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# Land West of Rumbush Lane, Tidbury Green: Landscape and Visual Appraisal with Green Belt Review

Prepared on behalf of Rainier Developments

28th March 2018



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## **ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL**

Figure 1: Site Context Plan

Figure 2: Topographical and Hydrological Features Plan

Figure 3: Site Appraisal Plan

Figure 4: Visual Appraisal Plan

Site Context Photographs

Site Appraisal Photographs

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix A.1: Extracts from Published Documents

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Barton Willmore Landscape Planning and Design (BWLPD) was commissioned by Rainier Developments in November 2017 to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal with Green Belt Review (LVA GBR) on land west of Rumbush Lane in Tidbury Green in Solihull District.

1.2 The land being considered for future development is referred to as 'the Site'. The location of the Site is demonstrated on Figure 1: Site Context Plan and Figure 3: Site Appraisal Plan. The 'Study Area' broadly reflects the area of land shown on Figure 1: Site Context Plan.

1.3 This report comprises the following elements:

- A study of the Site and its landscape context, combined with an analysis of the relevant published landscape character assessments, to understand the degree to which the Site reflects local landscape character and its contribution to the landscape character of the Study Area.
- A visual analysis of the Site to understand its visibility and its role within views of the Study Area.
- A study of the published evidence base, including Green Belt Reviews, produced by Solihull Council relating to the Site.
- An assessment of the contribution that the Site makes to the purposes of the Green Belt and, therefore, its suitability for release from the Green Belt.
- The identification of the landscape and visual opportunities and constraints to development within the Site, and recommendations for landscape enhancement measures that may be implemented as part of any future development proposals. This information will be used to inform the emerging masterplan for the Site.

1.4 Supporting illustrative information is presented in the following accompanying plans and photographs:

- Figure 1: Site Context Plan - demonstrating the location of the Site in relation to areas of settlement, key areas of vegetation and landscape and cultural heritage designations within the Study Area.
- Figure 2: Topographical and Hydrological Features Plan - demonstrating the topography of the Site to aid the understanding of the visual envelope of the Site.
- Figure 3: Site Appraisal Plan - demonstrating key landscape and built features around the Site and the locations of the Site Appraisal Photographs.
- Figure 4: Visual Appraisal Plan - demonstrating the areas from which the Site is visible as well as the locations of the Site Context Photographs.

- Site Context Photographs - illustrating key views towards the Site and the role that the Site plays in those views.
- Site Appraisal Photographs - illustrating the character of the different areas of the Site and the landscape features within it.

1.5 In addition, the extracts from the relevant landscape character assessments and Green Belt Reviews are included within Appendix 1.0 of this report.

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) and Green Belt Review (GBR) are separate assessments. However, the information ascertained through the LVA is used to aid the assessment of the contribution that the Site makes to the purposes of the Green Belt, such as through the assessment of the relationship of the Site with the existing built form, the identification of defensible boundaries that may prevent sprawl, the physical and visual encroachment into the countryside and the physical and visual merging of settlements.

### **Methodology for Landscape and Visual Appraisal**

2.2 The LVA has been prepared with reference to the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition<sup>1</sup>.

2.3 A desktop review of the Study Area was undertaken to identify landform, landscape features, landscape designations and relevant landscape policy, and to review published landscape character information. This information was used as the initial basis against which to appraise the Site, and site visits were undertaken subsequently.

2.4 A visual appraisal of the Site was undertaken to consider the nature of existing views from publicly accessible viewpoints including roads, Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and public open spaces. Views were considered from all directions and from a range of distances. The viewpoints chosen are not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to represent the potential views obtained towards the Site.

2.5 The Landscape and Visual Appraisal was used to identify opportunities and constraints to future development to inform the development of masterplan designs for the Site.

### **Methodology for Green Belt Review**

2.6 The Site was assessed against the first four purposes of the Green Belt as set out in Paragraph 80 of the NPPF, which are:

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

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



- 2.7 The fifth purpose of the Green Belt *"to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land"*, has been scoped out of the assessment as the Council is considering greenfield sites and, therefore, should the Site be brought forward for development, it would not prejudice derelict or other urban land being brought forward for development.
- 2.8 The NPPF states in Paragraph 83 that *"once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan"*.
- 2.9 The NPPF states that the key characteristics of the Green Belt are *"their openness and their permanence"*. In defining new boundaries to the Green Belt, it must be ensured that these characteristics are not diminished for the areas remaining within the Green Belt designation as a direct result of development.
- 2.10 The table below sets out the assessment criteria used within this LVA GBR to assess the contribution that the Site makes to the purposes of the Green Belt.

**Table 2.1: Purposes of the Green Belt – Assessment Criteria**

Purpose	Criteria	Contribution
Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Protects open land against disorganised and unattractive extension	<p>Considerable: Open land with few existing permanent boundaries where development would extend the settlement pattern beyond established limits and result in the perception of a disorganised or unattractive extension</p> <p>Some: Open land with some existing boundaries however they may not be permanent. The site has some relation to the existing built form of the area.</p> <p>Limited: Is well contained by existing boundaries where development would not extend the settlement pattern beyond its established limits.</p>
Prevent neighbouring towns from merging	<p>Prevents development that would result in the merging of settlements.</p> <p>This would also take into consideration the extent of visual connectivity between settlements.</p>	<p>Considerable: Development would result in the merging of settlements.</p> <p>Some: Development is not likely to result in the physical merging of settlements, however, there would be a visual merging of settlements.</p> <p>Limited: Development would not result in the merging of settlements, physically or visually.</p>
Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Protect the openness of the countryside and perceived rurality	<p>Considerable: No built or engineered forms present and inherently rural in character.</p> <p>Some: Urbanising elements over the area, with minimal built for engineered forms.</p> <p>Limited: The majority of the area contains existing built or engineered forms or is urban in character / not perceived to be rural.</p>

Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Conserve the setting and special character of heritage assets	<p>Considerable: Heritage assets present within, or adjoining, the area.</p> <p>Some: Intervisibility with, or contribution to the setting of, heritage assets.</p> <p>Limited: No intervisibility with, or contribution to the setting of, heritage assets.</p>
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### Description of terms

#### *Openness*

- 2.11 Openness is taken to be the degree to which an area is unaffected by built structures. It is considered that, in order to be a robust assessment, this should be considered from first principles, i.e. acknowledging existing structures that occur within the area, rather than seeing them as being 'washed over' by the existing Green Belt designation.

#### *Sprawl*

- 2.12 Disorganised and unattractive extension to an existing development area. Unrestricted sprawl could also be defined as areas where large expanses of land are being used for a relatively small amount of development. Sprawl also considers:
- How well the Site relates to the existing built form of the area (how well contained the Site is);
  - How well the existing boundary performs in containing development. Where strong boundaries are formed by roads, rivers and railway lines, with smaller country lanes performing a more limited role; and
  - The impact of encroachment on the countryside. Where sites that are surrounded on more than one side by development (i.e. where the landscape is less open), this impact is more limited.

#### *Merging*

- 2.13 This relates to the coalescence of settlements or the erosion of the gap between settlements. Interlying physical barriers, intervisibility between towns / settlements and the potential for coalescence are all taken into consideration.
- 2.14 Coalescence is the physical or visual linkage of two settlements or areas of built form.

#### *Encroachment*

- 2.15 Advancement of built development beyond the limits of the existing built up area into an area perceived as countryside either physically or visually.

- 2.16 Any development on greenfield sites would inevitably lead to physical encroachment, whether the land is within the Green Belt or not. Encroachment into the countryside takes into consideration the landscape character context, and the urbanising features present as well as the potential visual encroachment into the countryside.

*Defensible Boundaries*

- 2.17 The NPPF states that ***"local authorities should define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent"***.
- 2.18 With regard to physical barriers, these would include roads, railway lines, large woodland or significant topographical features.

## 3.0 LANDSCAPE BASELINE

### Site and its Location

- 3.1 The Site comprises approximately 11.5ha of irregularly shaped pasture and woodland, situated on the eastern edge of the village of Tidbury Green, within Solihull Metropolitan Borough. The north-western area of the Site comprises woodland planting, dating from the late 1990s. The remainder of the Site comprises 3no. pastoral fields, separated by hedgerows with mature trees, mainly oaks.
- 3.2 The land to the north-east comprises an area of playing fields associated with the Tanworth and Camp Hill Cricket Club. To the south-east and east of Rumbush Lane, the landscape comprises further small irregularly shaped pastoral fields separated by hedgerows with large trees. There is an area of woodland to the immediate south of the Site and, beyond this to the south and south-west, is an area of residential development. This comprises detached dwellings on deep plots and extending east along Norton Lane from Tidbury Green. The area to the west comprises an area of emerging residential development within Tidbury Green.

### Settlement and Land Use

- 3.3 The local landscape comprises rural pasture between frequent sprawling villages and hamlets. Tidbury Green, once focussed around the crossroads approximately 300m west of the Site, has extended along the surrounding roads, including east along Norton Lane. The Site, and the area under construction to the west, will consolidate the ribbon development along Norton Lane with the remainder of Tidbury Green to the west. This ribbon development currently extends along Norton Lane, extending further east than the eastern edge of the Site. Development extends north along Rumbush Lane from the junction with Norton Lane, and these houses are situated opposite the southern edge of the eastern boundary. Two individual dwellings, 174 and 182 Rumbush Lane, are located to the immediate east of the Site.
- 3.4 The Site immediately to the west is currently under construction for residential development, accessed from Fulford Hall Road. The edge of Dickens Heath is situated 325m to the north-east along Rumbush Lane and this area is also under construction for residential development.
- 3.5 The land to the immediate north comprises the playing fields of the cricket club as mentioned above.

### Access and Rights of Way

- 3.6 Fulford Hall Road extends north-south through the centre of Tidbury Green, crossing with Dickens Heath Road/Lowbrook Lane in a crossroads at the historic centre of the settlement.

Norton Lane crosses Fulford Hall Road and extends along the southern edge of Tidbury Green. Rumbush Lane extends approximately north-east to south-west along the eastern boundary of the Site. It crosses Norton Lane 190m south of the south-eastern corner of the Site and Cleobury Lane 320m to the north of the north-eastern corner. Cleobury Lane extends along the southern edge of Dickens Heath and meets Dickens Heath Lane approximately 380m to the north of the northern corner of the Site.

- 3.7 A railway line extends approximately north to south through the Study Area, and Wythall station is located at the closest point to the Site, approximately 1km to the west.
- 3.8 A dense network of criss-crossing enclosed rural lanes extends throughout the Study Area with no clear hierarchy. There are relatively few Public Rights of Way (PRoW) in the local area, the closest running south-east from Norton Lane to the southern edge of the Study Area. Further footpaths exist to the west of the railway line and to the east of the Stratford upon Avon Canal. No PRoW cross or meet the Site.

### **Designations**

- 3.9 The Site is not covered by any landscape designations and none exist within the Study Area. The Site is located within the Green Belt. There are no Listed Buildings within or immediately adjacent to the Site. Big and Little Dickens Woods to the immediate north of the Site are areas of Ancient Woodland and will therefore need a buffer area to development.

### **Vegetation and Field Pattern**

- 3.10 The landscape comprises a patchwork of small, irregularly shaped fields separated by hedgerows with mature oak trees. Patches of woodland are situated between these fields. Big Dickens Wood and Little Dickens Wood, areas of Ancient Woodland, are located to the north of the Site.
- 3.11 Woodland within the north of the Site comprises a modern mix of native species, planted in the late 1990s, with the mature oaks associated with the historic hedgerows still evident within the woodland. This woodland is set back from the field boundaries on its southern and western edges, leaving a grass strip of approximately 5m. A path through the centre was originally left unplanted, together with a clearing on the western side, but these have since become overgrown and are now fenced off.
- 3.12 A further belt of woodland is situated on the eastern boundary of the central field with Rumbush Lane, to the south of the two dwellings, numbers 174 and 182 Rumbush Lane. This is visible on the historic OS maps dating back to the 1880s.
- 3.13 A small area of native woodland immediately abuts the southern boundary of the Site.

### Topography and Hydrology

- 3.14 The landform as demonstrated on **Figure 2** ranges in height from a ridge of higher ground at 175m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum) in the west of the Study Area, to a series of shallow stream valleys below 125m AOD in the east.
- 3.15 The area of the Site is broadly level, with little variation from between 145-155mAOD.
- 3.16 A tight network of shallow stream valleys extends through the area from the higher ground towards the west towards to the north and east. These are shallow and are not immediately evident in the landscape.
- 3.17 The Stratford and Avon Canal extends through the Study Area, approximately 1km to the east of the Site, but there is no intervisibility between the two, due to the intervening vegetation. A small stream extends along the rear boundaries of the properties on Norton Lane to the south of the Site, then curving around to the east and north to meet the canal.

## 4.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER BASELINE

4.1 Landscape character assessment is a descriptive approach that seeks to identify and define the distinct character of landscapes that make up the country. It also ensures that account is taken of the different roles and character of different areas. The description of each landscape character area is used as a basis for evaluation in order to make judgements to guide, for example, development or landscape management and as a basis against which to assess the character of the Site. The different layers of character are used to identify areas of land which are not reflective of wider landscape character. The extent of published landscape character areas in the vicinity of the Site are illustrated on **Figure 3: Landscape Character Plan**.

### Published Landscape Character Assessment

#### National Character Area 97: Arden

4.2 At a national level, the Site is situated within National Character Area (NCA) 97: Arden, described by Natural England as *"farmland and former wood-pasture lying to the south and east of Birmingham"*. Key characteristics relevant to the Site and Study Area are as follows:

- *"Well-wooded farmland landscape with rolling landform.*
- *Mature oaks, mostly found within hedgerows, together with ancient woodlands, and plantation woodlands that often date from the time of enclosure. Woodlands include historic coppice bounded by woodbanks.*
- *Narrow, meandering clay river valleys with long river meadows...*
- *Numerous areas of former wood-pasture with large, old, oak trees often associated with isolated remnants of more extensive heathlands...*
- *Diverse field patterns, ranging from well hedged, irregular fields and small woodlands that contrast with larger semi regular fields on former deer park estates...*
- *Complex and contrasting settlement pattern with some densely populated where traditional settlements have amalgamated to form the major West Midlands conurbation whilst some settlements remain distinct and relatively well dispersed.*
- *Shakespeare's 'Forest of Arden', featured in 'As You Like It', is still reflected through the woodland cover, mature oaks, small ancient woodlands and former wood pasture."*

#### Warwickshire Landscape Project (1987)

4.3 The Site is located within the Arden Pastures Landscape Character Area according to the above assessment. The Arden area is described as *"an area of former wood pasture and ancient*

*farmlands*". It is further described as having *"few dramatic physical features"* but as having *"an intimate, historic character with a strong sense of unity"*.

4.4 The Arden Pastures are described as *"a small scale, enclosed landscape, often pervaded by suburban influences and characterised by small fields, typically bordered by mature hedgerow trees"*. Characteristic features include:

- *"A gently rolling topography;*
- *A well-defined pattern of small fields and paddocks;*
- *Numerous mature hedgerow oaks;*
- *Permanent pasture often grazed by horses;*
- *A network of minor lanes often with ribbon development;*
- *Many place names ending in Heath."*

Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2016)

4.5 The Site is situated within Landscape Character Area 2: Southern Countryside within the above document, described as an area of approximately 14km<sup>2</sup> to the south of the Shirley area of Solihull. The LCA is described as being mainly rural with farms, horsiculture and scattered settlements, in contrast to the urban edge of Solihull. It goes onto state:

*"The narrow lanes, strong hedgerow structure lend an enclosed and intimate feeling to this area... "*

4.6 Key characteristics include:

- Undulating landform ranging from 130 to 150mAOD;
- The Stratford upon Avon canal passes diagonally through the area;
- Horsiculture and paddocks subject to overgrazing;
- Strong hedgerow boundary structure across majority of the area and a key feature;
- Main settlements of Dickens Heath, Cheswick Green, Hockley Heath and Tidbury Green;
- Narrow street structure with established mature hedgerows and associated trees, which are a key feature and lend to the intimate and enclosed feeling.

4.7 Sensitivities and pressures are described as including:

- Potential loss of tree cover through new development;
- Poor woodland management;
- Increased pressure for access and development;
- Pressure of coalescence, particularly between Tidbury Green and Dickens Heath;
- Decline in number of hedgerow trees due to neglect and lack of replacement.



- 4.8 The landscape character sensitivity has been assessed as being 'medium' and is described as a landscape with a strong sense of local connection to the place, defining landscape features and a characteristic enclosed and intimate landscape which is in good condition.
- 4.9 The visual sensitivity is assessed as being 'high' although this is described as consisting of mainly medium to short distance views that are 'wide-framed'. This is not born out in the site visit undertaken by Barton Willmore which suggested a very tight visual envelope due to the frequent hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The overall sensitivity has been assessed in the document as being 'high'.
- 4.10 The landscape value has been assessed as 'medium' as the landscape is locally distinctive and containing valued characteristics. The overall landscape capacity has been assessed as being 'very low' in accordance with the methodology set out within the document.
- 4.11 Despite this, the document states that:

*"The area is likely to be able to accommodate only very restricted areas of new development, which would need to be of an appropriate type, scale and form, in keeping with the existing character and local distinctiveness of the area."*

#### **Contribution of the Site to Landscape Character**

- 4.12 The Site is reflective of the wider landscape character, comprising small fields surrounded and separated by native hedgerows with mature hedgerow oaks. The woodland to the north of the Site and the tree belt along Rumbush Lane form further characteristic mature tree features, with the younger woodland in the north of the Site making a lesser contribution. The context of the Site is changing so that residential development will surround it to the south and west, as well as the south-east.
- 4.13 The Site, therefore, is of some landscape value as it contributes to the wider landscape character. It is not, however, of notable visual sensitivity as views are limited to those from Rumbush Lane to the immediate west, from the sports fields to the immediate north and from the emerging development to the immediate east. Filtered views from the southernmost edge of Dickens Heath will likely be possible during winter months, but these will be through at least three hedgerows and layers of hedgerow trees.

#### **Management and Guidance**

- 4.14 The following are the key areas of guidance which should be used to inform the proposed masterplan design.

### National Character Area 97: Arden

#### *Strategic Environmental Objectives*

- 4.15 SEO 1: Manage and enhance the valuable woodlands, hedgerows, heaths, distinctive field boundaries and enclosure patterns throughout the NCA, retaining the historic contrast between different areas while balancing the needs for timber, biomass production, climate regulation, biodiversity and recreation.
- 4.16 SEO 2: Create new networks of woodlands, heaths and green infrastructure, linking urban areas like Birmingham and Coventry with the wider countryside to increase biodiversity, recreation and the potential for biomass and the regulation of climate.

#### *Landscape opportunities*

- Conserve, enhance and restore the area's ancient landscape pattern of field boundaries, historic (including farm) buildings, moated sites, parkland and pasture and reinforce its well wooded character.
- Protect and manage woodlands particularly ancient woodlands and wood pasture to maintain the character of Arden.
- Manage and restore hedgerows and restore parkland, ancient trees and stream side trees plus manage and replace hedgerow trees.
- Create new green infrastructure with associated habitat creation and new public access on former mining sites and close to urban populations in the West Midlands Green Belt.

### Warwickshire Landscape Project (1987)

- 4.17 The Site is situated within the Arden Pastures landscape character area according to the above document. A key feature of this landscape type is described as "the sense of enclosure provided by the abundance of mature hedgerow trees. The density of trees reflects the generally intact pattern of small pastoral fields."
- 4.18 The management strategy for this area is to conserve and enhance the small-scale enclosed character of the landscape.
- 4.19 The landscape guidelines are as follows:
- Maintain the wooded character of mature hedgerow and roadside oaks;
  - Conserve and enhance tree cover through natural regeneration of hedgerow oaks;
  - Conserve historic pattern of small hedged fields.

Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment – LCA 2: Southern Countryside

4.20 Landscape character sensitivity for the character area has been assessed within the above document as 'medium' and visual sensitivity has been assessed as 'high'. Landscape value has been assessed as 'medium', resulting in landscape capacity of 'very low'. This means that protection of landscape features is of foremost importance as part of the development of any scheme design.

*Guidelines and Strategy*

4.21 To protect the landscape pattern characteristic of the area:

- Retain strong hedgerow structure and planting of individual trees along field boundaries, particularly in and around Fulford Hall Estate.
- Tree planting in the vicinity of Tidbury Green and Dickens Heath is described as being important to their setting and approaches.
- Resist coalescence of settlements to preserve landscape character.
- Resist loss of field boundaries and retain irregular pattern.
- Proactively manage existing woodland and plant new woodland to fit with landscape pattern.
- Positively manage roadside hedgerows.
- Promote understanding of the heritage features in the area and their contribution to landscape character:
- Protect the landscape setting of Dickens Heath.
- Protect existing woodland around Dickens Heath. Plant new woodland to diversify age structure.
- Manage access for recreation at the urban edge.
- Promote enhancement of the footpath network.
- Explore opportunities to improve public enjoyment of the area.

## 5.0 VISUAL BASELINE

- 5.1 The landscape in the immediate area of the Site is generally level, resulting in no elevated views. The local landscape, as described within Chapters 3.0 and 4.0, is heavily vegetated, with frequent hedgerows and numerous mature trees dividing small fields, and stands and blocks of woodland. This results in few long-distance views in the local area as the layering of the trees and hedgerows creates effective screening, even during winter months.
- 5.2 The Site is surrounded to the north by existing woodland in Big Dickens Wood, further supported by the woodland in the north of the Site. This, together with the vegetation within the school site, prevents views to the Site from Dickens Heath Road, as demonstrated by **Site Context Photograph 4**. Views from the west will be obscured by the emerging residential development between Fulford Hall Lane, as shown on **Site Context Photograph 3**, although views into the Site will be possible from the area of proposed open space once it has been completed. Views from the houses on Norton Lane will be obscured by the emerging residential development and the woodland block to the immediate south of the Site. Views into the Site are possible from a small number of residences at the southern end of Rumbush Lane (**Site Context Photograph 1**), from the two dwellings to the immediate west of the Site, and from Rumbush Lane itself (**Site Context Photographs 2 and 8**). Heavily filtered views towards the Site are possible from a short stretch of Cleobury Lane, to the north-west of the junction with Rumbush Lane. From this latter location, the layers of hedgerows and trees separating the small-scale field pattern combine to strongly filter views, as shown on **Site Context Photograph 5**.

### Summary

- 5.3 The Site has a small zone of visual influence, mainly restricted to direct views from Rumbush Lane along the eastern boundary, and filtered views from a short stretch of Cleobury Lane on the southern edge of Dickens Heath. Views from other locations are restricted by the layers of vegetation, areas of woodland and existing built form.

## 6.0 LANDSCAPE PLANNING POLICY

6.1 The Solihull Local Plan was adopted in December 2013, but a review is currently underway in response to a legal challenge in reference to housing numbers, and the HS2 routes. A summary of the relevant policies from the existing Local Plan will be included within the LVA GBR but the key themes will be similar.

6.2 Relevant policies and objectives are outlined and summarised below:

### **Reviewing the Plan for Solihull's Future: Solihull Local Plan Review Draft Local Plan (November 2016)**

6.3 The following policies from the submission draft are relevant:

- **P10 Natural Environment:**
  - Protect existing and create new landscape features including woodlands, copses, hedgerows and standard trees.
  - Developers will be expected to incorporate measures to enhance and restore the landscape.
- **P14 Amenity:**
  - Safeguard important trees, hedgerows and woodland, and plant new trees, hedgerows and woodland.
  - Protect dark skies from impacts of light pollution.
- **P15 Security Design Quality:**
  - New development will be expected to conserve and enhance local character, distinctiveness and streetscape quality and respect the surrounding natural, built and historic environment.
  - New development will be expected to respect and enhance landscape quality, including trees, hedgerows and other landscape features of value and contribute to strategic green infrastructure.
- **P16 Conservation of Heritage Assets and Local Distinctiveness:**
  - The Arden landscape must be protected and restored.
  - Landscape, including woodlands and distinctive fieldscapes should be protected.
- **P17 Countryside and Green Belt:**

- Development within the Green Belt must not harm the visual amenity of the Green Belt.
- **P18 Health and Wellbeing:**
  - Measures to improve health and wellbeing include the improvement of the quality of and access to the local green infrastructure network.
  - Increasing opportunities for walking.
  - Seek to retain and enhance green spaces and incorporate planting and trees.
- **P20 Provision for Open Space, Children’s Play, Sport, Recreation and Leisure:**
  - Existing facilities that make an important contribution to the quality of the environment or network of green infrastructure will be protected.

### **Evidence Base Documents**

#### SHLAA (2012)

- 6.4 The Site formed part of SHLAA Site 117<sup>2</sup>, together with the allocated land to the west that is currently under construction. Tree Preservation Orders and the woodland block were highlighted as ‘hard’ constraints. The document recommended that the Site not be included within the SHLAA and not be considered further for allocations as development would impact upon the green belt functions and openness, although a small part closest to the village centre was highlighted for consideration to meet local affordable housing needs.

#### SHELAA (2016)

- 6.5 The Site was not put forward for the 2016 Call for Sites and is not present on the maps of promoted sites pre- and post-May 2016. It therefore did not appear in the 2016 SHELAA.

#### Solihull’s Countryside Strategy: First Review 2010-2020

- 6.6 The Strategy’s stated outcomes are to control and guide future change in Solihull’s countryside in order to protect and enhance its character whilst managing and developing a prosperous economy. It aims to recognise the distinctive character of the Solihull countryside and provide a framework to new development.
- 6.7 The Strategy identified ten broad character zones, with the Site being situated within Zone 1 – Hockley Heath Parish. This zone is described as still retaining many of the unique features

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<sup>2</sup> Page 546

of the Arden pastureland, i.e. a small-scale enclosed landscape. The document highlights that the area has recently been subject to large change as a result of the Dickens Heath New Village and that there may be further pressures from the expansion of the Dickens Heath.

- 6.8 The Strategy goes onto highlight strategies for the future including maintaining the rural character, protect and enhance green infrastructure and maintaining local distinctiveness. Local objectives for Hockley Heath Parish include minimising the impact of new development on the edge of the countryside and maintaining the openness of gaps between settlements.

## 7.0 GREEN BELT REVIEW

### Published Green Belt Reviews

#### Solihull Green Belt Review (2012)

7.1 This was a high-level document, concentrating on the land on the edge of Solihull around the Cole Valley and Chelmsley Wood. It does not include the area of the Site.

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

7.2 The Site is located within Refined Parcel RP75, an area of land extending between the edge of Dickens Heath and Norton Lane, and therefore much greater than the area of the Site. This area was assessed against the first four purposes of the Green Belt as set out within the NPPF:

- 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.

7.3 Refined Parcels were given a score of 0-3, with a score of 0 meaning the Refined Parcel does not perform against the purpose and 3 meaning the Refined Parcel is higher performing against the purpose. Refined Parcel 75 comprises the land between Old Dickens Heath Lane and Norton Land. The scores were as follows:

1)	1
2)	3
3)	3
4)	0
Total.	7

7.4 The Refined Parcel was assessed as making the greatest contribution to preventing neighbouring towns from merging and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. A score of 7 places the Refined Parcel approximately midway through the potential scores.

#### Greater Birmingham Housing Market Area (HMA) Strategic Growth Study: Greater Birmingham and the Black Country (February 2018)

7.5 This document comprises a four-stage process to identify potential housing land supply to meet the identified demand. These stages comprise: attempts to increase density through use of policy, identification of non-Green Belt land, identification of previously developed Green Belt



land and, should a shortfall still remain, undertake a strategic Green Belt Review of all of the land within the HMA to identify further sites.

- 7.6 The strategic review of Green Belt sites was based on the assessment of the performance of the strategic areas against the five purposes of the Green Belt as set out within the NPPF. The strategic areas were assessed as to whether they made a 'principal contribution' or a 'supporting contribution'. Figure 6 identifies the area of the Site as making a supporting contribution, rather than a principal contribution.
- 7.7 The assessment resulted in the identification of six 'Areas of Search' for new settlements and six for urban extensions, together with three Areas of Search for employment uses. In addition, a number of areas were identified where 'proportionate dispersal' might be appropriate, i.e. small-scale developments of approximately 500-2,500 dwellings. The corridor of the railway line passing Tidbury Green to the west is identified as a potential area of search (NS5) for a new settlement, with the area to the north identified as a suitable location for proposition dispersal (PD5) (see Figure 7 on page 27).
- 7.8 Chapter 8 of the document sets out the strategic Green Belt Review that was undertaken as part of the overall assessment process. The Site is situated within Green Belt parcel S28 for the purposes of analysis. This parcel covers all of the land from the south of the built edge of Birmingham as far south as the M40, from the railway line in the west to the M42 in the east, an area of approximately 2000ha. The overall study area was divided into six 'sectors' which were also assessed for their landscape character and settlement pattern. Parcel S28 is situated within the north-eastern corner of the 'South Sector'.
- 7.9 The analysis of the sector notes the *"higher occurrence of small scale settlements, clusters of dwellings and ribbon development associated with the Hollywood, Dickens Heath and Cheswick Green part of the sector"*. It goes on to state the:
- "Settlement pattern away from the conurbation and within the rural farmland is relatively well dispersed with many discrete clusters of dwellings and villages and frequent farmsteads and wayside dwellings in more settled landscapes."*
- 7.10 Under the heading of 'Green Belt Role', the strategic function of the Green Belt within the sector is described as principally relating to the containment of the southern expansion of Birmingham and the maintenance of the separate identities of the settlements to the south. In addition, the Green Belt is described as preventing wider encroachment from the urban edge of Birmingham and from the *"numerous settlements of various sizes located in the Green Belt"*.

- 7.11 Figure 27 on page 167 shows the majority of S28 as contributing to the protection of the countryside from encroachment and the western area (including all land west of the Site) as forming part of the strategic separation of settlements. The Site is situated on the very edge of this area and may fall outside it. The location of the strategic separation on the plan suggests that it is primarily to maintain the separation of Birmingham, Redditch and Bromsgrove.
- 7.12 Figure 36 shows that the area of the Site provides a supporting contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt.
- 7.13 The scale of the search and the identified parcels and strategic Areas of Search mean that this assessment cannot be usefully applied to development at a site level. The document has identified a potential strategic corridor along the railway route, linking to the stations. The Site is situated approximately 1.2km from a mainline railway station at Wythall and could be argued to fall within the Area of Search NS5.

### Contribution of the Site to the Green Belt

- 7.14 Barton Willmore has undertaken their own assessment of the contribution made by the Site to the Green Belt and these findings are summarised within the following table:

Purpose	Critique	Contribution	Contribution using Solihull Methodology
Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	The Site is bordered by a development site to the west, by existing residential development to the south, ancient woodland to the north and Rumbush Lane with hedgerows and tree belt to the south-east, all of which are strong defensible boundaries. The area to the north-east comprises an area of sports facilities. The north-eastern boundary is moderately defensible, comprising a hedgerow between the Site and the sports pitches.	Limited	1
Prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Development within the Site would not cause erosion of the separation between Solihull / Birmingham and Redditch (the closest town) and does not therefore perform this role as defined within the NPPF, which refers to the merger of 'towns'. The distance between Birmingham and Redditch at this point is 9.3km from edge to edge. However, it is acknowledged that development within the Site would bring the edge of Tidbury Green closer to the edge of Dickens Heath (approximately 350m at their closest points). The two settlements are visually separated by existing hedgerows with mature trees and there would be limited intervisibility during winter months. There would be a clear sense of leaving one settlement before entering the other when travelling along Rumbush Lane.	Limited	1

Purpose	Critique	Contribution	Contribution using Solihull Methodology
Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Development within the Site would not bring the edge of Tidbury Green any further east than is currently the case along Norton and Rumbush Lanes. The Site is surrounded by development on two sides and by a containing road on the third. There are two additional dwellings in the easternmost area of the Site. Development within the Site would comprise further consolidation of the settlement with the development along Norton and Rumbush Lanes. Visual encroachment would be limited due to the strong visual containment by the mature hedgerow trees.	Limited	1 (development present to immediate south, south-east and east)
Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	There is no intervisibility between the Site and a historic town.	None	0
<b>Overall</b>		Limited	3

- 7.15 As can be seen in the table above, the Site does not perform a strong role when assessed against the purposes of the Green Belt as set out within the NPPF. The Green Belt is not intended to prevent the merger of local villages but, rather, to keep large settlements from merging. In the case of Tidbury Green, the Solihull assessment echoes the NPPF in that Green Belt is concerned with the merger of towns, not villages. The Site will not cause the merger of these large settlements, but it is important to respond to local identity and, therefore, the proposed masterplan should seek to protect the individual identities of Tidbury Green and Dickens Heath.
- 7.16 An assessment of the contribution of the Site to the purposes of the Green Belt utilising the Solihull methodology resulting in an overall score of '3', lower than the overall score of '7' for Refined Parcel 75.

## 8.0 OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS TO DEVELOPMENT

### Landscape Considerations for the Site

- 8.1 The most important features within the Site are the boundary hedgerows with their mature trees, the mature trees within the hedgerows subdividing the Site, and the historic woodland block on the south-eastern boundary with Rumbush Lane.
- 8.2 The existing mature trees should be retained, subject to survey, and provision made to add new trees, particularly oaks, along the routes of the historic hedgerows to create age depth. This is to maintain the historic small-scale pattern of the landscape and the visual filtering created by the layering of the trees.
- 8.3 The woodland within the north of the Site is relatively young, having been planted in the late 1990s. Within the woodland are the remaining mature oak trees demarking the historic field pattern. This woodland makes a positive contribution to the wider landscape pattern and provides a buffer to Big Dickens ancient woodland to the north. The woodland should be retained but is of lower landscape sensitivity than historic and more established woodlands.
- 8.4 The character of Rumbush Lane is of importance, particularly its green and enclosed nature. It is important that the green enclosed character of this is retained and enhanced as part of any proposed development fronting the road. The existing hedgerow should be retained as far as is practicable and new native tree planting, particularly native oaks, should be added to create age depth.

### Visual Considerations for the Site

- 8.5 The Site is visually well enclosed by emerging residential development to the west, by existing residential development and a small block of woodland to the south, and by Big and Little Dickens Woods to the north. Short distance views into the east of the Site are possible from Rumbush Lane where it extends along the south-eastern boundary. Heavily filtered views are available from a very short stretch of Cleobury Lane, between the junction of Rumbush Lane and Little Dickens Wood. These views are filtered by the three layers of hedgerows and mature trees between the viewpoint and the Site.
- 8.6 Visual separation between Tidbury Green and Dickens Heath is of importance and, therefore, the north-eastern boundary of the Site should be reinforced with new tree planting to further reduce intervisibility between the two settlement edges. This does not need to be a solid tree belt but can be regular tree planting within an area of grassland to add further layers of vegetation.

## Site Opportunities and Constraints

8.7 The following strategy responds to the site landscape features, policy and landscape character guidance:

- Preserve the intimate landscape pattern through the retention of existing hedgerows where practicable, primarily around the Site boundaries.
- Existing hedgerow trees within the Site should be retained, subject to tree survey, and provision made for the planting of new oaks along the historic hedgerow routes. This is to maintain the historic small-scale field pattern and visual enclosure of the Arden Pastures and to provide an age structure within the tree cover.
- New and historic trees should be given sufficient space as part of any masterplan design in order to allow them to reach maturity without potential harm to them or the surrounding development.
- Situate access points so that impact on hedgerows and trees is kept to the minimum.
- Preserve the historic tree belt on Rumbush Lane, south of numbers 182 and 174.
- Provide positive frontage to Rumbush Lane, echoing existing character along Rumbush and Norton Lanes. Ensure that this is designed to reflect the enclosed and verdant character of Rumbush Lane.
- Protect and enhance the existing young woodland in the north-west of the Site as far as is practicable. At minimum, protect the existing hedgerow oaks which have been subsumed within the woodland, and make provision for the planting of new oaks to reinforce the field pattern.
- Provide additional planting along north-eastern boundary to increase defensibility of boundary and to reduce intervisibility between proposed edge of Tidbury Green and Dickens Heath.
- Reopen footpath link through woodland to the emerging development to the west and the primary school beyond.

## 9.0 APPRAISAL OF THE CONCEPT MASTERPLAN

- 9.1 A concept masterplan has been developed for the Site, in consultation with the authors of this LVA GBR to ensure that it responds to the opportunities and constraints to development identified herein. The masterplan is included on page 17 of the Vision Document produced to accompany the representations to the Local Plan.
- 9.2 The table below includes a broad analysis of the performance of the masterplan against the landscape and visual considerations identified in Chapter 8.0.

Issues Identified in this LVA GBR	Source Documents	Masterplan Response
<b>Landscape Appraisal</b>		
Improve public access to the woodland and connectivity to centre of Tidbury Green through adjacent development to the west		The concept masterplan proposes restoring the pedestrian route through the woodland within the north of the Site and connecting to the development to the west.
Consider setting of Big Dickens Wood		There is 128m between the edge of Big Dickens Wood and the edge of the proposed development.
Protect distinctive field pattern, particularly hedgerow oaks		The development has been designed to respond to the field pattern, creating pockets of development between the lines of oak trees.
Plant new oaks along hedgerow routes to create age structure		This is a detailed design matter but the intention to do so is set out within the vision document.
Improve access to young woodland in north of Site		A connection through the woodland between the east and west is proposed within the masterplan and a natural play area is proposed within the more open southern area of woodland.

Issues Identified in this LVA GBR	Source Documents	Masterplan Response
Protect historic tree belt by Rumbush Lane as historic feature		This has been incorporated into the masterplan, is shown to be extended along the south-eastern boundary of the Site and will be separated from the proposed development by an area of blue green infrastructure.
<b>Published Landscape Character Assessments</b>		
Manage and enhance existing woodlands, trees and hedgerows	National Character Assessment SEOs and Landscape Guidelines, Warwickshire Landscape Project and Solihull Landscape Character Assessment	The existing trees, hedgerows and woodland are to be incorporated into the proposed masterplan with pockets of development set between the existing field boundaries.
Protect the distinctive field pattern		
Create new networks of woodlands, heaths and green infrastructure		New areas of public open space will be created within the scheme, connecting through to the existing countryside and development areas to the west. New woodland and open space is to be created about the north-eastern, south-eastern and southern boundaries of the Site, connecting through to the open space with the proposed development to the west and the woodland to the north.
Protect tree planting around Tidbury Green and Dickens Heath as important to setting. Protect setting of Dickens Heath	Solihull Landscape Character Assessment	New areas of tree planting are to be established within the proposed masterplan, protecting the visual distinction between the settlements and, therefore, the visual and landscape setting of Dickens Heath.
Resist coalescence of settlements to preserve landscape character		

Issues Identified in this LVA GBR	Source Documents	Masterplan Response
Manage access for recreation at the urban edge, enhance the footpath network and explore opportunities to improve public enjoyment of the area		The proposed masterplan will result in increased access into the Site, particularly the woodland within the north of the Site, and will connect to the open space and public access networks to the west.
<b>Visual Appraisal</b>		
Consider views from the edge of Dickens Heath to prevent perception of merging.		A new area of woodland planting is to be established along the north-eastern boundary, connecting to the young woodland in the north of the Site and Big Dickens Wood to the north. This will prevent views towards the edge of Tidbury Green from Dickens Heath and vice versa. The existing vegetated character of Rumbush Lane will be enhanced by retaining the existing landscape features and by creating new areas of tree and woodland planting, protecting the rural character of Rumbush Lane. These will prevent the sense of coalescence from Rumbush Lane and from the edge of Dickens Heath.
Consider views from Rumbush Lane		
<b>Planning Policy</b>		
Protect existing and create new landscape features	Solihull Draft Local Plan – Policy P10, P14, P15, P16, P18	The existing landscape features within the Site will be protected and enhanced by new tree and woodland planting.



Issues Identified in this LVA GBR	Source Documents	Masterplan Response
Conserve and enhance local character and distinctiveness	Policy P15, P16, P18	The distinctive field pattern and wooded character will be protected and enhanced by new areas of tree and woodland planting which respond to the wider pattern of landscape infrastructure.
Protect the visual amenity of the Green Belt	Policy P17	The Site has a small visual envelope with views being restricted to filtered views from Rumbush Lane and heavily filtered views from the edge of Dickens Heath. These have been addressed through the protection and enhancement of the vegetated character of Rumbush Lane, resulting in development glimpsed through the existing vegetation as is characteristic at present. It will also prevent views from the edge of Dickens Heath and views towards the Site from the wider landscape.
Improve access and opportunities for walking	Policy P18	The proposed development will increase public access into the Site where there is currently no access, and will provide connections through the young woodland, through the development to the west and on to the centre of Tidbury Green.
<b>Green Belt Review</b>		

Issues Identified in this LVA GBR	Source Documents	Masterplan Response
Prevent perception of visual coalescence between Dickens Heath and Tidbury Green		New tree planting along the north-eastern boundary will prevent views from the edge of Dickens Heath, preventing any perception of coalescence from the village boundaries. The protection and enhancement of the green enclosed character of Rumbush Lane will reduce the perception of development when travelling between Norton Lane and Dickens Heath.
Prevent visual encroachment into the countryside by protecting existing landscape features		The visual envelope of the Site is small, restricted to views from Rumbush Lane, immediately adjacent to the Site, and heavily filtered views from the edge of Dickens Heath. Although there is no public access to the east of the Site, in order to prevent visual encroachment, planting along the south-eastern boundary will eliminate most views.

9.3 The above table demonstrates that the concept masterplan design responds to the issues and opportunities identified within the Landscape and Visual Appraisal of the Site and the assessment of its contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt. This demonstrates that the Site is able to accommodate development in a way that is sensitive to the local context and which responds positively to the distinctive landscape character of the area.

## 10.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

### Summary

- 10.1 The Site comprises approximately 11.5ha of irregularly shaped pasture and woodland, situated on the eastern edge of the village of Tidbury Green, within Solihull Metropolitan Borough. The north-western area of the Site comprises woodland planting, dating from the late 1990s. The remainder of the Site comprises 3no. pastoral fields, separated by hedgerows with mature trees, mainly oaks.
- 10.2 The land to the north-east comprises an area of playing fields associated with the Tanworth and Camp Hill Cricket Club. To the south-east and east of Rumbush Lane, the landscape comprises further small irregularly shaped pastoral fields separated by hedgerows with large trees. There is an area of woodland to the immediate south of the Site and, beyond this to the south and south-west, is an area of residential development. This comprises detached dwellings on deep plots and extending east along Norton Lane from Tidbury Green. The area to the west comprises an area of emerging residential development within Tidbury Green.
- 10.3 The local landscape comprises rural 'Arden' pasture which is characterised by small fields divided by hedgerows with large trees, mainly oaks, creating an enclosed and intimate landscape. The area is populated with regular small settlements, including Tidbury Green, and Dickens Heath to the north. Access within the area comprises regular narrow lanes with few major roads or footpaths, further contributing to the rural character of the area.
- 10.4 There are no landscape designations within the Site although Big Dickens Wood to the immediate north is an area of Ancient Woodland and the buffer zone falls within the Site. The Site and the local landscape falls within the Green Belt.
- 10.5 The Site is situated within the Arden Pastures within the National Landscape Character Areas, an area of former wood pasture which is described as a small-scale enclosed landscape typically bordered by mature hedgerow trees but often pervaded by suburban influences.
- 10.6 The Solihull Landscape Character Assessment has assessed the landscape as having very low landscape capacity but that, despite this, it states that there is the ability to accommodate restricted areas of new development of an appropriate type, scale and form, in keeping with the existing character and local distinctiveness.
- 10.7 The Site is reflective of the wider landscape character, comprising an area of small fields and woodland, separated by hedgerows with mature oak trees but close to areas of development.

- 10.8 Guidelines for the area include the protection of the distinctive small-scale character of the landscape, areas of ancient woodland and the network of mature trees.
- 10.9 The landscape in the immediate area of the Site is generally level, resulting in no elevated views. The local landscape, as described within Chapters 3.0 and 4.0, is heavily vegetated, with frequent hedgerows and numerous mature trees dividing small fields, and stands and blocks of woodland. This results in few long-distance views in the local area as the layering of the trees and hedgerows creates effective screening, even during winter months.
- 10.10 The Site has a small zone of visual influence, mainly restricted to direct views from Rumbush Lane along the eastern boundary, and filtered views from a short stretch of Cleobury Lane on the southern edge of Dickens Heath. Views from other locations are restricted by the layers of vegetation, areas of woodland and existing built form.
- 10.11 The Site was assessed within the Solihull Green Belt Review 2016 as part of the wider Refined Parcel 75. This Refined Parcel was assessed as contributing to purposes 2 and 3 of the Green Belt as set out within the NPPF, i.e. the prevention of merging of towns and the protecting of the countryside from encroachment. Overall Refined Parcel 75 was assessed as scoring 7 out of a possible 12, a moderate contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt.
- 10.12 Barton Willmore has undertaken a more detailed assessed of the contribution made by the Site to the purposes of the Green Belt, using both the Solihull methodology and the Barton Willmore methodology. This identified that the Site made a limited contribution to the prevention of towns merging and a limited contribution to preventing sprawl and protecting the countryside from encroachment. The overall contribution that the Site makes to the Green Belt was assessed to be 'limited' in the Barton Willmore methodology and a score of three using the Solihull methodology.
- 10.13 The following strategy responds to the site landscape features, policy and landscape character guidance:
- Preserve the intimate landscape pattern through the retention of existing hedgerows where practicable, primarily around the Site boundaries.
  - Existing hedgerow trees within the Site should be retained, subject to tree survey, and provision made for the planting of new oaks along the historic hedgerow routes. This is to maintain the historic small-scale field pattern and visual enclosure of the Arden Pastures and to provide an age structure within the tree cover.
  - New and historic trees should be given sufficient space as part of any masterplan design in order to allow them to reach maturity without potential harm to them or the surrounding development.
  - Situate access points so that impact on hedgerows and trees is kept to the minimum.

- Preserve the historic tree belt on Rumbush Lane, south of numbers 182 and 174.
- Provide positive frontage to Rumbush Lane, echoing existing character along Rumbush and Norton Lanes. Ensure that this is designed to reflect the enclosed and verdant character of Rumbush Lane.
- Protect and enhance the existing young woodland in the north-west of the Site as far as is practicable. At minimum, protect the existing hedgerow oaks which have been subsumed within the woodland, and make provision for the planting of new oaks.
- Provide additional planting along north-eastern boundary to increase defensibility of boundary and to reduce intervisibility between proposed edge of Tidbury Green and Dickens Heath.
- Reopen footpath link through woodland to the emerging development to the west and the primary school beyond.

10.14 The proposed concept masterplan has been shown to respond to the opportunities and constraints identified as part of the LVA GBR process, as summarised in the table in Chapter 9.0.

### **Conclusion**

10.15 The Site has the ability to accommodate development which is of a type and scale that reflects the existing development within Tidbury Green and the surrounding area, as demonstrated in the table in Chapter 9.0 above. Hedgerows around the boundaries, and the mature trees within and around the Site should be maintained as a priority, subject to tree survey. New trees, primarily oaks, should also be planted along the historic routes of the hedgerows to maintain and enhance the characteristic intimate scale of the landscape and wooded appearance. Both new and existing trees should be given sufficient space within the proposed masterplan design to ensure that they may reach maturity without risk to themselves or the surrounding development.

10.16 An area of open space should be provided along the north-eastern boundary and planted with native trees. This does not need to be a solid tree belt and should not harm the condition of existing mature trees along that boundary. New oak trees should also be planted within the existing hedgerow to create structure. These elements together will further reduce visual permeability from the edge of Dickens Heath and prevent the impression of visual merging between Tidbury Green and Dickens Heath.

10.17 Although the physical distance between the edge of Tidbury Green and Dickens Heath will be reduced, there will remain a distinct experience of leaving one settlement, travelling through countryside and entering the next. With the addition of further planting along the north-eastern

boundary to further reduce visual permeability, there will be a limited impression of the merging of settlements from the edge of each.

- 10.18 The masterplan has been shown to respond to these issues identified above and demonstrates how development may be accommodated on the Site in a way that responds positively to the local landscape, visual and policy context and which provides enhancements to the local landscape character.

## **Visual Material**

Figure 1: Site Context Plan

Figure 2: Topographical and Hydrological Features Plan

Figure 3: Site Appraisal Plan

Figure 4: Visual Appraisal Plan





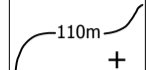







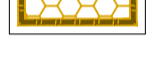
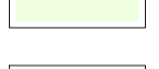


Site Context Photographs

Site Appraisal Photographs





**LEGEND**

-  Site Boundary
-  Existing Woodlands, Copses and Tree Belts ^
-  Existing Scrub ^
-  Existing Water Courses and Features ^
-  Contours/Spot Heights (Metres AOD) ^
-  Public Rights of Way \*
-  Cycle Route ++
-  National Trails / Long Distance Walks #
-  Listed Buildings ~
-  Scheduled Monument ~
-  Ancient Woodland #
-  Local Nature Reserve
-  Sites of Special Scientific Interest
-  Green Belt ^^
-  Proposed Housing Sites ##
-  Mixed use ##

Sources:  
 # OS Mapping  
 ^ Natural England GIS Data Set  
 ~ Historic England National Monument Record GIS Data Set  
 \* Worcestershire / Warwickshire County Council GIS Data Set  
 + Substrata National Cycle Network GIS Data  
 ++ Department of Transport (DOT) GIS Cycle Network Data  
 ^ Department for Communities and Local Government GIS Data  
 # Solihull District Council Local Plan Proposals Map Adopted, December 2013

Data collected for constraints and analysis mapping is based on publicly available sources at the time of preparation (inset) using the British National Grid and may itself not be accurate. Barton Willmore shall not be liable for the accuracy of data derived from external sources.

**FIGURE 1**

Project  
**Land West of Rumbush Lane,  
 Tidbury Green**

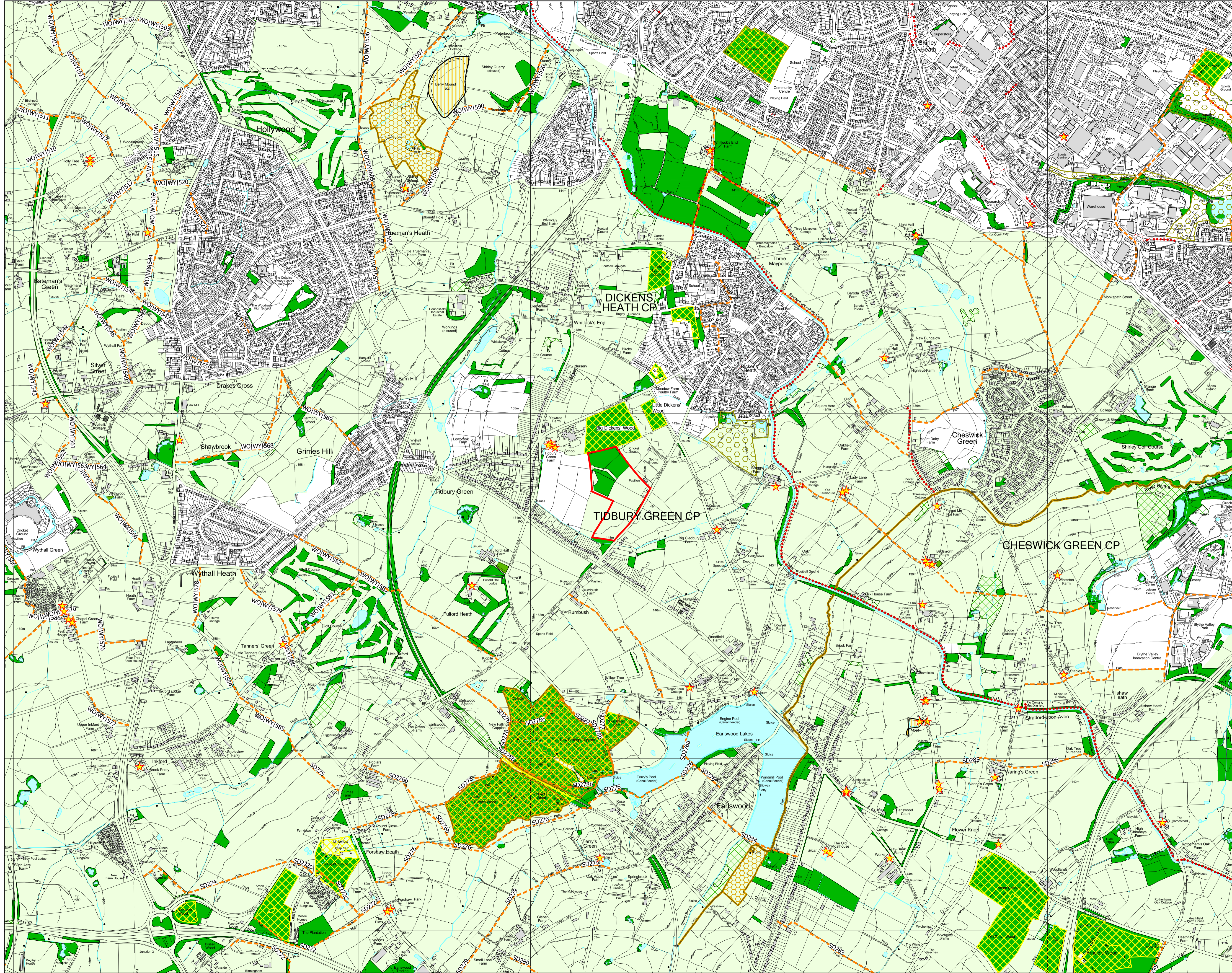
Drawing Title  
**Site Context Plan**

Date 07.03.2018	Scale 1:10,000 @A1 1:20,000 @A3	Drawn by GG	Check by WL
Project No 28232	Drawing No L1	Revision -	

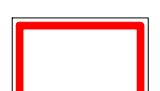
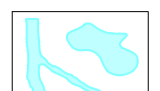
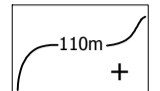




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 Communication • Public Engagement • Development Economics

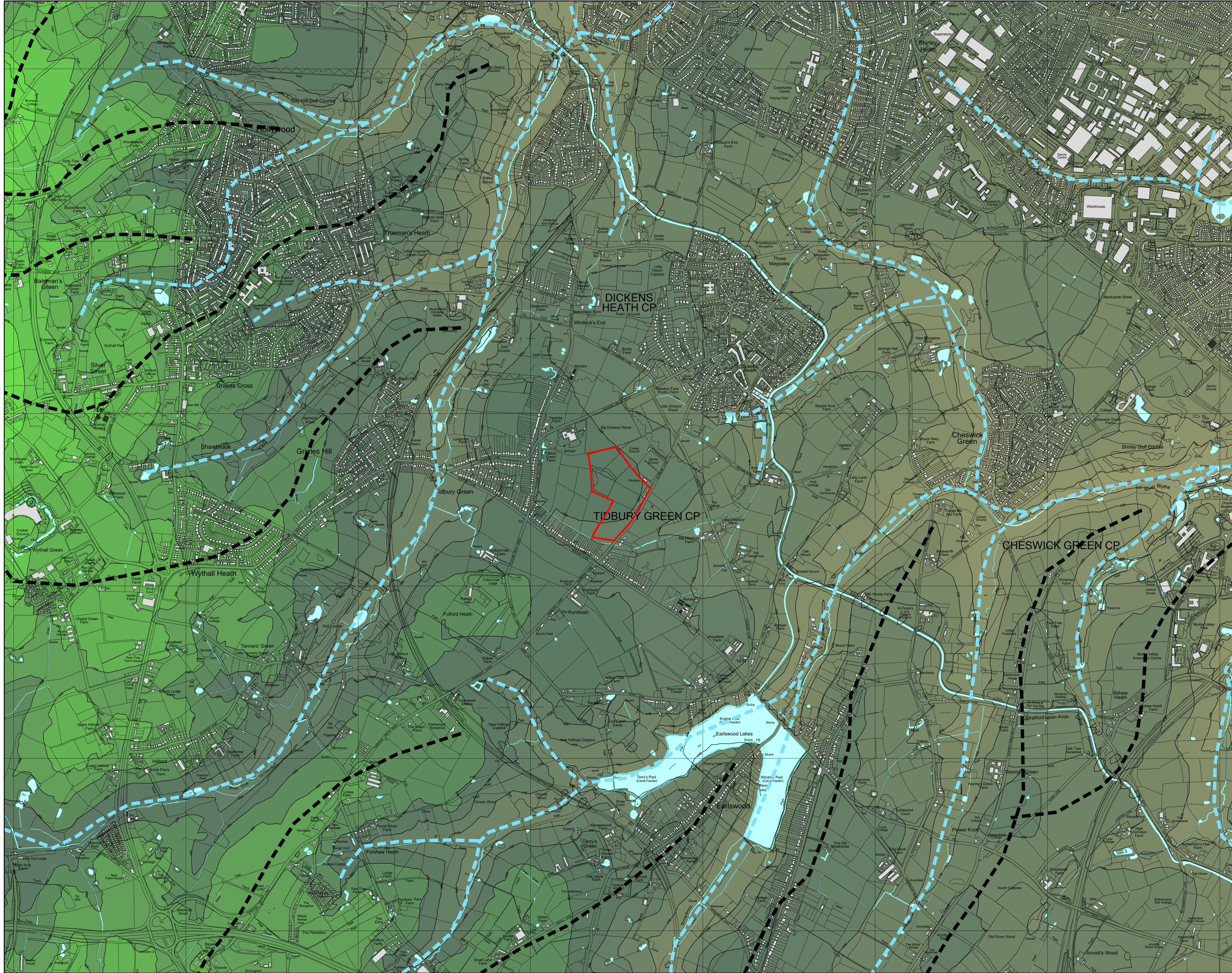
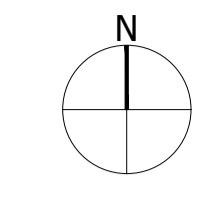
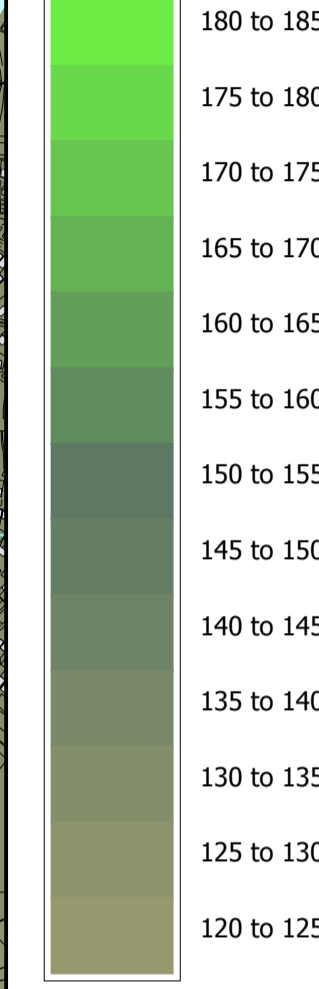
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**LEGEND**

-  Site Boundary
-  Existing Water Courses and Water Features ^
-  Contours/Spot Heights (Metres AOD) ^
-  Ridgelines
-  Valleys

**Elevation (m AOD)**



**FIGURE 2**

Project  
 Land West of Rumbush Lane,  
 Tidbury Green  
 Drawing Title  
 Topographical Features Plan

Date 07.03.2018	Scale 1:10,000 @A1 1:20,000 @A3	Drawn by ML	Check by WL
Project No 28232	Drawing No L3		Revision -



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 Communication • Public Engagement • Development Economics

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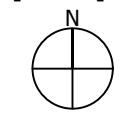


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Revision \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Drn \_\_\_\_\_ Ckd \_\_\_\_\_

**LEGEND**

-  Site Boundary
-  Contours/Spot Heights (Metres AOD)
-  Ancient Woodland
-  Listed Buildings
-  Green Belt
-  Tree Preservation Order
-  Location of Photographic Viewpoints (Site Appraisal Photographs: A-L)



**FIGURE 3**

Project  
**Land West of Rumbush Lane,  
 Tidbury Green**  
 Drawing Title  
**Site Appraisal Plan**

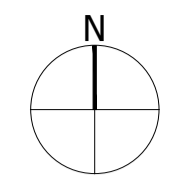
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Project No 28232	Drawing No L2	Revision -	



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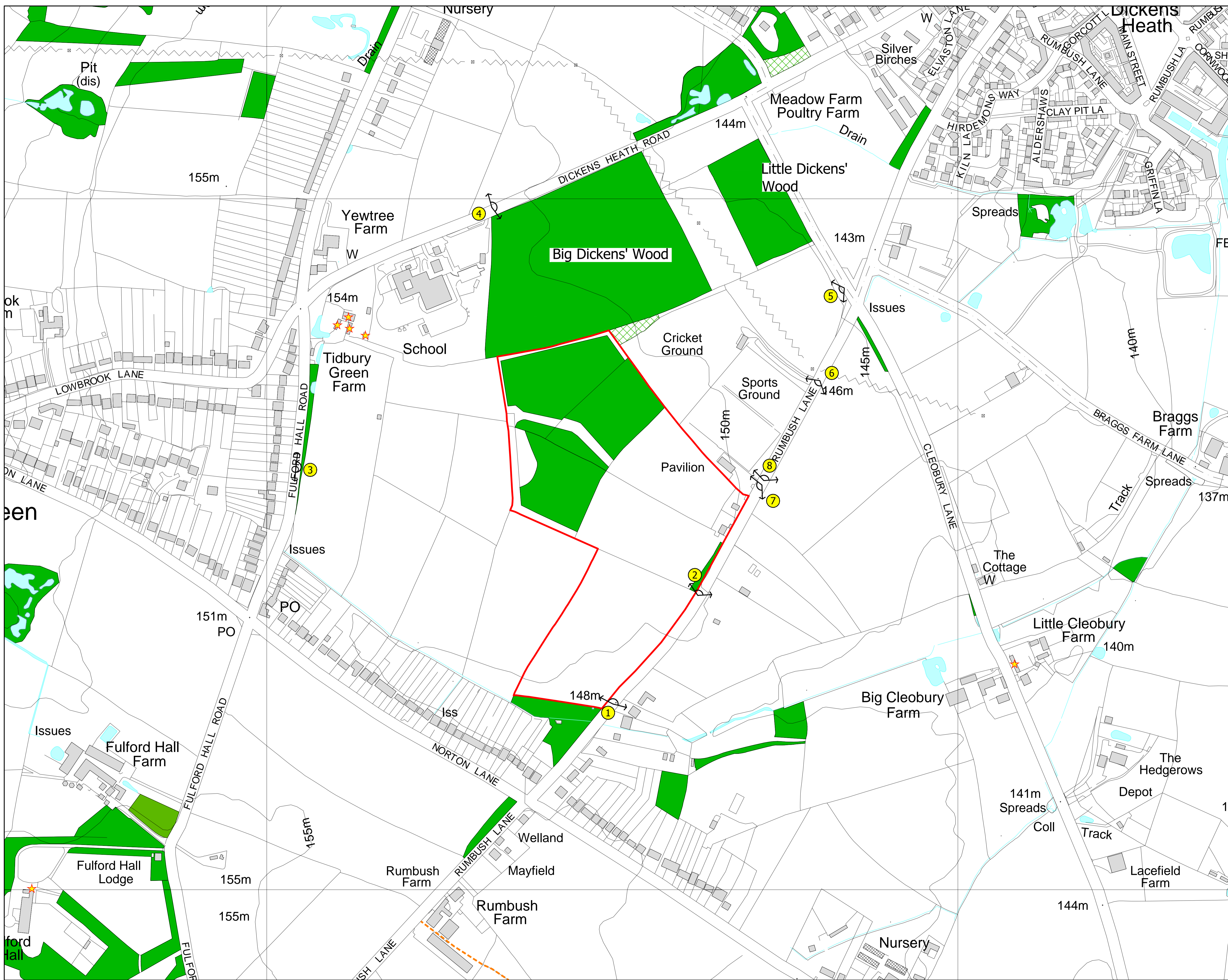


**LEGEND**

- Site Boundary
- Existing Woodlands, Copses and Tree Belts ^
- Existing Scrub ^
- Existing Water Courses and Features ^
- Contours/Spot Heights (Metres AOD) ^
- Public Rights of Way \*
- Cycle Route ++
- ★ Listed Buildings ~
- 1 Location of Photographic Viewpoints (Site Context Photographs: 1-8)

Sources:  
 # GIS Mapping  
 # Natural England GIS Data Set  
 # Historic England National Monument Record GIS Data Set  
 # Worcestershire / Warwickshire County Council GIS Data Set  
 # Sustrans National Cycle Network GIS Data  
 # Department of Transport (DOT) GIS Cycle Network Data

Data collected for contours and analysis mapping is based on publicly available sources at the time of preparation inserted using the British National Grid and may itself not be accurate. Barton Willmore shall not be liable for the accuracy of data derived from external sources.



**FIGURE 4**

Project  
 Land West of Rumbush Lane,  
 Tidbury Green

Drawing Title  
 Visual Appraisal Plan

Date 07.03.2018	Scale 1:2,500 @A1 1:5,000 @A3	Drawn by ML	Check by WL
Project No 28232	Drawing No L4	Revision -	

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Approximate extent of the Site



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 1:**

Distance: 8m

Elevation: 147.8m AOD

Approximate extent of the Site



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 2:**

Distance: 5m

Elevation: 147.5m AOD

Approximate extent of the Site



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 3:**

Distance: 310m

Elevation: 154.3m AOD

LAND AT TIDBURY GREEN

SITE CONTEXT  
PHOTOGRAPHS: 1 - 3

RECOMMENDED VIEWING  
DISTANCE: 20CM @A1

DATE TAKEN: NOV 2017

PROJECT NUMBER: 28232

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Approximate extent of the Site



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 4:**

Distance: 214m  
Elevation: 155.4m AOD

Approximate extent of the Site



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 5:**

Distance: 311m  
Elevation: 147.5m AOD

Approximate extent of the Site



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 6:**

Distance: 195m  
Elevation: 147.6m AOD

LAND AT TIDBURY GREEN

SITE CONTEXT  
PHOTOGRAPHS: 4 - 6

RECOMMENDED VIEWING  
DISTANCE: 20CM @A1

DATE TAKEN: NOV 2017

PROJECT NUMBER: 28232

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Approximate extent of the Site



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 7:**

Distance: 25m

Elevation: 154.2m AOD



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 8:**

Distance: 31m

Elevation: 154.0m AOD

LAND AT TIDBURY GREEN

SITE CONTEXT  
PHOTOGRAPHS: 7 - 8

RECOMMENDED VIEWING  
DISTANCE: 20CM @A1

DATE TAKEN: NOV 2017

PROJECT NUMBER: 28232

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SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH A:



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH B:



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH C:

LAND AT TIDBURY GREEN

SITE APPRAISAL  
PHOTOGRAPHS: 1 - 3  
RECOMMENDED VIEWING  
DISTANCE: 20CM @A1  
DATE TAKEN: NOV 2017  
PROJECT NUMBER: 28232

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SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH D:



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH E:



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH F:

LAND AT TIDBURY GREEN

SITE APPRAISAL  
PHOTOGRAPHS: 4 - 6

RECOMMENDED VIEWING  
DISTANCE: 20CM @A1

DATE TAKEN: NOV 2017

PROJECT NUMBER: 28232

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SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH G:



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH H:



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH I:

LAND AT TIDBURY GREEN

SITE APPRAISAL  
PHOTOGRAPHS: 7 - 9

RECOMMENDED VIEWING  
DISTANCE: 20CM @A1

DATE TAKEN: NOV 2017

PROJECT NUMBER: 28232

**BARTON  
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SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH J:



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH K:



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH L:

LAND AT TIDBURY GREEN

SITE APPRAISAL  
PHOTOGRAPHS: 10 - 12

RECOMMENDED VIEWING  
DISTANCE: 20CM @A1

DATE TAKEN: NOV 2017

PROJECT NUMBER: 28232

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## **Appendix A.1**

Extracts from Published Landscape Character Assessments





## Summary

Arden comprises farmland and former wood-pasture lying to the south and east of Birmingham, including part of the West Midlands conurbation. Traditionally regarded as the land lying between the River Tame and the River Avon in Warwickshire, the Arden landscape also extends into north Worcestershire to abut the Severn and Avon Vales. To the north and north-east it drops down to the open landscape of the Mease/Sence Lowlands. The eastern part of the NCA abuts and surrounds Coventry, with the fringes of Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon to the south. This NCA has higher ground to the west, the Clent and Lickey Hills and to the east, the Nuneaton ridge. The landscape of the lower lying central area is gently rolling with small fragmented semi natural and ancient woodlands. Mature oaks set in hedgerows, distinctive field boundaries, historic parklands and narrow river corridors are key features, all on the doorstep of a heavily urbanised area. Land use throughout the area is mainly, residential, agricultural and industrial including coal mining which is still active in the north east of the NCA. Numerous transport corridors; road, rail, air and canal run through the area. There is likely to be increased development and greater pressure upon the existing infrastructure, particularly around Birmingham, Coventry and the main towns. This pressure could lead to the creation of a new Green Infrastructure linking the urban areas out into the more rural areas. This NCA is among the most geologically diverse. This has had a strong impact on the landscape's character and development and is further reflected in the range of locally and nationally important geological assets across the NCA. There are also many local biodiversity assets and strong cultural links with William Shakespeare and his 'Forest of Arden'.

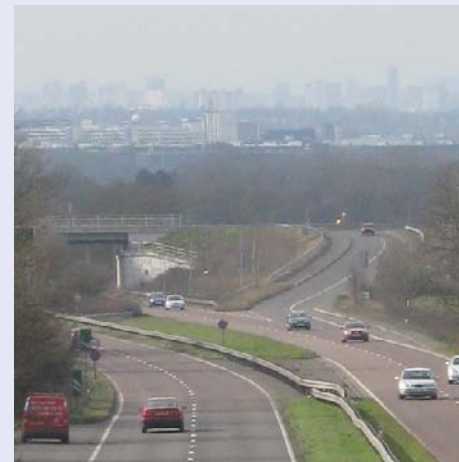
## Statements of Environmental Opportunity

- **SEO1:** Manage and enhance the valuable woodlands, hedgerows, heaths, distinctive field boundaries and enclosure patterns throughout the NCA, retaining the historic contrast between different areas whilst balancing the needs for timber, biomass production, climate regulation, biodiversity and recreation.
- **SEO2:** Create new networks of woodlands, heaths and green infrastructure, linking urban areas like Birmingham and Coventry with the wider countryside to increase biodiversity, recreation and the potential for biomass and the regulation of climate change.
- **SEO3:** Conserve and enhance Arden's strong geological, industrial, and cultural resource, to increase public access, enjoyment, recreation and to retain a sense of place and history.
- **SEO4:** Enhance the value of Arden's aquatic features such as the characteristic river valleys, meadows and standing water areas like Bittell reservoirs, to increase resource protection eg. soil erosion, soil quality and water quality.

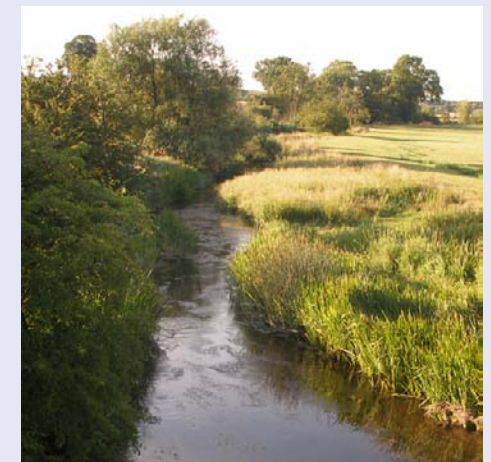
Click map to enlarge; click again to reduce.

## Key characteristics

- Well-wooded farmland landscape with rolling landform.
- Geologically diverse with rocks ranging from the Precambrian to the Jurassic and overlain by superficial Quaternary deposits.
- Mature oaks, mostly found within hedgerows, together with ancient woodlands, and plantation woodlands that often date from the time of enclosure. Woodlands include historic coppice bounded by woodbanks.
- Narrow, meandering clay river valleys with long river meadows; the River Blythe SSSI lying between the cities of Coventry and Birmingham is a good example of this.
- Numerous areas of former wood-pasture with large, old, oak trees often associated with isolated remnants of more extensive heathlands. Village greens/commons have a strong association with remnant lowland heath. Fragmented heathland persists on poorer soils in central and northern areas.
- Diverse field patterns, ranging from well hedged, irregular fields and small woodlands that contrast with larger semi regular fields on former deer park estates, eg. Packington Hall and Stoneleigh Park.
- Complex and contrasting settlement pattern with some densely populated where traditional settlements have amalgamated to form the major West Midlands conurbation whilst some settlements remain distinct and relatively well dispersed.
- North eastern industrial area based around former Warwickshire coalfield, with distinctive colliery settlements. North western area dominated by urban development and associated urban edge landscapes such as managed green space, eg. allotments, gardens, parks, golf courses (rough areas) and public open spaces; playing fields, churchyards, cemeteries and institutional grounds (schools, hospitals etc).
- Transport infrastructure, the M42, M40, M6 and M5 are major transport corridors that sit within the landscape of this NCA.
- Shakespeare's 'Forest of Arden', featured in 'As You Like It', is still reflected through the woodland cover, mature oaks, small ancient woodlands and former wood pasture.



Demonstrating the undulating landscape between Coventry and Birmingham - looking west along A45, near to Meriden.



An example of the meandering clay river valleys with long river meadows typical of the Arden landscape.



## Statements of Environmental Opportunity

**SEO 1 - Manage and enhance the valuable woodlands, hedgerows, heathlands, distinctive field boundaries and enclosure patterns throughout the NCA, retaining the historic contrast between different areas whilst balancing the needs for timber, biomass production, climate regulation, biodiversity and recreation.**

**For example by:**

- Managing small woodlands, semi-natural woodland and ancient woodland to maintain pockets of tranquillity and enhance biodiversity value and where appropriate re-plant new locally characteristic woodlands for wood fuel/biomass, Managing and maintaining the existing resource of 'big historic trees' in urban areas and support schemes to expand urban tree planting to support urban biodiversity and increase sense of place and history.
- Managing hedgerows in traditional local style to enhance landscape character and improve biodiversity value, Improving existing fragmented heathlands in Southern Arden and Arden Parklands.

**SEO 2 - Create new networks of woodlands, heathlands and green infrastructure, linking urban areas like Birmingham and Coventry with the wider countryside to increase biodiversity, recreation and the potential for biomass and the regulation of climate change.**

**For example by:**

- Expansion of urban tree planting to support urban biodiversity, landscape character and sense of place and history, Targeting expansion of woodland for the benefit of biodiversity and landscape, particularly where it can link isolated woodland blocks and increase habitat connectivity,
- Ensuring that the right type of tree is planted in the right location to maximise the benefits for water quality, climate regulation, erosion control, tranquillity and sense of place, Planting new hedgerows, especially in the north-eastern part of the NCA, using species of local provenance, planting standard hedgerow trees primarily oak, to maintain the distinctive character of the area. Maintain associated grassland buffer strips and improve habitat connectivity, particularly where this can assist in regulating soil erosion,
- Planning and creating new and improved links between urban areas, green belt and the wider countryside or major open spaces within and/or near the conurbation especially in and around Birmingham, Coventry and north Solihull,
- Enhance urban areas and fringes through sympathetic building and landscape design, Creation of new green infrastructure with associated habitat creation and new public access especially around old mining and quarry sites in the central and north east areas of the NCA, Maintaining and improving the existing rights of way network such as the Heart of England Way, cycle routes and access land, Improving links to or within the wider network of canal towpaths such as the Grand Union and Avon canal walks and cycle routes.

## **SEO 3 - Conserve and enhance Arden's strong geological, industrial, and cultural resource, to increase public access, enjoyment, recreation and to retain a sense of place and history**

### **For example by:**

- Conserving, enhancing and making accessible the network of geological sites, ensuring the importance of the man-made sites such as disused quarries, road, rail and canal cuttings, Widening the understanding of the role of geodiversity in the NCA, in particular, its connection with biodiversity, landscape character, industrial and cultural heritage,
- Conserving and enhancing archaeological features such as moated sites and archaeology associated with the manufacturing and mining industries particularly in relation to the Warwickshire coalfield and the canal network; promote access and awareness,
- Protecting and managing historic wood pasture, parklands and urban parks to conserve significant historic landscapes and important features and habitats such as veteran and urban trees and the associated invertebrate populations, Conserving historic farmsteads, the buildings and their surrounding landscapes particularly where new uses are being considered,
- Capitalise on the links made in literature to the Arden landscape, eg. Shakespeare using it as a tool to promote the conservation and enhancement of the landscape described.

## **SEO 4 - Enhance the value of Arden's aquatic features such as the characteristic river valleys, meadows and standing water areas like Bittell reservoirs to increase resource protection, eg. soil erosion, soil quality and water quality.**

### **For example by:**

- Managing and restoring habitats including floodplain grazing marsh associated with river valleys, particularly the Tame, Blyth and Arrow,
- Reducing sources of diffuse pollution into rivers, particularly in catchments of Trent, Tame and Blythe and standing open water habitats such as Bittell Reservoirs,
- At old mine and quarry sites continue to develop the growing nature conservation and recreational resource of value, eg. Hartshill and Alvecote wetlands.

## Landscape opportunities

- Conserve, enhance and restore the area's ancient landscape pattern of field boundaries, historic (including farm) buildings, moated sites, parkland and pasture and reinforce its well wooded character.
- Protect and manage woodlands particularly ancient woodlands and wood pasture to maintain the character of Arden.
- Manage and restore hedgerows especially in the north-eastern part of the area (enclosure patterns) and restore parkland, ancient trees and stream side trees plus manage and replace in-field trees and hedgerow trees.
- Maintain and restore areas of heathland particularly in southern Arden, Arden Parklands and Birmingham Hills, lowland meadows and pastures and floodplain grazing marshes.
- Manage arable cultivation to encourage rare arable plants and range-restricted farmland birds and mammals, following appropriate management options under Entry Level Stewardship.
- Restore habitats associated with river valleys particularly the Blythe and Tame.
- Create new green infrastructure with associated habitat creation and new public access on former mining sites and close to urban populations in the West Midlands Green Belt.

## Photo credits

Front cover: Dandy's Farm across cornfield to colliery among trees, the north eastern industrial landscape can be quite rural in character, with pockets of farmland often surrounded by urban development © Rob Cousins/Natural England

Page 3: © Philip Halling

Page 4: A45, near to Meriden © Michael Westley, Meandering clay river valleys © John Evans

Page 5: modern towns and cities in Arden still retain a historic core © Isobel Brooks, Enjoywarwickshire.com, Meandering clay river valleys © neil at Geograph.org.uk.

Page 6: Hedgerow oaks © Robin Stott, Arden's parklands are studded with ancient oaks © David Stowell

Page 7: Kenilworth Castle © Jim Lawrie, Enjoywarwickshire.com, Over Hedge and Cornfield © Mick Malpass, Canal network © E Gammie

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# Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment

for

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council



December 2016

## Residential Development:

- 5.7. The Solihull Local Plan (2013) and Local Plan Review (2016) sets out the policies and proposals to enable the Borough to grow and develop.
- 5.8. There is considerable demand for housing in the Borough resulting in development pressure for new residential areas. The area has strong economic assets, strategic transport infrastructure and a high quality environment making the Borough a desirable place in which to live, work and invest. As a result, there is continued development pressure on in the Borough particularly within the M42 Corridor, the Solihull urban fringes, villages in rural areas and the Green Belt.
- 5.9. In rural areas mature oak trees add a distinct quality to the landscape character of the area where they often form tree-lined streets in the mature suburb areas. Large front gardens also contribute to the leafy and Arcadian nature of some of these areas.
- 5.10. Building styles are a contributing factor to the landscape character and local distinctiveness between areas with varied styles that often impact positively on overall character. In contrast, modern buildings in rural villages and open countryside can sometimes appear incongruous.

### Guidelines

- Housing location, design and layout should respect local character.
- New development should conserve and enhance local character in terms of its distinctiveness and streetscape quality to ensure the scale, massing, density, layout, materials and landscape of development respects the surrounding natural, built and historic environment.
- Development should aim to retain existing landscape features which help define the character of areas, such as hedgerows, hedgerow trees, parkland trees and field patterns.
- It is beneficial for landscape works for new development sites to be considered in the early stages of design, to help integrate the development with its setting.
- Buildings should be well sited in relation to other features including tree cover and landform.

- New development should integrate the natural environment through the provision of gardens, quality open space and green infrastructure.
- Villages and settlement in the Borough have a distinct identity as a result of their historic origins and setting.
- It is important to maintain the identity of existing settlement and to avoid breaching the well-defined settlement edges.
- Careful selection of building materials utilising different textures and colour can add interest and break up the mass of larger buildings.
- Where new buildings are required they should be located in association with existing farmsteads and settlement across the area and located so as not to require new access arrangements.

## Lighting:

- 5.11. Inappropriate lighting in the countryside can impact considerably on landscape character and experience of the landscape. Lighting in the countryside can be disruptive to residents and ecology. The NPPG includes guidance on light pollution and notes that artificial light has the potential to become what is termed 'light pollution' or 'obtrusive light' and not all modern lighting is suitable in all locations.

### Guidelines

- Lighting for new developments should be assessed and considered where appropriate particularly when submitting landscape proposals in support of planning applications.
- Areas of the countryside in the Borough that retain a dark sky from the impacts of light pollution should be protected.
- Limiting the hours lighting is used, the use of down lights and minimising output should be considered as part of the landscape scheme.
- Lighting schemes should be designed to the safe minimum requirements for the purposes of the development.
- Care should be taken when designing lighting schemes to ensure that appropriate products are chosen and that their location to reduce spill light and glare has been fully considered.

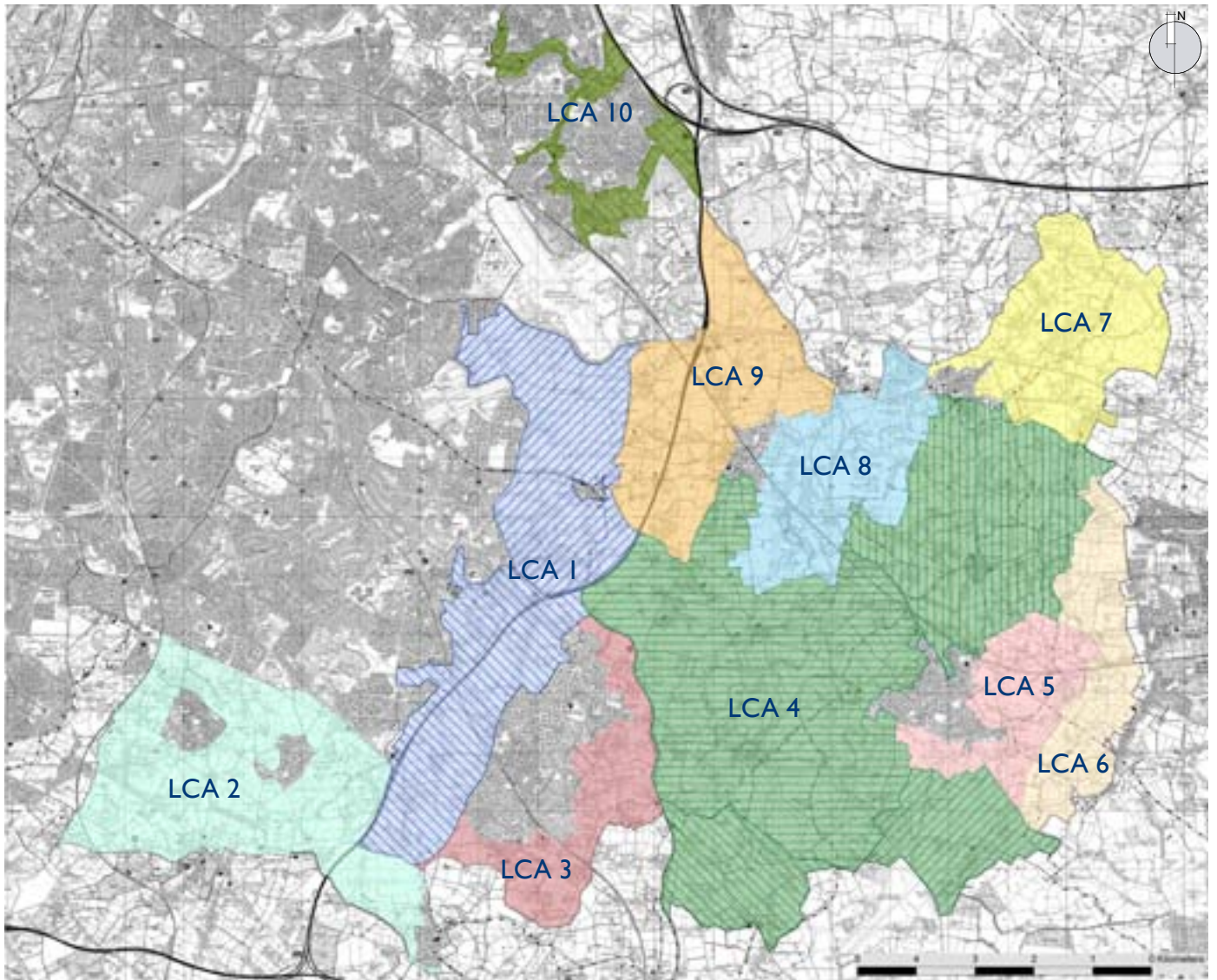
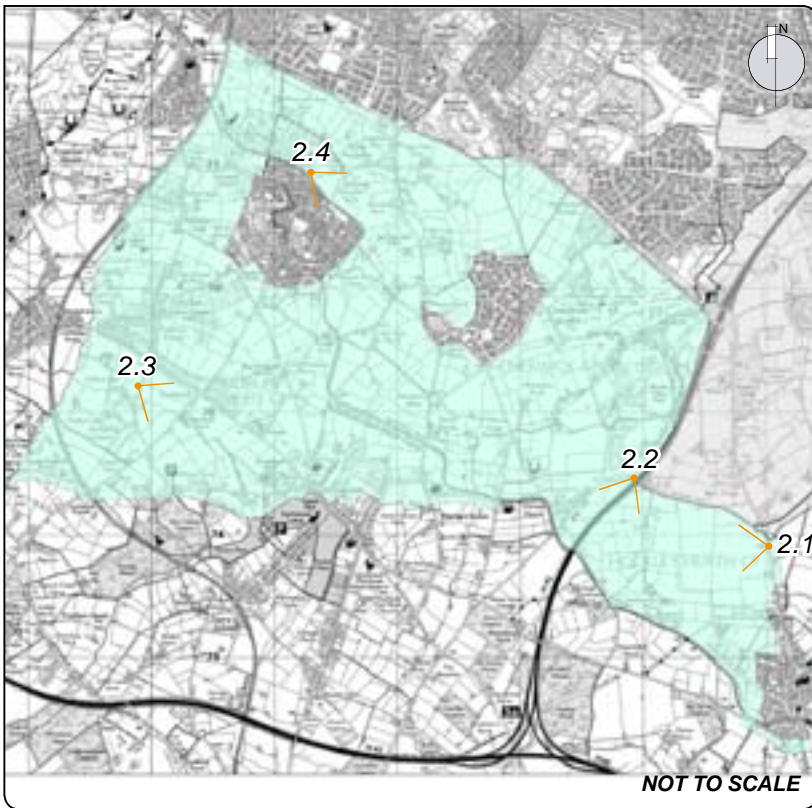


Figure 2: Solihull Borough Landscape Character Areas Map (Refer to Appendix D for a full-sized map.)





Southern Countryside

LCA 2



**Photograph 2.1:**  
The land is predominantly agricultural with poor boundary structure or open fields of medium to large size, particularly in the east.



**Photograph 2.2:**  
The M42 motorway segregates this area into two parts.



**Photograph 2.3:**  
Main settlements, including Tidbury Green, have a great influence on the character of the area acting as a gateway between the urban southern fringe of Solihull and the more rural south.

**Description:**

This area covers approximately 14km<sup>2</sup> to the south of the Shirley area of Solihull where the main settlements in the area are Dickens Heath, Cheswick Green and Hockley Heath.

The land gradually slopes down from the south west edge of Solihull towards the settlement of Cheswick Green with LCA 1 presiding to the east. The River Blythe along with its tributaries pass across this area and the River Cole skirts the western edge. Both of these river corridors provide good tree cover. The Stratford-upon-Avon Canal also passes diagonally across the area adding to overall landscape character and providing an important route for recreation within the area.

The narrow lanes, strong hedgerow structure lend an enclosed and intimate feeling to this area, that is particularly well perceived around Salter Street, south of Cheswick Green. This LCA is a largely rural area with active farms, horsiculture and scattered settlement pattern, where in contrast urban influences prevail near the urban edge of Solihull. Sub-urban influences are also present in and around Tidbury Green.

This character area provides a gateway from the southern fringe of the Solihull urban settlement to the more rural south. Despite the limited availability of public footpaths and bridleways across the area it remains accessible due to its geographical location close to Solihull and the other settlements of Dickens Heath, Cheswick Green and Hockley Heath.

**Key Characteristics:**

**Geology, soils and drainage:**

- Slowly permeable clayey soils, seasonally wet with impeded drainage.
- Triassic Rocks (undifferentiated) of Mudstone, Siltstone and Sandstone solid geology.

**Landform and Drainage Pattern:**

- Undulating landform ranging from 130m to 150m AOD.
- The River Blythe SSSI along with its tributaries, including stream and field drains, pass across this area and the River Cole skirts along the western edge.
- The Stratford-upon-Avon Canal passes diagonally across the area.

**Land use, fields, boundaries, trees and wildlife:**

- Irregular field pattern and sizes ranging from small to large field that are generally well enclosed.
- Land use is predominantly pastoral with some residential areas, parks and open space, sports fields and a golf course (Whitlock's End Golf Course).
- A reasonable amount of horsiculture and horse paddocks were also noted in this area along with associated overgrazing.
- Strong hedgerow boundary structure across majority of the area. The hedgerows with mature oaks are a key feature of this area.

### Settlement, built environment and communications:

- Areas with poor boundary structure with open field boundaries were noted among the larger fields within the eastern extent, south of Kineton Lane.
- Both the river corridors (Blythe and Cole) have good tree cover.
- Several Local Wildlife Sites are located in the area including Dickens Wood, an ancient woodland.
- Dickens Heath Country Park is an important asset to the area being a Principal Park, Local Nature Reserve and designated Local Wildlife Site.
- River Blythe Oxbow, situated north of Winterton Farm near River Blythe, is a Regionally Important Geological Site.
- The SSSIs within this LCA are the River Blythe and Clowes Wood & New Fallings Coppice. The majority of the latter lies outside the southern boundary of the Borough, however, the setting should be considered due to its close proximity to the LCA.

- The main settlements are Dickens Heath, Cheswick Green, Hockley Heath and Tidbury Green. Of these the first three are outside of the LCA, however due to the nature of their location they have a strong influence on the character area.
- There are a further few smaller settlements of Ilshaw Heath, Earlswood and Whitlock's End and scattered farms across the area.
- Several listed buildings within the area with most of them being concentrated in the central extent of the character area near Dickens Heath and Cheswick Green.
- Engine House, adjacent to Engine Pool, although not listed, is a historic building of local note and is a key feature of the area.
- Most of these listings comprise farmsteads and associated buildings with it.
- There are several roads and footpaths within this area connecting the outlying settlements to Solihull and the north. The M42 segregates the area into two parts.
- The narrow street structure with established mature hedgerow and associated trees, originally farm tracks now tarmacked, are a key feature of the area and lends to it an intimate and enclosed feeling.
- The Stratford-upon-Avon Canal cuts across the length of the area from east to west and provides a recreational route along its towpath. Overall, this is an aesthetically pleasing landscape feature and a valuable heritage asset to the area.



**Photograph 2.4:**

*The Stratford-upon-Avon Canal passes diagonally through the area and borders the northern edge of Dickens Heath.*

## Sensitivities and Pressures:

- Neglect and potential loss of tree cover through new development.
- Neglect of woodland management will decrease the long-term sustainability of tree cover.
- Possible increase pressure for access to open countryside from edge of Solihull and Dickens Heath may impact upon the rural character of the area.
- Pressure for development close to the urban edge of Solihull and Dickens Heath as is evident.
- Impact of the urban edge on rural character. The impact of encroachment can be seen along Dickens Heath Road when leaving Solihull towards Tidbury Green.
- Pressure of coalescence between the settlements particularly evident between Tidbury Green and Dickens Heath.
- The landscape around Salter Street contains many scattered buildings and has limited capacity to accept additional built development without detriment to landscape character through coalescence.
- Maintenance of public rights of way, which are few in number.
- Decline in frequency of hedgerow trees due to neglect and lack of replacement.
- Pressure for new housing in this attractive commuter area close to Solihull and the M42 corridor due to the easy access generates pressure along the corridor. Limited capacity of the corridor to accept development without impact upon character. Pressure particularly around the M42 due to accessibility is likely to continue along with pressures for motorway services.
- Limited footpath network close to urban edge places walkers on narrow and dangerous roads.
- Overgrazing by animals can give the appearance of over use and impacts upon biodiversity. Inappropriate fencing also impacts on rural character.
- Proximity of urban areas and their influence upon the River Blythe and River Cole corridors.
- Potential of farmstead sprawl with new large modern buildings that detract from the area.
- Noise from M42 corridor impacts upon tranquillity of area to south at Hockley Heath and Kineton Lane.
- Pressure for expansion of Blythe Valley Park.

## Guidelines:

### **Aim: To protect the landscape pattern characteristic of the area.**

- Discourage planting along the River Blythe and River Cole where the open river corridor landscape character of the area would be affected. Conversely protect the strong tree-lined river corridor at Hockley Heath.
- Promote opportunities to restore the River Blythe to a more favourable condition.
- Encourage reinstatement of river meadows along the valley floor to create a buffer zone between the river corridors and M42.
- Encourage appropriate management to retain strong hedgerow structure and the planting of individual trees along field boundaries particularly in and around Fulford Hall Estate. Tree planting in the vicinity of Tidbury Green and Dickens Heath is important to their setting and approaches.
- Resist coalescence of the built settlements to preserve the landscape character of the area.
- Resist loss of field boundaries to retain irregular field pattern. Discourage amalgamation of fields and promote awareness of the Hedgerow Regulations. Refer to Habitat Biodiversity Audit for detail.
- Promote proactive management of existing woodland and planting of new woodland to fit with landscape pattern.
- Adhere to the requirements of the Solihull Woodland Strategy.
- Encourage use of fencing with less intrusive materials in combination with hedges and follow traditional post and rail or post and wire design. Promote the positive management of roadside hedgerows.
- Where new buildings are required they should be located in association with existing farmsteads and settlement across the area and located so as not to require new access arrangements and subject to no adverse effect on historic character.
- Strengthen existing woodland to enhance the character of the area and increase diversity of woodland edge with native planting.
- Conserve pastoral character and identify opportunities for conversion of arable land back to pasture.
- Conserve the diversity of old permanent pastures, reseeded or ploughing must be avoided and tree/woodland planting is inappropriate in these areas.

### **Aim: To promote understanding of the heritage features in the area and their contribution to landscape character.**

- Identify heritage canal features of interest and develop strategy for their protection around bridge crossings at High Chimneys Farm.
- Resist any development that would risk the character of the canal landscape and its historic value particularly at crossings with River Blythe.
- There is potential to promote connections across the area via the intricate network of footpaths. Promote new studies and provide interpretation of historic features across the area.
- Protect the landscape setting of Dickens Heath and resist development that would further impact upon the character of the landscape between Solihull and Dickens Heath and Dickens Heath and Cheswick Green.
- Protect ancient woodland at Dickens Wood and follow management in line with Solihull Woodland Strategy. Encourage awareness. New planting should be encouraged to diversify age structure.
- Research small woodland blocks to establish whether they are Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland.
- Protect the landscape setting of the River Blythe and River Cole corridors, which are key features of the area, particularly around the canal bridges, Fulford and Salter Street.
- Identify further historic and archaeological features suitable for active management and explore the potential to use as an educational resource.

### **Aim: To manage access for recreation at the urban edge:**

- Survey how walkers use the area to improve the safety and enjoyment of the countryside particularly due to limited amount of footpaths in the southern area.
- Promote the enhancement of the footpath network and its contribution to landscape character and appreciation.
- Explore opportunities to improve public enjoyment of the area, through access agreements following appropriate routes, that would cause minimal disturbance.
- Explore opportunities to enhance the landscape setting of Whitlocks End Golf Course.

## Overall Landscape Sensitivity:

### Landscape Character Sensitivity:

- The Landscape Character Sensitivity of this area is considered to be **Medium**.
- This is a landscape with a strong sense of local connection to the place, defining landscape features and a characteristic pattern within an enclosed and intimate landscape, creating a balanced tract of countryside in a good condition. The Stratford-upon-Avon Canal and the remnants of historical features are key positive features within this area. There are a few detracting features within the landscape including the M42 and communication masts.

### Visual Sensitivity:

- The Visual Sensitivity of this area is considered to be **High**.
- The visibility in this LCA consist of generally medium to short distance views that are wide-framed with both a deep and shallow extent. Views are experienced both downwards and horizontal in orientation. There are a few long distant views out towards the landscape further south outside of the Borough boundary specifically towards the wooded backdrop of Clowes Wood & New Fallings Coppice. Overall, views across the area are enclosed in places for example at Lady Lane and extensive in others such as Hockley Heath. The woodland is a key visual feature in the area and forms the background for many of the views. Prevention of coalescence is very important.

**Table 7: Overall Sensitivity for LCA 2 – Southern Countryside: High**

		Landscape Character Sensitivity			
		High	Medium	Low	Very Low
Visual Sensitivity	High	High	High	Medium	Low
	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Low
	Low	Medium	Medium	Low	Low
	Very Low	Low	Low	Low	Very Low/ Negligible

## Landscape Value:

- The value of this character area is considered to be **Medium**.
- This is a locally distinctive landscape containing valued characteristics. Local Wildlife Sites and ancient woodlands are a key part of the rural landscape which impart an enclosed feeling that contributes towards the local distinctiveness of the area. Value is increased by the presence of the Stratford-upon-Avon Canal providing important cultural and historic association with the place.

## Landscape Capacity:

- As set out within the Methodology and in line with the current guidance, it is not possible to establish a definitive baseline sensitivity to change without having details of a given development proposal. However, for the purpose of this report a general assessment of the LCA's capacity to accommodate change has been undertaken. This should be used as a guide only, and will need to be re-assessed once details of any proposed development and site location are known.
- The LCA being of **High** overall landscape sensitivity and **Medium** landscape value, suggests that the LCA would typically have an overall **Very Low** landscape capacity to accommodate new development.
- The LCA is an attractive rural landscape with ancient woodlands and local wildlife sites where the Stratford-upon-Avon Canal provides good amenity and recreational value. The LCA also serves as an important access point to the countryside and a buffer region preventing coalescence between Solihull and Shirley with the smaller settlements to the south, preserving the largely rural and enclosed character of the area.
- Overall, the area is likely be able to accommodate only very restricted areas of new development, which would need to be of an appropriate type, scale and form, in keeping with the existing character and local distinctiveness of the area. Any new developments should not result in the loss of the irreplaceable habitats or facilitate the merger of the various settlements with each other and with Solihull to the north. Development should also respect and enhance the setting of the Stratford-upon-Avon Canal and retain the overall enclosed feeling of the LCA.

**Table 8: Landscape Capacity for LCA 2 – Southern Countryside: Very Low**

		Overall Landscape Sensitivity			
		High	Medium	Low	Very Low
Landscape Value	High	Very Low/ None	Very Low	Low	Medium
	Medium	Very Low	Low	Low	Medium
	Low	Low	Low	Medium	High
	Very Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	High

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# Assessment of Overall Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Value

- A.17. Following the identification of the Landscape Character Areas and noting the description of existing elements, features, characteristics, character and quality within the study area, a further analysis of each LCA was undertaken to determine the following:
- Overall Landscape Sensitivity – derived from combining Landscape Character Sensitivity and Visual Sensitivity;
  - Landscape Value – derived largely from designated landscape or features and local associations; and
  - Landscape Capacity – derived from combining the results of the Overall Landscape Sensitivity with the defined Landscape Value.

## Overall Landscape Sensitivity

- A.18. Overall Landscape Sensitivity is defined as the sensitivity of the landscape and does not take into account or represent any type of change that may be under consideration. Overall Landscape Sensitivity is made up of essentially two components:
- Landscape Character Sensitivity; and
  - Visual Sensitivity.

## Landscape Character Sensitivity

- A.19. Landscape Character Sensitivity is defined as the sensitivity of the landscape resource which includes individual elements/ features contributing to the character and the character as a whole. Landscape Character Sensitivity is judged on certain factors including:
- Natural Factors;
  - Cultural Factors;
  - Landscape Quality; and
  - Aesthetic Factors.
- A.20. Criteria used to assess the Landscape Character Sensitivity is set out in Table A.1.

**Table A. I: Landscape Character Sensitivity Criteria**

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Classification Criteria	
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attractive landscape with a sense of place and national/ regional recognition or strong local connection to place.</li> <li>• Distinctive structure, characteristic patterns, harmonious relationship between landform and land cover.</li> <li>• Unified landscape promotes social interaction with high levels of activity and few conflicts between traffic and pedestrian movements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate land management with limited scope to improve and in very good landscape condition.</li> <li>• Evident use of good quality locally characteristic materials and detailing.</li> <li>• Distinct features worthy of conservation.</li> <li>• A few detracting features.</li> </ul>
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typical and unremarkable landscape, however with local connection to place.</li> <li>• Obvious structure, characteristic patterns, balanced combination of landform and land cover.</li> <li>• Opportunities for social interaction limited to specific 'community' locations leading to an interrupted landscape.</li> <li>• Traffic circulation often controls pedestrian movement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope to improve land management.</li> <li>• Good landscape condition.</li> <li>• Some areas of local distinctiveness, elsewhere widespread use of standard materials and detailing.</li> <li>• Remnant distinctive features may no longer be in context.</li> <li>• Some detracting features.</li> </ul>
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monotonous / uniform landscape in poor condition or decline with little or no obvious local connection to place.</li> <li>• Indistinct structure and characteristic patterns often masked by mixed land use creating an unbalanced relationship between landform and land cover.</li> <li>• Fragmented landscape with poor boundary definition and arbitrary 'disowned' space.</li> <li>• Development is often unsympathetic in scale.</li> <li>• Few opportunities for social interaction, unwelcoming or even threatening.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport infrastructure may inhibit or severely constrain pedestrian movement.</li> <li>• Lack of management has resulted in degradation.</li> <li>• Fair landscape condition.</li> <li>• Derelict land requiring treatment.</li> <li>• Inappropriate use of materials, poorly located infrastructure or use of materials with a limited life span.</li> <li>• Several detracting features.</li> </ul>
Very Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broken and degraded landscape in poor condition with no sense of place.</li> <li>• Degraded structure/ characteristic patterns masked by mixed land use.</li> <li>• Unbalanced relationship between landform and land cover.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence of land management has resulted in degradation and in poor landscape condition.</li> <li>• Many detracting features.</li> </ul>

### Visual Sensitivity

A.21. Visual Sensitivity is the assessment of a combination of factors including the type and nature of the view, visibility, the number and nature of people (visual receptors) who may experience the landscape visually.

A.22. The classification criteria for Visual Sensitivity is set out in Table A.2:

**Table A.2: Visual Sensitivity Criteria**

Visual Sensitivity	Classification Criteria
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relationship with existing urban built form: <i>Very strong</i></li> <li>Prevention of coalescence: <i>Very important</i></li> <li>Scope to mitigate development: <i>Wide range of opportunities</i></li> <li>Openness to public &amp; private views: <i>Long distance; Elevated/ high level/ panoramic (360 degrees); Wide (180 degrees); Deep; Downwards.</i></li> </ul>
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relationship with existing urban built form: <i>Strong</i></li> <li>Prevention of coalescence: <i>Important</i></li> <li>Scope to mitigate development: <i>Some opportunities</i></li> <li>Openness to public &amp; private views: <i>Medium distance; Medium level; Framed (90 degrees); Contained (45 degrees); Shallow; Horizontal.</i></li> </ul>
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relationship with existing urban built form: <i>Weak</i></li> <li>Prevention of coalescence: <i>Minor role</i></li> <li>Scope to mitigate development: <i>Little opportunity</i></li> <li>Openness to public &amp; private views: <i>Short distance; Low level; Fragmented; Upwards.</i></li> </ul>
Very Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relationship with existing urban built form: <i>None</i></li> <li>Prevention of coalescence: <i>Not important</i></li> <li>Scope to mitigate development: <i>No opportunity</i></li> <li>Openness to public &amp; private views: <i>Limited or no view.</i></li> </ul>

### Overall Landscape Sensitivity

A.23. The two principal criteria, Landscape Character Sensitivity and Visual Sensitivity, are combined and set out within Table A.3 which is used to establish the classification of the Overall Landscape Sensitivity of each Landscape Character Area.

**Table A.3: Overall Landscape Sensitivity Criteria**

		Landscape Character Sensitivity			
		High	Medium	Low	Very Low
Visual Sensitivity	High	High	High	Medium	Low
	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Low
	Low	Medium	Medium	Low	Low
	Very Low	Low	Low	Low	Very Low/ Negligible

## Landscape Value

A.24. The likely value of the character areas is based on which users may value the areas, and where relevant, any statutory, non-statutory or local plan designations.

A.25. Landscape value is associated with a recognisable and demonstrable use, and can relate not only to historic and cultural importance, but also social, recreational and community value. The presence of combinations of attributes along with scale of importance should be considered when ascribing the landscape value.

A.26. The factors and criteria influencing the value of the landscape are set out in Table A.4

**Table A.4: Landscape Value**

Landscape Value	Geographical Scale of Importance	Classification Criteria	Typical Example
High	National / Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landscape or element therein of distinctive value, rich cultural associations and a recognised high level of importance.</li> <li>Limited potential for substitution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Parks</li> <li>Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty</li> <li>Listed Buildings</li> <li>Scheduled Monuments</li> </ul>
Medium	Regional / District / Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Locally distinctive landscape or element therein of moderately valued characteristics, or moderately valued components.</li> <li>Some potential for substitution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designated areas by local authorities e.g. special landscape areas and Conservation Areas</li> <li>Undesignated but value expressed through historical or cultural associations or through demonstrable use.</li> </ul>
Low	District / Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landscape or element therein similar to many other areas with little remaining indication of local distinctiveness. Low importance and rarity.</li> <li>High potential for improvements/substitution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remnant landscape features may remain but are degraded or out of context. Potential for enhancement.</li> <li>Commercial, industrial or disused area providing little value to the community or residents</li> </ul>
Very Low	Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landscape or element therein of very low importance, which may include damaged or derelict landscape.</li> <li>Would benefit from improvements/substitution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Areas identified for recovery, often vandalised and rarely used by the community.</li> </ul>



## Landscape Capacity

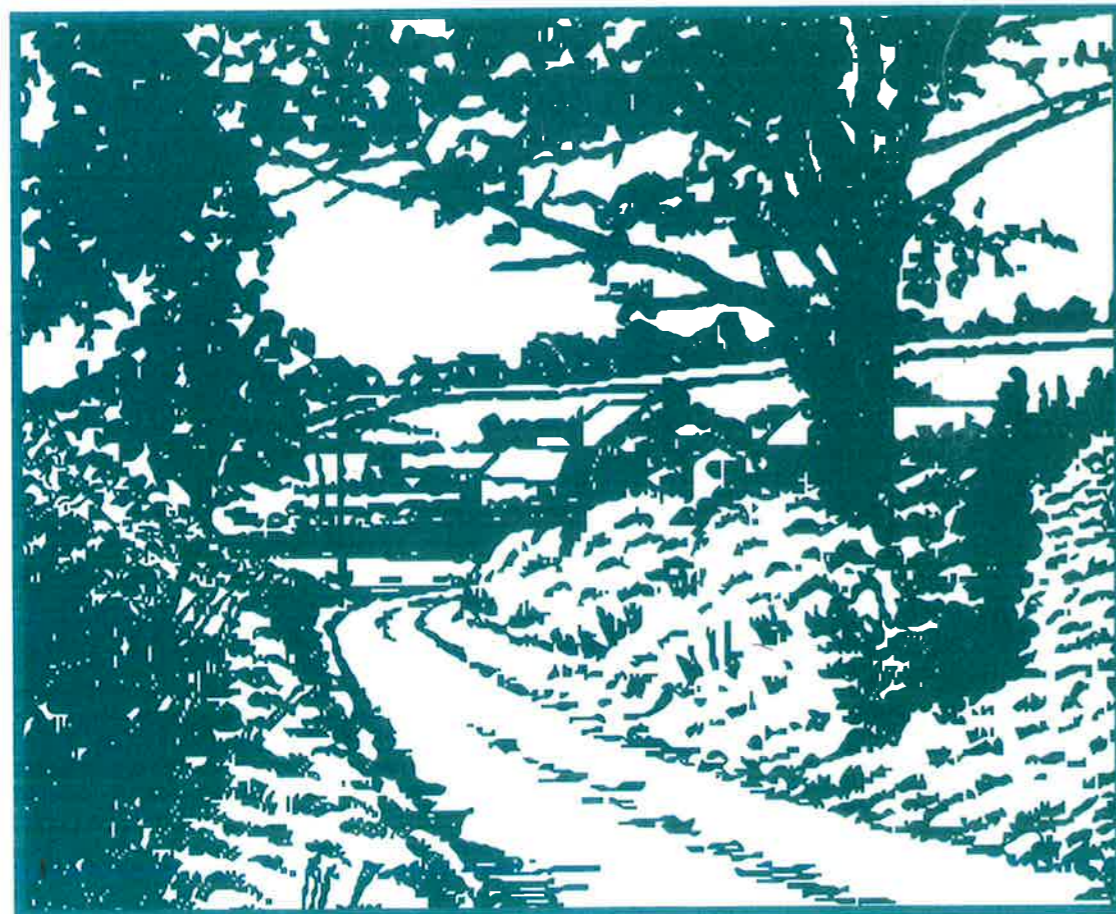
- A.27. Landscape Capacity is defined as the ability of a landscape to accommodate varying amounts of change or development of a specific type without changing or having significant effects on the overall character and visual amenity of the area. It is generally derived from combining the levels assigned to each area for Overall Landscape Sensitivity and for Landscape Value, with a consideration as to the type of development.
- A.28. The implication of the definition outlined above, and in line with current guidance, capacity studies must be site and development specific in order to be relevant and of use within development planning. The ability of the individual landscape character areas to accommodate change (sensitivity to change and landscape capacity) requires a more detailed assessment focused on site allocations and descriptions of expected development types.
- A.29. The distinct characteristics or features of an area can have a varying sensitivity to change. This will depend on the nature of the change proposed and in particular, how suitable or characteristic the proposed change is compared to the receiving landscape. This assessment therefore will only be able to suggest a general assessment of the 'Landscape Capacity' based on the matrix set out in Table A.5. This general scoring will need to be reviewed when details of specific development proposals are known for specific sites.

**Table A.5: Landscape Capacity Rating**

		Overall Landscape Sensitivity			
		High	Medium	Low	Very Low
Landscape Value	High	Very Low/ None	Very Low	Low	Medium
	Medium	Very Low	Low	Low	Medium
	Low	Low	Low	Medium	High
	Very Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	High

# Warwickshire Landscapes Guidelines

## • Arden



# Warwickshire Landscapes Guidelines



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This booklet is one of a series of three covering the whole of Warwickshire

Landscape guidelines are also available for:

Avon Valley – Feldon – Cotswolds Dunsmore – High Cross Plateau – Mease Lowlands

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT  
PART ONE

## Part one Landscape assessment

### Arden

**Introduction** The region known as Arden is an area of former wood pasture and ancient farmlands lying on the eastern side of the Birmingham plateau. Traditionally regarded as the land between the river Tame and the river Avon in Warwickshire, Arden type landscapes also extend into north Worcestershire.

Although there are few dramatic physical features, the Arden countryside has an intimate, historic character with a strong sense of unity. Brick and timber are the chief building materials throughout the area and the many farmsteads and hamlets blend subtly with their surroundings. This is Shakespeare's 'Forest of Arden', historically a region of woodlands and 'waste' which remains today one of the more wooded parts of the Midlands.

**Physical influences** The name Arden is derived from the old British word 'Ardu' meaning 'high land'. This relates primarily to the northern and central parts of the region which lie across the main Severn-Trent watershed on the eastern side of the Birmingham plateau. In the wider context of the West Midlands, the Birmingham plateau consists of two uplifted units of older Palaeozoic strata – the South Staffordshire and East Warwickshire plateaus – separated by an area of Triassic rocks covered for the most part by glacial drift. This central plateau is lower lying than the adjoining Palaeozoic areas and in Warwickshire it is largely underlain by Mercia mudstones with a covering of glacial sands and gravels or boulder clay. This gives the plateau a flat to gently rolling character, finely cut by the River Blythe and its tributary streams which flow northwards to join the Tame at Hams Hall. The Blythe is a slow-moving meandering river with countless minor tributary streams trickling in from every side. Many of these tributary valleys

are badly drained and occupied by sluggish, braided streams. Indeed, some of the place names, such as Fen End, Sedgemoor and Bradnock's Marsh, suggest that the area retained its marshy character until comparatively recent times. The Tame valley is wider than that of the Blythe and has a much more developed floodplain with at least two associated gravel terraces.

The East Warwickshire plateau is a dissected upland plateau closely associated with a spindle-shaped horst of Carboniferous and older rocks, which rise to just over 180 metres near Corley. The major part of the plateau is occupied by the Upper Coal Measures, consisting mainly of red marls and sandstones and characterised by red, free draining soils. These are fringed on the north and north-east by the Middle (Productive) Coal Measures with which the Warwickshire coalfield is associated. A narrow band of Cambrian and pre-Cambrian rocks also outcrop along the north-eastern edge of the plateau, between Atherstone and Nuneaton. These older rocks, mainly consisting of hard diorite and quartzite, are faulted against the adjoining Triassic mudstones and present a steep scarp slope towards the Mease Lowlands to the north-east. The Carboniferous rocks are also cut off on the west by a major boundary fault which forms a pronounced edge to the plateau along the Blythe and Tame valleys. South and eastwards, where glacial drift deposits flatten the landform, the plateau slopes gradually into the valleys of the Avon and the Sowe.

To the south of the main Severn-Trent watershed lie the river basins of the Arrow and the Alne which drain southwards into the Avon valley below Alcester. This area, underlain mainly by Mercia mudstones, has a varied undulating topography characterised by outcrops of Arden sandstone which form a series of prominent escarpments. Steep slopes are also found along the Lias escarpment to

## Arden

the east of Haselor, while a series of narrow parallel ridges of glacial origin are a feature of the area between Wootten Wawen and Snitterfield. To the west along the county boundary is the Ridgeway, a flat-topped ridge also of glacial origin which once marked the watershed of the old Avon-Soar river system. The tributaries of the Arrow and the Alne, in contrast to those of the Blythe, are frequently swift flowing and often enclosed in steep sided valleys. Narrow alluvial floodplains are associated with the lower parts of both rivers while terrace deposits occur only along the Arrow, where they form areas of flatter land adjoining the river corridor.

**Human influences** The historical development of Arden is a major factor influencing the character of the present day landscape. In a region with few dramatic physical features it is these subtle human influences, developed over many centuries, which have created the man-made landscapes and special features which clearly distinguish Arden from other areas of the county.

Agriculturally Arden may have originally served as an area of seasonal pasture for the more intensively developed Feldon estates to the south. However, permanent pastoral settlements were established at an early date. The resulting clearances were farmed as small hedged enclosures or 'closes' which created a characteristic pattern of small irregular fields. These were particularly representative of the areas between Tanworth and Rowington and from Allesley to Fillongley.

In contrast open field agriculture was only represented to any degree in the Blythe valley, the lower Arrow and Alne valleys and the areas around Bearley and Norton Lindsey. Generally this was closely associated with nucleated villages. Piecemeal enclosure began relatively early in the southern part of the region with most fields being enclosed before the 18th

century. Here the rolling topography and gradual enclosure produced a characteristic pattern of medium sized fields. In the Blythe valley full enclosure was not completed until the 19th century resulting in a more regular pattern of larger fields. Elsewhere enclosure into large semi-regular fields is a feature of former deerparks. Examples are the Warwick and Kenilworth Castle parklands, which were enclosed between the 16th and 18th centuries.

Extensive woodland cover remained until the Norman Conquest, with the most heavily wooded manors recorded in the Domesday Survey. This registered over 50 square miles of woodland and wood pasture. Subsequently much woodland was cleared and enclosed for arable and stock. Between the 12th and 14th centuries, numerous manorial deer parks were created which probably helped conserve woodland cover. Most have left little impression upon the modern landscape, though good examples survive at Packington and Stoneleigh. Parks continued to be enclosed from the 15th century onwards and it is these, for example Merevale, Arbury and Berkswell, which are most prominent today.

As late as 1540 Leland wrote that ".....the ground in Arden is much enclosyd, plentiful of gres and woode". However, by 1822 C & J Greenwoods' one inch County map showed only small remnants of woodland. Little further shrinkage occurred during the 19th Century as maps show only slightly more woodland than is found today. Minor additions resulted from the Enclosure movement of this period with the planting of many small woods and coverts. These are uniform in size and shape and lack the irregular sinuous boundaries and woodbanks of ancient woods. Often they are named as 'coverts', 'gorses' or 'spinneys'.

Commons were a feature of areas of remnant woodland and many were wooded until

## Arden

relatively recent times. A typical wood pasture common was grassland or heather with thickly scattered trees and bushes. Other commons represented areas of heathland on poorer soils and the numerous 'Heath' names indicate those cleared of woodland at a relatively early date. Commons did not disappear completely until the last stages of enclosure in the early 19th century. The largest occurred at Sambourne and Shrewley, the latter extending nearly 10 miles from Rowington to Balsall Common. Commons have left little impression upon the present landscape, except that they can often be identified as areas with a geometric pattern of fields and lanes within a surrounding irregular or semi-regular pattern.

Commons attracted settlement by landless labourers and poorer sections of the community. These formed the basis of many Arden hamlets, especially those known as 'End' or 'Green'. An allied settlement type is the wayside cottage established on a roadside verge and taking in a long linear garden.

The dispersed settlement pattern more generally found in Arden was closely related to agricultural development. The typical expression of woodland assarting and heathland enclosure was a pattern of scattered farmsteads and hamlets. This dispersed pattern is reflected in a maze of narrow lanes, trackways and footpaths which grew up to serve outlying farms and hamlets. A land-owning peasantry gave rise to a wealthy class of yeoman farmers by the late medieval period. As a result many substantial brick and timber farmhouses were built in the 16th and 17th centuries, often on earlier moated sites.

A more recent and very distinct settlement type is associated with the pit villages of the coal mining industry. Extensive coal exploitation began in north Warwickshire in the 19th century, shortly after the start of the Industrial Revolution. This has had a

profound effect on the landscape of this part of Warwickshire. Mining villages contain much early 20th century terraced housing, often situated on hill tops and with a very distinctive 'northern' character. Some of these were new villages built to house mining families, while others were older villages relocated as a colliery expanded.

The presence of coalmines attracted secondary industry which relied on coal for power. Hams Hall power station was built to produce electricity directly from coal. Other industrial plants sprung up to convert coal to coke and other products. Railways and roads were also built to transport the coal to other areas of the country. The effects of the mines therefore spread far beyond the colliery gates, and have made the north eastern part of Arden, between Tamworth and Nuneaton, an industrial landscape unlike any other in the county.

**Ecological influences** The natural vegetation of Arden is thought to have consisted of dense broadleaved woodland, dominated by oak on the light sandy soils and lime on the heavier clays and loams. Woodland clearance, from earliest times, resulted in the development of grassland and wood pasture over much of the area with heathland on the poorer, leached soils. Marshland occurred in low lying areas along rivers and streams. All of these habitats have been greatly influenced by land-use history and no large areas have survived. The sites of greatest ecological interest today are those that retain remnants of these ancient vegetation types. They reflect the underlying geology and soils and make an important contribution to landscape character. Some, particularly woodlands, also form prominent visual features.

**ancient woodland** Scattered blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland occur throughout Arden but are most common in the parishes of

## Arden

Tanworth and Bentley where Clowes Wood and Bentley Park Wood are fine examples. Although none retain the climax species composition of the original wildwood, some on the sandy soils on the North Warwickshire plateau can still be classified as oak dominated woodlands. The rest are now best described, as a result of frequent disturbance by man, as oak-birch woodlands. On the clay loams of central and southern Arden there are only one or two small areas left of lime dominated woodland, since lime was managed 'out' of woodlands in favour of the more useful oak. These woodlands are now typically oak-ash or oak-birch, though in places small-leaved lime is still a significant component, reflecting the woodlands' ancient origin.

Many woods, although on the ancient woodlands register, have been substantially replanted in modern times and are reduced in their conservation value. However, their rich ground flora and fauna built up over centuries is often still present, particularly along rides and around the edge of the woodland. This makes them superior wildlife sites to more recent plantation woodlands, and high priorities for conversion back to a semi-natural species mix. Ancient woodbanks, not found in recent woodland, add additional historical interest to many ancient woodlands.

**heathland** Heathland and commons, now rare and greatly diminished in area, were historically associated with wood pasture and waste. Yarningale Common, Kenilworth Common, Baddesley and Grendon Commons are the most significant areas now remaining. Elsewhere fragments of heathy grassland survive at Packington, Earlswood and along some roadside and railway banks. Although all three heather species exist, true heathland in Arden is characterised by ling heather with bilberry, purple moor-grass, heath bedstraw and wavy hair-grass. Where management has

ceased, gorse, bracken and silver birch start to colonise. Bracken is perhaps the most obvious 'heathy' indicator and is a common feature of many woods and roadside verges, especially in the central and northern parts of the region.

**hedgerows** Ancient, mixed hedgerows, often more than two metres wide, are a special feature of Arden, and some may represent remnants of the original wildwood as it was cleared and converted into small hedged fields by assarting. The hedges were assimilated from shrubs found along the previous woodland edge, or from the seed bank in the soil, and the species mix therefore reflects that from the woodland itself. A wide variety of woody species are typically present, often dominated by hazel, but with dogwood, field maple, hawthorn, blackthorn and holly also common. Holly is associated particularly with the lighter soils of the East Warwickshire plateau. Where hedge banks complement ancient hedges, these often support a diverse flora with many woodland plant species.

**unimproved grassland** Permanent grassland is still in feature of the more pastoral Arden landscapes, and where this remains unimproved it can be rich in flowering plant species. Many sites which existed up to the second world war have now been destroyed or damaged as a result of agricultural intensification, but many areas remain, particularly on marginal land. The best remaining sites are found on steep hillsides as rough, often scrub grassland; on high canal and roadside embankments; on disused railway cuttings; or as isolated groups of hedged fields.

**field ponds** Field ponds, often fringed by scrub and trees, are found throughout Arden and are associated with its history of stock-rearing. Where they are managed to avoid silting up and overshadowing by surrounding

## Arden

scrub vegetation, they can be valuable wildlife habitats. Although many ponds have been lost as a result of agricultural intensification and neglect they are still an important feature of the region, and are particularly abundant in Fillongley and Meriden parishes.

**river wetlands** Historically river floodplains were managed as wet meadowland. These were floristically very rich and of great nature conservation value. The Alne river and the Blythe (the latter a Site of Special Scientific Interest) remain relatively unspoilt, retaining a good variety of marginal vegetation, wet grassland, riverside trees and scrub. Some areas of particular interest include the marsh, reedbed and floodland on the Arrow at Alcester; the wet meadows at Kinwarton and Haselor; the osiers at Pettiford on the Alne and the water meadows along the Blythe at Hampton in Arden.

### Visual character of the landscape

Arden is characterised by a wide range of historical and ecological features, which create a landscape of intimacy and a strong 'sense of place'. Most significantly it remains a wooded landscape with mature hedgerow oaks, ancient woodlands and historic parklands. The association with former common and heath

imparts a strong sense of unity and is reflected in the widespread occurrence of heathy vegetation, particularly roadside bracken. A number of remnant commons still survive but most of the larger areas have been enclosed and are today characterised by a geometric pattern of roads and small fields. The landscape retains many ancient features, in particular a pattern of irregular fields defined by thick hedgerows; a network of narrow, winding and often sunken lanes and trackways; a dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads and hamlets; and a wealth of antiquities including castles, fishponds and moated sites. These features are woven within a farmed landscape which in places still retains a strong rural character.

The above features define Arden as a broad landscape region. Within this area seven distinct types of landscape can be identified, each of which is characterised by a particular aspect of the wider regional character:

- Ancient Arden
- Arden pastures
- Industrial Arden
- Arden parklands
- Wooded estatelands
- Arden river valleys
- River valley wetlands

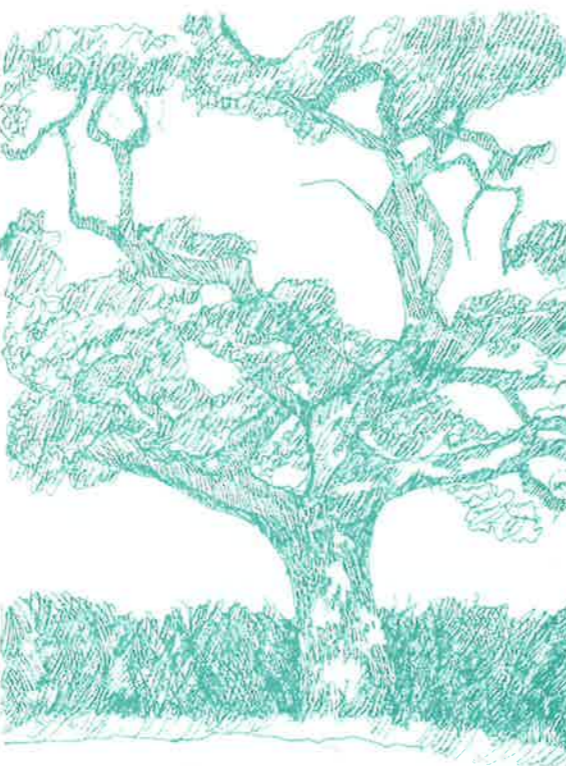


wayside cottages

## Arden

**Arden pastures** Arden pastures is a landscape of poor soils and small hedged fields associated with deposits of glacial drift on the southern edge of the Birmingham plateau. Much of this area remained as wood pasture and waste until relatively recent times. This is reflected in the many place names ending in 'Heath' or 'Common'. The village of Balsall Common, for example, takes its name from a large area of former heathland which extended from Berkswell to Shrewley. Today this area is characterised by long straight roads and small geometric fields. Balsall Common itself originated as a group of wayside cottages built on the common, supplemented by later ribbon development. This pattern of late enclosure followed by the development of new settlements has been repeated throughout Arden pastures in places such as Hockley Heath, Earlswood, Wythall and Aspley Heath. Some of these settlements have expanded considerably in the last thirty years or so, with much modern 'infill' development. This has resulted in a landscape often pervaded by suburban influences. These pockets of 'suburbia' in the countryside are superimposed on an older dispersed pattern of farmsteads and wayside cottages.

Despite the densely populated character of this landscape, settlement is not usually a dominant visual element. Instead the gently rolling topography and numerous mature hedgerow trees combine to create a heavily wooded appearance throughout much of the area. It is not uncommon in some areas to find lines of mature oak trees in almost every hedgerow. The effect of so many trees is to create filtered views and a strong sense of enclosure. Where the fields are very small, the feeling is often one of confinement. Throughout the area as a whole the general impression is of a strongly unified landscape where to a large extent the impact of new settlement is visually contained by tree cover.



*pollarded oak*

The main part of Arden pastures lies in Solihull district, but extends into Warwickshire around Forshaw Heath, Terry's Green and Kingswood. A second smaller area occurs at Balsall Common. The farmed landscape in both areas is characterised by permanent pasture, often grazed by horses or ponies. Field pattern is varied, including geometric semi-regular and irregularly shaped fields. The latter are typically bounded by ancient mixed hedgerows. Elsewhere thorn hedges are more common, while roadside hedgerows are often characterised by holly and bracken.

## Arden



### Arden pastures

#### Overall character and qualities

A small scale, enclosed landscape, often pervaded by suburban influences and characterised by small fields, typically bordered by mature hedgerow trees.

#### Characteristic features

- A gently rolling topography.
- A well defined pattern of small fields and paddocks.
- Numerous mature hedgerow oaks.
- Permanent pasture often grazed by horses.
- A network of minor lanes often with ribbon development.
- Many place names ending in Heath.

## Part two Strategies and guidelines

**Introduction** Part two of this report examines recent changes which have affected the landscape in Arden and the current issues which are likely to influence change in the future. From this a series of management strategies set out the direction which is required in order to maintain and enhance regional character and local distinctiveness. These strategies are supported by a comprehensive set of landscape guidelines which provide detailed advice for farmers, foresters, developers and highway engineers. Responsibility is also placed on planners to encourage higher standards, using persuasion, planning conditions or enforcement as necessary. The same principles apply to other organisations who play a part in managing the landscape.

The guidelines show how landscape character should be conserved, restored or enhanced. They have been grouped into five topics reflecting the user groups at which they are aimed. Each topic is depicted by a stylised symbol:

- settlement & buildings 
- highways 
- land management 
- field boundaries 
- trees & woodlands 

Nature conservation is treated as an integral component within each of these topics. The guidelines are presented in the form of a short statement, supported by a summary outlining the issue in question

and the reasons why a particular course of action has been recommended.

The guidelines should be used in conjunction with the fold out map accompanying this booklet. This shows the location of the seven landscape types identified within Arden. The map also highlights areas within each landscape type where the structure and character of the landscape are in decline. These areas, termed 'enhancement zones', are indicated by hatching on the map. They represent priority areas where resources for landscape and habitat restoration should be targeted.

### Landscape change and current trends

There have been dramatic changes to the Warwickshire landscape in the last half-century as a result of agricultural intensification, urban expansion and the suburbanisation of the countryside. The impact of these changes has been compounded by neglect and natural disasters, in particular Dutch elm disease, which has highlighted the environmental decline of the countryside. The result has been a gradual erosion of local character and sense of place.

**agricultural intensification** Major agricultural changes have taken place since the 1940s with an increase in arable land at the expense of permanent pasture. This has been most marked on the North Warwickshire plateau where in 1946 approximately 75% of the farmland was pastoral with dairying as the major land use. By the late 1980s this had declined to approximately 30% of the farmed area. Though not as marked, similar trends can be seen elsewhere in Arden, while on the

## Landscape change and current trends

plateau area to the south of Birmingham many smallholdings are now farmed part-time or given over to pony paddocks.

In parallel there have been changes in grassland character with the making of silage rather than hay. This has resulted in many traditional pastures being reseeded or improved by chemicals and herbicides, which has greatly diminished their floristic interest. There are now very few grasslands which retain their original nature conservation interest.

The intensification of agriculture has in places resulted in the wholesale removal of hedgerows and trees creating open fragmented landscapes. This has been particularly marked in the north of the region where the historic pattern of small irregular fields has been completely swept away in some areas. The features that remain often appear out of scale with their surroundings. In particular isolated field trees and remnant gappy hedgerows reinforce the impression of a landscape in decline.

Land drainage has severely affected the character of many river landscapes. This has resulted in a loss of wetland habitats and the conversion of former flood meadows to arable production. Wetland habitats have also been cleared during river channel management. The River Arrow in particular has lost much of its marginal vegetation and associated wet grassland, and is only slowly recovering. Similarly, with the demise of working mills many mill leats and islands have been lost.

Although further agricultural expansion is now less likely, declining incomes and continued uncertainty in the short term may result in intensification of production on existing land. This could lead to continued 'improvement' of older grasslands and further loss of hedgerows.

In the longer term new incentives may encourage more environmentally sensitive

farming, with perhaps a return to more traditional mixed farming regimes. Priority areas for returning to pasture might include Ancient Arden landscapes, river floodplains and areas of former park and heath. Surplus arable land could also be targeted for other uses such as new woodlands.

**trees and woodlands** Since the 1950's 16% of ancient woodland sites have been partly cleared, largely for agriculture but also for urban development and mineral extraction. In addition there has been a distinct change in woodland character with 42% of ancient sites replanted with a mixture of native and exotic species. Most notably there has been a demise in oak as the final timber crop. Many small planting schemes have also favoured quick growing non-indigenous species, often to provide cover for game or shelter around buildings.

Although a dominant element in the landscape, many small woods have been neglected, resulting in unmanaged, even-aged stands. Likewise hedgerow oaks and parkland trees are for the most part mature and in many places there are few young trees coming on to replace them. Excessive trimming of hedges exacerbates this problem by suppressing the natural regeneration of hedgerow trees. Without urgent action there is likely to be a continued decline in the wooded character of the landscape.

In the future it is likely that there will be continued incentives for landowners to plant trees through government planting schemes. Provided that new planting complements existing landscape character and avoids damaging historical or ecological features, it should be encouraged. To maintain the essence of Arden, however, oak must remain the dominant tree species.

## Landscape change and current trends

**pressures for new development** Urban expansion has been a major influence affecting the Arden landscape and in places both the ancient settlement pattern and rural character have been eroded. Some hamlets have expanded into larger residential centres, ribbon development has taken place along the Coventry urban fringe and new houses have been built throughout the area, with many conversions of redundant farm buildings. These influences are having a subtle cumulative impact on the landscape by bringing social change and a new appearance of affluence.

Urban influences are especially dominant in central Arden between Birmingham and Coventry and they have imprinted a suburban character on the landscape. To help control their expansion most of Arden was designated as Green Belt after approval of the original County Structure Plan in 1973. In the future however, Arden will continue to be a popular place in which to live and work and if rural integrity is to be retained, it will be important to restrict the spread of suburban influences. This is particularly the case in south Arden following the opening of the M40 motorway.

Locally mineral extraction has also had an impact on the landscape with coal mining on the North Warwickshire plateau and sand and gravel workings in central Arden. Though only having a limited lifespan these workings are often visibly intrusive.

**highway improvements** Road construction has had a major impact on the Arden landscape. New roads, particularly motorways (M6, M45, M40, A45), cut through existing landscape patterns. In places this has led to field rationalisation along the road corridor resulting in a loss of hedgerows and trees which makes the road more visible and intrusive. Traffic movement and noise has

had a particularly deleterious effect on many formerly peaceful rural landscapes.

Improvements to existing roads can also effect landscape character as road widening and realignment have resulted in the removal of hedgerows, ancient hedgerows and fords.

## General development guidelines

One of the key determinants of landscape character is whether built development intrudes on the landscape or integrates with it. With the diverse means available, through planning policy and related planning and highways legislation, a significant influence can be exercised in mitigating any adverse effects of development and in harnessing its many potentially enhancing effects. The general development guidelines set out below are designed to achieve those ends. These guidelines should be regarded as a good practice guide to be applied to all new development wherever it may occur. More specific design guidance to conserve and strengthen local settlement character can be found within the strategy and overall guidelines section.



Due to its ancient landscape character Arden retains a wealth of antiquities and historic buildings. Many of these are scheduled as ancient monuments or listed buildings, but there are many others unprotected by official designations. These features provide strong social and cultural links with the past and add considerably to landscape detail at a local level. They are also part of our heritage and it is important to conserve all sites of archaeological and historical significance.

- **Conserve all sites of archaeological and historical importance**



The suburbanising influences associated with new development are an increasing pressure on the traditional character of settlements, and are having a subtle, cumulative impact. Examples include the external modernisation of buildings, the erection of illuminated and corporate plastic roadside signs, the replacement of roadside hedges with quick growing ornamental screens, the increased use of security fencing, and even standardised landscaping schemes. Standardised planning and highway design criteria also often necessitate the replacement or modernisation of existing features and tend to result in rather bland and characterless developments. Much more discretion is needed when applying design standards in rural landscapes. In particular, original features such as walls, roadside hedges and mature trees should be retained, moved or replaced. Where this is not possible consideration should be given to moving or replacing such features.

- **Conserve the character of rural settlements by retaining existing features and local patterns in all development schemes**



The interface between new development and the surrounding landscape can often appear sharp and stark. Tree planting within and around new development is one of the best ways to soften hard edges. Integration can best be achieved by allowing established trees to run into a development site and designing new planting to break up their densely built appearance. At least 10% of the site should be allocated for tree and woodland planting and resources should be provided for the ongoing management of these features. Opportunities should also be sought, perhaps through planning gain, for offsite woodland planting to help link the development into the wider landscape pattern. The aim should not necessarily be to hide buildings, but rather to integrate them into the landscape, using locally occurring native species. Ornamental species planted as quick growing screens, particularly 'leylandii', should be avoided.

- **Soften hard built edges through increased tree planting within and around new development**



## General development guidelines



Traditional farm buildings constructed from local materials often have a distinctive regional identity. This identity is being eroded by the construction of modern farm buildings, which often look out of place and visually intrusive. Many new buildings are necessarily large, particularly the roof areas which can be a dominant feature. Siting and design are therefore very important and no amount of 'landscaping' will conceal a building that is fundamentally badly designed. Big buildings can sit well in an open landscape if they are well sited in relation to other features such as landform and tree cover. Use of shadows, different textures and careful selection of building materials can add interest and break up the mass of a large building. Similarly, the choice of colours should complement those in existing buildings and in the surrounding landscape. Darker, matt colours are generally less obtrusive than light, shiny colours. The surroundings of new buildings are also very important but often given inadequate consideration. Locally occurring trees should be used in a positive way to strengthen the overall farm landscape, rather than as an afterthought in an attempt to hide an ugly building.



The construction of new roads and the widening or re-alignment of existing roads can have a major impact on the character of the landscape. The visual impact can often be considerably reduced through careful route selection and it is important that landscape considerations are thoroughly assessed at the inception of all such schemes. No amount of landscaping will ameliorate the impact of a badly chosen route. A landscape assessment should be undertaken prior to carrying out improvements to existing roads as well as for new ones.



Country roads are an important component of the rural landscape. Improvements to meet modern highway standards can have a detrimental impact on the character of the roadside environment by introducing suburban influences into the rural landscape. Of particular concern are treatments such as concrete kerbing, galvanised railings, new or replacement street lighting and standardised road signs. These features, which are often visually intrusive, are also alien in a rural setting, and should be used only where absolutely necessary. Opportunities should also be sought for using more traditional materials such as stone setts for kerbing, or reverting to the use of locally distinctive road signs.

- **New agricultural buildings should be sited, designed and landscaped to blend with the surrounding farmed landscape**

- **Landscape assessment should be a major consideration at the inception of all road schemes**

- **Conserve rural character by limiting standardised treatments during highway improvement schemes**

## General development guidelines



A characteristic feature of Arden is its irregular road network which reflects the ancient landscape pattern. Features are many and varied, including thick roadside hedgerows, narrow sunken lanes and trackways, irregularly shaped verges, hedgebanks, fords and mature roadside oaks. Wherever possible these features should be retained. When improvements need to be made they should reflect the irregular landscape pattern, trying to avoid straight lines and looking to replace historic features. Guidance should be sought to enable a preliminary landscape assessment to identify key features that should be retained, moved or reinstated.



Landscaping along new roads can greatly improve the immediate highway environment, but is often insufficient to maintain the integrity of the adjoining landscape. Greater attention should be given to landscape enhancement within a wide road corridor, perhaps up to a half kilometre either side of the carriageway. Sufficient space should be allowed to enable embankments and cuttings to be shaped to reflect the surrounding landform. Geometric slope profiles should be avoided. Within the wider corridor priority should be given to linking highway landscaping into the surrounding landscape pattern. Local authorities could play an active role here by coordinating and promoting landscape initiatives.



Arden has a variety of mineral deposits which have been worked for many years. These include coal, hard rock aggregate and sand and gravel for the construction industry. Restoration proposals accompanying mineral applications often show little appreciation of how an extraction site relates to the wider landscape, which can result in landscaping schemes that do not reflect this wider context. Detailed landscaping schemes should be based upon an assessment of landscape character. Such an assessment should be submitted with the planning application, to inform a decision as to whether reinstating the original landscape, or creating a new landscape is most appropriate. Consideration must also be given to the long term management of new landscape features.

- **Protect and conserve the irregular pattern and characteristic features of roads and lanes**

- **Highway landscaping should be strongly linked to the surrounding landscape pattern**

- **Restoration proposals for mineral workings should be based upon an assessment of landscape character**

## Arden

The overall strategy and guidelines for Arden set out below provide the framework for conserving and enhancing the character and unity of the region. The seven landscape types which make up the region, however, have their own distinctive characteristics and for each of these there is a separate strategy and set of management guidelines. These are specific to the individual landscape types, but should be read in conjunction with the overall strategy and guidelines for the region.

Internationally, Arden is famous for its historical and cultural associations as being 'Shakespeare's Arden'. The wooded character of the landscape also has direct historical links with the ancient Forest of Arden. It is the most densely wooded part of Warwickshire (8%), which is well above the county average (3%). Of particular significance is the high proportion of ancient woodland sites and the association with oak as the dominant tree species. Equally important are the many built and other historic features and antiquities which impart an 'ancient' landscape character. Together, these associations are an important part of our national heritage and they distinguish Arden from the later 'planned' countryside found elsewhere in Warwickshire.



In contrast to the rest of Warwickshire, Arden is characterised by a dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and hamlets – the latter often no more than a loose cluster of wayside cottages. Ribbon development and more recent infill development have overwhelmed this historic pattern in many areas while barn conversions are eroding the rural character of undeveloped lanes. Where new housing is necessary in the countryside it should be located in loose clusters to form new hamlets. This would reflect the scale and pattern of existing settlement. Equally, it is important that new development should not be permitted along lanes that are presently undeveloped.



A characteristic feature of the Arden landscape is the wealth of brick built farmsteads and country houses which date from the 16th and 17th centuries. These give the area a strong and coherent building style which should be conserved. A trend in recent years has been the conversion of redundant barns into dwellings. This often results in modifications to the external appearance of a building. If the existing character is to be maintained consideration must be given to retaining traditional style and features. New housing should also harmonise with the vernacular style, with particular attention being given to scale, building materials and the incorporation of traditional features.

### Management strategy

- **Conserve the historic, well-wooded character of the region**

### Overall guidelines

- **Maintain the historic dispersed settlement pattern of hamlets and scattered farmsteads**
- **Conserve the built character of Arden by ensuring that new development reflects the vernacular style**

## Arden



Mature oaks are a characteristic feature of the Arden landscape. Through their size and antiquity individual trees can contribute greatly to landscape character. They are also ecologically important as they support many species of insects and birds. Wherever possible these old trees should be retained as their heritage value far outweighs any economic value. Management agreements could be used to help preserve these trees for future generations.



Ancient woodland sites are those which have had continuous woodland cover since at least 1600. Over 70% of the woodlands in Arden are of ancient origin. These sites represent the final core of woodlands which retain a link with the ancient Forest of Arden. Following losses this century there is now a presumption against further woodland clearance and conservation of all ancient woodlands must be given the highest priority. These sites usually have a very high nature conservation interest with a diverse flora and fauna. Oak is usually the dominant tree species but small leaved lime is also locally important. To maintain species diversity management should favour small scale felling coupes and natural regeneration. Where vigorous regrowth can be obtained through coppice and regeneration this would be a suitable management option.



Plantation ancient woodlands are those which have been replanted often with non-indigenous broadleaves or conifers. Though reduced in their interest these woods are frequently of much higher nature conservation value than recently established woodlands. Much of their ecological interest can be enhanced through sympathetic management. On sites where indigenous species survive, natural regeneration of native broadleaves should be encouraged. Only where species interest is greatly diminished should replanting be undertaken, favouring indigenous broadleaves where possible.



Small woodlands are a feature of many Arden farms. Historically they were managed for timber and firewood. A shift towards intensive agriculture, coupled with reduced farm labour and a demise in management practices such as coppicing, have resulted in many of these woods being left unmanaged. As landscape and wildlife features many are now in decline and in urgent need of management. Government incentives now favour the diversification of farm enterprises including the management of small woods for timber, fuel, game, wildlife, landscape and recreation. These woods would be suited to long rotation coppicing and should be targeted for management grants. Coppice management would be especially sensitive to both the landscape and nature conservation value of these sites.

- **Conserve the high heritage and ecological value of individual ancient oaks**

- **Conserve all ancient woodland sites and restock with locally occurring native species**

- **Restocking of plantation ancient woods should favour native broadleaved species preferably through natural regeneration**

- **Promote long rotation coppicing as a management tool for neglected small woods**



There is considerable scope for enhancing regional character through new woodland planting. The location and scale of all new planting, however, must reflect the character and scale of the different landscapes in Arden. The size and shape of new woodlands should complement the surrounding landscape pattern. Small woods are likely to be most suitable where the field pattern is still intact, while large woods may be more appropriate where the structure of the landscape has become fragmented. All new planting should avoid sites of ecological or historical interest.



The use of appropriate species in well-designed mixes is an important factor to consider in determining how well new planting will fit into the landscape. Selection of species will need to reflect a wide range of considerations, including the balance to be struck between nature conservation, landscape enhancement, recreation and timber production. Most Arden woodlands are of ancient origin and are predominantly broadleaved in character. New planting should reflect this where possible, and where schemes include non-indigenous species, oak should be included in the mix and favoured as the final hardwood crop. Species selection for amenity woodland should favour locally occurring associations of native trees and shrubs, including small-leaved lime as a co-dominant species with oak.



Hedgerows are prominent landscape features and frequently define roads, bridleways, footpaths and parish boundaries. Lanes and trackways are emphasised in many places by double hedgerows. These are historic features in their own right and form important wildlife corridors within the overall field pattern. In open landscapes they are often the only remaining features and are valuable as a basis for rebuilding the structure of the landscape. It is important to avoid further fragmentation of the landscape through hedgerow removal, particularly those along highways and parish boundaries. Hedgerows along woodland edges are often associated with ancient banks and ditches, and even where a woodland has been cleared these features may still survive and should be conserved.



The general condition of hedgerows in Arden is very variable. Roadside hedges are usually well maintained, but many field hedgerows are closely trimmed or gappy, and would benefit from being managed more positively as landscape features. This would include allowing them to grow thicker and taller (up to two metres in height) and replanting those that are gappy. Existing incentives for replanting should be more actively promoted. Where possible management should avoid excessively tidy low cut hedges, and should favour trimming at three yearly intervals to improve wildlife interest. Consideration should be given to traditional hedgelaying, or coppicing where hedges have grown spindly or become gappy at the base.

- **The design of all new woodland planting should complement the shape and scale of the surrounding landscape pattern**

- **New woodland planting should be broadleaved in character and favour oak as the major tree species**

- **Avoid the removal of hedgerows, especially along footpaths, bridleways, parish boundaries and woodland edges**

- **Promote the management of hedgerows and landscape features**



Heathland was once a common feature of the Arden landscape but following losses to agriculture and urban development it is now rare and very restricted. Those sites where heather survives have particularly important nature conservation interest. Elsewhere remnant heathy vegetation remains a characteristic feature with bracken and gorse particularly common along roads and in ancient woods. In all cases open heathland is in decline due to encroachment of trees and lack of management. Priority should be given to removal of trees and the regeneration of heather and other heathland flora. This can be most effectively carried out through the reinstatement of grazing with cattle or sheep.



Heaths are now very restricted and rare, but many of the associated plant species still survive along roadside verges. Species such as bracken and gorse are especially evident and provide historic links with former commons and waste. They also create interest and diversity along the roadside environment. Management of existing verges should seek to maintain and enhance this diversity. In road improvement schemes opportunities may also arise for habitat creation. In such cases the exposed subsoil is ideal for establishing heathy vegetation, but topsoiling must be avoided. This approach would provide a more interesting alternative to amenity tree planting.



Increasing leisure time has resulted in greater demands for sport and recreational facilities in the countryside, especially around the fringes of the larger urban centres. This type of development should be avoided in most rural areas. In some, however, particularly the more wooded estate landscapes such as Arden parklands and Wooded estatelands, such facilities can be more readily assimilated into the landscape. Golf courses, for example, could be designed to take on the appearance of modern day parklands as they mature. The selection of appropriate tree species is an important consideration, and the planting of longer lived trees such as oak, lime and sweet chestnut should be favoured over quick growing or smaller amenity species. There should also be opportunities for creating new wildlife habitats including heathlands, meadowlands and wetlands.

- **Promote the regeneration and management of heathland flora on all remnant heathy areas**

- **Diversify roadside character through the creation and management of heathy vegetation on highway verges**

- **The design of recreational facilities, such as golf courses, should seek to reflect the character of existing landscape features**

## Arden pastures

A key feature of Arden pastures is the sense of enclosure provided by the abundance of mature hedgerow trees. The density of trees reflects the generally intact pattern of small pastoral fields. Together these features create the impression of a strongly unified landscape despite the presence of much suburban development in the area. Management should therefore be aimed at maintaining and where necessary strengthening the well wooded pastoral character of the landscape.



Roadside and hedgerow oaks are a characteristic feature of Arden pastures, where they create a strong sense of enclosure and visual unity. Wherever possible old trees should be retained until younger trees have matured sufficiently to replace them. This will be a long term management strategy as it takes many years for an oak to develop the characteristic features of a large mature tree. Management Agreements could be used to initiate a programme of conservation and replacement.



The visual character of Arden pastures is dominated by mature hedgerow trees. Young or semi-mature trees are generally much less common. Action is therefore needed to diversify the age structure by encouraging the natural regeneration of hedgerow trees. Most hedgerows have oak seedlings which at little cost can be selected and left to grow. Replanting need only be undertaken where few hedgerow trees remain and the seed source has diminished.



The relatively flat topography and dominance of hedgerow trees means that fields are not a dominant visual element in Arden pastures. They form the essential fabric of the landscape, however, and are a key element controlling the density of hedgerow trees. Where hedgerows have been removed, tree cover is often much reduced and the scale of the landscape increased. Replacement hedgerow planting, using locally occurring species, is to be encouraged in such areas and where possible this should complement the shape and scale of existing fields. Hedgerow trees should also be incorporated at irregular spacings with oak as the dominant species.

### Management strategy

- **Conserve and enhance the unity and small scale enclosed character of the landscape**

### Landscape guidelines

- **Maintain the wooded character of mature hedgerow and roadside oaks**

- **Conserve and enhance tree cover through natural regeneration of hedgerow oaks**

- **Conserve the historic pattern of small hedged fields**

## Arden pastures



Arden pastures, as the name implies, has traditionally been a pastoral landscape characterised by small livestock farms. This character is still evident today although cattle and sheep have been replaced by horses and ponies in many places. Where pasture has been converted to arable production this has often resulted in a loss of landscape features and fragmentation of the small scale field pattern. In such areas opportunities should be identified for restoring pastoral character through government incentives to encourage more environmentally sensitive farming.



Permanent pasture is typically associated with poor soils in Arden pastures. Where these have not been 'improved' they still retain a diversity of plant and animal species. Such pastures should be conserved and managed appropriately as traditional, low input grassland. Reseeding or ploughing must be avoided. Tree or woodland planting is also inappropriate on these sites.



Unenclosed commons were once a distinctive feature of Arden pastures. These have now disappeared, but many associations, such as the numerous place-names ending in 'Heath' or 'Common', still remain. Historically commons were associated with settlement and often they had roads running through them. Where they survive today they frequently have a high recreational value. In densely settled landscapes, such as Arden pastures, there is often a requirement for new areas of public open space in addition to those that already exist. With careful planning such areas could be designed to reflect the character of commons. The re-creation of these historic features would enhance landscape diversity and with sympathetic management there would also be opportunities to create new wildlife habitats.

- **Conserve pastoral character and identify opportunities for conversion of arable land back to permanent pasture**

- **Conserve the diversity and special character of old permanent pastures**

- **Identify opportunities for enhancing landscape character through more creative design of public open space**

## River valley wetlands

The River valley wetlands is a fragmented, often degraded landscape with little sense of unity. The character of the landscape has been extensively modified and the original River meadowlands largely replaced by a chaotic mix of industrial, new wetland and restored agricultural landscapes. There are considerable opportunities for landscape enhancement and reconstruction but these need to be part of an overall scheme to strengthen the structure and unity of the landscape throughout the valley. Such a scheme should enhance the wetland character that has been created, through positive habitat creation and management.



The Tame Valley has been extensively worked for sand and gravel. This has resulted in the creation of a series of large lakes. Where these have developed a fringe of willow and alder scrub, the impact of these man-made features is much reduced. The visual impact, however, increases with size and regularity of shape. Opportunities should be sought in both old and new workings to create a more varied wetland landscape of smaller lakes and ponds with areas of reedbed and marsh. The aim should be to achieve a better balance between 'wetland' and open water.



The River Tame has been extensively modified by river drainage works. The channel has been canalised and typically has a uniform cross-section with steep banks to improve the flow of water. Flood banks have also been erected in places, further emphasising that the river is little more than a large drain. Opportunities should be sought to restore river channel diversity by creating a more varied bank profile and introducing new features such as marginal shallows and backwaters. Where flood banks are needed these should be kept as far back from the river as possible. Such measures would considerably enhance the visual and ecological importance of the river environment, particularly if they were combined with a water quality improvement programme.



Riverside trees and scrub are important features contributing to the visual continuity of the river channel. They also provide cover and nesting places for a variety of animals. Tree cover is generally fragmented in the River valley wetlands and improvements to the river channel have resulted in the loss of most riverside trees. Where it does not conflict with drainage requirements, consideration should be given to enhancing the unity of tree cover throughout this landscape. This may involve new tree and shrub planting, or allowing natural regeneration to take place. Large scale woodland planting should be avoided, and locally occurring native trees and shrub species should be used wherever possible.

### Management strategy

- Enhance the unity and wetland character of the landscape through habitat creation and management

### Landscape guidelines

- Opportunities should be sought creating more diverse wetland habitats during restoration of sand and gravel workings
- Enhance river channel diversity and create new habitats for marginal vegetation
- Enhance the continuity and wooded character of the river corridor

## Species lists – Arden

The following is a list of those tree and shrub species which are common and characteristic to the Arden, and which contribute to its regional identity. Other native tree species may also be appropriate to individual sites – professional advice is recommended and is available from the sources listed at the back of this report.

Main soil types – clay loams and sandy soils

- Dominant species
- Other appropriate species

		WOODLANDS		HEDGES AND HEDGEROW TREES	WET AREAS AND RIVERSIDES
		Clay Loams	Sandy Soils		
<b>Trees</b>					
Field maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>	○			
Common alder	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	○			●
Silver birch	<i>Betula pendula</i>	○	●		
Downy birch	<i>Betula pubescens</i>	○			
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	●			○
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	○	○		
Crab apple	<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	○	○		
Aspen	<i>Populus tremula</i>	○	○		○
Wild cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>	○			
Sessile oak	<i>Quercus petraea</i>		●	●	
Pedunculate oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	●	●	●	
White willow	<i>Salix alba</i>				●
Crack willow	<i>Salix fragilis</i>				●
Rowan	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>		○		
Small leaved lime	<i>Tilia cordata</i>	○			
<b>Shrubs</b>					
Field maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>			○	
Dogwood	<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	○		○	
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	●		●	
Midland hawthorn	<i>Crataegus laevigata</i>	○	○	○	
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	○	○	●	
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>			○	
Wild privet	<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	○		○	
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	○		○	
Goat willow	<i>Salix caprea</i>	○	○		○
Guelder rose	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	○		○	○

Planting should contain at least 80% of dominant species

### Semi-natural habitats

A number of exciting and increasingly threatened semi-natural habitats are associated with Arden. True heathland characterised by ling heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), with bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) and purple moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) on the acid sands is a rare but important habitat. Its re-creation is practical on suitable sites, and is often best achieved through natural colonisation, but specialist advice should always be sought.

Summary of landscape guidelines

MANAGEMENT OPTION	ANCIENT ARDEN	ARDEN PASTURES	INDUSTRIAL ARDEN	ARDEN PARKLANDS
<b>Settlement &amp; buildings</b>				
Conservation of rural character	●	○	○	○
Conservation of settlement pattern	●	○	●	○
Conservation of vernacular character	●	○	●	●
<b>Land management</b>				
Conservation of historic features	●	○	●	●
Conservation of pastoral character	●	●	●	○
Maintenance of field ponds	●	○	○	○
Management of field margins	○	○	○	○
Restoration of permanent pasture	○	●	○	●
Management of river and stream corridors	○	○	○	○
Management of roadside vegetation	○	●	○	●
Management of semi-natural habitats	○	○	●	○
Habitat creation	○	●	●	●
<b>Field boundaries</b>				
Conservation of historic field pattern	●	●	●	○
Conservation of primary field boundaries	●	●	●	●
Hedgerow replanting and management	●	○	●	○
<b>Trees &amp; woodlands</b>				
Conservation of mature trees	●	●	○	●
Regeneration of hedgerow tree cover	●	●	●	○
Management of primary boundary trees	○	○	○	●
Amenity tree planting	○	○	●	○
Parkland management	○	○	-	●
Woodland management	●	○	●	●
Small scale woodland planting	●	○	●	●
Large scale woodland planting	○	×	×	○

● High priority ○ Low priority × Inappropriate - Not applicable

Summary of landscape guidelines

MANAGEMENT OPTION	WOODED ESTATELANDS	ARDEN RIVER VALLEYS	RIVER VALLEY WETLANDS
<b>Settlement &amp; buildings</b>			
Conservation of rural character	●	●	○
Conservation of settlement pattern	●	-	-
Conservation of vernacular character	●	●	-
<b>Land management</b>			
Conservation of historic features	○	●	○
Conservation of pastoral character	○	●	○
Maintenance of field ponds	○	-	-
Management of field margins	●	○	-
Restoration of permanent pasture	×	●	○
Management of river and stream corridors	●	●	●
Management of roadside vegetation	○	-	-
Management of semi-natural habitats	○	●	●
Habitat creation	○	●	●
<b>Field boundaries</b>			
Conservation of historic field pattern	○	-	-
Conservation of primary field boundaries	●	●	-
Hedgerow replanting and management	○	○	○
<b>Trees &amp; woodlands</b>			
Conservation of mature trees	●	○	○
Regeneration of hedgerow tree cover	○	-	-
Management of primary boundary trees	●	●	●
Amenity tree planting	×	○	●
Parkland management	○	-	-
Woodland management	●	-	-
Small scale woodland planting	○	×	×
Large scale woodland planting	●	×	×

● High priority ○ Low priority × Inappropriate - Not applicable



# **Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment**

## **Assessment Report**

JULY 2016

# 03 | Assessment Methodology

In order to ensure a robust and consistent approach to the Assessment, the methodology has been informed by the key relevant requirements of the NPPF, whilst also having regard to the work undertaken within the draft 'Shared Principles for undertaking Green Belt Reviews across the Greater Birmingham Housing Market Area (GBHMA). Although still in draft, these principles set out the joint approach of the GBHMA authorities to Green Belt reviews, and therefore provided a sound basis from which the methodology for this Assessment was developed.

An initial Draft Methodology Statement was issued for consultation to the GBHMA authorities in March 2016. The feedback received was taken into consideration and is reflected in the methodology which forms the basis of this Assessment.

## Defining Assessment Areas

In order to ensure the Assessment is reflective of the five purposes of Green Belt, as defined by the NPPF, and the varying character of the Green Belt in SMBC, two distinct categories of assessment area have been utilised:

- Refined Parcels; and
- Broad Areas

Refined Parcels of Green Belt land adjoining or adjacent to built-up areas, including inset villages were defined. Refined Parcels were also defined along the eastern borough boundary where the built-up area of Coventry adjoins. The wider rural areas were divided into Broad Areas which were defined as Green Belt land that is not located on the edge of, or adjacent to, large built up areas within SMBC or those within adjoining authorities, for example Coventry to the east.

The definition of Refined Parcels and Broad Areas reflects the varying character and role of Green Belt land across the borough. Green Belt land immediately adjoining the urban areas performs a different role to those areas of Green Belt within the more rural areas of the borough. Furthermore, the definition of assessment areas within these two categories enables a focused assessment of the performance of the Green Belt

The Refined Parcels and Broad Areas were delineated on OS Mastermap using strong permanent physical features which are easily identifiable, in line with the requirements of Paragraph 85 of the NPPF:

85. When defining boundaries, local planning authorities should...define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.'

The physical features used in defining boundaries for the purposes of this Assessment included:

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

The Green Belt land within the defined Broad Areas and Refined Parcels does not necessarily respect authority boundaries. For example, Broad Areas of Green Belt land in the south-west of the borough stretch beyond the authority boundary where it adjoins Stratford-on-Avon to the south and Bromsgrove to the west. Therefore, in order to ensure a cohesive approach to the definition of assessment areas, care has been taken to reflect Land Parcels or Broad Areas which have previously been identified within the adjoining authorities of Stratford-on-Avon, Coventry, Warwick and North Warwickshire in the 'Coventry and Warwickshire Joint Green Belt Study'. Land Parcels identified as part the Joint Green Belt Study straddle the borough boundary at its border with Coventry, therefore particular attention has been paid to the definition of assessment area boundaries in this area. Figure XX illustrates the interaction between adjoining authority studies.

## Assessment

As set out in Section 1 this Assessment has been carried out using a 'policy off' approach. Consideration has not therefore been given to the Refined Parcel or Broad Area's role in the context of any other constraints, policies, strategies or its development potential. It is the role of future stages of Green Belt review to consider the wider constraints or

opportunities of land designated as Green Belt within SMBC using this Assessment as the basis.

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.

Refined Parcels and Broad Areas were not assessed against the fifth purpose of Green Belt 'to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land'. 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.

The Assessment was carried out using the criteria set out in Table 1 and the numerical scoring system identified below. Where applicable, each Refined Parcel and Broad Area was assigned a score of 0, 1, 2 or 3 for each of the first four purposes of Green Belt. Broad Areas were defined based on their countryside character and therefore perform highly against the third purpose of Green Belt ('Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment'). Each Broad Area was assigned a score of 3 against the third purpose of Green Belt and this score checked during the initial desk based assessment and site visits.

0	Refined Parcel/Broad Area <b>does not</b> perform against the purpose;
1	Refined Parcel/Broad Area is <b>lower performing</b> against the purpose;
2	Refined Parcel/Broad Area is <b>more moderately</b> performing against the purpose;
3	Refined Parcel/Broad Area is <b>higher performing</b> against the purpose.



**Table 1 - Assessment Criteria**

Green Belt purpose	Broad Area Criteria and Scoring	Refined Parcel Criteria and Scoring	Considerations
<p>1. To check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas</p>	<p>Is ribbon or other development present within the Refined Parcel or Broad Area?</p> <p>Is other development detached from the existing large built-up area?</p> <p><b>Scoring</b></p> <p>Broad Area or Refined Parcel is already developed and/or is within the urban area with no clear boundary = <b>0</b> Parcel or Area does not perform against the purpose</p> <p>Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the existing built-up area with no clear boundary = <b>1</b> Parcel or Area is lower performing</p> <p>Refined Parcel or Broad Area boundary is weak but can be identified and there is no development present = <b>2</b> Parcel or Area is more moderately performing</p> <p>'Refined Parcel or Broad Area boundary is clearly identifiable/durable and there is no development present = <b>3</b> Parcel or Area is higher performing</p>		<p>Consideration should be given to how well contained the urban area is by the Refined Parcel or Broad Area. Ribbon and other development that is detached from the existing built up area is an indication that the Green Belt is lower performing.</p> <p>Durable permanent boundaries are considered to be motorways and A roads, other infrastructure, and permanent natural features such as watercourses etc. Less durable boundaries are considered to be established field boundaries, hedgerows and treelines. Whilst easily identifiable these features are less durable</p>
<p>2. To Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another</p>	<p>Does the Broad Area represent a 'strategic gap' between major urban areas?</p> <p><b>Scoring</b></p> <p>Broad Area does not represent a strategic gap and/or is not between major urban or smaller urban areas = <b>0</b> Area does not perform against the purpose</p> <p>Broad Area is between smaller urban areas but does not represent a strategic gap and is not between major urban areas. = <b>1</b> Area is lower performing</p> <p>Broad Area represents a strategic gap between major urban areas = <b>3</b> Area is higher performing</p>	<p>Does the Refined Parcel represent a 'gap' between urban areas?</p> <p>Is the Refined Parcel within an existing urban area?</p> <p><b>Scoring</b></p> <p>Refined Parcel is within an existing urban area and does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns = <b>0</b> <i>Parcel does not perform against the purpose</i></p> <p>Refined Parcel represents a gap of more than 5 kilometres between urban areas = <b>1</b> <i>Parcel is lower performing</i></p> <p>Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas = <b>2</b> <i>Parcel is more moderately performing</i></p> <p>Refined Parcel represents a gap of less than 1 kilometres between urban areas = <b>3</b> <i>Parcel is higher performing</i></p>	<p>Strategic gaps are considered to be those areas that separate major urban areas/cities e.g. Birmingham and Coventry.</p> <p>Merging can reasonably be expected if a gap of less than 1 kilometre is identified. Refined Parcels representing gaps of less than 1 kilometre play an essential role in preventing the merging of urban areas.</p> <p>Refined Parcels which are entirely contained within the urban area are considered not to play a role in preventing neighbouring towns merging.</p>

Green Belt purpose	Broad Area Criteria and Scoring	Refined Parcel Criteria and Scoring	Considerations
3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Broad Areas, by their nature, are considered to perform highly against the third purpose of Green Belt and therefore all areas are assigned a score of <b>3</b> <i>Area is higher performing</i>	<p>Is the Refined Parcel characterised by countryside?</p> <p>Does Refined Parcel adjoin areas of countryside?</p> <p>Is ribbon or other development present within the Refined Parcel?</p> <p><b>Scoring</b></p> <p>Refined Parcel is not characterised by countryside, does not adjoin countryside and/or has been developed = <b>0</b> <i>Parcel does not perform against the purpose</i></p> <p>Refined Parcel is adjoined by countryside and has development present = <b>1</b> <i>Parcel is lower performing</i></p> <p>Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present = <b>2</b> <i>Parcel is more moderately performing</i></p> <p>Refined Parcel is characterised by countryside, adjoins countryside and does not contain any development = <b>3</b> <i>Parcel is higher performing</i></p>	Countryside is considered to be land which is rural and open in nature including farmland. Associated agricultural buildings are not considered to be development for the purposes of assessing the encroachment of urban development.
4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	<p>Is the Refined Parcel or Broad Area within or adjoining a Conservation Area within an historic town?</p> <p>Are key landmarks or the historic core visible from within the Refined Parcel or Broad Area?</p> <p>Does the Refined Parcel or Broad Area contribute to the setting of the historic town?</p> <p><b>Scoring</b></p> <p>Refined Parcel or Broad Area is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town = <b>0</b> <i>Parcel or Area does not perform against the purpose</i></p> <p>Refined Parcel or Broad Area is adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town but has no views of landmarks and/or the historic core = <b>1</b> <i>Parcel or Area is lower performing</i></p> <p>Refined Parcel or Broad Area is adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town and/or has limited views of landmarks and/or the historic core = <b>2</b> <i>Parcel or Area is more moderately performing</i></p> <p>Refined Parcel or Broad Area is adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town and there are clear views of landmarks and/or the historic core = <b>3</b> <i>Parcel or Area is higher performing</i></p>		An assessment of topography, intervening features and site visits have been used to assess the performance of the Refined Parcels and Broad Areas against this purpose.

## Refined Parcels

Refined Parcels were defined adjoining or adjacent to built-up areas, including inset villages and the area of Solihull along the eastern boundary of the borough where the built-up areas of Coventry adjoins. Table 3 below identifies the scoring of each Refined Parcel against the Green Belt purposes. The performance of the Refined Parcels is described in further detail below and scores for each included in Table 3 alongside a total and highest score. The inclusion of a total and highest score for each parcel has not been used to rank parcels, these have been included for illustrative purposes only.

### Purpose 1

Refined Parcels which perform highly against purpose 1 to 'Check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas' are those parcels which adjoin strong defensible permanent boundaries. Such parcels include those adjoining the M6 and M42 motorways, the A45 and the railway line (RP04, RP15, RP16 and RP80) where the presence of permanent infrastructure supports the restriction of urban sprawl. Refined Parcels RP25 and RP82 also perform highly against purpose 1 as an integral part of the Meriden Gap.

Parcels which perform more moderately against purpose 1 include parcels which aren't immediately adjacent to the built up area of Solihull and stretch into the more rural areas where boundaries are weak and not easily identifiable e.g. parcels RP19 and RP46. However, these parcels do not contain urbanising or ribbon development and therefore continue to perform a role in preventing urban sprawl.

Refined Parcels which are lower performing against purpose 1 include parcels which are to the east of and immediately adjacent to the built up areas of Solihull. The boundaries of most of these parcels are weak and not easily identifiable where they meet the urban area and ribbon development is evident e.g. RP31 and RP32 between the built up area of Solihull and the M42 motorway. Some parcels which have clear and robust boundaries have also scored lower against purpose 1 due to the presence of ribbon or other development which is detached from the main urban area. These parcels include, for example, RP33 and RP34 where the M42 motorway and the A3400 form strong definitive boundaries but ribbon development is present along Lady Byron Lane.

Broad Area ID	Description	Purpose Scores					Highest Score
		1	2	3	4	Total	
BA01	Broad Area BA01 is located in the south-west corner of Solihull MBC adjoining Stratford-on-Avon DC to the south, Warwick to the south east and Bromsgrove to the west.	2	1	3	0	6	3 (Purpose 3)
BA02	Broad Area BA02 is located along the southern edge of Solihull MBC at its boundary with Stratford-on-Avon DC.	2	1	3	3	9	2 (Purpose 3 and 4)
BA03	Broad Area BA03 is located within the central portion of Solihull MBC between Birmingham and Solihull to the west and Coventry to the east.	3	3	3	3	12	3 (All)
BA04	Broad Area BA04 forms the eastern portion of Solihull MBC at its boundary with Coventry to the east and North Warwickshire BC to the north	3	3	3	3	12	3 (All)
BA05	Broad Area BA05 is located immediately to the east of the urban area of Solihull south of Birmingham International Airport.	3	3	3	2	11	3 (Purpose 1,2 and 3)

**Table 2 - Broad Area Scoring**

Refined Parcels which do not perform against purpose 1 include those parcels which are developed or entirely constrained by the urban area for example parcels RP11 and RP79 respectively. Parcel RP64 is entirely formed of Cheswick Green and is developed as is RP76 which is formed of land between Lowbrook Lane and Norton Lane in the south west of the borough at Tidbury Green.

### Purpose 2

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.

Parcels which are more moderately performing against purpose 2 include those which form a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas, particularly the areas of Green Belt land which separate the western edges of the built-up area of Solihull from Dorridge and Knowle to the east i.e. parcels RP32, RP33, RP43 and RP44. In addition, those parcels which adjoin the borough boundary with Coventry in the east perform moderately against purpose 2, forming a gap of approximately 3 kilometres between Coventry and Balsall Common.

Lower performing parcels include those areas of Green Belt land to the extreme south of the borough which form part of a gap of more than 5 kilometres between settlements. Refined parcels which immediately adjoin the A45 to the south are also lower performing against purpose 2 as they form part of the wider strategic Meriden Gap between Solihull and Coventry.

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.

These parcels include those within Kingshurst and Marston Green in the north of the borough and parcel RP64 which is entirely formed of Cheswick Green. Parcels RP01 – RP03 form part of Babbs Mill Park and Meriden Park which are surrounded by urban development and therefore do not perform against purpose 2.

### Purpose 3

Refined Parcels which perform highly against purpose 3 to 'Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment' are generally those contained areas of Green Belt land which adjoin the Broad Areas in the more rural parts of the borough away from the main built-up areas. Those parcels within the centre of the borough, detached from the main urban areas, which form part of the Meriden Gap perform highly i.e. parcels RP21, RP23 and RP80 which are characterised by countryside with no ribbon or other urbanising development present.

Parcels which are more moderately performing against purpose 3 are largely those which immediately adjoin the built up areas of Solihull, Dorridge, Knowle and Coventry. Although adjacent to urban areas, these parcels are mainly characterised by countryside and do not contain development.

Lower performing parcels include those which are within the urban areas or which contain ribbon or other urbanising development. These parcels include RP07 and RP10 in the north of the borough which are largely contained by the urban area but which are formed of agricultural land. Parcels which do not perform against the purpose are also largely contained within the north of the borough where they form Babbs Mill Park and areas of open space within the urban areas of Kingshurst and Marston Green.

### Purpose 4

Refined Parcels which perform highly against purpose 4 to 'Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns' are entirely contained in the central part of the borough where they adjoin the Hampton in Arden, Bickenhill and Knowle Conservation Areas. Parcels RP16 and RP17 provide clear views of Bickenhill Church whilst parcels RP20 and RP23 have clear views to and from the historic core of Hampton in Arden. Parcels RP37 and RP38 benefit from clear views of the Church of St John the Baptist and lie immediately adjacent to the Knowle Conservation Area.

Refined Parcel RP32 is the only parcel to perform more moderately against purpose 2. The parcel is immediately adjacent to the Solihull Conservation Area but benefits from only limited views. Likewise parcels RP18 and RP39 are adjacent to Hampton in Arden and Knowle Conservation Areas respectively but have no views of the historic core and therefore are considered as lower performing against the purpose.

Refined Parcel	Description	Purpose Scores					Highest Score
		1	2	3	4	Total	
RP69	Land north of Dickens Heath south of Shirley Heath	1	3	2	0	6	3 (Purpose 2)
RP70	Land north west of Dickens Heath	3	3	2	0	8	3 (Purpose 1 and 2)
RP71	Land between Tythe Barn lane and Birchy Leasowes Lane, west of Dickens Heath	3	2	2	0	7	3 (Purpose 1)
RP72	Land between Houndsfield Lane and Tilehouse Lane, east of railway line	1	2	1	0	4	2 (Purpose 2)
RP73	Land between Old Dickens Heath Road and Tilehouse Lane	1	2	3	0	6	3 (Purpose 3)
RP74	Land north of Lowbrook Lane, west of Tilehouse Lane	1	2	0	0	3	2 (Purpose 2)
RP75	Land between Old Dickens Heath Road and Norton Lane	1	3	3	0	7	3 (Purpose 2 and 3)
RP76	Land between Lowbrook Lane and Norton Lane	0	0	0	0	0	0
RP77	Land between Norton Land and Braggs Farm Lane	1	2	3	0	6	3 (Purpose 3)
RP78	Land between Braggs Farm Lane and Dickens Heath	2	2	3	0	7	3 (Purpose 3)
RP79	Land between Cooks Lane and Chelmsley Road	0	0	0	0	0	0
RP80	Land to the north west of Hampton in Arden	3	2	3	0	8	3 (Purpose 1 and 3)
RP81	Land to the north of Back Lane	1	1	2	0	4	2 (Purpose 3)
RP82	Land between Back Lane to the north and Coventry Road to the south	3	1	3	0	7	3 (Purpose 1 and 3)
RP83	Land to the east of Benton Green Lane	1	2	2	0	5	2 (Purpose 2 and 3)

Refined Parcel	Description	Purpose Scores					Highest Score
		1	2	3	4	Total	
RP84	Land between B4101 Tanners Lane to the north and Duggins Lane to the south	1	2	2	0	5	2 (Purpose 2 and 3)
RP85	Land between Duggins Lane to the north and railway line to the south	1	2	1	0	4	2 (Purpose 2)
RP86	Land to the east of Nailcote Lane, south of railway line	2	2	2	0	6	2 (Purpose 1, 2 and 3)
RP87	Land between M42 and Blythe Valley Business Park	1	2	1	0	4	2 (Purpose 2)
RP88	Land to the west of Blyth Valley Business Park, east of Cheswick Green	2	3	2	0	7	3 (Purpose 2)
RP89	Land at Shirley Golf Course	2	3	2	0	7	3 (Purpose 2)

# Appendix | A

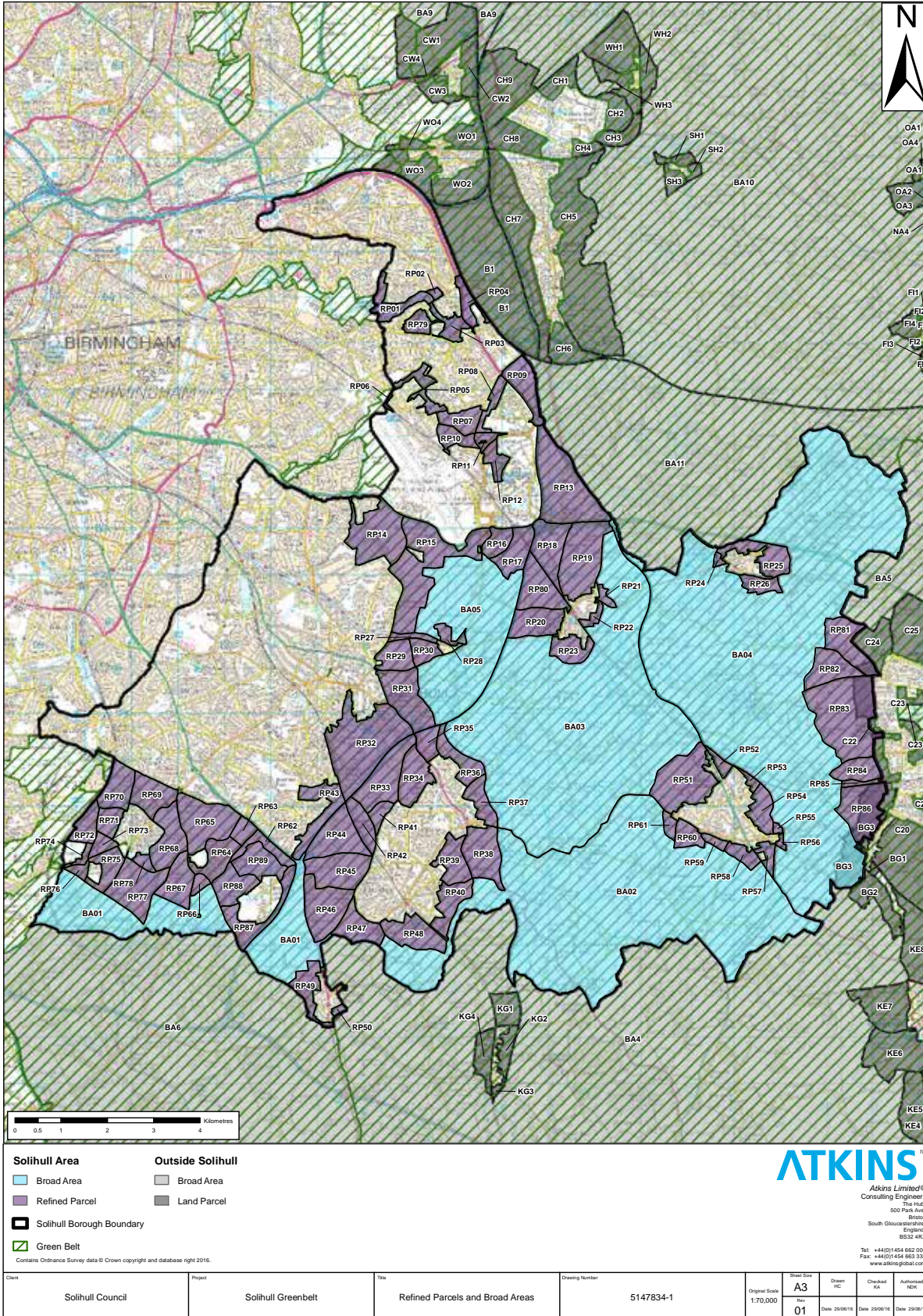
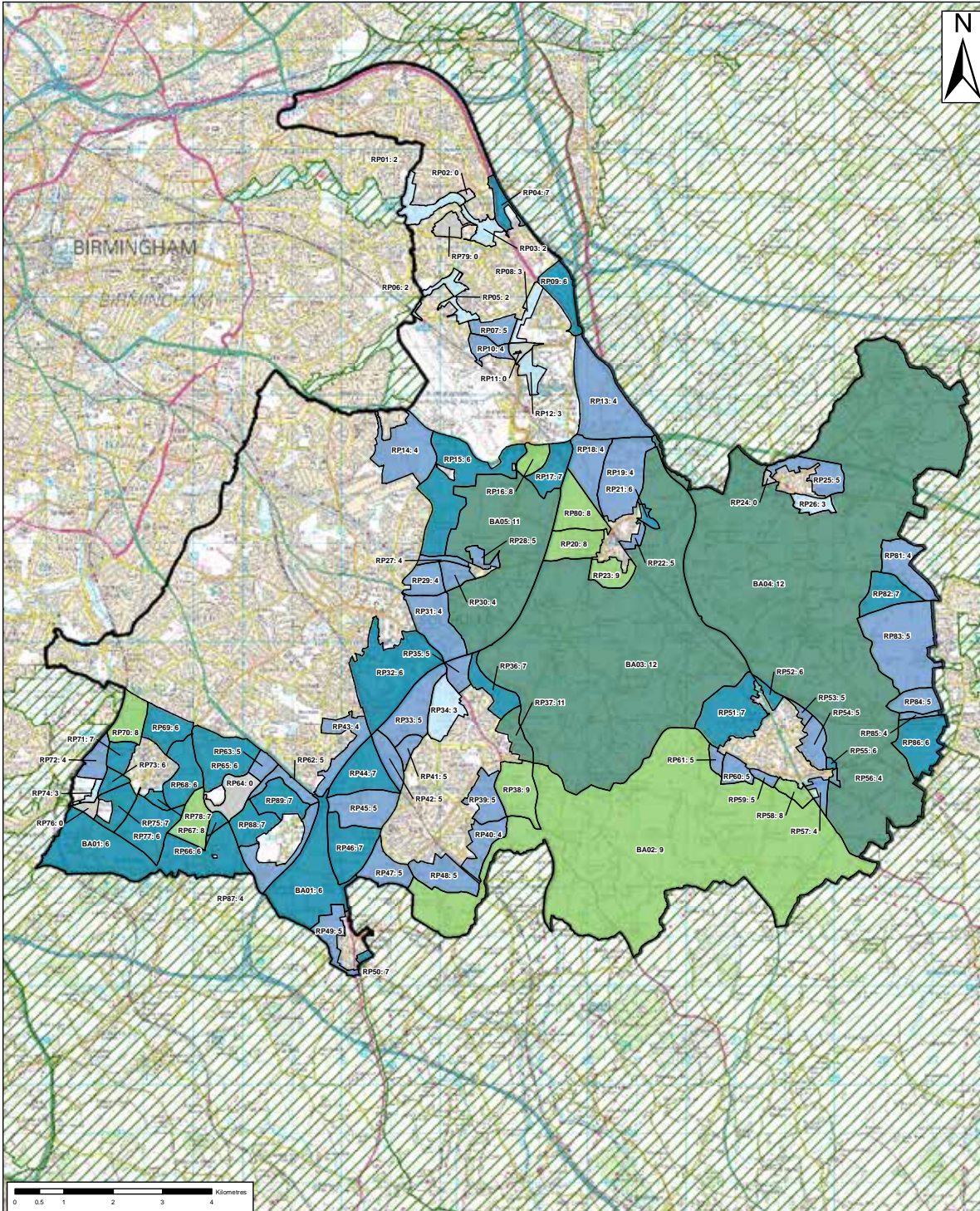


Figure 1

# Appendix | F



**Combined Score** Solihull Borough Boundary

Green Belt

- 0
- 1 - 3
- 4 - 5
- 6 - 7
- 8 - 9
- 10 - 12

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Client Solihull Council	Project Solihull Greenbelt	Title Refined Parcels and Broad Areas Combined Score	Drawing Number 5147834-2	Sheet Size A3 Rev 01	Original Scale 1:70,000	Drawn HC	Checked JA	Authorised SOK
				Date 06/05/16	Date 06/05/16	Date 06/05/16		

Path: \\sasatkins.com\project\GBEM\WGE\Projects\Cities\20160155 Solihull Green Belt Study\7 WIPE\UD40\GIS\WIP\5147834-2\_Solihull\Parcels\_OverallScore.mxd

**Purpose 1: 'to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas'**

<b>Refined Parcel ID</b>	Is ribbon or other development present within the Refined Parcel? Is other development detached from the existing large built up areas? <b>0</b> - Refined Parcel is already developed and/or is within the urban area with no clear boundary ( <i>Parcel does not perform against the purpose</i> ) <b>1</b> - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the existing built-up area with no clear boundary ( <i>Parcel is lower performing</i> ) <b>2</b> - Refined Parcel boundary is weak but can be identified and there is no development present ( <i>Parcel is more moderately performing</i> ) <b>3</b> - Refined Parcel boundary is clearly identifiable/durable and there is no development present ( <i>Parcel is higher performing</i> )	<b>Score</b>	
	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Commentary:</b>	
RP01	2 - Refined Parcel boundary is weak but can be identified and there is no development present	Refined Parcel RP01 forms part of Babbs Mill Park (Local Nature Reserve) which also contains Babbs Mill Lake. By virtue of its designation as a LNR the parcel is undeveloped. The boundary is weak and not easily identifiable. The parcel is also contained by the urban area.	2
RP02	0 - Refined Parcel is already developed and/or it within the urban area with no clear boundary	Refined Parcel RP02 boundary is not easily identifiable and contains the Pavilion Sports Club and allotments. The parcel is also contained by the urban area.	0
RP03	2 - Refined Parcel boundary is weak but can be identified and there is no development present	Refined Parcel RP03 boundary is weak at it's border with properties on Conway Road and Forth Drive. By virtue of its designation as Meriden Park and the presence of the River Cole the parcel is undeveloped. The parcel is also contained by the urban area.	2
RP04	3 - Refined Parcel boundary is clear identifiable/durable and there is no development present	Refined Parcel RP04 boundary is clear and robust (M6 motorway to the east, A452 Chester Road to the west and B4114 Birmingham Road to the north) and there is no development present	3
RP05	2 - Refined Parcel boundary is weak but can be identified and there is no development present	Refined Parcel RP05 boundary is clear to the north at Moorend Avenue and to the south at Colehill Road but is less clear at its boundary with Sycamore Crescent, Wagstaff Way and Wavers Marston. The parcel is also contained by the urban area.	2
RP06	2 - Refined Parcel boundary is weak but can be identified and there is no development present	Refined Parcel RP06 northern boundary is weak but is more clear and robust at Alcott Wood	2
RP07	2 - Refined Parcel boundary is weak but can be identified and there is no development present	Refined Parcel RP07 northern boundary is weak adjoining the rear of residential properties. Other boundaries are clear and more robust including Coleshill Heath Road and Bickenhill Road to the east and south.	2
RP08	2 - Refined Parcel boundary is weak but can be identified and there is no development present	Refined Parcel RP08 boundary to the east is weak bordering Birmingham Business Park but is stronger at its boundary with Coleshill Heath Road. There is no development present within the Refined Parcel.	2
RP09	3 - Refined Parcel boundary is clear identifiable/durable and there is no development present	Refined Parcel RP09 boundary is clearly identifiable and robust. The parcel is bounded by the M42 motorway to the east, the A452 Chester Road to the west and Coleshill Heath Road to the north. No development is present within the parcel.	3
RP10	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the existing built-up area with no clear boundary	Refined Parcel RP10 boundaries are weak including where it adjoins Birmingham International Park and properties on Somerton Drive and Farndon Avenue. A small number of residential properties are also present within the Refined Parcel along Bickenhill Road.	1
RP11	0 - Refined Parcel is already developed and/or it within the urban area with no clear boundary	Refined Parcel RP11 is already developed and contains a large number of residential properties along Blackfirs Lane and Bickenhill Lane which are detached from the surrounding built-up areas.	0
RP12	3 - Refined Parcel boundary is clear identifiable/durable and there is no development present	Refined Parcel RP12 boundaries are clear and durable by virtue of its woodland character.	3
RP13	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the existing built-up area with no clear boundary	Refined Parcel RP13 boundaries are clearly identifiable as the A45 to the south, M42 to the west and A452 Chester Road to the east. The boundaries are robust and durable. However, there are some residential properties which are detached from the urban area.	1
RP14	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the existing built-up area with no clear boundary	Refined Parcel RP14 boundaries are clear to the north at the A45 dual carriageway and to the east at Damson Parkway. Woodland forms the boundary in the north west corner and southern edge at Land Rover. However, the boundaries at the north west peninsula of the parcel are not clearly identifiable and are not robust with residential gardens forming the boundary. Development associated with Land Rover has also encroached.	1
RP15	3 - Refined Parcel boundary is clear identifiable/durable and there is no development present	Refined Parcel RP15 boundaries are clearly identifiable as A45 Coventry Road to the north, Damson Parkway to the west and the Grand Union Canal to the south. The eastern edge of the parcel adjoins Broad Area BA05. No development is present within the parcel.	3
RP16	3 - Refined Parcel boundary is clear identifiable/durable and there is no development present	Refined Parcel RP16 northern boundary is clearly identifiable as A45 Coventry Road to the north and is therefore durable. This parcel performs a role in preventing the sprawl of Birmingham International Airport from the north of the A45.	3



RP53	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the	Development is already present within Refined Parcel RP53 along Hallmeadow Road and Station Road which is detached from the main built-up area of Balsall Common.	1
RP54	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the	Other development is present along the northern edge of Refined Parcel RP54 along Station Road which is detached from the main built-up area of Balsall Common.	1
RP55	2 - Refined Parcel boundary is weak but can be identified and there is no development present	The boundaries of Refined Parcel RP55 are relatively clear to the eastern edge of the parcel and are made up of established field patterns with established hedgerows and tree lines. Parcel boundaries to the west of the parcel are less clear and are formed by gardens at the rear of residential properties along B4101 Kelsey Lane/Waste Lane.	2
RP56	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the	Other development is present within Refined Parcel RP56 including caravan storage along Hob Lane which is detached from the main built-up area of Balsall Common.	1
RP57	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the	Development is already present within Refined Parcel RP57 along Windmill Lane which is detached from the existing built up area.	1
RP58	3 - Refined Parcel boundary is clear identifiable/durable and there is no development present	Established field patterns and mature hedgerows/tree lines form a strong durable boundary to the rear of residential properties along Alder Lane to the north and the southern boundary. The A452 forms a durable and clear eastern boundary.	3
RP59	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the	Limited residential development is already present along Frog Lane and Holly Lane that is detached from the main built-up area of Balsall Common.	1
RP60	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the	Two dwellings are present within Refined Parcel RP60 which are detached from the main built-up area of Balsall Common	1
RP61	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the	Residential development is detached from the main built-up area of Balsall Common along Fernhill Lane.	1
RP62	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the	Other development is present within Refined Parcel RP62 including Premier Inn hotel, public house and clubhouse associated with Shirley Golf Course.	1
RP63	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the	Ribbon development is already present along Creynolds Lane and the southern edge of A34 Stratford Road.	1
RP64	0 - Refined Parcel is already developed and/or is within the urban area with no clear boundary	Refined Parcel RP64 is formed of Cheswick Green and is developed.	0
RP65	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the	Some development is already present within Refined Parcel RP65 which is detached from the main built-up area of Shirley to the north.	1
RP66	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the	Some development is already present within Refined Parcel RP66 which is detached from the main built-up area of Cheswick Green to the north.	1
RP67	3 - Refined Parcel boundary is clear identifiable/durable and there is no development present	The southern boundary of Refined Parcel RP67 is clearly defined by the Stratford upon Avon Canal which forms a durable boundary. The B4102 Salter Street/Tanworth Lane to the east and Lady Lane to the west form less durable boundaries. No development is present.	3
RP68	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the existing built-up area with no clear boundary	Residential development is already present along Lady Lane which is detached from both Dickens Heath and Cheswick Green. The western boundary of Refined Parcel RP68 is durable and clearly identifiable as the Stratford upon Avon Canal.	1
RP69	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the	Some limited development is already present within Refined Parcel RP69 including residential properties on Tythe Barn Lane and Dickens Heath Road. The northern boundary is weak and not easily identified.	1
RP70	3 - Refined Parcel boundary is clear identifiable/durable and there is no development present	Established field patterns and mature hedgerows form the eastern boundary of Refined Parcel RP70. The less durable south and west boundaries are formed by Tythe Barn Lane and the railway line respectively. Areas of woodland form part of the north west corner's boundary where the parcel adjoins Shirley.	3
RP71	3 - Refined Parcel boundary is clear identifiable/durable and there is no development present	Dense woodland forms the eastern boundary where Refined Parcel RP71 adjoins Dickens Heath. Birchy Leasowes Lane, Tilehouse Lane and Tythe Barn Lane form the less durable boundaries to the south, west and north.	3
RP72	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the	Whilst the western boundary is clearly defined by the railway, ribbon development is present along the length of the southern and much of the eastern boundaries of Refined Parcel RP72.	1
RP73	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the	Residential development is present along the western boundary of Refined Parcel RP73 along Tilehouse Lane.	1
RP74	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the	Ribbon development is present along much of the eastern and southern boundaries of Refined Parcel RP74 along Tilehouse Lane and Lowbrook Lane.	1
RP75	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the	Ribbon development is present along the entire southern boundary of Refined Parcel RP75 at Norton Lane. A school is also present along Old Dickens Heath Road.	1
RP76	0 - Refined Parcel is already developed and/or is within the urban area with no clear boundary	Refined Parcel RP76 is entirely developed.	0
RP77	1 - Ribbon/other development is already present and/or other development is detached from the	Ribbon development is already present in the south west corner of Refined Parcel RP77 along Norton Lane.	1

**Purpose 2: 'to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another'**

Refined Parcel ID	Does the Refined Parcel represent a 'gap' between urban areas? Is the Refined Parcel within an existing urban area? <b>0</b> - Refined Parcel is within an existing urban area and does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns ( <i>Parcel does not perform against the purpose</i> ) <b>1</b> - Refined Parcel represents a gap of more than 5 kilometres between urban areas ( <i>Parcel is lower performing</i> ) <b>2</b> - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within an existing urban area ( <i>Parcel is more moderately performing</i> ) <b>3</b> - Refined Parcel represents a gap of less than 1 kilometre between urban areas and is not within an existing urban area ( <i>Parcel is higher performing</i> )	Score	
	Rating:	Commentary:	
RP01	0 - Refined Parcel is within an existing urban area and does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns	Refined Parcel RP01 is entirely contained by the urban area and therefore does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns.	0
RP02	0 - Refined Parcel is within an existing urban area and does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns	Refined Parcel RP02 is within and is contained by the urban area to the north, east and south. It does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns.	0
RP03	0 - Refined Parcel is within an existing urban area and does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns	Refined Parcel RP03 is entirely contained by the urban area except at the narrow northern edge where it adjoins Refined Parcel RP01. It does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns.	0
RP04	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within an existing urban area	Refined Parcel RP04 forms part of a gap of approximately 1.5 kilometres between the main urban area of Solihull and Coleshill to the east.	2
RP05	0 - Refined Parcel is within an existing urban area and does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns	Refined Parcel RP05 is contained by the urban area. It does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns.	0
RP06	0 - Refined Parcel is within an existing urban area and does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns	Refined Parcel RP06 is contained by the urban area. It does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns.	0
RP07	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within an existing urban area	Refined Parcel RP07 represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between the northern suburbs of Solihull and the industrial areas to the south including Birmingham International Airport.	2
RP08	0 - Refined Parcel is within an existing urban area and does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns	Refined Parcel RP08 represents a gap between Birmingham Business Park to the east and the urban area of Chelmsley Wood to the west. The Parcel does not however, represent a gap between neighbouring towns.	0
RP09	1 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of more than 5 kilometres between urban areas	Refined Parcel RP09 forms part of Green Belt land between Solihull and Coventry to the east.	1
RP10	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within an existing urban area	Refined Parcel RP10 represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between the northern suburbs of Solihull and the industrial areas to the south including Birmingham International Airport.	2
RP11	0 - Refined Parcel is within an existing urban area and does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns	Refined Parcel RP11 is already developed and contains development which is detached from the urban areas - it therefore does not represent a gap.	0
RP12	0 - Refined Parcel is within an existing urban area and does not represent a gap between neighbouring towns	Refined Parcel RP12 is contained by urban development to the south and west, more limited development is also present to the north within Refined Parcel RP11 and to the east at land which forms part of the NEC.	0
RP13	1 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of more than 5 kilometres between urban areas	Refined Parcel RP13 forms part of Green Belt land between Solihull and Coventry to the east.	1
RP14	1 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of more than 5 kilometres between urban areas	Refined Parcel RP14 is contained on three sides by urban development (Land Rover to the south and residential areas of Elmdon to the north and west. However the parcel forms a very limited edge of the wider Green Belt stretching between Solihull and Coventry and therefore makes a limited contribution to preventing these towns merging into one another.	1
RP15	1 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of more than 5 kilometres between urban areas	Refined Parcel RP15 adjoins the built up areas of Elmdon Heath to the west and Birmingham International Airport to the north. However, the parcel forms part of the wider Green Belt stretching between Solihull and Coventry and therefore makes a limited contribution to preventing these towns merging into one another.	1
RP16	1 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of more than 5 kilometres between urban areas	Refined Parcel RP16 forms part of the wider Green Belt stretching between Solihull and Coventry and therefore makes a limited contribution to preventing these towns merging into one another.	1
RP17	1 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of more than 5 kilometres between urban areas	Refined Parcel RP17 forms part of the wider Green Belt stretching between Solihull and Coventry and therefore makes a limited contribution to preventing these towns merging into one another.	1

RP63	3 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of less than 1 kilometre between urban areas and is not within an	Refined Parcel RP63 forms a gap of less than 1 kilometre between the Monkspath area of Solihull and Cheswick Green to the south	3
RP64	0 - Refined Parcel is within an existing urban area and does not represent a gap between	Refined Parcel RP64 is formed of Cheswick Green and is developed - therefore this does not represent a gap	0
RP65	3 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of less than 1 kilometre between urban areas and is not within an	Refined Parcel RP65 forms a gap of less than 1 kilometre between Shirley Heath area of Solihull and Cheswick Green	3
RP66	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within	Refined Parcel RP66 forms part of a gap of approximately 1.2 kilometres between Cheswick Green and Earlswood	2
RP67	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within	Refined Parcel RP67 forms part of a gap of approximately 1.2 kilometres between Cheswick Green and Earlswood. It also forms part of a gap between Cheswick Green and Dickens Heath.	2
RP68	3 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of less than 1 kilometre between urban areas and is not within an	Refined Parcel RP68 forms a gap of approximately 1 kilometre between Cheswick Green and Dickens Heath	3
RP69	3 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of less than 1 kilometre between urban areas and is not within an	Refined Parcel RP69 forms a gap of less than 1 kilometre between Dickens Heath and Shirley area of Solihull to the north.	3
RP70	3 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of less than 1 kilometre between urban areas and is not within an	Refined Parcel RP70 forms a gap of approximately 1 kilometre between Major's Green and Dickens Heath	3
RP71	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within	Refined Parcel RP71 forms part of an approximate 1.7 kilometre gap between Dickens Heath and Trueman's Heath to the west	2
RP72	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within	Refined Parcel RP72 forms part of an approximate 1.7 kilometre gap between Dickens Heath and Trueman's Heath to the west and Grimes Hill to the south west.	2
RP73	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within	Refined Parcel RP73 forms gap of less than 1 kilometre between Tidbury Green and Dickens Heath to the north.	2
RP74	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within	Refined Parcel RP74 forms gap of less than 1 kilometre between Tidbury Green and Grimes Hill to the west.	2
RP75	3 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of less than 1 kilometre between urban areas and is not within an	Refined Parcel RP75 forms a gap of less than 1 kilometre between Tidbury Green and Dickens Heath.	3
RP76	0 - Refined Parcel is within an existing urban area and does not represent a gap between	Refined Parcel RP76 is entirely developed and therefore does not represent a gap.	0
RP77	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within	Refined Parcel RP77 forms a gap of approximately 1.5 kilometres between Dickens Heath and Earlswood to the south.	2
RP78	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within	Refined Parcel RP78 forms part of a gap of approximately 1.5 kilometres between Dickens Heath and Earlswood to the south.	2
RP79	0 - Refined Parcel is within an existing urban area and does not represent a gap between	Refined Parcel RP79 is contained by the urban area and contains urbanising development. It does not therefore represent a gap.	0
RP80	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within an existing urban area	Refined Parcel RP80 forms part of an approximate 3.5 kilometre gap between Hampton in Arden and Solihull to the west.	2
RP81	1 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of more than 5 kilometres between urban areas	Refined Parcel RP81 forms part of the Meriden Gap separating Coventry to the east from Birmingham and Solihull to the west.	1
RP82	1 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of more than 5 kilometres between urban areas	Refined Parcel RP82 forms part of the Meriden Gap separating Coventry to the east from Birmingham and Solihull to the west. RP82 also forms part of an approximate 6 kilometre gap between Coventry and Hampton in Arden to the west.	1
RP83	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within an existing urban area	Refined Parcel RP83 forms part of an approximate 2.9 kilometre gap between the Tile Hill area of Coventry to the east and Balsall Common to the west.	2
RP84	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within an existing urban area	Refined Parcel RP84 forms part of an approximate 2.8 kilometre gap between the Tile Hill area of Coventry to the east and Balsall Common to the west.	2
RP85	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within an existing urban area	Refined Parcel RP85 forms part of an approximate 2.9 kilometre gap between the Tile Hill area of Coventry to the east and Balsall Common to the west.	2
RP86	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within an existing urban area	Refined Parcel RP86 forms part of an approximate 2.9 kilometre gap between the Burton Green area of Coventry to the east and Balsall Common to the west.	2
RP87	2 - Refined Parcel represents a gap of between 1 and 5 kilometres between urban areas but is not within an existing urban area	Refined Parcel RP87 forms part of an approximate 1.6 kilometre gap between Dorridge to the east and Blythe Valley Business Park, although its role is limited due the permanent and durable M42 boundary in-between.	2

**Purpose 3: 'to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment'**

<b>Refined Parcel ID</b>	Is the Refined Parcel characterised by countryside? Does Refined Parcel adjoin areas of countryside? Is ribbon or other development present within the Refined Parcel? <b>0</b> - Refined Parcel is not characterised by countryside, does not adjoin countryside and/or has been developed ( <i>Parcel does not perform against the purpose</i> ) <b>1</b> - Refined Parcel is adjoined by countryside and has development present ( <i>Parcel is lower performing</i> ) <b>2</b> - Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present ( <i>Parcel is more moderately performing</i> ) <b>3</b> - Refined Parcel is characterised by countryside, adjoins countryside and does not contain any development ( <i>Parcel is higher performing</i> )	<b>Score</b>	
	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Commentary:</b>	
RP01	0 - Refined Parcel is not characterised by countryside, does not adjoin countryside and/or has been developed	Refined Parcel RP01 is entirely contained by the urban area and is in itself not characterised by countryside. This parcel contains Babbs Mill Park with Babbs Mill Lake and River Cole running through it.	0
RP02	0 - Refined Parcel is not characterised by countryside, does not adjoin countryside and/or has been developed	Refined Parcel RP02 is entirely contained by the urban area and is in itself not characterised by countryside. This parcel contains football pitches and some development.	0
RP03	0 - Refined Parcel is not characterised by countryside, does not adjoin countryside and/or has been developed	Refined Parcel RP03 is entirely contained by the urban area and is in itself not characterised by countryside. This parcel contains Meriden Park and River Cole running through it.	0
RP04	0 - Refined Parcel is not characterised by countryside, does not adjoin countryside and/or has been developed	Refined Parcel RP04 is adjoined by urban area and M6, however is characterised by countryside and no development is present. River Cole runs through.	2
RP05	0 - Refined Parcel is not characterised by countryside, does not adjoin countryside and/or has been developed	Refined Parcel RP05 is entirely contained by the urban area and is in itself not characterised by countryside. It contains woodland patch and Hatchford Brook.	0
RP06	0 - Refined Parcel is not characterised by countryside, does not adjoin countryside and/or has been developed	Refined Parcel RP06 is entirely contained by the urban area and is in itself not characterised by countryside. It contains green open space and Low Brook.	0
RP07	3 - Refined Parcel is characterised by countryside, adjoins countryside and does not contain any development	Refined Parcel RP07 is partially adjoined by the urban area and has development present. It also contained football pitches and some agricultural land.	1
RP08	2 - Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present	Refined Parcel RP08 is entirely contained by the urban area. It contains agricultural land, trees and green spaces.	1
RP09	2 - Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present	Refined Parcel RP09 is adjoined by urban area and M42, however is characterised by countryside and no development is present.	2
RP10	2 - Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present	Refined Parcel RP10 is partially adjoined by the urban area and has development present. It also contains some green fields and patch of woodland.	1
RP11	0 - Refined Parcel is not characterised by countryside, does not adjoin countryside and/or has been developed	Refined Parcel RP11 is entirely contained by the urban area and is in itself not characterised by countryside. The whole area has been developed.	0
RP12	0 - Refined Parcel is not characterised by countryside, does not adjoin countryside and/or has been developed	Refined Parcel RP12 is entirely contained by the urban area and is in itself not characterised by countryside. There is woodland present on the parcel.	0
RP13	2 - Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present	Refined Parcel RP13 is adjoined by M42 and A452, however is characterised by countryside and no development is present.	2
RP14	2 - Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present	Refined Parcel RP14 is adjoined by urban to the west, however is characterised by countryside and no development is present.	2
RP15	2 - Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present	Refined Parcel RP15 is adjoined by urban development along south western border, however it is characterised by countryside and no development is present.	2
RP16	1 - Refined Parcel is adjoined by countryside and has development present	Refined Parcel RP16 is partially adjoined by the Coventry Road and has development present.	1
RP17	2 - Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present	Refined Parcel RP17 is adjoined by Coventry Road and M42, however it is characterised by countryside and only limited development is present.	2
RP18	1 - Refined Parcel is adjoined by countryside and has development present	Refined Parcel RP18 is adjoined by countryside but substantial part of the parcel has been developed.	1

RP62	1 - Refined Parcel is adjoined by countryside and has development present	Refined Parcel RP62 is partially adjoined by the urban area of Monkspath to the north east and west and has development present.	1
RP63	1 - Refined Parcel is adjoined by countryside and has development present	Refined Parcel RP63 is located between urban area of Monkspath and Cheswick Green. The parcel comprises some agricultural land but substantial area has been already developed.	1
RP64	0 - Refined Parcel is not characterised by countryside, does not adjoin countryside and/or has been developed	Refined Parcel RP64 is entirely developed and is in itself not characterised by countryside.	0
RP65	2 - Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present	Refined Parcel RP65 is adjoined by development of Shirley to the north and Cheswick Green to the south-east. The area is made up of agricultural fields and open to the south-west. Only limited development is present.	2
RP66	3 - Refined Parcel is characterised by countryside, adjoins countryside and does not contain any development	Refined Parcel RP66 is adjoined by development of Cheswick Green to the north-east and agricultural land to the south and west. The area is made up of agricultural fields with no development present.	3
RP67	3 - Refined Parcel is characterised by countryside, adjoins countryside and does not contain any development	Refined Parcel RP67 is entirely adjoined by countryside and limited development in the north-east corner. The area is made up of agricultural fields, with no development present.	3
RP68	2 - Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present	Refined Parcel RP68 is adjoined by development of Dickens Heath to the west and agricultural land to east and south. The area is made up of agricultural fields and open to the south-east. Only limited development is present.	2
RP69	2 - Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present	Refined Parcel RP69 is adjoined by development of Shirley to the north-east. The area is made up of forestry plantation and agricultural fields. Limited development is present in the eastern part of the site.	2
RP70	2 - Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present	Refined Parcel RP70 is adjoined by development of Shirley to the north and Major's Green to the west. The area is made up of forestry plantation, agricultural fields and football pitches. Only very limited development is present.	2
RP71	2 - Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present	Refined Parcel RP71 is adjoined by development of Dickens Heath to the east and agricultural land to north and south. The area is made up of agricultural fields and football pitches. Only very limited development is present.	2
RP72	1 - Refined Parcel is adjoined by countryside and has development present	Refined Parcel RP72 is adjoined by countryside but it has been largely developed.	1
RP73	3 - Refined Parcel is characterised by countryside, adjoins countryside and does not contain any development	Refined Parcel RP73 is adjoined by development to the west and north-east and agricultural land to south-east and north. The area is made up of agricultural fields and woodland with only very limited development present.	3
RP74	0 - Refined Parcel is not characterised by countryside, does not adjoin countryside and/or has been developed	Refined Parcel RP74 is entirely developed and is in itself not characterised by countryside.	0
RP75	3 - Refined Parcel is characterised by countryside, adjoins countryside and does not contain any development	Refined Parcel RP75 is adjoined by development to the west and agricultural land to east, south and north. The area is made up of agricultural fields and woodland. Only limited development is present on the south-west border.	3
RP76	0 - Refined Parcel is not characterised by countryside, does not adjoin countryside and/or has been developed	Refined Parcel RP76 is entirely developed and is in itself not characterised by countryside.	0
RP77	3 - Refined Parcel is characterised by countryside, adjoins countryside and does not contain any development	Refined Parcel RP77 is entirely adjoined by countryside. The area is made up of agricultural fields, with very limited development present on the south-west border.	3
RP78	3 - Refined Parcel is characterised by countryside, adjoins countryside and does not contain any development	Refined Parcel RP78 is adjoined by development of Dickens Heath to the north and agricultural land to east, south and west. The area is made up of agricultural fields, two ponds and mature trees patches. Only limited development is present.	3
RP79	0 - Refined Parcel is not characterised by countryside, does not adjoin countryside and/or has been developed	Refined Parcel RP79 is entirely contained by the urban area and is partially developed.	0
RP80	3 - Refined Parcel is characterised by countryside, adjoins countryside and does not contain any development	Refined Parcel RP80 is entirely adjoined by agricultural land to east, south and west. The area is made up of agricultural fields and mature trees patches. There is no development present.	3
RP81	2 - Refined Parcel is generally characterised by countryside, is adjoined by countryside and/or has limited development present	Refined Parcel RP81 is characterised by countryside and adjoins countryside to the west north and south. There is however some limited development present.	2
RP82	3 - Refined Parcel is characterised by countryside, adjoins countryside and does not contain any development	Refined Parcel RP82 is characterised by countryside and adjoins countryside to the north, south, west and for a small distance to the east. There is no development present within the parcel.	3

**Purpose 4: 'to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns'**

Refined Parcel ID	Is the Refined Parcel within or adjoining a Conservation Area within an historic town? Are key landmarks or the historic core visible from within the Refined Parcel? Does the Refined Parcel contribute to the setting of the historic town? <b>0</b> - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town ( <i>Parcel does not perform against the purpose</i> ) <b>1</b> - Refined Parcel is adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town but has no views of landmarks and/or the historic core ( <i>Parcel is lower performing</i> ) <b>2</b> - Refined Parcel is adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town and has limited views of landmarks and/or the historic core ( <i>Parcel is more moderately performing</i> ) <b>3</b> - Refined Parcel is adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town and there are clear views of landmarks and/or the historic core ( <i>Parcel is higher performing</i> )	Score
	<b>Rating:</b> <b>Commentary:</b>	
RP01	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town Refined Parcel RP01 is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area or historic town.	0
RP02	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town Refined Parcel RP02 is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area or historic town.	0
RP03	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town Refined Parcel RP03 is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area or historic town.	0
RP04	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town Refined Parcel RP04 is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area or historic town.	0
RP05	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town Refined Parcel RP05 is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area or historic town.	0
RP06	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town Refined Parcel RP06 is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area or historic town.	0
RP07	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town Refined Parcel RP07 is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area or historic town.	0
RP08	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town Refined Parcel RP08 is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area or historic town.	0
RP09	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town Refined Parcel RP09 is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area or historic town.	0
RP10	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town Refined Parcel RP10 is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area or historic town.	0
RP11	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town Refined Parcel RP11 is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area or historic town.	0
RP12	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town Refined Parcel RP12 is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area or historic town.	0
RP13	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town Refined Parcel RP13 is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area or historic town.	0
RP14	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town Refined Parcel RP14 is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area or historic town.	0
RP15	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town Refined Parcel RP15 is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area or historic town.	0
RP16	3 - Refined Parcel is adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town and there are clear views of landmarks and/or the historic core Refined Parcel RP16 is within the Bickenhill Conservation Area with the clear views of Bickenhill Church.	3
RP17	3 - Refined Parcel is adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town and there are clear views of landmarks and/or the historic core Refined Parcel RP17 is within the Bickenhill Conservation Area with the clear views of Bickenhill Church.	3
RP18	1 - Refined Parcel is adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town but has no views of landmarks and/or the historic core Refined Parcel RP18 is adjacent to the Hampton in Arden Conservation area but there are no views.	1
RP19	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town Refined Parcel RP19 is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area or historic town.	0
RP20	3 - Refined Parcel is adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town and there are clear views of landmarks and/or the historic core Refined Parcel RP20 is within the Hampton in Arden Conservation area and there are clear views of the historic core and landmarks.	3
RP21	0 - Refined Parcel is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area within a historic town Refined Parcel RP21 is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area or historic town.	0

