

Land off Birmingham Road **Great Barr**

Vision framework for a strategic
development opportunity

September 2017

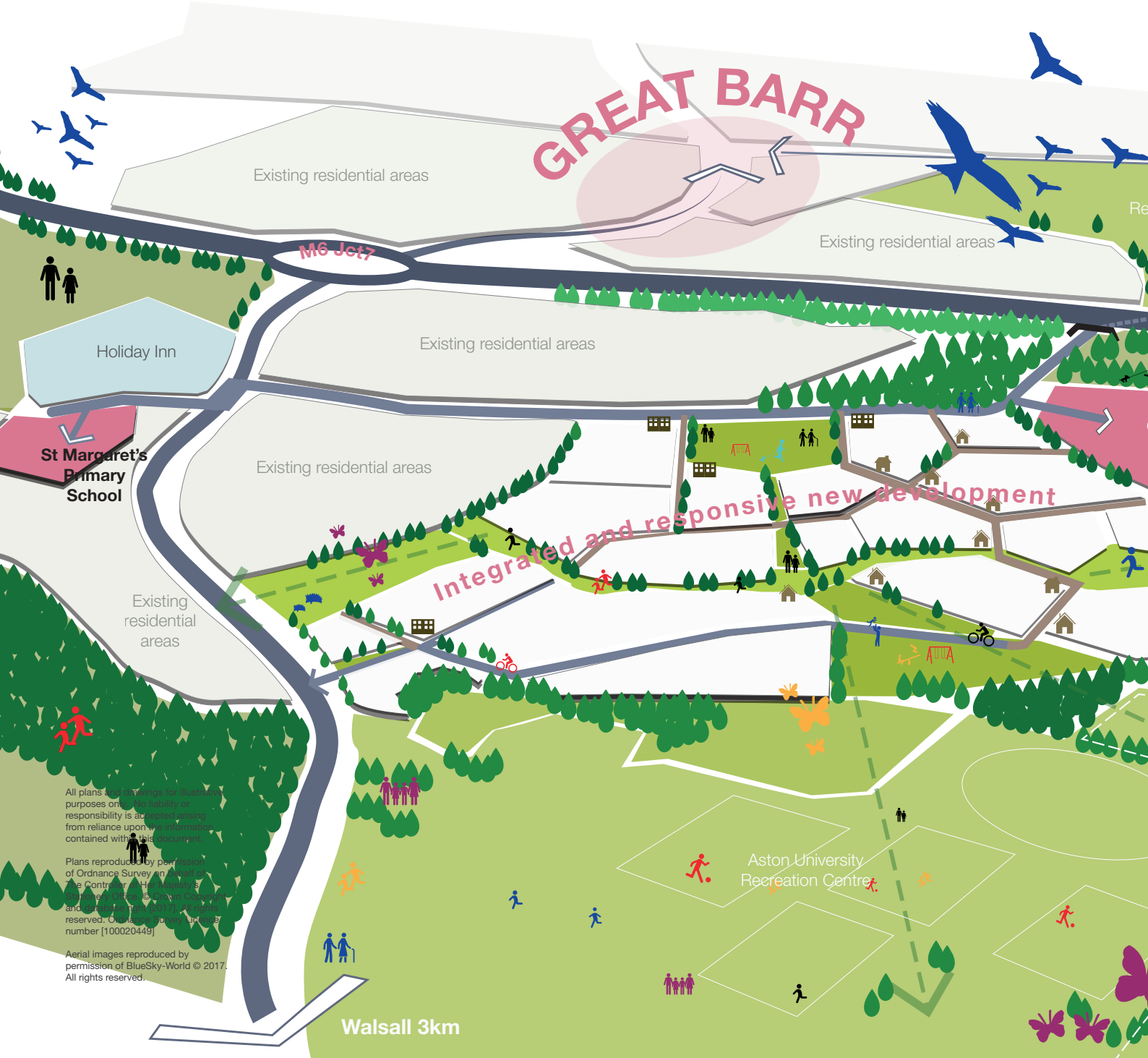


Potential

2 **Land off Birmingham Road at Great Barr provides the foundation for high quality development that can combine key attributes of great location, distinctive environment and high design quality.**

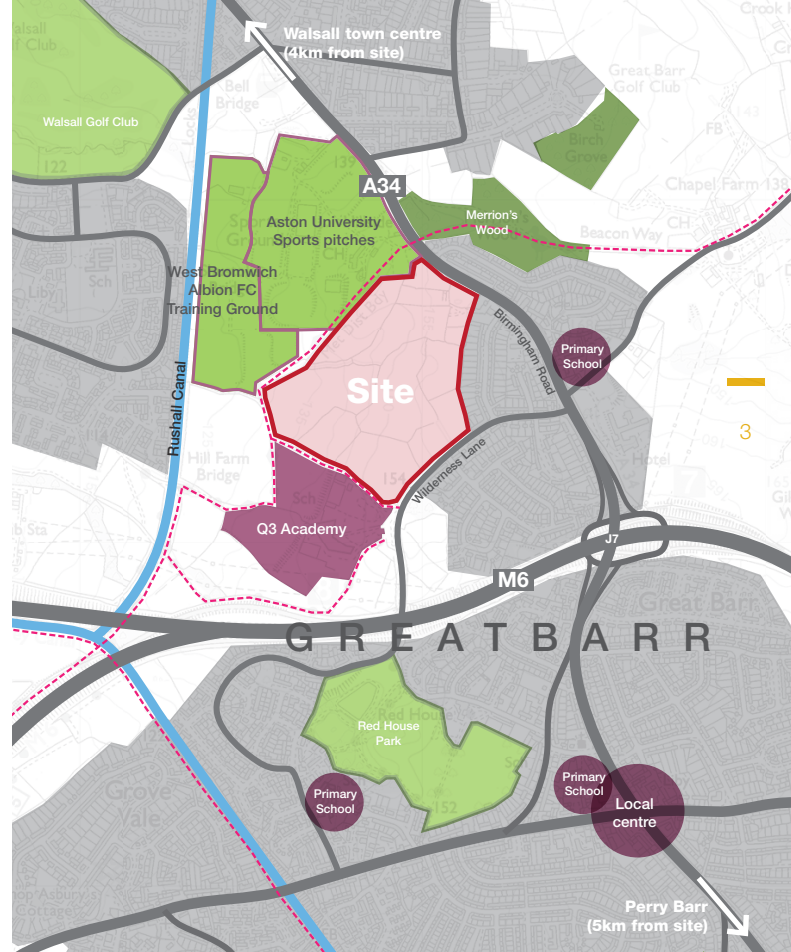
Development here has the potential to enhance the sustainability and accessibility of existing communities and facilities: delivering greater diversity, greater choice and greater sense of place.

This can create a healthy and interactive development that enhances quality of life for new and existing residents.



At approximately 27ha in area, this is a highly flexible site that could deliver mixed use development including both residential and employment - performing roles that meet a variety of needs. The location and scale of development has potential to;

- Make a significant contribution to strategic planning and economic growth ambitions of Sandwell, the Black Country and the wider West Midlands region.
- Meet evidenced housing and/or employment needs.
- Provide a balance between built form and green space assets.
- Enhance access to the Rushall Canal corridor, through to Sandwell Valley Country Park.
- Create new accessible green space.
- Facilitate enhancements to local wildlife value.
- Create and improve links between existing community assets including the Q3 Academy.
- Make use of natural topographic characteristics to shape and enhance local views.



Site location

Delivering on potential

The site sits in an area with immediate access to strong, sustainable and growing infrastructure. A strategic perspective needs to be taken on the value of maintaining the Green Belt status of the site in the long term, against its potential to deliver a sustainable and positive form of development that maximises existing physical and green infrastructure.

A positive and progressive review of Green Belt objectives should not only recognise the changing needs of Sandwell and the wider region, but look at specific opportunities like this site at Birmingham Road to create a distinctive, high quality development in a location that is already integrated into the heart of a major urban conurbation.

This site presents a particularly strong opportunity to balance new development with landscape elements that will respect the valley setting and fully integrate and enhance existing features. Development can be planned to deliver strong green spaces and corridors of high recreational and wildlife value.

HIMOR

HIMOR's track record and expertise provide great confidence that this opportunity can be fully maximised. HIMOR is a privately owned property investment and land promotion company, who are a trusted partner for local authorities seeking major economic developments. We have worked closely with many local authorities to deliver signature developments, including Trafford MBC, Stockport MBC, Wigan MBC, Manchester City Council and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

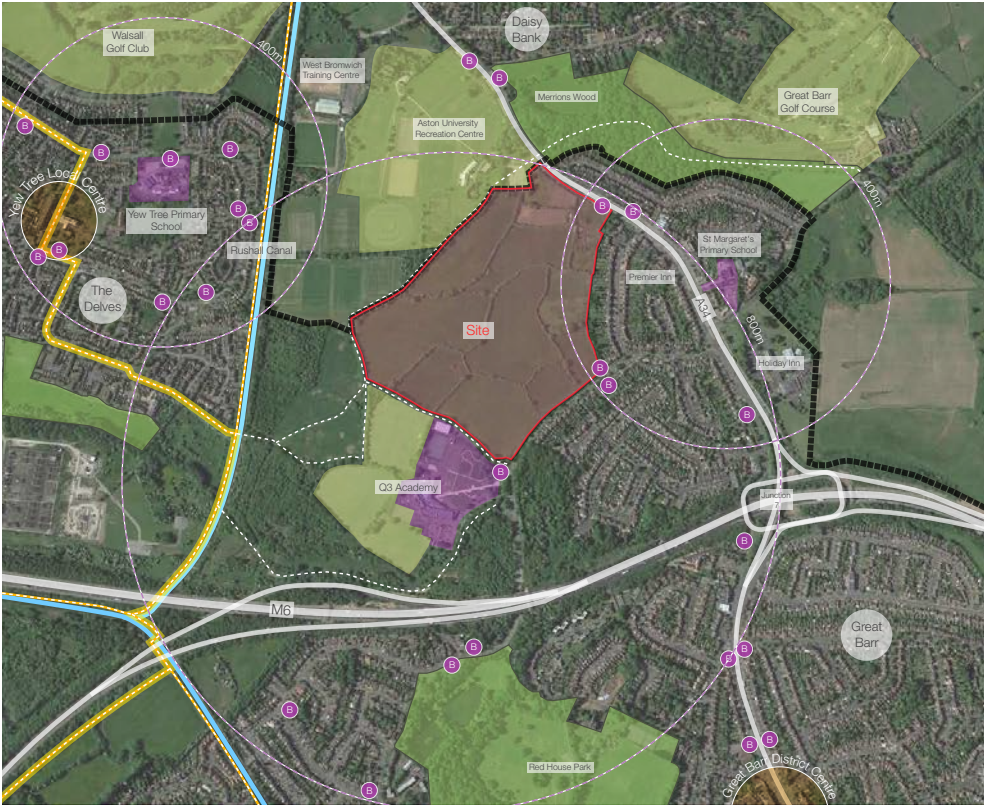
Find out more about HIMOR by visiting www.himor.co.uk

HIMOR 

Site opportunities

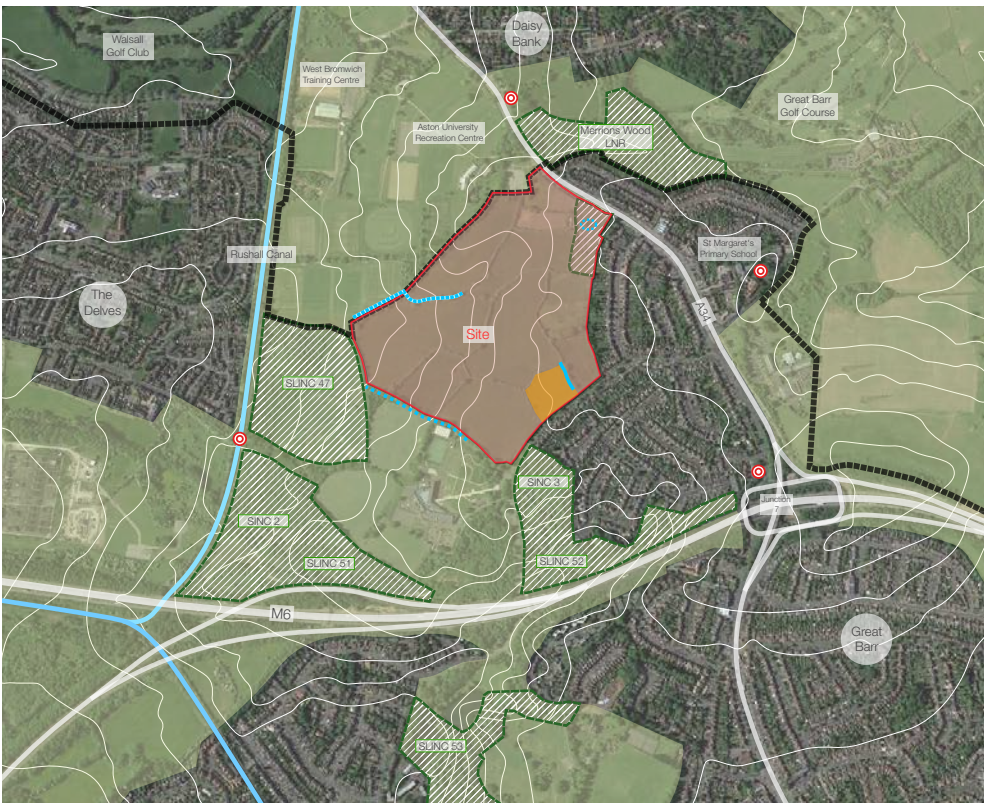
We have undertaken robust assessment of key issues to be considered in formulating a development proposition for the site, and this document is accompanied by a suite of assessment reports which provide in-depth analysis. An overview of selected site and area characteristics is illustrated below.

4 Movement and infrastructure



The site has excellent connectivity in terms of direct access to the strategic highway network, significant local arterial routes and regular bus services. National cycling and walking routes pass immediately adjacent to the site, complementing the local movement network to provide strategic recreational routes into the wider Sandwell Valley. The Q3 Academy provides high quality secondary and 6th Form education, and the site is in close proximity to three primary schools. The diverse local centre of Great Barr lies less than 1.5km to the south.

Environment

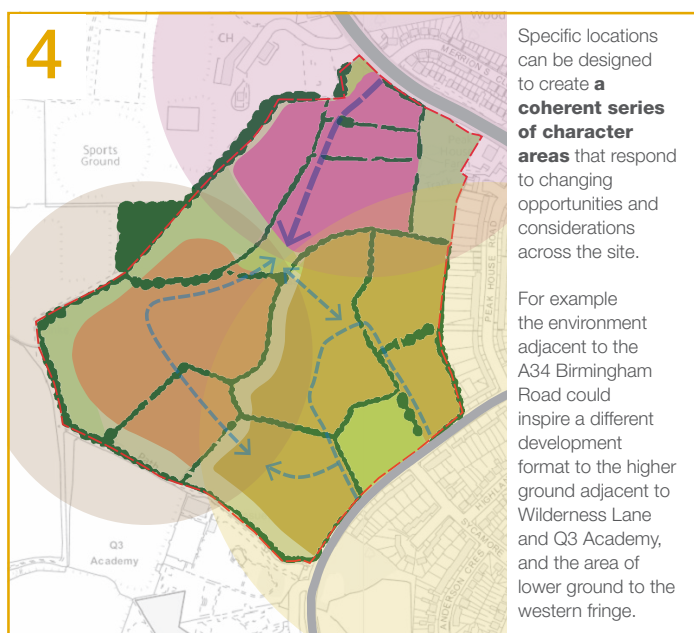
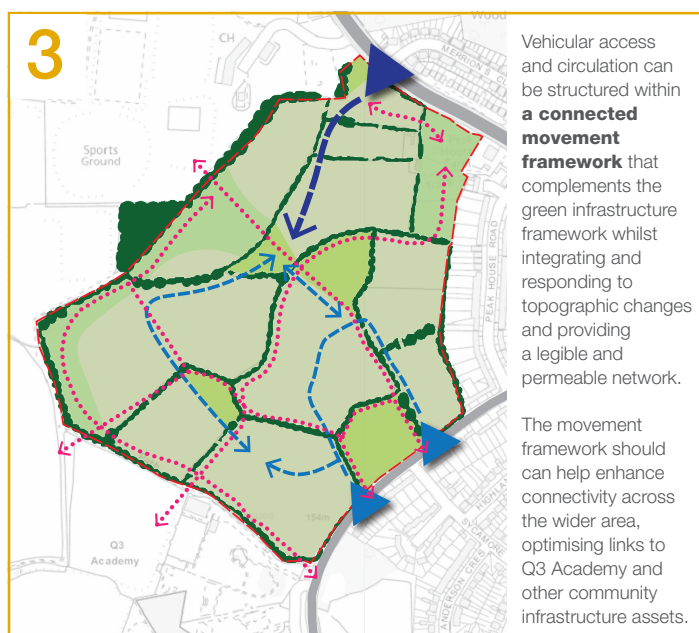
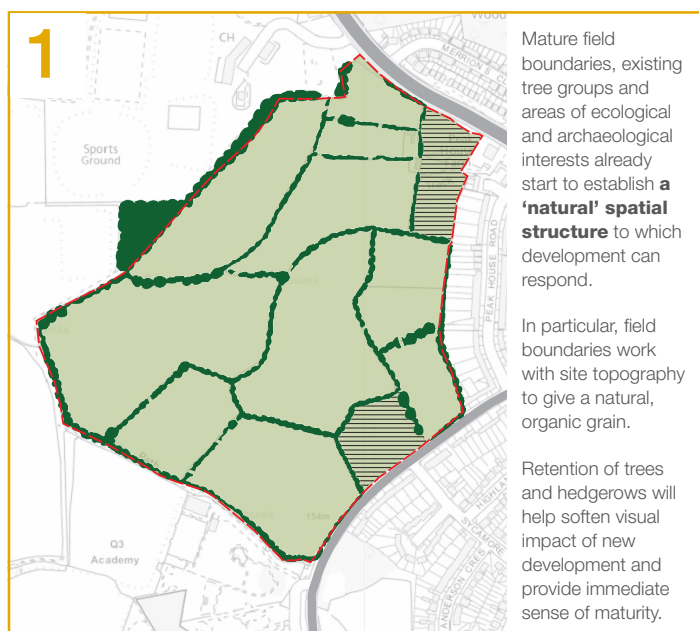


The area has diverse environmental characteristics. This is urbanised Green Belt compartmentalised by activities including the Q3 Academy, Aston University recreation centre and WBA Football Club training ground. There are wildlife assets in the form of local nature reserves (largely clustered to the south adjacent to motorway and Rushall Canal). The land gently slopes towards the west / south west from the ridge of higher ground which is marked by the A34. The A34 is a historic route which although extensively modernised to maximise capacity has some Listed Buildings.

Responsive design approach

Emerging key principles

Existing area and site characteristics can inspire an approach to development that addresses specific constraints and opportunities - a tailored and responsive design approach. In taking the site forward, our objective would be to create a new built environment that is sensitive to and embedded in its context - optimising potential to enhance the local area - but at the same time taking the opportunity to create a distinctive and inspiring place in its own right, providing a high quality, aspirational addition to the area.



Potential approach 1

Mixed residential and employment

- 6 This accessible location, strategically positioned in close proximity to Junction 7 of the M6, means that the site can be seen as an opportunity to deliver a significant employment hub alongside new homes. The size and physical characteristics of the site means that it can naturally accommodate these two uses - high capacity access direct from the A34 opening up the lower lying parts of the site for employment development, with the parts of the site on the higher plateau - accessed from Wilderness Lane - being developed for new homes.





Given the flexibility of the site, employment development could potentially be delivered in different formats and across a range of use classes, but could come together to complement:

- The ambitions of the Sandwell MBC Economic Prospectus
- The success of the Black Country LEP in establishing a strong business hub at the heart of major markets
- The emergence of the WMCA as a driver of economic growth and skills training and as a facilitator of strategic regional planning.

Employment development could help to deliver a high quality environment that is compatible with and respectful of existing and potential new residential communities.

On the basis of initial assumptions on potential net development area, this development approach could yield in the region of 300 - 400 new homes plus approximately 35,000 - 40,000sqm employment space.



Potential approach 2

Residential development

8 The site has clear potential to become the foundation to an attractive, distinctive and connected residential community. Access to the south (Wilderness Road) will enable new homes to become integrated with existing communities and in particular maximise direct links into the Q3 Academy. This would help enhance the role of Wilderness Road as a 'community spine' that connects St Margaret's C and E Primary School in the east with Q3 Academy and Red House Park and Grove Vale Primary School further south.



Residential development could potentially deliver a host of benefits, underpinning the sustainability of local facilities and enhancing the range and mix of the local housing offer. The site has the size and flexibility to accommodate a range of densities and typologies, set within a network of green spaces and with immediate access to distinctive and high quality local landscapes.

On the basis of initial assumptions on potential net development area, this development approach could yield in the region of **700 - 900 new homes**.

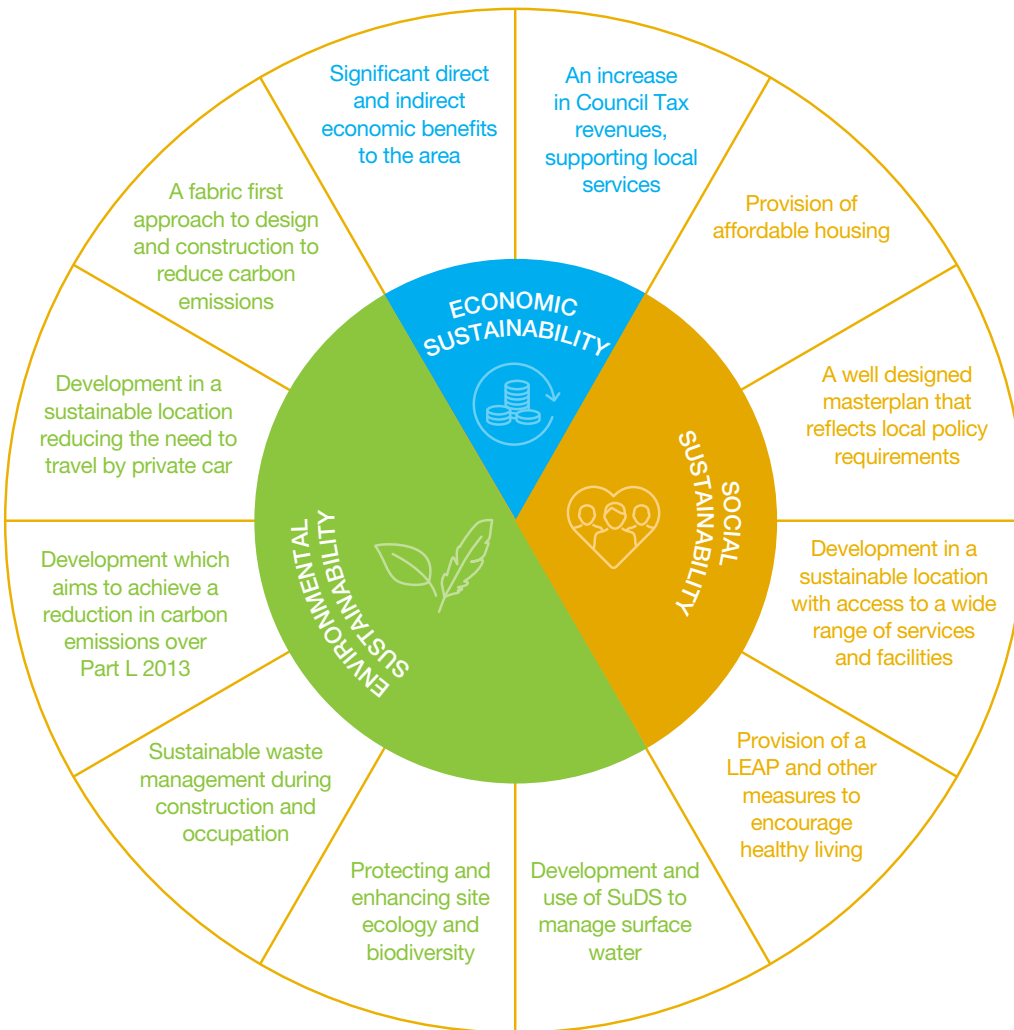


Summary

10 The flexibility of the site will lead to further exploration of development potential, the benefits this could deliver for local communities and contribution made to strategic planning and economic development objectives.

We would welcome the opportunity to work in partnership with Sandwell Council to explore preferred options, in terms of land use mix, landscape structure, open space provision, community infrastructure provision and phasing.

However development is ultimately configured, we believe that this site presents a clear opportunity to make a significant contribution to sustainable development objectives at local, regional and national level.



Immediate access from the A34 Birmingham Road less than 1km from M6, with opportunity for a high quality gateway junction



Wilderness Road enhanced as a key local connection to community infrastructure including Q3 Academy



Opportunities to strengthen a distinctive green infrastructure network and integrate development with existing tree groups





Turley