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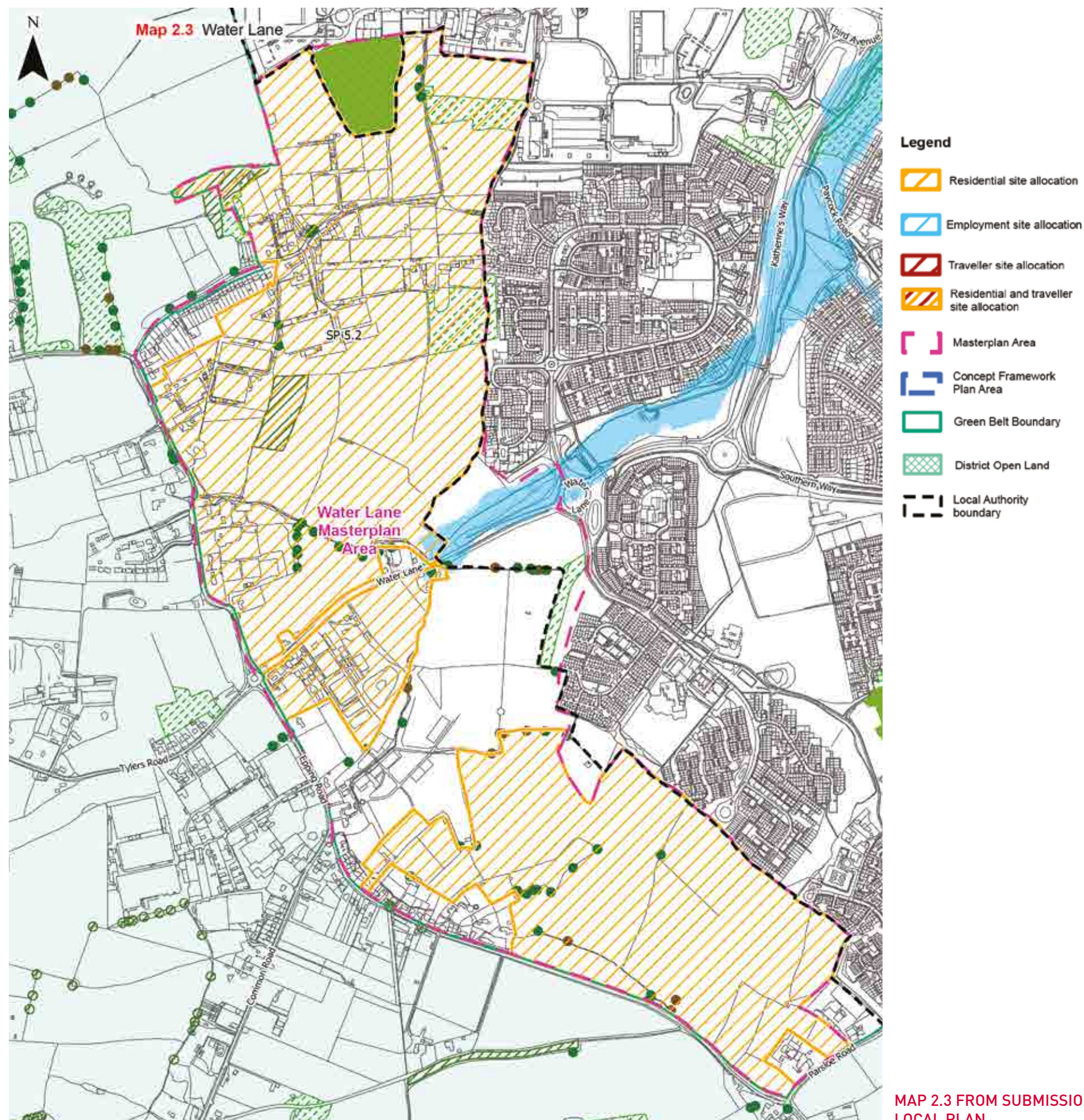


# 1. INTRODUCTION

## **Vision & Development Objectives**

- 1.1 West Katherines will be a forward thinking 21st Century place, its design will be underpinned by contemporary Garden City urban design principles combined with Sir Frederick Gibberd's founding principles for the growth of Harlow. The intention is to create an aspirational living environment that provides a strong sense of place with a variety of high quality living patterns.
- 1.2 Development at West Katherines will help Harlow to deliver its housing and employment needs within a sustainable development comprising attractive, self-sufficient walkable neighbourhoods shaped by the landscape and natural setting.
- 1.3 The Concept Framework Plan, illustrated in Section 5 of this document is founded on the very best practice in urban design, community integration and sustainable development, with strong links to the existing movement corridors and existing settlements.
- 1.4 West Katherines will deliver new infrastructure that will provide residents with a range of transport choices and alternatives to the car that will help move Harlow towards a more sustainable future.
- 1.5 West Katherines has the potential to deliver at least 1100 residential homes; approximately 1ha mixed use local centre and 2.2ha two-form entry primary school all supported by new strategic green infrastructure.





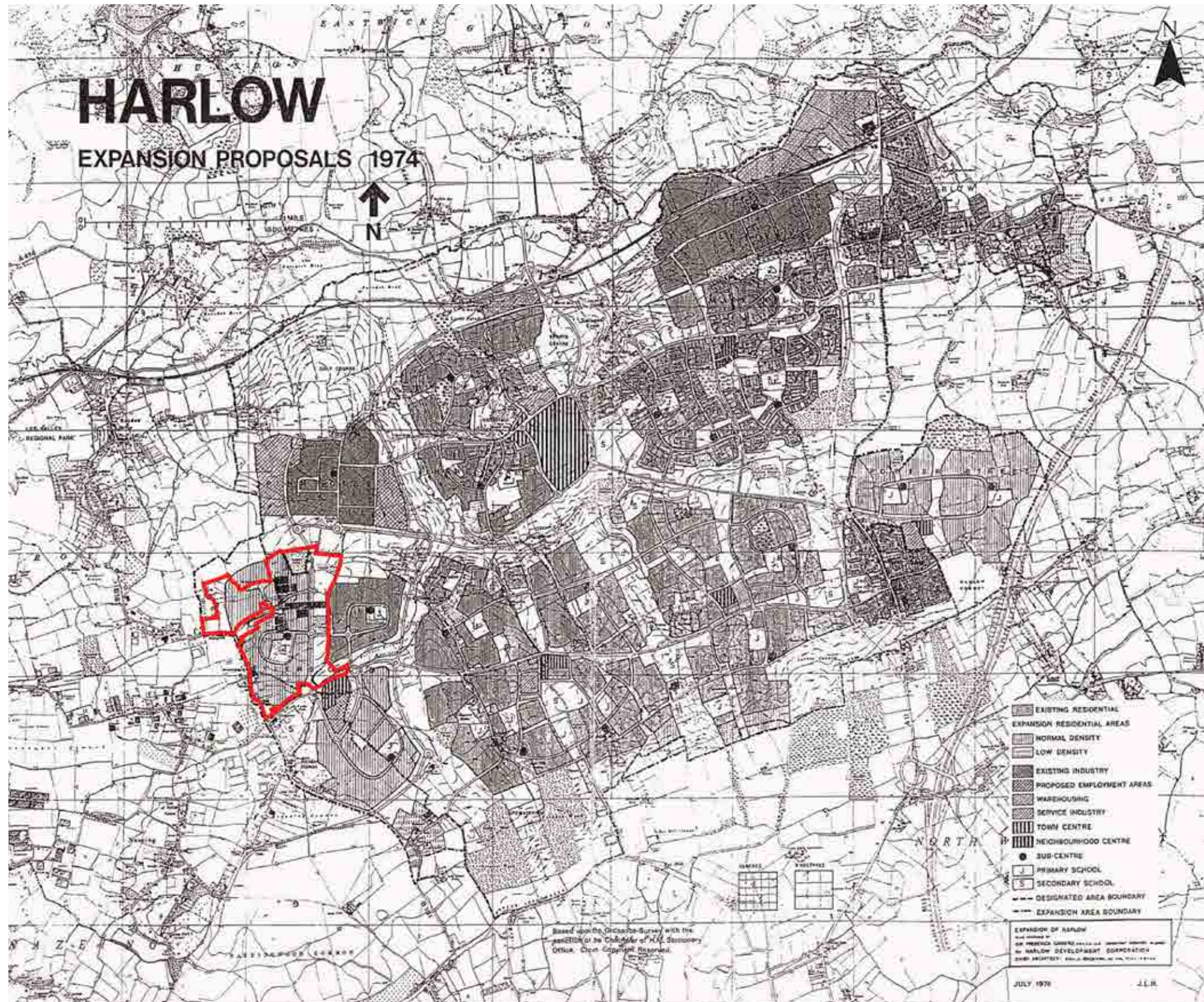
MAP 2.3 FROM SUBMISSION  
LOCAL PLAN



## Water Lane Area Allocation

- 1.6 Epping Forest District Council, Harlow Council and East Hertfordshire Council are working in partnership together with all stakeholders including land owners and promoters, to bring forward transformational growth in the form of Harlow and Gilston Garden Town. The Garden Town represents a major opportunity to accommodate around 16,000 homes up to 2033 between the global centres of London and Cambridge.
- 1.7 Harlow and Gilston Garden Town comprises four new Garden Town Communities:
- East of Harlow;
  - Latton Priory;
  - Water Lane Area; and
  - Gilston.
- 1.8 The approach to delivery of the Garden Towns means that the new communities will not only provide a long-term supply of new homes, but will also deliver a quality of development, environment, infrastructure, services and community that would not otherwise be possible.
- 1.9 At the heart of the Garden Town is in the Gibberd masterplan. Gibberd's original masterplan for Harlow New Town was strongly influenced by the character of the existing landscape, including the curving formation of Rye Hill containing the built-up area to the south, east and west. The masterplans will ensure continuity with these principles. This area to the west of Harlow was envisaged to come forward as part of the 1974 Gibberd Expansion Plan to support the future growth of Harlow. In keeping with the Gibberd Plan, the Water Lane Area will provide a well-designed sustainable extension within the west of Harlow area identified in the Plan
- 1.10 The Water Lane Area will be a forward thinking 21st Century Place. The intention is to create an aspirational living environment that provides a strong sense of place with a choice of different high-quality living patterns. It will deliver new infrastructure that will provide residents with real transport choice that will help move Harlow towards a more sustainable future. The Water Lane Area will deliver at least 2,100 homes, a local centre, a new 2FE primary school, community and health facilities all supported by significant public open space.
- 1.11 The Water Lane Area comprises two distinct parts. The area to the north of Water Lane (known as West Katherines) and land to the south of Water Lane (known as West Sumners). Whilst these areas share the same geographical location being to the west of Harlow, they are very different in relation to their characteristics, features, impacts and potential benefits, therefore these proposals will be masterplanned separately to take into account these differences and to address them individually. They are physically separate and do not contain any adjacent land and therefore will not share any vehicular access. However, opportunities may exist for some common approaches and connectivity between the two sites in the form of public footpaths and cycleways and potential communal use of some facilities.
- 1.12 West Katherines adjoins an existing residential area to the east and the Pinnacles employment area to the north. There are opportunities to enhance these links and to improve the site's connectivity with the built-up area and central Harlow, both regenerating the existing residential area and ensure sustainable links with the proposed development.
- 1.13 West Sumners is located adjacent to the residential areas of Kingsmoor to the east and Broadley Common to the southwest. Development of this site provides an opportunity to link green infrastructure to the north and south of the site providing key movement routes and enhancing accessibility between existing settlements and the proposed wider allocation area, including West Katherines to the north.



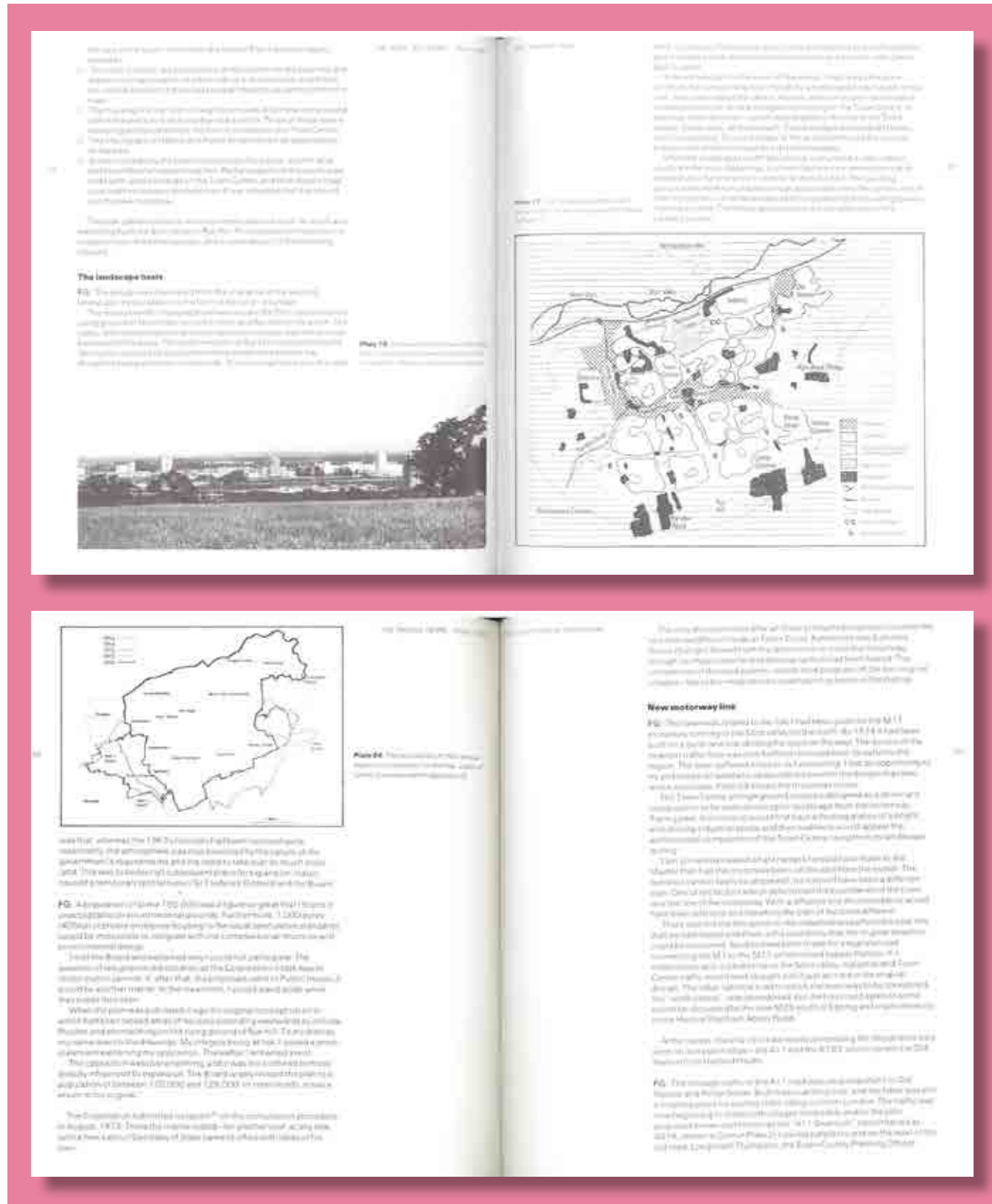


HARLOW EXPANSION PROPOSALS 1974



## Harlow Expansion Area

- 1.14 Harlow was one of the first New Towns to be formally designated in 1947. The masterplan for the New Town, designed by Sir Frederick Gibberd, was strongly influenced by the character of the existing landscape. A quotation by Sir Frederick Gibberd on page 38 of Harlow: The Story of a New Town (see opposite) refers to the curving formation of Rye Hill containing the built-up area to the south, east and west, and creating a clear distinction between town and country.
- 1.15 The masterplan for Harlow was approved in 1952. It incorporated three wedges, a concept which was intended to link the town with the surrounding countryside. The wedges converged on the Town Centre, and subdivided the New Town into four quarters, also referred to as neighbourhood housing areas. The original neighbourhood areas remain clearly discernible today.
- 1.16 A plan produced on page 160 in Harlow: The Story of a New Town showing various expansion proposals between 1963 and 1974, indicates proposed westerly expansions of the New Town (see opposite). In addition, a Design Report by Sir Frederick Gibberd included more detail of future development areas. This is reproduced on Plan L1 opposite. Importantly, these are incorporated the Site.



PAGE EXTRACTS FROM HARLOW: THE STORY OF A NEW TOWN





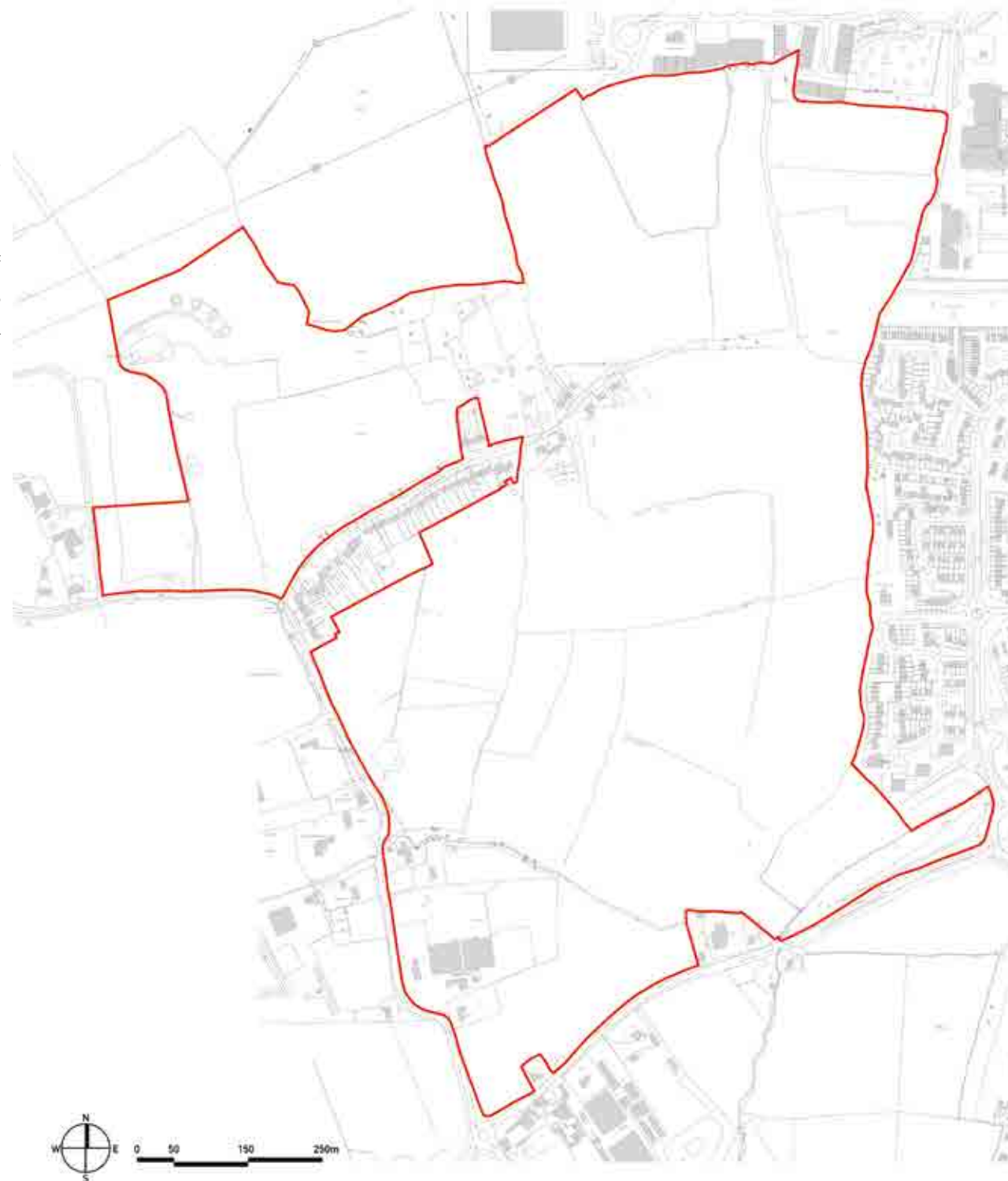
AERIAL SITE LOCATION PLAN



## 2. CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

### Physical Context

- 2.1 The site is situated within the urban fringe of Harlow, with residential development of Katherines located to the east, commercial/industrial development located to the north and predominantly open countryside to the south and west.
- 2.2 Two parts of the site are located within the Nazeing and South Roydon Conservation Area. There are also listed buildings located within and close to the site. Further details are provided later in the document.
- 2.3 The majority of the site comprises agricultural land with part of the site comprising glasshouse structures. These glasshouses represent a negative visual aspect having a strong detrimental effect upon the setting of the Conservation Area and surrounding listed buildings.



CONCEPT FRAMEWORK BOUNDARY

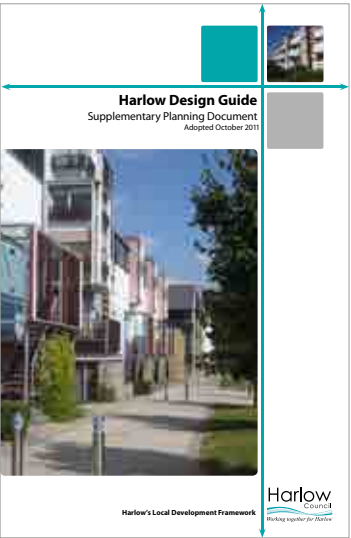


Landscape & Visual Impacts

- 2.4
- The landscape within the site is in variable condition, being notably poor on the northern half of the site, which is dominated by glasshouses in varying states of decline and has a neglected urban fringe character with considerable scope for landscape enhancement.
- 2.5
- The site generally possesses good visual enclosure, with public views of the site typically limited to adjoining public roads and footpaths. More distant views are generally curtailed by intervening landform, vegetation and existing built development, with the exception of some longer distance views into the southern part of the site.
- 2.6
- A key consideration for proposed open spaces will be the opportunities to connect into a wider network of public open spaces, for example, 'Green Wedges' or 'Green Fingers', in accordance with the original masterplan principles of the New Town.
- 2.7
- There are no overriding constraints to development of the West Katherines site, which has no specific landscape planning policy designations and in landscape terms fulfills a limited role to any Green Belt purpose.
- 2.8
- The Roydon Hamlet landscape character area, within which most of the site lies, is identified as having a moderate to high sensitivity to change. However, the more sensitive characteristics comprising hedgerows and medieval field systems as well as existing trees and woodland will be successfully incorporated within a responsive landscape led framework, with the more visually sensitive land on the southern margin of the site retained as open uses.

A Place Shaped By Its Landscape Setting

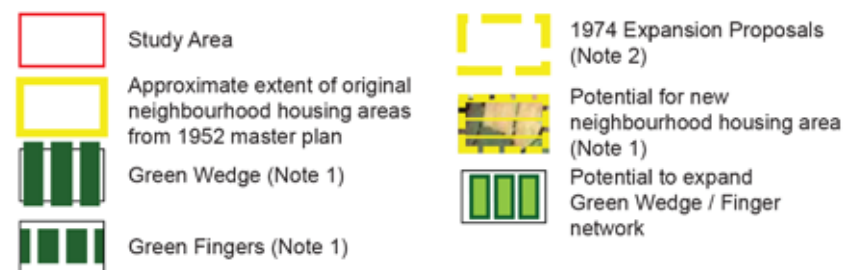
- 2.9
- Gibberd's original masterplan for the New Town was strongly influenced by the character of the existing landscape, including the curving formation of Rye Hill containing the built up area to the south, east and west.
- 2.10
- The Design Guide advocates that "the pattern of any new development should evolve from the existing topography, natural assets and ecological features. Large developments, such as urban extensions should form a consistent and positive relationship with the town and will be required to take a landscape-led approach in order to provide proposals which evolve from the existing typology, natural assets and ecological features of Harlow." West Katherines will be delivered within this context.
- 2.11
- A key consideration is to maximise opportunities to connect into a wider network of public open spaces, for example, 'Green Wedges', or 'Green Fingers'. The Design Guide explains the role of Green Wedges and Green Fingers, which can be broadly summarised as follows:
  - Green Wedges help define one neighbourhood from another; and
  - Green Fingers are smaller, linear open spaces that connect to Green Wedges.
- 2.12
- The potential for extension of one of the Harlow Green Wedges along the B1133, into the West Katherines site, is shown opposite.



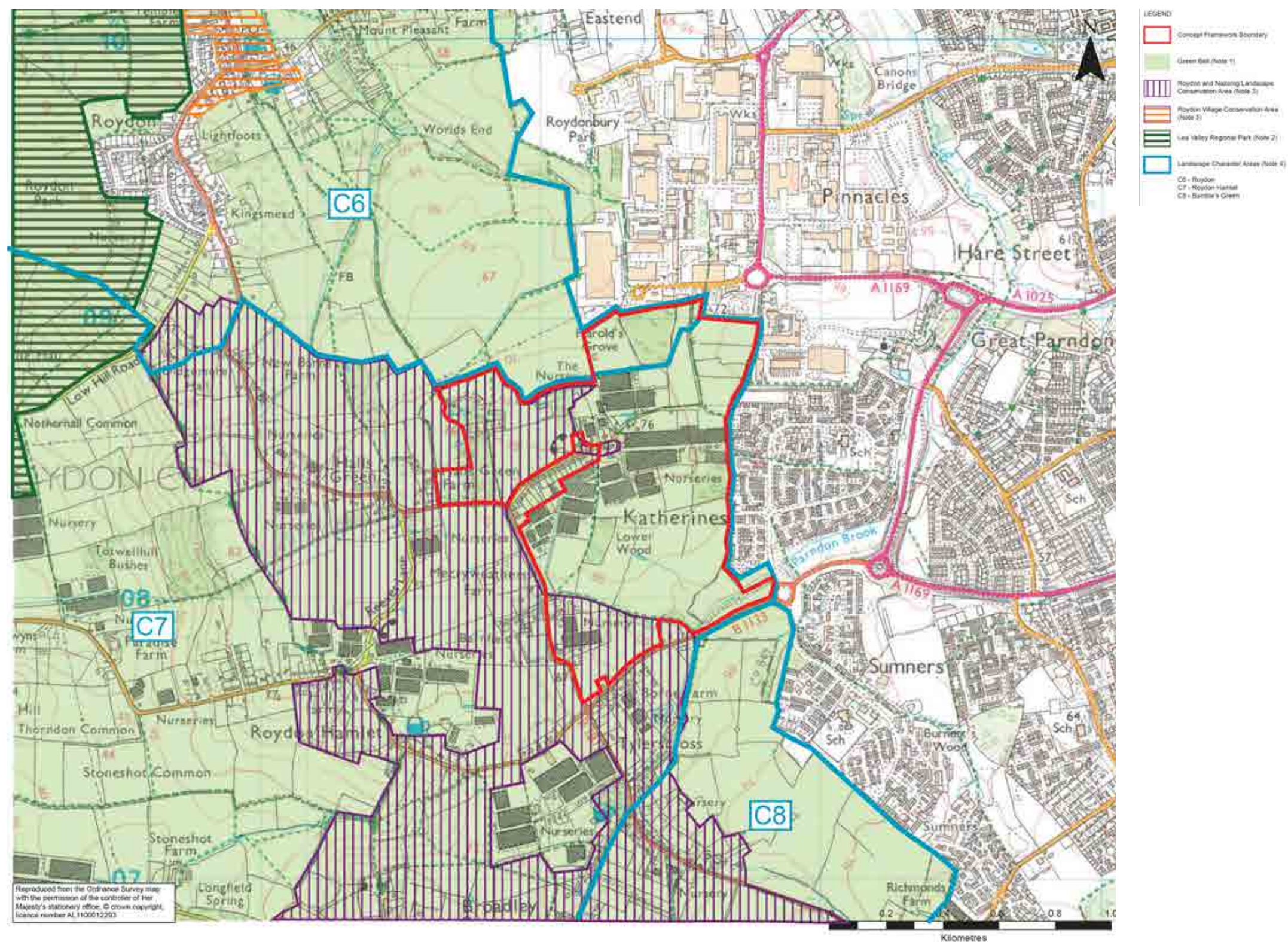


## Landscape Context

- 2.13 Sir Frederick Gibberd considered the valley landscapes to be the most worthy of preservation, and consequently based the open spaces forming the characteristic 'Green Wedges' on the existing valley system. The West Katherines scheme will take forward these core principles.
- 2.14 Expansion proposals for Harlow, prepared in 1974 by Sir Frederick Gibberd, show a proposed westerly expansion of the New Town, including proposed development on the West Katherines site and land to the north west.
- 2.15 It was argued at the time of the 1974 expansion proposals that the proposed new neighbourhood cluster to the west comprised land of "comparatively low grade agricultural land and the landscape being marred by glasshouses and scattered building development is of a lower quality than that of other areas surrounding the town."







DESIGNATIONS AND CHARACTERS PLAN



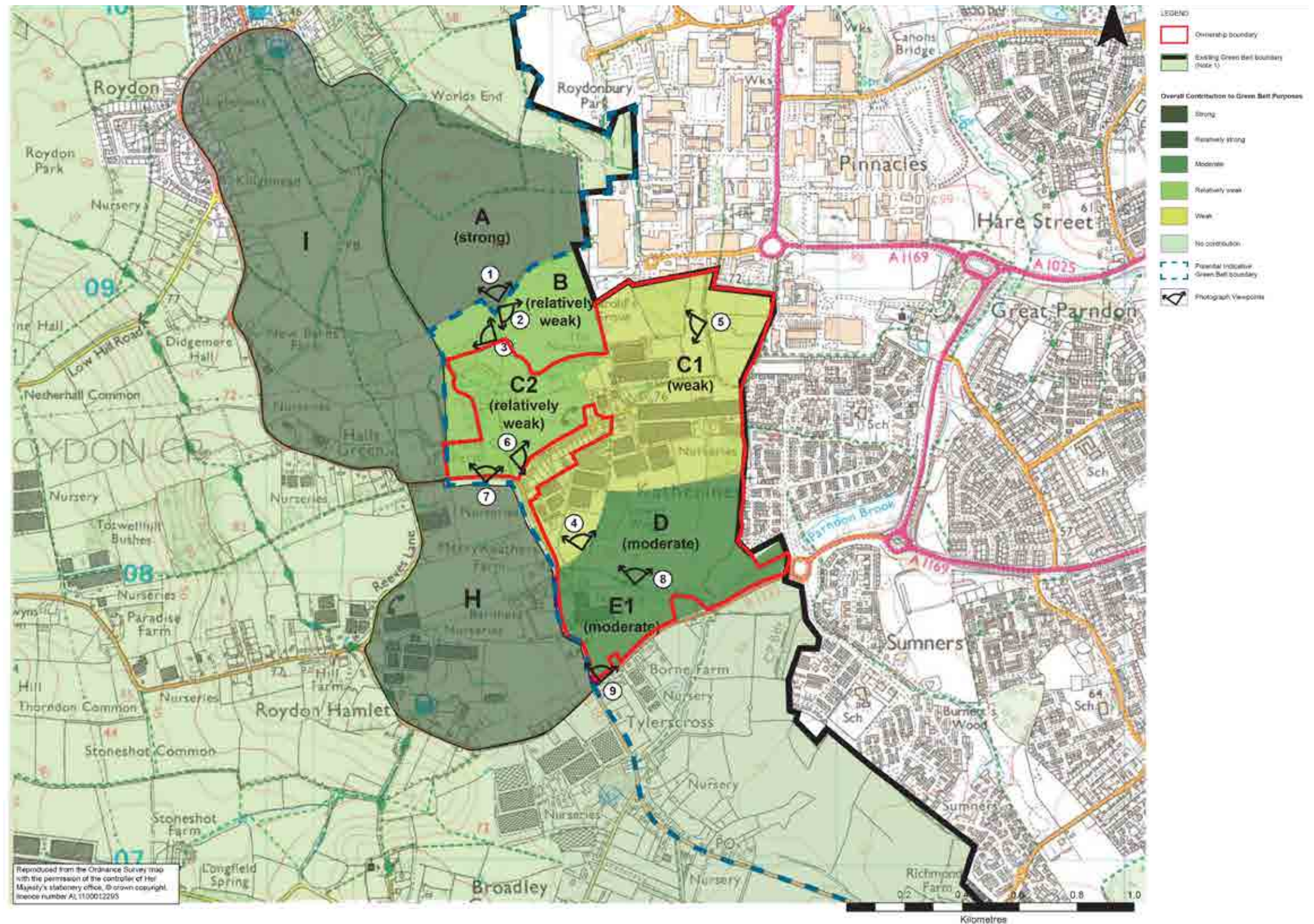
## Landscape Setting & Context

- 2.16 There are no specific landscape designations on the site. However, the extensive Nazeing and South Roydon Conservation Area encompasses the southern margin of the site, south of the Parndon Brook tributary. The designation recognises the general presence of historic landscape features, including remains of settlements and field systems on the Conservation Area as a whole. Three public rights of way cross the site and a Tree Preservation Order applies to Lower Wood in the centre of the site.
- 2.17 Most of the West Katherines site lies outside the area evaluated in the Settlement Edge Sensitivity Study (SELSS) prepared for EFDC in 2009. A small corner of the site to the north west appears to lie within 'Landscape Setting Area 4'. However, this large area cannot be said to typify the small part of the site included. Furthermore, the SELSS acknowledges that: "further assessment work would be needed to examine site specific landscape and visual sensitivities."
- 2.18 The site lies mainly within the Roydon Hamlet landscape character area defined in the Epping Forest District Council Landscape Character Assessment. The character assessment identifies the more sensitive elements and characteristics as; hedgerows and medieval field systems which are seen as important historic elements and open views across farmland, requiring new development to be sensitively designed.

## Defensible & Long Term Green Belt Boundaries

- 2.19 The Inspector who reported in 1987 on the Crest Homes appeal suggested that the Green Belt to the west and south of Harlow fulfilled essential purposes detailed in Circular 42/55. The Inspector observed that "the Green Belt preserves Harlow's special character as a former new town which was painstakingly laid out in complete sympathy with the local lie of the Essex landscape." However, the Harlow expansion proposals prepared in 1974 by Sir Frederick Gibberd incorporated a western extension of the New Town. West Katherines will be delivered in a manner which accords with Gibberd's principles.
- 2.20 One of the arguments advanced at the time of the proposed westerly expansion was that the land comprised comparatively low grade agricultural land and the landscape being marred by glasshouses and scattered building development is of a lower quality than that of other areas surrounding the town. It was also noted that Old House Lane, with its ribbon development of small houses and bungalows, does not exhibit the quality of other rural areas surrounding the town.
- 2.21 The present situation regarding population and economic change is significantly different to 1987. Exceptional circumstances exist to warrant an alteration to existing green belt boundaries. West Katherines will deliver a sustainable development on land which is unnecessary to keep permanently open.





CONTRIBUTION TO OPEN GREEN BELT POLICIES



### Green Belt Review

- 2.22 In December 2015, SLR were appointed by the consortium to undertake a Green Belt Review of West Katherines. The conclusion of the SLR report are as follows and refer to the plan opposite.
- 2.23 Parcels of land to the north, between Harlow and Roydon, to the west beyond the B181, and south beyond Tylers Cross contribute strongly to Green belt purposes (Parcels A, H and I). These areas are more open and rural in nature. Development is likely to be perceived as encroachment into the countryside and there is potential for coalescence between the scattered villages of Roydon, Roydon Hamlet and Broadly common. This would set a precedent and create strong pressure that would be difficult to resist.
- 2.24 The SLR report finds that parcels of land in the vicinity of Old House Lane and south west of Pinnacles Industrial Estate (Parcels B, C1 and C2) are found to contribute the least to Green Belt purposes. These have been identified as suitable for development in Green Belt terms.
- 2.25 The areas identified as suitable for development in Green Belt terms offer opportunity to create well-defined settlement edge to the west of Harlow, making a clear distinction between town and country, with potential benefits to the adjacent Roydon and Nazeing Conservation Area.
- 2.26 The areas identified with suitability for development largely accord with areas identified for residential expansion of Harlow by Sir Frederick Gibberd in 1974.
- 2.27 Development in these areas would form a grouping of new houses, in keeping with the principles of the original New Town masterplan and contained by string boundaries on the ground, reinforced by rising landform to the west which prevents intervisibility with areas west of the Leas Valley.
- 2.28 The sensitive expansion of Harlow to the west was considered acceptable by Sir Frederick Gibberd in 1974 and remains appropriate today.

### Proposed Revision to Green Belt Boundary

- 2.29 Our landscape analysis shows the West Katherines site to play a limited role in fulfilling Green Belt purposes (paragraph 80 of the NPPF). The village of Roydon lies over 1km from the western edge of the site, which plays a very limited role in preventing the coalescence of primary or secondary settlements. The strong physical boundaries on the site provide effective visual containment for new development, which would not be perceived as urban sprawl, in conjunction with a sensitive masterplan respecting the character of the visually less enclosed land and Conservation Area on the southern part of the site. Similarly, the perception of encroachment into the countryside would be limited, due to the good visual enclosure of the site.
- 2.30 Strong revised Green Belt boundaries in accordance with the criteria set out in the NPPF would be provided by the B1133 to the south and to the west by the B181, Old House Lane and the strong hedgerow extending northwards. The existing urban area of Harlow would visually contain new development to the north and east.
- 2.31 The revised Green Belt boundary will provide a long term defensible boundary to future development to the west and secure a clear distinction between town and country in accordance with the masterplan principles of Sir Frederick Gibberd.





Viewpoint 1: Taken from public right of way looking north



Viewpoint 1: Taken from public right of way looking north (continued)





Viewpoint 2: Taken from public right of way looking south east



Viewpoint 3: Taken from public right of way looking north west





Viewpoint 4: Taken from public right of way looking north

For continuation see below



Viewpoint 4: Taken from public right of way looking north (continued)

For continuation see above





Viewpoint 5: Taken from public right of way looking north west



Woodland belts to the north



For continuation see below

Viewpoint 6: Taken from public right of way north of Old House Lane looking east

Buildings on Old House Lane



For continuation see above

Viewpoint 6: Taken from public right of way north of Old House Lane looking east (continued)