



GALLAGHER

ESTATES

Part of the L&Q Group

LAND AT BERKSWELL ROAD

MERIDEN

VISION DOCUMENT



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

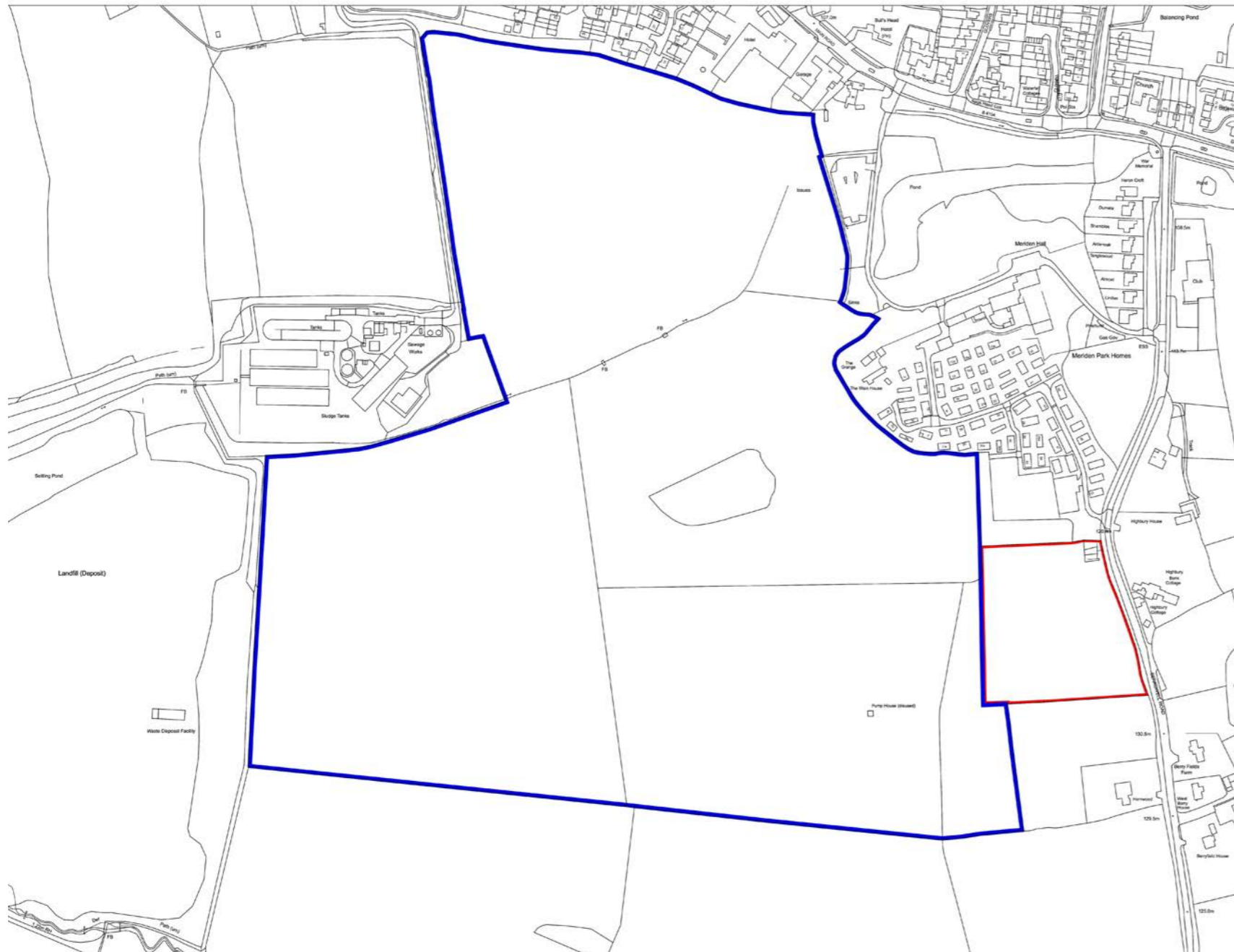


FIG 1.1. SITE PLAN

PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

- 1.1 Gallagher Estates is promoting land off Berkeswell Road, Meriden, Solihull for housing development. The site is located on the southern edge of the village of Meriden and is approximately 1.5 ha in size and could accommodate up to 59 dwellings. This document has been prepared in response to the Solihull Local Plan Review consultation, and provides background information to demonstrate that the site is suitable for housing 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.
- 1.2 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.

01 | INTRODUCTION

1.3 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 previously allocated in the adopted Solihull Local Plan (2013). The Local Plan Review envisages the need to deliver 15,029 additional dwellings in the plan period. As detailed fully 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 Council to release more land from the Green Belt than is currently proposed with the Draft Local Plan. This document sets out that Land off Berkeswell Road, Meriden is suitable for residential development and should be considered as a housing allocation.

DOCUMENT FORMAT

1.4 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 on the Design Concept Plan. 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).

1.5 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 Visuals 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 summarise the extant and emerging policy context for the site at the time of writing this document. The Development Plan for the area comprises the Solihull Local Plan (adopted December 2013).

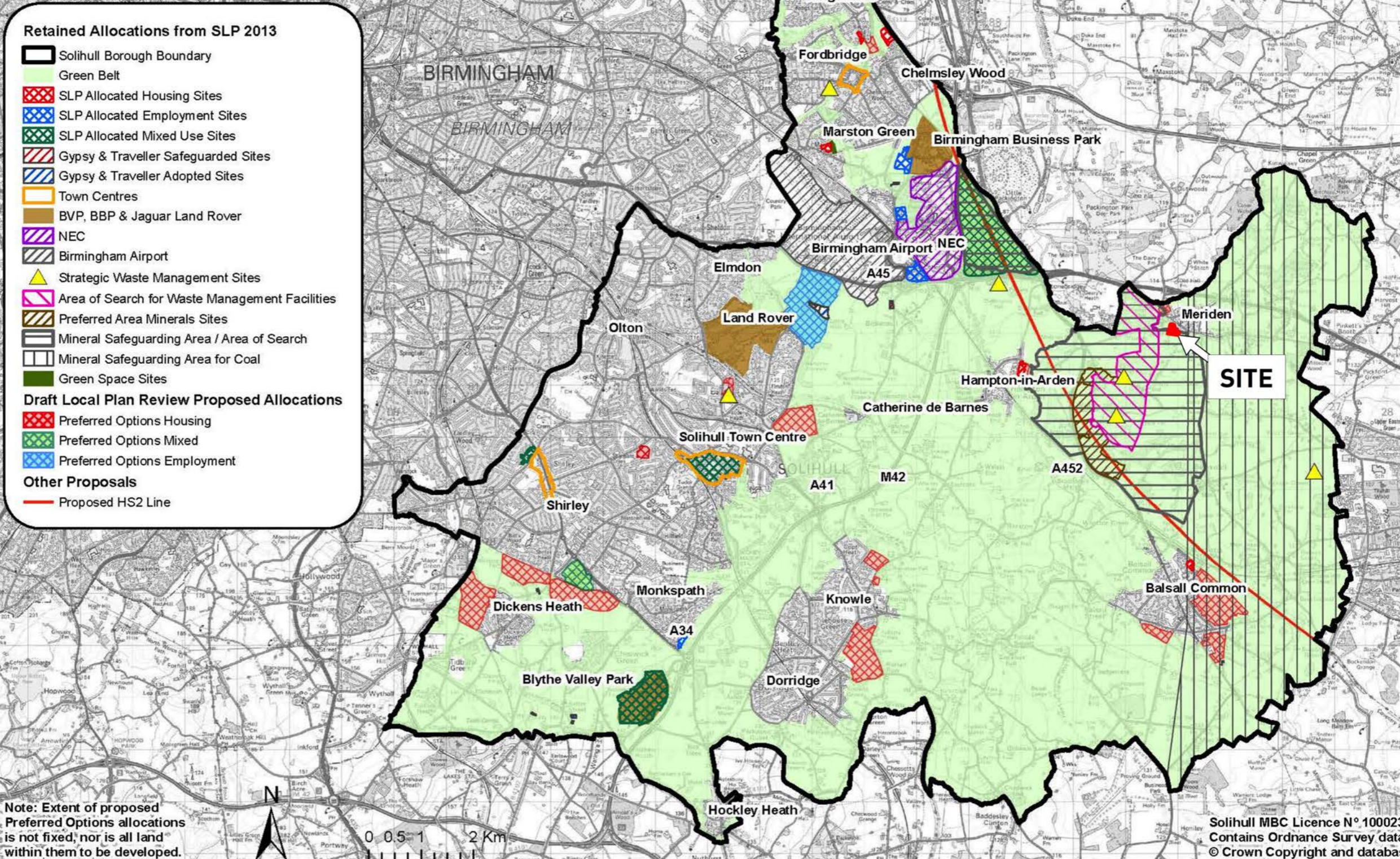
ADOPTED DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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. Upon adoption, the Local Plan replaced the Solihull Unitary Development Plan (2006) and is now the Council's statutory starting point in assessing planning decisions.
- 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 undertake a Local Plan Review to ensure that a proper planning framework is in place that addresses these issues.

- 2.5 The site is located wholly within the West Midlands Green Belt. Apart from the Green Belt designation, there are no statutory or landscape designations covering the site. The site is located within a Mineral Safeguarding Area, accordingly the adopted policy position stipulates that the Local Plan will only provide support for non-mineral related development where it can be demonstrated that the proposed development would not sterilise a potential mineral resource or lead to the loss of infrastructure or sites for infrastructure which would be required for mineral extraction.
- 2.6 The majority of the site is located in Flood Zone 1, which is the area of lowest flood risk. A small section of the site which is located adjacent to the sewage treatment works, is located in Flood Zone 3. Flood Risk and Drainage matters are discussed in further detail in Section 3 of this document.

Draft Local Plan Review Proposals Map November 2016



EMERGING DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Draft Solihull Local Plan (2016)

2.7 The Draft version of the Local Plan was published in November 2016 and covers the period up to 2033. The emerging Local Plan sets out the long term vision and objectives with policies that will guide development throughout the plan period. These include:

- 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

- Continuing to support and encourage the development of Birmingham Business Park, within its defined boundary to support its role as a prime employment location in Borough.
- * Expansion of Blythe Valley Business Park (P1A), 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
 - Chelmsely Wood Town Centre.
- Requiring Land for Housing (Policy P5):
 - * 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 sites 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.

2.8 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. In relation to Meriden, one housing site is proposed and set out within the Summary Table of Allocated Sites within the Draft Local Plan as *“Land West of Meriden”* Site Reference 10. This site is proposed to be allocated for up to 50 dwellings. The site comprises of both previously developed and greenfield land the development of which entails the release of land from the Green Belt.

Meriden Neighbourhood Development Plan

2.9 Meriden Parish Council applied for Neighbourhood Area Designation in November 2014; which was approved by the Council in March 2015. The Neighbourhood Plan is still in the early stages, no draft Meriden Neighbourhood Development Plan has been published and no consultations relating to the emerging Neighbourhood Plan are imminent.

STRATEGIC GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT

- 2.10 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.
- 2.11 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.
- 2.12 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, the Assessment 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.

- 2.13 The village of Meriden is located within Broad Area 4, with the Assessment concluding that this is an area which performs highly against the purposes of the Green Belt. This broad area also makes a contribution to the preservation of the Meriden strategic gap. The report also breaks down an assessment of smaller parcels of Green Belt land, including 3 land parcels around Meriden (RP24, RP25 and RP26). Notably, a parcel of land referred to as Land South of Main Road, Meriden (RP26) has a low performing score when assessed against the purposes of the Green Belt. The refined parcel has a combined score of between 1-3. This parcel of land is therefore considered in the Assessment to be a less sensitive area of Green Belt due to the low performing score. This site is located in close proximity to the Gallagher Estates site, and illustrates how this area of the Green Belt is suitable for consideration to be released from the Green Belt for housing land allocation in the emerging Local Plan.
- 2.14 Refined Parcel RP26 is fully within Section 3 – Landscape and Visual Issues. The need for Green Belt release has been accepted by Solihull MBC with the majority of the proposed allocations for residential and both of the proposed employment allocations being within the designated Green Belt. It is considered that a residential proposal on Land off Berkeswell Road, Meriden 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

- 2.15 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.
- 2.16 The SHELAA focussed 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.
- 2.17 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.

2.18 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 site 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 the 167 sites could potentially yield around 31,085 dwellings. Of this theoretical dwelling 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 per cent) are from sites which are 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 per cent) are from sites which are wholly or predominantly contained within the currently designated Green Belt; and
- 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 contained within the currently designated Green Belt.

2.19 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 per cent 'buffer'). To fully meet the five-year target, it will be necessary for a number of the 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 per cent 'buffer') and residual 17-year dwelling requirement, the assessment sets 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.

2.20 The SHELAA also set out that ***"It is important to emphasise that 150 of the 167 sites assesses 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

2.21 A number of sites were assessed in Meriden, including a site titled '*Land South of Meriden site (Ref: 197)*' which form the site the subject of this Background Document. The assessment of the site concludes that the site performs well against availability and achievability criteria and faces some suitability constraints. The report outlines how the site is within or adjacent to a free standing rural village, that the existing road access is adequate and the site could accommodate a yield of 200 dwellings. In terms of constraints, it is noted that 10-20% of the site is within Flood Zone 3 and less than 50% of the site is either contaminated or adjacent to a landfill site. Flood Risk and Ground Conditions are dealt with in Section 3 of this Document, the work that has been undertaken to date is such that neither matters are considered to be a constraint to development with all development proposed to take place within Flood Zone 1.

SOLIHULL BOROUGH LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT (DECEMBER 2016)

- 2.22 Within the Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment, the site is located within Landscape Character Area (LCA) 4: Rural Centre. LCA4 is sub divided into four sub-areas, the site is located within sub-area 4D, 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)

- 2.23 As part of the evidence base for the Local Plan, the council has prepared an Interim Sustainability Appraisal which assessed a variety of potential development sites across the Borough.
- 2.24 The site is assessed as site *"South of Meriden"* in the report, and is allocated the reference ME3 (alternative reference AECOM74). The assessment outlines how the site performs well in terms of sustainable access to local facilities, with the site in close proximity to bus stops, a primary school and a local convenience store. The assessment acknowledges matters discussed in other Sections of this document, such as that the site is partially located with Flood Zone 3 as set out above no development is proposed within the northern part of the site shown outlined in blue on Fig. 1.1., there is some landscape sensitivity and that the site is located within a mineral safeguarding area. These matters are addressed in detail within Section 3 of this document.

03 | SITE ASSESSMENT

SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The site comprises a parcel of land to the south of the village of Meriden, adjacent to Berkswell Road. The site is as shown on **Fig. 1.1**, approximately 84.5 hectares in extent and consists of a series of agricultural fields which are bounded by hedgerows and mature trees. There is a small copse of trees within existing field patterns in the site. The site is bounded to the north by the existing built up area of Meriden to the south of Main Road. This includes properties located off Strawberry Fields and the Strawberry Bank Hotel and Restaurant, a Grade II Listed Building. To the north east of the site, between the site boundary and Main Road, is Meriden Hall, a Grade II* Listed Buildings set within associated grounds including Grade II Listed stables and Ice House to its west. Meriden Hall is currently used for office accommodation and adjoined immediately to the by an existing mobile home park which is accessed directly off Berkswell Road. Berkswell Road defines the south eastern edge of the site, in addition to the curtilage of Hornwood a detached residential property. To the south, the site is adjoined by existing fields in agricultural use. To the west the site is bounded by a Sewage Works to the north west and Meriden Quarry to the south west.
- 3.2 The topography of the site gently undulates with a localised high point to the south of the site which restricts views towards the site from the wider landscape to the south and east. is generally falls in an east to west direction. The site is classified as Grade 2 in terms of its agricultural land classification.

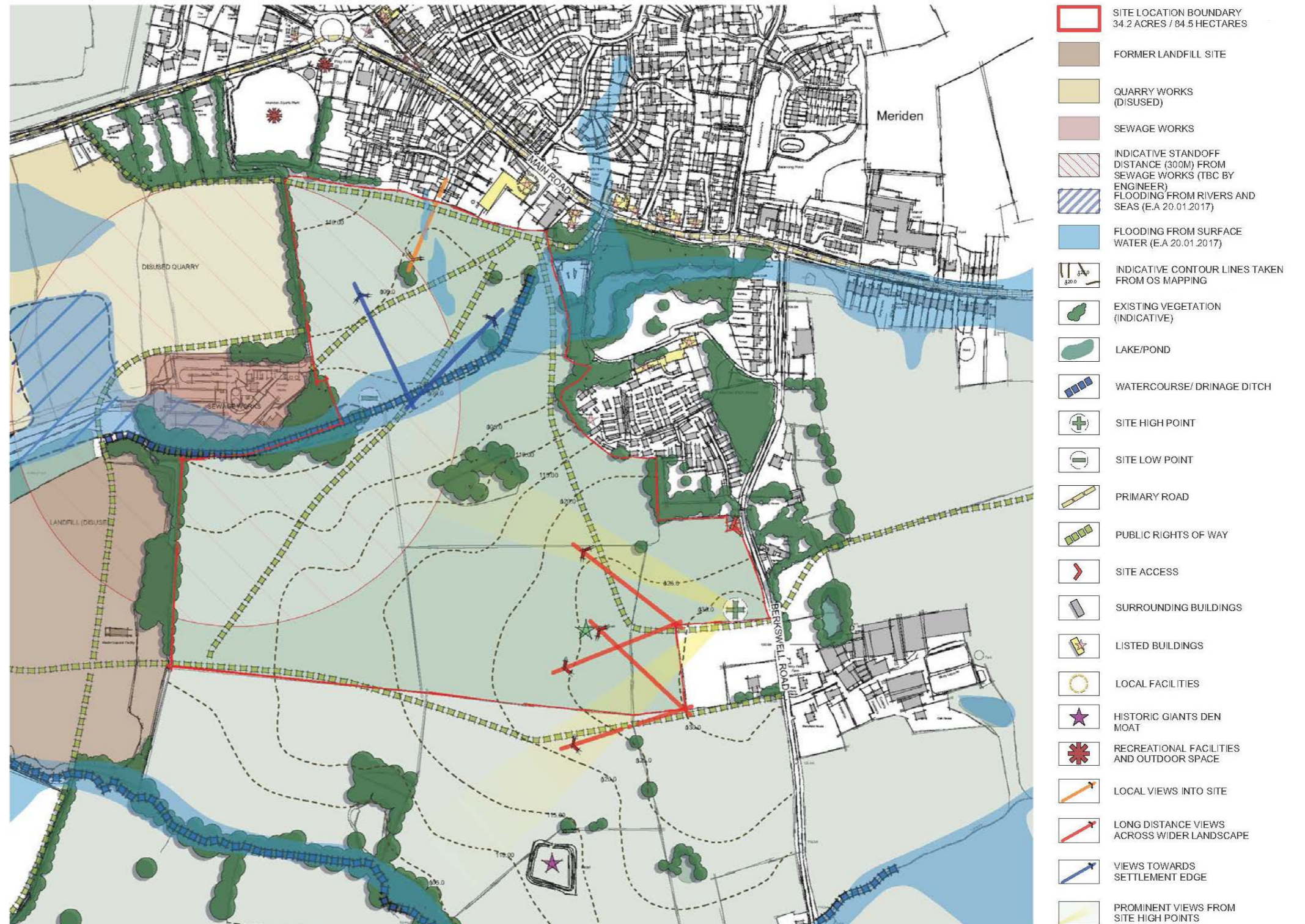


FIG 3.1. SITE AND CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

- 3.3 Immediately to the north of the site is the built up area of the village of Meriden which is primarily residential in character. The areas to the east and south of the site are primarily agricultural in nature with a number of farm complexes set within their wider agricultural holdings. To the west of the site is a disused landfill site and a large working quarry (Meriden Quarry) and several golf courses.
- 3.4 Meriden is one of the defined rural settlements within the Borough and is located within the West Midlands Green Belt to the east of Solihull and Birmingham International Airport. Meriden is located between Solihull and Coventry and is located approximately 6 miles to the east of Solihull and 7 miles to the west of Coventry. Meriden has a number of existing facilities including Meriden C of E Primary School, Berryfields Farm Shop complex, Hotel with restaurant and pub, and supermarket. The site is also within easy to existing bus stops which provide for journeys to Solihull, Coventry and Birmingham.

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

Policy Context

- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 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).
- 3.7 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.

- 3.8 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.

- 3.9 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.
- 3.10 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.

- 3.11 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.
- 3.12 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.
- 3.13 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

- 3.14 At a national level the site is located within the National Character Area Profile 97: Arden as published by Natural England (2012).
- 3.15 Landscape character at a local level is defined by the Solihull Borough Landscape Character (2016). The site is located in Landscape Character Area (LCA) 4: Rural Centre. The key characteristics of this LCA can be summarised as follows:
- The land falls from the east to the west towards River Blythe and then gently rises up towards the west with landform generally ranging from 90m to 140m AOD;
 - The River Blythe and its associated tributaries are a key feature within the area. Cuttle Brook, Long Brook and several pools, ditches and springs also contribute towards the drainage pattern of this LCA;
 - Area is generally rural with agriculture (mix of arable and pastoral) being the predominant use;
 - Field sizes vary, although they are generally small to medium scale;
 - Field boundaries are diverse and include hedgerows of varying condition;
 - Thick hedgerows occur often with bracken and mature oaks present;
 - Pockets of woodland including plantations are present across the area, which are generally found in close proximity to the settlements and river corridors;
 - The A4141 and the A452 are the principle roads within the character area, which are linked by several minor roads connecting the various smaller settlements; and
 - Several public footpaths and bridleways traverse the area, including the Millennium Way recreational route.

1. VIEW FROM PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY, WEST OF BERKSWELL ROAD
2. VIEW FROM MILLENIUM WAY, LOOKING SOUTH
3. VIEW FROM MILLENIUM WAY, LOOKING NORTH
4. VIEW FROM MILLENIUM WAY



- 3.16 LCA 4 is sub-divided into four sub-areas, the site is located within sub-area 4D. The key characteristics of sub-area 4D are as follows:
- Small to medium sized fields, boarded by field ditches and hedgerows, supporting pastoral and arable use, generally with a well wooded background;
 - Strong hedgerow structure of varying condition, many with mature hedgerow trees;
 - Oak and ash are the two dominant species in the sub-area. Poplar shelterbelts are also present adding to the wooded character of the area;
 - Red brick buildings and render are typical of the vernacular in the sub-area. Large ornamental gates are present particularly along Back Lane and seem incongruous with the rural landscape character. Farm house conversion to residential use is also evident; and
 - The lanes tend to be narrow and winding with high hedgerows.

3.17 In relation to landscape sensitivity, the published assessment notes that this sub-area has clear legibility with a broad road network and consistent field patterns. It states that the landscape varies in condition from good to fair. There are a few detractors including electricity pylons to the north, construction noise and presence of HGVs to the west. Overall, the landscape character sensitivity of the sub-area is considered to be high.

- 3.18 In relation to visual sensitivity, the published assessment states that this sub-area consists of generally medium to short distance views that are medium level, wide and contained, deep and shallow, and horizontal and upward in orientation. Overall the published assessment considered the visual sensitivity of the sub-area to be medium.
- 3.19 The published character assessment states that the value of the sub-area is considered to be medium.
- 3.20 In terms of landscape capacity, the published assessment states that this sub-area would typically have an overall very low landscape capacity to accommodate change. It states that the sub-area would be able to accommodate very restricted areas of small scale 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

- 3.21 The visual envelope is defined broadly as follows:
- from the north, by the built form and vegetation along the existing settlement edge of Meriden;
 - from the east by the existing caravan development and mature tree cover along Berkswell Road and associated with Meriden Hall;
 - from the west by the sewage works, quarry and associated vegetation; and
 - from the south by the rising landform towards Berkswell.
- 3.22 Views towards the more elevated parts of the site are likely from the wider landscape, including from the Millennium Way recreational route. These areas will however be viewed in the context of the existing settlement edge of Meriden. The lower areas of the site to the north are more enclosed, although retain a more 'parkland' character when viewed from the local public right of way network.

Landscape and Visual Constraints and Opportunities

3.23 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 local PROW network, including the Millennium Way recreational route (providing recreational opportunities for potential high sensitivity visual receptors);
- proximity to the listed Meriden Hall;
- 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 very low capacity to accommodate change.

3.24 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 opportunity to extend the existing woodland along the western edge of Meriden further south to provide enclosure to proposed development; and
- The opportunity to propose development within LCA Sub-area 4D 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

3.25 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.

3.26 The site is located partly within Refined Parcel RP26 'Land South of Main Road Meriden'. The assessment scores each Refined Parcel against four purposes of the Green Belt. In relation to RP26, it sets out the following:

GREEN BELT PURPOSE	RP26 SCORE
1 - CHECK UNRESTRICTED SPRAWL OF LARGE BUILT-UP AREAS	1
2 - PREVENT NEIGHBOURING TOWNS MERGING INTO ONE ANOTHER	1
3 - ASSIST IN SAFEGUARDING THE COUNTRYSIDE FROM ENCROACHMENT	1
4 - PRESERVE THE SETTING AND SPECIAL CHARACTER OF HISTORIC TOWNS	0
TOTAL	3

Fig 3.2. GREEN BELT REFINED PARCEL RP26 SCORES

Landscape Strategy

3.27 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 Berkswell Road to the east and does not extend further west than built form already present to the north;
- The development envelope is located away from the more open parcels of the site to the west and from the more 'parkland' like character to the north. This will reduce visual prominence of any new built form and means that it will not encroach across the plateau of the site;
- 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.

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 along Berkswell Road. The introduction of new development to the west of Berkswell Road in this location will not be uncharacteristic. Built development will not extend any further west than the existing built form to the north. On this basis, it is not considered that the proposed development will contribute to any 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 nearest settlement is Berkswell which is located approximately 1.5km to the south. The site comprises an area of agricultural land on the south-western edge of Meriden and as such does not represent a 'gap' between major urban areas.
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 broadly agricultural but is influenced by a number of detracting urbanising features, these include the quarry and sewage works to the west and caravan development to the east. The existing settlement edge of Meriden is also an influence. The proposed development is of relatively small scale, given the nature of the proposed development and its context, it is considered that it will safeguard the wider landscape from encroachment.
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 3.3. TABLE 1

- 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, including the hedgerow vegetation along the western boundary of the site, as well as new tree planting along this boundary, could form a new Green Belt boundary.

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

3.28 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 hedgerow vegetation along the western boundary of the site, as well as new tree planting along this boundary could form a clearly defined Green Belt boundary that ties into the existing green infrastructure to the north and south. 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.

3.29 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

3.30 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 west of the site.

MOVEMENT AND ACCESS

Access

- 3.31 Development is proposed on the eastern parcel of land known as 'Hornwood Farm', with access provided off Berkswell Road. This section of Berkswell Road is predominantly rural in nature, with good visibility for turning vehicles. The internal layout of the site will be highly permeable, providing convenient access for Non-Motorised Users (NMUs).

Connectivity

- 3.32 A pedestrian route has been identified a short distance from the north of the site, which provides convenient access through to Main Road and local services. Meriden has a primary school located within the village centre which can easily be accessed via this route.
- 3.33 The closest bus stops are located on Main Road, opposite and adjacent to the junction with Leys Lane. Both stops are served by a number of bus services, providing frequent connections to Solihull, Coventry and Birmingham. The services provide access to major employment hubs such as the National Exhibition Centre and Birmingham Airport, with a journey time of approximately 10 minutes. The design and layout of the development will ensure the development can provide direct links to bus stops in order to capitalise on the potential of existing public transport provision.

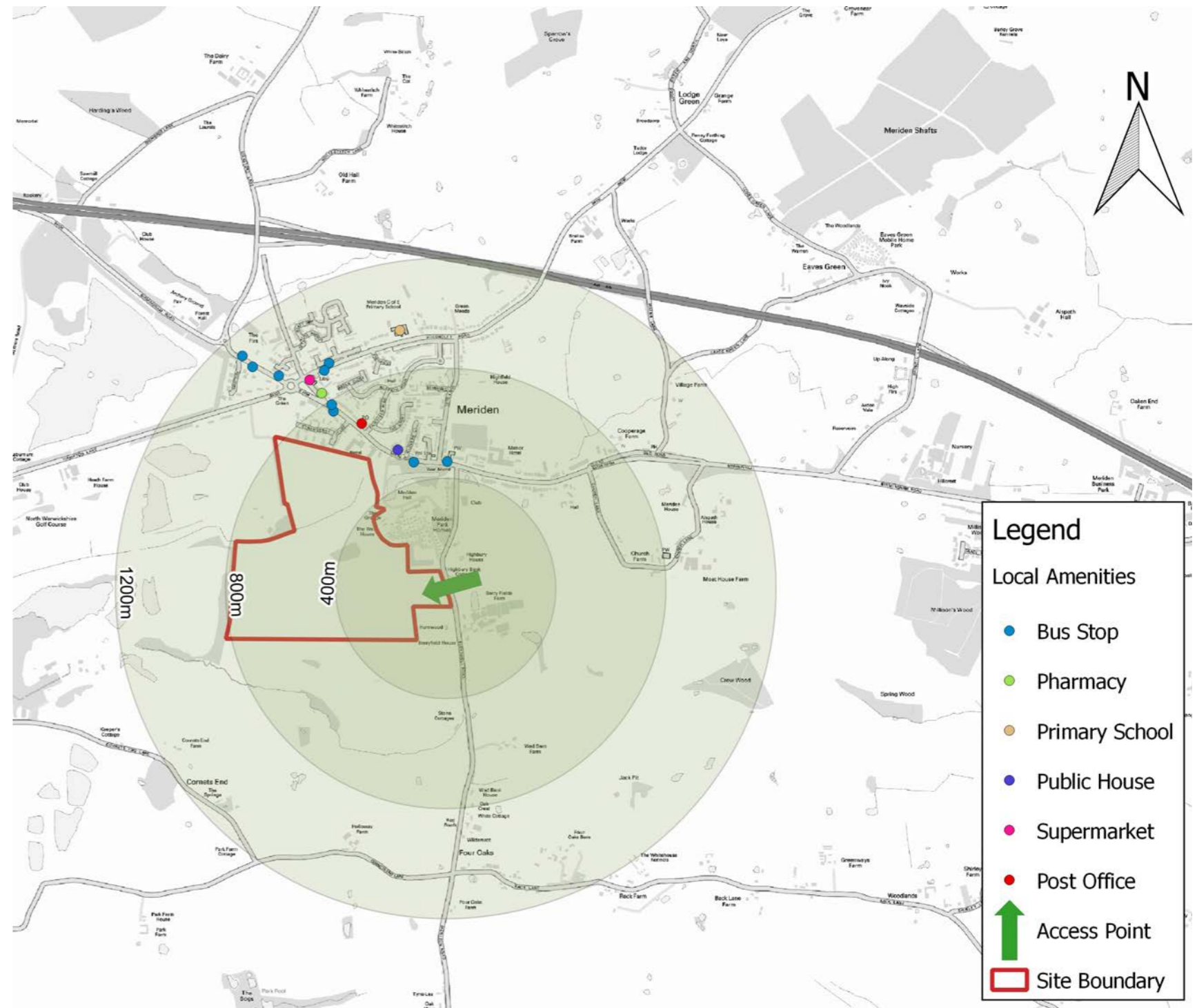


Fig 3.4. LOCAL AMENITIES PLAN

Services / Amenities

- 3.34 The majority of local services are located within a 400m distance of the northern part of the wider site. The site benefits from being conveniently located in close proximity to a local supermarket, public house, post office, pharmacy and primary school.
- 3.35 The site also benefits from its proximity to major employment hubs such as Birmingham Business Park, Birmingham Airport and the National Exhibition Centre, which can easily be accessed via bus. The local facilities within the surrounding area are shown on Fig 3. Xx.

FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

Flood Risk

- 3.36 Development units are proposed for the eastern parcel of land known as 'Hornwood Farm', it is considered unlikely that this parcel of land would be affected by surface water flooding. The majority of the site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is well above the flood levels of the two watercourses that cross the site. Investigation of the Environment Agency's (EA) flood mapping has identified that the potential for surface water flooding associated with these watercourses is confined to a corridor along the brook's route and the site's topography supports this.
- 3.37 It is recommended that a sustainable surface water drainage strategy be developed based on the development parcel draining to the existing water course, via a series of sustainable urban drainage techniques such as swales and storage basins.

Drainage

- 3.38 The site can be served by a new foul sewer connecting to the existing sewer which runs across the site to the Water Treatment Plant.
- 3.39 The proposed development has two potential surface water outfall options. The favoured option will be to drain the development into the watercourse which runs across the site, with appropriate attenuation. If this is not achievable then the site can be drained into the public storm sewer which runs parallel to the watercourse.

ECOLOGY

Introduction

- 3.40 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.
- 3.41 The current site occupies an area less than 35 hectares and is located to the south of Meriden village settlement and west of Berkswell Road.

Methods

- 3.42 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 dry weather conditions.
- 3.43 A Desktop Ecological Review was produced by CSA in January 2016, covering a wider area of 75ha (in the same location and adjacent land to the south), prior to the 2017 Site visit; to inform this previous report, a desktop data search of designated wildlife sites for a radius of 1km and of records for protected/notable species for a radius of 2km from the wider Site's central grid reference (SP 239 814). The Warwickshire Biological Records Centre (WBRC) was contacted to obtain records, while details of statutory designated wildlife sites were retrieved from the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) online database.

Baseline Ecological Conditions

Designated Sites

3.44 There are no international (e.g. SPA, SAC, Ramsar) statutory designated wildlife sites within 10km of the Site. Two national (e.g. SSSI, NNR) statutory designated wildlife sites are present within 3km of the Site and two local statutory designated wildlife sites are present within 3km of the Site.

3.45 Sixteen non-statutory Local Wildlife Site (LWS) designations are present with 1km of the Site. Full details of the above sites are provided in

Habitats and Flora

3.46 The Site comprises three arable and two extensive semi-improved sheep grazed pasture fields, with a small sparse mixed woodland copse centrally located on-site and an area of young colonising broadleaved woodland on the north-western boundary. Fields were bounded by post and rail fencing across the site, with some off-site hedgerows or linear belts of trees and shrubs. Please refer to the Habitats Plan (FIG 3.4.) which maps these features.

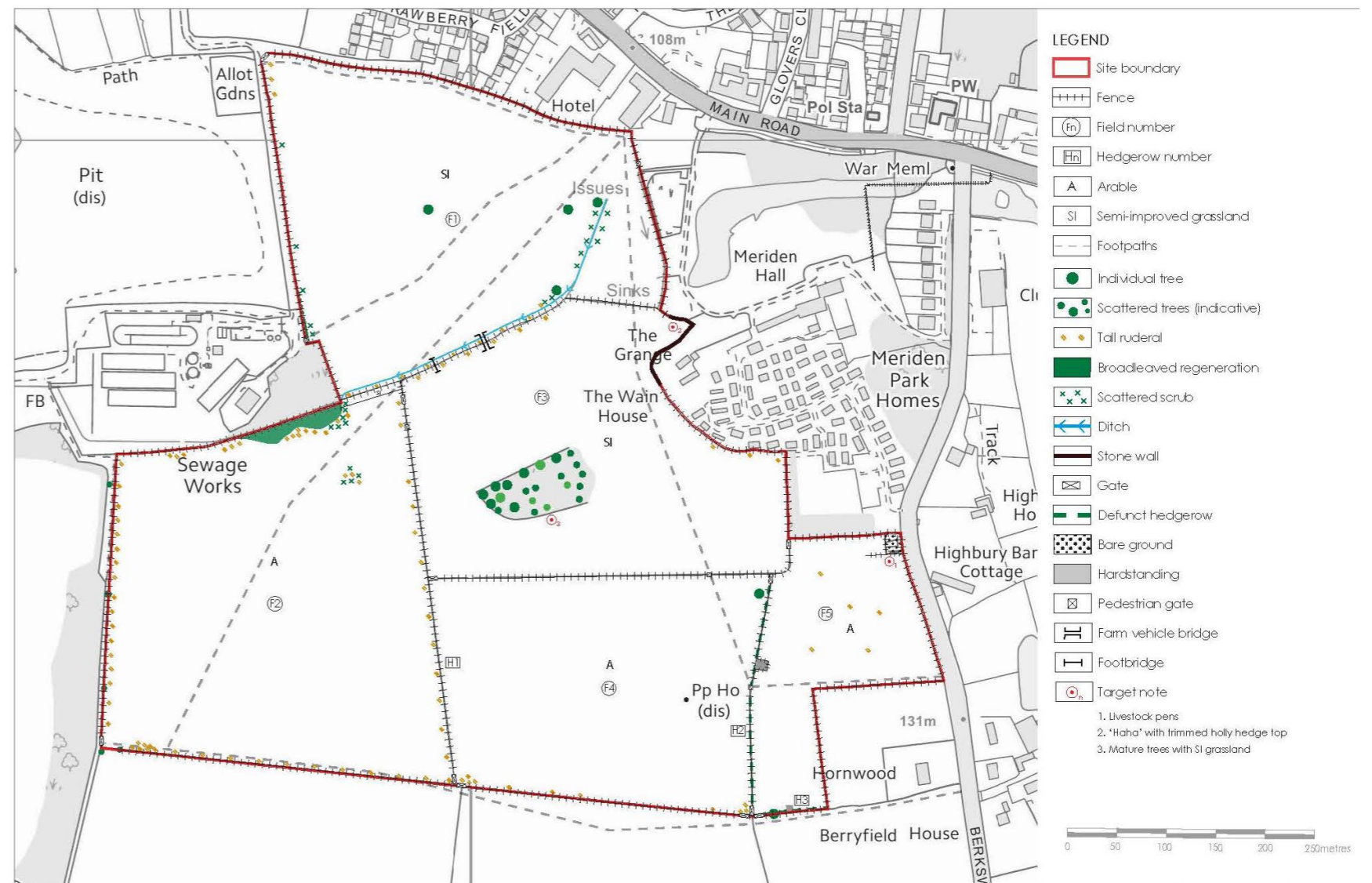


Fig 3.5. HABITATS PLAN

Semi-improved grassland and tall ruderal

- 3.47 Two fields of semi-improved grassland areas (thought to be species poor) were sheep grazed at the time of survey. Species encountered during the survey included common grasses and herbs; false oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, cock's-foot *Dactylus glomerata*, red fescue *Festuca rubra*, perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, annual meadow-grass *Poa annua* and meadow grasses *Poa* spp., Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, bent *Agrostis* sp., creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, hedge bedstraw *Galium mollugo* and clover *Trifolium* sp. Field margins comprising of occasional scattered tall ruderal vegetation such as common nettle *Urtica dioica*, dock *Rumex* sp., creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense* and spear thistle *C. vulgare*.
- 3.48 The developing wet woodland on the north-west boundary has dense tall ruderal vegetation beneath comprised of dominant willowherb *Epilobium* sp., with nettle, dock and common grasses such as Yorkshire fog and bent species recorded.

Arable

- 3.49 Three arable fields were recorded on-site, sown with a cereal crop and had evidence of recent ploughing at the time of surveying. Field margins were absent in some cases, but most recorded were between c. 0.5-2m wide with some potential habitat for wildlife amongst tall ruderal vegetation and along hedge lines. All arable fields were surrounded with post and rail fencing.

Woodland

- 3.50 On-site woodland is restricted to the open copse in F3 with mature and over mature silver birch *Betula pendula*, Scot's pine *Pinus sylvestris*, English oak *Quercus robur* and beech *Fagus sylvatica*, as well as the regeneration on the northern edge of F2 comprised of willow *Salix* sp. and alder *Alnus glutinosa* saplings.
- 3.51 Off-site, but adjacent are some mature trees and linear belts of trees and shrubs; on the western boundary, within the sewage works (planted mature silver maple *Acer saccharinum* and scrub); on the eastern boundary within the grounds of Meridan Hall; and, on the periphery of the Meriden Park Homes enclosure, near Berkswell Road. These areas are likely to be of higher value to a variety of species than the pasture and arable fields.

Scrub

- 3.52 Occasional hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* bushes and some scattered bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, are present on either side of the water course which runs through the site in F1, where it issues from the head wall, before it turns west along the fence line.
- 3.53 In F2 there is a small scrub area comprising of elder *Sambucus nigra* and hawthorn, interspersed with tall ruderal vegetation and a number of suspected rabbit holes.

Trees and hedgerows

- 3.54 Hedgerows on-site and at the edges are a mixture of intact and defunct, hawthorn dominated hedgerows with patches of holly *Ilex aquifolium* and bramble.
- 3.55 Several standard trees exist in hedgerows including oak *Quercus* sp. and sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*. Oak and elder saplings were also recorded along the western boundary of the Site. In addition there are four significant individual mature trees within F1 (English oak and horse chestnut) which should be maintained for landscape and biodiversity value where possible.

Bare ground and hardstanding

- 3.56 There is bare ground where a livestock pen is located on the eastern boundary of F5 due to trampling. Also in F5 are two residual areas of hardstanding; for a livestock water trough and a manhole cover.

Water courses and Ditches

- 3.57 A running water course/ditch emerges from a brick headwall and pipes in the north-east of F1, flowing south and then west along the field boundary. In profile, the 'v' shaped channel was c. 2.5-3m deep and running water was shallow and measured c. 0.5m across. The ditch was bordered by occasional scrub at the eastern end with Fool's watercress *Apium nodiflorum* and floating sweet grass *Glyceria fluitans* recorded in the water itself. The banks are gentler as it flows west and were short grazed/cut grass with scattered tall ruderal vegetation. It is culverted into the off-site grounds of the sewage works in the south west corner of F1.

Fauna

Bats

- 3.58 The WBRC provided 46 bat records of 7 bat species. Recordings of substantial roost colonies of over 400 individuals of common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and soprano pipistrelles *P. pygmaeus* some as close as 190m from site.
- 3.59 The land on-site is predominantly arable and semi-improved grassland grazed pasture making the Site of generally low suitability for foraging bat species. Few hedgerows are present, but the running ditch and areas of on-site and adjacent woodlands could provide some habitat for bats for foraging and commuting. The Site has connectivity to good foraging habitats to the north and west of the site. These features considered to be important for bat species should be enhanced and retained where possible.
- 3.60 There are no buildings present on the Site; however, there are a trees that could support roosting features, and it is likely that local farm buildings house in the nearby village settlement may support roosts of bats that will commute and forage on the Site.

Badgers

- 3.61 Six confidential records were provided of badgers *Meles meles*, including one record of a sett on-site; no dates were provided. No evidence of badger activity was recorded during the Site walkover and on-site habitat provides few opportunities for sett building, other than a steep bank covered in scrub to the west of the Site and the slope on the edge of the wooded copse, which may provide such opportunities for badgers setts. It is considered that there is potential for badgers to use on-site areas for foraging with easy access to the wider landscape.

Dormouse

- 3.62 No dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* records were provided from within the search area from WBRC. Individuals are infrequently encountered in the Midlands and due to lack of well-connected hedgerows and mature woodlands on-site it is unlikely that they will be found here and are not considered a constraint to development.

Riparian Mammals

- 3.63 Two records of water vole *Arvicola amphibius* have been provided for the local area, the closest record is from Moland's mere c. 1.5km north of the Site. A wet ditch is present on Site but is isolated in terms of connectivity to more suitable water bodies; therefore it is considered unlikely that they would be present on-site.
- 3.64 Eight records for otter *Lutra lutra* have been provided, the closest of which is c. 1.6km away from the River Blythe. No suitable water bodies are present on Site, therefore it is considered unlikely that these species would be found on-site.

Birds

- 3.65 Records were provided for six bird species from the local area, with an additional five records of barn owl *Tyto alba*, the closest record being c. 1.5km west of the Site. Hedgerows, mature trees and woodland patches on-site are likely to offer good hunting and nesting opportunities for a commonly found widespread bird species.

Reptiles

- 3.66 The land on-site is largely considered unsuitable for reptile species due to it being close grazed pasture and arable land. The limited areas of scrub and tall ruderal habitat is considered insufficient to support a population of reptile species.

Great crested newts

3.67 One record of a great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* was provided c. 2.1km south of the Site. Although this record is considered to be some distance away, interpretation of aerial imagery and maps has indicated that there are over 25 ponds within 500m surrounding the Site with suitable dispersal routes between them. The habitats on-site are mostly unsuitable for newts because it is managed pasture and arable land, however it is possible that this species cross the site during terrestrial phases and moving between ponds.

Invertebrates

3.68 WBRC provided records of 72 invertebrate species from the local area. As most of the land on-site is arable/pasture the likelihood of any notable or rare species being found here is unlikely.

Summary of Ecological Constraints and Opportunities

Confirmed Constraints

3.69 Development at this Site will likely require avoidance, mitigation and / or compensation measures in respect to:

- Designated Wildlife Sites
 - * Assessment would be necessary to determine any potential impact to off-site statutory and non-statutory designations, such as Berkswell Meadows SSSI, River Blythe SSSI, Meriden Hall Pool and Woodland Ecosite and Cornets End Ecosites. This is because the current redline falls within the “Impact risk zones” on MAGIC, and for this area states that:-
 - * “Any residential development of 100 or more houses outside existing settlements/ urban areas for River Blythe SSSI)” needs to be considered. Consultation with the relevant bodies is recommended.
- Mature Trees
 - * Mature trees are a Habitat of Principal Importance and have intrinsic ecological value with the ability to support a wide range of species. These should be retained and enhanced alongside development of the Site.
- Woodland
 - * The small on-site wooded areas have the potential to support a wide range of species. These areas should be retained and enhanced, in the development process if possible or replaced.

- Birds
 - * The nests and eggs of wild birds are all subject to legal protection. Any clearance works to be undertaken should do so out of the nesting bird season (March-August inclusive), or immediately after confirmation from a suitably qualified ecologist that there are no active nests present. Further surveys for breeding birds are likely to be necessary.

Potential Constraints

- 3.70 Avoidance, mitigation and/or compensation measures may be required in respect to the following potential ecological constraints, subject to further surveys/assessment:
- Badgers
 - * It is recommended that small areas of suitable habitats on-site should be checked for badger evidence or setts, such as the scrub and wooded areas.
 - Bats
 - * There are records of bat roosts within the local area and potential for bats to be roosting in on-site trees.
 - * Woodland habitats on and adjacent to the Site may provide important foraging areas and commuting corridors for bats. All bats are European protected species and subject to strict protection.
 - * Further Bat Activity Surveys (walking transect and static detectors) are recommended to ascertain levels of bat activity.
 - * Assessments should be carried out to determine the potential for roosting bats to be present in any trees which may be impacted by the development. If significant roosting potential is identified, then further Bat Roost aerial investigations or surveys should be undertaken to determine the presence or likely absence of roosting bats.
 - Great crested newts
 - * Records were returned for this species from over 2km away, however, given the abundance of ponds within 500m a pond scoping exercise is recommended to assess the likelihood of great crested newts utilising on-site habitats.

Conclusion

- 3.71 There are limited ecological constraints identified at this Site and those identified are fairly typical of a rural site with the need to retain hedgerows and mature trees and protect woodland areas and water courses where possible. The Site is dominated by poor semi-improved grazed pasture and arable land which is considered to be of low ecological value, at this stage, although it should be noted that the site survey was carried out during a sub-optimal period for botany and may need to be reassessed in the summer months.
- 3.72 Further survey work has been recommended for badgers, bats and great crested newts in order to inform development proposals and to ensure that any legal constraints are understood and appropriate mitigation 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 No overriding constraints to development have been identified, subject to the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures in respect of confirmed ecological constraints, and further recommended survey work.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

- 3.75 This document provides an initial assessment of potential heritage constraints for the proposed development site Land South of Meriden. The assessment has been informed by the following sources:
- Historic England National Heritage List for information on designated heritage 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.
 - Warwickshire and Solihull Historic Environment Record for information on non-designated heritage assets and previous archaeological works.
 - Historic cartographic sources and satellite imagery.
 - A site visit.

Designated Heritage Assets

- 3.76 The Grade II* Listed Meriden Hall, an early 18th-century house now divided into flats, is located immediately east of the site. Meriden Hall is set within associated grounds including a fish pond to the north (extant) and a Grade II Listed Stables and Grade II Listed Icehouse to its west. The main façade of the house faces south, historically looking towards associated gardens although now largely occupied by a mobile home park, although there are also principal views north across an associated pond. The site has historically formed parkland associated with Meriden Hall, although is now separated from it by the mobile home park located within the former gardens of the hall.

Non-Designated Heritage Assets

- 3.77 The findspot of a Mesolithic flint tool (microlith) is recorded to the south of the site. Finds of a Bronze Age sword and a Bronze Age Beaker are recorded to the north-west of the site.
- 3.78 A moat, known as Giant's Den, potentially of medieval origin, is located approximately 200m to the south of the site. A 17th-century cottage is located within the moat (ibid).

CONCLUSIONS

- 3.79 The proposed development site is located to the south of the Grade II* Listed Meriden Hall. The site has historically formed parkland associated with the hall, although is now separated from the hall by a mobile home park, located within the former gardens. The setting of the Grade II* Listed Meriden Hall should be taken into account in the formulation of detailed design plans.
- 3.80 Prehistoric finds are recorded in the vicinity of the site. There is no current evidence to suggest below-ground archaeological remains are present which would preclude development.

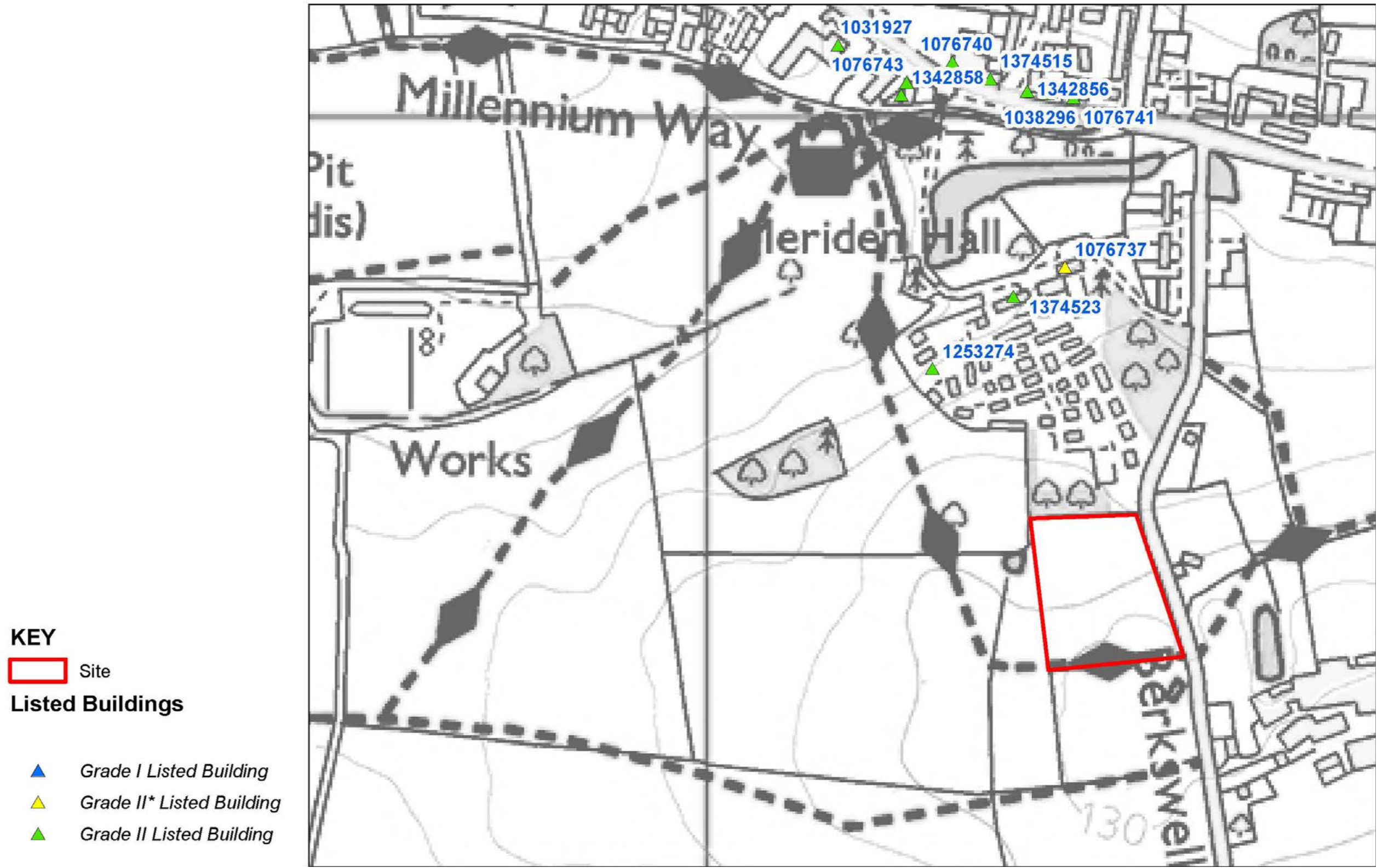


Fig 3.6. LISTED BUILDINGS PLAN

OTHER MATTERS

Ground Contamination and Pollution

- 3.81 The site is currently in pastoral and arable use and as such there are no known ground contamination constraints.
- 3.82 The wider blue land of the site is adjacent to a disused Landfill and a working Quarry (Meriden Quarry). As shown on the Design Concept Plan (Fig. 4.1.) development is proposed to the southern side of the existing mobile home park, and is a significant distance from the landfill and Meriden quarry.
- 3.83 Electricity, gas and water supplies can be provided for the proposed development, subject to extensions to the local network.

Odour

- 3.84 An existing Sewage Works is located to the west of the site. DEFRA have produced a Code of Practice document relating to odour nuisance from Sewage Treatment Works. The need to establish buffer zones between new development and existing Sewage Treatment Works is an important consideration to reduce the impact of potential odour nuisance. The existing code of practice sets out that differing circumstances between individual works makes a standard distance 'cordon sanitaire' difficult.
- 3.85 In considering individual buffer zones, the operational and complaints history of a sewage treatment works and other potential odour issues should be carefully considered a 300m buffer from the sewage works has been shown on the Contextual Site Plan (**Fig. 3.1.**). The development site as outlined in red is a significant distance from the 300m indicative buffer and as the proposals for the site evolve further, Gallagher Estates will ensure that a sufficient buffer zone between any new built from and the adjacent Sewage Treatment Works is provided taking into account the operation of the existing sewage works.

Noise

- 3.86 A Noise and Vibration Survey will accompany any future planning application on the site. Road noise in addition to noise from the Quarry and Sewage Works are likely to be the main noise sources affecting the site. Any future planning application will ensure that the relevant acoustic mitigation measures can be implemented and delivered on site to ensure that an appropriate level of amenity can be provided for the proposed residential development.

04 | EMERGING PROPOSALS

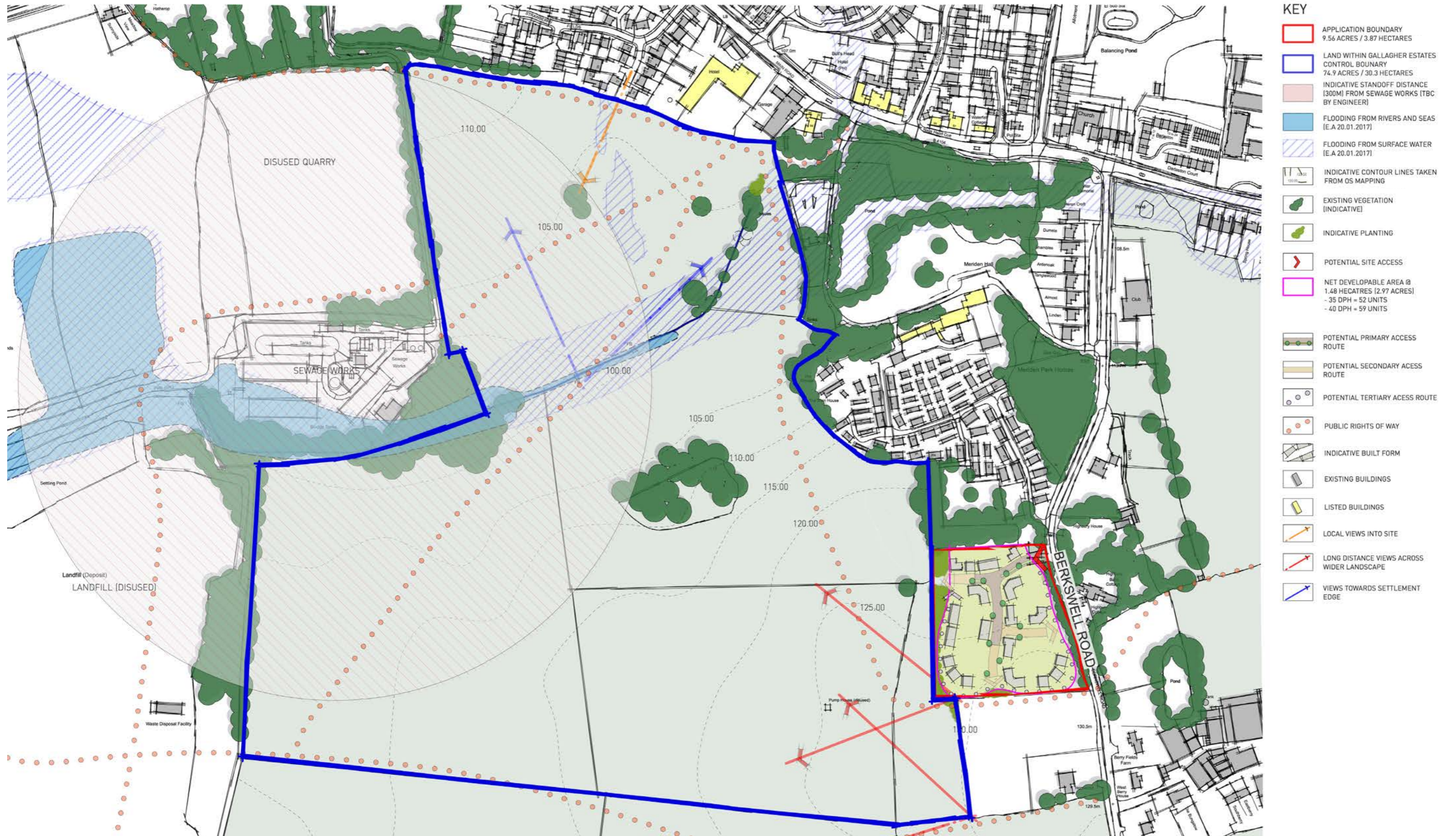


Fig 4.1. DESIGN CONCEPT PLAN

DEVELOPMENT AND QUANTUM

- 4.1 The net developable area of the proposed residential development is approximately 1.48 hectares of the sum 34.55 hectares. The remaining site area as outlined in blue on Fig. 1.1 will comprise of retained agricultural pastureland.
- 4.2 Taking into account the sites edge of settlement location and Solihull local plan which sets out a high demand for 1,2 and 3 bedroom units with a range of tenures and sizes, an average density of 35-40 dph has been applied. This will approximately provide in the order of up to 52 dwelling at 35dph and 59 dwellings at the upper 40dph figure. The proposed density will allow for the formation of a sustainable and balanced residential development which can respond appropriately to the local housing need.
- 4.3 Green spaces have been designed to soften the development fringe and complement an outward facing lower density development. Additional planting to nearby coppices will seek to soften the development and assist in its assimilating into the surrounding landscape context.
- 4.4 Internal facing streets would seek to achieve a higher density, this will allow for a range of types and units being provided within the development while still allowing for a lower density periphery.

- 4.5 The development has been set back from Berkswell Road to allow for the retention of the existing landscaping and to take into account the set back of the residential development along Berkeswell Road to the north and south of the site. Opportunities exist for additional enhanced hedgerow planting and to compensate for the loss of vegetation required to allow for the access to be provided to the development.
- 4.6 Development has been proposed to sit fully outside the latest flood mapping estimates (obtained from the E.A flood maps).
- 4.7 Development is to be sited to the southern side of the existing Meriden Park Homes mobile home park away from the existing key views from within the red line boundary of the site, as shown on the Site and Contextual Analysis Plan (Fig 3.1) and the Design Concept Plan (Fig 4.1).

ACCESS

- 4.8 Principal vehicular access will be taken off Berkswell Road from an existing gated field access point, opposite Highbury House.
- 4.9 A principal tree lined street will enter the site via a newly planted landscaped frontage. Traffic will continue along series along a series of primary routes which will disperse traffic around the development in a series of secondary and tertiary circuitous lanes.
- 4.10 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
- 4.11 A number of proposed pedestrian links would be established to further improve accessibility to the local surrounding facilities and nearby public right of ways.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- 4.12 A large proportion of the site will be retained as pastureland which incorporates a series of existing hedgerows, a coppice and a number of existing public right of ways running across the site.
- 4.13 The majority of existing trees and linear shrub vegetation are proposed to be retained aside from the removal of vegetation necessary to widen the existing track to provide the site access and internal connectivity.
- 4.14 The land retained as green infrastructure extends to approximately 33.07 hectares (about 81.7 acres) which will remain in private ownership.
- 4.15 A series of newly planted screen planting is proposed along the southern and western boundary of the development which will form an extension of the existing Coppice tree planting to the north which surrounds the Meriden Park Homes mobile home park. This will provide a new defensible green belt boundary to the south and west of the proposed development, with only glimpsed views into the development.
- 4.16 Proposed new attenuation features for the development will be located north-west of the proposed dwellings and will be enveloped by the new planting and incorporated into the landscape.
- 4.17 Solihull's Green Spaces Strategy sets out a requirement for green space of 2.86 hectare per 1,000 population. Using this standard, the development will require an estimated 0.34 – 0.39 hectares, which the site can comfortably provide. These will take shape in the form of informal natural play spaces and green open spaces.

05 | SITE SELECTION ASSESSMENT

5.1 The following table provides an assessment of Land off Berkswell Road, Meriden 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 off Berkswell Road, Meriden would have a low impact when judged against each individual criterion.

SHELAA Suitability Criterion	
Access Infrastructure Constraints	The site scores a 5 on this aspect, with the existing road access considered to be adequate. A site access can be provided off Berkswell Road, demonstrating that the site is suitable in access terms.
Contamination Land/ Landfill Site	The assessment states that less than 50% of the site is within this constraint. The current use of the site is agricultural pasture fields and arable fields. There are no known constraints in relation to ground contamination. An existing sewage works and Quarry lie to the west of the site. The proposed development envelop lies to the south east side of the site as outlined in red on Fig 1.1, the remainder of the land outlined in blue will remain in its current use. The proposed development is a significant distance from the existing quarry. A full ground investigation report will be undertaken as the proposals for the site progress further.
Ground Conditions	Site achieves the maximum score regarding its suitability and treatment not expected to be required regarding ground conditions. Although not anticipated, any issues which arise could be adequately conditioned at permission stage.

SHELAA Suitability Criterion	
Heritage	The SHELAA scored the site as not including, or being located adjacent to, a Nationally or Locally Listed Building. This is incorrect, the Site and Contextual Plan (Fig 3.1) shows how there are listed buildings located in the nearby vicinity, including the Grade II* Listed Meriden Hall to the north. The proposals for the site as shown on the Design Concept Plan (Fig 4.1) have been carefully designed to take into consideration the proximity of these heritage assets, and the proposed development parcel is located at a sufficient distance away from these heritage assets to ensure that the setting of Meriden Hall would not be affected.
BMV Agricultural Land	The Agricultural Land Classification of the site is Grade 5. Development of this site would not result in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land. It is therefore suitable for the proposed development.
High Pressure Gas Pipeline	The site does not lie within this constraint and achieved the maximum score possible. The site is therefore suitable when assessed against this criteria.

SHELAA Suitability Criterion	
Flood Risk Constraints	<p>The site scores 2 on this matter in the SHELAA, as it is stated that 10-25% of the site area is located within Flood Zone 3.</p> <p>The Design Concept Plan (Fig 4.1) has been designed to take into consideration the areas of the site which are located in Flood Zone 3. Development is proposed within the south eastern part of the site adjacent to Berkeswell Road which is located entirely within Flood Zone 1, the lowest area of flood risk. It is therefore considered that the site is suitable for residential development in the south-eastern parcel of the site as proposed.</p>
Bad Neighbour Constraints	Site scored highest in the assessment and has no bad neighbours
Biodiversity	<p>There are limited ecological constraints identified at the site and those identified are fairly typical of a rural site.</p> <p>The site is dominated by poor semi-improved grazed pasture and arable land which is considered to be of low ecological value at this stage of assessment.</p> <p>No overriding constraints to development have been identified, subject to the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures.</p>
Suitability of Location Constraints	<p>The site is immediately adjacent to a 'free standing rural village'.</p> <p>Meriden has a number of local facilities such as a primary school, local shops and public houses. The site is well located on the edge of Meriden, and would therefore be well placed to meet the future housing growth needs of the village in a sustainable manner.</p>
Other Suitability Constraints	

SA Suitability Criterion	
SA Suitability Criterion	
SA1 Contribution to Regeneration and Economic Development	Located within 60% least deprived
SA2a Distance to Primary School	The site is located 722m from the nearest primary school and scores green on this aspect.
SA2b Distance to Secondary School	The site is located 5525m from the nearest secondary school and scores yellow on this aspect.
SA3a Proximity to Bus & Train services	The site is located within 400m of an infrequent bus or train service (less than 3 bus services or 2 train services per hour)
SA3b Proximity to Principal Road Network	655m, which scores green on this aspect.
SA4a Soils	Contains more than 20 ha of agricultural land 1-2. The development site however extends to a site area of 30.3 and as such the proposals for the site would only the loss of 3.9 ha of agricultural land.
SA4b Minerals	The site is located within a minerals safeguard area. Any forthcoming Planning Application would address this matter in relation to the proposals.
SA7 Flooding	The SA states that some of the site is located within Flood Zones 2 or 3, however the Design Concept Plan (Fig 4.1) shows where the proposed residential development could be located (which is located entirely in Flood Zone 1).
SA9 Enhance Ecological Sites	<p>The SHELAA sets out that site overlaps or contains a local wildlife site. The site is of a strategic scale to enhance ecological works.</p> <p>This is incorrect, the site does not contain and is not adjacent to a LWS. There are 16 non statutory designations within 1km of the site, the closest being Meriden Hall Pool and Woodland Ecosite/ Rejected pLWS adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site which is not of LWS quality. Meriden Hall Pool and Woodland Ecosite comprises of a long pool, hedges, village pond and woodland which will not be affected by the proposals for development.</p>

SA Suitability Criterion	
SA10 Landscape Sensitivity	<p>The site is considered in the assessment as being a landscape with high sensitivity to change. The site adjoins an existing caravan park which creates a strong Green Belt boundary.</p> <p>The overall development envelop is as shown on the Design Concept Plan (Fig 4.1) is defined by the visual and physical containment provided by Berkeswell Road to the east and does not extend further west than the built form already present to the north. The development envelop is located away from the more open parcels to the west and from the more 'parkland character' to the north which will reduce visual prominence of any new built form afforded visual containment</p> <p>The Design Concept Plan seeks to conserve and enhance where possible the existing vegetation and make best use of existing landscape elements and features on the site.</p> <p>Additional tree planting to extend the existing area of woodland along the western edge of Meriden is proposed to provide enclosure to the development.</p> <p>Existing physical features including the hedgerow vegetation along the western boundary of the site, as well as new tree planting along this boundary could form a new Green Belt boundary.</p>
SA11 Enhance Green Infrastructure	The proposals for green infrastructure and landscaping will deliver a number of enhancements in terms of the physical landscape and strengthening of the structure of the landscape to create a new robust, defensible Green Belt boundary to the west of the site.
SA12 Enhance and Protect Historic Assets	The Design Concept Plan has illustrated how development could be carefully located in the south-east section of the site to ensure sufficient separation distances are achieved between development and designated Heritage Assets. This will ensure that the character and setting of designated heritage assets would be preserved.
SA14 Amenity	No sources of noise adjacent to the site.
SA17a Distance to Healthcare	617 from local health care facility, which scores green on this aspect.
SA17b Access to Leisure Facilities	Within 400m of at least two facilities- green.
SA19a Distance to Key Economic Assets	4776m
SA19b Distance to Convenience Stores or Supermarket	Located 103m from local convenience stores or supermarket, which again scores green on this aspect.

06 | SUMMARY

- 6.1 Gallagher Estate's emerging proposals for Land off Berkeswell Road, Meriden are capable of contributing positively to meeting the housing needs of the Borough in a sustainable manner. There will be easy access to the existing facilities located within Meriden which includes a primary school, located within the village centre, supermarket, pharmacy and a number of public houses. The site is also well placed being in close proximity public transport provision, with bus stops along Main Road providing frequent connections to Solihull, Coventry and Birmingham in addition to major employment hubs such as the NEC and Birmingham Airport.
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 The scale and form of development has been landscape and visually led to wrap around the existing mobile home park off Berkeswell Road to the north of the site. The development envelope is located away from the more open parts of the site which will be retained in agricultural use. The proposals for green infrastructure and landscaping which include the new tree planting along the western boundary of the site will deliver a number of enhancements in terms of the physical landscape and strengthening of the structure of the landscape to form a clearly defined Green Belt boundary that ties into the existing infrastructure to the north and south.
- 6.4 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 Meriden;
 - 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 along the western boundary of the development site which will integrate the development with the surrounding landscape;
 - The provision of new areas of public open space within the development;
- 6.5 The work that has been undertaken by the project team demonstrates that Land off Berkeswell Road, Meriden 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.

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