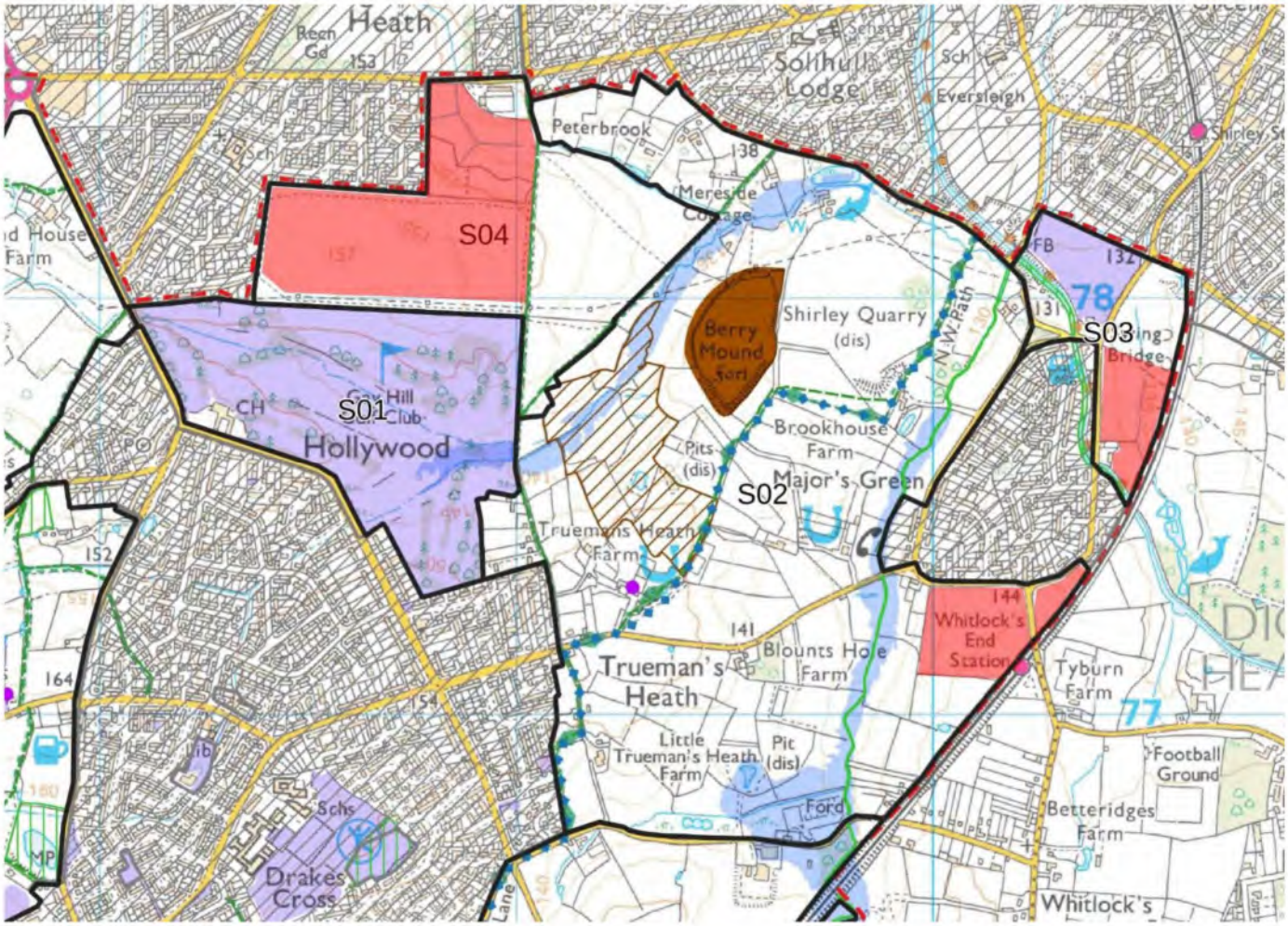
Settlement Sensitivity Summary: Solihull fringes

Summary

This area lies between the settlements of Solihull, including Highter's Heath and Solihull Lodge, and Drakes Cross and Whitlock's End and comprises of gently rolling plateau incised by two small valleys, one being the River Cole. Each settlement comprises mainly of 20c housing development with linear edges and within the area there are piecemeal smallholdings around Peterbrook and dispersed farms. The main features of the area are Berry Mound fort with its strong tree cover, the Stratford-upon-Avon Canal to the east and the listed Truman's Heath Farm. The central area traversed by the watercourses and the North Worcestershire Way is relatively enclosed and semi-rural with pastures including an SSSI and a well vegetated landfill site. To the west there is Gay Hill Golf Club and relatively open grass enclosures and to the east there is a disused coarse fishery planted up with conifers. Overall, the area acts as a green buffer between the various settlements.

Sensitivity to housing is considered to be medium in S03 and S04 and high/medium for the bulk of the area. There is an opportunity to the north west adjoining Highter's Heath (S04). There are also more minor opportunities to the east of Major's Green and, although less desirable, to the south of the settlement towards Whitlock's End station.

Sensitivity to employment use is considered high in all areas.



Key

As for Land parcels, Constraints and Designations figure plus below.

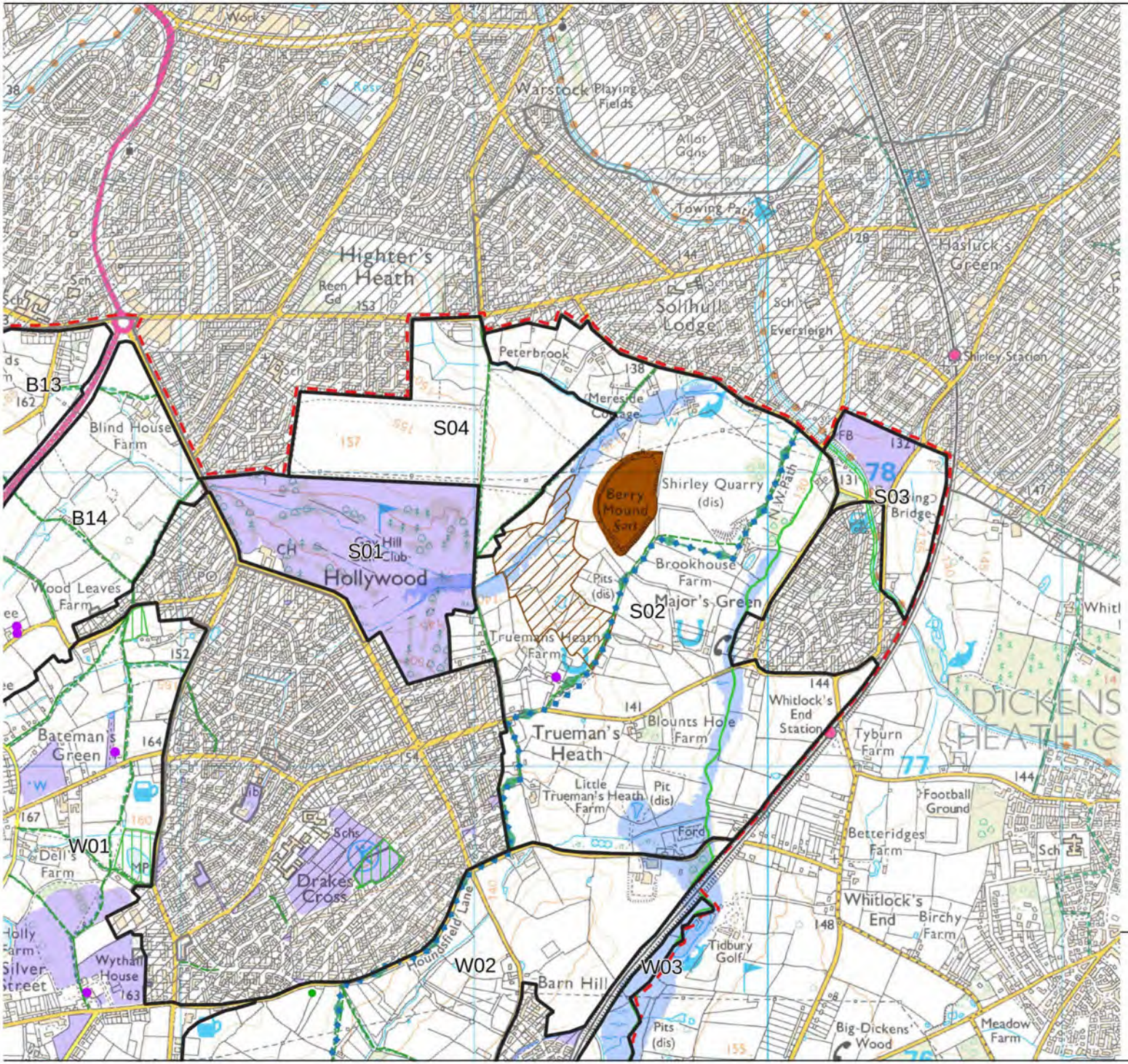
Opportunity for Housing

View across fallow field (S04) towards Berry Mound fort (S02).

Disused fishing ponds east of Major's Green (S03).

View south from North Worcestershire Path (S02).

View south west from Major's Green (S02).



KEY

- District Boundary
- Land Parcels
- Settlement development limits
- Ancient Veteran and Notable Trees
- Listed Buildings
- Scheduled Monuments
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Wildlife sites
- Open Spaces
- North Worcestershire Way
- Public rights of way
- Flood Zone 3

N

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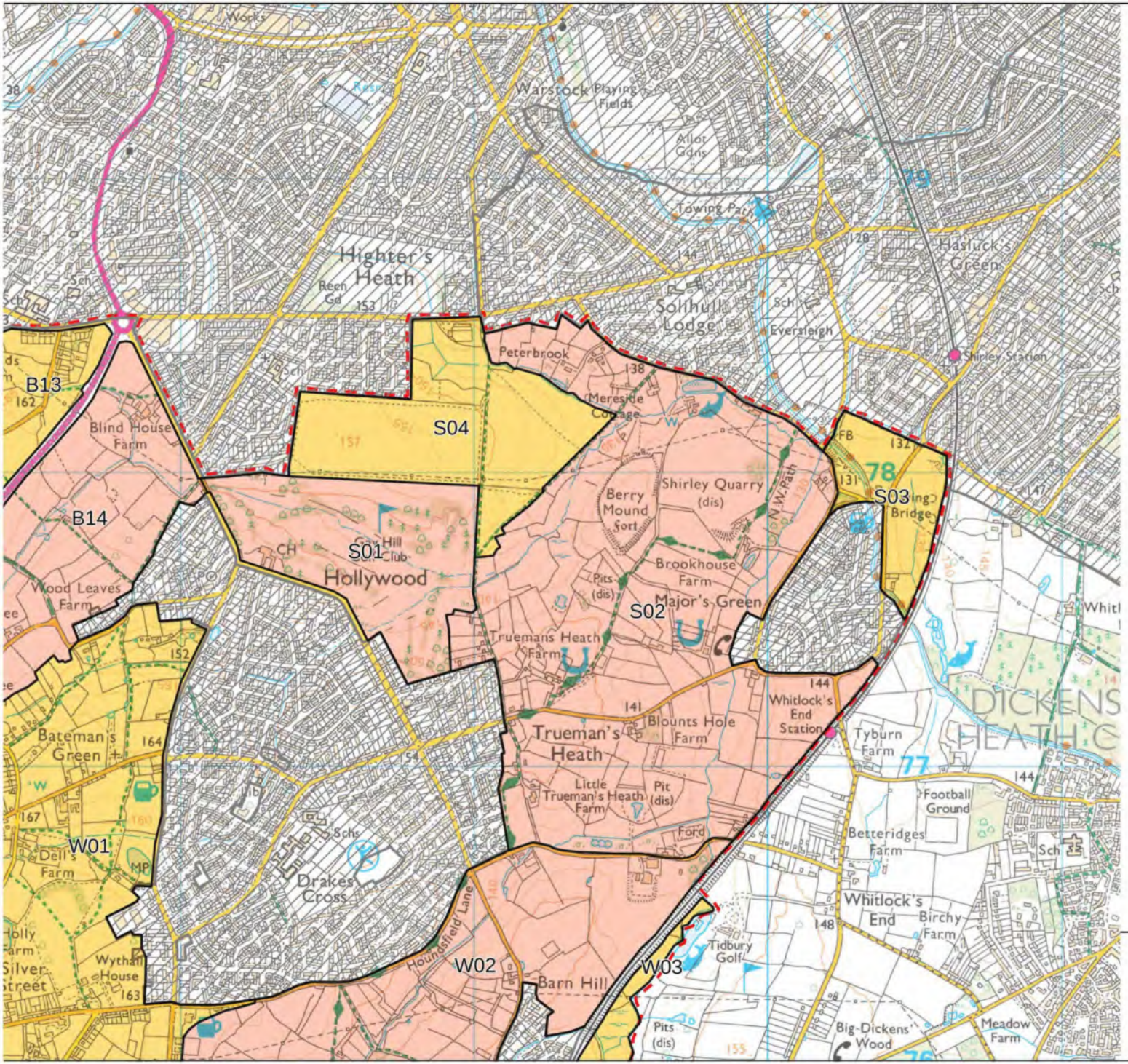
Project: Bromsgrove District Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study
Client: Bromsgrove District Council

Solihull Fringes
Land parcels, Constraints and Designations



KEY

- District Boundary
- Settlement development limits

Sensitivity to housing development

- High/medium
- Medium

N

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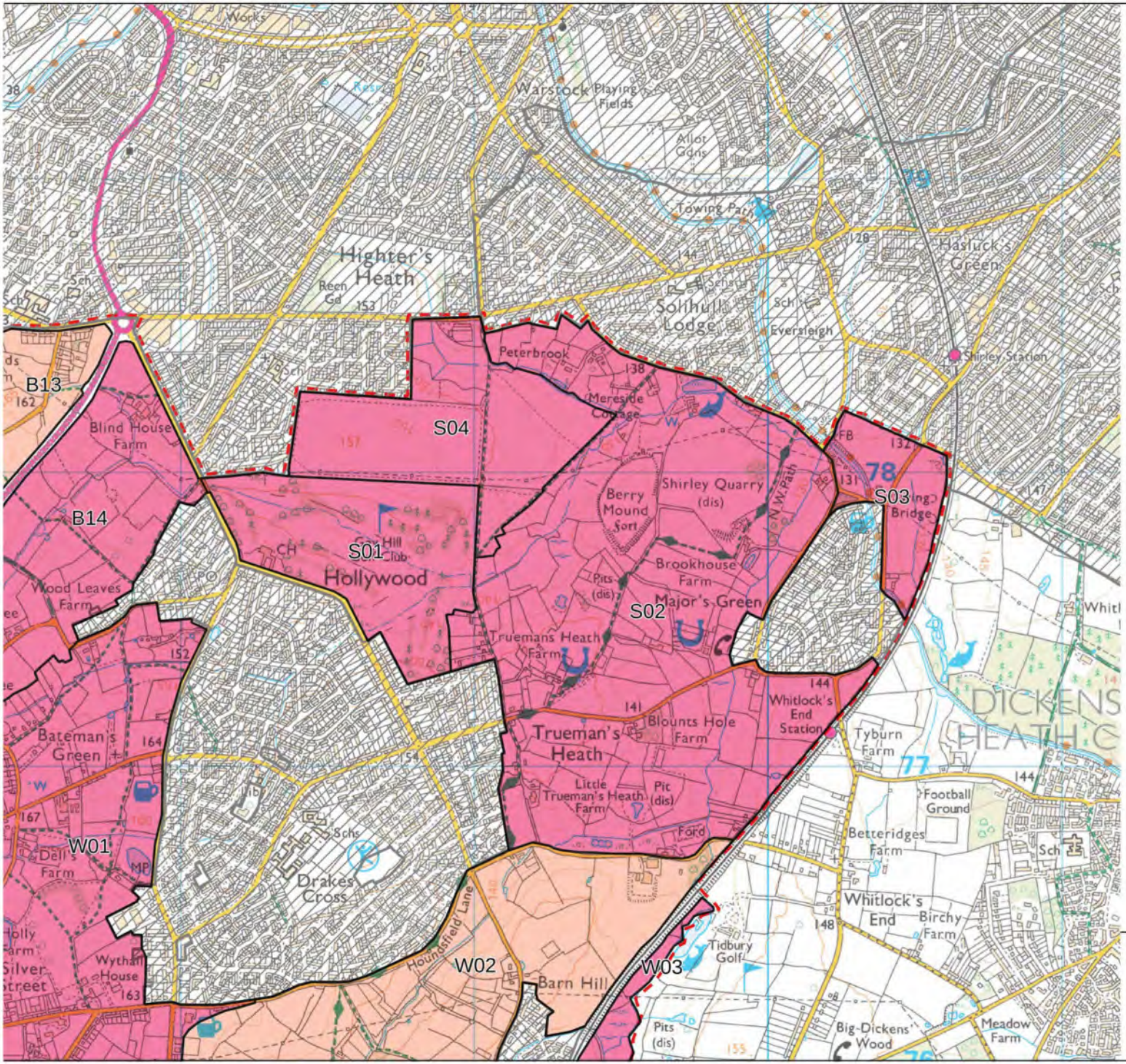
Project: Bromsgrove District Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Study
Client: Bromsgrove District Council

Solihull Fringes
Settlements: Sensitivity to Housing



KEY

- District Boundary
- Settlement development limits

Sensitivity to employment use

- High
- High/medium

N

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Client: Bromsgrove District Council

Solihull Fringes
Landscape sensitivity to employment use

Land Cover Parcel No.	S01

ASSESSED SENSITIVITY EVALUATION

Sensitivity to Housing	High/medium
Sensitivity to Employment	High

Sensitivity Summary

The landscape value lies in its role as an important part of the narrow green gap between Highter's Heath/Maypole and Hollywood, the floodplain related to watercourses and strong hedge and tree belt boundaries and deciduous and native species vegetation within the golf course. The landscape susceptibility to housing lies in prevalence of tree belts, hedge boundaries and deciduous internal vegetation belts which have the potential to act as biodiversity corridors, the floodplain and the skyline role when viewed from the sensitive landscape to the east. The visual susceptibility to housing lies in views towards the parcel from the North Worcestershire Path and from nearby PROWs to the east, potential intervisibility with the Berry Mound fort to the west (although not publicly accessible) and from adjacent residents and roads. The sensitivity lies in primarily the parcel's role as a green, well vegetated gap between settlements giving them a separate sense of identity. The landscape and visual susceptibility to employment use is similar to housing, except that it is more pronounced with greater potential for visibility from the east and the undesirability of proximity to housing adjoining the area.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER CONTEXT

National character area	Arden
WCC landscape character type (LCT)	Timbered Pastures
WCC land cover parcel (LCP) sensitivity	Low

LANDSCAPE VALUE FACTORS

Landscape designations		-
Natural heritage	M	Strong hedge and tree belt boundaries and internal vegetation defining fairways although widespread use of conifers.
Cultural heritage	M/L	20c golf course.
Distinctiveness	M/L	-
Perceptual	M	
Scenic factors		Strong tree boundaries contribute to positive character of Hollywood urban edge.
Tranquillity		Roads on the western boundary.
Recreational and functional	H/M	
Recreational		Provides local recreation as golf course, although private.
Functional		Floodplain located centrally, and serves as an important part of the narrow green gap between Highter's Heath/Maypole and Hollywood.
Condition	M/L	Some boundary trees appear to be in poor condition, partly due to the adjacent conifers. Overall, condition variable.
Associations		-
Summary evaluation of overall value		**M**

LANDSCAPE SUSCEPTIBILITY FACTORS

Natural factors	H/M

Landform eg steep slopes		Gentle slopes falling to the east.
Presence of water		-
Cultural factors	M/L	
Historic field/land use pattern		20c golf course has eradicated previous field pattern internally.
Settlement pattern		Golf club house and small commercial unit.
Land use factors	M	
Function of area e.g. floodplain, GI corridor, biodiversity corridor or patch, productive land.		Floodplain located centrally and tree belts, hedge boundaries and deciduous internal vegetation belts have the potential to act as biodiversity corridors.
Amenity- presence of footpaths/recreation corridors		No PROWs or public access.
Functional relationship between the area and the settlement/key features		The parcel contributes to the green infrastructure network.
Perceptual factors	M	
Scale		Small
Enclosure		Enclosed
Skyline		Trees and boundaries act as local skyline.
Landmarks/features		-
Detractors		Commercial unit within parcel and power line and pylons to the north.
Settlement edge character		Linear 20c residential development with mature gardens.
Visual relationship between the area and the settlement/key features (eg cumulative impact issues)		The generally strong tree boundaries provide a positive outlook for the adjacent settlements and give a positive approach into Hollywood from the north and a feeling of separation from Highter's Heath/Maypole.
Summary evaluation of landscape susceptibility		**M**

VISUAL SUSCEPTIBILITY FACTORS

General factors		
Intervisibility	M/L	Relatively low intervisibility.
Key views		Potential intervisibility with the Berry Mound fort to the east (although not publicly accessible).
Key receptors		
Residents- rural/semi-rural		-
Residents-urban/suburban edge	H/M	Settlement edges on three sides.
Promoted trails	H	North Worcestershire Path runs across the valley to the east and has filtered views to the land parcel boundary.
Public rights of way	H/M	PROWs run adjacent and nearby to the east.

Access/common land		-
Cycleways		-
Roads	M	Roads on two sides- to the south and west.
Summary evaluation of visual susceptibility		**H/M**

OPPORTUNITIES, DESIGN AND MITIGATION

Development location, layout and design recommendations where appropriate:

-

Opportunities and potential for landscape mitigation where appropriate:

-

Land Cover Parcel No.	S02

ASSESSED SENSITIVITY EVALUATION

Sensitivity to Housing	High/medium
Sensitivity to Employment	High

Sensitivity Summary

The landscape value lies in the presence of Berry Mound, a former Iron Age hill fort, well defined irregular pattern of small hedged fields, older mixed species hedgerows, all of which contribute to a strong sense of time depth, the many patches of species rich wet pasture, some designated as a SSSI, the River Cole Local Wildlife site and other watercourses and their floodplains, field ponds in damp hollows, the relatively tranquil landscape with restricted views to adjoining urban development, the North Worcestershire Path and PROW to the west. Landscape susceptibility to housing lies in the parcel's role as a strong green buffer between the three adjacent settlements, its strong rural pastoral character, its irregular and small scale field pattern in places, its waterbodies and floodplains and openness to the south of Major's Green. Visual susceptibility to housing lies in views from the North Worcestershire Path, the PROW to the west, from rural residents, filtered views from adjacent settlements and local roads. These factors mean that the parcel is sensitive to housing development and it is undesirable in landscape terms. There may be a small opportunity south of Major's Green north of Whitlock's End Station. Sensitivity to employment use would be greater due to the small scale and irregular field pattern, trees and relationship with residential settlement.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER CONTEXT

National character area	Arden
WCC landscape character type (LCT)	Timbered Pastures
WCC land cover parcel (LCP) sensitivity	Medium

LANDSCAPE VALUE FACTORS

Landscape designations		-
Natural heritage	H/M	Berry Mound Pastures SSSI- area of wet pastures and other wet pastures in the area, River Cole Local Wildlife site and tributary watercourses to the north and south, all with associated riparian vegetation and floodplains, strong hedgerow trees.
Cultural heritage	H	Scheduled monument of Berry Mound - an Iron Age hill fort, is a major feature defined by trees, Trueman's Heath listed farmhouse, irregular field pattern and meadows derived from piecemeal enclosure centrally with enclosure derived from heathland to the east and west.
Distinctiveness	H/M	The Iron Age hill fort combined with the complex irregular and small scale field boundaries contribute to a distinctive sense of time depth.
Perceptual	H/M	
Scenic factors		There are many attractive vistas across the area , across and along valleys and to minor hillsides and features such as the hillfort.
Tranquillity		Minor roads cross or skirt area. Railway to east. Restricted views to adjoining suburban development due to strong tree cover.Two PROWs cross/skirt area.
Recreational and functional	H/M	
Recreational		Two PROWs cross/skirt area including North Worcestershire Path.
Functional		Wet pastures, River Cole Local Wildlife site and tributary watercourses to the

		north and south, all with associated riparian vegetation and floodplains and strong hedgerow trees form strong GI.
Condition	M	The cultural pattern is in decline as reflected in the overgrown/mature condition of many hedgerows.
Associations		-
Summary evaluation of overall value		**H/M**

LANDSCAPE SUSCEPTIBILITY FACTORS

Natural factors	H/M	
Landform eg steep slopes		Gently rolling plateau incised by small valleys with floodplains and landfill mound.
Presence of water		River Cole, tributary streams and damp hollows with ponds.
Cultural factors	H/M	
Historic field/land use pattern		Irregular field pattern and meadows derived from piecemeal enclosure centrally with enclosure from heathland to the east and west. Landfill at Shirley Quarry.
Settlement pattern		Dispersed pattern of settlement with scattered farmsteads and roadside dwellings. Permanent travellers site to the far south east.
Land use factors	M	
Function of area e.g. floodplain, GI corridor, biodiversity corridor or patch, productive land.		Wet pastures, River Cole Local Wildlife site and tributary watercourses to the north and south, all with associated riparian vegetation and floodplains and strong hedgerow trees form strong GI.
Amenity- presence of footpaths/recreation corridors		Amenity use limited to access along the North Worcestershire Path.
Functional relationship between the area and the settlement/key features		North Worcestershire Path and other PROW link into settlements to north and south.
Perceptual factors	H/M	
Scale		Small scale landscape.
Enclosure		Generally enclosed but more open on slopes and to the south of Major's Green.
Skyline		Wooded skylines dominant in this area.
Landmarks/features		Berry Mound
Detractors		Pylons and power lines.
Settlement edge character		Most of the settlement edges are set behind roads fringed by hedgerow trees, or are well screened by series of hedges and trees.
Visual relationship between the area and the settlement/key features (eg cumulative impact issues)		The parcel forms an effective green buffer between settlements of Soihull Lodge, Drakes Cross and Major's Green.
Summary evaluation of landscape susceptibility		**H/M**

VISUAL SUSCEPTIBILITY FACTORS

General factors		
Intervisibility	M	Generally enclosed by combination of landcover and landform but open to the south of Major's Green.
Key views		-
Key receptors		
Residents- rural/semi-rural	H/M	A scatter of farmsteads rural dwellings within the area.
Residents-urban/suburban edge	H/M	Suburban edges to the north, east and west have filtered views.
Promoted trails	H	North Worcestershire Path.
Public rights of way	H/M	PROW along north western and western boundary.
Access/common land		-
Cycleways		-
Roads	M	Roads around edge and within parcel.
Summary evaluation of visual susceptibility		**H/M**

OPPORTUNITIES, DESIGN AND MITIGATION

Development location, layout and design recommendations where appropriate:

Housing is undesirable in this parcel. The only potential opportunity for housing would be either side of the Tilehouse Lane to Whitlock's End Station, south of Haslucks Green Road. This site is currently used as a Christmas tree farm. Housing should address/front the roads, retaining the existing hedges.

Opportunities and potential for landscape mitigation where appropriate:

Structural planting of native trees and shrubs, preferably advance, should be located on the site especially to the west to screen the housing from wide views and integrate housing into the upper valley sides.

Land Cover Parcel No.	S03

ASSESSED SENSITIVITY EVALUATION

Sensitivity to Housing	Medium
Sensitivity to Employment	High

Sensitivity Summary

The landscape value of the area lies in its role as a green gap between the settlements of Haslucks Green in Solihull and Major's Green, the Stratford-upon-Avon Canal Local Wildlife site and associated towpath/cycle route and use as a recreational waterway, deciduous and native tree cover, outgrown hedges and rough grassland/scrub which contribute to biodiversity corridors and patches linking into open spaces to the north and landscape to the south. The landscape susceptibility to housing lies in the canal corridor with associated recreational and biodiversity functions and the native tree and hedge cover. The visual susceptibility to housing lies primarily in views from the canal with its associated users. Though this is an enclosed and degraded landscape its function as a green setting to the canal and its role in maintaining the separation and integrity of Major's Green from the urban area to the north mean that development potential is limited. Housing may be accommodated east of Major's Green but no further north than the existing settlement provided that the area to the north is retained as open green space in perpetuity with associated landscape treatment and replacement of conifers with deciduous native planting. Development should front the road and the canal in a positive way. Further employment use would have greater adverse effects on landscape value, susceptibility and visual susceptibility than housing and is considered inappropriate.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER CONTEXT

National character area	Arden
WCC landscape character type (LCT)	Timbered Pastures
WCC land cover parcel (LCP) sensitivity	Medium

LANDSCAPE VALUE FACTORS

Landscape designations		-
Natural heritage	H/M	Stratford-upon-Avon Canal Local Wildlife site, deciduous and native tree cover, outgrown hedge boundaries in places and rough grassland/scrub by Peterbrook Road contribute to biodiversity corridors and patches linking into open spaces to the north and landscape to the south.
Cultural heritage	H/M	Stratford on Avon canal is an important feature running to the south and west.
Distinctiveness	H/M	The presence of the canal is a distinctive feature including the lift bridge.
Perceptual	M/L	
Scenic factors		The football ground/buildings and prevalence of spruces (overgrown Christmas trees) reduce scenic quality.
Tranquillity		Haslucks Green Road and Drawbridge Road are moderately busy with some noise and movement.Built development is apparentwith a focus on the Drawbridge Inn, a football club buildings and the linear residential development. Public access along the canal.
Recreational and functional	H/M	
Recreational		Public access along the canal towpath and waterway. Private football club and apparently disused fishing lakes.
Functional		Acts as a green gap between Hasluck's Green and Major's Green. Canal and tree,

		hedge and rough grass cover link into other habitats to the north and south.
Condition	M/L	Poor with limited management of area apart from the football pitch.
Associations	M	Canal
Summary evaluation of overall value		**M/L**

LANDSCAPE SUSCEPTIBILITY FACTORS

Natural factors	H/M	
Landform eg steep slopes		Slopes to stream valley to the east.
Presence of water		Canal and former fishing ponds to the east.
Cultural factors	M/L	
Historic field/land use pattern		Current uses have removed the historic pattern of field enclosure.
Settlement pattern		One large dwelling associated with commercial premises, plus a football club within the area with linear detached houses to the south west and housing estate behind trees to the north.
Land use factors	M	
Function of area e.g. floodplain, GI corridor, biodiversity corridor or patch, productive land.		Canal corridor, deciduous and native tree cover, outgrown hedge boundaries in places and rough grassland/scrub by Peterbrook Road contribute to biodiversity corridors and patches.
Amenity- presence of footpaths/recreation corridors		The canal is an important corridor for boating, walking and as a traffic free cycle route.
Functional relationship between the area and the settlement/key features		The canal corridor forms an important link between the settlement to the north and the countryside to the south east.
Perceptual factors	M	
Scale		Small
Enclosure		Enclosed
Skyline		-
Landmarks/features		Canal lift bridge and associated pub
Detractors		Power lines and pylons, football club buildings, commercial transport premises and excessive conifer tree planting.
Settlement edge character		Established incremental housing ribbon development between canal and road.
Visual relationship between the area and the settlement/key features (eg cumulative impact issues)		Tree cover and vegetation within the area contains and separates the settlements to the north and south.
Summary evaluation of landscape susceptibility		**M**

VISUAL SUSCEPTIBILITY FACTORS

General factors

Intervisibility	M/L	Tree cover within area and to the east limits intervisibility.
Key views	M/L	-
Key receptors		
Residents- rural/semi-rural		-
Residents-urban/suburban edge	H/M	Major's Green edge.
Promoted trails		-
Public rights of way	H	Canal towpath.
Access/common land		-
Cycleways	H/M	Traffic free cycle route along canal.
Roads	M	Roads through and adjacent
Summary evaluation of visual susceptibility		**H/M**

OPPORTUNITIES, DESIGN AND MITIGATION

Development location, layout and design recommendations where appropriate:

Housing may be accommodated east of Major's Green but no further north than the existing settlement provided that the area to the north is retained as open green space. Development should front the road and the canal in a positive way.

Opportunities and potential for landscape mitigation where appropriate:

Open green space should be retained in perpetuity with associated access, landscape treatment and replacement of conifers with deciduous native planting. Hedges and existing native trees should be retained where possible to soften any development edge.

Land Cover Parcel No.	S04

ASSESSED SENSITIVITY EVALUATION

Sensitivity to Housing	Medium
Sensitivity to Employment	High

Sensitivity Summary

The landscape value lies in the watercourses to the north and east with associated vegetation linking into Berry Mound Pastures SSSI to the east, strong hedgerows with trees, remnant oaks and the PROWs. The landscape susceptibility to housing lies in the open valley slopes to the east, the watercourses with associated vegetation and hedgerows with trees which are potential biodiversity corridors and the amenity provided by the area in PROWs and informal use. The visual susceptibility to housing lies in the area to the east which is visible across the valley, with filtered winter views from the North Worcestershire Path and PROWs within the area, and winter views from Berry Mound fort to the east (although not publicly accessible). The area to the east of the PROW , which divides the area, is more sensitive due to its contribution to the valley landscape, and views from the more sensitive receptors to the east. The area to the west is more screened from the wider landscape and is more self-contained, albeit on crowned ground in part. The area does contribute to separation of settlements, especially to the south eastern tip, but less so than the golf course to the south. Housing development may be accommodated on the western part and, with careful design on the eastern part. The landscape and visual susceptibility to employment use is similar to housing, except that it is more pronounced with greater potential for visibility from the east.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER CONTEXT

National character area	Arden
WCC landscape character type (LCT)	Timbered Pastures
WCC land cover parcel (LCP) sensitivity	Low

LANDSCAPE VALUE FACTORS

Landscape designations		-
Natural heritage	M	Watercourse to the north and east with associated vegetation linking into Berry Mound Pastures SSSI to the east, strong hedgerows with trees, remnant oaks and fields cut for hay/silage.
Cultural heritage	M	Rectilinear fields formed by parliamentary enclosure, now amalgamated, with lower lying irregular meadow/rough grass associated with a watercourse to the north.
Distinctiveness	M	Open in the majority of the area due to field amalgamation.
Perceptual	M	
Scenic factors		Rectilinear character within the area but views to complex landscape including Berry Mound fort across the valley to the east.
Tranquillity		Relatively quiet away from roads and settlement in middle of the area and to the east. Filtered views of settlement in parts. PROWs through the area and informal local use for recreation.
Recreational and functional	M	
Recreational		PROWs through the area and informal local use for recreation.
Functional		Watercourses with associated vegetation and hedgerows with trees are potential biodiversity corridors. The parcel contributes to the green gap between Highter's Heath in Birmingham and Hollywood.

Condition	M/L	Poor- low management input apart from cutting for hay/silage.
Associations		-
Summary evaluation of overall value		**M**

LANDSCAPE SUSCEPTIBILITY FACTORS

Natural factors	M	
Landform eg steep slopes		Crowned to the west and falling to valley floors to the north and east.
Presence of water		Watercourses to the north and east.
Cultural factors	M	
Historic field/land use pattern		Rectilinear fields formed by parliamentary enclosure, now amalgamated, with lower lying irregular meadow associated with a watercourse to the north.
Settlement pattern		None within parcel but 20c housing estate to the north west and dispersed settlement/smallholding pattern to the north east.
Land use factors	H/M	
Function of area e.g. floodplain, GI corridor, biodiversity corridor or patch, productive land.		Watercourses with associated vegetation and hedgerows with trees are potential biodiversity corridors.
Amenity- presence of footpaths/recreation corridors		PROWs through the area and informal local use for recreation.
Functional relationship between the area and the settlement/key features		PROWs through the area linking the settlements to the north and the south and informal local use for recreation.
Perceptual factors	M	
Scale		Large generally, medium to the north.
Enclosure		Generally open but more enclosed to the north.
Skyline		Central boundary trees act as skyline locally
Landmarks/features		Berry Mound fort (defiined by trees) to the east.
Detractors		Power lines and pylons crossing the area east to west.
Settlement edge character		Rectilinear 20c estate with small mature gardens backing onto the site to the west and north-west an informal dispersed settlement in small hedged paddocks to the north east.
Visual relationship between the area and the settlement/key features (eg cumulative impact issues)		The area provides pleasant/neutral green views from the north-west.
Summary evaluation of landscape susceptibility		**M**

VISUAL SUSCEPTIBILITY FACTORS

General factors		
Intervisibility	M	Intervisibility of the area to the west is limited by mature hedgerows, trees and existing settlement whilst the area to the east is visible across the valley.

Key views	H/M	Potential intervisibility with the Berry Mound fort to the east (although not publicly accessible).
Key receptors		
Residents- rural/semi-rural	H/M	Filtered views from cottages to the north east.
Residents-urban/suburban edge	H/M	Views from the housing estate to the north west and west.
Promoted trails	H	North Worcestershire Path runs across the valley and has filtered mainly winter views to the eastern part of the area.
Public rights of way	H/M	PROWs through the area, especially to the east.
Access/common land		-
Cycleways		-
Roads	M	Road to the north.
Summary evaluation of visual susceptibility		**H/M**

OPPORTUNITIES, DESIGN AND MITIGATION

Development location, layout and design recommendations where appropriate:

Any development layout would need to be landscape led. Housing development would need to allow for access to space from existing housing and retention of the stream corridor and hedgerows as part of the GI. The central hedgerow with trees should be retained as a strong north-south divide, helping to screen housing to the west. Development of the eastern side of the area should be very carefully considered to minimise the adverse effect on the valley landscape and should not extend further south than the northern boundary of the golf course to avoid excessive closing of the green gap between settlements or more than half way down the valley side to the watercourse with the rest being open space and GI. The PROWs should form the core of substantial green links between settlements.

Opportunities and potential for landscape mitigation where appropriate:

As above.