



# Loxley Valley

VISION FOR THE LAND OFF  
STORRS BRIDGE LANE

prepared by CODA on behalf of Sky House Co | spring 2023



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# Foreword

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The purpose of this document is to illustrate a vision for a proposed residential development on land off Storrs Bridge Lane in the Loxley Valley.

The vision has been informed by our detailed analysis of the site, consideration of the distinctive characteristics of the valley, and the Loxley Valley Design Statement.

Our aim is to repurpose a troubled and derelict site which has become a blight on the valley, and leave a positive and long lasting legacy of which all stakeholders involved can be proud.





# The Site

The Site is located within the Sheffield City Council (SCC) boundaries on the western outskirts of Loxley and Stannington, in the Loxley Valley, about 5.5 km north-west of Sheffield City Centre.

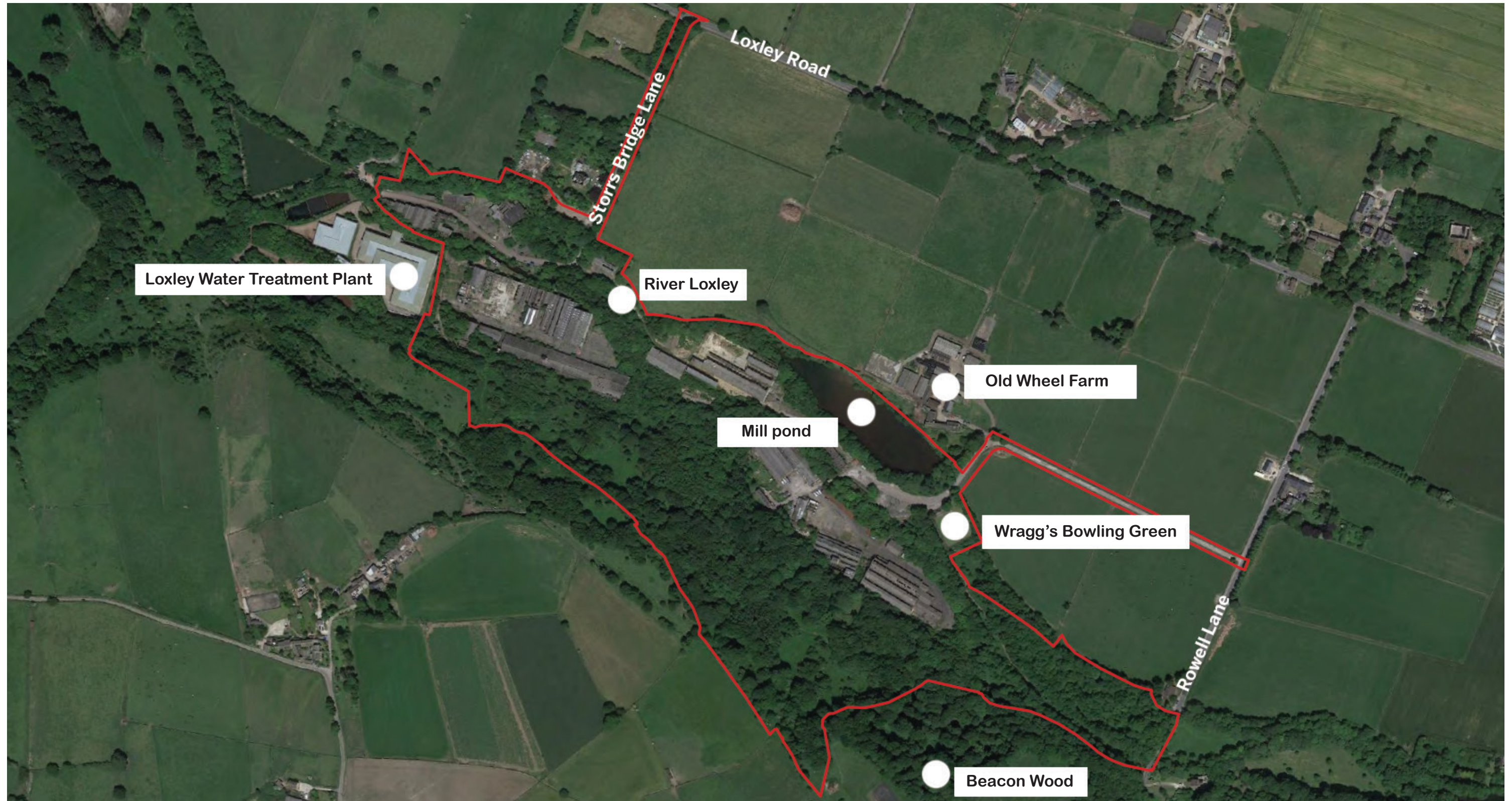
The Site, which has an uneven form and a surface area of around 22 acres, is located directly south of Loxley Road and west of

Rowell Lane. The Site is bordered to the north by Old Wheel Farm and grazing fields, to the east and south by woods, and to the west by Loxley Water Treatment Works.

The Site is currently overgrown, includes substantial hardstanding sections, is largely unmaintained, and has numerous abandoned and inactive industrial structures that once belonged to the

former Hepworth Works.

The Site has a number of natural features, such as the River Loxley, which crosses it from northwest to southeast, a sizeable mill pond to the east of the Site, and an extensive amount of woodland to the south of the Site.





# The Site Today

The current site is a combination of landscape features, human settlements and pockets of old industry with large factory buildings that are now derelict.



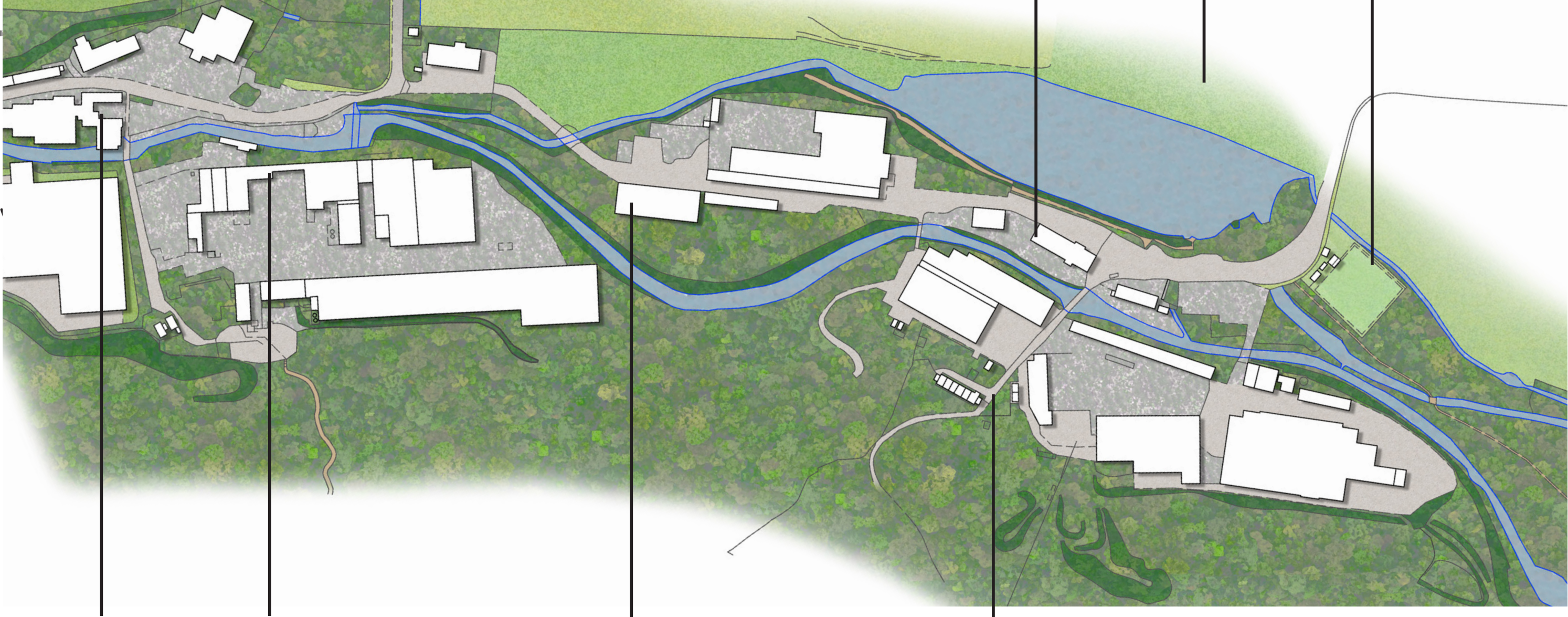
former social clubhouse



view of Old Wheel Farm across mill pond



Wragg's bowling green



former offices for Hepworth Works



former factory buildings for Hepworth Works



derelict factory buildings



existing residential cottages



# Vision

An exemplary residential development that respects Loxley Valley, takes care of the environment, and makes the community a better place for all different kinds of people to live.

In order to achieve this vision, our proposals will be underpinned by three very evident and distinctive characteristics of the Loxley Valley; **Landscape, Building, Water.**

## Landscape

The valley forms a “green finger” of countryside stretching from the densely populated urban fringe of the city to the Peak District National Park. It is a beautiful and peaceful landscape characterised by green fields, woodlands, and heath, opening up to wild moors in the upper reaches of the valley.

## Building

The valley is characterised by modest buildings that blend into the landscape in scale and tone. Many are built using gritstone from local quarries. The built environment ranges from small clusters of farm buildings with barn structures, to larger hamlets and villages. The valley also contains old industrial buildings, redundant quarries and mine workings.

## Water

The water in the fast-flowing River Loxley has provided a source of power for local industry and has helped shape the valley for centuries. There are four reservoirs in the valley and water features including the river, streams, and old industrial millponds, dominate the valley.

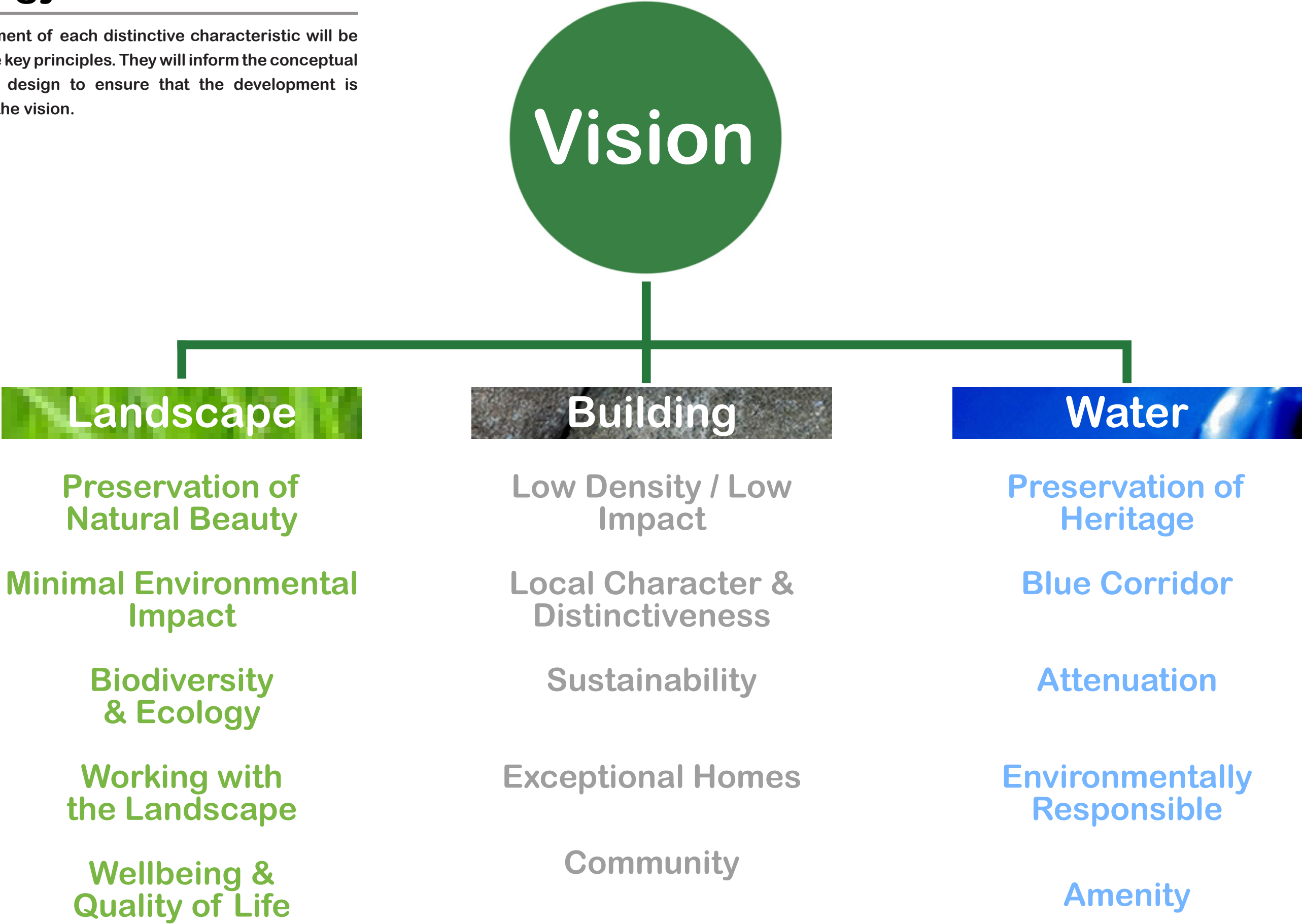
The integration of these three elements is truly exceptional in the Loxley Valley, and why it remains one of the most picturesque and peaceful valleys within Sheffield and the Peak District National Park.





# Strategy

The development of each distinctive characteristic will be guided by five key principles. They will inform the conceptual and detailed design to ensure that the development is aligned with the vision.





# Landscape

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Our design approach to landscape will be guided by these five key principles.

## Preservation of Natural Beauty

To ensure that the natural beauty and tranquil atmosphere of the valley is preserved. The development will not spoil the natural landscape and have minimal impact on the views and natural resources. Natural assets on the site including existing trees and hedgerows will be retained and incorporated within the new development as much as possible.

## Minimal Environmental Impact

Low impact/low density development reduces the environmental impact of the development. Traffic in the valley will remain light ensuring there will be little or no disturbance to the natural ecosystem and peaceful nature of the valley. Sensitive design and orientation of properties will ensure that lighting is not visually intrusive nor detract from the rural landscape.

## Biodiversity & Ecology

The design, siting, and landscape of new development will respect and promote nature. Conservation and maintenance measures on the site will be appropriate to the local ecology and protect and enhance the natural habitats of local wildlife. Traditional mixed hedgerow will define boundaries between the homes and with private gardens and trees, can provide habitat and increase biodiversity on the site. Hard landscaping and lawns will be kept to a minimum with priority given to wild planting and grasslands.

## Working with the Landscape

The natural characteristics of the site and its surroundings will help to determine the size, form and placement of buildings. Factors to consider include the microclimate, topography, existing trees, water, and views that connect the built form to the landscape.

## Wellbeing & Quality of Life

There is strong evidence that people are happier and healthier when they live in and have easy access to green surroundings. Having green spaces nearby increases the likelihood that people will take outdoor exercise, leading to better health outcomes and improved quality of life.

By incorporating and enhancing green spaces, trails, and outdoor recreation areas within the development, residents can enjoy the beauty of the valley while being encouraged to be active and healthy.

The new homes will be carefully positioned in clusters around several village greens. These will provide focal points within the development that can help create a sense of community among the residents, encouraging them to interact with their neighbours, and where children can meet and play with their friends.





# Building

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**Our design approach to building will be guided by these five key principles.**

## Low Density / Low Impact

The built footprint of the new homes will be significantly less than that of the old mill buildings and factories that they will replace. Hard standing will largely be replaced with soft landscaping, wild planting, hedgerows, and gardens. The low density of development will preserve the openness between the new homes which is a distinctive feature of the valley. The low number of new dwellings together with sensitive design, orientation, and screening of properties will ensure that the natural beauty and feeling of spaciousness in the valley will be preserved and key views protected.

## Local Character & Distinctiveness

By incorporating exemplary architecture, materials, and landscaping that take inspiration from the local character and distinctiveness, the development will blend seamlessly with the natural beauty of the valley. Integrating existing buildings and structures of historical significance can add considerable interest and character to new development, contribute to environmental sustainability with the reuse of existing buildings, and help protect the heritage of the site and the wider valley.

## Sustainability

The homes will be designed from first principles to be low carbon and environmentally friendly, and incorporate features and technologies which promote sustainable living and reduce the impact of the homes on the natural surroundings. The development will minimise reliance on existing local energy infrastructure with energy efficient homes that incorporate low-energy appliances, renewable energy sources, and water conservation techniques.

Homes will include car charging points and will also have access to a car pool for residents as an alternative to car ownership. The development will encourage the use of soft travel modes as an alternative to use of the private car, including a commitment a 'walking bus' to get children to and from the local primary school as an alternative to use of the private car. Scheme proposals will confirm a package of scheme benefits both for future occupants and residents and the wider community as well as a governance / management structure with funding and legal controls to ensure those benefits are maintained throughout the life of the development once it has been delivered.

## Exceptional Homes

The development will provide exceptional homes with large private gardens that are suitable for families and the elderly. The homes will be designed in a contemporary architectural style that takes inspiration from local buildings and structures. They will have open plan spaces and abundant natural light through mostly south facing windows. The development will include affordable housing, a quarter of these can be first homes.

## Community

The development will encourage the creation of a community with start up Indy space, padle tennis, a community cafe, and retaining the existing bowling club. Community events and activities can promote the use of these amenities leading to a stronger and more cohesive community, where residents feel a sense of belonging and are invested in the well-being of where they live. These amenities will attract the wider valley community and visitors to the area, which can have economic benefits for the local community.





# Water

Our design approach to water will be guided by these five key principles.

## Preservation of Heritage

Respecting and including local heritage within the development ensures that the industrial history of the valley will remain visible and not be lost or forgotten. It will preserve small dams, mill ponds, sluices, and goyts, remnants of the waterpower that helped shape the valley. It is proposed that the site commemorates the importance of water power in the valley and in particular, the Great Sheffield Flood. These features provide educational opportunities for residents and visitors by revealing the history and cultural significance of the area, which can lead to a greater appreciation and understanding of the valley.

## Blue Corridor

The River Loxley carves its way through the valley and is a defining feature of the site. New buildings will be set back from, or planned around the river and surface water ponding areas to create a generous blue corridor running through the site. This will protect the natural beauty of the river, facilitate natural hydrological processes, enhance biodiversity, and ensure the river remains easy to access for amenity and leisure purposes.

## Attenuation

Some of the larger dwellings will have their own infiltration ponds as a feature in their gardens. These provide for stormwater attenuation and treatment, act as a biological filter, and support aquatic vegetation and ecology. They are an attractive feature that can provide natural cooling in the warmer months, and will provide significant amenity benefits for the residents..

## Environmentally Responsible

The new homes will feature water conservation techniques including rainwater harvesting and Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). By encouraging residents to participate in eco-friendly and sustainable initiatives, the development can foster a sense of shared community responsibility for the environment and help protect the overall health and well-being of the valley's ecosystem.

## Amenity

The River Loxley is a significant natural resource in the valley that is enjoyed by the local community and attracts visitors to walk along its banks. Rights of way will be kept through the site to maintain and improve access to the river for community enjoyment and local wildlife.





# Concept

A low impact development of circa 60 special homes that respect the Loxley Valley, take care of the environment, and make the community a better place for all different kinds of people to live.

These homes will be for people of all ages at all stages in their life. There will be larger homes for families, and smaller homes for the elderly and those who live alone or with just a few people.

There will be things to do in the community, including riverside walks, play areas, and a community garden where residents can grow their own fruits and vegetables. The homes will use less energy and water, and be surrounded by trees and plants to enhance biodiversity and protect the natural and spacious feel of the Loxley Valley.

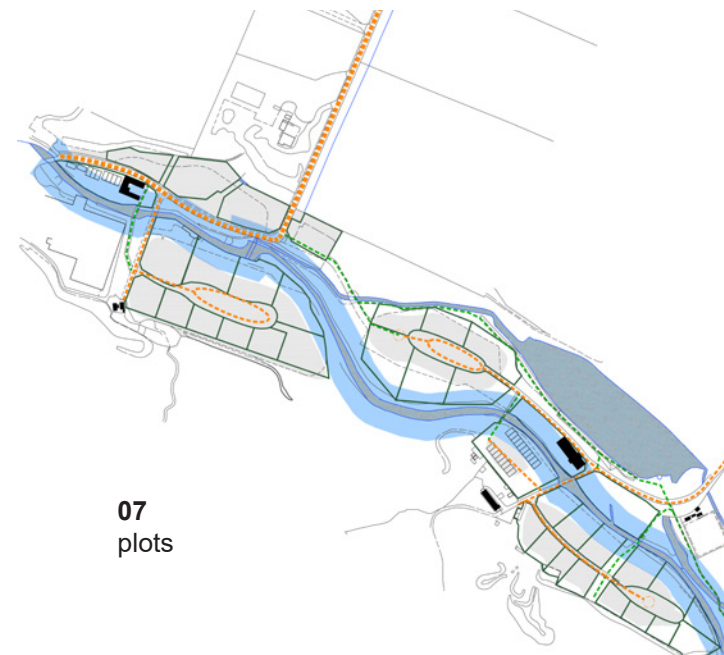
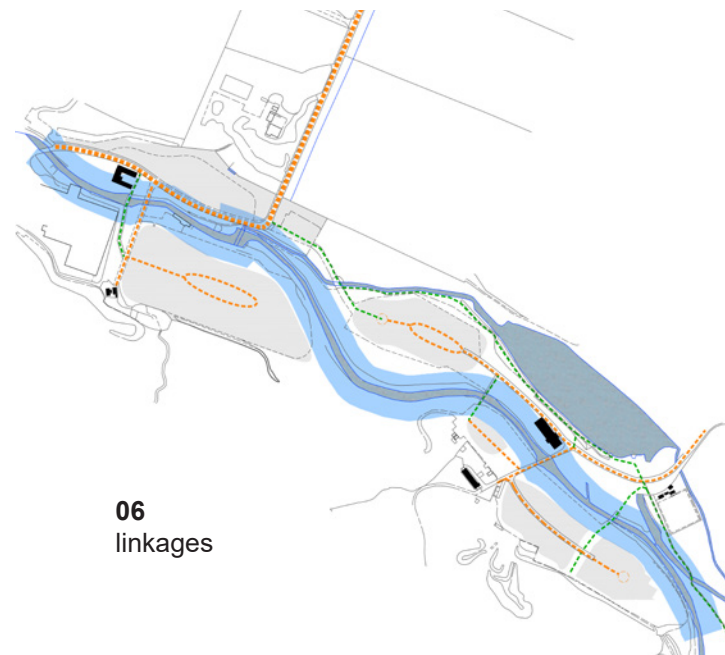
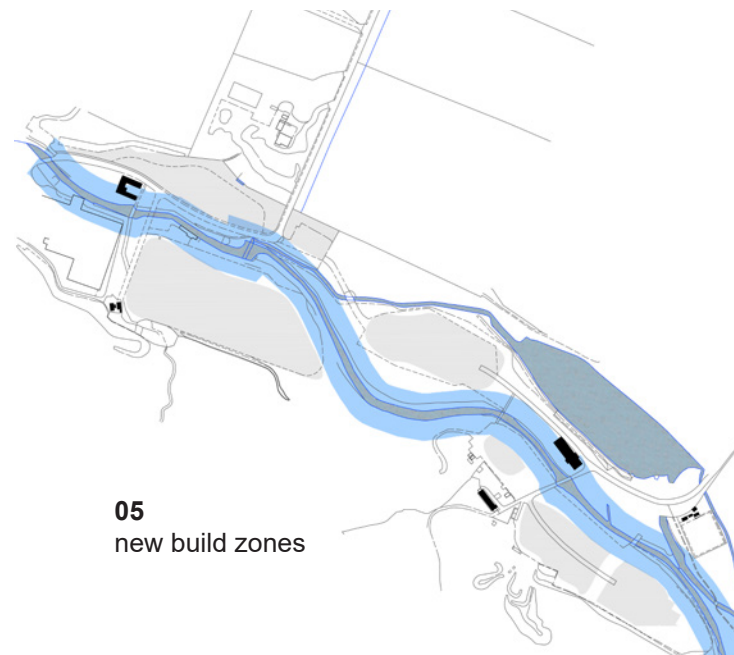
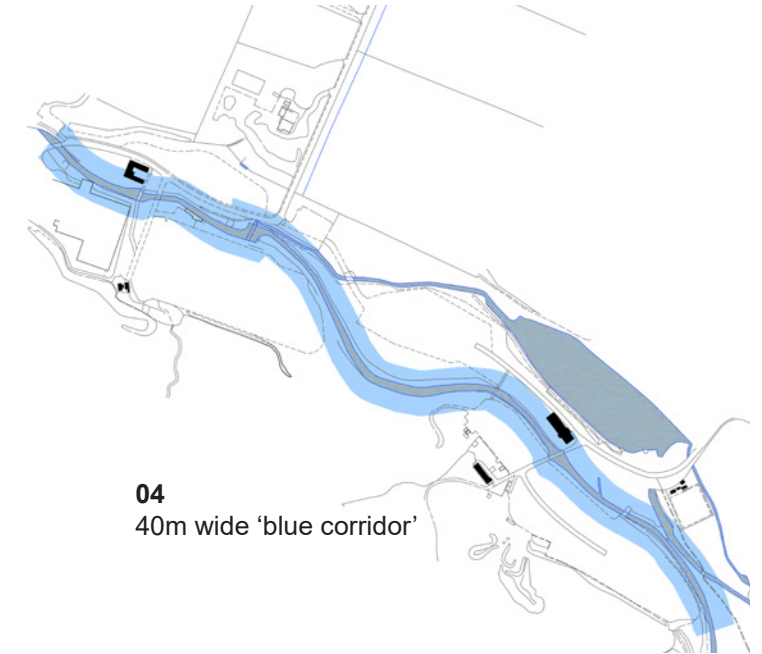
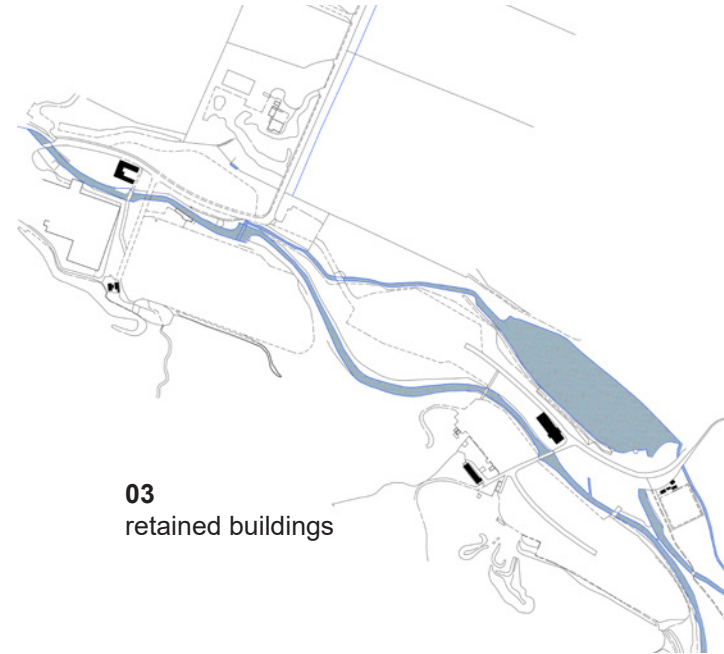
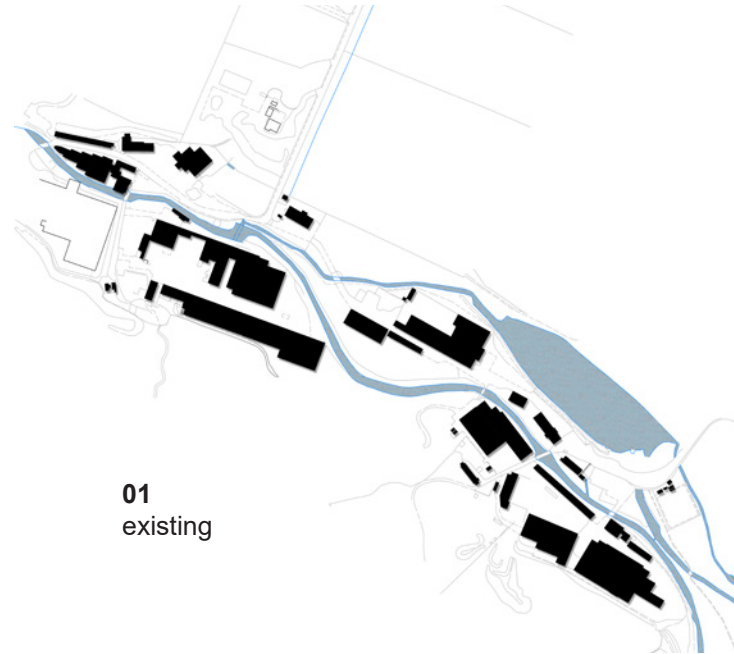
Some heritage buildings will be reused and the setting of the River Loxley will be protected to ensure it can be enjoyed by all. Our designs are currently in the very early stages and the key design themes are summarised on the following pages.





# Framework

A series of successive interventions that will see the site evolve from its current state into an exemplary, low impact residential development.





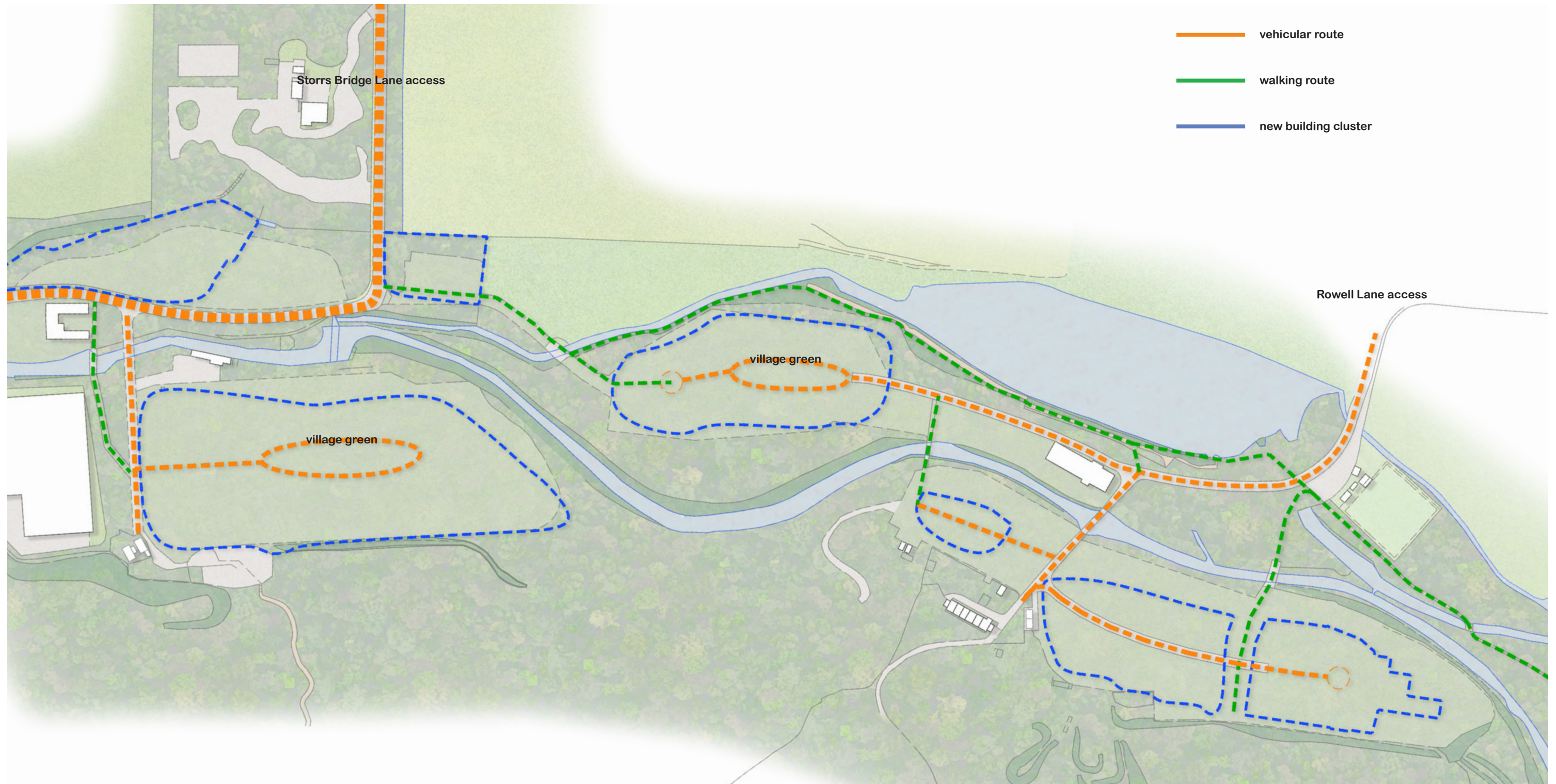
# Layout

The development will utilise existing access arrangements and not introduce new connecting roads or bridges across the river.

- Two vehicular site access points off Storrs Bridge Lane and Rowell Lane.

- No vehicular link connecting the two site access points to discourage car use on and across the site.
- The lack of a vehicular link between the two access points discourages the continuation of built form in the valley.

- Walking route and rights of way across the site retained.
- Some of the new building clusters discourage the continuation of built form in the valley, and are centered around a village green.





# Openness

The low density of development will preserve the openness between the new homes which is a distinctive feature of the valley.

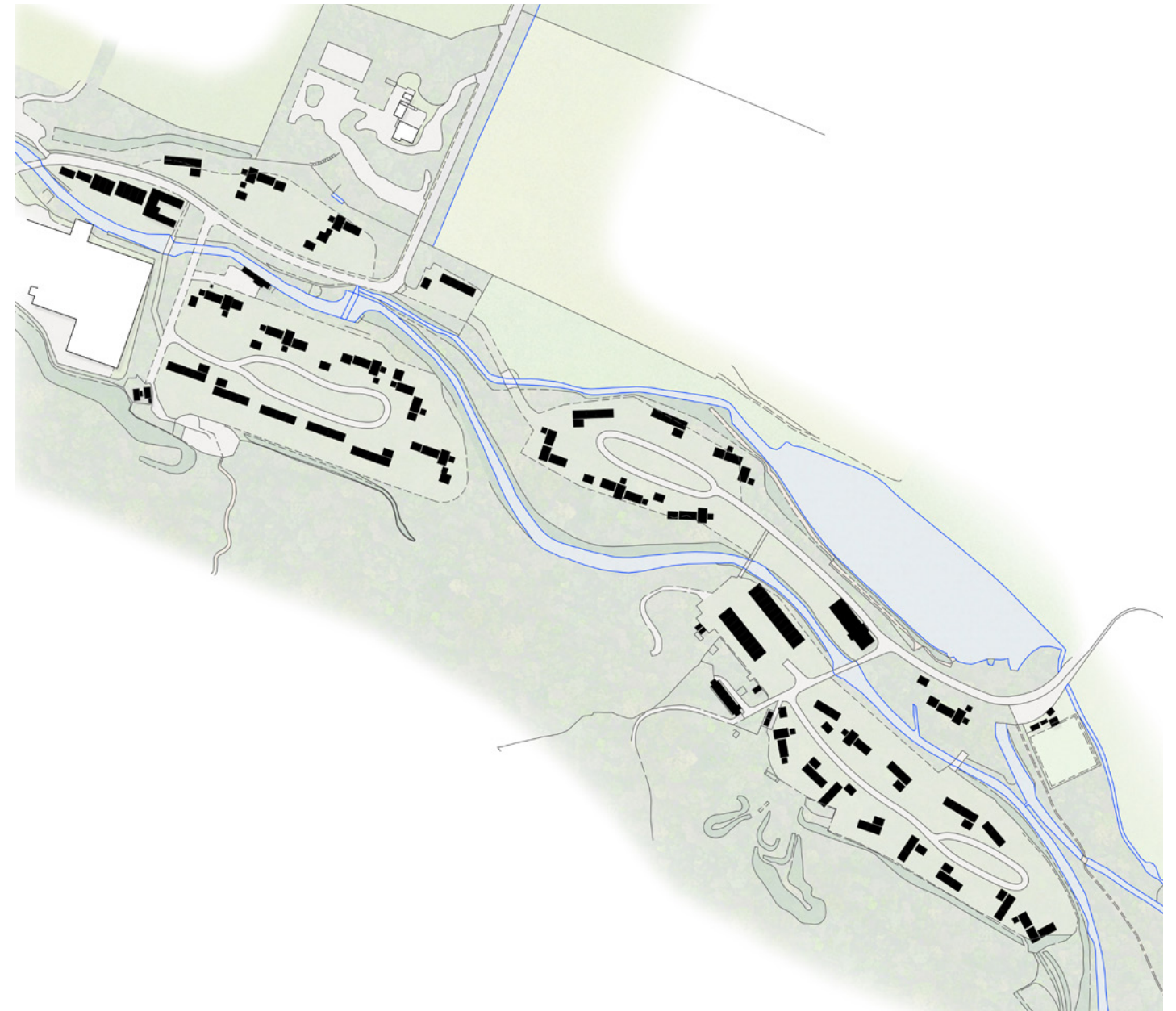
## Existing site

- Footprint of buildings approx 30,000sqm / 322,920sqft.
- Footprint of hardstanding on the site approx 86,500sqm
- Maximum building height on the site approx 15m.
- Buildings are oversized for the valley and not in keeping with the modest nature and spacing of buildings that typifies built form in the area.



## Proposed site

- Footprint of all buildings approx 11,150sqm / 120,000sqft.
- Footprint of hardstanding on the site significantly reduced
- Maximum building height on the site reduced to approx 8m.
- Buildings mostly arranged in small clusters as is typical of farm buildings and hamlets in the valley.
- Buildings are modest in size and kept to a similar scale and relationship with the landscape, a characteristic that is typical in the valley.
- No continuation of built form to preserve the openness of the greenbelt and prevent an urban appearance.





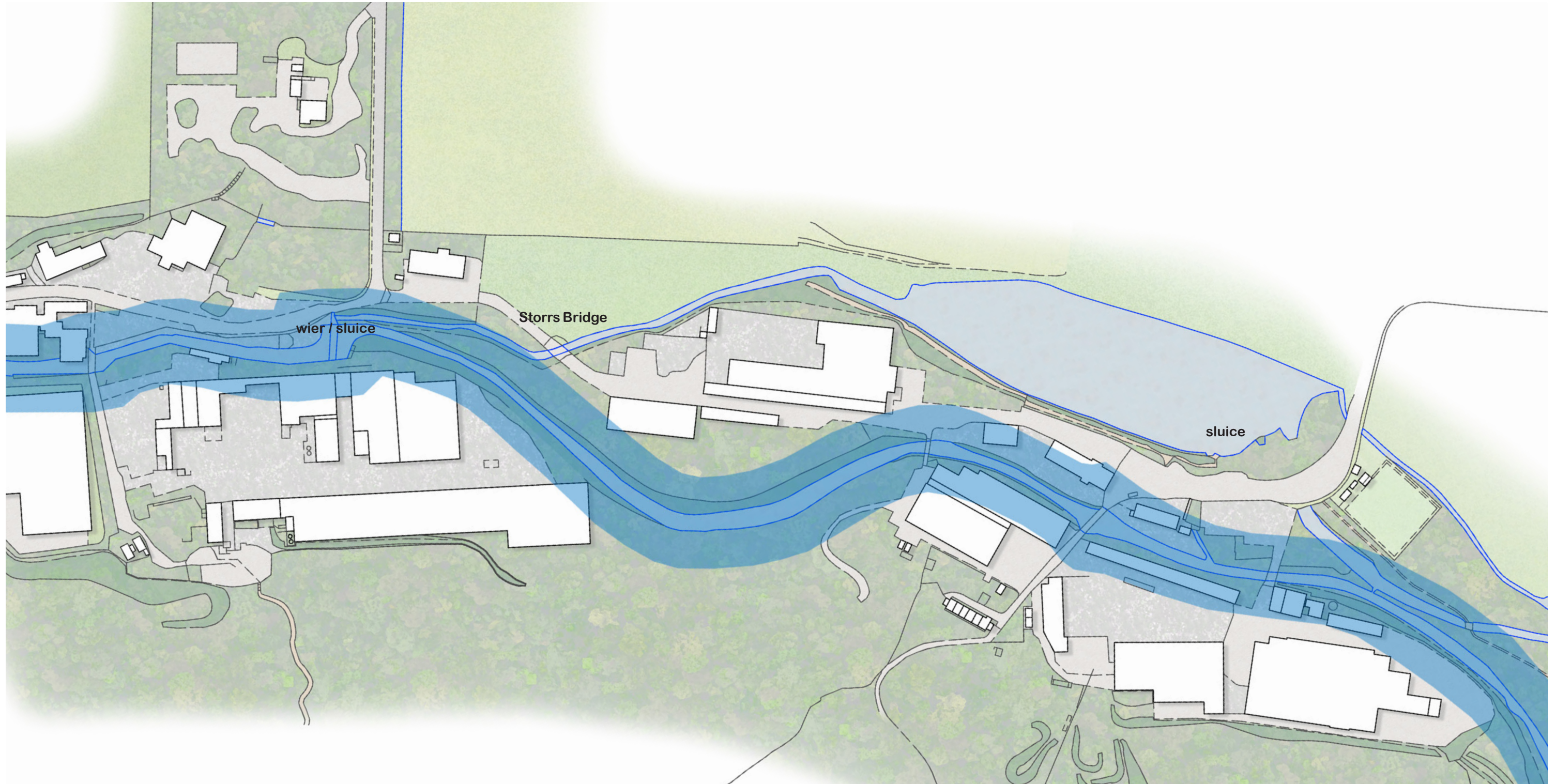
# Blue Corridor

**A protected area running through the site that protects and enhances the setting and biodiversity of the River Loxley.**

- A generous 40m wide 'blue corridor' which excludes all new buildings to protect the setting of the River Loxley.

- Enhancements to improve biodiversity along the River Loxley and encourage a thriving wildlife habitat.
- Highlight the waterpower heritage of the site and include a commemoration to the Great Sheffield Flood.

- An improved gateway to the Peak District with the River Loxley at its heart.





# Green Infrastructure

The development will harness the Site's many existing natural assets and form a sustainable green infrastructure network, improve biodiversity, and connect people with nature.

- The preservation of existing wooded areas, notably those south of the Loxley River within the Site's boundaries;
- Protection and enhancement of the landscape along the existing river corridor;
- Tree removal will be limited to what is required to facilitate the intended development, in places that are not visually sensitive;
- Planting new trees native to the Site's character areas to suit its existing landscape and arboricultural style;

- Plot boundaries formed of local hedgerows, plants, and trees for a natural aesthetic and to allow local biodiversity to move freely across the site.
- Village greens provide informal open areas for children's play that blend into the natural scenery.





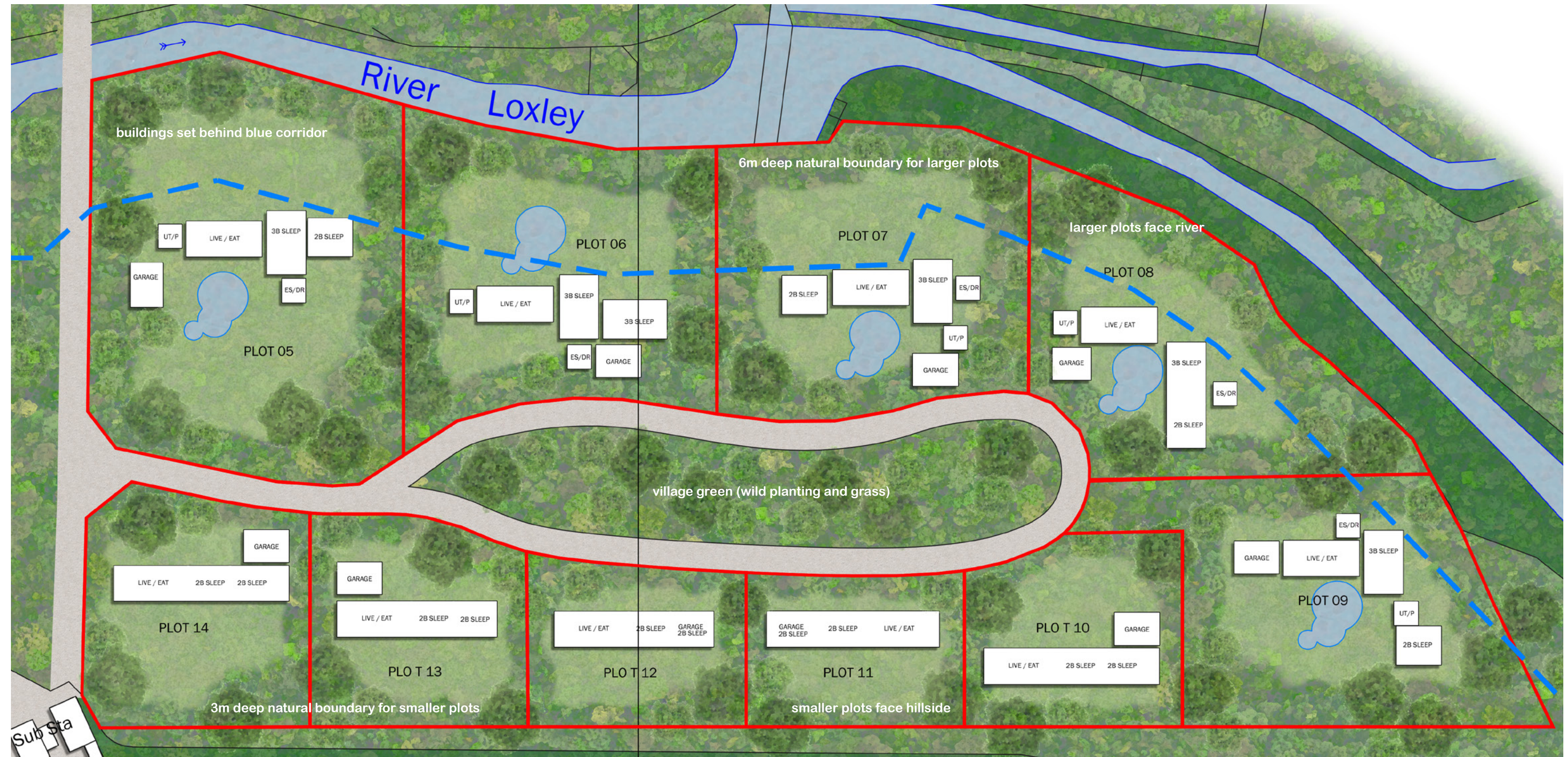
# Clusters

Buildings are mostly arranged in small clusters as is typical of farm buildings and hamlets in the valley, and to discourage the continuation of built form to preserve the openness of the green belt and prevent an urban appearance.

- A cluster will offer a hierarchy of plot sizes; larger homes face the river, smaller homes face the hillside.

- All properties are visually screened with natural boundaries formed of local hedgerows, plants, and trees. Larger properties have 6m deep boundaries, smaller properties have 3m deep boundaries.
- There are no fences to maintain a natural and open visual appearance, and to allow local biodiversity to move freely across the site.

- All homes are centered around a village green with a loop road that provides vehicular access to the properties.
- All properties will have gravel drives and are set in natural grasslands featuring wild planting, with lawns and hard landscaping kept to a minimum.
- All properties are set back behind the 40m wide 'blue corridor' which protects the setting of the River Loxley.





# Visual Impact

The development will not spoil the natural landscape and have minimal impact on views across the valley. Sensitive design and orientation of properties will ensure that lighting is not visually intrusive nor detract from the rural landscape.



## Valley section

The development will be screened by the topography, vegetation, and trees to minimise visibility in views across the valley..

topography and levels 'indicative only' for illustrative purposes



## Site section

The homes will have south facing glazing and be screened by vegetation and trees to minimise visibility across the site. The building footprints and areas of hardstanding are minimised to protect the openness of the site.

topography and levels 'indicative only' for illustrative purposes



# Architecture

Our design approach to the new buildings can be described as ‘contemporary rural’.

The massing and forms of the new homes are inspired by the farmsteads and barn structures of the Loxley Valley. The homes will be one and two floors in height only, and feature pitched roofs with a shallow pitch between 35° to 45° as is typical in the valley.

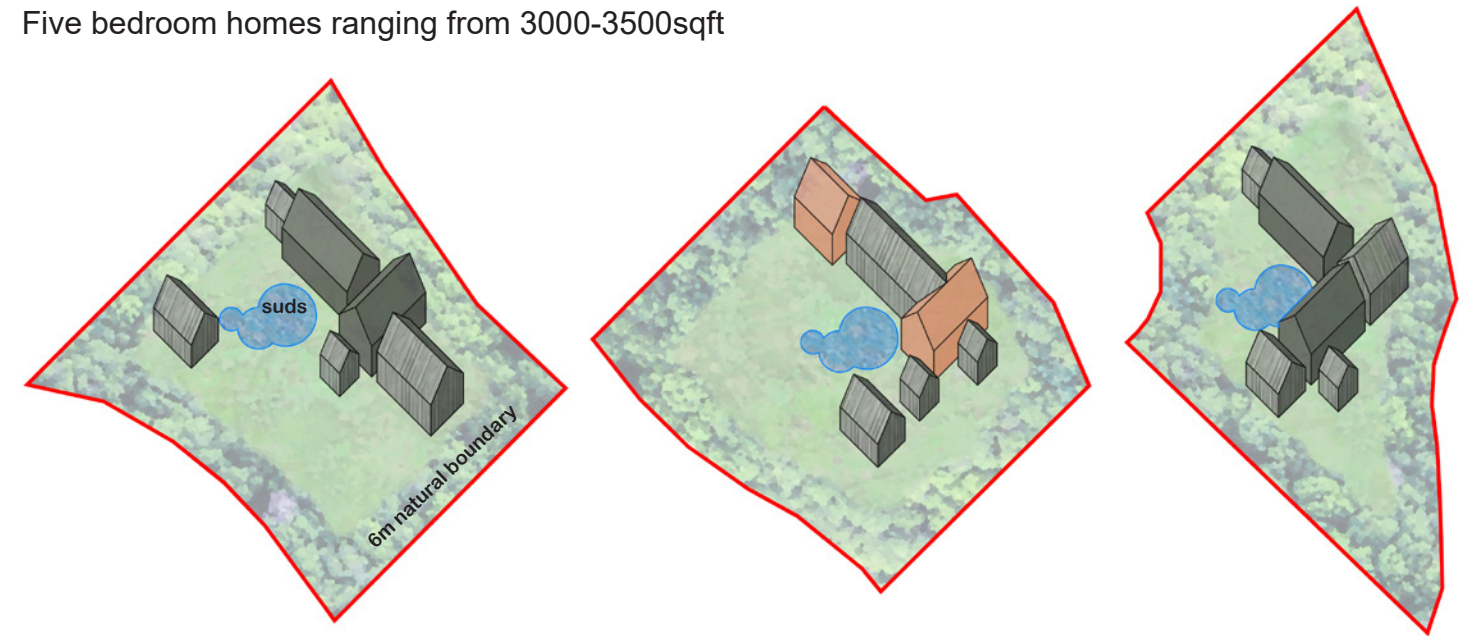
They will be assembled from a series of components faced in a limited palette of materials that are local to the valley and inform its character; stone, metal, wood. The way the homes fit together, and how they fit into the landscape will accentuate the valley and its distinctive character.

These diagrams show how the proposed building components could be assembled to create homes that share a common architectural form, material and detailing, but are distinctly different to each other.

The intention is to create a series of buildings that create variety and distinctiveness through their differences, and to avoid the repetition of house types that is common in more urban housing developments.

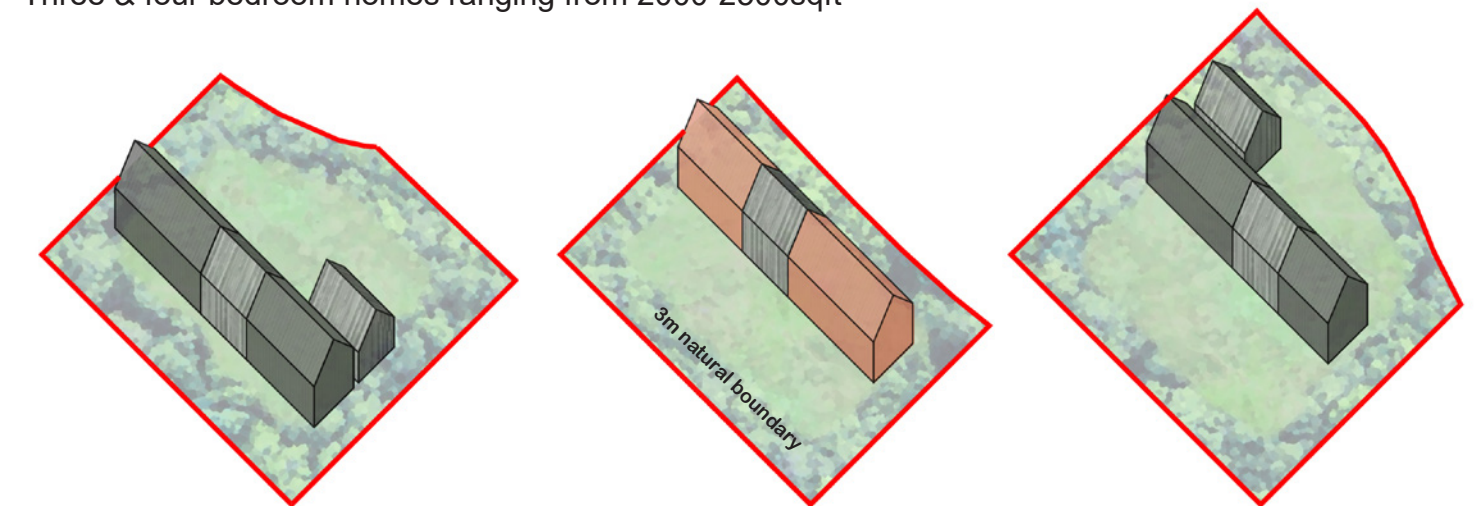
## Larger riverside plots

Five bedroom homes ranging from 3000-3500sqft



## Smaller hillside plots

Three & four bedroom homes ranging from 2000-2500sqft



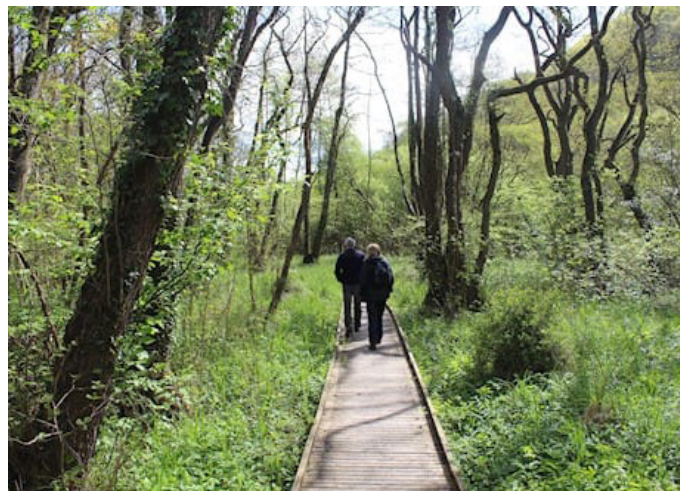


# Community

The development will encourage a sustainable community by providing homes suitable for people at all stages of life. It will include amenities to encourage social interaction and activities between the residents and the local community, and attract visitors to enjoy the natural beauty of Loxley Valley.

The following sustainability measures will be included in the development to support social integration, recreational and leisure activities, and promote healthy and active lifestyles:

- Provide homes suitable for the elderly. The former Hepworth Works offices can be converted into apartments with affordable bungalows to the rear.
- Community garden so the residents can grow their own food.
- Retain the existing bowling club.
- Develop area in front of residential terraces into a community hub containing mixed-use space with space for potential bike hire, cafe, local producers and artisan markets, and workshop units.
- Events and activities can promote the use of these amenities to attract the wider valley community and visitors to the area.
- Retained and enhanced woodland areas and blue corridor with footpath improvements.





# Conclusion

This statement sets out our vision for an exemplary residential development in Loxley Valley, and has been the result of a methodological design process that has included:

- The preservation of existing wooded areas, notably those south of the Loxley River within the Site's boundaries;
- An initial Site and context assessment;
- The development of a set of design principles;
- Initial engagement with the Friends of Loxley Valley with reference to the Loxley Valley Design Statement;

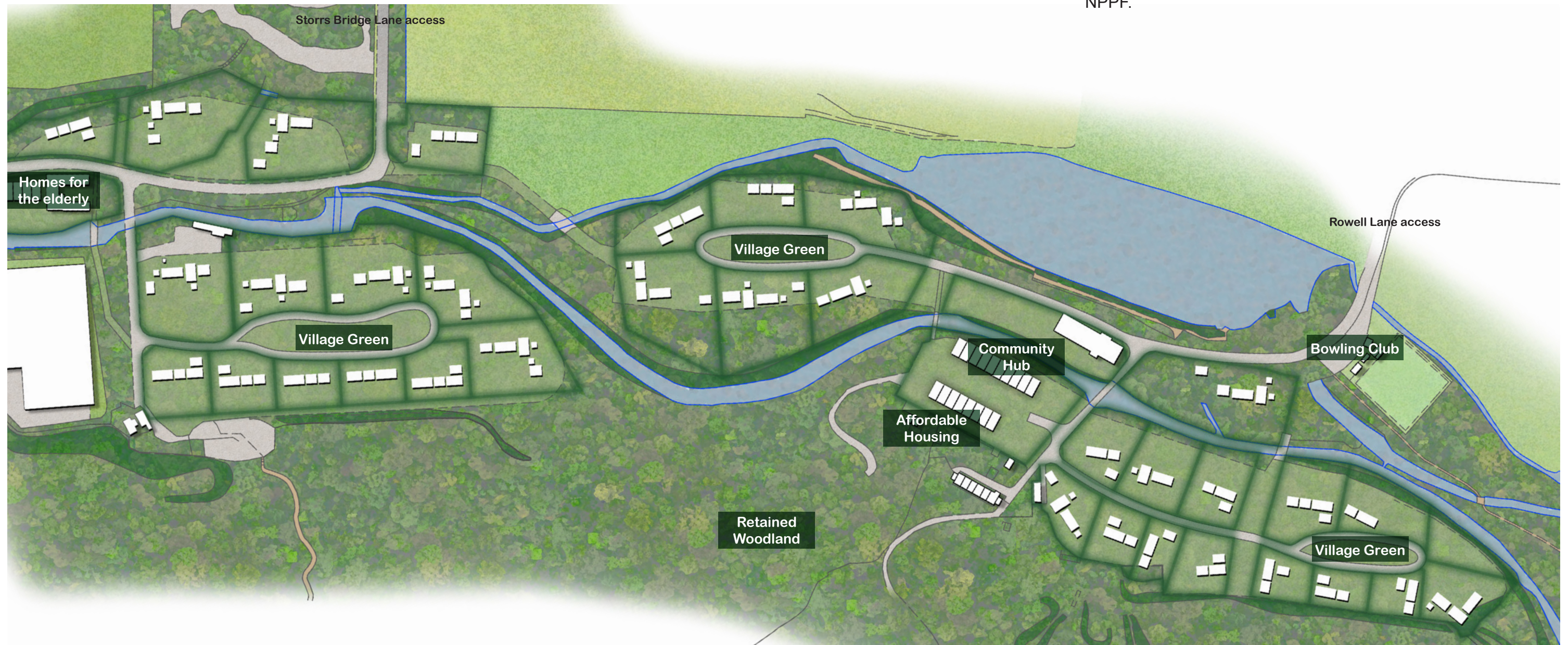
- The refinement of a conceptual masterplan and a set of parameter plans.

## Summary of the Proposal

- Circa 60 residential dwellings including family homes, apartments and bungalows for the elderly, and affordable housing.
- Access arrangements from Storrs Bridge Lane and Rowell Lane;
- Conversion of two existing buildings for a custom house and homes for the elderly;

- Significant green infrastructure retained including public open space and landscaping, village greens, woodland and landscape features, ecological mitigation and enhancements, sustainable urban drainage systems and other associated infrastructure.

The vision achieves a compromise between preserving the character of the current landscape and allowing the Site to deliver new development. The development ideas address the need to improve the Site's sustainability in terms of location, as well as to provide a sustainable development that integrates social, environmental, and economic enhancements as outlined in the NPPF.





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