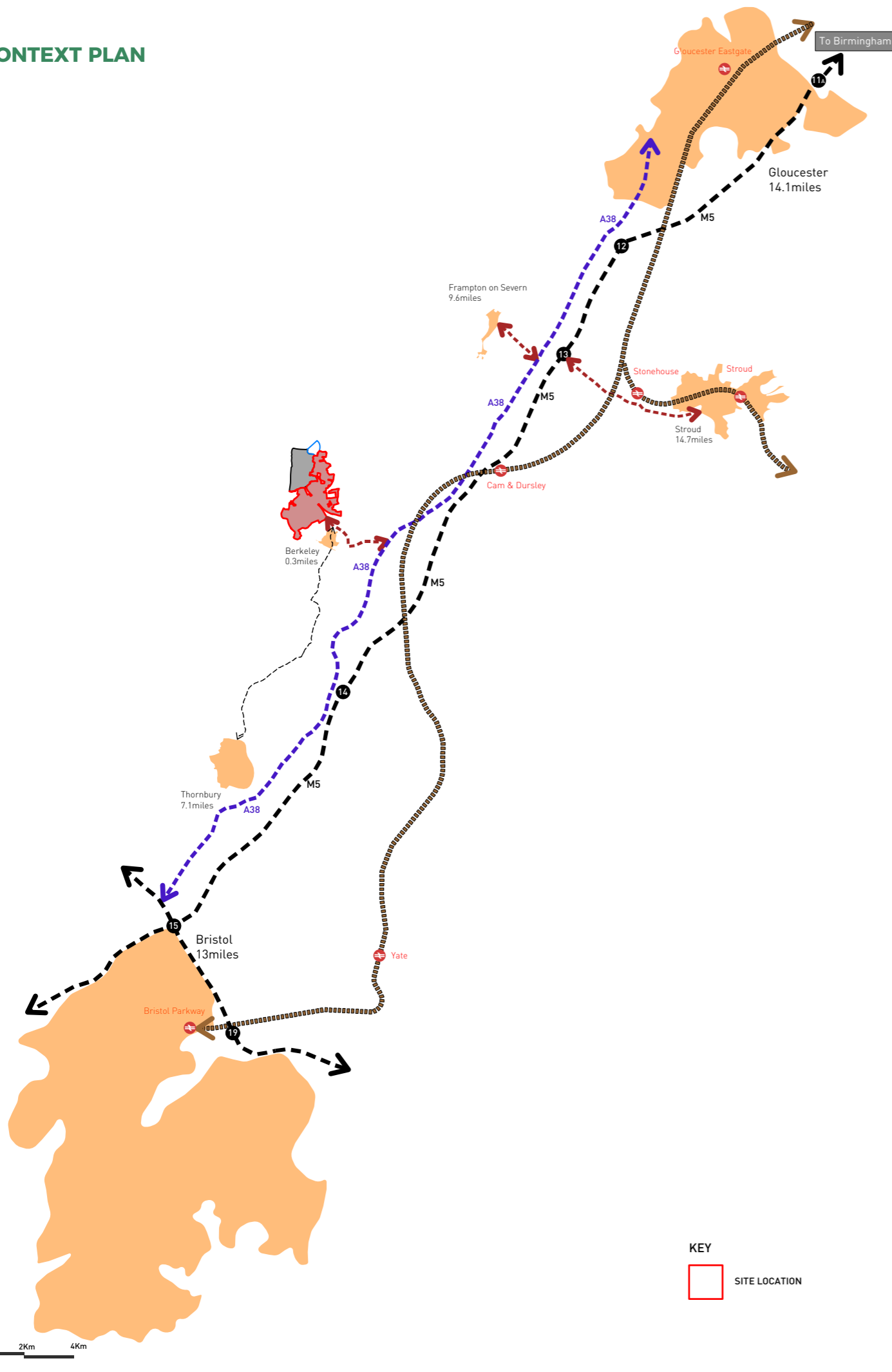
We want to create a thriving new settlement at Sharpness based on 'Garden City' principles that will have a unique character and act as the catalyst for change and renewal. The UK countryside is littered with new housing developments that fail to create thriving communities or take seriously the need to conserve our planet's finite resources.

Planning a significant new scheme from scratch can deliver major benefits that are hard to achieve through smaller, piecemeal, developments. At Sharpness, it provides an exciting opportunity to properly plan and deliver a new sustainable and self-contained settlement which will remain faithful to the Garden City principles advocated by Ebenezer Howard's 1898 vision.

Ebenezer Howard's book "Tomorrow: a Peaceful Path to Real Reform", published in 1898, put forward a vision of towns that would take the best elements of the city; good employment prospects, relative wealth for its inhabitants and good communications and merge it with the best elements of the countryside; a healthy and affordable setting. We wish to build on these core principles and adapt them for contemporary living.

Our vision for Sharpness will push the boundaries on sustainability, both socially and environmentally. On this journey, we will evolve new methods of collaborative development and ways of building new homes that are beautiful and affordable in a stunning landscape with a diverse range of amenities and employment opportunities on the door step.





6.0 SITE CONTEXT

The proposed new green settlement will be centred on Sharpness and Newtown which is located midway between Thornbury and Gloucester; to the north west of Berkeley. The study area falls within Hamfallow Parish and Hinton Parish.

Sharpness is served by the B4066 with a direct link onto the A38 to the south east of Berkeley. The local road network connects Sharpness to surrounding villages and hamlets such as Newtown, Wanswell and Brookend. The Gloucester to Sharpness Canal provides a valuable leisure facility for pleasure boats, fishing as well as cycling and walking along its tow paths.

The dock at Sharpness is the eighth largest in the South West and serves as the gateway from the River Severn to the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal. The canal and River Severn provide opportunities to travel by boat to Gloucester to the north and the Bristol Channel to the south.

The former rail link to the Gloucester to Bristol railway line runs adjacent to the B4066 as it approaches Sharpness. Passenger services ceased on the branch in November 1964. However, the line to the docks is still open for occasional freight services.

The area is well served by a network of Public Rights of Way, running across fields between local roads. The Severn Way National Trail follows the banks of the River Severn to the west of the development area.

The study area is not subject to any formal landscape designation and is not within a floodplain. Furthermore, there are no listed buildings within the immediate vicinity and the study area does not contain any Scheduled Monuments.

The Severn Estuary lies in close proximity to the study area and is recognised as a wetland area of international importance and is designated as a Ramsar Site. Under the EC Directive on the conservation of Wild Birds the estuary is recognised as a Special Protection Area (SPA). The estuary is also recognised as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the EU Habitats Directive and parts of the estuary have also been designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Importantly, Sharpness is currently one of five proposed strategic growth locations for housing and employment within the Local Plan.

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7.0 LOCAL CONTEXT

Existing Residential Development

Newtown

Newtown initially developed at the end of the 19th century to provide housing for dock workers and fitters and has since expanded along Gloucester Road and Oldminster Road. Recent housing development by Persimmon Homes has extended Newtown south of Gloucester Road

The settlement includes St Mary's Church, a primary school, two small shops, a village hall with adjacent public house and play facilities on the west side of Oldminster Road. A linear landscape corridor, containing the B4066, separates the housing from the docks and follows the disused railway line including the former railway sidings, allotments and playing fields.

Brookend & Old Brookend

Brookend lies to the east of Newtown and is divided into two main areas of development known as Brookend and Old Brookend. Old Brookend is located towards the north. Both areas assume a linear form of development fronting Station Road.

Sharpness

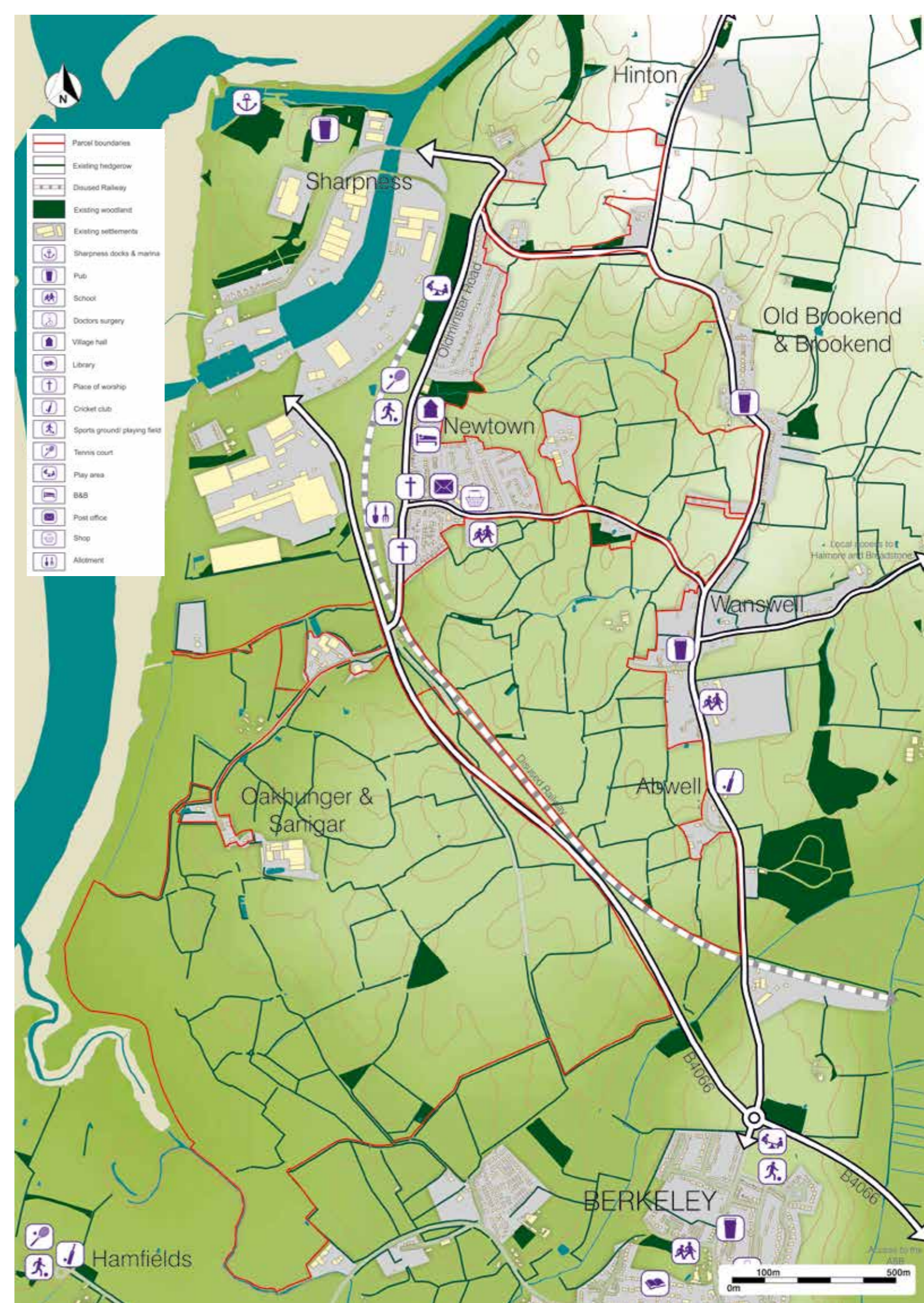
The settlement of Sharpness is located directly within the docklands area and dates back to 1850. Constructed by the Sharpness New Docks and Birmingham Navigation Company, Sharpness was a purpose built company village to house the lock gate keepers and their families. Although the original settlement consisted of 5 separate terraced rows, today it is defined by the three remaining terraces of Dock Row, Great Western Row and Severn Row and accounts for only 31 dwellings.

Wanswell

Wanswell is a settlement located to the southeast of Newtown and immediately south of Brookend. Reflecting a linear form, Wanswell is characterised by small groups of properties interspersed by open countryside and open spaces. Consequently, the settlement appears to have a relatively low density.

Many of the properties within this settlement date from the Victorian era and like many of the surrounding villages, red brick tends to dominate. With the exception of the school, which appears to have been constructed mid to late 20th century, there are few modern properties with limited growth over the last 20 years.

With the exception of The Salmon Inn and its immediate neighbouring properties, the majority of properties tend to be relatively modest in size and form. The majority of properties are detached or terraced.



Oakhunger and Sanigar

The farmland surrounding Sanigar and Panhurst Farms is set on the western foot of the sandstone ridge and gently slopes down to the flat meadows behind the flood bank, with the Severn beyond. The farmsteads are concentrated clusters of dwellings and agricultural buildings on slightly rising ground.

Berkeley

Berkeley is situated to the south of Newtown and has an attractive historic centre including the castle. The town centre has a varied range of shops and facilities including a sub post office, medical centre, pharmacy and library. Berkeley also has a small primary school, the town's secondary school, closed in 2011.

More recent development (approximately 1990s) can be found to the northern and eastern periphery of the town.

Existing Employment

The Employment Land Study (ELS) 2013 indicates that around a third of the 2012 employment supply is located at Sharpness Docks. Throughout the ELS, reference is made to the fact that employment land supply is dominated by provision at Sharpness and recognises the importance of Sharpness as a major provider of employment land.

Demand for industrial and logistics premises at Sharpness is focused at the adjacent Severn Distribution Park. The ELS recognises that Severn Distribution Park is now established as a key warehouse/distribution facility in Stroud District and the wider Gloucestershire sub-region. The ELS therefore recommended that 'realistic and viable proposals to deliver further warehouse accommodation at this location should therefore be supported.'

In response to this, the Local Plan allocates 7ha of expansion land in the Sharpness Docks South for dock uses and dock related industrial and distribution uses, and 9.8ha of land to the south of Severn Distribution Park for B2-B8 employment uses.

In addition to the employment land at Sharpness, the Gloucestershire Science and Technology Park at Berkeley Green, which will include the Gloucestershire Renewable Energy, Engineering and Nuclear (GREEN) Skills Centre has now opened. In addition, a University Technical College (UTC) specialising in Digital Technologies and Advanced Manufacturing has opened bringing further learners and staff. The catchment for these establishments is greater than Stroud District leading to either significant distances being travelled or additional accommodation requirements in the Stroud.

All this is in addition to the employment to be created in B1-B8 uses on the allocation EI2a Former Berkeley Power Station identified in the Local Plan. The allocated site comprises some 31 hectares to include the Science and Technology Park which will act as a stimulus for other employment growth in the area as well as that on site. The housing needed to support this can be readily delivered at a new settlement at Sharpness.



Within the surrounding areas the following sites provide valuable opportunities for sustainable employment and industrial development:

Sharpness Docks:

The docks and working port are linked to Gloucester and other inland waterways via the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal. The docks and working port are currently managed by British Waterways and Sharpness Dock Ltd facilitating commercial vessel movements (including cargoes of dry bulks).

Currently a planning application is also under consideration at the Docks for the regeneration of the part of the site for a mix of uses including up to 300 dwellings (C3), industrial and distribution development (B1c,B2,B8) on 6.6 hectares of land 2 no. marinas, up to 1250m² of ancillary retail / food and drink uses (A1,A2,A3 and A4) up to 7,000m² of commercial floor space (B1 office/light industrial of which no more than 4300m² to be B1 office), up to 100 holiday lodges/camping pitches, hotel, public open space, landscaping, visitor parking, new access road and associated infrastructure (reference: S.17/0798/OUT).

The Severn Distribution Park:

Immediately adjacent to the docks the Distribution Park currently comprises approximately 41,000 sqm warehouse/floor space with a further 15,800 sqm still to be developed.

A number of companies are based at the Park including Howard Tenens, and Downton.

While there has been continued commercial activity around the port, several buildings and storage silos are not used due to changes in types of cargo being handled and there are large areas around the docks that are undeveloped and could provide significant additional employment opportunities.

Former Nuclear Power Station Site:

The former Nuclear Power Station site at Berkeley has been redeveloped to provide employment and training opportunities in related science and technology sectors including a University Technical College. The site comprises some 31 hectares and has significant job creation potential.



8.0 LOCAL ANALYSIS CONSTRAINTS & OPPORTUNITIES

Landscape

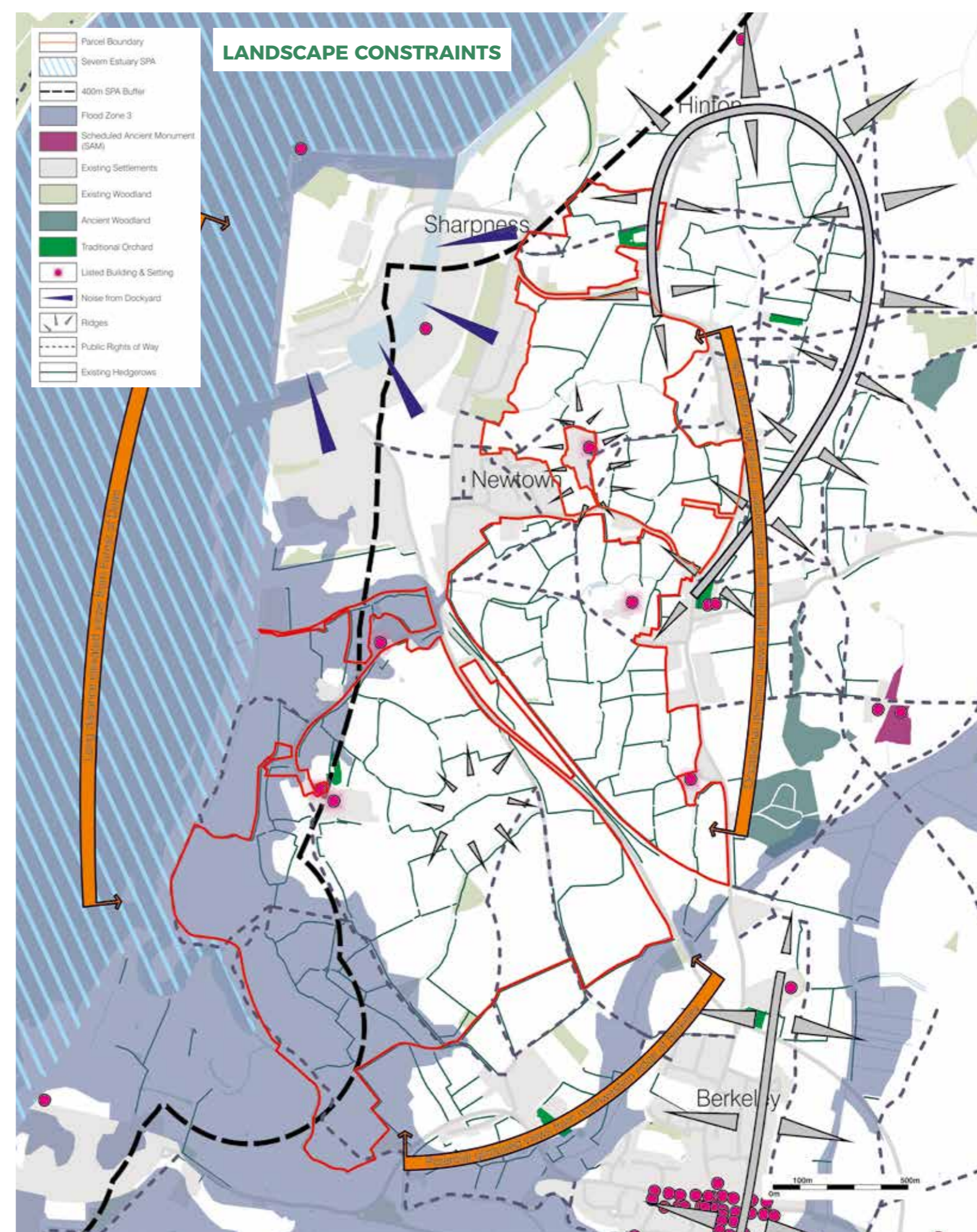
There are no national or local landscape designations within the proposed development area.

Sharpness is set on the bank of the River Sever at the end of a low north-south sandstone ridge and at the edge of the Vale of Berkeley. This is a broad landscape on a bold scale with the rolling hills of the Forest of Dean to the west contrasting with the low lying and gently undulating Vale and the wide horizontal expanse of the River Sever.

There are many visual detractors along the banks of the river, including the power stations and bridges. However these provide focal points and points of reference within the mainly level Vale. Subtle local variations in topography provide interest and screen local views further east. Further subdivision of the landscape is reinforced by hedges and small but infrequent woods. All set a landscape context to provide a new growth point that has its own unique character and diversity.

Landscape Strategic Opportunities and Constraints

- Incorporate **quality landscape features** such as woodlands, hedgerows, tree belts and streams;
- Incorporate **PRow** and provide **enhanced links**;
- Avoid development of the eastern elevated ridgeline;
- Proposals to be set within a **strong Green Infrastructure**;
- Provide **high quality open space** in accordance with policy and national standards; and
- Opportunity for **long-term landscape management**





LANDSCAPE CONTEXT



Ecology

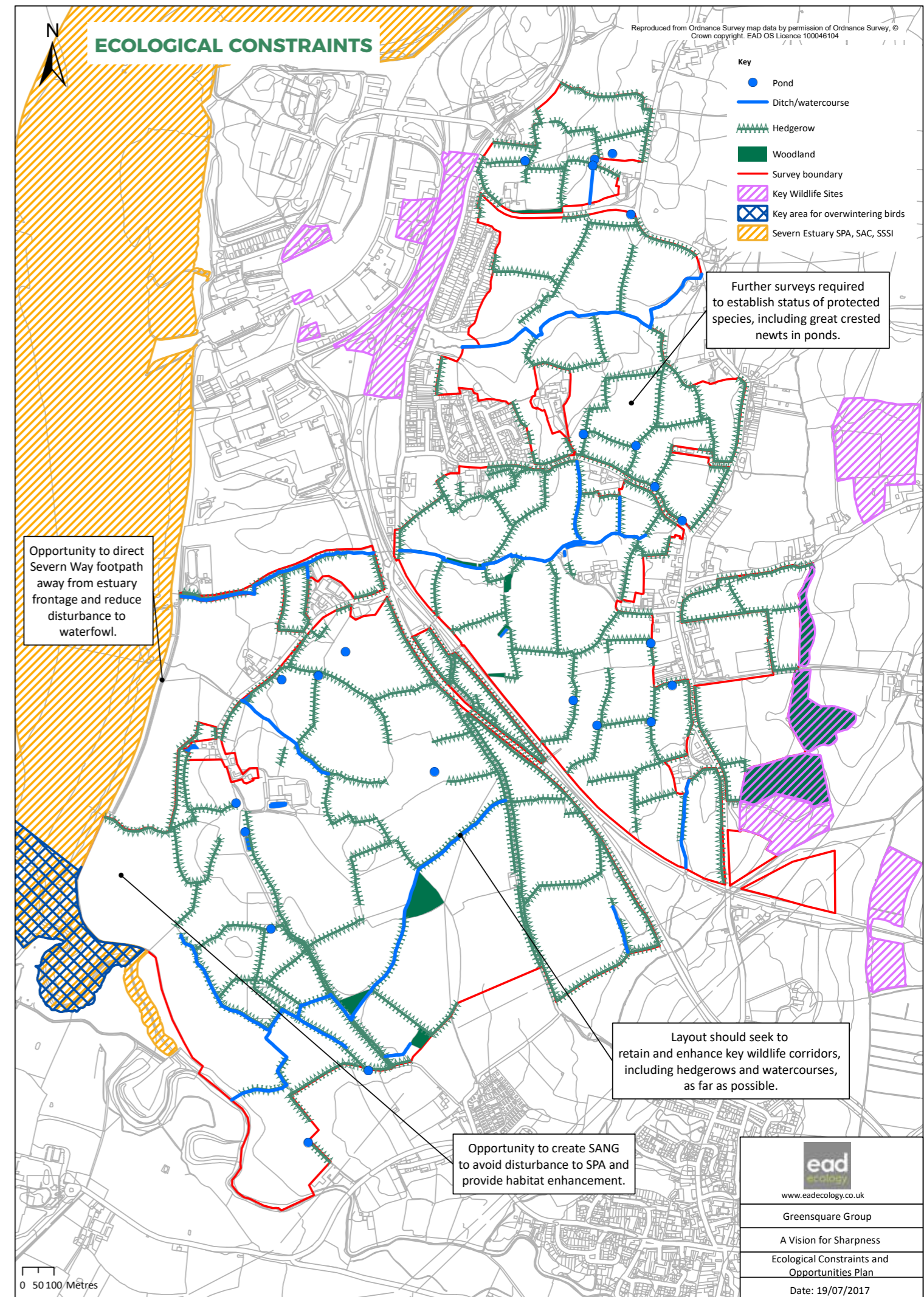
The study area comprises predominantly large agricultural fields bounded by hedgerows and treelines. Other habitats include small woodlands, watercourses and field ponds. It has no statutory nature conservation designations.

The study area is, however, set next to the River Severn, which is designated as a Ramsar Site, Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). These designations reflect the importance of the Severn's estuarine habitats, including saltmarsh and mudflat, and the large populations of the passage and wintering birds that visit the estuary each year.

The new settlement will be designed to ensure that the Severn's wildlife and habitats are not adversely affected. This will include ensuring that development is located away from the estuary shoreline; providing Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to divert recreational usage away from the estuary; and ensuring appropriate management of recreational access to the estuary. Suitable avoidance, mitigation and enhancement measures will be informed by overwintering bird surveys and by residents and visitor surveys, and will be developed in consultation with Natural England and local conservation groups.

Ecology Strategic Opportunities and Constraints

- Detailed ecological studies such as overwintering bird surveys and resident and visitor surveys will inform development design and will ensure that **key habitats are retained and enhanced**;
- Consultation with Natural England other relevant stakeholders will also inform development design and mitigation measures;
- **Habitat creation** on currently species-poor agricultural land: Opportunities for habitat creation include the 'Priority' habitats broadleaved woodland, native hedgerow, wildflower meadow, and standing water, including 'scrapes' for wetland birds and ponds;
- Creation of an **extensive network of interlinked semi-natural greenspace**, including SANG and other green infrastructure: This will provide a network of wildlife 'corridors' through the site that will be of high wildlife and amenity value;
- **Creation of SANG** incorporating facilities for access, including footpaths, car parks and interpretation: This will divert recreational activities away from the Severn Estuary; and
- Management of retained and created habitats post-development according to an integrated landscape and ecological management plan: This will ensure suitable **long-term maintenance** and **monitoring of the green infrastructure** and **appropriate management** of recreational activities.
- The broad principle of the proposals will be to keep the development separated from the shoreline and to accommodate the recreational needs of the population within the designated areas.



Cultural Heritage

Sharpness is a promontory into the Severn, severed from the adjoining land by the construction of the dock basin and the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal. Many of the dockland buildings are of a very large scale and are visible from across the Severn and from adjoining high ground. Others are of smaller, more domestic scale, notably around the old dock basin, along with a scattering of terraces of housing and new, distinctive small office buildings.

There are a limited number of listed buildings within the proposed development area.

Cultural Heritage Strategic Opportunities and Constraints

- Continue the sustainable working of the dockland; and
- Protect the setting of historical assets.

Hydrology

The eastern shores of the River Severn are identified within the EA Flood Map as flood Zone 3.

Initial Baseline Flood Risk work has been undertaken which identifies:

- The risk of tidal, fluvial and surface water flooding is assessed to be low to high risk.
- The risk of groundwater flooding is assessed to be low to medium risk.
- The risk of flooding from all other sources is negligible.

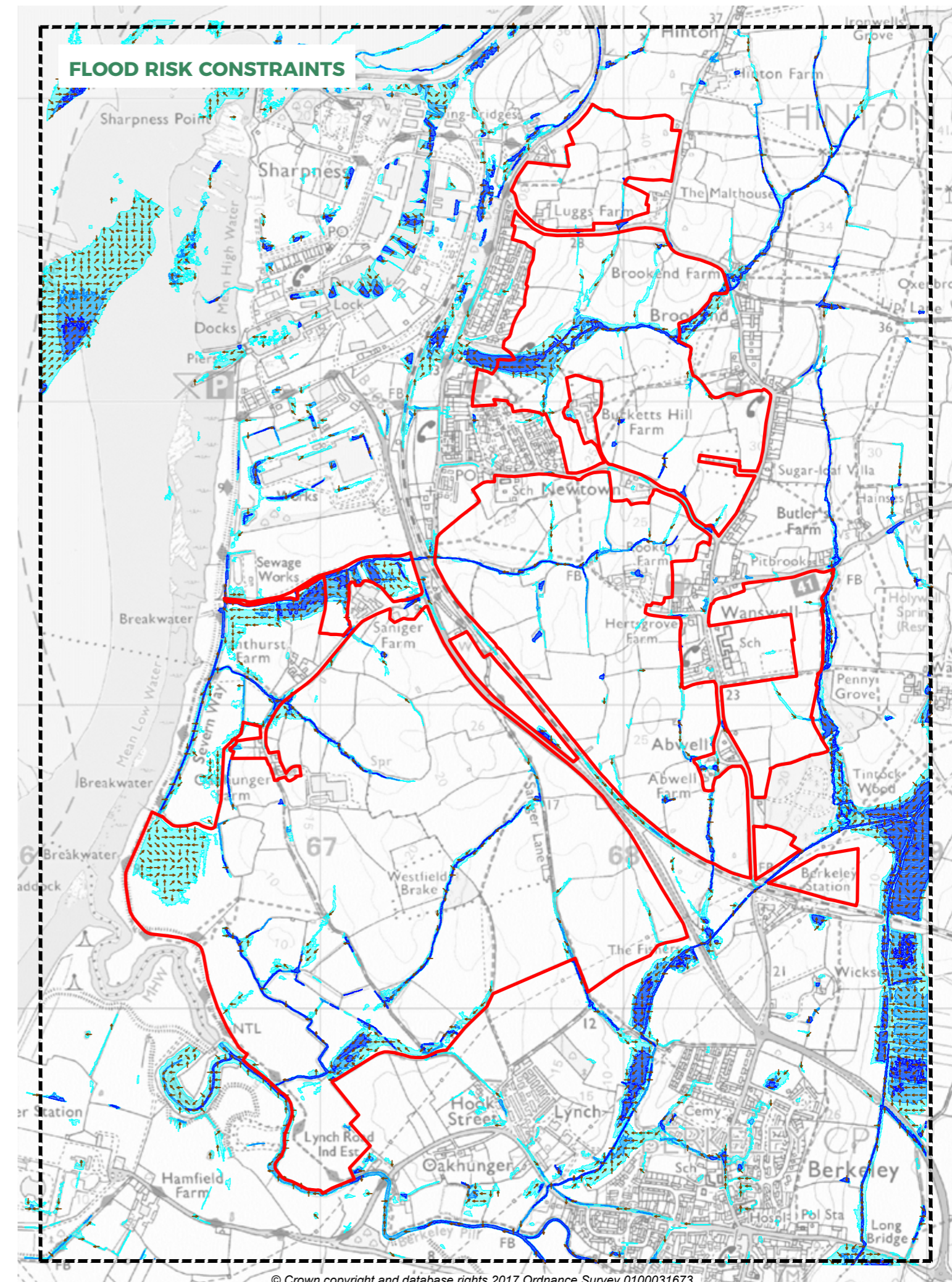
The following broad scale mitigation measures are proposed based on the known flood risk and drainage issued established as part of this scoping exercise. The mitigation measures will fix the broad flood risk and drainage constraints within the Site boundary:

- Sequential development of the Site, limiting the developable area (including surface water attenuation features) outside the mapped extents of tidal, fluvial and surface water flooding.
- Provision of easements along watercourses, flood defences and sewers.
- Provision of a surface water drainage strategy, with sufficient greenspace provided throughout the Site to accommodate above ground SuDS features.

The baseline constraints identified within the initial scoping exercise have been presented through constraints mapping to inform the development of the masterplan.

Hydrological Strategic Opportunities and Constraints

- Remove all development from Flood Risk Zones; and
- Include significant Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) within the developing design.



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Highways, Access and Movement

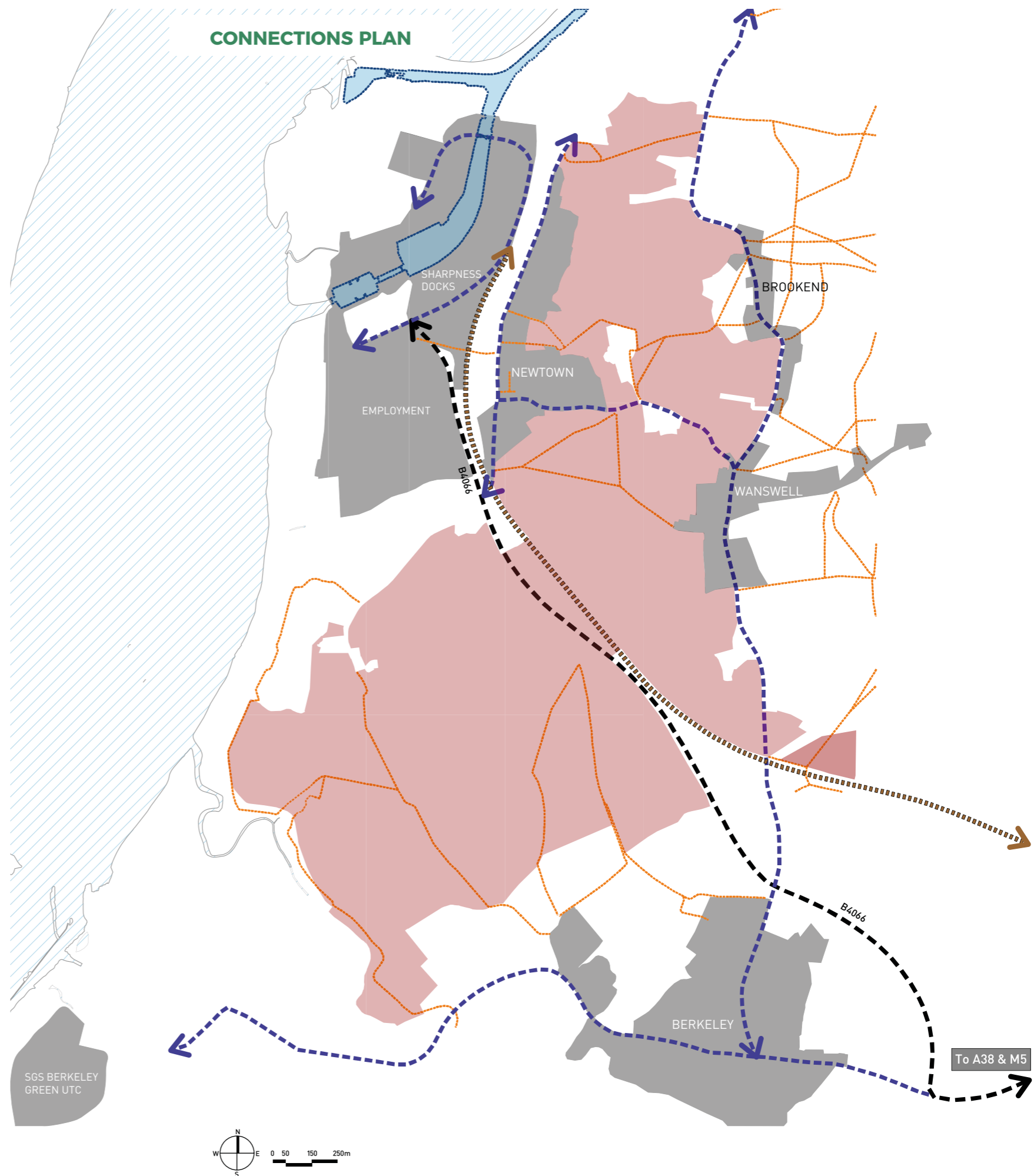
Sharpness is well located in terms of access to the highway network; both the A38 (providing access to Bristol, Gloucester and villages including Cam and Dursley) and the M5 (the key route between the Midlands and the South West) are located to the east of the site. However, access between the site and the A38 is via a number of country lanes and drivers must travel either 11km north or 7km south to the nearest junction with the M5.

A development of the scale of that at Sharpness will require and facilitate significant highway improvements including improved access to the M5, upgrading existing roads and junctions and new roads as appropriate.

Key opportunities to improve and enhance connectivity and sustainable travel over a phased basis, could include:

- Potential re-use of the railway line from Sharpness to Gloucester;
- Better connectivity to the existing docks and commercial activity – opportunity for rail freight interchange;
- Upgrades to highway access – with better connections to the M5 – including a potential new motorway junction;
- Enhancement to leisure and tourism offer in the area – especially to the marina, and, potentially with a heritage element to the railway;
- Better local pedestrian and cycle routes – including along the river corridor;
- Provision of new or extension to existing bus services that provide connectivity with existing local communities, including nearby rail stations, and provide express connections to Stroud, Gloucester and Bristol;
- Integration of bus priority measures within the site, providing reliable, direct and attractive bus services; and
- Improvements to supporting infrastructure including improved waiting facilities at bus stops and spatial integration at interchanges.
- A significant new settlement could help to facilitate wider opportunities for the area and beyond such as a new Severn River crossing.

KEY	
	SITE LOCATION
	PRIMARY ROAD (B4066)
	SECONDARY ROAD
	DISUSED RAILWAY
	EXISTING PROW (PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY)
	EXISTING SETTLEMENT
	THE GLOUCESTER AND SHARPNESS CANAL
	SEVERN ESTUARY



9.0 MASTERPLAN

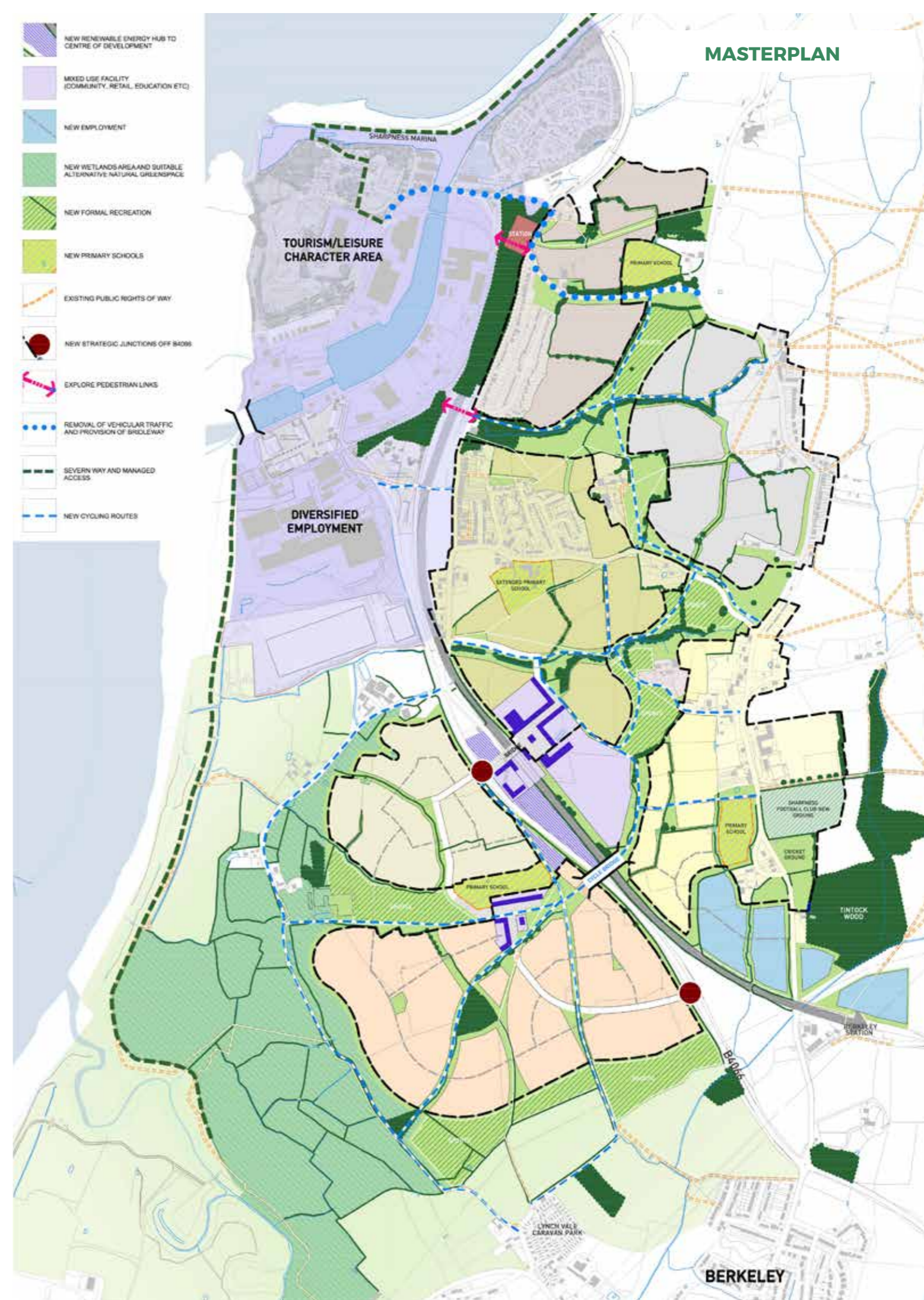
Sustainable Residential Development

The Growth Point Masterplan proposes a new place that will establish a well-balanced community that is positively integrated with the existing context and is based on 'Garden City' principles.

The Masterplan shows how up to 5,000 dwellings and supporting land uses can be delivered within the site. The masterplan will allow for the formation of differing densities across the development including higher density towards the proposed mixed-use areas and lower densities near landscape sensitive areas. The density will also allow for a range of dwellings across the site with a range of sizes and tenures in order to accommodate a variety of household types including much needed affordable housing.

The proposals will enable a mix of housing to meet a range of needs in the community including: starter homes, homes for older people, self-build, and more traditional affordable rent and shared equity products.

Greensquare is a registered provider of affordable homes and has a strong track record in delivering market sale and market rent homes to subsidise their affordable homes, reducing their reliance on public subsidy. Likewise, Lioncourt is a 5 Star Quality Award Winning Home Builder. They deliver a wide range of properties from one bedroom apartments and starter homes to five bedroom detached family homes, giving everyone a chance to own their ideal home and strive to set new standards in their approach to sustainable new home building.



Employment

The Growth point will provide enhanced and diversified employment land, attracting investment in the local area and new business. Encouraging new technologies and enhancing the local workforce alongside the encouragement of small businesses, social enterprise and home working within the development.

The principal employment area is located to the south east of the site, positioned closest for journeys to the M5 and close to future public transport routes. It is envisaged that the employment will predominately consist of a mix of B1 and B2. Further employment space is envisaged in small clustered satellite areas within the neighbourhood centre and residential areas.



Mixed Use Areas

Community facilities are an essential part of a new place and a good basis for building communities that, in turn, will provide support to the facilities.

The masterplan proposes a district centre and smaller local centres. The smaller centres will provide local facilities to their associated neighbourhood such as convenience stores, takeaways and other local facilities. The district centre will not only provide a local facility for the new development but will also support and provide additional community facilities for the wider area that is currently not well served.

A diverse mix of uses will contribute towards making these areas active and vibrant places throughout the day. The central district centre is positioned adjacent to the main movement routes and public transport corridors giving the option for journeys to be made by means other than the private car.



Education

New educational facilities, including primary schools and a potential middle school are to be provided as part of the proposed development. The education will be located alongside the public transport routes and strategic cycle routes.



Public Open Space

The amount of open space provided has been designed to cater for the recreational needs of the new community at Sharpness. The public open space will provide the quantum of open space within Stroud District Council's Residential Development Outdoor Play Space Provision SPD as a minimum.

The proposals will create a strong green infrastructure network and enhanced habitat opportunities to avoid any disturbance of the Severn Estuary Special Protection Area; including the provision of new 72 hectare wetland area (SANG) to the east of the estuary, to divert recreational pressure away from the designated site;

Due to the floodplain constraints and provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace, the development will provide in excess of the overall quantum of open space required by policy. This will create a new place influenced and situated within natural and semi-natural greenspace.



Exemplar Low Carbon Development

In respect of energy, a new planned settlement at Sharpness offers an exciting opportunity to explore the potential for use of new sustainable technologies including sustainable transport modes such as the use of shared travel 'hubs'.

There is also the opportunity to look at an Energy from Waste facility (EfW). This type of facility would take non-hazardous waste from households and businesses for treatment by high temperature incineration with energy recovery. The steam generated would then be used to generate electricity to serve the docks and surrounding homes and businesses. This would have the combined benefit of reducing waste going to landfill and reducing the reliance on fossil fuels.

In particular, this type of facility could have a close synergy with the existing operations at the docks whereby waste could be transported via water from further afield and processed efficiently through the docks. The EfW facility could also utilise the existing waste generated from the dock operations.

In order to further reduce carbon emissions, we also want to ensure that all buildings are highly energy efficient. This can be achieved in part through the building fabric by incorporating high levels of cavity wall and roof insulation; ensuring airtightness; and through the use of triple glazing and low emissivity glass, for example. The siting of the buildings relative to the solar orientation will also be carefully considered at the detailed design stages.

This 'fabric first' principle will be complemented through the use of low or zero carbon technology, such as highly efficient space heating, hot water and lighting technologies, and through renewable energy generation, such as through solar and/or wind.



An accessible and well connected community

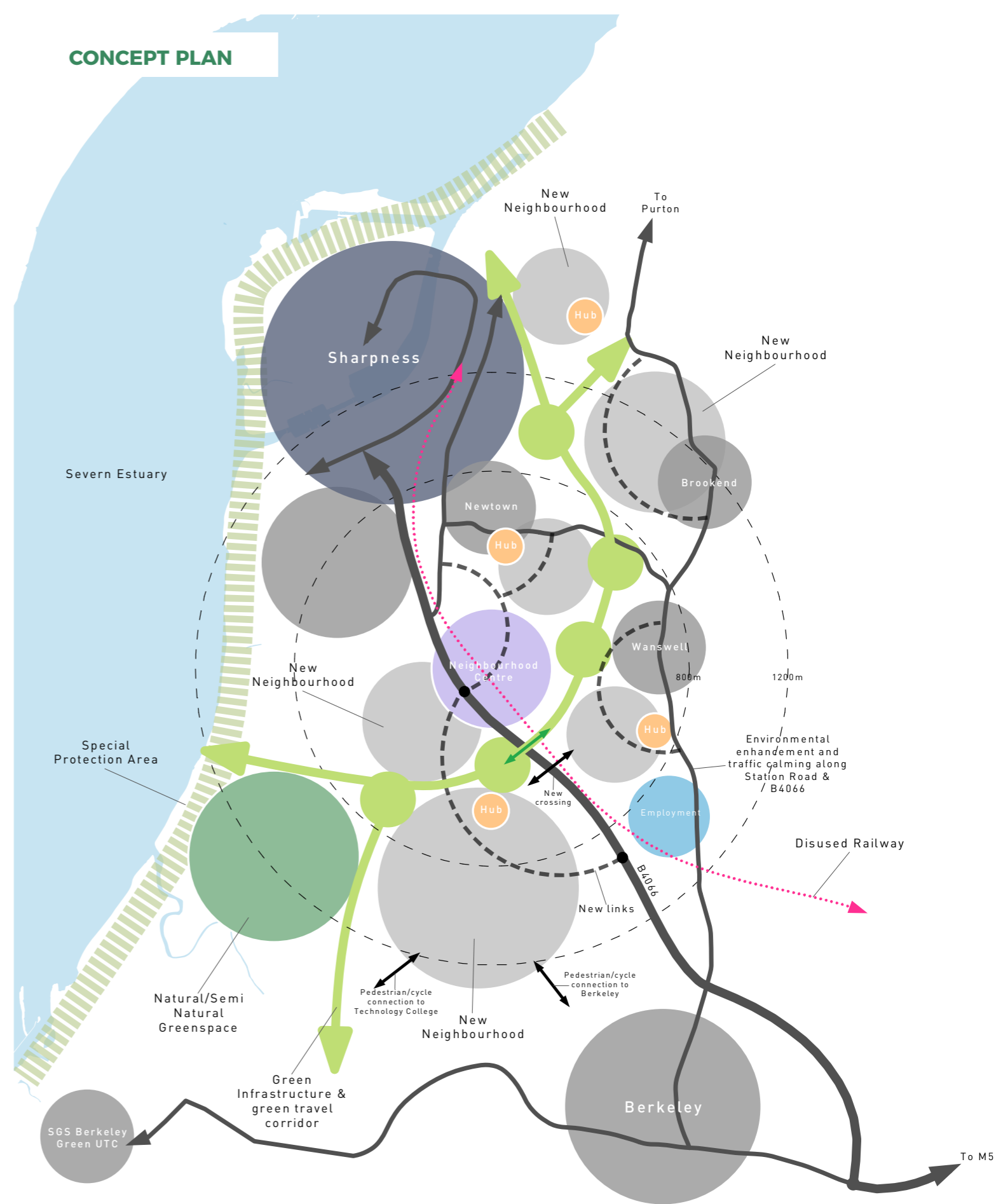
Sharpness is currently classed as a Third Tier (Accessible Settlements with Limited Facilities) in the Settlement Hierarchy of Core Policy CP3. There is recognised potential for Sharpness to become a Second Tier as it could potentially be much larger than Hunts Grove which is currently anticipated as a Second Tier.

The scale of the proposed growth point combined with its 'rural' location away from other large settlements and strategic infrastructure means that a hierarchy of transport connections is required. This includes a framework of multi modal connections at regional and local levels in the short through to long term horizon. Consistent with the transport objectives, the infrastructure will support the use of sustainable transport modes in preference to single occupancy car.

The plan for transport and movement is to encourage walking, cycling and public transport ahead of car use, whilst ensuring that the masterplan is pragmatic and designed to ensure that cars are catered for sensibly in the illustrative layout.

As shown on the concept plan, the masterplan has been designed around walkable neighbourhood principles where all facilities are within easy reach of all houses. The development is focused upon the neighbourhood centre for the main uses with supporting uses spaced in appropriate walking distances through the site.

Manual for Streets (4.4.1) defines the walkable neighbourhood as typically characterised by having a range of facilities within 10 minutes (up to about 800m) walking distance of residential areas which residents may access comfortably on foot. The Masterplan shows how the various uses and facilities are within the appropriate walking distance of the majority of the dwellings ensuring the creation of walkable neighbourhoods.



PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Sustainable Transport Modes

Driving the design is the recognised need to provide a new sustainable transport corridor through the site that provides public transport to all parts of the new place and provides strategic connections to the wider areas including areas of employment.

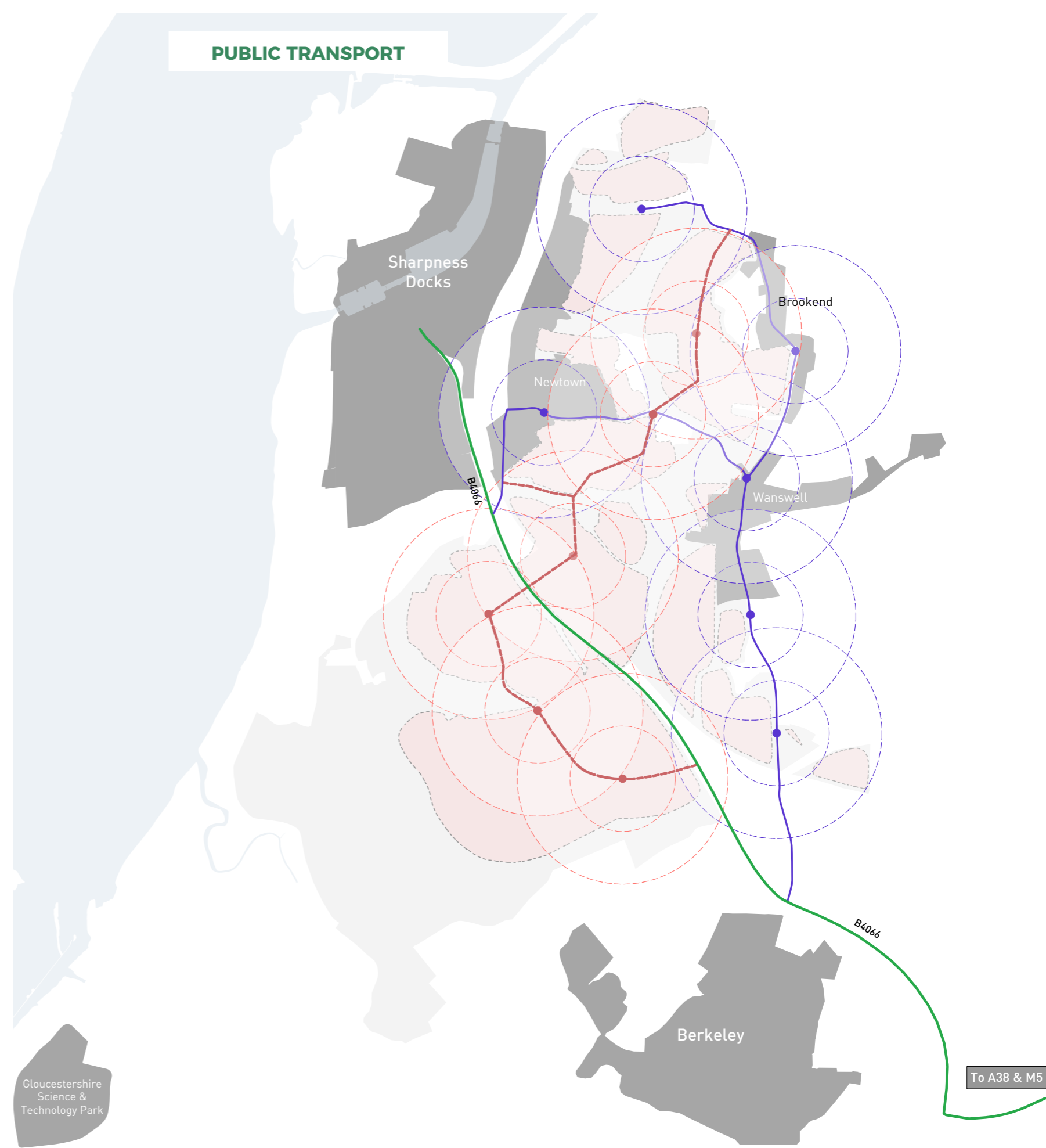
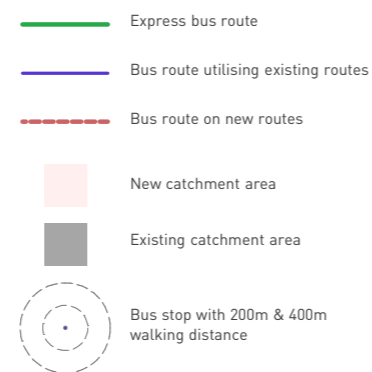
The masterplan has also been developed to accommodate the potential delivery of a train or mode of transport along the disused railway and allowance for the potential Severn crossing in the longer-term. This will be achieved by safeguarding a corridor to accommodate the infrastructure necessary for various operators – as well as positioning land uses in a way which supports transport networks and maximises convenience of access.

In view of the uncertainties and whilst further details are progressed with regards to the disused railway proposals and Severn crossing, phased enhancements to existing public transport opportunities will be pursued to ensure that the shared vision with the Council for increased modal shift is achieved.

Phased improvements at the site could potentially include:

- Provision of new or extension to existing bus services that provide connectivity with existing local communities, including nearby rail stations, and provide express connections to Stroud, Gloucester and Bristol;
- Provision of new cyclepaths and change of character to existing roads to promote cycling and walking;
- Integration of bus priority measures within the site, providing reliable, direct and attractive bus services; and
- Improvements to supporting infrastructure including improved waiting facilities at bus stops and spatial integration at interchanges.

As described above, the primary focus for trips to and from the site will be public transport. This will be complemented by an internal layout which promotes walking and cycling for short trips. New pedestrian and cycle routes will be provided across the site connecting the mixed-use areas and schools with the residential neighbourhoods and open space/recreation spaces.



CYCLE PLAN

The following elements are promoted to ensure options are available for transportation modal shift and there is environmentally friendly sustainable travel choice:

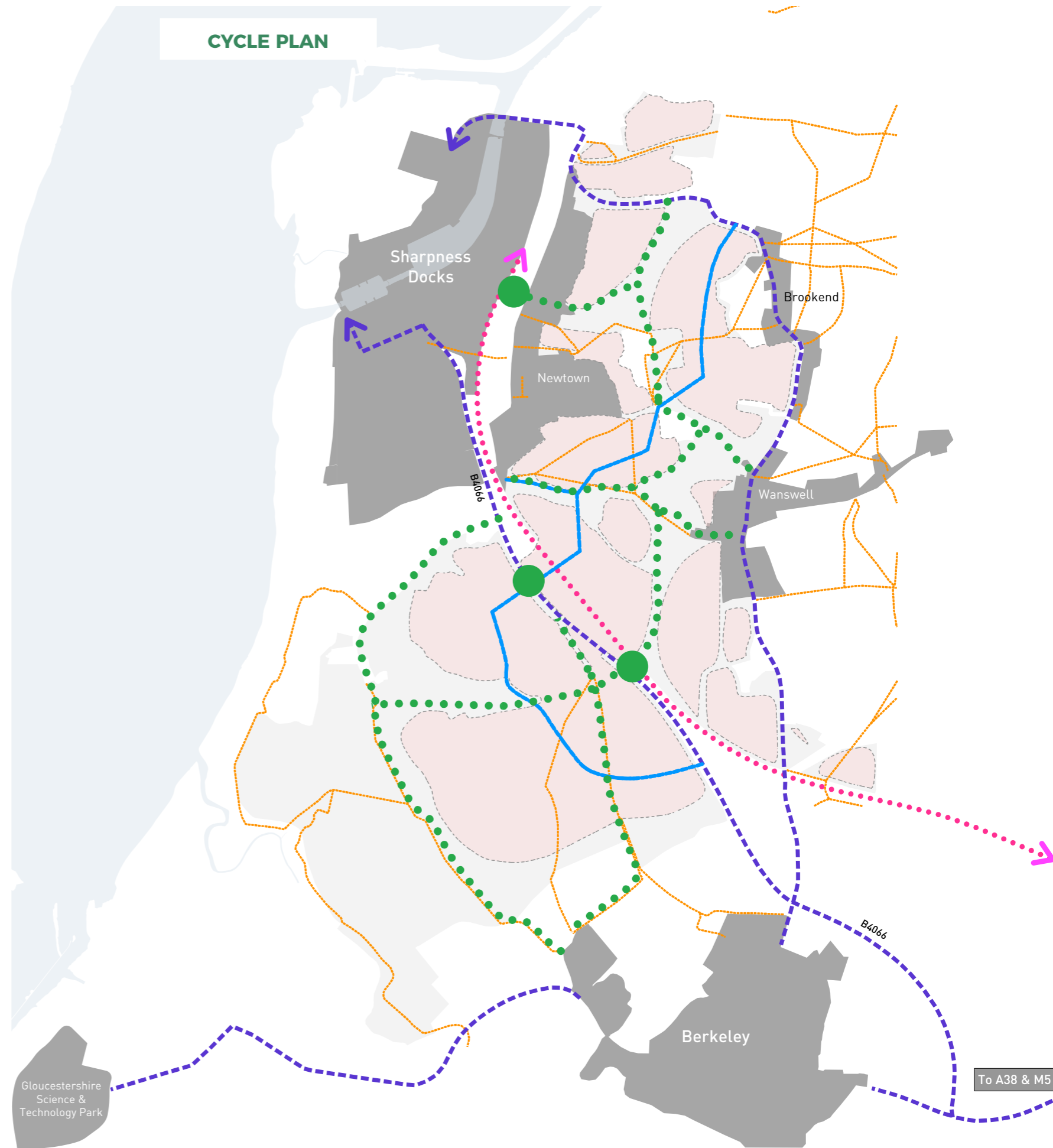
- Dedicated cycling routes;
- School cycling trains and scoot to school strategies;
- Clear and attractive pedestrian and cycling routes;
- Cycle hire and car clubs;
- Promotion of electric bikes and charging points;
- Future allowance for use of disused railway;
- Use of current and future transport technology;
- Bus gates and bus priority;
- Bus has clear and visible advantage over other vehicle movements;
- Direct walkable distances to bus stops;
- Design to change the character of the B4066 and break down this route as an existing barrier;
- Direct walkable distances to facilities;
- Footpaths and cyclepaths to be continuous cross junctions without breaks to give priority to the pedestrian or cyclist;
- Development areas designed to put the pedestrian and cyclist first;
- Accessible local education and facilities;
- Street design that creates driver awareness; and
- Appropriate parking standards.

Highway Improvements

A comprehensive package of infrastructure improvements will be employed to enhance the existing network. These will focus not only on providing additional capacity for vehicles, but also on providing priority for sustainable modes of transport. This could include bus lanes, cycle lanes and new shared use foot and cycle ways, electric car charging points as well as potential wider initiatives such as a new rail station and reopening of the Severn bridge crossing.

New junctions are proposed from the B4066 and this will provide additional capacity and enable access to the Growth Point along with the use of existing key routes. Vehicular crossings of the main greenspace running north south will be limited to public transport to encourage walking and cycling along this route.

- Cycle enhancement to existing route:
- Existing Public Right of Way
- New strategic cycle route
- Disused railway
- New cycle route along new streets
- Potential cycle bridges
- New catchment area
- Existing catchment area



CHARACTER OBJECTIVES

Part of the urban design lexicon is the “genius loci”, the prevalent feeling of place. Perceptions of a place are made up of layers of understanding – the settlement in the landscape, its overall structure, the district, the street, the building. They arise from understanding the physical and human geography, the history and morphology of past uses, the natural landscape and buildings, both on a site and around it. (Urban Design Compendium)

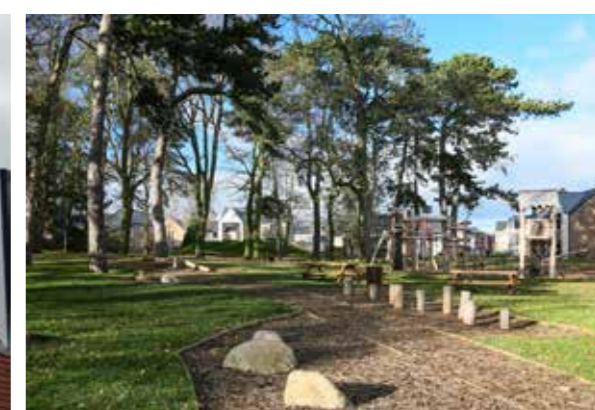
The proposals for Sharpness are strongly influenced by the existing topography, landscape setting and the layout of the streets. A neighbourhood is a district or community within a town and is defined by the area surrounding a place and the proximity to the centre point of that place.

Based on the principle of walking and cycling, the new residents should naturally attract to each of the mixed-use areas with collocated schools and this focus/facility should provide the basis for the creation of new communities and neighbourhoods. This naturally generates eight distinct areas that are also separated by natural features. Each area will be defined by a mix of uses and building types, landscape features and a network of routes.

The areas follow some basic rules including:

- An interconnected street system with many direct connections to a main street that is the focus for mixed-use, through traffic and public transport;
- A place that is central to the neighbourhood with a radius from that centre;
- Larger space uses are located on the edge of the area so as not to disrupt the fine grain of streets;
- Broadly speaking a density increases from the edge to centre, though the density will be varied throughout; and
- They should contain a range of housing forms and tenures as well as a balanced mix of uses.

The eight areas will have a distinctive character of their own and which will come together to form the wider whole. Whilst it is important that each neighbourhood has continuity and definable sense of place, the character areas respond in different ways to their particular role and location within the development and provide design cues for architectural style and design that will come together to create a unique, distinctive and memorable place.



Character Areas

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE;

This mixed-use centre will be at the heart of the community providing a link between development either side of the B4066. The area will potentially provide education, a public transport hub, community facilities, shops, employment space, apartments, focal square and other associated facilities. The principal focal space will be fronted by a 'layering' of mixed use buildings to create activity and height. This area will become an identifiable "place" with recognisable features and iconic buildings will reflect their importance through design. A distinctive character will emerge through a pattern of development emanating from walking, cycling and public transport journeys. This area will be the most densely-developed area and be based on perimeter blocks with strong building lines and continuous frontage.

GARDEN VILLAGE SOUTH AND NORTH;

These two separate areas located to the south of the B4066 will be based on a contemporary interpretation of a Garden Village layout with direct landscaped streets providing direct connections and maximising views to the Severn Estuary. Through the provision of direct links and relationship to topography, the layout will have based on a formal grid with strong avenues of tree planting, on street parking and well surveyed green spaces. There will be a high degree of permeability and legibility and the perimeter of the character area will have the opportunity to create a distinct split between green infrastructure and built form. The materials of the built form will have the opportunity to relate to the natural colours found within the existing landscape to blend the development into the landscape when viewed from the western side of the River Severn.

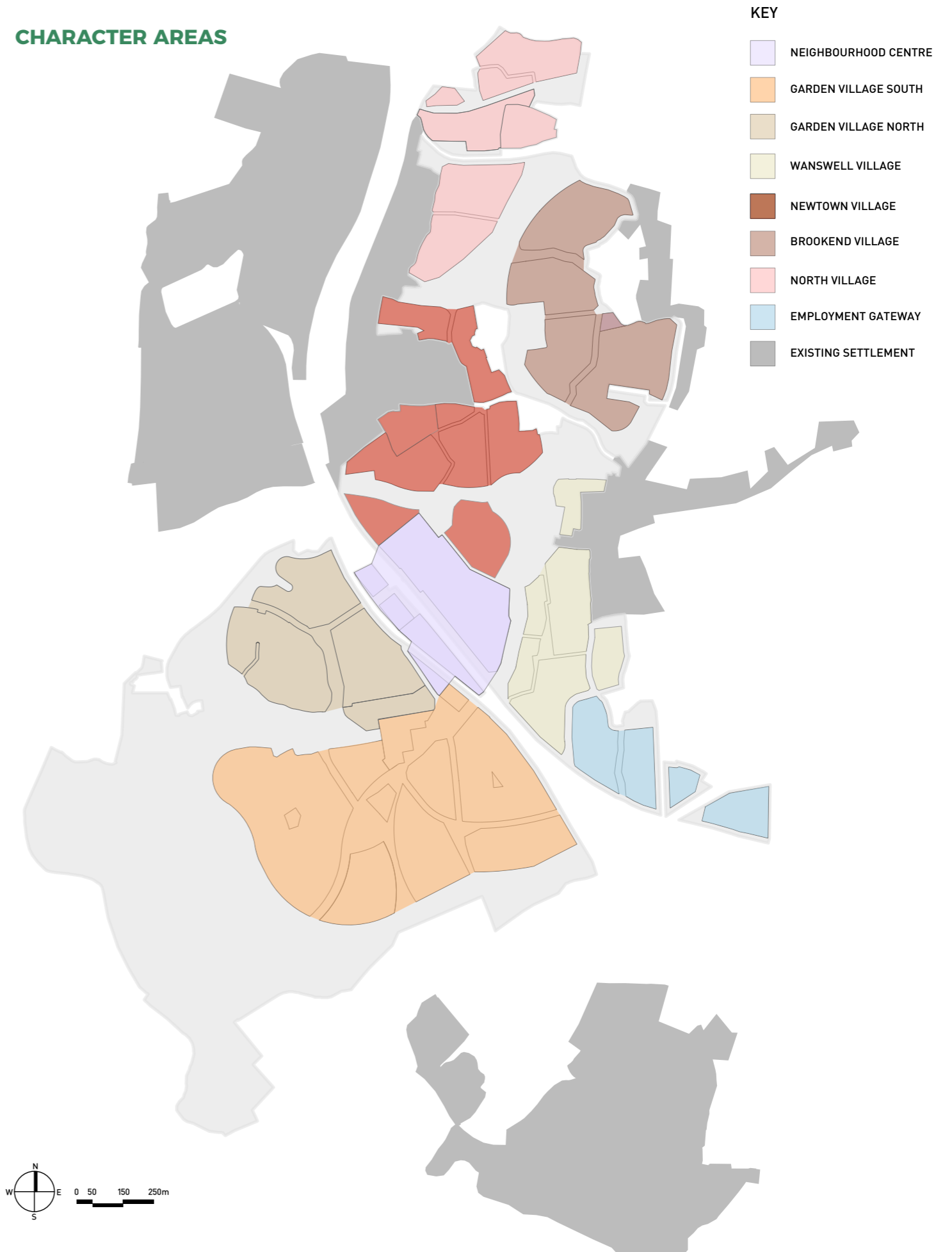
EMPLOYMENT GATEWAY;

This area will focus on a variety of employment buildings in a landscaped setting. They will be accessed from the B4066 or Station Road and provide a new entrance into Sharpness.

THE VILLAGE AREAS OF WANSWELL, BROOKEND AND THE NORTHERN VILLAGE.

These areas are based to the north of the B4066 and due to the more varied topography and existing landscape features, will produce a different and distinct character to the south of the B4066. These areas will predominately be connected to the existing small village settlements already located within the Growth Point and provide streets based on a village concept of 'non engineered' street design with a disjointed grid layout and irregular setbacks. The local vernacular will be conveyed either in a traditional style or as a contemporary interpretation with a variety of vernacular materials and building details used in traditional or contemporary style including a 'Natural' palette of colours and materials that fit in with landscape context.

CHARACTER AREAS



The following will be created to ensure all the new areas are distinctive, unique and memorable:

- Strong design and character with high quality layout and architecture;
- Creation of different character areas and neighbourhoods;
- Differing densities from village edge to denser urban core;
- Use of precedents and existing context to create change in the urban grain of places, the use of built form, spatial enclosure and the relationship between built and un-built spaces;
- Desired building and open space arrangements to dictate the development layout;
- To create buildings and spaces that draw upon the positive built characteristics of the area.



ENVIRONMENT OBJECTIVES

Green infrastructure is a key characteristic of the site and landscape design will be a key component for creating a successful development at Sharpness. The green spaces are an integral part of the place and create a strong landscape structure across the site.

New green infrastructure has been a driving factor in the creation of new routes and spaces within the masterplan and also in creating the separation between the various character areas. The landscape helps to further define the public and private space whilst adding colour, water and seasonal interest to the residential environment.

The existing trees and hedgerows form a valuable opportunity and the proposed strategic open space network seeks to link these together as part of a network of ecological and recreational resources.

The green infrastructure framework will include a network of green spaces including:

- informal open space;
- play areas;
- parks;
- playing fields;
- strategic planting;
- retained views;
- leisure routes (cycling and walking);
- wetland areas;
- woodland areas and retained key trees;
- attenuation ponds and other Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDs);
- allotments and orchards;
- enhanced biodiversity; and
- green corridors.



Woodland bocks, hedgerows and trees will be retained and incorporated into the development where possible. Many will be retained in their entirety whilst others will be retained except where access breaks are required. There are hedgerows and trees that are to be removed due to the opportunity of creating a better layout of streets and scpaes. There will, however, be many opportunities to replace any hedgerows lost elsewhere within the development site.

A series of sustainable design principles will be developed, these are:

- Creating a locally distinctive, sustainable and thriving new community that is well integrated and has excellent connections with Stroud, Gloucester and Bristol;
- Provide a mix of high quality housing, diverse employment opportunities and an excellent network of green infrastructure;
- Be planned in a sustainable manner and have regard to the protection and enhancement of built and natural resources; and
- Being locally distinctive and create attractive, usable and adaptable development that meets high environmental standards, is resilient to climate change and optimises opportunities for sustainable transport choice.

ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES

In economic terms, Sharpness will ensure employment opportunities due to the inclusion of mixed use centres and the allocation of employment and other commercial development uses. This will encourage inward investment into the area to make use of infrastructure, setting, links to the wider area and up to date broadband services. Employment is also expected to be a key issue during construction, with opportunities for local procurement streams, apprentices and those who are not in employment, education or training.

The development should be flexible enough to respond to future changes in use, lifestyle and demography. This means creating flexibility in the use of property, public spaces and service infrastructure and introducing new approaches to transportation, traffic management and parking. The development should therefore be flexible in order to accommodate future changes of use and circumstances through evolving social, technological and economic conditions.





Sharpness : A New Village, A New Growth Point
Stroud's 21st Century Garden Settlement to Meet Tomorrow's Needs

Document Prepared by **Maple Rock Design Ltd** on behalf of **Hunter Page Planning**