

8 April 2021

Delivered by email

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Strategic Planning – Bromsgrove District Council
Parkside
Market Street
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Ref: REDQ3005

Dear Sir / Madam

CATSHILL AND NORTH MARLBROOK NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (JANUARY 2021): REGULATION 16 CONSULTATION

We write on behalf of our Client, Redrow Homes Limited (Redrow) to make representations to the Regulation 16 Consultation of the Parish of Catshill and North Marlbrook Neighbourhood Plan (January 2021) (CNMNP).

Redrow made representations to the Regulation 14 CNMNP consultation in November 2020, expressing concerns with the site-specific evidence supporting the emerging Neighbourhood Plan and these concerns remain within the Regulation 16 version.

Redrow's representations are made in the context of Land at Washingstocks Farm, Catshill (identified in the supporting evidence as "Site 2") which Redrow are promoting for residential development through the Bromsgrove District Local Plan Review. A copy of the Vision Document prepared for the site is attached as **Appendix 1**.

Land at Washingstocks Farm, Catshill

Redrow are promoting land at Washingstocks Farm, immediately south of Catshill, for residential development (C. 175 dwellings), and have previously engaged with the CNMNP through both the submission of the site through the CNMNP Call for Sites (2018) as well as meeting with the NP Steering Group to present and discuss the emerging proposals and, most recently, through representations to the Regulation 14 consultation in November 2020.

This site covers around 7.5ha and is located in a sustainable location within close proximity to a range of local facilities and amenities within both Catshill and Bromsgrove, and is well served by bus services. It benefits from strong defensible boundaries to the south in the form on the M42/M5 slip road and its immediate context is predominantly urban with residential development to the north and west, a garden centre to the east and the M42 / M5 motorway embankments to the south.

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Redrow's ambition is to create a high quality sustainable community providing a mixture of new homes set within a significant area of public open space with enhanced pedestrian linkages and wildlife habitats.

The land at Washingstocks Farm, is truly 'deliverable', meeting the NPPF's definition, and can assist in providing housing land supply early in the plan period:

- As identified through the Call for Sites submission and the supporting Vision Document and package of technical evidence, the site is **Suitable** for development with limited physical and environmental constraints.
- Redrow are promoting the site on behalf of the landowners and the site is therefore **Available** for development now.
- Given Redrow's substantial experience and resource in the delivery of high quality housing developments and promotion of sites through the development plan process, the site is **Achievable**, with a realistic prospect of being brought forward for housing following adoption of the new Local Plan.

Section 1 (Background)

The plan period for the draft NP extends to 2030 to align with the adopted Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) Local Plan. For the NP to pass Independent Examination and be formally 'Made' it will need to align with the higher order plan which in this case is the BDP Local Plan 2011-2030 (2017), so this timeframe is sensible.

The NP recognises that BDC are currently in the early stages of reviewing the adopted LP (a Preferred Option version was due in early 2021 but this has been delayed), with a wide range of supporting studies including housing needs which will identify growth requirements beyond 2030.

A key component of the BDC Local Plan Review will be a Green Belt review, as required through the adopted Local Plan, as well as a response to the revised Standard Method for calculating housing need across the District. Responding to the wider and longer-term housing needs within the Greater Birmingham Housing Market Area (HMA) will also need to be assessed.

These are substantial challenges for the Local Plan Review and will necessitate a detailed Green Belt review, which will clearly be of relevance to Catshill and North Marlbrook. Indeed Paragraph 8.5.14 of the CNMNP recognises this important relationship noting that:

"...the District Council has not yet completed its Green Belt Review. This will be central to the Council's approach in developing an updated land use planning strategy for the District. The absence of such a strategy currently means it is uncertain what housing targets will be proposed for different parts of the District. In these circumstances it is not realistic to identify specific sites within the NP."

We are therefore mindful that as the BDC Local Plan review progresses and gains more weight, the NP is likely to need to be reviewed to ensure it remains up to date and in accordance with the higher order plan, including aligning with any residential allocations identified within the Local Plan Review. In addition, and perhaps more critically, we are also mindful that all sites with potential for release from the Green Belt must be soundly assessed by the CNMNP to form a robust evidence base from which the BDC Local Plan review can draw upon. In light of this and as set out in the following section of these representations, we are concerned that the assessment of sites, including Redrow's site at

Washingstocks Farm ('Site 2'), is not sound and should not therefore be relied upon in informing the BDC Local Plan Review.

Section 3: 'Neighbourhood Plan Policies'

Section 3 of the NP introduces site specific assessments for meeting an identified housing need for the NP area. We reserve the right to comment on the appropriate level of growth to be attributed to the NP area through the BDC Local Plan review process, we would reflect upon our comments set out in response to Section 1 of these representations, and note that as part of the BDC Local Plan Review, a revised housing need will be established in line with the revised Standard Methodology. As part of this identified need, the Local Plan Review will distribute the growth throughout the district in accordance with the established settlement hierarchy.

Looking to the site specific assessments and specifically that relating to Site 2 (Land at Washingstocks Farm), we note that the independent and impartial assessment completed by Aecom concluded that the site was '**considered suitable for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan**, subject to the site being released from the Green Belt, the scale of development reduced and the provision of a suitable access' (emphasis added).

Indeed Aecom's assessment of the site goes further to note that 'a smaller amount of development could be considered suitable, i.e. focusing development to the north of the site abutting the adjacent residential properties ... not extending further south than the existing built development of Washingstocks Farm'. Redrow welcomes these observations and conclusions and highlights that the final form and layout of the development is still to be determined so these comments can be appropriately addressed.

Redrow is concerned that the subsequent assessment undertaken by the Neighbourhood Plan Group departs from Aecom's assessment and downgrades the assessment of the site from Amber to Red (unsuitable) with little justification.

We strongly disagree with this assessment and respond to each point raised by the NP Steering Group assessment in turn below:

'Significantly reducing the gap'

In considering the performance of Site 2 (the Site) against the five purposes of the Green Belt, we refer to the Green Belt Purposes Assessment (GBPA) which was prepared to inform the BDC Local Plan Review. Within that assessment, the site is included within Parcel C12, and is considered as the **second least contributor to Green Belt purposes** out of all the land parcels considered surrounding Catshill.

Parcel C12 wraps around the western and southern edges of Catshill with the M5 and M42 motorways demarcating the southern and western boundaries. The northern boundary of the parcel forms the built-up area of Catshill and throughout the parcel are a number of roads, buildings and differing land uses which have an urbanising influence.

The site is of such a scale as to ensure a significant green buffer (comprising a green infrastructure corridor providing an area of open space and biodiversity enhancement) can be delivered to the south, which will create a new and strong and defensible boundary for Catshill adjoining the M42 and will not result in the merging of Catshill and Bourneheath to the west which is separated by the M5.

'Site would be well-contained'

We agree with the Aecom view that the site would be well contained by the urban edge to north and road to east (Stourbridge Road) and South (M5 / M42) with existing buildings and built form already encroaching into the site. These features heavily influence and have an urbanising effect upon the site, as well as safeguarding the open countryside from encroachment.

'Access would exacerbate traffic issues'

As identified within the Vision Document (enclosed with these representations), a Transport Feasibility Assessment has been produced to establish the site's sustainability credentials and provide initial advice on means of access to the development. Initial proposals indicate the development would be accessed from Stourbridge Road, via a new simple priority junction. Given the quantum of development proposed, a secondary/ emergency access which will also cater for pedestrians and cyclists would be required. Initial proposals suggest that this could be via Hinton Fields.

The proposed junction is located just outside the gateway to the 30mph speed limit zone within the village, on that basis it is considered that there is merit in relocating the 30mph speed limit gateway to the south of the site, so that it encompasses the proposed access junction. This measure will help to calm traffic travelling into the village.

The Feasibility Assessment, has demonstrated that the proposed development site is located within an accessible location, with good public transport provision and access to existing local amenities. Access to the site is achievable. There are no overriding highways reasons why the development proposals should not be progressed towards a planning application.

Having regard to all of the above, we do not consider that the additional grounds for downgrading Site 2 as identified within Appendix 7 and 10 of the evidence base are sound and they conflict with the findings of the GBPA which underpins the Green Belt review which will inform the preparation of the BDC Local Plan Review.

We have also identified (and evidenced through the enclosed Vision Document), that suitable access points can be delivered and through transport modelling and discussions with Worcestershire County Council, the site will be able to be delivered without detriment to the surrounding road network.

We consider that the site assessment for Site 2 should be at least graded as amber, consistent with the Aecom assessment. It is critical that all sites with potential for release from the Green Belt are soundly assessed to inform the BDC Local Plan review and we contend that Site 2 provides the most sustainable and deliverable option to accommodate housing needs within Catshill.

We would be grateful to receive acknowledgement of receipt of these representations.

Yours sincerely

Ian Deverell
Senior Planner

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Appendix 1: Land at Washingstocks Farm, Vision Document



Land at Washingstocks Farm, Catshill

VISION DOCUMENT

June 2018

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This Vision Document has been prepared by Redrow to support the proposal for a high quality residential development at land at Washingstocks Farm, Catshill.

Our Vision

Preliminary analysis of constraints and opportunities demonstrates that the site has great potential to assist in meeting the future development requirements and aspirations of Bromsgrove District Council (BDC).

The concept proposals will deliver a residential development encompassed by a comprehensive green infrastructure network which enhances the retained framework of landscape features. A distinctive and appropriate local sense of place will be created.

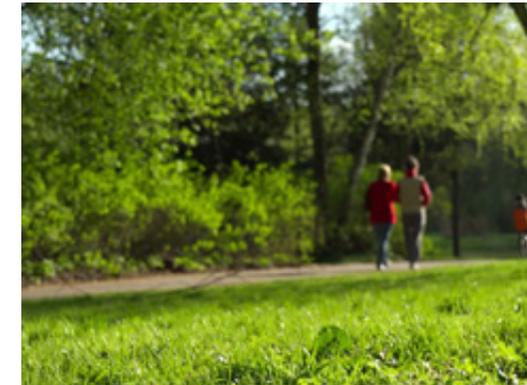
The ambition is to create a high quality and sustainable residential development in a suitable location, reflecting the future growth of the District and wider area. As well as providing much needed new homes, the proposal will deliver significant other benefits including enhanced recreational opportunities and wildlife habitats.

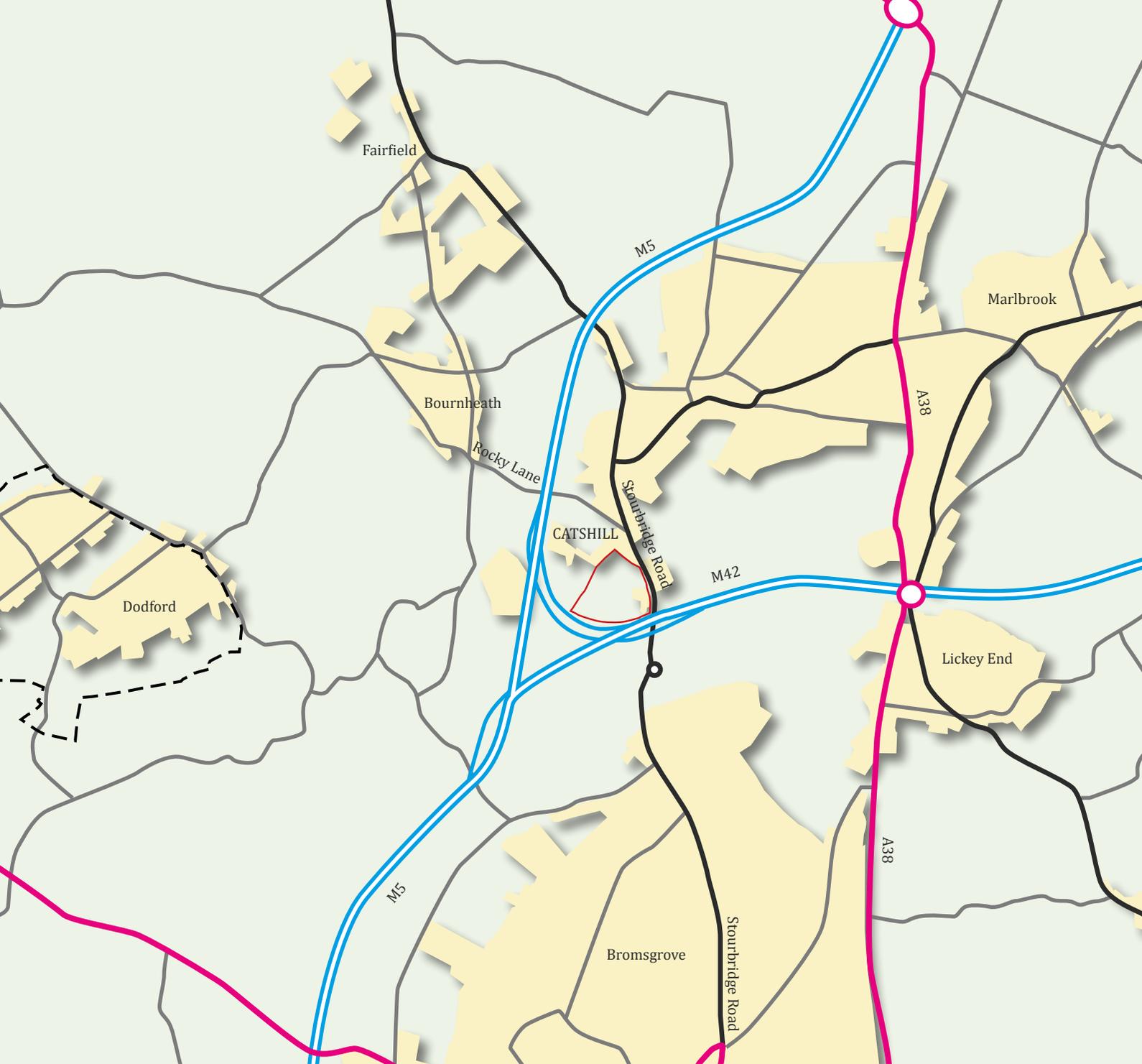
The proposed development would:

- Provide a choice of housing to meet the needs of the local and wider area.
- Retain and enhance existing landscape features, thus maintaining a substantial and attractive landscape setting.
- Create a cohesive Green Infrastructure (GI) which respects existing landscape character and features.
- Deliver an enhancement in wildlife habitats and overall biodiversity.
- Respect the visual amenity of existing residents and users of countryside footpaths, roads, etc. using a combination of GI buffers and responsive design.



“ To create a sustainable, high quality development which contributes to healthy living and quality of life for all ”





-  Site Boundary
-  Built Development
-  Conservation Area
-  Motorway
-  Primary Roads
-  Secondary Roads
-  Tertiary Roads



Context Plan

Chapter 2

SITE & SURROUNDINGS

The site covers around 7.5Ha and is situated within North Worcestershire.

Location

The site is conveniently located off the strategic highway network, in close proximity to the M42 and M5, and lies in the district of Bromsgrove, within North Worcestershire. Stourbridge Road runs along the eastern site boundary, with Hinton Fields along the western and north western boundaries. Existing residential development off Stourbridge Road abuts the north eastern boundary.

Within the surrounding area, Bromsgrove Town Centre is situated approximately 4km away to the south, whilst Birmingham lies 16km to the north east.



Chapter 3

PLANNING POLICY

Bromsgrove is committed to a full Green Belt Review to identify land for an additional 2,300 homes by 2023 at the latest

Bromsgrove District Plan 2011-2030

On 25 January 2017 the Bromsgrove District Plan was adopted. The Plan sets out the long-term vision and spatial vision for Bromsgrove Town, other settlements and surrounding countryside in the period up to 2030. The plan sets out a number of Strategic Objectives, which include focusing new development in sustainable locations in the District (SO2). This objective is supported by a Settlement Hierarchy (Policy BDP2) which identifies Catshill as a Tier 2 “Large ‘Settlement’”. Second to Bromsgrove Town the six Large ‘Settlements’ are the next foci for both residential and employment growth.

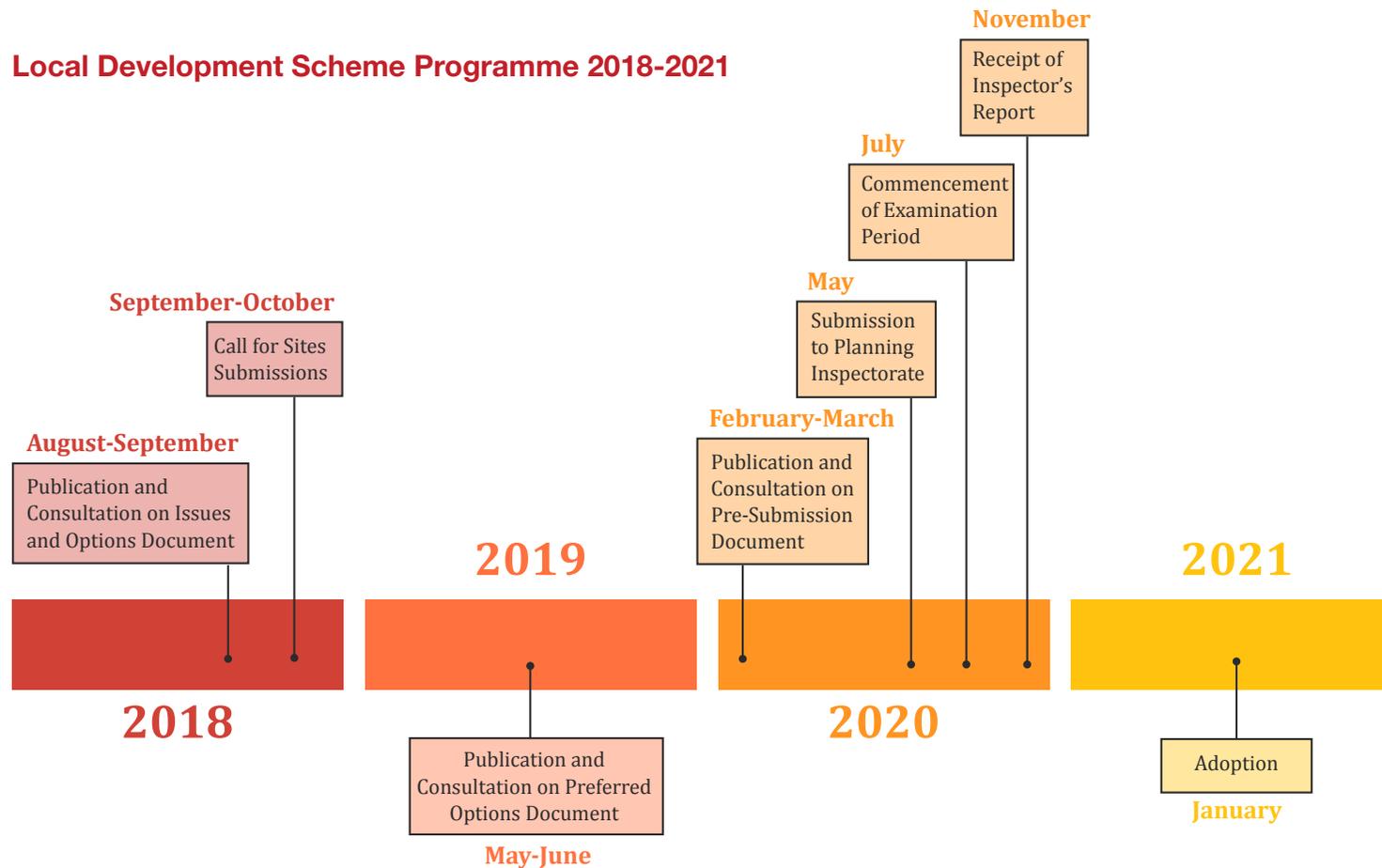
The Plan, based upon the Worcestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2012) identifies an Objectively Assessment Housing Need figure for the District of 7,000 dwellings over the plan period. The Plan identifies

that 4,700 dwellings can be delivered without the need to release Green Belt land and therefore commits to a full Green Belt Review to identify the further 2,300 dwellings by 2023.

The release of Green Belt land will come through a full Local Plan Review. This review will also consider to what extent Bromsgrove will assist Birmingham City in meeting some of its overspill need.

Bromsgrove District Plan Review

In January 2018, the Council’s Latest Local Development Scheme was adopted; this sets out the time frame for undertaking the Local Plan Review as shown adjacent.



The Council is now committed to updating its evidence base regarding housing need and available land in order to progress its Local Plan Review.

Redrow Homes is making representations to the Draft Local Plan consultation in respect of the overall housing need, distribution and the identification of the site to meet housing need in a sustainable location.



Chapter 4

SUSTAINABILITY

The development proposals seek to deliver a sustainable development and a high quality of life that improves economic, social and environmental well-being.

Local Facilities

The site is located in a sustainable location within close proximity of a range of local facilities and amenities by car and on foot. These include Catshill First and Middle School, a GP Surgery, a Village Hall, Public Houses, Post Office, Knights Pharmacy and local shops.

The site itself is located near an extensive footpath network and a children's play area and is well served by public transport with a number of bus stops to the east of the site along Stourbridge Road. These are well situated to service destinations north and south of the site with bus stops at various stages along Stourbridge Road. These are served by seven bus routes, offering a combined peak frequency of one bus every 10 minutes, between Catshill, Bromsgrove, Worcester, Droitwich and Birmingham.

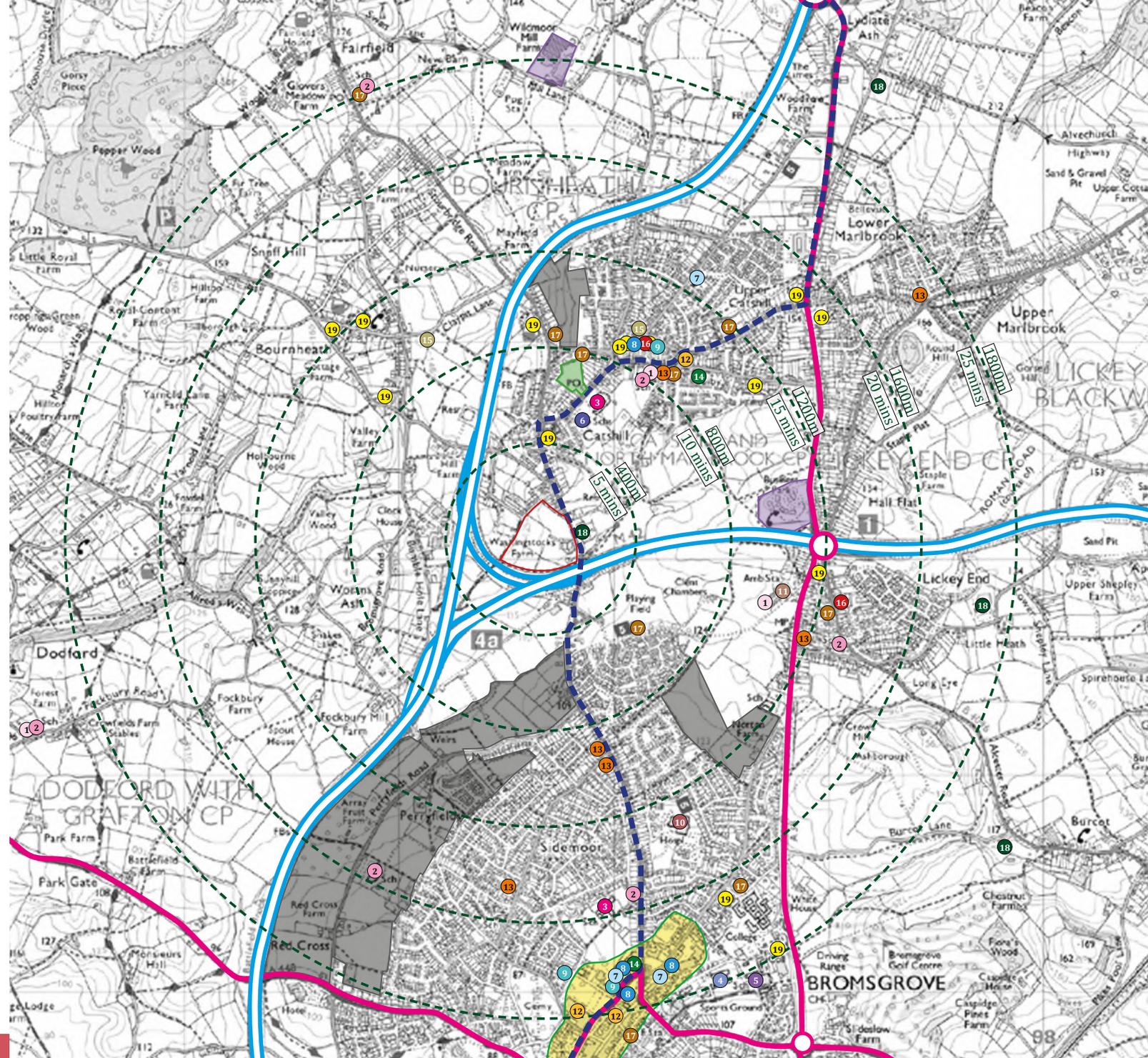


Co-operative store on Barley Mow Lane



Pharmacy on Golden Cross Lane

-  Site Boundary
-  Nursery School
-  First School
-  Middle School
-  High School and Sixth Form
-  College
-  Chadsgrove School
-  Medical Centre
-  Pharmacy
-  Dentist
-  Community Hospital
-  Bromsgrove Ambulance Hub
-  Supermarket
-  Local Store
-  Library
-  Village Hall/Community Centre
-  Post Office
-  Place of Worship
-  Garden Centre
-  Restaurant/Takeaway/Public House
-  Play Area
-  Bromsgrove Town Centre
-  Business Park
-  Residential Allocations
-  A Roads
-  Motorway
-  Main Bus Route





Chapter 5

LANDSCAPE & VISUAL

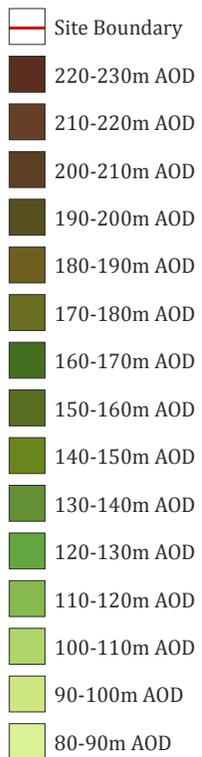
The environmental capacity of the site has been investigated, through both site assessment and desk study.

Topography

The site slopes up from east to west, where the lowest point in the south east corner lies at approximately 115m AOD. From this corner it slopes to a highpoint at 130m on the western boundary along which runs bridleway 509 (C).

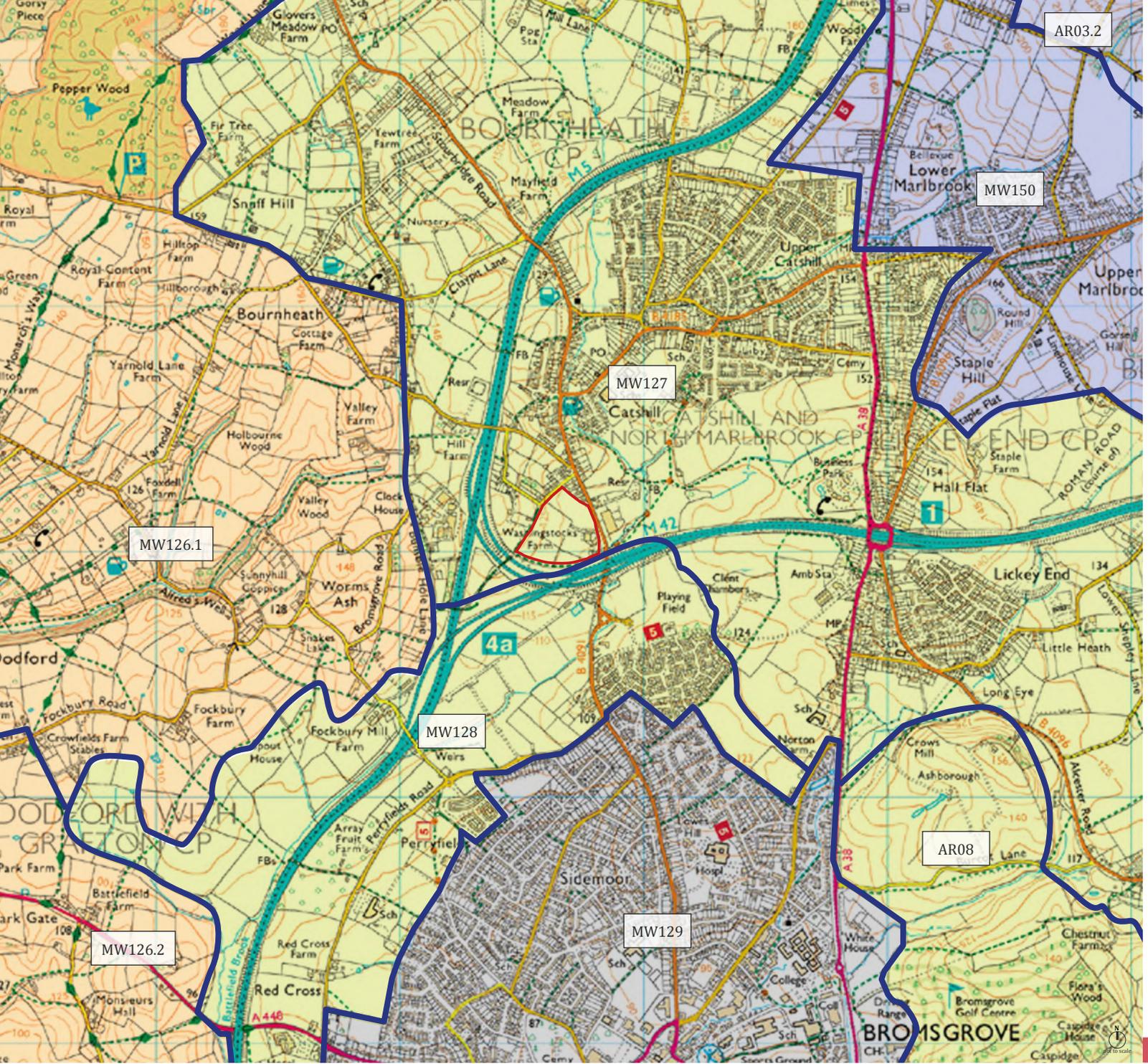
The immediate context of the site itself is heavily influenced by the M42 and the M5 to the south and west, the embankments of which can be seen from certain areas of the site. The south eastern edge of the site sits lower than the M42, however as the slip road continues along the southern edge of the site, the site's topography rises above it.

The topography of the site's wider context is heavily influenced by areas of high ground to the north east and north west. To the north east the majority of Catshill occupies a more elevated position than the site at around 140-160m AOD. Beyond Catshill the land continues to rise to a view point in Lickey Hills Country Park which sits at 298m AOD. To the north west of the site, the land rises to up to the M5, beyond which it continues to rise to Fairfield which lies at round 180-190m AOD. Land to the south of the site and the M42 slopes down towards Bromsgrove typically located at around 80-100m AOD.



Topography Plan





-  Site Boundary
-  Landscape Character Type (LCT):
Principal Settled Farmlands
-  Landscape Character Type (LCT):
Principal Timbered Farmlands
-  Landscape Character Type (LCT):
Enclosed Commons
-  Urban
-  Landscape Description Unit (LDU) Boundary

Landscape Character

Landscape Character

At a broad scale the majority of the site lies within Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) 97 Arden. NCA 97 comprises farmland and former wood-pasture lying to the south and east of Birmingham, including part of the West Midlands conurbation. The area extends across the Midlands, from Birmingham in the north as far as Coventry in the east, Warwick in the south and Bromsgrove in the west. NCA 97 is summarised as comprising *'farmland and former wood-pasture lying to the south and east of Birmingham, including part of the West Midlands conurbation.'*

At a county level the Worcester Landscape Character Assessment classifies the site as Landscape Type, *'Principal Settled Farmlands'*. This

landscape type is described as ***"A small- to medium-scale, settled agricultural landscape of scattered farms, relic commons and clusters of wayside dwellings. These built features are linked by a network of narrow, winding lanes which nestle within a matrix of hedged fields. Tree cover is largely restricted to thinly scattered hedgerow trees and groups of trees around dwellings. The land is primarily one of mixed farming."***

Primary key Characteristics of the 'Principal Settled Farmlands' include ***"Hedgerow boundaries to fields"*** and ***"Moderate-to-high density settlement pattern of farmsteads and rural dwellings dispersed throughout the area."***

Landscape Guidelines for this character type include:

- conserve and enhance the pattern of hedgerows
- retain the integrity of the dispersed pattern of settlement
- conserve and enhance tree cover along watercourses
- enhance patterns of tree cover associated with settlement
- seek opportunities to conserve all remaining areas of permanent pasture

Within the Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment the site lies within Landscape Description Unit (LDU) ***MW127 - Catshill Principal Settled Farmlands.***

Catshill Principal Settled Farmlands are described as: ***'soft rock sandstone with impoverished sandy soils and an intermediate, rolling topography. The settlement pattern is one of farmsteads and strings of wayside dwellings associated with a moderate to high level of dispersal and a small to medium scale field pattern. The land use is mixed farming and the tree cover comprises thinly scattered hedgerow and streamside trees together with groups of trees associated with settlements.'***

Visual Amenity

Short range views of the site are largely screened by the well established vegetation at the site boundaries including a large band of conifers on Stourbridge Road. Extensive vegetation associated with the M42 and the M5 screens views of the site from these major roads. Close views of the site occur from the residential properties on Hinton Fields, at the site's northern edge which would achieve short range views from the fronts of the properties and rear views, across gardens of properties on Stourbridge Road. Close range views from the surrounding footpath network are limited to footpath 10 (B) and bridleway 509 (C) which run along the site's southern and western boundaries. These footpaths have relatively open views of the site and would be incorporated as part of the development.

Away from the immediate periphery there are no significant views of the site from Catshill due to the combined screening effects of topography, woodland, hedgerows and existing settlement. Wider views of the site from the west are prevented by the M5 and its associated vegetation. This is the case with views from the south too, where the localised topography and vegetation entirely screen wider ranging views. Longer range views of the site's south western corner are possible from footpath 624(C) and 514(C) in the east and properties on Birmingham Road. Views of the site's south western field from these receptors in the east would be seen in context with the surrounding road infrastructure and the existing settlement edge of Catshill.

In overall terms, with exception of its south western corner, the site has a restricted visual envelope.

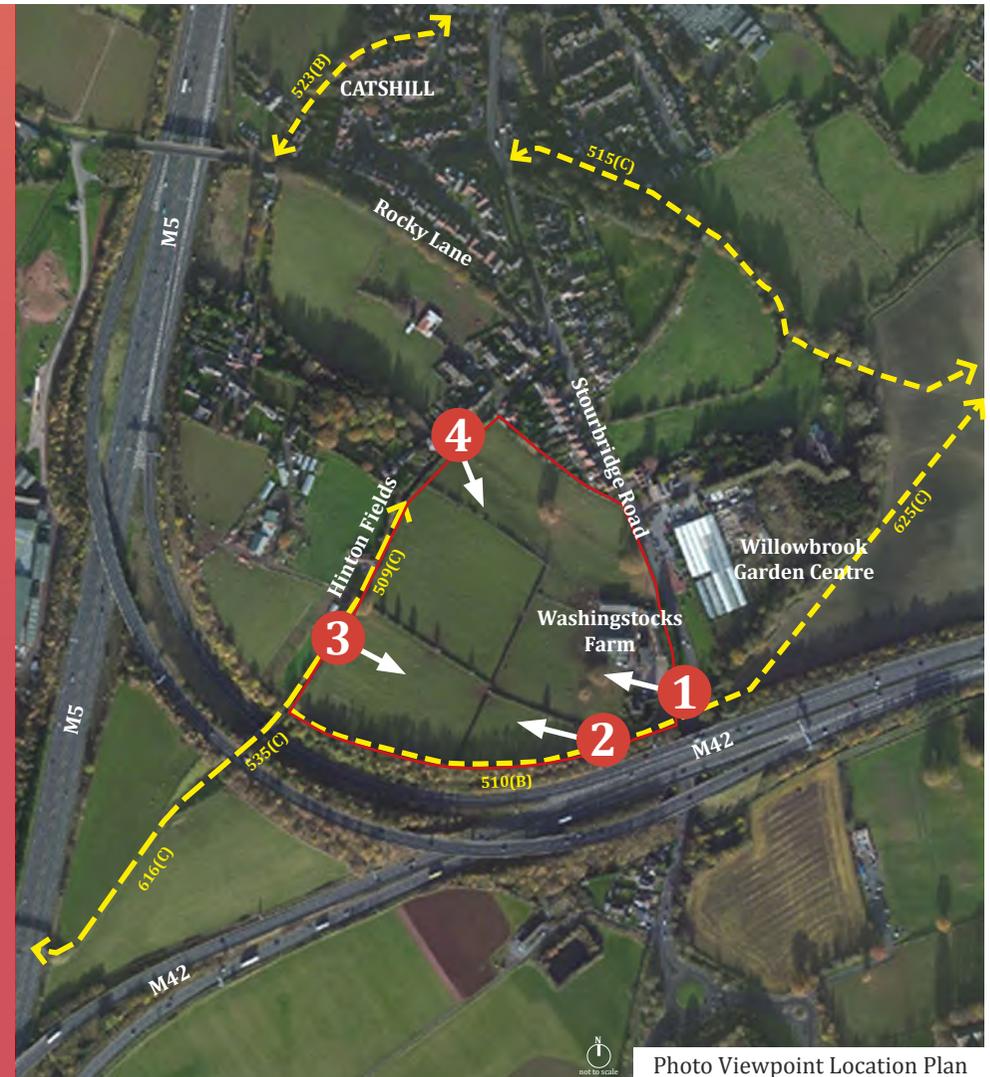


Photo Viewpoint Location Plan

Photo Viewpoints



Photo Viewpoint 1 View west from the entrance to Washingstocks Farm



Photo Viewpoint 2 View from Public Right of way 510 (B), looking north west into the site



Photo Viewpoint 3 View east from Bridleway 509 (C)



Photo Viewpoint 4 View south east into the site from Hinton Fields

Green Belt

It is understood that while the site is currently located in the Green Belt, Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) are preparing a replacement Local Plan which will include a Green Belt review later this year.

For the purposes of this Vision Document, the site will be tested against the five purposes of the Green Belt set out in the NPPF in order to ascertain its suitability for Green Belt release.

1: To Check the Unrestricted Sprawl of Large Built Up Areas

The site is of limited value in checking the unrestricted sprawl of Catshill. The site is well contained to the south and west by the M42 and M5 and by Stourbridge Road and existing settlement on the east and north respectively, providing a strong defensible boundary to future development.

2: To Prevent Neighbouring Towns from Merging into One Another

The site has a limited role in preventing the merging of neighbouring settlements. The proposal will maintain the separation between Catshill and Bromsgrove to the south of the site, which are separated by the M42 and will not result in the merging of Catshill and Bourneheath to the west which is separated by the M5.

3: To Assist in Safeguarding the Countryside from Encroachment

The removal of the site from the Green Belt will not contravene the purpose of safeguarding the countryside from encroachment due to its existing physical boundaries in the form of road infrastructure and vegetation which create a defensible Green Belt boundary. In addition the site is already

encroached by the existing farm buildings.

4: To Preserve the Setting and Special Character of Historic Towns

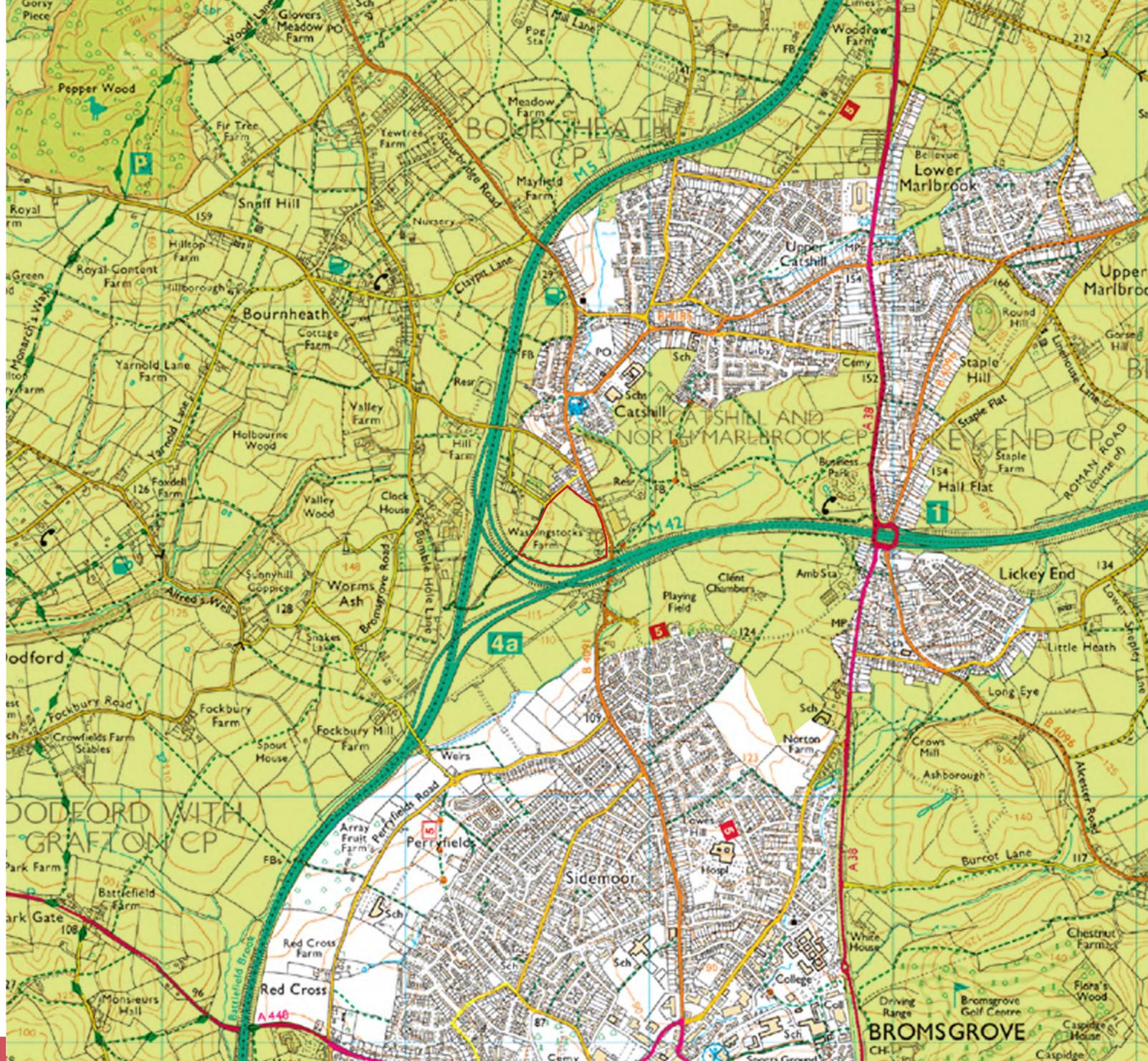
The site is remote from Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings and does not form a significant part of their setting. The removal of this site from the Green Belt would not contravene this purpose and is not relevant when assessing the Stourbridge Road site against the purposes of the Green Belt.

5: To Assist Urban Regeneration by Encouraging the Recycling of Derelict and Other Urban Land

The removal of the Stourbridge Road site from the Green Belt will, by definition, affect urban regeneration in the Borough or the recycling of derelict and other urban land within

Catshill. However, the Council have acknowledged that there is insufficient, available, development land within the urban area and that Green Belt land will need to be released to accommodate the future development requirements of the Borough.

-  Site Boundary
-  Green Belt
(Bromsgrove District Local Plan, July 2017)



Chapter 6

HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT

Land at Washingstocks Farm, Catshill is a highly sustainable location for development.

Strategic Road Network

A Transport Feasibility Assessment has been produced to establish the site's sustainability credentials and provide initial advice on means of access to the development.

Initial proposals suggest the development would be accessed from Stourbridge Road, via a new simple priority junction. Given the quantum of development proposed, a secondary/emergency access which will also cater for pedestrians and cyclists would be required. Initial proposals suggest that this could be via Hinton Fields.

The proposed junction is located just outside the gateway to the 30mph speed limit zone within the village, on that basis it is considered that there is merit in relocating the 30mph speed limit gateway to the south of the site, so that it encompasses the proposed access junction. This proposal would need to

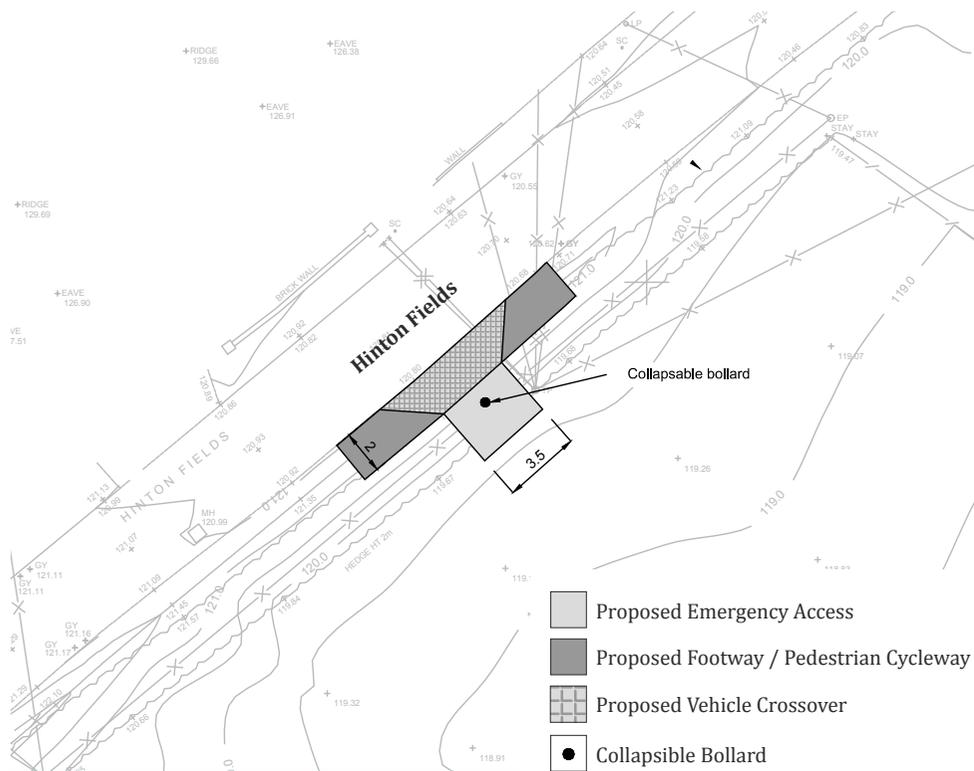
be agreed with Worcestershire County Council, as the highway authority.

The Feasibility Assessment, has demonstrated that the proposed development site is located within an accessible location, with good public transport provision and access to existing local amenities.

Access to the site is achievable, and subject to scoping discussions with the highway authority, and further traffic surveys. There are no overriding or sustainable highways reasons why the development proposals should not be progressed towards a planning application.



Proposed Site Access



Potential Emergency Access



Chapter 7

ECOLOGY & ARBORICULTURE

The site has been subject to a range of ecological and arboricultural surveys such that the existing baseline can be fully understood and in turn used to inform emerging development proposals for the site.

Arboriculture

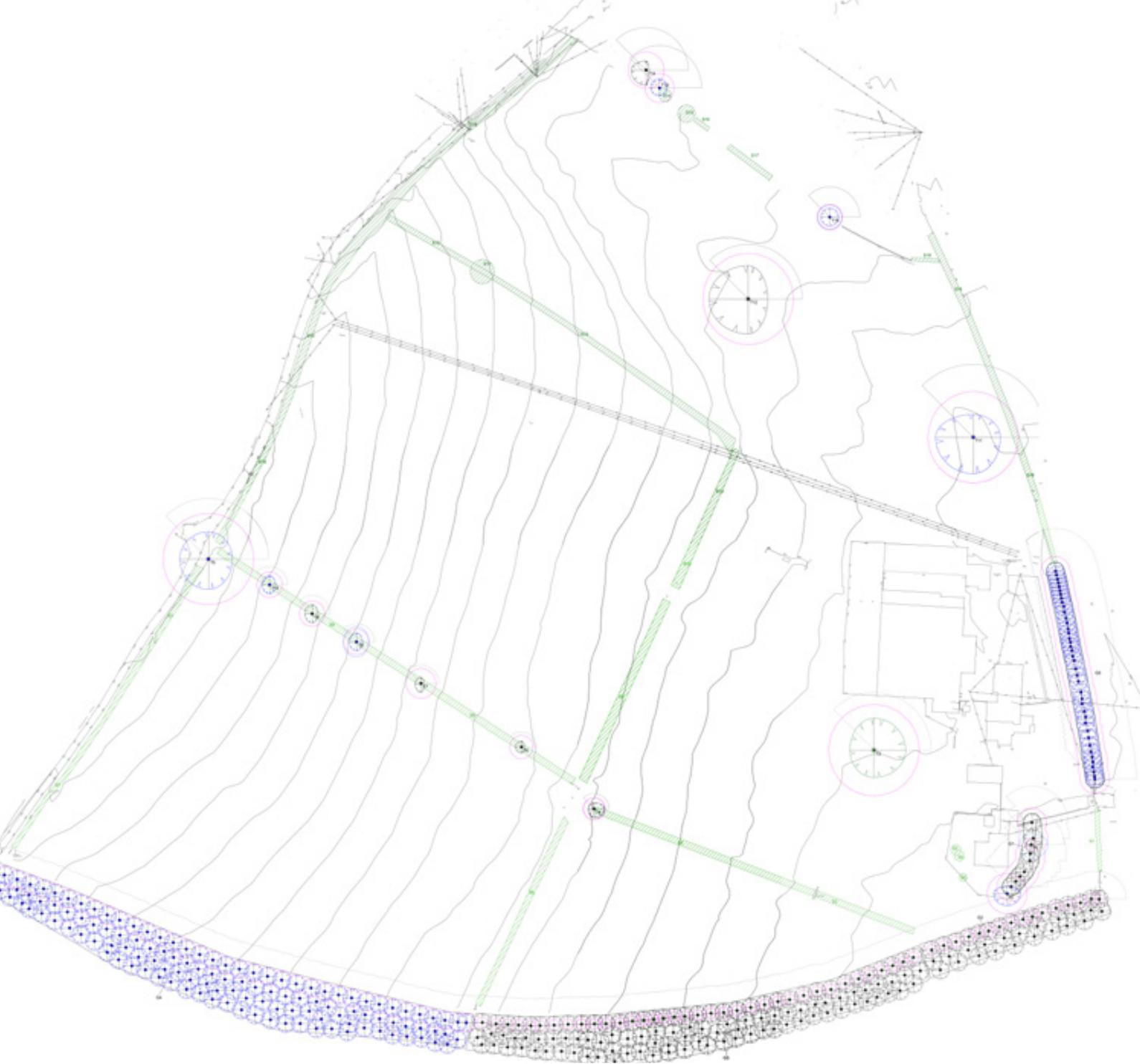
The site is comprised of field boundary hedgerows, occasional hedgerow trees and isolated trees within field parcels.

The southern boundary is formed by a woodland buffer which acts as screening between the site and the M42. This tree buffer is divided into two categories, Category B in the west and Category C in the east. This area of woodland is offsite and will be retained as part of the proposals.

Within the site itself there are a number of individual trees, two of which are category A. One of these category A trees, located next to the farm house, has been hit a number of times by lightning and has large scars with splits. Both these category A trees and all the category B trees will be retained as part of the proposals.

The majority of the perimeter hedgerows in the north west and east will be kept as part of the proposal, with small sections removed for access.

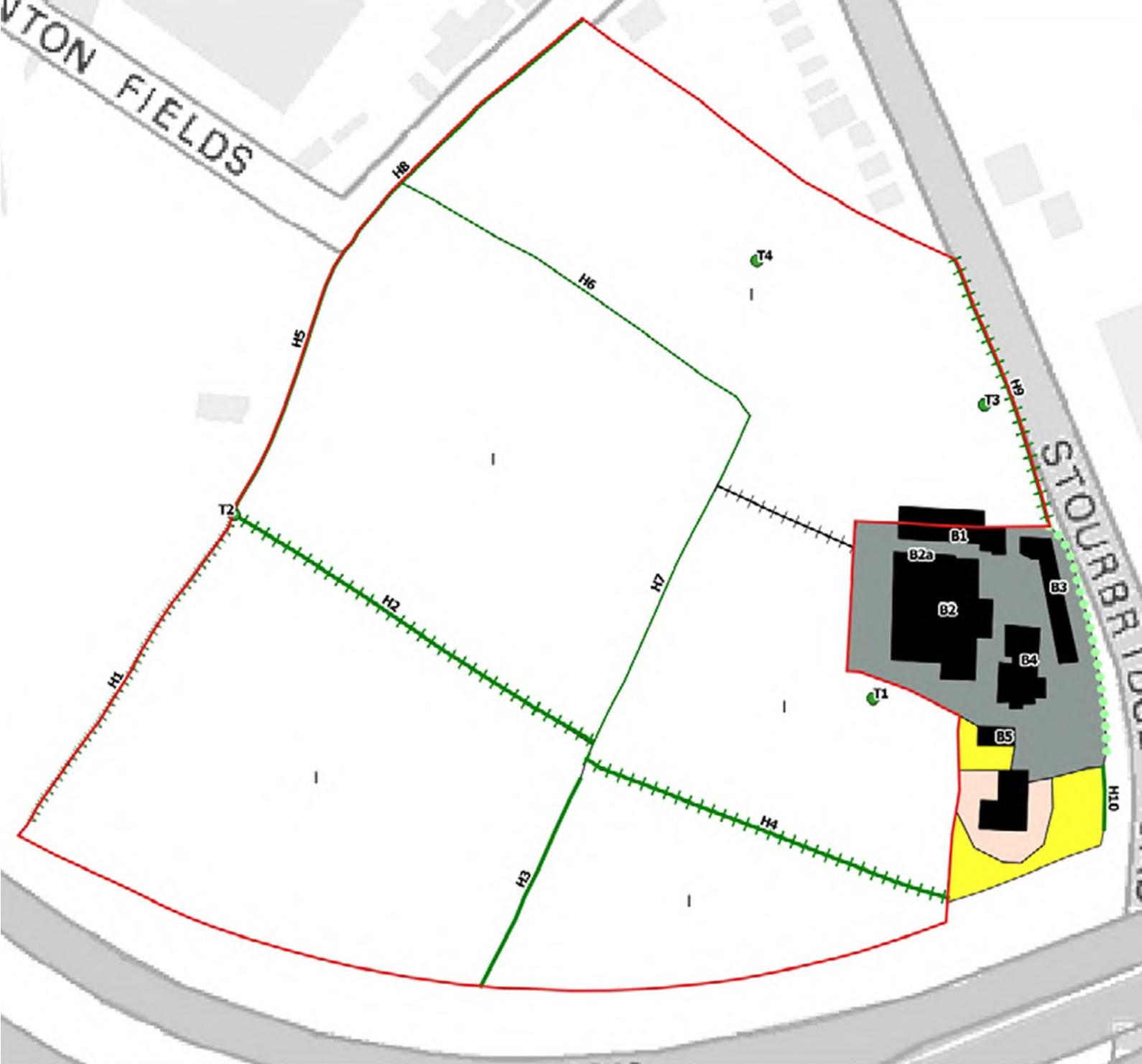
As part of the development it is likely that some of the internal hedgerows will be removed, the loss of which will be offset through proposed planting. This would include a substantial planted buffer on the southern edge of the site and an area of open space in the east.



-  Category A - Trees / Groups of High Quality (BS 5837:2012)
-  Category B - Trees / Groups of Moderate Quality (BS 5837:2012)
-  Category C - Trees / Groups of Low Quality (BS 5837:2012)
-  Category U - Trees / Groups Unsuitable for Retention (BS 5837:2012)
-  T/G202 Tree / Group Number
-  Root Protection Area (Based on simple radius from tree)
-  Tree Canopy - Ultimate Spread
-  Hedge or Woody Scrub Area
-  S202 Hedge or Woody Scrub Area Section Number
-  Approximate Tree Shadow Extent



Tree Survey



- Site Boundary
- Buildings
- Built Environment: Buildings/Hardstanding
- Built Environment: Gardens (Lawn and Planting)
- Cultivated/Disturbed Land - Amenity Grassland
- Improved Grassland
- Hedge with Trees -Species-Poor
- Intact Hedge - Species-Poor
- Defunct Hedge - Native Species-Rich
- Defunct Hedge - Species-Poor
- Fence
- Coniferous Trees
- Broadleaved Tree



Phase 1 Habitat Survey

Ecology

An Ecological Assessment has been carried out. The following provides a summary of the baseline character of the site;

No designated sites of nature conservation interest fall within the site boundary. Battlefield Brook Local Wildlife Site (LWS) is situated approximately 100m to the east of the site and is designated for its water vole *Arvicola amphibious* colony. Two sites of national importance are also present within 2km of the site, these include Oakland Pasture Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI (1.5km to west)) and Feckenham Forest SSSI (1.9km to the north-west). No impact on these sites as a result of development are anticipated in relation to the proposals.

Flora

The site was dominated by fields of improved grassland bound by hedgerows and mature trees. The grassland was heavily grazed and as a result, was of low ecological value due to its intensive management and poor species diversity. The hedgerows provided greater interest, however were also observed to be intensively managed. Hedgerow H1, situated on the western boundary, qualifies as 'important' under the Hedgerow Regulations (1997) due to its high species diversity and structure. The other hedgerows on site do not fall under this protection and range from moderate to low conservation value under the Hedgerow Evaluation and Grading System (HEGS). Overall the habitats on site were considered of low ecological value, with limited species diversity and high disturbance.

Fauna

Suitable foraging, commuting and nesting habitat for a number of faunal species has been identified on site including bats, breeding bird and badger *Meles Meles*. No aquatic habitat is present within the site boundary and the short grassland provided poor terrestrial suitability for great crested newts *Triturus cristatus* and water vole. No potential for any other protected species was present.

Due to the overall low ecological value of the site, proposals will provide opportunities for habitat creation within a cohesive green infrastructure framework. The incorporation of species-rich grassland, tree planting, SUDs scheme and bat, bird and insect boxes across the development, would provide significant biodiversity enhancements to the site.

Agricultural Land Quality

The site is predominantly in agricultural use for pasture fields. The site is not covered by any detailed agricultural land quality information but the current Agricultural Land Classification (published by Magic) indicates that the land is of medium agricultural quality, (Grade 3). Effects of development on soils, the agricultural land resource and agricultural businesses will not be significant.

Chapter 8

HERITAGE

There are no designated heritage assets within the site.

Historic Context

There are 2 Grade II listed Buildings within Catshill that lie outside of the site boundary and are situated to the north, off Stourbridge Road - Christ Church and Catshill and North Marlbrook War Memorial.

There are a further 2 Grade II Listed Buildings to the west of the M42.

There is a Conservation Area within Dodford, to the west of the site, in Barnt Green, to the east of the site and in the town centre of Bromsgrove, situated to the south of the site.

Development would have no impact upon designated heritage assets, or indeed those considered locally important.



Chapter 9

FLOOD RISK & DRAINAGE

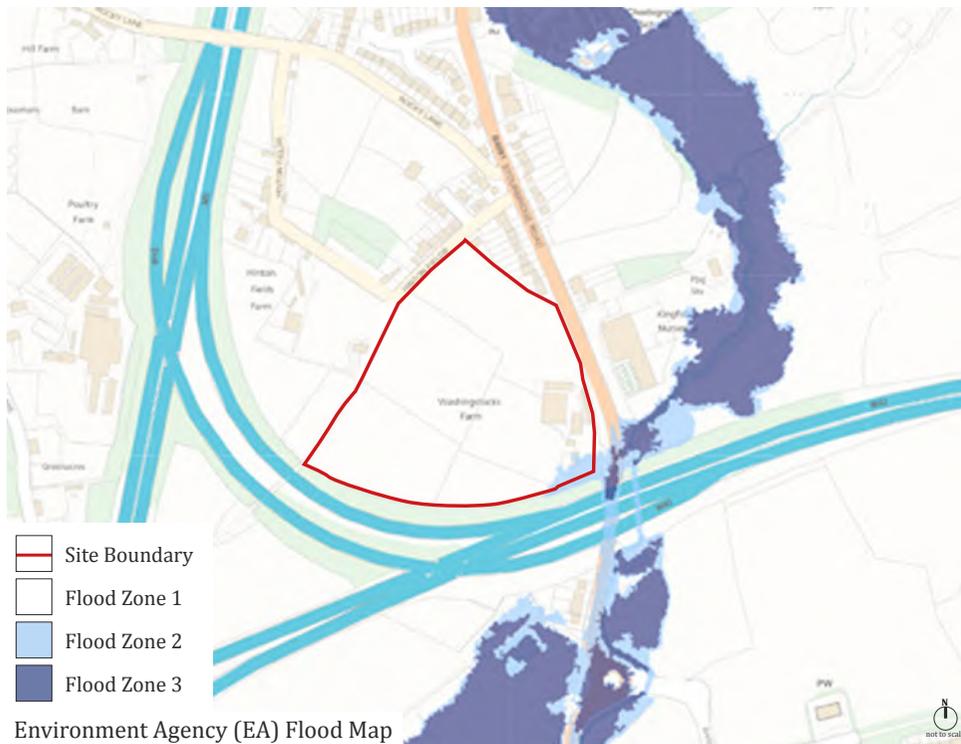
The proposed development site lies within Flood Zone 1, an area with a low probability of flooding.

Summary

A very small portion of the site, to the south east, is located in Flood Zone 2, an area with a medium probability of flooding.

Appropriate drainage measures through the use of SuDS can be readily developed to address on-site drainage as a result of built development.

Overall, the minimal risk of flooding on the site would not prevent appropriate development being brought forward.



Chapter 10

ACOUSTICS

Existing noise levels across the site are predicted to be of a magnitude suitable for residential development.

Introduction

A noise assessment has been undertaken regarding the site's suitability for the proposed residential development at Washingstocks Farm, Bromsgrove.

Existing noise levels across the site are predicted to be of a magnitude suitable for residential development. The project can be designed to meet the WHO noise criteria for outdoor living areas.

Proposals that will help to reduce the overall noise impact for residential properties include barriers (a bund and fencing), glazing and ventilations.

The following mitigation options are currently being considered:

- **Taking into account the main noise sources affecting the site (link between M42 and M5), an acoustic screening option consisting of a 1 metre high fence to be installed on top of a 3 metres high bund have been proposed.**
- **Double glazed systems would provide an attenuation of 35 dB(A). The glazing would be accompanied by a ventilation system capable of providing the necessary sound reduction of 35dB in an open form.**

Such considerations will be taken during the detailed design phase of the project in order to incorporate good acoustics within the design process in order to meet the required noise criteria.





Photographs of nose monitoring equipment

Chapter 11

AIR QUALITY

Air quality on the site is expected to be at an acceptable level to facilitate residential development.

Introduction

The principal source of air pollution attributable to housing developments is typically during the operation phase, due to exhaust emissions associated with any additional traffic the development may bring. The key air pollutants from road traffic sources are nitrogen oxides (NO_x), Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) and fine particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}).

There are currently no air quality monitoring locations in the vicinity of the site for any of the relevant pollutants. The most similar currently monitored location is located within the nearest AQMA at Lickey End, declared for exceedances of the NO₂ annual mean air quality standard (AQS). However the Lickey End AQMA area suffers from traffic congestion in peak hours as a result of junction 1 of the M42 and the

busy A38. The proposed development site does not have similar congestion issues on the roads bordering it, therefore is likely to experience lower pollutant concentrations. Estimated background concentrations at the proposed development site are well below the respective annual mean AQSs for each of the pollutants. Considering the available data, it is likely that pollutant concentrations are below the respective AQSs.

Due to the likely low background PM₁₀ concentrations, it is considered that there will be a low risk in regards to human health. Mitigation measures to reduce the impact of construction activities can be accommodated. For example, travel plans will be put in place for traffic to avoid the local AQMA and for non road mobile machinery to be the

most efficient possible with regard to exhaust emissions.

For the operation phase assessment, initial estimates suggest the development would not exceed the criterion suggested in guidance.

Good practice mitigation will be undertaken for the operational phase to minimise the impact of the development. Such measures include charging points for electric vehicles to help promote low emission vehicles, specification of low NO_x boilers and further planting along the site boundary.

The air quality assessment concludes that a significant impact is not anticipated a result of the proposed development.





-  Site Boundary
-  Existing Trees, Hedgerows and Vegetation
-  Existing Buildings
-  Potential Access Point off Stourbridge Road
-  Existing Contours
-  Potential Location for Attenuation and Flood Storage
-  Existing Green Buffer to be Retained
-  Main Road Network
-  Existing Public Right of Way
-  Short Range Views from Existing Properties and Road Network
-  Long Distance Filtered Views
-  Potential Location for Public Open Space
-  Environment Agency (EA) Floodplain

not to scale

Opportunities and Constraints

Chapter 12

SITE DELIVERY

A considerable amount of technical work has already been undertaken with respect of this site which has informed the emerging masterplan.

Opportunities and Constraints

The site has no fundamental environmental constraints which cannot be successfully mitigated, and its development provides a range of opportunities:

- **The site extends to over 7.5Ha and can accommodate high quality and sustainable residential led development, set within a generous Green Infrastructure framework.**
- **The site is in a sustainable location with easy access to nearby amenities, the strategic road network and existing bus stops on Stourbridge Road.**
- **The existing hedgerows and trees can be supplemented with additional planting to create new habitats and maximise opportunities for biodiversity.**
- **Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) can collect surface water run-off and enhance biodiversity.**
- **Integration of existing footpaths, and establishment of new footway and cycle links.**



-  Site Boundary: 7.5 Ha
-  Proposed Residential Development: 5Ha (Up to 175 dwellings @35dph)
-  Existing Trees, Hedgerows and Vegetation to be retained where feasible
-  Proposed Open Space
-  Proposed Noise Bund/Fencing (Indicative location)
-  Proposed Tree Planting
-  Indicative Attenuation Basin
-  Proposed Childrens Play Area
-  Existing Public Right of Way
-  Proposed Footway/Cycle Link



Development Framework

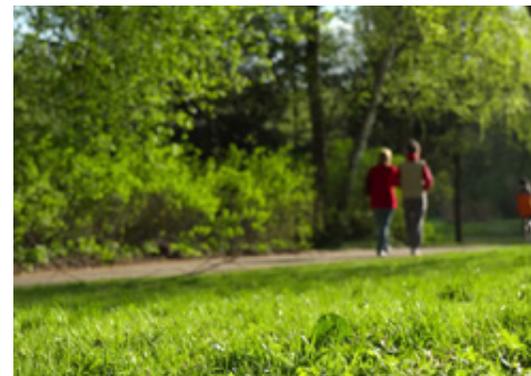
The site provides an excellent strategic opportunity to accommodate residential development.

A “ground up” iterative approach to the Development Framework will ensure that development is directly responsive to the key natural characteristics of the site and works to reinforce local landscape character.

Proposed built development will be well integrated within the local landscape, with a comprehensive green infrastructure framework building upon the established landscape features.

The Development Framework has the potential to deliver multiple benefits for new and existing residents in the surrounding villages including:

- **A new residential development within an attractive landscape setting.**
- **A variety of dwelling types, sizes and tenures providing a broad range of accommodation from first time homes to larger family and affordable homes.**
- **Green Infrastructure comprising existing retained habitats and features (e.g. hedgerows, trees and ponds) together with the public rights of way, providing the framework for new landscape and recreation in the form of community woodland/tree planting, open space, swales, ponds and an equipped children’s play area.**





Land at Washingstocks Farm, Catshill

VISION DOCUMENT