



# 6 Green Infrastructure Opportunities

Informal route across Weston Hills LNR - Baldock







# 6 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE OPPORTUNITIES

## 6.1 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE OPPORTUNITY THEMES

### Inherited Assets

Understanding the context and existing Site features of value, which have helped shape and guide the design of the landscape and framework plan.

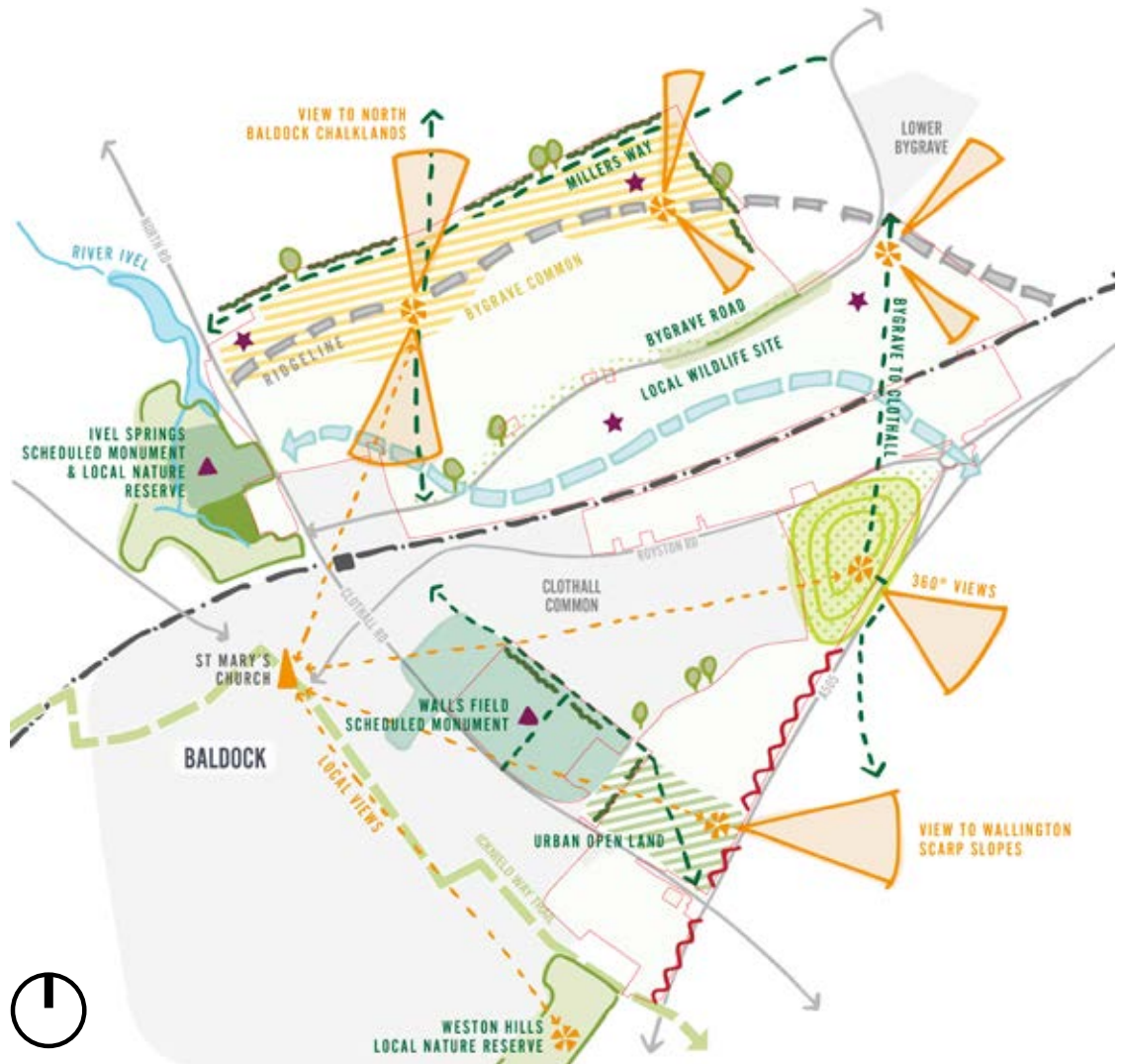


Figure 24. Inherited Assets Opportunity



Key vantage point from ridgeline in BA1

- Retain and incorporate existing key views from elevated areas – particularly towards St Mary's Church spire
- Respect, embrace and work with the undulating chalk landform
- Protect, restore and enhance high value vegetation/habitats
- Safeguard, buffer and improve Ivel Springs and Weston Hills LNR connectivity within the wider landscape
- Reference, interpret and celebrate some of the area's heritage within the landscape

## Wild Infrastructure

Prioritising nature rich beautiful places that meet Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) targets, delivered through a range of retained, enhanced and created habitats.



### Figure 25. Wild Infrastructure Opportunity



Therfield Heath an area of Common Land (SSSI & LNR) on chalk escarpment, Hertfordshire

- Create a nature recovery network that reconnects nature and provides greater permeability for species within, to and from the Site
- Reverse habitat fragmentation through creating ecological stepping stones & linear corridors to aid movement of wildlife
- Safeguard, buffer and improve Ivel Springs and Weston Hills LNR connectivity within the wider landscape



## 6.1 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE OPPORTUNITY THEMES

### Heritage

Celebrating and referencing Baldock's heritage - embracing the context, history and character of Baldock to positively influence the landscape design and place, giving a greater sense of identity and ownership.

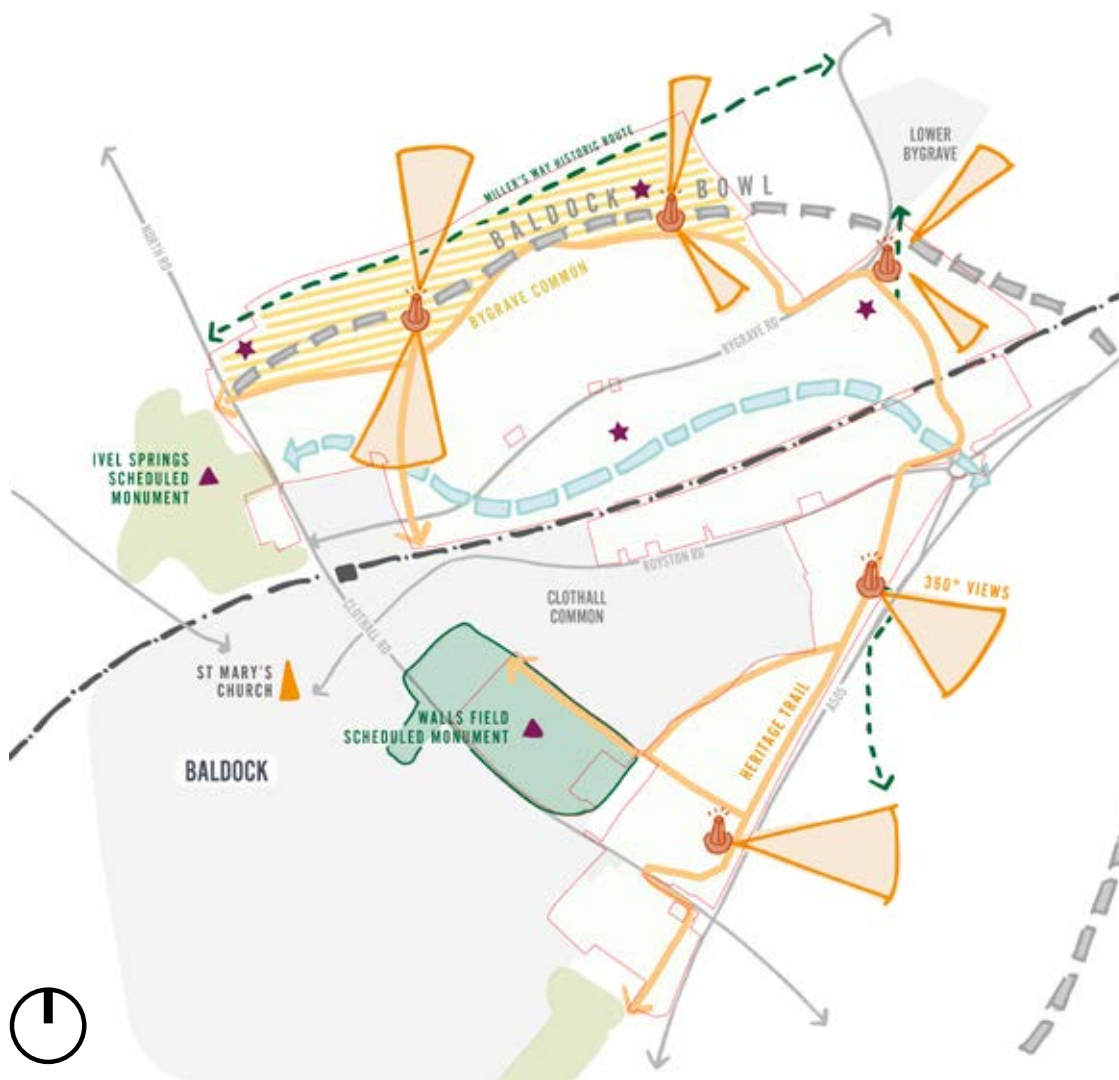


Figure 26. Heritage Opportunity



A plinth-mounted toposcope atop Lantern Pike, Peak District

- Create a 'Heritage Trail' that connects and celebrates the area's rich heritage, potentially using public art installations or 'toposcopes' at key vantage points to indicate the direction and distance, to notable landscape features which can be seen from that point.
- Reinterpret the historic 'Winterbourne' channel, which is a winter river route and ancient stream-bed now infilled with soil, as part of the Site's new sustainable drainage features.
- Reference and reinterpret 'Bygrave Common' as part of a new public open space parkland. Historic and current mapping has a reference to this area as 'Bygrave Common', previously used for strip field farming. The field would have been owned by a land owner and the villagers would rent strips in which to grow their own crops



### Movement & Access

Improve accessibility, connectivity and safety as part of the walking, cycling and horse riding network in Baldock, which connects to the surrounding wider network.

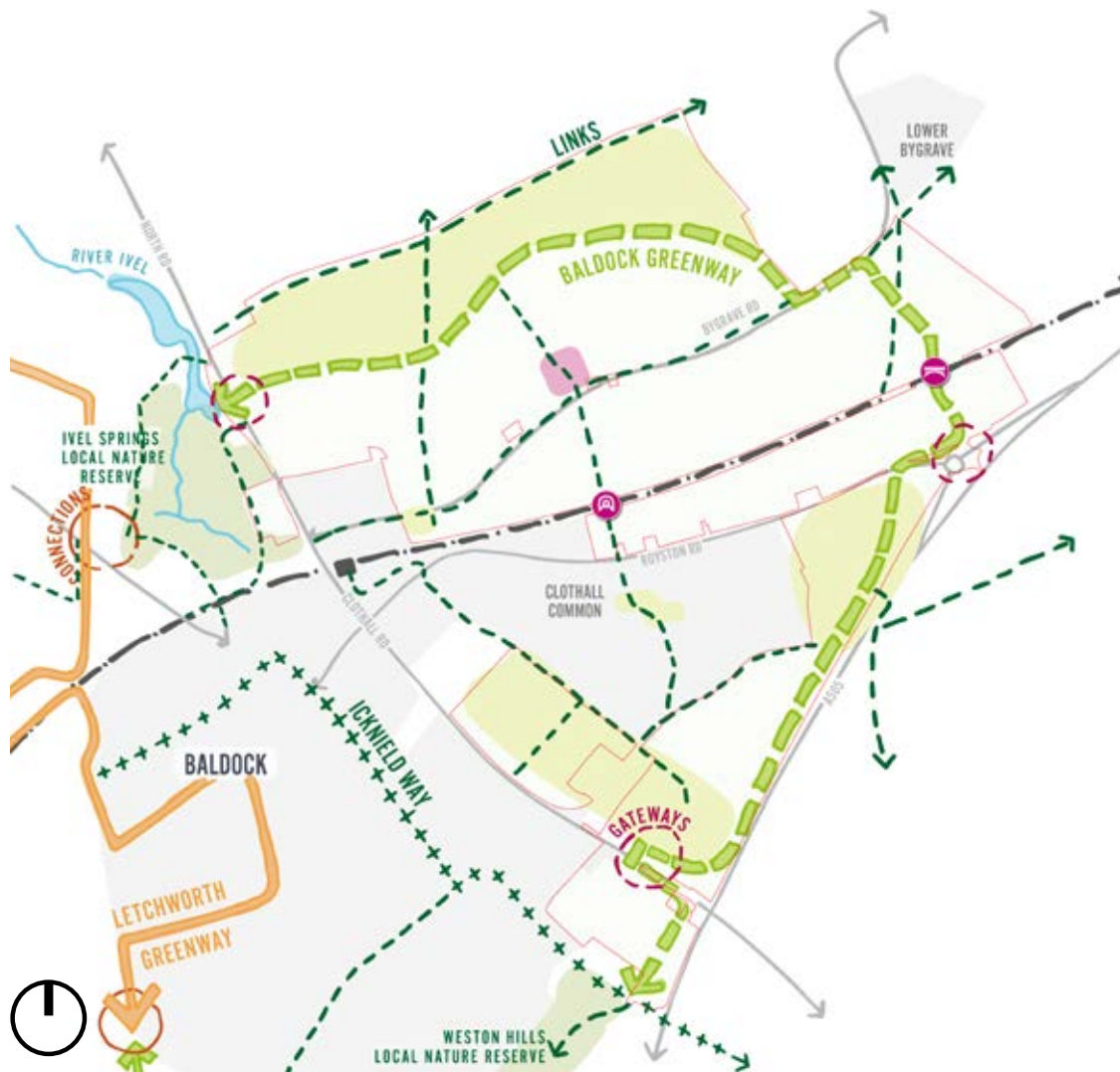


Figure 27. Movement & Access Opportunity



Stratford Greenway is a multi user path for cyclists, walkers, horse riders and wheelchair users and part of the National Cycle Network.

- Deliver a dedicated walking, cycling and horse riding movement network through and around Baldock as part of the Baldock Greenway
- Provide a range of movement links through the new development that will support active travel, healthy lifestyles and provide access to the surrounding countryside
- Improve connectivity between Baldock and Letchworth through strengthening active travel links to recreational, community and employment facilities



## 6.1 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE OPPORTUNITY THEMES

### Key Green Infrastructure Destinations

A series of new, connected, community green spaces that support a range of recreational uses. Spaces where people meet, socialise, relax, exercise, grow, play sport and connect with nature.

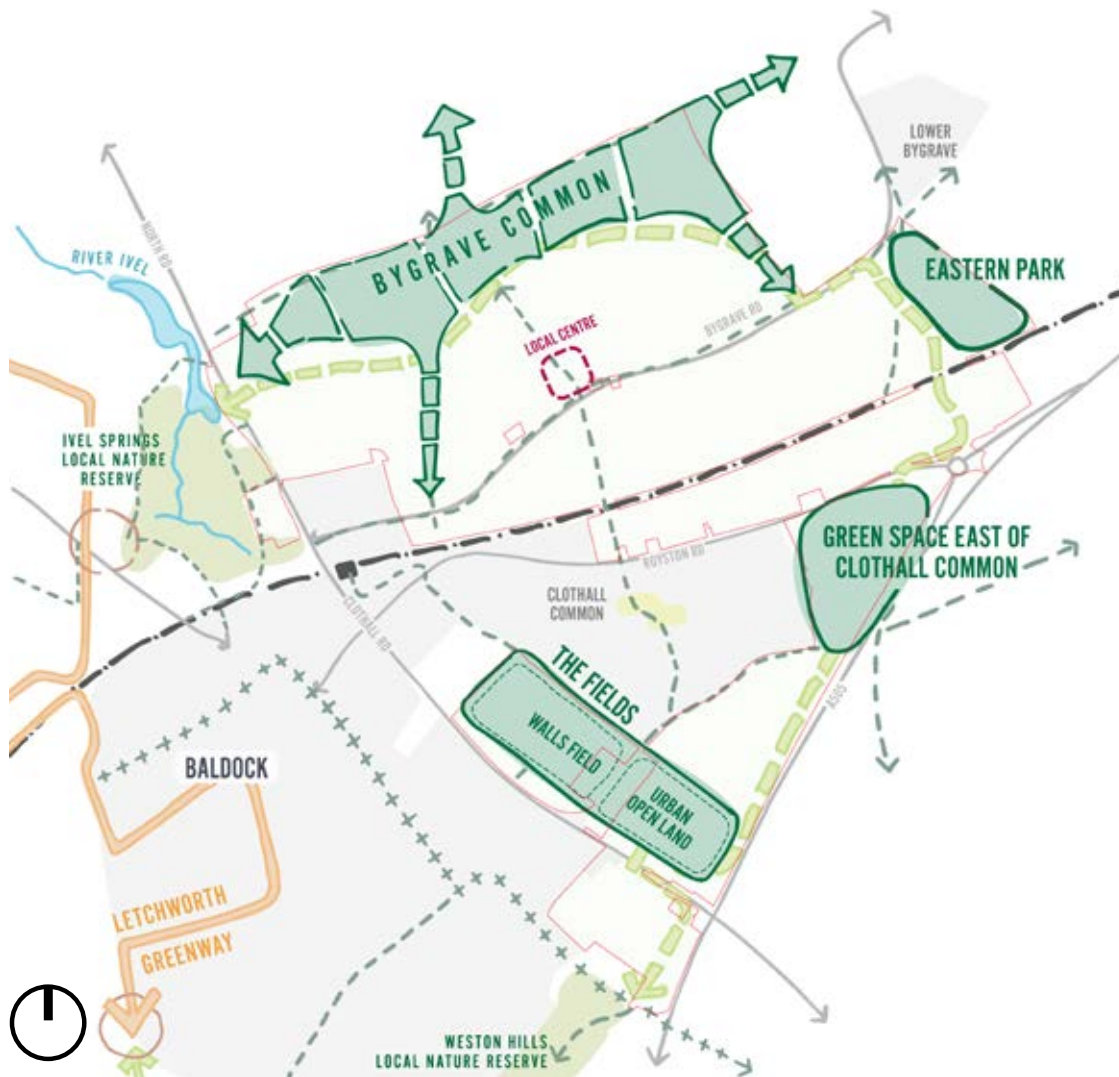


Figure 28. GI Destinations Opportunity



Alconbury Weald Swynford Park - featuring allotments, sports courts and play equipment.

- A series of new, connected, community green spaces that provide publicly accessible open space for children's play, sport, social interaction & food production
- New parks defined and characterised by the existing setting, landscape, heritage and ecology

### Landscape Character

Creating new landscapes characterised and influenced by the surrounding Ivel Valley, chalk uplands, Wallington scarp slopes and Weston Hills.



Figure 29. Landscape Character Opportunity



Example of the proposed landscape character within a wildflower meadow

- Deliver a range of characters that are influenced by the surrounding landscape
- 'Landscape character' embraces the existing topographic features, biodiversity, wildlife and habitats, land use, sights, sounds, touch and smells, cultural associations, history, and memories





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## 6.2 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE OPPORTUNITY SUMMARY

### Green Infrastructure (GI) Destinations

- Opportunity to create a series of connected open spaces, all unique in character, that respect, embrace and work with the undulating chalk landform and landscape character.
- Opportunity to safeguard, buffer and improve connectivity to the Ivel Springs and Weston Hills LNR, as part of the GI Framework.

**1 Ivel Springs LNR:** The creation of a substantial new parkland in the north of Site (Bygrave Common) would relieve the recreational pressures on Ivel Springs. Development of a sustainable drainage strategy - optimising infiltration of surface water drainage whilst minimising over-land outfall - has the potential to recharge the chalk aquifer. Opportunity to expand North Road Allotments and orchard area, into the small part of the Site adjacent to North Road, currently used informally by the local community.

**2 Weston Hills LNR:** Improve connectivity between Weston Hills and the wider PRoW network, particularly through BA2 as part of the Baldock Greenway, that would enhance the north/south movement.

**3 Bygrave Common:** There is the opportunity to reference and reinterpret Bygrave Common as part of a new public park for the community of Baldock. Retain, respect and enhance the northern undulating chalk landform, elevated ridgeline and key views. Within Bygrave Common there is the potential for more ecologically focused areas, where public access is minimised to maximise biodiversity value.

**4 Eastern Park:** The creation of a new local park to serve the north eastern community of the Proposed Development through co-located sports, play and productive spaces. Noting this area's archaeological features, this park could provide the opportunity for heritage landscape interventions by the way of play area themes, interpretation and layout/ species planted in this park.

**5 Green Space east of Clothall Common:** Opportunity to designate this area of land as a public open space/nature park managed for informal recreation and access to nature for the local community. Celebrate this key vantage point and reference Baldock's rich cultural heritage, as part of a heritage trail around Baldock.

**6 Walls Field:** Opportunity for a new community green space and as a 'common ground' for existing and new communities.

Taking Walls Field out of intensive agricultural use would be beneficial to preserve the archaeology associated with the Scheduled Monument. Opportunity to convert Walls Field into a meadow grassland, managed for biodiversity, amenity and heritage purposes. Opportunity to reference Baldock's rich cultural heritage, as part of a heritage trail around Baldock, linking all heritage open spaces and features.

### **7 Urban Open Land:**

Opportunity to expand and enhance the existing allotment facilities at Clothall Road. Opportunity to enhance the existing PRoW network through the Urban Open Land and out to the countryside to the east - as part of the Baldock Greenway. Opportunity to create a publicly accessible, recreational focused parkland for outdoor sports, play and productive uses that would maintain the openness and respect the transition from urban to rural beyond.

### Green Infrastructure (GI) Connectivity

- Opportunity to deliver a dedicated walking, cycling and horse riding (where possible) movement network through and around Baldock as part of the Baldock Greenway.
- Opportunity to provide a range of movement links through the new development that will support active travel, healthy lifestyles and provide improved access to the surrounding countryside.
- Opportunity to Improve connectivity between Baldock and Letchworth through strengthening active travel links to recreational, community and employment facilities.
- Opportunity to create a 'Heritage Trail' that connects and celebrates the area's rich heritage, potentially using public art installations or toposcopes (at key vantage points to indicate the direction and distance, to notable landscape and/or heritage features, which can be seen from that point.)
- Opportunity to reinterpret the Winterbourne palaeo channel as part of the Site's waterstory and potential SuDS network.





Figure 30. Green Infrastructure Opportunity Plan







# 7 Green Infrastructure Framework



BALGA North Road Site Allotments - Baldock









# 7 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE FRAMEWORK

## 7.1 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE VISION

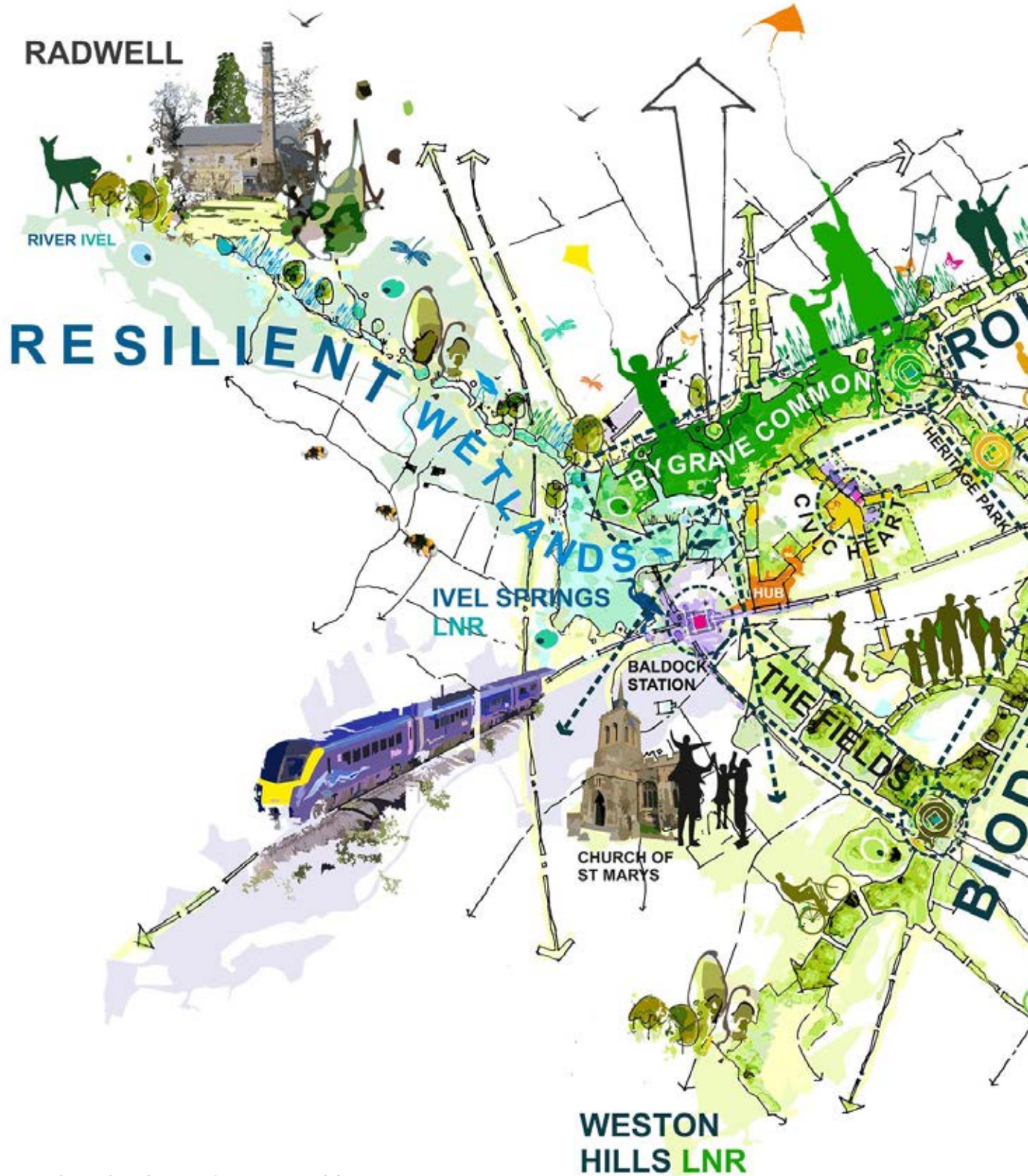


Figure 31. Green Infrastructure Vision Plan





**ROLLING CHALKLANDS**



**BIODIVERSE GRASSLANDS**



**RESILIENT WETLANDS**





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## 7.2 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE FRAMEWORK

The Green Infrastructure framework supports the landscape led design process undertaken for Baldock. The framework will:

- **Create a Strategic Nature Recovery Network** - buffer existing Local Nature Reserves (LNR) at Ivel Springs and Weston Hills, creating a strategic Local Nature Recovery Network (LNRN) as part of Bygrave Common. The LNRN will be supported further by core ecological stepping stones and green links, designed to aid the movement of wildlife through and beyond the Site
- **Deliver Key Open Space Destinations** - create a series of connected parklands that celebrate their unique landscape character and provide opportunities for play, sport, food production, historical interpretation and sustainable drainage features. Dedicated open space destinations include: Bygrave Common, Eastern Park, Green Space east of Clothall Common, Urban Open Land and Walls Field
- **Provide Access for All** - dedicated walking, cycling and (where possible) equestrian movement network through and around Baldock as part of the Baldock Greenway, supported by a network of green links and active travel routes providing direct active travel connectivity to key open spaces and destinations such as sports pitches and parks
- **Bring the Past to Life** – embedding the heritage of the Site in landscape and green infrastructure through provision of a heritage trail through Bygrave Common, vantage points within strategic green spaces providing views to Baldock, and reinterpretation of historic winterbourne channel
- **Integrate SuDS** – to be integrated into and core component of strategic green infrastructure including the sustainable drainage corridor, to deliver drainage, placemaking and ecology function, as well as restoring the alignment of the winterbourne channel
- **Establish GI within parcels** – residential and commercial parcels will incorporate regular, smaller scale open spaces and landscaped areas located along and connected by AT routes. These spaces may include equipped play, play on the way, community growing space, SuDS and active travel connections. Design Coding will further articulate the approach to green infrastructure within parcels.

The Green Infrastructure framework plan, **Figure 32**, illustrates the proposals for option 2 at the Urban Open Land, where BA3 delivers the most residential units. For the instances where either options 1 or 3 are delivered, the GI strategy has the capacity to flex to suit the different land use options.

For options 1 & 3, where a secondary school is delivered on BA3, the 3G sports provision within the school grounds on BA3, grass pitches and pavilion on the Urban Open Land, and with play redistributed throughout the rest of the residential development, to ensure natural surveillance.

Further information on options 1, 2 & 3 and how these affect GI strategies and key spaces can be found in **Chapters 8 & 9**.





**Figure 32. Green Infrastructure Framework Plan - Option 2**

— Site boundary

**GI Destinations:**

- ① Ivel Springs (offsite)
- ② Weston Hills (offsite)
- ③ Bygrave Common
- ④ Eastern Park
- ⑤ Green Space east of Clothall Common
- ⑥ Walls Field
- ⑦ Urban Open Land

- ⑧ Baldock Greenway
- ⑨ Green Lane
- ⑩ Green Links
- ● Sustainable Drainage features





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## 7.3 OPEN SPACE, PLAY & RECREATION PROPOSALS

The Proposals for Baldock are compliant with open space requirements, details of which can be found in the previous **Section 4.1**, with the exception of Outdoor Sport Facilities.

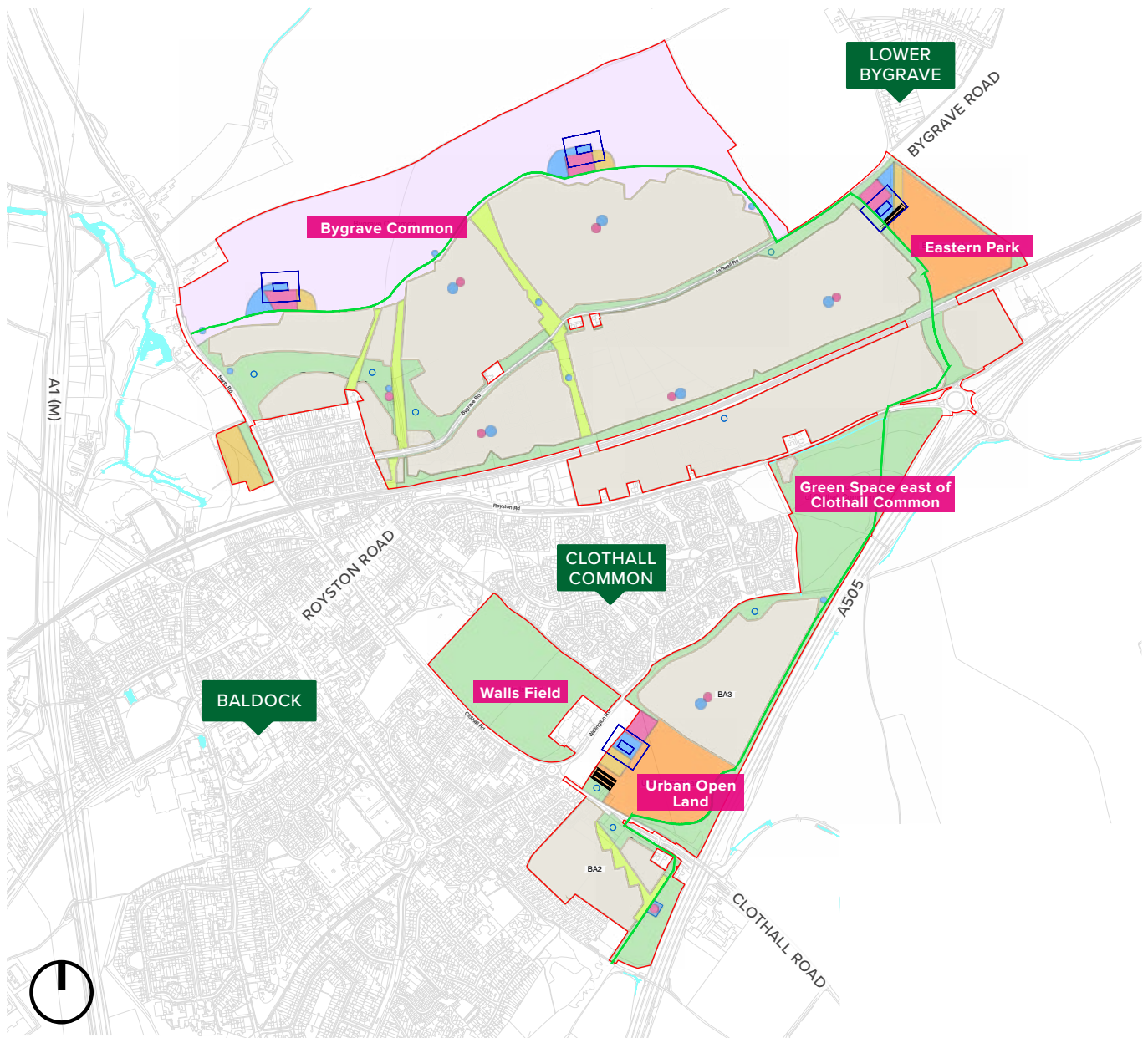
As part of the design process, we have tested and measured open space requirements based on the Parameter Plan and Illustrative Masterplan for all 3 options. The following table and plan demonstrate that the illustrative proposals for Baldock will achieve the open space required for the maximum option of units (3,200).

The slight under provision of the quantum area of Outdoor Sports Facilities is in part as a result of the Site constraints - biodiversity and heritage designations, under ground archaeological features and the undulating topography, which collectively limit the locations sport can be located. Refer to **Section 8.4 Sports Strategy** for further information.

| BALDOCK HYBRID STANDARDS - OPTION 2 - 3,200 UNITS                                                  |                  |                   |                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| OPEN SPACE TYPOLOGY                                                                                | 1,000 population | 7,680 population* | PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT |
| <b>Outdoor Sports Facilities (NHC SPD)</b><br>Grass & 3G pitches, sports pavilion, buffer planting | 1.60 ha          | 12.29 ha          | 11.67 ha             |
| <b>Allotments (NHC SPD)</b><br>Allotments, orchards, community gardens                             | 0.30 ha          | 2.30 ha           | 2.30 ha              |
| <b>Provision for Children &amp; Young People (FiT)</b>                                             |                  |                   |                      |
| Equipped play                                                                                      | 0.25 ha          | 1.92 ha           | 1.92 ha              |
| Informal play                                                                                      | 0.30 ha          | 2.30 ha           | 2.30 ha              |
| <b>Parks &amp; Gardens (FiT)</b>                                                                   | 0.80 ha          | 6.14 ha           | 39.28 ha             |
| <b>Amenity Green Space (FiT)</b>                                                                   | 0.60 ha          | 4.61 ha           | 4.61 ha              |
| <b>Natural &amp; Semi-Natural Greensapce (FiT)</b>                                                 | 1.80 ha          | 13.82 ha          | 45.35 ha             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                                                                       | 5.65 ha          | 43.38 ha          | 107.43 ha            |

\* Based on standard occupancy ratio of 2.4 persons per dwelling to estimate the population (3200 unit scheme x 2.4 = 7,680 population)





**Figure 33. Indicative Open Space, Play & Recreation Plan - Option 2**

— Site boundary