

Colchester Northern Gateway

Master Plan Vision Review

Draft

July 2016

GILLESPIES



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Introduction

This Master Plan review for Colchester Northern Gateway has been prepared by Gillespies on behalf of Colchester Borough Council.

Colchester Northern Gateway will play an important role in the growth of Colchester into an increasingly competitive place, with a diversified offer. The vision is for a vibrant, accessible, green, leisure orientated mixed use location.

It will be characterised by a mix of leisure uses, green surrounding and a civic heart to provide focus and to unify the community and visitors. The intention is to create a new sustainable destination that promotes growth and investment for the entirety of Colchester.

The Council has been working with Gillespies to prepare a public realm and urban design strategy for the whole of the Northern Gateway.

The aim is to provide a parkland and informal recreation setting for the informal sports facilities on the Northern side of the A12 and a masterplan strategy of commercial and employment uses on the Southern side.



THE SITE - COLCHESTER NORTHERN GATEWAY COVERS AN AREA OF APPROXIMATELY 112HA.
THE AERIAL PHOTO ABOVE OF CNG IS BEEN TAKEN IN 2014

Context

Purpose of the Report

Strategic Position

Overview of the Process

2012 Master Plan Vision

Emerging Southern Site Framework

Reviewed Master Plan Principles

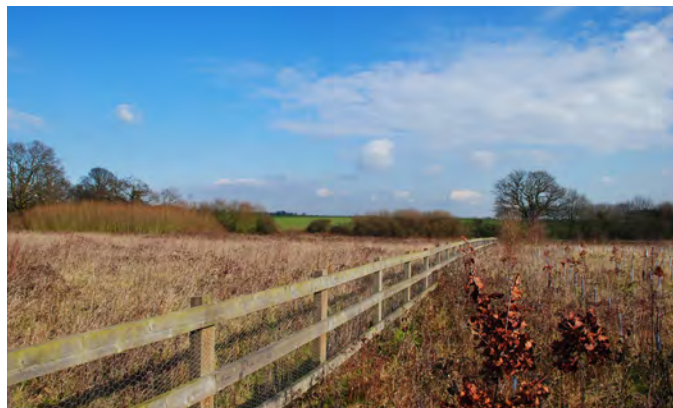
Context Purpose of the Report

This report represents a review of the existing Master Plan Vision for the Northern Gateway, originally published in June 2012 by the Colchester Borough Council.

The report suggests a broad set of design principles but does not have status or weight in planning terms.

The report has the following objectives:

- To present a review of the masterplan vision produced in 2012.
- To identify the urban design and landscape principles and key moves which will achieve this vision and create a distinctive location.
- To define a broad master plan framework as a basis for the development of more detailed proposals

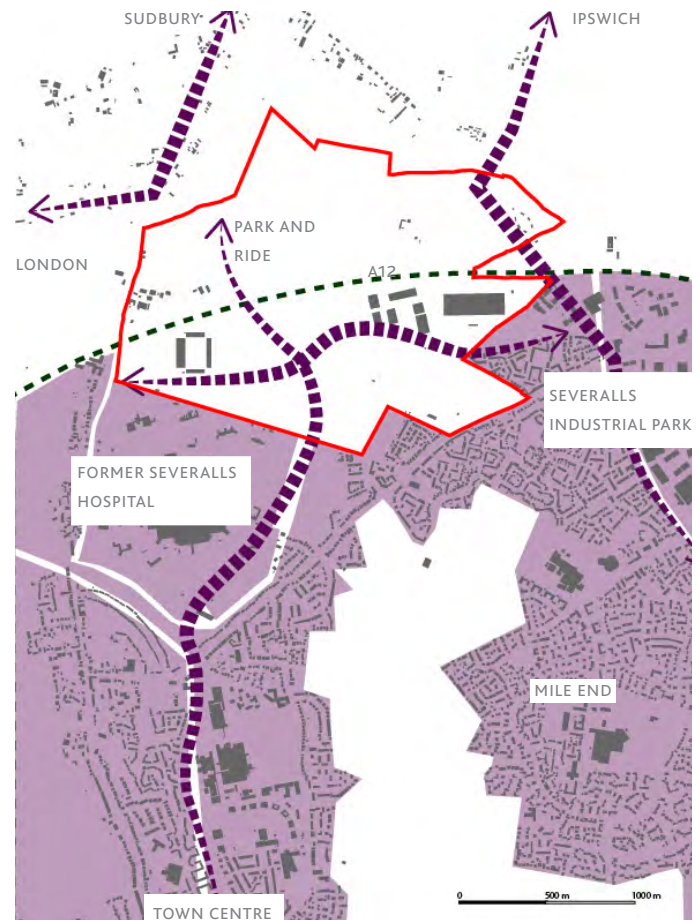


Context Strategic Position

The adjacent plan highlights the strategic position of Northern Gateway within Colchester. The site is situated to the immediate south and north of the A12 which provides an important link to London and Ipswich.

The Park and Ride facility provides a direct connection through Northern Gateway to the railway stations and the town centre .

Northern Gateway has been promoted for development by the Council for a number of years. Now that proposals for Severalls Hospital are underway there is an even greater emphasis on the creation of a distinctive, high quality development which contributes to the identity and role of North Colchester.

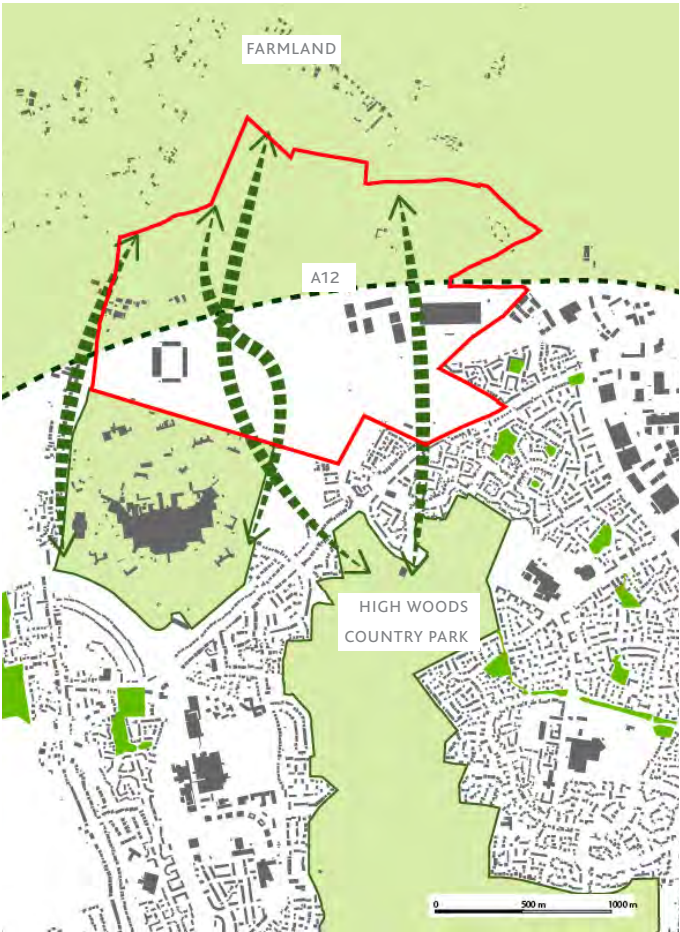


MAIN URBAN LINKS

Context Strategic Position

In addition to excellent road links, Northern Gateway also benefits from connections to an established network of green routes, parks and wild spaces, north to the Essex Way, and south to the town centre via High Woods Country Park

It is conveniently located in close proximity to large green areas, which makes it an ideal linking point between Colchester and its green surrounding. It is walking distance from High Woods Country Park, as well as green farmlands and fields to the north of the A12.



MAIN PEDESTRIAN LINKS

Context Overview of the Process

2012 MASTER PLAN

A number of key moves have been identified in the previous Vision for the Northern Gateway:

- Respond to the existing landscape structure
- Establish a central boulevard which unifies Northern Gateway
- Use planting to reinforce spaces and connections
- Promote a sustainable movement strategy
- Establish flexible and accessible building plots
- Define a clear framework for key buildings, spaces and views

This master plan review will endeavour to preserve the key moves where possible

EMERGING SOUTHERN SITE FRAMEWORK

Since publication of the Master Plan Vision in 2012, some plots on the site have been granted planning permission.

The layout of these developments is not in line with the Master Plan Vision, creating a new situation on the site.

Further changes since the Master Plan Vision published in 2012 include:

- the decision to keep the roundabout on Via Urbis, which is contrary to the Master Plan Vision
- the decision to include the site north of A12 into the master plan, predominantly by moving the Rugby Club to the north of A12.

Context 2012 Master Plan Vision



The diagram above is been extracted from the draft framework document prepared by consultants Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners who were commissioned to undertake the masterplanning exercise and design led workshop with officers during October and November 2011, followed by public consultation in 2014

Context Emerging Southern Site Framework



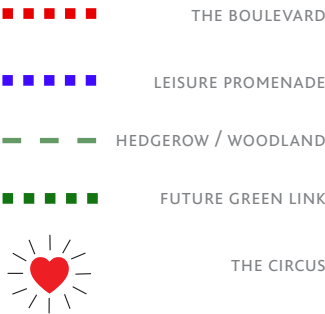
The diagram above shows the emerging urban framework of the southern site dated July 2016

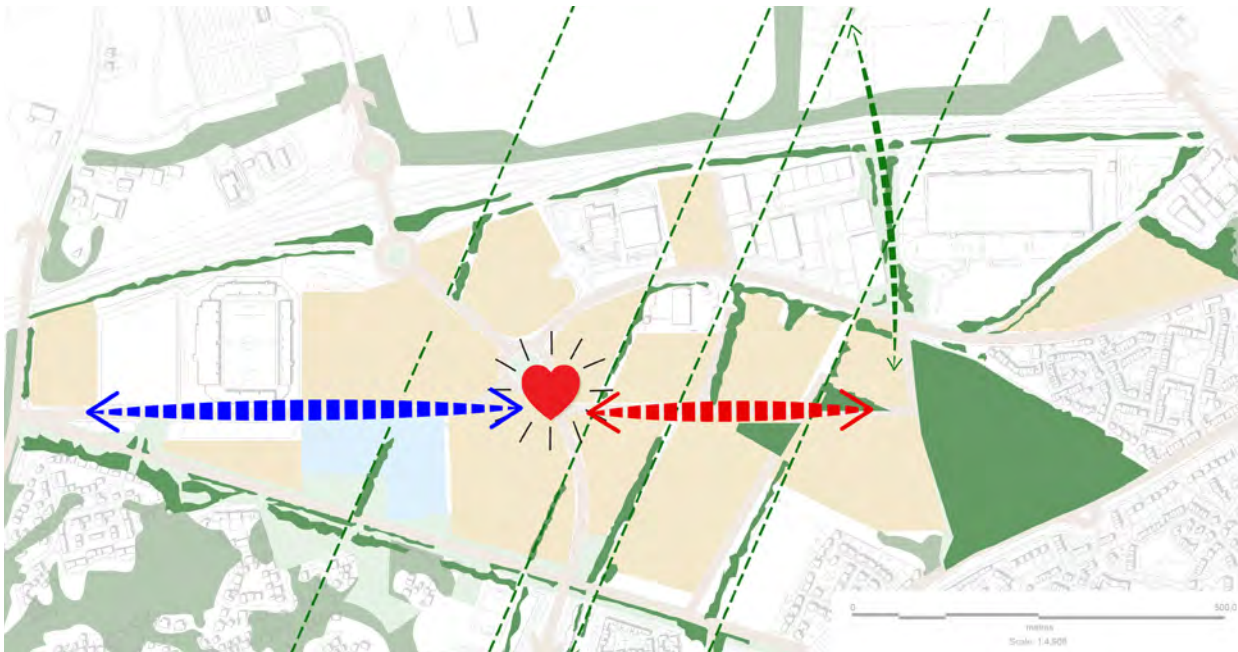
Context Reviewed Master Plan Principles

The new site configuration, created by new developments and the decision to retain the roundabout limits the key move from the 2012 Vision of establishing the Central Boulevard from being established.

To adapt and retain the idea of Allies and Morrison Central Boulevard it is proposed to establish a two part central spine, comprising of The Boulevard to the east, and the Leisure Promenade to the west. A generous public plaza on either side of the roundabout should be created where these two intersect.

Where possible, it is recommended to retain the existing hedgerows, and follow their lines in any future division of the site into plots.





ADOPTED PRINCIPLES UPON THE EMERGING SITUATION





Key Principles

Reviewed Master Plan Concept

Master Plan Elements

Master Plan Plots

Buildings and Views

Zones and Local Amenities

Key Principles Reviewed Master Plan Concept

CNG master plan strategy aims to provide coherent and clear links between the parkland, sport and informal recreational area in the North to the southern commercial and leisure

At the intersection of the Leisure Promenade and the Boulevard, close to the new public space we called The Circus, a new leisure trail will lead north toward the Rugby Centre and south towards the High Woods Country Park. The leisure trail will benefit from new landscaping, with clearly signposted leisure destinations along it, spanning the site both south and north of the A12.

Secondary green links, to more leisure destinations, and potentially water based leisure activities is planned to the east of the site, linking the new village green with the recreational to the north of the A12. Public realm should form a backbone to the development, with focal areas capable of acting as informal community spaces.

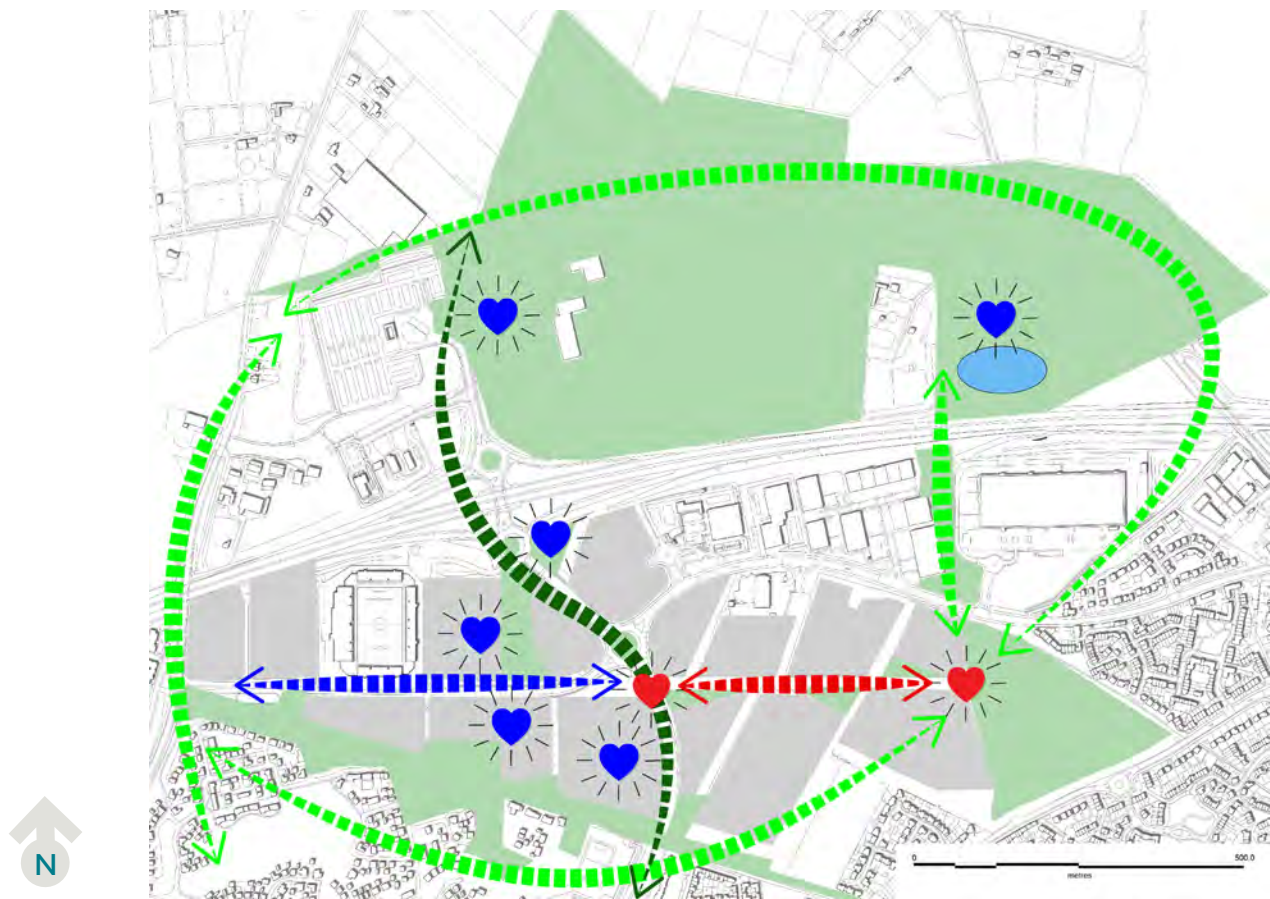
The master plan strategy delivers appropriate site - wide sustainability measures from sustainable drainage systems (SUDs) to sustainable development forms



LEISURE PROMENADE



THE BOULEVARD



REVIEWED MASTER PLAN CONCEPT

Key Principles Master Plan Elements

FOLLOWING EXISTING HEDGEROWS

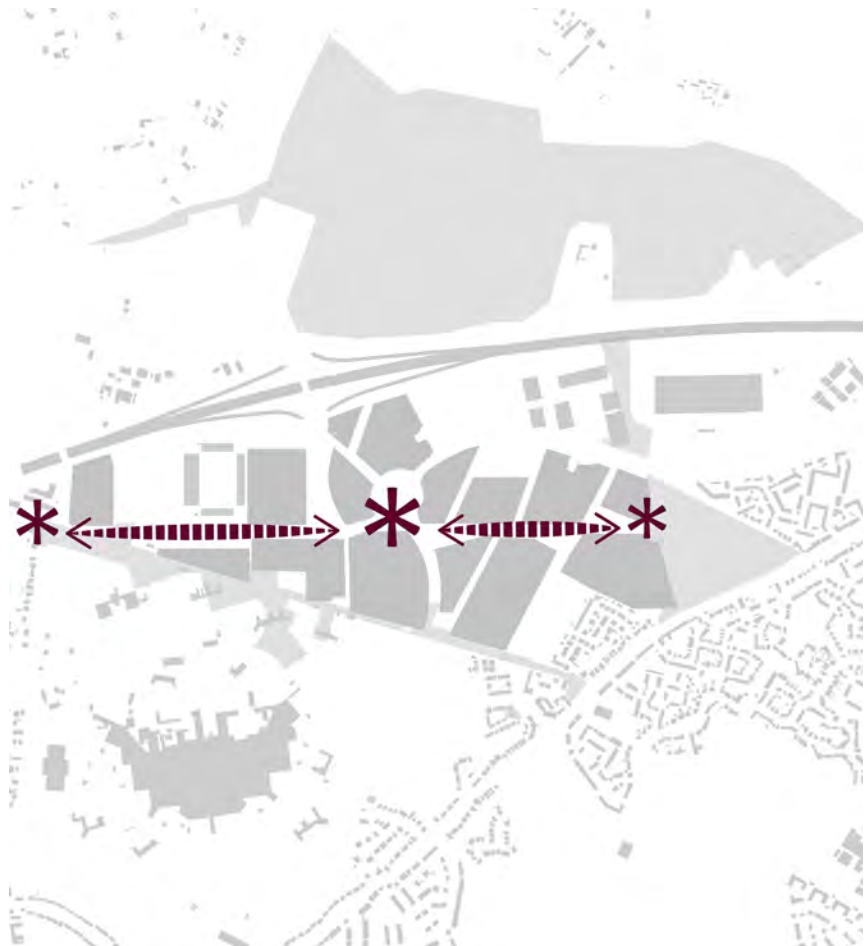
Respond to the existing landscape structure: it is the aim to preserve as many of the established hedgerows on the site as possible, and to orientate development plots in a way to allow pedestrian and cycle routes along these hedgerows.



LEISURE PROMENADE + THE BOULEVARD

Due to new constraints and the already emerging leisure orientated nature of the western part of the site, the central spine should have two clearly distinguished corridors: the *leisure promenade* which will be focused on the *movement* and the *boulevard* which will be focused on the *place*.

The western part of the spine will constitute a Leisure Promenade, with a more open feel to it, while the eastern part will form the newly established Boulevard with clearly defined building frontages and open spaces.



Key Principles Master Plan Elements

CIRCULATION VEHICULAR AND PEDESTRIAN

The Boulevard should have clearly defined frontages creating a more urban feel than the differently landscaped less dense leisure promenade.

New prominent artworks should be located on the bridge over A12 and should be designed to be taller than the surrounding buildings and visible from some distance.



REDUCING DENSITY + PERMEATING LANDSCAPE

Create a logical framework for residential, leisure and landscape elements

The building height should increase in the south-eastern area, gradually reducing towards the north-west in order to allow the green landscape to permeate, especially amongst the leisure-orientated developments.



Key Principles Master Plan Elements

WALKING DISTANCE

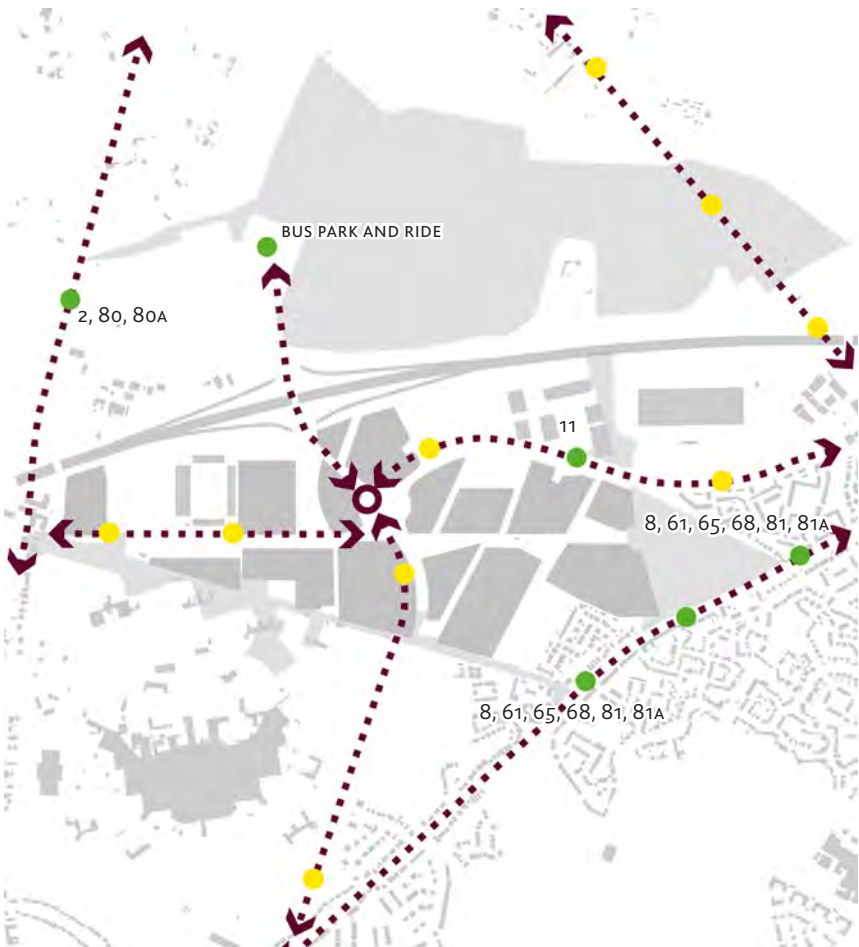
The movement strategy for the Colchester Northern Gateway is envisaged in such a way as to provide plenty of opportunities for walking, cycling and jogging. The network will serve not only to aid the connectivity on the site, but also to be used for recreation, reinforcing the identity of the Northern Gateway as a leisure destination



NEW BUS - ROUTES AND BUS STOPS

The master plan incorporates the bus stops location pattern which will be considered by standard spacing and walking distance. The optimal spacing between bus stops involves a balance of customer convenience and operating efficiency. The location of the new bus stops will be negotiated with the Council and bus operators

-  BUS ROUTES
-  NEW BUS STOPS
-  EXISTING BUS STOPS



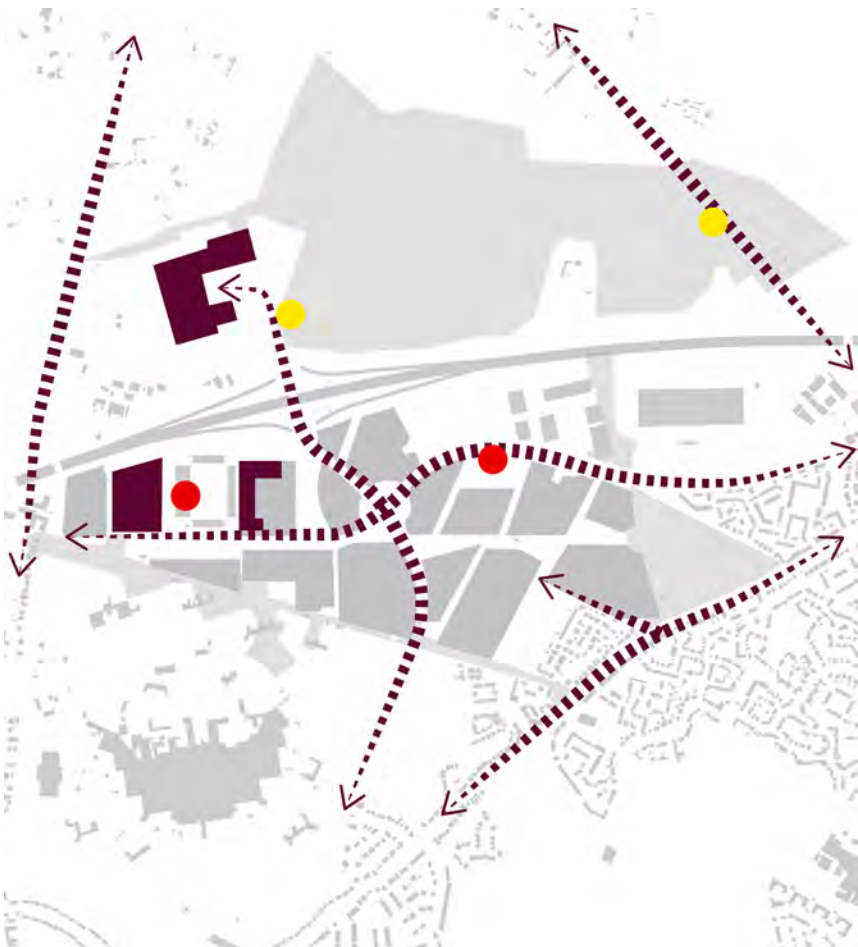
Key Principles Master Plan Elements

CAR PARKS AND ELECTRIC VEHICLES CHARGING

The master plan incorporates two existing electric vehicles charging points and proposes two new ones in the new car-parks. .

Electric vehicle charging points are located at relatively equal distances from each other in order to facilitate easy walking to the desired destination

- EXISTING CAR PARKS
- EXISTING ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS
- NEW ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS



Key Principles Master Plan Plots

Zones are orientated in such a way to take full advantage of the existing hedgerows, whilst allowing for a meaningful central spine, and vehicular access to each of the plots.

- PARCELS TO BE DEVELOPED
- UNDER CONSTRUCTION



2012 MASTER PLAN PLOTS



REVIEWED MASTER PLAN PLOTS



Design Principles Buildings and Views

Key buildings should be located around The Circus between the Leisure Promenade and the Boulevard, framing the two newly formed public spaces to the south side and the whole of the curved elevation around the Circus.

Northern Gateway's proposed artworks located on the bridge should be commissioned as new icons for Colchester, will mark it in the cityscape and will be highly visible from the A12.

This will enhance the creation of a destination and is important to establishing CNG as a place with prominence. The new images for Colchester will be highly visible from the existing transport infrastructure and present Colchester from A12.

Landmark frontage should be located around the Circus. This will create a visual link with the new iconic artwork, and provide a clear gateway when entering Colchester from the A12, opening the views towards the two new public plazas and further towards The Boulevard, the leisure promenade and the stadium.



Important building elevation



Indicative zones



The Boulevard



Leisure Promenade



Key Frontages



Key views



Secondary significant views



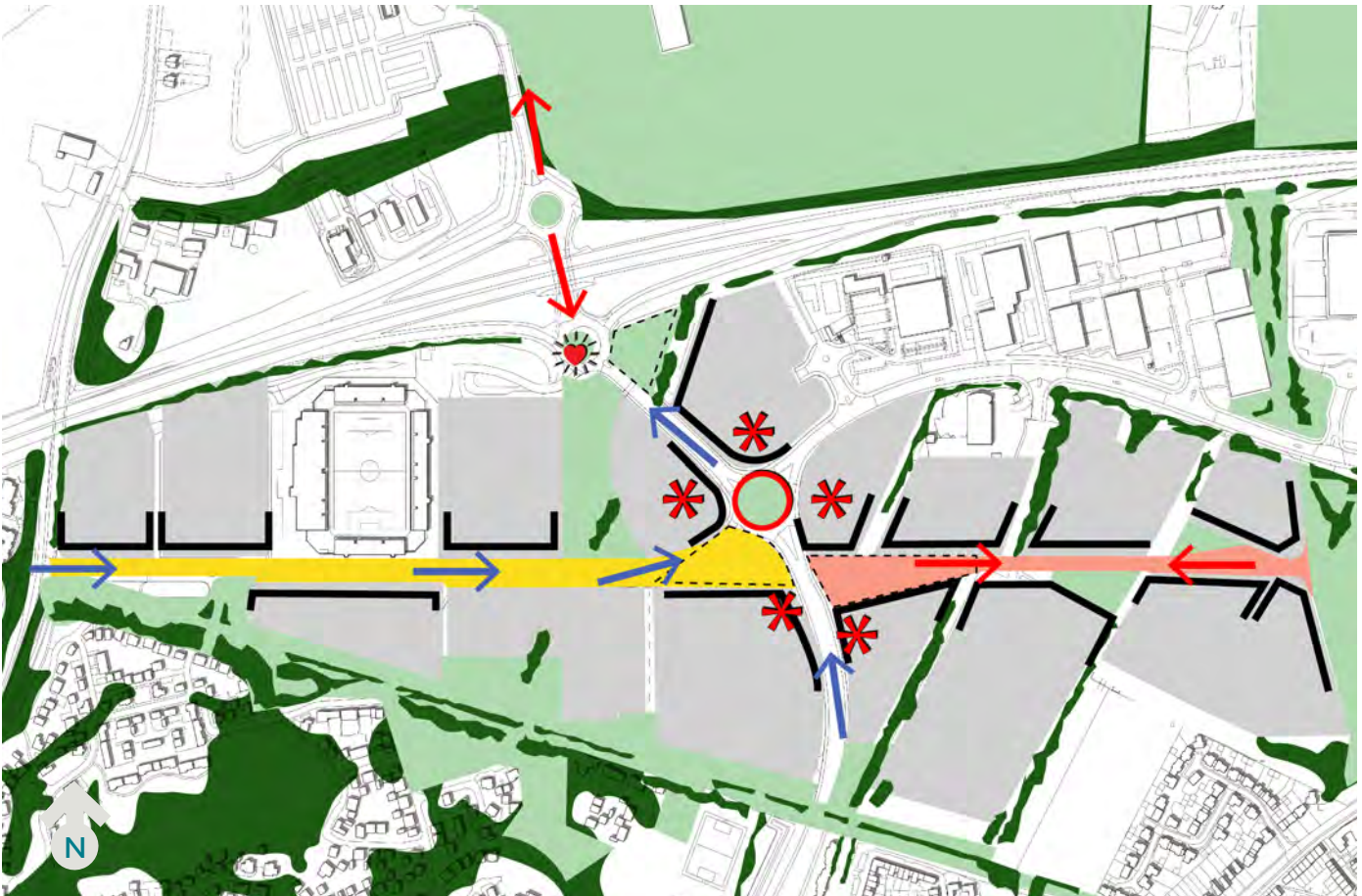
New Public Spaces



The Circus



Artwork



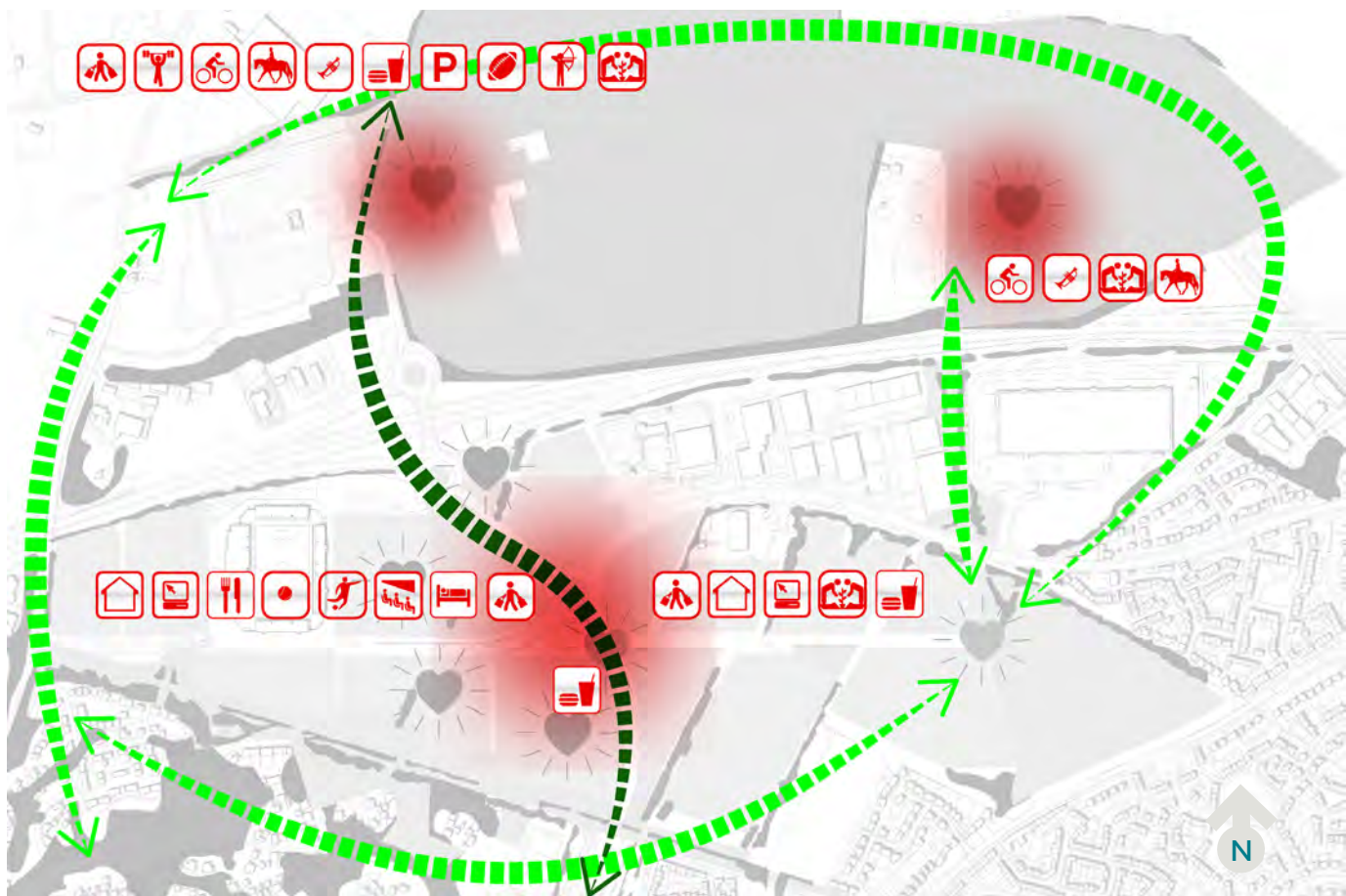
GILLESPIES MASTER PLAN BUILDINGS AND VIEWS

Design Principles Zones and Local Amenities

The Master Plan for the Colchester Northern Gateway is based around the delivery of a mixed use scheme capable of providing a major leisure destination for the town. However, to ensure uses within the master plan are compliant with this aspiration and accord with the objectives of this document, all uses as identified are categorised below:

- Sport and Recreation
- Commercial Leisure
- Employment and Mixed Use
- Homes
- The uses included within the master plan should consist primarily of leisure and associated uses relevant to the Northern Gateway and its central boulevard, *The Boulevard*, offering plenty of opportunities for residents in the area and attracting tourists and visitors from the town centre and a wide regional hinterland
- Other limited uses such as ancillary commercial and residential uses should be permitted where they add to the vitality of the scheme.
- This spatial master plan has been design to address people’s everyday needs to live, work and spend leisure time in Colchester Northern Gateway. The objective lies in meeting current demands for space by individual groups, creating flexible and adaptable spaces to satisfy different needs and generating new potential place creation

	Cycle / Pedestrian route		Food and drink
	Equestrian route		Restaurant
	Archery		Ancillary commercial
	Fitness and wellbeing		Hotel
	Football		Event space
	Tennis		Community / Health
	Rugby / Football		Park and Ride
	IMAX		Residential
			Workspace



Design Principles Zones and Local Amenities

In order to strategically balance day and night time offer of sport and recreation, commercial, leisure, employment and mixed uses, the emerging destination should attract visitors and residents after dark, creating evening and night time economies

It is important that Colchester Northern Gateway is an attractive destination during all seasons.

It is expected that spring / summer months will be busy for the area, and that there will be a contraction and consolidation during the winter months when visitors numbers are lower.

There should be a versatile range of uses that can be attractive at different times of year.



NIGHT LIFE EVENTS AND USES



DAY LIFE ACTIVITIES

-  Cycle / Pedestrian route
-  Equestrian route
-  Archery
-  Fitness and wellbeing
-  Football
-  Tennis
-  Rugby / Football
-  IMAX
-  Food and drink
-  Restaurant
-  Ancillary commercial
-  Hotel
-  Event space
-  Community / Health
-  Park and Ride
-  Residential
-  Workspace





Design Guidance

General Height
Hierarchy of Frontage
Public Open Space Hierarchy
Pedestrian Circulation
Vehicular Circulation

Design Guidance General Height

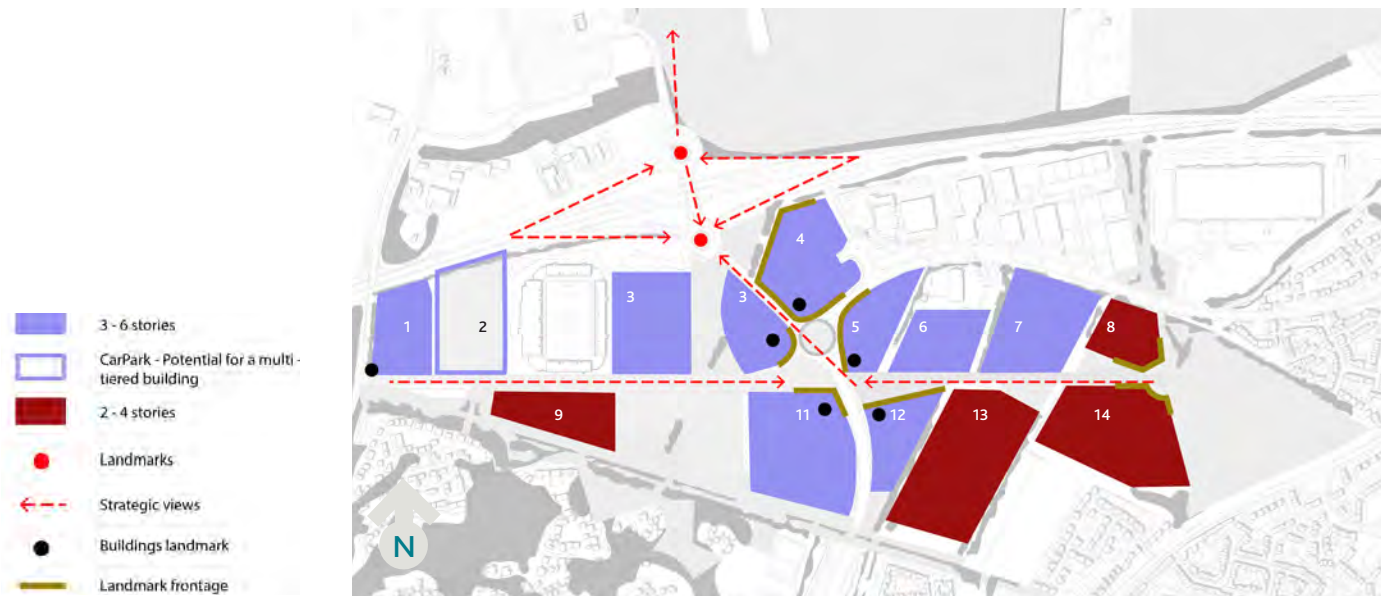
Most of the zones are allocated 3-6 stories height. Heights might increase for parcels 5, 11, 12 to relate to their context between the Pedestrian Boulevard and major traffic routes.

Parcels 9, 8, 13 and 14 are designated lower building heights in order to respond to the more green setting, lower density. Heights should crescendo to a maximum height at The Circus, the Via Urbis roundabout.

For the predominantly residential plots we have allocated two types of density:

Low Density Residential: this should be a mixture of housing types with medium plots and garden sizes. It should include a range of house types, including detached and semi-detached.

Medium Density Residential: this should have smaller plot sizes. The alignment of buildings should be formal, close to street edge, slightly set back from the street. The plots with predominantly leisure and commercial uses will be given design guidance in terms of the Floor Area Ratio and plot coverage.



Design Guidance Hierarchy of Frontage

There are three frontage types proposed for the NCG. The building frontage hierarchy is required in order to guide the location of elements, such as main entrances, ancillary commercial frontage, fire exits, vehicular access and service doors. The hierarchy of frontages will ensure that an appropriate architectural response is made for facade of the building.

- **Primary frontage:** these are key frontages of particular importance as they front main squares, The Boulevard, and prominent corner conditions.
- **Secondary frontage:** these frontages face onto the main existing streets and pedestrian thoroughfares. They will mostly incorporate residential entrances, secondary access to commercial and business spaces
- **Tertiary frontage:** found along quieter streets and routes.



Design Guidance Public Open Space Hierarchy

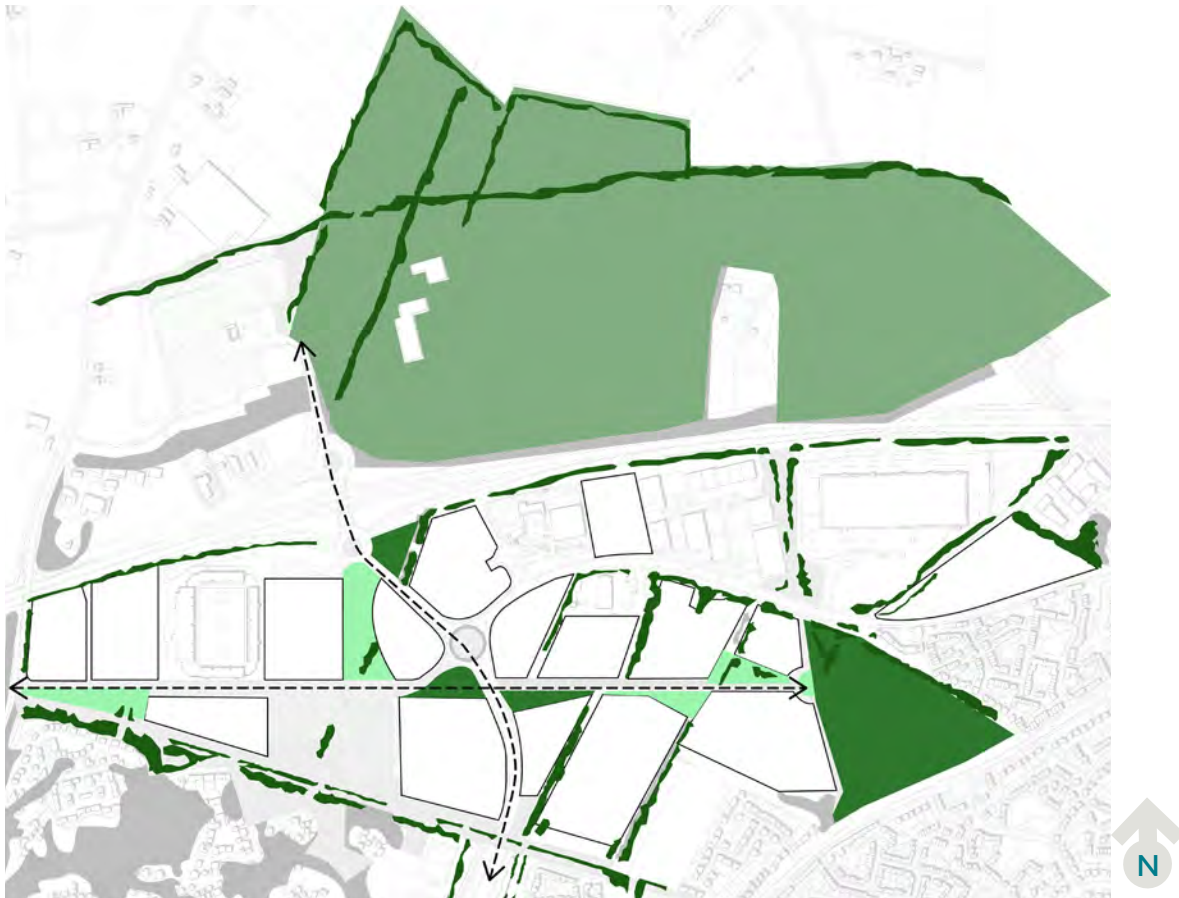
Within the development area south of the A12 there are different new public spaces each to be designed with a different and identifiable character:

- The Circus, Main Plaza East and Main Plaza West are the key connective element, creating a link between the Leisure Promenade and the Boulevard, to ensure they are integrated and create a sense of one place. It is furthermore a focal point, a place of arrival and meeting and orientation and it will also be highly visible from the vehicular entrance via A12.
- “Village Green” provides much needed green space not just for the new communities, but the existing communities to the east. It should provide a pleasant and lively 'stitch' between those communities. It is the heart of the residential community, providing space for leisure, community purposes and local gatherings
- Tertiary open spaces will add character to the Boulevard / Leisure promenade and will provide informal gathering and spill-out spaces.
- Tower Lane to the south provides a pleasant walking and cycling link and forms part of the green loop that links north and south of the A12

The emerging landscape and public realm strategy is an integral part of the Master Plan Vision and it also represents its spine and backbones.

For example the landscape design of the boulevard and the leisure promenade will take into account access routes, important corners, views, buildings plots and a range of appropriate uses incorporating historic hedgerows, mature trees and the Tower lane boundary.







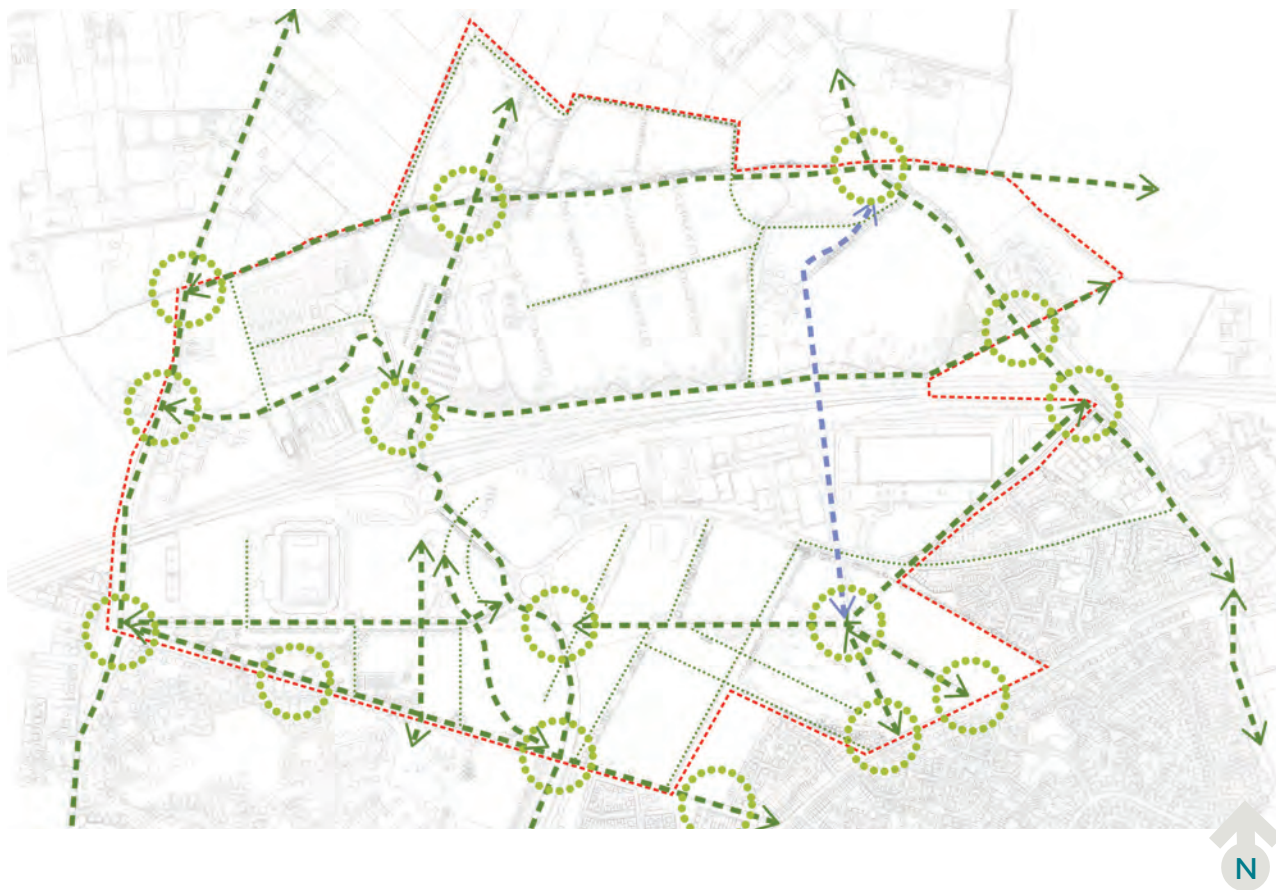
Design Guidance Pedestrian Circulation

The public realm of the Northern Gateway will be developed to ensure clarity and safety of movement between pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Appropriate signage and material changes will be implemented to ensure safe passage of pedestrian traffic at all times.

Pedestrian pavements will take into account roughness of material and adequate slip resistance to ensure comfortable and safe walking experience. The use of tactile and hazard warning paving will be proposed in compliance with British standards and building regulations.

Key pedestrian gateways between routes and primary entry points should be clearly defined through the use of building scale and proportions

-  FUTURE PEDESTRIAN ROUTE
-  PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN ROUTES
-  SECONDARY PEDESTRIAN ROUTES
-  PEDESTRIAN GATEWAYS
-  SITE BOUNDARY











Design Guidance Vehicular Circulation

The key vehicle routes are already established by the current road structure which consists of several key north-south routes at the site boundary: Via Urbis Romanae connecting northern and southern parts of the site and connecting to the A12, and Axial way connecting east-west through the southern part of the site.

New road links are required to serve the plots to the east of Via Urbis Romanae. Shared surfacing will be considered in areas of predominant pedestrian priority where vehicles can either be limited or controlled in the hours of access.

The Boulevard will be pedestrian / cycle only, while the vehicular access to the plots to be developed will be ensured through a new secondary streets network

Car parking is provided on plot in the southern part of the site, in the north the park-and-ride and rugby clubs have significant parking. There is the potential for a new car park in the north-east of the site which will reduce walking distance in this area.

	PROPOSED BUS STOP
	EXISTING LOCAL BUS STOP
	TRUNK ROAD
	ROAD NETWORK
	POTENTIAL VEHICULAR ROUTES
	CAR PARKS
	FUTURE CAR PARK LOCATION
	SITE BOUNDARY

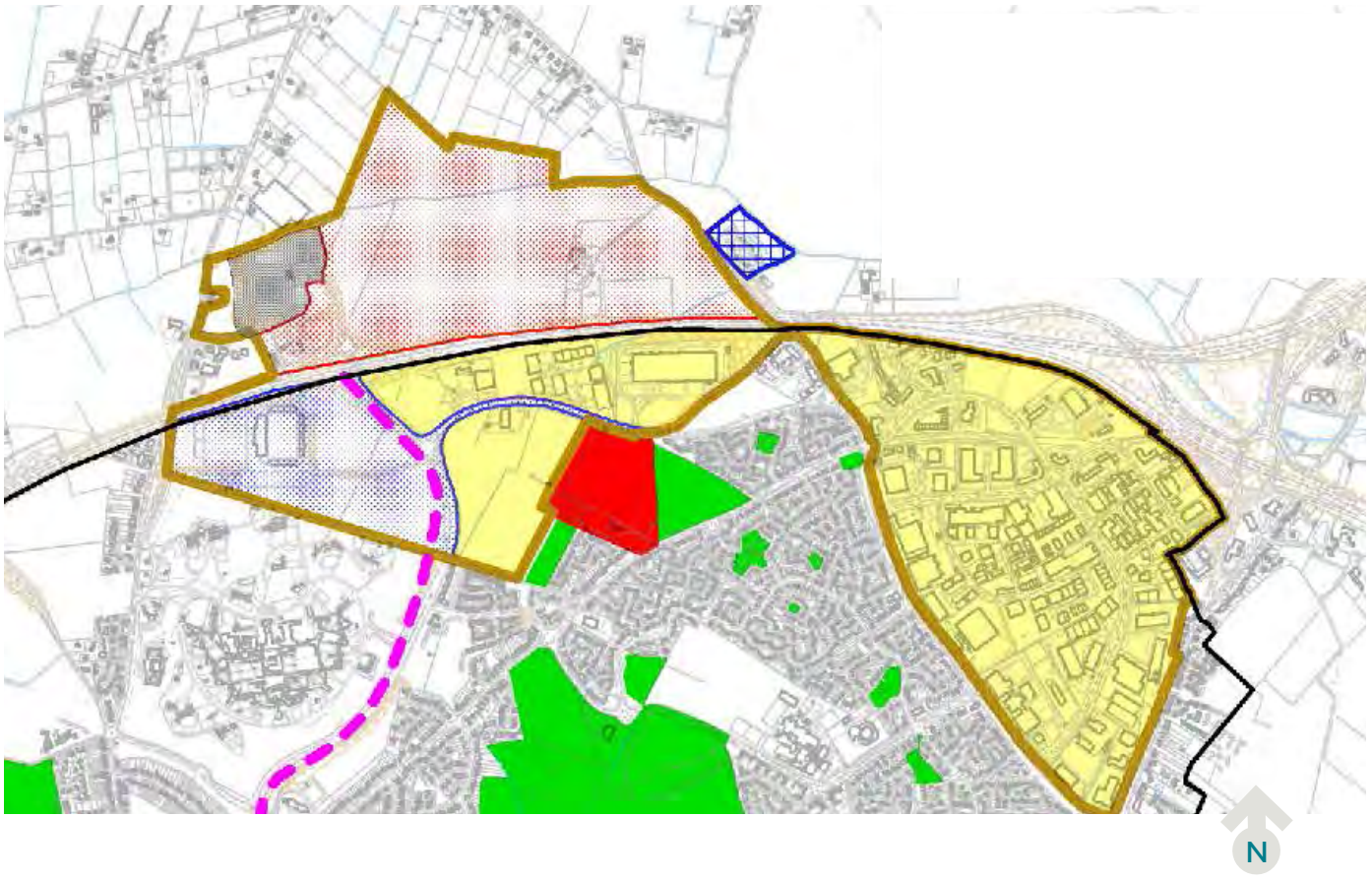


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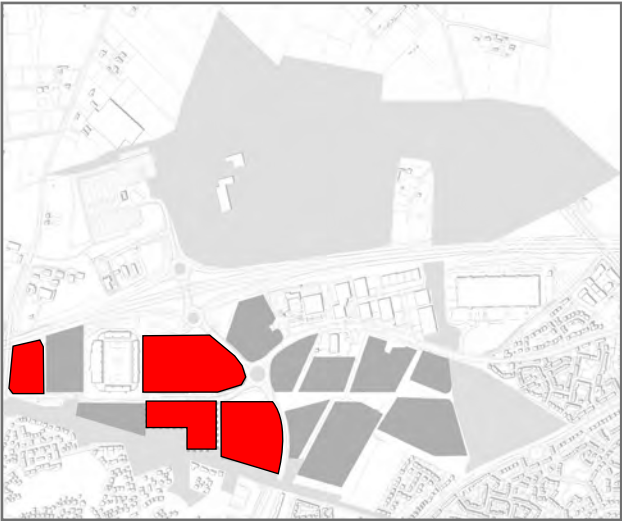
Zone by Zone Character Areas

Colchester Local Plan Preferred Options
Sport and Recreation
Commercial Leisure
Employment and Mixed Uses
Homes

EXTRACT FROM THE PREFERRED OPTIONS STAGE OF THE COLCHESTER BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN 2017 - 2033, UPDATED JULY 2016



Zone by zone Character Areas Sport and Recreation



EXAMPLE OF LEISURE PROMENADE

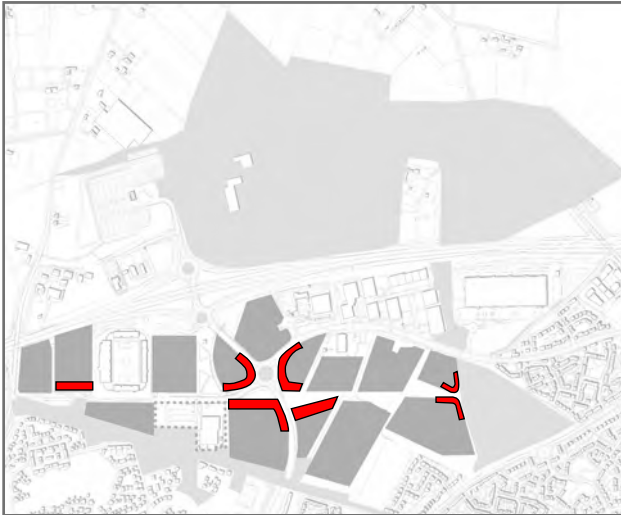


EXAMPLE OF PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE



EXAMPLE OF PUBLIC SPACE FOR EVENTS AND PERFORMANCES

Zone by zone Character Areas Commercial Leisure



Commercial activities should be located as per the diagram on the right hand side. These are envisaged to be complementary to the leisure and employment offer of the Colchester Northern Gateway.



EXAMPLE OF PUBLIC CENTRAL SPACE



EXAMPLE OF THE BOULEVARD SITTING AREA



EXAMPLE OF THE BOULEVARD AND ACTIVE FRONTAGES

Zone by zone Character Areas Employment and Mixed Uses

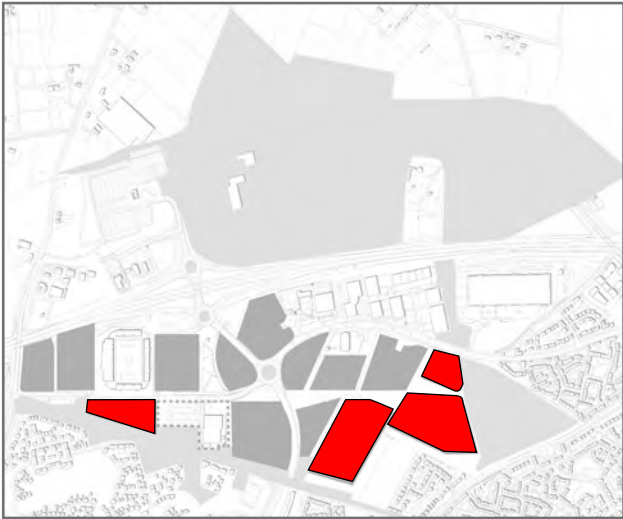


EXAMPLE OF MULTI-STORY PARKING



EXAMPLE OF PUBLIC SPACE ALONG THE BOULEVARD

Zone by zone Character Areas Homes



EXAMPLE OF RESIDENTIAL AREA PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

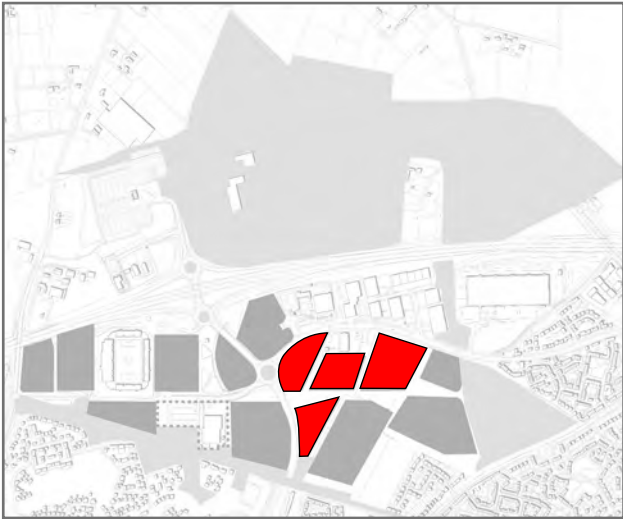


EXAMPLE OF LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL AREA



EXAMPLE OF SUDS WITHIN THE RESIDENTIAL AREA

Zone by zone Character Areas Homes



EXAMPLE OF PUBLIC SPACE ALONG THE BOULEVARD



EXAMPLE OF MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL AREA



EXAMPLE OF SUDS WITHIN MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL AREA

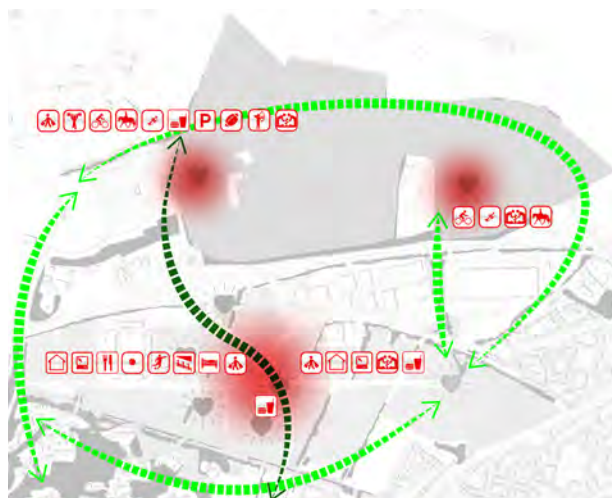
Conclusion Next Steps

This document provides a review of the 2012 Masterplan Vision and consolidates this Vision with current developments on site.

Together with the Landscape Strategy this document is the first step in developing more detailed guidance for the site, expanding on the initial masterplanning concepts established in the 2012 Vision Document.

Key next steps for the Council are outlines below:

- Develop more detailed guidance for the site, based on initial masterplanning concepts established in this document, developed to the level of a masterplan showing building massing and heights, as well as detailed design guidelines.
- Consider site allocations through the Local Plan review.



CNG MASTER PLAN STRATEGY



CNG LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

GILLESPIES

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