

Public Consultation - Heybridge Swifts

WELCOME

The purpose of this consultation is to give you the opportunity to review and to comment on proposals, ahead of a submission of planning applications, for the relocation of Heybridge Swifts Football Club to a new site (B), and the redevelopment of the existing site (A) for new homes.

Site A - Existing Heybridge Swifts Football Club Site

The current buildings and equipment at the club are now 50 years old and fail to meet the current FA standards. The club would like to expand but this is not possible at the existing site and relocation of the club is the only option to meet the future needs and aspirations.

To enable the relocation of the club it is proposed that the existing Heybridge Swifts site is redeveloped to provide 105 new homes, public open space, highways and ancillary and associated development.

The current Heybridge Swifts site on Scraley Road has been allocated within the submitted Local Plan for approximately 100 dwellings.

This site has been recognised through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) process as suitable and appropriate for residential development.

Site B - New Heybridge Swifts Football Club Site

A move to this new site will allow a vast improvement in facilities, including the provision of an all weather pitch that can be utilised by the community, and enhanced facilities for the Youth Football Club.

A new football stadium for the Heybridge Swifts Football Club is proposed which will comprise an all-weather pitch; practice pitch and youth team pitch; new access road; car parking and ancillary and associated development.

The new stadium will provide a Main Stand with facilities that will be to Conference standard, a larger clubhouse for more functions and much needed training facilities.

The main stand in the new ground will have capacity for 250 seated and 250 standing spectators, both covered.



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Heybridge Swifts Football Club

Heybridge Football Club was founded in 1880. The 'Swifts' prefix was adopted after World War II and there have been clubs called Heybridge FC and Heybridge Swifts FC during the early 1920's.

For the first 70 years of the last century the club played in the local leagues working their way through to become founder members of the Essex Senior League in the 1970-71 season.

The site of the current stadium was purchased in the early 1960's.

The club currently comprises 3 senior teams (the first team, the U21s and the former HSFC team) and the Youth Football Club, which comprises 13 teams ranging from the under 8's to the under 18's who play in a range of local junior leagues.

In 2006 it was proposed that Heybridge Swifts Football Club would ground share with Maldon Town and eventually merge. At that time the Youth Football Club was a separate entity and although the oldest of the players could feasibly travel up to Maldon Town's ground, they would have to share with the existing Youth Football Club, which consequently would have meant that they would have ceased to exist as a separate entity. Therefore, the Youth Football Club would have still had to relocate within Heybridge.



The lack of funds available to aid the relocation and in the interests of the Youth Football Club, coupled with the subsequent sale of Maldon Town Football Club, meant that the Swifts merger with Maldon Town Football Club did not happen.

Since then the Youth Football Club has now fully merged with the Swifts as a single members club. The Youth Football Club can therefore only serve the Heybridge community if the new facilities are sited within Heybridge.

The current buildings and equipment are now 50 years old and fail to meet the current FA standards. The youth section only has one pitch and very basic facilities available to them.

The current Heybridge Swifts site is unable to expand and the club is unable to raise the required funds needed to undertake the necessary improvements without selling the site, which is the club's only asset.

A move to the new site will allow a vast improvement in facilities, including the provision of an all weather pitch that can be utilised by the community, and enhanced facilities for the Youth Football Club.

The main stand in the new ground will have capacity for 250 seated and 250 standing spectators, both covered.

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Planning Policy Context

Both application sites are currently located outside of the Heybridge defined development limits, where there is generally a policy presumption against new development. However, the existing ground is acknowledged to be previously developed land and the relocation site is an appropriate sports and community use within the countryside.

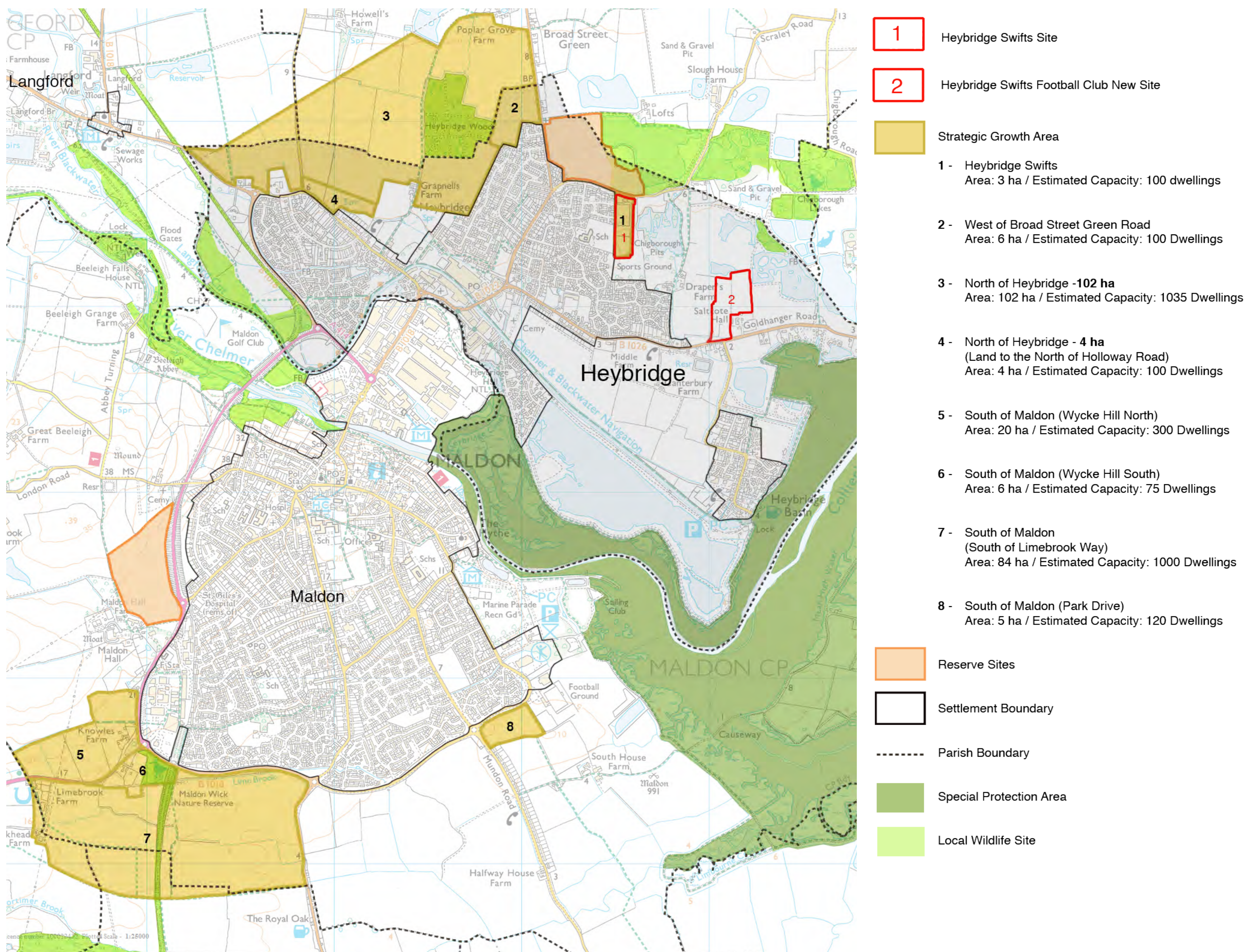
The existing Heybridge Swifts site on Scraley Road has now been allocated in the submitted Local Plan for approximately 100 dwellings.

The site has been recognised through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) process as suitable and appropriate for residential development and as an integral contribution to Maldon District Council's growth strategy and delivery of a five year housing land supply.

The redevelopment of the existing ground for housing will create environmental benefits to neighbouring residents.

Relocation of the Heybridge Swifts Football Club would deliver significant social and economic benefits not just to the local football interests, but to the wider community and any minor impacts on the countryside would be successfully mitigated.

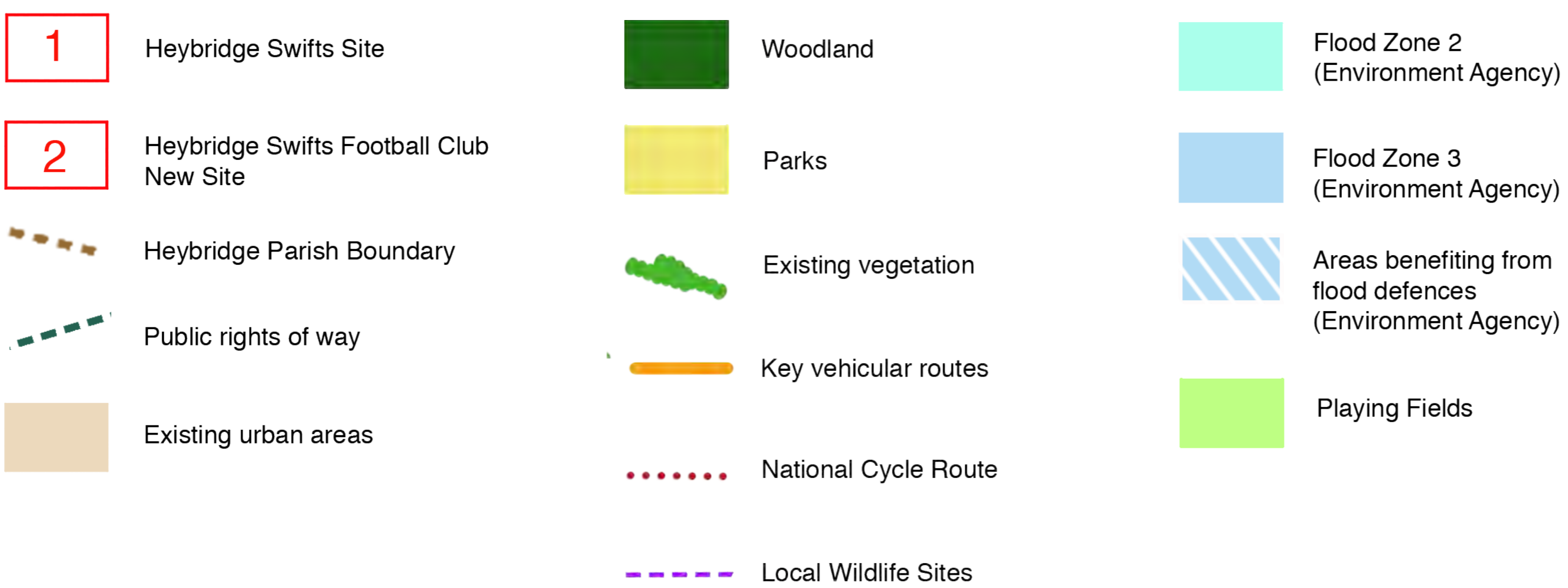
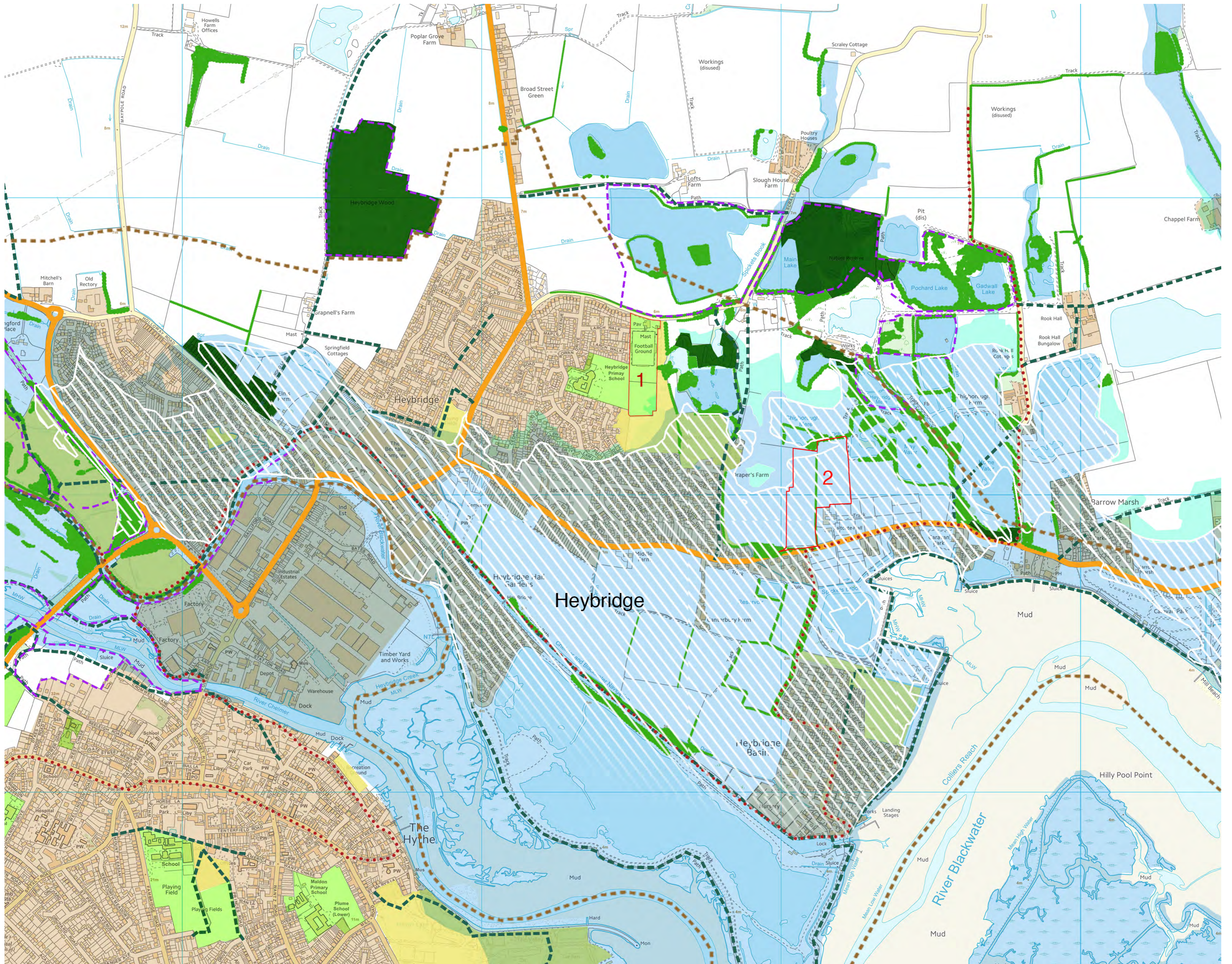
The proposals will result in the achievement of all three dimensions to sustainable development as required by the NPPF.



The Heybridge Swifts FC proposals in the context of the submitted draft Local Plan Proposals for Maldon and Heybridge.

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Context of sites in relation to local land uses and flood zones



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Existing Heybridge Swifts Football Club Site - Context

The site consists of the sports pitches, a car parking area and buildings for Heybridge Swifts FC at Scraley Road.

The site is situated on the north-eastern edge of the urban area of Heybridge.

The development site is rectangular in shape and predominantly open grassland with few structures save the fencing and stands round the main pitch and buildings within the car park to the north. However there are tall flood lights around the main pitch.

To the west, the site is adjacent to housing on Willow Walk and Larch Walk, and Heybridge Primary School grounds. There are mature trees along the boundary with the school and a row of mature poplars along Willow Walk. Beyond this, the urban area of Heybridge extends to the west.

To the south the site abuts the sports grounds associated with the Recreation Ground which are contained by further housing along Wagtail Drive and Limbourne Drive. The residential area extends southwards to Goldhanger Road.

Immediately to the south east the sports grounds continue and to the north east a narrow strip of land forms an access and informal parking area off Scraley Road. Beyond this to the east, a belt of mature trees along the boundary ditch marks the start of the wider countryside with the first of many of the Chigborough Lakes that lie east and north of the site.

To the north the site abuts Scraley Road and is contained by a mature hedgerow both sides of the road. With arable land and further lakes beyond fringed with mature trees.

