

Medway Local Plan 2041

Proposed site allocations for Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople's accommodation

November 2026

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1. Introduction

1.1 Medway Council has submitted its proposed Medway Local Plan 2041 to government for independent examination. Two Planning Inspectors were appointed in January 2026 to lead the examination into the Medway Local Plan. The examination is ongoing.

1.2 The Inspectors have requested additional information from the Council in relation to the provision of Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople's accommodation to meet needs over the plan period.

1.3 The Council has carried out further work in seeking sites and considering options on Council owned land, including the former park and ride site at Wigmore.

1.4 The Council is now consulting on proposals for site allocations for gypsy and travellers and travelling showpeople for inclusion in the Medway Local Plan 2041. This includes safeguarding existing consented sites, and providing for increased capacity for pitches and plots.

1.5 This report outlines the work carried out in determining levels of need, the supply and assessment of sites, and proposed sites to be allocated for this dedicated use in the Local Plan.

1.6 The Council is consulting on these proposals from **16 November to 8 January 2027**. You can make written comments during the consultation period via the Council's website or by email or letter, as below:

- Online: https://medway.oc2.uk/
- By email: planning.policy@medway.gov.uk.
- By post: Planning Service, Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent ME4 4TR.

1.7 You can submit comments online on our consultation portal, OpusConsult via the above link. To add your comments to any part of the document, just use the 'comment point' button on OpusConsult. Guidance is available at https://medway.oc2.uk/instructions.

1.8 Representations should focus on whether the proposals are 'legally compliant' and if they meet the tests of 'soundness', meaning being positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy. Any person making representations may request to participate in hearing sessions during the independent examination of the Local Plan. You can include this request in your response.

1.9 Following the end of this consultation, Medway Council will collate and review all responses received. The responses will be shared with the Planning Inspectors and published as part of the Medway Local Plan Examination record. The Inspectors will arrange a Hearing Session in early 2027 to consider provision for Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople's accommodation, as part of the examination of the Local Plan.

1.10 Please note that all responses will be published on the examination website but personal details will not be shown. You can view the Council's data privacy policy here.[1]

1.11 Your information is being used by the Planning Inspectorate for the examination of the Medway Local Plan. You can view its privacy notice here[2].

1.12 If you require the document in an alternative format, or have any queries regarding this consultation please email planning.policy@medway.gov.uk.

1.13 Further information about the Medway Local Plan Examination is available on the website here[3]:

[1] Available at: https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200133/planning/714/planning_service_privacy_statement%C2%A0

[2] Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-inspectorate-privacy-notices

[3] Available at: https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200888/medway_local_plan_examination

2. Background

2.1 The Local Plan must assess the need for specialist forms of accommodation, including Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, and make provision for these needs. The Council commissioned a Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople's Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) (see Local Plan Examination Library Reference: B11.1[4] and B11.2[5]) as part of the evidence base for the Medway Local Plan 2041. A Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Topic Paper (see Examination Library Reference: B22.7)[6] was submitted with the Local Plan for examination. This outlines the evidence base findings and the Council's approach to delivering sites to meet needs.

2.2 The baseline for the evidence on identifying needs for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople set out in the GTAA (see Examination Library Reference: B11.2) is February 2024.

2.3 There was an identified need for:

	2022-2041	**First 5 years (2026-2031)**
Gypsy and Traveller Households	56 pitches	43 pitches
Travelling Showpeople	8 plots	5 plots

2.4 Since the baseline of the GTAA, supply has been increased through consented developments:

Planning Application/Appeal Reference	**Number of Pitches**
MC/22/1215	2
MC/23/2423	1
MC/25/1099	4
MC/24/2334	3
MC/24/2526	3
MC/25/0937	8
APP/A2280/W/25/3358815	5
Total	**26**

2.5 This indicates that the supply from planning applications has made a significant contribution to meeting needs – over 46% of the needs over the

[4] Available at: https://medway.oc2.uk/docfiles/37/B11.1%20Gypsy%20and%20Traveller%20Accommodation%20Assessment.pdf

[5] Available at: https://medway.oc2.uk/docfiles/37/B11.2%20Gypsy%20and%20Traveller%20Accommodation%20Assessment%20-%20Addendum.pdf

[6] Available at: https://medway.oc2.uk/docfiles/37/B22.7%20Gypsy%20and%20Traveller%20Accommodation%20Topic%20Paper.pdf

Plan period, and 60% of the first five- year requirement for gypsy and traveller households.

2.6 The residual need to be addressed in the plan is now:

	2022-2041	**First 5 years (2026-2031)**
Gypsy and Traveller Households	30 pitches	17 pitches
Travelling Showpeople	8 plots	5 plots

2.7 Policy T10: Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in the submitted Medway Local Plan 2041 (see Local Plan Examination Library Reference A1[7]) identified criteria for new and expanded traveller sites, but did not provide any allocations for new sites in the Plan. This reflected the lack of sites that were identified as suitable, available and deliverable as development allocations in the Plan as the Council was preparing the Plan.

2.8 Following correspondence with the Local Plan Inspectors (see Examination Documents Reference MLP.ED5[8] and MLP.ED8[9]) the Council carried out further work seeking to increase the provision in the Plan. The Council provided updates to the Inspectors (see Examination Documents References MLP_ED17[10], MLP_ED18[11] , MLP18A[12] and MLP ED28[13]

2.9 The outcomes of this work are set out in this consultation document.

[7] Available at: https://medway.oc2.uk/docfiles/37/A1%20Submission%20Medway%20Local%20Plan%202041.pdf

[8] Available at: https://medway.oc2.uk/docfiles/41/MLPED5%20Inspectors'%20Initial%20Queries%20Letter%20to%20Medway%20Council%2027-03-26.pdf

[9] Available at: https://medway.oc2.uk/docfiles/41/MLP.ED8%20Council's%20response%20to%20Inspectors%E2%80%99%20initial%20questions%20on%20Gypsy,%20Traveller%20&%20Travelling%20Showpeople.pdf

[10] Available at: https://medway.oc2.uk/docfiles/41/MLP_ED17%20Cover%20Letter%20+%20Report%20+%20Appendices_Redacted.pdf

[11] Available at: https://medway.oc2.uk/docfiles/41/MLP-ED18%20Covering%20letter%2011.8.26%20Cover%20Letter%20110826_Redacted.pdf

[12] Available at: https://medway.oc2.uk/docfiles/41/MLPED18A%20RCE%20OSC%20130826%20Call%20In%20Provision%20for%20Gypsy%20and%20Traveller%20Accommodation.pdf

[13] Available at: https://medway.oc2.uk/docfiles/41/MLPED28%20Update%20on%20Gypsy%20and%20Traveller%20Accommodation%20Needs_Redacted.pdf

3. Site Identification and Assessment

3.1 In preparing the Local Plan, the Council identified the needs for Gypsy and Traveller pitches and Travelling Showpeople's plots. The Council sought to identify suitable, appropriate and available sites to meet needs. This included a Call for Sites between November 2022 and February 2023. This is reported in the Gypsy and Traveller Topic Paper (see Examination Library Reference: B22.7). The Council was not able to identify suitable sites for allocation as new sites in the Local Plan.

3.2 The Council held a further Call for Sites between 8 June and 20 July 2026 in agreement with the Local Plan Inspectors. Again, the Call for Sites found limited market interest in promoting sites for this land use. The Council also carried out a review of land in its ownership. The site assessment processes and outcomes of this work were reported in the Council's response to the Local Plan Inspectors (see Examination Document Reference: MLP ED17).

3.3 The assessment found one site (Land Registry Title K746571) that was considered suitable, available and achievable. The eastern area of the site, a former 'park and ride', was granted planning permission (MC/24/1038) on appeal (APP/A2280/W/25/3358815 - retrospective material change of use of land for use as gypsy traveller site). The remaining area of the site comprises a paddock, which could provide for expansion.

3.4 The Council subsequently considered the use of the former 'park and ride' site at Wigmore as a gypsy and traveller site at meetings of its Cabinet on 4 August 2026, Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 13 August 2026, and Council on 15 October 2026. The Council has confirmed its support for the use of the Wigmore site as a gypsy and traveller site, and agreed to add £2,684,000 to its Capital Programme to deliver the site, providing good quality conditions and amenity standards. The report and minutes of the Council meeting are available to view here[14] on the Council's website.

3.5 The Council now wishes to propose this site as an allocation in the Local Plan for use for gypsy and traveller accommodation. This is set out as Site 11 in the plans in the Appendix.

3.6 Given the limited availability of new sites, the Council also reviewed existing sites to identify where there was potential for greater capacity for pitches or plots. The Council contacted planning agents for such potential sites. This has identified potential for additional pitches on specific sites that together with the development of the Wigmore site could meet the five year land supply need for pitches and plots.

[14] Available at: https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=122&MId=6715

3.7 The Council assessed these sites against the Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal framework, and the criteria in Policy T10. The former Park and Ride site at Wigmore was assessed as site HW7 in the Sustainability Appraisal (see Examination Library Reference: A3.3[15]) of the Submission Local Plan.

Site ref	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	CC Mitigation	CC Adaptation	Biodiversity and geodiversity	Landscape and townscape	Pollution and waste	Natural resources	Housing	Health and wellbeing	Cultural heritage	Transport and accessibility	Education	Economy
Site 11A	+/-	+	0	0	+/-	-	+	0	0	+	-	0
Site 11B	+/-	+	0	0	+/-	-	+	0	0	+	-	0
Site 5	+/-	+	0	-	+/-	-	+	-	0	-	-	0
Site 17	+/-	+	0	+/-	+/-	-	+	+	-	+/-	-	0
Site 16	+/-	+	0	+/-	+/-	-	+	+	0	+/-	+/-	0

Consideration against Policy T10 criteria

Site	Accessibility	Scale	Access
Site 11A – Wigmore Phase 1	Yes - good connections to local facilities for education, healthcare, and convenience retailing.	Extended use provides sufficient space for storage and maintenance of equipment.	Yes - there is safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicular access to the public highway (Maidstone Road), with adequate space on site for vehicle turning and parking.
Site 11B – Wigmore Phase 2	Yes - good connections to local facilities for education, healthcare, and convenience retailing.	Site adjacent to consented site with potential for expansion with retention of landscaping.	Yes - there is safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicular access to the public highway (Maidstone Road), with adequate space on site for vehicle turning and parking.

[15] Available at: https://medway.oc2.uk/docfiles/37/A3.3%20Sustainability%20Appraisal%20-%20Volume%203%20of%203%20-%20Appendices.pdf

Site 5, Ropers Green Lane	Rural Location, about 1 mile from services in High Halstow, and access to bus services	Flat site adjacent to existing use suitable for small scale expansion.	Yes, from existing access
Site 17, rear of Mulberry Tree Cottage, Lower Rainham	Good proximity to local services and bus services.	Flat screened site adjacent to existing use suitable for small scale expansion.	Yes, from existing access
Site 16, Orchard Grove, Meresborough	Rural location, within a mile of range of services in Rainham	Flat screened site adjacent to existing use suitable for small scale expansion.	Yes, from existing access

4. Proposals for Site Allocations

4.1 Policy T10: Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople states that existing sites will be protected and intensification or expansion sought. The Council proposes to request a modification to the Plan including the existing sites on the Policies Map.

4.2 For clarity the sites for safeguarding for the existing consented uses are identified below:

Site Reference	Address
1	Sturchfield, Grain Road, Lower Stoke
2	Shant Cottage, Grain Road, Lower Stoke
3	The Paddock, Sharnal Street
4	Two Acre Farm, Parbrook Road
5	Ropers Green Lane, High Halstow
6	Cobs View, ME3 8SE
7	Buddy's View, ME3 8SE
8	Travelling Showmen's Guild of Great Britain site, Marsh Street, Strood
9	Cuxton Gypsy Caravan Park
10	North Dane Way
11	Former Park and Ride site, Wigmore
12	Scarlet Meadow, Matts Hill Road
13	The Chestnuts, Matts Hill Road
14	Harewood, Matts Hill Road
15	Land Adjacent to Four Seasons, Matts Hill Road
16	Orchard Grove, Meresborough
17	Rear of Mulberry Tree Cottage, Lower Rainham

4.3 The Council has identified that there is additional capacity on, or adjacent to some consented sites. These are all available and suitable sites where development could be achieved within the first five years of the plan. The indicative capacity and phasing is set out below. The GTAA identified a need for 7 pitches in years 6-10 of the Plan. This need could be achieved through additional expansion on identified sites and potentially adjacent land. Wider need over the plan period is anticipated to be met through planning consents, as this has been shown to be an important source of supply in recent years.

Site Reference	**First 5 Years**	**Wider Plan period**
Wigmore Phase 1	4 (additional to consent)	
Wigmore Phase 2	6	Additional future potential
Land off Ropers Green Lane	3	Additional future potential
Rear of Mulberry Tree Cottages	2	
Orchard Grove	2	Additional future potential
Total	**17**	

4.4 The Showmen's Guild of Great Britain site at Marsh Street, Strood has the capacity to accommodate the projected need for an additional 8 plots over the plan period. As the site is in an existing use and operated by the Showmen's Guild, it would be available, suitable and achievable in accommodating the five year need if required.

Appendix 1 – Location Plans

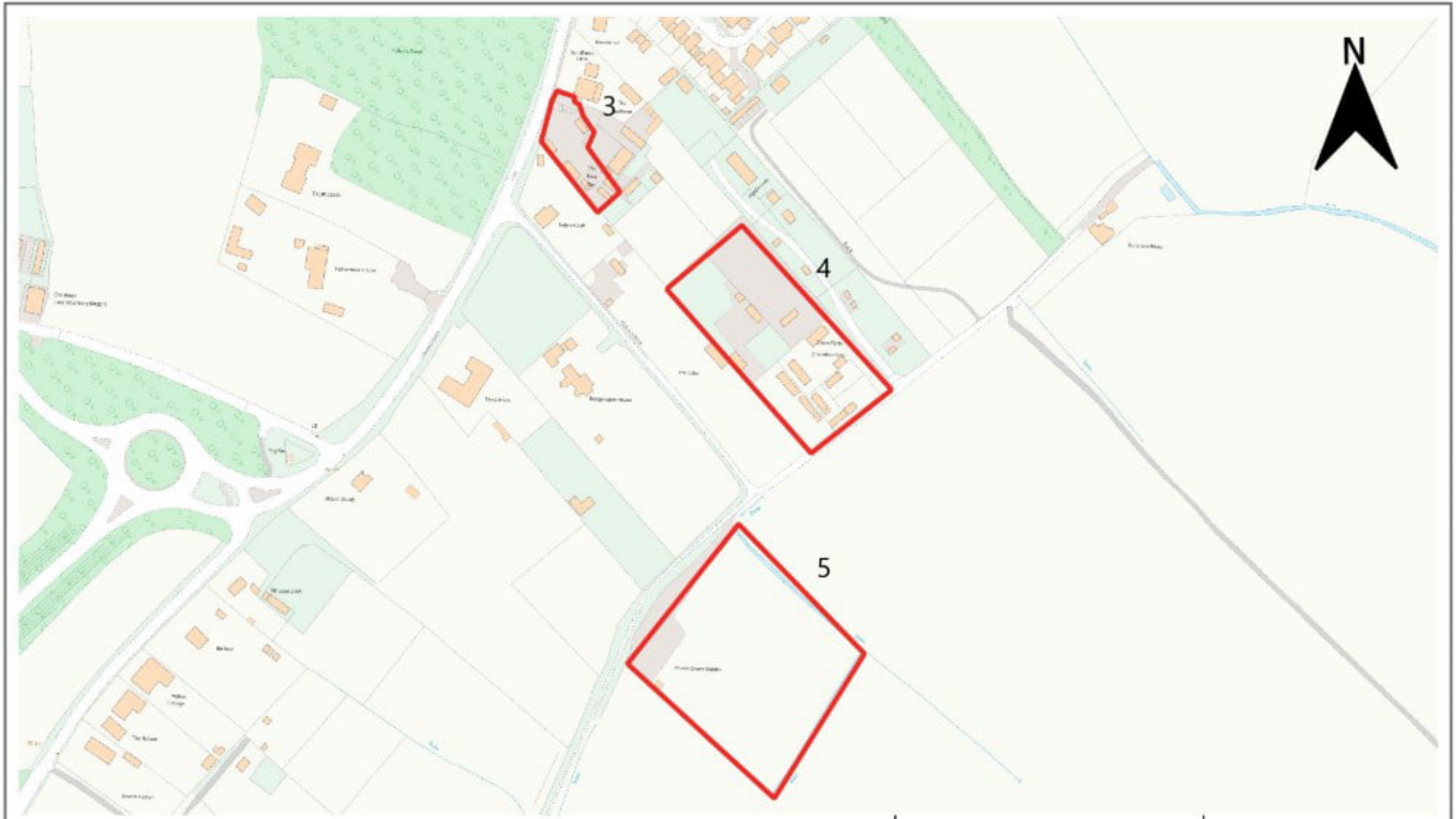


1. Sturchfield, Grain Road, Lower Stoke
2. Shant Cottage, Grain Road, Lower Stoke

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3. **The Paddock, Sharnal Street**
4. **Two Acre Farm, Parbrook Road**
5. **Ropers Green Lane**

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6. Cobs View

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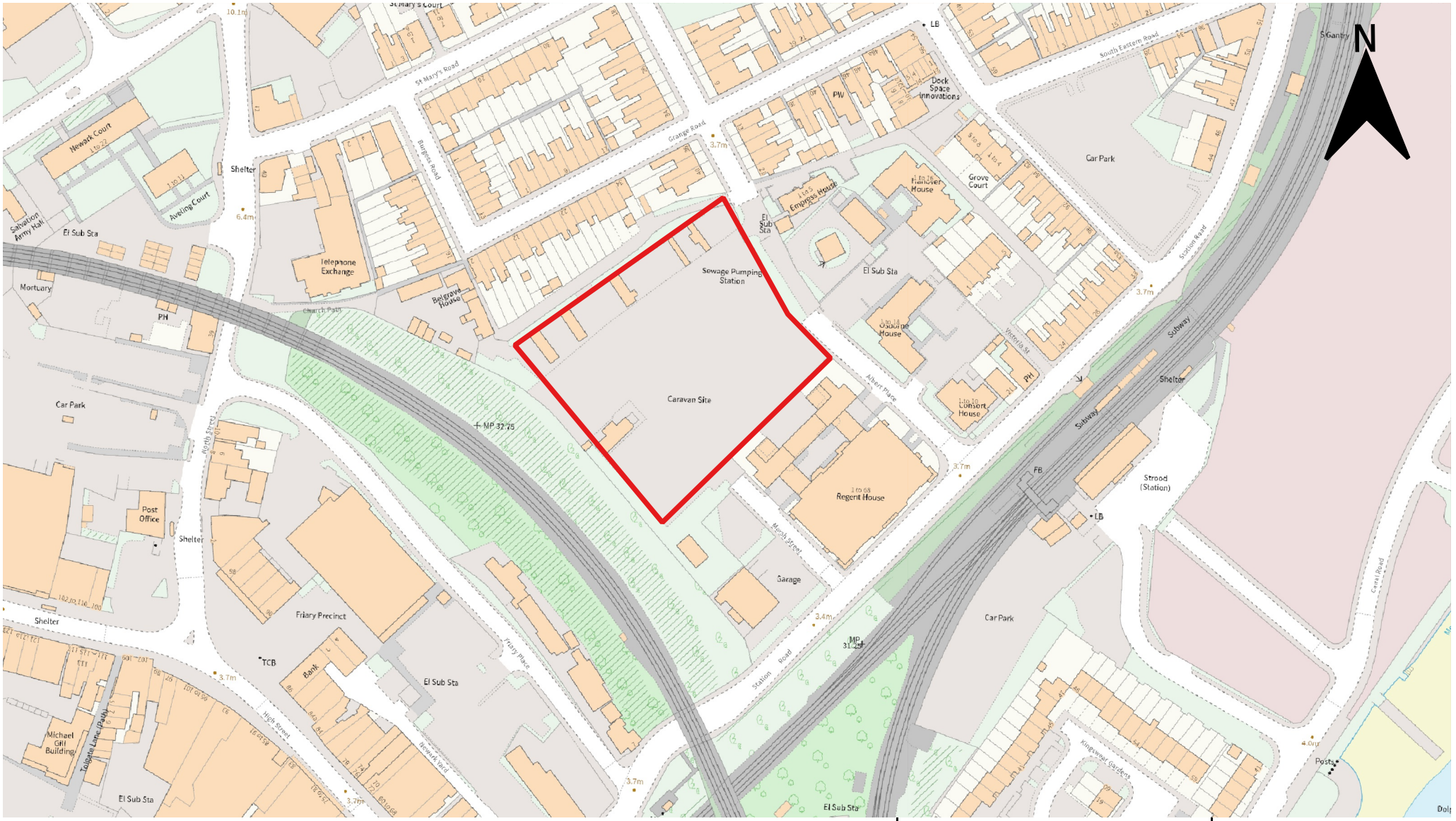


7. Buddy's View

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8. Strood Travelling Showpeople yard

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9. Cuxton Gypsy and Caravan Park

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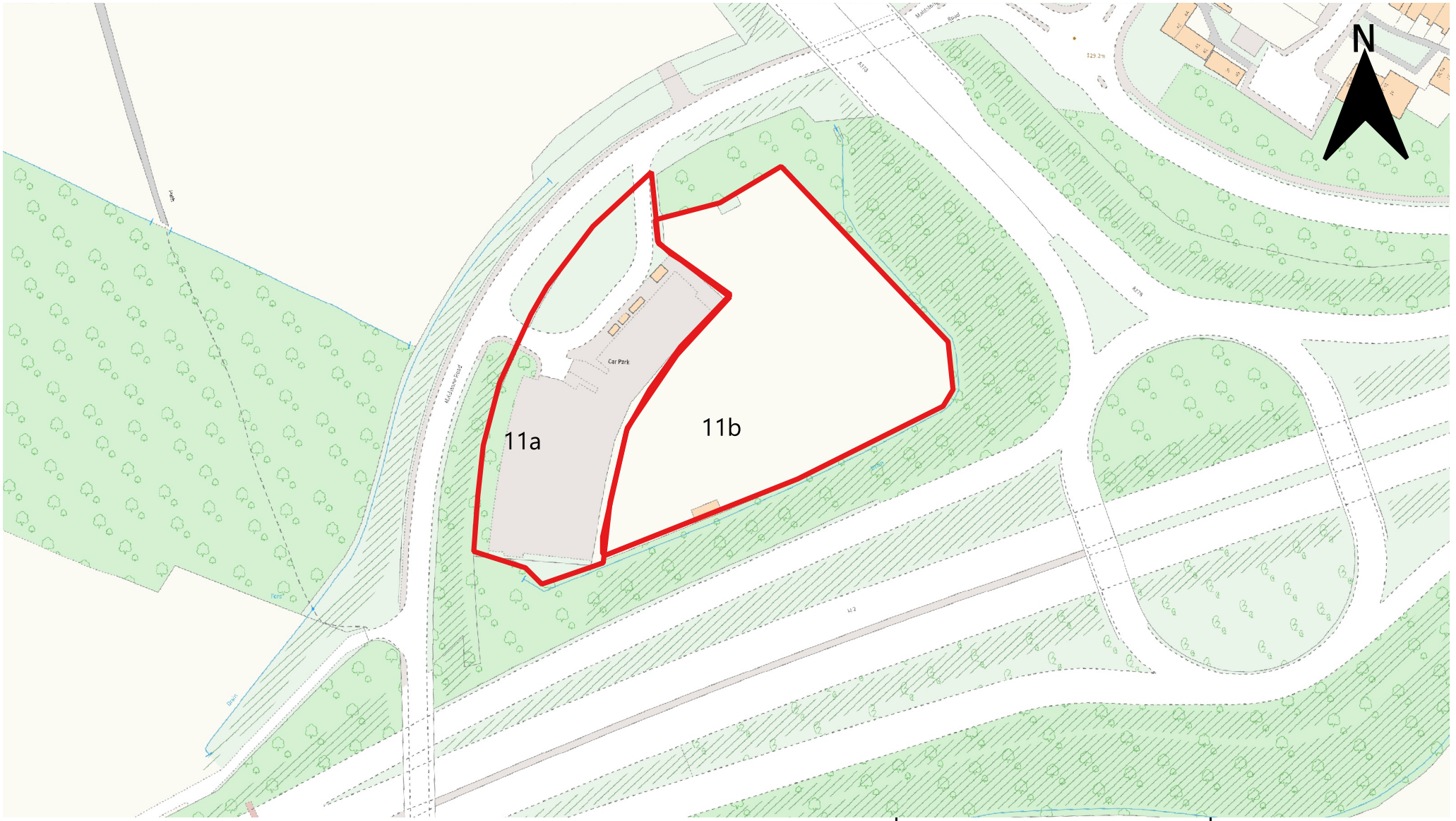
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10. North Dane Way

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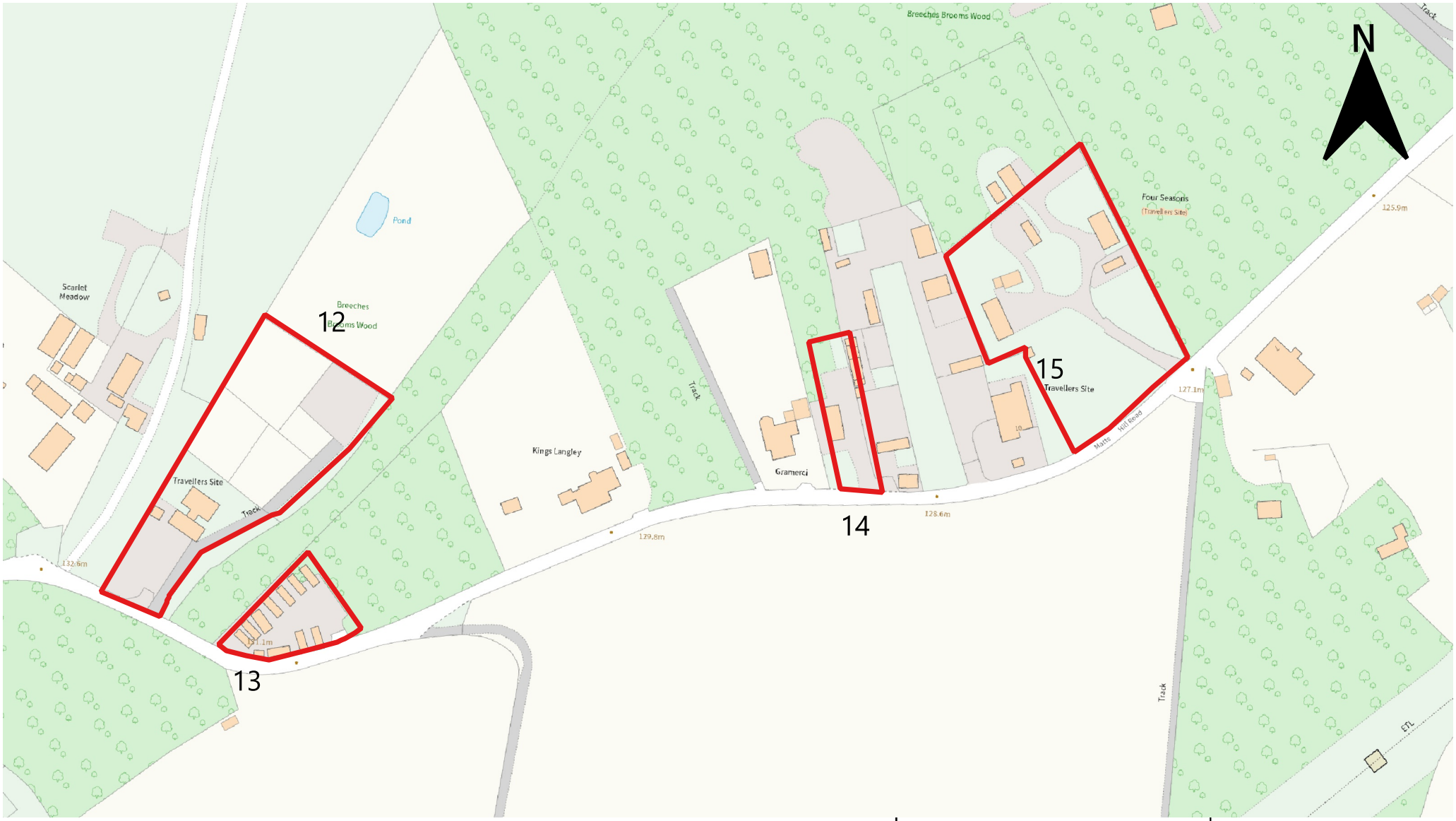


11. Former Park and Ride site, Wigmore

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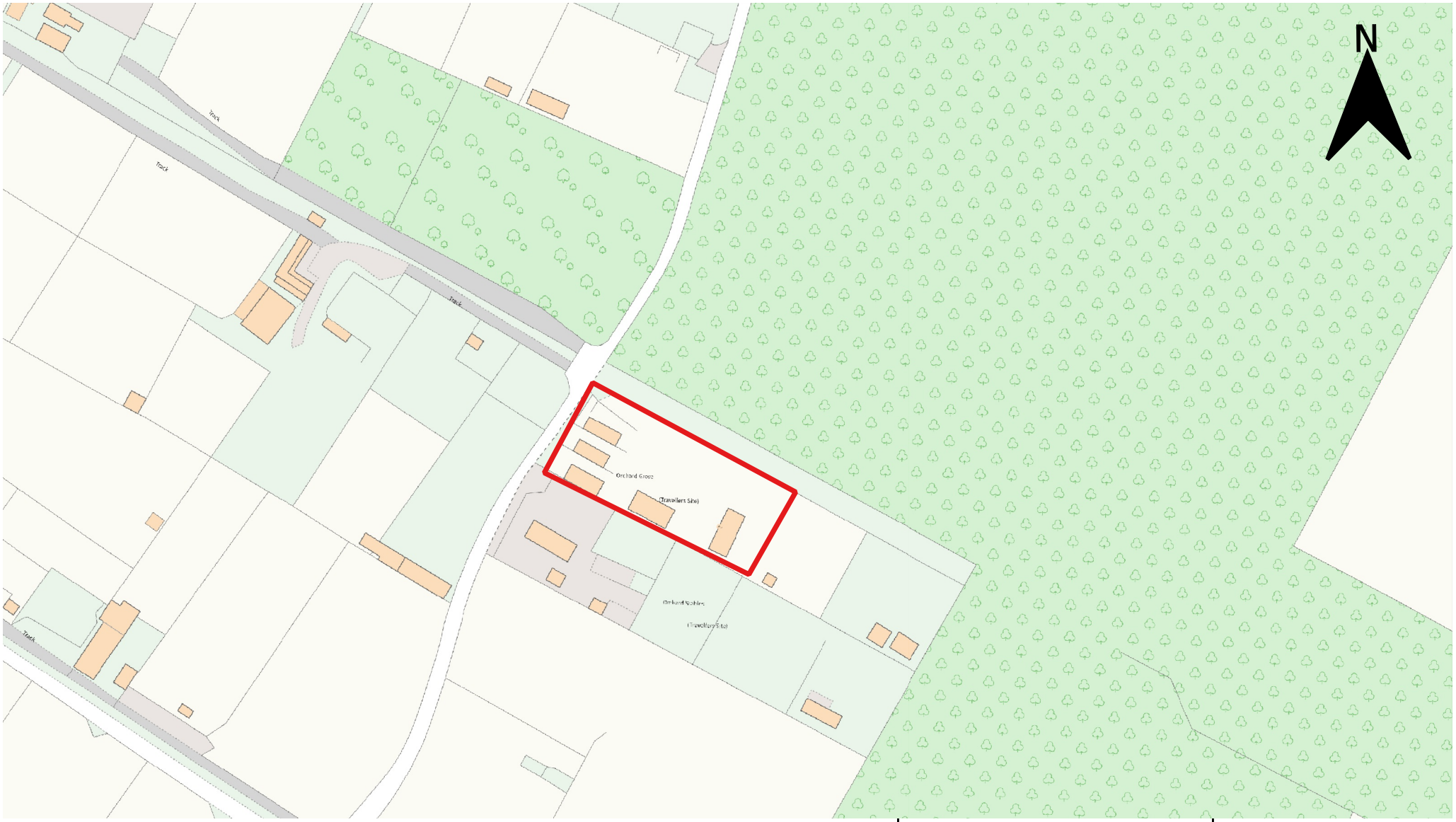
12. Scarlet Meadow **13. The Chestnuts**

14. Harewood **15. Land adj. Four Seasons**

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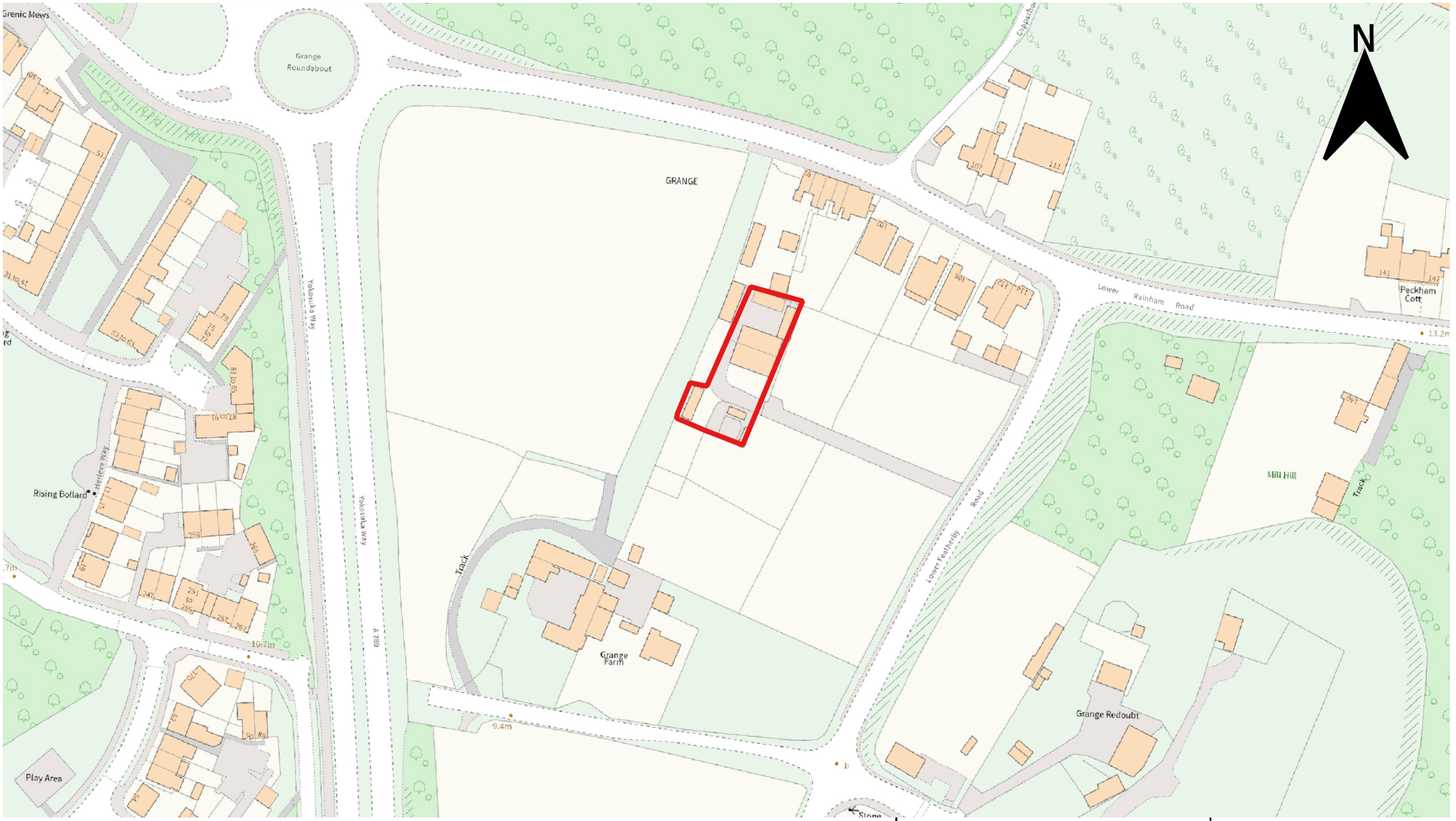


16. Orchard Grove, Meresborough

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17. Rear of Mulberry Tree Cottages, Lower Rainham

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