

The logo for L&Q Estates, featuring the letters 'L&Q' in a stylized, bold font followed by the word 'Estates' in a clean, sans-serif font. The logo is white and set against a dark blue background.

# L&Q Estates

A wide-angle photograph of a large, open field with green grass and scattered brown leaves. In the background, there is a line of trees and a row of houses under a grey, overcast sky.

LAND AT FOUR ASHES ROAD

**DORRIDGE**

VISION DOCUMENT

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

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# 01 | INTRODUCTION

- 1.2 This document has been prepared in response to the Solihull Local Plan Review and provides background information to demonstrate that the land being promoted is suitable for residential development. The site has previously been submitted to the Council for their consideration as part of the 'Call for Sites' consultation as well as the Draft Local Plan Consultation (Dec 2016) and the Draft Local Plan Supplementary Consultation (January 2019).
- 1.3 This document builds on the work previously undertaken, and provides robust background information to demonstrate how the site is suitable for housing development. However, whereas the land being promoted was previously considered as a single option, it is now to be considered as two options, site A (standalone) and site A with site B (combined) as set out in paragraph 1.1. This vision document reflects this changed position.
- 1.4 This document brings together assessment work from a number of disciplines undertaken by the project team which comprises of a wide range of specialist consultants who are advising on the proposals. The document also sets out the design principles which have informed the proposed masterplan.

## Introduction

- 1.5 This document demonstrates that the site is suitable, available and achievable for residential development. This is particularly important given the need for the Borough to accommodate significantly more housing land than was previously allocated in the adopted Solihull Local Plan (2013). The Local Plan Review envisages the need to deliver 15,017 additional dwellings in the plan period. As fully detailed within Section 2 of this document, it is clear from the work that has informed the preparation of the Draft Local Plan that to achieve the housing requirement there is a need to release land from the Green Belt. Separate representations are made on behalf of L&Q Estates to the Draft Local Plan which set out that there is a need for Solihull MBC to release more land from the Green Belt than is currently proposed within the Draft Local Plan.

- 1.6 This Document is sub divided into separate sections as follows:

### Section 1: Introduction

### Section 2: Planning Policy Context

### Section 3: Site Assessment:

- The Development Site;
- Landscape and Visual Issues;
- Movement and Access;
- Flood Risk and Drainage;
- Ecology;
- Cultural Heritage;
- Other Matters

### Section 4: Emerging Proposals

### Section 5: Site Selection Assessment

### Section 6: Conclusions

## L&Q ESTATES

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



## PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

- 1.1 L&Q Estates is promoting land at Four Ashes Road to the south of Dorridge for housing development, SHELAA reference site 199. The land being promoted (Fig 1.1) is split into two sections, which sit to the north and south of Earlswood Road. The northernmost section (Site A) is 2.89 hectares in size and could accommodate c. 60 dwellings. This is the main priority in terms of the land being promoted and can be considered as an option on its own merits. The southernmost section (Site B) is 1.8 hectares in size and could accommodate c. 35 dwellings. This section is to be considered as a potential extension to site A, but not as a standalone option.

## KEY

- LAND PROMOTED FOR DEVELOPMENT  
4.69 HA / 11.59 ACRES

FIG 1.1. | THE SITE | NOT TO SCALE

# 02 | PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

## ADOPTED DEVELOPMENT PLAN

### Solihull Local Plan 2013

2.1 This Section summarises the adopted and emerging policy context for this site at the time of writing this document. This promotional document has been produced in response to the Draft Local Plan consultation [Draft Submission Plan October 2020]. The current adopted Development Plan for the area is the Solihull Local Plan (December 2013).

2.2 The adopted Local Plan (**Fig.2.1**) sets out the long-term spatial vision for how Solihull's towns, villages and countryside will develop and change over the Plan period (2011-2028). This vision will be delivered through a strategy for promoting, distributing and delivering sustainable development and growth. Upon adoption, the Local Plan replaced the Solihull Unitary Development Plan (2006) and is now the Council's statutory starting point in assessing planning decisions.

2.3 Shortly after adoption, the Local Plan was subject to a successful legal challenge which means that the current Local Plan has no overall housing requirement for the Plan period. As a result, those parts of the Local Plan, that relate to housing numbers for the plan period, are not adopted.

2.4 Two other reasons have triggered the need for Solihull to undertake an y review, namely; the plans for high speed rail (HS2 Interchange Station known as Arden Cross) and the impact within the Housing Market Area (HMA) relating to Birmingham's inability to meet its own housing requirement within its boundaries, with the shortfall needing to be met elsewhere within the HMA. The growth aspirations of UK Central Hub Area, which includes Birmingham Airport, National Exhibition Centre (NEC), Birmingham Business Park and Jaguar Land Rover (JLR), absence of adopted housing policies and housing needs across the HMA have all contributed to a situation where the Council needs undertake a Local Plan Review to ensure that a proper planning framework is in place that addresses these issues.

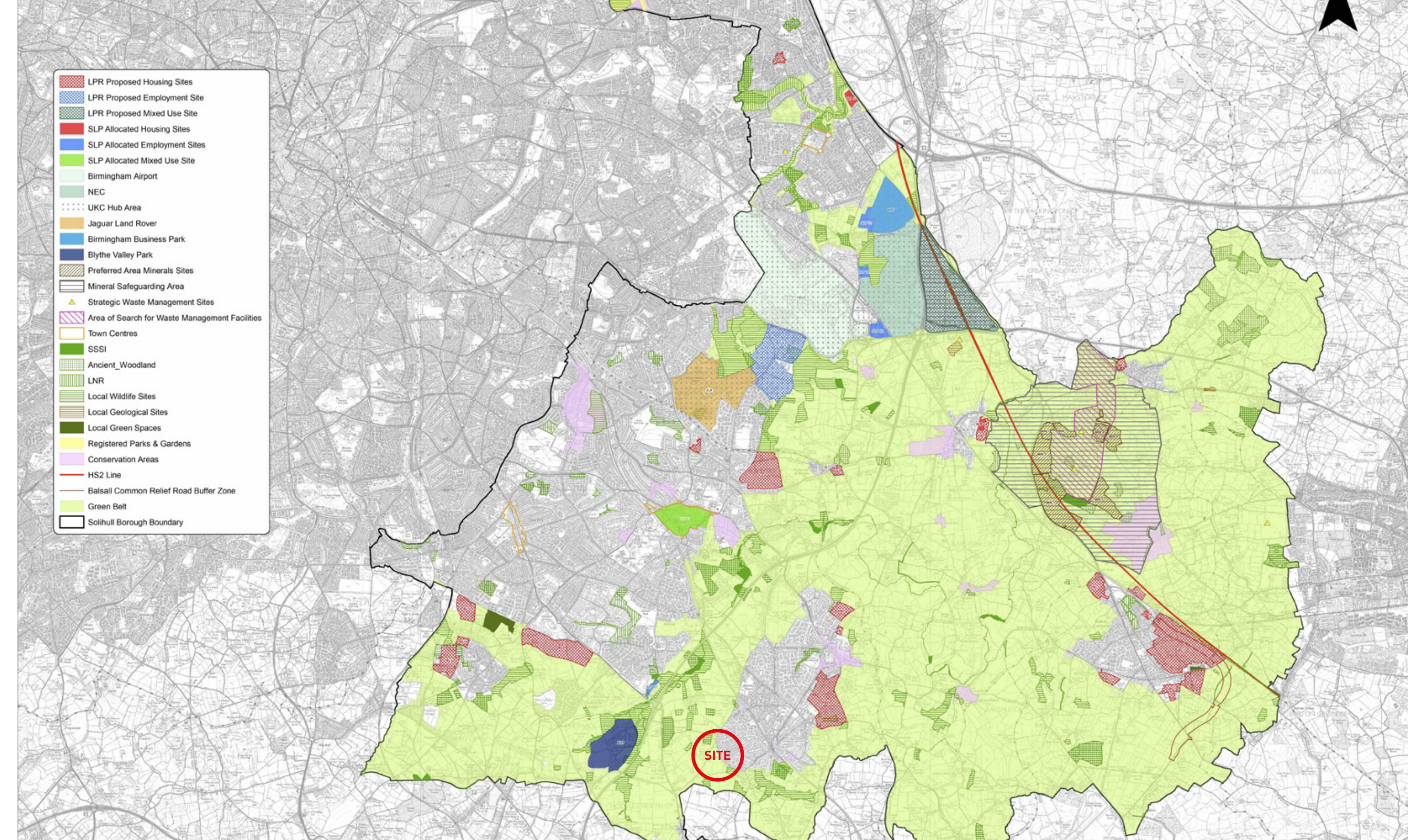


FIG 2.1. | DRAFT SOLIHULL LOCAL PLAN REVIEW OCTOBER 2020 | NOT TO SCALE

## EMERGING DEVELOPMENT PLAN

### Draft Solihull Local Plan (2016)

2.5 The Draft Solihull Local Plan was originally published in November 2016, with a supplementary consultation document being published in January 2019, and the Submission Version published in October 2020. The latest iteration covers the period to 2036. The emerging Local Plan sets out the long term vision and objectives with policies that will guide development throughout the plan period.

These include:

#### Delivering Sustainable Economic Growth through:

- Developing the UK Central Hub Area (Policy P1), which embraces Birmingham Airport, the NEC, Arden Cross, Birmingham Business Park and JLR. This includes:
  - creating Arden Cross – an exemplary international station with new public realm supporting the potential for commercial and residential opportunities;
  - upgrading and refurbishing the NEC - the Council will enable a broad range of developments enhancing visitor offerings, diversifying facilities and increasing international competitiveness;
  - further development of Birmingham Airport – increasing passenger, freight, terminals and transport facilities and capacity, which allows the extended runway to be maximised. The Council will also support a broad range of ancillary and complementary facilities including hotels, administrative offices car parks and other appropriate facilities to serve the airport;
  - expansion of JLR – supporting further success in the global vehicles industry through supporting and encouraging the development of JLR within its boundary defined in the Local Plan and through the release of Green Belt land; and
  - Continuing to support and encourage the development of Birmingham Business Park, within its defined boundary to support its role as a prime employment location in Borough.
- Expanding Blythe Valley Business Park (P1A), including:
  - encouraging the delivery of a major quantity of employment floorspace;
  - upgrading existing and creating new facilities; and
  - attracting investors.

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

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

#### Requiring Land for Housing (Policy P5):

- Delivering at least 15,017 additional homes between 2020 to 2036;
- Allocation for at least 5,270 net additional homes to ensure sufficient housing supply to deliver 15,017 homes in the period 2020 to 2036;
- Annual housing requirement is 938 net additional homes 2020 to 2036;
- New housing will be supported on windfall sites in accessible locations where they contribute towards meeting borough-wide housing needs and towards enhancing local character and distinctiveness.
- Housing will be provided as a mix of small and larger sites that will ensure a continuous supply of housing provision throughout the Plan period
- New homes should comply with the nationally described space standards set out by Government.
- The appropriate density of new housing will be based on a number of factors, and measured on the developable area of a site. This will include site plots and estate roads, but exclude land for other development requirements such as open space, SuDS and strategic highway infrastructure. It will take into account the need to maximise the efficient use of land; appropriate mix of housing ; local character and distinctiveness; scale, type and location of development with regard to accessibility of services by sustainable transport modes;

#### Providing Homes for All through:

- Delivery of 40% affordable housing (but taking into account site circumstances) on residential sites of major development, where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more (Policy P4A);
- Rural Exception Sites (policy P4B);
- Providing Market Housing, 30% 1 to 2 bedroom, 50% 3 bedroom and 20% 4+ bedroom (Policy P4C);
- Encouraging self and custom housebuilding including 5% of plots on sites of 100 or more to be contributed for self and custom build (subject to individual site circumstances) (Policy P4D);
- Housing for older and disabled people including all new build housing on major development sites to be built to Category M4(2) (Accessible and Adaptable dwellings) of approved Building Regulations Document M; Volume 1, unless it is built in to M4(3); 5% of housing on major development sites to be wheelchair user dwellings to M4(3) of the Building Regulations and all developments of 300 dwellings or more to provide specialist housing or care bedspaces in accordance with the Council's most up to date statement of need on older person's accommodation (Policy P4E).

2.6 In order to achieve the target of delivering additional dwellings, the Council places significant focus upon the UK Central Hub, which is one of the key growth areas for the Borough, encompassing Arden Cross land including the site of the future HS2 interchange, Birmingham Airport, The NEC, Jaguar Land Rover and Birmingham Business Park (Policy UK1). In terms of the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath area, the key focus for growth is to the north and eastern edge of the settlement, Policy KN1 (Hampton Road, Knowle) is a proposed allocation of 180 dwellings, and Policy KN2: South of Knowle (Arden Triangle) is a proposed allocation of 600 dwellings with associated infrastructure. No allocations are proposed to the south west of the settlement i.e. Dorridge.

### Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Plan

2.7 The Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Plan was formally made by the Council on 11th April 2019. The plan covers the period up to 2035.

2.8 Key policies in relation to this site include:

- Policy VC1: Green Belt and Landscape, which requires that any development must be in harmony with the rural character of the villages' surroundings and sit well in the landscape. All development proposals should demonstrate how they have taken account of the setting of the built up areas within the wider landscape. Proposals shall have regard to the principles set out in: the Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines: Arden; the Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment 2016; and the Solihull Borough Local Character Guide 2016.
- Policy VC5: Green Streets. New development must respect, maintain and, so far as is reasonably practicable, enhance the green character of residential roads. Where loss of frontage planting is unavoidable, applicants shall include, in their proposals, details of replacement planting that is in keeping with the green character of the road.
- Policy NE1: Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland. On sites with mature or important trees or hedgerows, groups of trees or woodland, the protection of such features shall be promoted in any development scheme. Where such features make a significant contribution to the street scene or landscape but are not protected within the proposed development, such proposals will be resisted.

- Policy H1: Housing on Allocated and Larger Sites. Housing on sites allocated in emerging and adopted development plans, and on larger windfall sites (defined as sites for 20 or more dwellings), shall address the matters set out below. These matters are also relevant to the consideration of some smaller scale development.

- setting, topography and design
- density
- movement by vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists and, where appropriate, equestrians
- off-site traffic and transportation effects
- open space provision, landscaping and gardens
- refuse storage
- capacity in local services
- construction practices
- air pollution
- capacity in statutory utilities services
- crime and community safety.

- Policy H2: Affordable Housing. 25% of all new affordable housing shall be occupied by households with a strong local connection to the Area, both when first built and at the point of any subsequent reoccupation. The policy specifies the detail of assessing 'local connection'.

- Policy H3: Housing Mix.

- Market housing:

- On allocated sites and larger sites, market housing shall be provided in the following sizes: about 32% shall be a relatively even split of flats/apartments and bungalows/houses of predominantly 2 bedrooms or less

- about 34% shall be 3 bedroom dwellings

- about 34% shall be 4+ bedroom dwellings.

- The provision of a different housing mix, including a higher proportion of smaller dwelling units of 2 bedrooms or less, will be supported where justified by the evidence of:

- the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)
- an equivalent Housing Needs Survey approved by SMBC; or
- other evidence considered by the Council to be robust for the purposes of this policy.

- In such circumstance, dwellings with 3 or 4+ bedrooms shall be provided in broadly equal numbers. Determination of the housing mix shall also take into account any relevant adopted strategic policies in the Solihull Local Plan or supplementary planning documents.

- The provision of specialist institutionalised housing (under Class C2 or C2A of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 or any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), sheltered housing for older people or affordable housing will be supported where it meets an evidenced need and complies with relevant Plan and Solihull Local Plan policies. The dwelling size percentages set out above would not apply to housing in these categories.

- Housing mix on sites not allocated or less than 20 dwellings shall be considered in relation to Solihull Local Plan policies.

- Design: Policy D1 Character and Appearance requires that development must:

- be in harmony with the village character and sit well in the landscape

- where on the edge of the built up area, achieve a sensitive transition between the built environment and the open countryside

- protect, enhance and maximise the value of key natural environment characteristics including the canal, mature hedgerows and large mature trees that define the natural landscape character

- reflect layouts characteristic of the surrounding area

- be of a density characteristic of the Area

- be in keeping with the scale, siting and appearance of nearby buildings

- preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the streetscene or the area within which it is located, taking into account matters such as building lines, established plot widths, parking, access and the arrangement of front gardens, walls, railings and hedges

- echo obvious local characteristics (such as the form and type of development, roof style, fenestration, materials, means of enclosure, landscaping and hard surfacing)

- use external finishes that respect local traditions in the use of brick, tile and render with wood for decoration or other materials of construction

- provide parking spaces and garages of a size capable of accommodating a modern family car

- feature green spaces

- provide good quality public realm with well maintained streets and spaces.

- Policies T3 (Walking Infrastructure) and T4 (Cycling Infrastructure) set out detailed design requirements to be incorporated into schemes.

### STRATEGIC GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT

2.9 Approximately 12,000 hectares of Solihull MBC is designated as Green Belt land, accounting for approximately two thirds (67%) of the Borough's land area (**Fig 2.1**). The Green Belt within Solihull MBC forms an integral In order to meet the housing requirements of the Borough, there will be a need to release sites from the Green Belt forms an integral part of the West Midlands Green Belt stretching between the Birmingham Conurbation, including Solihull, and the surrounding major urban areas.

2.10 As part of the Local Plan Review, Solihull MBC commissioned a Strategic Green Belt Assessment to evaluate the extent to which the land currently designated as Green Belt within the Borough fulfils the essential characteristics and purposes of Green Belt land as set out in Paragraph 134 of the NPPF.

2.11 The basis of the Assessment was to provide a 'policy off' approach and consideration of other constraints or the development potential of any of the Green Belt land has not been included in the assessment. The Strategic Green Belt assessment has concluded that a number of refined parcels of Green Belt land in the Borough do not perform against any of the first four purposes of the Green Belt but as set out above does not make any recommendations for amendments to the Green Belt boundary or determine whether land should be removed from the Green Belt.

2.12 Land at Four Ashes Road has been assessed within the Council's Strategic Green Belt Assessment as falling within Refined Parcel RP47. Refined Parcel RP47 is considered in the assessment to be a parcel or area that is:

- lower performing against the first criteria of the Green Belt;
- moderately performing against the second criteria of the Green Belt;
- moderately performing against the third criteria of the Green Belt; and
- does not perform against the fourth criteria of the Green Belt.

2.13 The site falls within a Refined Parcel with a Combined Score of 4-5. Details of the above classification of Refined Parcel RP47 are discussed fully within Section 3 of this Document which relates to Landscape and Visual Issues.

2.14 The need for Green Belt release has been accepted by Solihull MBC with the majority of the proposed allocations for both residential and employment development being within the designated Green Belt. It is considered that a residential proposal at Land at Four Ashes Road would assist Solihull MBC in providing additional housing for the Borough in a highly sustainable location.

# 03 | SITE ASSESSMENT

## SOLIHULL STRATEGIC HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT (SHELAA)

- 2.15 In November 2015 Solihull Council commenced a review of the current Local Plan and launched a Call for Sites exercise alongside the Issues and Options consultation. 247 site submissions were assessed by Peter Brett Associates LLP (PBA), commissioned to undertake a Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA).
- 2.16 A full SHELAA of these sites was published in November 2016 and consulted upon as part of the Draft Local Plan Review. An update has since been published in draft (October 2020) which relates to new submissions or amended sites.
- 2.17 Land at Four Ashes Road has a SHELAA reference of 199, which covers both the northern and southern section of the land being promoted. The assessment of the site concludes that it performs well against suitability, availability and achievability criteria. The report states the following:
- road access is adequate,
  - the site is not affected by contaminated land,
  - there are no ground conditions constraints,
  - there are no high pressure gas pipeline constraints,
  - The site is Grade 5 agricultural land,
  - The land lies within Flood Zone 1,
  - The site has no bad neighbours,
  - The site is not within, or adjacent to a Local Wildlife Site
  - The site is within or adjacent to a fee stranding village.

- 2.18 The site scores a maximum score of 5 out of 5 for 9 out of 10 of the suitability criteria. It is only criteria dealing with locational constraints where a score of 3 out of 5 is afforded, and this is because it sites at the edge of the settlement. This is higher however when compared to the locational score afforded to Site 213, Land North of Hampton Road which is one of the Council's proposed allocations (Land at Hampton Road) whereas the same locational score of 3 was also afforded to Site 1010 an amalgamation of sites known as the Arden Triangle and proposed to be allocated by the Council (Land South of Knowle).

- 2.19 The overall SHELAA observations for the site conclude:

*It is a 'greenfield site in grazing use with good defensible boundaries, which represents a logical residential extension to the existing settlement.'*

*The 'Site performs well against suitability, availability and achievability criteria'*

## SOLIHULL BOROUGH LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT, NOVEMBER 2016

- 2.20 Within the Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment, the site is located within Landscape Character Area (LCA) 3: Knowle and Dorridge Fringe, the key characteristics fully detailed within the Landscape Character Assessment. Landscape and Visual Issues are fully considered within Section 3 of this Document which also sets out the proposed landscape strategy for the site taking into account landscape character and the role of the site in the Green Belt.

## SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL (SA)

- 2.21 An interim SA was produced in January 2017 and this has been updated in October 2020. This shows that the site (reference AECOM 58) is sustainably located, with no 'red' scores. Section 5 includes an assessment of the site against the SA criteria proposed to provide the detail required.

## SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 L&Q Estates has an interest in two adjoining parcels of land measuring approximately 11.6 hectares, predominantly in pastoral use. The site comprises two parcels of land which are located to the north and south of Earlswood Road to the south western side of Dorridge (**Fig.3.1**).
- 3.2 The larger parcel is located to the northern part of the site and is a triangular parcel of land bounded by Box Trees Road to the west, Four Ashes Road to the east and Earlswood Road to the south. The smaller parcel is broadly rectangular in nature and is delineated by Earlswood Road to the north and to the east and well-defined hedgerow boundaries to the south and west. The northern parcel comprises of two fields currently in agricultural use, the site is bounded by hedges and contains a number of mature trees. The southern parcel comprises of one agricultural field bounded by hedgerows and mature vegetation field.
- 3.3 Dorridge is one of the Borough's larger rural settlements and is located in the south of Solihull Borough and to the south east of the main urban area. To the east of the northern part of the site, Four Ashes Road is characterised by existing residential development along its entirety with properties fronting Four Ashes Road and further residential development to the east. Immediately to the north of the northern site there is residential development along the western side of Four Ashes Road which continues northwards. To the east of the southern site there is residential development fronting Earlswood Road, there are also occasional properties located south of the southern site on the western side of Earlswood Road.
- 3.4 The site is wholly within the West Midlands Green Belt and has a public footpath running along the northern boundary of the northern parcel. The public right of way runs east to west connecting to Four Ashes Road to the east and Box Trees Road to the west. There are no listed buildings within or adjacent to the site, with the closest listed building sited 0.4km to the north-east beyond existing built development in Dorridge, as such, there are no known heritage constraints to the development of the site.
- 3.5 The site falls within the Environment Agency's Flood Zone 1 (Land having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding). Topographically, the site gradually rises from the junction of Earlswood Road and Ettington Close to the north-west corner of the site which borders Box Trees Road.
- 3.6 Aside from the site being within the Green Belt, there are no statutory or non- statutory landscape designations covering the application site, such as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Conservation Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Community Forrest, Minerals Safeguarding Area, Ramsar Sites, Special Areas of Conservation, Key Wildlife Site, National Wildlife Site, County Wildlife Site, Local Wildlife Site, Local Nature Reserve, National Nature Reserve, Site of Nature Conservation Interest, High Grade Agricultural Land, Air Pollution, National Cycle Route, Landfill, Pollution, Ancient Monument or Registered Park and Gardens.
- 3.7 Dorridge is one of the Borough's larger rural settlements and is highly accessible within easy access of the motorway network, accessible to both the M40 and M42. The settlement also benefits from the centrally located Dorridge railway station which provides passengers with a regular service to central Birmingham. As one of the Borough's larger rural settlements, Dorridge and Knowle provide a range of services and facilities as detailed further within Section 3 of this document.

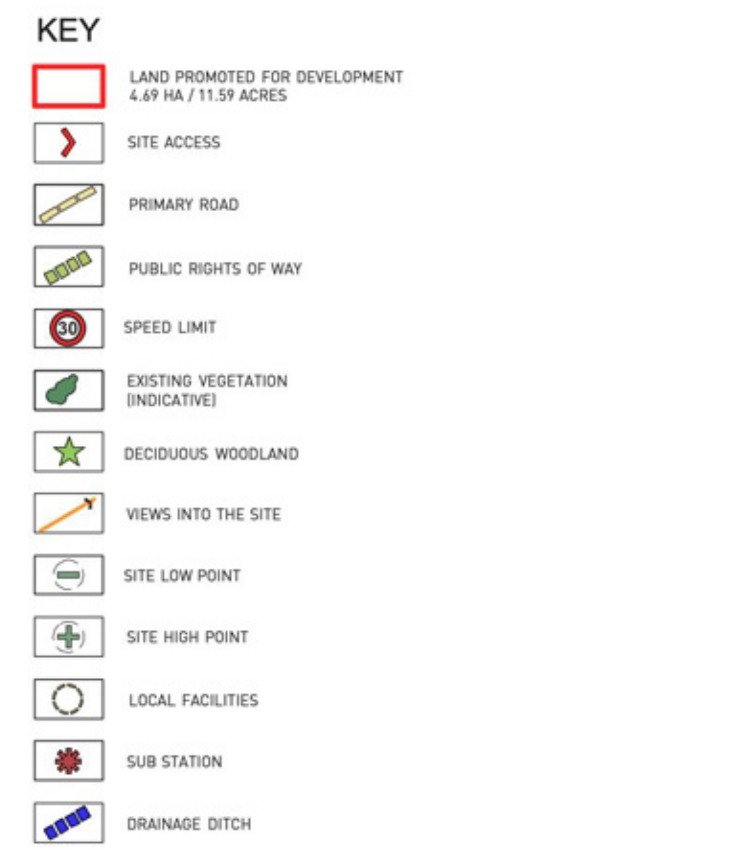


FIG 3.1 | SITE AND CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS | NOT TO SCALE

## LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

### Policy Context

- 3.8 The Solihull Local Plan: Shaping a Sustainable Future, December 2013 sets out the long term vision, objectives and planning policies for the borough. Those policies relevant to a study of landscape and visual matters include Policy P10: Natural Environment and Policy P17: Countryside and Green Belt. The Solihull Draft Local Plan (November 2016) explains its policy context in terms of 'Protecting and Enhancing the Environment' at section 9. It notes the borough has a high green and blue infrastructure (GI) as one of its greatest assets, that extends beyond the countryside to include green and blue spaces of the street scene, gardens, ponds, rivers etc. The natural environment is fundamental to Solihull's attractive urban and rural environment (para. 288).
- 3.9 Policy P10 Natural Environment is central to this, and recognises the importance of a healthy natural environment in its own right. The Council will seek to protect, enhance and restore the diverse features of its Arden landscape, and seek to create new habitat and promote local distinctiveness. The policy also seeks to conserve, enhance and restore biodiversity and geodiversity across the Borough, protecting habitat and species, in particular recognised areas such as SSSIs and Local Nature Reserves. Outside designated areas, developers are expected to take full account of nature conservation and geological value, and demonstrate appropriate mitigation where development is permitted.
- 3.10 Policy P11 Water management discusses the need for all new development to have regard to the actions and objectives of the relevant River Basin Management Plan, with the use of sustainable urban drainage systems in the context of all new major development.
- 3.11 Policy P14 Amenity discusses the need to ensure a good standard of amenity of all existing and future occupiers of houses, businesses and other uses. A number of criteria are relevant including:
- High quality design;
  - Visual amenity and minimising visual impact;
  - The scale, character and appearance of new infrastructure elements related to electronic communications;
  - Safeguarding important trees and hedgerows and new planting;
  - Safeguarding areas of countryside with intrinsically dark sky from the impacts of light pollution; and
  - Protect the tranquil and locally distinctive areas in the Borough by guiding new development to locations that will avoid or minimise adverse impacts.
- 3.12 Policy P14 is cross referenced with Policy P15 Securing Design Quality (Section 10: Promoting Quality of Place), which expects all proposals to contribute to, or create, high quality spaces and places that have regard to local distinctiveness. Proposals will be expected to meet a number of key principles:
- Conserve and enhance local character, distinctiveness and streetscape quality (ref. scale, massing, density);
  - Future proofing the design and layout;
  - Provision for water management;
  - Proactive approach to responding to climate change and adoption of low carbon construction principles;
  - Conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity;
  - Respect and enhance landscape quality, including trees, hedgerows and other landscape features of value, and contribute to strategic green infrastructure; and
  - Create attractive, safe, active legible and uncluttered streets and public spaces.
- 3.13 Cly there is a balance within these criteria between more 'strategic; design issues, with those at a more schematic and detailed level. All established urban design principles and guidance need to be adhered to, with the design process active at prep-application stage.
- 3.14 Policy P16 concerns heritage assets, and makes reference again to the Arden landscape and historic villages including Bickenhill, and that all development proposals likely to impact on this character and significance will be expected to demonstrate how this impact has been addressed.
- 3.15 Policy P17 Countryside and Green belt, advises that inappropriate development will not be permitted in the Solihull Green belt (see below in respect of recent Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment).



### Landscape Context

- 3.16 At a national level the site is located within the National Character Area Profile 97: Arden as published by Natural England (2012).
- 3.17 Landscape character at a local level is defined by the Solihull Borough Landscape Character (2016). The site is located in Landscape Character Area (LCA) 3: Knowle and Dorridge Fringe. The key characteristics of this LCA can be summarised as follows:
- The land gently slopes from a high point of 130m AOD down to 110m AOD from west to east eventually falling towards the River Blythe in LCA 4;
  - Purnell Brook, Cuttle Brook and Canal Feeder along with their associated springs form the main drainage pattern within the LCA. These waterways and watercourse are a valuable landscape asset to the area;
  - Land use is varied with some residential development, individual farmsteads, horsiculture, parkland and agricultural land (mostly Grade 3 with some Grade 4);
  - Field boundaries follow the watercourses and are generally delineated by hedgerows, although a small number of open fields are also noted;
  - This LCA, being adjacent to the settlement of Knowle and Dorridge, has no other major settlements within it apart from smaller residences along the roads and individual farmsteads;
  - Pockets of woodland are scattered across the area;
  - Grimshaw Hall, a 16th century manor, is a Grade I listed building in the north of the area; and
  - The Grand Union Canal forms the eastern boundary of the LCA.

- 3.18 In relation to landscape sensitivity, the published assessment states that this is a landscape with a strong sense of local connection to the place, defining landscape features and a characteristic pattern including the watercourses and associated willow planting, bracken hedgebanks, creating a balanced landscape in a good to fair condition. The single track roads and winding lanes enhance rural character of the area and the pastoral character in some parts add to local distinctiveness. There are a few detracting features within the landscape including poor legibility of the canal and some of the sub-urban influences. Access to public footpaths and bridleways is limited. The Landscape Character Sensitivity of this LCA is considered to be medium.
- 3.19 In relation to visual sensitivity, the published assessment states that the general visibility in this LCA is contained, short distance and low level where small scale fields and watercourses add intimacy and close down views across the area. The urban interface with Dorridge is well screened, although some views of the built form play a minor role in terms of visual coalescence in some parts of the character area. Overall the published assessment considered the visual sensitivity of the area to be low.
- 3.20 The published character assessment states that the value of the area is considered to be medium. It identifies ancient woodlands, wooded watercourses, Grimshaw Hall and the Grand Union Canal as assets.
- 3.21 In terms of landscape capacity, the published assessment states that this sub-area would typically have an overall low landscape capacity to accommodate change. It states that the area would be able to accommodate small areas of new development, which would need to be of an appropriate type, scale and form, in keeping with the existing character and local distinctiveness.

### Visual Context

- 3.22 The visual envelope is defined broadly as follows:
- from the north, by properties on Box trees Road and Four Ashes Road;
  - from the east by settlement edge of Dorridge, specifically residential properties on Earlswood Road;
  - from the south by a combination of gently sloping topography and layers of hedgerow boundary vegetation across the agricultural land between Grange Road, Aylesbury Road and the site; and
  - from west by the mature tree lined Box Trees Road.
- 3.23 Views towards the site are generally limited by the settlement edge of Dorridge to the east and mature vegetation across the agricultural landscape in the south and west. There are several public footpaths and highways that provide the potential for views both towards and across the site. From the north, there are open views from the public footpath that runs parallel to the proposed northern boundary of the site, and as a result of the almost flat topography views across the site are possible. From the south, views are possible from Eastwood Road across the site. Views northwards include the well vegetated Box Trees Road and the existing properties that front Four Ashes Road, to the east of the site. From the west, views of the site are possible from Box Trees Road but are limited to vehicular users as they pass the northern extent of the site. Views include the existing residential properties that front Four Ashes Road, to the east of the site.



**Landscape and Visual Constraints and Opportunities**

- 3.24 Landscape and visual constraints can be used to guide the development of a proposal in a positive manner, often leading to opportunities and not just creating absolute constraints to development. The constraints are considered to be:
- The site is visually exposed from the adjacent public footpath network, and views are semi-rural in character due to the exposed urban edge;
  - the local PROW network, including the Grand Union Canal recreational route (providing recreational opportunities for potential high sensitivity visual receptors);
  - the location of the site within the Green Belt, which will have some influence on the value of the local landscape; and
  - the findings of the Solihull Landscape Character Assessment that identify the LCA within which the site sits as having generally low capacity to accommodate change.

- 3.25 Landscape and visual opportunities can be summarised as follows:
- There are no overriding statutory landscape planning designations;
  - Existing vegetation and green infrastructure throughout the site, including boundary hedgerows, providing opportunities to enhance this through a comprehensive landscape strategy; and
  - The site is located within a small scale landscape where the potential for expansive views are limited by the level topography, woodland blocks and established field boundary vegetation;
  - The site is located against the visually exposed, urban edge of Dorridge providing a developed context to the site and providing potential to improve the visual and physical interface between the countryside and urban area; and
  - The opportunity to propose development within LCA 3: Knowle and Dorridge Fringe in this location which is of an appropriate type, scale and form and in keeping with the existing character and local distinctiveness of the area, as set out in the Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment.

**Role of the Site in the Green Belt**

3.26 The Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment - Assessment Report (July 2016) identifies a number of Broad Areas of Green Belt land. It also identifies a number of Refined Parcels, which adjoin or lie adjacent to built-up areas. The site is located within Refined Parcel RP47 'Land to south of Earlswood Road, Dorridge. The assessment scores each Refined Parcel against four purposes of the Green Belt. In relation to RP47, it sets out the following: **(Fig.3.2)**.

GREEN BELT PURPOSE	RP47 SCORE
1 - CHECK UNRESTRICTED SPRAWL OF LARGE BUILT-UP AREAS	1
2 - PREVENT NEIGHBOURING TOWNS MERGING INTO ONE ANOTHER	2
3 - ASSIST IN SAFEGUARDING THE COUNTRYSIDE FROM ENCROACHMENT	2
4 - PRESERVE THE SETTING AND SPECIAL CHARACTER OF HISTORIC TOWNS	0
TOTAL	5

**Fig 3.2. | GREEN BELT REFINED PARCEL RP47 SCORES**

3.27 Overall the combined score for parcel RP47 identifies it as a parcel or area that is "higher performing".

**Landscape Strategy**

- 3.28 In response to the desktop and fieldwork undertaken, an initial landscape strategy has been identified and the following landscape principles have been applied to the emerging development envelope for the area:
- The overall development envelope is defined by the visual and physical containment provided by the urban edge of Dorridge and the road network that transects the surrounding countryside. Consideration should be given to the existing vegetation (including trees, hedgerows, hedgerow trees and woodland areas). Where possible these landscape elements should be retained and integrated into the layout of both developable areas and open space. This will also provide a varied and soft edge to not only the development but this urban area of Dorridge.
  - The development envelope is located to the east of the northern parcel allowing open space to be placed on the more sensitive western edge that lies adjacent to the surrounding countryside. This also provides opportunities for pedestrian routes to travel through this green corridor and connect to the existing PROW network. To the south the development envelope is pulled back to provide a green gateway to the site when approaching it from the south.
  - The location and extent of green infrastructure and open space within the site should influence the formation and extent of the development envelope. The retained areas of vegetation (as described above) would ensure that the built form of a proposal would be contained in a robust and diverse framework of green infrastructure and open space. A strategy for retaining existing vegetation combined with proposals for extensive landscaping would result in a landscape context for future proposals which show a variety of stages of establishment and maturity. This would enhance the quality of a proposal and also help to integrate the site with the local landscape character.

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

- The layout of proposals for the site should incorporate substantial areas of private garden space as well as the proposed publically accessible areas of green infrastructure as these would have the capacity to hold a substantial number of street and garden trees which will, over time, contribute to a network of green infrastructure and help to integrate the character of the site with the surrounding landscape.
- All landscape mitigation which forms part of a proposal should be subject to a high quality detailed landscape scheme so as to ensure that the functions of the landscape components will be delivered; this would also reflect positively on the design quality of a proposal as a whole.
- In terms of a defensible Green Belt boundary, existing physical features, which include the existing and vegetation; a robust network of existing and proposed hedgerows and flat topography as well as the potential for the creation of dedicated open space and Green Infrastructure (GI), could be combined to form a new Green Belt boundary.
- The introduction of a new Green Belt boundary to the west of the site using physical landscape features such as the mature hedgerow and tree belt will mean both that the purposes of the green belt are maintained, and any future development will be set within a well vegetated new settlement edge which respects the topography of the site, key views across and into it, such that it is landscape and visually led.

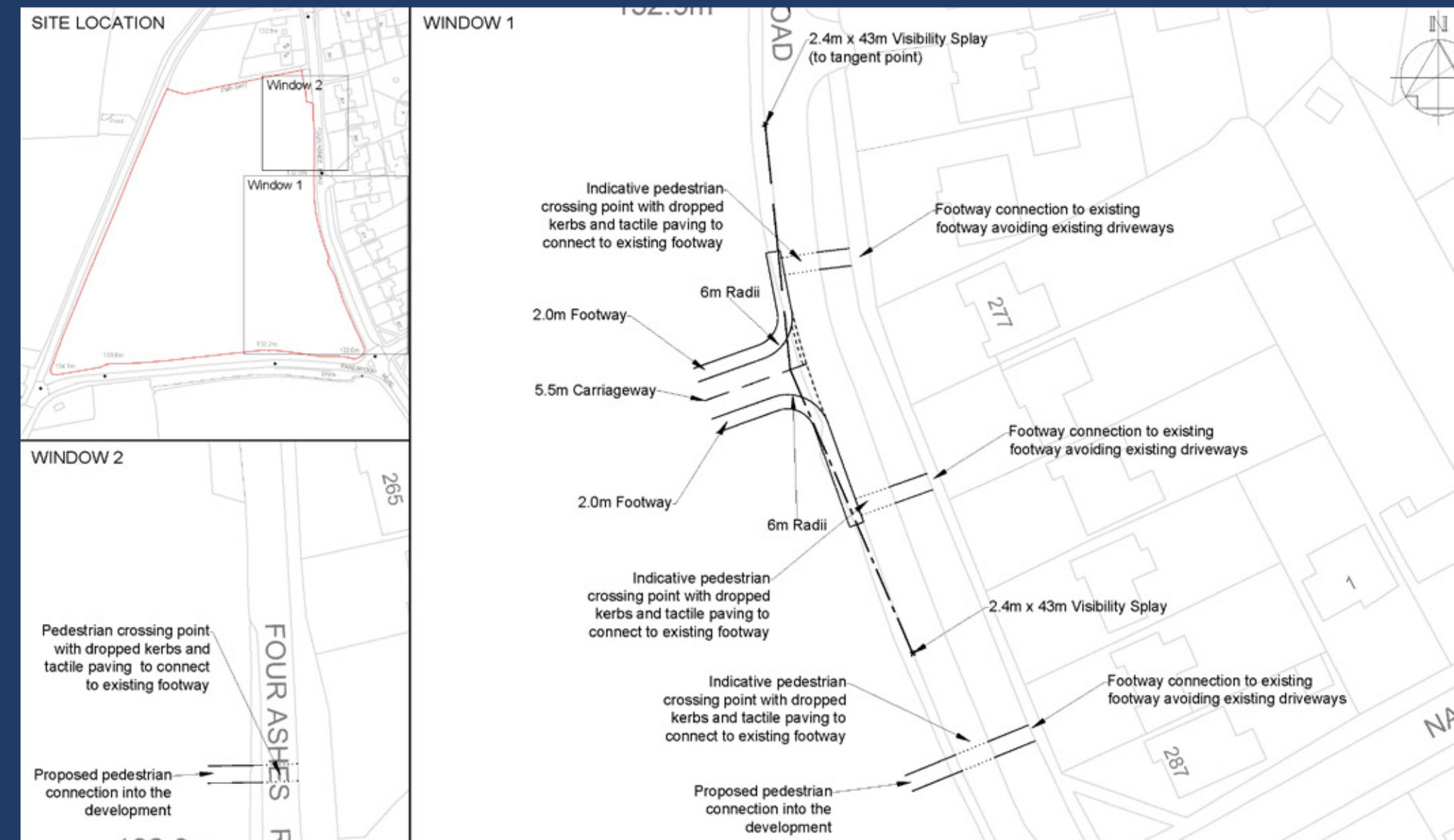
- 3.29 In accordance with the NPPF, Green Belt boundaries should be defined cly, using physical features that are readily recognised and likely to be permanent. It is considered that the southern and western boundaries of the site, led by existing and proposed vegetation, could form a cly defined Green Belt boundary. This mitigation measure will help to establish and enhance a robust landscaped edge to the proposed development a definitive boundary to the future Green Belt.
- 3.30 **Fig.3.3.** sets out a summary of the likely impacts on Green Belt purpose, in landscape and visual terms, using the criteria set out by the Solihull Green Belt Strategic Assessment.

### Summary

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

Green Belt purpose	Criteria	Summary
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.	Is ribbon or other development present? Is other development detached from the existing large built-up area?	There is limited ribbon development in the vicinity of the site, however the existing settlement edge is located along Four Ashes Road and Earlswood Road, to the west. The site makes a contribution to the definition of the boundary of Dorridge in this location through its mature green infrastructure boundaries which serve to contain it both physically and visually. Development of the site will not lead to unrestricted sprawl of the built up area as it will be contained within this framework and remain enclosed by existing and proposed green infrastructure.
To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.	Does the area represent a 'gap' between major urban areas?	The closest settlement to the edge of Solihull in this location is Hockley Heath, which is located ca. 1.6 km to the south-west and Monkspath 1.6 km to the north-west. Development of the site is proposed where it will be physically and visually contained by the existing and proposed landscape framework and as such is likely to have a minimal influence on the 'gap' between the edge of Dorridge and Hockley Heath or Monkspath. Overall, development of the site will not lead to coalescence ('merging') of neighbouring settlements.
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.	Is the area characterised by countryside? Does the area adjoin areas of countryside? Is ribbon or other development present within the area?	The landscape of the site and to the south and west is generally characterised by countryside, with occasional built form. To the north and east however, is the existing settlement edge of Dorridge. There is some ribbon development to the south along Chessettes Wood Road. The countryside in the vicinity of the site is characterised by mature woodland coppices and mature boundary hedgerow which serves to provide visual enclosure and will contain proposed development. However, the majority of the existing vegetation will be retained, and together with a robust green infrastructure strategy, development can be located within a comprehensive landscape setting.
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.	Is the area within or adjoining a Conservation Area within a historic town? Are key landmarks or the historic core visible from within the area? Does the area contribute to the setting of the historic town?	The site lies outside of any Conservation Areas and is not located within a historic town.

FIG 3.3. | ASSESSMENT AGAINST GREEN BELT PURPOSES



### MOVEMENT AND ACCESS

#### Access

- 3.32 The development parcel north of Earlswood Road is bounded by three sides on public highways, this being to the east by Four Ashes Road, the south by Earlswood Road and the west by Box Trees Road. The northern end of the plot is bounded by an existing public right of way, and adjacent residential properties.
- 3.33 Vehicle access to this site is proposed onto Four Ashes Road from a point close to the centre of the site frontage. In line with the SMBC highway design guidance the access has been designed with a 5.5 metres wide carriageway and 6 metres corner radii. Footways 2 metres wide are provided adjacent to the site access road.

- 3.34 Four Ashes Road is subject to a 30mph speed limit and based on the guidance contained within Manual for Streets3 (MfS) visibility splays of 43 metres would be required. Fig.3.4 shows the proposed access drawing.
- 3.35 The plot will benefit from a high level of permeability for pedestrians, with key internal routes providing access north towards the existing public right of way, east towards existing residential areas and south towards the optional second development plot. Due to the presence of the hedge and mature trees on the site frontage, a footway is not proposed along the site frontage adjacent to Four Ashes Road. Instead routes would be provided throughout the site and to Four Ashes Road where pedestrians would be able

FIG 3.4. | PROPOSED ACCESS | NOT TO SCALE

- to cross to access the footway on the eastern side of the carriageway. These informal crossing points would include dropped kerbs and tactile paving.
- 3.36 The second (optional) plot, situated south of Earlswood Road, is bounded to the north and east by Earlswood Road, and by open agricultural land to the south west. Vehicle access into this plot will be achieved off the section of Earlswood Road to the east of the site, south of the existing junction with Nailsworth Road. This section of Earlswood Road is predominantly residential in nature, with good visibility for turning vehicles.
- 3.37 The internal layout of the development will be designed in accordance with the principles of Manual for Streets.

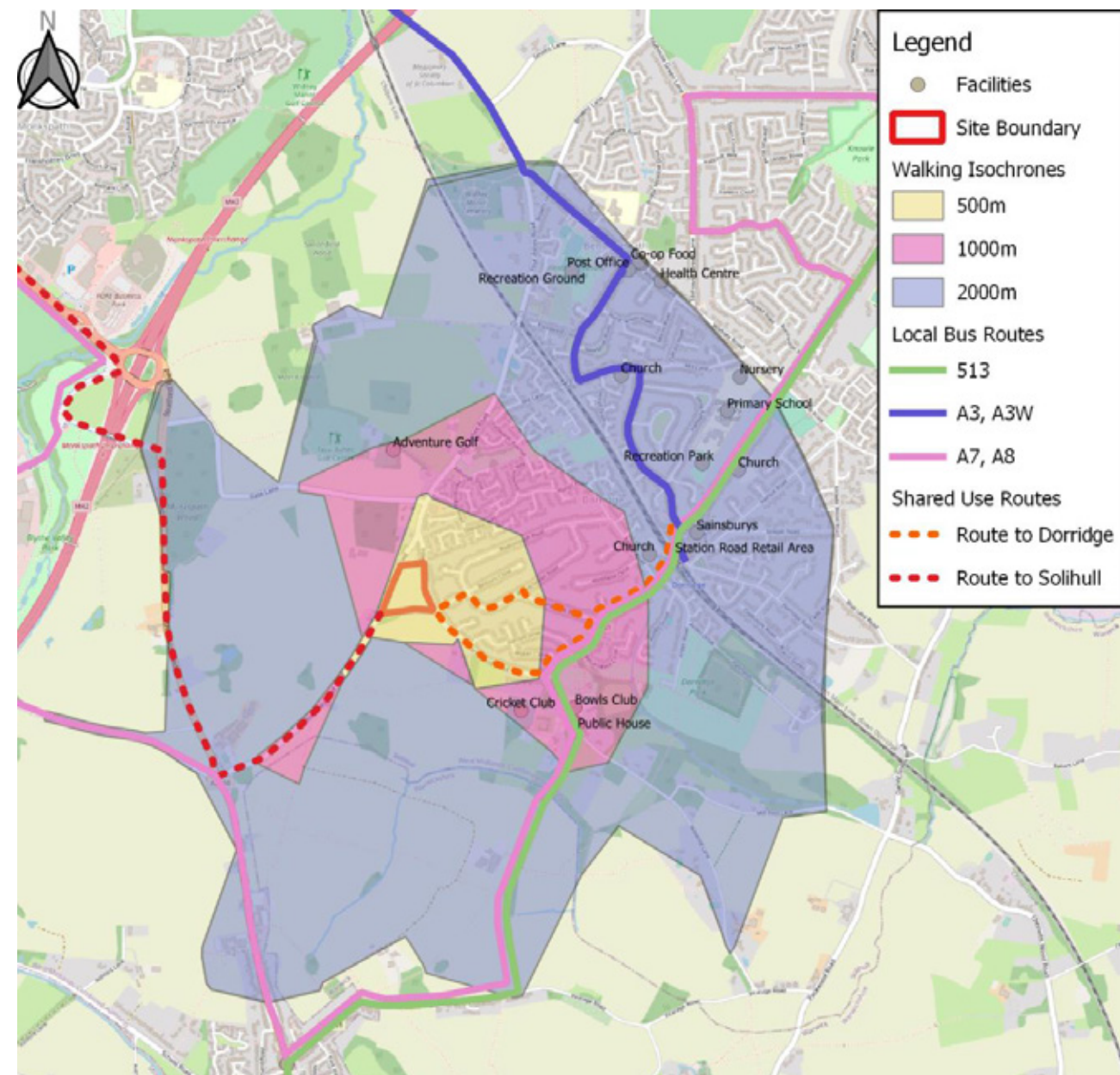


FIG 3.5. | WALKING CATCHMENT | NOT TO SCALE

**Connectivity**

3.38 The footway provision along Four Ashes Road and Earlswood Road is continuous along the eastern side, adjacent to existing residences. The development will provide new footways linking to the existing provision, offering safe and convenient access to surrounding residential areas and local services. A public right of way runs along the northern boundary of the site, providing access between Four Ashes Road and Box Trees Road.

3.39 The Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot produced by the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation describes the 'maximum', 'acceptable' and 'desirable' walking distances. It suggests that in terms of commuting, walking to school and recreational journeys; walk distances

up to 2,000 metres can be considered, with the 'desirable' and 'acceptable' distances being 500 and 1,000 metres respectively. For non-commuter journeys, the guidance suggests that a walk distance of up to 1,200 metres can be considered, with the 'desirable' and 'acceptable' distances being 400 metres and 800 metres respectively.

3.40 Fig.3.5 demonstrates that the site is located in a highly walkable location, showing that Dorridge train station and the retail area on Station Road which including a Sainsburys store are within convenient walking distance of the site. Other available facilities within the isochrone include a post office, public house and schools.

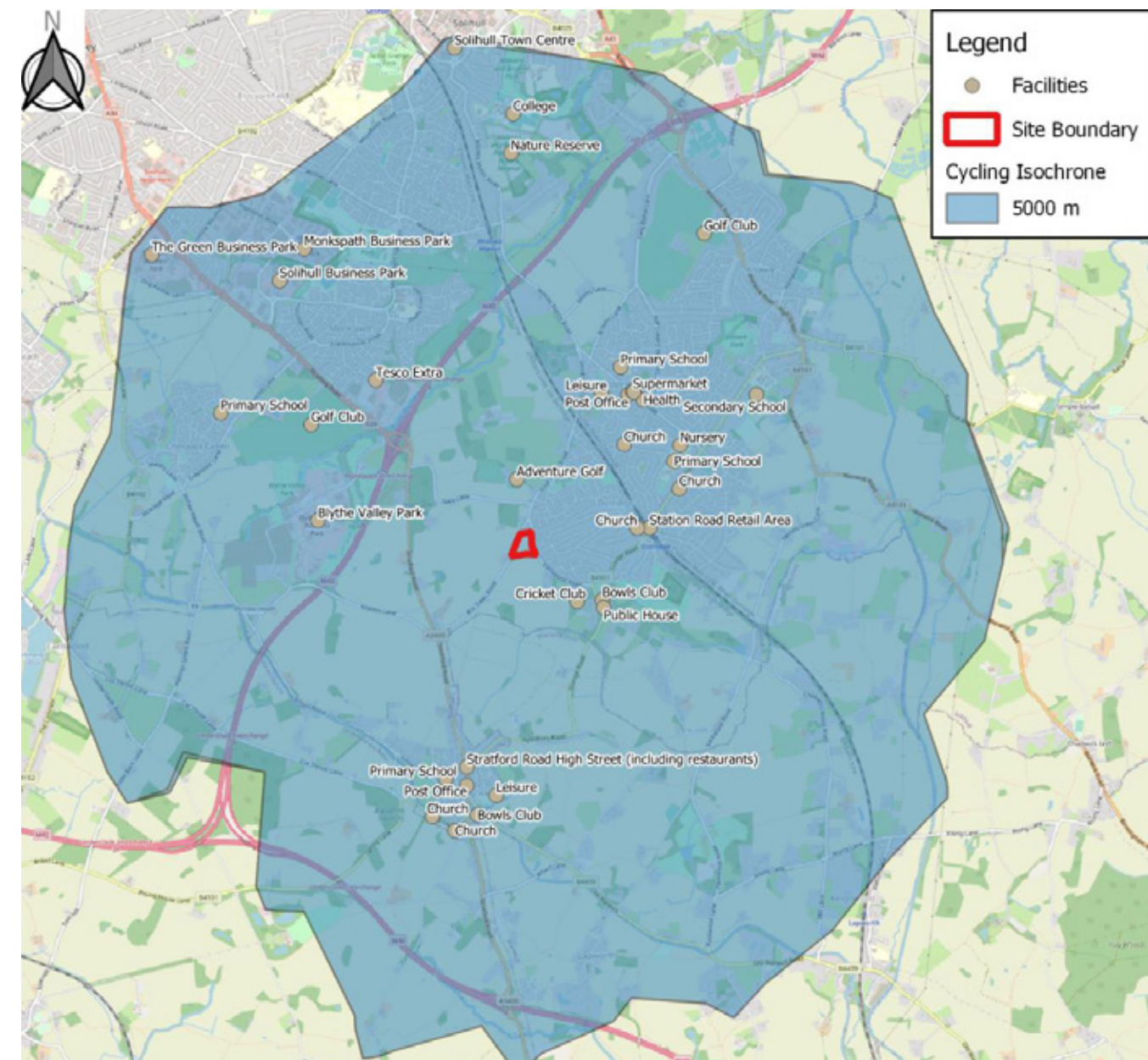


FIG 3.6. | CYCLE CATCHMENT | NOT TO SCALE

3.41 Cycling has the potential to substitute for short car trips, particularly those less than 5km. Fig.3.6 shows that all of Dorridge is within convenient cycling distance of the site. Hockley Heath, Cheswick Green, Monkspath and Blythe Valley Park are also accessible as is Solihull Town Centre.

FIG 3.7. | SMBC WALKING AND CYCLING | NOT TO SCALE

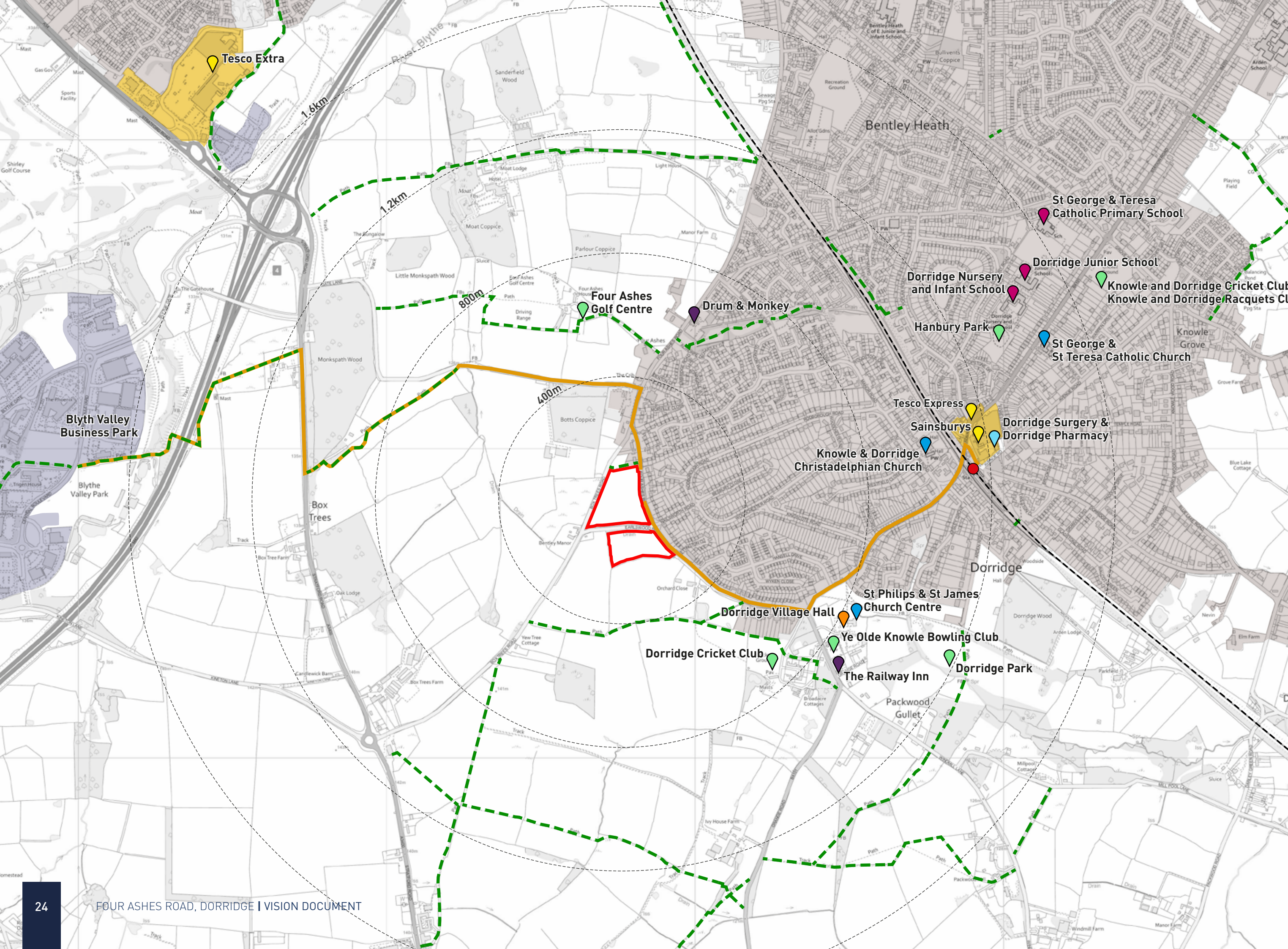


FIG 3.8. | BUS SERVICES | NOT TO SCALE

Service	Routes	Service details
A3/A3W	Solihull to Dorridge via Widney Manor	Hourly Monday to Saturday
A7	South Solihull Circular Clockwise	Hourly Monday to Sunday
A8	South Solihull Circular Anticlockwise	Hourly Monday to Sunday
513	Solihull to Norton Lindsey Flexibus Service	One service on a Monday

3.42 Fig.3.7 is extracted from the SMBC walking and cycling map which designates the roads surrounding the site as being suitable for cycling. This includes the route to Dorridge railway station via Four Ashes Road and Grange Road. In addition, an off-road shared use cycle route is available to the southwest of the site and is accessed via Box Trees Road. This route runs parallel to the A3600 and crosses the M42 via the bridge access into Blythe Valley Park. The cycle routes continues to the north to provide a connection to Monkspath and to Solihull.

3.43 The nearest bus services to the site route along Grange Road to the southeast of the site and comprise of a post and flag with timetable information. These stops are served by the A7 and A8 South Solihull Circular services. Additionally, the A3 Solihull to Dorridge service which routes via Widney Manor is available from bus stops close to the railway station. A summary of the bus services is included at Fig.3.8.



**LEGEND**

- Land promoted for development
- Built-up area (Predominantly Residential)
- Employment/Industrial
- Retail Centre
- Pedestrian/Cycle Links
- Public Rights of Way

**Facilities**

- Dorridge Railway Station
- Leisure & Recreation
- Retail
- Healthcare
- Community
- Place of Worship
- Education
- Pubs and Restaurants

**FIG 3.10. | LOCAL FACILITIES PLAN | NOT TO SCALE**

DESTINATION	JOURNEY TIME	PEAK TIME FREQUENCY
Solihull	8 minutes	3 services per hour
Warwick	13 minutes	2 services per hour
Leamington Spa	17 minutes	2 services per hour
Birmingham	25 minutes	3 services per hour
Stratford-upon-Avon	27 minutes	Hourly service
Stourbridge Junction	50 minutes	3 services per hour
Kidderminster	65 minutes	2 services per hour
London Marylebone	1 hour 48 minutes	Hourly service

**Fig 3.9 | RAIL SERVICE SUMMARY**

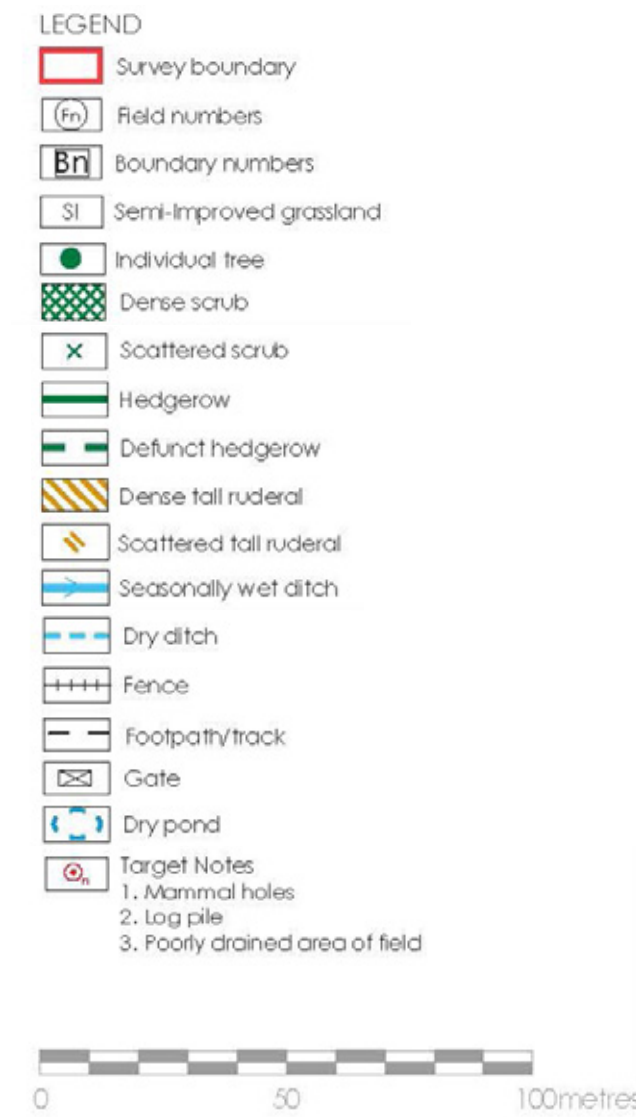
3.44 Dorridge railway station is located approximately 1.4km to the east of the site. The station has 3 platforms. Platform 1 serves southbound Chiltern Railways and West Midlands Railway services to Warwick, Leamington Spa, London Marylebone and Stratford-upon-Avon. Platform 2 serves northbound trains towards Birmingham, Stourbridge Junction and Kidderminster and platform 3 is used by terminating West Midlands Railway services. See **Fig.3.9**.

3.45 The train station is located within convenient walking distance of the site and is likely to be a key destination for residents. The available pedestrian and cycle routes between the site and the station provide a good opportunity for travel by this mode of transport. The station also benefits from 30 cycle parking spaces located outside the main entrance to the station.

**Services / Amenities**

3.46 The site is located within a 15 minute walk of Dorridge Village Centre, ensuring convenient access to local amenities such as a supermarket, bank, ATM, petrol station and pharmacy. Local primary schools are located within 2km of the site, with a large secondary school situated in the neighbouring village of Knowle.

3.47 The site benefits from good access to utilities. Electricity, water and gas supplies can be taken from the existing networks which run along Earlswood Road and Four Ashes Road. The local facilities within the surrounding area are shown on **Fig.3.10**.



**FIG 3.11. | HABITATS PLAN | NOT TO SCALE**

## FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

### Flood Risk

3.48 The Environmental Agency's (EA's) Flood Mapping identified that there are no water courses within the site area and consequently no record of any flooding is identified.

### Drainage

3.49 The nearest foul water sewer is located approximately 40 metres from the site, east of the junction of Earlswood Road and Nailsworth Road. It is envisaged that the development will connect to this sewer, subject to Severn Trent Water (STW) confirmation of connection point, capacity and depth.

3.50 The sewer records indicate the presence of a surface water sewer laid beneath Four Ashes Road and Earlswood Road, running in a southerly direction. There is also a Highway Drain which originates towards the midpoint of the eastern boundary of the southern development parcel. It is considered that one site storage may be required, which will take the form of a storm water attenuation basin, which will also provide significant ecological value, providing a habitat for wetland species.

## ECOLOGY

3.51 CSA Environmental have undertaken site visit and desktop study, undertaken to identify potential ecological constraints to development, and to inform recommendations for further ecological surveys/assessments necessary and the promotion of the Site for future residential development.

### Methods

3.52 An extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey of the Site was undertaken on 3 February 2017, in order to assess the on-site habitats and their potential to support notable and protected species. The survey, encompassing the Site (approximately 4.5 ha) and immediately adjacent habitats that could be viewed, was conducted in damp weather conditions.

3.53 A desktop ecological review was undertaken by CSA for the Site in 2016 in order to obtain records of designated wildlife sites and protected/notable species on-site or within the local area.

## Baseline Ecological Conditions

### Designated Sites

3.54 There are no statutory or non-statutory designations covering any part of the Site or internationally important designations present within 10km of the Site. Three nationally important statutory designations are within 3km of the Site; namely the River Blythe SSSI (c. 1.5km north-west), Monkspath Meadow SSSI (c. 1.7km north-west) and Brook Meadow Darley Green SSSI (c. 2.1km east). Four locally important statutory designations are within 3km of the Site; the Dorridge Wood LNR (c. 1.1km east), Jobs Close LNR (c. 2.1km north-east), Hillfield Park LNR (c. 2.6km north-west) and Malvern & Brueton Park LNR (c. 2.9km north).

3.55 Twelve non-statutory designations are present within 1km of the Site, the closest are Botts Coppice LWS (c. 65m north-west) and Drayton House and Meadow pLWS (c. 115m south-east). No areas of the Site or immediately adjacent to the Site are designated as ancient woodland.

### Habitats and Flora

3.56 The Site comprises of two grazed pasture fields, bounded by hedgerows with mature trees, some with associated ditches and areas of scrub and tall ruderal vegetation. Please refer to the Habitats Plan (Fig 3.11) which maps these features.

### Notable Flora Records

3.57 The WRBC provided a number of notable plant species from within the search area and there is potential for some to be present on-site.

### Grassland

3.58 Grassland areas consist of grazed semi-improved grassland with some poorly drained areas where soft rush *Juncus effusus* is abundant. No grassland of higher value was seen.

### Trees and Hedgerows

- 3.59 Trees and hedgerow represent some of the best habitat on-site for wildlife. Hedges range from regularly cut, well managed features to taller less managed (5m+) hedges, most with standard trees.
- 3.60 Mature trees are present along hedgerow boundary features these consist mostly of English oak *Quercus robur*.

### Scrub and Tall Ruderal

- 3.61 There is tall ruderal vegetation and scrub along the edges of the fields and the boundary features.

### Ponds and Ditches

- 3.62 From aerials and OS maps there appears to be a pond in the south-east of the Site but during the Phase 1 Habitats survey, despite recent wet weather, this was found to be dry with colonising scrub, indicating that it is likely to be permanently dry. There are several seasonally wet and dry ditches on-site or immediately adjacent to Site along the field boundaries.

### Fauna Badgers

- 3.63 Ten badger *Meles meles* records were provided from within the search area from an unknown year. There are records relating to badger road casualties, the closest being c. 170m north. There is potential for sett building on-site within the hedgerow bases and foraging in the grassland fields. Several mammal holes were noted in the hedgerow bases of field F2 during the phase one habitat, but none were attributed to badger, however a comprehensive search has not been undertaken at this stage.

### Bats

- 3.64 A number of records of bats were provided from within the search area. These include at least five bat species and several roost records within the local area and the closest record of a common *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* on Earlswood Road, adjacent to the east of the Site. The nearest roost record was over 300m south-east, for a serotine *Eptesicus serotinus* bat.
- 3.65 Trees within the Site potentially offer suitable tree roosting opportunities for bat species with features such as fissures, cracks and other crevices. The boundary hedgerows and trees, particularly on the western and southern boundaries away from residential roads, offer potential foraging and commuting corridors for bat species.

### Dormouse

- 3.66 No records of dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* were provided from within the search area. There is a small amount of suitable habitat within the hedgerows and connectivity to wooded areas only from the southern land parcel, no dormouse populations are known to be within the wider landscape of this region, therefore this species is not considered as a potential constraint to proposals for this Site.

### Riparian Mammals

- 3.67 No records of water vole *Arvicola amphibius* and one record of otter *Lutra lutra* were provided within the search area. The on-site habitats are not considered suitable and the drainage ditch in the south of the Site lacks connectivity to the wider landscape. It is considered unlikely for these species to be present on-site and no further surveys are recommended.

### Other Mammals

- 3.68 Historic records, one record of brown hare *Lepus europeus* and two of hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* have been provided from within the search area. The on-site habitats may offer some limited potential for these two species as part of the wider foraging area if still present in the local area. One record from 2005 exists for harvest mouse *Micromys minutus* from ny 2km away, however, it is considered that there is not sufficient suitable habitat on-site (long grassland and reed beds preferred by harvest mice) for this species to enable a viable population to survive.

### Birds

- 3.69 36 records of 26 notable bird species were provided from within the search area, including swallow *Hirundo rustica*, swift *Apus apus* and redwing *Turdus viscivorus*. The pasture, hedgerows, trees and patches of scrub on-site offer potential nesting and foraging habitats for a variety of bird species including these.

### Reptiles

- 3.70 Four reptile records were provided from within the search area for grass snake *Natrix natrix* (c. 1.3km east) and slow worm *Anguis fragilis*. The majority of on-site habitats lack the structural diversity to offer significant suitability for reptile species, with the short sword of the grazed semi-improved grassland and the field margins. It was considered that any reptiles present would likely be limited to low numbers of transient grass snakes, as part of a wider home range.

### Amphibians

- 3.71 20 records of four amphibian species were provided from within the search area, one of great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* 1.7km east of the Site. On-site terrestrial habitats such as hedgerows also offer suitable foraging and dispersal habitat for amphibians, including great crested newt. Approximately 15 ponds were noted on maps and aerial imagery within 500m of the Site.

### Invertebrates

- 3.72 Numerous records of invertebrate species were provided from within the 1km search area. It is considered that the hedgerows and trees on-site may have some potential for common and widespread invertebrate species to be present, however these should largely be retained as intact and therefore no further invertebrate surveys are considered necessary.

### Summary of Ecological Constraints and Opportunities Confirmed Constraints

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

- Statutory Designated sites – SSSIs and LNRs
  - Three SSSIs and four LNRs occur within 3km of the Site and many of which have public access. It is recommended that discussions take place as part of the planning process with the relevant consultees to discuss potential impact posed by recreational pressure and approaches to mitigation.
- Non-Statutory Designated sites - LWS
  - Several LWS are close to the Site including Botts Coppice LWS (c. 65m north-west) and Drayton House and Meadow pLWS (c. 115m south-east) with potential for public access. As above, y consultation would be advised with the relevant authorities to discuss avoidance of impact on these sites.
- Hedgerows and Trees
  - Hedges and their component mature trees are a Habitat of Principal Importance and have intrinsic ecological value. On this site they are mature and well established in most places and should be retained and enhanced alongside development of the Site, other than where access is required.

- Nesting birds
  - The nests and eggs of all wild birds are subject to legal protection. Any clearance of potential nesting habitat should be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season (March-August inclusive), or immediately following confirmation by a suitably qualified ecologist that no active nests are present.

### Potential Constraints

- 3.74 Avoidance, mitigation and/or compensation measures may be required in respect to the following potential ecological constraints, subject to further surveys/assessment:

- Badgers

- 3.75 There is potential on-site for badgers to be present and a comprehensive badger survey is advised.

- Bats

- Certain habitats at the site may be of importance for commuting and / or foraging bats. Bat Activity Surveys (walked transects and use of automated static monitoring) are recommended to assess the level, diversity and distribution of on-site bat activity.
- Trees within boundary hedgerows, may provide roosting opportunities. Ground based tree assessment would be required for any trees to be impacted as a result of the development proposals.
- Where impacts are anticipated suitable mitigation and avoidance strategies will need to be provided.

- Great crested newts

- There is potential for great crested newts to occur on-site with a number of ponds having been identified in the local area and suitable terrestrial habitat on-site.
- Further surveys will be required to assess the habitat suitability of the ponds (any time of year) and potentially presence /absence surveys (mid-March to mid-June). If present, a mitigation strategy will be needed, which is likely to require ponds to be retained and connected by green infrastructure.

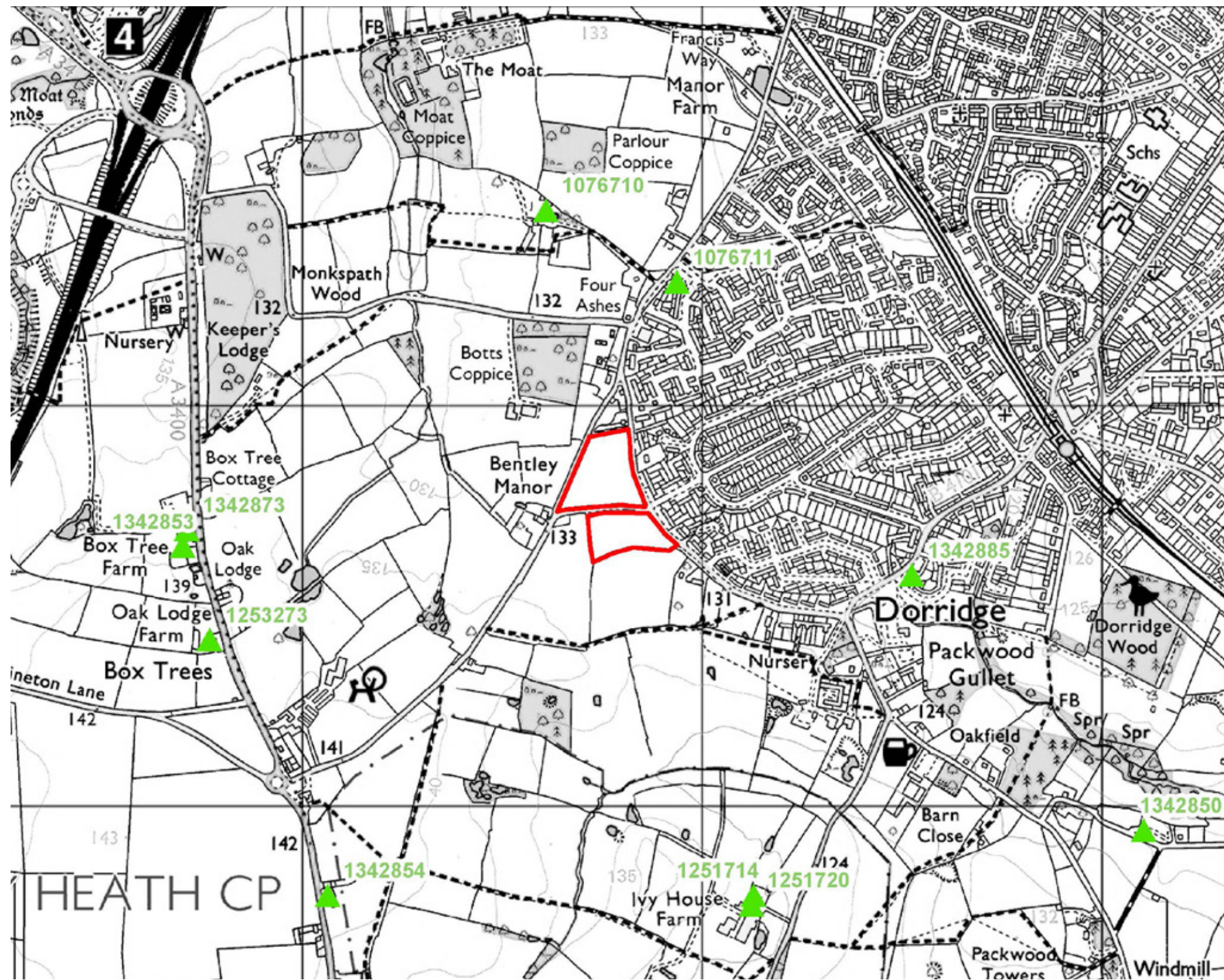
### Conclusion

- 3.76 The number of ecological constraints identified at this Site is limited and is restricted to a fairly typical range of protected species issues including the retention of trees and hedgerows, where feasible. Semi-improved grazed grassland dominates the Site and is considered to be of lower ecological value.

- 3.77 Further survey work has been recommended for a number of species to inform development proposals and to ensure that any legal constraints are understood and appropriate mitigation developed. Opportunities will exist to create new habitats and provide other ecological enhancements alongside development.

- 3.78 Considerations will need to be made regarding Biodiversity Offsetting assessments, which is now a mandatory requirement in all Warwickshire districts, consultation with the local authority and Environment bank may be beneficial. Given the proportion of residential dwellings potentially proposed for this site in relation to existing habitats to be lost, it is likely that Biodiversity Offsetting will necessitate an off-site alternative.

- 3.79 No overriding constraints to development have been identified for this Site, subject to the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures in respect of confirmed ecological constraints, and further recommended survey work above.



**KEY**

- Site
- ▲ Listed Building

FIG 3.12. | LISTED BUILDING PLAN | NOT TO SCALE

**CULTURAL HERITAGE**

3.80 An initial assessment has been made of the potential heritage constraints for the proposed development site. This has considered built and below-ground heritage issues and has been informed by the following sources:

- Historic England National Heritage List for information on designated assets comprising Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and World Heritage Sites;
- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council website for information on Conservation Areas;
- Solihull Historic Environment Record;
- Historic Ordnance Survey mapping;
- Satellite imagery.

**BUILT HERITAGE**

3.81 There are no designated heritage assets located within or immediately adjacent to the site. Grade II Listed Buildings are recorded in the wider vicinity (Fig.3.12) which comprise Lilac Cottage approximately 400m to the north, beyond intervening built form, and Four Ashes approximately 550m to the north beyond woodland at Botts Coppice. Packwood Hall moated site Scheduled Monument is located approximately 2km south-east of the site and Parkwood House Grade II\* Registered Park and Garden is located approximately 2.5km south east of the site. Station Approach Dorridge Conservation Area is located 1km to the east, beyond intervening built form.

**ARCHAEOLOGY**

3.82 A review of historic ordnance survey mapping indicates that the site was under agricultural use in the 19th and 20th centuries. Satellite imagery indicates potential for very slight, narrow ridge and furrow earthworks within the site. Ridge and furrow earthworks are of greater importance where they are of medieval date, well preserved and exist in association with other well preserved ridge and furrow earthworks and medieval settlement earthworks. This would not appear to be the case in this instance.

**CONCLUSIONS**

3.83 Initial assessment of recorded heritage assets within and in the vicinity of the site has not identified any major heritage constraints to the development of the site. Furthermore, it is not anticipated that the development of the site would result in significant impacts to heritage assets in the wider vicinity. Any slight narrow ridge and furrow earthworks present within the site would comprise non-designated heritage assets.

**OTHER MATTERS**

**Utility Services**

3.84 The benefits from good access to utilities. Electricity, water and gas supplies can be taken from the existing networks which run along Earlswood Road and Four Ashes Road.

**Ground Conditions**

3.85 EA Flood mapping identifies that both sites are within Flood Zone 1. Investigation of the British Geographical Bore Hole records has shown there to be no records in the area form which an indication of ground conditions can be made.

3.86 A full ground investigation will be undertaken as the proposals for the site progress further.

**Noise**

3.87 A noise survey will accompany any future planning application on the site. It is considered that road noise is likely to be the main source of noise affecting the site. Any future planning application will ensure that the relevant acoustic mitigation measures can be implemented and delivered on site to ensure that an appropriate level of amenity can be provided for the proposed residential development.



# 04 | EMERGING PROPOSALS

## DEVELOPMENT AND QUANTUM

- 4.1 The net developable area of the proposed residential development is approximately 2.78 hectares (6.87 acres) of the sum 4.69 hectares (11.59 acres). The remaining site area will comprise of public open space or attenuation features (Fig.4.1).
- 4.2 Green spaces have been designed to soften the edges of the development and complement a lower density edge with outward facing dwellings to follow the curvature of Earlswood Road and Four Ashes Road.
- 4.3 Internal facing streets will envelope a higher density development to preserve a lower density fringe.
- 4.4 Regard has been given to the sites edge of settlement location and Solihull local plan housing mix policy which sets out a high demand for 1,2 and 3 bedroom units with a range of tenures and sizes, accordingly an average density of 40 dph has been applied which will provide approximately produce 111 units. The proposed density will allow for the creation of a sustainable and balanced residential development which can respond appropriately to the local housing need.
- 4.5 Outward facing frontages envelop all elements of the sites edges and will assist in the surveillance of the public open space and the proposed location of the children's play space to the South-eastern corner of the site. Dwellings will be offset from existing hedgerow green corridors to preserve any potential ecology sensitivity (subject to report).










## ACCESS

- 4.6 Vehicle access to this site is proposed onto Four Ashes Road from a point close to the centre of the site frontage. In addition In line with the SMBC highway design guidance the access has been designed with a 5.5 metres wide carriageway and 6 metres corner radii. Footways 2 metres wide are provided adjacent to the site access road.
- 4.7 Four Ashes Road is subject to a 30mph speed limit and based on the guidance contained within Manual for Streets3 (MfS) visibility splays of 43 metres would be required.
- 4.8 The optional southern parcel would be served from Earlswood Road, approximately 45 metres south of the junction with Earlswood and Four Ashes Road.
- 4.9 The established primary route underpins a hierarchy of streets which includes secondary linked shared surfaces and lanes and tertiary designed private driveways in accordance with manual for streets.
- 4.10 A series of homezone destinations will be created to create a sense of place and support in neighbourhood surveillance, while looped tertiary private lanes will aid maximum permeability.
- 4.11 There is a potential opportunity to take account of the established public right of way running parallel with the northern boundary ensuring pedestrian access points connectivity east to west of the development. This land provides an opportunity for the creation of Green Belt compensatory mitigation.
- 4.12 A number of proposed internal footpath links will be established to further improve accessibility throughout the development and out to the wider context and services.

## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- 4.13 A large proportion of the site will be retained as green infrastructure including open public space and attenuation features. Additional structural planting is proposed along the southern boundary to strengthen the green belt boundary.
- 4.14 Interconnected green spaces and offsets around the edges of the development will provide attractive soft edges and provide formal green walks through the site complementing outward facing lower density development and natural surveillance.
- 4.15 The majority of the existing trees and linear shrub vegetation is proposed to be retained and enhanced where possible. New tree planting will compensate for the loss of vegetation required to facilitate the creation of the four access points.
- 4.16 The existing public right of ways is maintained through the creation of a green footpath network with the provision of additional routes to ensure pedestrian links north to south through the development.
- 4.17 Site low points will be retained and utilized for attenuation features associated with sustainable urban drainage.
- 4.18 A proposed equipped area for play is identified on the Design Concept Plan (Fig 4.1) and indicatively shown toward the southern boundary of the site between existing and proposed communities.
- 4.19 Solihull's Green Spaces Strategy sets out requirements for green space from new developments of 2.86 hectare per 1,000 population. Using this standard, the parcel north of Earlswood Road will achieve an overprovision of 0.68 hectares, whilst the southern parcel will achieve an overprovision of 0.5 hectares (netting out sports provision).

## KEY

-  LAND PROMOTED FOR DEVELOPMENT  
4.69 HA / 11.59 ACRES
-  PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT  
APPROX 60 DWELLINGS
-  POTENTIAL PEDESTRIAN CROSSING POINT ALONG EARLSWOOD ROAD
-  SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE
-  PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY
-  KEY PEDESTRIAN LINKS
-  EXISTING LANDSCAPE
-  PUBLIC OPEN SPACE
-  LOCALLY EQUIPPED AREA OF PLAY

## KEY PRINCIPLES

1. PROPOSED VEHICULAR ACCESS VIA FOUR ASHES ROAD.
2. RETAINED NETWORK OF EXISTING TREES AND HEDGEROWS.
3. NEWLY PROPOSED LANDSCAPE OFFSET TO COUNTRYSIDE EDGE.
4. LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL FRONTAGE TO HELP DEVELOPMENT ASSIMILATE WITH EXISTING BUILT FORM ON FOUR ASHES ROAD.
5. LOCALLY EQUIPPED AREA OF PLAY FOR NEW AND EXISTING RESIDENTS.
6. OUTWARD FACING DWELLINGS PROVIDING FULL SURVEILLANCE OVER OPEN SPACE.
7. POTENTIAL PEDESTRIAN CROSSING POINT ON FOUR ASHES ROAD.
8. PRIMARY MOVEMENT WITH LARGE MEANDERING PLANTED VERGES.
9. SECONDARY LANES PROVIDING ACCESS TO SMALLER PARCELS OF DEVELOPMENT.
10. MAXIMUM PEDESTRIAN PERMEABILITY THROUGHOUT SITE CONNECTING WITH EXISTING MOVEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE.
11. NEWLY PLANTED WOODLAND PROVIDING WOODED TRAILS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR NATURAL/ SENSORY PLAY AND
12. SUSTAINABLE URBAN DRAINAGE UTILISING EXISTING SITE LOW POINTS.



FIG 4.1. | DESIGN CONCEPT | NOT TO SCALE

# 05 | SITE SELECTION ASSESSMENT

5.1 Fig.5.1 and Fig.5.2 provide an assessment of Land at Four Ashes Road against Solihull MBC's site selection criteria uses to assess the suitability of sites within the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment, 2016 (SHELAA), and the Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report, January 2017 (SA), and their respective 2020 updates. It is considered that Land at Four Ashes Road would have a low impact when judged against each.

SHELAA SUITABILITY CRITERION	
Access Infrastructure Constraints	Existing road access is adequate, with the site achieving the maximum score. Accessibility to the site is to be provided off Four Ashes Road and Earlswood Road which is suitable for the proposed development.
Contamination Land/Landfill Site	Site does not lie within this constraint and achieves the maximum score regarding its suitability. It is therefore suitable for the proposed development.
Ground Conditions	Site achieves the maximum score regarding its suitability and treatment not expected to be required regarding ground conditions. Development will not be infringed by poor ground conditions. It is therefore suitable for the proposed development.
Heritage	Site does not include, nor is it adjacent to, a Nationally or Locally Listed Building and achieves the maximum score possible. It is therefore suitable for the proposed development, given that the closest heritage assets are more than 100m from site.
BMV Agricultural Land	The Agricultural Land Classification of the site is 'Grade 5' and the site achieved the maximum score possible. Development of this site would not result in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land. It is therefore suitable for the proposed development.
High Pressure Gas Pipeline	Site does not lie within High Pressure Gas Pipeline and achieved the maximum score possible. Development of this site would not result in impact on any gas pipeline. It is therefore suitable for the proposed development.
Flood Risk Constraints	The site falls within the Environment Agency's Flood Zone 1 (Land having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding). The site achieved the maximum score possible and the proposed development will not increase flood risk on site or in the wider area. It is therefore suitable for future residential development.
Bad Neighbour Constraints	Site scored highest in the assessment and has no bad neighbours.
Biodiversity	The site currently comprises agricultural fields, however, following the assessment it was found that site is not within, or adjacent to, a Local Wildlife Site. It is not considered that this development would not have a negative impact on environmental quality and habitats.
Suitability of Location Constraints	Site is immediately adjacent to a 'free standing rural village'. Dorridge is a large rural village in Solihull MBC which has expanded significantly in recent times. The settlement has a railway station, schools, places of worship, GP surgery, dentist, restaurants, guest houses, pubs, supermarkets, and a strong, vibrant centre which provides a variety of services and facilities for the local population. The proposed rural extension is of an appropriate scale for a settlement and future residents would contribute to the economic, social and environmental features of Dorridge.
Other Suitability Constraints	

FIG 5.1. | SHELAA SUIABILITY CRITERION TABLE

SA SUIABILITY CRITERION	
SA Suitability Criterion	
SA1 Contribution to Regeneration and Economic Development SA15 Reduce social exclusion and disparities within the Borough	Located within 60% least deprived
SA2a Distance to Primary School	1370m (Dorridge Junior School)
SA2b Distance to Secondary School	2488m (Arden School)
SA3a Proximity to Bus & Train services	Within 400m of an infrequent bus or train service (less than 3 bus services or 2 train services per hour)
SA3b Proximity to Principal Road Network	1815m
SA4a Soils	Contains less than 20 ha of agricultural land 1-3b
SA4b Minerals	Site outside of minerals safeguard area
SA7 Flooding	Site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1
SA9 Enhance Ecological Sites	Overlaps or contains a local wildlife site and / or records of priority species and habitats. Site not of the scale to avoid sensitive habitats or to deliver strategic improvements to ecological networks and so development would likely lead to loss.

FIG 5.2. | SA SUIABILITY CRITERION TABLE

SA SUIABILITY CRITERION	
SA10 Landscape Sensitivity	The Landscape Character sensitivity of the site is medium. Views towards the site are generally limited by the settlement edge of Dorridge to the east and mature vegetation to the south and west. There are no overriding statutory landscape designations affecting the site and the site is located within a small scale landscape where the potential for expansive views are limited by topography, woodland blocks and established field boundary vegetation. The Design Concept Plan (FIG. 5.1) as been landscape and visually led, having been defined by the visual and physical containment provided by the urban edge of Dorridge and the road network. Consideration has been given to the existing vegetation and where possible these landscape features have been retained and integrated into the layout of both developable areas and open space. Existing physical features and a robust network of existing and proposed hedgerows and flat topography as well as the creation of green infrastructure can form a new Green Belt boundary.
SA11 Enhance Green Infrastructure	The Design Concept Plan (Fig 4.1) has been landscape and visually led being, the location and extent of green infrastructure and open space retains areas of vegetation and development will be contained in a robust and diverse framework of green infrastructure. Substantial areas of private garden space as well as publically accessible open space will be provided which will have the capacity to hold a substantial number of street and garden trees which will over time contribute to a network of green infrastructure.
SA12 Enhance and Protect Historic Assets	Heritage assets more than 100m from site
SA14 Amenity	No sources of noise adjacent to site
SA17a Distance to Healthcare	1025m
SA17b Access to Leisure Facilities	Within 400m of at least two facilities
SA19a Distance to Key Economic Assets	2215m
SA19b Distance to Convenience Stores or Supermarket	916m

# 06 | SUMMARY

6.1 L&Q Estate's emerging proposals for Land off Four Ashes Road, Dorridge is capable of contributing positively to meeting the housing needs of the Borough in a sustainable manner. There will be easy access for to the existing facilities within the surrounding and the site is also well placed being in close proximity public transport provision including local bus services and the near-by Dorridge Railway Station.

6.2 The technical information that has been provided within this Background Document set out that there are no insurmountable physical constraints to the development of the site for residential development.

6.3 The scale and form of development has been influenced by the landscape constraints and opportunities of the site and its context with a landscape led approach having been undertaken. The proposals for green infrastructure and landscaping will deliver a number of enhancements in terms of the physical landscape and strengthening of the structure of the landscape to create a new robust, defensible Green Belt boundary.

6.4 The development proposals will include the:

- The provision of a range of dwelling types and affordable housing which would assist in meeting the Borough housing needs in a sustainable location on the edge of Dorridge;
- The creation of a development that responds positively to the character of Dorridge;
- The creation of a development that is well connected, readily understood and easily navigated, promoting a layout which reduces dependence on the car, and links to pedestrian and public transport networks;
- The creation of a strong landscape and open space structure, retaining existing hedgerows and trees and offsetting development from the south and south eastern corner to provide a more rural character along Earlswood Road;
- The provision of new areas of public open space including sustainable drainage and proposed play area;
- The provision of a wildlife corridor along the western boundary of the site providing new footpaths connections to the existing public footpath to the and pedestrian links to the south;

6.5 L&Q Estates look forward to engaging with Solihull Council to discuss the site further.

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PLANNING | DESIGN | ENVIRONMENT | ECONOMICS | HERITAGE



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