

## Land at Light Hall, Solihull, West Midlands

### Green Belt Position Note

#### edp0938\_r015a\_180319

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP) has been commissioned by Taylor Wimpey West Midlands (the 'Developer') to prepare a Position Note proving a preliminary Green Belt appraisal of land at Light Hall, Solihull, West Midlands. This note has been prepared to inform the early consideration of the site's design and its promotion in the local plan making process.
- 1.2 This note has been informed by a desk-based review of available data, policy, landscape character publications and mapping, as well as a site visit undertaken by an experienced Chartered Landscape Architect during February 2019, continuing their existing involvement with the site since 2014. The site was in 'wintertime' condition during the visit, allowing for a full appreciation of its potential visibility.

### 2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The site is situated within the administrative authority of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference (OSGR) SP 122 757. The site is located entirely in the (Birmingham) Green Belt on the southern edge of Shirley, Solihull, with Monkspath to the east, Cheswick Green 80m to the south and Dickens Heath 430m to the west.
- 2.2 With respect to the site the subject of this study, within the last publication of the '*Solihull Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment*' (SHLAA), (September 2012), a significant proportion of the site is identified as a SHLAA Housing Site. Effectively the SHLAA identified a predominant area of the site which should be removed from the Green Belt and allocated for housing development (see SHLAA Housing Site 7, 60, 170-173).
- 2.3 The site is subject in part to a Proposed Housing Allocation for development within the '*Local Plan Review consultation*'. The northern section of the site has been identified for new housing development and categorised as part of Growth Option G – Large Scale Urban Extensions. The site is identified within Proposed Housing Allocation 12 and is proposed to be released from the Green Belt. This is approximately 50% of the site quantum which Taylor Wimpey Development Ltd is promoting.

### 3. The Purpose of this Position Note

- 3.1 In February 2019, Taylor Wimpey West Midlands, has prepared an Illustrative Masterplan (ref: 675A-28C prepared by Randall Thorp); see **EDP Appendix L1** of this Position Note. As part of

their Local Plan Review Supplementary Consultation, SMBC have prepared their own Illustrative Emerging Concept Masterplan; see **EDP Appendix L2** of this Position Note.

3.2 This Position Note will inform the promotion of the site to the Local Plan preparation. Specifically, this document will provide headline technical evidence to the Local Planning Authority (SMBC) that the removal of the site from the Green Belt and its development would be appropriate. The following matters are considered in this Position Note:

- A headline assessment of the site's contribution to the function of the Green Belt; and
- High-level consideration of the Developer's proposed Green Belt re-alignment (alongside that which is proposed by Illustrative Emerging Concept Masterplan; see **EDP Appendix L1** and **L2** respectively).

#### **4. Background to the Green Belt Designation**

4.1 The Green Belt was conceived to control urban form, and the purposes of a Green Belt around urban areas were set out in 1955 by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government as being:

- To check the further growth of a large built up area;
- To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another; and
- To preserve the special character of a town.

4.2 The current Green Belt allocation was last reviewed nearly 25 years ago. Apart from then, the boundaries have remained unchanged except for the previous release of a small parcel of brownfield land at the former Minworth Sewage Works for employment land in 2005. Approximately 12,000 hectares of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council is designated as Green Belt land, accounting for approximately two thirds of the borough's land area.

4.3 The Government formerly set out its policies and principles towards Green Belts in England and Wales in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: Green Belts, but this planning guidance was superseded by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012, and has been subsequently superseded with the Revised National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018), and most recently by the Revised National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019). Planning Authorities are strongly urged to follow the Revised NPPF's detailed advice when considering whether to permit additional development in the Green Belt.

4.4 The NPPF requires land to demonstrate that it contributes towards these two essential characteristics of openness and permanence by meeting one or more of five 'tests' of Green Belt designation, which are set out at Revised NPPF (Feb 2019) Paragraph 134 as follows:

- *“To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- *To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- *To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- *To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- *To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.”*

4.5 The Revised NPPF Paragraph 136 (July 2018) says that: *“... once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans. Strategic policies should establish the need for any changes to Green Belt boundaries, having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so they can endure beyond the plan period.”*

4.6 Provisionally, this Position Note considers the extent to which the appraisal site fulfils the five Green Belt purposes in Revised NPPF (July 2018) paragraph 134. In doing so, EDP have been minded to ensure that any revision to the Green Belt provision would ensure that the Local Planning Authority (SMBC) would *“satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the development plan period”*, as well as, ensuring any new boundaries are: *“clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent”* (Revised NPPF (July 2018) paragraph 139 respectively).

#### **Current Green Belt Assessment Undertaken by the Local Planning Authority ‘Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment’ (July 2016, produced by Atkins)**

##### ***Purpose and Methodology***

4.7 The ‘*Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment*’ (SSGBA) was published July 2016 against the current backdrop to the debate of Green Belt land release within the Borough and the wider West Midlands area:

*“The key driver for this Strategic Green Belt Assessment (hereafter referred to as the Assessment) is SMBC’s need to adopt a review of its Local Plan by December 2017, with an essential component of this being the requirement for the Plan to be informed by updated evidence.”*

*“Part of this evidence base includes the recent Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) and the Black Country Authorities Strategic Housing Needs Study. This study found that there is a significant shortfall in housing supply across the Greater Birmingham Housing Market Area which, alongside the growth associated with the planned HS2 Interchange, would further add to pressure for significant future development within the*

*Borough over the lifetime of the Plan.....the provision of a sound and up to date evidence base to support the development of policies relating to growth in the Borough.”*

4.8 The purpose of this assessment is stated as follows:

*“The core purpose of this Assessment is to assess the extent to which the land currently designated as Green Belt within SMBC fulfils the essential characteristics and purpose of Green Belt land as set out in Paragraphs 79 and 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).”*

4.9 As stated, this study is to be considered as one of only several likely representations to the Local Plan process and will form part of the Evidence Base in the development of planning policies and the Draft Allocation for housing development. It is therefore entirely reasonable for the landowners of the site to undertake further studies to inform the development of the emerging Plan, and for this to be considered in its preparation.

4.10 Further to this, the assessment is mindful of recognising and using strong permanent physical features, which are easily identifiable, and so ensuring any new boundaries are: *“clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent”* (Revised NPPF para 139 (Feb 2019)). With consideration of the site’s context, EDP identifies the following criteria of physical features as those which may be used to sustainably re-align the Green Belt for longevity:

- Roads (motorways, A and B roads);
- Rail and other permanent infrastructure;
- Watercourses;
- Areas of woodland established hedgerows and treelines; and
- Established field patterns.

4.11 The Council study has examined land across the Borough against the following criteria:

*“Each Refined Parcel and Broad Area has been subject to an assessment against the first four purposes of Green Belt, all of which have equal weight, in line with the criteria set out in Table 1 below and assigned a score for the extent to which it performs against each purpose.*

- *To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- *To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- *To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; and*
- *To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.”*

- 4.12 SMBC limited their assessment to only these first four Green Belt purposes, therefore, not including the fifth Green Belt purpose: *“to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land”*. SMBC reasoned that: *“By virtue of its designation, all Green Belt land makes an equal contribution to this purpose and therefore inclusion of this purpose would add no value to the Assessment.”*
- 4.13 SMBC scored each land parcel for each of the first four purposes of the Green belt as follows (see page Section 3, page 5 of the *‘Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment’*, July 2016):
- *“Refined Parcel/Broad Area does not perform against the purpose;*
  - *Refined Parcel/Broad Area is lower performing against the purpose;*
  - *Refined Parcel/Broad Area is more moderately performing against the purpose;*
  - *Refined Parcel/Broad Area is higher performing against the purpose.”*
- 4.14 In the methodology of the SGBA 2016, SMBC scores 1 to 4 respectively, with ‘higher performing’ scoring 3, and ‘does not perform’ scoring 0.

### **Review of the Site**

- 4.15 With reference to the SSGBA 2016, the site is identified by SMBC within three refined land parcels; no doubt reflecting the physical features and differing landscape character found throughout the site. The site is identified as follows; see Figure 1 of the SMBC’s SSGBA 2016 contained within **EDP Appendix L3** of this Position Note.
- *RP 63* – this land parcel is situated within the site to the east-south eastern extent of the site;
  - *RP 64* – the site occupies the northern extent of this land parcel; and
  - *RP 65* – the land parcel is situated within the site and forms the majority of the site quantum.
- 4.16 These three land parcels were considered in line with and SMBC’s scoring mechanism from the SSGBA 2016 against the assessment criteria (NPPF Paragraph 134 Green Belt purposes 1-4), which are identified in **Table EDP 4.1**.

**Table EDP 4.1:** Review of Land Parcels (forming the site) from SSGB A 2016



<b>Land Parcel</b>	<b>Purpose 1</b> To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	<b>Purpose 2</b> To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	<b>Purpose 3</b> To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	<b>Purpose 4</b> To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	<b>Overall Score</b>
<b>Parcel RP63</b>	1	3	1	0	5 out of a max. of 16 (Main Purpose 2) averaging 1.25 overall
<b>Parcel RP64</b>	0	0	0	0	0 out of a max. of 16 (No Main Purpose) Averaging 0 overall
<b>Parcel RP65</b>	1	3	2	0	6 out of a max. of 16 (Main Purpose 2) averaging 1.5 overall

4.17 As can be seen from **Table EDP 4.1** above the three parcels of land which form the site have been assessed overall as quite low functioning elements of the Green Belt (Parcel RP 63 and RP 65) or having no score at all with regard to its function against these four main purposes of the Green Belt (Parcel RP 64).

4.18 The highest scores for RP 63 and RP 65 are found relative to Green Belt purpose 2: “To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another.” That said, a score of 2 is categorised by SMBC as: “represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas = 2 Parcel is more moderately performing.” SMBC comment as follows:

*“Refined Parcels which perform highly against purpose 2 to ‘Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another’ are those parcels within the south west corner of the borough which form the gap separating the urban area of Solihull from the nearby settlements of Cheswick Green and Dickens Heath. For example, parcels RP62 and RP63 form a gap of less than 1 kilometre between the Monkspath area of Solihull and Cheswick Green to the south. Likewise, parcels RP65 and RP69 form a gap of less than 1 kilometre between the Shirley area of Solihull to the north and Dickens Heath to the south.”*

- 4.19 Furthermore, land parcel RP 63 scores poorly against Green Belt Purpose 1: *“To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas”*; and Green Belt Purpose 3: *“To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment”*, whilst RP 65 scores poorly for Green Belt purpose 1 and moderately for Green Belt purpose 3. Non the less these land parcels are not scored as high functioning elements of the Green Belt i.e. score 3.
- 4.20 With regard to RP 64, SMBC states the following:
- “Refined parcels which do not perform against purpose 2 include those parcels which are entirely contained by the urban area and therefore do not form a gap..... parcel RP64 which is entirely formed of Cheswick Green.”*
- 4.21 These three land parcels which form the site score 0 for Green Belt purpose 4: *“To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.”*
- 4.22 It is considered that the SMBC’s Strategic Green Belt Assessment demonstrated that the performance and character of Green Belt land within SMBC varies greatly across the borough when considered against the first four purposes of including land in the Green Belt.
- 4.23 In summary all three land parcels which form the site are not high functioning elements of the Green Belt to the south west of the Solihull, i.e. at most the site attains an average scoring of 1.5 at most which is moderate – lower in their function, albeit part of the site scores no function. This may, in part, be due to their location adjoining the existing urban edge of Solihull or being situated within a location which is already *“washed over”* by surrounding urban development i.e. RP 64 which: *“does not perform against any of the first four purposes of Green Belt.”*

#### **EDP’s Headline Green Belt Appraisal of the Site**

- 4.24 The review includes an analysis of desk-based material, and was supported by a site visit during March 2019, which re-visited and updated EDP’s previous Green Belt appraisal work from 2015, 2017 and 2018 (effectively updating our appraisal work relative to the revised NPPF, Feb 2019). A Chartered Landscape Architect from EDP walking local roads and rights of way to gain an understanding of the landscape context of and surrounding the site.
- 4.25 This Review of the Site will be against Revised NPPF (Feb 2019) Para 134 Green Belt Functions and will provide greater clarity on this matter. This test is undertaken in accordance with a methodology published by SMBC and considers potential development areas within the site (as a whole).



**Table EDP 4.2:** EDP’s Headline Green Belt Appraisal (March 2019) based on Methodology of SSGBA 2016

Green Belt Purpose	Application of Criteria	Notes from EDP’s Site Visit (March 2019)	Scoring
<p><b>Purpose 1:</b>  <b>To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas</b></p>	<p>Does the site form a contiguous open buffer between the existing settlement edge and the other settlement areas/wider countryside?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The site does not contain development but is encompassed by other urban and sub-urban land uses to the north and north east. To the north and north east the site is overlooked by the adjacent properties within the existing industrial land use and settlement within Solihull.</li> <li>2. The site is not continuously open because of robust hedgerows and mature tree groups to the eastern extent of the site leading to a sense off visual containment against the existing urban edge of Solihull.</li> <li>3. The site is enclosed from the north and east by existing bands of vegetation, some of which is characteristic of the baseline character i.e. mature hedgerows within small rectilinear fields and robust tree groups.</li> <li>4. Views into the site from existing houses will be apparent from very few receptors along Tamworth Lane to the west. The potential for views from PRow to the east limited by the character</li> <li>5. The site is essentially a pocket of open land with an otherwise urban setting to the north and east of the site.</li> </ol>	<p>1/3</p>
	<p>Are there any defensible boundaries?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The site contains defensible boundaries to the north with Dog Kennel Lane roadway, as well as with A34 Stratford Road to the east. Mature vegetation to the east and south creates a layered and enclosed effect. There is also a distinct valley feature to the west which forms a physical feature between the west and eastern aspects of the site.</li> <li>2. There is a limited, if any, sense of openness across the site to the east and south. The western site area is perceived as more open with larger field pattern, less defined field boundaries and fewer tree belts. There is opportunity for moderate intervisibility between the site and the wider open countryside to the west.</li> </ol>	

Green Belt Purpose	Application of Criteria	Notes from EDP's Site Visit (March 2019)	Scoring
<p><b>Purpose 2:</b> To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another</p>	<p>What is the intervisibility with the next nearest settlement edge?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is very little intervisibility with the settlement edge of Solihull and views are not expected to be experienced far beyond the site boundary i.e. within 0.5km of the site. Views outside of the site are limited or filtered reduce the opportunity for intervisibility with the edge of surrounding settlements.</li> <li>2. Development of the site would not change the perception of the open landscape to the north and east of the site. The presence and screening effects of existing development and vehicle routes with associated vegetation, including vegetation within the site's field pattern and along its boundary, all limit intervisibility. Mature vegetation along the site's southern boundary has a limiting effect on views from the nearby Cheswick Green settlement edge.</li> <li>3. The western part of the site has a sense of visual openness; views from Tamworth Lane are likely to be significantly filtered by mature vegetation around the settlement edge of Dickens Heath i.e. from Square Acre Farm to Baroda Farm.</li> </ol>	<p>1/3</p>
<p><b>Purpose 3:</b> To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment</p>	<p>How representative is the site of the key characteristics of the countryside?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 'Countryside Strategy 2010 - 2020' finds that the site is located within two of the highlighted Zones.</li> <li>2. The majority of the site, particularly the west and south-west, sits within Zone 1 'Hockley Heath Parish', with a north-eastern corridor alongside Stratford Road being within Zone 9 'West Solihull'.</li> <li>3. The site is not representative of an open countryside but rather a landscape of countryside pocketed by strong urban influences.</li> <li>4. Zone 1 typically has: "a small-scale enclosed landscape, containing wide variety of natural habitats. At the same time, it is an area where "urban fringe" features are already apparent, including recreation and other mixed uses."</li> <li>5. Zone 9 is typically described as: "<i>The western area of Solihull is dominated by urban development. However, even though much of the area is urban and strongly influenced by its closeness to Birmingham..</i>"</li> </ol>	<p>2/3</p>



Green Belt Purpose	Application of Criteria	Notes from EDP's Site Visit (March 2019)	Scoring
		6. The site would not be described as 'countryside' due to the lack of interrelationship with the wider area and sub-urbanising effect of adjoining land uses, particularly to the north and east. In addition, the character of the host landscape is one which has substantive urban elements."	
	What is the influence of urbanising features?	1. There is a noticeable degrading effect of the adjoining urban area. Adjacent roadways, associated noise and traffic movement and further landscape detractors present on site, including pylons and degraded hedgerows and tree groups (particularly to the west), establish a sub-urbanising effect within the site and its immediate context.  2. Lack of public footpath links and intervisibility with the wider area severely reduce the extent to which the open area of the site contains links to the wider countryside, particularly to the northern and eastern site areas.	
<b>Purpose 4: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns</b>	Is there potential for intervisibility with an historic core?	1. There is no intervisibility between the site and the nearest Conservation Area (TBC).	0/3
<b>Overall Score:</b>			<b>7 out of a possible 12</b>

**Outline Summary**

4.26 Given the above preliminary appraisal of the site, EDP finds that the site is a very low functioning area of the Green Belt. Moreover, given, EDP's field-based assessment, it is our professional opinion that the makes a lower contribution that that which is appraised by SMBC previously in 2016. These findings are in line with our previous Green Belt appraisal works from 2015, 2017 and 2018.

**5. Review of Boundary Resilience**

5.1 This 'test' stem from the Revised NPPF (Feb 2019) paragraph 139 and whether the release of the appraisal site from the Green Belt, and effectively re-drawing the Green Belt boundary, would ensure the new boundary "will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period" and use

*“physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.”* This element of the headline appraisal, continues, more detailed analysis which EDP had previously undertaken in 2015, 2017 and 2018.

- 5.2 Given our field-based assessment, and local knowledge of the site (developed since 2015), EDP considers that the site scores very strongly in this area, having well-defined and defensible boundaries on all four sides. The northern and north-western edge of the site is defined by existing vehicle route (Stratford Road and Dog Kennel Lane respectively), which provide permanent physical elements.
- 5.3 The site has a distinct ‘layering’ effect of mature landscape features within the central belt of the site, situated around the shallow valley landform. At this locality there are also robustly vegetated field boundaries, a number of woodland copse (around Light Hall and in the locality of the existing water features) and watercourse within the valley landform.
- 5.4 These existing features can be used to create a defensible Green Belt boundary, and through Green Infrastructure initiatives, could be enhanced further, and create new landscape features in keeping with the character of the surrounding area.
- 5.5 With reference to the Illustrative Masterplan by Randall Thorpe (March 2019), a defensible Green Belt boundary is attained through the following initiatives:
- There is a distinct ‘layering’ effect within the local landscape through the combination of robust field boundaries and mature tree components, tree groups and woodland copse. This is most obviously experienced in the southern extent of RP65 and RP64 (as per SMBC’s SSSGI 2016 (see **EDP Appendix L3**)) beyond the shallow valley landform running through the site. These features combined with wider landscape elements significantly reduces intervisibility of the site from the wider open countryside (Green Belt).
  - The shallow valley landform forms a ‘hinterland’ within the open countryside, to the south and west of this feature, the existing field pattern is smaller scale and irregular in shape and form (reflective of the ‘Arden Pastures’ landscape type (*Warwickshire Landscapes Guidelines: Arden*’ (November 1993)). In their *Solihull’s Countryside Strategy 2010 – 2020* SMBC described this landscape as:  
  
*“A small scale, enclosed landscape, often pervaded by suburban influences and characterised by small fields, typically bordered by mature hedgerow trees.”*
  - Furthermore, development would preserve the ongoing inter-relationship between the settlement and the surrounding rural environment by new development being well contained and enclosed by the existing site boundaries. The ‘Arden Pastures’ landscape type (*Warwickshire Landscapes Guidelines: Arden*’ (November 1993)) states the following:

*“This pattern of late enclosure followed by the development of new settlements has been repeated throughout the Arden Pastures in places such as ...Hockley Heath (and) Wythall...this has resulted in a landscape often pervaded by suburban influences...Despite the densely populated character of the landscape, settlement is not usually a dominant visual element... the gently rolling topography and numerous mature trees combine to create a heavily wooded appearance...and a strong sense of enclosure.”*

- Hence, the Green Belt re-alignment of Illustrative Masterplan by Randall Thorpe (March 2019), would ensure that the development would remain integrated within its setting through existing landscape and physical features, which would afford the proposal enclosure, rather than being incongruous and experienced as quite raw and sporadic.

5.6 The combination of the above physical and landscape features results primarily from the clearly demarcated boundary features, the enclosed nature of the site and the consequential limitation in landscape and visual effects through the utility of permanent and physical features within the site.

5.7 EDP considers that the defensible Green Belt boundary of the Illustrative Masterplan by Randall Thorpe (March 2019), to be more appropriate than that which is currently being proposed by SMBC. In the SMBC Solihull Local Plan Site Allocations – Masterplans. SMBC has developed a high-level site masterplan for the site; see **EDP Appendix L2**. SMBC identifies the site as “Site 12” in this document. In this case, the SMBC proposal relies quite extensively on existing movement corridors for the re-alignment of the Green Belt. Specifically:

- The southern edge of built form within the SMBC Masterplan has been defined by a ‘drove track’ within the existing agricultural fields; and
- The western edge of the built form is defined by the existing private driveway access leading to Light Hall.

5.8 EDP notes, that in both of these situations, the new Green Belt edge would be irrespective that this edge is irrespective of any existing robust field hedgerow or mature trees along their individual lengths, which would otherwise help screen and filter views, and provide a more succinctly defined edge for development which would otherwise better integrate any future development (and be reflective of the existing relationship between settlement edges and the character of the countryside as noted in the ‘Arden Pastures’ landscape type (*Warwickshire Landscapes Guidelines: Arden*’ (November 1993))).

5.9 It is noted, that the south-eastern Green Belt boundary of the SMBC Solihull Local Plan Site Allocations – Masterplans (Site 12) foresees a similar edge as that which is proposed within the Illustrative Masterplan by Randall Thorpe (March 2019). In this situation, the proposed development would be integrated within the existing field pattern and defined by the robust field hedgerow system along this extent of the site.



- 5.10 The high-level site analysis for Site 12 identifies a number of key constraints that require consideration during the development of the illustrative masterplan. It identifies that Site 12 is *“in the Green Belt, and therefore a new defensible Green Belt boundary will be required, this could take the form of a road.”*
- 5.11 Given SMBC’s high level masterplan for Site 12, EDP assumes that SMBC are asserting that the Green Belt will be re-aligned to a new roadway. EDP considers this to be less wholesome approach to forming a defensible edge. To re-align to only a newly built man-made feature affords less opportunity to integrate the proposed development into the landscape setting, which may potentially impact the character of the countryside beyond and the perception of openness in the countryside.
- 5.12 The utility of physical features, such as that devised within the Illustrative Masterplan by Randall Thorpe (March 2019), would enable a better definition of the settlement edge for Solihull, rather than an almost sporadic approach which fails to reflect the local distinctiveness of the landscape.
- 5.13 Taylor Wimpey’s Illustrative Masterplan by Randall Thorpe (March 2019) ensure that an appropriate, and sensitive development edge is created, which can form an attractive interface between the development and the Green Belt. The retention of existing landscape features (of local character) and new initiatives for Green Infrastructure promote connectivity to the wider open countryside beyond affording pedestrian and cycle access, whilst retaining and enhancing the site’s landscape character, which would integrate the new development.
- 5.14 In summary, this review shows that the boundaries of the site are not only demarcated by visible features, but these features are both strong in a visual and perceptual sense and have a high degree of permanence due to their status. Hence, Taylor Wimpey’s Illustrative Masterplan by Randall Thorpe (March 2019).
- 5.15 EDP concludes, that the boundaries of the site are not only demarcated by visible features, but these features are both strong in a visual and perceptual sense and have a high degree of permanence due to their status.

## 6. Summary

- 6.1 This Position Note presents a headline Green Belt appraisal, which continues, more detailed analysis which EDP had previously undertaken in 2015, 2017 and 2018.
- 6.2 Given our most recent field-based assessment, EDP considers that the site performs a less significant Green Belt role (in the round) than that appraised by SMBC (SMBC’s SGBA 2016), see below **Table EDP 6.1:**



**Table EDP 6.1:** Comparative Summary of Green Belt Purpose Rating

<b>Green Belt Purpose</b>	<b>Rating by SMBC (SSGBA 2016)</b>	<b>Rating by EDP (March 2019 using SSGBA 2016 methodology)</b>
<b>GB Purpose 1</b> To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Lower performing against the purpose	Lower performing against the purpose
<b>GB Purpose 2</b> To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	Moderately performing against the purpose	Lower performing against the purpose
<b>GB Purpose 3</b> To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Moderately performing against the purpose	Moderately performing against the purpose
<b>GB Purpose 4</b> To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Does not perform against the purpose	Does not perform against the purpose
<b>GB Purpose 5</b> To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	No comment by SMBC on contribution	No comment on contribution by EDP
<b>Most Significant Rating</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

- 6.3 It is agreeable between SMBC and EDP, that the main function of the site (and its immediate context) is to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, and effectively ensuring the openness of the countryside between Solihull, and its neighboring settlements (Cheswick Green and Dickens Heath to the south-east and south-west respectively).
- 6.4 Given the foregoing, it is important to ensure that any re-alignment of the Green Belt is one which ensures the new development is well integrated within the setting and is afforded visual filtering and screening to ensure the perception of the openness between Solihull and its outlying settlements are not unacceptably harmed. This places the need to consider realignment of the Green Belt to defensible boundaries other than roadways (or existing movement corridors such as the route of a private driveway or 'drove track').
- 6.5 Therefore, emphasis should be placed on using existing landscape features and field boundaries where possible or establishing new landscape features in keeping with the character of the surrounding area. This ensures that an appropriate, and sensitive development edge is created, which can form an attractive interface between the development and the Green Belt. EDP considers, that the Taylor Wimpey's Illustrative Masterplan by Randall Thorpe (March 2019) is more successful in realising a new development edge whose physical features "are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent."



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- 6.6 This Position Note provides a headline appraisal of the Site's contribution to the function of the Green Belt and reviews the resilience and robustness of physical features which could be utilized for re-aligning the Green Belt, might development come forward south of Dog kennel Lane, Solihull.
- 6.7 EDP considers that the site (as a whole) is not a high functioning part of the Green Belt, and certainly not one in which development would result in the purposes of the Green Belt being 'significantly compromised'.
- 6.8 It is EDP's firm opinion, that site could reasonably be removed from the Green Belt (i.e. 'Green Belt off') in isolation without harm to the purposes and functionality of the surrounding Green Belt. Hence, through the appropriate masterplanning of the site, the site could be developed in the future without harm to the integrity of the Green Belt overall.



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**Appendix EDP L1**  
**Illustrative Masterplan (ref: 675A-28C prepared by Randall Thorp)**



Land Ownership	Density per Ha	Net developable Area	No. Units
Taylor Wimpey			
High Density	42.5	12.49 ha / 30.86 ac	531
Medium Density	32.5	4.73 ha / 11.69 ac	154
Low Density	27.5	3.13 ha / 7.73 ac	86
Potential school site		2.00 ha / 4.94 ac	
TRW			
Medium / High Density	37.5	8.23 ha / 20.34 ac	309
Low Trustees			
Medium / High Density	37.5	2.94 ha / 7.26 ac	110
<b>Total net developable area</b>		<b>31.52ha / 77.88 ac</b>	<b>1,190</b>



LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING  
MASTERPLANNING  
URBAN DESIGN

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- KEY:**
- Site boundary - Taylor Wimpey
  - Site boundary - TRW
  - Site boundary - Low Trustees
  - Proposed development cells
  - Proposed retail/commercial
  - Potential school site
  - Proposed vehicular access
  - Proposed vehicular access to country park
  - Proposed primary spine road
  - Proposed secondary roads
  - Proposed pedestrian/cycle routes
  - Proposed structural woodland planting
  - Proposed hedgerow
  - Proposed green space
  - Proposed country park
  - Retained agricultural fields
  - Proposed formal sports pitch
  - Proposed car park
  - Proposed pedestrian and/or cycle connections to surrounding area
  - Proposed club house for formal sports pitch
  - Existing off-site pedestrian/cycle link to Hillfield Park

Date: 21.02.19  
Drawn by: SR  
Checker: DL  
Rev by: SR  
Rev checker: SR  
QM Status: Checked  
Product Status: Confidential Review



**Light Hall Farm, Solihull**

**DRAFT**

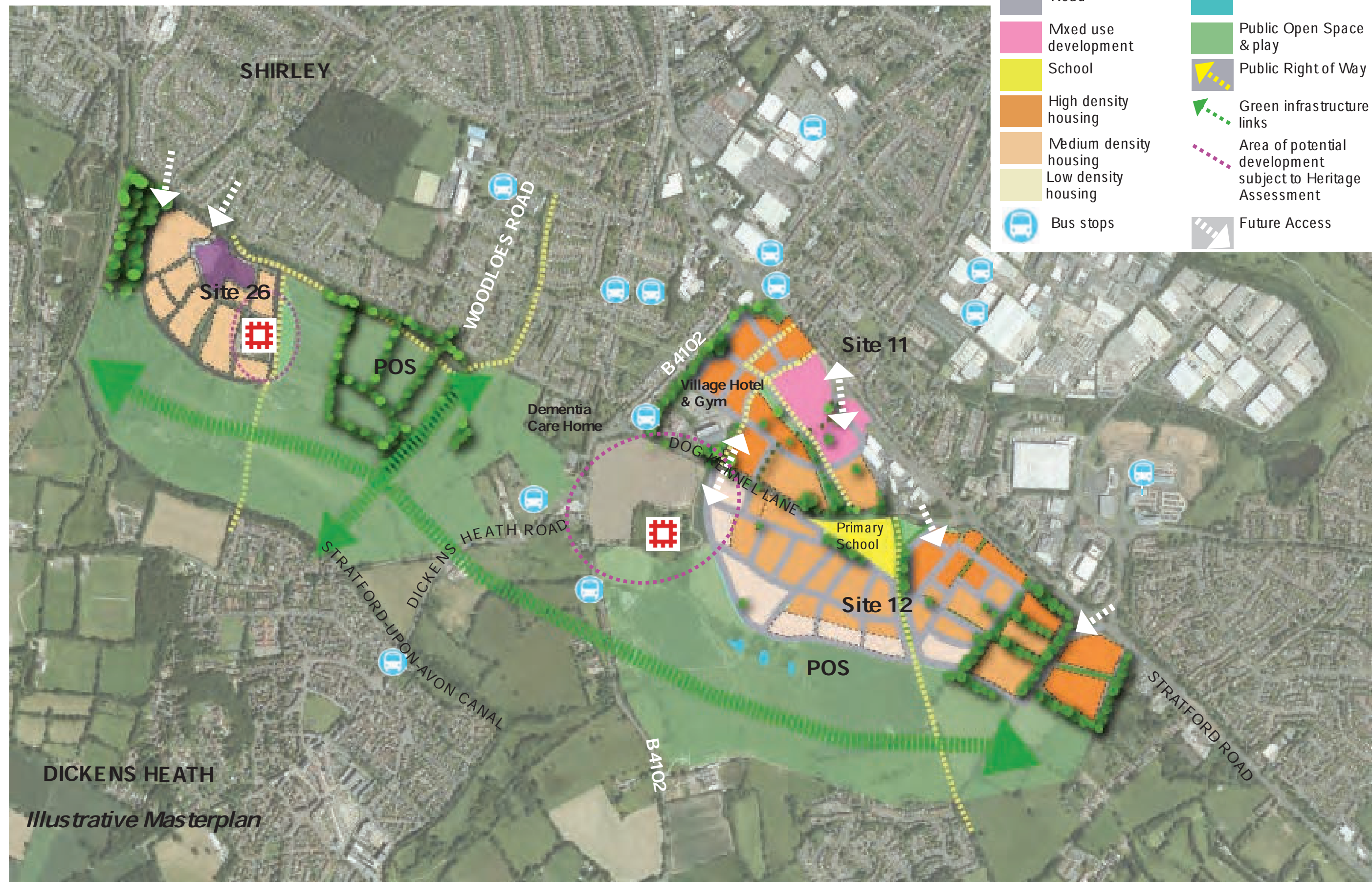
Illustrative Masterplan with Alternative Road Layout



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**Appendix EDP L2**  
**SMBC Illustrative Emerging Concept Masterplan**

# SMBC Illustrative Emerging Concept Masterplan: Sites 11, 12 & 26





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**Appendix EDP L3**  
**Figure 1 of the SMBC SGBA 2016**

# Appendix | A

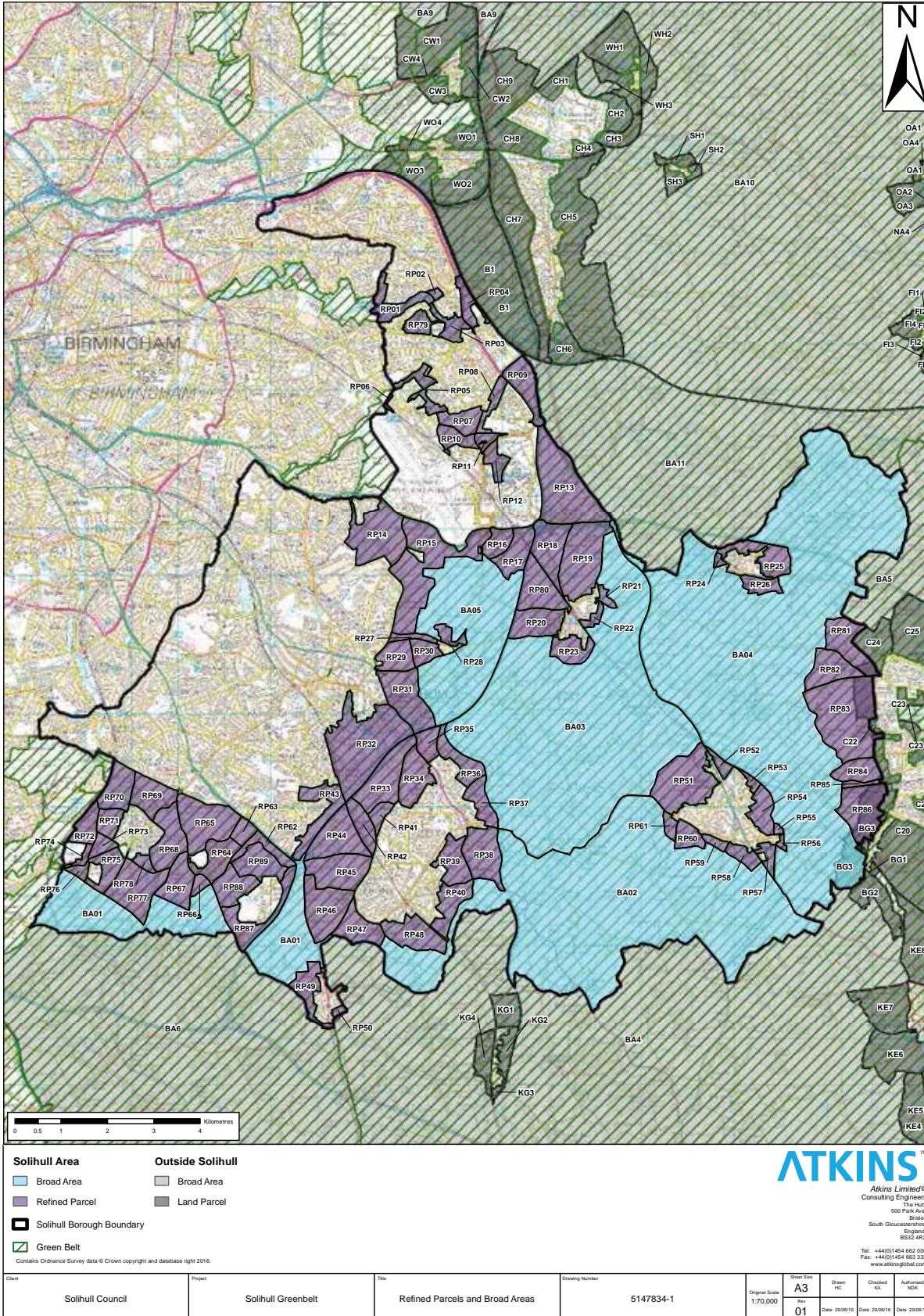


Figure 1