

Rickling Green

Review of site constraints and opportunities

Prepared for the Quendon Estate, Pegasi Ltd

April 2021



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Sustainable village growth

Pegasi Limited own and manage the Quendon Estate which includes farmland, woodland and properties in and surrounding the village of Rickling Green, Essex.

In response to Uttlesford District Council's Local Plan Call for Sites consultation, the Quendon Estate is promoting two potential sites at the edge of the village for high quality, sustainable development including a range of new homes, sports and leisure facilities and investment in landscape, drainage and transport infrastructure.

This report summarises the current features of each site and illustrates their potential to support sustainable development of around 145-165 homes in total, over the Local Plan period.

The ideas presented here are at an early stage of development. As a local landowner, the Estate is keen to work with the village community to develop their proposals in more detail so that they can fully address local needs and ambitions.

1.2 Ethos and Approach:

The Estate strongly supports the draft Neighbourhood Plan's Vision for Newport, Quendon and Rickling as:

'forward thinking, vibrant villages, which are clean and healthy with a strong sense of community to provide an outstanding quality of life for current and future generations where the views of the community are respected and reflected.'

The vision fits well with the Quendon Estate's own commitment to the long term stewardship and sustainable management of its properties and landholdings, which supports the vitality of rural communities.

The Estate is keen to use its land at Rickling Green to offer a wide range of homes that meet residents' needs at each stage of their life, from smaller properties and bungalows through to larger family homes. The Estate is looking to maintain ownership of the properties and deliver them as 'Built to Rent' homes, maintained to a high standard in line with their other rental properties in the village.

The homes will have a bespoke, high quality design in line with the Essex Design Guide with excellent levels of sustainability, while being in keeping with the historic, vernacular architecture of the village. The schemes will be developed with the input of the local community, to ensure that they meet local needs for housing and deliver the necessary supporting facilities.

The design of car parking will be carefully integrated into the layout so that it does not dominate the street scene and is in line with local standards and the Essex Design Guide.

In addition to the two sites promoted for housing, the Estate is keen to explore with the village community the potential for additional enhancements to village facilities making use of other land they own within the village. This includes opportunities for the former farmyard and buildings immediately west of The Green known as Maces Farmyard Buildings, plus formalising and improving the provision of the land used for allotments.

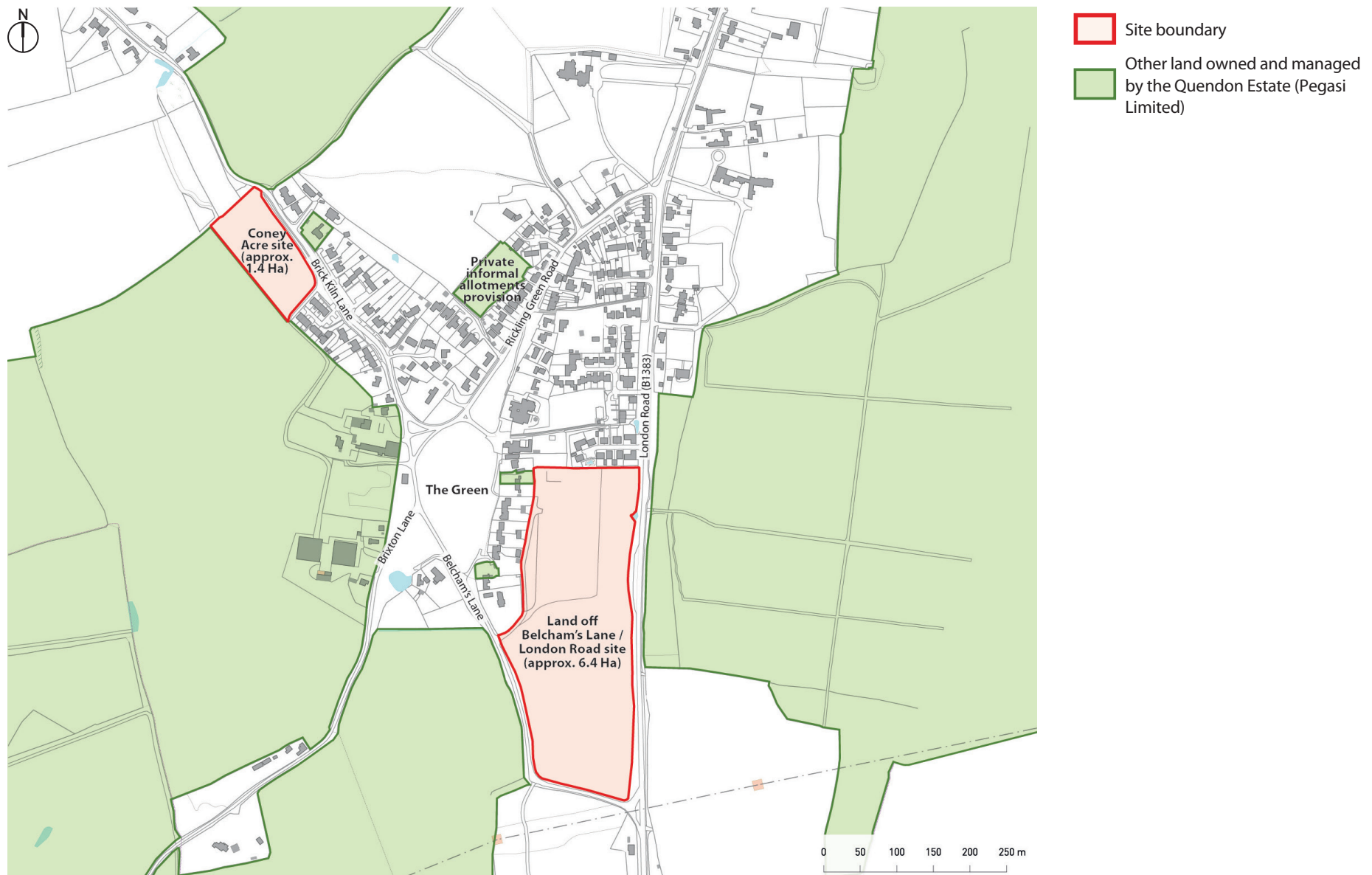


Figure 1: Rickling Green proposed development sites location plan

2.0 Village context

2.1 Location

The village of Rickling Green is located to the west of the B1383 London Road and is centred on the Green, a large open space and cricket pitch. To the north it adjoins the village of Quendon, and both are within the jurisdiction of Rickling and Quendon Parish Council.

2.2 Facilities

Facilities in the village are limited but include:

- The Cricketers Arms public house
- Rickling Green Primary School including public use of the small play area
- sports facilities including cricket pitch and pavilion, bowls club and football pitch
- village hall in Quendon
- Church of St Simon and St Jude in Quendon
- private, informal allotments provided by the Quendon Estate

The nearest larger centres and shops are at Stansted Mountfitchet to the south and Newport to the north.

2.3 Landscape setting

The village has an attractive rural setting, surrounded by arable farming land and woodland, much of which is owned and managed by the Quendon Estate (Pegasi Limited). The character of the landscape is described as Debden Farmland Plateau in the Landscape Character Assessment of Uttlesford, reflecting the arable farming landscape interspersed with dense woodland. The topography of the village is gently undulating and gradually falls to the east.

Quendon Wood to the east of the village is a Priority Habitat (deciduous woodland), an Ancient Woodland and a Site of Special Scientific Interest. It is managed by the Quendon Estate for its habitat importance with public access restricted to perimeter public rights of way.

Coney Acre to the north of the village is an Ancient Woodland and Priority Habitat. A number of other smaller parcels of woodland are also identified as Priority Habitats.

The draft Neighbourhood Plan notes several locally important views at the edge of the village, which are to be protected or appropriately mitigated.

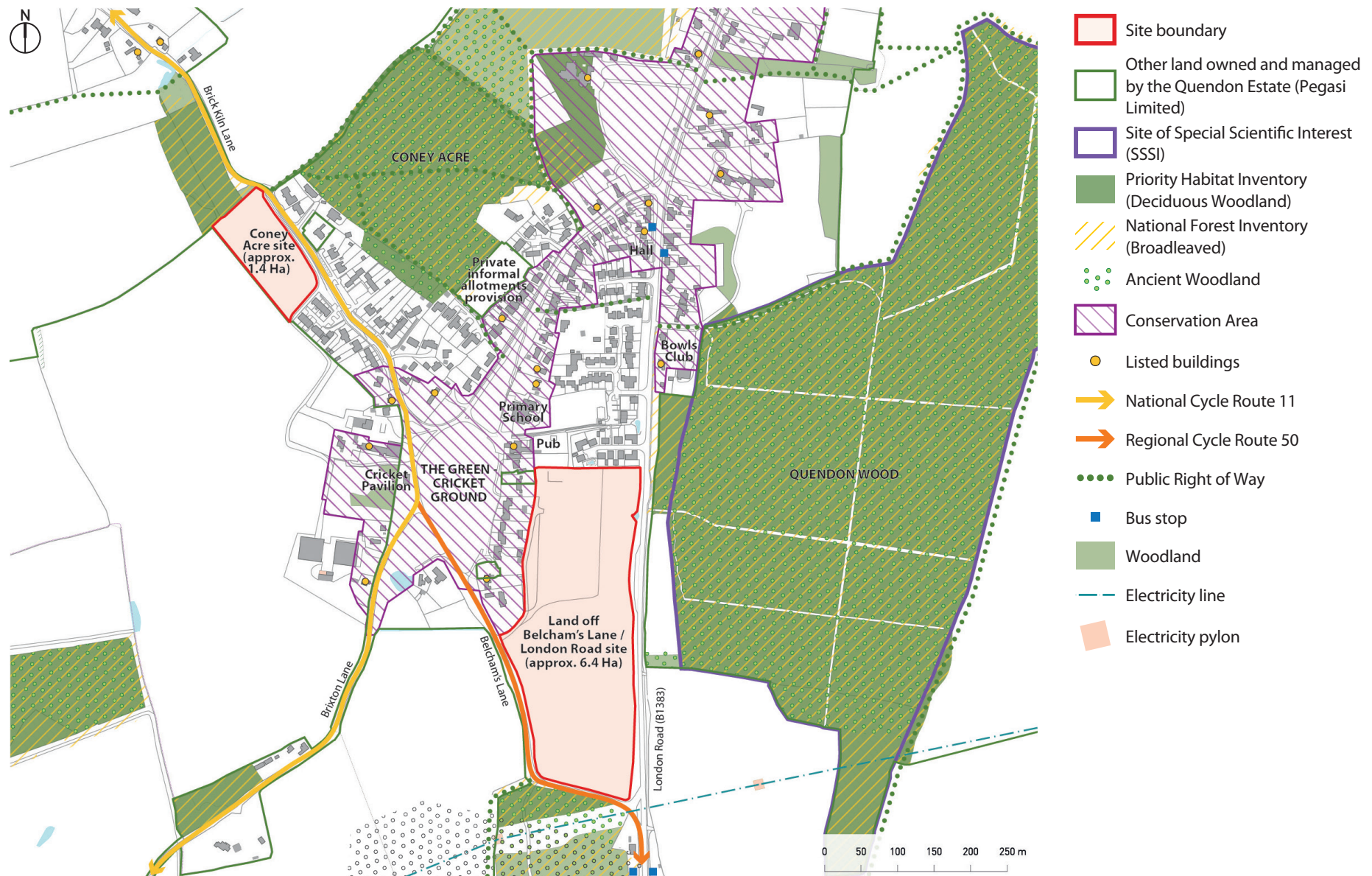


Figure 2: Village context and constraints

2.4 Townscape character

The village has a loose, low density character nucleated around the Green and fronting the roads running from it. Buildings are predominantly 1-2 storey in height, comprising larger detached, semi-detached and small runs of terraces set behind front gardens with walls, fences and hedges to the street. To the west of the Green, former agricultural buildings are visible which are currently occupied for commercial and distribution purposes. This site is known as Maces Farmyard Buildings.

Historic properties within the village vary in age from the 16th and 17th century cottages and farm buildings, to the pub and school of the 18th-19th century. Local materials and vernacular detailing includes the use of brick, flint, slate, colour-washed plaster and weatherboarding, with clay tile and straw thatch for roofing.

The historic core of the village comprising the Green and its setting, together with Rickling Green Road and Quendon to the north are designated a Conservation Area. The Conservation Area includes a number of listed buildings in Rickling Green such as the Grade II listed Cricketers pub, the barn at Maces Farmyard Buildings and a number of cottages.

There are a number of recent infill housing developments comprising detached or terrace properties including some very good examples reflecting the historic vernacular. Larger scale post-war developments include a small estate of bungalows on Brick Kiln Lane and two recent housing estates accessed off the B1383, both of which have a more generic character reflecting their date of construction. The latter includes houses of up to 2.5 storeys in height with dormer windows.

There are no scheduled monuments in the Parish.

2.5 Sustainable movement

Public transport

The village is served by the hourly 301 bus service between Saffron Waldon and Bishop's Stortford, with stops located on the B1383 near the junction with Rickling Green Lane, and to the south of Belcham's Lane. The 441 school service runs during term time.

The nearest mainline railway station is 2.8 miles to the north at Newport, with half hourly services towards London and Cambridge. Other nearby mainline stations are located at Audley End and Stansted.

Walking and cycling

The countryside surrounding the village is accessible by public rights of way, including the Harcamlow Way bridleway to the north west of the village.

National Cycle Route 11 runs north-south through the village on Brixton Lane and Brick Kiln Lane and joins with Regional Cycle Route 50 on Belcham's Lane which heads to the south east.

Strategic connections

The site is located 6 miles to the north of junction 8 of the the M11, which provides strategic connections to the north and south.



Rickling Green townscape character

3.0 Site constraints and opportunities

3.1 Coney Acre, off Brick Kiln Lane

Site considerations

This 1.4ha site is located to the north west of the village adjacent to a small estate of late twentieth century bungalows and opposite three large detached properties. The boundary of the site rounds off and infills between these two existing areas of development.

The site is currently in agricultural use. To the north west the site is bounded by woodland, which marks a strong edge to the village.

The site has no physical constraints to development and is located within flood zone 1.

There are a number of considerations and opportunities that have informed our initial proposals for the site:

- A hedgerow forms the eastern boundary of the site along part of Brick Kiln Lane and contains two mature trees. Subject to arboricultural survey, the intention is to retain these features as far as possible.
- There is a break in the hedgerow at the northern corner of the site. This location is suitable for gaining vehicle access to the site from Brick Kiln Lane, and is currently the location of a field access for agricultural machinery
- A second break in the hedge at the southern end of the site provides an opportunity for a walking and cycling connection with Brick Kiln Lane.
- The site is adjacent to the National Cycle Route 11 and close to the Harcamlow Way bridleway. There are opportunities to enhance or connect with these routes.
- A 'locally important view' is identified crossing the site in the draft Neighbourhood Plan. Any potential impacts on the view will need to be adequately mitigated.
- The site is relatively flat, falling gently to the northern corner. Sustainable drainage attenuation features should therefore be located here.
- The woodland to the north is a Priority Habitat and may benefit from a landscape buffer.
- The relationship of the site to existing residential properties to the south and east will require an appropriate design response to create an attractive outlook for these properties and secure boundaries.

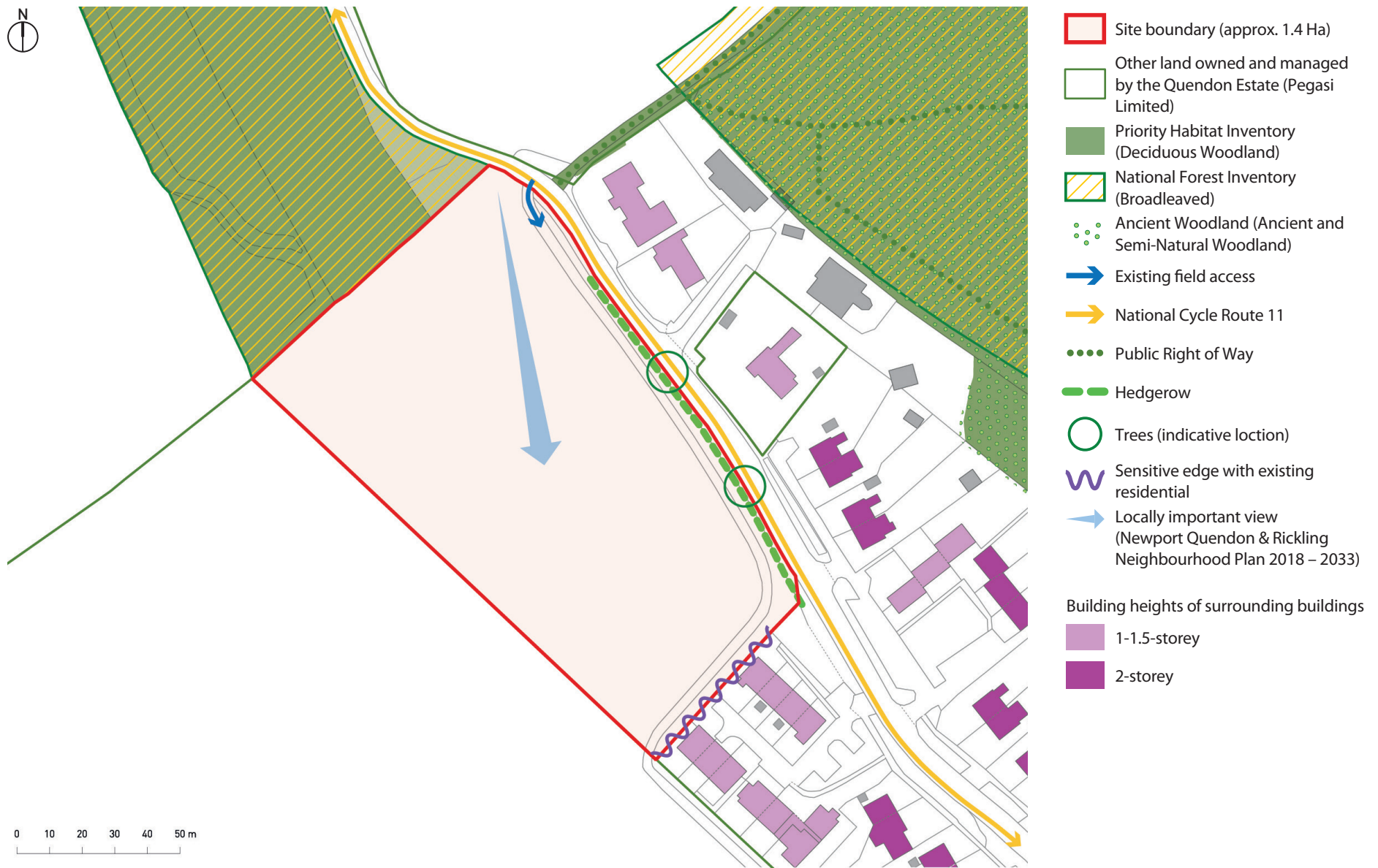


Figure 3: Coney Acre site considerations



View north across site



View south from access point



Adjacent bungalows



Properties opposite the site

Coney Acre site photos

Development opportunities

Figure 4 illustrates the initial concept for development of the site reflecting the considerations and opportunities outlined above:

- a. The site has capacity for around 35 homes ranging from detached to small runs of terrace properties, 1-2 storeys in height in a street-based arrangement, reflecting the approach to design outlined in section 1.2.
- b. New homes adjacent to the existing bungalows will have side or rear gardens adjacent to the bungalows creating an appropriate and secure boundary between properties.
- c. Vehicle access to the site is at the north from Brick Kiln Lane, where there is a gap in the hedgerow and an existing field access.
- d. The entrance to the site at the northern corner of the site is kept free from development and provides a public green space either side of the access road, which provides sustainable drainage features, habitat creation and a small play area (a LAP). This retains a sense of openness at the entrance to the village, where the site is overlooked by existing properties.
- e. A linear open space and footpath runs along the northern boundary of the site. This offers a buffer to the existing woodland, and provides a footpath which connects with the Harcamlow Way to the east. The footpath has the potential to continue westwards across Quendon Estate land joining with existing footpaths towards Rickling Hall forming a local, circular walking route.
- f. The existing hedgerow and mature trees along Brick Kiln Lane are retained. A linear landscape buffer and second footpath are created alongside the hedgerow connecting towards the bungalows at the south east of the site.
- g. The 'locally important view' across the site is mitigated by the retained open space at the site entrance and the proposed alignment of the streets which retain a long view to the south towards the open countryside.
- h. A new hedgerow will be planted on the south western edge of the site, forming a clear boundary to the development and the village.



Figure 4: Coney Acre site opportunities

3.2 Land off Belcham's Lane/London Road

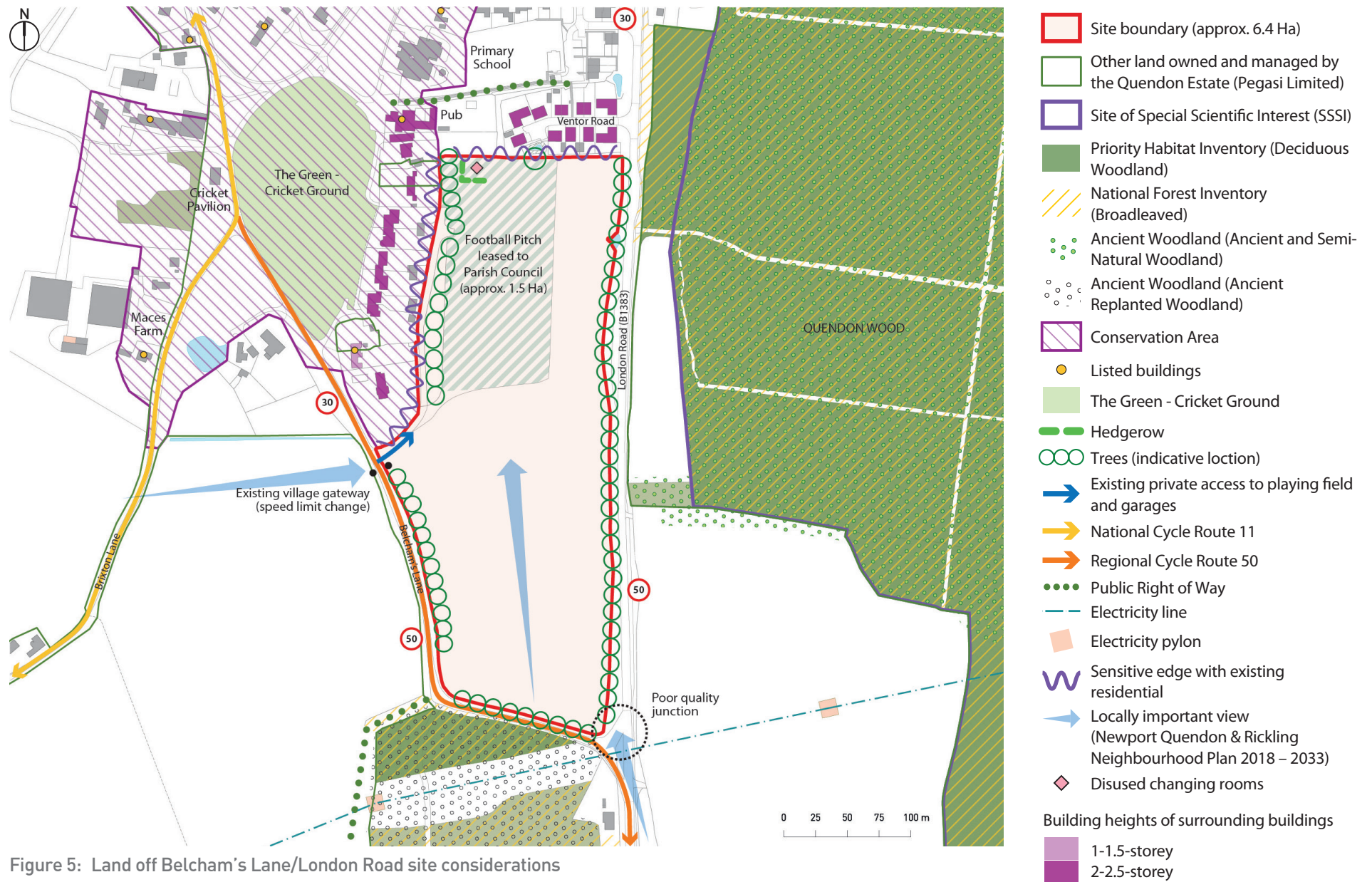
Site considerations

This 6.4 hectare site is located at the southern edge of the village, west of the B1383 London Road and to the rear of existing properties on The Green and Ventnor Road. It is close to the centre of the village being located to the south of the village primary school and pub. The majority of the site is in arable agricultural use, with an approximately 1.5 ha area leased to the Parish Council by the Estate and used as a football pitch.

The site has no physical constraints to development and is located within flood zone 1.

There are a number of considerations and opportunities that have informed our initial proposals for the site:

- The site is located to the rear of properties and gardens forming part of the Conservation Area including one listed cottage. Properties fronting the Green are generally 2 storey. An appropriate design response to the character and scale of the Conservation Area and the listed building and their settings will be required.
- Recent development to the north of the site is generally 2.5 storeys with dormer windows.
- The relationship of the site to existing residential properties to the north and west will require an appropriate design response to create an attractive outlook for these properties and secure boundaries.
- Woodland to the east and south of the site is identified as Ancient Woodland. Quendon Wood to the east is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Both these woodlands are separated from the site by existing roads and hedgerows which provide a buffer, however the design response will need to be sensitive to potential habitat considerations at the site edges.
- Hedgerows are located at the western, eastern and southern boundaries of the site and existing mature trees at the boundaries and to the west of the football pitch. Subject to arboricultural survey, the intention is to retain these features as far as possible.
- Any development of the site will retain or re-provide the football pitch provision. The existing grassed football pitch has been improved over recent years but is limited to seasonal usage; it lacks changing facilities and there is an opportunity to enhance the provision.
- There is an existing private vehicle access to the site from Belcham's Lane which gives access to the football pitch and existing property rears and garages.
- The existing speed limit of Belcham's Lane and the B1383 in the vicinity of the site is 50mph. The speed limit change to 30mph on Belcham's Lane is located just south of the existing access into the site. On the B1383 the speed limit change occurs to the north of the site. The speed of traffic on Belcham's Lane, the B1383 and the quality of the Belcham's Lane/B1383 junction are local concerns.
- Recent residential developments to the north of the site have created new junctions onto the B1383.
- The site is adjacent to the Regional Cycle Route 50 which runs along Belcham's Lane.
- A high voltage power line runs to the south of the site. The easement corridor does not affect the site. A foul sewer alongside the existing access road serving existing properties and would be retained. No other utilities cross the site.
- A 'locally important view' is identified crossing the site looking northwards in the draft Neighbourhood Plan. Two further views are identified looking towards the site, from the west and from the south east. Any potential impacts on these views will need to be adequately mitigated.
- The site is relatively flat, falling gently to the south west corner. Sustainable drainage attenuation features should therefore be located here.



3.0 Site constraints and opportunities



View north across the site from Belcham's Lane



View across the football pitch towards recent development



Belcham's Lane access



Existing private property access road

Land off Belcham's Lane/London Road site photos

Development opportunities

Figure 6 illustrates the initial concept for development of the site reflecting the considerations and opportunities outlined above:

- a. Recognising the importance of the open outlook at the southern end of the village and the locally important views, the Estate proposes to keep the southern part of the site free from housing development. This area is to become a new public open space comprising sports and play facilities, set within a semi-natural landscape. The Estate is keen to work with local residents to understand their preferences for the type of sports and community facilities delivered here, ideas for which include:
 - the existing adult football pitch is to be re-provided together with changing and toilet facilities in a small pavilion or community hall.
 - the smaller training pitch could be re-provided, or alternative leisure uses could be created such as an outdoor gym, community orchard or similar.
 - a play area (LEAP) suitable for a range of ages and designed for universal accessibility will be located next to the sports facilities.
 - the necessary sustainable drainage attenuation features will be located at the lowest part of the site adjacent to Belcham's Lane and will be designed as an attractive wildlife habitat area.
 - woodland planting along the south western boundary of the site will create a habitat 'stepping stone' between the two areas of existing Ancient Woodland. The existing hedgerows at the edge of the site will be retained.
- b. The northern part of the site has capacity for around 110-130 homes and is of sufficient scale to deliver a wide range of property types including smaller houses and apartments through to larger terrace, semi-detached and detached properties of between 1-2.5 storeys in height. The final number of homes will depend on the mix of house types which will be chosen to reflect local needs.
- c. A tree lined, central village lane running north-south will provide a focus for the development. Properties fronting onto the lane would be arranged to create an attractive and interesting townscape leading from the centre of the village through to the new sports and play facilities at the south of the site.
- d. At the northern end of the central lane, the Estate is keen to create a pedestrian connection into the heart of the village. This is possible either via the garden of the existing Estate property on The Green, or via the pub car park and private garden immediately to the north of the site (subject to agreement with landowners).
- e. A second smaller play area (a LAP) would be created at the northern end of the site, close to the primary school.
- f. A new pedestrian route within the site, adjacent to the hedgerow alongside the B1383 London Road will be created to enable access along the main road. At the south western corner of the site this new footpath will connect with the existing public right of way into the woodland for longer walks.
- g. A new set of bus stops are proposed on the B1383 utilising the existing laybys. This would serve both the development and the centre of the village, and would be accessible via the new pedestrian link.
- h. The primary vehicle access to the site would be from a new junction onto the B1383 serving the majority of the site. Initial transport advice suggests this would be best located between the two existing laybys.
- i. The existing access onto Belcham's Lane would provide access to the southern part of the site and the open space, as well as maintaining the existing rear property access. To avoid rat-running between the two access points, the central lane would be designed as a no-through route for vehicles, while allowing through movement for pedestrians and cyclists.
- j. The Estate would support the extension of the 30 mph speed limit zone on Belcham's Lane and London Road, together with improvements to the quality and safety of the Belcham's Lane / London Road junction.



3.3 Wider village opportunities

If both proposed sites were to be developed, around 145 to 165 new homes, three new play areas, sports and leisure facilities and new footpaths could be provided for the village over a number of years. The increase in population associated with the growth of the village would provide support for existing facilities such as the school, support the viability of the village pub and provide the critical mass to make new facilities viable.

The Quendon Estate (Pegasi Limited) own a number of other properties and pieces of land in and around the village and they are keen to look at how these can be used to support the sustainability and vitality of Rickling Green in the future, as the village grows. The Estate would like to work with the local community to explore the best use of these assets. Initial ideas include:

- Formalising the current informal, private allotment provision off Rickling Green Road and enhancing facilities for allotment holders.
- Introducing additional commercial or community uses by utilising the former agricultural buildings and yard space at Maces Farmyard Buildings immediately west of the Green. Initial ideas for these buildings include flexible community space, business hub or space for small businesses.



Barns with potential for commercial or community uses

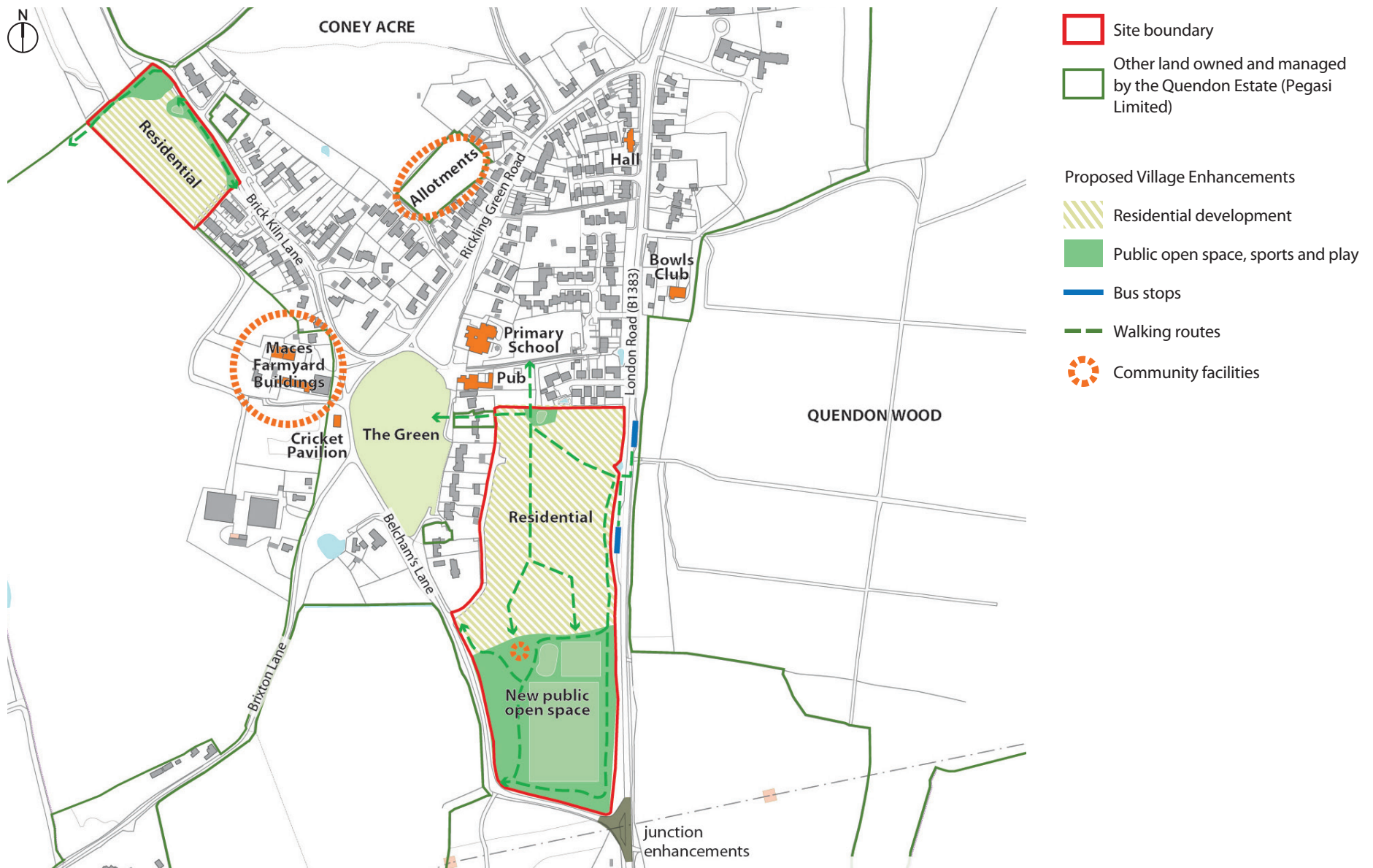


Figure 7: Village wide opportunities

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Reviewed by CC

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