

# Columba Park

September 2017

Prepared by BHB Architects on behalf of IM Land



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Barr Beacon Hill War Memorial



*Queslett* was first known in ancient English as *Quieslade* - meaning 'valley of the wood pigeon'.

*'Columba'* is the biological classification of the wood pigeon.

# 1. Introduction

*This document sets out a vision for sustainable growth.*

This document sets out an exciting and deliverable vision for sustainable growth in Walsall and forms part of a suite of documents that demonstrate the unrivalled opportunity to create a new community and high quality green infrastructure at the site to the north of Queslett Road East, Walsall. The proposals would contribute to boosting significantly the supply of housing in Walsall and the wider Black Country, whilst opening the site up to public access, significant landscape improvements and enhanced biodiversity opportunities.

This document draws on the technical evidence base which has been prepared for the site by specialist consultants, as well as the evidence which will underpin the Black Country Core Strategy Review.

The document illustrates a vision for the creation of a new community; Columba Park, which could provide around 1,500 new dwellings. The site gives an opportunity to create a new neighbourhood which delivers real health and wellbeing gains and economic benefits for both existing and new residents. This includes significant high-quality public open space and green infrastructure, well designed homes, and new community facilities.



The site's Promoters, IM Land, are a team of experienced professionals specialising in the promotion of sites for residential-led development. The team has a wide range of experience including work for major PLC housebuilders, and local government.

IM Land are part of IM Properties, one of the UK's largest privately-owned property companies, with an investment and development portfolio across the UK, Europe and the USA, and projects spanning the industrial, retail, office and residential sectors.

IM Properties is committed to securing high quality, long-term investments and developments through a fair approach to business.

To support the promotion of this site, IM Land have assembled an experienced team of professional technical experts in respect of planning, design, landscape, highways, heritage, ecology and arboriculture to ensure that the proposed development is of the highest calibre with the least possible impact on the surrounding environment.

*“Our vision is for a high quality residential development, which enhances the existing qualities of the area by creating an attractive and interactive environment for future and existing residents whilst respecting its landscape setting.”*



## 2. Strategic Perspective

*This document sets out a vision for delivery of new homes to meet the housing needs of both Walsall and the wider Black Country, whilst delivering significant benefits for the local community. It explores the contribution the site can make to housing the areas growing population and also providing it with new, high-quality, public open space.*

As a Housing Market Area, there is significant need for greater housing delivery, with the current shortfall in supply arising from the Birmingham Local Plan standing at 37,900 dwellings. This is to be distributed amongst the Greater Birmingham Housing Market Area, which includes the Black Country authorities. At the sub-regional level, the Black Country has its own pressures, with the emerging Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS) Review and its associated evidence base demonstrating a need for 78,190 dwellings between 2014 and 2036 of which 24,670 may need to be found within the current green belt.

It is clear from the evidence published to date that the scale of growth needed is unprecedented. The Black Country's need for new homes cannot be met on land within the urban area alone and the growth should therefore be met in the most sustainable and deliverable locations such as at Columba Park.



Map showing the location of Columba Park and its surrounding context

Imagery (c) 2017 Google, Map data (c) 2017 Google

NOT TO SCALE



Columba Park presents a unique opportunity to combine meeting housing needs with the delivery of a well-planned, landscape-led proposal. No other site for 1500 homes in Walsall can bring with it the delivery of a unique parkland offer. One which will benefit not only the communities in the surrounding area and Walsall more generally, but also the greater Birmingham and Black Country.

Green infrastructure, natural spaces and community facilities contribute strongly to character and 'sense of place' and creating a better environment where people aspire to live. Its benefits include helping to meet recreation needs, supporting biodiversity, promoting health and wellbeing, and stimulating economic growth. Being involved at such an early stage in the project's inception, means IM Land are able to plan for more and better quality green infrastructure at the site, as this will form an essential component of sustainable growth in Walsall.

Improving health and wellbeing is a key part of the BCCS review, this is identified in the Health and Wellbeing Technical Paper (June 2017) which emphasises the importance of integrating health and wellbeing into all policies, including those of the emerging BCCS Review. The technical note encourages the creation of communities which are:

- Well-connected and walkable;
- Have a wide choice of homes;
- Accessible to services; and
- Where people can belong to a cohesive community which fosters diversity, social interaction and social capital.

Furthermore, the TCPA (Town and Country Planning Association) and Public Health England report, 'Planning Healthier Places' (November 2013) states that good quality, accessible green space and infrastructure can provide many potential health and well-being benefits. Green spaces can also help reduce health inequalities and that both the improvement of existing, and creation of new, green infrastructure should be prioritised.

Benefits will be achieved most successfully if green space creation and management are integrated with more traditional land development and built infrastructure, and are considered at a local level, not just site specific. The proposals for the site will therefore seek opportunities to link to existing green infrastructure, including Barr Beacon.

### 3. Parkland Proposition

*Building upon the health and wellbeing agenda mentioned in the previous section, it is proposed that a new public parkland would be delivered as part of the implementation of the proposals for approximately 1,500 new homes at Columba Park.*

The proposed park would extend from Queslett Road which forms the southern boundary of the site, opening up to its northern boundary towards the Barr Beacon.

This park would provide interconnectivity between the communities of Streetly and Pheasey, enhancing community access to and between existing assets such as Barr Beacon, Doe Bank Park and Sutton Park.





SUTTON PARK

COLUMBA  
PARK

DOE BANK  
PARK

BARR BEACON

Artists impression illustrating the parkland proposition  
Imagery (c) 2017 Google, Map data (c) 2017 Google







## 4. Columba Park: The Opportunity

*Columba Park provides a unique opportunity to help meet housing needs, establish a public parkland offering recreational opportunities, enhancing accessibility and promoting active lifestyles.*

### **Understanding the Place**

It is recognised that an opportunity of this scale needs to be grounded in a sound appreciation of its context. Good planning and good design is about shaping development in response to the constraints and opportunities evident in the wider and immediate locality. We recognise that development on any scale would need to respect and respond to its context.

### **Green Belt**

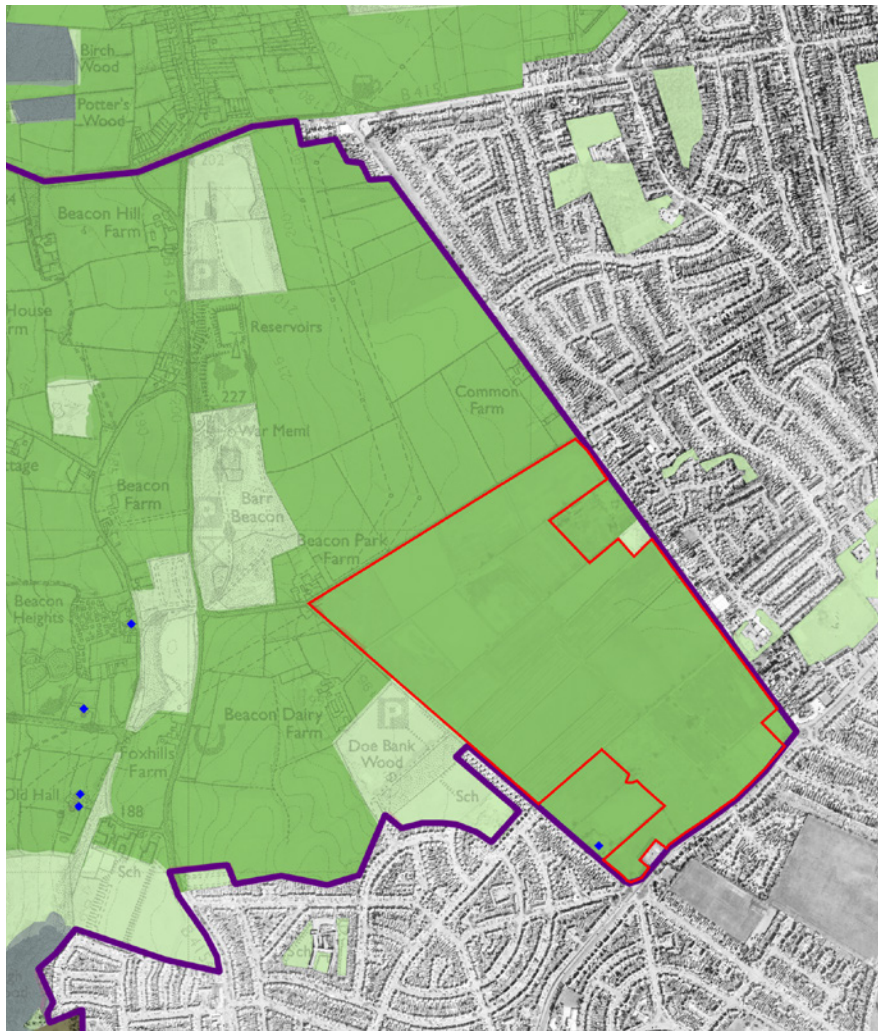
Columba Park is located within the Green Belt. As a whole, Walsall is significantly constrained by Green Belt (33% of the authority is currently within the Green Belt) although there has been no strategic review of it within the Black Country since the late 1970's.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) does not preclude development in the Green Belt, but does require that 'exceptional circumstances' can be demonstrated and the review of the Black Country Core Strategy provides the best opportunity to plan for sustainable growth in the Green Belt. Indeed the Issues and Options Report indicates that the Black Country will need to accommodate between 14,270 and 24,670 within its Green Belt.



The Black Country authorities intend to undertake a Green Belt Review over the next year. In advance of this work we have undertaken our own an assessment of Columba Park against the five 'tests' of the Green Belt below:

<p>Purpose 1- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas</p>	<p>The site is bound by residential development to the east, south and west. As such the site is enclosed by existing built form along three boundaries. The opportunity exists for the parkland proposed to the north of the site to provide a stronger Green Belt boundary to the north, creating an enduring physical feature.</p>
<p>Purpose 2- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another</p>	<p>The site presents a gap in the urban form. Releasing the site would therefore not result in any neighbouring towns merging.</p>
<p>Purpose 3 - To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment</p>	<p>The site is located within a gap in the urban form. It will create a significant level of green infrastructure which will open the site in part to the public. As such it will not result in a detrimental encroachment into the countryside.</p>
<p>Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns</p>	<p>The site is not located within close proximity to any historical town. The site will create a new green infrastructure buffer to the north, protecting the setting of Barr Beacon.</p>
<p>Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land</p>	<p>The Black Country authorities are unable to meet their identified housing and employment needs within the urban area, and therefore require Green Belt release.</p>



- Site boundary
  - ◆ Listed buildings
  - Open space (Policy OS1)
  - Registered parks and gardens
  - Ancient woodland
  - Green Belt (Policy GB1)
  - Conservation Area
- All listed policies taken from draft site allocation document (SAD) (October 2016)

Plan of Designations and open space near Columba Park

Imagery (c) 2017 Google, Map data (c) 2017 Google

NOT TO SCALE

**Landscape**

The landscape of the site currently consists of small to medium-scale arable fields, bounded by, largely intact, mixed native hedgerows. The landform rises gently towards the north-west, rising more steeply beyond the site boundary, before meeting the ridgeline upon which the Barr Beacon Monument is located. There are a number of well-established native trees within the site along hedgerows and along the alignment of lost hedgerow boundaries. There is currently no public access across the site.

The site is located within the south-eastern edge of the Great Barr Conservation Area which is a local landscape-related designation, but is not within or near to any other statutory or non-statutory landscape-related designation.

The site is visually enclosed by prominent residential development to the east along Aldridge Road and to the west along Doe Bank Lane and bounded by the A4041 (Queslett Road East) dual-carriageway and further commercial and residential properties to the south. To the north the landscape becomes increasingly rural, with long views towards arable fields, native woodland, dispersed farm houses and the Barr Beacon monument and associated Beacon Way long distance trail. The settlement edge along the eastern, western and southern boundaries of the site restricts the majority of more distant views into the site from surrounding areas.

Views would be available from residential properties along these boundaries, and from pedestrian and vehicle users along the road network, although the experience of these views is already heavily influenced by views of the settlement edge and noise and movement associated with the road network, especially the A4041 (Queslett Road East) dual-carriageway. More distant views from the north, available from the Barr Beacon monument and associated Beacon Way long distance trail, can be mitigated by the provision of green space and planting within the northern area of the site.



## Habitat and Ecology

The Columba Park site comprises mainly arable fields with minor areas of semi-improved grassland, delineated by predominately native but species-poor hedgerows. These habitats have limited intrinsic ecological and biodiversity value.

Mature standard trees are occasionally present within the sites hedgerow network, with two small copses of mature semi-natural broad-leaved woodland present to the south of the site. These features, which would not be replaceable within a generational lifespan (30 years or more), are proposed to be retained and buffered within the conceptual masterplan.

The proposals offer scope for enhancement of the ecological and biodiversity value of the site, through a combination of retention and management of the sites existing features of value and the creation of open parkland habitat within Columba Park.

The existing agricultural habitats lack structural or species diversity and offer extremely limited ecological function for faunal species in terms of foraging, shelter or ranging. The parkland habitats proposed within Columba Park, to include scattered trees, species-rich hedgerows, ponds and species-rich grassland, will be of benefit to local amphibian, reptile, bird, mammal and invertebrate populations and create greater connectivity to the wider landscape, particularly Barr Beacon and Doe Bank Park.









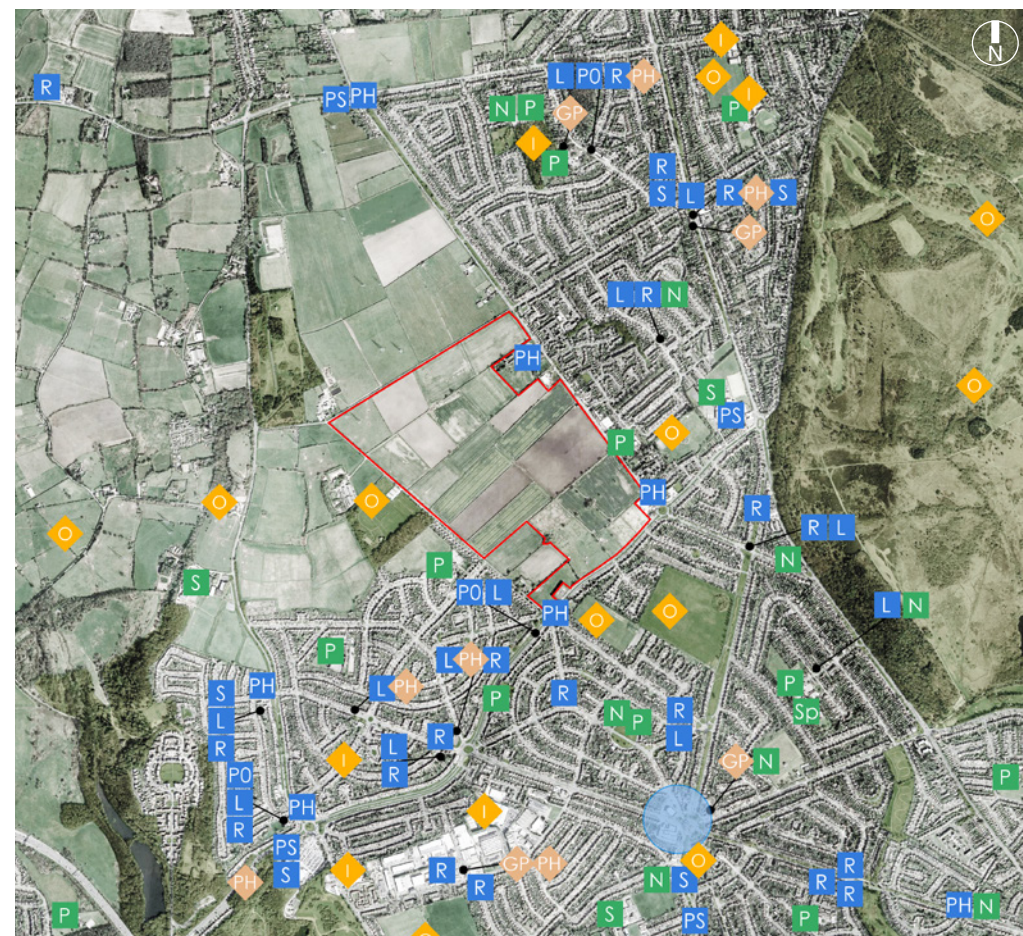
## Connectivity and Access to Facilities

The site is well located to existing facilities and amenities, including schools, doctors surgeries, supermarket, and public houses.

Public transport services including the 39, 997, 937, 78, 935 and 23 buses operate along the eastern, southern and western boundaries of the Columba Park site providing frequent access to Walsall, Birmingham and other key destinations. As the proposals emerge, consideration will be given to the integration and routing of services through the development area and discussions will take place with public transport operators.

Existing footways are located along Doe Bank Lane, Queslett Road East and Aldridge Road. Opportunities exist to improve accessibility to, from and across the site. These include footway extensions and improvements into the development area, the creation of new crossing points and the provision of improved cycle facilities to improve accessibility to key amenities and nearby National Cycle Route 535. Accessibility to Barr Beacon will also be improved and enhanced to enable safe and easy access.

Vehicular access to the site will be taken from Doe Bank Lane, Queslett Road East and Aldridge Road. Primary access will be formed from Queslett Road and it is likely to take the form of traffic signals. Multiple secondary access points could be formed from Doe Bank Lane and Aldridge Road to improve accessibility into the site. Both roads have a straight alignment and therefore visibility splays are not constrained and junctions can be designed accordingly to accommodate existing access points.



### Education

- N Nursery
- P Primary School
- S Secondary School
- Sp Specialist School

### Health

- GP Doctor's Surgery
- PH Pharmacy

### Leisure

- I Indoor Venue
- O Outdoor Venue

### Retail

- PS Petrol Station
- PH Public House
- PO Post Office
- L Local Shop
- R Restaurant/ Takeaway
- S Supermarket/major retailer
- Retail area  
(collection of shops/businesses)

## Accessibility of Community Facilities

Imagery (c) 2017 Google, Map data (c) 2017 Google

NOT TO SCALE







## Cultural Heritage

The existing character of the land is typical of a 19th century enclosure landscape, but prior to this it had formed part of Great Barr Commons. Although not remarkable in itself, the land rises to the north to the prominent landmark of Barr Beacon, and ancient focal point and currently the site of a war memorial. Registered Parks and Gardens lie to the east in Sutton Coldfield, and to the south-west around Great Barr Hall. Columba Park provides an opportunity to promote recreational use of these assets with a connecting green route through the new development. At present the site is included on the periphery of the extensive Great Barr Conservation Area, but the core heritage significance for the designation of this Area derived from Great Barr Hall and its surrounding parkland, rather than remote agricultural land, within which Columba Park sits, which is largely separated from the park by existing urban expansion.

There are no known archaeological assets within the site, but two grade II listed buildings are located on the south-western edge. These are Doe Bank Farm house and its associated barn. The proposed development will be designed sensitively to ensure that the contribution that the setting makes to their heritage significance is not significantly affected or changed. Historically the northern part of the site was used for a shooting range during the First World War, and this cultural connection is one that resonates with the war memorial at Barr Beacon. In the conceptual masterplan, this area would form part of the public park and would therefore not be developed. In conclusion Columba Park lends itself to sympathetic development that can enhance the experience of local heritage assets without adverse effects.

## Flood Risk

The land is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 (less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding (<0.1%)).

An area of low risk surface water flooding is noted within the site however the introduction of site wide drainage systems will mitigate these impacts.

The site is underlain by sandstone and soakage testing has confirmed there is good potential for surface water drainage to be disposed of through soakage into the ground. All dwellings and buildings can therefore go to soakaways. Private highways and car parking area will drain via permeable paving. Adopted highways can drain to soakage basins located throughout the site and it is estimated 9,500m<sup>3</sup> of above ground attenuation would be required to cater for the 1 in 100 year plus 40% for climate change.

Foul drainage is likely to drain by gravity to existing sewers in Queslett Road East.

### Summary

*Our initial assessments in relation to impact on the green belt, landscape, heritage, flooding, ecology and highway infrastructure have not identified any issues which cannot be addressed through the planning process or which would outweigh the substantial benefits which Columba Park can deliver in terms of new homes, community infrastructure and public open space.*

## 5. Contextual Analysis

*The framework of the site has evolved from an appreciation of the local character and an understanding of key views. The site is well connected to existing services and can deliver enhanced community facilities; it includes strong green infrastructure; and can deliver a logical and sustainable expansion of the existing communities.*

New development can fully integrate existing hedgerows and trees into the landscape structure of the masterplan. The form of the development can also focus on areas which are already characterised by the prominence of the existing settlement edge, leaving the more elevated, prominent and more 'rural' areas relatively free of development. The proposed form of the development would also protect and enhance a central green way which would allow views towards Barr Beacon and provide an attractive, new, publicly accessible green corridor linking thousands of existing and new residents with this panoramic viewpoint.

The following plans illustrate our understanding of the site and define key concepts that can shape development going forward.

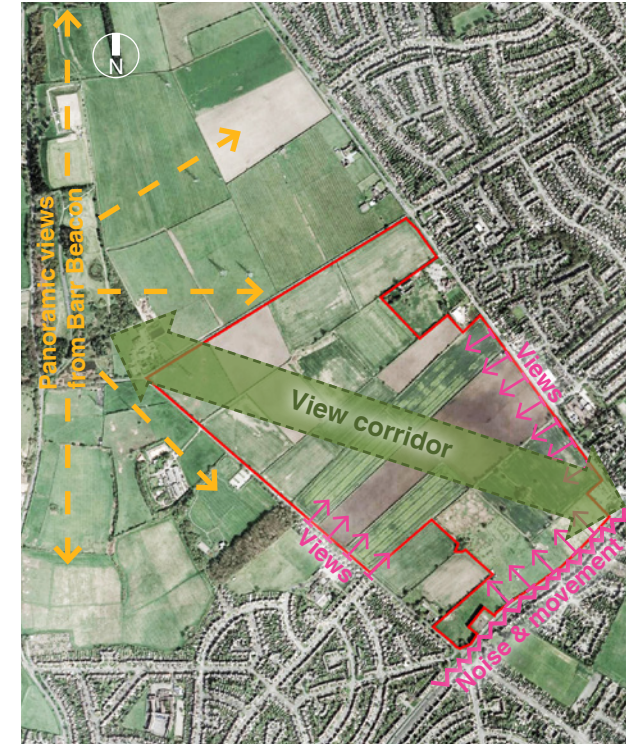


Step 1 - Landscape Context

Imagery (c) 2017 Google, Map data (c) 2017 Google

The landform rises gently towards the north-west, rising more steeply beyond the site boundary, before meeting the ridgeline upon which the Barr Beacon Monument is located.

The site is influenced heavily by the suburban edge to the south-east and becomes increasingly rural to the north, albeit that the north is also strongly influenced by prominent overhead powerlines.



Step 2 - Visual Context

Imagery (c) 2017 Google, Map data (c) 2017 Google

Views available from residential properties and pedestrian / vehicle users along the road network. The experience of these views is already heavily influenced by views of the settlement edge / noise and movement associated with the road network.

More distant views available from the north from the Barr Beacon monument and associated Beacon Way long distance trail.





### Step 3 - Urban Grain

Imagery (c) 2017 Google, Map data (c) 2017 Google

The distinct street layouts of the existing development to the south and east provide a variety of precedents for potential new housing layouts on the site.

To the east street layouts are largely linear, with generous pavements incorporating areas of green.

To the south the streets form strong geometric patterns, again with wide pavements, providing opportunity for parcels of green space and incidental public space where streets meet.

Within a new layout these street patterns could be utilised to create a pleasant urban environment in which development is interspersed with green features. A series of green pockets amongst the housing, leading to a green-way along the key south-north view corridor, and to potential new public open space of Columba Park in the north part of the site.



Geometric street patterns of local development creates opportunities for pockets of green space




## 6. Conceptual Framework

*The concept framework is informed by the sequence of key design steps. It shows the potential for high quality residential development and delivery of a publicly accessible park.*

This plan demonstrates the potential for a cohesive sustainable place, attractive to residents, visitors and wildlife. It envisages a scale of housing development that:


- Delivers approximately 1500 new homes and an extensive area of parkland and public open space
- Makes significant contribution to strategic growth ambitions and meets evidenced housing needs
- Balances built form and open landscape, creating a substantial parkland that can act as a major recreation asset
- Enhances landscape quality, wildlife value and biodiversity
- Creates and improves pedestrian and cycle links within and between existing communities
- Responds to natural topographic characteristics, shaping and enhancing local views
- Can properly address the park, providing valuable frontages and a safe environment
- Can contribute to the health and wellbeing of existing and new residents.


 Existing hedgerow, incorporating mature trees, providing good ecological value. To be retained and enhanced where possible

 Existing Species-rich hedgerow


 Existing hedgerow, providing important ecological connectivity across site - to be retained where possible


 Proposed Site Access, linking into surrounding highways network

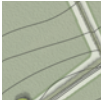
 High Point of Site (Maximum site level +200.0m AOD)

 Key Landmark within existing landscape

 Proposed Pedestrian linkages

 Extent of development to minimise potential visual impact on higher ground

 Opportunity for potential improvements to Green Infrastructure

 Clearly defined field boundary pattern characterises higher portion of site and landscape beyond. This character should be retained and enhanced where possible

 Surrounding urban fabric demonstrates a clear and legible grain





- 1 Lower Part of site provides an ideal location for on site attenuation.
- 2 Existing pockets of woodland. The connectivity between these could be improved as part of any scheme brought forward, increasing their ecological value
- 3 Existing field pattern could be strengthened, by the creation of a 'green-way' providing opportunities for public recreation and greater links across the site.
- 4 Existing local landscape features retained
- 5 Proposed linkage towards Barr Beacon Park
- 6 Proposed Linkage towards Doe Bank Park
- 7 Opportunity to strengthen existing landscape characteristics, extending existing woodland

Opportunities and Constraints Diagram



## 7. Conceptual Masterplan

*The conceptual masterplan illustrates how development proposals may respond to the sites context, integrating with the surrounding landscape and adjoining pattern of development.*

### The Proposals

The scheme proposes approximately 1,500 new homes to meet the needs of the Borough.

Integrated within these proposals is the creation of a new extensive area of public parkland.

The park offers the opportunity to provide a diverse range of recreational opportunities including formal and informal play, sports pitches, cycle tracks and footpaths.

The park could greatly enhance connectivity to, from and between existing communities and facilities including Barr Beacon park and Doe Bank Lane park by providing pedestrian and cycle friendly routes.

The park could contain a unique range of landscape character. These areas could be linked by a series of interconnected pathways and cycle ways.

There is the potential for new habitat areas, woodland, wetland or sensitive grassland areas crisscrossed by pathways, where nature can be viewed easily and safely, close up and first hand by all.

### Masterplan Elements

#### Built Form

The extent of development has been informed by details landscape assessment and responds to the site's topography.

There is opportunity to enhance and compliment the strong geometric development patterns that are characteristic of the existing area.

#### Connectivity

Running north-south the parkland creates a pedestrian and cycle friendly green corridor which, following the natural topography of the site, meanders from Queslett Road to Bridle Lane and Barr Beacon Park beyond.

Running east-west a series of green routeways are established which link into the main parkland, these routeways typically follow existing field boundaries and hedgerows and provide strong connectivity between Doe Bank Lane, Doe Bank Park and Aldridge Road.

#### Landscape and Ecology

The retention of existing ecology and landscape features are integral to the scheme proposals. Such features forming key parts of the proposed park and interconnected greenways.

- 1 Sutton Park
- 2 Denotes Walsall Borough boundary
- 3 Parkland edge/location for SuDs
- 4 Formal landscape character area with tree lined main avenues providing access
- 5 Green routes running east-west
- 6 Informal parkland character - provides transition to existing rural character beyond
- 7 Existing habitat retained and enhanced
- 8 Existing feature retained for community recreational use
- 9 Proposed linkage to Barr Beacon Park
- 10 Barr Beacon Park
- 11 New connection to Doe Bank Park playing fields.





Concept Masterplan





## 8. Delivery

To meet the levels of housing need identified in the BCCS Issues and Options Report, 'large scale', well-planned, housing sites, such as Columba Park, will be necessary to deliver the sustainable new communities and infrastructure improvements which will be needed for the area.

However, we recognise that the scale, relative complexity and infrastructure requirements of such are project are significant. It is for this reason that we are currently undertaking all necessary technical studies and surveys to ensure that the lead-in time to commencement on site will be as short as possible. Contact has already been made with relevant statutory undertakers and utility providers and these discussions will continue to take place.

IM Land has the experience of already working on significant schemes such as Columba Park. IM Land is currently working collaboratively to deliver the largest Local Plan allocations within both Solihull and Stratford Districts at Blythe Valley Park and Gaydon Lighthorne and have worked to transform a former MOD base in Bath into a vibrant new residential community.





### Blythe Valley Park:

Acquired in 2014, IM worked collaboratively and constructively with the Local Authority to agree a new vision for a stalled business park near Junction 4 of the M42. The largest allocation in the Local Plan, a planning application for 750 homes, 250 bed housing with care facility and over 1 million square of commercial floorspace was granted in March 2017. Work has already commenced on site and the first new homes will be occupied in 2018.

### MOD Ensleigh:

IM Land worked in partnership with Bath & North East Somerset Council to transform this former MOD site, on the edge of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Working hard to deliver the authority's aspirations, we developed a vision for a desirable community and are now delivering approximately 300 homes a 72 bed housing with care facility and a new primary school for over 200 pupils. The first to be delivered in that authority for several decades.



*Using our experience of these projects and our years knowledge gained elsewhere within the industry, the project will be designed with delivery as a fundamental consideration. The conceptual masterplan is already evolving in such a way that the project could accommodate several 'outlets' for a number of housebuilders and as such we would estimate that peak build out for the site could be in the region of 150-200 dwellings per annum.*



## 9. Narrative Illustrated

*Columba Park presents a unique opportunity to create a genuinely sustainable new community which would deliver a range of much needed housing, as well as new public parkland.*

### The Vision

IM's vision for Columba Park is bold and inclusive. It aims to deliver a unique and modern piece of Green Infrastructure for the area that could:

- Enhance public access for passive recreation, walking and cycling
- Create areas for active recreation, trails, woodland activities and events
- Enhance local access to resources such as Barr Beacon and Sutton Park
- Increase biodiversity and enhance natural habitats
- Foster the restoration of important landscapes and ecological features
- Enhance sustainability prospects and encourage healthier lifestyles and community wellbeings

Columba Park will be an integrated environment, balancing the needs of ecology, nature conservation, habitat biodiversity as well as providing valuable access to outdoor recreation and leisure facilities. Its integration with neighbouring communities and associated residential development could make a valuable contribution to the overall quality of life and the promotion of outdoor activities and wellbeing in the Borough.











Artists Impression - proposed view from Columba Park looking south towards new development







## Landscape Led Development

Columba Park could serve a variety of residential users providing interconnectivity between the communities of Streetly and Pheasey and enhancing community access to and between existing assets such as Barr Beacon, Doe Bank Park and Sutton Park by providing pedestrian and cycle friendly routes. By investing in a new area of public parkland, a diverse range of recreational opportunities including formal and informal play, cycle tracks and footpaths could be provided which will see the promotion of healthier outdoor activity based lifestyles.



## Habitat and Access Management

Columba Park can be transformed from the existing agricultural fields into a managed parkland habitat, greatly enhancing the ecological and biodiversity value of the site. The parkland habitat and additional green infrastructure within the development will act as a habitat corridor through the site, creating greater connectivity to the wider landscape, particularly Barr Beacon and Doe Bank Park.

Management of the scattered trees, species-rich hedgerows, ponds and species-rich grassland to be created within Columba Park will result in increased structural and species diversity within the sites habitats. The management will be of benefit to local amphibian, reptile, bird, mammal and invertebrate populations.

Access to the parkland will be via a designated pedestrian/cycle network. A further series of informal paths will create routes through specific areas of the parkland habitats, minimising impacts on the retained hedgerow network.





## 10. Benefits and Impact

*The comprehensive range of key benefits presented in the Columba Park vision, shows the exciting opportunity we have to create a new sustainable neighbourhood, promoting positive working between public and private sectors.*

### Community Benefits

Columba Park could deliver significant benefits for the Borough. It can help meet an identified need to deliver new, attractive and sustainable homes. The residential development could deliver around 1500 homes. The new homes could also create a diverse housing supply, including a mix of open market and affordable homes.

### Environmental Benefits

At the heart of the proposals is a green infrastructure strategy, the benefits of which will positively impact the region. The Columba Park proposal would include a significant amount of new open space, and the green infrastructure strategy will be dynamic and multifunctional. This will lead to vast improvements in the biodiversity of the wider area.

### Economic Benefits

Columba Park can deliver significant economic benefits for Walsall Borough and the wider West Midlands region. During both the construction and operational phases.

The construction of the proposed development will generate initial benefits by directly supporting 180 gross full time equivalent jobs employment in addition to indirect and induced benefits associated with supply chain and employee spend. The construction phase of the development will also significantly increase economic activity (measured as Gross Value Added) by around £151.3 million within the wider economy.

The positive economic impacts of Columba Park will be experienced for long after the construction phase by providing a range of local benefits as the new homes are occupied. The proposed mix of homes is expected to attract a full range of households including working-age, economically active households and families. Through the delivery

of family housing the proposed development will help to sustain a balanced population and community, providing an essential foundation for securing the long-term security of key services such as local schools.

The attraction of economically active households to the local area will result in increased levels of disposable income. The new residents are expected to generate £16.7 million in retail expenditure and £9.1 million in leisure expenditure each year, which will help to sustain local shops and services and contribute towards the competitiveness of the local area.

The development of new homes will also significantly boost Walsall Council revenues through the generation of £2.3 million additional Council Tax annually and a total of £7.4 million in New Homes Bonus payments. This revenue will support investment in maintaining and enhancing local infrastructure and the built and natural environment.



# 11. Summary

*This document has demonstrated how and why we believe that residential development at Columba Park represents a unique opportunity for positive and beneficial growth within the Walsall Borough.*

In summary, the development of Columba Park offers the opportunity to:



Deliver around 1500 much needed homes. The new homes could also create a diverse housing supply, including a mix of open market and affordable homes



Provide new public open space with the potential for children's natural play created through the inclusion of a strong green infrastructure strategy



Retain existing natural assets and enhance them improving the biodiversity of the wider area



Create new greenways with footpath and cycle routes linking Barr Beacon and Sutton Park, making these existing areas of public open space more accessible

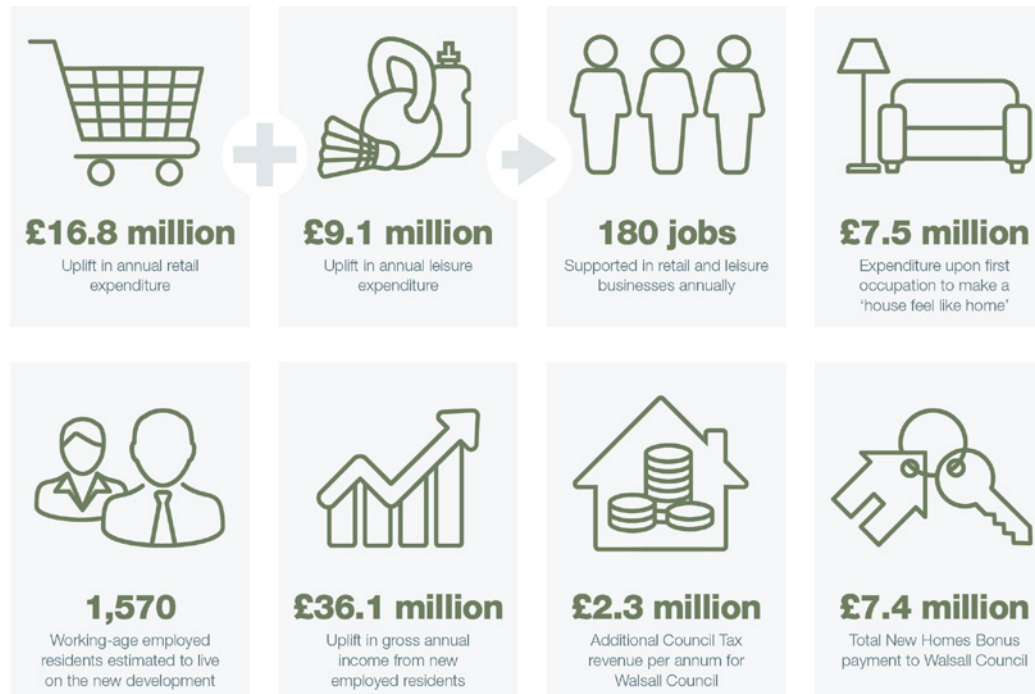


The economic benefits of development at Columba Park include:

### Construction Phase



### Operational Phase



*The document has illustrated an indicative spatial framework which could form the foundation for future development proposals at Columba Park. This has been built up in response to appreciation of the unique context, demonstrating a highly credible and deliverable opportunity. This is intended to be the starting point to a process of refinement and detailing, based on further assessment of potential constraints and technical feasibility work.*

*We are willing and fully intend to engage further in the BCCS review, and with Walsall Council, residents and other key stakeholders to discuss the merits of this exciting opportunity.*





Prepared for IM Land  
by Brownhill Hayward Brown Ltd,  
trading as BHB Architects,

in conjunction with Turleys, SLR Consulting, TEP, M-EC and EDP.

bhb architects