

6. Land at Milverton and Blackdown, North of Leamington Spa

6.1.1 This area lies within the West Midlands Green Belt and was therefore considered in the 2008 Joint Green Belt Study and again recently in the 2015 JGBS.

6.1.2 In the 2008 JGBS, the Milverton/Blackdown area was subdivided into several land parcels which covered a wider area than presently under review. Parcels WL6a and 6b were defined by the rail line to Kenilworth to the west, and Sandy Lane to the east, the urban edge to the south and the river Avon to the north. 6a and 6b are split by Kenilworth Road (A452). WL7 covered Blackdown Hill and West Hill to the north of Leamington, bounded by Sandy Lane to the west, the A4113, Stoneleigh Road to the northwest, West Hill road to the north-east and the A445 Leicester Lane (the urban edge) to the south.

6.1.3 The 2008 JGBS landscape review concluded that WL7 should be retained within the Green Belt but that 6a and 6b had opportunities for additional development and that further detailed study would be appropriate. The latter areas were defined as ‘least constrained’ in the final assessment. The recent 2015 JGBS considered that the area north of Milverton (defined as RL1) and Blackdown Hill (RL2) had benefits for the Green Belt including contributing to the setting of the Leamington Conservation Area.

6.1.4 The entire area was the subject of analysis in the RMA report *Considerations for Sustainable Landscape Planning* report (2012). In that document, an indicative masterplan was developed which considered the land that had been promoted for development north of both Milverton and Blackdown. This included SHLAA site L07 – around 80 hectares of green field land lying north of Milverton and largely made up of arable land and allotment gardens. Taylor Wimpey had been promoting development on a large portion of this land. The RMA masterplan also included SHLAA site L03 (at the end of Bamburgh Grove, which is a 1.8Ha area of former farmland presently managed as meadow and scrub), SHLAA sites L41 and L42 (parts of the former North Leamington school site) and SHLAA site L48 (an area of Blackdown Hill and West Hill).

6.1.5 For the areas north of Milverton, the 2012 conclusions were as follow:

The areas north of Leamington are within the West Midland Green Belt and generally fulfil the required functions of Green Belt. However, if parts of this landscape were brought forward for urban expansion, well-considered development might be largely contained by local topography and existing vegetation, whilst viable buffers of working agricultural land could be retained between Leamington and the outlying settlements of Old Milverton and the Woottons. Good design might minimise adverse impacts to the gateways to Leamington and to existing residential areas. Considered design, careful construction and long-term landscape management initiatives could provide excellent opportunities for new green infrastructure, with opportunities to reverse some areas of landscape decline and provide for local biodiversity and an improved recreational network. The prominent and distinctive landscape around Old Milverton should be protected and enhanced as a multifunctional ‘green wedge’ featuring the Avon Valley. This would also maintain a landscape buffer between the northern neighbourhoods of Warwick and Leamington.

Recommendations:

- Detailed assessment of cumulative infrastructure impacts will be required if all the SHLAA sites north of Leamington come forward – including consideration of secondary impacts (e.g. off-site road building). Avoiding adverse environmental impacts from major infrastructure might define the extent of new development in this area.

- The masterplan for the L07 site needs to consider potential wider landscape impacts. Prominent new residential development on higher ground will ideally be avoided. The most recent Taylor Wimpey report² would appear to acknowledge this.
- Where possible, design and implementation of green infrastructure needs to consider and complement the wider landscape pattern.
- All opportunities for local (and sub-regional) non-vehicular paths and networks need to be developed to ensure the best opportunities for a multifunctional landscape infrastructure. This will especially include east–west links around north Leamington.
- Seek to capitalise on existing topographic variety – especially by considering views and focal points.
- Explore opportunities for development to provide resources for new countryside links and landscape enhancement in surrounding Green Belt areas – notably north into the Avon valley.

6.1.6 For the areas around Blackdown, the landscape issues were considered more complex due to topography, drainage and the existing settlement pattern, and substantial changes to the character of key routes (e.g. Sandy Lane and the A445 Leicester Lane) seem likely.

6.1.7 Conclusions on the Blackdown area in 2012 were as follow:

Pending more detailed review of possible site constraints and infrastructural requirements, it is possible that appropriately designed mixed use development at Blackdown could be largely visually contained within the land parcel boundaries. There is great scope to create a distinctive development and to include assets that could benefit the existing community.

Opportunities and Assets:

- Some excellent landscape assets including a stream course, mature trees, hedges, and topographical variety.
- Existing spatial definition that could be protected and enhanced to define development.
- Existing footpath(s).
- Mature boundaries enclosing many neighbouring properties.

Constraints and Challenges:

- Minimising visual impacts and achieving an acceptable outlook for neighbouring dwellings to the south-east.
- Containing development and creating an acceptable transition to open countryside on the north-east.
- Protecting the rural character of Sandy Lane for the long term.
- Retaining or enhancing the character of the other road gateways to Leamington.
- Creating a successful stream corridor across the site – managing flood risk, ecological values, landscape and amenity.
- Protecting the other landscape assets in perpetuity – especially large trees and old hedges.
- Sustaining and enhancing the footpath network.

6.2.0 – 2015 Review. (Refer also to Figures 5.0, 5.1).

6.2.1 Taylor Wimpey continue to promote their land option north of Milverton – which they claim is an area of 73 hectares capable of delivering 1,500 homes and a new local centre with a primary school. They have published a new masterplan (dated October 2015) which is broadly similar to the indicative plan produced in the RMA *Considerations for Sustainable Landscape Planning* report (2012). The only area of notable divergence in the two schemes appears to be at the west end – where the RMA approach suggested avoiding development on the higher ground (65–70m AOD) so as to limit the potential for visual intrusion on the wider Green Belt to the north and north-west – including

² Taylor Wimpey/Barton Willmore *North Milverton – a new garden neighbourhood* (August 2012)

the settings of Old Milverton and Hill Wootton. This approach would still be recommended. It is considered that the area of safeguarded land would be large enough to remain viable for agriculture.

6.2.2 In the Blackdown area, the former North Leamington school site has still not been fully redeveloped although there is an extant planning consent for a care home. Significant additional residential development north of this (to the west or east of Sandy Lane) would still have to be considered in the context of the associated infrastructure (particularly road infrastructure) that might be required. Playing fields owned by the Kingsley School have now been promoted for development allocation.

6.2.3 **SHLAA site L49 – Kingsley School Playing Fields.** This site of approximately 7 hectares was not originally promoted for development – but has now been assessed by RMA in January 2016. The site is essentially flat, lying at around 60m AOD and provides space for a number of pitches. There is a brick-built pavilion in the south-east corner of the site and all-weather sports courts in the north-east corner. The playing fields and a number of mature trees along the western boundary are notable from the A452 Kenilworth Road and contribute to an attractive approach to North Leamington. To the north, the site is adjoined by other playing fields (assumed to be part of the new North Leamington School grounds). The site is presently accessed by a road across arable land from an entrance on Sandy Lane to the east. To the north, the site boundary is defined by a rough hedge and scrub, including dead trees, adjacent to a stream course. Beyond this is *Cranford House* (offices) and a large dwelling, *Lakeside Lawns*. Vegetation restricts intervisibility between these properties and the playing fields.

6.2.4 Development at this site would be notable from the A425 and a number of large detached dwellings along that road; housing to the south (at Cloister Way, Park Road, and the new dwellings at Canberra Mews – although a 150m-wide ‘buffer’ of playing fields would presently separate this housing from L49); and, in longer views from the east, to West Hill.

6.2.5 It is considered that if L49 was allocated for development, it would need to be considered in an integrated approach with other land parcels to the east and west. Therefore the wider cumulative impacts of development around the northern edge of Leamington would need to be fully considered as the allocation of land parcels was confirmed. Previously it was assumed that retention of playing fields here would sustain a significant area of open space in the local setting and enable the separation of new ‘neighbourhoods’. If L49 is now integrated into a wider development plan, it would be important that new public open space was adequately provided for – and there might be benefits and advantages for replacing private playing fields with public open space. An integrated green infrastructure approach could ensure a network of non-vehicular routes, ecological, drainage and landscape benefits – hopefully including enhancement of the Blackdown streamcourse to create a multifunctional landscape corridor.

6.2.6 The mature trees along the A425 road corridor and a few smaller trees and sections of hedge along the other site boundaries are the principal landscape assets of this site and the best should be retained. Trees and development along the A452 substantially enclose the site from further west. The A452 is considered an important gateway to Leamington and would benefit from considered design to sustain and enhance the ‘avenue’ approach to the town. Access arrangements or road alterations should not be allowed to compromise the mature trees.

6.2.7 Development of this site in isolation to other sites (i.e. if land to the east and west were not allocated) would be likely to result in an ‘island’ of housing that would seem unlikely to result in sustainable development.

6.2.8 The following conclusions are made in relation to SHLAA site L49.

Opportunities, assets, benefits:

- Should sites to the west and east also be allocated for development, there are likely to be advantages from developing an integrated plan for the whole area. Such advantages would include access, road and other service provision; green infrastructure planning; new community facilities and local centre provision.
- Some mature trees and the stream along the northern boundary are landscape assets worth retaining and integrating into a wider network of green infrastructure which could have very positive outcomes for existing and future residents.

Constraints and Challenges:

- Integrating a masterplan for the area and ensuring different stakeholders will work to common goals.
- Managing potential cumulative impacts of development – including impacts to existing road system and/or other community infrastructure.
- Development must not degrade the existing pleasant approach to Leamington.
- Development should respect the setting and outlook of neighbouring properties.
- Ensure appropriate provision of green infrastructure to offset loss of playing fields and enhance public access recreational provision.

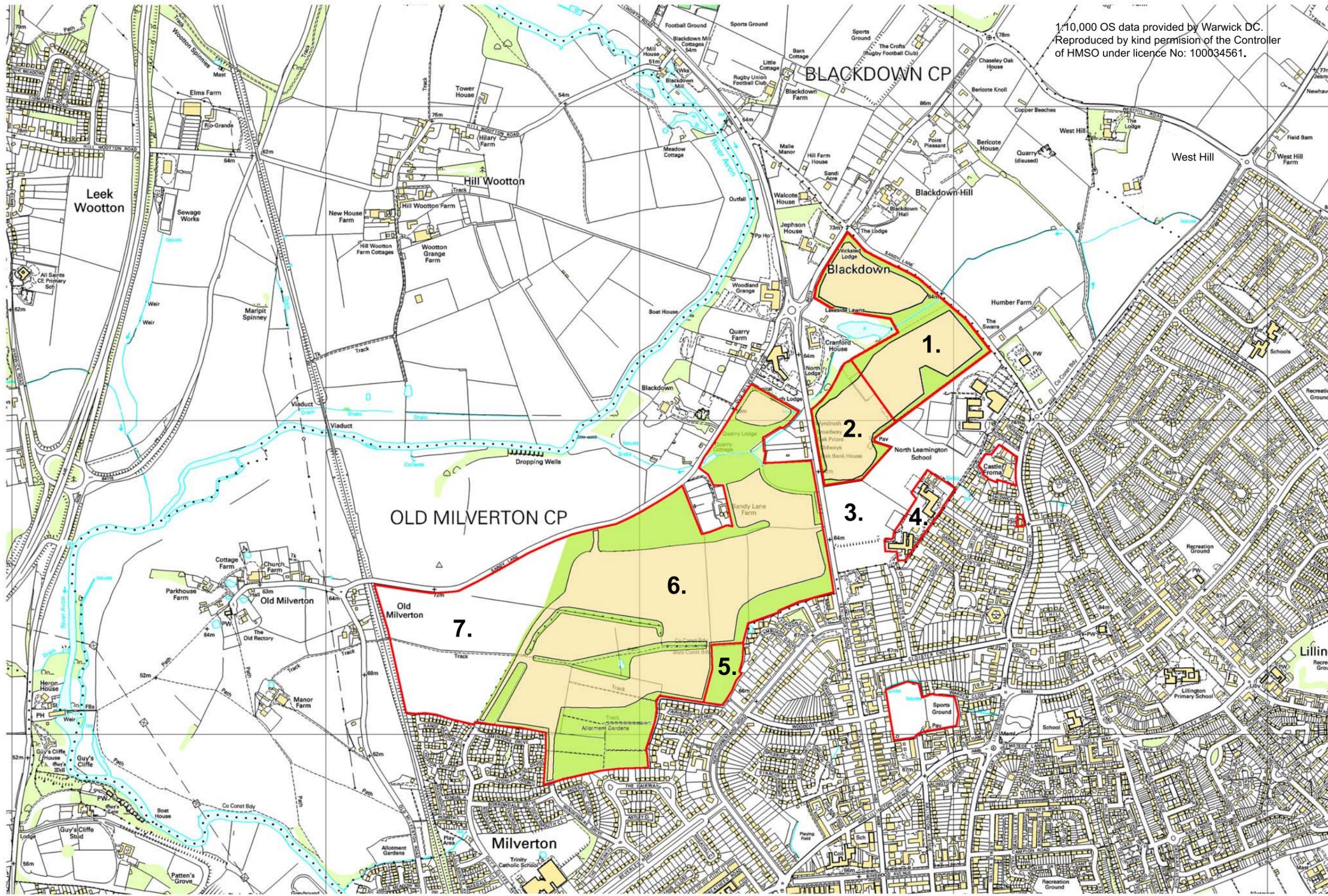
6.3.0 Overall Conclusions for the Milverton and Blackdown area:

6.3.1 An area of Green Belt land north of Milverton could be released for development without substantial harm to the wider landscape towards Hill Wootton, Old Milverton and the River Avon valley. Settlement expansion here could fit with the existing settlement footprint and be undertaken within well-defined landscape boundaries. However, it is recommended that higher land at the north-west of SHLAA site L07 land parcel is safeguarded from urban expansion, as development here is likely to be intrusive in the wider setting. It is anticipated that the safeguarded area indicated on Figure 5.0 would still be large enough to retain viable agricultural use. There will be good opportunities for new green infrastructure that could enhance recreational provision around northern Leamington. It will be important to confirm that existing infrastructure is capable of supporting this scale of new development (especially roads). This may define the sustainable limit of urban expansion in this area.

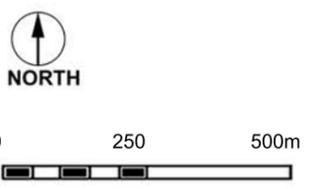
6.3.2 Opportunities for sustainable urban expansion at and around Blackdown would appear to be more constrained. Development to the north of the new North Leamington School site and east of Sandy Lane (approximately 10 hectares), in conjunction with the newly promoted Kingsley School playing fields (7 hectares) might have relatively limited landscape impacts. The land is predominantly flat and open in character, with a limited number of landscape assets and a relatively small zone of visual influence. Assuming a sensitive approach to site design and especially the retention of boundary trees and an enhanced setting for the Blackdown streamcourse, this site might well be able to deliver sustainable development with green infrastructure benefits that could link to the L07 development to the west.

6.3.3 However, cumulative impacts associated with other sites, but particularly the Taylor Wimpey land to the west, would certainly need to be fully considered. Of particular landscape significance are the existing roads including the A452 Kenilworth Road, Sandy Lane, Westhill Road and Stoneleigh Lane, which all presently have a pleasant tree-lined character in part, providing attractive approaches to Leamington and contributing greatly to a pleasing ‘peri-urban’ environment at this edge of the urban area. Significant road widening and junction improvements that might arise from cumulative traffic impacts could very well jeopardise this character. This is particularly the case on Sandy Lane.

6.3.4 Land to the east of Sandy Land, including Westhill, is presently recommended for retention within the Green Belt. This landscape is more elevated and has more landscape complexity in terms of topography, field pattern, mature landscape elements and drainage. Substantial adverse landscape impacts are likely, and it is less clear that a development approach could balance these impacts.



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1. Development west of Sandy Lane may have a limited impact in the wider landscape setting - if the character of the lane and other site boundaries can be protected.
2. The Kingsley School playing fields could unify/link adjacent sites and provide opportunities for an integrated approach to green infrastructure.
3. It is assumed that other playing fields would be retained - maintaining an 'open' setting for the important approaches to Leamington.
4. Former school site - now partly redeveloped.
5. SHLAA site L03 - could be retained as green infrastructure.
6. Development north of Milverton (SHLAA site L07) could make a sustainable urban extension with limited impacts on the wider landscape setting. A generous approach to green infrastructure provision could enhance public open space provision for North Leamington. Infrastructure constraints are likely to define the upper limit of development.
7. Higher ground might be retained as agricultural land to minimise the impact of new development.

- SHLAA sites.
- Indicative development.

Warwick District Urban Expansion Options
 Sustainable Landscape Considerations.
 Figure 5.0: Milverton and Blackdown (2016)



Panoramic view north across Kingsley School playing fields. Note mature trees along A452 to left.



Existing pavilion.



Trees along south boundary.



Panoramic view north over existing playing fields including SHLAA site L49 from *Canberra Mews* (recent housing development). Note North Leamington School in mid-distance to right.



View south-west towards North Leamington School and potential allocation sites from Sandy Lane.



Sandy Lane looking south.



Sandy Lane looking north.



Existing view south on A452 opposite SHLAA site L49.



View east from Old Milverton Road adjacent SHLAA site L07. L49 is unlikely to be intervisible from here.

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Figure 5.1: Around Blackdown + Milverton.

7. Land off Southam Road, Radford Semele

7.1.1 This land parcel of approximately 13 hectares (SHLAA site R129) is located at the eastern edge of Radford Semele. It is defined by the A425 Southam Road to the north, the existing settlement of Radford to the west, a large detached dwelling and a public right-of-way, W122c, to the east and a field boundary with small stream course and hedge to the south. The site lies outside of the West Midlands Green Belt and has therefore not been considered in previous Green Belt studies, nor was it considered in previous RMA reviews of land parcels south of Warwick and Leamington.

7.1.2 The site did fall within a large land parcel reviewed by Warwick District Council in 2013 as part of their ‘Green Belt Review’, which assessed the site against criteria based on the purposes of Green Belt. This assessment concluded that the large area reviewed was important to the setting of Radford and had a ‘medium–high’ value relative to the criteria defined.

7.1.3 For continuity within this present study, it is useful to quickly summarise the general landscape context at this site.

Study Area Reference	Land off Southam Road, Radford Semele.
Study Area Description	The site is essentially one large arable field with a gently south-facing aspect – the northern edge defined by the A425 (which runs along a ridge at around 85m AOD), falling to a shallow valley at the southern edge at around 70m AOD. This valley ultimately drains to the Whitnash Brook at Sydenham. The western edge of the site is adjoined by around 20 dwellings that are accessed along Lewis Road and cul-de-sacs off that road (Overtons Close, Lythall Close, Thornalley Close, St Nicholas Rd).
Landscape Character	The area falls within the <i>Dunsmore and Feldon</i> character area and the <i>Plateau Fringe</i> landscape character type. A variable, undulating topography generally supporting large-scale agriculture. Pasture on steeper slopes and poorly drained valleys. Nucleated settlements. Isolated farmsteads.
Visual Issues	From the site there are long views south and south-east over a very rural landscape towards the Fosse Way. However, the site is enclosed along the western boundary by the existing settlement of Radford and in the north-east corner by a group of three dwellings with large gardens and mature tree cover. There is a thin hedge and scattered trees along the A425 boundary. A footpath (W123) crosses the land parcel, another passes along the village boundary (W123a), and another along the eastern site boundary (W122c). There are more footpaths in the landscape to the south.
Historic and Cultural Issues	The site is not intervisible with the church of St Nicholas, Radford Hall or the older parts of Radford, which lie to the north-west edge of the village. The origins of a large pit (pond) in the south-west corner of the site have not been established. There also appears to be a former field pond (now dry) near the eastern site boundary.
Ecological Features	Thin, gappy field hedges with some hedge trees (including veteran oaks on A425 boundary). Ditch and pit/pond on southern boundary and hollows with small copse of trees at north-west site corner and near south-east corner.
Landscape Condition	Large modern arable setting. Previous field agglomeration and hedge loss appears likely. Slightly scruffy urban edge with Radford along western boundary. Ash dieback disease could remove a significant proportion of local hedge trees in future.
Other issues	It is understood that there is a gas pipeline corridor across the site. There is a pole mounted overhead service line across the western end of the site.

7.2.0 **2015 Review:** (Refer also to Figures 6.0 and 6.1).

7.2.1 **General.** Allocation of development at this site would constitute a very substantial growth for Radford Semele – which is presently a village of around 2,000 residents. The area of the site would constitute a proportional expansion of the settlement of 25–30%. The village is already growing. Consent has recently been granted for around 65 new dwellings off Spring Lane at the western edge of the village. Significantly for this site, land to the immediate north, on the opposite side of the A425, has also been allocated for development (presently paddock/small holding). This site now has planning consent for 60 new dwellings (ref W/15/1293).

7.2.2 In the wider landscape context, development at this site would not present any issues with settlement merger – the countryside to the east of the village being extensively open in character, with the only settlement being scattered farmsteads and cottages.

7.2.3 However, 400m east of the village on the A425 is a group of three large detached dwellings with large gardens and mature non-native vegetation (located at the north-east corner of the study site). Travelling west towards Leamington from the Fosse Way, the dwellings are not rural in character and signify the proximity of settlement before the settlement actually comes into view. It might therefore be argued that these existing dwellings already represent the edge of settlement influence – whilst the consented scheme to the north will strengthen this perception. With the existing settlement of Radford to the west, the A425 to the north, the three dwellings and track to the east and the drainage corridor to the south, the site therefore has reasonably well-defined boundaries in all directions – and development here is unlikely to lead to urban sprawl.

7.2.4 The potential to integrate development here with the existing village is less clear. The footpath across the site which begins at Lewis Road (W123) appears not to have a wide enough corridor between existing dwellings to provide for vehicular access unless at least one dwelling was demolished. It would therefore appear that integration with the main village may be limited to pedestrian access and that the main vehicular access to the site would be from the A425. This may require a significant new junction – possibly a roundabout.

7.2.5 **What if?** The site might be appropriate for a medium-density development of one- or two-storey dwellings. Combined with the other permitted development in Radford, it is unclear whether this would trigger a need for a new primary school or other community facilities in the village. If it did, this would obviously have implications for the site masterplan. Landscape planning issues would also include:

- Achieving acceptable integration with the existing settlement boundary. There would be some adverse visual impacts for residents at around 20 dwellings.
- Achieving an acceptable frontage with the A425. The development (and the site to the north) would constitute the new ‘gateway’ to Radford Semele – and in effect the settlement of Leamington. Issues would include establishing whether existing roadside trees could be retained and creating a safe pedestrian or dual use corridor (either beside the road or within the site) that could link to the existing village.
- Achieving an acceptable boundary / transition with the dwellings to the north-east of the site and the open countryside to the south-east and south. Sustainable urban drainage would need to be addressed along the southern boundary and it would seem that there might be good opportunities for a significant wedge of green infrastructure and new public open space. However, creation of formal facilities such as playing fields are likely to require significant cut and fill operations unless a portion of the flatter land could be made available.

7.3.0 **Other Landscape and Planning Issues:**

7.3.1 **Infrastructure requirements:** Further work will be required to ascertain infrastructure requirements for this site – including road access, community infrastructure, and service capacity. The existing gas pipeline may constitute a significant constraint depending on its exact location. There is a reasonably good network of public footpaths around Radford, but a growing population would put more pressure on them. It would be ideal if funds could be provided by new development to ensure an integrated new network of paths in the locality – including new sections of path if required.

7.3.2 **Cumulative impacts:** Development at this site would clearly be intervisible with the permitted 3Ha site north of the A425 – and together the sites would create a significant change in perceptions of the size and character of Radford Semele. As noted above, it would be very important that the development plans consider the ‘gateway’ these sites will create. Designs should ensure an attractive approach and a suitable transition to the settlement area.

7.3.3 It is not anticipated that development at this site will be intervisible with the new dwellings at Spring Lane but there could be some potential for limited intervisibility with development at the allocated site proposed south of Sydenham and east of Whitnash (HO3 in the draft Local Plan, approximately 1500m to the south-west) and the additional SHLAA site presently under consideration for allocation, L55/L56).

7.3.4 **Potential Landscape and Visual Impacts:** Development here would result in adverse visual impacts for residents at around 20 dwellings adjoining the site along the western boundary. These residents presently benefit from views over open countryside. In addition, residents at one of the dwellings at the north-east corner of the site will also experience visual impacts at both the dwelling and in garden areas. Views from the other two neighbouring dwellings are less likely due to enclosing vegetation.

7.3.5 The context of the existing public footpaths at this side of the village will be greatly altered – notably W123 and W123a. Development here would be notable in the landscape to the south where there are a number of footpaths but limited settlement. The site will obviously be notable in the outlook from the A425.

7.3.6 With appropriate and sensitive development, impacts to the physical landscape and existing landscape components should be limited. The existing hedgerow and veteran trees along the A425 road are the mostly likely features to be affected – due to the possible need for access road alterations and highway sight lines.

7.4.0 **Conclusions:**

7.4.1 Allocation of this site would constitute a substantial increase in the size of Radford Semele. Although there may be some constraints to integrating this site with the existing settlement, in broad terms the resulting settlement pattern would be well-defined and a logical extension of the existing village. In some respects, it would complement and help integrate the recently permitted development to the north, which might otherwise be regarded as a disconnected spur.

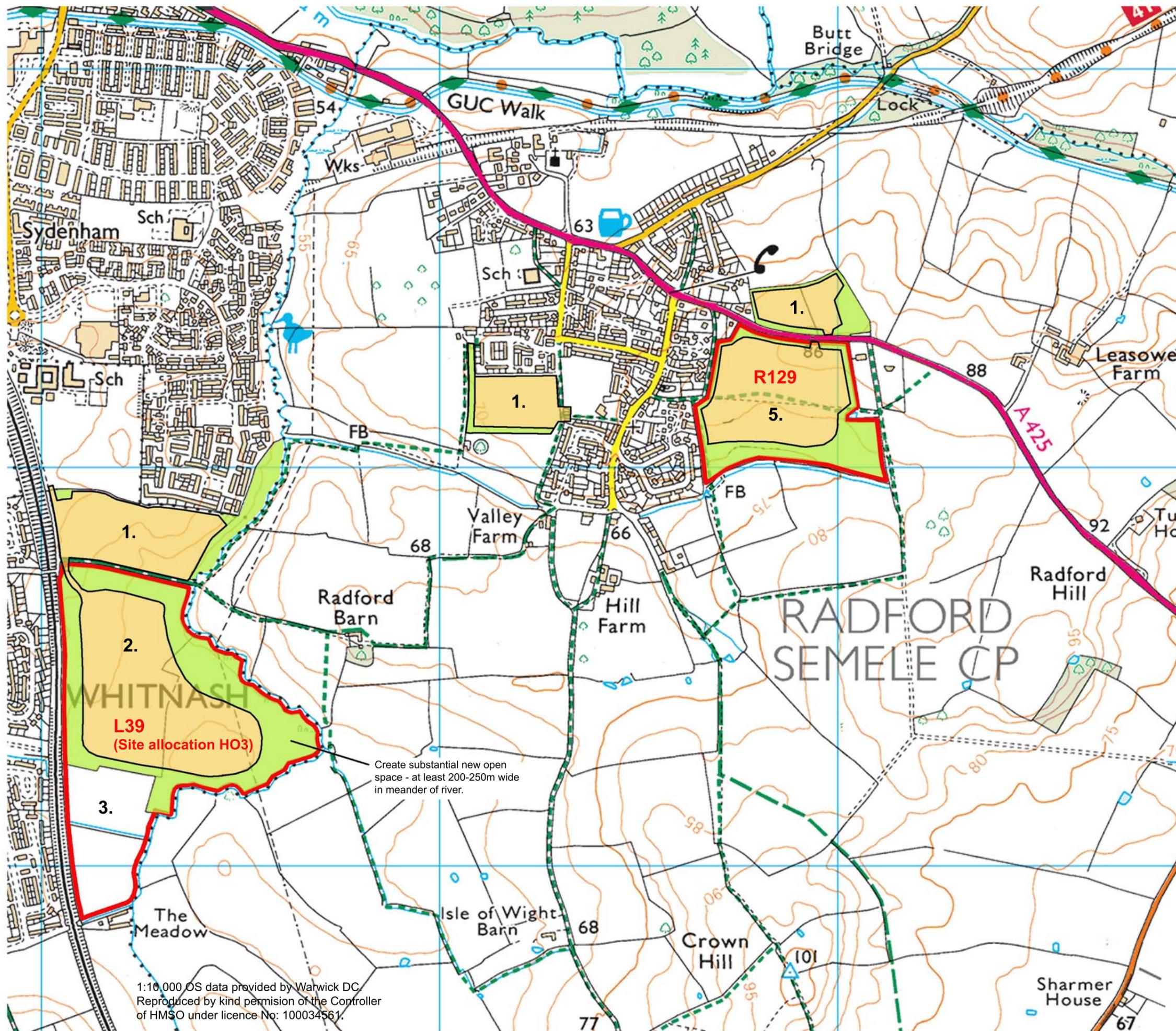
Opportunities, assets, benefits:

- Creation of a substantial new ‘neighbourhood’ of Radford Semele which if well-designed could assist integration of the permitted development to the north, be large enough to have a distinct character and provide new benefits for the existing community.
- The low-lying southern edge offers the potential to create a significant green corridor with sustainable urban drainage, recreation, landscape and ecological benefits.
- The predominantly south-facing aspect could create an attractive outlook for new dwellings.
- There is the potential to create an attractive A425 ‘gateway’ to Radford and Leamington.

- It should be possible to retain the majority of boundary features and trees around the site.
- Development may be able to fund footpath improvements or new paths in the locality.

Constraints and Challenges:

- It is not yet clear what impact this scale of development will have on existing community facilities at Radford and how this will affect an appropriate masterplan for the site.
- Access from the A425 and the existing gas pipeline may constrain a site masterplan.
- There will be adverse visual impacts for some neighbouring properties, loss of ‘rural’ sections of footpath and an extension of the urban area along the A425.
- Development here must be able to ensure sustainable integration with the existing village, minimising the need for local car journeys, sustaining community cohesion and avoiding creation of a residential ‘dormitory’.



- Key:
- L39 SHLAA sites.
 - Development sites. (Committed and potential - with suggested green infrastructure).

1. Existing permitted development at construction or planning stages.
2. Proposed development by AC Lloyd at site allocation H03.
3. Recommended to avoid development of the flat, low lying meadows at south end of L39. Unlikely to provide a sustainable development site.
4. Potential development at SHLAA site R129 - could form a coherent extension to the settlement and help to integrate permitted development to the north. The scheme will ideally provide a generous level of new green space for the benefit of existing and new residents.

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Warwick District Urban Expansion Options
 Sustainable Landscape Considerations.
 Figure 6.0: Radford Semele and Whitnash



View south-west across land east of Radford Semele - with the A425 to the right. Land north of the road is already allocated for development. Note roadside hedge and veteran trees.



View east across the site from footpath W123. The mature trees in the mid-distance enclose three large detached dwellings. Note the skyline to the south-east is defined by rising ground and trees.



Views of the western site boundary and existing dwellings that overlook the site.

8. Land south of Sydenham, east of Whitnash

8.1.1 This area is not within the Green Belt but was first reviewed by Richard Morrish Associates in the assessment of sites south of Warwick in 2009 and again in the *Options for Future Urban Expansion in Warwick District* report of 2012. AC Lloyd developers are presently constructing an extension to the St Fremund Way estate at Sydenham – with 209 new dwellings to be known as *Chesterton Gardens*. Land to the south is allocated for residential expansion in the draft Local Plan. Consultants for AC Lloyd have previously produced a ‘Concept Landscape Masterplan’ (LS01C, dated 07/03/2013) for a further 20-hectare residential development. RMA have reviewed the plan and the site in November 2015 to assist WDC in considering the proposal.

8.1.2 The 2012 report included observations which are still relevant to the proposed residential development.

- The Whitnash Brook is a locally important wildlife corridor, a nature reserve and a managed landscape that adds value to existing residential areas. It is also an important drainage corridor and the lower valley floor is a flood risk area.
- There are some good footpath links to the wider countryside and these are well used. Mature trees and hedges, the watercourses and riverine habitat, a variety of local wildlife, and the variety of spatial and visual experience, including longer views from higher ground, make the local walks particularly attractive.
- Active farming and also management of the Whitnash Brook environment has generally maintained landscape condition and avoided the type of landscape degradation that often affects urban fringe areas.

8.2.0 **2015 Review:** (Refer also to Figure 6.0).

8.2.1 The *Chesterton Gardens* development will create a relatively dense residential environment with a central open space and provision for ten allotment gardens at the north-west corner. There is also some provision of ‘public open space’ adjacent the Whitnash Brook – although this is mainly fairly narrow (20–25m wide), and where wider, is utilised for a surface water attenuation basin that is unlikely to have significant recreation or ecological benefit. The boundary hedge adjacent the existing track / public footpath at the southern edge of the site has been removed, which will greatly urbanise this route – which has previously retained a rural character.

8.2.2 It is therefore very important that if L39 is allocated for development to the south that the proposed scheme includes a more generous and thoughtful approach to green infrastructure provision. The proposed allocation will push the settlement footprint a further 400–500m south into an arable landscape and it will be notable from the footpaths south of Radford Semele. It is important that there will be sufficient building setback adjacent the Whitnash Brook to achieve several functions:

- Maintenance of a natural riverine corridor along the brook which will not be subject to management pressures (through proximity to the built environment) that could undermine the sustainability of landscape and ecological values.
- It would preferably provide the opportunity to enhance and expand the riverine habitats along the Brook.
- Provide space for any required flood risk management and urban drainage infrastructure – in a form that ensures multifunctional benefits – and avoids the creation of engineered features with little amenity and ecological benefit.
- The creation of a meaningful public open space that might be suitable for informal play, picnics or other community activities.
- Provision of a network of footpaths that provide circular routes around the site and interconnections to the wider footpath network.
- Enclose the development and mitigate its visual impact in the wider setting.

8.2.3 It is recommended that a 25m setback from the Whitnash Brook is an absolute minimum to achieve the first goal outlined above – and that a typical width for this ‘riverside park’ should actually be 75–100m. For the main public open space (proposed in the river meander to the south-east corner of the site), a building setback from the brook of 150–200m is recommended.

8.2.4 The AC Lloyd concept masterplan indicates creation of a 40–50m-wide public open space to separate Chesterton Gardens from the new development area. This is a good idea that should be ensured with planning conditions. It is recommended that this space should have a generally ‘rural’ character (preferably including retention of the remaining hedge and additional native planting). The space should provide an attractive corridor for the existing public right of way that does not feel overly enclosed by adjacent dwellings.

8.2.5 The AC Lloyd concept masterplan does not propose building on the two most southerly paddocks of the WDC allocation area (HO3 in the draft Local Plan). This is flat, low-lying land, and the corridor between the river corridor and railway line to the west is less than 200m wide. It is unlikely that sustainable development would be possible here and it is suggested that these two paddocks are removed from the H03 allocation in the finalised version of the Local Plan.

8.3.0 Conclusions:

8.3.1 The further 20 hectares being promoted by AC Lloyd could be appropriate for medium-density development most likely featuring one- or two-storey dwellings. The quality of the finished environment will be dependent on a sensitive and generous approach to green infrastructure. This must be firmly stipulated in planning conditions – along with assurances on ongoing management and maintenance provision.

8.3.2 It is not clear what the cumulative impact to other local community facilities (e.g. schools and active recreation facilities) will be should development at this site follow the Chesterton Gardens completion. This may influence the preferred masterplan for the site. Building height and style must consider the landscape setting and create a successful urban/rural transition.

9. Land at Golf Lane, south of Whitnash, Leamington – L55/L56

9.1.1 These land parcels amount to an area of approximately 3 hectares located at the southern edge of Whitnash. They consist of one large detached dwelling (*Hazlemere*) in a large garden (approximately 0.5 hectares – L55) and a second dwelling with gardens (*Little Acre*) set within a larger area of paddock (2.8 hectares – L56). The combined properties wrap around two additional large detached houses with gardens, *Cedar Hill* and *Greenacres*, which are not included in the land being promoted for allocation. *Greenacres* was probably the original house in the group and appears to be early 20th century, whilst the others appear to be more recent (refer to Figures 7.0 and 7.1).

9.1.2 The L55/L56 parcel is defined to the north by a new Bovis development (*The Fairways*) at Fieldgate Lane, to the east by the Birmingham to London railway line, to the west by a track known as *Golf Lane* and to the south by a large paddock used as a practice driving range by Leamington and County Golf Club. In the wider setting, the Golf Club extends beyond the lane to the west and its rising topography and tree cover defines the viewshed in this direction. To the south and east, the landscape is ostensibly open rolling farmland within the *Feldon and Dunsmore* character area, with only scattered settlement present before the large villages of Harbury, Southam and Long Itchington, 5–8km away. To the north lies the existing neighbourhood of Whitnash, mainly consisting of late 20th-century, low-rise housing estates.

9.1.3 The site lies outside of the West Midlands Green Belt and has therefore not been considered in previous Green Belt studies, nor was it considered in previous RMA reviews of land parcels south of Warwick and Leamington. However, the Fieldgate Lane site was included in the 2009 *Land South of Warwick* report and some of the background description for that site is relevant and has been included and updated in the following summary.

Ref	SHLAA sites L55 and L56 – South of Whitnash.
Landscape Character	The sites are located in the <i>Feldon and Dunsmore</i> character area and within the Feldon Parklands landscape type, although it is also at the edge of the <i>Plateau Fringe</i> landscape type. The site lies at around 70m AOD on the west side, but slopes down to below 65m AOD adjacent the Birmingham/London railway line (which adjoins the site on an embankment). The site therefore has a predominantly east-facing aspect.
Visual Issues	The site is relatively well-defined and enclosed by tall hedges and trees. There is a copse at the south-west corner of L56. It is not clear to what extent this mature vegetation would be affected by development here. However, development at the site would be partially visible from the residential areas to the north, Golf Lane (public right of way) and the golf course to the west, the driving range and a smallholding to the south and the railway line and footpaths in the countryside to the east. The development would enclose the two existing dwellings at <i>Cedar Hill</i> and <i>Greenacres</i> .
Historic and Cultural Issues	No historic or cultural assets have been identified on or near the site. Sections of boundary hedging may pre-date the dwellings. The largest trees on site appear to be less than 100 years old. No evidence of ridge and furrow was noted in the remaining paddocks – although this may have been hidden by long grass.
Ecological Features	Mature gardens, hedges and the copse provide ecological value. A scrubby area at the north-east corner of L56 may surround a field pond. It is understood that the railway corridor and Golf Course have both been identified as potential SINC sites.
Landscape Condition	The boundary hedges are generally overgrown and include non-native species and some dead trees. The southern boundary is gappy with willow and ash (and the copse is mainly ash regeneration). Ash may be susceptible to <i>Chalara fraxinea</i> in coming years. Some trees within the site have apparent retention value.
Conclusion / Recommendation	The site can be said to be significantly influenced by the existing properties at the site. The site cannot be described as ‘countryside’ or ‘farmland’ even though the tree and hedge cover and remaining paddock provide notable ‘rural’ elements. This is a ‘peri-urban’ setting (and the railway, golf facilities and smallholding to the south extend that character beyond this site). Development here could be relatively prominent as it lies on higher ground. However, there would be some potential for enclosure if existing

	boundary vegetation was retained / managed / enhanced, and the number of visual receptors to the south and east would be limited.
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9.2.0 **Other Landscape and Planning Issues:**

9.2.1 **Infrastructure requirements:** Further work will be required to ascertain infrastructure requirements for this site – including road access. If the unmade road (Golf Lane) was proposed for site access, it is unlikely to be suitable without widening. This would certainly require removal of existing hedge and trees with consequent landscape and ecological impacts. It is not clear whether the existing road through the Bovis *Fairways* development has been designed to take additional traffic or whether it could be extended southward. If this was possible, it would seem to offer the least intrusive landscape solution for access. Further work would also be required to ascertain requirements for other service infrastructure and amenities.

9.2.2 **Cumulative impacts:** This development site would clearly form a visual extension to the existing *Fairways* development in the surrounding setting – but particularly from the north. It is also likely to be partially intervisible with development proposed east of Whitnash, south of Sydenham and possibly new development around Radford Semele, 2km to the north-east. However, it is not expected to be intervisible with the much larger urban extensions proposed south of Harbury Lane and towards Europa Way. It is not expected to be intervisible with the presently proceeding Persimmon development, *Mallory Grange* at Tachbrook Mallory. As noted, the need for infrastructure improvements at this end of Whitnash may result in secondary development impacts.

9.2.3 **Potential Landscape and Visual Impacts:** As noted above – there is a likelihood of tree and hedge loss if this site was developed as well as the loss of a small area of paddock. However, the site can be described as ‘peri-urban’ in character and would not constitute loss of open countryside. The setting and outlook of the two dwellings at *Cedar Hill* and *Greenacres* would be affected along with a number of dwellings to the north and a smallholding to the south. There would be a change in outlook from the Leamington and County Golf Course and from the right-of-way on Golf Lane as well as some more distant paths and vantage points to the east.

9.3.0 **Conclusions:**

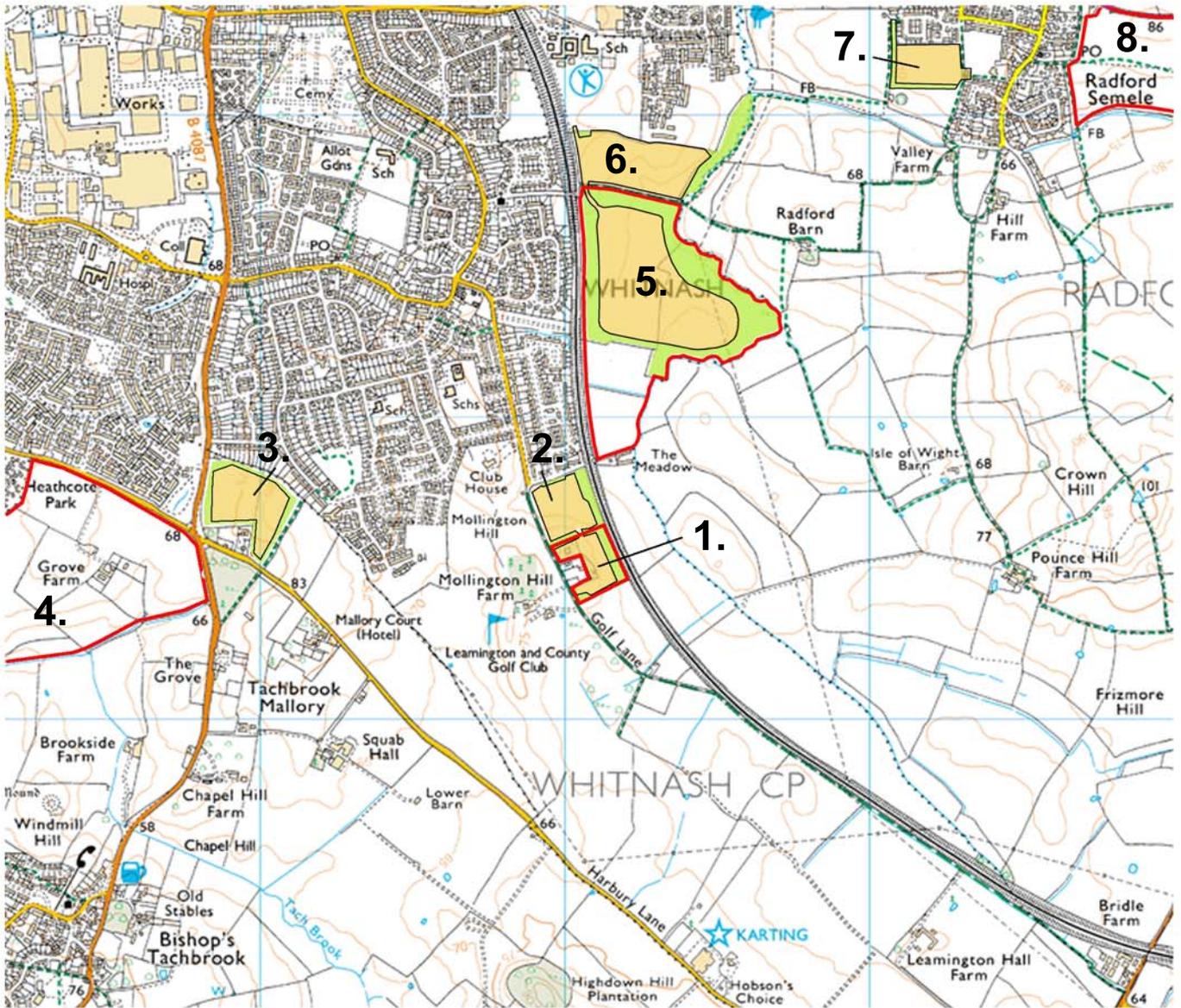
9.3.1 The apparent access constraints for this site would need to be overcome. The site is relatively high and design should take account of this and utilise an approach to minimise visual impacts. If this site was allocated for development, it is likely to form the edge of settlement for the foreseeable future. It would therefore be appropriate to assign a generous landscape approach to ensure an appropriate ‘transition’ from settlement to open countryside.

Opportunities, assets, benefits:

- Retain the best trees and hedgerows within the site. It would be beneficial to agree a long-term management plan to improve amenity and biodiversity of landscape features on site (e.g. the boundary hedges, copse and pond).
- Consider creating a landscape buffer adjacent the railway line with the opportunity to create a multifunctional space (including SUDs).
- Ensure long-term sustainability of existing boundary hedge at southern edge of site – to enclose and screen new housing from the open countryside.
- It would be beneficial in landscape terms to retain Golf Lane as a narrow access track with its enclosing hedgerows as this would retain the rural character and enclose the development from the west.
- Potential to link to green infrastructure proposals and footpath networks to the east (via the railway underpass at end of Fieldgate Lane).

Constraints and Challenges:

- Access and infrastructure requirements need to be fully assessed.
- Design should minimise visual impacts to immediate and wider setting.
- Distance to existing services / amenities in Whitnash are somewhat distant which may encourage local car use.



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Key:



SHLAA sites



Development sites.
 (Committed and potential - with
 suggested green infrastructure).



NORTH



Scale - metres

1. Land off Golf Lane - SHLAA sites L55/L56.
 (Suggest landscape buffer adjacent railway and retention of key boundary vegetation - including copse in SW corner of site).
2. Committed development - *The Fairways* - Bovis.
3. Committed development - *Mallory Grange* - Persimmon.
4. Allocated site H02 - Grove Farm.
5. SHLAA site L39 (allocation H03).
6. Committed development - *Chesterton Gdns* - AC Lloyd.
7. Committed development - *Spring Lane* - AC Lloyd.
8. SHLAA site R129.



View of western site boundary along Golf Lane. Note soil at the southern edge of the *Fairways* development.



Entrance / trees at *Hazlemere* (L55).



Dwelling at *Cedar Hills*.



Entrance and house at *Greenacres*.



Access roadway to *Little Acres*.



Panoramic view east over the paddocks at *Little Acre*. Note railway embankment and views to countryside beyond.



Golf Lane from *Fieldgate Lane*.



Golf Lane from near southern boundary of L56. Note woodland copse.



Southern boundary of site from the adjacent golf practice range. *Greenacres* is visible.



Development site *The Fairways* from *Fieldgate Lane*, with *Golf Lane* to the right.

10. Sites south of Gallows Hill

10.1.1 This area is not within the Green Belt and has been reviewed by Richard Morrish Associates in the assessment of sites south of Warwick in 2009 and again in the *Options for Future Urban Expansion in Warwick District* report of 2012.

10.1.2 The original SHLAA analysis split the area into three sites: W10 (approximately 15Ha to the west, nearest Castle Park and often referred to as the ‘Hallam Land’ site), W26 (21Ha at the corner of Gallows Hill and Europa Way and being promoted for residential development by Gallagher Estates), and land south of these two sites – W27 ‘the Asps’ (59 Ha being promoted for residential development and a park-and-ride facility by developers Barwood Developments). Schemes at both W26 and W27 have been refused planning consent and have been the subject of appeals in 2015. In January 2016, it was announced that the Secretary of State had ruled in favour of development at both sites. It seems likely that Hallam land will now submit a planning application for the remaining W10 site.

10.1.3 The previous RMA reviews of this area have concluded that this land parcel is important to the historic setting of Warwick and Leamington and particularly the approaches to Warwick conservation area and the setting of Warwick Castle Park. Although land is already allocated for development to the north and east, development of all three SHLAA sites south of Gallows Hill will push the settlement footprint a mile south of Gallows Hill and into farmland that presently provides an attractive rural approach to the urban area (along the A425 and A452). Development in this area is therefore likely to be prominent in the setting of Warwick and Leamington. An excellent quality of green infrastructure planning, development management and long-term landscape management will be required to mitigate the inevitable development impacts.

10.1.4 The Barwood scheme for the Asps has also incorporated a ‘park-and-ride’ facility. This proposal should conclude speculation about a wider ‘search area’ for this infrastructure. It is recommended that farmland further south and south-east are now safeguarded from development.

10.2.0 Conclusions:

10.2.1 Planning conditions for the proposed development south of Gallows Hill must ensure the design, delivery and ongoing management of high quality green infrastructure. This will ideally include a first-rate network of cycle and footpaths that can minimise the need for local car journeys and provide a high quality living and working environment for this large urban extension.

11. Sites at Longbridge (Refer also to Figures 8.0, 8.1).

11.1.1 The area around Longbridge is not within the Green Belt and therefore was not considered in the JGBS studies, but two land parcels here were reviewed by Richard Morrish Associates in the assessment of sites south of Warwick in 2009. The setting is essentially flat, low-lying and has some flood risk concerns. There is a variety of existing land-use, including ongoing construction of both residential and employment sector sites. Other potential development constraints include the *cordon sanitaire* associated with the Severn Trent sewage treatment plant (east of Stratford Road), potential noise and pollution issues relating to the major road network (the A46 to the west, the M40 to the south and even the A429 Stratford Road itself, which is a very busy thoroughfare into Warwick), and the setting of Castle Park and the river Avon to the east.

11.1.2 WDC have requested two sites to be reviewed again to assess their suitability for residential development allocation. In addition, landscape considerations relating to the proposed employment sector allocation site at Home Farm are also briefly summarised.

11.1.3 **Land adjacent Stratford Road** includes a large grass paddock (formerly assessed as SHLAA site W06 and approximately 4.5 Ha in area) and an adjacent area to the south of approximately 1.6Ha which includes some commercial activities, an area of remnant paddock and a dwelling. The whole area was assessed in the RMA 2009 report. The following summary is taken from that report with some updates based on a November 2015 site visit:

Study Area Reference	Land adjacent Stratford Road
Study Area Description	An area of approximately 6 Ha of mainly agricultural land lying at the south-west corner of urban Warwick. The study area is principally defined by the A429 Stratford Road to the west, 20th-century suburban housing and Gog Brook to the north, Gog Brook and Leafield Farm to the east and the Severn Trent Longbridge Sewage Treatment works to the south.
Landscape Character	The land lies on the flat ‘Terrace Farmlands’ of the Avon regional character area. The majority of the site is one large paddock. Since 2009, some native boundary hedges that divided this land into three smaller paddocks have been removed. On the Stratford Road frontage, the remaining hedge includes a number of larger trees (Ash, Oak @ 8–10 metres tall) which make a contribution to the character of the Stratford Road approach to Warwick. Since 2009, the Gog Brook corridor appears to have had management input, with a new bridge revetment at Warwick Road, gabion bank stabilisation and tree clearance. There is an access road from Stratford Road to Leafield Farm (and other dwellings). At the south-west corner of the site, there is a small area of commercial development that appears to include second-hand car sales, a carwash, shed sales and a café. There is a telecommunications mast behind the commercial site and also a pole-mounted service line. There is a dwelling at the south-west corner of the site. Beyond Stratford Road to the west is Aylesford School, playing fields, land being developed as ‘Chase Meadows’ residential estate and the Tournament Fields business park. To the east is the River Avon and Castle Park. The setting can be described as ‘peri-urban’ in character.
Visual Issues	The flat landscape coupled with mature vegetation along Stratford Road and parts of the Gog Brook provides some visual enclosure, although much less than in 2009 due to clearance. The remaining hedge along Stratford Road has a lot of Ash which may be lost to Ash dieback disease in coming years. Development of the site could potentially be prominent from Stratford Road and from the few dwellings to the east and from dwellings to the north adjacent Gog Brook (Stratford Road and Lodge Crescent). The commercial property and mast at the southern edge of the site and to some extent the overgrown hedgerows are considered as visual detractors.
Historic and Cultural Issues	Leafield Farm and its associated woodland lie within the Castle Park conservation area – a Grade 1 listed Park. Leafield was an important part of

	the Warwick Castle estate from at least the 16th century and the woodland forms part of the 18th-century landscape works (ref www.british-history.ac.uk). Preserving the historic setting of the park is an important consideration. It is likely that the study site has historically been part of the Leaffield Farm landholding but it has not been established whether this is presently the case. No other historical references have been obtained.
Ecological Features	The Gog Brook appears to be a reasonably clean and ecologically intact watercourse. Preserving a viable ecological corridor along this watercourse, including a sufficient buffer for future management, would be a prerequisite of a sustainable development plan. The existing meadow, hedgerows and trees on the site will have an ecological value that would ideally be retained or substituted in any future development. A detailed ecological survey of the site is recommended. Potential SINC sites have been identified to the east of the site.
Landscape Condition	Hedges and mature vegetation lost since 2009. The remaining hedges are over-mature and together with neighbouring land use give a general impression that the landscape is declining due to urban expansion pressures.
Planning Issues	The site is low-lying (below 50 m AOD) and is partly within a flood risk area (Gog Brook). It is within a <i>Dap 2</i> Area of Restraint and the <i>Rap 1–Rap 16</i> Rural Policies area. It is understood that the site is in, or close to, the <i>cordon sanitaire</i> for the sewage treatment works. Residential and commercial development in progress to the west.
2009 Conclusion	In general, the setting for this site is urban fringe and although it is located in a rural policies area, committed development on adjacent sites is likely to make a block of pastoral paddock increasingly anomalous in the local context. The site appears to be sufficiently enclosed by tree cover around Leaffield Farm to be visually separate from Castle Park. Our preliminary view is therefore that this site could be developed without impacting on the historical setting of Warwick Castle or Castle Park. The flood risk and <i>cordon sanitaire</i> will determine exactly how this site can be developed and with what type of development. In our view, putting malodorous issues aside, there is potential for landscape screening to create an attractive setting for development. However, we would strongly recommend that planning conditions for the site include safeguarding or enhancing the Stratford Road frontage as a principal approach to Warwick and ensuring that there is a wide and sustainable ecological corridor for Gog Brook. This corridor might include the access to Leaffield Farm and flood risk mitigation considerations.

11.1.4 **Land adjacent Stratford Road - 2015 Review:** As noted above, there have been some alterations to this site since 2009 through removal of hedges and management of the Gog Brook corridor. However, in general the conclusions from 2009 appear sound and, assuming flood risk, *cordon sanitaire* and infrastructural constraints can be appropriately addressed, this site would appear to be suitable for residential allocation. The following landscape provisions are recommended:

- To the north, the area between the existing access road to Leaffield Farm and Gog Brook should be retained as a landscape buffer ‘green corridor’ adjacent the brook. There should be an appropriate transition to residential development south of the track (for example a 3–5m grass verge with an avenue of medium-large species native tree planting).
- There should be a continuation of this corridor along the entire Gog Brook boundary – with a suggested minimum width of 25m and preferably wider. The corridor will ideally be developed as riverine habitat(s), providing screening and enclosure for the new development and including public access footpaths.
- It would be beneficial to redevelop the commercial use area at the southern edge of the site as this presently provides a poor impression at the gateway to Warwick. However, there may be a need for a *cordon sanitaire* adjacent the sewage treatment plant which would create a

constraint for housing. In any case, it may be beneficial to have a landscape buffer with native species planting adjacent the tall leylandii screen hedge which presently forms the boundary with the sewage plant. This might help to compensate for the likely loss of the remaining native hedging at this end of the site if the whole site is combined for development.

- It will be extremely important to provide an appropriate site frontage along Stratford Road – an important gateway to Warwick. It seems likely that through ash dieback and previous poor management, the remaining road-front hedge may not now be suitable for sustainable retention. A recommended approach to replacement will ideally include:
 - A setback of around 5m of grass ‘verge’ adjacent the existing dual-use footpath on Stratford Road.
 - A new mixed native site boundary hedge with new medium–large species trees that can provide an ‘avenue’ frontage for the road over time. This boundary might be combined with fencing – e.g. metal ‘park’ style railings.
 - A sufficient further setback for the housing within the site to allow the tree planting to grow to maturity without management conflicts (suggested a minimum further 10m).

11.2.0 Land at Tournament Fields Business Park. An area of approximately 12 hectares at the Tournament Fields Business Park has been previously allocated for employment land usage but is now being considered for a change-of-use to a housing allocation. This site has apparently not been considered before in previous reports for the WDC housing allocation evidence base and there has not been a SHLAA assessment.

11.2.1 The site is essentially flat and is presently derelict coarse grassland that has been promoted by land agents as ‘the only directly motorway linked design-and-build site on the M40’. To the north, it is adjoined by ‘Tournament Court’, which was the first phase of the Tournament Fields development, and a number of other large office and commercial buildings. These are set within a landscaped ‘campus’ style setting including ornamental lakes adjacent the A429 Stratford Road frontage. East of the road is the Severn Trent sewage and water treatment plant. To the south lies a mixture of development including residential cul-de-sacs (*The Peacocks* and *Earl Meadows*), a Hilton hotel, offices and a gym. Beyond these is the busy M40 junction 15. To the west, the A46 dual carriageway is another very busy road which is on embankment and notably audible from within the site.

11.2.2 It is understood that Aston Martin have secured planning consent for a new warehouse/office building at Tournament Fields which would occupy around 4 hectares of the site. Assuming this development proceeds, it will be a large warehouse-type building with a floor area of 2.1 hectares and a height to ridge of 15m occupying the north-west portion of the site. This would therefore leave an area of around 8 hectares to consider for housing, although building setbacks will presumably be appropriate adjacent both this large building and the remaining western frontage adjacent the A46.

11.2.3 If this site was allocated for housing, there would be some potential for continuity with the residential cul-de-sacs adjoining the site to the south and there would appear to be an existing bellmouth for road access to the A429 that would avoid the need for residents to share the main Tournament Fields road access. The site would be approximately 750m from Aylesford School and other residential areas to the north. There would be potential to create public open space facilities adjacent the roads and business parks – and some of these landscape buffer zones are already established. However, the site is on the outskirts of the main settlement of Warwick and the setting has considerable environmental constraints and disadvantages for a residential development. House building on this site would remove an employment sector site with obvious access and infrastructural advantages and presumably it would require replacement with another suitable employment site elsewhere within the District. It is concluded that this site should only be considered as a ‘last option’ for housing allocation and that it would be appropriate to safeguard the site for employment sector usage.

11.3.0 **Employment allocation site – Home Farm, Longbridge.** This area was reviewed by Richard Morrish Associates in the assessment of sites south of Warwick in 2009. A wider area including land extending a further 150m south to the M40 was also previously considered as SHLAA site W12. The area presently under consideration for employment sector allocation includes 5–6Ha of existing employment sector land (the Seven Trent Water Longbridge main office and a waste management depot) and approximately 6–7Ha of pasture which is believed to be part of Longbridge Farm.

11.3.1 The site is very flat river flood plain with a thin hedge along the Stratford Road frontage including a lot of dead elm. There is also quite a lot of ash in this locality – which is likely to succumb to *Chalara fraxinea* in coming years – so the current poor condition of tree and hedge cover could worsen. Releasing the pasture for employment development is likely to have adverse environmental impacts on the 3 or 4 dwellings located adjacent the south-west corner of the site and also for the frontage of Stratford Road – which is important because it is a gateway to the historic centre of Warwick. These impacts could hopefully be addressed with appropriate building setbacks and landscape treatments.

11.3.2 The boundary with the river Avon is a ‘riverine’ setting with established trees. This vegetation will form part of the spatial boundary with Castle Park to the east. Intervisibility with Warwick Castle has not been established from the site – but there may be potential for partial, distant (2.5km) views of this location from the castle (e.g. Guys Tower) if new development was large in scale. There would be an opportunity to widen and enhance the riverine habitat(s) along the river frontage with potential landscape screening and ecological benefits.

11.3.3 The Stratford Road site frontage is presently ‘scruffy’ with overgrown remnant hedge, dead elm, and intermittent cypress screen planting. As well as the road being a vehicular gateway to Warwick, the corridor also includes the national route (41) cycle path. There would be a great opportunity to establish a more formal and attractive approach to the town with a generous grass verge and new tree planting (preferably with large native trees such as oak). This would also help to screen / integrate large buildings. It is recommended that a 15–20m setback would therefore be appropriate between the cyclepath and any new buildings. The number of site entrances should also be restricted to the existing one at the Tournament Fields roundabout, so as to ensure a consistent presentation of the site frontage along this important Warwick gateway route.

11.3.4 It is anticipated that there will be little opportunity for views of development at this site from the M40 corridor. Planting beside the motorway and mature vegetation around Longbridge Farm and the River Avon are expected to largely screen the site. There is an anticipated narrow ‘window’ (perhaps only 200m long) where some intervisibility between motorway and site might be possible. This will rather depend on the size of buildings proposed. There would be good opportunity for new planting to enhance existing planting (notwithstanding a lot of the existing trees are Ash).

11.4.0 **Longbridge Conclusions:**

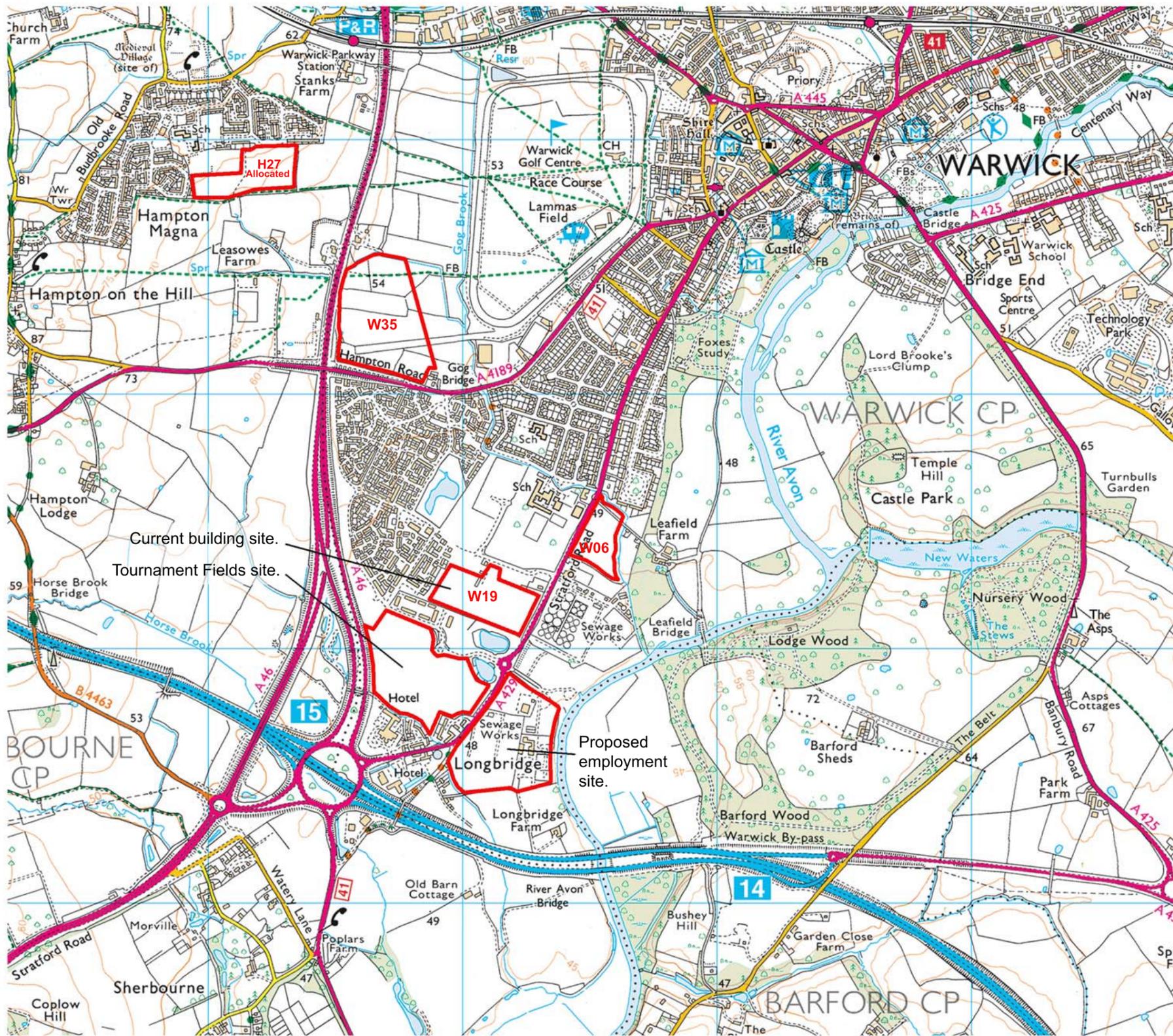
11.4.1 The 6-hectare site east of Stratford Road and south of Gog Brook would appear to be appropriate for housing allocation pending confirmation that site constraints including flood risk and the *cordon sanitaire* can be appropriately and sustainably addressed. However, it is important that development here is conceived within a strong landscape infrastructure including an enhanced Stratford Road frontage and a safeguarded ‘green corridor’ for Gog Brook. Planning conditions will ideally also include a requirement for ongoing maintenance and management provisions for these landscape areas.

11.4.2 The 8–12 hectare site at Tournament Fields appears to have significant disadvantages for a housing allocation and may have questionable sustainability at this edge of settlement location –

notwithstanding there is an existing small residential area already established to the south. It is recommended that this land is safeguarded for employment sector development.

11.4.3 The land proposed for employment sector development at Home Farm would extend an existing area of commercial and office activity and is anticipated to increase the scale and prominence of development at the edge of Warwick. The landscape condition of this area is however poor, and it could be argued that with an appropriate provision of landscape infrastructure (especially along the Stratford Road frontage), development could enhance this gateway to Warwick. It will also be important to safeguard and ideally enhance the riverine habitats adjacent the River Avon and to consider the landscape setting and sustainable boundary enclosure to the north and south of the site. Wider visual impact issues must be considered when developing detailed proposals for buildings and site layout – notably in relation to Warwick Castle and Castle Park. Buildings will ideally not be taller than those at Tournament Fields (presently estimated at 8–12m tall).

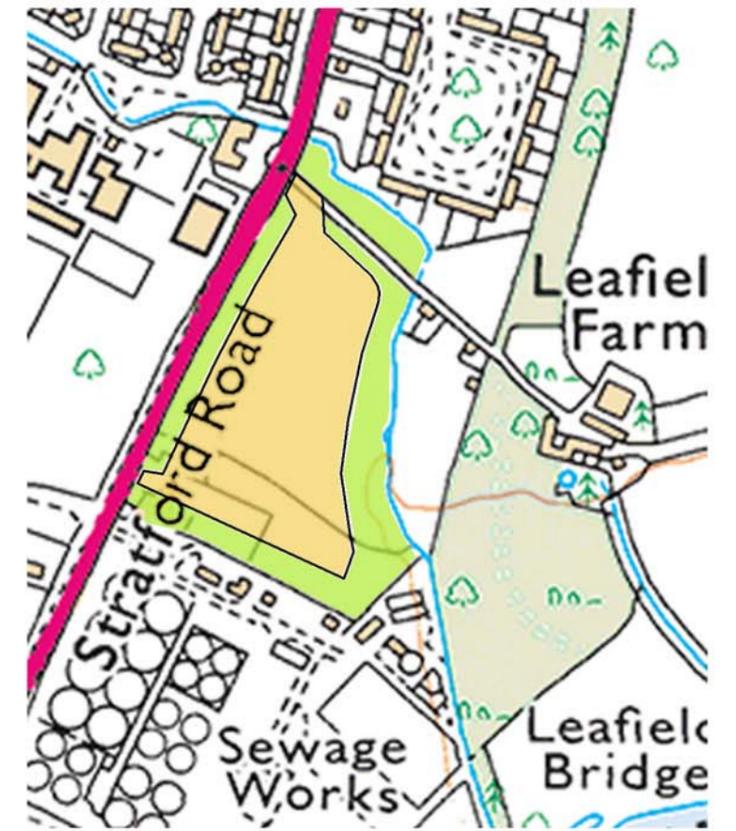
11.4.4 The potential future loss of tree cover through ash dieback (*Chalara fraxinea*) may be particularly notable in this locality – where ash is prevalent. Robust planning support for appropriate landscape design, establishment and ongoing management will be required to safeguard the urban / rural interface in this locality.



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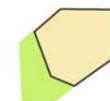
Possible development option for SHLAA site W06.



Possible development option for SHLAA site W35.



SHLAA sites.



Potential development sites.
 (With suggested green infrastructure).

Warwick District Urban Expansion Options
 Sustainable Landscape Considerations.
 Figure 8.0 Longbridge sites and Warwick racecourse



Land adjacent Stratford Road, Longbridge: Panoramic view east from entrance of track to Leaffield Farm, with Gog Brook to left and the conifer screen adjacent the sewage farm, distant right.



Gog Brook from Stratford Road bridge.



Stratford Road frontage with cyclepath.



Undeveloped site at Tournament Fields - looking south-west towards A46.



View north-east over existing pasture from entrance to Longbridge Farm. The land is proposed for employment allocation. A commitment to generous landscape infrastructure will be required in order to mitigate development and enhance the setting.

12. Site at Warwick racecourse (Refer also to Figures 8.0 and 8.2).

12.1.1 This area is not within the Green Belt and was not therefore assessed in the JGBS studies but was reviewed by Richard Morrish Associates in a 2014 addendum to the *Options for Future Urban Expansion in Warwick District* report of 2012. The 2014 review actually assessed the entire land parcel defined by the A46 to the west, the Warwick/Leamington to Birmingham rail line to the north, Warwick racecourse to the east and Hampton Road (A4189) and the Chase Meadow neighbourhood to the south (approximately 56 Ha). The current review only considers the southern portion of that area – approximately 14 Ha that WDC assessed as SHLAA site W35 in 2012.

12.1.2 A summarised version of the RMA 2014 description of the area is provided below, with alterations to reflect the smaller land parcel now being reviewed.

Study Area Ref	Land south-west of Warwick racecourse.
Study Area Description	14 Ha of mainly agricultural land lying adjacent Budbrooke Lodge Farm on Hampton Road (A4189). It also includes an ‘arm’ of Warwick racecourse which was formerly used for flat-racing (approximately 1 hectare in area).
Landscape Character	The land lies within the ‘Arden Wooded Estates’ regional landscape character area. The site is not especially indicative of the character type being essentially flat and mostly lying below 55m AOD. Along the eastern boundary the study site is defined by Gog Brook, with mature willow, alder, ash and sycamore to 15–20m high. Fields are in arable use (except for a very small paddock adjacent the farm buildings). Field boundaries are generally defined by gappy native hedgerow with some veteran hedge trees. There is mixed native screen planting adjacent the roads along west and south-west boundaries and a taller overgrown hedge along the Hampton Road frontage. The flat-race straight is approximately 30m wide and 500m long. In the wider setting to the east is Warwick racecourse – including golf course, sports pitches, a caravan park, a number of footpaths, a community woodland and other public access areas that make up ‘St Mary’s Lands’. The topography rises towards the historic core of Warwick beyond the racecourse. To the south beyond Hampton Road is a post-war housing estate. To the south-west, the Hampton Road passes over the A46 on a grade separated bridge, and the embankments have maturing woodland that encloses this corner of the study site. To the west, there is a variety of hedge and tree cover along both sides of the A46 corridor, with mainly open agricultural land retained on rising ground towards Hampton Magna and Hampton-on-the Hill (although there is also a rugby club adjacent the A4189). A BP service station is located at the north-west corner of the site adjacent the A46. In general, the site can be described as predominantly rural in character, in spite of many types of land-use in the wider setting.
Visual Issues	The flat landscape coupled with mature vegetation along boundaries provides some local enclosure. However, future development at this site is likely to be notable from the A46 to the west, from Hampton Road and adjacent properties to the south and from the public access areas within St Mary’s Lands / Warwick racecourse to the east. Development is likely to be distantly visible from some public access areas and buildings within Warwick (potentially including parts of the castle battlements, 1600m to the east). Development here may also be partially visible from Hampton Magna and other elevated ground to the west. A public footpath crosses the northern portion of the site. Although transient, potential visual receptors on the footpaths within St Mary’s Lands are likely to be regarded as sensitive receptors to any notable landscape change at the study site, whilst the historic setting of the racecourse and old Warwick would also merit special consideration in any assessment of landscape and visual impact. Views of the castle and the spire of St Mary’s should be regarded as important to the setting of Warwick.
Historic and Cultural Issues	St Mary’s Lands was originally common land that began to be used for horse racing in the late 18th century. The racecourse became more formalised in the

	<p>19th century and a public golf course was also established in the 1890s. Commoners' rights were extinguished in the 1940s and the land has since been owned and managed for public recreation by the District Council. Parts are rented to the Jockey Club, a football club, and as farmland, but the area is still widely regarded as an important open space and public asset in Warwick. The setting of the racecourse requires special consideration (including access management). The footpath across the study site appears to be used – albeit crossings of the A46 appear dangerous. The field pattern appears to be historic. Warwick Conservation Area lies 1.2 km to the east. Further heritage assessment will be required.</p>
Ecological Features	<p>The Gog Brook appears to be a reasonably clean and ecologically intact watercourse and other ecological assets at the site will include hedgerows, veteran trees, blocks of scrub woodland around the boundaries and possibly the remaining pasture. Preserving a viable ecological corridor along the watercourse, including a sufficient buffer for future management, and mitigating impacts or losses to other assets, would be a prerequisite of a sustainable development plan. A detailed ecological survey of the site is recommended. Much of St Mary's Lands is known as 'Lammas meadows', featuring species-rich grassland that is a potential local nature reserve. Nature conservation initiatives are noted adjacent Gog Brook.</p>
Landscape Condition	<p>Although there may have been some hedge loss and some hedges are overgrown or gappy, the overall condition can probably be considered fair.</p>
Planning Issues	<p>The site is partly within a flood risk area (Gog Brook). It is within a <i>Dap 2</i> Area of Restraint. It is outside the Green Belt, the boundary of which is defined by the A46 to the west. It is understood that there are presently a range of plans for development at Warwick Racecourse including a hotel, an enlarged caravan park, an enlarged golf driving range and sports pitch facilities. One possible site for the hotel is at the present racecourse maintenance depot off Hampton Road (immediately east of Gog Brook). There is a preferred option site for residential development at Hampton Magna (4.2 Ha south of Arras Boulevard), approximately 400m west of the site. Cumulative impact assessment will be necessary if any of these plans come to fruition. The only suitable location for site access would appear to be on to Hampton Road near the existing farm house.</p>
2014 Conclusion	<p>Because of the many different land-uses in the locality, this might be considered an 'urban fringe' location. However, the open landscape of the racecourse and agricultural land within and to the north of the site retains a predominantly rural character. If the site was developed, even with low-rise, low-density residential development, it is considered there would be considerable landscape and visual impacts to the setting of the racecourse, to outlooks from Warwick and to perceptions of the setting of the town from adjacent transport corridors. There would also be constraints from flood risk and drainage, noise/pollution from adjacent roads and ecological mitigation. Access and site servicing must come from the south.</p> <p>It is therefore considered that the only area that might be suitable for development is that lying immediately adjacent Budbrooke Lodge Farm. Notwithstanding that this area still has constraints (flood risk / traffic noise), there could be potential for some residential development here. Design would have to consider the Hampton Road frontage (an important gateway to Warwick) and the northern boundary with the racecourse (which would ideally include a substantial landscape buffer). Landscape and visual impacts to the wider setting might be minimised if only this area was brought forward for development.</p>

12.2.0 2015 Review

12.2.1 After a further site visit in November 2015, the original concerns about developing land west of the racecourse appear relevant for the smaller 14–Ha site now being promoted for development at Budbrooke Lodge Farm. However, it is understood that the spur of racecourse formerly used for flat racing is now not required for racing purposes and could also be made available for development.

12.2.2 Compared to the farmland in the wider land parcel, the Budbrooke Lodge Farm corner of land is perhaps less noteworthy in views west from the racecourse, St Mary’s Lands and historic Warwick (although some intervisibility with St Mary’s and the Castle is evident from the site). There is existing mature vegetation adjacent Gog Brook which will provide some seasonal visual enclosure. It could be argued that the now unused section of racecourse has little rural character. A development site that incorporated the farmstead, the land immediately surrounding it and the unused flat-race straight might not intrude significantly on the setting of either the racecourse or the farmland landscape beyond it. However, if a development allocation extended north of the unused race track, it would constitute a significant settlement expansion into farmland and is more likely to be notable from the racecourse and A46. It would lead to the permanent loss of the historic setting of the racecourse and a notable change to this edge of Warwick. It is likely to lead to other pervasive impacts through urbanisation and increased visitor pressure on St Mary’s Lands. It is very likely to put development pressure on the remaining farmland to the north in future planning cycles.

12.3.0 Conclusions:

12.3.1 If it was considered that the site immediately around Budbrooke Lodge Farm, along with the additional 1–hectare of land offered by the unused racetrack, was viable for sustainable development, then the following landscape provisions would be recommended.

- Incorporate the land adjacent Gog Brook into the site so that it can be properly integrated as green infrastructure within the development.
 - It would be ideal to re-introduce an open section of Gog Brook where it has presently been culverted under the racecourse.
 - Provide a building setback to create a sustainable ‘green corridor’ adjacent the brook with the creation/enhancement of riverine habitat(s).
 - Establish a new path / right-of-way beside the brook (where there is presently a very well-used, but muddy, permissive access between Hampton Road and the racecourse)
- Create a definitive boundary that mitigates and defines the site to the north. Hedge and medium–large native tree planting is recommended.
- Retain tree and hedge planting where possible along the Hampton Road frontage and ensure through appropriate design that a sustainable and attractive road corridor environment is maintained at this important gateway to the town.
- Retain/provide an appropriate setback and enclosure adjacent the A46 at the western end of the site.
- Retain any required access to the farmland to the north as might be needed for sustainable management of this land.



View 4 - Looking east near the boundary with A46 towards south end of study site. The land is predominantly arable in this area.



View 5 - Looking north on farm access track adjacent A46. Note BP garage further along road.



View 6 - Looking north-east from the flat race straight at Warwick racecourse. Long views to Warwick and St Mary's.



View 7 - Looking south-east from the flat race straight - towards Budbrooke Lodge Farm and Hampton Road (A4189). Small arable fields with low hedges.

13. Land south of Bishop’s Tachbrook (Refer also to Figures 9.0 and 9.1).

13.1.1 This site does not lie within the Green Belt and was not therefore assessed in the previous JGBS studies. No sites immediately adjoining Bishop’s Tachbrook have been assessed by Richard Morrish Associates in previous studies. However, the area was covered in the WDC ‘Green Belt and Green Field Review’ (2013). In this the conclusion for the relevant land parcel, BT4, was: *Generally a well-connected parcel which plays an important role in preserving the open setting of the village from the south. Some potential for enhancement.*

13.1.2 **General Review.** The site lies to the south of Bishop’s Tachbrook and is essentially a south-east facing hillside with a highpoint of around 90m AOD. The land is managed as one large arable field and its aspect and height will make it intervisible with a large area of countryside to the east and south-east. To the south-west, the site lies a few hundred metres from the M40 (in cutting but audible from the site). The tree line of *Oakley Wood* largely defines the southern viewshed, just south of the motorway.

13.1.3 A number of sites around Bishop’s Tachbrook have been promoted for development in the past five years. This site was considered by WDC as part of a larger SHLAA site (R22 – see inset to Figure 8.0). The conclusion was that although the site had few environmental constraints and has one owner willing to offer the land for development, development here would have ‘high landscape impact’. Ultimately a portion of the land immediately adjacent the village (adjacent Holt Avenue, the Primary School, Commander Close and an allotment site) was allocated for residential development in the draft Local Plan (H23). Bloor Homes received planning consent for 150 homes with a new public open space and allotments on the higher land in 2014. A reserved matters application (W/15/1078) was given consent in September 2015. This development should relate well to the existing settlement, will be close to existing community facilities and includes plans to provide additional footpath links to the wider footpath network. A ‘landscape buffer’ approximately 15m wide is proposed along the south-western site boundary. Although outside of the red line site and not yet designed and specified, this landscape provision could greatly assist mitigation of this scheme and help to create a successful transition with the adjacent farmland.

13.1.4 It is understood that the additional land within the original SHLAA R22 is now being promoted for development (approximately 12Ha in addition to the existing permitted 6.5Ha site). This would create a significant south-easterly extension for Bishop’s Tachbrook which would not easily complement the existing settlement form. There might be opportunities to create more public open space on higher ground (avoiding the potential visual impacts that would be associated with building here) and the most westerly point of the site might be retained as farmland. However, it can be anticipated that some of the new housing would be more than 800m from the historic village centre, which is likely to encourage car usage and reduce sustainability. Although the landscape setting to the east of Bishop’s Tachbrook is sparsely populated, with a few scattered farmsteads and rural footpaths, the extended development would be likely to be prominent from this direction and from Oakley Wood Road, greatly altering perceptions of the village. The existing permitted development has resulted in the removal of all road-front vegetation – and if a similar approach was taken on the extended development site, this would result in a significantly urbanised setting.

13.1.5 The proposed extension would bring residential development to within 250m of Tachbrook Hill Farm (Grade II listed). Barwood Developments previously proposed a development of 125 dwellings on land north of the current proposed extension (west of the existing village), bringing development up to the listed farm. The scheme was refused on grounds of adverse impact to the character and appearance of the area and the listed building, and this decision was upheld at appeal in November 2014.

13.2.0 Conclusions:

13.2.1 Extending the village of Bishop’s Tachbrook further to the south would create a significant spur of new settlement into open countryside which would not complement the general settlement footprint and is unlikely to result in sustainable development. Housing is likely to be prominent in the wider setting to the south-east and in the approach to the village along Oakley Wood Road. Even if development was designed to avoid landscape and visual impacts to the north, the site would still extend settlement westward and encroach on the setting of a listed farmhouse. It is recommended that the permitted scheme for 150 homes forms the full extent of village expansion in this direction. WDC should ensure that the landscape buffer proposed along the western boundary of the scheme, along with new footpath links and corridors defined in the original outline application, are fully implemented with appropriate provisions for establishment maintenance and ongoing management.



View looking north-east over the proposed Bishop's Tachbrook expansion site, near the boundary of the permitted allocation. Note housing at Holt Avenue to left and long views to open countryside to east.



View from same viewpoint looking south-east - with Oakley Wood defining much of the skyline. Development here is likely to be perceived as prominent urban expansion into open countryside.



The removal of roadside vegetation at the Oakley Wood Road boundary of the existing permitted scheme will 'urbanise' the approaches to Bishop's Tachbrook.