
Land at Hatton, Warwickshire: Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Green Belt Review

Prepared on behalf of Hatton Estate

April 2016

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Reserved Site Appraisal Photographs A - I

Reserved Site Context Photographs 1 - 19

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Overview

- 1.1 Barton Willmore Landscape Planning and Design (BWLPD) was commissioned by Hatton Estate to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Green Belt Review of the Land at Hatton, Warwickshire (the 'Reserved Site'), as identified within the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) – 2015 Update, under reference R188. This review has been undertaken with regards to the potential development of approximately 1,000 dwellings within the Reserved Site and in the context of the public consultation on the Proposed Modifications (February 2016) to the Warwick Local Plan, which was originally submitted for examination in January 2015.
- 1.2 With reference to **Figure 1: Reserved Site Context Plan**, the Reserved Site is located in the vicinity of Hatton, between the M40 and the Chiltern Mainline Railway/Grand Union Canal, and to the west of Hatton Country World. The Site is located within the south-eastern part of the Green Belt that encompasses the metropolitan area of Birmingham.
- 1.3 This report details the landscape character, landscape value and visual envelope of the Site, and provides an assessment of the contribution that the Site makes towards the purposes and function of the Green Belt, as set out in Paragraph 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 1.4 This report also considers the contribution that the land surrounding the Reserved Site makes in relation to the purposes and function of the Green Belt to identify the potential wider strategic opportunities and constraints to future development.
- 1.5 The objectives of this study are to:
 - Assess the landscape characteristics and quality of the Reserved Site and its surroundings and function within the landscape;
 - Assess the visibility of the Reserved Site and the nature and quality of the existing views from the surrounding area;
 - Consider the policy basis for the Green Belt designation that applies to the area;
 - Assess the contribution of the Reserved Site in response to its Green Belt function and its potential to be released from the Green Belt;
 - Identify opportunities and constraints to development on the Reserved Site, from a landscape and visual perspective, in relation to the potential development of approximately 1,000 dwellings; and

- Consider and identify a revised Green Belt boundary to incorporate the Reserved Site and areas of potentially safeguarded land.

1.6 Supportive illustrative information is presented in the following plans and photographs:

- Figure 1: Reserved Site Context Plan;
- Figure 2: Topographical Features Plan;
- Figure 3: Landscape Character Plan;
- Figure 4: Reserved Site Appraisal Plan;
- Figure 5: Visual Appraisal Plan;
- Figure 6: Landscape and Visual Opportunities and Constraints Plan;
- Figure 7: Strategic Development Framework Plan;
- Reserved Site Appraisal Photographs A - I; and
- Reserved Site Context Photographs 1 - 19.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

- 2.1 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', prepared by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environment Management and Assessment (2013).
- 2.2 A desktop review of the surrounding area was undertaken, including for a review of the published landscape character information, landform, landscape features, relevant landscape and visual policy and landscape designations. This information was used as the initial basis against which to appraise the Reserved Site. A visit to the Reserved Site and surroundings was subsequently undertaken in April 2016 to verify the desk-based review findings and add further information to the landscape and visual context of the Reserved Site and wider area.
- 2.3 A description of the existing land use of the surrounding 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.
- 2.4 To determine the extent of visual influence, a visual appraisal was undertaken of the Reserved Site to consider the nature of existing views from publicly 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 considered from all directions and from a range of distances. The viewpoints chosen are not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to represent the potential views obtained towards the Reserved Site in order to identify the visual sensitivity of the Reserved Site.
- 2.5 A more detailed landscape appraisal of the Reserved Site was then undertaken, which in combination with the wider visual appraisal, assists in the identification of opportunities and constraints that would assist in defining the boundaries for potential future development, and thus an amended Green Belt boundary.
- 2.6 The sensitivity of the Reserved Site is considered in terms of the following:
 - Landscape Character: i.e. landform, vegetation cover, land use, scale, state of repair of individual elements, representation of typological character, enclosure pattern, form/line and movement;

- Landscape Value: i.e. national designations, local designations, sense of tranquillity/remoteness, scenic beauty and cultural associations; and
- Visual Influence: i.e. landform influences, tree and woodland cover, numbers and types of residents, numbers and types of visitors and scope for mitigating potential visual impacts.

Green Belt Review

Assessment against the purposes of the Green Belt

- 2.7 The Reserved Site is assessed against the first four of the purposes of the Green Belt as set out in Paragraph 80 of the NPPF, which are:
- ***"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..."***
- 2.8 With respect to the fifth purpose of the Green Belt "***to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land***", should the Reserved Site be brought forward for development it would not prejudice derelict or other urban land being brought forward for urban regeneration. In any event, the principle of retaining land within the Green Belt holds true for all areas within the Green Belt, therefore the Reserved Site is considered to make the same contribution to this purpose of the Green Belt as any other land parcel within the Green Belt. Accordingly, no additional specific assessment is undertaken.
- 2.9 The NPPF endorses the permanence of Green Belts as an essential characteristic and stipulates in Paragraph 83 that "***once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan***".
- 2.10 The NPPF seeks to align Green Belt boundary reviews with sustainable patterns of development as set out in Paragraph 84, with Local Planning Authorities encouraged to "***consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary***".
- 2.11 A common interpretation of the NPPF is that, where necessitated by development requirements, local plans should identify the most sustainable locations for development, unless outweighed by adverse effects on the overall integrity of the Green Belt according to an assessment of the Green Belt based on its five purposes. In this regard, where a given area of land contributes

poorly towards meeting the purposes of the Green Belt and its release would contribute positively to promoting a sustainable development pattern, this may be considered to constitute an 'exceptional circumstance' and the Green Belt boundary should be reviewed accordingly.

2.12 To ensure transparency and robustness in the assessment process, the methodology employed in undertaking the Green Belt Review of the Reserved Site replicates the methodology applied in the Joint Green Belt Study – Stage 1 (2015) for Coventry City Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Rugby Borough Council and Warwick District Council, prepared by LUC. The criteria used to assess the contribution made to the five purposes of the Green Belt is set out in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Purposes of the Green Belt - Assessment Criteria

Purpose	Criteria	Score
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	a Does the parcel play a role in preventing ribbon development and/or has the Green Belt within the parcel already been compromised by ribbon development?	If strong role (parcel inhibiting development along two or more sides of a road corridor), 2 If some role (parcel inhibiting development along one side of a road corridor), 1 If no role (parcel not inhibiting development along a road corridor), 0
	b Is the parcel free from development? Does the parcel have a sense of openness?	If parcel contains no development and has strong sense of openness, 2 If parcel contains limited development and has a relatively strong sense of openness, 1 If parcel already contains development compromising the sense of openness, 0
To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	a Is the parcel located within an existing settlement? If no, what is the width of the gap between the settlements at the point that the parcel is intersected?	If parcel is less than 1km away from a neighbouring settlement, 4 If parcel is between 1km and 5km away from a neighbouring settlement, 2 If parcel is within an existing settlement or more than 5km away from a neighbouring settlement, 0

Purpose	Criteria	Score	
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	a	<p>Does the parcel have the characteristics of countryside and/or connect to land within the characteristics of countryside?</p> <p>Has the parcel already been affected by encroachment of urbanised built development?</p>	<p>If parcel contains the characteristics of countryside, has no urbanising development, and is open, 2</p> <p>If parcel contains the characteristics of countryside, has limited urbanising development, and is relatively open, 1</p> <p>If parcel does not contain the characteristics and/or is not connected to land with the characteristics of countryside, or contains urbanising development that compromises openness, 0</p>
	b	Are there existing natural or man-made features / boundaries that would prevent encroachment of the countryside within or beyond the parcel in the long term?	<p>If no significant boundary, 2</p> <p>If less significant boundary, 1</p> <p>If significant boundary, 0</p>
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	a	<p>Is the parcel partially within or adjacent to a conservation area within an historic town?</p> <p>Does the parcel have good intervisibility with the historic core of an historic town?</p>	<p>If parcel is partially or wholly within or adjacent to a conservation area within an historic town and has good intervisibility with the historic core of the town, 4</p> <p>If parcel is partially or wholly within or adjacent to a conservation area within an historic town or has good intervisibility with the historic core of the town, 2</p> <p>If parcel has none of these features, 0</p>
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	a	All parcels of Green Belt land make an equally significant contribution to this purpose and are given a score of 4.	

Assessment against the characteristics of the Green Belt

2.13 The NPPF states that the key characteristics of the Green Belt are "***their openness and their permanence***". 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. An assessment is made of the openness of the Green Belt in the vicinity of the Reserved Site and to what extent its removal could have on the perception of openness in the remaining designated area.

2.14 In addition, the relationship of the Reserved Site to existing elements, such as roads, railways and rivers, as well as visual barriers, such as ridgelines and areas of notable vegetation is demonstrated. This assists in the assessment of impacts of potential development upon the

openness of the remaining Green Belt area and assists in the identification of boundaries that may be considered to be 'permanent'.

Definitions

Openness

- 2.15 Openness is taken to be the degree to which an 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

- 2.16 Disorganised and unattractive extension to an existing development area.

Defensible boundaries

- 2.17 The NPPF states that "**local authorities should define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent**".

Coalescence

- 2.18 The physical or visual linkage of two settlements or areas of built form.

Encroachment

- 2.19 Advancement of built development beyond the limits of existing built up area into an area perceived as countryside.

3.0 RELEVANT POLICY

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2012

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 The NPPF states that “**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 plays 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**”.
- 3.3 Twelve Core Planning Principles are set out, of which the following are relevant to the consideration of landscape and visual matters, stating 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.”**
- 3.4 Section 7 of the NPPF provides guidance on ensuring the delivery of good design. The NPPF requires development proposals to respond to local character and be visually attractive, as well as emphasising the need to integrate development proposals into the natural environment.

Paragraph 58 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- ***"will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;***
- ***establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;***
- ***optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;***
- ***respond to local character and history and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;***
- ***create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and***
- ***are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping".***

3.5 Paragraph 61 of the NPPF 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."

3.6 Section 9 of the NPPF relates to the protection of Green Belt land, with Paragraph 79 noting that "***the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open***". Paragraph 80 of the NPPF sets out the five purposes of the Green Belt, which are replicated in Paragraphs 2.7 - 2.8 of this report.

3.7 Paragraph 83 considers alterations to the designated Green Belt boundary, stating:

"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 permanence in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period."

3.8 This is supported by Paragraph 85 of the NPPF that states with regard to defining boundaries that local planning authorities should "***not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open***" and to "***define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent***".

3.9 Furthermore, Paragraph 85 notes that local planning authorities should "***satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the development plan period***" and "***where necessary, identify in their plans areas of 'safeguarded land' between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching will beyond the plan period***".

3.10 Emphasis on development to be appropriate to an underlying Green Belt designation is reinforced in Paragraph 87, which states:

"As with previous Green Belt Policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances."

3.11 This is supported by Paragraph 88, which states that:

"Local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations."

3.12 With respect to the natural environment, Paragraphs 109 - 125 of the NPPF focus on the conservation and enhancement of the local and natural environment. The NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the local environment by inter-alia "***protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils***".

3.13 Paragraph 110 of the NPPF 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. 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."

Local Policy

Warwick District Local Plan (1996 - 2011)

3.14 The Reserved Site lies within the administrative boundary of Warwick District Council, within Warwickshire County Council. As such, the current Development Plan for the area comprises the 'saved' policies of the Warwick District Local Plan (1996 - 2011), which sets out the planning

policies for the district. Those 'saved' policies of relevance to the immediate context of the Reserved Site and landscape and visual matters are set out below.

3.15 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:

- a) harmonise with, or enhance, the existing settlement in terms of physical form, patterns of 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 architectural and historical distinctiveness;***
- e) enhance 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;***
- k) ensure all components, e.g. buildings, landscaping, access routes, parking and open spaces are well related to each other and provide a safe and attractive environment....***

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 Character Appraisal and Design Statement."

3.16 Policy DP2 'Amenity' states that:

"Development will not be permitted which has an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of nearby uses and residents and/or does not provide acceptable standards of amenity for future users/occupiers of the development."

3.17 Policy DP3 'Natural and Historic Environment and Landscape' states:

"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. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate that they:

- a) protect and/or enhance local ecology, including existing site features of nature conservation value;***
- b) protect and/or enhance features of historical, archaeological, geological and geomorphological significance;***
- 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;***
- f) secure the long term management and maintenance of habitat/landscape features; and***
- g) protect best and most versatile agricultural land.***

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."

3.18 Policy DP11 'Drainage' states:

"Development will be encouraged to incorporate sustainable drainage systems which provide for the disposal of surface water..."

3.19 Policy SSP8 'Hatton Country World' states:

"New retail development will not be permitted at Hatton Country World as defined on the Proposals Map."

3.20 Within the supporting text to Policy SSP8 it states that "***in order to safeguard the character of the rural area, the Council will not support proposals which would lead to an increase in visitor numbers***" and that "***any new building at Hatton County World would be classified as inappropriate development within the Green Belt***".

3.21 The extent of the Warwickshire Green Belt is included within the Proposals Map of the Warwick District Local Plan (1996 - 2011). However, Policy DAP1 'Protecting the Green Belt' has since been revoked.

Warwick Local Plan - Submission Version - January 2015

3.22 Warwick District Council are currently in the process of preparing a new local plan. The Warwick Local Plan was submitted for examination in January 2015. In response to the interim conclusions of the Inspector, Warwick District Council have set out a series of Proposed Modifications (dated February 2016) to the Warwick Local Plan that are subject to public consultation. This section outlines the emerging policy basis of relevance to the Reserved Site and landscape and visual matters, and where relevant, the February 2016 Proposed Modifications.

3.23 Emerging Strategic Policy DS3 'Supporting Sustainable Communities' 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) Green infrastructure (such as parks, open space, playing pitches and ecosystem services such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS and habitats))."***

3.24 Emerging 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."

3.25 Emerging Policy SC0 'Sustainable Communities' states:

"New development should be high quality and...it is also important that new development protects and enhances the historic, built and natural features that make Warwick District a great place. To achieve this the development should:

- a) Deliver high quality layout and design to integrate with existing communities...;***
- j) Protect, and where possible enhance, the natural environment including important landscapes, natural features and areas of biodiversity..."***

3.26 Emerging Policy BE1 'Layout and Design' states:

"New development will be permitted where it positively contributes to the character and quality of its environment"

through good layout and design. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate that they:

- a) harmonise with, or enhance, the existing settlement in terms of physical form, patterns of movement and land use;***
- b) relate well to local topography and landscape features...;***
- d) reflect, respect and reinforce local architectural and historical distinctiveness;***
- e) enhance 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...;***
- j) provide for convenient, safe and integrated cycling and walking routes within the site and linking to related routes and for public transport;***
- k) provide adequate public and private open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality;***
- l) incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features including incorporating sustainable water management features;***
- m) ensure all components, e.g. buildings, landscaping, access routes, parking and open spaces are well related to each other and provide a safe and attractive environment;***

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 Layout and Design Statement."

3.27 Emerging Policy BE3 'Amenity' states:

"Development will not be permitted which has an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of nearby uses and residents and/or does not provide acceptable standards of amenity for future users and occupiers of the development."

3.28 Emerging Policy HS1 'Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities' states:

"The potential for creating healthy, safe and inclusive communities will be a guiding principle when considering all development proposals. Support will be given to proposals which...:

- g) Improve the quality and quantity of green infrastructure networks and protect and enhance physical access,***

including public rights of way to open space and green infrastructure...;

- k) Protect natural resources (as set out in Policy NE5) and which ensure the impacts on the quality of natural resources does not give rise to undue impacts on human health."***

3.29 Emerging Policy CC1 'Planning for Climate Change Adaptation' states:

"All development is required to be designed to be resilient to, and adapt to the future impacts of, climate change through the inclusion of the following adaptation measures where appropriate...:

- b) Optimising the use of multi-functional green infrastructure (including water features, green roofs, and tree planting) for urban cooling, local flood risk management and to provide access to outdoor space for shading..."***

3.30 Emerging Policy FW2 'Sustainable Urban Drainage' states:

"All new major developments must incorporate SuDS that provide biodiversity, water quality and amenity benefits and be in accordance with the Warwickshire Surface Water Management Plan. There will be a presumption against underground storage of water, and it should support the delivery of green infrastructure..."

3.31 Emerging Policy NE1 'Green Infrastructure' states:

"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..."

3.32 Emerging Policy NE3 'Biodiversity' states:

"New development will be permitted provided that it protects, enhances and/or restores habitat biodiversity. Development proposals will be expected to ensure that they:

- a) Lead to no net loss of biodiversity and where possible a net gain, where appropriate, by means of an approved ecological assessment of existing site features and development impacts;***
- b) Protect or enhance biodiversity assets and secure their long term management and maintenance; and***
- c) Avoid negative impacts on existing biodiversity.***

Where this is not possible, mitigation measures must be identified. If mitigation measures are not possible on site, then

compensatory measures involving biodiversity offsetting will be required."

3.33 Emerging Policy NE4 'Landscape' states:

"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 and/or expanding 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."***

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment – 2015 Update

3.34 The Reserved Site is identified within the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) – 2015 Update, under reference R188, and is described as follows:

"Large area of open countryside to east of Hatton Station. The site comprises agricultural land to the east of Hatton."

3.35 The overall suitability of the Reserved Site is summarised as follows:

"This is a large site on the edge of a small village, beyond the built up limits in the Green Belt, and would be contrary to Plan strategy. Site not considered suitable. Exceptional circumstances would need to be demonstrated for its release from the Green Belt."

4.0 RESERVED SITE CONTEXT

Landscape Setting

4.1 The Reserved Site is approximately 65.53 hectares (ha) in size, is irregular in shape and comprises predominantly westerly-facing agricultural land that is subdivided into a series of fields by hedgerows and treebelts. There are two small woodland copses within the centre of the Reserved Site, while the built forms of Little Nunhold Farm and Nunhold Farm Cottages lie adjacent to Dark Lane, which generally forms the eastern extent of the Reserved Site. Field small field ponds are located within the Reserved Site. Hatton Technology Centre adjoins the Reserved Site and is served by Dark Lane. The north-western part of the Reserved Site is utilised for outdoor storage.

Location and Land Use

4.2 As illustrated on **Figure 1: Reserved Site Context Plan**, the Reserved Site and the surrounding landscape context is generally agricultural in character. The agricultural fields that comprise the landscape are generally irregular in shape and size and are often bounded by dense hedgerows. Treebelts are also commonplace, giving rise to the perception of being within an enclosed landscape.

4.3 The majority of the Reserved Site lies between the M40 and the Chiltern Mainline Railway, which form robust and permanent boundaries, with the settlement of Hatton lying to the west of the Reserved Site. The north-western part of the Reserved Site is utilised for outdoor storage and is located between the Chiltern Mainline Railway and the Grand Union Canal, adjacent to Hatton train station. Hatton Technology Centre adjoins the Reserved Site, while Hatton County World lies to the east of the Reserved Site, which is a local tourist attraction comprising an educational farm and shopping village. Small settlements are dispersed throughout the agricultural landscape, including Pinley Green, Shrewley, Yew Green, Haseley, Hatton Park, Hampton Magna, Hampton on the Hill, Norton Lindsey and Calverdon.

4.4 Further afield to the east lies the main built-up area of Warwick, approximately 5km from the Reserved Site, while the main built-up area of Henley-in-Arden lies approximately 7km from the Reserved Site to the west.

Access and Rights of Way

4.5 The Reserved Site is traversed by PRoW W82, which follows the southernmost extent of the Reserved Site and connects Hatton with Hampton on the Hill via Grove Park. In addition, a number of permissive paths traverse the Reserved Site. The wider landscape is traversed by a series of PRoW that generally provide connectivity between the small villages that lie within

the generally farmed landscape. Furthermore, a number of permissive paths are present within the landscape to the east of the Reserved Site associated with Hatton Country World.

4.6 Notable long-distance PRow within the wider landscape include the Grand Union Canal Walk, which follows the course of the Grand Union Canal, and Shakespeare's Avon Way, which extends from the source of the Avon in Naseby to the Severn at Tewkesbury, passing through Hampton on the Hill to the east of the Reserved Site.

4.7 Key transport routes in the vicinity of the Reserved Site include:

- The M40 adjoins the Reserved Site to the south and extends north-west to south-east;
- The Chiltern Mainline Railway adjoins the Reserved Site to the north and extends east-west;
- The Grand Union Canal extends east-west to the north of the Reserved Site beyond the Chiltern Mainline Railway;
- Dark Lane adjoins the Reserved Site to the east and extends north-south;
- Station Road adjoins the Reserved Site to the west and extends north-south;
- The B4439 extends east-west to the north of the Reserved Site, connecting Hatton Park with Shrewley; and
- The A4177 extends north-west to south-east, connecting Wroxall with Warwick, to the north-east of the Reserved Site.

Topography and Hydrology

4.8 As illustrated on **Figure 2: Topographical Features Plan**, the Reserved Site lies within the context of a rolling landscape forming part of the western aspect of a valley side. Hatton lies within this valley bottom and is framed by a number of ridgelines to the north (associated with Shrewley and Hatton Green), to the north-east at Hatton Park, to the south-east by a ridgeline that separates Hatton from Hampton on the Hill, and to the west by a ridgeline associated with Great Pinley. Further to the east beyond the ridgeline separating Hatton from Hampton on the Hill, the landform is generally orientated towards the lower-lying vale landscape associated with Warwick.

4.9 North of the Reserved Site the Grand Union Canal traverses the landscape in a broadly east-west direction within the lower-reaches of the rolling landform. Consequently a series of locks are present on the Grand Union Canal (known as Hatton Locks) within the transitional area between the vale landscape and rolling landscape to the north-east of the Reserved Site. Other notable waterbodies in the vicinity of the Reserved Site include the tributary to the River Alne that extends from Yew Green towards Pinley Green, and defines the western extent of the Reserved Site.

Vegetation

4.10 With reference to **Figure 1: Reserved Site Context Plan**, a well-defined and consistent treebelt follows the course of both the M40 to the south of the Reserved Site and the Chiltern Mainline Railway to the north of the Reserved Site, which physically and visually contain the Reserved Site. The Reserved Site is also subdivided into a series of fields that are defined by hedgerows, while individual mature trees are also present, adding to the visual containment of the Reserved Site. In addition, there are small copses of woodland both within the Reserved Site and the surrounding landscape. Elsewhere vegetation is generally associated with the hedgerows and treebelts that bound the fields, and ornamental planting associated with residential properties.

Designations

4.11 The Reserved Site is not covered by any national, regional or local landscape designations. However, the Reserved Site and surrounding area lie within the Green Belt, as illustrated in **Figure 1: Reserved Site Context Plan**, with the existing settled areas of Pinley Green, Hatton, Shreweley, Yew Green, Haseley, Hatton Park, Hampton Magna, Hampton on the Hill, Norton Lindsey and Calverdon 'washed over' by the Green Belt designation.

4.12 The Grade II listed Little Nunhead Farmhouse lies within the southern part of the Reserved Site adjacent to Dark Lane and the M40. Other Grade II listed buildings in the vicinity of the Reserved Site include:

- Pinley Hill Farmhouse, located approximately 340m to the south-west;
- Station House, located approximately 310m to the west;
- Thrackum Hall, located approximately 800m to the north-west;
- Hatton Lane Farmhouse, located approximately 620m to the north;
- Gardener's Cottages, located approximately 475m to the north;
- Hatton House, located approximately 420m to the north-east; and
- Water View, located approximately 580m to the north-east.

4.13 There are small concentrations of listed buildings with the surrounding settlements, including at Hampton on the Hill and Hatton Green. Further afield to the east in Warwick there is a large concentration of listed buildings, many of which are Grade I listed, within a conservation area.

4.14 There are no Registered Parks and Gardens within the vicinity of the Reserved Site. The nearest are Wroxall Abbey and Baddesley Clinton Hall (which are located approximately 3.7km to the north), Guy's Cliffe (which is located approximately 5km to the east), and Warwick Castle (which is located approximately 4.7km to the south-east).

- 4.15 The Reserved Site does not coincide with any scheduled monuments. The nearest to the Reserved Site is Pinley Priory, a Cistercian nunnery and post-dissolution garden located approximately 1km to the west of the Reserved Site.
- 4.16 There are no Local or National Nature Reserves within the vicinity of the Reserved Site. The nearest is Oakwood and Blacklow Local Nature Reserve, which is located approximately 5.7km to the east to the north of Warwick.
- 4.17 There are no country parks within the vicinity of the Reserved Site.

Landscape Character

- 4.18 The landscape character assessment approach is a descriptive approach that 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, as contributing factors in people's quality of life, in accordance with the European Landscape Convention. It also ensures that account is taken of the different roles and character of different areas, in accordance with the NPPF Core Principles.
- 4.19 The description of each landscape is used as a basis for evaluation in order to make judgements to guide, for example, development or landscape management. The extent of published landscape character areas in the vicinity of the Reserved Site are illustrated on **Figure 3: Landscape Character Plan**.

National Landscape Character

- 4.20 As part of Natural England's responsibilities in delivering the Natural Environment White Paper, Biodiversity 2020 and the European Landscape Convention, Natural England has developed a series of National Character Area (NCA) profiles. These NCA profiles provide a broad range of information including an outline of the key characteristics of a given area; a description of the ecosystem services provided and how these relate to people, wildlife and the economy; and an array of opportunities for positive environmental change.
- 4.21 The Reserved Site is situated within NCA Profile 97: Arden, of which the key characteristics considered relevant to the Reserved Site and surrounding area are outlined as follows:
- ***"Well-wooded farmland landscape with rolling landform...;***
 - ***Mature oaks, mostly found within hedgerows, together with ancient woodlands, and plantation woodlands that often date from the time of enclosure. Woodlands include historic coppice bounded by woodbanks;***
 - ***Narrow, meandering clay river valleys with long river meadows; the River Blythe SSSI lying between the cities of Coventry and Birmingham is a good example of this;***

- **Numerous areas of former wood-pasture with large, old, oak trees often associated with isolated remnants of more extensive heathlands. Village greens/commons have a strong association with remnant lowland heath. Fragmented heathland persists on poorer soils in central and northern areas;**
- **Diverse field patterns, ranging from well hedged, irregular fields and small woodlands that contrast with larger semi regular fields on former deer park estates, such as, Packington Hall and Stoneleigh Park;**
- **Complex and contrasting settlement pattern with some densely populated where traditional settlements have amalgamated to form the major West Midlands conurbation while some settlements remain distinct and relatively well dispersed...;**
- **Transport infrastructure, the M42, M40, M6 and M5 are major transport corridors that sit within the landscape of this NCA; and**
- **Shakespeare's 'Forest of Arden', featured in 'As You Like It', is still reflected through the woodland cover, mature oaks, small ancient woodlands and former wood pasture."**

County Landscape Character

- 4.22 The Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines, produced by the Countryside Commission and Warwickshire County Council in 1993, provide a description of the character of the landscape of Warwickshire.
- 4.23 The Reserved Site is identified in the broad regional character area of Arden, which is described as "***an historic region of former wood pasture and heath characterised by a dispersed settlement pattern, ancient woodlands and mature hedgerow oaks***". The Arden regional character area is further subdivided into seven distinct types of landscape, with the majority of the Reserved Site identified within the Wooded Estatelands area.
- 4.24 The Wooded Estatelands area extends to the east towards the settlement of Hampton Magna and is defined as "***A well wooded estate landscape characterised by a large scale rolling topography and prominent hilltop woodlands***", with the following characteristic features identified:
- ***"A large scale rolling topography with occasional steep scarp slopes;***
 - ***Large woodlands, often associated with rising ground;***
 - ***Mature hedgerow and roadside oaks;***
 - ***A semi-regular pattern of medium to large sized fields; and***
 - ***A varied settlement pattern of small villages and scattered farmsteads."***
- 4.25 The north-western part of the Reserved Site is identified within the Ancient Arden area, which is described as "***a small scale famed landscape with a varied, undulating topography,***

characterised by an irregular pattern of fields and narrow, winding lanes", with the following characteristic features identified:

- *"A varied undulating topography;*
- *A network of winding lanes and trackways often confined by tall hedgebanks;*
- *An ancient irregular pattern of small to medium sized fields;*
- *Hedgerow and roadside oaks;*
- *Field ponds associated with permanent pasture; and*
- *Many place names ending in Green or End."*

4.26 The landscape further to the north towards the settlement of Haseley is identified within the Arden Parklands area, which is described as *"an enclosed, gently rolling landscape defined by woodland edges, parkland and belts of trees"* with the following characteristic features identified:

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

Landscape Guidelines

National Landscape Guidelines

4.27 With respect to the Arden NCA Profile, the following Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEOs) of relevance to the Reserved Site are provided:

- *"SEO 1: Manage and enhance the valuable woodlands, hedgerows, heaths, distinctive field boundaries and enclosure patterns throughout the NCA, retaining the historic contrast between different areas while balancing the needs for timber, biomass production, climate regulation, biodiversity and recreation;*
- *SEO 2: Create new networks of woodlands, heaths 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; and*
- *SEO 3: Conserve and enhance Arden's strong geological, industrial, and cultural resource, to increase public access, enjoyment, recreation and to retain a sense of place and history..."*

4.28 The following landscape opportunities of relevance to the Reserved Site are provided:

- *"Conserve, enhance and restore the area's ancient landscape pattern of field boundaries, historic (including*

- farm) buildings, moated sites, parkland and pasture and reinforce its well wooded character;*
- *Protect and manage woodlands particularly ancient woodlands and wood pasture to maintain the character of Arden;*
- *Manage and restore hedgerows especially in the north-eastern part of the area (enclosure patterns) and restore parkland, ancient trees and stream side trees plus manage and replace in-field trees and hedgerow trees...; and*
- *Create new green infrastructure with associated habitat creation..."*

County Landscape Guidelines

4.29 The following management strategies and landscape guidelines for the Wooded Estatelands, of relevance to the Reserved Site, are provided:

- *"Enhance tree cover through large scale woodland planting on rising ground...;*
- *Protect and enhance the internal open space and irregular outline of village settlements;*
- *Conserve and enhance the overall structure and well-wooded character of the landscape;*
- *Conserve and restore all primary hedgelines and manage them more positively as landscape features;*
- *Enhance the continuity and wooded character of river stream corridors; and*
- *Conserve and enhance tree cover within and around rural settlements."*

5.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL RESERVED SITE APPRAISAL

Overview

- 5.1 The Reserved Site and the surrounding environment was visited in April 2016, with **Reserved Site Appraisal Photographs A – I** illustrating the existing character of the Reserved Site. The location from which the **Reserved Site Appraisal Photographs** were taken are shown on **Figure 4: Reserved Site Appraisal Plan**. The visual context of the Reserved Site is illustrated by **Reserved Site Context Photographs 1 – 19**, the locations of which are illustrated on **Figure 5: Visual Appraisal Plan**.

Landscape Appraisal

- 5.2 A landscape appraisal has been undertaken to ascertain the existing character of the Reserved Site. This is accomplished through recording and analysing the existing landscape features and characteristics, the way the landscape is experienced, and the value or importance of the landscape and visual resources in the vicinity of the Reserved Site. The elements of the landscape that contribute to landscape character include the built and natural form, the pattern of features, detailing, scale, planting, land use and human perception. In this regard, landscape character is derived as a result of the perception of, and action and interaction of, natural and human factors.
- 5.3 The Reserved Site is approximately 65.53ha in size and comprises predominantly agricultural land that is under arable cultivation. There are three small areas of woodland within the Reserved Site, which in combination with the hedgerows that feature mature trees and define the constituent fields of the Reserved Site, provide a strong sense of containment. Other elements within the Reserved Site include isolated built forms associated with Little Nunhold Farm and Nunhold Farm Cottages, a low-voltage electricity transmission line traverses the Reserved Site, an outdoor storage area, and a low number of small field ponds. PRoW W82 extends along the southern extent of the Reserved Site adjacent to the M40 corridor, while a number of additional permissive paths follow the field margins on the Reserved Site, providing connectivity between Hatton and Hatton Country World.
- 5.4 As illustrated in **Reserved Site Appraisal Photographs A – H** the landform of the Reserved Site is broadly west-facing and gently sloping as part of the valley side, rising from approximately 96m AOD in the west to approximately 114m AOD in the east coinciding with Dark Lane at the ridgeline, before descending slightly to a height of approximately 109m AOD in the vicinity of Hatton Country World (as illustrated in **Reserved Site Appraisal Photograph I**).

- 5.5 Despite the predominant agricultural land use, the character of the Reserved Site is influenced by the audible intrusion from passing traffic along the M40 and trains on the Chiltern Mainline Railway, which reduces the level of tranquillity, remoteness and sense of seclusion, thereby diluting the rural character. Nonetheless, the Reserved Site is generally perceived as being within a countryside setting owing to the mature landscape framework within and bordering the Reserved Site and predominant agricultural use. However, there is intervisibility with detracting elements in the wider landscape including infrastructure associated with the Chiltern Mainline Railway to the north and telecommunication masts to the south.
- 5.6 The Reserved Site is considered to range between low and medium landscape value as:
- The Reserved Site is generally not of noteworthy scenic beauty, insofar that it comprises predominantly agricultural land that is commonplace, with fields bounded by hedgerow vegetation and isolated dwellings;
 - While the Reserved Site does not contain any landscape features of particular importance, there are a number of mature trees within the Reserved Site, which together form a coherent and legible landscape structure and provide sense of time depth;
 - The Reserved Site affords the opportunity for outdoor recreation as it is traversed by a PRoW and a number of permissive paths; and
 - The Reserved Site is not covered by any landscape designations.

Visual Appraisal

- 5.7 A visual appraisal has been undertaken to determine the relationship of the Reserved Site with its surroundings and its approximate extent of visibility within the wider landscape from publicly accessible locations.
- 5.8 The potential visibility of the Reserved Site is largely determined by the intervening landform, as topographic features such as ridgelines and subtle undulations may block or curtail views towards the Reserved Site. In addition, land cover has an important role in determining potential visibility as woodland, treebelts or built forms may contribute to additional blocking, filtering or curtailing of views.
- 5.9 The effectiveness of vegetation as a screen depends to a considerable extent on its scale. A large mature feature will form a substantial screen throughout the year, but a hedgerow or intermittent treebelt may only be effective during the summer months. Whilst small features, such as hedgerows and individual trees can be very important, particularly when their combined effect is taken into account, they cannot be considered to be substantial or wholly effective screening features or visual barriers due to the seasonal nature of their effect.

- 5.10 **Reserved Site Context Photographs 1 – 19** illustrate the nature of the existing views obtained towards the Reserved Site from the surrounding environment and demonstrate that the Reserved Site is generally well contained by the existing vegetation, underlying landform and its position within a valley landform. In the longer distance views to the north-east, as illustrated in **Reserved Site Context Photographs 1 – 3**, the Reserved Site is screened from view due to the extent of intervening vegetation and generally west-facing orientation of the Reserved Site. As such, views of the Reserved Site from the east are generally limited to close range views, as illustrated in **Reserved Site Context Photographs 4 – 8**. However, with the exception of views from Hatton Country World (as illustrated in **Reserved Site Context Photograph 5**), views of the Reserved Site are filtered by the vegetation containing the Reserved Site. From Hatton Country World open views of the eastern part of the Reserved Site are obtainable.
- 5.11 Views from the landscape to the south of the Reserved Site, including from the M40 corridor, are generally curtailed by the dense vegetation that defines the southern boundary to the Reserved Site as illustrated in **Reserved Site Context Photographs 9 and 10**. However, as illustrated in **Reserved Site Context Photograph 10**, glimpses of the south-western part of the Reserved Site are obtained from the Station Road overbridge, albeit these views are filtered through the roadside vegetation.
- 5.12 Similarly in the close range views to the east of the Reserved Site, as illustrated in **Reserved Site Context Photographs 11 – 13**, views of the Reserved Site are for the most part curtailed by the existing vegetation containing the Reserved Site and built forms in its immediate context. In **Reserved Site Context Photographs 11 and 12** filtered glimpsed views of the Reserved Site are limited to the parts of the Reserved Site in proximity to the receptor, while **Reserved Site Context Photograph 13** illustrates that the typical views obtained from Hatton Station towards the Reserved Site feature only the elevated north-eastern part of the Reserved Site.
- 5.13 From the north, intermittent heavily filtered views across the Reserved Site are obtained through vegetation when travelling along the Grand Union Canal (as illustrated in **Reserved Site Context Photograph 14**). However, views further afield are generally curtailed by successive bands of vegetation and localised landform alterations, including the Grand Union Canal on embankment as illustrated in **Reserved Site Context Photograph 15 and 16**. Further afield to the north-west and west however, heavily filtered views of the west-facing elevated part of the Reserved Site are obtained as illustrated in **Reserved Site Context Photographs 17 and 18**. South-west of the Reserved Site beyond the M40 corridor, as illustrated in **Reserved Site Context Photograph 19**, the Reserved Site is screened from view by successive bands of vegetation with the landscape appearing well-wooded and enclosed.

Summary

- 5.14 The Reserved Site is generally open as a result of its land use and exhibits a countryside character. However, this character is partly eroded by the influence of the audible intrusion of passing vehicles on the M40 that reduces the sense of tranquillity, seclusion and remoteness. The Reserved Site ranges between low and medium landscape value and features a robust vegetation framework within and bordering the Reserved Site that provides substantial containment. Despite its large size and slightly elevated nature, the Reserved Site has a localised visual envelope due to the extent of enclosure provided by vegetation surrounding the Reserved Site and its predominantly west-facing orientation within the valley. Consequently, there is no one location where the Reserved Site can be seen in its entirety.

6.0 SCOPE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ability of the Reserved Site to Accommodate Residential Development

6.1 The key opportunities and constraints from a landscape and visual perspective for residential development at the Reserved Site are:

- Absence of any landscape designations, ancient woodland, or conservation areas;
- The existing vegetation framework bordering and within the Reserved Site provides localised screening and containment that could provide the basis for a residential layout incorporating new structural planting;
- Overall the Reserved Site is visually well contained in relation to the wider landscape, therefore providing the opportunity to integrate development and limit adverse effects on visual amenity;
- Existing vegetation, which will require development to be offset from vegetated boundaries, i.e. Root Protection Areas;
- Development provides the opportunity for increased public access across the Reserved Site through green infrastructure linkages that link with and enhance the existing semi-natural habitats while securing biodiversity enhancements;
- Development provides the potential for habitat creation, to respond positively to the NPPF's environmental role of increasing biodiversity, which could be further secured through its long-term management;
- Adjacent to the existing road network and contiguous with built-up area; and
- Gently sloping landform, requiring limited cut and fill operations.

Response to Landscape Character

6.2 The development proposals could respond positively to the environmental and landscape opportunities identified for the Arden NCA through managing and enhancing the existing field boundary vegetation and creating new networks of green infrastructure. In relation to the Wooded Estatelands, the development proposals could simultaneously protect and enhance the irregular outline of the settled area through a new landscape framework which would also enhance tree cover through woodland planting on rising ground through the provision of structural planting along Dark Lane. This would similarly conserve and enhance the overall structure and well-wooded character of the landscape and around rural settlements. In addition, the restoration and ongoing management of the primary hedgelines through the Reserved Site as key green infrastructure links would strengthen and enhance the existing vegetation structure.

Response to Planning Policy

6.3 The development proposals within the Reserved Site could respond positively to the identified policies within the NPPF, the 'saved' policies of the Warwick District Local Plan (1996 – 2011) and the emerging policies of the Warwick Local Plan. As part of the development of the Reserved Site the existing landscape features could be retained and enhanced, and could be supplemented through the provision of additional areas of planting and SuDS, providing green infrastructure linkages through the Reserved Site that allow for public access. This would ensure that a positive response is in place with respect to the natural environment and increasing biodiversity that could be sustained through ongoing management while also planning for climate change resilience. The siting, layout and materials of introduced built development could contribute positively to the character of Hatton, and supplemented by additional tree planting, could reinforce the established wooded character of the area. Nonetheless, it will be essential to ensure that any introduced built forms are sensitively sited to protect the visual amenity of existing and future receptors, with particular consideration in the way in which the built forms relate to the local underlying topography and landscape features.

Design Strategy

6.4 A series of design considerations for the development of the Reserved Site have been identified as a result of the findings of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal, as illustrated on **Figure 6: Landscape and Visual Opportunities and Constraints Plan**, and include:

- Ensure that built forms respond positively to the sense of place by using materials that reflect or complement the local vernacular and exhibit a high quality of design, with existing landscape features sympathetically integrated within the siting of built forms;
- Improve public accessibility by providing safe walking and cycling routes and areas of open space, that integrate with the existing PRoW network and provide linkages between Hatton Country World, Hatton Technology Park and Hatton Train Station (providing interpretation boards and signage where appropriate);
- Retain and enhance the existing vegetation within the Reserved Site by establishing green infrastructure linkages;
- Ensure that the scale and massing of introduced built forms are softened through the retention of mature vegetation, the introduction of new planting, and sympathetic landform alterations;
- Ensure that built forms are set within structural planting to preserve the existing characteristic of settlements set within a well-wooded landscape establishing a terraced planting arrangement across the valley side;

- Provide new areas of locally appropriate planting, including a woodland belt along the length of Dark Lane which encompasses rising ground, to enhance tree cover and enhance the overall structure of the landscape while maintaining an irregular outline to the settled area; and
- Ensure that all built development is offset in relation to the Root Protection Areas of existing retained vegetation within and bordering the Reserved Site.

7.0 GREEN BELT REVIEW

Joint Green Belt Study – Stage 1, 2015

- 7.1 The Joint Green Belt Study – Stage 1 (2015) was prepared by LUC for Coventry City Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Rugby Borough Council and Warwick District Council, and published in June 2015.
- 7.2 The study sets out the context to the Green Belt within West Midlands and provides an assessment of parcels of land within the Green Belt within the four authorities identified above, predominantly based on the Green Belt parcels identified in a 2009 Joint Green Belt Review. The study notes that in the absence of an agreed alternative spatial strategy, only Green Belt land adjacent to the large built-up areas and main rural settlements was assessed. As such, the Reserved Site is not specifically assessed on a land parcel basis in the Joint Green Belt Study.
- 7.3 Nonetheless, the study does include consideration of 'Broad Areas', albeit these were not subjected to the detailed criteria-based assessment as is the case for the land parcels identified, and instead a broader descriptive assessment was undertaken. The Reserved Site is identified within the south western part of 'Broad Area 4', which is described as follows:

"Broad Area 4 lies between Solihull to the north west and Kenilworth and Coventry to the north east. The area contains the Registered Park and Gardens at Wroxall Abbey, Baddesley Clinton Hall and Packwood House, several scheduled monuments and pockets of ancient woodland.

The area makes a considerable contribution to all the purposes of Green Belt:

- ***Checking the sprawl of Warwick to the south east and Kenilworth and Coventry to the north east;***
- ***Preventing the merging of these neighbouring towns in the long term, particularly Warwick, Kenilworth and Coventry to the east. However, the south western half of the broad area makes a less significant contribution to preventing neighbouring towns merging due to there being no towns immediately to the west and south west;***
- ***Safeguarding the countryside, including a number of large woodlands, such as Hay Wood;***
- ***Preserving the setting and special character of the historic towns of Warwick, Kenilworth and Coventry. The broad area has excellent views in to the historic core of Kenilworth, and Warwick; however, there are limited views in to the historic core of Coventry to the north; and***
- ***Assisting urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land across the West Midlands."***

- 7.4 However, given the location of the Reserved Site the descriptive assessment of Broad Area 4 is not considered to be suitably representative as the Reserved Site does not contribute to checking the sprawl of Warwick, Kenilworth of Coventry, nor does it prevent the merging of these neighbourhood towns or preserve the setting and special character of the historic towns, as acknowledged in the description that "***there being no towns immediately to the west and south west***" in relation to Broad Area 4.

Green Belt Review of the Reserved Site

- 7.5 As the descriptive assessment of Broad Area 4 is not considered to be representative of the Reserved Site, and too large to identify areas for potential residential development, a specific assessment of the contribution of the Reserved Site to the purposes of the Green Belt has been undertaken and is set out in Table 7.1. To ensure transparency and robustness in the assessment process, the methodology employed in undertaking this Green Belt Review of the Reserved Site replicates the methodology applied to the identified land parcels in the Joint Green Belt Study – Stage 1 (2015) prepared by LUC.

Table 7.1: Contribution of the Reserved Site to the Purposes of the Green Belt

Purpose	Critique	Score (0-4)
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	a The Reserved Site plays a role in preventing ribbon development along Station Road and Dark Lane. For the most part this would be development along one side of a road corridor, however in localised areas the Reserved Site inhibits development along two sides of a road corridor. While built development already exists in the eastern part of the Reserved Site adjacent to Dark Lane, this does not currently comprise built form that is perceived as ribbon development.	2
	b The majority of the Reserved Site is free from development and is generally perceived as an open landscape. However, there are areas of built development within the Reserved Site, including Nunhold Farm Cottages, Little Nunhold Farm and a series of low voltage electricity transmission poles.	1
To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	a The Reserved Site lies to the east of the settlement of Hatton. The existing separation distance between Hatton and Yew Green through the Reserved Site is approximately 1.1km, while the existing separation distance between Hatton and Hatton Locks / Hatton Park is approximately 1.8km.	2

Purpose	Critique		Score (0-4)
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	a	The Reserved Site exhibits the typical characteristics of the countryside insofar that it comprises a relatively open farmed landscape with fields bounded by hedgerow vegetation and isolated dwellings. However, utility infrastructure (including low voltage electricity transmission lines that traverse the Reserved Site and telegraph poles that line Dark Lane) has a slight urbanising influence over the Reserved Site, as does the audible intrusion of passing traffic along the M40 and passing trains along the Chiltern Mainline Railway.	1
	b	The M40 corridor to the south and the Chiltern Mainline Railway to the north form significant man-made boundaries that would prevent encroachment beyond the Reserved Site in the long term. The eastern extent of the Reserved Site is formed by Dark Lane and the developed area associated with Hatton Country World, and whilst establishing containment to the Reserved Site, are considered to be less significant boundaries.	1
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	a	The Reserved Site is not within or adjacent to a conservation area, nor is there any intervisibility with the historic core of an historic town.	0
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	a	All Green Belt land makes a strategic contribution to urban regeneration by restricting the land available for development and encouraging developers to recycle derelict and other urban land.	4
Overall Score			11

7.6 From the above, the Reserved Site receives a score of 11 out of 20. In comparison to the findings of the identified parcels in the Joint Green Belt Study – Stage 1 (2015) prepared by LUC, the Reserved Site is considered to be a 'mid-performing Green Belt parcel'. However, in comparing the Reserved Site's score to those land parcels identified to the west of Warwick in the Joint Green Belt Study, the Reserved Site is the joint least performing of these Green Belt parcels, as outlined below (from high to low):

- Parcel HM1, received a score of 17;
- Parcel HA1 and Parcel WA2, received a score of 15;
- Parcel WA3, received a score of 14;
- Parcel HM2 and Parcel WA1, received a score of 13;
- Parcel HA3, received a score of 12; and
- Parcel HA2, received a score of 11 (the same score as the Reserved Site).

7.7 The NPPF states that the key characteristics of the Green Belt are "***their openness and their permanence***". As demonstrated in Table 7.1, the Reserved Site is considered to be inherently open due to its predominantly agricultural use and minimal presence of built development.

Consequently, the Reserved Site exhibits the typical characteristics of the countryside, however, audible intrusion from passing trains on the Chiltern Mainline Railway to the north and vehicles on the M40 to the south diminish the sense of tranquillity, rurality and remoteness, as does the intervisibility with existing areas of built development, including at Hatton Country World and within the settlement of Hatton itself.

- 7.8 The boundaries to the north and south of the Reserved Site, comprising the Chiltern Mainline Railway and the M40 corridor, form robust defensible boundaries of permanence, and would serve to contain development and prevent further encroachment into the wider landscape to the north and south. The eastern extent of the Reserved Site however is generally formed by Dark Lane which is considered to be a less substantial boundary feature, albeit Dark Lane corresponds with an area of elevated land that would also serve to contain development and limit the visual envelope of development within the Reserved Site and its resulting influence over the wider landscape. The settlement of Hatton, which adjoins the Reserved Site to the west, would also contain development and prevent any westward encroachment, in addition to it already forming an existing settlement pattern within the landscape.
- 7.9 As noted above the Reserved Site lies to the east of Hatton and as such, should the Reserved Site be developed the separation distance between Hatton and Yew Green and Hatton and Hatton Locks / Hatton Park would reduce to approximately 500m and 1km respectively. However, whilst this would result in a physical reduction in the separation distance there would be no physical or visual coalescence. Furthermore, the Reserved Site is not within or adjacent to a conservation area, nor is there any intervisibility with the historic core of an historic town. On the basis of the above, development of the Reserved Site would not compromise the purposes and function of the remaining Green Belt.

8.0 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

- 8.1 The review of the Warwick Local Plan provides an opportunity to provide a long-term strategy for growth in the District. As identified within this Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Green Belt Review, the Reserved Site is appropriate for release from the Green Belt and capable of accommodating residential development.
- 8.2 Nonetheless, Paragraph 85 of the NPPF notes that when defining boundaries to the Green Belt the Local Planning Authority should take into account meeting the requirements for sustainable development and not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open. In this regard, a review of the Green Belt boundary in the vicinity of the Reserved Site provides the opportunity to shape future sustainable development in order to meet the longer-term needs of the District in a coherent and logical manner.
- 8.3 The contribution that the wider Green Belt in the vicinity of the Reserved Site makes in relation to the purposes and function of the Green Belt has been considered to identify the wider strategic opportunities and constraints to potential future development. In addition, the landscape and visual context of the wider area has been considered to provide a greater understanding of, an aid in the identification of, appropriate locations for development.
- 8.4 The wider study area for the strategic review of the wider area in the vicinity of the Reserved Site encompasses the land contiguous with the built-up area of Hatton and the land owned by Hatton Estate as illustrated on **Figure 1: Reserved Site Context Plan**, which comprises predominantly agricultural land underlain by a rolling landform between the settled areas of Hatton and Hatton Park. This wider area is traversed east-west by the Grand Union Canal and Chiltern Mainline Railway, which together form a linear corridor within the lower reaches of the rolling landform. To the west of Hatton the railway corridor continues westward, while an additional branch leads southwards, defining the western extent of the wider study area. The land between Hatton and this southward branch of the railway line comprises agricultural land that is physically and visually contained by dense vegetation and the M40 to the south.
- 8.5 North of the Grand Union Canal the landscape is generally south-facing up to the Hockley Road B4439, which defines the northern extent of the wider study area. To the east, the A4177 connects with the B4439 and provides access to Hatton Park. Station Road, which extends northwards from Hatton towards Little Shrewley defines the western extent of the area, while Dark Lane extends north-south and bisects the northern part of the study area. Vegetation is generally limited to hedgerows and intermittent treebelts associated with field boundaries, although the area within the vicinity of Hatton House between Dark Lane and the A4177 features a number of mature trees and exhibits a parkland character.

- 8.6 The landscape between the Grand Union Canal and Chiltern Mainline is low-lying and although visually contained, provides a positive visual amenity experience, particularly in the vicinity of Hatton Locks. The western part of this corridor however in the vicinity of Hatton Station is somewhat degraded and comprises an area utilised for outdoor storage.
- 8.7 South of the Chiltern Mainline and to the east of Dark Lane and the Reserved Site the predominant land use is agricultural, although Hatton Country World influences the character of the landscape due to its prominent built form. Hatton Country World straddles an area of elevated land that is broadly orientated to the east, although north of the developed area the slopes are slightly north-facing towards the Chiltern Mainline Railway, and south of the developed area the slopes are slightly south-facing towards an established treebelt that links between the M40 corridor and the Chiltern Mainline Railway. This established tree belt defines the land ownership boundary and is a readily recognisable feature in the landscape.
- 8.8 The field boundaries are generally defined by hedgerows that extend north-south across this eastern part of the wider study area, and from the more elevated parts there is some intervisibility with the historic core of Warwick to the east.
- 8.9 From the desktop work and field survey it is apparent that the Chiltern Mainline Railway and the M40 would form readily recognisable and defensible boundaries to the Green Belt and serve to prevent urban sprawl, as is identified in relation to the Reserved Site. In this regard the land to the north, west and south of these physical features should remain within the Green Belt in order to protect their openness and permanence. Accordingly, it is unnecessary to keep 'permanently open' the land to the immediate west of Hatton as it is contained by the existing built-up area, the railway and the M40.
- 8.10 As noted above, the established treebelt to the south of Hatton Country World is a readily recognisable and definitive physical feature. In this regard this feature could form a defensible boundary to the Green Belt to the south-east while protecting the openness and permanence of the intervening countryside landscape between Hampton on the Hill and Hatton Country World. The established hedgerows to the east of Hatton County World could also form a defensible boundary to the Green Belt while protecting the openness and permanence of the intervening landscape between Hatton Country World and Hampton Park to the north-east.
- 8.11 Accordingly it is recommended that the agricultural land to the north of Hatton Country World up to the Chiltern Mainline be released from the Green Belt, and that the agricultural land to the south of Hatton Country World up to the established treebelt that links the M40 and the Chiltern Mainline Railway be released from the Green Belt, with the eastern extent defined by the existing robust hedgerow network.

- 8.12 On the basis of the above it is therefore recommended that the Green Belt boundary be revised as illustrated on **Figure 7: Strategic Development Framework Plan**, with the undeveloped areas in the vicinity of the Reserved Site as discussed above released from the Green Belt and defined as safeguarded land in accordance with Paragraph 85 of the NPPF as it is unnecessary to keep this land permanently open, thereby defining a potential Site boundary to future development.

9.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 A Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Green Belt Review has been undertaken to establish the opportunities and constraints to residential development from a landscape and visual perspective; to determine the suitability of the Reserved Site to accommodate residential development; and to assess the contribution that the Reserved Site makes towards the NPPF purposes of the Green Belt.
- 9.2 The appraisal has included a review of published landscape character information, planning policy, and field work to determine the landscape characteristics of the Reserved Site, its function in the wider landscape, and its influence within views from the surrounding areas.
- 9.3 As previously noted, the NPPF seeks to align Green Belt boundary reviews with sustainable patterns of development. Emphasis is placed on the purposes of the Green Belt as opposed to the quality of the landscape when undertaking a Green Belt Review. However, the consideration of landscape and visual opportunities and constraints provides a greater understanding of, and aids in the identification of, appropriate sustainable locations for development.
- 9.4 The findings of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal indicate that the Reserved Site is generally open and exhibits a countryside character. However, the countryside character is partly eroded by the influence of the audible intrusion of passing vehicles on the M40 that reduces the sense of tranquillity, seclusion and remoteness. The Reserved Site is considered to range between low and medium landscape value and features a robust vegetation framework within and bordering the Reserved Site that provides substantial containment. Despite its large size and slightly elevated nature, the Reserved Site has a localised visual envelope due to the extent of enclosure provided by vegetation surrounding the Reserved Site and its predominantly west-facing orientation. Consequently, there is no one location where the Reserved Site can be seen in its entirety.
- 9.5 The Green Belt Review noted that the boundaries to the north and south of the Reserved Site, comprising the Chiltern Mainline Railway and the M40 corridor respectively, form robust defensible boundaries of permanence, and would serve to contain development and prevent further encroachment into the wider landscape to the north and south.
- 9.6 The Green Belt Review of the Reserved Site resulted in a score of 11 out of 20, utilising the published methodology for the District, the Joint Green Belt Study – Stage 1 (2015) prepared by LUC. As such, the Reserved Site would be considered a 'mid-performing Green Belt parcel', and is the joint least-performing in relation to those land parcels identified in the Joint Green Belt Study to the west of Warwick.

- 9.7 In addition, it was noted that should the Reserved Site be developed the separation distance between Hatton and Yew Green and Hatton and Hatton Locks / Hatton Park would reduce to approximately 500m and 1km respectively. However, whilst this would result in a physical reduction in the separation distance there would be no physical or visual coalescence. Furthermore, it was noted that the Reserved Site is not within or adjacent to a conservation area, nor is there any intervisibility with the historic core of an historic town.
- 9.8 In light of the findings of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Green Belt Review it was considered that development could be effectively assimilated within the Reserved Site and that it would not compromise the purposes and function of the remaining Green Belt as it would be well contained by the existing landscape structure. As such, the Reserved Site is considered appropriate for release from the Green Belt and suitable for development.
- 9.9 Nonetheless, without prejudicing the ability of the Reserved Site to accommodate development and be successfully released from the Green Belt, there is the opportunity to release a greater extent of land from the Green Belt to promote a sustainable pattern of development in line with Paragraph 85 of the NPPF.
- 9.10 The strategic review undertaken of the land within the vicinity of the Reserved Site identified that the M40 and Chiltern Mainline Railway corridors serve to protect the openness and permanence of the wider landscape to the north and south. However, there is the opportunity to release an area of land to the west of Hatton that is not contiguous with the Reserved Site, and also an area of land to the east of the Reserved Site in the vicinity of Hatton Country World between the M40 and the Chiltern Mainline Railway.
- 9.11 The release of such an extent of land would facilitate the delivery of the longer-term development needs for the area stretching beyond the plan period in a sustainably planned manner and be a positive response to the environmental role of sustainable development, whilst protecting the openness and permanence of the wider Green Belt and separate identities of the surrounding rural villages.

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