

REPORT TO: East Lothian Council

MEETING DATE: 14 December 2021

BY: Executive Director for Place

SUBJECT: East Linton Primary School

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The Administration has asked officers to investigate an option of a replacement East Linton Primary School as an alternative to the currently approved policy position to extend the school to accommodate an increased school roll as a result of planned development.
- 1.2 The Administration is concerned that the proposed investment in the extension and refurbishment of the existing school of circa £5M would not deliver a high quality teaching and learning environment and would not provide a school that was future proofed. To ensure the delivery of best value alongside a modern, quality teaching and learning environment for East Linton, the Administration promote the need to pursue an alternative proposal and build a replacement primary school.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Council considers the following options and decides which of these to adopt:
- Option 1: that the existing policy position, to extend and refurbish the school, should be delivered; or
 - Option 2: subject to public consultation and clarity on technical and financial feasibility, that an alternative position to deliver a replacement school is preferred and should be pursued.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The existing school was built in 1881 and extensions were completed in 1987 and 2004. These were as a result of rising school rolls related to development. Housing development in the mid-1990's led to the school

roll increasing from 153 students in 1992, to a high of 207 students in 2002, before falling to 160 students in 2005.

- 3.2 East Linton Primary School is currently identified as having a category C condition (poor) and a category C suitability (poor)¹ both being described as showing major defects and/or not operating adequately.

Current Condition

- 3.3 Through the Property Renewals budget, administered by the Engineering Services team, the Council has invested in the school over the past few years (to a level of circa £1M) to address some of the condition issues. The existing school buildings however retain inherent condition issues that will require significant investment to improve its condition rating. The following areas are requiring full replacement or significant upgrades and repairs:

- Ventilation
- Heating
- Lighting
- Roof
- External fabric e.g. stonework
- External hard surfacing
- Mechanical and electrical plant
- Classroom decoration upgrades

- 3.4 The full extent and detail of issues are contained within Condition Survey Reports and data held by the Engineering Services team.

Suitability

- 3.5 Suitability (taken from the Scottish Government's Core Fact Guidance) is a measure of whether a school is fit for the purpose of delivering the education curriculum. That is whether its design and layout enhance its function and use, whether there is space and scope to accommodate all the pre-school, day school and after-school demands and services, whether it is 'inclusive' and accessible to those with disabilities, how capable it is of adjustment or adaptation, how able to 'flex' in response to future, sometimes unforeseen changes in the scale and nature of demand and usage, to changes in climate and to changes in ICT and other technology and the ways in which education may be delivered. The school has been assessed as having a C rating for suitability. An A rating is considered 'Good – Performing well and operating efficiently' and a D rating 'Bad – Economic life expired and/or risk of failure'.

- 3.6 Suitability issues within East Linton Primary School include:

¹ D suitability rating for PE provision but C overall suitability

- Physical Education (PE) - due to the existing multipurpose hall/dining space being of insufficient size, with unsatisfactory lighting and ventilation, the school currently cannot provide its statutory PE requirement on-site, and pupils therefore have to be taken off-site and use the village hall. This rates this element of suitability as a D. The existing hall also has poor acoustics;
- Accessibility – Works would be required to improve disabled access. A full access audit of the school would be required with actions funded and implemented; and
- Early Learning and Childcare - There are currently no staff toilets in the nursery area. Nursery staff have to walk through the school to the main entrance area.

Site

- 3.7 The school is positioned at the end of School Road, a cul de sac with narrow pedestrian footways. However, there are good safe walking routes to school and the school site is well positioned in an accessible location in the centre of the village. The whole of East Linton can access the site by foot within the 20 minutes as promoted through emerging national policy. There is no designated staff, visitor and disabled parking and access for delivery and maintenance vehicles is restricted. The on-street parking is very limited, given that School Road and the surrounding area is residential.
- 3.8 The site is bordered by residential properties on its northern and eastern boundaries. To the west and south is the park, a predominantly green space, part of which is set out as a sports pitch. The land is owned by East Lothian Council and part of that land historically sits on the education account as shown in blue in Appendix 1. This land was added to the education account prior to the dissolution of the Regional Council because it may be required for future education expansion. The East Lothian Local Development Plan 2018 (ELLDP2018) identifies this land as safeguarded for education and community facilities.
- 3.9 The site is within the East Linton Conservation Area and although the school building is not listed, the Victorian part of the school is recognised as making a positive contribution to the conservation area.

Local Development Plan and Pupil Projections

- 3.10 The site at Pencraig Hill, to the west of the village was allocated for residential development in the ELLDP2018. School roll projections in 2016 indicated that with an increasing roll the school would breach its seven class capacity and that an additional classroom would be required. Additional early learning and childcare places would also be required as well as a dedicated games hall rather than the current shared dining and hall space. Paragraph 3.101 of the ELLDP2018 and the accompanying Developer Contributions Framework Supplementary Guidance that accompanied the ELLDP set out the requirement to extend the school.

This remains the approved policy position to meet the rising pupil roll and need for additional early learning and childcare places.

- 3.11 A planning application for 113 homes was permitted at Pencraighill at appeal on 13 July 2018. Through the appeal process it was determined that the Council could only secure a developers contribution of £497K for this extension as the Council could not seek the recovery of the full cost of the new sports hall from the developer due to existing detriment. With current indexation levels, this contribution is now forecast to increase to £526K with payments due in 2021 and 2022. That sum is identified in the Council's current approved General Services Capital budget.
- 3.12 The most recent roll projections for the school catchment were undertaken in November 2021 and are shown in the table below.

	P1- P7 Roll	No of Classes
2021	162	8
2022	176	8
2023	196	8
2024	206	9
2025	194	7 or 8
2026	193	8
2027	192	8 or 9

- 3.13 Until three years ago, the max capacity of the school was 175 pupils (seven classes), but due to roll pressures arising generally, the Council had to arrange to take over the visiting specialist room in order to make an eighth classroom to accommodate a roll of up to 205 pupils. This has temporarily reduced the General Purpose (GP) provision and further reduces the school's suitability and is not a long term solution for an eight class requirement. The GP provision could be re-provided if the new games hall was built. The November 2021 roll projections indicate that the roll will further increase to a peak of 206 (9 classes) in 2024 and then reduce slowly from there to around circa 190 pupils and eight classes into the 2030s. However, an additional class space will have to be provided for the start of the 2024 school year.

Proposed Extension – Current Policy Position

- 3.14 The initial plans for the extension required by the LDP have been reviewed and designed by HUB South East. It totals 405m² and is comprised of:
- New games hall and changing area;
 - Additional classroom;
 - 10 additional place capacity added to nursery, including staff toilets and kitchen; and

- Ancillary space, including games hall storage and covered outdoor space.
- 3.15 This would result in a total capacity of 213 pupils across nine classes and 30 early learning & childcare places. The building could not be extended again due to the constrained site and therefore nine classes would be the final capacity of the school. Education would not be able to support any further housing development in the catchment that would result in the nine class capacity being breached.
- 3.16 Whilst the proposed extension would resolve the nursery toilets issue, provide additional classroom space and address PE hall deficiency with a new hall, the current ventilation and acoustics issues together with the replacement, upgrade and outstanding repair works listed above and the accessibility issues would require to be addressed to improve both condition and suitability.
- 3.17 Improvements can be made to address these issues. If an accessibility audit were also undertaken then solutions could also be found to provide improved disabled access. In combination with the extension, with these works the school would no longer be in condition C for suitability or condition.
- 3.18 Construction costs are currently very high with COVID-19 and Brexit-related supply chain pressures. The cost of the construction of the extension is currently estimated at circa £3M. In addition the refurbishment, upgrade, repair and access costs are estimated at a minimum of £1M to £2M. An updated assessment of repair and refurbishment costs would be required before costs could be finalised.

Replacement School – Alternative Policy Position

- 3.19 An alternative to extending the existing school would be to build a replacement 9 or 10 class school on a range of locations in the adjoining park. Three layouts for the location of the school are considered possible under this alternative:
- Layout A shown on Appendix 2 would be built on land for the most part held under the education account (as shown on Appendix 1), which is to the west of the existing school.
 - Layout B shown on Appendix 3 would locate the school in a south central location of the Memorial Park.
 - Layout C shown on Appendix 4 would be built in the south of Memorial Park, approximately where the tennis courts are located to the south of the existing school.
- 3.20 Please note that the diagrams of each layout are broadly indicative and are focused on the location and potential orientation of the replacement school and where it could be accommodated within the park so that statutory school requirements are met. These have been worked up through officer discussion and are in no way final layouts. The locations of

the re-located community facilities are not final but instead show how they could be re-provided within the park. All layouts would of course be subject to public consultation and further technical and financial feasibility work.

3.21 All layouts would result in the loss of elements of parkland and individual layouts would result in possible loss of current facilities. However, the reconfiguration of the park and existing school site would be required to provide replacement sites for any facilities displaced by the replacement school. All layouts propose the demolition of the extension elements of the existing school with the Victorian original element of the building being retained. The parts of the existing school building that are not retained and the school campus would be provided as park space.

3.22 The broad scale of the school building would be similar to what the Council will be delivering at Whitecraig and would be two storey compared to the existing one-storey school. The school could also be designed to be expandable, should further classes be required in the future.

3.23 The principle advantages of the replacement school proposal over the extension and refurbishment proposal are:

- Teaching and learning facilities that underpin the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence in its widest form, including the four capacities and six entitlements, are future proofed and provide more space with a layout that facilitates class, group and individual activity;
- Improved and designed spaces to allow children with Additional Support Needs to fully access the curriculum and to support a nurturing approach;
- Improved capacity for break out, social and dining spaces, including to meet capacity required for SG initiative of free school meals;
- Expandable capacity if required;
- Better building flow and storage;
- A more energy efficient building however this could be offset by the embodied energy lost in demolishing the existing building and materials required for the new building;
- Modern ventilation and lighting;
- The capacity for improved digital provision as new Scottish Government policy intent is delivered, such as use of 1-1 devices; and
- Possibility of community use of modern sports hall and multi-use pitch outside school hours.

3.24 The following is a list of factors that will need to be given further consideration that apply to all three of the layouts:

- Access will still be off School Road as the other potential accesses of Langside and Bank Road are private and not adopted. The Council could not force residents to agree to the roads becoming adopted;

- Additional parking at the new school will be minimal to reduce impact on land take within the park. Given the central accessible location of the school and the policy position of promoting walking and cycling to school for pupils and staff, the Council would not wish to provide significant parking levels. Echelon parking spaces could be providing as part of a re-profiled turning head at the end of School Road. Although the proposed on-street parking is not designated as school parking, measures to prohibit all day rail halt parking may be necessary, and unsolicited drop off during school travel times. Consideration thereof of a school street order restricting access during may be appropriate;
- Construction access is likely from the north of the park from Langside. Whilst this is not adopted, amenity services have access rights here for park maintenance. Alongside access would not be optimal for a replacement school on the south side of the park and as it would require vehicles traversing the full length of the park and would lead to disruption of park facilities. Further investigation would be required to investigate suitability and alternatives. The majority of construction of the new station will be accessed from School Road;
- As the school would be located adjacent to the East Coast Main Line, additional sound insulation measures would be required. These could be minimised by having the classrooms located on the north east side of the school away from the railway but greater sound insulation would still be required than normal and would be in addition to the estimated costs set out below;
- Whilst the existing building is not listed despite architectural heritage features, it is located within East Linton Conservation Area and therefore consent is required to demolish the building. Local Development Plan policy states that demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to a conservation area requires to be justified in the same manner as if it were listed. Given the character of the Victorian element of the existing school, subject to the review, it is likely that this part shall have to be retained. If that is the case, options will have to be considered for a replacement use or sale;
- Whichever layout is preferred any replacement school will be required to be sensitive to the character of the conservation area within which it would be located;
- The tennis courts, on which the school would be built under layout B or C, or on which the pitch would be re-provided under layout A, have a lease until 2029. The Council would have to negotiate terms to break the lease and examine in detail the timing of replacement delivery within the park;
- The war memorial would remain unaffected in any of the three layouts;
- The skate park, pavilion and public toilets will have to be re-located for any of the layouts. Consideration could be given to locating the pavilion and public toilets within the new school building;

- Use of the football pitch will be lost during construction. It will be replaced as part of all of layouts, as per Council policy but in different locations;
- Consideration will need to be given to minimising tree loss in any of the layouts particularly of mature trees. Any loss would have to be compensated;
- All layouts factor in the new path across the park that provide access to the station that is due to open in 2022; and
- The park is not just used for general recreation and the specific sporting facilities within it but also for holding village wide events such as the Gala Day. Therefore consideration will need to be given so that sufficient area within the park is provided so that these events can continue to be successfully hosted.

3.25 The following are features and issues that relate to Layout A:

- Proximity of school building to rail station and consideration would need to be given to pupils being close to an open station access to railway line at the new station to be delivered in 2022;
- The new school would be constructed to the highest energy efficiency standards possible on all layouts. However, layout A allows for the building to be orientation to be maximised for solar gain and thus would allow for the highest Passivhaus energy efficiency standard and configuration to be achieved, resulting in lowest energy costs;
- This layout results in the park space being concentrated together in the east and south rather than strung out through the site; and
- Proposed layout results in majority of school site being located on land held on the education account - see Appendix 1.

3.26 The following are features and issues that relate to Layout B:

- Proximity to rail station (as Layout A);
- Passivhaus standard cannot be achieved; and
- Proposed layout results in majority of school site being located on land identified as open space and park - see Appendix 1.

3.27 The following are features and issues that relate to Layout C:

- School building would be sited slightly further away from station entrance;
- Further away from possible construction access point from Langside;
- Passivehaus standard cannot be achieved;
- Need to consider impact on mature trees in-between building and railway line; and
- Proposed layout results in majority of school site being located on land identified as open space and park - see Appendix 1.

- 3.28 In progressing any further work on the design of the school, we would seek to explore the potential of partnership working, community engagement and the aspiration for the new school to become a hub for the community. Developing the new build as a practical resource for the diversity of community needs and aspirations would also involve considering the provision and location of existing council and partnership services from other buildings within the settlement and looking to optimise our asset rationalisation opportunities and carbon reduction ambition.

Other Alternative Locations

- 3.29 It would be possible to build a replacement school on the existing school site, possibly utilising part of the original school building. However this is not a preferred educational solution because the Council has no nearby alternative space to accommodate the primary school pupils for the likely 18-month to 2-year period for which the existing school would have to be closed for the demolition, refurbishment and building works to take place. If provision were to be made using Temporary Units (TU), the Council would have to acquire a 9-class TU, as well as a hall TU and provide foundations in the park on which these could be sited. This would not be a positive learning environment and would have significant revenue costs from rental of the TUs. The Council has no other land ownerships within the village where the school could be provided.

Design Status

- 3.30 As set out, no design works have been undertaken for a replacement school at this stage. Assuming the resolution of issues, the earliest a new school could be opened would be August 2025. Whilst the existing school could operate in the interim, it would still require a TU to cope with breaching capacity in 2024. Subject to the necessary planning permission, this would be located on land immediately north of the existing school.

Estimated Costs & Potential Funding Support

- 3.31 The outline high level cost of replacing the school, subject to the above and further investigation would be circa £11M. This is broken down as follows:
- Construction Cost = £9,612K²
 - Additional Allowances = £100K
 - Partial Demolition of Existing School = £200K
 - Furniture & IT = £228K
 - Multi-purpose pitch = £200K
 - Works to School Road and Access = £235K
 - Statutory Fees = £56K

² Based Scottish Futures Trust cost metric as of Q4 2021 and on circa 2,400m² gross floor area – floor space subject to finalisation

- Contingency = £347K
 - **Total = £10,978K**
- 3.32 Options and costs for re-providing the existing facilities in the park (tennis courts, pavilion, football pitch, skate-park and toilets) will also have to be investigated and are not included above. If the school is designed to Passivehaus standards, that may have additional costs over the SFT cost metric.
- 3.33 In 2019, the Council was successful in bidding for revenue grant support from Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) for the new Wallyford Learning Campus and a replacement primary school for Whitecraig. As Wallyford is a new facility and not replacing any existing school, revenue funding is equivalent to 50% of the total capital costs of the new facility. For Whitecraig, a replacement school, funding was awarded to the equivalent of 50% of the costs of the existing five class capacity school and not 50% of the cost of an eight class school (expandable to ten) that the Council intends to replace the school with. Both grants are paid in instalments over a 25 year period.
- 3.34 A condition of an SFT funding award is that the Council has a plan for the category C schools within our Learning Estate Investment Plan. This will continue to be developed through the Learning Estate Review consultation process.
- 3.35 A further SFT funding bid was submitted in 2020 for a range of projects. Whilst the Council was unsuccessful, SFT did not rule out future revenue grant awards if a greater level of supporting information and commitment was provided. Since then, Council officers have engaged with SFT further on potential funding bid for a replacement school at East Linton and have been advised that bids with a greater chance of success would have a site selected, an agreed process for the Council owning that site and capital funding identified.
- 3.36 Any new bid for SFT funding would also be for revenue support and the sum awarded would be based on 50% cost of replacing the existing school and nursery and would be based on SFTs construction metric costs, which are currently lower than the Council is experiencing in tender submissions for education projects. Therefore, even if successful in its bid, the Council would may not be awarded 50% of the actual cost of the new school.

Learning Estate Review and Consultation

- 3.37 The parent council has previously raised matters regarding the condition of the existing school with particular concern over the lack of playground space, including for outdoor learning. They also requested that East Lothian Council consider a replacement school as an alternative to the proposed extension.
- 3.38 The Council is currently undertaking Phase 2 of the Learning Estate Review which will gather consultation responses on the condition and use of our education buildings and how they support learning. Once the

consultation stage of the review is complete, a Learning Estate Investment Plan setting out the Council's priorities for the estate will be prepared, proposals for East Linton Primary School will need to be part of that plan.

- 3.39 The phase 1 pre-consultation of the Learning Estate Review was undertaken earlier this year. Whilst a full analysis of this regarding East Linton has not yet been completed, it is reasonable to say that a majority of responses raise issues regarding the capacity, suitability and condition of the school and seek improvement to it. Some explicitly call for the building of a replacement school.
- 3.40 If Council decides to support a replacement school, a critical next step will be public consultation, including in person events (COVID-19 restrictions permitting) on the layouts early in the new-year. This should seek to reach as much of the East Linton community as possible given the impact of the proposal will be felt village wide. Officers will work up a programme of consultation. Feedback will also be critical from park facilities user groups, such as the tennis and football clubs. Any final designs and layouts will then be informed by these consultations as well as ongoing technical and financial feasibility work.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 As set out within para 3.10 above, the approved education strategy, as set out in the ELLDP2018 and the accompanying Developer Contributions Framework Supplementary Guidance, is for an extension to East Linton Primary School. This remains the approved policy position of Council in order to meet the requirements of the rising pupil roll.
- 4.2 Any extension to the existing school, or any new school, would require planning permission. Any such application would require to be assessed against relevant policies of the ELLDP2018, including on the consideration of possible loss of open space.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 It is not possible to undertake an integrated impact assessment on an alternative proposal until the feasibility and technical work have been completed. An assessment will be made available at that stage should that be required.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial – Costs for the projects are set out above. In the current budget only £508K of developer contributions is allocated against East Linton and therefore additional resources require to be identified. Any future decision taken in this context will require to be aligned with the Council's financial

strategy. Note that SFT funding is revenue support and is paid over a 25 year period. It is not capital grant and any additional costs above the developer contributions of £526K would have an impact on Council borrowing.

- 6.2 Personnel – As with the Integrated Impact Assessment, this will not be possible to estimate until the technical and feasibility work has been completed should that be required and appropriate procurement and delivery arrangements evaluated. Strategic Asset and Capital Management staff are already stretched delivering the current capital programme. The wider impacts of the Learning Estate Review will be a significant consideration.

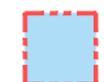
7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

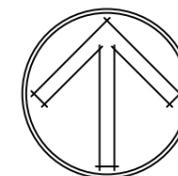
- 7.1 [Adopted ELLDP2018](#)
- 7.2 [Supplementary Guidance Developer Contributions Framework](#)
- 7.3 [Learning Estate Review](#)
- 7.4 Appendix 1 – Existing School and Park Diagram
- 7.5 Appendix 2 – Replacement School Layout A
- 7.6 Appendix 3 – Replacement School Layout B
- 7.7 Appendix 4 – Replacement School Layout C

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DATE	1 December 2021

APPENDIX 1

LEGEND:-

-  DESIGNATED ELC EDUCATION LAND
-  DESIGNATED ELC COMMUNITY PARK LAND



North



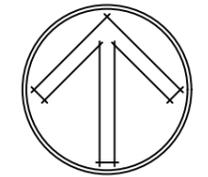
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APPENDIX 2

LEGEND:-

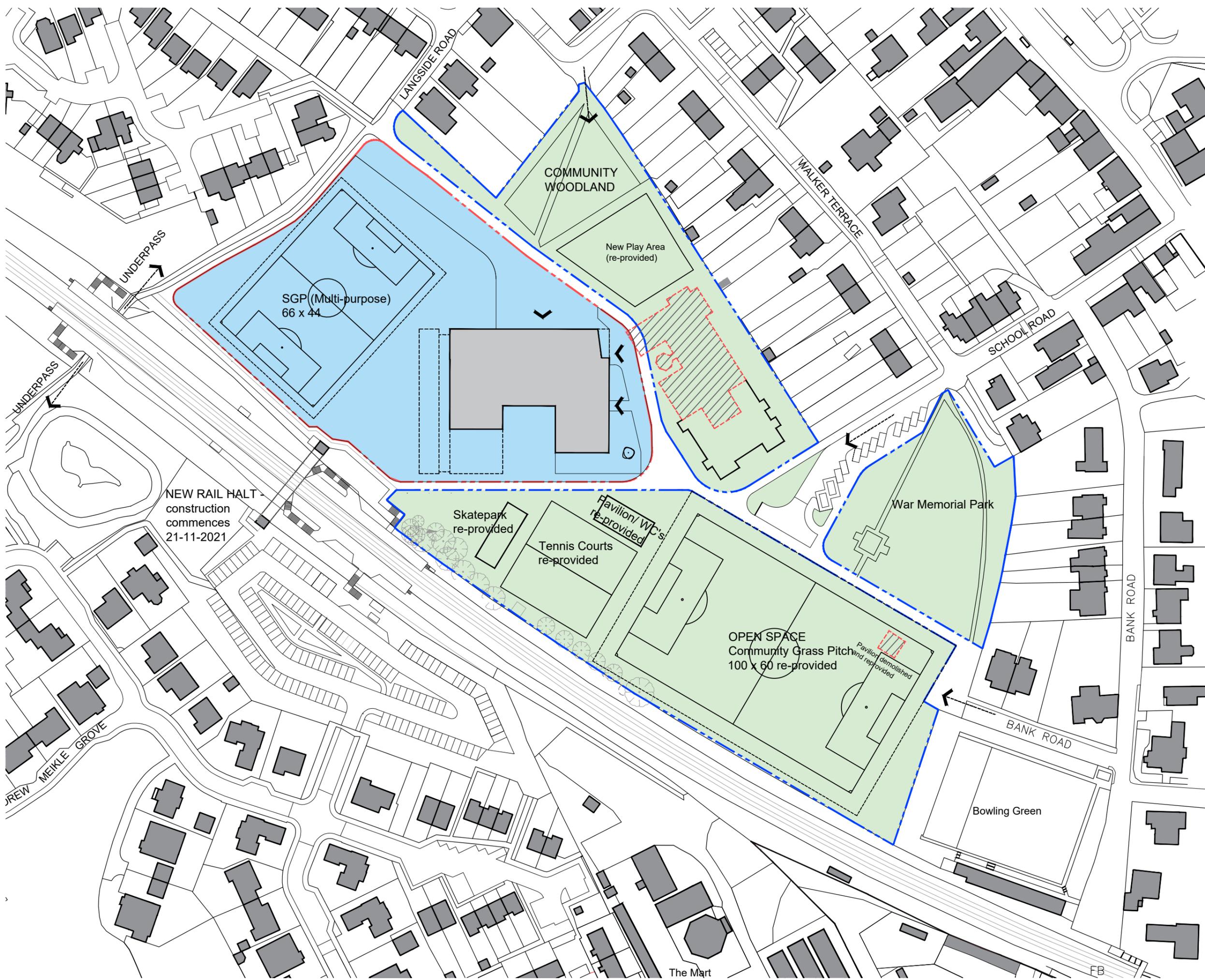
-  DESIGNATED ELC EDUCATION LAND
-  DESIGNATED ELC COMMUNITY PARK LAND
-  DEMOLITION
-  NEW SCHOOL



North



Scale of Metres - 1:1250



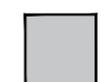
APPENDIX 3

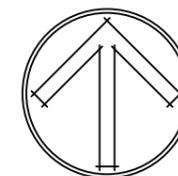
LEGEND:-

 DESIGNATED ELC EDUCATION LAND

 DESIGNATED ELC COMMUNITY PARK LAND

 DEMOLITION

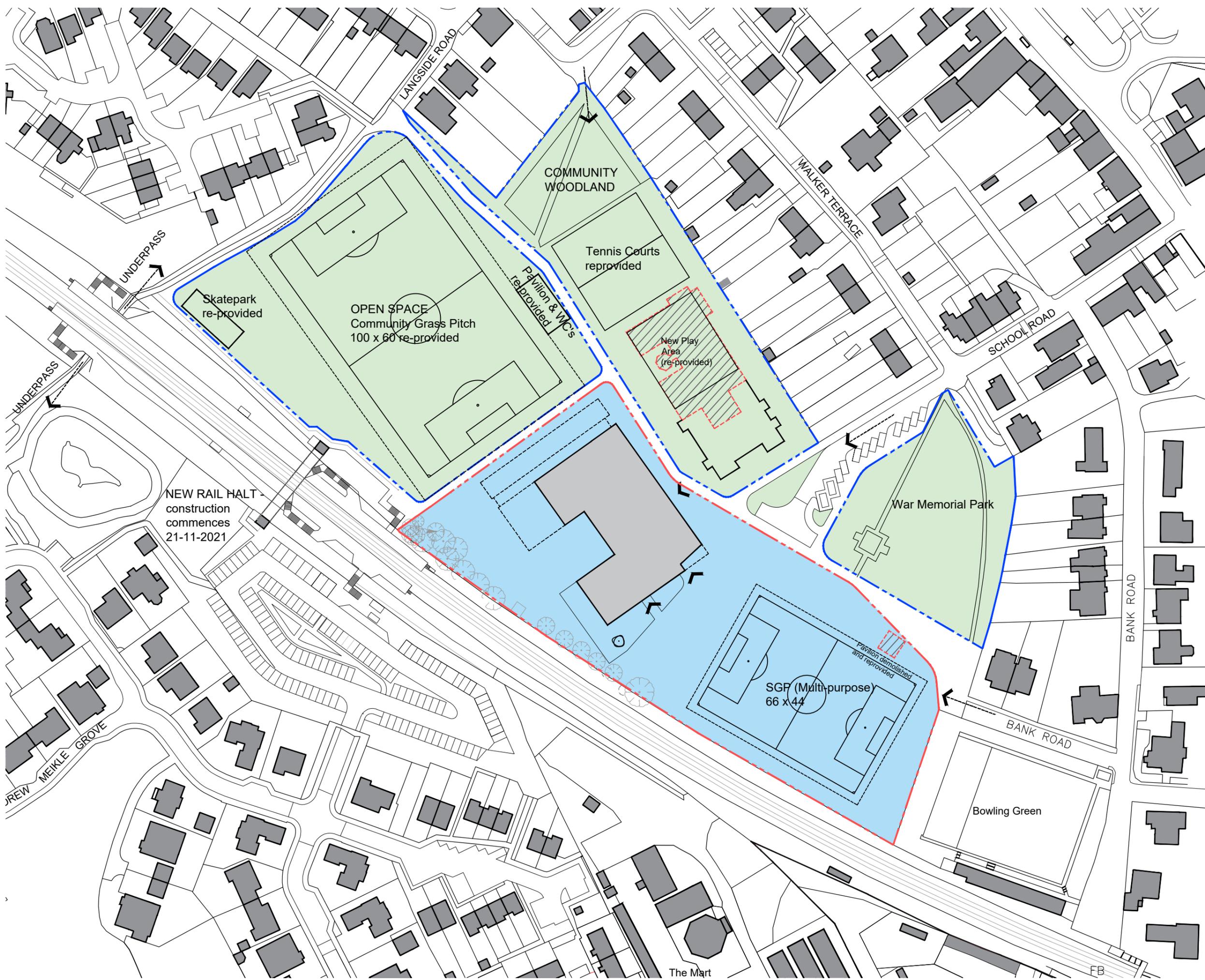
 NEW SCHOOL



North



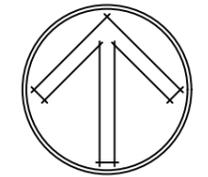
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APPENDIX 4

LEGEND:-

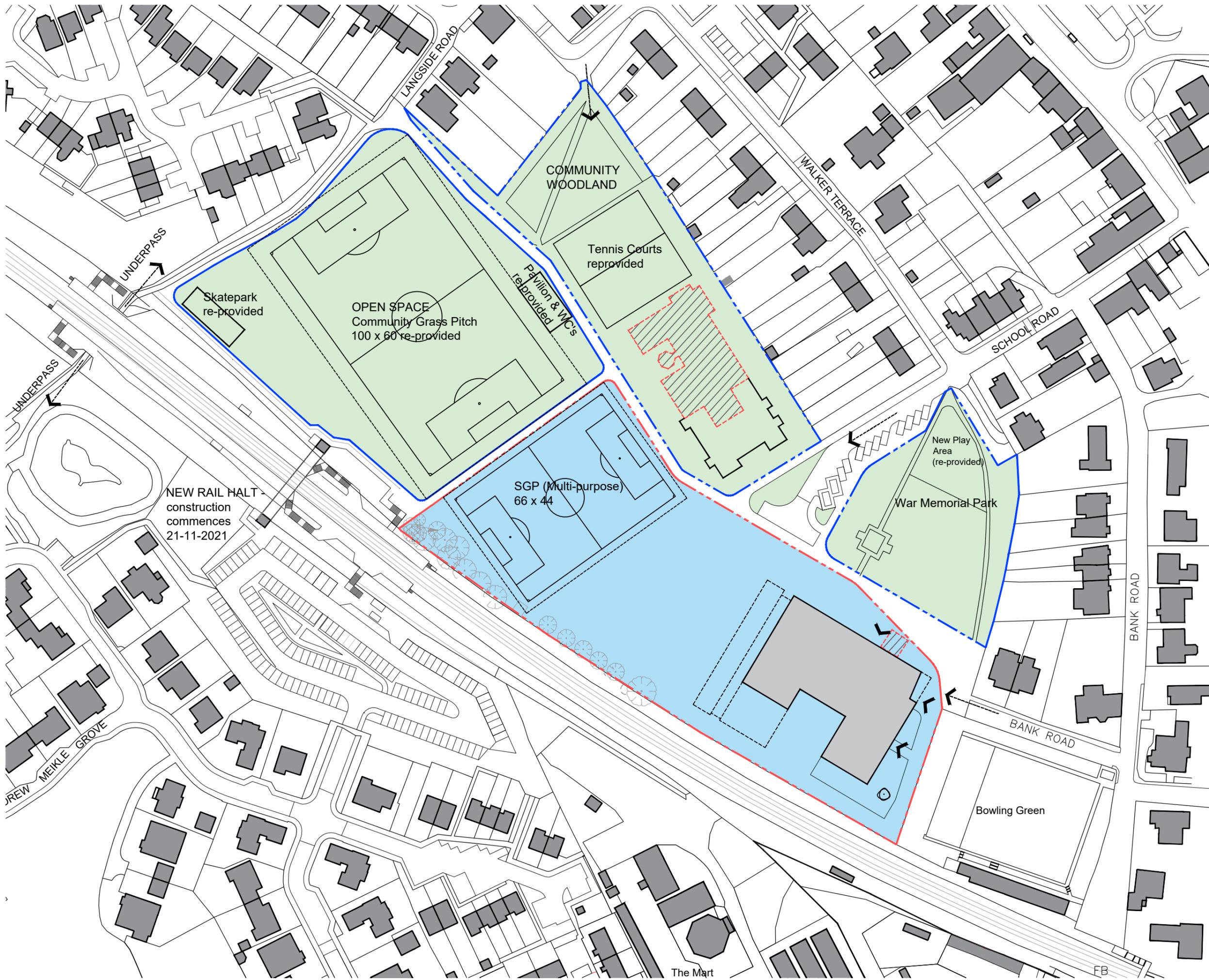
-  DESIGNATED ELC EDUCATION LAND
-  DESIGNATED ELC COMMUNITY PARK LAND
-  DEMOLITION
-  NEW SCHOOL



North



Scale of Metres - 1:1250



NEW RAIL HALT -
construction
commences
21-11-2021

SGP (Multi-purpose)
66 x 44

COMMUNITY
WOODLAND

Tennis Courts
re-provided

Pavilion & WC's
re-provided

Skatepark
re-provided

OPEN SPACE
Community Grass Pitch
100 x 60 re-provided

New Play Area
(re-provided)

War Memorial Park

Bowling Green

The Mart

FB