

Vision Document

Land at Lane Green Road

Bilbrook

June 2015



BARRATT
HOMES

Turley
Design

CONTENTS

1 Introduction	05
2 Policy context	09
3 Townscape and services	13
4 The site	19
5 Towards a framework	27
6 Summary and conclusions	33

“Barratt Homes has a vision to provide new high quality homes through carefully considered and locally responsive development.”



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Date of issue:

June 2015

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“The Lane Green Road site is an opportunity to deliver new high quality family homes which help meet the future housing needs of Bilbrook”

Introduction

1.1 This Vision Document has been prepared by Turley Design on behalf of our client Barratt Homes. It supports and promotes the principle of residential development on land off Lane Green Road in response to the South Staffordshire Core Strategy.

1.2 It supports the role of Bilbrook as a sustainable area to accommodate future residential development to help meet the identified need for housing within the South Staffordshire District. It demonstrates that land off Lane Green Road is suitable, sustainable and deliverable for future housing and is to be considered the primary location for new residential development in the Bilbrook area.

Barratt Homes

1.3 Barratt Homes is the largest housebuilder in the UK. Composed of 27 divisions spanning the country, Barratt Homes delivered over 14,500 new homes in 2014 to help meet the needs of first-time buyers, new families and growing families alike. Barratt Homes is the only housebuilder in the country to be awarded 5* housebuilder status by the Homebuilders Federation six years in a row, achieving over 90% customer satisfaction year on year.

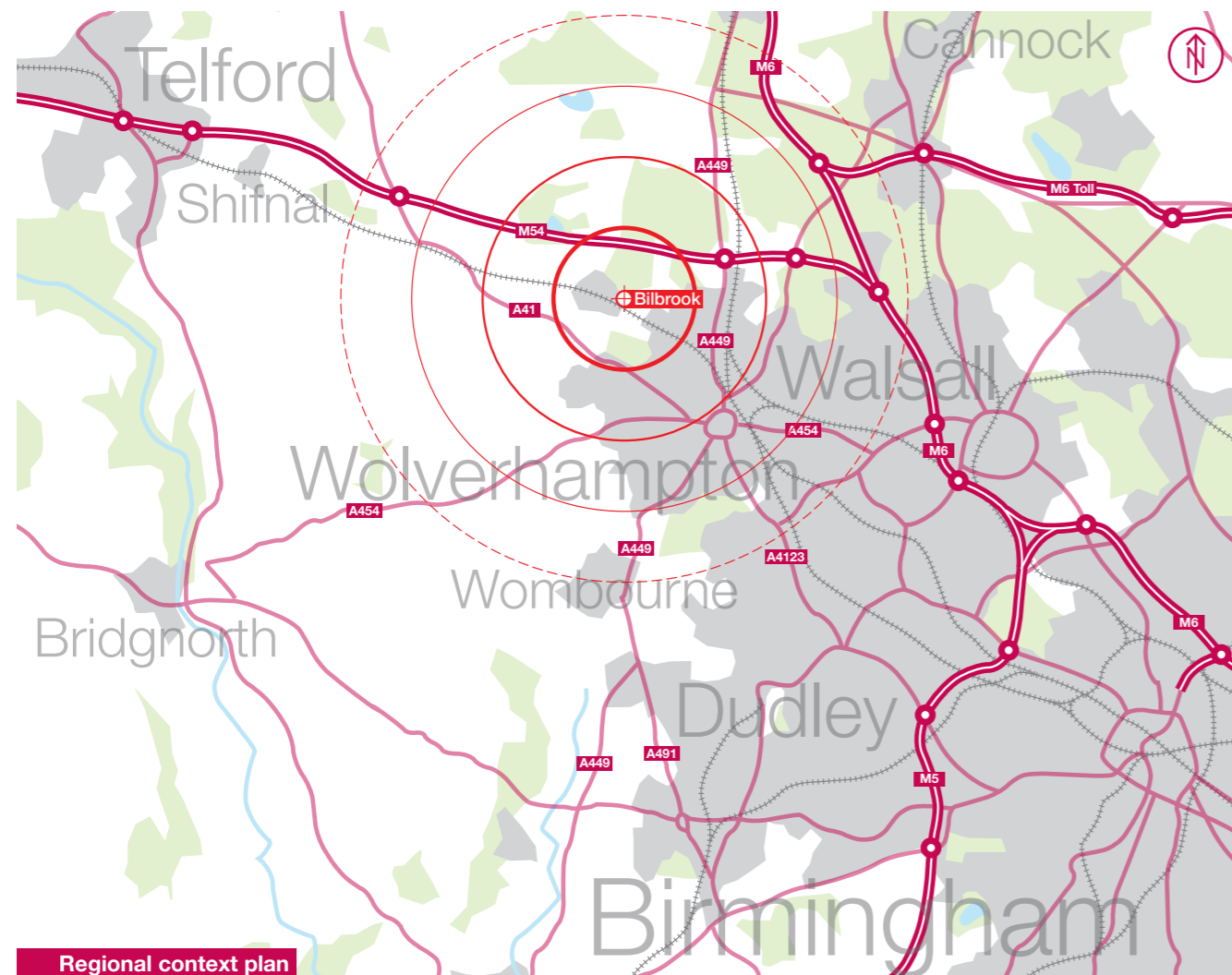
1.4 As well as building new homes for local communities, Barratt Homes also ensures their social and ethical responsibilities lie at the heart of their new developments. In 2014, Barratt Homes were responsible for the delivery 2,255 affordable homes, the creation of over 600 ha of open space and the planting of over 867,000 trees and shrubs. Barratt Homes also commit to meeting Building for Life 12 Standards in all new development as well as having a partnership with the RSPB to enhance the biodiversity value of their schemes.



Scope and structure

1.5 This statement comprises the following sections:

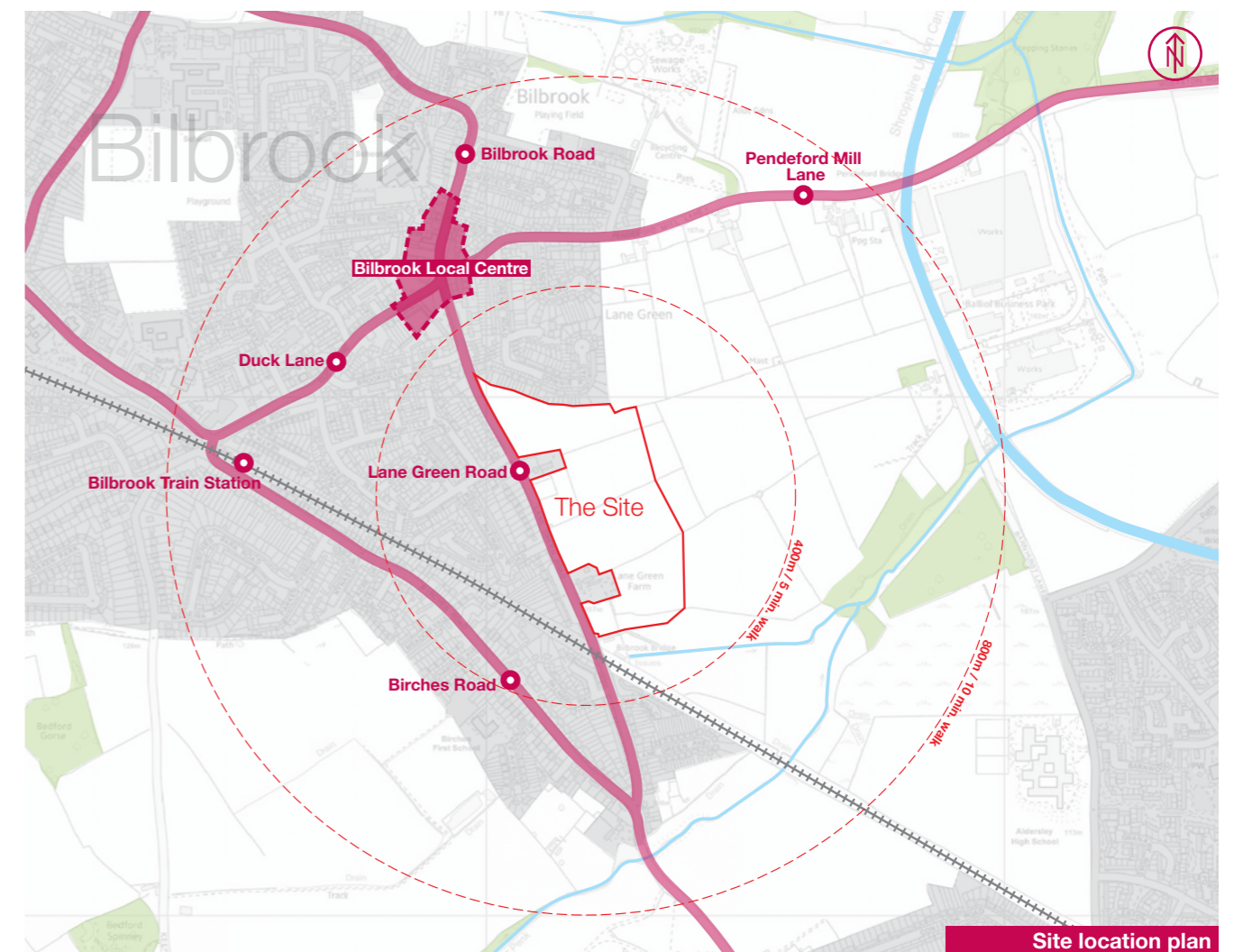
- Chapter 2 - Planning context: This section identifies the pertinent issues within the context of local planning policy
- Chapter 3 - Townscape and services: Comprises a detailed analysis of the area's historic growth and how this influences the future growth pattern of the settlement
- Chapter 4 – The site: This section focuses on the immediate site context, documenting how natural constraints will shape the development of the site
- Chapter 5 – Towards a spatial framework: This section brings forward the conclusions from the analysis and demonstrates how they have influenced the spatial development framework for the site
- Chapter 6 – Summary and conclusions.



The Lane Green Road site

1.6 The site extends to an approximate area of 9.8 hectares, occupying an area currently used as private farmland. The site is situated on land to the east of Lane Green Road within Bilbrook, South Staffordshire. It is located to the north west of the city of Wolverhampton, just 5.5km away from the City Centre. Other large settlements of note and their associated distances are Dudley (14km), Telford (18km), Stafford (21km) and Birmingham (25km). The site benefits from good road, rail and bus connections to all of the above and the wider locations in the area.

1.7 The site is defined by Lane Green Road to the west, the rear boundaries of properties bounding Downie Road to the north; and field boundaries and open countryside to the east and south. Beyond these boundaries, the area has a largely semi-rural character with the villages of Bilbrook and Codsall extending to the west with open farmland extending to the east, with the city of Wolverhampton beyond. This sits in contrast with areas of open farm land extending outward to the north and south. A red line plan showing the extent and location of the site within its immediate and regional context can be seen below and on the adjacent page.





“Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.”

2.1 Good design is indivisible from good planning. Barratt Homes is committed to providing high quality developments and is the only national housebuilder committed to achieving Building for Life 12 standards on all new sites.

2.2 The South Staffordshire Core Strategy sets out the spatial planning strategy for the District to 2028. It establishes a long term vision, objectives and planning policies to steer and shape development as well as defining where development should be located.

2.3 Bilbrook is located in Locality Area 4 (Central Area) and is identified as a Main Service Village. The vision for the area as set out in the Core Strategy is:

“Within the central area of the District, planned and carefully managed housing growth, which will have contributed to meeting its local needs, will have taken place and key services and facilities delivered and maintained at local community level. Affordable housing to meet local needs will have been delivered on suitable sites.

The villages of Codsall, Bilbrook and Perton will have developed their key roles as the main service villages and improvements to community infrastructure, facilities and services including social care and health facilities and the provision of extra care housing will have been delivered with partners.

Within the locality area, development in the Green Belt will have been managed in order to maintain the separation and distinctiveness of villages, with protection for the environment and appropriate countryside uses, including support for farm diversification schemes.”

2.4 The adopted Core Strategy (Policy CP6) requires a minimum of 105 dwellings to be delivered in Bilbrook before 2028. Taking into account recent completions, this has reduced to 102 dwellings. The Site Allocations Document (Issues and Options) requires a further 4.1 hectares (ha) of land to be identified to contribute towards a 10 year supply of safeguarded land for future housing needs after 2028.

2.5 The Council recognise that Green Belt release will be necessary to meet the housing requirements and they have undertaken a partial Green Belt review. This review concludes that the site makes a considerable contribution to the five purposes of the Green Belt; although of the three Green Belt sites in Bilbrook, this site is ranked ‘B’ (‘A’ having the least contribution to Green Belt purposes, with the remaining parcels ranked in descending order). The review comments that the site is “less than 500m from the Wolverhampton boundary at its southern edge, thereby providing an important separating function. However, the presence of a waterway and some significant pockets of woodland between the settlements inhibit the encroachment of much of the countryside between the two settlements.”

2.6 Turley, on behalf of Barratt Homes, has previously submitted representations to the Site Allocations Document (Issues and Options) consultation to highlight the site’s suitability for removal from the Green Belt for residential development. This Vision Document is submitted to respond to South Staffordshire Council’s request for further information.

2.7 A number of public consultation responses to the Site Allocations Document (Issues and Options) expressed support for development on this site, citing reasons such as ease of access to Wolverhampton and the surrounding area, less impact on existing built development, and the site’s ability to accommodate all of Bilbrook’s housing requirement.





“Bilbrook benefits from a host of local amenities and good quality transport links making the village a great location for accommodating future sustainable housing growth in the area.”

3.1 The village of Bilbrook has evolved throughout its history to become an established commuter settlement on the urban fringe of the West Midlands conurbation. The townscape the village exhibits and the services it hosts demonstrate such growth and show the village to be a suitable and sustainable location for future housing growth.

3.2 In order to demonstrate that development is sustainable and locally responsive to its surrounding context of the site, a study of the historic and current context is therefore required to show the following:

- Historic context: How has the village grown over its history and can any patterns of growth be identified? If so, future growth within the village should be located in areas which are sensitive to historic growth patterns and not detract from the settlement's character, urban form and appearance.
- Current context: What services and amenities are currently available within the settlement and is there enough to sustain future urban growth? Sustainable development should promote sustainable movement patterns. As such, future growth should be located in close proximity to services and amenities in order to encourage a modal shift towards more sustainable forms of public transport including walking, cycling, buses and trains.

3.3 The following chapter will seek to identify these key elements in order to demonstrate how suitable and sustainable the site is with regard to accommodating future residential development.

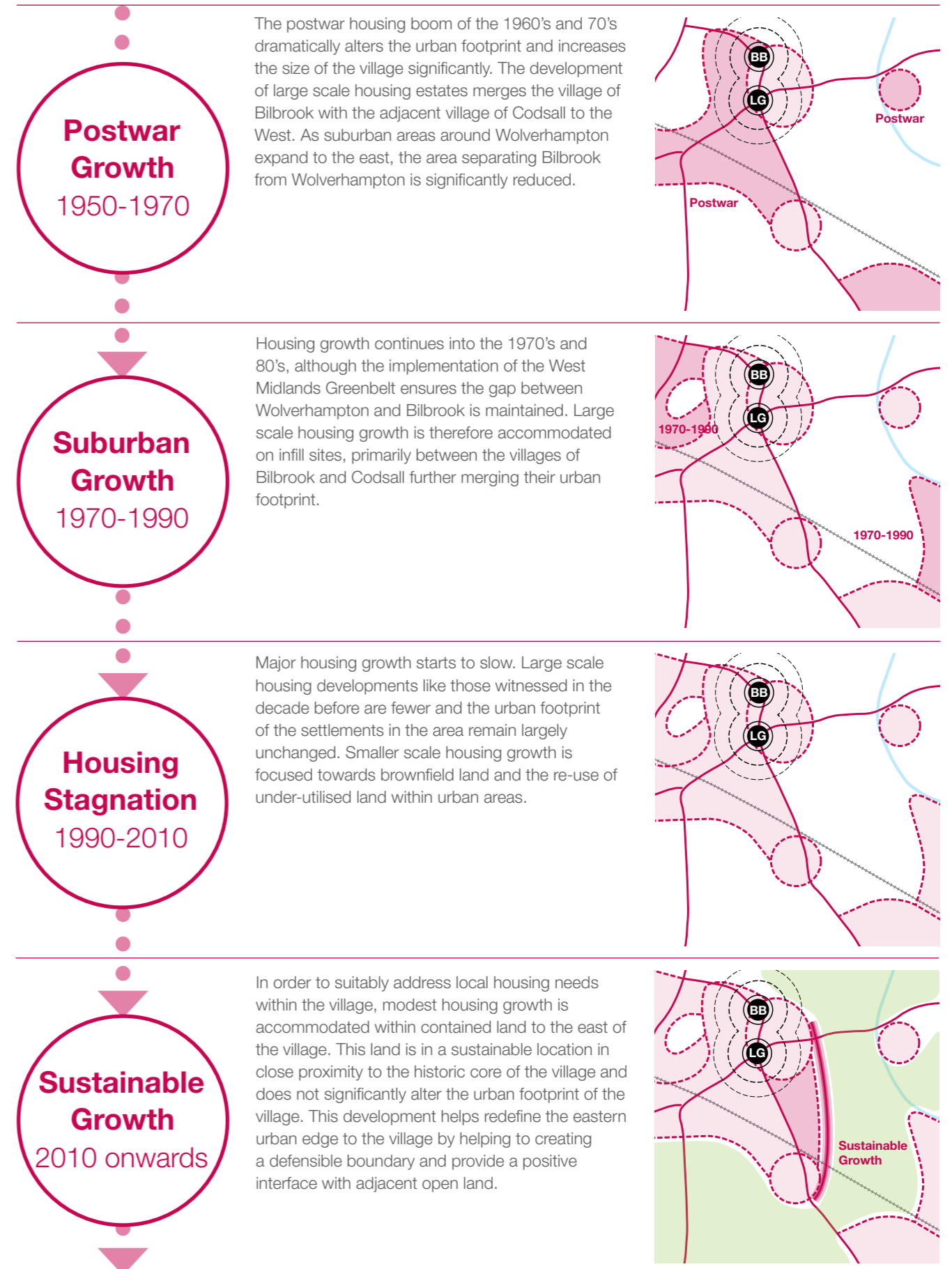
Historic context

3.4 Many of the characteristics and opportunities of the site's village setting can be attributed to the historical growth and development of Bilbrook. It is important to understand this area's historical development context in order to identify any historic growth patterns to help inform and support a responsive design rationale and approach. This not only ensures that the site is appropriately utilised through any future development but also ensures that any future development compliments the wider village's historic development and growth pattern as is specific to Bilbrook.

3.5 Prior to the 1850s Bilbrook was a small farming village composed mainly of the Estate of Bilbrook Manor, with its constituent farm workers cottages. The village has continued to evolve over time and has grown to become a popular commuter settlement with a buoyant housing market. The historic growth of the settlement area is illustrated in the adjacent diagrams, demonstrating how the urban area has extended over the villages past.

"Initial design thoughts..."

- Ensure development is of a scale and appearance which is sympathetic to the village's character and historic growth.



Amenities and facilities

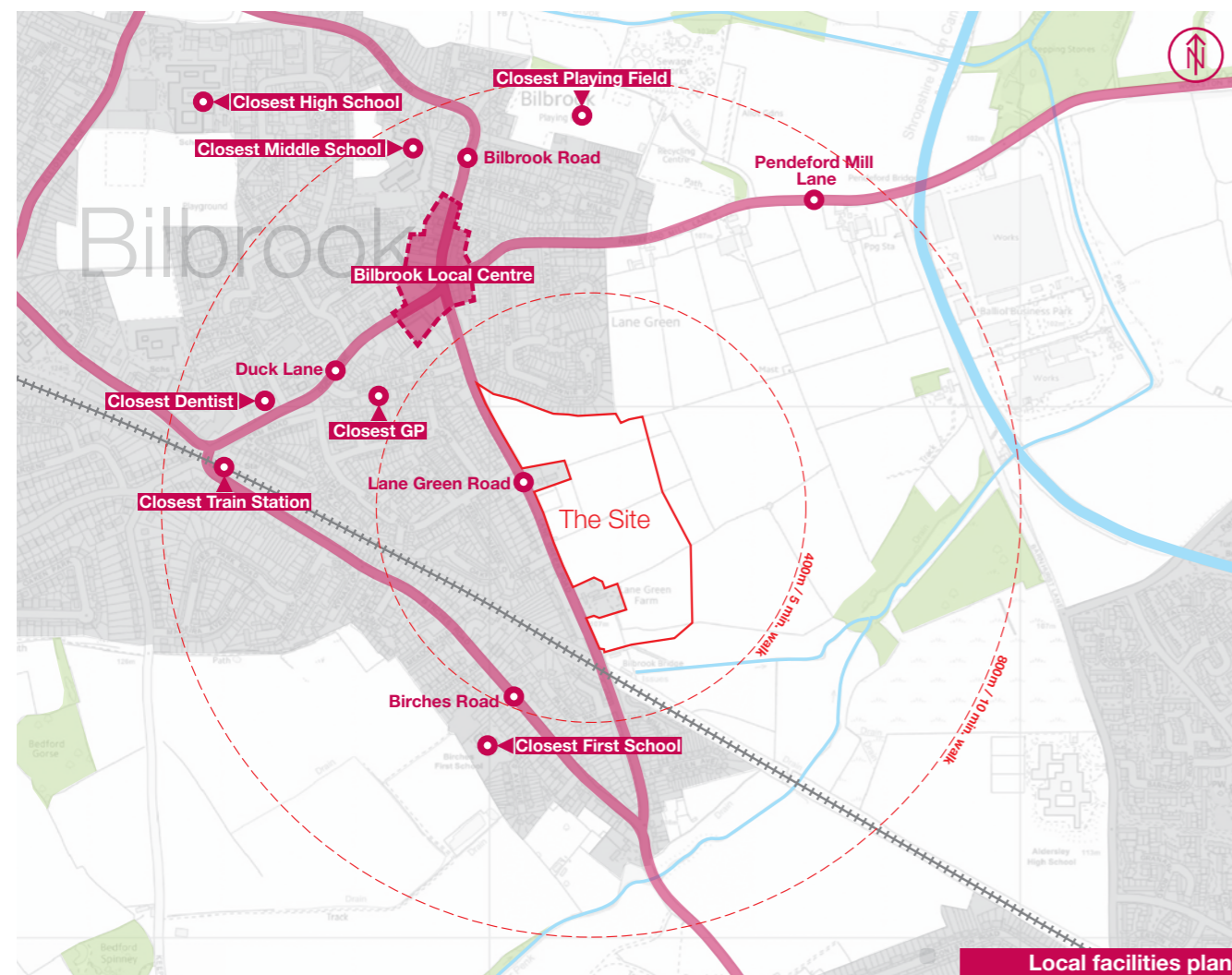
3.6 Located immediately adjacent to the urban edge of the village, the site is in close proximity to and well-served by a number of public facilities and amenities, many of which located within a short walking distance from the site.

3.7 Within 800m of the site (an approximate 10 minute walking distance), there is a number of First Schools and a Middle School, a GP, Medical Centre and Dentist, and a number of playing fields and recreation areas. There are also a number of bus stops and Bilbrook Train Station providing high quality sustainable transport links to the surrounding area. Bilbrook Local Centre which contains a number of banks, a post office, and a range of convenience retail is also located within close proximity to the site and a short walk away.

3.8 There are a number of additional complementary uses located further afield such as High Schools, Colleges and Universities, Hospitals and primary shopping areas and transport hubs. These are all located within a short 5-10 minute drive from the site either in the adjacent villages or within Wolverhampton immediately to the east.

“Initial design thoughts....”

- Ensure development provides desirable and convenient pedestrian and cycle connections to local facilities in the surrounding area.



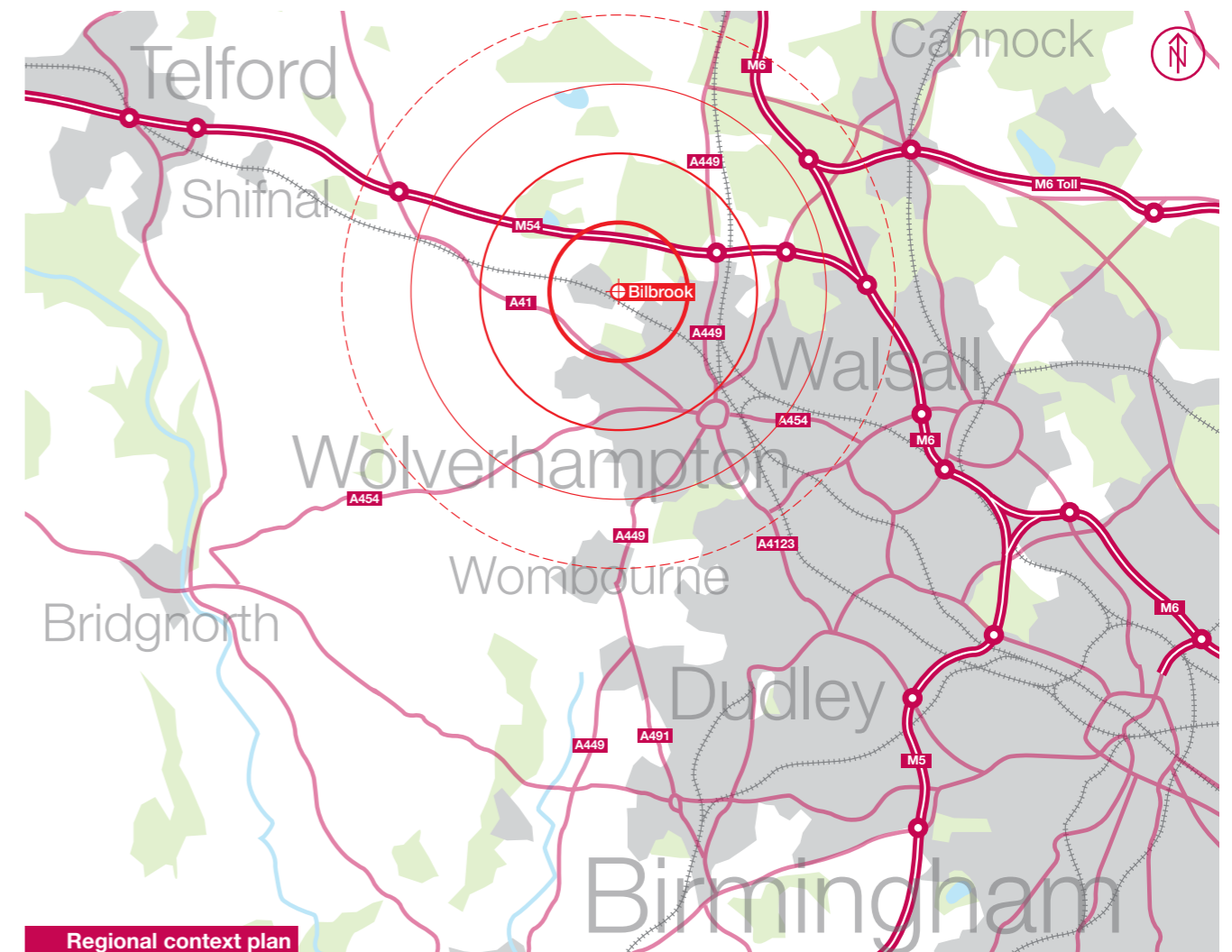
Access

3.9 Vehicular access onto the site is taken off Lane Green Road. From here drivers have access to the surrounding road network via Pendeford Mill Lane and Elliot Lane to the north and Bilbrook Road and Keepers Lane to the south. These offer fast and convenient connections to the A41 and A449 which are the primary feeder roads serving the area, proving connections with Wolverhampton to the east, Stafford to the north and Telford to the west. Junction 2 of the M54 motorway is located a 10 minute drive way to the north east, whilst junction 10a of the M6 motorway is located a 15 minute drive to the east.

3.10 The site also benefits from regular high quality public transport links. The 5, 5a and 10b bus routes links Bilbrook with Wolverhampton, Compton, Perton and Dunstall Hill, stopping within a few metres of the Lane Green Road site. The site is also served by the 17 and 535 bus services which run less frequent services. Bilbrook Train Station is also located within a 10 minute walk from the site. This offers regular and direct train services to Telford, Shrewsbury, Wolverhampton and Birmingham, making the area a popular location with commuters.

“Initial design thoughts....”

- Ensure development is permeable and well connected to surrounding movement patterns in the local area.





“The site’s natural features and characteristics will be retained and enhanced where possible to provide a locally responsive development unique to Bilbrook.”

The site

04

4.1 Developments should be site specific and locally responsive in character and form to their surrounding context. The design of new housing developments therefore need to understand the unique characteristics of the site and its environs and identify key opportunities and constraints afforded by the site’s physical form.

4.2 A detailed contextual appraisal of the site is therefore required. Given the early stage of development, detailed technical assessments on elements of the site are to be completed. Notwithstanding the above, this chapter discusses the key characteristics of the site which are likely to need to be addressed and the opportunities which should be harnessed by any future development.

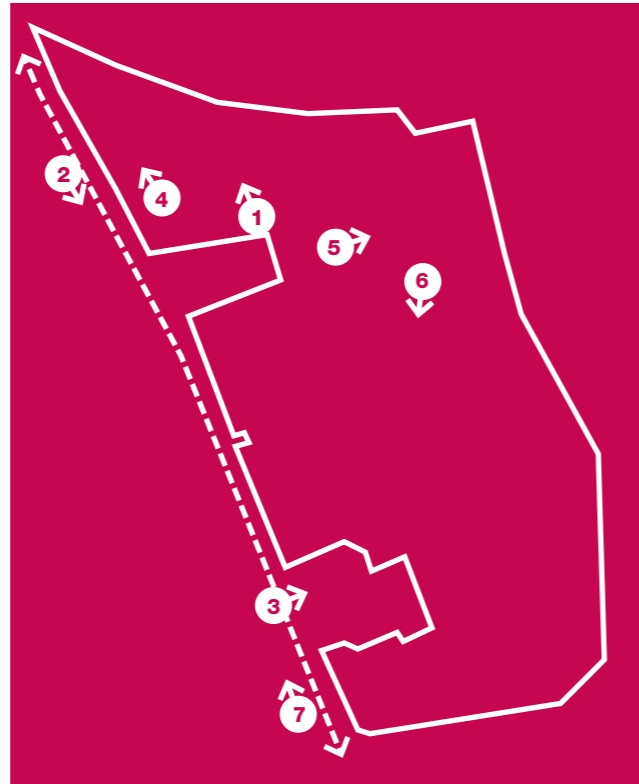
The site

4.3 Located on the eastern edge of the village of Bilbrook, the site comprises of approximately 9.8 hectares of land in single ownership. The site is greenfield in nature and is currently used for the purposes of private farm land. The site is currently accessed of Lane Green Road off the site's western boundary.

4.4 With regard to physical form, the site is largely level with the land falling very gently in a southerly direction. Falling from its highest point of circa 116m AOD in the north eastern corner of the site down to approximately 105m AOD along its southern edge, the site falls 11m over an approximate distance of 600m in the form of a gentle slope. Notwithstanding the above, this gradient is unlikely to inhibit development of the site and could help support potential sustainable drainage solutions.

4.5 Early stage technical assessments have been undertaken to identify any constraints which may need to be considered with regard to the site's future development. A Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared for the site which concludes that the site could be developed 'without having a significant impact' on its surrounding context, most notably the green gap which currently exists between Bilbrook and Wolverhampton. Further information regarding the LVIA can be found of the following pages. Other initial appraisals of the site conclude that there are no technical constraints which would inhibit the site's future development for residential purposes. A review of planning policy also confirms that whilst the site is in the Green Belt, the site does not appear to encroach upon any areas of known historic or archaeological sensitivity.

4.6 The adjacent photos are taken from key points across the site to offer a perspective into the form of the site and how it responds to surrounding uses.



Right: Photographs taken from a number of viewpoints from around the site offering and indication of the sites physical form and constraints.

LVIA Findings

4.7 Barratt Homes commissioned Tyler Grange to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Review which concluded that the site is capable of being developed without having a significant impact on coalescence between Bilbrook and the edge of Wolverhampton.

4.8 Principal visual barriers, namely intervening built form and screening vegetation associated with the woodland to the south-east of the site, represent physical and visual restriction between the site and the edge of Wolverhampton.

4.9 Given the current topographical arrangement, the extent of adjoining built form and screening associated with the surrounding landscape framework, any changes to visual amenity for users of highways would be limited to localised vantage points within an established suburban edge and residential context. There are opportunities to provide a high quality frontage to the new development where it adjoins Lane Green Road in order to maintain the current amenity and bring about characteristic improvements to the street scene.

4.10 The review concludes that the site is considered to be suitable for removal from the Green Belt for residential development.



Opportunities and constraints

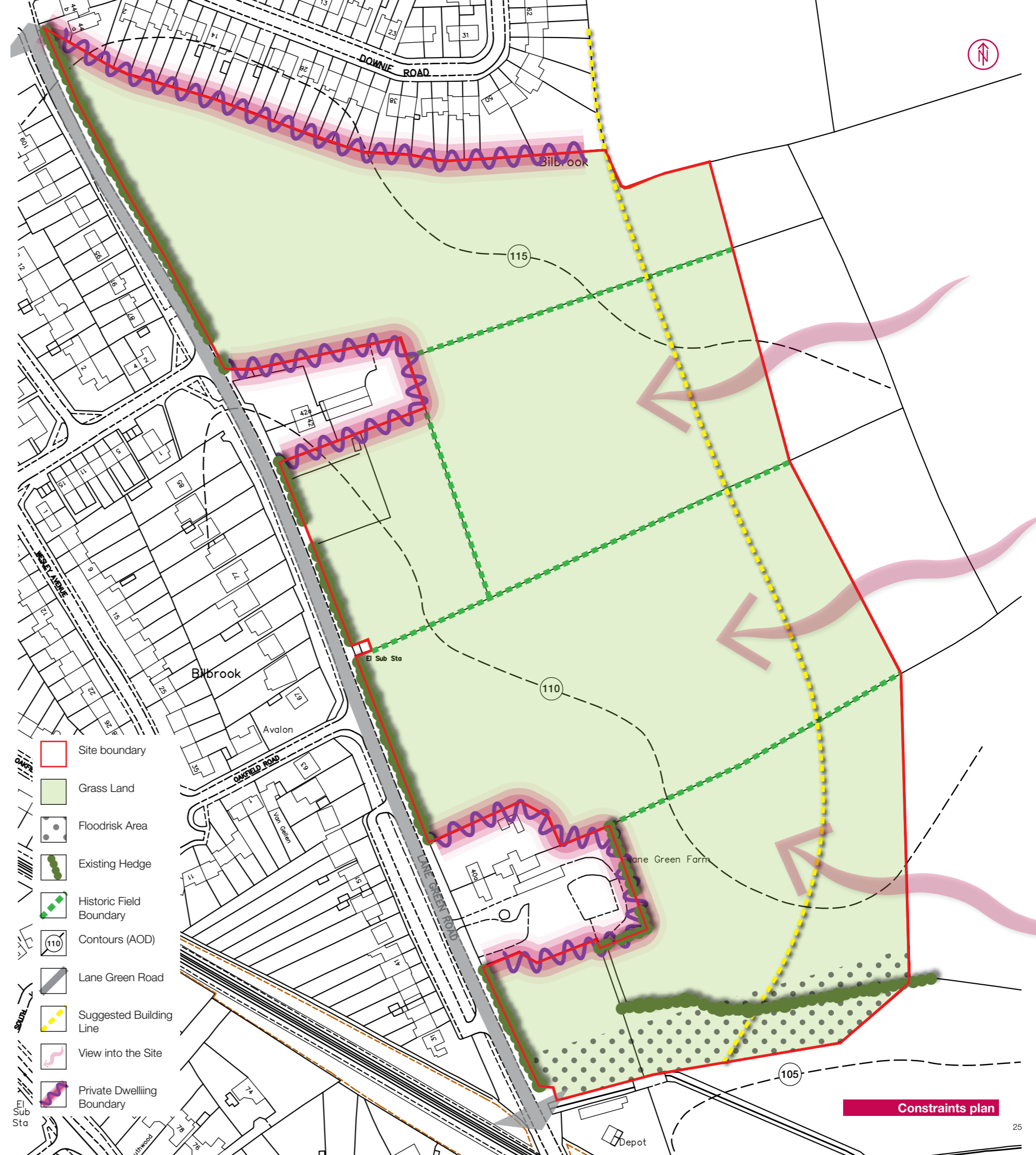
4.11 At this stage, there are no physical constraints which would inhibit the future development of the Lane Green Road site. There are however a number of matters and opportunities which have been identified as part of the site appraisal which will need to be assessed in greater detail and addressed in the design of any future proposal.

4.12 These matters broadly include:

- **Housing** – Ideally located within the popular village of Bilbrook and in close proximity to high quality transport connections, the site offers a great opportunity to deliver a new residential community and family homes to meet local demands for housing in a sustainable manner.
- **Landscape** – The site is located in the urban edge of the village and is currently allocated as Green Belt. An LVIA prepared for this site has concluded there would be no significant impact on the site's wider context as a consequence of its development. The design of any proposals for the site will need to be sensitive in this regard and ensure suitable mitigation measures are implemented where possible to help reduce any impacts even further.
- **Ecology** – The site contains a number of established hedgerows along the western boundary of the site which will need to be preserved and enhanced wherever possible. An Ecological Assessment has been undertaken and has confirmed there are no species living on the site which would inhibit its future developments.
- **Access** – Development will be serviced off Lane Green Road to the west of the site via a new junction. The County Council have confirmed that access into the site off Lane Green Road is acceptable in principle subject to detailed design. A Transport Assessment will be prepared to determine the design and layout of the proposed traffic junction and its potential vehicular capacity.
- **Amenity** – The site is bound to the north by the rear gardens of existing properties and to the west by properties facing the site, both of which overlook the site. The layout and form of any proposal for the site will need to be sensitive to the amenity of existing residents to ensure development does not have a detrimental impact on adjacent land owners.

4.13 In addition to the above, the only other issues which has been identified as part of our initial appraisals regarding issued with floodrisk. A small area of the site along its southern boundary has been identified as at risk of flooding on the Environment Agency website. Whilst this area is unlikely to be developed, this will need to be considered in any future proposal.

4.14 The adjacent plan offers an insight into the above matters and how they may influence the site's future redevelopment.





“The sites natural features and characteristics will be retained and enhanced where possible to provide a locally responsive development unique to Bilbrook.”

5.1 In order to promote this site as a sustainable, suitable, and deliverable housing development opportunity, and as a development which is locally responsive to the characteristics of the site, it is necessary to demonstrate how development may be accommodated on the site.

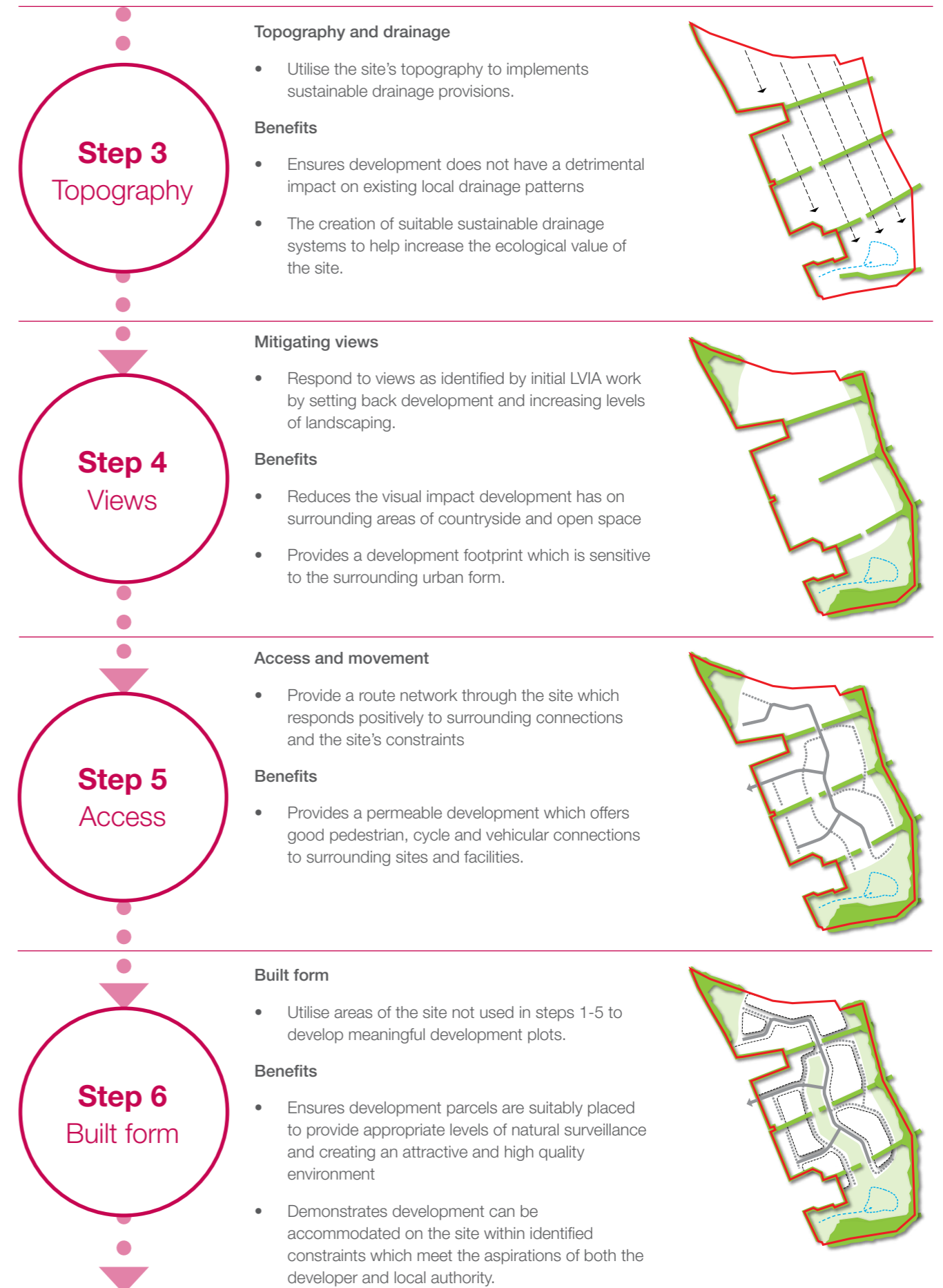
5.2 Having identified the spatial opportunities and constraints which are likely to influence the future redevelopment of the site, it is now necessary to demonstrate how the uses envisaged for the site can respond spatially to these considerations.

Design evolution

5.3 Having identified the key characteristics and opportunities which are likely to influence the form of any proposal, it appears they can be broadly categorised into six broad topics. The topics are:

- The extent of the site
- Retention of green assets
- Topography and drainage
- Mitigating views
- Access and movement
- Built form

5.4 The following diagrams and supporting text explore these matters in the form of spatial steps. These in turn will help inform a development framework which can be tested prior to entering the later stages of the planning and design process. The framework offers a spatial interpretation of how the site could be taken forward for development in the future having addressed the key constraints and opportunities identified through the course of this document.



The framework

5.5 Following from the steps identified previously in this document, the adjacent development framework has been produced demonstrating an illustrative spatial interpretation of how the site could be developed for housing in the future.

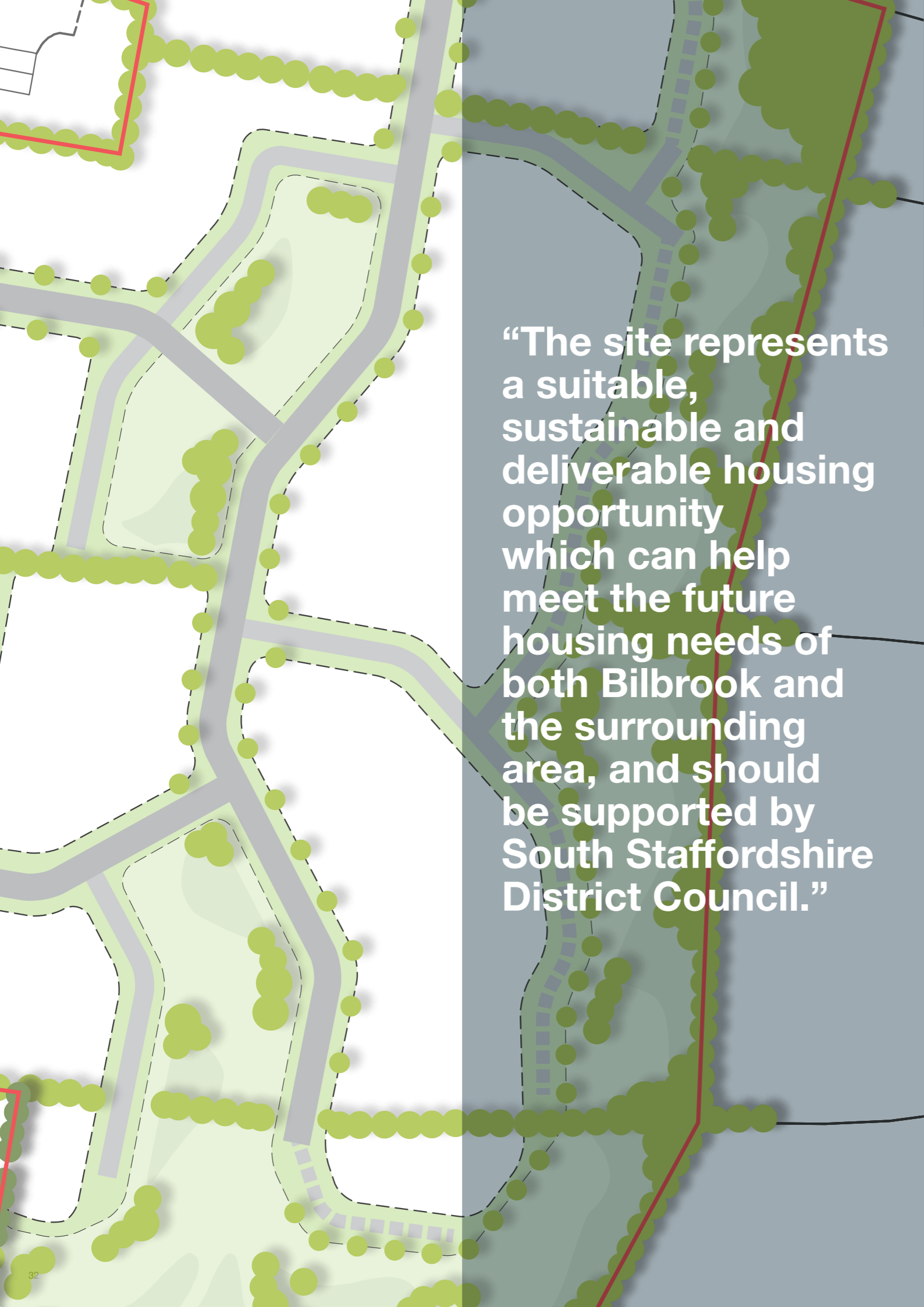
5.6 The framework has been developed to accommodate the following components on the site in a way which is sensitive to the site's unique physical attributes:

- Provision of circa 5.5 Ha of developable space providing a yield of approximately 150 homes.
- Provision of circa 4.3 Ha of Public Open Space
- Retention of features of any ecological value including trees and hedgerows
- Provision of sustainable drainage systems
- Provision of potential community facilities including play area.

5.7 The layout follows a clear rationale and offers a spatial interpretation of how the site could be taken forward for development in the future having addressed the key constraints and opportunities identified. This framework will be tested at later stages of the development process in response to the findings of more details surveys of the site, potential changes in market conditions, and through consultation with the local community.



Framework plan



“The site represents a suitable, sustainable and deliverable housing opportunity which can help meet the future housing needs of both Bilbrook and the surrounding area, and should be supported by South Staffordshire District Council.”

Summary and conclusions

6.1 This Vision Document has been prepared by Turley Design on behalf of our client Barratt Homes. It supports and promotes the principles of development on land off Lane Green Road, Bilbrook in response to the South Staffordshire Core Strategy.

6.2 It demonstrates the reasons why land at Lane Green Road should be considered a primary sustainable location for growth within the village and shows the site to be capable of accommodating approximately 150 new family homes.

6.3 Through a robust assessment of the site's physical context, it has been demonstrated that land at Lane Green Road is not only suitable and appropriate for future development, but that it also represents a deliverable and viable opportunity to provide sustainable housing growth within Bilbrook.

6.4 The analysis of the site and subsequent development framework clearly illustrates how a sensitive, high quality development which responds to the valuable attributes of the site can be achieved.

6.5 In summary, this Vision Document has concluded the following:

- Townscape and services – The site is located within close proximity to the historic core of the village and is well contained by surrounding development. Its development will also not harm the green wedge which currently separates the village from the urban footprint of Wolverhampton. The site is in a sustainable location, a short distance from shops and services, and is well served by high quality public transport links.
- The site - Previously undeveloped, the greenfield site is free from any technical or physical constraints which would inhibit its future development. The site has a number of assets including some established hedgerows which will be retained and enhanced as part of the development. The sites gentle sloping topography is also ideal for sustainable drains systems.
- The framework - The framework represents a sensitive design solution which responds to the identified site constraints and opportunities. It demonstrates how a development which is locally responsive to the needs of Bilbrook can be accommodated on the site without detrimental impact to its surroundings.

Next steps...

6.6 Following submission of this Vision Document and in response to South Staffordshire Council's request for further information, Barratt Homes would welcome engagement with the council, local stakeholders and the community including the parish council. This will allow for a greater insight into the needs of the local community to ensure development at Lane Green Road has a positive impact on Bilbrook and the surrounding area.

6.7 It is concluded that the Lane Green Road site is suitable for release from the Green Belt for a sustainable, high quality residential development, which can be delivered early in the plan period.

For further information contact

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