

3.8 Townscape Character

Shrewsbury is a historic market town with a distinctive centre and largely unaltered medieval street plan at its core. The town centre is largely built on a hill and surrounded by a loop in the River Severn. It includes a significant number of listed buildings and both Shrewsbury Castle and Shrewsbury Abbey.

The more immediate townscape context of the site is less distinct, but includes a broad variety of good quality buildings offering distinct architectural character areas. Notably the cluster of stone buildings around Christ Church; the render and brick buildings forming Shelton Gardens dating from 1921; the predominantly brick buildings of the former Shelton Hospital, a listed building; the predominantly red brick and detached houses along Shepherd's Lane, with a distinctly rural flavour, and Welshpool Road (particularly Elm Farm Cottage); the red brick and rendered Old Post Office and Rose Cottage south of Welshpool Road; and Vaughan's Cottages, the Victorian brick terrace along Welshpool Road.

The high boundary wall and fence of the bungalows south of the Local Centre facing Welshpool Road provide a particularly poor townscape character. More recent housing is of a variable townscape quality with some notable exceptions including Florence Close and Cavendish Close which attempts to create a distinctive townscape with a variety of architectural features and adornments on houses around a small green space.

The Grapes Inn and the Oxon Priory public houses are both large red brick buildings and include distinctive roof profiles and chimneys. The Oxon Business Park and the Local Centre both

comprise modern large footprint buildings of varying architectural quality. The Severn Trent Water works area contains an interesting neo-classical water tower and a contemporary office building.



Building of the former Shelton Hospital Complex.



The Grapes Inn - Prominent building along Welshpool Road.



1920s housing arrangement at Shelton Gardens.



Terrace of Victorian houses on Welshpool Road.



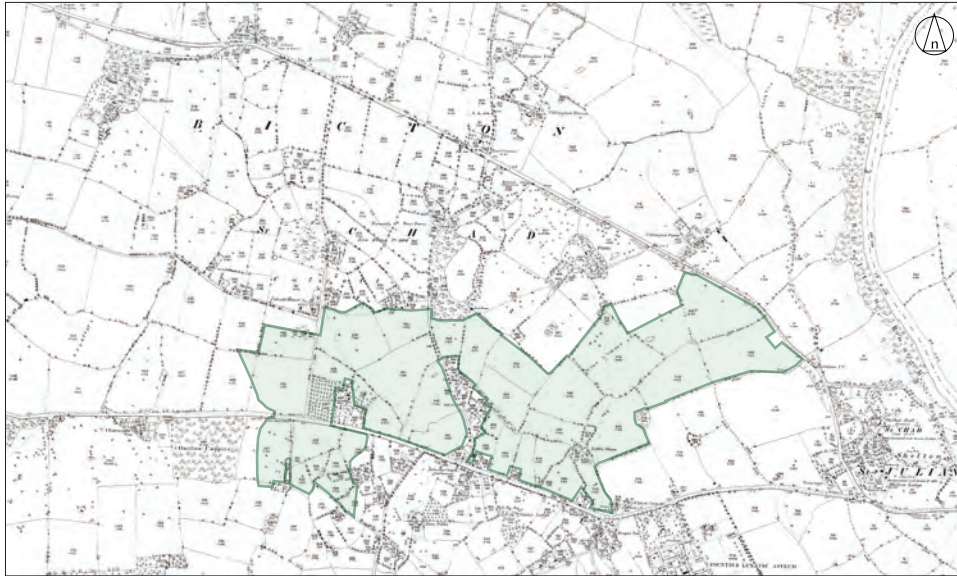
Water Tower of Severn Trent Water works.



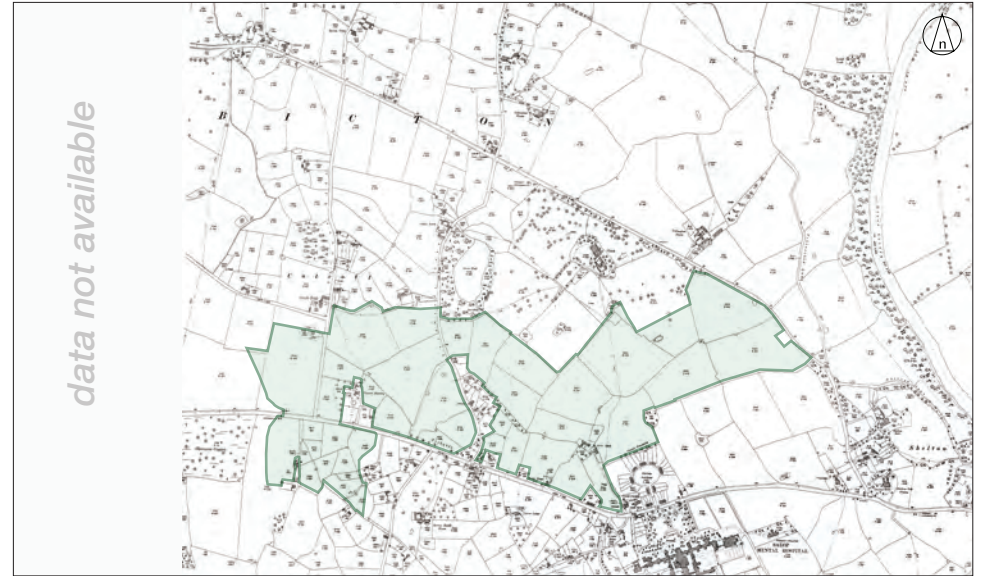
Recent development at Cavendish Close.



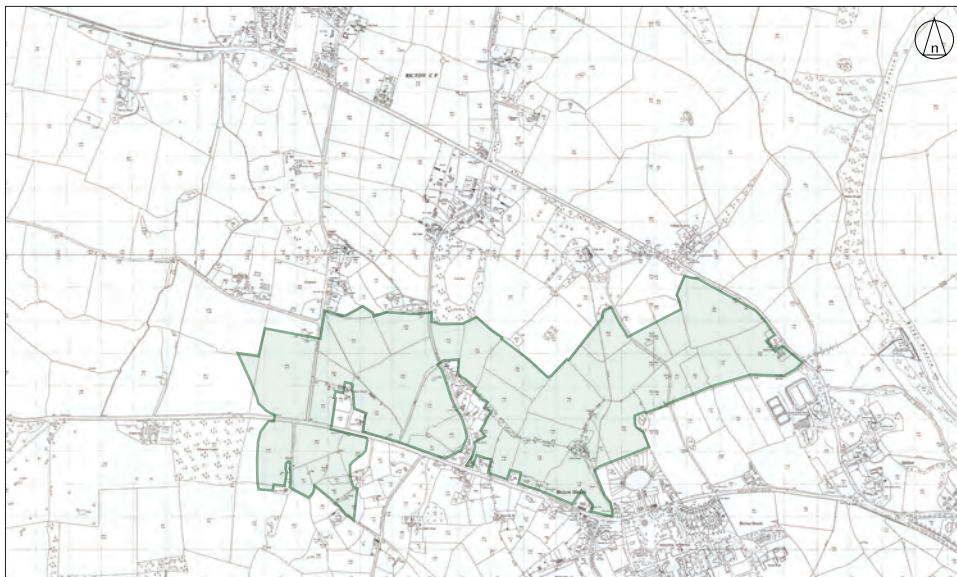
Rural characteristics along Calcott Lane.



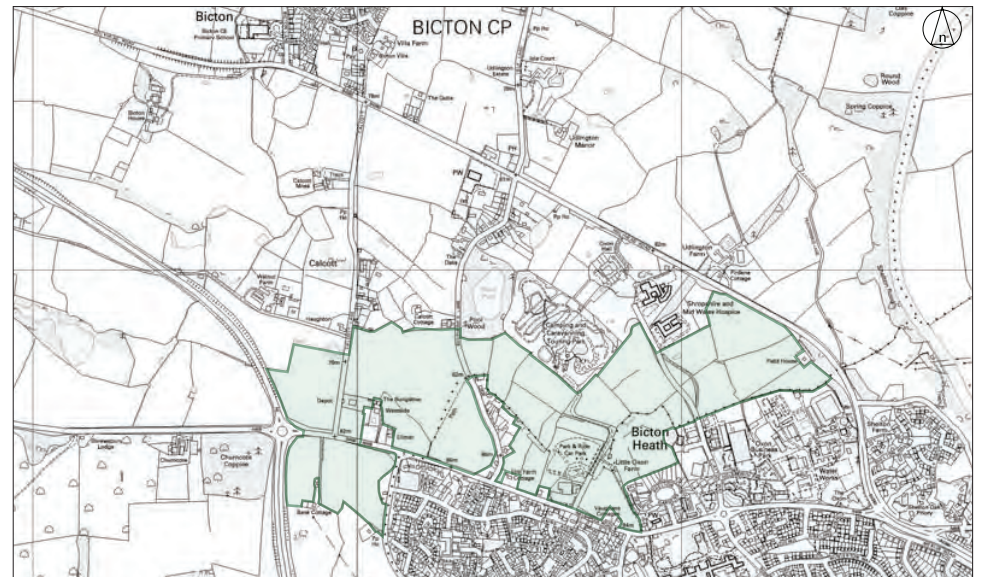
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3.9 Environmental Constraints and Opportunities

The accompanying plan summarises the environmental constraints and opportunities associated with the site. In addition to those referred to in the preceding sections, there are a number of other environmental or related considerations to be taken into account in designing the proposals. These include:

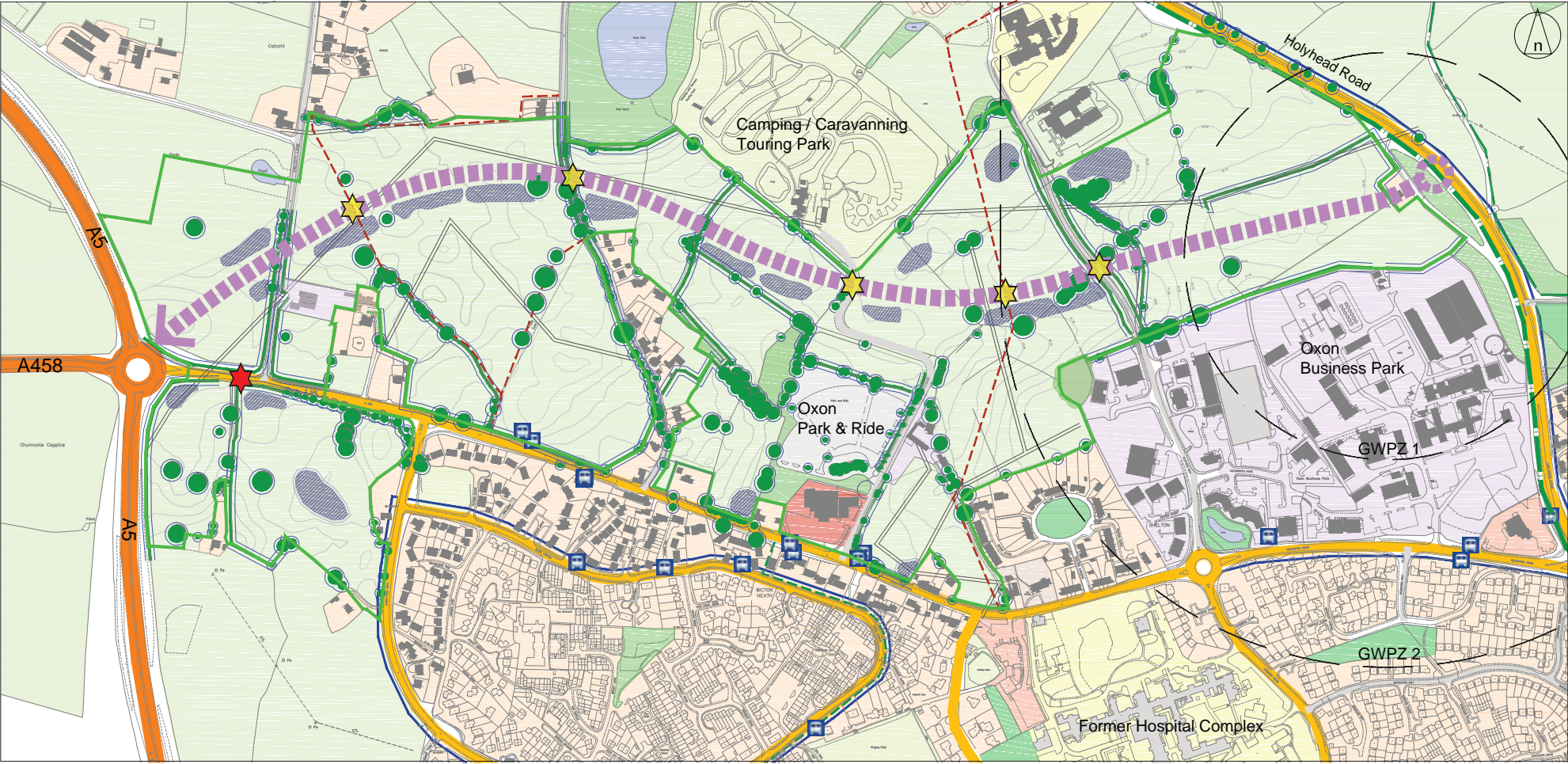
- Utilities corridors and easements,
- Potential noise from the Oxon Link Road, and
- Desired linkages to Bicton.

Each of the identified constraints and opportunities should be appropriately addressed by the Masterplan and subsequent design of the proposed development. Existing landscape character varies across the site and in conjunction with the conserved mature trees and retained hedgerows should help

to shape the character and variety of the future development. Existing public rights of way (PROW), cycle routes and other footpaths are well positioned throughout and around the site and offer valuable links to both the urban area to the south and countryside to the north.

Similarly, other local community facilities exist in close proximity to the site and would serve and relate well to the new development. Townscape and heritage influences are less immediately obvious within the site, except the rural flavour of Shepherd's Lane, but there are some older and more distinctive properties and individual buildings around the site. The local and wider characteristics should inform the evolving design proposals.

Constraints and Opportunities Plan



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Study Area	Public footpath	Trees to be retained (shown with 4m offset from tree canopy)	Residential	Recreation and Leisure
Primary Route / Strategic Road Network	Pedestrian crossing locations along Oxon Link Road considered	Contours	Local Centre	Public Open Space
Principal Route / Distributor Road	Opportunity for pedestrian / cycle only link	Contextual surrounding buildings	Employment	Fields
Secondary Route / Local Access	National Trail	Overhead power lines	Public House / Restaurant	Woodland
Proposed Oxon Link Road (indicative)	Cycle link	Ponds	Health/Care Facility	Indicative attenuation areas
	National Cycle Route	Bus Routes and bus stops	Other uses	Ground Water Protection Zone 1 & 2 illustrative extents
	Hedgerows to be retained (shown with 6m offset either side)	Park and Ride route	Oxon Park & Ride	



4 Development Vision and Objectives

“A masterplan sets out principles that can be applied with a degree of flexibility. A good masterplan has a ‘vision’ that helps shape what happens on the site, giving it coherence and a real sense of identity and place.”

(page 84 of Creating Successful Masterplans)

4.1 Vision

Shrewsbury West will **create a distinctive, high quality place** which maintains and enhances the qualities and character of Shrewsbury, linking with and consolidating existing development and facilities and providing a new gateway commercial area off the A5 Churncote Island. New exciting and distinctive places to live, work and play will be created which do not copy older neighbourhoods and instead embrace contemporary approaches to high quality design.

A new strategic route (Oxon Link Road) connected to the retained Park and Ride facility will enable a revised road hierarchy taking unnecessary traffic off Welshpool Road and **promoting the use of sustainable transport** and links into the existing network of pedestrian and cycle routes to the town and countryside beyond. The place will ensure appropriate use of natural resources and seek to develop innovative drainage solutions and keep carbon emissions to a minimum.

It will be an area that **promotes health, well being and social cohesion** for new residents and businesses to thrive and will deliver a health/care focussed business campus off Clayton Way.

4.2 Development Objectives

Design Principles

- The place will have a distinctive identity whilst also respecting the qualities and character of the existing environment,
- The place should use contemporary design solutions for sustainable development,
- Each component of the place should have a defined character which respects the overall vision,
- Space should be provided for the community to “breathe” through the development of easily accessible open spaces,
- The design should adhere to “Manual For Streets” principles,
- The design should maintain, enhance and restore the strong existing Environmental Network for which Shrewsbury is valued,
- The place shall provide appropriate focal points and landmark buildings to define the spaces particularly as part of the new gateway commercial area off the A5 Churncote Island and enhanced Local Centre,
- The need for new development is to be integrated with and have regards to the existing development in the area, with careful attention to boundary areas,

- The place should provide defined edges to development and a clear distinction between the urban area and the open countryside while providing linked pedestrian routes, cycle routes and Environmental Networks between the town and countryside beyond, and
- The opportunity should be explored to utilise green bridges across the new OLR linked as appropriate with existing and new Environmental Network features north and south of the Link Road.

Housing

- By 2026, achieve the development of approximately 750 new homes, with an appropriate mix of sizes, house types and tenures including the provision of new affordable homes in line with the Council's affordable housing policy and viability considerations, and
- Affordable housing will be tenure blind and integrated within the development.

Employment and Economy

- By 2026, achieve the development of an expansion to Oxon Business Park, a health/care focussed business campus off Clayton Way and a gateway commercial area off the A5 Churncote Island junction, and
- Strong transport linkages will be formed to support the new and existing employment areas.

Transport

- To provide the OLR between the A5 Churncote Island junction and the Holyhead Road, designed to a standard to function as a component of the Shrewsbury North West Relief Road (NWRR) and to provide access to the Park and Ride facility, local centre, and to the health/care business campus off Clayton Way,
- In association with the construction of the OLR, to facilitate the improvement of the capacity of the A5 Churncote Island junction through the dedication of land by the Onslow Estate. The improvement of the junction is identified as a high priority strategic infrastructure project in the Shrewsbury area Place Plan,

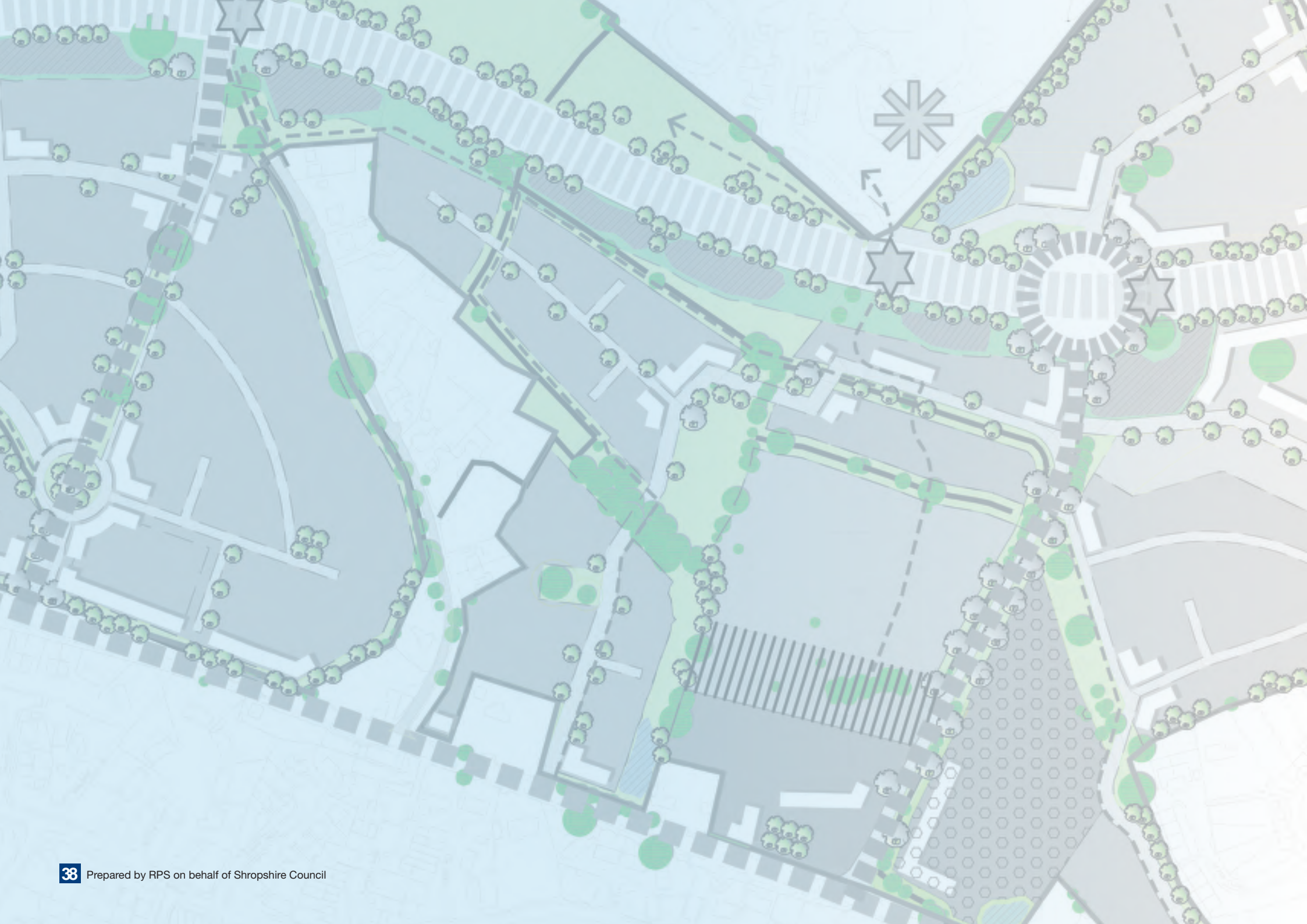
- Following construction of the OLR, to introduce traffic management, alternative transport modes and environmental enhancement measures to reflect the role of Welshpool Road as a local distributor road rather than a through route
- These measures are identified as a priority local infrastructure project in the Shrewsbury and Surrounding Area Place Plan,
- To design development areas around a clear hierarchy of traffic routes supplemented by a good network of footpath and cycle links, to provide connectivity, and to embed the encouragement of smarter travel choices from the outset. A strategy for modal shift from private car use to more sustainable modes of transport and movement will be implemented, to be agreed in conjunction with the Highways Agency and Shropshire Council following further traffic modelling, and
- To provide a new access for the Oxon Caravan Site with convenient access via the Oxon Link Road, maintaining an adequate 'stacking' length for peak arrival periods and providing an appropriately attractive approach to the site.

Social Infrastructure

- To provide for an expanded Local Centre with a main focus on the existing supermarket facility on Welshpool Road with scope for the provision of additional community and health facilities to the help to meet the needs of the area,
- To provide two primary functional recreational open spaces for play and informal recreation, available for use as the phases of housing development progress in accessible locations,
- The dual / community use of facilities provided on site will be encouraged,
- To contribute to the provision of community infrastructure in the area through the Community Infrastructure Levy, and
- To enable provisions of additional school places as may be required to meet the needs arising from the new development.

Environmental Sustainability

- To have regard to inherent landscape character and Environmental Network features within the area.
- To ensure that native trees are integrated into the design of the place either by retaining suitable existing trees or by providing sufficient space for new tree planting, including mature specimen trees where appropriate,
- To provide an Environmental Network of integrated and accessible green spaces to serve the area with links to the wider countryside including the Oxon Pool and River Severn corridor,
- To integrate the sustainable drainage measures for the development areas and the OLR with the green infrastructure network,
- To safeguard archaeological interests on the site,
- To safeguard biodiversity interests on the site, limit the impacts of development on biodiversity in the surrounding environment, and where appropriate create new habitats,
- Provision for waste management and recycling will be built into the new development,
- To ensure the appropriate use of natural resources and sustainable and energy efficient development,
- To ensure mitigation of severance and other impacts on the Environmental Network arising from the creation of the Oxon Link Road, and
- To meet Sustainability standards to at least Code level 3.



5 Masterplan and Design Principles

“Successful streets, spaces, villages, towns and cities tend to have characteristics in common. These factors have been analysed to produce principles or objectives of good urban design. They help to remind us what should be sought to create a successful place.”

(page 14 of By Design)

5.1 Design Evolution

Having used the technical studies described in Section 3 to gain a good understanding of the existing site character, constraints and opportunities, it is now possible to formulate an appropriate Masterplan response. This section sets out the design principles which inform the Masterplan response. These principles demonstrate how the inherent and underlying characteristics of the site shape and structure the development and have been based on good practice and guidance. Overlaying this, the principles consider the location and extent of the built development and in particular the key activity areas and the location and the mix of uses.

The first principles retain and enhance where possible the existing site vegetation and overlay this with a network of integrated routes focussed around pedestrian and cycle uses and access to public transport, before the character and appearance of the future development is more closely analysed and the Masterplan refined.

The success of the development is dependent upon achieving an appropriate relationship between community needs, development principles, development form and a positive response to local conditions. The principles have been developed in order to define sustainable development which achieves the criteria set out in the NPPF and current design guidance.

5.2 Consultation Process

The draft Shrewsbury West SUE masterplan underwent public consultation in July 2013.

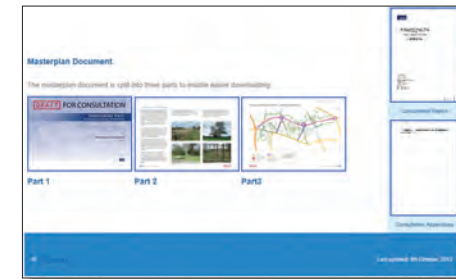
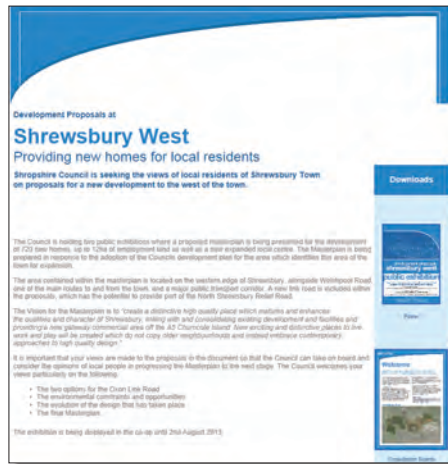
Two public exhibitions were held at the Oxon with Shelton Christ Church Hall on the 4th July, and at the Grapes Inn on the 18th July. The exhibition boards were also displayed in the foyer of Bicton Village Hall on the 6th and 7th July, and the Co-Op Store on Welshpool Road from the 8th to 14th July. The exhibition boards were then displayed in Bicton Hall for the period 24th July to 6th September.

The material was also presented at the Bicton Parish Council meeting on the 9th July.

Additionally, details of the proposal were provided on a web site www.shrewsburywest.org dedicated for the consultation.

The consultation included options with regard to junctions and connections of existing lanes and crossing points on/over the proposed Oxon Link Road.

Comments were received from the public on the proposal, and the Masterplan has been reviewed taking on board these comments which has resulted in the production of the final Masterplan proposal.



Web page extracts advertising the Shrewsbury West Project: www.shrewsburywest.org

5.3 Design Principles

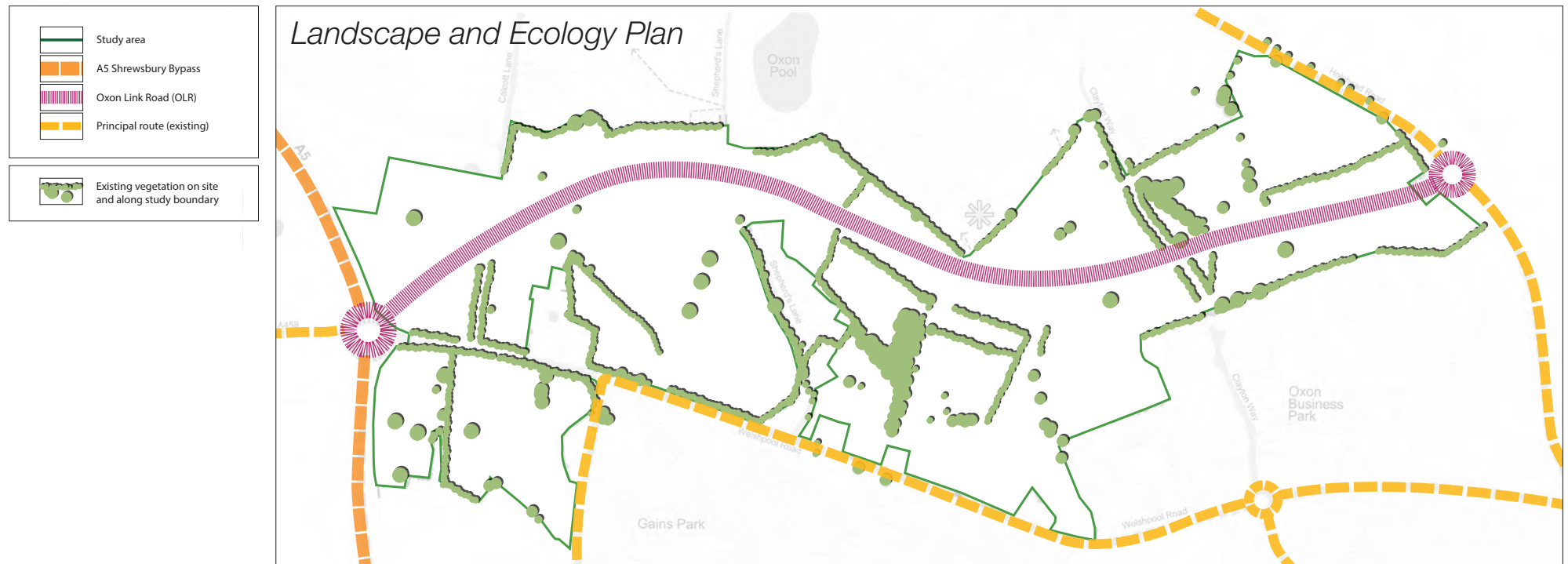
Landscape and Ecology

The approach will be to create a network of multifunctional green spaces that harness ecological benefits to add greater value.

Key Points:

1. Minimise the impact of the proposed OLR and conserve and enhance the countryside character of the area north of its preferred route.
2. Conserve and enhance the majority of areas of higher biodiversity value on the site (in particular species rich hedgerows and mature trees) as part of the landscape framework for the built development.
3. Ensure that important biodiversity assets and landscape characteristics, including the rural lanes, are protected and managed in a positive way and that wildlife corridors across the landscape are enhanced.

development. New planting within this landscape framework should increase the biodiversity and encourage a range of species.



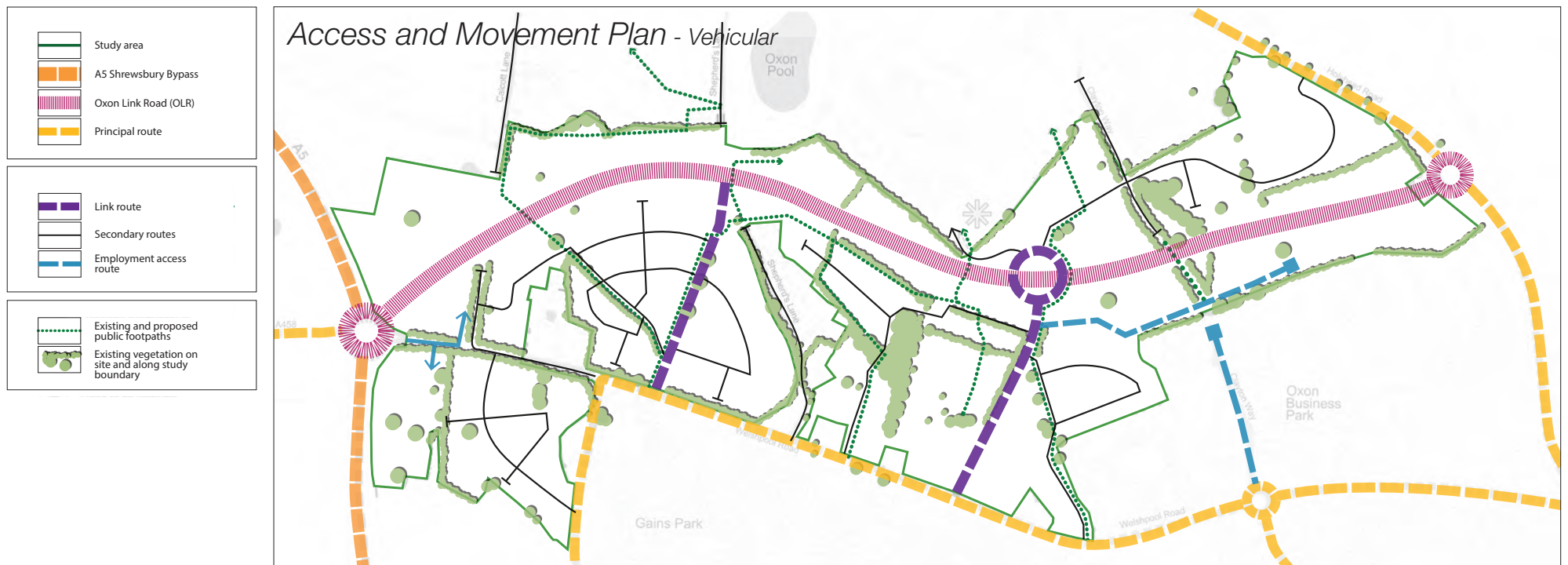
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Access and Movement 1 – Vehicular

The approach is to encourage vehicles to use the Oxon Link Road, particularly through traffic currently using Welshpool Road, with the Sustainable Urban Extension both delivering a major addition to the town's strategic network and providing an enhanced local network to serve the needs of existing and future residents and businesses.

Key points

1. 'Calm' the existing Welshpool Road and change its character to a more varied and less traffic dominated local distributor road.
2. Provide a series of crossing points along the proposed Oxon Link Road with key junctions at either Calcott Lane or Shepherd's Lane and Little Oxon Lane to serve the land to the north and the Park and Ride and Local Centre.
3. Integrate new local access roads to the proposed residential development areas into the existing street network.
4. Provide separate access routes to the employment areas in the east and the west of the site.



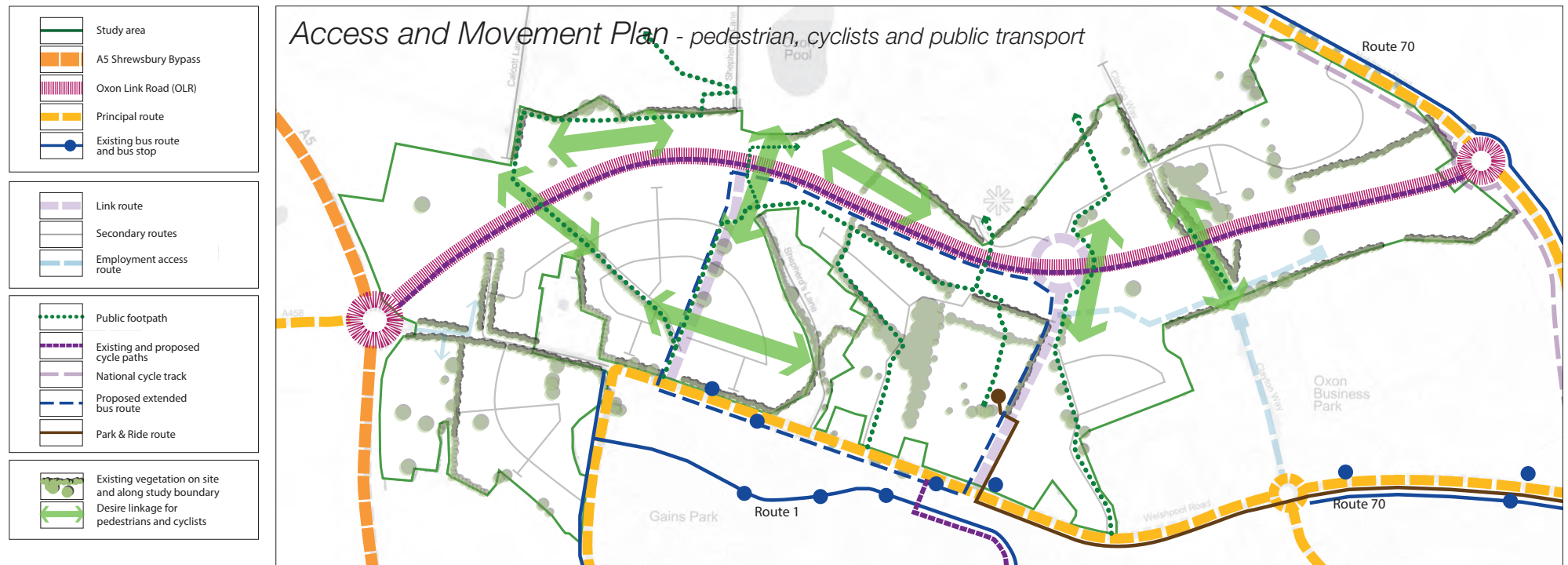
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Access and Movement 2 – Pedestrians, Cyclists and Public Transport

The approach is to ensure that the proposals promote the use of more sustainable means of transport for the movement of people at the local level and to provide a good network of safe and attractive links within and through the new development and adjacent areas.

Key points

1. The site is located in a sustainable location with good access to Shrewsbury town centre and with good public transport connections that could be extended through the development,
2. Maintain the existing pedestrian access and footpaths across the site and with the surrounding area,
3. Connect to and extend existing on and off road cycling routes,
4. Facilitate safe and easy pedestrian (and potentially cycling) access between the existing urban edge, the new development, Bicton Village and the countryside north the development and the countryside north of the OLR through provisions of at least two footbridges across the OLR, and
5. Provision of additional pedestrian crossings including west of Little Oxon Lane junction to provide access to the public open space and countryside north of the OLR and Oxon Caravan Park.



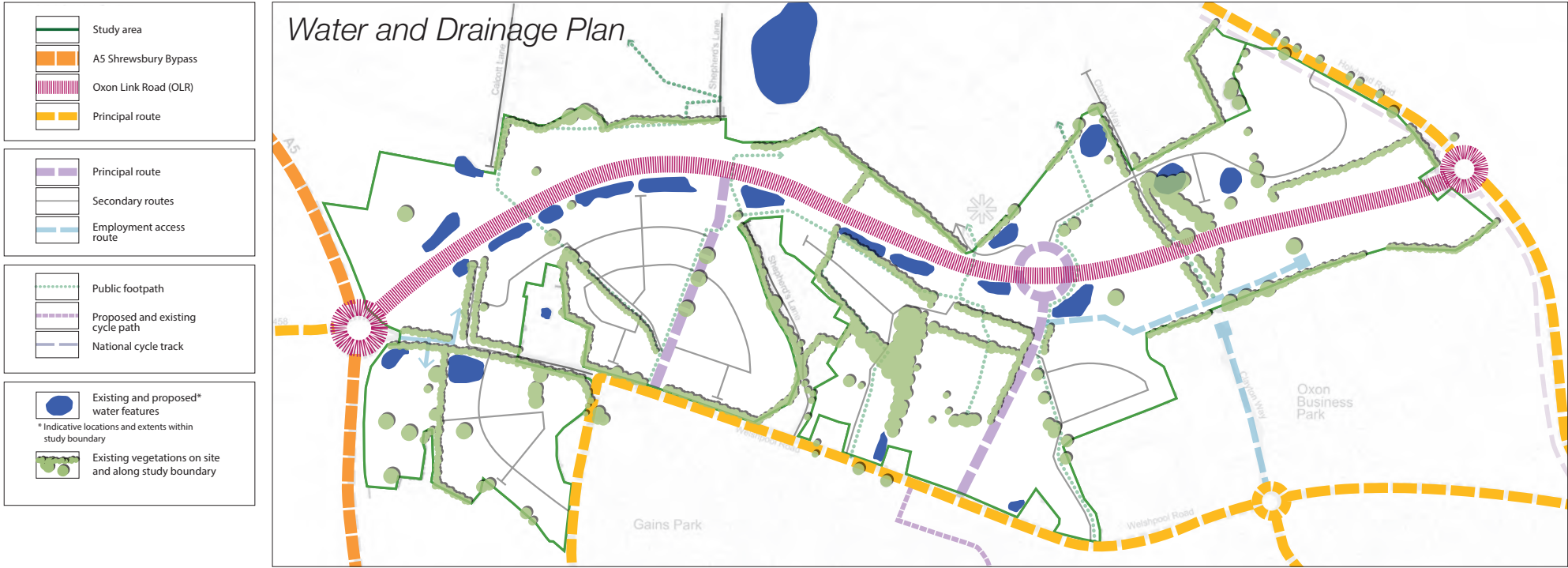
Water and Drainage

The approach is to avoid development in areas at risk of flooding and manage all surface water run off on the site.

SuD's will be incorporated into the scheme via a number of large ponds in locations throughout the development, mainly adjacent to the OLR. The location of the ponds will be dependent on the requirements of Severn Trent Water and the Environmental Agency.

Key points

1. Conserve and enhance the existing ponds and ditches within and around the site, and
2. Adopt a Sustainable Drainage (SuD's) strategy throughout the site to include draining the surface water via series of open swales and ponds.



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Green Infrastructure Framework

The approach is to comprehensively plan Green Infrastructure (GI) to be integrated, flexible and highly accessible from the built development. This includes landscaped open spaces, wildlife corridors, space for recreation and accessible footpaths and cycleways.

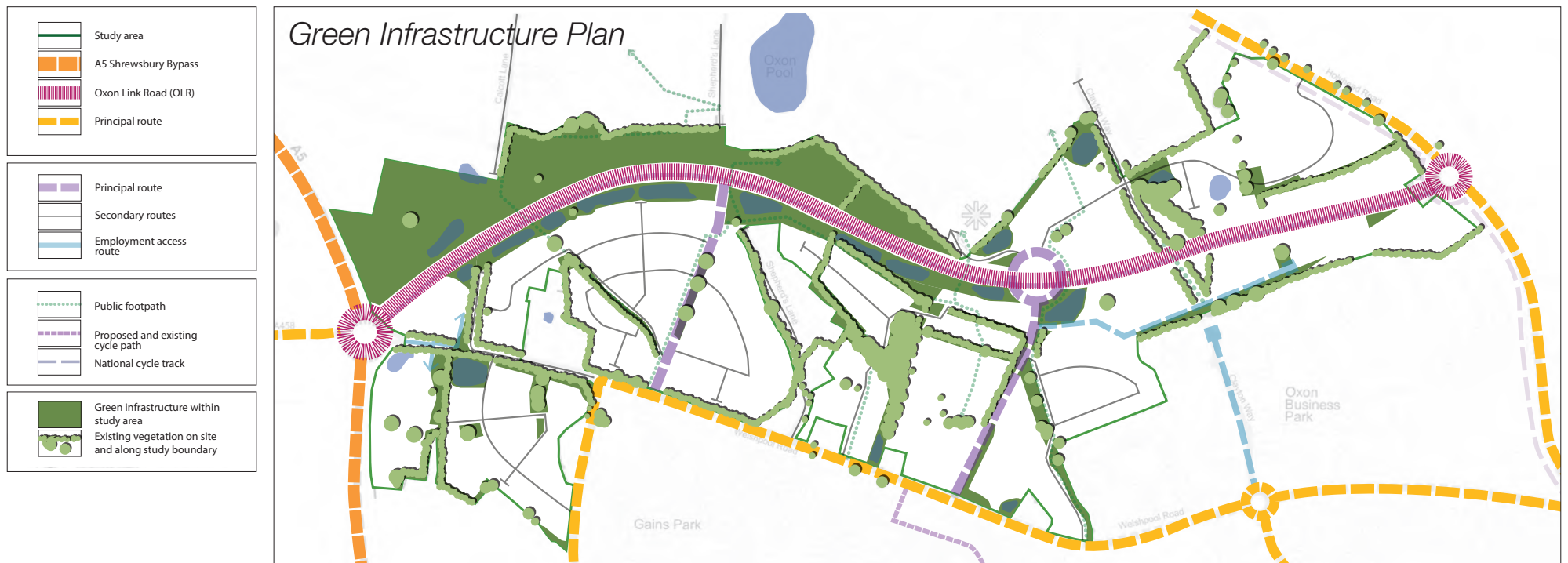
Key points

1. The GI framework builds upon the existing network of hedgerows, trees, ponds and PROWs,
2. Provide a multi-functional and well connected network of green corridors and spaces, which are accessible, and maximise opportunities for recreation, habitat creation and landscape enhancement,
3. GI framework structured to deliver north to south and east to west corridors punctuated and linked by public spaces and landscape areas,
4. Existing habitats, mature hedgerows and trees are to be conserved and appropriately managed for wildlife, landscape and informal recreation interest,
5. New SuDs features to be integrated into the GI framework and to be designed and managed to contribute positively to the character and appearance of the development, and
6. Provide landscape and buffer areas to mitigate the impact of the OLR.

The principal area of proposed green space on the site is a new public open space to the north of the OLR which will serve many purposes, including:

- providing accessible amenity green space for the existing and new communities,
- providing the opportunity for new informal play provision such as activity / trim trails and informal / wild play areas,
- providing the opportunity to increase biodiversity with areas of native tree planting and wildflower meadows,
- the retention of a green space buffer between existing and proposed areas of development, and
- softening of the landscape and visual impact of the new link road.

Within the proposed developable areas existing hedgerows and mature trees will be retained where possible to maintain green infrastructure and wildlife routes. These areas will be supplemented with additional green space to create informal infrastructure and provide the opportunity to create small scale pocket play areas if this is what the existing and new communities would like. Every opportunity to link areas of green space together to create a green space network will be explored.



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