

Land off Singleton Drive Grange Farm Development Brief



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milton keynes council

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and Ownership

1.1.1 The site extends to approximately 0.55 ha (1.36 acres) and is located within Grange Farm grid square. The site is strategically located on the entrance to the grid square from Portway (H5), which leads directly to Central Milton Keynes approximately 2 miles away to the north east. (see figures 1-3).

1.1.2 The site is in the ownership of Milton Keynes Development Partnership* (MKDP).

Vision Statement:

“To create a high quality residential development that marks a key gateway into Grange Farm and helps contribute to housing need in Milton Keynes.”

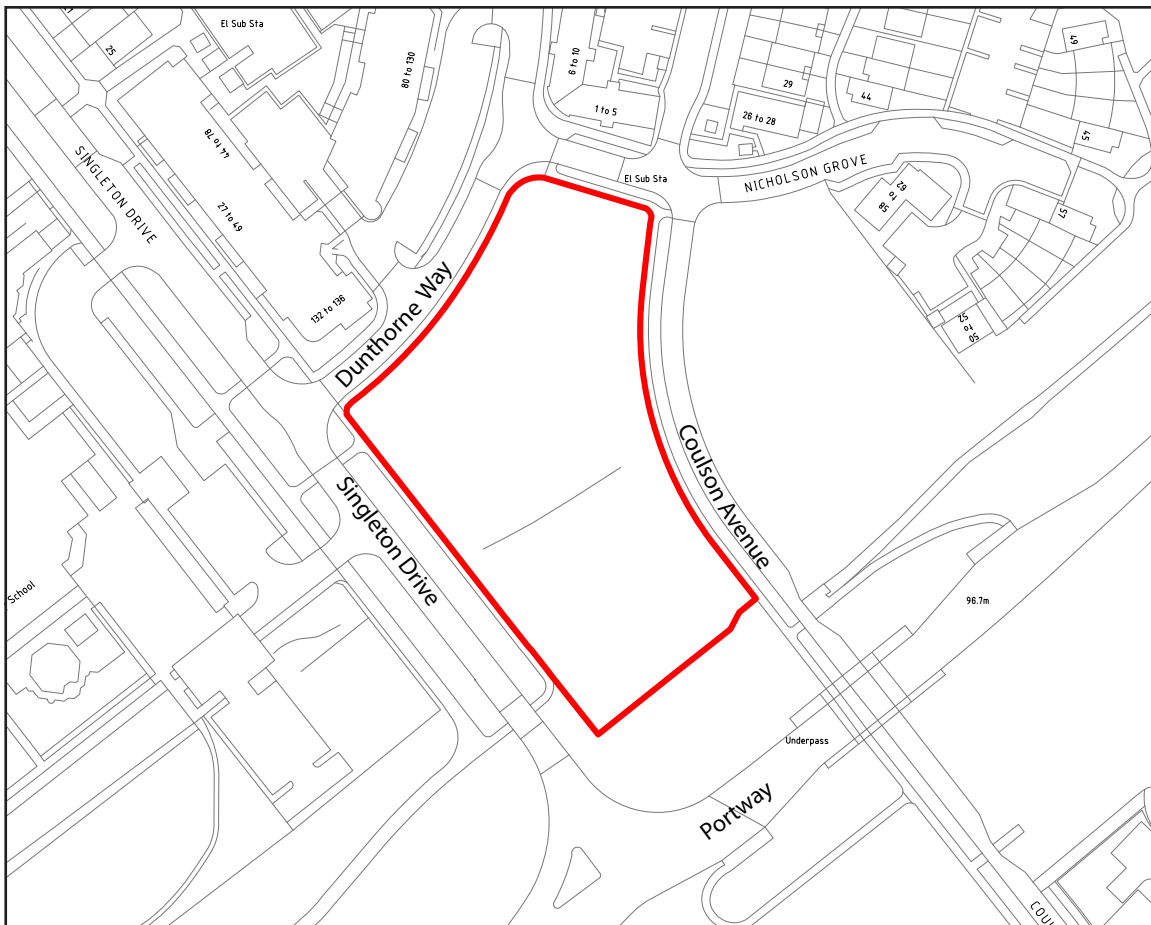


Figure 1: The Site

1.2 Purpose of the Development Brief

- 1.2.1 The purpose of this document is to provide planning and design guidance for the development of this site in Milton Keynes. This will aid the development process, by allowing developers to submit informed proposals that respond to Council (MKC), landowner and other local stakeholder expectations for the site, and respect the requirements of MKC planning policy.
- 1.2.2 The Brief has been prepared to help deliver the Council Plan as well as the Core Strategy.
- 1.2.3 The consultation process associated with the preparation of this development brief is intended to give all interested parties full opportunities to set out their aspirations for the site and to identify constraints that need to be accommodated.
- 1.2.4 The Development Brief has been commissioned, not by the Planning Authority, but rather by the landowner and it has not been subject to the all the statutory requirements that a planning document would have to undergo. The Brief has however been prepared to accord with current national and local Planning Policy and has been subject to public consultation. In addition it will be submitted for approval by MKC Cabinet and if approved will therefore be a material consideration in helping determine planning applications albeit with limited planning weight.

**MKDP is a limited liability partnership set up and owned by Milton Keynes Council to facilitate Milton Keynes's continued growth and economic success by promoting the development of land assets transferred to the council from the Homes and Communities Agency, in line with the Council's Corporate Plan and Economic Development Strategy. MKDP take a commercial and entrepreneurial approach to sell and develop these assets with third party developers and investors, whilst ensuring full community and stakeholder engagement in the preparation of development briefs for the sites.*

It is a requirement on the MKDP that an adopted Development Brief must be in place before they commence marketing or developing any of their larger sites. This is intended to enable the Council, following consultation with all interested parties, to set clear expectations for the nature of any future development on the site; but also to assist the MKDP in marketing the site and to give potential bidders/development partners a degree of confidence about the parameters within which they should develop their proposals.



Figure 2: Site Location



1.3 Structure of Brief

The Brief is divided into five sections:

Section 1 outlines the purpose of the brief, its location and ownership.

Section 2 describes the planning policy context of the site.

Section 3 provides a site analysis of the site itself and the surrounding area. A thorough understanding of this will have an important

bearing on the key design principles and parameters.

Section 4 outlines what the Brief is seeking to deliver in terms of land uses

Section 5 represents the Key Design and Development Principles, that should inform any development proposals. The accompanying Parameters Plan spatially illustrates the design principles.

SECTION 2: POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in 2012. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 2.1.2 The following sections of the NPPF are of particular relevance to the development of this site:
- Promoting healthy communities
 - Requiring good design
- 2.1.3 As of 6 April 2015, National Planning Policy has been strengthened to make it clear that the Government's expectation is that Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) will be provided in new developments. To this effect it is expected that, where planning applications are for major development, the Local Planning Authority must ensure that SuDS are put in place, unless demonstrated to be inappropriate.
- 2.1.4 Milton Keynes Council will therefore determine planning applications in accordance with national standards and local policy, whilst taking into account technical advice provided by the Lead Local Flood Authority.

2.2 Draft Site Allocations Plan

- 2.2.1 The Site Allocations Plan has been prepared to support the delivery of the housing targets for Milton Keynes, which have been set by the Core Strategy. It was submitted for examination in April 2017.
- 2.2.2 Land off Singleton Drive, Grange Farm is allocated for housing. Policy SAP3 includes

the following key principles:

- i. Proposals should maintain pedestrian access through the site and provide enhanced crossing points to both Christ the Sower Ecumenical Primary School and the local centre.
- ii. Proposals should respect any other principles established in any future Development Brief.

- 2.2.3 Proposed Modifications to the Site Allocations Plan were published in February 2018.

2.3 Proposed Submission Plan:MK

- 2.3.1 The Proposed Submission Plan:MK document was published in October 2017. It is anticipated that an examination into Plan:MK will take place in summer 2018.
- 2.3.2 Plan:MK includes policies on sustainable construction (SC1), flood risk (FR2), biodiversity (NE2, NE3), open space (L4), design (D1-D4), housing (HN1-HN6), transport (CT1-CT3, CT5-CT6), digital communications (CT9), parking (CT10), promoting healthy communities (EH7) and infrastructure (INF1).
- 2.3.3 Policy HN1 encourages higher density development in locations with good accessibility to facilities and public transport.

2.4 Milton Keynes Local Plan

- 2.4.1 The Milton Keynes Local Plan was adopted in December 2005. The following Local Plan policies have been 'saved' by the Secretary of State. They remain in force until superseded by policies in other development plan documents, e.g. Plan:MK, Site Allocations Plan.

2.4.2 The site is allocated in the Local Plan as a “reserve site” (Policy C9). “Reserve Site” is the term used to describe small sites in residential housing areas that are left undeveloped to accommodate unforeseen local needs. Housing is one of the permissible uses on this reserve site (Local Plan appendix C9).

2.4.3 Policies H4-H5 and L3 set out the Council’s requirements with regard to affordable housing, and open space, respectively. Policy H8 sets out an average density for Grange Farm of 35 dwellings per hectare (dph).

2.4.4 Policy D4 of the Local Plan sets out the Council’s requirements with regard to sustainable construction.

2.4.5 Policies D1, D2 and D2A are general design policies that apply borough-wide. They look at the impact of development proposals on locality and the design of buildings. Policies T10 and T15 take account of traffic and parking provision respectively, while Policy T11 sets out the Council thresholds regarding whether or not a Transport Assessment/Travel Plan is required.

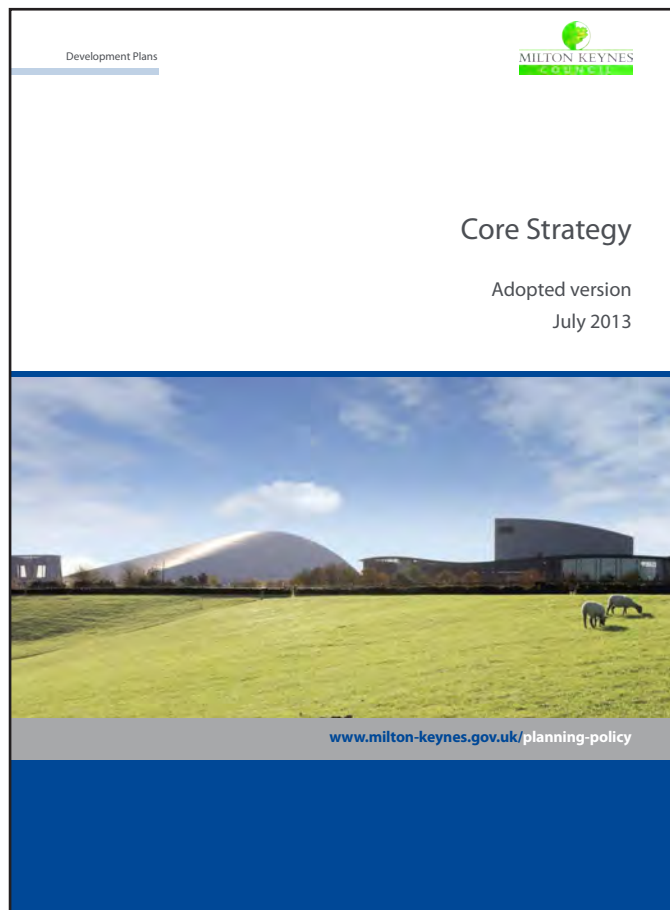
2.5 Core Strategy

2.5.1 The Core Strategy was adopted in July 2013 and forms part of the development plan for Milton Keynes.

- 2.5.2 Relevant Core Strategy policies include:
- Policy CSA National Planning Policy Framework - Presumption in favour of sustainable development
 - Policy CS10 Housing
 - Policy CS11 A Well Connected Milton Keynes

- Policy CS12 Developing Successful Neighbourhoods
- Policy CS13 Ensuring High Quality, New Designed Places
- Policy CS18 Healthier and Safer Communities
- Policy CS19 The Historic and Natural Environment
-

2.5.3 Milton Keynes benefits from an innovative and strategic approach to open space provision and surface water management. In line with local policy contained within the Core Strategy, all



Core Strategy (2013)

new developments will be required to ensure that flood management is planned at the largest appropriate scale, providing sustainable and strategic surface water drainage as part of a network of multi-purpose open spaces.

2.6 Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)/Documents (SPDs)

- 2.6.1 The following Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents (SPG/SPDs) should be considered as material considerations when preparing any planning application for the site:
- Sustainable Construction SPD (2007)
 - Parking Standards SPD (2016)
 - New Residential Development Design Guide (2012)
 - A suite of Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance relating to Developer Contributions

2.7 Council Plan

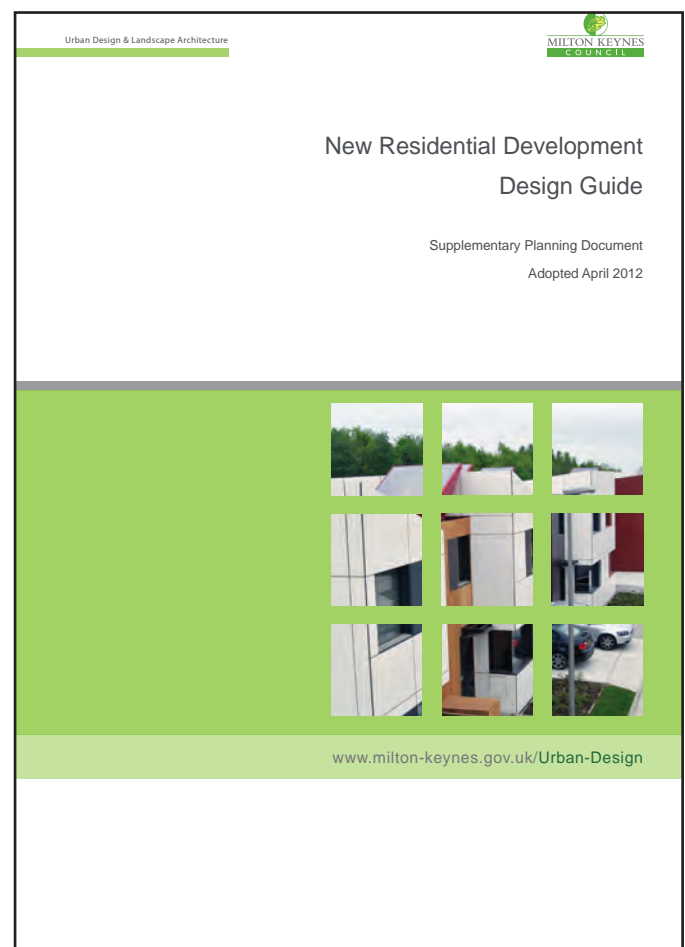
- 2.7.1 This Brief will, in particular, support the key priority of delivering housing.



Parking Standards (2016)

2.8 Planning Summary

- 2.8.1 The site is allocated in the Draft Site Allocations Plan for residential development.



New Residential Development Design Guide (2012)

SECTION 3: CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 It is important to understand the existing site and surrounding area and their features, as this informs the layout and design principles for any redevelopment of the site. Figures 4 to 7 provide an analysis of the site and its context.

3.2 Surrounding Area

Land Uses

- 3.2.1 The site is well located in close proximity to a range of uses. To the west of the site is the Christ the Sower Ecumenical Primary School. To the north of the site is the local centre, which includes a supermarket, a dental practice and a number of unit shops. Residential properties are located above the local centre. The external appearance of these residential uses and roofs in particular provide for a distinctive and contemporary character.
- 3.2.2 Immediately to the east of the site is a grassed area which is allocated as a “reserve site” owned by the Milton Keynes Community Foundation. To the north-east of the site is housing, occurring primarily as apartments. To the south of the site is the Portway (H5) grid road.
- 3.2.3 Slightly further to the north and south (but within 400m) are the key open spaces of Grange Farm Local Park, and Medbourne Playing Fields. Shenley Wood lies just over 400m to the south of the site.



To the north of the site is the local centre which has a contemporary and distinctive character



Housing to the north-east of the site

Building Heights

3.2.4 The primary school on Singleton Drive is 1-2 storeys in height. Otherwise, development in the immediate vicinity of the site is primarily 3 storeys. Given the topography, development on the northern side of Dunthorne Way is at a higher level than the site.

Public Transport Access

3.2.5 There are bus stops located on Portway (H5) and 'hail and ride' stops on Singleton Drive and Dunthorne Way (see figure 5).

Redway network

3.2.6 There is an existing redway on the west side of Singleton Drive. This links into the redway network which provides cycle and pedestrian access to adjoining grid squares, and beyond.



3 storey development adjoining the site



Redway on Singleton Drive

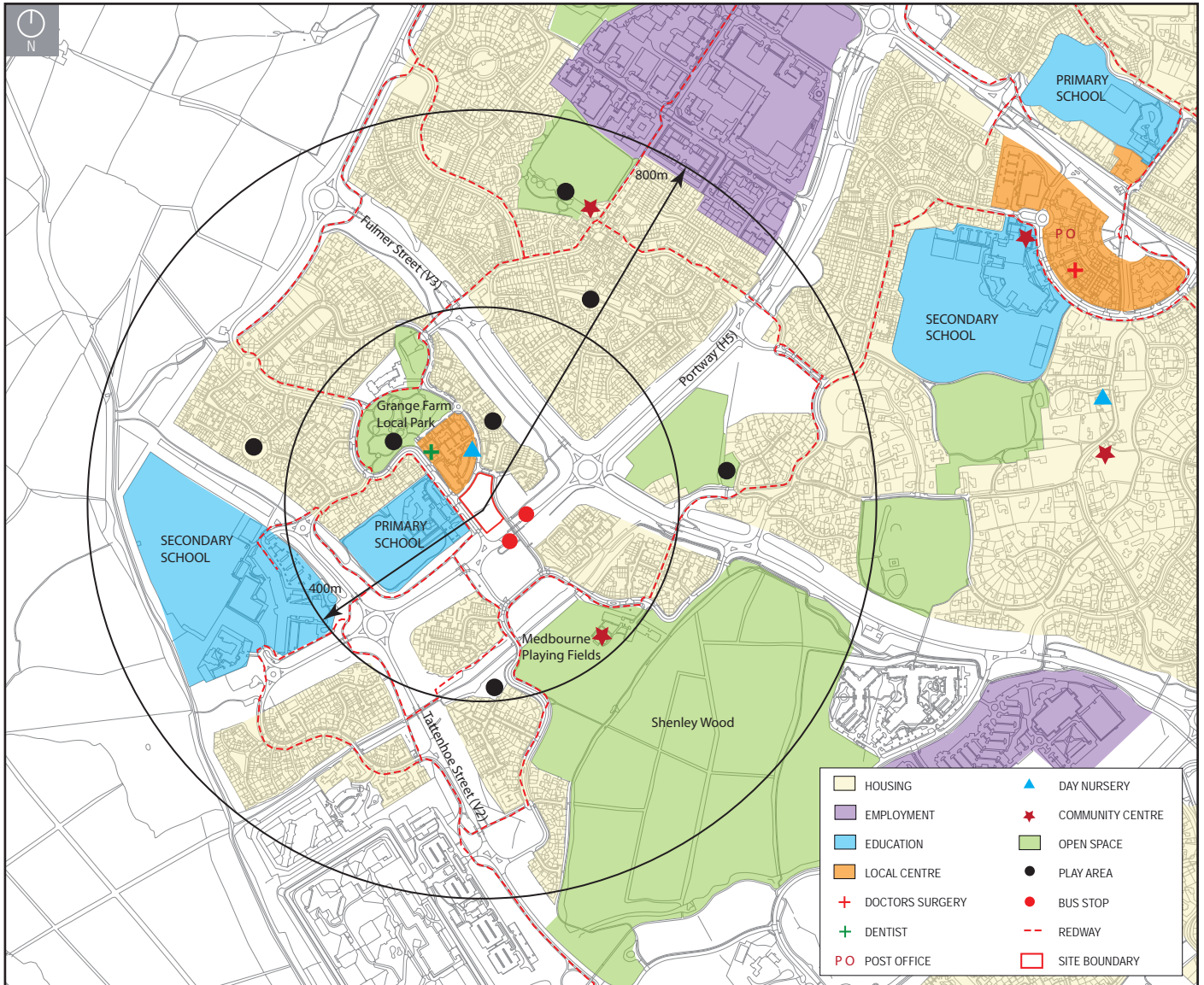


Figure 4: Surrounding Area

3.3 The Site

Topography and Landscape

- 3.3.1 The site is relatively flat. The site slopes down from Dunthorne Way to Portway. Coulson Avenue slopes down from north to south in order to pass under the grid road. There is consequently a change of level between the street and the south-eastern edge of the site.
- 3.3.2 The site comprises rough grassland. There is a mature hedgerow that crosses the site in an east-west direction.
- 3.3.3 The site is partially screened from the Portway grid road by planting. Glimpses of the site can be seen through gaps in the grid road planting.
- 3.3.4 Within the site there is a row of trees along the Dunthorne Way frontage. These trees form part of the original landscape structure created in the development of Grange Farm.
- 3.3.5 There is a line of street trees within the highway verge along Singleton Drive and Coulson Avenue.



Mature hedgerow crosses the site



Level change between the street and south-eastern edge of the site



Street trees along Singleton Drive

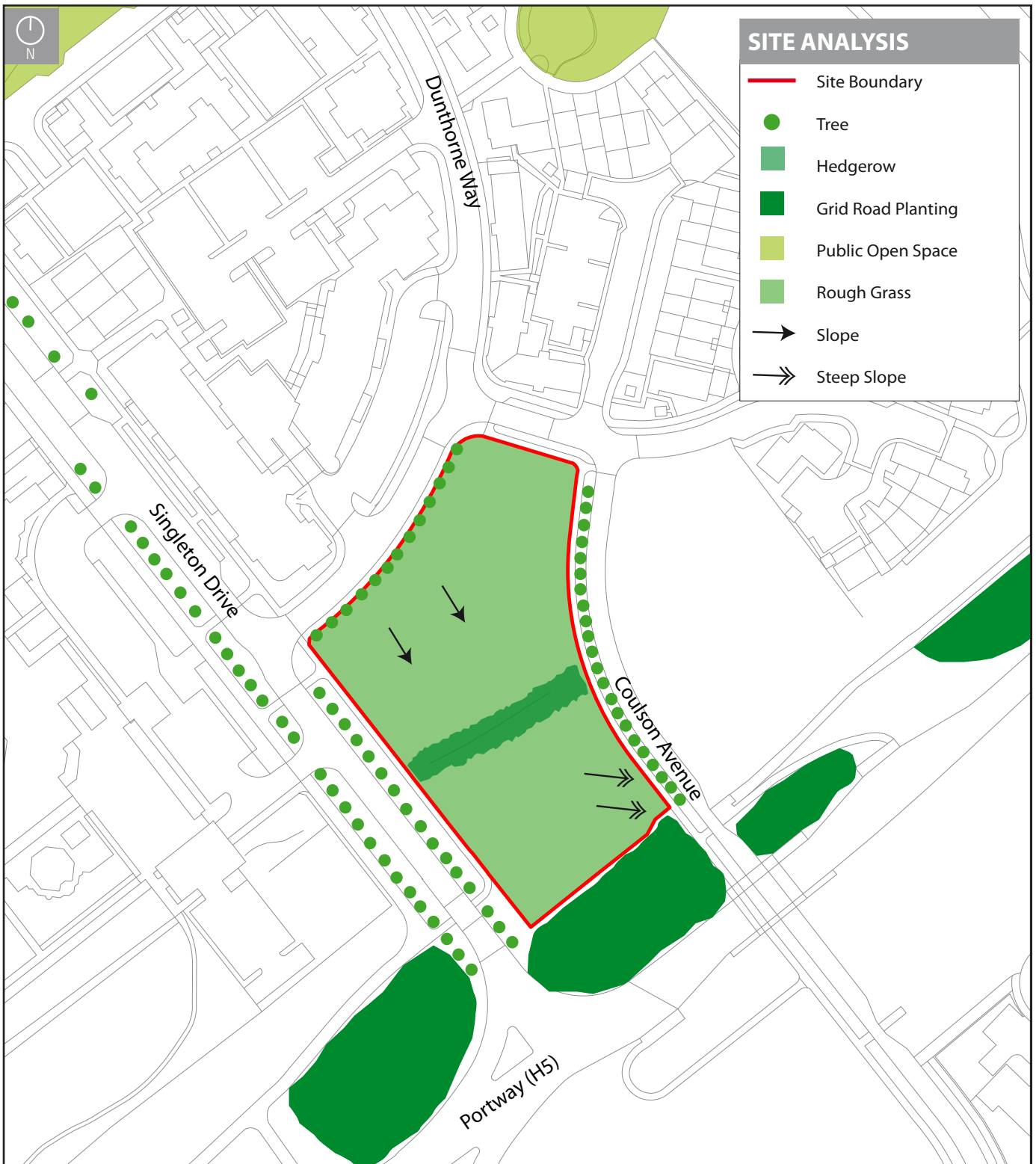


Figure 5: Site Analysis

Vehicular Access

- 3.3.6 Vehicular access to the site can be taken directly from the streets (Singleton Drive, Dunthorne Way and Nicholson Grove/Coulson Drive) which bound the site on three sides. The other side of the site backs onto the planted grid road reserve.
- 3.3.7 Vehicular access off Singleton Drive is restricted by the site's proximity to Portway. The Council's Residential Design Guide states that there should be a minimum distance of 50m between the grid road and the first side access street.
- 3.3.8 The site has easy access to the grid road network with Singleton Drive connecting to Portway (H5). Vehicular access is also provided under the grid road to Medbourne via Coulson Avenue.

Pedestrian Access

- 3.3.9 Singleton Drive, Dunthorne Way and Nicholson Grove/Coulson Drive have a pedestrian footway which adjoins the boundary of the site. There are a number of desire lines across the site. The principal desire line is that which runs from Coulson Avenue to Singleton Drive providing access to the primary school for residents from Medbourne.



Coulson Avenue provides access to Medbourne under the grid road.



View of the site looking west from Coulson Avenue.

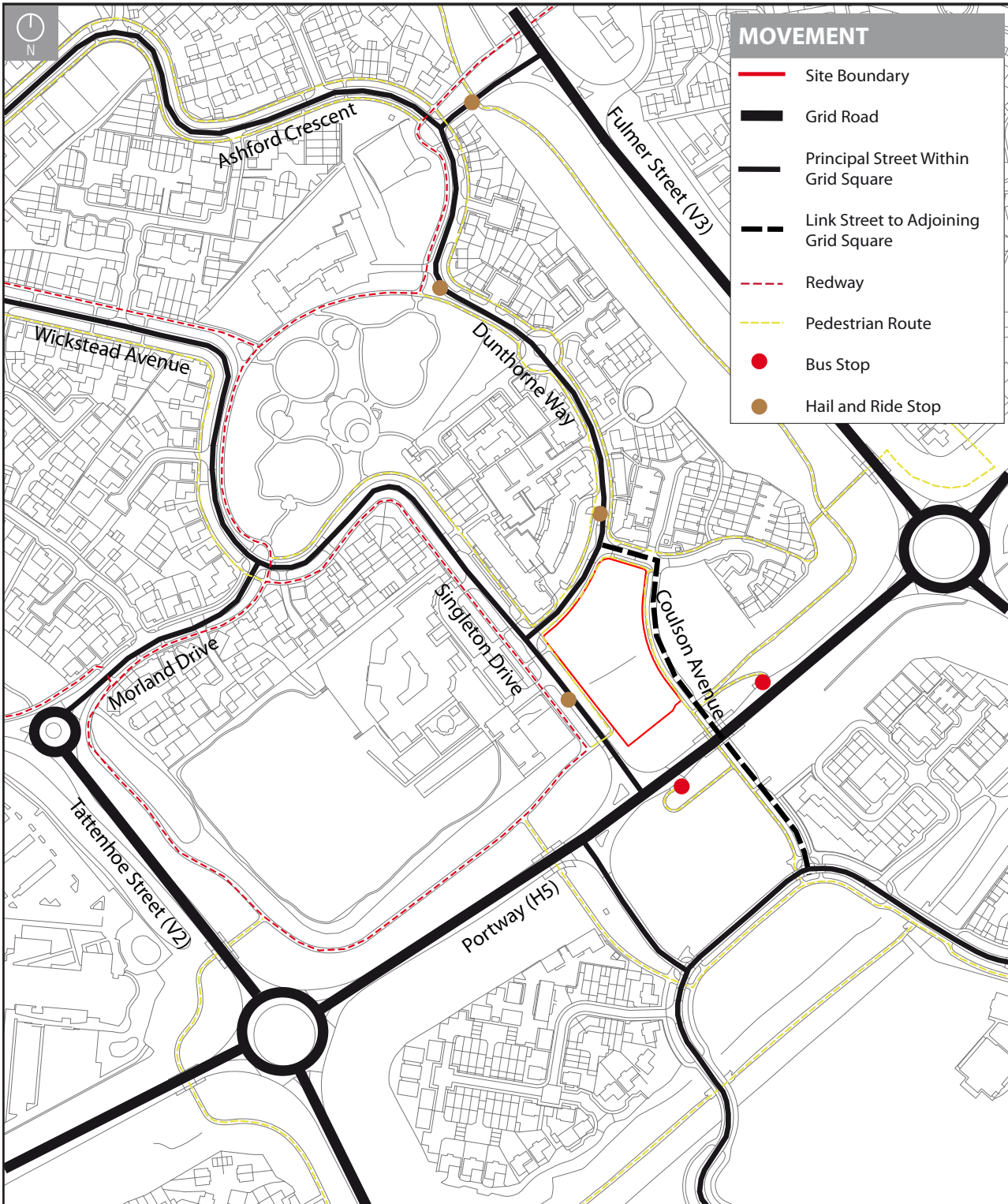


Figure 6: Movement

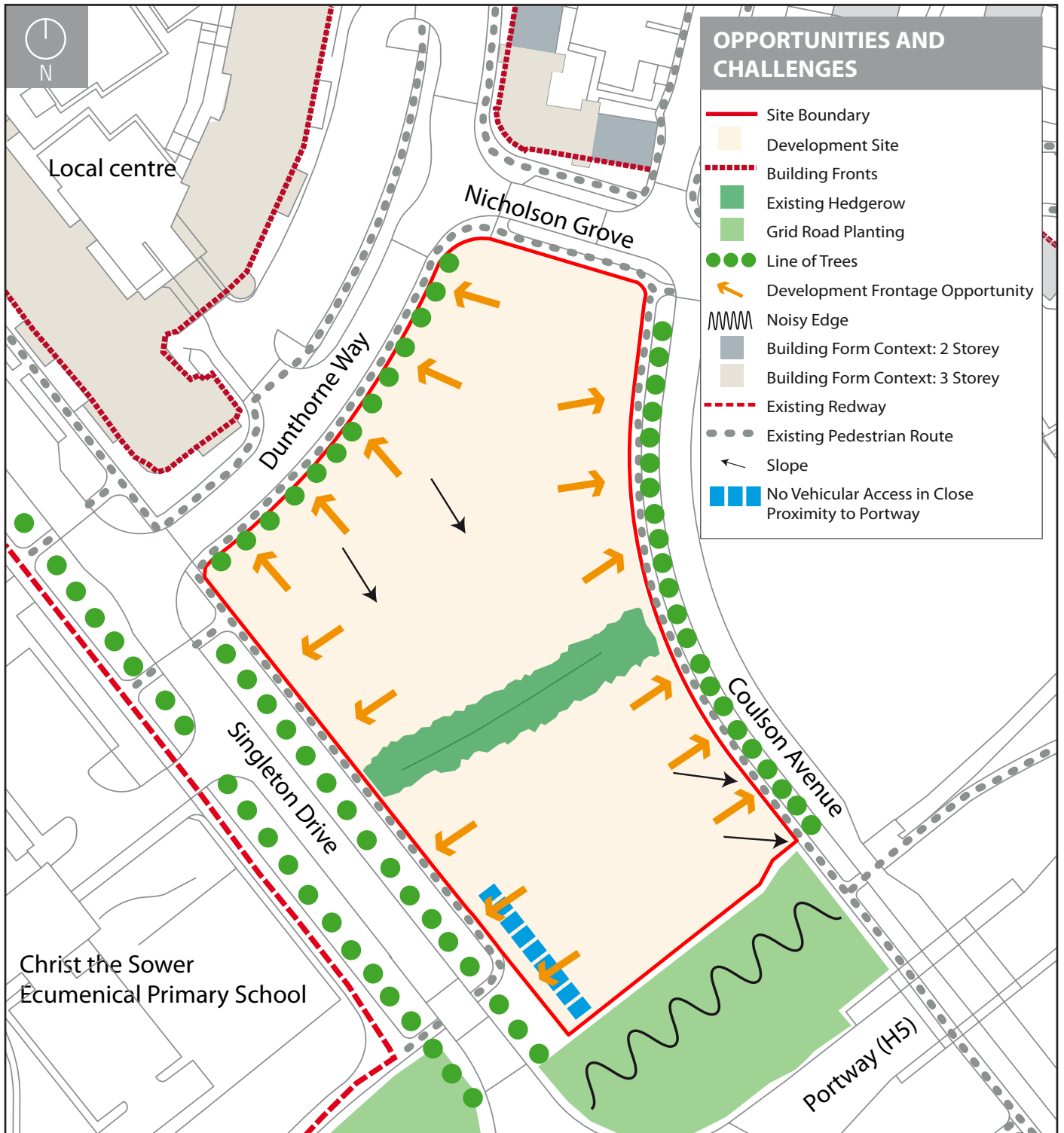


Figure 7: Opportunities and Constraints

3.4 Opportunities and Challenges

3.4.1 The preceding sections of the development brief provide an appraisal of the site's existing character and context.

Opportunities

- Good existing pedestrian and cycle links.
- Site is accessible by public transport and car.
- Site is located in a sustainable location adjacent to the local centre and primary school, and within walking distance of key open spaces.
- Site is relatively flat.
- Site has street frontages along three sides and is large enough to create a perimeter block.

Challenges

- Vehicular noise from the adjacent Portway.
- Mature hedgerow crosses the site.
- Sloping nature of site at south east corner where Coulson Avenue passes underneath Portway will make vehicular access difficult
- Vehicular access restricted off southern end of Singleton Drive due to proximity to Portway.
- Trees within site along Dunthorne Way frontage.
- Need to accommodate a pedestrian access across the site from Coulson Avenue to Singleton Drive.

3.4.2 The opportunities and challenges have served to underpin the rationale behind the approach and principles of this Brief and the Parameters Plan, outlined in section 5.



View of the site from Dunthorne Way looking south.



View of the site from Singleton Drive looking east.

SECTION 4:
DEVELOPMENT
OPPORTUNITIES

4.1 Development Opportunities

- 4.1.1 The planning policy context is outlined in Section 2. The site is allocated for residential development in the Draft Site Allocations Plan. The surrounding context suggests that residential development could take the form of apartments and/or housing.
- 4.1.2 It is expected that 30% of the total housing will be provided as affordable housing, as outlined in the Council's Affordable Housing SPD adopted in 2013.
- 4.1.3 A financial contribution towards off-site local play provision will be required.

SECTION 5:
PLANNING AND DESIGN
PRINCIPLES

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 This section outlines the principles relevant to the design and development of the site. A Parameters Plan serves to spatially represent the key design principles.
- 5.1.2 Development proposals should be based on a thorough appraisal of the site's context.

5.2 Layout

- 5.2.1 Development should be laid out and designed so that it fronts onto Singleton Drive, Dunthorne Way, and Coulson Avenue. Private areas created as part of the development should be inaccessible to the public.
- 5.2.2 Development should furthermore be laid out to retain the existing desire line across the site. This pedestrian route could be accommodated as part of a joint access into the site and potentially follow the existing hedgeline. In either case this pedestrian route should be fronted onto by development and feel like a public route.

5.3 Key Buildings and Frontages

Key Buildings

- 5.3.1 The corner of Dunthorne Way and Singleton Drive should be marked with a key building. The building should turn the corner with active frontages provided to both streets. It should be designed so that it is distinct from the surrounding buildings by virtue of use, scale, architectural style, detailing or materials.

- 5.3.2 The buildings at the corner of Dunthorne Way and Nicholson Grove, and the corner of Coulson Avenue and Nicholson Grove should have active frontages to both streets.

Frontages

- 5.3.3 The most important frontages are onto Singleton Drive and Dunthorne Way. Development should however overlook all other streets as well as the new pedestrian route across the site. In this regard care must be taken to avoid layouts and building footprints that result in blank elevations that front any of these routes.

5.4 Building Heights and Densities

- 5.4.1 Given the higher location of the local centre and its housing above (which is already 3 storeys) relative to the site, housing along Dunthorne Way could be up to 4 storeys in height. Along Dunthorne Way building heights should be 2 ½ - 4 storeys in height. Buildings fronting Coulson Avenue and Singleton Drive should be 2 - 2 ½ storeys.
- 5.4.2 The Local Plan sets out an average density of 35 dph within Grange Farm. However, given the site's location adjacent to a local centre and the immediate context of 3 storeys, it is considered that higher densities, incorporating apartments, would be appropriate.

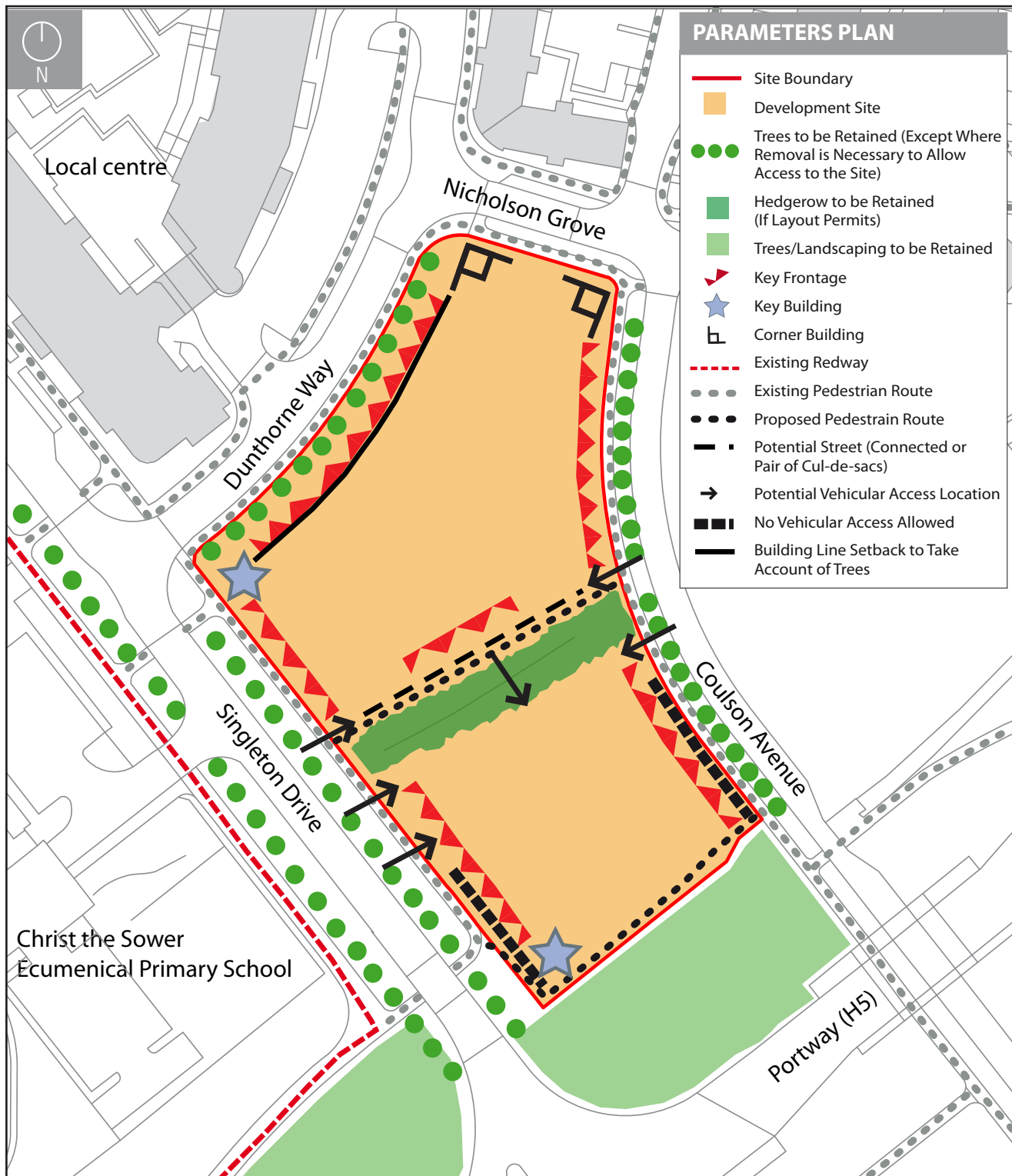


Figure 8: Parameters Plan

5.5 Detailed Design Appearance

- 5.5.1 The architectural approach to development should be informed by the contextual analysis. The Grange Farm Local Centre represents a distinctive and contemporary design which should act as a cue in this regard.
- 5.5.2 As a general principle, the appearance of buildings should reflect Milton Keynes's ethos as a forward thinking, and innovative city. All buildings should be of high design quality,



Contemporary architecture - Grange Farm Local Centre



Contemporary architecture - Oakgrove

should be well proportioned, should enhance their surroundings and be constructed from high quality, durable materials.

5.6 Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency

- 5.6.1 The Council's Local Plan Policy D4 and its supplementary Sustainable Construction SPD sets sustainability standards that will have to be considered as part of the overall design process.

5.7 Access and Movement

- 5.7.1 Vehicular access will not be allowed off Nicholson Grove or Dunthorne Way. No vehicular access should be allowed off Singleton Drive for the first 50 metre from the grid road. At the southern end of Coulson Avenue vehicular access will not be possible, due to changes in level.
- 5.7.2 In order to open up the centre of the site, a street between Singleton Drive and Coulson Avenue could potentially be provided. This could be designed as a connected street or as a pair of cul-de-sacs.
- 5.7.3 A pedestrian link should be provided between Singleton Drive and Coulson Avenue. This will provide pedestrian access for local residents as well as those from Medbourne who currently cross the site to access the primary school to the primary school. This pedestrian link could 'double up' as the potential street outlined in para 5.7.1 and could be located directly to the north of the existing hedgerow. A vehicular access could be created through the hedgerow

to enable access to that part of the development site to the south of the hedgerow (where access off Singleton Drive is restricted and off Coulson Avenue where it is not possible due to level changes).

5.8 Parking

5.8.1 Car and cycle parking must be in accordance with Milton Keynes Council's Parking Standards.

5.8.2 Direct access for vehicles will be difficult to achieve on parts of Coulson Avenue, due to level changes, and on Singleton Drive, due to proximity to Portway. Consequently, there may be the need for some rear parking courts. These should be kept small and private with car parking spaces ideally located on the rear boundary of individual properties.

5.8.3 Alternatively short private drives could be included parallel Singleton Drive and Coulson Avenue which could provide parking to the front or sides of properties.

5.8.4 The location of apartments in these locations would also be an effective way of dealing with the constraint of direct access being not possible - as parking to the rear of apartments is permissible.

5.9 Public Realm and Landscaping

5.9.1 There is an existing hedgerow that runs across the site in an east-west direction. The hedgerow has biodiversity benefits and should be retained within the development, if possible. The proposed pedestrian link could follow this hedgeline.



Trees along Dunthorne Way frontage

5.9.2 There are existing trees located within the site along Dunthorne Way. These form part of the original landscape structure created for Grange Farm. Any built development along this frontage should be set back to allow for the growth of these trees and to provide a good standard of residential amenity for future occupiers of the dwellings. Removal of some trees may be necessary to provide access to the site. Replacement planting should be provided within the site to compensate for any loss.

5.9.3 There are rows of trees within the highway verge along Singleton Drive and Coulson Avenue. These should be retained except where removal is required to accommodate vehicular access to the site.

5.9.4 Development proposals should be accompanied by a plan illustrating indicative landscape principles for the site.

5.9.5 Landscaping should be used to reduce the impact of blank side boundary fences.

5.10 General Planning Requirements

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems

5.10.1 When making planning applications it is essential that, to get the best results, the integration of water and SuDS options are considered early in the site evaluation and planning process, not just at the detailed design stage. Full consideration of SuDS at the pre-application and outline stage is important to ensuring surface water management is fully integrated into the development, leading to an effective drainage design, providing multiple benefits and with costs considered from the outset. Further guidance and information can be found in the “Milton Keynes Council Surface Water Drainage; Local Guidance for Planning Applications”, which is available on the Council’s website.

Nature Conservation

5.10.2 The site is a potential habitat for several protected species, including great crested newts. Any proposals for development will require a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

5.10.3 In addition, additional biodiversity improvements should be undertaken to satisfy the requirements of the Council’s Local Plan Policy NE3.

Safety and Security

5.10.4 The layout of the development should avoid the creation of areas of public realm that are ‘leftover’ and not overlooked by any development, as they can become areas of anti-social behaviour. Furthermore, there should be no ambiguous space in terms of ownership.

Superfast Broadband

5.10.5 All new developments are encouraged to provide superfast broadband. Larger developments of 30 or more homes can have the infrastructure installed for free if they start the application process very early in the lifecycle of their developments.

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