



THAME

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Site Selection Report

July 2021

Thame Neighbourhood Plan: Site Selection Report



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1 Introduction

This Site Selection report builds upon the Site Assessment prepared and which considered the suitability of sites in Thame for future growth and development. That assessment was based upon all sites contained within the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) prepared by South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) in support of the Local Plan, as well as those put forward through the Call for Sites process undertaken by Thame Town Council.

The assessment, which followed guidance published by MHCLG and Locality in their toolkit for Neighbourhood Planning groups, found that 23 sites were potentially suitable and available for development (see Figure 1), and thus decisions need to be taken as to which of these perform best in terms of meeting the vision for Thame as well as accommodating new growth as required in the Local Plan.

The vision and objectives for Thame, as set out in the 'made' Neighbourhood Plan (2013), were subject to consultation in 2019, during which they were ratified as the basis for work on the review of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The overarching vision statement for Thame is that:

'Thame must maintain its character as a real market town'.

The 'made' Neighbourhood Plan expands on this, stating that:

- Thame must continue to feel 'compact'.
- Thame must continue to have a close relationship with the open countryside around it.
- Thame must retain its markets, festivals and events.
- Thame must continue to act as a centre for the surrounding area not just its residents.

The Objectives from the 2013 'made' Plan are grouped under five main headings and are listed below.

Objective set 1, Housing:

1. Integrate new housing into Thame
2. Provide a greater range of affordable housing
3. Provide a range of different housing types across all tenures

Objective set 2, Working and Shopping:

1. Support Thame's shops
2. Provide new employment
3. Make sure the Cattle Market site supports Thame town centre

Objective set 3, Getting around:

1. Connect new housing into Thame and the wider area with good pedestrian, cycle and bus connections
2. Improve existing pedestrian and cycle connections within Thame
3. Improve connections to surrounding destinations
4. Plan public transport to better meet users' needs
5. Ensure car parking within the town supports the viability of the town centre

Objective set 4, Community, Leisure and Wellbeing:

1. Provide a large community facility
2. Ensure the Thame Neighbourhood Plan meets the needs of local people
3. Allocate land for a primary school

Objective set 5, Environment, Sustainability and Design Quality:

1. Co-ordinate green infrastructure
2. Provide more public open space
3. Improve existing open space
4. Provide riverside walks within natural green space
5. Co-ordinate sports provision
6. New development to address flooding and drainage issues
7. Encourage energy efficient and sustainable development
8. Development should reinforce the character and quality of Thame

In terms of the spatial distribution of growth and development in Thame, key principles based on the above are that:

- The compactness and walkability of Thame should be retained, with new homes within comfortable travel distance, by foot and by bike, from the town centre and other social and community facilities located around the town.
- The sensitive environment around Thame should be respected, with areas of new growth avoiding areas of nature conservation and flood risk.
- Growth should avoid impacting on the landscape setting of Thame, retaining proximity to the surrounding countryside.
- The separate identity of Thame and outlying villages, including Moreton, to the south, and Towersey, to the east, should be retained.
- New development should be well integrated with the existing built form, contributing to the achievement of integrated communities.
- New development should respect the historic growth and evolution of Thame.

These principles are illustrated in Figure 2 – Figure 4.

In terms of the quantum of development to be accommodated on new site allocations within the revised Neighbourhood Plan, the SODC Local Plan states:

- **Housing:** 1,518 new homes should be delivered in Thame over the Plan period, of which 1,179 are already completed or committed, leaving a minimum balance of 339 new homes to plan for (see Table 4d of the Local Plan).
- **Employment:** A minimum of 3.5 hectares of employment land are required in Thame over the Plan period to accommodate additional jobs in the office, manufacturing and distribution sectors (see Policy EMP1 of the Local Plan).
- **Retail:** At least 1,500 sqm net convenience retail floorspace is required in Thame over the Plan period. The expectation is that delivery of this floorspace should follow a 'town centre first approach' (see Policy TC4 of the Local Plan).

The requirements outlined above are based upon monitoring data as of April 2020 and subject to update from SODC, and which may impact on the quantum of development to plan for. This includes a number of live applications for development in Thame and which are expected to be determined in May and June 2021.

In addition to the above, the SODC Local Plan and South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse Hotel Needs Assessment (2014) further indicates a possible requirement and opportunity for a hotel within Thame. Should this need be significant, there is potential to provide a hotel within a mixed-use allocation.

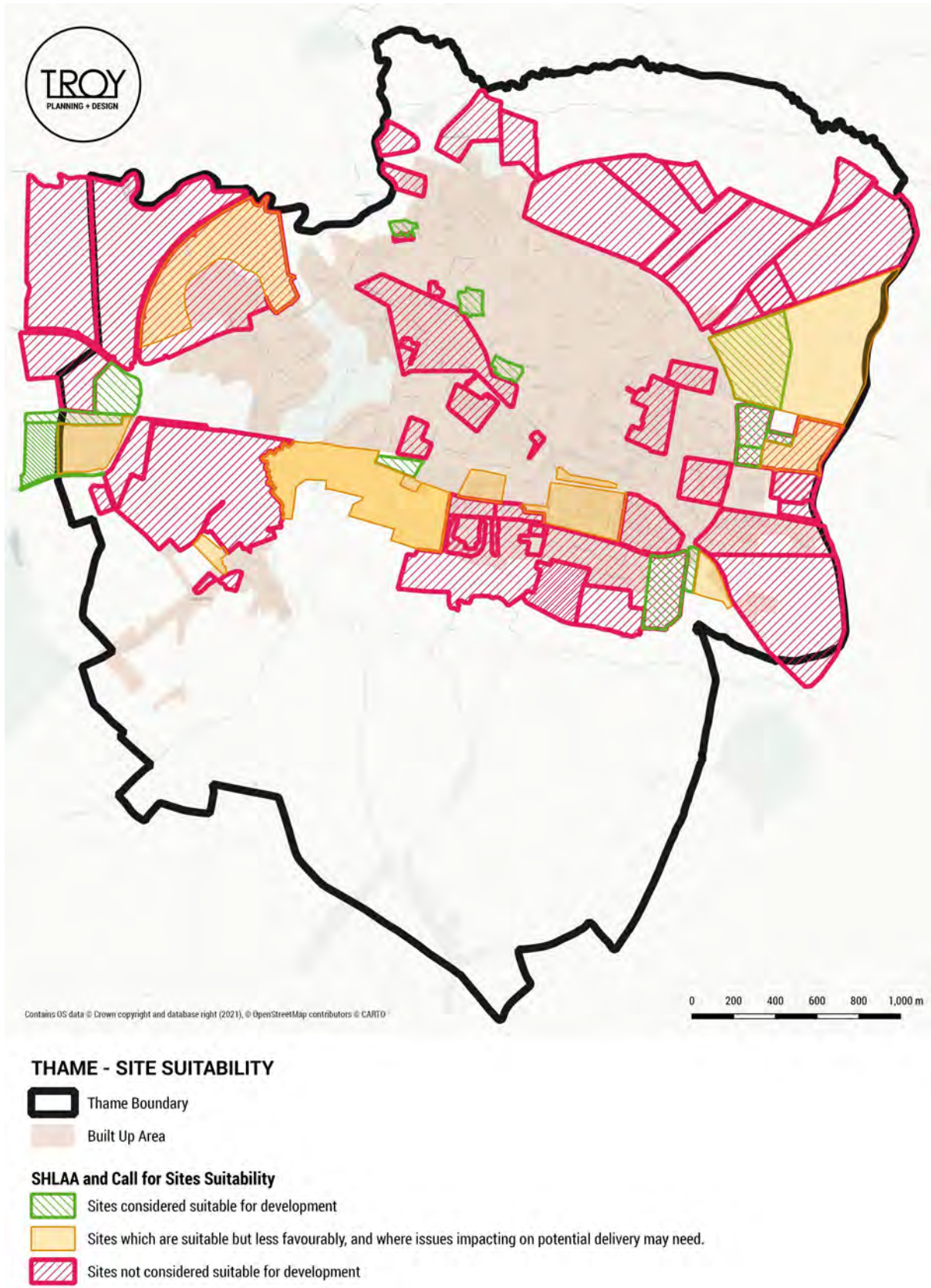


Figure 1: Plan showing all sites carried forward from the site assessment. Suitable (green), less favourable (amber) and unsuitable (red) sites for further assessment

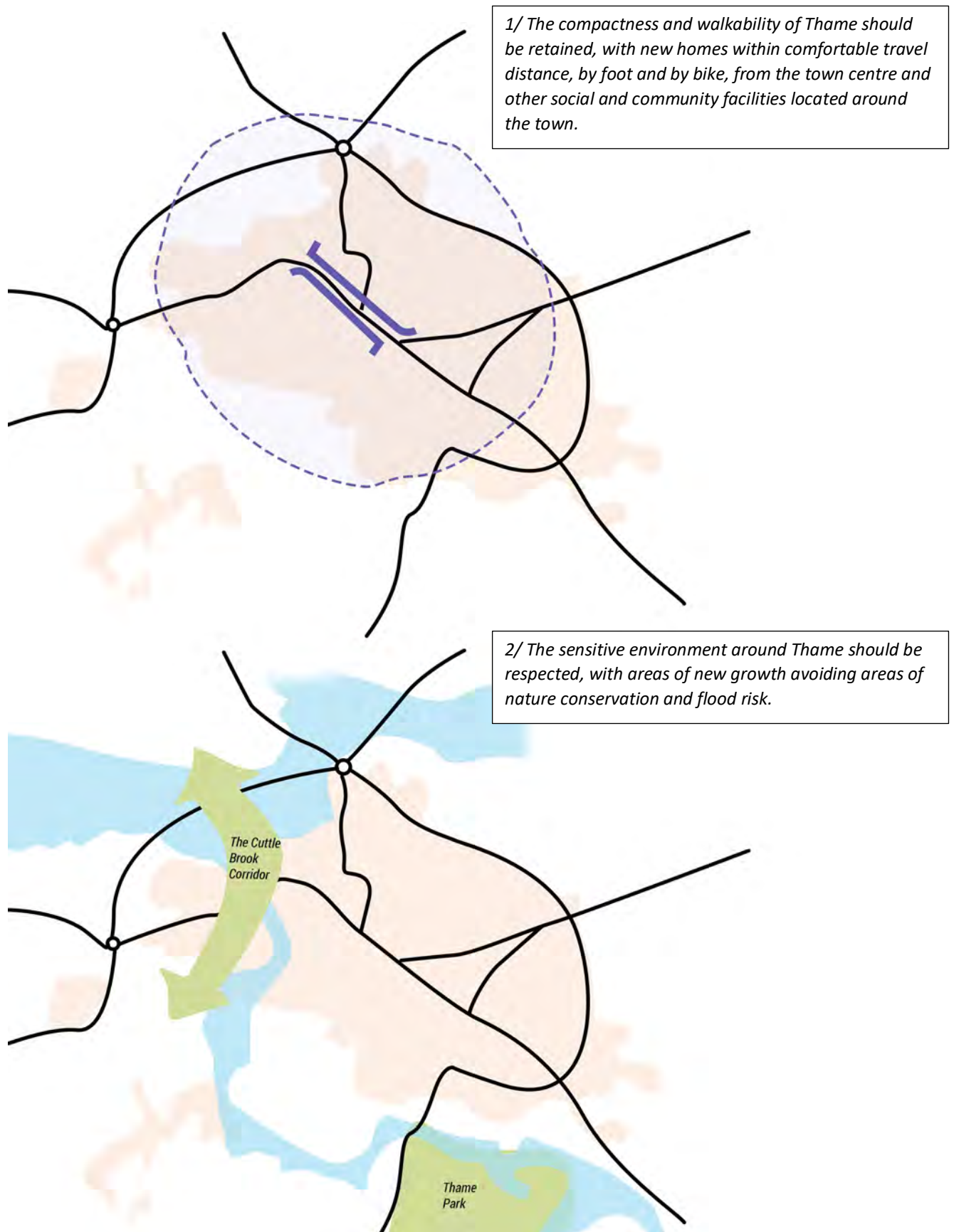


Figure 2: Concept plans 1 & 2 illustrating the spatial growth principles

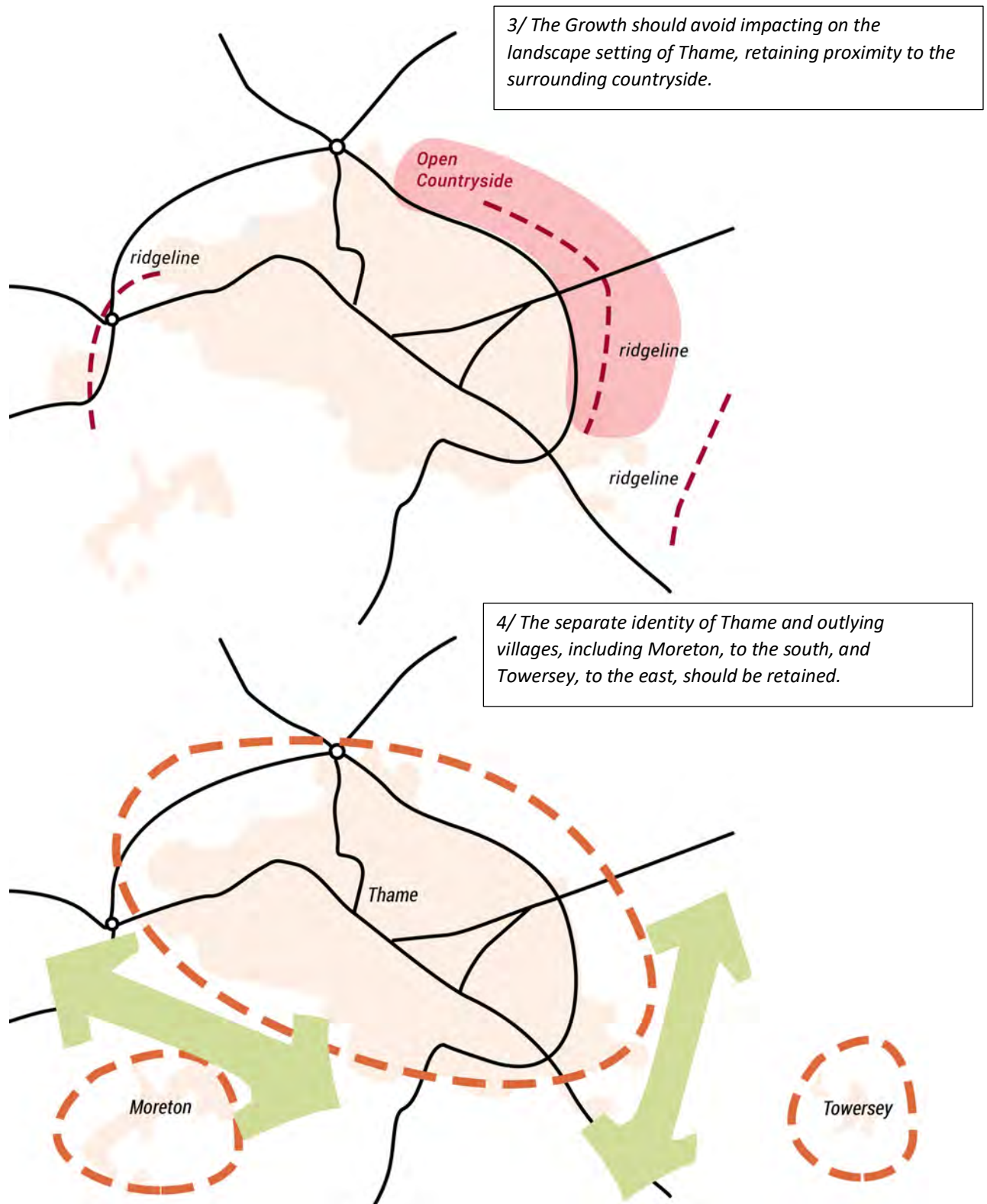


Figure 3: Concept plans 3 & 4 illustrating the spatial growth principles

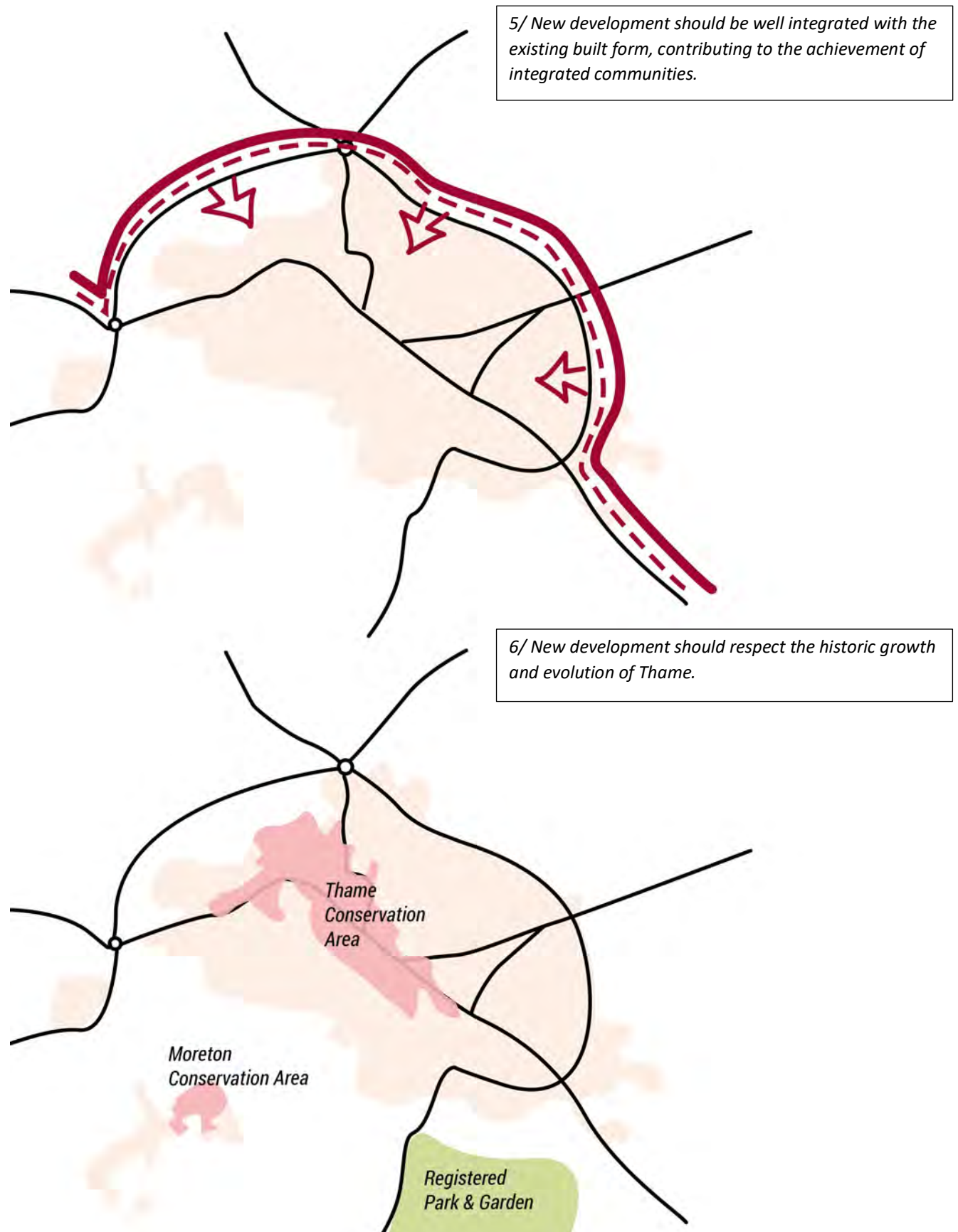


Figure 4: Concept plans 5 & 6 illustrating the spatial growth principles

2 Review of Sites

This section of the report provides commentary against all of the sites carried forward to this stage, indicating how they perform against the principles outlined in the previous chapter, and whether they should be considered as a potential allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Site Reference	Commentary	Potential allocation (y/n) and suitable use
34.1 (Land east of Howland Road/south of Towersey Road Stoford)	Land to the east of the B4012 should only be developed if it were not to encroach significantly eastwards into the countryside and reduce the openness between Thame and neighbouring Towersey. The land to the south of this site has been recently developed (for employment uses) in line with TNP1 and extends eastwards from the B4012 by circa 160m. Development aligned with this would be considered appropriate (such as this site and 34.2 below) as it would be well integrated with the existing built form. This land was deemed appropriate for development within the SODC Landscape Capacity Study and it would make sense to extend the industrial development to mirror that towards the south.	Y Employment <i>This site was initially promoted for residential, although the promoter has since confirmed that they would be happy to promote employment use on this site instead.</i>
34.2 Land east of Howland Road/north of 'Windles'	Please refer to site 34.1	Y Employment <i>This site was initially promoted for a hotel, bar and restaurant, although the promoter has since confirmed that they would be happy to promote employment use on this site instead.</i>
34.3 Land east of Towersey Road(Cotmore Wells)/east of Howland Road	There is potential for development on a reduced area of this site. There may need to be some level of landscaping and green infrastructure along the eastern boundary as indicated by the	Y <i>This site was initially promoted as part of a wider mixed-use scheme. The promoter has since</i>

	Landscape Capacity Study. Development on this site would not extend any further east than the existing built form to the south and therefore the site will be well integrated, and Thame would retain its compact character.	<i>confirmed that they would be happy to promote employment use on this site instead.</i>
34.4 Land east of Windles and Groves (east of Howland Road)	The key principles for Thame include retaining the compact nature and walkability of the town, retaining the separate identity of Thame and establishing new development that is well integrated with the existing built form. It is considered that to retain the compact nature of Thame, land on the eastern side of the B4012 should only be developed if it were not to extend significantly to the east. Firstly, sites that extend too far would be removed from and have limited access to local facilities, including shops and the town centre, and growth would also encroach on the open countryside between Thame and Towersey, reducing the openness between the areas. The same applies to site 34.5 below.	N
34.5 Land south of Towersey Road	Please refer to site 34.4	N
285 (Howland Road Business Park)	Whilst there is potential to redevelop the eastern extent of the site, the most appropriate development would be industrial/commercial. The site is currently operational and within this use. The Local Plan establishes a requirement for additional employment land, rather than jobs, and bringing this site forward would not contribute towards supplying more land. If it were to come forward in the future it would represent an intensified form of development.	N

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<p>303 (Menlo Industrial Park)</p>	<p>The site would be appropriate for commercial / industrial use, however it is currently operational for this use and therefore redevelopment would not be appropriate. This site would not be appropriate for residential development due to the poor access to services and facilities including shops and the town centre. In addition, it would be located approximately 600m from existing development to the east.</p>	<p>N</p>
<p>321 (Thame 40, Jane Morbey Road)</p>	<p>This site could be appropriate for residential or employment allocation, however the site has been recently developed and is in operational use, therefore, redevelopment of the site would not be appropriate.</p>	<p>N</p>
<p>340 (The Dairy, Moreton)</p>	<p>This site is located within Moreton (outside and beyond the main settlement of Thame). Key principles for Thame include retaining a separate identity of Thame and outlying villages and maintaining the walkability and compact nature of the town. This site has poor access to facilities and therefore is not a sustainable location. It would also extend the village of Moreton north west, reducing the separate identity.</p>	<p>N</p>
<p>347 (Goodsons Industrial Mews)</p>	<p>This site forms part of a live planning application. It is considered appropriate for a mixed use scheme including residential and employment floorspace. It has good access to services, retaining the compact nature of the town. There is no impact on the landscape or surrounding countryside and development will be well integrated with the existing built form. Development must respect the historic core of the town.</p>	<p>Y (Subject to outcome of current live planning application) Mixed Use (Residential / Retail / Employment)</p>

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351 (Station Yard)	This site would be appropriate for industrial / commercial floorspace, however it is in operational use with limited opportunity to increase the intensity on site. It is therefore not considered appropriate for redevelopment.	N
837/837.1 (Land south of Moreton Lane CALA)	The most appropriate location for redevelopment of this site would be within the north east section. This would be well integrated with the new developments to the east, while retaining the landscape buffer to the south. Development within the west section of the site would be within FZ2/3 and would be located adjacent to Cuttle Brook nature reserve to the north, and therefore not appropriate.	Y (partly) Residential
843 (Land South of Kingsey Road)	Development on the eastern side of the B4102 would encroach on the open countryside between Thame and Towersey. The natural delineation of the land deemed appropriate for allocation to the south is Towersey Road. If development were to be allocated on this site, it would set a precedent for development of land to the north which would impact the landscape setting and accessibility of the countryside.	N
843.1	See site 843 above	N
855.1 (Land at Site F, North of Oxford Road)	The only location within this site that is deemed appropriate for development would be land to the south west. The north of the site is located within FZ2/3 and is to be retained for landscaped publicly open space and natural greenspace as outlined within TNP1. As one of the principles of Thame is to retain this, it will be important not to develop this part of the site. The south west location of the site will be well integrated with the existing built form and will not impact on the open	Y (Partly) Residential

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	countryside which is considered to be on the west of the A418.	
859 (Cattle Market)	This site is allocated in TNP1 for 3,000sqm of mixed use retail, employment and residential use. The site has good access to services and redevelopment will not impact the open countryside or have any detriment to the landscape. Development will however need to be sensitive to the historic core of the town. This site would be well integrated with existing built form.	Y Mixed Use (Residential / Retail / Employment)
860 (Land at Aylesbury Road, Lash Lake)	This site would be suitable for employment floorspace, although any development would have to be sensitive to the Conservation Area and the listed buildings within and on the boundary of the site, especially Lashlake House (a Grade II* listed building) to the south. FZ2/3 bounds the north west edge of the site. As the site is operational, it is not considered an appropriate allocation.	N
872 (Land east of Moorend Lane)	The site would be suitable for industrial development to mirror the site to the east (Menlo Industrial Park), however, it would extend development further to the west, encroaching on the open countryside. This would set a precedent for land to the north to be developed westerly, further impacting on the landscape.	N
1022/1022.1 (Land South of Chinnor Road/Diagnostic reagents)	The northern extent of the site is considered most appropriate for residential development to act as a continuation of the development to the west (including site 1108.2). The site currently comprises a few commercial units to the north, which would need to be redeveloped. This site is promoted for 25 dwellings, although the extent of the developable area may be constrained by the route of an oil pipeline. In addition, it is likely that alterations will be required	Y (Partly) Residential

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	to the access to ensure safe access and egress away from the roundabout	
1108.2 (CEG Site C Reserve)	This site is subject to a live planning application for 57 homes (P21/S0917/O), however, subject to this application the site is potentially suitable. The southern half of the site should remain as open greenspace to mirror the recent developments to the west and as outlined within TNP1.	Y (Partly – subject to outcome of live planning application) Residential
1113/1113.1 (Land at Rycote Lane)	This site is located to the west of Rycote Lane and therefore, not well integrated with the existing residential development or the settlement of Thame. Development has the potential to impact the landscape and encroach into the countryside that surrounds the town, reducing its compactness and walkability.	N
1143 (Land South of Chinnor Road)	Part of the site has been recently developed for community use, with associated landscaping. Development of this site would impact the landscape setting of this building and is therefore not considered appropriate. Development would not be well integrated with existing built form.	N
1336 (Land south of properties on Arnold Way)	This site forms part of a live planning application for 31 affordable homes. The site does not have any detrimental impact on access to the countryside and will be well integrated with the land allocation to the south (837). This site is suitable for residential development.	Y Residential (Subject to outcome of live planning application)
1337 (Land at Meadow Brook House)	This site is located adjacent to the southern boundary of site 1337 and northern boundary of site 837. Its current use is a single large residential dwelling and its availability is unknown. It therefore is not allocated as part of this plan.	N

3 Recommendations

Based upon the commentary outlined in the previous section it is recommended that the following sites (see Figure 5) are taken forward as potential allocations in the revised version of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Potential housing allocations:

- **837/837.1 (Land south of Moreton Lane/Land South of Thame):** The north east section of this site would be most appropriate for residential development. This would be well integrated with the new residential development to the south of Thame whilst retaining a buffer from the Flood Zone and Nature Reserve.
- **855.1 (Land at Site F, North of Oxford Road):** The south west section of this site would be most appropriate for residential development. The remainder of the site should remain undeveloped to reduce flood risk and retain open and green space.
- **1108.2 (CEG Site C Reserve):** This site is subject to a live planning application for 57 homes (P21/S0917/O), however, subject to this application the site has been taken forward for consideration to allocate as part of TNP2.
- **1022/1022.1 (Land South of Chinnor Road/Diagnostic Reagents):** The northern extent of this site would be most appropriate for the provision of residential units. Development would be well integrated with the modern development to the west although the developable area would need to be carefully considered given the oil pipeline running through the site. Access to the site may also have to be reconsidered to move it away from the roundabout.
- **1336 (Land south of properties on Arnold Way):** Subject to the current planning application, the site is considered to be suitable for residential development. This site would be well integrated with existing development and any future development at site 837/837.1.

Potential employment allocations:

- **34.1 (Land east of Howland Road/South of Towersey Roads Stoford):** This site is an appropriate site for employment floorspace as it reads as a natural extension of the employment use to the south. Site 34.1 would not extend any further east than the existing built form to the south, and therefore retaining Thame's separate identity from neighbouring villages.
- **34.2 (Land east of Howland Road/North of 'Windles'):** This site is an appropriate site for employment floorspace as it reads as a natural extension of the employment use to the south. Site 34.1 would not extend any further east than the existing built form to the south, and therefore retaining Thame's separate identity from neighbouring villages.
- **34.3 (Land south of Towersey Road (Cotmore Wells)/east of Howland Road:** There is potential for development on a reduced area of this site for

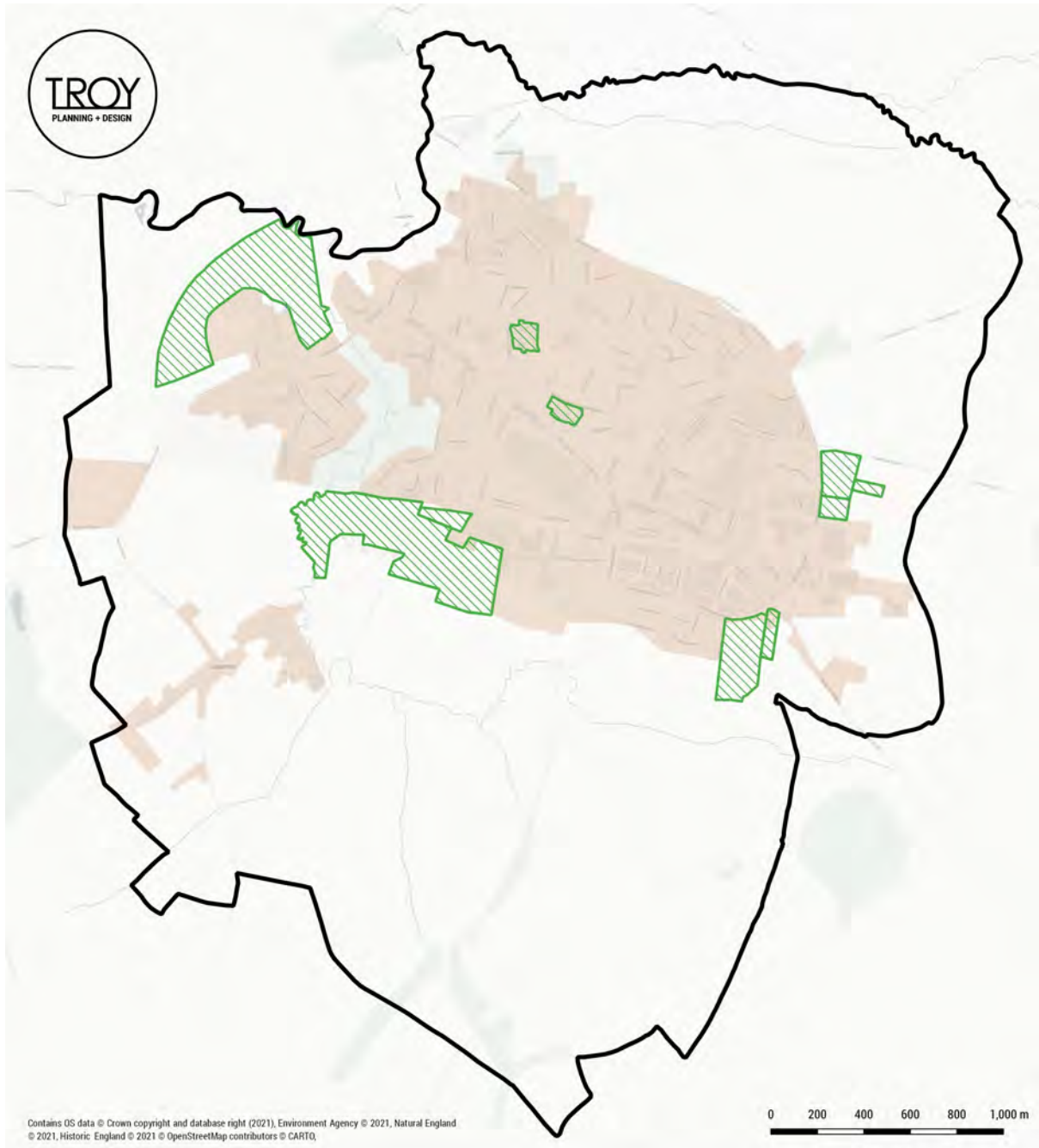
employment use. There may need to be some level of landscaping and green infrastructure along the eastern boundary as indicated by the Landscape Capacity Study. Development on this site would not extend any further east than the existing built form to the south and therefore the site will be well integrated, and Thame would retain its compact character. As with sites 34.1 and 34.1, this site would read as a natural extension of the existing employment land to the south.

Potential retail / mixed-use allocations:

- **347 (Goodsons Industrial Mews):** This site is an appropriate site for potential retail / mixed use allocation (subject to live planning application). Development would have to be sensitive to the surrounding heritage assets, although the site is well integrated into the Town with good access to services.
- **859 (Cattle Market):** This site is an appropriate site for potential retail / mixed use allocation, with the potential for inclusion of a hotel. It is in close proximity to the town centre and with limited landscape impacts and good access to services. Development must however be sensitive to heritage assets.

Further consideration should be given to these, including consultation, assessment through the SEA process, and design work to refine the scale and nature of potential development.

In addition to the above, opportunities for 'windfall' development may come forward over the life of the Plan (indeed, the Local Plan makes allowance for delivery of 1,200 new homes over the Plan period on windfall sites across the entire District), normally on smaller sites not allocated, and these should be judged on their merits against the policies of the development plan (comprising the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan).



THAME

 Thame Boundary

 Built Up Area


 Preferred / recommended site allocations following site selection process

Figure 5: Plan indicating preferred / recommended site allocations



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