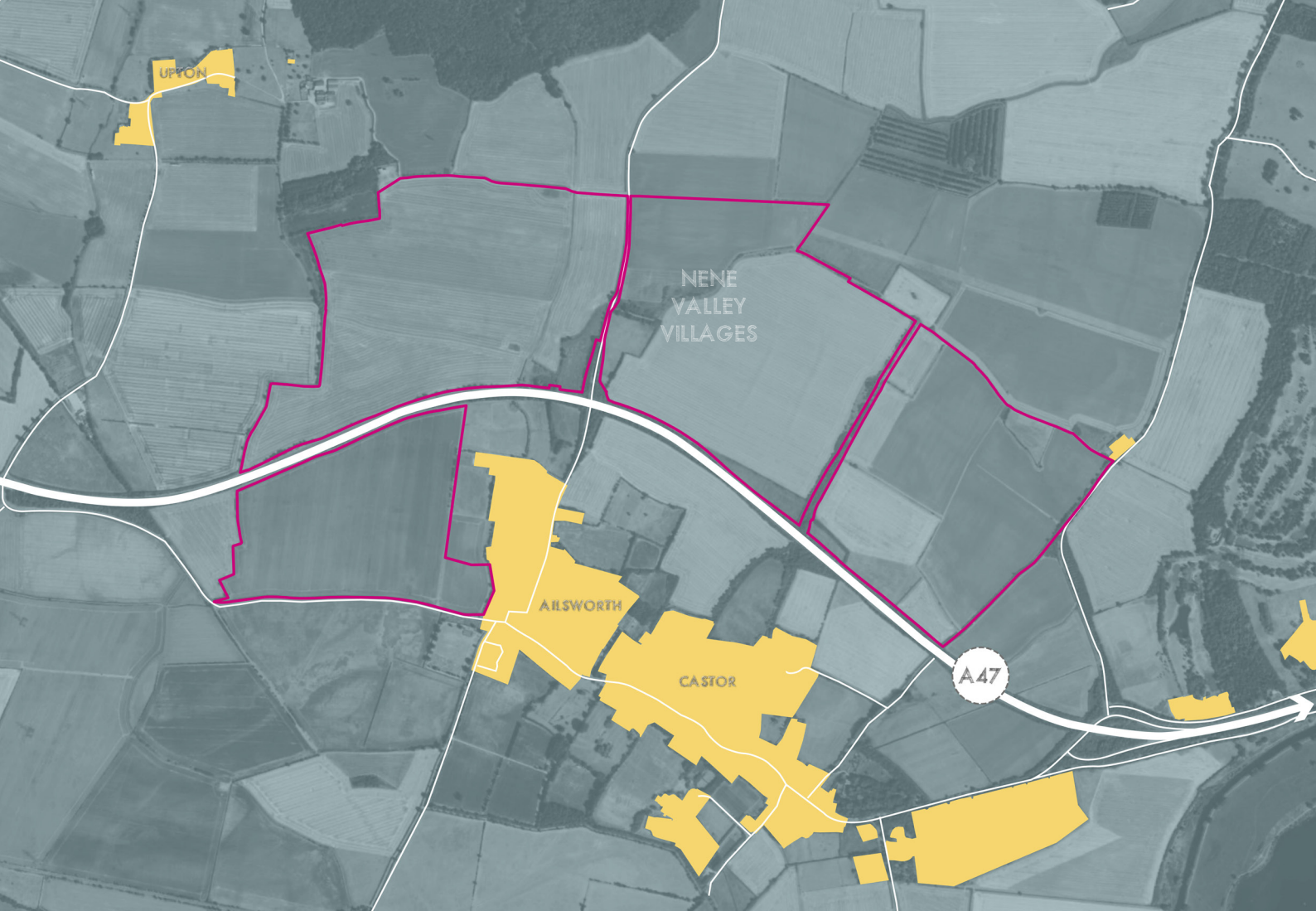




# Nene Valley Villages Ambition Statement

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Project number: D3354  
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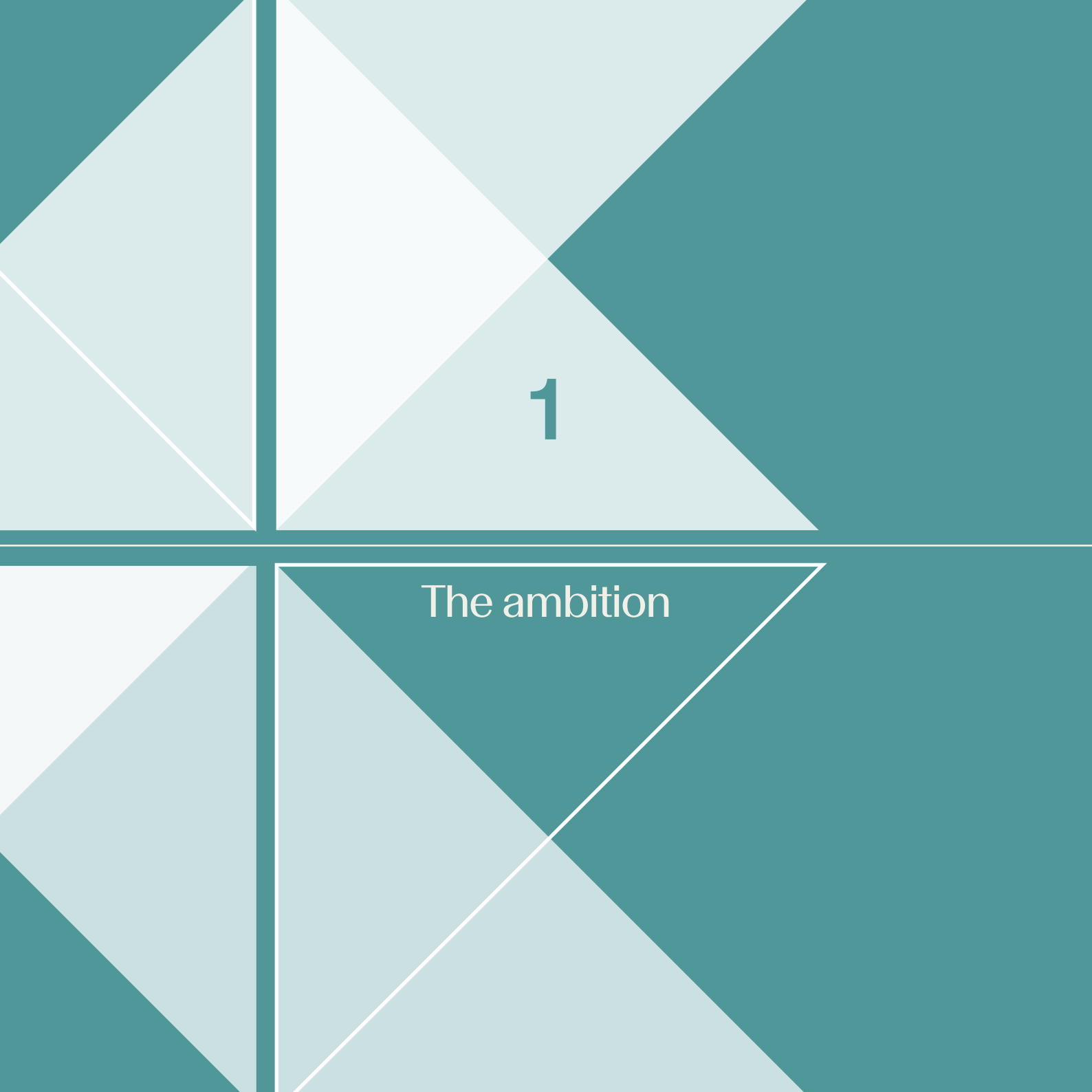
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1

The ambition

# An opportunity to think differently

Nene Valley Villages presents a long-term and flexible opportunity to create a modern western gateway to Peterborough that supports the city's regeneration ambitions and vision for the future.

## Single public sector ownership

Nene Valley Villages ('The Villages') comprises some 220 hectares and is fully within a single public sector ownership. This presents a significant benefit and means the site is available to come forward at an early stage, with the ability to deliver not only homes and new facilities, but also much needed jobs.

Homes England is the Government's housing and regeneration agency. At the heart of what we do is driving regeneration and housing delivery to create high-quality homes and thriving places by working with local communities and stakeholders. We make this happen by using our powers, expertise, land, capital and influence to bring investment to communities and get more quality homes built.

## Placemaking at the heart of delivery

With our Strategic Plan, published in 2023, one of our key objectives is to *'promote the creation of high-quality homes in well-designed places that reflect community priorities by taking an inclusive and long-term approach.'* We know that high-quality homes in well-designed places are key to improving people's lives. We achieve this by forming long-term partnerships that bridge public and private sectors, and by using our influence to champion the creation of sustainable homes, communities and places that are brilliantly designed, support the environment and deliver locally-relevant social value for those who live, work and play there. We take an infrastructure-first approach, delivering infrastructure alongside new homes, whilst mandating pace and quality.

## The growth of Peterborough

Designated a New Town in the 1960's, Peterborough grew as a series of villages surrounding the main city. The site was identified at this time as Peterborough's fifth township in planning for the city's strategic growth. Peterborough's population has grown by 31% since 1991 – nearly twice as fast as national average, as a result is one of the fastest growing cities in the UK. With further rapid growth projected over the coming decades, there is a clear need to plan for growth and continue this success story. The local economy has expanded rapidly over the last two decades, with research indicating 31,000 more jobs in 2021 than in 2001.

## **The future role of Peterborough**

We recognise the excellent work the Council, its partners, and the business and residential communities have made to grow the city as an important regional centre and wish to work with you to deliver the city's ambitious future growth story, with Nene Valley Villages supporting the Local Plan's objectives and vision.

With a renewed focus on pride in place, Homes England is ideally placed to deliver growth for Peterborough's current and future generations. Nene Valley Villages can help to realise the city's key ambitions for diverse high-quality homes and flexible employment space that are connected to the new international railway station and beyond.

### **Nature first**

A nature-led masterplanning approach will be taken, ensuring The Villages are created in harmony with the natural environment and prioritise ecology, sustainability, health and wellbeing. This will provide a robust framework, which integrates nature with the new community to create a resilient, biodiverse and aesthetically pleasing environment, founded on the principles of Building with Nature. The aspiration is for green and blue infrastructure to comprise a minimum of 50% of the total site area and to aspire to biodiversity net gain policy targets.

### **Creating a community**

Nene Valley Villages offers the opportunity to create a modern, vibrant community that is seamlessly connected to Peterborough. The development can support

Peterborough's vision for growth by providing a diverse range of community, cultural, recreational, retail and commercial amenities, alongside high-quality new homes. These amenities will be accessible to both the new residents and the existing communities of Castor and Ailsworth, and beyond. Additionally, Nene Valley Villages will provide adaptable employment spaces to nurture local businesses and established enterprises, from start-ups to larger organisations. This will be supported by new schools, healthcare services, retail hubs and recreational facilities, fostering a dynamic and inclusive community for all. The scale of The Villages makes this suite of benefits achievable, delivering a holistic place rather than abstract homes.

## **Working with the Local Plan**

The Villages is a flexible opportunity to deliver homes, facilities and employment space to meet local needs across both this and future Plan periods, in line with the draft allocation within the Draft Peterborough Local Plan (April 2025), Policy LP55: Land North of Castor and Ailsworth. The Villages can grow at a sustainable rate over the next 20 years, providing the right number of homes, jobs and social infrastructure to support local need, as well as wider need in the region. The Villages are suitable and viable as a series of new settlements as set out in Paragraph 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework, December 2024.

This Ambition Statement presents one way in which The Villages can come forward in line with the Draft Local Plan. We see this as a live document, which will evolve throughout the plan making process, working closely with the Council and local stakeholders.

# Key aspirations



Establishing a network of green links and natural spaces, alongside recreation and productive landscape, across at least 50% of the total site area



Promotion of wellbeing and biodiversity enhancements, with an aspiration for meaningful biodiversity net gain



Integration of blue infrastructure, supporting climate resilience and aiding biodiversity enhancements



Weaving in local heritage features as key placemaking elements



A considered approach to placemaking, aligned with garden village principles and Building for a Healthy Life



Delivery of approximately 3,000 high-quality, multi-tenure homes within three new interconnected villages



Provision of community amenities, such as primary and secondary schools, health facilities and leisure, and an emphasis on social value



Aspiration to provide jobs across a range of sectors within close proximity to new residents



Provision of approximately 7.5 ha of flexible employment space, able to adapt to needs at the time of build-out



Encouraging healthy lifestyles through prioritisation of walking, cycling and wheeling (e.g. scooters), with dedicated routes through natural open space



Linking the existing and the new, with new foot, cycle and wheeling connections across the A47, connecting to Castor and Ailsworth



Creation of a smart movement network, making active travel and public transport more attractive than the private car



# The ambition

## Nene Valley Villages: a modern mosaic

*The site lies at the heart of the Nene Valley, where the settlement pattern reflects that of existing villages of a similar scale in the locality, such as Castor and Ailsworth, set within a nature-rich landscape. We envisage Nene Valley Villages growing as a series of distinct yet interconnected villages, nestled within nature, linked with Peterborough and offering homes for all. This will create a 'modern mosaic' of communities, with high-quality homes, jobs, and opportunities to grow and thrive.*





The Villages provide a unique opportunity to re-imagine the traditional English village for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, creating a modern mosaic of nature, homes, facilities, jobs and spaces that support the growth of Peterborough now and in the future, created in partnership with the community and delivered through long-term stewardship. The Villages are underpinned by four core themes, which together form an interlocking framework for a high-quality, contemporary and inclusive place.

1

**Living alongside nature and heritage:**

Where landscape and heritage is embraced and enhanced, creating opportunities for healthy lifestyles and ensuring climate resilience for the future.

2

**A cohesive community:** Ensuring the community can thrive, with a choice of high-quality homes, facilities and jobs that are diverse and flexible to support the lifestyles, aspirations and needs of all generations, delivering positive social value outcomes for both the existing and new communities.

3

**Inclusive growth:** A range of employment opportunities alongside new homes will bring social and economic value to the community.

4

**A connected Peterborough:** Where The Villages, their facilities and the employment opportunities are sustainably connected with Peterborough and the wider area, benefiting existing and future communities alike.





## Easy access to nature

Easy access to nature is fundamental to health and wellbeing. This principle will be embedded within The Villages' design strategy, to create a beautiful and wildlife-rich place. Residents will have easy access to recreational green spaces with a range of characters, which in turn will provide pedestrian connectivity to the Nene Park Rural Estate to the south. Existing natural assets will be retained and enhanced as part of a co-ordinated green and blue infrastructure strategy.

## Respecting the historic landscape

Retaining references to the historic landscape will be an integral design driver. This will be achieved through the preservation of field boundary alignments, reinstatement of former hedgerows, where possible, celebrating the line of the Roman Road and views to The Church of St Kyneburgha at Castor. A heritage trail will provide a walking route - connected by factors that make The Villages unique, and link to historical features within the local landscape, to share knowledge of the rich Roman history with the community.

## Climate resilience

Multi-functional green and blue infrastructure, including a country park, green corridors, public open space and productive landscapes, will be designed following the latest guidance on resilient species that are capable

of adapting to climate change. The existing landscape includes an established network of streams and drains, which will be incorporated into a comprehensive sustainable drainage strategy. Zero-carbon and energy-positive technology will further support climate resilience.

## Activity, play and sports

The Villages will adopt Sport England's Active Design Principles, to support sport and physical activity across all age groups. Spaces will be designed with all demographics in mind and will provide a range of characters and types - from spaces for children and teenagers, active leisure routes, social spaces, places to grow fruit and vegetables and shared spaces for social interaction. The Villages will actively support health and wellbeing and encourage community spirit.

## A culturally rich community

Emphasis will be placed on the role of the arts, culture, heritage and natural history to celebrate the area's unique identity and inform wellbeing as part of a cooperative approach to society, respectful of, and informed by, the local landscape and collective stewardship.

The landscape proposals will be cognisant of draft local plan policies - LP35: New Open Space, Outdoor Sports and Recreation Facilities; LP36: Green Infrastructure; LP38: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation; LP41: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows; and LP43: Landscape Character.



LEARNING FROM  
LANDSCAPE

CONNECTING  
PEOPLE AND  
NATURE

PLAYING IN  
NATURE

CELEBRATING  
HERITAGE

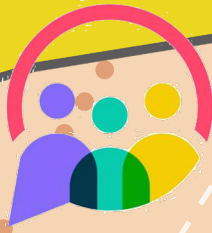




A PLACE FOR ALL



COMMUNITY  
TOGETHERNESS



LIVING  
OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR ALL AGES

HEALTHY LIVING



## A cohesive community

### A place for everyone

A diverse housing offer for all life stages will be provided, addressing local housing needs and affordability. The Villages offers certainty by virtue of its public sector control and creating a community that meets local needs is of utmost importance. This will help to deliver more genuinely affordable homes, a mix of tenures and housing types, as well as more flexible and lifetime homes, to address the challenges of a changing demographic.

### Creating a community to be proud of

The Villages will provide a wide range of community, cultural, recreational, retail, social and commercial activities, which are easily accessible for everyone, serving the new community, existing residents in Castor and Ailsworth, and beyond. The day-to-day retail needs of residents will be met in The Villages, whilst safeguarding and strengthening Peterborough City Centre.

Complementary uses and facilities will be delivered in order to address local community priorities, deliver social value, promote a cohesive community and encourage people to shop and work locally, and support small businesses. This all combines to deliver positive social outcomes for the existing and new communities.

### A holistic offer

The Villages will offer more than housing, with social infrastructure serving the needs of the entire community.

This is likely to include new schools, healthcare provision, sports facilities and other uses, to be determined through collaborative engagement and co-design with the existing community. This will be further supported by a plethora of flexible employment opportunities. The Villages will work holistically to ensure that the community's diverse range of needs are met locally.

### Healthy living

The Villages will enable households to enjoy healthy lifestyles in a high-quality built environment that caters for the needs for all, supported by an extensive network of green spaces. Tangible health benefits will be achieved through walkable neighbourhoods, inclusive and connected open spaces and the provision of lifetime homes to support an ageing demographic, in line with Building for a Healthy Life, the NHS's Healthy New Towns philosophy and healthy placemaking principles.

### Distinctively local

Whilst The Villages will be a new arrival in the landscape, they will be rooted in their place, responding to the intrinsic local character and historic patterns of local built form, aspiring to a high-quality of architectural and landscape design. They will have a sense of place and positive characteristics which make them special. They will respond sensitively to landform and topography by locating development in the right places.



## **A diverse population**

A sense of belonging will be created, supported by a variety of house types and job opportunities, helping to retain a younger and more diverse population, who cannot currently either afford to stay in Peterborough or find a job, as well as meeting the needs of an older population.

## **An integrated approach**

The Villages will not be simply about housing – a broad range of employment opportunities will be provided, with the aim of offering jobs within close proximity to new households. This does not only mean creating a variety of new employment spaces, but also the provision of shared work spaces, communal work hubs, spaces to nurture new businesses and ensuring dwellings can accommodate home working. The Villages will recognise and cherish the social and economic value that living and working together brings, and establish the link between planned job growth (both within the city centre and The Villages) and the provision of homes to suit the workforce.

## **An entrepreneurial village**

The Villages will provide infrastructure to support home working, the self-employed, new/start-up businesses, and co-operative and community-led employment. A range of employment opportunities will help ensure there is a healthy and diverse social mix, and that as people

develop their skills and careers they can continue to find employment nearby.

## **A connected workforce**

Sustainable transport networks will facilitate sustainable commuting where necessary, playing a role in the sub-regional hierarchy and supporting the regeneration of Peterborough City Centre. High-quality public transport connections with local strategic hubs will be vital – even homeworkers have to visit colleagues or customers from time to time. Supporting homeworkers will help support The Villages' local economy throughout the week, not just at weekends and evenings, as they pop out for a coffee or take a short walk away from their PC. Proximity to the A1 and Peterborough City Centre also supports the potential for a diverse range of commercial uses and employment facilities, taking advantage of the community's excellent road connections.

## **Future-fit**

It will be important to ensure the new community is flexible, with the ability to adapt over time to changing work patterns and uses. This can be achieved through high-quality architectural responses to traditional employment spaces. Integrated mixed-use live/work environments will have the ability to easily respond to an ever evolving economy.



DIVERSE  
POPULATION

FLEXIBLE  
WORKING

COMMUNITY

TODAY

INDEPENDENT  
BUSINESSES





SMART GRID  
CONNECTIONS

BRINGING  
PEOPLE  
TOGETHER



CONNECTING  
TO KEY  
DESTINATIONS

WAYFINDING

PRIORITISING SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENT



## A connected Peterborough

### Keeping everyone connected

The Villages are well-connected and making the most of this connectivity will be key. Integrated and accessible transport systems will be central to establishing low-carbon travel habits in two ways – first, in relation to the spatial development of a network of Villages linked by sustainable transport to create a social network, and secondly in terms of the physical walkability of the new community, designed to promote healthy lifestyles. A network of multi-modal hubs and cycle routes will provide affordable, fast and reliable low-carbon connections to and from Peterborough, and link with ambitions to transform the City Centre and the Railway Quarter. Both will be easily accessible via sustainable transport initiatives, encouraging positive behavioural change. Alongside this, there is the potential to include fast charging infrastructure, e-bike hire, car clubs and e-bike/e-car repair and maintenance, amongst other facilities. The result will be a neighbourhood that is fit and flexible to accommodate the transport systems of today and future-proofed for the transport systems of tomorrow.

### Local neighbourhoods

Ensuring the new community is sustainable with a high level of accessibility for walking and wheeling (e.g. scooters) is a key aspect of The Villages, following Garden Community principles. People should be able to access the day-to-day services they need on foot, bicycle, scooter or by public transport within a short time,

reducing the need to use a private car. Homes, schools, shops, community facilities, workplaces, open spaces and sports facilities will be within easy reach of each other, creating a vision-led opportunity for a high level of trip internalisation, by active and sustainable modes of travel.

### Connected to nature

The new community will offer easy access to the existing and enhanced green infrastructure network, as part of a safe and comprehensive cycle network and the wider network of Public Rights of Way. Along with the aspiration to create new high-quality foot and cycle links across the A47 to Ferry Meadows Country Park via Castor and Ailsworth, an extensive network of new pedestrian routes and cycle paths will intertwine with existing strategic movement networks, such as the Peterborough Green Wheel, connecting the existing community at Castor and Ailsworth to the range of facilities, enhanced bus connectivity and low carbon transport options available within The Villages, greatly benefiting those living there.

### A digitally connected village

The Villages will accommodate smart systems and superfast broadband, and will be flexible enough to respond to the changing nature of, and emerging trends in, work and technology. Excellent digital connectivity and smart place technology will enable residents to work locally and progressively, reducing the need for outbound car trips and providing on site employment opportunities.



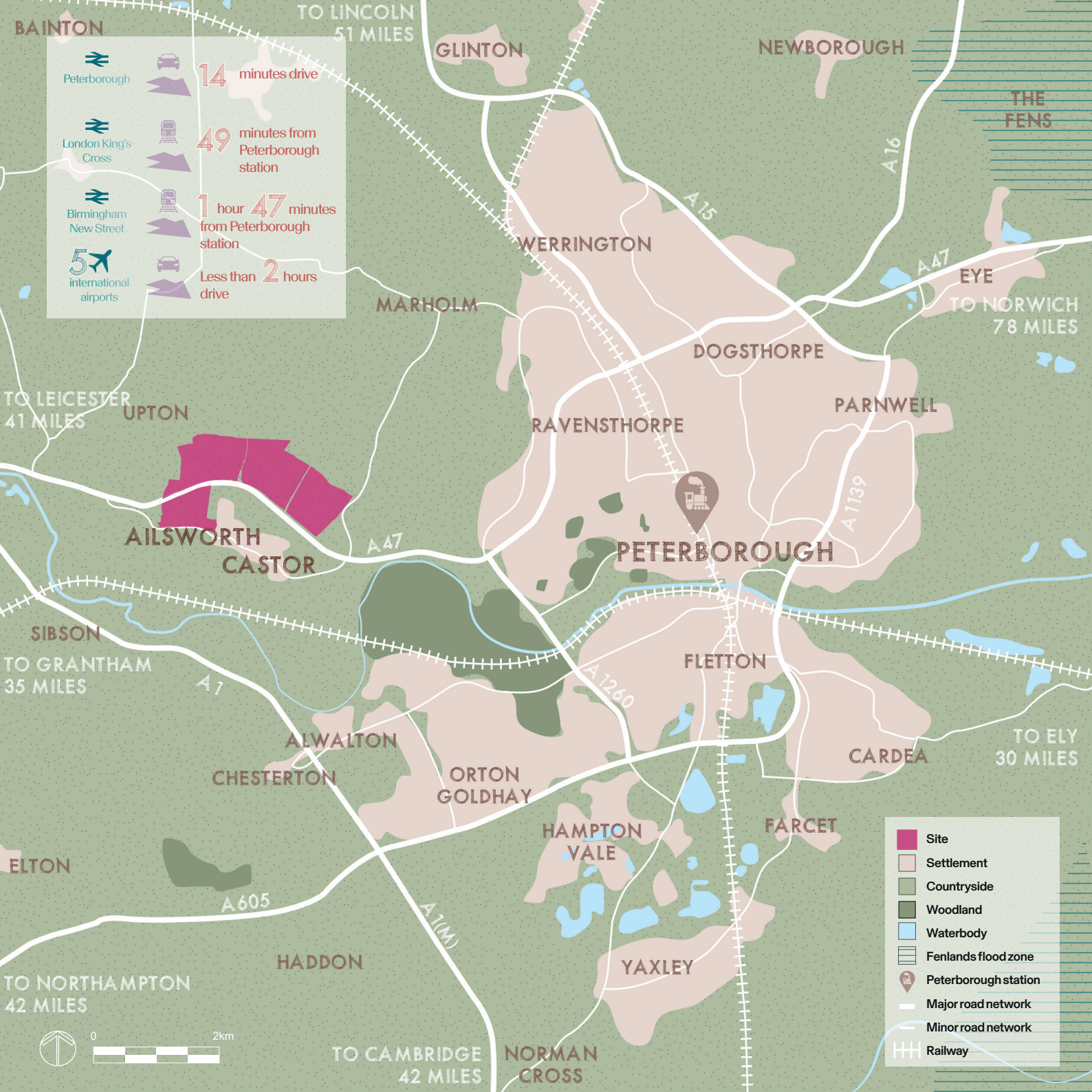






2

Why Nene  
Valley Villages?





# A location for growth

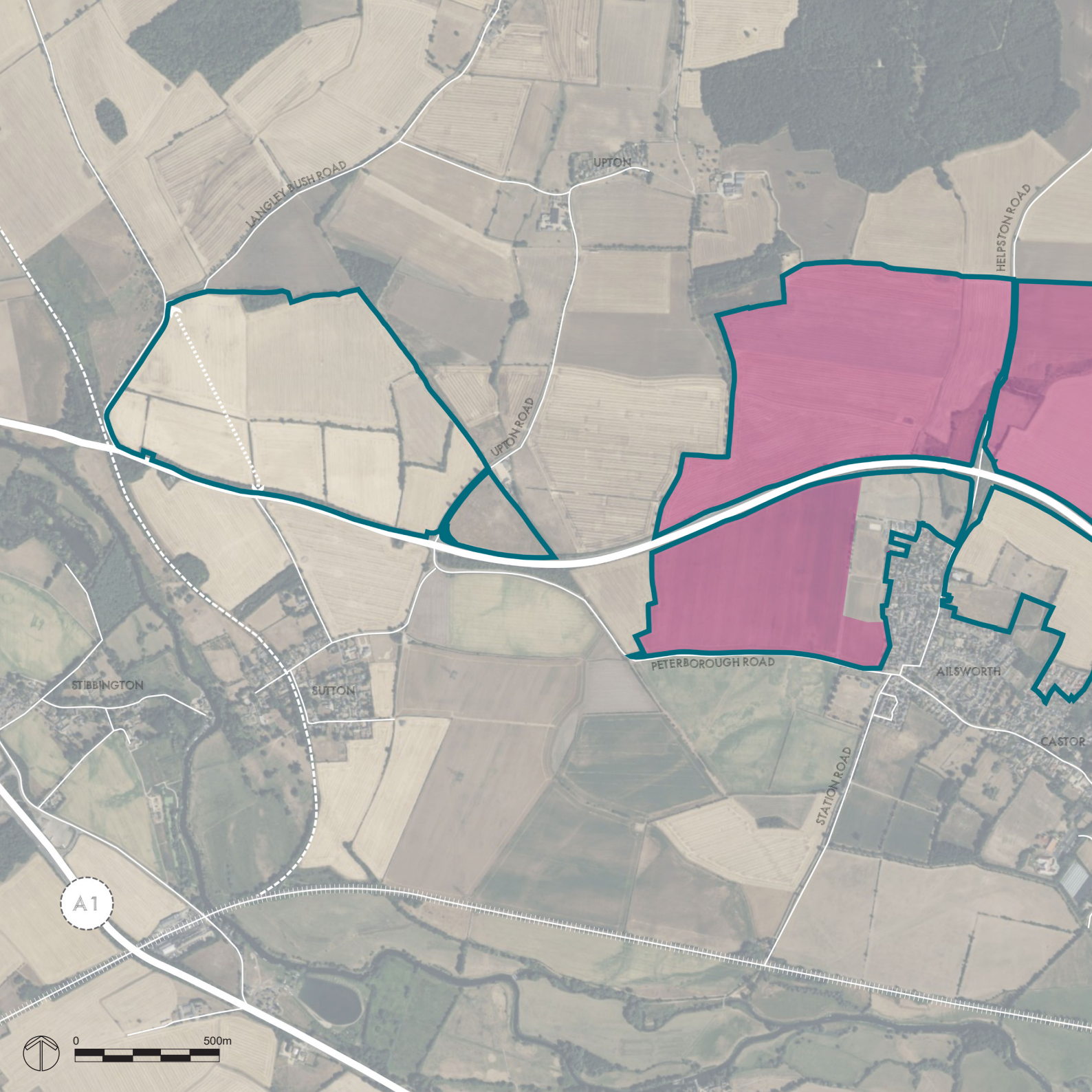
Peterborough is among the fastest-growing cities in the UK, however the opportunities for growth are constrained. The wetlands of The Fens and associated flood risk prevents development to the east and north of the city, whilst the south is already heavily developed. As such, there are limited opportunities for long-term growth outside the city centre.

Peterborough is an exceptionally well-connected city, benefiting from its position on national road and rail networks. It is as little as 49 minutes by train from London King's Cross, with direct trains to Birmingham and Norwich airports. Aspirations for Peterborough to become an international station will mean the city's connections will increase, further supporting the city's ambitious growth plans.

Nene Valley Villages benefits from excellent accessibility via the adjacent A47, which is currently being improved. Being 15 minutes from Peterborough City Centre and five minutes from the A1, The Villages are ideally located to deliver sustainable growth for Peterborough, with excellent links to the UK Innovation Corridor and strong relationships with regional centres, including Cambridge, Birmingham and London.

With the arrival of Anglia Ruskin University and a focus on diversifying the city's employment offer, there is a need to boost higher value job growth by providing new homes in well-connected locations, where people want to live and are proud to call home. This in turn will help to realise the Council's vision to become a 'smart-circular city', facilitating the flow of materials, goods, services, people and data through a thriving and growing economy, and brought forward in a sustainable way.

The Villages provide the opportunity to deliver on the city's ambitions, whilst reflecting its historic growth pattern of *'a network of characterful villages set within an attractive rural landscape, each with local services and facilities providing for community needs, together with a vibrant and diverse rural economy'*, (Draft Peterborough Local Plan, 2024-2044), and the Combined Authority's wider ambition to double GVA by 2040.



LANGLEY BUSH ROAD

UPTON

HELPSTON ROAD

UPTON ROAD

STIBBINGTON

SUTTON

PETERBOROUGH ROAD

AILSWORTH

CASTOR

STATION ROAD

A1



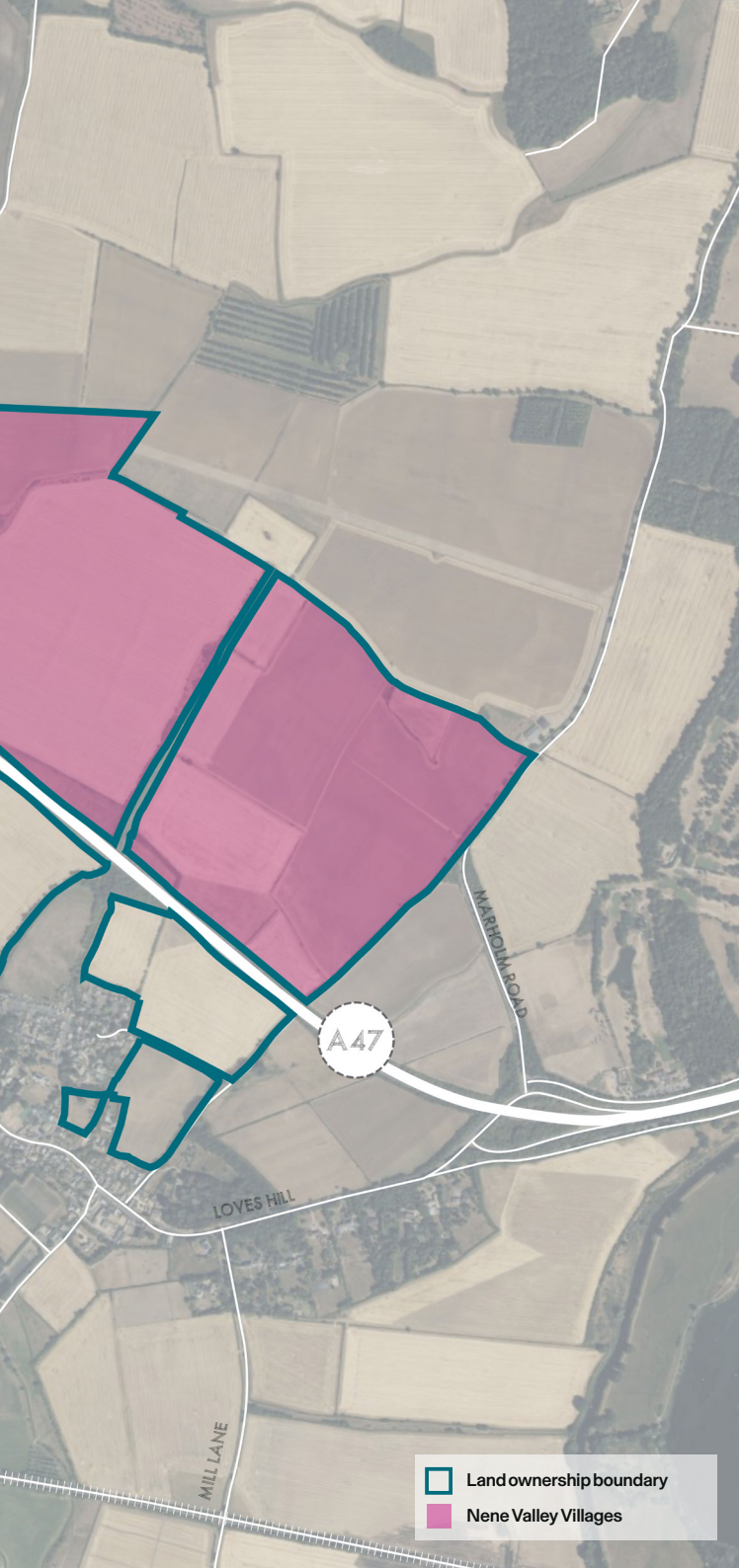
0 500m



# Land Ownership

Homes England own approximately 350ha of land around the villages of Castor and Ailsworth, to the west of Peterborough City Centre. The land ownership straddles the A47 and extends to the west close to the villages of Sutton and Upton. The land comprises former Commission for New Towns land that was originally purchased by the Peterborough Development Corporation and designated to be one of the original townships for Peterborough.

The core site that represents the Nene Valley Villages opportunity, shaded pink on the adjacent plan, is mainly focussed on land to the north of the A47. The wider land ownership includes land immediately north of Castor and Ailsworth, separating the villages from the A47, land immediately west of Ailsworth, and then a larger circa 40 ha detached parcel of land to the west, adjacent to Upton and Sutton.





# The site

The site lies circa 4 km (2.5 miles) to the west of Peterborough. Totalling some 220 hectares, it straddles the A47 to the west and north of Castor and Ailsworth. The Nene Valley Villages will be located to the north of the A47, with the land south of the A47 providing a wider community benefit of a new country park and ecological enhancements.

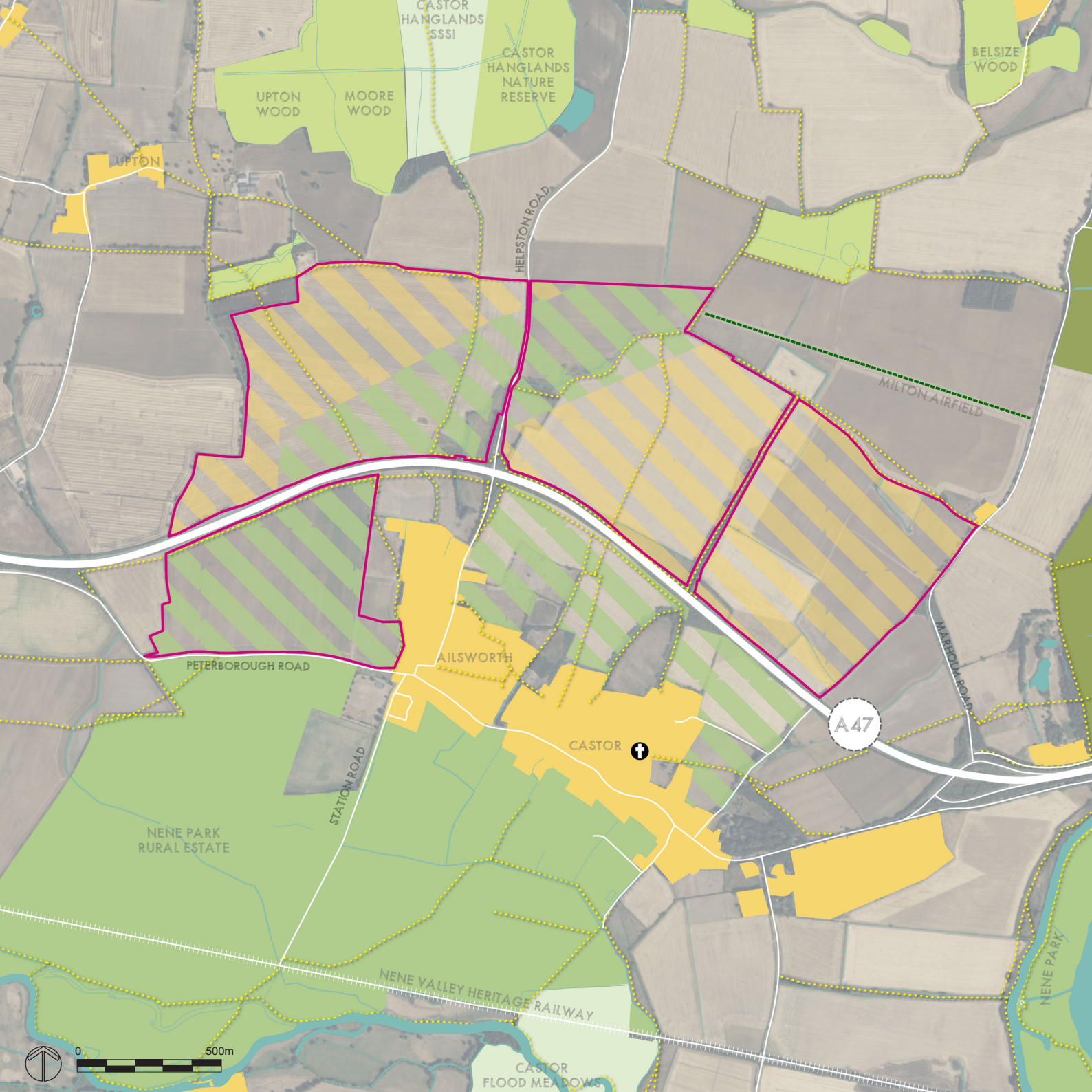
The site comprises predominantly arable farmland, where field boundaries are defined by tree belts, hedgerows and small watercourses. The site is crossed by several footpaths, providing north-to-south and east-to-west connectivity.

The site benefits from its unique position close to the River Nene and a range of natural assets. By planning strategically, these natural assets can be protected, while

ensuring that strategic development is aligned to the Council's growth needs in a comprehensive and sensitive way.

The site has recently been identified as a draft allocation under 'Policy LP53: Urban Extensions and New Settlements' within the Draft Peterborough Local Plan (April 2025). 'Policy LP55: Land North of Castor and Ailsworth' sets out the specific requirements for the site. The draft allocation area for both housing and a country park is indicated on the adjacent plan.

- Site boundary
- Existing settlement
- Draft Local Plan housing allocation
- Draft Local Plan country park allocation
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Existing woodland
- Existing country park
- Registered Park and Garden
- Waterbody
- Existing road network
- Route of Nene Valley heritage railway line
- Milton Airstrip
- Public right of way
- Church of St Kyneburgha





# Considerations

A range of baseline assessments and surveys have been undertaken to fully understand the site's constraints. The suite of technical work undertaken to understand the site and its context is summarised below, showing how the site can be suitable to support Peterborough's growth aspirations.

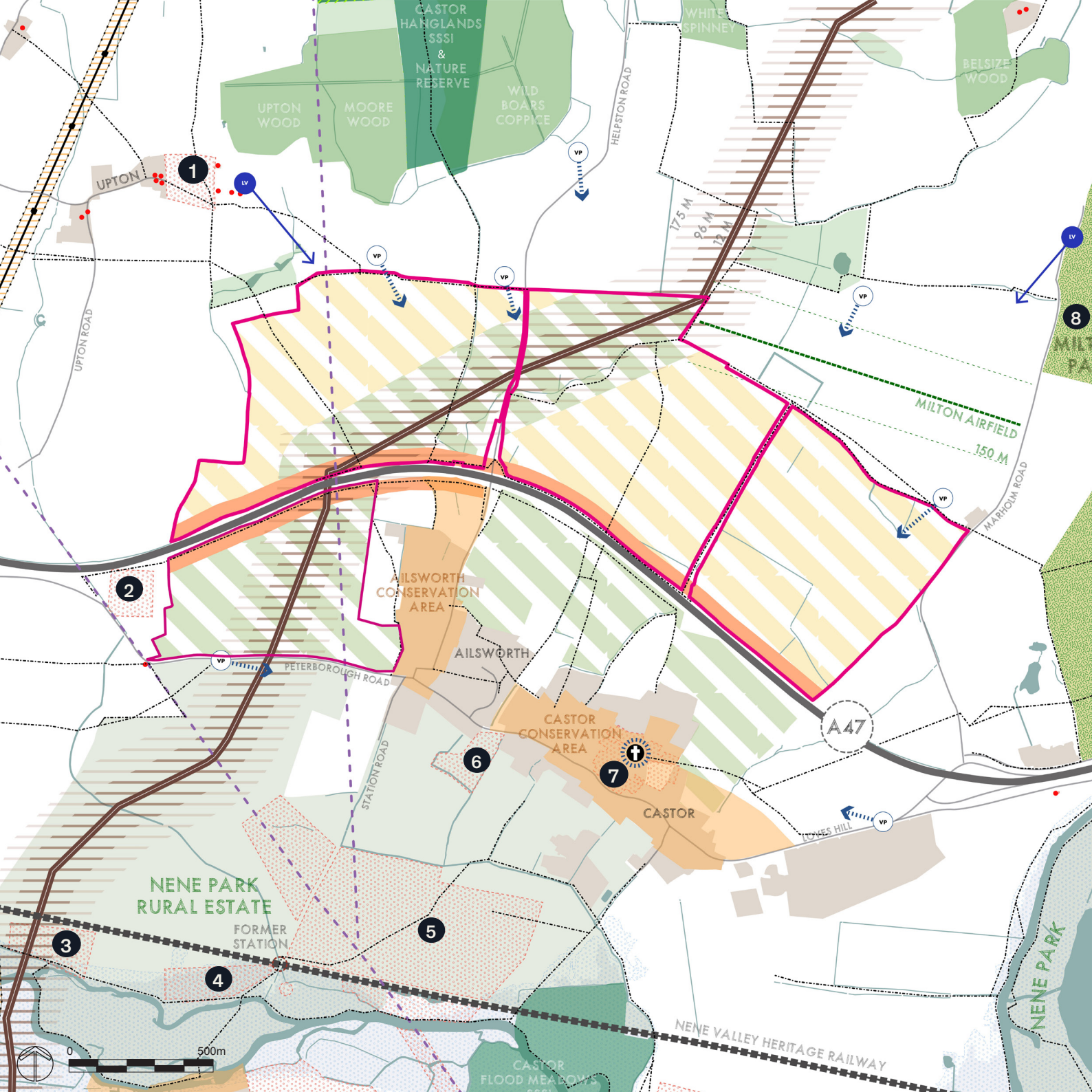
## Landscape and visual

A Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has identified baseline conditions and informed how The Villages can be designed to sensitively respond to the landscape context of the Nene Valley:

- Retention of the rural setting to and minimising the visual impact of development on Milton Hall Registered Park and Garden through planted buffers and woodland creation in strategic locations
- Incorporation of views and vistas towards and along key heritage landscape features and the existing PRoW network, such as the line of the Roman Road, listed buildings, Conservation Areas at Castor and Ailsworth and prominent views towards the Church of St Kyneburgha. The intervisibility between existing and new villages should be considered, with the retained perception of a gap between settlements to achieve separation, whilst remaining interconnected

- Retention and enhancement of existing landscape features such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows, waterbodies and watercourses, wherever possible, as part of the strategic green and blue infrastructure network
- The provision of landscape buffers to the major transport corridor of the A47 and protection of the character of adjacent rural lanes.







## Ecology and arboriculture

The site has undergone baseline ecological and arboricultural surveys to determine baseline conditions both within the site and its immediate context. A summary of key factors which may influence the opportunities and any elements that can be mitigated through a comprehensive landscape strategy are noted below:

- A number of statutory designations are located in close proximity to the site, including Castor Hanglands SSSI/National Nature Reserve (NNR), Castor Flood Meadows SSSI and Wansford Pasture SSSI. These areas of ecological influence can be suitably mitigated through the use of landscape buffers, placement of uses and open space and ecological enhancements
- The majority of the site is arable farmland, which likely supports a community of bird species adapted to this type of land use and common species of reptile, mammals and invertebrate species. This can be mitigated with sensitive design, through the retention and enhancement of field boundaries and hedgerows
- Other areas of the site are used as pasture for grazing, which has limited biodiversity value. Through a clear landscape strategy, enhancements can be made to increase biodiversity across the site
- Hedgerows and trees are primarily contained to field boundaries, some of which are mature or may have veteran status, and may provide routes and roosts

for bats. These marginal areas provide important ecological benefits to the site and as far as possible should be retained.

## Heritage and archaeology

Within a 2km study area of the site, a total of 18 Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM), 220 listed buildings, three Conservation Areas and a Registered Park and Garden can be found. These are located within a wide study area and none fall within the site itself. Two Roman Roads pass through or adjacent to the site, which should be accommodated and celebrated. The majority of the listed buildings are within the Conservation Areas at Castor and Ailsworth to the south of the A47, and should be celebrated through sensitive design and retention of key vistas.

## Drainage and flood risk

The site falls from circa 36m AOD in the north to circa 5m AOD in the south, and the site sits solely within Flood Zone 1. The Environment Agency identifies the risk of surface water flooding primarily along minor watercourses within the site, which should be accommodated within any emerging proposals. The site is not predicted to be at risk of flooding in the event of failure to local reservoirs.

## Transport and movement

An extensive network of vehicular and pedestrian routes can be found within and around the site:

- The site is conveniently located on the A47, which offers fast and direct links to Peterborough to the east and the A1 to the west. Work is ongoing by National Highways to dual a section of the A47 to the west of the site, as well as to relocate Sutton Heath Road roundabout
- There is potential to upgrade Helpston Road, currently a rural lane, which passes centrally through the site and forms a key connector back to Ailsworth
- Several Public Rights of Way and bridleways cross the site, providing connections between local villages and the wider countryside. A number of routes have been severed by the A47 and potential exists to reconnect these lost links and enhance safety.

## Utilities

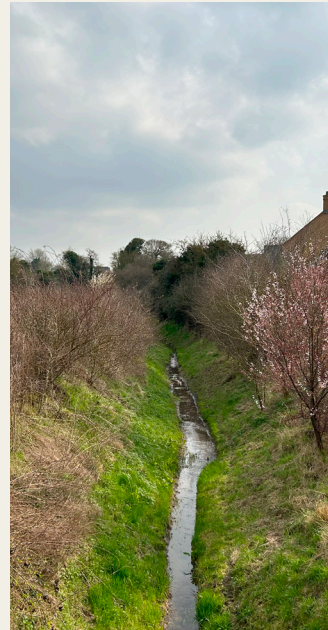
A high-pressure gas main runs through the centre of the site to the north and south of the A47. This should be integrated as part of the wider landscape strategy, and the HSE consultation zones must be taken into account when locating different land uses.

## Air and noise quality

The main air quality and noise consideration is from the A47 and nearby roads, and can be mitigated through the provision of adequate landscape buffers.



Church of St Kyneburgha, Castor



Existing drain



Existing PRoW



# Nature recovery

The biodiversity resources of the site and local landscape have been identified (illustrated at page 27) and opportunities for nature recovery are presented on the adjacent plan.

Natural resources on site, including flushes, verges, hedgerows, trees and limestone grassland heathland, will be protected, restored and enhanced as part of a comprehensive nature recovery strategy, developed in dialogue with local nature groups and statutory consultees.

Proposals will be sensitive to pertinent landscape and ecological features within the local landscape, including the Castor Hanglands SSSI and NNR, Sutton Heath SSSI, Castor Flood Meadows SSSI, Milton Park Registered Park and Garden, county wildlife sites, open spaces in the adjacent villages and the network of Public Rights of Way. Proposals will be cognisant of Draft Local Plan Policies LP36, LP38 and LP41 and will include a robust mitigation strategy and country park as alternative natural greenspace, to be developed in accordance with Natural England guidance.

There is the opportunity to create an extensive nature recovery network that:

- Preserves and enhances the natural, geological, historical and cultural diversity of the local natural environment
- Provides buffers to Castor Hanglands SSSI, and alternative and more desirable usable green space for recreation
- Enhances nature conservation and creates wildlife-rich villages
- Contributes to strategic/large scale habitat enhancement with, for example, the reinstatement of limestone grassland and the expansion of woodland, in a manner that is responsive to the open landscape character
- Creates and restores wildlife-rich habitats, corridors and stepping stones that help wildlife populations to grow, move, thrive and adapt to a changing climate
- Improves the local landscape's resilience to climate change, providing natural solutions to reduce carbon emissions and manage flood risk
- Enables greater public access to green spaces for residents to enjoy and connect with nature close to home, with low-impact, informal activities that contribute to improving health and wellbeing
- Connects with the Nene Park Rural Estate and aligns with the objectives of Draft Local Plan Policy LP39: Nene Valley.



New woodland planting, in accordance with Forestry Commission guidelines and as per published Landscape Character Assessment recommendations

Creation of green corridors / verges along PRoW and identified views to the Church of St Kyneburgha at Castor, providing off-road pedestrian links to open space and visual connection to the local heritage feature

Buffer to Castor Hanglands SSSI

Retention and enhancement of existing verges with the settlement, as characteristic components of the local landscape

Retention and enhancement of existing hedgerows and ditches for wildlife connectivity through the villages

NENE PARK RURAL ESTATE

Extensive new country park with varied habitat types and walking routes, retention of the open character, whilst providing pedestrian connectivity to Nene Park Rural Estate and Ailsworth to the south

Additional area of country park allocated in the draft local plan

Creation of linear woodland belts characteristic of the receiving landscape, to provide habitat connectivity and visual containment

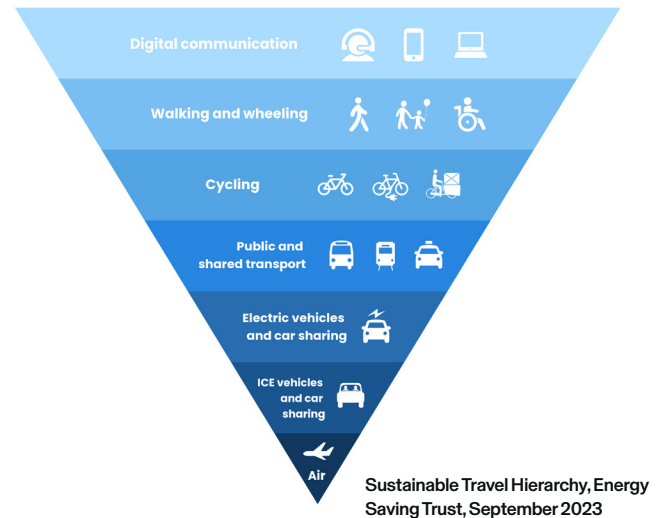


# Sustainable movement

The sustainable movement strategy for Nene Valley Villages will be vision-led, based on the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy, as shown in the adjacent diagram. This will not only reduce the impact of new development on the highway network, but also on the environment through a low carbon approach to travel.

The ambition for The Villages is to focus on placemaking, maximising the opportunity for internalised trips and influencing travel behaviour. Proposals for reducing external trips will be central to The Villages, such as providing a range of on-site community facilities, employment, education, mobility hubs and work from home digital infrastructure. The proposals will help to implement the paradigm shift in thinking about non-car modes and trip reduction to ensure The Villages do not become car-dominated.

The overarching principle of movement within The Villages will be predicated on the provision of active travel links to improve accessibility and connectivity within and between the new neighbourhoods. A network of dedicated active travel mode routes will be provided to prioritise pedestrian and cyclist permeability and ensure connectivity with the wider active travel network off-site. The Peterborough Green Wheel, which provides a comprehensive network of sustainable routes around the city, runs adjacent to the proposed boundary of Village 1, along Marholm Road and Castor Road. This presents an opportunity to connect The Villages with all destinations along the circular route.



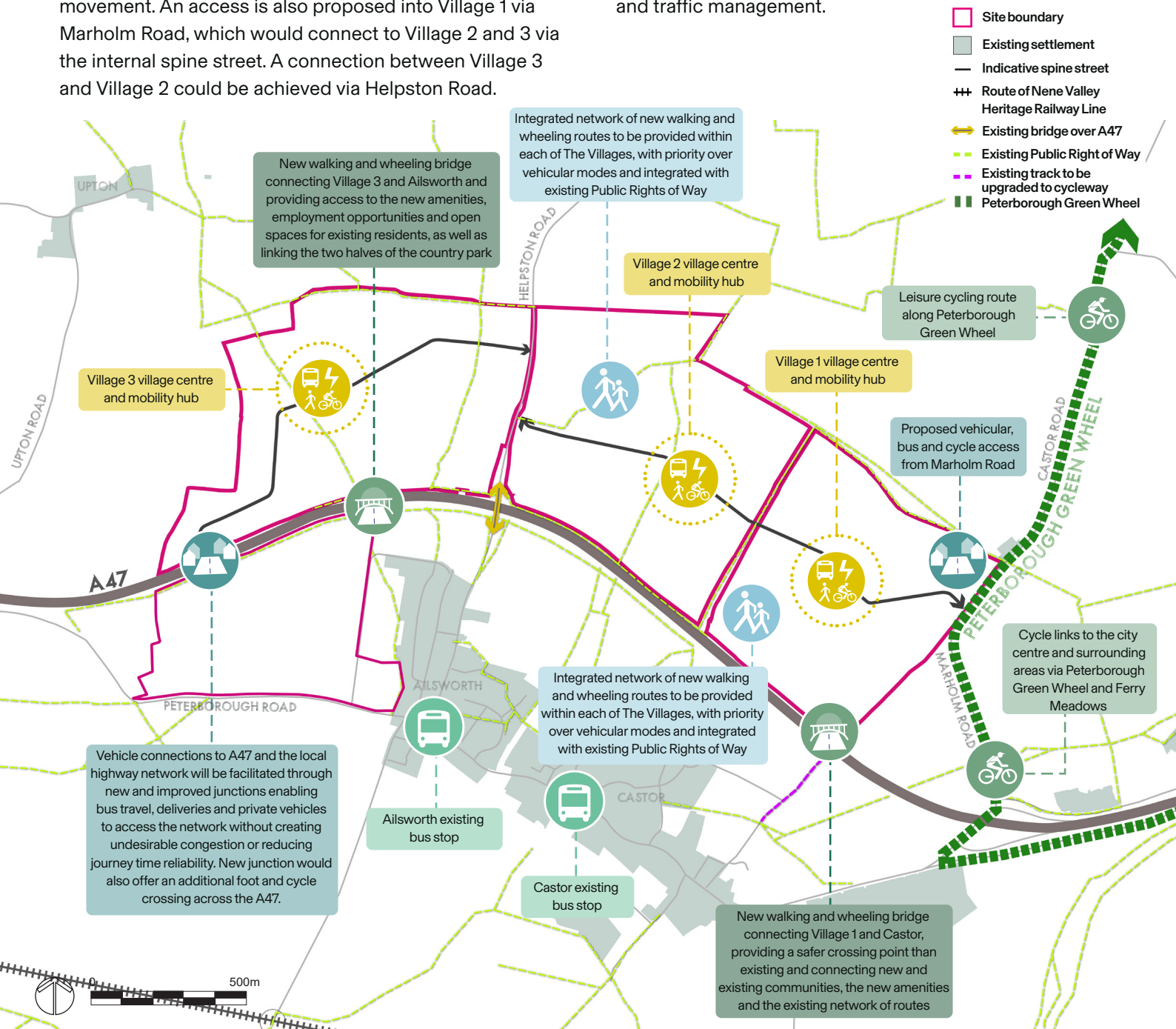
A centrally-located mobility hub within each of The Villages will be a focus for interchange between buses and more active modes, including cycle parking, and will potentially include provision for cycle, e-cycle and e-scooter hire. Parcel lockers would be provided to ensure ease of collection of goods without the need to travel by car. The mobility hubs would also incorporate wayfinding totems that provide vital public information on routes, public transport services, and key destinations.

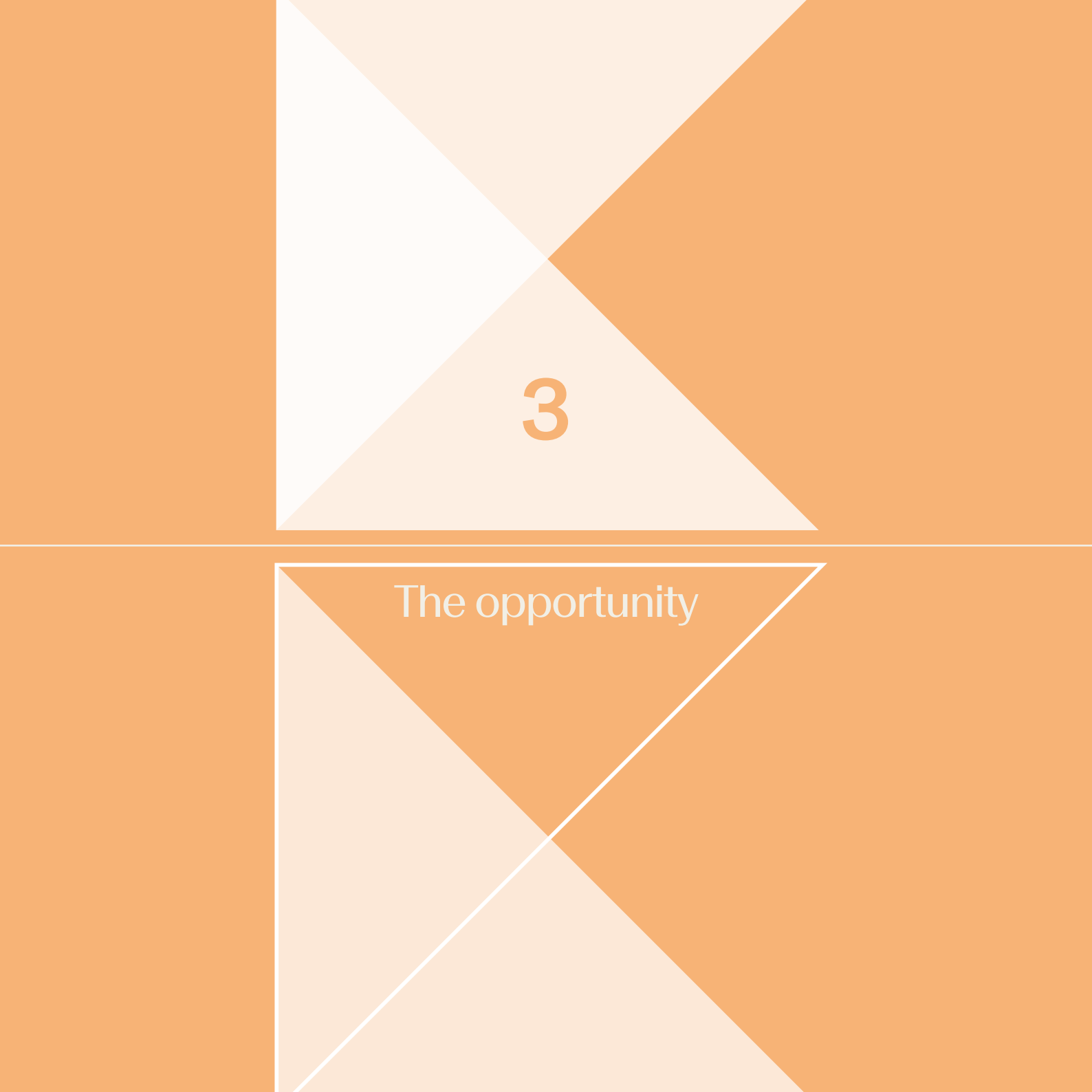
Public transport will play a key role in facilitating sustainable travel between The Villages and external destinations such as Peterborough, with a need for a bus network both internal and external to them. It is likely that multiple bus routes may be required to serve The Villages given the size of the development and the range of land uses proposed.



Primary vehicular access into The Villages via a new junction on A47, between Upton Road and Marholm Road, would be most efficient and provide full flexibility of movement. An access is also proposed into Village 1 via Marholm Road, which would connect to Village 2 and 3 via the internal spine street. A connection between Village 3 and Village 2 could be achieved via Helpston Road.

Full consideration will be required to minimise additional traffic through the villages of Castor and Ailsworth, achieved through the masterplan design, access strategy and traffic management.



The image features a background of solid orange. In the upper half, there is a large white triangle pointing downwards, which is partially overlaid by a smaller, light orange triangle pointing upwards. The number '3' is centered within the white triangle. A thin white horizontal line separates the upper and lower halves of the image. In the lower half, there is a large white triangle pointing upwards, which is partially overlaid by a smaller, light orange triangle pointing downwards. The text 'The opportunity' is centered within the white triangle.

3

The opportunity

# The opportunity

We have carefully studied the existing context and the range of facilities and services on offer, in order to establish the needs of both existing and future communities.

The Nene Valley Villages are proposed to be a holistic response to address housing, employment, and community needs, in a biodiverse and natural environment. Offering a diverse range of homes and jobs, The Villages will foster inclusivity and growth. Strategically located retail and essential amenities will ensure the creation of a well-served community.

The outcome will enable the curation of a vibrant, prosperous and self-sustaining community comprising three interconnected villages, which support the health and wellbeing of all residents and visitors, across the generations. It will become a place of enduring quality and choice, a place of beauty. The key aspirations are explored in more detail over the following pages.









## A nature-led approach

The **protection, retention, enhancement and celebration of nature** is at the forefront of the vision for The Villages. There is an opportunity to deliver robust green/blue infrastructure and an extensive nature recovery network, including:

- Aligning green corridors and open spaces to encompass existing retained and locally valued natural resources
- Ensuring every new home has access to nature within 300m from their front door
- Substantial planting of climate-resilient tree species
- Safeguarding 50% of the site as green space
- Integrating sustainable drainage features within open space and street scenes, softened by planting and providing opportunities for habitat enhancement
- The creation and reinstatement of a range of habitat typologies including woodland, orchards, hedgerows and verges, grassland and wildflower meadows, waterbodies and ponds
- Providing a range of open spaces typologies performing different functions, including social, amenity and recreation areas, sports facilities, community food growing and off-road leisure routes
- Sharing of knowledge on natural history, heritage and the local landscape.

## Sustainability and climate change

Sustainability lies at the heart of the vision for The Villages and resilience to **climate change and adaptability** in design will be fundamental for The Villages' long-term sustainability, in turn helping Peterborough to meet its net zero targets. There is an opportunity to reflect **sustainable development priorities** through the delivery of energy-efficient built form, that is integrated with nature, through the pragmatic use of green and blue infrastructure. Additionally, well-connected transport links and active travel routes that enhance connectivity with the wider area will be pivotal in shaping a healthy, sustainable community. This will entail:

- Abundant green spaces, woodlands and wetlands to provide biodiversity enhancements and protect and enhance habitats for existing species
- The development of a water resource strategy to ensure a sustainable approach to water supply and use, alongside a sustainable drainage strategy
- Energy-efficient designs that maximise natural light and heat and provide passive cooling and ventilation, utilising sustainable energy sources and creating future-proofed homes
- Employing new technologies in the design and construction of buildings, such as modular design and flexible fit-out options, ensuring adaptability for the future use changes
- Embracing a holistic approach through the integration of nature-based solutions, ensuring that The Villages maintain their appeal, offering abundant amenities and green and blue spaces to address the challenges posed by a warmer, wetter future.





## Homes for all

The Villages will seek to address Peterborough's housing needs by offering a **diverse range of high-quality homes**. Through a mix of tenures, typologies and sizes, The Villages aims to meet the forecasted affordable housing requirements and provide inclusive housing options. Providing a diverse array of housing types and tenures will be fundamental to fostering an **inclusive community** with a sense of belonging, thus encouraging families to stay and invest in their neighbourhood across generations.

It is envisaged that The Villages can provide a combined total of up to **3,000 new homes**, which could include:

- Affordable homes
- Family homes
- Later living homes
- Graduate living and starter homes
- Live/work units
- Custom and/or self build plots.

## Community and social value

The Villages has the potential to deliver up to **three primary schools**, totalling six forms of entry. This will cater to the educational needs of circa 1,260 primary school children. In addition, a **new secondary school** with six forms of entry will provide children with a seamless continuity of education within their local community. It is anticipated that the neighbouring villages will also directly benefit from the delivery of new schools to bolster existing provision, since there is an under provision in existing primary level education within the community, already warranting one form of entry. Whilst educational facilities will provide a backbone of community and social infrastructure, The Villages could also provide:

- A new modern **healthcare centre** designed in accordance with the NHS and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System's policy and strategic direction
- A range of indoor and outdoor **sports facilities** dispersed across The Villages to ensure ease of access to facilities that promote health and wellbeing
- The potential to provide circa 3,500 sqm of **retail, food and beverage space**, strategically located within village centres, supporting local shopping and boosting local economic activity. These centres will be carefully scaled to avoid disrupting Peterborough's retail hierarchy, ensuring they complement existing facilities
- Integrated **community hubs**, with flexible spaces that promote neighbourhood cohesion, cater for varying activities and provide mobile workspace.





## Creating local jobs

The Villages presents a unique opportunity to deliver a **range of employment uses** and new jobs, with the potential to provide high-quality employment options across various sectors. The Villages has opportunity to deliver approximately **7.5 hectares** of flexible employment space. The Villages could provide opportunity for:

- Flexible employment uses with the potential to house established businesses along with smaller scale start-up and 'scale-up' units to support local talent and help businesses to flourish
- A mix of village centres across The Villages, set within the context of new homes, facilities and green spaces to provide the right types of accommodation to meet the day-to-day needs of the community
- Provision of work hubs and support for home-working and the self-employed, to ensure that there is a healthy and diverse social mix.



**How will our aspirations  
shape Nene Valley Villages?**



# Living alongside nature & heritage

The Village's natural attributes will be retained, enhanced, and celebrated, with the knowledge of local heritage shared. This approach will be guided by the visions of the John Clare Countryside, Langdyke Trust, Wildlife Trust and Nene Valley Trust.

Collaboration with local nature groups and statutory consultees, together with the principles of Building with Nature will provide a framework of best practice that will ensure a focus on placemaking and sustainability, with the themes of wellbeing, water and wildlife, aligned with Draft Local Plan Policy themes for climate change, nature recovery and healthy communities.

This approach will ensure a context driven approach, that maximises environmental net gain, creates a distinctive place with high-quality green infrastructure that delivers climate resilient water management, brings nature and water close to people, supports equitable and inclusive places, delivers wildlife enhancement, underpins nature recovery and which aligns with Local Plan principles.

Central to the concept will be the creation of a sizeable country park, spanning both sides of the A47. This park will provide opportunities for habitat creation/restoration, and space for recreation as appropriate to the rural setting. The park will foster connectivity between the existing community, The Villages and the Nene Park Rural Estate to the south, whilst celebrating local heritage and natural history. Art, wayfinding and interpretation boards will play an integral role to achieve this.



CLIMATE RESILIENCE







School playing fields will be integrated into the broader open space network, retaining the open character and serving as additional buffers at boundaries

The location and alignment of proposed green lanes reflect key views through the site towards the Church of Kyneburgha

Attractive circular walking routes through the country park as a meaningful alternative to walking to Castor Hanglands, with connections to the north actively discouraged

New woodland blocks reflect local landscape patterns and offer the potential to enhance biodiversity and provide visual mitigation

Creation of a heritage trail, revealing and celebrating the rich historic landscape, with the retained views to the Church of St Kyneburgha at Castor

School playing fields will be integrated into the broader open space network, retaining the open character and serving as additional buffers at boundaries

Creating strategic green links that connect into the wider landscape. Public Rights of Way retained and providing access to recreational, productive and natural green spaces

Integration of blue infrastructure, supporting climate resilience and aiding biodiversity enhancements

Cow Lane functions as both a separator and a connector between the new villages

Integration of blue infrastructure, supporting climate resilience and aiding biodiversity enhancements

Weaving The Villages and Castor and Ailsworth together with an extensive country park that promotes wellbeing and habitat creation, is connected with the Nene Park to the south and which provides a more attractive recreational alternative than the nearby SSSIs

A green perimeter separates built form from the A47 corridor and creates opportunities to connect woodland blocks, enhance biodiversity and provide areas of sustainable drainage

Pocket parks and open spaces, close to homes, varying in scale and type - from sports and formal recreation, to allotments, community orchards and wildflower meadows

# WEAVING IN THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE





# A cohesive community

Nene Valley Villages aims to be self-sustaining and mutually supportive, complementing Peterborough. The three villages will be interlinked, creating a network of infrastructure, open spaces, facilities, services and social amenities meeting the everyday needs of the community. Combined facilities will create a long-term sustainable place, with community and social value at the heart, ensuring The Villages becomes a desirable, convenient and sustainable place to live and work, and is recognised for prioritising health and wellbeing.

To achieve self-sufficiency and sustainability, key facilities will include a secondary school and several primary schools, early years provision, and a number of village centres. A range of housing options will be offered, catering for all ages. This holistic approach aims to create an inter-generational neighbourhood.

The Villages will embrace existing residents, ensuring ease of access, such that a mutually supportive local economy and community will flourish. The wider movement strategy also ensures that both future and existing residents have fast, dedicated, low-carbon connections with Peterborough, granting them access to wider civic, commercial and retail amenities within the city centre.



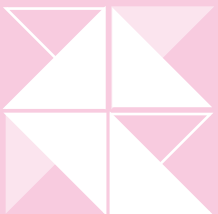
HEALTHY LIVING



# Inclusive growth

An innovative approach to mixed-use placemaking will underpin the The Villages, creating jobs and opportunities to maximise sustainable growth. This includes integrating employment opportunities at the heart of The Villages, weaving together a range of opportunities, such as shared work hubs, spaces to nurture new businesses, flexible and adaptable working spaces of varying sizes and continued support through the provision of grow on spaces. The close proximity to the A1 also creates an opportunity to provide a new employment gateway to Peterborough along the A47 corridor, allowing rapid connection to major arterial roads.

All dwellings will be designed to accommodate homeworking, recognising the evolving nature of work and population needs in response to new technologies. The integration of mobile working facilities, supported by superfast digital connectivity, will ensure maximum flexibility for the workforce. By integrating a variety of working options alongside local facilities and living opportunities, the community will foster a vibrant local economy throughout the week and into the evenings.



DIVERSE ECONOMY





# A connected Peterborough

In the broader context of travel and sustainability, there is a need to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and private vehicular travel. This shift is essential for minimising carbon emissions and decreasing the frequency of shorter journeys, establishing habits from the outset. The Villages will achieve this through integrating innovative solutions across the primary movement network, creating a connected, low-carbon, smart movement network between The Villages, Castor and Ailsworth, Peterborough and beyond.

Opportunities will be taken to prioritise pedestrian, cycle and e-wheeler movements both on and off-site, further facilitated by two new non-vehicular bridges over the A47, ensuring accessible and safe crossing points

for the entire community. Moreover, the wider green network of spaces and routes within and surrounding The Villages fosters a permeable network of local pedestrian movement. These landscaped spaces will encourage sustainable movement and facilitate health and wellbeing.

The movement network will be supported by a series of multi-modal mobility hubs, situated at key nodes and combining public transport with car clubs, e-bike/scooter schemes, cycle parking, rapid charging points, cycle and e-vehicle repair, and other facilities to promote journeys by low carbon means.



FUTURE PROOFED





# Nene Valley Villages

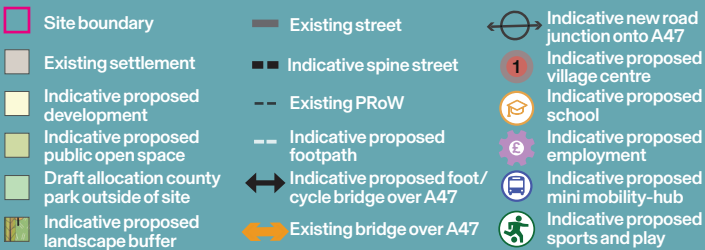
The Nene Valley Villages mosaic provides a long term, sustainable growth opportunity, based on Garden City principles and responsive to 21<sup>st</sup> century living, to deliver an exemplar framework for the growth of this area. This opportunity is woven across a series of Villages, which can come forward to flexibly meet local housing and employment needs over a 25+ year timeframe. This will make a positive contribution towards meeting Peterborough City Council's development needs alongside their growth and regeneration ambitions. Each village offers different benefits, interlinked and supportive of one another, demonstrating the potential to create a new series of neighbourhoods which are innovative, vibrant, healthy, safe, sustainable and connected. This will integrate with, complement and enhance the existing mosaic of villages in the surrounding area.

The Villages have their own distinct character, set within the heritage-rich landscape context of Peterborough and the Nene Valley, with nature recovery being a key design driver. The Villages will provide extensive community infrastructure, residential uses, employment opportunities, public open space (including a country park), tree-lined streets and footpaths, and ecological enhancements. This modern mosaic of Villages will be a contemporary reinterpretation of the historic settlements which shape the landscape to the west of Peterborough.

The adjacent illustrative framework plan presents one way in which the site could come forward, in line with

the Draft Peterborough Local Plan allocation. This spans Villages 1, 2 and 3, with a swathe of country park between Villages 2 and 3, extending south of the A47 to the west of Ailsworth. Each Village can be its own distinct entity, including its own local centre, educational uses and amenity green space. However, together they form a comprehensive mosaic of Villages, connected via sustainable modes of transport, with Village 2 providing a district centre, Village 1 a secondary school, and Village 3 the main location for employment uses, which are located in the middle zone of the HSE consultation zone, where housing development is limited. There is flexibility of approach, presenting a key opportunity for comprehensive long-term growth, depending on Peterborough's housing need, employment need, and build-out rates.

This framework could provide a combined total of up to 3,000 homes, in line with the draft allocation. As set out earlier in the document, Homes England owns additional land parcels in the locality, which provide further opportunities to enhance the Nene Valley mosaic. These are presented overleaf.





## VILLAGE 3

- Approximately 850 new homes
- 2FE primary school (with expansion to 3FE)
- Local mobility hub
- A village centre
- Approximately 7.5ha dedicated employment

## VILLAGE 2

- Approximately 1,150 new homes
- 2FE primary school
- Local mobility hub
- A larger village centre with range of uses, including a health facility

## VILLAGE 1

- Approximately 1,000 new homes
- 6FE secondary school
- Local mobility hub
- A village centre
- Connection to Peterborough Green Wheel and existing walking and cycling networks





# Potential additional opportunities

Whilst the proposed Nene Valley Villages presents the core development option to be delivered as part of the emerging Local Plan, Homes England's wider land ownership in the area presents further development opportunities to help meet strategic aspirations and targets for housing, employment and nature recovery.

Two primary alternative opportunities have been identified for consideration for additional allocations in the emerging plan. The first, is for a fourth village opportunity on land to the west of Village 3 that could provide additional housing and employment land. This would be linked to the wider village network but also act as a standalone settlement that could be delivered concurrently with the wider site. The second option is for a smaller village extension on land to the west of Ailsworth that would be independent from the wider Nene Valley Villages concept.



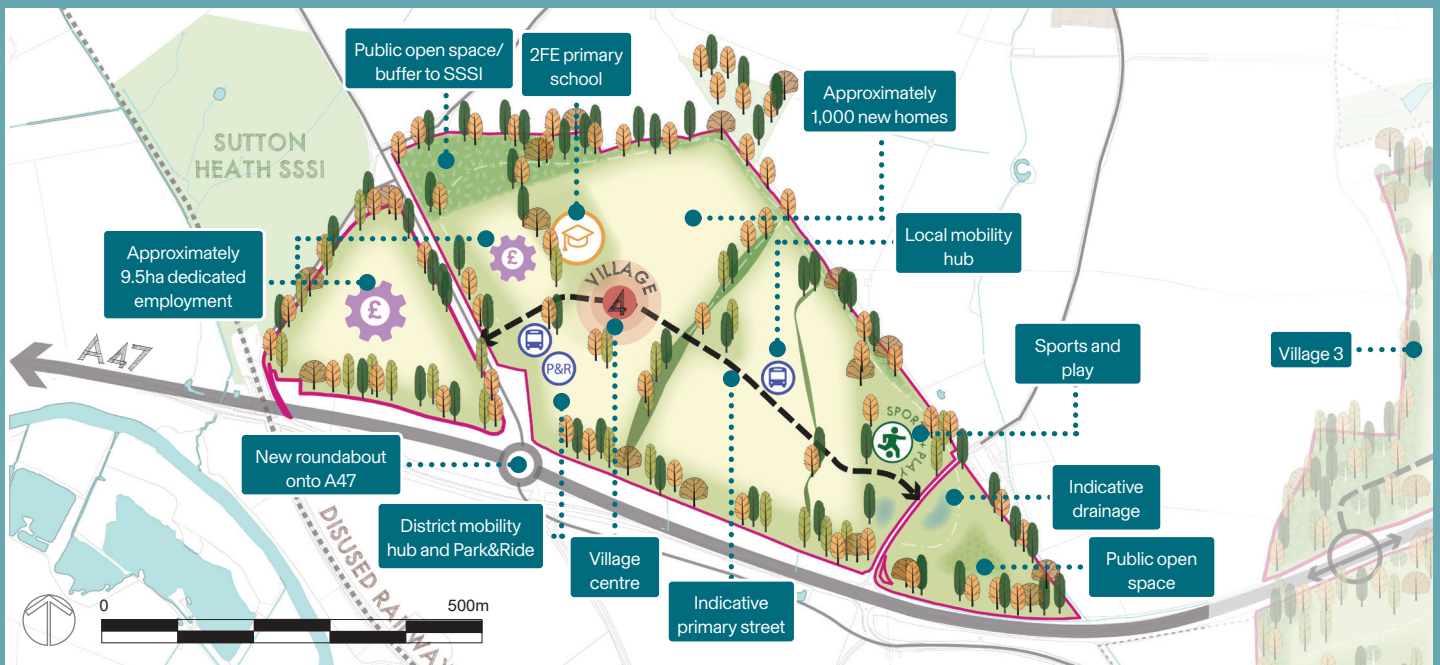
# Village 4

Homes England owns parcels of land to the west of Villages 1-3, north of the A47, which present the opportunity of providing space for a 4<sup>th</sup> Village. Village 4 is located in an accessible strategic position, close to the junction with the A1, and adjacent to a section of the A47 which is being upgraded to a dual carriageway, along with a new roundabout onto Sutton Heath Road.

The Village could provide a mix of uses, following the pattern of Villages 1-3, with approximately 1,000 residential dwellings, a primary school, local centre, employment and associated public open space. The employment could be strategically located to provide a

buffer between the residential uses and Sutton Heath Bog SSSI, and would respond to local and regional need, corresponding with Peterborough's aspiration for inclusive long-term sustainable growth.

Given the site's location on the strategic network, there is also the potential to create a district-wide mobility hub, including a Park & Ride, as part of a new western gateway to Peterborough. This would maximise sustainable connectivity to the City Centre and wider region, supporting Peterborough's objective to increase the number of people travelling sustainably and supporting the ambition to deliver a Park & Ride.



Village 4 framework plan

# Land west of Ailsworth

A further additionality, which Homes England's land holdings presents, is within land immediately to the west of Ailsworth, between the existing village and the proposed country park. This provides land for approximately 250 additional homes, for early delivery.

It would be ensured that the development parcels and new homes would be sensitively designed to minimise the impact upon the existing residents within Ailsworth. The character would also respect the sensitivities of the Ailsworth Conservation Area.



Land west of Ailsworth framework plan





5



Delivering the  
ambition

# Working in partnership

Homes England is committed to working with local partners and the community to deliver a high quality scheme, which actively responds to the needs and growth opportunities of Peterborough. As part of the City's future growth story and success, we can provide long-term commitment and certainty.

Nene Valley Villages has great potential. We are committed to working with local partners and the community to deliver a high-quality scheme, which actively responds to the needs and growth opportunities of Peterborough. We will engage with key local stakeholders and undertake the necessary technical work in response to the Draft Local Plan consultation process. Looking ahead, the community will be invited to participate in the development of the site concept and vision at the appropriate time, to ensure their priorities and ambitions are reflected.

As a strategic and long-term phased opportunity, The Villages can be shaped to meet Peterborough's known and emerging requirements. Our long-term objectives and approach to stewardship means the scheme will be sustainable now and in the future. This too can ensure that the City and Parish Councils, as well as the local business and residential community, can actively engage in stewardship of new community assets.

Delivering strategic growth at scale at The Villages offers the chance to innovate and mitigate the critical challenge

of climate change. It presents an opportunity to create more sustainable homes and business accommodation, with better facilities to support sustainable, healthy lives, and which instils a sense of community.

Homes England is the Government's housing, land and regeneration agency and sole landowner of the Nene Valley Villages site. We are supportive of innovative delivery methods and high-quality design, including accelerated construction, direct commissioning and self/custom-build, and will further explore these and other new opportunities throughout the Plan period. As the sole landowner, we can ensure design quality, as well as control and a drive for delivery, where an infrastructure-first approach is taken to ensure the delivery of critical technical and social infrastructure alongside new homes.

Based on our extensive development experience, together with evidence developed by the WSP and fabrik team, Nene Valley Villages is a suitable, available and deliverable site.

# Summary – for the benefit of all

Nene Valley Villages offers the opportunity to do something different: to innovate by building for the future, whilst simultaneously nurturing and enhancing the natural and heritage credentials of the site. Creating the community of tomorrow, which empowers stakeholders to participate in the creation of place, take ownership and manage their community, for the benefit of future generations.

## Suitable

As a long-term strategic growth opportunity for Peterborough, The Villages has very few land-use constraints and is of sufficient scale to provide a highly sustainable new community that could support the proposed population, as well as complementing existing needs.

## Achievable

The site is clearly deliverable and key infrastructure requirements have been identified with potential solutions already established and initially costed, to demonstrate that they would not create a barrier to the scheme's delivery.

## Sustainable

The Villages provides an opportunity to apply a landscape-led approach to placemaking, ensuring the rich heritage and natural assets are at the heart of proposals, working holistically to create biodiversity and wellbeing enhancements, alongside a housing and employment offer that is for the benefit of all.

## Available

Homes England's full ownership of the site offers certainty of housing delivery, with the public sector being in control of the disposal strategy. As a team, we bring extensive development experience that will ensure the delivery of a thriving new community which will in-turn bring extensive benefits to the city and people of Peterborough.



# The four pillars of the ambition

## Living alongside nature & heritage



Protecting, restoring and enhancing the natural environment. Improving resilience to climate change with adaptable solutions



Creating high quality green infrastructure that is multifunctional, provides connectivity and champions a context-driven approach



Celebrating local heritage and natural history, as understood through extensive baseline studies and community engagement

## A cohesive community



Fully aligned with the Town & Country Planning Association's Garden Village principles



A multi-tenure housing strategy that can deliver beyond this Plan period. Our trajectory assumes a rate of 200 homes per annum from 2031/32



Wider community benefits, including primary and secondary school provision, a health hub and a sports offer

## Inclusive growth



Flexible employment uses, including support for smaller scale start-ups and 'scale up' space to help local businesses flourish



Village centres meet the day-to-day needs of the community and provide additional job opportunities



Provision of work hubs and support for home-working and the self-employed, providing a healthy and diverse social mix

## A connected Peterborough



A smart movement network linking The Villages to Peterborough, optimising opportunities and supporting the success of the city centre



Prioritisation of walking and wheeling to encourage healthy lifestyles and connect into a wider network of movement routes



Opportunities for new pedestrian and wheeling bridges across the A47 connecting existing and future communities

# Nene Valley Villages - A Modern Mosaic

Lenten House  
16 Lenten Street  
Alton  
Hampshire  
GU34 1HG

First Floor Studio  
The Old School  
Exton Street  
London  
SE18UE

[fabrikuk.com](http://fabrikuk.com)

# fabrik