

Darlington Local Plan

Skerningham Estates Limited (ID: 1250841)

Inspector's Note No.5: Response to Supplementary Questions to the Council

Issued May 2021

1.1 Our Client (Skerningham Estates Limited) responds to Question SQ4.

M4. Housing development

SQ4. Policy H10 part i(vii) requires the relocation of Darlington Golf Club to a suitable location within the allocation. Figure 6.1 (masterplan framework) includes a symbol for “indicative golf club location” on the northern part of the site. Please provide a map that indicates (a) the extent of the existing golf course; (b) the area of community woodland referred to in policy H10 part i(iii); and (c) the likely position of the relocated club house, its vehicular access, and the extent of the relocated golf course based on the symbol included on Figure 6.1.

- 1.2 We expect the Council to respond on this matter but thought it would also be helpful to provide background on this element of the development proposals.
- 1.3 As noted in SQ4, Policy H10 i(vii) requires a network of green and blue infrastructure to provide for the relocation of Darlington Golf Club to a suitable location within the allocation boundary. Figure 6.1 provides a pink star symbol which identifies an “*Indicative Golf Club Location*”.
- 1.4 Paragraph 6.10.11 of the Local Plan references that:
- “Around 45% of the site is expected to be retained and enhanced as accessible green infrastructure, managed agricultural land and the relocated golf club as part of a wide green corridor on the south side of the River Skerne...”*
- 1.5 The Skerningham Statement of Common Ground, which has been agreed between Darlington Borough Council and Skerningham Estates Limited, includes an Indicative Masterplan at Appendix 2 which provides a suggested layout for the development; including the extent of the development cells, the route of the local distributor road and the potential land for the relocated golf course.
- 1.6 The Indicative Masterplan shows that on land to the east of the railway line, all development cells are located to the south of the local distributor road with the land to the north contributing to the network of green and blue infrastructure as stated in Policy H10 (i). As referenced in our Client's response to Matter 4, Question 4.5 (a)¹, the Indicative Masterplan demonstrates a gross developable area of 234 ha (or 138ha) net. Therefore, set against an overall allocation of 492 ha, the development would exceed the target stated in Local Plan paragraph 6.10.11.
- 1.7 The relocated Golf Club is shown to the north of the proposed local distributor road and broadly in the area indicated by the symbol shown on Figure 6.1. The design of the proposed Golf Course

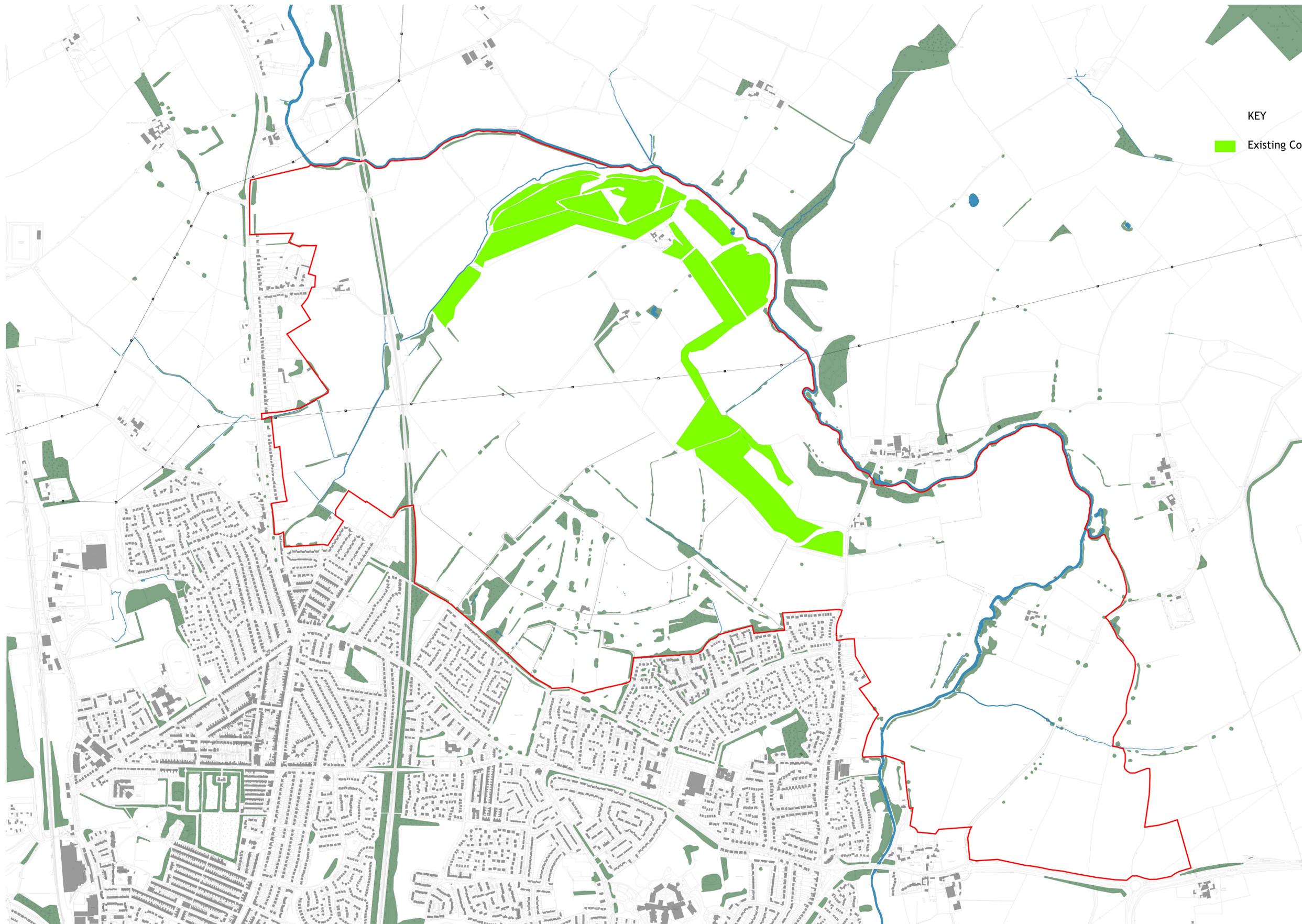
¹ Paragraph 1.9

is still to be fully considered and the detail would be finalised as part of any future planning application. Notwithstanding this, it is likely that access would be taken from the new local distributor road with the clubhouse, car parking and other key facilities located a short distance from this road.

- 1.8 The Indicative Masterplan currently shows the relocated Golf Club extending into the woodland which lies to the south of the River Skerne. For context, the woodland is located within our Client's ownership and our Client was instrumental in delivering this woodland approximately two decades ago and remains committed to providing land for the benefit of the local community in the future.
- 1.9 As shown on the appended plans, the existing woodland measures around 34.7 ha. Based on the Indicative Layout, approximately 7.4 ha would be removed to facilitate the delivery of the relocated Golf Club. The plans also show that the development would provide a further 12.4 ha of woodland which would result in a total area of around 39.7 ha of woodland, equating to an increase of around 5 ha when measured against the current provision.
- 1.10 As detailed in the Social and Community Infrastructure Assessment (May 2021)², which is appended to our Client's statement in response to Matter 4, it is anticipated that the Golf Club will be relocated in 2030. As such, this provides an opportunity for advanced planting of the compensatory woodland so that it will have started to mature before the new Golf Club is delivered.
- 1.11 We also note Question SQ3 and, whilst this is a question for the Council to address, the Viability Appraisal appended to our Client's responses to Matter 1 and 4 details that how the relocation of the Golf Club is treated as a neutral cost as the receipt from the sale of the land of the existing Golf Club would be used to fund the relocation and its long-term running costs.

² Figure 4.1

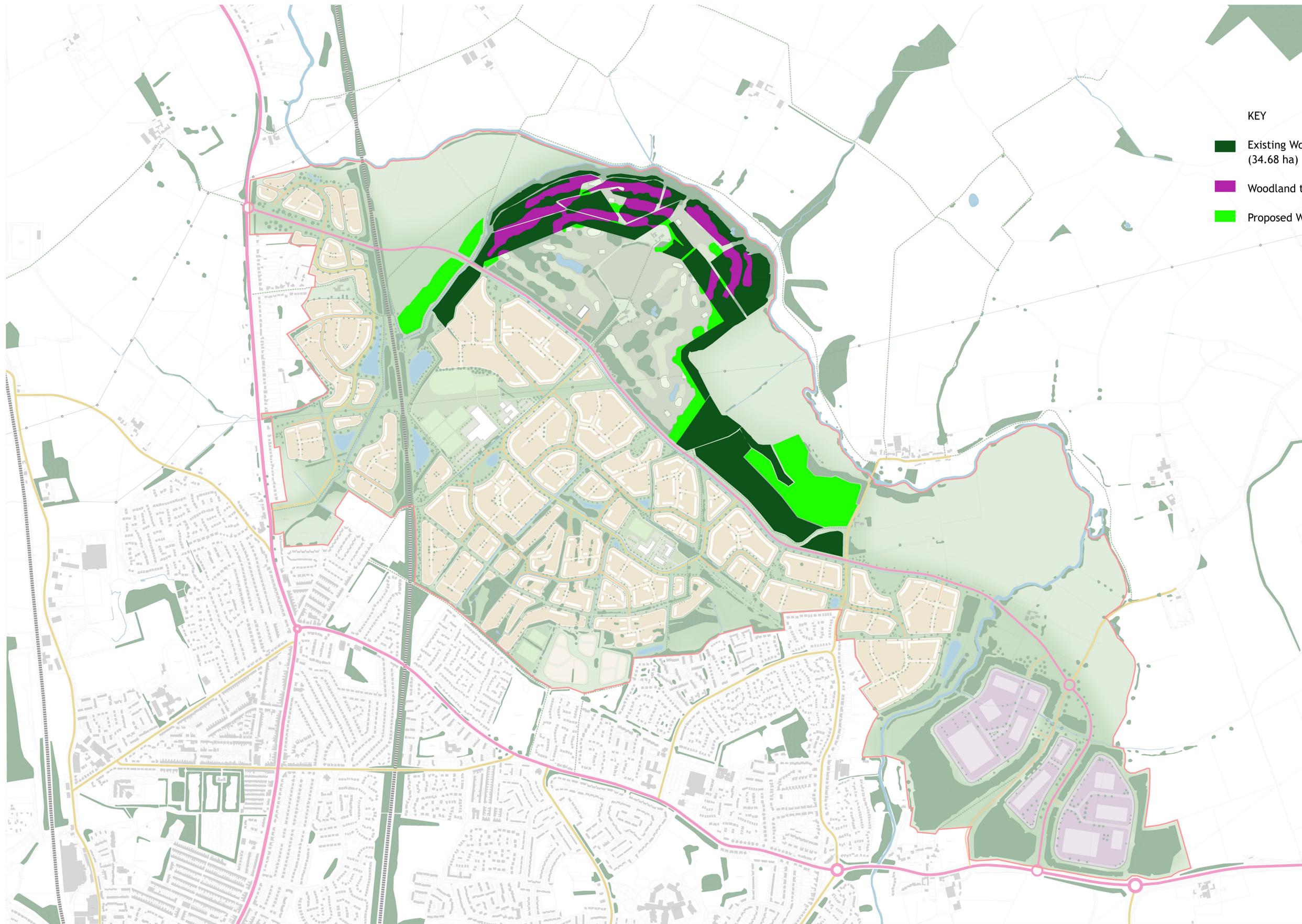
Appendix 1 – Existing Woodland



KEY

Existing Community Woodland (34.68 ha)

Appendix 2 – Existing and Proposed Woodland



KEY

- Existing Woodland to be retained (34.68 ha)
- Woodland to be removed (7.4 ha)
- Proposed Woodland (12.39 ha)