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Land at Wotton Road, Kingswood

# VISION DOCUMENT

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February 2023

**Vistry Group**

# Preface

This Vision Document has been prepared by The Environmental Dimension Partnership (EDP) to promote Land at Wotton Road, to the North of the village of Kingswood, in Stroud District, for a residential village extension. This submission is on behalf of Vistry Group who are in control of the land promoted in this document.

This document presents an opportunity at Land at Wotton Road, Kingswood to deliver around 100 new homes set within a beautiful natural landscape. It will include a mix of attractive high-quality family homes, including affordable housing, a community park with allotments, orchards and play spaces, new traffic-free cycling and recreational routes.

## Vistry Group

Developer



Masterplanning, Ecology, Heritage and Landscape



Planning



Flooding and Drainage

Report Ref: ehp 7745_1001				
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## Introducing Vistry

The Vistry Group was formed in January 2020 following Bovis Homes' acquisition of Linden Homes and Galliford Try Partnerships businesses. In November 2022 Vistry acquired Countryside Partnerships and became the top housebuilder in England by volume. The expanded Countryside Partnerships, working with local authorities, housing associations and investors to deliver affordable housing, is now the largest private sector provider of affordable housing.

Vistry has an HBF five-star rating and was awarded Large Housebuilder of the Year in 2021, testament to an ethos of doing the right thing across all operations and the company values of integrity, caring and quality.

Vistry wish to promote Land north of Kingwood to create a sustainable residential extension to the village, with extensive green infrastructure provided and a portion of the Wotton, Charfield and Kingswood (WCK) Greenway cycle route.



# 1. Site Context

## A Sustainable Location

The site presents an opportunity to deliver high quality housing to the north of Kingswood, to help meet local housing needs. The site is well connected to both Kingswood and Wotton-under-Edge, benefiting from proximity to a range of local services, schools and community facilities.

Development of the site will also enable the creation of a new Sustrans cycle link to the WCK Greenway, providing a well landscaped, segregated off-road route between Wotton, Charfield and Kingswood, which also connects to Renishaw, a major local employer, and Charfield train station (planned for re-opening) to the west of the site. The site is located outside of the Cotswold AONB in an area of high housing need for both open market and affordable family homes.

## The Site

- The site amounts to a total of 4.38 hectares (1ha);
- Currently in agricultural use, it is comprised of 3 fields, divided by hedgerows and blocks of mixed woodland;
- The site is accessed off Wotton Road to the west, and is bound to the east and south east by Vineyard Lane,
- The land sits close to Katharine Lady Berkeley's School to the west and is adjacent to Pennwood Lodge Care Home and Westgreen House Care Centre to the south and Kingswood House to the north; and
- A public right of way runs along the northern boundary.



Figure 1. Strategic Context Plan



Wotton  
Community PARC

Katherine Lady  
Berkeley's School

Wotton  
Hill

Wotton-  
under-Edge

Kingswood

 The Site

 Public Right of Way

 Primary Roads

## 2. Planning Context

This document illustrates how the site can be designed to meet current and emerging national policy and best practice.

Kingswood is an extremely sustainable location, which is well connected strategically, being located close to Junction 14 of the M5 and Charfield train station to the west. The thriving market town of Wotton, with good facilities and employment opportunities, is located to the north of the site and can be reached by public transport or via active travel routes. The village of Kingswood itself is well served by facilities, including a primary school, thriving community hall, post office and shop.

### Stroud District Local Plan (2015)

The Stroud Local Plan was adopted in November 2015, and provides the planning policy framework for the district for the period up to 2031.

The proposals map shows the site located outside of the settlement boundary of Kingswood, within an area of “white land”

(undesignated land). In Policy CP3 (Settlement Hierarchy) Kingswood is designated as a 3rd tier settlement (Accessible Settlement with limited facilities).

On 25th October 2021, the Stroud District draft Local Plan and Evidence Base documents were submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination.

### Kingswood Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

**NDP: Proposals must reinforce local distinctiveness and character through attention to matters of scale, density, massing, height, landscaping, layout and materials as part of achieving a high standard of design**

The Kingswood Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in November 2017 and provides a vision and development guide for the parish of Kingswood from 2014 to 2031.

It forms part of the Development Plan for the district alongside the Stroud District Local Plan.

The site falls outside of the designated neighbourhood area (Kingswood Parish Boundary) which covers the neighbourhood plan area.



## Kingswood Design Statement

The Kingswood Design Statement was adopted as supplementary planning advice (SPAs) on 14th December 2014. SPAs have not been subject to the same level of process as either SPGs or SPDs, However, they can be referred to for guidance and may be used in decision making.

## National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

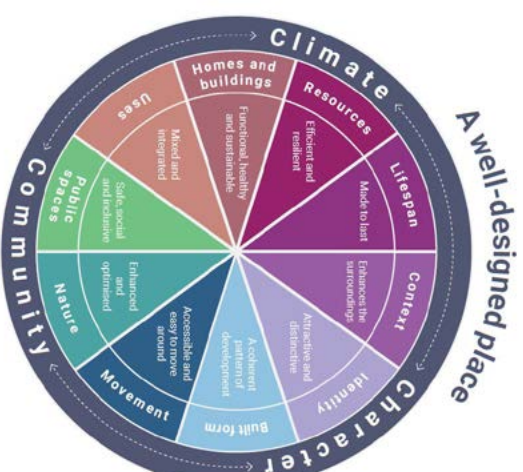
This document sets out the national level policy that guides planning in England. The NPPF advises that growth should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes (NPPF, paragraph 105).

## National Design Guide

The National Design Guide was released in January 2021 and provides an illustrated guide to the delivery of good design. It focusses on the best practice principles to deliver places that are fit for purpose, durable and bring delight. It is structured around the 'ten characteristics of a well designed place' as depicted in the diagram to the left.

## Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission

A government commission produced a report in 2020 seeking to put beauty at the heart of the design and development agenda. Whilst defining beauty can be a subjective undertaking, the vision prepared for Land at Wotton Road, Kingswood will seek to create beauty by responding sensitively to the distinctive character of Kingswood and its natural landscape setting.



## 3. Site Considerations

### Heritage

A heritage appraisal has been carried out and the conclusions have been incorporated into the masterplan to provide a sympathetic and contextual response. The site contains no statutory heritage assets, but is located nearby to heritage assets whose setting could potentially be affected by development.

Kingswood House is a prominent house set in semi-formal grounds fronting onto Wotton Road at the north western edge of the site. The setting of the house within rural fields contributes to its significance and therefore the masterplan should give consideration to the appreciation of the house within a green context and provide appropriate offsets from it.

Park Mill House, a former textile mill house, is located 50m to the east of the study site. It derives its historic interest as a surviving element of a larger textile mill complex in the area, with remnants of the Mill Pond and Sluice within its grounds making an important contribution to its significance. The site forms part of the rural context to the site, and therefore provides a limited contribution to its significance.

It is considered that there is also a historic relationship between these two buildings and that intervisibility between the two properties should be maintained to allow for appreciation of this historic connection.

Further south within the historic core of Kingswood is a Conservation Area that contains several listed buildings and a scheduled monument. There is no visibility from or to the site except some longer distance glimpsed views of the Church of St Mary church tower. Another Conservation Area further north in Wotton-Under-Edge just under 1km away is enclosed by recent development and screened from the site.

No in-principle archaeological constraints have been identified on the site. Consultation with the Local Authority Archaeological Advisor will establish whether further investigative works will be required. If previously unknown archaeological remains are encountered within the site, appropriate mitigation measures will be put in place.

#### Design Considerations

- 1 Maintain open space to the south of the Kingswood House to preserve prominence of the property and rural character on the approach to the village.
- 2 Maintain open space at the eastern boundary of the site to preserve rural character when approaching via the public right of way.
- 3 Maintain open space to preserve inter-visibility between Kingswood House and Park Mill Farm.
- 4 Opportunities to create incidental views to Church of St Mary.



Kingswood House -  
Grade II Listed



Park Mill Farm -  
Grade II Listed

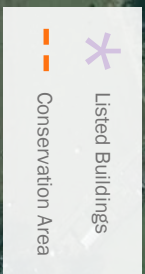


Figure 2. Heritage Considerations and Opportunities

## Ecology

Ecological baseline investigations undertaken by EDP in 2022 included a desk study and an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey. The key conclusions are as follows:

There are no international statutory designations within the site or within its zone of influence; further, there are no statutory or non-statutory ecological designations present within the site and none nearby that will be materially affected by the proposals given their special separation and lack of ecological connections;

- The large majority of the site comprises four poor semi-improved grassland fields, small, scattered patches of tall ruderal and two derelict buildings of negligible intrinsic value. However, a number of more valuable habitats are also present and include a network of hedgerows and several mature trees. Furthermore, there are two ponds present marked on Ordnance Survey maps, that were recorded as being overgrown and inaccessible, as well as a dry ditch running along the eastern boundary of the site.
- In terms of protected species, the habitats within the site provide potential foraging and commuting opportunities for bats, with the potential for roosting bats to be present within the two derelict buildings as well as mature trees. The habitat within the site has the potential to support foraging and

sett building for badger, may attract reptiles as well as an assemblage of breeding birds. In addition, the site supports suitable terrestrial habitat for great crested newt. It is considered that the site does not provide suitable habitat for otter and water vole.

- Based on the survey and desk study carried out so far, further Phase 2 surveys are likely to be required for: breeding birds, foraging bats, roosting bats, badger, great crested newt, and reptiles.

### Design Opportunities

- Owing to the dominance of low value grassland fields across the site there is ample opportunity to improve the site's ecological value and deliver a net gain to biodiversity of at least 10%;
- Buffering of existing landscape features and protection of bat corridors;
- Installation of durable, good-quality bird and bat boxes erected on or within the walls of new buildings and retained trees; and
- Creation of new wetland habitat to create new breeding and foraging habitats for amphibians, and a range of aquatic biodiversity and restoration/management of existing ponds to maximise their potential.



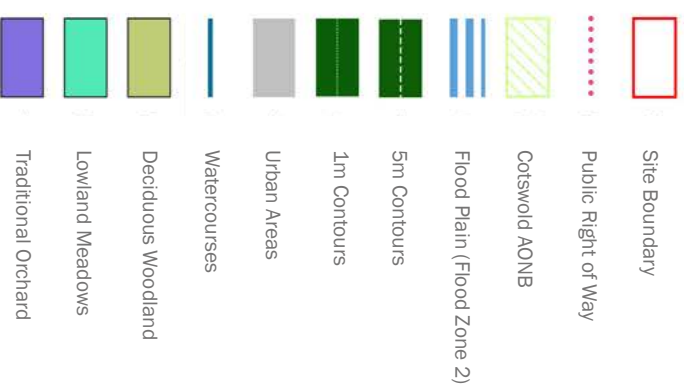
**Figure 3. Ecology - Habitats and Opportunities**

## Landscape

The site is situated in a gently undulating landscape that is populated by a dense network of hedgerows and mature trees providing a level of enclosure that limits local views into the site. It does not contain any landscape designations, but does lie approximately 0.5km south of the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The site is adjacent to Kingswood House to the north, Pennwood Lodge Care Home to the south and Katharine Lady Berkeley's School sits within close proximity to the north west. This means that the site is perceived within a settlement fringe context.

Residential development at the site would be partly seen from the raised landform at the edge of Wotton-Under-Edge within the AONB to the north. However, views of the development would be set within the context of the existing settlement (including the school and other built elements) and surrounded and interspersed with mature vegetation. It is unlikely that it would be perceived as a dominant feature in the view.



### Design Opportunities

- Respond positively to the special qualities of the AONB through the creation of a strong green infrastructure framework to integrate development into the landscape and townscape context.
- Create a landscape buffer between the site and the landscape to the north by strengthening the existing boundaries with tree and hedgerow plantings.
- Reinstate traditional orchard planting to the north of the site to recreate priority habitat.

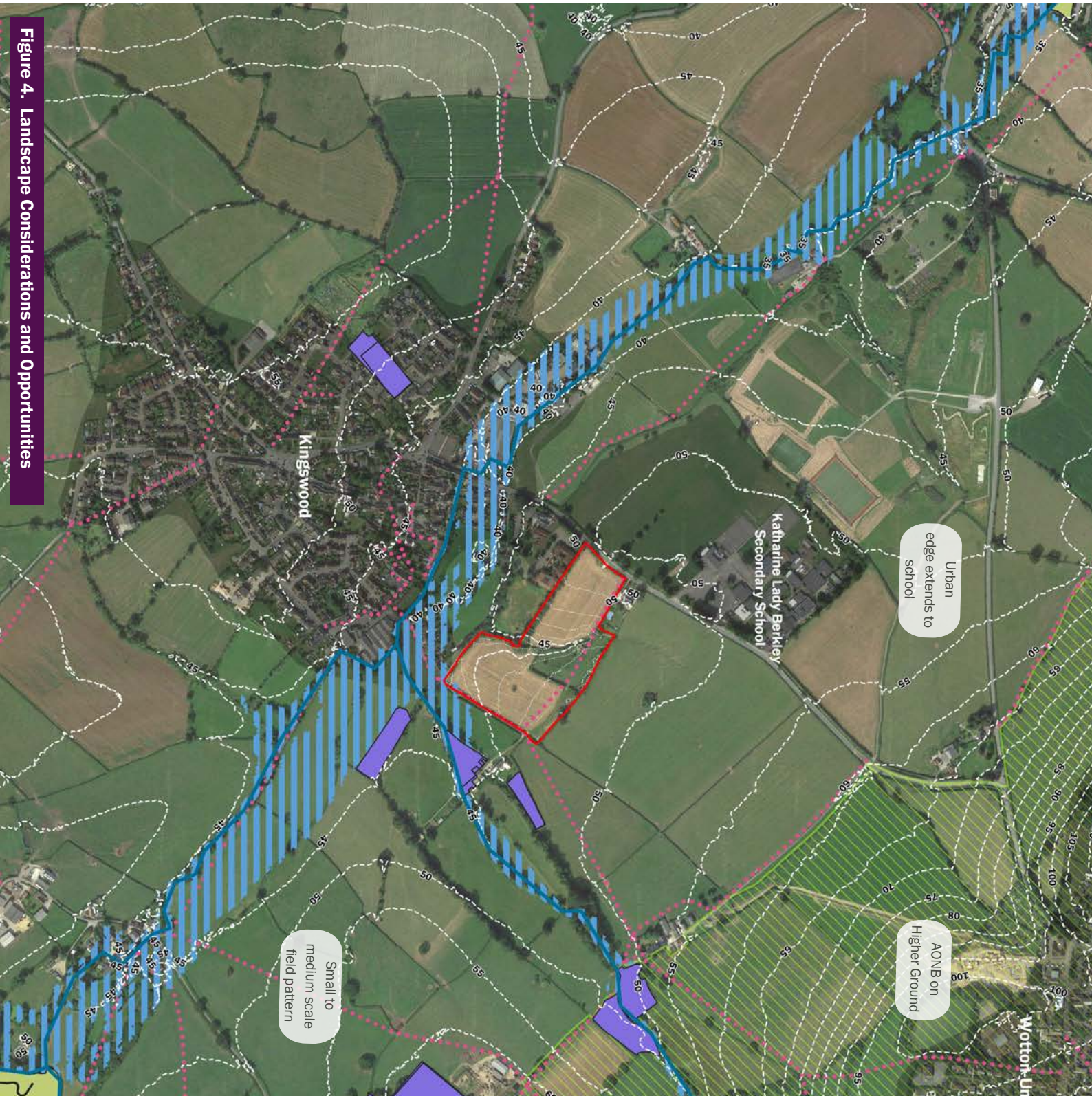
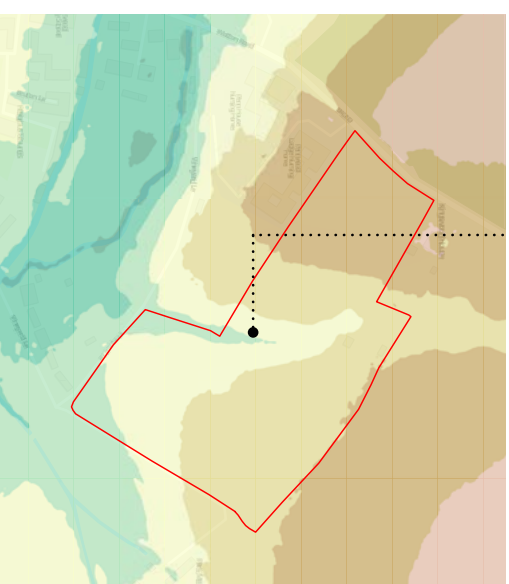


Figure 4. Landscape Considerations and Opportunities

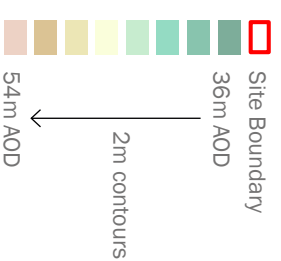
## Flooding and Drainage

- The existing south west surface water flow route will be maintained within the masterplan;
- Two bio-detention areas are shown indicatively, adjacent to the surface water flow route to form a blue infrastructure corridor through the centre of the site that mimics the natural pattern of drainage. The bio-detention areas will discharge into existing SW channel at a controlled rate.
- Attenuation areas will also be integrated within the development, e.g. permeable paving, geocellular attenuation, swales along roads and tree pits;
- A culvert will be required under the proposed road crossing the central valley to maintain the flow route. Additional culverts will also be required under pavement or cycleway crossings to maintain existing flow characteristics;
- There is a surface water flood area in the south east corner of the site that must be avoided by development (maintaining the current land profile); and
- Existing drainage ditches around the northern and eastern site boundaries are to be maintained.

**Road crossing in this location will require a culvert underneath**



**Figure 5. Topography and Drainage**





Surface Water flood area to be avoided by development



Figure 6. EA Flood Zones

- Site Boundary
- Flood Zone 3
- Flood Zone 2
- Main River

Development to avoid surface water flow route maintained within open space

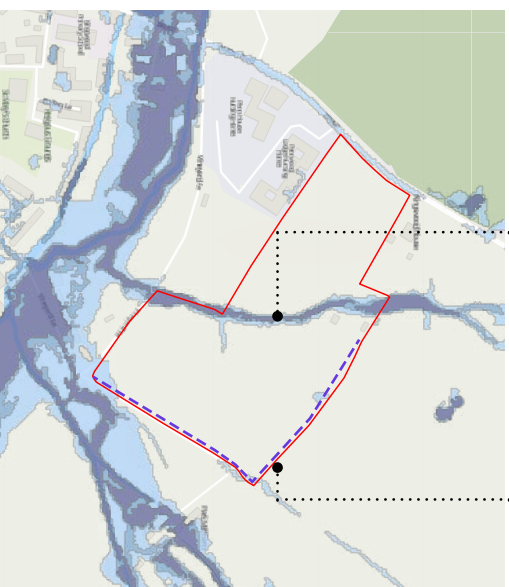


Figure 7. EA Surface Water Flood Risk

- Site Boundary
- Risk of Flooding from surface water:
- High - 1 in 30 Annual Probability
- Medium - 1 in 100 Annual Probability
- Low - 1 in 1000 Annual Probability
- Existing Ditches

## 4. Concept Masterplan

The first principles have been to retain, enhance and extend the existing green infrastructure framework on site and integrate the new homes within a beautiful landscape setting. The masterplan responds sympathetically to the landscape, visual and heritage analysis in terms of creating a multi-functional buffer to the north that allows for appreciation of the historic buildings nearby and allowing for intervisibility between them, whilst providing additional planting to filter views from the north and providing an attractive setting for the cycle route.

The site benefits from having an existing turning head off Wootton Road on the western boundary. This priority junction will form the primary vehicular access point into the site, as well as access for pedestrians and cyclists. The street layout has been designed to utilise existing breaks in the hedgerows to limit any loss of these features. Streets will be tree lined and provide a significant canopy cover to the site to provide a climate positive environment.

- 1 Formal open space with feature broadleaf tree at site entrance in response to the setting of Kingswood House
- 2 Community Garden, potentially including: refurbished agricultural outbuildings for community use, reinstated orchard, grow spaces/allotments, natural play features, communal space and picnic tables/bench seating
- 3 Native tree planting to enhance hedgerow to northern edge whilst maintaining a visual connection between Park Mill Farm and Kingswood House
- 4 Buildings set back on eastern edge to allow space for tree planting and the retention of the existing ditch.
- 5 Sustainable drainage integrated within valley profile, with biodiverse wetland habitat creation and nature trails

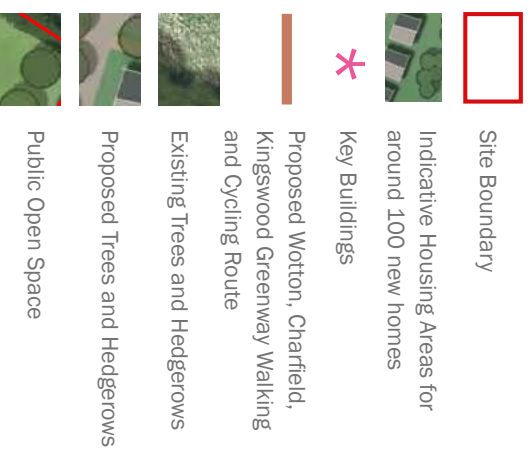




Figure 8. Concept Masterplan

# 5. Design Principles

## Promoting Active Travel

### Integration of the Proposed Sustrans Wotton-Charfield-Kingswood Greenway

Wotton Road has a good quality footpath along the western side of the carriageway providing a link between Wotton-Under-Edge and Kingswood.

Vistry have been in detailed discussions with Sustrans in relation to the Wotton, Charfield and Kingswood (WCK) Greenway Project. This initiative seeks to create a traffic-free walking and cycling route linking Wotton, Charfield and Kingswood, with an additional link to Katherine Lady Berkeley School and the Renishaw employment site.

The site forms an important opportunity to link to the school along the existing footpath CWE49 alignment and provide a safe onward connection to Charfield, and the potential new station there.

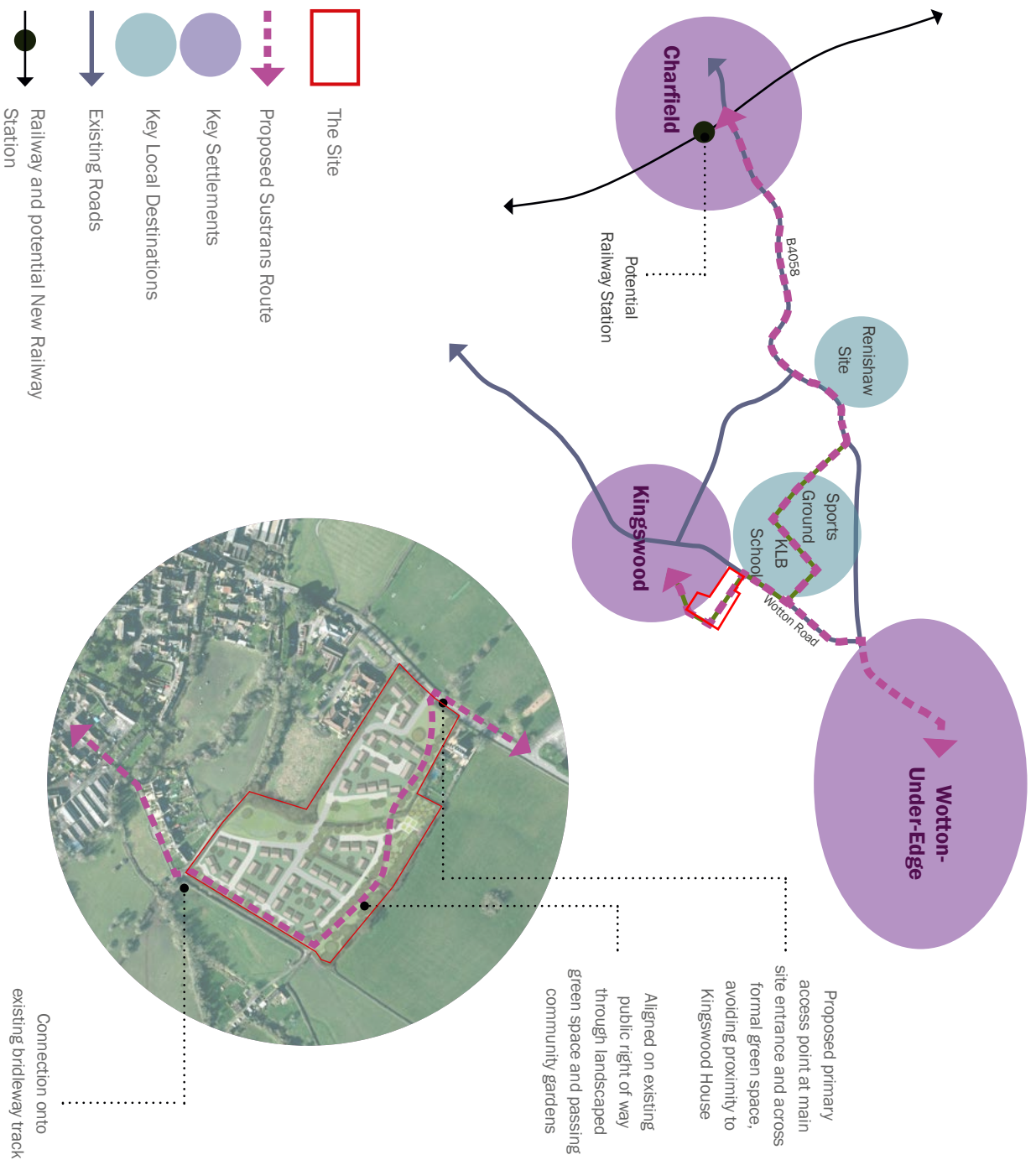
Figure 5 opposite shows an indicative alignment of the potential route.



Example image of a Greenway: Sustrans Walking and Cycling Guidance

#### Active Travel Benefits Delivered:

- Allow for a 3m wide dedicated footpath and cycle route through the site to connect between Wotton Road and Park Mill Farm;
- Explore the potential to deliver a crossing on Wotton Road; and
- Allow for secondary cycle and walking routes through the site to link southwards to Vineyard Lane.



**Figure 9. Proposed Wotton, Charfield and Kingswood (WCK) Greenway Route**

## A New Garden for the Community

A great opportunity exists to create a new garden to the north of the site for the use of new and existing residents. This will be a multi-functional space with food growing, orchards, play, wildlife spaces and quiet tranquil spaces combined, plus the sustans route connecting to it.

### The New Community Garden could include:

- Two existing agricultural out buildings in the northern part of the site provide an opportunity for conversion into community facilities.
- The existing remnant traditional orchard will be reinstated as a Wassail Garden with new fruit tree planting using local varieties and managed organically for biodiversity.
- Community grow spaces will be provided, creating a communal space for residents to come together that will include seating and picnic benches as well as flexible open space for small events or games.
- Childrens natural play features such as logs and boulders will be integrated within the landscaped edge of the site amongst broadleaved tree planting, meadow and scrub areas.
- Biodiversity will be enhanced through new tree planting, wildflower meadows and areas of wetland surrounding the central watercourse.



High quality pathways , wildflower margins and signage





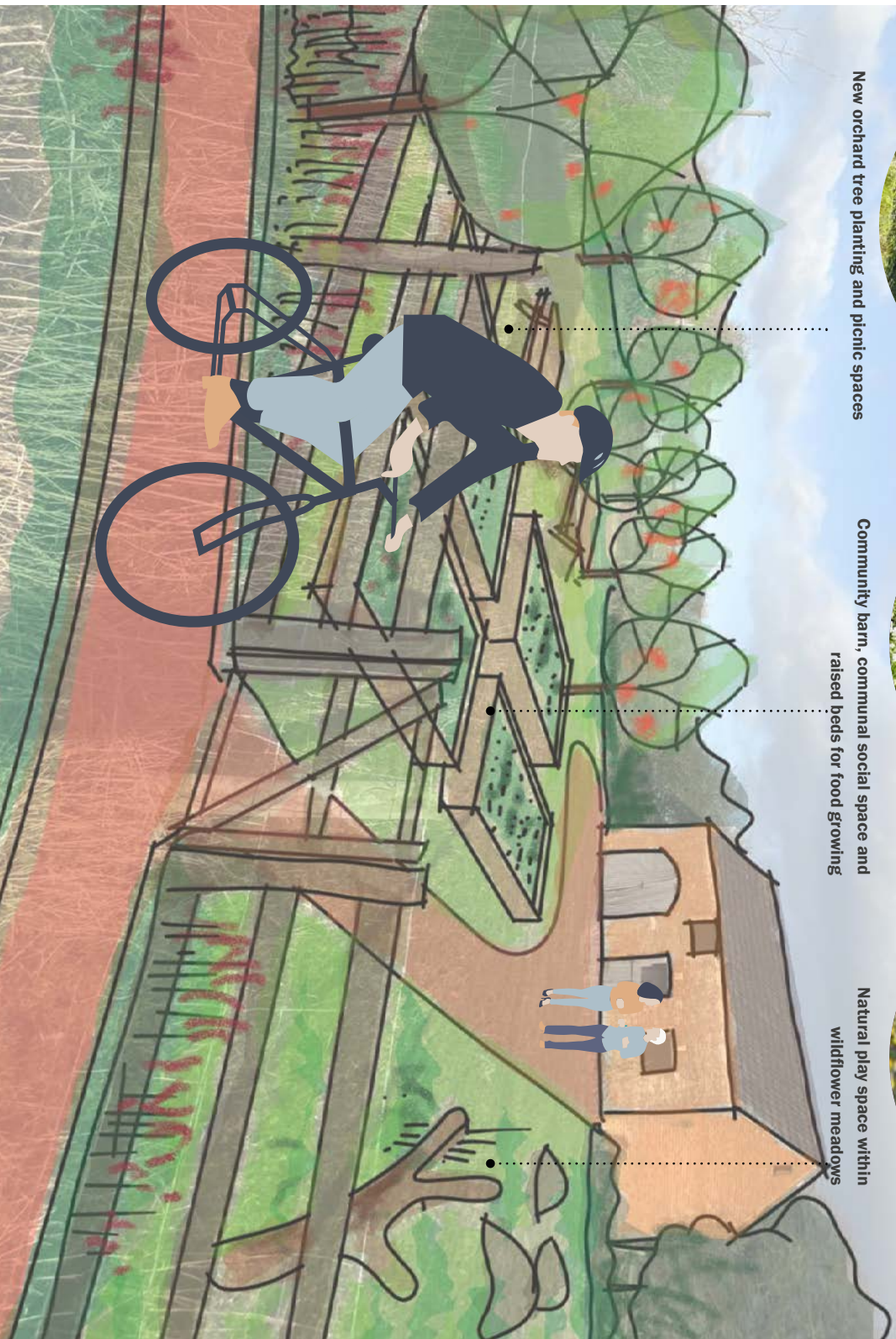
New orchard tree planting and picnic spaces



Community barn, communal social space and raised beds for food growing



Natural play space within wildflower meadows



## A Climate Resilient Community

### Commitment to Sustainability

Vistry Group have a dedicated in-house sustainability team working to improve practices and materials across sites. By the end of 2025, Vistry Group will be diverting 100% of waste from its sites away from landfill, with an overall reduction of waste of 20% per plot core to 2021. By 2025 Vistry are aiming to achieve a 75-80% reduction in CO2e (Carbon Dioxide equivalent, the metric measure used to compare emissions) compared to 2021.

A new range of high quality homes has been designed to meet the anticipated Future Homes Standard 2025. These are gas-free, and, through a fabric-first approach, seek to reduce energy demand within homes in the first place, as well as featuring air-source heat pumps and heat recovery systems.



- a. .150mm cavities
- b. air source heat pump, or
- c. potential hydrogen boilers
- d. solar panels
- e. battery storage
- f. smart controls
- g. underfloor heating
- h. electric vehicle charge points
- i. improved air tightness
- j. heat recovery ventilation
- k. superstructure material for embodied carbon

Vistry are committed to using modern methods of constructions (MMC) where possible, delivered via their in-house timber frame manufacturing plants around the UK. MMC reduces the amount of materials used by over 45%; reduces waste generation by over 50%; and reduces HGV movements at the construction site by over 40%; not to mention a reduction in the build time.

Vistry recognises the high environmental and social value of green and blue infrastructure, and, ahead of the national mandate, is designing in a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain into all its new communities. Vistry works in partnership with a number of wildlife groups, including the Bumblebee Trust, British Hedgehog Preservation Society and the Bat Conservation Trust, to help protect these important species through, for example, the inclusion of bee bricks, hedgehog highways and bat-friendly lighting schemes and foraging routes.

Homes will be built to the Future Homes Standard and will be gas-free, using renewable technologies.



### **Integrated Sustainable Drainage**

The central surface water corridor will form a biodiverse feature to the site with ephemeral waterbodies, cascade swales and varying plant communities along the banks, using the natural profiles of the land. The road connection will be culverted.




### **Village Living**

A contemporary development will be created, taking influences from the character of Kingswood in terms of the informal village form, boundary treatments, architectural features, materials and styles.

### **Biodiversity**

The northern buffer will be planted to strengthen the existing hedgerows, new woodland pockets, and avenue planting alongside the sustrans footpath, allowing intervisibility between the Kingswood House and Mill Farm. This will form a strong identity and beautiful setting for the development, provide a softening of views transitioning into the open countryside and deliver biodiversity benefits.





“Land at Wotton Road, Kingswood, presents an opportunity to create a sustainable extension to the village, providing around 100 new homes, a community park, natural open spaces and extensive planting plus inclusion of the proposed Sustrans Greenway cycle route linking Wootton and Charfield. Designed with zero-carbon principles and prioritising nature and biodiversity, the development will be well connected, environmentally responsive and beautifully designed.”





**The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd**

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