

Land at Cross Green, South Staffordshire

Landscape Position Note

edp5393_r004d

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Landscape Position Note has been prepared by the Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP) on behalf of Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd (the 'promotor'). The document sets out the findings of a preliminary appraisal in respect of landscape and visual matters to inform the proposed allocation of Land at Cross Green near Wolverhampton, Staffordshire ('the site').
- 1.2 This Landscape Position Note provides technical evidence to assess the suitability of bringing forward development at the site, which can be considered by the Local Planning Authority (South Staffordshire District Council) as part of their current Local Plan Review.
- 1.3 This Landscape Position Note has been informed by a desk-based review of available data, policy, landscape character publications and mapping, and by a site visit undertaken by an experienced and Chartered Landscape Architect in early Summer 2021. The site was also visited in April 2019. On both occasions the visits were during fine, dry weather with excellent visibility. Across the visits the site was experienced in a range of conditions, allowing for a full appreciation of its potential visibility and its context.

2. Site Location, Description and Context

Site Location

- 2.1 The site is situated within the administrative authority of South Staffordshire District Council, and measures approximately 54 hectares (ha), and is located at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference (OSGR) SJ 918 052 (site centre).
- 2.2 The site is located approximately 1.25km west of the village of Featherstone, and approximately 6km north of Wolverhampton City Centre. There are wayside dwellings situated along the Stafford Road (A449), and the nucleated dwellings and farmstead around the site form the most immediate residential setting for the site. The site is shown on **Image EDP 2.1**.



Image EDP 2.1: The Draft Masterplan (December 2021)

Site Description and Context

- 2.3 The site is of a rectilinear shape but contains no development. The majority of the site comprises pasture fields, divided by robust hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees, with small woodland groups situated through the site; see **Photoviewpoint EDP 1 (Appendix EDP 1)** and **Image EDP 2.2**.



Image 2.2: Photograph taken within the site, looking east across it, towards the West Coast Mainline railway line, and HMP Featherstone. The photograph was taken in April 2019 and its location is SJ 91746 05057

- 2.4 The site is enclosed by existing communication routes including: (i) Old Stafford Road and New Road to the north; (ii) the West Coast Mainline railway, which runs north to south along the eastern site boundary; (iii) the M54 Motorway to the southern site edge (see **Photoviewpoint EDP 3, Appendix EDP 1**); and (iv) the Stafford Road (A449) dual carriageway along the western edge of the site.
- 2.5 The western boundary of the site is formed in part by the Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal, which is lined with robust vegetation and mature trees; see **Image EDP 2.3**, and **Photoviewpoint EDP 2 (Appendix EDP 1)**.



Image EDP 2.3: Photograph taken outside of the site's western boundary looking north-east across the site, which is situated beyond the mature tree group. Photograph was taken in April 2019. Viewpoint location is situated at SJ 91581 05495

- 2.6 The site is dissected by two roads, the first of these being Dark Lane, a single-track carriageway running diagonally north-west to south-east through the centre of the site. This narrow country lane is enclosed by robust hedgerows, which define pastoral fields, giving the route a sunken feeling; see **Image EDP 2.4**.



Image EDP 2.4: Photograph taken within the site, on Dark Lane looking south-east through the site. Photograph was taken in April 2019. Viewpoint location is situated at SJ 91681 05791

- 2.7 Secondly, Brinsford Lane, a two-lane carriageway runs west to east across the southern portion of the site. Along this lane, there are a small number of wayside dwellings, farmsteads and agricultural infrastructure including storage barns, including Brinsford Farm; see **Image EDP 2.5**.



Image EDP 2.5: Photograph taken on the south-western site boundary looking east along the edge of Brinsford Lane. Brinsford Farm can be seen in this view. Photograph was taken in April 2019. Viewpoint location is situated at SJ 91516 05214

- 2.8 The north-eastern edge of the site is enclosed by mature tree planting and vegetation situated along the route of the West Coast Mainline railway, which runs along the south-eastern edge, after being dissected by Brinsford Lane, with the railway line passing over the route with a railway bridge. HMP Featherstone is situated approximately 0.25km beyond the site's eastern edge, with further arable and pastoral fields situated between the railway line and Cat and Kittens Lane; see **Image EDP 2.6**. The visual impact of HMP Featherstone can be seen on **Photoviewpoint EDP 4**.



Image EDP 2.6: Photograph taken within the site looking east towards the West Coast Mainline railway. Photograph was taken in April 2019. Viewpoint location is situated at SJ 91789 05047

- 2.9 Along the south-western edge of the site, there are existing two and two and a half storey dwellings, situated on the Stafford Road (A449). The rear of these dwellings is limited by extensive tree groups with agricultural barn type buildings; see **Photoviewpoint EDP 4 (Appendix EDP 1)**.
- 2.10 There are further residential dwellings overlooking the site along the north-western boundary (along the Old Stafford Road). These two- and two and a half storey dwellings are situated on the northern side of the road and look across the site; see **Photoviewpoint EDP 1 (Appendix EDP 1)** which shows a similar view from New Road.
- 2.11 The site has a gentle undulating topography, with the highest landform around its north-eastern and south-eastern (approximately 110m above Ordnance Datum (aOD)), with the western edge around Brinsford Lane and the Stafford Road (A449) sitting at approximately 105m aOD.
- 2.12 There are no public rights of way (PRoW) or public access land within the site. However, the towpath running along the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal affords public access along its route on the north-western edge of the site; see **Image EDP 2.3**, and **Photoviewpoint EDP 5 (Appendix EDP 1)**.
- 2.13 The long-distance walking route – the Monarchs Way – passes east to west along Brinsford Lane before joining the wider PRoW network in the wider landscape to the east and west of the site.

HM Prison Featherstone is situated approximately 0.25km east of the site, and the M54 Motorway to the south, and there are limited publicly accessible routes to the east and south of the site. Beyond the M54 to the south, the settlement of Wolverhampton further restricts the availability of PRoW.

- 2.14 The Monarchs Way long-distance walking route runs along the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal outside of the site, linking with the Stafford Road (A449) and Brinsford Lane, as detailed above.
- 2.15 There are a number of PRoW situated to the north and west of the site; however, none afford direct access to the site.

3. Relevant Planning Context and Considerations

Local Planning Policy

- 3.1 The site is located within the administrative authority of South Staffordshire District Council, which is the Local Planning Authority. The Local Plan contains a range of policies and land allocations, and is made up of two documents, which are the Core Strategy and the Site Allocations Document (SAD). These two plans replace the 1996 Local Plan and together deliver the local planning strategy for South Staffordshire. The Core Strategy was adopted in 2012 and the SAD in September 2018.
- 3.2 In landscape terms, 'Policy EQ4: Protecting and Enhancing the Character and Appearance of the Landscape' draws attention to the importance of the: 'intrinsic rural character and local distinctiveness of the South Staffordshire landscape should be maintained and where possible enhanced.' Further emphasise is placed on development coming forward, which ensure that *"the design and location of new development should take account of the characteristics and sensitivity of the landscape and its surroundings, and not have a detrimental effect on the immediate environment and on any important medium and long-distance views"*.
- 3.3 It is therefore key that the siting, scale, and design of new development takes full account of the nature and distinctive qualities of the local landscape. The use of techniques, such as landscape character analysis, to establish the local importance and the key features that should be protected and enhanced, will be supported.
- 3.4 Where possible, opportunities should be taken to add character and distinctiveness through the contribution of new landscape features, particularly to landscapes which have been degraded.
- 3.5 It is clear that the Local Planning Authority would require any emerging site masterplan to be developed iteratively through the undertaking of a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment, to ensure the appropriate level of development, siting of new built form, and the effective offsetting, and reduction of likely effects through landscape mitigation initiatives.

Green Belt

- 3.6 The site does not lie within a nationally or locally designated landscape, however, it does lie within the West Midlands Green Belt. The Green Belt designation extends northwards from Wolverhampton, between the edges of Wolverhampton City towards the outlying towns of Stafford and Cannock. The Green Belt excludes the outlying villages of Featherstone, Coven, Codsall and Penkridge, restricting substantive development within this area.
- 3.7 A number of overarching local plan policies relate to Green Belt and the provision of Green Infrastructure. Both can work hand-in-hand, as discussed further below.
- 3.8 The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. As such, Green Belt is a planning policy designation rather than a landscape designation based on landscape character and value (i.e. Green Belts are not automatically of high landscape value). Whilst Green Belt has been used to control all development, the focus of the designation is essentially to control the sprawl and creep of urban areas and settlements, and not protect high quality landscapes.
- 3.9 With regards to Green Belt, paragraph 137 of the revised July 2021 NPPF states:
- “The government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence”.*
- 3.10 Paragraph 138 of the July 2021 NPPF sets out five purposes of the Green Belt, listed below:
- *“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;*
 - *To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
 - *To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land”.*
- 3.11 It is clear from this set of criteria that the relative landscape value or sensitivity of Green Belt land is not a reason for its designation; it is a strategic tool to restrict unacceptable development within areas around and between settlements. In this way, it is very different, for example, from a national or local landscape designation, which are areas defined specifically for their landscape qualities.

- 3.12 The site is currently (largely) a green field site situated within open countryside to the west of Featherstone and north of the City of Wolverhampton. As such, the development of the site would represent a new area of settlement within open countryside. Consequently, the development would encroach into the open countryside, which is contrary to Green Belt purposes as set out within the revised NPPF July 2021; therefore, EDP would recommend a detailed appraisal of the site relative to overall Green Belt functionality.
- 3.13 However, the site has robust defensible boundaries that are well established, and which include the arterial transportation routes of the West Coast Mainline railway, the M54 Motorway and the Stafford Road (A449) dual carriageway, with intervening land between the site and the immediate settlements of Featherstone and Wolverhampton.
- 3.14 With reference to the NPPF, EDP notes the following at paragraph 140:
- “Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans...”.*
- And which continues at paragraph 143:
- “When defining Green Belt boundaries, plans should:*
- e) be able to demonstrate that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period; and*
 - f) define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent”.*
- 3.15 Any perceived sense of encroachment would be limited by the dense physical boundaries of the site, which could be further enhanced through hedgerow enhancement, new tree planting, as well as the planting of further woodland blocks within the site, echoing those typically found within the context of the site and in the surrounding countryside. In visual and sensory terms these features enclose and limit the site’s discernibility and the perception of built development across the wider open countryside.
- 3.16 However, at this preliminary stage, a strategy for dealing with Green Belt release would need to be developed, and the site’s function with the designation determined. The existing M54, earthwork embankments and the mature tree components create a robust defensible edge to Wolverhampton. The development of this site has the potential to reduce the perceived openness of Green Belt north of Wolverhampton, and as such, its release may be harmful to the function of the wider Green Belt i.e. between Featherstone and Penkridge.
- 3.17 This would contribute to the perception of sprawl, and the performance of the area in terms openness and permanence (the key purpose of the Green Belt designation), may suffer.



- 3.18 In terms of local plan policy, the development of the site would be contrary to the South Staffordshire District Council's Core Strategy (December 2012) Policy GB1: Development in the Green Belt, unless, for exceptional circumstances the site could be released from the Green Belt.
- 3.19 In their 2014 Green Belt review and the 2016 Partial Green Belt Review, South Staffordshire District Council did not review the site for its Green Belt function; hence, no conclusions were drawn on its function and contribution to the integrity of the Green Belt.
- 3.20 However, South Staffordshire District Council is currently undertaking a review of the adopted Local Plan (Core Strategy and Site Allocations Document) and has carried out a number of Regulation 18 consultations. The review will cover (as a minimum) the following matters:
- South Staffordshire's own local housing need and the potential for housing supply to meet this need;
 - South Staffordshire's potential role in meeting wider unmet housing and employment needs through the Duty to Cooperate;
 - The need for further additional safeguarded housing and employment land for longer term development needs; and
 - A comprehensive Green Belt Review undertaken jointly with the Black Country authorities.

4. Landscape Character and Visual Amenity

- 4.1 At a high level, the site is situated within two National Character Area Profiles (NCAP) 61: Shropshire, Staffordshire and Staffordshire Plain, and (NCAP) 66: Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau, as well as adjoining a further NCAP, that being (NCAP) 67: Cannock Chase and Cank Wood to the site's eastern edge.
- 4.2 However, given the size of the site, and its transitional NCAP location, combined with its location on the edge of an extensive urban area (Wolverhampton City), which adjoins the M54 Motorway, and within close range of the M6 and associated road infrastructure, such a published appraisal is considered too broad-brush to provide an understanding of the character of the site and its local context.
- 4.3 EDP undertook its own field-based assessment during June 2021 which, combined with information published within Staffordshire County Council's 'Planning for Landscape Change Supplementary Planning Guidance' landscape character assessment, enables a much finer grain understanding of the site. Our field-based appraisal is helpful to reach conclusions about the acceptability, in landscape terms, of developing the site, and its possible effects on local character.

4.4 The presence of settlements within the 'Settled Plateau Farmland Slopes' Landscape Character Type is typical, and the Staffordshire County Council's 'Planning for Landscape Change Supplementary Planning Guidance' recognises settlements as typical influence in the landscape following 20th Century urban expansion and infrastructure:

"The proximity of urban edge strongly influences the general character of the landscape...busy, noisy areas, dissected by major transport corridors, railways, quarries and power lines..."

4.5 Given EDP's field-based assessment, the following landscape characteristics are noted as being common to the site:

- *"Gently rolling landform with ore pronounces slopes and undulations in places allowing medium to long distance views across to urban edges of surrounding landscapes;*
- *The proximity of the urban edge strongly influences the general character of the landscape...busy, noisy areas dissected by major transportation corridors...; and*
- *The encroachment of housing and industry urbanises the general character with the deterioration of landscape quality most noticeable at the immediate urban fringe".*

4.6 Reflecting on EDP's field-based assessment, the following is noted with regard to the open countryside surrounding the site area:

- *"Where nearby urban influences impact strongly on the landscape the landcover elements are in decline, with lanes now heavily used as through routes, and large scattered farms now diversifying; and*
- *The landscape there becomes one of an undistinguished character where no one element visually dominates but with an urban fringe feel due to adjacent industrial areas and to the introduction of non-traditional activities".*

4.7 It is clear that the site is influenced by the extensive transportation corridors, including the West Coast Mainline railway, the M54 Motorway, and the Stafford Road (A449) dual carriageway, as well as the nearby HMP Featherstone.

4.8 Furthermore, the development of the former Royal Ordnance Factory (ROF) Featherstone strategic employment site to the east and the construction of the consented Road Option 7 that forms an elevated crossing over the West Coast Mainline railway and crosses the site to connect with the A449, will further influence the site.

4.9 The result of this is that the site has a functional relationship with these urbanising influences rather than the wider open countryside, which it feels almost divorced from due to the physical presence of roadways, railway line and substantial built form (HMP Featherstone and Wolverhampton City) forming the site boundary, or its immediate context.

Visual Amenity

- 4.10 Visual amenity is informed by the underlying character of the host landscape character area, which is of a rolling character with mature hedgerows, trees and agricultural farmland and urban influences, that serve to limit the potential visual envelope of the site (refer to **Appendix EDP 1** for representative viewpoints).
- 4.11 There is no public access within the site area; however, provided below is a review of the visual receptors which are situated adjoining the site boundary.
- 4.12 The extensive tree groups and vegetation along and adjoining the site's southern boundary with the M54 Motorway is sufficient to substantially filter views of the site from the motorway; see **Image EDP 4.1** and **Photoviewpoint EDP 3 (Appendix EDP 1)**.



Image EDP 4.1: Photograph taken within the site looking south-east towards the site boundary with the M54 Motorway screened by mature tree components. Photograph was taken in April 2019. Viewpoint location is situated at SJ 91672 04958

- 4.13 Vehicles travelling along the Stafford Road (A449), where views are transient, oblique to the direction of travel, and for the majority of the site screened by intervening built form on the route, the mature landscape setting of the golf course (The Three Hammers) or mature landscape features along the A449 limits views. These road users would be travelling at speed and would have a low sensitivity to the development of the site; see **Photoviewpoints EDP 3 and 4 (Appendix EDP 1)**.
- 4.14 Rail users travelling along the West Coast Mainline railway along the eastern edge of the site would also be travelling at speed and would have a low sensitivity to the development of the

site. The rail route runs through mature tree groups along the eastern edge of the site limiting the discernibility of the wider site area; see **Image EDP 2.6**.

- 4.15 Users of the local minor routes travelling through the site area including Brinsford Lane and Dark Lane, would have a medium sensitivity to the development of the site; however, the combination of sunken lanes, extensive field hedgerows and the wider field pattern with robust hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees would limit the discernibility of the wider site area; see **Images EDP 3 and 4**.
- 4.16 Those boat users, walkers and cyclists using the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal as it passes along the western edge of the site would be sensitive to the development of the site. The users of the canal would have a generally high sensitivity. The mature tree groups along the canal, combined with the robust field hedgerows and hedgerow trees within the site would filter views of the wider site area; see **Photoviewpoint EDP 2 (Appendix EDP 1)**.
- 4.17 Residential dwellings which adjoin the site or overlook it from the local road network would be sensitive to the development of the site. Those most notable are situated on the Old Stafford Road and the junction of the Old Stafford Road with Dark Lane in the north-western edge of the site; see **Photoviewpoint EDP 4 (Appendix EDP 1)**, as well as those nucleated wayside dwellings and farmstead located within the centre of the site; see **Image EDP 2.5**. In these situations, there are direct views into the site; albeit the robust hedgerows and mature hedgerows within the site filter and screen views of the whole site area.
- 4.18 Residential dwellings situated to the south-western corner of the site are oriented towards the site. However, extensive tree planting to the rear substantially filter and screen views of the site; see **Photoviewpoint EDP 3 (Appendix EDP 1)**.
- 4.19 Residential dwellings situated to the west of the Stafford Road (A449) are oriented towards the site and would be sensitive to the development of the site; see **Photoviewpoint EDP 3 (Appendix EDP 1)**; however, extensive tree components to the rear substantially filter and screen views of the site.
- 4.20 With regard to the wider area surrounding the site, EDP notes that whilst there is a strong network of PRow in the wider landscape to the north, west and north-west, the landform remains gently undulating and field patterns are typically small to medium in size with robust field hedgerows and mature tree components, which limits views. From the field-based assessment, EDP finds that the site is not discernible due to the combination of these features; see **Image EDP 4.2**.



Image EDP 4.2: Photograph taken from PRow west of the site beyond the Stafford Road (A449) situated within 0.2km of the site (at its closest point). Photograph was taken in April 2019. Viewpoint location is situated at SJ 91369 04917

- 4.21 Additionally, walkers along the Monarch Way, where its route travels along the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, would have very limited views of the site, if any at all. The combined effect of the undulating landform, mature field hedgerows and trees and intervening built form is in many situations sufficient to screen the site from view; see **Photoviewpoint EDP 5 (Appendix EDP 1)**.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 4.22 In July 2019, South Staffordshire District Council published their 'South Staffordshire Landscape Sensitivity Assessment' (Final Report). This assessment forms an important evidence base for the preparation of the South Staffordshire Local Plan.
- 4.23 The purpose of this study was to provide an assessment as to the extent to which *“the character and quality of landscape abutting is in principle susceptible to change as a result of introducing new built form”*. In terms of scope, this study considers the landscape sensitivity of land within the West Midlands Green Belt which is *“immediately adjacent to selected South Staffordshire settlements (Tier 1-4 settlements)...encompassing locations identified through the South Staffordshire ‘Call for Sites’ exercises, and land adjacent without promoted sites.”*
- 4.24 South Staffordshire District Council define landscape sensitivity as *“the relative extent to which the character and quality of an area (including its vital attributes) is likely to change as a result of introducing a particular type of development.”*

4.25 This study appraises parcels of land, some of which are large and expansive tracts of land, and the study includes the site situated within three relatively compact land parcels, identified by South Staffordshire District Council as SL46,47 and 48; see **Image EDP 4.3**.

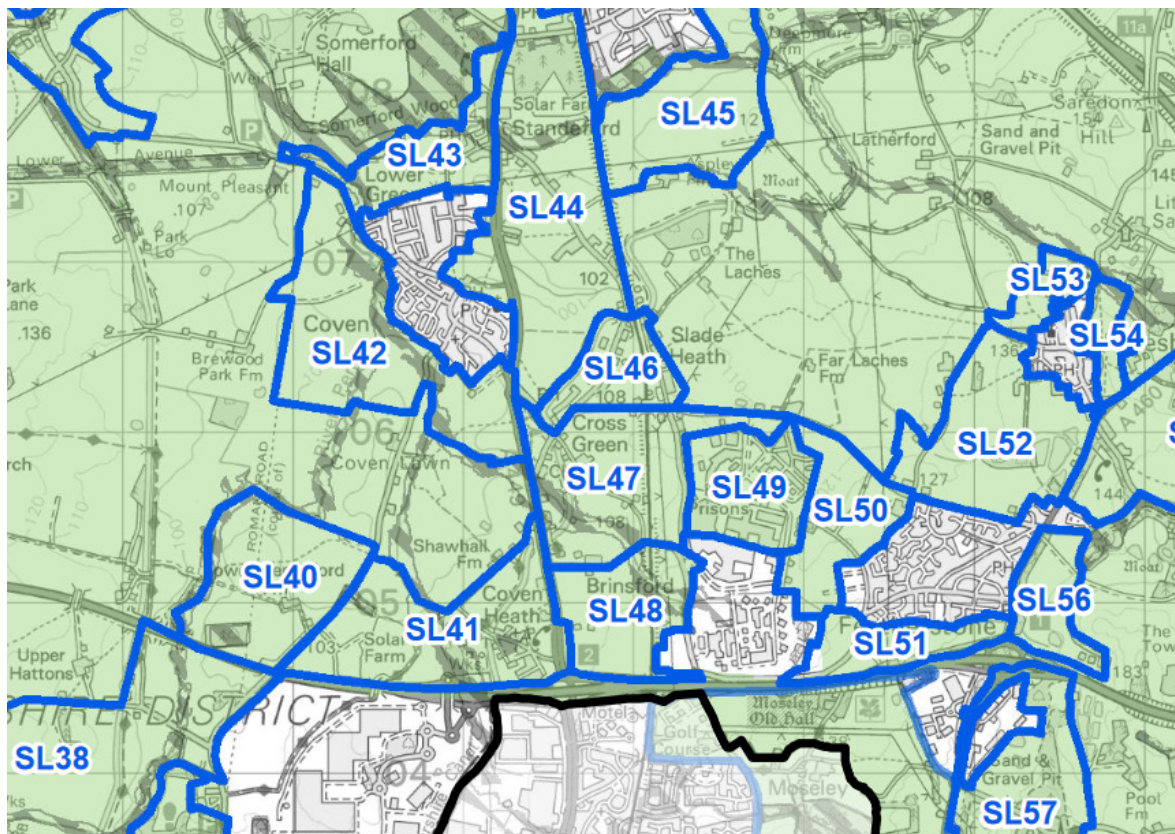


Image EDP 4.3: Extract from the South Staffordshire District Council's South Staffordshire Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (Final Report, July 2019)' Figure 3.2

4.26 With reference to Table 4.1 of the South Staffordshire District Council's South Staffordshire Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, all three of these land parcels have been rated as having a Moderate landscape sensitivity, which it defines as:

"The landscape has some distinctive characteristics and valued qualities, with some sensitivity to change as a result of introducing built development."

4.27 With consideration of our own field-based assessment, EDP considers that the site has a lower landscape sensitivity, for the following reasons:

- The site has limited features of value with its hedgerows, hedgerow trees and topography probably being it's most interesting aspect; however, existing boundary and internal vegetation is commonly poorly managed;
- There are a number of landscape detractors discernible from within the site, which are predominantly associated with the position of the site on the edge of Wolverhampton, and

the adjoining M54 Motorway to the southern boundary. The West Coast Mainline railway runs along the eastern boundary, and the A449 roadway enclosing the western site edge. In combination, these physical features, and transient movement, disrupts the tranquillity of the local area;

- The perception of existing development is common within the site; especially in the southern areas where existing residential development overlooks the site from the western edge;
- Where nearby urban influences impact strongly on the landscape, the landcover elements are in decline, with lanes now heavily used as through routes, and large scattered farms now diversifying;
- The landscape here becomes one of an undistinguished character where no one element visually dominates but with an urban fringe feel due to adjacent industrial areas and to the introduction of non-traditional activities; and
- It is clear that the site is influenced by the extensive transportation corridors, including the West Coast Mainline railway, the M54 Motorway and the Stafford Road (A449) dual-carriageway, as well as the nearby HMP Featherstone, ROF strategic employment site and the new Road Option 7. These features provide significant and prominent physical elements which sandwich and enclose the site.

4.28 Consequently, given the above factors, EDP would most definitely conclude, that the site has less than moderate landscape sensitivity.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Any future development of the site should be informed by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, the findings of which should help inform and shape the scheme design. Overall, the site is considered to have some visual constraints but is generally relatively well enclosed by existing arterial road corridors, a main railway line, as well as residential development and mature landscape features, which substantially filter and screen views to the wider landscape. Consequently, the site is experienced as largely enclosed and the perception of the site is one which is not of such a sizeable area due to the filtering effect of field hedgerow vegetation.

5.2 At this early stage, the preliminary analysis contained in this Landscape Position Note, has identified the following key points on visual amenity:

- The effect of undulating landform, robust hedgerows and mature trees within the site filter and screen the visibility of the site, from within the site. However, there is no public access land, or public access route through the site;

- There is potential for views of the site from the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal to the west of the site;
- There is scope for views of the site from travelling around the local minor routes, particularly those running through the site, albeit these routes have a sunken feeling in places (e.g. Dark Lane); and
- There are existing dwellings adjoining the site or overlooking it from the immediate environment; these are mostly situated to the north-west and centrally along Brinford Lane.

- 5.3 Furthermore, the gently undulating landform within the site, and its surrounding context, further restricts views into the site's interior, by not providing landform of a sloping nature for open views or from elevated topography.
- 5.4 With regards to the planning advice for the 'Settled Plateau Farmland Slopes' Landscape Character Type, the basic concern for the retention of character is the loss of scale and structure due to the decline and fragmentation of elements of tree cover, mostly notably hedgerow trees and the loss of hedgerows.
- 5.5 The masterplanning of the site provides opportunity to retain, enhance and integrate field hedgerows and tree components, and create new tree groups and woodland blocks through the undertaking of sensitive masterplanning, and appropriate management for longevity.
- 5.6 Reflecting the organic field pattern should be considered in the masterplanning process through the shape of newly planting hedgerows and the definition of roadside boundaries and verges. The spatial distribution and orientation of new buildings should also avoid uniformity of pattern, in all cases, and should seek to reduce the impact on those existing residential dwellings adjoins or overlooking the site in its immediate context.
- 5.7 This preliminary analysis of the site has looked at key considerations in relation to landscape and visual matters, and in particular, discussing the national and local planning policy.
- 5.8 The desk study and wider consideration of views has found that overall the site is well contained from the wider area. Local topography, off-site and on-site mature trees, hedgerows and woodland are notable features that contribute to the site's containment and should therefore be thoughtfully integrated into the development where they will continue to offer these enhancements to local landscape character and context. As such, clear views towards the site are only really obtainable from a limited number of locations, which, are immediate to the site, or within close range.
- 5.9 The redevelopment of the site would remove the site from the Green Belt, and whilst the site has the potential to provide permanent, defensible boundaries to maintain a sense of openness across the wider Green Belt, there is a requirement to further understand the function of the site in terms of its Green Belt functionality.



- 5.10 Currently, South Staffordshire district Council has begun the review of the Local Plan (Core Strategy and SAD), which is supported by a Green Belt Review. Further to this, EDP has highlighted the requirement to appraise the site's Green Belt function for the further promotion of the site to the Local Planning Authority in respect of their current review.
- 5.11 Overall, it is EDP's firm opinion that given a responsive masterplan, this site could be released for a new residential development, and its effects could be managed and offset through appropriate and responsive landscape mitigation.
- 5.12 With respect to landscape character, the site has limited features of value, with its topography and field pattern and vegetated field boundaries being its most valuable aspect. Its existing boundary and internal vegetation remain intact, filtering and screening views from the wider area. Furthermore, development of the site would provide an opportunity to improve the tree stock of the site and to bring all vegetation into long-term management, creating new Green Infrastructure within the site.
- 5.13 Residential receptors within close range of the site are perhaps the most sensitive receptors, though private views are not protected in policy terms. Residential amenity is protected, however, and, as such, the scheme design should be sensitive to these receptors, buffering neighboring properties with open space or rear gardens and seeking to provide an attractive, high-quality development in architectural terms.
- 5.14 Overall, this Landscape Position Note has identified no issues which suggest the site is undevelopable in landscape and visual terms subject to an appropriate design coming forward.



Appendix EDP 1
EDP Photoviewpoints
(edp5393_d005a 08 December 2021 CLM/CJM)



To be viewed at comfortable arm's length



To be viewed at comfortable arm's length

Photoviewpoint EDP 3: Viewpoint from south-western edge of the site looking south towards the M54 Motorway



Photoviewpoint EDP 4: View from Old Stafford Road on the site's western boundary



To be viewed at comfortable arm's length

Photoviewpoint EDP 5: Viewpoint from public right of way outside of the site looking eastwards



To be viewed at comfortable arm's length