

Staffordshire County Council

Penkridge Estate

Development Appraisal



Report for

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Contents

1.	The Appraisal	4
1.1	Purpose	4
1.2	The Estate	4
2.	Methodology	5
2.1	Stage 1 – Environmental Policy	6
2.2	Stage 2 – On Site Conditions	6
3.	Penkridge Estate	9
3.1	Application of Environmental Policies	9
3.2	General Conditions in Penkridge	9
	Green Belt and Countryside Policies	9
	Services	9
	Accessibility	9
	The A449	10
3.3	North of the River Penk	10
	On Site Conditions	10
3.4	South of the River Penk	10
3.5	Availability and Ownership	11
4.	Findings	12

Table 2.1	Environmental Policy Assessment Criteria	6
Table 2.2	Site Specific Criteria	7

Figure 1.1	Site Context Plan	After Page 4
Figure 3.1	Penkridge Estate – Key Constraints within 2km	After Page 11
Figure 3.2	Penkridge Estate – Assessment Area (North)	After Page 11
Figure 3.3	Penkridge Estate – Assessment Area (South)	After Page 11

Appendix A	Site Assessment Proforma	
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1. The Appraisal

1.1 Purpose

This development appraisal considers the promotional opportunities presented by the Penkridge Estate within the ownership of Staffordshire County Council. In this context the appraisal considers:

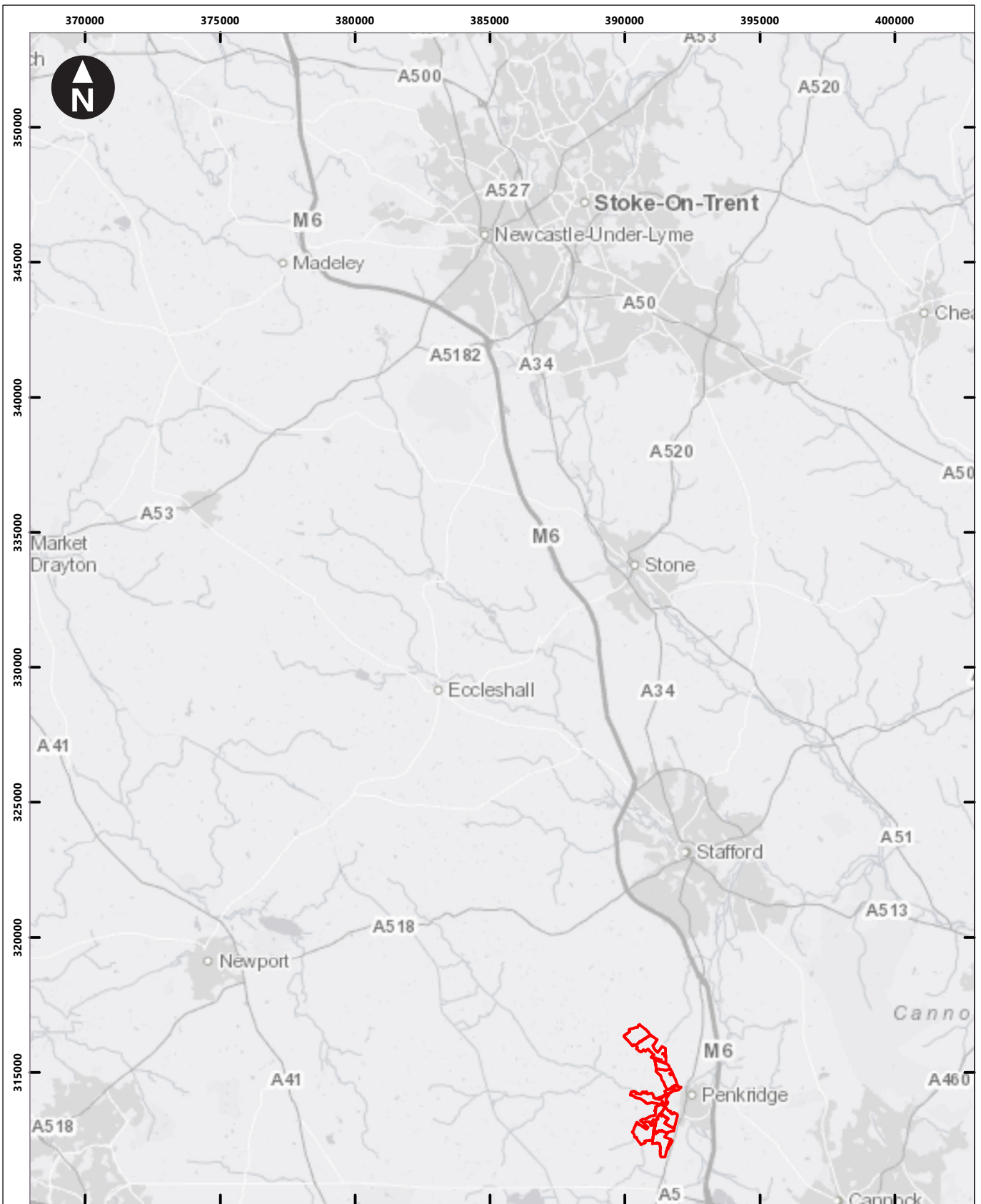
- The constraints and opportunities presented by each estate; and
- The potential form of development and potential design response.

1.2 The Estate

A site location plan is at **Figure 1.1**.

At 324 hectares (801 acres), the estate is large and, as such, development potential from place to place according to the physical and policy issues (in this case, mainly floodplain) that apply to specific areas within it.

This appraisal responds by undertaking individual assessments for distinct areas of the estate where differing appraisals and conclusions apply.



Key

 Estate boundary

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Figure 1.1
Penkrige Estate

0 2 4 6 8 10 12 km

Scale at A4: 1:200,000

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2. Methodology

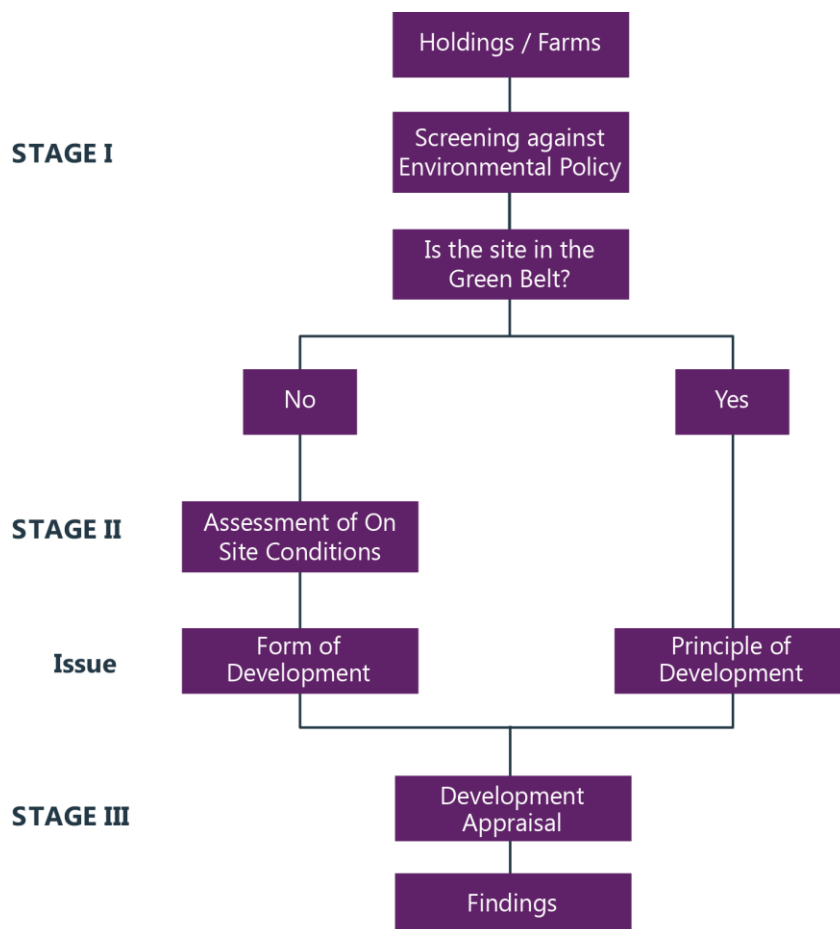
There is no established method to undertake appraisals. However, and as it will be important to present each site for development to the respective local planning authority (LPA) in the most helpful way, the methodology responds to the site information requested by South Staffordshire District Council through its periodic 'call for sites'.

The methodology is objective based. Each assessment criteria is expressed as a specific objective founded in 'best practice' that focuses upon the implementation of legislation and policy principles that facilitates a consistent approach.

A top down GIS approach based approach assesses sites through the application of defined constraints. As well as this, a bottom up approach based upon on site assessment also identifies site constraints and opportunities. The methodology is in three distinct parts as follows:

- **Stage 1** – The top down screening against environmental policies that rule out or may rule out development;
- **Stage 2** – The on-site assessment following the application of the above constraints and opportunities against site-specific criteria;
- **Stage 3** – The appraisal of the development potential of the site against local plan strategy and identified needs.

A flow chart of the approach is depicted below.



2.1 Stage 1 – Environmental Policy

Undertaken through desk study and GIS mapping, constraints that will, or may, rule out development due to being contrary to policy objectives are set out in Table 2.1. Where these constraints are of international or national importance and potential sensitivity to indirect constraints, these have been mapped within and around a 2km buffer to the site boundaries. Where these occur the need for an Appropriate Assessment under the Habitat Regulations is identified for future consideration.

Table 2.1 Environmental Policy Assessment Criteria

Assessment Objective	Aspect	Source of Data	Identified within 2km buffer
Desk Study The extent to which development of the site would directly or indirectly affect internationally and or nationally important cultural and natural heritage designations	Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs)	Historic England	Yes
	Registered Historic Parks and Gardens	Historic England	Yes
	European designations (RAMSAR/SSSI/SAC)	Natural England	Yes
	National Nature Reserves (NNRs)	Natural England	Yes
	Ancient Woodland	Natural England	Yes
	Registered Common Land	Environment Agency	
	Area of Flood Risk (Zone 3)	Environment Agency	
Desk Study The extent to which development of the site would directly or indirectly affect regionally and or locally important cultural and natural heritage designations	Registered Battlefield	Historic England	
	Listed Buildings	Historic England	
	Conservation Areas	Staffordshire CC	
	Area of archaeological interest	Staffordshire CC	
	Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)	Natural England	
	Sites of Biological Interest (SBIs)	Staffordshire CC	
	Natural England Priority Habitats	Natural England	
	Tree Preservation Orders*	Staffordshire CC	
	Area of Flood Risk (Zone 2)	Environment Agency	
	Green Belt / Strategic Green Gap	Staffordshire CC	
	Landscape Character Assessment	Staffordshire CC	
	Regionally Important Geological Sites	Staffordshire CC	
	Safeguarded Mineral Resource Areas	Staffordshire CC	
	Agricultural Land Grade	Natural England	
	Air Quality Management Zone	Defra	
	H&SE Major Hazard Consultation Zone	H&S Executive	
Contamination or Pollution Incidents	Environment Agency		

Once these constraints are mapped, a judgement is made on the parcels that are appropriate for assessment. This can be due to physical constraints e.g. floodplain that leads the methodology to focus upon the principle of, and need for, development rather than upon the site conditions and attributes.

2.2 Stage 2 – On Site Conditions

Where judged to be appropriate, this stage is undertaken through site work and considers a range of aspects that would constrain or influence the form of development and these objectives are set out in Table 2.2. In each case, the objective is assessed against a scale ('A' to 'E' where 'A' is the most favourable) based upon the extent to which the objective presents a constraint and the degree to which this could be mitigated.

Table 2.2 Site Specific Criteria

Subject Area	Objectives	Indicator	Threshold of Concern	Opportunities	Grading
Physical Size	1. To ensure site is physically large enough to accommodate development	Land available for development			A to E
	2. To ensure site is level enough to accommodate development	Presence of slopes	Slopes estimated to be > 20°		A to E
Traffic and Transport	1. To ensure site is physically accessible to a standard acceptable to the highway authority	Adequate unconstrained highway frontage	Any direct/ indirect impacts		A to E
		Adequate passing distance on highway network	Narrow roads and blind corners		A to E
	2. To promote sites in locations that avoid access through residential areas and sensitive land-uses	Residential areas and sensitive land-uses	Any direct/ indirect impacts		A to E
		3. To promote sustainable transportation linkages	Good pavement and PROW links	Any direct/ indirect impacts	Enhancement of linkages
		Good public transport links	Any direct/ indirect impacts	Enhancement of linkages	A to E
	Amenity	1. To minimise potential detrimental impacts of noise/vibration	Location of noisy land uses	Any direct/ indirect impacts	General amenity exclusion zone or mitigation
2. To minimise potential detrimental impacts of odour			Location of odorous land uses	Any direct/ indirect impacts	General amenity exclusion zone or mitigation
3. To minimise potential detrimental impacts of nuisance		Location of bad neighbour land uses or lighting	Any direct/ indirect impacts	General amenity exclusion zone	A to E
		4. To minimise any potential detrimental effects to air quality	Location of bad neighbour land uses or emissions	Any direct / indirect impacts	General amenity exclusion zone
Nature Conservation	1. To avoid the loss or damage to protected trees and groups of trees	Existence of TPO	Any loss or damage	Enhancement of habitat	A to E
		2. To minimise the impact on wildlife interests	Presence of protected species	Any direct / indirect impacts	Enhancement of habitat
		Location of wildlife corridor	Any direct / indirect impacts	Enhancement of corridor	A to E
Landscape and Visual	1. To prevent the creation of unacceptable visual impacts	Magnitude and sensitivity of potential receptors	Many viewers affected from residential / public		A to E

Subject Area	Objectives	Indicator	Threshold of Concern	Opportunities	Grading
			open space / right of way		
Infrastructure	1. To take advantage of existing infrastructure	Existence of Water (Supply / Sewerage), Power and Telecoms	Any direct / indirect impacts		A to E

A summary of each estate, or part thereof, according to its availability, suitability and likely viability is presented. This makes recommendations for promotion based upon its constraints, the extent to which these may be addressed through mitigation, the identification of likely significant costs and the available promotional route. Other factors are reported as these emerge.

3. Penkridge Estate

3.1 Application of Environmental Policies

A location plan for the estate is at **Figure 5.1** overlaid with environmental designations and policies within and around a 2km buffer. The only nationally important designations are the Belvide Reservoir SSSI located well outside the 2km buffer to the south west. It is not considered that the integrity of the SSSI would be threatened by development of the estate.

Figure 5.2 and **Figure 5.3** focus upon the estate itself which is crossed by the floodplain to the River Penk which effectively divides the site into two appraisal areas:

- a parcel to the north of the River Penk; and
- a parcel of Green Belt to the south of the River Penk.

3.2 General Conditions in Penkridge

Green Belt and Countryside Policies

The estate straddles the Green Belt boundary formed by the River Penk with the southern area lying within the Green Belt and the northern within the countryside. The current potential of all areas of the estate is limited to development for agricultural uses.

Services

Penkridge is a sustainable location for development being a Category 1 settlement in the development plan. As such it possesses diverse services with three supermarkets, a post office, medical and dental practices, library, two first schools, a middle school, Wolgarston High School, a community hall and a range of other commercial services, independent shops and food and drink outlets.

Accessibility

A dominant feature of Penkridge, and the estate itself, is the very significant physical barrier formed by the West Coast Mainline that has confined all development to the east. The only development to its west are health and leisure facilities and parking associated with Penkridge Station. All highway crossings to the railway are narrow, with poor visibility and with no pavements.

There are two main bus services (54/54A and 75/75A/75B) serving Penkridge. These provide half hourly links to Stafford and Cannock and hourly links to Wolverhampton via the employment locations of Pendeford and i54. Wolgarston High School is also served by school services from Stafford, Coven and Brewood. There are no Sunday bus services.

Bus stops are located along the A449 through the town. The A449 runs parallel to the southern area of the estate and services are available within easy reach via the highway crossings to the railway line and two further rights of way. The majority of these provide links within the 400m recommended walking distance specified in the 1999 Institution of Highways & Transportation (IHT) publication, Guidelines for Planning for Public Transport in Developments. However, the size of the estate means that areas are up to 3km distant from services.

The railway station is located close to the estate boundary although again, parts of the estate are distant.

The A449

The A449 runs parallel to the M6 between Wolverhampton and Stafford and was de-trunked in 2007. A 2013 traffic count revealed a daily flow of 18,653 motor vehicle movements through the town and it is estimated that this would equate to around 700 movements in each direction during peak periods¹. This is insufficient to justify highway works to divert traffic away from the town centre.

3.3 North of the River Penk

On Site Conditions

An area of 141 hectares comprising nearly half the estate extends from the hamlet of Levedale approximately 2km to the southwest the outskirts of Penkridge. Its eastern boundary extends to a point beneath the viaduct to the North West Main Line that defines the urban area of town. The site is not prominent and visibility would likely be limited to these properties and others across the wider sparsely populated area. The intervening railway line limits visibility from Penkridge.

Land Uses

The overall impression is of broadly level land characterised by small fields within hedgerows with some trees and contain a number of ponds. A gentle slope trends to Preston Vale Lane and the River Penk to the south. Around Longridge, sporadic farm buildings and housing to Levedale Road suggest previous subdivision into smallholdings.

Linkages

The railway viaduct forms a very significant physical barrier to the A449 and the town and lends an impression of remoteness to the estate. Highway linkage is restricted to Levedale Road.

Levedale Road serves the estate along its entire length. This is of a good standard up to the railway but then narrows at a blind bend under the viaduct. The pavement ends at this point and there is little potential for improvement under the viaduct without third party land and the co-operation of Network Rail. Further work will be required to evaluate whether a suitable access can be achieved although this is likely to include works to and beneath the railway viaduct that may be difficult to deliver.

Following a further blind bend at the junction with Preston Vale Lane, Levedale Road is narrow but straight with good visibility. There are no pavements within its adjacent hedgerows.

Aside from the Staffordshire Way that runs along the metalled Preston Vale Lane, there are no rights of way on the estate itself. A footpath from Grassmere Farm leads to a footbridge over the railway 1.5km to the northeast but to not link to any settlement.

The development potential of this northern area depends upon improved linkages to the town and would require third party land and the co-operation of Network Rail.

3.4 South of the River Penk

Comprising 154 hectares, this area of the estate is located entirely within the Green Belt and as such development depends upon the long term need for development overriding its contribution to the purpose and objectives of its inclusion within the Green Belt. These factors have not been considered in detail at this stage.

¹ Traffic Count No 7156, assuming 7.1% to 7.8% of total flow within peak periods.

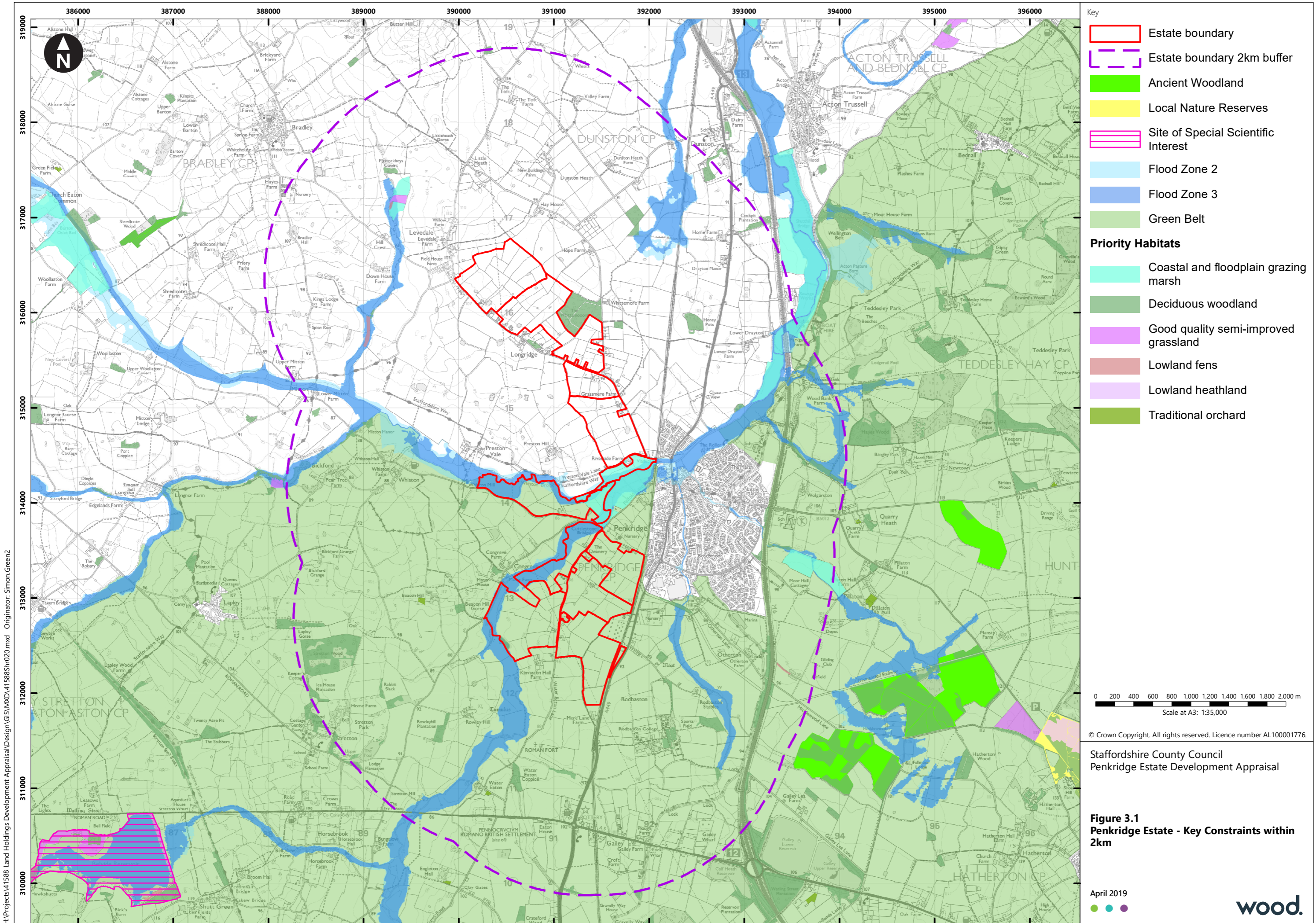
Presently under a range of agricultural uses, this area could be physically developed for a number of uses. At its closest, the range of services and public transport links in Penkridge are easily accessible within walking distance however, the railway viaduct forms a significant barrier that emphasises the sites relationship to the wider countryside.

The highway accesses from the A449 in Penkridge are via either Pinfold Lane or Bungham Lane onto Water Eaton Lane. These accesses are without pavements at constrained narrow crossings to the West Coast Mainline – a traffic controlled underpass and a single lane, hump backed bridge respectively. A bridleway connects to the A449 well to the south and a footpath to Penkridge station.

There is presently no justification to divert traffic away from Penkridge town centre although there is an opportunity to link the site to the A449 using a small, narrow and tapering parcel of the estate between the road and the railway to the west. This land is not wide enough to allow an access to be secured over the railway which is at grade at this point but with the inclusion of further third party land, an access could be secured from a realigned A449. If this could be achieved it would effectively 'unlock' the estate for development and could be the subject of a promotion that seeks to remove the site from the Green Belt. A key element of any promotion would likely focus on securing sustainable links to the town to soften the dominant barrier presented by the railway.

3.5 Availability and Ownership

The estate in totality has been stated by Staffordshire CC to be available but has not been promoted previously.



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- Key
- Assessment Area
 - Narrow Highway
 - West Coast Mainline
 - Viewpoint
 - Grade I Listed Building
 - Grade II* Listed Building
 - Grade II Listed Building
 - Flood Zone 2
 - Flood Zone 3
 - Green Belt

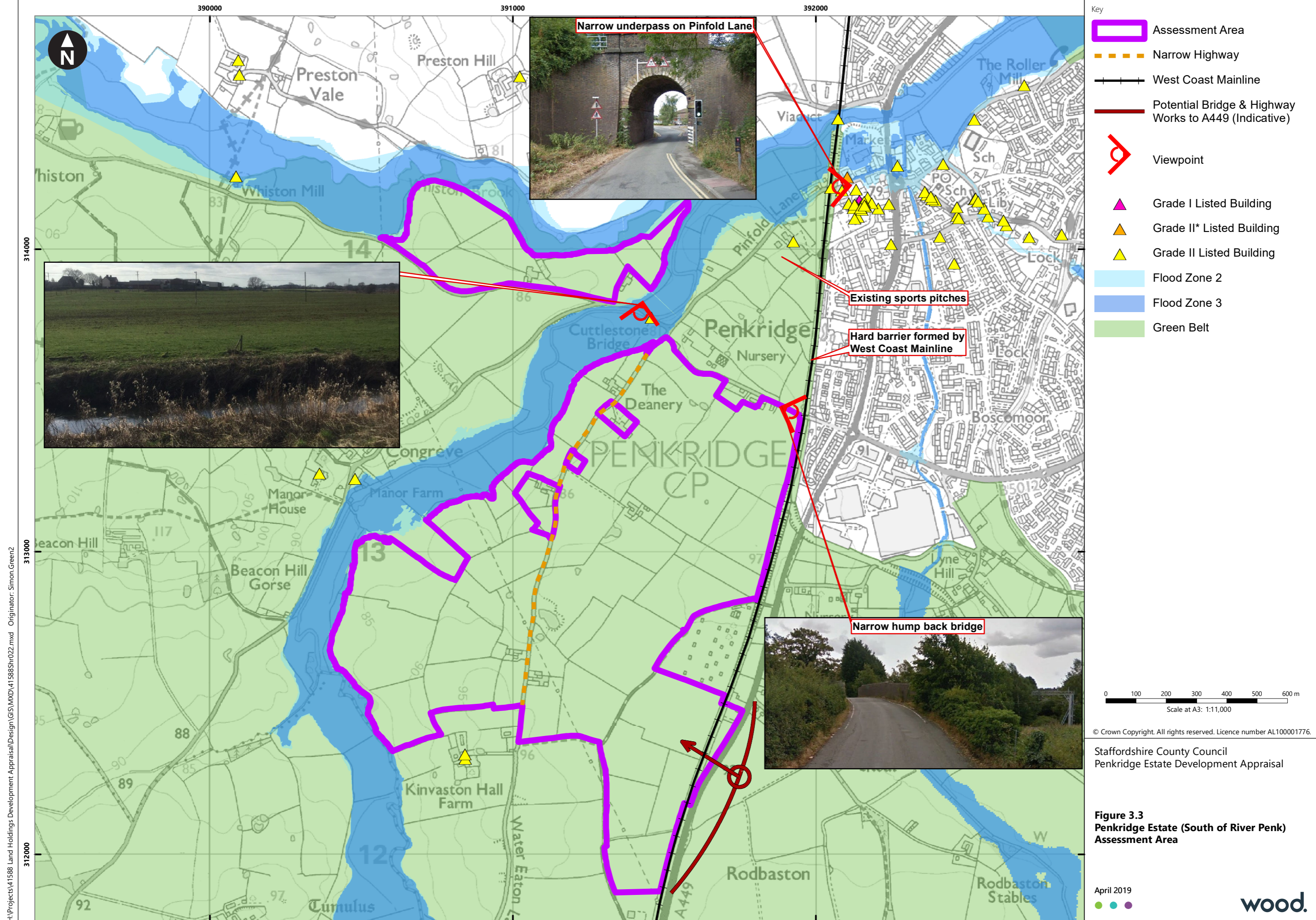
0 100 200 300 400 500 600 m
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Penkridge Estate Development Appraisal

Figure 3.2
Penkridge Estate (North of River Penk)
Assessment Area

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4. Findings

The Penkridge estate offers long term development potential.

In the short term, and as the estate is subject to restrictive Countryside and Green Belt policies, potential is restricted to agricultural uses, renewable energy.

In the longer term, potential will rely upon the review of settlement boundaries and the Green Belt through the preparation of a new Local Plan strategy where growth around existing settlements are considered in comparison with other options assessed through a comparative assessment of options such as sustainability assessment.

Proximity to the services and linkages provided in Penkridge is a key strength. However, the influence of the West Coast Mainline presents a major handicap that will require significant collaboration and investment to overcome.

The area North of the River Penk is subject to potentially less restrictive Countryside policies but is constrained by particularly difficult access conditions that will require third party land and as yet unspecified works to and beneath the railway viaduct that may be difficult to deliver.

The area South of the River Penk suffers from the potentially more serious Green Belt policies but does offer an opportunity to link the site to the A449 using a small, narrow and tapering parcel of the estate between the road and the railway to the west. This would also require third party land but access could be easier to deliver from a realigned A449. If achieved, this would effectively 'unlock' the estate for development and could be the subject of a promotion that seeks to remove the site from the Green Belt and provide much stronger sustainable links to the town.

Appendix A

Site Assessment Proforma

Penkridge			North of the River Penk			
Subject Area	Objectives	Indicator	Threshold of Concern	Opportunities	Grading	Rationale
Physical Size	1. To ensure site is physically large enough to accommodate development	Land available for development.			A	The site is large enough to accommodate a range of development proposals
	2. To ensure site is level enough to accommodate development	Presence of slopes	Slopes estimated to be > 20°		A	The site is predominantly level with gentle slope to the River Penk to the south. This presents no impediment to development
Traffic and Transport	1. To ensure site is physically accessible to a standard acceptable to the highway authority	Adequate unconstrained highway frontage	Any direct/ indirect impacts		A	Site is directly accessible from the adopted highway
		Adequate passing distance on highway network	Narrow roads and blind corners		D	Located outside the 30mph limit, with two blind bends on Levedale Road. Third party land is required to provide safe footpath under railway to Penkridge
	2. To promote sites in locations that avoid access through residential areas and sensitive land-uses	Residential areas and sensitive land-uses	Any direct/ indirect impacts		A	Some residences on Levedale Road from Penkridge
	3. To promote sustainable transportation linkages	Good pavement and PROW links	Any direct/ indirect impacts	Enhancement of linkages	D	Aside from Levedale Road the site is poorly linked to Penkridge primarily due to the barrier formed by the railway line
			Good public transport links	Any direct/ indirect impacts	Enhancement of linkages	B

Penkridge			North of the River Penk			
Subject Area	Objectives	Indicator	Threshold of Concern	Opportunities	Grading	Rationale
Amenity	1. To minimise potential detrimental impacts of noise/vibration	Location of noisy land uses	Any direct/ indirect impacts	General amenity exclusion zone or mitigation	B	Noise from the west coast mainline is evident although not particularly intrusive given the intervening distance
	2. To minimise potential detrimental impacts of odour	Location of odorous land uses	Any direct/ indirect impacts	General amenity exclusion zone or mitigation	A	An agricultural area. No odorous land uses identified otherwise
	3. To minimise potential detrimental impacts of nuisance	Location of bad neighbour land uses or lighting	Any direct/ indirect impacts	General amenity exclusion zone	A	No bad neighbour uses identified
	4. To minimise any potential detrimental effects to air quality	Location of bad neighbour land uses or emissions	Any direct / indirect impacts	General amenity exclusion zone	A	No bad neighbour uses identified
Nature Conserv.	1. To avoid the loss or damage to protected trees and groups of trees	Existence of TPO	Any loss or damage	Enhancement of habitat	A	Some trees associated with hedgerows and ponds but unlikely to be protected and easily accommodated within any development layout
	2. To minimise the impact on wildlife interests	Presence of protected species	Any direct / indirect impacts	Enhancement of habitat	C	Ponds, trees and an area of priority habitat associated with River Penk are likely to provide habitat for newts and bats. Surveys need to inform masterplan
		Location of wildlife corridor	Any direct / indirect impacts	Enhancement of corridor	A	Ponds and trees on the site are isolated and there is potential for linkage to be improved as part of the masterplan design
Landscape and Visual	1. To prevent the creation of unacceptable visual impacts	Magnitude and sensitivity of potential receptors	Many viewers affected from residential/public open space/right of way		C	Development of the southern area of this parcel would be visible from Penkridge although to an extent screened by the railway viaduct
Infrastructure	1. To take advantage of existing infrastructure	Existence of Water (Supply / Sewerage), Power and Telecoms	Any direct / indirect impacts		C	Site served by telecoms. Evidence of foul drainage on Preston Vale Road but this coverage is

Penkridge			North of the River Penk			
Subject Area	Objectives	Indicator	Threshold of Concern	Opportunities	Grading	Rationale
						unlikely to extend into other areas
Summary:	A very large predominantly remote and rural site that could be physically developed for a number of uses. At its closest to the services and public transport links in Penkridge, the railway viaduct forms a significant barrier that emphasises the sites relationship to the wider countryside. The viaduct also constitutes a pinch point and partnership with the owners of third party land and the co-operation of Network Rail will be required to strengthen links and provide safe pedestrian access to Penkridge.					

Penkridge			South of the River Penk			
Subject Area	Objectives	Indicator	Threshold of Concern	Opportunities	Grading	Rationale
Physical Size	1. To ensure site is physically large enough to accommodate development.	Land available for development.			A	The site is large enough to accommodate a range of development proposals
	2. To ensure site is level enough to accommodate development	Presence of slopes.	Slopes estimated to be > 20°		A	The site is predominantly level with gentle slope to the River Penk to the north and west. This presents no impediment to development
Traffic and Transport	1. To ensure site is physically accessible to a standard acceptable to the highway authority	Adequate unconstrained highway frontage	Any direct/ indirect impacts		A	Site is directly accessible from the adopted highway
		Adequate passing distance on highway network	Narrow roads and blind corners		D	Pinfold and Bungham Lanes are narrow and both are significantly constrained at their crossings to the railway
	2. To promote sites in locations that avoid access through residential areas and sensitive land-uses	Residential areas and sensitive land-uses	Any direct/ indirect impacts		A	There are few residential properties to Pinfold and Bungham Lanes. Those existing are between the railway line and the A449
	3. To promote sustainable transportation linkages	Good pavement and PROW links	Any direct/ indirect impacts	Enhancement of linkages	D	The railway is crossed by a bridleway close to Lyne Hill Lane by foot bridges at Penkridge station. Neither Pinfold or Bungham Lanes

Subject Area	Penkridge		South of the River Penk			
	Objectives	Indicator	Threshold of Concern	Opportunities	Grading	Rationale
						have footpaths at their railway crossings
		Good public transport links	Any direct/ indirect impacts	Enhancement of linkages	B	Frequent bus services on the A449 are located within 100m to 200m of site by bridleway and Pinfold Lane respectively. Penkridge station is 900m away. However, most of the site will be a considerable distance away
Amenity	1. To minimise potential detrimental impacts of noise/vibration	Location of noisy land uses	Any direct/ indirect impact	General amenity exclusion zone or mitigation	B	Noise from the west coast mainline is evident although not particularly intrusive given the intervening distance to much of the estate
	2. To minimise potential detrimental impacts of odour	Location of odorous land uses	Any direct/ indirect impacts	General amenity exclusion zone or mitigation	A	An agricultural area. No odorous land uses identified otherwise
	3. To minimise potential detrimental impacts of nuisance	Location of bad neighbour land uses or lighting	Any direct/ indirect impacts	General amenity exclusion zone	A	No bad neighbour uses identified
	4. To minimise any potential detrimental effects to air quality	Location of bad neighbour land uses or emissions	Any direct / indirect impacts	General amenity exclusion zone	A	No bad neighbour uses identified
Nature Conserv.	1. To avoid the loss or damage to protected trees and groups of trees	Existence of TPO	Any loss or damage	Enhancement of habitat	A	Estate is largely devoid of trees. Those that exist are associated with hedgerows and ponds, unlikely to be protected and easily accommodated within any development layout
	2. To minimise the impact on wildlife interests	Presence of protected species	Any direct / indirect impacts	Enhancement of habitat	C	Ponds, trees and an area of priority habitat associated with River Penk are likely to provide habitat for newts and bats. Surveys need to inform masterplan

Subject Area	Penkridge		South of the River Penk			
	Objectives	Indicator	Threshold of Concern	Opportunities	Grading	Rationale
		Location of wildlife corridor	Any direct / indirect impacts	Enhancement of corridor	A	Ponds and trees on the site are isolated and there is potential for linkage to be improved as part of the masterplan design
Landscape and Visual	1. To prevent the creation of unacceptable visual impacts	Magnitude and sensitivity of potential receptors	Many viewers affected from residential/ public open space/right of way		C	Development would largely be screened from Penkridge although to an extent screened by the railway and its associated vegetation
Infras.	1. To take advantage of existing infrastructure	Existence of Water (Supply / Sewerage), Power and Telecoms	Any direct / indirect impacts		C	Site served by telecoms. No evidence of significant services otherwise
Summary:	A very large predominantly remote and rural site that could be physically developed for a number of uses. At its closest to the services and public transport links in Penkridge, the railway viaduct forms a significant barrier that emphasises the sites relationship to the wider countryside. Development potential would need to be supported through revision to Green Belt boundaries.					

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