

Section 2. Analysis

This section provides an analysis of the expansion area and its context, and sets out initial responses to the key issues raised. This section forms the foundation for the rest of the SPD.

The analysis covers the following topics:

- The main expansion area
- Existing development
- Topography, views and visibility from the AONB
- Context
- Landscape
- Biodiversity
- Flooding and drainage issues
- Infrastructure and utilities
- Movement
- Land use
- Summary plan

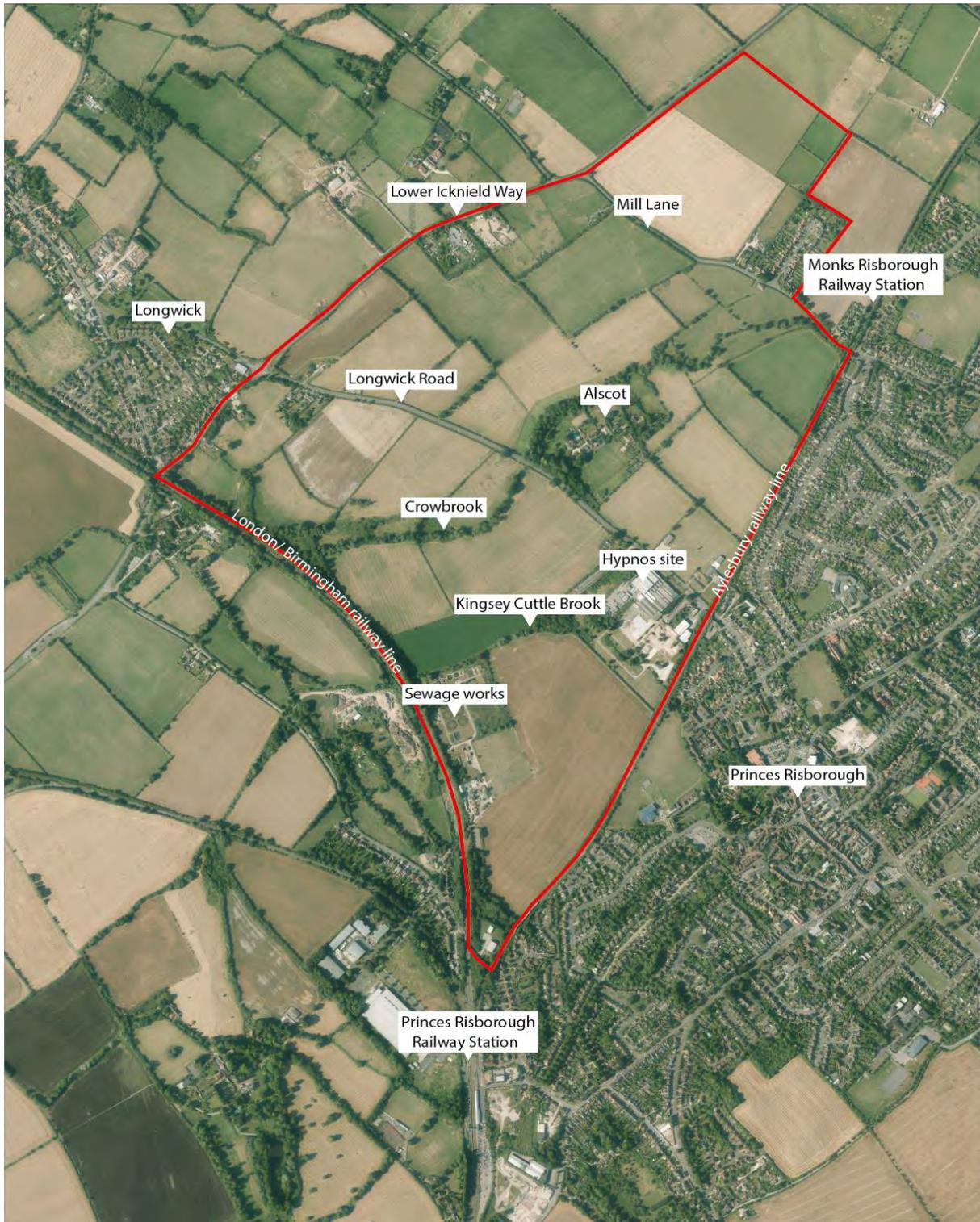
2.1 The main expansion area

The site is around 177 hectares and is allocated as the Main Expansion Area in the Local Plan. It is made up of a series of linked fields that are crossed by existing roads (Longwick Road and Mill Lane) and pathways.

It is defined to the west by the London/Birmingham railway line, Lower Icknield Way (B4009) to the north and the footpath to Meadle, and the Aylesbury railway line to the east. The Crowbrook Stream (also called Mill Brook), flowing east to west from Mill Lane, and the Kingsey Cuttle Brook, flowing from the Hynnos site to the Sewage Treatment Works and beyond the railway line, cross the expansion area. In the southern corner flows the Pyrtle spring.

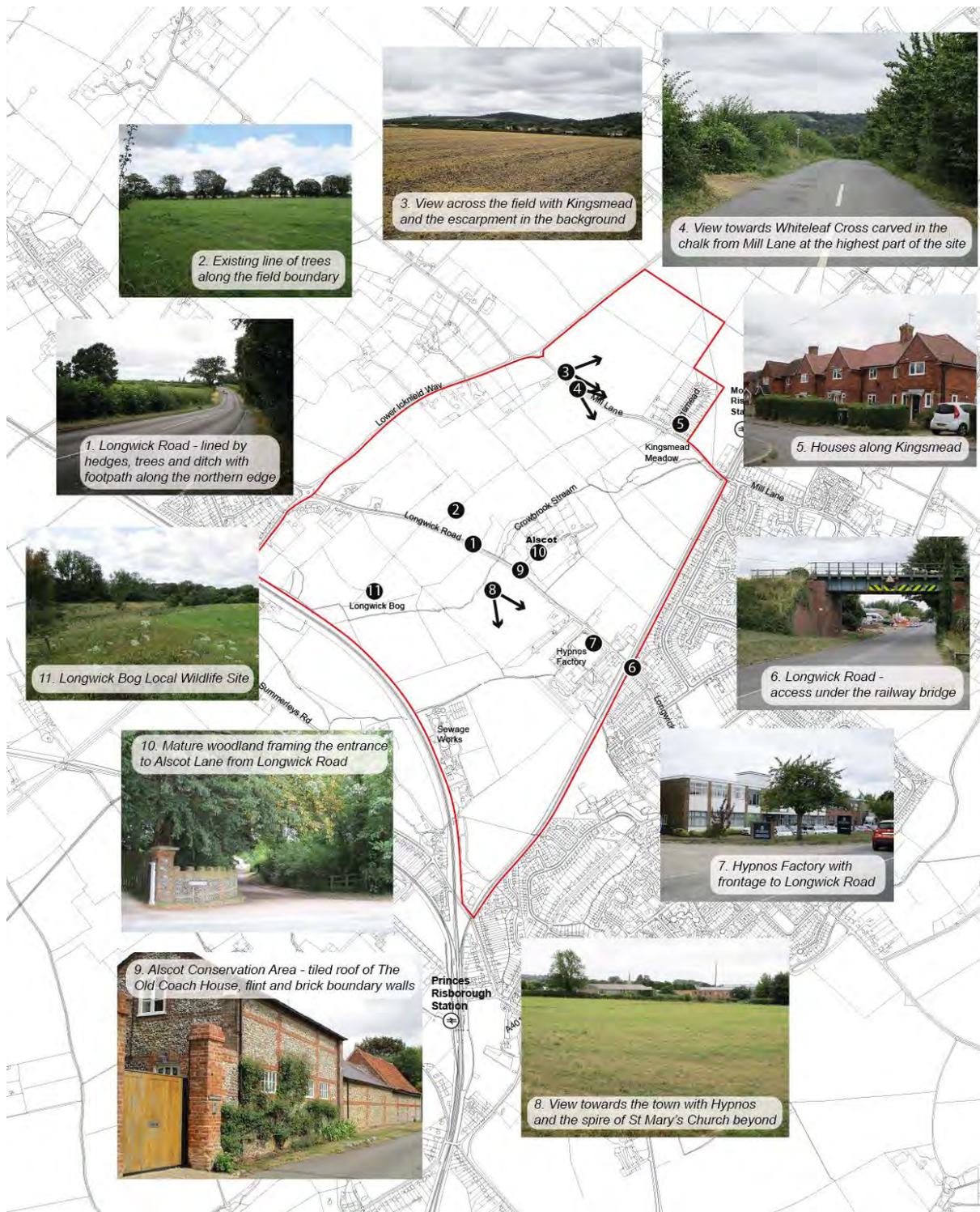
Small pockets of development are found within the expansion area including the small hamlet of Alscot, a designated Conservation Area, and housing off Longwick Road and Mill Lane. Princes Risborough Sewage Treatment Works is located along the western edge of the expansion area. There is also an employment area off Longwick Road.

Figure 3. The main expansion area



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Figure 4. The main expansion area – photo analysis



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2.2 Existing development

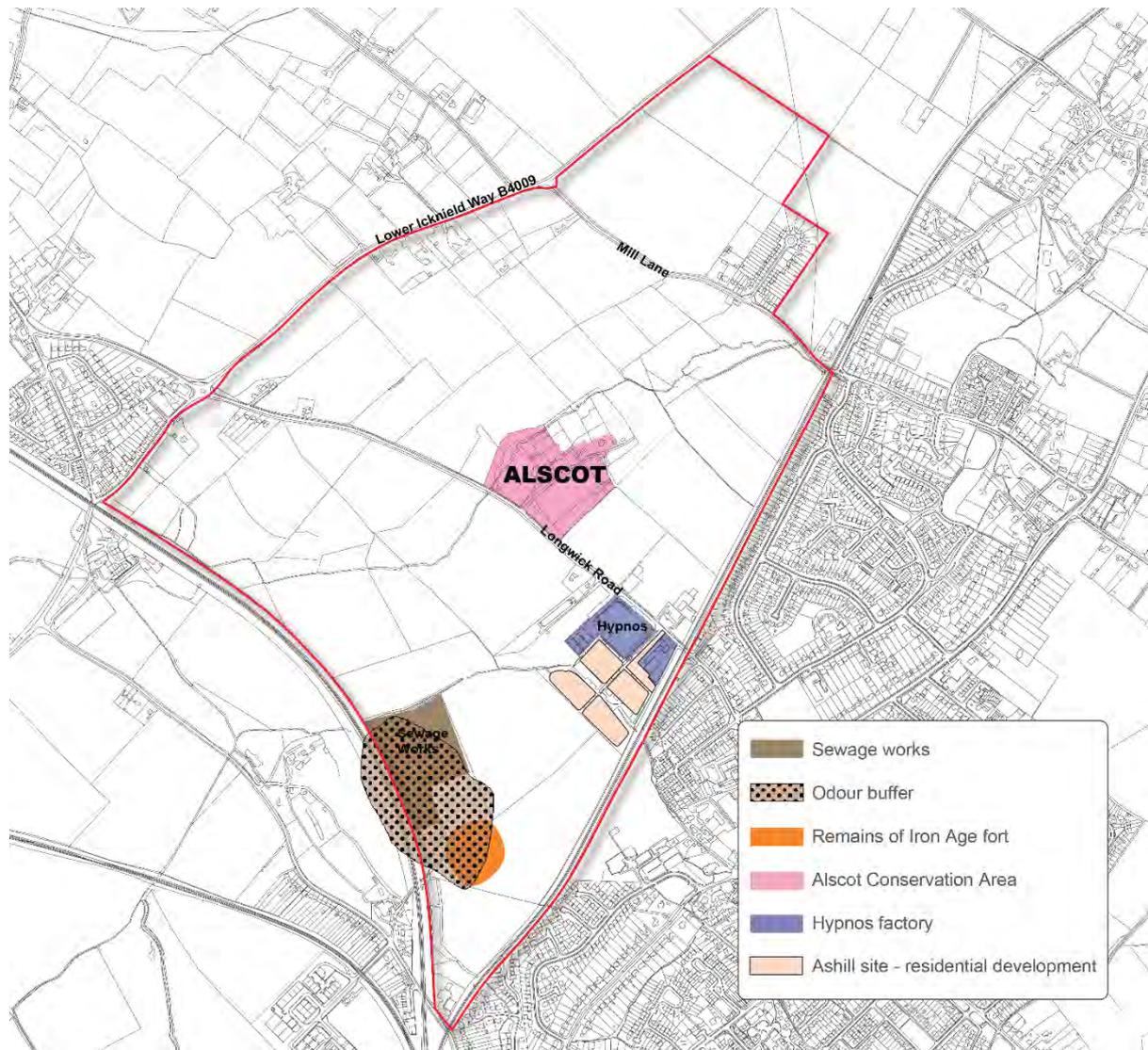
2.2.1 Main issues

- Character and setting of Alscot Conservation area; a small hamlet of historic farm buildings and cottages at the centre of the expansion area.
- Presence of an Iron Age settlement at Park Mill Farm.
- Integration with the Ashill site; a new development of 96 houses adjacent to the Hypnos Factory and accessed off Longwick Road.
- Indicative odour buffer around the sewage treatment works within which housing is restricted.

2.2.2 Initial responses

- Maintain an appropriate green buffer between the hamlet and new development to safeguard the setting of the Alscot Conservation Area.
- Ensure the layout connects to the new residential development at the Ashill site.
- Any change to the indicative baseline odour buffer must be evidenced by appropriate and up to date odour assessment and modelling.

Figure 5. Existing development



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2.3 Topography, views and visibility from the AONB

2.3.1 Main Issues

- The expansion area is visible in key viewpoints from the Chiltern escarpment and AONB including Whiteleaf Cross and Brush Hill on the Ridgeway National Trail.
- The visibility of different parts of the expansion area from the AONB is influenced by the topography, the railway embankments, vegetation as well as the relationship to the existing urban area.
- The northern part of the expansion area is particularly prominent in views from the AONB; land is at its highest point(s) with greater levels of undulation and openness.
- The southern corner of the expansion area is less sensitive in long distance views; land falls to levels below the town, and the area is strongly influenced by its close proximity to the town, its location between two railway lines and the presence of a number of urban fringe uses.
- Within the expansion area there are local views towards the town including key landmarks such as the spire of St Mary's Church.
- There are long range views towards Bledlow Cop and Lodge Hill to the west and Whiteleaf Cross (carved in the chalk of the hillside) to the east.
- The backdrop of the escarpment is a prominent and important vista from a number of locations within the expansion area including existing footpaths, the northern edge of the expansion area from Mill Lane and Longwick Road and Alscot Conservation Area.

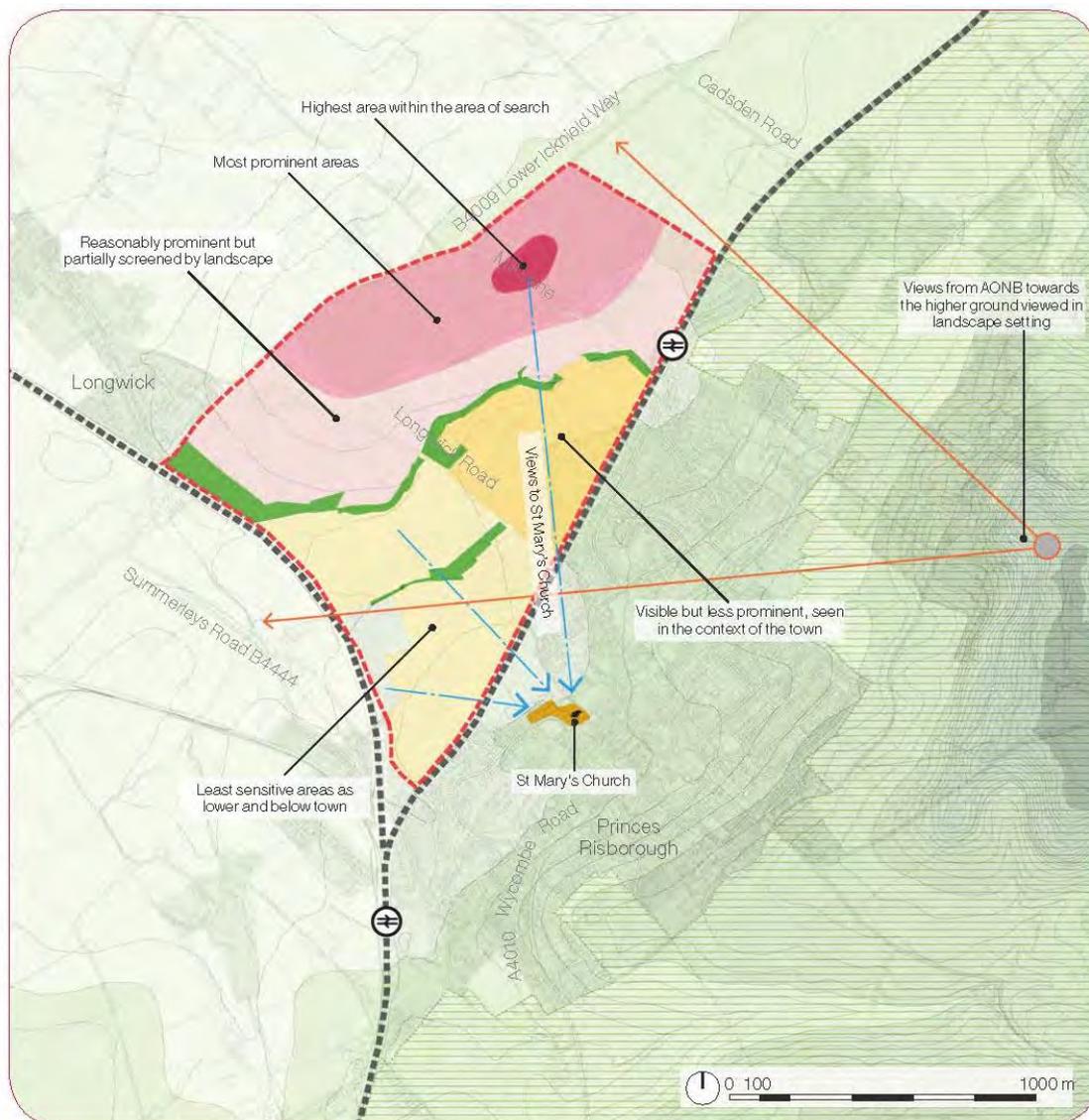
2.3.2 Initial responses

- Retain existing soft landscape, and supplement it with new to justify and support increased densities in some locations
- Integrate substantial green infrastructure links that are visible from the Chiltern escarpment.
- Scale and design of development to reflect the locality and allow sufficient space for structural planting along its boundaries and within the development footprint to break up the built-form and to relate positively to the existing residential context.
- Consider choice of materials, orientation of building and level of lighting in the impact of new development from the AONB¹.

¹ Parts of the expansion area are more visible in views from the AONB due to topography and/or vegetation, and the development layout and density/intensity will need to take account of this

- Local and long range view corridors should be used to inform the layout of the expansion area and ensure it feels visually connected to the town and its wider landscape setting.

Figure 6. Topography and visual impact of different parts of the expansion area. The key views are from the AONB to the east. (Princes Risborough Background Study, Tibbalds, 2015)²



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² The site boundary on this plan marks the area of search for the Tibbalds study and does not reflect the expansion area boundary for this document as shown in figure 6.

2.4 Context

2.4.1 Main issues

- Maintain Princes Risborough's future scale; preclude future piecemeal development and prevent coalescence with Longwick.
- Princes Risborough has a compact town centre, low/medium density formal grid residential blocks and is surrounded by more informal lower density hamlets and villages.
- The existing residential areas include a variety of housing types and styles.
- The residential areas are characterised by street trees, grass verges and hedgerows in front gardens. There are several green spaces within developments e.g. Fairway, New Road, Place Farm Way, Elmdale Gardens, Park Meadow, Ash Road, The Crescent, Northfield Road, Berryfield Road, Beech Road, End of Park Street, Dunsmore Avenue which are characteristic of the town.
- Local materials include red stock brick, brick and flint, white/cream painted render, weather-boarding and timber.
- Historic and special features of local Conservation Areas, most notably Alscot Conservation Area, Princes Risborough Conservation Area, Monks Risborough Conservation Area and the presence of historic mills within the surrounding area.

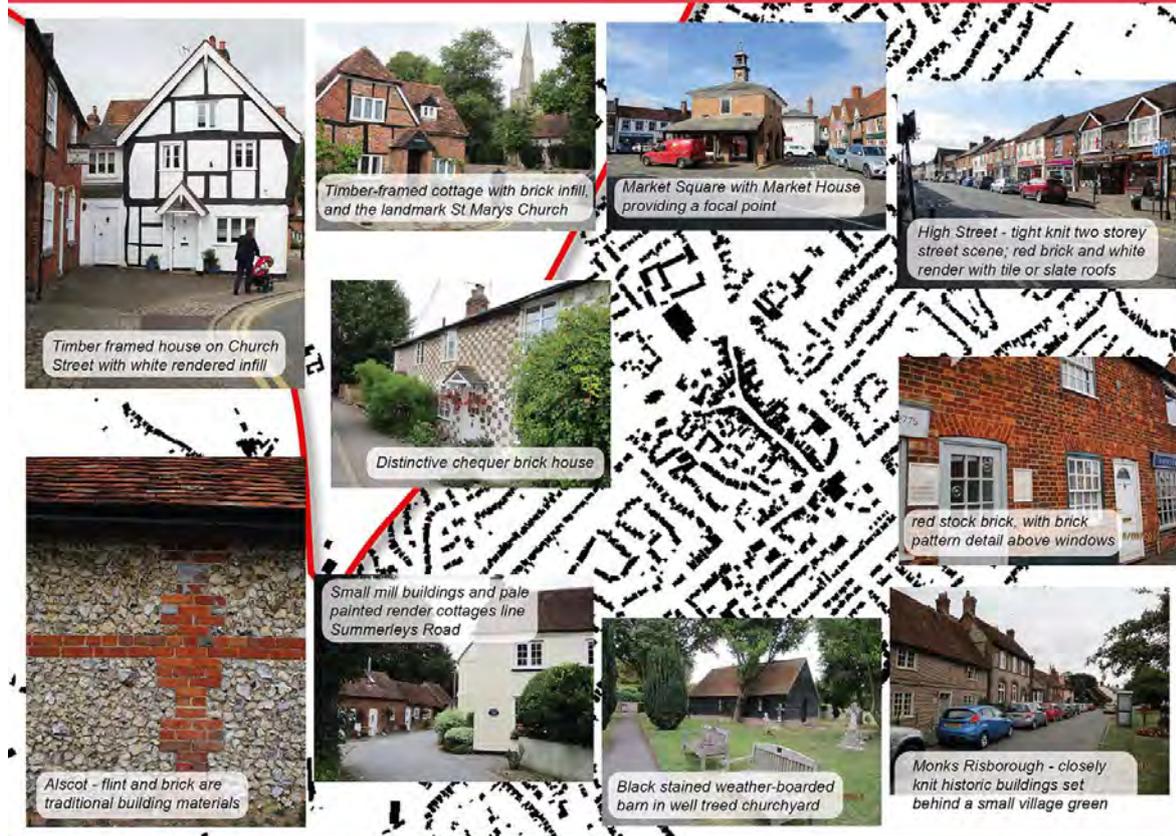
2.4.2 Initial responses

- Provide clear development edges by retaining and strengthening existing landscape features at the boundaries of the expansion area, and green open space to Longwick.
- The block layout and street pattern of new development should respond to the Princes Risborough context.
- Incorporate the positive characteristics of the existing residential areas of Princes Risborough in new development.
- Use a small but well defined palette of materials in keeping with the local context of the town to unify development and reinforce sense of identity. Incorporate innovative new sustainable materials.

Figure 8. Local character



Streets and Boundaries



Buildings and Materials

2.5 Landscape

2.5.1 Main issues

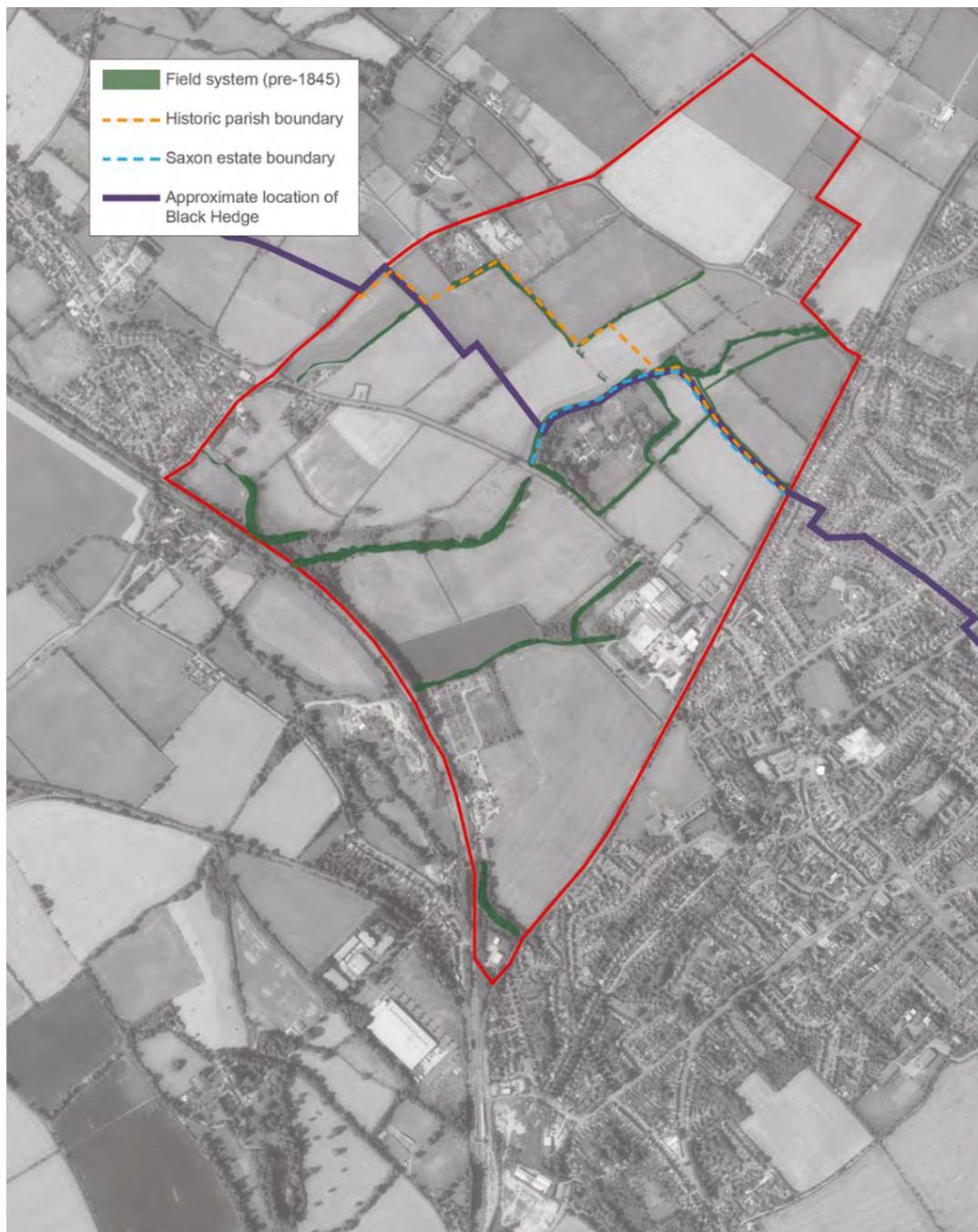
- Historically important hedgerows are evident in the expansion area (see figure 9).
- The line of the ancient Black Hedge which marks the boundary of the parish of Monks Risborough passes through the expansion area (see figure 9). It is the oldest recorded parish boundary in England; identified in the historic Charter of 903AD. Parts of the hedge are still in evidence around Alscot Conservation Area.
- Key landscape characteristics of the site include the network of small intimate stream corridors, the strong linear and geometric field pattern, and the network of dense hedgerows and enclosures, grass verges and ditches.
- Existing vegetation includes mature oak trees, willow trees along the Crowbrook Stream Corridor, woodland at Alscot Lodge and adjacent to the Kingsey Cuttle Brook, and vegetation at Longwick Bog. Hedgerows and trees along the ancient Lower Icknield Way form the northern boundary of the expansion area (see figure 11).
- There is a lack of vegetation management along the watercourses. In some areas, dense canopy cover is causing heavy shading of the streams, resulting in little or no undergrowth or emergent vegetation.
- The expansion area is located within 5km of the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation, which is sensitive to air pollution and recreational pressure.
- There are two non-statutory Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation within the expansion area. Longwick Bog Local Wildlife Site (LWS) which includes priority habitats of purple moor grass and rush pastures, and Kingsmead Meadow and Pond Biological Notification Site (BNS).
- Other priority habitats include deciduous woodland at Alscot and around Park Mill ponds and hedgerows (see figure 11).
- The expansion area includes areas of Grade 2, 3 and 4 agricultural land (see figure 10).

2.5.2 Initial responses

- As part of the green infrastructure network, retain existing trees and significant hedgerows, linking them together with new planting within green spaces, gardens and streets.
- Where possible, incorporate the route of the Black Hedge into the new development layout to provide links with the history of the local area.
- Provide an appropriate buffer between new development and nature conservation areas.

- Retain and enhance a landscape and wildlife movement corridor between the two locally-designated wildlife sites to improve the biodiversity value of the areas.

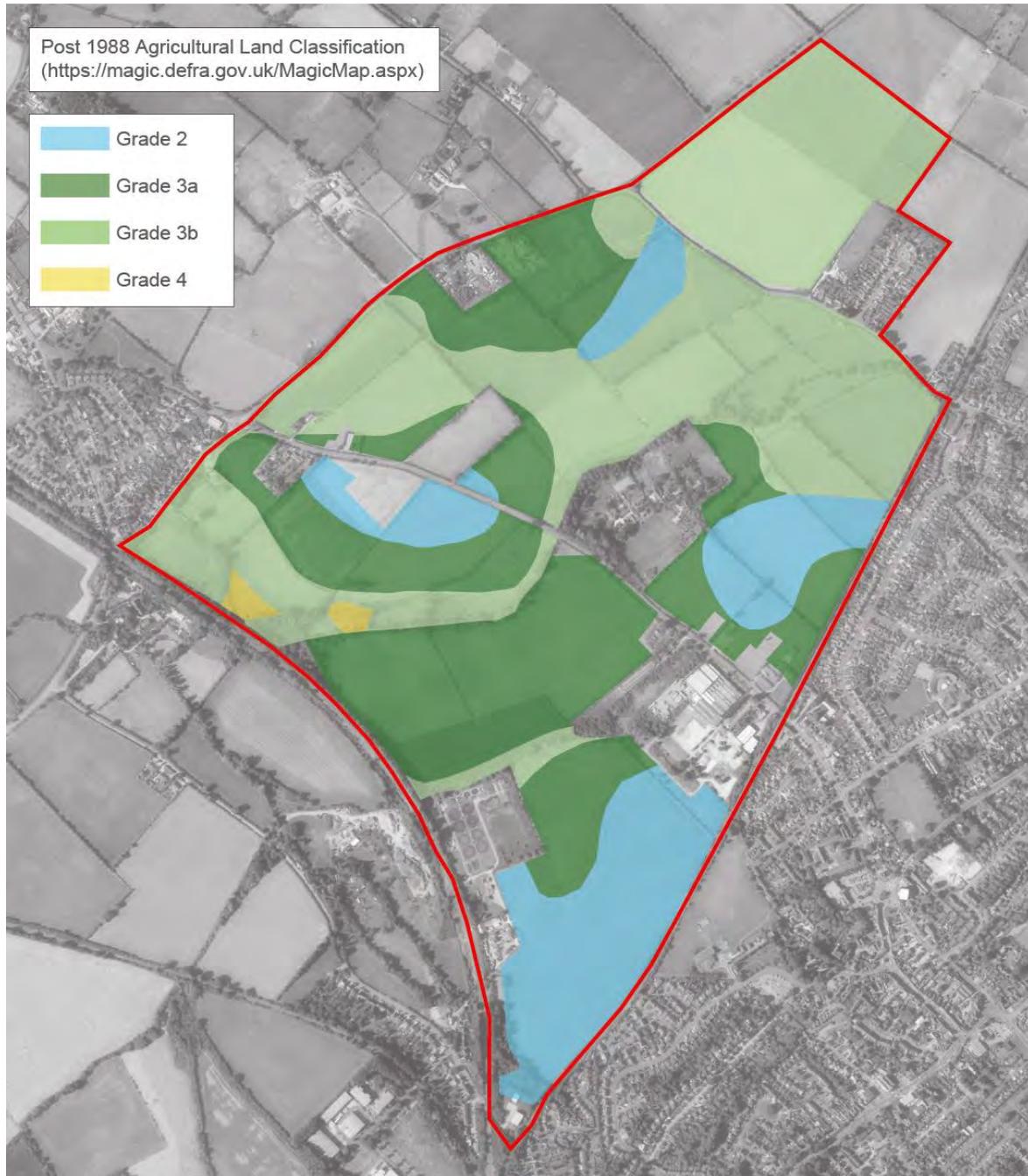
Figure 9. Historic hedgerows, field systems and boundaries⁴



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⁴ Location of Black Hedge – a Saxon Estate boundary- based on Figure 1 from *The Boundaries of Monks Risborough* (Arnold H.J. Baines) and further surveys from the Risborough Countryside Group of the Black Hedge

Figure 10. Agricultural Land Classification



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2.6 Biodiversity

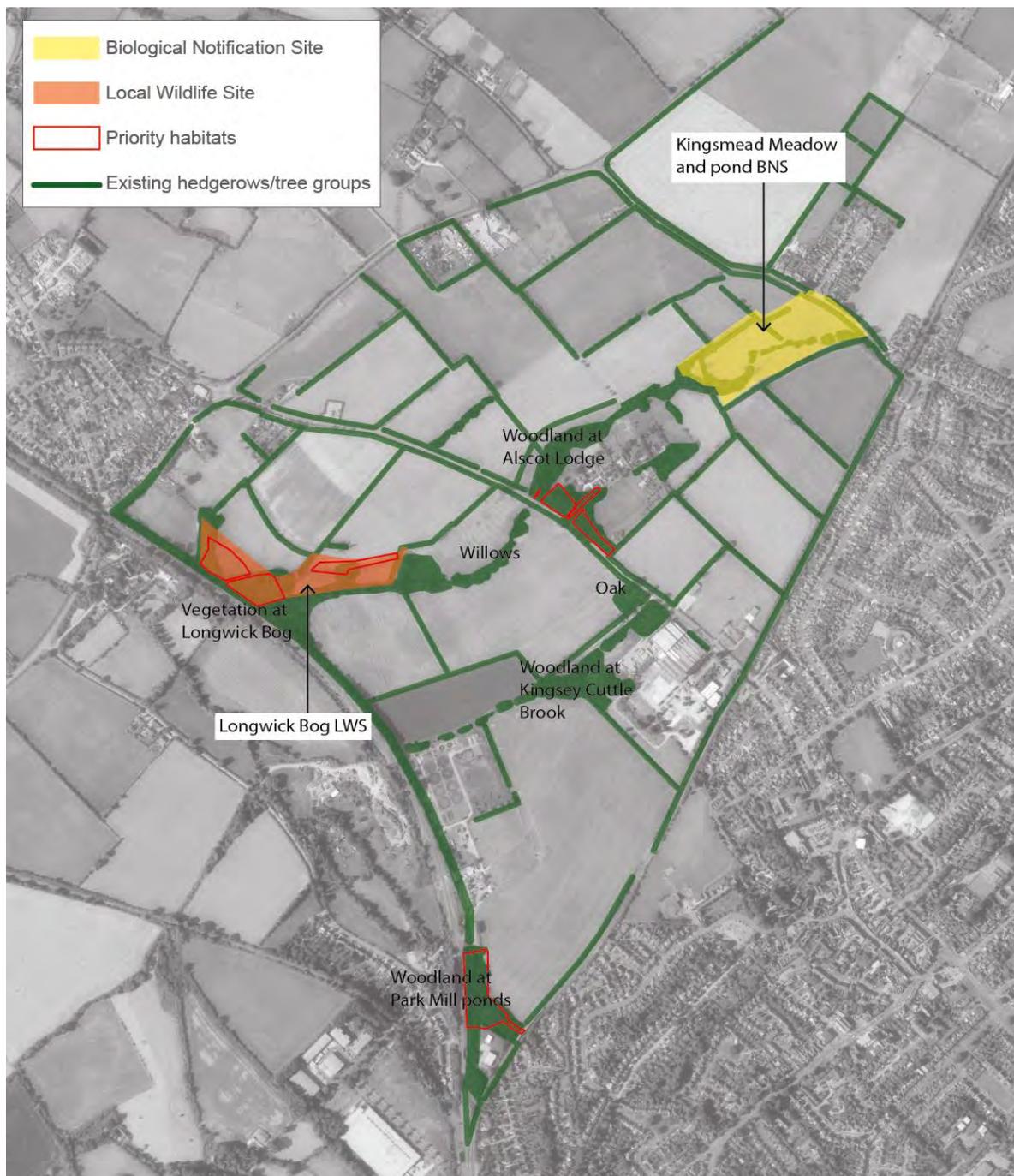
2.6.1 Main issues

- The structural vegetation of hedgerows and trees along the watercourses and field boundaries act as essential corridors along which wildlife can travel.
- The streams are used as commuting routes within the local area and/or resting habitat by riparian mammals such as water vole and otter.
- The expansion area supports a number of 'protected species'. Badger setts have been recorded in several locations within the expansion area.
- Roosting, foraging and commuting bats have also been recorded. These are most likely to be found along watercourses such as the Crowbrook Stream, Kingsey Cuttle Brook and around the sewage works. Areas of vegetation such as the woodland areas around Alscot, along the London/ Birmingham railway line, and within hedgerows.
- The expansion area also has the potential to support other protected species including nesting birds, dormice, Great crested newts, otters, reptiles and water voles.
- Princes Risborough has a population of swifts. Lack of - and the loss of - nest sites is a significant factor in their recent decline.

2.6.2 Initial responses

- Conserve and enhance stream corridors by improving stream biodiversity and provide appropriate habitat buffers to watercourses. Put in place arrangements for long term landscape and ecological management to sustain biodiversity.
- Plant emergent and aquatic vegetation in poorly vegetated sections of the streams to provide food and shelter for water voles as well as increasing the general wildlife value.
- Promote and enhance connectivity of habitats and biodiversity, especially along important hedgerows and taking opportunities provided by the location and design of SuDS ponds and channels, and traffic free routes.
- Include swift boxes on buildings in suitable locations.

Figure 11. Existing vegetation and designations



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2.7 Flooding and drainage issues

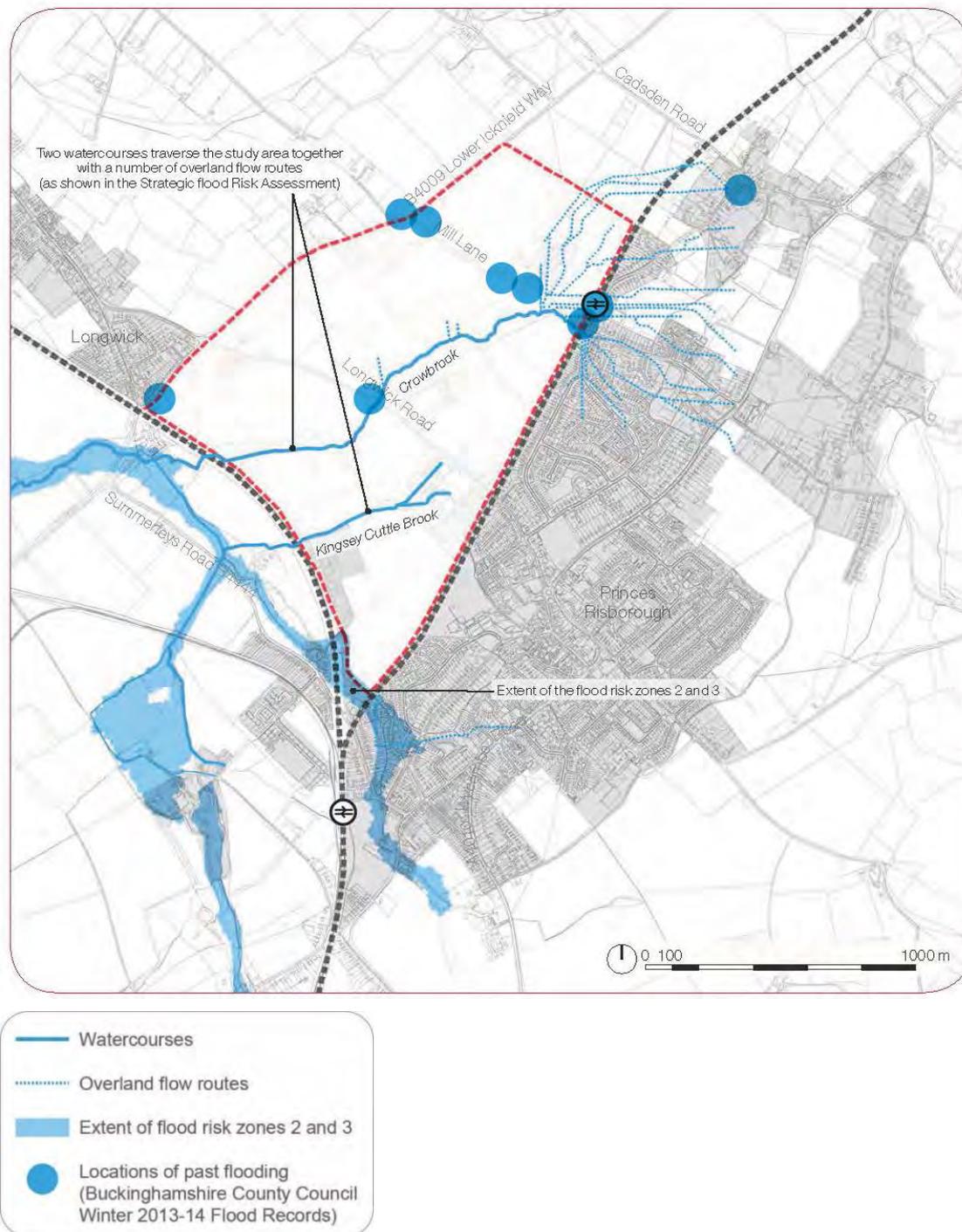
2.7.1 Main issues

- Due to the geology and topography of the land around Princes Risborough, the area has high groundwater levels, and is at risk of ground and surface water flooding.
- Higher groundwater levels in the south of the expansion area (south of the Crowbrook Stream) are likely to prevent infiltration and require management.
- There is a risk of fluvial flooding from watercourses and overland flow routes.
- The local watercourses located in the southern corner of the site are within Flood Zone 3.
- There are a number of low points in the road network and gardens at Mill Lane, Crowbrook Road, Longwick Road, Kingsmead, and Lower Icknield Way where surface water and groundwater flooding has occurred in the past.

2.7.2 Initial responses

- Flooding/drainage is a significant constraint on this site, and will need to be addressed through an adequate strategy.
- The strategy will need to build upon the work of the Princes Risborough Expansion Area Drainage Strategy (PREADS) - which demonstrates how drainage could be delivered on a comprehensive or parcel by parcel basis-, as well as the recommendations of Buckinghamshire County Council Section 19 Flood Investigation report for Monks Risborough. This will require early engagement with the Lead Local Flood Authority, Environment Agency and Thames Water.

Figure 12. Fluvial and surface water issues (Princes Risborough Background Study, Tibbalds, 2015)⁵



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⁵ The site boundary on this plan marks the area of search for the Tibbalds study and does not reflect the expansion area boundary for this document as shown in figure 12. It also only shows fluvial and surface water issues.

2.8 Infrastructure and Utilities

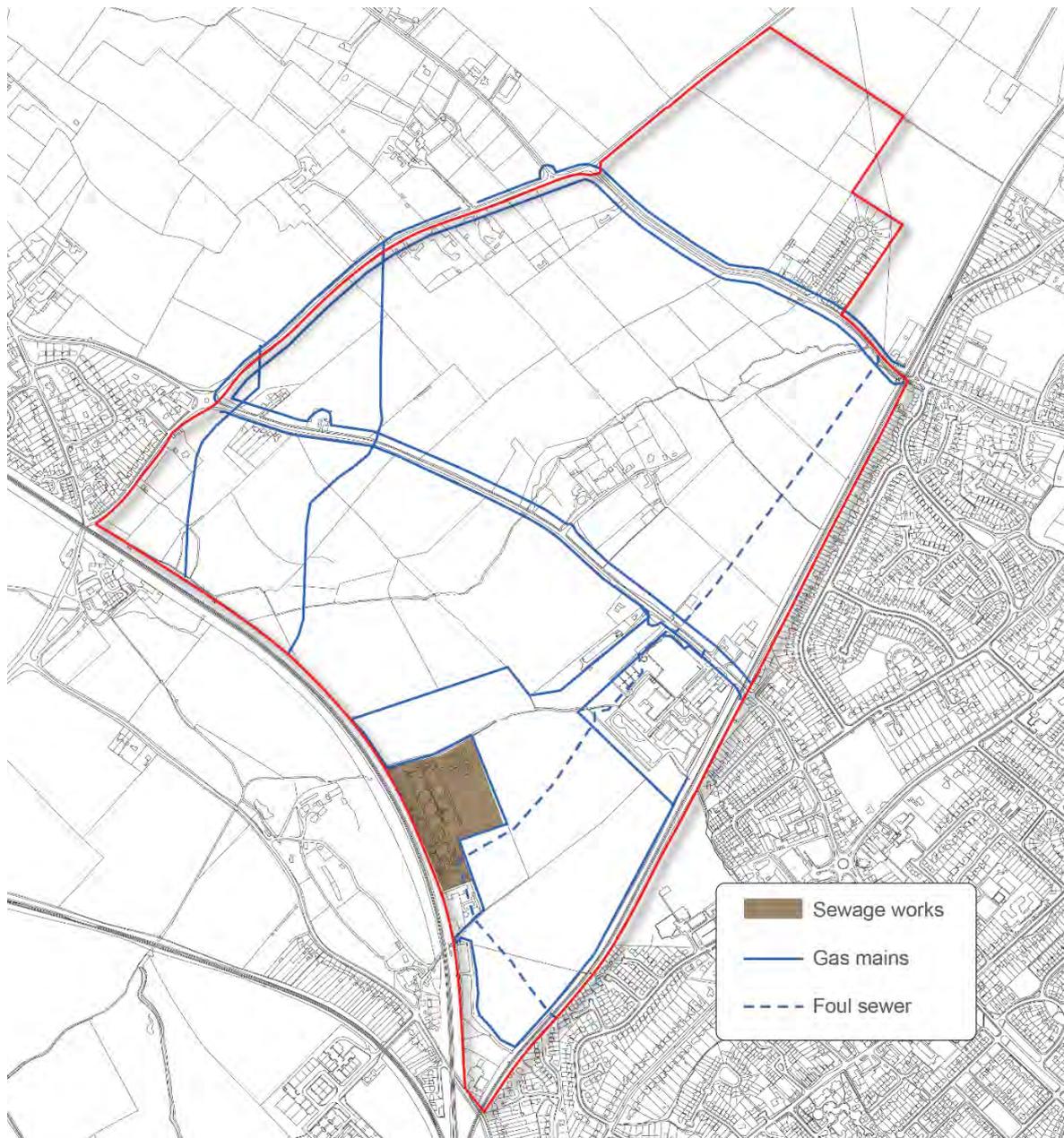
2.8.1 Main issues

- Thames Water has indicated that there will be a requirement to upgrade the water supply network in the vicinity of the expansion area. A water booster station may also be required in order to maintain a satisfactory water pressure.
- There are 600mm, 375mm, 300mm diameter foul water sewers running NE-SW across the south eastern part of the site, through Park Mill Farm and discharging into the sewage treatment works.
- A 180mm diameter MP gas main runs along the south eastern railway boundary and bordering Longwick Road and Mill Lane.
- Thames Water has indicated that the foul sewer network does not have sufficient capacity and will need upgrading.
- Thames Water anticipate the need for upgrades to the Sewage Treatment works.
- The future water quality of the receiving watercourse relating to the sewage works needs to be maintained or improved to meet Water Framework Directive objectives.
- Future development will need to mitigate climate change by integrating renewable energy

2.8.2 Initial responses

- The details and exact scale of the upgrade works to the water supply network and strategic upgrade to the sewage treatment works will be determined once the quantum and timing of the development is confirmed. Developers should engage at the earliest possible stage with the infrastructure provider to ensure that funding and development of the upgrades are secured in line with development coming forward.
- Proposals will need to maintain existing easements and no build zones around foul sewers.
- A new foul sewer is likely to be needed along the route of the new Relief Road.
- Opportunities exist in every development to integrate renewable technologies, such as heat pumps and photo voltaic cells.

Figure 13. Infrastructure and utilities



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2.9 Movement

2.9.1 Vehicular movements

Main issues

- New road infrastructure is required to serve the expansion area as an alternative to the A4010, and relieve the congestion on the existing road through the town.
- Deter through-traffic on unsuitable routes through Askett, Mill Lane, Crowbrook Road, and Bridge Street / Church Lane at Little Kimble and achieve a safer environment for all road users.

Initial responses

- Construct new highways infrastructure as specified by policy PR8
- Retain as far as possible the rural character of Mill Lane and rural lanes in this area.
- Refer to the Mill Lane Area Position Statement (March 2020)

2.9.2 Public Transport

Main issues

- Safeguard land for the future twin-tracking of the Princes Risborough to Aylesbury railway line.
- The expansion area is in the vicinity of Princes Risborough and Monks Risborough railway stations.
- The most frequent bus service is route 300 which runs between High Wycombe and Aylesbury through the town centre.
- The 120/121 bus service links the town to Thame and Longwick.
- A local community bus service links to the railway stations.

Initial responses

- Provide a green buffer on land abutting the railway line.
- Provide safe and convenient walking and cycling routes between the stations and new development areas.
- Provide a new, high quality bus route running through the new development serving key destinations including the town centre, the railway station(s), the schools and Local Centre and connect to Longwick.

2.9.3 Walking and cycling

Main issues

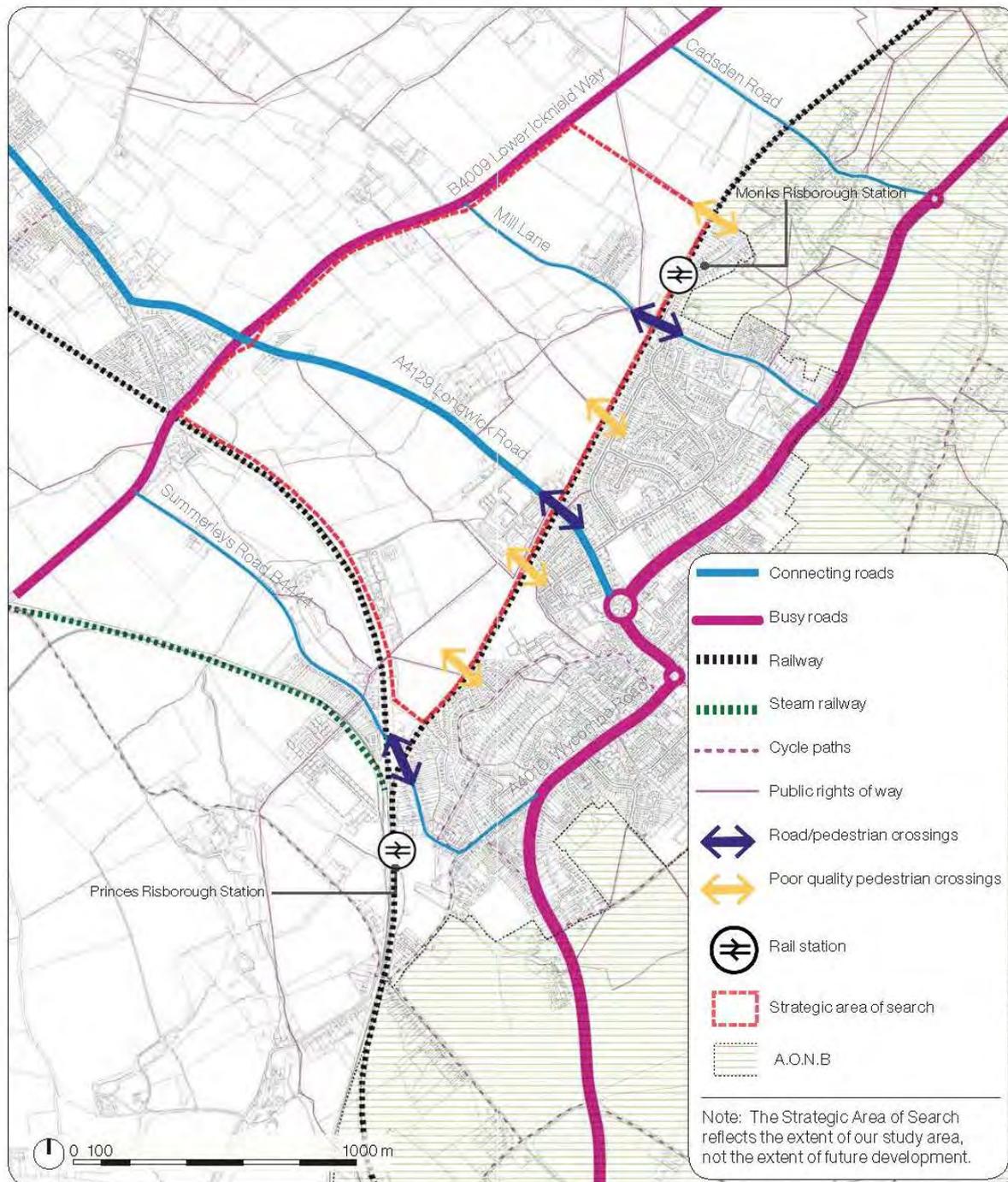
- The railway line presents a potential barrier to integrating the expansion area with the existing town.
- Closure of the existing railway crossing points from Westmead, Church Path and Mount Way as the proximity of existing dwellings limits options to accommodate infrastructure such as bridges to make the crossings safe.
- Access under the railway line at Mill Lane and Longwick Road is restricted as pavements are narrow and only run along the northern edge of the carriageway.
- A number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) cross the expansion area and connect into the wider network linking to the countryside and promoted routes.
- There are three cycle routes traversing the Princes Risborough area, most of which are on-road rather than traffic free routes.

Initial responses

- Provide safe and attractive means of crossing the railway line on Public Rights of Way and existing highways to integrate the expansion area with the existing town.
- Provide a new underpass for walking and cycling under the railway line in the north east corner of Wades Park.
- Provide a stepped footbridge north of Monks Risborough station at PRoW⁶ 31.
- Retain and use the existing Public Rights of Way as the starting point for the walking and cycling network. Integrate with green infrastructure such as the Crowbrook stream corridor.
- Provide improved connections from the expansion area into the wider countryside including those from both ends of the Crowbrook and linking to the Ridgeway National Trail.
- Create a clear and safe cycle network within the new development that connects to key locations such as the railway stations, town centre and schools.

⁶ Public Right of Way

Figure 14. Key existing transport facilities (Princes Risborough Background Study, Tibbalds, 2015)⁷



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2.10 Land Use

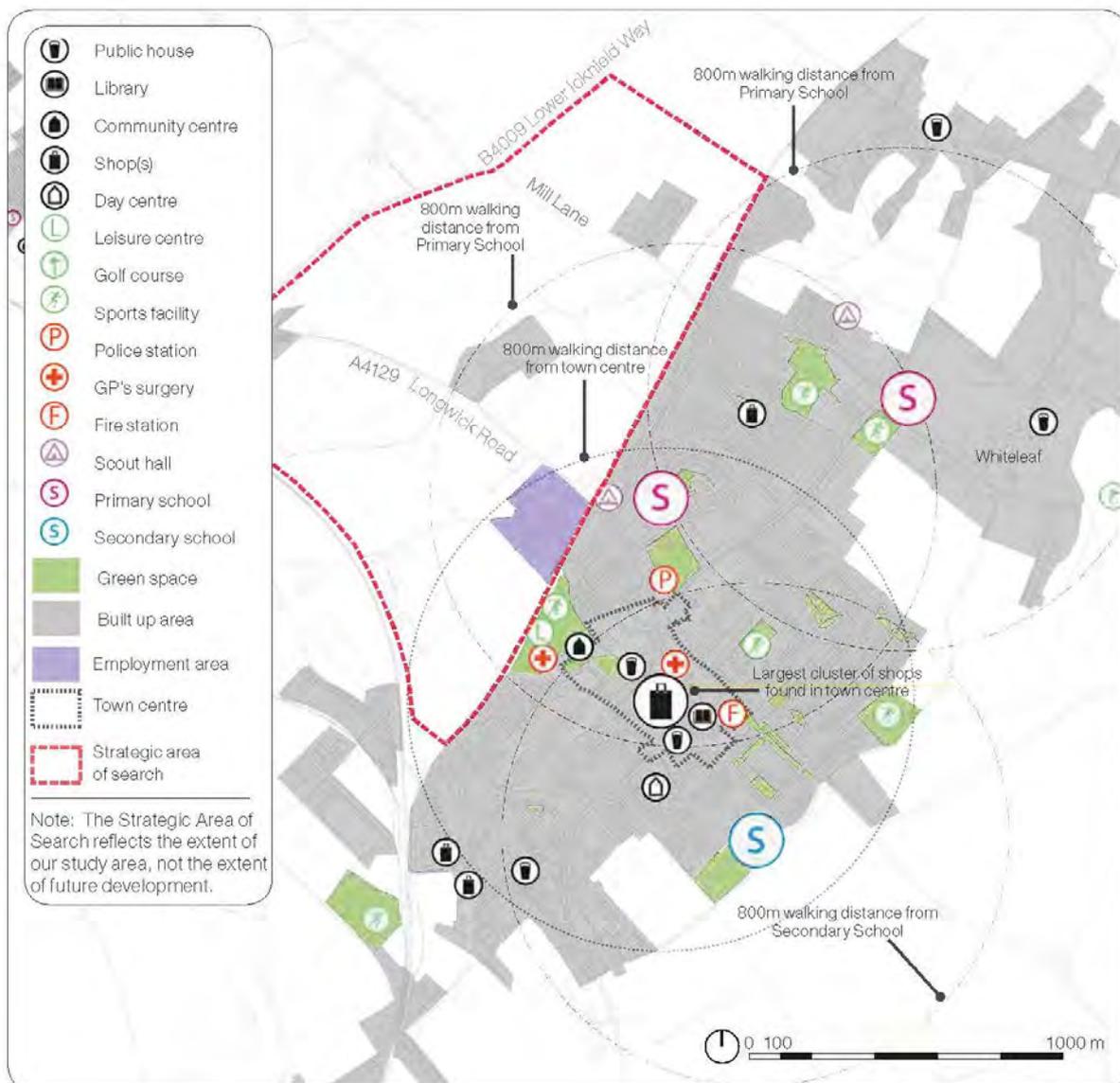
2.10.1 Main issues

- As the town grows more pressure will be put on existing facilities.
- New development brings the opportunity to provide new facilities or improve existing facilities.
- Ensure that new retail provision does not compete with or undermine the viability of the existing town centre.
- Ensure new primary schools are located to balance with the location of existing schools and provide opportunities for safe routes to school.

2.10.2 Initial responses

- Deliver the quantity and type/ mix of housing to create a balanced community.
- Provide a local centre to meet local convenience needs.
- Provide opportunities for local businesses to grow locally and space for new businesses to start up.
- Provide two new primary schools; one north of the Crowbrook Corridor and east of the A4129, and one south of the Crowbrook Stream Corridor and west of the A4129 to minimise the need to cross a main road.
- Contribute via CIL to secondary school provision, for both upper school and grammar school places and adult community learning, to meet the needs arising from the development.
- Provide new community meeting space(s) associated with the local centre and the sports hub.
- Locate larger areas of open space including provision for sports at the edge of the expansion area to provide active uses within the strategic buffer.
- Provide local open space throughout the expansion area creating focal points for neighbourhoods and enabling walkable communities.
- Focus other green spaces around local wildlife sites, water corridors and the green corridors.

Figure 15. Key existing community and retail facilities (Princes Risborough Background Study, Tibbalds, 2015)⁸



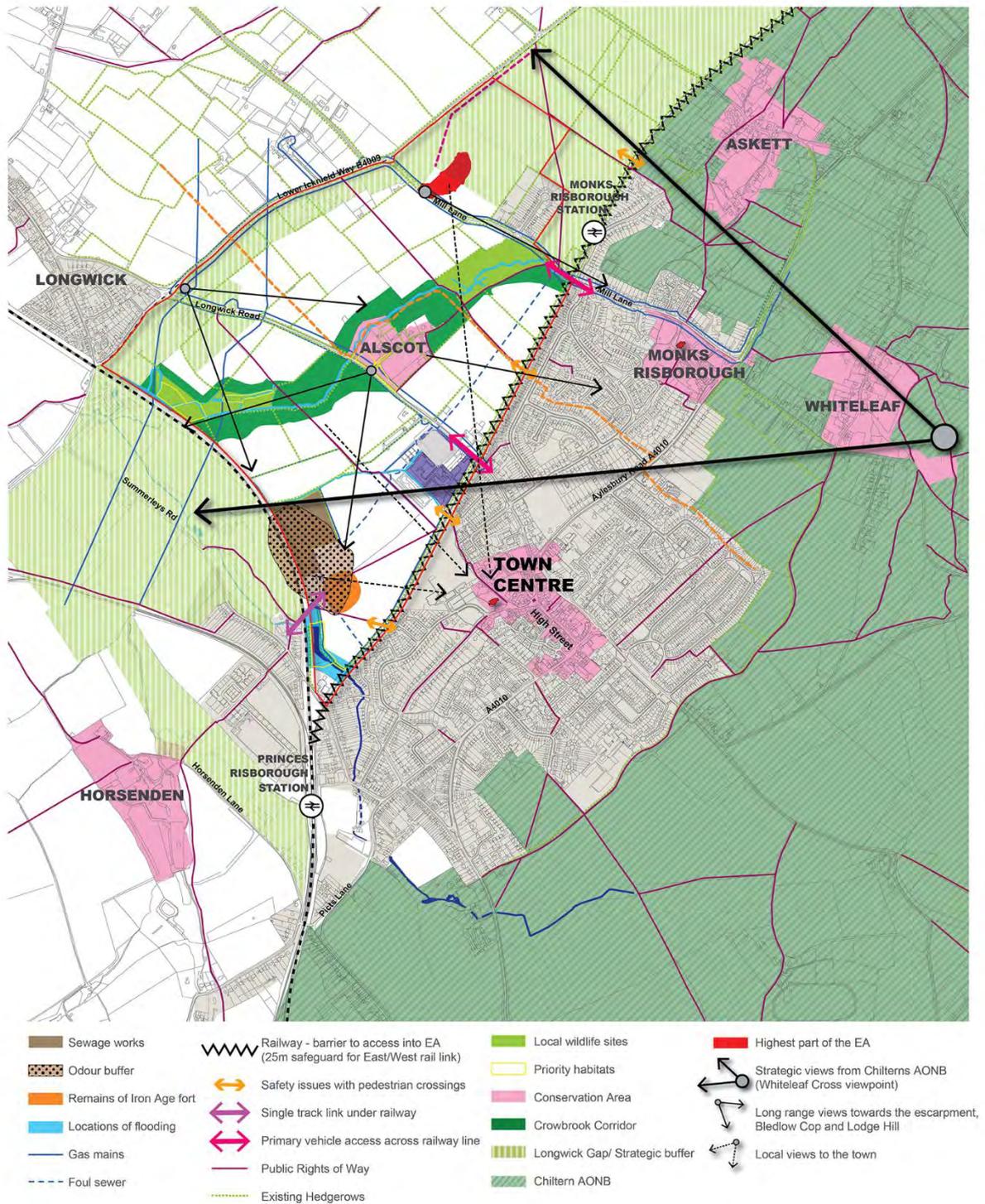
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⁸ The site boundary on this plan marks the area of search for the Tibbalds study and does not reflect the expansion area boundary for this document as shown in figure 15.

The employment area shown in the key is part of the Leo Labs site which has been redeveloped for housing.

2.11 Summary

Figure 16. Summary of the main issues and initial responses



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