

# 1 Welcome and Introduction

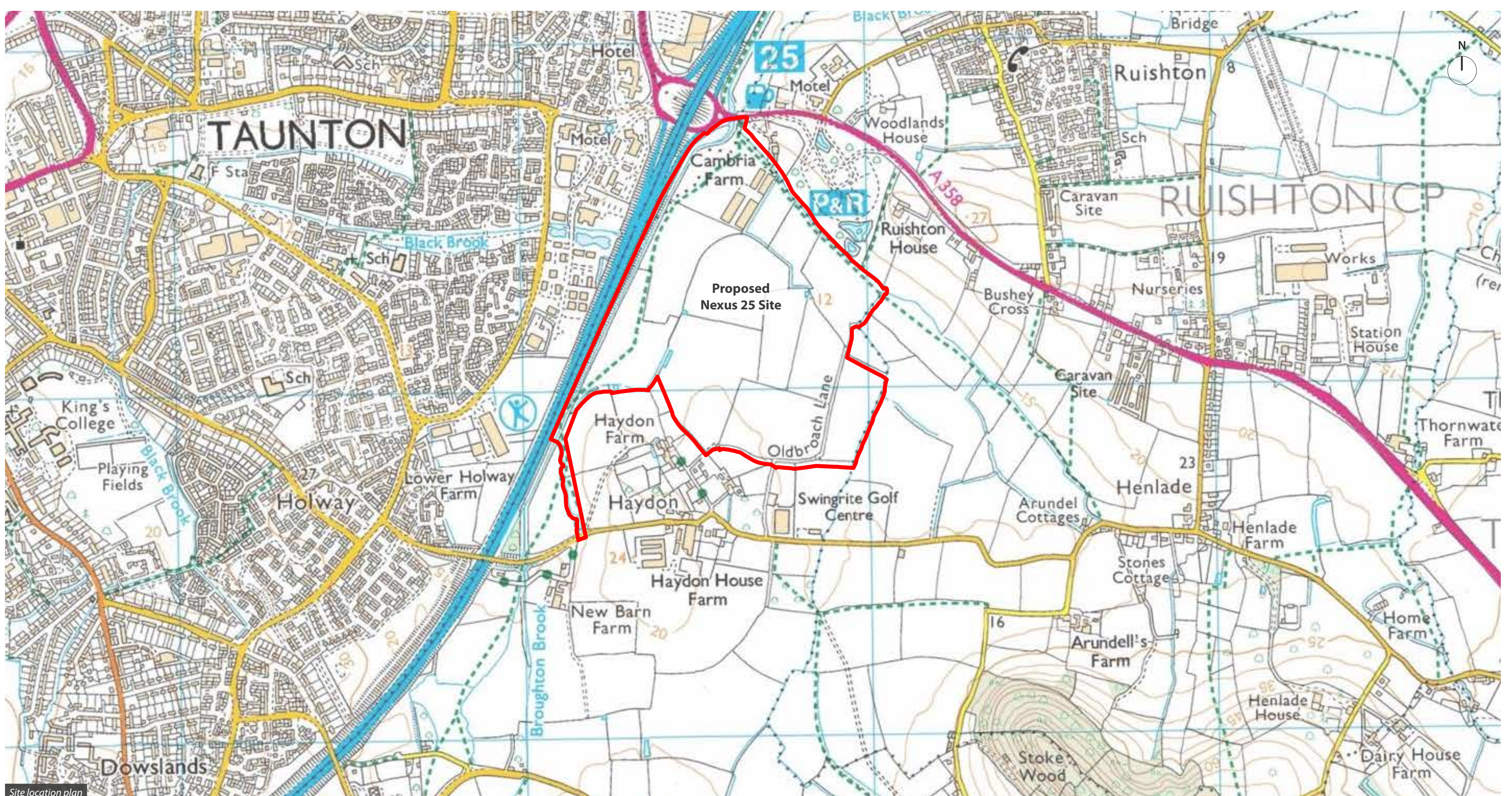
The purpose of this exhibition is to provide local people, key stakeholders and the business community with an early opportunity to inform the emerging design proposals for the Nexus 25 Strategic Employment Site.

## Background

The proposals have been developed by a Working Group drawn from the key public agencies and potential developer.

## The Site

The site is located to the south-east of M5 Junction 25 and is approximately 2.5 miles from Taunton Town Centre.



## What is a Local Development Order?

Local Development Orders (LDOs) set out the planning and design principles, environment and site specific criteria that the development must follow. They are a positive planning tool that provides certainty to potential developers and encourage investment.

They are produced by Local Planning Authorities and are used to grant planning permission for specified development in defined areas.

The process involves close collaboration with key stakeholders as well as public consultation. An LDO must be robust and clearly set out the parameters for good development, being a positive planning tool and representing a proactive stance on the part of the local authority.

## Nexus 25

The word nexus means a central or focal point, connection or series of connections and therefore reflects the key benefit of 'connectivity' that the development will provide for business.





## 2 Planning Policy & LDO Process

### Planning Context

#### Core Strategy SS8

Taunton needs a strategic employment site to raise the skill base, create jobs and secure inward investment. Junction 25 was identified as a suitable potential employment site in the Core Strategy (Policy SS8) and through consultation with the local business community.

#### Site Allocation and Development Management Plan

The Site Allocation and Development Management Plan (SADMP) sets out allocations across the Borough consistent with the Core Strategy. The Junction 25 site has been considered during the SADMP process, and the Preferred Options Consultation (October/November 2013) identified the site for a Strategic Employment Site.

### Strategic Location

Nexus 25 is located at J25 of the M5, halfway between Bristol and Exeter and in close proximity to Taunton town centre and Bridgwater.

The site is a good strategic location in comparison with other strategic employment sites on M5 corridor (below). Journey times to Bristol are less than 1 hour by car or 30 minutes by train, with similar times to Exeter.

There is also excellent rail wider connectivity with a fast rail service to London (1 hour 40 mins), and good connections to the midlands and other centres.

The well-connected location will appeal to investors, businesses and potential employees attracted by Taunton's existing assets, including:

- Good quality schools and colleges
- Thriving town centre, with many independent shops
- Good access to the Quantock and Blackdown Hills, and coast
- Good quality housing at relatively affordable prices
- Good transport links via A358/A303 to Yeovil, South Somerset and beyond to the Dorset South Coast.



Wider Context Plan



### 3 Context, Access & Transport

#### Transport and Access

Nexus 25 will be accessed via Junction 25, which is being improved by Somerset County Council to increase its capacity and help to reduce existing traffic congestion at peak times. It will also accommodate traffic generated by proposed housing and employment growth in Taunton through to 2033.

The highways improvements will ensure that the site is readily accessible by car via strategic links including the M5 and A303, and also the local road network. The scheme will also benefit from improvements to the Toneway corridor.

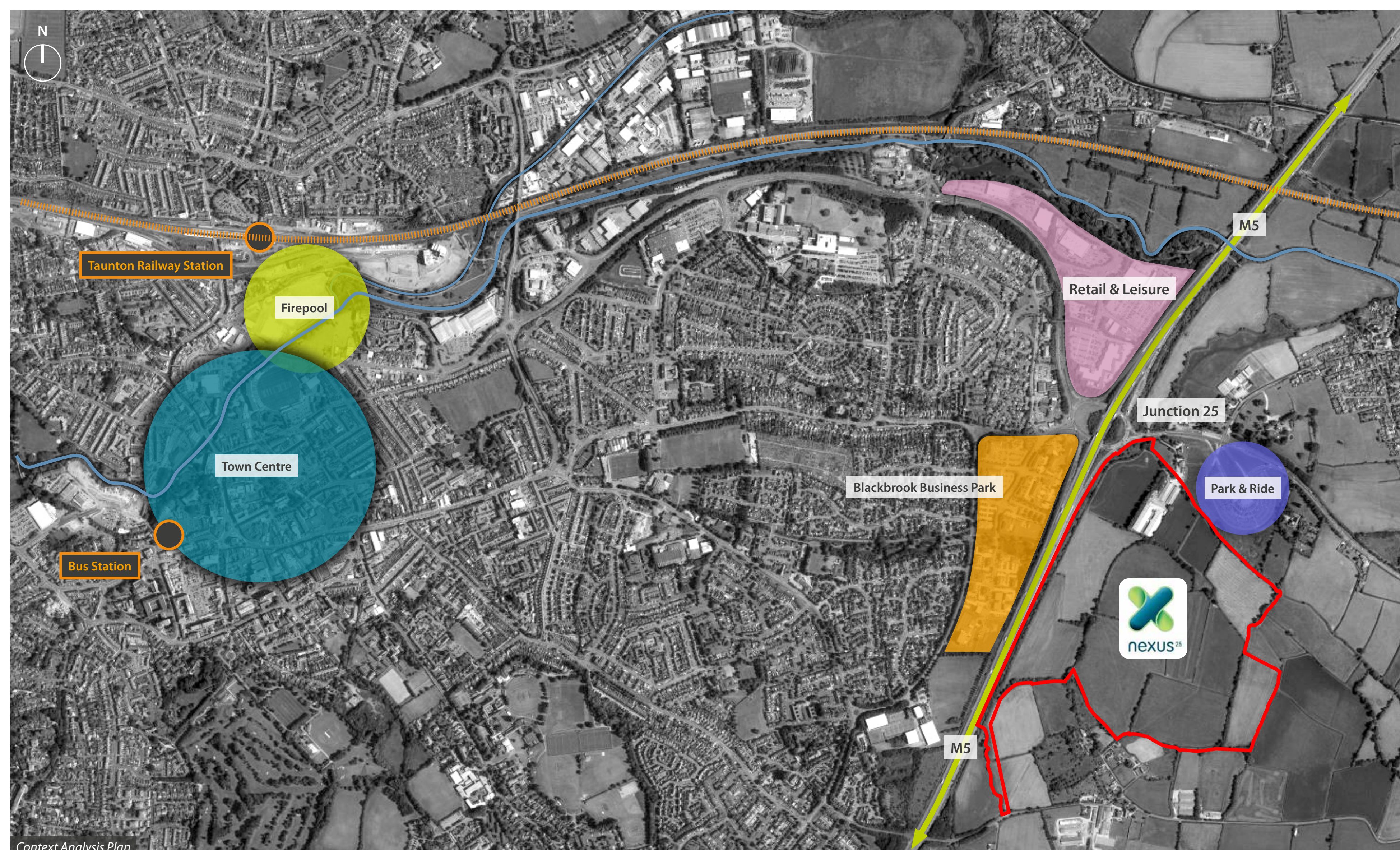
Nexus 25 will be well connected to surrounding areas. Journeys to and from the site will be easily undertaken by sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling, bus and Park and Ride.

The improved Junction 25 will not only improve the operation of the road network, it will also improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

In addition to this, a comprehensive access strategy and mitigation package is currently being identified as part of the development proposals to ensure that Nexus 25 is well connected to surrounding areas; enabling employees and visitors to use non-car modes of transport.

The following items have been identified and are being considered and investigated in consultation with SCC, TDBC and Highways England:

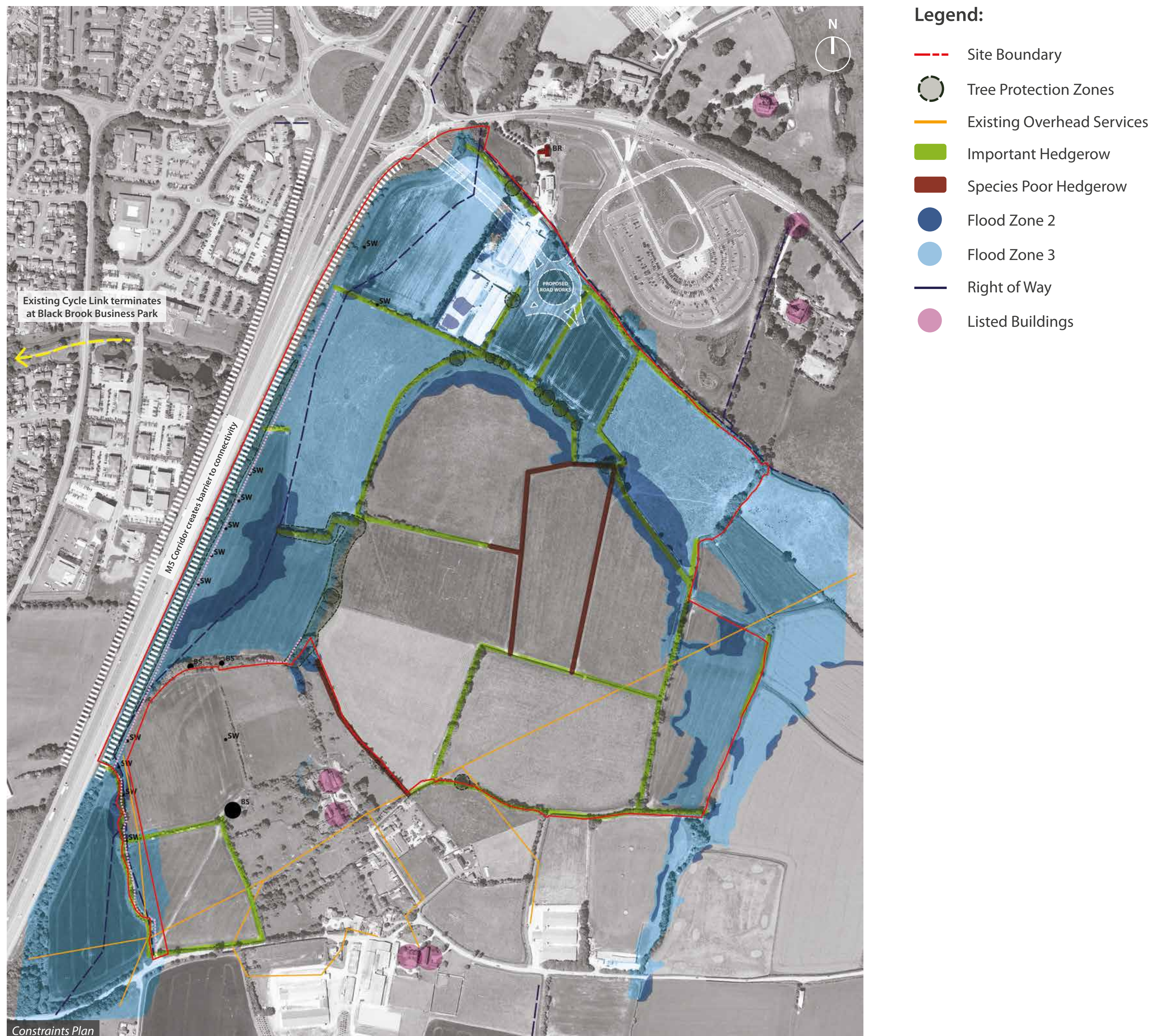
- Provision of a dedicated pedestrian and cycle connection at the southern end of the site onto Haydon Lane to create permeability with surrounding areas.
- Improvements to existing local bus / Park and Ride services to access key destinations such as large residential areas, education and healthcare facilities, and the town centre and its associated public transport hubs.
- Potential for a new pedestrian and cycle bridge that would pass over the M5.
- Framework Travel Plan requiring all occupiers to encourage more sustainable modes of transport.





## 4 Site Appraisal & Constraints

A thorough understanding of the site's constraints and opportunities will inform the design of the concept proposals.



### Key Site Constraints

A key part of the LDO process is to gain a thorough understanding of the existing site constraints, which will shape the parameters for development of the site.

#### Environmental Impact Assessment

An Environmental Statement is being prepared in accordance with best practice which will assess effects and mitigation for the site.

#### Ecology

The ecological impacts of the scheme will be assessed and enhancements will be made to maximise biodiversity.

#### Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Existing and new tree and hedgerow planting will filter views of the site from the surrounding area. Mitigation measures will seek to minimise potential effects of the proposed development upon landscape character and visual amenity.

#### Existing Trees and Hedgerows

Mature trees and important hedgerows will be retained and incorporated within green infrastructure areas within development, where possible and practicable.

#### Flooding and Drainage

The proposed development is located in Flood Zone 1, the zone with the lowest probability of flooding. Parts of the site are located in Flood Zones 2 and 3.

A flood modelling assessment will be carried out to gain a better understanding of flooding in the vicinity of the development. All development is located out of the floodplain (Zone 1).

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) will be incorporated into the landscape and will ensure surface water runoff from the site is controlled to match discharge rates set by local planning policy. This will ensure that flooding both on site and downstream will not be increased.



# 5 Site Concept & Opportunities

The concept design sets out parameters for the proposed development.



## Site Opportunities

A number of key site opportunities have been identified, which will form part of the emerging proposals. Nexus 25 masterplan will include:

- A range of employment uses including research & development, high quality offices, light industrial, warehouses, and a range of ancillary uses. There are also potential opportunities focusing on development for health and education/ training.
- The creation of a 'Green Campus' with a strong sense of place, walkable streets and a green environment for high quality business uses.
- Attractive and strong building frontage to the M5 and green infrastructure.
- A landscape framework that will provide pleasant pedestrian and cycle links from the site to the wider landscape and incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDs), tree planting and biodiversity enhancements. Views to the wider landscape, including Stoke Hill to the east, will be maintained.
- Amenity space and new public realm for the employment park.
- Potential landmark bridge across the M5 motorway to provide pedestrian and cycle links between Nexus 25 and Taunton Town Centre.
- Improved public transport links with Taunton Gateway Park & Ride.
- High quality buildings and street frontages to reinforce character and provide a pleasant built environment.
- Digital communication facilities to include gigabit fibre access and mobile 4G/5G connectivity throughout the site.



## 6 Development Vision

The Artist's impression below offers an early indication of what Nexus 25 may look like.





# 7 Have Your Say & Next Steps



## Have Your Say

We hope that you found the information about Nexus 25 useful. We would be grateful if you could take time to submit a feedback form to tell us what you think.

You can record your views by:

1. Completing one of the feedback forms and depositing it in the box before you leave.
2. Completing an on-line feedback form which can be found at <http://consultldf.tauntondeane.gov.uk/portal/j25/>
3. Emailing a completed form to [talkingtomorrows@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:talkingtomorrows@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

Completed forms must be returned by Friday 31st March, 2017.

## Next Steps

