8 Green Infrastructure Strategies

Bridge crossing SuDS ponds - Houlton, Warwickshire


CHANGES.
LEAD

8 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGIES

8.1 BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY

Mitigation by Design - Habitats & Biodiversity

Extensive habitat restoration across the Baldock Site will improve habitat quality, structural diversity, and biodiversity through the creation, restoration, and expansion of neutral grasslands, woodland blocks, and species-rich hedgerows.

Enhanced habitat connectivity is central to the design, establishing wildlife corridors that link fragmented habitats and facilitate species movement, dispersal, and genetic exchange - particularly important for bats, badgers, and hedgehogs.

Natural and semi-natural open space typologies are positioned adjacent to sensitive sites such as Ivel Springs and Weston Hills LNRs, reducing edge impacts from development and reinforcing landscape-scale ecological resilience.

Targeted enhancement of degraded features will boost their value for nesting and foraging birds and bats, with management informed by baseline survey results.

Mitigation by Design - Species

Targeted ecological design will deliver conservation benefits tailored to the needs of key species recorded on-Site.

Bats will benefit from new roosting boxes and strengthened commuting and foraging routes via enhanced hedgerows and woodland edges. These improvements will support prey availability and secure movement corridors, boosting bat activity and diversity.

Farmland birds, particularly corn buntings, will be supported through rough grassland and scrub mosaics (northern part of Bygrave Common & at Green Space east of Clothall Common) designed for nesting and foraging. Dedicated management regimes and the provision of new nesting opportunities will aid breeding success.

Reptile species, such as common lizards and slow worms, will be supported through the installation of hibernacula and refugia in appropriate grassland areas, offering essential shelter and overwintering habitat to stabilise populations.

Corn Bunting Mitigation Strategy

Off-site mitigation areas have been identified for corn buntings to compensate for habitat loss at the Baldock Site, recognising the species' local importance.

Three key mitigation sites (Potential Park, Ashwell End, and Hinxworth) were surveyed and found suitable for supporting enhanced breeding habitat for corn buntings.

Proposed measures include 5m wide wildflower-rich field margins, beetle banks, and appropriate cropping regimes to maximise nesting and foraging potential.

2023 survey results confirmed these sites support viable corn bunting populations, with minimal population change since earlier assessments. Monitoring data from 2023 recorded stable or slightly increased territory numbers, especially at Ashwell End and Hinxworth, supporting the efficacy of these sites.

Ongoing habitat management will maintain high-quality breeding conditions at these locations, effectively offsetting impacts from the Baldock development.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

The BNG assessment for the OPA will be illustrative and based on the Parameter Plan, informed by the GI Framework and some assumptions within the Illustrative Masterplan. As more detail comes forward at each stage as per the tiered approach, the BNG will be updated to reflect further information.

The scheme will deliver policy compliant BNG which is 10%, however given the opportunities within retained habitat and extensive landscape proposals we will aspire to achieve beyond this.

Figure 34. Biodiversity Strategy Plan - Option 2

- Site boundary
- Roads
- Railway
- Settlement
- Local Nature Reserve
- Local Wildlife Site

Retained Features:

- Allotments
- Grassland
- Scrub
- Woodland
- Hedgerow
- Trees

Proposed Features:

- Wildlife Focused Corridor
- Wildlife Focused Area
- Wider GI connections
- Green links
- Buffer planting
- SuDS features

- Grassland habitat
- Wetland habitat
- Amenity landscape
- Productive landscape
- Formal sport areas
- Play areas
- Development areas

8.2 SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE STRATEGY

The proposed surface water drainage for the Badock scheme (refer to **Drainage Strategy Report** by akt for further information) will be designed in line with the guidance and recommendations contained in The SuDS Manual (CIRIA C753) but will also consider the most appropriate SuDS measures in the context of the River Ivel and the chalk aquifer.

The drainage proposals will include a linear, open space corridor, focused on the movement of people, water and wildlife - whilst reinterpreting the historic Winterbourne channel as part of the Site's waterstory. This linear corridor incorporates Bygrave Road, passes through the development, accommodates sustainable transport links (pedestrian and cycle) and will vary in width and character along its length. The linear open space will also facilitate multiple uses including proposed landscape planting to enhance biodiversity value along the linear open spaces, and will provide opportunities for informal recreation and play.

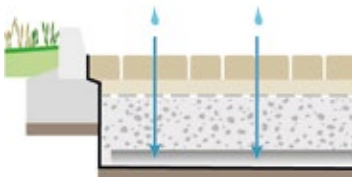
The philosophy for the proposed SUDS strategy is to dispose of surface water by infiltration wherever possible. The proposals include:

- Individual soakaways to the residential plots
- Permeable paving to driveways and residential parking areas
- Infiltration basins to collect runoff from residential parcel roads and footpaths
- Permeable paving to employment land car parking areas
- Infiltration basins to collect runoff from employment land buildings, roads and pavements
- Swales and bio-retention areas to partially convey runoff from roads and footpaths to the infiltration basins along with traditional piped systems

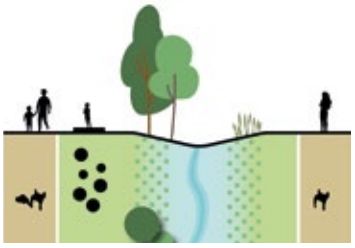
The Drainage Strategy Plan opposite, **Figure 35,** illustrates indicatively how SuDS features can be integrated into the design, managing surface water, by using infiltration basins and swales.

Further SuDS features, as part of the Proposed Development, will include permeable paving, soakaways to residential plots, filter strips, rain gardens and bio-retention areas. The exact location, shape and size of SuDS will be resolved through future Design Codes (Tier 2) and Reserved Matters Applications (Tier 3).

Permeable paving

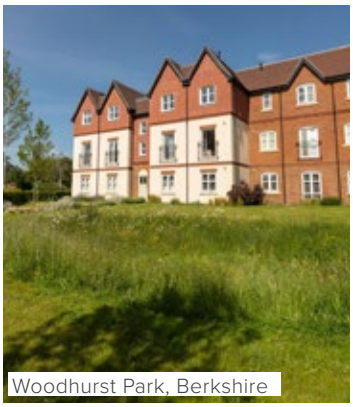


Swales/Rain Gardens



Watercolour, Surrey

Infiltration basin



Woodhurst Park, Berkshire

Figure 35. Indicative Drainage Strategy Plan

- Existing & proposed vegetation
- Indicative infiltration basins
- Indicative developable area
- Indicative swales/Rain gardens
- Direction of flow

8.3 PLAY STRATEGY

The Proposed Development provides the quantum of play required as per the **'The North Herts Council (NHC) Developer Contributions (SPD) January 2023,'** and the **'Fields in Trust Standards (FiT) 2024'.** The play strategy will not only ensure that play meets the minimum size and walking distances required, but will cater for all ages, offer opportunities for social interaction and provide a range of experiences. The exact location, shape and size of play areas are Indicative only and will be resolved through future Design Codes (Tier 2) and Reserved Matters Applications (Tier 3).

The play strategy illustrated in **Figure 36,** demonstrates four combined NEAP/LEAP play areas that are located along the Baldock Greenway and close to peoples homes for sustainable access. These combined NEAP/ LEAP play areas are also co-located next to youth provision and community growing spaces.

LEAPs and informal play will also be evenly distributed throughout the residential parcels, ensuring the minimum area and walking distance of equipped play is provided for the rest of the development.

Informal play will be provided through landscape design elements such as: changes to levels, boulders, logs and other engaging natural features to create incidental play opportunities, as well as within pocket parks in development areas. Informal play elements included along key movement routes such as the green links and Baldock Greenway, can provide play on the way, and will also be incorporated next to equipped play areas, ensuring all ages of play are catered for in one location.

This strategy illustrates one option for how play could be delivered at Baldock, based on option 2 where BA3 delivers the most residential units. For the instances where either options 1 or 3 are delivered, the play strategy has the capacity to flex to suit the different land use options.

Formal Combined NEAP/LEAP

Alconbury Weald, Cambridgeshire

Formal LEAP

Alconbury Weald, Cambridgeshire

Priors Hall, Northamptonshire

Informal Play

Houlton, Warwickshire

Wintringham, Cambridgeshire

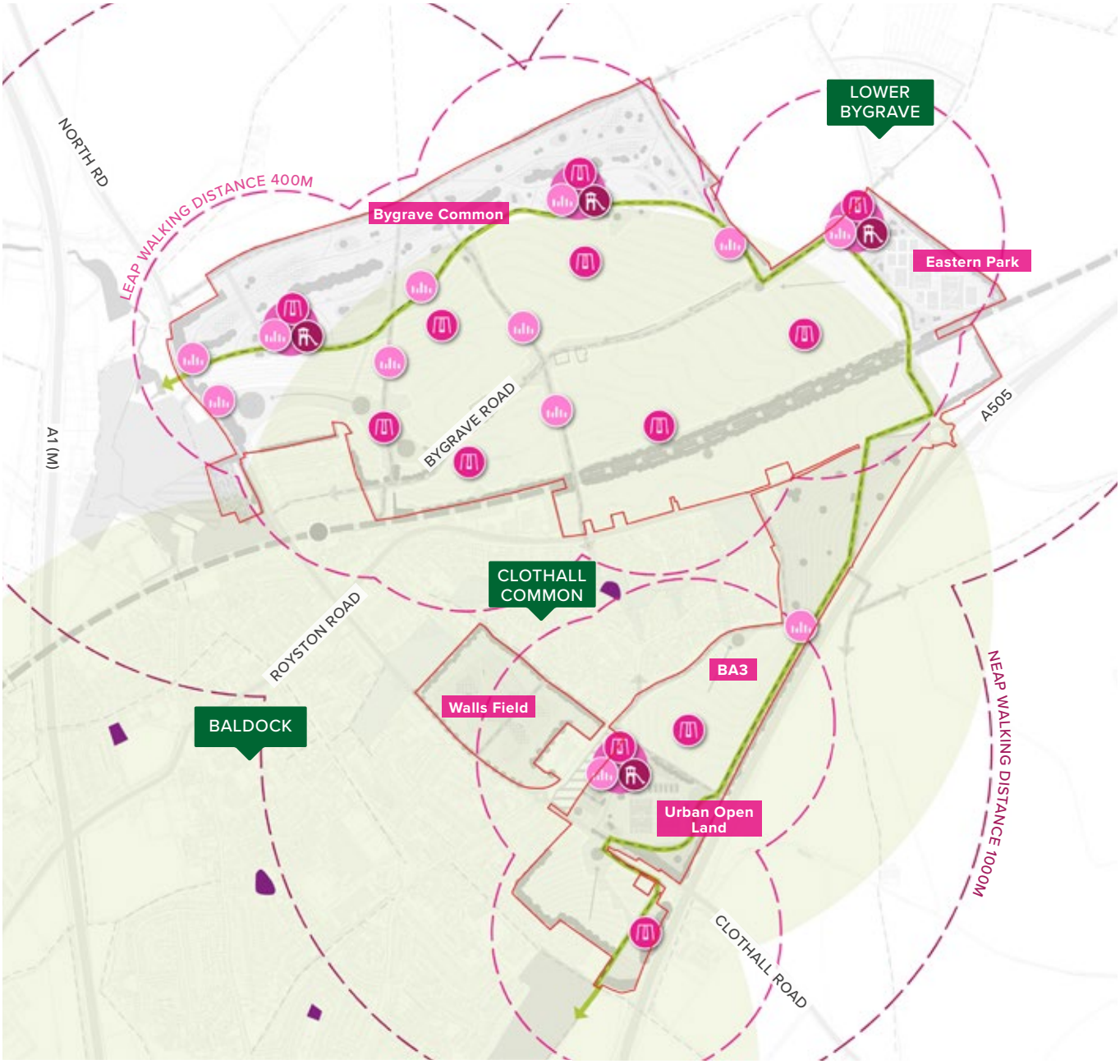


Figure 36. Indicative Play Strategy Plan - Option 2

Existing Play Provision:

- Existing play areas
- Existing play walking distance
- Baldock Greenway

Proposed Play Provision:

- Combined NEAP/LEAP
  - Including MUGA
  - 1000m walking distance from home
- LEAP
  - 400m walking distance from home
- Informal Play
  - informal natural play interventions interspersed along key movement routes

8.4 SPORTS STRATEGY

The sports strategy for Baldock has been developed alongside **North Herts Council (NHC),** and **Sport England** as part of the pre-application process. Guidance from both NHC and the issue of the '**20250409 Playing Pitch Calculator Outputs Baldock Allocations 3200 dwellings 7680 population**' from Sport England have determined the following strategy.

The suitable locations in which to provide formal sports provision are limited due to the constraints at Baldock such as, the ecological importance of Bygrave Common and Green Space east of Clothall Common and the archaeological importance of Walls Field.

The sports strategy for Baldock will deliver sports hubs at Eastern Park and the Urban Open Land. These will be supported by car parking, a sports pavilion/club changing rooms and co-located facilities such as play areas and community growing areas. Proposed bunds featuring pollinator planting and trees will provide buffers between proposed and existing residential development and the formal sports pitches.

The sports strategy at Baldock has been tested to suit the different land use options at BA3. **Figure 37** is based on option 2, with residential and an SEND school proposed on BA3, resulting in the sports provision being located on the Urban Open Land. For both options 1 & 3, the 3G pitches will be located within the school grounds on BA3 for joint community use, with grass pitches on the Urban Open Land for school use only. For all 3 options the formal sports at Eastern Park will provide be unlit grass pitches.

Alongside the formal sport provision, active design principles such as active travel routes, green links and the Baldock Greenway will prioritise sustainable travel and provide opportunities for outdoor gym equipment, walking, running and cycling routes, all encouraging healthy active lifestyles.

See table opposite for a breakdown of pitch type and quantum for all options, and refer to **Chapter 9** for illustrative examples of pitch layouts at Eastern Park and the Urban Open Land.

Formal pitch provision - Grass

Adult pitches with cricket pitch

Mini pitch

Formal pitch provision - 3G

3G all weather pitch

Tennis/Netball courts

MUGA/Sports Pavilion

Alconbury Weald, Cambridgeshire

Meon Vale, Stratford-upon-Avon

Figure 37. Indicative Sports Strategy Plan - Option 2

Existing Sports Provision:

- Not publicly accessible to local residents (private clubs/schools)
- Sport accessed through private membership and/or hire fees
- Publicly accessible
- Existing sport walking distance

Proposed Sport Provision:

- Football
- Cricket
- Netball
- Tennis
- Outdoor gym equipment
- Cycling routes
- Multi-use Games Area (MUGA)
- Baldock Greenway

PLAYING PITCH CALCULATOR - SPORT ENGLAND		
PITCH TYPE	REQUIRED 7,680*	PROPOSED Options 1, 2 & 3
TOTAL - 3G Adult Football	**0.75**	**2**
TOTAL - Grass	**12.67**	**13**
Adult Football	1.67	3
Youth Football	4.96	7
Mini Soccer	3.49	0
Rugby Union	1.12	0
Rugby League	0.17	1
Cricket	1.27	2
ADDITIONAL - Netball/Tennis	**-**	**6**

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

8.5 PRODUCTIVE STRATEGY

The Proposed Development provides the quantum of productive area (allotments, growing spaces and orchards) required as per the **'The North Herts Council (NHC) Developer Contributions (SPD) January 2023,'** and meets the minimum walking distances required.

The strategy for productive landscapes at Baldock is to extend existing formal allotments at North Rd and Clothall Rd, to utilise facilities and infrastructure associated with the existing plots.

The strategy illustrates three community growing spaces, co-located next to play areas, MUGAs and sports facilities to create active and multifunctional destinations. These community growing spaces will provide raised community beds, fruiting orchard trees with spaces and seating for informal social activities.

The productive strategy will be supported by opportunities for informal foraging and edible trails along key pedestrian movement routes such as the Baldock Greenway.

The strategy plan, **Figure 38**, illustrates option 2, where BA3 delivers the most residential units. For the instances where either options 1 or 3 are delivered with a secondary school on BA3, the formal allotments proposed at the Urban Open Land can change shape to stretch along the existing plots at Clothall Rd, keeping ownership boundaries between school land on Urban Open Land straightforward.

Formal Allotments

Alconbury Weald, Cambridgeshire

Alconbury Weald, Cambridgeshire

Community Growing Spaces

Houlton, Warwickshire

Woodhurst Park, Berkshire

Informal Foraging/Edible Trails

Figure 38. Indicative Productive Strategy Plan - Option 2

Existing Productive Provision:

- Formal allotments
- Existing allotments walking distance
- Baldock Greenway

Proposed Productive Provision:

- Formal allotments
- Community growing spaces
- Informal foraging/edible trails

9 Key Spaces

Taplow Riverside, Berkshire

9 KEY SPACES

This chapter sets out to clearly illustrate the location, function, character and the management and maintenance of the key green infrastructure spaces within the Proposed Development.

The following pages indicatively show how Baldock can accommodate the key landscape design features, whilst ensuring all open space, landscape character, visual and ecological requirements are met.

Section 9.3 illustrates alternative layouts for the Urban Open Land options 1, 2 & 3.

Figure 39. Key Spaces Plan

Parks & Gardens

1. Bygrave Common Overall
2. Eastern Park
3. Urban Open Land
4. Weston End

Natural/Semi Natural Open Space

5. Bygrave Common Ecological Area
6. Green Space east of Clothall Common
7. Walls Field

Linear Open Space

- 8 Baldock Greenway
- Green Lane
- Green Links
- Sustainable Drainage Corridor

9.1 BYGRAVE COMMON OVERALL

Bygrave Common will deliver a new destination public parkland and natural landscape that is over 40ha in size and forms part of a new Local Nature Recovery Strategy that reconnects nature and provides greater permeability for species within, to and from the Site.

The overall strategy for Bygrave Common is to provide recreational focused activities alongside the development edge and the Baldock Greenway, with the northern part of Bygrave Common providing a range of ecological focused habitats. For more information on the Bygrave Common Ecological Area see **Section 9.5.**

This proposed parkland destination will provide the existing and new residents of Baldock ample space to relax, play, exercise and socialise, alongside the opportunity to experience nature through a range of habitat typologies and biodiversity enhancements .

1. Utilise the existing key vantage points at Bygrave Common as part of a 'heritage trail', to provide views towards St Mary's Church spire in Baldock and out to the surrounding landscape.
2. Create a destination park, through the co-location of play (NEAP & LEAP), MUGAs and community growing spaces (raised beds & orchards) whilst respecting archaeological constraints and providing natural surveillance.
3. Dedicated walking, cycling and horse riding (where possible) movement network through and around Baldock as part of the Baldock Greenway.
4. Provide informal natural play and fitness interventions interspersed along key movement routes.
5. Retain and enhance existing hedgerows and field margins, and create a new open chalk grassland habitat, featuring areas of scattered trees & scrub to support a range of species as well as encouraging species to move through the wider landscape.
6. Retain Millers Way historic route and alignment as a grass track as part of the existing public right of way.
7. Creation of native scrub and tree planting as part of a wooded landscape buffer along the ridgeline to aid the transition in character out to the wider landscape, species movement and softening views of proposed built form.

Figure 40. Bygrave Common Illustrative Plan


Toposcope viewing point


Therfield Heath, Hertfordshire


Alconbury Weald, Cambridgeshire


Alconbury Weald, Cambridgeshire


Alconbury Weald, Cambridgeshire

9.2 EASTERN PARK

Eastern Park will deliver a new local park, serving the north eastern community of Baldock, ensuring to also provide an important buffer between the proposed residential development, formal sports pitches and existing properties at Lower Bygrave.

1. Utilise the existing key vantage points at Eastern Park as part of a 'heritage trail', to provide views out to the surrounding landscape.
2. Creation of a destination park, through the co-location of play (NEAP & LEAP), MUGA and community growing spaces (raised beds & orchards) close to people's homes.
3. Provision of grass sports pitches supported by a sports pavilion and car park.
4. Dedicated walking, cycling and horse riding (where possible) movement network through and around Baldock as part of the Baldock Greenway.
5. Proposed landscape mounds/bunds, featuring pollinator and buffer planting to provide a buffer between the proposed residential development, formal sports pitches and existing properties at Lower Bygrave.

Location plan

Figure 41. Eastern Park Illustrative Plan

Alconbury Weald, Cambridgeshire

Alconbury Weald, Cambridgeshire

Adult grass pitches with cricket pitch

Meon Vale, Stratford-upon-Avon

Community growing, Houlton, Warwickshire

9.3 URBAN OPEN LAND

The green infrastructure proposals at the Urban Open Land will create a new local park to serve the south eastern community of Baldock, whilst maintaining a sense of 'openness' and creating a transition from urban to rural.

Figure 42, 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, demonstrates 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.

1. Create key vantage points as part of a 'heritage trail', to provide views out back towards Baldock and out to the surrounding landscape.
2. Provision of 3G outdoor sports pitches, supported by a sports pavilion and car park if option 2, no secondary school on BA3 is delivered.
3. Create a destination park, through the co-location of play (NEAP & LEAP), situated adjacent to community spaces to provide natural surveillance, if option 2, no secondary school on BA3 is delivered.
4. Dedicated walking, cycling and horse riding (where possible) movement network through and around Baldock as part of the Baldock Greenway.
5. Sensitively designed sports provision, landscaped mounds and lighting for ecological benefits and to retain openness between Baldock and the surrounding landscape to the east.
6. Opportunity to expand and enhance the existing allotment facilities at the BALGA Clothall Rd site.

Figure 42. Urban Open Land - Option 2 Illustrative Plan


Tennis/Netball Courts


3G All Weather Pitch


Katherine Warington School. St Albans


Alconbury Weald, Cambridgeshire

9.4 WESTON END

Weston End will serve as a gateway local park destination, connecting to Weston Hills Local Nature Reserve. The retained and proposed landscape will provide an attractive setting for a new playground, overlooked by residential properties and with onward connections to the rest of the Proposed Development.

1. Dedicated walking, cycling and horse riding (where possible) movement network through and around Baldock as part of the Baldock Greenway.
2. Provision of a LEAP play area that serves the new residents at BA2, that is overlooked by residential properties and situated alongside the Baldock Greenway.
3. Opportunity for fitness interventions interspersed along the Baldock Greenway, informal natural play integrated within proposed landscape mounding and buffer planting.
4. Retention of existing habitats and proposed landscape mounds/bunds, featuring pollinator and buffer planting to provide a buffer between the proposed residential development and the A505.
5. Create an attractive gateway setting with signage and wayfinding to signal the entrance to both the Weston Hills LNR and the Proposed Development.

Figure 43. Weston End Illustrative Plan


Play, mounding & buffer planting


Pollinator friendly planting

Gateway signage & wayfinding


Alconbury Weald, Cambridgeshire


Residential properties overlooking play area

9.5 BYGRAVE COMMON ECOLOGICAL AREA

Bygrave Common will provide a new habitat mosaic, as part of a new Local Nature Recovery Strategy that reconnects nature and provides greater permeability for species within, to and from the Site.

Proposed Species & Habitats

Species-rich calcareous grassland, seeded with a native wildflower and fine grass mix (e.g. Helianthemum nummularium, Lotus corniculatus, Koeleria macrantha, Festuca ovina), to promote invertebrates including bees, butterflies (e.g. chalkhill blue, marbled white) moths, and hoverflies.

Scattered scrub and native standard trees, such as hawthorn, blackthorn, and field maple, offering structural heterogeneity, berry-producing resources, and nesting opportunities for farmland and scrub-edge birds including corn bunting, linnet, yellowhammer, and whitethroat.

Hedgerow enhancement and infill, using native, locally characteristic species (e.g. dogwood, hazel, spindle), managed to achieve dense, layered structure for cover and movement of small mammals, reptiles, and bats, while providing nectar and fruits.

Tussocky grassland margins and south-facing slopes, left unmanaged or lightly managed to support thermoregulation, foraging, and hibernation for reptiles such as common lizard and slow worm.

Linear features and wildflower margins, providing navigational and foraging routes for bats, likely species include common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and noctule.

Management & Maintenance for Ecological Benefits

Scrub and tree management to ensure a dynamic balance between open grassland and structural diversity. Rotational cutting and selective coppicing to prevent encroachment, with retention of flowering shrubs and berry-bearing species for invertebrates and birds

Hedgerow management on a 2–3 year cycle using traditional methods (e.g. coppicing, laying) outside of the bird nesting season

Targeted monitoring and ecological surveys, including fixed-point floristic assessments, invertebrate transects (e.g. pollinator counts), and reptile refugia surveys to inform an adaptive management plan to refine cutting regimes and identify habitat gaps.

Low-impact public access, incorporating surfaced recreational routes and strategic signage to direct footfall away from sensitive grassland and scrub-edge areas.

Calcareous grassland management through late summer cutting (post-seeding), with arisings removed to maintain low fertility conditions that favour wildflower dominance. A rotational mosaic of cut and uncut areas will be maintained to support overwintering invertebrates and reptiles.

Ongoing habitat creation and enhancement, particularly within hedgerow gaps and around the margins of grassland blocks, to create a resilient, interconnected ecological network across the Site and the wider countryside.

1. Create a new open chalk grassland habitat, featuring areas of scattered trees & scrub to support a range of species as well as encouraging species to move through the wider landscape.
2. Existing hedgerow retained, enhanced and gapped up where necessary with native species rich hedgerow and hedgerow trees.
3. Creation of native scrub and tree planting as part of a wooded landscape buffer along the ridgeline to aid the transition in character out to the wider landscape, species movement and softening views of proposed built form.
4. Provide a range of informal mown routes and surfaced footpaths for recreational use.
5. Retain Millers Way historic route and alignment as a grass track as part of the existing public right of way.


Grassland margins


Therfield Heath, Hartfordshire


Chalk grassland meadows


Hedge laying

9.6 GREEN SPACE EAST OF CLOTHALL COMMON

The Green Space east of Clothall Common is an existing habitat mosaic that acts as a key ecological stepping stone as part of the wider Baldock Green Infrastructure strategy.

Proposed Species & Habitats

The enhancement of Clothall Common as part of the Site's GI strategy focuses on increasing biodiversity value through habitat diversification and sensitive management. The area is proposed to support:

- Species-rich neutral grassland with native wildflowers (e.g. Centaurea nigra, Rhinanthus minor, Leucanthemum vulgare) to enhance floral diversity and attract pollinators like bumblebees, butterflies (e.g. small skipper), and hoverflies,
- Scattered scrub and hedgerows to support nesting birds such as whitethroat, dunnock, and song thrush, and provide shelter for reptiles and small mammals,
- Habitat for reptiles, particularly common lizard and slow worm, through the retention and creation of south-facing banks, log/brash piles, and unmanaged tussocky swards,
- Bat foraging habitat, supported by flower-rich meadows and linear features like tree lines and hedgerows.

Management & Maintenance for Ecological Benefits

To maximise the ecological value of Clothall Common, the following long-term management practices are proposed:

- Scrub management, maintaining a balance between open grassland and structurally diverse shrub cover. Scrub will be coppiced or thinned on rotation to prevent encroachment while retaining value for nesting birds,
- Hedgerow management on a 2–3 year rotation using traditional techniques (e.g. coppicing or layering), avoiding nesting season to protect breeding birds,
- Monitoring and adaptive management, with regular ecological checks (e.g. floristic diversity assessments, reptile presence surveys) to inform refinement of the maintenance regime,
- Minimised disturbance, by directing public access along defined paths and using signage/fencing where needed to reduce trampling pressure on sensitive areas,
- Rotational cutting of grassland, with a late summer cut (after seeding) and removal of arisings to maintain nutrient-poor conditions suitable for wildflower dominance. Some areas will remain uncut annually to provide overwintering habitat for invertebrates.

1. Utilise the existing key vantage points as part of the 'heritage trail', to provide views out to the surrounding landscape.
2. Existing grassland and scrub habitat mosaic to be retained and enhanced encouraging species to move through the wider landscape.
3. Dedicated walking, cycling and horse riding (where possible) movement network through and around Baldock as part of the Baldock Greenway, retaining the existing width and surface treatment of the public right of way, to minimise impact on the ecological area.
4. Informal recreational routes indicated with mown paths located on existing desire lines to control movement, ensuring the preservation as an ecologically rich area.
5. Opportunities for seating within mown amenity grass situated at accessible distances for all users.

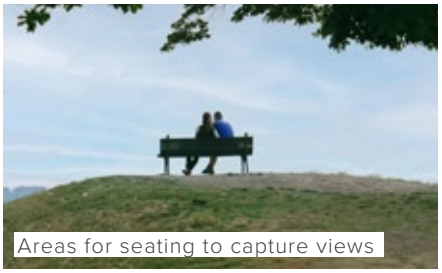
Figure 45. Green Space east of Clothall Common Illustrative Plan


Existing planting


Tring Park, Hertfordshire


Log pile


Toposcope as part of Hertiage trail


Areas for seating to capture views

9.7 WALLS FIELD

Walls Field presents a key opportunity for a new natural/semi-natural space, taking Walls Field out of intensive agricultural use and transforming it into wildflower meadows will help preserve the archaeology associated with the Scheduled Monument and provide ecological and recreational benefits.

Proposed Species & Habitats

The primary ecological proposal is the establishment of a low-nutrient, species-rich grassland seeded with native wildflower and fine grass mixes. This habitat is intended to support a diverse invertebrate assemblage, including pollinators such as meadow brown, marbled white, and various solitary bee species. The floral composition will prioritise shallow-rooted species to avoid disturbance to sub-surface archaeological features.

Scattered non-invasive native trees, such as field maple (Acer campestre), hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna), and crab apple (Malus sylvestris), will be sensitively planted in low densities, with locations informed by archaeological constraints. These will provide shelter and foraging opportunities for birds and invertebrates without compromising the integrity of the Scheduled Monument. In turn this will lead to increased use by breeding birds and provide a stepping stone for other protected species such as reptiles and bats.

Recreational use will be integrated through mown pathways and informal access routes, maintaining large buffer zones around ecologically sensitive and archaeologically significant areas. This approach ensures accessibility while preserving ecological and heritage features.

Management & Maintenance for Ecological Benefits

Meadow cutting regime, involving a single annual cut in late summer, with arisings removed to maintain low soil fertility and encourage floral diversity. Some areas may be left uncut on rotation to support overwintering invertebrates.

No fertiliser or deep cultivation, in line with Scheduled Monument requirements. All works will be surface-based with seed drilling limited to shallow scarification or plug planting where appropriate.

Tree and scrub management, ensuring only appropriate species are used and that no deep rooting species are introduced. Trees will be monitored regularly and pruned as necessary to avoid excessive canopy spread or root penetration.

Public access zoning, with well-defined mown paths and signage to limit footfall in core wildflower and archaeological areas. Visitor infrastructure (e.g. benches or signage) will be kept to the periphery where possible.

Monitoring, including annual fixed-point photography and botanical quadrat surveys to assess sward development, floral richness, and habitat condition. Findings will inform adaptive management.

Heritage liaison, ensuring all habitat works align with Scheduled Monument guidance, and that any interventions are agreed with Historic England or relevant bodies in advance.

1. Ecological enhancement that respects the archaeological sensitivity of the Scheduled Monument and its biodiversity potential through species-rich wildflower meadow creation, light recreational access, and non-invasive native tree planting.
2. Retained existing public right of way footpath.
3. Informal recreational routes indicated with mown paths to control movement whilst increasing amenity value of Walls Field Scheduled monument.
4. Opportunities for seating and wayfinding/ interpretation boards (as part of Baldock heritage trail), situated at key locations to reference cultural heritage of Baldock and the existing scheduled monument.

Figure 46. Walls Field Illustrative Plan


Informal mown paths


Meadow management


Pollinator species

9.8 BALDOCK GREENWAY

Baldock is strategically located to the east of two existing strategic recreational routes, Etonbury Green Wheel and Letchworth Greenway. As part of the Proposed Development, a dedicated walking, cycling and horse riding (where possible) movement network will be provided through and around Baldock, with the potential to connect offsite to the existing Etonbury and Letchworth routes.

The strategy for the Baldock Greenway has been developed alongside **North Herts Council (NHC), Hertfordshire County Council (HCC)** and the **British Horse Society (BHS)**. As part of this pre-application process, it was raised that there was currently a gap in the equestrian network between Clothall and Bygrave. During the Green Infrastructure Audit of the PRoW, undertaken for SMP stage, it was identified that Royston Rd and the railway had deterred users crossing and causing further disconnections in the PRoW network.

The Baldock Greenway provides the opportunity to reconnect this gap in the equestrian network through controlled horse rider access, and provide safe crossing points for all users at Royston Rd and across the railway.

The function, width and surface treatment of the Baldock Greenway will vary along its length, creating a route with varied character that responds to its surroundings.

Running in part along the Baldock Greenway and destination parks, the **Baldock Heritage Trail** will celebrate, reference and interpret the area's rich history by connecting key heritage features within the development and linking to the wider area through a network of waymarked trails. Surfaced paths, connecting important assets and highlighting the area's heritage, through interpretation using either boards / signage, wayfinding, landscape features and / or public art.

Figure 47. Baldock Greenway Illustrative Plan

Stratford Greenway, Warwickshire

Arborfield Green, Berkshire

Alconbury Weald, Cambridgeshire

Existing PRoW, Green Space east of Clothall

Common, Baldock, Hertfordshire

Letchworth Greenway, Hertfordshire

10 Management & Maintenance

Community Gardens - Woodhurst Park, Berkshire

10.1 MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE OPTIONS

The development will seek to establish a sustainable long-term approach to the maintenance and management of green infrastructure and other community assets. The design of open spaces and green infrastructure must therefore consider the long-term management and maintenance of the landscape, not just its design at 'day one'. Urban&Civic are exploring long term management options for areas of green infrastructure (i.e. Land Trust, Wildlife Trust or an Estate Management Company). The below options are different approaches that could be considered at Baldock. Detailed Landscape and Management and Maintenance Plans will be submitted as part of more detailed planning applications.

Adoption by the Local Authority

- Leavesden Country Park is a 38 hectare park in Hertfordshire, owned and managed by Three Rivers District Council
- With significant investment in the park from Three Rivers District Council, Warner Bros. Studios Leavesden, National Lottery Heritage Fund, YMCA and Sport England, it has moved from a dog walking space into a destination attraction
- The rejuvenated park, provides a home to Leavesden HIVE (Heritage/Information/ Volunteering/Education), full time Park Ranger, a Friends of Leavesden Country Park group and Leavesden Hospital History Association
- The park is managed in accordance with the Leavesden Leavesden Country Park, Management Plan 2021-2031

Leavesden Country Park, Hertfordshire

Stewardship by the Land Trust

- Beaulieu, Chelmsford is a 3000+ new homes development by developers Countryside and L&Q
- The Land Trust have taken on the long-term ownership and management of the green infrastructure on the Site
- By the end of the 20-year build-out, the Land Trust will manage the 72 hectares of parks and open spaces incorporated into the original masterplan
- The Land Trust will take care of the estate parkland indefinitely on behalf of, and in partnership with, the Beaulieu residents and the wider local community through the collection and administration of a service charge


Beaulieu, Chelmsford

Stewardship by the Wildlife Trust

- The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire owns and manages Trumpington Meadows country park and nature reserve
- Grosvenor Property UK and the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) in 2022 agreed the terms for a financial endowment to the Wildlife Trust to secure the future of the 148-acre country park and nature reserve within a 1,200 home neighbourhood in Cambridge
- The Wildlife Trust has maintained the country park and nature reserve since 2015 but its partnership with Grosvenor and USS goes back to 2008, when the trust was selected to help shape the green spaces at Trumpington Meadows. The endowment will pay for the trust to undertake the maintenance of the park for an indefinite period

Trumpington Meadows, Cambridge

Strategic Management Company

- Alconbury Weald is 6,500+ strategic residential development, located north west of Huntingdon, in Cambridgeshire and is being delivered by Master Developer Urban&Civic Plc
- Over the next 15 - 20 years, Alconbury Weald will deliver new homes, employment, green space, education, transport links and amenities for the community to enjoy
- The management and maintenance of the open spaces, landscape and green infrastructure is funded through an annual service charge to residents, which facilitates a private management company to maintain these spaces

Alconbury Weald, Cambridgeshire

BMD

Bradley Murphy Design LTD
Studio 3, Floor 18, Alpha Studios , Alpha Tower
Suffolk Street Queensway
Birmingham
B1 1TT