



Welcome

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), part of the Ministry of Defence (MOD), is developing initial plans for the redevelopment of the Middlewick Ranges site in Colchester.

The MOD has identified Middlewick Ranges for disposal as part of its long-term Defence Estate Optimisation (DEO) programme. It will cease being a military facility when the firing operation relocates to Fingringhoe in 2021, though the army will continue to use the area south of Birch Brook.

This public consultation sets out our long-term vision for the site and initial concept plan. We welcome your views to help shape the proposals.

ABOUT THE DEO PROGRAMME

The DEO programme is providing long-term value for money for the taxpayer by disposing of sites it no longer needs, creating a smaller and more sustainable estate for the MOD over the next 25 years.

For further information, please visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/better-defence-estate-strategy>



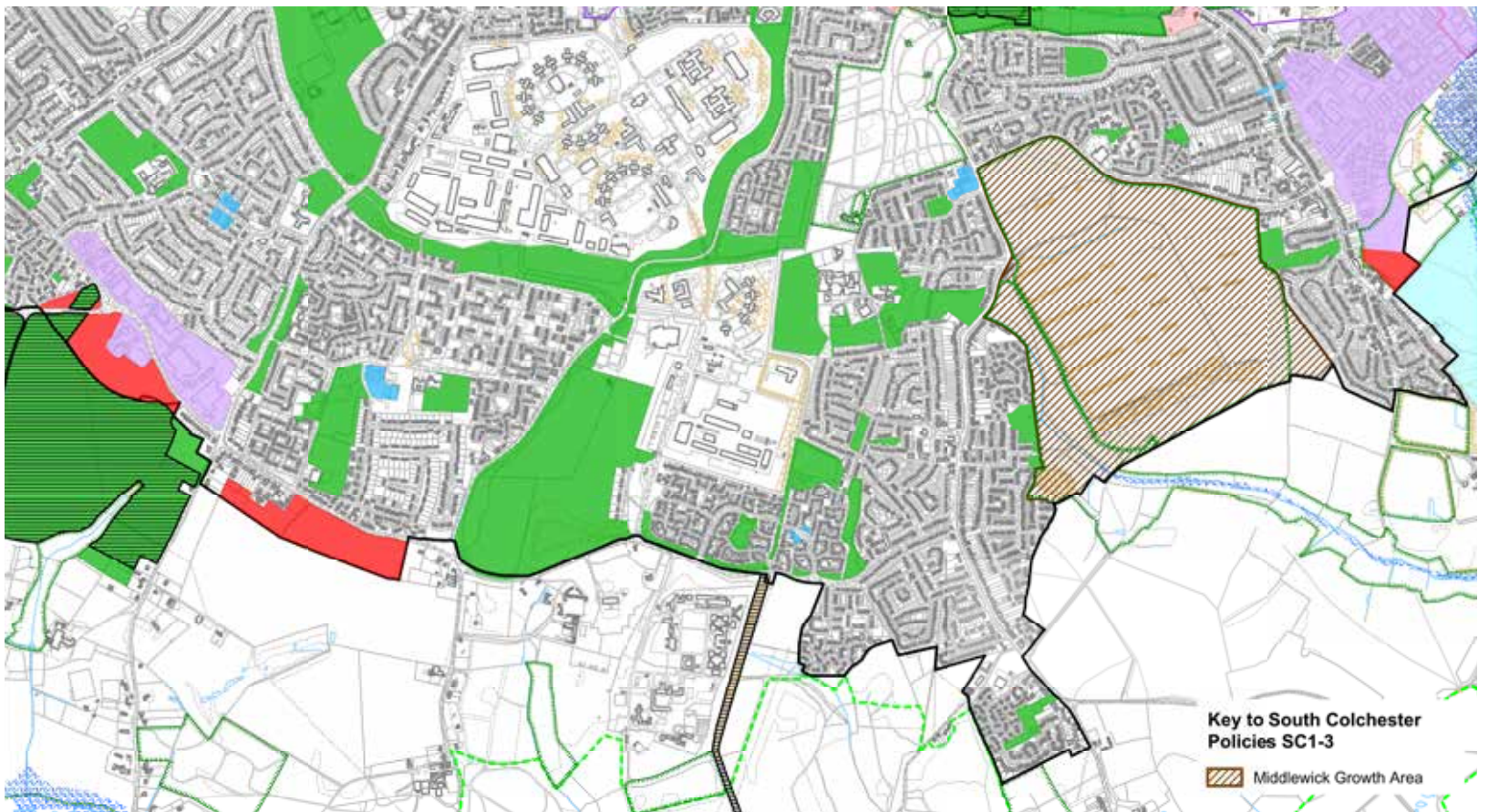
KEY FACTS

- The firing operation will stay within the area, being relocated to Fingringhoe in 2021
- Middlewick Ranges is allocated for housing in Colchester Borough Council's Draft Local Plan
- The proposals are at an early stage and this consultation is on the initial concept plan



Draft Local Plan allocation

Due to its location, current site use and availability, Colchester Borough Council has identified Middlewick Ranges as a suitable site for future housing delivery and has allocated it in the Draft Local Plan for around 1,000 homes.



Plan showing Colchester Borough Council's draft Local Plan allocation of 1,000 homes at Middlewick Ranges

Following independent examination and approval, the Local Plan will guide development and land use policies in Colchester until 2033.

To support the site's allocation, the DIO is developing an initial concept plan to show it is a sustainable location for housing. A planning application may be developed following the adoption of Colchester Borough Council's Local Plan.

HOUSING NEED IN COLCHESTER BOROUGH

Colchester Borough Council has established that there is a need to deliver 920 new homes each year across the borough until 2033.

To ensure there is enough suitable land available to meet housing demand, the Council is identifying and allocating sites, such as Middlewick Ranges, that are suitable for residential development between now and 2033.



View of Middlewick Ranges

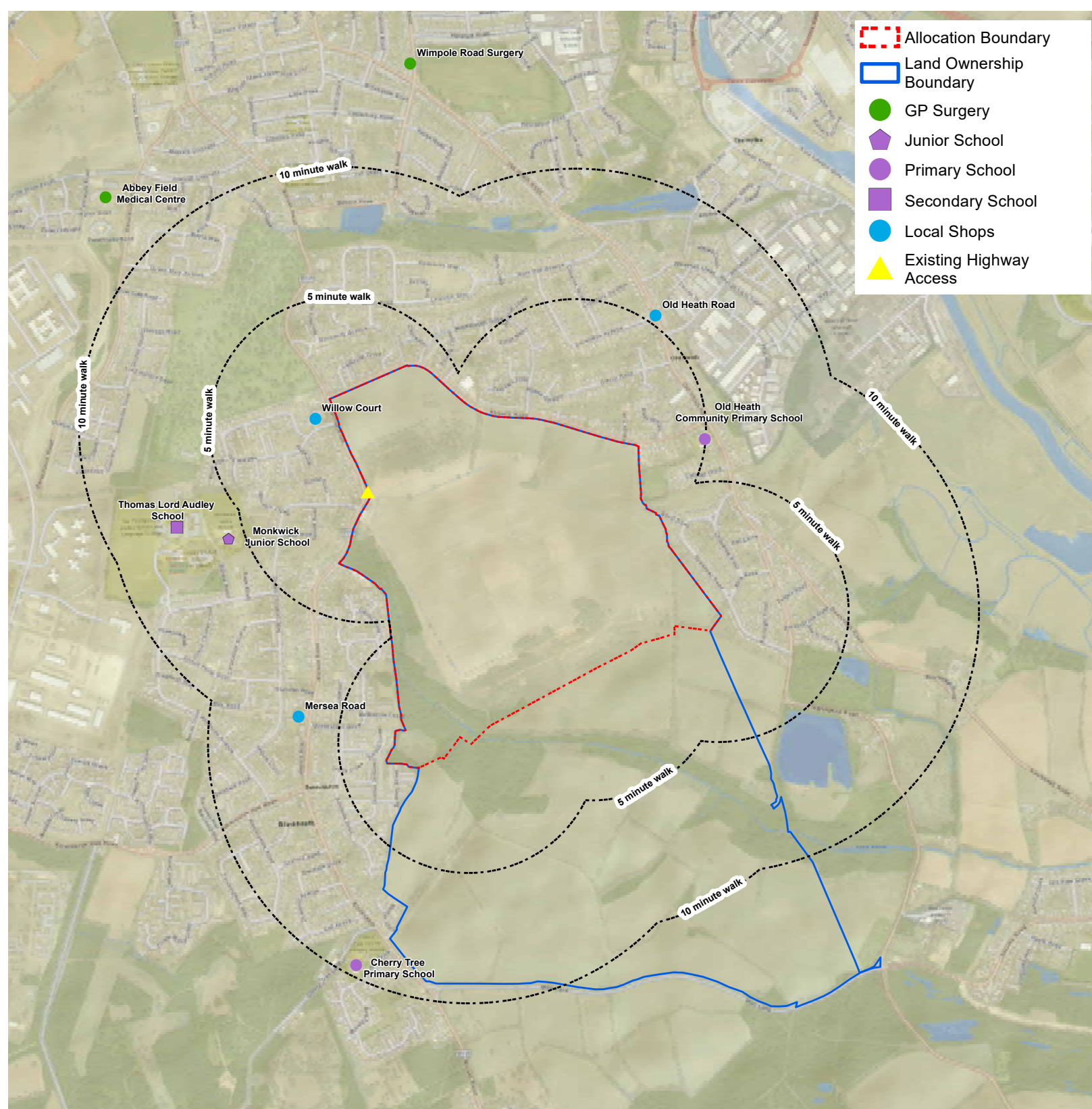


The Site

Middlewick Ranges is a live firing range on the southern edge of Colchester and is well-located near to key transport links, existing residential areas and amenities.

It would offer a sustainable expansion of Colchester to meet demand for housing.

The part of Middlewick Ranges that has been allocated in the draft Local Plan is approximately 76 hectares. Part of the northern area is used as a shooting range by both the military and a sporting rifle club – the Middlewick Range Association. Public footpaths run through Middlewick Ranges, as well as around the perimeter, and are used regularly by dog walkers.



Aerial photo showing local amenities, with MOD ownership outlined in blue and the draft Local Plan allocation outlined in red





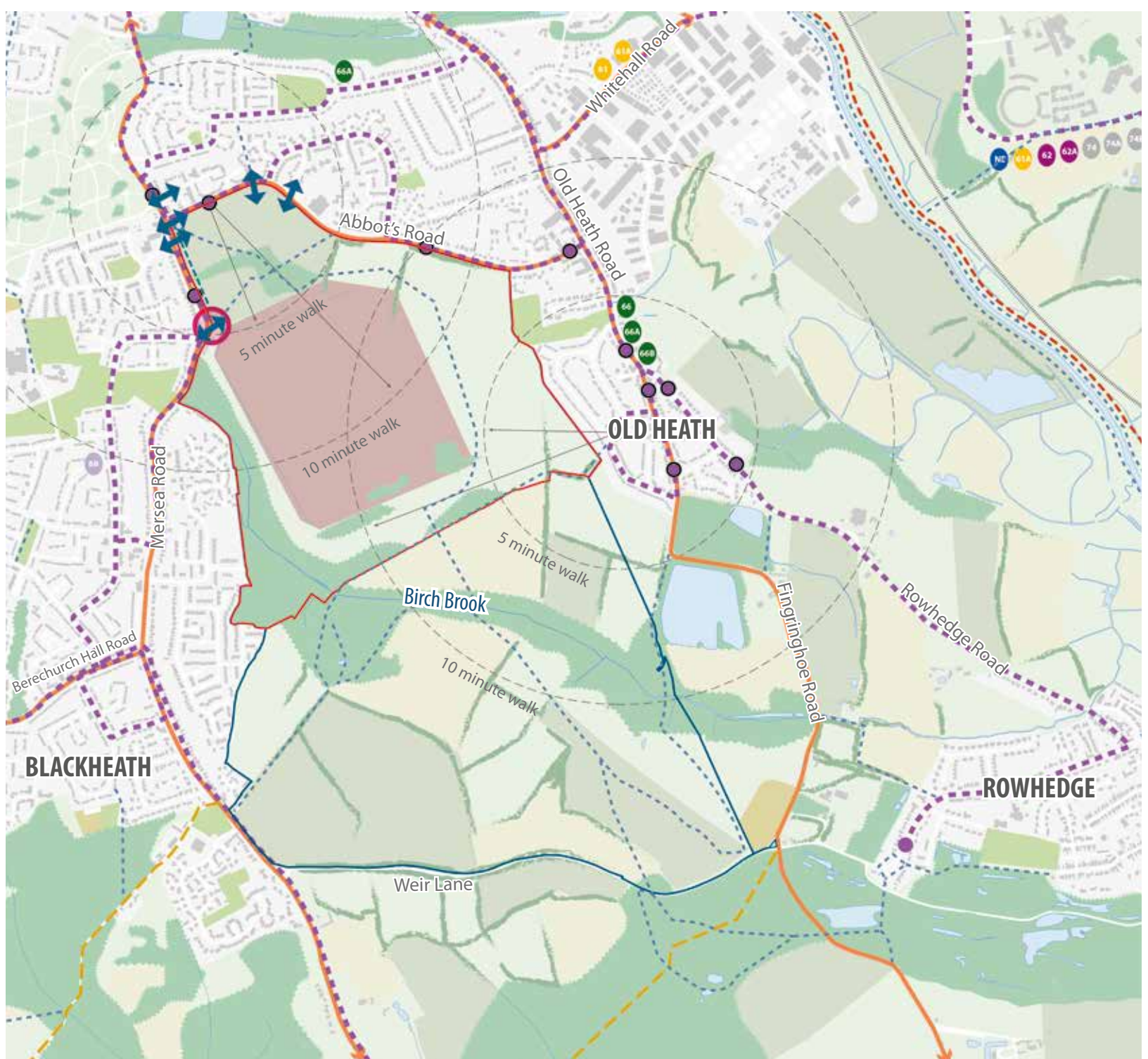
Transport Links

Middlewick Ranges has access to good transport links. It is:

- Accessible by public transport with direct access into the town centre
- Accessible by foot and by bicycle
- Located near to Colchester Town, Hythe and Wivenhoe train stations

Using data from Essex County Council, the capacity of the local road network has been tested and the results show that traffic generated by development could be accommodated on the local road network.

Any future plans for the site would link into the existing pedestrian, cycle and public transport routes.



Plan showing existing transport links and public footpaths

Key

- CBC boundary of draft housing allocation
- Site ownership boundary
- Fenced firing range

- #### PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE MOVEMENT
- ↔ Designated pedestrian crossing
 - Public Rights of Way
 - Bridleway

- #### PUBLIC TRANSPORT
- Existing bus stops near the site
 - Distance isochrones
 - Bus routes

- #### VEHICULAR MOVEMENT
- Primary roads
 - Existing access point (gated)

Biodiversity

Any future development will need to be sensitive to its ecology. The development footprint has been, and will be, influenced by the results of any ecology surveys.

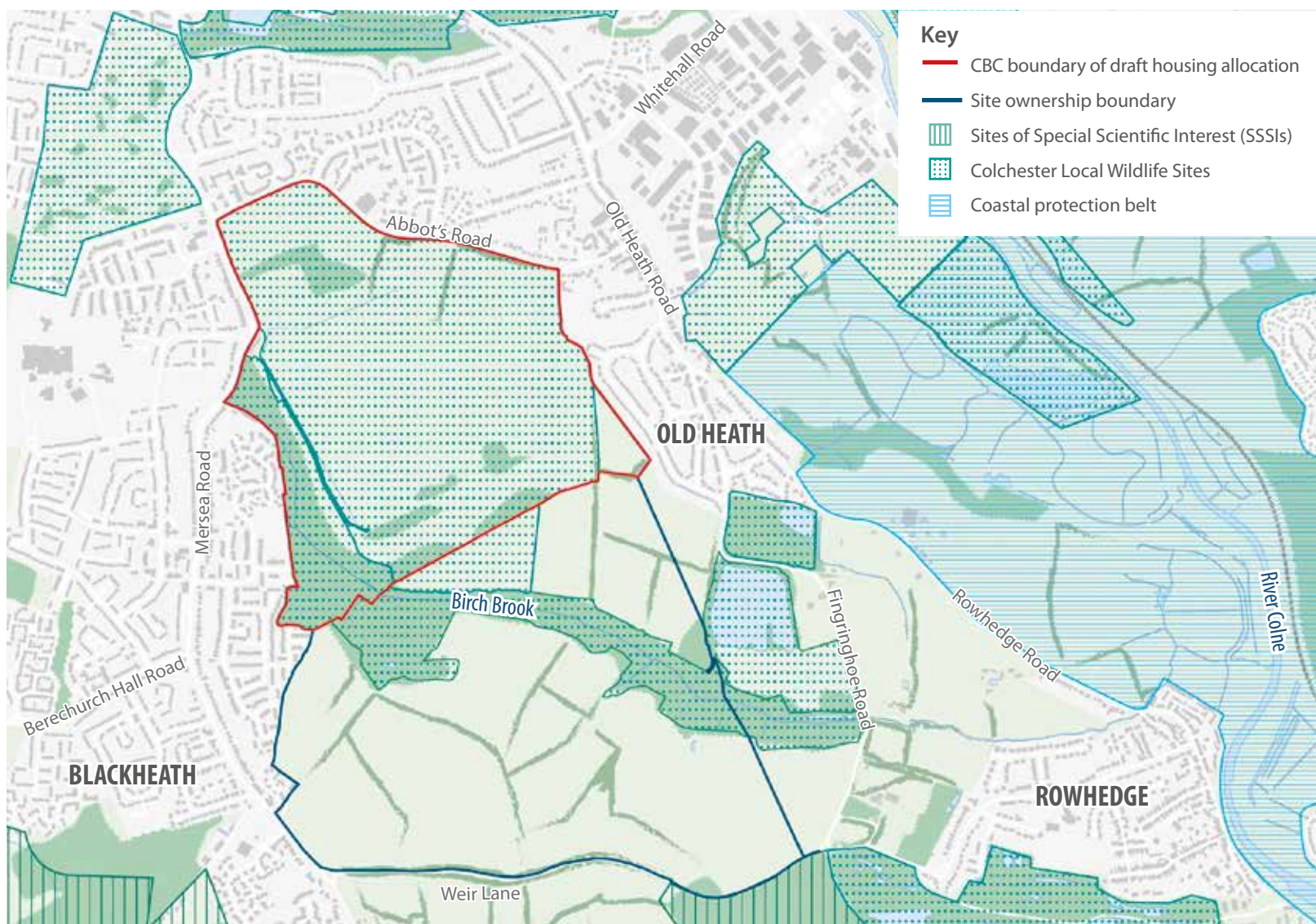
The majority of the site comprises grassland, with hedgerows and Birch Brook.

The wooded corridor of Birch Brook is a Local Wildlife Site, as is the grassed area in and around Middlewick Ranges. More widely Middlewick Ranges is close to other local wildlife sites, the River Colne, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and other areas designated for nature conservation.

We are currently completing a range of targeted habitat and species surveys, and consulting with Colchester Borough Council and Essex Wildlife Trust as the proposals are developed. The development proposals will need to ensure we deliver a net gain to biodiversity in accordance with national and local planning policy and ensure the continued ecological functionality of the designated areas.



Birch Brook Wood



Plan showing ecological areas of interest



Our commitments to Colchester

The DIO is committed to delivering a sympathetically designed, ecology-led, high-quality residential development for the community at Middlewick Ranges.

The redevelopment of Middlewick Ranges could deliver, subject to planning:

- Sensitively designed high-quality housing and community amenities, with potential for around 1,000 new homes
- A large area of green open space for the community to enjoy
- Investment to improve local infrastructure

We are exploring community facilities and will deliver a range of housing types, including affordable homes, and provide opportunities for travel by a range of modes.

Access and footpaths through the site will be maintained, offering large areas of publicly accessible green, open space.

As part of the development, the DIO would also work with Colchester Borough Council to make appropriate provision for new local health and education facilities onsite.

What would you like to see included in the plans? Please let us know by filling in a feedback form [here](#) or [online](#).



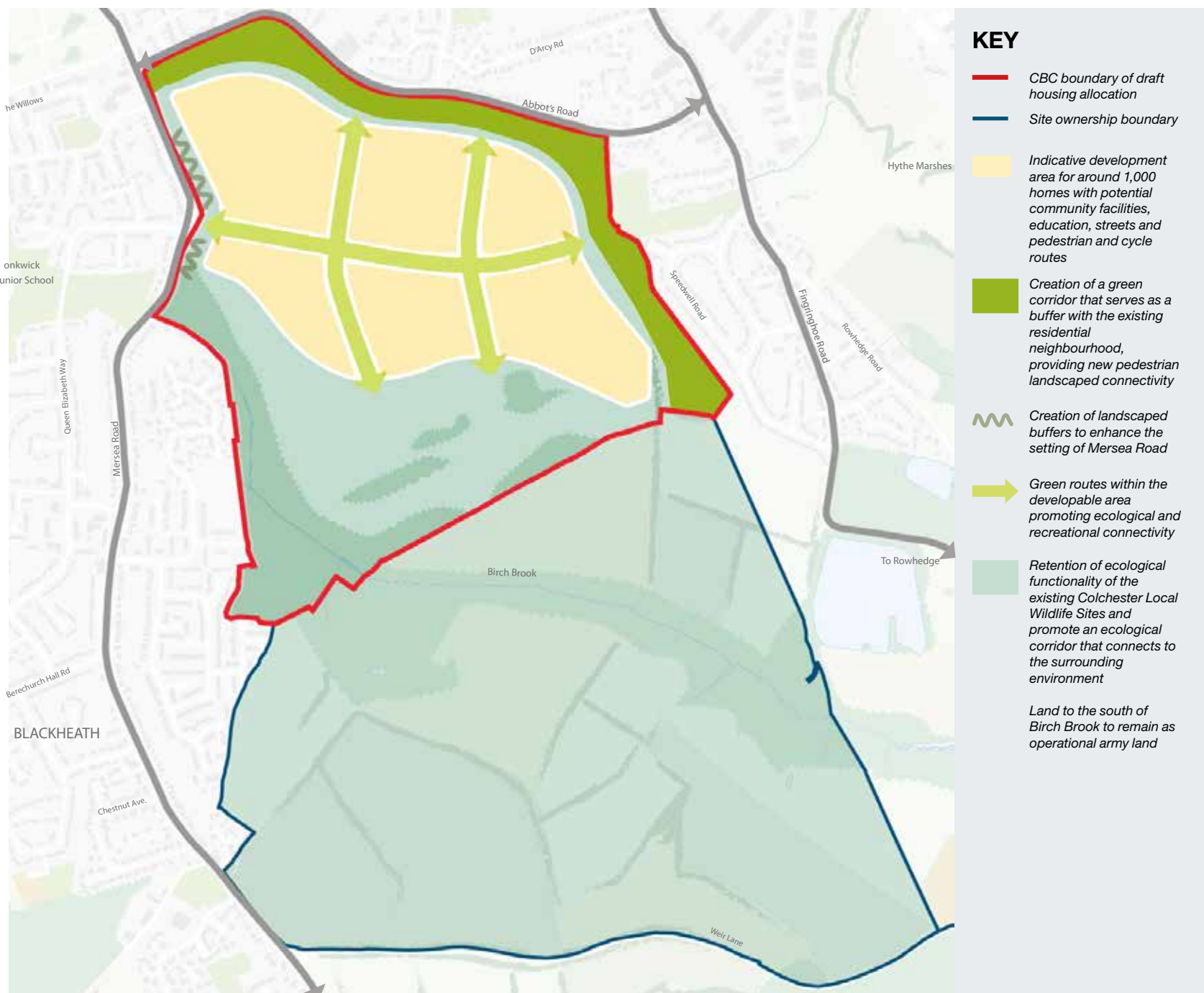
Middlewick Ranges footpath



View of Mersea Road from the site



Our initial concept plan



Autumn 2019
Review of consultation feedback
as masterplan is developed

Mid / Late 2020
Detailed masterplan prepared
and further consultation

Summer 2019
Consultation on initial
concept plans

Spring 2020
Local Plan
examination in public

2021
Middlewick Ranges firing range
relocated to Fingringhoe

INDICATIVE TIMELINE



www.middlewickconsultation.co.uk



Feedback and next steps

Thank you for viewing the DIO's initial plans for Middlewick Ranges.

We are in the early stages of developing a high-quality masterplan for Middlewick Ranges and would welcome your feedback to help shape the plans.

The DIO is committed to consulting with the community and will continue to keep you updated on the plans as they progress.

We encourage you to provide feedback by filling in a form and handing it in today or returning it to us by post to the address below. Alternatively, you can submit your feedback via the project website or email address. Contact details are below.

Contact Us



By Post: Defence Infrastructure Organisation,
c/o Camargue,
11 Waterloo Street,
Birmingham B2 5TB



By Email: info@middlewickconsultation.co.uk



Online: www.middlewickconsultation.co.uk

The deadline for feedback is **5.00pm on Monday 5 August 2019**. We will then carefully consider all of the comments we have received to help us shape our plans for Middlewick Ranges and deliver its potential to support sustainable growth for Colchester.

Further consultation will take place before any planning applications are submitted to Colchester Borough Council.

If you have any questions, please call us on 03308 384 199.



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