

**'DRAFT LOCAL PLAN SUPPLEMENTARY  
CONSULTATION' RESPONSE**

**SOLIHULL COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN  
REVIEW**

**LAND AT BICKENHILL ROAD, MARSTON GREEN**

**ON BEHALF OF L&Q ESTATES**

**TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)  
PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 These representations are made by Pegasus Group, on behalf of L&Q Estates (formerly Gallagher Estates) in response to the Solihull Local Plan Review (2015 - 2028) 'Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation' January 2019. This representation relates to land at Bickenhill Road, Marston Green where L&Q Estates has an interest (see Site Location Plan at **Appendix 1**). These representations should be read alongside the accompanying:

- Site Location Plan (**Appendix 1**)
- Landscape and Visual Statement with Green Belt Review (**Appendix 2**)
- Previous duly submitted representations to Draft Local Plan November 2016 by Gallagher Estates comprising of:
  - Representations Report, February 2017 (**Appendix 3**)
  - Vision Document, dated Feb 2017 (**Appendix 4**)
  - Un-met Housing Need and Duty to Cooperate (**Appendix 5**)

1.2 This evidence is provided, in association with previous representations to the previous consultation of the Draft Local Plan that took place between November 2016 and February 2017, namely as set out above as **Appendices 3, 4 and 5**. It is requested that the February 2017 Representations which at the time were submitted on behalf of Gallagher Estates, now L&Q Estates continue to constitute duly submitted representations to promote the allocation of land at Bickenhill Road, Marston Green for residential development.

1.3 These representations respond to the 'Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation Preferred Options & Policy Directions' consultation document and accompanying published evidence, having regard to the national and local policy context. Where appropriate, these representations provide a response to the specific questions set out within this document.

1.4 The representations are framed in the context of the requirements of Local Plans, including the Allocations document, to be legally compliant and sound. The tests of soundness are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), paragraph 35. For a development plan to be sound it must:

**Positively Prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet objectively assessed needs, and is informed by agreements with

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other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;

**Justified** – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;

**Effective** – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and

**Consistent with National Policy** – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework.

- 1.5 These representations also give consideration to the legal and procedural requirements associated with the plan-making process.

## 2. SECTION 2 – BACKGROUND

### Duty to Cooperate

- 2.1 The Supplementary Consultation notes acknowledges that planning for an areas need should be taken at the 'Housing Market Area' level, and it is noted further that in this respect Solihull is one of 14 local planning authorities that is within (in whole or in part) the HMA that includes Birmingham and surrounding Authorities. It is also recognised that the housing shortfall for the HMA will be one of the key issues to be addressed through the on-going and legal obligation under the duty to cooperate (DtC).
- 2.2 Paragraph 26 of the Supplementary Consultation acknowledges that the Draft Local Plan tested a contribution of 2,000 dwellings towards accommodating the shortfall occurring beyond the Borough.
- 2.3 Paragraph 27 of the Supplementary Consultation sets out that the representations to the Draft Local Plan in 2017 demonstrated a clear expectation from other HMA authorities (and other interested parties) that (a) there is no clear justification why 2,000 was chosen as the figure Solihull would make towards the HMA shortfall and (b) there is opportunity to make a greater contribution.
- 2.4 Paragraph 28 of the Supplementary Consultation acknowledges that to inform the Duty to Cooperate the 14 HMA authorities commissioned the Strategic Growth Study undertaken by GL Hearn (SGS). It is noted that one of the aims of the study was to look at options that may be required however it is more pertinent to note that the SGS concluded that on the basis of the current evidence, provision of between 205,000-246,000 homes is needed across the Birmingham HMA to 2031; and of between 256,000-310,000 homes to 2036 (from a 2011 baseline) to meet the Birmingham HMA's housing needs. This is out with that two authorities, namely North Warwickshire and Stratford on Avon which fall within the Coventry HMA, have agreed to make proviso for Coventry's unmet needs.
- 2.5 In considering the supply of the Birmingham HMA as a whole the SGS set out that this needs to be added on top of the figures above which would result in a **minimum provision taking account of Coventry's unmet need of 208,000 dwellings to 2031 and 258,500 homes to 2036.**

- 2.6 The work undertaken as part of the SGS in considering Housing Land Supply across the HMA has concluded that there is a deliverable land supply of 180,000 dwellings across the HMA to 2031, and 198,000 dwellings to 2036 based on sites and supply currently identified. Paragraph 1.23 of the SGS sets out that “**Based on current supply assumptions and taking into account proposed allocations in the emerging plans, there is an outstanding minimum shortfall of 28,150 dwellings to 2031 and 60,900 dwellings to 2036 across the Birmingham HMA**”.
- 2.7 In order to accommodate the shortfall, the further work undertaken by GL Hearn established that even with increasing densities there remains a need to identify sites capable of supporting the delivery of **over 15,000 homes to 2031, and a total of over 47,800 homes to 2036**. Given the scale of the unmet need and the strategic nature of the Study, the SGS focused on considering a number of strategic options. The SGS considered a number of Growth Options with the identification of Areas of Search for strategic development which can be considered and assessed in more detail by individual councils though the preparation of Local Plans alongside further small and medium sized sites.
- 2.8 The SGS identified 24 Areas of Search for strategic development which include for the Solihull Borough Site 19 Land around Balsall Common for a New Settlement of around 10,000 to 15,000 homes and Site 22 Land South of Birmingham Airport & NEC for an Employment Led Growth Option. The 24 Areas of Search for strategic development are appraised within the SGS.
- 2.9 The results of the assessment concluded that each of the 3 Employment Led Strategic Allocations (namely North of Wolverhampton/i54; East of Birmingham and South of Birmingham Airport/NEC) perform strongly in terms of the assessment criteria and offer the opportunity for some residential development alongside employment.
- 2.10 In relation to the work that is undertaken to assess the New Settlements, the SGS concludes that new settlements should also form part of the solution to meeting the housing shortfall, recognising that whilst they will require significant infrastructure, they can contribute positively to meeting longer-term development needs against a context whereby a significant proportion of the HMA housing need shortfall relates to the period beyond 2031; and they provide the

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opportunity to secure significant funding support from the Government given their scale and impact.

- 2.11 The Area of Search for South of Birmingham Airport/NEC – Site 21, is one of the 4 Areas of Search that the SGS considers perform the strongest and is recommended to be taken forward for future assessment as a New Settlement. Paragraph 10.30 of the SGS sets out that there are clear choices to be made regarding what weight in decision making is attributed to different factors which warrant joint consideration by HMA partners.
- 2.12 It is of note that paragraph 10.49 of the SGS sets out that due to the significant lead in time to deliver large strategic sites, given the requirement for technical work, masterplanning, establishing the policy framework, progressing planning applications, and bringing forward development and infrastructure which can take 10years +, there is a need to progress further technical and feasibility studies considering the potential for strategic development in these areas now.
- 2.13 The need to bring forward a mix in size and types of sites is therefore key to meeting local housing needs.

### 3. SECTION 3 - HOUSING REQUIREMENT AND CURRENT LAND SUPPLY

#### *Establishing the Local Housing Need*

- 3.1 It is noted that the Borough Council set out at paragraph 45 that it is prudent for the present consultation that the 2014 based household projections are used and that this is on the basis that the current consultation will confirm this position in early 2019. The publication of the revised NPPF has confirmed this position and accordingly we agree with the approach that Solihull have applied to establishing the Local Housing Need Figure.
- 3.2 We also agree with the manner in which the Borough Council has applied the 40% cap from the 621 dwellings per year based on the 2014 household-based projections.
- 3.3 Reference is given at paragraph 47 of the Supplementary Consultation to paragraph 60 of the NPPF which indicates that the standard methodology should be used to arrive at the Local Housing Need “**unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach**”. It is noted at paragraph 48 that in calculating the Borough’s own needs, the Council does not believe there are any exceptional circumstances that justify a departure from the methodology. This is dealt with at Question 1.

#### ***Question 1: Do you believe that there are exceptional circumstances that would justify the Council using an alternative approach, if so what are the exceptional circumstances and what should the alternative approach be?***

- 3.4 it is considered that the Local Housing Need (LHN) figure of 767 dwellings per annum based on the 2014 household projections published in 2016 should be the minimum LHN figure and that there are clear exceptional circumstances to justify an alternative approach which takes into account economic growth as we have previously set out in representations to the November 2016 Draft Local Plan (**Appendix 3**). This is based on the significant economic growth that is to take place at UK Central Hub which includes the release of the Arden Cross land from the Green Belt (140ha of Green Belt land) as part of the HS2 Interchanges; Birmingham Airport and the Councils support for a broad range of ancillary and complementary facilities including hotels, car parks and other appropriate facilities needed to serve the needs of air travellers using the Airport; the NEC



and the Council's support to enable a broad range of developments to enhance visitor offer, diversify facilities and increase international competitiveness; Jaguar Land Rover and its planned expansion with the proposed release of approximately 94 ha of Green Belt land – Proposed Employment Site 20 and the Council's support within the emerging LPR to encourage the development of the Birmingham Business Park within its defined boundaries to support its role as a prime employment location and enhances its important role as a high quality, managed business park.

- 3.5 It is considered that the economic growth associated with the UKC Hub Growth Area should be reflected with a higher level of housing to support this economic growth and hence it is considered that UKC provides the 'exceptional circumstances' to deliver a higher level of growth above the 767 dwellings per annum figure set out in this consultation. The economic growth case has previously been set out in the representations to the Solihull Draft Local Plan (Nov 2016-Feb 2017) consultation as included for completeness as **Appendix 3** and **4**.
- 3.6 In relation to the Housing Market Area the Draft Local Plan (Nov 2016) included a commitment to accommodate 2,000 dwellings from the shortfall that is occurring in the wider Housing Market Area. Paragraph 49 of the Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation sets out that using the same contribution, the overall housing requirement to be addressed in the Local Plan Review would, using the standard methodology be 15,039 dwellings over the period 2018 to 2035, or 885 dwellings per year.
- 3.7 Paragraph 50 of the Supplementary Consultation sets out at paragraph 51 that this rate of development represents a doubling of the average rate achieved over the last 10 years which would exceed the highest number of net completions achieved in a single year since 2001. It is noted at paragraph 51 that this Supplementary Consultation has a focus on reviewing the proposed allocations and whilst commentary has been provided on how the standard methodology would be taken into account; this consultation is not seeking views on any potential addition that the Council may take towards the HMA shortfall.
- 3.8 Previous representations to the Draft Local Plan (**Appendix 3**) set out at that time that a range of 20,000 to 24,000 dwellings would be required to be provided

over the plan period to meet the demographic and economic needs of the Borough.

- 3.9 It should be noted that the above figures do not incorporate any additional economic uplift to take into account the UKC initiative as set out above (or the suggested proposal within the SGS for an Employment Led Strategic Allocation in the same vicinity of Birmingham Airport and the NEC) which will deliver additional employment growth to the Borough on top of growth based on past trends.
- 3.10 Within these previous representations concerns were raised in relation to the underestimation of job likely to be created from UKC and accordingly that insufficient homes are provided in the LPR to meet the economic needs which could lead to commuting into the District and/ or business being dissuaded from locating in Solihull due to the lack of workforce available. It has also been set out in previous submissions that in relation to affordability that if all uplifts and proper employment figures are included, it will result in an increased dwelling requirement.
- 3.11 The economic scenario discussed in **Appendix 3** would lead to a significantly higher dwelling requirement than currently planned for in the LPR. Further submissions will be made in relation to this at the next consultation stage when it is hoped the Borough Council's position on Local Housing Need and the HMA will be clearer.

#### 4. SECTION 4 – SITE SELECTION PROCESS

4.1 The Borough Council set out at paragraph 63 that the vast majority of sites that have been put forward through the Call for Sites are sites located in the Green Belt.

##### Site Selection Process

4.2 The Draft Local Plan set out a sequential approach to direct growth to particular locations. Part of this process included setting an overall hierarchy and how the growth options identified at the earlier issue and options stage could contribute. Paragraph 65 of the Supplementary Consultation sets out that the hierarchy and site selection process have been further refined to support the present consultation and notes that all of the submitted sites have been assessed against it.

4.3 The site selection process is split into two steps, initially based on a 'site hierarchy' and secondly use of 'planning judgment to refine site selection'. The approach notes that it aims to test the appropriateness of sites rather than allocating numbers per settlement.

4.4 Clearly any judgement in respect of selecting sites needs to be objective, based on a clear and transparent methodology and applied consistently through the process. Any inconsistent judgements moving away from an objective assessment would not be robust.

4.5 The first step of the approach sets out a 'site hierarchy', using a scoring system of 1-10. Sites falling within 1-4 are considered 'Green' and should generally be considered suitable for inclusion in the plan. Sites scoring 8-10 are 'Red' and are considered unsuitable.

4.6 Sites between 5 and 7 however are considered to have potential, but the document notes that these are not 'impact free', and also notes that there is potential for these to impact on the purposes of the Green Belt. These potential sites are sub-divided as scoring 5 (potential inclusion – yellow) and 6 or 7 (unlikely inclusion – blue).

4.7 These 'potential' (yellow) and 'unlikely' (blue) sites then proceed to Step Two of the site selection process, which assesses against the refining criteria. The analysis in Step 2 is said to be used principally to confirm whether **potential**

**allocations (yellow) should be included as green or amber sites in the consultation, and whether 'unlikely' allocations (blue) should be included as amber or red sites in the consultation** (emphasis added).

4.8 The factors set out in Table 2 below identify the considerations that have been taken into account at Step 2. It is specifically noted that **higher performing sites in the hierarchy need more significant harmful impacts if they are to be excluded**, (emphasis added) and for sites not performing well in the hierarchy they will need more significant justification to be included.

FACTORS IN FAVOUR	FACTORS AGAINST
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SPATIAL STRATEGY.</li> <li>• ANY HARD CONSTRAINTS ONLY AFFECT A SMALL PROPORTION OF THE SITE AND/OR CAN BE MITIGATED.</li> <li>• SITE WOULD NOT BREACH A STRONG DEFENSIBLE BOUNDARY TO THE GREEN BELT.</li> <li>• ANY IDENTIFIED WIDER PLANNING GAIN OVER AND ABOVE WHAT WOULD NORMALLY BE EXPECTED.</li> <li>• SITES THAT WOULD USE OR CREATE A STRONG DEFENSIBLE BOUNDARY TO DEFINE THE EXTENT OF LAND TO BE REMOVED FROM THE GREEN BELT.</li> <li>• IF FINER GRAIN ACCESSIBILITY ANALYSIS<sup>38</sup> SHOWS THE SITE (OR THE PART TO BE INCLUDED) IS ACCESSIBLE.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SPATIAL STRATEGY.</li> <li>• OVERRIDING HARD CONSTRAINTS<sup>39</sup> THAT CANNOT BE MITIGATED.</li> <li>• SHELAA CATEGORY 340 SITES UNLESS DEMONSTRATED THAT CONCERNS CAN BE OVERCOME.</li> <li>• SITE WOULD BREACH A STRONG DEFENSIBLE BOUNDARY TO THE GREEN BELT.</li> <li>• SITES THAT WOULD NOT USE OR CREATE A STRONG DEFENSIBLE BOUNDARY TO DEFINE THE EXTENT OF LAND TO BE REMOVED FROM THE GREEN BELT.</li> <li>• IF FINER GRAIN ACCESSIBILITY ANALYSIS SHOWS THE SITE (OR THE PART TO BE INCLUDED) IS NOT ACCESSIBLE.</li> <li>• IF THE SITE IS IN A LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA THAT HAS A VERY LOW LANDSCAPE CAPACITY RATING.</li> <li>• IF THE SA APPRAISAL IDENTIFIES SIGNIFICANT HARMFUL IMPACTS.</li> </ul>

***Question 2: Do you agree with the methodology of the site selection process, if not why not and what alternative/ amendment would you suggest?***

4.9 The methodology that has been utilised for the site selection process has been considered in the Landscape and Visual Statement and Green Belt Review Paper included as **Appendix 2**.

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- 4.10 It is considered that there are inconsistencies in the Step 1 Assessment which has led to sites that should have scored lower being given higher scores.
- 4.11 The Landscape and Visual Statement (Appendix 3) also considers the Strategic Green Belt Assessment (SGBA) approach as leading to inconsistencies when assessing settlement edge sites.
- 4.12 Clearly site 196 (Land at Bickenhill Road) which has been assessed as Priority 5 – “potential allocation” (i.e. yellow) and therefore a site which is applicable to continue to ‘Step 2’ has been identified at Step 2 as R (a red site) which is not to be included in the Plan due to R sites being sites with severe or widespread impacts that are not outweighed by the benefits of the proposal. There is no justification for this conclusion and no evidence provided within the Site Assessment for the site not to be identified as an Amber or Green site.
- 4.13 The Landscape and Visual Statement that have been prepared also provides commentary on the inconsistencies that are evident in relation to the application and interpretation on the site assessment methodology on Green (proposed allocations) and Amber sites (sites currently been consulted on which the Borough Council consider to be the ‘least harmful’ of the omission sites).

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## 5. SECTION 15 – OMITTED SITES

5.1 The Site Selection chapter explains the process the Borough Council has undertaken to assess submitted sites.

***Question 39: Are there any red sites omitted which you believe should be included, if so which ones and why?***

5.2 Based on the inconsistency with the site selection assessment of sites that has been demonstrated fully within the Landscape and Visual Statements (**Appendix 2**) it is considered that Land at Bickenhill Road, Marston Green in accordance with the Council's own assessment site should be at least an Amber, if not a Green site.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 L&Q Estates supports the Borough Council's decision to continue with the review of the Solihull Local Plan.
- 6.2 Land at Bickenhill Road, Marston Green is within the control of L&Q Estates and is developable and would contribute significantly towards meeting housing needs within the Borough. There are no known constraints that would prevent the site coming forward as proposed. The suitability of the site for development is fully detailed within the Vision Document previously submitted in February 2017 (**Appendix 4**) in response to the DLR. The evidence provided within the Landscape and Visual Statement and Green Belt Review (**Appendix 2**) demonstrated that in Green Belt terms the site is suitable for consideration as an 'Amber Site' or a 'Green Site' and should be reassessed objectively by the Council and considered as a suitable site for housing development. Land at Bickenhill Road, Marston Green would support the delivery of the Council's Preferred Growth Option that focuses development towards the most sustainable locations, including key rural villages.
- 6.3 L&Q Estates would welcome the opportunity to maintain a dialogue with the Council through the process of reviewing the Solihull District Local Plan.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **SITE LOCATION PLAN**



# APPENDIX 1



# APPENDIX 2

## **1. INTRODUCTION: LOCAL PLAN REVIEW**

- 1.1. Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) adopted their current local plan, the 'Solihull Local Plan', in December 2013. SMBC is undertaking a Local Plan Review (LPR) to ensure that an up to date planning framework is in place that addresses potential issues.
- 1.2. The evidence base to the Local Plan includes several documents related to the strategic selection of sites and the Green Belt context to Solihull. These documents have informed the selection of strategic sites to be brought forward under the draft Local Plan.
- 1.3. Those referred to as part of this landscape and visual statement include:
  - Solihull MBC Landscape Character Assessment (2016);
  - Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment, Assessment Report (July 2016);
  - Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation (January 2019);
  - Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation: Site Assessments (January 2019);
  - and
  - Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation: Amber Sites (January 2019).
- 1.4. Reference has also been made to additional sources of data and information, for example (but not limited to) Ordnance Survey mapping, aerial photography and landscape character studies.
- 1.5. This report first summarises the relevant landscape and greenbelt evidence to date in relation to Land at Bickenhill, Marston Green, notably with reference to Solihull MBC Landscape Character Assessment (2016) and Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment (2016), given its relevance to the whole site selection process.
- 1.6. **The report then examines the latest evidence base assessment in relation to identifying strategic sites, which is set out in the Council's Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation Documents (as listed above), including Site Assessments. This key analysis is provided in Section 5.**
- 1.7. Whilst Green Belt is not a 'landscape' policy as such, there is an inherent connection between Green Belt matters and those relating to landscape and visual issues, particularly in respect of considering landscape enclosure and defining the physical attributes of a landscape.



- 1.8. Principles related to the appraisal and assessment of landscape and visual matters are set out in the Landscape Institute (LI) and the Institute of Environmental Management (IEMA) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (2013)<sup>1</sup> and reference is made to this document as necessary.

## **2. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- 2.1. In respect of the context set out above, Pegasus Group has undertaken a strategic review of an area of landscape located to the east of Marston Green which currently lies within the West Midlands Green Belt. The Green Belt in this area of the Borough comprises smaller, more refined parcels surrounded by urban areas.
- 2.2. The area of landscape under consideration includes five parcels of land totalling 20.5 ha which lie to the north and south of Bickenhill Road and are further separated by private tracks and well defined hedgerows. The western boundary of the site is defined by Low Brook, with the northern, eastern and southern boundaries defined by field boundaries and/or Bickenhill Road.

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<sup>1</sup> Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (April, 2013)

### **3. GREEN BELT AND THE NPPF**

#### **NPPF**

- 3.1. Approximately 12,000 hectares of Solihull MBC is designated as Green Belt land, accounting for approximately two thirds of the Borough's land area. The Green Belt within Solihull MBC forms an integral part of the West Midlands Green Belt stretching between the Birmingham Conurbation, including Solihull, and the surrounding major urban areas.
- 3.2. The Green Belt in the vicinity of Marston Green lies to the east of the settlement's urban edge, separating it from the development of Birmingham Business Park, Birmingham Airport and the National Exhibition Centre. This area of Green Belt does not physical join the more extensive area of the West Midlands Green Belt which extends southwards towards Warwick District, rather it includes smaller, fragmented and more refined areas within the urban areas.
- 3.3. The NPPF attaches 'great importance' to Green Belts. Section 13 of the NPPF (2019) addresses Green Belt matters, noting the fundamental aim of preventing urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The Framework also notes that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.
- 3.4. The Framework goes on to set out the long-established 'five' purposes of Green Belt<sup>2</sup>:
  - to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
  - to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
  - to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
  - to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
  - to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 3.5. In respect of conserving and enhancing the natural environment, the NPPF states that plans should 'allocate the land with the least environmental or amenity value', noting the need to be consistent with other policies in the Framework<sup>3</sup>.
- 3.6. Overall the importance of Green Belt is clear, as are the connections to landscape and visual matters in respect of understanding the physical attributes, character and visual amenity of a given landscape.

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<sup>2</sup> Para 134, NPPF (2019)

<sup>3</sup> Para 171, NPPF (2019)

#### 4. RELEVANT EVIDENCE BASE

##### **Solihull MBC Landscape Character Assessment (2016)**

4.1. The 'Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment' (prepared by Watermans on behalf of SMBC) defines the character of the landscape in this area as 'LCA10, Urban Green Spaces' and notes that this area "largely comprises managed green spaces.....typical of the peri-urban fringe". LCA10 is further sub divided into two areas, of which the site is located within sub-area 10B.

4.2. In respect of LCA10B, the key characters are as follows:

- Green managed spaces, as a result of urban influences. These include playing fields, school grounds, cemetery and Marston Green Park, which is a Local Nature Reserve;
- Small to medium scale arable fields of a regular pattern with two active farms;
- Small pockets of deciduous woodland scattered across the sub-area;
- Limited public footpaths, although where in existence they are well sign posted;
- High hedges along the roads with fast moving traffic towards the east;
- Intimate and enclosed character within the western extent of the sub-area with overhanging trees along some roads;
- Strong tree cover in general across the sub-area;
- Poplar shelterbelts add to the character of the area at Marston Green;
- Constant road and aeroplane noise form background disturbance within the sub-area, which is more prevalent to the eastern extent in contrast to the west.

4.3. The LCA sets out a series of landscape sensitivities, which include reference to:

- a combination of attractive areas including the Marston Green Park;
- the legibility of the landscape pattern in the area is vague although it's character is distinct due to its geographical setting reaching up to the urban edge;
- the landscape is fragmented by the roads and other built influences which results in the unbalanced nature of the landscape.
- some detractors including road and air traffic noise, electricity pylons and litter specifically around Marston Green.
- the landscape condition varies between good to fair with some fields in need of management particularly around the Marston Green cricket ground.

4.4. The Landscape Character Sensitivity of this LCA sub area is considered to be **medium**.

- 4.5. In relation to visual sensitivity, the published assessment states that this sub-area consists of generally short distance views that are wide-framed, shallow and horizontal in orientation. There are some views towards commercial/employment buildings within the landscape and glimpses of the M42 from some parts of the sub-area. Overall the published assessment considered the visual sensitivity of the sub-area to be **low**.
- 4.6. The published character assessment states that the value of the area is considered to be **medium**. Marston Green Park Local Nature Reserve and the other recreational grounds are identified as locally valued characteristics.
- 4.7. In terms of landscape capacity, the published assessment states that this sub-area would typically have an overall **low** landscape capacity to accommodate change. However, it does state that the area would be able to accommodate some areas of new development, which would need to be of an appropriate type, scale and form, in keeping with the existing character and local distinctiveness of the area.
- 4.8. This forms a clear constraint to development and consequently the land cannot be considered as an area of 'the least environmental or amenity value'.
- 4.9. Other parts of the evidence base in relation to Green Belt utilise a 'red-amber-green' scoring system for sites. Further reference is made to the conclusions on landscape character in later stages of this landscape and visual statement when considering the Green Belt scoring system.

#### **Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment (2016)**

- 4.10. This document sets out a strategic review of the Green Belt in Solihull. The document states that:
- 4.11. *"Once complete, this Assessment will form the basis for more detailed assessment of Green Belt land within the Borough. This more detailed assessment will include consideration of wider criteria including analysis of constraints, spatial strategy, site selection methodology and other policy considerations."* (Page 1)
- 4.12. The Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Assessment Report (July 2016) (SGBA) identifies a number of Broad Areas of Green Belt land. It also identifies a number of Refined Parcels, which adjoin or lie adjacent to built-up areas. The site is located across **Refined Parcels 7 and 10, referred to as RP07 'Land to the south of Coleshill Road' and RP10 'Land to the north of Birmingham International Park' respectively.**



4.13. The SGBA scores RP's against the purposes of Green Belt, utilising potential scores of 0 to 3, with no weighting applied between the respective Green Belt purposes.

4.14. The numerical scoring applied in the SGBA is defined as follows:

- 0 - **does not** perform against the purpose;
- 1 - is **lower performing** against the purpose;
- 2 - is **more moderately performing** against the purpose; and
- 3 - is **higher performing** against the purpose.

4.15. The assessment scores each Refined Parcel against four purposes of the Green Belt and in relation to RP07 and RP10, it sets out the following:

GREEN BELT PURPOSE	RP07 SCORE
1 - CHECK UNRESTRICTED SPRAWL OF LARGE BUILT-UP AREAS	2
2 - PREVENT NEIGHBOURING TOWNS MERGING INTO ONE ANOTHER	2
3 - ASSIST IN SAFEGUARDING THE COUNTRYSIDE FROM ENCROACHMENT	1
4 - PRESERVE THE SETTING AND SPECIAL CHARACTER OF HISTORIC TOWNS	0
TOTAL	5

4.16. Overall the combined score for parcel RP07 identifies it as a parcel or area that is "lower performing" with an overall score of 5. Moderately performing in terms of purpose 1 and 2.

GREEN BELT PURPOSE	RP10 SCORE
1 - CHECK UNRESTRICTED SPRAWL OF LARGE BUILT-UP AREAS	1
2 - PREVENT NEIGHBOURING TOWNS MERGING INTO ONE ANOTHER	2
3 - ASSIST IN SAFEGUARDING THE COUNTRYSIDE FROM ENCROACHMENT	1
4 - PRESERVE THE SETTING AND SPECIAL CHARACTER OF HISTORIC TOWNS	0
TOTAL	4

4.17. Overall the combined score for parcel RP10 identifies it as a parcel or area that is "lower performing" with an overall score of 4. Moderately performing in terms of purpose 2.

4.18. Following both desk and field studies a number of landscape and visual constraints and opportunities have been identified. The constraints are considered to be:

- the limited local PROW network, (providing recreational opportunities for potential high sensitivity visual receptors);

- the location of the site within the Green Belt, which will have some influence on the value of the local landscape; and
- the findings of the Solihull Landscape Character Assessment that identify the LCA within which the site sits as having generally low capacity to accommodate change.

4.19. The opportunities are considered to be:

- There are no overriding statutory landscape planning designations;
- Existing vegetation and green infrastructure throughout the site, including hedgerows, providing opportunities to enhance this through a comprehensive landscape strategy;
- The presence of mature vegetation including the mature woodland of School Rough and hedgerows throughout the various parcels of the site, which will help to minimise the visual envelope of the site and will contribute to the capacity of the site to accommodate development; and
- The opportunity to propose development within LCA Sub-area 10B in this location which is of an appropriate type, scale and form and in keeping with the existing character and local distinctiveness of the area, as set out in the Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment.

4.20. These constraints and opportunities have been used to guide the proposed development and analyse the site in terms of its performance on and potential impact on the purposes of the Green Belt.

4.21. Table 1, below, sets out a summary of the likely impacts on Green Belt purpose, in landscape and visual terms, using the criteria set out by the Solihull Green Belt Strategic Assessment.

Green Belt purpose	Criteria	Summary
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.	<p>Is ribbon or other development present?</p> <p>Is other development detached from the existing large built-up area?</p>	<p>There is some ribbon development present in this location, including along Bickenhill Road.</p> <p>Other development is not detached from the existing large built up area, and forms part of the edge of Solihull.</p> <p>The site's existing physical and visual containment and the decision to concentrate proposed development south of a robust new green belt boundary along Bickenhill Road helps to ensure that the site will not result in the unrestricted sprawl of built up areas.</p>
To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.	Does the area represent a 'gap' between major urban areas?	The area does not represent a 'gap' between major urban areas and allows for the retention of land to the north as undeveloped land.
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.	<p>Is the area characterised by countryside?</p> <p>Does the area adjoin areas of countryside?</p> <p>Is ribbon or other development present within the area?</p>	<p>The area is heavily influenced by the existing urban edge, including buildings associated with Elmdon Trading Estate to the south, existing residential development along Bickenhill Road and other urban fringe land uses such as Marston Green burial ground.</p> <p>There are a number of open agricultural; fields to the north, however the existing urban edge of Solihull, Birmingham Airport and Birmingham Business Park are all in close proximity.</p> <p>There are some areas of ribbon development. It is considered due to the sites location it would not result in any encroachment into the countryside.</p>

To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.	Is the area within or adjoining a Conservation Area within a historic town? Are key landmarks or the historic core visible from within the area? Does the area contribute to the setting of the historic town?	The site lies outside of any Conservation Areas and is not located within a historic town.
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**Table 1: Impacts on Green Belt Purpose**

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- 4.22. This analysis broadly confirms that the scoring of RP07 and RP10 is consistent with the criteria within the Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment.
- 4.23. However, based on field work, it is clear to note that the Green Belt in this location is fragmented, as opposed to large swathes of open land which is seen in the southern area of the Borough's Green Belt. It should be recognised therefore that given the fragmented landscape within this area of the Green Belt, it is not consistent in its role and function in its entirety, which results in individual parcels performing lower or higher than nearby or even adjacent parcels in relation to the purposes of the Green Belt.
- 4.24. This is clearly seen in relation to the site which is formed of 5 parcels, however the emerging proposals for the site as has been demonstrated with the Vision Document submitted in February 2017 in response to the Draft Local Plan consultation (**Appendix 3, Fig 4.1**) proposes development on only 2 of the parcels which are considered to be suitable for development. The development envelope is purposely located away from the more open parcels of the site to the north, including that near to Marston Green Recreation Ground. This will seek to reduce visual prominence of any new built form and maintain the sense of open space on arrival into Marston Green in this location.
- 4.25. It could therefore be argued that certain parcels of the site may not score as high as those summarised in the above assessment.

## **5. THE SOLIHULL LOCAL PLAN REVIEW: DRAFT LOCAL PLAN SUPPLEMENTARY CONSULTATION (AND SITE ASSESSMENTS): ANALYSIS OF ASSESSMENT**

5.1. This section examines the latest evidence base assessment in relation to identifying strategic sites, which is set out in the Council's Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation Documents, including Site Assessments.

### **Site Selection Process Methodology**

5.2. The Supplementary Consultation (including Site Assessments) is a non-statutory supplementary consultation to that undertaken previously for the Draft Local Plan (December 2016).

5.3. The site selection process of the Draft Local Plan (DLP) Supplementary Consultation is split into two steps, initially based on a 'site hierarchy' and secondly use of 'planning judgement to refine site selections'. The approach notes that it aims to test the appropriateness of sites rather than allocating numbers per settlement.

5.4. Clearly any 'judgement' in respect of selecting sites needs to be objective, based on a clear and transparent methodology and applied consistently through the process. Any inconsistent judgements moving away from an objective process would be not be robust.

5.5. The first step of the approach sets out a 'site hierarchy', using a scoring system of 1-10. Sites falling within 1-4 are considered 'Green' and should generally be considered suitable for inclusion in the plan. Sites scoring 8-10 are 'Red' and are considered unsuitable.

5.6. Sites between 5 and 7 however are considered to have potential, but the document notes that these are not 'impact free', and also notes that there is potential for these to impact on the purposes of the Green Belt. These potential sites are sub-divided as scoring 5 (potential inclusion – yellow) and 6 or 7 (unlikely inclusion – blue).

5.7. These 'potential' (yellow) and 'unlikely' (blue) sites then proceed to Step Two of the site selection process, which assesses against the refining criteria. The analysis in step 2 is said to be used principally to confirm whether **'potential' allocations (yellow) should be included as green or amber sites in the consultation, and whether 'unlikely' allocations (blue) should be included as amber or red sites in the consultation** (emphasis added).

5.8. The factors set out in Table 2 below identify the considerations that have been taken into account at Step 2. It is specifically noted that **higher performing sites in the hierarchy**

**need more significant harmful impacts if they are to be excluded**, (emphasis added) and for sites not performing well in the hierarchy they will need more significant justification to be included.

FACTORS IN FAVOUR	FACTORS AGAINST
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SPATIAL STRATEGY.</li> <li>● ANY HARD CONSTRAINTS ONLY AFFECT A SMALL PROPORTION OF THE SITE AND/OR CAN BE MITIGATED.</li> <li>● SITE WOULD NOT BREACH A STRONG DEFENSIBLE BOUNDARY TO THE GREEN BELT.</li> <li>● ANY IDENTIFIED WIDER PLANNING GAIN OVER AND ABOVE WHAT WOULD NORMALLY BE EXPECTED.</li> <li>● SITES THAT WOULD USE OR CREATE A STRONG DEFENSIBLE BOUNDARY TO DEFINE THE EXTENT OF LAND TO BE REMOVED FROM THE GREEN BELT.</li> <li>● IF FINER GRAIN ACCESSIBILITY ANALYSIS<sup>38</sup> SHOWS THE SITE (OR THE PART TO BE INCLUDED) IS ACCESSIBLE.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● NOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SPATIAL STRATEGY.</li> <li>● OVERRIDING HARD CONSTRAINTS<sup>39</sup> THAT CANNOT BE MITIGATED.</li> <li>● SHELA<sup>40</sup> CATEGORY 340 SITES UNLESS DEMONSTRATED THAT CONCERNS CAN BE OVERCOME.</li> <li>● SITE WOULD BREACH A STRONG DEFENSIBLE BOUNDARY TO THE GREEN BELT.</li> <li>● SITES THAT WOULD NOT USE OR CREATE A STRONG DEFENSIBLE BOUNDARY TO DEFINE THE EXTENT OF LAND TO BE REMOVED FROM THE GREEN BELT.</li> <li>● IF FINER GRAIN ACCESSIBILITY ANALYSIS SHOWS THE SITE (OR THE PART TO BE INCLUDED) IS NOT ACCESSIBLE.</li> <li>● IF THE SITE IS IN A LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA THAT HAS A VERY LOW LANDSCAPE CAPACITY RATING.</li> <li>● IF THE SA APPRAISAL IDENTIFIES SIGNIFICANT HARMFUL IMPACTS.</li> </ul>

**Table 2: Step 2 Refinement Criteria**

5.9. The site is identified as site reference 196 in the Supplementary Consultation Site Assessments and is discussed further below.

**Application of Methodology in relation to Site Reference 196 (Land at Bickenhill Road, Bickenhill)**

5.10. The site is identified as site reference 196 in the Supplementary Consultation Site Assessments. The assessment confirms the SGBA score as lower performing with a score of 5. Additionally, it confirms the LCA10B Landscape character sensitivity as medium and visual sensitivity as low. Further criteria are the Sustainability Appraisal which is assessed as AECOM 62 17 effects: 8 positive (5 significant); 5 neutral; 4 negative (1 significant).

5.11. The Site Selection Step 1 is assessed as **Priority 5 – “potential allocation”** (i.e. yellow) and therefore is a site which is applicable to continue to ‘Step 2’, the assessment against refining criteria. The commentary in relation to the Step 2 criteria is provided within the Site Assessments and states:

*"Site is part within lower performing and part moderately performing parcel in the Green Belt Assessment, although it would result in an indefensible boundary. The site has a high level of accessibility, is within an area of medium landscape sensitivity with low capacity for change, and is suitable for development, subject to some constraints. The SA identifies 8 positive and 4 negative effects, with only the loss of agricultural land a significant negative. However, it would have a detrimental impact on the green belt and coalescence"*

- 5.12. The assessment then identifies the Site Selection Step 2 as being R (a Red site) which is *"Not to be included in the plan. This means that the development of the site has severe or widespread impacts that are not outweighed by the benefits of the proposal"*. **This conclusion is not agreed.**
- 5.13. On review of the above conclusions against the prescribed methodology, there are 2 clear errors of its application to note as follows. Firstly, The Councils' criteria at paragraph 73 of their Site Selection Process clearly states that ***"The analysis in Step 2 will be used principally to confirm whether 'potential' allocations (yellow) should be included as green or amber sites in the consultation, and whether 'unlikely' allocations (blue) should be included as amber or red sites in the consultation"*** (emphasis added). There is no discussion or mention that a 'potential' allocation (yellow) site at Step 1, could then be concluded to be a 'Red site', which appears to be the case in relation to the Site assessment for Land at Bickenhill Road (reference 196).
- 5.14 Furthermore, there is little justification within the comments provided by the Borough Council which could override this prescribed methodology and justify their conclusion that this is a 'Red Site'. This therefore demonstrates the incorrect application of the criteria and with no further justification on the conclusion reached. It is considered that the site should, by definition, be at least an Amber, if not a Green, Site.
- 5.15 Secondly, in relation to 'Step 2 – Refinement Criteria', the Council identify more site-specific factors which could impact on the performance of the Site (as copied in Table 2 within this report). The methodology then goes on to state in relation to these factors, that ***"higher performing sites in the hierarchy need more significant harmful impacts if they are to be excluded..."***.
- 5.16 To confirm, it is considered that the site is indeed a 'higher performing site', given it is a yellow site, which is the highest performing site that would reach the Stage 2 criteria (with green sites 'skipping' this step). On this basis, according to the Borough Council's criteria, the site therefore needs "more significant harmful impacts" if it is to be excluded.



On review of the Borough Council's assessment of the site (196) there appears to be no robust justification that there are "significant harmful impacts" in relation to the site, with the only significant negative effect identified in the Sustainability Appraisal being the loss of agricultural land. In relation to this point, it is argued that the majority of the sites which are included within this assessment step are also likely to result in similar losses of agricultural land; it should therefore be expected that all sites are scored similarly in this regard.

- 5.17 Looking at the commentary provided against the 'refined criteria', it is not clear what further "significant harmful impacts" the site would have, and certainly there is no indication that a "high number of significant effects" which would be required in order for the site "to be excluded". Furthermore, no mention is made of the Sustainability Appraisal results that confirm more positive than negative effects, including 5 significant positive effects. It is acknowledged that although the commentary states that development of the site "would result in an indefensible boundary" and "would have a detrimental impact on the green belt and coalescence", these are not identified as 'significant' as per the specific methodology.
- 5.18 In relation to this matter, it is recognised that in accordance with the NPPF, Green Belt boundaries should be defined clearly, using physical features that are readily recognised and likely to be permanent. It is considered that the combination of School Rough woodland, the Low Brook, and Bickenhill Road itself could form a clearly defined Green Belt boundary. The landscape and green infrastructure strategy for the site as fully detailed in the Vision Document submitted in February 2017 proposes new planting which will serve to break down the scale of built form and provide further containment. These mitigation measure would help to establish and enhance a robust landscaped edge to any proposed development and a definitive boundary to the future Green Belt. It is therefore disputed that the site would result in an indefensible boundary and "would have a detrimental impact on the Green Belt".
- 5.19 Finally, it is not clear whether this assessment has assumed the development of all the 5 parcels, which is not what is being promoted. Careful consideration has been given to the extent of the development envelope from a landscape (and ecological) perspective, ensuring development is located away from the more open parcels of the site to the north, including that near to Marston Green Recreational Ground. It is this which has resulted in 3 of the 5 parcels of land **not** being proposed for built form.
- 5.20 The Vision Document, which is provided at **Appendix 4** to these Representations, has been produced which demonstrates that the site is suitable for residential development,

and in particular discusses such issues further, including identifying further specific landscape mitigation measures and opportunities.

- 5.21 In light of the above matters, it is considered the site should be, at least, an Amber, if not Green, Site and accordingly considered suitable as a proposed housing allocation.

## 6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- 6.1. This landscape and visual statement has been prepared in respect of land at Bickenhill Road, Marston Green, and its classification in the Solihull MBC Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation (reference 196).
- 6.2. The site is located in the Green Belt, a matter which the NPPF attaches 'great importance' to, aiming to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. In respect of conserving and enhancing the natural environment, the NPPF states that plans should 'allocate the land with the least environmental or amenity value'.
- 6.3. As such there is an inherent connection between landscape and visual matters and Green Belt and a consequent need to give due consideration to matters of landscape character, sensitivity and value.
- 6.4. This report has summarised the relevant landscape and greenbelt evidence to date in relation to Land at Bickenhill, Marston Green, notably with reference to Solihull MBC Landscape Character Assessment (2016) and Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment (2016). The latter document identified the site as lying within 2 'refined parcels', both of which were identified as parcels that are "lower performing" when considered against the 5 purposes of the Green Belt.
- 6.5. This report has then continued to examine the latest evidence base assessment in relation to identifying strategic sites, which is set out in the Council's Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation Documents, including Site Assessments. This analysis is provided in full in Section 5 of this report, however in summary identifies 2 clear errors in relation to the application of the council's stipulated methodology/criteria.
- 6.6. Firstly, the Councils' criteria at paragraph 73 of their Site Selection Process clearly states that "*The analysis in step 2 will be used principally to confirm whether 'potential' allocations (yellow) should be included **as green or amber sites in the consultation.***" (emphasis added). The document clearly states that the Land at Bickenhill Road (reference 196) is indeed a 'potential' allocation (yellow), however following Step 2 is then considered to be included as a 'red' site. There is no discussion or mention within the stipulated methodology that a 'potential' allocation (yellow) site at Step 1, could then be concluded to be a 'Red site', as is the case in relation to the Site assessment for Land at Bickenhill Road.
- 6.7. Furthermore, there is little justification within the stipulated comments of the Council's assessment which could override this prescribed methodology and justify their conclusion

that this is a 'Red Site'. This therefore demonstrates the incorrect application of their own criteria and with no further justification on their conclusion, it is considered the site should, by definition, be at least an Amber, if not Green, Site.

- 6.8. Secondly, in relation to 'Step 2 – Refinement Criteria', the Council identify more site-specific factors which could impact on the performance of the Site (as copied in Table 2 within this report). The methodology then goes on to state in relation to these factors, that "higher performing sites in the hierarchy [of which Land at Bickenhill is considered as such] **need more significant harmful impacts if they are to be excluded...**" (emphasis added). On review of the council's assessment of the site there appears to be no robust justification that there are 'significant harmful impacts' in relation to the site, and therefore reasons for its exclusion. Further work and assessment prepared by the team, as set out in the enclosed 'Vision Document', also seeks to provide additional evidence how the site is suitable for development.
- 6.9. In conclusion, the incorrect application of the Council's methodology, and lack of justification in relation to the site selection process has led to the land at Bickenhill Road, Marston Green, site reference 196, being incorrectly excluded from the Amber or Green sites. If the criteria had been applied correctly, particularly in relation to the fact that "potential allocations" (yellow) should be included as either an amber or green sites within the consultation, the site at Bickenhill Road would not have been excluded. It is on this basis the site should, by definition, be a least an Amber, if not Green, site.

## **1. INTRODUCTION: LOCAL PLAN REVIEW**

- 1.1. Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) adopted their current local plan, the 'Solihull Local Plan', in December 2013. SMBC is undertaking a Local Plan Review (LPR) to ensure that an up to date planning framework is in place that addresses potential issues.
- 1.2. The evidence base to the Local Plan includes several documents related to the strategic selection of sites and the Green Belt context to Solihull. These documents have informed the selection of strategic sites to be brought forward under the draft Local Plan.
- 1.3. Those referred to as part of this landscape and visual statement include:
  - Solihull MBC Landscape Character Assessment (2016);
  - Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment, Assessment Report (July 2016);
  - Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation (January 2019);
  - Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation: Site Assessments (January 2019);
  - and
  - Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation: Amber Sites (January 2019).
- 1.4. Reference has also been made to additional sources of data and information, for example (but not limited to) Ordnance Survey mapping, aerial photography and landscape character studies.
- 1.5. This report first summarises the relevant landscape and greenbelt evidence to date in relation to Land at Bickenhill, Marston Green, notably with reference to Solihull MBC Landscape Character Assessment (2016) and Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment (2016), given its relevance to the whole site selection process.
- 1.6. **The report then examines the latest evidence base assessment in relation to identifying strategic sites, which is set out in the Council's Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation Documents (as listed above), including Site Assessments. This key analysis is provided in Section 5.**
- 1.7. Whilst Green Belt is not a 'landscape' policy as such, there is an inherent connection between Green Belt matters and those relating to landscape and visual issues, particularly in respect of considering landscape enclosure and defining the physical attributes of a landscape.

- 1.8. Principles related to the appraisal and assessment of landscape and visual matters are set out in the Landscape Institute (LI) and the Institute of Environmental Management (IEMA) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (2013)<sup>1</sup> and reference is made to this document as necessary.

## **2. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- 2.1. In respect of the context set out above, Pegasus Group has undertaken a strategic review of an area of landscape located to the east of Marston Green which currently lies within the West Midlands Green Belt. The Green Belt in this area of the Borough comprises smaller, more refined parcels surrounded by urban areas.
- 2.2. The area of landscape under consideration includes five parcels of land totalling 20.5 ha which lie to the north and south of Bickenhill Road and are further separated by private tracks and well defined hedgerows. The western boundary of the site is defined by Low Brook, with the northern, eastern and southern boundaries defined by field boundaries and/or Bickenhill Road.

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<sup>1</sup> Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (April, 2013)

### **3. GREEN BELT AND THE NPPF**

#### **NPPF**

- 3.1. Approximately 12,000 hectares of Solihull MBC is designated as Green Belt land, accounting for approximately two thirds of the Borough's land area. The Green Belt within Solihull MBC forms an integral part of the West Midlands Green Belt stretching between the Birmingham Conurbation, including Solihull, and the surrounding major urban areas.
- 3.2. The Green Belt in the vicinity of Marston Green lies to the east of the settlement's urban edge, separating it from the development of Birmingham Business Park, Birmingham Airport and the National Exhibition Centre. This area of Green Belt does not physical join the more extensive area of the West Midlands Green Belt which extends southwards towards Warwick District, rather it includes smaller, fragmented and more refined areas within the urban areas.
- 3.3. The NPPF attaches 'great importance' to Green Belts. Section 13 of the NPPF (2019) addresses Green Belt matters, noting the fundamental aim of preventing urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The Framework also notes that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.
- 3.4. The Framework goes on to set out the long-established 'five' purposes of Green Belt<sup>2</sup>:
  - to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
  - to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
  - to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
  - to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
  - to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 3.5. In respect of conserving and enhancing the natural environment, the NPPF states that plans should 'allocate the land with the least environmental or amenity value', noting the need to be consistent with other policies in the Framework<sup>3</sup>.
- 3.6. Overall the importance of Green Belt is clear, as are the connections to landscape and visual matters in respect of understanding the physical attributes, character and visual amenity of a given landscape.

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<sup>2</sup> Para 134, NPPF (2019)

<sup>3</sup> Para 171, NPPF (2019)

#### **4. RELEVANT EVIDENCE BASE**

##### **Solihull MBC Landscape Character Assessment (2016)**

4.1. The 'Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment' (prepared by Watermans on behalf of SMBC) defines the character of the landscape in this area as 'LCA10, Urban Green Spaces' and notes that this area "largely comprises managed green spaces.....typical of the peri-urban fringe". LCA10 is further sub divided into two areas, of which the site is located within sub-area 10B.

4.2. In respect of LCA10B, the key characters are as follows:

- Green managed spaces, as a result of urban influences. These include playing fields, school grounds, cemetery and Marston Green Park, which is a Local Nature Reserve;
- Small to medium scale arable fields of a regular pattern with two active farms;
- Small pockets of deciduous woodland scattered across the sub-area;
- Limited public footpaths, although where in existence they are well sign posted;
- High hedges along the roads with fast moving traffic towards the east;
- Intimate and enclosed character within the western extent of the sub-area with overhanging trees along some roads;
- Strong tree cover in general across the sub-area;
- Poplar shelterbelts add to the character of the area at Marston Green;
- Constant road and aeroplane noise form background disturbance within the sub-area, which is more prevalent to the eastern extent in contrast to the west.

4.3. The LCA sets out a series of landscape sensitivities, which include reference to:

- a combination of attractive areas including the Marston Green Park;
- the legibility of the landscape pattern in the area is vague although it's character is distinct due to its geographical setting reaching up to the urban edge;
- the landscape is fragmented by the roads and other built influences which results in the unbalanced nature of the landscape.
- some detractors including road and air traffic noise, electricity pylons and litter specifically around Marston Green.
- the landscape condition varies between good to fair with some fields in need of management particularly around the Marston Green cricket ground.

4.4. The Landscape Character Sensitivity of this LCA sub area is considered to be **medium**.



- 4.5. In relation to visual sensitivity, the published assessment states that this sub-area consists of generally short distance views that are wide-framed, shallow and horizontal in orientation. There are some views towards commercial/employment buildings within the landscape and glimpses of the M42 from some parts of the sub-area. Overall the published assessment considered the visual sensitivity of the sub-area to be **low**.
- 4.6. The published character assessment states that the value of the area is considered to be **medium**. Marston Green Park Local Nature Reserve and the other recreational grounds are identified as locally valued characteristics.
- 4.7. In terms of landscape capacity, the published assessment states that this sub-area would typically have an overall **low** landscape capacity to accommodate change. However, it does state that the area would be able to accommodate some areas of new development, which would need to be of an appropriate type, scale and form, in keeping with the existing character and local distinctiveness of the area.
- 4.8. This forms a clear constraint to development and consequently the land cannot be considered as an area of 'the least environmental or amenity value'.
- 4.9. Other parts of the evidence base in relation to Green Belt utilise a 'red-amber-green' scoring system for sites. Further reference is made to the conclusions on landscape character in later stages of this landscape and visual statement when considering the Green Belt scoring system.

#### **Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment (2016)**

- 4.10. This document sets out a strategic review of the Green Belt in Solihull. The document states that:
- 4.11. *"Once complete, this Assessment will form the basis for more detailed assessment of Green Belt land within the Borough. This more detailed assessment will include consideration of wider criteria including analysis of constraints, spatial strategy, site selection methodology and other policy considerations."* (Page 1)
- 4.12. The Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Assessment Report (July 2016) (SGBA) identifies a number of Broad Areas of Green Belt land. It also identifies a number of Refined Parcels, which adjoin or lie adjacent to built-up areas. The site is located across **Refined Parcels 7 and 10, referred to as RP07 'Land to the south of Coleshill Road' and RP10 'Land to the north of Birmingham International Park' respectively.**

4.13. The SGBA scores RP's against the purposes of Green Belt, utilising potential scores of 0 to 3, with no weighting applied between the respective Green Belt purposes.

4.14. The numerical scoring applied in the SGBA is defined as follows:

- 0 - **does not** perform against the purpose;
- 1 - is **lower performing** against the purpose;
- 2 - is **more moderately performing** against the purpose; and
- 3 - is **higher performing** against the purpose.

4.15. The assessment scores each Refined Parcel against four purposes of the Green Belt and in relation to RP07 and RP10, it sets out the following:

GREEN BELT PURPOSE	RP07 SCORE
1 - CHECK UNRESTRICTED SPRAWL OF LARGE BUILT-UP AREAS	2
2 - PREVENT NEIGHBOURING TOWNS MERGING INTO ONE ANOTHER	2
3 - ASSIST IN SAFEGUARDING THE COUNTRYSIDE FROM ENCROACHMENT	1
4 - PRESERVE THE SETTING AND SPECIAL CHARACTER OF HISTORIC TOWNS	0
TOTAL	5

4.16. Overall the combined score for parcel RP07 identifies it as a parcel or area that is "lower performing" with an overall score of 5. Moderately performing in terms of purpose 1 and 2.

GREEN BELT PURPOSE	RP10 SCORE
1 - CHECK UNRESTRICTED SPRAWL OF LARGE BUILT-UP AREAS	1
2 - PREVENT NEIGHBOURING TOWNS MERGING INTO ONE ANOTHER	2
3 - ASSIST IN SAFEGUARDING THE COUNTRYSIDE FROM ENCROACHMENT	1
4 - PRESERVE THE SETTING AND SPECIAL CHARACTER OF HISTORIC TOWNS	0
TOTAL	4

4.17. Overall the combined score for parcel RP10 identifies it as a parcel or area that is "lower performing" with an overall score of 4. Moderately performing in terms of purpose 2.

4.18. Following both desk and field studies a number of landscape and visual constraints and opportunities have been identified. The constraints are considered to be:

- the limited local PROW network, (providing recreational opportunities for potential high sensitivity visual receptors);

- the location of the site within the Green Belt, which will have some influence on the value of the local landscape; and
- the findings of the Solihull Landscape Character Assessment that identify the LCA within which the site sits as having generally low capacity to accommodate change.

4.19. The opportunities are considered to be:

- There are no overriding statutory landscape planning designations;
- Existing vegetation and green infrastructure throughout the site, including hedgerows, providing opportunities to enhance this through a comprehensive landscape strategy;
- The presence of mature vegetation including the mature woodland of School Rough and hedgerows throughout the various parcels of the site, which will help to minimise the visual envelope of the site and will contribute to the capacity of the site to accommodate development; and
- The opportunity to propose development within LCA Sub-area 10B in this location which is of an appropriate type, scale and form and in keeping with the existing character and local distinctiveness of the area, as set out in the Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment.

4.20. These constraints and opportunities have been used to guide the proposed development and analyse the site in terms of its performance on and potential impact on the purposes of the Green Belt.

4.21. Table 1, below, sets out a summary of the likely impacts on Green Belt purpose, in landscape and visual terms, using the criteria set out by the Solihull Green Belt Strategic Assessment.

Green Belt purpose	Criteria	Summary
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.	<p>Is ribbon or other development present?</p> <p>Is other development detached from the existing large built-up area?</p>	<p>There is some ribbon development present in this location, including along Bickenhill Road.</p> <p>Other development is not detached from the existing large built up area, and forms part of the edge of Solihull.</p> <p>The site's existing physical and visual containment and the decision to concentrate proposed development south of a robust new green belt boundary along Bickenhill Road helps to ensure that the site will not result in the unrestricted sprawl of built up areas.</p>
To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.	Does the area represent a 'gap' between major urban areas?	The area does not represent a 'gap' between major urban areas and allows for the retention of land to the north as undeveloped land.
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.	<p>Is the area characterised by countryside?</p> <p>Does the area adjoin areas of countryside?</p> <p>Is ribbon or other development present within the area?</p>	<p>The area is heavily influenced by the existing urban edge, including buildings associated with Elmdon Trading Estate to the south, existing residential development along Bickenhill Road and other urban fringe land uses such as Marston Green burial ground.</p> <p>There are a number of open agricultural; fields to the north, however the existing urban edge of Solihull, Birmingham Airport and Birmingham Business Park are all in close proximity.</p> <p>There are some areas of ribbon development. It is considered due to the sites location it would not result in any encroachment into the countryside.</p>

To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.	Is the area within or adjoining a Conservation Area within a historic town? Are key landmarks or the historic core visible from within the area? Does the area contribute to the setting of the historic town?	The site lies outside of any Conservation Areas and is not located within a historic town.
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**Table 1: Impacts on Green Belt Purpose**

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- 4.22. This analysis broadly confirms that the scoring of RP07 and RP10 is consistent with the criteria within the Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment.
- 4.23. However, based on field work, it is clear to note that the Green Belt in this location is fragmented, as opposed to large swathes of open land which is seen in the southern area of the Borough's Green Belt. It should be recognised therefore that given the fragmented landscape within this area of the Green Belt, it is not consistent in its role and function in its entirety, which results in individual parcels performing lower or higher than nearby or even adjacent parcels in relation to the purposes of the Green Belt.
- 4.24. This is clearly seen in relation to the site which is formed of 5 parcels, however the emerging proposals for the site as has been demonstrated with the Vision Document submitted in February 2017 in response to the Draft Local Plan consultation (**Appendix 3, Fig 4.1**) proposes development on only 2 of the parcels which are considered to be suitable for development. The development envelope is purposely located away from the more open parcels of the site to the north, including that near to Marston Green Recreation Ground. This will seek to reduce visual prominence of any new built form and maintain the sense of open space on arrival into Marston Green in this location.
- 4.25. It could therefore be argued that certain parcels of the site may not score as high as those summarised in the above assessment.

## **5. THE SOLIHULL LOCAL PLAN REVIEW: DRAFT LOCAL PLAN SUPPLEMENTARY CONSULTATION (AND SITE ASSESSMENTS): ANALYSIS OF ASSESSMENT**

5.1. This section examines the latest evidence base assessment in relation to identifying strategic sites, which is set out in the Council's Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation Documents, including Site Assessments.

### **Site Selection Process Methodology**

5.2. The Supplementary Consultation (including Site Assessments) is a non-statutory supplementary consultation to that undertaken previously for the Draft Local Plan (December 2016).

5.3. The site selection process of the Draft Local Plan (DLP) Supplementary Consultation is split into two steps, initially based on a 'site hierarchy' and secondly use of 'planning judgement to refine site selections'. The approach notes that it aims to test the appropriateness of sites rather than allocating numbers per settlement.

5.4. Clearly any 'judgement' in respect of selecting sites needs to be objective, based on a clear and transparent methodology and applied consistently through the process. Any inconsistent judgements moving away from an objective process would be not be robust.

5.5. The first step of the approach sets out a 'site hierarchy', using a scoring system of 1-10. Sites falling within 1-4 are considered 'Green' and should generally be considered suitable for inclusion in the plan. Sites scoring 8-10 are 'Red' and are considered unsuitable.

5.6. Sites between 5 and 7 however are considered to have potential, but the document notes that these are not 'impact free', and also notes that there is potential for these to impact on the purposes of the Green Belt. These potential sites are sub-divided as scoring 5 (potential inclusion – yellow) and 6 or 7 (unlikely inclusion – blue).

5.7. These 'potential' (yellow) and 'unlikely' (blue) sites then proceed to Step Two of the site selection process, which assesses against the refining criteria. The analysis in step 2 is said to be used principally to confirm whether **'potential' allocations (yellow) should be included as green or amber sites in the consultation, and whether 'unlikely' allocations (blue) should be included as amber or red sites in the consultation** (emphasis added).

5.8. The factors set out in Table 2 below identify the considerations that have been taken into account at Step 2. It is specifically noted that **higher performing sites in the hierarchy**

**need more significant harmful impacts if they are to be excluded**, (emphasis added) and for sites not performing well in the hierarchy they will need more significant justification to be included.

FACTORS IN FAVOUR	FACTORS AGAINST
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SPATIAL STRATEGY.</li> <li>● ANY HARD CONSTRAINTS ONLY AFFECT A SMALL PROPORTION OF THE SITE AND/OR CAN BE MITIGATED.</li> <li>● SITE WOULD NOT BREACH A STRONG DEFENSIBLE BOUNDARY TO THE GREEN BELT.</li> <li>● ANY IDENTIFIED WIDER PLANNING GAIN OVER AND ABOVE WHAT WOULD NORMALLY BE EXPECTED.</li> <li>● SITES THAT WOULD USE OR CREATE A STRONG DEFENSIBLE BOUNDARY TO DEFINE THE EXTENT OF LAND TO BE REMOVED FROM THE GREEN BELT.</li> <li>● IF FINER GRAIN ACCESSIBILITY ANALYSIS<sup>38</sup> SHOWS THE SITE (OR THE PART TO BE INCLUDED) IS ACCESSIBLE.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● NOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SPATIAL STRATEGY.</li> <li>● OVERRIDING HARD CONSTRAINTS<sup>39</sup> THAT CANNOT BE MITIGATED.</li> <li>● SHELA<sup>40</sup> CATEGORY 340 SITES UNLESS DEMONSTRATED THAT CONCERNS CAN BE OVERCOME.</li> <li>● SITE WOULD BREACH A STRONG DEFENSIBLE BOUNDARY TO THE GREEN BELT.</li> <li>● SITES THAT WOULD NOT USE OR CREATE A STRONG DEFENSIBLE BOUNDARY TO DEFINE THE EXTENT OF LAND TO BE REMOVED FROM THE GREEN BELT.</li> <li>● IF FINER GRAIN ACCESSIBILITY ANALYSIS SHOWS THE SITE (OR THE PART TO BE INCLUDED) IS NOT ACCESSIBLE.</li> <li>● IF THE SITE IS IN A LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA THAT HAS A VERY LOW LANDSCAPE CAPACITY RATING.</li> <li>● IF THE SA APPRAISAL IDENTIFIES SIGNIFICANT HARMFUL IMPACTS.</li> </ul>

**Table 2: Step 2 Refinement Criteria**

5.9. The site is identified as site reference 196 in the Supplementary Consultation Site Assessments and is discussed further below.

**Application of Methodology in relation to Site Reference 196 (Land at Bickenhill Road, Bickenhill)**

5.10. The site is identified as site reference 196 in the Supplementary Consultation Site Assessments. The assessment confirms the SGBA score as lower performing with a score of 5. Additionally, it confirms the LCA10B Landscape character sensitivity as medium and visual sensitivity as low. Further criteria are the Sustainability Appraisal which is assessed as AECOM 62 17 effects: 8 positive (5 significant); 5 neutral; 4 negative (1 significant).

5.11. The Site Selection Step 1 is assessed as **Priority 5 – “potential allocation”** (i.e. yellow) and therefore is a site which is applicable to continue to ‘Step 2’, the assessment against refining criteria. The commentary in relation to the Step 2 criteria is provided within the Site Assessments and states:



*"Site is part within lower performing and part moderately performing parcel in the Green Belt Assessment, although it would result in an indefensible boundary. The site has a high level of accessibility, is within an area of medium landscape sensitivity with low capacity for change, and is suitable for development, subject to some constraints. The SA identifies 8 positive and 4 negative effects, with only the loss of agricultural land a significant negative. However, it would have a detrimental impact on the green belt and coalescence"*

- 5.12. The assessment then identifies the Site Selection Step 2 as being R (a Red site) which is *"Not to be included in the plan. This means that the development of the site has severe or widespread impacts that are not outweighed by the benefits of the proposal"*. **This conclusion is not agreed.**
- 5.13. On review of the above conclusions against the prescribed methodology, there are 2 clear errors of its application to note as follows. Firstly, The Councils' criteria at paragraph 73 of their Site Selection Process clearly states that ***"The analysis in Step 2 will be used principally to confirm whether 'potential' allocations (yellow) should be included as green or amber sites in the consultation, and whether 'unlikely' allocations (blue) should be included as amber or red sites in the consultation"*** (emphasis added). There is no discussion or mention that a 'potential' allocation (yellow) site at Step 1, could then be concluded to be a 'Red site', which appears to be the case in relation to the Site assessment for Land at Bickenhill Road (reference 196).
- 5.14 Furthermore, there is little justification within the comments provided by the Borough Council which could override this prescribed methodology and justify their conclusion that this is a 'Red Site'. This therefore demonstrates the incorrect application of the criteria and with no further justification on the conclusion reached. It is considered that the site should, by definition, be at least an Amber, if not a Green, Site.
- 5.15 Secondly, in relation to 'Step 2 – Refinement Criteria', the Council identify more site-specific factors which could impact on the performance of the Site (as copied in Table 2 within this report). The methodology then goes on to state in relation to these factors, that ***"higher performing sites in the hierarchy need more significant harmful impacts if they are to be excluded..."***.
- 5.16 To confirm, it is considered that the site is indeed a 'higher performing site', given it is a yellow site, which is the highest performing site that would reach the Stage 2 criteria (with green sites 'skipping' this step). On this basis, according to the Borough Council's criteria, the site therefore needs "more significant harmful impacts" if it is to be excluded.

On review of the Borough Council's assessment of the site (196) there appears to be no robust justification that there are "significant harmful impacts" in relation to the site, with the only significant negative effect identified in the Sustainability Appraisal being the loss of agricultural land. In relation to this point, it is argued that the majority of the sites which are included within this assessment step are also likely to result in similar losses of agricultural land; it should therefore be expected that all sites are scored similarly in this regard.

- 5.17 Looking at the commentary provided against the 'refined criteria', it is not clear what further "significant harmful impacts" the site would have, and certainly there is no indication that a "high number of significant effects" which would be required in order for the site "to be excluded". Furthermore, no mention is made of the Sustainability Appraisal results that confirm more positive than negative effects, including 5 significant positive effects. It is acknowledged that although the commentary states that development of the site "would result in an indefensible boundary" and "would have a detrimental impact on the green belt and coalescence", these are not identified as 'significant' as per the specific methodology.
- 5.18 In relation to this matter, it is recognised that in accordance with the NPPF, Green Belt boundaries should be defined clearly, using physical features that are readily recognised and likely to be permanent. It is considered that the combination of School Rough woodland, the Low Brook, and Bickenhill Road itself could form a clearly defined Green Belt boundary. The landscape and green infrastructure strategy for the site as fully detailed in the Vision Document submitted in February 2017 proposes new planting which will serve to break down the scale of built form and provide further containment. These mitigation measure would help to establish and enhance a robust landscaped edge to any proposed development and a definitive boundary to the future Green Belt. It is therefore disputed that the site would result in an indefensible boundary and "would have a detrimental impact on the Green Belt".
- 5.19 Finally, it is not clear whether this assessment has assumed the development of all the 5 parcels, which is not what is being promoted. Careful consideration has been given to the extent of the development envelope from a landscape (and ecological) perspective, ensuring development is located away from the more open parcels of the site to the north, including that near to Marston Green Recreational Ground. It is this which has resulted in 3 of the 5 parcels of land **not** being proposed for built form.
- 5.20 The Vision Document, which is provided at **Appendix 4** to these Representations, has been produced which demonstrates that the site is suitable for residential development,

and in particular discusses such issues further, including identifying further specific landscape mitigation measures and opportunities.

- 5.21 In light of the above matters, it is considered the site should be, at least, an Amber, if not Green, Site and accordingly considered suitable as a proposed housing allocation.

## 6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- 6.1. This landscape and visual statement has been prepared in respect of land at Bickenhill Road, Marston Green, and its classification in the Solihull MBC Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation (reference 196).
- 6.2. The site is located in the Green Belt, a matter which the NPPF attaches 'great importance' to, aiming to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. In respect of conserving and enhancing the natural environment, the NPPF states that plans should 'allocate the land with the least environmental or amenity value'.
- 6.3. As such there is an inherent connection between landscape and visual matters and Green Belt and a consequent need to give due consideration to matters of landscape character, sensitivity and value.
- 6.4. This report has summarised the relevant landscape and greenbelt evidence to date in relation to Land at Bickenhill, Marston Green, notably with reference to Solihull MBC Landscape Character Assessment (2016) and Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment (2016). The latter document identified the site as lying within 2 'refined parcels', both of which were identified as parcels that are "lower performing" when considered against the 5 purposes of the Green Belt.
- 6.5. This report has then continued to examine the latest evidence base assessment in relation to identifying strategic sites, which is set out in the Council's Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation Documents, including Site Assessments. This analysis is provided in full in Section 5 of this report, however in summary identifies 2 clear errors in relation to the application of the council's stipulated methodology/criteria.
- 6.6. Firstly, the Councils' criteria at paragraph 73 of their Site Selection Process clearly states that "*The analysis in step 2 will be used principally to confirm whether 'potential' allocations (yellow) should be included **as green or amber sites in the consultation.***" (emphasis added). The document clearly states that the Land at Bickenhill Road (reference 196) is indeed a 'potential' allocation (yellow), however following Step 2 is then considered to be included as a 'red' site. There is no discussion or mention within the stipulated methodology that a 'potential' allocation (yellow) site at Step 1, could then be concluded to be a 'Red site', as is the case in relation to the Site assessment for Land at Bickenhill Road.
- 6.7. Furthermore, there is little justification within the stipulated comments of the Council's assessment which could override this prescribed methodology and justify their conclusion

that this is a 'Red Site'. This therefore demonstrates the incorrect application of their own criteria and with no further justification on their conclusion, it is considered the site should, by definition, be at least an Amber, if not Green, Site.

- 6.8. Secondly, in relation to 'Step 2 – Refinement Criteria', the Council identify more site-specific factors which could impact on the performance of the Site (as copied in Table 2 within this report). The methodology then goes on to state in relation to these factors, that "higher performing sites in the hierarchy [of which Land at Bickenhill is considered as such] **need more significant harmful impacts if they are to be excluded...**" (emphasis added). On review of the council's assessment of the site there appears to be no robust justification that there are 'significant harmful impacts' in relation to the site, and therefore reasons for its exclusion. Further work and assessment prepared by the team, as set out in the enclosed 'Vision Document', also seeks to provide additional evidence how the site is suitable for development.
- 6.9. In conclusion, the incorrect application of the Council's methodology, and lack of justification in relation to the site selection process has led to the land at Bickenhill Road, Marston Green, site reference 196, being incorrectly excluded from the Amber or Green sites. If the criteria had been applied correctly, particularly in relation to the fact that "potential allocations" (yellow) should be included as either an amber or green sites within the consultation, the site at Bickenhill Road would not have been excluded. It is on this basis the site should, by definition, be a least an Amber, if not Green, site.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL STATEMENT: GREEN BELT REVIEW**

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **REPRESENTATIONS TO THE DLPR**

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **VISION DOCUMENT, FEBRUARY 2017**



## **APPENDIX 5**

### **UN-MET HOUSING NEED AND DUTY-TO-COOPERATE**