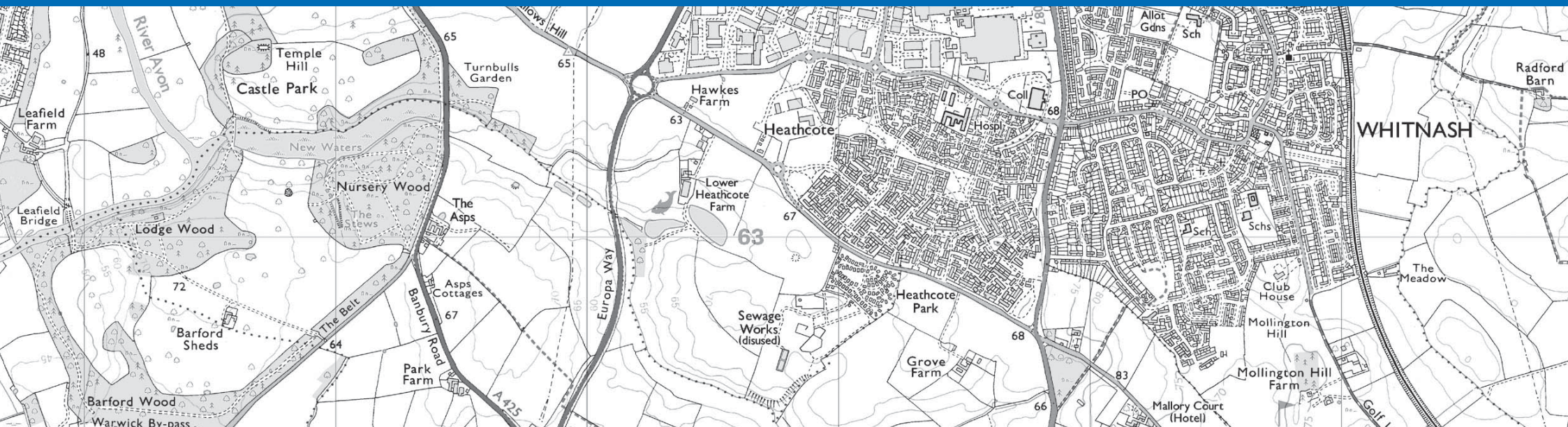


Lower Heathcote Farm, Warwick

BACKGROUND DOCUMENT JULY 2012

Prepared by Pegasus Planning Group on behalf of Gallagher Estates



Lower Heathcote Farm, Warwick

BACKGROUND DOCUMENT

July 2012

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Prepared by Pegasus Planning Group Ltd
on behalf of Gallagher Estates

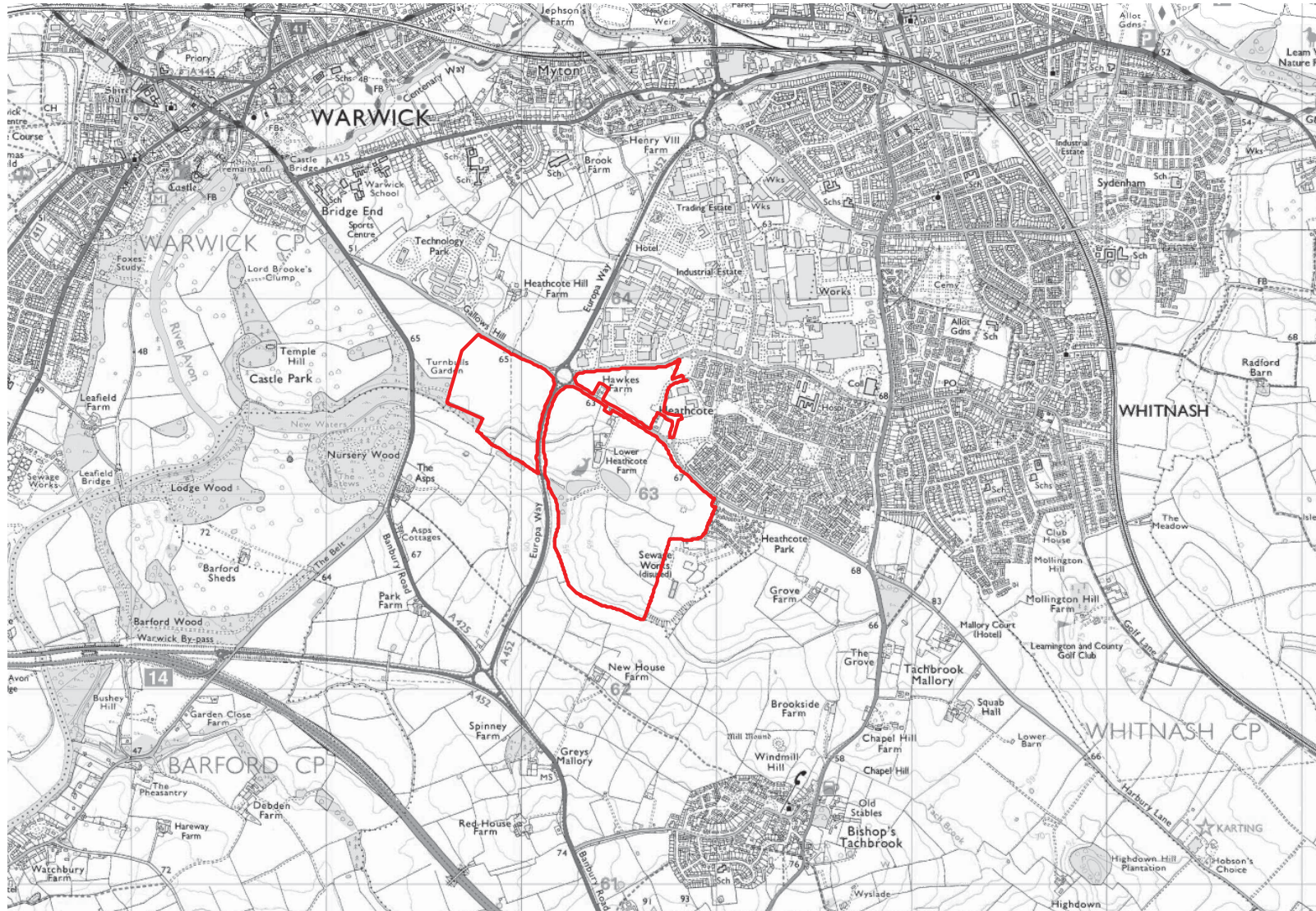
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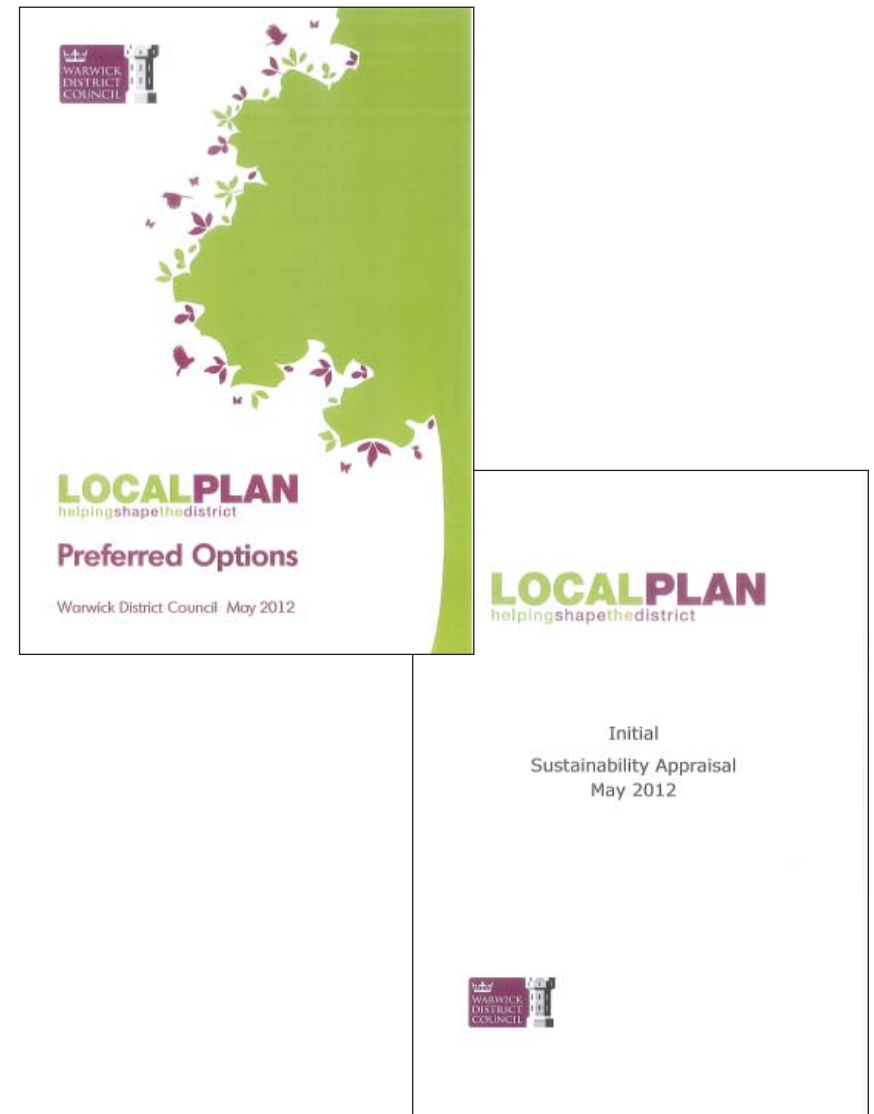


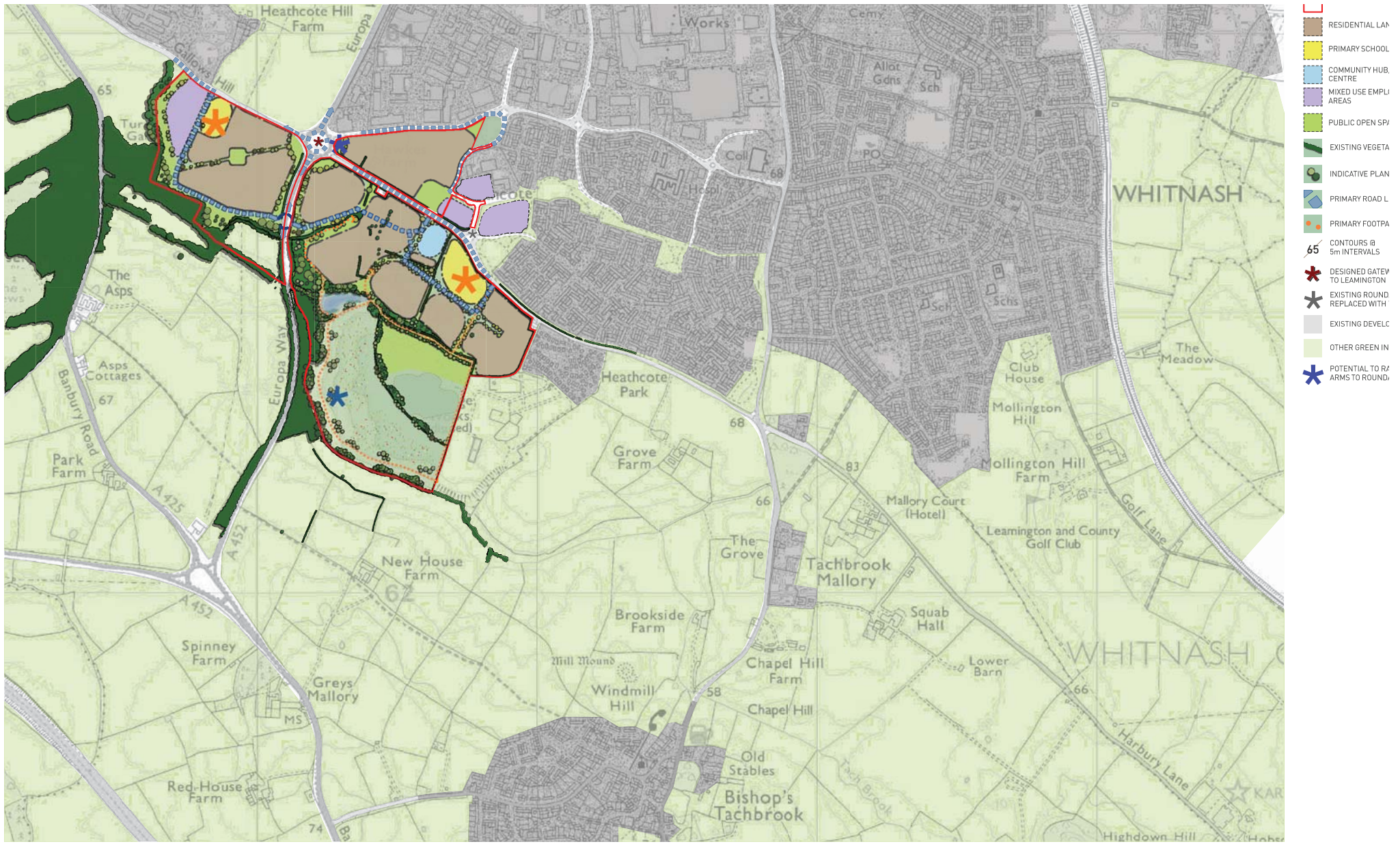
Site Location

1 INTRODUCTION

This document relates to the site known as 'Lower Heathcote Farm' which is located to the south Warwick adjoining the urban edge of Warwick and Leamington Spa.

This document has been produced on behalf of Gallagher Estates to assist in the Council in the preparation of the New Local Plan. This document provides a summary of pertinent site specific information regarding the Lower Heathcote Farm site. This information has enabled the site's constraints and opportunities to be identified which, in turn has helped formulate potential development proposals. This document serves to reinforce the suitability of the site and its soundness as an allocation within the New Local Plan.





Context Plan

2 SITE DESCRIPTION & CONTEXT

The Site

The site covers approximately 95 hectares of predominantly arable land which adjoins Heathcote to its south west, as illustrated on the Site Location Plan (Page 2). The site forms the southern side of a local ridge line as it rises from a low lying valley following a tributary of the River Avon. The highest point on the site sits at approximately 73m AOD.

The site is divided into 3 separate parcels of land split by Harbury Lane and Europa Way. The northern parcel, to the north of Harbury Lane, is the smaller of the parcels and is triangular in form, it is defined on its northern boundary by Heathcote Lane, with its eastern extent adjoining the Nuffield Health, Fitness and Wellbeing Centre. The site's southern boundary is defined by Harbury Lane but follows the boundary around Hawkes Farm.

The south eastern parcel is the largest of the 3 at approximately 63.5 hectares. Its northern boundary is defined by Harbury Lane between the roundabout with Europa Way and the southernmost residential development area of Heathcote, Heathcote Park. To the east, the site abuts this residential area of Heathcote and then follows the line of the disused sewage works western boundary to the small stream that forms the southern boundary. The stream is a tributary of the River Avon and flows north west to meet Europa Way, the site boundary follows this course. Europa Way makes up the remainder of the western boundary.

The remaining parcel to the west of Europa Way is the most regular in shape. Its northern boundary follows the line of Gallows Hill to the roundabout with Europa Way, which makes up the eastern site boundary. This boundary takes in the main large field and one smaller field to the south. The southern boundary follows the vegetated line of the field boundary, tracing the edge of the woodland which forces the boundary north through the middle of the large field forming the western boundary.

The south eastern and western parcels of the site are currently in agricultural land use, predominantly arable, and so vegetation is generally limited to field boundaries, including hedgerow trees and small areas of woodland and understorey vegetation in places. The northern parcel is currently grassland with only boundary vegetation of hedgerow and hedgerow trees. Lower Heathcote Farm sits in the northern extent of the south eastern parcel, the farm is also a trout fishery and so there are a series of fishing lakes within the site.

Landscape Context

The site and its context have been the subject of detailed landscape and visual analysis and the overall setting of Warwick and Leamington Spa is topographically derived of shallow river valleys, encompassing the urban area which sits on a plateau of slightly elevated land.

The surrounding countryside to the south of the site comprises small to medium scale fields predominantly used for arable farming. There are a number of water courses that are connected to the River Avon in the west of the area.

3 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

National planning policy in respect of determining appropriate housing requirements is set out within the National Planning Policy Framework published in March 2012, which are summarised below.

National Planning Policy

On the 27 March 2012 the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published. It replaced Planning Policy Guidance and Statements currently in existence.

Through the NPPF, the Government has introduced a strong presumption in favour of sustainable development. Local Authorities are to plan positively for new development, deal promptly and favourably with applications that comply with up to date plans and national planning policies and wherever possible to approve applications where plans are absent, out of date silent or indeterminate.

In terms of determining an appropriate housing requirement, the NPPF at paragraph 159 requires local planning authorities to have a clear understanding of housing requirements in their area. It goes on to state that they should:

- prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment to assess their full housing requirements, working with neighbouring authorities where housing market areas cross administrative boundaries. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment should identify the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that the local population is likely to require over the plan period which:
- meets household and population projections, taking account of migration and demographic change;
- addresses the need for all types of housing, including affordable housing and the needs of different groups in the community (such as families with children, older people, disabled people, service families and people wishing to build their own homes); and
- caters for housing demand and the scale of housing supply necessary to meet this demand.
- prepare a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment to establish realistic assumptions about the availability, suitability and the likely economic viability of land to meet the identified requirement for housing over the plan period.



Paragraph 160 goes on to consider the needs of businesses within economic markets operating the area and that local planning authorities should recognise the changing needs of businesses and identify barriers to investment including a lack of housing.

As identified in the accompanied representations there is concern that the new Local Plan is inconsistent with the NPPF. It is considered that the identification of this wider site for development would assist to improve soundness in a number of respects.

Local Planning Policy

Warwick District Local Plan

The majority of the policies contained within the adopted Warwick District Local Plan (2007) have been saved by the Secretary of State, the Local Plan does not address housing supply issues beyond March 2011.

Warwick District Preferred Options Core Strategy

The Preferred Option Core Strategy was published in June 2008. This document set out the preferred options for growth in Warwick District. Following the direction of the Phase II Review RS, the Core Strategy directed the majority of development to within and adjoining the combined urban areas of Warwick, Leamington Spa and Whitnash. It further specified that within this broad area, development will generally be directed towards the south of the urban area in order to minimise journeys through the historic town centres and to avoid incursion into the West Midlands Green Belt to the north, east and west of the urban area to maintain separation between towns and villages.

The preferred dwelling requirement taken from the Phase II Review RS was 10,800 dwellings. In order to deliver this requirement, land at Lower Heathcote Farm, South of Harbury Lane was identified for future development accommodating 2,500 dwellings to be phased with 450 dwellings coming forward between 2011/16, 1,050 between 2016/21 and 1,000 between 2021/26.

Following the announcement of the Government of its intent to abolish regional spatial strategies and proposed changes to the planning system, the Council abandoned the preparation of the Core Strategy in 2010 and are now working on preparing a new Local Plan.

Warwick District New Local Plan Preferred Options

A New Local Plan is being prepared for the District to cover the period to 2028. A Preferred Options Document was published in May 2012. One of the key principles of the Local Plan is to meet the needs of the existing and future population of the District, including identifying land for around 550 new homes per annum on new allocated sites.

The preferred option for the level of growth between 2011 and 2029 is 10,800 dwellings, an average of 600 dwellings per annum.

The New Local Plan sets out a preference for the continued growth within, and in the edge of, the existing urban areas; avoid development in locations which could potentially lead to the coalescence of settlements; and distribute growth across the District, including within and/or on the edge of some villages.

The New Local Plan identifies a number of sites for allocation including 480 within urban areas, 6,250 on the edge of Warwick, Leamington Spa and Whitnash and 770 on the edge of Kennilworth. In addition, the Plan allocates land within the Green Belt (north of Leamington Spa) for around 2,000 dwellings – the green belt boundary would need to be amended in order to accommodate this development. The land at Gallows Hill and Gallagher Business Park sites are allocated as development sites on the edge of Warwick. The land at Gallows Hill is allocated for residential and employment (1,600 to come forward in Phase 2 and 3), this site forms part of a wider allocation which incorporates land to the south and west. Gallagher Business Park is allocated for residential development (200 to come forward in phase 1).

Planning Policy Context Summary

The above text explains that all three parts of the site have been allocated for development at one point or another in the emerging development plan. This demonstrates the suitability of the site for development and confirms that the principle of development on this site is acceptable.



Development Concept

4 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPT RATIONALE

Having considered and recognised that the location of the site to the south of Warwick is one of the most suitable locations to accommodate development in the context of the District, the site has been considered in more detail and is discussed throughout the remainder of the document.

Development Principles

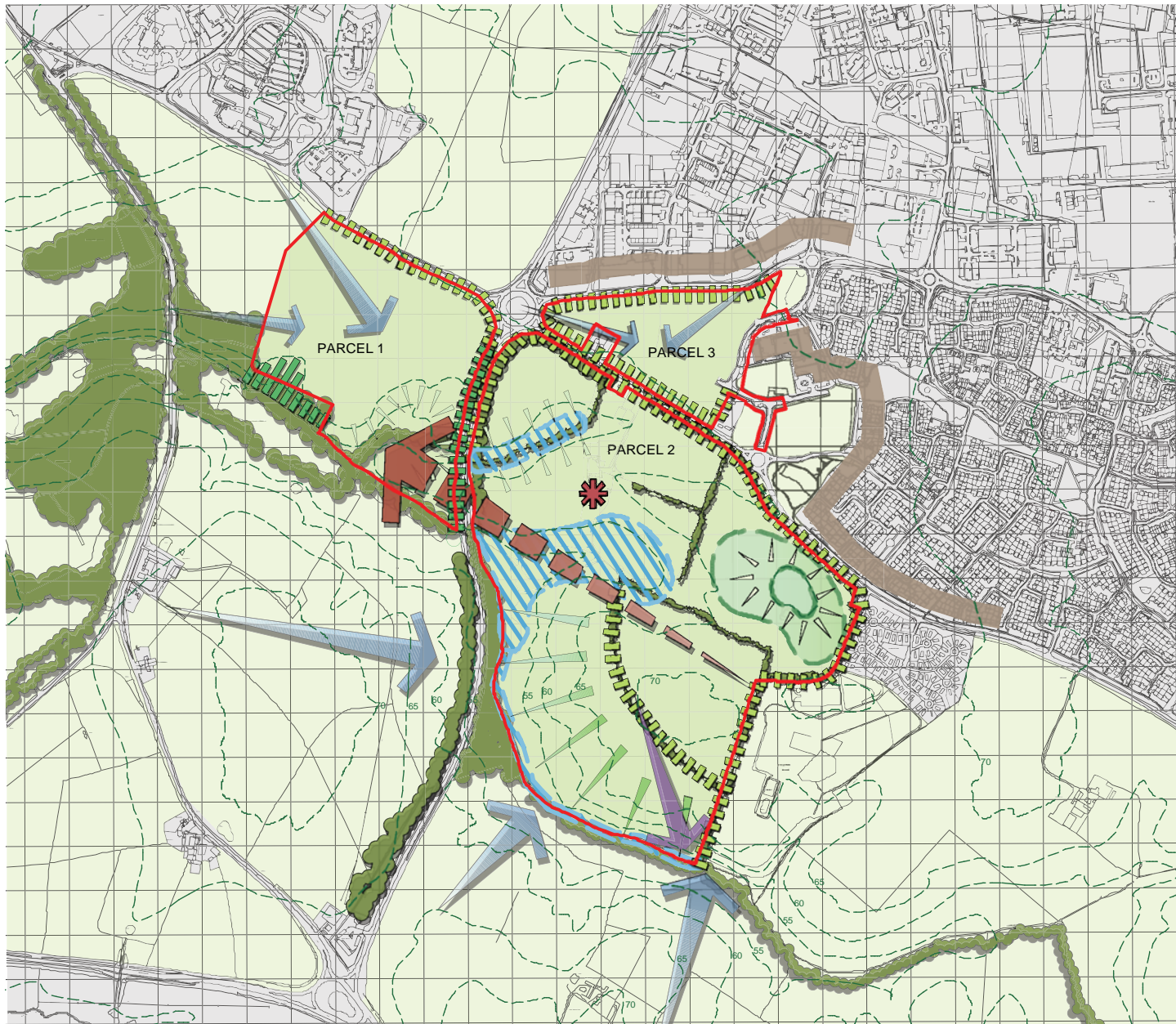
Being located to the south of Warwick, the proposed development site is well located to existing movement corridors and local facilities and will provide a clear southern extent of development to the town. To the north and east of the study area are existing commercial and residential developments and the study area split into three distinct parcels by Europa Way and Harbury Lane.

The first area of land included within the study area is located to the south and west of Gallows Hill and Europa Way respectively. This area provides an extension of the green corridor, along with two further parcels of residential development and a parcel of mixed use commercial development. It is anticipated that this commercial parcel will be predominately B1 and B2 uses and will complement existing employment at Warwick Technology Park.

The largest portion of the study area is located on undulating land which falls away from the built up edge of Warwick before rising again approximately half way through the site. In order to compensate for the varying topography and to mitigate any potential visual impacts from the south, development has been constrained to the northern half of this area thereby reducing the development envelope when compared to earlier proposals. Land to the south of this first area is proposed to form part of a green network which will connect all three sites to the wider landscape network and provide a defensible green edge to the urban extent. The large area of green space will provide opportunities for attenuation ponds, play areas and further areas of publically accessible open space. In addition to the large area of public open space, it is proposed that the majority of housing provision be provided within this area along with a mixed use local centre and space allocated for a local primary school which has the capacity to provide a two form entry facility which will assist with the existing educational infrastructure deficiencies to the south of Warwick.

The final area of land included within the study area is located to the north of Harbury Lane and is proposed to be entirely residential development. The three parcels of land meet at the existing Europa Way/Gallows Hill/Heathcote Lane/Harbury Lane roundabout and it is proposed that this roundabout is potentially reduced to a four arm roundabout in order to alleviate current traffic conditions. It is also intended to create a gateway feature through the proposed built form in order to signify the entrance to Leamington Spa and to frame the important Europa Way route.

In order to adopt the design principles contained within Warwick District Councils emerging prospectus, Garden Towns, Villages and Suburbs, the proposed disposition of land uses positions the local centre and Primary School to so as to benefit not only the new residential community, but also those adjacent to the proposed development. The location of these two community facilities also benefit from the existing movement links that will ensure their continued viability, in addition to the main route proposed through the main site that will connect all three parcels of development to each other and to the community facilities. Residential parcels are located towards the edges of the study areas with a green network providing the protection and transitional area between the built environment and open countryside to the south of the study area. A variety of character areas will be designed into the development concept during further detailed design stages in order to ensure that an appropriate range of design principles and densities are incorporated across the study area. It is anticipated that these will include a higher density, formal character area to frame the main routes through the study area and in the vicinity of the local centre; a medium-low density neighbourhood to the core of the study area and a low-density neighbourhood edge to the extremities of the development parcels.



-  Site boundary
-  Visible urban edge
-  Existing vegetation
-  Views across site
-  View corridor towards Warwick City centre
-  Strong landscape features
-  Strong built form
-  Steep, exposed slope
-  Localised slopes
-  Weak landscape edge
-  Stronger landscape edge
-  Views south to countryside/ Bishops Tachbrook
-  Contours

Landscape Analysis Plan

5 LANDSCAPE

Policy Context

As illustrated on the Landscape Designations Plan on page 12 the two larger parcels (1 and 2, either side Europa Way), lie within an area where Rural Area Policies Apply (Policy RAP 1 – RAP16 of the Adopted Local Plan). These policies consider that it is important that a vibrant countryside is maintained for the benefit of those living, working and visiting there, but also equally that the countryside is protected from inappropriate development that would destroy its character, and which is not essential to meet local needs. The new Local Plan seeks to direct most new development into the major towns of the District.

Land directly to the west of the overall site is an area designated Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest (DAP 11). This includes Warwick Castle and Castle Park. Whilst the site does not extend into this area, this policy is relevant insofar as concerns matters of the historic structure, character, principal components and setting of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest and any development that would harm such assets will be strongly resisted.

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

The overall site and its context have been the subject of a detailed landscape and visual analysis, taking into account matters of landscape resources (features); character; and visual amenity.

Physical disposition

The vast majority of the site lies directly on, and has a strong relationship with, the existing urban edge, which is both residential and commercial in character, in particular, parcels 2 and 3. Whilst parcel 1 has more limited connectivity with the existing urban edge, it does lie in very close proximity to the technology park directly to its north-west. Consequently, the overall site lies directly adjacent to the existing urban area, in an area where urban and urban fringe characteristics are present, including built form, lighting and signage as well as major highway infrastructure.

Existing Urban Interface and Site Boundaries

The existing urban edge along this part of Leamington Spa is fragmented, defined by roads and by residential areas of varying ages and Styles, as well as visually prominent commercial development. These two distinct land uses combine to form different characters along the existing urban edge, with limited coherent

landscape infrastructure. The interface between the existing urban edges adjacent to the overall site varies, including a number of rear gardens, open spaces, native hedgerows of varying quality.

The industrial and commercial units to the north of the overall site on Hawkes Drive are located within a much larger industrial and trading estate to the south west of Leamington Spa. This area in particular creates a hard and prominent edge to the south west of the town, and effectively acts as the current gateway into the built form of Leamington Spa.

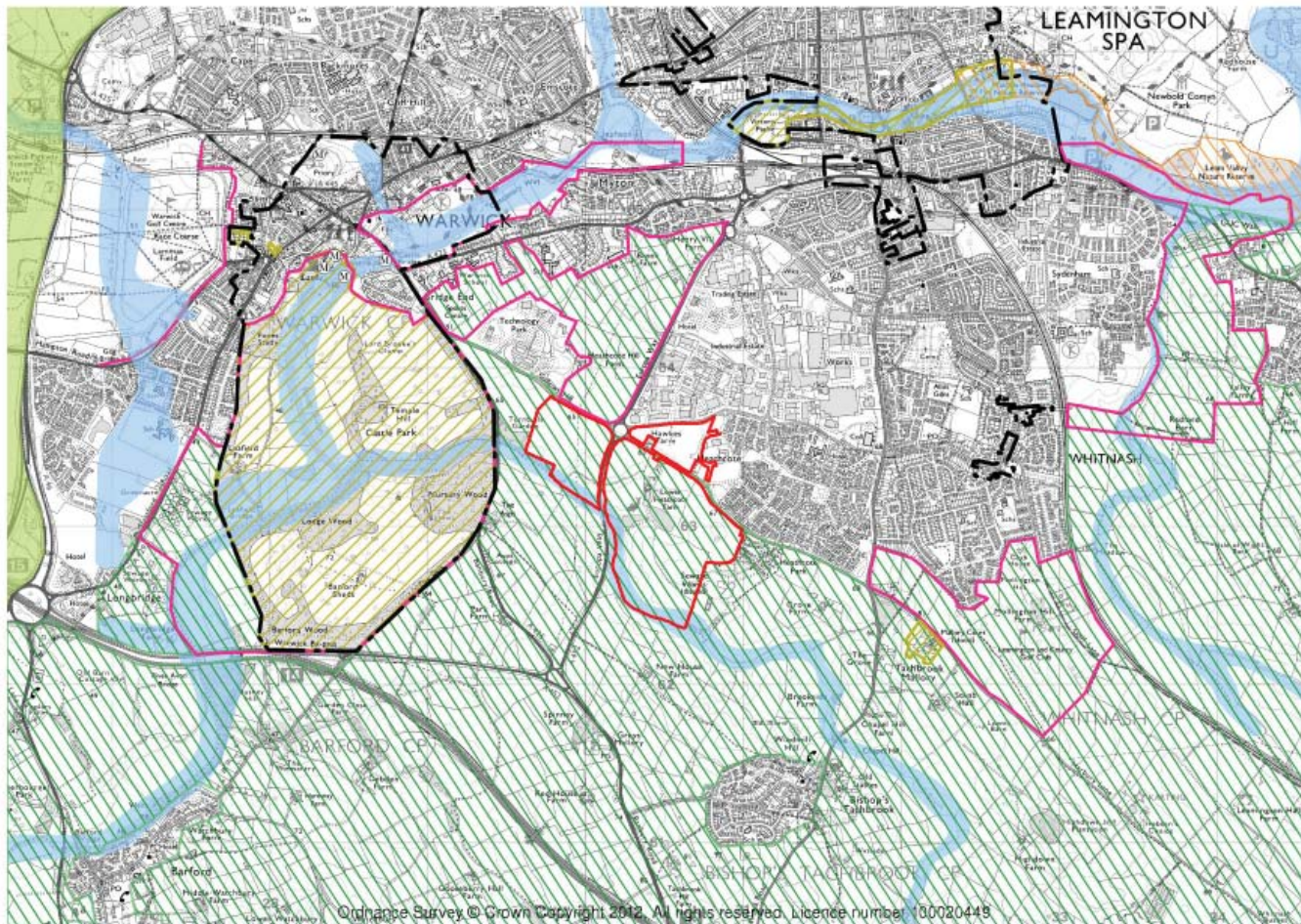
Landscape Resources

The overall site currently comprises a number of agricultural fields which are predominantly arable, with some rough grassland. Built form is limited to a mixed group of farm buildings (Lower Heathcote Farm) in the central part of parcel 2. The overall site is relatively open. Landscape resources include: the network of hedgerows, which vary in terms of quality and quantity, with a number of hedgerow trees; the two fishing ponds which have particularly open an un-vegetated banks; small areas of riparian and other mixed woodland at the western site boundaries, including under-storey vegetation; and the stream that follows the southern boundary of the site.

Landscape Character

The Warwickshire Landscape guidelines locate the overall site within the Avon area; and more specifically within the Feldon area, which itself is sub-divided into a number of different character areas. The site and its immediate context lie within the Feldon Parklands. This is described as a well wooded estate landscape with many large country houses. Characteristic features include:

- A large scale rolling topography with occasional slopes;
- Large woodlands often associated with rising grounds;
- Many small coverts and belts of trees;
- Mature hedgerow and roadside oaks;
- Large country houses set in mature parkland;
- A nucleated settlement pattern of small estate villages; and
- Large isolated brick farmhouses.



- Site boundary
- Warwick District Local Plan September 2007
- Area of Restraint (DAP2)
- Conservation Areas (DAP 6, 8-10)
- Flood Plain
- Parks & Gardens of Special Historic Interest (DAP 11)
- Rural Area Policies apply (RAP1 - RAP16)
- Green Belt RAP1 - RAP 6
- Site of Special Scientific Interest & Local Nature Reserve (RAP3)

Visual Amenity

The site is generally well visually contained from areas to the north, by virtue of the density and form of the existing urban area, and its associated vegetation. Built form on the urban edge itself retain views across the overall site. From the south, the site is visible from the opposite side of the valley from a number of areas, in particular from a long the public right of way network which extends north-west from the Village of Bishops Tachbrook. There are limited, distant views from Bishops Tachbrook. Typically these are views of the site with the existing urban edge prominent in the background. From the east, views are limited by the combination of rolling topography and intervening vegetation, and from the west there are some views from the adjacent highways network. There might also be some views from locally elevated areas in the parkland further to the west.

Landscape Planning Designations

A number of these characteristics prevail, particularly the large scale rolling topography with occasional slopes; woodland areas; and mature parkland. Across the different parcels of the overall site, parcels 1 and 2 retain characteristics of the wider character of the open countryside to the south, but contrast to the character of the parkland to the west. Parcel 3, being more enclosed by the existing urban edges that surround it, retains more of an enclosed, urban character. What prevails across the overall site is the urban fringe characteristics associated with the existing urban edge.

In the immediate vicinity of the site, views towards the site vary dependant on location. There are some open views across the northern parcel of the site from Heathcote Lane. Views on Gallows Hill and Harbury Lane are limited to glimpsed views through hedgerow gaps, and there are limited views of parts of the site from locally elevated areas within the southern part of the town.

From the footpath that runs north-west from Bishops Tachbrook, there are some areas from where the Village and the site can be seen, however the combination of distance, rolling topography and vegetation serve to emphasise the distance between the two.

From within the site there are views out towards Bishops Tachbrook from an elevated area within the south eastern parcel of the site. There is also a filtered view corridor from the east of the site across to Warwick Castle to the north west of the site.

The landscape and visual analysis is illustrated on page 4.

Evaluation

Opportunities

Landscape and visual opportunities are considered to include the following:

- Strong visual and physical links between the overall site and the existing urban edge of Warwick and Leamington Spa;
- The combination of undulating contextual landform with vegetation across it which serves to provide visual containment from a number of areas to the south, east and west;
- Existing built form which serves to provide visual containment from a number of areas to the north;
- The 'urban fringe' character of the immediate overall site area;
- The potential to provide a softer appearance to the overall urban edge when viewed from areas to the south;
- The potential to create a high quality mixed use development that serves tie together the existing fragmented elements of the urban edge, and create a more attractive 'gateway' into this part of Warwick;
- Improvements in the local Green Infrastructure connecting the site with areas off-site;
- Improvements in the Green Infrastructure on the site to include access, open spaces, visual connectivity, and the existing landscape resources including water features and woodland vegetation
- Provide a platform for development;
- Integration of the ponds on site into a Sustainable Urban Drainage Structure; and
- Use of the extensive flatter parts of the site as a practical platform for development.

Constraints

Landscape and visual constraints are considered to be the following:

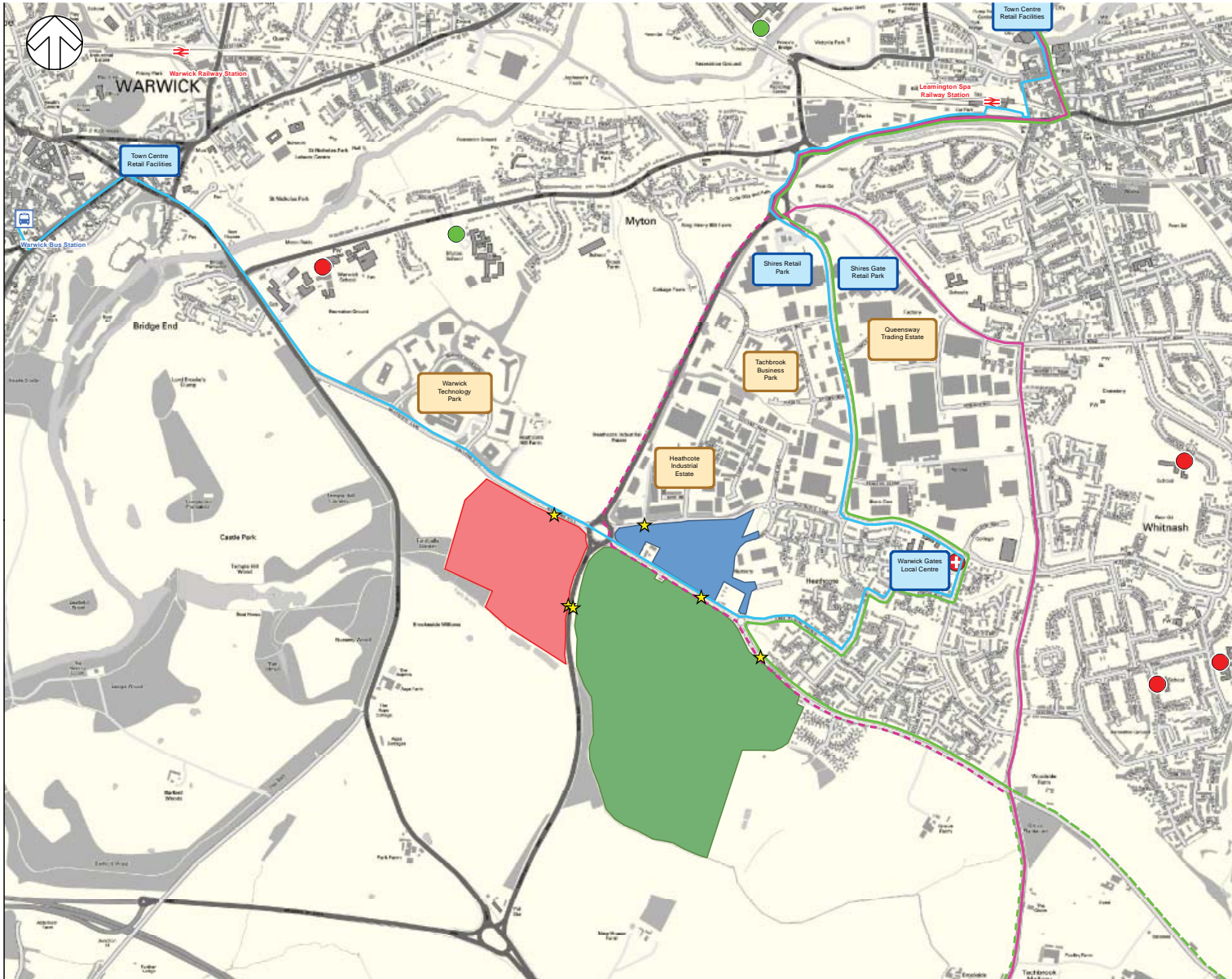
- Visual exposure of the sloping parts of parcel 2 from popular local footpaths to the south;
- The perception of encroachment of development across open countryside towards the Village of Bishops Tachbrook to the south;
- Steeply sloping landform on the southern parts of parcel 2 precluding practical development;

- The visual connectivity across the site towards Warwick Town Centre, in particular Warwick Castle and St. Mary's Church Tower, and the parkland in front of it; and
- A generally weak landscape infrastructure around various parts of the site boundaries;

Outline Proposals

The landscape and Green Infrastructure (GI) strategy based on the following principles:

- Maximising development on land to the north of Harbury lane (parcel 3) where both visual enclosure and urban/urban fringe context offer an excellent opportunity with limited landscape and visual constraints;
- Limiting the development envelope on parcel 2 to the northern section of this part of the site, where the land is flatter, avoiding the visually exposed south/south-west facing slope;
- Aligning the southern edge of the development envelope on parcel 1 in a similar manner to avoid the steeper sloping topography towards the southern boundary of this parcel;
- Consideration of the south-western part of the development envelope in parcel 1 in respect of its proximity to the adjacent parkland;
- Creation of a structured and considered GI strategy to include the following key elements:
 - A strong infrastructure planting belt along the southern edge of the development envelope within parcel 2, to visually contain the proposed development and provide a softer presentation of the overall urban edge when viewed from the south;
 - A strong infrastructure belt along the southern and western edges of the development envelope within parcel 1, in respect of the adjacent parkland;
 - Retention and enhancement of the existing hedgerow network where present across the overall site, and combining these corridors with pedestrian green links where possible;
 - Integration of the existing water features on site into a SUDS;
 - Creation of a hierarchy of attractive green open spaces to include a gateway landscape feature; a central open space (parcel 2) located to maximise views towards Warwick Castle and the Town centre; smaller play hubs; and informal accessible linear open spaces associated with the stream corridor along the overall southern/south-western site boundary;
 - Provision of much increased public access
 - Consideration of biodiversity opportunities associated with the water features and the potential of the south facing retained open meadows.



- Key**
- West of Europa Way
 - South of Harbury Lane
 - North of Harbury Lane
 - ★ Potential Site Access Point
 - No. 68 Bus Service
 - No. 67a Bus Service
 - No. 67b Bus Service
 - No. 67a&b Bus Services
 - No. 77 Bus Service
 - No. 77 Occasional Service
 - Primary School
 - Secondary School
 - H Hospital
 - + Healthcare
 - ≡ Rail
 - B Bus
 - Employment Areas
 - Retail Areas

Public Transport

6 TRANSPORTATION, LOCATION & ACCESSIBILITY

The development proposals are situated to the south of Warwick and are subdivided into three land parcels as illustrated on The Development Concept Plan on page 8. The first land parcel is situated to the south of Gallows Hill, to the West of Europa Way and is bordered to the south and west by open space. It is intended to derive access to this land parcel via Gallows Hill and Europa Way.

The largest of the three land parcels is bordered to the north by Harbury Lane, to the east by Heathcote Park, to the south by open space and to the west by Europa Way. It is intended to derive access to this land parcel via Harbury Lane and Europa Way.

The third land parcel is bordered to the north by Heathcote Lane, to the east by Macbeth Approach and to the south/west by Earl Rivers Avenue and Harbury Lane. It is intended to derive access to this land parcel via Heathcote Lane, Harbury Lane and Gallagher Way.

The site is linked to the strategic highway network via Europa Way linking with the A452 Warwick Bypass and the M40 at junctions 13 and 14.

As previously stated the site is situated immediately to the south of the existing urban area of Warwick and as such benefits from the close proximity of existing sustainable transport infrastructure and local amenities. The following paragraphs provide a summary of existing provision.

The number 67A, 67B, 68 and 77 bus services operate within the area immediately surrounding the development proposals.

The number 68 bus service is the most frequent of these services and runs along Earl Rivers Avenue, Harbury Lane and Gallows Hill adjacent to the site frontage. This service routes between Hatton Park and Cubbington serving the centres of Warwick and Leamington Spa en-route. This route operates Monday to Saturday at up to a 30 minute frequency. The number 68 service stops at Leamington Spa and Warwick Parkway railway stations as well as Warwick bus station allowing connections to other public transport services to be made.

The number 67A and 67B bus services operate on Sundays only and run along Earl Rivers Avenue and Harbury Lane. The 77 bus service operates at more infrequent intervals throughout the day and routes along Harbury Lane and Europa Way. This service provides connection to Leamington Spa town centre.

The nearest railway stations to the development site are Leamington Spa (approximately 2.3km to the north of the site) and Warwick (approximately 2.7km to the north-west of the site). It is possible to travel directly from Leamington Spa to destinations such as Birmingham New Street, Birmingham Snow Hill, Coventry, London Marylebone, Manchester and Bournemouth as well as other stations en route. It is possible to travel directly from Warwick to Birmingham Snow Hill, London Marylebone and Stratford-upon-Avon as well as other stations en-route.

The area immediately to the north of the development benefits from an existing network of off-road shared use foot/cycleway facilities, in particular in and round the Warwick Gates development. These facilities are present on Gallows Hill (throughout), Heathcote Lane (part of), Macbeth Approach (part of) and Earl Rivers Avenue (throughout) providing much scope for providing linkages from the development. There is also a toucan crossing on Europa Way linking the shared use facilities on Heathcote Lane and Gallows Hill.

In particular there are cycle linkages to Warwick Technology Park, Heathcote Industrial Estate, Tachbrook Business Park, Leamington Spa Railway Station and Leamington Spa town centre.

A network of footways and cycleways will be provided within the site to provide safe walking and cycling routes between land uses and land parcels and also connecting with existing facilities in the surrounding area. The intention is to provide pedestrians and cyclists with safe and pleasant facilities to encourage uptake of these modes of transport.

The site is considered to be situated in a location which benefits from reasonable accessibility to a range of existing amenities.

Employment opportunities are available in the area surrounding the development and are predominantly situated to the north of the development and include Warwick Technology Park, Heathcote Industrial Estate, Tachbrook Business Park, Shires Gate Retail Park and Queensway Trading Estate. As well as within the centre of Warwick and Lemington Spa

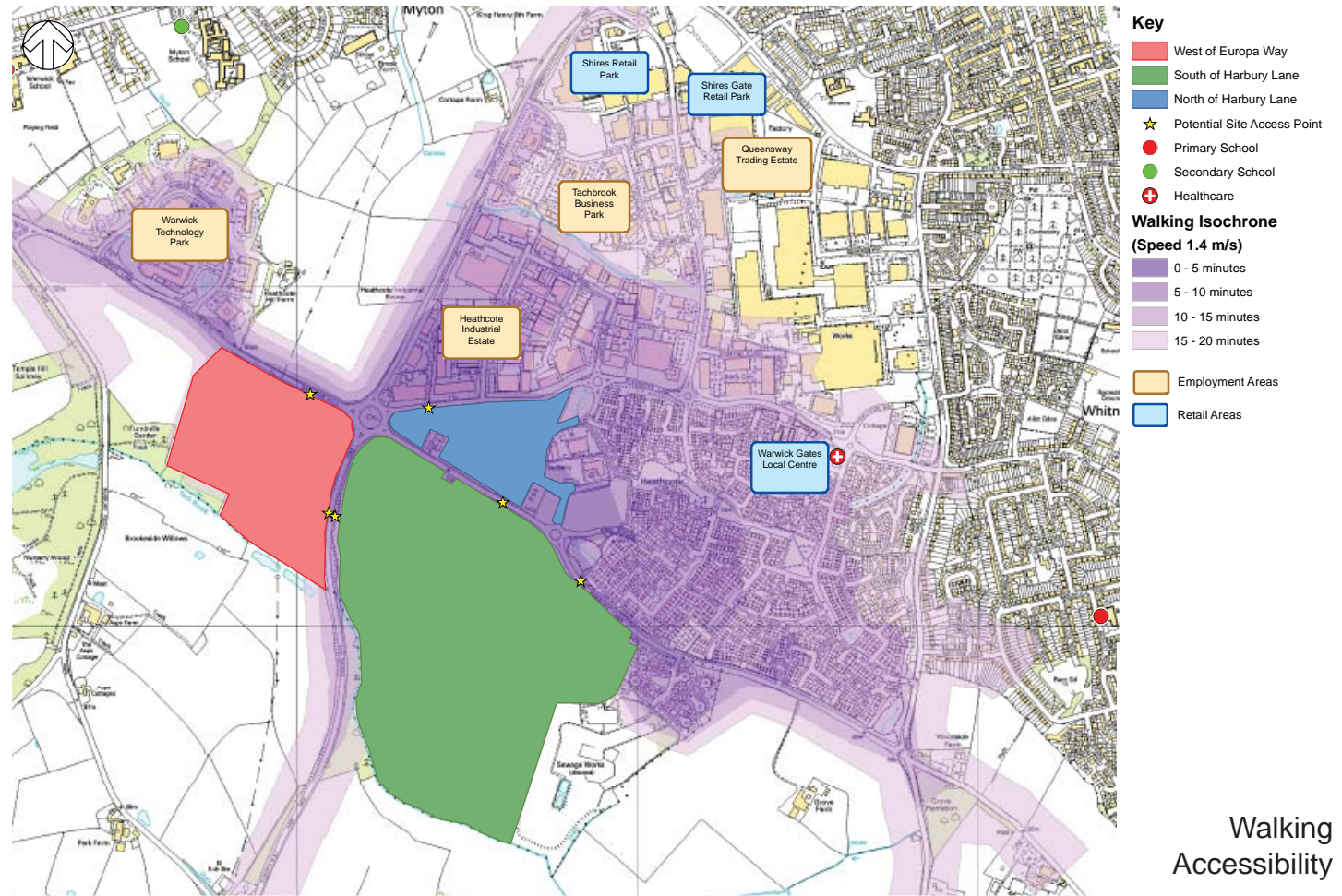
The nearest healthcare facilities to the site are situated to the north of the site at the Warwick Gates Family Health Centre. Warwick Hospital is situated north of Warwick town centre, to the north west of the development.

Retail facilities are provided in the Warwick Gates local centre, the Shires Retail Park and in Leamington Spa and Warwick town centres.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, St Margaret's C of E Primary School, Whitnash Primary School and Briar Hill Infant School are situated to the east of the development in the Whitnash estate. The nearest secondary schools are Myton School, situated to the north west of the site and Champion School situated to the north east of the site. Warwickshire College (Leamington Campus) is situated to the north of the site.

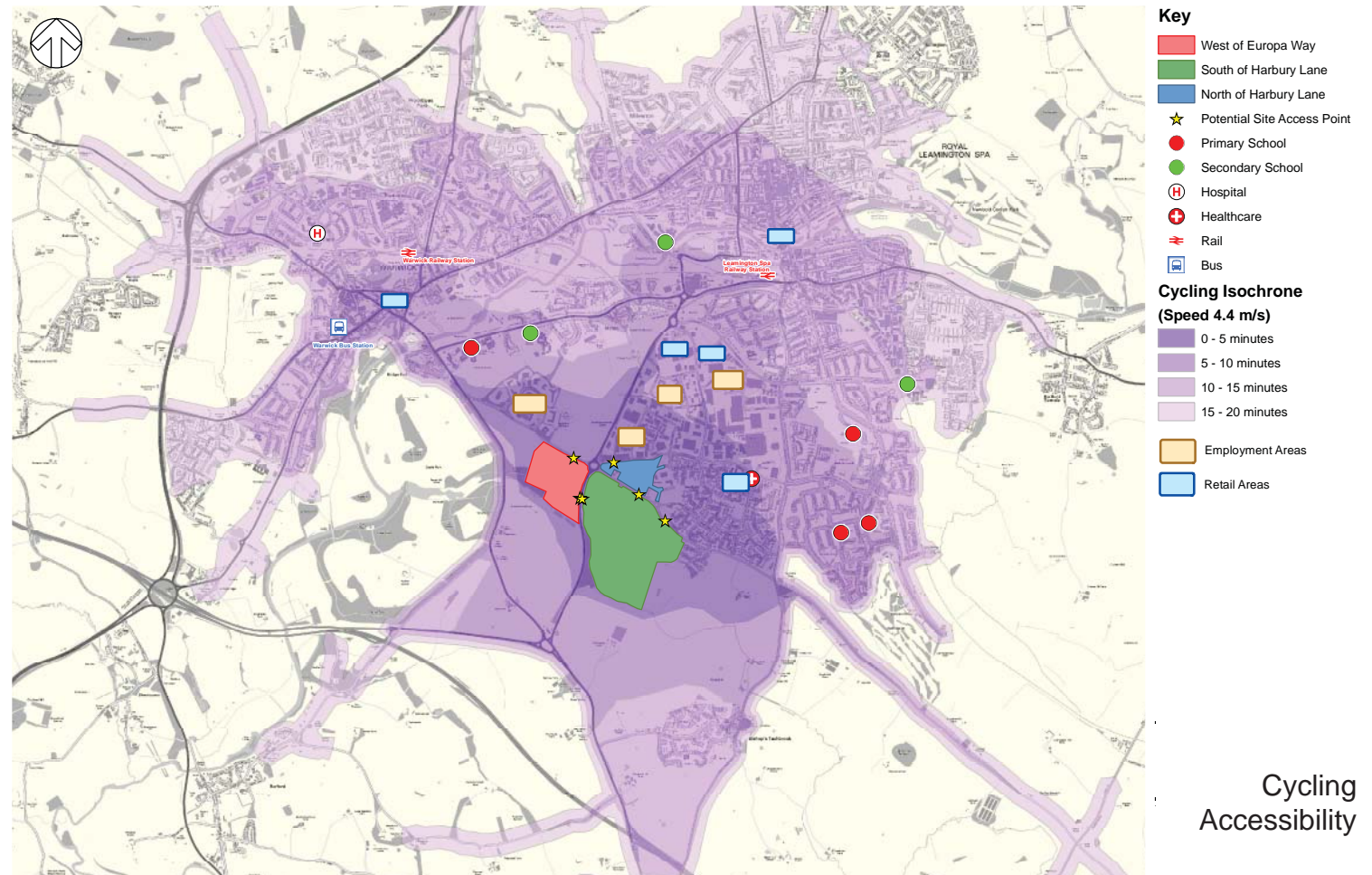
The site is a mixed use scheme comprising residential, employment, education and community land uses. The provision of multiple types of land use reduces the need to travel long distances for many journey purposes and in some cases trips can be undertaken without leaving the site.

Europa Way provides a linkage from the development site to Leamington Spa to the north and to the strategic highway network to the south. We are aware of pre-existing congestion which occurs on this highway corridor, particularly during peak hour periods. This will be considered in relation to the development proposals and any infrastructure benefits will be explored where applicable and relevant. These benefits could include a rationalisation of the existing Europa Way/Harbury Lane five arm roundabout, linkages into the proposed Lower Heathcote development parcels, which could potentially provide alternative links to existing roads such as Gallows Hill. These links could also provide added benefit for pedestrians and cyclists by providing more user friendly routes through residential areas.



Transport Assessment Overview Report March 2012

The Warwickshire County Council (WCC) and Highways Agency (HA) document Strategic Transport Assessment Overview Report March 2012, forms the County Councils response on transport matters to Warwick District Councils (WDC) most recent proposals for potential housing and employment growth sites for the Local Development Framework up to 2028. A set of four possible options, requested by WDC, each containing a mix of LDF sites, has been tested on the highway network utilising the WCC2028 S-PARAMICS microsimulation model. Each option contains total development of approximately 8,500 dwellings and 26 hectares of employment land. The test year for all assessments was 2028, and the model tests run in the AM and PM peak periods, as they represent the worst case for traffic congestion issues on the road network in Warwick District. Identification of key transport interventions was based on expert analysis of the modelling outputs and officer local knowledge of existing network conditions, with schemes identified through a project board including senior officers at WCC and the HA.



Cycling Accessibility

From the modelling results, Option 4 which includes the site(s) discussed in this document, was shown to have least impact prior to mitigation and demonstrated the greatest improvements when mitigation was applied. Mitigation schemes include both site(s) specific and area wide interventions. This could therefore also assist with derived benefits for public transport through the delivery of network interventions that aid the free flow of traffic on a network. Option 4 was then chosen to test further mitigation packages due to the high concentration of development north of Leamington.

To fully understand the impacts of developments and the mitigation requirements, a more in depth microsimulation modelling study would be required, which would include an iterative assessment of mitigation options, would optimise network performance and would take account of time period choice and modal shift. However from these results it is clear that WCC believe that the impact of all options can be mitigated and that there are no fundamental barriers to delivering schemes that achieve mitigation, however option 4 in particular was shown to have least impact prior to mitigation and demonstrated greatest improvement when mitigation applied.

7 OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Our clients are in the process of undertaking full environmental assessments of the site over a wide range of disciplines, including, but not limited to, ecology and nature conservation, landscape and visual issues, transportation and accessibility, cultural heritage, land use and soils, noise environment, air quality and infrastructure services. These ongoing assessments have helped formulate the development proposals to date, and will continue to influence the proposed development and emerging masterplan.

The work undertaken to date has demonstrated there are no overriding constraints to development, confirming the site is an appropriate location for future development. Our clients are happy and intend to liaise with the District Council and other relevant consultees to progress the proposals further and to ensure all relevant environmental issues are adequately addressed.

Ecology

- There are no statutory or non statutory ecological designations within or in the vicinity of the site. The nearest designations, the Nature Reserves running along the River Leam, linking with Watch Meadow Nature Reserve, are situated approximately 2.6km and 3km to the north of the site at their closest points respectively. Ufton Fields Local Nature Reserve and Site of Scientific Interest also lies approximately 7km to the east of the site, around Bascote Heath, with Ufton Wood/Long Itchington Wood SSSI also located approximately 7km to the site's east. A further SSSI is located near Station Road, Harbury, approximately 6km south east of the site. These designations are at some distance from the site and are separated by other built form and infrastructure. However, the careful layout and design of the proposed development, in addition to the enhancement measures integral to the proposals, will ensure that there are no unacceptable significant impacts on these designations.
- Furthermore, the development will take into account all the ecological findings and will thoroughly consider the impacts on flora, fauna and habitats. Mitigation measures will, where necessary, be integral to the design of the development; the initial proposals have already identified numerous opportunities which could provide a range of enhancements and associated benefits for wildlife. It is considered that the careful masterplanning of the site is capable of delivering these benefits to wildlife whilst still maximising the developable potential of the land, in accordance with best practice.

Cultural Heritage

- There are no international World Heritage Sites present within, or in the vicinity of, the site. There are also no national Grade I or Grade II* Listed buildings, Grade I or II* Registered Parks or Gardens, Registered Battlefields or Conservation Areas which lie within or adjacent to the site.
- Detailed surveys are to be undertaken with regard to potential archaeological interest and our clients will continue to liaise with statutory stakeholders, including the Council's Archaeology Service, to agree these investigations where deemed necessary. This will help inform and progress the design of any proposals, in addition to allowing any necessary mitigation measures to be devised in line with relevant guidance so to ensure there are no unacceptable adverse effects to cultural heritage as a result of the proposed development.

Infrastructure and Physical Constraints

- We are not aware of any known constraints in respect of public drainage, electricity, gas, water supplies and other public utilities and consider that development at the site could be successfully accommodated.
- Suitable vehicular access can be achieved to and within the various parcels of the site and on site physical constraints do not exist that would render the site unsuitable for development.

8 CONCLUSIONS

This document and the work undertaken to date in compiling evidence to support Warwick's emerging New Local Plan, including the consideration of landscape and visual, sustainability, accessibility and other environmental issues, has demonstrated the development potential that the land at Lower Heathcote Farm possesses in the context of the district.

From the more site specific environmental and design work undertaken, as summarised in this document, it is considered the land at Lower Heathcote Farm can successfully accommodate development in a sustainable manner and assist Warwick in meeting its development requirements. This document has served to reinforce this suitability and demonstrates the sites potential to meet key objectives for Warwick District. We are aware the development of proposals is an iterative process and we welcome further discussions with Warwick District Council and other relevant stakeholders in taking these ideas forward.

Further work will be prepared to demonstrate the suitability, achievability and deliverability of the site over coming months and submitted to the Council to support development in this location.

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