



HOLLY HAYES GATE

MEADOW LANE, WHITWICK

VISION DOCUMENT

December 2023







Consulting Team



Masterplanners



Planning



Ecology and Biodiversity



Landscape

Pell Frischmann Highways and Transport

Pell Frischmann Flooding and Drainage



Archaeology and Heritage



Arboriculture

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Introduction

“Holly Hayes Gate by Redrow will be a thriving residential community of traditional, arts & crafts inspired new homes set within the mature setting of hedgerows and trees, with doorstep access to green space, forming a gateway into the National Forest on the eastern edge of Whitwick”

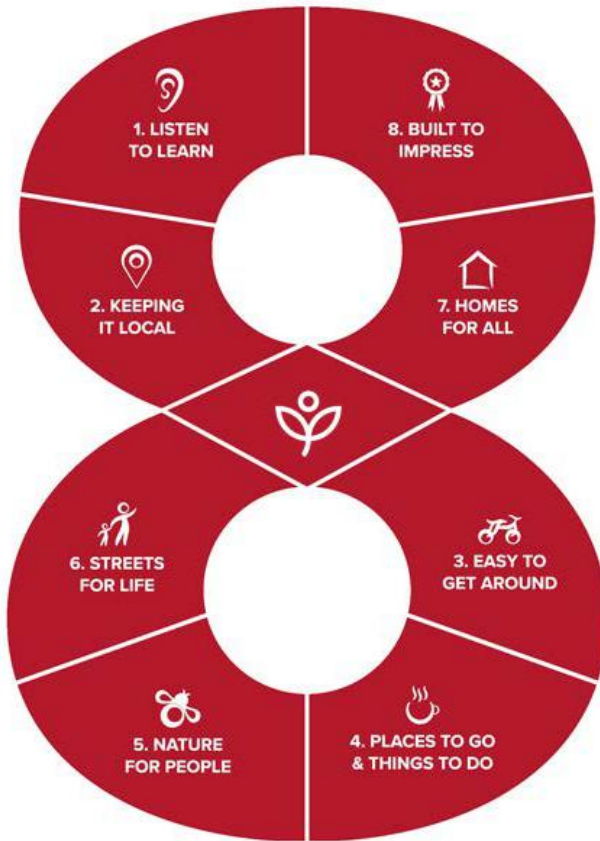
Redrow East Midlands are working to promote a new development within the settlement of Whitwick. Holly Hayes Gate, will offer a variety of new market and affordable homes with careful consideration of the surrounding nature and existing features of the site which will be carefully considered and incorporated as part of any development.

The site has been recently considered as a draft allocation in the new Local Plan for 400 homes.

The purpose of this vision document is to share the work undertaken to date in relation to the progression of the site and a masterplan of how the site could be developed and come forward. We welcome further discussion with the Council in relation to the development of this site.

The vision for this site is underpinned by the ‘Redrow 8’, a set of design principles which are a distillation of relevant national policy and guidance documents. Redrow are committed to these design principles which are illustrated adjacent.





These principles, which are unique to Redrow, were developed through a review of customer surveys and feedback, a literature review of urban design and placemaking principles and workshops with our teams.

All of this work was facilitated by two leading independent urban designers to create a set of fundamental principles to deliver the key ingredients of a good place:

- somewhere with a sense of identity;
- a place that is easy to get around on foot or bike;
- destinations within the new community or within a short walk or ride;
- a place where nature is an integral part of the design and is accessible from every home;
- and a community with a balanced mix of homes.

At a time when there is an increased focus on the quality of the natural environment and on our health and wellbeing, the Redrow 8 provides a robust framework for delivering high quality, beautiful places to live for our customers. Our principles embed established and recognised measures for creating great places such as those found in 'Building for a Healthy Life' (2020) but are also rooted in what we know our customers value most.

Creating a better way to live by providing high quality homes is an integral part of our design culture and by applying the 8 principles set out in this manual we will ensure that we leave a legacy of attractive, sustainable and beautiful places to live.

The Redrow 8 principles are focused on creating places that offer social and environmental benefits for new residents and the wider community they will become a part of.

The principles contribute towards improving health and happiness, a sense of belonging, protection and enhancement of the built and natural environment, among other considerations.

Our track record in delivering high quality homes and beautiful streets, in communities that our customers are proud to call home, provides a very strong foundation for the application of these principles on all of our future developments.

As well as improving placemaking within the site, the 8 principles look beyond it to consider how our developments interact with surrounding employment opportunities, facilities and services as well as creating thriving, sustainable settlements.

The overall benefit will be a lasting legacy of robust and resilient communities that will remain healthy, happy places to live.

Planning Context

The following section provides contextual information in relation to the relevant planning policy in order to demonstrate how the site complies both locally and nationally.

At a national level the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is considered in relation to the site. At a local level both the adopted North West Leicestershire Local Plan 2011 - 2031 and New Local Plan review are discussed in relation to the compliance of the development at Holly Hayes Gate.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF) (SEPTEMBER 2023)

The proposed development would accord with the overarching sustainability aims of the NPPF. This compliance is demonstrated through the ability to deliver social sustainability by providing a range of homes both market and affordable which are well designed in relation to the site topography and existing opportunities present within the site boundary. This includes careful consideration of the existing bridleway and the incorporation of this into the design of the scheme. Environmental sustainability is encompassed in the proposed development in the form of considered landscaping, retained vegetation within field boundaries and delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain. Economic sustainability would be achieved through the provision of contributions to local services and facilities and through the construction phase of the development, including providing jobs from the local labour force.

Further compliance to Chapter 5 of the NPPF is also demonstrated via the provision for 400 new homes on the site and the aim to 'significantly boost the supply of homes'. The site has been identified as suitable for allocation within the emerging Local Plan and

therefore is deemed to be in a sustainable location and should be supported without delay.

Further aims of the NPPF are also adhered to through the provision of shared open spaces throughout the scheme which include play facilities, as well as consideration for sustainable transport. This is further recognised through the draft site allocation and the provision of a bus route as part of the development. The existing bridleway dissects the site and this is an important pedestrian and cycle connection which will be maintained and enhanced as part of the future development.

Careful design will be brought forward within the scheme in line with Chapter 12 of the NPPF. This is achieved through the strong creation of place, through preservation of established pedestrian routes and appropriate landscape and architecture, tree lined streets and built form reflective of the surrounding edge of settlement context. Redrow pride themselves on their build design and heritage collection they offer which links to the Arts and Crafts movement coupled with modern living.

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE NEW LOCAL PLAN

North West Leicestershire District Council are starting to prepare their new Local Plan. The first stage of this process involves the Council reviewing sites which were submitted as part of the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) in order to determine site allocations across the Local Plan area. Various evidence based documents are also being updated and a Sustainability Appraisal is being produced.

A Council meeting was held on the 18th October 2023 by the newly set up Local Plan Committee in order to discuss the new draft Local Development Scheme (LDS).

The LDS circulated as part of this meeting provided the below timeline for progression of the New Local Plan.

1. Consult of the draft policies and housing and employment site allocations (Regulation 18) – January / February 2024
2. Agree publication version (Regulation 19) – December 2024
3. Consult of Publication Local Plan (Regulation 19) – January / February 2025
4. Submission – May 2025
5. Examination – October 2025
6. Adoption – October 2026

It is also important to note the recent Statement of Common Ground (2022/23) which was signed by the Council surrounding Leicester City's unmet housing need, and the requirement of surrounding Leicestershire Local Authorities to cater for this. In the case of NWL this equates to a total of 686 homes a year, which includes 314 homes from Leicester City on top of its own annual housing requirement. Therefore the development at Holly Hayes Gate will help the district to meet this increased housing requirement and provide a site which is within a sustainable location and well related to the Coalville Urban area.



DRAFT ALLOCATION – SITE SPECIFIC CRITERIA

Appendix A of the New Local Plan Proposed Housing and Employment Allocations Document produced by the Council, sets out a draft policy in relation to the proposed allocation, Land at Meadow Lane, Coalville (C76).

This draft policy stipulates a number of requirements which any development on the site would be required to deliver, this includes:

- Provision of a significant buffer of complimentary meadow grassland, scrub and woodland, forming a soft edge to the development along its boarder with the Coalville Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- Existing trees and hedgerows along site boundaries and within the site are to be retained and incorporated into open spaces, with minimal breaks in hedges for access purposes and in a manner that does not have a negative impact upon the living condition of future occupants (over shadowing);
- Provision of a safe and suitable access from Meadow Lane. This should take the form of two points of access which are linked. Access will not be allowed from Leicester Road; and

- Provision of active travel pedestrian and cycle routes through the site and pedestrian and cycle recreational routes within the site.

The detail of the draft policy has been considered as part of the masterplan approach and therefore the layout and design has come forward in order to best mitigate site specific constraints and further enhance opportunities.

Paragraph 180 of the NPPF outlines development in relation to SSSI's stating that benefits of the development must outweigh the impacts on the features that make it special. In relation to the site at Meadow Lane a significant buffer has been proposed which borders the site. As detailed within the masterplan the SSSI of Coalville Meadows has been carefully considered and a buffer ranging from 70m-110m in width that wraps along this edge of the site provides appropriate screening and complimentary site features, therefore avoiding any harm to the SSSI.

Draft Policy EN4 of the New Local Plan provides consideration of the Charnwood Forest Regional Park. In relation to any new development within the Charnwood Forest it is expected the character and appearance will be respected in terms of the design and materials used.

All existing mature trees on site will be retained, as show via the masterplan and

the majority of mature hedgerows. The only places where hedgerow will be lost is to allow for connecting access points. The layout has been considered in such a way to allow for the field boundaries to guide development and support the criteria detailed in the draft policy in relation to the allocation of the site. Any hedgerows removed will be replaced with compensatory planting of new hedgerows.

The draft site policy also details a number of highways access requirements and active travel considerations. As part of the Holly Hayes Gate scheme transport improvements will be delivered in the form of good placemaking and the retention and enhancement of pedestrian and cycle links through the site. Redrow are also proposing a pedestrian crossing and safe access route to the local schools opposite the site to improve safety. Correspondence is also ongoing with Leicestershire County Council in relation to the alleviation of the Leicester Road / Warren Hills junction and the possibility of delivering an alternative route to alleviate traffic as part of this development. This accords with paragraph 110 and 111 of the NPPF which seeks for safe and suitable access to the site and mitigation of any highways safety impacts.

It is therefore evident that the site adheres with both national and local policy and aims to deliver a site which mitigates against harm and provide a number of benefits to the surrounding community.



Prow running through the site

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Landscape Context

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL SETTING

In landscape terms, the land to the north-west of Meadow Lane, Whitwick comprises an area of arable farmland with associated hedgerow and mature oak tree cover that sits immediately adjacent to the modern settlement edge.

The site is not covered by any landscape designation that would suggest an increased value or sensitivity to change and is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designation that would prohibit its development for residential purposes.

The site is identified as part of land parcel 01COA-C in the North West Leicestershire Landscape Sensitivity Study 2019 (prepared by Gillespies) that identifies no landscape and visual constraints relevant to the immediate setting of the site.

The 2019 Study assessed the site as being of medium landscape sensitivity to residential development, this is one of the least sensitivity landscapes at the edge of Coalville excluding area 01COL-D that covers the Bardon Hill Quarry area that is not an option for future development.

In terms of visual setting the 2019 Study assessed 01COA-C as being of medium to high visual sensitivity. Again, excluding 01COL-D that covers the quarry, this is one of the least visually sensitive landscapes at the edge of Coalville identified in this assessment.

01COL-C covers a relatively large area of land, and whilst the overall character may be similar there are localised sensitivities that should





be taken into account when considering the immediate landscape and visual sensitivity of the site.

In terms of landscape sensitivity, the wider extent of 01COL-C includes Local Wildlife Sites, and the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)/National Nature Reserve (NNR) at Warren Hills. This is a more valued landscape of far greater sensitivity when compared to the intensive arable farmland setting of the site. Taking this into account, and when considered in light of the overall landscape assessment of medium for 01COL-C, it must be the case that the immediate setting of the site falls into a lower category of medium to low landscape sensitivity.

In terms of visual sensitivity, a similar pattern emerges. The wider setting of 01COL-C

extends to include elevated sections of land rising up towards Warren Hills that form the rising slopes to the Charnwood Forest. These are inherently sensitive locations given their elevation, relatively attractive landscapes, and ability to capture wide panoramic views. In contrast, the site sits within the lower slopes sharing an immediate relationship with the modern settlement and associated highway infrastructure. Taking this forward, it must be the case that the site sits within the medium range of the scope of visual sensitivity and not high.

It is therefore logical to conclude that in landscape terms the site can be assessed as being of medium to low sensitivity, and in visual terms medium sensitivity. This would rank the site as one of the least sensitivity locations at the edge of Coalville in landscape and visual terms.

IMMEDIATE SITE CONSTRAINTS

The site comprises an area of intensively managed arable farmland at the immediate edge of the modern settlement. The existing land use has little if any ecological value and associated biodiversity.

The main landscape constraint of the site is its framework of native boundary hedgerows and mature oak tree cover. Rather than safeguard these assets the existing land use regime that involves regular deep ploughing actually placed them under threat. There is also little if any evidence of the effective management of the tree and hedgerow cover, and no evidence of succession planting to safeguard this framework for future generation.

The development of the site will see the safeguarding and preservation of the tree and hedgerow framework within an extensive network of greenspace with significantly enhanced levels of biodiversity. It will also see the planting of new landscape features that will secure the succession of these assets, and the implementation of a long-term landscape and ecological management regime.

Beyond the framework of tree and hedgerow cover, the only constraint is the existing network of public rights of way. These can be easily integrated and enhanced within a development proposal as part of the new network of accessible greenspace.



SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (SSSI)

To the north-west of the site is the Coalville Meadow SSSI comprising an area of lowland neutral grassland. Pressures on the SSSI will include public access and a lack of buffer habitat at its margins that protect it from the intervention associated with intensive arable farming.

The development of the site will secure benefits in this regard by securing:

- Extended areas of accessible green space providing relief to the SSSI;
- Extended buffer/transitional habitats of neutral grassland with associated enhanced biodiversity; and
- It will cease the existing arable farming practice and use of pesticide and fertilizer application both of which negatively impact on neutral grassland habitats.

The ability of development to secure extended terrestrial grassland habitats at the edge of the SSSI is a key benefit that should not be overlooked.



URBAN FORM AND SETTING TO CHARNWOOD FOREST

The wider urban setting of Whitwick has evolved over a number of years, but its modern expansion has been prolific throughout the latter part of the 20th century. This growth has taken the form of a field-by-field approach to development that has resulted in the geometric pattern of the settlement that exists today. In terms of future expansion, the site is a logical extension to this established pattern. Its development will not breach Warren Hills Road that sits at the transition between the lower slopes of the settlement and upper slopes of the Charnwood Forest, and it will not result in the erosion of the separate character and identities of Whitwick and its surrounding settlements. These are two key issues relating to the urban form of the local area.

In terms of the Charnwood Forest, the site sits in the lower slopes of the valley tucked into an existing framework of settlement, school development, and highway infrastructure. The landscapes of the Charnwood Forest extend across the upper valley slopes where the patchwork, or mosaic, of pastures, heathland with rocky outcrops, woodland and plantation are present. The key Forest asset local to the site is the open access land at Warren Hills. Due to the elevation, orientation of landform and nature of intervening vegetation cover there is very limited intervisibility between the site and Warren Hills. This in turn confirms that the development of the site is unlikely to result in any measurable impact on the setting of this asset.



The Site

The site is partly located within the parish of Whitwick, being split across the Castle Rock and Holly Hayes Ward. It lies approximately 1.6 miles from the centre of Whitwick and around 2.2 miles from Coalville's Town Centre. The site is within the district of North West Leicestershire.

The site is approximately 22.7ha (56.09 acres) in size being bounded by Meadow Lane to the south-east, Leicester Road to the north-east, the existing built form of Whitwick to the south-west and Coalville Meadow woodland to the north-west.

The existing bridleway dissects the centre of the site and provides onward connection to Whitwick Town Centre via Holly Hayes Wood.

As per the adopted Local Plan Whitwick is recognised within the settlement hierarchy under Policy S2 as a Principal Town. Within the most recent proposed housing and employment allocations document, discussed at committee on 15th November, this recognises the site at Meadow Lane as within the 'Principal Town' and being at the top of the hierarchy, encompassed as within the settlement status of Whitwick.



CONSTRAINTS

- Existing PROW passing through the site north to south into Holly Hayes Wood.
- Existing tree canopy spreads and Root Protections Areas (RPAs) should be protected where possible.
- Existing boundary hedgerows and trees form important ecological features and should be retained where possible.
- Surface water drainage feature(s) to be located at the low point of the site, in the north-western corner.
- Residential amenity of properties along Meadow Lane to the east and Leicester Road to the north will need to be respected.
- A landscape buffer should be provided along the south western edge of the development facing on to Holly Hayes Wood.
- There is a SSSI to the north west of the site which requires a stand off.
- Two foul sewers cross the site which need to be respected or diverted.
- Movements to the Castle Rock Secondary School opposite the site will need to be carefully considered.
- Three suitable points of access along Meadow Lane will need to be identified, minimising tree loss.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Reinforce the gateway into Holly Hayes Wood.
- A high-quality scheme with a strong sense of identity can be created, synonymous with Redrow's commitment to placemaking.
- Use the existing hedgerow network to create a structure for the development and a mature landscape structure.
- Create a multi-functional green infrastructure that provides ecological enhancement, protection of existing natural assets, surface water attenuation, recreation and play facilities.
- Deliver high quality new homes with a mix of house types, sizes and tenures.
- Improvement to highway safety by creating an alternative junction between Meadow Lane and Leicester Road.
- The setting of new homes within a strong green infrastructure network that could be inclusive of new pedestrian connections, areas of children's play and ecological enhancements.



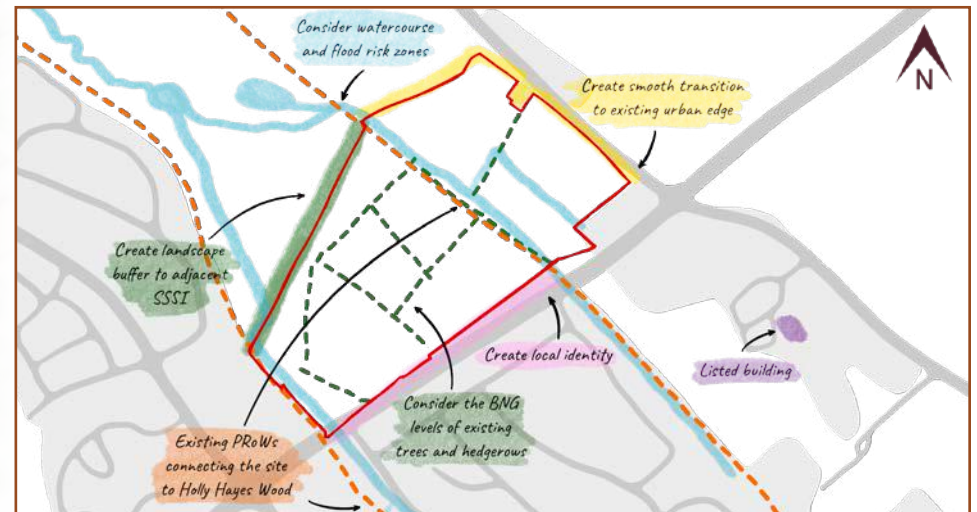
Constraints and Opportunities Plan

Design Evolution

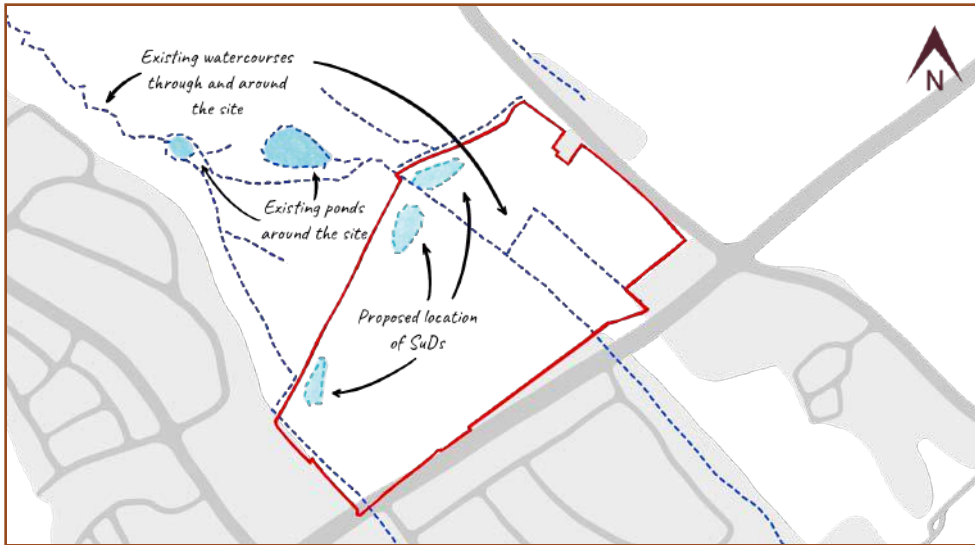
The constraints and opportunities presented by the site and summarised in this document have informed the emerging concept for development of the site.



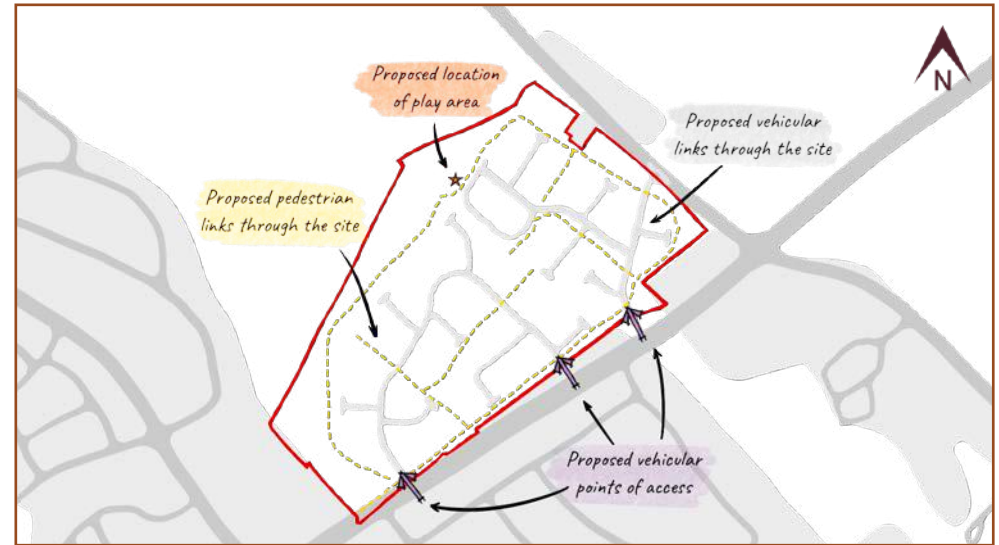
Context – the site is located adjacent to a well-established residential area to the south and west. Castle Rock Secondary School lies to the south east of the site. The PRoW running through the site from north to south provides access to Holly Hayes Wood and the wider countryside/footpath routes beyond.



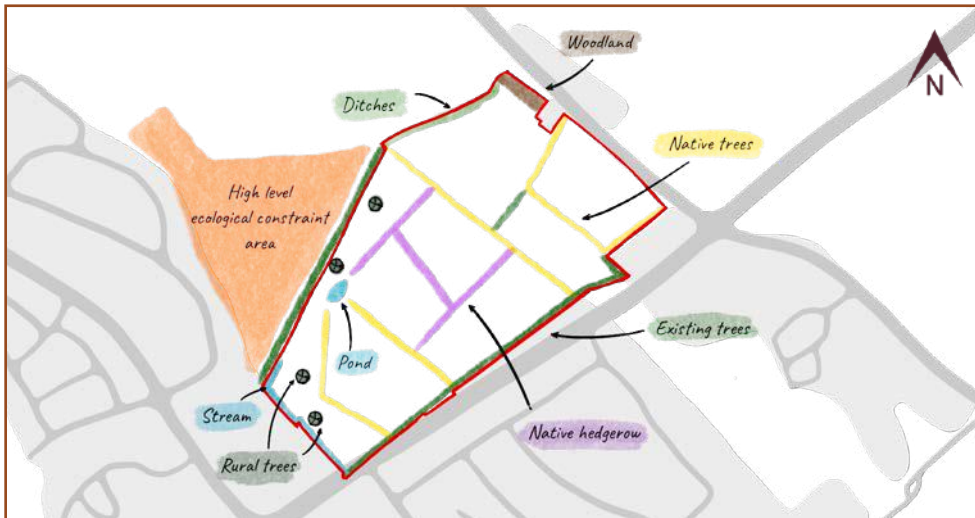
Placemaking – the above plan highlights the key opportunities to create local identity and a sense of place.



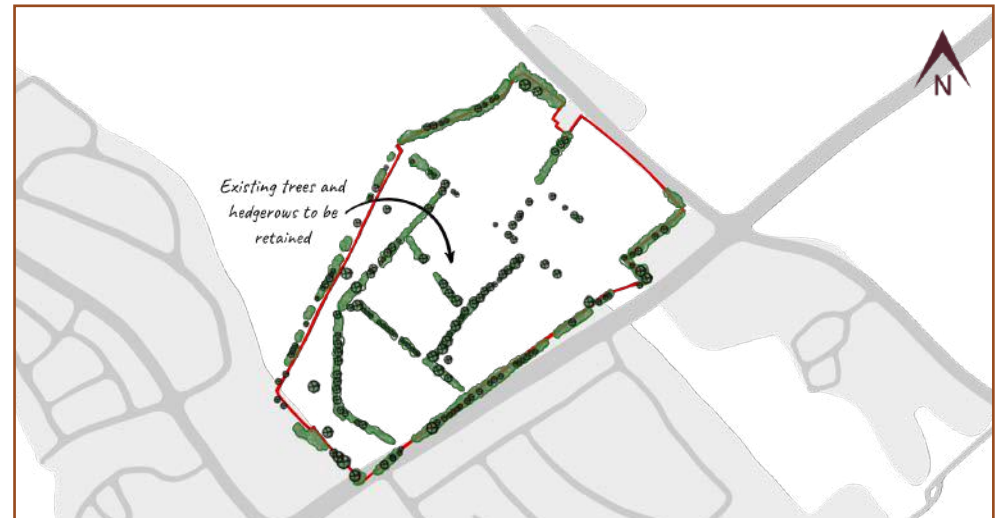
Drainage – the northern edges of the scheme are the lower points of the site, feeding into the existing watercourse running through Holly Hayes Wood.



Connectivity – opportunities exist to improve highway safety, enhance existing pedestrian routes and introduce new ones.



Ecology - the northern fields can be retained as natural areas to enhance the biodiversity of the site.



Hedgerows & Trees – the existing framework of mature vegetation should be retained and integrated into the design where possible.

The Vision











“Holly Hayes Gate by Redrow will be a thriving residential community of traditional, arts & crafts inspired new homes set within the mature setting of hedgerows and trees, with doorstep access to green space, forming a gateway into the National Forest on the eastern edge of Whitwick”

The masterplan illustrates a framework for approximately 400 dwellings assuming a range of house types are delivered and an average density of 35 dph. Development cells are compartmentalised by the framework provided by the existing hedgerows which recognises the historic field pattern, softens the appearance of the built form and creates a mature landscape setting.

The green infrastructure for the site equates to 11.6ha, 51.1% of the site. This includes green corridors for the hedgerows often incorporating existing and new pedestrian

routes such as the public right of way leading to Holly Hayes Wood and a new pedestrian/cycle route parallel to Meadow Lane which is anticipated to be well used for trips to The Castle Rock Secondary School. In addition small, incidental green spaces are proposed within the development at key points. Larger swathes of green space wrap around the developable area, with these multifunctional areas making provision for ecological enhancement, surface water attenuation and a central area of equipped play located at the gateway into Holly Hayes Wood.



-  Application site boundary
-  Existing (retained) trees & hedgerow
-  Indicative proposed planting
-  Open space
-  Existing Public Right of Way
-  Proposed pedestrian/cycle link
-  Proposed vehicular access
-  Potential for equipped play/LEAP
-  Indicative extent of residential area
-  Potential locations of landmark buildings



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The following pages summarise the key principles which underpin the masterplan: -



An attractive frontage of dwellings will face Meadow Lane, set back from the road behind a green corridor which creates an attractive alternative route for active travel to the local school.

Tree lined avenues meander through the development reinforcing the National Forest setting and the position of the site as a gateway into Holly Hayes Wood.





Green Journey

A series of 'little greens' are proposed at key locations along the primary route, providing opportunities for the planting of 'champion trees' which will be visible along key vistas, with an attractive backdrop of Redrow houses.

Designed by History

The existing hedgerows and mature trees within them have been integrated into the perimeter block structure, recognising the memory of the site and providing a mature landscape setting for new housing.



Natures Edge

A swathe of green space wraps around the northern edges of the site, providing opportunities for ecological enhancement and, together with the retained vegetation, a gain in biodiversity.



Strategic Connections

Four points of access are proposed which provide a range of movement benefits. The two westernmost accesses for a link, distributing traffic, and the third access from Meadow Lane ensures no highway route crosses the public right of way corridor. The third access from Meadow Lane extends to a new potential roundabout junction on Leicester Road, removing pressure at the cross roads at the end of Meadow Lane.

Routes to Nature

The existing bridleway that runs through the site has been integrated into the scheme. Care has been taken to avoid crossing this route with highway in order to create a safe route through to Holly Hayes Wood.

Active Travel

A series of active travel corridors are designed to follow the hedgerow corridors, providing a permeable network of routes, promoting walking and cycling through the development and beyond.



Summary

The proposal at Holly Hayes Gate has been identified as suitable to deliver around 400 new homes within a sustainable location which would support the housing delivery sought as part of the North West Leicestershire New Local Plan.

The proposed development would feature a landscape led approach in order to retain and enhance the existing features of the site, integrating closely into the surroundings and taking full advantage of opportunities for blue and green infrastructure.

Our proposals for a residential scheme at Meadow Lane, Whitwick would include the following features:

SAFE AND SUITABLE POINTS OF ACCESS

Will be provided via two/three points of access from Meadow Lane. This will provide a suitable loop road through the site and there is further possibility to alleviate congestion at the Leicester Road/Warren Hills junction.

HIGH QUALITY BUILDING STANDARD

Redrow aim to ensure a better way to live through the delivery of their eight placemaking principles which they consider as part of any new development.

DESIGN AND SCALE

The scale and design of the proposed buildings has been evaluated carefully in respect of the surrounding area to ensure the impact is sensitive to surrounding views and context. Sustainable design has also been considered in line with relevant building standards.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT CONNECTIONS

Active travel elements have been incorporated into the proposed layout. This includes the retention and enhancement of the existing bridle way connection and additions of several footpaths connecting the site to the nearby schools, thus strengthening pedestrian and cycle links. A bus route is also proposed to run through the site providing connections to the nearby centres of Whitwick, Thringstone and Coalville.

SENSITIVE LANDSCAPING

Landscape buffers and landscape features will be retained and enhanced within the site to provide a high quality level of green and blue infrastructure. This will ensure appropriate interaction with the nearby SSSI of Coalville Meadows.

SUSTAINABLE URBAN DRAINAGE (SUDS)

SuDS have been designed to provide sustainable drainage to improve the existing drainage on site and manage surface water flows from the proposed development. These have been proposed in the natural low points currently present on site.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN (BNG)

Biodiversity net gain will be achieved through the proposed extension to the woodland to the north-west which forms part of the SSSI. In addition to this existing field boundaries will be retained and an 'L shaped' buffer will be developed along the western and south-west edge. These proposal combined will provide significant landscaping and biodiversity benefits.



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