

Land Promotion Document

Land at Springhill Lane, Wolverhampton

Prepared on behalf of Jay Farm Homes Limited & Lawnswood Homes Limited

August 2017



Document to be printed at A3

Executive Summary

This document has been prepared on behalf of our Client(s), Jay Farm Homes Limited and Lawnswood Homes Limited, to support the promotion of their land interests at Springhill Lane, Wolverhampton for residential development.

The site, which is 3.64 hectares, is located within the administrative bounds of South Staffordshire District Council but directly abuts The City of Wolverhampton Council authority along its eastern edge.

This document seeks to demonstrate that the site is entirely appropriate for residential development, it should be duly considered for release from the Green Belt and that it would be valuable in meeting the housing needs for the Housing Market Area which incorporates both South Staffordshire District Council and the adjoining Black Country Core Strategy area.

Site Specific Considerations

This Report demonstrates that the promotion site is Available, Suitable and Achievable for residential development and would therefore represent an appropriate release from the Green Belt. Key issues in terms of the site's consideration include that;

- This site is available for development and our Client is willing to release their land for housing development in the immediate future.
- The site can deliver a development in a sustainable location that could provide a housing allocation during this and/or future development plan periods to ensure that successive Green Belt reviews are not required and housing requirements are deliverable within the wider Housing Market Area.
- The site is bound by significant land holdings within the ownership of Staffordshire County Council and, whilst no formal agreement is in place, this could provide an

opportunity to release a larger development site which could form a strategic allocation meeting the needs of both South Staffordshire and the wider Black Country Housing Market Area.

- Suitable and safe access can be achieved from Springhill Lane to deliver the level of housing envisaged in this Promotional Document. Indeed, two new site access points have already been consented by South Staffordshire Council under application reference 16/01078/FUL which would be able to accommodate over and above the quantum of development considered herein.
- A range of alternative forms of transport (to the private motor car) are readily available within an appropriate proximity to the site. This would provide all residents with a full range of transport options.
- Any development on the site will generally be read against the landscape context of the site, which is bound by the settlement of Wolverhampton, and visually sensitive areas of the site can be dealt with through suitable native landscaping and the strategic placement of open space.
- With the exception of the Green Belt, the site lies outside of any protective ecological, flood, historic or other landscape designations and is therefore considered less sensitive than other sites considered within the South Staffordshire Green Belt Review and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.
- By virtue of the existing development footprint on the site, the site's relationship with the settlement edge of Wolverhampton, the topographical nature of the site and surrounds, and the presence of large overhead power lines, the Green Belt function of the site has already been eroded.
- There are no notable ecological designations relevant to the site. With the retention of established planting, where appropriate and the introduction of new native strategic planting and open space, ecological enhancements could

be delivered over and above the site's existing agricultural contribution.

- The site contains no known heritage assets and is not in close proximity to any designated or non-designated heritage assets. Any risk of unknown buried remains is low and can be appropriately managed as part of the planning process.
- The site is not liable to flooding and the ground conditions mean that a suitable and sustainable drainage solution can be achieved.

Based on the above, the site is considered suitable for release from the Green Belt and subsequent residential development. Through the provision of strategically located public open space and landscaping the site's defensible boundaries could be strengthened to create a more defined and defensible edge to the settlement of Wolverhampton.

Overall the site represents an excellent opportunity for delivering some of the housing land requirement for the Housing Market Area during this local plan period and/ or as safeguarded land for future reviews.

Green Belt Considerations

As identified within the South Staffordshire Partial Green Belt Review Method Statement, prepared by LUC and published in November 2016, *"...the District is at risk from development 'leapfrogging' to sites immediately beyond the Green Belt boundary. This can result in unsustainable patterns of housing, public services or employment land."* As such, there is a need for South Staffordshire to seek to release suitable Green Belt sites to meet housing needs up to 2028.

However, given the emphasis of the South Staffordshire Core Strategy (adopted December 2012) to locate development within or adjacent to the principal villages within South Staffordshire (in accordance with Core Policy 6), no review was undertaken for the

Green Belt which bounds the settlement edge and authoritative boundary of The City of Wolverhampton.

This stance is evidenced within the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment ('SHLAA') Update 2016. The promotion site is located within Locality Area 5 within which development was identified to be principally located around the settlements of Wombourne, Kinver and Swindon. A total of 114 sites were considered within the SHLAA Update 2016, of which only a single site outside of these settlements was considered suitable for delivery given its location within a settlement boundary (site 335a – The Limes, Plantation Lane). All remaining sites not in proximity of the settlements detailed above were discounted on the bases that they did "... *not accord with agreed Spatial Strategy and/or Settlement Hierarchy*". No sites discounted as part of the SHLAA Update 2016 were taken forward for consideration within the subsequent SHLAA publication plan in 2017.

From the context of Locality Area 5, it is clear from the promoted and available non-Green Belt SHLAA sites that there will be very little land available outside of the current Green Belt boundaries to deliver housing over the next two development plan periods. This issue will only be exacerbated should the Black Country Core Strategy Review identify that further housing need for the Housing Market Area would have to be accommodated on Green Belt sites in neighbouring authority areas.

Given that the Green Belt '*should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan*' (paras 83 – 85 of the NPPF) and that the Planning Advisory Service suggests that a Green Belt review should last for 'two plan lifespans', it is critical that any review at this stage is sufficient to deliver the long term housing requirements of South Staffordshire Council and any required cross boundary provision.

In light of the above, it is therefore contended that the underlying strategy to the South Staffordshire District Council Partial Green Belt Review is fundamentally flawed as it was based on a preconceived assumption that sites not adjoining the 15

settlements identified within the Core Strategy (Core Policy 6) should be immediately dismissed from consideration. This is the not the principal aim of a Green Belt Review and does not accord with the National Planning Policy Framework or associated guidance for the undertaking of such reviews. Critically this means that the Green Belt Review is silent on any consideration of sites located on the urban fringe of Wolverhampton which might be demonstrated to be more appropriate as a Green Belt release than the limited number of sites considered within the SHLAA.

It should be emphasised that the SHLAA is aimed at identifying potential housing sites between plan reviews and should not be the driving force behind a Green Belt Review. Further given the cross boundary housing requirements, which are recognised in the Black Country Review Documents, this starting point for the Green Belt Review is inappropriate and liable to lead to a need for successive Greenbelt Reviews, which would be inappropriate and unnecessary if a full review were undertaken.

SLR has undertaken an initial review of the Green Belt in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') and the criteria utilised within the South Staffordshire District Council Partial Green Belt Review. As evidenced herein, the site is considered suitable for subsequent release from the Green Belt and should therefore be duly considered for allocation.

It is for these reasons that we would urge the site be considered for strategic release from the Green Belt to accommodate the likely housing requirements for at least two local plan review periods.

Introduction

This Land Promotion Document is submitted on behalf of our Client(s), Jay Farm Homes Limited and Lawnswood Homes Limited, who is the freehold owner of the site in question (See Location Plan and Topographical Survey attached as Appendices 1 and 2 respectively).

Our Client is promoting their land for release from the Green Belt as a housing allocation and/or safeguarded land for future development. As such they support the release of the site and the contribution which this can make to delivering, the current and future Development Plan housing requirements both for the South Staffordshire District and, potentially, any cross boundary requirements brought forward under the Black Country Core Strategy.

Plan 1 - Location Plan



With regard to the above, it is also duly contended that the underlying strategy to the South Staffordshire District Council Partial Green Belt Review is fundamentally flawed as it was based on a preconceived assumption that sites not adjoining the 15

settlements identified within the Core Strategy should be dismissed from consideration. This is not the principal aim of a Green Belt Review and does not accord with the National Planning Policy Framework or associated guidance for the undertaking of such reviews.

Further information regarding the Green Belt is provided within the various sections below.

Site Location and Ownership

The site, which is 3.64 hectares, is located on the south western edge of Wolverhampton, approximately 6km to the southwest of the designated city centre. The site is also located approximately 370m from the designated local centre of Spring Hill, whilst the local centres of Warstones Road, Merry Hill and Penn Manor are all located within 1.6km of the site.

In terms of its wider setting within South Staffordshire, the site is located approximately 1.2 miles north of Wombourne and 0.75 miles to the southeast of Lower Penn. In terms of other major centres, the site is located approximately 4.8 miles northwest of Dudley and 4.2 miles west of Bilston.

The site is currently a mixture of residential and agricultural uses, with a variety of built structures spread across the southern portion of the site including two residential properties, large barn structures and a number of ad hoc outbuildings. As such, whilst the site is currently located within the designated Green Belt, its character is a mixture of both greenfield and brownfield.

Indeed, the site's current character and context with the adjoining settlement boundary of Wolverhampton, the purposes of the Green Belt are considered to have been eroded in this location. This is considered further later in this Land Promotion Document.

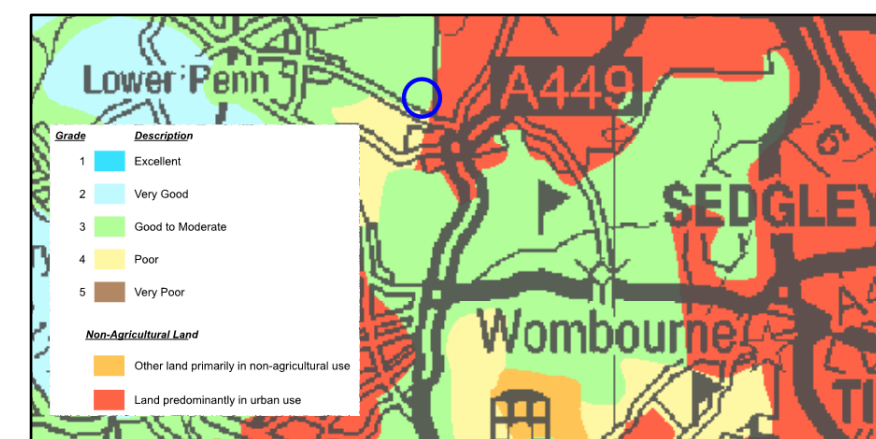
The Location Plan attached at Appendix 1 and reproduced above identifies our Client's land ownership in red and illustrates how this

relates to the administrative boundary of The City of Wolverhampton.

Plan 2 – Topographic Survey



As identified within the Natural England Regional Maps, the site has an Agricultural Land Classification of '3 – Good to Moderate' but immediately adjoins land identified as 'land predominantly in urban area' (site within blue circle). This ALC would need to be reviewed given that the Natural England maps were published in 2010 and are not significantly detailed in this respect.



Planning Context

Planning History

The site has been subject to a number of planning applications in the recent past which clearly demonstrate the development history of the site despite its location within the Green Belt. These are outlined, in brief, below.

Historic applications with limited information available on the local authority website:

- 83/00694 – Tennis Court and plunge pool – unknown outcome;
- 84/00205 – Erection of floodlights and use of tennis court for league and cup netball – unknown outcome;
- 86/00329 – Renewal of permission for use of netball court and floodlights – unknown outcome; and
- 87/00662 – Extension to Springhill Cottage – unknown outcome.

Applications with full information provided on the local authority website:

- 99/00887/FUL – Front Boundary Wall – Refused 10th November 1999;
- 00/01098/FUL – Boundary Wall and Gates – Approved 8th November 2000;
- 01/00558/FUL – Replacement changing rooms, equipment store and swimming pool – Approved 11th October 2001;
- 01/01052/COU – Change of use of barn to dwellinghouse – Refused 7th January 2002;
- 01/01053/FUL – 3 freshwater pools and boathouse, walled garden, new track and septic tank – Approved 8th February 2002;
- 04/01086/COU – Conversion of garage to bungalow – Refused 20th October 2004;
- 05/00768/FUL – Conversion of the existing detached garage workshop and store to an annexe to provide

- accommodation for a dependent relative – Refused 9th February 2006;
- 08/00022/TREE – Tree Preservation Order No. 22/1965. G23 – prune mature Beech – Approved;
- 11/00966/COU – Conversion of garage into a dwelling – Refused 30th January 2012;
- 12/01022/LUP – Conversion of garage to annexe for family member – Refused 19th February 2013;
- 12/01023/COU – Change of use of land within the residential curtilage for the storage of 5 caravans (maximum) – Withdrawn 27th February 2013;
- 13/00258/LUP – Conversion of garage to annexe for family member – Approved 24th May 2013;
- 13/01027/COU – Change of use to holiday let – Approved 27th February 2014;
- 14/00637/COU – Re-use of netball court to provide 10 pitches for touring caravans – Refused 31st October 2014;
- 15/00290/FUL – Change of use of an annexe to a dwelling – Approved 4th June 2015;
- 15/00764/COU – Change of use to granny annexe – Approved 20th October 2015;
- 15/00902/FUL – Proposed re-use of net ball court providing six pitches for touring caravans – Refused 8th December 2015;
- 16/01078/FUL – Proposed alteration works to existing access provision from No. 62 and 58 Springhill Lane – Approved 11th January 2017;
- 16/01095/FUL – 2 no. proposed 4 bedroom detached dwellings and associated detached garages – Refused 9th March 2017; and
- 17/00224/SCHNUR – Change of use of existing agricultural building to nursery – Refuse 25th April 2017.

As can be evidenced from the above planning history, the site has been subject to a number of built developments dating back to 1983 (no online records available prior to this date). As such, the site is considered to have a significant brownfield footprint within the southern half of the site that has been subject to significant

change over this period. This development history is not in keeping with the current Green Belt designation and therefore undermines its allocation somewhat.

Development Plan Representations

The site has been previously been promoted for residential development in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment ('SHLAA') Update 2016. Within the SHLAA Update 2016 the site was discounted on the bases that it did "... *not accord with agreed Spatial Strategy and/or Settlement Hierarchy*".

Representations were subsequently submitted to the Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment ('HELAA') in December 2016. Given the ongoing nature of the HELAA, no formal review of the site associated with this process has been undertaken to date.

It should be noted that the site has not been assessed under the previous Partial Green Belt Review (2016), which concentrated on sites around Wombourne, Kinver and Swindon in this area of South Staffordshire. As such, the Council has not formally addressed whether the promotion site still meets the necessary National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') requirements for Green Belt designation.

South Staffordshire District Council's housing target in the adopted Core Strategy is 3,850 dwellings over the period 2006-2028. However, the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Black Country has identified an Objectively Assessed Need for South Staffordshire of 270 dwellings per annum over the period 2014-2036.

The 5 Year Housing Land Supply Statement for 2016-2017 identifies that South Staffordshire District Council can demonstrate a 4.39 year housing land supply including a modest windfall allowance of 30 dwellings per annum.

Between 2014 and 2017, there has been a single year where housing completions exceeded the OAN and 2 years with a shortfall, leading to a 10% shortfall against the target for the 3 year period. Notwithstanding, the Council's past housing completions

met or exceeded a lower annual housing target of 175 dwellings per annum between 2006 and 2014. This led to a considerable cumulative oversupply of 553 dwellings during this period and, as such, the authority is only required to accommodate a 5% buffer as required by the NPPF. Finally, the 5 Year Housing Land Supply Statement identifies that there is a supply of 4,773 dwellings as proposed to be allocated through the Site Allocations Document ('SAD') for the period 2006-2028.

Notwithstanding the above, housing needs must be placed in the context of the wider Housing Market Area which includes the needs identified within the Black Country Core Strategy.

The Black Country Core Strategy Issues and Options identifies that a total of 24,670 new homes will be required over the plan period (2014-2031), including an accommodation of 3,000 extra homes to address a shortfall in the wider Housing Market Area.

Section 4.31 of the Core Strategy Issues and Options Report details that not all of housing land supply can be met through the release of sites within the Black Country alone. As such, the Black Country will need to work with other authorities to 'export' the shortfall in housing land supply, agreeing to try and accommodate this within other authorities within the Black Country Housing Market Area – including that of South Staffordshire District Council.

Section 4.34 identifies that as the "... *Black Country boundary follows the edge of the urban area in many places, areas on the urban fringe of the Black Country which fall within neighbouring districts of South Staffordshire... may provide sustainable locations for growth to meet Black Country needs. Given the possibility that exporting housing growth to authorities within the HMA will be necessary, the Call for Sites extends to parts of these authorities which adjoin the Black Country urban area or which could potentially form part of a larger development which could adjoin the Black Country urban area.*"

Report Format and Content

The remainder of this Document takes the following format:

- Consideration of Green Belt
- Transport and Access Considerations
- Landscape and Visual Considerations
- Ecological Considerations
- Historic Environment Considerations
- FRA and Drainage Considerations
- Draft Masterplan Process
- Overall Sustainability
- Delivery and Timing
- Key Opportunities and Benefits
- Conclusion

In addition, a number of detailed plans and drawings are included to support the consideration of this site, within the Appendices at the back of this Document. Thumbnail extracts of these various plans are reproduced though the text of this document for ease of reference, but should be cross referenced with the full drawings for completeness.

The Plan numbers, descriptions and appendix references are listed below for reference:

- Plan 1 – Appendix 1 – Location Plan
- Plan 2 – Appendix 2 – Topographical Survey
- Plan 3 – Appendix 3 – Aerial Plan
- Plan 4 – Appendix 4 – Accessibility Plan
- Plan 5 – Appendix 5 – Consented Site Access'
- Plan 6 – Appendix 6 – Basic 3D Assessment Model
- Plan 7 – Appendix 7 – ZTV Study
- Plan 8 – Appendix 8 – Site Context
- Plan 9 – Appendix 9 – Topography
- Plan 10 – Appendix 10 – Extent of Green Belt Designation
- Plan 11 – Appendix 11 – Ecological Designations
- Plan 12 – Appendix 12 – Priority Habitats

- Plan 13 – Appendix 13 – Indicative Landscaping & Open Space Plan
- Plan 14 – Appendix 14 – Designated Heritage Assets Plan
- Plan 15 – Appendix 15 – Non-Designated Heritage Assets Plan
- Plan 16 – Appendix 16 – Historic Mapping Plan
- Plan 17 – Appendix 17 – Flood Map Plan
- Plan 18 – Appendix 18 – Geological Map
- Plan 19 – Appendix 19 – Constraints and Opportunities Plan
- Plan 20 – Appendix 20 – Initial Concept Sketch
- Plan 21 – Appendix 21 – Draft Masterplan
- Plan 22 – Appendix 22 – Adjoining County Council Land

Consideration of Green Belt

National Planning Policy Framework

When considering the Green Belt, it is necessary to first understand the NPPF context. Section 9 of the NPPF relates to protecting Green Belt land, stating that it serves five purposes:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Paragraph 84 of the NPPF states that *“When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries local planning authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development. They should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary”*.

Paragraph 85 of the NPPF identifies that when defining Green Belt boundaries, local planning authorities should:

- ensure consistency with the Local Plan strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;
- not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open;
- where necessary, identify in their plans areas of ‘safeguarded land’ between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period;

- make clear that the safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time. Planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land should only be granted following a Local Plan review which proposes the development;
- satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the development plan period; and
- define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.

Subsequent to the above, we have sought to consider the South Staffordshire District Council’s Partial Green Belt Review below.

Plan 3 – Aerial Plan



South Staffordshire Partial Green Belt Review (2016)

The South Staffordshire Partial Green Belt Review was originally completed in January 2014 but has subsequently been updated with a number of clarifications and re-published in November 2016. These clarifications and amendments primarily related to representations received during the completion of the South

Staffordshire Site Allocations Document (‘SAD’) Preferred Options Consultation.

The Partial Green Belt Review was intended to review the Green Belt around 15 of the 16 main and local service villages and the four free standing Strategic Employment Sites in South Staffordshire (N.B. only 14 villages were eventually assessed) in accordance with Core Policy 6 and sites identified within the SHLAA Update 2016. As such, consideration of the Green Belt adjacent to the authoritative boundary of Wolverhampton (the ‘West Midlands Metropolitan Green Belt’) was excluded from the partial review.

In light of the above, it is therefore contended that the underlying strategy to the Partial Green Belt Review is fundamentally flawed as it was based on a preconceived assumption that sites not adjoining the 15 settlements identified within the Core Strategy should be immediately dismissed from consideration. This is the not the principal aim of a Green Belt Review and does not accord with the National Planning Policy Framework or associated guidance for the undertaking of such reviews. Critically this means that the Green Belt Review is silent on any consideration of sites located on the urban fringe of Wolverhampton which might be demonstrated to be more appropriate as a Green Belt release than the limited number of sites considered as a result of the SHLAA.

It should be emphasised that the SHLAA is aimed at identifying potential housing sites between plan reviews and should not be the driving force behind a Green Belt Review. Further given the cross boundary housing requirements, which are recognised in the Black Country Review Documents, this starting point for the Green Belt Review is inappropriate and liable to lead to a need for successive Greenbelt Reviews, which would be inappropriate and unnecessary if a full review were undertaken.

Therefore, SLR has sought to undertake a review of the promotion site based on the ‘review criteria’ contained within Appendix 1 of the South Staffordshire Partial Green Belt Review which were used to assess the sites contained therein. These criteria are,

however, considered skewed given that they seek to negatively score sites abutting the settlement boundaries of Wolverhampton, Dudley, Walsall or Cannock.

This review of the promotional site is provided below. Further, we recognise and recommend that a second stage review would need to be undertaken should the adjoining County Council land become available and be required to meet housing needs.

As you will note from the reviews provided below, the site is contended to compare favourably to other sites which have been brought forward for safeguarding under the current Partial Green Belt Review.

NPPF Green Belt Purposes	Issues for consideration	Criteria	Value	Assessment and Comments
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Location in relation to the West Midlands urban area (Wolverhampton, Dudley, Walsall and Cannock).	Is the parcel abutting the boundary of Wolverhampton, Dudley, Walsall or Cannock?	If yes, +++. If no, +	+++ The site directly abuts the settlement boundary of Wolverhampton.
	Ribbon development.	Does the parcel play a role in preventing ribbon development?	If strong role (i.e. it lies either side of a road corridor), ++ If no role, +	+ The site is located to the north of Springhill Lane which is already subject to significant Ribbon Development. The southern side of Springhill Lane is already significantly developed around Springhill Park and Wynne Crescent.
	Distance between parcel and the nearest neighbouring settlement(s).	What is the distance to the nearest neighbouring settlement?	If abuts boundary or <500m, +++ If between 500m and 2km from boundary, ++ If more than 2km, +	+++ The site directly abuts the settlement boundary of Wolverhampton.
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Location of the parcel.	Does the parcel play a major role in maintaining separation? (This will partly be a function of the size of the parcel).	Major, ++ Minor +	+ The site plays a minor role in the separation between the Springhill area of Wolverhampton and Lower Penn. However, the distance between the site and this settlement is significant enough that the impact upon separation would be minor.
To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	Type and location of physical boundaries bordering / separating parcels: motorways, railways, rivers or woods.	Are there natural or man-made features that could prevent settlements from merging with one another? (These could be outside the parcel itself).	If there is no significant boundary between the parcel and the neighbouring settlement, +++ If there is a less significant boundary, ++ If there is a significant boundary(s) between the parcel and the neighbouring settlement, +	++ The site is separated from Lower Penn to the west by a number of large agricultural fields, some of which are within the ownership of Staffordshire County Council. Overhead powerlines, agricultural fields, Penn Fields School / Highfields School and allotments are located to the north of the site. The site is bound by existing built up areas to the east and south.
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Significance of existing urbanising influences. Openness.	Has the parcel already been affected by encroachment of built development within the parcel?	If no encroachment, +++ If limited encroachment, ++ If already encroached upon, +	++ The site has already been encroached upon by a number of existing residential and

NPPF Green Belt Purposes	Issues for consideration	Criteria	Value	Assessment and Comments
				agricultural buildings, ad hoc outbuildings and overhead power lines in close proximity to the site.
	Significance and permanence of boundaries / features to contain development and prevent encroachment.	Are there existing natural or man-made features / boundaries that would prevent encroachment in the long term? (These could be outside the parcel itself).	If no significant boundary between the parcel and the neighbouring settlement, +++ If less significant boundary between the parcel and the neighbouring settlement, ++ If significant boundary(s) between the parcel and the neighbouring settlement, +	+ The site is separated from Lower Penn to the west by a number of large agricultural fields, some of which are within the ownership of Staffordshire County Council, mature hedgerows and established access roads leading to farmsteads. Overhead powerlines, agricultural fields, Penn Fields School / Highfields School and allotments are located to the north of the site. The site is bound by existing built up areas to the east and south.
To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	Countryside access / recreation.	Is there evidence of positive use of the countryside in this location (e.g. footpaths, bridleways, formal or informal sport and recreation)? (Accessible countryside on the doorstep).	If yes and abutting the settlement, ++ If yes but not abutting the settlement, or no +	+ The site is abutting the settlement of Wolverhampton but is not in close proximity to footpaths or bridleways, formal or informal sport and recreation. There is no positive use of the countryside in this location.
	Contribution of parcel to setting and special character of settlement.	Are there features of historic significance in the parcel or visible from the parcel?	If yes and in/abutting the parcel, +++ If yes and not abutting the parcel, ++ If no, +	+ There are no historic features of archaeological or cultural heritage importance within or in close proximity to the site.
	The need to incentivise development within settlements.	Does the settlement contain significant areas of brownfield land? (Only applies to one settlement).	If yes, ++ If no, +	+ There are limited opportunities for brownfield development within the Spring Hill area of Wolverhampton. As identified within the Black Country Core Strategy, a number of Green Belt sites will need to be release to meet housing needs within the Housing Market Area.

Transport and Access

Transport and Access

Local Services and Destinations

Manual for Streets (DfT, 2007), notes at Section 4.4.1 that:

“walking offers the greatest potential to replace short car trips, particularly those under 2km”

The site is also located approximately 370m from the designated local centre of Spring Hill, whilst the local centres of Warstones Road, Merry Hill and Penn Manor are all located within 2km of the site. Key local services within this distance include a hospital, doctors’ and dentists’ surgeries, chemists, library, Post Office, infant, junior and secondary schools. Furthermore, there are at least three convenience stores, two takeaway food outlets, restaurants and six public houses which also lie within 2km of the centre of the site.

In addition to the services available in the immediate vicinity of the site, additional day to day services and amenities can be found in Wolverhampton city centre, which lies approximately 6km to the northwest of the development site and is, as noted below, fully accessible from the development site by bus.

The locations of these services and destinations, and the distances thereto, are shown on Plan 4.

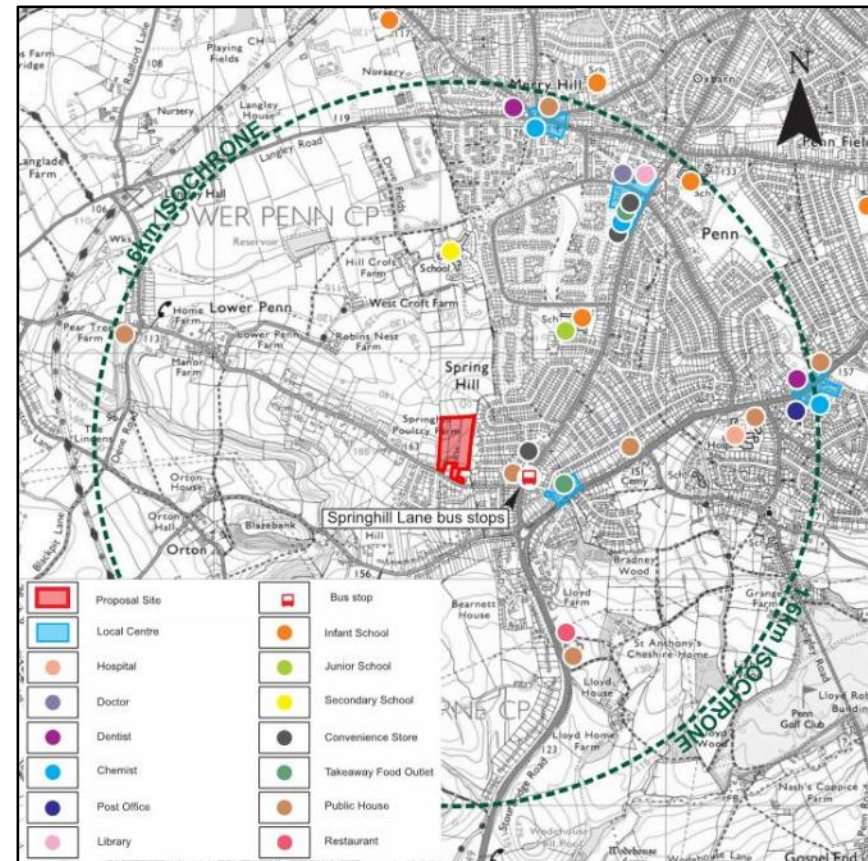
Buses

The nearest bus stops to the proposed development site are the ‘before’ and ‘after’ Spring Hill Lane stops on Warstones Road. These stops lie 350m to the east of the proposed access to the development site (the one which lies immediately to the west of No. 58 Springhill Lane), and thereby approximately 600m to the south-east of the centre of the site.

The Spring Hill Lane bus stops are used by two bus services, both operated by National Express West Midlands.

The No.4 service provides a commuting, shopping and leisure service to Wolverhampton, travelling onwards to the i54 Business Park from Monday to Saturday, and to Pendeford on Sundays. It also calls at the University of Wolverhampton bus stops from where it is a 500m walk to Wolverhampton Railway Station.

Plan 4 – Accessibility Plan



The No. 4 service operates every day of the week, offering a half-hourly service both before and after the peak periods from Monday to Saturday; a 20 minute frequency throughout the daytime from Monday to Saturday; and an hourly service in the evenings and on Sundays.

The journey time to Tower Street, Wolverhampton is a little under 20 minutes, the University is a little over 20 minutes, and to the i54 a little over 40 minutes. On weekdays and Saturdays, the first i54-bound service leaves the Spring Hill Lane stop at 0543, while on Sundays the first Pendeford service leaves at 0919. The last return service leaves the i54 at 2239 from Monday to Saturday, and leaves Pendeford at 2241 on Sundays.

The 714 service offers a school-run service to Compton Park Schools, with a journey time of 20 minutes. The morning service leaves the Spring Hill Lane stops at 0810, and the return leg leaves the school at 1510.

Rail

Wolverhampton railway station lies on the eastern edge of Wolverhampton town centre, approximately 7km, by road, to the north-east of the proposed development site. From here passengers can travel direct to Birmingham New Street in a journey time of between 16 minutes to half an hour.

On weekdays and Saturdays there are upwards of 8 trains an hour in each direction, more during the morning peak period, and upwards of 5 an hour on Sundays. The first Birmingham-bound train leaves Wolverhampton at 0500 on weekdays, 0540 on Saturdays and 0805 on Sundays, and the last return train leaves Birmingham New Street at 0149 on weekdays, 2335 on Saturdays and 0024 on Sundays.

Pedestrian Accessibility

Along the site’s frontage, and extending south-eastwards towards the centre of Spring Hill, Springhill Lane is provided with footways and street-lighting on both sides of the road.

This footway link provides a direct route through to the Spring Hill Lane bus stops on Warstones Road, at which point a pedestrian crossing on the arm of the roundabout is available.

Site Access Provision

Vehicular

The site access for vehicular traffic will be from Springhill Lane, which runs along and forms the southern boundary of site.

Two potential access points are available onto Springhill Lane from the development site. The upgrading of these access points has recently been approved by South Staffordshire District Council under application ref. 16/01078/FUL. The approved access arrangements are shown on Drawing 1150/300 prepared by CJZ design (Plan 5 below), and this shows 2 T-junctions into site.

It is understood that these access junctions have been designed to accommodate capacity for up to 200 residential dwellings. Notwithstanding, these access points will be reviewed at the appropriate time to ensure they can accommodate the level capacity required for any forthcoming development proposal.

Plan 5 – Consented Site Access'



It is anticipated that the eastern junction would be the principle point of vehicular access to the site as it offers the most direct route to the wider highway network for vehicles and pedestrians alike. The western access route would be available as a secondary access for cars as well as for pedestrian, cycle and emergency vehicle use and also for immediate access to the properties at this location.

Internal Layout

The internal layout will be determined at the detailed application stage, but will be designed to ensure vehicle speeds are maintained at a maximum of 20mph throughout the development site.

Pedestrian routes from each dwelling through to the main site access points will be direct, lit, segregated from the main vehicular access routes and level in gradient where possible.

Summary

From the above review of the site location and access opportunities, we can conclude that the site is physically deliverable in terms of the availability of a suitable and safe access point which can be designed to meet current highway requirements.

The location of the site also means that there is access to a range of alternative forms of transport. In highway and access terms the site therefore performs well and should be considered as locationally preferable.

Landscape and Visual

This section of the document considers the potential landscape and visual effects associated with development of a residential scheme within the promotion site. While this is an area we are familiar with, the output and conclusions are very much based on a desktop review of published information including forward planning documents, OS mapping and digital terrain models.

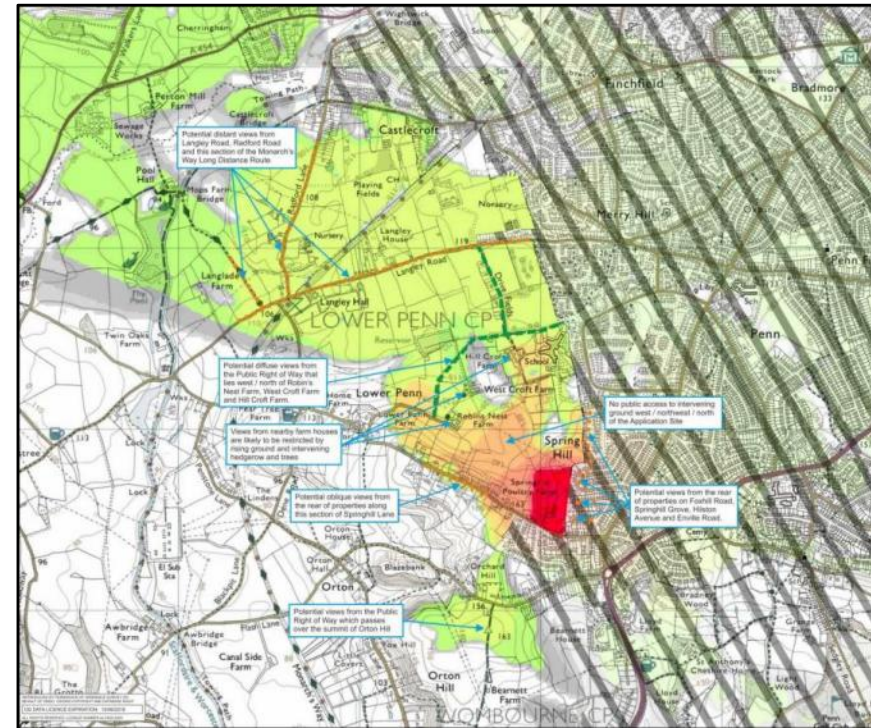
This work has included the preparation of a basic 3D assessment model; this utilises OS DTM 5 terrain data with the promotion site being extruded up to a typical 2 storey property height (6.5m). An oblique aerial view of this model being shown in the following figure:

Plan 6 – Basic 3D Assessment Model



This model has subsequently been used to generate a 'Zone of Theoretical Visibility study (or ZTV). The ZTV provides a 'worst case' representation of the area likely to experience visual effects and as such the scope of this section. The ZTV is shown on SLR Plan 7 with an excerpt of the plan being shown in the following figure:

Plan 7 – ZTV Study



Site Overview

The promotion site is primarily in residential and agricultural use at present, with a number of residential buildings, medium scale barns and hardstanding located within the southern bounds of the site; this existing brownfield area of the site comprises approximately 18.4% (0.67 hectares) of the promotion site (3.64 hectares). The remaining areas being rough pasture / paddock (2.97 hectares).

Both external and internal boundaries are formed by hedgerows incorporating some mature trees; while some gaps would appear to be present the peripheral hedgerow is reasonably continuous and is expected to provide a robust boundary. The context of the promotion site is illustrated by Plan 8, which uses aerial photography to depict the local landscape characteristics.

Local Development Context

The local development context is illustrated by Plan 8, which uses an aerial photograph as a base to reveal the pattern of development and associated landscape character. This drawing has been annotated to highlight our key thoughts about the locality with the following paragraph providing a brief written description of the development context. An excerpt of Plan 8 is shown in the following figure for reference purposes:

Plan 8 – Site Context

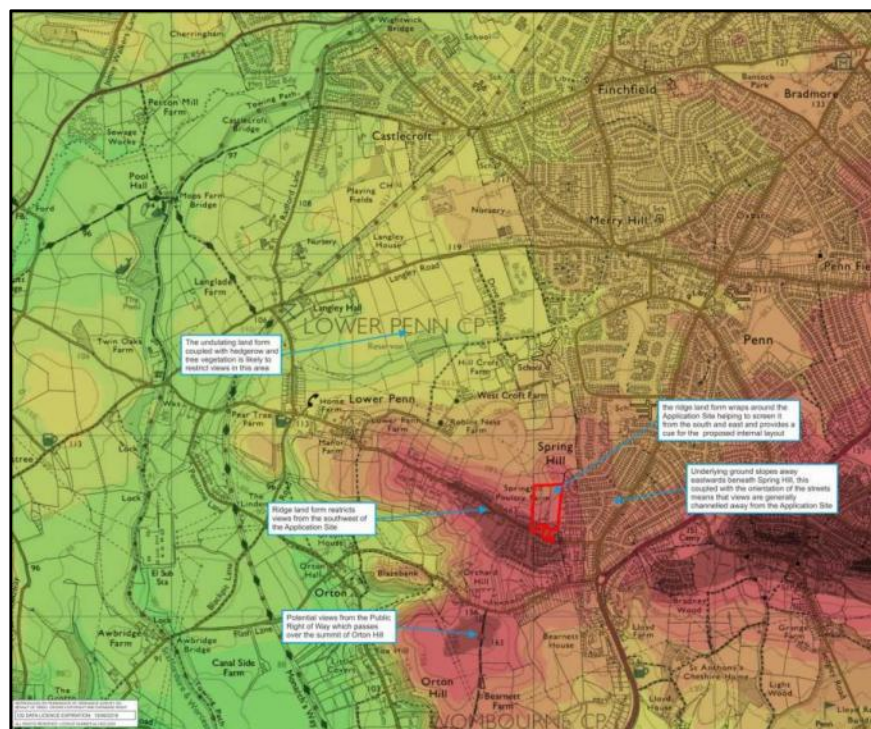


Adjacent built development includes properties along Springhill Lane to the south and the main conurbation of Spring Hill itself to the east. The properties immediately to the south of the promotion site are larger units of varying age and architectural style; further to the west, heading towards Lower Penn, the properties are arranged in a more regular fashion, are also more modest in scale and have a more consistent architectural appearance.

Springhill Park and Wynne Crescent lie on the opposite side of Springhill Lane, directly south of the promotion site. Properties here are again of varying age and architectural style and mainly detached.

The main conurbation of Spring Hill is immediately to the east of the promotion site with Foxhills Road, Springhill Grove and Hilston Avenue. These streets are mostly lined with semi-detached properties from which views are expected to be channelled eastwards (away from the promotion site) due to the prevailing slope and alignment of the road (The local topography being illustrated by Plan 9 with an excerpt being shown in the following figure).

Plan 9 – Topography



To the north of the promotion site there are allotments and Highfields / Penn Fields Schools. The schools site is a large modern development within the Green Belt and was constructed in 2012. There is a belt of medium / large scale farm complexes (including Hill Croft Farm, West Croft Farm and Robins Nest Farm) that wrap around the area north west of the Promotion site with the intervening land not having any public access. The ground in this area slopes away to the north (as illustrated by Plan 9) so views from the farmhouses and Public Right of way to the west / north would generally be directed away from the promotion site. The nearest farm development marked on OS mapping is the Springhill Poultry Farm located approximately 100m to the west of the

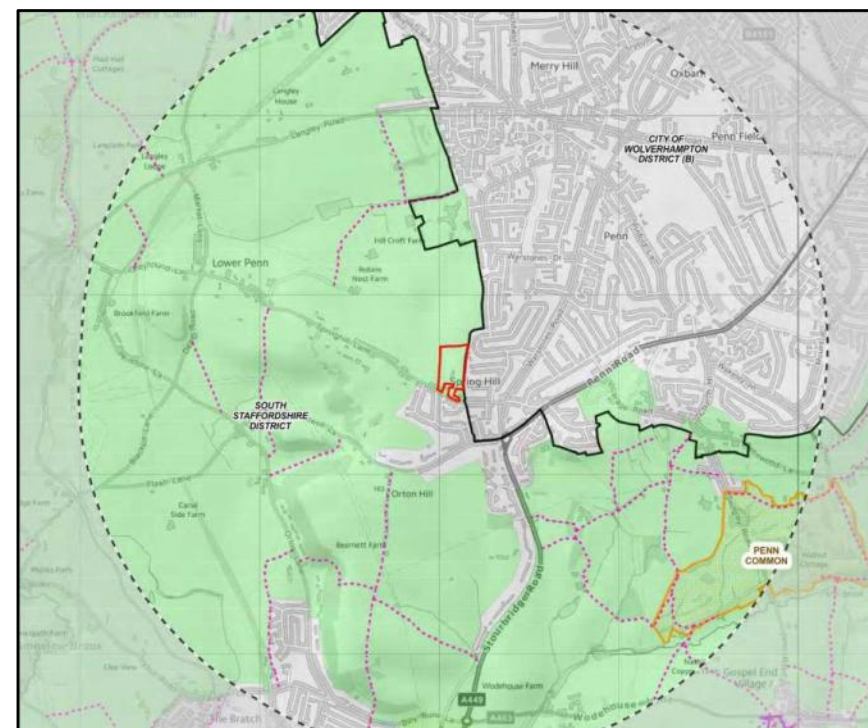
promotion site, although based on a review of online resources this would no longer appear to be in use. The land associated with Springhill Farm, which surrounds the promotion site, is understood to be within the ownership of Staffordshire County Council.

The wider landscape characteristics of the study area are described in more detail later in this section, but in broad terms the Application Area and its immediate context forms part of the urban fringe to Wolverhampton.

Green Belt

The extent of the Green Belt is shown on Plan 10, an excerpt of which is provided below:

Plan 10 – Extent of Green Belt Designation / Potential Landscape and Visual Receptors



The Green Belt would appear to be a 'wash over' of the area, loosely relating to the boundary between local authorities rather than the local characteristics of the urban fringe; particularly given that more recent development (such as Highfields / Pennfields

School) is likely to have had a modifying effect on the characteristics of the Green Belt in this area.

While the proposed development would undeniably have an effect on 'openness' of the promotion site itself the context of the site and proposed layout means that wider implications on openness are limited. A key consideration should also be who will perceive any effects, given that views of the development are likely to be limited and in most cases it would be seen either through, or against the backdrop of existing development.

Landscape Character Assessment

A landscape character assessment has been published under the heading 'Planning for Landscape Change: Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) to the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure Plan 1996 – 2011'¹. While this document is outdated by the recently revised 'National Character Assessment'² it does provide a detailed characterisation of the area and suitable for the purposes of this document.

The national level character assessment places the promotion site NCA 67 'Cannock Chase and Cank Wood', as alluded to above this is a high level assessment but it does pick up on some of the 'key characteristics' associated with the locality of the promotion site by stating that: *"The settlement pattern is complex and contrasting, with some areas densely populated and others relatively sparse. The conurbation includes a mosaic of urban areas, former industrial land and patches of farmland, with an extensive urban fringe."*

The SPG document further divides the area and places the promotion site in the 'Sandstone Hills and Heaths' Landscape Character Type (LCT), this to recognise the characteristics of the locality stating under 'Visual Character' that: *"The urban influence is very great, with built up areas visible and farm cottages*

¹ Staffordshire County Council, Development Services Department 2001

² Natural England 2015

improved. The small roads are all very well used, giving the impression of an area that is travelled through by large numbers of people. The variable condition tends to emphasise the vulnerability to change of this landscape.” The SPG also makes reference to ‘Incongruous Landscape Features’ which include “Urban edge; horseyculture; inappropriate poor quality fencing; agricultural setaside.” A key passage relating to what is to be proposed is found under the heading ‘Potential Value of New Woodland Planting’ which states that it would be: “Of moderate value overall, to provide a replacement structure to the landscape as hedgerows disappear due to general decline or farming intensification. It could also serve to screen incongruous urbanising landscape features and to reduce the visual influence of urban edges.” The proposed development offers a significant opportunity to strengthen landscape structure in this area and via considerate design reduce the proposed development’s visual influence on the urban edge.

Design Considerations relating to Green Belt and Landscape Character

The supporting drawings (see Plans 7 to 9) aim to illustrate the key landscape characteristics, the scope of any likely landscape / visual effects and any potential opportunities to enhance the existing landscape / cues for the proposed design. This, coupled with our understanding of the published Landscape Character Assessments and policy relating to the Green Belt, has informed the following key design considerations:

- Opportunity to improve existing hedgerows to the periphery of the site and potentially those associated with adjacent field compartments.
- Opportunity to enhance landscape structure by introducing woodland (as alluded to in the SPG document).
- To create a diffuse edge to the urban fringe akin to areas south of the promotion site providing a more subtle transition to the Green Belt.

- Consideration of the visual appearance of the site from potential views coming in from the northwest.
- To prepare a design which responds to the underlying landform which integrates green and blue infrastructure.

By taking these considerations into account the proposed development would not only assimilate itself as part of the wider landscape by minimised landscape and visual effects, but would also provide enhancement to the current situation, particularly with regards improvement of landscape structure which is identified as being a high priority locally.

Summary

The ‘Draft Masterplan’ shown on Plan 21 is a culmination of the key considerations taken from the technical studies, notably ‘Landscape and Visual’ and ‘Ecology’. The local landscape characteristics of the landscape along with the opportunities and constraints offered by the site itself also lead the design process with existing trees and hedgerow being retained where possible and integrated as part of a wider landscape strategy for the Site. These features coupled with proposed planting would help to reinforce the landscape pattern and enhance biodiversity by creating wildlife corridors across the site. Retention of existing vegetation will also bring a degree of maturity to the linear public open space which would become a focal point for recreational activity and community interaction. The layout of the development aims to be conducive to free movement around the Site and aims to work with the topography and maximise linkages to public open spaces.

From a visual perspective potential lines of sight from the northwest of the Site have been taken into account, with the peripheral landscape treatments and aforementioned layout / massing of the built form softening the potential impact of the development on views from this direction. As such, the masterplan clearly shows that the site could be brought

forward with a suitable solution to minimise Landscape and Visual Impact

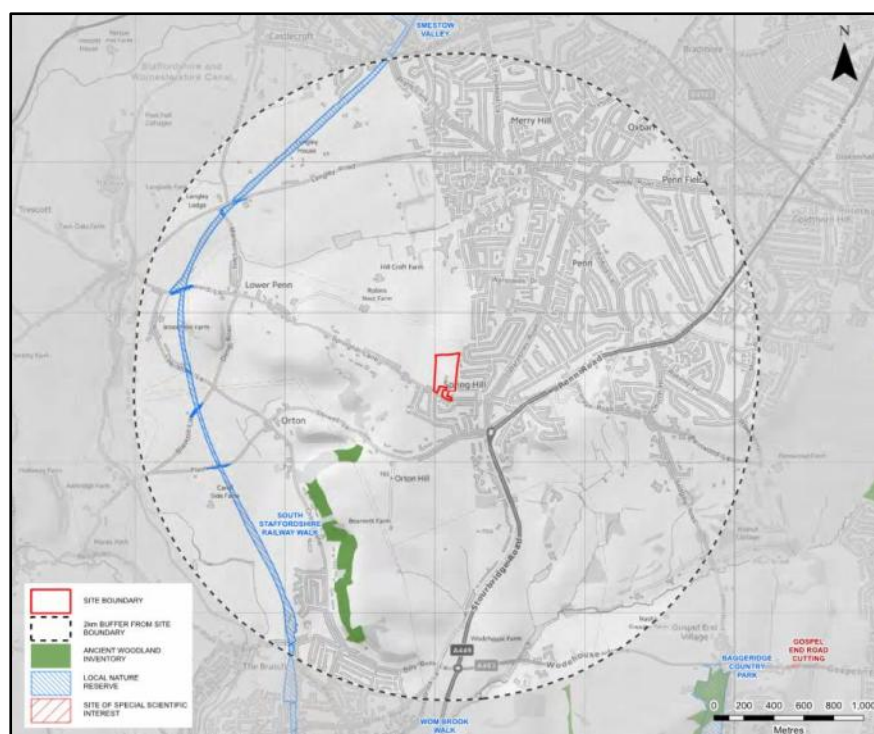
Ecology

A desk study has been undertaken by reviewing publically available sources of data pertaining to the site and within a 2km buffer from the boundary (the study area). The desk study has found that there are no sites within the study area which are subject to statutory designation of importance at a national level or above (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest SSSI or Special Areas of Conservation SAC).

Study Area

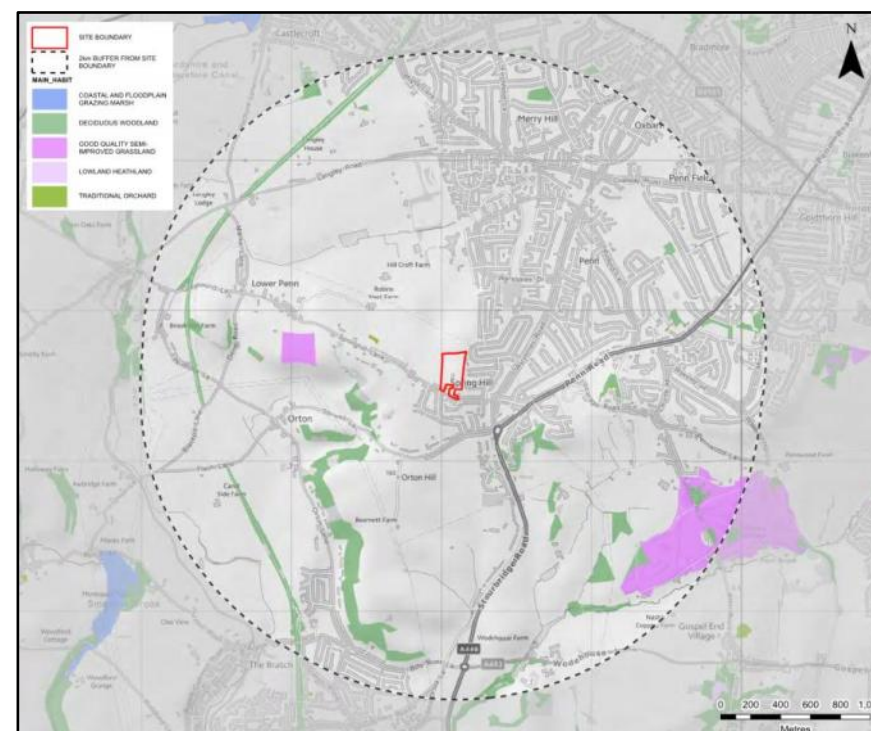
Within the study area the South Staffordshire Railway lies approximately 1.7km to the west of the site which is designated as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) a statutory designation of up to county-level value.

Plan 11 – Ecological Designations



A desk-based review of available datasets has been undertaken in respect of un-designated habitats and species³ (e.g. priority habitats and species). The site does not contain any priority habitats with a possible exception of native hedgerows (to be confirmed through appropriate site survey). Undesignated ancient woodland is located 0.5km south west of the site boundary.

Plan 12 – Priority Habitats



A review of available OS mapping and aerial photography has not revealed the presence of ponds within the site or up to 500m (excluding urban areas).

Agricultural outbuildings occur within the site to the southern entrance and mature trees are also present. These features have the potential to provide opportunities for roosting by bats and nesting by birds. The site habitats are likely to be used by bats, as part of a wider resource, for foraging and commuting and may also form part / all of the territory of local badger clans.

Any development should seek to retain important hedgerows and provide appropriate buffers where possible to maintain general

habitat resources and connectivity for wildlife within the site and the local area.

Summary

To conclude based on relevant desk study assessments, it is considered feasible that a scheme could be developed to provide appropriate ecological mitigation and compensation to address any potential impacts arising from future development proposals.

An indicative plan of the potential retention and enhancement of existing hedgerows within the site is shown as Plan 13, which also identifies an opportunity for habitat creation and enhancement of land around the drainage pond.

Plan 13 – Indicative Landscaping & Open Space Plan



Overall it is considered, following relevant surveys and assessments, that it would be feasible to develop an appropriate scheme of ecological mitigation and compensation to address any potential impacts of future development proposals.

³ <http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx> accessed 19/08/2017.

Historic Environment

This Section considers any potential heritage issues which should be taken account as part of the future development of the site for housing.

Site Context (500m)

The proposed site at Springhill Lane contains no known heritage assets. Three locally listed assets are recorded within 500m, which consist of a milestone on the A449 south of the site, a public house (The Spring Hill, Warstones Road) which is a significant example of the architect Twentyman’s designs, and the site of the 1714 Old School at Wynne Crescent (Penn). These heritage assets would not form any constraint to development of the site.

Designated Heritage Assets (2,000m)

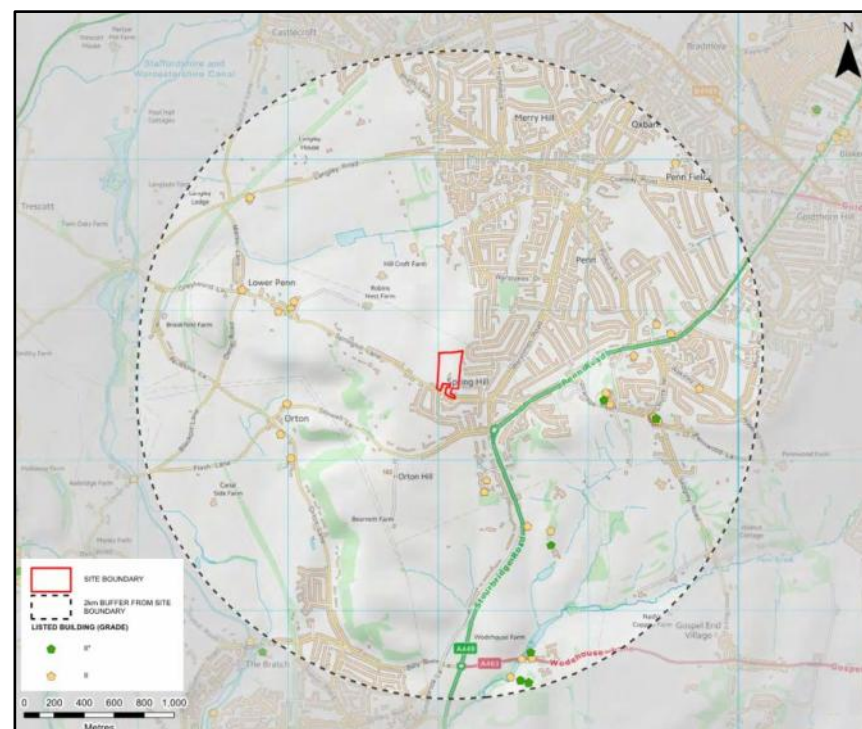
Within 2km there are 43 designated heritage assets, consisting of two scheduled monuments at St Bartholomew’s Church, Penn, and 41 listed buildings, of which six are Grade II* and the rest are Grade II. The nearest listed buildings lie c.600m to the south-east at Barnett House. There are no conservation areas, registered battlefields, or registered parks and gardens within the 2km study area.

Non-Designated Heritage Assets (2,000m)

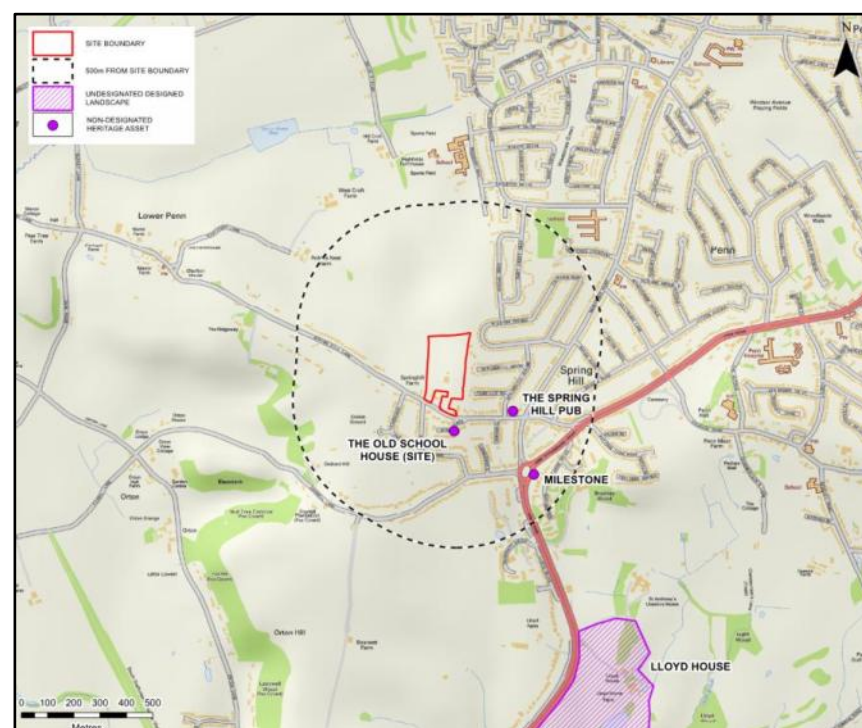
A large number of heritage assets are recorded within this area, however, with 59 identified in Staffordshire and 66 in Wolverhampton. The vast majority of these entries are for post-medieval buildings, and there is virtually no evidence for archaeological remains except for the scheduled monuments of churchyard crosses at St Bartholomew’s Church in Upper Penn (c.1.3km to the east), and a possible prehistoric hillfort on Church

Hill, Penn. In addition an 18th century designed landscape (parkland) surrounding Lloyd House, Wombourne, is recorded 1km to the south-east of the proposed site.

Plan 14 – Designated Heritage Asset Plan (2,000m)



Plan 15 – Non-Designated Heritage Asset Plan (500m)



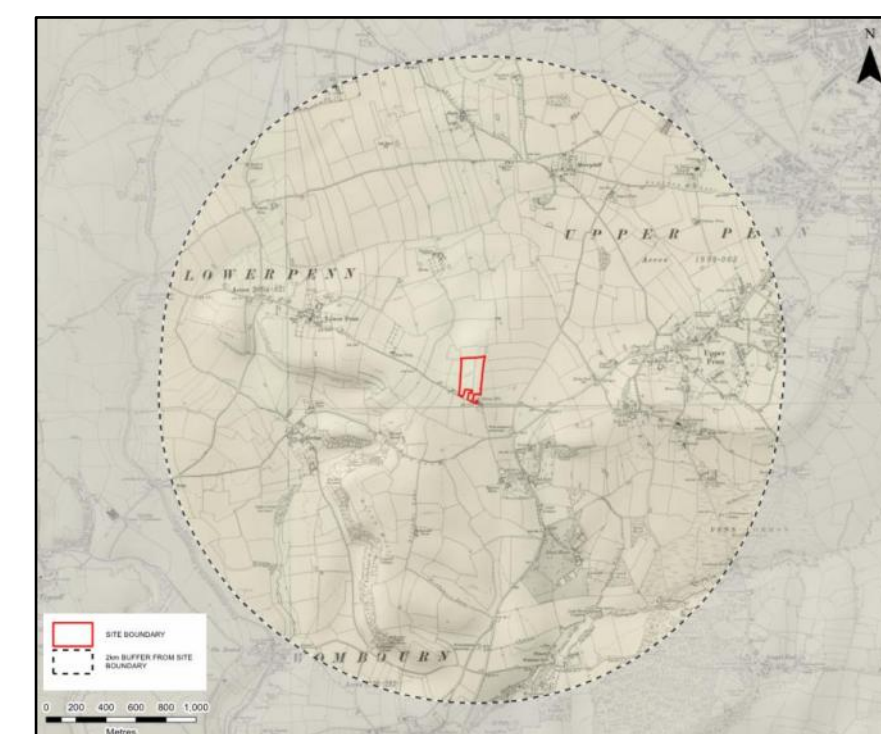
Of these un-designated heritage assets, and as identified on Plan 15 above, three are located within 500m of the promotion site, whilst a design landscape is located further afield to the south east of the A449. These assets are listed below:

- Design Landscape – Lloyd House, Wombourne at SO 8868 9442.
- Heritage Asset – Milestone, north of Lloyd Farm, Wombourne SO 884 952.
- Heritage Asset – The Spring Hill pub, Warstones Road SO 8833 9543.
- Heritage Asset – The Old School House (site); Wynne Crescent; Penn SO 8813 9539.

Sites Specifics and the Wider Area

Historic mapping shows that the eastern boundary of the site runs along the parish boundary between Lower and Upper Penn. At the beginning of the 20th century Spring Hill was the only building in close proximity, located at the south-eastern edge of the site, which comprised two agricultural fields sub-divided by a north-south boundary.

Plan 16 – Historic Mapping Plan



The surrounding field pattern strongly suggests that the fields were laid out as part of an enclosure award in the late 18th or early 19th centuries, with Penn Common and woodland shown in the south-eastern part of the study area. The main settlement nuclei within the study area were to the east, at Upper Penn, and to the west at Lower Penn. The road system has a co-axial pattern, with a north-south orientation to the east of the proposed site, and a west-east orientation to the south, and (further away) to the north. The southern edge of the site is located on the road that runs between the two settlements of Penn, and there are no historic rights of way within close proximity.

Topographically and geologically the proposed site lies on some of the highest land in the area, at the watershed between two streams draining westwards and southwards. Spring Hill has no recorded superficial geology but a thin layer of soil overlies bedrock. This would have made the land attractive for early farming as it would have been well-drained and relatively easy to plough, and the high ground would also have been attractive for long views, a similar strategic position as suggested for the possible hillfort to the east.

Summary

The lack of archaeological evidence within the study area could be due to an historical lack of archaeological investigation, and so there remains a low risk that unknown buried remains could survive within the proposed site, but this risk can be appropriately managed as part of the planning process.

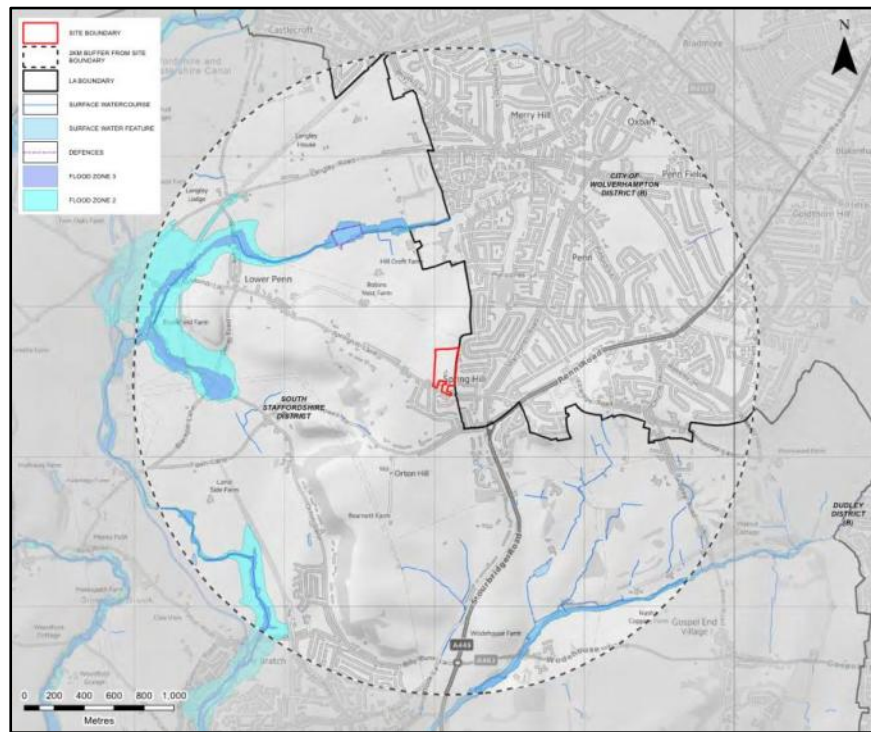
In summary there is no indication from existing knowledge to suggest the proposed site might be unsuitable on cultural heritage grounds.

Hydrology and Flood Risk

Site Setting and Flood Risk

A desk based study of the site has been undertaken based on Ordnance Survey (OS)⁴, British Geological Survey (BGS)⁵ and Environment Agency (EA)⁶ mapping. Review of EA flood map for planning indicates that the site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 (Low probability).

Plan 17 – Flood Plan Map



The site is located within the catchment of Merry Hill Brook, an EA main river and tributary of the River Stour, located approximately 1km to the north-west of the site. This watercourse rises on the western edge of the City of Wolverhampton urban area, immediately to the north of Highfields School (c.800m to the north of the site) and flows in an initially westerly and then southerly direction to its confluence with the River Stour.

A reservoir is located on Merryhill Brook approximately 1 km north of the site. The site is not within the flood extent from failure (breach) of this or any other reservoir.

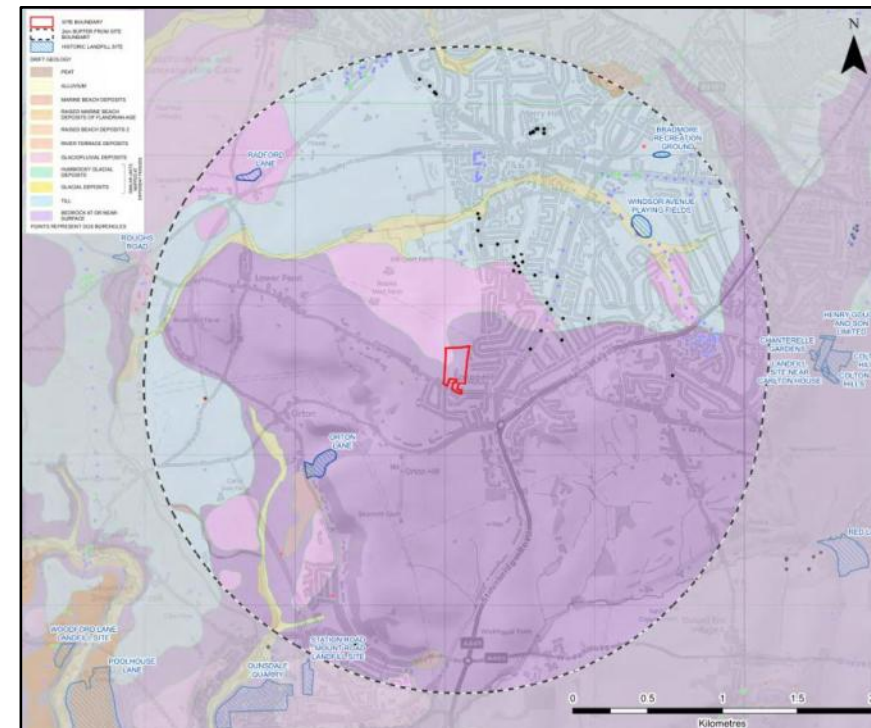
Other surface water features within the area include the Wom Brook and its tributaries which rise c.1 – 1.5km to the south-east of the site and flow in a predominantly south-westerly direction and away from the site.

2.3km west of the Site is the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal. It is orientated north south and has is intertwined with the course of Merryhill Brook.

There are no surface water features (i.e. ponds or streams) within the site boundary.

The surface water flood maps indicate that the vast majority of the site is assessed as ‘Very Low’ risk from surface water flooding. The only exception is along the -eastern boundary where there is a low risk surface water flow path.

Plan 18 – Geological Map



Review of BGS mapping indicates that the local bedrock geology comprises of a mixture of Bromsgrove Sandstone Formation and

Wildmore Sandstone Formation of the Early Triassic period. Both formations are classified by the EA as a Principal Aquifer with high intergranular permeability.

There are no superficial deposits recorded across most of the site, the only exception being along the north western corner where the bedrock is overlain by glaciofluvial deposits.

Given the nature of the soils and underlying geology it is considered that infiltration rates across the site will be high with the majority of incidental rainfall infiltrating to groundwater.

Due to the generally elevated local topography (the site is located at between c.145 and 165m AOD) the risk of groundwater flooding is considered low with any groundwater flood risk likely to be limited to the base of the valley to the west of the site.

The potential flood risk from a range of sources is outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Potential Sources of Flooding

Source	Flood Risk?	Comments
Fluvial	No	Site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1
Tidal	No	Site is remote from coast
Pluvial (Land)	No	Majority of site is Very Low risk. The eastern boundary contains a low risk surface water pathway.
Groundwater	No	Flooding most likely with valley base to N-W
Sewers	No	Assumed no sewers within site boundary
Reservoirs	No	Mapping confirms no flood risk from reservoirs

Planning Guidance and Appropriate Development

The Environment Agency currently considers the site to be within Flood Zone 1 which is defined as “land having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding”. Therefore, with reference to Table 3: Flood risk vulnerability and flood zone ‘compatibility’ at Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) Paragraph

⁴ <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/>
⁵ <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>
⁶ <http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/>

067, all infrastructure and urban development would be considered appropriate for the flood zone.

The only areas of concern are along the eastern boundary of the site which is at low risk from surface water flooding during events with more than a 3.3% annual exceedance probability. It is recommended that sensitive development is steered away from this part of the site, although it should be noted that this constitutes a very small portion of the total land area.

Sustainable Drainage

Any urban development would significantly lower infiltration rates of incidental rainfall and therefore increase surface water runoff. Any development will therefore need to be designed in accordance with appropriate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). SuDS guidance gives preference to discharging surface water run-off to ground wherever possible.

Based on the BGS and soil mapping it is considered that the underlying geology is likely to be highly permeable and has a high potential for utilisation of soakaway techniques to control surface water run-off from any future development.

It is recommended that a site investigation is undertaken to include the digging of trial pits and undertaking of soakaway tests to both confirm the presence of a suitable unsaturated zone within the strata, confirm the permeability of the in-situ material and confirm the feasibility of using soakaways at site.

Summary

Given the scale of the available development land and open space it is considered that there would be significant opportunity for the placement of SuDS at this site.

Overall there are no drainage, flooding or other issues which would constrain development of this site.

Draft Masterplan Process

Constraints and Opportunities

The first stage of preparing a draft masterplan for the site was to understand the constraints and opportunities that the site is subject to. A detailed review of the above technical information was undertaken, along with consideration of existing features on and adjacent to the site.

Plan 19 – Constraints and Opportunities Plan



Draft Masterplan Process

From this process of understanding constraints and opportunities, an initial concept sketch was prepared which considered how best to retain features of note. The objective has been to create a potential development layout that is appropriate to the general location, has sensible and appropriate development densities, and delivers landscape and biodiversity benefits which would not otherwise be secured.

The principal points to raise from the concept sketch are the intention to retain the mature hedgerow and trees within the centre of the site, the accommodation of a drainage pond at the topographic low point of the site and the potential provision of a community use in the form of a building as a village hall and/or nursery should existing facilities in the area need to be enhanced with such a provision. If such a provision is not required, this area could be utilised for further housing provision.

Plan 20 – Initial Concept Sketch



Masterplan Content

This concept sketch has subsequently been drawn upon to create a draft masterplan and internal layout. This has resulted in the indicative masterplan layout identified below. This provides a starting point for the consideration of the site’s capacity and ability to accommodate the level of development proposed. However, it is recognised that this will evolve as part of any potential future detailed planning application, with the benefit of a full and comprehensive technical pack, as required for a planning application.

Development Density

It is intended to provide a development with a maximum density of 35 dwellings per hectare which would be in keeping with the surrounding area of Spring Hill. The site is 3.64 hectares but is considered to have a developable area of approximately 3 hectares (excluding open space provision and drainage pond), this would result in a development of up to 105 units.

Notwithstanding, the current draft masterplan has sought to incorporate a significant area of Open Space provision (in accordance with draft Policy SAD7 of the Site Allocations Document) and a drainage pond. As such, the current draft masterplan accommodates 58 units and provides a baseline (circa. 20 dwellings per hectare).

Plan 21 – Draft Masterplan



Landscaping

Landscaping has been retained within the site and bolstered where necessary to enhance views into the site from the surrounding landscape. Also, opportunities for ‘an extended allocation taking in the adjoining Staffordshire County Council land have been retained.

The site could therefore be developed independently as a standalone minor greenbelt release or as part of a more strategic allocation. The landscaping strategy for the latter would require a more structural approach, which could be investigated further if this approach is preferred.

Drainage

A drainage pond has been accommodated within the north western corner of the site at the topographical low point. The size of this pond has been calculated using standard methodology by our hydrology and drainage team and has the ability to be enlarged should further land be accommodated within any forthcoming allocation (i.e. the County Council Land).

Adjoining County Council Land

As outlined above, and illustrated within Plan 22 below, the site is bound by land within the ownership of Staffordshire County Council.

Plan 22 – Adjoining County Council Land



Were all of this land to be brought forward for development (12.06 hectares), the wider site (the promotion site and County Council land) could accommodate a baseline density of 310 units (based on 21 dwellings per hectare) or a maximum density of up to 520 units (based on 35 dwellings per hectare).

This level of provision would have significant benefits in terms of forming a strategic allocation meeting the housing needs of both South Staffordshire and the wider Black Country Housing Market Area.

Summary

The draft masterplan demonstrates that the site can be delivered at a suitable density in keeping with the surrounding residential areas whilst still meeting the necessary levels of housing to deliver some of the future housing needs for South Staffordshire and the wider Black Country Housing Market Area.

The site offers the opportunity to deliver either a standalone minor Greenbelt release or to form part of a more strategic allocation, if this is preferable in terms of adequately and sustainably meeting housing need.

Overall Sustainability

The site performs well in terms of its sustainability credentials, albeit that it is an edge of town location. Wolverhampton City Centre lies approximately 6km to the northeast of the site providing access to a full range of town centre services and facilities, whilst Spring Hill Local Centre is located approximately 370 m to the east of the site, whilst the local centres of Warstones Road, Merry Hill and Penn Manor are all within 1.6km.

The site also benefits from connectivity to a range of forms of transport, including bus stops located along Warstones Road approximately 350m to the east of the site. Access to the site is provided via Springhill Lane, which connects to the wider highway network including a main distributor route (with cycleway), as well as via the existing footpaths for foot and cycle trips. Via these routes a range of key local services are also located within 2km of the site, including;

- Hospital;
- Doctors' Surgery;
- Dentist Surgery;
- Chemist;
- Library;
- Post Office;
- Infant School;
- Junior School;
- Secondary School;
- Convenience stores;
- Takeaway food outlets;
- Restaurants; and
- Public houses.

The site is considered preferential to a number of the other Green Belt sites that have been either identified for safeguarding or considered as part of the South Staffordshire District Council SHLAA and Partial Green Belt Review. With the exception of the Green Belt itself, the site is outside of other protective designations

and, as outlined above, there are no overriding constraints to its development.

In terms of the Green Belt itself, the function of this designation has been eroded a result of existing scattered and ribbon development on and around the site, whilst the site is contended to rate poorly against the NPPF considerations detailed above. As such, the site should be considered preferential for release in all of these terms.

The site offers the opportunity to deliver much needed housing on a sustainable site that would be available and deliverable for development in the short term or could be safeguarded for future requirements if necessary.

The site can either be released as a standalone minor Greenbelt release or as part of a more strategic allocation were the Staffordshire County Council land be brought forward as well.

Delivery & Timing

In preparing this document our Client(s), Jay Farm Homes Limited and Lawnswood Homes Limited, duly confirm that the site is available and deliverable for housing and associated infrastructure. Indeed, the site access arrangements required for the delivery of the site are already consented under South Staffordshire Council application ref. 16/01078/FUL.

Given the sites current Greenfield context, the site could either be delivered immediately or safeguarded for future requirements if necessary. This would create more flexibility and responsiveness in terms of land for housing in a time when housing requirements should be seen as a minimum and need is increasing.

This need is only expected to increase following the completion of the Black Country Core Strategy Review and the need for adjoining local authorities to release Green Belt sites to meet the needs of the Housing Market Area.

Key Opportunities & Benefits

This Report has identified a range of opportunities and benefits which the delivery of this land for housing could secure. These include the following;

- Delivery of accessibly located land to meet identified and future housing requirements.
- Release of Green Belt land which has already been the subject of erosion in terms of function and is located outside of any other protective designations.
- Opportunity to identify safeguarded land to avoid successive Green Belt reviews, which would run contrary to NPPF.
- Opportunity to enhance the settlement edge of Wolverhampton and the wider landscape setting of the site and surrounding area.
- Potential to enhance biodiversity and implement a native planting scheme to complement the new development, open space provision and ecological connectivity.
- Delivery of a site which can be readily linked into the wider infrastructure network, coupled with the potential delivery of a much needed public building which could be utilised for a nursery and village hall (if required).
- The site is bound by significant land holdings within the ownership of Staffordshire County Council and, whilst no formal discussions have taken place as yet, could provide an opportunity to release a larger development site which could form a strategic allocation meeting the needs of both South Staffordshire and the wider Black Country Housing Market Area.
- Provide assistance to the adjoining Black Country Core Strategy and Housing Market Area in delivering their housing requirements.

The above is not an exhaustive list at this stage, but provides a flavour of some of the opportunities and benefits which the development of this site could secure.

Conclusions

Analysis of the site identifies that whilst it is recognised that the land parcel is situated within the Green Belt, the site only makes a limited contribution to its wider designation. Existing built development within the site, together with the encroachment of the settlement edge and overhead power lines compromise the openness of the site – a quality which is defined by the NPPF as needing to be an ‘essential characteristic’ of the Green Belt.

The site, which is 3.64 hectares, is positioned on the edge of Wolverhampton and it is considered that the draft masterplan demonstrates that new development here can be successfully integrated with the existing settlement pattern without compromising the overall purposes of the Green Belt. With careful planning and design, in line with the principles set out in the South Staffordshire District Council Core Strategy, the site can make a positive contribution to the needs of the wider Housing Market Area.

Analysis of planning and environmental issues, as set out in this document, identifies that there are no major constraints to development. With a positive and proactive approach, development could capitalise on the attributes of the site and measures could be incorporated to mitigate potential effects.

It is recognised that the pressure to build new housing within the wider Housing Market Area is growing, and the utilisation of a site which has lost some of its Green Belt character provides an excellent opportunity for the site to make a significant contribution to the strategic housing land requirement for both South Staffordshire and the Black Country. Given that all technical matters can be dealt with, as outlined above, and the site can deliver a range of other benefits; it is duly contended that the site should be removed from the Green Belt and either allocated for housing or safeguarded for future requirements.

Finally, failure to identify sufficient land for release from Green Belt would be likely to result in a need for successive Green Belt reviews in the near future which runs contrary to National advice and the essential purpose of the Green Belt. This is especially pertinent given the likely additional requirements brought forward by the Black Country Core Strategy.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the site in more detail with you once you have considered these comments and can supplement this submission if required as part of that ongoing process.