



**GALLAGHER**

ESTATES

Part of the L&Q Group

LAND AT BICKENHILL ROAD

**MARSTON GREEN**

VISION DOCUMENT



**GALLAGHER**  
ESTATES  
Part of the L&Q Group

**Pegasus**  
Design

Pegasus Group  
5 The Priory  
Old London Road  
Canwell  
Sutton Coldfield  
B75 5SH  
T 0121 308 9570 | E Birmingham@pegasuspg.co.uk

Prepared by Pegasus Design  
Pegasus Design is part of Pegasus Group Ltd  
Prepared on behalf of Gallagher Estates

February 2016 Project code BIR.5088\_00

Contact: Urban Design - Sabrina Thomas  
Planning - Michelle Simpson-Gallego

COPYRIGHT The contents of this document must not be copied or reproduced in whole or in part without the written consent of Pegasus Planning Group Ltd. Crown copyright. All rights reserved, Licence number 100042093.

# CONTENTS

PAGE 05	<b>1</b>	PAGE 06	<b>2</b>	PAGE 12	<b>3</b>
INTRODUCTION		PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT		SITE ASSESSMENT	
PAGE 12	<b>4</b>	PAGE 34	<b>5</b>	PAGE 36	<b>6</b>
EMERGING PROPOSALS		SITE SELECTION ASSESSMENT		CONCLUSIONS	

NOTE: THIS DOCUMENT IS DESIGNED TO BE VIEWED AS A3 DOUBLE SIDED

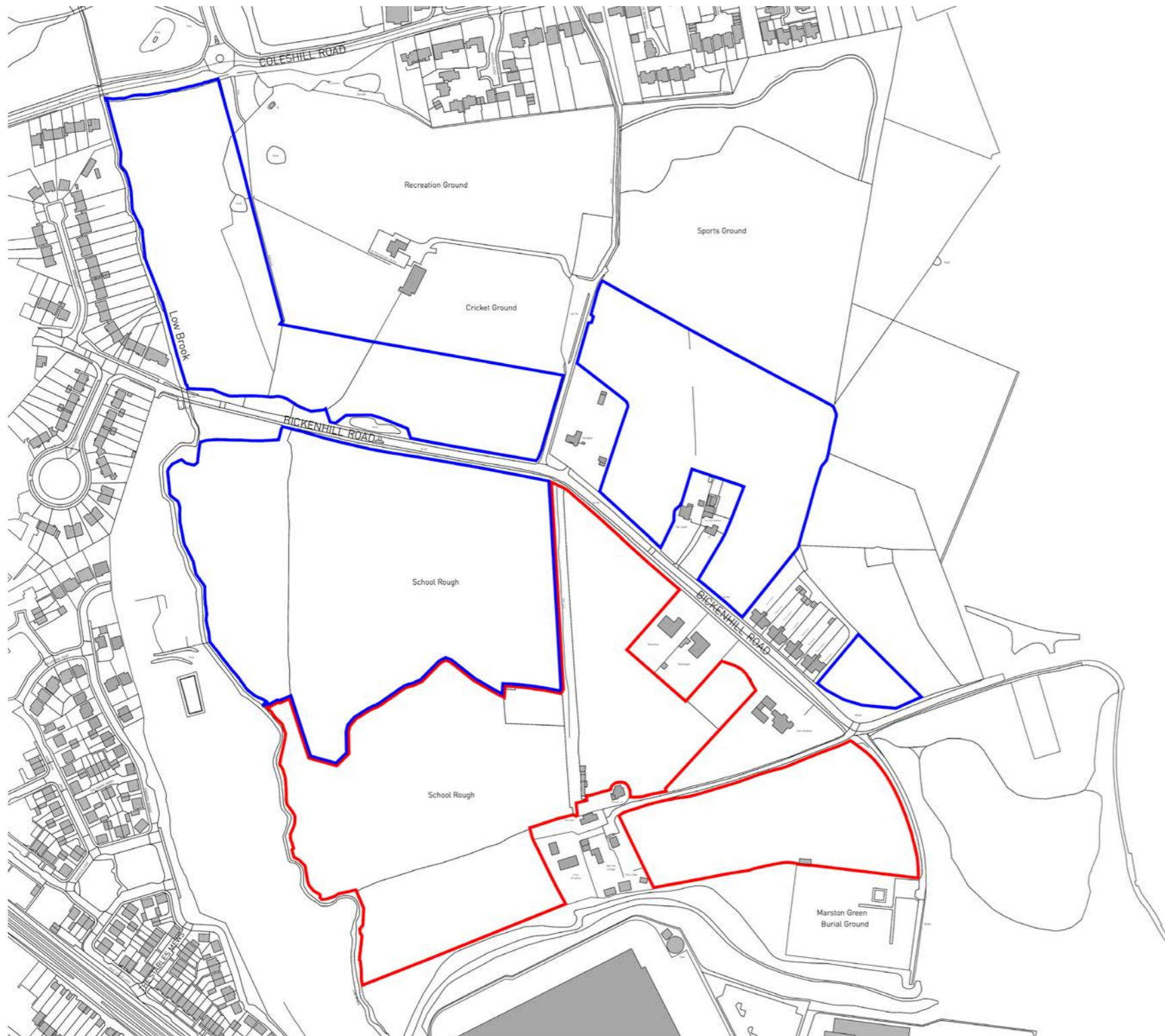


FIG 1.1. THE SITE

## PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

- 1.1 Gallagher Estates is promoting land at Bickenhill Road, Marston Green for housing development. Land at Bickenhill Road comprises of five parcels of land located either side of Bickenhill Road, with intervening residential development. The sites are located to the south-east of the village of Marston Green where there are a number of existing residential properties. In total all five sites are approximately 20.5 hectares in extent and could accommodate up to 180 dwellings.
- 1.2 This document has been prepared in response to the Solihull Local Plan Review and provides background information to demonstrate that the site is suitable for residential development. The site has previously been submitted to the Council for their consideration as part of the previous 'Call for Sites' consultation, undertaken during November to January 2016. This document builds on the work previously undertaken, and provides robust background information to demonstrate how the site is suitable for housing development.
- 1.3 This document brings together assessment work from a number of disciplines undertaken by the project team which comprises of a wide range of specialist consultants who are advising on the proposals. The document also sets out the design principles which have informed the proposed masterplan contained as **Fig 4.1**.
- 1.4 This document demonstrates that the site is suitable, available and achievable for residential development. This is particularly important given the need for the Borough to accommodate significantly more housing land than was previously allocated in the adopted Solihull Local Plan (2013).

# 01 | INTRODUCTION

The Local Plan Review envisages the need to deliver 15,029 additional dwellings in the plan period. As fully detailed within Section 2 of this document, it is clear from the work that has informed the preparation of the Draft Local Plan that to achieve the housing requirement there is a need to release land from the Green Belt. Separate representations are made on behalf of Gallagher Estates to the Draft Local Plan which set out that there is a need for Solihull MBC to release more land from the Green Belt than is currently proposed within the Draft Local Plan.

1.5 Land at Bickenhill Road, Marston Green benefits from its close proximity to the UK Central Hub Growth Area where significant employment and jobs will be provided.

1.6 This Document sets out that Land off Bickenhill Road, Marston Green is suitable for residential development and should be considered as a housing allocation.

## DOCUMENT FORMAT

1.7 Following this introduction, the document sets out the planning policy context for the site and its development potential. This is then followed by an assessment of the site which provides an overview of the technical studies and assessments that have been undertaken to demonstrate the suitability of the site for residential development. The emerging proposals for the site are then set out as shown the Design Concept Plan (**Fig 4.1**). Finally, the document provides an overall assessment of the sites residential potential utilising the Council's Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA).

1.8 This document is sub divided into separate sections as follows:

### **Section 1 Introduction**

### **Section 2 Planning Policy Context**

### **Section 3 Site Assessment:**

**The Development Site;**

**Landscape and Visual Issues;**

**Movement and Access;**

**Flood Risk and Drainage;**

**Ecology;**

**Cultural Heritage;**

**Other Matters**

### **Section 4 Emerging Proposals**

### **Section 5 Site Selection Assessment**

### **Section 6 Conclusions**

## GALLAGHER ESTATES

Gallagher Estates, now part of the L&Q Group, is one of the largest strategic land companies in the UK, promoting and developing residential and mixed use schemes in all geographical areas. Gallagher Estates play a unique role as master developer, taking forward and coordinating all aspects of the development process from initial site assembly through to master planning, planning promotion and Section 106 negotiations before delivering serviced land to the market place.

# 02 | PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 This Section summarises the adopted and emerging policy context for this site at the time of writing this document. This promotional document has been produced in response to the Draft Local Plan consultation. The current adopted Development Plan for the area is the Solihull Local Plan (December 2013).

## ADOPTED DEVELOPMENT PLAN

### Solihull Local Plan 2013

- 2.2 The adopted Local Plan sets out the long-term spatial vision for how Solihull's towns, villages and countryside will develop and change over the Plan period (2011-2028). This vision will be delivered through a strategy for promoting, distributing and delivering sustainable development and growth.
- 2.3 Shortly after adoption, the Local Plan was subject to a successful legal challenge which means that the current Local Plan has no overall housing requirement for the Plan period. As a result, those parts of the Local Plan, that relate to housing numbers for the plan period, are not adopted.
- 2.4 Two other reasons have triggered the need for Solihull to undertake an early review, namely the plans for high speed rail (HS2 Interchange Station known as Arden Cross) and the impact within the Housing Market Area (HMA) relating to Birmingham's inability to meet its own housing requirement within its boundaries with the shortfall needing to be met elsewhere within the HMA. The growth aspirations of UK Central Hub Area, which includes Birmingham Airport, National Exhibition Centre (NEC), Birmingham Business Park and Jaguar Land Rover (JLR), absence of adopted housing policies and housing needs across the HMA have all contributed to a situation where the Council needs to re-examine to undertake a Local Plan Review to ensure that a proper planning framework is in place that addresses these issues. This document has been prepared in response to the council's consultation on the Local Plan Review.

2.5 The site is located wholly within the West Midlands Green Belt. A small portion of the site has been identified as a potential Local Wildlife Site (pLWS) on the Local Plan Review Draft Constraints Map, November 2016. This however relates to the smallest of the five land parcels being promoted by Gallagher Estates but upon which no development is proposed to take place as fully detailed within the consideration of Ecology matters contained within Section 3 of this Document. The site is located predominantly in Flood Zone 1. There are small portions of Flood Zone 3 adjacent to Low Brook which affects the western fringes of the two largest sites. Flood Risk and Drainage matters are fully discussed within Section 3 of this Document.

# Draft Local Plan Review Proposals Map November 2016

**Retained Allocations from SLP 2013**

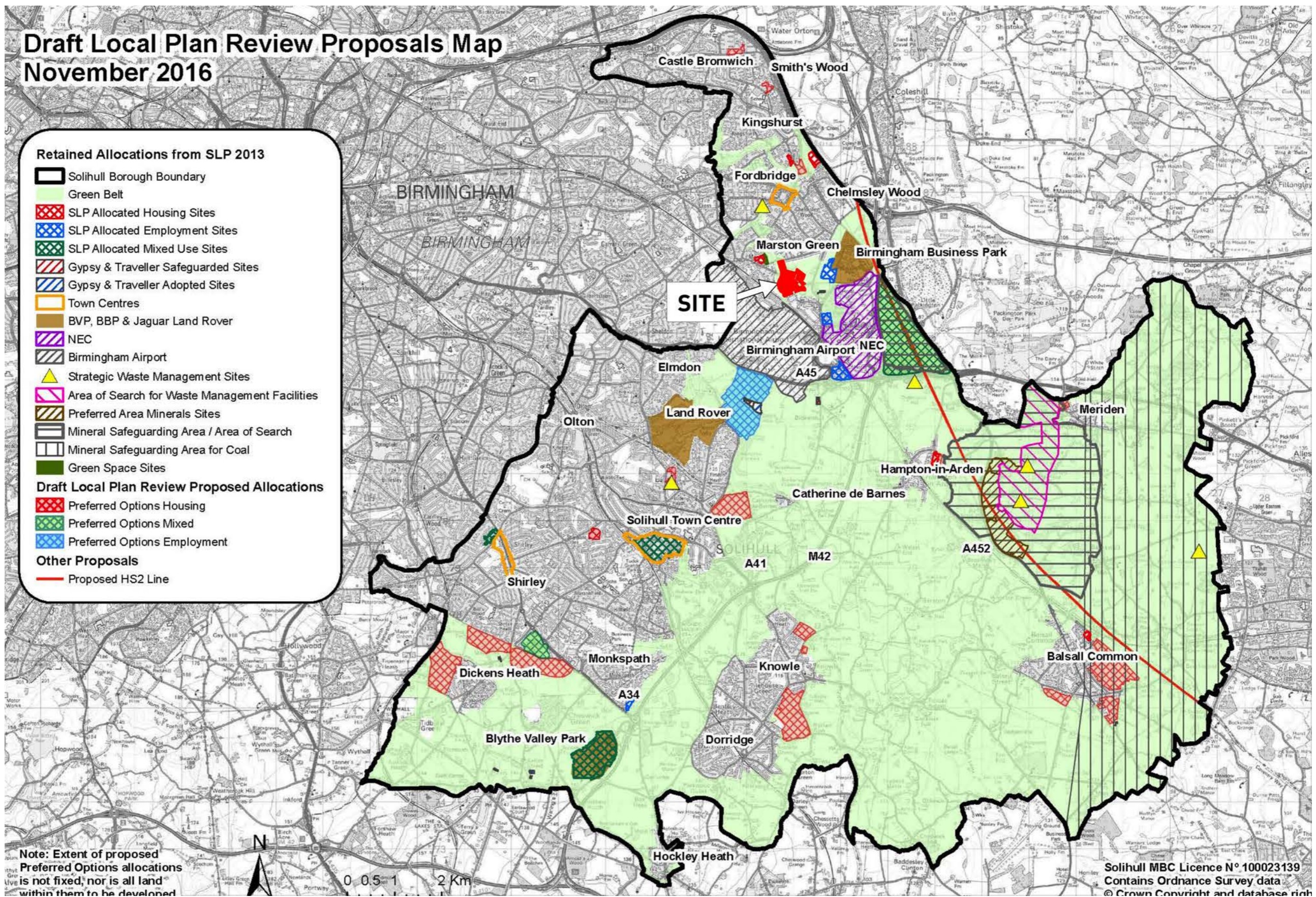
- Solihull Borough Boundary
- Green Belt
- SLP Allocated Housing Sites
- SLP Allocated Employment Sites
- SLP Allocated Mixed Use Sites
- Gypsy & Traveller Safeguarded Sites
- Gypsy & Traveller Adopted Sites
- Town Centres
- BVP, BBP & Jaguar Land Rover
- NEC
- Birmingham Airport
- Strategic Waste Management Sites
- Area of Search for Waste Management Facilities
- Preferred Area Minerals Sites
- Mineral Safeguarding Area / Area of Search
- Mineral Safeguarding Area for Coal
- Green Space Sites

**Draft Local Plan Review Proposed Allocations**

- Preferred Options Housing
- Preferred Options Mixed
- Preferred Options Employment

**Other Proposals**

- Proposed HS2 Line



Note: Extent of proposed Preferred Options allocations is not fixed, nor is all land within them to be developed

0 0.5 1 2 Km

Solihull MBC Licence N° 100023139  
Contains Ordnance Survey data  
© Crown Copyright and database right

FIG 2.1. DRAFT SOLIHULL LOCAL PLAN (2016)

## EMERGING DEVELOPMENT PLAN

### Draft Solihull Local Plan (2016)

- Delivering Sustainable Economic Growth through:

- \* Developing the UK Central Hub Area (Policy P1) which embraces Birmingham Airport, the NEC, Arden Cross, Birmingham Business Park and JLR comprises:
  - creating Arden Cross – an exemplary international station with new public realm supporting the potential for commercial and residential opportunities;
  - upgrading and refurbishing the NEC – the Council will enable a broad range of developments enhancing visitor offerings, diversifying facilities and increasing international competitiveness;
  - further development of Birmingham Airport – increasing passenger, freight, terminals and transport facilities and capacity, which allows the extended runway to be maximised. The Council will also support a broad range of ancillary and complementary facilities including hotels, administrative offices, car parks and other appropriate facilities to serve the airport;
  - expansion of JLR – supporting further success in the global vehicles industry through supporting and encouraging the development of JLR within its boundary defined in the Local Plan and through the release of Green Belt land; and
  - continue to support and encourage the development of Birmingham Business Park within its defined boundary to support its role as a prime employment location in the Borough.

- \* Expansion of Blythe Valley Business Park (Policy PA1), which comprises:

- encouraging the delivery of a major quantity of employment floorspace;
- upgrading existing and creating new facilities; and
- attracting investors.

- \* Maintaining Strong, Competitive Town Centres, which comprises specific focus on:

- Solihull Town Centre;
- Shirley Town Centre; and
- Chelmsley Wood Town Centre.

- Requiring Land for Housing:

- \* Delivering at least 15,029 additional homes between 2014-2033;

- \* Allocation for at least 6,522 net additional homes to ensure sufficient housing supply to deliver 15,029 homes in the period 2014-2033;

- \* annual housing requirement is 791 net additional homes 2014-2033;

- \* New housing will be supported on unidentified in accessible locations, where they contribute towards meeting borough-wide housing needs and towards enhancing local character and distinctiveness;

- \* Allocations will be released on a phased basis in line with a phasing designation and will not be released before they reach their specified phase.

- Providing Homes for All through:

- \* Providing 50% Affordable Housing on:
  - All sites creating 11 units or more, or which have a combined gross space of more than 1,000 sq.m.; and
  - Rural Exception Sites.

- \* Providing Market Housing; and

- \* Looking favourably on self and custom housebuilding.

2.6 In order to achieve the target of delivering additional dwellings, the Council proposes to allocate 18 sites as proposed Housing Land Allocations under Policy P5. The Summary Table of Allocated Sites within the Draft Local Plan details the proposed allocations. In relation to Marston Green, the Summary Table indicates that the Council have retained the allocation from the previous Plan at "Chelmsley Lane, Marston Green" (Site Reference SLP9) which is expected to deliver 80 dwellings. This site is located to the north-west of the proposed site, to the north of Coleshill Road and development has not yet commenced on this site. There are no new proposed allocations in Marston Green within the Draft Local Plan.



## STRATEGIC GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT

- 2.7 Approximately 12,000 hectares of Solihull MBC is designated as Green Belt land, accounting for approximately two thirds (67%) 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. In order to meet the housing requirements of the Borough, there will be a need to release sites from the Green Belt forms an integral part of the West Midlands Green Belt stretching between the Birmingham Conurbation, including Solihull, and the surrounding major urban areas.
- 2.8 As part of the Local Plan Review, Solihull MBC commissioned a Strategic Green Belt Assessment to evaluate the extent to which the land currently designated as Green Belt within the Borough fulfils the essential characteristics and purposes of Green Belt land as set out in Paragraphs 79 and 80 of the NPPF.
- 2.9 The basis of the Assessment was to provide a 'policy off' approach and consideration of other constraints or the development potential of any of the Green Belt land has not been included in the assessment. The Strategic Green Belt assessment has concluded that a number of refined parcels of Green Belt land in the Borough do not perform against any of the first four purposes of the Green Belt but as set out above does not make any recommendations for amendments to the Green Belt boundary or determine whether land should be removed from the Green Belt. It is acknowledged that the assessment forms the basis for more detailed assessment work that will take place.

- 2.10 The site has been assessed within the Council's Green Belt Assessment as located across Refined Parcels 7 and 10. Refined Parcels 7 and 10 scored 5 and 4 respectively. It is noted that these two parcels are particularly low on purpose three to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. This is discussed fully within Section 3 – Landscape and Visual Issues. The need for Green Belt release has been accepted by the Borough Council with the majority of the proposed allocations for both residential and both employment allocations being within the designated Green Belt. It is considered that a residential proposal for Land at Bickenhill Road, Marston Green would assist Solihull MBC in providing additional housing for the Borough in a sustainable location.

## Solihull Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment SHELAA 2016

- 2.11 Solihull MBC undertook a 'Call for Sites' exercise during the period November to January 2016 to inform the SHELAA which was published in December 2016. The SHELAA seeks to ensure that sufficient housing and employment in the Borough over the plan period. This document forms a key part of the evidence base to inform the review of the Local Plan.
- 2.12 The SHELAA focused on 247 sites identified by the Council and suggested as part of the 'Call for Sites' exercise in Winter 2015, 12 of which were subsequently removed from the Study by the Council.
- 2.13 The assessment examined whether each identified site is 'deliverable' (i.e. available now, suitable and achievable), 'developable', or 'not currently developable' for housing or economic development over the plan period. Of the 235 sites assessed:
- 206 sites were considered most appropriate for housing development; and
  - 29 sites were considered most appropriate for employment use.

- 2.14 A number of sites were removed taking account of overlapping, allocations and other factors, leaving 167 housing sites for assessment. The SHELAA assessed whether each identified sites is 'deliverable' (i.e. available now, suitable and achievable), 'developable', or 'not currently developable' for housing or economic development over the plan period. In conclusion, the SHELAA found that 167 sites could potentially yield around 13,085 dwellings. Of this theoretical yield:
- The assessment examined whether each identified site is 'deliverable' (i.e. available now, suitable and achievable), 'developable', or 'not currently developable' for housing or economic development over the plan period;
  - 9,262 dwellings could be expected to come forward for development in years 6-10, of which 8,660 dwellings (93.5%) are from sites wholly or predominantly contained within the currently designated Green Belt;
  - 7,878 dwellings could be expected to come forward for development in years 11-17, of which 7,524 dwellings (95.5%) are from sites which are wholly or predominantly contained within the currently designated Green Belt;
  - 6,740 dwellings could be expected to come forward for development beyond the plan period, of which all dwellings are from sites which are wholly or predominantly within the currently designated Green Belt.
- 2.15 Critically, the study has found that outstanding planning commitments in the Borough together with windfall sites are unable to meet the dwelling target for the first five-year period (with a 20% 'buffer'). To fully meet the five-year target, it will be necessary for a number of Category 1 sites (including sites within the Green Belt) to be brought forward. Similarly, to fully meet the Borough's 10-year target (with a 20% 'buffer') and residual 17-year dwelling requirement, the assessment set out it would be necessary for Category 1 sites within the Green Belt to be brought forward, in addition to planning commitments and windfall sites.
- 2.16 The SHELAA also sets out that *"It is important to emphasise that 150 of the 167 sites assessed in the SHELAA for housing are wholly or predominantly contained within the currently designated Green Belt. If theoretical supply from units within the Green Belt is removed from the assessment, only 1,090 units could be delivered from and which is currently not within the Green Belt."* On the basis of the assessment it was concluded therefore that it will be necessary to release some Green Belt land to meet the Borough's housing requirements.
- 2.17 A number of sites were assessed in Marston Green and Bickenhill, including the *Land at Bickenhill Road* (Ref: 1012). The assessment of the site concluded that the site performs well against availability and achievability criteria and faces some suitability constraints. The report outlined how the site is within or adjacent to a major urban area, the existing road access is adequate, the site does not include nor is it adjacent to any Listed Buildings, is Grade 5 Agricultural land, has no bad neighbours and is not affected by ground conditions constraints or high pressure gas pipelines. On all of the above suitability criteria the sites considered collectively scored the highest scoring of 5.
- 2.18 The suitability constraints identified relate to flood risk and biodiversity for which a suitability score of 2 was afforded to the sites. Section 3 of this Document details the suitability of the site in relation Flood Risk and Drainage and Ecology. To summarise, 10-20% of the overall sites does fall within Flood Zone 1 however as shown on (Fig 1.1), these areas will not be within the proposed development envelop, and the northern parcel is not within the red line boundary of the site with all development proposed to take place within Flood Zone 3. As such the suitability scoring should be updated to reflect no development taking place within Flood Zone 1.

2.19 In relation to ecology, the SHELAA set out that 10-24% of the site is within a LWS. It is however the case that only the smallest of the five land parcels is a LWS, namely Heath Corner LWS which does not fall within the red line boundary of the site. Schools Rough which is an existing area of woodland within the largest of the sites is an Ecosite, not a LWS. The site had previously been put forward as a potential LWS, this was however rejected by the LWS Panel, the site therefore only has the status of an Ecosite. In any event, as shown on the Design Concept Plan, development is not proposed on the LWS or on the Ecosite, the ancient woodland is to be retained with a 30m buffer to development, as such there is no adverse impact on the LWS or non- designated Ecosite. The suitability score of 2 should be updated to reflect that emerging proposals for the site do not propose development on the LWS as shown on **Fig. 1.1**. Ecology matters are discussed in detail within Section 3 of this Document.

#### **SOLIHULL BOROUGH LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT, NOVEMBER 2016**

2.20 Within the Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment, the site is located within Landscape Character Area (LCA) 10: Urban Green Spaces. LCA10 is sub divided into two areas, the site is located within sub-area 10B, the key characteristics fully detailed within the Landscape Character Assessment. Landscape and Visual Issues are fully considered within Section 3 of this Document which also sets out the proposed landscape strategy for the site taking into account landscape character and the role of the site in the Green Belt.

#### **INTERIM SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL, JANUARY 2017**

2.21 The site was assessed as part of a larger site known as *Land at Bickenhill Road and Coleshill Road* (Aecom reference 62; SMBC reference CW2). The site scored well across a number of SA objectives including; contributing to regeneration and economic development, reducing social exclusion, making efficient use of existing physical infrastructure, distance to greenspace, access to healthcare and leisure and play facilities and access to opportunities, basic services and amenities.

2.22 The site was only assessed as red on one objective, relating to soil in that the combination of all five sites contain more than 20ha of agricultural land of Grade 1-2 or 20ha of agricultural land Grade 1-3b. In relation to flood risk, the assessment sets out that up to 50% of the site is within Flood Zones 2 or 3. In relation to ecology, it is set out that the site overlaps or contains a LWS or records of protected species. The commentary goes on to set out that the site is not of a scale that would be able to deliver strategic improvements to ecological networks and so development would likely lead to loss. In relation to noise, road noise, noise from an adjacent industrial park and resulting from agricultural processes are considered in the SA as potential noise sources.

2.23 The proposal would result in some loss of agricultural land however large parts of the site would be not be developed as shown on the Design Concept Plan (**Fig 4.1**). In relation to Flood Risk, Section 3 of this document and the Design Concept Plan demonstrate that the development would be wholly within Flood Zone 1. Ecological Issues are dealt with fully in Section 3 and as shown on the Design Concept Plan, no development is proposed on the smallest site which is designated as a LWS. Development is also offset from the School Rough Ecosite and ancient woodland, and provides an opportunity to enhance this area and the Lowbrook watercourse corridor as set out in Section 3. Noise is not considered to be a constraint to the development of the site and is dealt with further in Section 3 of this Document.

# 03 | SITE ASSESSMENT

## SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 Gallagher Estates has an interest in five parcels of land totalling 20.5 hectares predominantly made up of grassland pasture which are separated by Bickenhill Road, private tracks and well defined hedgerows. The individual parcels of land range from 0.25 hectares to 12 hectares in size.
- 3.2 The site is located to the north and south of Bickenhill Road to the east of Marston Green. The site is located within Solihull Metropolitan Borough and is part of the West Midlands Green Belt. The site is located in close proximity to Birmingham Airport and the National Exhibition Centre (NEC) as well as the proposed location for UK Central (High Speed 2). Agricultural land and sports pitches lie to the north and east; small clusters of residential development borders the sites whilst residential development lies to the west and an existing industrial estate and Marston Green burial ground lies to the south of the site.
- 3.3 The western boundary of the site is Low Brook which flows adjacent to the site from north to south. The northern, eastern and southern boundaries of the site are defined by historic field boundaries.

**KEY**

	SITE LOCATION ACRES / HECTARES
	LOCAL BUILDING CONTEXT
	PRIMARY ROAD
	PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY
	BUS STOP
	SPEED LIMIT
	EXISTING VEGETATION (INDICATIVE)
	ECO SITE - NON STATUTORY LOCAL DESIGNATION
	VIEWS INTO THE SITE
	SITE LOW POINT
	SITE HIGH POINT
	INDUSTRY
	LOCAL WILDLIFE SITE (LWS)
	LOCAL FACILITIES
	SUB STATION
	FLOODING FROM SURFACE WATER
	POTENTIAL FOR FLOODING

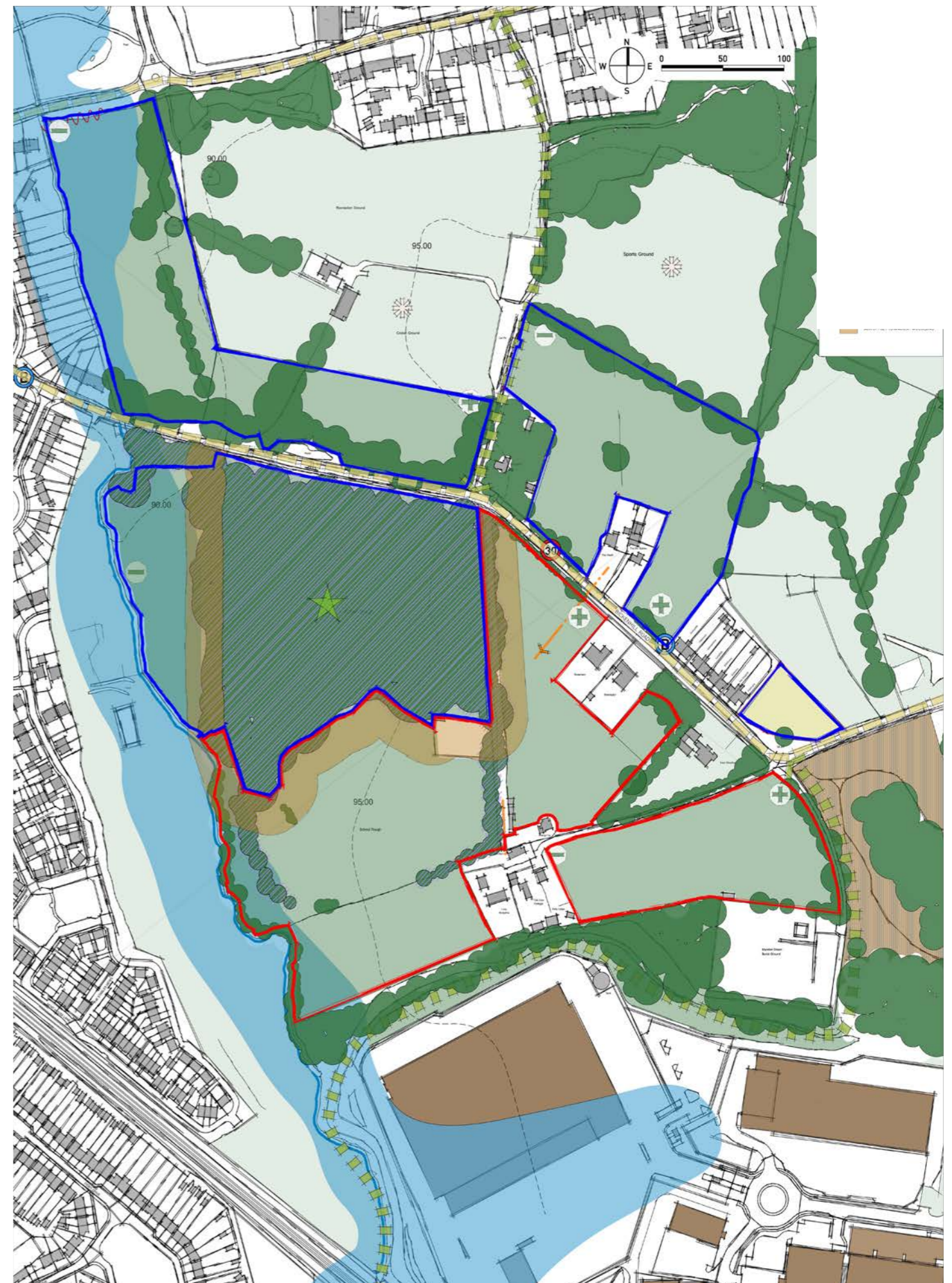


FIG 3.1. SITE AND CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

- 3.4 The five individual parcels are comprised of:
- Parcel 1 – the largest parcel of land approximately 12 hectares in size. It is located to the southern side of Bickenhill Road which forms the north and north-eastern boundary of the site. Low Brook and the associated trees form the western boundary. The central area of the site is a woodland known as School Rough Coppice, which is a locally designated Ecosite. There are a small number of existing residential properties to the south of Bickenhill Road adjacent to the east of the site.
  - Parcel 2 – an ‘L’ shaped parcel of land to the northern side of Bickenhill Road immediately adjacent to the built up area of Marston Green. Low Brook forms the western site boundary, Bickenhill Road and the trees immediately adjacent form the southern boundary and the access track to the Marston Green Recreation ground forms the western boundary. This land is shown outlined in true on **Fig. 1.1** where no more development is proposed.
  - Parcel 3 – the third largest parcel is located to the west of parcel 2 and is approximately 2.78 hectares. Bickenhill Road forms the southern boundary of the sites and mature trees form the northern and western boundaries. The site is comprised of an agricultural field and wraps around existing residential development. This land is shown outlined in blue on **Fig. 1.1** where no development is proposed.

- Parcel 4 – is an agricultural field of approximately 1.78 hectares located to the south of Bickenhill Road. The land parcel is bounded to the north, east and west by tracks which provide access to residential properties adjacent to the site. A burial ground is located immediately to the south of the site and Birmingham Airport is located further to the south.
  - Parcel 5 – the smallest land parcel at 0.25 hectares and is located on a near 90-degree bend in Bickenhill Road which forms the south-western and south-eastern boundaries. To the north-west is the curtilage of existing residential properties with trees and hedgerows forming the north-eastern boundary. This site is a designated LWS, namely Heath Corner LWS. This land is shown outlined in true in **Fig. 1.1** where no development is proposed.
- 3.5 In terms of physical site constraints there is a large wooded area in the centre of parcel 2 which is considered to be a priority habitat of deciduous woodland. Additional trees and hedgerows which mark historic fields boundaries. Topographically, the site gradually falls from east to west.
- 3.6 All of the sites are predominantly in Flood Zone 1 however the western fringes of parcel 1 and 2 lie are within Flood Zone 3, adjacent to Low Brook. Flood Risk and Drainage are fully discussed within Section 3 of this Document.

- 3.7 The surrounding area is comprised of residential development to the west and north of the sites of predominantly detached and semi-detached two-story properties. To the south is Birmingham International Airport, Elmdon Trading Estate and the NEC. Also to the south and adjacent to the NEC is land safeguarded for UK Central as part of High Speed 2.

## LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

### Policy Context

- 3.8 The Solihull Local Plan: Shaping a Sustainable Future, December 2013 sets out the long term vision, objectives and planning policies for the borough. Those policies relevant to a study of landscape and visual matters include Policy P10: Natural Environment and Policy P17: Countryside and Green Belt.
- 3.9 The Solihull Draft Local Plan (November 2016) explains its policy context in terms of 'Protecting and Enhancing the Environment' at section 9. It notes the borough has a high green and blue infrastructure (GI) as one of its greatest assets, that extends beyond the countryside to include green and blue spaces of the street scene, gardens, ponds, rivers etc. The natural environment is fundamental to Solihull's attractive urban and rural environment (para. 288).
- 3.10 Policy P10 Natural Environment is central to this, and recognises the importance of a healthy natural environment in its own right. The Council will seek to protect, enhance and restore the diverse features of its Arden landscape, and seek to create new habitat and promote local distinctiveness. The policy also seeks to conserve, enhance and restore biodiversity and geodiversity across the Borough, protecting habitat and species, in particular recognised areas such as SSSIs and Local Nature Reserves. Outside designated areas, developers are expected to take full account of nature conservation and geological value, and demonstrate appropriate mitigation where development is permitted.
- 3.11 Policy P11 Water management discusses the need for all new development to have regard to the actions and objectives of the relevant River Basin Management Plan, with the use of sustainable urban drainage systems in the context of all new major development.
- 3.12 Policy P14 Amenity discusses the need to ensure a good standard of amenity of all existing and future occupiers of houses, businesses and other uses. A number of criteria are relevant including:
- High quality design;
  - Visual amenity and minimising visual impact;
  - The scale, character and appearance of new infrastructure elements related to electronic communications;
  - Safeguarding important trees and hedgerows and new planting;
  - Safeguarding areas of countryside with intrinsically dark sky from the impacts of light pollution; and
  - Protect the tranquil and locally distinctive areas in the Borough by guiding new development to locations that will avoid or minimise adverse impacts.
- 3.13 Policy P14 is cross referenced with Policy P15 Securing Design Quality (Section 10: Promoting Quality of Place), which expects all proposals to contribute to, or create, high quality spaces and places that have regard to local distinctiveness. Proposals will be expected to meet a number of key principles:
- Conserve and enhance local character, distinctiveness and streetscape quality (ref. scale, massing, density);
  - Future proofing the design and layout;
  - Provision for water management;
  - Proactive approach to responding to climate change and adoption of low carbon construction principles;
  - Conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity;
  - Respect and enhance landscape quality, including trees, hedgerows and other landscape features of value, and contribute to strategic green infrastructure; and
  - Create attractive, safe, active legible and uncluttered streets and public spaces.

- 3.14 Clearly there is a balance within these criteria between more 'strategic; design issues, with those at a more schematic and detailed level. All established urban design principles and guidance need to be adhered to, with the design process active at prep-application stage.
- 3.15 Policy P16 concerns heritage assets, and makes reference again to the Arden landscape, and that all development proposals likely to impact on this character and significance will be expected to demonstrate how this impact has been addressed.
- 3.16 Policy P17 Countryside and Green belt, advises that inappropriate development will not be permitted in the Solihull Green belt (see below in respect of recent Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment).

### Landscape Context

- 3.17 At a national level the site is located within the National Character Area Profile 97: Arden as published by Natural England (2012).
- 3.18 Landscape character at a local level is defined by the Solihull Borough Landscape Character (2016). The site is located in Landscape Character Area (LCA) 10: Urban Green Spaces. The key characteristics of this LCA can be summarised as follows:
- Generally flat landform ranging from 80m to 100m AOD;
  - River Cole to the north, Kingshurst Brook and Low Brook to the south;
  - Much of the land within this area is used for recreation;
  - Agriculture, deciduous woodland and cemetery use also exist;
  - Tree cover is extensive large due to the strong presence of woodlands and tree lined waterways especially Low Brook;
  - Hedgerows and scattered trees within the fields are also distributed across the area;
  - The area is contained by the urban edge of Solihull and therefore heavily influenced by its presence;
  - Road infrastructure is a dominant feature specifically in the southern and eastern extent of the area.
  - Strong network of footpaths, possibly due to its location and function as a green space at the edge of an urban area, providing requisite recreational routes and therefore of considerable value;
  - There are four principal parks located here, including Marston Green Recreation Ground.

- 3.19 LCA 10 is sub-divided into two sub-areas, the site is located within sub-area 10B. The key characteristics of sub-area 10B are as follows:
- 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.
- 3.20 In relation to landscape sensitivity, the published assessment notes that this sub-area has some attractive areas including Marston Green Park. It states that there are some detractors including road and air traffic noise, electricity pylons and litter specifically around Marston Green. According to the published assessment, the landscape character sensitivity of the sub-area is considered to be medium.

1. VIEW FROM PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY , MARSTON GREEN RECREATION GROUND, LOOKING EAST
2. VIEW FROM PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY, MARSTON GREEN BURIAL GROUND, LOOKING WEST
3. VIEW FROM BICKENHILL ROAD, LOOKING NORTH





- 3.21 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.
- 3.22 The published character assessment states that the value of the sub-area is considered to be medium.
- 3.23 In terms of landscape capacity, the published assessment states that this sub-area would typically have an overall low landscape capacity to accommodate change. It states that the sub-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.

#### Visual Context

- 3.24 The visual envelope is defined broadly as follows:
- \* from the north, by built form and vegetation along Coleshill Road, in combination with tree cover associated within the sports and recreation grounds;
  - \* from the east by the 'layering' of field boundary and road corridor vegetation;
  - \* from the south by the large scale commercial buildings of Elmdon Trading Estate; and
  - \* from west by the mature woodland of School Rough, the wooded streamline of the Low Brook and the existing urban edge.
- 3.25 Views towards the various parts of site are generally limited by the mature woodland of School Rough and the patchwork of built form and vegetation along local roads. There are some open views into the areas of the site off Bickenhill Road from the road corridor itself. There are also views into the south-eastern parcel of the site from the public right of way that runs south of Bickenhill Lane towards the cemetery. The public right of way passing through Marston Green recreation ground also allows for views of the northern part of the site.

#### Landscape and Visual Constraints and Opportunities

- 3.26 Landscape and visual constraints can be used to guide the development of a proposal in a positive manner, often leading to opportunities and not just creating absolute constraints to development. 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.

3.27 Landscape and visual opportunities can be summarised as follows:

- \* Notwithstanding that the site is located within Green Belt, 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; and
- \* 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.

### Role of the Site in the Green Belt

3.28 The Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Assessment Report (July 2016) 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 partly within Refined Parcel RP07 'Land to the south of Coleshill Road' and partly within Refined Parcel RP10 'Land to the north of Birmingham International Park'. The assessment scores each Refined Parcel against four purposes of the Green Belt. In relation to RP07, 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

Fig 3.2. GREEN BELT REFINED PARCEL RP07 SCORES

3.29 In relation to RP10, it sets out the following:

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

Fig 3.3. GREEN BELT REFINED PARCEL RP10 SCORES

### Landscape Strategy

3.30 In response to the desktop and fieldwork undertaken, an initial landscape strategy has been identified and the following landscape principles have been applied to the emerging development envelope for the area:

- \* The overall development envelope is defined by the visual and physical containment provided by School Rough to the west and north, the Bickenhill Road corridor to the north and east, the line of the Low Brook to the west and vegetation along the northern boundary of Elmdon Trading Estate to the south.
- \* The development envelope is located away from the more open parcels of the site to the north, including that near to Marston Green Recreation Ground, this will reduce visual prominence of any new built form and maintain the sense of open space on arrival into Marston Green in this location.
- \* Consideration should be given to the existing vegetation (including trees, hedgerows, hedgerow trees and woodland areas). Where possible these landscape elements should be retained and integrated into the layout of both developable areas and open space.

\* The location and extent of green infrastructure and open space within the site should influence the formation and extent of the development envelope. The retained areas of vegetation (as described above) would ensure that the built form of a proposal would be contained in a robust and diverse framework of green infrastructure and open space. A strategy for retaining existing vegetation combined with proposals for new landscape planting would result in a landscape context for future proposals which show a variety of stages of establishment and maturity. This would enhance the quality of a proposal and also help to integrate the site with the local landscape character.

\* The layout of proposals for the site should incorporate substantial areas of private garden space as well as the proposed publically accessible areas of green infrastructure as these would have the capacity to hold a substantial number of street and garden trees which will, over time, contribute to a network of green infrastructure and help to integrate the character of the site with the surrounding landscape.

\* All landscape mitigation which forms part of a proposal should be subject to a high quality detailed landscape scheme so as to ensure that the functions of the landscape components will be delivered; this would also reflect positively on the design quality of a proposal as a whole.

\* In terms of a defensible Green Belt boundary, existing physical features, which include the existing School Rough woodland and course of the Low Brook, as well as the defensible boundary of Bickenhill Road could be combined to form a new Green Belt boundary.

Green Belt purpose	Criteria	Summary
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.	Is ribbon or other development present? Is other development detached from the existing large built-up area?	There is some ribbon development present in this location, including along Bickenhill Road. Other development is not detached from the existing large built up area, and forms part of the edge of Solihull. 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.
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.	Is the area characterised by countryside? Does the area adjoin areas of countryside? Is ribbon or other development present within the area?	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. 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. 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.
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.

Fig 3.4.TABLE 1

### Potential Impact on the Green Belt and Creation of a Defensible Green Belt Boundary

3.31 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 a 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 also proposes new planting which will serve to break down the scale of built form and provide further containment. These mitigation measure will help to establish and enhance a robust landscaped edge to the proposed development and a definitive boundary to the future Green Belt.

3.32 Table 1 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.

### Summary

3.33 Overall the scale and form of proposed development has been influenced by the landscape constraints and opportunities of the site and its context. Furthermore, the proposals for green infrastructure and landscaping will deliver a number of enhancements in terms of the physical landscape and the strengthening of the structure of the landscape to create a new robust, defensible Green Belt boundary to the north of the site.

**MOVEMENT AND ACCESS**

**Access**

3.34 The development site will be accessed directly from Bickenhill Road, which provides access towards the A452 and the M42 at Junction 7. Adjacent to the proposed site access, the road is predominantly rural in nature and benefits from good visibility for turning vehicles.

**Connectivity**

- 3.35 Footway provision is continuous along the south western side of Bickenhill Road. The development of the site will serve to improve and provide new footways linking to the existing provision to provide improved accessibility.
- 3.36 The development benefits from two conveniently located bus stops in close proximity to the site. These are served by the 91 bus, which operate hourly during mornings only from Monday to Saturday, providing connections between Birmingham International and Chelmsley Wood.
- 3.37 The nearest railway station is Marston Green, which can be found approximately 1400m west of the site, providing connections to Birmingham and Coventry. To the south of the site is Birmingham International, which provides regular connections to Birmingham, London, Wolverhampton and Glasgow.

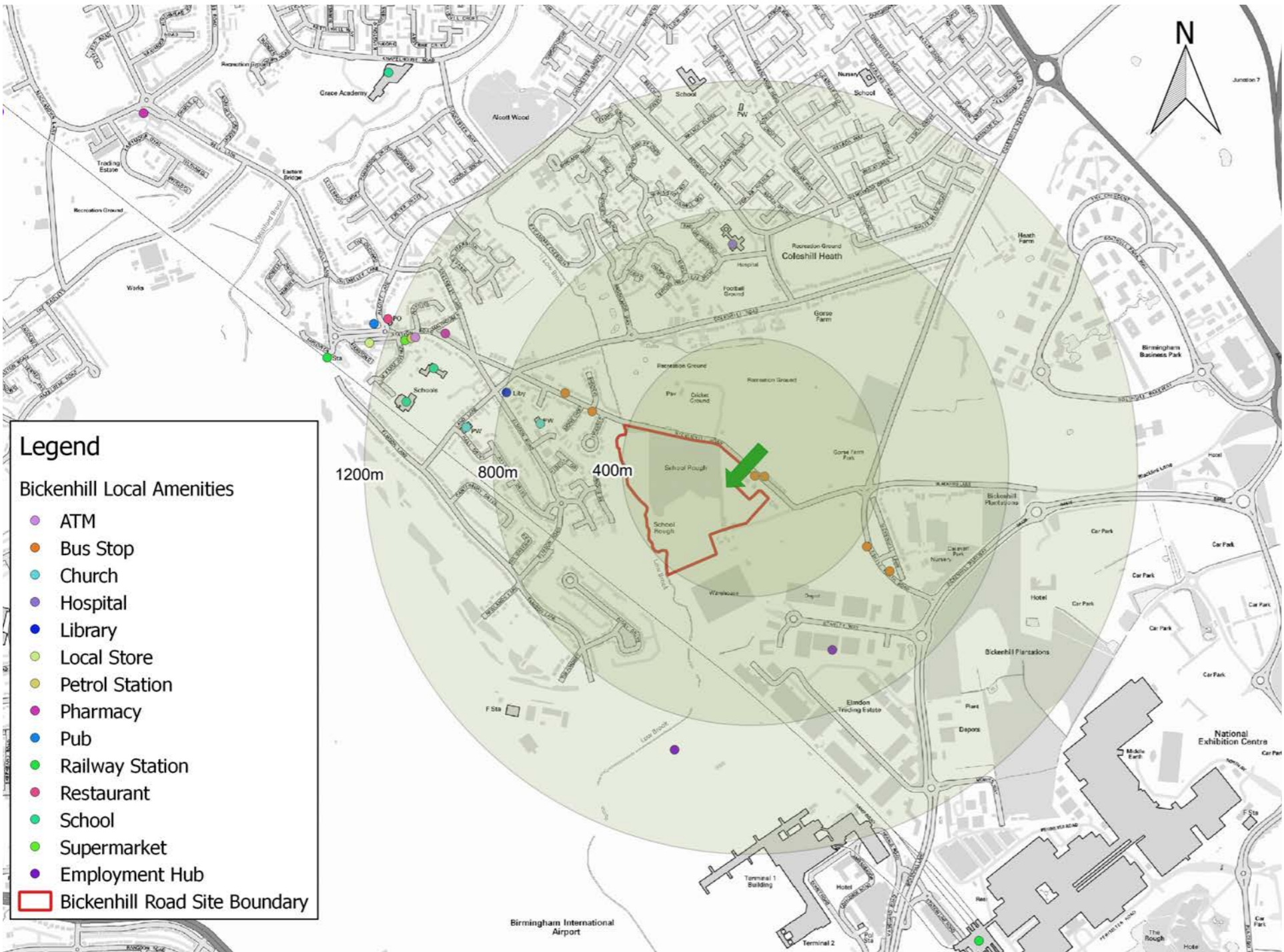


Fig 3.5. LOCAL AMENITIES PLAN

### Services / Amenities

- 3.38 The site is located within 1200m of Marston Green village centre, which benefits from access to a supermarket, petrol station, ATM, pharmacy and local shops. The nearest primary school is located approximately 1000m west of the proposed site.
- 3.39 The site also benefits from its close proximity to the UK Central Growth Area which embraces existing employment hubs and proposed employment hubs, namely; Birmingham Airport, the NEC, Arden Cross (Proposed HS2 International Station and mixed use development), Birmingham Business Park and Jaguar Land Rover (JLR). This area will experience a significant increase in employment and jobs accordingly Land at Bickenhill Road, Marston Green will assist in providing homes close to jobs. **FIG 3.5** shows the local amenities within 400m, 800m and 1.2km of the site.

## FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

### Flood Risk

- 3.40 All of the development land parcels are identified to lie within Flood Zone 1 and well above flood levels.
- 3.41 The only watercourse in close proximity to the site is Low Brook, which is located beyond the School Rough woodland area.

### Drainage

- 3.42 Severn Trent Water (STW) records indicates there is a foul water sewer running along Bickenhill Road. Feeding into this sewer is a rising main, which is in an area of public highway. It is considered that there will be adequate capacity in this sewer to drain the development site.
- 3.43 It is considered that ground conditions on site will support sustainable infiltration. If ground conditions are not suitable across the development parcels in part or whole an alternative options could be to drain surface water runoff to Low Brook with appropriate SuDS features.

## ECOLOGY

### Introduction

- 3.44 CSA Environmental have undertaken a site visit and desktop study to identify potential ecological constraints to development, and to inform recommendations for further ecological surveys/assessments necessary to inform the promotion of the Site for future residential development.
- 3.45 The Site occupies an area of approximately 20ha and is located to the south-east of Marston Green.

### Methods

- 3.46 An extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey of the Site was undertaken on 31 January 2017, in order to assess the on-site habitats and their potential to support notable and protected species. The survey, encompassing the Site and immediately adjacent habitats that could be viewed, was conducted in wet weather conditions.
- 3.47 A Desktop Ecological Review was produced by CSA in January 2016 (for further details refer to the review CSA/2821/01 in appendix B). To inform this report, a desktop data search was completed; the Warwickshire Biological Records Centre (WBRC) and Birmingham EcoRecord (BER) were contacted to obtain records of species within 2km radius and details of non-statutory wildlife site designations from a 1km radius from the Site's central grid reference; and, details of statutory designated wildlife sites were retrieved from the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) online database.



Fig 3.6. HABITATS PLAN

## Baseline Ecological Conditions

### Designated Sites

- 3.48 There are no international (e.g. SPA, SAC, Ramsar) statutory designated wildlife sites within 10km of the Site. There are two nationally important statutory designated wildlife sites within 3km of the Site (1.6km east and 2.6km south). Nine local statutory designated wildlife sites are present within 3km of the Site: including Marston Green Millennium Wood LNR (adjacent, south-east of the Site) and Marston Green Park LNR (c. 20m north-west from the Site).
- 3.49 Twelve non-statutory Local Wildlife Site (LWS) designations are present with 1km of the Site: including Schools Rough Ecosite (rejected as an LWS but is classified as Ancient Woodland) and Heaths Corner LWS, which occur on-site, as well as Low Brook and Kingshurst Brook LWS/Ecosite and Bickenhill Parish Burial Ground Ecosite, which occur adjacent to Site boundaries. The remaining eight non-statutory sites occur within 500m.

### Habitats and Flora

- 3.50 The Site comprises of five parcels of land centred on Bickenhill Road, the Site is dominated by semi-improved grassland, with approximately 4 hectares of ancient woodland located centrally and the Low Brook watercourse on the western boundary running adjacent to the Site. Please refer to the Habitats Plan (Appendix A) which maps these features.

### *Semi-improved grassland*

- 3.51 All nine fields on-site comprise of semi-improved grassland, with occurrence of both rough and managed grassland habitat. F5 is a non-statutory designated LWS (semi-improved and acidic grassland) with some known botanical interest such as yellow oat grass *Trisetum flavescens*, sweet vernal grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, sheep's fescue *Festuca ovina* and great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis* for example, although none of these species were recorded at the time of survey. The south-west corner of F8 is poorly drained and has dense clumps of rush *Juncus* sp. present.

### *Broadleaved woodland*

- 3.52 W2 is mature woodland, recorded on the ancient woodland inventory. It is predominantly mature oak *Quercus* sp. and birch *Betula* sp., with an understory of holly *Ilex aquifolium*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, elder *Sambucus nigra* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. scrub. The track on the eastern side of W2 is now completely colonised by mature woodland of the same character. W1 is a small adjacent woodland with a similar composition to W2, although mature oak is dominant.

### *Scrub and tall ruderal vegetation*

- 3.53 Tall ruderal vegetation is present along the majority of field boundaries and internally in some fields (F1, F2, F3 and F8) with denser patches occurring along the southern boundary of W2. Scattered scrub is present intermittently throughout the Site, predominantly composed of bramble, with continuous scrub running alongside Low Brook at the south-west end of the Site, and large areas of continuous scrub in F1 and F6.

### *Tree and hedgerows*

- 3.54 There is a variety of hedgerow types on Site; ranging from a tree line with scrub along the western boundary, native out grown hedges, to managed garden hedgerows around residential properties on the eastern side of the Site.
- 3.55 The site is characterised by the presence of mature trees, largely oak but other species include occasional lime *Tilia* sp. and horse chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum* amongst others within hedgerows. A significant tree line, of 11 mature oaks runs through F8. At the base of F4 mature individuals of alder *Alnus glutinosa*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and oak can be found.

### *Ponds*

- 3.56 Two ponds were recorded during the site walkover and upon consulting aerial imagery a further 9 are present within 500m of the Site.



## Fauna

### *Badgers*

- 3.57 The WBRC provided two records of badger *Meles meles* from the local area from confidential locations over 400m from Site.
- 3.58 During the Site walkover incidental recordings of signs of badger activity were made such as disused badger setts, snuffle holes and mammal run-throughs. Habitat on-site provides good opportunity for sett building in the woodland area or hedgerow bases. There is also ample opportunity for foraging in grassland and woodland with good connectivity to the wider landscape.

### *Bats*

- 3.59 The WBRC provided 6 bat records from within the search area, including roosts of an undetermined bat species and brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus*, c. 230m and c. 615m from Site respectively.
- 3.60 BER provided a further 21 records of common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and *Nyctalus* sp., the majority of which relate to Sheldon Country Park c. 1.7km west of the Site.
- 3.61 The ancient woodland on-site and mature standard trees could support roosting features for a number of bat species. Hedgerows, Low Brook corridor to the west of the Site and ancient woodland areas could provide good foraging and commuting habitat for bats.

### *Dormouse*

- 3.62 No records of dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* have been returned from WBRC or BER. The species is generally considered not to be found in this area and it is therefore unlikely that this species would pose a constraint to proposals, however if works were to significantly impact the hedgerow habitats or woodland on-site this may need to be re-assessed.

### *Riparian Mammals*

- 3.63 WBRC have provided records of both otter *Lutra lutra* and water vole *Arvicola amphibious* from within the local area. No water courses run through the Site, however the western boundary is adjacent to Low Brook which could support both of these species and has connectivity to a larger watercourses.

### *Birds*

- 3.64 Local records have been provided of 31 bird species, including red and amber listed species. Species of potential note include Swift *Apus apus* (BOCC Amber), Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* (Amber), Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* (Red), Song thrush *Turdus philomelos* (Red) and Mistle thrush *Turdus viscivorus* (Red). The large range of habitats present on-site is likely to provide good habitat for nesting, sheltering and foraging for a variety of bird species.

### *Reptiles*

- 3.65 Historic records were provided of common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, grass snake *Natrix natrix* and slow-worm *Anguis fragilis* over half a kilometre distance from the site. This said, the Site walkover confirmed habitats on-site that could be suitable for reptile species, such as less managed grassland and scrub habitats, hence presence of reptile populations cannot be discounted.

### *Amphibians*

- 3.66 BER provided four records of common frog *Rana temporaria* but no records of great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*. There are 11 ponds within 500m of the Site, including two on-site and one c. 30m north-east. On-site habitat provides opportunities for great crested newts in their aquatic and terrestrial phases.

### *Invertebrates*

- 3.67 WBRC returned records of 73 invertebrate species, the closest being of a forester butterfly *Adscita statice* recorded c.10m east of the northern western boundary. The variety of on-site habitats, including grassland, woodland and nearby watercourses is likely to support a large number of invertebrate species and further surveys may be required by the local planning authority to identify any notable assemblages.

## Summary of Ecological Constraints and Opportunities

### Confirmed Constraints

- 3.68 Development at this Site will likely require avoidance, mitigation and / or compensation measures in respect to:
- Statutory Designated Wildlife Sites
    - \* There are 9 LNRs within 2.6km of the Site, many designated for botanical reasons, it is not known how many are open for public access. Therefore, it is recommended that further investigation be carried out regarding the potential impact of increased recreational use of these sites and, if need be, consultation with the relevant authorities in order establish any potential requirements.
    - \* Local policy Policy P10 (Natural Environment) 2013 Solihull Local Plan states that, "Development likely to have an adverse effect on a Local Nature Reserve or a Local Wildlife Site will be permitted only if the reasons for the development clearly outweigh the nature conservation value of the site and its contribution to wider biodiversity objectives."
  - Non-Statutory Designated sites (Local Wildlife Sites and Ecosites)
    - \* Schools Rough Ecosite (Ecosite 318/18), Heaths Corner LWS (48/18) occur on-site; Low Brook, Kingshurst Brook pLWS/ Ecosite (56/18) and Bickenhill Parish Burial Ground Ecosite (46/18) occur adjacent to Site boundaries. The impacts of proposals will need to be carefully considered, with appropriate consultation and buffering to ensure minimal impact.

- Ancient Woodland
  - \* The on-site woodland, Schools Rough is also included in the Ancient Woodland inventory. This area should be retained and enhanced alongside of development proposals with an agreed buffer from the proposed residential development.
- Hedgerows and Trees
  - \* Hedges and their component mature trees are a Habitat of Principal Importance and have intrinsic ecological value. Where possible, these should be retained and enhanced alongside development of the Site, other than necessary access points. It is expected that removal of any sections of hedgerow would require at least equivalent lengths to be replanted.

### Potential Constraints

- 3.69 Avoidance, mitigation and/or compensation measures may be required in respect to the following potential ecological constraints, subject to further surveys/assessment:
- Badgers
    - \* - Evidence of badger activity was observed on-site and large areas of suitable habitat indicate that a full comprehensive badger survey will be necessary (February – April, September – October).
  - Bats
    - \* Woodland and hedgerow on-site, together with adjacent brook corridor habitats provide extensive opportunities for foraging and commuting bats. Hence bat transect and static activity surveys are recommended to identify the level, diversity and distribution of bats at the and near to the Site (April to September).
    - \* Trees on the Site boundaries and areas of woodland could host roosting features for bats. If significant roosting potential is identified, then further Bat Roost Surveys should be undertaken to determine the presence or likely absence of roosting bats, in order to avoid direct or indirect impacts to this group of species.

- Birds
  - \* Numerous notable and common bird species have been recorded near to the Site. Due to the diverse habitat available, breeding bird surveys are recommended (March – June).
  - \* The nests and eggs of all wild birds are subject to legal protection. Any clearance of potential nesting habitat should be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season (March-August inclusive), or immediately following confirmation by a suitably qualified ecologist that no active nests are present.
- Reptiles
  - \* Large areas of habitat on-site are considered suitable for locally recorded reptile species, consultation on scope of survey is recommended with the local authority; and potentially further surveys to establish presence/absence is recommended in key habitats (April – October).
- Water Vole and Otters
  - \* Given the proximity of the Site to suitable water bodies to support both water vole and otter. Consultation with the local planning authority is recommended to agree on suitable buffers to avoid impacts and/or ascertain the level of surveys required.
- Great crested newts
  - \* There are aquatic and terrestrial habitats found at the Site for great crested newts, however no records of this species in the area. However, further pond scoping surveys are recommended, to assess their habitat suitability (any time of year) and consider the need for presence /absence surveys (mid-March to mid-June).

## Conclusion

- 3.70 There are a number of ecological constraints identified at this Site, including those associated with potential impact of increased recreational use often arising with residential development and LNRs. In addition with the non-statutory designated LWS's present on or adjacent to Site.
- 3.71 Sympathetic masterplan designs should take into account both the need to retain trees, hedgerows and woodland where possible, and provide adequate buffers to sensitive habitats such as streams and ancient woodland, which are likely to support higher levels of biodiversity.
- 3.72 Further survey work has been recommended for a number of species; this will inform development proposals and highlight any legal constraints, ensuring appropriate mitigation measures are developed. Opportunities will exist to create new habitats and provide other ecological enhancements alongside development.
- 3.73 Considerations will need to be made regarding Biodiversity Offsetting assessments, which is now a mandatory requirement in all Warwickshire districts, consultation with the local authority and Environment bank may be beneficial.
- 3.74 Whilst this is a complex site with regard to habitats and land parcel distribution, no overriding constraints to development have been identified. Subject further survey work to assess potential constraints to the proposals, together with implementation of consultation; inclusion of appropriate buffers; and, mitigation measures in respect of confirmed ecological constraints, it is considered that residential development could be successfully accommodated at this Site.

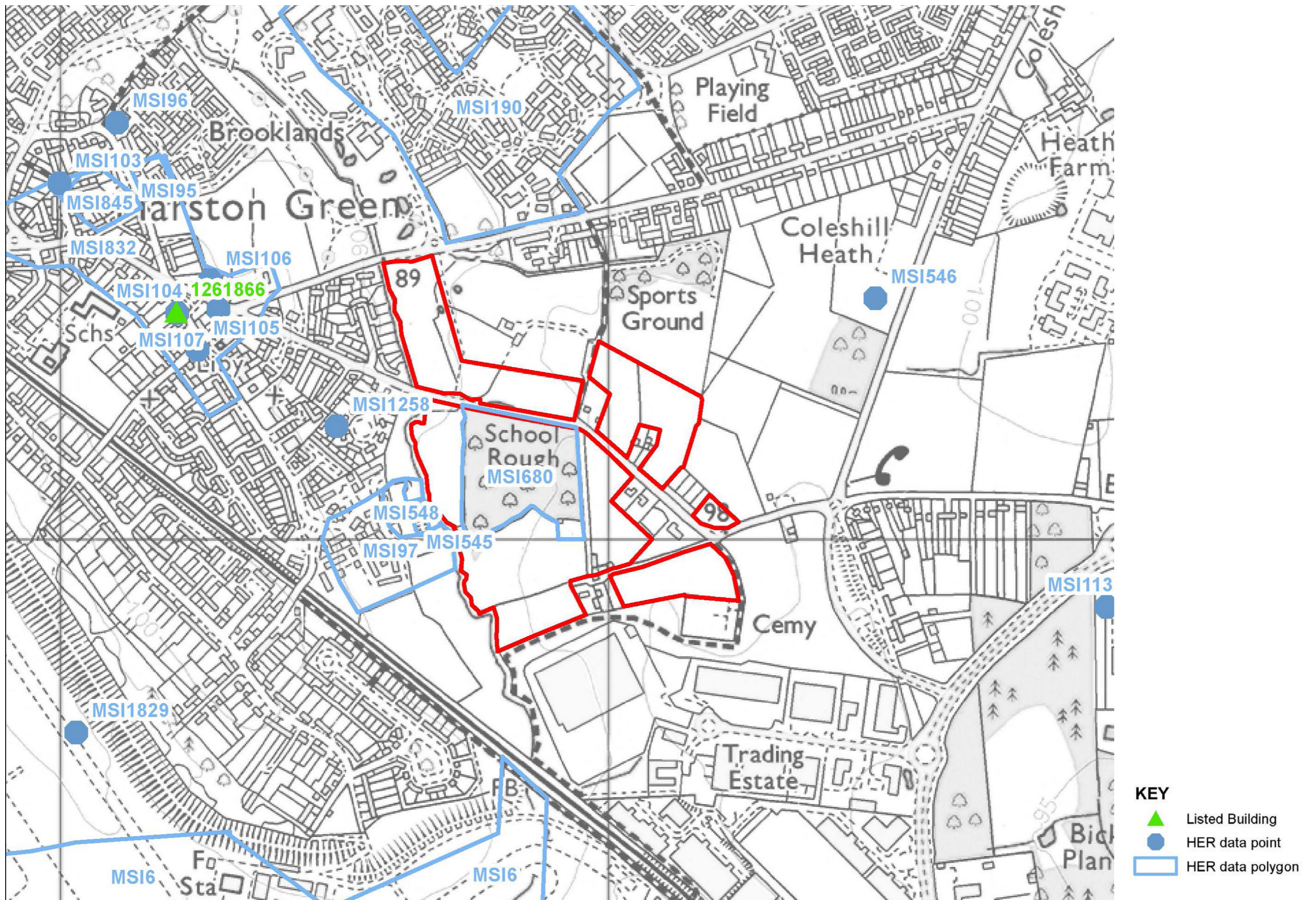


Fig 3.7. LISTED BUILDINGS PLAN

## ARCHAEOLOGY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

- 3.75 An assessment has been made of the potential heritage constraints to the development of land at Bickenhill Road for residential usage. This has considered built and below-ground heritage issues.
- The assessment has been informed by the following sources: Historic England National Heritage List for information on designated assets comprising Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and World Heritage Sites
  - Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council website for information on Conservation Areas
  - Solihull Historic Environment Board
  - Historic Ordnance Survey mapping
  - Satellite imagery

## BUILT HERITAGE

- 3.76 There are no designated heritage assets located within or immediately adjacent to the site.
- 3.77 5 Elmdon Road Grade II Listed Building located c. 420m to the west of the site. This building is situated within existing residential development in Marston Green.
- 3.78 Packington Hall Park and Garden Grade II\* Listed Garden located c. 3.5km to the east of the site and beyond the M42 motorway.

## ARCHAEOLOGY

- 3.79 The findspot of a Thames Pick, a Mesolithic flint axe is recorded in the vicinity of the site, c. 350m east of the site; HER ref.MSI546).
- 3.80 A possible medieval moated mansion site and fishpond is recorded to the west of the site beyond Low Brook and the line of the historic Sheldon/Coleshill Parish boundary (HER refs. MIS548/545) There is no current evidence to indicate that associated activity extended into the proposed development site. A post-medieval farmhouse is located within the medieval moat.
- 3.81 Historic cartographic sources indicate that in the later 19th Century the site comprised of agricultural land with an area of woodland known as 'School Rough' (HER ref.MSI1680) located within parcel 1. This situation appears to be unchanged today.

## CONCLUSIONS

- 3.82 Initial assessment of recorded heritage assets within and in the vicinity of the site has not identified any major heritage constraints to development.

## OTHER MATTERS

### Utility Services

- 3.83 Initial investigations have identified that there are existing electricity, water, telecoms and gas supply infrastructure located within the vicinity of the site at Bickenhill Road. These services run within the local highways supplying local residential properties in the area.
- 3.84 Severn Trent Water operate and maintain the existing public drainage networks serving the surrounding area. The sewer records for the area indicate that there is a 225mm dia foul sewer that runs northwards along Bickenhill Road which commences near the north-western boundary of parcel 5. It is proposed that the foul flows will be discharged into the existing Severn Trent network.
- 3.85 Severn Trent Water asset plans confirm there is no existing surface water sewers located within the vicinity of the site. It is therefore proposed that surface water flows from the development will be discharged via the use of sustainable urban drainage techniques. It is anticipated that the ground conditions are suitable for infiltration and sustainable urban drainage techniques however this is subject to confirmation by a full ground investigation.
- 3.86 Existing electricity, water and gas supplies, all of which run along Bickenhill Road, will be utilised in order to serve the site.

## NOISE

- 3.87 A noise and vibration survey will accompany any future planning application on the site. The site is in close proximity to Birmingham Airport, the site is however located outside of the noise contours for the airport, including revised contours for the proposed expansion options. It is considered that road noise and noise from the existing industrial estate are likely to be the main noise source affecting the site. Any future planning application will consider the existing noise and will ensure that the relevant acoustic mitigation measures can be implemented and delivered on site to ensure an appropriate level of amenity can be provided for the proposed residential development.

# 04 | EMERGING PROPOSALS

## DEVELOPMENT AND QUANTUM

- 4.1 The net development area of the proposed residential development is 3.9 hectares (9.64 acres) of the sum 7.91 hectares (19.55 acres). The remaining site area will comprise of the retained School Rough Coppice, the retained Heath Corner LWS, the existing western fringes of the site adjacent to the Low Brook, the large parcel of land to the northern side of Bickenhill Road and proposed areas of public open space and attenuation areas.
- 4.2 Green spaces have been designed to soften the edges of the development envelope while maintaining existing vegetation where possible. Outward facing dwellings are proposed on the fringes of the development to assist in the surveillance of the retained Coppice and existing and proposed public open space.
- 4.3 The current infrastructure showing tree lined verges creates a green vein to run East to West, this will act as a conduit between Heavily wooded Bickenhill Road and the Low Brook planting.
- 4.4 Taking into account the location of the site within the green belt but also its proximity to the urban fringe, a dph of 35-40 has been proposed. This will complement its semi-rural location whilst also taking into account Solihull Council's housing mix policy which sets out a requirement for higher number of 1,2 and 3 bedroom units. With a density of 35-45dph the site will achieve approximately 137-176 units and will provide a mix of housing, sizes and tenures.

- 4.5 Pedestrian footpath links have been proposed to cross a large proportion of the site, these will link back to the surrounding context including existing PROWs, Bickenhill Road and through the proposed natural play space to the North-West as shown on the proposed Design Concept Plan contained as **Fig 4.1**.
- 4.6 All development has been offset from the ancient woodland contained within School Rough Coppice by which has been identified as a non-statutory local Eco Site designation, to ensure an appropriate separation from the existing mature trees.
- 4.7 Development has been proposed to sit outside the latest flood mapping estimates (obtained from the E.A flood maps) as shown on the Design Concept Plan (**Fig 4.1**).

## ACCESS

- 4.8 Principal Vehicular access will be located off Bickenhill Road adjacent to an existing property, Rosemary. A separate access is to be provided to the smaller development parcel which is proposed to be taken off Bickenhill Road, to the east of East Woodhay. Further more detailed work will be advanced in relation to the detailed design of the proposed access arrangements.
- 4.9 The primary access point, adjacent to Rosemary has been designed to form part of a primary return route through the site serving circa 121-138 units. The second access point will serve the remaining development of 44-50 units to the south.
- 4.10 A principal tree lined street enters the site via the landscaped frontage which will define the circuitous route. Traffic will continue along a series of defined primary streets which will in turn disburse traffic around the development. The route passes through the most southern and south west parcels and meanders alongside development, mature hedgerows and existing woodlands.
- 4.11 The established primary route will also underpin the hierarchy of streets which includes secondary linked shared surface streets and lanes and tertiary private driveways in accordance with Manual for Streets.
- 4.12 A number of proposed pedestrian links are proposed which improve accessibility to the existing local surrounding facilities, recreation fields and nearby public right of ways.

## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- 4.13 4.12 A large proportion of the site will be retained as green infrastructure which is a key feature of the proposals. The retained green space incorporates the existing woodlands (School Rough Eco site), Heath Corner LWS, existing trees and hedgerows in addition to new areas of public open space which include incidental open space intended for recreational use and newly created footpath links which will link on to the wider surrounding context.
- 4.14 Interconnected green space corridors around the eastern, southern and western fringes of the development provide an attractive soft edge to compliment the proposed development. The majority of existing vegetation is proposed to be retained where possible although there will be some loss where sections need to be removed for access and internal connectivity.
- 4.15 The site low point to the west will be used for storm water attenuation features associated with sustainable urban drainage. (SuDs).
- 4.16 An appropriate buffer is provided between the proposed residential development and the ancient woodland within School Rough to ensure there will be no adverse impact on the ecological value of the Coppice. Footpaths are proposed to the west of the Coppice which provide recreational pedestrian routes outside of the Coppice, with access to the Coppice managed. No built development is proposed within the Heath Corner LWS which forms the smallest of the land parcels. This parcel of land will be managed as grassland, with no public access proposed on this land parcel.
- 4.17 Taking into consideration the location of the site and scale of the proposed development, a proposed equipped area for play is identified within the proposals and indicatively shown centrally within the development between existing residential and proposed development. Informal open areas of green space are proposed to achieve soft development edges.
- 4.18 The proposed open space extends to approximately 9.25 hectares (about 22.86 acres) which will include the existing School Rough, the floodplain areas and incidental open space and play area which will exceed public open space provision requirements.





**KEY**




-  APPLICATION BOUNDARY  
19.55 ACRES / 7.91 HECTARES
-  LAND WITHIN GALLAGHER ESTATES  
CONTROL BOUNDARY  
31.14 ACRES / 12.6 HECTARES
-  NET DEVELOPABLE AREA @  
9.64 ACRES / 3.9 HECTARES  
@35 DPH = 137 UNITS  
@40 DPH = 156 UNITS  
@45 DPH = 176 UNITS
-  POTENTIAL SITE ACCESS
-  PRIMARY STREET
-  PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL AREA
-  PROPOSED STREET/ LANES
-  PROPOSED FOOTPATH LINKS
-  22 METRE OFFSET FROM EXISTING  
BUILDING WINDOWS
-  EXISTING TREES  
(INDICATIVE)
-  PROPOSED TREES
-  INFORMAL TREE BUFFERING
-  POTENTIAL PLAY SPACE LOCATION
-  NATURAL PLAY SPACES
-  STORM WATER ATTENUATION
-  PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAYS
-  FLOODING FROM RIVERS AND  
SEAS [E.A 26.01.2017]
-  ECO SITE - NON STATUTORY LOCAL  
DESIGNATION AND HISTORIC WOODLAND
-  LOCAL WILDLIFE SITE (LWS)
-  FEATURE SPACES/ JUNCTURES
-  30m OFFSET FROM ANCIENT WOODLAND

FIG 4.1. DESIGN CONCEPT PLAN

# 05 | SITE SELECTION ASSESSMENT

5.1 The following table provides an assessment of Land at Bickenhill Road, Marston Green against Solihull MBC's site selection criteria uses to assess the suitability of sites within the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment, 2016 (SHELAA), and the Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report, January 2017 (SA). It is considered that Land at Bickenhill Road would have a low impact when judged against each individual criterion.

SHELAA Suitability Criterion	
Access Infrastructure Constraints	Existing road access via Bickenhill Road is adequate.
Contamination Land/Landfill Site	The site does not lie within this constraint.
Ground Conditions	There is no evidence of any contamination on site.
Heritage	
BMV Agricultural Land	The Agricultural Land Classification of the site is Grade 5 agricultural land. Development of this site would not result in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land
High Pressure Gas Pipeline	The site does not lie within this constraint.
Flood Risk Constraints	The site is predominantly within flood zone 1 with areas of flood zone 3 on the western periphery of the site adjacent to the existing Low Brook. No built development is proposed within the parts of the site that fall within Flood Zone 3.
Bad Neighbour Constraints	The site has no bad neighbours.

SHELAA Suitability Criterion	
Biodiversity	<p>The site currently comprises of five parcels of land which are predominantly agricultural fields with an area of woodland known as School Rough which is designated as an Ecosite an Ancient Woodland. The small land parcel located on the bend of Bickenhill Road is designated as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS).</p> <p>The Design Concept Plan (Fig 4.1) has been carefully designed to ensure an appropriate offset of development from the Ancient Woodland. The Design Concept Plan shows that all residential development would be located away from School Rough, LWS and the areas of the site that fall within Flood Zone 3. The LWS which is shown outlined in blue would remain in its current use as would the rest of the land outlined in blue shown on Fig 1.1. The School Rough and western fringes of the site would form part of the green infrastructure of the proposed development.</p> <p>It is considered that this development would not have an adverse impact on environmental quality of the LWS, School Rough woodland (Ecosite and Ancient Woodland) or the site as a whole.</p>
Suitability of Location Constraints	The site is adjacent to the built up area of Marston Green.
Other Suitability Constraints	N/A

SA Suitability Criterion	
SA Suitability Criterion	
SA1 Contribution to Regeneration and Economic Development	Development located within the top 10% most deprived
SA2a Distance to Primary School	617m (Marston Green Junior School).
SA2b Distance to Secondary School	1544m (Grace Academy)
SA3a Proximity to Bus & Train services	Within 400m of frequent bus or train service
SA3b Proximity to Principal Road Network	935m
SA4a Soils	Contains more than 20ha of agricultural land 1-2 or →20ha of 1-3b land.
SA4b Minerals	Site outside of minerals safeguarding area
SA7 Flooding	Some of the site is in flood zone 3 – this is proposed to remain undeveloped and will form part of the green infrastructure of the proposed development.
SA9 Enhance Ecological Sites	The LWS is within land outlined as blue on Fig 1.1 which is within the control of Gallagher Estates but does not form part of the proposals for development.

SA Suitability Criterion	
SA10 Landscape Sensitivity	<p>The site is located in a landscape with medium sensitivity to change. The site adjoins existing residential development that creates a strong Green Belt boundary.</p> <p>The Design Concept Plan (Fig 4.1) has been landscape and visually led with development located away from the more open parcels of the site to the north (outlined in blue on Fig 1.1).</p> <p>Consideration has been given to existing landscape and where possible existing vegetation is to be retained and integrated into the layout. New planting is also proposed to provide further containment to the proposals.</p> <p>Existing physical features which include the existing School Woodland woodland and course of the Low Brook, as well as the defensible boundary of Bickenhill Road could be combined to form a new Green Belt boundary.</p> <p>Opportunities have also been exploited to implement additional vegetation to ensure the proposed development responds to and integrates with the existing urban fabric and landscape context.</p> <p>TBC</p>
SA11 Enhance Green Infrastructure	2m from →2ha of greenspace and 4243m from →20ha of greenspace. The development envelop lies to the north of the existing woodland of School Rough and away from the LWS. The extent of green infrastructure and open space ensures that the proposed built form will be contained in a robust and diverse framework of green infrastructure and open space.
SA12 Enhance and Protect Historic Assets	Heritage assets are more than 100m from site
SA14 Amenity	Potential sources of noise located to the south of the proposed site. Appropriate mitigation can be provided to ensure acceptable levels of amenity are provided for future occupants.
SA17a Distance to Healthcare	914m
SA17b Access to Leisure Facilities	7 leisure and play facilities within 400m, 10 within 800m and 16 within 1200m. the site is located within 400m of at least two facilities.
SA19a Distance to Key Economic Assets	637m
SA19b Distance to Convenience Stores or Supermarket	298m

# 06 | SUMMARY

- 6.1 Gallagher Estate's emerging proposals for Land off Bickenhill Road, Marston Green are capable of contributing positively to meeting the housing needs of the Borough in a sustainable manner. The site is located within 1200m of Marston Green village centre, which benefits from a supermarket, petrol station, ATM, pharmacy and local shops. The nearest primary school is located approximately 1000m west of the proposed site and as such within walking distance of the site. Public transport provision is readily available with bus stops in close proximity of the site and Marston Green railway station is within 1400m of the site.
- 6.2 As has been set at within this document the site benefits from its close proximity to the UK Central Hub Growth Area which embraces existing and proposed employment hubs namely; Birmingham Airport, the NEC, Arden Cross (proposed HS2 International Station), Birmingham Business Park and Jaguar Land Rover (JLR), the proposals for which will significantly increase employment and jobs in the area.
- 6.3 Residential development on land at Bickenhill Road, Marston Green will assist the Borough in providing homes close to jobs in the main economic growth area in the Borough.
- 6.4 The technical information that has been provided within this Background Document sets out that there are no insurmountable physical constraints to the development of the site for residential development.
- 6.5 The scale and form of development has been landscape and visually led with development located away from the more open parcels of the site to the north which will be retained in agricultural use. The proposals fully take account of the presence of mature vegetation including the mature woodland of School Rough and hedgerows throughout the various parcels of the site. The retained areas of vegetation combined with the proposals for new landscape planting will enhance the quality of the proposals. The existing features which include the School Rough woodland and the course of the Low Brook as well as the defensible boundary of Bickenhill Road will form a new defensible Green Belt boundary.
- 6.6 The development proposals will include the:
- The provision of a range of dwelling types and sizes including affordable housing which would assist in meeting the Borough housing needs in a sustainable location on the edge of Marston Green;
  - Retention of the School Rough woodland, the Low Brook corridor and the Heath Corner LWS
  - The provision of new areas of public open space within the development including informal open space to achieve soft development edges, natural play space, an equipped play area indicatively shown located centrally within the development and new footpaths links which will link to the wider surrounding area as a recreational feature of the proposals;
  - The creation of a development that is well connected, readily understood and easily navigated, promoting a layout which reduces dependence on the car and which links to existing pedestrian networks;
  - The creation of a strong landscape structure, retaining existing hedgerows and providing new tree planting which will integrate the development with the surrounding landscape;
- 6.7 The work that has been undertaken by the project team demonstrates that Land off Bickenhill Road, Marston Green is suitable, achievable and residential development on the site is deliverable. Gallagher Estates look forward to engaging with Solihull Council to discuss the site further.



[www.pegasuspg.co.uk](http://www.pegasuspg.co.uk)

PLANNING | DESIGN | ENVIRONMENT | ECONOMICS

Pegasus Planning Group  
The Priory  
Old London Road  
Canwell  
Sutton Coldfield  
B75 5SH

T 0121 308 9570 | E [Birmingham@pegasuspg.co.uk](mailto:Birmingham@pegasuspg.co.uk)

COPYRIGHT The contents of this document must not be copied or reproduced in whole or in part without the written consent of Pegasus Planning Group.

Crown copyright. All rights reserved, Licence number 100042093.