

# 03

## 3.3 Borders

- 3.3.1 Borders nor Boundaries
- 3.3.1 Recognising and enhancing the Edges
- 3.3.2 Hedgerow Typologies
- 3.3.3 Movement and Journey

## 03.3 CONCEPT

### 3.3.1 Borders not Boundaries

The distinguished sociologist Richard Sennett has had a made a huge contribution to our understanding of post industrial urban space. His analysis of public space and its role in managing the relationship between people and communities has greatly helped urban planners, architects and city leaders to understand and value well thought out organization of urban elements. Sennets thoughts on 'borders' and 'boundaries' seem relevant to the social organization of an eco-town.

The layouts for Himley Village proposed here, marked out as they are by ancient field boundaries and modern road layouts nevertheless will allow a well-judged degree of porosity so that moving through the various parts of the settlement is eased. That will however depend a great deal on detailed design and physical construction, which the proposal in support of the Outline Planning Application can encourage but cannot enforce.



Mark Rothko, 'Light Red over Black', 1957



Mark Rothko, 'Light Cloud, Dark Cloud', 1957

*"..... This is an important distinction in the natural world. In natural ecologies, borders are the zones in a habitat where organisms become more inter-active, due to the meeting of different species or physical conditions. The boundary is a limit; a territory beyond a particular species does stray. So these are two different kinds of edge. For instance, in the border-edge where the shoreline of a lake meets solid land there is an active zone of exchange; here is where organisms find and feed off other organisms. The same is true of temperature layers within a lake: where layer meets layer defines the zone of the most intense biological activity. Whereas the boundary is a guarded territory, as established by prides of lions or packs of wolves. This spatial distinction in natural ecologies relates to a difference in the structure of cells themselves. It is the difference between a cell wall and cell membrane, the cell wall's function being that of a container holding things in, the membrane being at once porous and resistant, letting matter flow in and out of the cell, but selectively, so that the cell can retain what it needs for nourishment. .... the difference, in degree, between wall and membrane is important for our understanding of "openness" as a condition: never simply free flow, it resembles the membrane in combining porosity and resistance. This combination marks the experience organisms have ecologically at the border's edge, and defines the condition of openness in human systems. Urban design provides examples of how porosity and resistance can combine. .... The devil in modern urban planning is that the contrary condition of the inert, closed boundary, constructed by a much less solid and fixed sort of wall. Highways cut through cities are the obvious example: crossing through six or eight lanes of traffic is perilous; the sides of highways in cities tend to become withered spaces; these invisible walls infamously have been used to mark off the territories separating the rich from the poor, or race from race. Porosity is lacking. Put as a general rule, in 20th planning motion has served as the instrument for making boundaries rather than borders. "*

Richard Sennett <http://www.richardsennett.com/site/SENN/Templates/General2.aspx?pageid=16>

## 03.3 BORDERS

### 3.3.2 Recognising and Enhancing the Edges

Hedgerows provide a strong visual connection to the historic agricultural use of the Site, as well as playing an invaluable role towards the rich biodiversity across the Site. They are a Habitat of principle importance under section 41 of NERC act and on the Oxfordshire LBAP.

The hedgerows act as borders to fields and are important permeable conduits for nature, they exist at the edges of the monoculture and the control of the agricultural order of fields. This is very similar to the qualities of cell membranes or city walls where movement of materials or people are greatest at the edges or borders.

The hedges in our proposal carry on the role of a border, affording a wide range of diverse activities and movements. These borders are not to be confused with boundaries. A boundary's characteristics are to stifle all movement. One boundary condition of modern planning is a large road or railway where the adjacent landscapes are often hostile and sterile. At stations where the railway moves from being a boundary and becomes a border the noted change in activity and movement is clear.

We propose the hedges retain their attributes as borders. They become the public realm corridors for movement, play, amenity, growing, water management, increased bio-diversity and like now are the central feature of the proposed landscape character.



### 03.3 BORDERS

#### 3.3.2 Recognising and Enhancing the Edges

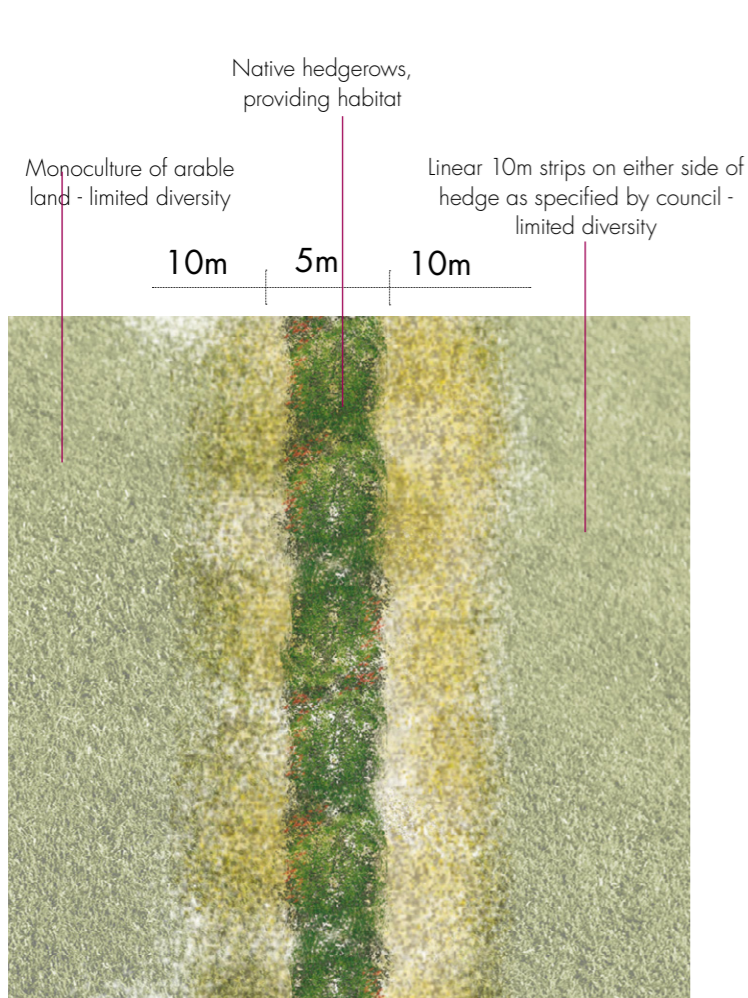
As stated in the NW Bicester Masterplan Green Infrastructure and Landscape Strategy May 2014 'the majority of the species rich hedgerows within the Masterplan Site have been replanted with a diverse mix of native shrub species.'

The hedgerows provide habitat links across the Site, delineate field boundaries and are a source of potential food production. A 10m wide buffer to each side has been set out by PPS1 Supplement. Our vision is that this 20m buffer will be an enhanced hedgerow. They will be broadened and planted up enhancing their roles as green corridors and a as a resource for the community. This links back to a history of productive landscape and a working farm.

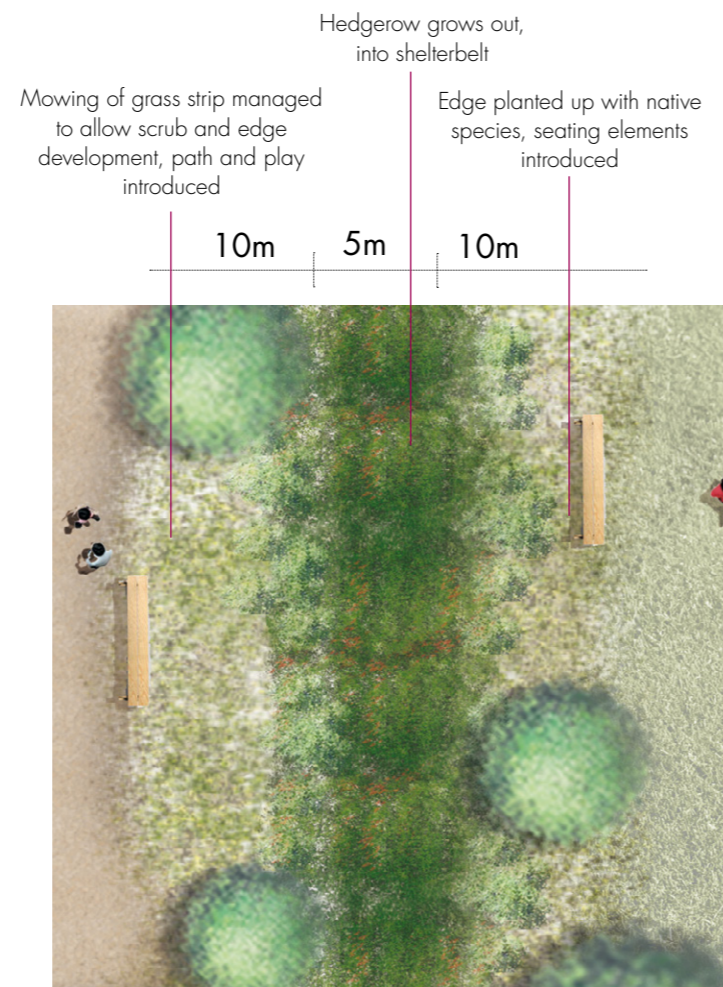


### 03.3 BORDERS

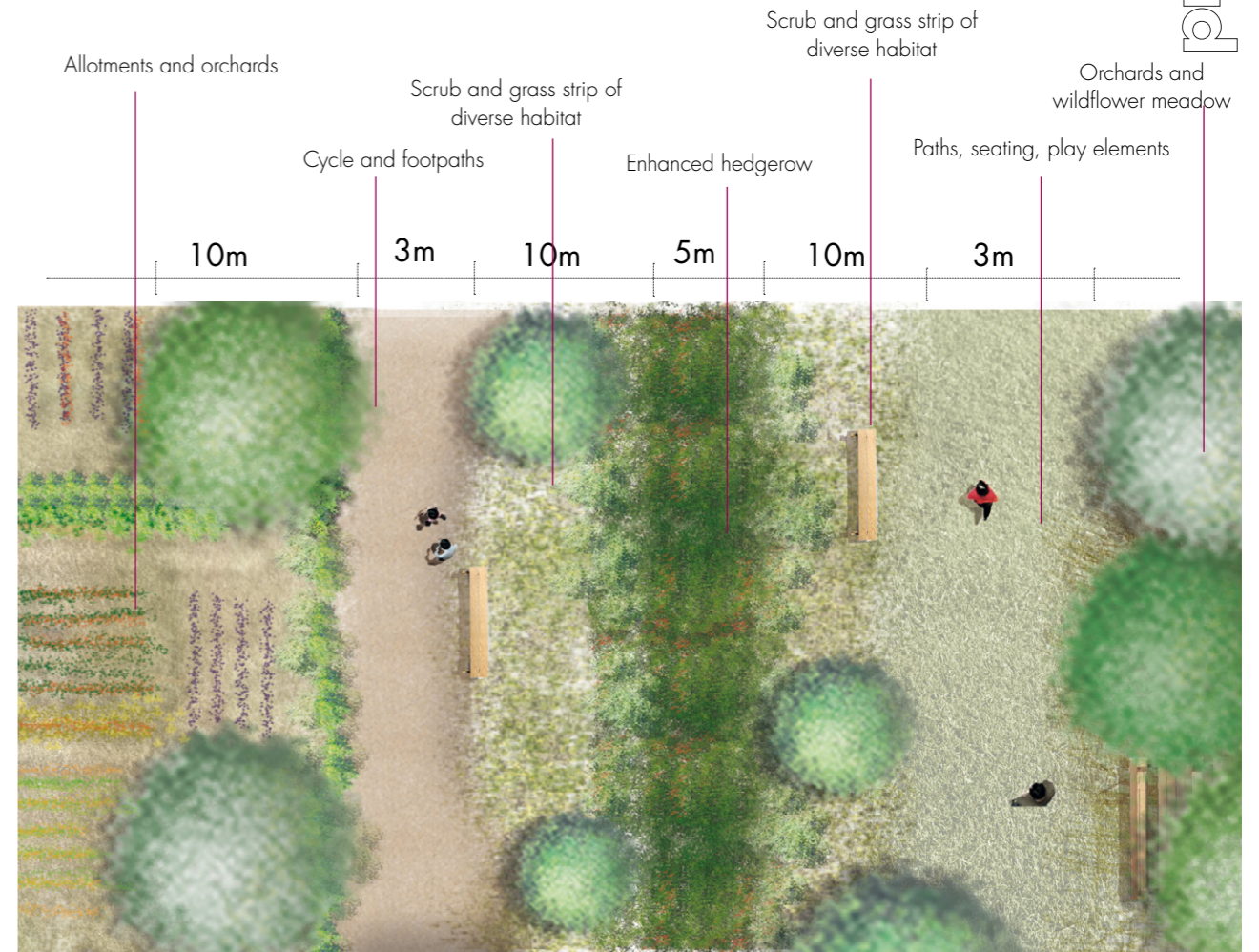
#### 3.3.3 Hedgerow Evolution



Indicative plan - Existing Hedgerows







Indicative Plan - Hedgerows at 20 years








Indicative Plan - Hedgerow and Bat Corridor at 20 years

..... HEDGEROW ENHANCEMENT: MONOFUNCTIONAL - MULTIFUNCTIONAL ..... ➔

-  10m verge to each side of hedge
-  Existing hedge

-  10m verge to each side of hedge
-  Existing hedge

-  Paths
-  Seating

-  Allotment (private/ public accessible)
-  Wildflower meadow with orchard trees and bee hives
-  Mown paths
-  Play/ fitness area

## 03.3 BORDERS

### 3.3.3 Hedgerow Evolution

#### EXISTING

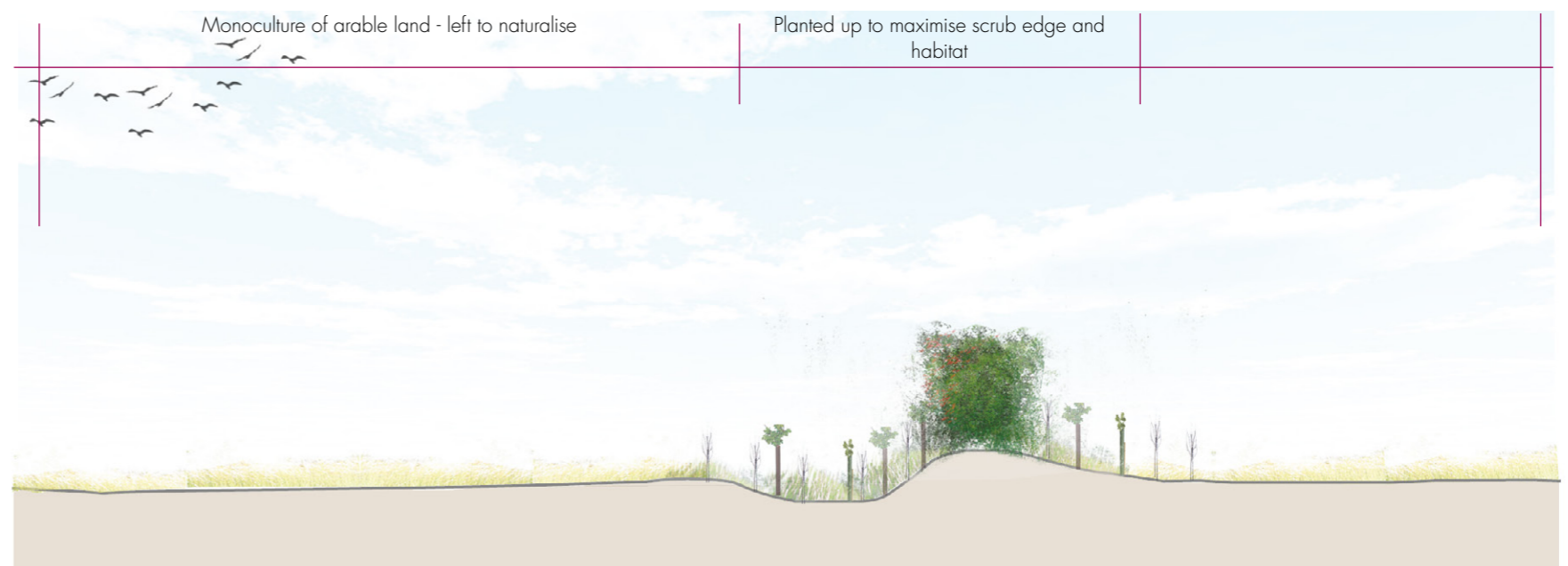
- Active and diverse edge zones that border field margins, native species supporting a range of ecology.
- Surrounded by monoculture of arable farming
- Occasional drainage ditch or band of grass



Indicative section - Existing Hedgerows

#### AT PLANTING

- Cutting of hedgerows ceases
- Scrub and native woodland mix planted in swathes around hedgerow
- Seasonal grass mowing initiated



Indicative section - Hedgerows at planting

### 03.3 BORDERS

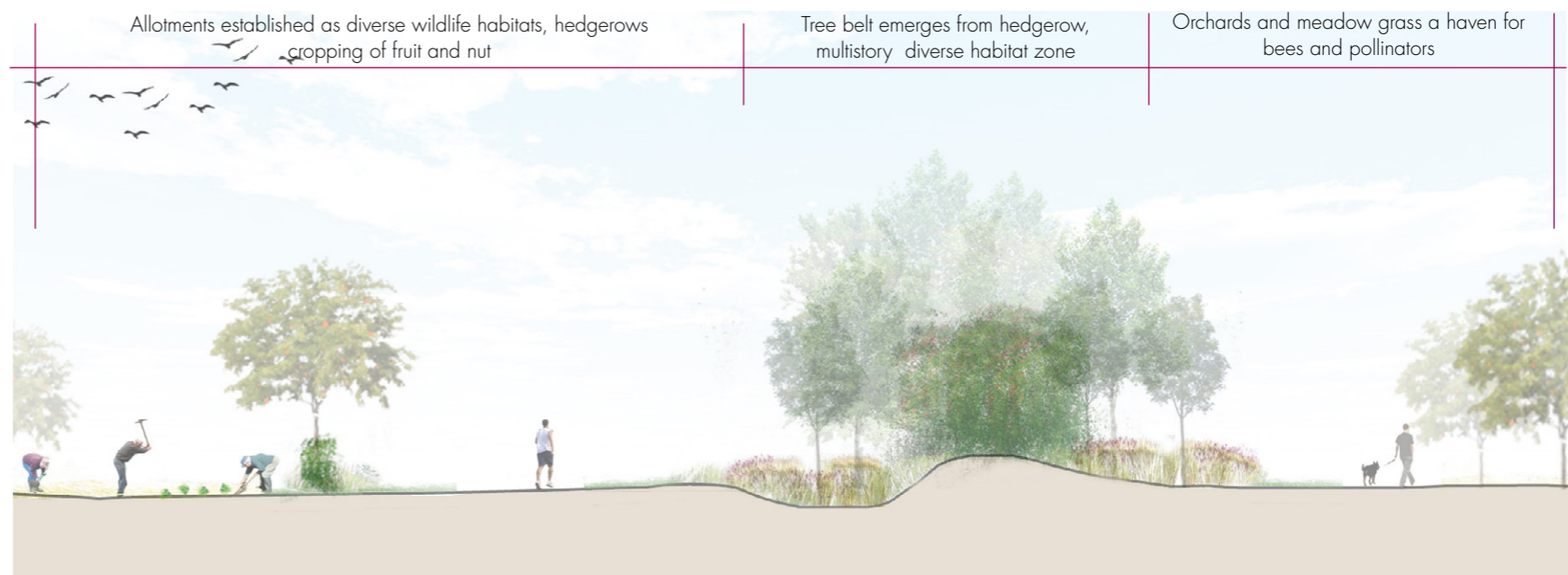
#### 3.3.3 Hedgerow Evolution

##### AFTER 5 YEARS

- Hedgerows growing out
- Additional planting and scrub development
- Understory and grass verges develop
- Residents move in allotments & orchards are established



Indicative section - Hedgerows at 5 years



Indicative section - Hedgerows at 20 years

##### AFTER 20 YEARS

- Climax species developing through hedge, tree belt beginning to emerge
- Scrub developing into tree belt
- Grass verges managed on mowing cycle
- Allotments and orchards reaching maturity, adding to the biodiverse and active zone

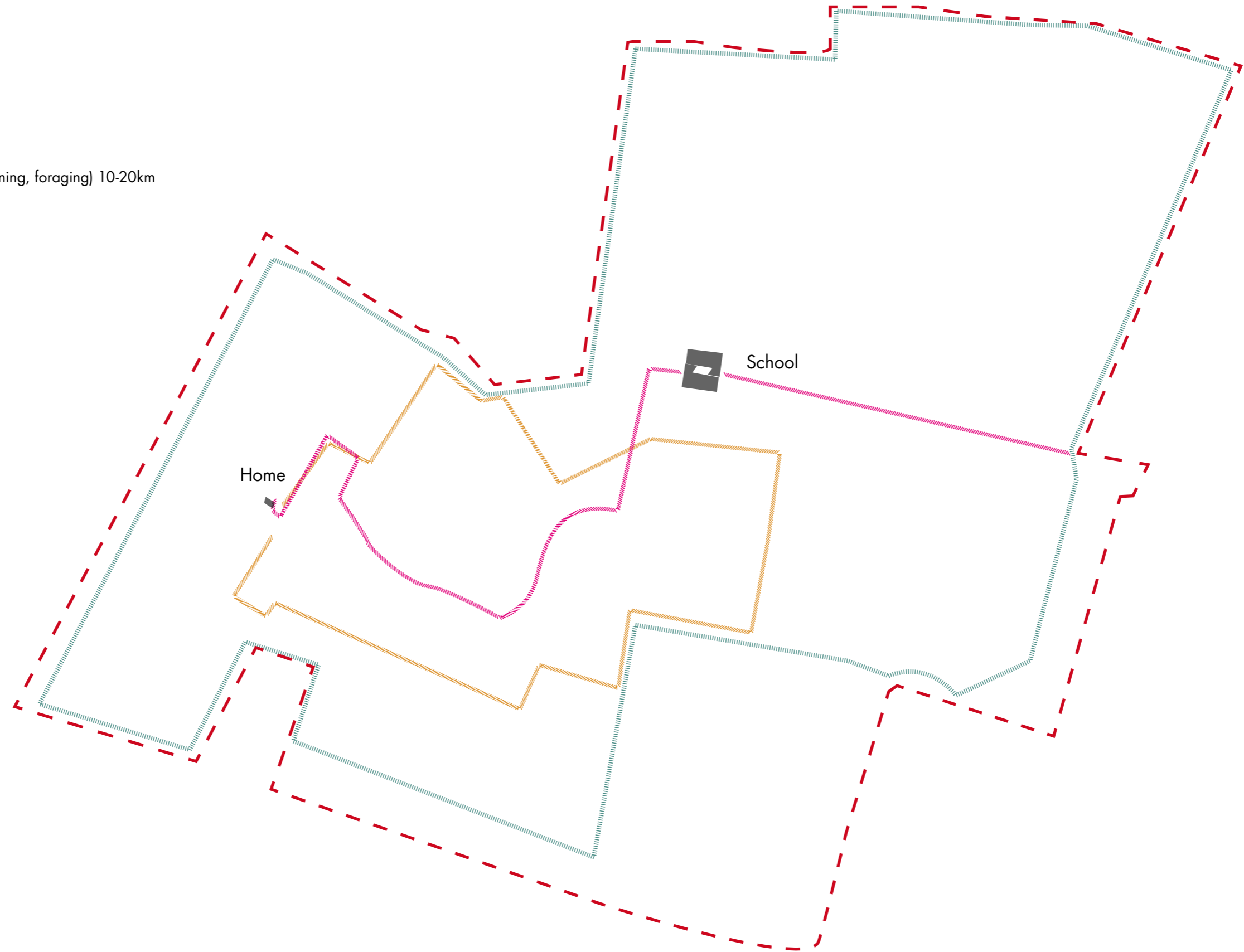
## 03.3 BORDERS

### 3.3.4 Movement and Journey

Short route (direct route)

Medium walk 5-10km

Long Leisure walk (cycling, walking, running, foraging) 10-20km

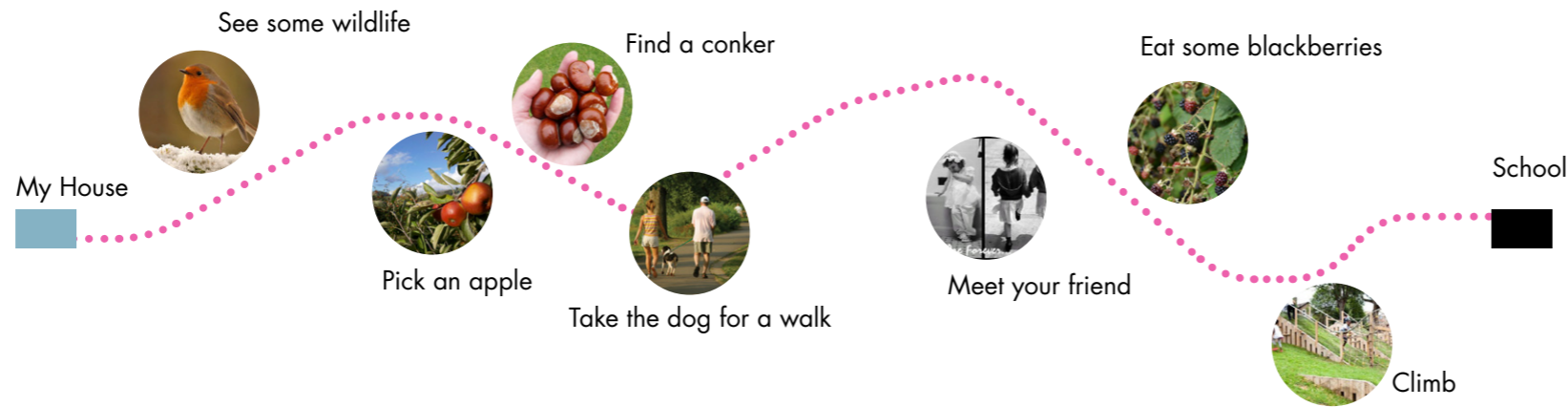




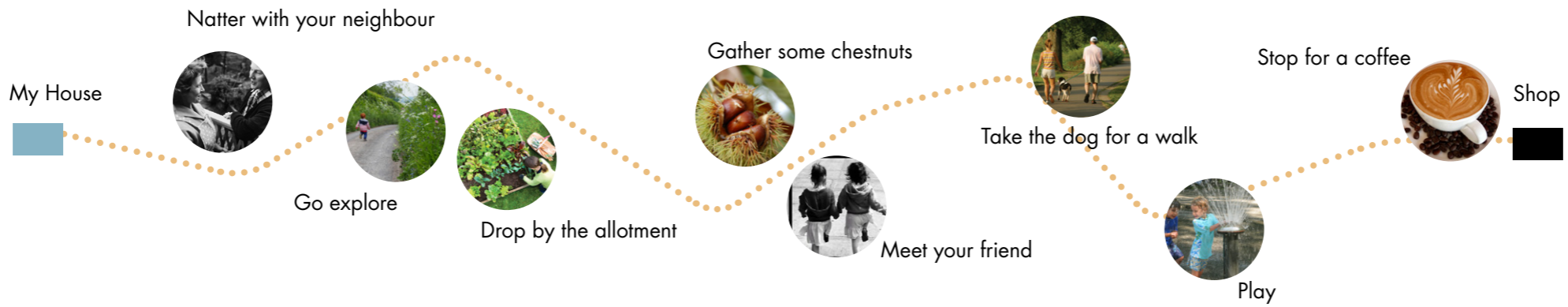
### 03.3 BORDERS

#### 3.3.4 Movement and Journey

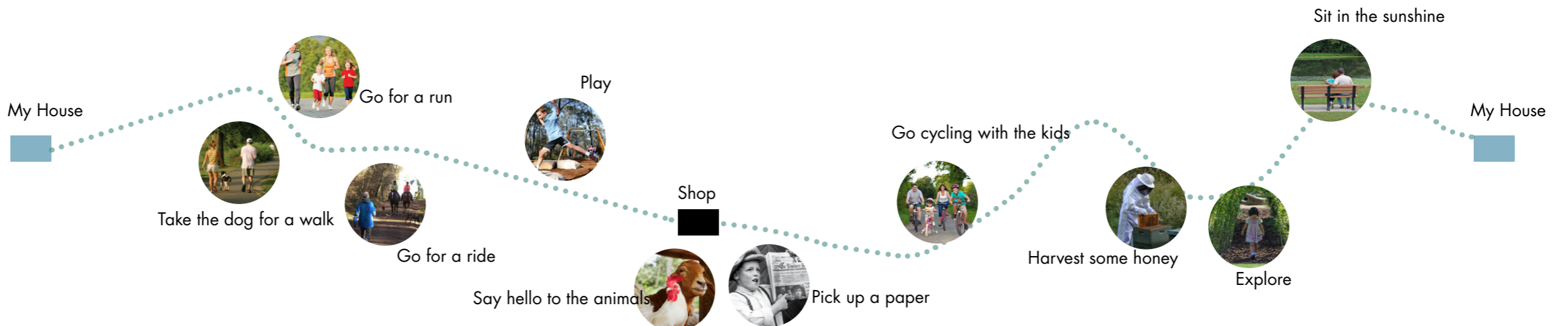
A walk to school



A trip to the shop



Sunday activities





# 03

## 3.4 Creating Neighbourhoods

- 3.4.1** Responding to the Physical Context
- 3.4.2** Five Neighbourhoods
- 3.4.3** Himley Green
- 3.4.4** Himley Fields
- 3.4.5** Himley Woods
- 3.4.6** Himley Park
- 3.4.7** Himley Edge

## 03.4 CREATING NEIGHBOURHOODS

### 3.4.1 Responding to the Physical Context

**By learning from key influences from the character of the existing site and its immediate surroundings, as well as responding to and engaging with the wider masterplan we are able to establish a diverse and integrated series of neighbourhoods.**

#### The Hedgerows

The hedgerows provide a strong visual connection to the historic agricultural use of the Site, as well as playing an invaluable role towards a rich biodiversity across the Site.

The retention of the field pattern also provides us with the opportunity to use these mature landscape features as natural framework from which neighbourhoods can begin to emerge.

By adopting the hedgerows as a cornerstone of the creation and identification of neighbourhoods, we can ensure that they play an integral part in creating a sense of place for the new community.



The hedgerows as a framework for creating neighbourhoods

## 03.4 CREATING NEIGHBOURHOODS

### 3.4.1 Responding to the Physical Context

#### Topography

The gentle rolling character of the topography still has integral influence on the character of the development. The SUDS - the attenuation ponds and swales - are a key landscape feature and the correlation between topography and SUDS should be recognised in the creation of character areas.



The close correlation between SUDS and topography

#### The Edges

Where the Application Site physically connects with the wider community - at its edges - there are a variety of different conditions.

Responding to the edges positively, reinforces connections to the local context.



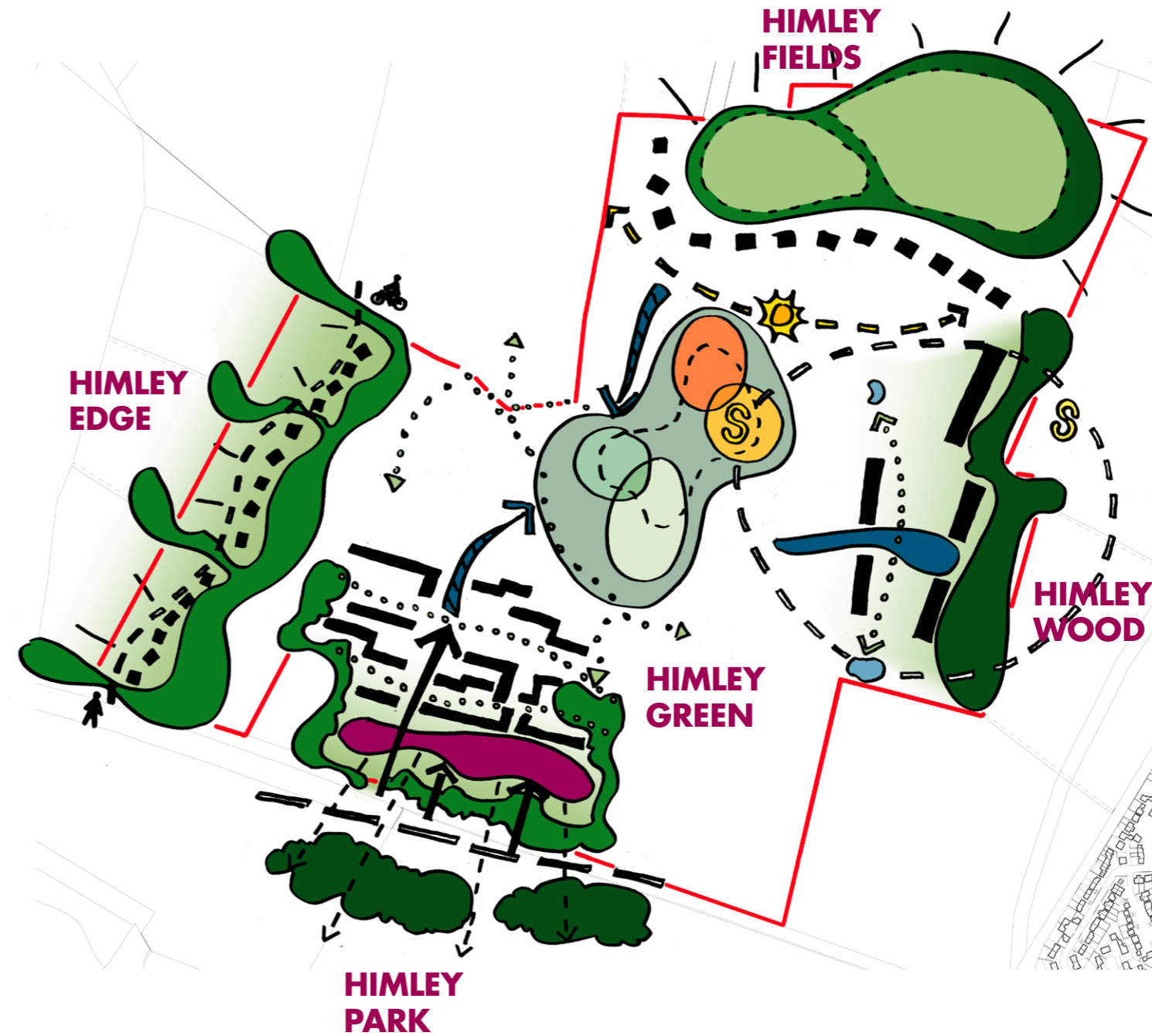
The edges informing character

## 03.4 CREATING NEIGHBOURHOODS

### 3.4.2 Five Neighbourhoods

Ensuring that new neighbourhoods are developed to respond and engaged to their local context positively is instrumental in ensuring that these new neighbourhoods bring benefits to both the new residents and the wider community.

Responding locally to the physical characteristics of the Site generates a series of connected neighbourhoods each with their own distinct character and feel, each forming part of a coherent whole.



## 03.4 CREATING NEIGHBOURHOODS

### 3.4.3 Himley Green

The historic structures of Himley Farm sit at the centre of the Site.

Adjacent to Himley Farm, to the north and west lies the new primary school.

The primary vehicle route dissects this part of the Site running north-south.

Key pedestrian and cycle routes converge here and radiate towards the rural edge to the west and the boulevard and Bicester to the east.

These elements provide the opportunity to create a village centre at the heart of the Site

- A new centre of horticultural activity, of food production, plant propagation and landscape management.
- The horticulture centre as an education resource for the local community promoting healthy living and greater connections with our natural environment
- A village green, a focal point for the community, with space to play, grow, meet and relax.

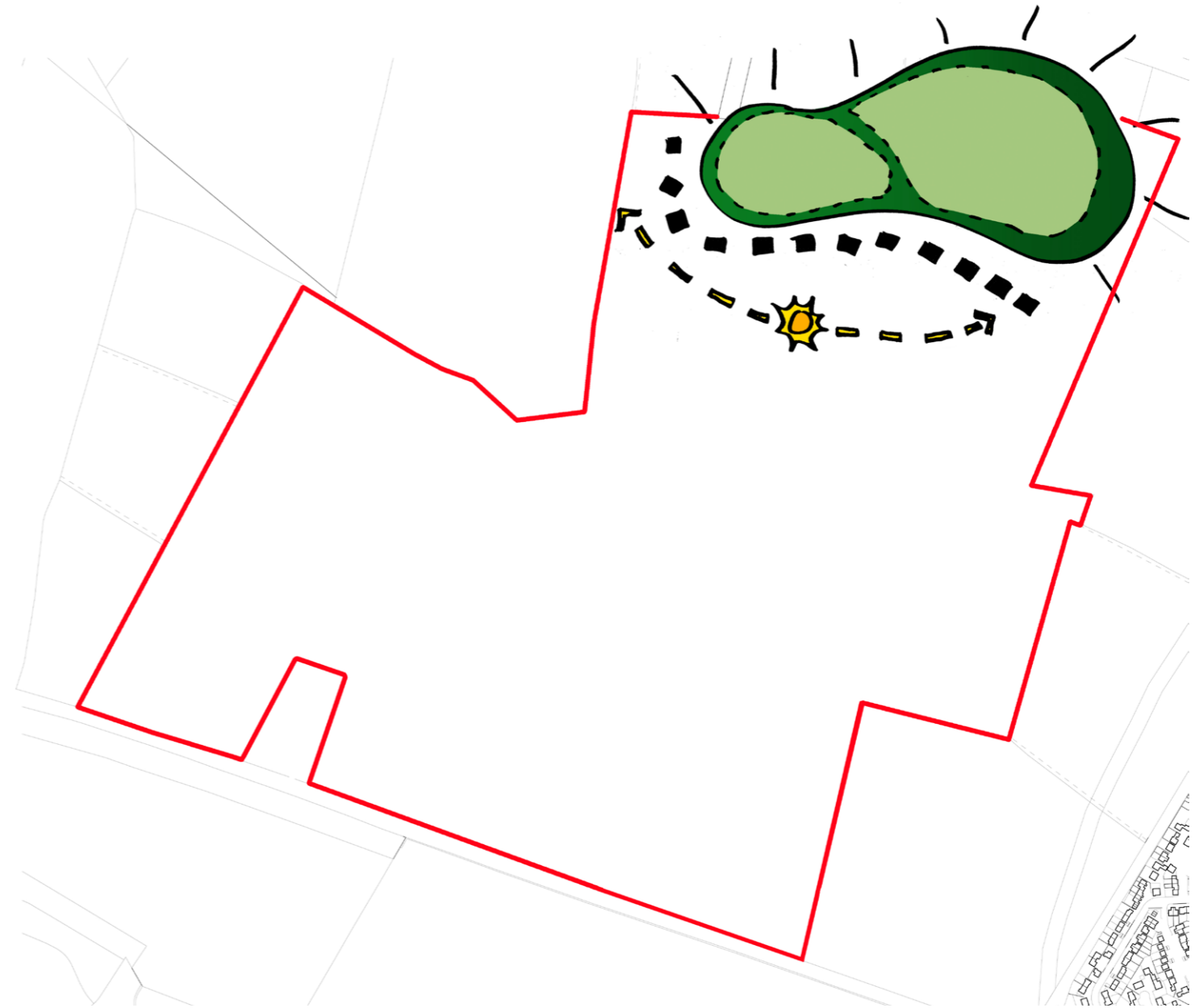


## 03.4 CREATING NEIGHBOURHOODS

### 3.4.4 Himley Fields

The north of the Application Site, in the NW Bicester masterplan has been set aside as open green space for sports fields and play spaces. This can influence the character of the neighbourhood immediately south of this in a number of different ways:

- Large areas of open space, proximity to schools, main routes and the new boulevard through the site all support the potential for greater density here
- Open space to the north ensures that overshadowing from any taller buildings is minimised





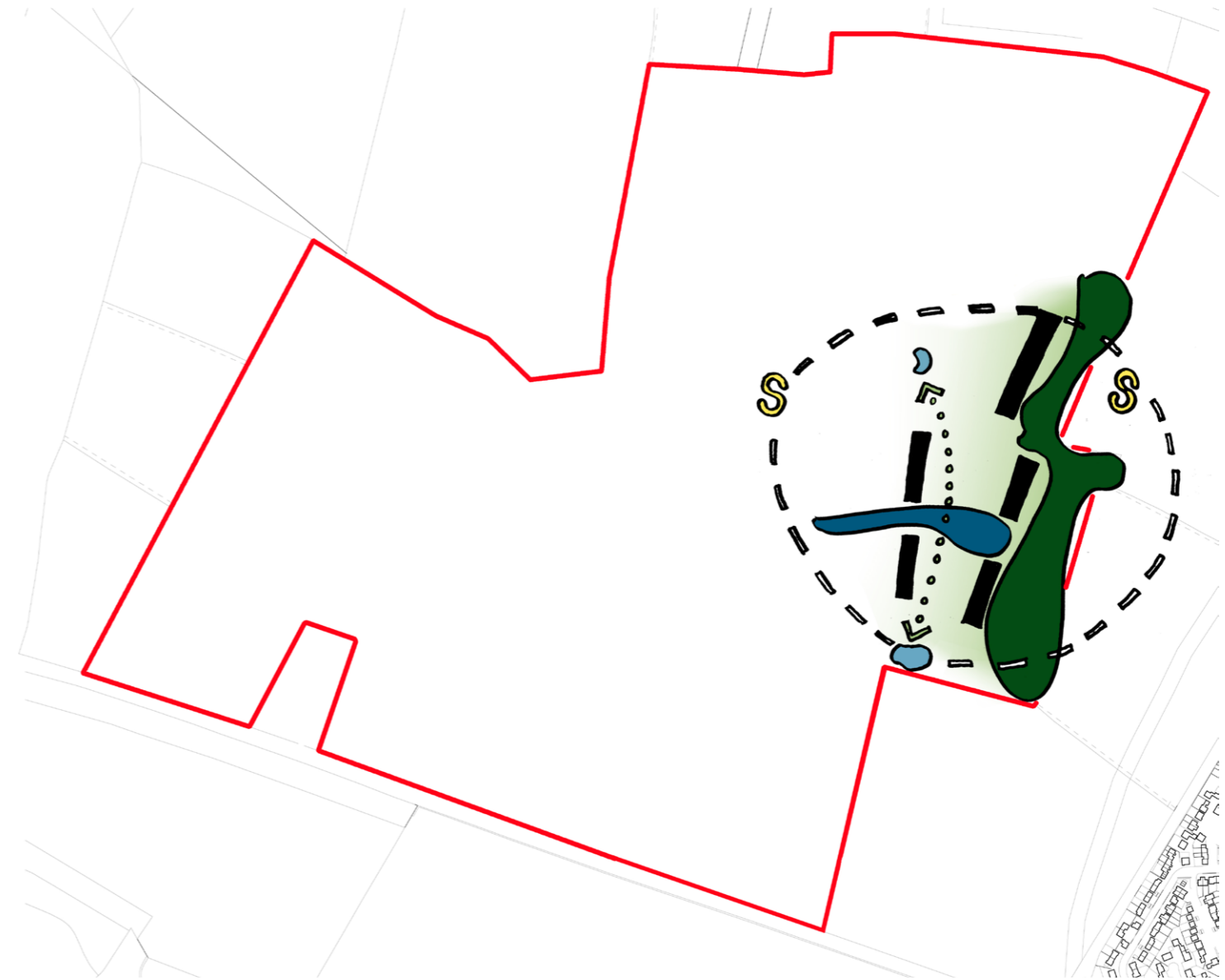
## 03.4 CREATING NEIGHBOURHOODS

### 3.4.5 Himley Woods

The east of the Site is bounded by young broad leaved woodland. Other significant landscape features here also include the two ponds and their associated planting and ecology. The eastern woodland edge is where the Application Site connects both to the new boulevard and associated local facilities and to Bicester beyond.

This brings its own unique influences to the part of the Site:

- A more informal natural landscape character focused on the newt habitat and the woodland areas
- Proximity to the boulevard and local facilities including secondary and primary schools, shops and community facilities support an increased density here



## 03.4 CREATING NEIGHBOURHOODS

### 3.4.6 Himley Park

The south of the Site is bounded by Middleton Stoney Road and Bignell Park beyond.

Middleton Stoney Road is the only vehicular route bounding the Application Site and the movement of traffic along this visible edge of the Site implies a certain character.

On a wider scale, Bignell Park itself offers a mature dense tree canopy to the southern edge beyond which are large areas of woodland spaces set amongst open green spaces.

Middleton Stoney Road, Bignell Park and the open landscape offer opportunities to shape and define the neighbourhood character here:

- Opportunity for other uses, potentially accessed directly off Middleton Stoney Road, which serve both the new immediate community but also the existing wider population.
- These other uses also serve to open up the new development to wider population creating a more permeable 'blurred edge' to the development.
- Potential for greater height here, both in response to Middleton Stoney Road but also to benefit from views to the woodland areas immediately to the south and the open green spaces beyond.



## 03.4 CREATING NEIGHBOURHOODS

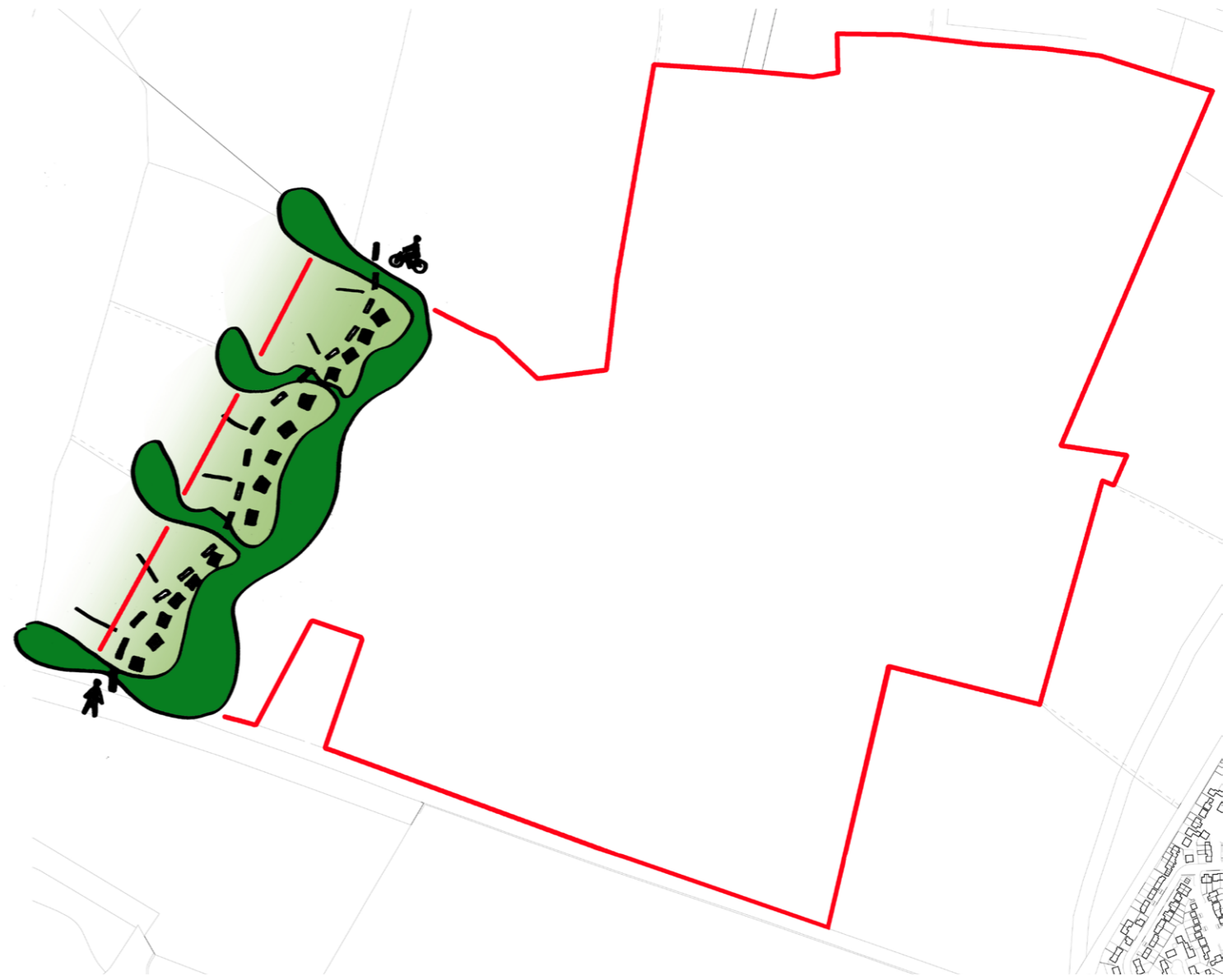
### 3.4.7 Himley Edge

The west edge of the Application Site is unique in that it is not defined by a physical landscape feature or road. Beyond this edge to the west, the landscape is characterised by open undulating agricultural land to the M40 and beyond.

This part of the Site is comprised of three parallel fields running approximately east-west. These fields are smaller in scale than typically found on the Site, approximately 150m wide at their narrowest point.

This edge condition and the different field pattern serve to influence the character of this area in a number of key ways:

- Respecting views to the Site from the surrounding open landscape as well as from Middleton Stoney Road, leads us towards a softer edge to the settlement; one of landscape and woodland intersped with small pockets of dwellings - forming a gradual transition from an open agricultural landscape, to one of woodland, to one of dwellings.
- A perceptible density gradient reflecting this transition
- A more compact field pattern, allows for the opportunity for the hedgerows to play a greater part in determining the character of this area
- As a rural edge for the development, there are opportunities to occupy this edge with meandering bridle paths, foot and cycle paths allowing for greater visual connections to the open undulating landscape which characterises the local area.





# 03

## 3.5 Play and Open Space

- 3.5.1 Open Space Standards
- 3.5.2 Play Provision
- 3.5.3 Play Philosophy

## 03.5 Play and Open Space

### 3.5.1 Open Space Standards

#### BASE LINE INFORMATION:

Requirements for open space are set out in Local Plan 2006 – 2031/ Part 1 – Policy BSC 11: Local Standards of Provision- Outdoor Recreation and Cherwell Green Space Strategy 2008-2031/PPG 17.

The average household has an occupancy of 2.39 people (Cherwell Council average household size). The number of dwellings (estimate for Play calculation purposes only) is 1700. This therefore equates to a population of 4063.

#### OPEN SPACE PROVISION:

##### Amenity green space:

Definition - A clean and well-maintained green space site with well kept grass and varied vegetation and large enough to accommodate informal play. Sites should have appropriate ancillary facilities (benches, litter bins) and landscaping in the right places, providing a spacious outlook and overall enhancing the appearance of the local environment.

##### Natural/ semi-natural green space

Definition - A publicly accessible, spacious, clean and litter free site with clear pathways and natural features that encourage wildlife conservation and biodiversity. Sites should be maintained to protect nature conservation interest, with interpretive signage and safety features where appropriate.

Requirement: 2.4ha/1000 population; 5 minute walk/ 400m for amenity space; 15 minutes walk/ 1200m for other.

Total: 9.75ha

##### Allotments

Definition - A clean, well kept secure site that encourages sustainable communities, biodiversity and healthy living with appropriate ancillary facilities to meet local needs, clearly marked pathways to and within the site.

Requirement: 0.37ha/1000 population; 10 minute walk/ 800m

Total: 1.5ha

Note: The exact location and type of open space allocation will be subject to detailed landscape design development and approved by planning during the Reserved Matters application process.



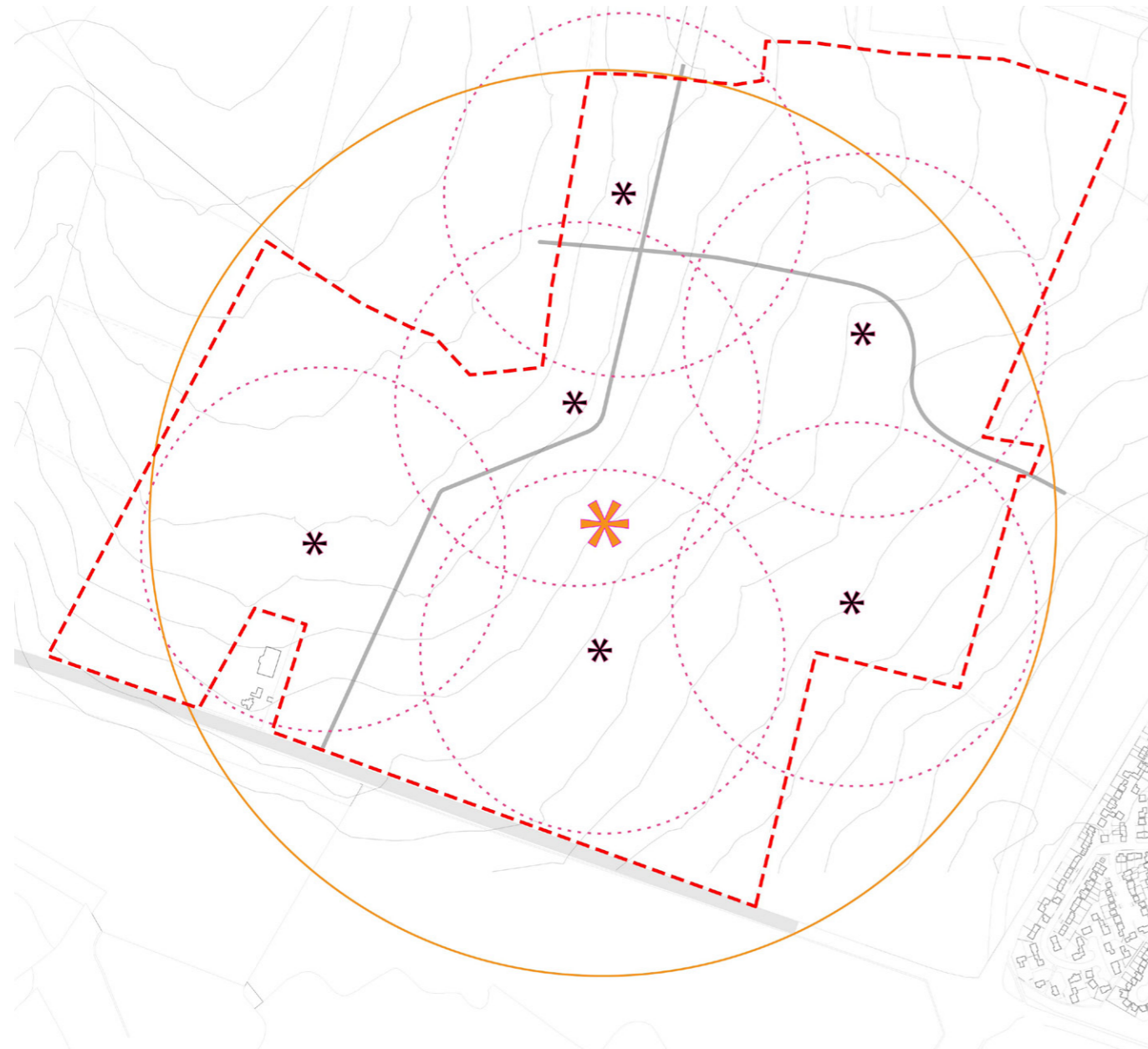
Trim trail in woodlands



Allotments with play elements

## 03.5 Play and Open Space

### 3.5.2 Play Provision



- \* LEAP (Local equipped area for play)
- \* NEAP (Neighbourhood equipped area for play)

A site for play must demonstrate a play enriched environment to encourage formal and informal play and recreation by children and young people. All public realm locations should be accessible and provide for play. The eco-town is based on accessible high quality public realm with multiple uses.

The play function is an integrated part of the public realm. The play provision be provided in accordance with the DCMS guidance document "Design for Play" The guide advocates a more flexible approach in accordance with principles laid down in the guide.

To this end the LAPs/LEAPs/NEAPs methodology should only be used as an indicator of areas for play only and Design for play" be used as a basis for play area provision.

#### BASE LINE INFORMATION:

Requirements for open space are set out in Local Plan 2006 – 2031/ Part 1 – Policy BSC 11: Local Standards of Provision- Outdoor Recreation and Cherwell Green Space Strategy 2008-2031/PPG 17. The average household has an occupancy of 2.39 people (Cherwell Council average household size). The number of dwellings (estimate for Play calculation purposes only) is 1700. This therefore equates to a population of 4063. The play area requirement is 0.78ha of playable space/1000 population. The total play space is therefore 3.17ha.

Traditionally this has been recorded as:

LAP – 100m<sup>2</sup>/ 10 dwellings

LEAP – 400m<sup>2</sup> (5 minute walk/ 400m)/ 50 dwellings

NEAP – 1000m<sup>2</sup> (15 minutes/ 1200m)/ 100 dwellings for LEAP & NEAP

## 03.5 Play and Open Space

### 3.5.2 Play Provision

The play strategy for the Bicester eco-town development is based on creating a playable, multifunctional landscape where various forms of public open space have the potential to be treated as incidental spaces for play with formal and informal play equipment distributed throughout all areas of the public realm on the site. Movement corridors along the existing hedgerows double up as incidental play opportunities such as jumping over boulders or balancing on tree trunks whilst the proposed woodland areas create pockets for den making and adventure play, trim trails and bridleways. The proposed neighbourhood parks also contribute to the overall playable landscape with both formal and informal play equipment distributed throughout.

The provision and allocation of the playable areas is detailed below and shown on diagram 3.6.3; the calculation for areas of active play are based on:

The definition of what constitutes a playable space is defined in the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) as a space “where children’s active play is a legitimate use of the space. Playability is a feature of fixed equipment play areas. But it is also feature of some parks, recreation grounds, natural areas and other types of public open space.”

The guidance also states “where open space provision is genuinely playable, the open space may count towards the play space provision”

Also outlined in the SPG is “the creation of incidental playable spaces are dependent on the creative use of the public realm to provide enjoyment and discovery for children and young people for example through the creation of home zones, safe walking and cycling routes, landscaping and public art’.

The guidance determines that well designed hard landscaped area, such as walls and steps, including informal seating, are a stimuli for physical play and surfaces for ball games can contribute to the play offer such as the tertiary roads and home zones.

As recommended in the guidance the new development will include: a playable landscape that includes level changes, foraging, water, boulders, tree trunks and other engaging features, in order to create incidental play opportunities as well as the opportunity for formal play along the residential parklands and village green; pedestrian and cycling routes will link play spaces and informal recreation areas along the green corridors and other key neighbourhood destinations to promote independent mobility.

For the site we intend that various forms of public open space have the potential to be treated as incidental spaces for play throughout the whole site.

Natural and informal play is encouraged through the integration of a number of different playful elements throughout the whole site. These areas are located along the green corridors, the neighbourhood and linear parks as well as smaller pockets parks associated with doorstep play areas. The wider green corridors allow for more provision of equipped play areas such as swings, see saws, table tennis and teen shelters. Pockets parks throughout the whole site create local playable spaces enhancing the identity of each of the neighbourhoods.

It is proposed that all public realm spaces are fully accessible providing level access where practical and are DDA compliant. This in turn creates dedicated areas for play as well as playable public realm throughout the whole site.



Formal play areas



Natural play