

Options for Future Urban Expansion in Warwick District Considerations for Sustainable Landscape Planning 2015/16

February 2016



landscape design • environmental planning



richardmorrishassociates

Options for Future Urban Expansion in Warwick District Considerations for Sustainable Landscape Planning 2015/16



Prepared for
**Warwick District Council
Riverside House
Milverton Hill
Leamington Spa
CV32 5HZ**

**Richard Morrish Associates Ltd
Landscape Design + Environmental Planning
56 Common Lane
North Runcton
King's Lynn
Norfolk, PE33 ORF
Tel. 01553 840284
Email: enquiries@rmassoc.co.uk
www.rmassoc.co.uk**

Contents:

- 1.0 Introduction/Background**
- 2.0 The Study Areas**
- 3.0 Method of Assessment**
- 4.0 Using this Report**
- 5.0 Ensuring successful implementation**

Bibliography

Figures

- Fig A Study Site Locations

Appendices

- Appendix A An Appraisal of Sixteen Study Areas in Warwick District

Figures:

- Fig 1.0 King's Hill
- Fig 1.1 King's Hill photographs
- Fig 1.2 King's Hill photographs
- Fig 2.0 Land east of Burton Green, south of Westwood Heath and west of Gibbet Hill
- Fig 2.1 Burton Green and Westwood Heath photographs
- Fig 3.0 Kenilworth sites
- Fig 3.1 Photographs – Kenilworth – sites to the north-east
- Fig 3.2 Photographs – Kenilworth, SHLAA K31
- Fig 3.3 Photographs – Kenilworth, SHLAA sites K13/K14
- Fig 4.0 Land east of Warwick Road, Kenilworth
- Fig 5.0 Land at Milverton and Blackdown, north of Leamington
- Fig 5.1 Photographs – Kingsley School playing fields – L49
- Fig 6.0 Southam Road, Radford Semele / Land south of Sydenham, east of Whitnash
- Fig 6.1 Photographs – Southam Road, Radford Semele
- Fig 7.0 Land south of Whitnash, SHLAA site L55 and L56
- Fig 7.1 Photographs – SHLAA sites L55/L56
- Fig 8.0 Sites at Longbridge / Warwick Racecourse
- Fig 8.1 Photographs – Longbridge
- Fig 8.2 Photographs – Racecourse
- Fig 9.0 Land south of Bishop's Tachbrook
- Fig 9.1 Photographs – south of Bishop's Tachbrook

Options for Future Urban Expansion in Warwick District Considerations for Sustainable Landscape Planning 2015/16

1.0 Introduction/Background.

- 1.1 Warwick District Council (WDC) is preparing a new Local Plan for Warwick district, which will guide the area's future development up to 2029. Further to concerns raised by the Inspector in the initial hearings in May 2015, the Local Plan examination process has been suspended until spring 2016. Particular concerns related to the land supply for housing in both Warwick district and neighbouring districts. Before the examination is re-adjudged WDC are therefore required to provide evidence that suitable land has been identified for the allocation of an additional 5000–6000 dwellings for the planning period.
- 1.2 WDC are reviewing land parcels south of Coventry, north of Kenilworth and on the fringes of the Warwick/ Leamington Spa settlement. Some of the sites lie within the West Midlands Green Belt. A range of evidence is being gathered to consider new sites including land availability, infrastructure needs and potential environmental impacts.
- 1.3 Richard Morrish Associates (RMA) were appointed in November 2015 to prepare landscape and landscape planning evidence to assist the land allocation process. This follows previous reports prepared or contributed to by RMA including the *Joint Green Belt Study* (JGBS-2008), the *Landscape Character Assessment for Land South of Warwick*, (LCASW-2009) and the *Options for Future Urban Expansion in Warwick District, Considerations for Sustainable Landscape Planning* (2012), as well as various other site and scheme specific landscape related reviews.
- 1.4 The format for this report broadly follows the approach used in 2012 and therefore shares the earlier report name. Particular matters considered include:
- Green Belt function (whether development will lead to settlement coalescence, unrestricted sprawl, encroachment into the countryside and adverse impacts to the historic setting and character of settlement);
 - Potential landscape and visual impacts – and the extent to which these might be notable in the local setting;
 - Sustainability – including the likelihood of development becoming an integrated part of existing settlement; the potential for access and movement links; opportunities for sustainable drainage and opportunities for other green infrastructure;
 - Other site specific design and planning matters. The potential for cumulative impacts from one of more developments in the same setting has also been considered.
- 1.5 An appraisal of each site is provided as ‘Appendix A’ and includes a summary of previous reports used in the WDC evidence base and recent planning history at the site or in the setting. The appraisals generally also include site photographs and indicative plans to illustrate broad ideas that are recommended for consideration in any subsequent development proposals.

2.0 The Study Areas.

- 2.1 The WDC brief has identified sixteen areas to be reviewed. These are as follow:
1. The King’s Hill area of Green Belt land south of Coventry. A large land parcel approximately 270 hectares in area.

2. Land east of Burton Green, south of Westwood Heath, west of Gibbet Hill. A large area of Green Belt land with a variety of different land parcels being promoted for development.
 3. Cryfield Grange (SHLAA sites C27/C28). Arable land west of Gibbet Hill and close to Warwick University.
 4. Land north-east of Kenilworth. An area of approximately 103 hectares within the Green Belt and including Kenilworth golf course.
 5. Land at Dalehouse Lane, Kenilworth (SHLAA site K31 – a 2.7-hectare paddock lying directly adjacent Kenilworth golf course).
 6. Land at Upper Ladyes Hills, Kenilworth (SHLAA sites K13/K14 – approximately 12 hectares comprising arable land and playing fields).
 7. Land east of Warwick Road, Kenilworth. A Green Belt site south of Kenilworth being promoted for housing and a new rugby club.
 8. Land at Milverton and Blackdown, north of Leamington. A large area of Green Belt land at the northern edge of Leamington.
 9. Kingsley School playing fields – a new allocation proposal: SHLAA site L49.
 10. Southam Road, Radford Semele. A 13-hectare site outside of the Green Belt.
 11. Land south of Sydenham, east of Whitnash. A review of existing allocated land.
 12. Land at Golf Lane, South of Whitnash – SHLAA sites L55 and L56.
 13. Land south of Gallows Hill. A review of land parcels south of Warwick and Leamington.
 14. Sites at Longbridge. A review of three sites south of Warwick.
 15. Land adjacent Warwick racecourse. A review of a promoted land parcel at the edge of Warwick Racecourse – last considered in 2014.
 16. Land south of Bishop’s Tachbrook. A review of a land parcel that has already been partially allocated and lies outside of the Green Belt.
- 2.4 The site appraisals consider previous data and current reports and representations for development proposals in the localities. If the site is considered to have some potential for development, the appraisal seeks to identify some landscape planning principles, access opportunities, planning goals and other criteria.

3.0 Method of Assessment.

- 3.1 The study has been undertaken using desk-top studies and field visits undertaken in November 2015 and January 2016 (although most sites have been reviewed previously). Where possible, background research has included a review of any previous planning representations, applications and studies.
- 3.2 Limitations / Disclaimers. The process of impact assessment for each of the study sites has required a provisional broad-brush approach with assumptions about the final form and density of development that might be proposed at each site. Little analysis has been possible regarding direct or indirect construction requirements – such as additional roads, drainage, energy services and the like. Such matters will influence a final evaluation of sustainability of development at each site. In relation to landscape and visual impacts, eventual requirements for secondary (off-site) infrastructure provision might greatly influence the final zone of influence for any development and this would have to be properly assessed as planning progresses.
- 3.3 There has been no detailed appraisal of ecological and heritage values at each site. Further evaluation of landscape and visual impacts will also be necessary as part of an iterative planning process for detailed development proposals. In addition, no detailed topographical survey data has been utilised at this stage, so that details regarding site conditions, site access, drainage, etc. will all require further analysis.

3.4 The study has not included any consultation with local residents who may have relevant local knowledge and opinion that could and should influence development outcomes.

4.0 Using this report.

4.1 General guidance provided on landscape appraisal and planning for sustainable development, as set in the 2012 report, should still be regarded as essential considerations for successful urban expansion. In that respect, it is recommended that this report is read as an addendum to the original *Options for Future Urban Expansion in Warwick District* text.

4.2 However, it is worth again repeating some of the principle goals for identifying sustainable development opportunities, as outlined in 2012. These include:

- creating high-quality residential and/or work environments (with attractive, distinctive settings, with good aspect and outlooks and, where possible, set-back from main roads, etc.)
- looking for opportunities for energy-efficient design, e.g. south-facing aspects for passive solar design, opportunities for sustainable drainage, etc.
- providing alternatives to car use (with opportunities for good non-vehicular access that can reduce car journeys and perhaps car ownership)
- promoting healthy lifestyles (including non-vehicular travel as above, access to natural environments, local round walks, communal social spaces, etc.)
- protecting and contributing to the natural and historic environment (respecting the existing landscape, using natural resources prudently, improving biodiversity and considering and planning for the possible impacts of future climate change).

4.3 It is also important to repeat that many landscape resources, regularly lost on development sites, are simply irreplaceable. This particularly relates to veteran trees, hedgerows and field boundaries, watercourses and soils. The following ‘rules of thumb’ must always be borne in mind when considering development plans:

- Site planning will ideally identify sufficient space to retain trees and hedges – including space for sustainable long-term management. (Refer to BS 5835:2012.)
- Trees/hedges must be recognised as dynamic living organisms that may grow, move and vary over time – and that they require space for such variation.
- Protection of landscape assets throughout development and in ongoing operational stages of development must be properly enforced and resourced.
- Where possible, important tree and hedge assets should be retained within one landholding to allow a coordinated approach to future management.
- Where necessary, legal documentation such as covenants might be attached to land registry deeds stipulating preservation and management clauses for important landscape assets in perpetuity.
- Recognition of wider landscape values and goals must be assimilated into planning and site management policy. Replacing oak and ash trees with Leyland cypress over time may replace a tree with a tree, but it will not sustain overall landscape character.

4.4 General considerations for biodiversity conservation and management are also essential and relate closely to landscape conservation.

- Soil management on construction sites should follow best practice standards – e.g. the Defra *Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites*.
- Recognising the likely long-term threats to existing biodiversity (including roads, disturbance and domestic pets) must be factored into masterplanning.
- Species-specific habitat management must be considered. If landscape is likely to become unsuitable for an existing resident species, perhaps offset with new habitat creation elsewhere.

- There must be sufficient scale and capacity in green infrastructure provision to ensure landscapes can be managed and sustained as a multifunctional asset – including sustainable nature reserves.
- Detailed design must consider creation of buffers and barriers that can benefit wildlife through creation of protected habitat zones.
- High activity landscapes and corridors will ideally be separated from ‘nature’ areas.

4.5 In evaluating an appropriate scale for ‘landscape buffers’ and ‘boundary planting’, it is worth considering that a typical mature rural hedge may be between 2 and 4 metres wide and that one mature native tree (e.g. oak, beech, ash) might have an overall spread of 15–20 metres. Therefore appropriate planning widths might be considered as follow:

- Hedge/screen – 3–5m wide. (Screening principally defined by height rather than width. Additional volume might be provided with ‘hedge trees’ where space permits.)
- Shelterbelt – 15–20m wide. With an appropriate mix of species, it can provide a level of screening through its width and it may have some value for productive timber management on a small scale.
- Woodland – 100m width. To create a woodland with sufficient volume to provide a range of woodland habitats and multifunctional use (with tracks, clearings, glades, etc.) a minimum width of 100m will generally be necessary depending on overall size and shape.

4.6 In planning green infrastructure, it is essential to consider the potential impacts of climate change and other changing environmental factors. In early 2012, few people had heard of *Chalara fraxinea* dieback in ash, but since that time it has rapidly spread across the country. Other pests and diseases have also established themselves. Robust green infrastructure design must consider such potential threats and allow for flexibility and adaptation.

5.0 Ensuring successful implementation.

5.1 In allocating new sites for urban expansion, especially when they are large greenfield sites, it is essential that a clear vision for the larger landscape setting¹ is agreed by primary stakeholders and held to over ensuing years. Piecemeal development and different approaches to design and management over time will undermine early goals.

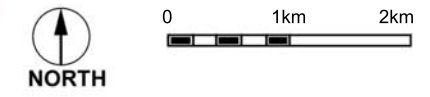
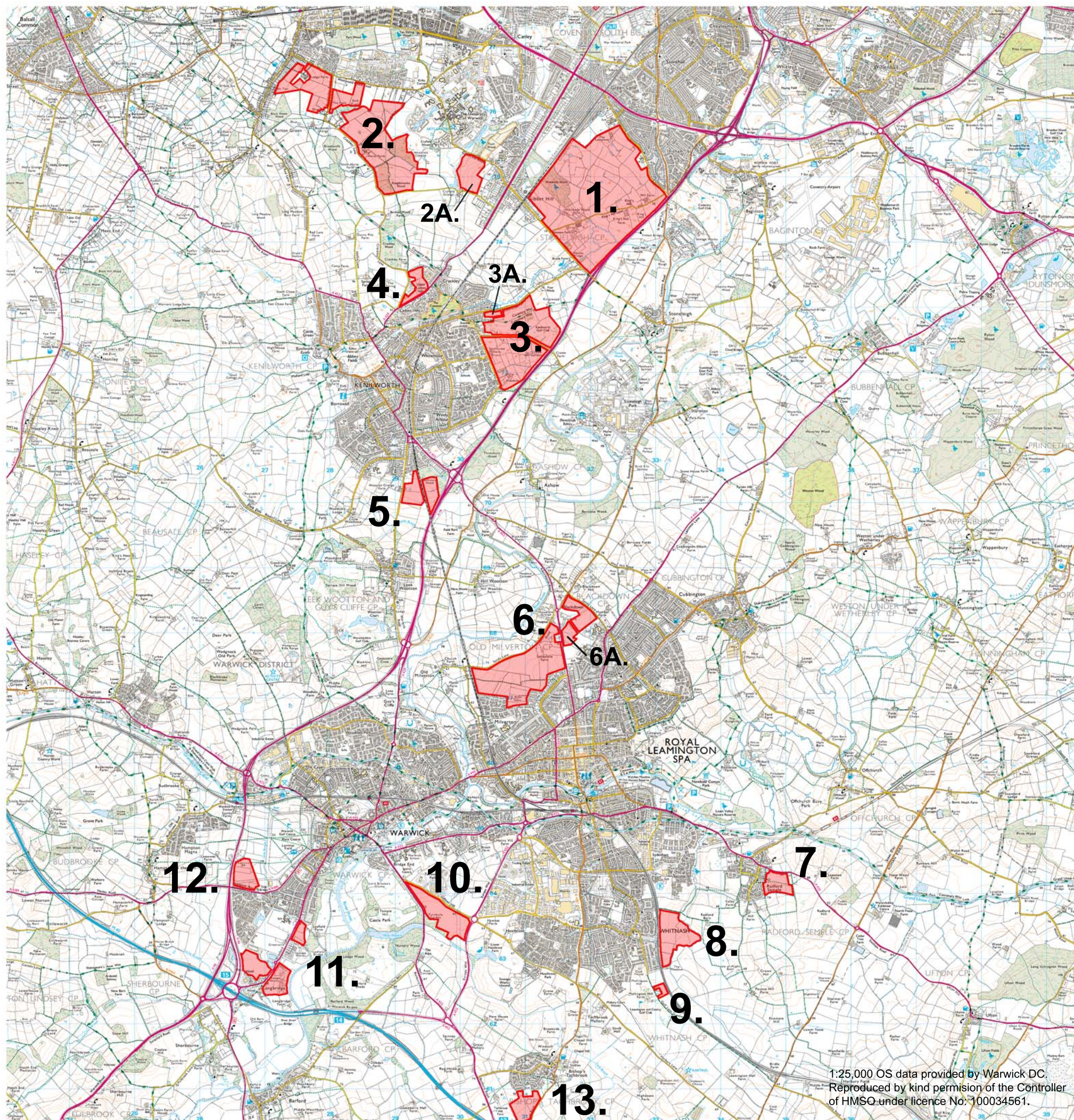
5.2 Landscape design must be carefully specified and conditioned through the development control system and then sufficient resources must be provided to monitor and enforce the implementation. Tree protection and management must be monitored throughout the development process. Ongoing landscape management must be adequately funded and monitored.

5.3 The Planning Authority must ensure that sufficient resources are made available at the time of construction to fulfil design promise and to eliminate poor practice. If ‘in-house’ resources are not available for monitoring and enforcement, then a scheme of monitoring and reporting by the developer and consultant team, perhaps set through planning conditions, may be a viable alternative.

¹ Ideally ‘larger settings’ will be defined by landscape types or character areas – and they may cross administrative as well as ownership boundaries, requiring the LPA(s) to ensure a coordinated approach.

Bibliography

- SSR Planning and Associates, JGBS (2008)
 Richard Morrish and Associates, LCASW (2009)
 Richard Morrish Associates *Options for Future Urban Expansion in Warwick District Considerations for Sustainable Landscape Planning* (2012)
 Richard Morrish Associates *Options for Future Urban Expansion in Warwick District (Addendum 2014)*
- WDC, Strategic Housing Land Availability Study (2009–2015)
 WDC Local Plan (1996-2011).
 WDC Local Plan Publication Draft (April 2014)
 WDC planning portal LDF evidence section in general.
- WDC, Green Infrastructure Study (2010)
 LUC, Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull sub-regional GI study (2011)
 LUC, Warwick District Green Infrastructure Delivery Assessment (Feb 2012)
 WDC, Green Space Strategy (2012).
The Countryside Agency Landscape Character Map of Britain (1999)
The Warwickshire Landscapes Guidelines (1993)
- WMFS, Warwick District Habitat Assessment (2008)
 WCC, data from the Warwickshire Historic Land Characterisation Project (2007–)
 WCC, Warwickshire Historic Farmsteads Characterisation Report (2011)
- CEG *Westwood Heath Garden Suburb* Prospectus 2015
 JJ Gallagher *Lower Heathcote Farm: A model of sustainable development* – March 1999
 Barton Willmore *Land at Radford Semele, Landscape and Visual Appraisal Statement* – Jan 2009
 Gallagher Estates, AC Lloyd, Terence O’Rourke *Lower Heathcote Concept Masterplan* – 2011
 Gallagher Estates, Pegasus Planning Group *Lower Heathcote Farm, Warwick, Background Document*. (July 2012).
 Taylor Wimpey/Barton Willmore *North Milverton – a new garden neighbourhood* (2012)
 Taylor Wimpey/Barton Willmore *Land at Milverton Road* leaflet (October 2015)
 Documents relating to the Barwood Development Asps appeal case
 Documents relating to the Gallagher land south of Gallows Hill appeal case
 Bloor Homes application and planning history (W/15/1078), Bishop’s Tachbrook
 HS2 Government website
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), DCLG, 2011
 The Plain English Guide to Localism, DCLG, 2011
 Guide to Neighbourhood Planning – CPRE, 2011
 DCLG website – Housing statistics – published Feb 2011
Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards, Natural England, 2010
Trees in Towns II (Myerscough/ADAS) 2008
Green Infrastructure Guidance, Natural England, 2009
Local Green Infrastructure, Landscape Institute, 2009
Trees in the Townscape – A guide for decision makers – TDAG (2012)
 BS 5837 (2012) – Trees in relation to construction



Sixteen study areas:

1. The King's Hill area.
2. Land east of Burton Green, south of Westwood Heath.
- 2a. Cryfield Grange.
3. Land north-east of Kenilworth.
- 3a. Dalehouse Lane - SHLAA K31.
4. Upper Ladies Hills, Kenilworth.
5. Land east of Warwick Road, Kenilworth.
6. Land at Milverton and Blackdown.
- 6a. Kingsley School playing fields - SHLAA L49.
7. Southam Road, Radford Semele.
8. Land south of Sydenham, east of Whitnash.
9. Golf Lane, south of Whitnash - SHLAA site L55/L56.
10. Land south of Gallows Hill.
11. Sites at Longbridge.
12. Land adjacent Warwick racecourse.
13. Land south of Bishop's Tachbrook.

1:25,000 OS data provided by Warwick DC.
 Reproduced by kind permission of the Controller
 of HMSO under licence No: 100034561.

Warwick District Urban Expansion Options
 Sustainable Landscape Considerations.
 Landscape Review - 2016
 Figure A - Study site locations.