

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION - MATTER 7A: – PROPOSED HOUSING SITE ALLOCATIONS AND SAFEGUARDED LAND – WARWICK, WHITNASH AND LEAMINGTON

This Statement is prepared on behalf of Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd in relation to their various land interests within Warwick District in particular Site H44 – North of Milverton. We respond to each question in turn below.

1) What is the current planning status of the site?

1.1 Sites H44 and S2 are currently located within the Green Belt. The site as a whole is not currently subject to a live planning application and there is no known planning history in relation to the site.

1.2 The site has however, been actively promoted throughout the Local Plan process which has resulted in the emerging allocation of Site H44: North of Milverton for 250 dwellings and the safeguarded Site S2: North of Milverton for development post the Local Plan period.

2) How does it fit within the overall spatial strategy?

2.1 The site fits within the overall strategy given that it adjoins the built up area of Royal Leamington Spa, which alongside Warwick forms the most sustainable location for growth within Warwick District.

3) In addition to housing provision, are there other benefits that the proposed development would bring?

3.1 In addition to market housing provision on the site, the proposals would include for a policy compliant level of affordable housing provision, thereby assisting in meeting the substantial affordable housing needs as outlined in the joint Coventry and Warwickshire SHMA. The housing mix would also be catered to provide for a range of tenures to meet local needs.

3.2 The wider site would also incorporate areas of public open space to the benefit of both new and existing residents.

3.3 Alongside these benefits, there would be significant economic benefits which would include; the creation of job opportunities during the construction phase of development, increased levels of disposable income from new residents which could be spent in supporting local

services and facilities and also the payment of the New Homes Bonus to the local authority. Furthermore, the site (as a whole) has the potential to provide for a local centre/employment uses which will add to the creation of job opportunities within the immediate locality.

- 3.4 In addition, the site also seeks to provide a virtual park and ride facility to serve the north of Leamington Spa and Kenilworth. The facility will be situated to the north of the site with a proposed access to Sandy Lane. As a facility it will have circa 400 spaces, which will ensure the service (proposed to be operated by Stagecoach) will remain viable for the foreseeable future.
- 3.5 In terms of environmental benefits, the proposals would seek to ensure pedestrian and cyclist connectivity to the surrounding built up area of Leamington Spa, thereby reducing the reliance on the private motor vehicle. It will also provide for enhanced landscaping buffers and areas of public open space. Furthermore, the provision of SUDS will act as a catalyst to enhance ecological biodiversity within the locality of the site.

4) What are the potential adverse impacts of developing the site? How could they be mitigated?

- 4.1 A poorly designed development could impact upon the landscape character and quality of the surrounding area. In addition, the boundary with the Green Belt could be undermined were the site not sensitively developed. In both instances, we consider that the impacts will be mitigated – and indeed the relationship enhanced from the current position.
- 4.2 The masterplan shown in the Development Framework Document (**Appendix 1**) shows an enhanced landscaping buffer to the northern boundary of the site which accords with the key recommendation contained within our initial Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Green Belt Review (**Appendix 2**) which details these considerations fully. Indeed at paragraph 8.4 the report notes that *“Although the site comprises arable agricultural fields, it does not display characteristics of strong rural character as a result of the influence of adjoining development, particularly along its southern boundary which adjoins the built up edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa; its eastern boundary where it adjoins the A452 Kenilworth Road; and its western boundary which adjoins a railway corridor.”*
- 4.3 In terms of potential ecological impacts, the proposals would seek to ensure pedestrian and cyclist connectivity to the surrounding built up area of Milverton and provide a park and ride scheme, thereby reducing the reliance on the private motor vehicle. It would also provide for enhanced landscaping buffers along key boundaries, enhancing the permanent physical

boundaries that are located on the site boundaries. Furthermore, the creation of SUDS, and significant buffers on the built edges of the site, will act as a catalyst to enhance biodiversity within the locality of the site – which is currently of limited ecological value due to the agricultural nature of the site. An ecological walkover report is enclosed at **Appendix 3** and a Protected Species Survey Report is enclosed at **Appendix 4**.

5) What are the infrastructure requirements/costs and are there physical or other constraints to development? How would these be addressed?

- 5.1 We consider that the costs are consistent with those expected with a greenfield sustainable urban extension to a settlement, and thus there should be no concern in relation to the deliverability of the site. Whilst more detail will emerge as an application is advanced, M-EC have estimated the infrastructure costs and requirements in the letter enclosed at **Appendix 5**.
- 5.2 In summary however, the estimated costs for infrastructure requirements and improvements for the whole site totals £16,435,000. This figure includes for any utility diversions and connections required as well as the infrastructure works for highways access and drainage solutions. This level of infrastructure is linked to the delivery of the wider site, and not just the initial 250 dwellings proposed at H44.
- 5.3 In terms of physical constraints, it is not considered that there are any constraints which would prevent the development of the site from coming forward during the Plan period. A review of the technical considerations in terms of highways; flood risk; drainage; noise; land contamination; and utilities are considered within the report at **Appendix 6** from M-EC. Early discussions have been held with Stagecoach regarding the deliverability of the northern parcel of the site for the park and ride facility and it is envisaged that a continued close working relationship will remain in place to ensure deliverability of such a facility between Taylor Wimpey and Stagecoach. We enclose at **Appendix 7** a letter of support from Stagecoach, in relation to the release of land north of Milverton.
- 5.4 The Council's Plan also sets out the potential for the delivery of a train connection
- 5.5 The Development Framework Document contained at **Appendix 1** sets out that the site can comfortably accommodate 250 dwellings with the requisite required landscape buffers and park and ride facility. It is therefore not considered that the site is subject to any constraints which would prevent development of the site.

6) Is the site realistically viable and deliverable?

- 6.1 As above, we are of the opinion that the site is realistically viable and deliverable. It is a greenfield site and, whilst the wider site will deliver substantial infrastructure, it is not considered that these will constrain development.
- 6.2 A continued close working relationship will remain established with Stagecoach to ensure that the park and ride facility can be delivered in a timely and concise manner in conjunction with an early planning application.
- 6.3 We enclose at **Appendix 8** a summary leaflet which sets out the economic benefits of the proposed development.
- 6.4 Furthermore, the site is in the control of a national housebuilder who is very active in the local market with a proven rate of delivery within the housing market area.

7) What is the expected timescale for development and is this realistic?

- 7.1 The housing trajectory has indicated delivery of the site to commence in 2019 with the delivery of 50 dwellings a year to 2024. We consider this to be a realistic and achievable trajectory for the site. If the wider site were to be delivered then it is expected that the rate could increase beyond 50 dwellings per annum, as the site would benefit from offering opportunities in a different market area than the sites to the south of Warwick.
- 7.2 Initial master planning and an assessment of the constraints and opportunities have already been undertaken for the site to inform the representations made throughout the emerging Local Plan process and to determine capacity on the site. As a result of early survey work undertaken with regards to capacity; landscaping; flood risk and transport, it would be anticipated that a full planning application would be submitted (subject to ecological survey seasons) in late 2017 which would subsequently allow for any pre-commencement conditions to be discharged and construction to commence in late 2018, allowing for the first completions in 2019.

8) What would be the effect of the proposal on the purposes of including land within the Green Belt?

- 8.1 We have previously undertaken an independent Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Green Belt Review of the site which is enclosed at **Appendix 2**.

8.2 This document concluded that the overall contribution the site makes to the Green Belt is *'some to limited'*. It continues to state at paragraph 8.3 that *"subject to proposed landscape measures including the reinforcement of site boundaries; the creation of a landscape buffer along the northern boundary; the retention of an area of green open space between the proposed development on the site and the western boundary adjoining the railway corridor with the settlement of Old Milverton beyond; and the retention of an area of green open space between the proposed development and the southern edge of Blackdown, the site has capacity to accommodate built form whilst maintaining Green Belt function."*

9) What would be the effect on the openness of the Green Belt?

9.1 The Council's Joint Green Belt Study (June 2015) considered the site as part of a wider parcel and noted that the site is largely free from development and therefore considered open and free from encroachment apart from the northern corner which has been compromised by several large buildings, including Oak Medical Hospital and Blackdown Clinic.

9.2 Whilst the site coming forward would impact upon the openness of the Green Belt as a whole, it has been noted that a number of landscape considerations and sensitive layout design can be taken into account when developing the site to minimise the impact which are considered to be as follows:

- Creation of a landscape buffer to the northern boundary;
- Retention of an area of green open space between the site and the western boundary adjoining the railway corridor;
- Retention of an area of green open space between the site and the southern edge of Blackdown; and
- Enhanced landscape buffer along the eastern boundary to Kenilworth Road.

9.3 The longer term boundaries would provide permanent and defensible boundaries to the Green Belt, namely Sandy Lane to the north; Kenilworth Road to the east; existing residential development to the south; and the railway corridor to the west. Paragraph 8.6 of our own Landscape and Visual Appraisal sets out that with the mitigation measures identified above the site will maintain a robust and defensible boundary to the settlement of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and ensure that both visual and physical separation is maintained between settlements.

9.4 Accordingly, it was concluded that development could be accommodated without resulting in significant landscape and visual effects, or impacting upon the primary objectives of Green Belt policy as set out at paragraph 80 of the NPPF.

10) Are there exceptional circumstances which justify altering the Green Belt? If so, what are they?

10.1 Following the suspension of the emerging Local Plan the Council have had to revisit the overall housing target for the District to meet the needs of the housing market area and the needs of Coventry as well through a Memorandum of Understanding.

10.2 This has resulted in an overall housing target of 16,776 dwellings for the emerging Plan period to 2029, subject to the ongoing considerations relating to Matter 2. It is also noted that, as set out in our other Matter Statement for Matter 3, the Plan allows for limited flexibility of 7.2% over and above the target of 16,776 dwellings.

10.3 The need to meet the objectively assessed need for the District is considered to be an exceptional circumstance which justifies the release of sites from the Green Belt to meet this challenging target for the District.

10.4 Furthermore, the release of Site H44 at North of Milverton is in accordance with the Council's hierarchy of settlements and is essential – and consistent with NPPF – to allow for the sustainable growth of the settlement over the Plan period.

11) Why was safeguarded land identified, what is it intended to achieve?

11.1 Safeguarded land has been identified under Policy DSNEW2 which sets out that the safeguarded sites may be utilised to meet the longer term strategic development needs beyond the Plan period at 2029.

11.2 Under supporting paragraph NEW2.2 the Council *“recognises that there is a limited amount of suitable land currently available outside the Green Belt to meet long-term development needs, particularly those needs arising in Coventry. Therefore identifying ‘safeguarded land’ in appropriate locations may assist in meeting the long-term development needs of the functional housing and economic market area.”*

11.3 We agree with the provision of safeguarded land subject to our proposed amendments set out as part of the Proposed Modifications consultation under ‘Mod 23’. We would continue to

maintain that appropriate wording should be incorporated into Policy DSNEW2 which allows for the release of safeguarded land for development to meet the needs of the housing market area should the Council fail to sustain the delivery of a five-year housing land supply.

12) How was the safeguarded land identified, what options were considered and why was the land in question selected?

-

13) How does it fit within the overall spatial strategy?

13.1 Please refer to Question 2.

14) What would be the effect of the proposal on purposes of including land within the Green Belt?

14.1 Please refer to Question 8.

15) What would be the effect on the openness of the Green Belt?

15.1 Please refer to Question 9.

16) What are the potential adverse impacts? How could they be mitigated?

16.1 Please refer to Question 4.

17) Are there infrastructure, physical or other constraints to development? If so how could these be overcome? Is the land realistically developable?

17.1 Please refer to Question 5 with regards to infrastructure costs and constraints to development.

17.2 With regards to whether the land is realistically developable, we consider that it is. Overall the site has no constraints to development and a range of access options are available as set out within the report from M-EC at **Appendix 4** and their accompanying access options drawing.

17.3 Furthermore, the entire site (Site H44 and S2) are within the control of a single national housebuilder with a proven rate of delivery within the housing market area, thereby

demonstrating that the site can come forward as part of a comprehensively planned development for the Plan period and beyond 2029.

18) Are there exceptional circumstances which justify altering the Green Belt? If so, what are they?

18.1 Please refer to Question 10.

19) Is the overall amount of safeguarded land identified sufficient?

19.1 It is considered that the safeguarded land is sufficient to assist in meeting the longer term strategic objectives post the Plan period in 2029. Initial capacity studies have indicated the site can adequately accommodate approximately 1,000 dwellings with associated infrastructure – the development of which may assist in the south western corner of the site being given over to a new railway station (subject to viability).

19.2 Appropriate landscaping buffers and enhanced landscaping can all be achieved within the area of safeguarded land to minimise the impact upon the landscape and visual context of the site and to assist in screening any new development.



Land North of Milverton, Royal Leamington Spa

Development Framework Document

August 2016

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Contents

1.0 Introduction

Purpose of this Document	4
The Site	4

2.0 Planning Policies

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	6
Emerging Local Plan Proposed Modifications	8

3.0 Milverton

Village Profile and Facilities	10
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4.0 Site Assessment

Topography	12
Site Access	12
Sustainable Transport	14
Landscape and Visual	15
Heritage.....	15
Landscape Quality, Sensitivity and Value	16
Ecology	16
Flood Risk and Drainage	17
Noise	18
Air Quality	18
Utilities	18
Summary of Assessment	18

5.0 Development Framework Context

Land Use and Amount	20
---------------------------	----

6.0 Landscape, Ecology & Drainage

Landscape and Ecology Strategy	22
Drainage Strategy	22

7.0 Summary

Conclusions	24
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1.0 Introduction

This section describe the purpose of the Development Framework Document and the Site location.



Figure 1.1> Wider Location Plans



Purpose of this Document

1.1 This Development Framework Document (DFD) has been prepared by Barton Willmore on behalf of Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd who have land interests to the north of Birmingham Road, Hatton Park. The land interest which is the focus of this DFD is illustrated in Figure 1.1 and 1.2 and is referred hereafter as 'the Site'.

1.2 Taylor Wimpey have been working on site appraisal work and the promotion of the site. This has enabled the production of a comprehensive masterplan (Figure 5.1) which is intended to guide the future development of the Site and support the achievement of a co-ordinated and comprehensive development.

1.3 Section 2 of this document explains the policy context behind the masterplan. Section 3 sets out the context of the settlement. Section 4 includes the technical analysis work that has been completed to date which have helped to define key Site features and those development opportunities which have influenced the proposed pattern of future development.

1.4 An assessment of the development framework context in terms of master planning is presented in Section 5. In Section 6 the main considerations

in terms of landscape, drainage and ecology are considered in preparing the wider master plan, before a summary is provided at Section 7.

The Site

1.5 Taylor Wimpey control the site located to the north of Milverton with a total site area measuring 73.22 hectares.

1.6 The Site is bounded by Sandy Lane/Old Milverton Lane to the north, the A452 to the east, a railway line to the west and existing residential development to the south, including an area of allotments. The Site is situated immediately to the north of Royal Leamington Spa. The boundaries to the site offer logical and permanent boundaries to the Green Belt which enable a sensible addition to the built form of Leamington Spa.

1.7 The proposed allocation in the Proposed Modifications to the emerging Local Plan is for 250 dwellings (Site H44). However, the site is capable of delivering a higher number of dwellings with the inclusion of safeguarded land under Site H2, delivering in total circa 1,300 dwellings. The wider development would include a park and ride facility; local centre and potential employment uses. Importantly, the site can be delivered whilst respecting the key characteristics of the site – including the Green Belt.



- Site Boundary
- - - WDLP - Housing Allocation



Figure 1.2> Site Location Plan

2.0

Planning Policies

The planning policy context for the Site is highlighted in this Section, with particular regard given to those aspects of adopted and emerging policy which have influenced our initial land use proposals and framework masterplan.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

2.1 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan-making this means that local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area. Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole; or specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted.

2.2 NPPF paragraph 47 states that in order to boost significantly the supply of housing Local Planning Authorities should use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with the policies set out in this Framework, including identifying key sites which are critical to the delivery of the housing strategy over the plan period.

2.3 NPPF paragraph 80 sets out the five purposes of Green Belt. These are as follows:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

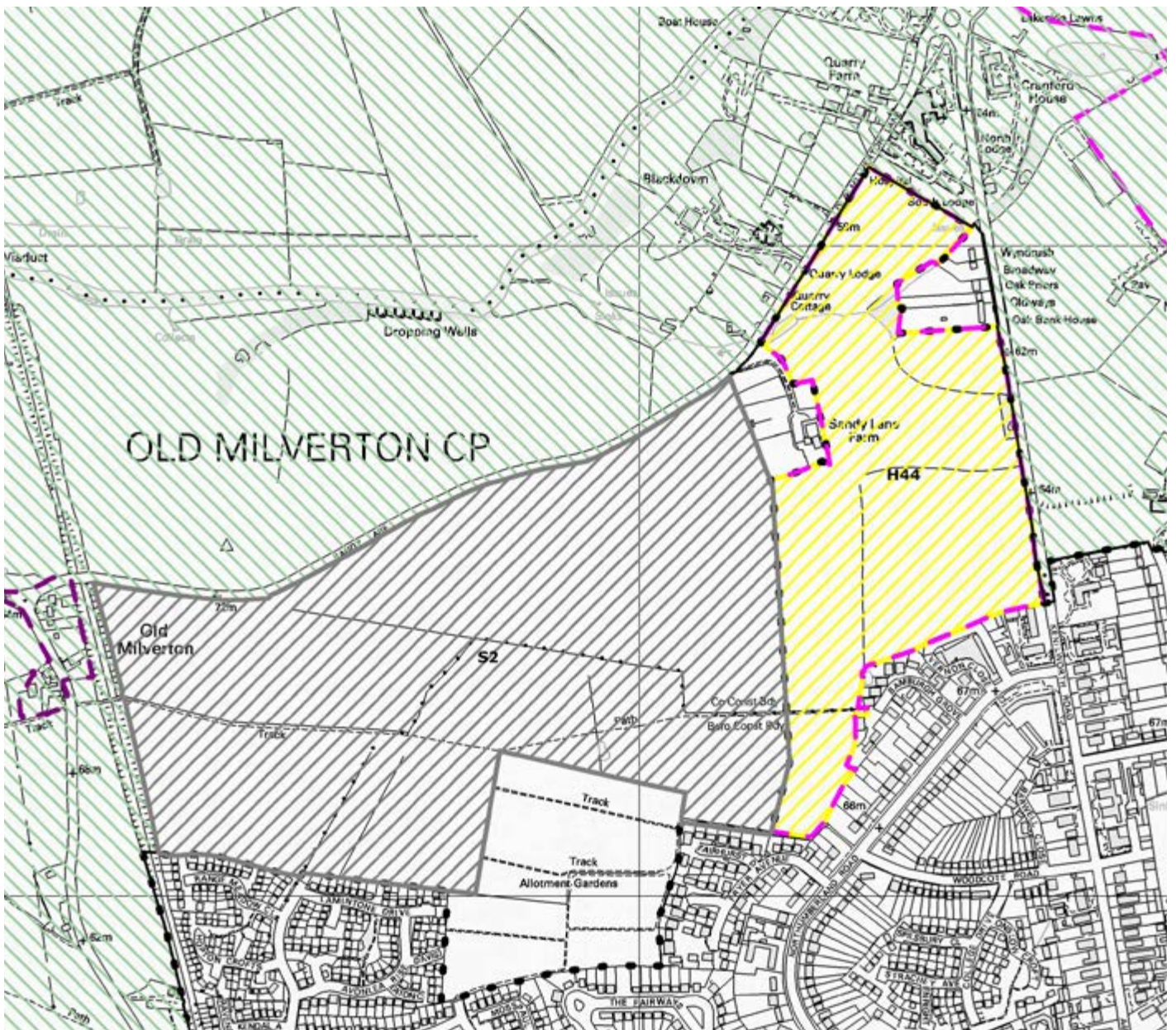
2.4 Paragraph 83 identifies that Local Planning

Authorities with Green Belts in their area should establish Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans which set the framework for Green Belt and settlement policy. Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan. At that time, authorities should consider the Green Belt boundaries having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period.

2.5 In defining Green Belt boundaries, the requirements for Local Authorities set out in paragraph 85 include taking account of the following:

- Ensure consistency with the Local Plan strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;
- Not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open;
- Satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the development plan period; and
- Define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.

2.6 Local Plans are the key to delivering sustainable development that reflects the vision and aspirations of local communities. Local Plans must be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. Local planning authorities should seek opportunities to achieve each of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, and net gains across all three. Local Plans should be aspirational but realistic. They should address the spatial implications of economic, social and environmental change.



Key

- WDLP - Housing Allocations (DS11) Site Ref.
- WDLP - Urban Area Boundary
- WDLP - Park and Ride Area of Search (TRS)
- WDLP - Green Belt (DS15)
- WDLP - Safeguarded Land (DSNEW2) Site Ref.
- WDLP - In-fill Village Boundaries

2. Leamington, Warwick and Whitnash - Milverton Extract (Proposed Mod. 2016)

Local Plan Policies Map

Figure 2.1> Hatton Park Proposed Modifications Feb 2016

Emerging Local Plan Proposed Modifications

2.7 The Proposed Modifications to the emerging Local Plan were subject to a period of public consultation between 11th March and 22nd April 2016. The following policies are considered to be of relevance to bringing the Site forward for development.

2.8 Policy DS4 sets out the Council's spatial strategy, with the level of housing growth set out under Policy DS6 which details that in accordance with the updated housing needs evidence and the Coventry and Warwickshire Memorandum of Understanding for Housing Requirements, the Council will provide for 16,776 new homes between 2011 and 2029.

2.9 Policy DS10 sets out the broad location of allocated housing sites, paragraph 2.37 of which outlines that "the spatial strategy aims to meet housing needs of the District and Housing Market

Area by allocating sites in and adjacent to the main urban areas and the more sustainable villages." Paragraph 2.38 continues by stating "In selecting sites on the edge of urban areas, non-Green Belt sites are favoured over Green Belt sites where possible. However, where there are no suitable non-Green Belt alternatives to meet an identified need, sites are removed from the Green Belt to enable development to take place."

2.10 Policy DS19 sets out the extent of the Green Belt on the Proposals Maps. It states that the Council will apply Green Belt policy in accordance with Government guidance as set out in national planning policy. The site at H44 is allocated to be removed from the Green Belt, which reflects the allocation. The site at S2 is proposed to be safeguarded land to come forward for development to meet the strategic development needs after the plan period in 2029.

2.11 Policy H1 sets out the direction for housing and identifies Leamington Spa as a main urban area.



Figure 2.2> National Planning Policy Framework



Figure 2.3> Warwick Local Plan



3.0 Milverton

A review of existing local facilities and movement patterns has been undertaken to assess how the Site relates in terms of distance and accessibility.

Profile of Village and Facilities

3.1 The site is located to the north of Milverton adjacent to Royal Leamington Spa. It lies within the Green Belt approximately 1 mile to the north of the centre of Leamington Spa and 3.4 miles to the north east of Warwick town centre.

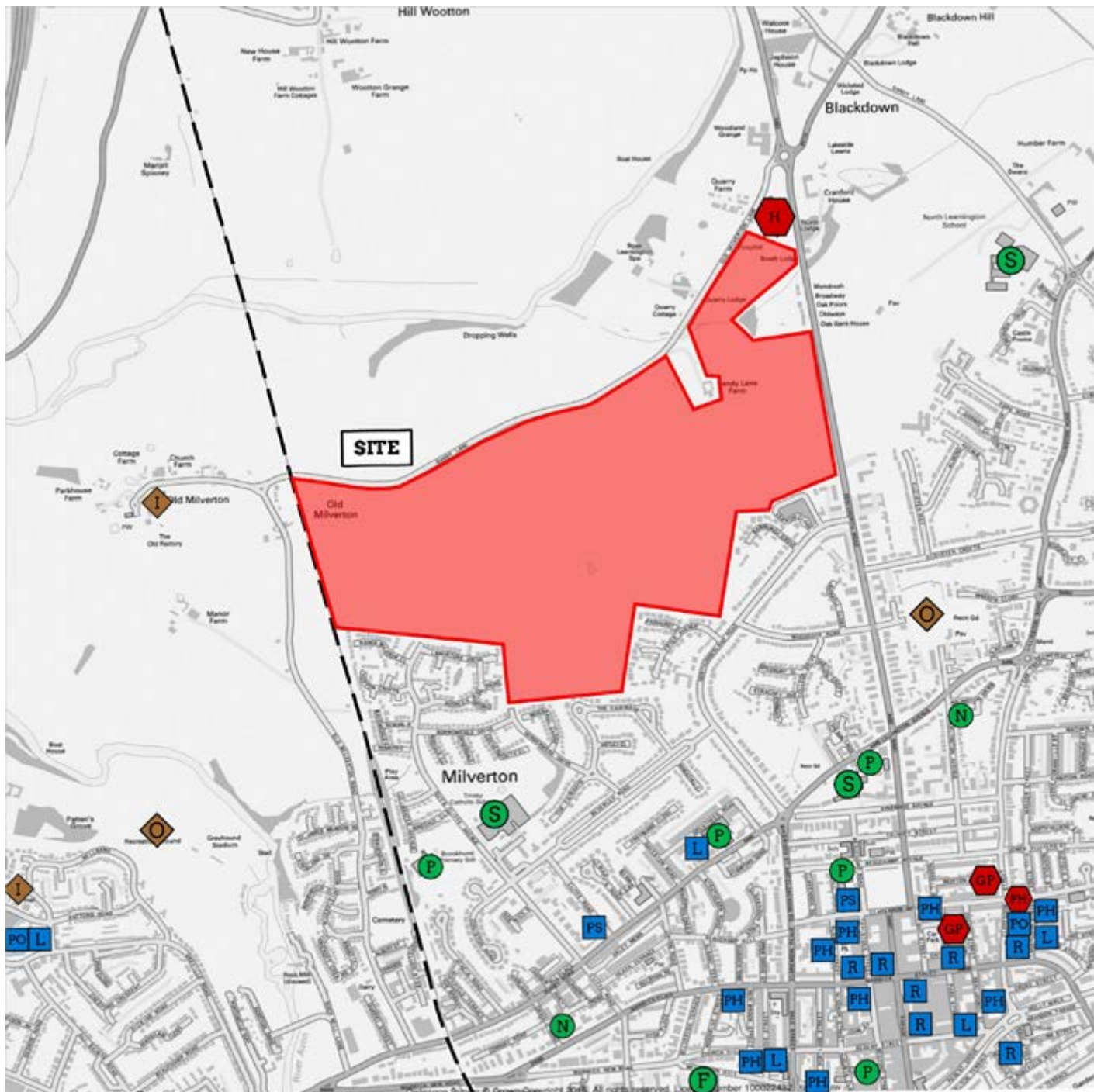
3.2 The settlement is surrounded by farmland to the north and residential development of the outskirts of Leamington Spa to the south. The small settlement of Blackdown is situated to the north east of Milverton. The railway line forms the western boundary of the site with the A452 forming the eastern boundary. The northern boundary is formed by Sandy Lane.

3.3 Leamington Spa is highlighted as a sustainable urban centre under policy H1 of the emerging local plan.

3.4 Key information relating to the settlement includes:

- Local shop, Public House, Petrol Station and Post office
- A number of Bus Service
- 0.6km to Primary School
- 2.2km to Leamington Spa Railway Station
- 2km to Warwick Town Centre





LEISURE

- INDOOR VENUE
- OUTDOOR VENUE

EDUCATION

- NURSERY
- PRIMARY SCHOOL
- SECONDARY SCHOOL
- FURTHER EDUCATION

RETAIL

- LOCAL SHOP
- PUBLIC HOUSE
- POST OFFICE
- PETROL STATION
- RESTAURANT/TAKEAWAY

HEALTH

- PHARMACY
- GENERAL PRACTICE
- HOSPITAL

MISCELLANEOUS

- RAILWAY LINE



Figure 3.1> Facilities Plan

4.0

Site Assessment

To ensure the delivery of this site, which sensitively and positively integrates with the existing urban area, a range of technical assessments of the Site have been undertaken on behalf of Taylor Wimpey. This assessment work is described below, with key physical features and development opportunities and constraints identified for the Site. This work has shaped and informed the design response to the Site which is presented as a framework masterplan in Section 5.

Topography

4.1 The site is located close to the River Avon, with land falling away beyond the northern boundary of the site towards the River Avon, which meanders across the landscape at an elevation of approximately 50m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). Landform is generally related to the winding route of the River Avon as it heads north and in this direction the landscape rises gently towards a prominent high point of approximately 90m AOD at Leek Wootton to the north-west, with an elevation of approximately 76m AOD at Hill Wootton to the north.

4.2 Landform is clearly further influenced by the River Avon as it heads south and then south westwards through the southern part of Warwick, with elevations again ranging from between 55m AOD. The River Leam joins the River Avon along the western edge of Leamington Spa and heads eastwards through the heart of the town, again at levels of approximately 50m AOD before land rises sharply along the eastern edge of the town, associated with the Campion Hills area.

4.3 Land within the site is gently undulating with a high point of approximately 72m AOD in the north-west. Land then slopes downwards from this point to the centre of the site to a level of approximately 60m AOD, before it slopes up from the site of the site to the south-east corner to a level of approximately 65m AOD.

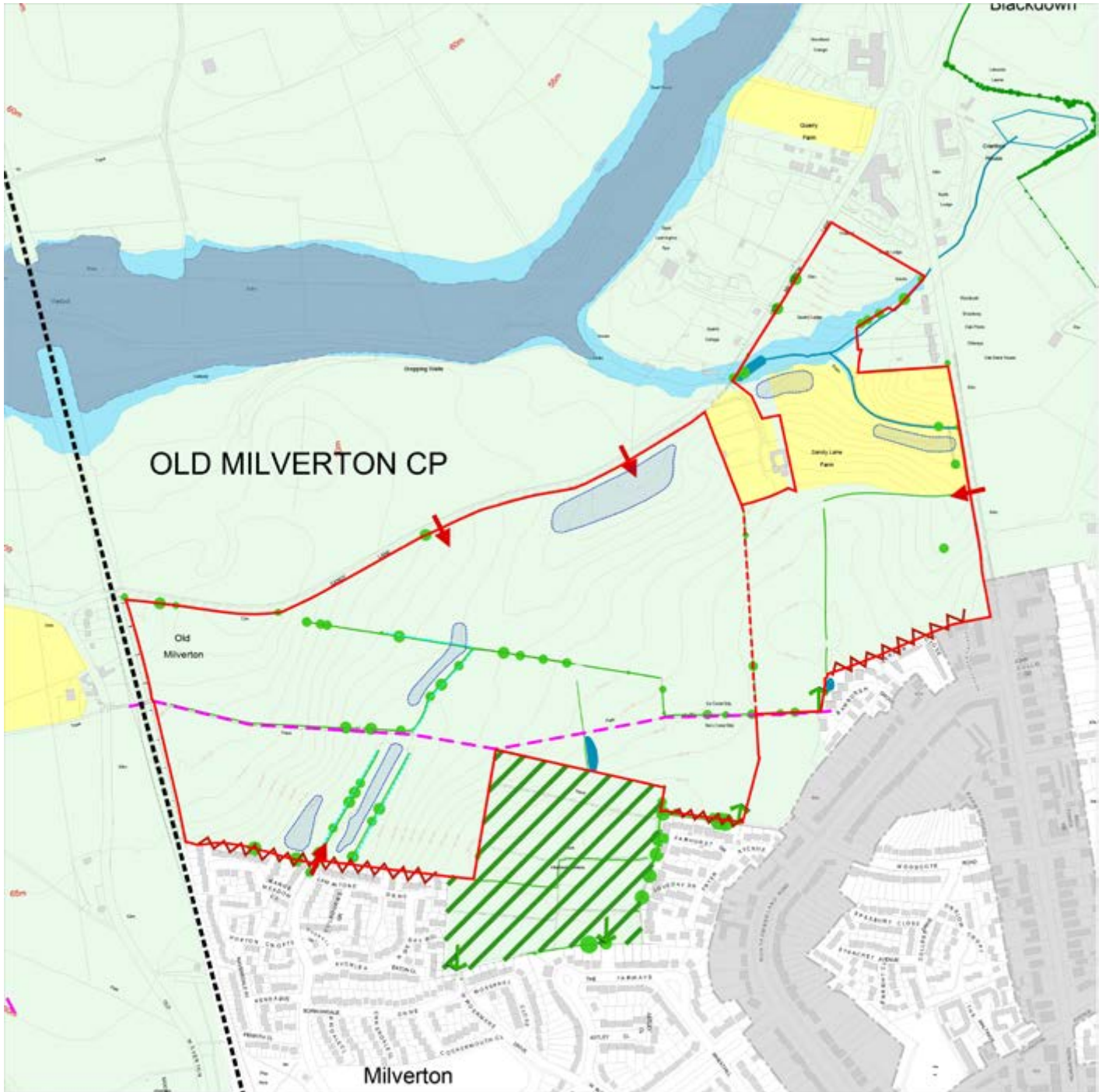
Site Access

4.4 The site (H44) can be served from two points of access, the first a priority junction from Sandy Lane and the second formed on the A452. The final layout of the junction has not yet been determined but is anticipated that this could take the form of a T-junction with right turn lane or traffic signals. It is considered that traffic signals would be appropriate to serve the wider development area (Site S2) and therefore if a right turn lane is proposed suitable provision will be made for the junction to be modified at a later date. Access to the Park and Ride facility will also be considered through discussions with Stagecoach and the County Council.

4.5 In terms of the wider development site (S2) it is likely that two further access points will be provided from Sandy Lane taking the form of a roundabout in a central location and a T-junction further west. A third access onto Guys Cliff Avenue will be facilitated through an extension of the existing cul-de-sac and as a minimum pedestrian, cycle and public transport access will be made available from this point.

4.6 As part of the access proposals onto Sandy Lane consideration will be given to longer term proposals and the County Council aspiration for the Leamington Northern Relief Road (LNRR). The development of the site will be developed to ensure this longer term proposal is not prejudiced.

4.7 Highway boundary information has been sought from Warwickshire County Council and this confirms the access proposals can be accommodated within the highway or land proposed to be under the control of Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd.



- | | | | |
|--|---|--|----------------------------|
| Site Boundary | Existing Allotments | Watercourses and Water Bodies | Potential Vehicular Access |
| WDLP - Housing Allocation | Existing railway | 1:100 Year Flood Zone | |
| Leamington Spa Conservation Area | Public Right of Way
<small>Source: OS Base Mapping</small> | 1:1000 Year Flood Zone | |
| Existing Trees
<small>Source: Topo Survey 17622A-1-2D</small> | Green Belt
<small>Source: GIS Data</small> | Potential Surface Water Attenuation Features | |
| Existing Hedgerows
<small>Source: Topo Survey 17622A-1-2D</small> | Existing Dwellings Backing onto Site | Ridge and Furrow | |
| Vegetation
<small>Source: Google Aerial Photo</small> | Seasonally Wet Ditch | Potential Pedestrian Access | |

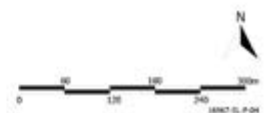


Figure 4.1> Constraints Plan

Sustainable Transport

4.8 Pedestrian access into the site will be achieved through an extension of the footways along Kenilworth Road to the east of the site. There is potential for further pedestrian access to the south of the site via Guys Cliff Avenue, Windermere Drive, The Fairways and Bamburgh Grove, subject to access design proposals.

4.9 The Warwickshire Nuffield Hospital borders the north eastern boundary of the site and can be accessed via the existing footways along Kenilworth Road. Further facilities and amenities are located to the south of the site and include various schools, convenience shopping, post offices, public houses, restaurants/takeaways and various high street shops; all of which are considered to be within reasonable walking distance of the site.

4.10 Various public transport options are available in close proximity to the site with bus services 11, X17 and X18 running frequently with a further 6 services operating less frequently to various destinations within Warwickshire. Figure 4.2 shows the keybus

routes in the local area. Discussions are underway regarding the provision of a virtual Park and Ride on the allocated site H44 which would include working with current bus operators to enhance the existing bus services in the area.

4.11 National cycle route 41 is located to the south of the site and is a long distance route connecting Bristol, Gloucester, Stratford-upon-Avon and Rugby. The route is a mixture of on-road and traffic free routes via unsurfaced bridleways. National cycle route 52 is located to the west of the site and connects Warwick to the west of Loughborough. The route is mostly on road with small sections of traffic free routes.

4.12 Leamington Spa Rail Station is situated 2.2km to the south of the site. The station, which is managed by Chiltern Railways, provides services to the neighbouring stations of Warwick, Coventry and Banbury as well as Birmingham, Derby and Oxford – all within an hours' commute of the station. The station offers a total of 10 cycle storage spaces coupled with 257 vehicle parking spaces which could form part of a multimodal journey.

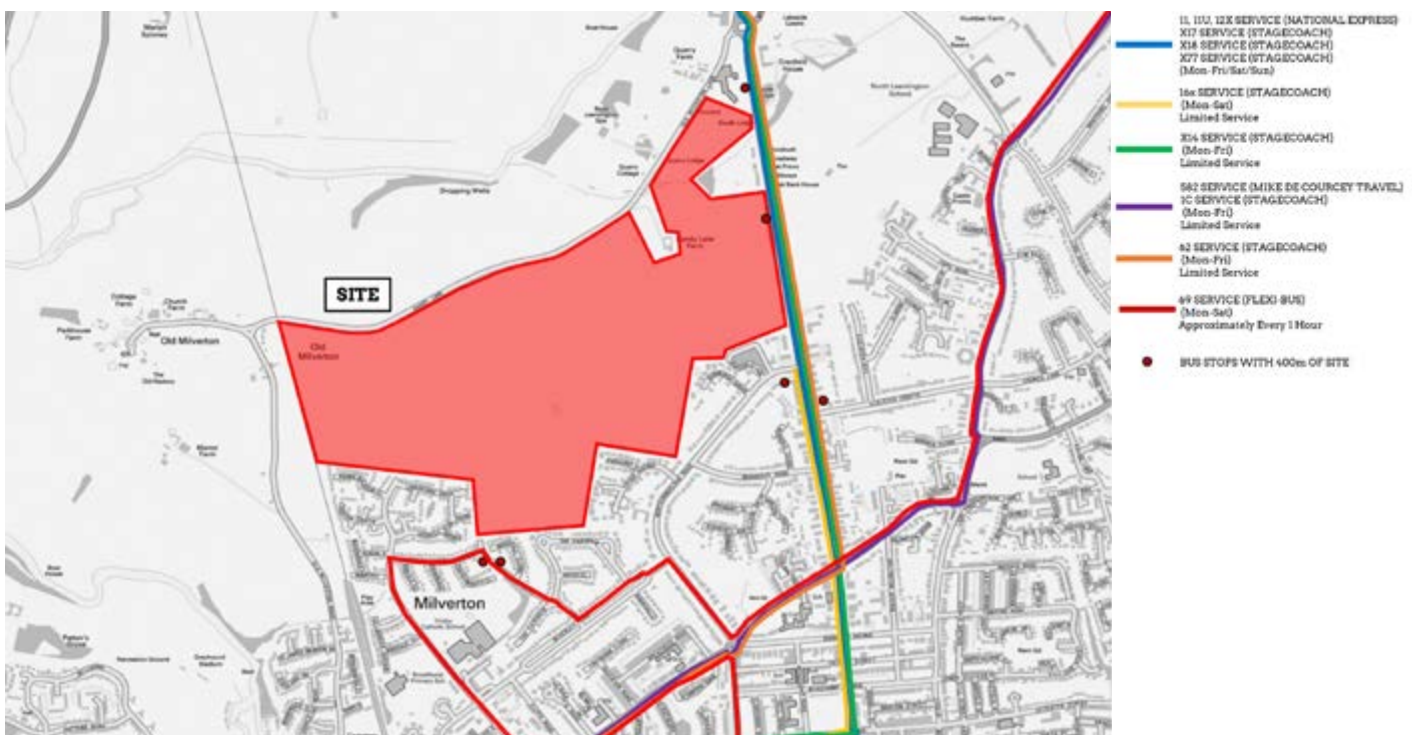


Figure 4.2> Milverton bus service

Landscape and Visual

4.13 Near distance views of the site are experienced from publicly accessible place, the site is seen in the context of existing residential built form on the northern edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and associated infrastructure including the A452 Kenilworth Road to the east of the site and the railway corridor to the west of the site. These urbanising features exert a substantial influence over the site giving it a greater affinity with the urban edge than with the open countryside which exists to the north of the site.

4.14 Longer distance views of the site experienced from publicly accessible places are limited to small parts of the site, with the visible parts of the site forming a very small element in a wider panoramic view. They are also seen in the context of existing built form associated with the settlement of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa.

4.15 Residential properties along the A452 Kenilworth Road immediately to the east of the Site will likely experience a limited detrimental change in the view

with views across the site filtered by extensive tree belts and mature trees around the boundaries of these properties. A limited number of residential properties in Hill Wootton will potentially experience distant partial views towards the site which are likely to be limited to upper floor windows only. In this context, any detrimental change in the view will likely be limited and seen in the context of the existing settlement edge.

Heritage

4.16 There is limited intervisibility between the site and the Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area, with the small section adjoining the south-eastern edge of the site being the only visible part of the Conservation Area. This part comprises recent development and forms a very small element of the wider Conservation Area which covers an extensive part of the settlement of Leamington Spa.

4.17 There are a number of listed buildings located around the site, however none are adjacent and they are separated by infrastructure and/or existing residential areas. Guy's Cliffe Park and Garden is also located to the west of the site, beyond the railway line.



Landscape Quality, Sensitivity and Value

4.18 The site lies within Green Belt but is not covered by any national or local landscape designations. It contains a network of hedgerows and hedgerow trees and a small part of the site lies adjacent to the Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area. The close affinity with urban development including residential to the south and east; the A425 Kenilworth Road to the east and railway corridor to the west of the site reduces tranquillity and remoteness. The site is considered to be of low to medium landscape value.

Ecology

4.19 The Site comprises a number of arable fields with grassland margins, bounded by hedgerows with mature trees. Two ponds, a brook, seasonal ditches and woodland are also present creating some diversity in parts of the largely arable site.

4.20 Previous surveys undertaken found three bat species using features within the area such as

hedgerows and tree lines to forage. Bat roost records are present nearby and there is potential for bat roosting within mature trees at the site. Badgers have been recorded to be active within the site and one substantial sett occurs, with a number of smaller outlying setts also present. To the north and west to the River Avon, several water vole and otter records were returned and the potential for both species to pass through the small brook in the north of the site will need further investigation, although resident populations are unlikely.

4.21 Grass snakes have previously been seen onsite and great crested newt populations have been recorded in close proximity to the site.

4.22 Despite great crested newts and badgers providing certain constraints to development, they only do so insofar as they must be carefully considered within the masterplanning of the site. With appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures, no over-riding constraints to development are identified.



Flood Risk and Drainage

4.23 The majority of the site lies in Flood Zone 1 and is therefore sequentially acceptable for development. Part of the site however is affected by Flood Zone 2 associated with an ordinary watercourse which means that this part of the site could be at risk of fluvial flooding during an event of between 1 in 100 and 1 in 1000 severity.

4.24 The River Avon flows in a westerly direction approximately 200m north of Sandy Lane and Old Milverton Lane. An ordinary watercourse flows in a westerly direction through the north east corner of the site passing through a culvert under Old Milverton Lane as it heads towards the River Avon.

4.25 The site would be designed to ensure no development is located within the flood plain area and all development would be contained to Flood Zone 1 only. In addition hydraulic modelling will be completed to define the exact floodplain extents.

4.26 Investigations of the surface water flooding maps indicate that there is potential for surface water flooding alongside the ordinary watercourse as it flows in a westerly direction through the north east corner of the site. A potential overland surface water route is shown following a natural valley in the topography heading in a north easterly direction towards a surface water ponding area adjacent to Sandy Lane to the west of Sandy Lane Farm. There is also a potential overland surface water route following a natural valley in the topography heading in a south westerly direction towards Guys Cliffe Avenue.

4.27 At this stage it is anticipated that all surface water flows will be attenuated and positively drained to nearby watercourses and ditches and where this is not possible to Severn Trent surface water sewers. A number of attenuation ponds are likely to be required across the full site area (H44 and S2). In addition to the ponds, swales could be incorporated into the development area and their location and size will be considered further in due



course. In terms of the Park and Ride facility it is envisaged that underground storage beneath the car parking areas will be provided.

4.28 Public sewer records show foul sewers to the north, west and east of the site and it is likely that multiple connections will be made. In any event and in accordance with the Water Industry Act (1990) Severn Trent Water will be required to provide capacity for the development whilst containing environmental impact and maintaining water quality; therefore improvements to the network will be provided if required.

Noise

4.29 The boundaries of the entire site lie directly adjacent to either the A452 Kenilworth Road to the east or the railway line to the west of the site. It is anticipated that any dwellings of site H44 along the northern and eastern boundaries are likely to require gardens to be orientated to face away from roads, in order to provide screening to rear gardens. This is also likely to be the case for any dwellings within S2 along the western boundary to the railway line.

4.30 It is considered unlikely that noise will have a significant adverse impact on the development of the site as any sound levels exceeding the recommended thresholds would be dealt with by way of a suitable mitigation strategy; (i.e. enhanced glazing and ventilation at certain locations to protect internal amenity and relevant stand-off distances with rear gardens placed at

facades facing away from the road benefitting from screening provided by intervening dwellings).

Air Quality

4.31 An Air Quality Assessment will quantify the impact of development-related traffic upon air pollutant concentrations within Warwick District and in Coventry City Centre. Mitigation proportionate to the level of impact will be discussed with the relevant local authorities and implemented to assist in offsetting identified impacts.

Utilities

4.32 Existing utilities are located within the development area. 32kV high voltage and 11kV underground electric cables and underground and overhead BT telecommunication and Virgin Media cables are located along the Old Milverton Lane. Diversions will be required to facilitate any vehicle or pedestrian accesses.

Summary of Assessment

4.33 The assessment has revealed a series of features and development opportunities which can be positively integrated into the proposed development. As such no overriding constraints to development have been identified, supporting the case for development coming forward in this location.





5.0

Development Framework Context

Taking all of the assessment and analysis work as well as interpreting the Local Plan policy requirements, a framework masterplan has emerged for the Site. The following Sections explain the main components and strategies underpinning the framework, namely those focused on the distribution of land uses; access and movement; landscape, ecology and drainage; and the indicative phasing and delivery of development.

Land Use and Amount

5.1 Table 5.1 and Figure 5.1 provide an indication of the proposed distribution of land uses and how they are broken down. The predominant land use will be residential, however this will be complemented by a sustainable urban extension incorporating other key uses such as a local centre, open space and potential employment provision.

5.2 The development will also deliver an open space and green infrastructure network that will positively integrate existing features whilst also promoting the creation of new recreation, amenity, biodiversity and landscape features providing a high quality landscape setting to the Site and the development as a whole. In our view this will provide a clear enhancement to the northern edge of Royal Leamington Spa.

5.3 The park and ride facility has been shown to the north eastern corner of the site providing a facility for up to 400 vehicle parking spaces. The precise design of this area is to be agreed with Stagecoach and the local authority in due course.

5.4 The masterplan Figure 5.1 includes;

- A network of open spaces
- Access points from A452 and Sandy Lane
- Potential pedestrian accesses in to the site from the surrounding area
- Indicative SUDS locations
- Appropriate landscaping to retain and enhance the Green Belt boundaries
- A virtual Park and Ride scheme containing 400 spaces
- A proposed Local Centre within the wider site
- Potential employment uses
- A potential train station to the west

Areas	Ha	Ac
Residential	36.83	90.97
Local Centre	1.03	2.54
Education	2.10	5.19
Open Space	30.83	76.15
Park & Ride	1.76	4.35
Station	0.67	1.65
Total	73.22	180.85

Table 5.1> Land Use Schedule

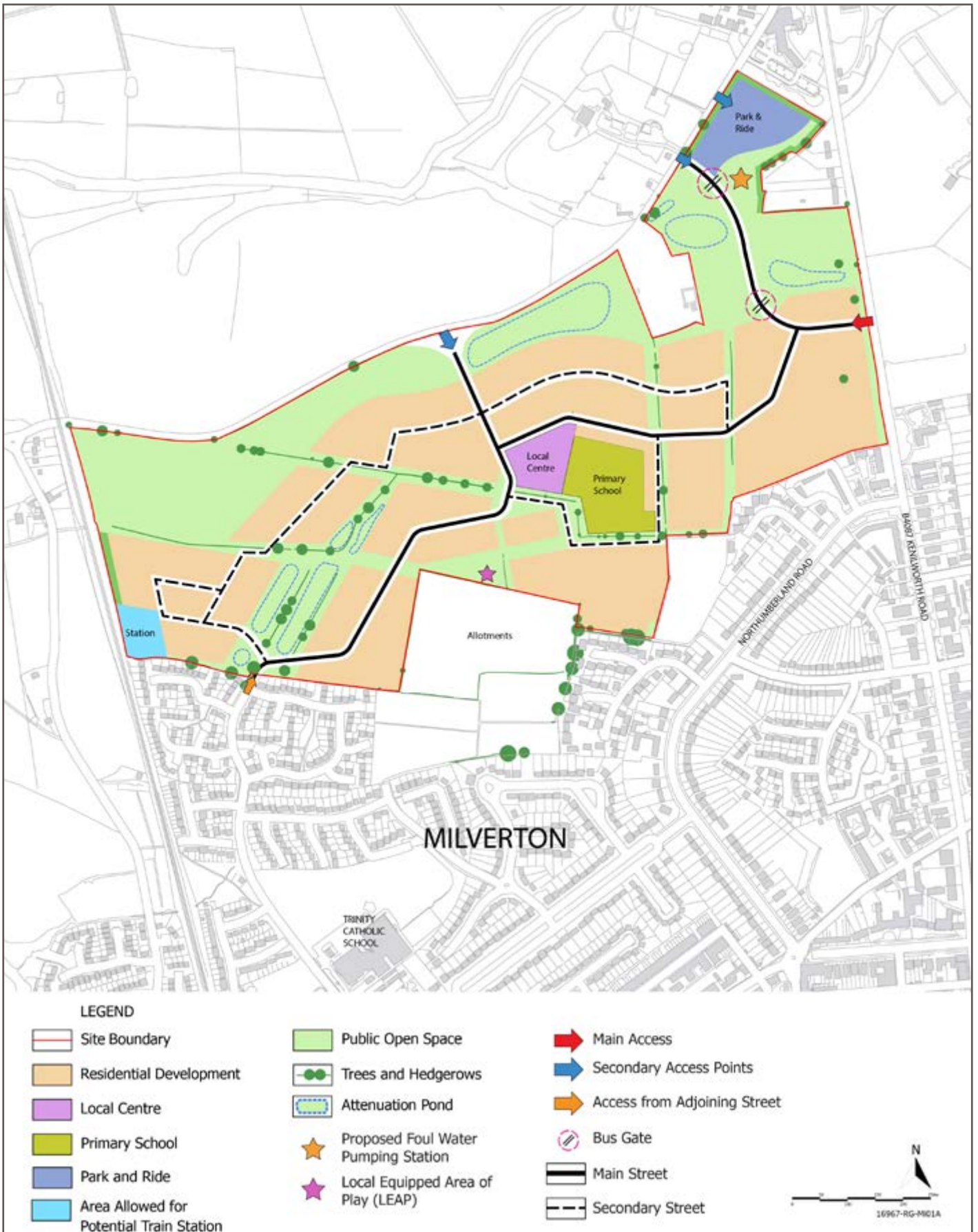


Figure 5.1> Framework Master Plan

6.0

Landscape, Ecology & Drainage

A strong landscape framework will form an important part of the proposals. The development of the Site provides the opportunity to enrich and strengthen the existing landscape structure, whilst improving ecological and recreational functions.

Landscape and Ecology Strategy

6.1 The design intention is to create a linked network of multi-functional landscape within which a range of functional formal and informal open spaces and ecological typologies can be delivered. These spaces will also positively integrate surface water drainage functions which will be designed to contribute towards the overall character, quality and amenity of the public realm.

6.2 The existing landscape features and topography of the site, alongside future surface water drainage requirements have strongly influenced the initial masterplanning of the site. Consideration has been given to the following points in developing the landscape and ecological strategy for the site:

- Retaining an area of landscaping at the western edge of the Site to maintain both visual and physical separation between the settlement of Old Milverton and Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa. This area will respond to and follow existing landscape structure;
- Retaining an area of landscaping between the proposed development and the southern edge of Blackdown to maintain both visual and physical separation;
- Introducing additional tree planting and a landscaping buffer along the northern boundary of the site adjoined by Sandy Road/Old Milverton Lane to form a robust and defensible edge to Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa as well as enhancing the definition of this edge to reduce the visibility into the site from the settlements north and north west to create an appropriate transition to the wider countryside.

6.3 The landscape buffer zones will provide an opportunity for enhancing biodiversity by encouraging the use of surrounding landscape

for foraging and roosting bats. The proposed attenuation ponds across the site will also act as an opportunity to enhance biodiversity within the site and its surroundings.

Drainage Strategy

6.4 In order to determine a drainage strategy for the site, the land area has been divided into a series of drainage catchments which are shown in figure 6.1.

Catchment	Anticipated Discharge Point	Attenuation Volume (m ³) for up to 1 in 100 year (+40%cc) storm event
Catchment A (S2)	A land drainage system appears to be available at the northern end of Guys Cliff Avenue which will require investigation and LLFA approval. Alternatively discharge to Severn Trent Water sewer in Guys Cliff Avenue. This will be subject to agreement with Severn Trent Water and hydraulic modelling may be required.	14,083
Catchment B (S2)	Discharge into ditch alongside Old Milverton Lane or if unacceptable to Highway Authority a new surface water sewer can be laid in carriageway.	13,777
Catchment C (H44)	Discharge into watercourse	9,131
Catchment D (H44)	Unlikely to be developed	
Catchment E (H44)	Discharge into watercourse	1,684

Table 6.1> List of Drainage Catchments

6.5 A number of attenuation ponds are likely to be required across the full site area. In addition to the ponds, swales could be incorporated into the development area and their location and size can be considered further in due course, however the land use framework of the site allows for additional features to be provided. For the park and ride area it is envisaged that underground storage beneath the car parking areas will be provided.

6.6 It is envisaged that the foul drainage strategy will utilise the same catchment areas and the anticipated discharge points are set out below:

6.7 In accordance with the Water Industry Act (1990) Severn Trent Water will be required to provide capacity for the development whilst containing environmental impacts and maintaining water quality; therefore improvements to the network will be provided if required.

Catchment	Anticipated Discharge Point
Catchment A (S2)	Discharge to Severn Trent Water sewer in Guys Cliff Avenue
Catchment B (S2)	Discharge into new foul sewer in Old Milverton Lane draining to new foul pumping station within Catchment C
Catchment C (H44)	Discharge into new foul water pumping station
Catchment D (H44)	Discharge into new foul water pumping station within Catchment C if required
Catchment E (H44)	Discharge into new foul water pumping station within Catchment C if required

Table 6.2> Foul Drainage Strategy

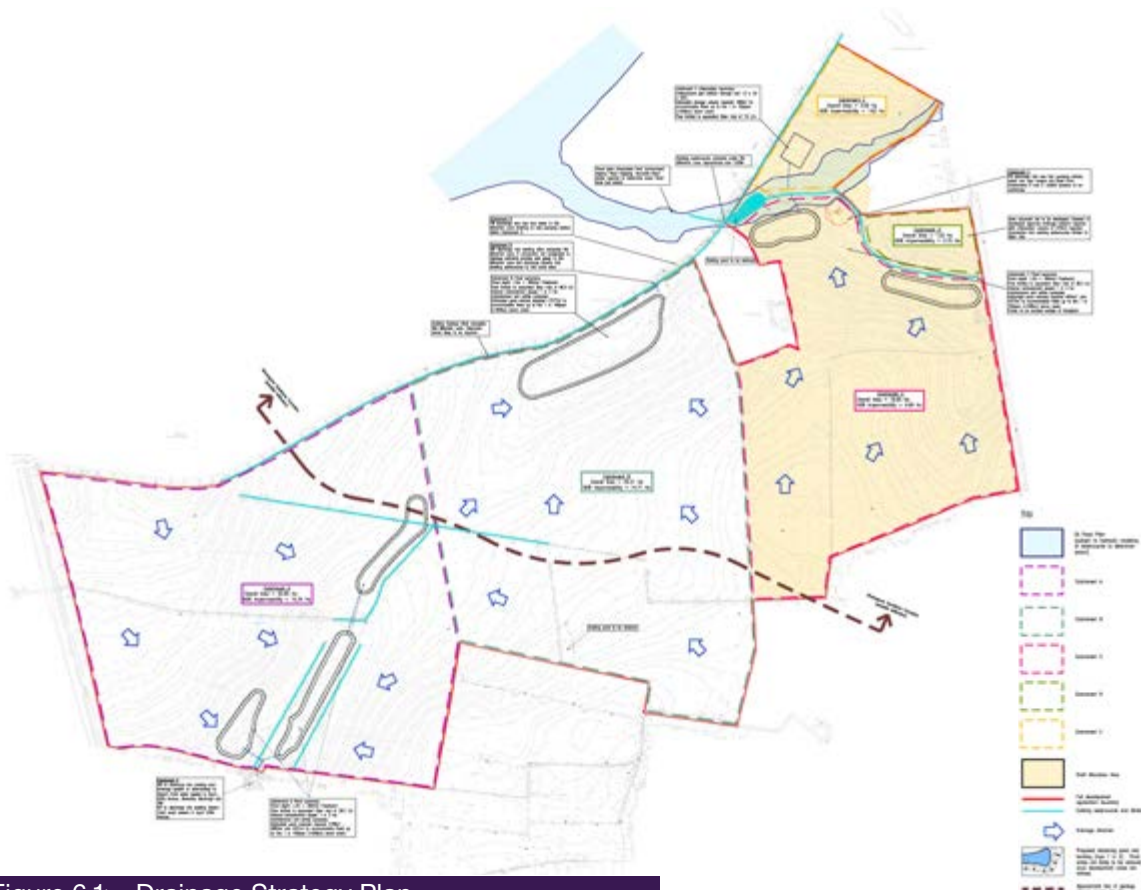


Figure 6.1> Drainage Strategy Plan

7.0 Summary

The Site has excellent links to the local area and is in an inherently sustainable location with access to local services and facilities

Conclusions

7.1 This DFD demonstrates how the development of this Site (including both the allocated and safeguarded parts) can assist Warwick in sustainably meeting the housing needs of existing and future residents as the area continues to grow.

7.2 The Site is located next to the most sustainable urban area within Warwick District and has excellent links to the local area and is in an inherently sustainable location with access to employment, retail, education and public transport within 2.5km of the Site. Furthermore, as demonstrated by the support of Stagecoach in allocating this site, the Site offers the opportunity to significantly enhance public transport provision to the north of the town through the provision of a virtual park and ride site.

7.3 The Site would provide areas of public open space for leisure and recreational purposes within its boundaries. It will also provide areas of substantial landscape buffer zones to enhance ecological biodiversity.

7.4 These landscaped buffers will also assist in softening the development edge of the proposals respecting the landscape setting of this Green Belt site and retaining the separation for existing settlements, whilst also utilising permanent physical boundaries such as the road and railway network.

7.5 7.4 In summary, the Site represents a highly sustainable and deliverable opportunity for a mixed use development which is both available and deliverable now.



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WILLMORE

Landscape and Visual Appraisal Land at Milverton, Warwickshire

Prepared on behalf of Taylor Wimpey Limited

October 2014

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

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CONTENTS

1.0	INTRODUCTION.....	1
2.0	SITE CONTEXT	1
3.0	METHODOLOGY.....	5
4.0	PLANNING POLICY.....	9
5.0	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER.....	22
6.0	SITE APPRAISAL	27
7.0	VISUAL APPRAISAL	29
8.0	CONTRIBUTION THE SITE MAKES TO THE PURPOSES OF THE GREEN BELT	36
9.0	OBJECTIVES, LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS TO DEVELOPMENT.....	42
10.0	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.....	44

ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL

Figure 1: Site Context Plan at 1:12,500 scale @ A1;

Figure 2: Landscape Character Plan at 1:12,500 scale @ A1

Figure 3: Topographical Features Plan at 1:12,500 scale @ A1;

Figure 4: Site Appraisal Plan at 1:5,000 scale @ A3;

Figure 5: Visual Appraisal Plan at 1:12,500 scale @ A1; and

Figure 6: Opportunities and Constraints Plan at 1:5,000 scale @ A3

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Site Appraisal and Site Context Photographs

Appendix 2: Landscape Character Extracts

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Barton Willmore Landscape Planning and Design (BWLPD) were commissioned by Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal of land at Milverton, Warwickshire (hereinafter referred to as the 'Site') for the purpose of identifying its suitability for residential development (the 'Proposed Development'), and subsequently prepare a landscape and visual opportunities and constraints / development principles plan to inform the development proposals.
- 1.2 A landscape appraisal is the systematic description and analysis of the features within the landscape, such as landform, vegetation cover, settlement and transport patterns and land use. A visual appraisal assesses visual amenity receptors, which are the viewers of the landscape, and could include locations such as residential or business properties, public buildings, public open space and public rights of way.
- 1.3 This report also provides an appraisal of the Site in terms of its contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt. The objectives are to consider the policy basis for the underlying Green Belt designation which applies to the Site; assess the landscape character and visibility of the Site and inform the potential to release the area of Green Belt land encompassing the Site in relation to the five purposes of the Green Belt, as identified in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 80.
- 1.4 The Appraisal should be read in conjunction with the following figures and appendices:
- Figure 1: Site Context Plan at 1:12,500 scale @ A1;
 - Figure 2: Landscape Character Plan at 1:12,500 scale @ A1
 - Figure 3: Topographical Features Plan at 1:12,500 scale @ A1;
 - Figure 4: Site Appraisal Plan at 1:5,000 scale @ A3;
 - Figure 5: Visual Appraisal Plan at 1:12,500 scale @ A1;
 - Figure 6: Opportunities and Constraints Plan at 1:5,000 scale @ A3;
 - Appendix 1: Site Appraisal and Site Context Photographs; and
 - Appendix 2: Landscape Character Extracts.

2.0 SITE CONTEXT

- 2.1 As shown on **Figure 1: Site Context Plan**, the Site is located on the northern edge of the town of Leamington Spa, with its southern boundary immediately adjoining the gardens of residential properties located within the area of Milverton. The town of Warwick is located some 2km to the south-west and its eastern limits come within very close proximity of the western extent of Leamington Spa, giving the impression of a large swathe of built development south of the Site, extending from east to west and also to the south-east.
- 2.2 Larger settlements are far less evident to the north and north-west of the Site, with smaller villages and isolated farms predominating, set within a landscape of medium to large sized agricultural fields utilised for arable cropping and stock grazing, along with other land uses such as Warwickshire Golf and Country Club, located approximately 1.7km to the north-west of the Site.
- 2.3 The A452 Kenilworth Road runs in a north-south direction along most of the eastern boundary, although the north-eastern part of the boundary skirts around a small copse and the wooded southern edge of the car park of Warwickshire Nuffield Hospital, and includes a number of other buildings clustered around a roundabout where Old Milverton Lane meets the A452.
- 2.4 The northern boundary is defined in most part by Sandy Lane which becomes Old Milverton Road in the north-eastern corner, while the Leamington Spa to Kenilworth railway line runs along the western boundary. The A46 Warwick by-pass runs in a north-south direction approximately 1.2km to the west of the Site with the A46/A429 interchange located some 1km to the west of the north-western corner of the Site. The A452 Rugby Road runs in an east-west direction approximately 500 metres to the south of the Site, within the urban area.
- 2.5 The River Avon is a notable landscape feature in close proximity to the Site, running from west to east and then turning in a north-easterly direction, approximately 300 - 400 metres to the north.

Public Rights of Way

- 2.6 A public right of way (PRoW W176/L3) passes through the Site travelling in an east-west direction from Bamburgh Close to Old Milverton. In the wider landscape there are a number of PRoWs to the west of the Site, across the railway line, within a body of land encircled by the River Avon as it sweeps from north to south in a semi-circular route. Two of these paths emanate from the St James's Church at Old Milverton and head south-west and south east, towards Guy's Cliffe and the edge of Milverton respectively. Further PRoW exist to the north

and north-east of the Site, heading northwards from Hill Wootton Road in the vicinity of Hill Wootton, a settlement on higher land some 1.3km north of the Site.

Topography and Hydrology

- 2.7 As shown on **Figure 2: Topographical Features Plan**, the Site is located close to the River Avon within the general floodplain area, although land falls away beyond the northern boundary of the Site towards the River Avon, which meanders across the landscape at an elevation of approximately 50m AOD. Landform is generally related to the winding route of the River Avon as it heads north and in this direction the landscape rises gently towards a prominent high point of approximately 90m AOD at Leek Wootton to the north-west, with an elevation of approximately 76m AOD at Hill Wootton to the north.
- 2.8 Landform is clearly influenced by the River Avon as it heads south and then south westwards through the southern part of Warwick, with elevations again ranging from between 55m AOD. The River Leam joins the River Avon along the western edge of Leamington Spa and heads eastwards through the heart of the town, again at levels of approximately 50m AOD, before land rises sharply along the eastern edge of the town, associated with the Campion Hills area.

Vegetation

- 2.9 Vegetation in the vicinity of the Site is relatively sparse, with the main wooded areas in the immediate vicinity associated with the partly wooded banks of the River Avon. Small areas of woodland and linear tree belts are also associated with settlement patterns to the north-east of the Site, either side of Stoneleigh Road as it heads north-east from the B4113.
- 2.10 To the west beyond the railway line, there are again some small scale areas of vegetation associated with residential, farm related and other various buildings along Old Milverton Road, while further west vegetation is again evident along the banks of the River Avon as it curves down towards Leamington Spa.
- 2.11 In the wider landscape, open, agricultural fields dominate the landscape pattern, divided by well managed hedgerows with few trees, although in some places the fields are not bounded with any landscape features except ditches. Woodland cover increases towards the north-west in association with Warwickshire Golf and Country Club where some small and medium sized, mainly linear shaped copses are clustered in the central northern part of the course and larger woodland blocks are located to the north and west of the course. Vegetation is also evident within and around Leek Wootton to the immediate north-east of the golf course, related to residential gardens and some field boundaries.

- 2.12 Larger woodland blocks exist to the north-west of the Site around the settlement of Leek Wootton, and to the north of the Site around the settlement of Ashow.

Designations

National Designations

- 2.13 The Site does not lie within or within visible range of any nationally designated landscapes.

Regional, County or Local Designations

- 2.14 The Site lies within the Green Belt as defined on the District Wide Proposals Map that accompanies the adopted Warwick District Local Plan (1996 – 2011) although Policy DAP1: Protecting the Green Belt has not been 'saved' so is no longer active. Current Green Belt policy for the District is set out in the NPPF.

- 2.15 The south-eastern part of the Site adjoins a very small section of the Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area, (specifically Area 33: Northumberland Road) as shown on **Figure 1: Site Context Plan**. This represents a very small section of an extensive conservation area boundary. Conservation Areas are designated under Section 69 of the 1990 Planning Act which defines them as, *"Areas of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance."* Proposed development in close proximity to Conservation Areas should consider the setting of the Area when design plans are prepared, including building style, materials, colour, height and detailing.

- 2.16 As shown on **Figure 1: Site Context Plan** there are numerous Listed Buildings within Royal Leamington Spa, mainly concentrated to the south and south-east of the Site within the built up urban area, although a number are also located to the east of the Site within and close to Old Milverton. The closest ones to the Site are as follows:

- 46 Kenilworth Road, Grade II, circa 290 metres to the south of the south eastern corner of the Site;
- Barn, 24 yards to east of cottage farmhouse, Grade II, circa 380 metres to the west of the north western corner of the Site;
- Cottage Farmhouse, Grade II, circa 450 metres west of the north western corner of the Site;
- 36 Kenilworth Road, 38 Kenilwoth Road, both Grade II, circa 455 metres to the south of the south eastern corner of the Site;
- Church of Saint James, Grade II, circa 480 metres west of the north-western corner of the Site; and

- Parkhouse Farmhouse, Grade II, circa 560 metres west of the north western corner of the Site.
- 2.17 Section 66 (1) of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990 refers to the desirability of preserving the Listed Building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. As the Visual Appraisal demonstrates, all the listed buildings noted above are considered sufficiently separated from the Site by landform, intervening vegetation and built forms to avoid adverse effects from the Proposed Development.
- 2.18 Guy's Cliffe is an approximately 56 hectare, Grade II Registered Park & Garden with its eastern boundary located approximately 510 metres to the west of the Site boundary and through which the river Avon flows from north to south-east. The citation for this designated landscape reads, ***"Early C19 gardens and pleasure grounds in part designed by Uvedale Price, which were developed from C17 riverside walks and mid C18 rococo gardens"***. There is no intervisibility between the Guy's Cliffe Registered Park and Garden and the Site.
- 2.19 Within Guy's Cliffe there is a Scheduled Monument known as 'Guy's Cave hermitage and other rock cut chambers at Guy's Cliffe'. The citation for the monument reads, ***"The monument includes the standing and buried remains and rock cut features of Guy's Cave hermitage and chapel at Guy's Cliffe, as well as caves and rock cut features associated with the later use of the site, within three separate areas of protection."***
- 2.20 There are no Registered Battlefields within visible range of the Site so no further consideration of this historical and cultural feature has been included in this report.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

- 3.1 The Landscape and Visual Appraisal has been prepared with reference to the guidelines as set out in the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment ' 3rd Edition, and Topic Paper 6: 'Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity '. The aim of these guidelines is to set high standards for the scope and content of landscape and visual assessments and to establish certain principles that will help to achieve consistency, credibility and effectiveness when undertaking these forms of assessment. A desktop assessment of the study area was undertaken, including an assessment of landscape character, landform, landscape features, historic evolution, policy and designations. This information was used as the initial basis against which to appraise the Site. A visit to the Site and surroundings was subsequently undertaken in August 2014 to verify desk-based findings and provide photography for inclusion within this appraisal.
- 3.2 The appraisal has been confined to an area approximately 3.0km from the Site, referred to as the study area. The study area selected is considered to be of a sufficient scale to establish the landscape and visual baseline of the Site and to determine its contribution to the landscape and the aims and purposes of the Green Belt.
- 3.3 A description of the existing land use of the study area is provided and includes reference to existing areas of settlement, transport routes and vegetation cover, as well as local landscape designations, elements of cultural and heritage value and local landmarks or tourist destinations. These factors combine to provide an understanding of landscape value and sensitivity and provide an indication of particular key views and viewpoints that are available to visual receptors and which should therefore be included in the visual appraisal.
- 3.4 To determine the extent of visual influence, a visual appraisal was undertaken of the Site to consider the nature of existing views from publically accessible viewpoints including roads, Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and public open space. Consideration was given to private views however access to private properties was not obtained. Views were assessed from all directions and from a range of distances. The viewpoints chosen are not intended to be an exhaustive list, but rather to represent the potential views attained towards the Site in order to identify areas of higher visual sensitivity which may not be best suited for development.
- 3.5 A more detailed landscape appraisal of the Site is then undertaken, which in combination with the wider visual appraisal, assists in the identification of opportunities and constraints which would assist in defining the boundaries for potential future development, and thus an amended Green Belt boundary.

3.6 The sensitivity of the Site is considered in terms of the following:

- Landscape Character
i.e. landform, vegetation cover, land use, scale, state or repair of individual elements, representation of typological character, enclosure pattern, form/line and movement
- Visual Influence
i.e. landform influences, tree and woodland cover, numbers and types of residents, numbers are types of visitors and scope for mitigating potential for visual impacts
- Landscape Value
i.e. national designations, local designations, sense of tranquillity/remoteness, scenic beauty and cultural associations

Evaluating the Contribution of the Green Belt

3.7 As illustrated on **Figure 1: Site Context Plan** land surrounding Milverton, including the Site, is designated as Green Belt Land. Relevant Green Belt Policy relating to this land has been identified at the national and local levels in the following chapter.

3.8 The Site was first assessed against each of the first four of the five purposes of Green Belt as set out in the NPPF. The fifth purpose "*to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land*" was not considered of relevance to the Site. Therefore, the following four criteria have been considered:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns from merging in to one another;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; and
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.

3.9 In evaluating the contribution of the land to the Green Belt, the following criteria (Table 1) will be used to assess the contribution of the Site to the first four purposes of the Green Belt.

Table 1: Contribution of Green Belt Purpose Categories

Threshold	Assessment
Significant	Significant landscape and visual contribution towards purpose of Green Belt
Some	Some landscape and visual contribution towards purpose of Green Belt
Limited	Limited landscape and visual contribution towards purpose of Green Belt
None	No landscape and visual contribution towards purpose of Green Belt

Assessment against the Characteristics of the Green Belt

- 3.10 The NPPF states that the key characteristics of the Green Belt are *'their openness and their permanence,'* (paragraph 79). In defining new boundaries to the Green Belt, it must be ensured that these characteristics are not diminished for the areas remaining within the Green Belt designation as a direct result of development on the identified sites.
- 3.11 An assessment will be made of the openness of the Green Belt in that particular location and to what extent the removal of the Site would have on the perception of openness in the remaining designated area.
- 3.12 In addition, the Site and its location will be shown demonstrating their relationship to existing elements, such as motorways and rivers, as well as visual barriers, such as ridgelines and areas of woodland. This is to help assess the impacts of the development upon the openness of the remaining designated areas and to help identify boundaries that may be considered to be 'permanent'.

Definitions

- 3.13 When considering the ability of the Site to meet each of the purposes of the Green Belt, the following definitions should be considered.

Openness

- 3.14 Openness is taken to be the degree to which the area is unaffected by built structures. It is considered that, in order to be a robust assessment, this should be considered from first principles, i.e. acknowledging existing structures that occur within the area, rather than seeing them as being 'washed over' by the existing Green Belt designation.

Sprawl

- 3.15 Disorganised and unattractive extension to developed area (perhaps lacking defensible boundary), spread out over a large area in an untidy or irregular way.

Encroachment

- 3.16 The gradual advancement of development beyond an acceptable or established limit.

Defensible boundaries

- 3.17 The NPPF states that, when choosing boundaries, 'local authorities should define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent,' (paragraph 85).

4.0 PLANNING POLICY

National

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 The NPPF aims to provide one concise document which sets out the Government's planning policies for England by replacing previous Planning Policy Guidance (PPGs) and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). It aims to provide a planning framework within which the local community and local authorities can produce distinctive local plans which respond to local needs and priorities.
- 4.2 The NPPF promotes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, defined as ***"meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"***, and providing it is in accordance with the relevant up-to-date Local Plan, and policies set out in the NPPF including those identifying restrictions with regard to designated areas. The NPPF states that the ***"The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development"*** and that there are ***"three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental"***. The role the environment will play is described as ***"contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use of natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a Low carbon economy."***
- 4.3 Twelve Core Planning Principles are set out, of which the following are relevant to consideration of landscape and visual matters, and state that planning should:
- ***"not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;***
 - ***always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;***
 - ***take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;***

- *contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; and*
- *conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations."*

4.4 The NPPF then identifies and describes thirteen aspects contributing to the delivery of sustainable development which should be considered in developing local plans and reviewing planning applications. Those of relevance to the landscape and visual considerations of the Site and Proposed Development include Section 7: Requiring good design. Paragraph 58 states that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments, *inter alia*:

- *"...Establish a strong sense of place;*
...
- *respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings;*
...
- *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping."*

4.5 Paragraph 61 states that:

"planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment."

4.6 With regard to the natural environment, Paragraphs 109-125 of Section 11 focus on conserving and enhancing the local and natural environment. The framework states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by *inter alia* *"protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils."*

4.7 Paragraph 110 sets out that the aim, in preparing plans for development, should be to minimise adverse effects on the local and natural environment, and that plans should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value.

4.8 Paragraph 114 notes that furthermore, local planning authorities should:

“set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure.”

4.9 Paragraph 125 states that:

“By encouraging good design, planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.”

4.10 The Site currently forms part of the Green Belt. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy, as set out at paragraph 79 (Chapter 9: Protecting Green Belt Land) of the NPPF is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. In this respect, the NPPF advises that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

4.11 The general purposes of the Green Belt as stated at paragraph 80 in the NPPF are:

***“(i) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
(ii) to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
(iii) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
(iv) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;
and
(v) to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.”***

4.12 Paragraph 81 of the NPPF provides advice on the use for land within designated Green Belts, indicating that Green Belts have a positive role to play in fulfilling the following objectives relevant to the Site:

“...enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged or derelict land.”

County and District Level Planning Policy

4.13 Under the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), Warwickshire

County Council now only deals with 'County matter' development, which is primarily minerals and waste development. In addition, as from 20th May 2013 the saved Warwickshire Structure Plan policies no longer form part of the statutory Development Plan for Warwickshire. Therefore all planning policies relating to housing developments are contained within relevant District level Development Plans.

Warwick District Local Plan 1996 – 2011 (adopted September 2007)

- 4.14 This Plan is the currently adopted document which controls the location and nature of new development within the district. Most of the policies have been 'saved' for use by the Council in taking planning decisions until such time as they are replaced by the emerging Warwick District Local Plan (2011 – 2029). Chapter 3 is concerned with the Core Strategy which includes four main aims, the second of which, 'Effective Protection of the Environment' is of particular relevance. Within each main Aim are a number of relevant Objectives, as follows:

“Objective 2B: To protect and enhance the natural environment:

- We recognise our responsibility to protect important assets of the natural environment, particularly biodiversity, for current and future generations. An attractive and diverse natural environment will contribute towards the achievement of economic, environmental and social aims. We will therefore protect the landscape character, geological/geomorphological features and wildlife habitats and species of value and acknowledged national, regional or local importance from inappropriate new development in urban and rural locations. We will aim, wherever possible, to enhance all of these assets.”***

“Objective 2D: To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes and townscapes:

- The landscape quality of our rural areas and the character and setting of the District's towns and villages are important in giving Warwick District distinctiveness and identity. The historic street patterns and 'green corridors' that run through the towns and villages are important features and distinctive attributes of the District. We will protect sensitive areas from new development to ensure that the towns and villages retain their separate identities and individual characters.”***

“Objective 2E: To promote high quality sustainable design and enhance the built environment:

- The appearance of new development can have a significant impact on the quality of our built environment which in turn can influence the achievement of other economic and social aims.***
- Securing good design is essential to achieving attractive environments for people to live and work in and to visit. We will require proposals to have regard to their context and to local architectural, historical and natural features. We will support proposals which can demonstrate a positive contribution to the quality of the built environment and will encourage innovative design which is sensitive to its locality.”***

4.15 Section A of the Local Plan is entitled District Wide Policies and Chapter 4 is concerned with Development Policies, the following of which are relevant.

4.16 Policy DP1: Layout and Design, states that:

“Development will only be permitted which positively contributes to the character and quality of its environment through good layout and design. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate that they:

- b) relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines”***

4.17 Policy DP1 further states that:

“Development proposals which have a significant impact on the character and appearance of an area will be required to demonstrate how they comply with this policy by way of a Character Appraisal and Design Statement.”

4.18 Policy DP3: Natural and Historic Environment and Landscape, states that development will only be permitted which:

“... protects important natural features and positively contributes to the character and quality of its natural and historic environment through good habitat/landscape design and management.

4.19 Furthermore, development proposals will be expected to demonstrate that they:

c) "protect and enhance the landscape character of the area, particularly respecting its historic character;

d) provide appropriate levels of amenity space which incorporate suitable habitat features and hard and soft landscaping;

e) integrate the amenity space and proposed landscaping into the overall development

...

Development proposals which have a significant impact upon the character and appearance of an area will be required to demonstrate how they comply with this policy by way of a Nature Conservation and Landscape Analysis. Where adverse impacts are unavoidable, the Council may consider possible mitigation measures to reduce any harm caused by these adverse impacts. Where mitigation measures are not possible, compensation measures may be appropriate".

4.20 Chapter 5 is concerned with 'Sustaining Communities' and in the 'Building Communities' sub section, Policy SC13 is relevant. Policy SC13: Open Space and Recreational Improvements states that:

"Contributions from residential and commercial developments will be sought to provide, improve and maintain appropriate open space, sport and recreational facilities to meet local needs."

4.21 Section B of the Local Plan, entitled Location Specific Policies, includes a number of policies relevant to the Proposed Development.

4.22 Policy UAP1: Directing New Housing states:

"Residential development will be permitted on previously developed land and buildings within the confines of the urban areas subject to other policies to manage the supply of housing under Policy SC10. In all other circumstances, residential development will not be permitted unless it is for affordable housing to meet local needs in accordance with the definition within Policy SC11."

4.23 It should be noted that Policy DAP1: Protecting the Green Belt has not been 'saved' so is no

longer active.

- 4.24 The south-eastern part of the Site adjoins a very small part of the Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area, therefore Policy DAP8: Protection of Conservation Areas is relevant and states that:

“Development will be required to preserve or enhance the special architectural and historic interest and appearance of Conservation Areas as defined on the Proposals Map. Development will also be expected to respect the setting of Conservation Areas and important views both in and out of them.”

Draft Warwick District Local Plan 2011 – 2029 (no issue date)

- 4.25 Warwick District Council is preparing a new Local Plan for Warwick District which will guide the area’s future development for the next 18 years. The publication draft Local Plan has been consulted on between 16th May and 27th June 2014. The Council are currently considering the responses to this consultation but, subject to the outcomes of the consultation period, may now proceed to the Submission of the new Local Plan to the Secretary of State for Examination.
- 4.26 Due to the new Local Plan not having been submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination, and thus not independently examined or found to be a ‘sound’ planning document, very little weight can be given to it for decision making purposes. Notwithstanding this, in order to carry out a robust assessment of the Site it is considered that it should still be taken account as part of this appraisal. A number of the draft policies have been adapted from those contained within the approved Warwick District Local Plan (WDLP, 1996 – 2011), and where applicable this has been indicated below. In addition, a raft of new policies have also been introduced and included in consideration below.
- 4.27 The draft Local Plan states the following under section ‘Local Plan Objectives’, point 1.51 in relation to new development:

“Make sure new developments are appropriately distributed across the District and designed and located to maintain and improve the quality of the built and natural environments, particularly historic areas and buildings, sensitive wildlife habitats and areas of high landscape value. In addition new developments should respect the integrity of existing settlements”.

- 4.28 Point 1.54 goes on to state the following objective:

“Protect and enhance high quality landscapes and important heritage and natural assets, ensuring that where adaptation is needed, this is done in a sensitive way”.

4.29 The draft Local Plan goes on to set out four Strategic Policies, with the third of these, Strategic Policy DS3: Supporting Sustainable Communities, of particular relevance, which states:

“We will promote high quality new development including:

a) delivering high quality layout and design which relates to existing landscape or urban form and, where appropriate, is based on the principles of garden towns, villages and suburbs;

b) caring for our built, cultural and natural heritage;

...

c) protecting areas of significance including high quality landscapes, heritage assets and ecological assets;

...

4.30 Strategic Policy DS3 goes on to say that:

“We will expect development which enables new communities to develop and sustain themselves. As part of this we will provide for the infrastructure needed to support communities and businesses including:

c) green infrastructure (such as parks, open space and playing pitches).”

4.31 Strategic Policy DS4: Spatial Strategy is also of relevance, stating that:

“Allocated Housing and Employment will be distributed across the District to take account of the following:

...

b) where greenfield sites are required for housing, they should be located on the edge of urban areas in sustainable locations close to areas of employment or where community facilities such as shops, bus services, medical facilities and schools are available or can be

made available."

...

- d) limiting development on sites which would lead to coalescence of settlements to ensure settlement identity is retained;*
- e) sites which have a detrimental impact on the significance of heritage assets will be avoided unless suitable mitigation can be put in place;*
- f) areas assessed as high landscape value or other highly sensitive features in the natural environment will be avoided; and*
- g) taking the national Green Belt policy in to account, sites in the green belt will be limited to those locations where exceptional circumstances can be justified. The following will be taken into account in considering exceptional circumstances:*
 - i. the availability of alternative suitable sites outside the Green Belt;*
 - ii. the potential of the site to meet specific housing or employment needs that cannot be met elsewhere;*
 - iii. the potential of the site to support regeneration within deprived areas; and*
 - iv. the potential of the site to provide support to facilities and services in rural areas.*

4.32 Policy DS19: Green Belt states:

"The extent of the Green Belt is defined on the Policies Map. The Council will apply Green Belt policy in accordance with government guidance as set out in the national planning policy."

4.33 Again, the Explanation section of the policy text is relevant where it states:

"The Warwickshire Green Belt covers a large part of the District and seeks to prevent urban sprawl that would prejudice the open nature and predominantly rural character of this area. National policy regards inappropriate development as, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and advises that it should only be approved in very special circumstances. In addition, national policy identifies exceptions to what is deemed inappropriate."

Other policies in this plan expand upon the meaning of those exceptions, including: Limited Village Infill Housing Development in the Green Belt... .”

- 4.34 Policy H1: Directing New Housing is relevant as it is concerned with where new housing will be permitted, as follows:

“Housing development will be permitted in the following circumstances:

...

b) within the Growth Villages and Limited Infill Villages, as identified below and on the Policies Map;”

- 4.35 Policy HS4: Improvements to Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities is very similar in wording to Policy SC13: ‘Open Space and Recreational Improvements’ in the adopted Warwickshire District Local Plan so has not been reproduced here.

- 4.36 The draft Local Plan goes on to include a number of relevant policies related to the built environment, including Policy BE1: Layout and Design. However, the wording of this policy is very similar to Policy DP1: ‘Layout and Design’ in the adopted Warwickshire District Local Plan, so has not been reproduced here.

- 4.37 The draft Local Plan expands consideration of the natural environment and landscape character in comparison to the adopted Warwickshire District Local Plan and includes a number of new policies of relevance to the proposed development.

- 4.38 Policy NE1: Green Infrastructure, states that:

“The Council will protect, enhance and restore the District’s green infrastructure assets and strive for a healthy integrated network for the benefit of nature, people and the economy... . The Council will continue to work with partners, including neighbouring authorities and the Local Nature Partnership to plan for green infrastructure at a landscape scale: protecting and enhancing existing habitats and restoring fragmented areas ensuring access natural green space and improvements to landscape character.”

- 4.39 Policy NE4: Landscape states that:

“New development will be permitted which positively contributes

to landscape character. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that they:

- a) integrate landscape planning into the design of development at an early stage;*
- b) consider its landscape context, including the local distinctiveness of the different natural and historic landscapes and character, including tranquillity;*
- c) relate well to local topography and built form and enhance key landscape features, ensuring their long term management and maintenance;*
- d) identify likely visual impacts on the local landscape and townscape and its immediate setting and undertakes appropriate landscaping to reduce these impacts;*
- e) aim to either conserve, enhance or restore important landscape features in accordance with the latest local and national guidance;*
- f) avoid detrimental effects on features which make a significant contribution to the character, history and setting of an asset, settlement, or area;*
- g) address the importance of habitat biodiversity features, including aged and veteran trees, woodland and hedges and their contribution to landscape character, where possible enhancing these features through means such as buffering and reconnecting fragmented areas;*
- h) maintain the existence of viable agricultural units, and;*
- i) are sensitive to an area's capacity to change, acknowledge cumulative effects and guard against the potential for coalescence between existing settlements".*

4.40 Policy HE2: Protection of Conservation Areas, states that:

"Development will be expected to respect the setting of Conservation Areas and important views both in and out of them."

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (Leamington and Whitnash) May 2014

4.41 This Local Development Framework evidence base identifies the Site as reference: L07 (Land North of Milverton). The Site is described as being within an area of 'medium' landscape value. The suitability of the Site for development is described as:

“Potentially suitable in part, subject to alteration of the Green Belt boundary...”

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

Residential Design Guide (April 2008)

4.42 The purpose of this SPG is to provide a design framework for the provision of residential accommodation in the Warwick District, seeking to promote high quality and innovative design for the housing of the 21st Century. The Guidance sets out a number of requirements that planning proposals should take account of, including:

- a) “Harmonise and enhance existing settlement in terms of physical form pattern or movement and land use;***
- b) Relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines;***
- c) Reinforce or enhance the established urban character of streets, squares and other spaces;***
- d) Reflect, respect and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness;***
- e) Retain and incorporate important existing features into the development.***
- f) Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing;***
- g) Adopt appropriate materials and details;***
- h) Integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity;***
- i) Provide adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality;***
- j) Incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features; and***
- k) Ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other, to provide a safe and attractive environment.”***

4.43 In terms of design considerations, the following elements are identified as contributing to the attractive qualities of many residential areas, and which should be considered in all applications:

- ***“Local distinctiveness;***

- *Densities and increased scale;*
- *Design character;*
- *Design practicalities;*
- *Layout, design and dwelling mix;*
- *Access for the disabled;*
- *Parking considerations; and*
- *Landscaping.”*

4.44 In terms of landscaping, the following detailed guidance is provided:

- *“Use deciduous trees to provide shade in Summer and allow sunlight to filter through in Winter;*
- *Avoid excessive overshadowing of buildings whilst placing trees away from south facing elevations;*
- *Use planting to maximise solar gain;*
- *Use hedges and trees as windbreaks and also to provide shelter from cold draughts, particularly strong northerly winds;*
- *Consider boundary treatment of any site as an integrated part of landscape proposals; and*
- *Carry out a biodiversity survey of the site as part of the site assessment to ensure that existing habitats can be adequately protected.”*

5.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

5.1 The Landscape Character Assessment approach is a descriptive approach which seeks to identify and define the distinct character of landscapes that make up the country. This approach recognises the intrinsic value of all landscapes, not just 'special' landscapes. The description of each landscape is used as a basis for evaluation in order to make judgements to guide, for example, landscape management or development. In line with this approach, national landscape guidance is now moving from concentrating efforts on designating and protecting those areas of the countryside, which are most important for landscape and wildlife (the quality approach) to a character approach, as a way of enriching the quality of the whole countryside whilst accommodating appropriate development. This approach complements the protection that designations may offer. **Figure 3: Landscape Character Plan** illustrates the extent of landscape character areas in the vicinity of the Site, as featured in published assessments, extracts from which are included in **Appendix 2**.

National

5.2 Natural England (formerly the Countryside Agency) has produced a Countryside Character Map of England which includes broad-brush descriptions of the different character areas. Natural England has recently revised its National Character Area (NCA) profiles.

5.3 The Site lies within National Character Area 97: Arden, revised and published in May 2012. Key characteristics for Character Area 97: Arden includes the following:

- *“Well-wooded farmland landscape with rolling landform;*
- *Mature oaks, mostly found within hedgerows, together with ancient woodlands, and plantation woodlands...;*
- *Narrow meandering clay river valleys with long river meadows...;*
- *Numerous areas of former wood pasture with large, old, oak trees...;*
- *Diverse field patterns ranging from well hedged, irregular fields and small woodlands that contrast with larger semi regular fields on former deer park estates...;*
- *Complex and contrasting settlement pattern with some densely populated where traditional settlements have amalgamated to form the major West Midlands conurbation whilst some settlements remain distinct and relatively well dispersed;*

- *North eastern industrial area based around former Warwick coalfield with distinctive colliery settlements. North western area dominated by urban development...;*
- *Transport infrastructure, the M42, M40, M6 and M5...;*
- *Shakespeare's 'Forest of Arden' [...] is still reflected through the woodland cover, mature oaks, small ancient woodlands and former wood pasture."*

5.4 In terms of tranquillity, the character profile states:

"Despite the major road and motorway network, a sense of tranquillity can still be found in the woodlands, sunken lanes, narrow river valleys and enclosed urban landscapes."

5.5 The following Statements of Opportunity are of relevance:

- *"SEO 1: Manage and enhance the valuable woodlands, hedgerows, [...] distinctive field boundaries and enclosure patterns throughout the NCA..."*
- *SEO 2: 'Create new networks of woodlands, heathlands and green infrastructure, linking urban areas like Birmingham and Coventry with the wider countryside to increase biodiversity, recreation and the potential for biomass and the regulation of climate change'.*

5.6 It is further stated that this could be achieved through the following:

"Enhance urban areas and fringes through sympathetic building and landscape design. Creation of new green infrastructure with associated habitat creation and new public access..."

5.7 In terms of 'landscape change' the character profile states:

"There is development pressure throughout the area. The majority of the NCA falls within the southern half of the West Midlands Green Belt which extends around Coventry and Redditch and south to Stratford. Growth proposals seem to be focussed around the East of Birmingham and North Solihull. Coventry is an area previously designated as a growth point and there has been consideration of sustainable urban extensions into the green belt..."

5.8 In terms of Future Opportunities, the character profile identifies the following:

- *“...opportunities for good, sustainable design reflecting local settlement patterns, green infrastructure and local character reflected in design and materials; and*
- *Associated potential for new green infrastructure building upon the network of sites in the urban fringe.”*

5.9 Recommendations noted in the Landscape Opportunities section include:

- *“Protect and manage woodlands particularly ancient woodlands and wood pasture to maintain the character of Arden; and*
- *Create new green infrastructure with associated habitat creation and new public access on former mining sites and close to urban populations in the West Midlands Green Belt.”*

County

Warwickshire Landscapes Project (1987)

5.10 This body of work includes maps and guidelines documents relating to three separate main areas within Warwickshire, comprising Borough of Rugby, Stratford Towns Urban Edge and Arden, Avon and Dunsmore. The Site lies within the third main area and, more specifically, within the Arden sub-area.

5.11 The Arden sub-area is split up into a number of different Landscape Character Areas (LCA's) and the Site falls within the Arden Parklands LCA which is described as follows:

“Arden parklands is characterised by large arable fields, often poorly defined by low cut and gappy hedgerows. Although field pattern tends to be a subsidiary landscape element, it is important to conserve primary hedgelines, including those along roadsides, bridleways, footpaths and parish boundaries. These form a key structural element in the landscapes, particularly where they contain mature hedgerow trees. Such features should be conserved and managed more positively as landscape features. This would include allowing hedgerows to grow thicker and taller (up to 2m in height), strengthening individual gappy hedges and encouraging the natural regeneration of hedgerow oaks. Where primary hedgerows have been removed, consideration should be given to replacement planting.

5.12 Overall character and qualities are described as:

“An enclosed, gently rolling landscape defined by woodland edges, parkland and belts of trees.”

5.13 The key characteristic features are identified as:

- ***“Middle distance views enclosed by woodland edge;***
- ***Belts of mature trees associated with estatelands;***
- ***Many ancient woodlands, often with irregular outlines;***
- ***Large country houses set in mature parkland;***
- ***Remnant deerparks with ancient pollarded oaks; and***
- ***Thick roadside hedgerows, often with bracken.”***

5.14 The Management Strategy for Arden Parklands is as follows:

- ***“Retain and enhance the effect of wooded enclosure.”***

5.15 Landscape Guidelines are identified as:

- ***“Felling coupes should be carefully designed to retain the effect of wooded enclosure;***
- ***Species selection along woodland edges should favour native trees and shrubs; and***
- ***Enhance tree cover through the planting of new woodlands and belts of trees.”***

5.16 General Development Guidelines for Arden (relating to housing) are as follows:

- ***“Conserve the character of rural settlements by retaining existing features and local patterns in all development schemes; and***
- ***Soften hard built edges through increased tree planting within and around new development.”***

District/Local Level Character Assessments

5.17 There are no district or local level character assessments relating to the Site.

Conservation Area Guidance

5.18 The south-eastern part of the Site bounds a very short section of the northern boundary of the Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area. The conservation area is divided into 37 sub-

areas. The sub-area the Site adjoins is sub-area 33: Kenilworth Road, the key characteristics of which are identified as:

- *“Part of planned town layout from late 19th Century;*
- *North end development late 19th Century with villas;*
- *Very good street trees;*
- *South end development with Edwardian houses;*
- *Larger middle section individually designed interwar houses;*
- *some 1950's infills. Good detailing, some imaginative designs;*
- *No.38 is a good 1930's house;*
- *Good garden trees;*
- *Varied boundary treatment some ironwork to southern end good brick walls with plinth remain in southern section;*
- *Large late Victorian house, new residential home at mid point, has unsympathetic extensions; and*
- *Gardens important to setting of house, linking of plots for redevelopment would not be appropriate.”*

6.0 SITE APPRAISAL

- 6.1 **Figure 4: Site Appraisal Plan** illustrates the extent of existing vegetation, boundary features and buildings and roads on or in close proximity to the Site. A number of **Site Appraisal Photographs (A-V)**, included in **Appendix 1**, have been taken from within the Site as part of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal visit, and serve to illustrate the features on the Site and its existing character, as described below.
- 6.2 The Site comprises 12 arable agricultural fields of varying shapes and sizes with a site area of approximately 83 hectares (ha) in total. Land within the Site is gently undulating with a high point of approximately 72m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) in the north-west. Land then slopes downwards from this point to the centre of the Site to a level of approximately 60m AOD. Land then slopes up from the centre of the Site to the south-east of the Site to a level of approximately of 65m AOD. Field boundaries comprise of hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees.
- 6.3 The south-eastern boundary of the Site adjoins residential development along Bamburgh Grove, Vernon Close and Northumberland Park, as illustrated in **Site Appraisal Photographs A, B and C**. Recently constructed properties visible along Northumberland Park fall within the Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area and these, in combination with residential properties along Vernon Close and Bamburgh Grove, form an abrupt and prominent settlement edge, as illustrated in **Site Appraisal Photographs C and H**. The eastern boundary of the Site where it abounds Kenilworth Road is delineated by a hedgerow and tree belt (TB1), as illustrated within **Site Appraisal Photographs B, C, D, E and I**.
- 6.4 A combination of hedgerows and mature trees exist along the boundary where the Site abounds Wyndrush, Broadway, Oak Priors, Oldways and Oak Bank House, located along Kenilworth Road in the north-east of the Site, limiting intervisibility between the Site and these properties, as illustrated by **Site Appraisal Photographs G, H and I**.
- 6.5 The north-eastern boundary of the Site where it adjoins the Warwickshire Nuffield Hospital is delineated by a tree belt (TB2), also limiting intervisibility between this building and the Site, as illustrated in **Site Appraisal Photographs G and H**. The Site Appraisal Photographs also demonstrate the character of the northern boundary, which runs alongside Old Milverton Lane in the north-east of the Site, which comprises a dense hedgerow and intermittent mature trees.
- 6.6 Sandy Lane Farm lies to the north-east of the Site, surrounded by hedgerows (H5) and mature trees, as illustrated in **Site Appraisal Photographs E, D, H and I**.

- 6.7 The northern boundary adjoining Sandy Lane comprises of a dense hedgerow with occasional gaps which allow intermittent views out of the Site towards Sandy Lane, as illustrated in **Site Appraisal Photographs F and J**.
- 6.8 From the northern boundary of the Site, the existing residential edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa is apparent, exerting a level of urban influence over the Site; reducing the sensitivity of the Site; and exhibiting a greater affinity of the Site with the settlement of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa than with the wider countryside, as illustrated by **Site Appraisal Photographs J and K**.
- 6.9 **Site Appraisal Photographs L-S** demonstrate the character of the western part of the Site, comprising agricultural fields influenced by the existing built up edge of Milverton, exerting a level of urban influence, which is experienced in views from PRow W176 which traverses the Site. The Site Appraisal Photographs L-S also demonstrate the limited intervisibility between the Site and the settlement of Old Milverton, separated by the railway corridor and associated tree belts (TB3).
- 6.10 **Site Appraisal Photograph T**, taken from outwith?? the Site boundary looking east towards Bamburgh Grove and Northumberland Road, demonstrates the limited intervisibility between the Site and the historic part of Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area (specifically area 33: Northumberland Road), as a result of substantial intervening vegetation in rear gardens and along the eastern edge of fields F8 within the Site and F8a outwith?? the Site boundary.
- 6.11 **Site Appraisal Photograph U** is looking north over field F7 from the central area of the Site. The photograph demonstrates the strong northern hedgerow boundary along Sandy Lane with landform falling away to the River Avon in the valley beyond. Landform in the valley beyond barely rises above the horizon, limiting views into the wider countryside from the Site and limiting views from the wider countryside back towards the Site.
- 6.12 A large allotment is located within the southern part of the Site, exerting further settlement edge characteristics over the Site, and reinforcing the Site's affinity with the settlement edge rather than the wider countryside, as illustrated in **Site Appraisal Photograph V**.

Summary of Site Appraisal

- 6.13 The character of the Site is influenced by its proximity to the settlement edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa, reducing its sensitivity. The Site has strong, robust and defensible boundary features, including tree belts, hedgerows, roads and railway corridors which contain it from the wider countryside and limit intervisibility between the Site and its wider surroundings. The Site contains strong internal landscape features including hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees which define its character.

7.0 VISUAL APPRAISAL

- 7.1 A visual appraisal of the Site and its environs was undertaken in August 2014 to determine the relationship of the area with its surroundings, the visibility of the Site within the wider landscape, the suitability of the land for development and the effect that this would have on the landscape and visual characteristics of the area.
- 7.2 The visual appraisal was undertaken from publicly accessible viewpoints within the surrounding landscape, such as from roads and footpaths to determine the approximate extent of the area from which the Site is visible from the eye level of a person standing on the ground. The visibility of any site is predominantly influenced by its landform and the extent and type of vegetation cover and built elements within the Site and the surrounding landscape.
- 7.3 There is, in most visual appraisals, a continuum of degrees of visibility ranging from no view of the Site to full, open views. To indicate the degree of visibility of the Site from roads, public rights of way and properties, three categories of visibility have been used in this assessment:
- a. Open view: A clear view of a significant proportion of the Site within the wider landscape.
 - b. Partial view: A view of part of the Site or a filtered view of the Site, or a distant view in which the Site is perceived as a small part of the view; and
 - c. Truncated / No view: Views towards the Site are curtailed by visual barriers, such as intervening topography, vegetation or built forms.
- 7.4 In order to represent the nature of identified views, a number of **Site Context Photographs (1-18)** are included within the Illustrative Material within **Appendix 1**. The locations from which these photographs were taken from are illustrated on **Figure 5: Visual Appraisal Plan** which also gives an indication of the level of visibility of the Site from the surrounding area.
- 7.5 As illustrated within **Figure 5: Visual Appraisal Plan** and within the **Site Context Photographs (1-18)**, views toward the Site from the north, south, east and west are predominantly curtailed by a combination of intervening vegetation, built form and topographical variation, in all but the most immediate surroundings and a very limited number of longer distances views from elevated land to the north, north-west and west where small parts of the Site are visible but not easily discernible from limited sections of PRoWs, forming a very small element in a much wider view and seen in the context of the existing settlement edge.

Near Distance Views (0-500 metres)

- 7.6 **Site Context Photograph 1** is taken from Sandy Road, immediately to the north of the Site where there is a gap in the hedgerow for field access, looking south. Sandy Road and the dense hedgerow which delineate the northern boundary of the Site are visible in the far left of the view. Built form and allotment gardens associated with the settlement edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa feature in the view, exerting a level of urban influence over the Site and giving the Site a greater affinity with the settlement of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa than with the wider countryside, reducing the sensitivity of the Site. Field boundaries including hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees provide an important landscape structure within the Site, contributing to the wider landscape character. Road users of Sandy Lane will experience glimpsed, transient views over the Site from short sections of Sandy Lane as a result of the northern boundary hedgerow predominantly curtailing views for road users. These views are seen in the context of the existing residential edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa.
- 7.7 **Site Context Photograph 2** is taken from further west along Sandy Road close to where it becomes Old Milverton Lane. Again, the dense northern boundary hedgerow predominantly curtails views from along this section of road. However, where there are gaps in the hedgerow for field access, views across parts of the Site are attained, seen in the context of the Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa settlement edge, with views of residential properties on the northern edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa visible. The built form of Sandy Lane Farm is also visible from this location, in an elevated position, adding to the palette of built forms which exert an urbanising influence over the Site.
- 7.8 **Site Context Photograph 3** is taken from the A452 Kenilworth Road along the eastern boundary of the Site. The road exerts a level of influence over the character of the Site and reduces its tranquillity and sensitivity. Rising landform within the Site limits views over the majority of the Site from this location, with only the easternmost part of the Site visible, with Sandy Lane Farm occupying an elevated position, introducing an element of built form into the view. The tree belt (TB1) running along the eastern boundary of the Site substantially filters/curtails views into the Site from the majority of Kenilworth Road.
- 7.9 **Site Context Photograph 4** is taken from PRow W176 on the edge of Old Milverton, to the west of the Site, looking east. Substantial tree belts along the railway corridor filter/curtail views across the majority of the Site. Topographical variation within the Site limits views from this location towards the centre and east of the Site as land falls away. Existing built form on the edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa visible in the view, exerts a level of urban influence over the Site.

7.10 **Site Context Photograph 5** is taken from Lamintone Drive to the south of the Site, on the northern edge of Milverton, looking north. Recent residential development characterises the streetscape in the left to the right of the view, with the Site partially visible in the left of the view, with views over the remainder of the Site curtailed by intervening built form and topographical variation within the Site.

7.11 **Site Context Photograph 6** is taken from Windermere Drive near the entrance to the allotments, looking north. Recent residential development characterises the streetscape in the left to the right of the view, with the Site partially visible in the centre of the view, with views over the remainder of the Site curtailed by intervening built form.

Site Context Photograph 7 is taken from PRoW L3 to the south-east of the Site along Bamburgh Grove, looking north-west. Recent residential development along Bamburgh Grove characterises the streetscape in the left to the right of the view, with views towards the Site curtailed by existing built form and intervening vegetation. This recent development of Bamburgh Grove is located between the Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area (area 33: Northumberland Road) and a section of the Site's south-eastern boundary.

7.12 **Site Context Photograph 8** is taken from a location along PRoW W176 slightly further west of the location of Site Context Photograph 4, where the PRoW joins Old Milverton Road. Residential properties within Old Milverton along Old Milverton Road are visible in the left of the view, with vegetation including tree belts within rear gardens and the western boundary of the Site along the railway corridor, predominantly curtailing views towards the Site.

Medium distance (501m-1km)

7.13 **Site Context Photograph 9** is taken from Sandy Lane, to the north-east of the Site, looking south-west. Views towards the Site are curtailed by topographical variation and intervening vegetation, including woodland blocks and tree belts.

7.14 **Site Context Photograph 10** is taken from PRoW W177 within Guy's Cliffe Registered Park and Garden (Grade II) to the west of the Site, looking east. The A46 is just visible in the left of the view, with St James's Church visible in the centre of the view, set within a framework of mature trees. The Site is not visible from this location with views curtailed as a result of topographical variation and intervening vegetation.

7.15 **Site Context Photograph 11** is taken from the B4115 (Coventry Road) to the north-west of the Site, looking south-east. The railway line and viaduct over the River Avon are visible in the left and centre of the view. The rising fields to the south of the River Avon are visible in the right-centre of the view, rising up to a localised ridge, beyond which the Site is located. As such, the Site is curtailed from view as a result of this topographical variation between

this location and the Site. In the right of the view, the railway line disappears from view as it passes the western boundary of the Site, with Old Milverton and St James's Church visible in the far right of the view, separated from the Site physically by the railway line and visually by intervening vegetation, including substantial tree belts along the railway corridor.

Long Distance Views (1km +)

- 7.16 **Site Context Photograph 12** is taken from the edge of Hill Wootton, in the vicinity of Wootton Grange Farm, to the north of the Site, looking south. Views towards the Site are predominantly curtailed by topographical variation and intervening vegetation between this location and the Site. A very small part of the Site, limited to its south-eastern edge, forms a very small element within the view, seen in the context of the existing residential edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa.
- 7.17 **Site Context Photograph 13** is taken from Westhill Road to the east of the Site, looking west. Built form associated with Royal Leamington Spa is present in the view, including North Leamington School. However, the Site is curtailed from view as a result of intervening vegetation including substantial tree belts and mature trees.
- 7.18 **Site Context Photograph 14** is taken from Warwick Road/Sustrans Cycle Route 52 on the edge of Leek Wootton, to the north-west of the Site, looking south-east. The A46 and its associated vehicle movements form a prominent infrastructure corridor within the centre of the view with the settlement of Royal Leamington Spa in the distance. The fields to the south of River Avon slope up to a localised ridge, beyond which lies the Site, predominantly curtailed from view, with the exception of a very short length of the northern boundary hedgerow in the north-western part of the Site.
- 7.19 **Site Context Photograph 15** is taken from a localised ridgeline along the B4115 in the vicinity of PRow W174, looking south-east. Substantial woodland vegetation along this road curtails views towards the Site from this location.
- 7.20 **Site Context Photograph 16** is taken from PRow 179d, in an elevated position to the north-west of the Site, looking south-east. The Site is barely discernible from this location with views being predominantly curtailed by intervening vegetation. Where a very small part of the Site is visible, this forms a very small element in the view, seen in the context of the existing settlement edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and other built forms, including Eden Court high rise tower block in Lillington, visible in the centre of the views, situated in an elevated position on the horizon.
- 7.21 **Site Context Photograph 17** is taken from a PRow (recently adopted) in an elevated position to the north-west of the Site in the vicinity of Leek Wootton and Warwickshire Golf

Club, looking south-east. Residential properties within Leek Wootton, including Stone Edge, are visible on elevated ground in the left of the view, set in a framework of mature trees which limit views from these properties towards the Site. Land then falls away to the right of Stone Edge where views towards Royal Leamington Spa are attained from this location. Built form associated with Royal Leamington Spa, including Eden Court tower block in Lillington are present in the view. The majority of the Site is curtailed from view as a result of intervening vegetation and topographical variation, including the southern fields beyond the River Avon which slope upwards to a localised ridgeline with the Site located beyond. The south-eastern part of the Site forms a small, barely discernible part of the wider panoramic view, seen in the context of the existing settlement edge of Royal Leamington Spa.

7.22 **Site Context Photograph 18** is taken from an elevated position along PRoW W180 in the vicinity of Prospect Farm and Woodbine Cottages, looking east. Built form associated with Royal Leamington Spa and Warwick can be seen in the distance from the centre to the right of the view. The Site is predominantly curtailed from view as a result of intervening vegetation including woodland blocks and tree belts. However, a very small part of the Site, barely perceptible to the naked eye, limited to the south-eastern section of the Site, forms a very small element of the wider panoramic view, seen in the context of the existing built up edge of Royal Leamington Spa.

Summary of Visual Appraisal

7.23 The Site's location adjoining the existing built up edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa, in combination with its robust and defensible boundaries and surrounding topographical variation (including the Sites location beyond a localised ridgeline of upward sloping fields to the south of the River Avon), extensive tree belts and woodland blocks in the wider landscape, results in views into the Site from publicly accessible areas being predominantly restricted to:

- Near distance open views from PRoW W176/L3 which traverses the Site;
- Near distance partial views from a limited number and limited sections of roads immediately to the south of the Site associated with recent housing development on the northern edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa;
- Near distance, partial, transient views from short section of the A452 Kenilworth Road to the east of the Site, where there are limited gaps in the tree belt along the eastern boundary of the Site;
- Near distance, partial, transient views from sections of Sandy Lane/Old Milverton Lane to the north of the Site;
- Long distance, partial views from very limited locations on the southern edge of Hill Wootton; and

- Long distance, partial views from a limited number of and limited lengths of PROWs on elevated ground to the north-west and west of the Site.

7.24 Where near distance views of the Site are experienced from publicly accessible places, the Site is seen in the context of existing residential built form on the northern edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and associated infrastructure including the A452 Kenilworth Road to the east of the Site and the railway corridor to the west of the Site. These urbanising features exert a substantial influence over the Site, giving the Site a greater affinity with the urban edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa than with the open countryside which exists to the north of the Site.

7.25 Where long distance views of the Site are experienced from publicly accessible places, limited to small parts of the Site, the visible parts of the Site form a very small element in a wider panoramic view, seen in the context of existing built form associated with the settlement of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa.

7.26 There is limited intervisibility between the Site and Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area, with the small section adjoining the south-eastern edge of the Site being the only visible part of the Conservation Area. This part comprises recent development and forms a very small element of the wider Conservation Area which covers an extensive part of the settlement of Leamington Spa.

7.27 In terms of residential receptors, the views which are most likely to change as a result of the proposed development are those near distance residential receptors immediately adjacent to or in close proximity to the southern, south-eastern and northern edge of the Site. This includes; residential properties along Northumberland Park, Vernon Close, Bamburgh Grove, Fairhurst Drive, Lamintone Drive and Range Meadows Close to the south and south-east of the Site which will likely experience open/partial views towards the Site and proposed built form; and residential properties, including Quarry Cottage, Quarry Lodge and Sandy Lane Farm to the north of the Site, which again will likely experience open/partial views towards the Site. However, in terms of these properties immediately to the north of the Site, changes in the view will be limited by proposed planting along the northern boundary filtering views over time and the retention of areas of open space in the north-eastern part of the Site limiting views towards built form.

7.28 Residential properties along the A452 Kenilworth Road immediately to the east of the Site, including Wyndrush, Broadway, Oak Priors, Oldways and Oak Bank House will likely experience a limited detrimental change in the view with views across the Site filtered by extensive tree belts and mature trees around the boundaries of these properties.

- 7.29 A limited number of residential properties in Hill Wootton potentially experience distant, partial views towards the Site, likely to be limited to upper floor windows only. In this context, any detrimental change in the view will likely be limited and seen in the context of the existing settlement edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa.

Landscape Value

- 7.30 The Site lies within Green Belt but is not covered by any national or local landscape designations. It contains a network of hedgerows and hedgerow trees and a small part of the Site lies adjacent to Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area. The close affinity with urban development including residential to the south and east; the A425 Kenilworth Road to the east; and railway corridor to the west of the Site reduces tranquillity and remoteness. The Site is considered to be of low to medium landscape value.

Capacity to Accommodate Residential Development

- 7.31 The Site varies in sensitivity to change, where the southern, western and eastern parts of the Site, which are influenced by adjoining residential development, rail and road corridors, are of lower sensitivity and the northern part of the Site is relatively more sensitive. The Site has the capacity to successfully accommodate residential development due to the low to medium landscape value and sensitivity of the Site and limited extent of intervisibility with the wider landscape. Residential development on the Site would result in a direct change of land use through the loss of areas of farmland and through the introduction of new built elements. However, the retention of open space in the west of the Site; and the provision of a green infrastructure corridor and landscape buffer to the north of the Site, would maintain an appropriate transition between the settlement edge and the wider countryside.
- 7.32 Any residential development would need to be sensitively designed through siting, layout, materials and massing, set within the existing vegetation structure. A comprehensive landscape strategy to enhance the landscape, biodiversity and visual amenity of the Site would be integral to ensure that residential development is readily assimilated within the Site. This would ensure that adverse landscape and visual effects on the surrounding area are limited. Overall it is considered that the Site has a medium to high capacity to successfully accommodate residential development of an appropriate form and scale.

8.0 CONTRIBUTION THE SITE MAKES TO THE PURPOSES OF THE GREEN BELT

- 8.1 Following a site visit and a review of baseline material, an assessment of the Site in terms of the first four Green Belt purposes is made within this appraisal, namely the contribution the Site makes to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas, preventing neighbourhood towns merging into one another; assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; and preserving the setting and special character of historic towns. The fifth purpose has not been assessed, and is 'screened out', as the Site is not brownfield land.
- 8.2 In evaluating the contribution of the land within the Site to the Green Belt, the Site has been ranked or quantified within a series of levels or categories, indicating a gradation from high to low, as recommended in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA). Accordingly, each threshold can be clearly defined, using simple, readily understood terms applicable for all circumstances in which they are applied. These thresholds are set out in **Table 1** within the methodology. An assessment of the contribution that the Site makes to each of the four purposes is set out below.

Table 2: Assessment of Green Belt Purpose of the Site

Green Belt Purpose	Assessment	Contribution of the Site to the Green Belt <i>Limited/Some/Significant/None</i>
1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	<p>Royal Leamington Spa has an irregular settlement edge and although development on the Site would result in an extension of Royal Leamington Spa to the north-west, it would not breach the established northern extent of Royal Leamington Spa, which includes Lillington and Cubbington; or the established western extent of Royal Leamington Spa, which includes Milverton.</p> <p>Although the Site predominantly comprises arable fields, it does not display characteristics of strong rural character as a result of the influence of adjoining development, particularly along its southern and south-eastern boundary, including residential development along Northumberland Park, Vernon Close, Bamburgh Grove, The Fairways, Moss Paul Close, Davis Close, Lamintone Drive and Range Meadow Close. The large allotment gardens in the southern part of the Site also displays settlement edge characteristics.</p> <p>The Site is contained by the A452 Kenilworth Road to the east; the built up edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa to the south and south-east; Sandy Road/Old Milverton Lane to the North; and a railway corridor to the west.</p> <p>These boundaries are robust, defensible and permanent,</p>	<p>Some reduced to Limited subject to the enhancement of existing landscape structure, particularly along the northern boundary of the Site adjoining Sandy Lane</p>

	<p>and would contain development within the strong boundaries of the Site. These boundaries can be further strengthened through the planting of and enhancement of tree belts along the boundaries.</p> <p>A carefully considered proposed layout responding to and enhancing the existing landscape structure, would form a coherent extension to Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa, and would not constitute 'sprawl'.</p>	
<p>2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another</p>	<p>The settlement of Hill Wootton lies to the north of the Site with the larger settlement of Kenilworth to the north beyond Hill Wootton; the settlement of Leek Wootton lies to the north-west of the Site; the settlement of Old Milverton lies to the west of the Site; and the settlement of Warwick lies to the south-west of the Site.</p> <p>Settlement of Hill Wootton:</p> <p>The distance between the northern edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa to Hill Wootton is approximately 1.5km. Development on the Site would result in the settlements of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and Hill Wootton becoming physically closer, by approximately 350m. However, this would not result in the merging of these settlements.</p> <p>The fields to the immediate south and north of the River Avon are of greater importance in the prevention of merging of these settlements, and constitute the undeveloped foreground of views from the settlement of Hill Wootton. The rising topography of this land to the south of the River Avon results in these fields being of greater prominence within local views than the fields within the Site, located beyond a local ridgeline, and of greater importance as a physical and visual gap between settlements.</p> <p>Sandy Road which runs along the north of the Site also provides a physical and permanent boundary to the Site which could be strengthened with the provision of a landscape buffer, containing development within the Site.</p> <p>Settlement of Kenilworth:</p> <p>The distance between the northern edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa to Kenilworth is approximately 3.5km, and as a result the development of the Site would not result in the merging of Milverton/Leamington Spa and Kenilworth.</p> <p>Settlement of Leek Wootton</p> <p>The distance between the northern edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa to Leek Wootton is approximately 1.8km. Development on the Site would result in the settlements of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and Leek Wootton becoming physically closer, by approximately 50-100m. However, this would not result in the merging of these settlements.</p> <p>The fields to the immediate south of the River Avon are of greater importance in the prevention of merging of</p>	<p>In relation to the settlement of Kenilworth and Warwick: None</p> <p>In relation to the settlement of Leek Wootton: Limited</p> <p>In relation to the settlement of Hill Wootton: Some reduced to Limited with a green buffer on the northern edge of the Site</p> <p>In relation to the settlement of Old Milverton: Some reduced to Limited with the retention of an area of open space in the western part of the Site</p> <p>In relation to the settlement of Blackdown: Some reduced to Limited with the retention of an area of open space between development on the Site and residential properties along the A425 on the southern edge of Blackdown.</p>

	<p>these settlements, and constitute the undeveloped background of views from the settlement of Leek Wootton. The rising topography of this land to the south of the River Avon results in these fields being of greater prominence within local views than the fields within the Site, and of greater importance as a physical and visual gap between settlements.</p> <p>The Site and Leek Wootton are physically separated by a railway corridor and the A46 which both travel in a north-south direction. The railway corridor runs along the western edge of the Site providing a robust, defensible and permanent boundary to the Site.</p> <p>Settlement of Old Milverton</p> <p>The distance between the northern edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa to Old Milverton is approximately 250m. Development on the Site would not result in the settlements of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and Old Milverton becoming physically closer, and would not result in the merging of these settlements.</p> <p>The railway corridor running along the western edge of the Site and associated tree belts provides a robust, defensible and permanent boundary and limits intervisibility between the Site and Old Milverton. An undeveloped area of land with strongly defined edges in the west of the Site would retain a physical and visual gap between Old Milverton and Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa.</p> <p>Settlement of Warwick</p> <p>The distance between the western edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa to Warwick is approximately 250m. Development on the Site would not extend further west than the existing extents of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and as a result would not reduce the gap between Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and Warwick. The River Avon provides a physical gap between these two settlements which have effectively already merged with built form of these two settlements along the east and west banks of the River Avon.</p> <p>Settlement of Blackdown</p> <p>To the east of the A452 Kenilworth Road, development in the Green Belt between the northern edge of Lillington/Royal Leamington Spa and Blackdown, including school buildings, pavilions, playing fields and tennis courts, has contributed to some degree of perceived and physical coalescence between these two settlements. Development on the Site would therefore not reduce the gap between the northern edge of Royal Leamington Spa and Blackdown. However, the agricultural fields within the Site, located to the west of the A452, provide some perception of separation between the northern edge of Milverton and the southern edge of Blackdown, including a small number of residential properties to the west of the A452 Kenilworth Road. This perception is primarily experienced when travelling along the A452. These residential properties are set within a wooded framework which limits intervisibility between the Site/proposed development and these properties. The</p>	
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	<p>setting back of proposed built form from the A452 Kenilworth Road; the strengthening of the eastern boundary of the Site along the A452 Kenilworth Road; and the retention of a physical gap between the proposed development edge and these residential properties will help retain the function of the Green Belt to the west of the A452 Kenilworth Road, in so far as retaining a physical and perceived gap between the southern edge of Blackdown and the northern edge of Milverton. However, the physical gap between the northern edge of Milverton and the residential properties to the west of the A452 Kenilworth Road on the southern edge of Blackdown will reduce from approximately 400m to approximately 150m as a result of the Proposed Development. However, this needs to be seen in the context of the degree of physical and perceived coalescence of Royal Leamington Spa and Blackdown which already exists to the east of the A452 Kenilworth Road.</p>	
<p>3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment</p>	<p>The Site comprises a series of arable fields bound by mature hedgerows and trees on relatively flat land, the eastern and western extent of which comprise of tree belts, along road and railway corridors.</p> <p>The Site is subject to urban influences to the south, including residential development; the east, including the A452 Kenilworth Road; and the west, including the railway corridor.</p> <p>The introduction of development within any area of countryside would inevitably result in impacts on the countryside, however, the extent of encroachment will be perceived within a limited visual envelope.</p> <p>Development would result in encroachment into arable fields and the development would form an extension of the built up edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa. However, this development would be seen in the context of existing development visible along the northern edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa.</p> <p>The Site is defined to its east by the A452 Kenilworth Road, which is a prominent main road connecting Royal Leamington Spa and Kenilworth and Birmingham beyond. The Site is defined to its north by Sandy Road/Old Milverton Lane, with the River Avon running along a valley approximately 300m beyond, and whilst not a 'main road' is a prominent road providing connection to the settlement of Old Milverton. The Site is defined to its west by a railway corridor and associated tree belts. The Site is defined by the built up edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa to the south. These boundaries are robust and defensible, and would prevent future encroachment beyond the limits of the Site.</p> <p>The strong Site boundaries would be enhanced through the introduction of a landscape buffer / green transition zone between the edge of proposed development and Sandy Lane/Old Milverton Lane, the result of which would form a robust limit to future development and contain development within the confines of the Site. In addition, these mitigation measures would filter views towards proposed development from settlements and roads to the</p>	<p>Some reduced to Limited subject to the reinforcement of the northern Site boundary with a landscape buffer along Sandy Lane and Old Milverton Lane.</p>

	north and north-west, thereby limiting the perception of encroachment.	
4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	<p>The Site is located adjacent to a very short section of the northern boundary of Royal Leamington Spa Conservation Area. There is no intervisibility between the Site and the remainder of the Conservation Area, which covers an extensive area of the settlement of Royal Leamington Spa to the south of the Site, as a result of intervening built form and vegetation. The wider setting of the Conservation Area will therefore not be affected by the proposed development.</p> <p>There are no Listed Buildings within the Site and no intervisibility between the Site and any Listed Buildings with the vicinity of the Site. The setting and special character of Listed Buildings will therefore not be affected by the proposed development.</p>	Some reduced to Limited subject to development respecting the existing height, form and massing of surrounding residential properties and respecting the setting of the very small section of conservation area which adjoins the Site.

- 8.3 The overall contribution the Site makes to Green Belt is '**Some to Limited**'. Subject to the proposed landscape measures including the reinforcement of Site boundaries; the creation of a landscape buffer along the northern boundary; the retention of an area of green open space between proposed development on the Site and the western boundary adjoining the railway corridor with the settlement of Old Milverton beyond; and the retention of an area of green open space between the proposed development and the southern edge of Blackdown, the Site has capacity to accommodate built form whilst maintaining Green Belt function.
- 8.4 Although the Site comprises arable agricultural fields, it does not display characteristics of strong rural character as a result of the influence of adjoining development, particularly along its southern boundary which adjoins the built up edge of Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa; its eastern boundary where it adjoins the A452 Kenilworth Road; and its western boundary which adjoins a railway corridor.
- 8.5 The existing boundaries to the Site are strong and robust. The boundaries of greatest sensitivity are; the northern boundary, defined by Sandy Lane; and western boundary, defined by the railway corridor with Old Milverton beyond. These could be enhanced and reinforced through reinforced boundary planting along the railway corridor and the planting of tree belts/landscape buffer along Sandy Lane. In addition, the retention of the fields closest to the settlement of Old Milverton as an undeveloped green open space with strongly defined edges would retain a physical and visual gap between Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa and Old Milverton. A carefully considered layout responding to the existing landscape structure, would form a coherent extension to Milverton/Royal Leamington Spa, and would