

Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull - Green Infrastructure

Layers

1 : 5000

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Legend

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)

-  1: Deferred Site
-  2: Destroyed Site
-  3: Local Wildlife Site (LWS)
-  4: Potential Site
-  5: Rejected Site

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MERIDEN

Parish Design Statement 2011

IN REMEMBRANCE
OF THOSE
CYCLISTS
WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES
IN WORLD WAR II
1939 - 1945



Meriden Parish Council
the centre of england

Putting the heart into the Centre of England

Landscape setting and important views



Meriden lies in a rural setting at the heart of the “Meriden Gap” – the narrowest part of the West Midlands Green Belt between Solihull and Coventry. This photo, taken from Meriden Hill, shows the NEC and Airport in the middle distance, and Birmingham city centre on the horizon.

Meriden Hill marks the watershed between the rivers Severn and Trent. Rain falling on Millison’s Wood, though to the east, drains into the Severn, while in the Village and most of the rest of the Parish it drains to the Trent. From the top, at Kinwalsey Lane at around 180m above sea level, to River Blythe valley at around 90m, the general fall of the land is north east to south west.

The surrounding countryside is a mix of high quality farm land, some extensive and very attractive woodland and sand and gravel extraction to the west.

Away from the main roads, the agricultural landscape is largely unchanged from Victorian times with a particularly distinctive feature being the lanes with high banks and ancient hedgerows. Within the village both Church Lane and Leys Lane still have these same characteristics, which must be retained. Millison’s Wood, Meriden Shafts and the extensive woodlands at the top end of Fillongley Road are all parts of the former Forest of Arden and form an essential characteristic of the parish and the wider landscape and a haven for all types of wildlife.



The hills within the village are an attractive feature. Church Lane offer views over the rest of the village and extensive views to the west over Birmingham and as far as the Lickey Hills. Meriden Parish is well served by footpaths and bridleways and is at the centre of two important walking trails – the Heart of England Way and the Coventry Way. These offer very attractive views of the village as well as further afield. The views from roads within the village are more restricted by development and by trees, but of particular note are the views on the approach from the east over Meriden Hill and the views from the Fillongley Road on descending from Shaft Lane towards Lodge Green Lane and Walsh Lane.



The large sand and gravel quarries to the west of the village are being backfilled and restored to farmland when exhausted. In this ‘hidden’ landscape, large lakes have been formed between extraction and backfilling that are developing naturally into havens for birds and other wildlife. The triangular area between Hampton Lane, Birmingham Road and Somers Road is currently nearing the completion of extraction and consideration should be given to creating a wildlife reserve in partnership with British Coal, Tarmac, the Packington Estate and the RSPB.

Within the village the urban landscape is very mixed. The duck pond is particularly valued, especially by Meriden's children. The Green is also valued highly by residents, as is the conservation area around St. Laurence Church. Other features, such as the avenue of magnificent trees at the lower end of Fillongley Road and the stretch of Main Road between the Bulls Head and Waterfall Cottages, with its willow tree have also been identified as of particular character and merit. Leys Lane, Church Lane and Old Road have a real 'village' feel and exemplify what residents said in the Household Survey 2008 – *'what most people like about living in Meriden is the feeling of it being a real village in a countryside environment, yet near employment centres and transport links'*.

The value of Meriden's landscape is recognised in published landscape character assessments, notably Natural England's National Character Area 97: Arden and Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines: Arden. The latter (adopted by Solihull MBC), divides Arden into seven distinct landscape types. Meriden lies within 'Ancient Arden'. For Ancient Arden the strategy is summarised as *'conserve and restore the ancient irregular landscape pattern'*; and the countryside around Meriden has been identified as an 'enhancement zone'. Solihull MBC's Countryside Strategy (adopted and published in October 2010) reinforces the case to protect and enhance the landscape of the Meriden Gap.

Commentary:

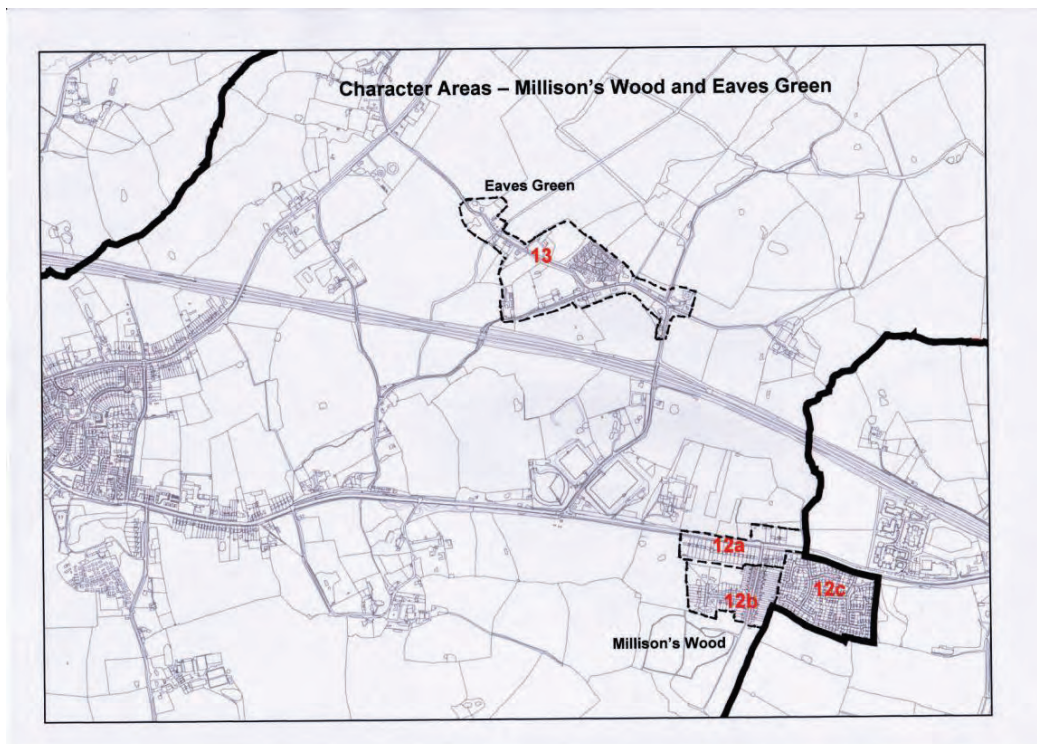
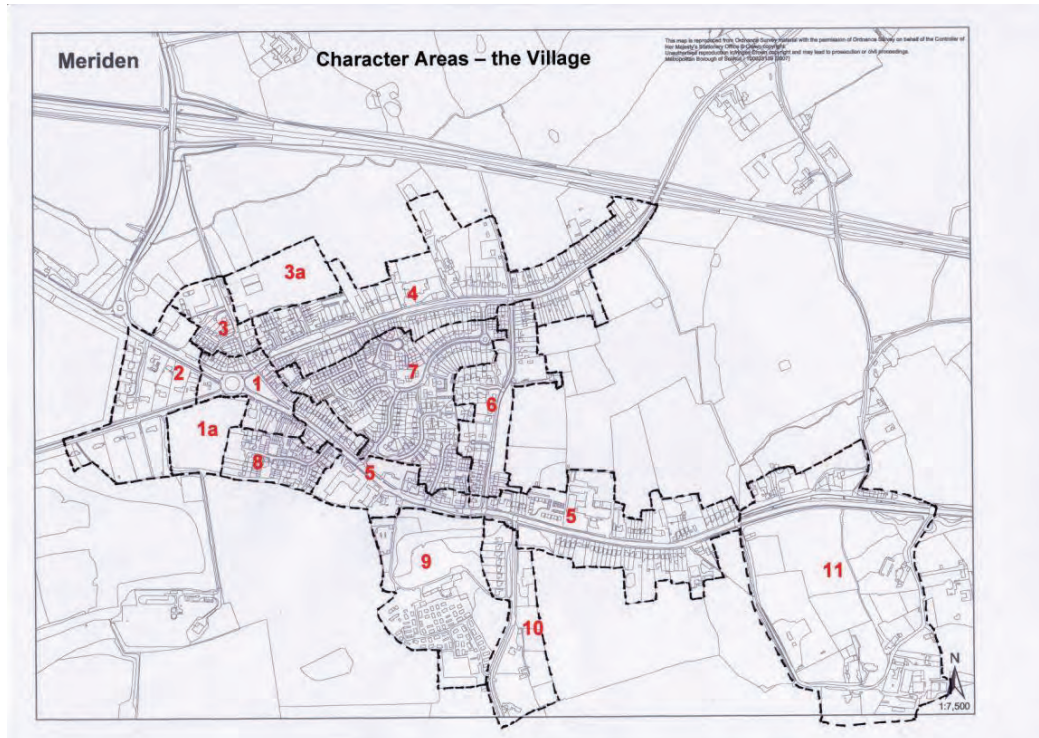
- ≠ Parish residents are passionately concerned to preserve the Green Belt, to reinforce the defensible green belt boundary around the Meriden village and Millison's Wood and to ensure that only very tightly regulated, appropriate development occurs elsewhere in the Parish.
- ≠ Residents of Meriden and from the surrounding conurbations value highly the quality of the landscape and the footpaths, bridleways and lanes of the Parish. Meriden is of national importance to cyclists with the National Cyclists Memorial and is a popular centre and destination.
- ≠ The urban landscape could be considerably improved in places by sensitive treatment of the public realm and reducing the impact of traffic, the narrowing of main roads and selective tree planting and landscaping. (See the later section on the public realm).

Guidance:

- ≠ *Public footpaths, bridleways and lanes form important parts of the Parish's character and amenity. They should be preserved and maintained and the lanes should be protected against any alterations that might spoil their peaceful nature and endanger their surrounding flora.*
- ≠ *To this end, Solihull Borough Council should designate the narrow rural lanes in the Parish as 'Quiet Lanes' under The Quiet Lanes and Home Zones (England) Regulations 2006 (Department of Transport Circular 02/2006). These should include Church Lane, Walsh Lane, Eaves Green Lane, Lodge Green Lane, Harvest Hill Lane, Becks Lane, Shaft Lane and Kinwalsey Lane.*
- ≠ *Mature hedges should be preserved and the creation of new hedgerows to delineate boundaries with typical indigenous species should be encouraged.*
- ≠ *Wildlife habitats and biodiversity should be protected and enhanced in accordance with the strategies set out in Solihull MBC's Nature Conservation Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan.*
- ≠ *Consideration should be given to creating a permanent wetland site on the current sand/gravel pit to the west of the village between Hampton Lane and Birmingham Road.*
- ≠ *Careful consideration should be given to the impact of any new development on the views from public rights of way, particularly with regard to height, size, design, colour, boundary and landscaping.*
- ≠ *Farm development which increases commercial or recreational activity should be encouraged provided there is no significant increase in any kind of pollution (including noise, traffic and light pollution), and the impact on the environment is kept to a minimum.*

The character areas of the village and parish

The Parish has 14 distinct 'character areas'. A description of each of these, together with a note on the concerns of residents about planning, development and public realm issues specific to each of these character areas follows. The character areas are delineated on the map and described below, with concerns expressed by residents and guidance particular to those areas where appropriate. They have been delineated on the basis of the visual environment – what you can see when travelling along a road or walking an area – and how residents identify their locality within the Parish.



2. Birmingham Road, Hampton Grange and Hampton Lane

This area contains mainly large detached houses in substantial grounds, facing Hampton Lane, the south side of Birmingham Road and in Hampton Grange, a gated cul-de-sac off the Birmingham Road. It is in the Green Belt.

The land to the north side of Birmingham Road contains a caravan storage park and the site of a former garage. As this road forms one of the main 'gateways' to the village, its appearance is particularly important, yet at present the north side is very scrappy and unattractive. There is existing planning approval for housing on the former garage site and serious consideration should be given to designating the adjacent land for housing purposes with a small attractive development and landscaping. This would be complemented by narrowing of the road, landscaping of the public space and better management of the wildlife habitat (see the Public Realm Guidance p14).

Concerns:

- ≠ To improve the appearance of the north side of Birmingham Road and slow down traffic on both Birmingham Road and Hampton Lane.
- ≠ To improve the control of parking and protect grass verges.

Guidance:

- ≠ *A well-designed and attractive development should be allowed on the north side of Birmingham Road to improve the appearance of this gateway to the village.*
- ≠ *Birmingham Road should be narrowed to make it more in scale with its village setting, with better parking provision and protection to verges etc*



3. Maxstoke Lane / Maxstoke Close



This currently forms a cul de sac area of the village, very close to the Green. It will be impacted substantially by the new housing development on the former playing field site (3a). In particular there are well-founded concerns about the volume of traffic in Maxstoke Lane and the difficulty of exiting the area onto Fillongley Road.



It is a characterful area with a variety of housing styles and ages with a real village feel. It includes a mixed tenure older persons' development (The Firs).

Concerns:

- ≠ The pressure that this area will be under after completion of the housing development and during its construction.
- ≠ The traffic and safety problems at the junction of Maxstoke Lane and Fillongley Road.
- ≠ The condition of the pavement, pavement parking and the safety of pedestrians, particularly the elderly, in Maxstoke Lane.



Guidance:

- ≠ *Any future developments in this area need to sensitively respect and enhance its village character.*
- ≠ *The pressure on Maxstoke Lane from the new housing development must not lead to its 'suburbanisation'. It must retain its rural / village feel.*
- ≠ *The footpath link directly to the Birmingham Road should be reinstated.*





Meriden
PARISH COUNCIL
the historic centre of England

**Meriden
Neighbourhood Development Plan
2018-2033
Submission Version**

Protecting our history, planning our future

6.0 Natural Environment

Strategic Objective Two – Natural Environment

To safeguard the natural environment and enhance biodiversity through sensitive development which protects and enriches the landscape.

6.1 Meriden lies in a rural setting at the heart of the “Meriden Gap” – the narrowest part of the West Midlands Green Belt between Solihull and Coventry.



View from St Laurence Churchyard

6.2 Meriden Hill marks the watershed between the rivers Severn and Trent. Rain falling on Millison’s Wood, though to the east, drains into the Severn, while in the Village and most of the rest of the Parish drains into the Trent. From the top, at Kinwalsey Lane at around 180m above sea level, to River Blythe valley at around 90m, the general fall of the land is north east to south west.



Public footpath, Meriden Hill

6.3 The surrounding countryside is a mix of high quality farm land, some extensive and very attractive woodland and sand and gravel extraction to the west.



Area G Quarry

6.4 Away from the main roads, the agricultural landscape retains many of the enclosure hedgerows and lane banks with hedges that reflect centuries of land management. A particularly

distinctive feature being the lanes with high banks and ancient hedgerows. Within the village both Church Lane and Leys Lane still have these same characteristics, which must be retained.

6.5 Millison's Wood and the extensive woodlands at the top end of Fillongley Road are all parts of the former Forest of Arden and form an essential characteristic of the parish and the wider landscape and a haven for all types of wildlife.



Bluebell Wood off Fillongley Road

6.6 The hills within the village are an attractive feature. Church Lane offer views over the rest of the village and extensive views to the west over Birmingham and as far as the Lickey Hills. Meriden Parish is well served by footpaths and bridleways and is at the centre of two important walking trails – the Heart of England Way and the Coventry Way. These offer very attractive views of the village as well as further afield. The views from roads within the village are more restricted by development and by trees, but of particular note are the views on the approach from the east over Meriden Hill and the views from the Fillongley Road on descending from Shaft Lane towards Lodge Green Lane and Walsh Lane.

6.7 Within the village the urban landscape is very mixed. Notable and valued features include Meriden Pool (the duck pond), conservation areas such as the Village Green (Meriden Green Conservation Area) and Meriden Hill Conservation Area around St. Laurence Church, the avenue of magnificent trees at the lower end of Fillongley Road and the stretch of Main Road between the Bulls Head and Waterfall Cottages, with its willow tree, Leys Lane, Church Lane and Old Road.



Church Lane



Meriden Pool

NE1.1 In order to maintain the distinctive character of the Neighbourhood Area, all new development must have regard to the valued landscapes, skylines and views as shown on Figures 8 to 18.

NE1.2 Measures to improve the quality of the landscape, its scenic beauty and tranquility; and to reduce light pollution will be encouraged.

NE1.3 Proposals which have an adverse impact on any valued landscape or skyline will be resisted.

6.8 Explanation

6.8.1 Based on the evidence Meriden's NDP Steering Group gathered from the residents of Meriden, three valued landscapes have been identified. They are:

1. 'The Dowlands'
2. Field from Berkswell Road to Church Lane
3. View from St Laurence Churchyard

6.8.2 Referred to as '**Dowlands**', this field lies in the north part of Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) 4 Rural Centre Sub Area 4D running from behind Strawberry Fields towards Meriden Hall. The public footpaths are well used by residents and ramblers alike. In the winter when snow falls and settles, families enjoy the chance to go tobogganing with their snow sleds. Of historic interest, Dowlands is a corruption of dole lands meaning shared meadow lands and is part of the medieval agricultural pattern of the village. They were open to the road when in use. Nearby running behind the old house by the gate to the Hall drive is a footpath once Whittle's Lane and part of the original route to Hampton before the Straight Mile was cut in 1785.

6.8.3 The **field from Berskwell Road to Church Lane** also lies in LCA4 Rural Centre Sub Area 4D and the public footpaths are well used and like 'Dowlands', features parts of the Millennium Way and Coventry Way trails.

6.8.4 The **view from St Laurence Churchyard**, which sits in the Meriden Hill Conservation Area, encompasses the landscape that features in LCA 7 Northern Upland. It has had the most mentions in the surveys and drop-in sessions as one of Meriden's favourite valued landscapes. One can see Birmingham and Coventry in the skyline, Meriden Gap, as well as the fields towards Fillongley Road and the area of Eaves Green. It is popular with residents and ramblers and also features parts of the Millennium Way and Coventry Way trails as well as the Heart of England Way trail.

6.8.6 The importance of these three valued landscapes as described in SMBC's Local Character Assessment are featured in section 6.11.

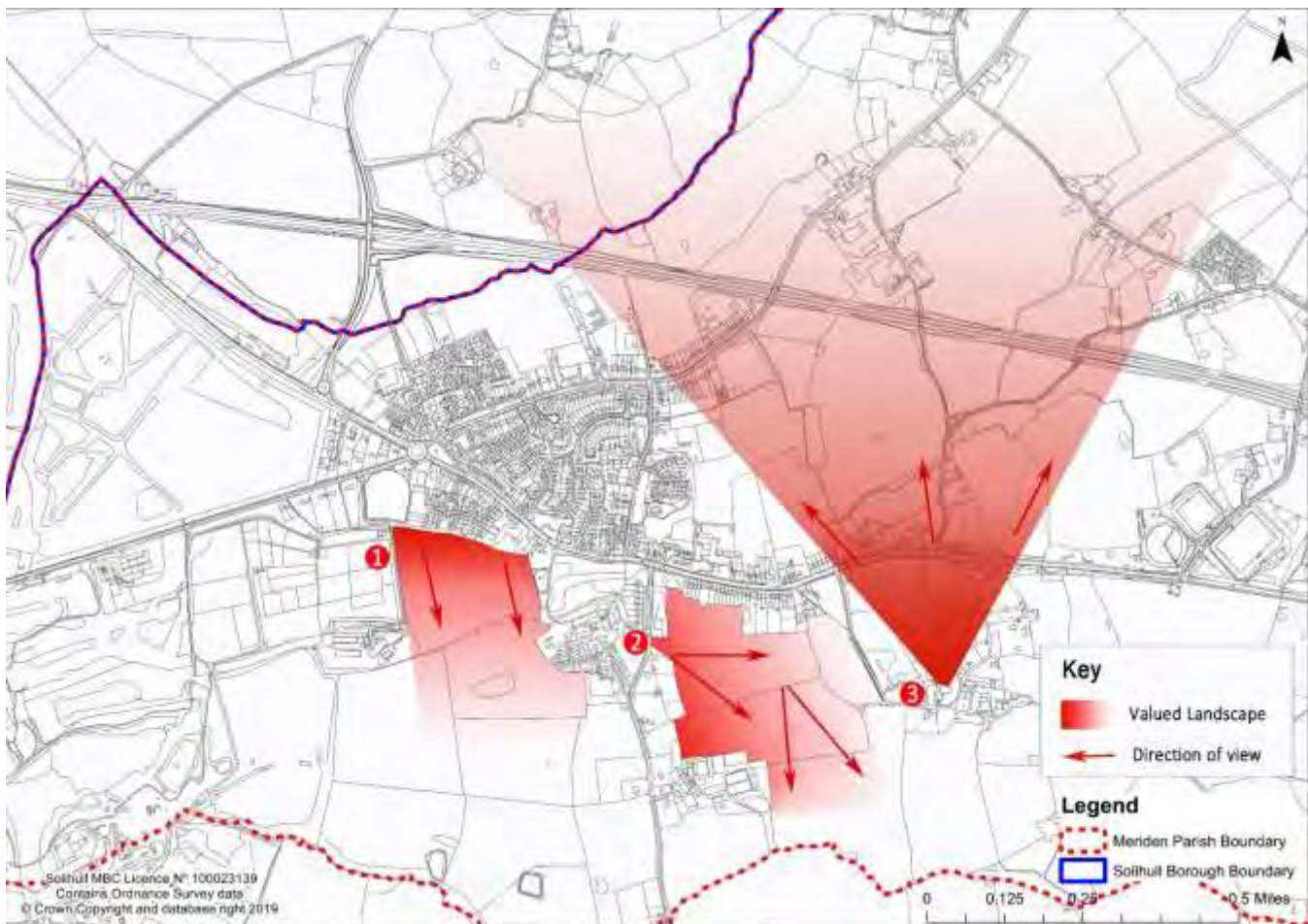


Figure 13 – Meriden’s Valued Landscapes from left to right, 1) ‘The Dowlands’, 2) field from Berkswell Road to Church Lane and 3) view from St Laurence Churchyard

6.9 Meriden’s Drop-In session at the Village Hall March 2019

At our Drop-in Session in March 2019 at the Village Hall, residents were invited to review a list of proposed Community Assets, Local Green Spaces and to ask what landscapes they valued. In relation to valued landscapes, it was highlighted what they had suggested in the Resident Survey 2016 (see 6.10 below) and they confirmed the name of one of the surrounding fields as ‘Dowlands’. Everyone was in agreement that the view from St Laurence churchyard was a must to be included and there were lots of votes for the Bluebell Wood in Millison’s Wood.

6.10 Meriden Neighbourhood Plan Residents Survey 2016

In the Residents Survey 2016, the majority (96%) of respondents said that any future development in Meriden should be in keeping with the character, heritage and settings of the surrounding countryside.

95% of respondents felt that the Neighbourhood Plan should aim to promote the maintenance and improvement of present green space and recreational areas, 89% went for the enhanced protection of historic and natural features, with 88% wanting the enhanced protection of the landscape.

66 suggestions of valued landscapes were put forward to be protected:

- 41 suggestions for St Laurence churchyard views – 62%
- 16 suggestions for Meriden’s surrounding fields – 24%
- 9 suggestions for Millison’s Wood’s Bluebell Wood – 14%

6.11 SMBC's Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) 2016

6.11.1 In SMBC's Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) published in 2016, Meriden features in LCA 4 Rural Centre Sub Area 4D, LCA 7 Northern Upland and LCA 8 Blythe Lowland.

6.11.2 LCA 4 Rural Centre Sub Area 4D, where both 'The Dowlands' and the field from Berkswell Road to Church Lane lie, states its key characteristics as being

- Small to medium sized fields, boarded by field ditches and hedgerows, supporting pastoral and arable use, generally with a well wooded background.
- Strong hedgerow structure of varying condition, many with mature hedgerow trees.
- Oak and ash are the two dominant species in the sub-area. Poplar shelterbelts are also present adding to the wooded
- character of the area.

6.11.3 The Landscape Character Sensitivity of the sub-area is considered to be High. The Visual Sensitivity and Landscape Value are considered Medium. The sub-area would typically have an overall Very Low landscape capacity to accommodate change.

6.11.4 LCA 7 Northern Upland, where St Laurence Churchyard and its views lie, states many key characteristics of which a selection features below

- Millison's Wood is the main settlement in this area. However, though Meriden does lie within the area, it adjoins the boundary of the LCA to the south-west. A static caravan park is also present at Eaves Green. Individual farmsteads are also scattered across the area.
- Northern part predominantly wooded & was more wooded, surrounding fields are assarts with enclosures dating to late medieval period.
- The Meriden Hill Conservation Area, located at the southern boundary is a key feature. The Moated site at Marlbrook Hall Farm and Churchyard Cross in St Laurence are both Scheduled Monuments and the setting of these are important to the character of the surrounding landscape.
- A majority of the listed buildings are concentrated within the Meriden Hill Conservation Area and also across the western extent of the LCA including Walsh Hall, a Grade II* listing.
- The wider landscape setting of Church Farm is distinct and marked by its tranquil nature, red boundary walls and single track lanes.
- Long views are afforded across the LCA towards Coventry and Birmingham from Fillongley Road.
- This area is subject to air traffic noise from the Birmingham International Airport situated further to the west.
- A number of public footpaths exist in the LCA including long distance trails forming part of the Heart of England and Coventry Way.

6.11.5 The Landscape Character Sensitivity of the sub-area is considered to be High. The Visual Sensitivity and Landscape Value are considered Medium. Being of High overall landscape sensitivity and Medium landscape value, this suggests that the LCA would typically have an overall Very Low landscape capacity to accommodate new development.

6.11.6 Meriden also features in LCA 8 Blythe Lowland and covers the quarries and golf courses.

6.12 Three Things Survey 2015

“The countryside, sports park, village green and duck pond were the top named three things within this survey; the sports park and duck pond were favoured most by Meriden pupils from Heart of England School.”

6.13 Meriden’s Parish Design Statement 2011

6.13.1 Within the village the urban landscape is very mixed. The duck pond is particularly valued, especially by Meriden’s children. The Green is also valued highly by residents, as is the conservation area around St. Laurence Church. Other features, such as the avenue of magnificent trees at the lower end of Fillongley Road and the stretch of Main Road between the Bulls Head and Waterfall Cottages, with its willow tree have also been identified as of particular character and merit.

6.13.2 The value of Meriden’s landscape is recognised in published landscape character assessments, notably Natural England’s National Character Area 97: Arden and Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines: Arden. The latter (adopted by SMBC), divides Arden into seven distinct landscape types. Meriden lies within ‘Ancient Arden’. For Ancient Arden the strategy is summarised as ‘conserve and restore the ancient irregular landscape pattern’; and the countryside around Meriden has been identified as an ‘enhancement zone’. SMBC’s Countryside Strategy (adopted and published in October 2010) reinforced the case to protect and enhance the landscape of the Meriden Gap as does its current Draft Local Plan.

Guidance:

- *Public footpaths, bridleways and lanes form important parts of the Parish’s character and amenity. They should be preserved and maintained and the lanes should be protected against any alterations that might spoil their peaceful nature and endanger their surrounding flora.*
- *To this end, Solihull Borough Council should designate the narrow rural lanes in the Parish as ‘Quiet Lanes’ under The Quiet Lanes and Home Zones (England) Regulations 2006 (Department of Transport Circular 02/2006). These should include Church Lane, Walsh Lane, Eaves Green Lane, Lodge Green Lane, Harvest Hill Lane, Becks Lane, Shaft Lane and Kinwalsey Lane.*
- *Mature hedges should be preserved and the creation of new hedgerows to delineate boundaries with typical indigenous species should be encouraged.*
- *Wildlife habitats and biodiversity should be protected and enhanced in accordance with the strategies set out in SMBC’s Nature Conservation Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan.*
- *Careful consideration should be given to the impact of any new development on the views from public rights of way, particularly with regard to height, size, design, colour, boundary and landscaping.*
- *Farm development which increases commercial or recreational activity should be encouraged provided there is no significant increase in any kind of pollution (including noise, traffic and light pollution), and the impact on the environment is kept to a minimum.*

6.13.3 Meriden’s Parish Plan 2009

The household survey preceding the 2009 Parish Plan established that one of the most important aspects of life in Meriden is its character as a real village in a healthy countryside environment.



Figure 14 - Valued Landscape - View from St Laurence Churchyard



Figure 15 - Valued Landscape – View from St Laurence Churchyard



Figure 16 - Valued Landscape – View from St Laurence Churchyard



Figure 17 - View from St Laurence Churchyard – Birmingham in the skyline



Figure 18 - View from St Laurence Churchyard – Coventry in the skyline



Figure 19 - Valued Landscape – 'The Dowlands' viewed from Strawberry Bank Hotel's garden



Figure 20 - Valued Landscape – ‘The Dowlands’ viewed from the back of Strawberry Fields housing



Figure 21 - Valued Landscape – ‘The Dowlands’ viewed facing Meriden Hall from Strawberry Fields



Figure 22 - Valued Landscape – Millennium Way footpath through ‘Dowlands



Figure 23 - Valued Landscape – View from the Scout Hut towards Church Lane in the field between Berkswell Road and Church Lane



Solihull Strategic Green Belt Assessment

Assessment Report

JULY 2016

03 | Assessment Methodology

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

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

Defining Assessment Areas

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

- Refined Parcels; and
- Broad Areas

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Assessment

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

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

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

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

Refined Parcels and Broad Areas were not assessed against the fifth purpose of Green Belt 'to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land'. By virtue of its designation, all Green Belt land makes an equal contribution to this purpose and therefore inclusion of this purpose would add no value to the Assessment.

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

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

Table 1 - Assessment Criteria

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

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

Refined Parcels

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

Purpose 1

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

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

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

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

Table 2 - Broad Area Scoring

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

Purpose 2

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

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

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

Refined parcels which do not perform against purpose 2 include those parcels which are entirely contained by the urban area and therefore do not form a gap.

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

Purpose 3

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

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

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

Purpose 4

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

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

Table 3 - Refined Parcel Scoring

Refined Parcel	Description	Purpose Scores					Highest Score
		1	2	3	4	Total	
RP01	Babbs Mill Park	2	0	0	0	2	2 (Purpose 1)
RP02	Land at Fordbridge Road and Cooks Lane	0	0	0	0	0	0
RP03	Land at and north of Meriden Park	2	0	0	0	2	2 (Purpose 1)
RP04	Land between M6 and A452 north of Chelmonds Cross	3	2	2	0	7	3 (Purpose 3)
RP05	Land between Moorend Avenue and Coleshill Road	2	0	0	0	2	2 (Purpose 1)
RP06	Land south of Grace Academy and Alcott Wood	2	0	0	0	2	2 (Purpose 1)
RP07	Land to the south of Coleshill Road	2	2	1	0	5	2 (Purpose 1 and 2)
RP08	Land immediately east of Birmingham Business Park	2	0	1	0	3	2 (Purpose 1)
RP09	Land to the east of Birmingham Business Park	3	1	2	0	6	3 (Purpose 1)
RP10	Land to the north of Birmingham International Park	1	2	1	0	4	2 (Purpose 2)
RP11	Land at Coleshill Heath Road and Bickenhill Parkway	0	0	0	0	0	0
RP12	Land to the north-west of National Exhibition Centre	3	0	0	0	3	3 (Purpose 1)
RP13	Land north of A45 between M42 and A452 Chester Road	1	1	2	0	4	2 (Purpose 3)
RP14	Land north east of Land Rover (south of A45)	1	1	2	0	4	2 (Purpose 3)
RP15	Land to the south of A45 west of Bickenhill	3	1	2	0	6	2 (Purpose 1 and 3)
RP16	Land between Catherine de Barnes Lane and Church Lane	3	1	1	3	8	3 (Purpose 1 and 4)
RP17	Land immediately west of M42 at junction with A45 Coventry Road	1	1	2	3	7	3 (Purpose 4)
RP18	Land to the north west of Hampton in Arden	1	1	1	1	4	1 (All)
RP19	Land to the north of Hampton in Arden, south of A45 Coventry Road	2	1	1	0	4	2 (Purpose 1)
RP20	Land immediately west of Hampton in Arden	1	2	2	3	8	3 (Purpose 4)
RP21	Land at junction of B4102 Meriden Road and Diddington Lane	2	1	3	0	6	3 (Purpose 3)
RP22	Land to the east of Lapwing Drive, south of B4102 Meriden Road	2	1	2	0	5	2 (Purpose 1 and 3)
RP23	Land to the south and west of Marsh Lane	2	1	3	3	9	3 (Purpose 3 and 4)
RP24	Land at junction of B4104 Birmingham Road and B4102 Hampton Lane, Meriden	0	0	0	0	0	0
RP25	Land to the north and east of Meriden	3	1	1	0	5	3 (Purpose 1)
RP26	Land south of Main Road Meriden	1	1	1	0	3	1 (Purpose 1, 2, and 3)
RP27	Land between Grand Union Canal and Lugtrout Lane	1	2	1	0	4	2 (Purpose 2)
RP28	Land immediately north of Catherine de Barnes	2	1	2	0	5	2 (Purpose 1 and 3)
RP29	Land between B4102 Hampton Lane and Lugtrout Lane to the west of Field Lane	1	2	1	0	4	2 (Purpose 2)
RP30	Land between B4102 Hampton Lane and Lugtrout Lane to the east of Field Lane	1	2	1	0	4	2 (Purpose 2)
RP31	Land between M42 and B4102 Hampton Lane, east of A41 Solihull By-Pass	1	1	2	0	4	2 (Purpose 3)
RP32	Land to the west of M42 at Brueton Park	1	2	1	2	6	2 (Purpose 2 and 4)
RP33	Land between M42 and Lady Bryon Lane	1	2	2	0	5	2 (Purpose 2 and 3)
RP34	Land east of Lady Byron Lane including Copt Heath Golf Course	1	2	0	0	3	2 (Purpose 2)

**APPENDIX A.3: EXTRACTS FROM PUBLISHED
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS**

National Character Area 97: Arden

Warwickshire Landscapes Guidelines: Arden

Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment: LCA7 Northern Upland



Summary

Arden comprises farmland and former wood-pasture lying to the south and east of Birmingham, including part of the West Midlands conurbation. Traditionally regarded as the land lying between the River Tame and the River Avon in Warwickshire, the Arden landscape also extends into north Worcestershire to abut the Severn and Avon Vales. To the north and north-east it drops down to the open landscape of the Mease/Sence Lowlands. The eastern part of the NCA abuts and surrounds Coventry, with the fringes of Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon to the south. This NCA has higher ground to the west, the Clent and Lickey Hills and to the east, the Nuneaton ridge. The landscape of the lower lying central area is gently rolling with small fragmented semi-natural and ancient woodlands. Mature oaks set in hedgerows, distinctive field boundaries, historic parklands and narrow river corridors are key features, all on the doorstep of a heavily urbanised area.

Land use throughout the area is mainly, residential, agricultural and industrial including coal mining, which is still active in the north-east of the NCA. Numerous transport corridors; road, rail, air and canal run through the area. There is likely to be increased development and greater pressure upon the existing infrastructure, particularly around Birmingham, Coventry and the main towns. This pressure could lead to the creation of new green infrastructure linking the urban areas out into the more rural areas. This NCA is among the most geologically diverse. This has had a strong impact on the landscape's character and development and is further reflected in the range of locally and nationally important geological assets across the NCA. There are also many local biodiversity assets and strong cultural links with William Shakespeare and his 'Forest of Arden'.

Statements of Environmental Opportunity

- **SEO 1:** Manage and enhance the valuable woodlands, hedgerows, heaths, distinctive field boundaries and enclosure patterns throughout the NCA, retaining the historic contrast between different areas while balancing the needs for timber, biomass production, climate regulation, biodiversity and recreation.
- **SEO 2:** Create new networks of woodlands, heaths and green infrastructure, linking urban areas like Birmingham and Coventry with the wider countryside to increase biodiversity, recreation and the potential for biomass and the regulation of climate.
- **SEO 3:** Conserve and enhance Arden's strong geological, industrial, and cultural resource, to increase public access, enjoyment, recreation and to retain a sense of place and history.
- **SEO 4:** Enhance the value of Arden's aquatic features such as the characteristic river valleys, meadows and standing water areas like Bittell Reservoirs, to increase resource protection such as regulating soil erosion, soil quality and water quality.

Click map to enlarge; click again to reduce.

Description

Physical and functional links to other National Character Areas

To the north-west of Arden is the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau NCA on the edges of Hagley Park. The Birmingham conurbation then links Arden with Cannock Chase and Cank Wood NCA. These National Character Areas, along with Arden, form the Natural Area referred to as 'The Midlands Plateau'.

In the north-east, the M42 transport corridor links the Mease/Sence Lowlands NCA and a sliver of the Trent Valley Washlands with Arden along the edge of Tamworth. On the eastern edge, the Warwickshire landscape flows into the Leicestershire Vales. In the central section of Arden the River Arrow starts its journey south and then merges into the River Avon near Bidford on Avon in the Severn and Avon Vales. Moving south, the River Avon flows into Dunsmore and Feldon then on into Severn and Avon Vales in the south-west.

From the highest point in Arden (Walton Hill, in the Clent Hill range), there are views from the summit looking south-west into the Shropshire Hills, Malvern Hills, Teme Valley and south into the Cotswolds. There are also views across the NCA taking in the southern fringes of Birmingham from the Heart of England Way near Meriden.



The eastern slopes of Walton Hill, the highest point in the NCA.

Key characteristics

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



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



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

Statements of Environmental Opportunity

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

For example, by:

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

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

For example, by:

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

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

For example, by:

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

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

For example, by:

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

Landscape opportunities

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



Frequent hedgerow oaks are a typical feature of the Arden landscape.

Photo credits

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

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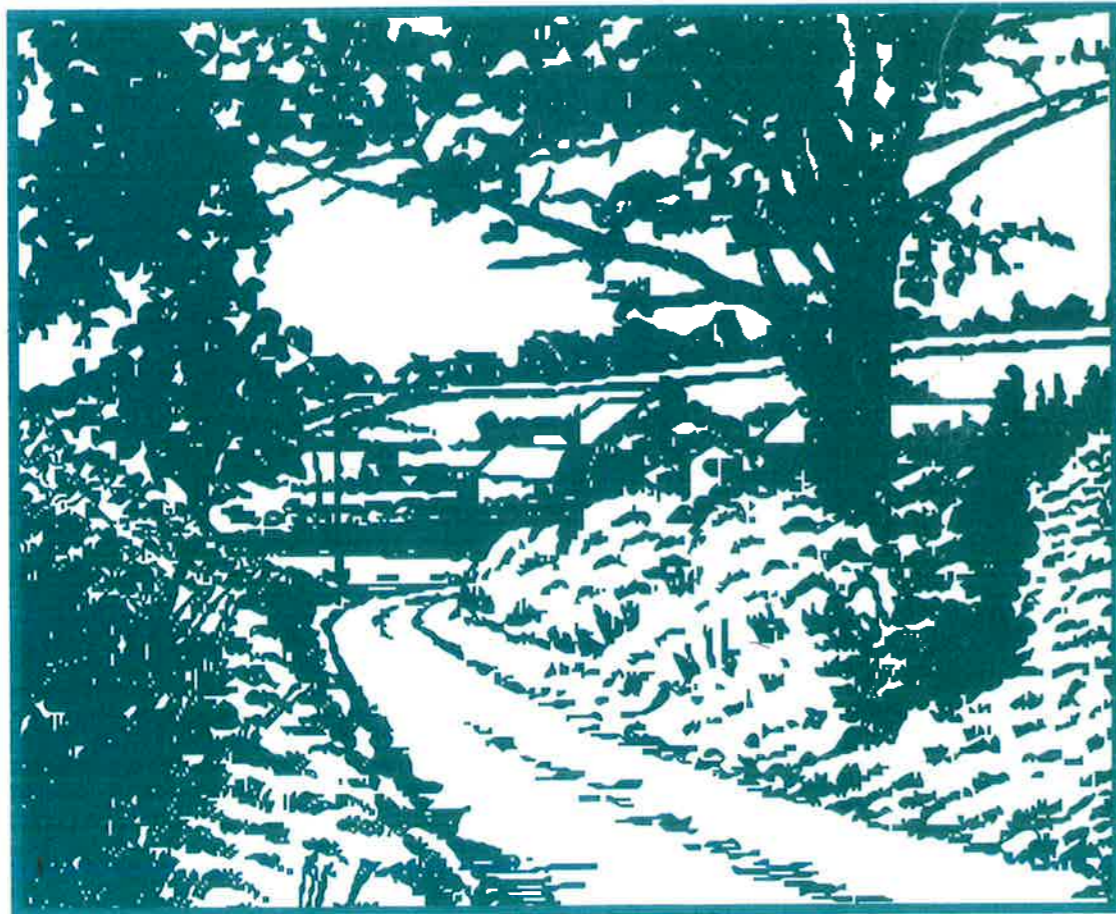
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Warwickshire Landscapes Guidelines

• Arden



Warwickshire Landscapes Guidelines



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

Landscape guidelines are also available for:

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

floodplains, wooded estatelands and ancient farmlands. The same landscape types are often found in different regional character areas, but they are distinguished by regional influences.

Regional character areas have provided a regional framework on which the more detailed county-wide assessment of the landscape has been based. Such a framework is much more meaningful than using administrative boundaries as a basis for landscape assessment.

Regional character areas have also proved to be the best level at which to tackle settlement and general development issues. Guidelines for land use, field boundaries and trees and woodlands, on the other hand, are generally specific to individual landscape types and it was at this level that these land management issues were tackled.

Regional character areas in Warwickshire

The first level of assessment identified a total of ten regional character areas within and around the fringes of the county. Only four of these, Arden, Dunsmore, Avon Valley and Feldon, can be truly described as Warwickshire landscapes. The others show characteristics more typically associated with surrounding counties. This is especially true of the Cotswolds, the Ironstone Wolds and the High Cross Plateau. The true character of each of these regions is more fully represented in Gloucestershire, Staffordshire, Northamptonshire and Leicestershire. Nonetheless, they form a distinct upland fringe along the southern and eastern edge of the county. Similarly, the Mease Lowlands is another marginal Warwickshire region, while the area to the east of the river Tame is transitional between Arden and Cannock Forest. For convenience some of these transitional areas around the fringes of the

county have been treated as part of the adjoining Warwickshire regions. As a result the county has been divided into seven broad regional character areas (Map 1). These are:

(1) Arden – an historic region of former wood pasture and heath characterised by a dispersed settlement pattern, ancient woodlands and mature hedgerow oaks.

(2) Dunsmore – a well wooded, and in places urbanised region characterised by low glacial plateaus, sandy soils and remnant heathy vegetation.

(3) Avon Valley – a prosperous agricultural and market gardening region closely associated with the river Avon and characterised by historic market towns, nucleated villages and orchards.

(4) Feldon – a lowland agricultural region strongly influenced by Tudor and later parliamentary enclosures and characterised by heavy clay soils, large geometric fields and a nucleated settlement pattern of small rural villages.

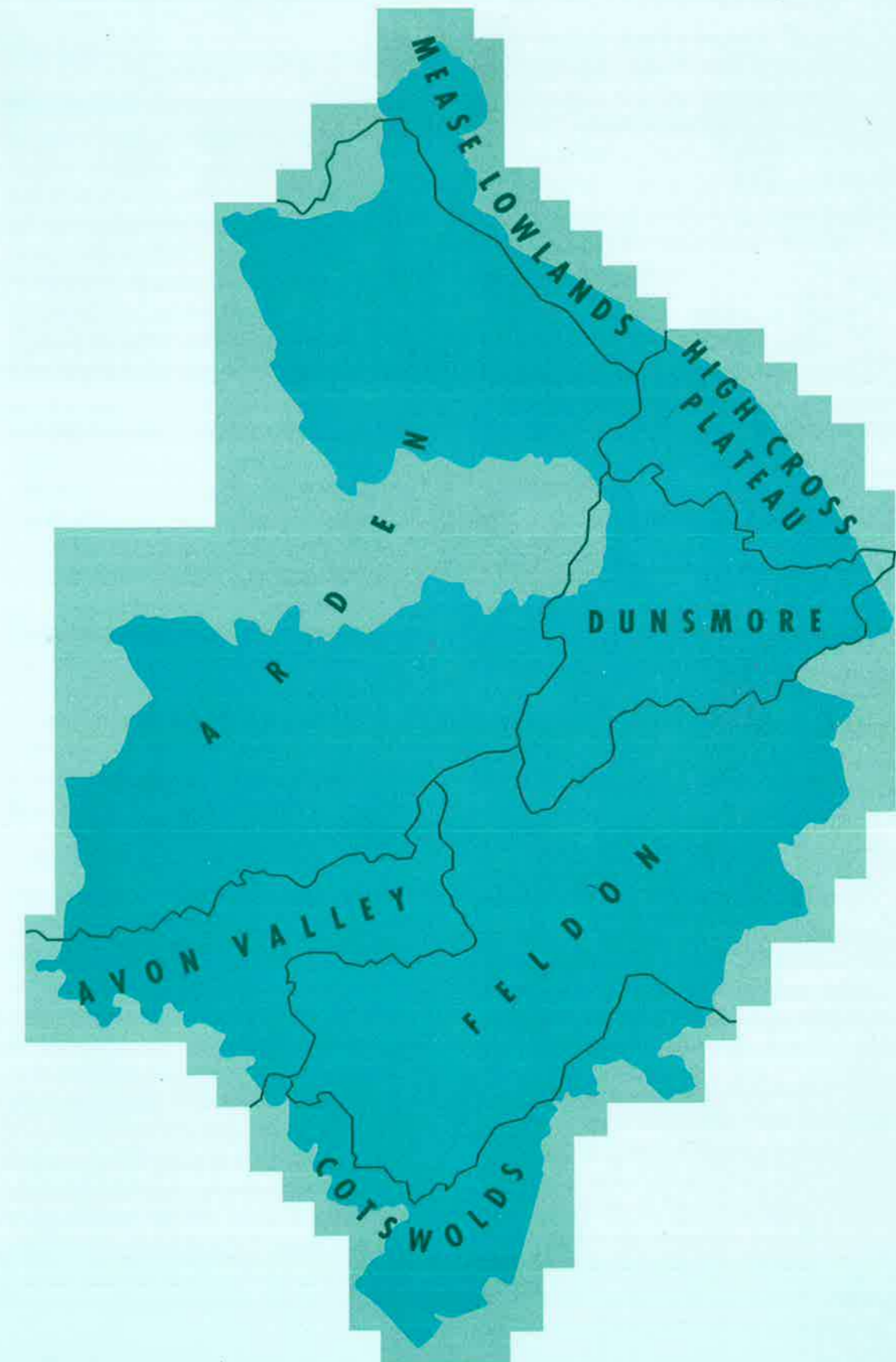
(5) Cotswolds – a sparsely populated region of limestone and ironstone uplands characterised by open wolds, large walled fields and distinctive stone villages.

(6) High Cross Plateau – a rural agricultural region characterised by open clay wolds and small nucleated villages.

(7) Mease Lowlands – a rural agricultural region of large country estates and small nucleated villages characterised by tall church spires.

The regional character area lying in the west of the county is described in this booklet: Arden. The booklet should be read in conjunction with the accompanying coloured map, which shows the area and its component landscape types.

Regional character areas



LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT
PART ONE

Part one Landscape assessment

Arden

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

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

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

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

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

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

Arden

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Arden

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Arden

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Arden

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

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

Visual character of the landscape

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

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

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

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



wayside cottages

Arden

Ancient Arden This is the most extensive Arden landscape and forms the core of ancient countryside in Warwickshire. It is located in two main areas: the northern section covers the eastern half of the North Warwickshire plateau, while the southern section forms the undulating countryside between Hatton and Redditch. It is a small scale, intricate landscape with many low rounded hills, steep scarps and small incised valleys. Landform is rarely dominant but in places it is emphasised by hilltop woodlands and wooded scarps. Within the area landform relates intimately with tree cover and field pattern to form a strong sense of enclosure. Views are restricted by thick roadside hedgerows and are often short, overlooking two or three fields to a wooded skyline. Occasional distant views are afforded from hilltops and ridgelines revealing a varied, wooded topography.

The farmed landscape is characterised by a well defined small to medium sized irregular field pattern, complemented by an irregular pattern of narrow lanes. Most lanes and trackways are tightly defined by thick hedgerows often on hedgebanks. Pockets of permanent pasture are closely associated with small scale field patterns around hamlets and lanes. These form the treasured, undisturbed Arden landscapes where a combination of ancient hedgerows, unimproved pasture and grazing animals creates a strong sense of place and a peaceful reminder of times past. The intimacy of the landscape is often reinforced by the presence of sunken trackways and old field ponds which provide the finishing touches to tranquil, typically English rural scenes.

Throughout much of the area the landscape has a well wooded character formed by a mixture of woodlands, hedgerow trees, small parks and strongly wooded streamlines. Woodlands are particularly prominent on higher ground on the North Warwickshire plateau between

Meriden and New Arley. The majority of woodlands are less than 5 hectares in size, although several such as Close Wood and Birchley Hays Wood just north east of Meriden are considerably larger. Most are oak dominated, but a substantial proportion particularly of larger woods have been replanted with mixed broadleaved and coniferous species. The irregular shape of most woodlands reflects the large number that have ancient origins. Hedgerow trees are mainly associated with pastoral landscapes, such as those found around Tanworth-in-Arden. Free standing field trees and groups of trees around field ponds are also locally important. Elsewhere trees are more scattered, but in combination with thick hedgerows they often maintain a semblance of wooded character.

An integral element of the landscape is the dispersed settlement pattern of hamlets and farmsteads. Many historic brick and timber farmhouses and parish churches are particularly prominent. Modern houses are found on the edges of most hamlets and along roadsides, but in north and south Arden these do not markedly detract from traditional settlement character. In central Arden however, in the parishes of Allesley, Berkswell, Corley and Meriden, urban influences give a suburban feel to the landscape.



Arden



Ancient Arden

Overall character and qualities

An small scale farmed landscape with a varied, undulating topography, characterised by an irregular pattern of fields and narrow, winding lanes.

Characteristic features

- A varied undulating topography.
- A network of winding lanes and trackways often confined by tall hedgebanks.
- An ancient irregular pattern of small to medium sized fields.
- Hedgerow and roadside oaks.
- Field ponds associated with permanent pasture.
- Many place names ending in Green or End.

STRATEGIES & GUIDELINES
PART TWO

Part two Strategies and guidelines

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

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

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

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

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

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

Landscape change and current trends

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

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

Landscape change and current trends

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

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

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

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

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

In the longer term new incentives may encourage more environmentally sensitive

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

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

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

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

Landscape change and current trends

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

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

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

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

had a particularly deleterious effect on many formerly peaceful rural landscapes. Improvements to existing roads can also effect landscape character as road widening and realignment have resulted in the removal of hedgerows, ancient hedgebanks and fords.

General development guidelines

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



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

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



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

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



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

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

General development guidelines



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



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



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

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

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

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

General development guidelines



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



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



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

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

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

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

Arden

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

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



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



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

Management strategy

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

Overall guidelines

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

Arden



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



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



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



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

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

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

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

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



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



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



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



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

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

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

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

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



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



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



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

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

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

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

Ancient Arden

This landscape is especially significant as it is the only area of ancient countryside in Warwickshire. The irregular landscape pattern reflected in the shape of fields and the network of narrow winding lanes is the essential structural element. Maintaining this pattern is the key to conserving the ancient landscape character. The pastoral character of the landscape is also important. Though now fragmented, this creates visual unity where it survives and contributes to Ancient Arden's distinct sense of place.



Field pattern is defined by thick boundary hedgerows and these are a key feature of Ancient Arden. Most are of medieval age and are distinguished by their size, irregular pattern and diversity of hedgerow species. They form the essential fabric of the landscape and once lost this unique combination is very difficult to replace. It is important in landscape and historical terms to conserve what is left, and where hedgerows have been removed consideration should be given to replacement planting.



New hedgerow planting should be encouraged in those areas where field pattern has become fragmented. Where practical priority should be given to reinstating ancient hedgerow patterns. New planting should complement the irregular shapes of existing fields and a regular geometric pattern should be avoided. Hedges should be planted in double rows with a mixture of locally occurring species. Hedgerow trees should also be incorporated at irregular spacings, with oak as the dominant species.



Ancient Arden has traditionally been a pastoral landscape and still retains this character in many places. Some of the older pastures are floristically diverse and often they are associated with areas of more steeply undulating ground. These are Arden's landscape gems where a peaceful, undisturbed character creates a strong sense of place and link with the past. Many formerly pastoral landscapes have been converted to arable, however, resulting in a loss of landscape features and fragmentation of the ancient field pattern. Where opportunities arise restoration of pastoral character should be encouraged, especially where this is part of a scheme to restore the historic field pattern. It is likely that this would have to involve government incentives to encourage more environmentally sensitive farming.

Management strategy

- **Conserve and restore the ancient irregular landscape pattern**

Landscape guidelines

- **Conserve and restore the irregular pattern of ancient hedgerows**
- **New hedge planting should reflect the irregular field pattern and include only mixed native species**
- **Conserve pastoral character and identify opportunities for conversion of arable land back to permanent pasture**

Ancient Arden



Field ponds are important features in pastoral landscapes where historically they were used for watering livestock. They remain common in most parishes. In arable areas their function is now redundant but fringing scrub and trees often form important landscape features. Retention of ponds should be a priority in pastoral areas where they have greater wildlife potential in association with permanent grassland. Many of these ponds are now badly silted and shaded and management is needed to improve their wildlife and landscape interest. Management allows ponds to be retained as landscape features as well as providing a valuable source of water for livestock. Allowing limited access to livestock also adds diversity to the wetland habitat.



Mature oaks are a characteristic feature of field and roadside hedgerows in Ancient Arden. These create variety and give filtered views through the landscape. Tree cover should be enhanced through the natural regeneration of hedgerow oaks. Most hedgerows have seedlings which at little cost can be selected and left to grow. Replanting need only be undertaken where few hedgerow trees remain and the seed source has diminished.



Woodland cover in Ancient Arden is varied and consists of both large and small woods. The shape of most woodlands is characterised by an irregular outline created by early woodland clearance. This ancient pattern is reflected in the layout of fields and lanes. New planting should complement this irregular pattern, avoiding geometric shapes and straight edges. Woodlands up to field size would be most appropriate, but where field pattern is fragmented larger areas of planting may be acceptable.



Although close to Birmingham and Coventry Ancient Arden retains a rural character throughout much of its area. This is being steadily eroded however, by the gradual change of agricultural land to other uses, such as sport and leisure facilities. Such changes are imprinting a suburban character on the landscape. In these ancient landscapes conservation of rural character should be given a high priority and all new development should be tightly restrained.

- **Retain and manage field ponds in areas of permanent pasture**

- **Encourage the natural regeneration of hedgerow oaks**

- **Enhance tree cover through small scale woodland planting**

- **Conserve rural character by restricting changes in the use of rural land**

River valley wetlands

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



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



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



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

Management strategy

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

Landscape guidelines

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

Species lists – Arden

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

Main soil types – clay loams and sandy soils

- Dominant species
- Other appropriate species

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

Planting should contain at least 80% of dominant species

Semi-natural habitats

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

Arden

Summary of landscape guidelines

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

● High priority ○ Low priority × Inappropriate - Not applicable

Arden

Summary of landscape guidelines

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

● High priority ○ Low priority × Inappropriate - Not applicable

Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment

for

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council



December 2016



1. Summary
2. Introduction
3. Context
 - Planning Context*
 - National and Regional Context*
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 - Geology*
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6. Solihull Borough Landscape Character Areas

Appendices:

Appendix A: Methodology

Appendix B: Landscape Character Baseline

Appendix C: Stakeholder Workshop Consultation

Appendix D: Landscape Character Area Map

Appendix E: Bibliography

Appendix F: Glossary

Figures:

Figure 1: Terrain Analysis

Figure 2: Solihull Borough Landscape Character Area Map

Landform and topography:

- 4.8. The Solihull countryside in particular has a generally undulating topography with wooded areas including mature hedgerows, remnants of ancient semi natural woodland and historic parklands.
- 4.9. The Borough is located within an upland catchment of the River Trent and River Severn (via the River Avon). A review of The Ordnance Survey (OS) Open Data indicates that the general topography of the Borough generally slopes northwards and elevations range from between approximately 180m AOD (metres Above Ordnance Datum) in the eastern area of Solihull down to 80m AOD in the northern area of the Borough.

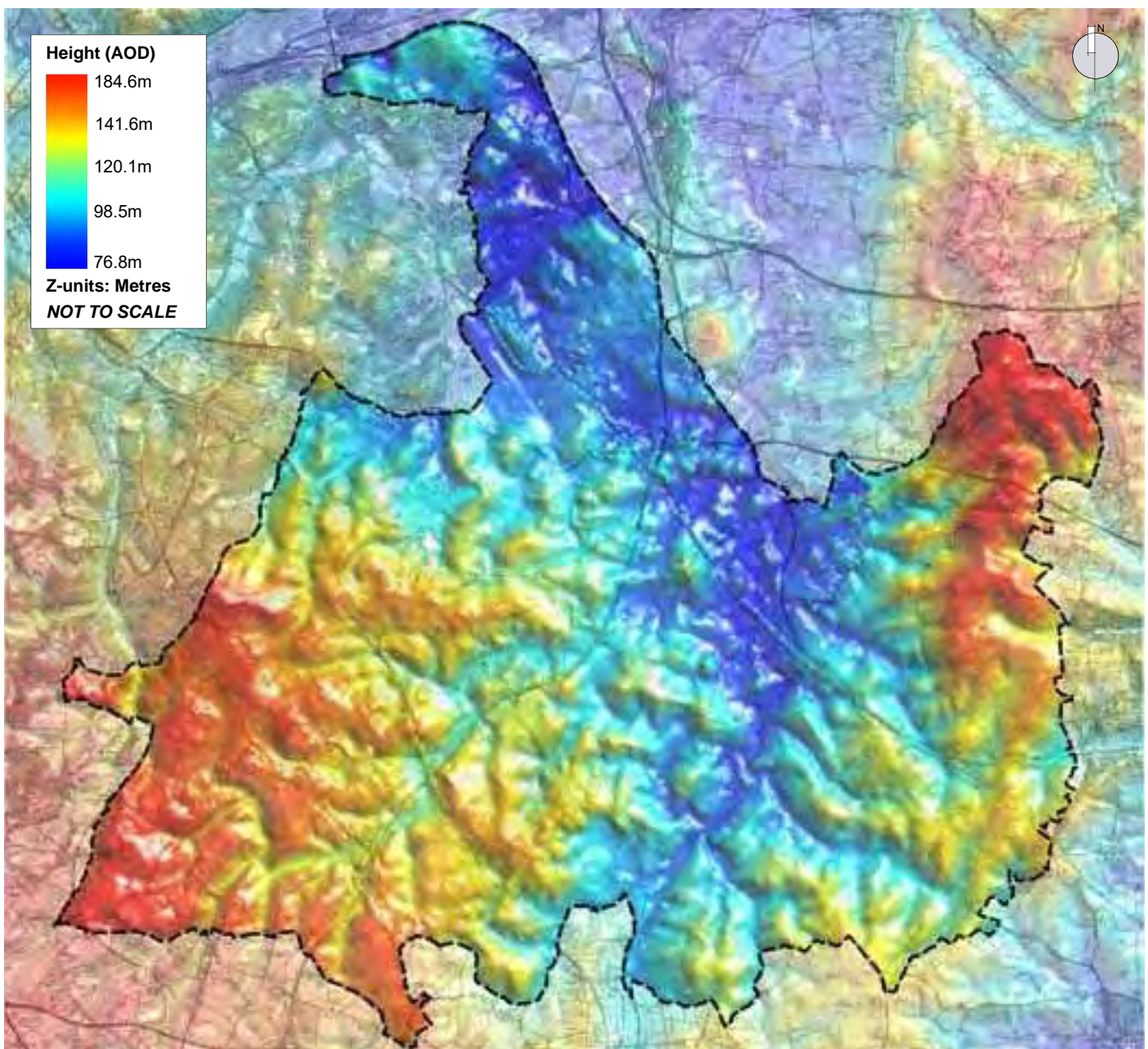


Figure 1: Terrain Analysis

Land Use Pattern:

- 4.10. Solihull became a borough in 1965 comprising Solihull Town and 12 parish Councils. The Borough covers an area of approximately 178 sq. km to the south east of Birmingham, where the northern and western parts of the area support predominantly urban areas including Solihull Town Centre, Birmingham International Airport and the National Exhibition Centre. In contrast, the eastern and southern areas of the Borough contain the countryside that occupies a substantial proportion of the land use. Within these countryside areas the M42 corridor forms the separation between the urban areas to the west and the more rural areas to the east.
- 4.11. The Borough is diverse in its land use and land quality. Land outside of the urban areas ranges from very good to poor land quality with most of the land being designated Grade 3 (good to moderate) agricultural land. Small areas of Grade 2 (very good) agricultural land is present mostly along the Berkswell and Meriden Road corridors.
- 4.12. Within the River Blythe corridor and around Cheswick Green and Dickens Heath, pastureland and meadows dominate, due to the poor agricultural soil quality found in these areas.
- 4.13. The River Blythe valley to the north of the Borough, due to its geology is an area of mineral deposit and therefore mineral extraction and quarrying is the main land use here. Although through time as quarrying has ceased, the land has been restored to form recreational areas some comprising golf courses and angling lakes.

Settlement and Infrastructure:

- 4.14. Settlement in the Borough comprises Solihull Town Centre, the National Exhibition Centre and the Solihull urban fringes to the south and east of the town centre. The main villages in the Borough include Dickens Heath, Cheswick Green, Knowle, Dorridge, Balsall Common, Hampton in Arden, there are also many isolated residential property and farmsteads with the rural eastern extent of the Borough.
- 4.15. Birmingham International Airport is a major transport hub location in the north west of the Borough. The M6 Motorway runs west to east on the northern boundary of the Borough and the M42 is a major transport corridor that runs north south through the centre of the Borough. Other major roads in the Borough include the A34, A45, A41 and A452. The Rugby-Birmingham-Stafford Railway Line, a loop off the West Coast Main Line runs north west to south east through the Borough, with several stations including Birmingham International, Hampton in Arden and Berkswell. Other rail lines traversing the Borough are the Chiltern line from Birmingham to London and the Birmingham to Stratford upon Avon line. There are also two canals that flow through Solihull; the Grand Union Canal that runs through the centre of Solihull, and the Stratford-upon-Avon Canal which crosses the south-western corner of the Borough. Canals have left features in the landscape including flights of locks, embankments, cuttings, lock cottages and bridges.

Sustainability:

- 4.16. Within in the Borough there is currently a high demand for new housing developments due to the employment opportunities within the Borough, the proximity to Birmingham and public transportation links to London, this is particularly evident within the Solihull urban fringes and the M42 corridor. The demand for new development currently puts pressure on landscape and agricultural land with the Borough. Policy set out in the Local Plan 2013 is underpinned by the theme of sustainability through promoting economic and job growth and new housing to meet the Borough's needs whilst conserving and improving the character and quality of the environment, an important component of the Borough's attractiveness.

5. Borough Wide Landscape Guidelines

Context:

- 5.1. As a result of physical processes and human activities, landscape character is constantly changing. Changes associated with social and political evolution through time result in the development of various land ownership and management regimes that influence landscape character.
- 5.2. Landscape change in the Borough has occurred in both the rural and urban areas as a result of physical processes, development and changes in land management. The development of Solihull was highly influenced by the 20th Century expansion of Birmingham south-eastwards. The Borough was predominantly rural with small historic towns and villages at Solihull, Meriden, Berkswell, Barston, Hampton-in-Arden, Knowle and Bickenhill until the end of the 19th Century, when Birmingham began to expand into rural Olton, with houses overlooking Olton Mere. The rural area once formed part of a huge area of wood pasture and ancient farm lands known as Arden with evidence of previous woodland, commons and heaths.
- 5.3. Large settlement expansion from Birmingham into Solihull occurred between 1900 and 1955, particularly during the inter-war period. This resulted in the development of large housing estates at Lyndon, Olton, Elmdon and Shirley stretching towards Solihull and at Castle Bromwich. Government and European policy have influenced land management changes and development considerably since the end of the Second World War. The emphasis has been on increased production. Now the focus is changing towards the environment, wildlife and biodiversity.
- 5.4. This section of the LCA sets out general landscape guidelines to manage landscape change related to the pressures which are Borough wide. The guidelines will support planning policy and help to manage landscape change when used in conjunction with the area specific guidelines contained within this document.

Industry and Business Parks:

- 5.5. There are development pressures resulting from a need for employment opportunities within the Borough that are likely to continue. UK Central (previously known as the M42 Economic Gateway) is a major economic growth driver within the Greater Birmingham. The economic assets within the UK Central include Birmingham International Airport, The National Exhibition Centre, Jaguar Land Rover, Birmingham and Blythe Valley Business Parks and Solihull Town Centre.
- 5.6. Continued expansion of employment sites on the urban edge and within rural locations also has the potential to impart a negative effect on landscape character. Noise, traffic and lighting as associated with new development could also impact on landscape character; the historic environment, the setting of settlements and people's experience of the landscape.

Guidelines

- New industrial and business developments should aim to respect and enhance the Character Area within which they are proposed, particularly in rural areas.
- New development should conserve and enhance biodiversity, landscape quality and consider the impact on and opportunities for green infrastructure at the earliest opportunity in the design process.
- Development within existing employment areas and business parks should maintain the attractiveness of the area to investors and protect and enhance the surroundings including the natural environment.
- Large buildings should be well-sited in relation to other features including tree cover and landform. The use of different textures and building materials can add interest and break up the massing of larger buildings.
- Proposals for industry and business park uses should consider landscape implications at the design stages and an appropriate landscape schemes should be submitted with planning applications.

Residential Development:

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

Guidelines

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

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

Lighting:

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

Guidelines

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

- Restoration plans should aim to provide new and enhanced habitats and enhance and restore features characteristic of the Warwickshire Arden landscape.

Recreational Activities:

- 5.17. Solihull's countryside plays a role in providing access and recreational activities for both people living in and outside of the Borough. There are a variety of opportunities for people to enjoy Solihull's countryside through the existing network of footpaths, towpaths and bridleways. The National Exhibition Centre (NEC) is important to the local and regional economy and is the UK's largest exhibitions centre and has become a major event, tourism and leisure venue, serving both business and leisure markets and contributing significantly to Solihull's and the Region's visitor economy.
- 5.18. Sporting activities that are pursued in the countryside are wide ranging.

Guidelines

- Development of high quality and accessible public realm, green spaces and green infrastructure.
- Planting proposals must integrate recreational developments within the surrounding countryside and pay regard to their wider setting.
- New development should protect and enhance physical access, including public rights of way to open space, green infrastructure and historical assets. Promotion of the use of footpaths will help maintain their presence and importance in the landscape including the associated benefits of health and well-being.

Agriculture:

- 5.19. In the rural areas of the Borough the prevailing land use is agriculture, which contributes to the diverse landscape character and distinctive features of the area. In recent years there has been an increasing emphasis on the diversification of farmland including rural tourism, retail (farm shop and tea rooms) and solar farms.

Guidelines

- Conserve the pastoral character of the borough and identify opportunities for the conversion of arable land back to permanent pasture in traditionally pastoral areas.

- Resist loss of field boundaries to retain irregular field patterns. Discourage amalgamation of fields and promote awareness of the Hedgerow Regulations.

Forestry and Woodland:

- 5.20. Historically, the Solihull countryside formed part of a huge area (Arden) of wood pasture, from the thirteenth century this comprised the deliberate preservation of woodland in Arden for cropping. It is also known that pollarding was used to prevent animals grazing the land. The Domesday Book indicates that 19% of Warwickshire was covered by woodland and that it was predominantly found in areas to the north of the county. Much of the woodland has now been cleared and the landscape character is predominantly agricultural across the Borough.
- 5.21. Today there are many mature hedgerow oaks, patches of ancient woodland and parks containing the remnants of wood pasture. The woodlands themselves range from 20th century plantations to species-rich ancient woodlands. Some of the woodlands contain important populations of lichens and fungi. Oak and ash wood with bracken, bramble and dog's mercury are also particularly distinctive.

Guidelines

- Individual oaks, veteran trees and ancient woodland should be preserved.
- New woodland planting should be compliant in design with the pattern and scale of the surrounding landscape.
- Broadleaved planting should be encouraged within new plantations and favour oak as the primary tree species.
- The removal of hedgerows, including those along footpaths, bridleways and woodland edges should be avoided and the management of hedgerows should be promoted.

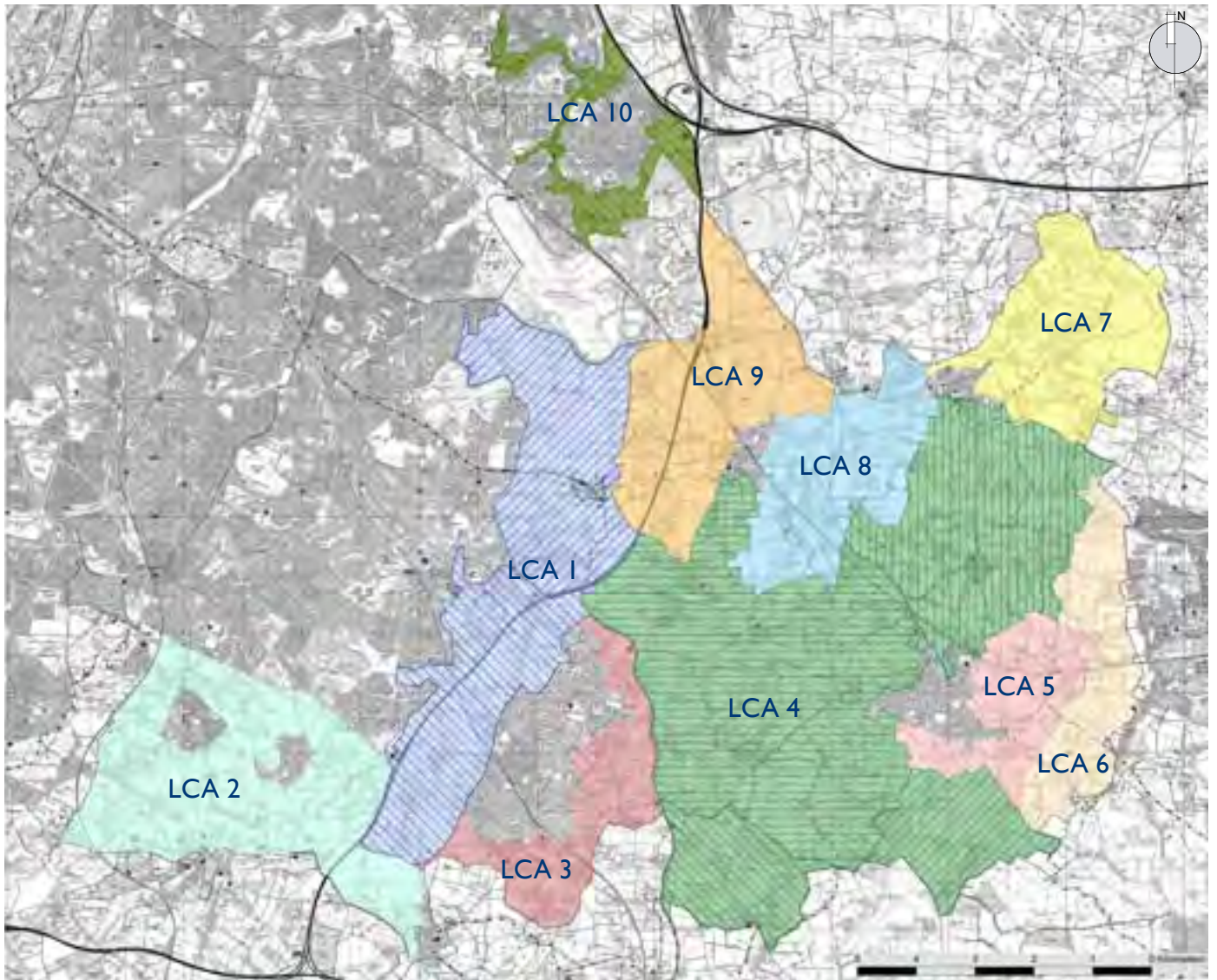
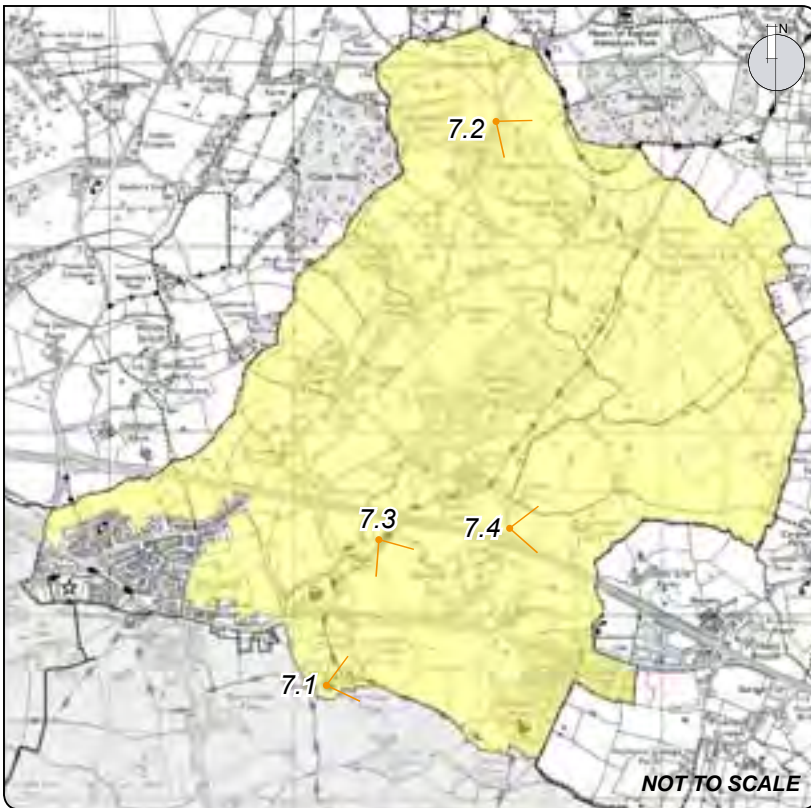


Figure 2: Solihull Borough Landscape Character Areas Map (Refer to Appendix D for a full-sized map.)



LCA
7

Northern Upland



Photograph 7.1:

The setting of Church Farm and St Laurence Church is an important part of the area's historic character.



Photograph 7.2:

Large woodland cover is common throughout and adds to the rural and wooded character.



Photograph 7.3:

The agricultural landscape comprises medium to large scale fields of an irregular pattern. Weak hedgerow structure is common despite a good contingent of mature trees.

Description:

This LCA covers an area of 8.15km² in the north east of the Borough, to the east of the village of Meriden. The landform is generally undulating and higher than the neighbouring character areas, allowing long views out to both the cities of Coventry and Birmingham.

Land use in the area is predominantly agricultural with some residential interspersed with large areas covered by woodland. Horticulture is also evident within this LCA with the presence of riding schools that serve the high demand for recreation in the area. Strong hedgerow structure and narrow roads are characteristic with high hedgerows bordering single track lanes. Good examples of green lanes can be found in the area such as Walsh Lane to the south-west of the area. The extensive woodland cover forms the backdrop of most views across the area and is an important landscape feature.

This area contains the Meriden Hill Conservation Area, the setting of which is particularly distinct and plays an important role in contributing to the wider character of the surrounding countryside. This area is relatively quieter than other northern parts of the Borough, however it isn't exempt from some road noise as the A45 traverses the area.

The main settlements in the area are the eastern edge of Meriden and Millisons Wood. A static caravan park is also present at Eaves Green in addition to a number of individual farmsteads that have not undergone residential conversion. Majority of the character area, with the exception of the two fields at the south-western edge, is designated as a mineral safeguard area for coal. A number of public footpaths including the long distance trails such the Heart of England and Coventry Way are present within this character area.

Key Characteristics:

Geology, soils and drainage:

- Slowly permeable clayey soils with slightly impeded drainage.
- Warwickshire Group of Siltstone and Sandstone with Subordinate Mudstone solid geology.

Landform and Drainage Pattern:

- This is an upland area forming a plateau ranging from 180m to 110m AOD.
- High point situated in the northern extent of the LCA near Meighs Wood/ Wood End Farm. Sloping towards the south-east and south-west. This area is comparatively higher than the surrounding Borough.
- Pickford Brook and reservoirs drain the LCA. Numerous field ponds are also present and considered to be characteristic of this area.

Land use, fields, boundaries, trees and wildlife:

- Land use is predominantly agriculture and residential interspersed by woodland blocks. The presence of horseculture is evident in this area through riding schools, bridleways and horse paddocks.
- Irregular field pattern ranges from medium to large scale fields.
- A strong hedgerow structure is present with most field boundaries being formed of hedgerows. However, open boundaries exist giving rise to the amalgamation of the fields which impacts negatively on the character of the area.
- Extensive woodland cover is present within this area. Meriden Shafts is the largest woodland located in the central extent of the LCA. The woodlands dominate the skyline in many views across the area.
- This is an area of good tree cover extending from hedgerow trees to woodlands and some scattered individual trees.
- There are three Local Wildlife Sites comprising Peastockings, Eaves Green Lane Hedgerow and Millison's Wood, which is also an ancient woodland and a Local Nature Reserve.

Settlement, built environment and communications:

- Millison's Wood is the main settlement in this area. However, though Meriden does lie within the area, it adjoins the boundary of the LCA to the south-west. A static caravan park is also present at Eaves Green. Individual farmsteads are also scattered across the area.
- Northern part predominantly wooded & was more wooded, surrounding fields are assarts with enclosures dating to late medieval period.
- The Meriden Hill Conservation Area, located at the southern boundary is a key feature. The Moated site at Marlbrook Hall Farm and Churchyard Cross in St Laurence's are both Scheduled Monuments and the setting of these are important to the character of the surrounding landscape.
- A majority of the listed buildings are concentrated within the Meriden Hill Conservation Area and also across the western extent of the LCA including Walsh Hall, a Grade II* listing.
- The wider landscape setting of Church Farm is distinct and marked by its tranquil nature, red boundary walls and single track lanes.
- The A45 cuts across the area from east to west just north of Meriden and is noticeable in the landscape due to road noise particularly around Eaves Green.
- Eaves Green caravan park is a detracting feature in some views across the area.
- Narrow single track roads with high bracken hedgerows are characteristic of this area. Views from these minor roads are generally short and contained.
- Red brick and render buildings with tiled roofs are the dominant vernacular features of the area.
- Long views are afforded across the LCA towards Coventry and Birmingham from Fillongley Road.
- This area is subject to air traffic noise from the Birmingham International Airport situated further to the west.
- A number of public footpaths exist in the LCA including long distance trails forming part of the Heart of England and Coventry Way.

Sensitivities and Pressures:

- Neglect and potential loss of ancient woodland will impact the character of the area.
- The straight edges of the A45 corridor to the north of the LCA are insensitive to the irregular field pattern of the area.
- The landscape contains many scattered buildings and has limited capacity to accept additional built development without detriment to landscape character through coalescence.
- Pressure for barn conversions, increasing domestic influence, development of modern farm buildings and additional farm dwellings are evident in this area.
- Loss of biodiversity through intensive farming and land management.
- Decline in frequency of hedgerow trees due to neglect and lack of replacement.
- Pressure for mineral search.



Photograph 7.4:

The area is predominantly agricultural with woodland blocks and field boundary trees. From Showell Lane there are long distance views towards Coventry. Elsewhere within the LCA, Birmingham can be seen on the distant horizon.

Guidelines:

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

- Encourage appropriate management to retain the strong hedgerow structure and the planting of individual trees along field boundaries particularly in close proximity to the A45. Tree planting in the vicinity of Meriden is also important to its setting and approaches.
- Resist further loss of field boundaries to retain the irregular field pattern in the north west of the area. Discourage the amalgamation of fields and promote awareness of the Hedgerow Regulations. Refer to the Habitat Biodiversity Audit for further detail.
- Promote proactive management of existing woodland in accordance with the Solihull Woodland Strategy.
- Create links between existing woodland following green lanes and footpaths and enhance nature conservation assets to fit with the Solihull Green Infrastructure Study.
- Where new buildings are required they should be located in association with existing farmsteads and settlement across the area and located so as not to require new access arrangements and subject to no adverse effect on the historic character.
- Protect the long views out towards Coventry and Birmingham.
- Conserve pastoral character and identify opportunities for conversion of arable land back to pasture.

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

- Protect the landscape setting of the Meriden Hill Conservation Area and the Meriden Green Conservation Area and resist development that would impact upon the character of the scattered farmsteads and listed buildings across the LCA.
- Protect ancient woodland and develop strategy for proactive management and enhancement in accordance with the Solihull Woodland Strategy.
- Protect the landscape setting of the River Blythe, which is a key feature of the area.
- Identify further historic and archaeological features suitable for scheduling and explore the potential to use as an

educational resource.

Aim: To integrate the A45 corridor and other large scale development in the landscape and reduce its visual impact.

- Support planting along the corridor of native species appropriate to the character of the area. Linear planting along its length should be avoided that would accentuate the roads presence in the landscape.
- Promote the management of roadside tree planting and links with woodland in the surrounding countryside to improve integration of the A45 corridor in the landscape.
- Design at the settlement edge requires high quality approach and the use of appropriate materials to maintain the distinctiveness of the area.
- New development should avoid large scale encroachment to respect the scattered nature of settlement beyond the edge of Meriden.

Aim: To manage access for recreation at the settlement edge:

- Survey how walkers use the area to improve the safety and enjoyment of the countryside particularly around Eaves Green.
- Promote the enhancement of the footpath network and its contribution to landscape character and appreciation.
- Explore opportunities to improve public enjoyment of the

area, through access agreements following appropriate routes, that would cause minimal disturbance.

Overall Landscape Sensitivity:

Landscape Character Sensitivity:

- The Landscape Character Sensitivity of this LCA is considered to be **High**.
- This is an attractive landscape with a strong ‘sense of place’, distinct landscape features including extensive woodland cover, narrow lanes and high hedgerows that create a harmonious and unified landscape. Overall, the landscape is in very good condition. There are a few detracting features such as communication masts and the caravan park at Eaves Green.

Visual Sensitivity:

- The Visual Sensitivity of this LCA is considered to be **Medium**.
- The general visibility in this LCA consists of long to medium distance views that are elevated, fragmented and contained, in parts shallow with a horizontal orientation. Strong tree cover forms the backdrop in many views across the area.

Views to the cities of Coventry and Birmingham are a key feature of this area. There is a strong relationship with the Conservation Area at Meriden Hill to the south of the LCA.

Table 25: Overall Sensitivity for LCA 7 – Northern Upland: High

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

woodlands along with the unique landform contribute towards the local distinctiveness of this area. The value of the area is increased by the presence of the two long distance trails passing through the centre of the LCA.

Landscape Capacity:

- Consistent with current guidance, it is not possible to establish a definitive baseline sensitivity to change without having details of a given development proposal. However, for the purpose of this report a general assessment of the LCA’s capacity to accommodate change has been undertaken. This should be used as a guide only, and will need to be re-assessed once details of any proposed development and site location are known.
- Being of *High* overall landscape sensitivity and *Medium* landscape value, this suggests that the LCA would typically have an overall **Very Low** landscape capacity to accommodate new development.
- The LCA covers large areas of ancient woodland and local wildlife sites. It is an area that is distinctly rural with limited development.
- This area would be able to accommodate new development but only in very restricted areas, which would need to be of an appropriate type, of small scale and form, in keeping with the existing character and features of the area. Any

Landscape Value:

- The value of this character area is considered to be **Medium**.
- This is a locally distinctive landscape containing valued characteristics. The Meriden Hill Conservation Area along with several listed buildings provide historical and cultural associations within the area. Local Wildlife Sites, ancient

Assessment of Overall Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Value

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

Overall Landscape Sensitivity

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

Landscape Character Sensitivity

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

Table A. I: Landscape Character Sensitivity Criteria

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

Visual Sensitivity

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

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

Table A.2: Visual Sensitivity Criteria

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

Overall Landscape Sensitivity

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

Table A.3: Overall Landscape Sensitivity Criteria

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

Landscape Value

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

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

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

Table A.4: Landscape Value

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

Landscape Capacity

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

Table A.5: Landscape Capacity Rating

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

Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment

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Prepared by



APPENDIX A.4: RELEVANT CASE LAW RELATING TO VALUED LANDSCAPES

Leonard Stanley (the Stroud Decision)

Leonard Stanley High Court Decision

Tutshill, Forest of Dean

Appeal Decision

Inquiry held on 29 April – 2 May 2014

Site visits made on 1 and 15 May 2014

by David Nicholson RIBA IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 21 July 2014

Appeal Ref: APP/C1625/A/13/2207324 Land off Bath Road, Leonard Stanley

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Edward Harper, Gladman Developments Ltd. against the decision of Stroud District Council.
 - The application Ref. S.13/1289/OUT, dated 18 June 2013, was refused by notice dated 10 September 2013.
 - The development proposed is a residential development for up to 150 residential units with associated infrastructure and access with all other matters reserved.
-

Decision

1. **The appeal is allowed** and outline planning permission is granted for residential development for up to 150 residential units with associated infrastructure and access with all other matters reserved at Land off Bath Road, Leonard Stanley in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref. S.13/1289/OUT, dated 18 June 2013, subject to the conditions in the attached Schedule.

Application for costs

2. At the Inquiry an application for costs was made by Mr Edward Harper, Gladman Developments Ltd. against Stroud District Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Procedural Matters

3. The application to which the Appeal relates was submitted in outline form with all matters reserved except for access. The extent of development is set out in the Design and Access Statement. An agreed Schedule of Drawings is listed in the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) dated 9 April 2014.
4. A Unilateral Undertaking, Inquiry Document (ID) 28, was submitted under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (s106). I deal with the contents of this below.
5. The Inquiry sat for 4 days. I held an accompanied site visit on 1 May 2014. I conducted unaccompanied visits on a clear sunny day on 15 May 2014.
6. I was told that an application has been submitted to register the land as a village green but this is not before me and has no bearing on the merits of the planning case.

7. After the Inquiry closed I was alerted to the Court of Appeal Judgment in *Cherkley*¹. Having allowed the main parties to comment, I have taken this Judgment into account in reaching my Decision.
8. The SoCG confirms that the Council has withdrawn reasons for refusal nos. 2 (agricultural land quality), 3 (archaeology), 4 (ecology), and 5 (junction at Marsh Road/Church Road). The Council also confirmed² that, until the examination in public (EiP) into the emerging local plan is concluded, it cannot confidently say that it has a 5 year housing land supply (HLS) and so gave no evidence on this matter.

Main Issues

9. The main issues are the effects of the proposals on:
 - (a) the character and appearance of the area;
 - (b) the natural beauty of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);
 - (c) the coalescence, or otherwise, of Leonard Stanley and King's Stanley; and
 - (d) the balance between harm and benefit with particular regard to whether the scheme would amount to sustainable development and consequently whether or not paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) should apply.

Reasons

Character and appearance

10. Leonard Stanley and King's Stanley lie within the valley to the River Frome at the foot of the escarpment to the Cotswolds hills. The villages are connected by Bath Road which has unbroken development along at least one side. As a result there is now continuous built development between the two villages although I was told that they still enjoy separate identities. The appeal site is within the 'Lowland Plain' part of the 'Rolling Agricultural Plan' landscape character type as set out in the Stroud District Landscape Assessment, adopted as supplementary planning guidance. The site itself comprises a little over 8 hectares of agricultural land abutting both the southern edge of Leonard Stanley and the western edge of King's Stanley. It extends from near Dozule Close and Marsh Lane, in Leonard Stanley to the west, to close to Castle Mead and Bath Road in King's Stanley to the east. The site lies outside the defined settlement boundaries for these villages in the Stroud District Local Plan (LP), adopted in 2005.
11. The appellant acknowledged that there would be some harm to the landscape as a result of the proposed houses but pointed out that there is already housing on three sides of the site and argued that this harm could not reasonably be considered to outweigh the need for new housing. There was little dispute that the proposal for up to 150 houses on the site would be contrary to LP policy HN10 which only permits residential development outside the defined settlement boundaries which is essential to the efficient operation of agriculture or forestry. Rather, the disagreement between the main parties was over whether or not this policy should attract any weight given the agreed position with regard to the Council's 5 year HLS.

¹ Inquiry Document (ID) 38: R (o a o Cherkley Campaign Limited) v. Mole Valley DC [2014] EWCA Civ 567

² David Jones in cross-examination (XX)

12. From my visit, I agree that there would be some harm to the character and appearance to the immediate vicinity including much more restricted views from the footpaths crossing the site. I shall therefore consider how the extent of HLS affects relevant policies before I return to the necessary balance below.

AONB

13. The nearest part of the site lies some 50m from the boundary to the AONB. The appeal site is not within the AONB but it is easily visible from nearby vantage points within it. The popular Cotswolds Way runs roughly parallel with the boundary to the AONB but a little higher up. From here the proposed houses would be seen in front of those in Leonard Stanley and King's Stanley. I viewed the site from along this section of the Cotswolds Way just below Stanley Wood. In my assessment, initially at least, the new roofs and other finishes would be likely to stand out, and to jar, and have a significant impact on views across the valley from this section of the Cotswolds Way.
14. However, from this direction the proposed houses would also be seen against a backdrop of the existing houses which, from this angle, form a continuous band of built development spanning both Leonard Stanley and King's Stanley. Subject to reserved matters, including height, size, orientation, and choice of materials, there is every reason to think that by the time the roofs have mellowed the new houses would blend into the villages at least as well as the late 20th century developments have done along Dozule Close, Bath Road and Castle Mead. The landscaping proposals, again subject to conditions, would further soften the overall effect and, if the illustrative plan for a central area of open space is implemented, this would divide the houses into two groups. Consequently, from just below Stanley Wood I find that in time the scheme would not cause significant harm to views out of the AONB.
15. I also viewed the site from Selsley Common, Doverow Hill and Swift's Hill. While the site is identifiable from Selsley Common and Doverow Hill, other built development is more prominent than even the combined effect of Leonard Stanley, King's Stanley and the proposed houses would be, and so the degree of harm to the AONB from these viewpoints would be minimal. From Swift's Hill, on the other side of Stroud, I required the use of binoculars to be sure that I had correctly identified the location of the site from some 7km away. In my assessment, the notion that the scheme could harm the enjoyment of views from Swift's Hill is not credible. The appellant's landscape witness understood this when he declined to visit there before making his assessment which, unlike the Council's, followed a recognised methodology and provided photographs which were reasonably representative of the actual views.
16. Around half of Stroud District is within the AONB. Of the remainder, most of the land can probably be seen in views from somewhere within it. Given the need for additional housing in the area, it follows that views from the AONB are very likely to be affected by new housing development wherever it goes.
17. Paragraph 116 of the NPPF deals with major developments in AONBs. The site is not in the AONB. Consequently, even if I found that the scheme would amount to major development, paragraph 116 would not apply. The case of *Cherkley* is therefore of limited relevance. NPPF paragraph 115 requires great weight to be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs. The Council argued, with reference to the statutory purpose and duty of the Cotswolds Conservation

Board³, that the scenic beauty of AONBs could also include their settings and views out and that *Cherkley* could be relevant in this context. I accept that, in extreme circumstances, a major development outside an AONB which caused a considerable harmful impact to its immediate landscape could have an adverse impact on the landscape and scenic beauty of an adjoining AONB. However, I have found that the impact would be less than significant in views out of the AONB and therefore give limited weight to this concern.

18. I have considered the argument, with regard to paragraph 109 of the NPPF, that the site is a 'valued' landscape as it is valued by neighbouring residents. I accept that, currently, there is no agreed definition of valued as used in this paragraph. In the absence of any formal guidance on this point, I consider that to be valued would require the site to show some demonstrable physical attribute rather than just popularity. In the absence of any such designation, I find that paragraph 109 is not applicable to the appeal site. Similarly, I have studied footnote 9 to the NPPF but again note that it refers to land designated as an AONB which the appeal site is not.
19. Similar considerations apply to LP policy NE8 which only permits development affecting the setting of the AONB if: *the nature, siting and scale are sympathetic to the landscape; and the design and materials complement the character of the area; and important landscape features and trees are retained and appropriate landscaping measures are undertaken. Major development will not be permitted unless it is demonstrated to be in the national interest and that there is a lack of alternative sites.* Although the proposed houses would undoubtedly have some impact, as detailed design and facing materials would be subject to reserved matters, landscape features and trees would be retained, and as the scheme would not cause significant harm to views out of the AONB, it would comply with the above criteria. Even if it were deemed to amount to major development, given the Council's lack of a 5 year HLS, there is a lack of alternative sites. On this issue, I conclude that the proximity of the AONB to the site should not be a bar to development.

Coalescence

20. The Local Plan Inspector considered, and rejected, allocating a similar site for housing at the same location. In doing so, he recognised the separate entities of the two villages but also noted that: *as an observer it appears to me that the two settlements are effectively one, and that without a map to show where the boundary lays between the two, it is difficult to recognise the division on the ground.* Although rejecting the site for other reasons, he did not do so by reason of coalescence. From my observations, including the continuum along Bath Road, I find no reason to reach a different conclusion.
21. I have noted the argument put forward by the local County Councillor and the Mankley Field Action Group that any social benefits would be diminished by the coalescence of the two villages and that the scheme would undermine the sense of community. However, this was not the view of the Council⁴. I find no reason why further development adjoining both villages should prevent the two continuing to function as separate entities, despite their proximity, should their residents wish them to. Indeed, additional houses would be likely to provide extra financial support for the existing services and community services within

³ Core Document (CD)17

⁴ David Jones in XX

each village. On this issue I find no harm and no conflict with policy in either the LP or the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Sustainability

22. Although disputed by others (see below) the Council acknowledged that at the time of the Inquiry it could not demonstrate a 5 year HLS. Under NPPF paragraph 49, in such circumstances relevant policies for the supply of housing, should not be considered up-to-date and so, under point 4 of paragraph 14 to the NPPF, permission should be granted except in specific circumstances. With regard to LP policy HN10, I have noted the Inspector's conclusions in the *Dursley* appeal⁵, October 2013, but also note that this predates the *Cotswolds* judgment⁶ which found that a similar policy should be disapplied to the extent that it would restrict the supply of housing. I therefore conclude on this point that conflict with Policy HN10 should be disregarded.
23. The start of NPPF paragraph 14 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the preface to point 4 makes reference back to this presumption. The interpretation of this has been considered by the Courts in *Davies*⁷. Here the judge found (paragraph 37) *that paragraph 14 of the NPPF only applies to a scheme which has been found to be sustainable development*. Even if that was not the specific ground of challenge, this comment in the judgment is useful and I have nothing better to aid my interpretation. I shall therefore follow this interpretation and turn to this balance before reaching my conclusion on whether paragraph 14 should be applied.
24. Assessing whether or not the proposals would amount to sustainable development, NPPF paragraph 7 requires consideration of the three dimensions to this. With regard to the economic role, there was no dispute that the construction of new housing would create jobs and support growth.
25. New housing, and 30% affordable housing in particular, would contribute to the social role in the NPPF to which, for the above reasons, I give substantial weight and which should be undiminished by any concerns regarding coalescence. Moreover, subject to conditions and the provisions in the s106 obligation, the scheme would include generous areas of public open space and protect and extend the length of established footpaths across the site. Finally, the site is located close to the existing services within the villages, including the school, shops, pubs and community facilities and it is probable that these would be better supported, and so flourish, or at least be less likely to close through lack of patronage.
26. Turning to the environmental role, as above, there would be some harm to the landscape, including immediate views, and this harm counts against the proposals. The extent of this would depend in part on the quality of the details to be submitted at the reserved matters stage. However, I find no reason why the proposed development should not achieve a high quality design such as that pointed out to me at Ebley Wharf, close to the Inquiry venue. I have studied the criticisms⁸ of the transport assessment and accept that this may contain some

⁵ David Jones appendix B

⁶ EWHC 3719 (Admin) November 2013, Martyn Twigg appendices p700

⁷ William Davis Ltd & Jelson Ltd v SSCLG & NW Leicestershire District Council [2013] EWHC 3058 (Admin)

⁸ From Mike Duxbury, ID18

flaws. I saw on my visits, including along the local roads referred to⁹, that many of these are not suitable for cycling.

27. On the other hand, subject to conditions and the s106 obligation, there would be improvements to footways, bus stops and shelters, and the houses would be built to Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. Finally, a travel plan could be required to demonstrate a modal shift away from the private car and so promote more sustainable modes of transport and help move towards a low carbon economy. No details were provided of how this shift would be expected to be achieved, but a sum of £49,250 would be made available through the s106 obligation. In the absence of details, such as specific proposals for significant subsidies for improved bus services, or schemes for new cycle lanes, the likelihood that what I consider to be a relatively modest sum, for the number of houses, could make a significant impact is unclear. Nevertheless, while greater precision would have been desirable, on balance I find that the condition and s106 obligation would be likely to make some, albeit modest, contribution to the environmental role of sustainable development. This would offset some of the harm that would otherwise arise as a result of the limitations of the existing transport links.
28. Looked at in the round, I conclude that the moderate harm to the character and appearance of the area, the limited harm to the AONB, and the moderate harm (on balance) through wider accessibility difficulties, would not outweigh the economic and social benefits of new housing. Overall, from consideration of the three dimensions in the NPPF, I find that the proposals would amount to sustainable development. Returning to paragraph 14 of the NPPF, I conclude that the adverse impacts of granting planning permission for the scheme would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

Other matters

29. Despite local objections, the Highway Authority accepted that the improvement offered would reduce the risk to highway safety to an acceptable level, with particular regard to visibility at the proposed access and nearby junctions, and I accept that the cumulative impacts would not be severe with regard to the NPPF.
30. I have studied the evidence of objectors and the appellant with regard to HLS. While I accept that there are some anomalies within the statistical evidence, on balance I have no reason to depart from the assessment of the Council itself that it cannot currently demonstrate a 5 year HLS plus the required buffer.
31. Concerns were raised as to the extent of highway land. However, any uncertainty could be overcome by a condition. I discuss this below.
32. The Council argued that considerable weight should be given to some of the relevant policies in the emerging LP. However, as was inevitably accepted by the Council in evidence¹⁰, prior to an examination in public and with objections to the relevant policies, not least from the appellant, I find that these should be given only limited weight at this stage.
33. I was told that there has been discussion with regard to preparing a neighbourhood plan but I find that it should carry no weight at this stage.

⁹ Mike Duxbury's evidence and his maps and documents at ID23

¹⁰ David Jones in XX

Conditions

34. As the development would be likely to be carried out in phases, this should be controlled and reflected in the reserved matters condition. Protection to existing trees during construction is not covered by reserved matters and, to protect the landscape, should be controlled. Given the contents of the Ecological Appraisal, its recommendations should be required. A Construction Method Statement and control over working hours are needed to protect the living conditions of nearby residents. To minimise flood risk, surface water drainage should be controlled. Control over access, parking and turning is needed for highway safety and to avoid unnecessary inconvenience.
35. In the interests of fostering sustainable transport, improvements should be required to footways, bus stops and shelters, and a Travel Plan should be required. As above, I have reservations about the degree of modal shift that could be achieved by a condition which only requires a demonstrable shift rather than a specific result. Nevertheless, I accept that the condition is enforceable, and would meet the other tests in the NPPF, and so would contribute to some degree towards sustainable modes of transport. The s106 undertaking would back this condition up with a significant contribution.
36. To ensure suitable access arrangements, and in the light of evidence of land ownership (above), both the separate access points should be in place before work begins on either part of the development. To cater for construction traffic, a routing strategy should have been agreed before any other development takes place. To secure the provision of all the formal and informal recreation areas, control over these is needed.
37. To secure a specific contribution towards the provision of much needed affordable housing, a condition for this is required; as the Council's suggested condition has taken account of the publication of the NPPF, this would be suitable. As they would not otherwise be covered by reserved matters, lighting works should also be controlled.

*Planning obligation*¹¹

38. The Unilateral Undertaking between the owners and the District and County Councils would provide open space, together with works for its laying out, construction, and future management. It would provide contributions towards off site recreation, education, library provision and the travel plan.
39. The Councils have provided justification for the contributions and calculations for the amounts sought¹². The primary school would be left with a shortfall of spaces requiring capital works; additional works would be required at Stonehouse library. The recreation contribution would prevent an increase in the need for provision in the Stonehouse cluster, of which Leonard Stanley and King's Stanley are a part. As above, the Travel Plan would contribute towards achieving a modal shift. I therefore find that the contributions are justified, would comply with the Community Infrastructure Regulations, and the NPPF, and I attach weight to them accordingly.

¹¹ ID 28

¹² IDs 31-34

Overall conclusion

40. I have found that the scheme would, on balance, amount to sustainable development and that at the time of the Inquiry the Council could not demonstrate a 5 year HLS. It follows from NPPF paragraph 49 that LP policy HN10 paragraph should not be considered up-to-date and that permission should be granted unless *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits* (NPPF paragraph 14). For the above reasons, I find that the harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the area, and any other harm, would not cross this threshold. Consequently, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

David Nicholson

INSPECTOR

CO/4082/2014

Neutral Citation Number: [2015] EWHC 488 (Admin)
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
QUEEN'S BENCH DIVISION
THE ADMINISTRATIVE COURT

Royal Courts of Justice
Strand
London WC2A 2LL

Friday, 6 February 2015

B e f o r e:

MR JUSTICE OUSELEY

Between:

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Claimant

v

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Defendant

GLADMAN DEVELOPMENTS LIMITED

Interested Party

Computer-Aided Transcript of the Stenograph Notes of
WordWave International Limited
A Merrill Communications Company
165 Fleet Street London EC4A 2DY
Tel No: 020 7404 1400 Fax No: 020 7404 1424
(Official Shorthand Writers to the Court)

Miss J Wigley (instructed by Stroud District Council) appeared on behalf of the **Claimant**

The Defendant did not attend and was not represented

Mr P Goatley (instructed by Irwin Mitchell) appeared on behalf of the **Interested Party**

J U D G M E N T

(Approved)

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1. MR JUSTICE OUSELEY: This is a challenge under section 288 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to a decision of an Inspector dated 21 July 2014 whereby he allowed an appeal against the decision of Stroud District Council refusing permission for a development of some 150 houses in land lying between King's Stanley and Leonard Stanley within the River Frome valley at the foot of the escarpment to the Cotswold Hills. It lay between 50 and 150 metres outside the boundaries of the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty ("AONB"). Three footpaths cross the site. From the footpaths, views towards the escarpment of the Cotswolds could be obtained. The Inspector defined the main issues as being the effect of the proposals on (a) the character and appearance of the area; (b) the natural beauty of the Cotswold's AONB; (c) coalescence between the two villages I have referred to; and (d) the balance between harm and benefit.

2. In paragraphs 10 to 12 he dealt with the first issue. He recognised that the development of the 8 hectares of agricultural land between the two settlements and outside the defined settlement boundaries would cause "some harm to the landscape". He said in 12:

"From my visit, I agree that there would be some harm to the character and appearance to the immediate vicinity including much more restricted views from the footpaths crossing the site."

3. The next section of his decision turned to the AONB. He described the views that he had obtained of the site from the AONB. He referred to the popular Cotswolds Way running roughly parallel with the boundary to the AONB; the appeal site was easily visible from nearby vantage points within the AONB; houses would be seen in front of those in the two villages. He had viewed the site along this section of the Cotswold Way just below Stanley Wood:

"In my assessment, initially at least, the new roofs and other finishes would be likely to stand out, and to jar, and have a significant impact on views across the valley from this section of the Cotswolds Way."

He went on, however, to say that with time and landscaping the development proposals would soften:

"Consequently, from just below Stanley Wood I find that in time the scheme would not cause significant harm to views out of the AONB."

He referred to other viewpoints from which he concluded that harm would either be minimal or the assertion of harm not credible.

4. In paragraph 16 he said that around half of Stroud District was within the AONB. Of the remainder, most of the land in it can probably be seen in views from somewhere within the AONB. Given the need for additional housing, it followed that views from the AONB were very likely to be affected by new housing development wherever it went.
5. He then dealt specifically with two paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework, paragraphs 115 and 116. I shall return to the former. Paragraph 116 dealt with major developments "in" AONBs. That does not apply to this case because no part of the development is "in" the AONB.
6. He was referred in the post-Inquiry submissions to the decision of the Court of Appeal in R(Cherkley Campaign Limited) v Mole Valley District Council [2014] EWCA Civ 567 and paragraph 44 in particular. In that case the Court of Appeal was concerned with the development abutting, and to a small extent actually falling within, an AONB. Richards LJ said at paragraph 44:

"The *relevance* of the golf course as a whole for the AONB, including such matters as its impact on visual perspectives, is not in doubt. It forms an aspect of the landscape issues covered *inter alia* by paragraph 115 of the NPPF and Policy REC12 of the Local Plan. The question here, however, is whether the golf course as a whole can properly be regarded as a development to which paragraph 116 of the NPPF applies."

It is plain that the thrust of that judgment deals with an NPPF policy irrelevant in these proceedings. Accordingly, the Inspector rightly recognised that Cherkley was of limited relevance.

7. He recorded in paragraph 17 that the Council had argued with reference to the statutory purpose and duty of the Cotswold's Conservation Board that the scenic beauty of the AONBs can also include their settings and views out and that Cherkley could be relevant in this context. He continued:

"I accept that, in extreme circumstances, a major development outside an AONB which caused a considerable harmful impact to its immediate landscape could have an adverse impact on the landscape and scenic beauty of an adjoining AONB. However, I have found that the impact would be less than significant in views out of the AONB and therefore give limited weight to this concern."

The penultimate sentence of that quote finds an ally in paragraph 11 of the Cotswold Conservation Board position statement, which is not a policy document with any statutory status.

8. The statutory duty to which he referred is section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of

Way Act 2000, which provides that (for example in relation to planning decisions) a planning authority, and for that matter the Secretary of State, "shall have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty".

9. The Inspector then considered an argument in relation to another paragraph, paragraph 109, of the NPPF:

"The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes ... "

It had been argued, as he recorded it, that the site is a valued landscape "as it is valued by neighbouring residents". He continued:

"I accept that, currently, there is no agreed definition of valued as used in this paragraph. In the absence of any formal guidance on this point, I consider that to be valued would require the site to show some demonstrable physical attribute rather than just popularity. In the absence of any such designation, I find that paragraph 109 is not applicable to the appeal site. Similarly, I have studied footnote 9 to the NPPF but again note that it refers to land designated as an AONB which the appeal site is not."

10. Local Plan Policy NE8 only permitted development affecting the setting of the AONB if a number of criteria, including nature, siting and scale being in sympathy with the landscape, were satisfied. The policy has as a tailpiece the following:

"Major development will not be permitted unless it is demonstrated to be in the national interest and that there is a lack of alternative sites."

He said of this in paragraph 19:

"Although the proposed houses would undoubtedly have some impact, as detailed design and facing materials would be subject to reserved matters, landscape features and trees would be retained, and as the scheme would not cause significant harm to views out of the AONB, it would comply with the above criteria. Even if it were deemed to amount to major development, given the Council's lack of a 5 year HLS, there is a lack of alternative sites. On this issue, I conclude that the proximity of the AONB to the site should not be a bar to development."

He rejected next the coalescence argument. On sustainability, which included the question of the environmental role of the site, he said:

" ... There would be some harm to the landscape, including immediate

views, and this harm counts against the proposals."

In paragraph 28:

"Looked at in the round, I conclude that the moderate harm to the character and appearance of the area, the limited harm to the AONB, and the moderate harm (on balance) through wider accessibility difficulties, would not outweigh the economic and social benefits of new housing."

Overall, and returning to paragraph 14 of the NPPF, he concluded that the adverse impacts of granting permission would not "significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits" and he affirmed that in paragraph 40.

11. Miss Wigley appeared for the Council to argue four grounds. Ground 1 related to the Inspector's approach to valued landscape. Ground 2 related to the policy basis for the consideration of views towards the AONB but from outside it. Ground 3 related to the way he had described harm as moderate having found it as significant, initially at least. Ground 4 concerned the Inspector's approach to a major development in the setting of the AONB in Development Plan Policy NE8.
12. The Secretary of State did not appear, having indicated his willingness to concede that the decision should be quashed because of the way the Inspector had dealt with Policy NE8. He said he accepted that the decision should be quashed on the ground "that it is not evident on the face of the decision letter that the defendant's Inspector fully considered all elements of Local Plan Policy NE8". I take that as a reference to ground 4.
13. I deal first with ground 1. It is important to understand what the issue at the Inquiry actually was. It was not primarily about the definition of valued landscape but about the evidential basis upon which this land could be concluded to have demonstrable physical attributes. Nonetheless, it is contended that the Inspector erred in paragraph 18 because he appears to have equated valued landscape with designated landscape. There is no question but that this land has no landscape designation. It does not rank even within the landscape designation that is designed to protect the boundaries of the AONB and apparently its setting, which is NE9, a policy derived from the Structure Plan. It is not a Local Green Space within policies 75 and 76 of the NPPF. It has no designation at all. The Inspector, if he had concluded, however, that designation was the same as valued landscape, would have fallen into error. The NPPF is clear: that designation is used when designation is meant and valued is used when valued is meant and the two words are not the same.
14. The next question is whether the Inspector did in fact make the error attributed to him. There is some scope for debate, particularly in the light of the last two sentences of paragraph 18. But in the end I am satisfied that the Inspector did not make that error. In particular, the key passage is in the third sentence of paragraph 18, in which he said that the site to be valued had to show some demonstrable physical attribute rather than just

popularity. If he had regarded designation as the start and finish of the debate that sentence simply would not have appeared. What he means, as I read it, in the next sentence by the words "in the absence of any such designation" is in the absence of any such demonstrated physical attribute. I appreciate that the final sentence refers to "again" noting that the land is not "designated" (in a formal sense), but he refers to any "such designation" in the penultimate sentence, by which stage he has not referred to any formal designation at all. It is clear that there is a verbal infelicity in that paragraph but not one which shows to me that he has adopted an unlawful approach to the meaning of "valued".

15. There had been a certain amount of interplay at the Inquiry, and here, about the extent to which paragraph 109 of the NPPF had even featured as a significant point given that it was not cited as a reason for refusal, and there was some criticism of the paucity of the evidence about the value of the site produced by the Council. I can deal with those aspects briefly. A contention that the Inspector has dealt with valued as simply being "valued" by neighbouring residents, as if that was the sum total of the argument is, I think, going too far. Again, if he had meant to discount in that comment in the first sentence at paragraph 18 the points made on behalf of the Council, he would have ignored certain factors which they prayed in aid. But on the other hand, the Inspector was entitled to conclude on the evidence he had before him that there had been no demonstrated physical attributes to make the land "valued". I have been taken to that which was referred to; there are certain limitations to that evidence which the Inspector was plainly recognising. He had before him evidence from consultants engaged by the Council which had not supported any particular physical attributes. More importantly, the Inspector had the evidence of Ms Kirby for the Council. Her evidence drew upon views from the footpaths in paragraph 41 and wider and more distant views from the site in paragraph 42, as well as, significantly, the views of the site from the AONB. She described the local landscape and amenity issues, again referring to the three public footpaths and the sense of open country starting before one even entered the site.
16. It is not difficult to see that the sort of demonstrable physical attributes which would take this site beyond mere countryside, if I can put it that way, but into something below that which was designated had not been made out in the Inspector's mind. The closing submissions of Miss Wigley referred to a number of features and it is helpful just to pick those up here. The views of the site from the AONB were carefully considered by the Inspector. There can be no doubt but that those aspects were dealt with and he did not regard those as making the land a valued piece of landscape. That is a conclusion to which he was entitled to come.
17. The first point raised by Miss Wigley was the visibility of the site in the wider landscape from the AONB. It is in the setting of the AONB, she submitted. But that issue, as I have said, was properly dealt with. It is difficult to see why that should be a demonstrable physical attribute when the site has not fallen within the policy designation designed to protect land beyond the AONB which is said to be important for them.

18. It is then said that the land represents a wedge of countryside extending right into the hearts of the settlement. But that issue itself was considered in relation to coalescence. It is a feature of the land but it is impossible to see that the Inspector would not have had that aspect in mind if he thought it was something that demonstrated its attributes. It was crisscrossed by well-used public footpaths and from those public footpaths it is evident that you can see the escarpment of the Cotswolds AONB and that the housing development on the site was going to impose considerable limitations. But the Inspector was entitled to regard that sort of factor as falling below the level required for demonstrable physical attributes in order for countryside to be "valued" but not designated countryside. The Inspector did not specifically refer to those factors in this context but I have no doubt that in paragraph 18, in his description of demonstrable physical attributes needing to be shown rather than just popularity, he was not remotely persuaded that the points made by Ms Kirby demonstrated that it had attributes that took it out of the ordinary, but did not warrant formal policy designation.

19. I do not quash the decision on ground 1.

20. Ground 2 concerns the policy significance of the treatment of views out of the site towards the AONB. Paragraph 12 represents the Inspector's consideration of this issue. It is clear that paragraph 115 of the NPPF was raised as the policy basis upon which submissions about the effect of views onto the site from the AONB and from the site of the AONB were to be judged and given weight. The competing position of the parties at the inquiry was that Mr Goatley for the interested party here and for the appellant at the Inquiry contended that the word "in" in paragraph 115 meant "in" and views from the AONB to land outside it and vice versa were not subject to 115. Miss Wigley contended that views from the AONB to land outside and from land outside onto the AONB were covered by policy 115. Policy 115 says this:

"Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in ... Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty."

Conservation considerations in those areas should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.

Harking back for a moment to the Cherkley Campaign case, paragraph 116 reads:

"Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances ... "

21. It is evident, reading the decision as the whole, that the Inspector adopted neither party's point of view. He does not explain why he rejected both Mr Goatley's submissions and Miss Wigley's. It is clear from paragraph 17, the final sentence and his consideration of the views from the AONB, and paragraph 19 that he took the view that the AONB within 115 included the views from the AONB into the surrounding landscape,

effectively taking the view that the beauty in the AONB would be harmed if looking out of it one saw ugliness. Mr Goatley sought to pursue the submissions he made to the Inspector by way of defending the decision against Miss Wigley's contention that 115 could not cover views from outside into the AONB.

22. In my judgment, the Inspector would have been unrealistic in adopting so narrow a view as to ignore for the purposes of paragraph 115 views out of the AONB and the effect of development upon them. I do not find it easy to accept that those have the same policy significance as views into the AONB from outside. It seems to me that there is a very considerable distinction to be drawn between the two. Before I reach the final conclusion on that point, however, I should refer to other policy matters in relation to that point.
23. Miss Wigley says that views into the AONB are important because the planning policy guidance on landscape of March 2014 refers to the duty in section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act as being relevant in considering development proposals outside an AONB but which might have "an impact on the setting of and implementation of the statutory purposes of those protected areas". The setting, she submits, includes the views in and the views out of the AONB. She also points to the need for planning bodies to have regard to the Management Plan. The Management Plan of the Cotswold Conservation Board refers to the special qualities of the Cotswolds as including the Cotswolds escarpment "including views to and from it".
24. I pause there to say it is entirely unclear whether that is referring to views inside the AONB of the escarpment or not, because much of the land within the AONB includes land that is beyond the foothills of the escarpment. The management plan also includes a statement that the surroundings are important to the landscape and that views into and out of the AONB can be very significant. The position statement, not a policy statement, of the Conservation Board says that interference with views of the AONB from public viewpoints is an adverse impact on the setting of the AONB. Miss Wigley says that either individually or all together there is a policy basis for the consideration of views into the AONB as being a factor of significance.
25. The only point, however, that it seems to me from a consideration of those policy documents which arises is whether it is a matter to which great weight is required to be given under paragraph 115. The Inspector clearly has treated those impacts (though not set out at any great length, that is to say the impacts on views from outside looking in) as material consideration, as paragraph 12 of the decision later shows. That is the significance of his reference to the development meaning that there would be much more restricted views from the footpaths crossing the site which would be of harm to the character and appearance of the immediate vicinity.
26. So the question is whether on the proper interpretation of paragraph 115 views of the AONB from outside the AONB fall within its scope. It is my judgment that that is not what policy 115 is intended to cover. It certainly covers the impact on the scenic beauty

of the land actually within the AONB. It seems to me that it would be unduly restrictive to say that it could not cover the impact of land viewed in conjunction with the AONB from the AONB. But to go so far as to say that it must also cover land from which the AONB can be seen and great weight must be given to the conservation of beauty in the AONB by reference to that impact reads too much into paragraph 115. The effect of Miss Wigley's approach would be to give very widespread protection to land outside the AONB and not significant in views from the AONB. The Inspector noted that almost everywhere in Stroud District would fall into that category. That could not be, in my judgment, the correct interpretation of paragraph 115, and the word "in" If there was an error by the Inspector, it was an error against Mr Goatley rather than an error against Miss Wigley.

27. Accordingly, I reject ground 2.
28. Ground 3 contends that the references to limited harm to the AONB in paragraphs 28 and 40 and some harm in paragraph 26 show that the Inspector has ignored, when he came to the balance, the significant harm that he has found there would be on views from a section of the Cotswold Way just below Stanley Wood in the initial years while the roofs mellowed and landscaping softened the effect of the development.
29. I am not persuaded that the Inspector had overlooked the earlier conclusions to which he had come, when he came to deal with the overall round-up conclusions in paragraph 28 and 40. Although I understand why the argument is put forward, it seems to me most unlikely that the Inspector has simply ignored that harm which he has identified, and the references to "limited harm" and "some" harm are references to the insignificant harm in the future from the views from below Stanley Wood coupled with the fact that the significant harm that he describes would be limited in time.
30. I reject ground 3.
31. Ground 4, which is the one upon which the Secretary of State threw in his hand, concerns an aspect of Policy NE8. I observe that Policy NE8 is not put forward as the policy basis either for the valued landscape argument nor for the debate about whether views into the AONB are a breach of policy. The sole point that is put forward in relation to NE8 concerns the way the Inspector dealt with the 150 houses as a major development.
32. The first observation I make is that the question of whether the development was a major development at all did not make it to Miss Wigley's closing submissions, as a major point. Indeed, it appears to have received no elaboration at all in the evidence of the Council. There was nothing to explain why this development would be a major development. A major development under that policy would require to be justified by the national interest to the extent that it was harmful. That gives an indication of the scale envisaged.

33. The second observation I make, but which reinforces the conclusions I have come to in the first and second grounds, is that the phraseology "development within or affecting the setting of the AONB will only be permitted if all the following criteria are met" and referring there to the setting of the AONB, is not what was relied on in the earlier grounds concerning views into the AONB from outside. The language of the major development tailpiece is not itself clear as to whether it applies to development within or merely development affecting the setting of the AONB, which is the highest that it could be said is the position of this development. The text accompanying that policy states that it is proposals for major development within the AONB which will only be permitted where it is in the national interest and there is a lack of alternative sites, as with paragraph 116 of the NPPF.
34. Mr Goatley makes the point that that means that the major development tailpiece did not fall for consideration here at all. He may very well be right in his interpretation of the plan but he attributes error to the Inspector in that respect in order to defend him because the Inspector clearly took the view that major development could be development outside the AONB, which might affect the setting of the AONB, viewed from inside.
35. The Inspector, in my judgment, considered this policy by reference to the first part of paragraph 19 and concluded that the criteria were met: it would not cause significant harm to views out of the AONB and thus would not affect its setting. The next aspect in his judgment in paragraph 19 is that the major development issue did not arise because this was not major development. By the sentence "even if it were deemed to amount to major development" in the context of paragraph 19, he is saying that he does not think it is. I can see no other proper interpretation of paragraph 19. Unless he had rejected the notion that this was major development he would have gone straight to deal with major development. In my judgment, the Inspector was entitled, absent any other guidance, to conclude that this development did not amount to major development and was entitled to resolve the matter in paragraph 19 in the way he did, up to his consideration of major development. If it were major development within the policy however then the Inspector has erred because he does not consider the national interest. But if that arises as an error only on the basis that the policy applies to development outside an AONB but affecting views from within it, it is an error that has no impact on the decision because the Inspector has reached a perfectly lawful conclusion that the development could not cause significant harm to views out of the AONB and would comply thereby with the criteria in Policy NE8. As I have said, NE8 was not said to be the policy which applied to protect views of the AONB from outside it.
36. The Secretary of State's letter gives no real clue as to why he threw in his hand. It is not, I would respectfully suggest, sufficient simply to say that it is not evident on the face of the letter that all elements of Local Plan Policy NE8 have not been considered. By itself that does not amount to a decision of error of law at all.
37. Finally in reply Miss Wigley developed a little further the argument, which the effect of

the NPPF has sometimes given rise to, that the Inspector has not considered compliance with Development Plan Policy. This often arises where, as is said here, Policy NE8 is not wholly consistent with policy paragraphs 115 and 116 of the NPPF. Be that as it may, and accepting that the Inspector has not cast his decision in terms of whether the development accorded with the Development Plan or not, he has concluded that the development complied with the policies about which issue has been taken in these proceedings. So far as there is an error in formulation, it does not go to the substance of the decision.

38. Accordingly, I reject this application.

39. MR GOATLEY: My Lord, thank you for that. I do not believe that any schedules have been agreed on costs but I would ask for my costs on this matter.

40. MR JUSTICE OUSELEY: Do you resist an order for costs?

41. MISS WIGLEY: My Lord, I cannot resist an order for costs in this appeal.

42. MR JUSTICE OUSELEY: There will be an order for costs in favour of the interested party to be subject to detailed assessment if not agreed.

43. MR GOATLEY: My Lord, thank you.

44. MISS WIGLEY: My Lord, I do have an application for permission to appeal. In relation to the first ground, my Lord, in my submission, with respect to your Lordship's judgment, it is arguable for the reasons I have given today that the Inspector did restrict his consideration to designated --

45. MR JUSTICE OUSELEY: Miss Wigley, I have got another matter to attend to, so I will take it shortly. I am going to refuse you permission to appeal because although your grounds were attractively presented, I think at the end of it all when one looks at the reality of the decision as opposed to the forensic play that may be made with words, the decision is perfectly reasonable and you would not, in fact, even if you were right on 115, it is difficult to see that that would in reality get you anywhere in the light of the evidence you provided and the conclusion he has come to. So I refuse you permission. If you want to renew it, without meaning to be offensive, you know where to go.

46. MISS WIGLEY: My Lord, could I have an extension of time from when the transcript comes out?

47. MR JUSTICE OUSELEY: Your current time is, what, 14 days?

48. MISS WIGLEY: I think it is 21.

49. MR JUSTICE OUSELEY: I extend time for 21 days for you to lodge the notice of appeal, if I have power to do so. You must make sure that that order is correct. There

have been one or two difficulties about such formulations recently. So I am not going to draft it for you, you must make sure it is correct. But I will give you a period of 21 days from when the transcript comes out in which to lodge any application for permission to appeal.

50. MISS WIGLEY: I am grateful.

51. MR GOATLEY: My Lord, I am not sure, do we need to ask for expedition of the transcript?

52. MR JUSTICE OUSELEY: Well, you can ask but I do not know when it will get there, you must ask the shorthand writer what she is doing.

53. MR GOATLEY: If I do not ask, I do not get, so therefore I ask for it.

54. MR JUSTICE OUSELEY: I have no objection to expedition.

55. MR GOATLEY: Thank you, my Lord.

Appeal Decision

Inquiry held on 19 August 2015

Site visit made on 24 August 2015

by **S R G Baird BA (Hons) MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 14 January 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/P1615/W/15/3003662

**Land north of Gloucester Road, Tutshill, Chepstow, Gloucestershire
NP16 7DA**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Gladman Developments against the decision of Forest of Dean District Council.
 - The application Ref P1530/14/OUT, dated 18 September 2014, was refused by notice dated 10 December 2014.
 - The development proposed is residential development (up to 126 dwellings), access, parking, public open space, landscaping and associated infrastructure.
-

Preliminary Matters

1. The application was submitted in outline with all matters other than access reserved.
2. The application was refused for 5 reasons (RfR). RfR 1 and 3 relate to the impact on biodiversity and trees. The appellant submitted further information on these matters to the local planning authority (lpa) who confirmed that it would not pursue these RfR. The remaining 3 RfR relate to the impact on a Listed Building (LB), the loss of agricultural land/effect on the character and appearance of the area and the absence of a S106 Agreement relating to affordable housing, open space management, air quality, education and libraries.
3. At the inquiry, the appellant submitted a signed S106 Unilateral Undertaking (UU) providing for library, highways and education contributions; the submission of a Travel Plan and a scheme for the transfer and management of the proposed open space.
4. At the opening of the inquiry, the appellant requested that the appeal be determined on the basis of an amended scheme for up to 95 dwellings. In coming to a conclusion on this request, I have been guided by the written submissions provided by the parties, the judgement of Forbes J in the case *Bernard Wheatcroft Ltd. V Secretary of State for the Environment and Another* (1982) 43 P. & C.R. 233 and Annex M of the PINS Procedural Guidance¹.
5. The judgement of Forbes J set out the test that the decision maker needs to apply. This is ***"is the effect of the conditional planning permission to allow development that is in substance not that which was applied for? The main, but not the only, criterion on which that judgment should be exercised is***

¹ The Planning Inspectorate Procedural Guidance: Planning Appeals – England 31 July 2015.

whether the development is so changed that to grant it would be to deprive those who should have been consulted on the changed development of the opportunity of such consultation.... There may, of course, be, in addition, purely planning reasons for concluding that a change makes a substantial difference...."

6. In addition to a reduction in the number of dwellings, the scheme reduces the number vehicular accesses to one. The Gloucester Road access remains the same and the Elm Road access has been replaced by a pedestrian/cycle access. This change results in a marginally smaller red-edged area.
7. A thorough consultation exercise has been carried out by the appellant and whilst there continues to be local opposition, no new or additional material issues have been raised. The lpa has considered the revised scheme and the parties have had adequate time to produce evidence relating to the amended scheme. In my view, the very minor reduction in the red edged area does not result in prejudice to any party. I conclude that the nature of the scheme has not been so changed that to consider it would deprive those who should have been consulted on the changed development of the opportunity of such a consultation. Similarly, I find there are no other planning reasons why the proposed change would make a substantial difference. Following my ruling, the Tutshill and Tidenham Action Group (TTAG) confirmed that it would not pursue its request that the inquiry should be adjourned for further public consultation and to allow it to seek expert advice.
8. This appeal will be determined on the basis of the refusal of outline planning permission for residential development (up to 95 dwellings), access, parking, public open space, landscaping and associated infrastructure as shown on Drawing Nos. 5978-L-01 Rev A (Location Plan), 004 Rev D (Proposed Access Arrangement) and 5978-L-02 Rev N – illustrative Framework Plan.

Decision

9. The appeal is allowed and outline planning permission is granted for residential development (up to 95 dwellings), access, parking, public open space, landscaping and associated infrastructure on land north of Gloucester Road, Tutshill, Chepstow, Gloucestershire NP16 7DA in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref P1530/14/OUT, dated 18 September 2014, subject to the conditions set out in Annex A to this decision.

Main Issues

10. These are: (1) the effect on the character and appearance of the area; (2) the effect on the setting of heritage assets (HA); (3) whether the lpa can demonstrate a 5-year supply of housing land; (4) the effect on agricultural land and (5) whether adequate provision would be made for affordable housing and the infrastructure needs of the development, with particular reference to open space, education, libraries and air quality management.

Reasons

Development Plan and Emerging Development Plan Policy

11. The development plan comprises the Core Strategy Adopted Version-February 2012 (CS) and saved policies of the Forest of Dean Local Plan 2005 (LP). CS settlement strategy is to concentrate development in the **District's** 4 main

towns. Beyond the towns, larger villages are expected to continue to provide services and employment. New development will be supported where it is compatible with the role and function of the village. Most changes are expected to take place within existing settlement boundaries, areas outside these boundaries are to be treated as part of the open countryside.

Tutshill/Sedbury is identified as the fifth largest settlement in the District and is identified as a Major Village. The CS indicates that there are only limited opportunities for expansion and the strategy is one of locally based growth and a relatively modest amount of new development. The 2005 LP Proposals Map shows the appeal site abutting but outside the settlement boundary for Tutshill/Sedbury.

12. The lpa published an Allocations Plan (AP) for consultation in March 2015. As well as allocating sites, the emerging AP seeks to update the housing requirement. The settlement boundary for Tutshill/Sedbury has been redrawn to include additional land within the settlement. The emerging AP is the subject of objections, particularly on the level of the housing requirement. Accordingly, only limited weight can be attached to the emerging AP as a material consideration.

Issue 1 - Character & Appearance

13. CS Policy CSP. 1 seeks to ensure that new development takes into account important characteristics of the environment and conserves, preserves and otherwise respects them in a manner that maintains or enhances their contribution to the environment. This policy is broadly consistent with the objectives of the Framework which seek to ensure that planning decisions take account of and recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside (paragraph 17).
14. The Forest of Dean Landscape Character Assessment – November 2002 locates the site within Landscape Character Type (LCT) 6 – Unwooded Vale and more specifically within Landscape Character Area (LCA) 6a – Severn Vale – Stroat and Sedbury. The Unwooded Vale LCT is an extensive area whose overall character type is that of a soft rolling landscape that is distinctly small scale, intimate and domestic. LCA 6a is noted as being typical of the wider vale landscape with a gently undulating landform, a patchwork of fields defined by hedgerows, scattered farmhouses. A feature of this LCA is the urbanising influence of Tutshill/Sedbury.
15. Before and during the inquiry I had the opportunity to experience the nature of the surrounding and wider landscape as part of my accompanied and unaccompanied visits to the site and the wider area. Whilst the appeal site shares similar characteristics to the wider LCT, there are no particular landscape features, characteristics or elements that demonstrate that the appeal site is in GLVIA² terms representative of the wider landscape i.e. a particularly important example which takes this site beyond representing anything more than countryside in general. I have no reason to disagree with **the lpa's and appellant's assessments** that the landscape value and sensitivity of the area to change are medium.
16. The lpa refers to Framework paragraph 109, **which refers to "protecting and enhancing valued landscapes"**. Given that all landscapes are valued by

² Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment.

someone at some time, the words "*valued landscape*" must mean a landscape that is considered to be of value because of particular attributes that have been designated through the adoption of a local planning policy document. The landscape around Tutshill/Sedbury is not the subject of any statutory landscape designation or emerging AP designation. The Framework has to be read as a whole and paragraph 17 refers to recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Paragraph 109 starts by reiterating the wider objective of enhancing the natural environment, which I take to mean the countryside in general and then it goes on to refer to valued landscapes, which must mean something more than just countryside in general. Thus, in this case, I consider that the reference in Framework paragraph 109 adds nothing to the exercise I need to undertake or the weight to be attached to the landscape and visual impact of the scheme.

17. Given the distinctly small scale, intimate and domestic nature of the landscape and the existing mature screening on the southern and eastern margins of the site, which would be retained and reinforced by new planting, the landscape and visual impact of this scheme would be highly localised. The loss of the fields where built development would occur would result in harm to and impact on landscape character. However, given the localised nature of this impact, the effect would be Minor/Moderate Adverse.
18. In terms of visual impact, the greatest effect would be on views from Elm Road looking east, where, in time, the effect would be softened by landscaping, I consider the effect would be Major Adverse reducing to Minor Adverse. There are no public rights away across the site and the main viewpoints from these routes are from some distance to the south-east, east, north-east and north of the site. However, on substantial lengths of these footpaths views towards the site are obscured by existing mature planting. Elsewhere there would be glimpses of the development, seen largely against the backdrop of the existing urban edge. In these views, the effect of the scheme would be mitigated by existing and proposed planting, reducing its visual impact. Overall, the visual impact of the development would largely be mitigated by existing and proposed planting and as such it would not appear intrusive or obtrusive. In this context, the visual impact would be highly localised and Minor/Moderate Adverse. This harm would not extend to materially harming views from elevated public vantage points of the Severn Estuary and land beyond.
19. On this issue, I conclude that there would be highly localised harmful landscape and visual impacts that would conflict with the objectives of CS Policy CSP.1.

Issue 2 – Heritage Assets

20. CS Policy CSP. 1 requires a consideration of the impact of a development on HAs and the potential for avoiding and/or mitigating any impacts. Framework paragraph 132 indicates that when considering the impact on the significance of a HA great weight should be given to its conservation. It notes that the significance of a HA can be harmed through alteration or development within its setting. Setting is defined as the surroundings in which a HA is experienced. Framework paragraph 134 says that where a development would lead to less than substantial harm to significance, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

50. The question as to whether Tutshill is a sustainable location has been addressed by the CS and the emerging AP where Tutshill and Sedbury are treated as one and identified as the fifth largest settlement in the District. Within Tutshill there are schools, a public house, a butchers and a surgery all within 700m of the site. I recognise that this list of facilities is not extensive. However, as the CS recognises Tutshill/Sedbury functions very much as part of Chepstow and suggests that it is for this reason it does not have the level of services and facilities expected in a settlement of its size. Chepstow has a wide range of facilities and services between 1.65 and 2.14km walking distance. I acknowledge that some of these routes involve steps and inclines that would deter the infirmed and the disabled. However, for the majority of the population there are a range of facilities and services within walking distance and there is the availability of a bus service.
51. In addition, the sustainability of Tutshill/Sedbury was addressed in a recent appeal for a development of up to 100 dwellings on land at Beachley Road, Sedbury⁸. There the Inspector concluded that the provisions of CS Policy CSP. 5 were another indicator of sustainability. He concluded, *"...the provision in policy CSP.5 for around 111 dwellings in the settlement, the fifth largest urban area within the District. Housing provision in policy CSP.5 is listed under the heading of 'Housing – strategic objectives: to promote thriving sustainable communities – provide affordable homes'. The Forest of Dean Settlement Hierarchy identifies Tutshill/Sedbury as the only settlement in the District (after the four main towns) that contains all eight of the criteria used in the methodology to assess sustainability. Moreover, if a development of the magnitude of the appeal proposal were considered to be unsustainable at Tutshill/Sedbury, then policy CSP.5 would not be making provision for around 111 dwellings at this location, and the Council's Core Strategy would not be including Tutshill/Sedbury as a sustainable community."* In addition, both the Planning Officer in the report to the Planning Committee and the **lpa's planning** witness at the inquiry acknowledge that Tutshill/Sedbury is a sustainable community. Therefore, looking at the issue of sustainability in the round, I consider that the appeal site is located in a sustainable community/location.

The Planning Balance and Conclusion

52. I have concluded that the proposal would not result in an unacceptable loss of B&MV agricultural land, there would be no unacceptable impacts on the safety and free flow of traffic, that the impact on air quality would be negligible and would be mitigated by the contribution provided by way of a UU and that there are no reasons in terms of primary health and education provision to resist this development.
53. The proposal would result in a moderate degree of harm to the setting and significance of Wirewoods Green Manor and a minor degree of harm to the setting and significance of Elmwood House albeit the degree of harm would fall, in Framework terms, in the category of less than substantial harm. As such the scheme would conflict with the objectives of CS Policy CSP.1. That said, Framework paragraph 134 indicates that in such circumstances the harm is to be weighed against the public benefits. Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that I have

⁸ APP/P1615/A/14/2220590

“special regard to the desirability of preserving a LB or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses”.

54. In this case, given the absence of a 5-year housing land supply, the provision of 95 dwellings is a significant and material contribution to the housing needs of the district. The contribution that this development would make to address the acute shortage of housing is a benefit that attracts very substantial weight in the planning balance. This is particularly so **given the lpa’s** acknowledgement that there is an acute need for affordable housing in the district. Economic benefits that would flow from the application include those arising from employment during the development phase; a New Homes Bonus payment and increased Council Tax revenues. In my view, the combination of these benefits would outweigh the minor/moderate harm to the settings and significance of the HAs. In light of the economic and social benefits of this development and my conclusion that the application site is located in a sustainable community/location, I consider this proposal, when taken in the round, would be sustainable development and that the requirements of Framework paragraph 14 are fully engaged. Framework paragraph 14 indicates that planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against policies in the Framework, taken as a whole.
55. There would be a change in the character of the area from open agricultural pasture to built development and an impact on visual amenity resulting in localised and limited harm and less than substantial harm to the setting and significance of nearby HAs contrary to the objectives of CS Policy CSP.1. However, with careful attention to detailed design, layout and landscaping I consider the above harm would be acceptably mitigated. Therefore, taken in the round, I consider the adverse impacts of this proposal would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of this housing scheme, when assessed against policies in the Framework as a whole. Accordingly, and having taken all other matters into consideration, I consider there are compelling reasons to allow this appeal subject to appropriate planning conditions.

Conditions

56. I have reviewed the list of suggested conditions in accordance with guidance contained in PPG. Where necessary and in the interests of precision and enforceability I have reworded the suggested conditions. I have not imposed **the lpa’s suggested condition (15) relating to a construction environmental noise management plan**. I consider this condition duplicates the matters dealt with by condition 11 relating to the agreement of a construction method statement
57. Conditions 1, 2 and 3 relate to the submission of reserved matters and given the number of conditions that require discharge before construction commences, I see no reason to depart from the standard time limits. I have imposed a condition specifying development in accordance with the approved plans to accord with the guidance on greater flexibility for planning permissions (4). In the interest of the appearance of the area and the **protection of neighbours’ living conditions**, conditions relating to the submission of details for approval relating to: the Framework Plan (5), foul and surface water drainage (6 & 7), the preparation of a construction method

statement (11), landscaping and landscape management (12 & 13), building heights (14), internal and external noise levels (16); the undergrounding of services (17) and the provision and management of the open spaces (10) are necessary. Within this latter condition, I have omitted specific reference to a community orchard. Should this be considered appropriate, it is something that could be dealt with generally under the reserved matters submission and through this condition.

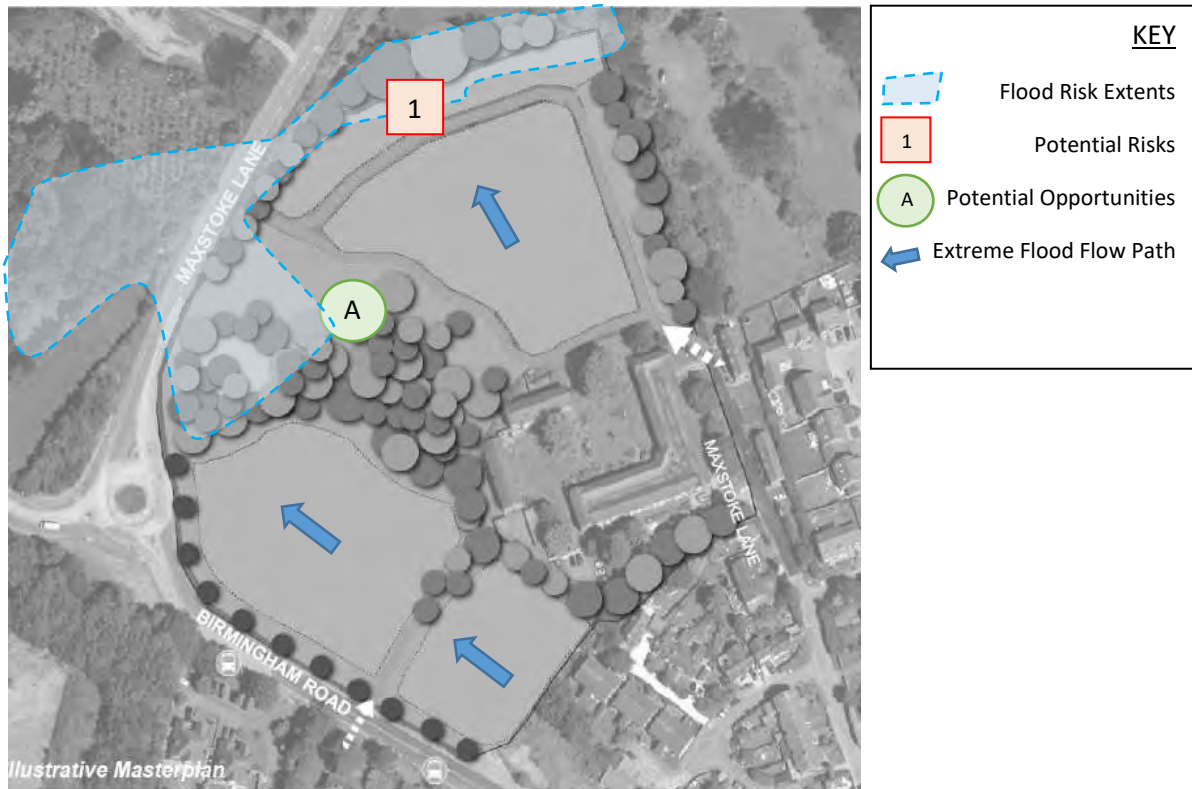
58. In the interests of highway safety, conditions relating to parking and access (8 & 10) and the implementation of the vehicular and pedestrian accesses (9 & 25) are necessary. In the interest of encouraging sustainable travel patterns, the submission of a Travel Plan (26); the provision of electric charging points (17) and works to the existing bus stops (24) are necessary. In the interests of biodiversity, approval of details relating to lighting (21); construction, landscape and ecological environmental management plans (22 & 23), hedgerows and services access (19 & 20) are necessary. In the interests of providing for the protection of archaeology, a condition requiring the approval of investigations is necessary (18). To provide for the provision and implementation of the affordable housing a condition is necessary. The condition imposed is the Planning **Inspectorate's model condition**, which covers all relevant matters and is less prescriptive than that suggested by the lpa.

George Baird

Inspector

Site Reference	Site Name	Accessibility to Local Facilities			Accessibility to Public Transport		Suitability of Walking and Cycling Routes	Total Score	Comments
		Primary School	Food Store	GP Surgery	Bus	Rail	Footway along site frontage		
50	Land at Arran Way	100	100	100	100	10	Footway provision along site frontage	400	
51	Jenson House, Auckland Hall & Kingfisher PH	100	100	100	100	5	Footway provision along site frontage	400	
52	Chester Rd/Moorend Ave Roundabout	100	100	100	100	30	Footway provision along site frontage	400	
98	Land to the rear of 1761 Warwick Road	100	100	100	100	35	Footway provision along site frontage	400	
124	The Former TRW Site	100	100	100	100	30	Footway provision along site frontage	400	Proposals for this site to be mixed use with retail, employment and leisure use alongside housing development.
171	Hampton Manor	100	100	100	25	100	No footway provided along all of site frontage	400	
187	Land to the east of Leys Lane	100	100	100	100	10	Footway provision along site frontage	400	
218	Endeavour House, including Pavilions Sports Club and Allotments	100	100	100	100	20	Footway provision along site frontage	400	
220	Chapelhouse Depot, including Conservative Club and former Boys Club	100	100	100	100	45	Footway provision along site frontage	400	
224	Brookvale	100	100	100	100	100	Footway provision along site frontage	400	Proposal for a retail outlet and community facility on this site
229	Kingshurst Village Centre	100	100	100	100	15	Footway provision along site frontage	400	Mixed use site does not specify if this includes residential, included anyway
307	Land Eastcote Road / Bellemere Road	100	100	100	20	100	No footway provision along site frontage	400	
331	Widney Manor golf club	100	100	100	45	100	Footway provision along site frontage	400	
556	Land North of Main Road	100	100	100	100	5	Footway along site frontage	400	
543	Land to the rear of 74-108 Colehill Road	100	100	100	80	100	Footway along site frontage	400	
55	Bacons End Centre	100	100	80	100	20	Footway provision along site frontage	380	
173	Winterton Farm/Land to the north of Blythe Valley Park	100	100	100	80	10	No footway provision along site frontage	380	
186	Land to the east of Leys Lane	100	100	80	100	10	Footway provision along site frontage	380	
222	Moat Lane Depot and Vulcan House Industrial Estate	100	100	80	100	45	Footway provision along site frontage	380	
225	Chelmsley Wood Town Centre (ongoing regeneration masterplan including redevelopment of old library site)	100	100	80	100	40	Footway provision along site frontage	380	Mixed use site does not specify if this includes residential, included anyway
312	Meriden Hall Mobile Home Park site 2	80	100	100	100	10	No footway provision along site frontage	380	
522	Land SE of Meriden	80	100	100	100	5	Footway along site frontage	380	
6	Land at Old Station Road, Hampton in Arden	100	80	80	20	100	No footway provision along site frontage	360	
59	Golden End Farms	100	100	80	80	35	Footway provision along site frontage	360	
131	Birmingham Business Park, land adj to Coleshill Heath Road	100	100	60	100	35	No footway provided along all of site frontage	360	
156	Arden Academy	80	100	100	80	45	Footway provision along site frontage	360	

Site 10: West of Meriden



Overview

Reference to the emerging Level 2 SFRA identifies a significant flood risk from fluvial and surface water sources associated with the ordinary watercourse tributary of the River Blythe on the northern boundary of the site

The layout should reflect the local topography and ensure extreme flood flow paths are not impeded by properties thus resulting in a residual risk.

Risks	Opportunities
<p>1. The site masterplan will need to be redrawn to ensure all built development is situated outside of the flood risk areas. This will likely result in either loss of unit numbers or increased density.</p>	<p>A. The quantum of open space available within the proposed allocation lends itself to a high quality, fully integrated SuDS scheme which can offer maximised multi-functional benefits</p>



**Land North of
Main Road,
Meriden**

**Preliminary
Biodiversity
Impact
Assessment**

Prepared by:
**The Environmental
Dimension
Partnership Ltd**

On behalf of:
IM Land Ltd

April 2020
Report Reference
edp3698_r004

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Appendix EDP 2	BIA Metric
Appendix EDP 3	Condition Assessments

Plan

Plan EDP 1	Extended Phase 1 Habitat Plan (edp3698_d007_31 March 2020 GY/VF/CR)
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	Report Ref: edp3698_r004			
	Author	Formatted	Peer Review	Proofed by/Date
r004	VF	RaB	JG	NG 01.04.20

Section 1 Introduction and Methodology

- 1.1 This Preliminary Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA) has been prepared by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP) on behalf of IM Land Ltd, to determine whether development proposals at Land North of Main Road, Meriden (hereafter referred to as ‘the Site’) can potentially deliver a net biodiversity gain.
- 1.2 To assess whether or not the proposals are capable of delivering a biodiversity gain, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Biodiversity Impact Assessment Calculator v2.0 was used. This is a transparent way to calculate the biodiversity value of the habitats and hedgerows on an application site, before and after development. It is a proxy measure to determine if the development will result in an on-site habitat biodiversity net loss or gain. The Defra Metric is downloadable from the Natural England website¹ and the specific user guide to this metric was consulted² throughout the process.
- 1.3 The project is currently at promotion stage and the post-development BIA calculations will evolve as the masterplan is developed. Therefore, the results presented here are indicative only, but demonstrate whether net gain is at least achievable or not based on the Concept Masterplan (see **Appendix EDP 1**).
- 1.4 The before development habitats were assessed during an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey conducted in January 2017. This was then updated on 20 March 2020.
- 1.5 Each habitat on the Site currently (before development) and after development requires an assessment of current condition or target condition. The condition assessments are set out in the Technical Supplement which accompanies the metric³.
- 1.6 Whilst January and March are considered to be suboptimal for undertaking habitat surveys, as they are outside the growth period for most plants, the arable nature of a majority of the Site and the fast growing nature of the other vegetation types means that, it is not thought that habitats were mis-identified or conditions under estimated.
- 1.7 The Defra Metric Calculation is appended to the rear of this BIA (**Appendix EDP 2**). Note that the calculations deal with linear features (hedgerows and line of trees in this case), rivers/streams and other habitats separately, resulting in three separate scores.

¹ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5850908674228224>

² Natural England Joint Publication JP029, The Biodiversity Metric 2.0 auditing and accounting for biodiversity USER GUIDE Beta Edition First published 29th July 2019

³ Natural England Joint Publication JP029, The Biodiversity Metric 2.0 auditing and accounting for biodiversity TECHNICAL SUPPLEMENT Beta Edition First published 29th July 2019

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Section 2 Preliminary Calculations

Current Site Habitat Value

- 2.1 As shown on **Plan EDP 1**, the Site is dominated by arable field parcels (7.02 hectare (ha)) with improved grassland/tall ruderal margins (0.28ha) and two areas of improved grassland (0.7ha). There are areas of scrub (0.03ha), plantation woodland (0.42ha) and community allotments (0.91ha). The field parcels are bounded by hedgerows (1.27km), a line of trees (0.1km) and a field drain (calculated as a stream) (0.31km).
- 2.2 There are a number of mature trees within the hedgerows on Site however, these are not separated out in the calculator, they are included in the hedgerow calculations. There are nine trees which ideally would be calculated separately, as they offer a clearly different and better habitat to the hedgerows they are within. However, the calculator does not allow for this and these trees are shown as T1 to T9 on **Plan EDP 1**.
- 2.3 Based on the metric used and the condition assessments for each habitat detailed in **Appendix EDP 3**, the Site currently has a biodiversity value of **25.11** units, **3.63** linear units and **2.46** river units before development. The current habitats are displayed in **Plan EDP 1**.

Proposed Site Habitat Value

- 2.4 The Concept Masterplan for the Site (**Appendix EDP 1**) shows that, the Site will comprise residential areas with extensive areas of Public Open Space (POS).
- 2.5 The Vision Document for the Site details the type and vision for the proposed POS from a landscape and recreation perspective. This Preliminary BIA report should be read in conjunction with this document, as it uses this information to determine the habitat types that are recommended for creation within these areas of POS.
- 2.6 The habitats which are to be lost, retained and created within the development are described below.

Hedgerows

- 2.7 There are four main criterion in the hedgerow condition assessment; dimensions - must be over 1.5m high and 1.5m wide; gaps - must comprise less than 10% of the length (at base and canopy); ground vegetation - must be undisturbed and free of undesirable vegetation and damage - must be free from invasive species and damage.
- 2.8 Most of the retained hedgerows failed on both the dimensions and gaps criteria, as well as some of the ground vegetation, damage and most are also species poor. These failings can be relatively easily remedied to provide enhancements to the retained network. Additional planting can make species poor hedges, species rich in addition to filling in gaps.

Appropriate management (cutting regimes) will allow retained hedgerows to become taller, wider and prevent damage to the ground vegetation. All of these measures can be readily achieved through implementation of a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP). Therefore, it is assumed that all retained hedgerows will be enhanced.

- 2.9 On the basis of the above, approximately 0.51km of hedgerow will be lost across the Site and 0.76km will be retained and enhanced, with an additional 0.1km of tree line retained. This loss and enhancement level results in a gain of 5.45 linear biodiversity units (50.26%).

Residential Area

- 2.10 The residential area has been split into 'buildings and hard standing' and 'gardens and amenity areas'. Both categories are assumed within the metric to be of poor condition and this is unchangeable. Therefore, the time to achieve this condition was selected at the lowest time period available, as the condition of the habitats will not achieve a higher score with increased time.

Greenbelt Defensible Boundary

- 2.11 The Greenbelt Defensible Boundary will likely consist mainly of trees, scrub and will be managed as a woodland. Therefore, this area has been classed as broadleaved woodland and mixed scrub. Conditions has been set to moderate as despite the appropriate management potential, this area will be publicly accessible and so the possibility of damage cannot be ruled out.

Public Open Space

- 2.12 The POS in **Appendix EDP 1** is shown at the northern end of the Site. It includes the Local play area and will consist of retained plantation woodland, additional tree and scrub planting, areas of wildflower grassland (other neutral grassland) and areas of a more hard-wearing amenity grassland (modified grassland) suitable for recreational areas.

Local Community Park

- 2.13 Adjoining the Greenbelt Defensible Boundary will be a new Local community park. This will consist of additional tree and scrub planting, on the edges that are not part of the Greenbelt boundary to envelop the park as well as areas of wildflower grassland (other neutral grassland) and tall herb vegetation.

New Community Gardens

- 2.14 The community gardens will be in the northernmost tip of the Site. This area could be seeded with a suitable wildflower grassland mix (other neutral grassland) with some tall herb areas, with additional planting of fruit and nut bearing trees. There is scope for further wildlife enhancements in this area, such as installation of 'bug hotels' and reptile hibernacula but these are outside the scope of this assessment.

Attenuation Area

- 2.15 The attenuation area in the south of the Site has the potential to be managed for wildlife. The basin itself is to be planted with a wetland grassland mix, with the surrounding areas seeded with a wildflower grassland mix for drier soils.
- 2.16 It is currently unknown if the basin will hold permanent water or not. If the attenuation area (blue on **Appendix EDP 1**) was to hold open water and is calculated as a pond with the surrounding grassland as wet grassland, an additional gain of 1.9 units is achieved, than if the attenuation area was all calculated as wet grassland surrounded by neutral grassland.

River/Stream

- 2.17 The small field drain also runs along the eastern boundary and through the south of the Site. This is calculated in the linear calculations as a stream and will be retained. This results in zero change in river units.
- 2.18 Possibilities for enhancing the field drain include, deepening to maintain a deeper water level, planting of submerged and marginal species and appropriate bankside species. However, enhancement results in a loss of 0.75% river units. Based on the metric results, it is recommended that enhancement measures are not carried out.

Street Trees

- 2.19 There will also be additional tree planting within the Site post development. However, the Concept Masterplan is at too early a stage to be able to calculate a number or location of trees. None have been included so far but, when they are, further biodiversity unit gains will be achieved.

Open Space Assumptions

- 2.20 It has been assumed that all habitat will be lost or damaged during construction therefore, apart from the plantation woodland that will form part of the POS, some hedgerows and the stream, no habitat is listed as retained or enhanced.
- 2.21 The Local play area is calculated as hard standing.
- 2.22 No footpaths are currently calculated. There is the potential for footpaths to be simply mown paths and thus not reduce the grassland area calculations within the greenspace, however, they may be sealed paths and thus included as hardstanding and so reduce the value slightly.

Condition Assessments

- 2.23 A brief overview of each habitat condition assessment is provided in **Appendix EDP 3**.

- 2.24 The condition assessment for ditch was used for the field drain, as this is the habitat it was closest to. However, there was no ditch option within the metric so the calculations were based on if it was a stream.
- 2.25 Target habitat conditions were selected as moderate, as despite the potential for appropriate maintenance regimes to maintain a good condition, the open space is all publicly accessible and so there is always the potential for damage and disturbance.
- 2.26 The assumptions above result in a post development biodiversity value of the Site of **35.32** units, **5.45** linear units and **2.48** river units. This is based on the habitats in **Appendix EDP 1**.
- 2.27 This means that the Site is capable of delivering a **40.69% net gain** in biodiversity units and a **50.26% net gain** in linear units and no loss of river units.

Section 3 Summary

- 3.1 It has been demonstrated that, the Site is capable of delivering biodiversity net gain for both the habitats impact assessment and the hedgerow impact assessment:

Habitats

- The Site currently has a biodiversity value of **25.11** units;
- With the extensive green space proposed on Site including community gardens, community park and POS, the Site is capable of delivering a **40.69% net gain** in biodiversity units;
- This potential gain will increase further once the assumptions are implemented, the masterplan is developed, and street trees are able to be taken into account; and
- There may be a small decrease in this net gain once footpath areas within the green spaces are calculated.

Hedgerows

- 0.51km of hedgerow will be lost across the Site and 0.76km will be retained and enhanced, in addition to 0.1km of retained tree line. This loss and enhancement level results in a **50.26% net gain** in linear units; and
- The criteria to meet for enhancement should not be difficult within the Site so it is assumed that all retained hedgerow will be enhanced.

River/Stream

- The 0.31km of stream will be retained within the Site and development will be more than 8m away. Therefore, there will be no change in river units.

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Appendix EDP 1
Concept Masterplan
(Barton Willmore, BM-M-08, 06.03.19, Rev H)

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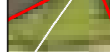

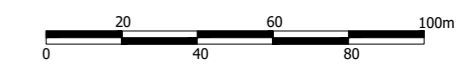
- Legend
-  Proposed Site Area
9.36 Ha / 23.13 Ac
 -  Existing Planting
 -  Proposed Planting
 -  Public Right of Way
 -  Proposed Footpath / Cycle Link and Emergency Access
 -  Areas of Proposed Development
 -  Attenuation Area

FIGURE 9
 Project
 Land North of Main Road
 Meriden
 Drawing Title
 Concept Masterplan on
 Aerial Base

Date	Scale	Drawn by	Check by
06.03.19	1:2,000 @ A2	A.S.	L.H.
Project No	Drawing No	Revision	
27878	BM-M-08	H	



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Appendix EDP 2
BIA Metric

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The Biodiversity Metric 2.0 - Calculation Tool

Start page

Project details

Planning authority:	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Project name:	Land North of Main Road, Meriden
Applicant:	IM Land Ltd
Application type:	Promotion for residential development
Planning application reference:	
Assessor:	Vicky Fletcher
Reviewer:	
Revision:	
Assessment date:	27/03/2020
Planning authority reviewer:	

Instructions

Main menu

Results

View all

Reset view

Cell style conventions

	Enter data
	Automatic lookup
	Result

The Biodiversity Metric 2.0 - Calculation Tool

Main menu

Start page

Instructions

Technical data

Results

Street tree helper		
Tree size	Tree number	Area
Small		0.0000
Medium		0.0000
Large		0.0000
Total	0.00	0.0000

Start here

1

2

3

4

On-site baseline

- A-1 On-site habitat baseline
- B-1 On-site hedge baseline
- C-1 On-Site river baseline

On-site post development

- A-2 Habitat creation
- A-3 Habitat enhancement
- A-4 Habitat accelerated succession
- B-2 Hedgerow creation
- B-3 Hedgerow enhancement
- C-2 River creation
- C-3 River enhancement

Off-site baseline

- D-1 Off-site habitat baseline
- E-1 Off-site hedge baseline
- F-1 Off-Site river baseline

Off-Site post development

- D-2 Habitat creation
- D-3 Habitat enhancement
- D-4 Habitat accelerated succession
- E-2 Hedgerow creation
- E-3 Hedgerow enhancement
- F-2 River creation
- F-3 River enhancement

The Biodiversity Metric 2.0 - Calculation Tool

Return to start page

Headline results

Detailed results

Habitat trading summary

Land North of Main Road, Meriden

Headline Results

Return to results menu

On-site baseline	<i>Habitat units</i>	25.11
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	3.63
	<i>River units</i>	2.48
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation, enhancement & succession)	<i>Habitat units</i>	35.32
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	5.45
	<i>River units</i>	2.48
Off-site baseline	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.00
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
Off-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation, enhancement & succession)	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.00
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
Total net unit change (including all on-site & off-site habitat retention/creation)	<i>Habitat units</i>	10.22
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	1.82
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
Total net % change (including all on-site & off-site habitat creation + retained habitats)	<i>Habitat units</i>	40.69%
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	50.26%
	<i>River units</i>	0.00%

Land North of Main Road, Meriden
A-1 Site Habitat Baseline

Condense / Show Columns Condense / Show Rows
 Main Menu Instructions

No.	Habitat and score		Habitat distinctiveness		Habitat condition		Ecological connectivity			Strategic significance			Suggested action to address habitat loss	Ecological habitat unit	Retention category biodiversity value						Ecosystem service value	Comments	
	Broad Habitat	Habitat type	Area (hectares)	Distinctiveness score	Condition	Score	Ecological connectivity	Connectivity	Connectivity multiplier	Strategic significance	Strategic significance	Strategic partition multiplier			Area retained	Area released	Area success	Barolin units	Barolin units	Baseline units success		Area lost	Units lost
1	Grassland	Grassland - Core of crop	7.02	Low	2	N/A - Agricultural	1	Medium	Moderately connected habitat	1.1	Area of compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Some distinction or better habitat required	15.04								See appraisal/compensation report for details on condition assessment. In plantation.
2	Grassland	Grassland - Modified grassland	0.4	Low	2	Poor	1	Medium	Moderately connected habitat	1.1	Area of compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Some distinction or better habitat required	0.44								See appraisal/compensation report for details on condition assessment. In plantation.
3	Woodland and forest	Woodland and forest - Other woodland; Young trees planted	0.42	Medium	4	Poor	1	Low	Unconnected habitat	1	Area of compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Some loss of habitat or higher distinctiveness habitat required	1.67	3.24	1.44	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.24	See appraisal/compensation report for details on condition assessment.
4	Grassland	Grassland - Modified grassland	0.2	Low	2	Poor	1	Low	Unconnected habitat	1	Area of compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Some distinction or better habitat required	0.40								See appraisal/compensation report for details on condition assessment. Southern field
5	Urban	Urban - Mosaic	0.91	Medium	4	Fairly Poor	15	Low	Unconnected habitat	1	Area of compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Some loss of habitat or higher distinctiveness habitat required	3.46								See appraisal/compensation report for details on condition assessment.
6	Heathland and shrub	Heathland and shrub - Bramble scrub	0.03	Medium	4	Poor	1	Low	Unconnected habitat	1	Area of compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Some loss of habitat or higher distinctiveness habitat required	0.12								See appraisal/compensation report for details on condition assessment.
7	Grassland	Grassland - Modified grassland	0.28	Low	2	Fairly Poor	15	Medium	Moderately connected habitat	1.1	Area of compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Some distinction or better habitat required	0.92								See appraisal/compensation report for details on condition assessment. Field margin

Land North of Main Road, Meriden
A-2 Site Habitat Creation

Condense / Show Columns Condense / Show Rows
 Main Menu Instructions

Post development/ post intervention habitats																		
Proposed habitat	Area (hectares)	Distinctiveness	Score	Condition	Score	Ecological connectivity			Strategic significance			Temporal multiplier		Difficulty multipliers		Habitat units delivered	Comments	
						Ecological connectivity	Connectivity	Connectivity multiplier	Strategic significance	Strategic significance	Strategic position multiplier	Time to target condition	Time to target multiplier	Difficulty of creation	Difficulty of creation		Assessor comments	Reviewer comments
Grassland - Other neutral grassland	0.58	Medium	4	Moderate	2	Medium	Moderately connected habitat	1.1	Area of compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	10	0.700	Low	1	3.57	that in community park - connected to rest of the GI on site	
Grassland - Tall herb communities	0.4	High	6	Moderate	2	Medium	Moderately connected habitat	1.1	Area of compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	20	0.490	High	0.33	0.85	In community park - connected to rest of the GI on site	
Grassland - Other neutral grassland	0.62	Medium	4	Moderate	2	Medium	Moderately connected habitat	1.1	Area of compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	10	0.700	Low	1	3.82	In PDS - connected to rest of the GI on site	
Grassland - Tall herb communities	0.2	High	6	Moderate	2	Medium	Moderately connected habitat	1.1	Area of compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	20	0.490	High	0.33	0.43	In community gardens - connected to rest of the GI on site	
Grassland - Other neutral grassland	0.35	Medium	4	Moderate	2	Medium	Moderately connected habitat	1.1	Area of compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	10	0.700	Low	1	2.16	In community gardens - connected to rest of the GI on site	
Urban - Orchard	0.16	Medium	4	Moderate	2	Medium	Moderately connected habitat	1.1	Area of compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	15	0.586	Low	1	0.83	In community gardens - connected to rest of the GI on site	
Woodland and forest - Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	0.6	High	6	Moderate	2	Medium	Moderately connected habitat	1.1	Area of compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	32+	0.320	High	0.33	0.84	In defensible boundary - connected to rest of the GI on site	
Heathland and shrub - Mixed scrub	0.85	Medium	4	Moderate	2	Medium	Moderately connected habitat	1.1	Area of compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	3	0.899	Low	1	6.72	In defensible boundary - connected to rest of the GI on site	
Heathland and shrub - Mixed scrub	0.92	Medium	4	Moderate	2	Medium	Moderately connected habitat	1.1	Area of compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	3	0.899	Low	1	7.28	Other proposed planting - connected to rest of the GI on site	
Grassland - Floodplain Wetland Mosaic (CFGM)	0.16	High	6	Moderate	2	Low	Unconnected habitat	1	Area of compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	20	0.490	High	0.33	0.31	SUDs basin - just in basin so unconnected	
Grassland - Other neutral grassland	0.59	Medium	4	Moderate	2	Medium	Moderately connected habitat	1.1	Area of compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	10	0.700	Low	1	3.64	Around basin - connected to rest of GI on site	
Urban - Developed land; sealed surface	2	V.Low	0	N/A - Other	0	N/A	Assessment not appropriate	1	Area of compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	0	1.000	Low	1	0.00		
Urban - Vegetated garden	1.07	Low	2	Poor	1	N/A	Assessment not appropriate	1	Area of compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	1	0.965	Low	1	2.07		
Grassland - Modified grassland	0.5	Low	2	Fairly Poor	15	Medium	Moderately connected habitat	1.1	Area of compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	5	0.837	Low	1	1.38	In PDS - connected to rest of the GI on site	

Appendix EDP 3 Condition Assessments

- A3.1 Habitat conditions both before and after development were determined using the technical supplement⁴.
- A3.2 The habitats on the Site before and after development and the appropriate condition assessment to use are listed in **Table EDP A3.1** below.

Table EDP A3.1: Habitats Before and After Development and the Condition Assessment Criteria Used

Habitat	Condition Assessment Criteria
Before Development	
Arable	N/A
Semi-improved grassland/tall ruderal mosaic	Grassland
Improved grassland	Grassland
Plantation woodland	Woodland
Scrub	Scrub
Allotments	Urban
Ditch	Ditch
Hedgerow	Hedgerow
After Development	
Development plots (buildings and gardens)	Urban
Defensible boundary	Woodland
Wildflower grassland	Grassland
Amenity grassland	Grassland
Trees and scrub	Scrub
Attenuation area	Pond
Ditch	Ditch
Hedgerows	Hedgerows

- A3.3 A brief overview of the criteria for each habitat assessment is set out below.

Grassland

- The area is clearly and easily recognisable as a good example of this type of habitat and there is little difference between what is described in the relevant habitat classifications and what is visible on Site;
- The appearance and composition of the vegetation on site should very closely match the characteristics for the specific Priority Habitat (i.e. as described by either the Phase 1 Habitat Classification or the UK Habitat Classification), with species typical of the habitat representing a significant majority of the vegetation;

⁴ Natural England Joint Publication JP029, The Biodiversity Metric 2.0 auditing and accounting for biodiversity TECHNICAL SUPPLEMENT Beta Edition First published 29th July 2019

- Wildflowers, sedges and indicator species for the specific priority grassland habitat are very clearly and easily visible throughout the sward and occur at high densities in high frequency. See relevant habitat classification for details of indicator species for specific habitat;
- Undesirable species and physical damage is below 5% cover;
- Cover of bare ground greater than 10% (including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens); and
- Cover of bracken less than 20% and cover of scrub and bramble less than 5%.

Woodland

- This should be an area of trees with complete canopy cover;
- Native species are dominant. Non-native and invasive species account for less than 10% of the vegetation cover;
- A diverse age and height structure of the trees;
- Free from damage (bark stripping; browse line; damage shoot tips) (in the last 5- years) from stock or wild mammals with less than 20% of vegetation being browsed;
- There should be evidence of successful (i.e. not browsed off before it gets well established) tree regeneration such as seedlings, saplings and young trees;
- Standing and fallen dead wood of over 20cm diameter are present including fallen large dead branches/stems and stumps;
- Wetland habitat if they exist within the wood has little sign of drainage or channel straightening;
- The area is protected from damage by agricultural and other adjacent operations;
- There should be no evidence of inappropriate management (e.g. deep ruts, animal poaching or compaction);
- Invasive non-native plants are below 5% (see list below);
- No signs of significant nutrient enrichment present; and
- More than three different native trees and three shrub species in an average 10m radius.

Urban

- Known history of disturbance at the Site or evidence that soil has been removed or severely modified by previous use(s) of the Site. Extraneous materials/substrates such as industrial spoil may have been added which in turn has led to a low nutrient environment;
- The Site contains some vegetation. This will comprise of early successional communities consisting mainly of stress-tolerant species (e.g. indicative of low nutrient status or drought). Early successional communities are composed of (a) annuals, (b) mosses/liverworts, (c) lichens, (d) ruderals, (e) inundation species, (f) open grassland, (g) flower-rich grassland or (h) heathland;
- The Site contains unvegetated, loose bare substrate and pools may be present and desirable; and
- The Site shows spatial variation, forming a mosaic of one or more of the early successional communities (a)–(h) above plus bare substrate.

Scrub

- There are at least three woody species, with no one species comprising more than 75% of the cover (except common juniper, sea buckthorn or box, which can be 100% cover);
- There is a good age range – a mixture of seedlings, saplings, young shrubs and mature shrubs;
- Pernicious weeds and invasive species make up less than 5% of the ground cover;
- The scrub has a well-developed edge with un-grazed tall herbs; and
- There are many clearings and glades within the scrub.

Pond

- Are of good water quality, with clear water (substrate can be seen) and no obvious sign of pollution in the water body;
- The water body should have semi natural riparian land for at least 10m from the pond edge;
- Non-woodland ponds should be dominated by plants, be they submerged or floating (note dominance of duckweed is a sign of eutrophication);

- Non-woodland ponds (i.e. that have always been open) should not be shaded more than 50%;
- Many ponds will be fishless, those which naturally contain fish should not be stocked and should contain a native fish assemblage;
- Ponds should not be artificially connected to other water bodies, e.g. ditches;
- Pond water levels should be able to fluctuate naturally throughout the year;
- Non-native species should be absent; and
- Less than 10% of the pond should be covered with duckweed or filamentous algae.

Ditch

- There should be good water quality with no sign of pollution (the water should not be green or turbid) in the water body or the water supply;
- Clear water should be dominated by plants, be they submerged or floating (note dominance of duckweed is a sign of eutrophication);
- A range of submerged and floating leaved plants should be present. As a guide more than ten species of emergent, floating or submerged species in a 20m ditch length or seven species of submerged or floating species in 150m canal length;
- A marginal fringe of emergent vegetation should be present;
- The water body should not be impacted by use of the riparian land;
- If a fish assemblage is present, it should comprise of a range of native species and the assemblage should not reach an excessive biomass or be overly dominated by benthivorous or zooplanktivorous fish;
- Sufficient water levels should be maintained; as a guide a minimum summer depth of approximately 50cm in minor ditches and 1m in main drains and linear waterbody should be maintained;
- Less than 10% of the ditch or linear waterbody should be heavily shaded;
- There should be an absence of non-native species; and
- There should be less than 10% cover of filamentous algae and/or duckweed.

Hedgerow

- A1. Height: >1.5m average along length;
- A2. Width: >1.5m average along length;
- B1. Gap – hedge base: Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5m for >90% of length (unless ‘line of trees’);
- B2. Gap - hedge canopy continuity: Gaps make up <10% of total length and no canopy gaps >5m;
- C1. Undisturbed ground and perennial vegetation: >1m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length measured from outer edge of hedgerow, and is present on one side of the hedge (at least);
- C2. Undesirable perennial vegetation: Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground;
- D1. Invasive and neophyte species: >90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native and neophyte species; and
- D2. Current damage: >90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities.

Habitat Assessments Before Development

Arable

- A3.4 No condition assessment is necessary for this habitat.

Semi-improved Grassland/Tall Ruderal Mosaic

- A3.5 This habitat is almost entirely made up of the undesirable species listed for this habitat; creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), common ragwort (*Senecio jacobea*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*) and cow parsley (*Anthriscus Sylvestris*) or of fast growing species indicating fertile soils such as perennial rye grass (*Lolium perenne*) and cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*).
- A3.6 Most of the condition assessment criteria failed (except for five and six Therefore, this habitat condition is poor.

Improved Grassland

- A3.7 This grassland is dominated by ryegrass (*Lolium* spp.) and white clover (*Trifolium repens*). It is a typical example of a grassland described in the 'poor' category in the condition assessment.

Plantation woodland

- A3.8 This woodland is dominated by two to three species. They are uniform in age and so lack diversity and structure. There is no standing deadwood. It is classed as in poor condition.

Scrub

- A3.9 The scrub is dominated by bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.). There are no clearings or glades, no structure or age range and no species diversity. It is classed as poor condition.

Allotments

- A3.10 These allotments certainly display evidence of disturbed ground however, the vegetation does not display characteristics of any early successional communities. It is heavily managed with a mix of native and non-native species. It is considered to be in poor condition.

Ditch

- A3.11 The ditch fails on all habitat assessment criteria, except the good water quality (1), less than 10% shade (8), less than 10% algae (10). It is classed as poor condition.

Hedgerow

A3.12 The hedgerows are numbered on **Plan EDP 1**. The table below (**Table EDP A3.2**) displays whether or not each hedgerow meets each assessment criteria. All hedgerows are in 'poor' condition as they fail more than four attributes and/or both in a single category.

Table EDP A3.2: Hedgerows on Site and the Assessment Criteria

Hedgerow	Assessment Criteria							
	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2	D1	D2
H1	x	x	x	x	Y	x	Y	x
H2	x	y	x	y	x	x	y	x
H3	x	x	x	x	x	x	y	x
H4	y	x	x	x	y	x	y	x
H5	x	x	x	x	x	x	y	x
H6	x	x	x	x	y	x	y	x
H7	x	y	y	y	y	x	y	x
H8	x	y	x	y	y	x	y	x
H9	x	x	x	x	x	x	y	x
H10	x	y	x	y	y	x	y	x
H11	x	x	x	x	x	x	y	x
H12	x	x	x	y	x	x	x	x

Note: x = criteria not met, y = criteria met

Habitat Assessments After Development

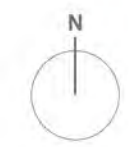
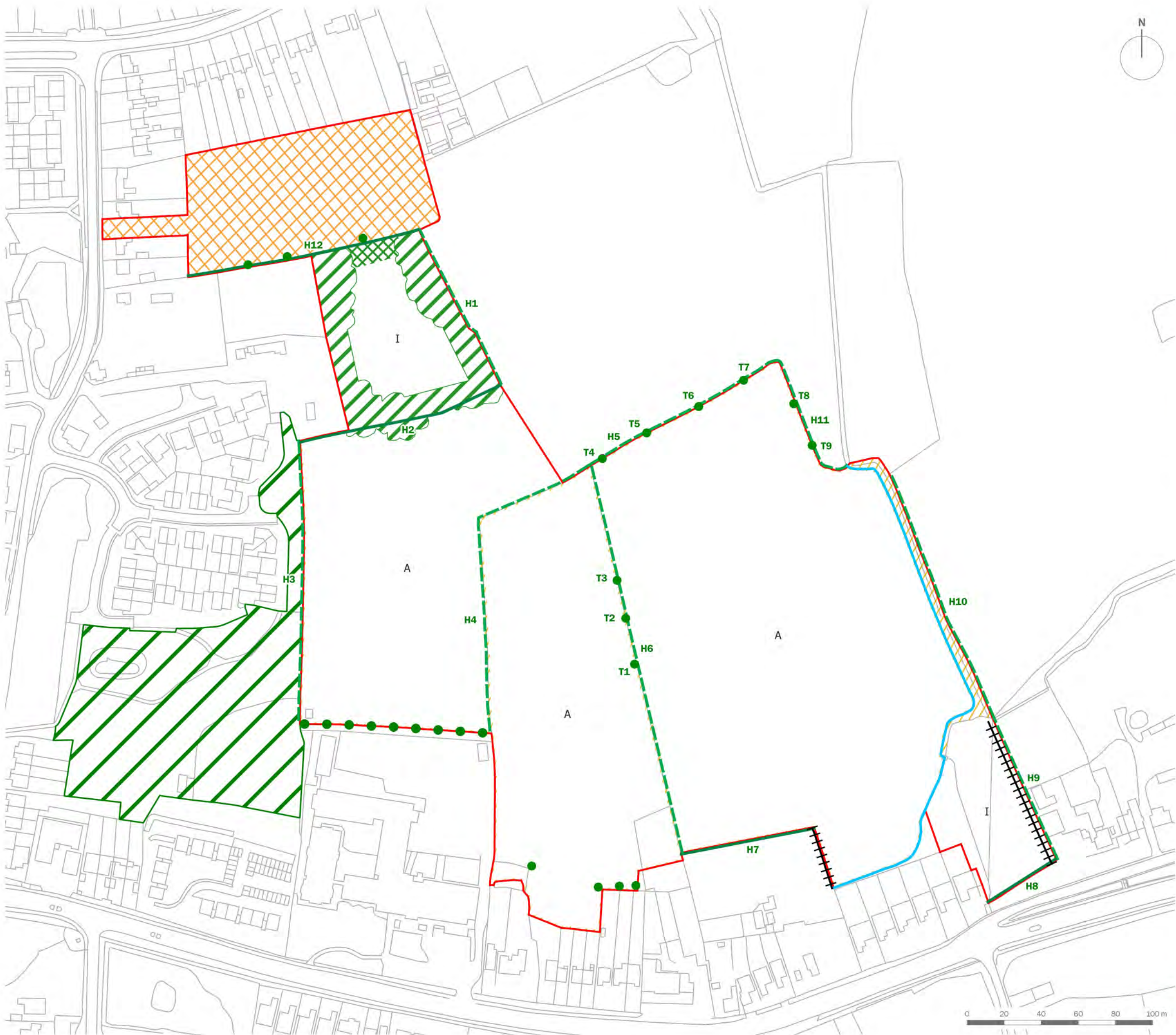
A3.13 All habitats post development will be assigned a 'moderate' habitat condition. Although, they will be designed and managed to reach 'good' condition, in reality, with public accessibility, damage is possible and good condition is unlikely to be achieved. The exception to this is any areas of 'amenity grassland' as the very nature of this habitat will classify it as 'poor'.

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Plan

Plan EDP 1 Extended Phase 1 Habitat Plan
(edp3698_d007_31 March 2020 GY/VF/CR)

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- Site Boundary
- Broad-leaved Plantation Woodland
- Dense Continuous Scrub
- A Arable
- I Improved Grassland
- Semi-improved Grassland/Tall Ruderal Mosaic
- Allotments
- Intact Species-poor Hedgerow
- Defunct Species-poor Hedgerow
- Running Water
- Fence
- Tree

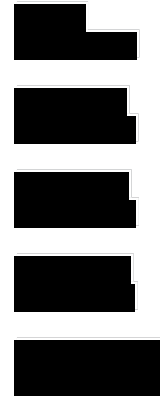
client
IM Land Ltd

project title
Land North of Main Road, Meriden

drawing title
Extended Phase 1 Habitat Plan

date	31 MARCH 2020	drawn by	GY
drawing number	edp3698_d007	checked	VF
scale	1:2,000 @ A3	QA	CR





SOLIHULL BOROUGH HOUSING NEED REPORT

Prepared on behalf of:

Barratt David Wilson Homes

Spitfire Bespoke Homes

IM Land

Heyford Developments

Generator Strategic Land

December 2020



SOLIHULL BOROUGH HOUSING NEED REPORT

December 2020

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Barton Willmore LLP



 
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Report has been prepared by Barton Willmore's National Development Economics Team on behalf of Barratt David Wilson Homes, Spitfire Bespoke Homes, IM Land, Heyford Developments, and Generator Strategic Land, in response to Solihull Borough Council's (SBC) consultation on its Local Plan – Draft Submission Plan (October 2020).
- 1.2 Specifically, this Report focuses on the calculation of housing need in the Draft Plan, and whether this aligns with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019), the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG, 2019), and the aims, objectives, and policies of the Draft Plan.
- 1.3 In undertaking this analysis, the Report reviews recent housing and employment evidence base documents published by SBC, alongside other publicly available data.
- 1.4 The Report provides the national and local planning policy context for determining housing need in Solihull, before reviewing the Council's housing need evidence base. We then present sensitivity testing of the Council's conclusions on what should constitute economic-led housing need, and what should inform the housing requirement of the Draft Plan.
- 1.5 We also consider the unmet housing need in the wider Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBC HMA) following the publication of the 'Housing Need and Housing Land Supply Position Statement' (Position Statement, July 2020).

2.0 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

i) Introduction

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was revised initially in July 2018 and again in February 2019. In respect of housing need, and how this is calculated for each local authority, the revised NPPF introduced the 'Standard Method' (SM) for calculating local housing need. This replaced the previous 'Objective Assessment of Overall Housing Need' (OAN) immediately in respect of planning applications and appeals.
- 2.2 However, in respect of the examination of Local Plans, a transition period applied for 6 months, during which time all Plans submitted to the Secretary of State for examination on or before 24 January 2019 were to be subject to the OAN method.
- 2.3 Notwithstanding the introduction of the SM however, there remains uncertainty over the method as of December 2020. This is because the Government's recent 'Changes to the current planning system' proposes a revised Standard Method.

ii) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019)

- 2.4 The revised NPPF replaces the 2012 NPPF and its requirement for an OAN, replacing it with the SM from the 24 July 2019 (except for Local Plans submitted on or before 24 January 2019).
- 2.5 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF lists the three overarching objectives of the NPPF; **economic, social, and environmental**. The social objective states that planning will *"support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a **sufficient number** and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations."*
- 2.6 Paragraph 11 moves on to state how *"Plans and decisions should apply a **presumption** in favour of sustainable development"* and how in respect of Plan-making this means that *"plans should **positively seek** opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change" and "strategic policies should, as a **minimum**, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas."*

- 2.7 Under section 3. 'Plan-making', the revised NPPF states that local authorities *"are under a duty to cooperate with each other, and with other prescribed bodies, on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries"* (paragraph 24) and in doing so *"should prepare and maintain one or more statements of common ground, documenting the cross-boundary matters being addressed and progress in cooperating to address these"* (paragraph 27).
- 2.8 When examining Plans and determining whether they are 'sound', the Planning Inspectorate will test whether the Plan is *"**positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a **minimum**, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that **unmet need** from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development"* (paragraph 35a).
- 2.9 The NPPF moves on to discuss 'Delivering a sufficient supply of homes' in section 5 and states how the delivery should *"support the Government's objective of **significantly boosting** the supply of homes."* Paragraph 60 moves on to state how *"To determine the **minimum** number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance – unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals. In addition to the local housing need figure, **any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas** should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for. This identifies how the SM should be used to establish the **minimum** number of homes to be planned for.*
- 2.10 Section 6 of the revised NPPF refers to 'Building a strong, competitive economy' and Paragraph 80 states how *"Planning policies and decisions 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."* As part of this the NPPF (paragraph 81c) states how planning policies should *"seek to address potential **barriers** to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or **housing**, or a poor environment."*
- 2.11 In this context, although the NPPF confirms that the SM should be used when calculating housing need, it also confirms how the SM represents **minimum** housing need. The NPPF is also clear that inadequate housing should not create a barrier to investment and that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth.

iii) Planning Practice Guidance – Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (PPG, 2019)

- 2.12 The 'Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment' (HEDNA) section of the PPG which supported the 2012 NPPF was initially replaced by the 'Housing Needs Assessment' (HNA) PPG on 13 September 2018 and updated on 20 February 2019. The HNA PPG provides more detailed guidance on the SM introduced in the revised NPPF.
- 2.13 At the outset, it is important to emphasise how the standard method calculation represents **minimum** housing need for an area. The revised HNA PPG is very clear in this respect, paragraph ID2a-002 stating that *"The standard method set out below identifies a **minimum** annual housing need figure. It **does not** produce a housing requirement."*
- 2.14 In this context paragraph ID2a-010 states *"The government is committed to ensuring that more homes are built and **supports ambitious authorities** who want to plan for growth. The standard method for assessing local housing need provides a **minimum starting point** in determining the number of homes needed in an area. It does not attempt to predict the impact that future government policies, changing economic circumstances or other factors might have on demographic behaviour. Therefore, there will be circumstances where it is appropriate to consider whether **actual housing need** is higher than the standard method indicates."*
- 2.15 Paragraph ID2a-010 moves on to consider the circumstances where housing *need* in excess of the minimum standard method *need* might be appropriate. Paragraph ID2a-010 states that *"Circumstances where this may be appropriate include, but are not limited to situations where increases in housing need are likely to exceed past trends because of:*
- *growth strategies for the area that are likely to be deliverable, for example where funding is in place to promote and facilitate additional growth (e.g. Housing Deals);*
 - *strategic infrastructure improvements that are likely to drive an increase in the homes needed locally; or*
 - *an authority agreeing to take on unmet need from neighbouring authorities, as set out in a statement of common ground;*

There may, occasionally, also be situations where previous levels of housing delivery in an area, or previous assessments of need (such as a recently-produced Strategic Housing Market Assessment) are significantly greater than the outcome from the standard method. Authorities will

need to take this into account when considering whether it is appropriate to plan for a higher level of need than the standard model suggests.

2.16 In summary, in the context of paragraphs ID2a-002 and ID2a-010, it is imperative to understand that the standard method calculation is specifically a **minimum starting point** in determining the number of homes needed, actual need has the potential to be higher in order to support the policies of the NPPF and the clear objectives of Government to 'significantly boost' housing supply and 'support economic growth'.

iv) Status of the Standard Method (December 2020)

2.17 As of December 2020 the Standard Method set out in the 2019 NPPF/PPG remains the method by which local authorities must determine their minimum housing need.

2.18 However the Government's 'Planning for the Future' and 'Change to the current planning system' consultation, published in August 2020, proposes a change to how the Standard Method calculation is undertaken.

2.19 At the time of writing these changes have been consulted on, and the results of that consultation are not yet known. However, nationally it would result in a starting position of 337,000 dwellings per annum. This is a significant increase to the existing Standard Method (circa 270,000 dwellings per annum).

2.20 Adoption of the proposed changes to the Standard method will have significant consequences for Solihull and the wider Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBCHMA) as we discuss later in this Report.

v) Summary

2.21 The current national policy and guidance with respect to housing need has been summarised in this section. The key points to note are:

- the 2019 NPPF introduced the 'Standard Method' for calculating local housing need;
- the Standard Method replaced the OAN method immediately from 24 July 2018 for applications, and for all Local Plans submitted after 24 January 2019;

- Government have reiterated that the SM represents 'minimum' housing need, and it should represent the 'starting point' for planning;
- PPG confirms that 'actual housing need may be higher' than the SM minimum;
- Revised NPPF states how inadequate housing should not form a barrier to investment;
- Proposed revisions to the Standard Method would increase housing need in the GBBCHMA and across the country significantly.

3.0 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

i) Introduction

3.1 Having identified the existing national policy and supporting guidance in which housing need should be calculated, in this section we consider policy and evidence at the local level in Solihull. This incorporates a summary and review of the Council's October 2020 *'Draft Submission Plan'* (Draft Plan) and existing policies.

3.2 This will enable the determination of a background from which to establish whether the standard method calculation – minimum housing need – will support policies in the Draft Plan, and whether the Council's own evidence points to 'actual' housing need being higher than the standard method.

ii) Adopted Solihull District Plan (03 December 2013)

3.3 Before we consider the Draft Plan consultation document, the key policies of the adopted Plan should be summarised.

3.4 Policy P5: 'Provision of Land for Housing' of the adopted Plan targeted the provision of 11,000 dwellings between 2006 and 2028 (500 dwellings per annum). This reflected the requirement recommended by the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Phase II Revision Panel Report which objectively assessed housing need.¹

3.5 However a successful High Court Challenge was subsequently made in 2014 against Policy P5 and the supporting text set out above in respect of housing numbers. The Judgment against the Council was subsequently upheld at appeal although it was confirmed that all other parts of the Plan remained adopted.

3.6 Notwithstanding the challenge in respect of housing need, the Local Plan is very clear in respect of its responsibilities in respect of economic growth. Challenge D of the Plan is entitled 'Securing Sustainable Economic Growth' and lists the following 'key economic assets' of the Borough:

i. Maintaining Solihull's important **regional and sub-regional role**;

¹ Paragraph 8.4.1, page 73, Solihull Local Plan – Shaping a Sustainable Future, December 2013

- ii. Meeting aspirations of key businesses to enable them to **maintain competitiveness** (Birmingham Airport, National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham Business Park, Blythe Valley Park, Jaguar Land Rover) whilst contributing to sustainable development;
- iii. Retaining a **high skilled workforce**;
- iv. Impact of congestion on motorways, the strategic highway network and rail from additional growth/housing;
- v. Impact of pressure for development on the quality of the environment;
- vi. Need to provide opportunities around workplaces for healthy and active lifestyles;
- vii. Need for high speed digital connectivity to enhance competitiveness. ²

3.7 The 'Vision' for the Borough also states the following:

"It will be a Borough that continues to be economically successful and a driver for sustainable growth within the West Midlands; where the potential for managed growth within the M42 Economic Gateway is unlocked and the ambitions for the economic assets contained within it are fully realised." ³

3.8 The Plan also identifies its place within the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Enterprise Partnership (LEP) stating how *"the Borough is the principal gateway to the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership area and the wider West Midlands Region"* ⁴ and how the M42 Economic Gateway sits within the LEP area.

3.9 The Plan goes on to identify how the Borough is home to several economic assets within the M42 Gateway including Birmingham Airport, the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham and Blythe Valley Business Parks, Jaguar Land Rover and Solihull Town Centre and how *"It is estimated that realising the full potential of the Gateway could create over 36,000 additional jobs by 2026 and add £5.9bn to the West Midlands economy."* ⁵

² Key Challenge D – Securing Sustainable Economic Growth, page 20, Solihull Local Plan – Shaping a Sustainable Future, December 2013

³ Paragraph , page 20, Solihull Local Plan – Shaping a Sustainable Future, December 2013

⁴ Paragraph 2.2.1, page 9, Solihull Local Plan – Shaping a Sustainable Future, December 2013

⁵ Paragraph 2.7.1, page 14, Solihull Local Plan – Shaping a Sustainable Future, December 2013

iii) Solihull Local Plan – Draft Submission Plan (October 2020)

3.10 The Draft Plan outlines at the outset why a review of the adopted Solihull Local Plan is required. The Draft Plan states the following:

“The current local plan, the “Solihull Local Plan” (SLP), was adopted in December 2013 and covers the period 2011 to 2028. Although it is a recently adopted plan, and is up-to-date in many respects, there are three reasons that have triggered the need for an early review of it. The first is to deal with the legal challenge to the 2013 plan; secondly to accommodate Solihull’s own housing needs, as well as helping to address the housing shortfall occurring in the wider Housing Market Area (HMA); and finally to provide a proper planning framework that recognises the arrival of HS2 in the Borough – in particular the first station outside of London which is to be constructed on land opposite the NEC.”⁶

3.11 The Draft Plan lists several ‘Challenges’ that the Borough faces. From these challenges several objectives have been formulated. Those challenges relevant to this Housing Need Technical Report are as follows:

- **Challenge B: Meeting housing needs across the Borough, including the Borough’s own needs and, where possible, assisting with accommodating the HMA (Housing Market Area) wide shortfall.**
- **Challenge D: Securing sustainable economic growth;**
- **Challenge M: Maximising the economic and social benefits of the High Speed 2 rail link and Interchange.⁷**

3.12 All three of these challenges affect housing need in Solihull.

3.13 The subsequent ‘objectives’ set out in the context of Challenge B include the following:

“To ensure that the full objectively assessed housing need for the Borough is met for the plan period consistent with the achievement of sustainable development and the other objectives of the Plan.

To ensure that provision is made for an appropriate proportion of the HMA shortfall in new housing land consistent with the

⁶ Paragraph 9, page 5, Solihull Local Plan – Draft Submission Plan, October 2020

⁷ Paragraph 38, page 12, Solihull Local Plan – Draft Submission Plan, October 2020

achievement of sustainable development and the other objectives of the Plan.

Maximise the provision of affordable housing; ensuring the provision of an appropriate mix, type and tenure of housing on sites in a range of locations which meet the needs of Solihull residents, particularly needs for affordable housing, including social rented, low cost home ownership and supported housing, on a Borough wide basis.

Widen the range of options for older people and for people with learning, physical and sensory disabilities and mental health needs through the provision of accommodation which is designed to meet these diverse needs.”⁸

3.14 Challenge D includes the following objectives:

- **Meeting aspirations of key businesses to enable them to maintain competitiveness (Birmingham Airport, National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham Business Park, Blythe Valley Park, Jaguar Land Rover) whilst contributing to sustainable development;**
- **Retaining and developing a high skilled workforce;**
- **Provide a range of housing to attract inward investment.**⁹
(our emphasis)

3.15 The Council acknowledge the link between housing and labour in this objective.

3.16 Policy P5 of the Draft Plan – Provision of Land for Housing – allocates land for **15,017 dwellings** in Solihull over the 2020-2036 Plan period. This equates to **938 dwellings per annum (dpa)**.¹⁰

3.17 The justification for this level of housing is set out in the explanatory text for Policy P5. In summary, the text states that housing need in excess of the Standard Method minimum (807 dpa) is required to meet economic growth generated by the ‘UK Central Hub’ scenario set out in the Council’s October 2020 ‘Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment’ (HEDNA).

3.18 The HEDNA concludes that 816 dpa is required to achieve the objective of supporting the UK Central Hub scenario. Growth of 816 dpa is therefore reported in the Draft Plan as representing housing need for Solihull Borough.¹¹

⁸ Challenge B, pages 13-14, Solihull Local Plan – Draft Submission Plan, October 2020

⁹ Challenge D, pages 15-16, Solihull Local Plan – Draft Submission Plan, October 2020

¹⁰ Page 67, Solihull Local Plan – Draft Submission Plan, October 2020

¹¹ Paragraph 221, page 68, Solihull Local Plan – Draft Submission Plan, October 2020

3.19 However the Council also determines there to be total capacity for 15,017 dwellings 2020-2036 (938 dpa). On this basis the Draft Plan states that 2,105 dwellings will be provided for Birmingham City's unmet need. This is the difference between the Standard Method baseline (12,912 dwellings 2020-2036) and the capacity of 15,017 dwellings. The capacity of 15,017 dwellings is therefore set as the housing requirement.¹²

UK Central Solihull Hub Area

3.20 As explained above there is a link between the housing need determined by the Council's HEDNA, and the job growth expected to be created by the UK Central Hub. It is therefore of assistance to summarise how the Hub area is expected to grow, and its status both regionally and nationally.

3.21 The Draft Plan describes the Hub as follows:

"The UK Central Solihull proposals present a unique opportunity on a nationally significant scale to bring forward major growth. This will contribute to wider strategic ambitions and in doing so make a substantial contribution to the economic growth aims of not just the Council, but also both the WMCA and the GBSLEP. The UK Central Solihull area, including The Hub, where key economic assets are located, also encompasses the proposed High Speed 2 Interchange railway station within the triangle of land bounded by the A45, A452 and the M42, known as Arden Cross."¹³ (our emphasis)

3.22 The status of the Hub emphasises its importance nationally. It is therefore imperative that enough homes are built to support the economic growth envisaged.

Summary

3.23 In summary, the following key points can be drawn from the Adopted Plan and the Supplementary Consultation document:

- A clear commitment to provide some of the wider HMA's unmet need;
- Housing delivery for Solihull Borough based on achieving growth in the UK central Hub;
- Acknowledgement that Solihull is in a unique geographical location which can support significant levels of new employment.

¹² Paragraphs 227-228, page 73, Solihull Local Plan – Draft Submission Plan, October 2020

¹³ Paragraph 72, page 31, Solihull Local Plan – Draft Submission Plan, October 2020

3.24 Having established the policy context for Solihull, the following section considers recent evidence in respect of housing need and employment growth.

4.0 EVIDENCE BASE REVIEW

i) Introduction

4.1 This section of our Report builds on the policy context summarised in section 3, by considering the most recent evidence published by the Council in respect of housing need and employment growth. This is predominantly set out in the recent 'Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment' (HEDNA) published in October 2020 which includes several possible scenarios for employment and housing growth. In this section of the Report, we consider these scenarios and how they were generated.

ii) Solihull HEDNA (October 2020)

Economic-led housing need assumptions

4.2 The Solihull HEDNA includes several sections relating to housing and the economy. This Report is concerned primarily with the sections of the HEDNA which determine the overall housing need for the Borough, and how this is calculated.

4.3 As discussed in the policy section of this Note, the final level of housing need (816 dpa) is linked to the economic growth expected in the UK Central Hub growth.

4.4 The HEDNA determines that growth will total 22,998 jobs in Solihull over the 16-year Plan period (1,437 jobs per annum – jpa). This is made up of a baseline job growth forecast from Experian (10,000 jobs 2020-2036), plus growth above the baseline generated by the UK Central Hub including expansion at Jaguar Land Rover, Birmingham Airport, the National Exhibition Centre and the HS2 interchange development Arden Cross (equating to an additional 12,998 jobs 2020-2036).¹⁴

4.5 The HEDNA determines the amount of housing required to support this level of job growth, by calculating the growth in the economically active population that will need to occur.

¹⁴ Paragraph 21, page 6, Solihull Borough HEDNA, October 2020

- 4.6 This is done by using a demographic forecasting model and applying a variety of assumptions alongside demographic assumptions (fertility, mortality, migration). These assumptions are listed as follows:
- Economic Activity Rates (EARs);
 - Unemployment rates;
 - Double jobbing (those with more than one job);
 - Commuting.
- 4.7 In respect of **EARs**, the HEDNA states that *“the future rates of change for economic activity are based on data provided by the Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) produced in the summer of 2018. These are national rates and have been rebased and applied to Solihull based on 2011 census data.”*¹⁵ This is the same approach that Barton Willmore would take in applying EARs and we agree with its application. The demographic forecasting we present in the following section of this report is underpinned by the same approach to EARs.
- 4.8 In respect of **unemployment** rates the HEDNA states that *“The methodology assumes that the number of people that are unemployed in Solihull remains the same moving forward to 2036.”* The number of people unemployed is presented in figure 32 of the HEDNA and is approximately 4,000 people in 2019. Based on the HEDNA data on economically active population in 2020 (Table 29) this equates to approximately 3.6% unemployed.
- 4.9 Barton Willmore’s approach differs, as we have consulted the Annual Population Survey (APS) to determine the most recent calculation of unemployment. The APS is a continuous household survey, covering the UK. The topics covered include employment and unemployment, as well as housing, ethnicity, religion, health and education. The purpose of the APS is to provide information on important social and socio-economic variables at local levels.
- 4.10 The most recent data available is for the year up to June 2020 and therefore considers the initial effects of COVID-19. The unemployment rate in the most recent data is 4.2%. We have therefore assumed 4.2% unemployment in 2020, falling back to pre-COVID levels of 3.8% by mid-2022 and remaining at that level thereafter.

¹⁵ Paragraph 6.12, page 82, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council HEDNA, October 2020

- 4.11 The HEDNA also applies an adjustment for **double jobbing**, i.e. people who have more than one job. The HEDNA applies an adjustment of 3.1% for this factor¹⁶, and Barton Willmore agree.
- 4.12 The **commuting ratio** is an important assumption. The HEDNA states *“In an area such as Solihull where more people in-commute for work than out-commute it may be the case that a lower increase in the economically active/working population would be required to provide enough workforce for a given number of jobs than if the reverse is true (and vice versa where there is net out-commuting).”*¹⁷ As the HEDNA quite rightly confirms, the 2011 Census showed a commuting ratio of 0.98 for Solihull. This means that for every 98 new economically active residents, 100 jobs could be supported.
- 4.13 The HEDNA also comments *“there are likely to have been changes to commuting patterns since 2011 and there are likely to be further changes as a result of the anticipated level of growth set out herein.”*¹⁸ Barton Willmore agree with this in part, i.e. that commuting patterns are likely to have changed. We have therefore utilised the Annual Population Survey (APS) as well, which confirms the evidence of the HEDNA in Figure 34, i.e. there has been a fluctuation in the commuting ratio since the 2011 Census.
- 4.14 However, as our analysis shows in Table 4.1, the APS data suggests there has remained a net in-commute to Solihull over the most recent 5-year period available.

Table 4.1: Annual Population Survey (APS) Resident and Workplace Population

	APS		APS commuting ratio
	Resident	Workplace	
Jan 2015-Dec 2015	95,000	97,700	0.97
Jan 2016-Dec 2016	98,800	112,400	0.88
Jan 2017-Dec 2017	104,000	108,800	0.96
Jan 2018-Dec 2018	100,300	112,600	0.89
Jan 2019-Dec 2019	102,100	105,900	0.96
Average	100,040	107,480	0.93

Source: APS, December 2020

- 4.15 The average over the most recent five-year period available is 0.93 as Table 4.1 shows. In our demographic modelling we have therefore sensitivity tested our scenarios based on two approaches to commuting, 0.93 (APS average), and 0.98 (2011 Census). The HEDNA uses the

¹⁶ Paragraph 6.16, page 84, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council HEDNA, October 2020

¹⁷ Paragraph 6.17, page 84, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council HEDNA, October 2020

¹⁸ Paragraph 6.20, page 85, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council HEDNA, October 2020

2011 Census ratio throughout but as we explain below, assumes that some of the job growth in some scenarios will be taken up by residents of other Boroughs/Districts. This approach has a prominent impact on the resulting calculation of housing need.

Economic-led housing need scenarios

4.16 The HEDNA uses the assumptions discussed above to test a range of job growth numbers based on several scenarios. These scenarios can be summarised as follows:

- **Baseline Growth (10,000 jobs 2020-2036)** – this is the baseline job growth forecast obtained from Experian Economics.
- **Growth A (15,680 jobs 2020-2036)** – this is an increase from the baseline growth, which the HEDNA states as *“allowing for a greater influence of recent trends”*¹⁹ and explains as follows; *“The ‘growth’ scenario does not rely on specific interventions but reflects modelled growth where locally high performing sectors of manufacturing, transport & storage, accommodation & food service, information & communication, real estate activities, and professional scientific & technical outperform the baseline forecast.”*²⁰
- **Growth B (15,680 jobs 2020-2036)** – as above but 10,000 jobs at 2011 Ratios plus only 38.5% (2,187 jobs) of the additional 5,680 jobs are taken up by local residents. The HEDNA states this scenario is intended to *“inform duty to cooperate discussions with neighbouring authority.”*²¹
- **Growth C (UKC) (22,998 jobs 2020-2036)** – 10,000 jobs baseline growth plus 12,998 jobs created through the Hub. However, only 25.3% (3,250 jobs) of the additional 12,998 jobs will be taken up by Solihull residents. This is again said by the HEDNA to inform duty to cooperate discussions.

4.17 The preferred UK Central Hub scenario (Scenario C above) is based on a significant proportion of the economic-led housing need being met by surrounding local authorities, and states that this scenario (and scenario B before it) is to *“aid duty to cooperate discussion with neighbouring authorities.”*²²

¹⁹ Paragraph 12.18, page 198, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council HEDNA, October 2020

²⁰ Paragraph 22, page 6, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council HEDNA, October 2020

²¹ Paragraph 6.31, page 87, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council HEDNA, October 2020

²² Paragraph 6.34, page 90, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council HEDNA, October 2020

- 4.18 The HEDNA therefore runs just a single scenario for the UK Central Hub job growth, based on growth of only 13,250 jobs in Solihull (of the 22,998-total generated by the UK Central Hub). Table 36 of the HEDNA shows how this would result in the 816 dpa being required in Solihull.
- 4.19 However, this means that the housing need generated by the remaining 9,750 jobs in the Growth C scenario would be generated in neighbouring authorities. This is simply an assumption as no evidence is presented to support this position and its purpose is simply stated within the HEDNA to be to 'aid' duty to cooperate discussions. There is no guarantee that neighbouring authorities will be agreeable to this approach. Furthermore, it is important to understand how many homes would be required in Solihull Borough if all jobs are taken up by Solihull residents so that the full quantum of housing need is understood.
- 4.20 Table 36 also shows how 'Growth A' would require **908 dpa** in Solihull based on the 2011 Census commuting ratio; a significant increase to the 817 dpa put forward as the recommended level of need to inform the housing requirement of the Plan.
- 4.21 However, the HEDNA does not test the outcome of the UK Central Hub scenario in the same way as 'Growth A'. This is an omission. All the scenarios should be tested in a similar manner to provide a full understanding of the potential housing need requirements for Solihull. We therefore provide the relevant consideration of the Growth C scenario in the following section of this Report.

Affordable Housing

- 4.22 BW do not advocate that affordable need has to be met in full when determining OAN, given the judgment of Mr Justice Dove in the Kings Lynn case (High Court Judgment)²³. This concluded neither the NPPF nor the PPG suggest affordable housing need must be met in full.
- 4.23 However, in a Borough where housing affordability is a significant issue, the impact of affordable housing should be considered and *"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.."*²⁴ (our emphasis)

²³ Paragraphs 32-25, pages 10-11, High Court Judgment, Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, ELM Park Holdings Ltd, 09 July 2015

²⁴ PPG, ID2a-024, 20 February 2019

4.24 The 2020 HEDNA states that the shortage of affordable housing is “clearly acute”²⁵ and determines ‘net’ affordable need of 578 dpa for Solihull. In this context the HEDNA concludes as follows:

“The provision of new affordable housing is an important and pressing issue in the Borough.”²⁶ (our emphasis)

“The analysis identifies a need for 578 affordable homes to rent per annum. This scale of need the Council is justified in seeking to secure as much affordable housing as viability allows.”²⁷ (our emphasis)

4.25 Based on the Plan’s requirement for 40% of homes to be affordable, OAN of 1,445 dpa would be required to deliver affordable need in full. The HEDNA’s conclusion of need (817 dpa) and the proposed housing requirement (938 dpa) would deliver only 57% and 65% of this figure respectively.

4.26 Affordable housing delivery in is another factor. The Council’s 2018/19 Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) (March 2020) records 1,105 net affordable completions in the past five years (221 per annum). Against the need determined by the 2020 HEDNA (578 affordable dwellings per annum) this would account for only 38% of need, while the delivery of affordable housing over the 2014-2019 period represents 32% of total housing completions during this time.

4.27 This is an important indicator of the Council’s failure to deliver affordable housing at the levels which the 2020 HEDNA considers are required moving forward. This is to be noted in the context of an affordable need position regarded as ‘clearly acute’ by the HEDNA. The Plan should therefore consider an increase in the total number of homes planned for to achieve as much affordable housing delivery as possible.

iii) Summary

4.28 In summary, Barton Willmore agree with most assumptions used in determining economic-led housing need set out in the 2020 HEDNA.

4.29 However, an additional scenario to test the UK Central Hub growth scenario (22,998 jobs) is required to determine how many homes might be required to support this job growth in Solihull

²⁵ Paragraph 7.69, page 114, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council HEDNA, October 2020

²⁶ Page 126, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council HEDNA, October 2020

²⁷ Paragraph 35, page 7, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council HEDNA, October 2020

where all jobs are filled by residents of Solihull. We provide this in the following section of this report, alongside testing an alternative commuting ratio based on the past 5 years data from the APS.

- 4.30 In addition, the HEDNA identifies an 'acute' situation in respect of affordable housing need. To date the council has struggled to deliver its affordable housing need. Since affordable homes will be delivered through private sector developments it is imperative that sufficient housing is provided to ensure that the maximum amount of the overall affordable housing requirement is met, subject to environmental constraints. Based on the past record of delivery the HEDNA's conclusion on overall need (816 dpa) should be increased to supply as much affordable housing need as possible.

5.0 DEMOGRAPHIC FORECASTING AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

i) Introduction

- 5.1 This section of our Report provides a range of demographic forecasting scenarios which sensitivity test the results of the Council's HEDNA. Specifically we have sensitivity tested the number of jobs supported by the Standard Method (SM, 807 dwellings per annum), alongside the number of homes that would be required to support the level of job growth supported by the HEDNA (22,998 jobs 2020-2036).
- 5.2 This exercise is intended to test whether robust alternative assumptions to those used in the HEDNA provide different results in respect of future housing need. This is an important exercise due to the various assumptions used to underpin the demographic forecasting scenarios that have resulted in the HEDNA's conclusions.

ii) Demographic forecasting scenario and results

Methodology and Assumptions

- 5.3 To undertake the demographic modelling, we have used the PopGroup model, managed by Edge Analytics and widely used for forecasting of this nature by a variety of groups and organisations, including local authorities and planning consultancies.
- 5.4 The model requires several different demographic and economic assumptions, and these have the potential to result in significant differences to the results and therefore the number of homes considered to be required through the Plan process.
- 5.5 For the purposes of this report we have used the most recent 2018-based ONS SNPP data for mortality, migration, and fertility rates. This is the most recent data module available from Edge Analytics, the company who manage the PopGroup model and its data.
- 5.6 However, ONS have stated how internal migration in the latest 2018-based ONS Sub National Population Projections (SNPP) is underpinned by a very short 2-year trend. This is due to the ONS changing the method by which internal migration is recorded. A 2-year trend is not as robust as the 5-year period used historically in ONS SNPPs. We have therefore sensitivity tested our

scenarios with the previous 2016-based ONS SNPP mortality, migration, and fertility rates to provide a more rounded picture.

5.7 In respect of Household Formation Rates (HFRs), we have used the 2014-based MHCLG household projections, thereby discounting the more recent 2016 and 2018 projections published by ONS. This is because of the criticism of the methodology employed by ONS in the 2016 and 2018 projections²⁸, and the decision of Government to underpin the Standard Method with the 2014 projections.

5.8 We have also used two approaches to commuting. The first is the 2011 Census, a widely accepted approach. However, given the age of that data, we have also used the Annual Population Survey (APS), and the average commuting ratio recorded over the past five years (0.93). Again, this approach provides a more encompassing approach.

5.9 In this context the assumptions used in the modelling are summarised below:

- 2016/2018-based ONS Mortality, Migration, and Fertility Rates;
- 2019 ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates;
- 2014-based Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) household formation rates;
- 2014-based MHCLG institutional population;
- July 2018 Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) economic activity projections;
- 2011 Census commuting ratio (0.98)/Annual Population Survey (APS) commuting ratio average 2014-2019 (0.93);
- Unemployment recorded by the APS in the year up to June 2020 (4.2%) falling to 3.8% (pre-Covid) by 2022 and remaining at 3.8% thereafter;
- Double Jobbing (those with more than one job) assumption in the 2020 HEDNA (3.1%).

²⁸ 2016/2018 household projections are underpinned by trends drawn from 2001 to the present. This differs from the 2014 projections and all household projections which came before, which were underpinned by trends since 1971. The 2016/2018 projections are therefore underpinned by a period in which housing became rapidly more unaffordable at a national and local level. This has manifested itself in the significant increase since 2001 of 'concealed families', those who cannot afford to form their own independent households and instead are forced to live with friends or relatives. The use of the 2016/2018 household projections for Planning purposes would therefore be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Furthermore the 2018-based household projections are underpinned by the 2018-based ONS Sub National Population Projections (SNPP). These SNPP are based on a 2-year net internal migration trend, rather than the more representative 5-year period used in previous SNPPs.

Standard Method for calculating minimum housing need (October 2020)

5.10 Below we set out the results of our demographic modelling scenario which constrains the model to the number of homes calculated by the Standard Method, i.e. **807 dpa**. As PPG identifies this should be the **minimum** level of housing need considered for the purposes of the Plan. PPG also recognises how 'actual' housing need may need to be higher than the Standard Method minimum to meet other growth aspirations. As we have summarised in previous sections of this report, Solihull Borough Council (SBC) have clear growth aspirations for the Plan period and it is therefore imperative that the housing requirement seeks to achieve these aims and objectives over the 16 year Plan period.

Table 5.1: Standard Method dwelling-led scenario (807 dpa) – 2016-based ONS SNPP rates

	2020	2036	2020-2036 (per annum)
Population	217,020	242,297	25,277 (1,580)
Economically Active Population	110,875	122,996	12,121 (758)
Jobs Supported ¹	108,361	120,709	12,349 (772)
Jobs Supported ²	114,213	127,228	13,015 (813)

Source: Barton Willmore modelling

¹2011 Census commuting ratio (0.98) continuing from 2020-2036;

²Change in commuting ratio between 2011 and 2020 from 0.98 to 0.93. Commuting ratio of 0.93 continuing 2020-2036.

5.11 Table 5.1 shows how the minimum level of housing need for Solihull (807 dpa) would only support **between 772 and 813 jobs per annum** over the Plan period. This range is based on two assumptions of commuting being applied to the change in the economically active population, as we have explained above.

5.12 The difference in the number of jobs at the start of the Plan period (2020) in the two results set out above is due to 1) an assumption that the 2011 Census commuting ratio has remained unchanged since 2011, and 2) that the ratio has changed over the nine years from 0.98 to 0.93 and remains at 0.93 thereafter.

5.13 We have sensitivity tested the same scenarios set out in Table 5.1, with the 2018-based ONS SNPP assumptions in respect of mortality, migration, and fertility rates. The results are set out in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Standard Method dwelling-led scenario (807 dpa) – 2018-based ONS SNPP rates

	2020	2036	2020-2036 (per annum)
Population	217,311	246,349	29,038 (1,815)
Economically Active Population ¹	111,243	127,307	16,064 (1,004)
Jobs Supported ¹	108,721	124,941	16,220 (1,014)
Jobs Supported ²	114,592	131,688	17,096 (1,068)

Source: Barton Willmore modelling

¹2011 Census commuting ratio (0.98) continuing from 2020-2036;

²Change in commuting ratio between 2011 and 2020 from 0.98 to 0.93. Commuting ratio of 0.93 continuing 2020-2036.

5.14 The results set out in Table 5.2 show how the different fertility, mortality, and migration rates of the 2018-based ONS SNPP would affect the number of jobs which could be supported by 807 dpa 2020-2036. This increases from a range of 772 to 813 dpa under the 2016 ONS SNPP rates, to between 1,014 and 1,068 jobs per annum.

5.15 This increase in the 2018 rates scenario is largely driven by an assumption of higher internal (UK-wide) and external (overseas) in-migration to Solihull. However, given the concerns over the methodology used to determine internal migration, the 2018-based ONS SNPP should be treated with some caution.

5.16 However, taken together, a reasonable mid-point would suggest that 807 dpa would support approximately 900 jobs per annum, or between 14,500 and 15,000 jobs over the Plan period.

5.17 This would fall well short of the 22,998 jobs which the HEDNA recommends as the growth which should underpin the level of housing need.

Economic Growth

- 5.18 The HEDNA states that growth of 816 dpa 2020-2036 is required to achieve the baseline job growth plus the UK Central Hub growth scenario presented in the HEDNA. This equates to 22,998 jobs 2020-2036 (1,437 jobs per annum).
- 5.19 Having established that the Standard Method (807 dpa) would fail to support this level of job growth, we have sensitivity tested the HEDNA's conclusions based on the assumptions set out at the start of this section. Our results are set out in Tables 5.3 and 5.4 below.

Table 5.3: Economic-led scenario (22,998 jobs 2020-2036) – 2016-based ONS SNPP rates

	2020	2036	2020-2036 (per annum)
Population ¹	217,020	260,607	43,587 (2,724)
Population ²	217,020	258,423	41,253 (2,595)
Economically Active Population ¹	110,875	131,017	22,624 (1,414)
Economically Active Population ²	110,875	132,316	21,441 (1,340)
Dwellings ¹	92,128	112,104	19,975 (1,248)
Dwellings ²	92,128	111,308	19,180 (1,199)

Source: Barton Willmore modelling

¹2011 Census commuting ratio (0.98) continuing from 2020-2036;

²Change in commuting ratio between 2011 and 2020 from 0.98 to 0.93. Commuting ratio of 0.93 continuing 2020-2036.

Table 5.4: Economic-led scenario (22,998 jobs 2020-2036) – 2018-based ONS SNPP rates

	2020	2036	2020-2036 (per annum)
Population ¹	217,311	257,588	40,247 (2,515)
Population ²	217,311	255,525	38,214 (2,388)
Economically Active Population	111,243	133,866	22,623 (1,414)
Economically Active Population	111,243	132,683	21,440 (1,340)
Dwellings ¹	92,117	109,480	17,363 (1,085)
Dwellings ²	92,117	108,687	16,570 (1,036)

Source: Barton Willmore modelling

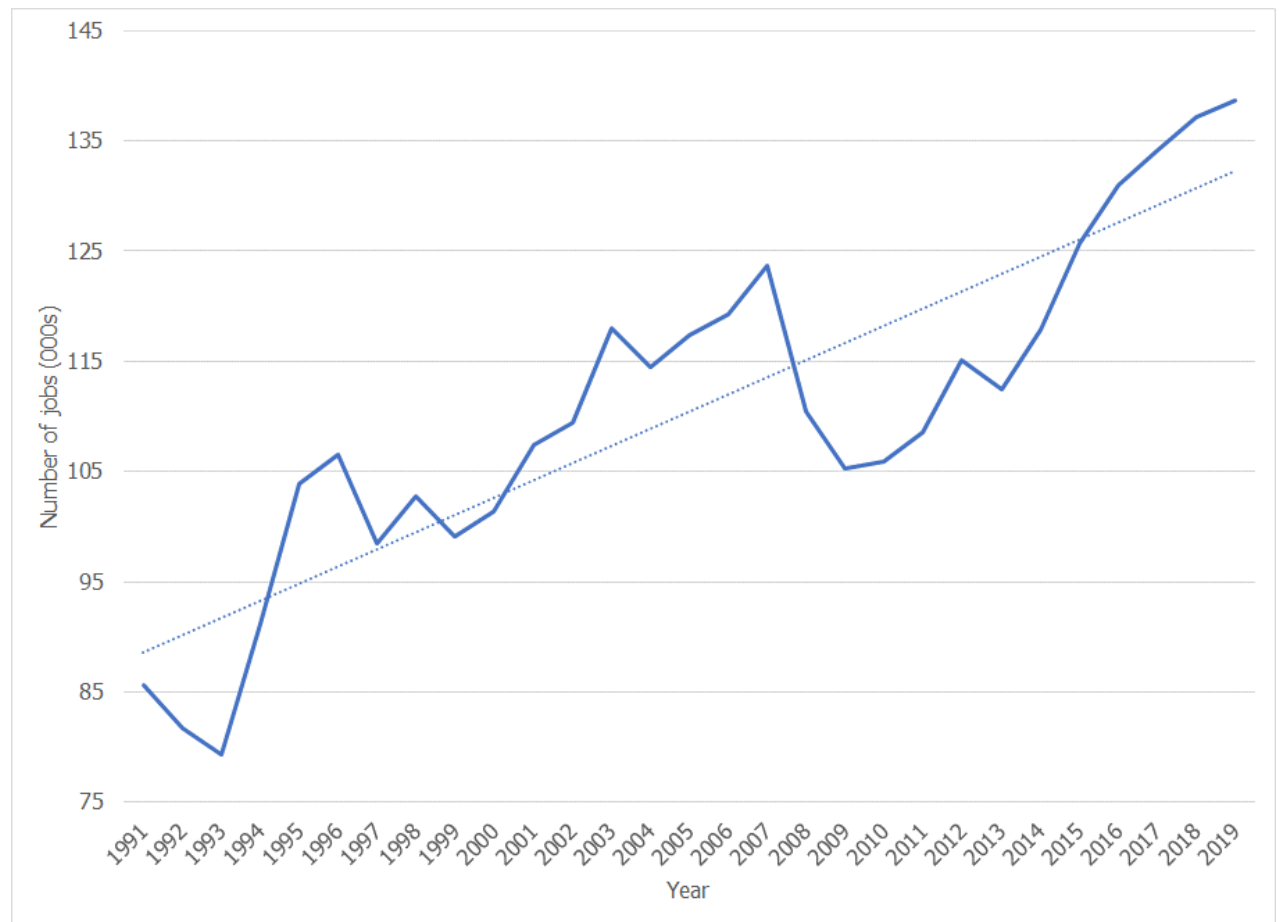
¹2011 Census commuting ratio (0.98) continuing from 2020-2036;

²Change in commuting ratio between 2011 and 2020 from 0.98 to 0.93. Commuting ratio of 0.93 continuing 2020-2036.

- 5.20 The above tables show how need in Solihull would range **between 1,199 and 1,248 dpa** based on the 2016-based ONS SNPP demographic rates. This reduces to **between 1,036 and 1,085 dpa** based on the more recent 2018-based ONS SNPP rates.
- 5.21 For reasons already explained, we would consider that the 2016-based ONS SNPP rates are more robust. However, a mid-point housing need figure of a **minimum 1,150 dpa** to meet growth of 22,998 jobs 2020-2036 would be a reasonable conclusion.

Historic job growth and housing need

- 5.22 Alongside the UK Central Hub scenario we have considered above, historic levels of job growth should also be considered. We have obtained this data from Oxford Economics dating back to 1991, and have therefore set out historic levels of job growth for Solihull in Figure 5.1 below:

Figure 5.1: Historic levels of employment in Solihull, 1991-2019

Source: Oxford Economics, October 2020

- 5.23 Figure 5.1 illustrates how the historic levels of job growth have fluctuated significantly in Solihull. In deciding on a reasonable calculation of past job growth to use for modelling purposes, an arbitrary period cannot be used. For example, using the most recent 10-year period (2009-2019) shows that there was growth of 34,000 jobs (3,400 jobs per annum). Similarly, using the inter-censal period between 2001 and 2011 would show a much less pronounced increase (1,200 jobs). Both figures illustrate the need to analyse historic levels of job growth more closely.
- 5.24 Barton Willmore's approach is therefore to identify 'peaks' and 'troughs' in the number of jobs, which provides a more realistic calculation of average job growth in the past. For Solihull there are clear peaks above the trend line (dotted line in Figure 5.1) in 1996 and 2016. Over this 20-year period there was growth of 24,500 jobs (1,225 jobs per annum). In contrast there are clear troughs below the trend line in 1993 and 2009; this results in growth of 26,400 jobs (1,650 jobs per annum).

5.25 In this context Barton Willmore consider that the UK Central Hub scenario (1,434 jobs per annum) favoured by the HEDNA and used to underpin economic-led housing need calculations is a realistic and reasonable level of job growth to expect in Solihull over the Plan period.

iii) Summary

5.26 In summary, the key points from this section are as follows:

- The Government's existing Standard Method calculates a minimum need of 807 dwellings per annum in Solihull, 2020-2036. Our demographic modelling shows how this will serve to support between 12,349 and 17,096 jobs 2020-2036;
- A mid-point of this suggests approximately 14,500 – 15,000 jobs over the Plan period. The Standard Method will therefore only support a maximum 65% of the job growth supported by the Council in their 2020 HEDNA (22,998 jobs 2020-2036);
- Economic-led demographic forecasting scenarios show a need for between 16,570 and 19,975 dwellings 2020-2036 (between 1,036 and 1,248 dpa);
- A mid-point therefore suggests a need for 18,500 homes over the Plan period to support the UK Central Hub scenario supported by the Council.

6.0 GREATER BIRMINGHAM AND BLACK COUNTRY UNMET HOUSING NEED

i) Introduction

- 6.1 Solihull Borough Council (SBC) is located within the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBCHMA) and is therefore responsible for delivering a proportion of any unmet need from authorities within the HMA, alongside the other 13 local authorities within the HMA.
- 6.2 This issue has been identified by SBC throughout the Plan process and has been updated in the Draft Submission Plan following the July 2020 GBBCHMA Position Statement.
- 6.3 The Position Statement concludes that capacity in Birmingham City has now increased to 65,400 dwellings²⁹ 2011-2031. The shortfall from the OAN determined by the adopted plan (89,000 dwellings 2011-2031) has therefore reduced to 23,600 dwellings.
- 6.4 Once commitments by HMA Local Plans to delivering unmet need have been considered, the Position Statement concludes that the shortfall is reduced from 23,600 to only 2,597 dwellings up to 2031. This represents a fall in the amount of shortfall still to be delivered of 13,728 dwellings since the baseline Strategic Growth Study (SDS) was produced.³⁰
- 6.5 However, the July 2020 Position Statement concedes that there will be a HMA shortfall *post* 2031 in the wider HMA, with the Black Country alone estimating a shortfall of 29,620 dwellings.³¹ However notwithstanding this comment the Position Statement makes no estimate of what the unmet need might be post 2031.
- 6.6 Solihull's Draft Plan makes an allowance for an additional 2,105 dwellings 2020-2036 to meet some of the unmet need recognised by the Birmingham City Development Plan. As set out in paragraph 3.19 above, this allowance is based on the difference between the capacity for housing identified by SBC (15,017 dwellings) and the Standard Method for calculating minimum housing need (12,912 dwellings).

²⁹ Table 6, Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBCHMA) Housing Need and Housing Land Supply Position Statement (July 2020)

³⁰ Paragraph 6.2, Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBCHMA) Housing Need and Housing Land Supply Position Statement (July 2020)

³¹ Paragraph 6.2, Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBCHMA) Housing Need and Housing Land Supply Position Statement (July 2020)

6.7 The housing requirement for the Draft Submission Plan is therefore set at 15,017 dwellings 2020-2036 (938 dpa). On a pro rata basis this suggests 1,447 dwellings will be delivered by SBC towards Birmingham's unmet need up to 2031.

6.8 In this section we consider the conclusions of the July 2020 position statement on unmet need up to 2031, alongside possible unmet need beyond 2031.

ii) Adopted Birmingham City Plan Unmet Need 2011-2031

6.9 As we have outlined above, the July 2020 GBBC HMA Position Statement concludes there to be a shortfall of 2,597 dwellings against Birmingham City's unmet need up to 2031.

6.10 However, Barton Willmore consider this figure to be far higher at **between 11,294 and 13,101 dwellings** up to 2031 (see Table 6.1).

Table 6.1: Adopted Birmingham City Plan Unmet Housing Need 2011-2031

Local Authority	Existing/ Proposed Plan period	Total Provision for GBBC HMA Unmet Need	Average annual contribution	Pro rata contribution to BCC unmet need 2011-2031	Shortfall against BCC Local Plan	
Birmingham City	2011-31	n/a	n/a	n/a	23,600 ¹	Birmingham City Deficit to 2031
Bromsgrove	2023-40	0	0	0	n/a	
Cannock Chase	2018-36	0 – 2,500	0 – 139	0 – 1,807	n/a	
Lichfield	2018-40	4,500	205	2,659	n/a	
Redditch	2011-30	0	0	0	n/a	
Solihull	2020-36	2,105	132	1,447	n/a	
Tamworth	2006-31	0	0	0	n/a	
North Warwickshire	2014-33	3,790	199	3,391	n/a	
Stratford-on-Avon	2011-31	265	13	265	n/a	
Black Country²	2019-38	3,000*	158*	1,895*	n/a	
South Staffordshire	2018-37	4,000	200	2,737	n/a	
Total		14,660 – 17,160	n/a	10,499 – 12,306	23,600	11,294 – 13,101

¹ Table 6, page 12, Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBC HMA) Housing Need and Housing Land Supply Position Statement (July 2020), OAN (89,000 dwellings) – Capacity (65,400 dwellings);

² The Black Country authorities are unable to meet their own need. We have therefore excluded the contribution of 3,000 dwellings to BCC's unmet need from the table and associated calculations;

- 6.11 Barton Willmore's position is based on the latest Local Plan position in each of the authorities and the amount of HMA unmet need they are proposing to deliver. However it should be noted that the unmet need figures proposed in the Plan are not exclusively for BCC and instead look to address unmet need across the HMA.
- 6.12 Furthermore, several of the proposed plan periods exceed 2031. It cannot therefore be assumed that the individual Local Plans will deliver their unmet need proportions by 2031, where their plan periods extend beyond 2031.
- 6.13 We have therefore made a pro-rata calculation of the proposed contribution based on the number of years in the proposed Plan period up to 2031, i.e. Lichfield propose 4,500 dwellings over their plan period (2018-2040); therefore $4,500/22$ years (205 dwellings per annum) x 13 years (2018-2031) = 2,659 dwelling contribution up to 2031.
- 6.14 It should be noted that we consider this to be a 'best case' scenario as it assumes all delivery will be towards BCC's unmet need, whereas the Black Country will also have unmet need up to 2031.
- 6.15 Alongside BCC, the Black Country should also be considered, in the context of the July 2020 GBBC HMA Position Statement's admission that the Black Country has evidenced a significant shortfall through its 2019 Urban Capacity Review Update (UCRU) of **up to 29,260 dwellings between 2019 and 2038**, against the 2019 NPPF's Standard Method (SM).³²
- 6.16 From this overall figure the UCRU states there will be a shortfall of 7,485 dwellings up to 2031. However, if we were to look at the overall shortfall as an average, it would suggest a much higher shortfall totalling 18,480 dwellings up to 2031 ($29,260/19$ years = 1,540 dpa x 12 years (2019-2031) = 18,480 dwellings shortfall).

³² Paragraph 2.13, Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBCHMA) Housing Need and Housing Land Supply Position Statement (July 2020)

iii) GBBCHMA Unmet Housing Need 2011-2031

- 6.17 The analysis set out above relates solely to Birmingham City Council's adopted Plan, which was assessed under the provisions of the 2012 NPPF and the Objective Assessment of Housing Need (OAHN).
- 6.18 However, as of October 2020 Local Plans must now be prepared by using the Standard Method, introduced by the 2019 NPPF. It is important to emphasise how the Standard Method determines minimum housing need for each local authority.
- 6.19 The PPG is very clear that 'actual' housing need may be higher, and this is most notably emphasised in the case of Birmingham City.
- 6.20 In Birmingham City, minimum housing need under the Standard Method is 'capped' at **3,577 dpa**. This is despite step 1 of the Standard Method calculation – the 2014-based MHCLG household projections – showing need of nearly 1,000 dpa higher (4,538 dpa).
- 6.21 Furthermore, step 2 of the Standard Method leads to a **12% uplift** to the 2014-based MHCLG household projection. This results in a Standard Method calculation of 5,069 dpa, a **42% increase** to the 'capped' figure that would apply at the present time.
- 6.22 Birmingham City benefit from the 'capped' figure of 3,577 dpa due to the status of the Local Plan, which has been adopted within the past 5 years. Where a Plan has been adopted within the past 5 years, the final Standard Method figure is capped at 40% above the average annual housing requirement figure set out in the existing policies i.e. $2,555 \times 40\% = 3,577$ dpa.
- 6.23 The Birmingham City Plan was adopted on 10 January 2017. This means that on the 11 January 2022 (14 months at the time of writing), the Standard Method will be capped at 40% above **whichever is the higher of** a) the projected household growth for the area over the 10 year period identified in step 1; or b) the average annual housing requirement figure set out in the most recently adopted strategic policies (if a figure exists).
- 6.24 For Birmingham City, a) applies and the Standard Method calculation will exceed 5,000 dpa as of early 2022.

6.25 It is therefore considered appropriate to consider what the Standard Method would mean for Birmingham and the HMA.

6.26 We have considered this in Table 6.2. Additionally, we have included other authorities in the GBBC HMA where the Standard Method would lead to unmet need.

Table 6.2: GBBC HMA Standard Method Minimum Unmet Housing Need 2011-2031

Local Authority	Existing/ Proposed Plan period	Standard Method (uncapped)	Current/ Emerging Plan Requirement	Unmet Need Total 2011-2031	Total Provision for Unmet Need 2011-2031	
Birmingham City	2011-31	3,577 (5,069)	2,555	20,440 (50,280)	n/a	
Bromsgrove	2023-40	379	379	0	0	
Cannock Chase	2018-36	276	284/312/ 367/423	0	0/360/1,083/ 1,806	
Lichfield	2018-40	321	536	0	2,659	
Redditch	2011-30	174	337	0	0	
Solihull	2020-36	807	938	0	1,447	
Tamworth	2006-31	149	177	0	0	
North Warwickshire	2014-33	171	436	0	3,391	
Stratford-on-Avon	2011-31	603	730	0	265	
Black Country	2019-38	3,756	2,220	18,432	1,895*	
South Staffordshire	2018-37	254	466	0	2,737	
Telford & Wrekin	2011-31	n/a	0	2011-31	0	
Shropshire	2016-38			2016-38	1,023	
Total		10,467	9,058 – 9,197	38,872	11,522 – 13,329	25,543 – 27,350

*Black Country cannot meet its own need. Contribution to BCC unmet need excluded

6.27 As Table 6.2 summarises, the Standard Method would result in **minimum** unmet need across the GBBC HMA of **25,543 dwellings up to 2031**. This is based on the 'capped' figure which currently applies in Birmingham City. This is made up of unmet need from Birmingham City and the Black Country authorities only and is based on the Birmingham City Plan figure of 51,100 dwellings 2011-2031. If we were to assume the increased capacity (65,400 dwellings 2011-2031) set out in the

Position Statement the unmet need would still be **between 11,243 and 13,050** dwellings up to 2031, very similar to the conclusion we have made in Table 6.1.

6.28 However, as we have identified above, the 'actual' uncapped housing need calculation for Birmingham City would increase this dramatically to **approximately 55,000 dwellings up to 2031** based on the Birmingham Local Plan figure, falling to between 41,083 and 42,890 dwellings based on the increased capacity for Birmingham suggested by the Position Statement. This higher figure will represent unmet need in the HMA when the existing Birmingham Plan becomes more than five years old in January 2022.

Unmet Need Beyond 2031

6.29 Several emerging Local Plans in the HMA cover a period exceeding 2031, and it is therefore appropriate to consider what the level of unmet need may be beyond 2031 and up to 2040.

6.30 The 2020 Position Statement recognises there will be unmet need after 2031, but does not provide an estimate of what this might be, only stating the following:

"It is, however, now apparent that there will be a HMA shortfall post 2031, with the Black Country alone estimating a shortfall of 29,260, which it will consider through the Black Country Plan review. The scale of the post 2031 shortfall for Birmingham, and potentially other authorities, is not yet known, therefore the post 2031 shortfall for the whole HMA cannot yet be calculated." ³³

6.31 Following the same method that we have applied to the tables above (i.e. pro rata delivery of unmet need in emerging plans) we have identified how the existing Standard Method would create unmet need of between **17,000 and 18,400 dwellings 2031-2040**.

6.32 However, the Government's recent 'Planning for the Future' proposals in respect of how the Standard Method minimum is calculated should also be considered.

6.33 If the proposed changes to the Standard Method are adopted by Government, there will be unmet need in all but one authority of the GBBC HMA. This will mean unmet need of **between 29,400 and 30,100 dwellings 2031-2040**.

³³ Paragraph 6.3, Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBCHMA) Housing Need and Housing Land Supply Position Statement (July 2020)

iv) Summary

- 6.34 In summary, this section has identified the extent of unmet housing need in Birmingham City against the Adopted Birmingham City Plan, following the publication of the July 2020 Position Statement.
- 6.35 Barton Willmore have considered the content of the Position Statement and conclude that the deficit in BCC's unmet need to be delivered by Local Plans up to 2031 is **between 11,294 and 13,101 dwellings up to 2031**, as opposed to the 2,597 dwellings suggested in the Position Statement.
- 6.36 Furthermore, we have considered the unmet need that is likely to result from the 2019 NPPF's Standard Method across all authorities in the GBBCHMA. Based on the existing Standard Method we have concluded this unmet need to be **between 25,543 and 27,350 dwellings up to 2031**. If we were to assume the increased capacity (65,400 dwellings 2011-2031) set out in the Position Statement the unmet need would still be **between 11,243 and 13,050 dwellings up to 2031**.
- 6.37 The existing Standard Method will lead to an additional unmet need of **between 17,700 to 18,400 dwellings 2031-2040**.
- 6.38 If proposed changes to the Standard Method are adopted, this would increase to **between 29,400 and 30,100 dwellings 2031-2040**.

7.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 This Technical Report responds to the consultation of the Solihull Local Plan – Draft Submission and specifically whether the housing need figure of 816 dpa 2020-2036 will support the economic growth aspirations of the Draft Plan. The key points to note from our analysis are as follows:

- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states the Standard Method (SM) figure represents the **minimum** housing need;
- The Draft Plan identifies the clear economic growth aspirations for the Borough, including the nationally significant growth planned for at the UK Central Hub. This is a circumstance where housing need may exceed the minimum need. If it does, housing delivery must be of a quantum to support these aspirations;
- The Council's 2020 HEDNA confirms that the calculation of housing need is underpinned by the growth at the UK Central Hub. The Hub is projected to generate an additional 13,000 jobs to the baseline Experian job growth forecast (10,000 jobs) included in the HEDNA;
- The HEDNA tests several economic-led housing need scenarios. However, the UK Hub Scenario assumes **only 25%** of the additional 13,000 jobs created by the Hub are to be taken up by Solihull residents. This results in the housing need (**816 dpa**) underpinning the Plan;
- However, this ignores the 'Growth A' scenario which concludes that **908 dpa** would be required based on the 'Adjusted Local Growth' scenario. This scenario assumes that strong industries in Solihull will outperform the baseline Experian forecast, resulting in an additional 5,680 jobs to the baseline (10,000 jobs) over the Plan period, with Solihull residents taking up these jobs;
- However, no scenario is presented to show what the housing need would be based on the UK Central Hub scenario being fulfilled in full by Solihull residents. It is important to understand this so that the duty to cooperate discussions referred to in the HEDNA are well informed;

- Barton Willmore provide these sensitivity scenarios based on two approaches to commuting, and two approaches to underlying demographic rates (mortality, fertility, and migration);
- The results of our testing are summarised in Table 7.1:

Table 7.1: Solihull Borough – Barton Willmore Demographic Forecasting 2020-2036

Scenario	Demographic rates	Jobs per annum 2020-2036	Dwellings per annum 2020-2036
Dwelling-constrained: Standard Method	2016 ONS rates	772 ¹ – 813 ²	807
	2018 ONS rates	1,014 ¹ – 1,068 ²	
Employment-constrained: UK Central Hub	2016 ONS rates	1,437	1,199 ¹ – 1,248 ²
	2018 ONS rates		1,036 ¹ – 1,085 ²

Source: Barton Willmore Development Economics

¹ Commuting Ratio 0.98

² Commuting Ratio 0.93

- Growth of **between 1,036 and 1,248 dpa** would be required to support the UK Central Hub scenario (between 16,576 and 19,968 dwellings in total);
- This represents an increase of between 220 dpa and 432 dpa on the housing need calculated by the HEDNA (816 dpa), or **an additional 3,520 to 6,912 dwellings** over the Plan period;
- Our analysis of historic levels of job growth in Solihull 1991-2019 shows a range of 1,225 and 1,650 jobs per annum (jpa). This highlights that the UK Central Hub scenario (1,437 jpa) is a realistic assumption;
- The HEDNA identifies an ‘acute’ situation in respect of affordable housing need. Our analysis suggests that the HEDNA’s conclusion on overall need (816 dpa) should be increased to meet as much affordable need as possible.
- Furthermore, our analysis of unmet need in the wider GBBCHMA suggests that the 2020 Position Statement’s conclusions under-estimate the remaining unmet housing need from Birmingham up to 2031, and for Birmingham alone the deficit in unmet need is **between 11,294 and 13,101 dwellings up to 2031**;

- In addition, there is significant unmet need up to 2031 based on the existing Standard Method coming from Birmingham City and the Black Country. This amounts to unmet need of between **25,543 and 27,350 dwellings up to 2031**. If we were to assume the increased capacity for Birmingham City (65,400 dwellings 2011-2031) set out in the 2020 Position Statement the unmet need would still be **between 11,243 and 13,050 dwellings up to 2031**. This increases significantly based on the uncapped Standard Method figure for Birmingham City which would come into effect once Birmingham's Local Plan becomes older than 5 years in 14 months time;
- Adoption of the proposed changes to Standard Method consulted on by Government in summer 2020 would lead to there being unmet need against emerging/existing housing requirements in **all but one** of the GBBCHMA authorities;
- Furthermore, the unmet need **post 2031** should be considered, as referenced to in the 2020 Position Statement. Based on data available at the present time and the most recent Local Plan figures, Barton Willmore calculate this to be a minimum **17,700 dwellings 2031-2040**.

7.2 In summary, the analysis in this report results in the following broad conclusions:

1. **The SM's minimum need for Solihull (807 dpa) will need to be increased to account for expected job growth from the UK Central Hub and the 'acute' need for affordable housing in the Borough;**
2. **Barton Willmore's demographic modelling shows that between 1,036 and 1,248 dpa are required to support the UK Central Hub scenario;**
3. **Barton Willmore's calculations suggest that the deficit in unmet housing need from Birmingham City being delivered by HMA Local Plans amounts to a minimum of between 11,294 and 13,101 dwellings up to 2031, a significant increase from the 2,597 dwellings concluded on by the 2020 Position Statement. This increases when the unmet need**

from the Black Country is considered. Additional unmet need will be created post 2031.