



# Accessibility & Circulation Improvements for Community Benefit

Roaring Meg Retail Park, Stevenage  
Design and Access Statement

May 2025

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Existing retail park aerial view

Revisions			
Rev	Date	Initials	Description
P01	12.03.24	MW	Issued for Planning
P02	08.07.24	MW	Biodiverse planting added
P03	04.04.25	SB	Draft issue
P04	09.04.25	SB	Draft issue
P05	25.04.25	SB	Comments incorporated
P06	16.05.25	SB	Issued for planning

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# 01 Introduction



# 01 Introduction

## Scope and Purpose of document

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Mountford Pigott LLP, on behalf of Stevenage Retail Ltd, for the improvement of accessibility and the creation of a new north-south link at Roaring Meg Retail Park. The new link between the north and south car parks will provide improved high quality public realm, and along with the other proposed improvements, will enhance the usability of the park.

Following the acquisition of Roaring Meg Retail Park by Stevenage Retail, as part of the 9Yards portfolio, a series of carefully focussed improvements, to enhance the tenant mix and create a better customer experience have already been carried out. Linking the car parks and providing accessibility improvements to enhance the circulation within the park is the next proposed enhancement.

The purpose of this document will be to accompany the Planning Application submitted for these planned improvements.

## Background

### Legislative Context

Section 62 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 ("the 1990 Act") (as amended) provides for a development order to make provisions about planning applications, and to require a statement of design principles and access issues, known as a design and access statement ("DAS"). Design and access statements can be a useful tool in planning for high quality development. If design and access issues are considered from an early stage of scheme development, this can and does result in good quality design. Paragraph 029 (Reference ID 14-029-20140306) (as revised 06/03/2014) of the National Planning Policy Guidance sets out in general terms what design and access statements should provide.

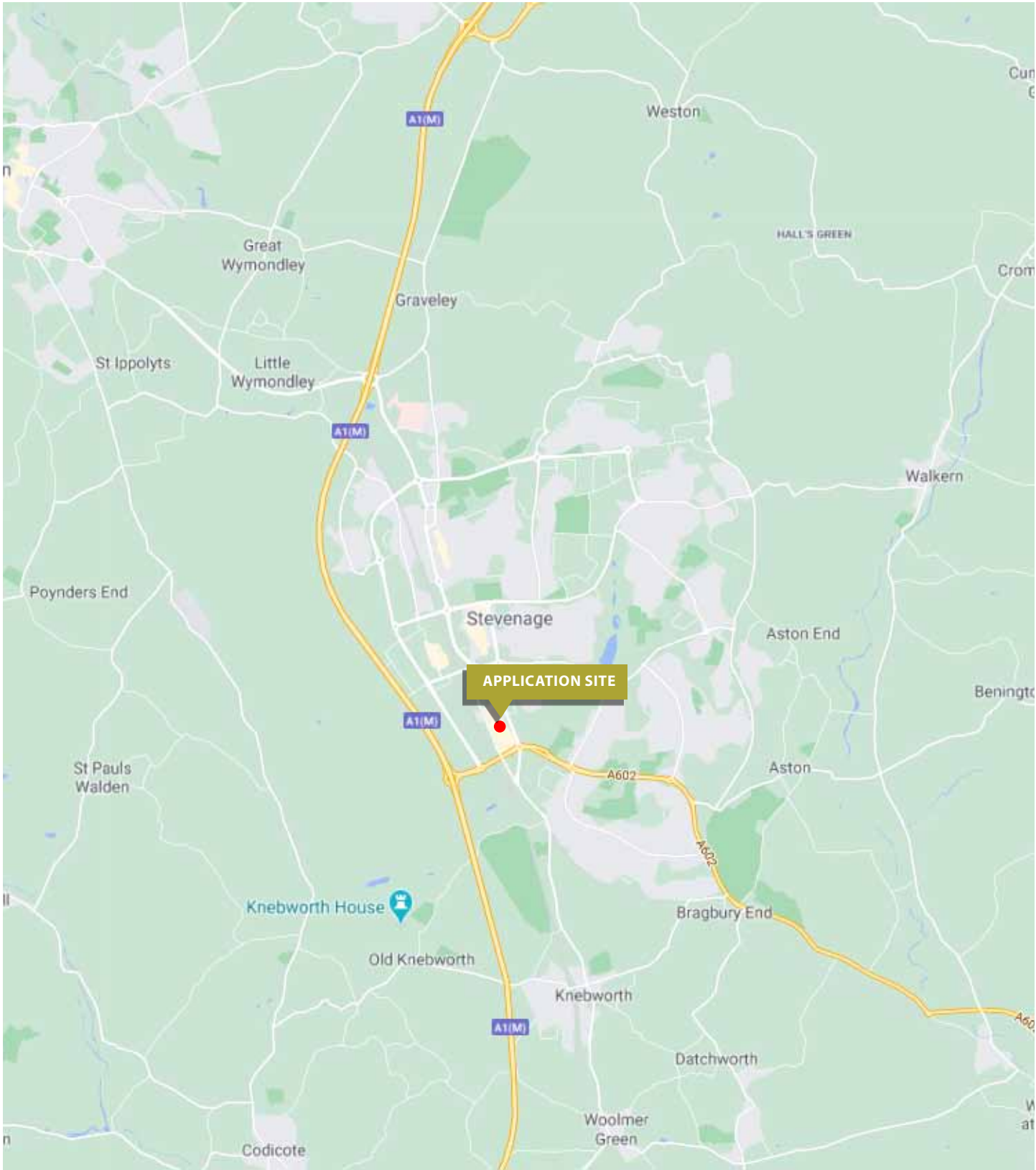
The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015 sets out the procedure for making and deciding planning applications, including the requirements to provide a design and access statement (article 9). Article 9 of the Development Management Procedure Order 2015 sets out the following requirements for design and access statements:

*(2) An application for planning permission to which this paragraph applies must, except where paragraph (4) applies, be accompanied by a statement ("a design and access statement") about -*

- (a) the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development; and*
- (b) how issues relating to access to the development have been dealt with.*

*(3) A design and access statement must -*

- (a) explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development;*
- (b) demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account;*
- (c) explain the policy adopted as to access, and how policies relating to access in relevant local development documents have been taken into account;*
- (d) state what, if any, consultation has been undertaken on issues relating to access to the development and what account has been taken of the outcome of any such consultation; and*
- (e) explain how any specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed.*



Context plan



01

Introduction

Brief

The brief for the this initiative was to enhance accessibility and circulation for all users of Roaring Meg Retail Park to create a better customer experience. The aims of the proposal are to provide improved cycle and pedestrian facilities and to better utilise the under-used public open space in the middle of the park to create better connectivity across the site for cars and cyclists.

At present when either of the car parks are busy, drivers are forced out onto the public highway, rather than being able to cross within the site, and cyclists wishing to cross are required to use the service area or disembark and enter the pedestrian zone.

The client has listened to feedback from local representatives (Invis-Ability) and reviewed the existing pedestrian circulation. A series of accessibility improvements are proposed, which will further improve the accessibility of the park and the safety of all users, but in particular for disabled people.

Creating a new link road to connect the north and south car parks will improve the convenience of the park for visitors and improve access for cyclists. The remaining pedestrian areas are to be improved with high quality new public realm including, new seating, areas of landscape and space for the forthcoming Stevenage Cycle Hire Scheme.

Technical consultants

The planning application has been prepared by a team of designers and technical consultants who have all contributed to the proposal in their respective areas of expertise. This team is formed by the following practices:

- *Architecture*
  - *Planning Consultancy*
  - *Highways consultancy*
  - *Project management*
- Mountford Pigott LLP

Montagu Evans

TTP Consulting

Belshaw Building Consultancy Ltd



Aerial view of Roaring Meg Retail Park in context



# 01 Introduction

## Context analysis



Context analysis plan



01

Introduction

The Retail Park

The 9.82 Hectare/24.27 Acre existing retail park, is located to the south of Stevenage town centre, at at the corner of the A602 Broadhall Way and Monkswood Way. The site comprises 23 retail units with associated car park and delivery access.

The retail park has 2 separate parking areas (north and south), both of which can be accessed from London Road to the west, with further access to the southern car park from Monkswood Way to the east. Once in the site there is a service road (Great North Road) which runs up the east side of the site which provides access to service areas for the retail units, as well as providing another link to the northern car park. Between the 2 car parks is a public open space, with limited seating and planting, between some of the newer units.

Within the curtilage of the site, to the east, is Monks Wood West which is defined in the local plan as a wildlife site. The site lies adjacent to a green corridor, as defined in the local plan, which runs along Monkswood Way to the east.

The site is situated a block away from the main railway line to Stevenage station, which lies to the west, and is on the periphery of the largely commercial and industrial area to the south of Stevenage. Between the site and the railway line is the Oaklands Retail Park.

To the east of the site are largely residential areas interspersed with green space.

To the south east of the site, across Broadhall Way, is the stadium of Stevenage Football Club, as well another small retail park, Roaring Meg South. To the north east is the Monkswood Retail Park, which is accessible from Elder Way.

To the north west of the site is the Stevenage Brook which runs above ground for part of the western boundary before being diverted into a culvert under the remainder of the site, under the central plaza. . The brook then runs above ground again once past Broadhall Way.

The site falls within Flood Zone 2, with some areas to the north west of the site in zone 3. However, the area in zone 3 is also designated as having flood defences in the form of the Elder Way water meadow flood storage reservoir, immediately to the north of the site, as well as a weir and flow control on the brook.

Recent improvements

Roaring Meg has seen a series of recent improvements that have brought a series of major new retailers into the scheme, including M&S, TKMaxx and Nando's.



Aerial view of the retail park



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## 02 Site Analysis

# 02 Site Analysis

## Existing access

### Pedestrian

There are a number of different access points for pedestrians into the site.



1 Northern level access from Monkwood Way via the service road



2 Southern level access from Monkwood Way via a pedestrian crossing.



3 South east level access from footpath



- Ownership boundary
- Pedestrian access points
- Key pedestrian routes



4 Southern stepped access from London Road.



5 Level access to Northern car park from London Road.



6 Ramped and stepped access from London Road.



7 Northern level access from London Road, via the southern pavement only.



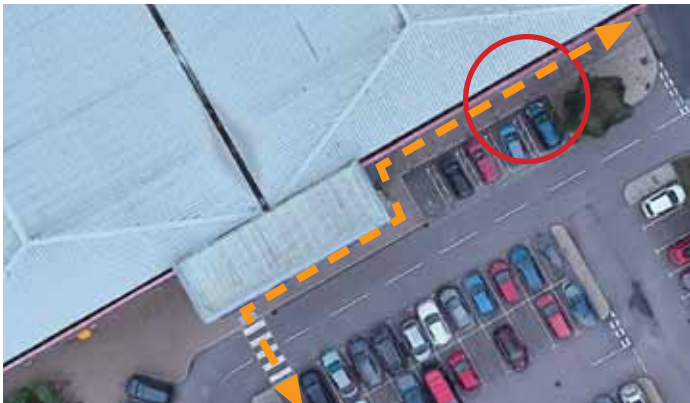
02

Site Analysis

Existing access

Wheelchair accessibility

The routes from the different pedestrian access points have been reviewed to analyse the accessibility for wheelchair users in accessing the park's existing circulation routes.



1 Route is blocked by an existing bollard which narrows the route.



2 Southern access from Monkwood Way via a pedestrian crossing reaches the level pedestrian route into the site.



3 Access from footpath crosses the cycle way and is partly in the roadway with no demarcation.



- Ownership boundary
- Pedestrian access points
- Key pedestrian routes
- Issues identified for pedestrian and/or wheelchair access



4 Route not accessible for wheelchairs due to steps.



5 Access is a shortcut from London Road to car park, but does not link up to the pedestrian routes in the park. Adjacent access points 5 and 7 are more suitable for wheelchair users.



6 Access has both steps and a ramp making this suitable for wheelchair users.



7 Access from south continuous, however, access from north requires entrance into roadway or crossing the road.



02

Site Analysis

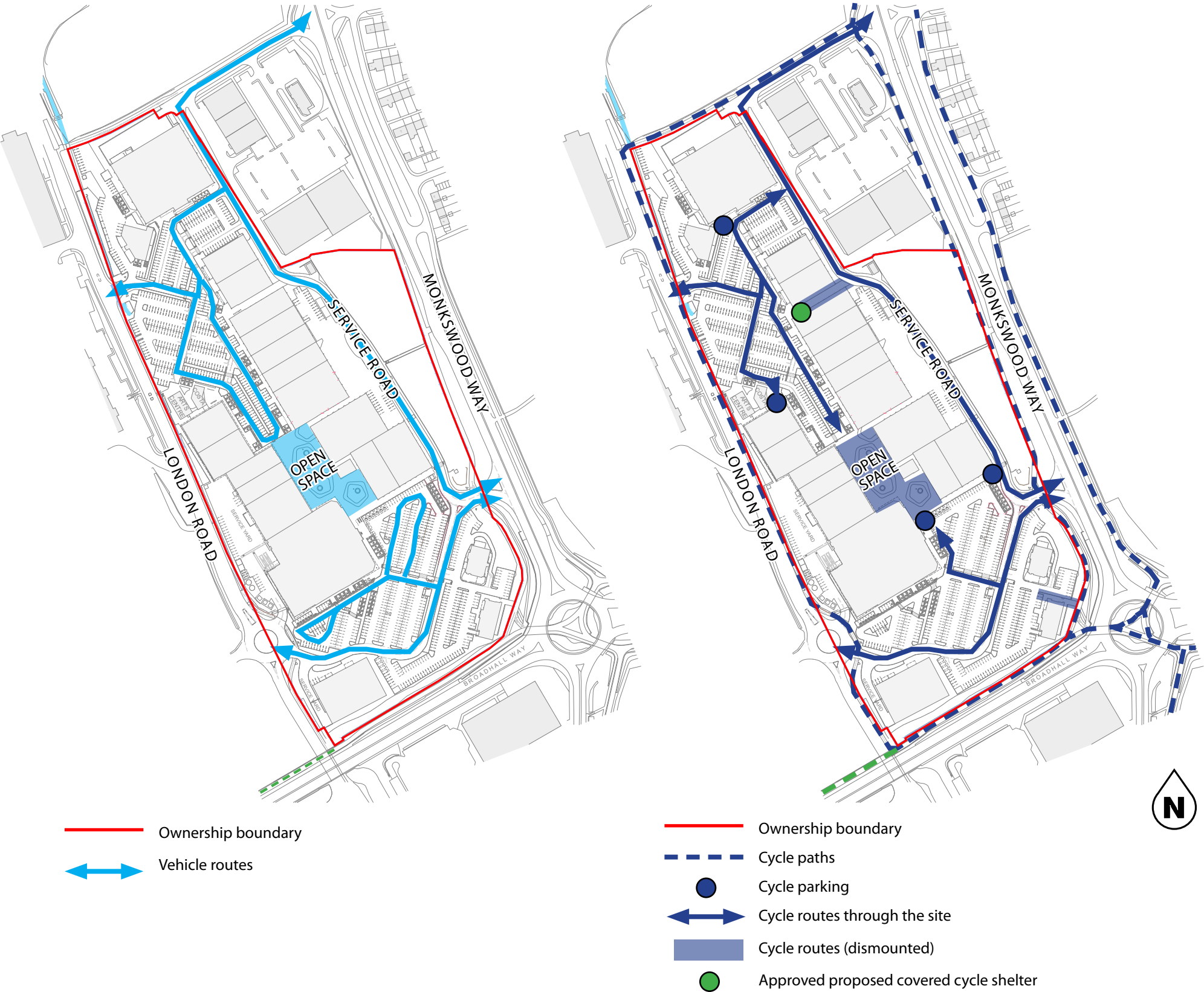
Existing access

Vehicular Access

There are four vehicular access points into the Park, two from London Road and two from Monkswood Way. There is no vehicular connection between the north and south parts of the site, with cars required to use either the service road or the other public highways.

Cycle Access

There are dedicated shared footway/cycle ways surrounding the site, connecting to a wider network of dedicated cycle paths in the area. There are no dedicated cycle routes within the site, as is common with UK retail parks, with cyclists required to dismount and share pedestrian routes, or to share the vehicular access. There are 5 different cycle parking locations throughout the site.





# 02 Site Analysis

## Public Open Space

The pedestrianised public open space sits in the centre of the scheme, between the north and south car parks, and extends to 3,223sqm (0.79acres). The whole space is c.91m in length and ranges from 28 to 36m in width at its south and northern ends, respectively and has retail units running along its entire east and west sides.

The space is punctuated by 3No. round planters with seating around the edge, each with a lighting column and a bin in close proximity. 3No. different colours of block paving are used for the space, each laid in a different direction, with the lightest colour creating a pentagon shape around the planters. Either side of the shape is a drainage channel.

There has always been a space between the car parks, which was originally much larger, until the north car park was extended. The main reason for the space being there is the culvert (with associated easements) which runs beneath, meaning no construction can take place in the space.



View 1



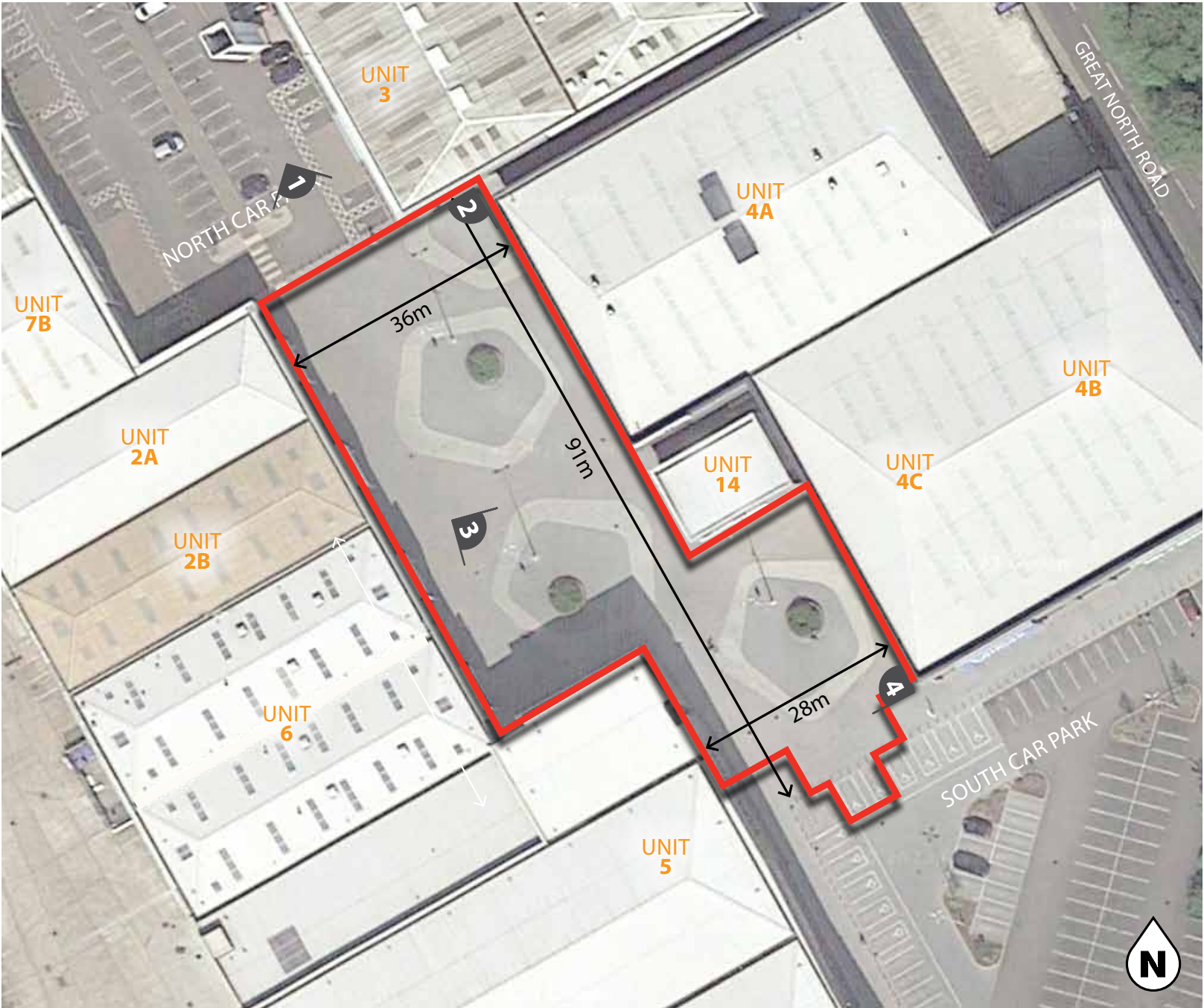
View 2



View 3



View 4



Aerial view of the site



# 02 Site Analysis

## Evaluation

### Vehicular

There is no vehicular connection between the north and south parts of the site. This results in a convoluted circulation route and requires cars to use the service road or London Road to travel between the two.

Providing a connecting link between the two car parks would increase the usability of the site and avoid cars using the public highways to travel between the two side of the site.

### Cycle

Although the site location is highly accessible to bikes, there are some constraints when navigating within the site. Due to there being no connection between the north and south parts of the site through the centre, cyclists are required to dismount and cross the open public space, use the service road, or exit the Park to use the dedicated cycle routes.

Providing a dedicated route through the centre of the site would encourage cyclists to avoid the service road and provide a safer means of access.

### Pedestrian

Reviewing the issues impeding accessibility for wheelchair users at the existing access points into the park, the following have been identified as having viable solutions:

- 1 Northern access from Monkswood Way via the service road. The route follows the pavement, however, there is an existing bollard which currently blocks the route.
- 2 South east access from footpath. The route crosses a cycle path and there is a section which requires users to enter the roadway.
- 3 Northern access from London Road. The path is not continuous so requires users to enter the roadway or cross over to access the other side of the pavement.

### Proposed improvements

The next part of the document will go through the different areas where improvements to the current layout are proposed. These are as follows:

- Proposed improvements to address the identified issues to the pedestrian access.
- Evaluating the public open space scheme and proposing a vehicular and cycle connection.
- Reviewing the existing cycle routes and proposing improvements.



- Ownership boundary
- Connection of north and south



1 Northern access from Monkswood Way via the service road



2 South east access from footpath.



3 Northern access from London Road.



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## 03 London Road Pedestrian Access (Miller & Carter Entrance)

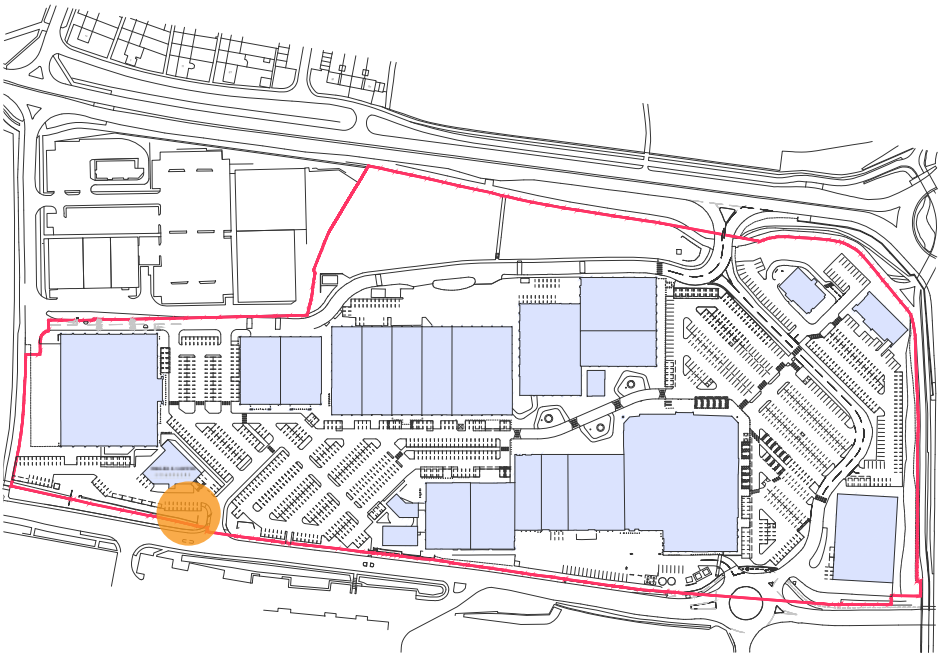
03

London Road Pedestrian Access (Miller & Carter Entrance)

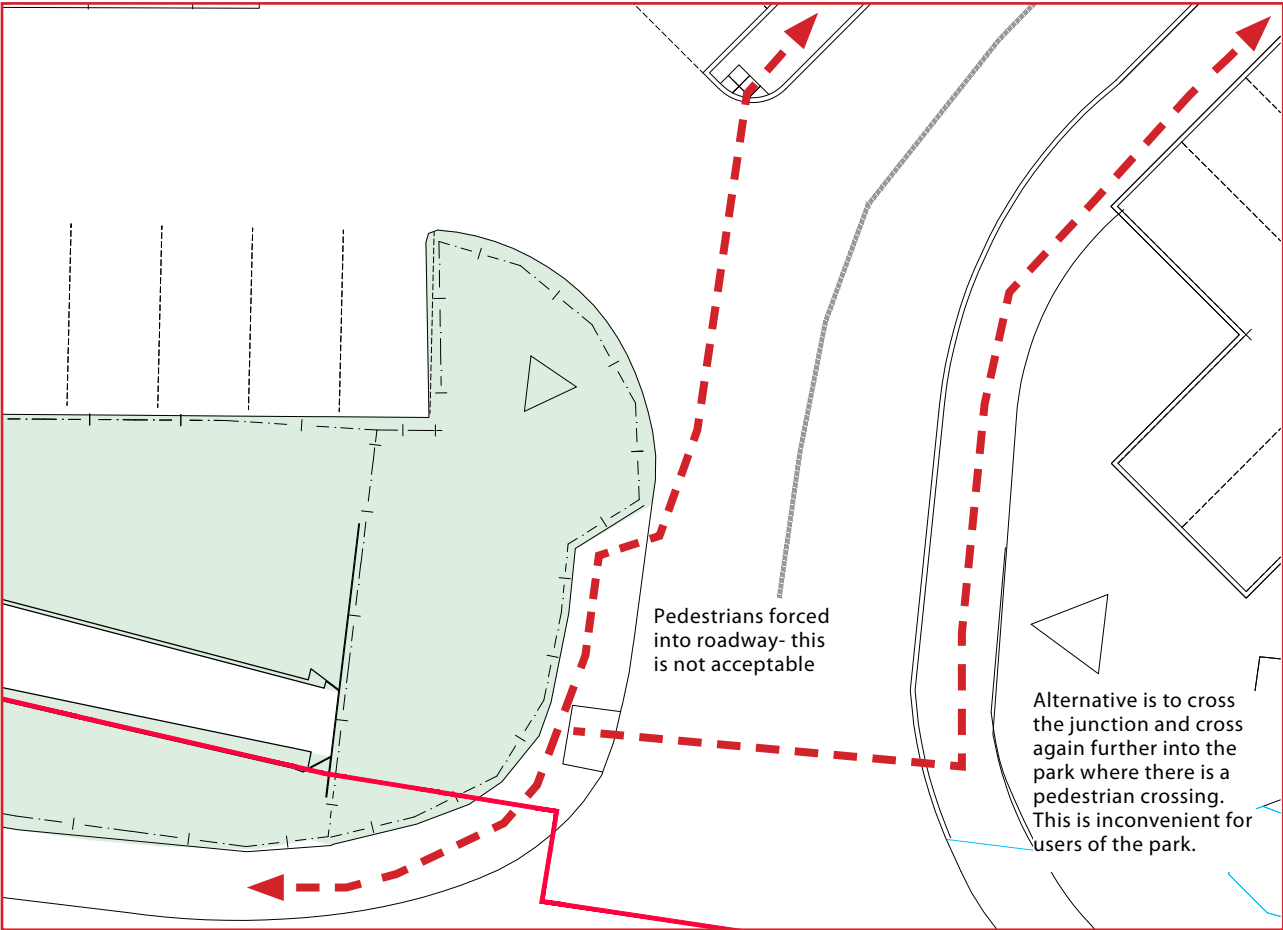
Existing access

Currently, visitors accessing the site from London Road from the north are required to enter the road way or cross over to the other side of the road in order to continue into the site. Extending the pavement, with the inclusion of a drop kerb, will allow visitors to more safely cross to the pavement beyond.

- Ownership boundary
- Existing pedestrian route



Key Plan



Enlarged Plan As Existing



Site photos- existing pedestrian route.



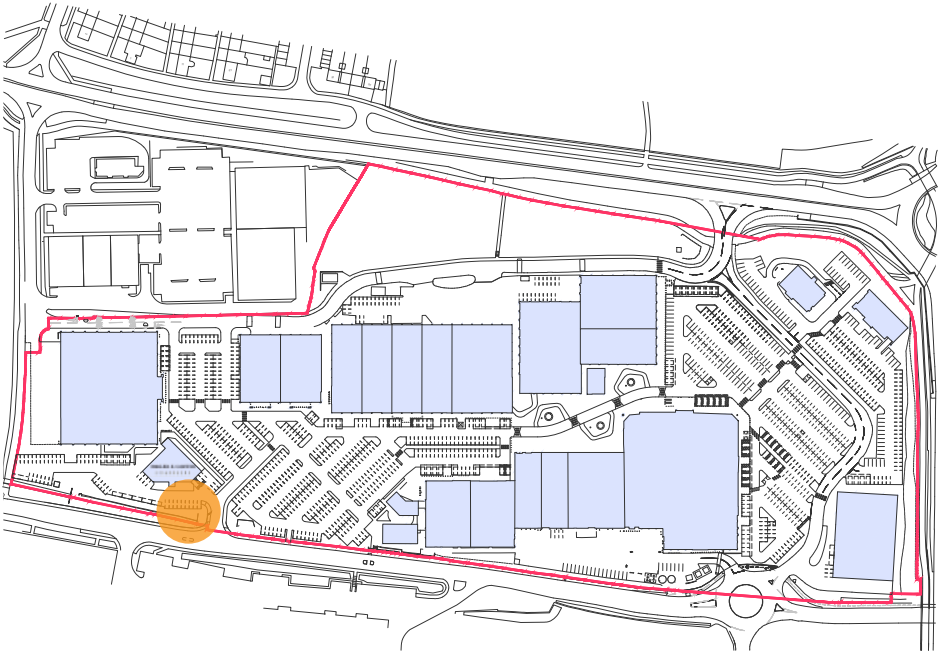
03

London Road Pedestrian Access (Miller & Carter Entrance)

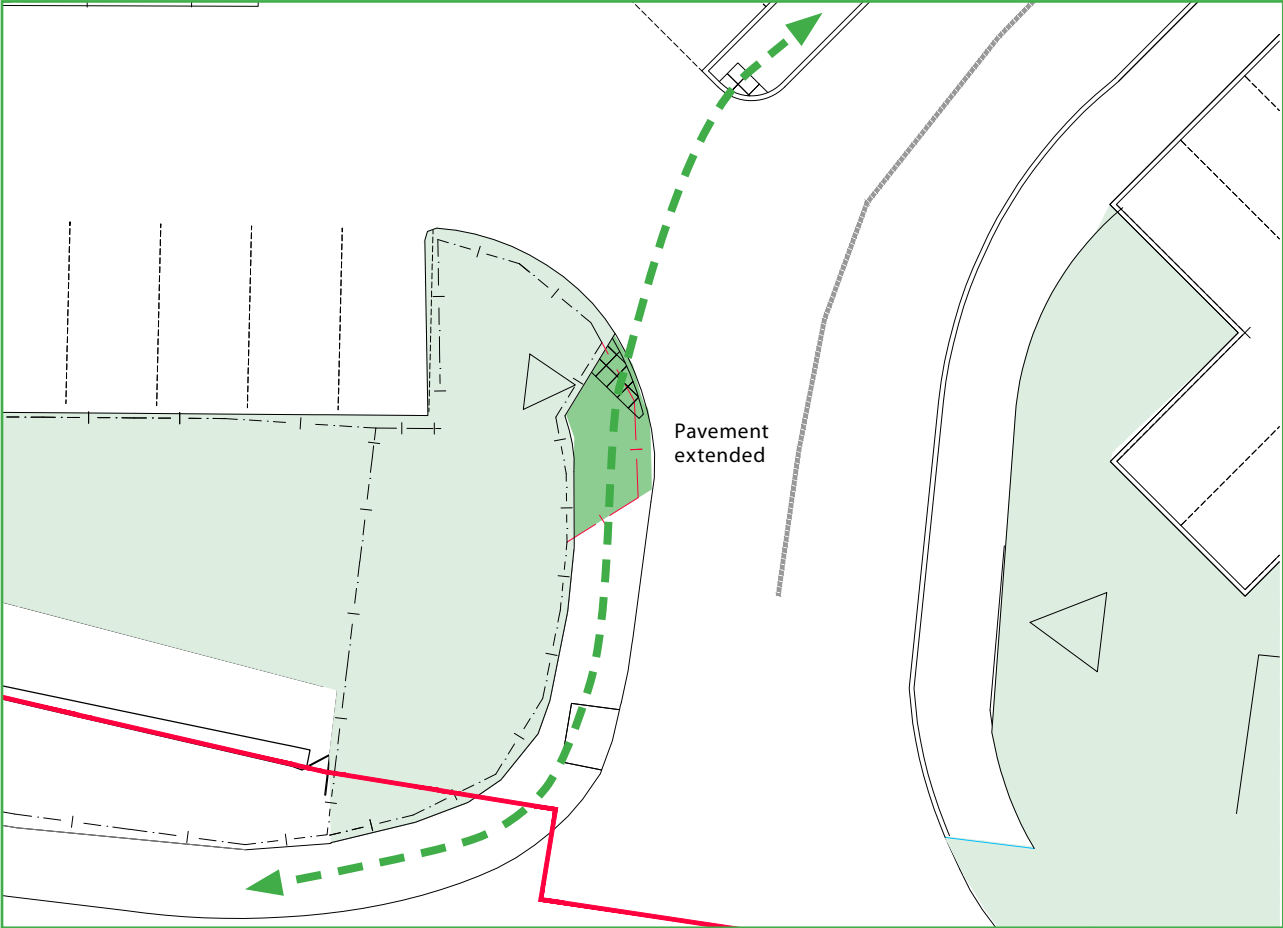
Proposed improvements

Extending the pavement, with the inclusion of a drop kerb, will allow visitors to more safely cross to the pavement beyond.

- Ownership boundary
- Improved pedestrian route



Key Plan



Enlarged Plan As Proposed - relocation of the existing fence (shown red) and part removal of existing grass verge will be required to extend the route.



Site photos- the areas to be modified is highlighted green.



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## 04 Southeast Pedestrian Access (Nando's Entrance)

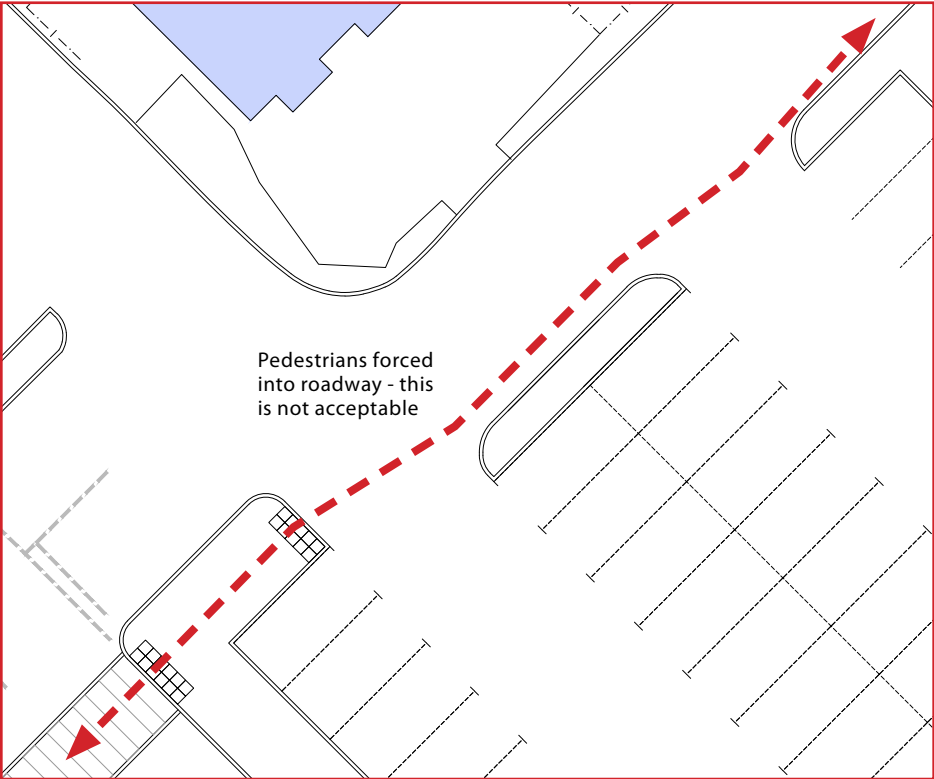
04

Southeast Pedestrian Access (Nando's Entrance Part 1)

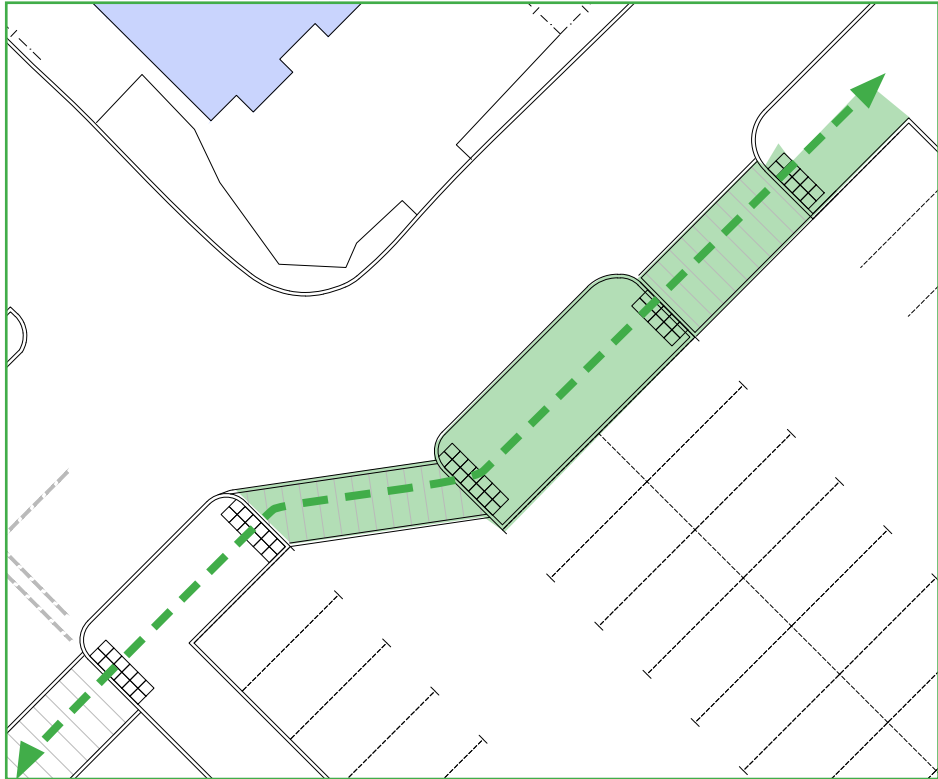
Pedestrian route

The pedestrian route which runs west to M&S has a section which requires users to enter the roadway, with no marked link to the pedestrian route beyond. Relocating 3 car parking spaces in this area will allow for the pedestrian route to be connected with the use of pedestrian crossings where the route crosses the car park.

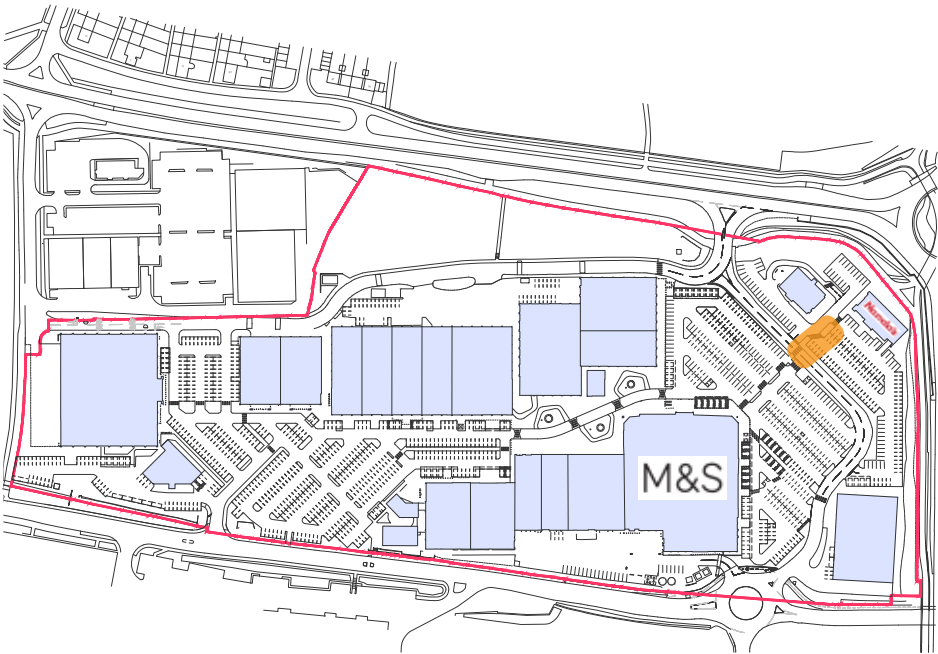
- Ownership boundary
- Existing pedestrian route
- Improved pedestrian route



Enlarged Plan As Existing



Enlarged Plan As Proposed



Key Plan



Site photo - new connecting route shown in green

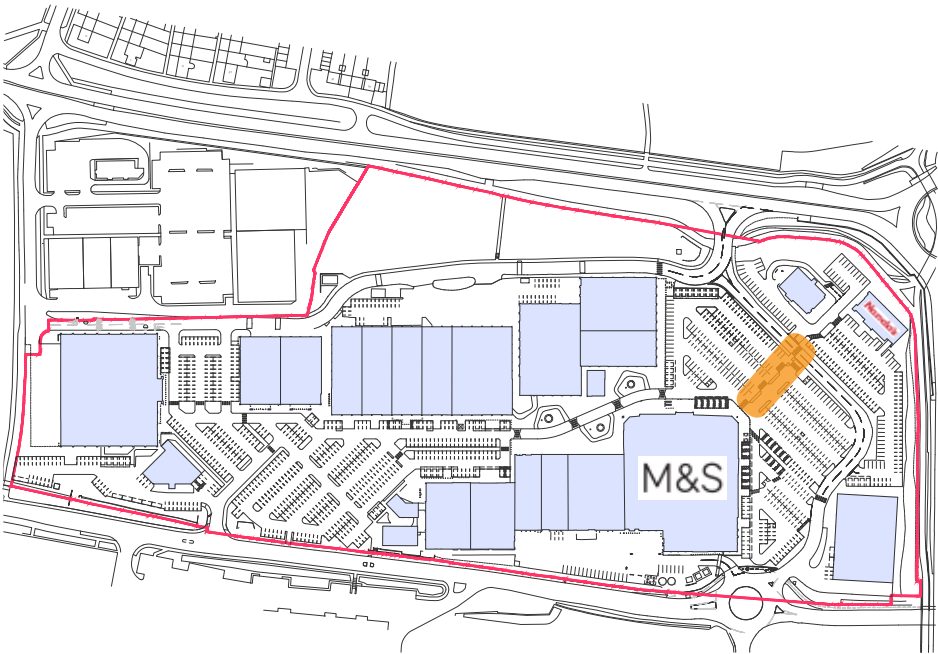


# 04 Southeast Pedestrian Access (Nando's Entrance Part 2)

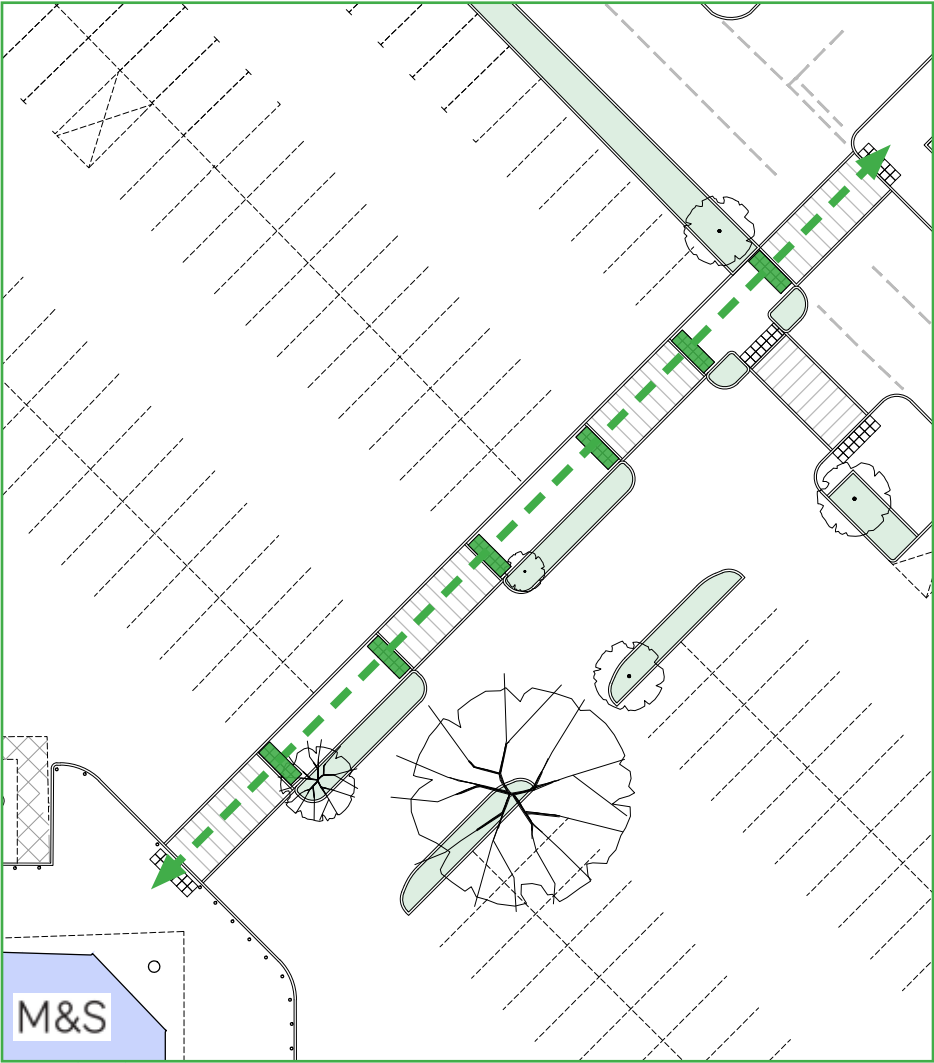
## Additional tactile paving

The pedestrian route continues west to M&S with a number of pedestrian crossings. The addition of tactile paving at each crossing where it is not already installed will assist in improving the safety of users who are partially sighted.

- Ownership boundary
- Improved pedestrian route



Key Plan



Enlarged Plan As Proposed - Additional tactile paving shown green.



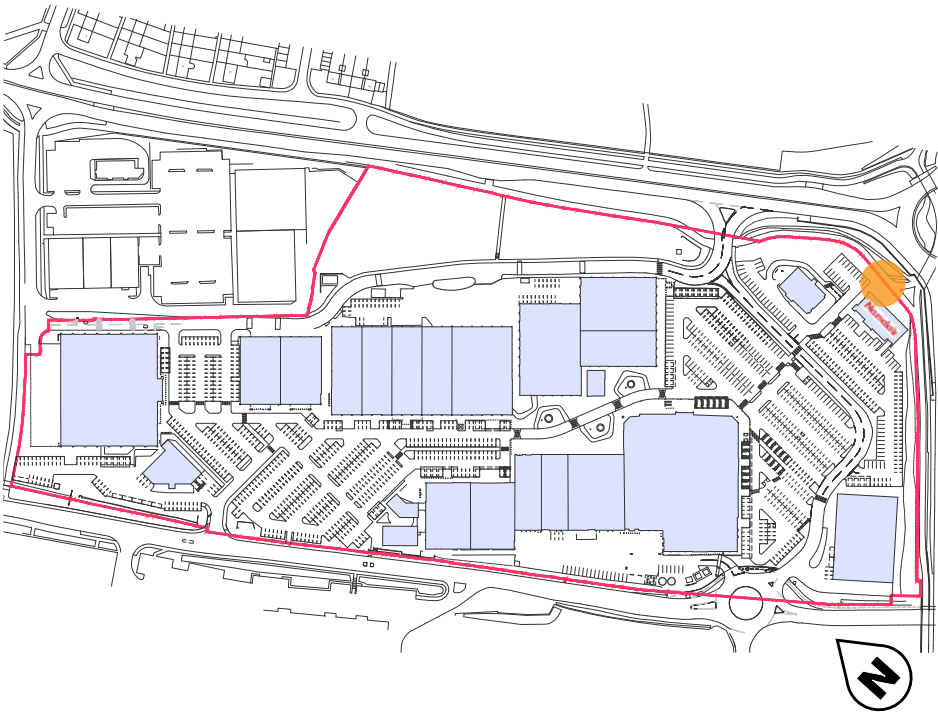
Site photo - areas for additional tactile paving shown green.

# 04 Southeast Pedestrian Access (Nando's Entrance Part 3)

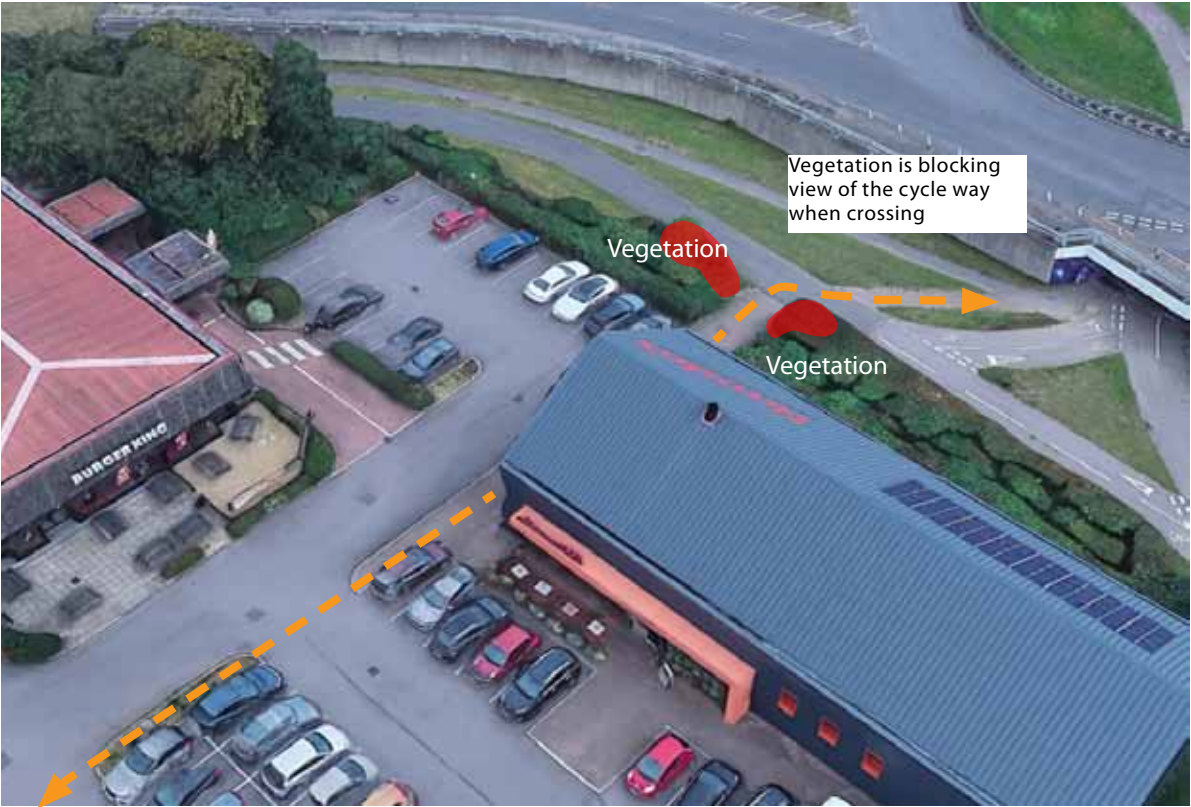
## Visibility improvements

The current pedestrian route in and out of the park at the south east corner crosses the cycle path near to a bend. Cutting back the vegetation in this area will help to improve visibility at this junction, improving safety for wheelchair users, pedestrians, and cyclists.

- Ownership boundary
- Pedestrian route



Key Plan



Site photo - planting to be cut back shown in red



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# 05 Northern Pedestrian Access (Currys Entrance)

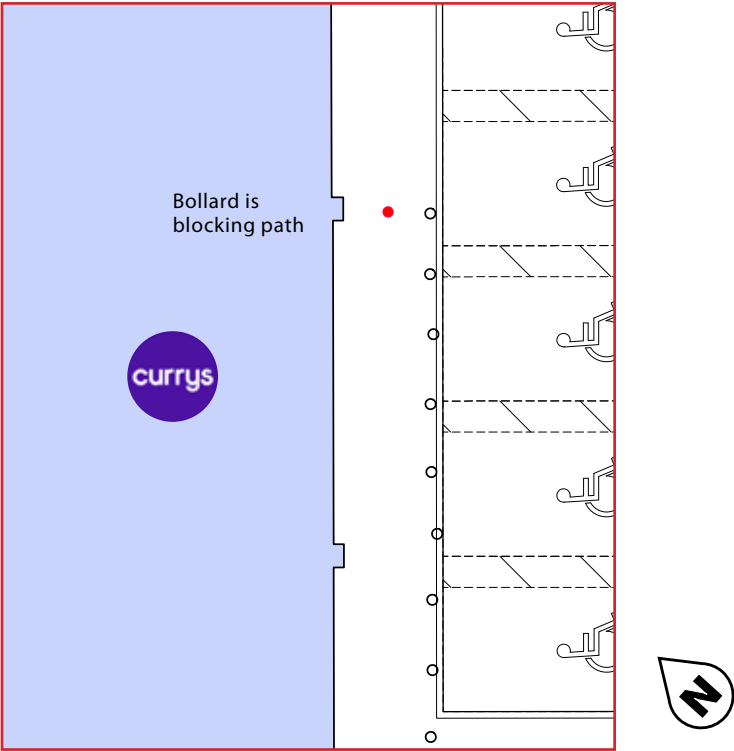
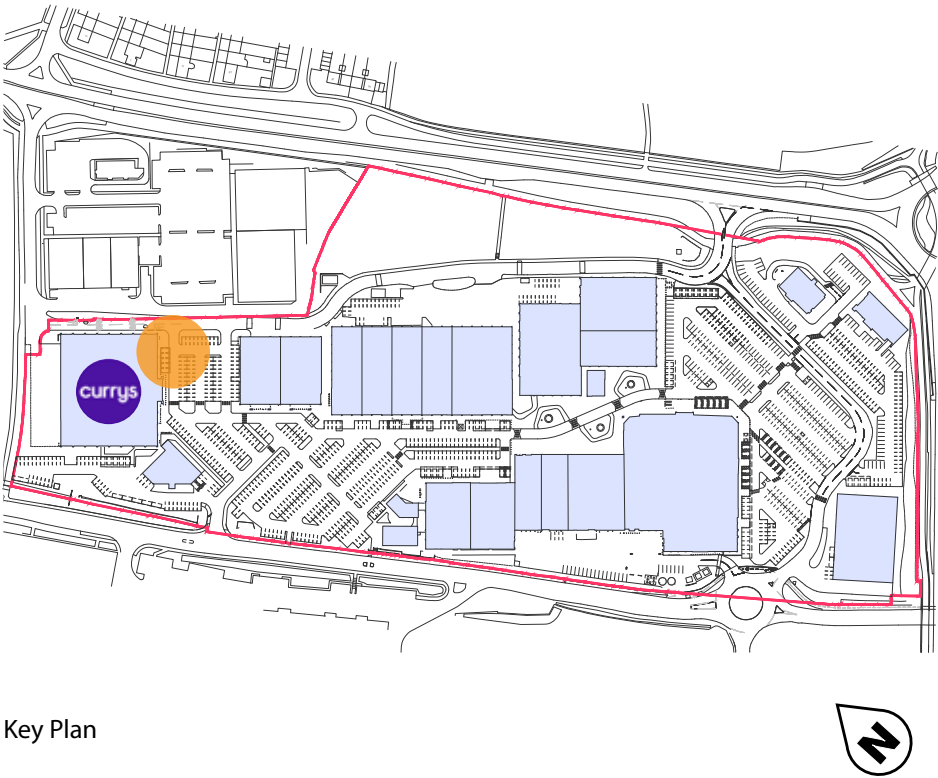
05

Northern Pedestrian Access (Currys Entrance)

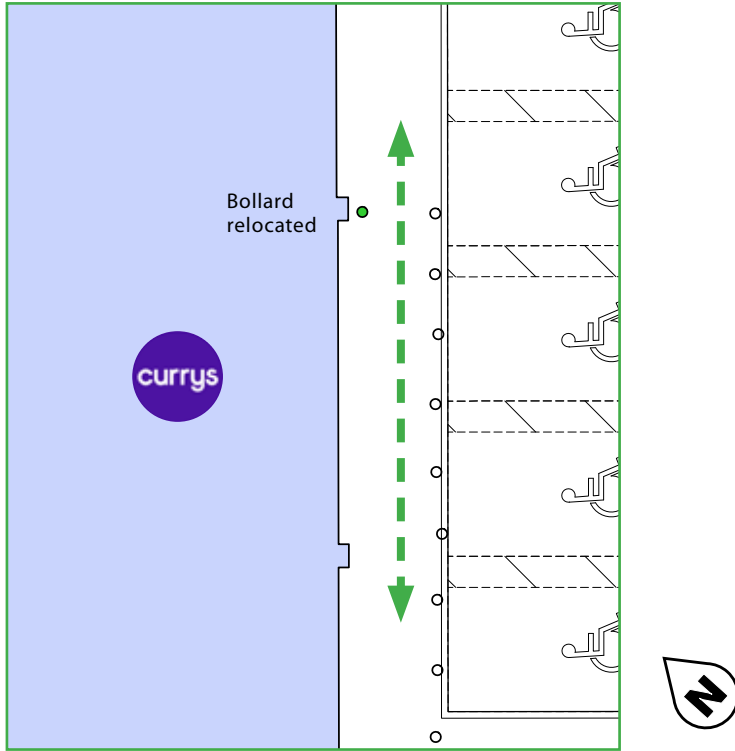
Relocation of bollard

Relocating the bollard identified allows for the widening of the pedestrian route in front of Currys, allowing for ease of access for all users, and in particular for wheelchair users or visitors with buggies.

- Ownership boundary
- Improved pedestrian route



Enlarged plan showing the bollard to be relocated in red.



Enlarged plan showing the relocated bollard in green.



Site photo with the bollard highlighted in red.







06

North-South Link

Opportunities and Constraints

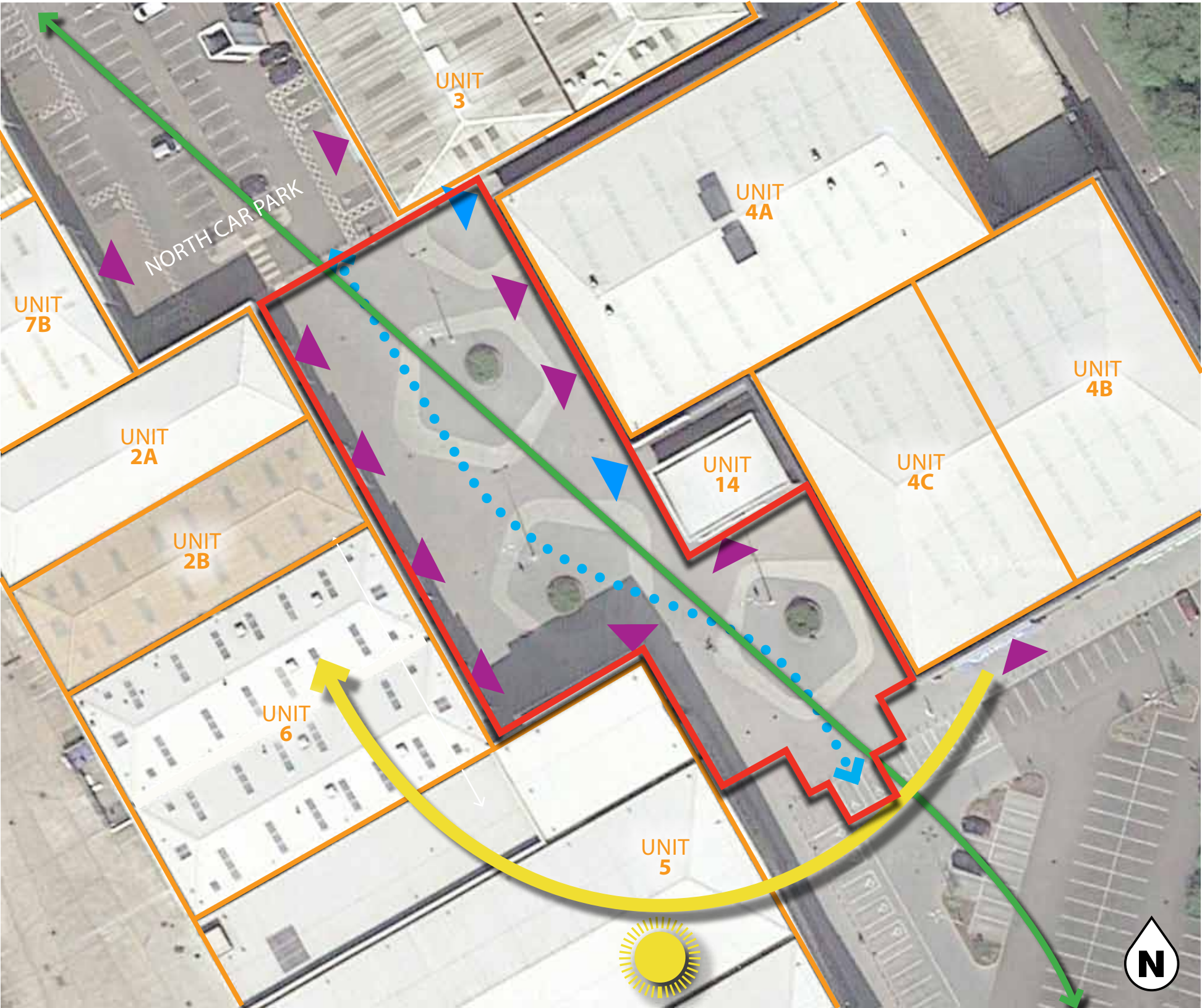
The public space is currently underused, and people don't tend to dwell in the space - it is not a particularly welcoming environment.

The retail units either side of the space do not spill out on to it, and therefore the space is not animated and feels empty and vacuous.

There is the opportunity to link the north and south car parks, and allow people to navigate between the two, which would activate the space and create a useful link, thereby improving the public realm.

Creating a link would limit the need for the public highway to be used to travel between the two. Also, if you are coming from the A1(M) the south car park is the closest and easiest to get to, so having the option to get to the north car park from within the park would simplify journeys.

- Public open space
- Culvert under
- Potential Route
- Sun path
- Unit Boundaries
- Building entrances
- Service/ MoE access



Constraints plan



# 06 North-South Link

## Site Aerial Views



The existing site looking south



The existing site looking north



06

North-South Link

Linking the Car parks

The proposal is to create a linkage between the north and south car parks with a new road to improve connectivity and convenience within the park.

The road will start at the ends of access roads from both car parks, leading to the loss of 2 accessible spaces in the south car park.

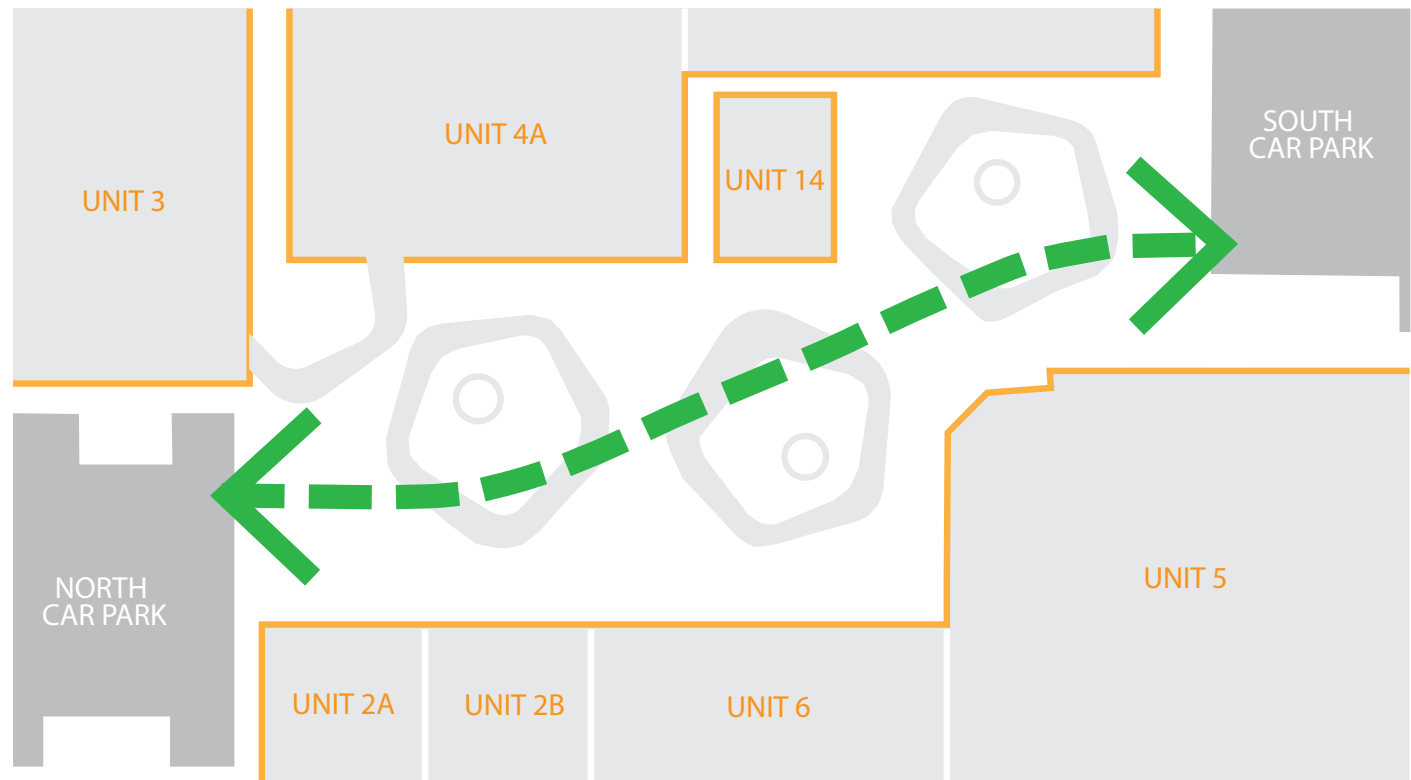
The road will then curve through the public space linking the 2 connection points, running between the 3 existing planters which currently populate the space.

Existing surface materials are proposed to be retained as much as possible, to limit the embodied carbon of the proposals.

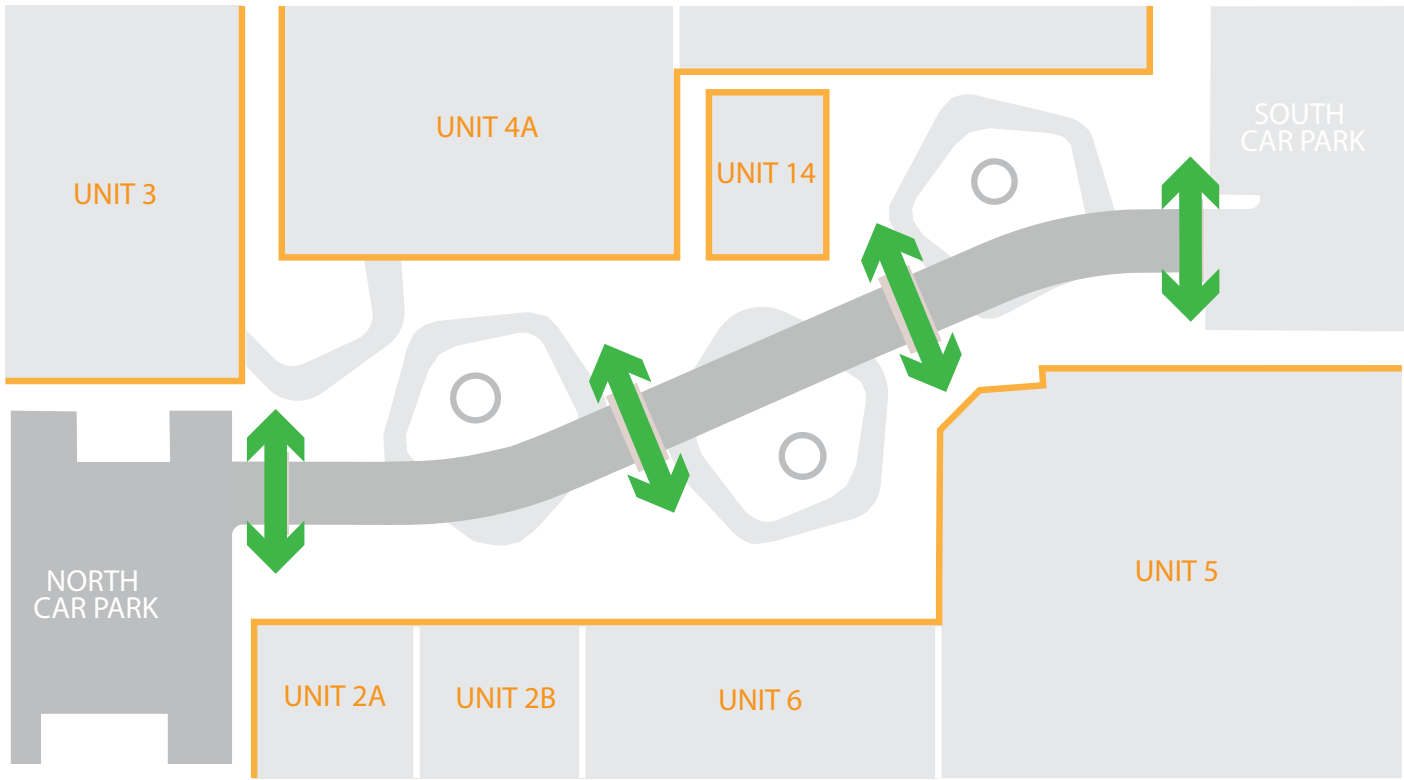
Permeability

A number of pedestrian crossings will be provided across the new link, at key desire lines. These are at either end of the road, with one outside the corner entrance to unit 5 and another between units 4A and 6.

These crossing points will be raised to aid traffic calming through the space, and ensure good connectivity.



A link between car parks



Crossing to created permeability





# 06 North-South Link

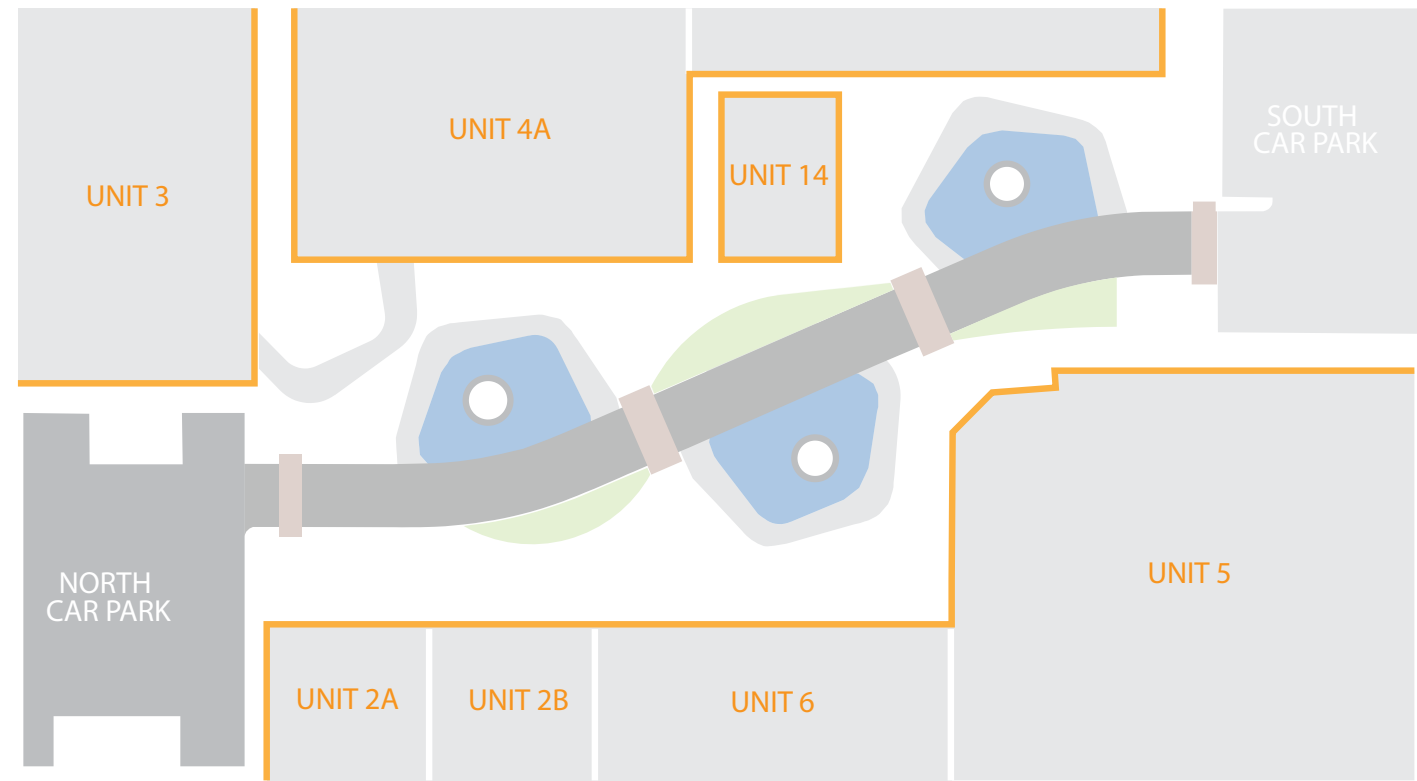
## Public Realm

Around the 3 existing planters, there is an opportunity to improve on the monotone nature of the existing space by replacing some of the existing paving with new surface materials .

These new materials might be artificial grass or coloured resin bonded gravel, which will help to animate the space and create opportunities for people of dwell, and children to play.

New landscape beds along the access road, planted with biodiverse grasses and flowers, increasing the soft landscaping across the scheme.

The visuals on the following pages illustrate how this might look, but the details of the colours and materials, will be confirmed through further applications.



Parking along the north-south link



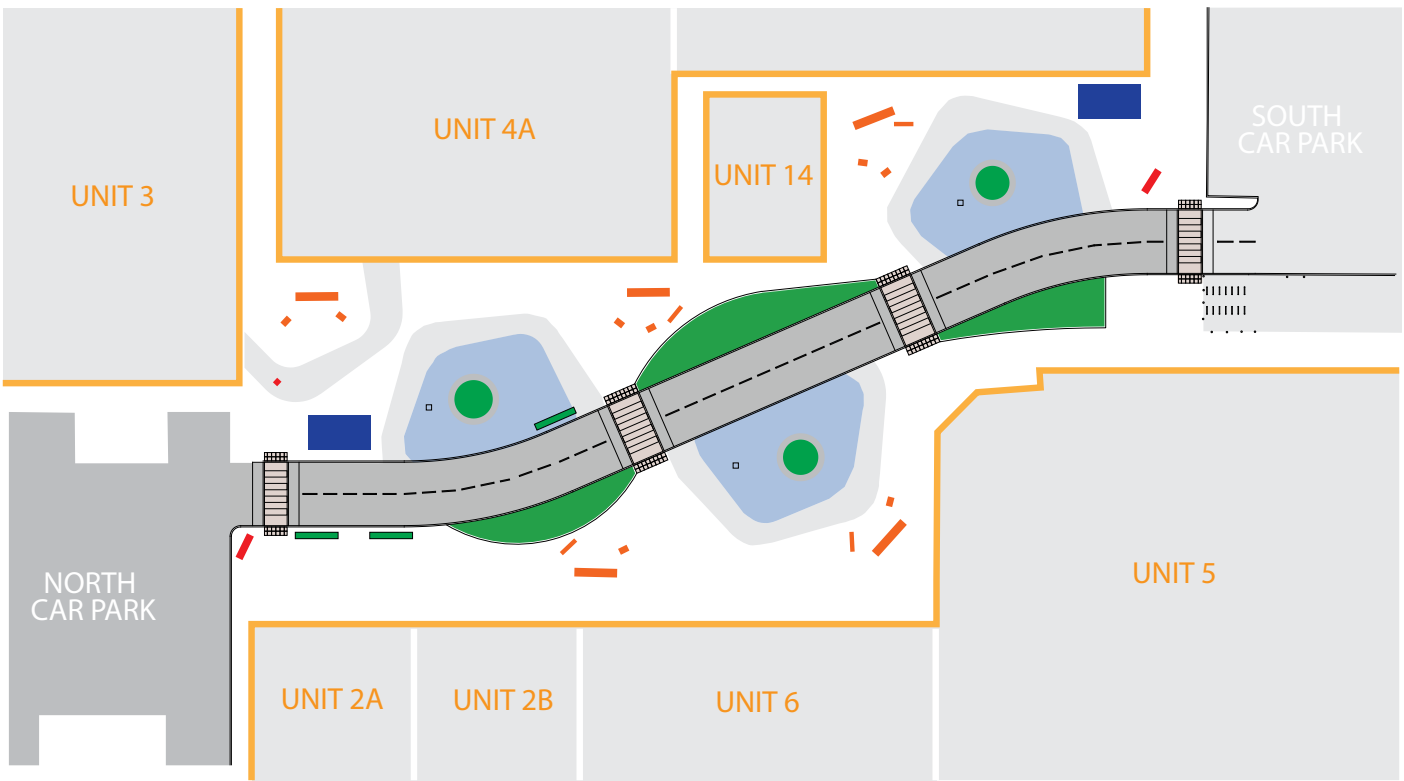
## Animating the space

In order to animate the public realm, and encourage visitors to dwell, a number of seating opportunities are proposed throughout the space.

As well as the seating there will also be new wayfinding and branding features placed within the space.

New trees and seasonal planting will be planted in the retained existing planters, and new planters will be placed along the road, and amongst the new seating.

Designated locations for food/beverage trucks will be created, with space for informal seating.



Features to animate the space



# 06 North-South Link

## Proposed urban equipment and materials

Various items are proposed throughout the space from seating, bins and planters, to branding and wayfinding, to help animate the space.

Branding, wayfinding (such as the larger hand) and some of the seating areas will be illuminated in the evening.

As far as possible, the existing paving materials will be retained and re-used where practicable, and new materials will be complementary. The surface of the north-south link will be tarmac to create a safe differentiation with the pedestrianised areas.

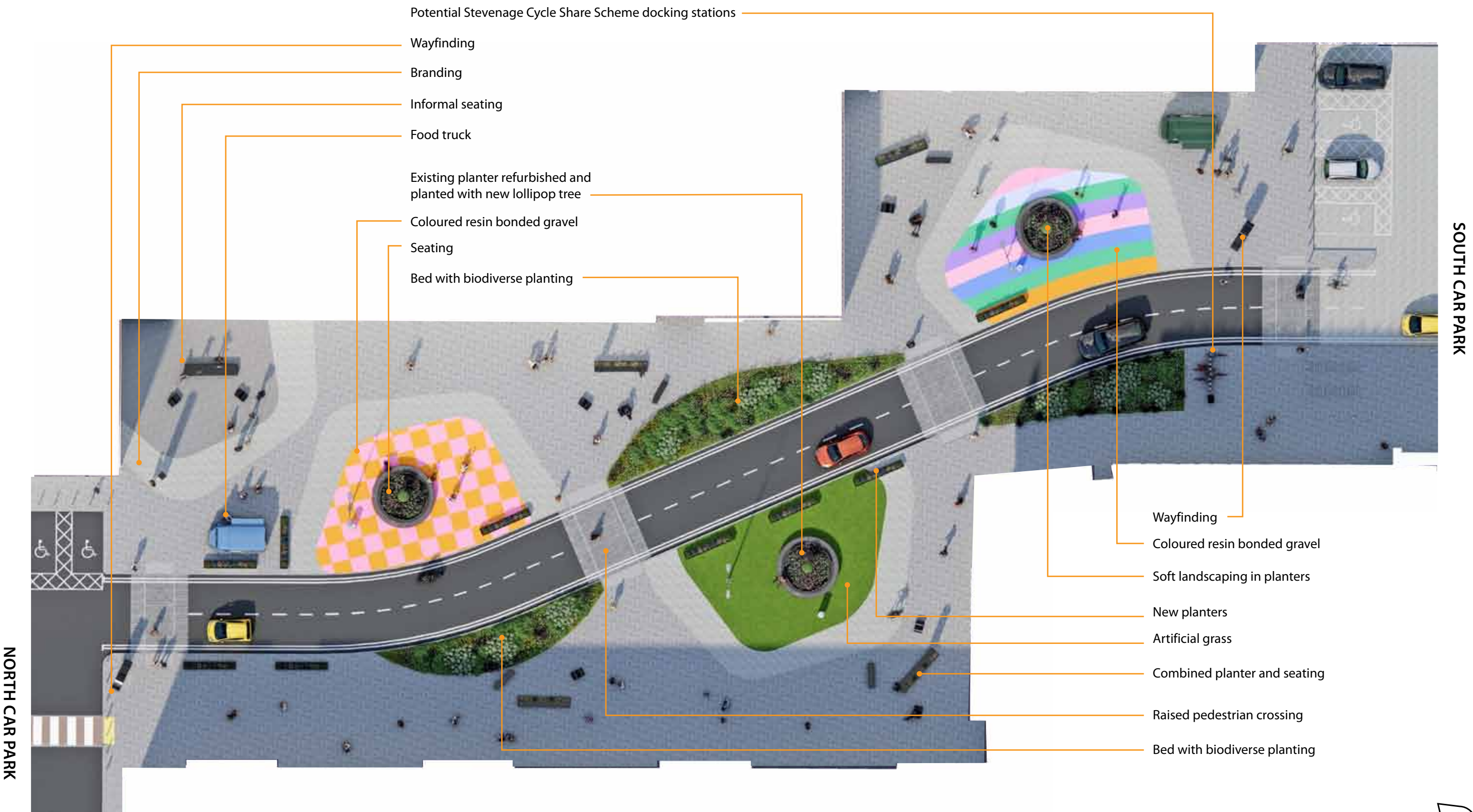




06

North-South Link

Proposed Improvements to Public Realm





# 06 North-South Link

## Visual



The proposed north-south link as seen from the North car park



# 06 North-South Link

## Visuals



The access to the proposed link from North car park



Looking at M&S and Smyth's Toys from Furniture Village



View from above M&S corner with Smyth's Toys



Looking at the proposed link from above south car park



# 06 North-South Link

Visual



The proposed north-south link's access from the South car park



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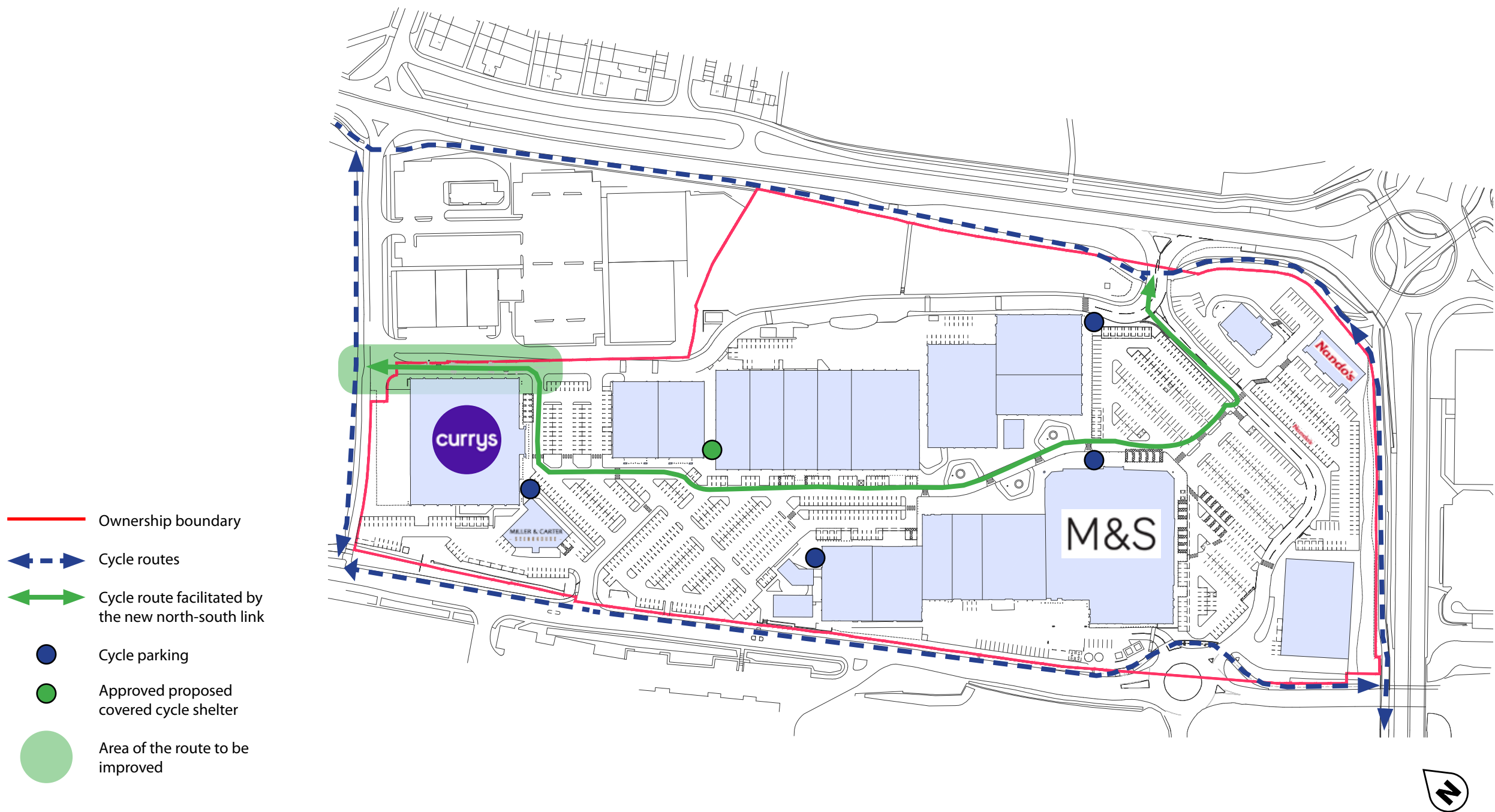
## 07 Cycle routes

07

Cycle routes

Proposed improvements

Implementing the new north-south link will provide a new main cycle route through the site, improving connectivity. This removes any need for cyclists to use the service road to move between the north and south parts of the site. However, a small section of the road is still required to be used in order to access the cycle path beyond.





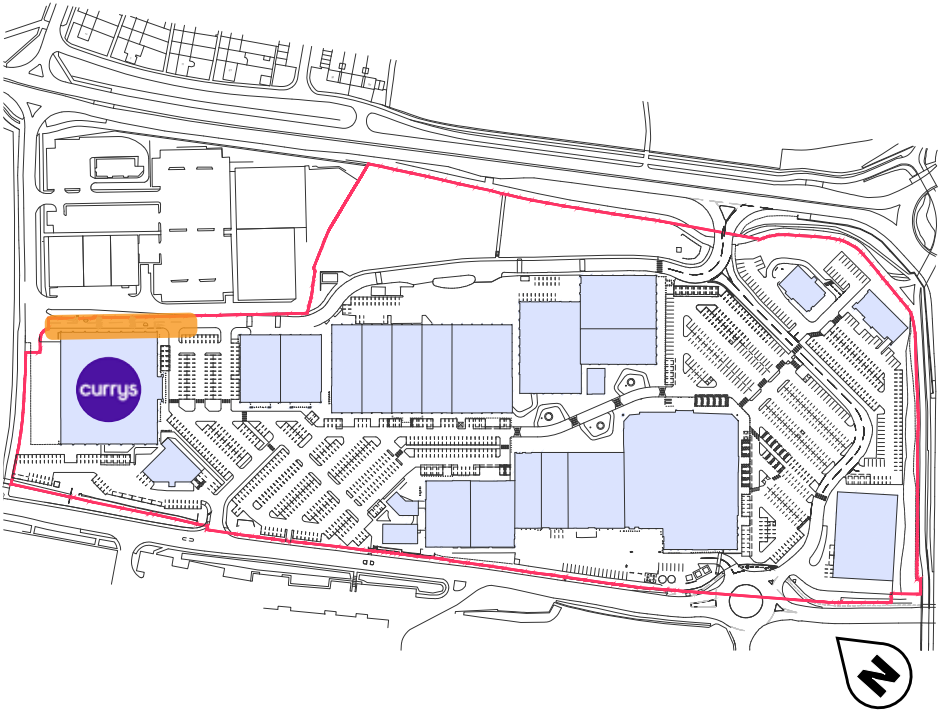
07

Cycle routes

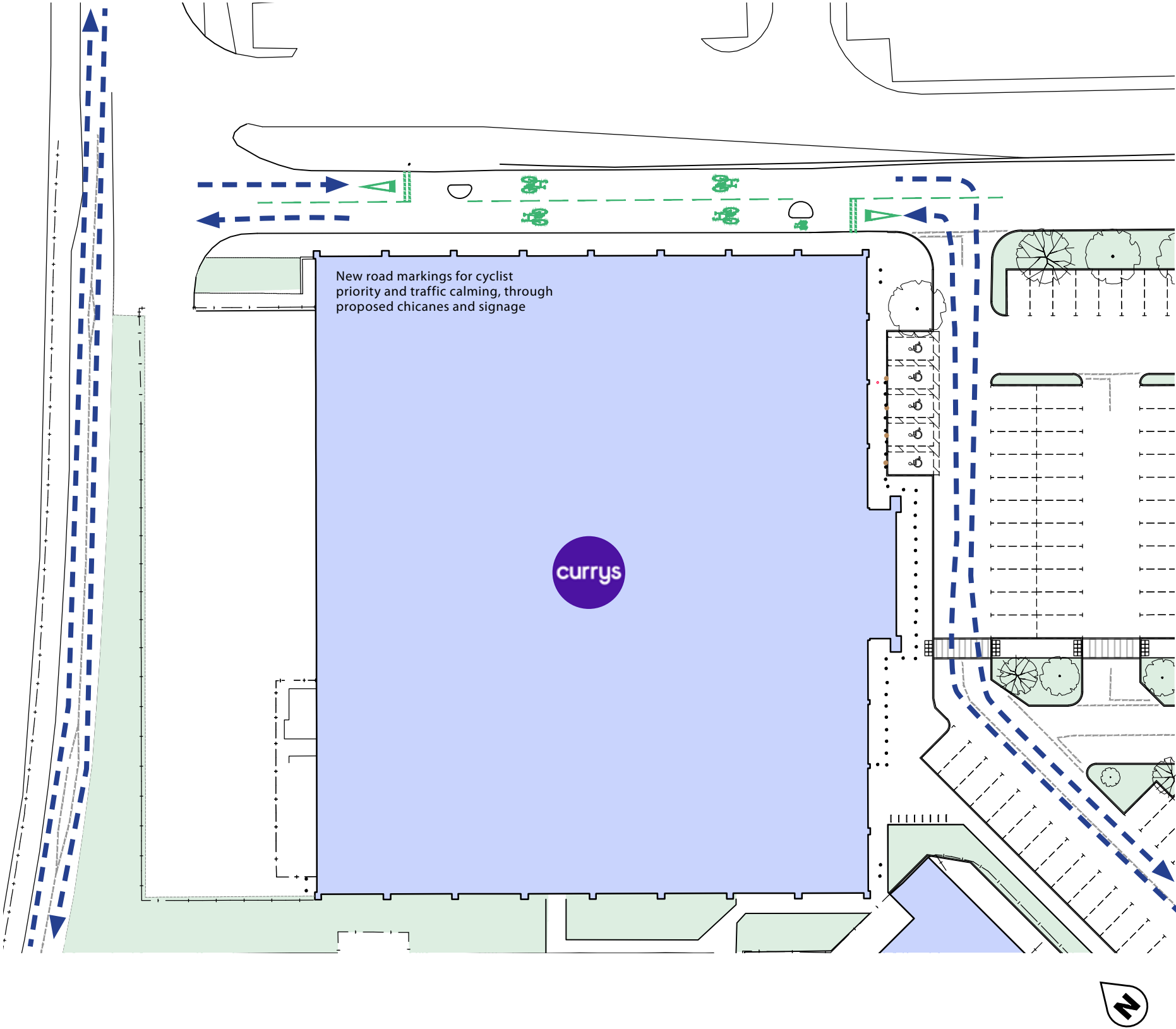
Traffic Calming Measures

It is proposed to introduce traffic calming measures along the section of the service road which access the cycle path, to enhance cycle safety along the corridor.

- Ownership boundary
- Cycle routes



Key Plan







08

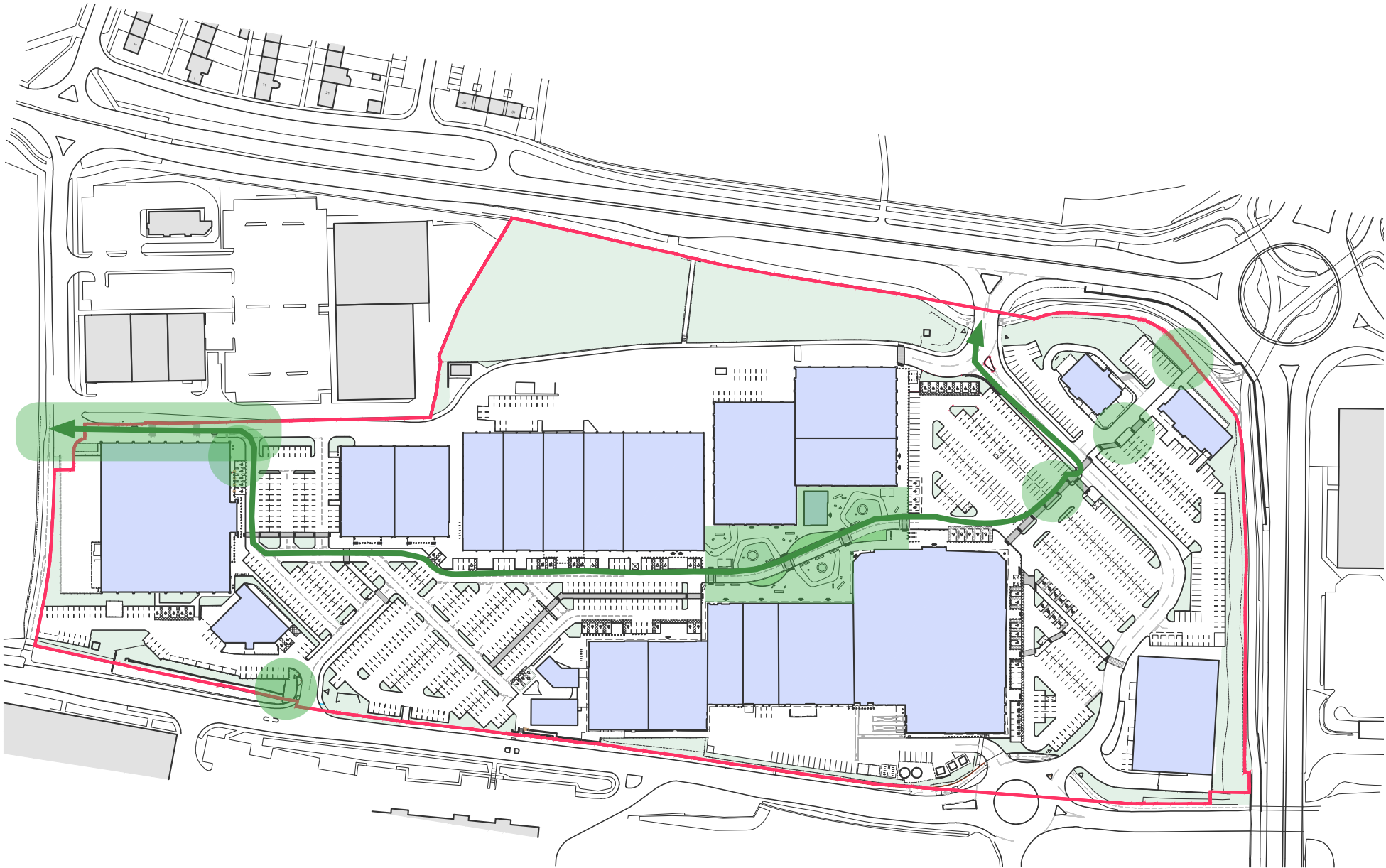
Accessibility Improvements

Summary

The accessibility and linkage improvements will provide:

- New link between North and South car parks, greatly improving customer convenience
- Improved connectivity within the park
- Improved accessibility and safety for all users
- Reduced reliance on public roads - visitors don't have to drive out of the site to go between the north and south areas
- New biodiverse soft landscaping and opportunities to dwell throughout the new space, will create a more active and animated public realm
- Space for 8 No Stevenage Cycle Share scheme docking stations
- The planned improvements will give a much improved experience for all users of Roaring Meg.

- Ownership boundary
- New route facilitated by the north-south link
- Areas of improvement for cyclists and pedestrians



# 08 Conclusions

## Conclusion

The different proposed interventions will improve the circulation and permeability of the park, improving conditions for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers. Increasing the accessibility and connectivity for all users, will not only improve safety, it will enhance the customer experience.





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