

Earls Colne Parish Council

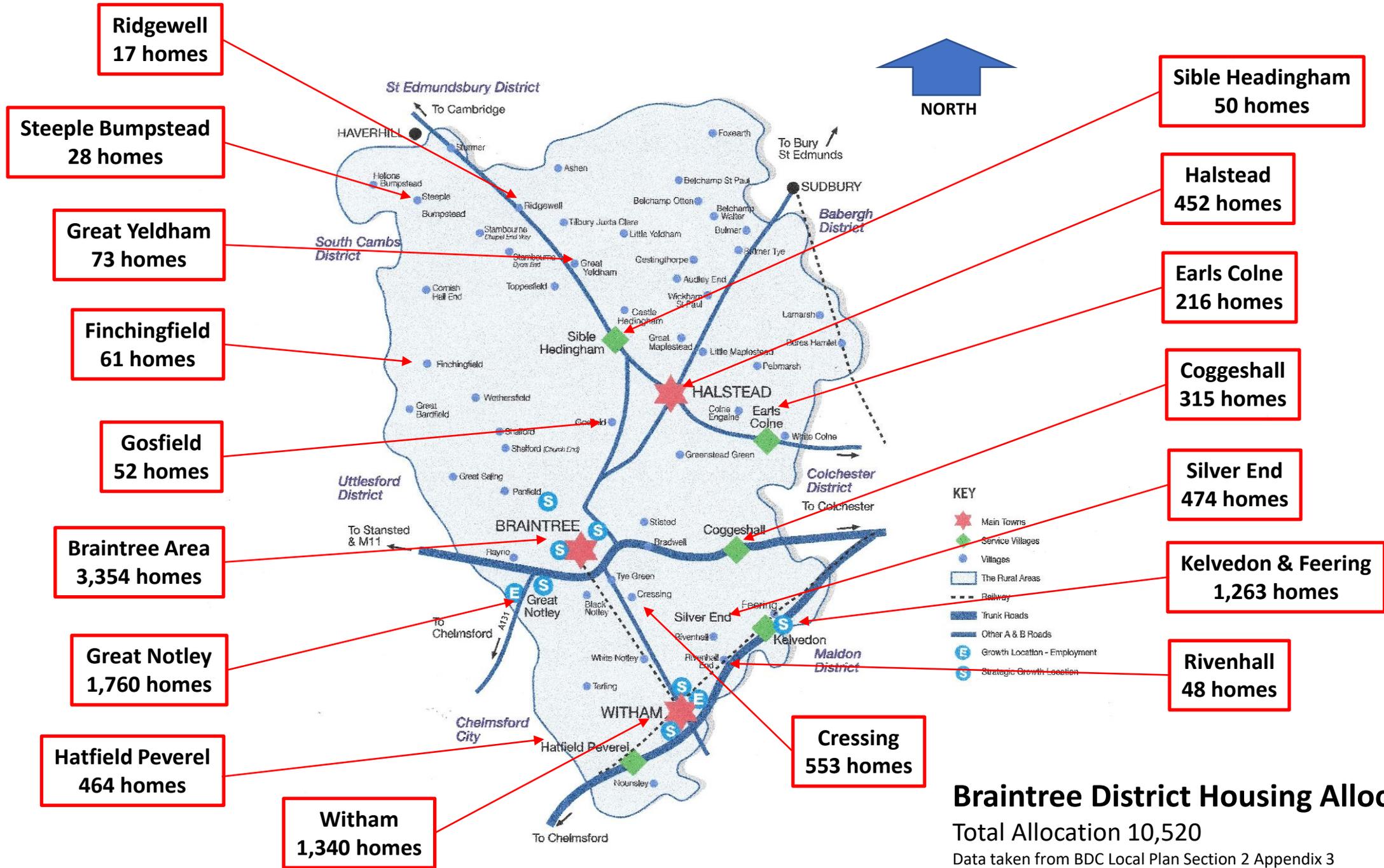
Open Day Event 14th January 2023

Displays Exhibited at the Event Covering:

The Braintree local Plan

The Earls Colne Neighbourhood Plan

The Long Term Outlook



Earls Colne Neighbourhood Plan

VISION - WHAT WE WANT FOR OUR FUTURE

TO ENHANCE... the village of Earls Colne as a residential and business community offering wide ranging housing stock, good employment opportunities, and local sport and leisure facilities within an attractive, safe and friendly environment

TO PROTECT AND SECURE... the rich history, rural environment and community spirit of our village

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - OBJECTIVES

OUR PLANNING GOALS

Environment and Infrastructure

- Preserve and enhance the high quality rural landscape of the parish.
- Identify where new footpaths and cycle ways are needed to facilitate travel within the village without cars, especially arising from new development.
- Survey current provision for parking and assess needs for further space in future, if and when additional sites can be found.
- Encourage the use of specific kinds of renewable energy technologies and propose community energy schemes such as solar and wind farms.
- Identify specific ways that development can protect and enhance biodiversity. Assist developers by indicating particular ways they can achieve above goal biodiversity targets.

Community Facilities

- Protect shared green spaces that are evidently of significance to the village.
- Ensure that availability of community facilities grows with the population.
- Ensure any new residential or commercial development has safe and easy access to most village facilities/amenities, preferably by walking or cycling; identify “Key Movement Routes”.

Housing and Design

- Ensure high quality design that reflects the character of Earls Colne.
- Meet the specific housing needs of the local community by encouraging a community led housing scheme if a suitable site becomes available.

Economy

- Continue to attract a wide range of businesses by having a variety of commercial and retail premises.
- Encourage the development of various offices, workshops and factories suitable for both established businesses and start-ups on our existing industrial estates.
- Identify “Key Movements Routes” and continue to improve travel to and from commercial centres.
- Continue to provide our village community with a vibrant retail centre, encouraging interesting ideas for use of premises and discouraging commercial premises being changed to residential use.

The table below details both positive and negative issues that Earls Colne faces in its future development. These are shown as Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats and have been derived from comments made in the village questionnaire and feedback from the Open Day held on July 16th 2019.

STRENGTHS

Rich history

Lots of services

Walking distance to centre

Community Spirit

Pretty (not chocolate box) but still functional village

Place to be proud of

Plenty of employment for village size

Good leisure facilities

Proximity to countryside/walks, especially Chalkney Woods

Mix of people/demographics

Good school

WEAKNESSES

Traffic – main route from Halstead to Colchester, both growing rapidly and adding traffic

Parking – streets crowded because older houses were not designed for car ownership

Services overstretched with limited capacity – struggling to cope with increasing demand of growing population

Lack of youth facilities/young family services

Lack of real power for Parish Council and understanding of their role

Lack of public transport (at times for commuters)

No connection to airfield industrial site, Coggeshall, Braintree or mainline stations at Kelvedon Marks Tey or Braintree

OPPORTUNITIES

A Neighbourhood Plan would seek to :

- Influence what is built/developed and where;**
- Make a list of historic buildings and features to be preserved, not lost sight of or over shadowed;**
- Influence village/ town planning;**
- Increase environmental sustainability;**
- Develop better transport communication in the village and between other local communities;**
- Have a say over how new developments link/integrate with existing ones;**
- Enable the village to grow organically without being swamped by insensitive developments;**
- Give greater clarity on what local residents desire and allow the village to participate democratically in decisions about its future**

THREATS

- Sudden large increase in population that outstrips the capacity of schools, medical services and other infrastructure;**
- Village loses its character and becomes impersonal;**
- Losing village feel re size;**
- Loss of identity and loyalty to the community, a place less cherished;**
- Loss of greenfield land;**
- Additional stress on the environment and contributors to climate change such as pollution from extra traffic, building on green space that may increase flood risk, destruction of wildlife habitat, litter and wear on foot paths and other amenities;**
- Type of housing not specific to meet local demand**
- Demographics determined by new housing built not needs of the existing community;**

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - POLICY STATEMENTS

- **Improve the quality, condition and signage of existing footpaths as an amenity in the wider environment, and develop further a network of paths and cycle ways to facilitate travel without cars.**
- **Encourage the building of energy efficient housing and use of renewable energy resources**
- **Preserve wildlife by protecting habitat and encouraging measures such as wildlife corridors where needed**
- **Preserve and enhance the high quality rural landscape of the parish**
- **Preserve and enhance existing community facilities, including green spaces, public buildings and services**
- **Ensure any new residential or commercial development has safe and easy access to most village facilities/amenities, preferably by walking or cycling**
- **Ensure that new housing developments meet the needs of existing residents, particularly with respect to affordable homes.**
- **Encourage the provision of shared ownership affordable homes at price levels commensurate with the incomes of local residents, especially those currently renting or living in multi-generational households**
- **Aim for a balanced demographic of young people, working families, elderly and retired by providing housing that meets their needs.**
- **Ensure high quality design that reflects the character of Earls Colne**
- **Continue to attract a wide range of business and employers and provide better transport links between residential areas and places of work.**

What did you want fixed?

Some of the most widely raised issues identified by residents of the village are:

- ❖ The ever increasing levels of through traffic in the High Street and the health, safety and environmental risks this represents.
- ❖ The high number of new homes built in recent years plus those currently under construction is concerning many residents particularly with respect to the additional pressures this places on existing local health and educational services, and recreational facilities.
- ❖ The lack of car parking in the village centre and the increase in local traffic partly attributed to the new housing developments on the extreme fringes of the village.
- ❖ The failure of housebuilders to address the specific future housing needs of existing local residents.
- ❖ The inadequacy of pedestrian footpaths and dedicated cycle ways to enable residents to walk and cycle freely and safely around the village. Also accessibility issues to public open spaces for the disabled.

HIGH STREET TRAFFIC VOLUMES

- Although the A1124 is a primary route, it has a 30mph limit within the Earls Colne Parish boundaries recognising the need to reduce speeds through the village centre. Whilst it would be possible to consider further traffic calming measures such as a lower speed limit (20mph), traffic lights, pelican crossings, speed bumps or road narrowing it is believed these would not significantly improve the situation and could even exacerbate the current problems.
- In terms of addressing this issue, in the longer term, the solution could be the construction of an A1124 relief road routed around either the north or the south of the village. This concept has been suggested by planning consultants commissioned by the Neighbourhood Plan team and is set out in the "Design Code" document.
- This proposal does not form any part of the Neighbourhood Plan policies at this time but was highlighted by the consultant because of the major benefits it could provide:
 - reducing traffic through the village
 - opening up future potential sites for residential and public amenity developments in areas which would not then require road access via the High Street.

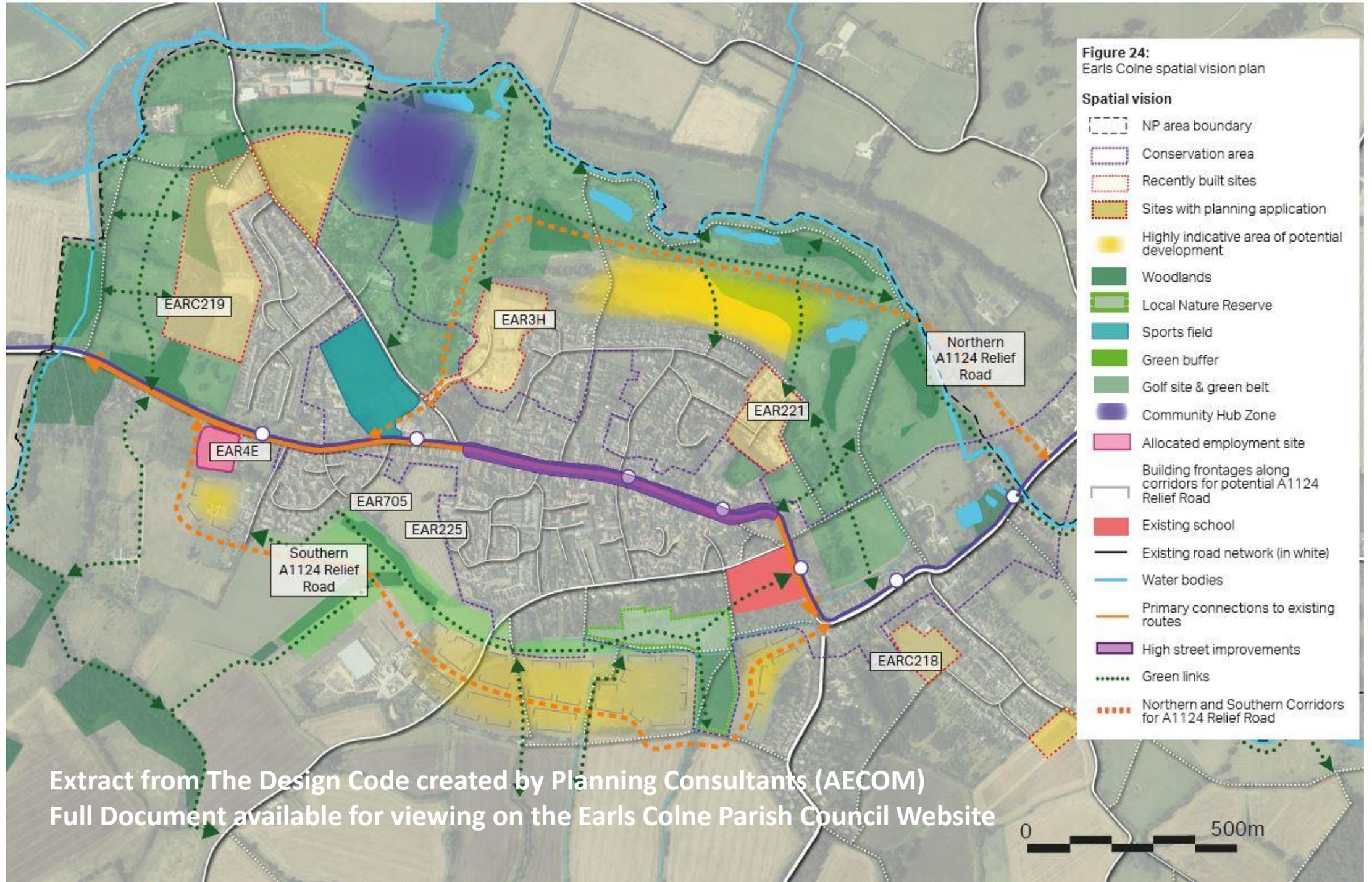
LOCAL HEALTH AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

- The Earls Colne Primary school has a maximum capacity of 420 pupils (two 30 pupil max classes per year) and is currently quite close to that level. Following informal discussions with the head teacher, it is clear there is not enough space on the current site for enlarging the capacity to the next level, 630 pupils (three classes per year).
- In the short to medium term the ratio of pupils from outside the village could be reduced to free up more spaces for the children of Earls Colne residents however this is a slow process as existing pupils and their siblings must be allowed to continue their progress through 7 years of primary education.

GENERAL PRACTICE SURGERY

- Following informal discussions with the senior partner at the practice we understand that the recent increase in the local population is not sufficient to trigger recruitment of another doctor, however the Pumphouse facility is large enough to grow in the future should significant further housing sites be allocated by the Planning Authority. In the interim it may be possible to review and adjust the current catchment area to provide more capacity for Earls Colne residents however we believe this is not considered necessary at present.

Figure 24:
Earls Colne spatial vision plan



Extract from The Design Code created by Planning Consultants (AECOM)
Full Document available for viewing on the Earls Colne Parish Council Website

