



Solihull MBC Local Plan Publication Stage Representation Form

Ref:

(For
official
use only)

Name of the Local Plan to which this representation relates:

Solihull Local Plan – Draft Submission

Please return to psp@solihull.gov.uk or Policy and Engagement, Solihull MBC, Solihull, B91 3QB BY Monday 14th December 23:59

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This form has two parts –

Part A – Personal Details: need only be completed once.

Part B – Your representation(s). Please fill in a separate sheet for each representation you wish to make.

Part A

1. Personal Details*

**If an agent is appointed, please complete only the Title, Name and Organisation (if applicable) boxes below but complete the full contact details of the agent in 2.*

2. Agent’s Details (if applicable)

Title	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Mr"/>
First Name	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Gary"/>
Last Name	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Stephens"/>
Job Title (where relevant)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Partner"/>
Organisation (where relevant)	<input type="text" value="IM Properties"/>	<input type="text" value="Marrons Planning"/>
Address Line 1	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Bridgeway House"/>
Line 2	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Bridgeway"/>
Line 3	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Stratford upon Avon"/>
Line 4	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Post Code	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="CV37 6YX"/>
Telephone Number	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="REDACTED"/>

E-mail Address

(where relevant)

Part B – Please use a separate sheet for each representation

Name or Organisation:

3. To which part of the Local Plan does this representation relate?

Paragraph Policy Policies Map

4. Do you consider the Local Plan is :

4.(1) Legally compliant	Yes	<input type="text" value="X"/>	No	<input type="text"/>
4.(2) Sound	Yes	<input type="text"/>	No	<input type="text" value="X"/>
4 (3) Complies with the Duty to co-operate	Yes	<input type="text" value="X"/>	No	<input type="text"/>

Please tick as appropriate

5. Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan is not legally compliant or is unsound or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible.

If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Local Plan or its compliance with the duty to co-operate, please also use this box to set out your comments.

See attached paper

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

6. Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make the Local Plan legally compliant and sound, in respect of any legal compliance or soundness matters you have identified at 5 above. (Please note that non-compliance with the duty to co-operate is incapable of modification at examination). You will need to say why each modification will make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.

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7. If your representation is seeking a modification to the plan, do you consider it necessary to participate in examination hearing session(s)?

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9. Signature:

Gary Stephens

Date:

14/12/2020

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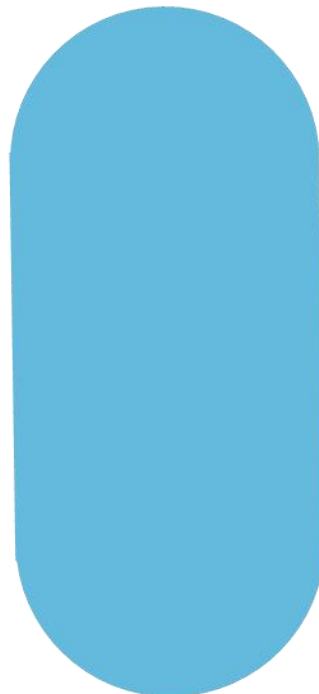
14/12/2020

Representations (Land west of Stratford Road – Site 62)

Solihull Local Plan - Draft Submission Plan

IM Properties

December 2020





1. The following representations are made in response to the Solihull Local Plan – Draft Submission Plan (October 2020) on behalf of IM Properties in respect of their land interests at land west of Stratford Road (Site Reference 62). These should be read alongside the completed Representation Form.

Paragraph 523 (Sustainability Appraisal)

Question 5

2. There is not a specific section within the Plan which refers to the Sustainability Appraisal (SA), therefore this objection is made in relation to Paragraph 523 of the Plan as this is the first reference to the SA in the Plan.
3. The SA has not fairly considered reasonable alternatives in respect of levels of housing or employment growth. In fact, the level of growth was pre-determined prior to undertaking the SA this year, and has therefore not been informed by the SA in accordance with the Framework¹.
4. In terms of housing, Option 2 (15,000 dwellings) is the Plan's preferred approach in light of the SA, and yet higher levels of growth perform equally as well. In fact, the only tangible difference between Option 3 (16,000 dwellings) and Option 2 is that Option 3 has a negative effect in relation to resource efficiency (resulting from greater generation of waste) whereas Option 2 is regarded as neutral².
5. An additional 1,000 homes represents a percentage increase of less than 1% in the number of homes within the Borough, and whilst they will generate greater levels of waste, it will not be material. The SA is factually inconsistent on this point as it has considered the additional 1,000 homes delivered by Option 3 to not have a material difference to the positive effects on housing, social inclusion, regeneration and employment. In any event, the negative effect on resource efficiency is not significantly adverse, and therefore the SA demonstrates that a higher level of housing growth than 15,000 dwellings can be accommodated sustainably.

¹ Paragraph 32 of the Framework

² Table 5.4 of the SA



6. Looking further, Option 4 (19,000 dwellings) is a sizeable jump from Option 3 without any explanation in the SA as to why it was selected over lesser options. The additional positive effects of Option 4 on housing, social inclusion, regeneration, and employment are noted. However, it also notes greater negative effects in relation to flooding and climate change, and the natural environment. Those greater negative effects appear to relate to the choice of locations that were put forward by the Council to assess this level of housing growth, e.g. significant growth (3,000 additional dwellings) at either Balsall Common or land south of the A45. Only considering two spatial options for this higher level of growth clearly has the potential to skew the conclusions of the SA. Further, the two spatial options were selected from the GBHMA Strategic Growth Study, and therefore had not even been taken from the Council's own SHELAA evidence as to land that was suitable for development. Negative effects say for example on flooding or green infrastructure could have been avoided had alternative options been considered.
7. It is acknowledged that the SA has to be manageable and cannot consider endless alternatives and permutations. However, given the importance of testing higher levels of housing growth in light of the scale of unmet need arising from the neighbouring authority, the SA should have undertaken a finer grain analysis of options at levels of growth above 16,000 dwellings utilising its own evidence base of available and suitable sites.
8. The SA therefore fails to provide a sound evidence base for not pursuing higher levels of housing growth in order to meet the housing requirement.
9. Aside from housing growth, the SA fails to appraise any alternatives in relation to levels or locations for employment growth within the Borough. Reference is made at Chapter 8 of the SA to developing the employment strategy, however the strategy was pre-determined and was never assessed. Chapter 8 explains that local employment needs are being addressed through existing commitments and the allocation of Employment Site 20. The SA justifies the selection of Site 20 based on its proximity to Jaguar Land Rover and it being within an area identified in the GBHMA Strategic Growth Study. No appraisal has therefore been undertaken of any reasonable alternatives in relation to employment.



10. In relation to the specific assessment of Site 62 (AECOM 114 CG4 Stratford Road/Creynolds Lane), there are a number of inaccuracies identified below.
11. SA9 refers to a negative effect in relation to ecology, and yet the site is not, and does not overlap with a Local Wildlife Site. Further, there are no sensitive habitats within the site, and therefore the impact should be neutral not negative.
12. SA10 states the landscape is of medium-high sensitivity to change based on the high level Landscape Character Assessment of the LCA2 Southern Countryside character area. Factually, this is incorrect as the landscape character sensitivity of LCA2 is considered to be medium within the Assessment. Further, the site is considered of low sensitivity to change given it is visually enclosed by a significant tree belt along its western and southern boundary and therefore the assessment should also be neutral.
13. SA14 refers to a negative effect in relation to amenity and noise from the A34, and yet the site is capable of accommodating a suitable buffer. Moreover, the proposed employment uses adjacent to the A34 could shield any potential noise issues affecting residential uses. The effect should therefore be neutral.
14. Finally, SA17 refers to a negative effect in relation to access to leisure and play facilities, and yet the site is adjacent to Shirley Golf Club, which is a substantial leisure facility open to the public.
15. On the basis of the above, the site performs well and the only negative being the fact the site falls within a least deprived area (SA1). This is not a significant adverse effect though, and therefore not a reason to not allocate the land.

Question 6

16. The SA should be updated to re-consider higher levels of housing growth using a more refined approach, and assess reasonable alternatives in relation to the location of employment growth.



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17. The SA of Site 62 (AECOM 114 CG4 Stratford Road/Creynolds Lane) should be amended to reflect the updated and correct position.



Paragraphs 63 to 69 (Spatial Strategy/Site Selection)

Question 5

18. There is not a policy within the Plan that contains the Spatial Strategy, and so representations are made against paragraphs 63 to 69 of the Plan. The Plan should contain strategic policies which set out the overall strategy for development³. On the basis that these policies are absent, the Plan is not sound.
19. The Spatial Strategy as defined in paragraph 63 confirms that growth around Shirley Town Centre and the A34 corridor is the 'starting position' (Options A to D). The A34 Corridor is not defined within the Plan, but runs from Junction 4 of the M42 to the northern boundary of the Borough.
20. The Strategy then refers to other Options (E to G), which can only therefore be described as 'secondary' to A to D. However, Options E to G may well also fall under Options A to D. For instance, a limited expansion of a rural village/settlement (F) could well be on the A34 Corridor. There is therefore ambiguity as to which option such a site might fall within. It should be noted that IM Properties are promoting such a site at Land west of Stratford Road (Site 62) which is on the A34 Corridor. The Strategy should be amended to clarify.
21. Paragraph 65 adds further confusion by introducing three further criterion which inform the location of growth but do not relate in any way to Options A to G. It is unclear which takes precedence (A to G or Paragraph 65). Furthermore, within the evidence base, the Site Selection Topic Paper includes an entirely new set of hierarchy criteria⁴, which has been used to inform the site selection.
22. The absence of a clear Spatial Strategy and indeed settlement hierarchy therefore makes it impossible to understand how the scale and pattern of development is to be delivered within the Plan.

³ Paragraph 20 of the Framework

⁴ Paragraph 43 of the Topic Paper



23. This therefore makes it difficult to understand how the sites selected relate to the Strategy. By way of example, it is noted that none of the sites chosen as allocations in Paragraph 69 fall within Options A to D, and yet these Options are the 'starting position' within the Spatial Strategy. Site Selection (Paragraph 69) refers to the site selection methodology which is set out in the Topic Paper. The methodology is consistent with national policy in so far as considering first the potential of sites outside of the Green Belt (Priority 1 and 2), however it then departs from national policy in relation to Green Belt by not first considering previously developed land and land well served by public transport⁵. It also makes no reference to whether the loss of Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the remaining Green Belt.
24. The implications of the Spatial Strategy and site selection methodology are that Green Belt sites that perform well in relation to national policy⁶ were not selected as a result of the methodology and its confused application.
25. For example, Site 62 at Land west of Stratford Road is well served by public transport (20 minute frequency of bus services connecting with Solihull Town Centre, Knowle, Dorridge, Blythe Valley, and Shirley)⁷. It offers compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of the remaining Green Belt in the form of enhancements to the leisure facilities at Shirley Golf Club, and landscape/ecological enhancements. It therefore fits squarely with the Framework.
26. However, the Site Assessment ignores the Spatial Strategy and considers the site as a large scale urban extension (Growth Option G) even though the site is only 8.5ha and is arguably not large scale and much smaller than other sites chosen as allocations along the A34 corridor.
27. In any event, the site was assessed as Priority Site 5 which meant it was considered a potential allocation on the basis it was low performing in Green Belt terms and in an accessible location. The commentary however then dismisses the site as an allocation for the following reasons.

⁵ Paragraph 138 of the Framework

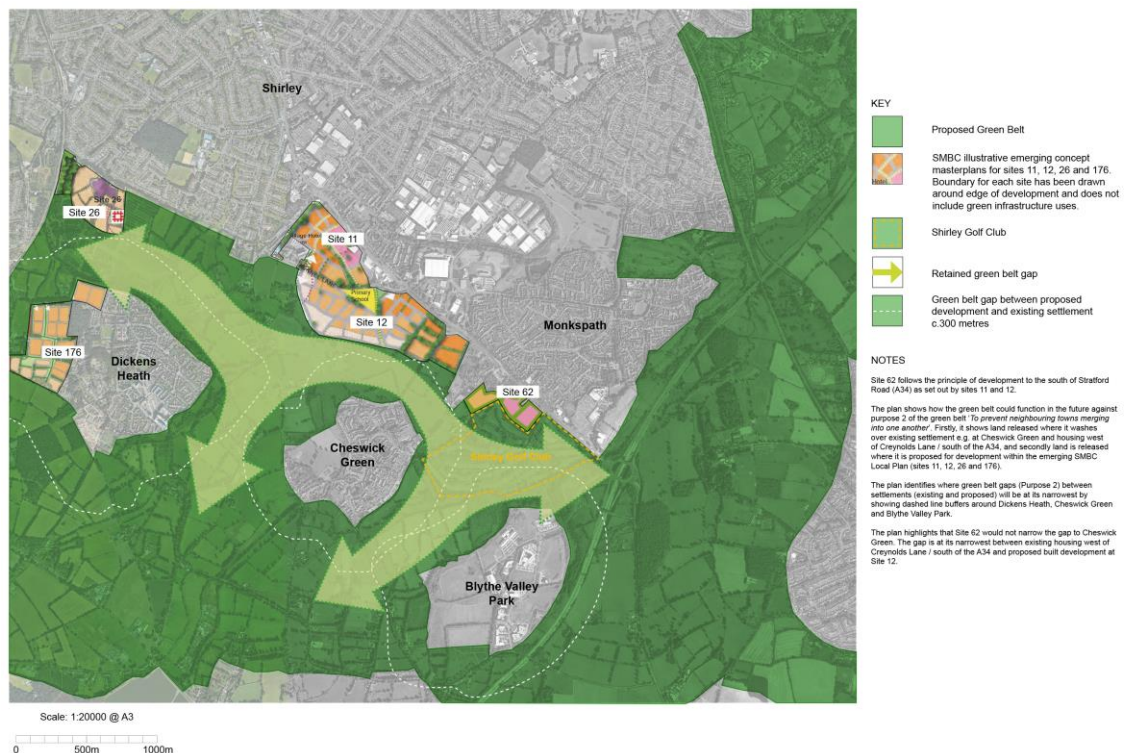
⁶ Paragraph 138 of the Framework

⁷ See Transport and Accessibility Technical Note at Appendix 1



28. The site is considered by the Council’s evidence as highly performing in Green Belt terms in preventing two neighbouring towns from merging into one another. However, the site does not fall between two neighbouring towns, and in any event would not erode the gap between Solihull and Cheswick Green (the nearest village). This is illustrated by the following plan (Green Belt Analysis of Purpose 2) which shows how releasing Site Ref: 62 from the Green Belt does not lead to any meaningful reduction in distances between the urban area and the surrounding settlements of Cheswick Green and Blythe Valley Park, indeed existing residential development on the northern side of Creynolds Lane is closer to Cheswick Green than the site.

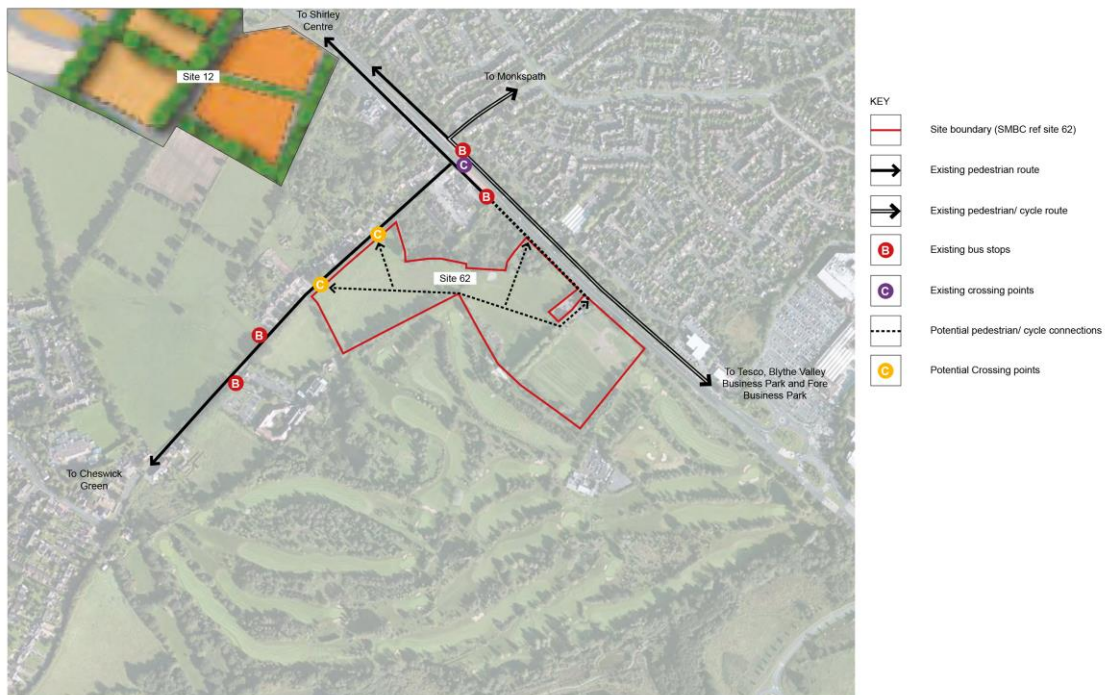
Plan showing the extent of the gap that is retained between Site 62 and Cheswick Green



29. The site is considered in the Council’s evidence to fall within an area of high landscape sensitivity, medium landscape value, and very low capacity to accommodate change. This is taken from the Landscape Character Assessment (December 2016). Site Ref: 62 forms part of LCA 2 Southern Countryside which



- covers the entirety of open land south of Stratford Road to the Borough boundary. It therefore includes other proposed allocations Sites 12, 26, and 176. It is inconsistent & unreasonable therefore for Site Ref: 62 to be assessed as 'red' with severe impacts on the grounds of this Assessment, if other sites within the same Assessment area are 'green' and have been proposed to be allocated.
30. Further, there has been no finer grain analysis of LCA 2 which distinguishes between the sites. Had the exercise been undertaken, it would be apparent that in respect of Site Ref: 62, the site has very limited intervisibility with the rest of LCA 2. The mature, dense tree belt along the southern boundary with the Golf Course prevents any views beyond. Further, views across the northern and eastern boundaries with Creynolds Lane are influenced by the built development on the opposite side of the Lane. Whilst the site has some landscape features of interest within it, notably the trees and woodland around its boundary, these can be retained to form components of any development. In landscape terms, Site Ref: 62 has high capacity to accommodate change, and there would be no 'severe' landscape impacts arising from its development.
 31. The site is considered in the Council's evidence to have lower accessibility to a GP or public transport. However, this Assessment did give the site an overall Medium/High Accessibility score, and it was also undertaken prior to the introduction of new bus services connecting Blythe Valley Park with the urban areas which result in a 20 minute frequency of service passing the site. The site is therefore now highly accessible by public transport.
 32. One of the points raised in the Assessment was the lack of an existing footway on Stratford Road. To address this issue, the following Connectivity Analysis Plan shows how the site would be connected to the existing pedestrian and cycle routes, and bus stops.



33. This shows that a new footway would be installed from the Stratford Road site frontage to the Premier Inn footway to provide connections to the existing Toucan crossing point at the Creynolds Lane junction and enable access to the facilities to the north of Stratford Road.
34. In terms of proximity to a GP surgery, the nearest facility is the ‘Village Surgery’ at Cheswick Green within 1.3km. Several surgeries are accessible within the equivalent journey times by bus.
35. There are bus stops provided both on Creynolds Lane and on Stratford Road within 400m which is the highest band used in the Accessibility Mapping to score the accessibility of the site. The bus stops on Stratford Road would be within 260m from the Stratford Road access using the new footway. In addition, safe crossing points would be provided at the Creynolds Lane site frontage and the bus stops on the Creynolds Lane would be within 225m from the Creynolds Lane site access.
36. The bus services at these stops provide frequent services during the weekdays, evenings and Saturdays, which combined with new bus services for Blythe Valley



Park which began in February 2019, substantively meet the criteria set out in the Accessibility Mapping.

37. In public transport terms, the site is highly accessible and the 'Access to Bus Services' scoring of 40 within the Accessibility Mapping is incorrect and should be updated to the full 100 points to provide an overall score of 320 for this site (see table below).

Band	Policy P7 Accessibility Score out of 400	Site 62 Corrected Rating
Primary School	100	100
Food Store	80	80
GP Surgery	40	40
Bus Services*	40	100
Rail services*	(20)	(20)
Total Score	260	320

**highest score for either bus OR rail*

38. The implications of this are that the site should be regarded as having a 'High' Accessibility Score within the Council's evidence.
39. Finally, the site is considered by the Council's assessment not to have a strong defensible Green Belt boundary. Historically, the Green Belt boundary has been Stratford Road as shown on the following plan.



40. However, given the Plan's focus of growth on the A34 Corridor, Stratford Road is clearly no longer an appropriate boundary for the Green Belt as evident by the selection of allocations south of Stratford Road, particularly along Dog Kennel Lane (Site Ref: BL2). Its character is inevitably going to change as more development takes place, and it no longer performs the function of a defensible boundary to development.

41. Paragraph 139 of the Framework requires Green Belt boundaries to use physical features that are readily recognisable, and likely to be permanent. The following plan proposes a new Green Belt boundary which releases Site Ref: 62 from the Green Belt.



42. The southern boundary of Site Ref: 62 is a tall, mature, dense tree belt which is long established and separates the Golf Course from the site. This tall screen forms a backdrop to the site, and is readily recognisable and likely to be permanent given its role in protecting the setting of the Golf Course. The Golf Course itself has been in existence for over 60 years, and is a long established recreational use within the Borough which is protected in land use planning terms. There is therefore a clearly defined southern boundary that accords with the Framework and will be permanent.
43. Development of Site Ref: 62 would be contained by strong, physical features that limit any intervisibility with the Golf Course beyond. It is not accepted therefore that development would result in an unacceptable incursion into the countryside on landscape or visual impact grounds, or any other grounds.
44. The northern boundary of Site Ref: 62 comprises Stratford Road, a small pocket of woodland, and built development along Creynolds Lane. The properties on the northern side of Creynolds Lane, and those around its junction with Stratford Road (e.g. Premier Inn), are currently within the Green Belt, however there is no need for this land to be designated as such given it is developed, it immediately adjoins the urban area, and openness does not form part of its character. Criteria b of



Paragraph 139 is clear in that Green Belt boundaries should not include land which is unnecessary to keep permanently open.

45. Furthermore, in the context of the proposed allocation Site Ref: 12 to the north of the properties on Creynolds Lane, the retention of the existing properties along Creynolds Lane within the Green Belt would be an anomaly when properties to the north would be outside the Green Belt. It would also present an illogical boundary and should therefore be removed, along with Site Ref: 62.
46. Retaining the Green Belt between the urban area and Cheswick Green is however important in preventing the two settlements merging, and therefore the boundary should be re-drawn at the western end of the existing properties on Creynolds Lane and Site Ref: 62 as shown on the plan.
47. The site has not therefore been considered fairly through this process. It is in an accessible location, it is a lower performing site in Green Belt terms, and should therefore be an allocation listed in Paragraph 69.

Question 6

48. The Spatial Strategy should be set out as a strategic policy in the Plan.
49. The Spatial Strategy should be more clear as to the scale and pattern of development that is intended to be delivered, and how this has informed site selection.
50. The Site Selection methodology should be amended to reflect Paragraph 138 of the Framework.
51. The Site Selection should include an allocation of land west of Stratford Road.



Policy P17 – Green Belt Policy

Question 5

52. Policy P17 makes no reference to safeguarding land within the Green Belt. Indeed, there is no reference to any consideration being given to safeguarding land. It is considered necessary for the Plan to safeguard land in order to meet longer-term development needs. Exceptional circumstances exist in that:
- a. the local authority is significantly constrained by Green Belt with very limited opportunities outside it;
 - b. unmet needs within neighbouring areas already exist (see representations under housing and employment requirements and the Council propose to deal with them through the next review of the Plan); and,
 - c. there are no neighbouring Councils who have expressed a willingness to take any unmet needs arising from Solihull thereby meaning the next review of the Plan will need to release land from the Green Belt.
53. This Plan should therefore be safeguarding land in order to ensure there is a degree of permanence to the boundaries proposed within this Plan in accordance with the Framework.

Question 6

54. The Plan should be amended to include safeguarded land to accommodate longer-term development needs.



Paragraph 419 – Strategic Green Belt Assessment

Question 5

55. Paragraph 419 of the Plan makes reference to the Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment, and that its findings have been used to help justify the removal of land from the Green Belt. That statement is inconsistent with the Assessment itself which states on page 2 that it does not make recommendations for amendments to the boundary but that it forms the basis for more detailed assessment. There is no evidence of any more detailed assessment. The Assessment was prepared in 2016 and therefore pre-dates the current version of the Framework.
56. There are inaccuracies in relation to the Assessment of Parcel RP62 (Site 62: land west of Stratford Road) which a more detailed assessment would have identified.
57. The site is assessed as being a gap of less than 1km between urban areas. That is clearly incorrect, as the nearest settlement is Cheswick Green which is not an urban area. In any event, development of the site would not result in the gap between Solihull and Cheswick Green being any smaller than exists at present, as built development already extends further along Creynolds Lane to the north as evident on the plan below. The site does not therefore perform any role in preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another.



58. The only purpose to which the site performs any role is in relation to assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. A characteristic which all undeveloped Green Belt performs.
59. This inaccuracy has contributed to the site not being selected as an allocation in the Site Selection Methodology and should be addressed.
60. Further, the Strategic Green Belt Assessment takes no account of any compensatory improvements to the remaining Green Belt that may arise from the release of land⁸. In respect of Site Ref: 62, this land is owned by Shirley Golf Club and they would benefit from any release of the land from the Green Belt as its development would give the Golf Club an injection of resources that would enable it to invest in improving its facilities for the residents of the Borough. This will inevitably improve the environment quality and accessibility of the Golf Course, land which of course falls within the Green Belt. The release of this land from the Green Belt would therefore provide compensation in accordance with the Framework.

⁸ Paragraph 138 of the Framework



Question 6

61. The Strategic Green Belt Assessment should be updated and corrected in relation to its Assessment of RP62 (land west of Stratford Road).
62. The Strategic Green Belt Assessment should be updated to take into consideration any compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of the remaining Green Belt.



Policy P3 – Provision of Land for General Business and Premises

Question 5

63. Policy P3 is unsound as it is not positively prepared and fails to make sufficient provision of employment land to meet the needs of the area, including unmet needs of neighbouring areas. Over reliance is placed on two large allocations where delivery and land availability is uncertain, and where their trajectory is likely to be much later in the plan period thus failing to provide the continuous supply necessary.
64. Policy P3 is also unsound as it is not justified and not an appropriate strategy based on the evidence. It fails to match the spatial strategy of the Plan and the location of housing growth, and has no regard to the evidence of the HEDNA in relation to supply and demand along the A34 corridor.
65. Policy P3 is also unsound as it is not consistent with national planning policy. It fails to provide a choice for businesses who wish to invest and expand, and fails to recognise the economic success of the A34 corridor in bringing investment and jobs to the Borough. It also fails to align with the locations for growth in housing leading to a less sustainable pattern of development.
66. The failure to allocate land for employment on the A34 corridor is a fundamental flaw in the Plan, which will not support a strong and competitive economy for Solihull, and which undermines the sustainable credentials of the Plan.
67. The suggestion by the Council in its topic paper that an early review of the Plan is an appropriate response to addressing unmet needs is also unsound as it is evidence of deferring cross-boundary strategic matters. Moreover, the Plan then fails to provide any certainty as to the permanence of its Green Belt boundaries in the longer term contrary to national planning policy.
68. The following points are made to support the above statements.



Employment Requirement

69. Paragraph 142 of the Plan sets out an employment requirement of 147,000 sq m of floorspace based on meeting local needs. This figure is not found within any of the policies of the Plan, and therefore the Plan fails to provide a strategic policy that sets out the overall scale of development for employment. This is inconsistent with paragraph 20 of the Framework.
70. The evidence of need is set out within the HEDNA based on a baseline forecast using national trends which indicates the economy is expected to grow by 1.5% per annum or 10,000 jobs. However, national economic trends may not automatically translate to particular areas with a distinct employment base⁹. As the HEDNA noted, the baseline forecast fails to reflect the progression of specific local sectors. The more appropriate position reflecting past performance was shown in a modelled forecast which resulted in growth of 15,680 jobs. This figure should be carried forward as a minimum to inform employment land requirement.
71. Other factors need to be taken into consideration in informing the requirement, particularly the existing stock available, pattern of supply, and evidence of market demand. It is evident from the HEDNA that the south west of the Borough (A34 Corridor) has a very high take up of offices¹⁰, the lowest amount of available office space, and strong occupier demand indicated through consultations with agents for space in locations such as the A34 Corridor¹¹. Indeed, the HEDNA recommended the Plan take account of the need for larger footplate needs in locations such as Blythe Valley Park on the A34 Corridor.
72. Reference is made to 7ha of land being available at Blythe Valley Park and 2ha at nearby Fore to satisfy short term needs, but this is no longer correct and supply is now down to around 3ha at Blythe (see below). Appended to these representations are two reports which consider in more detail the supply and demand for

⁹ Paragraph: 025 Reference ID: 2a-025-20190220 of the NPPG

¹⁰ Paragraph 11.7 of the HEDNA

¹¹ Paragraphs 11.29 and 11.54 of the HEDNA



- employment land and automotive retail as an employment type on the A34 Corridor.¹²
73. The Local Industrial Strategy raises similar concerns as to the shortfall of land for employment, highlighting the significant gap in good quality employment land¹³, and yet no reference is made to the Strategy or its evidence.
74. In this context, the limitation imposed on future supply by the low requirement in the Plan and the very limited number of allocations will constrain economic growth in the short to medium term given the market demand indicators and evidence. No account of this evidence has been taken in the employment land requirement, or the selection of sites to meet that requirement. The Plan requirement is therefore not positively prepared or justified.
75. Furthermore, unmet employment land needs exist within neighbouring areas (up to 570ha to 2038 within the Black Country Authorities who have written to the Council notifying them). There is no evidence within the Plan of any contribution being made to meet those unmet needs, and the Council has suggested their unmet needs can be dealt with as part of the next review of the Local Plan. However, that is not evidence of effective joint working, but rather deferring its consideration which is evidence of an unsound Plan in being contrary to paragraph 35 c) of the Framework.
76. It is unacceptable to propose before the Plan has even been submitted to the Inspectorate that a review will be necessary to properly address employment needs. That amounts to 'poor planning', and is not evidence of a positively prepared Plan which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the needs of the area. The opportunity exists now to make this Plan sound before it is submitted to the Inspectorate, and the Council should properly address this issue.
77. In any event, were an early review of the Local Plan to be undertaken addressing unmet needs it will inevitably require the release of Green Belt land. This Plan demonstrates exceptional circumstances exist to require the removal of land from the Green Belt as a consequence of the level of need, the lack of sufficient

¹² See Appendix 2 and 3

¹³ Page 63 of the Local Industrial Strategy



alternatives outside of the Green Belt, and the absence of willing neighbouring Councils prepared to accommodate some of the need. Those exceptional circumstances are very likely to still exist when the Council comes to undertake its review as urban capacity is limited, and nearby Councils are similarly constrained.

78. The Council have therefore failed to demonstrate the proposed Green Belt boundaries within this Plan will not need to be altered at the end of the Plan period¹⁴, and therefore consideration must be given in this Plan to safeguarding land. If not, there is no permanence to the Green Belt boundaries proposed within this Plan and they will not endure beyond the Plan period contrary to the Framework¹⁵.

Employment Supply

79. Policy P3 states that the Plan provides a continuing supply of employment land, which encourages sustainable economic growth and provides a broad range of employment opportunities.
80. The table at paragraph 143 of the Plan sets out the seven sites that comprise that supply. Five of the sites are existing allocations. The land currently available on those five sites is less than what is stated within the Plan as illustrated below.

¹⁴ Paragraph 139 e) of the Framework

¹⁵ Paragraph 136 of the Framework



Summary Table of Solihull Borough Employment Land Availability

No	Site.	Readily Available Allocated Area (ha) Draft Plan October 2020	Current Availability (ha) – December 2020
1	Blythe Valley Park	2	3 ¹⁶
2	Fore, Stratford Road	2	0
3	Chep/Higginson, Bickenhill Lane	0	0
4	Land at Clock Interchange	1	1
5	Birmingham Business Park	2.4	2.4
6	Land at HS2 Interchange		
7	Land at Damson Parkway		
	Total ha	7.4ha	6.4ha

81. Only 3ha of land remains available at Blythe Valley Park, no land is left available at Fore, no land is available at Chep/Higginson, only 1ha is readily available at Coventry Road, and 2.4ha is remaining at Birmingham Business Park.
82. On Blythe Valley Park, IM Properties are currently preparing a planning application for the remaining 3ha with an intention to develop out the plot meaning that this land will be removed from the employment land availability early in the plan period. This site, along with Fore, has developed rapidly over the past six years to the point where supply of some 20ha has now run out. This means there will be no further supply of employment land along the A34 corridor, and yet in the Spatial Strategy of the Plan this corridor is the focus for accommodating new development.
83. The existing supply therefore amounts to 6.4ha of employment land on three sites, but soon to fall to 3.4ha on two sites. For an economy that is described as 'strong, with key sector growth across a suite of white-collar and technical industries', this

¹⁶ This land is due to come forward shortly and will no longer be available.



is a wholly unacceptable figure and can only be regarded as a significant constraint upon the local and regional economy.

84. The Plan proposes only two additional allocations. The UK Central Hub whose delivery is described as 'complex' within the Plan¹⁷, and that proposals are likely to come forward towards the end of the Plan period (subject to the delivery of HS2)¹⁸. The scale of infrastructure required is also noted as significant, requiring co-ordination with a variety of key stakeholders¹⁹. There is no trajectory within the Plan for when this site will be readily available, nor any evidence to support such a trajectory. There is therefore no certainty when this site will be readily available, and as such it currently makes no contribution to maintaining a continual supply of employment land.
85. In addition, there are substantial infrastructure requirements in addition to HS2, such as public transport and active travel bridges across the WCML, which has an estimated cost of £40m and with no timescales confirmed for delivery. It is also noted the Council are still working with Highways England to assess the impact of development on their highway network²⁰. The absence of any agreement undermines the extent to which the assumptions within the Plan on delivery can be relied upon.
86. This evidence is important in being able to demonstrate the Plan is deliverable and sustainable, and that improvements to infrastructure required as a result of development have been robustly assessed, costed in order to demonstrate viability, and capable of being delivered in a way which does not hinder the proposed delivery of housing and employment. The absence of this evidence means the Plan is not justified.
87. The second allocation is land at Damson Parkway. It is noted there is no concept masterplan for the site (unlike other proposed allocations) and presumably this will have to be prepared and adopted post adoption of the Local Plan thus delaying the

¹⁷ Paragraph 835 of the Plan

¹⁸ Paragraph 845 of the Plan

¹⁹ Paragraph 835 of the Plan

²⁰ Page 23 of the Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan



- planning process. The site has a close relationship with the delivery of UK Central²¹ and therefore planning and delivering infrastructure improvements, particularly highways, will be more complex and take longer. The absence of any evidence as noted above is a similar concern.
88. The allocation is labelled as Jaguar Land Rover expansion²², although reference is made to it also being available for local needs. However, it is unclear at this stage the exact nature of the proposals²³, and therefore there is a significant degree of uncertainty as to what land is available beyond that required by Jaguar Land Rover.
89. As with UK Central, there is no trajectory within the Plan for when the Damson Parkway site will be readily available, nor evidence to support such a trajectory. There is therefore no certainty when this site will be available, and as such it currently makes no contribution to maintaining a continual supply of employment land.
90. On the basis of the above, there is significant doubt as to the ability of the Plan to maintain a continual supply of employment land to meet its needs. The economic growth of the Borough appears to be in the hands of two sites where delivery and the availability of land is in serious doubt. The Plan fails therefore to create the conditions that enable businesses to invest and expand now, and provides little or no choice for businesses who wish to locate or expand in the Borough.
91. Moreover, the future economic growth of the Borough over the next 15 years is reliant upon two inter-related large scale allocations geographically clustered around Junction 6 of the M42 away from centres of population and growth. In contrast, the Plan's growth corridor along the A34 (aligned as it is with existing centres of population, economic activity, and sustainable transport route) will have no employment land available from the very beginning of the plan period. Given the economic performance of this area in attracting new businesses, this is a missed opportunity and a barrier to investment.

²¹ Paragraph 850 of the Plan

²² Paragraph 850 of the Plan

²³ Paragraph 850 of the Plan



92. The employment allocations of the Plan have little relationship with the strategy of the Plan. For example, over 1,600 homes are allocated on the A34 corridor and in nearby settlements (BL1, BL2 and BL3), any yet no employment growth is proposed in this area. Such a strategy does not support a sustainable pattern of development through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of modes of transport. It is not therefore an appropriate or sustainable strategy and will only continue the pattern of unsustainable travel to work patterns within the Borough.
93. Objection is therefore made on the basis there are insufficient suitable, deliverable, and available sites to meet the needs for employment and therefore the absence of a continuous supply of employment land. Moreover, there is a lack of flexibility within the proposed allocations, in terms of the scale and location of sites allocated which will not contribute towards a sustainable pattern of development contrary to the Framework.

Question 6

94. The employment requirement should be set out within a strategic policy within the Plan.
95. The employment requirement should be increased to reflect past performance, the market evidence of supply and demand, the Local Industrial Strategy for the West Midlands Combined Authority and the unmet needs of the Black Country Authorities.
96. Evidence should be provided as to the availability and deliverability of the proposed allocations and the trajectory for their delivery, to demonstrate they are justified. If the evidence is not available, the sites should be removed as allocations.
97. Additional employment sites should be allocated to address the additional employment land requirement to ensure a continuous supply, to provide choice both in terms of scale and location and to focus particularly on sites which can be delivered early within the Plan period. There should be a balance of allocations across the Borough, including an employment allocation in the south of the Borough to serve the A34 corridor.



98. The table of allocated sites should therefore be amended to include land west of Stratford Road as a mixed use allocation comprising residential and employment uses. The site is:
- deliverable, available and achievable²⁴;
 - low performing in Green Belt terms;
 - has a low impact in landscape terms due to its enclosed nature²⁵;
 - on a high frequency bus service route connecting with the key centres;
and,
 - a sustainable location for residential and employment development.
99. Further, the Sustainability Appraisal finds no significant adverse effects from development of the site. The site is located on the A34 Corridor where market demand is high and land supply limited. It is also located in an area where substantial housing growth is planned, with no corresponding employment growth planned, leading to a less sustainable pattern of development.
100. The land at Site 62 should therefore be allocated for mixed use development.

²⁴ Site 62 – Category 1 in the SHELAA Update

²⁵ See Vision Document submitted with these representations as Appendix 4



Policy P5 – Provision of Land for Housing

Question 5

Housing Requirement

101. The housing requirement is not sound as it is not positively prepared, justified, effective or consistent with national policy for the following reasons.

Local Housing Need

102. The minimum Local Housing Need (LHN) has been calculated using the standard method which is well established and is not disputed. However, the Council will need to be mindful of any changes arising from the Government's stated intention to change the method for calculating LHN prior to submission of the Plan.

Plan Period

103. It is highly unlikely that the Local Plan will be adopted in 2021, thereby providing a plan period of 15 years post adoption as recommended by the Framework. On the basis that it is already December 2020 and the Plan has not been submitted, it is more likely to be adopted in 2022, and therefore the housing requirement and the Plan should be extended to 2037.

Employment uplift

104. LHN is afforded an employment uplift of nine dwellings per annum to take account of the substantial job growth at UK Central of around 13,000 net additional jobs. This is a figure which could increase as plans crystallise, and it is noted that the Council's Viability Study (2020) predicts up to 77,500 jobs by 2040. The Plan justifies the small increase based on the distinct jump between economic based housing needs and the number of jobs the minimum standard method can accommodate.



105. The Plan also justifies the small uplift from LHN on the assumption that only 25% of the jobs will be filled by people residing in Solihull, with the remainder in commuting from neighbouring areas. Travel to work data from the 2011 census is used to justify this, despite it being acknowledged in the HEDNA that patterns have likely changed since 2011.
106. Taking this approach will ‘bake-in’ inward commuting reflecting an historic pattern of movement rather than shaping growth to be more sustainable by locating homes close to where work is. This can only serve to increase traffic levels given the main mode of transport using census data in 2011 is the private car. In light of the Council’s recognition of the gravity of the climate change emergency, it is not sound to Plan on the basis of accepting such high levels of inward commuting.
107. As a consequence for the housing requirement, the Plan as proposed creates an unmet housing need that has no clarity about how it will be addressed, as the HEDNA states:
- 6.43 The UK Central scenario (Growth C), which is the recommended growth scenario, results in a housing need 9 dwellings per annum above the Standard Method, under the commuting assumptions set out above. There is, however, an unmet need 379 dwellings per annum required to fulfil the 75% of in-commuting jobs associated with UK Central.*
108. This unmet need amounts to over 6,000 dwellings over the Plan period. It is stated that some of this may already be accommodated within other Plan’s housing requirements (HEDNA Para 6.35), but there is no evidence to support that assumption.
109. The Plan also appears to suggest in paragraph 2.29 that its contribution to unmet needs from Birmingham should be taken into account as contributing to the UK Central employment uplift. However, the unmet housing needs arising from Birmingham had no regard to the level of job growth at UK Central and its implications on their housing needs.
110. The housing requirement should therefore be increased to take account of the employment uplift, particularly in the absence of any evidence that neighbouring areas are intending to accommodate higher housing numbers as a consequence.



Affordability uplift

111. The housing requirement should also be increased to take account of affordability within the Borough, consistent with national guidance (paragraph 2a-024-20190220) which states:

An increase in the total housing figures included in the plan may need to be considered where it could help deliver the required number of affordable homes.

112. The identified affordable housing need is 578 homes per annum (HEDNA para 35). However, the Council has reached the conclusion that the maximum amount that can be viably sought is 40% on any given scheme. Even if it was assumed that all of the LHN (807dpa) could contribute 40% affordable housing it would amount to only 322 affordable homes per annum. This top line is substantially less than the evidence suggests, and in reality 322 per annum is unlikely given the sources of supply, despite the Housing Topic paper (Paragraph 73) noting other methods for maximising affordable housing provision.
113. The Housing Topic paper notes at footnote 10 that this reduced to 224dpa if households already in accommodation are excluded, however the HEDNA is clear that the figure is theoretical and should not be seen to minimise the acute housing need in the borough.
114. The housing requirement should therefore be increased to reflect the levels of affordability.

Unmet Needs

115. The Plan does not fully address unmet housing needs and the housing requirement should be increased accordingly. Paragraph 227 of the Plan advises that Birmingham has unmet needs (37,900 homes), and paragraph 228 advises that the Plan is proposing a contribution of 2,105 homes towards unmet needs. However, there is no evidence that this level of contribution is agreed with Birmingham or



- other neighbouring authorities²⁶, or that the unmet needs that remain are to be addressed elsewhere²⁷.
116. Further, there is no evidence as to why the contribution is only 2,105 homes. Solihull has a strong functional relationship with the City, with good transport connections, and in population terms is much larger than other neighbouring areas (such as North Warwickshire) which have agreed to take a greater share of the unmet need.
117. In addition to Birmingham's needs, it is also noted the Black County Authorities estimate unmet housing needs of 29,260 homes and up to 570ha of employment land to 2038, and have written to the Council notifying them. The Council has suggested their unmet needs can be dealt with as part of the next review of the Local Plan²⁸. However, that is not evidence of effective joint working, but rather deferring its consideration which is evidence of an unsound Plan in being contrary to paragraph 35 c) of the Framework.
118. It is unacceptable to propose before the Plan has even been submitted to the Inspectorate that a review will be necessary to properly address housing and employment needs. That amounts to 'poor planning', and is not evidence of a positively prepared Plan which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the needs of the area. The opportunity exists now to make this Plan sound before it is submitted to the Inspectorate, and the Council should properly address this issue.
119. In any event, were an early review of the Local Plan to be undertaken addressing unmet needs it will inevitably require the release of Green Belt land. This Plan demonstrates exceptional circumstances exist to require the removal of land from the Green Belt as a consequence of the level of need, the lack of sufficient alternatives outside of the Green Belt, and the absence of willing neighbouring Councils prepared to accommodate some of the need. Those exceptional circumstances are very likely to still exist when the Council comes to undertake its review as urban capacity is limited, and nearby Councils are similarly constrained.

²⁶ Page 21 of the Summary of Representations to the Supplementary Consultation

²⁷ The GBBC Housing Needs and Housing Land Supply Position Statement (August 2020) confirms unmet needs from Birmingham still exist of 2,597 homes taking into account the contribution from Solihull.

²⁸ Paragraph 154 of the Overall Approach Topic Paper



120. The Council have therefore failed to demonstrate the proposed Green Belt boundaries within this Plan will not need to be altered at the end of the Plan period²⁹, and therefore consideration must be given in this Plan to safeguarding land. If not, there is no permanence to the Green Belt boundaries proposed within this Plan and they will not endure beyond the Plan period contrary to the Framework³⁰.

Housing Requirement

121. The Plan is proposing a housing requirement that equates to the supply that it considers is capable of being delivered over the Plan period. However, the Sustainability Appraisal of the Plan does not provide any evidence as to why higher levels of housing growth could not be accommodated without causing significant adverse effects.

122. There is therefore no flexibility within the supply to ensure that the housing requirement is met. An oversupply above the housing requirement is typical for all Plans to some degree, and a 10% buffer is advised for Solihull since the Plan is reliant upon sites with long gestation periods. and its portfolio of allocations relies upon larger strategic sites. In order for the Plan to be positively prepared, the housing requirement should be expressed as a minimum.

Supply over the Plan Period

123. There are a number of objections to how the Council has calculated supply over the plan period as set out below.

UK Central

124. The plan assumes 2,740 units will be delivered at UK Central by 2036. This is a substantial amount of growth for a site that is unlikely to see any completions for

²⁹ Paragraph 139 e) of the Framework

³⁰ Paragraph 136 of the Framework



- several years post plan adoption³¹. The UK Central Hub Growth and Infrastructure Plan suggests 2028. However, it is difficult to envisage that substantial residential completions will take place on the UK Central site until such time as the HS2 railway line is constructed and operational.
125. The Transport Secretary said in a written statement to parliament in September 2019 that it could be between 2028-31 before trains run on the route. Even if completions could be achieved from 2028 this would assume an annual total of 340 completions to achieve the delivery projected in the plan period which is far beyond what might be realistically be achieved. Without sight of a realistic housing trajectory, there is no evidence to support this level of delivery and therefore it is not justified. Since this is a strategic site, it is appropriate for the anticipated rate of development to be included within the Plan in accordance with the Framework.
126. In addition, there are substantial infrastructure requirements in addition to HS2, such as public transport and active travel bridges across the WCML, which has an estimated cost of £40m and with no timescales confirmed for delivery. It is also noted the Council are still working with Highways England to assess the impact of development on their highway network³². The absence of any agreement undermines the extent to which the assumptions within the Plan on delivery can be relied upon.
127. This evidence is important in being able to demonstrate the Plan is deliverable and sustainable, and that improvements to infrastructure required as a result of development have been robustly assessed, costed in order to demonstrate viability, and capable of being delivered in a way which does not hinder the proposed delivery of housing and employment. The absence of this evidence means the Plan is not justified.

³¹ The UK Central Hub Growth and Infrastructure Plan suggests 2028.

³² Page 23 of the Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan



Allocated Sites

128. The absence of any evidence in relation to housing trajectories for the proposed allocated sites means that the figure of 5,270 homes to be delivered by 2036 is not justified.
129. Also, of note, the allocation for Solihull Town Centre (Site 8) in the adopted Local Plan expected 350 units to come forward in the first phase of the Plan period. This has not transpired. The new Local Plan now estimates 861 units but none coming forward in the first 5 years, and no evidence to support its delivery³³.

Windfalls

130. The estimated level of windfalls at 2,800 homes completed over 14 years is not justified.
131. Firstly, whilst it is stated that windfalls are not included for the first 3 years (to avoid double counting with extant planning permissions) only 2 years have been discounted.
132. Secondly, the annual average level of windfall is substantial for an authority significantly constrained by Green Belt. The SHELAA notes that of the known sites, 96% are in the Green Belt. Very few of these are likely to be suitable for windfall planning applications given Green Belt policy, but in any event these are a separate source of supply in the Plan.
133. Reliance is placed on historic trends, but there is no certainty that past sources of supply are likely to continue. Given the absence of a Local Plan meeting housing needs in Solihull for some time, there is a degree of inevitability that there has been a high level of windfalls historically. Relying upon past trend averages is not sufficient for a forward projection to be made. As the Framework states, the evidence should be so compelling that it is a source of supply that can be relied upon for delivering the housing requirement.

³³ SHELAA – Site number 5015.01



134. The SHELAA notes that 20% of the windfall allowance is for sites under 1ha. Therefore, 80% is for over 1ha – which should be covered by sites assessed in the SHELAA. Indeed the SHELAA is so comprehensive that very small sites have also been assessed. Therefore, the windfalls allowance is double counting with other sources of supply in the Plan. Indeed, the source of housing supply includes sites identified in the land availability assessment, brownfield register, and town centre sites. This amounts to over 1,350 dwellings, much of which would have previously been counted as a windfall. It is also unclear in whether projecting forward using historic trends the Council has removed garden land from its supply.

Existing Sites

135. In the SHELAA, there are also Existing Sites and Communal Dwellings where it appears there may be calculation errors, including:
- a. Examples of demolition of existing dwellings where it is rightly noted the net is 0 but this is not reflected in the deliverable supply column which remains 1 (or greater).
 - b. 2102.06 where the net should be zero since it is a change of use.

Five Year Supply on Adoption

136. The Plan will not provide for a five year housing land supply upon adoption. As noted elsewhere, three years' worth of windfalls are included within the supply rather than two (an estimate which is high, and overlaps with other sources of supply). There is also 350 homes on allocated sites without the benefit of planning permission, without clear evidence that housing completions will begin within five years. Discounting by these two sources alone (ie.550 units) puts the supply under five years.

137. The Plan assumes that 1,170 homes will be delivered on allocated sites within the first five years but there is no evidence to support this. The table at Paragraph 226 of allocated sites only breaks down sites into phases of the Plan. There should be a year by year completions trajectory for the whole of the plan period for all sources of supply, and the SHELAA 2020 only does this in part. Without this, the Plan is not



justified. For all sites, there needs to be clear evidence that housing completions will begin within 5 years.

Question 6

138. The housing requirement should be amended to take account of the likely realistic date of adoption; a more sustainable balance between the jobs uplift and commuting patterns; unmet housing needs; and an affordability uplift. The housing requirement should also be expressed as a minimum figure. The exact figure will need to be informed by further assessment by the Council.
139. The housing supply should be justified with evidence, and assumptions in relation to windfalls should be reviewed and amended. The housing supply should contain a buffer of 10% over the housing requirement to ensure delivery and that housing needs can be met should some sources of supply slip.
140. There is an insufficient portfolio of sites, in particular small sites, that can deliver quickly ensuring a five year housing land supply is achieved upon adoption. National planning guidance advises where a stepped trajectory is used local authorities could identify a priority of sites that could come forward earlier in the plan period in order to ensure housing needs are met. This emphasises the imperative to release further small sites within Solihull that can deliver quickly.
141. Policy P5 and the table of allocated sites should be amended to include land west of Stratford Road as a mixed use allocation comprising residential and employment uses. The site is:
- deliverable, available and achievable³⁴;
 - low performing in Green Belt terms;
 - has a low impact in landscape terms due to its enclosed nature³⁵;
 - on a high frequency bus service route connecting with the key centres; and,
 - a sustainable location for residential and employment development.

³⁴ Site 62 – Category 1 in the SHELAA Update

³⁵ See Vision Document submitted with these representations as Appendix 4



142. Further, the Sustainability Appraisal finds no significant adverse effects from development of the site. The site is located on the A34 Corridor where market demand is high and land supply limited. It is also located in an area where substantial housing growth is planned, with no corresponding employment growth planned, leading to a less sustainable pattern of development.

143. The land at Site 62 should therefore be allocated for mixed use development.

TECHNICAL NOTE

Job Name: Shirley Golf Club, Solihull
Job No: 36850
Note No: 36850/5502/TN01 (Revision B)
Date: February 2017
Prepared By: Amrit Mudhar/ Robert Pawson
Subject: **Transport and Accessibility**

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Peter Brett Associates LLP (PBA) has been appointed by IM Properties PLC and Shirley Golf Club to prepare this Transport and Accessibility Technical Note demonstrating the accessibility of Land at Shirley Golf Club in Solihull in support of site representations to the Local Plan.
- 1.2 This Technical Note provides a high level review of the accessibility of the site by sustainable modes of travel and potential traffic impacts on the A34 Stratford Road/ Creynolds Lane signalised junction. The review is based on data available to PBA and information publically available from web sources. The structure of this Technical Note is as follows:
- existing pedestrian and cycle facilities available on Creynolds Lane and the A34 Stratford Road in the vicinity of the site proving connectivity to key destinations, as well as a review of committed local pedestrian and cycle infrastructure and enhancement schemes and identification of potential key gaps and opportunities to enhance pedestrian and cycle facilities along Creynolds Lane and the A34 Stratford Road in the vicinity of the site
 - development trip impact on the local highway network, junction capacity at the A34 Stratford Road/ Creynolds Lane signalised junction and proposed junction improvements (as part of the consented Blythe Valley Park development (subject to signed S106 agreement)), and
 - public transport along the A34 Stratford Road corridor and the new bus services to be introduced as part of the consented Blythe Valley Park development.

DOCUMENT ISSUE RECORD

Technical Note No	Rev	Date	Prepared	Checked	Reviewed (Discipline Lead)	Approved (Project Director)
36850/5502/TN01	-	06.02.2017	AM/ RP	DG	DG	-
36850/5502/TN01	A	10.02.2017	ES	AM	DG	MP
36850/5502/TN01	B	15.02.2017	MS	DG	DG	MP

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Peter Brett Associates LLP Waterloo House, Victoria Square, Birmingham B2 5TB

T: +44 (0)121 633 2900 E: birmingham@peterbrett.com

TECHNICAL NOTE

2 Pedestrian and Cycle Facilities/ Infrastructure

Existing Provision

- 2.1 A continuous, tarmacked footway along the northern side of Creynolds Lane provides a connection between Cheswick Green and the A34 Stratford Road via the proposed site access. There is good footpath provision to local destinations with paved footways along the A34 Stratford Road leading north-west towards Shirley and Monkspath, along the north and eastern side of M42 Junction 4 and along the A3400 Stratford Road from M42 Junction 4 to Hockley Heath.
- 2.2 A signalised crossing at the A34 Stratford Road/ Creynolds Lane junction provides safe access across the A34 Stratford Road to the site for pedestrians and cyclists from Monkspath. An on-road signposted cycle route runs along Hay Lane, connecting the site with local amenities in Monkspath. Creynolds Lane is an advisory cycle route, providing good access to local cycle routes in and around Cheswick Green to the south and the A34 Stratford Road to the north.
- 2.3 A signed, shared foot/ cycleway runs along the A34 Stratford Road with Toucan crossings located at the junction with Huskisson Way (site access to Fore Business Park) and across the A34 Stratford Road to the south of Huskisson Way providing access to Blythe Valley Park. This route forms part of a local cycle route providing connectivity between Hockley Heath, Monkspath, Shirley and Solihull town centre. A copy of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council's Cycling and Walking Map is provided in **Appendix A**, detailing pedestrian and cycle routes in proximity to the proposed development and throughout Solihull.
- 2.4 Policy P7 of the Solihull Local Plan states that '*All new development should be focused in the most accessible locations and seek to enhance existing accessibility levels and promote ease of access*'. The policy provides accessibility criteria for proposed developments and for residential developments this is stated as a walking distance to a range of local amenities including bus stops (400m) and primary schools, doctor's surgeries and food shops (all 800m). Accessibility by walking and cycling to a number of destinations in proximity to the site has been considered and presented in **Table 2.1** (approximate walking and cycling times from the proposed site access on Creynolds Lane). The location of these destinations is shown in **Figure 2.1**.

Table 2.1 – Accessibility to Local Destinations

Figure 4.1 Ref.	Destination	Distance (km)	Walk Time (minutes)	Cycle Time (Minutes)	Bus
1	Creynolds Lane bus stops	0.3	4	1	
2	A34 Stratford Road bus stops	0.3	4	1	
3	Cheswick Green Primary School	1.0	11	3	✓
4	Tesco Extra, A34 Stratford Road	1.3	16	5	✓
5	Cheswick Green Post Office	1.4	18	5	✓
6	The Village Surgery	1.4	18	5	✓
7	Blythe Valley Park	2.3	26	9	✓
8	Shirley local centre	3.5	46	13	✓
9	Solihull town centre	4.0	50	15	✓

Source: Google Maps journey times (accessed on 03/02/2017)



2.5 **Table 2.1** shows that the bus stops on Creynolds Lane and the A34 Stratford Road are within the accessibility criteria for journeys by foot, and primary schools, shops and GPs are all within 20 minutes' walk, destinations are also accessible by cycle; as noted in Section 3 these destinations are also accessible by public transport. Good quality footways are provided in the vicinity of the site to Cheswick Green and along the A34 Stratford Road which connect these destinations to the site.

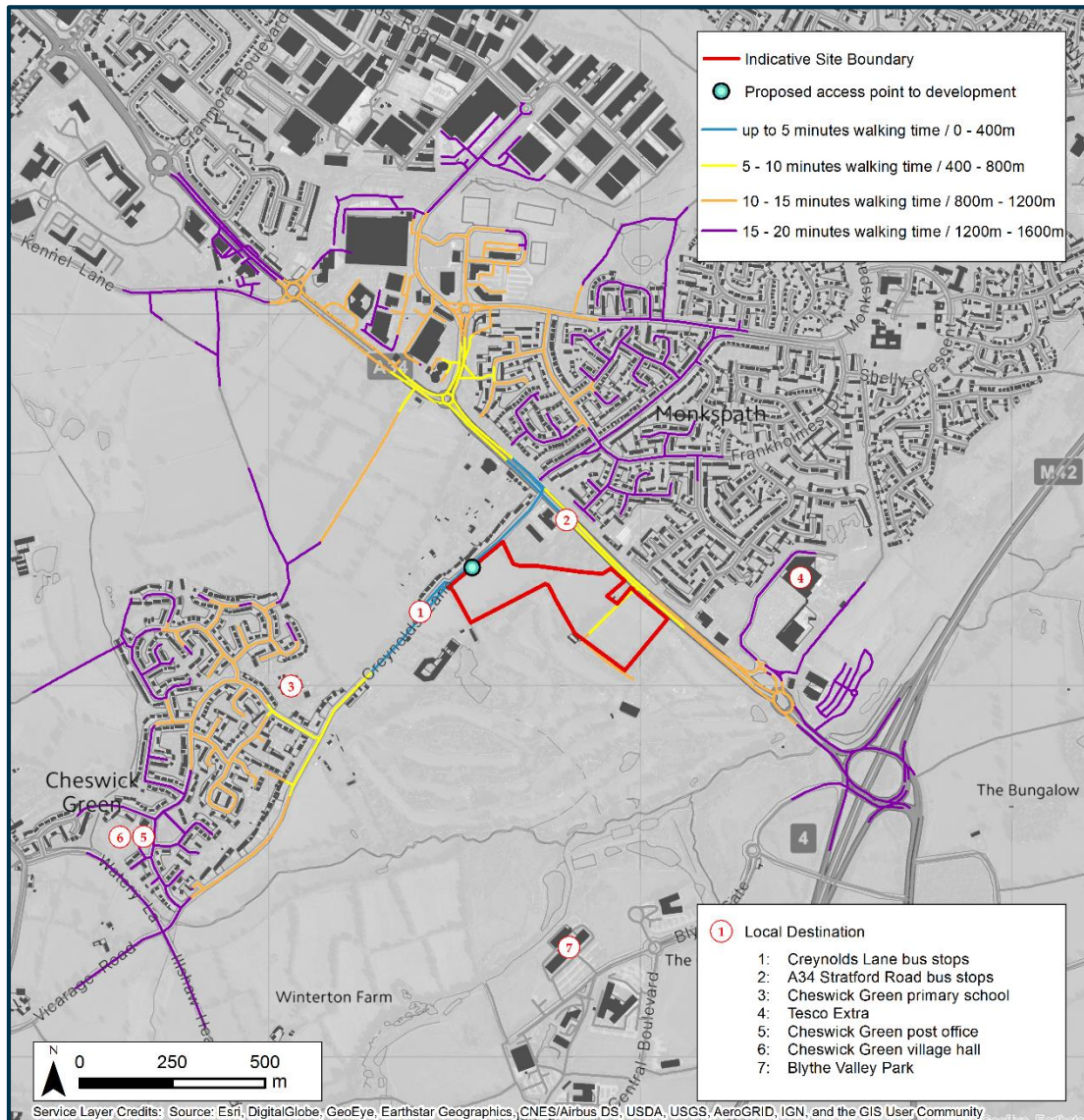


Figure 2.1 – Location of Local Destinations in Proximity to the Site

Future Schemes

2.6 The A34 has been identified by both Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and the West Midlands Combined Authority (WCMA) as a key route between the employment site at Blythe Valley Park, Shirley local centre and Solihull town centre. In both the WCMA's 'Movement for Growth: The West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan' and the 'Solihull Connected Transport Strategy', the A34 is identified as a strategic cycle route. 'Solihull Connected' outlines a number of 'primary routes' including the A34 which will provide 'fast and safe journeys to/from our main trip generating locations'. A multi-modal study of the A34 Stratford Road is currently being developed by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council with the outline business case due to be published by October 2017. Additionally, a new Walking and Cycling Strategy, to be published in summer 2017, will set out the opportunities and priorities for the Borough.



Potential Gaps and Opportunities

- 2.7 Potential opportunities to provide a safe crossing point from the northern side of Creynolds Lane to the site access would improve pedestrian accessibility to the site. The form of crossing, if necessary, will be explored with Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
- 2.8 There may also be the opportunity to provide a footway along the A34 Stratford Road (subject to utilities infrastructure and available width in the highway boundary) between the existing Golf Club site access and the bus stop westbound bus stop on the A34 Stratford Road to the west of the existing site access, or the westbound bus stop to the east of the site access. This would provide a more direct and safer route for people wishing to travel by public transport towards Solihull which would avoid walking on the verge or crossing the A34 Stratford Road at an informal crossing point. This will be investigated further at the appropriate stage in consultation with Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council in support of Policy P7.

3 Local Highway Network

Access Arrangements

- 3.1 A new vehicular site access could be provided off Creynolds Lane to serve the residential areas of the development. In addition, improvements to the existing access off the A34 Stratford Road which could serve the proposed commercial area could also be provided. Further opportunities to provide an additional point of access to the commercial area off the A34 will be explored, in the form of a left in/ left out junction.
- 3.2 The existing Shirley Golf Club site access could be retained and upgraded with opportunities for further enhancement of the A34 to be explored. This thereby provides two potential routes for staff and members to the Golf Club (via the existing A34 Stratford Road access and proposed Creynolds Lane access).
- 3.3 The proposed site access arrangements would allow residential and commercial traffic to be segregated. The provision of a site access off Creynolds Lane would also allow a more direct route for residential and Golf Club traffic travelling towards Cheswick Green without the need to use the A34 Stratford Road/ Creynolds Lane junction. Further, the proposed improvements to the A34 Stratford Road/ Creynolds Lane junction as part of the Blythe Valley Park development (see **A34 Corridor Improvements** sub-section) would allow a right turn from Creynolds Lane onto the A34 Stratford Road and therefore reduce the impact of development traffic at the A34 Stratford Road/ Monkspath Hall Road roundabout; currently traffic travelling eastbound from Creynolds Lane has to U-turn at this roundabout.

Development Trip Impact

- 3.4 A summary of total vehicle trip generation expected by the proposed development with up to 150 residential dwellings has been provided in **Table 3.1**. This has been informed by trip rates and trip generation presented in the Transport Assessment prepared by Savoy Consulting on behalf of Banner Homes as part of the resubmitted planning application in 2013 (application reference: PL/2013/01355/OLM). The trip rate/ generation assumptions from the Savoy Consulting Transport Assessment (2013) were:
- golf course staff – five two-way trips in each peak hour
 - golf course members – 27 two-way trips in each peak hour, and
 - residential – 0.8 person trips per household in each peak hour, noting that this is higher than recently approved residential schemes such as Blythe Valley Park.
- 3.5 2011 Census mode share data has been applied to the residential trip rate provided in the Savoy Consulting Transport Assessment (2013) to determine the number of vehicular trips



generated by 150 residential dwellings (82 per cent of all trips are as a car driver); as per the Transport Assessment it is assumed the same number of trips are generated in both peak hours.

- 3.6 Commercial trip rates have been taken from recently consented developments near to the site as an initial proxy.

Table 3.1 – Preliminary Vehicle Trip Generation from the Proposed Development (including existing trips)

Land Use	Morning Peak Hour (8am to 9am)			Evening Peak Hour (5pm to 6pm)		
	In	Out	Two-way	In	Out	Two-way
Up to 150 residential dwellings, commercial development and Golf Club	99	49	148	43	102	145

Source: informed by Savoy Consulting Transport Assessment (2013) and TRICS

A34 Stratford Road/ Creynolds Lane Junction Modelling Outputs

- 3.7 Preliminary junction capacity modelling using LinSig software has been undertaken at the A34 Stratford Road/ Creynolds Lane signalised junction for a 2016 base year and future years of 2021 and 2026. The model results showed that the junction operates within capacity in the 2016 base year, 2021 Do Minimum and 2021 Do Something scenarios. In the 2026 scenarios (without and with development) there are expected to be some capacity issues in the morning peak hour with the junction operating within capacity in the evening peak hour.
- 3.8 Initial modelling has shown that the proposed development with up to 150 dwellings and commercial use does not result in any significant change in capacity at the A34 Stratford Road/ Creynolds Lane junction.
- 3.9 It should be noted that further junction capacity assessments would be required in due course to validate the traffic impact from the proposed development at this junction which does not take into account any Travel Plan measures that could be implemented at the site or wider sustainable travel measures proposed by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.

A34 Corridor Improvements

- 3.10 As part of the Blythe Valley Park development, mitigation measures are proposed at the A34 Stratford Road/ Creynolds Lane junction and the A34 Stratford Road/ Monkspath Hall Road roundabout. The impact of these two mitigation schemes were modelled using 2026 traffic flows which include development trips from Blythe Valley Park based on the realistic and maximum developable scenarios. The benefits of these two schemes combined has also been considered. Further details of the mitigation schemes have been provided below.
- 3.11 The A34 Stratford Road/ Creynolds Lane scheme provides a right turn out of Creynolds Lane and reduces the number of drivers that would U-turn at the A34 Stratford Road/ Monkspath Hall Road roundabout. This also provides a more direct public transport route from Cheswick Green to Blythe Valley Park which would also serve the proposed development. Modelling of this highway scheme shows that whilst there is increased delay at the junction, the scheme provides benefits for public transport (allowing faster journeys from Cheswick Green to eastbound locations) as well as improving journey times for drivers and providing a potential alternative route for local residents (e.g. those travelling from Dickens Heath to the M42 Junction 4).
- 3.12 There are also proposals to part signalise the A34 Stratford Road/ Monkspath Hall Road roundabout. When these mitigation schemes are combined and operationally linked, the results show an improvement in capacity at both the A34 Stratford Road/ Creynolds Lane



junction and the A34 Stratford Road/ Monkspath Hall Road roundabout compared against the existing layout.

- 3.13 The highway improvements proposed at both the A34 Stratford Road/ Creynolds Lane junction and A34 Stratford Road/ Monkspath Hall Road roundabout as part of the Blythe Valley Park development would also positively impact existing users of Shirley Golf Club as drivers wishing to travel south-east along the A34 Stratford Road from Creynolds Lane would have a shorter journey time through the provision of a right turn from Creynolds Lane.

4 A34 Stratford Road Public Transport

Existing Provision

- 4.1 The closest bus stops to the site are located on Creynolds Lane (approximately 300m to the south of the proposed site access) and on the A34 Stratford Road (approximately 250m south and 300m to the north of the proposed site access). The Creynolds Lane north and southbound bus stops can be accessed via the footway on the northern side of Creynolds Lane and comprise a flag on a pole with timetable information. The most frequent service serving these bus stops is the S2 service which provides a half-hourly weekday service between Cheswick Green and Dorridge via Solihull.
- 4.2 The A34 Stratford Road east and westbound bus stops comprise bus laybys with shelters, a flag and timetable information and can be accessed via the footway on the northern side of Creynolds Lane (and Toucan crossing over the A34 Stratford Road for the eastbound bus stop). These bus stops are served by the X20 service which operates hourly between Birmingham and Stratford Monday to Sunday.

Future Schemes

- 4.3 As part of the Blythe Valley Park development, the S2 service, which is accessible from Creynolds Lane, would be enhanced to create a circular bus route operating along the A34 Stratford Road. It is proposed that the new bus route and associated infrastructure would be provided upon occupation of the first dwelling at Blythe Valley Park with contributions to be paid under a Section 106 agreement.
- 4.4 The improved bus service would provide a 15-minute frequency providing connections to Solihull town centre, Blythe Valley Park, Dorridge and Knowle every 30 minutes in a clockwise direction and every 30 minutes in an anti-clockwise direction Monday to Saturday. On Sunday the service would operate every hour in each direction providing a half hourly connection to Solihull and other destinations along the route. This would double the frequency of buses serving the closest bus stops to the site and enhance weekend services as currently the X20 provides the only weekend service operating in the vicinity of the site.
- 4.5 Access to the existing and improved bus services will enable future residents of the development to access shops, schools and jobs by public transport.
- 4.6 It may be possible to install Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) at the bus stops closest to the site to encourage travel by bus to and from the site.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 Following the review of site accessibility and benefits which can be delivered as part of the proposed development at Land at Shirley Golf Club, the transport related benefits and opportunities for the site to support its allocation include:
- the site is situated in an accessible location, by foot, cycle and public transport



- there are a number key local amenities and facilities which are accessible by foot and cycle via good walking and cycling routes; Toucan crossings along these routes aid safe crossing of the A34 Stratford Road
- there are opportunities to improve the public transport offer through providing RTPI at bus stops and better connections between the existing site access and bus stop on the A34 Stratford Road to the west of the site access
- the off-site infrastructure and public transport improvements to be delivered as part of the Blythe Valley Park development will have a beneficial effect on the proposed development further improving the sustainability of the site location
- the proposed highway improvements and access arrangements would allow more direct routeing and reduce trip impact on the A34 Stratford Road/ Monkspath Hall Road roundabout (by right-turners from Creynolds Lane) and A34 Stratford Road/ Creynolds Lane junction by allowing a left turn from the proposed Creynolds Lane site access
- the level of vehicle trips generated by the proposed development would not have a significant impact on the A34 Stratford Road/ Creynolds Lane and therefore it is unlikely that the mitigation requirements and/ or triggers associated with Blythe Valley Park would be affected by the proposed development, and
- Travel Plan measures could be implemented at this site which could reduce the number of vehicle trips generated by the site.



TECHNICAL NOTE

Appendix A Solihull Cycling and Walking Map

TECHNICAL NOTE





Solihull Cycling & Walking Map

Double-sided map with hundreds of miles of recommended cycle and walking routes

North Solihull Strategic Cycle Network

An improved network of cycle routes is coming to North Solihull.

Funded jointly by the European Regional Development Fund and Solihull Council, the scheme aims to get more people riding their bike and will work with local employers to make cycling more accessible and easy to do.

1km of new high quality cycle routes in North Solihull will be completed in 2016. Through the scheme with grants of up to £2500 being made available to businesses that employ up to 249 people to promote and encourage cycling to places of work.

Due for completion in 2016, work on the scheme began in June 2011. The scheme is also being partly funded by Cannock Chase Network, Staffer Choices programme.

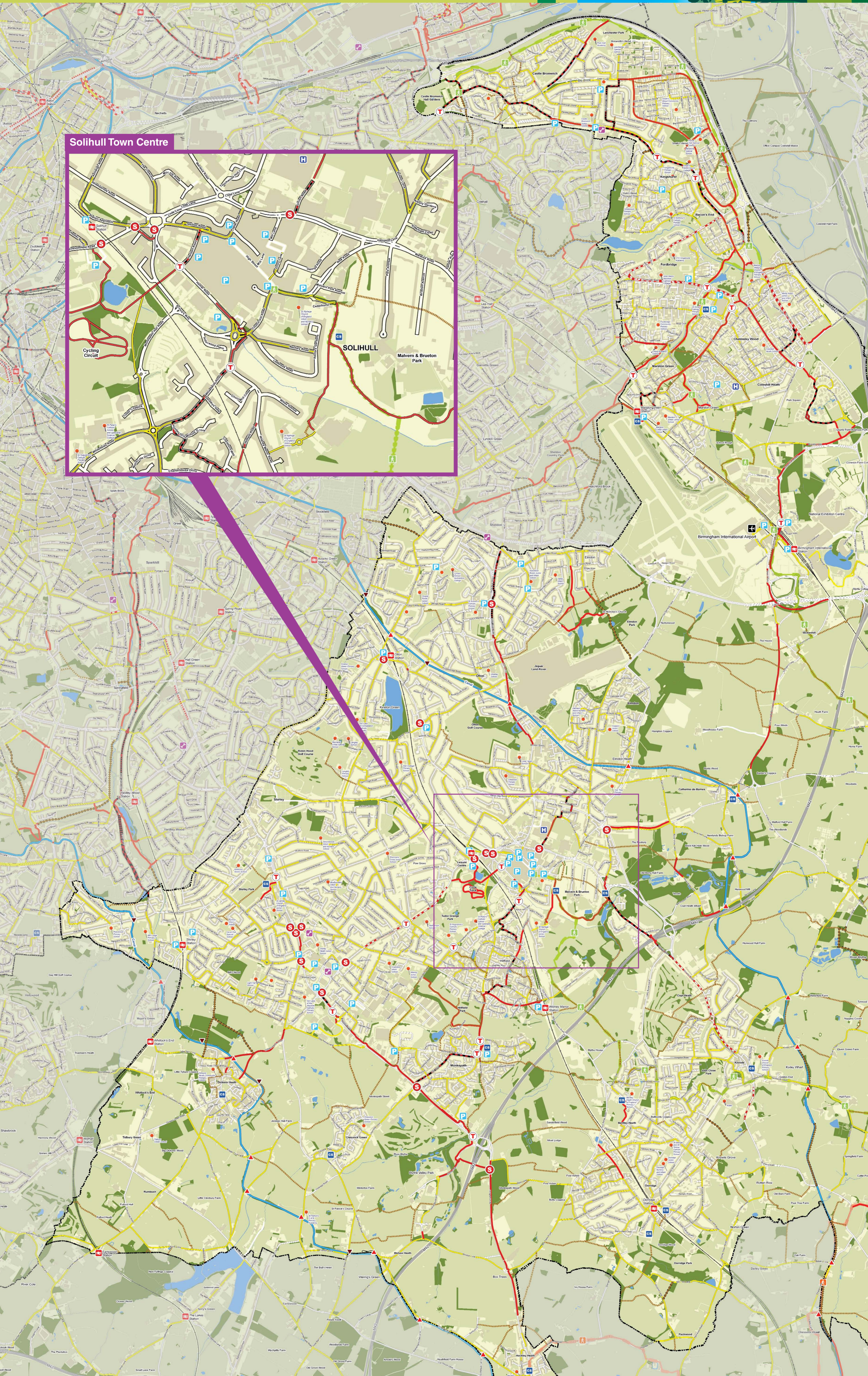
For further information on the scheme and to apply for funding please contact us at: cyclists@solihull.gov.uk



- Benefits to Cycling:**
- Filter, healthier and more productive staff
 - Healthy staff are less likely to be absent through stress or illness
 - Assists staff retention and reduce turnover
 - Reduce your business carbon footprint
 - Contribute to work reduce congestion and demand for parking
- Employee Benefits**
- Save money on travelling costs
 - Reduce your carbon footprint
 - Lose weight and tone up
 - Improve your general health and well-being
 - Improve mental health and help reduce stress levels
 - Look good, feel great, save money and help save the planet!

Key and Signs

- Signposted cycle route
- - - Cycle lane
- Advisory route
- Shared use
- Canal
- Bridleway
- Footway
- Green Man Trail
- Millennium Way
- Kenilworth Greenway
- ▲ Canal access point (ramp)
- ▼ Canal access point (steps)
- Ⓢ Signalled crossing
- Ⓣ Toucan crossing
- Ⓜ Hospital
- Ⓡ Railway station
- Ⓢ Cyclesolihull start point
- Ⓢ Cycle shop
- Ⓜ Airport
- Ⓟ Parking



Cycling hints and tips

Getting and keeping fit
If you're not cycling for some time, take it easy at first. You may find cycling tiring for a few weeks but you will soon start to feel the benefits and arrive at your destination feeling more energetic than you ever used to! Remember that ten miles of cycling can use an extra 350 calories, so with regular cycling the scope for weight loss is considerable.

Coping with the weather
The UK weather is relatively cycle-friendly as it rarely gets too cold or too hot for cycling. But, if you don't feel like cycling in the rain or snow, just don't do it! Most regular cyclists find they cycle more than they originally expected to.

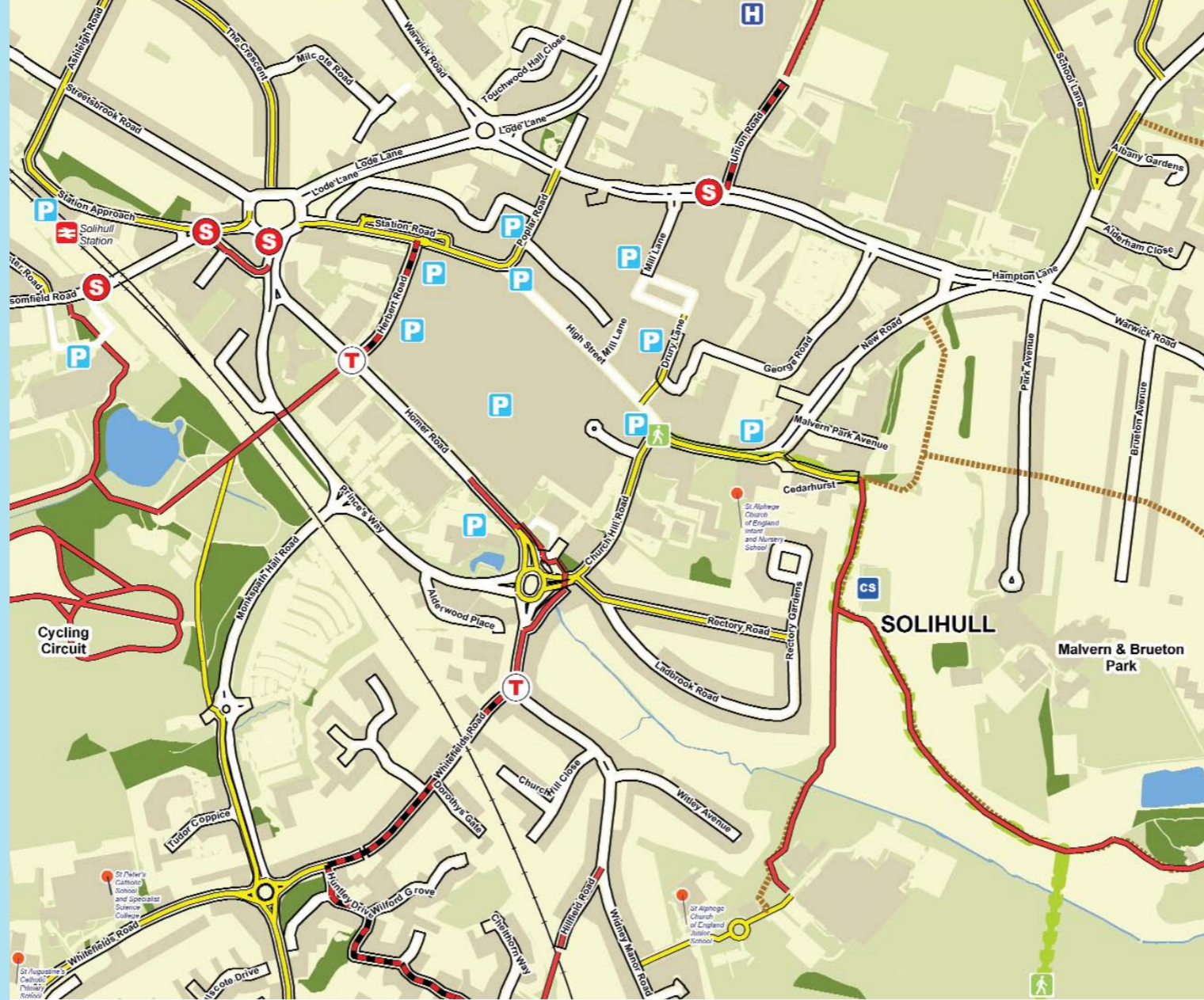
Which bike?
If you already own a bike then use it first. This will help you decide what is important if you later decide to buy a new one. Make sure a new bike has mudguards, as this makes a big difference when it is raining. Modern bikes have a wide range of gears, which will painlessly deal with the sort of hills you are likely to encounter in this area. Give your bike a thorough check over well before you wish to start cycling – many bike shops will service it for you. Once you cycle regularly, keeping your bike ready to go takes very little time.

What clothes?
There is no need to wear special clothes for cycling. A good windproof layer, plus a varying number of thin layers, will keep you warm whatever the weather. Avoid too many clothes that will soon make you hot and tired – it is better to be a bit chilly for the first half mile and comfortable for the rest of the journey. As you become more experienced, you may wish to invest in some special clothes, which may make you more comfortable.

Staying safe
Cycles are not inherently dangerous, but poorly driven motor vehicles are! Wear a helmet and make sure you are visible by wearing high visibility, reflective clothing such as a vest or shoulder belt. If cycling at night, always use lights and consider using a supplementary flashing light – rechargeable batteries are a good investment for regular night cyclists. Experienced cyclists who are assertive and anticipate potential problems are the safest riders. Aim to develop your confidence and skill to a high level.

Reliability
Most cyclists find their journey times are more reliable than those of bus, train or car users. A well-maintained cycle will suffer few problems. To cope with the odd puncture, take a spare inner tube and know how to change it!

Have fun!
Most people cycle because they enjoy it. There is something exhilarating about travelling under your own steam. Your route will seem more interesting than in a car and you may discover something new on the way.



Key and Signs

- | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Signposted cycle route | Green Man Trail | School |
| Cycle lane | Millennium Way | Hospital |
| Advisory route | Kenilworth Greenway | Railway station |
| Shared use | Canal access point (ramp) | Cyclesolihull start point |
| Canal | Canal access point (steps) | Cycle shop |
| Bridleway | Signalled crossing | Airport |
| Footway | Toucan crossing | Parking |

Cycling can be a fun, healthy activity that can be safely undertaken with a few sensible precautions.

- General**
- Rely on your own judgment
 - Check over your shoulder regularly
 - Make eye contact with motorists when possible
 - Signal clearly the direction you intend to travel
 - Keep off footpaths unless you allowed to be on them
 - Where you are sharing space with pedestrians, remember they can be frightened by cyclists passing too closely and too quickly
 - Give horse riders plenty of room and do not pass too quickly, especially from behind

Cycle maintenance
Check moving parts often, giving special attention to brakes and lights. Make sure that your tyres are properly inflated and that you can see the tread on them clearly – they need frequent inspection for damage. If you need help, go to your nearest bike shop.

Plan your route
When you are about to plan your journey, ask yourself if there are areas of the route that are hazardous or that cause you concern. Are there alternative roads you could take? Unless you are a very experienced cyclist, think about ways of avoiding roundabouts, multi-lane roads or busy junctions. Use this maps to plan your route (wherever possible) and use the cycle routes provided for cyclists.

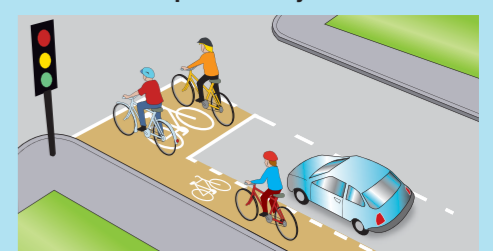
Be seen
When cycling in adverse weather or in the dark, the right clothes can help you to be seen – wear something bright and reflective. The law says that at night you must use front and rear lights and a red rear reflector. Make sure they're clean and working properly.

Wear a cycle helmet
A cycle helmet will not prevent an accident occurring, but it can help to prevent a serious head injury. Make sure your helmet is the right size and is properly fitted – ask your local biked shop or contact your local road safety officer for advice. As a rule, you should just about be able to see the rim of the helmet above your eyes when it is on. Only buy a helmet that conforms to a recognised standard BS EN 1078; 1997; BS8863; 1989 or SNELL B.95.

Stay legal
Cycling through red lights, on pavements and down one-way streets the wrong way is against the law. It is also risky for you and makes you a danger to other people. The Highway Code tells you what the law is and what traffic signs mean – it also has a special section for cyclists.

Cycling safety tips

Advanced stop line for cyclists



Watch that junction!
The most common type of cycling accident occurs at junctions. Cyclists should take great care – this is especially true at roundabouts. Clear hand signals are always very important and be aware of drivers cutting in front of you. Check if it is safe before joining a main road – if it's not, stop! If a situation looks tricky, get off your bike and walk it along the pavement to a safer crossing point.

Load safely
Be careful not to overload your bike. It's advisable to load your belongings in a rucksack or panniers (special bags designed for cycles), with the weight equally balanced on either side and nothing loose that might get caught up in the wheels or chain. Ensure that you keep your hands free to signal and control your bike. Using cycle clips can prevent loose clothing from getting caught in the wheel.

Weather and road surface hazards
Cycling in bad weather can be particularly hazardous.

- Windy conditions may cause a cyclist to over-balance.
- Icy or snowy conditions make the road surface very slippery. It takes significantly longer to brake and you're more likely to skid and fall off your bike. Extreme cold causes discomfort and can numb your fingers, making it harder to brake.
- Strong winter sunshine can cause visibility problems.
- Fog reduces the ability to see and be seen – it is better not to cycle in foggy conditions.
- Pot holes, tarmac edging, glass, debris and uneven grids can all cause problems for cyclists. Maintain a gap of around 60cms from the kerb to avoid them.

Get equipped
Prepare for the unexpected! Always carry a tool/puncture repair kit and waterproofs. It is also a good idea to carry a mobile phone, in case of emergencies.



Solihull Cycling Club



- A proud history of Olympic medallists and National Champions
- All year round programme of racing, touring and social activities
- Organised club runs for riders of all standards – 9.00am every Sunday from Solihull town centre
- Weekly club night social gathering
- Regular programme of structured training on the Tudor Grange cycle circuit
- Open to all ages

Visit our website: www.solihullcc.org.uk

Contact the club secretary
Email: secretary@solihullcc.org.uk



Countryside Walks in Solihull

Why not take a look at our series of guided walks leaflets?

Based around villages, each leaflet sets out a number of suggested walks that will allow you to explore some of the many public footpaths in and around Solihull. Each is different but they all offer a unique view of the borough and its surrounding countryside.

The leaflets are available to pick up in the tourist information centre in the library complex in Solihull town centre or on line at: www.solihull.gov.uk/walksinsoalihull
Leaflets available: Balsall Common, Castle Bromwich, Hampton in Arden, Meriden, Three Churches (Berkswell, Meriden and Eastern Green)

If you have any questions or enquires about these leaflets or the routes which they describe please contact the Rights of Way Officer at Solihull Council, Council House, Manor Square, Solihull B91 3QB – 0121 704 6429.

- Countryside Code:**
When using these walks, please respect, protect and enjoy the countryside you pass through.
- You can do this by:
- Being safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
 - Leave gates and property as you find them
 - Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
 - Keep dogs under close control at all times
 - Consider other people



Scan this code with your smart phone for more information about walks in Solihull.

Cyclesolihull

Explore your borough by bike

Cyclesolihull aims to help you to use your bike more, whether it's to cycle for local trips, explore the surrounding countryside, or improve your fitness and health.

Run by volunteers Cyclesolihull offers:

- Over 30 self-guided ride leaflets, starting at various points within the borough and exploring some of Solihull's quieter roads. Ride start points are marked CS on the map.
- A programme of weekly cycle rides throughout the year, providing opportunities to cycle with others at a leisurely pace.
- A regularly updated website www.cyclesolihull.org.uk containing details of all the rides and route leaflets, plus information and news about local cycling.
- A monthly Cyclesolihull E-newsletter to keep you in touch with the latest developments.

Cyclesolihull can also put you in touch with other organisations supporting cycling in Solihull, including cycling clubs, local and national groups, and providers of cycle training. Email us at: info@cyclesolihull.org.uk or call 07896 885726

www.cyclesolihull.org.uk



Cyclesolihull Community Cycle Rides

Sunday Cycle Rides are regular afternoon rides of between 10 and 20 miles long, starting from various points in the borough and following one of over 30 Cyclesolihull routes.

Evening Explorer rides take place on summer weekday evenings and are about 10 miles long.

Taster Rides are only 5 miles long – ideal for new cyclists and children beginning to cycle on the road with their parents.

Saturday Stretcher rides are twice-monthly longer morning rides (25 to 35 miles) with variable routes.

All the rides use quieter roads and include a refreshment stop of about 30 minutes.



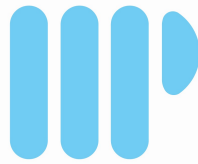
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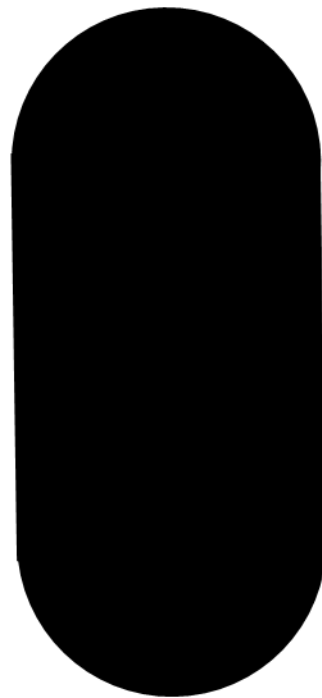




**Marrons
Planning**

Review of Employment Land Supply and Market Conditions within the Borough, including the A34 Stratford Road Corridor

December 2020



Bridgeway House, Bridgeway, Stratford on Avon, CV37 6YX
www.marrons-planning.co.uk



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been prepared jointly by IM Properties and Marrons Planning to consider the recent pattern of employment land supply and loss across the Borough and current market conditions, including the A34 Stratford Road Corridor.
- 1.2 The A34 Stratford Road Corridor represents one of the Borough's high frequency public transport corridors¹, and is a preferred Growth Option for the Solihull Local Plan Review. The Corridor contains a number of major employment sites, including Blythe Valley Park (BVP) and Fore Business Park (Fore), as well as proposed major residential allocations at TRW/The Green and South of Dog Kennel Lane.
- 1.3 IM Properties control BVP and Fore, and are therefore well placed to comment on the recent changes that have occurred in relation to employment development and need since the Council published its Draft Local Plan in November 2016, and Employment Land Review in January 2017.
- 1.4 This report has been prepared in support of representations made by IM Properties to the Solihull Local Plan Review in respect of seeking the allocation of land off Stratford Road, Shirley for employment uses (Site 62). The report is intended to supplement Solihull Borough Council's Local Plan Review Evidence Base in respect of the needs for economic development. A similar report was prepared in 2018 in respect of the automotive retail sector needs.
- 1.5 This report begins by considering the guidance provided by the Government to local planning authorities with respect to how to assess the need for economic development, and the Local Industrial Strategy.
- 1.6 In response to the requirements of the Guidance, the report then provides a market overview and evidence as to the recent pattern of changes in employment land supply, market demand and signals.
- 1.7 The report will conclude with a summary and recommendations to inform the Council's consideration of the Local Plan Review.

¹ Three bus services an hour operate along Stratford Road and Creynolds Lane (X20/A7/A8), offering the potential for a 20 minute frequency.



2. Context

- 2.1 The following is a summary of the National Planning Practice Guidance in so far as the approach that should be taken by local planning authorities to ensuring their Local Plan is based on appropriate economic evidence.
- 2.2 In preparing a Local Plan, strategic policy-making authorities need to prepare a robust evidence base to understand existing business needs, which must be kept under review to reflect local circumstances and market conditions.
- 2.3 In gathering evidence, strategic policy-making authorities will need to liaise closely with the business community, taking account of the Local Industrial Strategy, to understand their current and potential future requirements. In order to achieve this, they need to assess (amongst other things):
- the existing stock of land for employment uses within the area;
 - the recent pattern of employment land supply and take up;
 - evidence of market demand (including the locational and premises requirements of particular types of business) – sourced from local data and market intelligence, such as recent surveys of business needs, discussions with developers and property agents, and engagement with business and economic forums; and,
 - Wider market signals relating to economic growth, diversification and innovation.
- 2.4 The West Midlands Local Industrial Strategy was published in May 2019. The Strategy highlighted that the shortfall of land for employment space is at least as pressing as the shortage of land for new homes, and possibly more so. This is most strongly the case in relation to those large scale, strategic sites that can have the greatest net additional impact on growth and jobs, such as Blythe Valley Park.



3. Solihull Borough Market Trends

- 3.1 The years 2015 to 2019 has seen a surge in take up of employment land within Solihull Borough, driven by the availability of good quality employment sites, the transport connectivity offered by major infrastructure in the Borough (such as the M42 motorway, Birmingham Airport and strong train connections between the Midlands and London), and pent up occupier demand post 2008 – 2012 recession.
- 3.2 Take up has been particularly focussed on out of town business parks such as BVP, Fore, and Birmingham Business Park, in addition to the take up of both new and existing built stock in Solihull Town Centre. The current availability of good quality, deliverable employment land in the Borough is now at an all-time low. This coincides with occupational demand reaching a post 2012 high with both inward investment from new businesses outside of Solihull relocating to the Borough, as well as existing businesses upgrading into new larger accommodation in the Borough.
- 3.3 The best example of employment land take up is the two business parks at the southern end of the A34 corridor, around Junction 4 of the M42, namely BVP and Fore. These two business parks benefit from excellent road and public transport connectivity. Two bus services, the A7 and A8, serve both business parks via the A34 Corridor in a loop with Solihull and Dorridge Stations as illustrated at Appendix 1.
- 3.4 Whilst Solihull Borough's employment land market is dominated by out of town business parks, there are also example of the regeneration of dated employment land occurring within Solihull town centre and occupiers taking existing buildings. For example, SOTI opened their EMEA Headquarters in the new St Alphege place development in Mell Square in 2017. SOTI took 9,138 sq.ft. and their business decision for relocating from Cranmoor to these premises was driven by the quality of the office accommodation on offer at St Alphege place, the car parking that was offered (50 spaces in Mell Square), and the ability to occupy a whole building without sharing occupation with other businesses. These are common business requirement for occupiers looking for space in Solihull.
- 3.5 This is a trend that we are seeing across Solihull, in that the quality of businesses who are looking to take space in the Borough are driven by factors such as having high quality Head Quarters type accommodation, availability of car parking, and a high-quality amenity offering which satisfies highly qualified employees. It tends to be that these blue chip and fast growth occupiers prefer and also have the budget for high quality design



and build accommodation. More detail on specific occupier deals is provided in the following sections.



4. Supply of Available Employment Land in Solihull Borough

- 4.1 A review of the available employment land within the eight proposed employment allocations in the Draft Plan is provided below.

Blythe Valley Park

- 4.2 BVBP at the southern end of the A34 Corridor was acquired by IM Properties in 2015, and represents the Midlands premier out of town business park spread over 257 acres. The commercial element of the park has planning permission for B1, B2 and B8 uses. The park comprises a mix of existing office buildings as well as commercial development land. Over the last 3-year period, all allocated employment land has been developed with significant pre-lets to the likes of Prologis, Jerroms, Rybrook, Gymshark, and Hofer Powertrain. Occupier take up at the park has now reached an all-time high and only two development plots remain available. The Employment Land Review (January 2017) highlighted at page 69 that BVBP has **23.1 ha** of available, allocated and deliverable land. As of September 2019, the current position stands at **2.8 ha** of available allocated and deliverable land available on 2 plots. Thus, 20.3 ha of employment land has been taken for development since January 2017.

Fore Business Park

- 4.3 Fore is also at the southern end of the A34 Corridor and was acquired by IM Properties in 2015, and is directly opposite BVBP. The park comprises HQ office accommodation with occupiers such as Collins Aerospace and Taylor Wimpey. Over the last two years, the remaining development plots have been built out with IM Group opening their new headquarters on the park in July 2019. The Employment Land Review (January 2017) highlighted at page 69 that Fore has 2 ha of available allocated and deliverable land, but this land has been developed and is no longer available.
- 4.4 A comprehensive take up schedule of development land at BVBP and Fore is contained at Appendix 2. It illustrates that between April 2017 and September 2019, 296,538 sq.ft. of new build commercial space has been developed over a 30 month period. On a net acreage basis this is 29.31 acres/11.86ha. On an annualised basis, this equates to 118,415 sq.ft. or 11.72 acres (4.74 ha) per annum.



Birmingham Business Park

- 4.5 Birmingham Business Park is located near Junction 6 of the M42 with the majority of the park in the ownership of Blackrock. Two plots have been recently developed on the park, with Sulzer taking a 60,000 sq.ft. pre-let for a manufacturing facility and a speculative industrial development on the other plot. The Employment Land Review (January 2017) highlighted at page 69 that 9 ha of available allocated and deliverable land is available. As of September 2019, one single plot of circa 2.4 hectares of available allocated and deliverable land remains.

TRW / The Green, Stratford Road

- 4.6 This site owned by M7 Real Estate has a current hybrid planning permission (application reference PL/2018/02731/MAJFOT) for car dealership uses, 242 residential units, as well as a care home. Construction is currently underway on circa 1 acre for a new Aston Martin Dealership which is operated by Cambria Automotive. In addition, as well as a McCarthy and Stone care home which sits on circa 2 acres, the existing occupier on the site ZF Lemforder who has offices, research and technical centres spread across the site intend to relocate to BVP and have purchased 9.15 acres of allocated employment land at BVP to build their new office and research centre. ZF Lemforder are currently on site constructing out this scheme and this will be occupied in the Summer / Autumn of 2021. No land is therefore being marketed for B1, B2 or B8 uses, and as such no land is available for employment uses.

Land at Damson Parkway

- 4.7 This land is specifically identified in the Draft Local Plan to be released from the Green Belt for the expansion of Jaguar Land Rover's (JLR) existing facility. It is understood that a planning application is due to be submitted shortly. It is unknown whether any land is available for any other users other than JLR. A case could be made that this site is not currently available and should not be included in the land supply calculation.

Chep / Higginson, Bickenhill Lane & Land at Clock Interchange

- 4.8 We have no information on these sites. As such, it is assumed they are still currently available. However, for the site to be delivered the existing occupier Chep needs to be relocated.



Land at HS2 Interchange

- 4.9 The delivery of the proposed employment allocation is subject to the delivery of HS2, and therefore land will not be available until the latter part of the Plan period and as such only a proportion is likely to be deliverable within the Plan period.

Summary

- 4.10 In summary, the overall supply of employment land availability is provided overleaf.

Summary Table of Solihull Borough Employment Land Availability

No.	Site.	Available Proposed Employment Land (ha) – Draft Plan October 2020	Current Availability (ha) – December 2020
1	Blythe Valley Park*	2	3*
2	Fore, Stratford Road	2	0
3	Chep/Higginson, Bickenhill Lane	0	0
4	Land at Clock Interchange	1	1
5	Birmingham Business Park	2.4	2.4
7	Land at HS2 Interchange		
8	Land at Damson Parkway		
	Total ha	7.4ha	6.4ha

* This land is due to come forward shortly and will no longer be available.

- 4.11 This illustrates a circa 16% reduction when compared with the findings of the Employment Land Review (January 2017). Moreover, in terms of the remaining supply, the vast majority is not currently available. In the case of the proposed allocation at HS2 Interchange, it will not be available until the latter part of the Plan period as it is reliant on the delivery of HS2. In addition, we understand that Land at Damson Parkway is currently restricted to a single user (namely JLR).
- 4.12 Without employment allocations in sustainable locations which can deliver buildings in the short term (1 to 5 years), there will be no available and deliverable employment land to satisfy demand from existing Solihull occupiers looking to expand into larger space, as



well as new occupiers looking to move to Solihull from outside the Borough. This position is in conflict with the Local Industrial Strategy.



5. Demand and Future Land Supply

- 5.1 In Solihull Borough, the A34 Corridor represents the main out of town commercial employment market. Demand for employment land, especially between 2016 and the current day, has been driven by high quality blue chip employers as well as high growth start-up companies that are expanding to take space.
- 5.2 An example of a recent success story along the A34 corridor is Gymshark who are one of the fastest growing businesses within the UK. This business which started in 2012 has now grown to become a global sports-wear manufacturer and in 2016 received the No. 1 Spot in the Sunday Times Fast Track 100 Companies in the UK. In 2017, Gymshark relocated from facilities in Redditch to a new 42,000 sq.ft. office at BVBP which has become their global headquarters. In 2018, Gymshark expanded and took 31,000 sq.ft. of additional space at BVP in the form of a new industrial building. Since November 2019 Gymshark have taken on a third unit on BVBP which is 56,800 sq.ft. This brings Gymshark's total floorspace at the Park to 129,000 sq.ft across 3 different buildings. The business decision to relocate from Redditch to BVP on the A34 corridor was the quality and availability of employment space available, the high quality environment of the business park, and the connectivity of the A34 and Junction 4 of the M42.
- 5.3 As highlighted in Appendix 2, annualised take up of B1, B2, and B8 employment land on the A34 corridor over the 3 year period from 2016 to 2019 equates to 107,815 sq.ft. of new build employment accommodation or 4.74 ha (11.72 acres) per annum. This does not take into account the take up rate of existing standing stock or employment land converted to other uses (such as the former Prologis Office at Monkspath Roundabout which is due to be converted to Car Dealership use) so the true take up rate will be higher.
- 5.4 Given the level of demand for employment land on Junction 4 (A34 Corridor), we are currently preparing a planning application for the remaining 2.8 ha plot at BVP with a view to developing this out during 2021. This means there will be no supply of land along this crucial economic corridor in the Borough. This is a significant concern not only from an economic perspective, but also a sustainable transport perspective given the Council's proposed allocation of circa 1,640 dwellings, and the resulting increase in working age population along the A34 Corridor as a result of major residential allocations such as Dog Kennel Lane. Planning policies should support an appropriate mix of uses across an area to minimise the number and length of journeys needed for employment (Paragraph 104a of the Framework).



-
- 5.5 In order for Solihull Borough to continue to attract major commercial occupiers, it is critical that a new site(s) is allocated that is capable of delivering commercial development in the short to medium term. The proposed employment sites that remain in the Draft Plan are not capable of delivering significant commercial space in that time frame, and this amounts to the exceptional circumstances necessary to remove land from the Green Belt. The final Submission Version of the Plan needs to address this issue.
- 5.6 Site 62, land adjacent to Shirley Golf Club would be a suitable allocation and is located in a highly sustainable location along the A34 Corridor where commercial occupiers have already expressed an interest in taking space on the site should it be removed from the Green Belt. Shirley Golf Club provides a permanent and sustainable Green Belt boundary, no 'artificial' Green Belt boundary will need to be created. IM Properties are capable of delivering high quality employment space on the site in the short term (1 to 5 years) and have demonstrated with BVP and Fore the latent demand that exists along the A34 corridor from commercial occupiers. In addition, any funds generated by the release of the land from the Green Belt for development will be reinvested by Shirley Golf Club back into the Club to ensure its viability and on-going operations as a club in the future.



6. Conclusions and Key Points

- 6.1 In preparing a Local Plan, strategic policy-making authorities need to prepare a robust evidence base to understand existing business needs, which must be kept under review to reflect local circumstances and market conditions.
- 6.2 The West Midlands Local Industrial Strategy was published in May 2019. The Strategy highlighted that the shortfall of land for employment space is at least as pressing as the shortage of land for new homes, and possibly more so.
- 6.3 The years 2015 to 2019 has seen a surge in take up of employment land within Solihull Borough, driven by the availability of good quality employment sites, the transport connectivity offered by major infrastructure in the Borough (such as the M42 motorway, Birmingham Airport and strong train connections between the Midlands and London), and pent up occupier demand post 2008 – 2012 recession.
- 6.4 The best example of employment land take up is the two business parks at the southern end of the A34 corridor, around Junction 4 of the M42, namely Blythe Valley Business Park and Fore. Between April 2017 and September 2019, 296,038 sq.ft. of new build commercial space has been developed over a 30 month period. On a net acreage basis this is 29.31 acres/11.86ha. On an annualised basis, this equates to 118,415 sq.ft. or 11.72 acres (4.74 ha) per annum. As of December 2020, only 2.8 ha of available allocated and deliverable land is available on 2 plots.
- 6.5 On the basis of this level of demand for employment land in this area, the remaining 2.8 ha is earmarked for development in 2021, and there will be no available employment land along the A34 corridor from 2021 onwards. This is a significant concern not only from an economic perspective given the Local Industrial Strategy, but also a sustainable transport perspective given the Council's proposed allocation of circa 1,640 dwellings, and the resulting increase in working age population on the A34 Corridor over the remainder of the Plan period.
- 6.6 Looking Borough wide, when compared with the findings of the Employment Land Review (January 2017), 16% of the land supply identified then is now not available². Moreover, in terms of the remaining supply, the vast majority is not currently available. In the case of the proposed allocation at HS2 Interchange, it will not be available until the

² This excludes land which is proposed to be allocated specifically for Jaguar Land Rover and its supply chain.

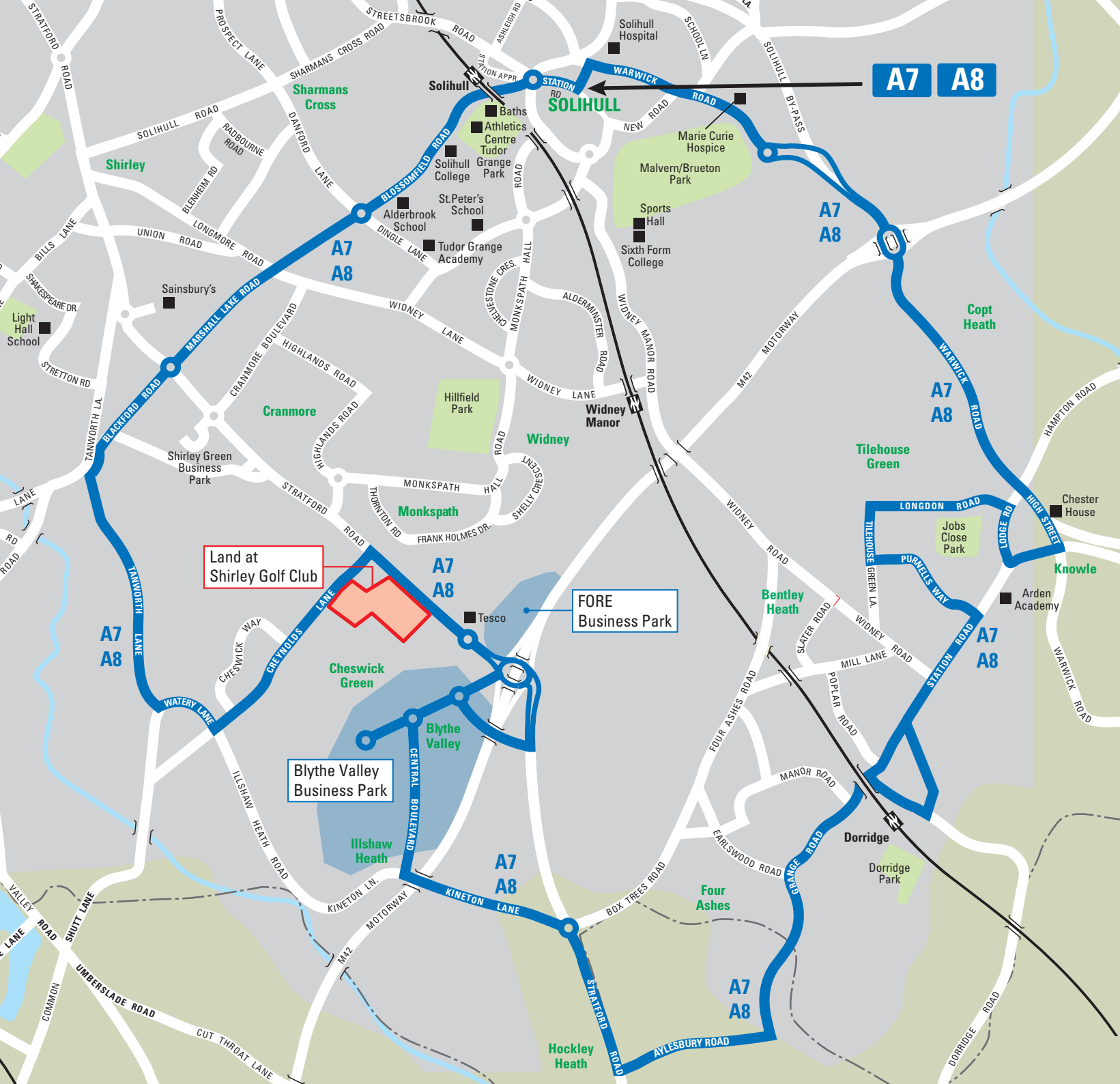


latter part of the Plan period as it is reliant on the delivery of HS2. In addition, we understand that Land at Damson Parkway is currently restricted to a single user (namely JLR).

- 6.7 In order for Solihull Borough to continue to attract major commercial occupiers, it is critical that a new site(s) is allocated that is capable of delivering commercial development in the short/medium term. The proposed employment sites that remain in the Draft Plan are not capable of delivering significant commercial space in that timeframe, and this amounts to the exceptional circumstances necessary to remove land from the Green Belt.
- 6.8 Site 62, land adjacent to Shirley Golf Club would be a suitable allocation and is located in a highly sustainable location along the A34 Corridor (near to BVBP and Fore) where commercial occupiers have already expressed an interest in taking space on the site. IM Properties are capable of delivering high quality employment space on the site in the short term, and have demonstrated with BVBP and Fore the latent demand that exists along the A34 corridor from commercial occupiers.



APPENDIX 1



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Land at Shirley Golf Club

FORE Business Park

Blythe Valley Business Park

Sharmans Cross

Shirley

Cranmore

Widney

Monkspath

Cheswick Green

Blythe Valley

Illshaw Heath

Four Ashes

Hockley Heath

Tilehouse Green

Copt Heath

Knowle

Dorridge



APPENDIX 2

A34 Corridor Commercial Take Up					
Date	Site	Building	Occupier	Size (sq.m.)	Net Area (hectares)*
Apr-17	Blythe Valley	Amenity	Java Lounge	139	0.08
Dec-17	Blythe Valley	New build technical centre	Rybrook	1,581	1.01
May-18	Blythe Valley	New build office	Prologis	1,450	0.49
Sep-18	Blythe Valley	New build industrial unit	Hofer Powertrain	4,394	0.93
Oct-18	Blythe Valley	New build industrial unit	Gym Shark	2,899	0.65
Jan-19	Blythe Valley	New build office	Jerroms	1,435	0.49
May-19	Blythe Valley	Land Sale	ZF Lemforder	0	3.70
Jun-19	Blythe Valley	New build industrial unit	Lounge Underwear	3,506	0.77
Jul-19	Fore	New build office	UTC Aerospace	2,973	1.21
Jul-19	Fore	New build Office	IM Group	5,574	1.82
Aug-19	Blythe Valley	New build industrial unit	Evac+Chair	3,551	0.79
Dec-19	Blythe Valley	New build industrial unit	Gym Shark	5,285	1.13
Dec-19	Blythe Valley	New build office	Arthrex	1,589	0.49
Total				34,376	13.57
Annual Take up between April 2017 to Dec 2019 (2 years 8 months)				12,890	5.09

sq.ft	acres
1,500	0.20
17,014	2.50
15,608	1.20
47,302	2.30
31,205	1.60
15,446	1.20
0	9.15
37,741	1.90
32,000	3.00
60,000	4.50
38,222	1.96
56,888	2.80
17,101	1.20

* the net area does not include land used for infrastructure (roads, landscaping, drainage, amenity space)

Annualised Take up between April 2017 to December 2019

Review of the Development Needs of the Automotive Retail Sector in Solihull Borough

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1. Introduction

- 1.1.1. This report has been prepared jointly by Savills and Marrons Planning on behalf of IM Properties to consider the development needs of the automotive retail sector (car dealerships).
- 1.1.2. The automotive sector as a whole is a major contributor to the local economy of Solihull Borough, and the retail element of the sector is a key link in the chain that converts production into sales.
- 1.1.3. This report has been prepared in support of representations made by IM Properties to the Solihull Local Plan Review in respect of land off Stratford Road, Shirley, and the need for such evidence to inform the Plan. The report is intended to supplement Solihull Borough Council's Local Plan Review Evidence Base in respect of the development needs for economic development.
- 1.1.4. The report begins by considering the guidance provided by the Government to local planning authorities with respect to how to assess the need for economic development.
- 1.1.5. In response to the Guidance, the report then provides an overview of the automotive retail sector at a national, sub-regional, and local level which considers the current and likely future drivers for change in the sector, and how such changes will influence the demand and supply of land within the Borough.
- 1.1.6. The report will conclude with a summary and recommendations to inform the Council's consideration of the Local Plan Review.

2. Planning Policy Context

- 2.1.1. The following is a summary of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018) in so far as the approach to be taken by local planning authorities to ensuring their Local Plan builds a strong, competitive economy.
- 2.1.2. Planning policies should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future.
- 2.1.3. Planning policies should set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy for sustainable economic growth, and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period.
- 2.1.4. Planning policies should seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment.
- 2.1.5. Planning policies should recognise and address the specific locational requirements to different sectors.
- 2.1.6. In this policy context, it is appropriate for the Council to consider the development needs of the automotive retail sector. Further, it is important for the evidence gathered to identify and address any barriers to investment in the sector.
- 2.1.7. The following is a precis of the National Planning Practice Guidance in so far as the correct approach to gathering appropriate economic evidence. The following sources of evidence should be considered with respect to all sectors, including the automotive retail sector:
- The recent pattern of changes in land supply, including take-up rates of available land and losses to other uses;
 - Market evidence, including evidence of business needs (such as the letter appended to this report from Listers) and advice from local agents;
 - Market signals, including differentials in land values (such as between residential and automotive retail);
 - The existing availability of land, including considering any reasons why committed sites have not come forward;
 - The locational and operational requirements of the particular businesses, (such as the need in the automotive sector to co-locate car sales, servicing, and storage on single sites);
 - Evidence of market failure; and,
 - Future trends and changes which may influence development requirements (such as the growth in population and the increasing switch from petrol and diesel to alternative fuel vehicles).

3. Market Overview

3.1. National Perspective

- 3.1.1. The passenger car sales market has seen significant growth since 2011, with annual sales figures rising from below 2,000,000 to a record of 2,692,786 in 2016, a 26% rise in overall passenger car sales. Despite reaching a record sales level by March 2017, sales numbers dropped overall in 2017 to approximately 2,540,000 with sales continuing to contract through the first quarter of 2018. March 2018 saw new registrations down 15.7% on March 2017 and down 12.4% year-to-date. However, new registrations are still at historically high levels with March 2018 providing the fourth best March sales performance on record as reported by The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT).¹
- 3.1.2. Supporting the new vehicles sales market, used vehicle sales remained relatively consistent in 2017, dropping only 1.1% on 2016 with the sale of over 8,100,000 vehicles.
- 3.1.3. A contraction in sales numbers since 2016 has been expected following the preceding rapid growth of the sector, but a contraction is also a reflection of wider consumer confidence as a result of economic and political uncertainty. Key factors influencing trading performance in this respect include; Brexit and the resulting poor exchange rates (placing pressure on vehicle pricing), the prospect of further interest rate rises to control inflation (impacting on vehicle financing options) and the Government's recent announcement of their intention to ban the sale of all diesel and petrol vehicles from 2040, together with the introduction of road tax (Vehicle Excise Duty) and company car tax (Benefit-in-Kind Tax) increases for diesel vehicles from April 2018.
- 3.1.4. As a result of uncertainty surrounding traditionally fuelled vehicles, there was a 9.8% year-to-date rise in new registrations for Alternative Fuel Vehicles (AFV) by March 2018. Consumers are becoming increasingly discerning and interested in low emission vehicle models in order to off-set concerns of further expected punitive legalisation and taxation changes.
- 3.1.5. A significant rise in sales numbers for AFV's was also reflected in the used car market in 2017 as vehicles became increasingly available second-hand. In this respect, sales of petrol-electric hybrid cars rose 22%, with zero emission electric vehicle sales rising dramatically by 77%.
- 3.1.6. With the prospect of additional legislative changes as the government look to implement their air quality improvement plans, the rapid growth of the Alternative Fuel Vehicle sector is inevitable. The recent reduction in overall sales levels may therefore only reflect the start of a transitional period as consumer focus shifts to environmentally friendly vehicles over the next 10-15 years. As a result, manufacturers will be under scrutiny and pressure to future proof vehicle ranges and ensure their network of dealership facilities are modernised and equipped for the sale and servicing of AFVs.

¹ All Figures referenced in this document relating to new registrations and vehicles sales are taken from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) and are available publicly on their website: <https://www.smmt.co.uk/>

- 3.1.7. Manufacturers continue to rationalise their dealer network representation, moving away from smaller, underperforming / inefficient sites with a view to securing large, core sites in good, accessible, locations. This has most recently been demonstrated by Vauxhall, who announced in April 2018 their plans to 're-franchise' their network with initial estimates suggesting they will consolidate the number of dealerships nationally from 326 to circa 200. Whilst some press commentators view such changes negatively, they demonstrate the importance of high quality facilities in order to deliver the experience consumers demand, that is often already provided by premium marque brands.
- 3.1.8. Other manufacturers / brands such as VW Group, BMW and JLR have increasingly put pressure on their dealer group franchise partners to deliver new facilities in line with their latest corporate identity requirements. In terms of JLR specifically, this has targeted the coming together of Jaguar and Land Rover brands under one roof. Due to the scale of these new facilities and the significant capital expenditure associated with site acquisition and construction, a large majority of new dealerships have been delivered by franchise dealer groups of scale, who operate multiple facilities and have access to the necessary funding resource.
- 3.1.9. This trend has been reflected in corporate merger and acquisition activity within the sector in recent years, particularly in 2016 and 2017, with a number of major dealership groups purchasing smaller, regional, groups as they jostle for position and control of representation for key brands.
- 3.1.10. Pressure to modernise facilities is not a new phenomenon to manufacturers and franchised dealer groups. A number of facilities are now dated, having been constructed pre-2011, prior to the rapid rise in sales numbers. A consistently high level of sales has resulted in a greater number of vehicles in use which, supported by longer lifespans and the growing level of technology within modern vehicles, means the demand for state-of-the-art servicing and aftersales facilities has never been greater.
- 3.1.11. Property requirements have therefore become larger in scale as dealers seek to keep all facilities on one site where possible. Broadly, property requirements for new facilities range from between 3 - 6 acres (c1.25 – 1.45 hectares) for the development of approximately 40,000 – 60,000 sq ft (c3,700 – 5,575 sq m) of built accommodation for premium marque facilities, with mid-range brands requiring between 2 – 4 acres (c0.80 – 1.60 hectares) for the development of between 20,000 – 40,000 sq ft (c1,850 – 3,700 sq m) of built accommodation.
- 3.1.12. These typical requirements are meant for guidance purposes only and there are anomalies. For example, LSH Auto UK Ltd have obtained planning permission in the last 12 months for the development of a new 10.5 acre (4.25 hectare) facility for Mercedes in Stockport. Similarly, Cotswold Motor Group opened a new BMW facility in Cheltenham in 2017 that extended to c150,000 sq ft (13,935 sq m) over four storeys, set upon a 4.5 acre (1.82 hectare) site. Both of these examples are positioned in locations with excellent accessibility to the motorway and arterial road network, within significant catchment areas.
- 3.1.13. **Summary**
- There remains significant pressure on manufacturers and dealer groups to review existing representation to ensure they are meeting the demands of their consumers. A number of the current and future drivers of change are as follows;

Review of the Development Needs of the Automotive Retail Sector in Solihull



- Over-representation is a common theme for a number of volume brands, forcing rationalisation of dealership networks;
- Given the rising number of vehicles using the road network and the increasing level of technology within vehicles, existing dealership facilities are often outdated, in-efficient and ill-equipped to provide the required aftersales service;
- The consolidation of brand representation from multiple and outdated facilities requires the development of new sites of scale that are accessible and well-located providing coverage to a wider catchment; and
- The anticipated growth of the Alternative Fuel Vehicle market over the next 10-15 years requires the modernisation of facilities to meet the demands of future product ranges.

3.2. Sub Regional (Greater Birmingham) Perspective

- 3.2.1. As population density within Birmingham city centre increases, predominantly residential development is pushing the traditional city centre boundaries as areas previously considered as 'fringe' become viable for development and regeneration. Beyond the city centre, there is competing demand for land, both for residential and industrial development as growth expands from the core into new quarters beyond the ring road.
- 3.2.2. In terms of motor trade representation in the greater Birmingham area, a limited number of brands retain representation in the city centre. Volkswagen (Johnsons Cars) and Mercedes Benz (LSH Auto UK Ltd.) occupy premises located off Lawley Middleway on the edge of the city centre core, but both are under significant pressure due to limited car storage, aftersales and Pre-Delivery Inspection (PDI) capabilities. Subsequently, both are considering acquiring additional land and buildings to support their operations.
- 3.2.3. However, land and buildings in this area of the city are subject to increasing competition and demand from residential developers, industrial occupiers who need to relocate ahead of HS2 construction works and industrial developers looking to supply 'last-mile logistics' facilities.
- 3.2.4. BMW / MINI are located on the northern periphery of the city centre core near the Jewellery Quarter. The franchise car dealer is Sytner Group who have historically operated over 3 distinct sites in this location. However, in the last 12 months, the MINI dealership has ceased trading and we understand is receiving significant interest for other, higher value, alternative uses. Given the level of residential development activity in the locality, it is also expected that they are receiving approaches on the remaining sites.
- 3.2.5. Aside from other pockets of vehicle dealership representation in locations such as Bristol Road (Bristol Street Motors Ford and Lookers Vauxhall in Selly Oak), Star City (Bristol Street Motors Seat and Lookers Vauxhall), Hagley Road West (Hyundai Birmingham), Kings Norton (Bristol Street Motors Ford) and Yardley (Lookers Vauxhall – soon to cease trading due to Vauxhall's 're-franchising' proposals), the only other area of concentrated representation is on the Kingsbury Road (A38) in Erdington.
- 3.2.6. Colliers Motor Group (now Lancaster Plc) developed three new dealerships in this location in 2014, including a new standalone Land Rover facility. Given the proximity to Jaguar Land Rover's (JLR) Castle Bromwich factory, JLR are likely to have preferred a dealership in this location to combine both the Jaguar and Land Rover brands, as they have targeted for the entirety of their network. However, combining the brands would have impacted on Tamworth Jaguar which was also operated by Collier Motor Group (now Lancaster Plc) and subject to a substantial remaining lease term.
- 3.2.7. Importantly, this has resulted in Jaguar being underrepresented in Birmingham, with their only facility being an outdated and constrained site located on Stratford Road, Shirley which is operated by Listers Group.
- 3.2.8. The sub-regional picture emerging is that car dealership representation is gradually being pushed to the periphery of Birmingham and beyond. This has resulted in Wolverhampton covering representation to the north and north west of the city, Erdington and Tamworth sharing representation to the north east of the city and Solihull covering representation across and beyond the south of the city.
- 3.2.9. A location map is attached for reference at Appendix 1.

3.2.10. Summary

3.2.11. The above demonstrates key examples of the scenarios faced by manufacturers and dealer groups in the Greater Birmingham area. In summary, a number of challenges are resulting in consolidation of dealership representation to fewer, well-located and accessible sites of scale. These challenges incorporate those set out within the National Market Perspective section alongside Birmingham-specific challenges, including;

- Outdated and often restricted facilities that make keeping all operations on one site increasingly difficult;
- Limited availability of land and competition from alternative uses when looking to acquire complementary / new space;
- Higher value alternative uses being developed on nearby sites, with pressure to release existing dealership sites for regeneration;
- An increasingly congested urban road network, that makes sites without ease of access to the motorway network less attractive to customers and harder to service and supply with vehicles; and
- Absence of land supply allocated within adopted Plans for car dealership use.

3.3. Local (Solihull) Perspective

- 3.3.1. Stratford Road, Shirley, Solihull is viewed as the principal car dealership location for the Midlands region as a whole and has been for a number of years. Through ease of connectivity to the M42 motorway and subsequently the wider motorway and arterial road network via the M6, M5, M40 and A38, Stratford Road is unequalled for accessibility to a significant catchment area that is characterised by a desirable and affluent demographic profile.
- 3.3.2. Positioning and securing representation for car dealer groups and manufacturers in this area of the country is business critical. The wider area of representation covers South and Central Birmingham, Solihull, Bromsgrove, Redditch, Warwick and Leamington Spa, together with a collection of outlying smaller towns and villages. Being well-located in close proximity to complementary and competing car dealers / brands whilst avoiding duplication with existing representation is essential.
- 3.3.3. Solihull is centrally located within the catchment allowing convenient access from all these areas. Manufacturer and dealer group focus falls specifically on Stratford Road, as it has historically facilitated dealer group representation and due to a limited number of other suitable arterial routes that provide such prominence in close proximity to complementary uses.
- 3.3.4. In this respect the Warwick Road / Solihull Bypass (A41) and the A45 corridor are the only other major arterial routes that provide connectivity to the motorway network within the wider area. Notably, the corridor either side of the A41 is characterised by predominantly residential development. Whereas, by contrast, the Stratford Road (A34) corridor remains largely commercial. The A45 corridor within Elmdon is similarly residential in character. Further east it does become more commercial to the north of the A45 with uses associated with the Airport and the NEC. However, there are no car dealerships in this area currently, and new dealerships would be unwilling to invest in a location that has no profile in the market. Other uses associated with growth of the Airport, the NEC and HS2 are more likely to be necessary in the future.
- 3.3.5. As a result of limited land availability, competition for representation on the Stratford Road is fierce, with dealer groups continually monitoring availability. To provide context, there have been multiple manufacturer / dealer group property relocation requirements that in some instances have been outstanding for in excess of 3-5 years.
- 3.3.6. Most recently, Mercedes have satisfied a long term outstanding requirement (approximately 10 years), albeit unconventionally. This involved the acquisition of Prologis House, fronting the roundabout junction of Stratford Road and Monkspath Hall Road, which was purchased by the franchised dealer group, LSH Auto UK Ltd, in February 2017.
- 3.3.7. Whilst Prologis House benefits from excellent prominence, its site area only extends to approximately 2.5 acres (1.01 hectares) which is small for a premium marque, particularly when typical site requirements (set out in the National Market Perspective section) are considered. This site continues to be occupied by Prologis until their headquarters relocation facility is delivered, adding a further delay to LSH Auto's development programme.

- 3.3.8.** The unsuitability of their existing location fronting the Warwick Road (A41) and limited availability of deliverable land fronting Stratford Road was a key factor in LSH Auto's decision making process to acquire the site. To support an eventual dealership facility, LSH Auto have subsequently purchased a separate industrial property extending to c26,000 sq ft (2,415 sq m) set upon 1.3 acres (0.53 hectares) located off Highlands Road, Shirley, in order to meet their aftersales / workshop needs. Operationally, this is clearly not ideal for the operator and will impact negatively on their productivity as a consequence of having to maintain and operate two independent sites, and having to split functions which would more efficiently be undertaken on one site. It also generates additional vehicle movements on the highway network as vehicles and staff have to travel unnecessarily between sites to carry out functions, as well as resulting in the loss of industrial floorspace from B class use.
- 3.3.9.** This disaggregation of components of business to different sites demonstrates the steps that car dealerships have been forced to take due to the lack of available sites.
- 3.3.10.** Listers Group, who operate (on separate sites) both the existing Jaguar and Land Rover franchises on Stratford Road, have recently contacted IM Properties detailing their outstanding requirement for a new combined JLR facility (a copy of this letter is attached at Appendix 2). This requirement has been outstanding for in excess of 3 years. Similarly to LSH Auto, due to the constraints of their existing site(s) and a pressing demand for additional storage and aftersales, Listers purchased an industrial facility on Cranmore Industrial Estate in July 2017 to ease pressures on the business. Again, this has similar negative impacts on their productivity and sustainability as identified above, and is a short term solution to their problem.
- 3.3.11.** Competition is not just between rival dealer groups and manufacturers, there is also significant demand for the development of alternative uses, in particular residential and care home. A key example of this is the former Shirley Acquatics site, which was being closely monitored by a number of car dealers. The site was eventually purchased by Barchester Healthcare for the development of a new care facility.
- 3.3.12.** The only other existing undeveloped site on the Stratford Road is M Seven's 'The Green' development. The first of four potential parcels received planning permission on 28th March 2018 for the development of a new Aston Martin dealership to be operated by Cambria Automobiles for c. 1.2 acres (0.5ha). The remaining parcels do not benefit from planning permission but have been identified as potential future sites for car dealership uses by the landowners. These range in size from c.2 – 3 acres (0.81 – 1.21 hectares), which may be restrictive in terms of the long term future proofing of the location. Unless plots are combined to facilitate larger requirements, dealer groups who commit to this location are likely to have to acquire additional accommodation off-site to support their aftersales operations in the future. It is also important to note these parcels are in existing use and not currently available.
- 3.3.13.** Listers Group's letter to IM Properties outlines that they considered The Green as a potential new site solution for JLR, however, there were significant concerns surrounding deliverability. This was due to the requirement to relocate the existing occupier of the site, meaning a new dealership would not be able to open until 2022 'at the very earliest'. A further 4 years on top of the existing 3 years that the requirement has been outstanding resulted in the decision that this solution is not suitable. Lister's JLR requirement is therefore becoming increasingly business critical.
- 3.3.14.** In terms of unsatisfied requirements, we understand that there are outstanding requirements for the following brands;
- Jaguar Land Rover

- Tesla (they currently operate from only a pop-up shop in Touchwood)
- Nissan (who currently have no presence in Solihull)
- Skoda
- Hyundai

3.3.15. These franchise requirements will be supported by general dealer group interest in land availability with prominence to Stratford Road, as their existing locations struggle to meet the vehicle storage and aftersales demands. In this respect, Johnsons Cars (Volvo, Volkswagen & Mazda) have expressed an interest in acquiring additional accommodation within the wider locality. Other brands, such as Skoda and Hyundai, also have a requirement in this location.

3.3.16. In a competitive market, car dealerships need modern efficient facilities in accessible locations that can reflect their brand. For some, securing suitable premises on Stratford Road is not just desirable, but essential to their long term plans to improve productivity and increase sales in the West Midlands. This is certainly the case for Listers (JLR) as evidenced in their letter appended to this report.

3.3.17. In any event, the car dealership sector is subject to change and the emergence of further specific brand requirements is likely as manufacturers seek to refresh their corporate identity requirements, lease events occur on existing facilities, and following corporate merger and acquisition activity. The next 10 – 15 years promises further changes within the sector with the rapid growth in demand for Alternative Fuel Vehicles, which will require new, state-of-the-art facilities.

3.3.18. It is therefore evident that the existing land availability on Stratford Road is not sufficient to meet the current operational needs of the market. An additional land allocation on the Stratford Road for car dealership use should be encouraged to meet both existing and future requirements. The land promoted by IM Properties through its representations to the Local Plan Review would represent suitable sites to accommodate this demand in a sustainable location.

3.3.19. A location map is attached for reference at Appendix 1.

3.3.20. Summary

There are a number of key factors and considerations that affect car dealership demand for land located off Stratford Road, Shirley, Solihull, that provide significant justification for the promotion of which can be summarised as follows:

- The location is business critical for dealer groups and manufactures due to the significant and affluent catchment area;
- Demand is focussed specifically on Stratford Road as it has historically accommodated car dealership representation. Other suitable arterial routes that provide prominence in close proximity to complementary uses in the wider Solihull area are limited;
- There is customer (vehicle purchaser) recognition that Stratford Road is the principal motor trade location within the catchment area;
- Competition from car dealer groups is fierce for representation, set against significant demand from alternative competing uses (e.g. residential);

Review of the Development Needs of the Automotive Retail Sector in Solihull



- This environment is intensified by the lack of availability of suitable and deliverable land with existing planning permission;
- Only two sites currently have planning permission, with car dealerships already identified. No other sites are currently available; and
- Based on existing market evidence and requirements, there is justification for further suitable land to be made available for delivery immediately, with further requirements anticipated over the next 5 years.

4. Overall Conclusions

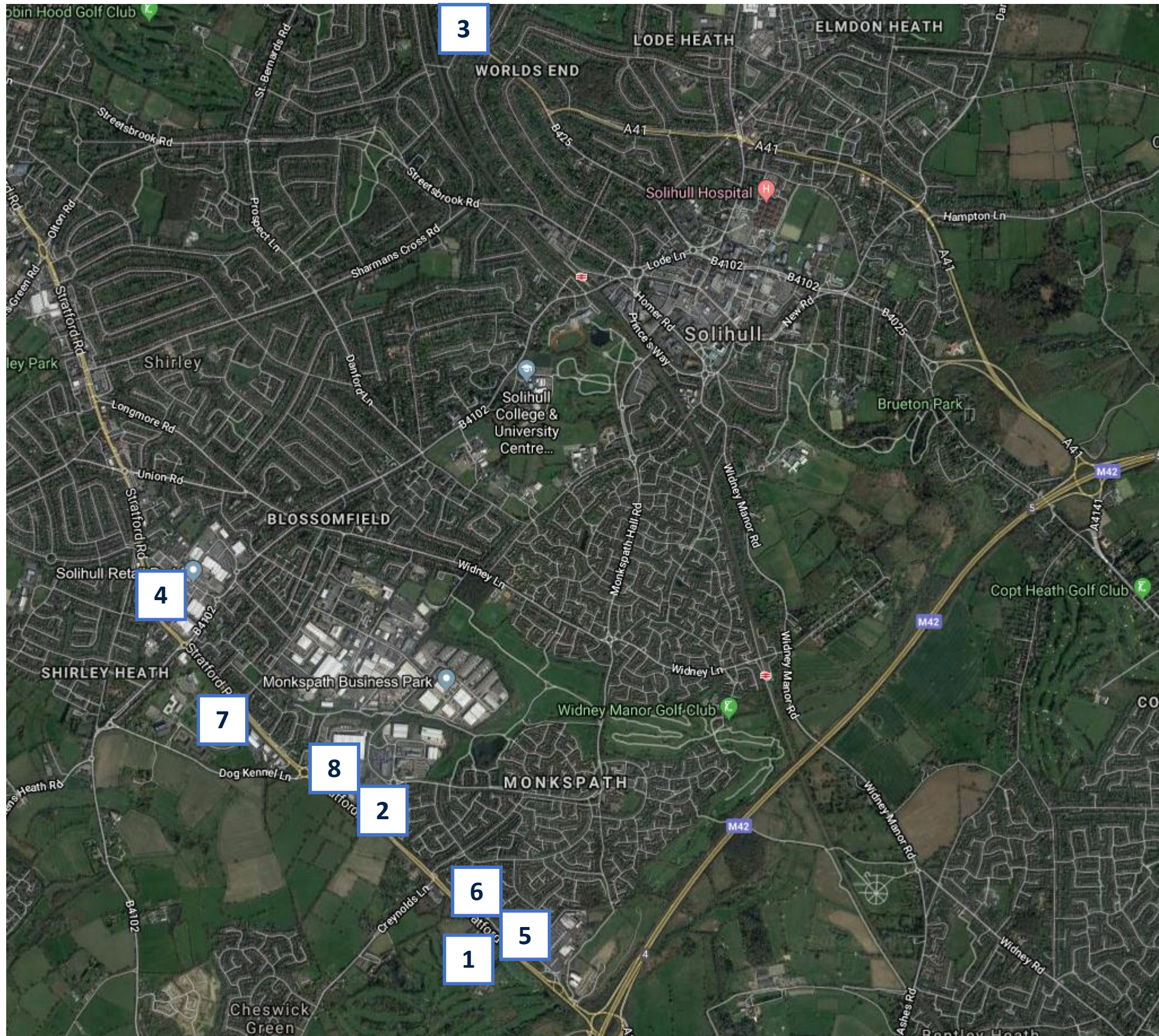
- 4.1.1. The market overview has established a number of key factors and drivers affecting the car dealership property market from a National, Sub-regional (Greater Birmingham) and Local (Solihull) perspective.
- 4.1.2. Nationally, there is a common theme of manufacturers and brands seeking to rationalise their dealership network representation to provide well-located and accessible facilities in order to drive operational efficiency and productivity. Smaller, dated facilities situated on constrained and restricted site areas are becoming unsustainable and often do not meet a manufacturers minimum corporate identity standards.
- 4.1.3. Whilst there has been a recent contraction in overall new vehicles registration figures, performance is still at historically high levels with March 2018 demonstrating the fourth best performing March on record. A contraction in new registrations has been expected following rapid growth in the sector from 2011 until early 2017.
- 4.1.4. A trend has emerged in both new and used vehicle sales data of growth in demand for Alternative Fuel Vehicles (AFVs). This is largely attributable to taxation and legislative changes. Given government commitments to improve air quality plans, the continued growth of the AFV sector is inevitable over the next 10-15 years and beyond. Manufacturers and dealer groups will need to future proof vehicle ranges and ensure their network of dealership facilities are modernised and equipped for the sale and servicing of AFVs.
- 4.1.5. In the greater Birmingham area, a number of existing facilities are outdated and located on restrictive site areas. This has made keeping all operations for a facility on one site increasingly difficult. Residential development is pushing beyond the traditional city boundaries as areas become viable for development and regeneration.
- 4.1.6. Limited availability of land and competition from alternative uses, together with an increasingly congested road network, is encouraging manufacturers and dealer groups to consolidate representation in locations beyond the city. New facilities are sought in close proximity to other complementary car dealership users that are prominent and accessible with good connectivity to the arterial road network.
- 4.1.7. Solihull is a business critical location for dealer groups and manufacturers due to the significant and affluent surrounding catchment area. Dealership demand focusses specifically on Stratford Road (A34) as it has historically accommodated car dealership representation and there is customer (vehicle purchaser) recognition that it is the principal motor trade location in the wider area.
- 4.1.8. There are limited alternative locations that provide such good accessibility. The Warwick Road / Solihull Bypass (A41) and the A45 Corridor provide the only other arterial routes that connect with the motorway. However, the A41 corridor is largely characterised by uncomplimentary residential use. The A45 is also characterised by residential use within Elmdon, whilst further east land adjoining the established commercial areas is likely to be required for other uses associated with the growth of the Airport, the NEC and HS2.

- 4.1.9. Examples (and supporting correspondence from Listers Group (JLR franchisee)) have been provided that demonstrate the demand for additional car dealership representation on the Stratford Road. A number of requirements have been outstanding for significant time periods, in one instance for up to 10 years. Whilst two requirements (Mercedes and Aston Martin) should be satisfied in the coming years, one dealer group has had to acquire buildings with existing occupancy, effecting the relocation of established businesses. Notably, this acquisition still doesn't satisfy their requirements and they have acquired additional accommodation off-site to meet their storage and aftersales requirements.
- 4.1.10. Similarly, dealer groups already operating along the Stratford Road continue to be under substantial pressure due to the restrictive size of their facilities. This has forced them to consider acquiring additional / new premises.
- 4.1.11. These market conditions are intensified by the lack of availability of suitable, deliverable, land with existing planning permission. The absence of any land allocated for car dealership uses within the Development Plan also makes it very difficult for operators to secure sites. Securing the necessary land is also not made easier by the appetite and demand of competing uses.
- 4.1.12. It is evident that the current operational needs of the market are not satisfied, and that this represents an existing barrier to investment in the automotive retail sector and improved productivity. Furthermore, anticipated drivers for change are envisaged to increase the need and demand for land. An additional land allocation for car dealership uses on land off Stratford Road would contribute towards meeting both existing and future requirements. The land promoted by IM Properties would represent a suitable and deliverable site to allocate.
- 4.1.13. In light of commentary contained with the National Perspective section setting out typical car dealership property requirements, it is recommended that between 5 – 10 acres (2 - 4 hectares) of land is made available in this location for car dealership use.

Appendices

Appendix 1.0 Location Maps

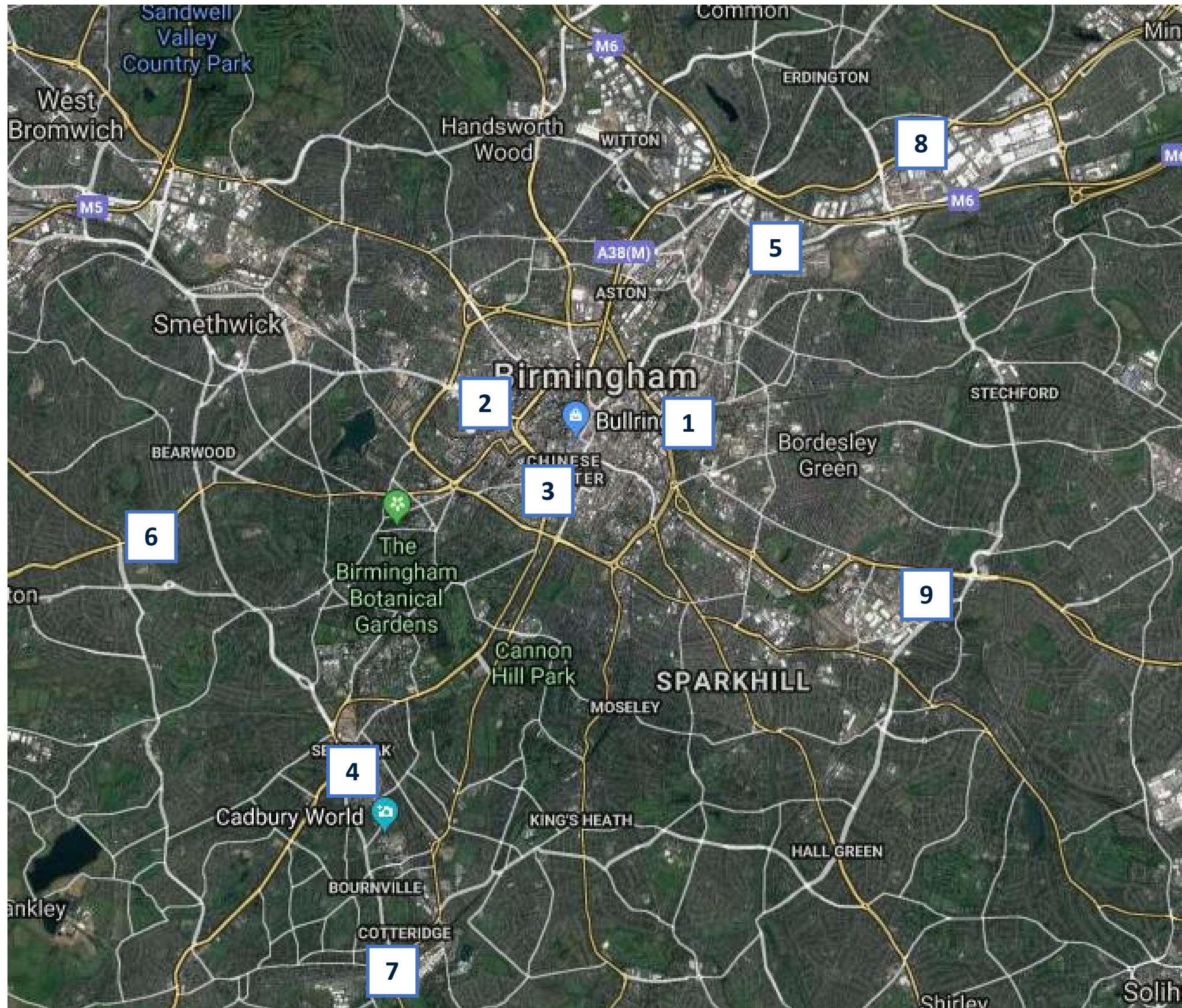
Local (Solihull) Perspective



KEY:

1. Shirley Golf Club (IM Properties)
2. Proposed Mercedes (LSH Auto UK Ltd)
3. Existing Mercedes (LSH Auto UK Ltd)
4. Jaguar (Listers Group)
5. Land Rover (Listers Group)
6. Shirley Acquatics
7. 'The Green' & proposed Aston Martin
8. Volvo, Volkswagen & Mazda (Johnsons Cars)

Sub Regional (Greater Birmingham) Perspective



KEY:

1. Volkswagen (Johnsons Cars) & Mercedes (LSH Auto UK Ltd)
2. BMW / MINI (Sytner Group)
3. Ford (Bristol Street Motors – Bristol Road)
4. Vauxhall (Lookers – Selly Oak)
5. Seat (Bristol Street Motors) & Vauxhall (Lookers – earmarked for closure)
6. Hyundai (Birmingham West)
7. Ford (Bristol Street Motors – Kings Norton)
8. Colliers Motor Group (now Lancaster Plc) & Others
9. Vauxhall (Lookers – Yardley)

**Appendix 2.0
Letter from Listers Group**

Mr Gary Stephens
Marrons
Bridgeway House
Bridgeway
Stratford upon Avon
CV37 6YX

Date – Wednesday, 18th April 2018

Dear Gary,

Listers Group/Jaguar Land Rover – Business Requirements for land off Stratford Road (Shirley Golf Club) - Site Ref 62

In addition to the representations and evidence provided by IM Properties in respect of the above site, please can you also take into consideration the following information.

Listers Group have represented Jaguar and Land Rover in Solihull since 2015, and as you know, Solihull is the home of Land Rover with 10,000 employed at Lode Land Solihull, plus associated supply chain.

Since 2015, we have been trying to find a suitable site to relocate and combine both businesses. Part of land off Stratford Road (Site Ref 62) would act as a relocation site and would house a combined Jaguar Land Rover dealership built to JLR's current ARCH concept corporate standards. The first ARCH concept dealership was completed in 2012 and more than half of the JLR dealership network now complies with this concept. This will increase by the end of 2018 to 70%.

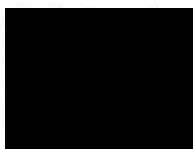
The absence of an ARCH concept dealership in Solihull is a concern to both JLR and Listers, and there is therefore an urgent need to bring the business up to standard and to provide sufficient capacity.

The existing sites are not suitable for redevelopment due to their limited size and ongoing complaints from nearby residents relating to parking and noise.

An alternative plot at The Green, had been identified. However, due to the timescale to relocate the existing occupier before commencement of development, this would mean that a new dealership could not be open until late 2022 at the very earliest. Indeed there is no certainty that this site can be delivered. Even if it can it would be in a timescale that is not acceptable to either Listers or JLR.

As the home of Land Rover, the Council will appreciate that a flagship dealership representation is critical to JLR and the area in terms of the contribution it would make to the local economy and employment. Sites for flagship schemes are already committed in Stratford and Coventry, Wolverhampton is under construction and Birmingham has already been built.

If you have any questions, or would like to discuss these points in detail, please don't hesitate to contact me.



Property Director, Listers Group Ltd

Marrons Planning

Parkway Bridge House
Bridgeway
Stratford upon Avon
CV37 6YX

Savills UK Limited

55 Colmore Row
Birmingham
B3 2AA

Review of the Development Needs of the Automotive Retail Sector in Solihull



IM Properties & Shirley Golf Club

LAND OFF STRATFORD ROAD VISION DOCUMENT

September 2017





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SUMMARY

Context

This document relates to land on the A34 Stratford Road Corridor.

It represents a discreet parcel of approximately 8.5ha (21 acres) of land between the Stratford Road, Shirley Golf Course, and Creynolds Lane.

The land is owned by Shirley Golf Club, but is not part of the operational golf course and is not in recreational use.

The land is in the Green Belt, but is not subject to any environmental designations.

IM Properties have partnered with Shirley Golf Club to put this land forward to the Council for its consideration through the Solihull Local Plan Review.

This document has been prepared to demonstrate to the Council and other stakeholders the suitability of the land for development.

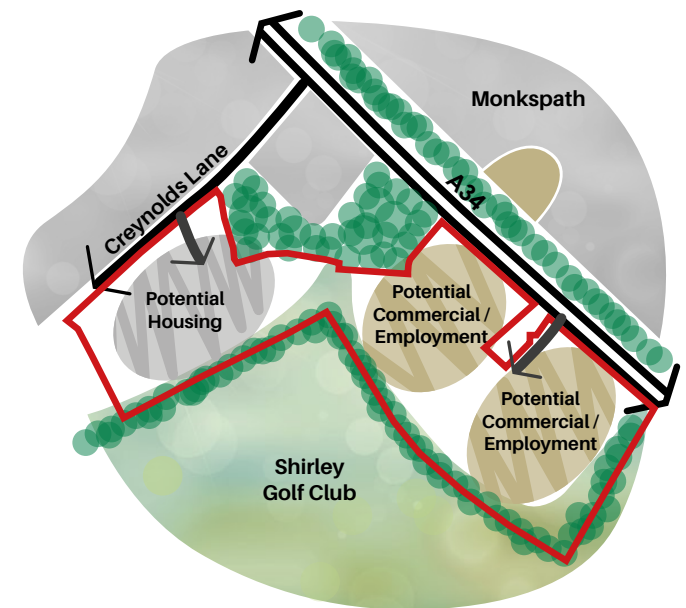
Opportunity

Land off Stratford Road has the potential to provide land for both housing and employment uses.

The land opposite the existing properties on Creynolds Lane has the potential to provide circa 60 market and affordable dwellings, consistent with its residential character. This would not extend development beyond the existing edge of the built-up area, retaining the open gap with Cheswick Green.

The land fronting onto Stratford Road has a very different character to Creynolds Lane reflecting its role as a transport corridor and the mix of commercial uses. The location, size and extent of frontage would provide attractive locations for car showrooms and other employment uses. These would contribute towards meeting an identified demand in this area, as well as providing jobs on a key public transport corridor.

Concept Plan



Why Support Land off Stratford Road?

- The allocation of land at land off Stratford Road within the Local Plan would be consistent with the Council's Spatial Strategy, and its focus for new homes and jobs on the A34 Corridor;
- The development of the land would not erode the key gap between Monkspath and Cheswick Green, and would allow the Green Belt to be amended to reflect the boundary of the Golf Course and clearly defined physical features;
- The use of the land would have no material effect on the operation of the Golf Club, rather the financial benefits for the Club from its development would enable it to sustain and enhance its role as a recreational asset within the Borough;
- The development of the land would contribute to addressing some of the challenges identified in the Draft Local Plan; particularly related to meeting housing needs, securing sustainable economic growth, and improving health and wellbeing; and,

The Council's evidence base is supportive of the allocation of the land, and its allocation can be demonstrated to be sound.

IM Properties and Shirley Golf Club acknowledge the careful balance the Council must strike in its Local Plan between meeting future development needs and protecting what is important in the Borough.

However, it considers the allocation of land off Stratford Road could make a meaningful contribution to new homes and jobs on the A34 Corridor without causing harm to the character of the Corridor or to the important gap with Cheswick Green.

Furthermore, it would have a significant positive effect on the future viability and permanence of Shirley Golf Club and help sustain and enhance this recreational asset.

Representatives of IM Properties and Shirley Golf Club would be happy to discuss this opportunity further with the Council and local residents.

VISION

“To create a sustainable, high quality development which compliments the existing qualities and character of the local area”



INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This Vision Document has been prepared on behalf of **IM Properties** and **Shirley Golf Club**.

IM Properties are one of the UK's largest private sector property companies active in both the commercial and residential sectors. IM Properties and Shirley Golf Club have partnered together to bring land forward for development at land off Stratford Road.

The land is located on the A34 Stratford Road Corridor.

It represents a discreet parcel of approximately 8.5ha (21 acres) of land between the Stratford Road, Shirley Golf Course, and Creynolds Lane.

The purpose of this Vision Document is to demonstrate to the Council and other stakeholders the suitability of the land for development, and to support its promotion as an allocation within the Solihull Local Plan Review.

Preliminary environmental assessment work has been undertaken to inform the Vision.

The land is owned by Shirley Golf Club, but is not part of the operational golf course and is not in recreational or agricultural use.

The Golf Club has been in existence for over 60 years and has a membership of over 400, the majority of whom are residents of the Borough. The golf course is open to visitors to play golf, and the Club also works with local schools in enabling children with disabilities to participate in sport.

The Club is well run; however, like many golf courses it faces the challenge of declining membership and increased running costs. It is increasingly difficult to maintain a profitable and viable club. In fact, the Club has returned a loss in 13 of the last 16 years.

It is in this context that the Club have partnered with IM Properties to seek to dispose of surplus land in order to secure a sustainable future for the Club, and improve facilities to attract more golfers to come and try golf.

There is a great deal of synergy between the ambitions of the Club to improve its facilities and sustain its operations, and the goals of the Council to tackle obesity and improve the health and well-being of its communities.



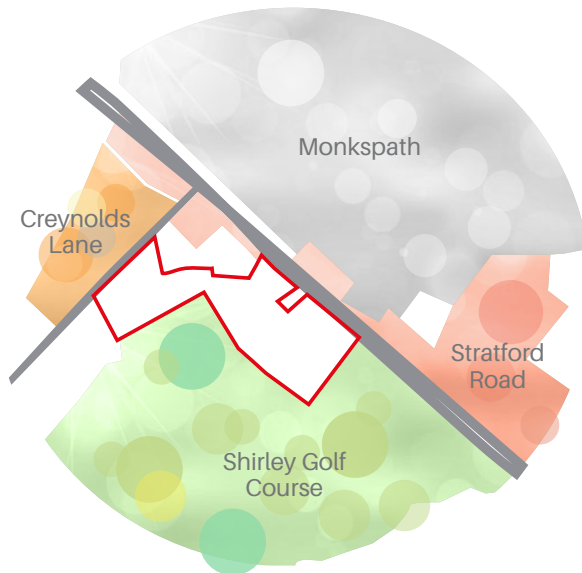
View north east along
Creynolds Lane towards
the site boundary

CHARACTER

Surrounding Land Characteristics

Stratford Road bounds the land to the east and Creynolds Lane to the west. Shirley Golf Course lies beyond vegetation to the south of the site and a small block of woodland is located to the immediate north.

Character Plan



Stratford Road (A34)

Stratford Road features a range of employment and retail services, and is a key public transport corridor.

Commercial uses on the land would therefore be appropriate along Stratford Road. The location would afford potential businesses good visibility and potential for passing trade.

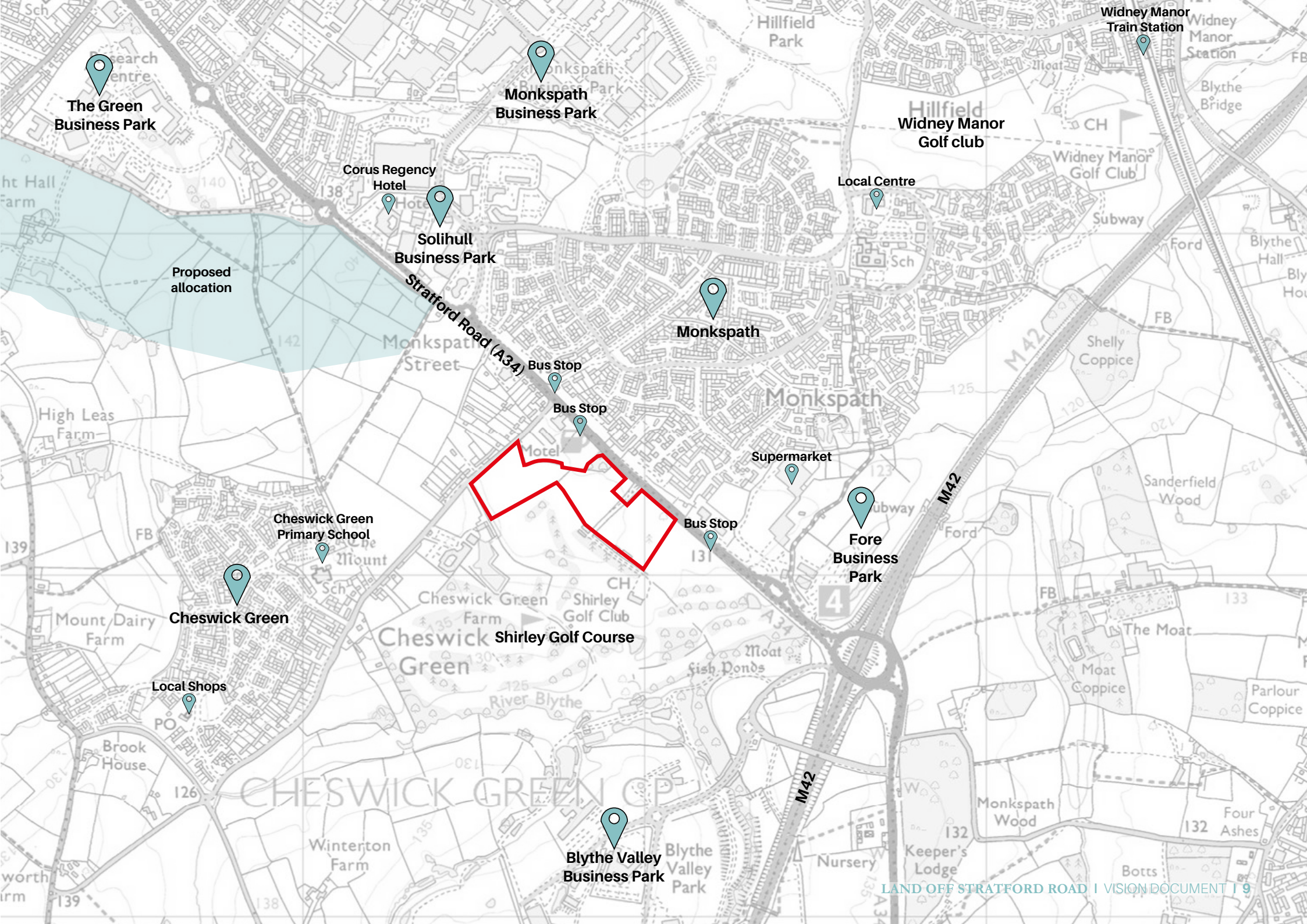


Creynolds Lane

Creynolds Lane features a range of sizes and styles of residential properties, many of which have undergone modernisation and extension. The dwellings are typically large pre-war semi-detached or detached with some bungalows. A number of mature trees feature along this lane, some of which are subject to TPO.

Portions of the land that front on to Creynolds Lane would be appropriate for residential uses to mirror those that currently exist.





Research Centre
The Green Business Park

Monkspath Business Park

Corus Regency Hotel
Solihull Business Park

Monkspath

Local Centre

Hillfield Widney Manor Golf Club

Widney Manor Train Station

Proposed allocation

Stratford Road (A34)

Bus Stop

Supermarket

Fore Business Park

Cheswick Green Primary School

Cheswick Green

Bus Stop

Shirley Golf Course

Local Shops

Blythe Valley Business Park



Proposed allocation

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

Visual Amenity

- The land has a very restricted visual envelope, primarily due to the layering effect of trees within the local landscape which act to limit the extent of visibility.

Landscape Character

- The land is situated within the 'Arden Pastures' Local Landscape Type (LLT). The overall character and qualities of this LLT are identified as being:

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

Ecology and Arboriculture













- There are no trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) within or immediately bounding the land.
- The hedgerows and oaks bounding the land are important local features which link with the wider Arden landscape beyond the built edge and connect with lines of oak trees along Creynolds Lane.
- The land has limited ecological value.

Drainage

- The land lies in Flood Zone 1.

Highways & Access

- The land can be accessed in two locations; one with Stratford Road, utilising the existing Golf Course access, and one with Creynolds Lane.
- New footways could be provided along Stratford Road and Creynolds Lane to tie into the existing provision.
- There are no Public Rights of Way (PRoW) or permissive paths crossing the land or within the immediate context.
- The A34 Stratford Road/Creynolds Lane traffic signal junction incorporates a controlled pedestrian crossing across Stratford Road.
- There is a shared footway/cycleway running along the A34 Stratford Road, from Hockley Heath at its southern end to Shirley Heath at its northern end. A signposted cycle route also runs along Hays Lane, east of the A34 Stratford Road.
- Bus stops are located on both sides of the A34 Stratford Road and Creynolds Lane within acceptable walking distances of the site.

-  Site boundary
-  Source of traffic noise and movement
-  Potential vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian access
-  Existing access to Shirley Golf Club
-  Consider frontage to Creynolds Lane and views from existing dwellings
-  Strong, defensible boundary
-  Existing vegetation
-  Existing buildings
-  Existing highway route
-  Existing noise attenuation bund
-  Pedestrian crossing
-  Bus stops



The land is not subject to any environmental designations and is located on an established movement corridor.















THE OPPORTUNITY

Indicative Masterplan

A combination of design guidance and site assessment has been used to establish the following broad design principles:

- Incorporation of existing landscape elements such as trees, hedgerows and drainage features as part of a connected and cohesive Green Infrastructure across the site.
- Arrangement of development beyond root protection areas and areas of open space, helping new residential dwellings to assimilate with the surrounding landscape.
- Delivery of structural planting as an extension to the existing Golf Course vegetation to soften the settlement edge and provide robust physical site boundaries.
- Creating public access for new and existing residents to proposed open spaces, providing circular pedestrian routes and providing good connections to the existing footpath network.
- Delivery of employment/commercial land with good visibility and access from Stratford Road to reflect the existing mix of uses along this key public transport corridor.
- Creation of drainage attenuation, to accommodate surface runoff, and discharge into existing watercourses at greenfield runoff rates.
- Provision of two points of vehicular access into the site that in turn connect to a clear hierarchy of streets.



-  Site boundary: 8.75Ha
-  Potential vehicular, cyclist & pedestrian access into the Site
-  Residential
-  Employment / Commercial uses
-  Public open space
-  Main vehicular routes
-  Emergency access route
-  Tree planting
-  Attenuation basin
-  Local equipped area of play (LEAP)
-  Existing vegetation
-  Existing built development



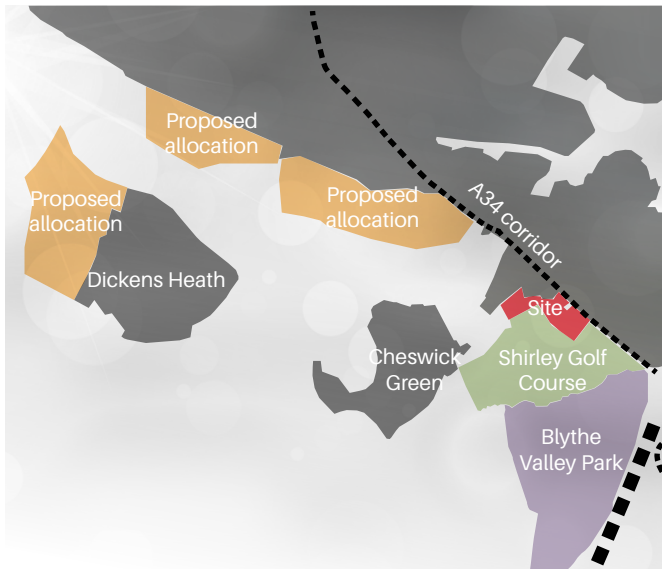
WHY SUPPORT LAND AT STRATFORD ROAD?

Why Support Land off Stratford Road?

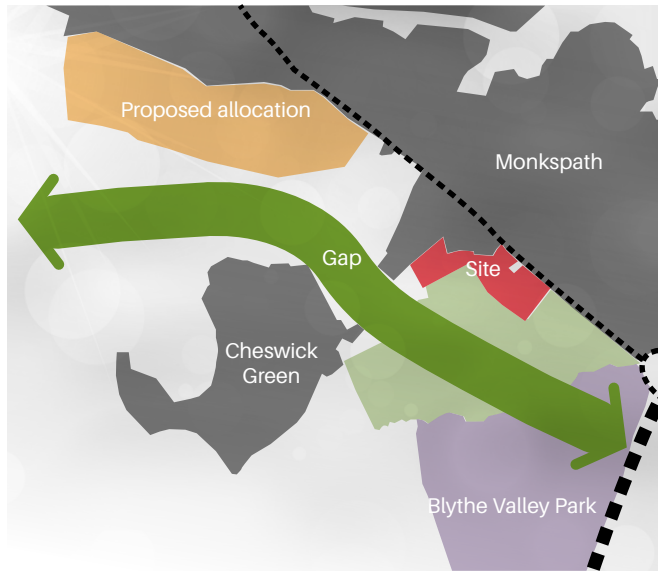
The allocation of land at Stratford Road within the Local Plan would be consistent with the Council's Spatial Strategy, and its focus for new homes and jobs on the A34 Corridor as a highly accessible location.

The development of the land would not erode the gap between Monkspath and Cheswick Green, and would allow the Green Belt to be amended to reflect the boundary of the Golf Course and clearly defined physical features.

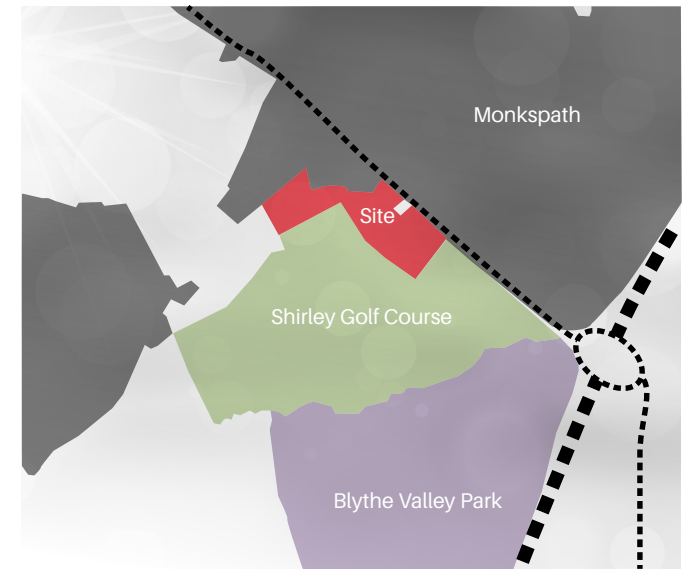
The use of the land would have no material effect on the operation of the Golf Club, rather the financial benefits for the Club from its development would enable it to sustain and enhance its role as a recreational asset within the Borough.



The site in relation to proposed allocations



Gap maintained



Golf Course unaffected

IM Properties and Shirley Golf Club acknowledge the careful balance the Council must strike in its Local Plan between meeting future development needs and protecting what is important in the Borough.

However, it considers the allocation of land off Stratford Road could make a meaningful contribution to new homes and jobs on the A34 Corridor without causing harm to the character of the Corridor or to the important gap with Cheswick Green.

Furthermore, it would have a significant positive effect on the future viability of Shirley Golf Club and help sustain and enhance this recreational asset.

Representatives of IM Properties and Shirley Golf Club would be happy to discuss this opportunity further with the Council and local residents.

The site is available, suitable and achievable, and can contribute new homes and jobs without harming the environment and character of the Borough.

The background is a detailed map of the Monkspath area in Birmingham, UK. The map shows various streets, parks, and landmarks. A central text box with a teal border contains the title. The map features labels such as 'Monkspath Business Park', 'Hilfield', 'Widney Manor Golf Club', 'Subway', 'Monkspath Street', 'Monkspath', 'Cheswick Green', 'Shirley Golf Club', 'River Blythe', 'Blythe Valley Park', and 'Bentley'.

LAND OFF STRATFORD ROAD VISION DOCUMENT