

SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE LOCAL PLAN 2023-41 PUBLICATION PLAN

LAND AT GRANGE FARM



BLOOR HOMES[®]

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This representation, submitted on behalf of Bloor Homes Ltd, responds to the revised Regulation 19 'Publication Plan' consultation document and accompanying published evidence, having regard to the national and local planning policy context. It relates specifically to Land at Grange Farm, Coven where Bloor Homes has secured land interests. A site location plan is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The representations are framed in the context of the requirements of Local Plans to be legally compliant and sound. The tests of soundness are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), paragraph 35. For a Development Plan to be sound it must be:
- **Positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet objectively assessed needs, and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
 - **Justified** – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
 - **Effective** – deliverable over the Plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and
 - **Consistent with national policy** – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.
- 1.3 These representations also give consideration to the legal and procedural requirements associated with the plan-making process.

2. Development Strategy

2.1 Bloor Homes supported Spatial Housing Option G (the Council's Preferred Option) identified through the previous Strategic Housing Strategy and Infrastructure Delivery consultation undertaken in 2019. It is noted the proposed strategy now represents a refinement of Spatial Housing Option C, focusing directing growth to the most sustainable villages. Spatial Housing Option C broadly reflects the approach in the adopted Core Strategy.

Policy DS1: Green Belt

2.2 In terms of the strategic approach to the Green Belt there is an acknowledgement within the Local Plan that there needs to be changes to the Green Belt boundary to accommodate growth requirements within the Plan period. It is agreed that Green Belt release is necessary to deliver a sustainable spatial strategy.

2.3 Bloor Homes agrees that exceptional circumstances exist for Green Belt release within the district to allow for sustainable development within the plan period.

2.4 The Publication Plan recognises that the character of South Staffordshire is directly influenced by the fact that around 80% of the district lies within the West Midlands Green Belt. The rural nature of the district also results in a lack of brownfield opportunities to meet any future housing needs beyond the proposed plan period.

Policy DS4: Development Needs

2.5 Bloor Homes generally supports the policy approach set out in Policy DS4 Development Needs however further commentary is set out below in respect of different components of the housing requirement arrived at.

Local Housing Need

2.6 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2021 sets out a minimum housing requirement of 254 dpa based on the Government's standard method, utilising the 2018 Affordability Ratios. Bloor Homes welcomes the publication of a SHMA update in 2024 which reconsiders the minimum housing requirement having regard to the latest Affordability Ratios (2022) which results in a minimum net annual requirement of 227 dwellings.

2.7 The PPG is clear however that the standard method identifies a minimum annual housing need figure and does not produce a housing requirement figure

recognising there will be circumstances where it is appropriate to consider whether actual housing need is higher than the standard method indicates.

2.8 Paragraph 010 of the PPG (ID: 2a-010-20201216) states:

“Circumstances where this may be appropriate include, but are not limited to situations where increases in housing need are likely to exceed past trends because of:

- *growth strategies for the area that are likely to be deliverable, for example where funding is in place to promote and facilitate additional growth (e.g. Housing Deals);*
- *strategic infrastructure improvements that are likely to drive an increase in the homes needed locally; or*
- *an authority agreeing to take on unmet need from neighbouring authorities, as set out in a statement of common ground;”*

2.9 Other circumstances that should be considered in respect of South Staffordshire District include the balance between homes and jobs created over the plan period.

2.10 These circumstances are considered in further detail below.

Unmet Need from Neighbouring Authorities

2.11 The unmet housing need arising from within the wider Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area is well documented.

2.12 The Birmingham City shortfall was tested through the BDP EiP and an unmet housing need to 2031 of 37,900 homes was confirmed. Birmingham City Council has now commenced a review of the Birmingham Development Plan, with an Issues and Options consultation recently published. The Issues & Options document recognised that the BDP was unable to identify enough land to meet all of Birmingham’s housing need and there is still a need to work with neighbouring authorities within the Housing Market Area (HMA) to deliver a housing shortfall. Birmingham City Council has identified a shortfall of around 78,415 dwellings following an assessment of potential capacity from all sources. While this figure will be refined through Birmingham’s plan making process, the shortfall to 2042 will remain significant.

2.13 The Black Country LPAs, were until this Autumn, undertaking a review of the Black Country Plan which is aligned to the timescales of the South Staffordshire Local

Plan review. Evidence that informed the emerging Black Country Local Plan includes an urban capacity assessment. The Urban Capacity Review (2019) concluded that the amount of housing need which cannot be accommodated in the Black Country urban areas remained significant, at around 26,920 homes to 2038.

- 2.14 The Draft Black Country Plan 2018-2039, subject to consultation in 2021, identified a shortfall of 28,239 homes to be exported to neighbouring LPAs through the Duty to Co-operate.
- 2.15 The shortfall figures above do not take into consideration the 35% urban uplift introduced in December 2020 which would be applicable to both Birmingham and Wolverhampton.
- 2.16 The Black Country LPAs took a decision to abort the joint plan-making approach to instead progress separate Local Plans.
- 2.17 The individual Black Country Authorities are now preparing their own Local Plans. Wolverhampton City Council consulted on a Regulation 18 Consultation Plan (dated February 2024) which identified a potential 11,413 dwellings shortfall. Sandwell Council held a Regulation 18 consultation ending in December 2023 which estimated around a 18,000 dwellings shortfall. Dudley Council also held a Regulation 18 consultation ending in December 2023 which estimated around a shortfall of 1,078 dwellings. It is Walsall Council's intention to proceed under new arrangements of plan making.
- 2.18 Bloor Homes supports the Council in providing a contribution to assist in meeting these unmet needs, however, raises concerns that this is not evidence based. The capacity-led approach, resulting in a contribution of 640 home contribution to the shortfall, will need to be explored and tested through the Examination in Public with neighbouring LPAs.

Economic Uplift

- 2.19 The SHMA sets out the broad economic consequences of the projected growth in Chapter 5. This references the Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA). The EDNA Update 2024 forecasts an additional 5,326 net additional jobs in South Staffordshire over the period 2020-2041. This compares to the 4,824 jobs within the district between 2020 and 2040 identified in the previous EDNA. This forecast is based upon methodologies of two of three forecasting houses that do not provide the basis to identify significant growth in the transport and storage sector.

- 2.20 The number of jobs to be created within South Staffordshire is likely to significantly exceed the 5,326 jobs forecast by virtue of committed development at the West Midlands Interchange (WMI) which will provide significant growth in the transport and storage sector. The WMI itself is projected to create 8,500 jobs of which 40% will be higher skilled.
- 2.21 At present the SHMA assumes that the projected growth of the working age population in South Staffordshire will grow by just 1,012 people between 2023 and 2041. This is significantly lower than the forecast jobs growth outlined in the EDNA. Further consideration should therefore be given to whether the minimum local housing need figure derived from the standard method would support the necessary growth in the working age population to create a balanced community within South Staffordshire to support such jobs growth, even taking into consideration the 640 additional homes to meet unmet needs in the wider housing market area.
- 2.22 Further evidence is necessary to consider the balance between jobs and the working age population that would be necessary to satisfy the jobs demand. This may require an uplift in local housing needs identified.

Policy DS5: The Spatial Strategy to 2041

- 2.23 Bloor Homes supports the proposed spatial strategy to 2041 which recognises environmental capacity and seeks to make best use of existing infrastructure whilst recognising opportunities to delivery new infrastructure.

Settlement Hierarchy

- 2.24 Bloor Homes supports the settlement hierarchy which considers the relative sustainability of villages within South Staffordshire District. The Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements identified contain the widest range of services and facilities and by focusing new homes to these settlements would provide an opportunity to increase sustainability and self-containment. Codsall/Bilbrook and Penkridge appear to achieve the highest services/facilities rankings of all villages within the district.
- 2.25 Coven appears to achieve the highest services/facilities rankings of all villages within the District of the Tier 3 villages within the latest Rural Services and Facilities audit, only falling short of Tier 2 status by virtue of the lack of secondary/high school provision.

Spatial Distribution of Housing Growth

- 2.26 Bloor Homes supports the distribution of housing growth through proportionate growth focused to the villages.
- 2.27 Allowing growth in the most sustainable settlements provides an opportunity to meet locally arising housing needs and offers opportunity to deliver new services, facilities and infrastructure that would assist in addressing local issues and provide community benefit for residents.

3. Site Allocations

3.1 Bloor Homes has a number of land interests within South Staffordshire District. This representation relates to Land at Grange Farm, Coven.

Policy SA3: Housing Allocations

3.2 Bloor Homes is promoting Land at Grange Farm, Coven for residential development. This site is suitable, available and achievable and should be considered if it is determined through the Examination in Public that omission sites are necessary to make the Local Plan sound.

4. Land at Grange Farm

4.1 This Chapter sets out a brief description of the site, followed by an assessment of the site against each of the Council's site selection criteria, as defined within the Housing Site Selection Topic Paper 2024 and preceding site assessments published in 2021 and 2022.

Site Description

4.2 Bloor Homes has current land interests at Grange Farm, Coven as shown on the Site Location Plan appended to this representation (see **Appendix 1**).

4.3 This land represents a logical site for development within the sustainable settlement of Coven, providing an opportunity for delivering approximately 189 new homes with associated supporting infrastructure.

4.4 The site has been historically used for agriculture and is identified as being in the Green Belt. However, the site is bordered by the A449 corridor to the east and the built-up area of Coven to the north, south and west. Due to the substantial edge of the A449 corridor, the site contributes little to the Green Belt quality / openness. Development of the site would effectively infill an area of undeveloped land within the established confines of the village. Considering this, the site is appropriate for development as it would result in the sustainable growth of Coven, close to its Village centre.

4.5 Within Coven there is a local centre comprised of a village hall, post office and cafe, public house, two food retail stores, pharmacy, takeaway, bakery, hairdresser, car garage / showroom and small retail businesses. The centre of the site is situated 230 metres north of the local centre.

4.6 Coven is located approximately 7.5km north of Wolverhampton, 9.1km south west of Cannock and 16.7km south of Stafford. There are four bus stops within a 230m radius of the site that connects Coven to Brewood, Stafford, Wheaton Aston and Wolverhampton.

4.7 The illustrative masterplan introduced through the attached Vision Document (**Appendix 2**) identifies the following key proposals:

- Provision of approximately 189 market and affordable homes;
- Provision of approximately 3.5 hectares of green infrastructure, evenly distributed through the site, including provision of village greens and green corridors;

- Provision of SuDS;
- A new cemetery extension for St Paul's Church;
- A development which respects the adjoining neighbours in terms of providing landscape buffers between existing and proposed homes; and
- A sensitive, high quality green infrastructure network that maintains and improves biodiversity in the area, whilst maintaining much of the existing hedgerows and trees.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Findings

- 4.8 The Council's Sustainability Appraisal (2024) provides an assessment of sites both pre and post mitigation and provides assessment of reasonable alternatives against the SA Objectives.
- 4.9 It is noted that the site assessment for Land at Grange Farm, Coven (Site 085) scores well from a sustainability perspective against objectives that relate to access to services and facilities within the village.
- 4.10 The Sustainability Appraisal notes the site is of lower Green Belt harm than the majority of land around the village.

Sequential Test

- 4.11 The Council's spatial development strategy identifies an infrastructure led approach to growth. Bloor Homes contends that additional growth is required within the Tier 3 settlement of Coven with the plan period and beyond to support existing services and facilities and to provide additional infrastructure, including an extension to the cemetery.

Green Belt Harm

- 4.12 The site lies within the West Midlands Green Belt, adjacent to the current built up area of Coven and bounded to the north, south and west by the existing urban fabric of the village and the A449 to the east.
- 4.13 Whilst the Council's Green Belt Assessment (2019) indicates that development of the site would result in a 'low-moderate' level of harm to the purposes of the Green Belt, the conclusion for Green Belt Sub-Parcel ref: S32Ms1 confirms the release of this site for development would not affect the integrity of the wider Green Belt land:

"The sub-parcel makes a strong contribution to preventing encroachment on the countryside. It lies adjacent on its western edge with the inset residential development at Coven, and is bound to the east by Stafford Road. Despite its spatial openness, the relationship of this land to the wider countryside is weakened by the presence of Stafford Road as a strong boundary to the east. As such, the release of this land would result in a simpler and more consistent Green Belt boundary with open countryside to the west, and would not affect the integrity of the wider Green Belt land."

- 4.14 The conclusion in the Green Belt Assessment that the release of this site would result in a more simple and consistent Green Belt boundary derived by the A449 is fully supported by Bloor Homes.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 4.15 South Staffordshire District Council's Landscape Study (2019) finds that the site has 'moderate' sensitivity in landscape terms.
- 4.16 Whilst the findings of the Landscape Study are not necessarily disputed by Bloor Homes, the site forms part of a much larger parcel that has been subject to assessment within the Landscape Study, including a large area of land to the east of Stafford Road (A449). The Landscape Study recognises that the A449 provides a strong barrier to further expansion, and it is contended that land to the west of the A449 has a lower landscape sensitivity than that which lies to the east and represents a logical infill within the village, if sympathetically designed.
- 4.17 Visually, this is a landscape of mixed arable and pastoral farming on a flat to gently rolling landform where the fabric of the landscape is breaking down under increasing pressure from adjacent urban areas. Deterioration of the medium scale field pattern is leading to large scale open areas with gappy hedges, grown up thorn trees and scattered stunted oaks. Further away from the urban pressures the overall impression is of a landscape more cared for and in good condition, with hedgerows being well maintained to an even height and reinforcing the smooth texture of the landscape.
- 4.18 Sensitive visual receptors are identified as being localised to the western and southern edges accounting for the interface with the existing residential area of Coven, however, most dwellings back onto the site boundary with an array of garden fences and vegetation forming the settlement edge. The north western boundary is adjacent to St Paul's Primary School. The eastern boundary is adjacent to the dual carriageway of the A449.

- 4.19 The development of the illustrative proposal for this site has taken the existing green infrastructure into account to provide a landscape-led approach to development. The landscape strategy proposes the following key features:
- Retention of the existing elements that make up the site's green infrastructure, such as tree and hedges and integrating these into the development, giving the scheme an immediate sense of maturity;
 - Ensuring the gaps in the existing hedge adjacent to the boundaries and the A449 are in-filled with native trees and hedge planting. Evergreen species of holly to be included in the mix to provide effective screening through the winter months;
 - Ornamental and native hedge planting to be planted in and around the proposed development to soften the adverse effects of the built form.
- 4.20 A range of trees are proposed to be introduced to reflect the street hierarchy including the central avenues, squares and mews. Opportunities exist to plant native trees in the Village Greens and general perimeters including areas of public open space.
- 4.21 The landscape strategy has been taken into account when considering the mitigation for the identified potential adverse landscape and visual effects arising at the operational stage and these have been reflected when considering the overall residual effects.
- 4.22 It is contended that the site is able to accommodate the proposed residential led development without causing undue harm to the landscape character and visual amenity of the site and surrounding countryside and footpath network.

Impact on the Historic Environment

- 4.23 Bloor Homes has commissioned Orion to prepare a heritage report, which draws together the available archaeological, historic, topographic and land-use information in order to clarify the heritage significance and archaeological potential of land proposed for development.
- 4.24 The assessment establishes that there are no designated heritage assets (World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Battlefields, Registered Historic Parks or Conservation Areas) within the study site. The Grade II heritage assets of Grange Farm, The Beeches and Church of St. Paul are all located to the south of the site and offer opportunities which have informed the

illustrative masterplan, with the creation of a village green to the north of Grange Farm and landscaped areas to the east and west.

- 4.25 Green corridors offer the opportunity to retain an early east – west aligned trackway which leads to Grange Farm, along with historic hedgerows within the site. Provision of space for a cemetery extension to the north of the Church of St. Paul safeguards space to the north of that heritage asset.
- 4.26 In summary, the technical work undertaken to date concludes there are therefore no heritage constraints to the allocation of the site for residential development.

Surface Water Flooding

- 4.27 The site lies within Flood Zone 1 which has the lowest probability of flooding.
- 4.28 A small stream runs across the northern part of the site flowing from Stafford Road towards the school, before flowing into the school grounds. The site gently falls from east to west and thus drains in the same direction.
- 4.29 To address initial concerns raised by the LLFA, a Sustainable Drainage Strategy (SuDS) can be delivered:
- To efficiently drain the site whilst not causing flooding downstream, including the school site;
 - To create suitable habitats to promote biodiversity;
 - To create ecological corridors across the site;
 - To create an aesthetically pleasing setting for development; and
 - To promote the site as a sustainable place to live and work.

Highways

- 4.30 A Technical Note prepared by Mode Transport Planning (**Appendix 3**) reviews the highways and transport conditions of the local area and confirms the sites suitability and deliverability. It confirms that a single access can be created to serve up to 200 dwellings (subject to internal layout), with potential for an emergency access if necessary. The Technical Note recommends that access is best served from the west of the site along School Lane due to the distance between nearby junctions. The Technical Note highlights the schemes focus on

prioritising pedestrian and non-car modes of transport and, the opportunity to integrate the site with existing public rights of ways through and around the site.

- 4.31 The site is relatively level, gently sloping downwards to the north, making it suitable to design and promote inclusive accessibility. The Illustrative Masterplan is proactive in this regard as it presents a legible and accessible layout with appropriate road and pedestrian connections. The site is well-located to the centre of Coven and there are four bus stops adjacent or near to the site (all within 230m radius). This will provide residents with diverse, convenient, safe and healthy means to travel through the site and local areas. Most importantly, this scheme presents an accommodating and welcoming layout that will be enjoyed by all residents.
- 4.32 The road layouts and parcels have been laid out to promote the site's legibility and permeability. The Illustrative Masterplan shows how key views are maintained and established across the site to create this accessible environment. Particularly in the centre, where the central 'Mews' area directly will be visible from the Village Green (South) and, the Village Square will also be visible from the edges of the site (south and east).
- 4.33 Bloor Homes notes SCC Highways view that an appropriate access cannot be achieved via Brewood Road, however the appended Technical Note recommends a primary vehicular access taken from School Lane would be sufficient to serve the site.

Site-Specific Opportunities

- 4.34 The Illustrative Masterplan identifies the provision of key infrastructure to accommodate development on the site. This includes approximately 3.5ha of 'Green Infrastructure' which includes pedestrian and wildlife corridors that will connect to existing public footpaths around the site, Village Greens within the site (north and south) and a cemetery extension at the south-east of the site (0.31ha) associated with St. Paul's Church.

Suitability

- 4.35 The information set out above, read in conjunction with the appended promotional document and Transport Technical Note, demonstrate that land at Grange Farm, Coven, is a suitable site.
- 4.36 The land parcel occupies an appropriate location in the context of the local centre, existing residential development and strategic highways corridors. The allocation of the site for residential purposes will not result in unacceptable

harm to the Green Belt, but instead will provide a sustainable and well-designed extension to Coven; that will enhance the environment by enhancing wildlife corridors and providing open spaces, to benefit local resident's well-being, while contributing to the success of local businesses.

Deliverability

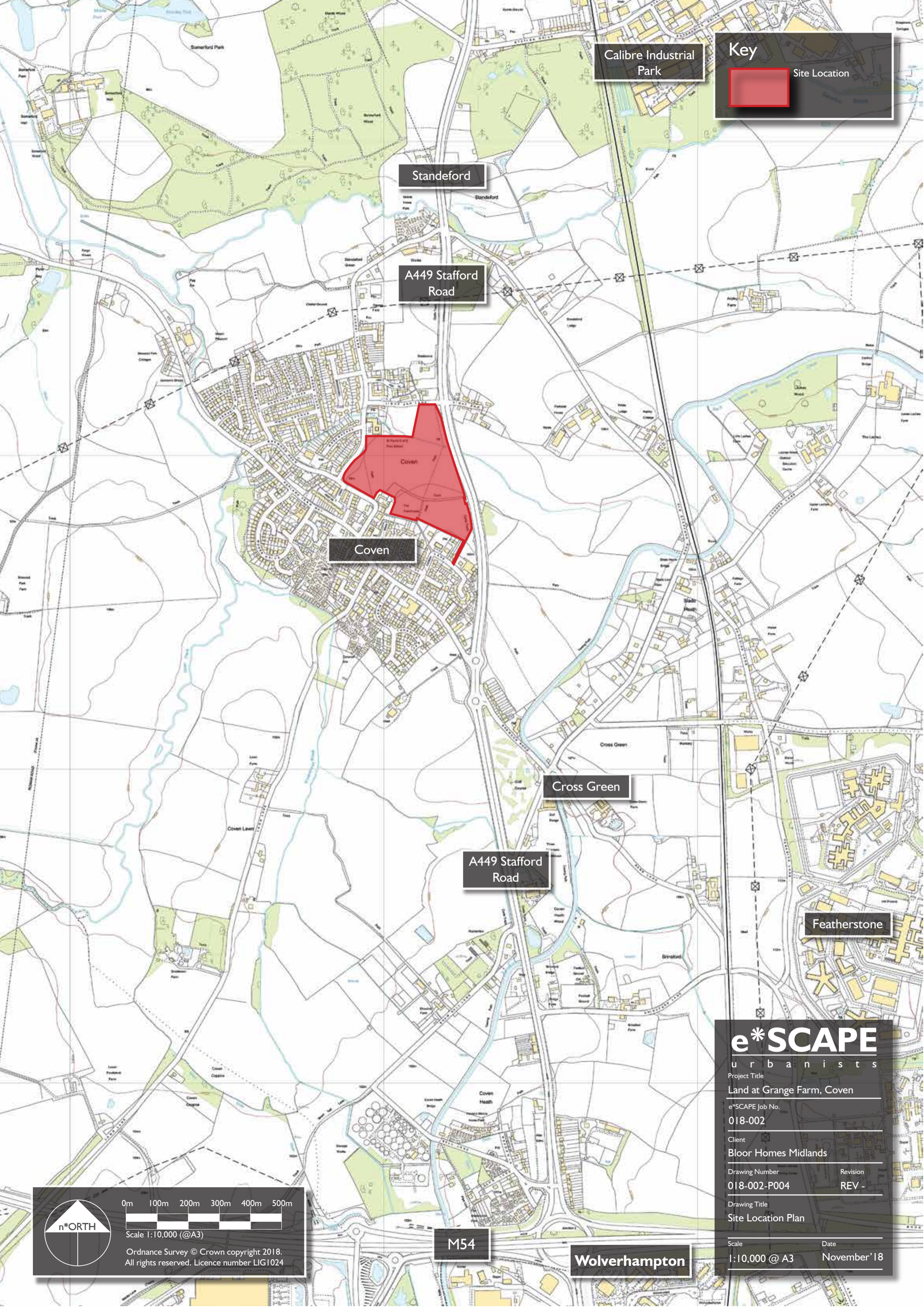
- 4.37 There is an agreement in place between the landowner and Bloor Homes to facilitate the development of the site.
- 4.38 Bloor Homes intends to undertake further technical work to demonstrate the deliverability of land at Grange Farm, Coven, however information gathered to date concludes that there are no physical or other constraints likely to render the site undeliverable within the proposed Plan period to 2041. The site is available now.
- 4.39 The Bloor Homes is a national housebuilder with no funding or capacity constraints and the site is an area of high market demand. The site is deliverable and immediately available and, subject to allocation and removal of the land from the Green Belt, could start to deliver homes and associated community benefits within the next 5 years.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 This representation is made by Evolve Planning on behalf of Bloor Homes to the South Staffordshire Local Plan Review, revised Publication Plan (Regulation 19) consultation. This representation relates to land at Grange Farm, Coven, which Bloor Homes is promoting for residential-led development.
- 5.2 The information contained within this representation, read in conjunction with the appended Vision Document and the Council's published evidence base demonstrates that Land at Grange farm is a suitable and deliverable site for residential development, subject to its release from the Green Belt.
- 5.3 There are no existing uses that would require relocation and no issues of contamination that would require remediation. Many of the potential impacts of the development of the site can be mitigated through design and in many cases a positive outcome can be achieved.
- 5.4 It is submitted that Land at Grange Farm represents a sound strategic housing allocation and should be considered if, through the Examination in Public process, omission sites are required to make the Local Plan sound.

APPENDIX 1

Site Location Plan



Calibre Industrial Park

Key

Site Location

Standeford

A449 Stafford Road

Coven

Cross Green

A449 Stafford Road

Featherstone

M54

Wolverhampton

e*SCAPE
urbanists

Project Title
Land at Grange Farm, Coven

e*SCAPE Job No.
018-002

Client
Bloor Homes Midlands

Drawing Number
018-002-P004

Revision
REV -

Drawing Title
Site Location Plan

Scale
1:10,000 @ A3

Date
November '18

n*ORTH

0m 100m 200m 300m 400m 500m

Scale 1:10,000 (@A3)

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APPENDIX 2

Vision Document

Land at Grange Farm, Coven

Vision Document

November 2018





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1.0 Introduction



I.0 Introduction

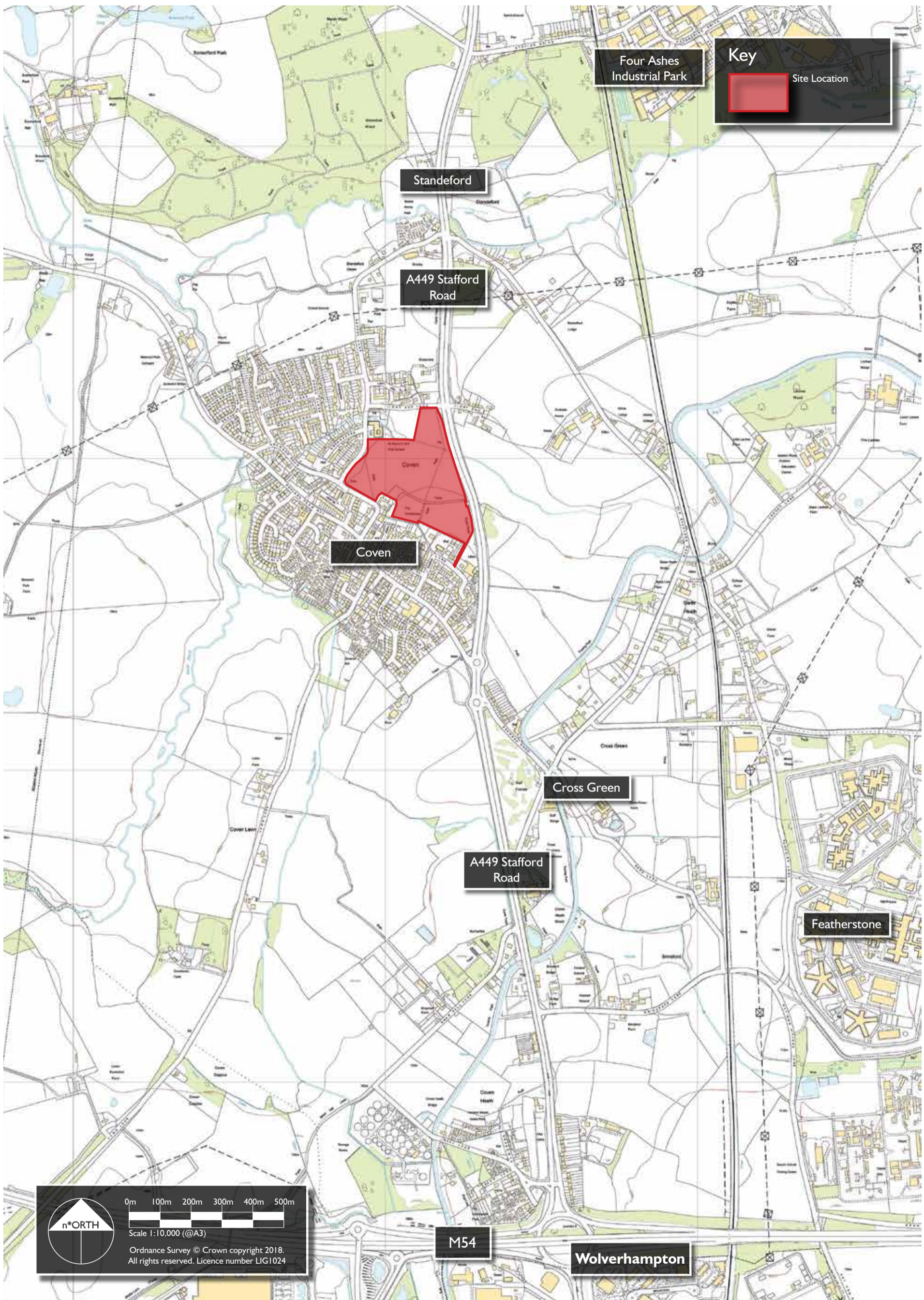


Figure 01:01 Site Location

Purpose

- 1.1 This document has been prepared for Bloor Homes by a multi-disciplinary, professional consultancy team. It provides a development framework for the delivery of a residential-led scheme for land at Grange Farm, Coven ('the site'), South Staffordshire. The site has been identified by South Staffordshire District Council as a potential candidate to be released from the Green Belt to help meet the local housing needs of the District. The site is considered to be suitable for release from the Green Belt to help meet the housing needs of the District as part of the Local Plan Review Process.
- 1.2 The purpose of this document is to explain why the site represents a suitable and deliverable opportunity to accommodate much-needed new housing in Coven in a sensitive way. The document provides a framework for residential-led development at the site, responding to the Council's current consultation on the need for additional housing in South Staffordshire and on the land that may be available to accommodate it.
- 1.3 Bloor Homes looks forward to continuing a constructive dialogue with South Staffordshire District Council, leading to the identification of the land for housing in the Local Plan, and is committed to promoting the opportunity through future stages of the Local Plan and the related examination, as necessary.
- 1.4 As we go on to explain in this development framework, the site is sustainably located and we are not aware of any physical, environmental, ecological or other constraints preventing the site coming forward for housing.

The Site

- 1.5 The land at Grange Farm is located in Coven, just to the north of Wolverhampton.
- 1.6 Coven is identified as a 'Local Service Centre' in the adopted Core Strategy, in recognition of the services and facilities available within the settlement. It is therefore considered as a sustainable location suitable for housing growth, and consequently sites elsewhere in the village have been removed from the Green Belt and either allocated for residential development or safeguarded for future development in the adopted Site Allocations Document.
- 1.7 Bloor Homes currently controls the land as illustrated in the Site Boundary Plan (Figure 01:01) and is committed to the delivery of a high-quality, contextually responsive and comprehensive residential-led scheme providing much needed new housing and community facilities for the village.
- 1.8 As we go on to discuss in this document, the site is well-related to the existing village, surrounded on three sides by Coven and on the fourth (eastern) side by the A449 Stafford Road which runs north-south. A development scheme at the site would be a logical infill within the village, if sympathetically designed.

Headline Benefits

- 1.9 Key benefits of the proposed scheme include the delivery of:
- approximately 189 market and affordable homes with a range of housing sizes and tenures to help meet the demand for new housing in the area;
 - new areas of public open space;
 - a new cemetery extension for St Paul's Church;
 - a development which respects the adjoining neighbours in terms of providing landscape buffers between existing and proposed homes; and
 - a sensitive, high quality green infrastructure network that maintains and improves biodiversity in the area, whilst maintaining much of the existing planting, hedgerows and trees.



2.0 Being Part of Coven

2.0 Being Part of Coven

A New Sustainable Neighbourhood

- 2.1 Bloor Homes wishes to work closely with the Council and other key stakeholders, including the local community, in order to deliver a comprehensively planned development of the highest quality at its site at Grange Farm, Coven.
- 2.2 The development of this site will create a new sustainable neighbourhood within the village. The development shall nestle between the existing houses on Brewood Road and School Lane, whilst also being bounded, enclosed and softened by the primary school, brook, hedgerows and associated trees.
- 2.3 This new neighbourhood will form part of a slightly expanded village, albeit at a site that already benefits from a high level of settlement enclosure. The development will therefore represent a logical infill of Coven rather than an unrestricted expansion into open Green Belt land. A strong and bold network of green spaces, wildlife corridors, habitats and recreational footpaths/cycleways will form an integral part of the Green Infrastructure network, linking the site to the local facilities, wider settlement and countryside.
- 2.4 The masterplanning team has carefully considered all the opportunities and constraints to inform this development framework, which demonstrates that the site can comfortably accommodate a sustainable neighbourhood of around 189 dwellings at the site. The proposals will enable the provision of a network of public open spaces for use by the existing and new members of the community.
- 2.5 The result will be a sympathetic, sustainable and integrated neighbourhood on the eastern edge of Coven, within a logical infill site, creating a strong addition to the village and complementing the surrounding neighbourhoods.

Our Vision for the Site

- 2.6 Our Vision for Grange Farm has sprung out of the appreciation of the surrounding context and features of the site itself as set out in detail in Chapter 4 with the Vision itself explored at the start of Chapter 5. However the panel to the right summarises that Vision:

“Bloor Homes’ Vision for Grange Farm will create a new sustainable neighbourhood at the heart of Coven. The development shall become part of the existing settlement pattern of the village.

This new neighbourhood will be part of the wider village, whilst being unique within the setting of the existing landscape in which it sits.

A network of green spaces, wildlife corridors, habitats and recreational footpaths/ cycleways will be developed within the proposed Green Infrastructure network.

The Streets, Greens, Mews and Squares shall be enclosed and overlooked by the homes, creating a heart and focus to the neighbourhood.

The neighbourhood would reflect the historic village character and contain a choice and variety of homes. The fringes of the neighbourhood shall use a range of detached properties, drawing their inspiration from the local vernacular in terms of their layout, design and materials to create a softer and more rural fringe, enabling it to blend and blur into the open countryside.

This organic approach works with the grain of the existing landscape and sympathetically overlays development. It will quickly mature and become a part of the setting and character of Coven.”



Figure 02:01 Site Boundary



3.0 Working with the Site

3.0 Working with the Site

Introduction

- 3.1 This site already has a strong Green Infrastructure network within it, therefore a sympathetic and light touch approach to development is required, working with the grain of the existing landscape.
- 3.2 e*SCAPE follow the principles of 'landscaped' masterplanning, whereby the existing site features, topography and general flow of the landscape and surrounding context govern the form and scale of the development. Indeed this approach is as much grounded in 'New Urbanism' as any other approach. New Urbanism in itself calls on a rediscovery of walkable neighbourhoods and the priority of walking, cycling and public modes of transport over private motor vehicles. The approach thus allows streets to be taken back by communities as social spaces, as opposed to domination by the car.
- 3.3 Such an approach works with the grain of the villagescape and landscape in which it sits, creates a place which has a varied mix and density of housing and places homes within a green environment. The following paragraphs provide the material to aid our understanding, of the site and it's surroundings.



Photograph 01: Half-timbered house within the heart of the village of Coven.

Appreciating the Physical Context

- 3.4 In demonstrating that the site at Grange Farm, Coven represents an appropriate and logical location for development, Bloor Homes is also seeking to understand how the site interacts with the village, surrounding settlements and countryside, so that future development can be integrated into the villagescape and landscape setting. This initial appreciation of these various levels of context which include both the wider area and site, is set out below.

Regional/Sub-Regional Context

- 3.5 As illustrated in Figures 04:01 the site lies on the eastern edge of Coven, adjoining the A449 Stafford Road, surrounded on three sides by existing village and on the fourth side by Stafford Road itself.
- 3.6 Coven sits within a good communications network within the West Midlands and on the western fringes of the Black Country. It is part of a group of villages and towns which lie just to the north of Wolverhampton and straddle the A449 Stafford Road corridor. These rural settlements contrast with the townscape of Wolverhampton just a few minutes drive to the south.
- 3.7 Jobs and employment opportunities are available locally with the Four Ashes Industrial Park just to the north east and the various business and industrial parks to the south, on the northern fringes of Wolverhampton.
- 3.8 Stafford Road links the village to Wolverhampton and the M54 to the south and north to Penkridge, Stafford and the M6 (via the A5).
- 3.9 The M54 thus provides direct links to Shrewbury and Telford, with the M6 providing good connections to Birmingham to the south and Stoke-on-Trent and Manchester to the north.
- 3.10 The A5 also provides direct access to Cannock just to the east of the M6 and north east of Coven itself.
- 3.11 The nearest train stations are at Penkridge with trains to Crewe, Liverpool, Birmingham and London Euston or at Codsall with trains to Wolverhampton, Birmingham, Shrewsbury, Wrexham, Chester and Holyhead.

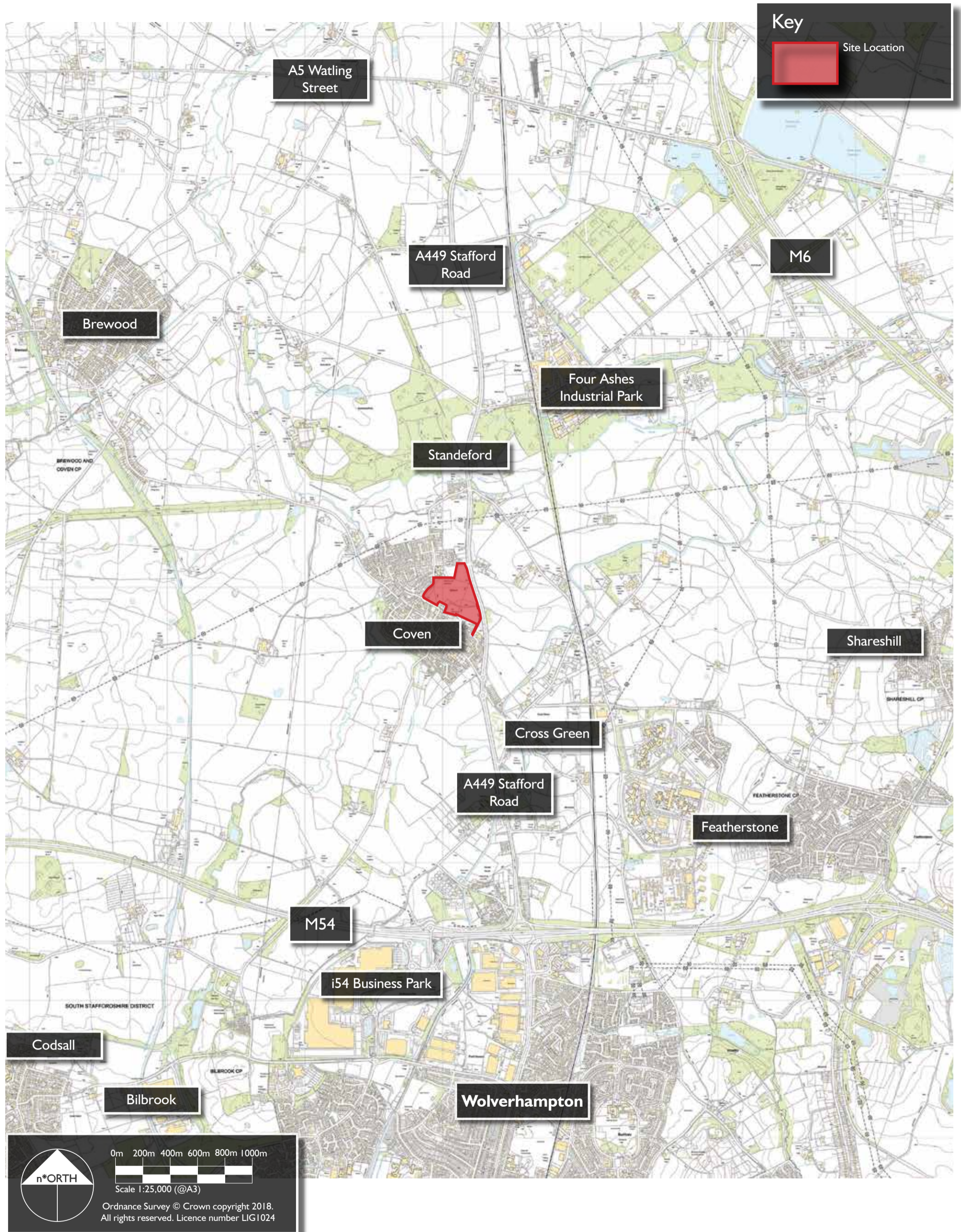


Figure 04:01 Sub-Regional Context

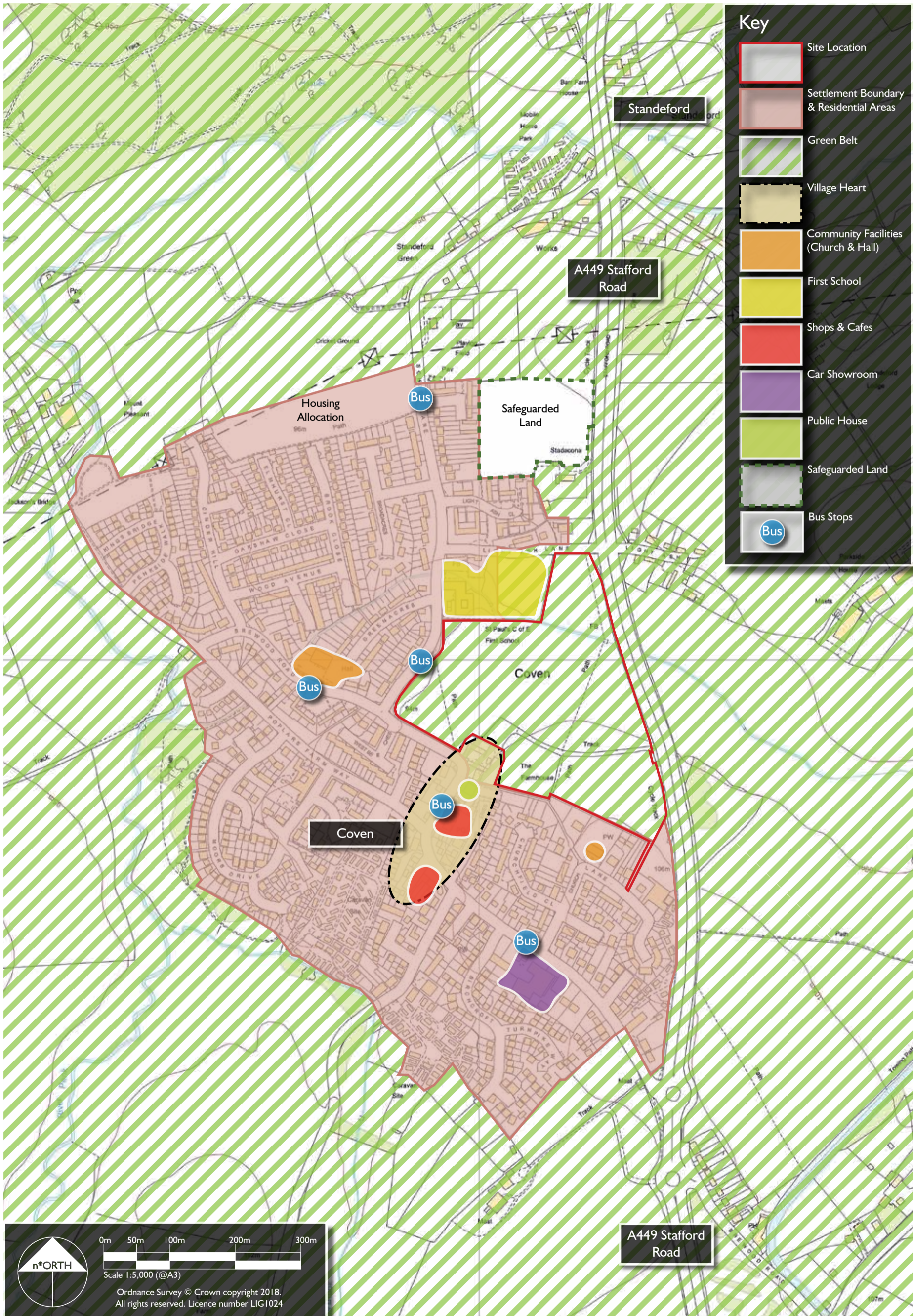


Figure 04:02 Local Context

Local Context

- 3.12 As stated above Coven sits within a good communications network within the West Midlands lying just to the north of Wolverhampton within the A449 Stafford Road corridor. Whilst there are few employment opportunities in the village itself it is in close proximity to the Four Ashes Industrial Park and the various business and industrial parks located on the northern fringes of Wolverhampton, including the highly successful and expanding i54 Business Park.
- 3.13 Coven lies in the district of South Staffordshire and makes up a parish with Brewood, the neighbouring village which is located just to the north west of Coven.
- 3.14 Historically Coven was a working village with an iron foundry, chain making, locksmiths, blacksmiths and steam and traction engine workshops. A number of historic properties lie within the current settlement boundary with the Grange Farm directly abutting the site and is reputed to have hosted King Charles, en route to Moseley Hall.
- 3.15 Coven has a vibrant community with St Paul's Church, St Paul's First School, the Memorial Hall, The Rainbow Inn and a number of local shops, including a pharmacy located in the village heart.
- 3.16 Various community groups are active in the area including Scouts and Guides, youth groups, local amateur theatre groups, play groups, Church groups, historical groups, the Women's Institute and amateur art groups.
- 3.17 The village does not have its own railway station, but services can be accessed from Penkridge to the north or Codsall to the south west. Or indeed via the central station in Wolverhampton.
- 3.18 The village does have a series of bus stops located through the village as illustrated in Figure 04:02 opposite. The services include the number 54, 54A, 877 and 878 providing connections to Stafford, Penkridge, Wolverhampton and a number of villages in between.
- 3.19 In planning terms the village is inset from the Green Belt as illustrated in Figure 04:02 with a small housing allocation to the northern fringe and an area of safeguarded land to the north eastern edge, adjoining the A449 Stafford Road.
- 3.20 As is clearly indicated by Figure 04:02 the site is enclosed on three sides by the current village and bounded on the fourth side by the Stafford Road corridor itself and represents a logical extension and infill site to the village.
- 3.21 As Green Belt, its openness is compromised by its enclosure, the visibility of the adjoining neighbourhoods and the infrastructure in the form of Stafford Road. By its very nature the site is a logical infill development parcel.
- 3.22 A number of Public Rights of Way cross the site and are well used and connect the heart of the village with some of the more peripheral neighbourhoods.
- 3.23 In summary therefore development on the site:
- would form part of a vibrant village;
 - benefits from a high level of containment, surrounded by existing residential uses on two sides (north, west and south) and other built development including a primary school to the north-west;
 - will form a natural 'rounding off' of the eastern part of the village; and
 - is enclosed to the east by Stafford Road which represents an enduring boundary, which means there is no potential for further expansion of Coven to the east.
- 3.24 The village is primarily a residential settlement, but has a clearly defined heart and a strong and active community.



Photograph 02: St Paul's Church which borders the southern edge of the site.



Figure 04:03 Site Constraints & Opportunities

Site Constraints & Opportunities

Introduction

- 3.25 As stated previously, Bloor Homes believe in developing proposals which complement the character of the local area, working with the natural grain and flow of the land and utilising existing natural and man-made features, which will give our evolving designs an immediate sense of place and maturity.
- 3.26 An important part of the masterplanning process is to understand the site and surrounding context in detail. Desktop and physical assessments have been undertaken by a multi-disciplinary team of consultants to inform the development of the opportunities and constraints plan, which is illustrated in Figure 04:03. A summary of that work which has informed the formulation of the development framework is provided below. In summary, no technical barriers preventing the development of the site have been identified.
- 3.27 The site is bounded by the A449 Stafford Road to the east which is separated from the site by a tall native hedgerow and intermittent trees which provide some screening of the site from the road.
- 3.28 To the north the site abuts the narrow Light Ash Lane before being separated from it by the school and playing fields to the north west.
- 3.29 School Lane borders the site to the west and provides direct access to the site. Again strong, tall native hedgerows separate the site from the lane.
- 3.30 Brewood Road forms the site boundary between Grange Farm and the junction with School Lane and like School Lane provides the opportunity for direct access to the site. This boundary is again formed by a tall native hedgerow and associated trees.
- 3.31 The final part of the southern boundary is formed by hedgerows related to residential gardens, a footpath and the graveyard of St Paul's Church. The footpath provides access to the site via a kissing gate and public right of way, as illustrated in Figure 04:03 opposite.

Existing Vegetation & Trees

- 3.32 A strong historic field pattern of native hedgerows sub-divides the site into five field compartments, as illustrated opposite. These hedgerows form an important character trait of the site and shall be integrated into the development as part of the green infrastructure network.
- 3.33 A hollow way runs east-west across the site from Stafford Road to Grange Farm and it is assumed that this is the historic route of the access way to the farm. Tall hedgerows border the track and a Public Right of Way runs along it.
- 3.34 A number of mature native trees are located either within the hedgerows or fields and create a setting for the site and wider village.
- 3.35 The trees and hedgerows combine to filter views of the site from the wider village and all shall be retained where possible with only short breaks being created through the hedgerows to allow access between the field compartments.

Watercourses

- 3.36 A small stream runs across the northern part of the site flowing from Stafford Road towards the school, before flowing into the school grounds. The site gently falls from east to west and thus drains in the same direction.
- 3.37 The site is located in Flood Zone I with the brook feeding into the River Penk catchment to the west.

Landscape & Visual Appraisal

Landscape Character

- 3.38 The site is located within the Settled Heathlands Landscape Character Type as documented by the Staffordshire Council document: 'Planning for Landscape Change: Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure Plan 1996 – 2011'.
- 3.39 The site generally accords with the key characteristics and descriptions but is described as a rare landscape type associated with areas of glacial and alluvial drift that formerly



Photograph 03: View North from the corner of Brewood Road and Grange Farm looking across footpath towards St Paul's First School.



Photograph 04: View South East from the brook looking towards St Paul's Church across the hollow way farm track in the mid-ground.



Photograph 05: View West along footpath between St Paul's Church and village centre (grave yard extension to right with site beyond).



Photograph 06: View West along the hollow way which appears to form the original farm access to Grange Farm which is just visible in the background.



Photograph 07: View North East from the Public Right of Way adjoining St Paul's Cemetery towards the A449 Stafford Road.

supported heathland. There is a distinction to be made, between landscapes of the alluvial drift of old river terraces, and of the glacial drift of other gently rolling lowland areas. Only the latter type is found in this Regional Character Area. In both cases the soils are mainly acid sands and brown earths which support cropping and mixed farming in a regular pattern of small and large hedged fields. Many areas are quite well wooded, although there are few hedgerow trees. The settlement pattern is dispersed and urbanised in places. Stream valleys and the canal route are associated with a subtle change in character of the landscape, with low-lying wetter pasture areas and waterside tree species.

- 3.40 The landscape is characterised by its heathland origins, particularly in the regular, more recently enclosed farmland, with a strong presence of bracken and birch in the woodlands and hedgerows. In the flatter areas, hedgerow trees are predominantly small sized oaks, and sufficiently numerous to coalesce and give filtered views that stop within two to three fields.
- 3.41 A network of both ancient and straight lanes dissects the area with numerous individual houses and small farms. Railways, power lines, busy main roads and motorways combine with encroachment of housing and industry to reduce the quality of this landscape.
- 3.42 The incongruous features within the landscape are busy main roads; large length of post and wire fencing; urban encroachment; power lines; electrified railway. The critical factors which currently limit landscape quality are the relatively poor survival of characteristic semi-natural vegetation particularly heathland.
- 3.43 The proposed development site is not within an area of Landscape Sensitivity but all proposals will have to generally be compliant with South Staffordshire Local Plan and Core Strategy (2012) Policy EQ4: Protecting and Enhancing the Character and Appearance of the Landscape:

“The intrinsic rural character and local distinctiveness of the South Staffordshire landscape should be maintained and where possible enhanced. Trees, veteran trees, woodland, ancient woodland and hedgerows should be protected from damage

and retained unless it can be demonstrated that removal is necessary and appropriate mitigation can be achieved. For visual and ecological reasons, new and replacement planting should be of locally native species.

Throughout the District, 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.

The siting, scale, and design of new development will need to take 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.

Proposals should retain and strengthen the components of landscape character and local distinctiveness, with particular attention to the detailing of any proposal and its relationship with existing buildings, features and vegetation.”

Visual Amenity

- 3.44 Visually, this is a landscape of mixed arable and pastoral farming on a flat to gently rolling landform where the fabric of the landscape is breaking down under increasing pressure from adjacent urban areas. Deterioration of the medium scale field pattern is leading to large scale open areas with gappy hedges, grown up thorn trees and scattered stunted oaks. Further away from the urban pressures the overall impression is of a landscape more cared for and in good condition, with hedgerows being well maintained to an even height and reinforcing the smooth texture of the landscape.
- 3.45 Sensitive visual receptors are identified as being localised to the western and southern edges accounting for the interface with the existing residential area of Coven, however, most dwellings back onto the site boundary with an array of garden fences and vegetation forming the settlement edge. The north western boundary is adjacent to St Paul’s Primary School. The eastern boundary is adjacent to the dual carriageway of the A449.



Photograph 08: View West along Light Ash Lane from the junction with the Stafford Road.



Photograph 09: View North along the Stafford Road footpath/cycleway with the site boundary hedge on the left.



Photograph 10: View from brook north towards Ash Lane.



Photograph 11: View north east towards Stafford Road from hollow way farm track.



Photograph 12: View west from Public Right of Way towards Grange Farm.

- 3.46 There are three public footpaths that cross the proposed development site, one diagonally links School Lane with Brewood Road whilst the other winds around the north of Grange Farm and forms part of the Hollow Way. The third footpath travels north to south linking Church Lane with Light Ash Lane and the A449. There will be an obvious change in view to these receptors as residential housing is introduced but the landscape strategy outlines the mitigation measures that will be introduced as part of the development to reduce any potential adverse effects on the visual amenity of these receptors.
- 3.47 Generally, the proposed development site is visually well contained when viewed from further afield. Views from the west and south are screened by the existing Coven settlement and from the north and east by the vegetation on the A449 roadside.
- 3.48 It is likely that some views are achievable into the site from higher ground in the north and east but tend to be limited due to the landform and vegetation within the existing countryside. The landscape strategy will ensure that appropriate planting is introduced to provide mitigation for any identified adverse effects.
- 3.49 Generally, it is not considered that any long term significant adverse effects will pervade in respect of the likely impacts on the landscape character and visual amenity.

Habitats

- 3.50 Primarily the fields have been used for arable crops and general stock grazing and so have little ecological value.
- 3.51 The northern field compartment abutting Light Ash Lane is made up of rough grassland and some of this area will be retained as wildflower meadows, along with new meadows located in other areas of the Green Infrastructure network.
- 3.52 The other key habitat are the hedgerows, as described previously and these will be retained, maintained and planted up with additional hedgerow species to ensure their long term viability as a habitat for native flora and fauna.

Heritage & Archaeology

- 3.53 There are no designated heritage assets within the site. The Grade II heritage assets of Grange Farm, The Beeches and Church of St. Paul are all located to the south of the site and offer opportunities which have informed the concept masterplan, with the creation of a village green to the north of Grange Farm and landscaped areas to the east and west. Green corridors offer the opportunity to retain an early east – west aligned trackway which leads to Grange Farm, along with historic hedgerows within the site. Provision of space for a cemetery extension to the north of the Church of St. Paul safeguards space to the north of that heritage asset.
- 3.54 Further, more detailed, assessment will be carried out as the development framework progresses towards detailed design and pre-application engagement with Historic England will also be undertaken with reference to the designated built heritage assets.

- 3.55 Based on the available information, there are no archaeological constraints to development; further assessment will be carried out as the site moves forward to detailed design.

Access & Accessibility

- 3.56 A number of Public Rights of Way cross the site as illustrated in Figure 04:03, most of which follow the existing field boundaries, save for a diagonal route between the corner of Brewood Road/Grange Farm and School Lane. It is proposed that the latter route is diverted within the proposed green infrastructure network whilst all the other routes are maintained more or less on their current alignments.
- 3.57 An existing cycleway runs along Stafford Road immediately adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site and is illustrated in Figure 04:03 and Photograph 09 below.
- 3.58 The site is located within a 5 minute walk of the local bus stops with two stops adjoining the site, one on Brewood Road and the other on School Lane. The services have been described in the previous chapter.
- 3.59 In terms of vehicular access School Lane offers the best flexibility and visibility between the site and road. A second vehicular access is not needed due to the size and capacity of the site, however an emergency access can be accommodated, if required, between the site and Brewood Road, as illustrated in Figure 04:03.

Noise

- 3.60 Vehicular noise is a potential issue on the Stafford Road boundary. Noise causes a nuisance primarily within rear gardens where residents are attempting to enjoy their outdoor spaces. Therefore, the built form will be set back behind a landscape buffer and turned to front out onto the Stafford Road corridor. This will ensure that the rear gardens are shielded from the road noise and provide a good level of residential amenity to those rear gardens.
- 3.61 Internal noise levels will be minimised by using triple glazing, mechanical ventilation and additional acoustic insulation to the front elevations of properties in close proximity to the eastern boundary.

Residential Amenity

- 3.62 Existing residents who front or back onto the site will be considered in the design and layout of the proposals. Landscape buffers shall be used to create a stand-off from the sensitive boundaries and built form will be set back to ensure minimum overlooking distances are exceeded.

Wider Green Infrastructure Network

- 3.63 The internal green infrastructure network as illustrated in Figure 04:03 shall be retained, as will its connections out to the wider area.
- 3.64 This network shall form the structure of the proposed layout and provide not only a backdrop to the proposed development, but also links between surrounding wildlife habitats and site to ensure good connectivity is maintained in the form of wildlife corridors into and through the site.



4.0 Creating a New Neighbourhood

4.0 Creating a New Neighbourhood



Figure 05:01 Parameters Masterplan

A Vision for Land at Grange Farm, Coven

- 4.1 Out of this contextual appreciation of place and analysis of the site springs our Vision.
- 4.2 The development of this site will create a new sustainable neighbourhood close to the heart of Coven. The development shall integrate and become part of the existing settlement pattern of the village, whilst also being bounded, enclosed and softened by the retained hedgerows and associated trees.
- 4.3 This new neighbourhood will be part of the wider village, whilst being unique within the setting of the existing landscape in which it sits.
- 4.4 A network of green spaces, wildlife corridors, habitats and recreational footpaths/cycleways will be developed within the proposed Green Infrastructure network, linking the site to the local facilities, wider settlement and countryside.
- 4.5 This neighbourhood will be focussed around the Village Streets, Lanes, Greens, Mews and Squares, utilising existing features such as the trees and hedgerows as focal features within them. The Streets, Greens, Mews and Squares shall be enclosed and overlooked by the homes, creating a heart and focus to the neighbourhood.
- 4.6 The neighbourhood would reflect the high quality historic village character of the surrounding area and contain a variety of house types. The fringes of the neighbourhood shall primarily be developed using a range of detached properties, drawing their inspiration from the local vernacular in terms of their layout, design and materials to create a softer and more rural fringe, enabling it to blend and blur into the open countryside.
- 4.7 This organic approach to developing the vision creates a new neighbourhood which works with the grain of the existing landscape and sympathetically overlays development. It will quickly mature and become a part of the setting and character of Coven.

An evolving masterplanning process...

- 4.8 Developing a visionary and unique masterplan, if done correctly, is an iterative process. Initial ideas develop out of the site's own context, constraints and opportunities, as touched upon in the previous chapter.
- 4.9 That initial process provides a logical structure and framework for the masterplan and also, as further work is undertaken and discussions are held with stakeholders on ecology, movement, landscape, the appreciation of the local character and vernacular, our understanding develops of the historical evolution and development of the surrounding settlement. Additional layers of detail can then be added in terms of layout, access, hierarchy of streets and public realm, detailing of the built form, materials and landscape.

Creating a Place

- 4.10 In order to deliver the vision the masterplan must take account of the sites context and constraints and term them into opportunities for use in developing the proposals.
- 4.11 The parameters masterplan illustrated here in Figure 05:01 is the result of that process. These opportunities emerged out of the earlier contextual and constraints work and provided the foundation for the masterplan. The following paragraphs describe each building block.

Landscape Strategy

- 4.12 The development of the layout for this site has taken the existing green infrastructure into account to provide a landscape led residential development set within a substantial landscape framework.
- 4.13 There are significant opportunities for new tree planting and landscaping within the site, and infill planting especially on the western interface with the existing settlement edge of Coven and the eastern boundary adjacent to the A449 dual carriageway. Furthermore, it is proposed that a substantial tract of public open space in the form of a village green is located to the north of the site and another in vicinity of Grange Farm. The hedgerow adjacent to the A449 will be enhanced with infill planting and groups of native trees.
- 4.14 The overall elements of the landscape strategy for the site can be summarised as follows
 - Retention of the existing elements that make up the site's green infrastructure, such as tree and hedges and integrating these into the development, giving the scheme an immediate sense of maturity;
 - Ensuring the gaps in the existing hedge adjacent to the boundaries and the A449 are in-filled with native trees and hedge planting. Evergreen species of holly should be included in the mix to provide effective screening through the winter months;
 - Ornamental and native hedge planting to be planted in and around the proposed development to soften the adverse effects of the built form.
- 4.15 A range of trees to be introduced to reflect the street hierarchy including the central avenues, squares and mews. Native trees should be planted in the Village Greens and general perimeters including areas of public open space.
- 4.16 The landscape strategy has been taken into account when considering the mitigation for the identified potential adverse landscape and visual effects arising at the operational stage of the proposed development and these have been reflected when considering the overall residual effects.

Public Realm and Hard Landscape

- 4.17 The hard landscape materials palette also reflects the spatial hierarchy and patterns of movement through the development. Village Streets and some Lanes will be designed as traditional roads, with other Lanes, the Mews and Squares designed as more intimate, human scale shared spaces where pedestrian movement takes priority over motorised vehicles.



4.18 The shared space areas shall utilise small unit block paving and street trees to create an open and more human scale series of communal spaces which flow out into the surrounding Green Infrastructure network.

Use and Quantum

4.19 The masterplan illustrates residential led development complimenting the surrounding established use mix, set within a Green Infrastructure network. The will include 5.47 hectares of residential development and 3.5 hectares of Green and Blue Infrastructure which will include woodlands, wetlands and grasslands, incorporating naturalistic play areas, cycle routes and nature trails.

4.20 A cemetery extension is proposed to offer much needed expansion space to the Church of St Paul's whose current cemetery is at capacity.

4.21 This new neighbourhood would contain a range of housing densities, offering choice and variety in terms of locations and size of homes. Densities would vary from the fringes at circa 20 homes per hectare up to 40 homes per hectare at its heart. This varied density would roughly equate to a net average of 35 homes per hectare, or a gross density of around 20 homes per hectare.

4.22 Overall around 189 homes can be accommodated on the site, based on the densities above.

Layout and Movement

4.23 The layout has emerged from the earlier constraints and opportunities work as set-out in Chapter 4. Figure 05:01 illustrates how the trees, hedgerows and farm track have been used to provide a starting point for developing a layout for the site. These elements have been used to establish a route hierarchy that forms the basis of the design. The primary element is the Street which forms the spine into and through the site.

4.24 Branching from the Street there are a number of Lanes which serve the parcels and is based around traditional Lanes as well as shared surface Lanes and Mews style spaces. Where these routes intersect; raised thresholds, public squares or landscape features will be introduced to aid legibility and reduce traffic speeds.



4.25 The layout is also designed to ensure pedestrian and cycle permeability. There are clear opportunities to link into surrounding footpaths, open spaces and other routes, thus ensuring that maximum permeability and integration is achieved.

Scale, Mix and Massing

4.26 It is proposed that approximately 189 homes can be accommodated on the site. The proposals have the potential to provide a range and choice of housing from two-bedroom dwellings to larger more aspirational housing.

4.27 The character of the surrounding neighbourhoods and villages suggests principally 2 storey (between 8 to 10 metres to ridgeline) development would be appropriate. 2.5 storey homes could be used in appropriate locations to provide increased scale at principle junctions, within mews, squares and around key green spaces to aid legibility and enclosure.

4.28 Such taller units will not be used close to boundaries where they would overlook existing dwellings or gardens.

Sustainable Urban Drainage Strategy (SUDs)

4.29 The SUDs is part of the Blue and Green Infrastructure network and has six site specific objectives:

- To efficiently drain the site whilst not causing flooding down stream,
- To create suitable habitat for amphibians, invertebrates, birds, mammals, native aquatic and marginal plant life,
- Create ecological corridors across the site to enable wildlife to move more freely and native plants to spread and colonise the wider area,
- Create an aesthetically pleasing setting for development,
- Promote the site as a sustainable place to live and work, and,
- Use SUDs features at property boundaries as part of the approach to Secure by Design.

In Summary

4.30 In essence the Parameters Masterplan takes the constraints and demonstrates that the proposals will create an integrated extension to the settlement, set into the existing landscape creating a high quality addition to the village, offering much need homes in a choice of sizes to the local community.



5.0 Summary



Figure 06:01 Parameters Masterplan

- 5.1 Bloor Homes is committed to working corroboratively with the Council and other local stakeholders with a view to delivering a high-quality residential scheme at Coven.
- 5.2 A full appreciation of the site has been undertaken in order to inform this Vision Document. We can confirm that there are no technical constraints which would preclude the site coming forward for residential development, direct access is available from the surrounding road network to ensure timely delivery.
- 5.3 The emerging parameters masterplan presented in this document has been informed by the vision and responds to the site analysis which identifies the main constraints and opportunities of the site. The development framework shows how development at Grange Farm, Coven could come forward in order to provide the following key benefits:
- approximately 189 market and affordable homes with a range of housing sizes and tenures to help meet the demand for new housing in the area;
 - new areas of public open space;
 - a new cemetery extension for St Paul's Church;
 - a development which respects the adjoining neighbours in terms of providing landscape buffers between existing and proposed homes; and
 - a sensitive, high quality green infrastructure network that maintains and improves biodiversity in the area, whilst maintaining much of the existing planting, hedgerows and trees.
- 5.4 The development of the site would result in a sympathetic, sustainable and integrated neighbourhood on the eastern edge of Coven, within a natural infill site and complementing the surrounding village.

“ Grange Farm will create a new sustainable neighbourhood at the heart of Coven. The development shall become part of the existing settlement pattern of the village.

This new neighbourhood will be part of the wider village, whilst being unique within the setting of the existing landscape in which it sits.

A network of green spaces, wildlife corridors, habitats and recreational footpaths/ cycleways will be developed within the proposed Green Infrastructure network.

The Streets, Greens, Mews and Squares shall be enclosed and overlooked by the homes, creating a heart and focus to the neighbourhood.

The neighbourhood would reflect the historic village character and contain a choice and variety of homes. The fringes of the neighbourhood shall use a range of detached properties, drawing their inspiration from the local vernacular in terms of their layout, design and materials to create a softer and more rural fringe, enabling it to blend and blur into the open countryside.

This organic approach works with the grain of the existing landscape and sympathetically overlays development. It will quickly mature and become a part of the setting and character of Coven.”

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