

The Green Buffer Policy

The evidence

- The NPPF says:

16. Plans should:

(c) be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan-makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees;

(f) serve a clear purpose, avoiding unnecessary duplication of policies that apply to a particular area (including policies in this Framework, where relevant).

The evidence

- The NPPF says:

16. Plans should:

(d) contain policies that are clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals;

18. Policies to address non-strategic matters should be included in local plans that contain both strategic and non-strategic policies, and/or in local or neighbourhood plans that contain just non-strategic policies.

19. The development plan for an area comprises the combination of strategic and non-strategic policies which are in force at a particular time.

The evidence

- The VALP says:

4.39 The AGT1 Masterplan SPD for the site will elaborate on Policy D-AGT1 by advising on the site layout and disposition of land uses.

Allocated for (key development and land use requirements)	• 1,000 dwellings • One primary school • Multi-functional green infrastructure • Aylesbury South East Link Road (A413 to B4443 Lower Road) • Local centre • Cycling and walking links
Site-specific Requirements	Development proposals must be accompanied by the information required in the council’s Local Validation List and comply with all other relevant policies in the Plan, including the principles of development for Aylesbury Garden Town and the Masterplan SPD to be prepared for the site. In addition, proposals should comply with the following criteria: a. Provision of land for at least 1,000 dwellings at a density that takes account of the adjacent settlement character and identity, integrates new development with the existing built area of Aylesbury and responds positively to the best characteristics of the surrounding area

The evidence

- The VALP says:

- o. Provision of buffer between the new development and Stoke Mandeville to maintain the setting and individual identity of the settlement of Stoke Mandeville

The evidence

The AGT-1 SPD (Para 2.3, page 14) says:

One of the objectives of Policy D-AGT1 in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan is for the new development to be in accordance with the overarching principles for the development of Aylesbury Garden Town. Commentary on this point is included in section 3.1 of this Supplementary Planning Document. However one of the challenges for AGT1 will be to deliver the design principles of the Garden Town Vision such as Inclusive Design, a connected street layout, and a clear hierarchy of streets and spaces, without letting these 'barriers' reduce the strength of these aspirations.

Another objective of Policy D-AGT1 in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan is to incorporate a buffer to maintain the setting and individual identity of Stoke Mandeville village. The routing of this buffer will require careful consideration regarding how it can fulfil this role.

The evidence

The AGT-1 SPD (Para 3.1, page 28) says:

3.1 Key Guiding Principles

3.1.1 Garden Town Design Principles

AGT1 will follow development and design guidelines as set out in the Aylesbury Garden Town Masterplan document (AGTM). Within this are a set of key design principles (section 8.8) that reflect the Garden Town Vision and Town and County Planning Association (TCPA) guidance on garden community principles.

The emerging Aylesbury Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document will also contain design principles that forthcoming proposals for AGT1 should reflect and comply with.

In addition to the Garden Town vision and principles the development of South Aylesbury will be guided by the policies contained within the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013 – 2033 (VALP), the Aylesbury Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document, together with other guidance and policies relevant at the time specific applications for the site are developed and considered.

The evidence

The AGT-1 SPD (Para 3.2, page 31) says:

There is a policy requirement within the Local Plan for a buffer between the new development and the existing village of Stoke Mandeville. This will be achieved by a combination of new public open space creation within the site, and the retention of areas of existing pastoral farmland on the village edge.

The public open space component of the buffer will be variable in character according to its location with public accessibility and water as a unifying feature. A watercourse will provide a sense of natural separation of the areas to the north and south, as well as habitat diversity, sustainable drainage and natural and formal play opportunities. In the eastern part of the buffer, this will be based upon an existing brook that runs between agricultural fields.

The buffer will contain scattered trees and woodland blocks along its length, which will not only serve to increase its presence and visual interest but will also serve to filter inward views from Coombe Hill, combining with street trees throughout the scheme.

The western part of the buffer will also incorporate more formal recreation facilities, such as playing fields and equipped play. This location will enable these facilities to be shared between existing and new residents via the existing public footpath connection into Stoke Mandeville. Parts of the strategic buffer to the west of the railway line will include Peri-urban agriculture, being retained pastoral farmland on the edge of Stoke Mandeville. The requirements of Policy NE2 should be adhered to in the buffer design.

The Aylesbury Garden Town Masterplan

6.8 Garden Communities

GI provision is an area in which Aylesbury intends to be a national exemplar.

The VALP Policy D1 requires each of the new garden communities on the edge of Aylesbury to deliver 50% green infrastructure. This is to be calculated on an area basis and include all elements of public green and blue infrastructure including but not limited to flood mitigation land, wildlife habitat, watercourses, sports and parkland. It does not include private green space such as private front and back gardens.

8.6 Take a comprehensive approach

A site specific SPD is to be prepared for AGT1 which has a complex land ownership position and is crossed by the South East Aylesbury Link Road. The SPD will provide additional guidance for the development of the allocation, expanding on the policy requirements of both the VALP and the Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan once it has been made.

Define the “settlement of Stoke Mandeville?”

- Is it the village as it is in January 2025 or the village when the SPD was published in 2022?
- Or is it the village once Cala Homes has its planning permission approved for its parcel of AGT-1 and has built the houses?
- If so, when will the Cala Homes site be part of “the existing village” of Stoke Mandeville?
- Let’s just move the Green Buffer from the AGT-1 SPD across to the south so that it actually is contiguous with the “existing village”.
- The AGT-1 site is allocated for 1,000 homes. Current planning applications are for over 1,000 homes, combining the areas which have planning applications and that which does not but which has an allocation in the VALP.

The Aylesbury Design Guide SPD

6.3 Residential amenity and privacy

Principle DES42: New development must be designed to respect the privacy of existing residents

Applicants will need to demonstrate how privacy will be maintained between new and existing development whilst designing to the principles of compact neighbourhoods in more urban locations.

Reason

6.3.1 It is important that all residents are able to feel comfortable in their own home and an adequate level of privacy is required to assist this.

Principle DES11: Establish a landscape and green infrastructure network

that is overlooked, is preferred. Locating green infrastructure on the edges of a site should be avoided unless there is a need to create a buffer and it is appropriate to the context.

3.2.13 The area has a significant number of Neighbourhood Plans and applicants should refer to these for detailed local information in their context analysis as well as to determine the local policies. Some provide relevant information on the designations, assets and/ or settlement character of the area and some also set detailed design policies.

The Maps – VALP (2023)

There is no map of the AGT-1 site in the VALP

The Maps – Aylesbury Garden Town Masterplan (2023)

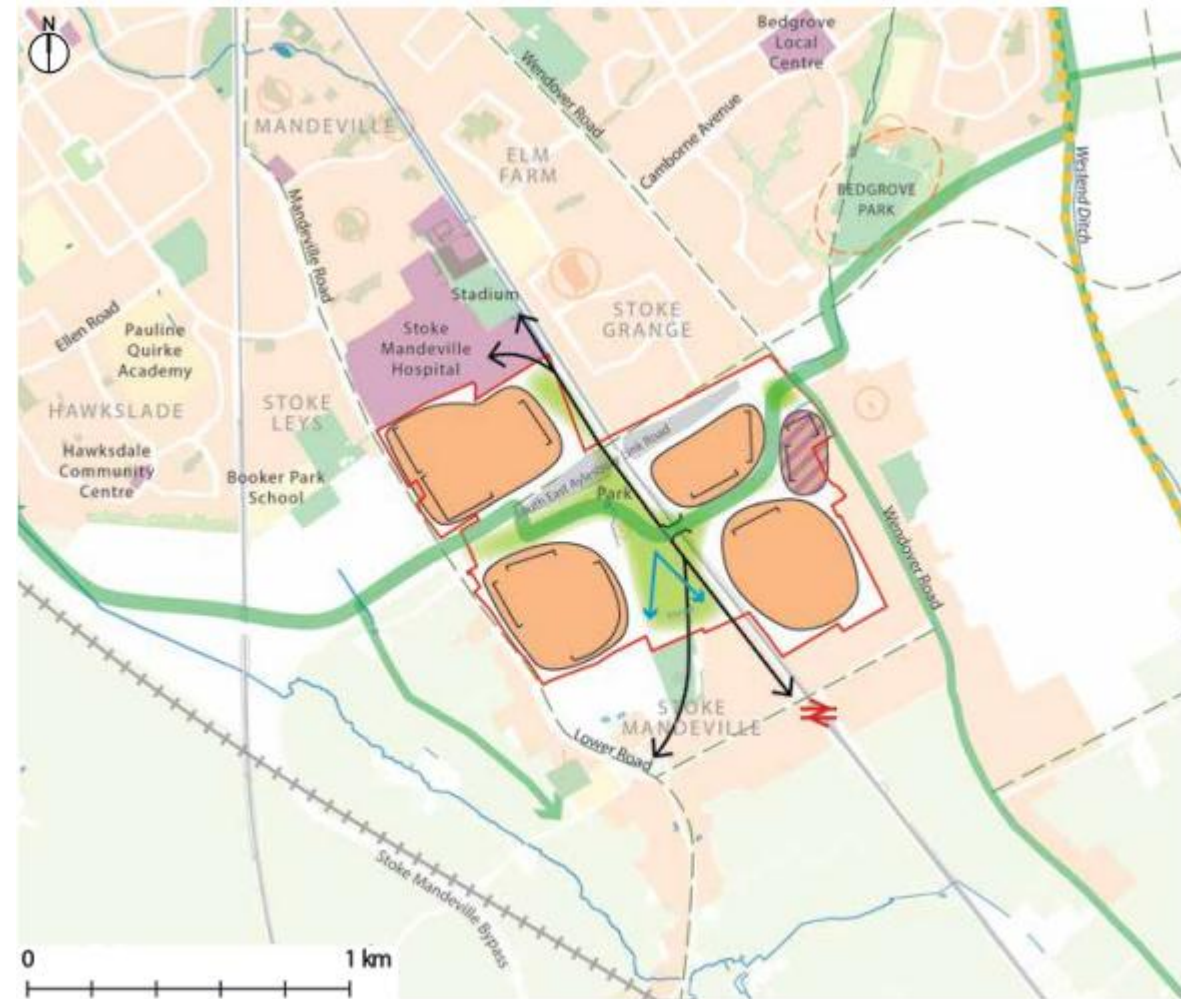


Fig 8.6: AGT 1 indicative design principles (the layout for AGT 1 is indicative and subject to resolution through the AGT 1 site specific SPD and the Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan)

The Maps – AGT-1 SPD (2023)



The Maps – AGT-1 SPD (2023)

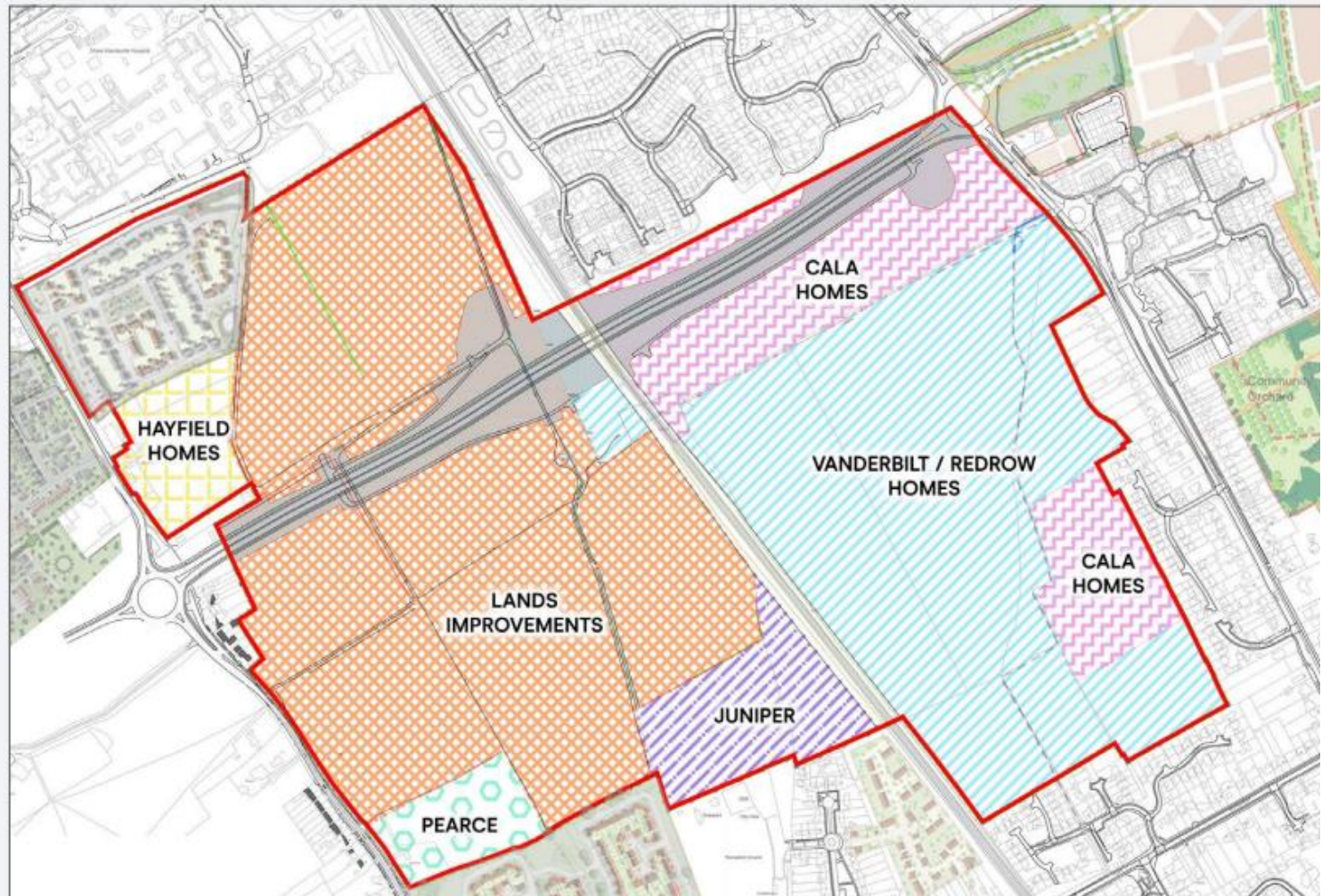


The Maps – AGT-1 SPD (2023)

2.6 Land Ownership

South Aylesbury is controlled by several different land ownerships / parties, these are identified on the adjacent plan. Buckinghamshire Council have worked together with the four Principle Parties (Lands Improvement, CALA, Vanderbilt Strategic and Redrow) to produce this Supplementary Planning Document in a collaborative fashion to ensure a cohesive and co-ordinated approach to development of the allocation as a whole.

This Supplementary Planning Document provides a strategic context to allow landowners / controlling parties to submit a planning application(s), whilst ensuring a comprehensive and cohesive development is delivered. In the event a single planning application is not submitted which would otherwise ensure the comprehensive development of the site, then multiple applications could be considered provided that an appropriate delivery mechanism is assured, as set out in outline Chapter 5.



The Maps – AGT-1 SPD (2023)

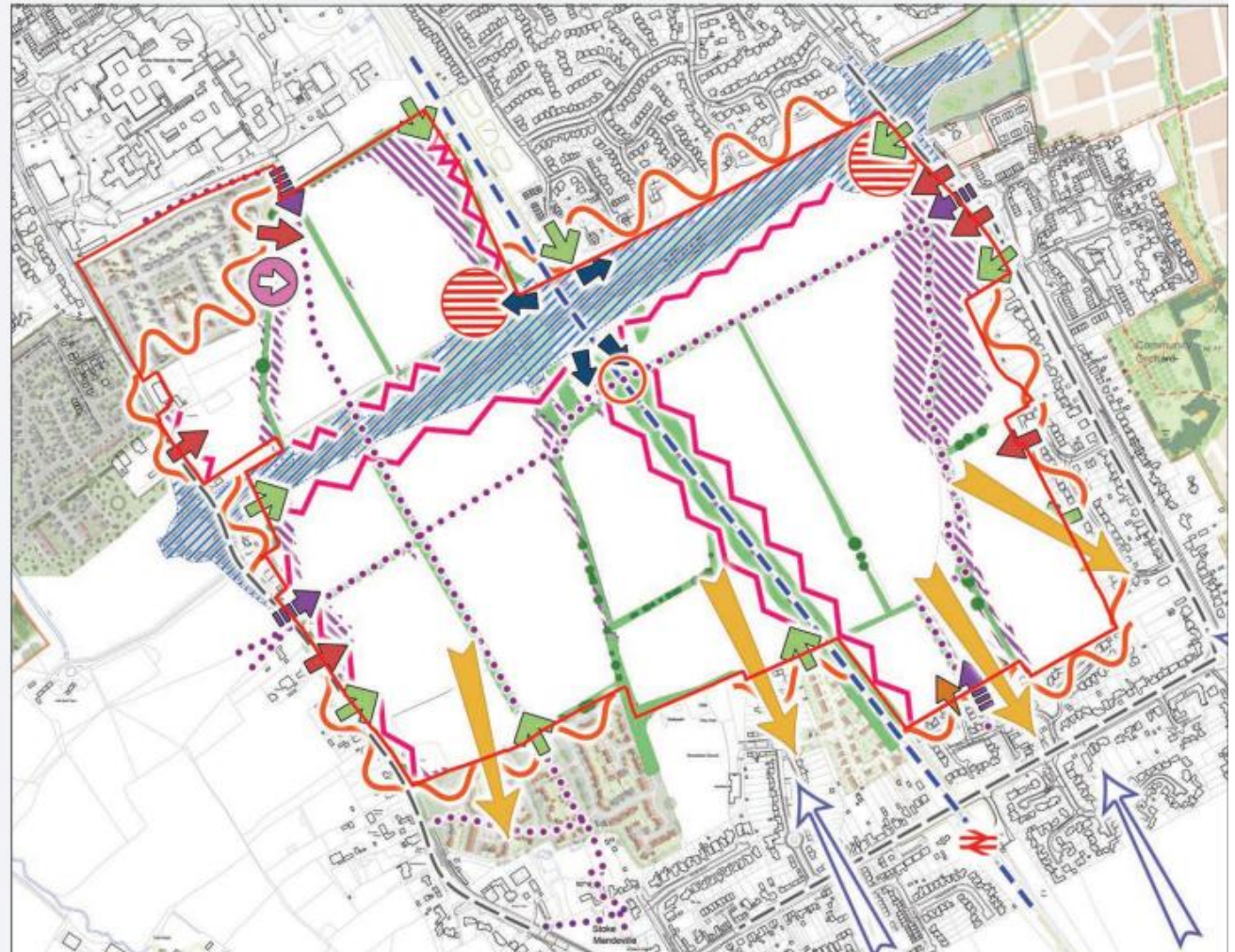
2.10 AGT1 Site Specific Considerations

Combining the technical baseline information as highlighted over the preceding pages forms an overarching constraints plan for the AGT1 site. This plan should be used as a basis for the development of concept ideas and framework layout plans for the site.

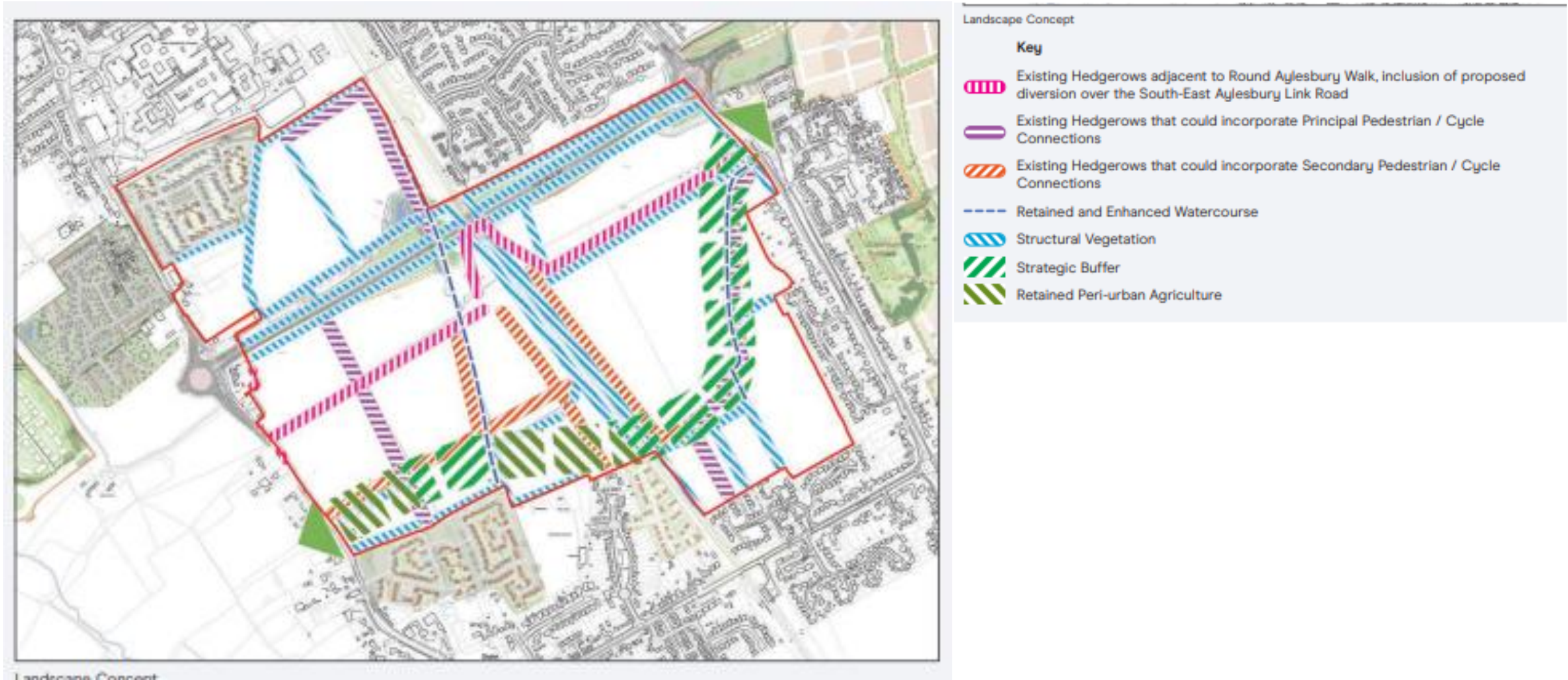
The constraints plan also refers to the contextual studies of the wider area at the beginning of this chapter which will inform the positioning of various infrastructure elements as required in South Aylesbury.

Key

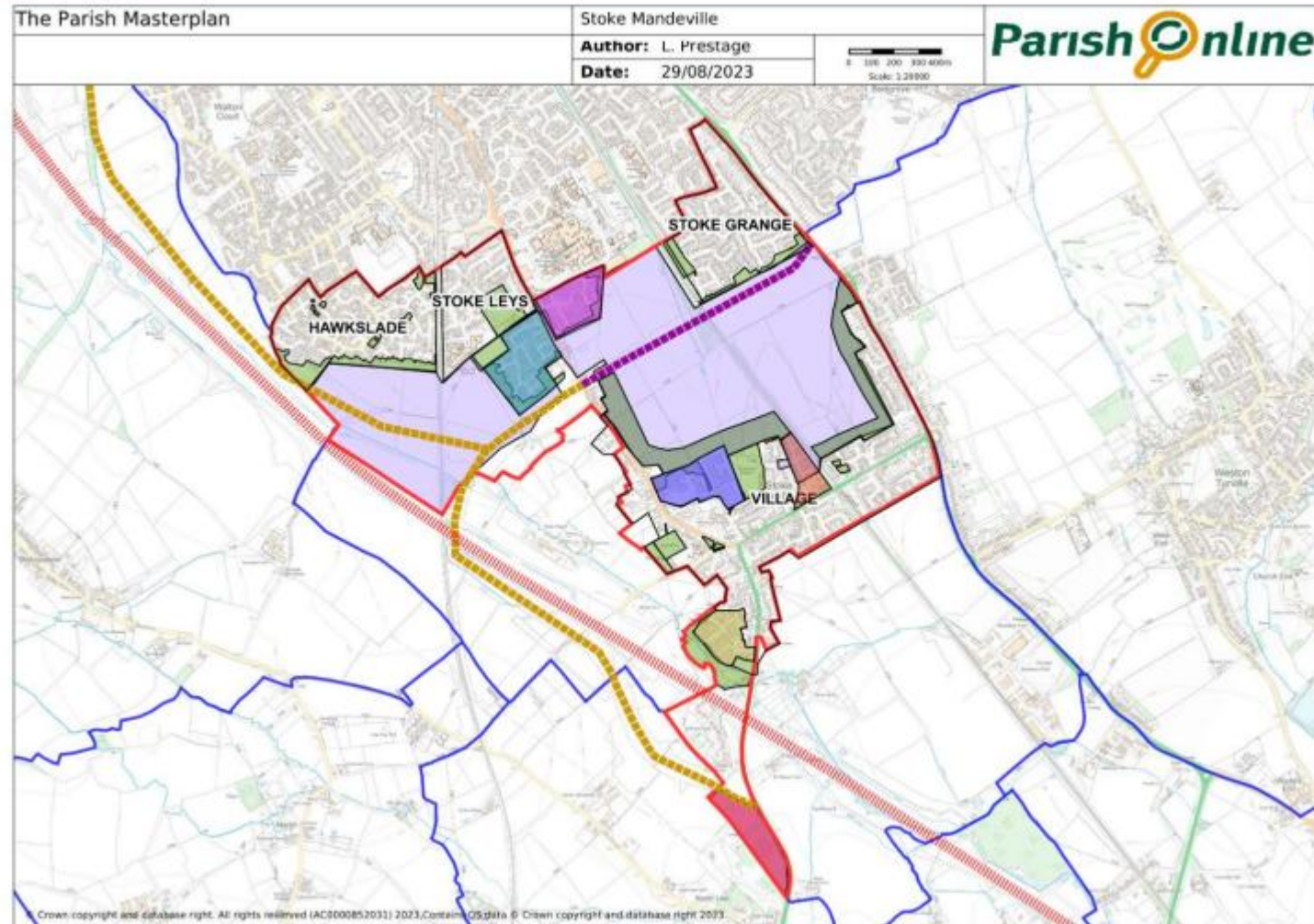
-  Existing Hedgerows
-  Existing Trees
-  Baseline 1000yr Flood Extent
-  South-East Aylesbury Link Road Sustainable Drainage Systems
-  Noise Source
-  Adjacent Residential Development
-  Safeguarded Land for the South East Aylesbury Link Road
-  Railway
-  Existing Public Right of Way
-  Proposed Vehicle/Pedestrian/Cycle Access Points
-  Potential Emergency Access
-  Existing Public Right of Way Access
-  Potential Access Locations
-  Potential Pedestrian Links



The Maps – AGT-1 SPD (2023)



The Maps – SM Neighbourhood Plan (2024)



What is the solution?

- SMPC asserts that the Green Buffer Policy is compliant with the NPPF, and consistent with the VALP, and with the parts of the AGT-1 SPD which are consistent with the VALP.
- It is possible to deliver the 1,000 houses while also moving the Green Buffer from the middle of the site (as outlined in the SPD map but not in the policy wording) to the edge adjacent to all **existing** housing in the **settlement** or **village**.