
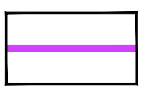
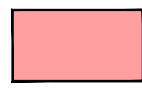
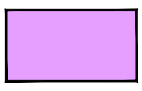






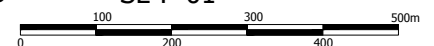
**Legend**

	SHLAA Site 1 Overall 65.50Ha / 161.85Ac		SHLAA Site 2 Overall 141.15Ha / 348.78Ac
	SHLAA Site 1A 3.26Ha / 8.06Ac		SHLAA Site 2 141.15Ha / 348.78Ac
	SHLAA Site 1B 9.57Ha / 23.65Ac		
	SHLAA Site 1C 8.49Ha / 20.98Ac		
	SHLAA Site 1D 36.94Ha / 91.28Ac		
	SHLAA Site 1E 7.23Ha / 17.86Ac		

Project  
**Bleak House,  
 Land to the East of Cannock**  
 Drawing Title  
**SHLAA Sites 2016**



Date 16.05.16	Scale 1:10,000@A3	Drawn by M.S.	Check by J.R.
Project No 20485	Drawing No SL-P-01	Revision -	



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# Bleak House, Cannock Chase

Vision Document

March 2017



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Document Status	Final
Revision	-
Author	Various
Checked By	JR
Authorised By	JR
Issue Date	March 2017



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# 1. Introduction

**This is a Vision Document prepared on behalf of the Church Commissioners for England to support a proposal for a high quality residential-led development at Bleak House, Cannock Chase.**

## Our vision

1.1 The long term vision for the site is to deliver a sustainable extension to Wimblebury and Rawnsley in Cannock Chase of around 1,000 dwellings on land to the east of Wimblebury, Cannock (known as 'Bleak House'). In the shorter to medium term, the site offers an opportunity for smaller parcels of land to be delivered, whilst not compromising the longer term vision for the site.

1.2 Bleak House would readily deliver much needed housing growth for the area (to include affordable housing) together with a range of community facilities to support modern sustainable living, such as: primary education, local retail, health care, open space, public transport, and walking and cycling routes. The Church Commissioners for England (the 'Commissioners') are promoting the land at Bleak House and have appointed a consultant team that have experience of delivering sustainable development.



## Introduction

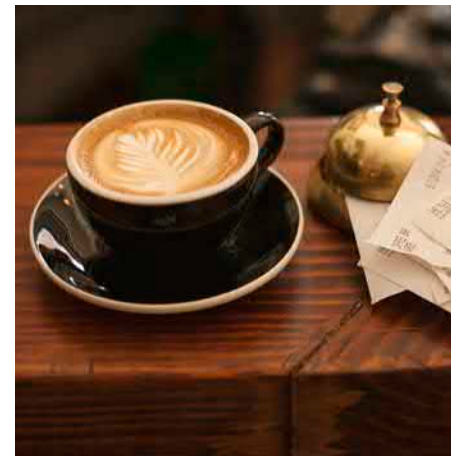
1.3 Bleak House provides a unique opportunity to deliver a sustainable, high quality residential-led development which will help meet the housing needs of both Cannock Chase Council and Greater Birmingham, which will integrate into the existing built form of Cannock. The site comprises 65.5 hectares of land within the Green Belt, located to the east of Wimblebury and west of Prospect Village in the District of Cannock Chase.

1.4 This Vision Document explains how Cannock Chase Council are reviewing their Green Belt as part of the emerging Local Plan (Part 2) (2006 – 2028) in order to meet development needs. We have undertaken a Green Belt Review on the site, and as such the site is considered to be a suitable and sustainable location for Green Belt release to provide residential-led development that would complement the urban character and existing settlements that surround the site.

1.5 This Vision Document seeks to clearly articulate the unique opportunity that exists at Bleak House by providing:

- An analysis of the site and its surroundings;
- A review of the emerging planning policy position and need for new homes in Cannock Chase;
- The case for the removal of the site from the Green Belt;
- Analysis of the sustainability of the site, including a review of key technical considerations;
- A Concept Plan and vision that illustrates the opportunity presented by the site and how the site responds to its surroundings;
- A demonstration that the site is deliverable, available and achievable; and
- A summary of the key benefits of the site.

1.6 It is requested that the site is removed from the Green Belt and allocated for residential development as part of the emerging Cannock Chase Local Plan Part 2 (2006 – 2028). As set out in this Vision Document, the site is capable of providing much needed market and affordable housing which will meet the needs of the local community and be supported by a new Primary School and range of community facilities.



## 2. Planning Context

### Cannock Local Plan (Part 1)

2.1 The Cannock Chase Local Plan (Part 1), adopted in 2014 provides the strategic planning framework for the District's future development needs up to 2028, alongside development management policies. The strategic approach of the Local Plan (Part 1) is to protect the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Green Belt by focusing new development between 2006 and 2028 on land within existing settlements not covered by these designations.

2.2 Part 1 of the Local Plan at Policy CP6: Housing sets out a requirement to identify land to provide 5,300 new homes in the District between 2006 and 2028.

2.3 Local Plan (Part 2) is then tasked with identifying site specific allocations to meet the 5,300 dwelling requirement for the District, to consider how the District might contribute to addressing Birmingham's housing needs (now a cumulative housing shortfall across the Greater Birmingham Housing Market Area), and to safeguard sites for potential development beyond the plan period to help meet the District's longer term needs to be informed by a review of the Green Belt.

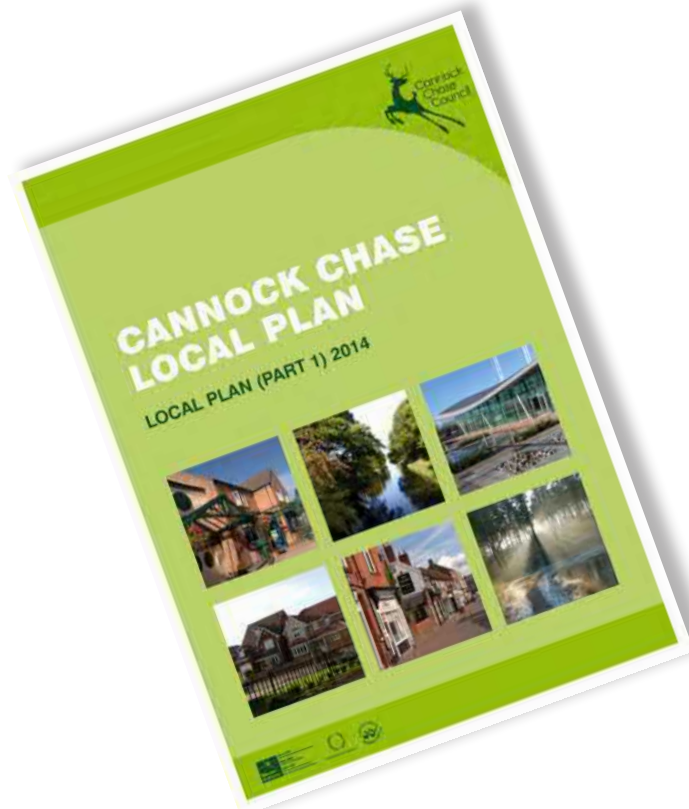
### Cannock Chase Local Plan (Part 2)

2.4 Cannock Chase Council are now progressing with their Local Plan (Part 2) which is at Issues and Options Stage.

2.5 The Council have undertaken a Green Belt Review (2016) following their commitment to assess the Green Belt boundaries. This will inform how the Council will safeguard land for the District's longer term housing needs in accordance with Paragraph 157 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and contribute towards meeting the housing needs of the Greater Birmingham Housing Market Area (GBHMA) as required under the Duty to Cooperate.

2.6 It has been identified that there is a significant gap for unmet development needs in the District unless site options are progressed and new development opportunities are provided within the Green Belt.

2.7 Bleak House represents one of the site options for residential development proposed in the Local Plan (Part 2) Issues and Options. The complete site is referenced as site option 'C264' and also redefined into five smaller parcels with site references C264(a) through to C264(e).







# 3. National Planning Policy

3.1 The NPPF sets out the purpose and role of the planning system in contributing towards sustainable development. It advocates a mix of land uses within an area to minimise journey lengths for employment, leisure, shopping, education and other services (paragraph 37). It also requires local planning authorities to ‘boost the supply of housing’ (paragraph 47) and stresses the importance of delivering a wide choice of high quality homes which meet local needs (paragraph 50).

3.2 Paragraph 52 states that ‘the supply of new homes can sometimes be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or extensions to existing villages and towns that follows the principles of Garden Cities’.

3.3 Paragraph 56 stresses the importance of design in built development. This is developed in the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), which encourages the consideration of issues such as local character (including landscape setting), safe connected and efficient streets, a network of greenspaces (including parks) and public places and the development of cohesive and vibrant neighbourhoods.

3.4 Paragraph 69 of the NPPF expects development to facilitate social interaction and to create healthy and inclusive communities. These aims can be achieved by providing recreation opportunities, space for residents to meet and by creating safe and accessible environments.

3.5 Paragraph 70 looks to ensure the delivery of community and recreational facilities and the integration of housing, economic uses, community facilities and services.

3.6 Paragraph 73 goes on to say that new development should provide access to high quality open space, sport and recreation. New development is encouraged to take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption (paragraph 96) and paragraph 99 expects new development to avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. In vulnerable areas green infrastructure can provide suitable adaptation measures.

3.7 The NPPF also seeks the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains where possible (paragraph 109).



# 4. National Green Belt Policy

## Is there a Case for Green Belt Release?

4.1 Paragraph 83 of the NPPF states that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan. Local Planning Authorities are advised to consider the Green Belt boundaries having regard to their intended permanence in the long term and they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period. Furthermore, Paragraph 84 highlights that when drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries local authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development.

4.2 The NPPF supports the Government's housing growth agenda which requires Local Authorities to boost significantly their supply of housing, plan positively for objectively assessed needs and adopt a presumption in favour of proposals for sustainable development. In line with the NPPF, it is considered that sites should be released from the Green Belt that would support sustainable development, particularly on the edge of the built urban form.

4.3 Releasing the Bleak House site from the Green Belt to facilitate new housing-led development would be consistent with the core objectives of the NPPF for the following reasons: It would meet the three pillars of sustainable development by delivering economic, social and environmental benefits (NPPF Paragraph 7). This is demonstrated in the Sustainability Appraisal of the site within this Document.

- It would be consistent with the presumption in favour of sustainable development – the golden thread for both plan making and decision taking (NPPF Paragraph 14)
- It would offer a sustainable location for residential-led development, with a range of services and facilities located both on-site and within close proximity of the site. The site is also accessible by means other than the private car through walking, cycling, bus and railway connections. This accords with Chapter 4 of the NPPF (Promoting Sustainable Transport)
- In accordance with NPPF Paragraph 83, there are exceptional circumstances which justify the removal of the site from the Green Belt. These include the development needs of Cannock Chase District and the significant housing needs of the Greater Birmingham Housing Market Area in a District that has limited urban capacity and is constrained by the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Cannock Chase are currently in the process of reviewing their Green Belt boundaries as part of the emerging Local Plan (Part 2). Furthermore, the site will accord with NPPF Paragraph 84 as it will promote sustainable patterns of development.

## The Purposes of the Green Belt

4.4 The Cannock Chase Green Belt Review (March 2016) identifies the site under reference 'C13'. This Green Belt Review identifies the site as mid-performing against the Green Belt purposes set out in paragraph 80 of the NPPF. The main contributing factor to the site's performance is the width of gap between the site and nearby settlements which is considered to perform a function which prevents neighbouring towns merging into one another and assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

4.5 Barton Willmore have undertaken a Green Belt Review of the site to assess its potential for development against the purposes of the Green Belt (as set out in Paragraph 80 of the NPPF).



### **1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.**

The Site makes no contribution to checking the unrestricted sprawl of residential settlements as Wimblebury and Rawsley have already merged along Littleworth Road. The eastern edge of the Site makes a contribution to preventing unrestricted sprawl of smaller scale settlements; specifically the potential coalescence of Prospect Village and Rawsley. However this contribution is in combination with roadside vegetation, Cooper's Cottages and woodland along the dismantled railway, all of which are not within the Site boundary.

Therefore the Site has the ability to absorb residential development, including for retaining the open character of the eastern edge of the Site, without contributing to an increase in the extent of unrestricted sprawl of the existing settlement patterns, in that it would not constitute a disorganised, unattractive extension of Heath Hayes, Wimblebury and Rawsley, lacking a coherent, robust or defensible boundary, and nor would it reduce the ability of neighbouring land to meet this purpose of the Green Belt designation.

### **2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.**

As identified, the existing settlement patterns to the north of the Site have already merged, and the strong vegetated framework to the west and south results in a high degree of enclosure to the Site. The retention of the open character on the eastern edge of the Site would retain the existing settlement pattern, preventing the merging of Prospect Village and Rawsley.

Development at the Site would be contained within a new robust landscape framework, including new planting to provide a defined edge to the built form and new open space. The new landscape framework would enhance the existing vegetation patterns, retain the open character of the elevated and eastern edges of the Site and in combination with roadside vegetation adjacent to the Site, retain the physical break between existing settlements.

Furthermore, the existing Cuckoo Bank and amenity open space to the south of the Site would remain, such that developing the Site would not contribute to Heath Hayes and Burntwood merging along the A1590; nor would it reduce the ability of this neighbouring land to prevent settlements from merging and to meet this purpose of the Green Belt.

### **3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.**

By avoiding development on the elevated parts of the Site and the eastern edge and siting development in the lower lying and more enclosed parts of the Site, the effects to the continuity with the surrounding countryside would be limited.

Residential development of the Site would result in a change in character, due to the change in land use; although set within a comprehensive landscape framework and retaining the open character of the eastern and elevated parts of the Site, including for enhancing the existing vegetation structure.

The loss to the countryside as a result of the development on the Site would be limited, due to the Site being bounded by settlement patterns, woodlands, Cuckoo Bank and road networks. Residential development of the Site would not weaken the ability of neighbouring land to safeguard the countryside from encroachment and to meet this purpose of the Green Belt.

### **4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.**

The Site is not in close proximity to Conservation Areas and therefore does not contribute to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns.

### **5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.**

Development of the site would not prejudice derelict or other urban land being brought forward for urban regeneration.

## **Conclusion of the Green Belt Review**

In summary, the Barton Willmore Green Belt Review has found that residential-led development on the site would result in a limited loss of countryside and a reduction in 'technical openness' compared with the existing character of the site; although this would only be perceived from the immediate vicinity due to the ridge lines across the Site which physically and visually separate the extent of the Site from the wider area. Development of the Site will offer the opportunity to enhance the existing landscape character through substantial tree planting and heathland creation, provide increased recreation and access via new green infrastructure, public open space and improved habitat connectivity. This is in accordance with paragraph 81 of the NPPF.

Our development proposals at section 7 demonstrate how development will be constrained by hedgerows and the existing public right of way and track along the southern boundary, which offer permanence.

Development of the site will also deliver a number of benefits to the local community through the provision of open spaces and green links. Overall the site is considered suitable for release from the Green Belt and should be identified as an allocation for residential-led development in the next stage of the Plan.

# 5. Case for Growth at Bleak House

## Site and Surroundings

### The Site

5.1 Bleak House is located on the urban edge of Cannock, approximately 3km east of the town centre.

5.2 The site is bounded by residential properties along Wimblebury Road to the west of the site, which continues on to John Street with Littleworth Road to the north. Cannock Wood Road runs along the eastern boundary of the site, with Littleworth Road connecting this road to John Street.

5.3 The site is contained by the urban areas of Wimblebury and Rawnsley to the west and north and Prospect Village to the east which makes the site a logical extension to the urban area.

5.4 The site covers 65.5 hectares and consists of individual field parcels of mixed land use including pasture and arable. Field boundary hedgerows, mature trees and water courses are scattered across the site. There are small areas of woodland to the east and west of the site and a dismantled railway to the north.

5.5 As confirmed by the Environment Agency's online flood maps, the site falls entirely within Flood Zone 1 which is the lowest risk of flooding. Furthermore, Historic England's online register identifies that there are no listed buildings located within, or close to the site.

5.6 The site is located within the Green Belt, which wraps around the urban areas of Cannock.

5.7 The site is made up of five parcels of land which have the capacity to be developed independently in phases (see Figure 7 - Phasing Plan).

5.8 We note that the commissioners own additional land around parcels 1A and 1E at the access point to the site, as shown on Figure 5: Concept Plan, which can be included in any site allocation going forward.

### Ownership

5.9 The Site is solely owned by the Church Commissioners for England.

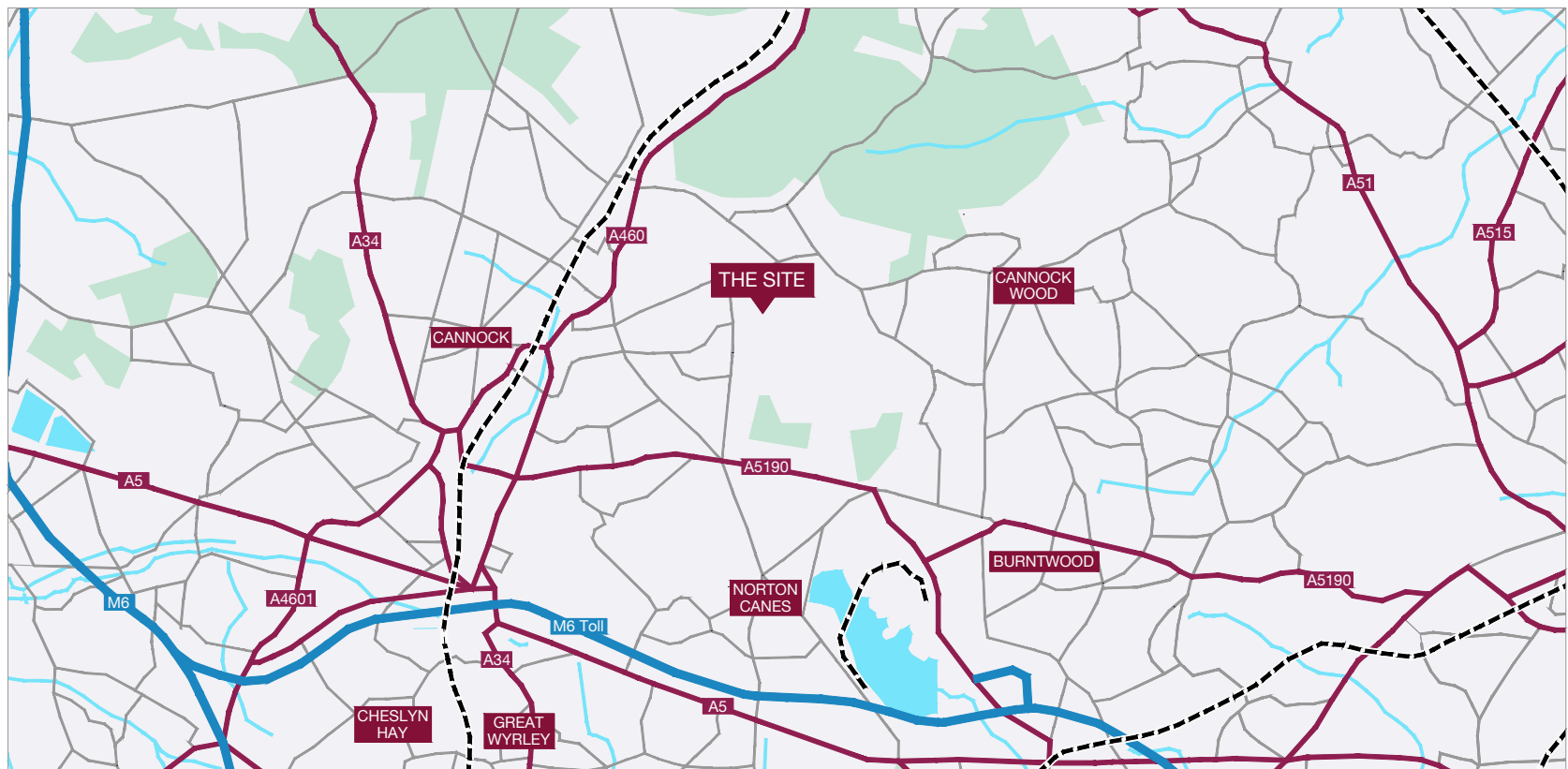


Figure 1: Wider Location Plan

Figure 2: Site Location Plan



## Site Surroundings

5.10 The site is in a highly sustainable location, in close proximity to essential facilities and services at Wimblebury, Littleworth and Rawnsley. Heath Hayes Primary School is located just 0.6km to the west of the site and Hazelslade Primary School 0.8km to the north of the site. A Technology college offering higher education is located to the west of the site.

5.11 There are several employment opportunities including Hednesford Business Park, all within 1.2km of the site. There are existing areas of play to the east and west of the site at a distance of approximately 0.6km, at Heath Hayes and Prospect Village, in addition to three Local Nature Reserves close to the site. Two Public Rights of Way (PRoW) cross the site; one through the north eastern corner of the site and the other along the sites' southern boundary, providing leisure opportunities for pedestrians and sustainable access to surrounding development.

5.12 In terms of transport connections, the site is located approximately 1.5km to the north of the A5190 which provides direct access westwards to Cannock, where onwards connections can be made to the M6 and M6 relief road. The site benefits from good transport connections with existing bus stops on Cannock Wood Road, John Street and Littleworth Road providing services to Cannock and Lichfield. Hednesford railway station is within approximately 2km – 2.5km walking distance of the site offering services to Birmingham and Walsall.

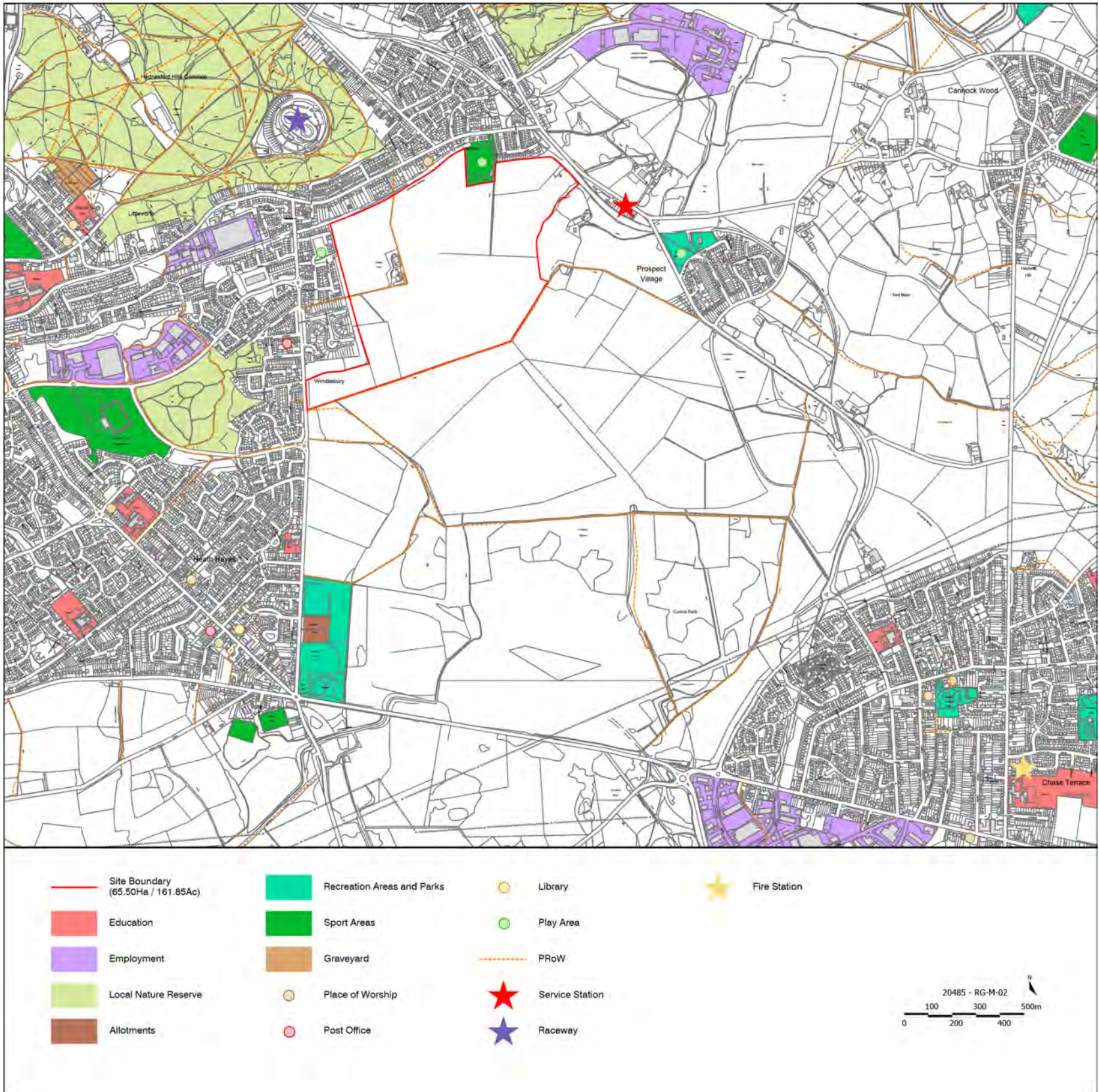


## Landscape and Visual Analysis

5.13 A Landscape and Visual Appraisal has been undertaken in respect of the site. The Landscape and Visual Appraisal identified that the site has medium landscape sensitivity and medium visual sensitivity which is influenced by the scale of existing residential development surrounding the northern, eastern and western edges of the land. The Appraisal also identifies the site as having the potential to successfully accommodate residential development set within a new robust landscape framework, due to its proximity to existing dwellings; exhibiting flatter landform contained by existing vegetation and surrounding rising landform and the established defined edge of the disused railway line.



Figure 3: Facilities Plan





# 6. Environment Considerations

6.1 Figure 4 illustrates a number of site opportunities and considerations identified from initial site investigations and analysis (explored in more detail below) to inform the proposed development. The response to these opportunities and constraints is set out within the 'Concept Masterplan' (Figure 5) within section 7 of the document.

6.2 Technical work has been undertaken at the site by the consultancy team to provide a thorough understanding of the sites' environment. This information has helped to inform the proposed development illustrated in the Concept Masterplan.

## Heritage and Archaeology

6.3 A Heritage and Archaeology Appraisal for the site has been undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology. This appraisal confirms that there are no designated heritage assets within the Site or within a 1km of it. Whilst there are six Grade II Listed Buildings more than 1.5km from the site, they are separated from the site by topography and more recent development. There are two Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM) within the wider surroundings more than 1.4km from the site. One of the SAMs is a moated site known as 'Castle Ring'. It is relatively secluded and screened from the site but there is potential for views between this and the southern part of the site. Further work to ascertain and minimise the influence of development on the moated site will be undertaken. The site offers the potential to set back development from the southern boundary by a buffer zone of mature planting to mitigate any potential visual impact.

6.4 The Appraisal has established that there is limited potential for the presence of archaeological remains from prehistoric activity within the site and has only some potential for later archaeological remains. As such archaeological remains are unlikely to represent a significant constraint on development across the site. Further work will be undertaken to understand the potential presence and extent of archaeological remains to inform mitigation measures, if required.

## Ecology

6.5 An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey has been undertaken by EDP which confirms that the Site is predominantly arable land with some areas of semi-improved grassland delineated by fences, partly dry drains, and a small number of species-poor hedgerows. Aside from ponds and to a degree hedgerows, there are limited potential constraints to development. Further ecological studies will be undertaken to establish the extent, if any, of potential habitats within the Site and would provide mitigation if required to successfully mitigate against any biodiversity loss.

6.6 There are no statutorily designated nature conservation sites within the Site. There are two Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) within 10km, three Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) within 5km and two Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) within 2km however their zones of influence do not pose an 'in principle' constraint to development. Future development proposals at the site will be supported by a landscape led approach to ensure the proposals seamlessly integrate into the surrounding setting.

## Arboriculture

6.7 A preliminary assessment of the tree stock across the site has been undertaken by EDP to identify trees of high and moderate quality. Of the 14 trees, groups and hedges recorded, only one is considered to be of high quality (Category A) and 13 as Category B, of moderate quality and value. Since the majority of the arboricultural items are located within the field boundaries or surrounding properties it is considered that these. Most high or moderate quality features are of minimal constraint as they are situated within the field boundaries or surrounding properties.

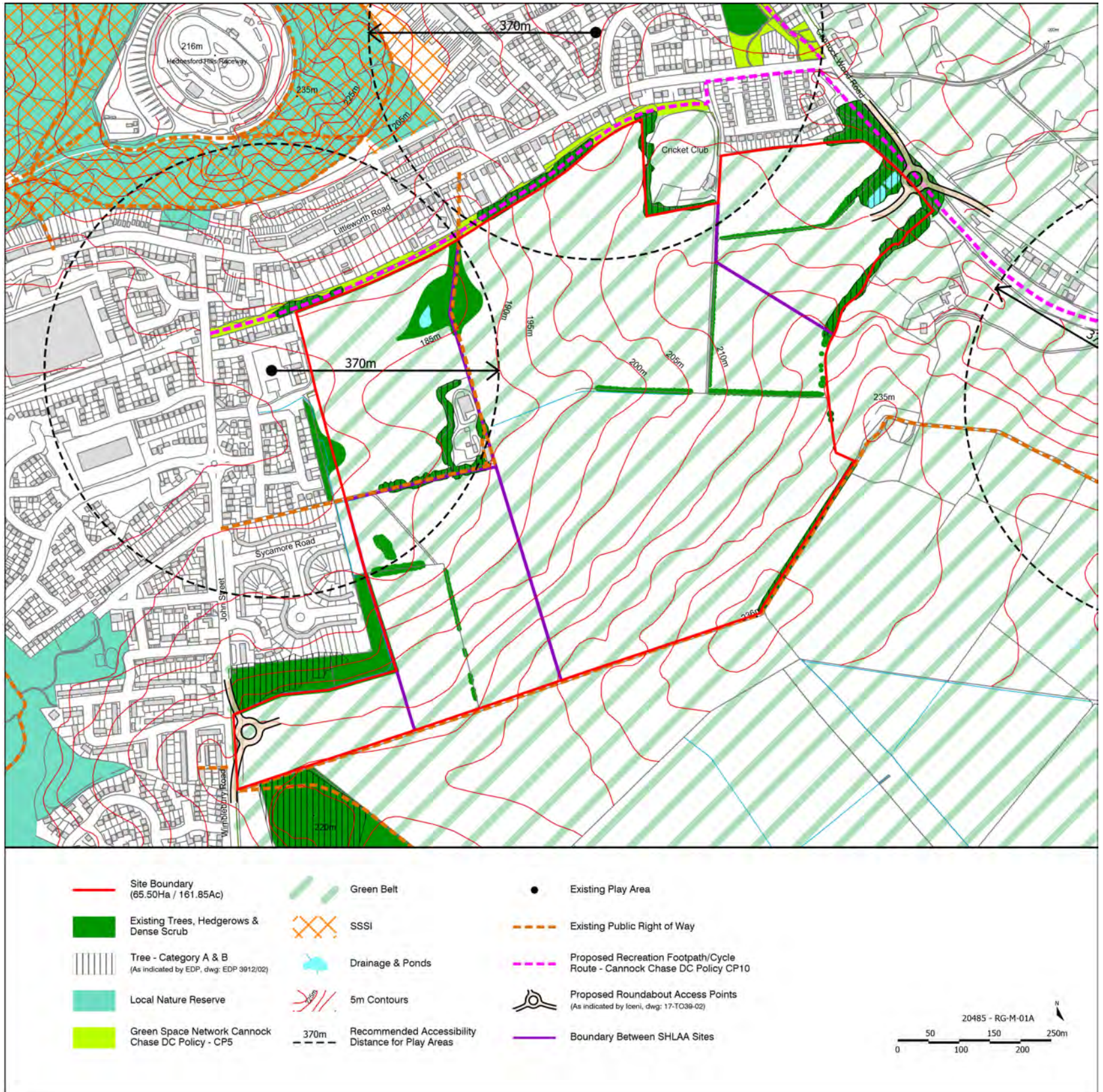
## Movement

6.8 An access appraisal for the site has been undertaken by Icenii to understand the potential to access the site for housing development. The appraisal confirms that a suitable access is achievable from the west of the site from Wimblebury Road and from the east of the site from Cannock Wood Road in the form of roundabouts. The precise location of the roundabout access points is yet to be determined and would be agreed with the Highway Authority. The accesses would however, be delivered with the sites' frontages owned by the Commissioners and/or highway extents.

6.9 If the overall Site is developed (in the longer term), a complete link between Wimblebury Road and Cannock Chase Road could be provided. As well as providing a spine road this is likely to also provide benefits to existing traffic using Littleworth Road given the poor vertical road alignment and substandard junction with Cannock Wood Road.

6.10 The site is strategically well located for access to the local and wider highway network. The site lies within approximately 5km of Junction T7 of the M6 relief road which provides access to the east and westbound A5 and the A34 in both directions.

Figure 4: Constraints and Opportunities Plan



## Sustainable Movement

6.11 Existing bus stops are conveniently located on all road adjacent the site on Wimblebury Road, Littleworth Road and Cannock Wood Road providing frequent services to Canock, Burntwood, Lichfield, Norton Canes, Hednesford and Hazelslade. The site benefits from being approximately 3 miles east of Cannock Railway Station and approximately 2 miles south east of Hednesday Railway Station which provide frequent services to Walsall and Birmingham with a direct onward journey to London.

6.12 Staffordshire County Council's Cannock Chase cycle map identifies Littleworth Road and Cannock Wood Road to the north and east of the site as advisory cycle routes linking to the local cycle network within Cannock Chase and Burntwood in the adjoining District of Lichfield.

6.13 There are two Public Rights of Way which cross the site. The shortest footpath cuts across the north western section of the site linking John Street to the west of the site with Littleworth Road in the north. There may be opportunities for these to be retained within the proposals, or diverted if necessary. There is an extensive stretch of footpath along the entire length of the southern site boundary linking Wimblebury Road in the west with Prospect Village in the east. These pedestrian routes offer future residents ideal sustainable walking opportunities for leisure purposes or walking to local amenities within the urban area of Cannock Chase.

6.14 The site location therefore offers a very realistic opportunity for future residents to travel to and from the new development by non-car modes. By doing so, the development would fully accord with the relevant planning policies which emphasis the need to locate developments where there is a realistic and reasonable expectation that services and facilities may be accessed by travel modes other than the private car. The site will also deliver a Primary School and local facilities for everyday living to further reduce the need to travel by car.

## Flooding and drainage

### Flood Risk

6.15 The site lies wholly within Flood Zone 1 – the lowest risk of flooding. In accordance with the guidance provided by the NPPF, the site should be regarded as sequentially acceptable for development. However, any application on the site will be supported by a Flood Risk Assessment.

### Drainage

6.16 BWB Consulting have considered the drainage requirements for housing development on the site and prepared a Sustainable Drainage Statement. In terms of sustainable urban drainage, the development parcels (1a – 1e) can be successfully drained independently of each other in line with best practice guidance, including allowance for climate change. The majority of parcels will utilise storage ponds and existing drainage features except Parcel 1E which will use an existing SW sewer.

## Ground conditions

6.17 A Phase 1 Environmental Assessment for the site has been undertaken to assess the risk of contamination at the site in connection to its proposed use for residential led development. The history of the site indicates a Low to Moderate potential for contamination from both on site past use and adjacent operations. Based on the historic mining activity in the vicinity an investigation of the ground conditions and implement any necessary remedial measures will be undertaken to support planning applications for the site.

## Landscape

6.18 As identified in the Landscape Character Assessment for Cannock Chase District (2016), the site (reference CP21g) is defined as a 'planned coalfield farmland'. The site is described as a landscape in generally poor condition as a result of long term mining activity and the more recent impact of large scale open casting in the central part of the area. Although the visual impact of the latter has been mitigated following restoration, the functional integrity of this area is weak due to the impact on both the historic character of this planned landscape and the loss of its original heathland character. The site's overall condition is identified as moderate.

6.19 The Landscape Character Assessment suggests that there are opportunities for the creation of new recreational routes to provide safe, off road access between the existing settlements in this area and to link these settlements with the open land in Cannock Chase to the north.

6.20 It is propose to preserve the existing footpaths that run across the site and enhance accessibility for new and existing residents with linkages from these to the new homes and onwards to the existing settlements.

## Summary of Environmental Issues

- The site is not subject to any landscape quality designations
- The site contains no designated heritage assets
- There are no significant ecological constraints and the bulk of the site is of limited conservation value
- The site can be readily accessed
- The site benefits from a sustainable location close to Wimblebury



# 7. Vision for the Site and Concept Plan

7.1 The proposal is set out in the Concept Masterplan opposite. This concept is informed by an assessment of the site and relationship with its wider context. It provides a framework for the delivery of a high quality development with its own character, which is sensitive to the surrounding urban character and landscape setting.

7.2 What will the site provide?

- Over 1,000 new market and affordable homes of varying types and sizes
- A new Primary School
- A new local centre containing shops and community services
- Green open spaces and an equipped play area
- Pedestrian and cycle links connecting to neighbouring areas
- A network of Green Infrastructure including new tree and hedge planting

7.3 The central portion of the development employs a perimeter block structure ensuring frontage onto open space and enclosure of the school site. These areas would provide a broad mix of housing types and tenures and would have an average density of 30dph. Courtyard clusters employing a distinct, more rural character are envisaged on the high ground to the south and adjacent to the former Wimblebury Farm. (The buildings of Wimblebury Farm would be redeveloped as they are of limited architectural merit) These clusters would provide larger detached dwellings and so have a lower density of around 15dph. Around the Local Centre a marginally higher density of 35 dph could be accommodated through the use of more terraced dwellings and a small number of apartment buildings particularly defining the urban square itself. This square could incorporate parking for the school and any retail units. This would be the hub for community life.

7.4 From the total site area of 65.5ha the following areas have been maintained as open space:-

- Green corridors through the site which integrate existing trees and hedgerows, drains and ponds, and public rights of way;
- Areas of particular ecological value;
- Low lying areas required for surface water attenuation basins;
- An area of amenity open space incorporating play areas as per the council's requirement;
- Boundary trees and proposed perimeter buffer tree planting; and
- High ground avoiding intervisibility with Burntwood to the east.



Figure 5: Concept Plan



7.5 In addition, an allowance has been made of 1.15ha for Local Centre facilities, 2.2ha for a Primary School and the land required for the two main access junctions. This leaves a developable area of approximately 38.44ha for residential development. Applying the densities stated above, the site could accommodate 1069 dwellings, as shown in the Land Use Plan. (Figure 6)

7.6 The layout is based upon two access points linked by a main spine street running from Cannock Wood Road in the east to Wimblebury Road in the west. Roundabout junctions have been illustrated which will be subject to further detailed design, capacity testing and discussions with the highway authority.

7.7 The block structure is driven, in part, by the subdivision of the site into a number of smaller sites, ensuring phased development is possible. The sequence of development would be determined by the capacity of each highway junction, prior to the connection right across the site being made.

7.8 The masterplan concept provides a large area of public semi-natural open space incorporating new native tree planting on the high ground. New leisure footpaths run through the green corridors, east to west and north to south across the site. These routes link into existing PROWs and proposed footpaths along the old mineral railways along the northern and eastern boundaries

7.9 The development will help fund infrastructure through the Cannock Chase Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Alongside this section 106 planning obligations will be made for site specific infrastructure.

Table 1: Land Use Schedule

Area	Ha	Ac	Density	Units
Residential Development (15 dph)	6.72	16.61	15	100
Residential Development (30 dph)	27.94	69.05	30	838
Residential Development (35 dph)	3.77	9.31	35	131
Local Centre	1.15	2.85		
Primary School	2.20	5.44		
Access	0.43	1.06		
Amenity	1.86	4.60		
Public Open Space	18.09	44.69		
Attenuation	3.34	8.25		
<b>Total</b>	<b>65.50</b>	<b>161.85</b>		<b>1069</b>

Figure 6: Land Use Plan





## Phasing and Delivery

7.10 The development proposed within the Commissioner's conceptual masterplan has a degree of flexibility in terms of phasing.

7.11 Development of the Bleak House site could commence within the first five years of the Plan Period, with the remainder being completed by 2036.

7.12 The residential development could commence from both the western and eastern ends of the site simultaneously, broadly expanding from Wimblebury Road and Cannock Wood Road towards the centre of site and away from existing developed areas. Infrastructure and facilities would be delivered at an appropriate time alongside the proposed residential development.

7.13 The series of 4 plans within this section provides an indication of the anticipated build out of the Bleak House site.

7.14 The development would expand through phased growth with delivery being driven by local and wider needs from Greater Birmingham. We are conscious that Cannock Chase Council are yet to agree the quantum of dwellings that may be accommodated in the District to contribute towards meeting the GBHMA housing shortfall.

### Phase 1

7.15 The residential development would be subject to a logical and gradual expansion away from Wimblebury Road and Cannock Wood Road, at an appropriate rate of around 40 dwellings per year. After a likely lead in time of 3 years, Parcel 1A and Parcel 1E could be completed in 3 years. Therefore, if secured as an allocation this phase can be completed by 2022. This might be shorter, with the potential for more than one developer to be on site for Parcel 1E. Parcels 1A and 1E have been identified for the first phase since separate points of access are achievable for each.

### Phase 2

7.16 Assuming that the first residential phase is from Wimblebury Road and Cannock Wood Road, the second phase is an extension from Wimblebury Road into Parcel 1B and an extension from Cannock Wood Road into a portion of Parcel 1D. There is the opportunity for this phases to commence as soon as the access road has been constructed during phase 1. With circa 440 dwellings on site in total, one might more reasonably expect two house builders, with a joint completion rate of circa 80 dwellings per annum. Assuming this is the case, development is likely to achieve these rates within 3 /4 years and be completed by 2024.

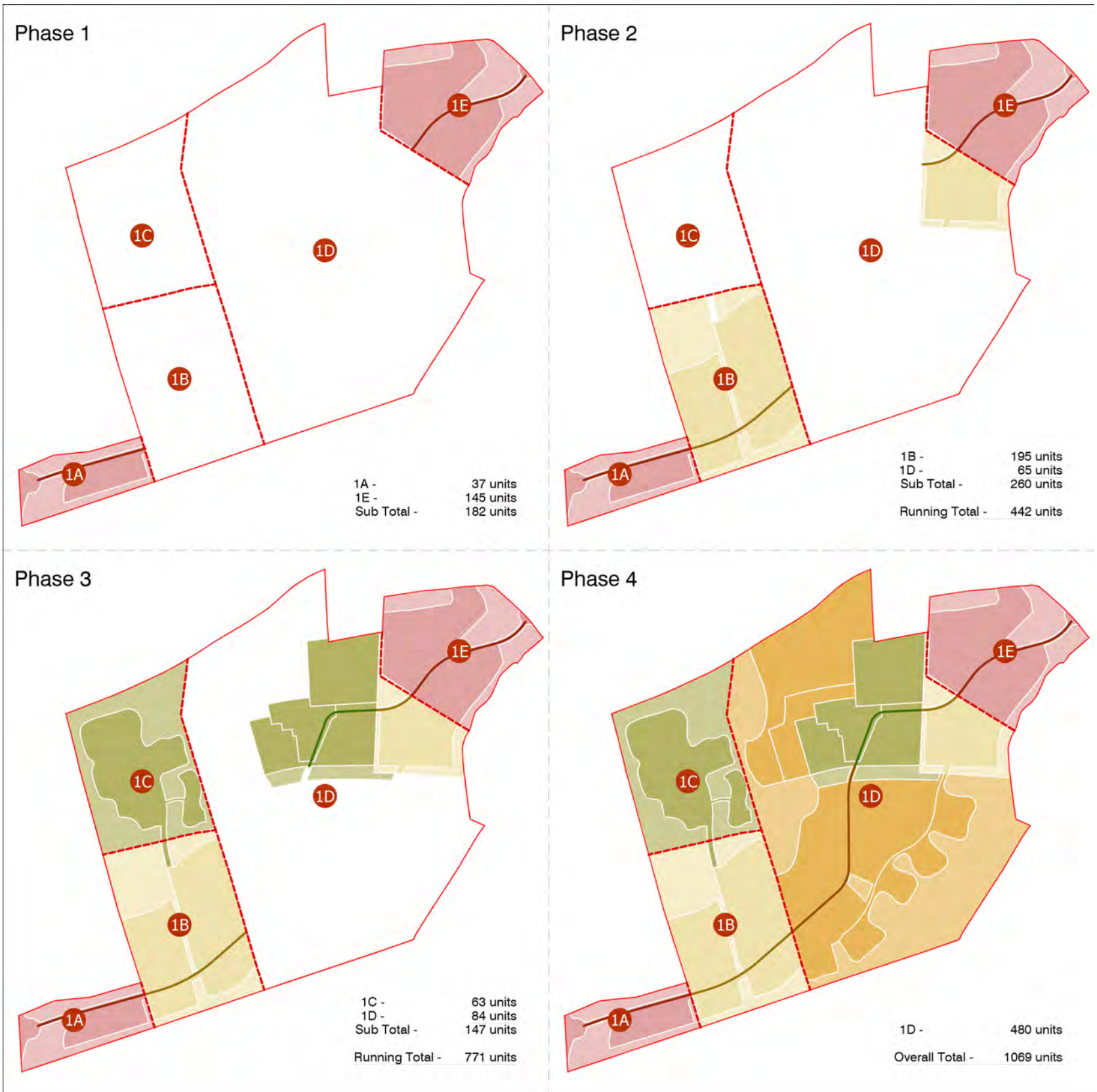
### Phase 3

7.17 There is the opportunity to apply for planning permission for both phases 2 and 3 together. Assuming this is the case we have suggested that the third phase of development might be the development of Parcel 1C and a further portion of Parcel 1D. It is within this area that the provision of a local centre, primary school and play area is planned. It is necessary to ensure that there is sufficient critical mass and footfall for a local centre to establish, attract new business and thrive. For this reason, we have suggested it is the third phase with completion in 2026.

### Phase 4

7.18 Finally we have suggested that the fourth and final stage of development might be for the remainder of Parcel 1E. With circa 480 dwellings planned, again, one might reasonably expect two house builders on site with a joint completion rate of circa 80 dwellings per annum. Assuming this is the case, development is likely to achieve these rates within 6 years for completion beyond the plan period in 2028.

Figure 7: Phasing Plans



# 8. Sustainable Development Principles

8.1 The Government specifically requires Council's when reviewing Green Belt boundaries, to promote sustainable patterns of development. The site represents a highly sustainable solution to the District's housing needs in line with the three dimensions of sustainability, identified by the NPPF. This is demonstrated in the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) we have undertaken for the site. The site has been tested against the SA objectives set out in the Integrated Impact Assessment: Cannock Chase (Local Plan Part 2): Issues and Options (January 2017). The SA findings clearly demonstrate the suitability of the site for residential-led development with significant positive effects against 7 of the 17 SA objectives (4, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13 and 14).

8.2 Overall the site will perform a positive economic, social and environmental role and will help meet the housing need of Cannock Chase and the wider housing needs of the Greater Birmingham Housing Market Area.



Figure 8: Sustainability Appraisal

SA Objectives	SA Score	Justification
1. Protect and enhance biodiversity, fauna and flora and geodiversity	0	The site is not of international, national or local conservation status. The Southern Staffordshire Coalfield Heaths SSSI is located approximately 195m north of the site and there are three Sites of Biological Importance (SBI) within close proximity to the site. There is existing development to the north of the site adjacent to the Coalfield Heath SSSI. Development at this site would not affect the biodiversity and geodiversity of areas of designated conservation sites nearby. The development proposals have been designed to take special account of these features and any planning application will be supported by appropriate species surveys to mitigate any potential harm.
2. Minimise pollution and protect and enhance air, water, and soils.	0	The site lies outside of the proposed air quality management area and our proposals include a good number of sustainable travel options to reduce travel by car.  The site is not located adjacent to a motorway or 'A' road and therefore development at this location is unlikely to result in noise pollution impacting upon local amenity.  This site is mainly classified as Grade 4 agricultural quality with a pocket of urban land to the north west of the site. Thus the quality of the soil is poor. The site is not located within a Source Protection Zone, so a negligible effect is identified for water quality.
3. Ensure development makes efficient use of previously developed land and buildings.	0	The site is not previously developed and does not contain existing buildings.
4. Adapt to the impacts of, and minimise factors contributing to, climate change	++	The development incorporates Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, offers good opportunities for sustainable transport use and is located in a low flood risk area.
5. Reduce the risk of flooding.	+	The site is located in flood zone 1 having the lowest risk of flooding. Our development proposals would not exacerbate the risk of flooding.
6. Protect, enhance and manage the character and quality of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place.	+	The site is located within CP21 (Planned Coalfield Farmlands) as identified in the Landscape Character Assessment for Cannock Chase District. This area has been identified as having a moderate level of sensitivity to development. The site lies adjacent to existing dwellings and our development proposals have been designed within a robust landscape framework contained by existing and new vegetation, surrounding rising landform and the established defined edge of the disused railway line.
7. Make sustainable use of resources and minimise waste generation.	0	The site is located on greenfield land
8. Encourage and facilitate the use of sustainable modes of transport	++	There are over 20 bus stops within 350m of the site with bus stops located on John Street, Littleworth Road, Rawnsley Road and Cannock Wood Street. A cycle path does not pass the site and the site is not located within 1km of a railway station.  Littleworth Road and Cannock Wood Rad are identified as advisory cycle routes on Staffordshire County Council's - Cannock Chase cycle map. Two public rights of way cross the site and new pedestrian and cycle linkages are proposed throughout the site connecting to existing development.
9. Ensure all people are able to live in a decent home which meets their needs	++	The site will accommodate over 1,000 new homes of which a proportion will be affordable. The development will include a range of house types and sizes, providing choice to cater for variety of needs
10. Raise educational aspirations and attainment within the District and ensure that educational facilities are provided where they are required.	++	The site will boost a new Primary School and provide the opportunity to raise educational attainment. Hazel Slade Community Primary School and Heath Hayes Primary School are also located in close proximity.
11. Reduce crime and the fear of crime	+	Our development proposals for the site will include areas of green space and appropriate lighting. Houses will be orientated to face public open space providing natural surveillance.
12. Improve public health and ensure health facilities are accessible for those in need	++	Rawnsley Surgery is located approximately 125m north of the site on Rawnsley Road. There is the opportunity for the new local centre on-site to provide health care facilities.
13. Protect, enhance and create open spaces for leisure and recreation	++	The site is located within close proximity (600m) of a number of open spaces and PRoWs. The northern boundary of the site is bound by an unrestricted green link and a private sports ground and within this designation is a bowling green- both have limited access. Lying directly adjacent to the site's western boundary lies Wimblebury Woods, an unrestricted area of semi natural open space and Barn Way, an unrestricted housing amenity land. A section of the southern boundary lies directly adjacent to a semi-natural open space that has limited access. Another unrestricted area of semi natural open space lies approximately 185m to the east of the site. This site along with the green link and Barn Way form part of the Green Space Network (2012). A PRoW directly aligns with the site's southern boundary. A significant positive is expected on this SA objective given that the site would provide nearby access to a number of open spaces and PRoW.  Our proposals incorporate new open spaces and retain the existing PRoW.
14. Provide easy access to community services and facilities to meet people's needs	++	Development at the site will include a new local centre providing on-site services and facilities. The site is also located in close proximity to a good range of existing amenities.
15. Help the continued regeneration of the local economy by protecting existing employment sites and ensuring there is adequate provision of new sites.	0	The site is not currently in employment use however our development proposals include a new Primary School and Local Centre providing new employment opportunities.
16. Enhance the town centres in order to protect and improve their vitality and viability.	0	The site is located outside of Cannock's three town centres
17. Conserve and enhance the built and historic environment.	0	There are no heritage assets located on the site and there are large distances between the site and heritage assets in the surrounding area. Our development proposals have been sensitively designed to give special regard to features of historic value, including the existing line of the railway on the northern boundary of the site, which will be retained.

# 9. Deliverability

9.1 The NPPF and the Government's growth agenda seek to ensure that sufficient land is available in the most appropriate locations to increase housing supply, support growth and boost home ownership. Importantly this land should be deliverable, to ensure that Cannock Chase and the Greater Birmingham Housing Market Area meet their housing need.

## To be considered deliverable, sites should:

9.2 Be Available: A site is considered available where there is confidence that there are no legal or ownership problems.

9.3 Be Suitable: A site is considered suitable for housing development if it offers a suitable location for development and would contribute to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities.

9.4 Be Achievable: A site is considered achievable for development where there is a reasonable prospect that housing will be developed on the site within five years and in particular that development of the site is viable.

## Available

9.5 The Site is solely owned by the Church Commissioners for England who are committed to the development of sustainable communities to help meet housing need for Cannock Chase and the Greater Birmingham Housing Market Area. If the site were to be released from the Green Belt, the Commissioners would seek a phased development of the site immediately.

## Suitable

9.6 The site is suitable for housing-led development because it:

- Offers a suitable location on the urban edge of Cannock and the first phases can be developed immediately following release from the Green Belt.
- It has readily recognisable and defensible boundaries and makes a limited contribution to the purpose of the Green Belt.
- Has no identified environmental constraints that would prevent the site coming forward for residential development.
- Will deliver a new Primary School, Local Centre, open spaces and green links for use by future residents and the local community.
- Is highly sustainable and within close proximity to everyday services and facilities, to existing areas of employment and recreational facilities.

## Achievable

9.7 The Concept Plan illustrates that the site could deliver approximately 1, 069 dwellings which would make a significant contribution towards meeting the housing needs of the District and the Greater Birmingham Market Area. This Vision Document identifies that the site has no restricting constraints for development. The Church Commissioners for England will undertake further technical assessments to support the delivery of the Site moving forward.



# 10. Conclusion

It is considered that the site presents an exceptional opportunity to meet the future housing needs of both Cannock Chase and Greater Birmingham in a location which would not undermine the purposes of the Green Belt. The Delivery Document demonstrates the case for removing the site from the Green Belt and allocating the site for residential development during the current Plan period or safeguarded for the next. The release and allocation of the site for residential-led development will deliver market and affordable housing that will contribute to meeting future housing needs.

This Delivery Document identifies that the site:

- Is sustainably located and within proximity to a range of amenities, services and facilities;
- Is entirely suitable, achievable and deliverable for housing development;
- Will deliver a mix of market and affordable housing; supported by a Primary School and Local Centre
- Is suitable for release from the Green Belt;
- Will provide high quality areas of new open space for existing and future residents; and
- Will generate significant economic and social benefits.

## Summary

Development of the site provides a highly sustainable opportunity to assist in provided suitable land to deliver housing that will assist in meeting the housing needs of Cannock Chase and Greater Birmingham. Indeed, the Council have confirmed that Green Belt release is needed to meet development needs within the current Plan Period and/or beyond this.

Accordingly, the site will deliver much needed market and affordable housing and is suitable for Green Belt release. Therefore the site should be allocated for residential development in the next stage of the plan, in this case the Proposed Submission.

