

# Somerdale landscape framework

A NEW PART OF KEYNSHAM







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This document has been prepared and checked in accordance with ISO 9001:2000.

# 1.0

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# INTRODUCTION

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## BACKGROUND

■■■■■ This document aims to deliver a landscape framework to accompany the vision for future development and use of the Somerdale site following the decision by Cadbury in early 2008 to close the factory.

It sets out a broad framework for the potential use of the Keynsham Hams and River Avon corridor as well as the other components of the site's unique setting.

## LOCATION

■■■■■ Keynsham is located close to the south eastern edge of Bristol and approximately 4 miles to the north west of Bath. It is nevertheless a separate settlement with its own identity.

## THE SITE

■■■■■ The site lies within the River Avon valley, just downstream from the outlet of the River Chew. It comprises the River Avon corridor, the low-lying floodplain south of the river ('The Hams'), and the gently sloping ground running south to the settlement of Keynsham, which is separated by the Great Western Railway. The land north of the river comprises a narrow floodplain and steeply rising ground covered by Cleeve Wood.





THE SETTLEMENT STRUCTURE OF KEYNSHAM WITH GROWTH TAKING PLACE ON HIGHER GROUND. THE SOMERDALE SITE IS ON A THIRD RAISED LEVEL OVERLOOKING THE FLUVIAL FLOODPLAIN, THE KEYNSHAM HAMS



# 2.0

# LANDSCAPE SETTING

## RESTORING HISTORIC STRUCTURE

Late nineteenth century mapping shows the Keynsham Hams as an open landscape comprised of a series of fields and stony pastures divided by hedgerows and drainage ditches.

The area was overlooked by the settlement of Keynsham to the south, beyond the Great Western Railway, with Cleeve Wood providing a wooded backdrop to the North. By 1938, the Cadbury Factory at Somerdale was in place, providing a strong visual landmark within the landscape.

This historic form has been somewhat softened over time. Strengthening it by restoring historic field patterns will not only reinforce the unique landscape setting of Keynsham, but also provide wider benefits for access, recreation and biodiversity.

## LANDSCAPE ASSETS

### THE RIVER

The River Avon flows west toward the Bristol Channel. It is tree-lined, with the River Avon Trail along its north bank and pasture along its south bank. It is designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest in the Bath and North East Somerset Local Plan.

### THE HAMS

The Hams lies within the fluvial floodplain of the River Avon and has long been used and managed for grazing. This managed landscape now comprises 'Floodplain Grazing Marsh', a UK BAP priority habitat which provides a unique range of habitats for flora and fauna.

The Hams is highly valued for the open character it has retained over time. It is designated as Green Belt within the Bath and North East Somerset Local Plan.

### THE WIDER LANDSCAPE

The wooded slope north of the River Avon provides a strong backdrop to the Hams as viewed from Keynsham. Additionally, the river valley extends east and west beyond the Hams. Tributary streams enter the River Avon from their associated valleys both upstream and downstream of the Hams.

## INFLUENCE ON DEVELOPMENT

The natural landform of the area has meant that historic settlement patterns favoured the ridgelines, above the floodplain. Keynsham has developed as such a settlement, overlooking the Hams and utilising them as a resource.



1887 PLAN - SHOWING FIELD PATTERN AND STONY PASTURES DIVIDED BY HEDGEROWS AND DRAINAGE DITCHES



1938 PLAN - WITH SOMERDALE FACTORY DEVELOPMENT



1965 PLAN - CONTINUED GROWTH OF FACTORY AND SUBDIVISION OF FIELDS FOR GRAZING



2006 - FIELD PATTERN WITH HEDGEROW AND DRAINAGE DITCH BOUNDARIES IS LOST BY INCREASED EXTENT OF RECREATION GROUNDS





DEVELOPMENT ON HIGHER GROUND OVERLOOKS A STRONG NATURAL LANDSCAPE DEFINED BY FLUVIAL SYSTEMS. THE HAMS MAINTAINS A SENSE OF OPENNESS WHICH AFFORDS VIEWS OF THE SOMERDALE FACTORY AND ALSO PRESERVES A STRONG VISUAL LINK BACK TO THE TOWN. DISTANT VIEWS ARE CONTAINED BY CLEEVE WOOD, AND THIS WOODLAND BELT PROVIDES A STRONG VISUAL BACKDROP TO THE HAMS.



3.0

# THE LANDSCAPE FRAMEWORK

## THE CONCEPT

■ The Hams and River Avon are unique and identifiable natural assets for Keynsham. They should serve as a resource not only for future development at Somerdale but also for all of Keynsham.

Therefore, the Somerdale Landscape Framework aims to re-connect Keynsham with the River Avon, allowing the Hams to provide open space, wildlife habitat, recreation, flood alleviation, visual amenity, and a landscape setting for the town.

## THE CHARACTER AREAS

■ The landscape framework establishes a series of distinct character areas that when considered as a whole create a unique place that can become a valuable local asset.

Each character area has a distinct identity and can serve a different function in the day to day use of the landscape. The variety of character areas proposed will insure a diverse mix of spaces that aim to satisfy different needs throughout the changing seasons.



1) THE RIVER EDGE

■ A green, tree-lined corridor along the south bank of the River Avon, embracing both wildlife and community benefits.

2) THE GRAZING MARSH

■ An open, pastoral landscape on the floodplain of the River Avon, providing a rich landscape setting for the Somerdale Community and Keynsham as a whole.

3) THE RECREATION GROUNDS

■ A high quality amenity space for active recreation throughout the year in a natural landscape setting.

4) THE SLOPE

■ A multi-functional landscape, including sports pitches, providing transition between the Somerdale Community and the wider landscape

5) THE SOMERDALE COMMUNITY

■ A mixed use neighbourhood with high quality civic spaces based around the existing site structure, with tree-lined streets and open spaces serving the Somerdale Community and linking it with the rest of Keynsham.



THE LANDSCAPE FRAMEWORK WHICH COMPRISES FIVE DISTINCT CHARACTER AREA'S; THE RIVER EDGE, THE GRAZING MARSH, THE SLOPE, THE SOMERDALE COMMUNITY AND THE RECREATION GROUNDS.



# CHARACTER AREA 01

## THE RIVER EDGE

### THE RIVER EDGE

- The south bank of the River Avon should be enhanced to provide a balance between both its biodiversity and recreational potential.
- A Site of Nature Conservation Importance in the North East Somerset Local Plan, the river banks could be protected from grazing livestock, allowing native trees and shrubs to flourish and provide greater benefit as a wildlife corridor.
- This corridor should be of sufficient width to allow implantation of an informal recreational footpath and cycleway, allowing improved access to the south bank of the River Avon and improving connectivity with existing footpaths and cycleways.
- The area around the tributary stream that enters the River Avon at the western end of the Keynsham Hams could be enhanced with scrapes and ponds to provide further benefits to wildlife and to diversify the landscape.



ENHANCEMENT OF THE RIVER EDGE WILL MAXIMISE THE POTENTIAL OF THE AVON CORRIDOR TO BECOME A LANDSCAPE ASSET FOR THE TOWN



ACCESS ALONG THE RIVER CORRIDOR WILL BE SET BACK TO PRESERVE THE INTEGRITY OF THE RIVER BANKS AND ALLOW FOR PLANTING TO REPAIR AREAS OF EROSION



THE FRAMEWORK AND THE NEW COMMUNITY WILL HAVE A STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH THE RIVER'S EDGE



THE RIVER EDGE WILL BECOME AN ENHANCED HABITAT CORRIDOR RICH IN BIODIVERSITY



# CHARACTER AREA 02

## THE GRAZING MARSH

### THE GRAZING MARSH

- The fields making up the fluvial floodplain of the River Avon should continue to be grazed as an open, pastoral landscape.
- The management of the fields should be improved to enhance their value as fluvial floodplain (a UK BAP priority habitat), with the grazing regime promoting the development of spring and summer meadows.
- Historic field boundaries should be restored, with informal paths alongside them to provide green links between Somerdale and the River Avon.
- Old hedgerows and the occasional field tree should be restored to act as wildlife corridors and improve the visual link between Somerdale and the River Avon.
- Old drainage channels should be enhanced, with grass banks, shelves for marginal and emergent vegetation, and sections deepened or widened to form on-line ponds.



WILDFLOWER MEADOWS WILL FLOWER IN SPRING AND SUMMER AFTER GRAZING



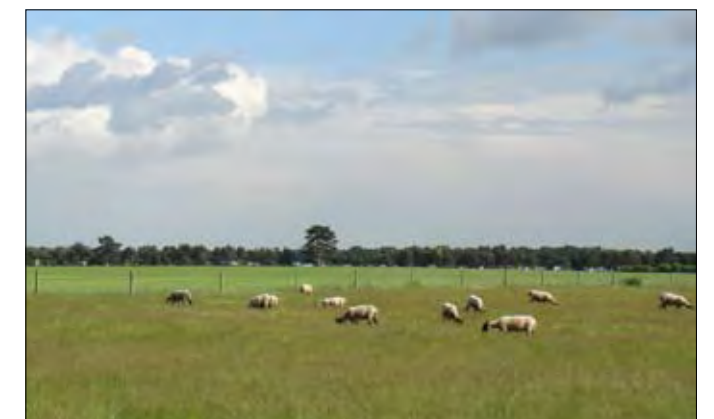
PUBLIC ACCESS WILL BE PERMITTED ACROSS THE MARSHES WITH FOOTPATHS ALONG THE HEDGEROW AND DRAINAGE DITCH FIELD BOUNDARIES



WILDFLOWER MEADOWS PROVIDING COLOUR TO THE LANDSCAPE



THE MARSHES WILL PROVIDE A NATURAL SETTING FOR THE TOWN TO ENJOY



GRAZING OF THE MARSH FIELDS WILL BE ROTATED TO ALLOW MEADOWS TO FLOWER



# CHARACTER AREA 03

## THE RECREATION GROUND



### THE RECREATION GROUND

- The area of land can accommodate up to 11 football pitches with the proposed swale and hedgerow perimeters helping to drain and enclose the pitches
- Additional pitch space in south western corner of the site to allow rotation of pitch use throughout the year, thus improving the quality of playing surfaces
- Drainage ditches enhanced with on line ponds to provide a defence to fluvial flooding and improved drainage of the sports pitches
- Pedestrian access through 'the slope' along a series of hedgerow lined footpaths



THE RECREATION GROUND WILL MAINTAIN THE CURRENT LEVEL OF PITCH PROVISION IN THE HAMS WITHIN AN IMPROVED SETTING THAT WILL ENJOY AN ENHANCED PATTERN OF DRAINAGE



USE OF THE SPORTS PITCHES WILL BE ROTATED THROUGHOUT THE SEASONS TO MAINTAIN PITCH QUALITY THROUGHOUT THE YEAR





# CHARACTER AREA 04

## THE SLOPE

### THE SLOPE

- The ground gradually rising above the floodplain should be utilised as a transition toward the Somerdale site, and provide for a multitude of functions.
- Areas should be used for both formal and informal recreation, meeting the needs of the adjacent community but remaining sympathetic to the open landscape beyond.
- Areas should be used as 'productive landscape' including provision of allotments, community gardens and orchards.
- Small blocks of woodland should be established both to improve biodiversity and to frame views. These small woodland blocks will also help to create a soft green edge to areas of existing and future development.



THE SLOPE WILL PROVIDE A TRANSITION BETWEEN THE DEVELOPMENT EDGE AND THE NATURAL LANDSCAPE



COMMUNITY ORCHARDS WILL BEAR FRUIT IN AUTUMN



A VARIETY OF FORMAL AND INFORMAL SPACES WILL BE PROVIDED ON THE SLOPE



THE SLOPE WILL PROVIDE CRICKET PITCHES IN A NATURAL LANDSCAPE SETTING



# CHARACTER AREA 05

## THE SOMERDALE COMMUNITY



### THE SOMERDALE COMMUNITY

- The public realm within the Somerdale Community should be designed and managed as high-quality amenity space.
- Landscape proposals for the Somerdale Community should retain existing features, such as the Avenue, and have a strong relationship with the Hams and the River Avon.
- A new civic gateway should be located near the station, linking the Somerdale Community with the rest of Keynsham.
- Public open space within the Somerdale Community should provide a range of aesthetic and community functions, from sports pitches, play areas, a café, areas shaded by trees, areas of lawn and ornamental planting.
- Smaller, localised open space close to homes should include play provision for children and young people, such as LEAPs and NEAPs.
- Tree-lined streets should provide adequate pavements and cycleways providing accessible and visually appealing routes.
- Trees, shrubs and herbaceous planting should provide a rich nectar source for insects and shelter for other wildlife.



DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOMERDALE SITE WILL PHYSICALLY PROVIDE SAFE, WELL OVER-LOOKED ROUTES THROUGH THE SITE TO OPEN UP ACCESS TO THE HAMS FOR THE WHOLE TOWN



AT THE HEART OF THE NEW NEIGHBOURHOOD WILL BE RESIDENTIAL SQUARES FOR INFORMAL PUBLIC USE



FORMAL AVENUES OF TREES WILL PROVIDE SHADING IN SUMMER MONTHS



EACH NEIGHBOURHOOD OF THE NEW SOMERDALE COMMUNITY WILL HAVE AN ACCESSIBLE AREA OF INFORMAL OR FORMAL PLAY





VIEW OF KEYNSHAM FROM THE WEST SHOWING THE SETTING OF THE SOMERDALE SITE AND THE TOWN CENTRE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE AVON VALLEY



# 4.0

## THE SEASONS OF THE FRAMEWORK

### CONCEPT

■ The Hams will exhibit a strong sense of seasonality, with a shifting and changing landscape to maximise it's potential throughout the year.

### SPRING

■ Fields green with fresh growth will be dotted by sheep and spring lambs.

Spring meadows left ungrazed will display a rich mix of wildflowers. Hedgerow species such as blackthorn and hawthorn will bloom in succession throughout the spring.

The community orchard will be in bloom, the woods will be full of bluebells and the scent of wild garlic, and spring bulbs will enliven the town park and neighbourhood spaces within the Somerdale Community.

Sports pitches will be rotated in order to allow re-growth and maintenance

### SUMMER

■ The sheep will be moved to graze the spring meadows on the Grazing Marsh, allowing the freshly grazed summer meadows to grow and flower, reaching their height by late summer.

Hedgerows and ditches will be full of life. Allotments on the Slope will be burgeoning with fruit and vegetables and the fields will be populated by games of cricket and football. Sports pitches in the recreational grounds will all be well used by local clubs and schools.

The tree-lined streets within the Somerdale Community will be cool and shaded, and the range of public open spaces will be used for informal play and by picnickers.

### AUTUMN

■ Grazing in the Grazing Marsh will be finished and the remaining meadows will have been cut for hay.

In places, fields will be graced by remaining seed heads and the occasional fairy ring, and hedgerows will be full of seeds and fruit.

On the Slope, the community orchard will be bearing fruit and areas of woodland will be showing autumn colour.

### WINTER

■ The low-lying Grazing Marsh will continue to function as fluvial floodplain, subject to seasonal flooding in winter, attracting overwintering wildfowl. In addition, they will continue to provide alleviation during more significant flood events.

Traditional management of hedgerows reveal a cycle of laying, re-growth, coppicing, re-growth, laying, and so on.

the recreation ground will be used for football and rugby matches with scope to rotate the 3 fields to avoid over use and resultant wear and tear which diminishes quality.



SPRING



SUMMER



AUTUMN



WINTER





# 5.0

## THE MASTERPLAN

### KEY

- 1) RIVER EDGE FOOT AND CYCLE PATH
- 2) DRAINAGE POND AND WETLAND HABITAT AREA
- 3) HEDGEROW, DRAINAGE SWALES, AND ON-LINE PONDS
- 4) RUGBY / FOOTBALL PITCHES ON ROTATION
- 5) FOOTBALL PITCHES ON ROTATION
- 6) FOOTBALL PITCHES ON ROTATION
- 7) REINSTATED HEDGEROWS TO REFLECT HISTORIC PATTERN
- 8) COMMUNITY WOODLAND
- 9) 3RD X1 CRICKET PITCH
- 10) 1ST X1 CRICKET PITCH
- 11) 2ND X1 CRICKET PITCH
- 12) 1ST TEAM FOOTBALL PITCH (OVERLOOKED BY NEW FRY CLUB PAVILION)
- 13) RETAINED BOWLING GREEN
- 14) RETAINED TENNIS COURTS
- 15) POTENTIAL AREA FOR NEW FRY CLUB PAVILION
- 16) PRODUCTIVE FRUIT ORCHARD
- 17) DESTINATION LAND USE / EDUCATIONAL FACILITY LANDSCAPE INTERPRETATION USE
- 18) CIVIC LANDSCAPING IN MIXED USE HUB
- 19) FORMAL AVENUE OF TREES
- 20) NEIGHBOURHOOD OPEN SPACE / PICNIC AREA
- 21) NEIGHBOURHOOD OPEN SPACE / ALLOTMENTS
- 22) SITE GATEWAY
- 23) SOMERDALE AVENUE
- 24) RIVER CORRIDOR ARRIVAL POINT & CROSSING





THE MASTERPLAN IS INFLUENCED BY IT'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE AND A VARIETY OF SPACES CREATE A STRONG BOND BETWEEN THE NEW NEIGHBOURHOOD AND IT'S LANDSCAPE. IMPORTANTLY THE NEW COMMUNITY WILL GUARANTEE THE LONG TERM STEWARDSHIP OF THE AMENITY AND THE FRY CLUB PROVIDES THE STRUCTURE FOR THE LONG TERM MANAGEMENT OF THE FACILITIES.



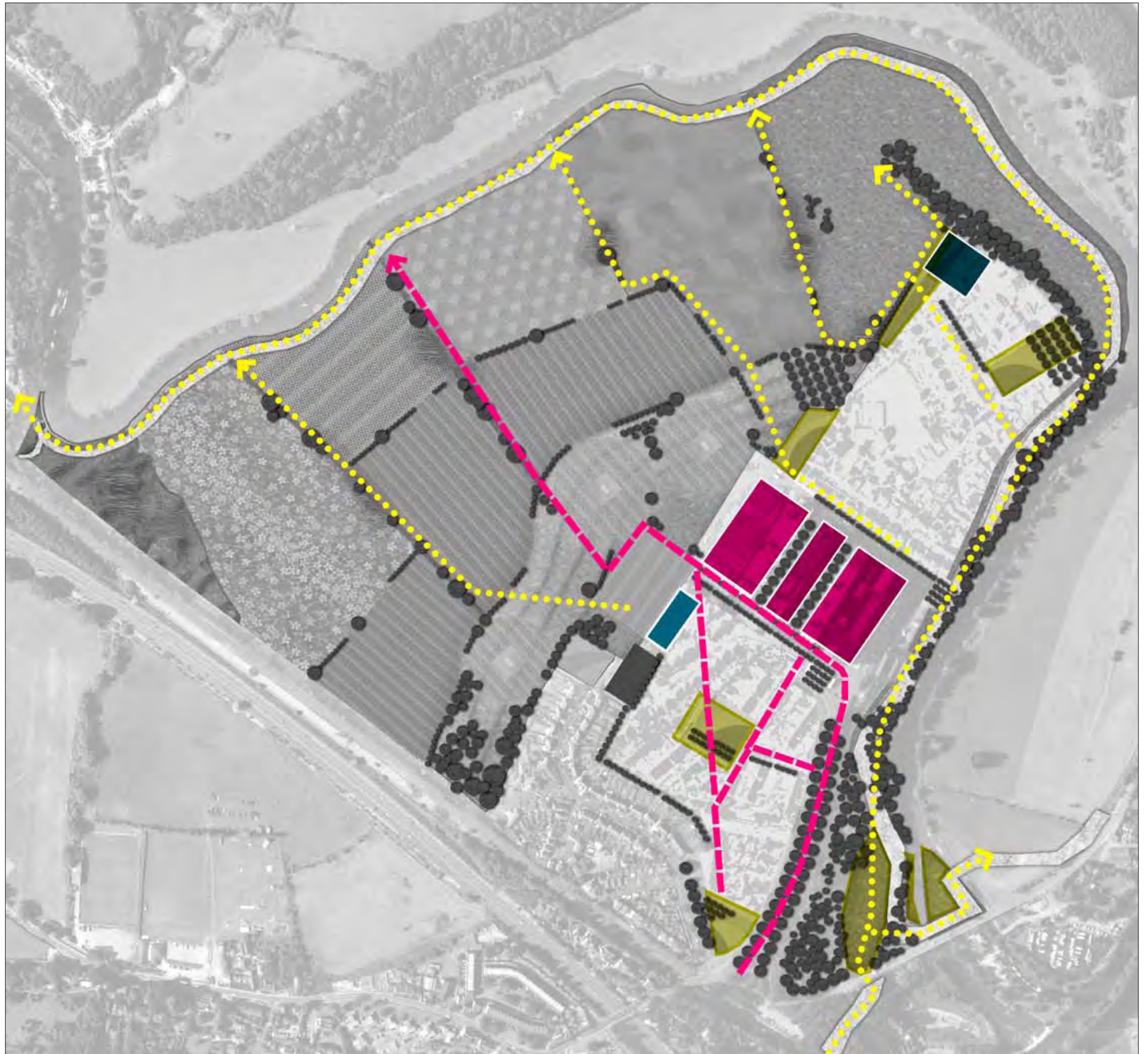
# 6.0 MAKING LINKS

## INTEGRATION AND ACCESS

The framework aims to not only create a variety of landscape amenity spaces for the proposed community at Somerdale, but the vision for this new landscape is to become a real asset for the town itself.

Key to achieving this is a recognition that the Hams can open up to the wider network of recreational routes in the area, with the Somerdale site encouraging movement through, and use of public open spaces.

The aim of the framework is to respond to the adjacent areas in a positive manner, and in particular to enhance links to strategic routes.



THE SOMERDALE SITE IS AT THE NEXUS OF THE TOWNS LINK WITH THE NATURAL LANDSCAPE. DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE CAN OPEN UP LINKS THROUGH TO THE AVON VALLEY AND THE SPACES PROVIDED WITHIN THE LANDSCAPE FRAMEWORK WILL BECOME A FOCUS FOR COMMUNITY LIFE.



#### LINKING TO THE FOREST OF AVON

The Hams and River Avon lie within the Forest of Avon (Community Forest Partnership) which has policies and programmes in place to encourage: protecting, enhancing and creating new areas of native woodland; enhancing access and recreational opportunities and establishing new links to strategic routes and gateways; and protecting, enhancing, and managing areas and features of landscape, heritage and ecological value.

#### WIDER RECREATIONAL ROUTES

The Hams lies at the nexus of a number of long-distance footpaths and adjacent to other recreational routes and strategic cycleways, such as the River Avon Trail and the Two Rivers Way. As such, there is tremendous potential to improve links with the wider landscape.



DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOMERDALE SITE PHYSICALLY OPENS UP ACCESS TO THE SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE FOR THE WHOLE TOWN. THIS VARIETY OF AMENITY SPACES AND NATURAL RESOURCES THAT THE FRAMEWORK CAN DELIVER WOULD BECOME A REAL ASSET FOR THE TOWN.



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