



2. BASELINE ANALYSIS

This section sets out the evidence base that underpins the masterplan, establishing a clear understanding of Southwater and the Site before design decisions are fixed. This place-led approach reflects national and local guidance, which emphasises that good design should be informed by context, local character and landscape setting.

Using mapping, photography and focused analysis, it summarises the key layers shaping the Site, including movement and access, landscape character, ecology, heritage and archaeology, and the surrounding urban fabric, drawing out the opportunities and constraints that guide the proposals.



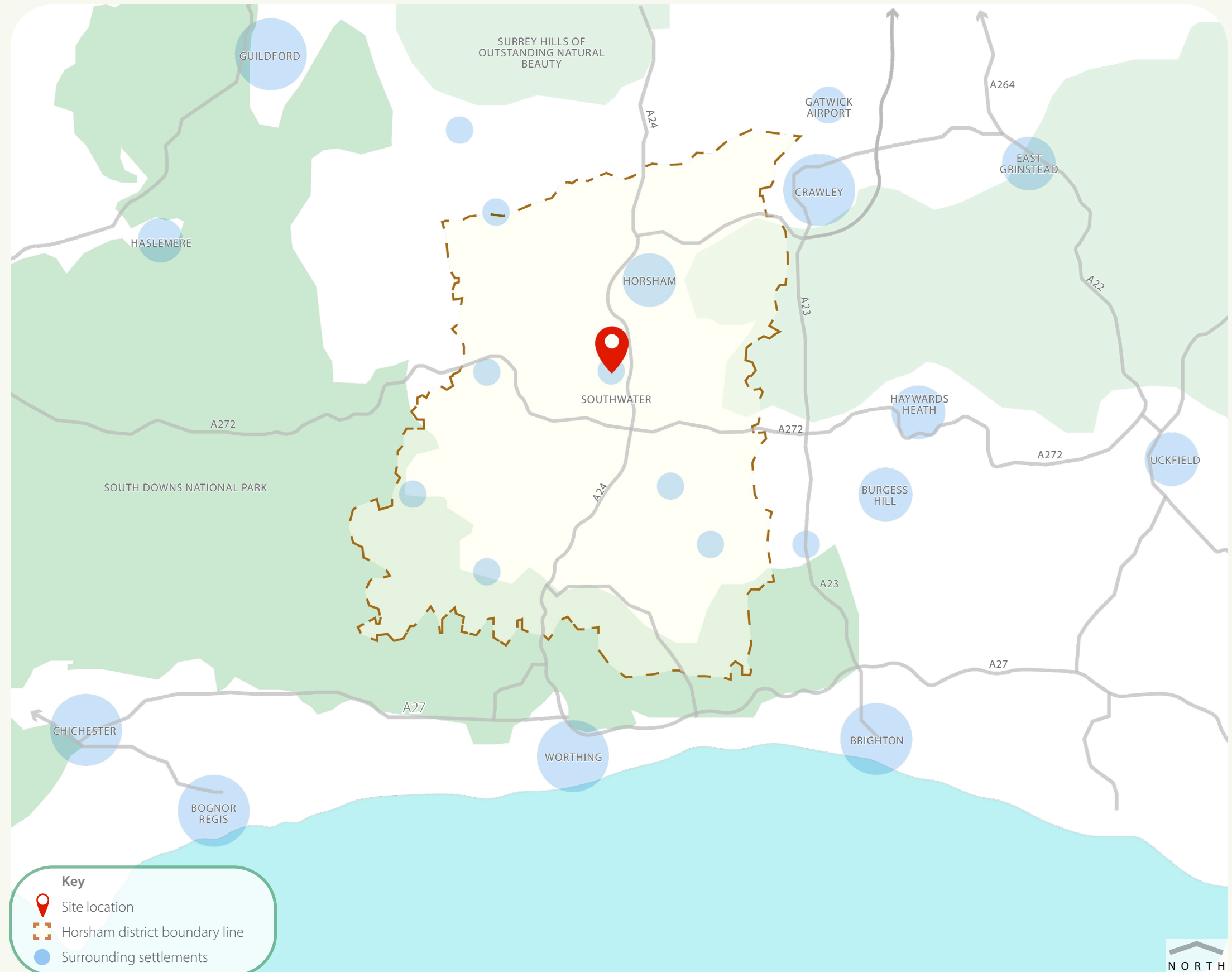
BASELINE ANALYSIS

National Context

The Site is located in Southwater, within Horsham District, West Sussex. Horsham District has a population of approximately 146,800, with Southwater itself home to around 10,000 residents. The settlement falls under the administrative boundaries of Horsham District Council (HDC) and West Sussex County Council (WSCC).

Southwater benefits from strong transport connections:

- **The A24 provides a key north-south corridor:** linking southwards to Worthing and northwards to central London, with further connections into the wider national road network.
- **Rail access is available via Christ's Hospital and Horsham stations:** offering direct services to London Victoria in 51 minutes.
- **Gatwick Airport**, one of the UK's major international gateways, is located approximately 25 minutes by car, providing access to global destinations.



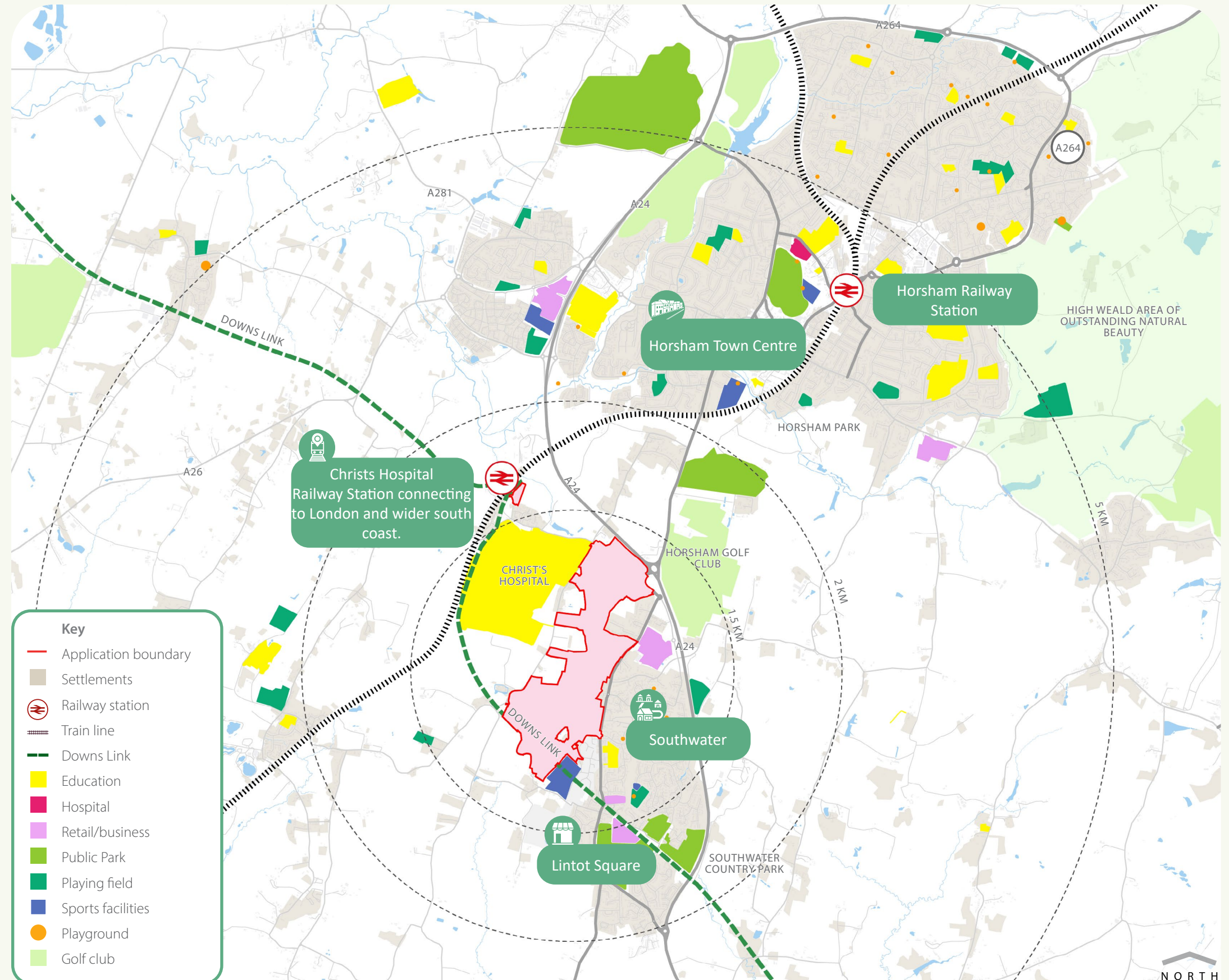
BASELINE ANALYSIS

Local Context

The site, shown on the plan opposite, is located to the west of Worthing Road in Southwater. It lies immediately north of the Berkeley 'Broadacres' development, adjacent to but outside the defined settlement boundary of Southwater.

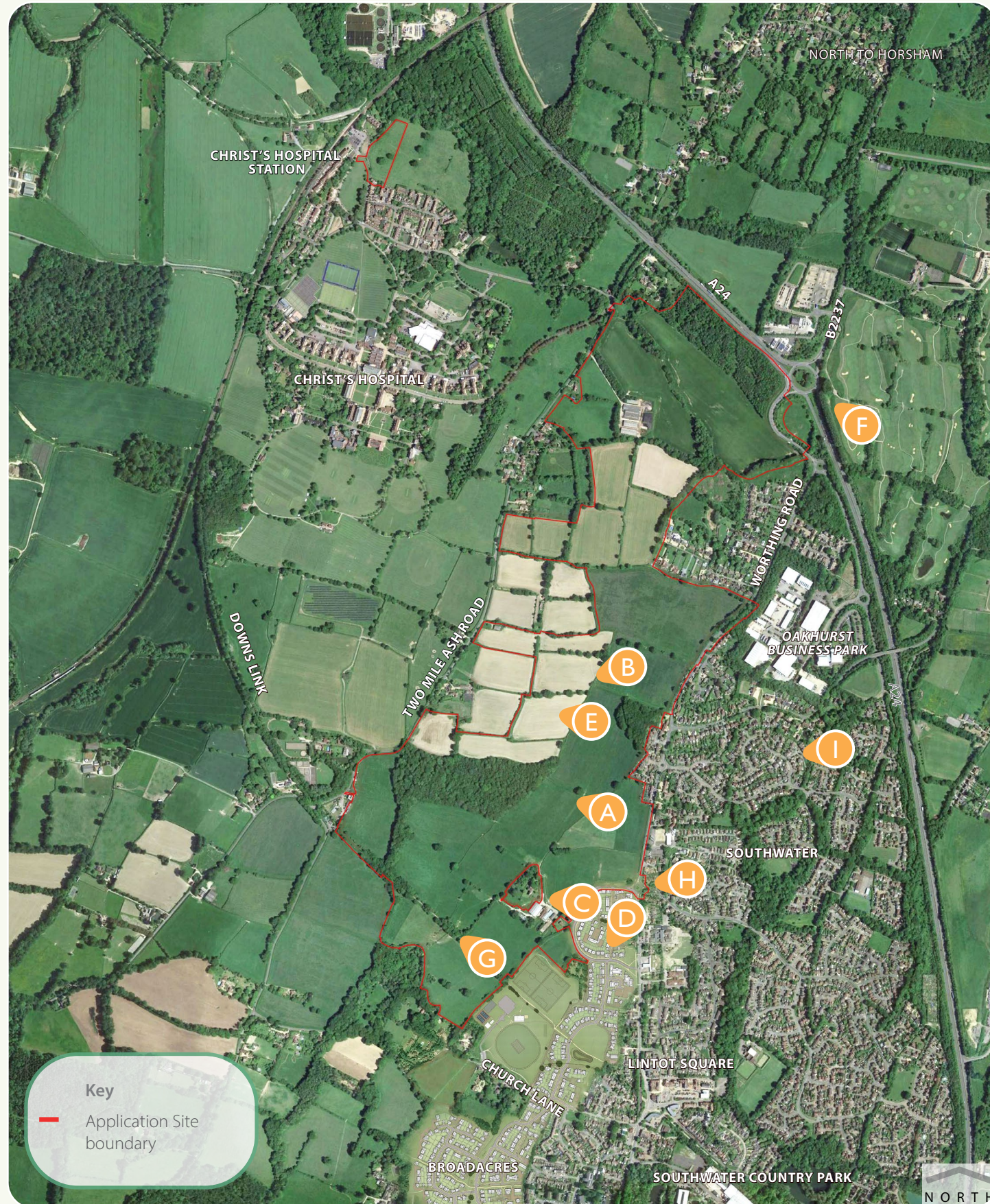
The site benefits from proximity to:

- **Christ's Hospital railway station**, offering northbound services to London and southbound connections to Bognor Regis and wider south coast.
- **The A24**, forms the site's northern edge, providing direct strategic road access.
- **Worthing Road** runs along the eastern boundary, linking the site to Horsham.
- **The Downs Link** long-distance trail also crosses the southern part of the site, providing a nationally recognised walking and cycling route between Surrey and Sussex.
- Convenient access to local amenities, including **Lintot Square and Southwater Country Park**.



BASELINE ANALYSIS

Site Context



The application site area extends to approximately 116.7 hectares and comprises a main parcel with one smaller parcel area to the north-west. The north-west parcel lies east of Christ's Hospital Station with access from Station Road.

Southwater village lies to the east and south-east, with its local centre focused around Lintot Square, which contains shops, cafés and local services. Nearby, Berkeley's Broadacres development is under construction, delivering 540 new homes and a retirement living scheme. Open countryside defines the setting to the west and south-west.

The A24 borders the site to the north, with Two Mile Ash Road along the west and Worthing Road to the east. Christ's Hospital Station is a 15–20 minute walk, while Horsham town centre and station can be reached in approximately 40 minutes on foot or 24 minutes by bus, providing direct links to London, Gatwick and Brighton.

The land is largely arable and pasture, interspersed with hedgerows and areas of ancient woodland, including Courtland Wood, Two Mile Ash Gill and Smith's Copse. Woodland to the north forms a buffer to the A24. Along the southern boundary, the Downs Link – a 59 km multi-use trail – crosses the site east to west.



Courtland Wood (centre) with Two Mile Ash Gill (left), both ancient woodlands



Mature trees and hedgerows within the site

BASELINE ANALYSIS

Site Context



Great House Farmhouse, visible from Chessall Avenue



Aerial view showing Broadacres and part of the site to the south



View from the centre of the site, looking west



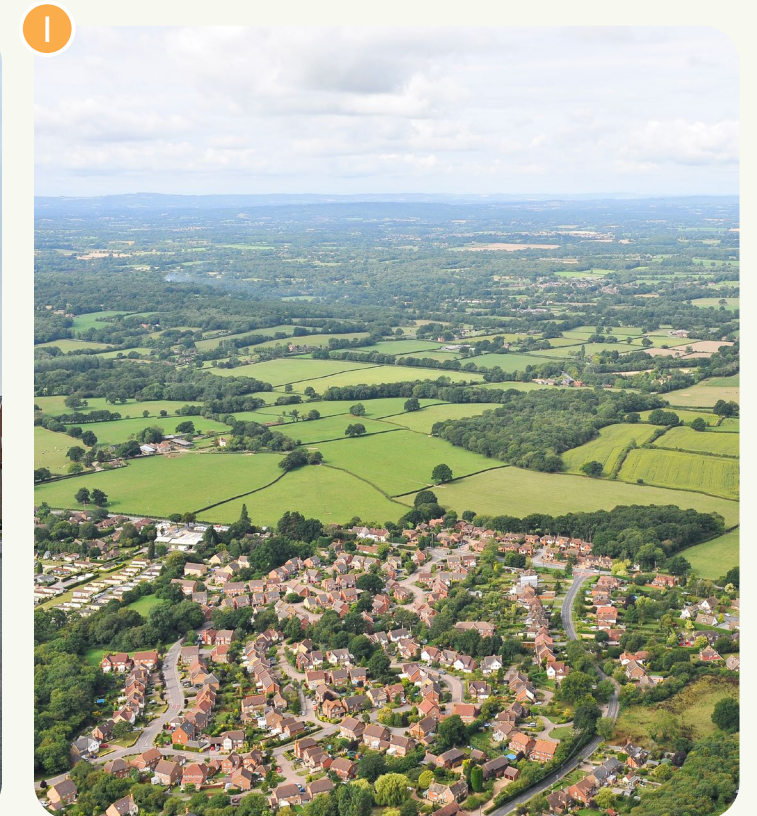
Aerial view of Hop Oast roundabout



View along the Downs Link



View of Broadacres roundabout, Worthing Road and Chessall Avenue



Aerial view of Southwater village, with the site in the background.

BASELINE ANALYSIS

Strategic Planning Context

At the national level, Government policy seeks delivery of around 1.5 million homes by the end of the current parliament to address population growth and affordability pressures, particularly acute in the South East. Within Horsham, affordability has worsened, with median house prices almost 14 times workplace-based earnings.

The Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan (2021) together form the statutory development plan.

Pre-App Meeting with HDC (21/08/25)-

HDC emphasised that members place strong importance on compliance with Draft Policy 40 (Improving Housing Standards), particularly in delivering 100% M4(2) accessible homes and 5% M4(3) wheelchair user dwellings. It was highlighted that this should be framed and presented as a clear benefit of the scheme.

Shaping Development in Horsham District Planning Advice Note (2025) provides up-to-date, non-statutory guidance on the Council's expectations for development quality, placemaking and landscape-led design, supporting proposals that align with the emerging Local Plan direction.

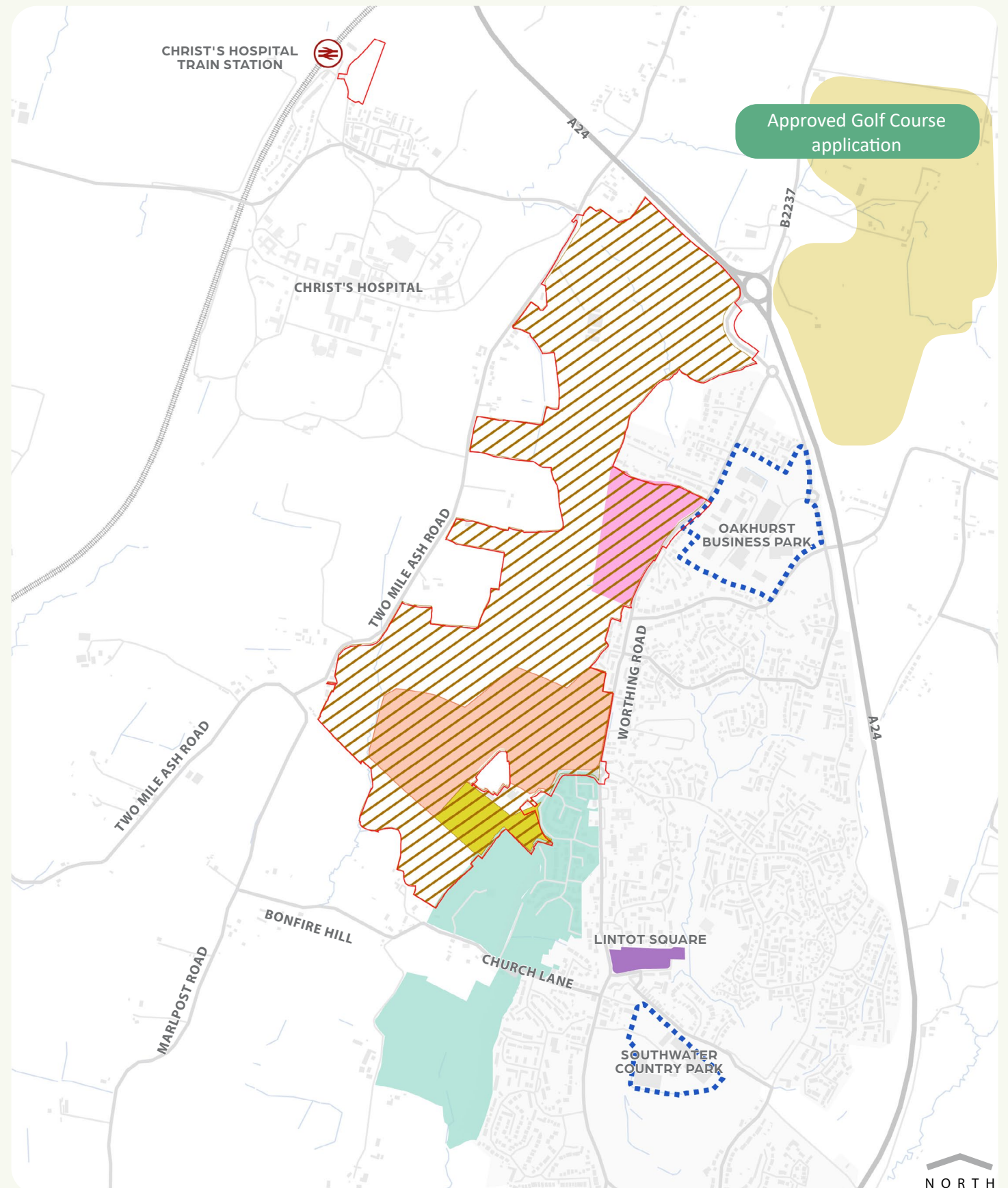
Policy HA3 of the draft Horsham Local Plan includes an allocation for the Land North West of Southwater. The plan proposes to allocate land for up to 1,000 homes (including 450 identified under Policy SNP2 of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan).

The policy requires the site provide approximately 4 hectares of employment land, a new secondary school and a new neighbourhood centre. Development must deliver supporting infrastructure, including transport improvements and flood mitigation.

A further consideration is the Horsham Golf Club appeal, which is located to the north of Southwater and is expected to provide 800 homes. This scheme was recently permitted at appeal, although subject to challenge.

Key

- Application boundary
- Draft Housing allocation area (Policy HA3 Horsham Local Plan Reg 19)
- Southwater neighbourhood plan housing allocation (Policy SNP2)
- Policy SD10 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)
- Safeguarded land for potential Education (SNP3)
- Village centre
- Existing key employment area
- Residential development under construction



BASELINE ANALYSIS

Heritage and Archaeology

Within 500m of the Site are 22 listed buildings (including 1 Grade II* listed), alongside four parish heritage assets identified in the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan.

- **Great House Farmhouse:** a late medieval Grade II* listed farmhouse, lies within the wider site boundary and is a key heritage consideration, valued for its historic fabric, rural setting and the Site's longstanding agricultural history.
- Nearby assets, including:
 - **Bodimans (Grade II)** on Two Mile Ash Road, further contribute to local historic character.
 - **Christ's Hospital School** (c. 1km north-west) includes Grade II* buildings and its clock tower is a notable landmark, with important views requiring protection.
 - Archaeologically, the southern part of the Site falls within an **Archaeological Notification Area**, and a north-south embankment indicates potential sensitivity.

Below, we summarise some of the key elements arising from this baseline analysis.

**Key views**

Protect views to Great House Farmhouse, Christ's Hospital tower, listed buildings and green western edge.

**Manorial boundary**

Predominantly retained and celebrated within the masterplan as part of public realm and landscape.

**Heritage Assets & Sensitive Sites**

1 Great House Farmhouse

2 Christ's Hospital Tower

3 Archaeological Site

4 Area of particular built heritage sensitivity

5 Existing barns

**Hedgerows & Woodlands**

Celebrate the mature woodlands and network of hedgerows that define the historic fields across the site.

**Downs Link**

Promote safe connections and protect the character of the important walking and cycling route.



Great House Farmhouse



Christ's Hospital Tower

Key

 Application boundary

 Railway station

 Railway line

 Grade II* listed building

 Grade II listed building

 Non-designated heritage asset

 Archaeological site

 Suggested reinforced boundary for landscaping

 Archaeological embankment

 Heritage sensitive hedgerow

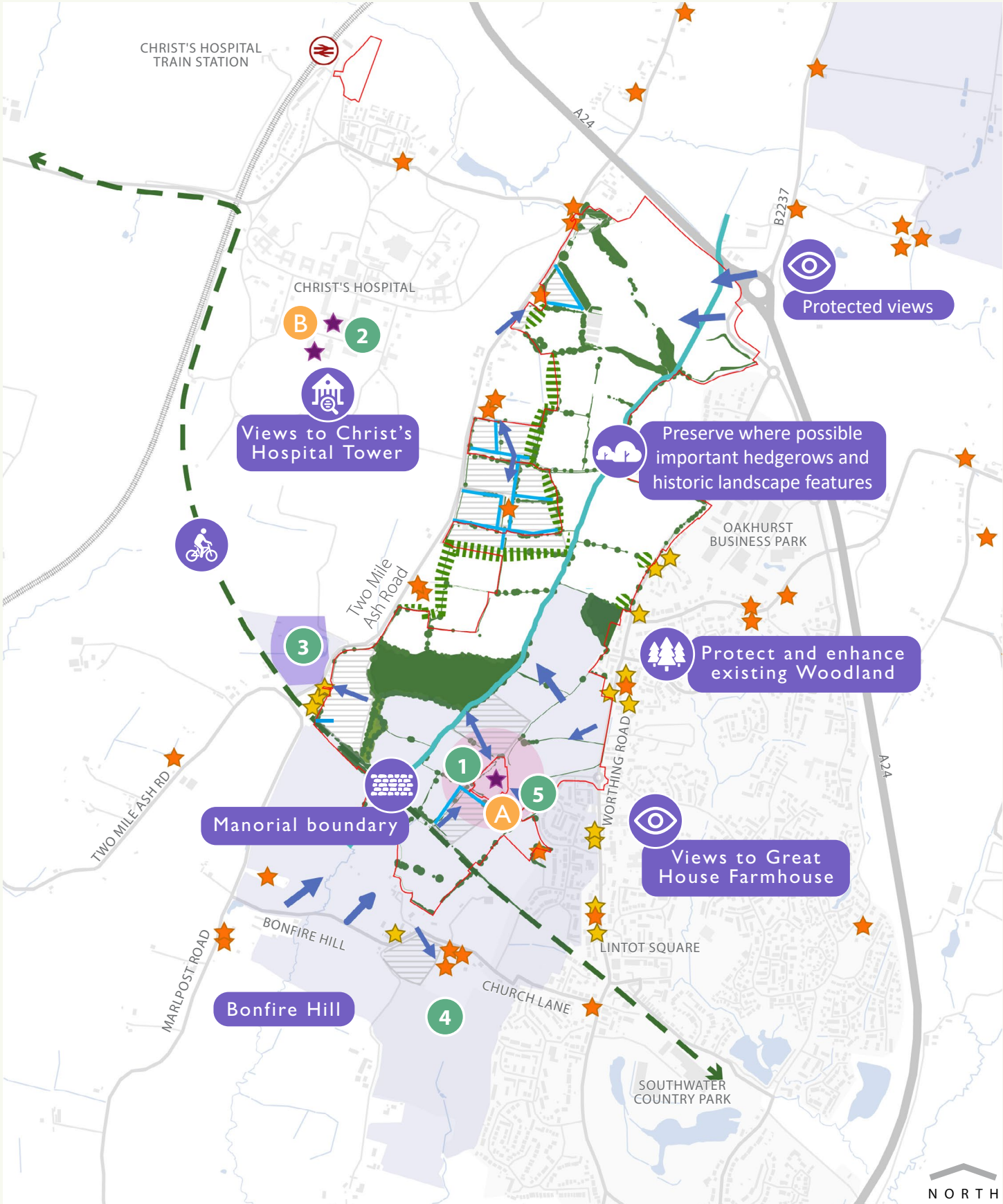
 Important heritage views

 Archaeological Notification Area

 Areas of particular built heritage sensitivity

 Area of sensitivity

 Downs Link

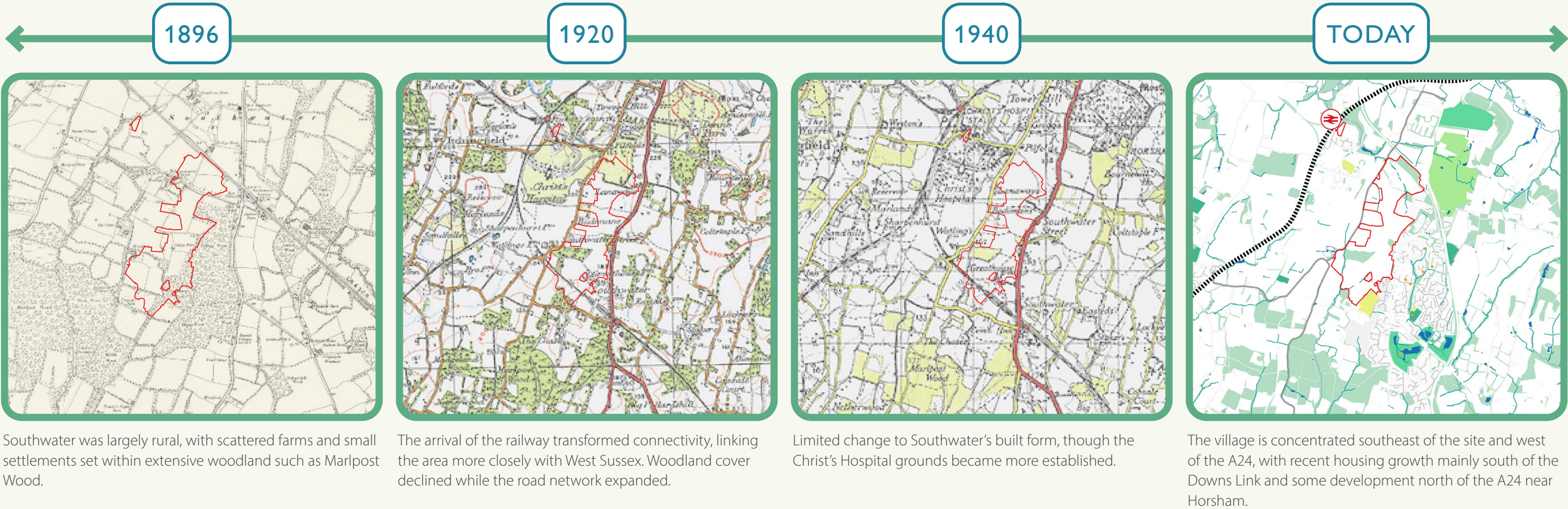


BASELINE ANALYSIS

Historic Evolution

Historical maps and images illustrate how Southwater and the surrounding settlements have evolved in relation to the landscape, topography, and movement routes.

Alongside the built form and infrastructure, numerous landscape and archaeological features, including hedgerows and woodland remain integral to the site. These elements provide evidence of past land use and demonstrate how Southwater has grown over time.



Aerial view of Christ's Hospital school (circa 1951)



Southwater near Bonfire Hill (circa 1960).



Historic photograph of Great House Farmhouse (circa 1969)



Southwater's historic railway station closed in 1973. The disused tracks now form the Downs Link.

BASELINE ANALYSIS

Movement Network

Wider Vehicular Network

Southwater benefits from strong road connections to nearby towns, including Horsham and Billingshurst.

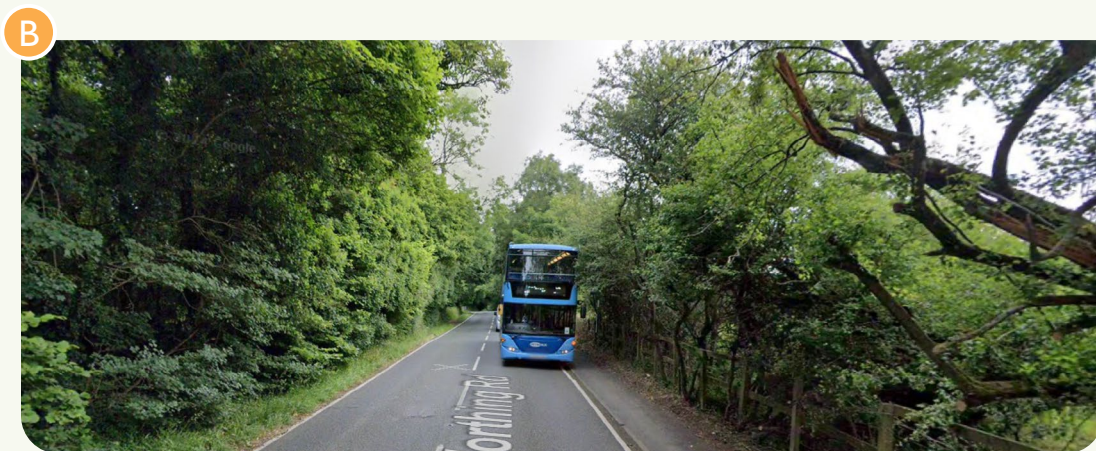
The A24 serves as the main strategic route, linking the wider highway network via the A264, A272 and A27; providing connections to Horsham, Worthing and London

By car, the site is approximately:

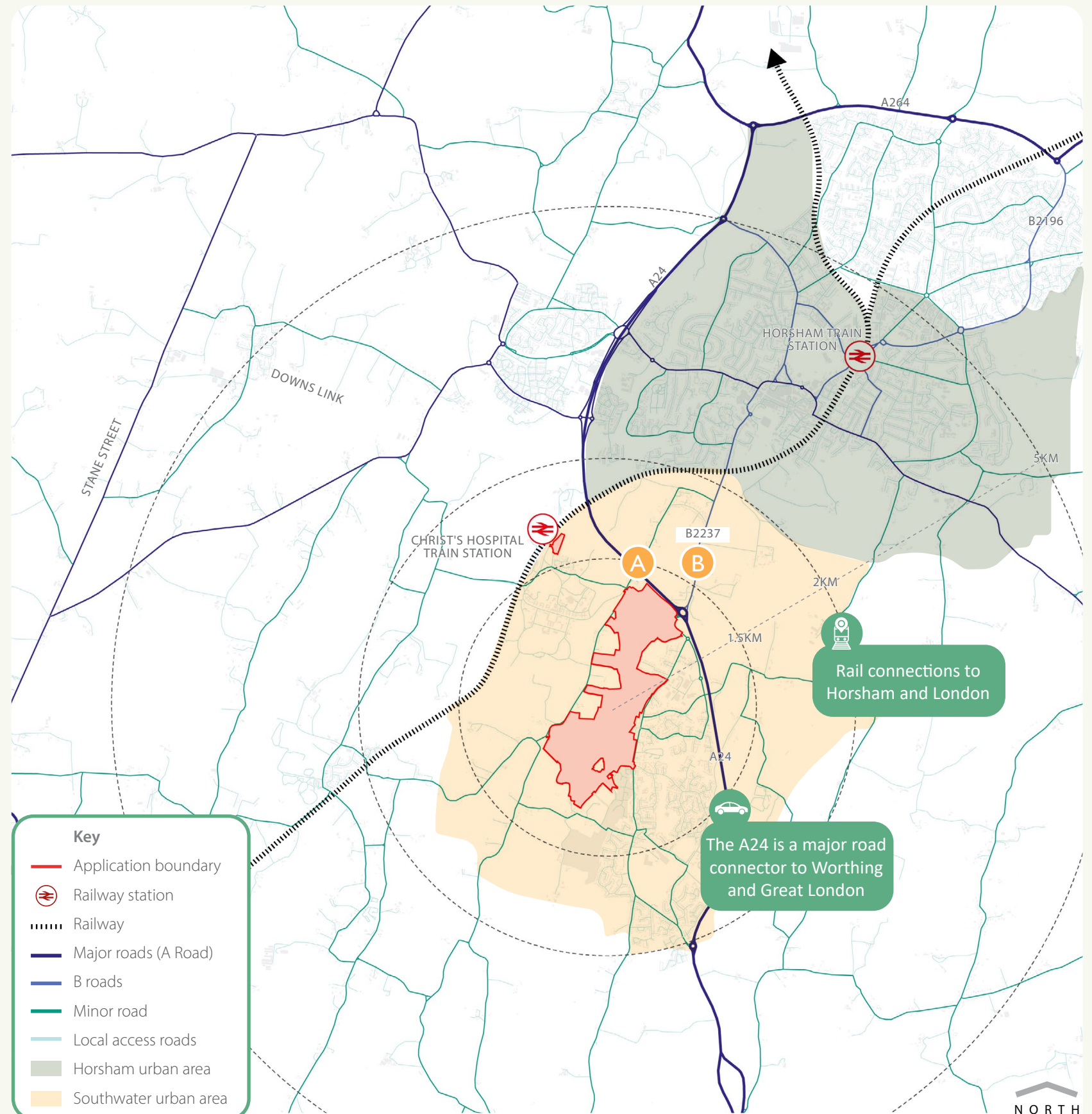
- 10 minutes to Horsham via the B2237
- 20 minutes to Crawley
- 25 minutes to Gatwick Airport
- 40 minutes to Brighton



A24 Dorking Road



B2237 Worthing Road



BASELINE ANALYSIS

Movement Network

Site Vehicular Network

Worthing Road (B2237): Forms the site's eastern boundary and acts as the main route through Southwater. South of the A24 (Hop Oast roundabout), it runs north–south to the Mill Straight/ Shipley Road junction, serving local roads such as Cedar Drive and Chessall Avenue. North of the A24, it continues as the B2237 towards Horsham town centre.

Church Lane: Located south of the site, this rural road links Southwater with Bonfire Hill and Marlpost Road.

Two Mile Ash Road: Runs along the western boundary in a rural north–south alignment between Barns Green and Tower Hill/Parthings Lane, connecting back to Worthing Road via a priority junction.

Christ's Hospital Road: Connects Two Mile Ash Road with Weston's Hill and provides access to Christ's Hospital School and Christ's Hospital Station (via Station Road).



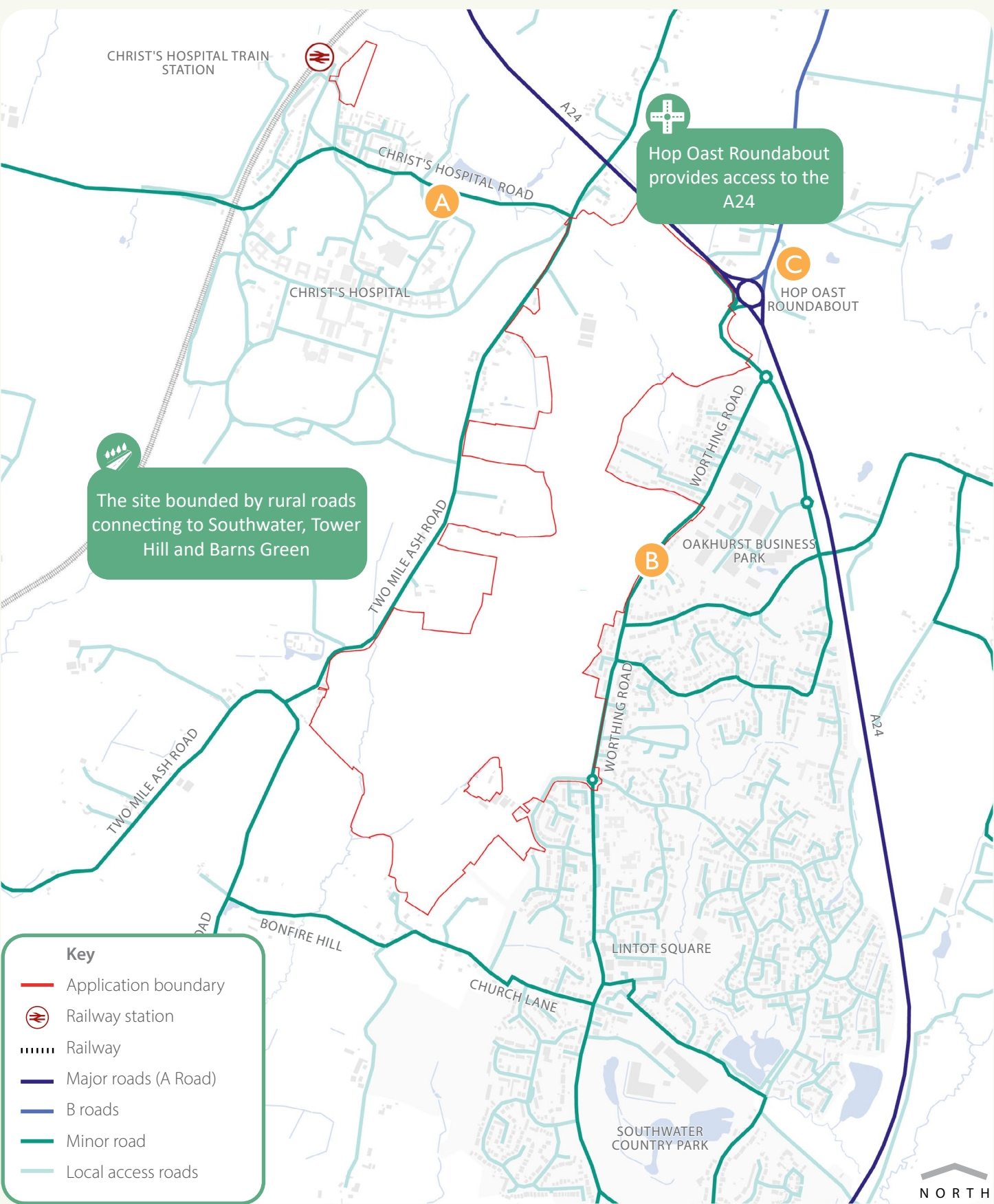
View from Christ's Hospital Road, facing west towards Christ's Hospital station



View from Worthing road (looking south), with the site located to the right



Hop Oast roundabout, located to the north of the site, providing access to the A24



BASELINE ANALYSIS

Movement Network

Sustainable Transport Network

The site benefits from access to rail, bus, walking, and cycling connections to Southwater, Horsham, and the wider region.

Rail: Christ's Hospital Station is located approximately 1.7 km west of the site, providing regular services into Horsham, Crawley, Gatwick Airport, and London.

Bus: Good-quality services operate through Southwater to the east, offering frequent connections to Horsham town centre and Horsham Station, a key hub for employment, services, and onward travel.

Walking and cycling:

- A network of local paths, bridleways, and Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) connect the site to surrounding areas.
- The Downs Link (National Cycle Route 223) runs south and west of the site, forming a largely traffic-free route between Guildford and Shoreham-by-Sea, popular with walkers, cyclists, and equestrians.
- Within and near the site, several PRoWs offer local links, though pedestrian provision along the A24 is limited. Continuous footways are only present immediately south of the Hop Oast roundabout, connecting to Worthing Road, but safe crossing points are limited.

Walking distances (by foot from the centre of the site):

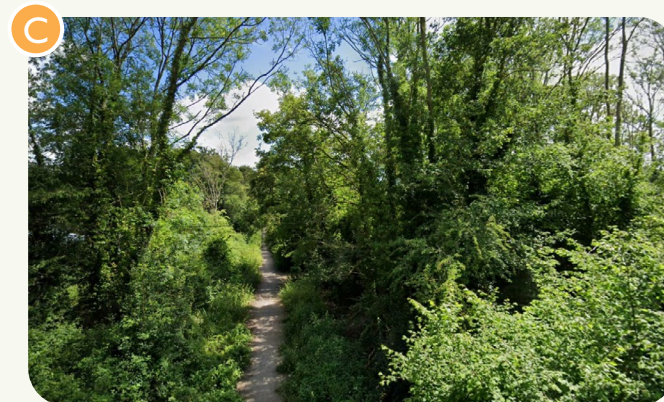
- 1.4 km to Lintot Square (village centre with shops and services)
- 0.9 km to Southwater Infant and Junior Academy
- 1.6 km to the village surgery



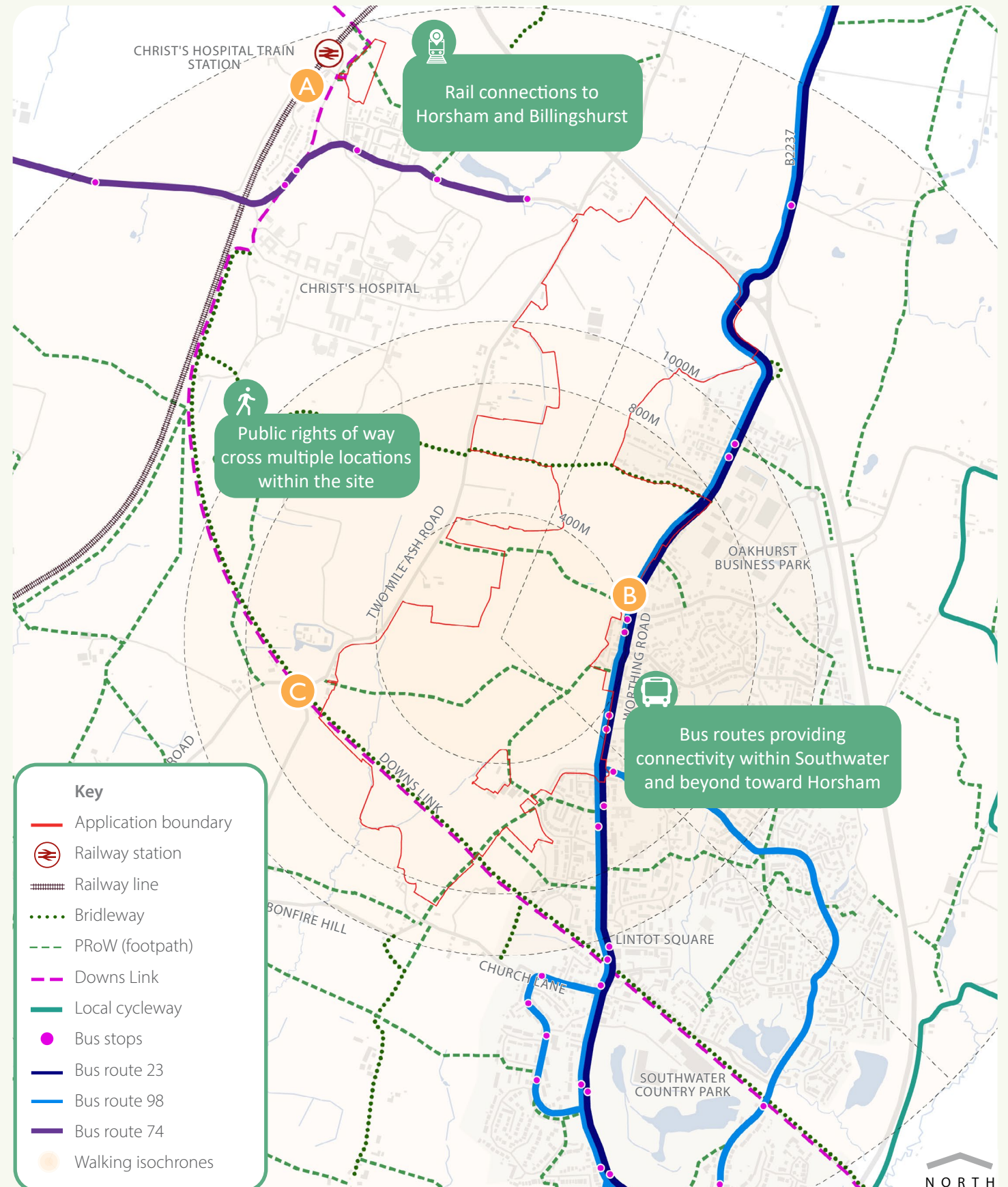
Christ's Hospital Railway Station



Bus stop on Worthing Road



Downs Link



BASELINE ANALYSIS

Landscape and Public Realm

Strategic Context

Southwater is surrounded by a diverse network of green spaces and landscape features, ranging from large-scale parks to smaller local areas. These assets are well connected and include important ecological and recreational destinations, as well as water features.

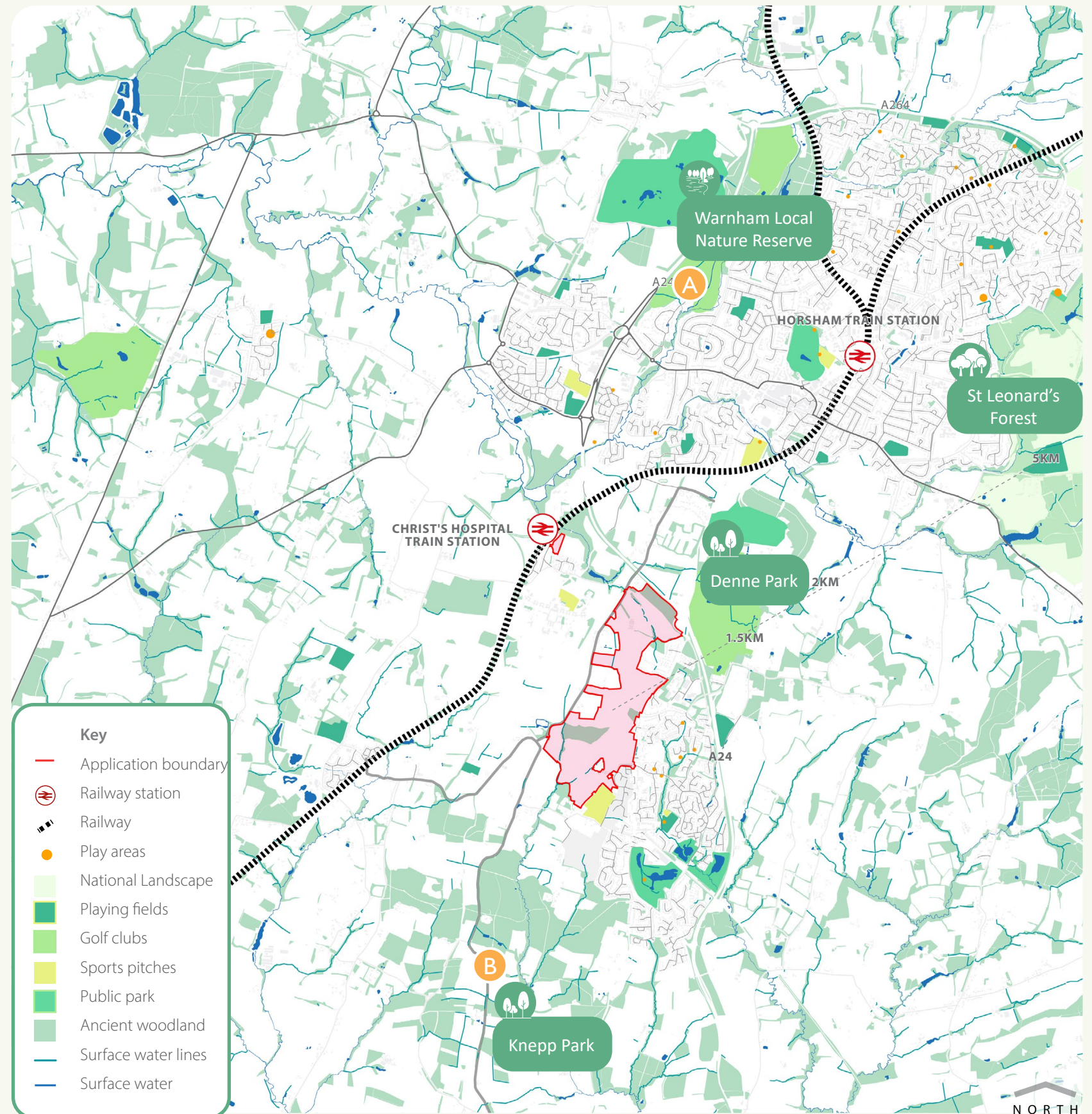
Key assets include Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), Local Wildlife Sites, areas of Ancient Woodland, river valleys, canals, Southwater Country Park, recreation grounds, and the Downs Link trail.



Warnham Local Nature Reserve



Knepp Park



BASELINE ANALYSIS

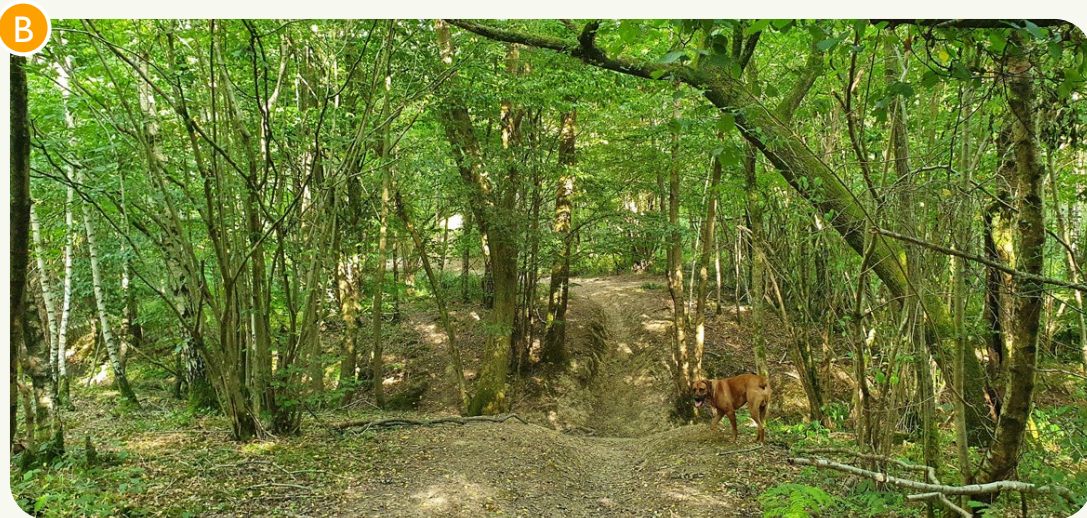
Landscape and Public Realm

Local Context

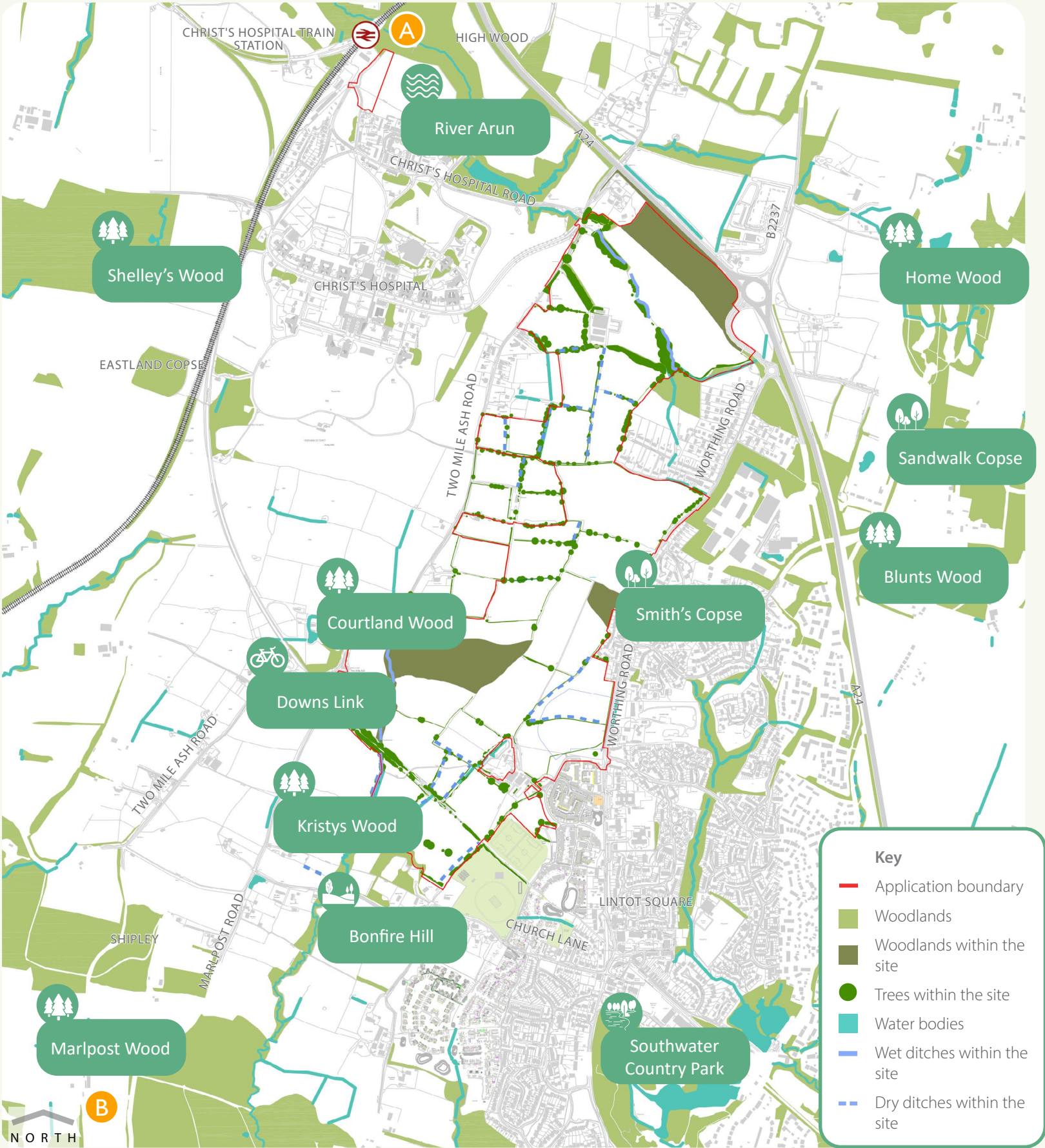
The site is located within a well-established network of woodlands, watercourses, public open spaces and recreational routes that define its landscape context. Key assets include Courtland Wood and Smith's Copse, the River Arun to the north, Southwater Country Park to the south-east, and the Downs Link National Cycle Route along the southern edge. A mosaic of ponds, wet and dry ditches and historic field boundaries further reflects the site's rural heritage and ecological value. Together, these features provide a strong green infrastructure framework that shapes movement, biodiversity and character, and underpins the site's landscape-led approach to development.



High Wood woodland



Walk in Marpost Wood



BASELINE ANALYSIS

Landscape and Public Realm

Site Context

The site is framed by a number of significant open spaces, including Horsham Golf Club to the north-east and Southwater Country Park to the south-east.

Within the site itself, three areas of ancient woodland provide strong ecological and landscape value. Courtland Wood, at the centre of the site, adjoins Two Mile Ash Gill to form an extensive woodland block. Smith's Copse lies along the eastern edge, close to the existing settlement of Southwater. The Downs Link, a long-distance walking, cycling, and riding route between Guildford and Shoreham-by-Sea, crosses the site's southern boundary.

To the north, tributaries of the River Arun pass through the site, alongside smaller water features such as Marlpot Gill and Pondfarm Gill. Numerous ponds, as well as wet and dry ditches, further enrich the site's blue and green infrastructure.



River Arun



Horsham Golf and Fitness Park



Sparrow Copse



Downs Link - car free national cycle route



BASELINE ANALYSIS

Landscape and Public Realm

Existing Trees

The plan illustrates the classification of trees across the site, following BS 5837:2012 categories (A, B, C, and U). The majority fall within Category B.

Three areas of ancient woodland lie within the main site. Courtland Wood, the largest (5.8 ha), sits centrally and adjoins Two Mile Ash Gill. Smith's Copse is located around 200m to the north-east of Courtland Wood. Courtland Wood is both a Local Wildlife Site and a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation, containing mature Pedunculate Oak, Ash, Birch, and Willow, with an understorey of Hazel coppice, Holly, Lime, and Field Maple.

Along the northern boundary, young mixed woodland includes Oak, Wild Cherry, Sycamore, Larch, Pine, Cedar, and Blackthorn. Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) protect mature specimens near the north-eastern boundary, such as Hybrid Black Poplar, Wild Cherry, Ash, and Sycamore, supported by Hazel, Field Maple, Hornbeam, Elder, and Blackthorn.

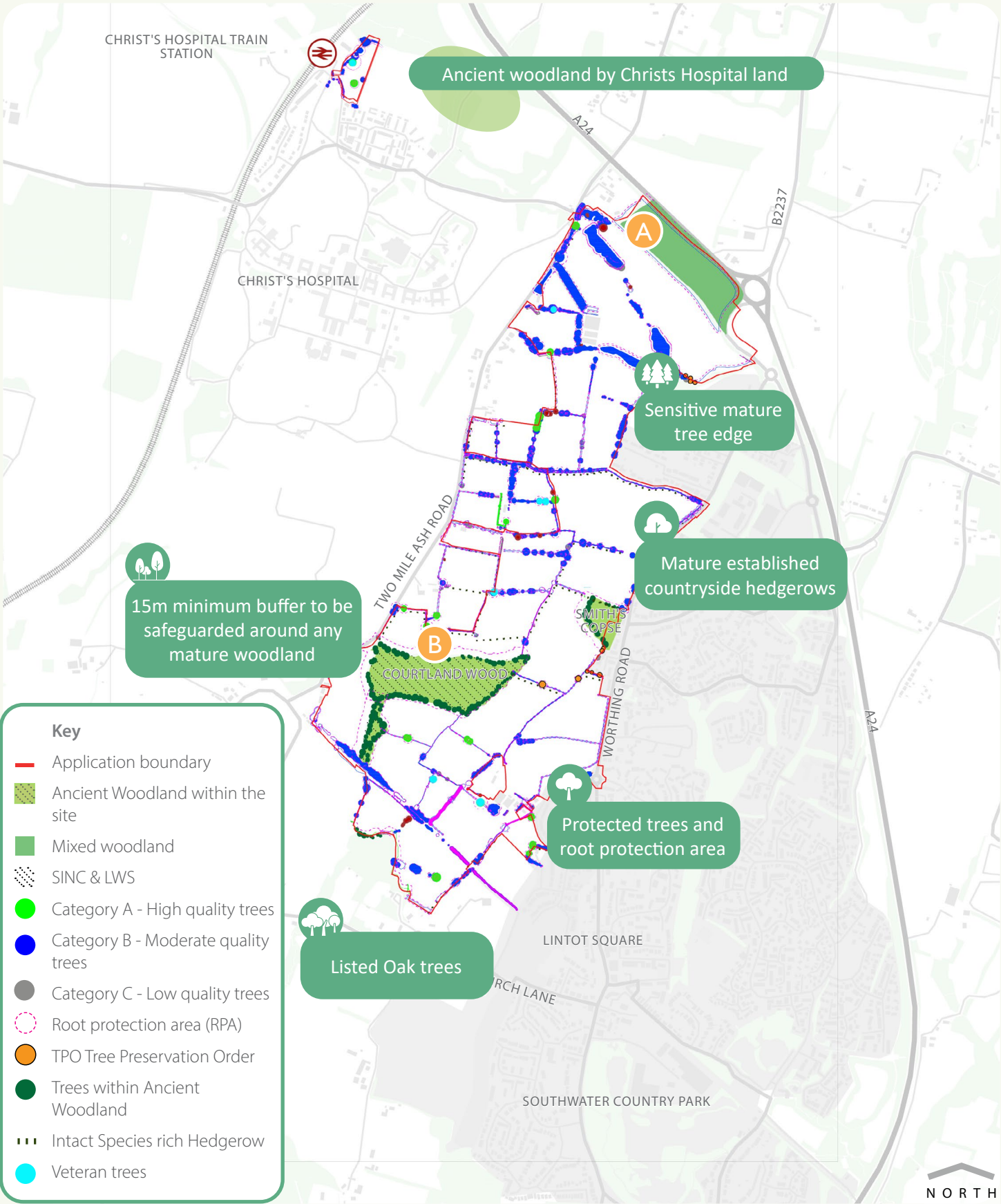
Across the site, mature trees are scattered along hedgerows, tree lines, and within fields. Species include Pedunculate Oak, Ash, Field Maple, Sycamore, and the Wild Service Tree.



Mixed woodland in the north of the site



Courtland Wood, Ancient Woodland



BASELINE ANALYSIS

Landscape and Public Realm

Existing Hedgerows

The plan shows hedgerows across the site, classified under the Wildlife and Landscape Criteria of the Hedgerow Regulations (1997). They are present along most field boundaries, forming an important part of the site's landscape structure.

Common species include Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Hazel, Field Maple, Ash, Pedunculate Oak, Dog Rose, and Bramble. A minimum landscape buffer of 3m is proposed between hedgerows and new development.

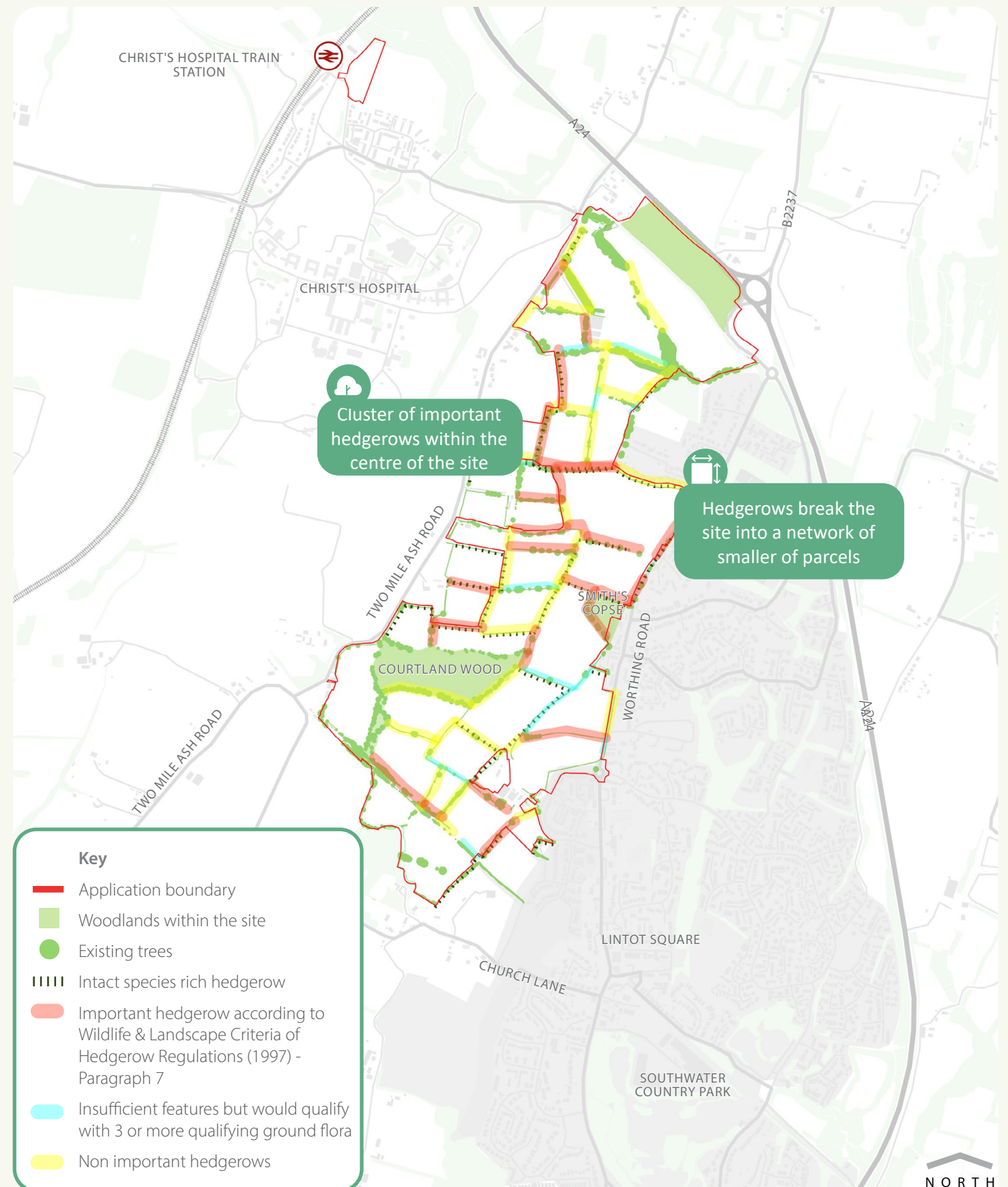
The network of hedgerows subdivides the site into smaller parcels, shaping the masterplan and providing opportunities to bring people closer to nature.



Network of Hedgerows within the fields



Scattered trees within the hedgerows



BASELINE ANALYSIS

Play and Sport Facilities

Local Play Spaces and Sports Facilities

The plan illustrates access to playing fields located within 400m, 800m, and 1 km of the site, following Fields in Trust walking distance guidance.

Southwater Country Park, covering around 90 acres, includes an adventure play area with equipment for a range of ages and abilities, alongside several football pitches. However, there is limited provision of more varied sports facilities, such as multi-use games areas (MUGAs) or hockey pitches.

Broadacres, a Berkeley development in Southwater, is noted for its strong community amenities and connection to the Downs Link path. Among its facilities are play parks, a variety of courts and pitches, a sports pavilion, and well-maintained recreation grounds.

The Downs Link Play Area, situated adjacent to the Downs Link route, is a popular feature used by walkers, cyclists and residents, offering children's play equipment, a sandpit and easy access to green, open countryside.



Play area at Southwater country park



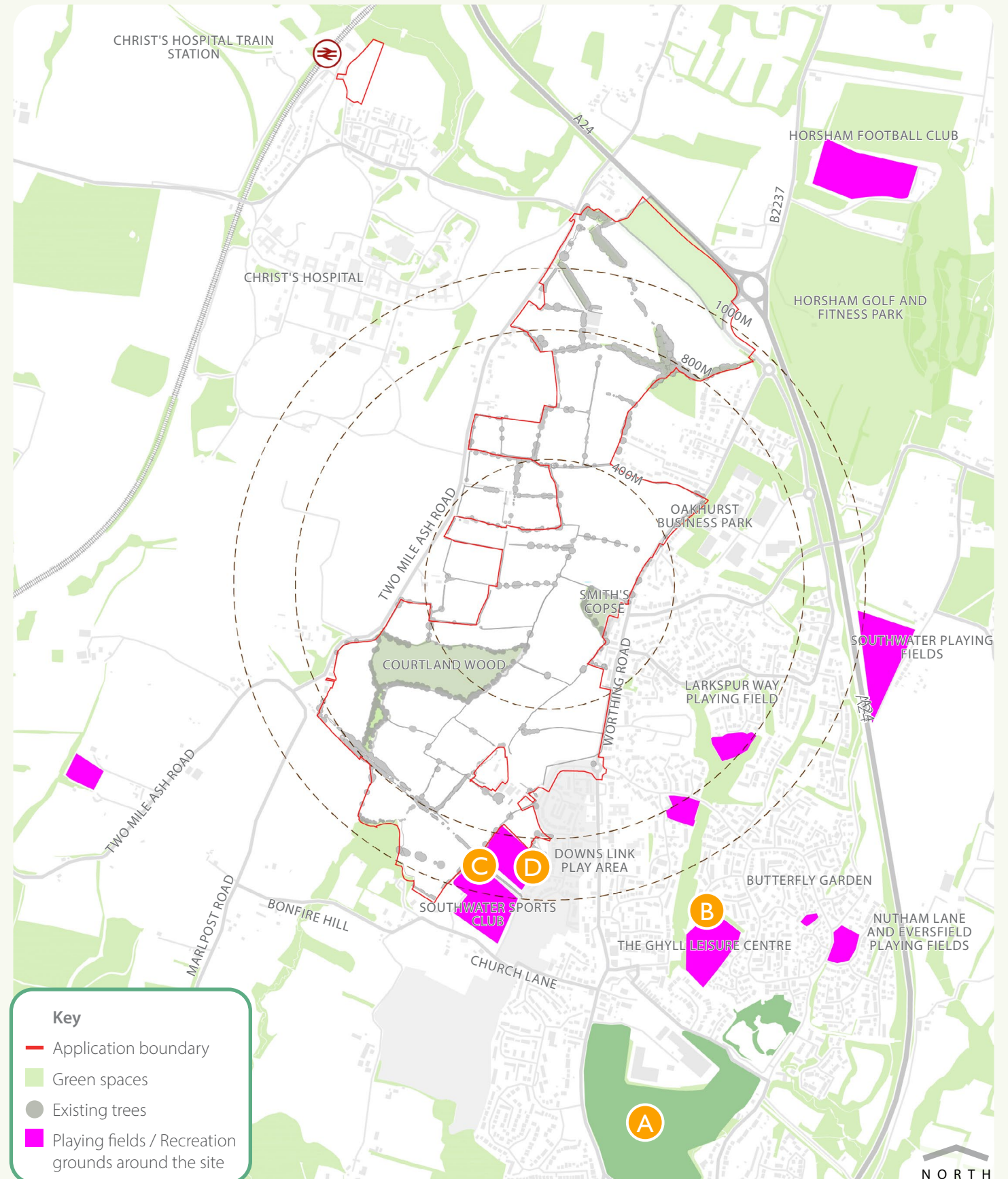
The Ghyll Leisure Centre



Southwater football club at Broadacres



Downs Link Play Area



BASELINE ANALYSIS

Topography

Topography

The Site sits within a gently undulating Low Weald landform, characterised by subtle ridgelines and small stream valleys that drain towards the wider River Arun catchment.

At the northern edge, close to the A24, the ground falls away towards a local watercourse corridor, creating a sequence of shallow dips and rises. This area is reinforced by established hedgerows, tree groups and riparian vegetation, which together form a distinctive, well-vegetated approach and a clear northern “gateway” into the Site.

The central part of the Site becomes comparatively more level, offering a more straightforward platform for accommodating development and associated infrastructure, while still retaining the subtle landform changes that shape views and enclosure.

To the south, the land falls again towards the Downs Link corridor and the stream valley associated with Two Mile Ash Gill, helping to define a softer, more contained southern edge where landscape and drainage features play a stronger role in structuring the proposals.



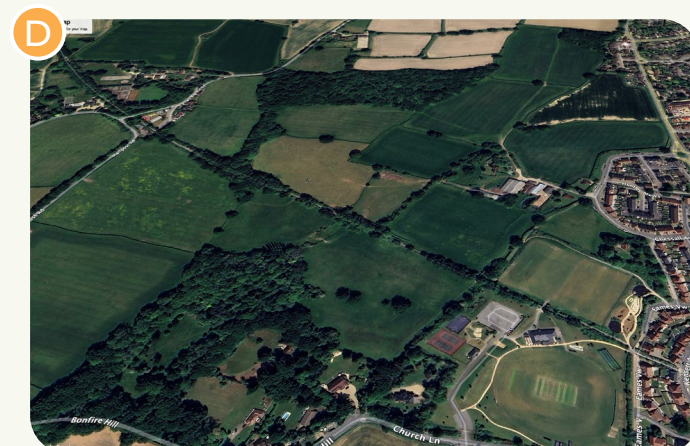
North part of the site - next to Hop Oast roundabout



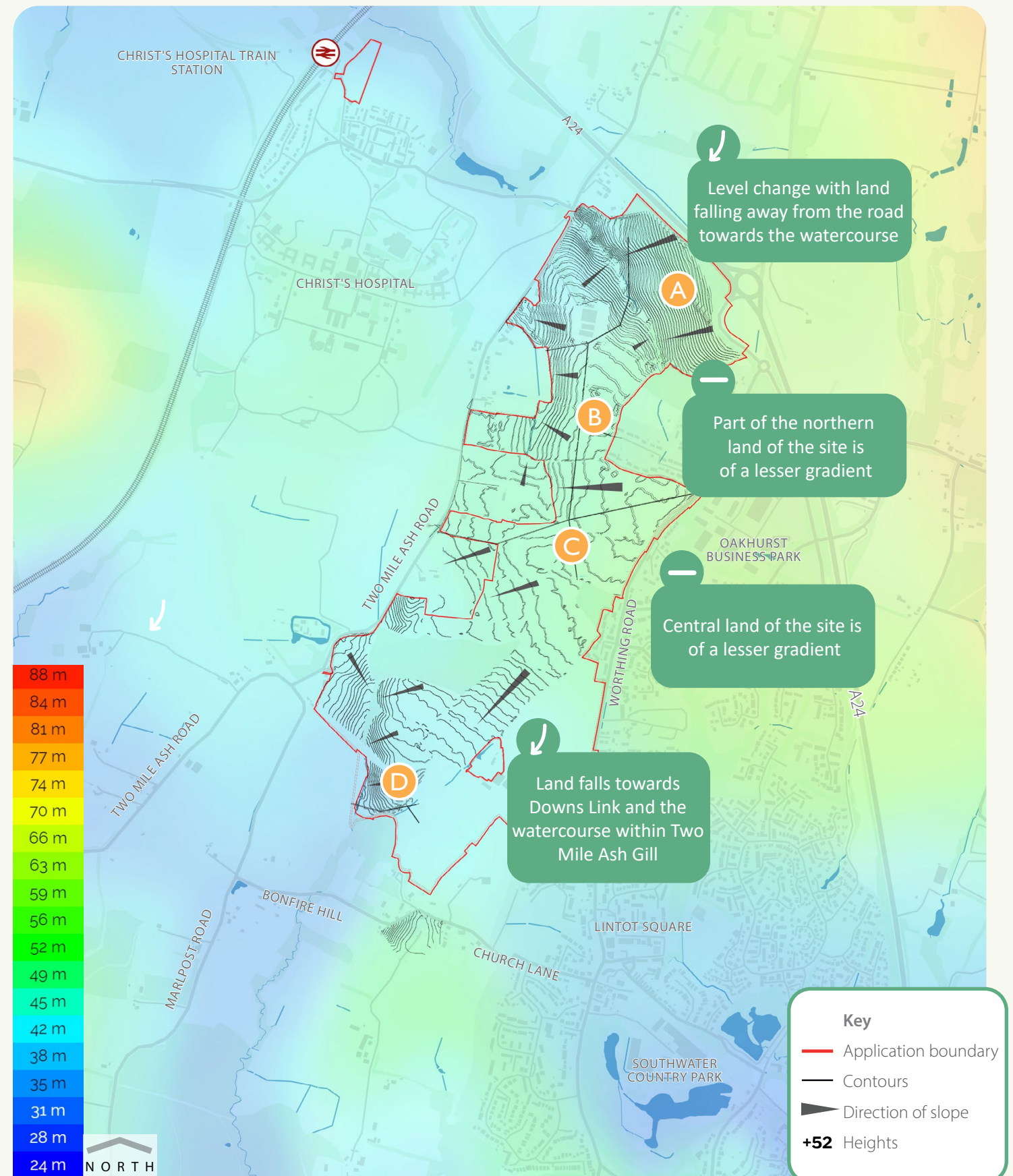
Central area of the site - along Worthing Road



Central area of the site - just south of the Dairy Farm



Southern part of the site - near Downs Link



BASELINE ANALYSIS

Urban Grain

The pattern of growth in Southwater has largely extended to the east and south-east of the Site. The Site itself is positioned between the existing settlement of Southwater to the east and Christ's Hospital School and the rail station to the west. The prevailing urban grain is predominantly low-rise residential, typically two-storey housing with pockets of single-storey homes, arranged in a generally regular street pattern that responds to the gently undulating landform. To the west and south-west, the setting becomes more rural, with scattered housing and open countryside.

Within the village centre at Lintot Square, building heights step up to create a stronger sense of

enclosure and identity, including apartments arranged across 2-3 floors above commercial/community uses, reinforcing its role as Southwater's local centre. More recently, Berkeley's Broadacres development to the west provides a local benchmark for edge-of-settlement growth, comprising a mix of approximately 2 to 3.5 storey development, including some taller elements that add variety and help define gateways and key corners. Subsequent studies explore the local range of typologies and densities to inform how the Site could evolve over time and to identify appropriate density parameters for the emerging masterplan.



Two Mile Ash Road



Lintot Square



Worthing Road



Broadacres development

