



NEXUS
PLANNING

Draft Local Plan 2040

Regulation 18 (Stage 1)

Consultation - Representations

On behalf of CEG

April 2022

Contents

- 1 Introduction..... 2**
- 2 Settlement Hierarchy 4**
- 3 Housing Market Area Boundary 7**
- 4 Spatial Strategy 9**
- 5 Housing Requirement 10**
- 6 Development on land at Rownhams Lane 12**
- 7 Conclusions 14**

- Appendix A – Settlement Assessment 16**

- Appendix B - Vision Document..... 17**

1 Introduction

- 1.1 These representations are made to Test Valley Borough Council's ("**the Council**") draft Local Plan (Regulation 18, Stage 1) Consultation ("**the Consultation**") on behalf of CEG.
- 1.2 The Consultation is a key stage in the Council's preparation of its emerging Local Plan, which will provide for future growth and development in the Borough until 2040.
- 1.3 The Consultation provides more detail on the strategic direction of the emerging Local Plan than seen in previous 'Issues and Options' consultations (in 2018 and 2020), with a clearer focus on the proposed settlement hierarchy, approach to housing market areas (HMA), spatial strategy and housing requirement.
- 1.4 CEG's interest in the Emerging LP is that it is the sole freehold owner of land at Rownhams Lane, Rownhams ("**the Site**"), identified in the Council's Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (November 2021) ("**the SHELAA**") (reference 201), following call for sites submissions (including the Vision Document and location plan) in October 2017 and June 2021.
- 1.5 These submissions explain that:
 - the Site is wholly suitable for development, most notably with its close relationship to the existing settlement of Nursling & Rownhams – a second tier settlement behind only Andover and Romsey;
 - the Site is available for development, with a single landowner (CEG) making delivery of housing less complicated and therefore faster;
 - the Site has a great degree of natural containment in the landscape;
 - the Site is within walking and cycling distance of the services and facilities within Nursling & Rownhams and Lordshill. This relationship with the adjoining areas of Southampton (including Lordshill District Centre) reinforces the sustainable credentials of the Site and the southernmost part of Test Valley;
 - the suitability of the location was considered by the appeal Inspector in allowing the development adjacent to the west of the Site (APP/C1760/A/14/2224913) ("**the Approved Scheme**"): "*The Appeal Site is in an accessible and sustainable location, adjoining the existing*

settlement boundary as an extension of Rownhams. The Appeal Site is appropriate for the Appeal Scheme";

- there is headroom in the Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace provided by the Approved Scheme to mitigate any impact on European protected sites that development on the Site might cause from increased recreational pressure; and
- as suitable and available land, residential development of up to 300 dwellings on the Site will help meet the housing requirement of Test Valley, as well as being able to contribute towards any unmet need from the wider Southampton HMA that the Council may need to accommodate through its Partnership for South Hampshire (PFSH) cross border working and the Duty to Cooperate.

1.6 In response to the Consultation, these representations address:

- i. the proposed settlement hierarchy of towns and villages across Test Valley;
- ii. the proposed change to the boundary between the two HMAs in the Borough and split of housing between the Northern Test Valley (NTV) and Southern Test Valley (STV) HMA;
- iii. the Council's preferred spatial strategy; and
- iv. the amount of housing that should be provided.

1.7 The representations also take the opportunity to reinforce the sustainable merits and development opportunity of the Site.

2 Settlement Hierarchy

- 2.1 The Consultation proposes to change the position of a number of villages in the settlement hierarchy from where they sit in the current Local Plan.
- 2.2 In STV, Wellow is proposed to be upgraded from a Tier 3 to a Tier 2 settlement (from a 'Rural Village' to a 'Key Service Centre' if the emerging Local Plan is to use the same terminology as the current Local Plan). In NTV the status of 'Hurstbourne Tarrant and Ibthorpe' and 'Shipton Bellinger' is proposed to be increased in the same way.
- 2.3 As to any justification for this, the Council seeks to rely upon its 'Settlement Hierarchy Assessment' (February 2022), which scores the towns and villages across the Borough with regard to 'key facilities' (with a maximum of six) and 'other facilities'. To provide some context, each Tier 1, 2 & 3 settlement (save of Chilworth) scores six for 'key facilities', with a scoring spread between 17 (Andover) and one (West Tytherley) for 'other facilities'.
- 2.4 The scoring of facilities (as a measure of sustainability) should directly influence a settlement's position in the hierarchy, but for a number of proposed Tier 2 and Tier 3 settlements that clear correlation is missing.
- 2.5 In particular, the three villages of Wellow, 'Hurstbourne Tarrant and Ibthorpe' and 'Shipton Bellinger', proposed to be upgraded to Tier 2, all score the same or lower than other settlements to be retained in Tier 3. 'Hurstbourne Tarrant and Ibthorpe' and 'Shipton Bellinger' score six for 'other facilities' whilst the Wallops and Broughton in Tier 3 score seven. The justification for this proposed change to the settlement hierarchy is unclear – the consequence of which would lead to an ineffective spatial strategy with too greater reliance on less sustainable villages. Thus on the Council's own evidence, the settlements of Wellow, 'Hurstbourne Tarrant and Ibthorpe' and 'Shipton Bellinger' should remain in Tier 3.
- 2.6 The Settlement Hierarchy Assessment also highlights two outliers within Tier 2 (Charlton and Chilworth), which have notably less facilities than others at this level.
- 2.7 For Charlton, whilst in itself scoring poorly, it can be considered a suburb of Andover (at a distance of 1.1km to Andover railway station), benefitting from that relationship – therefore if not justified as a standalone Tier 2 location, it could (in planning terms) be amalgamated into Andover.

- 2.8 For Chilworth, however, there is no such mitigating factor. The settlement scores lower in 'key facilities' than any other in Tier 2 or indeed Tier 3 settlement, and in terms of 'other facilities' scores just two (compared to seven for some Tier three settlements). The Consultation seeks to justify the Tier 2 inclusion of Chilworth with regard to the nearby science park and proximity to Eastleigh, Chandler's Ford and Southampton. However, employment opportunities are not considered to compensate for a lack of shop, primary school, post office, takeaway and many other facilities (as should be found in a Tier 2 settlement); and facilities in these other larger settlements are beyond a accessible walking distance.
- 2.9 This lack of facilities at Chilworth is compounded by its public transport accessibility – scored by the Settlement Hierarchy Assessment as 'Medium', where all other Tier 2 settlements (save for Stockbridge, but which has a much greater level of self-sufficiency) scores as 'High'.
- 2.10 For the Emerging Local Plan to be justified and effective, Chilworth should be re-classified as a Tier 3 settlement.
- 2.11 For Nursling & Rownhams, the Settlement Hierarchy Assessment requires¹ consideration be given to *"facilities and services within settlements located in an adjacent local authority area that Test Valley residents have access to and use."* [Nexus Planning's emphasis]
- 2.12 As established through the Approved Scheme adjacent to the Site, Lordshill is within cycling and walking distance of Nursling & Rownhams, with a significant range of additional facilities including doctors' surgery and larger health centre, dentists', pharmacy, large supermarket, indoor sports facilities (including swimming pool) and café/restaurant.
- 2.13 Contrary to the stated methodology of the Settlement Hierarchy Assessment, and assertion of the Settlement Hierarchy Assessment (paragraph 4.8) that the methodology has been followed for Nursling & Rownhams, these facilities at Lordshill are not reflected in the scoring of Nursling & Rownhams and so understating its sustainable merits.
- 2.14 If Nursling & Rownhams is scored fully / properly (with regard to the facilities and accessibility of Lordshill) in accordance with the stated methodology, it should score six for key facilities and 15 for other facilities (as out in the table at **Appendix A**). Nursling & Rownhams it is then an outlier above other Tier 2 settlements, scoring just one less than Romsey.

¹ Settlement Hierarchy Assessment, paragraph 3.4

- 2.15 The sustainability of Nursling & Rownhams is further enhanced by its large areas of employment within the settlement boundary (as Strategic Employment Sites in the current Local Plan) providing very significant job opportunities.
- 2.16 The emerging Local Plan must recognise the greater sustainable merits of Nursling & Rownhams, set apart from other Tier 2 settlements, and upgrade it to have its own position as a new tier between Tier 1 and Tier 2.

3 Housing Market Area Boundary

- 3.1 The Consultation proposes to change the established boundary between NTV and STV, from its current position (just to the north of Romsey and excluding the south western corner of the Borough) to much further north just beyond Stockbridge.
- 3.2 It is unclear what the Council is seeking to achieve through this altered boundary. In respect of the Council's own housing needs, with growth to remain focussed around the higher tier settlements, the only change of significance is that Stockbridge (Tier 2) is now in STV (rather than NTV). As other central parts of the Borough are predominantly rural (away from greater clusters of population), with only smaller villages/hamlets (as Figure 3.1: Settlement Hierarchy Map in the Consultation shows), the opportunity or growth here remains very limited.
- 3.3 Whilst the population of STV would increase with the change in boundary, as would the split from 33% to 43% that the Consultation considers remains proportionate.
- 3.4 Therefore in meeting Test Valley's own housing need, the change in HMA boundary should have not have significant consequences on the spatial strategy and distribution of development.
- 3.5 In relation to any unmet need for housing required to be accommodated by the Council from other PfSH authorities, such development should be located where it is closest to meeting that need and consistent with the planning area of the PfSH within Test Valley (as defined in the PfSH Statement of Common Ground (October 2021)). This PfSH boundary generally accords with and historically has justified the current NTV/STV boundary.
- 3.6 If the Council was to consider the greater dispersal of any unmet need from other PfSH authorities across the wider STV area (for instance in Stockbridge, which has little functional or geographical relationship with the PfSH area) this would not be an appropriate or justified approach.
- 3.7 Whilst the Consultation considers there is no evidence of any unmet need from neighbouring authorities, that position is not definitive and under review. Indeed it is noted² that Southampton has a shortfall of identified housing land for some 7,345 dwellings, New Forest a shortfall of 5,314 dwellings and Eastleigh a shortfall of 2,656 dwellings for the period 2021-2036.

² Partnership for South Hampshire – Statement of Common Ground (October 2021)

- 3.8 CEG thus reserves its position to comment through further representations once any approach to dealing with the shortage of housing land across the PfSH area becomes clearer.

4 Spatial Strategy

- 4.1 The Consultation narrows previous spatial strategy options to those now preferred – of focus on the regeneration of Andover and Romsey; growth at key employment areas; and supporting larger urban and rural communities. In principle this approach is capable of supporting a sustainable pattern and distribution of development.
- 4.2 There should certainly be some development at Andover and Romsey, but with the Consultation’s emphasis on regeneration the challenge will be one of delivery – where brownfield sites raise challenges of land assembly and viability. Such sites may also only be achievable for higher density flatted schemes, whilst a wider range/mix of housing will continue to be needed.
- 4.3 Indeed the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 73) recognises that larger numbers of new homes can often best be achieved through larger scale extensions to existing villages and towns.
- 4.4 For Andover and Romsey it is also relevant that each town has grown rapidly over recent years and has struggled to develop its current allocations at the rate/trajectory anticipated by the current Local Plan. Indeed, the largest allocation of 1,300 homes at Whitenapp, south of Romsey continues to be delayed.
- 4.5 Focusing growth at key employment areas is encouraged and generally sustainable. In this approach the greater employment opportunities at Nursling & Rownhams must be recognised, with its major employment areas at Adanac Park and Nursling Estate. This should therefore support a much greater level of growth than at other currently proposed Tier 2 settlements, of which some (including Wellow, North Baddesley and Stockbridge) have very little designated employment land.
- 4.6 For development to support larger urban and rural communities, the accessibility of Nursling & Rownhams (which is more urbanised and sustainable than rural areas) to the greater level of facilities in adjacent areas of Southampton is relevant, which would support greater levels of growth than other far less sustainable proposed Tier 2 and Tier 3 towns/villages in the settlement hierarchy.

5 Housing Requirement

- 5.1 The Consultation, with reference to the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (January 2022) and Housing Topic Paper (February 2002), seeks to provide for Test Valley's local housing need calculated through the standard methodology. This figure is however a minimum and allows the Council to plan for greater housing growth where that may help achieve other sustainable objectives.
- 5.2 Indeed, objectives of the emerging Local Plan include to 'promote a vibrant and resilient local economy' and to provide conditions that allow 'businesses to thrive with access to the skilled labour they require'³. Coupled with the major growth in employment floorspace (of approximately 36 hectares between 2015/15 and 2020/21) and the challenges of an aging population (with a 43% increase in people aged 65+ between 2020 and 2040)⁴, this requires closer consideration of whether an upward adjustment in housing delivery is required – to ensure the available working age population is aligned with the Council's economic need and ambition.
- 5.3 To provide for greater resilience in maintaining a sufficient supply of sites to deliver the housing requirement, the position of the Council to consider allocating land for a higher number of homes is welcomed.
- 5.4 The Consultation explains that only at the next Regulation 18, Stage 2 of the emerging Local Plan will proposed housing allocations come forward. At this point further representations from CEG will be made including in respect of whether or not those allocations would be effective in (i) delivering a sound spatial strategy, (ii) achieving economic objectives and (iii) providing a sufficient supply of deliverable and developable land to meet the Council's housing needs.
- 5.5 The Consultation maintains a position that there is no current unmet housing need from neighbouring authorities that the Council should accommodate, although being kept under review. That ongoing review process is clearly critical given the very significant levels of housing land shortfall in Southampton and Eastleigh (authorities that border the southern part of Test Valley within the PFSH area) agreed to in the PFSH Statement of Common Ground (October 2021). Indeed, given the context of the PFSH Statement of Common Ground it is inconceivable that there will not be a request under the Duty to Cooperate for the Council to help meet its neighbour's unmet need.

³ Consultation, para 2.57

⁴ Strategic Housing Market Assessment (January 2022), Figure 3

- 5.6 Given there are suitable and available sites for development in the PfSH area of Test Valley, consistent with a sustainable spatial strategy (such as the Site), the Council should readily accommodate (in fulfilling its legal Duty to Cooperate) an apportionment of any such unmet need (as arising) within the current emerging Local Plan.

6 Development on land at Rownhams Lane

6.1 In response to the Council's latest call for sites, the suitability of development on the Site was presented in the Vision Document. This document has now been updated and is enclosed as **Appendix B** to these representations

6.2 Key aspects of the Site that make it suitable for development are:

- its contiguous relationship with the 'Key Service Centre' of Nursling & Rownhams (the built form of the Approved Scheme is now a natural part of the settlement, with an appropriate adjustment of the settlement boundary);
- that it is extremely well contained by natural landscape features, greatly screened to the east and south by woodland;
- that it is not constrained by heritage assets;
- that the adjacent SANG has capacity to further mitigate any additional recreational pressure on European protected sites; and
- the Site is able to offset / mitigate any increase in nitrates through taking land out of agricultural use and/or other measures relating to Tanners Brook.

6.3 Reinforcing this suitability are the findings of the appeal Inspector for the Approved Scheme, which remain relevant for the Site (with reference to the paragraphs of the appeal decision APP/C1760/A/14/2224913):

- significant tree planting to the north of the access off Rownhams Lane would effectively screen the development in views from existing public highways (paragraph 32);
- tree planting along the northern edge of the housing development would providing screening in views from the public footpath (paragraph 32);
- from the M27 motorway, the housing development would be screened by significant tree planting and separated by the SANG – development would not be intrusive in views of the rural landscape (paragraph 33);
- tree planting around the SANG would attenuate noise from the motorway to a significant degree; and it is noted that existing housing in Rownhams is closer to the motorway (paragraph 38);

- buffer zones between the built development and Clam's Copse and the paddocks and Lord's Wood would maintain the woodlands' nature conservation status (paragraph 39). There would be a net gain in biodiversity (paragraph 55);
- the bus stop on Horn's Drove is within easy walking distance (paragraph 42); and bus route 4, from this stop, connects to the central railway station in Southampton and other bus services at Lordshill, providing residents with frequent and nearby access to public transport (paragraph 43);
- Lordshill local centre, which is within walking distance of the development, includes a supermarket, medical centre, library, post office, public house and church, amongst other services. It is also within easy cycling distance (paragraph 44); and
- overall, the development has no significant adverse impact on the visual amenity of the area, highway safety or local infrastructure. The site is a sustainable location for residential development (paragraph 47).

6.4 The Council has considered the Site in the SHELAA (November 2021). Whilst a number of constraints are identified – including adjacency to 'Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation' and ancient woodland, as well as noise from the motorway – the Vision Document and appeal decision of the Approved Scheme demonstrate how these can be successfully addressed. Suitable buffers areas of woodland can be provided; and for noise, the officers' report for the reserved matters of the Approved Scheme is relevant:

"that future occupiers of the proposed dwellings would not experience levels of noise that would adversely affect their amenities. The proposals are considered to comply with policy LHW4 of the RLP in this regard."

6.5 Therefore, it cannot be said that the Site (with a similar noise environment to the adjacent Approved Scheme) is unsuitable for development based on any noise from the motorway.

6.6 As a point of clarification, reference in the SHELAA to the Site being closest to the village of North Baddesley should be corrected to refer instead to Nursling & Rownhams.

Overall, it is demonstrated that there are no reasons why the Site cannot be considered suitable for development. It is in a highly sustainable location, capable of making a meaningful contribution towards the need for market and affordable housing within STV as well as any unmet needs from neighbouring authorities in the PfSH area.

7 Conclusions

7.1 These representations respond to the Consultation and specifically in relation to how the Council should plan to meet its current and future housing need.

7.2 In this regard it is considered that:

- justification to upgrade the villages of Wellow, 'Hurstbourne Tarrant and Ibthorpe' and 'Shipton Bellinger' from Tier 3 to Tier 2 of the settlement hierarchy is not supported by the Council's own evidence in its Settlement Hierarchy Assessment;
- the continued inclusion of Chilworth as a Tier 2 settlement, where it lacks a shop, primary school, post office, takeaway and many other facilities, and does not score highly for public transport accessibility, is unjustified;
- the greater facilities accessible to Nursling & Rownhams at Lordshill are not reflected in the scoring of the Settlement Hierarchy Assessment, contrary to its methodology;
- the emerging Local Plan must recognise the greater sustainable merits of Nursling & Rownhams, set apart from other Tier 2 settlements;
- if the revised boundary between NTV and STV HMAs was used in respect of the greater dispersal of any unmet need from other PFSH authorities, this would not be an appropriate or justified approach;
- the general spatial strategy preferred by the Consultation is capable of supporting a sustainable pattern of development, but full regard must be had to matters of deliverability and the types of homes required;
- the greater accessibility to local facilities and employment opportunities at Nursling & Rownhams would support greater levels of growth than other far less sustainable proposed Tier 2 and Tier 3 towns/villages in the settlement hierarchy;
- local housing need using the standard methodology is a minimum figure, and further consideration of whether an upward adjustment in housing delivery, to ensure the available working age population is aligned with the Council's economic need and ambition, is required;
- given the agreed levels of housing shortfall in the PFSH area, the continued review of this matter by the Council in the preparation of the emerging Local Plan is critical.

7.3 As the Site is both deliverable and located where it is consistent with the sustainable distribution of growth, it should be allocated in the emerging LP for housing development.

Appendix A – Settlement Assessment

	Nursling & Rownhams, including Lordshill	
	Council's Settlement Hierarchy Assessment	Nexus Planning's Assessment
Shop (Key Facility)	1	1
Pub (Key Facility)	1	1
Primary School (Key Facility)	1	1
Sports Facility	1	1
Community Hall (Key Facility)	1	1
Place of Worship (Key Facility)	1	1
Public Transport	H	H
Shop with Post Office	1	1
Post Office only	0	0
Café / restaurant	0	1 Sainsbury's Cafe
Takeaway	1	1
Other shop	1	1
Early years	1	1
Secondary school	0	1 Oasis Academy
Further education	0	0
Other education facility	0	0
Doctors	0	1 Lordshill Health Centre
Dentist	0	1 Lordshill Dental Partership
Chemist	0	1 Lloyds Pharmacy
Other medical facility	0	1 Lordshill Health Centre
Allotments	1	1
Parks & open space (Key Facility)	1	1
Indoor sport	0	1 Oaklands Community Pool
Bank	0	0
Cashpoint	1	1
Superfast broadband	Y	Y

Appendix B – Vision Document

Land at
Rownhams Test Valley

Vision Document
March 2022



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Site is wholly suitable for development, most notably with its close relationship to the existing settlement and natural containment in the landscape.
2. The Site is available for development, with CEG being the sole freehold owner of it, making delivery of housing less complicated and therefore faster than where there are multiple landowners.
3. The Site abuts Nursling and Rownhams (as the most sustainable Tier 2 settlement in the emerging Local Plan), within walking and cycling distance of the services and facilities within Rownhams and Lordshill. The role of Nursling and Rownhams is reinforced by its strong relationship with major employment areas in both Test Valley and Southampton.
4. The Site formed part of the wider Appeal Scheme approved for residential-led growth and development. The appeal Inspector considered that: *“The Appeal Site [including the Site] is in an accessible and sustainable location, adjoining the existing settlement boundary as an extension of Rownhams. The Appeal Site is appropriate for the Appeal Scheme.”*
5. As suitable and available land, in a highly sustainable location, residential development on the Site should be progressed to help meet the housing requirement of Test Valley, as well as any unmet needs across the Partnership for South Hampshire area, including the Southampton Housing Market Area.
6. Taking into account the constraints and opportunities for the Site, approximately 300 new homes can be accommodated along with green infrastructure.



The **concept masterplan** above demonstrates how housing development on the Site (approximately 300 new homes along with green infrastructure) can be delivered.



CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	01
2. THE SITE	03
3. PLANNING CONTEXT	07
4. TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY	09
5. TECHNICAL MATTERS	13
6. CONCEPT MASTERPLAN	15
7. DELIVERY	19



1. INTRODUCTION

This vision document introduces Rownhams and specifically land at Rownhams Lane (**“the Site”**), as a sustainable location to provide new homes, which is both suitable and available for development.

In the context of the current and future housing requirement in Test Valley and any unmet need from the wider Partnership for South Hampshire area, including the Southampton Housing Market Area, the Site presents a significant opportunity.

This document supports the representations by CEG to Test Valley Borough Council’s (**“the Council”**) consultation on its Draft Local Plan 2040 (Regulation 18 Stage1) (**“the Consultation”**).

The Site is wholly suitable for development, most notably with its close relationship to the existing settlement and natural containment in the landscape, screened by existing woodland. This is supported by the recent planning permission (APP/C1760/A/14/2224913) for up to 320 dwellings and a 60 unit extra care facility (**“the Approved Scheme”**), on land to the east of Rownhams Lane, which included the Site as paddocks.

The Site and its general wider context is shown at Figure 1, with the Approved Scheme now having been substantially built out by Taylor Wimpey.



Figure 1: The Site and Context

INTRODUCTION TO CEG

CEG is an investment and development company, specialising in the investment, management, promotion and development of land and property around the UK. CEG is the single freehold owner of the Site.

CEG works as a ‘master developer’, in partnership with communities and local authorities, using its expertise to find unique and viable solutions to deliver development.

CEG’s approach puts place-making and people first, helping to ensure the creation of sustainable, well-designed environments and communities that meet local needs and aspirations.

CEG secured planning permission for the Approved Scheme, which is now being quickly delivered by Taylor Wimpey with their substantial housebuilding expertise.



2. THE SITE



Figure 2: The Site

The Site, as shown in more detail at **Figure 2**, comprises approximately 19.48 hectares of agricultural land, which has extant planning permission for paddock use, consented as part of the Approved Scheme.

With the implementation of the Approved Scheme, the Site is bounded to the north by an area of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (“SANG”), including new tree, hedgerow and woodland planting, which will further buffer the M27 motorway beyond. The motorway service area is substantially screened by the dense trees and vegetation of Routs Copse.

To the east and south, the Site is bounded by other areas of established woodland - Lords Wood and Clam’s Copse. Tanners Brook also runs along the eastern boundary of the Site.

To the west, the Site abuts the built form of the Approved Scheme, with its retained / reinforced network of hedgerows.

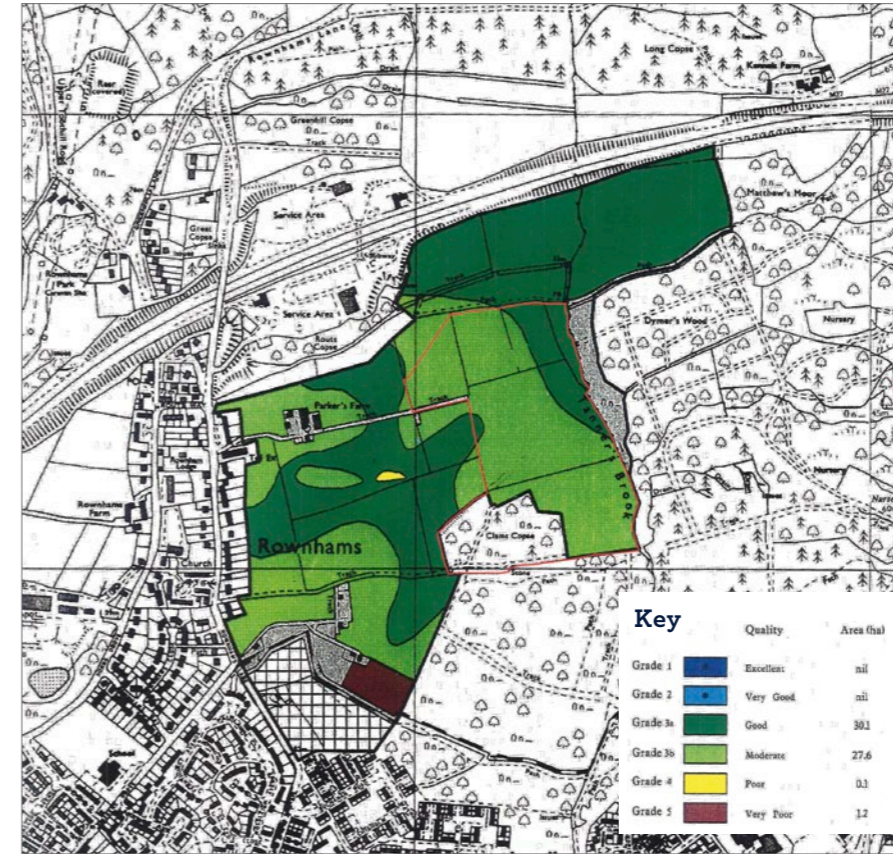
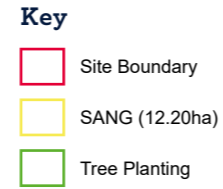


Figure 3: Agricultural Land Classification

The Site is generally flat, with a gentle fall down towards its eastern boundary that does not constrain development.

The Site is not within any designated landscape area.

There are no listed buildings on or adjacent to the Site, nor does it sit within or adjoin a conservation area.

Although the Site currently comprises grazing farmland, it has extant planning permission (the Approved Scheme) for paddock use. The plan at **Figure 3** shows the agricultural land classification of the Site to be mainly Grade 3b moderate, which is not within the best or most versatile category.

The Site is located within Flood Zone 1, except for a narrow band of land adjacent to Tanner’s Brook which is at higher risk of flooding. All future built development can be located within Flood Zone 1.

The Site is not within a Local Gap as defined by the Revised Local Plan 2011-2029 (adopted January 2016) (“the Local Plan”).

LOCATION

The Site abuts the Tier 2 settlement of Nursling and Rownhams* (behind only largest towns of Andover and Romsey), which the Consultation identifies as having an important role in supporting and meeting the needs of its communities and the wider area.

* The built form of the Approved Scheme has become part of the settlement, with an appropriate adjustment of the settlement boundary to be established in due course.

The Site is well located, within walking and cycling distance of the services and facilities within Rownhams and Lordshill. Facilities include a supermarket, convenience grocery shop, doctors’ surgery, pubs/restaurant and village hall, of which more details are provided in the following sections.

The role of Nursling and Rownhams is reinforced by its strong relationship with employment areas and other services in the adjoining areas of Southampton.

The Site is accessible by bus services, including between Romsey, Winchester and Southampton, and is reasonably close to Southampton Central and other smaller railway stations.

PLANNING HISTORY

The extant planning permission for the Approved Scheme (including up to 320 dwellings and a 60 unit extra care facility) (Figure 4), which included the Site as paddocks, is extremely relevant.

Although the Approved Scheme was subject to appeal, the Council did not present any evidence at the inquiry and took no part in proceedings, other than to confirm agreement of the S.106 undertaking. The Council agreed in the Statement of Common Ground that:

“The Appeal Site is in an accessible and sustainable location, adjoining the existing settlement boundary as an extension of Rownhams. The Appeal Site is appropriate for the Appeal Scheme.”


In considering the suitability of the Site for residential development, many of the findings of the appeal Inspector for the Approved Scheme, remain relevant:

- significant tree planting to the north of the access off Rownhams Lane would effectively screen the development in views from existing public highways (paragraph 32);
- tree planting along the northern edge of the housing development would providing screening in views from the public footpath (paragraph 32);
- from the M27 motorway, the housing development would be screened by significant tree planting and separated by the SANG - development would not be intrusive in views of the rural landscape (paragraph 33);
- tree planting around the SANG would attenuate noise from the motorway to a significant degree; and it is noted that existing housing in Rownhams is closer to the motorway (paragraph 38);
- buffer zones between the built development and Clam’s Copse and the paddocks and Lord’s Wood would maintain the woodlands’ nature conservation status (paragraph 39). There would be a net gain in biodiversity (paragraph 55);
- the bus stop on Horn’s Drove is within easy walking distance (paragraph 42); and bus route 4, from this stop, connects to the central railway station in Southampton and other bus services at Lordshill, providing residents with frequent and nearby access to public transport (paragraph 43);
- Lordshill local centre, which is within walking distance of the development, includes a supermarket, medical centre, library, post office, public house and church, amongst other services. It is also within easy cycling distance (paragraph 44); and
- overall, the development has no significant adverse impact on the visual amenity of the area, highway safety or local infrastructure. The site is a sustainable location for residential development (paragraph 47).



Figure 4: The Approved Scheme

Key

	Application Boundary		Public open space (19.10ha), includes:		Proposed footpath/cyclepath
	Built Area		1 Children's play 0.46ha		Existing public right of way retained
	Paddocks		2 Informal Recreation 0.98ha		SANG (12.20ha)
	Existing retained trees, hedgerows and woodland (3.63ha)		3 Allotments 0.15ha		Circular Route (2.3km)
	Tree, hedgerow and woodland planting (2.54ha)		4 Community Orchard 0.17ha		
	Indicative proposed attenuation areas (0.65ha)		Landscape buffer (minimum 20metre width)		

3. PLANNING CONTEXT

Development at Nursling & Rownhams is wholly consistent with the emerging Local Plan's preferred settlement strategy in focusing growth at key employment areas and supporting Larger urban and rural communities.

With its accessibility to local services/amenities (including at Lordshill) and access to very significant employment opportunities at Strategic Employment Sites within the settlement, Nursling & Rownhams is considered an outlier above other Tier 2 settlements. Thus the settlement should support greater levels of growth than other less sustainable Tier 2 and Tier 3 towns/villages in the emerging revised settlement hierarchy.

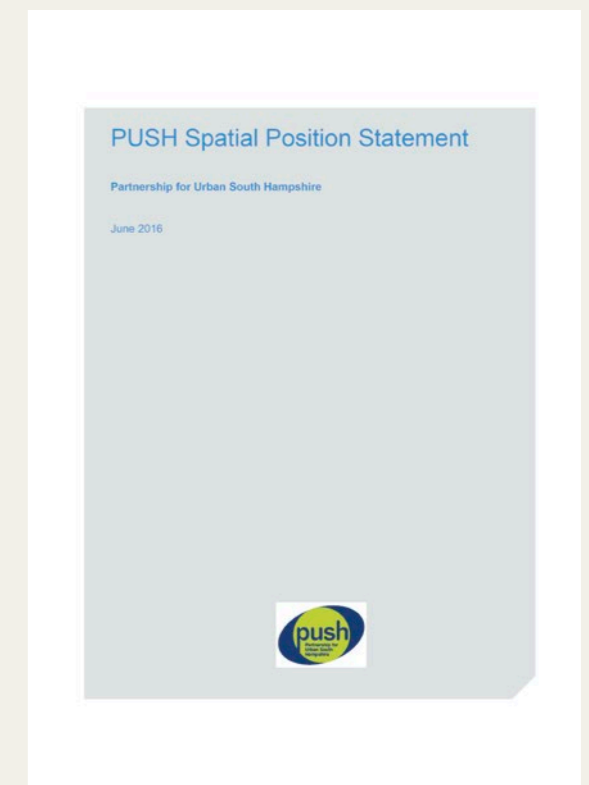
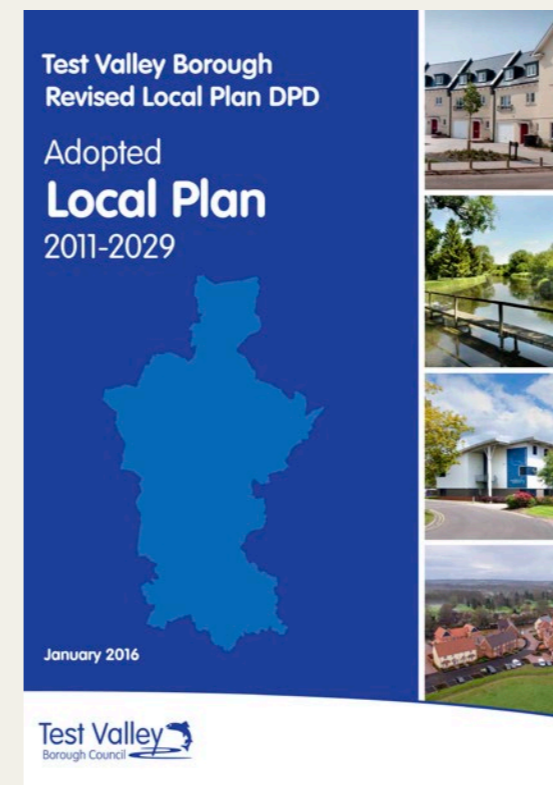
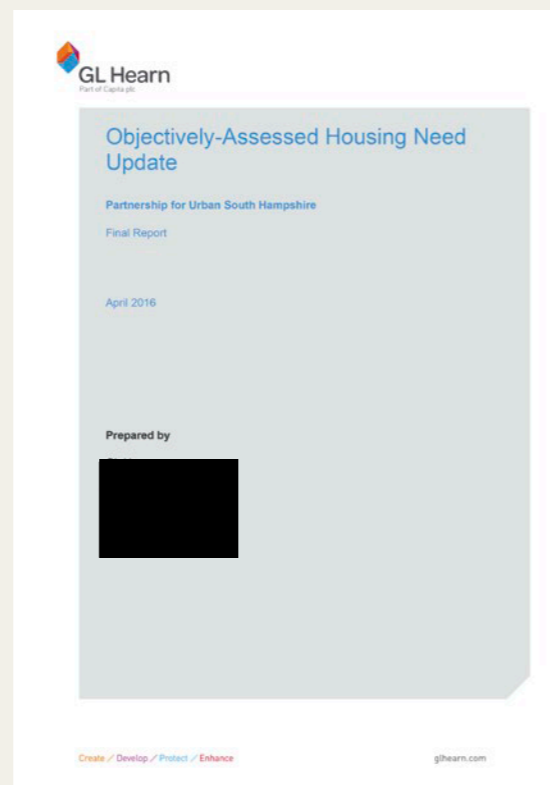
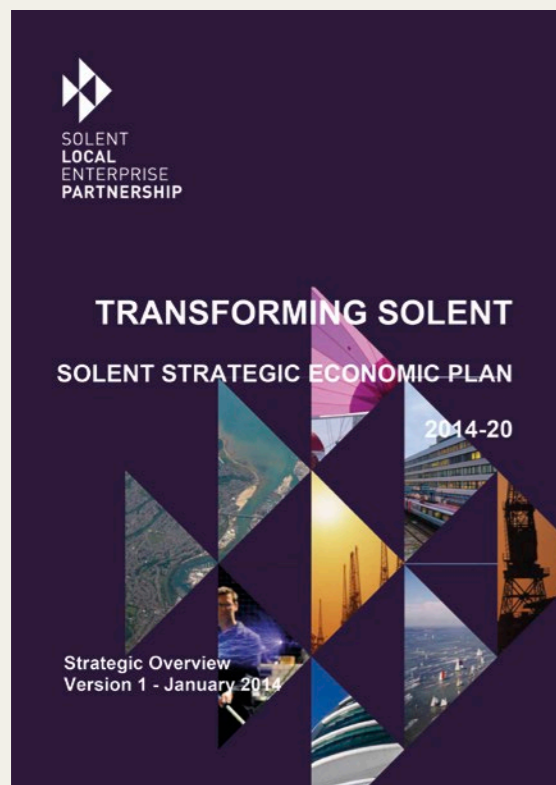
Whilst some further growth at the largest towns of Andover and Romsey is needed, they have rapidly expanded in recent years to the extent that delivery (whether on complex brownfield sites as the emerging Local Plan prefers or greenfield locations) could be challenging. Certainly the largest allocation of homes south of Romsey in the current Local Plan continues to be delayed.

The Council is seeking to provide for Test Valley's local housing need through the standard methodology. This figure is however a minimum and the NPPF allows the Council to plan for greater housing growth where that may help achieve other sustainable objectives.

Where the emerging Local Plan seeks to 'promote a vibrant and resilient local economy' and to provide conditions that allow 'businesses to thrive with access to the skilled labour they require', against recent major growth in employment floorspace and the challenges of an aging population (with a 43% increase in people aged 65+ between 2020 and 2040), an upward adjustment in housing delivery is justified.

Beyond the Council's own housing need, with reference to the PfSH Statement of Common Ground (October 2021), neighbouring authorities of Southampton, Eastleigh and New Forest have a significant identified shortfall of housing land (totalling some 15,000 homes).

Given there are suitable and available sites for development in the PfSH area of Test Valley, consistent with a sustainable spatial strategy (such as the Site), the Council should readily accommodate (in fulfilling its legal Duty to Cooperate) an apportionment of any such unmet need (as arising) through the current emerging Local Plan.



4. TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY



FACILITIES PLAN

The Site is located on the eastern edge of Rownhams, which is a 'Key Service Centre' containing a number of facilities and amenities. These include:

- convenience grocery shop
- hairdresser
- takeaway
- pubs and restaurants
- village Hall
- social club
- scout group
- St Johns Church

In terms of educational facilities, St. John's C of E Primary School and Horns Drove Pre-School are also located within walking distance of the Site.

As considered by the appeal Inspector for the Approved Scheme, the Site is located within walking and cycling distance from facilities at the Lordshill Centre. Services and facilities here include:

- Sainsbury's superstore
- other retail facilities
- bingo hall
- petrol station
- pharmacy
- doctors surgery
- public house

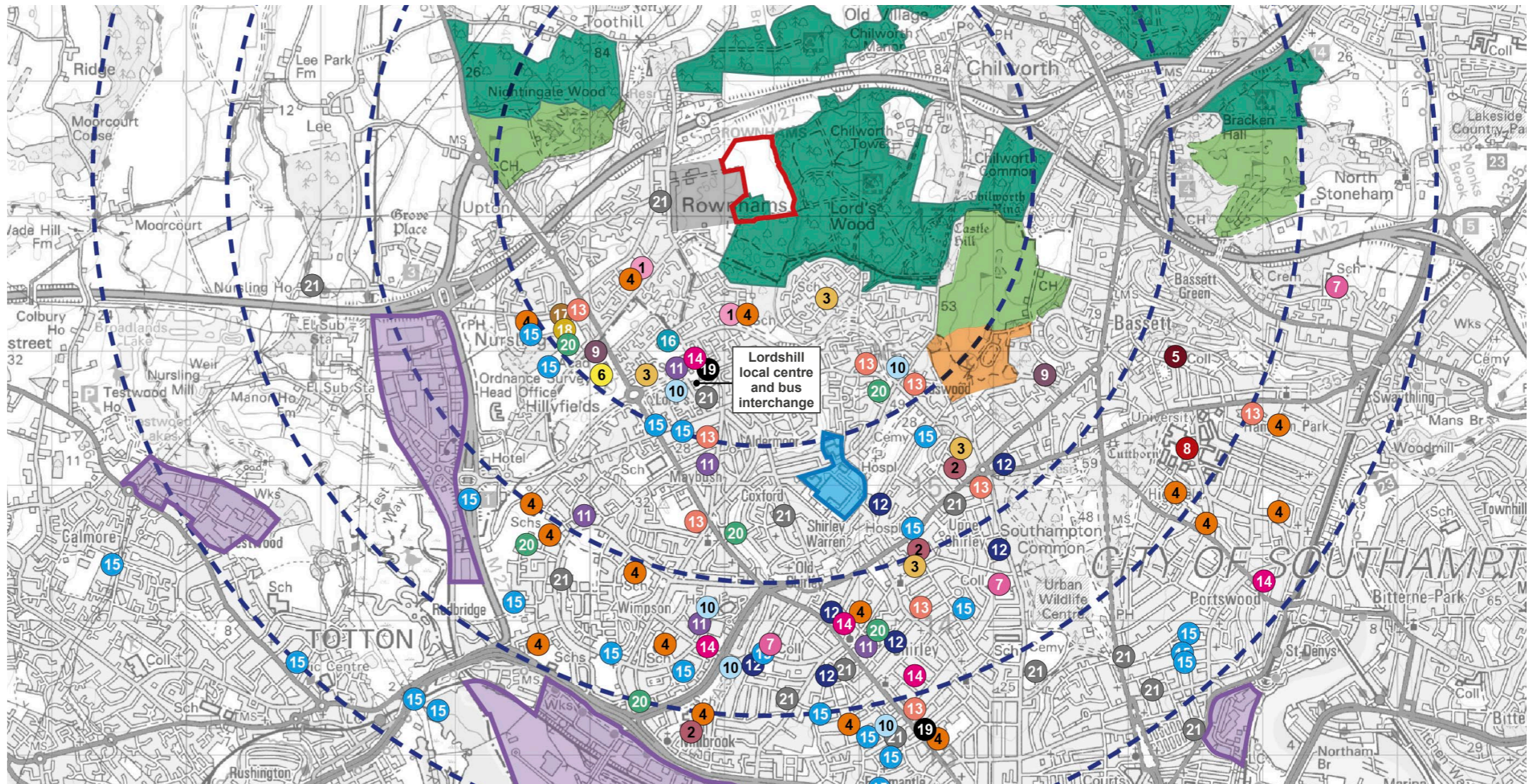


Figure 5: Facilities Plan

Key

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Site Boundary | Academy | Dentist | Scout Group |
| Major Employment Location | College | Local Store | Place of Worship |
| Pre-School | University of Southampton | Supermarket | Golf Course |
| Infant School | Special Education Needs | Takeaway/Restaurant/Public House | Regional Sports Centre including Alpine Snowsports |
| Junior School | Doctors Surgery | Oaklands Community Pool | Village Hall |
| Primary School | University Hospital Southampton | Village Hall | Proposed Lords Wood Forest Park |
| Secondary School | Pharmacy | Social Club | |
| | | Bingo Hall | |



PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The nearest public bus stops to the Site, within an accessible walking distance as considered by the appeal Inspector for the Approved Scheme, are located on Horns Drive, served by route 4. From these bus stops, there are regular services to Romsey, Winchester, Lordshill, Southampton Hospital and Southampton City Centre.

At Lordshill, there are additional bus services to a number of other locations including Adanac Park, Maybush Corner, General Hospital, RSH Hospital, Sholing, Millbrook, Woolston and Midanbury. As agreed by the appeal Inspector for the Approved Scheme, this provides residents with frequent and nearby access to public transport.

For rail travel, Southampton Central Railway Station is located approximately 7km from the Site, giving regular access to London, Weymouth, Bristol and West Sussex via the Southwestern Mainline, Wessex Main Line and West Coastway Line. There are a number of smaller stations (including Millbrook, Redbridge, Romsey, Swaythling and Chandlers Ford) within a similar distance of 7km.

The Site has excellent access to the local and strategic highway network. Junction 3 between the M27 and M271 is located a driving distance of only 4km from the Site.

The Site is in an accessible and sustainable location, as agreed by the previous appeal Inspector, which suitable for residential development.

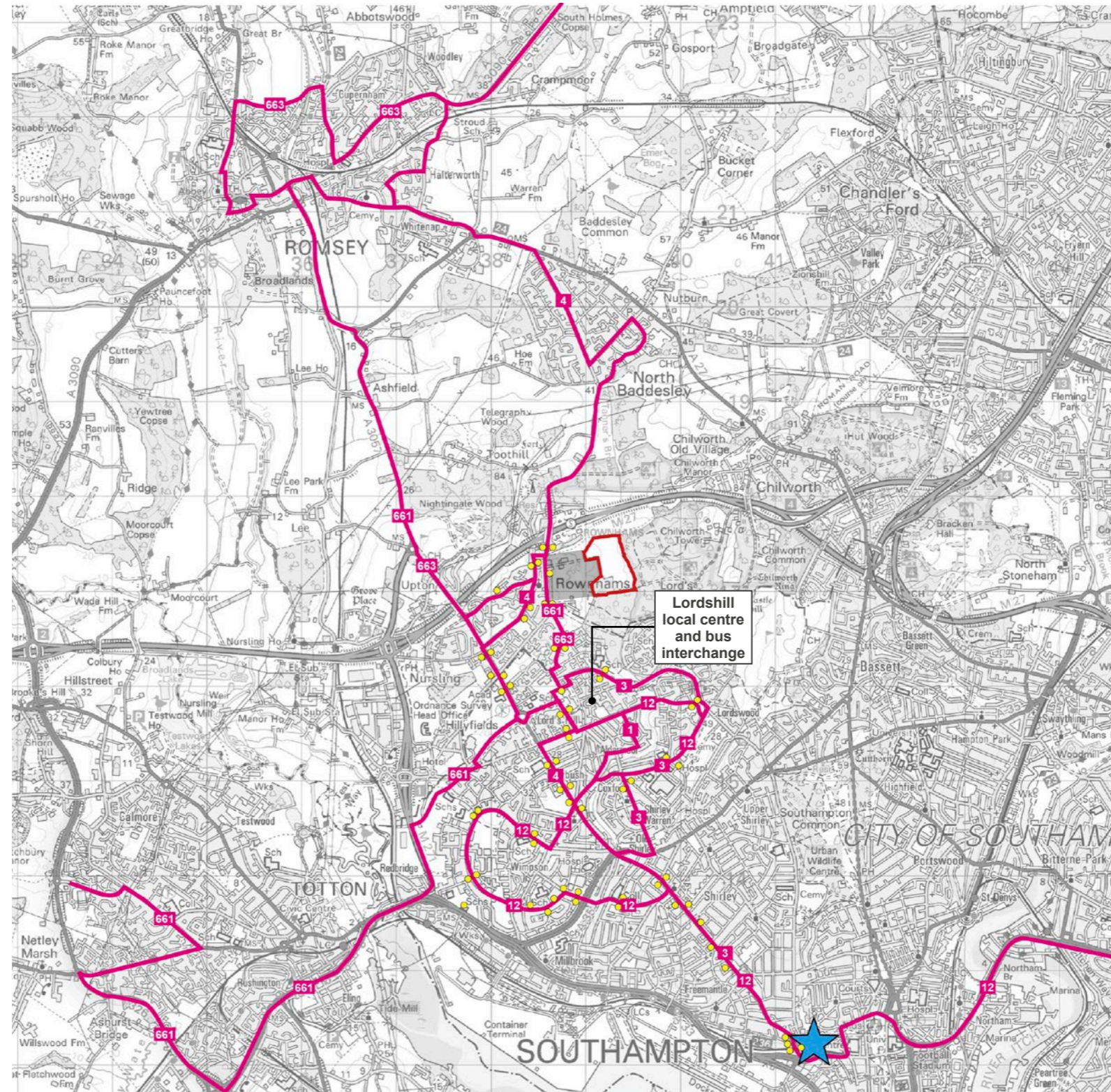
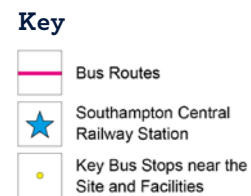


Figure 6: Public Transport

SITE ACCESS

New accesses and pedestrian crossing points on Rownhams Lane will be provided as part of the Approved Scheme. These comprise:

- a principal vehicular access, with a separated pedestrian/cycle access, close to the north western corner of that site;
- a combined footway/cycleway/emergency access to the south;
- a footway/cycle access close to the southern boundary of that site; and
- three pedestrian crossings – one to the north of the principal access; one further south to correspond with the bus stops on either side of Rownhams Lane; and one to the south of the southern footway/cycle access.

Hampshire County Council, as the highways authority, agreed that the Approved Scheme (which includes the Site), is a sustainable location, acceptable in terms of all transport, traffic and highway matters.

Whilst further work will be required with the highways authority, there are no overriding reasons why transport related issues for the residential development of the Site cannot similarly be addressed.

5. TECHNICAL MATTERS

LANDSCAPE / VISUAL

The Site is very well screened by natural features within the landscape. To the south and east are areas of mature woodland; and to the west is the built form of the Approved Scheme, with houses up to two-and-a-half storeys (10m) in height. To the north, not only does the significant barrier of the M27 motorway contain the Site, with significant tree planting and the intervening SANG, development would not be intrusive in views from this direction, as was considered by the appeal Inspector for the Approved Scheme.

The visual amenity of users of the public footpath adjacent to the north of the Site is maintained with retention of the treed hedgerow, which can be reinforced if necessary.

There are no landscape or visual reasons why the Site is unsuitable for development.

AGRICULTURAL LAND

As was confirmed by the Council in the Statement of Common Ground in the appeal for the Approved Scheme, the larger appeal site (of which the Site formed part) is too small to be financially viable as a self-contained agricultural unit. Accordingly, as any loss of higher grades of agricultural land was not significant. Given that the Site by itself is much smaller than when it formed part of the larger appeal site, this conclusion applies to an even greater extent.

Although the Site has extant planning permission for paddock use, as part of the Approved Scheme, the delivery of the residential development is not predicated on these paddocks being provided. Therefore, in any fallback position, because the Approved Scheme is extant but a material change of use to paddocks has not occurred, the Site can still be considered as either agricultural or paddock land. It does not comprise an 'existing' recreation facility.

OPEN SPACE

A significant amount of informal recreation space, provision for children and teenagers, and allotments were provided as part of the Approved Scheme, with a financial contribution towards outdoor sports facilities and agreement that there was a surplus of parks and public gardens in the area.

Future residential development on the Site will meet, through on-site provision or financial contribution (depending on the Council's preference), the public open space requirements of the current or emerging Local Plan.

SANG / ECOLOGY

To mitigate any additional recreational pressure from the Approved Scheme (320 dwellings) on the New Forest SPA/SAC/RAMSAR/SSSI, an area of SANG, measuring 12.20 ha, has been provided by the Approved Scheme.

As set out in **Table 1**, there is sufficient headroom in the Approved Scheme SANG for up to 315 dwellings (in addition to the up to 320 dwellings already consented). Appropriate mitigation to offset any additional recreational pressure on the New Forest SPA/SAC/RAMSAR/SSSI is available.

Buffer areas between the built form of the development and the areas of adjacent woodland to the south and east can be provided, as was considered an appropriate layout in the Approved Scheme.

In terms of whether or not there are other habitat and species of ecological value, this was comprehensively addressed by ecology surveys as part of the Approved Scheme application, which included the Site. The Inspector in his appeal decision noted that the ecology officer of Hampshire County Council accepted the survey results (as not posing a constraint for development) in respect of reptiles, great crested newts, dormice, bats and birds.

NUTRIENT NEUTRALITY

The requirement to ensure that development on the Site is nutrient neutral, in respect of maintaining the favourable conservation status of the Solent region SACs and SPAs, is understood.

In taking agricultural land out of use, which utilises nutrient rich fertilizer, some mitigation is provided. If additional mitigation is required, there may be opportunities relating to Tanners Brook which follows along the eastern Site boundary (such as measures to naturally filter nutrients from the water) and/or other offsite mitigation measures can be progressed.

NOISE

The noise climate on the Site will be very similar to that on the adjacent site of the Approved Scheme, which was also considered suitable for residential development.

The main source of noise is from the M27 motorway, with some intermittent contributions from air traffic and local sources such as bird song and farm movements.

The site layout, building envelope construction and ventilation strategy for development on the Site will be informed by detailed survey work, so that any scheme is compliant with the relevant local and national standards. In particular, requirements of BS8233:2014 can be met with suitable internal ambient noise levels within internal living areas and bedrooms under appropriate ventilation conditions.

Noise levels in external amenity areas will also be considered. Based on the noise survey carried out for the Approved Scheme, suitable external and internal noise levels can be achieved across the Site using standard construction materials and design approaches.

Matters of noise were most recently considered acceptable by the Council in resolving to approve reserved matters for the Approved Scheme. Each of the dwellings will have an internal noise environment compliant with the requirements of the Council's environmental protection officer. The Council is satisfied that future residents would not experience levels of noise that would adversely affect their amenities; and the scheme would comply with policy LHW4 of the Local Plan.

Table 1: SANG Headroom

Natural England's SANG requirement	8 ha per 1,000 head of new residents (0.008 ha per head)	
Size of Approved Scheme SANG	12.20 ha	
Number of Approved Scheme residents	320 x 2.4 = 768	
Headroom in Approved Scheme SANG	12.20 - (0.008 x 768)	= 6.056 ha
	6.056 / 0.008	= 757 population
	757/2.4	= 315 dwellings

6. CONCEPT MASTERPLAN

SITE ANALYSIS

The constraints and opportunities for development are shown at **Figure 7**. The main constraint is an area of land at higher risk of flooding in Flood Zones 2 and 3, associated with Tanner's Brook. Also close to the eastern boundary of the Site, are an underground water main and sewer. Whilst these have a wayleave to ensure that buildings are not constructed over them, they provide readily available utilities infrastructure and connections.

The retention of existing trees is a constraint, but also provides an opportunity to take advantage of a mature landscape setting. The reinforced and new planting in the SANG (as secured as part of the Approved Scheme), will screen the M27 motorway and provide noise attenuation and is shown as an opportunity.

Taking account of these constraints, there is a large developable space in the centre of the Site that is suitable for residential development.

To provide access to the Site, connecting it to the Approved Scheme, two locations for such connectivity are identified.

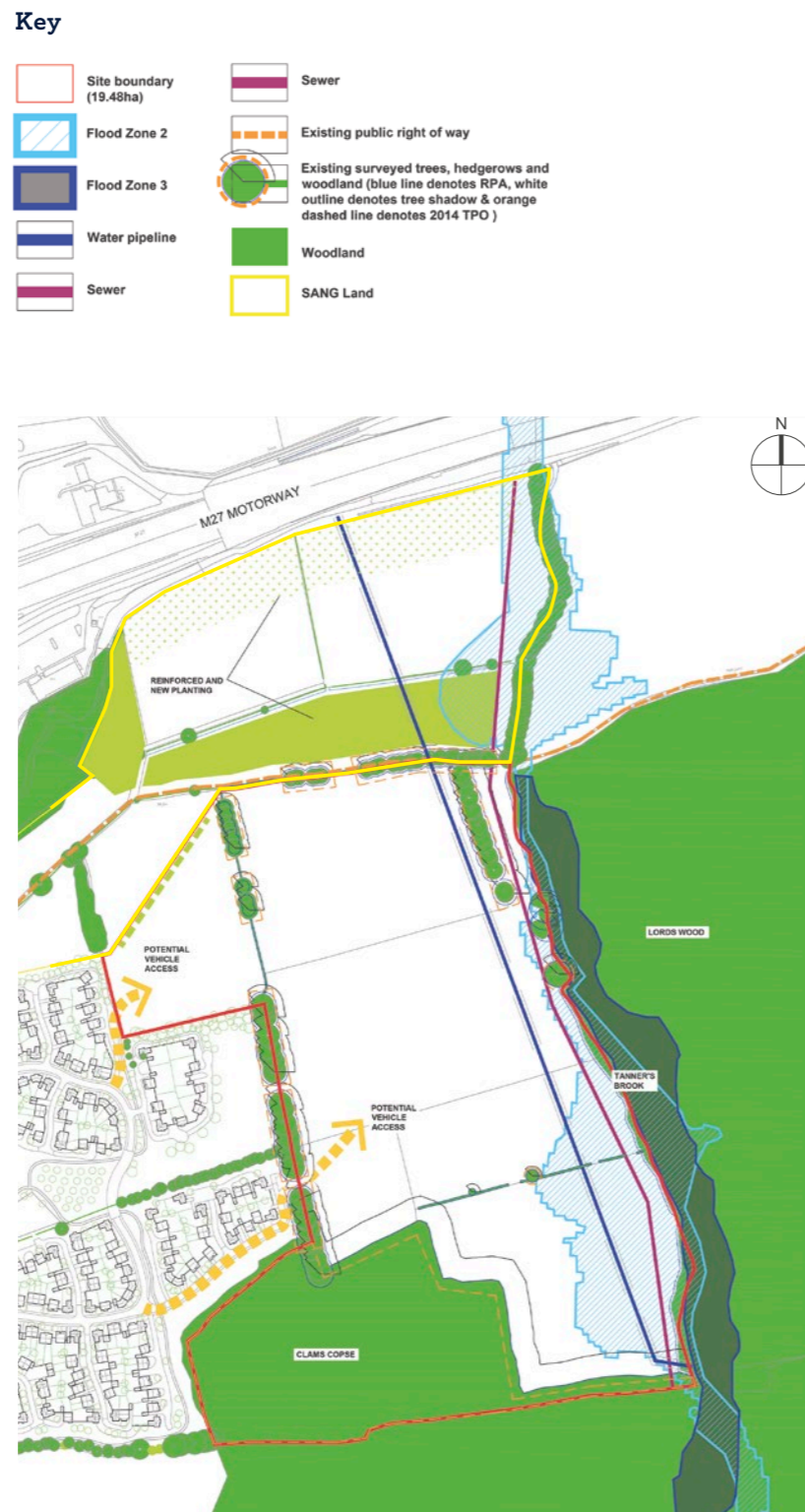


Figure 7: Site Analysis

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Figure 8 demonstrates a number of the key design principles that would inform future development on the Site. These include:

- green edge planting to reinforce the setting of the SANG;

- an outward facing development with active frontages;
- areas of Green Infrastructure distributed across the Site;
- an expansion of potential bus services through the Site; and
- an expanded network of recreational footpaths.



Figure 8: Design Principles

MASTERPLAN

Figures 9 & 10 show a parameter land use and concept masterplan for the Site. At an average density of 31dph, 300 units can be provided, avoiding the area at higher flood risk close to the eastern boundary.

The masterplan utilises the access locations between the Site and the Approved Scheme, which enables a rational movement network to be provided for vehicles, bus services, as well as cyclists and pedestrians.

A significant amount of Green Infrastructure is provided, more than sufficient to comply with provisions of current and emerging policies.

As the Site gently falls to the east, SuDS drainage basins are rationally located on this side. Buildings are not located in the wayleave above the water main and sewer.

The areas of woodland at Claim's Copse and Lords Wood are maintained with suitable buffer areas to the built form.

The development will utilise the headroom in the SANG to ensure that any impact on the New Forest SPA/SAC/RAMSAR/SSSI is fully mitigated. The 300 dwellings is comfortably below the SANG headroom capacity of 315 units.

BENEFITS

The NPPF identifies three dimensions to sustainable development and requires that local planning authorities seek opportunities to achieve new gains across all three (paragraph 8).

Residential development on the Site will provide benefits that include:

Economic

- a significant capital investment in the local area
- increased spending by new residents in local shops, restaurants, businesses and other services
- new housing to underpin existing and support new economic activity
- accessibility for residents to a significant range of job opportunities
- provision of direct construction jobs
- New Homes Bonus funding

Social

- approximately 300 new market and affordable homes, which will make a significant contribution to local need
- a high quality physical environment with green infrastructure that will provide opportunities for social interaction
- through good design, a reduction in the fear of crime and opportunities for crime and antisocial behaviour
- accessibilities to facilities utilising non-car modes of transport

Environmental

- high quality design that reinforces local character and distinctiveness
- on-site biodiversity enhancements
- new green infrastructure and open space.

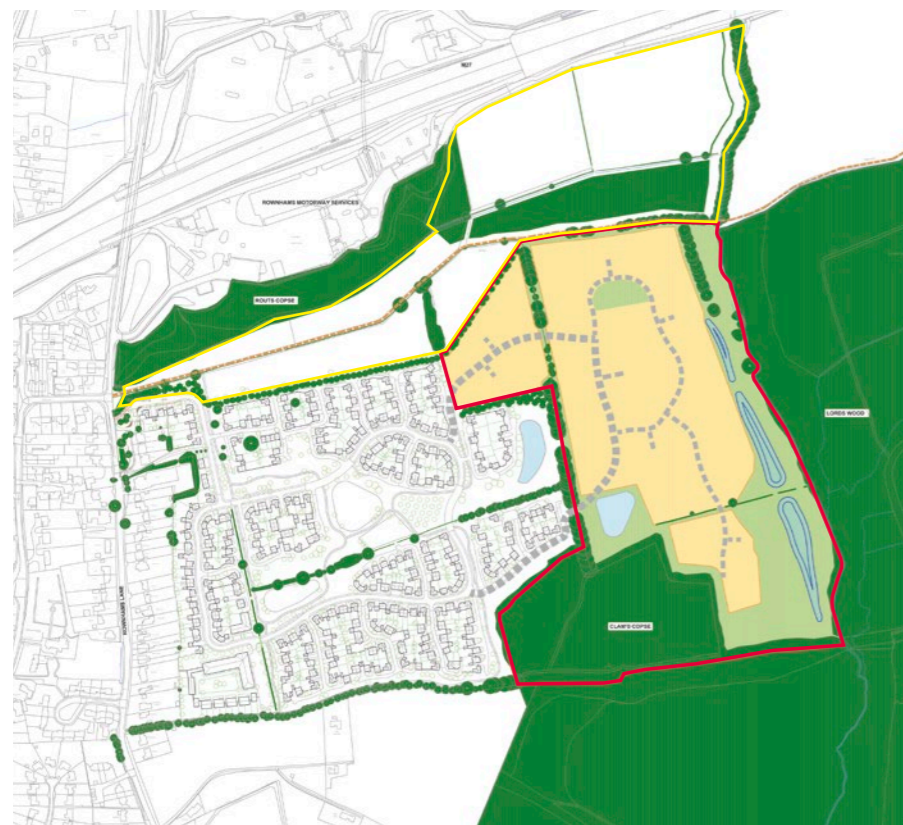


Figure 9: Parameter Plan



Figure 10: Concept Masterplan

7. DELIVERY

The Site is available for development, with **CEG being the sole freehold owner** of it, making delivery of housing less complicated and therefore faster than where there are multiple landowners.

Infrastructure to access to the Site has now been provided by **Taylor Wimpey**, through the delivery of the Approved Scheme.

For the Site **150 new homes** can be delivered within the five year period up to 2027; and **150 homes** between 2027 and 2032.



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