

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This Technical Compendium relates to the site known as 'Home Farm, Sandhills, Walsall'. The site location is shown on **Figure 1.1** and site context is shown on **Figure 1.2**.

1.1.2 The purpose of this Technical Compendium is to provide further information to identify the suitability, availability and achievability of the site to inform emerging planning policy preparation in Walsall District and the wider Black Country. Previous Background Documents were prepared in 2013 and 2015 in response to the earlier consultations. Where applicable, information has been updated to take into consideration any changes in the local area or other relevant contextual and technical information.

1.1.3 It is considered that this Technical Compendium also demonstrates the soundness of this site as a future strategic allocation for residential development. In light of this, the site should be considered as one that is capable of contributing towards delivering the Council's future dwelling requirements.

1.2 Gallagher Estates

1.2.1 Gallagher Estates, now part of the L&Q Group, is a major strategic land promotion company operating across the UK with a track record for successfully delivering many large-scale developments. The company has a specific focus on the residential sector, and acts as 'Master Developer' by retaining responsibility through all stages of the development process. The company is not a house builder, but instead facilitates development through the provision of infrastructure and community facilities to enable serviced land parcels to be offered for sale to the house building industry.

1.2.2 Gallagher Estates was appointed by the land owners in July 2013 to exclusively promote this site for a residential led development. Gallagher Estates have the full support of the land owner whom they have a close working relationship with and have a long-term agreement covering the full length of the current plan period.

1.2.3 In terms of availability, there are no legal or ownership problems, such as multiple ownership, ransom strips, tenancies or operational requirements of the land owners and therefore there are no known constraints that would inhibit the development of the site.

1.2.4 In respect of achievability, residential development is an economically viable prospect for the site.

1.3 Site Description and Context

- 1.3.1 The site is located on the eastern edge of Brownhills, adjacent to the Wyrley and Essington Canal. It enjoys good access to the High Street (that includes convenience stores, public houses, places of worship and other specialist amenities), which is further along Chester Road where there is a proposed access to and from the site. There are several bus stops located adjacent to the site (on both the A452 Chester Road and A461 Lichfield Road), which are frequented by a number of services that provide access to Birmingham, Lichfield, Cannock and Walsall amongst other locations in the vicinity. The nearest railway stations to the site are Walsall and Shenstone, which are approximately 4.6 miles south east and 2.45 miles east of the site respectively. Brownhills also has access to the Strategic Road Network via the M6 Toll Motorway.
- 1.3.2 Brownhills historically expanded as a former coal mining town on the edge of the Staffordshire Coalfield, which was the principal industry of the town until the 1950s. Since then the area has experienced economic decline and has subsequently been the focus for regeneration initiatives. The Wyrley and Essington Canal, which forms a boundary to the site, is identified as a key asset to make a substantial contribution to the character of the regeneration corridor and provide opportunities for recreation nature conservation and tourism.
- 1.3.3 The site is located to the south east of Brownhills, within Sandhills, which is an area that includes Sandhills Farm and existing residential ribbon development that comprises of medium density post war housing.
- 1.3.4 The site is bounded to the north west by the canal; to the south west by the curtilage of properties along the Chester Road (A452) and to the south east by the Lichfield Road (A461). To the north east the boundary is less well separated but is broadly defined by an increase in the height of the landform to the west of Barracks Lane. The Local Authority boundary between Walsall Council and Lichfield District Council follows a track and field boundary in this location.
- 1.3.5 Brownhills is identified as a Regeneration Corridor in the Black Country Core Strategy (2011). It has a population of c. 12,500 and is connected to other suburban areas such as Pelsall, Shelfield and Aldridge, with Walsall and Sutton Coldfield beyond. The site therefore benefits from a sustainable location.

1.3 Contents of the Technical Compendium

- 1.4.1 This Technical Compendium considers the pertinent environmental issues identified in the context of the site in order to demonstrate the suitability, availability and achievability of the site, including further detail in respect of how the site could be developed for residential purposes. All of which provides evidence to support the identification of the site as a future strategic allocation. Figures are included within each chapter where required.

1.4.2 The Technical Compendium is structured as follows:

- **Executive Summary:** provides an Executive Summary of the findings of the Technical Compendium
- **Chapter 1: Introduction:** provides an introduction to the site and explains the purpose and content of the document.
- **Chapter 2: Landscape and Visual Context:** considers the capacity of the site to accommodate development in relation to landscape and visual issues.
- **Chapter 3: Indicative Development Framework:** provides an illustrative 'Development Framework Plan' and accompanying text to demonstrate how the proposals could be successfully accommodated on the site.
- **Chapter 4: Transportation:** considers the accessibility of the site to public transport and nearby facilities and details the capacity of the surrounding highway network and potential access arrangements.
- **Chapter 5: Ecology:** considers ecological and nature conservation issues in relation to the site.
- **Chapter 6: Archaeology and Cultural Heritage:** considers heritage matters in relation to the site.
- **Chapter 7: Drainage:** provides initial information on the flood risk of the site and discusses appropriate drainage strategies to ensure development can be accommodated on the site.
- **Chapter 8: Ground Conditions:** considers the relevant geotechnical matters relative to this site.
- **Chapter 9: Agricultural Land:** considers the agricultural land quality of the site.
- **Chapter 10: Conclusions:** provides an overview of the findings and conclusions of the Technical Compendium.

1.4.3 The specialist consultants who have contributed to the preparation of this technical information are referenced in the Project Directory at the front of this document.

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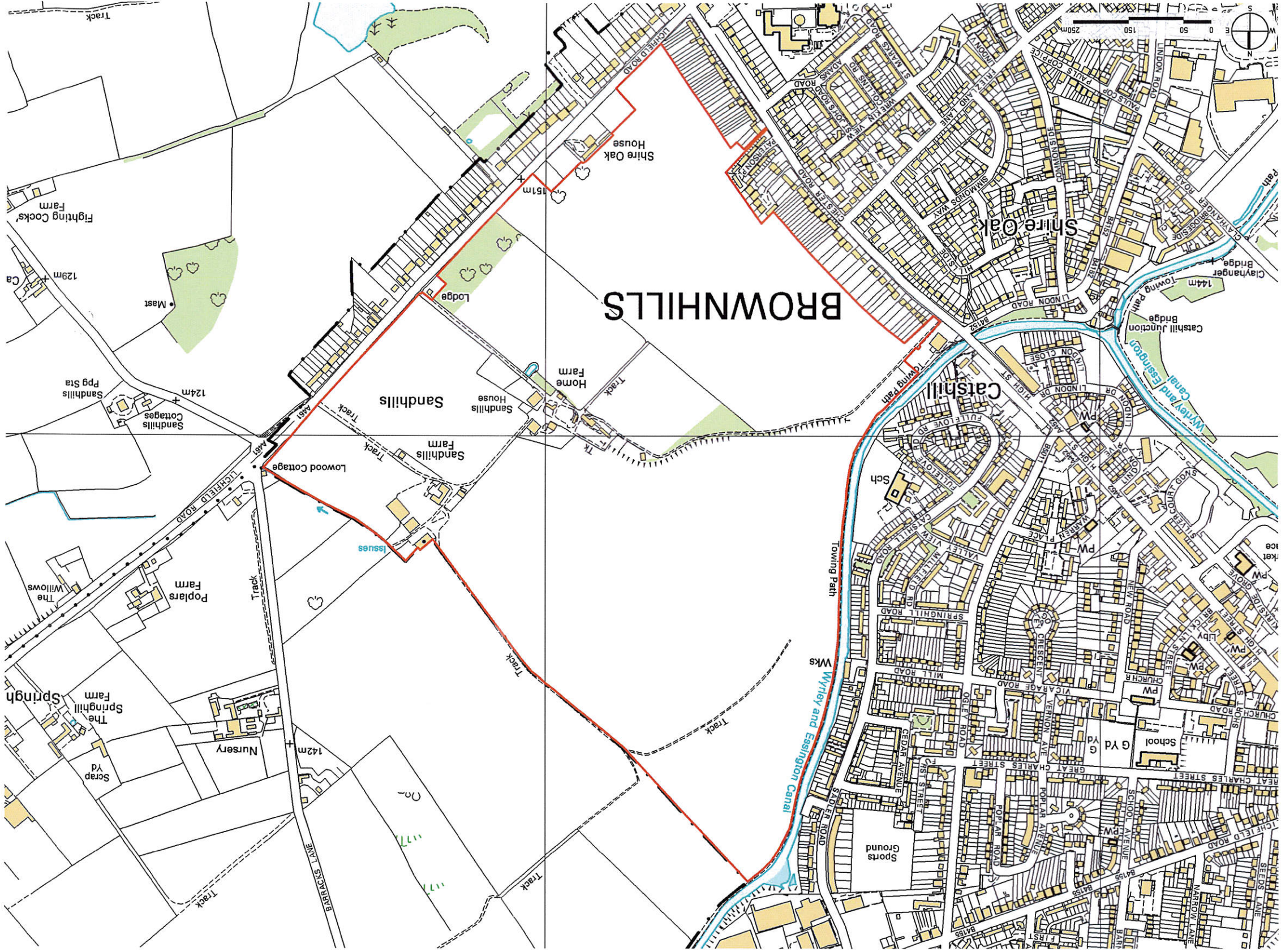


FIGURE 1.1

LAND AT HOME FARM, BROWNHILLS - SITE LOCATION PLAN

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STUDY AREA

KEY



FIGURE 1.2
LAND AT HOME FARM, BROWNHILLS - SITE CONTEXT PLAN

KEY



STUDY AREA