

SOUTH OF HENLEY-IN-ARDEN

VISION DOCUMENT | FEBRUARY 2023

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Figure 1. View from Henley-in-Arden High Street

This vision document has been prepared on behalf of Mac Mic Group in relation to land South of Henley-in-Arden, Warwickshire (the Site).

The document illustrates the emerging vision for development on the Site in the context of the emerging South Warwickshire Local Plan and confirms that the Site is available now, is suitable for development, and is deliverable.

The Site lies in a logical and sustainable location, consistent with the historic evolution of the settlement and benefits from close proximity to the wide range of facilities the town has to offer.

The Site is well connected by both road and rail to the surrounding towns and cities including Birmingham, Coventry, Solihull, Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon.

This vision document should be read in conjunction with accompanying representations and presents a positive option to deliver a component of the required housing need in Warwickshire, in addition providing local benefits to the residents of Henley-in-Arden.

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Figure 2. View from Beaudesert Mount



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The Opportunity

Planning Context

The current Development Plan for Stratford-on-Avon comprises principally the Stratford-on-Avon District Core Strategy 2011-2031 (adopted 11 July 2016). In this plan Henley-in-Arden is identified as a Main Rural Centre. At the time of writing, Stratford upon Avon District Council is in the process of preparing a Site Allocations Plan (SAP). This is a sister document to the adopted Core Strategy and does not seek to address development needs or make allocations beyond 2031, by which time it is anticipated that the SWLP will have been adopted.

South Warwickshire Local Plan (SWLP)

The SWLP is being jointly prepared by Warwick District Council and Stratford upon Avon District Council and will ultimately result in a single plan covering the whole of the South Warwickshire area. It is anticipated that the SWLP will be split into two parts and cover a plan period up to 2050.

In May-June 2021 the SWLP underwent an initial Scoping and Call for Sites Public Consultation to which land to the south-east of Henley-in-Arden was submitted as a potential location for future development.

In January 2023 a Part 1 Issues and Options (Regulation 18) Public Consultation was launched. The Consultation Document indicates that based on new trend-based data there is a minimum need for 1,679 dwellings per annum across the two Districts, which excludes any unmet housing need arising from Birmingham and Coventry.

This is an ambitious target given the constraints on land within South Warwickshire, where nearly 1/3 is designated as part of the West Midlands Green Belt.

Summary of Proposals

- The Site comprises 23.86 hectares (ha) of arable land located south of Henley-in-Arden within the administrative area of Stratford upon Avon District Council.
- Development of the Site would be consistent with the historic pattern of growth of Henley-in-Arden and is bisected by the River Alne and bounded to the west by the A4300 Stratford Road.
- The Site is sustainably located within a 7-minute cycle of Henley-in-Arden train station and connected directly by road to surrounding major urban areas.
- The Site is free from significant environmental constraint and, assuming the Site is released from the Green Belt, is capable of delivering new housing without any technical impediments.
- Proposals set out in this document illustrate that the Site has the capacity to deliver approximately 300 new homes, a range of community areas - including provision for young people, all set within a well-contained woodland context and new Riverside landscape.

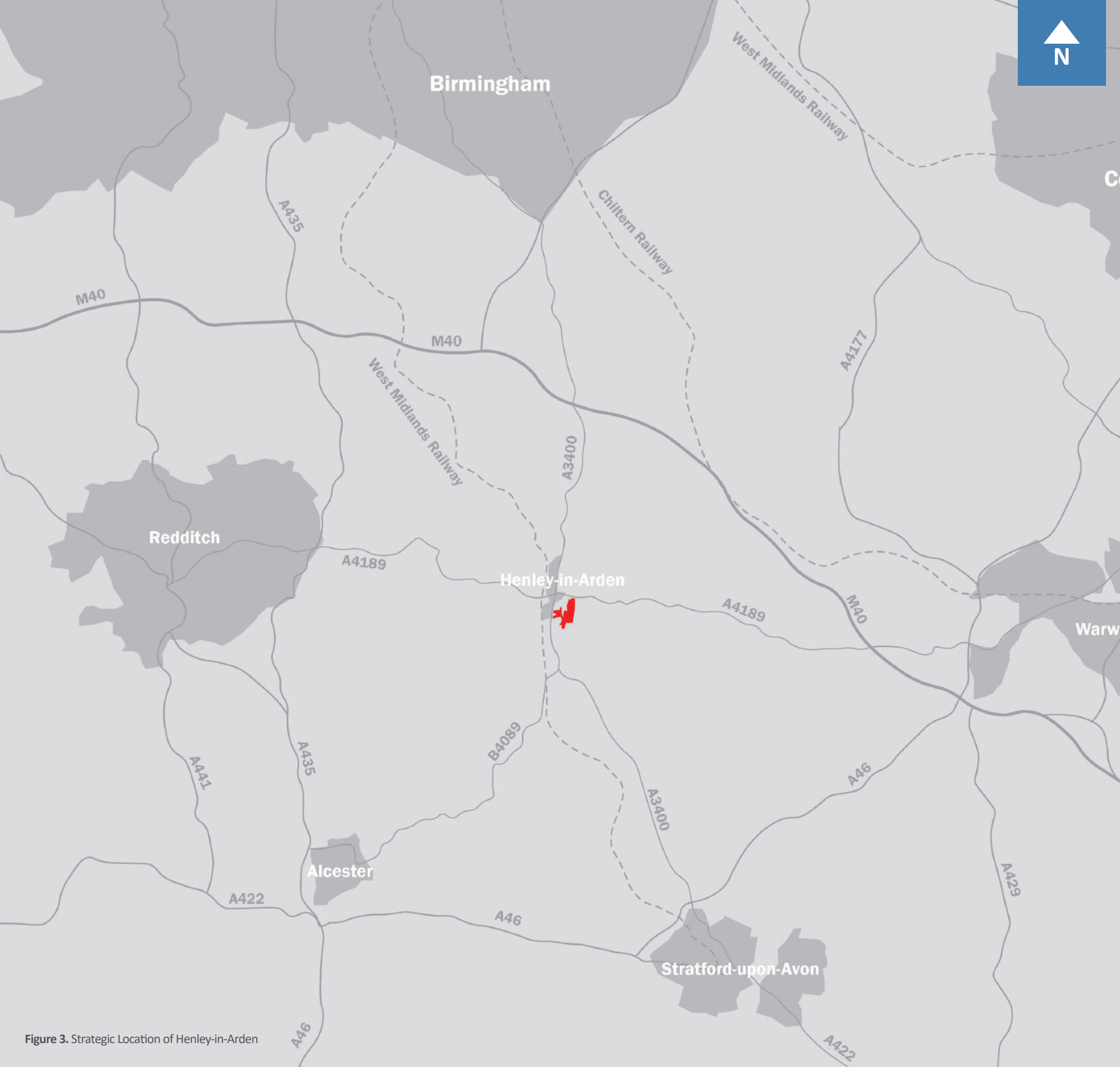


Figure 3. Strategic Location of Henley-in-Arden

A Sustainable Location

Henley-in-Arden is a bustling Market Town that is sustainable and largely self-contained with a compact and vibrant High Street and excellent local institutions.

Facilities and Amenities

Henley-in-Arden High Street offers a range of facilities and amenities, which are all located 1.4km to the north of the Site (17-minute walk). Facilities include cafés, restaurants, takeaways, convenience stores, retail stores, public houses, a post office and ATMs, amongst others.

Henley-in-Arden Secondary School borders the north-west section of the site and two primary schools are located less than 800m north of the site via Arden Road.

Connectivity

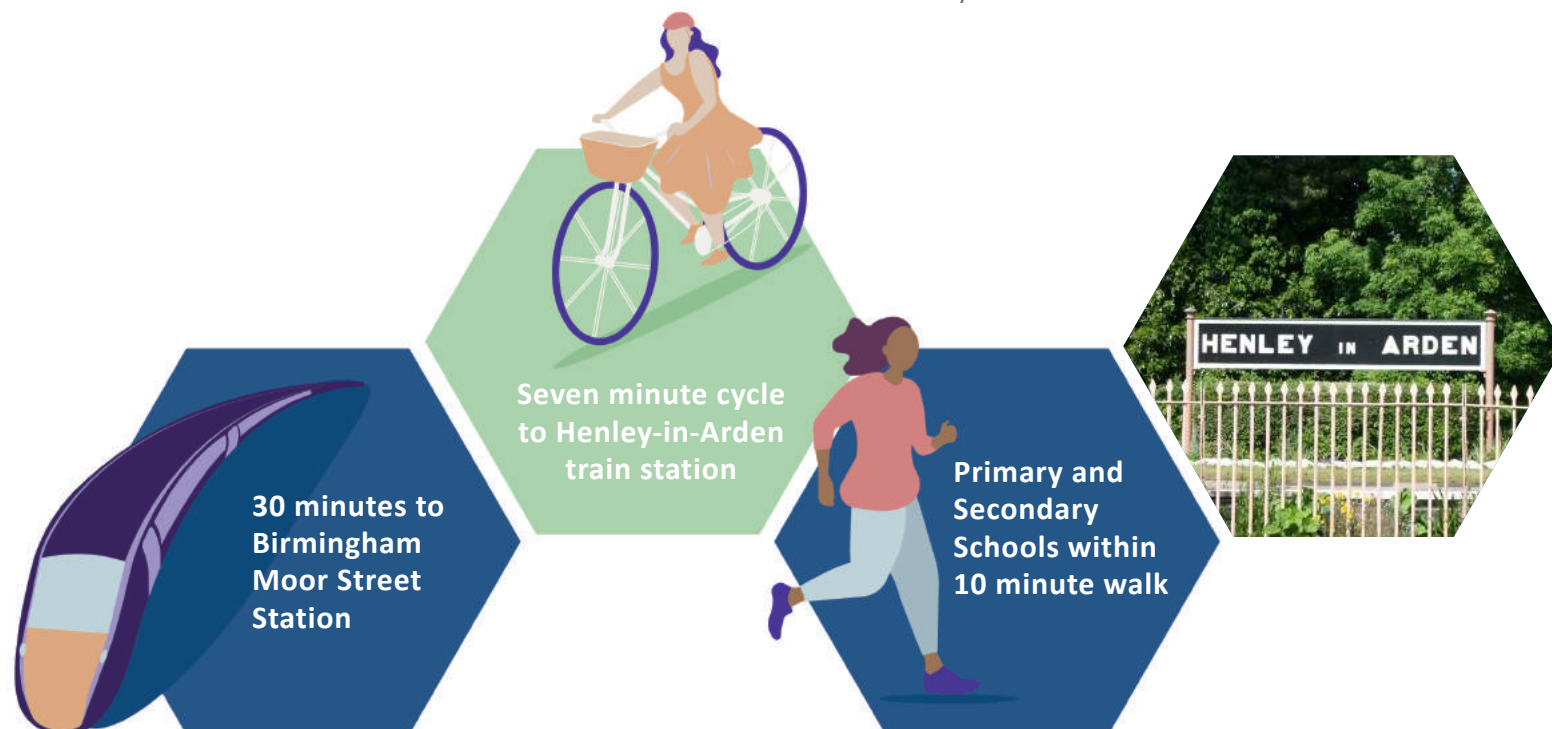
Henley-in-Arden benefits from a train station, located approximately 1.7km to the north-west, offering travel routes to Birmingham and Stratford upon Avon. The station can be reached via a 17-minute walk or a 7-minute cycle.

Bus stops are available within walking distance of the Site, including the River House School stop. The X20 bus service is available from this bus stop, offering the potential for residents to travel by bus for commuting purposes. Utilising this stop and the 'Warwick Road' bus stop, future residents will be able to travel to Stratford upon Avon and Solihull for commuting and recreational purposes.

Public Right of Way 192/SD188/1, which crosses the Site, provides a direct connection between the site and the school. As part of the development, enhancements to the route are proposed which will benefit future residents as well as existing users.

Active Travel Audit

An Active Travel Audit (ATA) has been undertaken to review the accessibility of the site by walking and cycling to key local facilities and amenities. The ATA concludes that the existing infrastructure offers suitable provision for access by active travel modes. Notwithstanding, the ATA has identified some potential improvements along the surveyed routes, which would enhance the existing pedestrian route network and improve access to key local facilities and amenities.



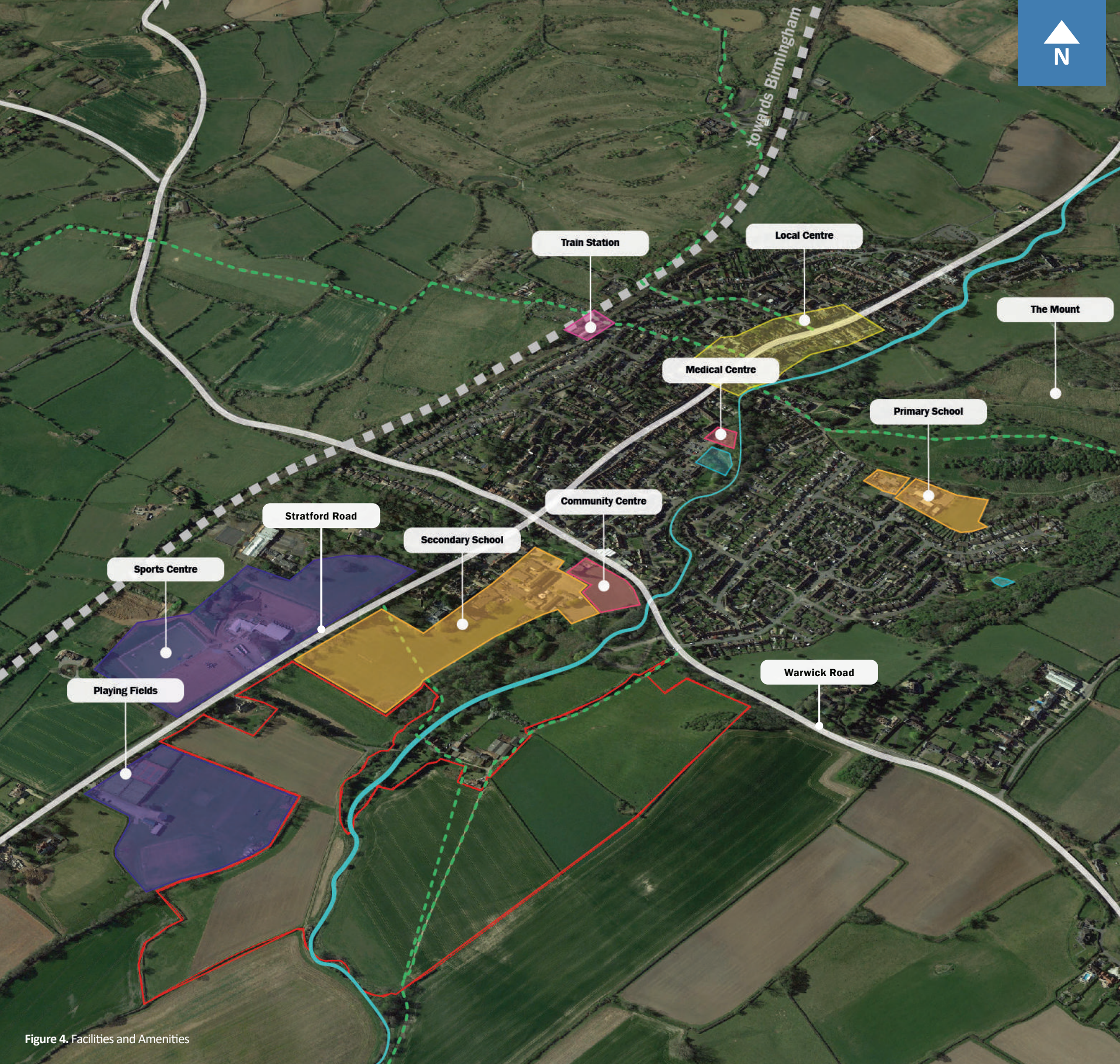


Figure 4. Facilities and Amenities

Options for Growth

Settlement Pattern

Henley-in-Arden is an attractive self-contained town nestled into the Warwickshire landscape on land historically contributing to the Forest of Arden. Evidence of the town's history is visible in the trees and woodland intertwined within the settlement creating its characteristic verdant streetscape and distinct sense of place.

The town is positioned in a saucer shaped depression which forms the upper reaches of the River Alne. The settlement has a linear form and is bounded on its eastern and western sides by low hills. The urban area is bisected by the A3400, a former ancient coach route which runs north-south alongside the Alne river corridor forming a connecting spine through the town.

Recent development has seen the town grow to the extent of containment offered by topography and existing woodland to the east, and large scale education and leisure facilities have continued the linear form along the A3400 to the south.

River Alne and Flooding

The River Alne has been a defining feature of the character and form of Henley-in-Arden from its earliest days.

The floodplain of the river has shaped the settlement character but not defined its extent. The river is visible and accessible at a number of points as it passes through the town and access to the water and its associated parkland are valued local assets and provide a shared area for active recreation, access to nature and biodiversity.

Boundaries to Growth

The town is well-contained to the west and north by the alignments of the current and former rail lines. In both instances, connectivity beyond these features are limited, and the disused rail line running across the northern edge of the town forms a substantial green edge, which severs the town and the immediate landscape setting.

To the east, rising topography is often wooded in character and open accessible landscapes such as Beaudesert Mount limit opportunities for development, which would be appropriate to the character of the settlement. By contrast, the southern edge of the town is eminently permeable and offers good visual and physical connectivity.

Town Approaches and Connectivity

The main approaches to the town by car are along the A3400 from the north and south and Warwick Road, which crosses the A3400 on an east-west axis, with the junction of the two routes forming a key node and interchange in the town.

The approach from the north is rural in character, enclosed by the surrounding topography and vegetation, an appreciation of the town itself is not experienced until the road is adjacent to built form and distance views are restricted by the former railway bridge and embankment.

From the south the settlement gradually appears in distance views along the straight route of Stratford Road, punctuated by accesses for leisure facilities and residences. The substantial tree-lined route includes direct and accessible pedestrian provision, which connects with all key facilities.

Approach from the west is similar in character to that of the north with limited appreciation of the urban area until beyond the railway bridge.

From the east, the transition from country to town is clearly defined on the downslope of Warwick Hill on the approach to Arden Road as the wooded character of the route distinctly changes to a manicured suburban form.

Heritage Influences

The long history of Henley-in-Arden and the resultant breadth of heritage assets has helped shaped the form of the settlement over time. Within the settled area there are 111 listed buildings of several grades, 2 Scheduled Monuments and the Henley-on-Arden and Wootton Waven Conservation Areas. Most influential in the evolution of the settlement however is the raised landform of Beaudesert Mount which limits development potential east of the urban area.

The majority of historic assets are concentrated to the north of the town within its Conservation Area, following and stemming from the High Street as markers of its historic development. Their setting is mostly focused around the settlement areas but in some cases extends to the wider agricultural environs. Within the wider environs, individual assets can be identified which would influence the development potential of the landscape – to the south, such assets are scattered, and their associated landscape and historic features are condensed and limited to their immediate settings; to the north, assets are potentially more influential by virtue of associated designed landscapes and contextual links which would require careful consideration.

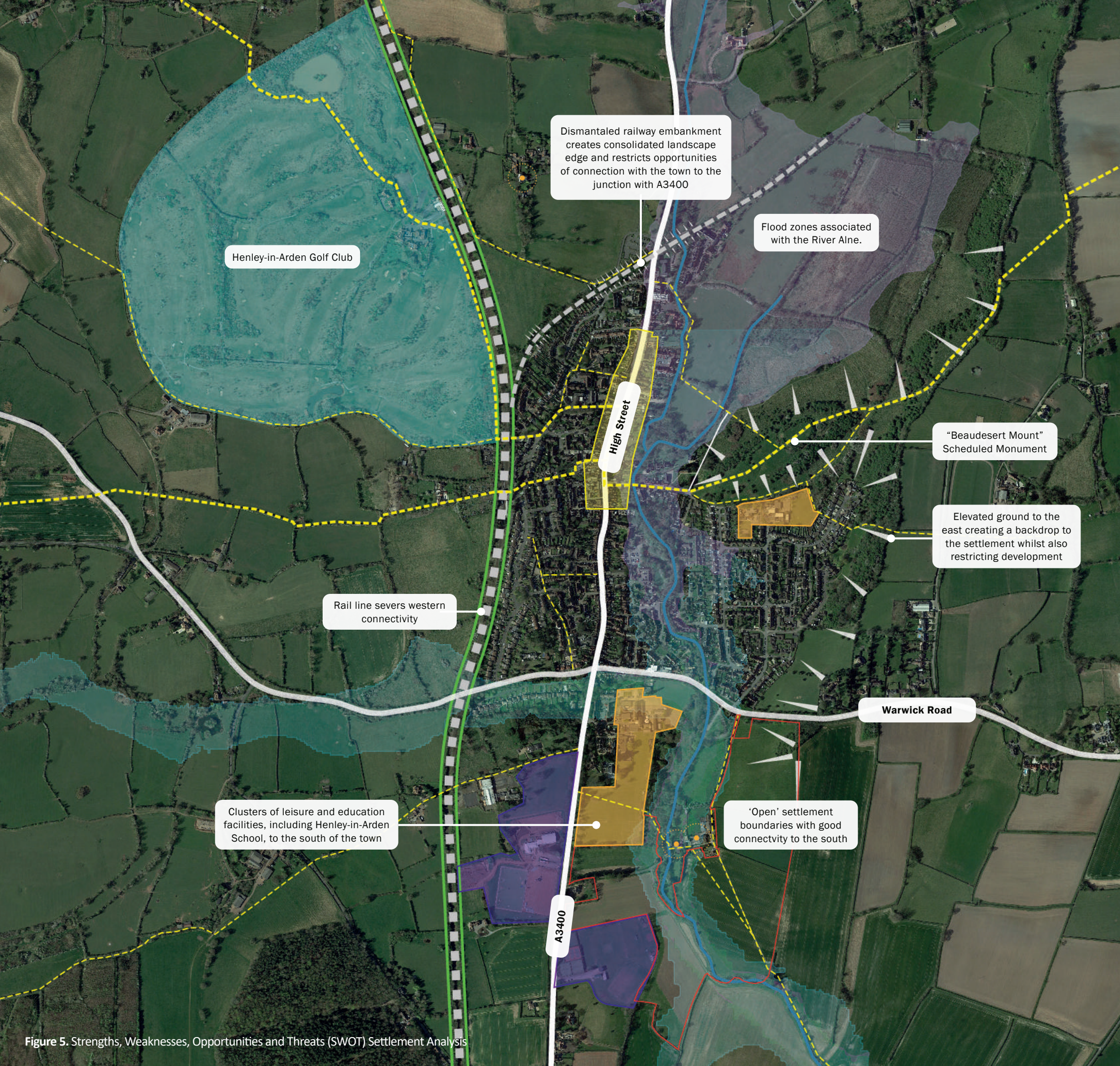
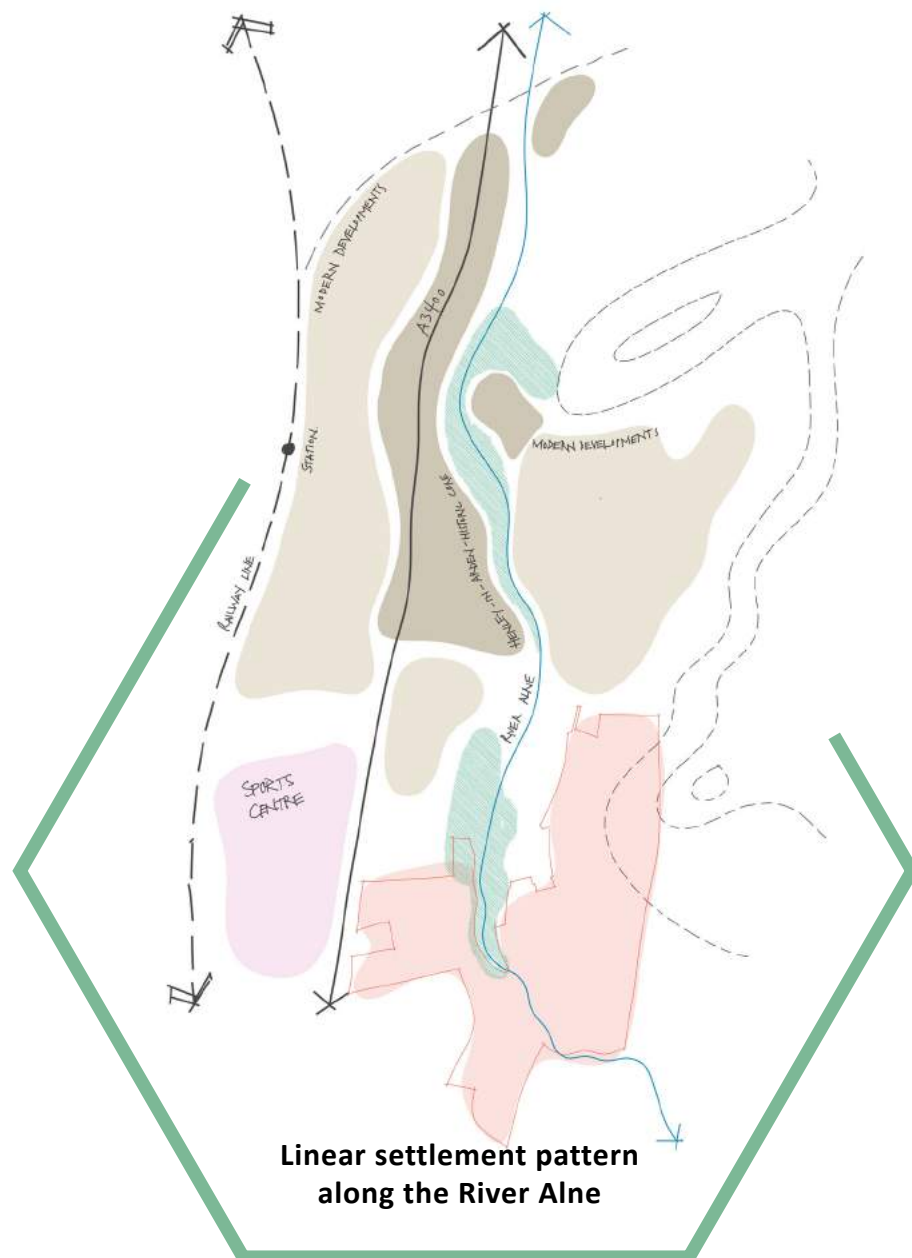


Figure 5. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Settlement Analysis

Unique Local Identity

The characteristics of the settlement set out in the previous section have not only dictated the patterns of growth of the town, but also contribute to its unique character and identity.

Future development in Henley-in-Arden should recognise this distinct character and complement the historic linear development pattern embracing opportunities created by access to the River Alne and its associated floodplains.





A woodland backdrop frames built form and terminates streets



Tree-lined streets and spaces



Characteristic water landscape



A verdant landscape and mature woodland context



Distinct local vernacular style and materials

Green Belt Review

Why Review the Green Belt as part of the SWLP?

Green Belt is designed to prevent urban sprawl through the unplanned expansion of urban areas.

While it is a successful spatial planning tool in this regard, it can have significant implications on the ability to deliver otherwise sustainable patterns of development. In recognition of this, there are mechanisms within National Planning Policy to enable Green Belt Review.

The Issues and Options Consultation Document (January 2023) sets out five options for growth (1-5) as follows:

- Option 1: Rail Corridors.
- Option 2: Sustainable Travel.
- Option 3: Economy.
- Option 4: Sustainable Travel and Economy.
- Option 5: Dispersed.

It is noted that all five options include Henley-in-Arden as a potential location for growth.

It is understood that the option currently considered to best align with mitigating climate change following completion of a Sustainability Appraisal is Option 2. This option is a hybrid of the Rail Corridor and Bus Corridor Options presented at the Scoping Consultation stage.

It is therefore expected that improving connectivity and locating development in highly sustainable locations, with access to public transport, and particularly rail, is likely to remain the focus of the joint authorities' overarching strategy.

Given that there are so few settlements within South Warwickshire with rail stations outside of the Green Belt it is considered somewhat inevitable that in order to release sufficient land for development within the most sustainable locations with regards to sustainable travel options that there must be Green Belt release.

Accordingly, to ensure a full and up-to-date understanding of the options for growth across the entire South Warwickshire area, and the relative sustainability of those options, a comprehensive Green Belt Review will be an important component of the SWLP process.

Why release land at Henley-in-Arden?

Paragraph 142 of the NPPF provides that where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development that plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously developed and/or well-served by public transport.

Henley-in-Arden is one of only a small number of settlements that benefit from an existing rail station with frequent services to a major centre (in this case Birmingham and Coventry). It has an excellent range of facilities and for these reasons has rightly been identified as a potential location for growth under all five growth options set out in the Issues and Options Consultation Document.

Why Release Land to the South East of Henley-in-Arden?

Henley in Arden is defined by the current Stratford upon Avon Core Strategy as a market town: a definition that is reflective of the town's wide range of facilities and services as well as the role and function that it plays in supporting the needs of other communities in the locality.

The town is, however, heavily constrained by Green Belt, landscape sensitivity and heritage issues, with notable reference made in the Stratford upon Avon Core Strategy to the physical constraints of the railway embankment on the western side of the town and the Scheduled Monument (SM) covering Beaudesert Mount to the east.

The subject site is ideally situated to the south of the town and near to the town's amenities and, in particular, Henley-in-Arden School. There is no visual relationship between the Site and the SM at Beaudesert Mount and is the 'right side' of the railway, which notably sets it apart from other options considered in the recently prepared Settlement Design Analysis.

The Site is also located within walking distance of Henley-in-Arden Rail Station, which is approximately 1.6km to the north-east of the Site and therefore provides an excellent opportunity to realise the Council's ambition to apply the principles of the 20-minute neighbourhood. Such benefits also mean making better use of existing infrastructure without significant investment being required.

Review of the Five Purposes of Green Belt Designation

Paragraphs 137 to 143 of the NPPF provides the necessary guidance for the review of Green Belt.

The joint authorities will need to be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances to justify Green Belt release and should look to release land that does not compromise the five purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Set out below is a brief overview of the performance of the site against these five purposes:

1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

Henley in Arden is not a large built-up urban area and development on the south-eastern side of the town would not lead to urban sprawl. The existing field structure, boundary roads and hedgerows provide an ideal framework against which defensible boundaries can be designed, preserving the function of the Green Belt in accordance with this purpose.

2. Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.

The south-eastern expansion of Henley in Arden will not lead to the coalescence of one town with another. Defined and defensible boundaries can and will be provided, which will further prevent the risk of unrestricted sprawl.

3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside encroachment

Development of the Site would lead to expansion of development into the countryside as a result of the extension of Henley-in-Arden to the south-east of the town. However, the Site is already seen in the context of existing development at Henley-in-Arden. Enhancements to existing green infrastructure will assist in creating a defined and defensible boundary, limiting the extent of any perceived encroachment without compromising this purpose.

4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.

The site is in close proximity to the Conservation Area and is located adjacent to Blackford Mill, which is Grade II Listed. However, both heritage assets have been responded to in the masterplan, which demonstrates that the Site can be developed without compromising heritage objectives.

5. To assist urban regeneration by encouraging recycling of derelict and other urban land.

While the site itself is greenfield its release does not in any way disincentivise the urban regeneration of sites elsewhere in the plan area. Given the lack of supply of brownfield land in either Warwick District or Stratford-on-Avon District it is simply unrealistic to expect the level of housing proposed to be accommodated on brownfield sites alone. This is evident by the need in previous Local Plans to allocate greenfield and Green Belt sites to meet development needs.



Given the scale of housing need and the significant consequences for sustainable development within the plan area if Green Belt is not released, the exceptional circumstances threshold set out under Paragraph 140 of the NPPF is considered to be met. The release of land to the south-east of Henley-in-Arden would not compromise the five purposes of Green Belts set out under Paragraph 138 of the NPPF, unlike other options around the town, and is therefore supportable in principle.

The Site

Site Description

Located at the southern edge of Henley-in-Arden, the Site comprises circa 23.86ha of agricultural land interwoven between Henley-in-Arden School and the Community Centre and a number of key leisure facilities.

The Site is bisected by the River Alne, a mature green corridor containing wetland flora and fauna. There are no vehicular or pedestrian crossings of the river within the site boundary.

To the north and west, the Site is bounded by blocks of woodland connected by hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The eastern and southern boundaries are more open, sometimes with hedgerows delineating field boundaries.

Topographically, the Site is low lying to the south-west rising towards the north-east with a high point on the site at c.95m aOD from which long distance views of the wider countryside are available.

The Site can be currently accessed to the west via an existing single lane track along Stratford Road (A3400) opposite the Wasps Elite Performance and Innovation Centre. This is also shared with Blackford Mill Farm. Access to eastern parcels is available from Warwick Road to the north via an agricultural entrance. For pedestrians the Site is crossed by two Public Rights of Way (PRow) entering the Site at three locations.

In the centre of the site, outside of the red line boundary, lies Blackford Mill, a Grade II listed house. Separate is a modern detached farmhouse and a range of contemporary and traditional farm buildings known as Blackford Mill Farm, all of which are accessed via the existing agricultural tracks.

A single residence facing Stratford Road sits within an indent in the Site's western boundary. This property benefits from mature vegetation surrounding the plot, but nonetheless, the privacy and amenity of residents should be considered.



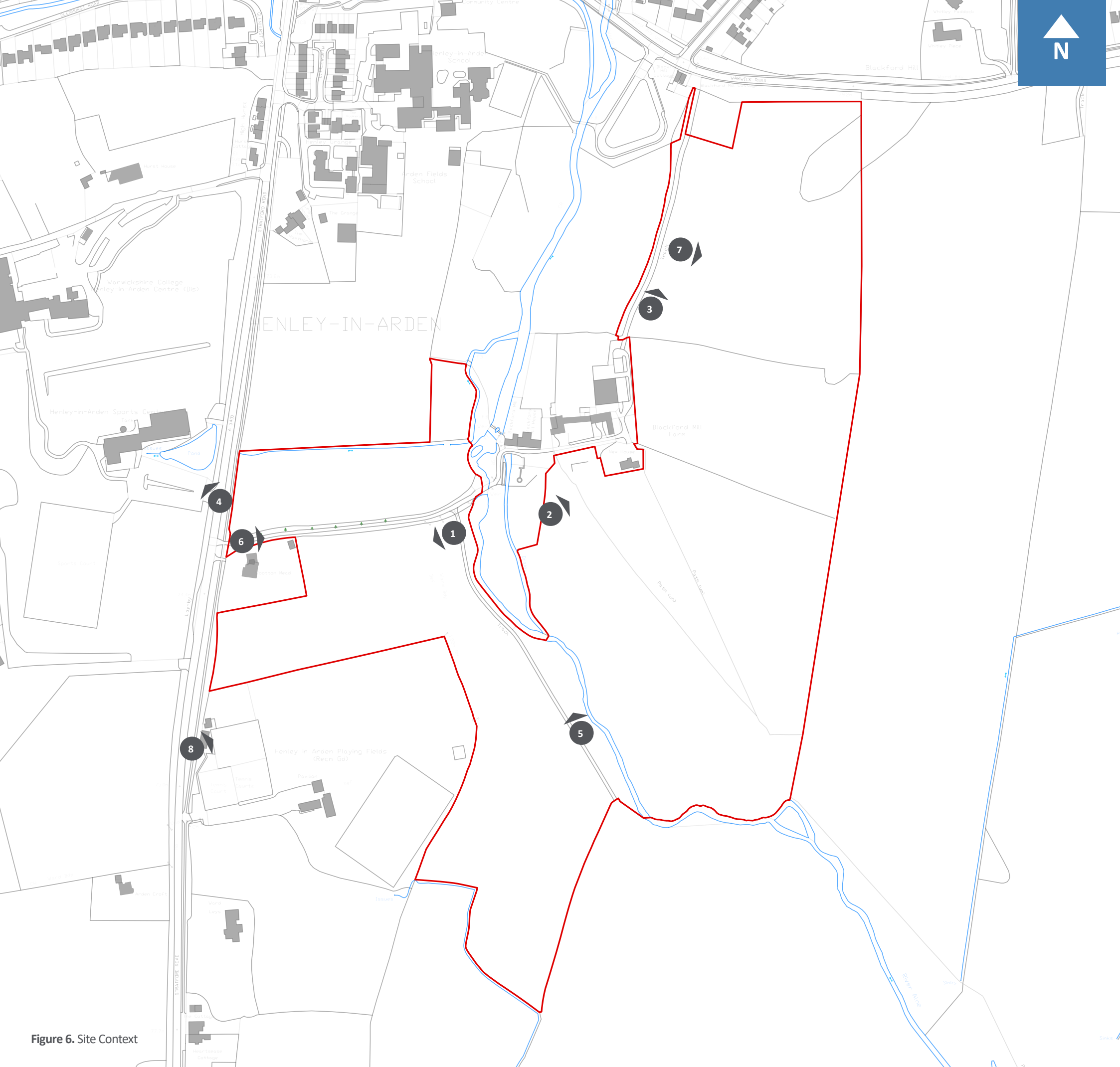
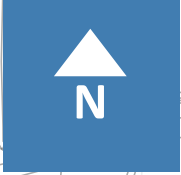


Figure 6. Site Context

Landscape and Visual Context

The Site does not fall within any national landscape designations but does fall within the Arden Special Landscape Area (SLA). Visually the Site is generally well contained, due to a combination of the surrounding mature vegetation and undulating topography.

Landscape Character

The Site lies within the Wooded Estatelands Landscape Character Type within the Warwickshire Landscapes Guidelines (1990), and contains elements of the identified key characteristics such as rolling topography, scattered farmsteads and semi-regular medium to large scale fields. The study also sets out a number of landscape guidelines/management strategies relevant to the site and development proposals:

- *“Conserve the built character of Arden by ensuring that new development reflects the vernacular style”.*
- *“The design of all new woodland planting should complement the shape and scale of the surrounding landscape pattern”.*
- *“New woodland planting should be broadleaved in character and favour oak as the major tree species”.*
- *“Avoid the removal of hedgerows, especially along footpaths, bridleways, parish boundaries and woodland edges”.*
- *“Promote the management of hedgerows and landscape features”.*

Visual Amenity

This Site is generally well contained, due to a combination of the surrounding mature vegetation and undulating topography.

To the north: Views are heavily restricted by the form and quantum of the vegetation along the Site’s northern boundary. Beaudesert Mount forms a locally prominent elevated location to the north of the Site where elements of the field parcels can be glimpsed, otherwise close and long distance views are heavily restricted.

To the east: The topography of the landscape to the east slopes gently away from the Site from the elevated section of the north-eastern corner



of the Site. The landscape contains mature field boundaries with good tree coverage, when combined with the limited receptors within this landscape, views are generally restricted to the most elevated sections of the Site. The central and southern areas are generally well screened by intervening vegetation.

To the south: The landscape to the south is generally low topography as it follows the course of the River Alne. Views are heavily restricted by the undulating topography and intervening vegetation, alongside the limited number of receptors.

To the west: Stratford Road runs broadly north to south along sections of the western boundary. The road forms a well treed corridor, which helps to contain the Site’s visual envelope along this edge. Although topography rises in the landscape to the west of the town, the intervening built form and vegetation heavily restricts any intervisibility.



Figure 7. 5a: View north from Public Footpath SD188 as it enters the Site from the south-eastern corner



Figure 8 View north from Public Footpath SD188 as it enters the Site from the south-eastern corner

Heritage and Archaeology

Development of the Site will not cause significant harm to, or changes to, the surrounding designated and non-designated heritage assets within the area.

There is no reason to believe or expect that the Site will contain archaeology of such significance that it would require preservation *in situ* and prejudice its delivery for the form of development proposed.

The Site does not fall within any Conservation Areas, nor does it contain any designated heritage assets, such as world heritage sites, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields or listed buildings.

Located central to the Site, but not within the Site boundary are the Grade II Listed Farm buildings and Grade II Listed Blackford Mill. Assessment of these assets has concluded that Site forms only a part of the setting of these assets and makes only a small positive contribution to their significance, by being a small part of their historical agricultural setting. However, the experience of these assets from the Site, and vice versa is very limited, comprising mostly glimpses or very long-distance views heavily screened by vegetation, as such there is every reason to believe that sympathetic masterplanning can minimise or avoid harm to the significance of these assets.

In terms of archaeology, the Warwickshire Historic Environment Record documents a single known feature within the Site comprising possible medieval ridge and furrow on the smaller northern field. Based on the available evidence, the assessment identified that the Site has low potential for prehistoric and Roman remains, and some potential for medieval, and post-medieval deposits to survive. Such remains would be of varying archaeological and historic interest, but it is unlikely that they would be of such significance that they would preclude development of the Site, subject to the implementation of appropriate mitigation, if necessary.

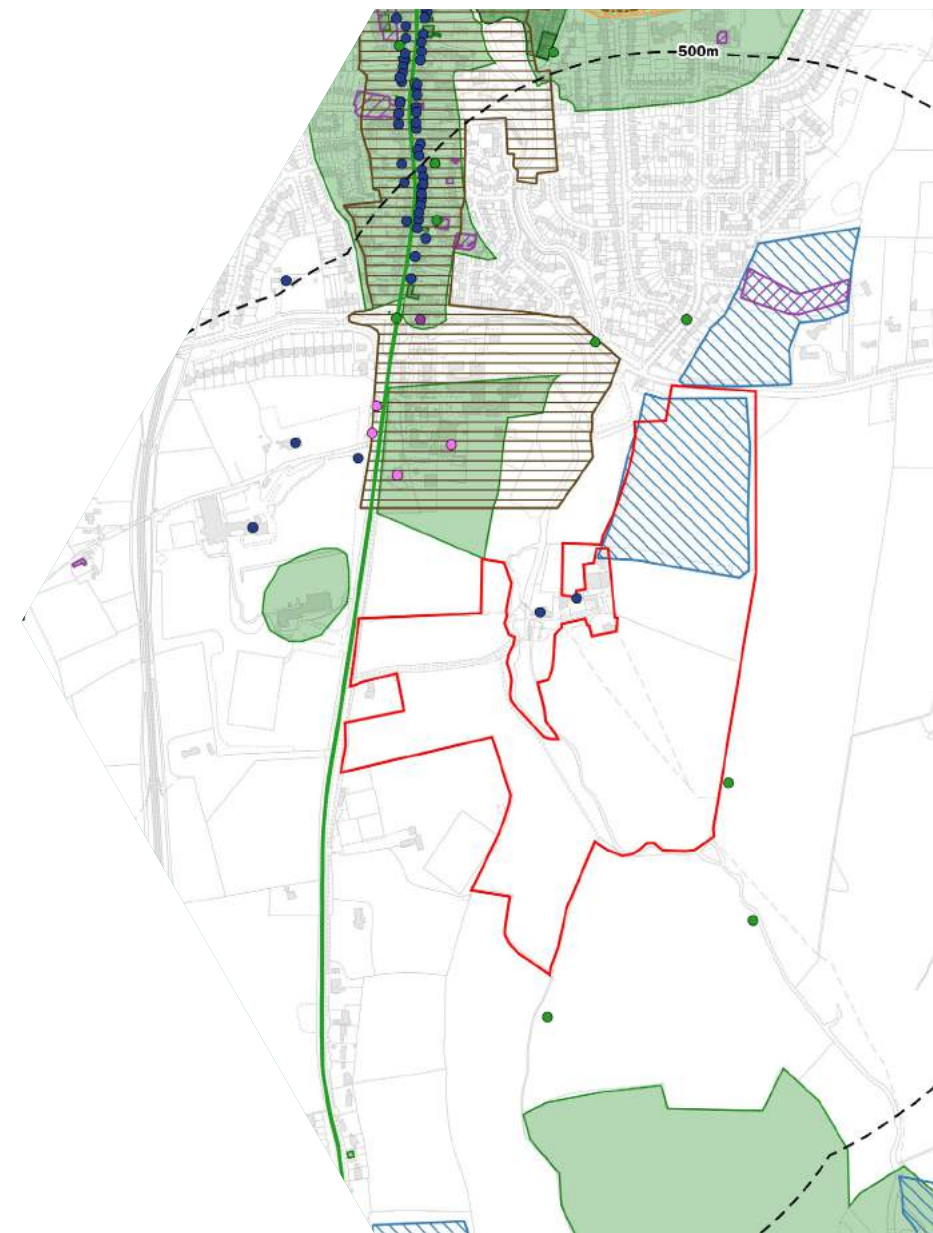










Figure 9. Designated and Non-Designated Assets

	Scheduled Monument		Grade II Listed Building		Area of Ridge and Furrow
	Grade I Listed Building		Conservation Area		Building of Group and Townscape Value
	Grade II* Listed Building		HER Monument		

Access and Connectivity

The initial access appraisal has concluded that safe and suitable access to the Site can be achieved.

- The Site benefits from two PRoW that cross the Site from east to west. These provide pedestrian connectivity into the existing footpath network offering routes between Henley-in-Arden and the Site.
- The Site is located suitably to provide convenient connections to Warwick Road (A4189) and Stratford Road (A3400), which are local distributor A roads. Access is proposed in the form two priority junctions, one from Warwick Road and one from Stratford Road, plus an emergency access on Warwick Road, to ensure safe and suitable access to the Site.
- Pedestrian connections will be provided at the vehicle access points and also at separate locations to provide a permeable network. A separate pedestrian and cycle link, which will also serve as an emergency vehicle access is proposed to Warwick Road.
- The access arrangements will be designed in accordance with local and national guidance, including the Warwickshire Design Guide.
- The internal site layout will provide for a network of internal streets that are well connected and will encourage access by walking and cycling. Pedestrian infrastructure will be designed to connect to existing provision, including the existing footways on Stratford Road and Warwick Road. A separate pedestrian and cycle link is proposed to Warwick Road and a new footway along the Site frontage to join the existing provision on the southern side of Warwick Road.
- No vehicle connection is proposed between the two site accesses.



Figure 10. Proposed Access Strategy



Drainage and Flooding

The majority of the Site is located within Flood Zone 1. Part of the site is located in Flood Zones 2 and 3 associated with the River Alne.

The Site is bisected by the River Alne and its associated flood plain. Taking reference from the riverlands in Henley-in-Arden, the river corridor provides ample opportunity for an appropriate sustainable drainage strategy, using a combination of attenuation basins and blue corridors containing swales, to enhance the Site and provide ecological benefits and biodiversification throughout.

The majority of the Site is located within Flood Zone 1. This is the area at low risk of river flooding. Part of the Site lies within Flood Zones 2 and 3 as shown on the Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning. This is the area identified to be at medium (0.1% annual event probability) to high risk (1% AEP) of river flooding associated with the River Alne, which flows south dividing the two land parcels forming the Site.

The Site will be designed in account of the flood risk constraint, in particular, the design flood event for planning purposes, which is the 1% AEP flood accounting for climate change. All proposed dwellings are to be located outside of this design flood risk area following local and national planning policy guidance along with open drainage storage features. This will ensure there would be no loss of design event floodplain that could increase river flood risk downstream.

Foul drainage will utilise connection to an existing on site public combined sewer, with pumped and gravitational connections sought.

Ecology

Investigations have identified no significant ecological constraints to the development of the Site.

There are two non-statutory sites within/adjacent to the Site, the River Alne Local Wildlife Site (LWS) runs from north to south through the centre of the Site. The Site contains hedgerows, woodland and a watercourse, which are of higher ecological value.

The River Alne is one of Warwickshire's best quality rivers for wildlife. The river corridor is to be retained and enhanced, buffering habitats from the development proposals. A new footpath route will be created crossing River Alne LWS, which will be designed to protect the aquatic and marginal habitats of the river wherever possible.

Blackford Hill Spinney Ecosite is located within the north-east corner of the Site and is designated for the broadleaved woodland. This tree belt will be breached by the Site access, however, substantial new woodland planting will offer improved connectivity for the Ecosite to mitigate losses.

The habitats within the Site are dominated by large arable fields and species-poor semi-improved grassland fields, all of which are of low ecological value. Other habitats present include hedgerows, woodland and a watercourse, which are of higher ecological value. Proposals will be designed to retain and protect the hedgerows, woodland and watercourse wherever possible, with only minor losses to facilitate new access roads and footpaths.

There is substantial opportunity to help facilitate nature recovery on the Site and includes the creation of large areas of green open space, including areas of wildflower grassland and woodland planting to diversify habitats within the Site.

Arboriculture

The character of the Site is partly derived from existing vegetation which helps to enclose much of the landscape. A number of distinctive specimen trees have been identified, which can be readily integrated into development.

Items identified across the Site are primarily of low arboricultural value, with the exception of a few higher quality items. None of the surveyed items are protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), nor does the Site lie within a designated conservation area.

A number of category A items, some of which comprise the large mature giant redwoods, are located along the entrance driveway on the eastern boundary. Two veteran trees were identified during the survey process. These two trees are located centrally on the boundary with the Tennis Club. Category A and B items, of which two are veteran trees, should be prioritised for retention due to their condition, age and retention span.

Utilities

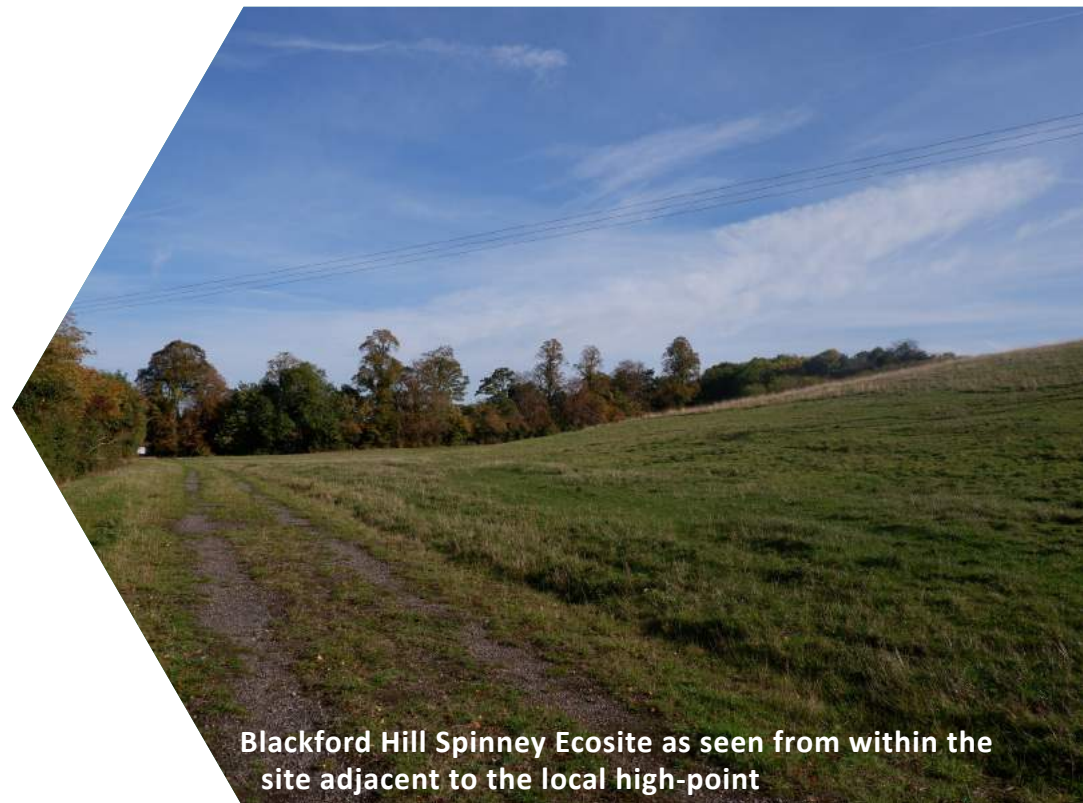
The Site is crossed by a limited number of underground mains that can be readily integrated with development.

The Site is crossed by an existing sewer easement running north to south adjacent to the River Alne. The alignment of this easement should be incorporated within publically accessible land.

Two overhead electricity lines cross the Site and are likely to be subject to diversion as part of proposals.



Giant redwoods at the existing site access as seen from the south adjacent to the river corridor



Blackford Hill Spinney Ecosite as seen from within the site adjacent to the local high-point

Design Considerations

Figure 11 sets out the constraints and opportunities for the Site that have been used to influence the design of the masterplan. A summary of these has been provided below:

Topography

- Generally low-lying high ground located to the north-east.

Drainage, Flooding and Utilities

- The Site is divided into two parts by the River Alne, which runs from north to south. The Site falls partly within the Flood Zones 2 and 3.
- The Site is crossed by an existing sewer easement running north to south adjacent to the River Alne

Landscape & Arboriculture

- Opportunity to reinforce the eastern boundary to create a new defensible boundary to the Green Belt.
- Opportunity to create two new community parks - along the Riverside, and on Blackford Hill.
- A number of category A trees have been identified for retention within open space helping create an established landscape backdrop to development.

Ecology


- There are two non-statutory sites within/adjacent to the Site: the River Alne LWS, which runs from north to south through the centre of the site, and the Blackford Hill Spinney Ecosite, at the Site's northern boundary.
- The Site contains hedgerows, woodland and a watercourse, which are of higher ecological value.

Heritage and Archaeology

- The Site surrounds Grade II listed Blackford Mill and associated farm buildings - appropriate landscape buffers should be included in proposals.
- Ridge and furrow has been identified on Blackford Hill.

Access

- Two new points of vehicular access have been identified from Stratford Road and Warwick Road, plus an emergency access.
- Numerous pedestrian and cycle connections link the Site with the wider areas.
- Public rights of way crossing the Site are likely to require diversion.

	Site Boundary (22.86ha)		Panoramic Views
	Existing Vegetation		Sewer Easement
	Veteran Tree		1:12 - 1:10 Slope
	Species Poor Hedgerow and Trees		1:10 - 1:7 Slope
	Green Belt Boundary		Slope Steeper than 1:7
	Flood Zone 3 with 40% Climate Change		Low Voltage Cable
	Flood Zone 3		High Voltage Cable
	Flood Zone 2		Reinforce Landscape Boundary
	Stream(Local Wildlife Site)		Proposed Vehicular Access
	Existing Ditch		Proposed Emergency Access
	Priority Habitat		Proposed Pedestrian Access
	Conservation Area		
	Listed Building (Grade II)		
	Listed Building Offset		
	Public Right of Way		
	5m Contours		
	Sports and Recreational Facility		

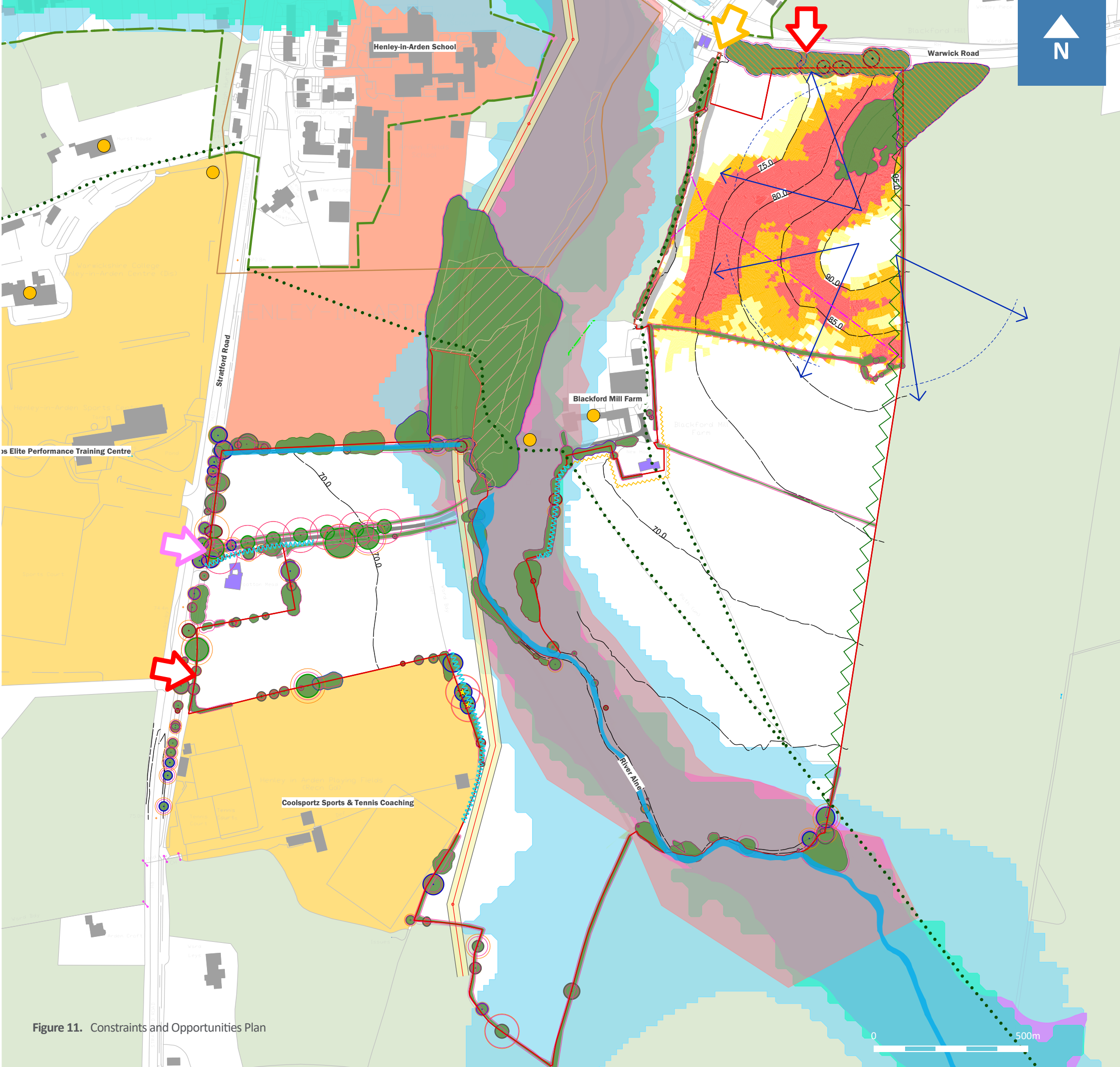


Figure 11. Constraints and Opportunities Plan

Design Proposals

Building on the unique character of Henley-in-Arden, the vision for the Site is to provide a mix of new homes reflective of local need; built to the highest environmental standards; and set within a network of high-quality green spaces enclosed by a connected woodland backdrop.

The design and layout of development will build on historic growth patterns and utilise features and details characteristic of the town and landscape to create a 21st century iteration of the established local vernacular.

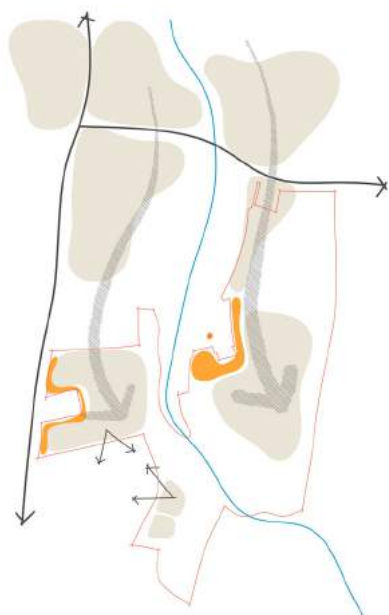
Riverside habitats, Blackford Hill Park and a connected network of functional landscape will provide resources for nature recovery and encourage healthy, active lifestyles within safe and accessible streets and spaces.



"Beauty includes everything that promotes a healthy and happy life, everything that makes a collection of buildings into a place, everything that turns anywhere into somewhere, and nowhere into home..." Objective 1 of Living with Beauty, the report of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission, 2020

Design Principles

Founded in a sound understanding of the town and Site, the following design principles have been developed to inform the design of the masterplan. The principles embed key design elements which reflect specific constraints and opportunities and aim to ensure the proposals reflect the distinctive character of Henley-in-Arden.



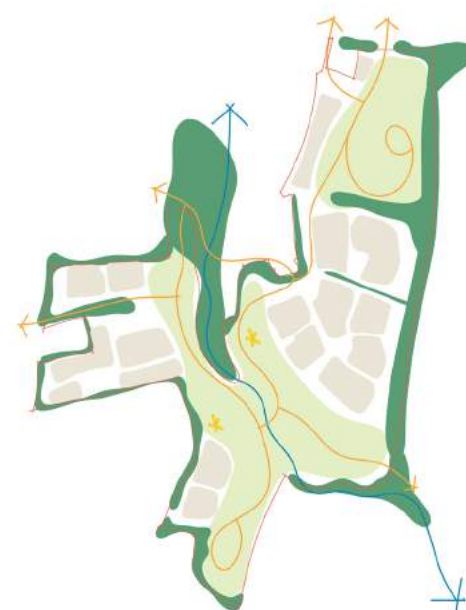
A Connected and Logical Extension

- Continue the historic linear settlement pattern along the route of the River Alne.
- Ensure connectivity with the town is retained and promoted, providing direct and safe walking and cycle routes to local amenities.
- Provide appropriate responses at the boundaries with adjacent facilities and residences that respect privacy, security and amenity.



Distinctive Local Character

- Create a generous landscape framework that retains the historic link to the Forest of Arden and encloses the Site with the next generation of trees and woodland.
- Restrict development of Blackford Hill to create a hilltop park. The design should seek to exploit elevated views to the south and visually connect the Site with the town.
- Cluster new homes within individual parcels enclosed by a landscape backdrop such that each community also has its own unique village qualities.



Unique Opportunities

- Create a new riverside park that continues the principles of the Riverlands and controls access for the benefit of nature recovery, whilst delivering active and passive health benefits to residents.
- Integrate site drainage both into the landscape and the urban realm following historic drainage routes associated with the floodplains of the river.
- Provide opportunities for play and recreation which compliment existing facilities and provide a functional use of the landscape.

Concept Masterplan

Building on the design principles set out in the previous section the Illustrative Masterplan is designed as a walkable neighbourhood which promotes healthy living, active travel and nature recovery within a locally distinct landscape setting.

The proposal includes:

- Approximately 300 energy efficient new homes with a mix of units to suit all needs.
- Two new vehicular accesses taken from Stratford Road and Warwick Road serving individual cells of development. Supplemented by a new emergency access and segregated pedestrian and cycle priority accesses.
- A new pedestrian and cycle crossing of the River Alne.
- Over 60% of the Site retained as open space, including: A new Riverside Park centred around the corridor of the River Alne providing clearly defined resources and activities for people, flora and fauna; and Blackford Hill Park - a new haven for biodiversity adjacent to Blackford Hill Ecosite, enclosed by new woodland planting and affording extensive new public views connecting the Site with the town and country.
- An overall net gain in biodiversity achieved through a locally responsive and appropriate ecological response.
- Numerous opportunities for leisure and play for all ages.

- 1 Riverside park
- 2 Existing vegetation to be retained and enhanced
- 3 Reinforce existing boundary hedgerow
- 4 Proposed specimen tree planting
- 5 New woodland buffer
- 6 Proposed development parcels
- 7 Opportunities for Play and Sport
- 8 Surface water network including basins, swales and raingardens
- 9 New vehicular access
- 10 Blackford Hill Park
- 11 Footpath network, including diversions to the two existing PRoW
- 12 New pedestrian bridge
- 13 Potential emergency vehicular Access



Over 60% of the site to be delivered as open space

Two new strategic parks providing benefits to people and wildlife

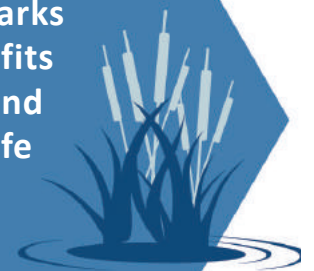




Figure 12. Concept Masterplan

Development Benefits

Homes Fit for 21st Century Life

Approximately 300 new energy-efficient, flexible homes

New, beautifully designed homes, which respond to local characteristics and preferences, would improve accessibility to first time buyers and increase the range of housing types, tenures and sizes in the locality, while new open spaces would provide a range of activities, habitats and functions.

Ensuring climate resilience

Buildings will be designed with a 'fabric-first' approach in order to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions. The proposals employ a robust approach to flood risk and mitigation and incorporate allowances for climate change. New tree planting would slow down the flow of surface water and aid water penetration – alleviating run-off– whilst also sequestering carbon. All new homes will also include electric car charging points and useable space for cycle storage.

Functional space to live and grow

New homes will deliver in excess of minimum space standards and include flexible layouts to accommodate a range of needs and lifestyles. Super-fast broadband to all properties will allow opportunity to work from home with a diverse network of open spaces on the doorstep to also bring the community together and offer opportunity to work from a third place.





Henley-in-Arden
School

Wasps Elite Performance
and Innovation Centre

Henley-in-Arden
Tennis Club

Figure 11. Illustrative birdseye view of the proposed site

Successful Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure planning is an important means of delivering a broad range of economic, social and environmental benefits within new developments. Carefully planned Green Infrastructure is a central component for sustainable development enabling multiple policy aspirations and objectives of different sectors to be achieved. In order to realise and maximise the wide ranging benefits associated with Green Infrastructure and biodiversity. Early integration into design proposals is essential.

The local environmental conditions including soils, topography and micro-climate have steered the development of a landscape setting that puts engagement with open spaces and stewardship of nature at the heart of the design approach.

Land South of Henley-in-Arden includes a series of unique landscape features which provide an instant established landscape setting and can be built on to deliver a wider remit on landscape and biodiversity objectives.

Green Infrastructure Objectives

To ensure the creation and subsequent maintenance of a high quality Green Infrastructure network it is essential to identify strategic design objectives in order to guide and shape development proposals. For Henley-in-Arden these are as follows:

- A landscape appropriate to historic and local character contexts.
- A multifunctional landscape.
- A biodiverse landscape.
- A resilient landscape.
- A landscape which encourages healthy lifestyles and green well-being.
- A landscape that stimulates the economy.
- A landscape that can be enjoyed by all.



Layering the Landscape for the Site

Woodland Landscapes

The wooded nature of the town of Henley-in-Arden relates to its historic context within the Forest of Arden. Elevated locations across the town show built form set within a heavily treed landscape. The masterplan has been developed to ensure this is a feature that runs through the development, providing a suitable setting to the proposal helping it to assimilate into the receiving landscape. Additional woodland and tree planting across the Site help to provide further biodiversity benefits and habitat opportunities.



Water Landscapes

Historically, the town of Henley-in-Arden developed along the banks of the River Alne as it meanders through the landscape. This forms an important feature today and marks the green spine of the town. The river runs centrally through the Site, affording the opportunity to continue the development grain of Henley-in-Arden along the watercourse. This has formed a key component of the masterplan as it has developed, utilising the existing blue corridor to provide a range of recreational and biodiversity opportunities, alongside integrating a holistic Blue Infrastructure strategy across the Site as a whole.

Biodiverse Landscapes

Running throughout all aspects of the design is the goal of enhancing biodiversity provision on-site and improving connectivity to the wider habitat network beyond the Site's extents. This will be achieved at both the strategic and local scale with habitat creation and improvements designed to connect to, and expand the value of, on-site and adjacent habitats and corridors. The local wildlife site running centrally through the Site is to be retained and protected within a sensitively landscaped corridor, with only a singular point of disturbance to allow for access between development areas. New pocket park and Public Open Space (POS) planting including a rich variety of habitats and species allow connection to the wider Green Infrastructure network, while avenue and street tree planting and pollinator friendly shrubs provide hopping points through development parcels.



Green Infrastructure Matrix

The Green Infrastructure Matrix provides a breakdown of the Landscape Layers and features that contribute to the creation of a diverse and characterful Green Infrastructure network that fulfills the sites Green Infrastructure objectives. The pattern book is made of a suite of Green Infrastructure features, organised into four landscape layers categorised by their community or ecological value.

The matrix allows for the easy codification of the Green Infrastructure features incorporated within the proposed scheme. It allows for a greater degree of flexibility within the masterplan, whilst providing a greater level of detail in the Green Infrastructure design and overall landscape vision.

The matrix below shows our initial approach to the structure. The matrix is organised vertically and horizontally: landscape layers make up the vertical rows, arranged on a sliding scale from a higher ecological value to a higher community value; and the landscape features are arranged horizontally against each category, arranged by scale from strategic to linear to local.





Street tree planting to create internal hierarchy and legibility alongside increased biodiversity opportunities.

Retain and where possible upgrade existing footpaths within site to improve pedestrian connectivity to the village core to the north.

Green connections are provided through development blocks through greening of main road routes with street tree corridors and rain gardens. Existing vegetation retained and enhanced where possible.

Local play and sports provision sensitively sited within development to tie in with adjacent facilities and provide features accessible to all.

Large Countryside Park with informal walking routes, tree and scrub planting alongside areas for habitat enhancement.

Incorporation of the Henley-in-Arden Riverlands to the site and Green Infrastructure network.

Extensive habitat enhancement along the River Alne corridor through grassland improvement and sensitive management.

Woodland along the north-eastern edge of the Site retained and enhanced where possible to retain tree approach to the town from the east and create additional habitat opportunities.

Hilltop Park with areas for play and grassland habitat improvement.

Significant structural woodland planting along the entirety of the Site's eastern boundary, which weaves into the development, reflecting the historic character of the town within the Arden Forest.

Informal tree planting throughout development parcels to further settle built form into the Arden Forest typology.

Attenuation basins located at the low point of the site collect and slow run-off from new development. These and associated wetland tolerant planting provide new habitat features within an otherwise arable landscape.

Existing PRoW links between the site and wider landscape retained and set within large Countryside Park.

Figure 12. Illustrative Landscape Strategy

Conclusion

Suitable, Available and Deliverable

This document demonstrates that land South of Henley-in-Arden is a logical and suitable location for sustainable development. Through comprehensive analysis of the contextual, planning and technical parameters it provides evidence that the Site is an appropriate location within the town, that it is available now and can deliver new homes within the next plan period without any technical impediment.

Henley-in-Arden is one of only a small number of settlements that benefit from an existing rail station with frequent services to a major centre. It has an excellent range of facilities and for these reasons has rightly been identified as a potential location for growth under all five growth options set out in the SWLP Issues and Options Consultation Document.

As demonstrated in this document, land South of Henley in Arden offers a unique and logical opportunity to provide the next step in evolution of the town. Through an environmentally-led approach, the proposals have illustrated one way in which development could sensitively respond to unique characteristics of the Site and settlement deliver a locally distinctive and high-quality development.

The Site's unified control by a trusted and experienced land promotion company (Mac Mic Group) and its non-dependence upon any major new strategic infrastructure mean the site's development is readily deliverable.

In terms of the NPPF the Site is available, suitable and developable, and therefore should be considered as an appropriate allocation to meet future housing requirements.

What's Next

Mac Mic Group trust the content of this document provides a useful overview of the potential proposals for the Site.

This document, however, represents only an initial guide, and Mac Mic Group would welcome an opportunity to discuss the Site and its potential development in more detail with the local community, stakeholders and Stratford upon Avon District Council.







The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd
www.edp-uk.co.uk