



LANGLEY ROAD
WOLVERHAMPTON

DEVELOPMENT VISION

Prepared by Pegasus Group on behalf of Richborough
MAY 2024 | P19-0658_01A



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PAGE 5

1

INTRODUCTION
& DOCUMENT
PURPOSE

PAGE 9

2

PLANNING
POLICY
CONTEXT

PAGE 19

3

SITE &
SURROUNDINGS
OVERVIEW

PAGE 23

4

ENVIRONMENTAL
CONSIDERATIONS

PAGE 41

5

VISION FOR LAND
AT LANGLEY
ROAD

PAGE 51

6

SUMMARY &
CONCLUSIONS



WINDSOR GARDENS

Bhyla Acre Primary School

SCHOOL CLOSE

Club House

ORCHARD COURT

ORCHARD CRESENT

BELLENCROFT GARDENS

BELLENCROFT GARDENS

LANGLEY ROAD

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“The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.”

Para 131, NPPF 2023

1

INTRODUCTION & DOCUMENT PURPOSE



SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE RAILWAY WALK

CASTLECROFT ROAD

BHYLLS LANE

THE SITE

LANGLEY ROAD



SITE LOCATION PLAN | NOT TO SCALE



INTRODUCTION & DOCUMENT PURPOSE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The land at Langley Road represents a logical and appropriate extension to Wolverhampton. The site is sustainable, is well located to a wide range of existing services and facilities and offers an opportunity to deliver new homes alongside supporting infrastructure.

RICHBOROUGH

1.2 Richborough is a responsible and specialist strategic land promotion business founded with the aim of working in partnership with landowners. Our projects are located throughout the country ranging from residential schemes of around 50 dwellings to large urban extensions (including sites within the Green Belt), Retail, Commercial and Extra Care Facilities.

1.3 Richborough oversees the entire planning process from start to finish and works closely with local communities, Planning Officers and key stakeholders, to create mutually beneficial schemes. Richborough is seeking to apply this approach to the proposed development which is the subject of this Vision Document.

1.4 Richborough has an interest in the land at Langley Road. The extent of land controlled by Richborough is shown edged red on the accompanying Site Location Plan.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

1.5 South Staffordshire Council is currently in the process of reviewing their Local Plan to identify and direct growth within the District to 2041.

1.6 The Council consulted upon a Regulation 19 version of a new Local Plan in 2022. This version of the Local Plan included a housing requirement of 9089 dwellings of which 4000 dwellings were a contribution towards meeting the shortfall in housing in the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area.

1.7 The 2022 Reg 19 Local Plan identified a housing supply capable of meeting the requirement under Policy SA5. This included the Langley Road site subject to this document which was to be removed from the Green Belt and allocated for the development of 390 dwellings.

1.8 Amendments to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in December 2023 led to a review of the District's proposed spatial strategy across the Plan Period, resulting in an updated Publication Plan (2024) superseding the 2022 version.

1.9 This Vision Document has been updated to reflect the change in circumstances that occurred between 2022 and 2024 versions of the local plan and to take account of any changes in circumstances.

1.10 This Vision Document presents an analysis of the site and its surroundings and sets out in detail the case for the removal of the site from the Green Belt. It is the case that the Council, in the 2022 Reg 19 Local Plan, considered there were exceptional circumstances to remove the site from the Green Belt and allocate it for housing development. This update to the vision document reviews current circumstances including the latest evidence to conclude whether the previously identified exceptional circumstances remain to justify the removal of the site from the Green Belt. This includes a review of the current and emerging planning policy position and an assessment of the site against the five purposes of the Green Belt contained in the NPPF.

1.11 The document also sets out the Vision for the site, informed by a consideration of the constraints and opportunities and an Indicative Masterplan demonstrating how the Vision can be achieved through a well-designed scheme. The document concludes with a summary of the site, the proposed development and its key benefits.

1.12 Overall this Vision Document present a sustainable site which is capable of delivering approximately 390 dwellings and promotes its release from the Green Belt.

1.13 This document has been prepared with input from the following Consultant Team:

Planning:
Pegasus Group



Urban Design:
Woods Hardwick Ltd



Landscape & Ecology:
Tyler Grange



Access & Movement:
Hub Transport Planning



Flood Risk & Drainage:
PJS Consulting Engineers



Heritage:
RPS Group



Land Promoter:
Richborough





WINDSOR GARDENS

Blythe Acre Primary School

SCHOOL CLOSE

ORCHARD COURT

ORCHARD CRESENT

BELLECROFT GARDENS

BELLECROFT GARDENS

LANGLEY ROAD

Club House

Disability Bus Station

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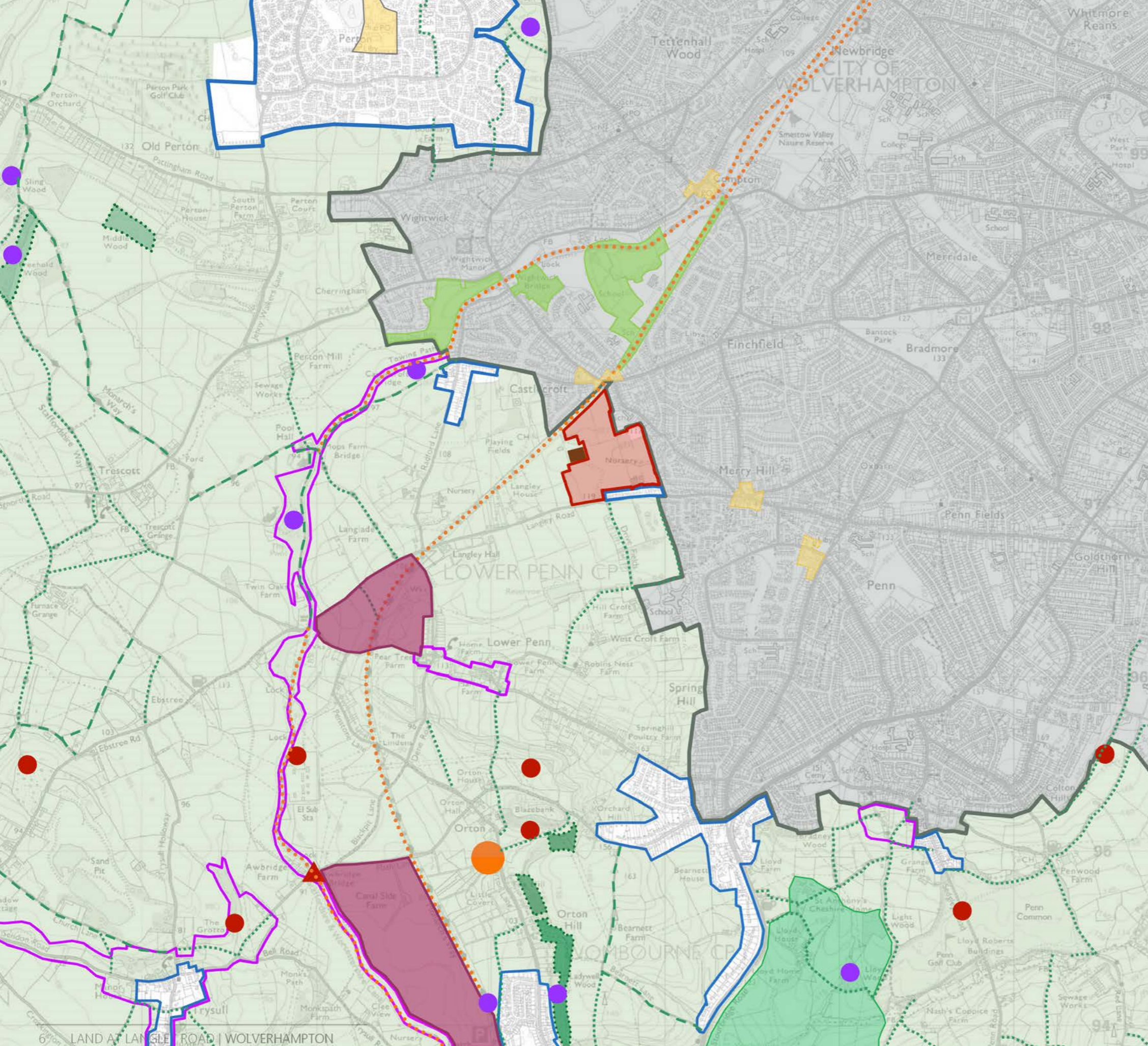
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“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development”

Para 135(a), NPPF 2023

2

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT



- THE SITE
- EXISTING ELECTRICITY SUB STATION ADJACENT TO SITE
- SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE/WOLVERHAMPTON BOUNDARY
- WOLVERHAMPTON
- PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY - BRIDLEWAY
- PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY - FOOTPATH

SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

- SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE GREEN BELT
- CONSERVATION AREA
- HISTORIC LANDSCAPE AREA
- ANCIENT WOODLAND
- HOUSING ALLOCATION SITES
- VILLAGE/NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE
- BIOLOGICAL ALERT SITE
- SITES OF BIOLOGICAL INTEREST
- ANCIENT MONUMENTS
- LOCAL GEOLOGICAL SITE

RELEVANT WOLVERHAMPTON PLANNING POLICY SITES

- DISTRICT/LOCAL CENTRES
- SITE OF IMPORTANCE/LOCAL IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION



PLAN ILLUSTRATING SITE LOCATION, CONTEXT & SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN DESIGNATIONS | NOT TO SCALE



PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

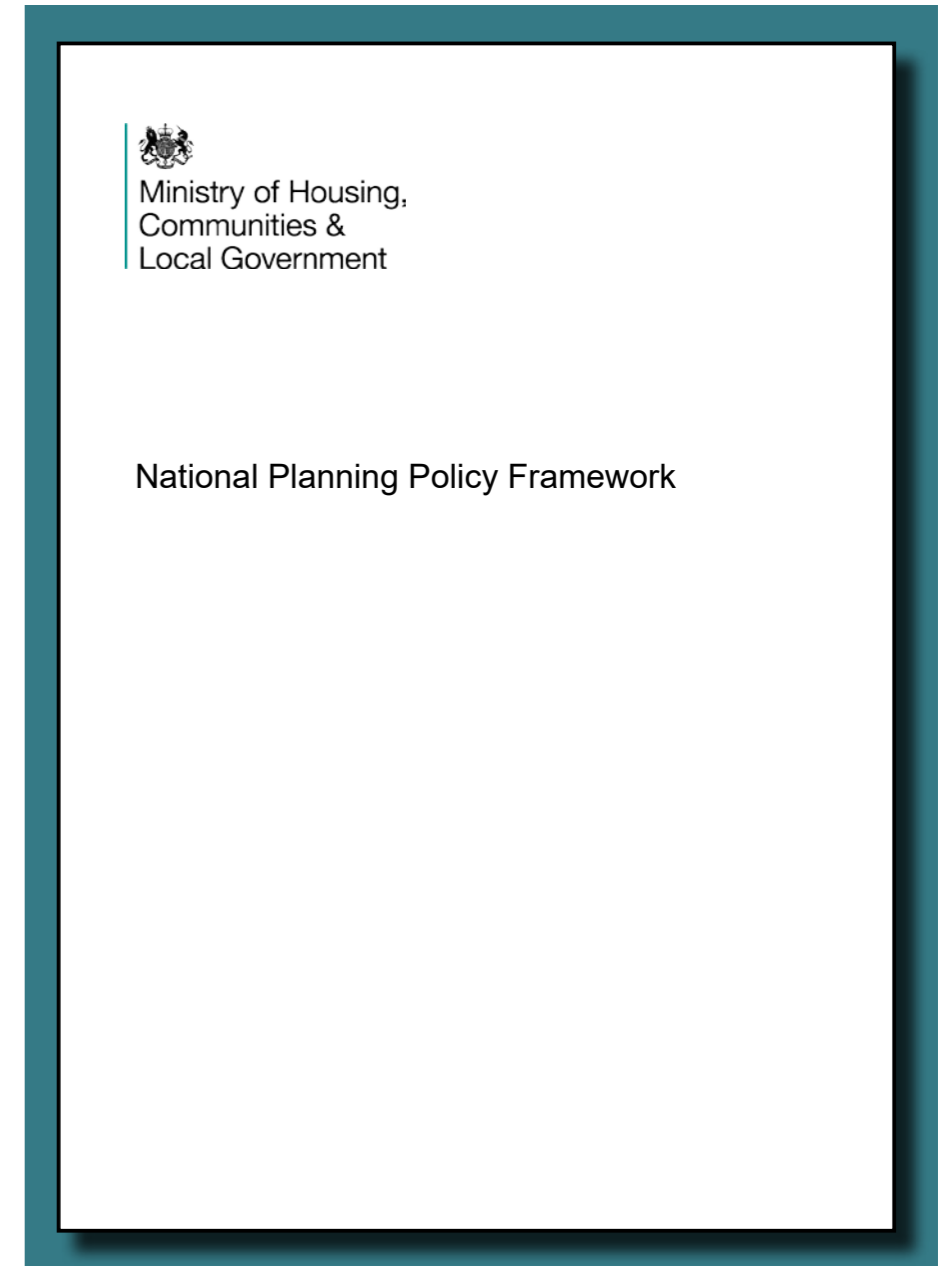
NATIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE

- 2.1 In December 2023, the Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework (“Framework”) which replaced the previous guidance published in September 2023. Central to the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which is the golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking (paragraph 11). The Framework also seeks to boost the supply of housing and requires local authorities to plan positively for objectivity assessed needs and maintain a sufficient supply of housing land.
- 2.2 Paragraph 8 of the Framework sets out that sustainable development has three overarching objectives: economic, social and environmental.
- 2.3 The proposed development accords with each of these objectives, contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities and continuing to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment.
- 2.4 Chapter 13 of the NPPF sets out how local authorities should seek to protect Green Belt land, with paragraph 143 setting out the 5 purposes of the Green Belt. Paragraph 144 of the Framework states that once the general extent of a Green Belt has been approved, it should only be altered in ‘exceptional circumstances’. Paragraph 145 continues, setting out that once Green Belt boundaries have been established there is no requirement for them to be reviewed or changed when plans are being prepared or updated. However, it also confirms that authorities may choose to review and alter Green Belt boundaries where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified.

- 2.5 As set above the Council had previously considered that there were exceptional circumstances which justify alteration to the Green Belt boundary in South Staffordshire District and the site continues to present an opportunity to release Green Belt in a sensitive manner, without harming its purposes and functions, as set out in paragraph 145 of the Framework.

EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 2.6 The Development Plan for South Staffordshire currently comprises:
 - Adopted Core Strategy (adopted 11th December 2012)
 - Site Allocations Document (SAD) (adopted 11th September 2018)
- 2.7 The Core Strategy establishes the strategic policies for the District, notably the housing requirement and distribution of housing (Core Policy 1 and Core Policy 6), whilst the Site Allocations Document provides a range of allocations to deliver the requirements set out within the Core Strategy.
- 2.8 The policies map identifies the following designation for the site:
 - Green Belt (Policy GB1)



EMERGING LOCAL PLAN

- 2.9 Richborough supports SSDC's review of the adopted South Staffordshire District Development Plan as required by Policy SAD1 of the Site Allocations Document ('SAD') 2018. This provides the opportunity for the Council to comprehensively review the Vision, Strategic Objectives, development requirements, spatial development strategy and policies shaping detailed development proposals.
- 2.10 The Plan review also provides the opportunity for the Council to not only review its own objectively assessed housing need, but also the role of the District in meeting unmet cross boundary needs from the wider Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area ('GBBCHMA').
- 2.11 However, despite proposing a contribution of 4,000 homes towards the unmet housing need of the GBBCHMA as part of the Reg 19 2022 Publication Plan, the Council are now of the view that the Growth Study, on which the 4,000 contribution was based, is out of date and requires further review, and the 2024 Reg 19 LP is instead proposing a token contribution of 640 homes towards the unmet HMA need across the Plan period. This is despite the evidence set out in the GBBCHMA Position Statement Addendum Update 2023 and evidence prepared by the other HMA authorities in the preparation of their Local Plan Reviews, that the unmet need continues to grow.
- 2.12 The GBBCHMA Position Statement Addendum Update 2023 continues to show a significant shortfall in housing delivery (2,053 dwellings shortfall as at 2020/21) across the HMA and recognises that these figures do not reflect the full extent of the housing shortfall. This is evident through the most up to date housing figures published by the other HMA authorities currently undergoing a review of their Development Plans.
- 2.13 In terms of need, Birmingham City Council for example, formally commenced the review of its new Plan and estimated a shortfall of 78,415 homes to 2042 in its Issues and Options (October 2022) document based on the Standard Method. This is a significantly greater shortfall than the housing requirement figure of 37,900 identified within the adopted Birmingham Development Plan 2011-2031.
- 2.14 The Council's thrust for development to be focused on the most sustainable locations is supported, however in light of the above, it is apparent there is a substantial need for housing across the HMA and the local Plan review provides an opportunity to allocate greater housing to the District to assist with this shortfall of housing in the HMA.
- 2.15 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out at paragraph 145, that:
- "Once established, there is no requirement for Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed or changed when plans are being prepared or updated. Authorities may choose to review and alter Green Belt boundaries where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, in which case proposals for changes should be made only through the plan-making process. Strategic policies should establish the need for any changes to Green Belt boundaries, having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so they can endure beyond the plan period. Where a need for changes to Green Belt boundaries has been established through strategic policies, detailed amendments to those boundaries may be made through non-strategic policies, including neighbourhood plans"*
- 2.16 The changes to the NPPF have resulted in the LPA drastically reducing the quantum of development proposed in the Green Belt across the District. This is despite the significant and continuing shortfall across the HMA which is acknowledged in within the Green Belt Exceptional Circumstances Topic Paper 2024 (paragraphs 4.5 and 4.6) of the Local Plan evidence base.
- 2.17 The Green Belt Exceptional Circumstances Topic Paper 2024 at paragraph 4.6 indicates that the significant shortfall across the GBBCHMA supports the exceptional circumstances case for releasing Green Belt at the Districts most sustainable settlements with the best sustainable transport links to these authorities in the conurbation that are the source of the unmet needs.
- 2.18 As set out in the accompanying representations, the 2024 Publication Plan has removed 9 proposed housing allocations, equating to 3,155 dwellings across the Plan Period. This is despite the clear need for housing across the GBBCHMA and the Publication Plan extended plan period, with the LPA only allocating the minimum figure produced by the Standard Methodology. It is acknowledged by the HMA authorities within their evidence bases and draft local plans that they cannot meet their housing land supply needs and therefore are reliant on the Duty to Cooperate to make up this shortfall. The drastic reduction in South Staffordshire contribution towards the shortfall of the GBBCHMA will cause significant issues in regard to housing supply in the sub regional context. As set out in the accompanying representations, Policy DS2 of the Publication Plan (2024) should be amended and ensure the extent of the housing shortfall in the GBBCHMA is recognised through the Duty to Cooperate.

2.19 In light of the extended Plan Period, consideration must also be given to the expected population growth to 2041 alongside the continued shortfall of housing across the GBBCHMA. Housing provision should therefore be considered in excess of the Standard Method.

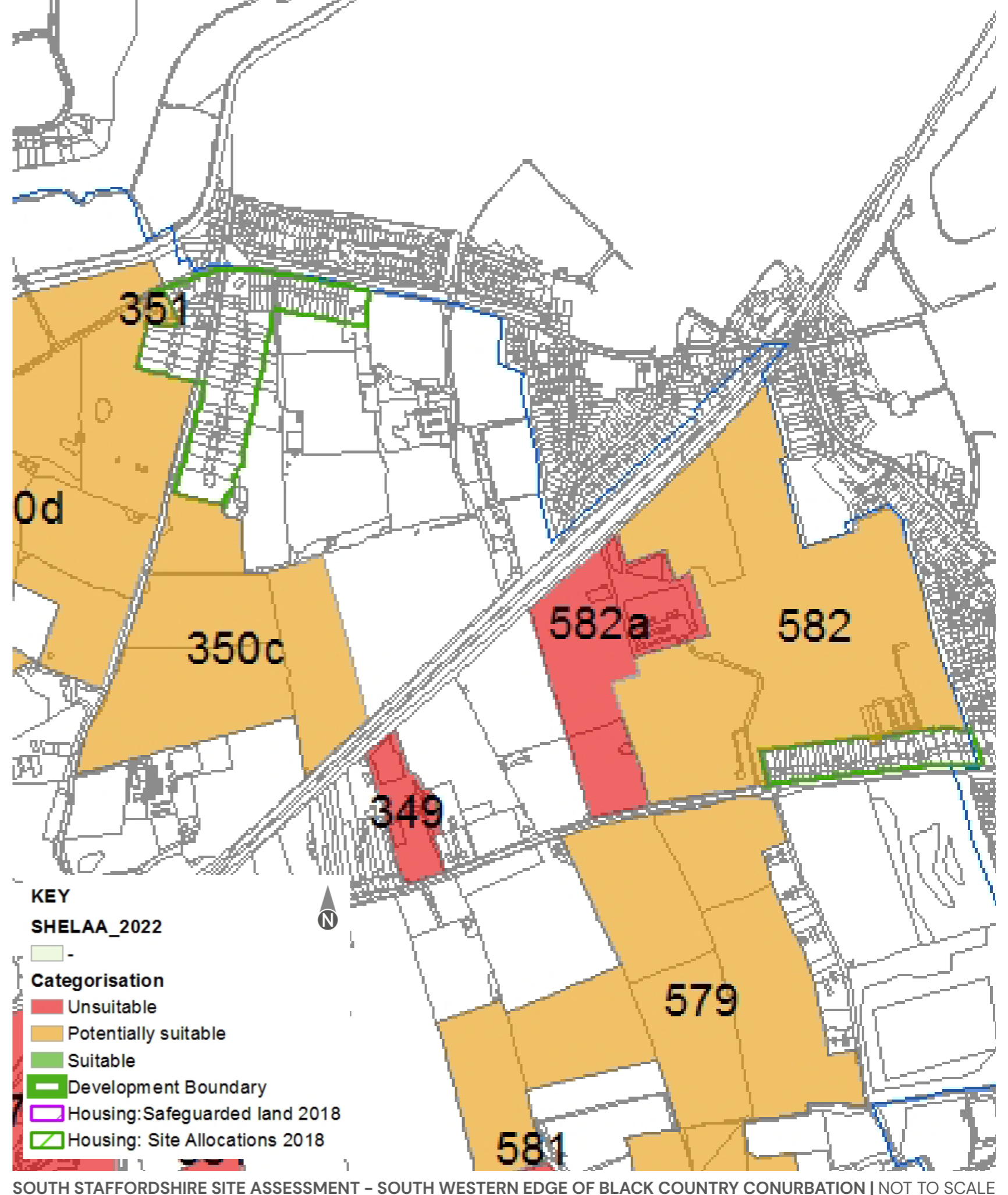
2.20 In August 2022, SSSDC published the South Staffordshire Green Belt Study Addendum. The reports are an addendum to the South Staffordshire Green Belt Study (2019) and provides additional sub-parcel assessment and amended maps and plans to reflect the addition of a sub-parcel.

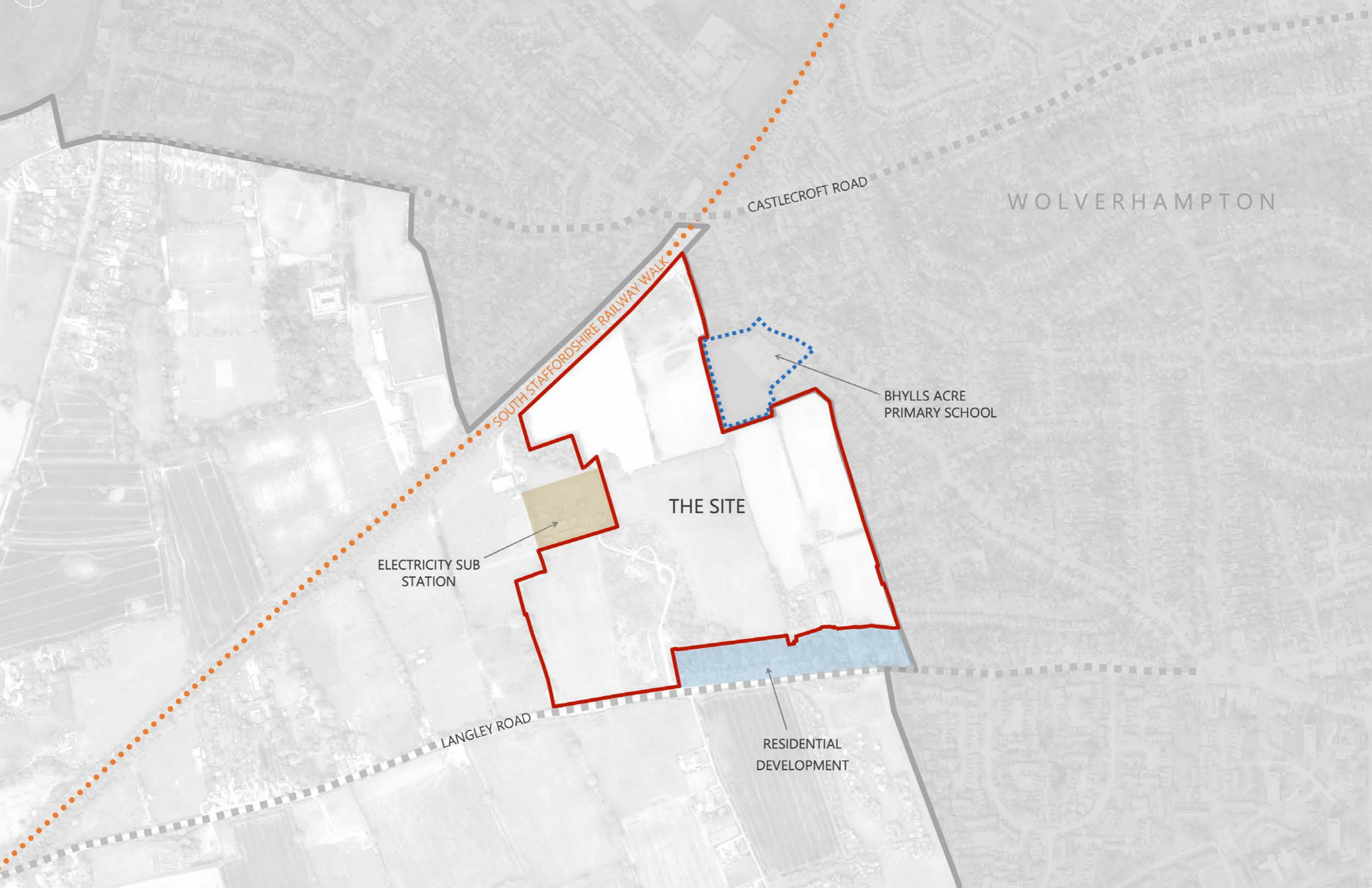
2.21 Alongside the Green Belt Study, a Stage 3 assessment involved undertaking a landscape sensitivity assessment in order to assess the sensitivity of land within the South Staffordshire to housing and employment development. Whilst there is a relationship between landscape sensitivity and Green Belt contribution/harm in that physical elements which play a role in determining landscape character, there are fundamental distinctions in the purposes of the two assessments. As such, the findings of the Stage 3 landscape sensitivity assessment for South Staffordshire and the Black Country are presented in a separate document (Landscape Study Addendum 2022) and is considered later in this representation.

GREEN BELT PURPOSES

2.22 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) states that the Green Belt should serve the five following purposes:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up area;
- 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.





WOLVERHAMPTON

CASTLECROFT ROAD

SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE RAILWAY WALK

BHYLLS ACRE
PRIMARY SCHOOL

THE SITE

ELECTRICITY SUB
STATION

RESIDENTIAL
DEVELOPMENT

LANGLEY ROAD

LAND OFF LANGLEY ROAD; CONTRIBUTIONS TO GREEN BELT PURPOSES

2.23 The Green Belt Study 2019 shows Land off Langley Road, Wolverhampton, as falling within Green Belt Sub-Parcel Ref S59B – ‘Spring Hill [and adjacent land]’, which is identified as making the following contribution to the five purposes of the Green Belt:

GREEN BELT PURPOSE	PREVIOUS RATING	RATING
P1: Checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Land is adjacent or close to the large built-up area, contains no or very limited urban development, and has strong openness. It retains a relatively strong relationship with the wider countryside.	Strong Contribution
P2: Preventing the merging of neighbouring towns	Land plays no significant role due to the distance between the West Midlands conurbation and Bridgnorth, its nearest neighbouring town.	Weak/No Contribution
P3: Safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Land contains the characteristics of open countryside (i.e., an absence of built or otherwise urbanising uses in Green Belt terms) and does not have a stronger relationship with the urban area than with the wider countryside.	Strong Contribution
P4: Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Land does not contribute to the setting or special character of a historic town	Weak/No Contribution
P5: Assist urban regeneration, by encouraging recycling of derelict and other urban land	All parcels are considered to make an equal contribution to this purpose.	Strong Contribution

LAND OFF LANGLEY ROAD, CONTRIBUTIONS TO GREEN BELT PURPOSES

2.24 The Study at Appendix 3 goes on to identify differing levels of harm if land within the parcel was to be released from the Green Belt for development. Should any ‘uncontained’ land within the parcel be released for development, the resulting harm would be ‘high’. In respect of ‘land north of housing on Langley Road’, the resulting harm would be ‘moderate-high’, stating:

“The sub-parcel makes a strong contribution to checking the sprawl of the West Midlands conurbation and to preventing encroachment of the countryside. This part of the sub parcel is tightly contained by outcrops of the settlement of Wolverhampton. Release of this land would therefore have a negligible effect on the Green Belt.”

2.25 This position was supported by the 2022 Green Belt Exceptional Circumstances Topic Paper. However, Appendix 1 of the Housing Site Selection Topic Paper 2024 identifies that the site was considered ‘unsustainable in the SHELAA’, this is in light of the 2023 changes to the NPPF, with the LPA now of the view that the site at Langley Road does not meet the exceptional circumstances test. The site therefore has been removed as a proposed allocation in the emerging Local Plan.

2.26 Richborough maintains that the Site provides a logical housing allocation, given its relationship with Wolverhampton and its ability to connect to the existing sustainable transport network including bus stops located at Castlecroft Road and the South Staffordshire Railway Walk located to the north of the Site.

2.27 It remains that Green Belt Sub-Parcel ref: S59B extends significantly beyond Land off Langley Road, which itself serves a reduced function against the five purposes of the Green Belt, as assessed below.

TO CHECK THE UNRESTRICTED SPRAWL OF LARGE BUILT-UP AREAS

2.28 The site relates well to the edge of the built form of the West Midlands conurbation, being enveloped by existing built features on three of four sides. Specifically, the site is bounded by the South Staffordshire Railway walk to the north, beyond which lies residential development. Bhylls Acre Primary School and further residential properties lie to the east, whilst residential properties also lie to the south of the site on Langley Road.

2.29 An existing electricity substation is also sited immediately adjacent to a section of the site’s western boundary, representing an urbanising feature beyond the currently settlement edge. The land west of the substation is also to be developed as a battery storage facility, following a grant of planning at appeal in December 2021. The battery storage development and substation site in combination will in effect extend the urban edge of the conurbation beyond the Langley Road site. The additional urbanising effect of these developments further limits the impact of the proposed allocation in terms of impact on the landscape and in regard to green belt issues. A subsequent application has been submitted on the application seeking to vary various conditions on the 2021 application. This is currently being determined by the LPA.

2.30 Furthermore, the site’s western boundary is comprised of intermittent mature trees and hedgerow, which could be strengthened in order to provide an enduring future Green Belt Boundary, level with the surrounding settlement edge to the north and south. The release of the site for development would serve to consolidate and ‘round-off’ the settlement edge in this location.

2.31 It is therefore felt that the site makes a ‘moderate’ contribution to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas, rather than the ‘strong’ contribution identified within the Green Belt Study.

TO PREVENT NEIGHBOURING TOWNS FROM MERGING INTO ONE ANOTHER

2.32 The site plays no significant role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another and therefore makes a 'weak/no' contribution to preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another.

2.33 Richborough accordingly agrees with the conclusions of the Green Belt Study in this regard.

TO ASSIST IN SAFEGUARDING THE COUNTRYSIDE FROM ENCROACHMENT

2.34 Whilst the Site itself site contains some characteristics of open countryside, such as an absence of built development, it remains that the site is surrounded by existing built form on three of its four sides, with the addition of the electricity substation partly forming the fourth site boundary. The site is accordingly strongly influenced by existing urbanising features.

2.35 Furthermore, the site has durable defensible boundaries that are afforded clear physical enclosure from the wider Green Belt. The development of the site would present the opportunity to further strengthen these boundaries, thus safeguarding the countryside from future encroachment.

2.36 It is therefore considered that the site makes a 'moderate' contribution to assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, rather than the 'strong' contribution identified within the Green Belt Study.

TO PRESERVE THE SETTING AND SPECIAL CHARACTER OF HISTORIC TOWNS

2.37 Richborough agrees with the conclusions of the Green Belt Study, that the site makes a 'weak/no' contribution to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns.

TO ASSIST IN URBAN REGENERATION, BY ENCOURAGING THE RECYCLING OF DERELICT AND OTHER URBAN LAND

2.38 Whilst it is acknowledged that all Green Belt land contributes towards encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land, the site and immediate area does not contain significant areas of brownfield land and would therefore not prejudice the redevelopment of urban land in this area. As such, the release of the site from the Green Belt and allocation for residential development would not significantly prevent the recycling of derelict land and other urban land.

2.39 It is therefore considered that the site makes a 'moderate' contribution to this purpose of the Green Belt, rather than the 'strong' contribution identified within the Green Belt Study.

SUMMARY OF GREEN BELT PURPOSES

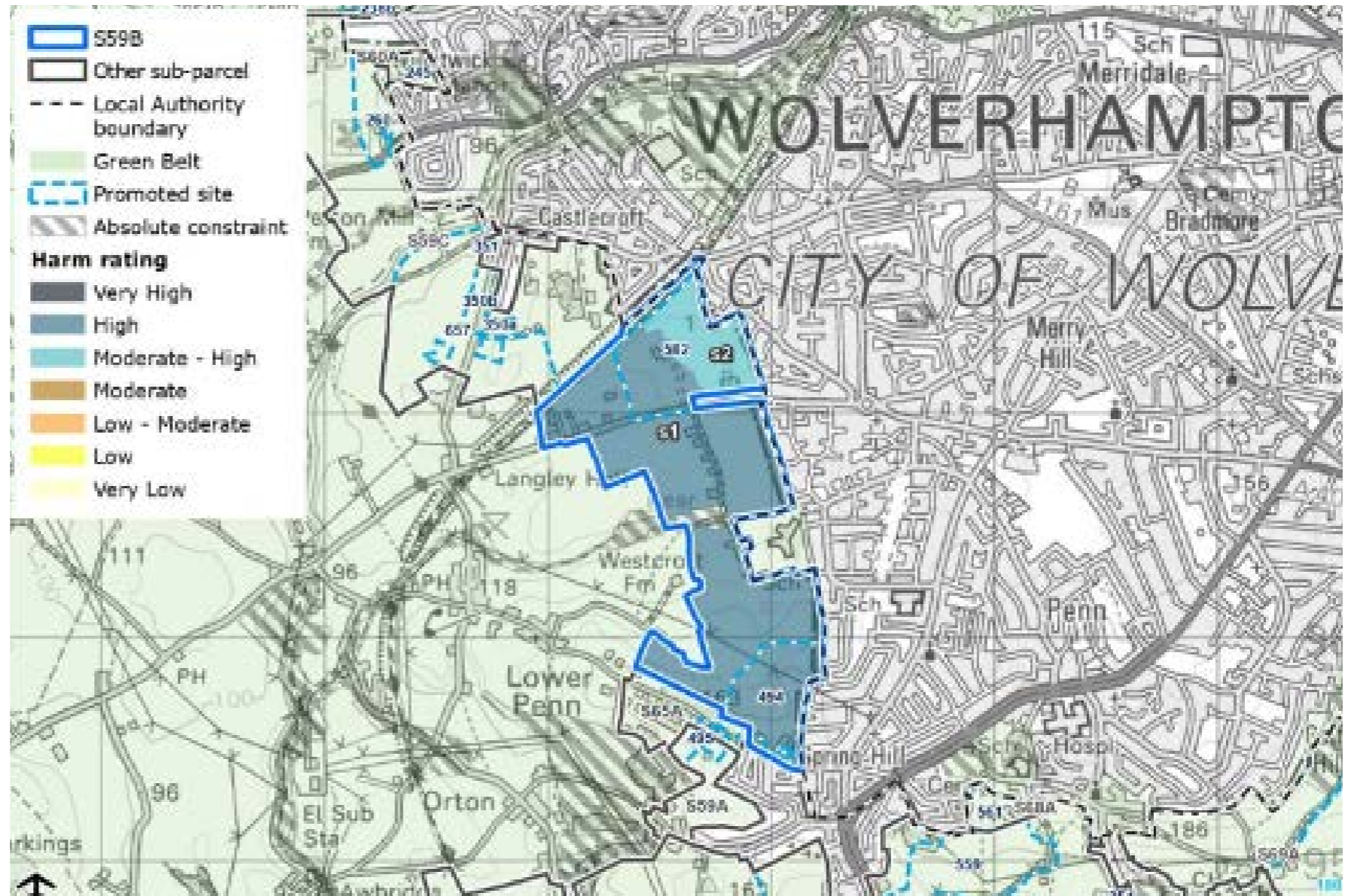
2.40 Overall, it is therefore considered that Land off Langley Road, Wolverhampton, makes a reduced contribution to the five purposes of the Green Belt than that identified within the Green Belt for Green Belt Sub-Parcel ref: S59B. This contribution is summarised in the table below:

GREEN BELT PURPOSE	PREVIOUS RATING	REVISED RATING
P1: Checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Strong Contribution	Moderate Contribution
P2: Preventing the merging of neighbouring towns	Weak/No Contribution	Weak/No Contribution
P3: Safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Strong Contribution	Moderate Contribution
P4: Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Weak/No Contribution	Weak/No Contribution
P5: Assist urban regeneration, by encouraging recycling of derelict and other urban land	Strong Contribution	Moderate Contribution

LAND OFF LANGLEY ROAD, GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT

GREEN BELT HARM

2.41 Given the reduced impact upon the five purposes of the Green Belt set out above, is contented that the Green Belt harm identified within the Study should be reduced from 'moderate-high' to 'low-moderate'.



HARM RATINGS FOR LAND PARCEL S59B



WINDSOR GARDENS

Blythe Acre Primary School

SCHOOL CLOSE

ORCHARD COURT

ORCHARD CRESENT

BELLECROFT GARDENS

BELLECROFT GARDENS

LANGLEY ROAD

Club House

West (Information)



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“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping”

Para 135(b), NPPF 2023

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SITE AND ITS SURROUNDING CONTEXT

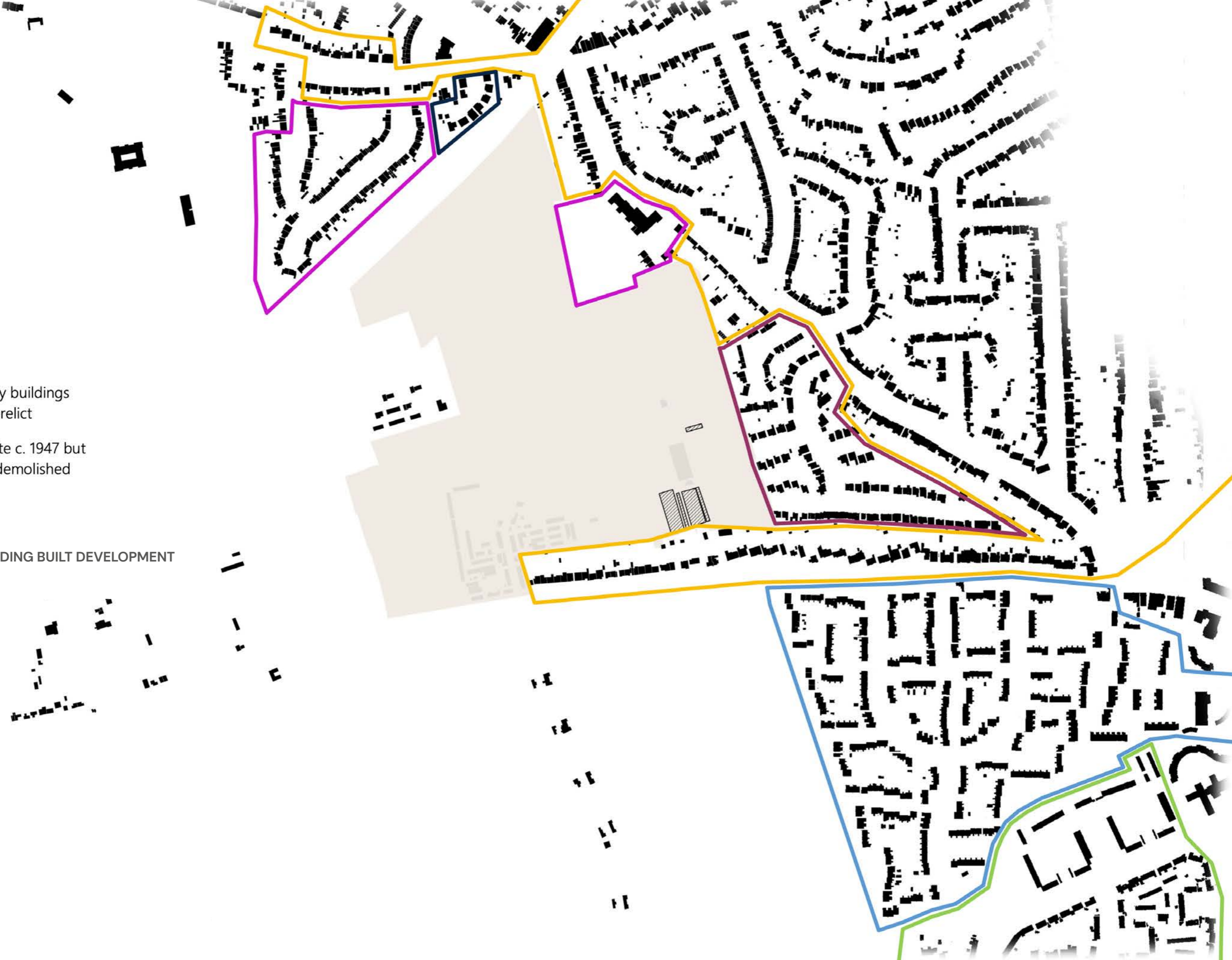
KEY

- c. 1930-40
- c. 1950
- c. 1960
- c. 1970
- c. 1975
- c. 2000

- Existing nursery buildings
c.1947, now derelict
- Buildings on site c. 1947 but
subsequently demolished



PATTERN OF SURROUNDING BUILT DEVELOPMENT
| NOT TO SCALE





3 THE SITE AND SURROUNDING CONTEXT

THE SITE

- 3.1 Land at Langley Road adjoins the western edge of the Black Country conurbation to the north of Langley Road. The South Staffordshire Railway Walk lies to the north and an electricity distribution substation and fields are located to the west. The site extends to approximately 19 hectares and comprises a number of fields within agricultural use and land associated with a derelict nursery.
- 3.2 The site appears to have a high point at the centre of the eastern edge of the site. The remainder of the site falls to the north and to the southwest. The northern slope appears to be initially steep with a slight valley towards the north corner of the site.
- 3.3 Richborough has secured an interest in the site.

SURROUNDING BUILT FORM

- 3.4 The majority of housing in the Merry Hill area takes the form of 1930s suburban semi-detached houses, arranged as 'perimeter blocks'; there are a number of cul-de-sacs. The existing housing along Langley Road immediately to the south of the site was built during this era. The houses, set back from the street edge, are characterised by hipped-roofs, bay windows and white render. Front gardens are enclosed by low brick walls.
- 3.5 The post-war years saw housing development to the south-east of the site, at Warstones Drive, in the form of two- and three-storey blocks of flats arranged in courtyards set in open green space. The housing is constructed in red brick, with dark brown pantiles and hipped roofs. The terraces have balconies; some are recessed.

- 3.6 Later, during the 1970s, the area to the north of Warstones Drive was developed in the form of 2-storey terraced housing arranged in small groups with rear parking courtyards and footpath access off green fingers which criss-cross the scheme. The eastern part of the development includes 3no. 16-storey slab blocks which are visible from the south-eastern part of the site.
- 3.7 Bellencroft Gardens immediately adjacent to the site, to the east, was also developed during the 1970s. This housing development takes the form of detached two-storey houses, some linked by single-garages, others with integral garages. Parking is accommodated on plot, and front gardens are simple lawns, left open to the street.
- 3.8 Bhylls Acre Primacy School, also adjoining the site's eastern boundary, was constructed during the 1960s. It comprises predominantly single storey flat-roofed blocks arranged in a staggered pattern. The buildings are separated from the site by playing fields.
- 3.9 The area to the north of the site (north of the South Staffordshire Railway Walk) was developed c.1960. Its layout echoes the surrounding 1930's street pattern.
- 3.10 To the north of the site (north of the South Staffordshire Railway Walk) there is a small recent infill housing development comprising 2-storey detached houses arranged in a crescent, with gardens backing onto the Railway Walk.
- 3.11 To the north of the site is a battery storage scheme approved in August 2022. Once completed, this development will enclose the site by built form.

SURROUNDING AREA

- 3.12 Merry Hill, Castlecroft and Upper Penn provide a good range of shops, including supermarkets and community and health care facilities. In addition, the area includes a number of primary and secondary schools and good access to public transport.
- 3.13 Merry Hill is well placed geographically and through good transport links to provide an appropriate location for meeting cross boundary pressures. Land at Langley Road is in a sustainable location and is very well located to take advantage of local facilities within neighbouring centres of Wolverhampton that are typically used on a day-to-day/ weekly basis, such as convenience stores, post office, bank, dining and coffee facilities, surgery, dental practice and a range of schools. All of these services can be reached easily and quickly by foot from the site.
- 3.14 The site provides an opportunity to deliver much needed housing, together with all necessary supporting infrastructure.



WINDSOR GARDENS

Blythe Acre Primary School

SCHOOL CLOSE

ORCHARD COURT

ORCHARD CRESENT

BELLECROFT GARDENS

BELLECROFT GARDENS

LANGLEY ROAD

Club House

West (Information)



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“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change”

Para 135(c), NPPF 2023

4

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS



- Bus Stops
- Merry Hill Facilities (including: Co-op Food, convenience stores, butchers, bakery, barbers, hairdressers, takeaways, Boots, public house, and post office)
- 1 Bhylls Acre Primary School
- 2 Castlecroft Primary School
- 3 Smestow School
- 4 Penn Fields School
- 5 Highfields School
- 6 St Michael's Catholic Primary Academy
- 7 Westacre Infants School
- 8 Warstones Primary School
- 9 Uplands Junior School
- 10 Springdale Junior and Infant Schools
- 11 Dentist
- 12 Boots Pharmacy
- 13 Opticians
- 14 Castlecroft Medical Practice
- 15 Firs Inn Public House
- 16 The Mermaid Public House
- 17 Finchfield Library
- 18 Warstones Library
- 19 Newsagents and Convenience Store
- 20 Hairdressers

N
 LOCAL FACILITIES | NOT TO SCALE



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

PROXIMITY TO LOCAL FACILITIES

- 4.1 A parade of local shops is located on Windmill Lane in Castlecroft. Facilities here include; pharmacy, foodstores and newsagent, health & beauty centre, opticians, a hair salon, and The Firs public house. The facilities are a 650m-750m walk from the centre of the site via the footway link to Castlecroft Road.
- 4.2 There are additional local shops and facilities located around the Langley Road/Bhylls Lane/Finchfield Lane/ Trysull Road/ Coalway Road junction complex, at an approximate 1km walk from the centre of the site. Facilities at this location include; Cost saver mini-market, butcher's shop, Chinese takeaway restaurant, hairdresser, bakery, barber, card & gift shop, Co-Operative store, bookmakers, charity store, Boots pharmacy, vets, fish & chips takeaway, kebab restaurant, Indian restaurant, vape store, The Merry Hill public house, and St Joseph's Church (C of E). Additional shops and local facilities, including a post office, are provided at the junction of Coalway Rd/ Warstones Rd, Oxbarn Ave, slightly further to the east.
- 4.3 The Bhylls Acre Primary School is located adjacent to the site and is an approximate 650m walk distance via the footway link to Castlecroft Road. Other nearby schools are located within the City of Wolverhampton and include; Highfields School (Secondary) and Penn Fields (Special School) located off Boundary Way at about a 1.4km walk from the site. St Michael's Catholic Primary Academy is located off Telford Gardens at about a 1.2km walk from the site and Springdale Junior & Infant schools are located about 1.7km from the site.
- 4.4 The Castlecroft Medical Practice is located at about a 1.0km walk from the centre of the site via the footway link to Castlecroft Road. Dental practices are available at an approximate 840m walk via Bellencroft Gardens.

ACTIVE & SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

- 4.5 The South Staffordshire Railway Walk lies on the northern boundary of the site. Despite the name, the route is indicated as a pedestrian and cycle route on Ordnance Survey maps and links to the route are available from Castlecroft Road via a footway/cycleway link from the site. The route meets canal based routes towards Wolverhampton City Centre.
- 4.6 A footway is provided along the site frontage with Langley Road and footway/cycleway links are also to be provided to Bellencroft Gardens, potentially shortening routes to local facilities.
- 4.7 The number 3 bus service can be accessed from Castlecroft Road at about 650m from the centre of the site. The service starts early in the morning and runs, at a 15-minute daytime frequency Mon-Sat, via the City Centre to Pendeford and i54. The service runs at an hourly frequency on Sundays. Service numbers 2, 4 and 712 can be accessed to the east at about a 1km walk. Service number 2 is a very frequent service to Wolverhampton and on to Bushbury Hill and service number 4 runs every 15 minutes towards Wolverhampton and beyond. Service 712 is a school service running to Highfields School.

ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

LOCAL HIGHWAY NETWORK

- 4.8 The site is situated on Langley Road, to the west of Wolverhampton and incorporates land north of Langley Road and southwest of Bhylls Lane. To the north-west, the site is bounded by the South Staffordshire Railway Walk.
- 4.9 The speed limit on Langley Road is 30mph/40mph along the site frontage. To the east, Langley Road links with the Langley Road/Bhylls Lane/Finchfield Lane/Trysull Road/Coalway Road junction complex for links onto the wider highway network including towards Wolverhampton City Centre and onwards towards Birmingham.
- 4.10 Langley Road is a single two-lane carriageway as it passes the site with a footway and verge running alongside the site frontage and a verge running alongside the carriageway opposite the site.
- 4.11 Traffic flows along Langley Road in the vicinity of the site are relatively modest during peak hours, and no queues or delays were observed in the immediate vicinity of the site.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

4.12 Staffordshire County Council Local Transport Plan 2011–2026 has one of its stated aims to:

“Enable economic growth without congestion”

4.13 The LTP suggests that it will seek to stimulate regeneration and support areas of deprivation, and to maximise the reliable operation of the existing road network. The LTP promises to facilitate sustainable access (including public transport, walking and cycling) to tourist attractions. The LTP states that the authority will make best use of the existing highway network before considering building new roads.



4.14 Policy 3.1 of the Plan states that Staffordshire CC will support the adoption of sustainable land-use planning policies and reduce the impact of development where it negatively affects the highway network.

4.15 The policy indicates that it will work through the LDF (now LP) process in order to achieve this aim. The Policy also makes reference to securing suitable planning obligations on development to secure appropriate highway and sustainable transport measures and that travel plans should support developments and include suitable modal shift targets and monitoring regimes.

4.16 The LTP acknowledges the role of transport in seeking to improve the health and quality of life of residents of Staffordshire. The LTP seeks to promote active travel and to reduce the impacts of poor air quality and road noise on its residents.

4.17 The relevant national policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) dated February 2019 which, with reference to transport, states in Paragraphs 103, 108 & 109:

“The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health.

However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.”

“In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:

appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location;

safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; and

any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.

Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe”



PROPOSED SITE ACCESS | NOT TO SCALE

INDICATIVE ACCESS STRATEGY

- 4.18 The proposed vehicle access will be direct from Langley Road in the form of the access road giving way to main road traffic. Suitable visibility can be achieved at the site access in accordance with observed speeds and guidance provided in Manual for Streets 2 (MfS2). The site access can accommodate a refuse lorry, which is typically the largest vehicle that might be expected to access site on a week-to-week basis. As well as larger HGVs.
- 4.19 A further access point, or points, for emergency vehicles and pedestrians/cyclists can be provided from Bellencroft Gardens to the eastern boundary of the site. The emergency access will be designed in line with relevant guidance.
- 4.20 There is potential for pedestrian/cycle links are to be provided from the residential estate situated to the east, including emergency vehicle access, and pedestrian/cycle links will also be promoted towards Castlecroft Road to give access to the South Staffordshire Railway Walk.
- 4.21 As part of the promotion and pre-application process, consultation will be undertaken with Staffordshire County Council as Highway Authority, City of Wolverhampton Council as the neighbouring highway authority, and South Staffordshire Council as planning authority.

1. View facing south across the site in close proximity to the South Staffordshire Railway Walk.
2. View across the pond near the north eastern corner of the site.
3. View of the derelict buildings and the south eastern field parcel from the southern boundary.
4. View of the existing properties backing onto the eastern boundary.



LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

POLICY CONTEXT

- 4.22 The site is not subject to any national landscape designations, nor has ever been considered for such. The site lies within the Green Belt.
- 4.23 The site is situated within South Staffordshire district, located on the western periphery of Wolverhampton near Merry Hill. Applicable local policy objectives address the need to conserve and enhance the landscape of the Green Belt and the green infrastructure of the District.
- 4.24 There are no Public Footpaths within the site boundary, although adjacent to the northern boundary lies the South Staffordshire Railway Walk. There are also a network of Public Rights of Way present across the wider landscape in close proximity to the southern boundary.



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

4.25 At a regional level, within the Staffordshire County Council Planning for Landscape Change SPD (2000), the site is identified as being located within the 'Sandstone Estatelands'.

4.26 The key characteristics of the Sandstone Estatelands include:

- A gently rolling, featureless landscape
- Remnants of silver birch woodland and heathland species present in hedgerows
- Sparsely settled pattern of expanded hamlets and isolated large farms and estate buildings
- Straight minor roads
- Silver birch woodlands
- Well-treed stream corridors
- Intensive arable agriculture in an open remnant field pattern

4.27 Incongruous features in the area identified by the SPD include the following:

- Hedgerow removal along roadsides
- Field trees
- Badly designed farm reservoirs
- Large modern farm buildings and improved commuter properties
- Power lines

SITE-SPECIFIC CONTEXT

4.28 The northern site boundary is defined by the South Staffordshire Railway Walk, lined with mature woodland vegetation, set in-cutting, with existing residential development beyond.

4.29 A pond is situated on the site's low point towards the north east corner, close to the existing properties and school along the eastern boundary. The urban influencing features continue towards the south east, with properties overlooking the eastern field parcels, divided by internal hedgerows and trees.

4.30 The remains of a former nursery lie beyond the properties off Langley road along the site's southern boundary, with a small access point between the properties.

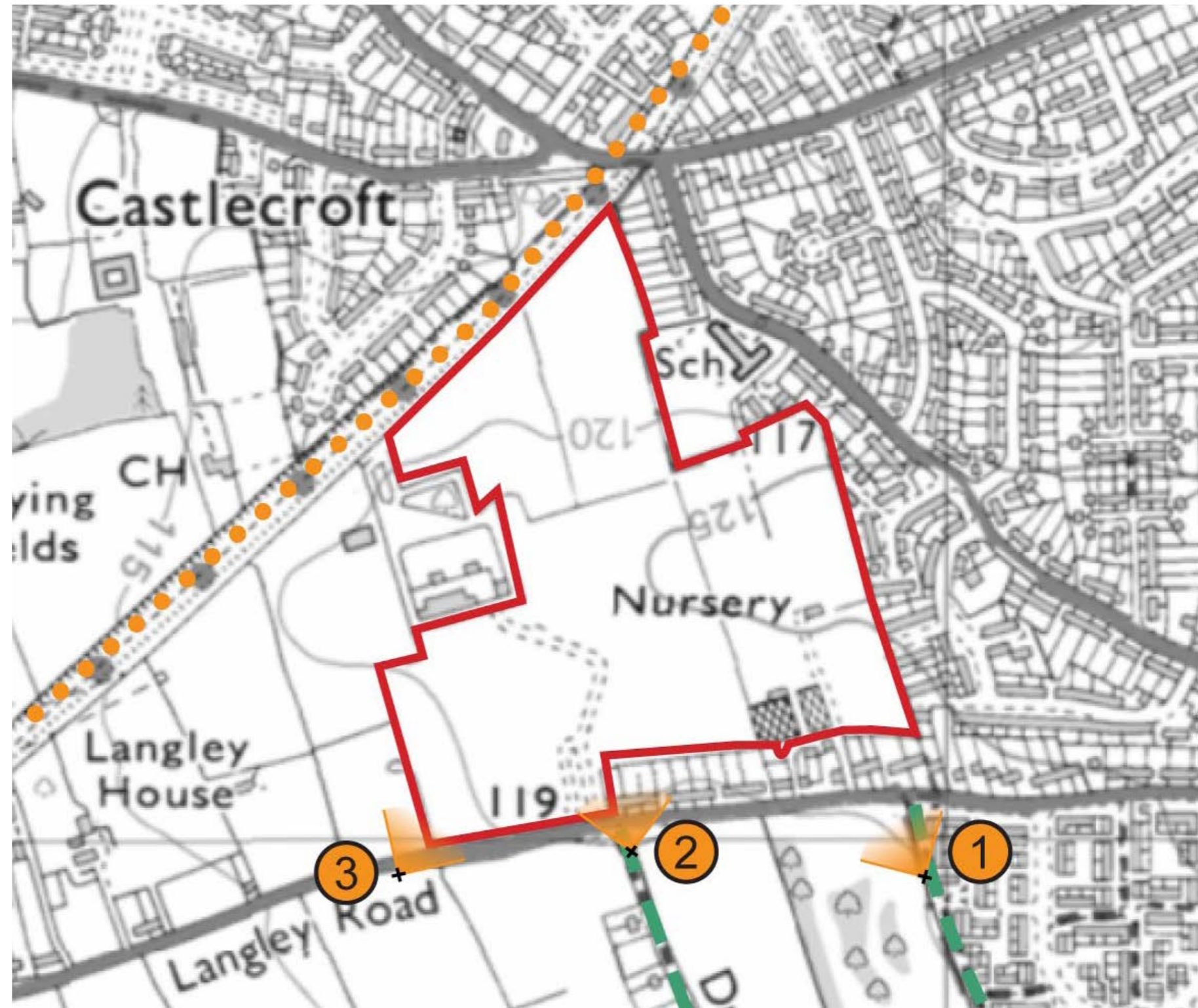
4.31 At the site's most southern part close to an access gate, a road weaves through an area of scrub land with trees which lead to the off-site substation which influences the site's western edge. Surrounding woodland vegetation assist with screening this from the surrounding landscape.

4.32 The hedgerow field boundaries provide containment and structure to the irregular-shaped fields and are also characteristic features within the local landscape. They should be retained and enhanced wherever possible to strengthen the visually-contained nature of the site.



VIEWS

- 4.33 Views from within the site are expansive due to the large, irregular shaped field sizes, however, mature, internal hedgerows and trees restrict direct visibility across the site. Along the site's northern boundary lies the South Staffordshire Railway Walk, although allows for no intervisibility with the site due to the intervening trees and the sheer depth of the railway walk in-cutting.
- 4.34 Viewpoint 1 is representative of users of the footpath and residents to the south of the site beyond Langley Road. Although in close proximity, development off Langley Road and intervening vegetation screens views of the site entirely.
- 4.35 Viewpoint 2 shows the view from Lower Penn 9 footpath to the south of the site where it meets Langley Road. At its closest proximity to the site, views are possible towards the site beyond the boundary vegetation, although the majority of the site is screened by the existing properties off Langley Road.
- 4.36 Viewpoint 3 shows the view from Langley Road facing north east. The managed hedgerow along the site's southern boundary assists to filter views into the site.
- 4.37 Western boundary trees and hedgerow aids with filtering views further west of the site. Properties on Langley Road visible to the south of the site.
- 4.38 Overall, the main receptors of the site with potential views are transient users of local roads and local residents to the north, east and south of the site. With a sympathetic proposed development that retains key landscape features and with the retention and enhancement of internal and existing boundary hedgerows and trees, the visual context would remain largely intact.
- 4.39 The site is well-contained within the local context, allowing for no distant views, with the proposed landscape-led development providing no uncharacteristic or incongruous features.



1



2



3
















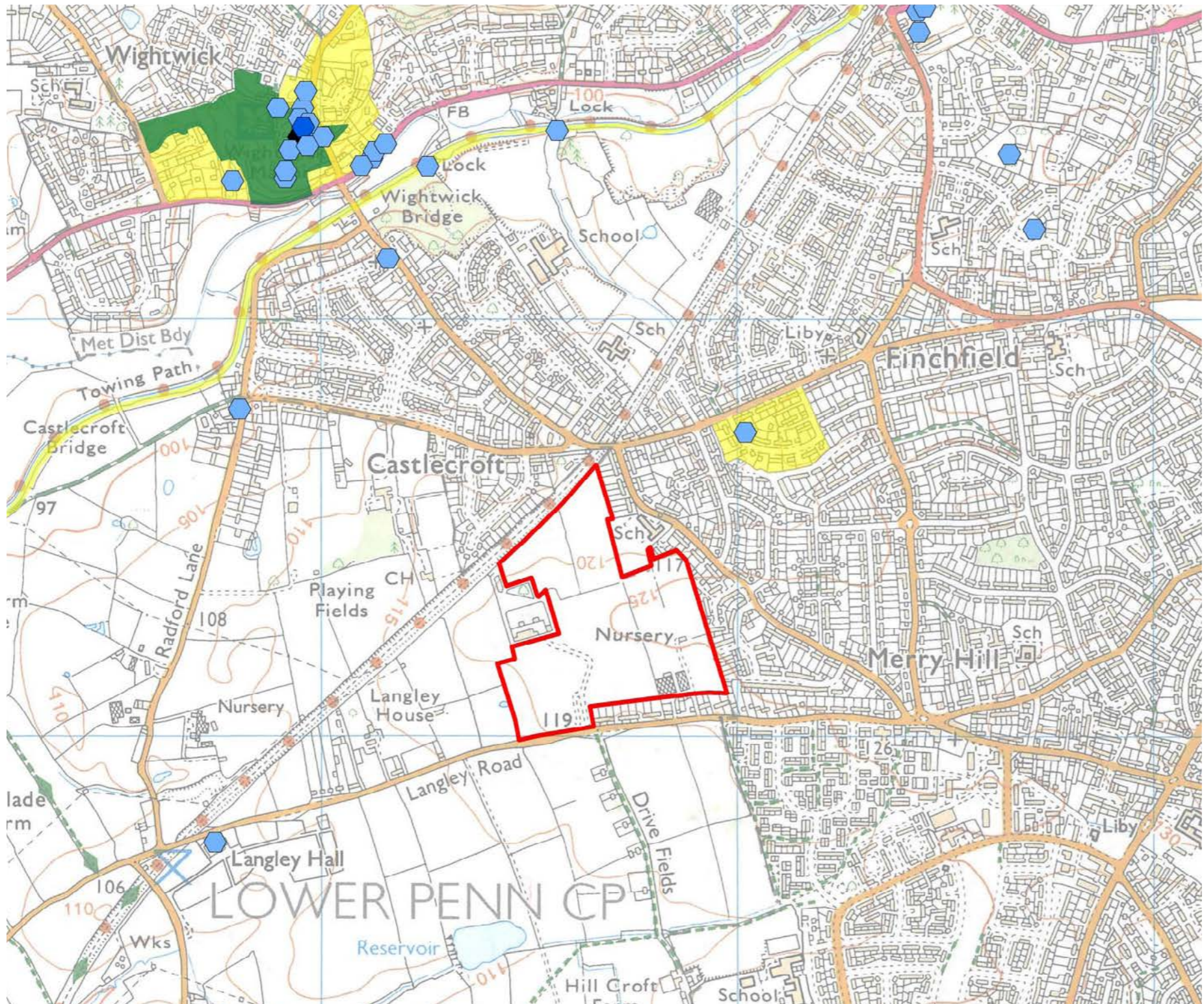
IN SUMMARY

4.40 Overall, the main receptors of the site with potential views are transient users of local roads and local residents to the north, east and south of the site. With a sympathetic proposed development that retains key landscape features and with the retention and enhancement of internal and existing boundary hedgerows and trees, the visual context would remain largely intact.

4.41 The site is well-contained within the local context, allowing no distant views, with the proposed landscape-led development providing no uncharacteristic or incongruous features.

-  Site boundary
-  Potential Developable Areas
-  Public Open Space
-  Opportunities to provide positive new street frontage in keeping with existing properties fronting Langley Road
-  Retention of Existing Field Pattern
-  Existing Pond
-  Existing Public Rights of Way (PRoW)
-  South Staffordshire Railway Walk
-  Existing Site Access
-  New Green Belt Boundary
-  Retain and Enhance Existing Hedgerow with Additional Tree and Woodland Planting to Create a Robust and Permanent Green Belt Boundary

 **LANDSCAPE OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS**
| NOT TO SCALE



HERITAGE & ARCHAEOLOGY

4.42 RPS Heritage have undertaken an initial appraisal of the extent and nature of known heritage assets within the site and surrounding area. There are no designated heritage assets located on the site.

4.43 Heritage is not considered to be a constraint to the development of the site. Any future planning application would be supported by a Built Heritage Statement which would assess the significance of the potentially affected designated and non-designated built heritage assets, and any impact on their respective significance from the development of the site.

4.44 There are remains of a WWII gun emplacement on the site. This can be retained in an area of open space. There is no suggestion that the site contains buried remains that would be a constraint to development of the site.

- Site Boundary
- Scheduled Monument

Listed Buildings

- I
- II*
- II
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- Conservation Areas
- Registered Battlefield
- World Heritage Site

DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS
| NOT TO SCALE

ECOLOGY

4.45 A preliminary ecological appraisal of the Site was undertaken in July 2019 and comprised a desk study and extended Phase I Habitat Survey. Whilst it is acknowledged that the assessment is now out of date, for the purposes of the indicative masterplan, the result of this preliminary ecology appraisal provided the ecological constraints and opportunities for development at the Site to be identified.

STATUTORY DESIGNATED SITES

4.46 Fen Pools Special Area of Conservation (SAC) lies approximately 9km south-east of the Site. This SAC is designated for its important amphibian assemblage, including great crested newts (GCN) which are an Annex II species protected under the Habitats Directive. Owing to the distance and lack of hydrological connections between the Site and Fen Pools SAC, it is considered unlikely that development at the Site would cause significant adverse effects. Indirect effects due to increased recreational pressures are considered unlikely to be significant due to the distance to the SAC and the presence of alternative publicly accessible greenspace which is closer to the Site (such as Baggeridge Country Park).

4.47 The South Staffordshire Railway Walk Local Nature Reserve (LNR) lies directly adjacent to the northern Site boundary and is predominantly formed of broadleaved woodland with a resident bird population. Sensitive construction practices are required to ensure the LNR is not subject to any direct or indirect effects and the LNR must be retained within a suitable buffer from development (15m minimum) in-line with Policy ENV1 of the Black Country Core Strategy (adopted February 2011). The Smestow Valley LNR also lies approximately 100m north-east of the Site, comprising a mosaic of woodland and grassland habitat, which supports GCN, badgers, Daubenton's bat, and otters.

4.48 It is considered that given the distances involved and through adoption of sensitive construction practices (such as avoiding dust deposition and sediment run-off), there would be no significant adverse effects on known Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) within 2km of the Site (namely Smestow Valley, Staffordshire Worcestershire Canal, and Coppice Road Wood).

HABITATS AND FAUNA HABITATS AND FAUNA

4.49 The Site itself is largely dominated by arable fields of wheat crop and two fields of semi-improved grassland of no more than site ecological importance. The fields are separated by native species-rich hedgerows which are managed to a height of 1.5m. Two ponds which hold water are present onsite, in addition to an offsite pond directly adjacent to the west of the Site.

4.50 The features of highest ecological importance are hedgerows, ponds, and mature trees present largely in the centre of the Site, and the woodland directly adjacent to the north of the Site. These together form a wildlife network through the Site which offers opportunities for the movement of mobile fauna such as bats. Lighting conflicts which might impact bats should be avoided or mitigated to ensure illumination and glare is avoided in a 'dark corridor' between the development and key bat habitat. These buffer zones would be guided by further bat surveys and BCT Guidance on bats and artificial lighting. Where the loss of the semi-improved grassland is required to facilitate development, replacement habitat or habitat enhancement elsewhere within the Site should be sought, to provide habitat for invertebrates, farmland birds, and foraging bats.

4.51 The multi-functional Green Infrastructure (GI) led approach for the Site offers the opportunity to retain, protect and enhance the features of most ecological value on the Site whilst also delivering drainage, landscape, amenity and open space benefits. This also has distinct advantages in terms of placemaking and consideration could be given to an independent accreditation of a Green Infrastructure Strategy (such as Building with Nature).

4.52 The proposed layout indicates creation of two corridors of GI through the Site, along the western Site boundary and through the centre of the Site, while retaining the woodland corridor to the north. There are opportunities to enhance the Site's importance for ecology and deliver biodiversity net gain through creation of new habitats. The GI approach would be in line with the NPPF and Policy ENV1 of the Black Country Core Strategy.

FURTHER WORK

4.53 Phase II surveys for protected and priority species would be required in due course to inform evolution of the development design and any future planning application. However, presence of such fauna would not be expected to affect the principle of development, with delivery of the measures detailed above in respect of habitats and GI able to accommodate those species that could be present.

CONCLUSION

4.54 The majority of the Site is dominated by arable fields and semi-improved grassland habitat of no more than Site ecological importance, losses of which would not trigger planning policy or legislation relating to wildlife. Habitats of most importance (hedgerows, ponds, mature trees, and woodland) can be adequately retained and protected during construction within appropriate buffers that form part of the multi-functional Green Infrastructure. These habitats are also most likely to be of value to any assemblage of protected and priority fauna species which may be using the Site. It is therefore demonstrated that the strategic network of environmental infrastructure will be protected and enhanced within the Site, in-line with Core Strategy Policy CSP3 (Environmental Infrastructure). There are opportunities to offer biodiversity net gain through enhancement of existing habitats, creation of new habitats, and enhancement of habitat connectivity to the wider landscape, which is in-line with local and national aspirations for biodiversity.

FLOOD RISK & DRAINAGE

4.55 The site has been found to be entirely within Flood Zone 1 and is classed as being at Very Low risk of flooding from reservoirs or large waterbodies. The main identified risk of flooding is from surface water with ponding in the north of the site observed both on the Environment Agency Flood Risk Mapping and in satellite imagery of the site.



4.56 No historic fluvial flooding has been recorded on site although ponding is visible in satellite imagery in the site's natural low-point in the north. This does not pose a risk to the site due to onsite mitigation and indicates that infiltration is not suitable on site.

4.57 Sewer flooding is considered to pose a very low risk to the site due to the site topography.

4.58 Tidal and canal sources are not considered to pose a risk due to the distance and terrain between the site and tidal/canal waterbodies.

4.59 A storm water outfall to the existing surface water network beneath Bhylls Lane would facilitate a gravity system with some localised level raising required. This is to be conveyed via the existing school adjacent to the site.

4.60 The site sits on superficial deposits of till above Wildsmoor Sandstone which is classed as a Principal Aquifer however borehole logs conducted in the near vicinity of the site found predominantly clay and did not encounter the bedrock.

4.61 The site has a high point in the east and generally falls away from this in all other directions. Overland flows onto the site may occur however this would be predominantly from the east and is unlikely given this area's general level of development.

4.62 An estimate of the greenfield runoff for the site has resulted in a QBar estimate of approximately 7.6l/s across the site.

4.63 This result has a corresponding site-wide storage estimate of approximately 12000m³ assuming 60% sitewide impermeability. This information has been used to suggest potential attenuation basins in the north and south of the site with conveyance routes incorporating swales and pipes between them.

4.64 A storm water attenuation proposal has been developed alongside an existing constraints plan which caters for storms up to and including the 1:100 year storm + 40% allowance for climate change. This assumes that the discharge will be controlled and restricted to the greenfield runoff rate (QBar) using SUDS and attenuation basins before discharging to the existing surface water network.

4.65 The incorporation of SUDS features and mimicking of existing greenfield flows will ensure no increase in flood risk results from the development whilst improving overall water quality and biodiversity.

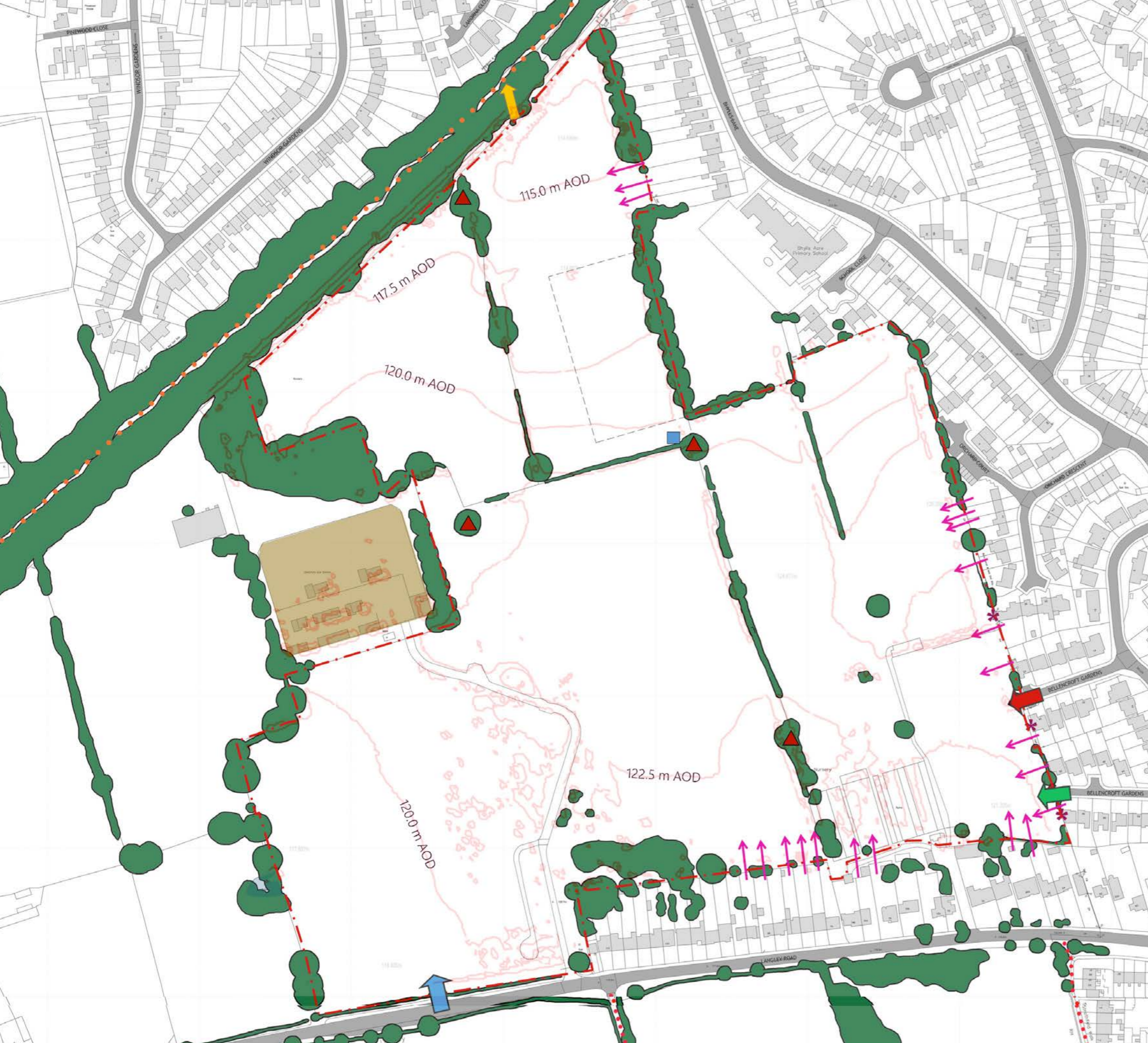
4.66 Exceedance flows have been considered and are to be directed away from residential developments and towards open space through the use of the SUDS network, overland flow routes and localised depressions.

4.67 Foul Drainage is anticipated to follow the same route through the existing school to discharge to the existing foul water network beneath Bhylls Lane.

UTILITIES

- 4.68 An existing electric sub station is present adjacent to the west of the site.
- 4.69 This has associated high voltage and extra high voltage cabling, some of which traverses from North to South from the sub station across the southwest of the site. Other associated high voltage cabling travels along the northwest boundary towards Castlecroft Road.
- 4.70 An existing medium pressure gas main travels alongside high voltage cabling along the northwest border of the site. This is shown by utilities records to be outside of site. This is shown by utilities records to be outside of the site boundary. These are also present within Langley Road.
- 4.71 Other utilities such as telecoms and water supply are located within Langley Road and are expected to currently serve the residential development bordering the site.
- 4.72 No capacity issues are envisaged in servicing the development due to the extensive utility infrastructure in close proximity.
- 4.73 In addition, planning permission has been granted for a battery storage site on land to the west of the site. It is not anticipated that this will have any significant implications for residential development on the site. However, as the scheme's developed, assessments will be carried out on such matters as noise impact and any necessary mitigation identified.





- - - SITE BOUNDARY
- EXISTING TREES AND HEDGES
- ➔ POTENTIAL ACCESS LOCATION
- ➔ POTENTIAL EMERGENCY ACCESS POINTS
- ➔ POTENTIAL FOR FURTHER ADDITIONAL EMERGENCY ACCESS
- ⋯ EXISTING PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY
- ⋯ SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE RAILWAY WALK
- ➔ POTENTIAL FOOTPATH CONNECTION TO SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE RAILWAY WALK
- ➔ RESIDENTIAL AMENITY CONSIDERATIONS
- * EXISTING HABITABLE ROOM WINDOWS TO BE CONSIDERED
- EXISTING SUBSTATION
- EXISTING SITE CONTOURS
- BADGER SETT
- ▲ TREES WITH HIGH/MODERATE BAT POTENTIAL

OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS
| NOT TO SCALE

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

4.74 Richborough have considered landscape character, ecology, highways, flood risk and drainage, heritage and archaeology, and it has been demonstrated that there are no constraints that would preclude development at the site. The analysis has shown:

- The site is well-located in terms of local facilities, public footpaths, as well sustainable transport modes of transport, in particular to local bus services;
- There are no designated heritage assets on the proposed development site;
- Built heritage assets are not considered to be a constraint to the development of the site as future development will incorporate mitigation measures to reduce any impact on their significance;
- The majority of the site is dominated by arable fields and semi-improved grassland habitat of no more than Site ecological importance, losses of which would not trigger planning policy or legislation relating to wildlife;
- The strategic network of environmental infrastructure will be protected within the site in line with Core Strategy Policy CSP3;
- The incorporation of SUDS features and mimicking of existing greenfield flows will ensure no increase in flood risk results from the development, whilst improving overall water quality and biodiversity; and
- No capacity issues are envisaged in servicing the development due to the extensive utility infrastructure in close proximity.

4.75 Principal considerations and opportunities that a development proposal should take into consideration are as follows:

CONSIDERATIONS

- Site topography and associated high/low points;
- Existing landscape comprising mainly hedgerows and trees at field boundaries;
- Areas of the site subject to surface water flooding;
- Ecological value of existing habitats;
- Residential amenity of existing dwellings;
- Local vernacular and character of existing residential areas;
- Transitional location of the site between built up areas and the wider countryside;
- Impact on the existing highway network;
- Existing adjacent electricity substation;
- Buffer zone to South Staffordshire Railway Walk;
- World War II gun battery; and
- Battery storage site.

OPPORTUNITIES

- To provide access into the site from existing road network;
- To create an attractive new walkable neighbourhood;
- To create a high quality, distinctive and landscape led development supported by public open space and children's play areas;
- To create a highly sustainable living place which offers a range of dwelling types, sizes and tenures and increases housing choice;
- To make efficient use of land, though the application of a range of appropriate densities;
- To create development identity areas which draw upon local vernacular and complement existing character;
- Provide a fully interconnected landscape structure, based on retention of existing mature trees and hedgerows, and enhancement where necessary;
- Provision of new footpath network through public open space and connectivity to existing Public Right of Way;
- Retain the World War II heritage feature; and
- Mitigation of impact of battery storage site.



WINDSOR GARDENS

Blythe Acre Primary School

SCHOOL CLOSE

ORCHARD COURT

ORCHARD CRESENT

BELLECROFT GARDENS

BELLECROFT GARDENS

LANGLEY ROAD

Club House

West (unintelligible)

Electricity Sub Station

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“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit”


Para 135(d), NPPF 2023

5

VISION FOR LAND AT LANGLEY ROAD



- ① Green corridor links incorporating existing trees and hedges
 - ② Possible connection to South Staffordshire Railway Walk
 - ③ Existing landscape to be retained and enhanced where necessary
 - ④ Continuation of existing residential street
 - ⑤ Principal residential street
 - ⑥ Line of existing derelict nursery buildings to be demolished
 - ⑦ Proposed surface water attenuation areas
 - ⑧ Opportunities for habitat enhancement
 - ⑨ Protection buffer to designated nature conservation site
-
- (L) Proposed 'Local Area for Play' (LAP)
 - (LE) Proposed 'Local Equipped Area for Play' (LEAP)
 - (LE+) Proposed Enhanced LEAP
 - (N) Proposed Natural Play Area
-
- Existing South Staffordshire Railway Walk
 - Existing Public Footpaths
 - ➡ Proposed site entrance off Langley Road
 - ➡ Proposed emergency access from Bellencroft Gardens
 - ➡ Potential emergency access from Bellencroft Gardens
 - Proposed primary residential access road
 - Proposed secondary residential access road
 - Proposed shared surfaces
 - Proposed private driveways
 - Proposed black-top footpath
 - Proposed informal pathways through open space
 - * Layout to respond to any existing habitable room windows' outlook



 CONCEPT PLAN | NOT TO SCALE



5 INDICATIVE MASTERPLAN & DESIGN PRINCIPLES

VISION FOR LANGLEY ROAD

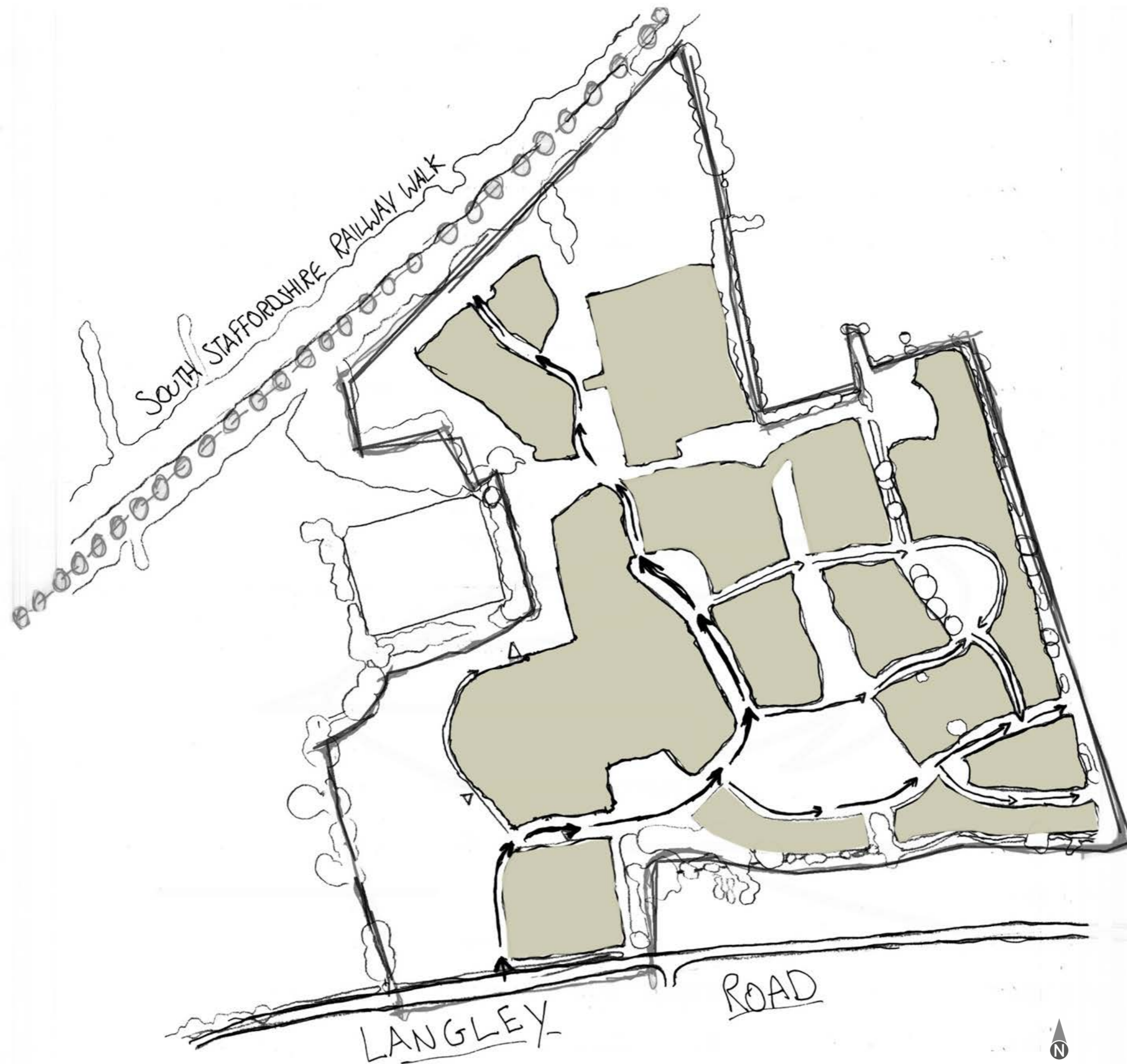
- To produce a new living environment of the highest standard, with a clear recognisable identity which is complementary to the vernacular and character of the surrounding area;
- To provide the right ingredients for a balanced and sustainable new development, which provides a range of high quality homes and a range of publicly accessible open spaces;
- To provide a range of new community infrastructure to benefit existing and new residents;
- To establish safe, attractive and secure neighbourhoods, streets and places which promote social interaction and afford access and movement priority to pedestrians and cyclists;
- To apply the practical use of environmentally friendly technology and techniques through the development, with the emphasis on carbon reduction, energy-saving and the avoidance of waste;
- To provide a locally-inspired and meaningful new green space network which enhances the character of the site and natural environment and creates a robust and enduring new Green Belt boundary; and
- To create a place which will enhance the attraction of the Merry Hill/Castlecroft area as a place to live, incorporating aspects of local character, landscape, heritage, visual amenity and biodiversity.

MAIN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- Green corridor links incorporating existing hedges and mature trees;
- Principal residential street set within green corridor connecting public open spaces and areas for play;
- Potential for pedestrian/cycle link to South Staffordshire Railway Walk;
- Existing landscape to be retained and enhanced where necessary, particularly relating to the existing substation and boundaries to adjoining existing dwellings;
- Proposed layout to be designed sensitively in relation to existing habitats (i.e., badger sett and trees with moderate/high bat potential);
- Protection buffer (minimum 15m) to be incorporated in the northern extent of the site, in relation to the South Staffordshire Railway Walk Local Nature Reserve;
- Opportunities for habitat enhancements in open space areas;
- Proposed surface water attenuation (to incorporate permanent wet features and opportunities for ecological and biodiversity enhancements);
- Continuation of existing building frontage along Langley Road;
- Existing derelict nursery buildings to be demolished;
- Proposed areas for play, including 'Local Areas for Play', 'Local Equipped Area for Play', 'Enhanced Local Equipped Area for Play' and an area for 'Natural Play'; and
- Connection to the existing sustainable transport network, particularly bus routes.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS:

- Number of dwellings provided = Approx. 390
- Approximate residential density = 35 dph
- Local Areas for Play (LAP)
- Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)
- Enhanced Local Equipped Area for Play
- Area for Natural Play



LAYOUT & FORM PLAN | NOT TO SCALE

LAYOUT AND FORM

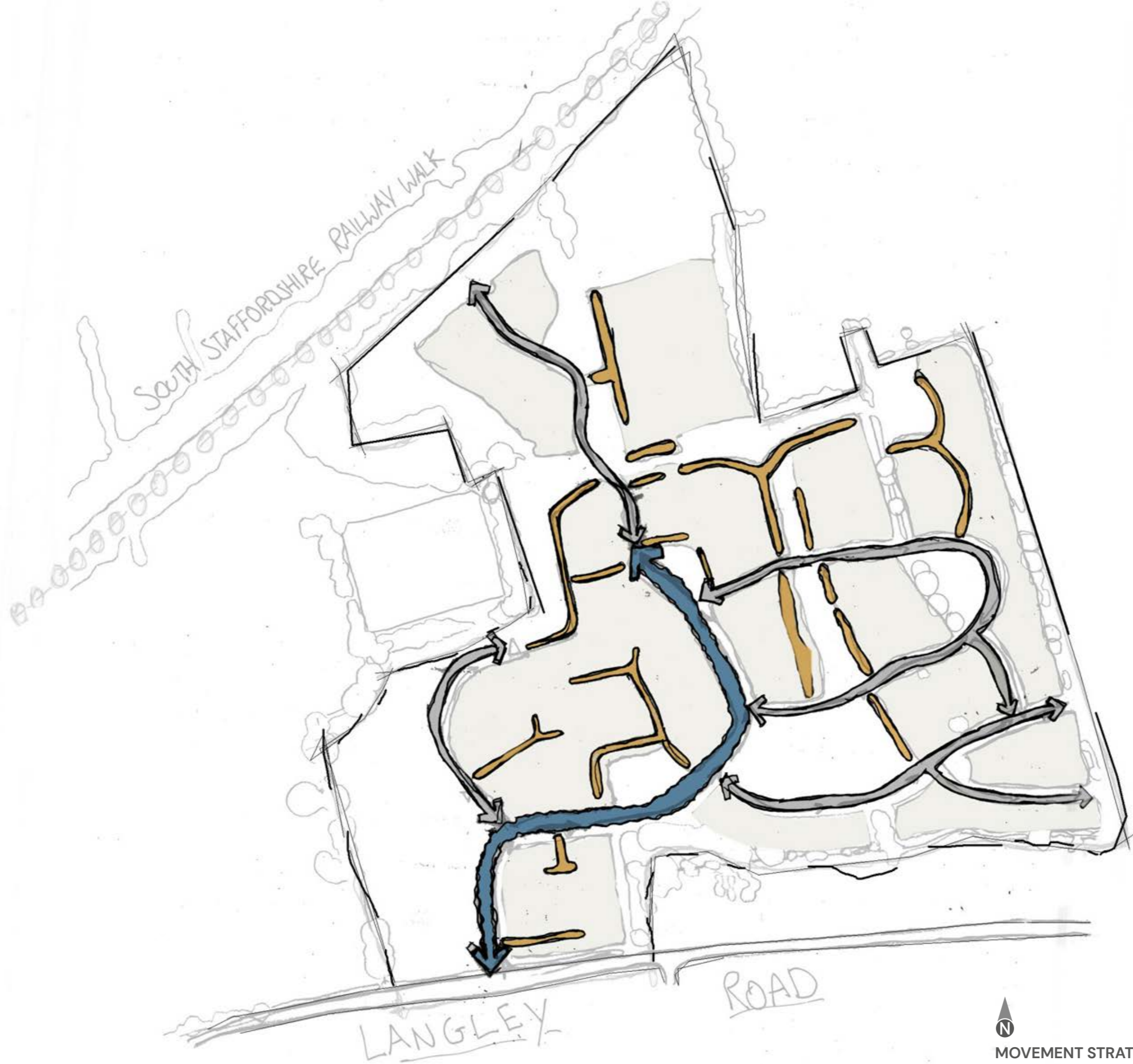
MAKING EFFICIENT USE OF SPACE

- 5.1 The illustrative masterplan comprises an efficient layout of residential development cells which slot into the existing field structure. Allowance is made for the necessary offsets to address underground services, residential amenity and potential ecology.
- 5.2 Using best-practice principles, each cell comprises back to back patterns of housing, allowing for local design and highway standards. This securely encloses private rear garden spaces and provides outward facing, active frontages that naturally surveil the public realm.
- 5.3 Form and wayfinding, connecting the site both internally and to the existing built form in the surrounding area.
- 5.4 Building groupings, types and heights vary within each development cell to establish a series of locally inspired character areas which respond to particular areas of the site and its surroundings. However an overall identity would be achieved to complement the existing character of the Merry Hill area.

- 5.5 Building patterns focused around the principal street and development core would take a more formal, sinuous and linear form. By contrast, outer edges would be more fragmented and irregular, providing a softer transition between urban areas and the wider countryside.
- 5.6 Signature frontages and landmark buildings would be placed at critical street junctures and intersections of main green spaces. These buildings would create a series of wayfinding nodal points and identity spaces but also provide high quality gateways to signify entry points and character areas.

DENSITY

- 5.7 Taking into account the location of the site, situated between urban and landscape contexts, an average net density of around 35 dwellings per hectare has been applied. This meets the preferred average density average as set out within the Green Belt Exceptional Circumstances Paper 2024.
- 5.8 The proposed density allows for the creation of a sustainable and balanced residential development comprising a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures, biased towards 2 and 3 bedroom family dwellings.



MOVEMENT STRATEGY PLAN | NOT TO SCALE

MOVEMENT STRATEGY

STREET HIERARCHY

- 5.9 The development would principally be accessed via a new T-junction off Langley Road. However, there is potential to include further pedestrian/cycle access from Bellencroft Gardens to the east of the site.
- 5.10 A hierarchy of new streets would be implemented to disperse movement around the new development. These routes would also serve to complement development character areas.
- 5.11 The hierarchy would be underpinned by a principal tree-lined street running from Langley Road to the heart of the proposed development. Higher density forms of development would generally be the focus for this street to achieve a defined, formal and sinuous route through the development.
- 5.12 Lower order, secondary streets would branch from the principal street to provide a choice of connected routes leading to new development.
- 5.13 Residential areas and green space. Street junctures would be signified by high quality public realm and architecture to provide a series of distinctive and attractive way-finding places to stop and meet.
- 5.14 Private drives would service outer edges of the development, and development fronting public open green spaces. These routes would be informal and lower density, minimising vehicular movements alongside areas of public open space and potential wildlife sensitivity.



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN | NOT TO SCALE

SUSTAINABLE MODES OF TRAVEL

- 5.15 The illustrative masterplan proposes a walkable new neighbourhood comprising a series of interconnected 'greenways' which criss-cross the site. These routes provide a choice of attractive links for pedestrians and cyclists to access new residential areas and green space for both existing and future residents. There is also an opportunity to link the greenways to the South Staffordshire Railway Walk to the north of the site.
- 5.16 The site is also well located to existing bus routes, with frequent buses from Castlecroft Road connecting the site to Smestow Comprehensive School and Bilston via the 751 route and Wolverhampton City centre and Snapes Green via the 3 route.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

NATURAL GREENWAYS

- 5.17 The proposed green space network comprises a series of naturalised green spaces (greenways) which provide ribbons of nature through new residential areas. Influenced by existing field boundaries, landscape and the location of existing services, these spaces would provide linear corridors of informal amenity space and new habitat areas with the aim of engaging users with nature by providing an educational resource as well as an informal outdoor learning environment.

5.18 The primary aim of green infrastructure is to:

- Provide education and promote local care and understanding of local ecology, as well as an educational resource;
- Provide recreational space for exercise and enjoyment of nature, as well as the opportunity for tranquility away from built up areas;
- Provide a place for wildlife to live and thrive;
- Contribute an attractive green element to the image of an area, raising the quality of people's everyday living and working environments;
- Provide sustainable drainage and wetland habitats;
- Provide a transient green environment for walkers and cyclists alike;
- Provide view corridors and information boards to provide a visual connection to the wider townscape and sky line features; and
- Retain and safeguard existing landscape elements and provide a robust and enduring new Green Belt boundary.



WINDSOR GARDENS

Blythe Acre Primary School

SCHOOL CLOSE

ORCHARD COURT

ORCHARD CRESENT

BELLOCROFT GARDENS

BELLOCROFT GARDENS

LANGLEY ROAD

Club House

West (unintelligible)

Electricity Sub Station

9

8

10

3

N

1

8

9

4

L

L

4

1

6

8

7



6

L

L

L

9

4

5

“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks”

Para 135(e), NPPF 2023

6

SUMMARY & CONCLUSION





SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This Vision Document demonstrates that there is a need to accommodate an increased amount of housing land within the Green Belt and there are exceptional circumstances that exist which support the site at Langley Road to become an allocation in the Local Plan.
- 6.2 The site presents an exceptional opportunity to deliver approximately 390 new market and affordable dwellings to meet the future housing need of South Staffordshire without undermining the purposes of the Green Belt or adversely impacting upon the environment.
- 6.3 In summary, this promotional document has illustrated that the site would:
- Positively contribute to the identified need for new housing and create a range and mix of housing types that will make a positive contribution to the District's housing requirements by providing a mix of types and tenures of dwellings, including new affordable homes;
 - Represent a logical and natural extension to the existing urban area that has strong physical boundaries and is well-contained;
 - Be sustainably located on the edge of Wolverhampton and within proximity to a wide range of local facilities and services, with local centres at Castlecroft, Merry Hill and Warstones Road all located within a 0.5-mile radius of the site;
 - Accommodate a high quality residential development that nestles within the surrounding landscape and green space network;
 - Deliver an overall development vision for the site that provides a well-designed and sympathetic development in a sustainable location on the edge of Wolverhampton;
 - Generate growth and provide significant social benefits as well as benefits to the local economy, including construction spend and investment generated by new residents; and
 - Have no identified technical or environmental constraints that will prevent its delivery.

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