

## 03 SITE ASSESSMENT

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Land ownership

Description

Landscape

Ecology

Drainage and Hydrology

Movement and access

Opportunities and Constraints



FIGURE 21. Aerial photograph of the site looking north towards the village centre and station.

# 03 SITE ASSESSMENT

- Well-designed places are:**
- based on a sound understanding of the features of the site and the surrounding context, using baseline studies as a starting point for design;
  - integrated into their surroundings so they relate well to them;
  - influenced by and influence their context positively; and
  - responsive to local history, culture and heritage.

National Design Guide (2019) Para 39

## Land ownership

The land (edged red on Figure 22.) is in the control of Gleeson Strategic Land Ltd who are the applicants for the planning application.

## Description

The site comprises a series of fields which are areas of managed grassland with some equestrian uses.

The site forms part of a generally low level landscape with built form and landscape planting to the north, east and south screening long distance views into the site. Any long distance views are limited to those from the west which in time will be lost through the development of the strategic site (SD5). Within the site itself the land slopes down from the north towards the south and east towards the Barnham Rife from around 8m AOD to 2m AOD.

The south eastern boundary of the site is defined by the Barnham Rife which forms part of a network of watercourses in the local area. Beyond the Rife are the rear gardens of properties in Church Lane which are generally long (80-90m) and have planting to the rear boundary.

There is a triangular piece of land to the north of the site which separates the site from Barnham Railway Station. The northern and eastern boundaries of this land are defined by mature tree planting which screens the site from the station and properties in Marshall Close.

Marshall Close is a mid 20c development to the north west and provides the potential for a primary vehicular access into the site. Marshall Close is made up of 1 and 2 storey semi-detached housing framing the street and an area of public open space which incorporates an equipped children's play area, behind a garage / parking court.

Access into the site is currently via a drive/track from Church Lane which also provides access to Tars Farm house, a stables building and some buildings in the centre of the site.

There is a section of public footpath which runs diagonally through the site western part of the site. The footpath route connects Church Lane (Barnham) to Church Lane (Eastergate) with a link to Elm Grove in the centre of Barnham. The footpath crosses the railway lines in two places.



Footpath to the site from Church Lane



Pedestrian crossing on railway



View along Marshall Close towards Church Lane

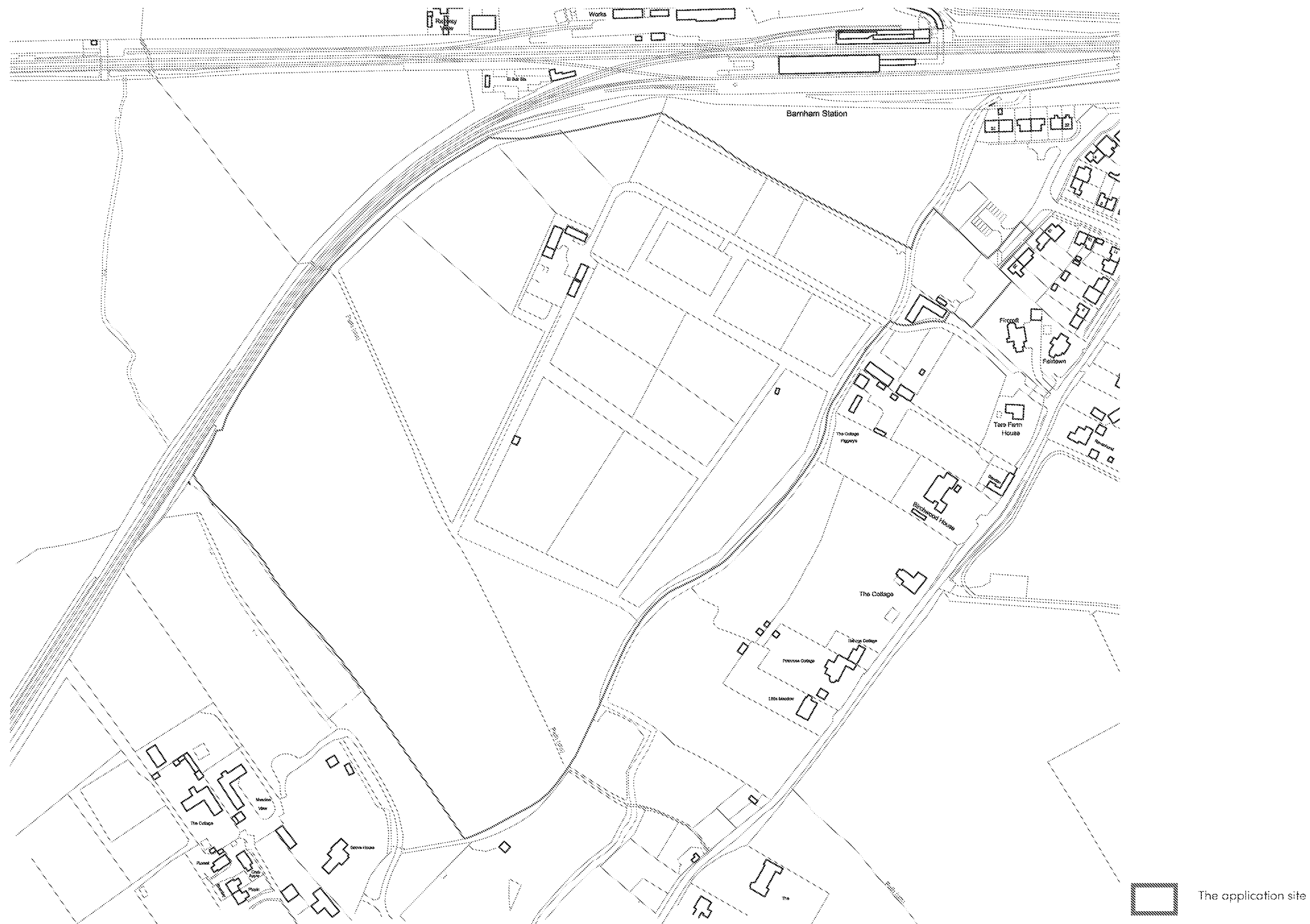


FIGURE 22. Site Location Plan

## Landscape

The site comprises a number of agricultural fields and horse paddocks, centred around a cluster of agricultural barns and stables with parking, an access track, and horse manège. The northern part of the Site comprises close-grazed horse pasture, whilst the southern part is cut for hay. The south eastern boundary is defined by a small watercourse – known as Barnham Rife, with mature hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees align the south-western and south-eastern boundaries

The immediate context to the site is made up of a typical settlement edge rural/ urban landscape. Residential properties set within substantial grounds are located along the majority of Church Lane and Highground Lane which run within the immediate landscape to the south east and south west respectively. These are surrounded by a number of small agricultural and pastoral fields that are bounded by established hedgerows, hedgerow trees, mature treebelts and small woodland blocks. This existing built form and established vegetation structure creates a degree of separation from the wider landscape found to the south of Church Lane.

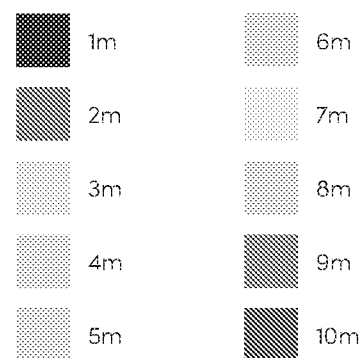


FIGURE 23. Plan showing the topography of the site

At present the land to the north west of the site, beyond the adjacent railway lines, consists of large open arable fields. However, this land is covered by strategic allocation SD5 which is for at least 2,300 dwellings, a two form entry primary school, sports pitches and employment. This will be developed over the plan period of 2011- 2031 and once complete will substantially change the size and scale of the surrounding area, which includes the settlements of Barnham, Eastergate and Woodgate, and results in the settlement edge extending up to the north western site boundary.

Other than the mature vegetated south eastern and south western site boundaries the internal components of the Site offer little in the way of landscape value. As noted the more established vegetation structure and mature hedgerows along the boundaries provides a high degree of containment and visual separation between the site and the local and wider landscape to the south east and south west.

Topography

The site is positioned on gently falling landform associated with a very shallow valley within which lies the Barnham Rife watercourse. The landform within the site slopes from approximately 7m AOD at the northern corner to 1m AOD at the southern corner. The landform then rises to the south east to around 5m at Church Lane. The local and wider topography lies at between 2-10m AOD.



Panorama view looking east / south east across the site from the railway crossing



Panorama view looking north west across the site towards the railway



Aerial photograph of the site looking west from the railway line towards the Church Lane Conservation Area

Arboriculture

A tree survey assessment was carried out in accordance with the guidance and recommendations of British Standards 5837: (2012) 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction' and good arboricultural practice by Aspect Arboriculture in September 2020.

Trees identified within this assessment were visually inspected from ground level by a person qualified and experienced in arboriculture. The tree's common name and its dimensions are recorded within the tree survey schedule together with their age, physiological, structural condition and a category code. This was used to inform the feasibility studies and design options for the development of the site.

A search of the Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside' (MAGiC) online database indicates that trees within the site are not subject to any specific designation.

An arboricultural impact assessment and tree protection plan has been provided as part of the planning application. This includes the recommended mitigation and protection measures for the trees on site in line with the proposed site layout.

A small number of trees within the site and on it's boundary are subject of Tree Preservation Orders. Particular regard will need to be had to the retention and protection of these trees.



FIGURE 24. Arboricultural assessment plan

## Ecology

Aspect Ecology was commissioned by Gleeson Strategic Land Ltd in April 2020 to undertake an Ecological Appraisal in respect of proposed redevelopment of the site. The site was surveyed in May 2020 based on standard extended Phase 1 methodology. In addition, a general appraisal of faunal species was undertaken to record the potential presence of any protected, rare or notable species, with specific surveys conducted in respect of bats and Badger, Dormouse and Water Vole.

### Designations

The site itself is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory ecological designations. The nearest statutory designation is The Brooks Local Nature Reserve located approximately 3.3km south-west of the site. The nearest non-statutory designation is Barnham Road at Eastergate Designated Road Verge located approximately 1.9km north-west of the site. All of the ecological designations in the surrounding area are physically well separated from the site and are therefore unlikely to be adversely affected by the proposals.

### Habitats

The site predominantly comprises two large semi-improved grassland fields which are bound to the south-east and south-west by mature hedgerows and to the north by the railway line. Centered within the grassland fields are a collection of barns and wooden stables with the other remaining building located in the eastern corner of the site. There are two watercourses present on site, one of which is a dry ditch transecting the site, whilst the other is a narrow watercourse located on the south-east edge of the site. The hedgerows include a number of trees scattered which are predominantly mature in nature. The only trees present outside of the hedgerows are the line of four Apple trees, the remainder are located offsite to the south-east of the watercourse. The majority of the habitats on site do not constitute as features of ecological importance however the hedgerows and watercourse are of importance on a local level. The loss of a proportion of these features is considered to be of minor ecological significance.

### Species

The site generally offers limited opportunities for protected species. However, some parts of the site are used by foraging and commuting bats, and the watercourse to the south of the site has a population of Water Vole, which will need to be considered. A number of trees have been identified as having low potential for roosting bats, although these will be retained under the proposals. Therefore, proportionate mitigation measures and precautionary safeguards have been proposed to avoid or minimise adverse effects on any protected species that might be present on site at the time of works.

### Ecological approach to the proposed development

The proposals present the opportunity to secure biodiversity enhancements, including additional wildflower meadow areas and native tree planting, wet woodland planting, new roosting opportunities for bats and more diverse nesting habitats for birds.

There are a number of ecological enhancements which can come forward as part of the proposals for the site including:

- ✦ Bats – A bat mitigation strategy to install bat boxes and improve foraging habitat quality
- ✦ Reptiles – A reptile mitigation strategy to create new wildflower grassland and hibernacula
- ✦ Birds – A breeding birds mitigation strategy to Land off Kennel Lane – install bird boxes and create new breeding habitat
- ✦ Management of SuDS for wildlife and native species planting within
- ✦ the shared open areas and along linear boundaries.

The development would also include a range of mitigation measures to ensure that adverse impacts to protected and notable species are avoided, and ensure legal compliance. This would include protection of retained habitats and ecological supervision during construction, as well as post-construction management and monitoring.

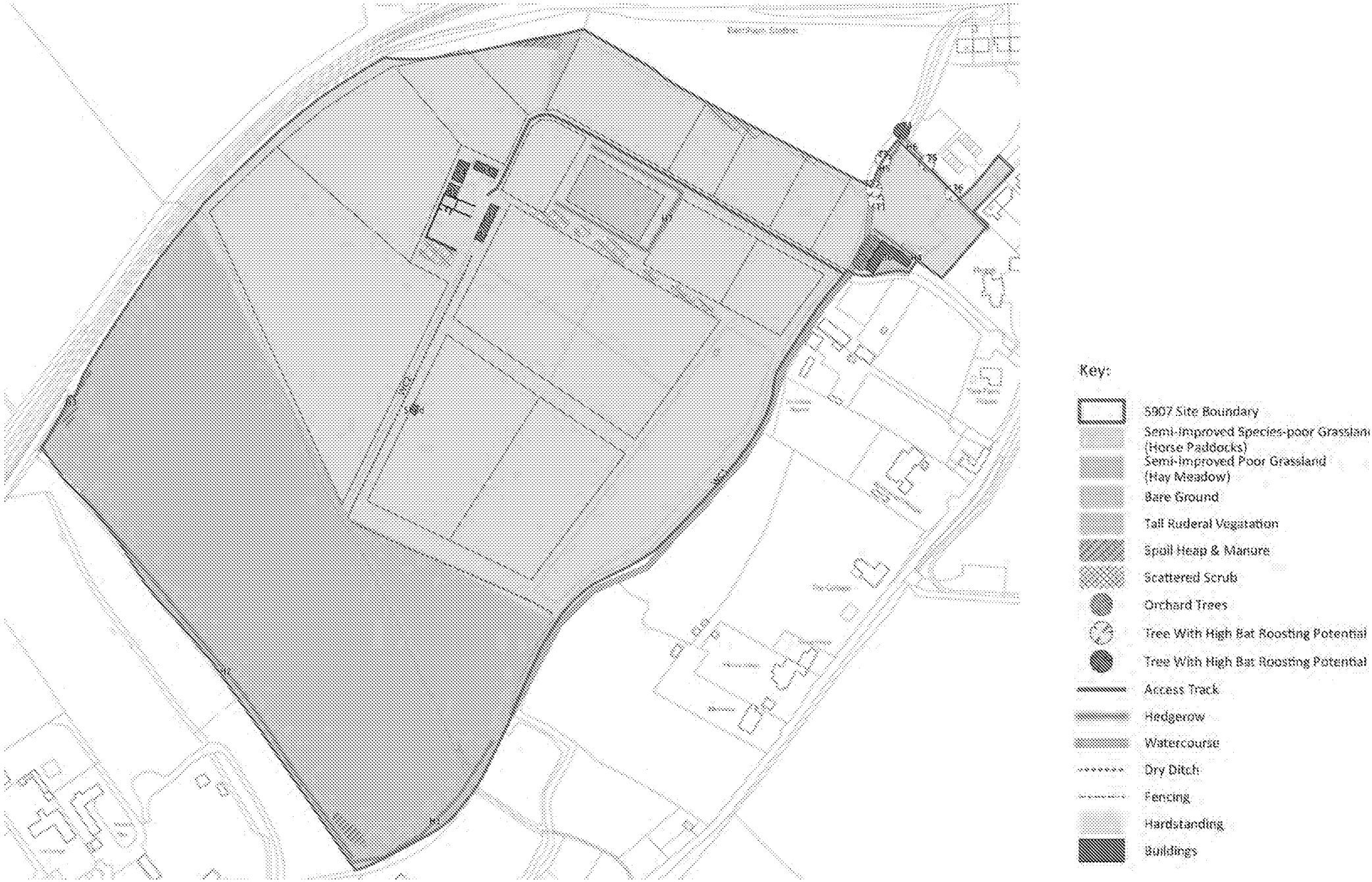


FIGURE 25. Ecological issues plan (Aspect Ecology)

## Drainage and Hydrology

A hydrology and drainage assessment was carried out by Abley Letchford Partnership Consulting to establish the potential for flooding and drainage within the site to inform the masterplan.

Figures 26. is an extracts from the Governments website, <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/long-term-flood-risk/>, which provides detailed information on long term flood risk assessment for locations in England.

The southeastern part of the site and a small section of the southwestern boundary lie within an area which is at risk from flooding from rivers or the sea.

In preparing a masterplan for the development of the site no residential development will be provided in areas of high or medium surface water flood risk. A drainage strategy has been developed to ensure that the proposed development does not increase the surface water run off from the site and drainage features are provided outside of existing surface water flood risk areas.

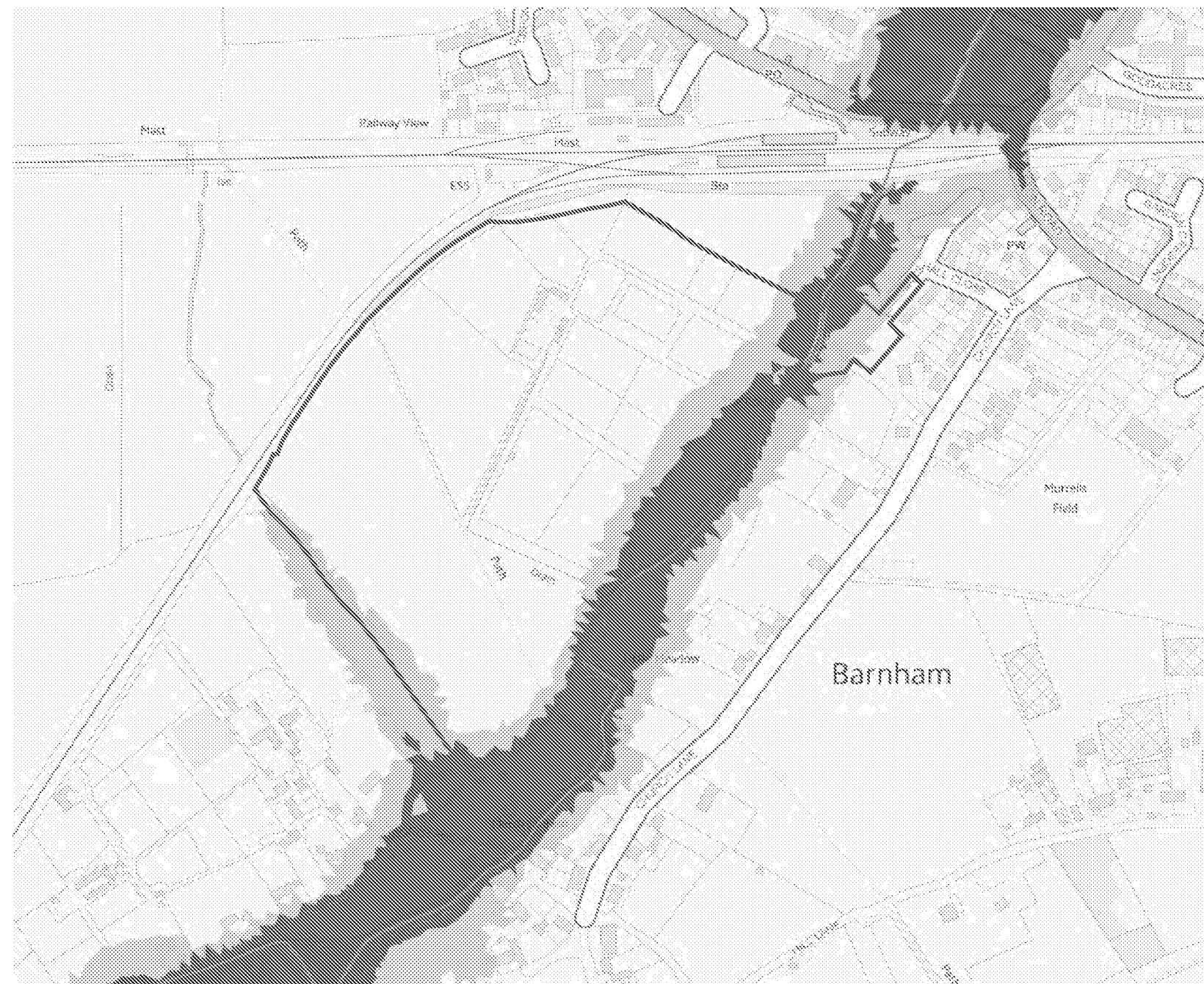
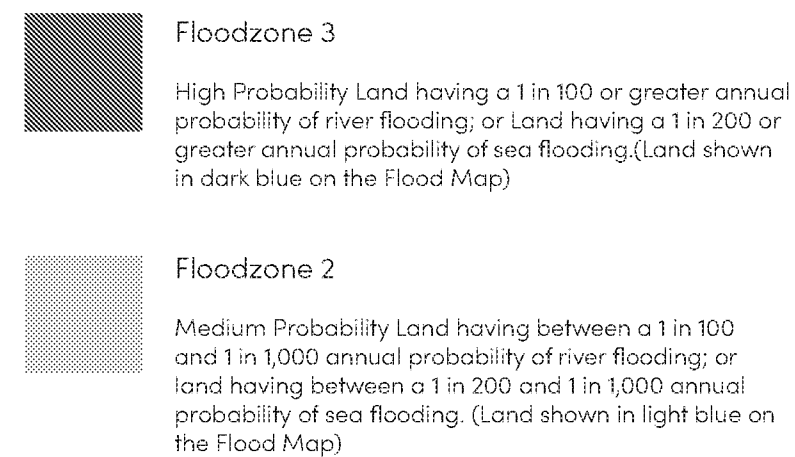


FIGURE 26. Plan showing the topography of the site



- KEY
- Site boundary
  - Village centre
  - Existing public open space
  - Primary school
  - Community Hall
  - BEW Strategic Development site
  - Public Right of Way
  - Footpath link to village centre
  - Existing highway access
  - Proposed access
  - Railway line
  - Pedestrian crossing over railway
  - Station

FIGURE 27. Site context plan

## Movement and access

Figure 27 shows the site in context and its accessibility to existing services and facilities.

### Vehicular access

Vehicular access to the site could be provided by an extension to the existing highway at Marshall Close. Marshall Close has a carriageway width of circa 4.8m with on-street parking occurring throughout. A 5.5m wide carriageway would be appropriate for a development in excess of circa 100 dwellings. This can be achieved through the setting back of the existing on-street parking into parking laybys and widening the carriageway within the existing highway verge.

### Pedestrian and cycle access

The site is within a 'comfortable' walking distance (circa 800m) of the majority of services in Barnham including the rail station. There are footways of minimum 1m width connecting the site to central Barnham routing via the northernmost part of Marshall Close onto the B2233 Yapton Road.

On street cycling within Barnham and whilst there are not dedicated cycle lanes in the vicinity of the site maximum road speeds are 30mph.

Church Lane also forms part of the "Barnham Link"/ "South Downs Way to NCN2 part of 5 Villages cycle network", a strategic route which connects the surrounding villages including Barnham, Bognor Regis and Bignor as identified in the West Sussex Walking and Cycling Strategy 2016-2026

### Rights of way

There is one public right of way crossing the site (no. 323) which requires the crossing of 2 x uncontrolled pedestrian level crossings of railway lines to the north.

### Public Transport

The site is well served by public transport with bus stops at Barnham Community Hall, approximately 480m (approx 6 mins walk) and Barnham Railway Station 650m (approx 8 mins walk). These provide connections to the wider area including bus links to Yapton, Bognor Regis, Arundel and Chichester. Barnham Station provides frequent peak time trains to Southampton, Portsmouth, Chichester and Brighton. The site is therefore readily accessible by public transport.



Potential vehicular access from Marshall Close



Pedestrian crossing over railway line



Existing access to Tars Farm

## Opportunities and constraints

In summary there are a number of opportunities and constraints which need to be taken into account when developing a masterplan for the site as shown on Figure 28.

### Landscape

- ✧ The need to retain and protect existing landscape assets within the site and on it's boundaries including existing hedgerows and trees
- ✧ Providing additional planting on the south eastern and western edges of the site to contain the development and mitigate any potential views into the site from properties in Church Lane and the Church Lane Conservation Area
- ✧ The opportunity to reinforce the character of the landscape by enhancing the existing landscape structure and providing new planting within the site

### Ecology

- ✧ Retaining the ecological assets of the site and providing buffers, where appropriate
- ✧ Providing potential new areas for habitat creation as part of the landscape and drainage strategy
- ✧ Creating new ecology corridors within the site including an extended corridor on the north western side of Barnham Rife

### Access and movement

- ✧ Utilise existing access opportunities from Marshall Close
- ✧ Retain and improve the existing PRoW which runs through the site
- ✧ Create a hierarchy of residential streets which help define the legibility and character of the new development and make it easy and safe to move around
- ✧ Allow sufficient room within the development for refuse and service vehicles
- ✧ Ensure that there is sufficient car and cycle parking including visitor parking for the development

### Drainage and hydrology

- ✧ Ensure that development areas do not have a negative impact on existing watercourses and the existing floodplain
- ✧ Provide appropriate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems with capacity for the new development
- ✧ Utilise other sustainable drainage features including rainwater harvesting, permeable surfaces and water efficient fixtures and fittings
- ✧ Ensure that the drainage, ecology and landscape strategies work together across the site

### Public Open Space

- ✧ Create areas of informal and amenity public open space within the site which are overlooked by housing
- ✧ Provide types of open space which compliment the existing facilities in the area
- ✧ Explore the potential to enhance existing open space and play facilities in Marshall Close
- ✧ Ensure that play areas utilise natural materials and existing landscape features

### Character

- ✧ Creating a development of housing and public open space which reinforces the character of Barnham and the surrounding area, drawing from the more historic areas in addition to the immediate context of the site
- ✧ Ensure that any new development respects the character and setting of the Church Lane Conservation Area and other properties in Church Lane
- ✧ Provide a variety of housing types and tenures to meet the local housing need and provide for a balanced community
- ✧ Ensure that any noise from the railway does not affect the amenity of future residential properties

### KEY

|                                                                                       |                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | Site boundary                                                          |
|    | Strategic Development Allocation site (SD5)                            |
|    | Built up area boundary (including SD5 site)                            |
|    | Existing playing fields                                                |
|    | Existing public open space with potential for enhancements             |
|  | Children's Play Area                                                   |
|  | Barnham Community Hall                                                 |
|  | Floodzone 2                                                            |
|  | Existing Public Right of Way / footpath with potential for enhancement |
|  | Proposed vehicular access via extension to Marshall Close              |
|  | Existing pedestrian link to village centre                             |
|  | Listed Building                                                        |
|  | Church Lane Conservation Area                                          |
|  | Views into and out of Conservation Area                                |
|  | Noise sensitive boundaries to residential properties                   |
|  | Potential areas for residential development                            |
|  | Potential landscape / ecology corridor                                 |

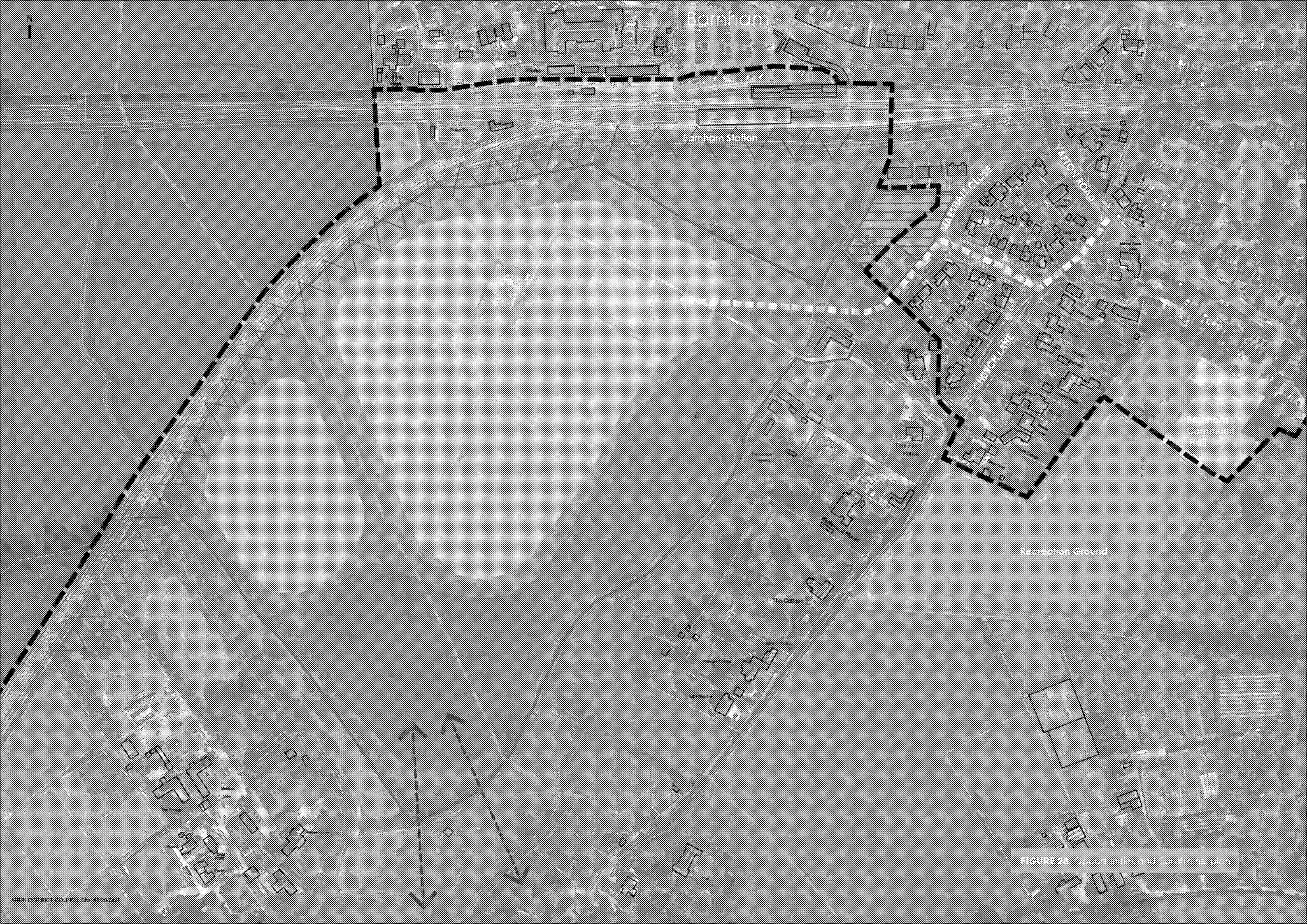


FIGURE 28 Opportunities and Constraints plan

