

**OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR CONSTRUCTION
OF UP TO 351 RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS, A NEW
COUNTRY PARK AND OPEN SPACE, LAND FOR A NEW
SECONDARY SCHOOL AND ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING,
ACCESS AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

PLANNING STATEMENT

**LAND SOUTH OF LAWFORD ROAD, LONG LAWFORD,
WARWICKSHIRE**

ON BEHALF OF GREENVOLT DEVELOPMENT LIMITED

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PLANNING | **DESIGN** | **ENVIRONMENT** | **ECONOMICS**

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1. INTRODUCTION

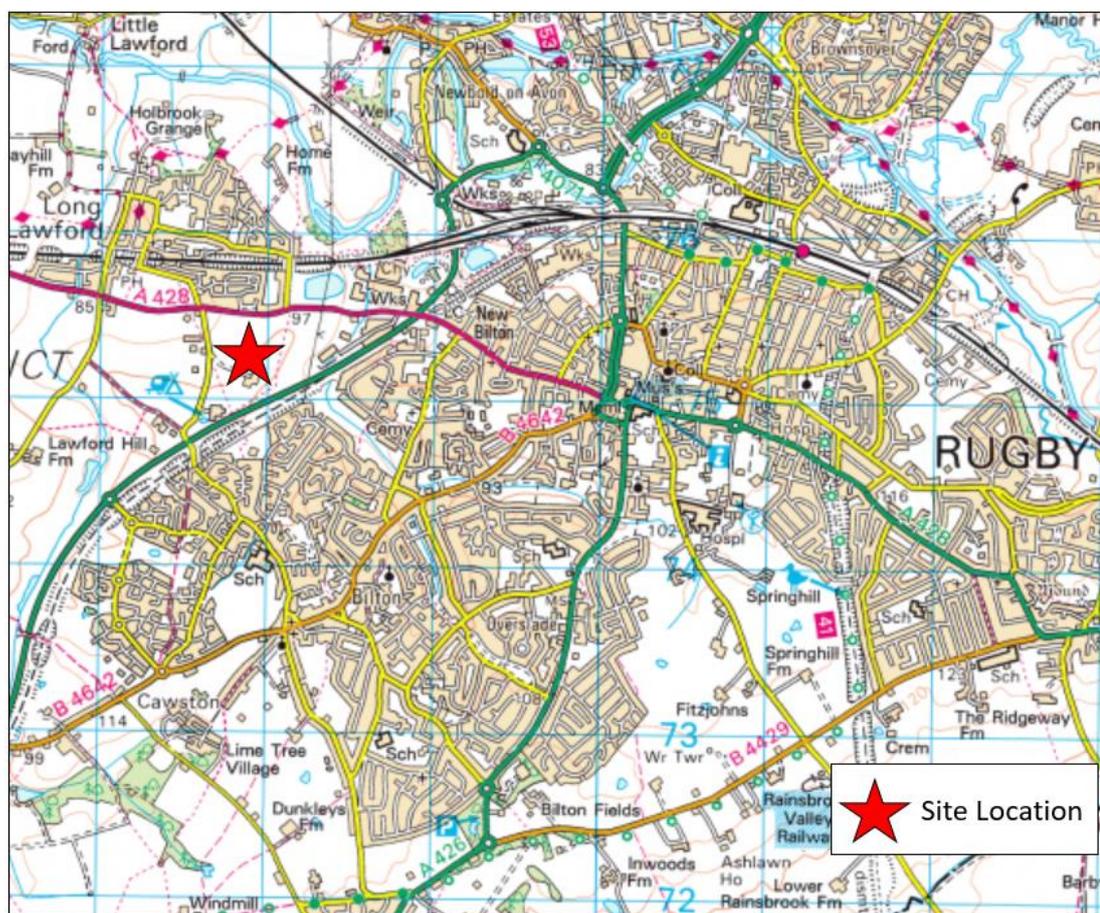
- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Pegasus Group on behalf of Greenvolt Development Limited ('the Applicant') in support of an Outline Planning Application for demolition of the existing buildings and a residential-led development of up to 351 residential units, a new Country Park and open space, new vehicular access, associated infrastructure and landscaping works and land to be made available for a new Secondary School, with all matters reserved except for access.
- 1.2 This Statement sets out the planning rationale behind the proposed development and seeks to demonstrate its acceptability in planning terms.
- 1.3 The Statement is structured as follows:
- **Section 2** describes the site, the surrounding context and planning history;
 - **Section 3** considers other relevant background information;
 - **Section 4** describes the proposed development;
 - **Section 5** reviews the planning policy context;
 - **Section 6** assesses the proposals against relevant planning considerations;
 - **Section 7** assesses the proposals contribution to sustainable development; and
 - **Section 8** summarises and concludes the report.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

Site Location

- 2.1 The Application Site ('the site') is situated within the administrative area of Rugby Borough Council (RBC) and immediately to the south of Rugby Road/ Lawford Road (A4278), which is located south of the existing settlement of Long Lawford. The site is adjacent to the urban edge of Rugby and is approximately 2.5km west of the town centre as shown in Figure 1 below.

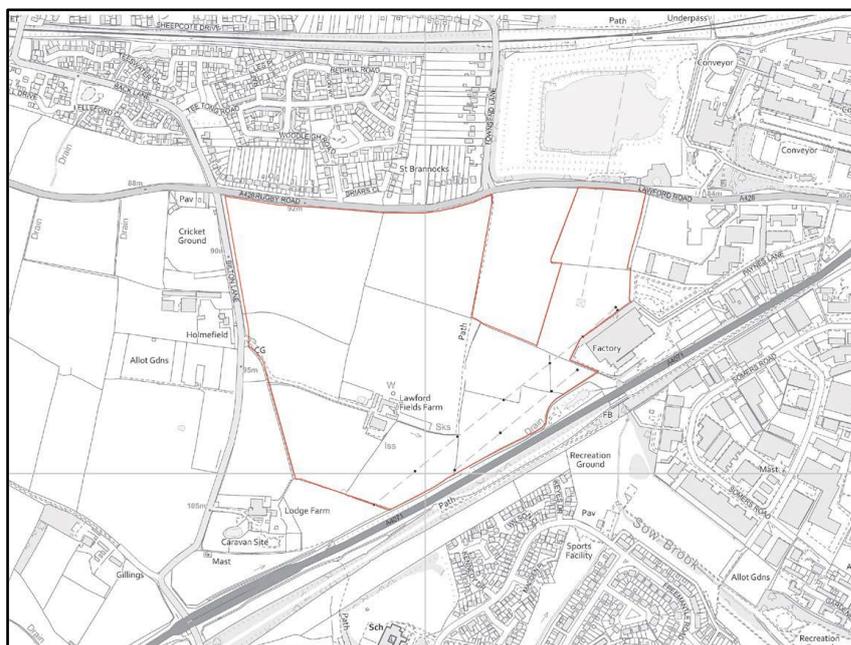
Figure 1: Site Location Plan



The Site

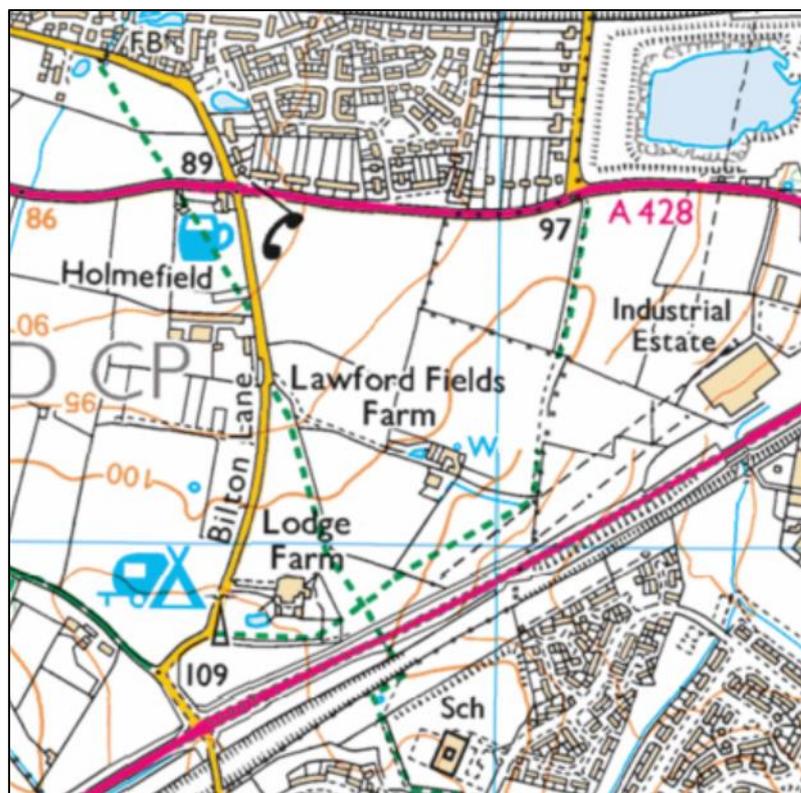
- 2.2 The site, edged red in Figure 2 below covers approx. 30 hectares.

Figure 2: Site Plan



- 2.3 Several access points, in the form of field gates, currently exist off the A428 on the site's northern boundary.
- 2.4 The site predominantly comprises open countryside, which is designated Green Belt land and is currently used for both arable and pastoral farming, with an associated dwelling and farm buildings (Lawford Fields Farm), which are accessed off Bilton Lane on the site's western boundary.
- 2.5 Existing Public Rights of Way run along the site's western boundary, before travelling in an easterly direction through the southern part of the site and then turning northwards at the site's mid-point to connect to Townsend Lane to the north of the site as shown in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Existing Public Rights of Way



2.6 The 'Rugby-Rugby Somers Road' National Grid gas pipeline also runs across the centre of the site from east to west.

Site Surroundings

2.7 Long Lawford lies adjacent to the site to the north, beyond Lawford Road (A428); to the south, the site is bound by the A4071 which also marks the outer extent of the built up area of Rugby; The Paynes Lane Industrial Estate is located adjacent to the east of the site; and to the west the site is bound by Bilton Lane, beyond which lies open countryside.

2.8 The nearest bus stops are located immediately to the north of the site at the junction of Lawford Road (A428) and Townsend Lane. Rugby Rail Station is located approximately 3km to the east of the site and is accessible by regular bus services (journey time approximately 15-minutes). Rugby Rail Station provides regular services between London Euston and Birmingham New Street in addition to other local stations.

3. OTHER RELEVANT BACKGROUND

Pre-Application Engagement

- 3.1 The Applicant has undertaken Pre-Application discussions with Rugby Borough Council (RBC) and Warwickshire County Council (WCC). The purpose of this Pre-Application engagement was to present the draft proposals at an early stage in the process to seek to agree and refine the design principles and benefits to be delivered; to inform decision-makers and stakeholders of the key project objectives and benefits, including from providing land for a new Secondary School; and to ensure the scheme has considered relevant Development Plan policies and technical considerations.
- 3.2 Pre-application discussions with WCC confirmed the shortfall in secondary school places in Rugby. As such, the principle aim of the project is the gifting of a significant parcel of land (3.6 hectares) to WCC to deliver a new Secondary School.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening

- 3.3 The Applicant submitted a formal Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening request to RBC and is awaiting a formal response.

4. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The purpose of this section is to describe the proposed development for which Outline Planning Permission is sought.

Description of Development

- 4.2 Approval is sought for the following description of development:

Outline Planning Application for the demolition of existing buildings and construction of up to 351 residential dwellings, new Country Park and open space, new vehicular access from Rugby Road and Bilton Lane and associated infrastructure and landscaping works in addition to providing land for a new Secondary School, with all matters reserved except for access.

- 4.3 This section provides a description of the proposed development. A detailed description of the proposal is also set out in the submitted Design and Access Statement.
- 4.4 The application is submitted in outline with all matters reserved except for access. The access is in respect of connections from the site to the adopted highway and does not include internal access roads that are detailed indicatively. All other matters (layout, scale, appearance, and landscaping) are reserved for future consideration.
- 4.5 The quality of the design of the proposed development is to be controlled by the Design Principles, contained with the Design and Access Statement, that seek to establish the key design objectives and requirements to ensure design quality is maintained for future Reserved Matters Applications.

Masterplan Vision

- 4.6 The proposed Masterplan is set out in the Design and Access Statement.
- 4.7 The Masterplan Vision is to create a sustainable, high-quality place to live, and a new neighbourhood that complements and improves service provision for existing and future residents.
- 4.8 The key objectives comprise:

-
- Gifting of land to WCC to enable the delivery of a much-needed new Secondary School.
 - A network of streets and spaces aligned to frame views towards proposed landmark buildings to create a legible scheme with clear sense of place.
 - Provision of mixed-tenure homes and housing types including homes that are genuinely affordable.
 - High-quality designed homes with gardens/private amenity space.
 - Opportunities to grow food in a local allotment garden.
 - Development that enhances the natural environment, providing a comprehensive green infrastructure network and net biodiversity gains and enhanced public access to open space and recreational play spaces, including the provision of a new Village Green at the heart of the development and a New Country Park.
 - Integrated and accessible transport systems, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of local transport and linking with existing Public Rights of Way to create a new fitness loop around the site.

Proposed Land Uses

- 4.9 The residential component of the Masterplan provides up to 351 dwellings.
- 4.10 The Indicative Layout Plan identifies approximately 8.4 hectares for residential development.
- 4.11 A mixture of dwelling sizes and tenures is proposed, including a provision of 30% affordable housing.
- 4.12 In addition to the provision of up to 351 dwellings, the Masterplan proposes:
- Land for a secondary school (3.59 hectares), which WCC (as the Lead Education Authority (LEA)), will deliver;
 - Allotments (0.9 hectares); and

- A Country Park, comprising public open spaces, structural landscaped open space, and sustainable urban drainage.

Design Quality - Layout

- 4.13 The layout of the proposed development is shown on the Indicative Layout Plan and elaborated upon within the submitted Design & Access Statement. The layout has been informed by the site's context, having regard to physical and technical constraints and opportunities at this location and a landscape character appraisal to ensure that the new development sits comfortably within the local landscape and is integrated with the existing built form to the north, south and east.
- 4.14 The layout has been designed to create a legible and permeable place, using key views and vistas to help frame and navigate the development and providing links throughout the site and the surrounding area to provide increased opportunities for sustainable modes of travel, particularly walking and cycling.
- 4.15 The detailed layout for the site will come forward at the Reserved Matters stage and will follow the design principles set out within the submitted material.

Density Ranges

- 4.16 The development proposes 351 dwellings across a net residential developable area of approximately 8.4 hectares. This creates an overall density of 42 dwellings per hectare (dph), representing an acceptable and suitable optimisation of developable land at this location. The density range is also within the range of acceptable densities for modern, mixed tenure and type developments, and is similar to the densities of the surrounding townscape.

Materials and Heights

- 4.17 Details of the materials will be identified at the Reserved Matters stage. However, as outlined in the 'Assessment' within the Design & Access Statement, the materials will be chosen to ensure they respond to the character of the surrounding area and ensure a high-quality development.
- 4.18 The height of the proposed buildings will be secured at Reserved Matters stage. It is anticipated that building heights will predominantly comprise two storeys, with occasionally taller buildings to frame key vistas and prominent corner plots within the scheme.

Access and Parking

- 4.19 The primary vehicular access is proposed from a new junction on Rugby Road, located to the north of the site and opposite the existing junction to Briars Close. A secondary access is proposed from Bilton Lane. These new points of access are to be created via conversion of the existing Rugby Road/Briars Close priority junction to a four-arm roundabout and formation of a new priority junction on Bilton Lane.
- 4.20 The scheme retains and incorporates the existing Public Rights of Way across the southern boundary and through the middle of the site.
- 4.21 Parking will be provided in accordance with RBC standards.

Landscape and Public Open Space

- 4.22 The proposed development includes the provision of a new Country Park, alongside an extensive new green infrastructure network.
- 4.23 The Masterplan and the Design & Access Statement show the proposed layout of the Country Park, primarily along the site's southern boundary to help create and maintain a permanent gap between the built up areas of Long Lawford and Rugby.
- 4.24 The total public open space provision is in the order of 17.2 hectares. This includes a linear park along the eastern boundary (which includes a new 'Fitness Loop'), woodlands along the southern boundary, allotments and a new Village Green running through the heart of the scheme.
- 4.25 In respect of play space, the proposed Village Green includes provision of a number of new Local Areas of Play (LPAs) and Locally Equipped Areas of Play (LEAPs) which are to be located between the two residential parcels to ensure these facilities are easily accessible by future residents

Drainage

- 4.26 The proposal includes the use of sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) for surface water drainage on-site. This will include infiltration basins and swales, located within green corridors. Permeable paving and rain gardens would provide further attenuation in and around driveways and access roads.

4.27 The proposed drainage system will be designed for the 1 in 100 year plus climate change storm event. A 40% allowance will be included for climate change.

5. POLICY FRAMEWORK

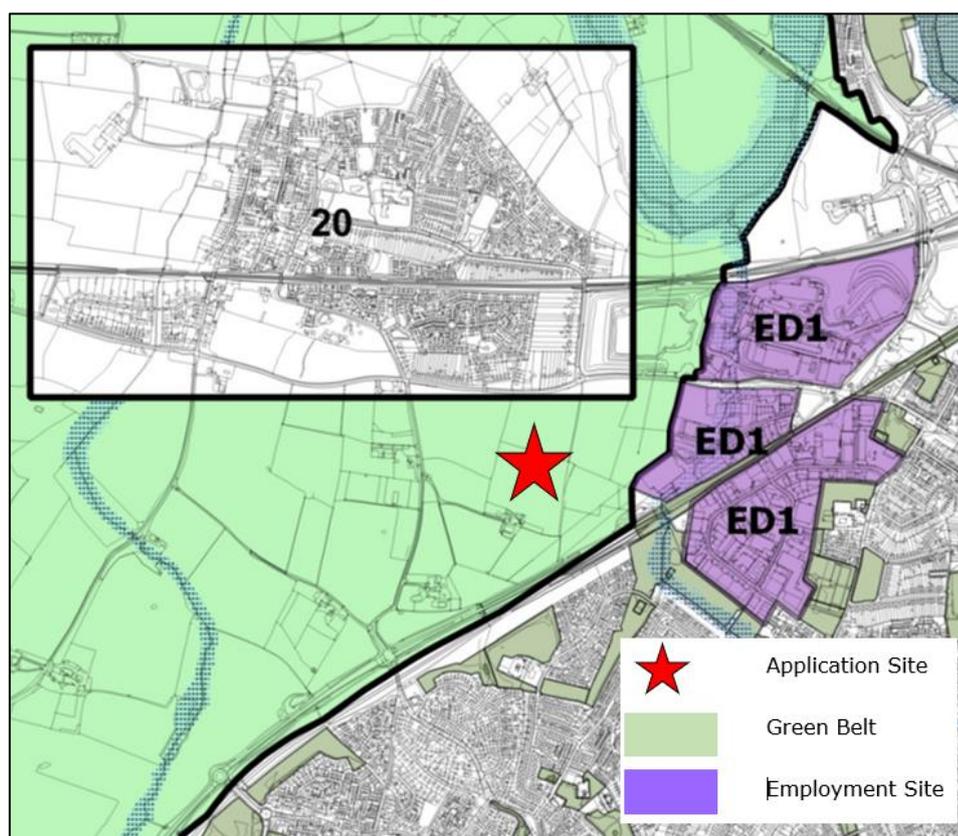
5.1 In line with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Accordingly, the relevant planning policies for the site are contained within the following:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019);
- Rugby Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 (2019); and
- Relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance / Documents (SPGs/ SPDs¹).

Site Designations

5.2 As highlighted in Figure 4 below, the site is designated within the Local Plan as Green Belt.

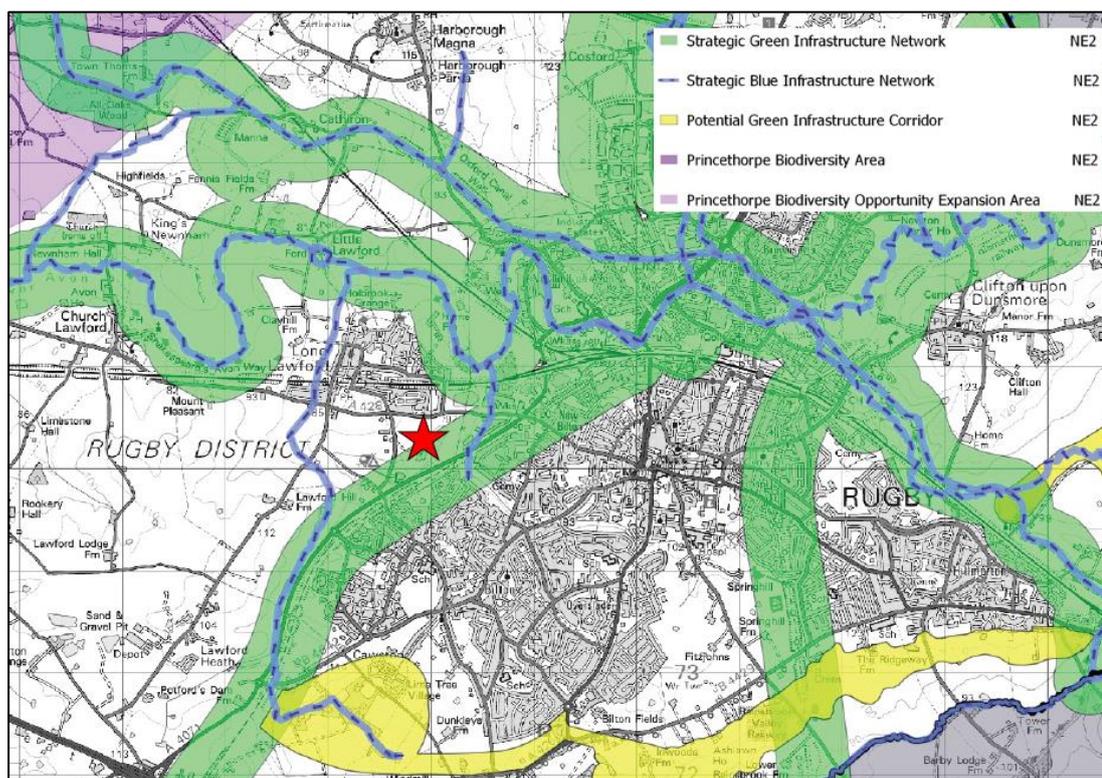
Figure 4: Planning Policies Map Extract



¹ This includes the Housing Needs SPD, Planning Obligations SPD, and Sustainable Design and Construction SPD.

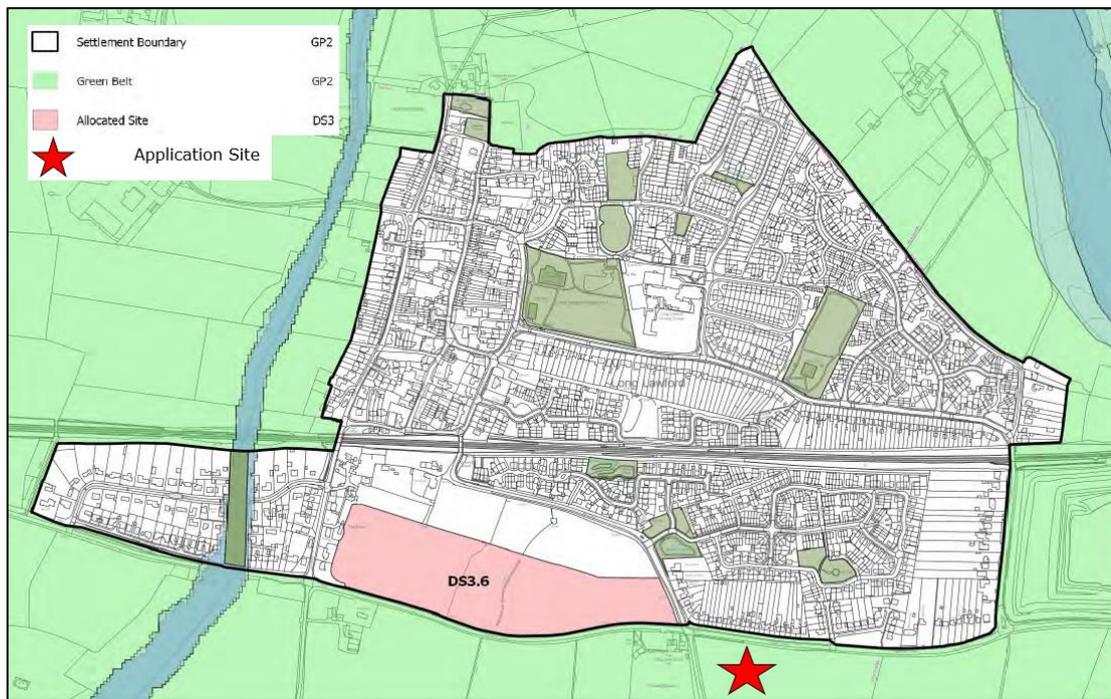
- 5.3 Figure 5 below further highlights that the southern and eastern extents of the site fall within the Strategic Green Infrastructure Network.

Figure 5: Green Infrastructure Network Map Extract



- 5.4 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 (lowest probability of flooding) and is not subject to any statutory environmental or heritage designations. There are several trees within the site boundary and which border the site. However, none of these are subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).
- 5.5 The site is bordered to the north by Long Lawford which is designated as a 'Rural Settlement' (No. 20). The site (Land North of Coventry Road, Long Lawford) on the other side of Rugby Road is allocated (DS3.6) for c. 150 dwellings as shown in Figure 6 below and the industrial areas to the east of the site are designated employment sites as shown in Figure 4 above.

Figure 6: Long Lawford Proposals Map Extract



6. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

6.1 This section assesses the proposed development against the relevant planning considerations set out in the Development Plan and other material planning guidance documents as highlighted in Section 5 above.

6.2 Accordingly, the following key planning considerations are assessed in turn:

- Principle Matters:
 - Principle of Development;
 - Land Uses:
 - Education;
 - Residential, including Dwelling Mix, Tenure and Residential Amenity; and
 - Public Open Space
 - Design and Landscaping
- Environmental and Technical Matters:
 - Ecology and Trees;
 - Highways and Access;
 - Flood Risk and SuDS;
 - Noise and Air Quality; and
 - Contamination/Agricultural Land.

6.3 Following an assessment of the above key planning considerations, the section then draws together the proposal's contribution towards the achievement of sustainable development as required by the NPPF.

Principle of Development

6.4 The application site is located in the Green Belt which represents the principle matter in the determination of the Application.

6.5 Policy GP2 of the Rugby Borough Local Plan states that new development in the Green Belt will be resisted and only where national policy on Green Belt allows will development be permitted.

6.6 Accordingly, at the national level, the NPPF states at paragraph 143 that:

"Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in Very Special Circumstances"

6.7 NPPF, paragraph 144 continues:

"When considering a planning application, Local Planning Authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. Very Special Circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations"

6.8 It is accepted that the proposals, when taken as a whole, constitute 'inappropriate development in the Green Belt', which is harmful by definition.

6.9 It is therefore necessary to consider the relative harm generated by the proposals against the defined purposes of the Green Belt as established by the NPPF (2019) when weighed against the benefits of the proposed development in order to establish whether the Very Special Circumstances necessary to outweigh such harm exist.

Purposes of the Green Belt

6.10 The NPPF seeks the continued protection of the Green Belt with paragraph 133 stating that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl, by keeping land permanently open, and identifies openness and permanence as essential characteristics of the Green Belt.

6.11 The NPPF (Paragraph 134) confirms that the Green Belt serves five purposes. To assess the level of "harm" that may arise from the proposed development, it is helpful to examine the extent to which the site contributes to those purposes.

1. To Check the Unrestricted Sprawl of Large Built-Up Areas

- 6.12 The application site is bordered to the east and south by the A4071 which defines the north-westernmost edge of Rugby, considered to be the 'Large Built-Up Area' of interest in respect of the first Green Belt purpose.
- 6.13 The A4071 acts as a permanent and physical barrier preventing the outward expansion of Rugby in a north-west direction and whilst the proposals would represent an extension of Long Lawford to the south-east, the proposals for a new Country Park along the southern and eastern part of the site further help to reinforce the permanent and defensible Green Belt boundary at this location to prevent the outward expansion of Rugby.
- 6.14 Accordingly, it is considered that it is the presence of the A4071 which restricts the sprawl of Rugby and not the site itself and therefore the site does not in itself contribute to the first purpose of the Green Belt. However, with further mitigation in the form of the proposed new Country Park, it is considered that the site will contribute positively to the permanent and defensible separation between Rugby and Long Lawford.

2. To Prevent Neighbouring Towns Merging into One Another

- 6.15 As recognised in the Coventry and Warwickshire Joint Green Belt Review (December 2015)², the application site plays a role in preventing merging between Rugby and Long Lawford. As such, the site contributes to this Green Belt purpose.
- 6.16 However, as set out above, it is considered that this purpose is primarily served by the presence of the A4071 and the proposed new Country Park along the site's southern and eastern edge will provide a further permanent and defensible boundary between Rugby and Long Lawford. Accordingly, the extent to which the site itself contributes to this Green Belt purpose is therefore effectively reduced and suitably mitigated by the proposals to the extent that the site only provides a partial contribution to the second Green Belt purpose.

3. To Assist in Safeguarding the Countryside from Encroachment

- 6.17 The site is recognised to be a countryside location on the edge of Rugby and accordingly any development at this site will, by necessity, result in encroachment

² The application site is identified as Land Parcel Ref. 4.

into the countryside. However, it is important to consider the degree to which any encroachment will occur and how this is perceived from the wider countryside.

- 6.18 The site benefits from a substantial degree of containment by both the existing settlement pattern and existing built form to the east, north and south, effectively enclosing the site by existing urban influences on three sides. The site is therefore perceived as being closely related to the surrounding urban areas and less with open and rural countryside. It is also evident that by being enclosed on three sides by existing built form, that the development of the site would not result in the outward expansion of urban areas beyond existing urban limits.
- 6.19 Furthermore, it is necessary to note that the site is not subject to any landscape or ecological designations which might otherwise contribute towards the value and sensitivity of the countryside at this location, elevating it above the ordinary.
- 6.20 Whilst it is accepted that, by necessity, the site contributes to the third purpose of the Green Belt, the combination of the above is considered to effectively reduce this contribution and limits perceptions of countryside encroachment at this location. Accordingly, it is considered that the site makes only a partial contribution to the third Green Belt purpose.

4. To Preserve the Setting and Special Character of Historic Towns

- 6.21 The application site is not subject to any statutory or local heritage designations and Long Lawford is not subject to any Conservation Area designations and significant built form is present between the Rugby Conservation Area within Rugby Town Centre to the extent that the site makes no contribution to the fourth purpose of the Green Belt.

5. To Assist in Urban Regeneration, by Encouraging the Recycling of Derelict and Other Urban Land

- 6.22 This purpose of the Green Belt is particularly difficult to quantify. The objective of this purpose is to constrain the supply of development land in order to encourage the recycling of previously developed sites which would not otherwise be developed, and therefore assist in urban regeneration. This objective can only be realised if there is a supply of derelict and other urban land that is capable of being recycled and which is deliverable.

6.23 It is evident, given that the boundaries of the Green Belt were altered through the Local Plan (adopted in May 2019) process, that there is a lack of supply of brownfield land to meet objectively assessed housing needs which is available for redevelopment for strategic housing delivery in RBC.

6.24 The proposed development would not result in the recycling of derelict or other urban land. However, in the context of an insufficient supply of deliverable brownfield land to meet housing needs, it is considered that in practice the significance of the site's contribution towards the fifth Green Belt purpose is limited.

Conclusion

6.25 Overall, the application site, on its own, makes a limited contribution to the five purposes of the Green Belt as set out in the NPPF and as such any harm arising from the proposed development in respect of Green Belt matters is proportionately limited.

Very Special Circumstances

6.26 Having considered the relative harm to the Green Belt purposes, it is necessary to consider the Very Special Circumstances (VSCs) which support the application proposals and the degree to which these outweigh such 'harm' to the Green Belt.

6.27 Accordingly, the Very Special Circumstances in support of the proposed development comprise:

- Education Need and Benefits;
- Positive Enhancement and Beneficial Use of the Green Belt; and
- Housing Delivery.

Education Need and Benefits

Statutory Duty

6.28 The Education and Inspection Act 1996/2006 places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to provide enough pupil places for every child of statutory school age in their local area. Local authorities also have a duty to promote choice, diversity and high standards, ensuring that every child fulfils their educational potential.

- 6.29 It is recommended by the Audit Commission that Local Authorities maintain a 5% surplus of places for planning and managing pupil places within their area. This surplus capacity allows for parental preference and future increase in demand.

Background to Local Plan

- 6.30 RBC has been experiencing an increase in the demand for secondary pupil places for several years. The RBC Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) states that education provision within Rugby town is extremely pressured and evidence produced by WCC (the Local Education Authority) demonstrates there is no additional capacity within the town. The table below³ shows the net requirement (and shortfall) for secondary school places over the plan period.

Table 1 - Net Requirement for Secondary School Places

Academic Year	Planned Capacity i.e. growth from Year 7 only	Total Capacity (assumes new schools open across all year groups)	Forecast Need	Surplus / Shortfall (against total capacity)	FE per year group
2017/18	5770	5770	5654	116	
2018/19	5950	5950	6095	-145	-0.97
2019/20	6130	6130	6394	-264	-1.76
2020/21	6310	6310	6818	-508	-3.39
2021/22	6310	6310	7000	-690	-4.60
2022/23	6490	7210	7271	-61	-0.41
2023/24	6670	7210	7573	-363	-2.42
2024/25	6850	7210	7769	-559	-3.73
2025/26	7210	8110	8115	-5	-0.03
2026/27	7570	8110	8348	-238	-1.59
2027/28	7750	8110	8347	-237	-1.58
2028/29	7930	8110	8306	-196	-1.31
2029/30	8110	8110	8314	-204	-1.36
2030/31	8110	8110	8139	-29	-0.19

- 6.31 Consequently, the strategic housing allocations in the RBC Local Plan include provision of onsite education; 1no. secondary school has been planned for within the largest of the allocations (South West Rugby). Delivery of this is timetabled for Plan Phase 2 (2018-2031).

- 6.32 In addition, secondary school provision for Coton Park East is to be provided off-site through the expansion of existing secondary schools in Rugby, with a financial contribution towards both school places and pupil transportation costs identified in

³ Source: Warwickshire County Council's 'Statement on Secondary Education Needs and Infrastructure', which forms part of the Local Plan evidence base.

the IDP. However, should the capacity not be available on existing school sites, a reserve site for a secondary school has also been proposed at Coton Park East⁴.

6.33 Therefore, the approach to meet the additional secondary education school places, set out in the Local Plan, which are required as a result of the planned housing growth in the Borough is to provide for 1no. new secondary school and to expand existing schools.

6.34 Further, the Local Plan states (on Page 114)that there will be a need for off-site contribution towards secondary school provision to support the combined growth of the Main Rural Settlements, including Long Lawford.

Advantages of the Proposal

6.35 The proposal includes 3.6 hectares of land which is proposed to be gifted to Warwickshire County Council towards the delivery of a new Secondary School. Whilst the Local Plan includes provision of a new Secondary School (to be co-located with a two form entry primary school), in the South West Rugby allocation, delivery is timetabled for Phase 2 (2018-2031) and the Draft South West Rugby SPD states that further information is required from WCC to indicate when exactly the secondary school will be required. No further details on timing etc. are set out. As such, it is extremely unlikely that this secondary school will be delivered in the short-term, or within the first five years of the plan period.

6.36 Given that the application site is available now, should planning permission be granted, the gifting of land for a new Secondary School would help to alleviate pressure on the education system, particularly in the event that planned school places do not come forward as envisaged within the major site allocations and could be delivered within the next five years. Large site allocations are often fraught with constraints and difficulties in delivery as highlighted within industry research⁵ and in particular, a development of the scale envisaged at South West Rugby can expect at least 6 years to achieve the necessary planning approvals to simply commence.

6.37 Accordingly, the gifting of land towards a new Secondary School would provide WCC with a suitable buffer to deliver additional education capacity to address

⁴ The reserve site was not part of the submitted Plan, but the potential need for it was confirmed by the LEA following discussion at the Stage 1 hearings and the publication of its statement on secondary education needs and infrastructure.

⁵ Lichfields: Start to Finish: How Quickly do Large-Scale Housing Sites Delivery? (November 2016)

recognised educational requirements (as set out in the IDP) for Secondary School places and thereby help alleviate pressure on the local education system, and is considered to represent a significant material consideration in favour of the proposed development.

- 6.38 The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Policy Statement (August 2011) 'Planning for School Development' advises that Local Authorities give full and thorough consideration to the importance of enabling the development of state-funded schools in planning decisions. As such, significant weight should be attributed to the educational benefits of the proposal.

Positive Enhancement and Beneficial Use of the Green Belt

- 6.39 Paragraph 141 of the NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of Green Belt, including opportunities to provide access, for outdoor sport and recreation, to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity. As set out in further detail later in the report, the proposals would deliver benefits in these respects, including:

- Extensive additions are proposed to the network of footpaths and cycle paths, through the delivery of new areas of open space and Green Infrastructure, including the provision of a new Country Park and play spaces, providing increased opportunities for access, leisure and recreational pursuits. The new routes would provide convenient links joining up existing parts of the Public Right of Way network to further encourage sustainable modes of travel;
- Provision of a 'fitness loop' and fitness equipment within areas of Public Open Space will deliver opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation, providing associated health benefits to new and existing residents; and
- Ecological enhancements as part of a comprehensive Green Infrastructure Strategy will deliver biodiversity improvements for local wildlife.

- 6.40 As such, the proposals are considered to accord with the requirements of the NPPF to positively enhance the beneficial use of the site, providing opportunities for improved access, outdoor sport and recreation, and improvements in landscaping and biodiversity net gains. Accordingly, such benefits are considered to warrant significant weight in favour of the proposals.

Housing Delivery

- 6.41 The NPPF sets out the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. Paragraph 59 of the NPPF states that it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed.
- 6.42 NPPF Paragraph 65 outlines that LPAs should establish a housing requirement figure for their whole area, which shows the extent to which their identified housing need can be met over the plan period.
- 6.43 NPPF Paragraph 72 states that the supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities.
- 6.44 Policy DS1 of the Local Plan outlines a housing need of 12,400 additional homes, including 2,800 dwellings to contribute to Coventry's unmet need, with the following phased annual requirement:
- Phase 1 – 2011-2018 – 540 dwellings per annum; and
 - Phase 2 – 2018-2031 – 663 dwellings per annum.
- 6.45 The Local Plan therefore sets out a step change in delivery. This is reflective of RBC's reliance on large strategic sites to achieve their housing target; the lead-in time to deliver these sites means that the subsequent housing delivery rates are considerably lower for the early years of the plan. Aspiring to deliver new homes towards the end of the plan period is inherently risky as, if delivery is delayed, housing targets will be missed, and the levels of housing need and housing affordability exacerbated.
- 6.46 The application site is deliverable (suitable, available and viable) within the early part of the plan period and the proposal offers the opportunity to deliver a high-quality development of up to 351 new homes to contribute to RBC's identified housing need and provide a necessary buffer to housing delivery within the early part of the Plan period.
- 6.47 The proposals would also deliver a mix of dwelling types, sizes and tenures that will make an important contribution to meeting local identified needs.

- 6.48 The proposal would therefore be complementary to the housing allocations set out in the Local Plan and allow for contingency in RBC's planned housing delivery. This is especially important given the imbalance in planned delivery rates across the Plan period, the reliance on a small number of large allocations and the risks with this approach and associated consequences for housing affordability in the event that the strategic sites should fail to come forward at the anticipated rate.
- 6.49 Significant weight should therefore be attached to the delivery of up to 351 dwellings as part of the application proposals which would add choice and competition into the local housing market. Moreover, the proposals would deliver policy compliant 30% Affordable Housing to provide a further significant and valuable contribution to affordable housing provision in the Borough.
- 6.50 Accordingly, the provision of new market and affordable homes in an accessible and sustainable location at Lawford Fields and also within close proximity to the services and facilities available in Rugby is considered to be a very significant benefit contributing towards the Very Special Circumstances in this case.

Conclusion – Very Special Circumstances

- 6.51 It is recognised that the proposed development would cause limited harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, loss of openness and partial conflict with two of the five purposes that Green Belt serves.
- 6.52 However, the combination of significant education provision, positive enhancement and beneficial use and housing delivery are considered to clearly outweigh the limited harm to the Green Belt, thereby justifying the proposals on the basis of Very Special Circumstances in line with the provisions of the NPPF.

Proposed Land Uses (Education)

Policy Summary

- 6.53 Paragraph 94 of the NPPF states that it is important that there is a sufficient choice of school places available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. It states that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. As such, great weight should be afforded to the need to create, expand or alter schools through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications.
- 6.54 Policy DC5 of the Local Plan states that proposals for the development of strategic sites of over 100 dwellings must include provision of and/or contribution to community facilities such as schools, community buildings and sports facilities.

Assessment

- 6.55 The scheme would provide land for WCC to deliver a new Secondary School.
- 6.56 The Masterplan proposes an indicative location for the secondary school, in the northern part of the site, adjacent to Rugby Road and the proposed northern (primary) access. This ensures that the proposed school is located so that it is accessible via sustainable modes of transport (including walking and cycling).
- 6.57 Further, the proposed secondary school will allow for dual-use for community purposes (i.e. use of the facilities outside of school opening hours for the community), providing a focal point for existing and new residents in the sharing of this facility.
- 6.58 The above represents a significant positive consideration in the determination of the proposed development and the proposals are acceptable in line with national and local policy requirements, including Paragraph 94 of the NPPF and Policy DC5 of the Local Plan.
- 6.59 The proposals would provide for the needs of the proposed new residential development, as well as helping to meet existing / identified need in the Borough. Other (community) requirements would be addressed by way of a financial contribution, subject to S106 Agreement.

Proposed Land Uses (Residential)

Policy Summary

Tenure/Affordable Housing

6.60 NPPF Paragraph 62 states that the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies.

6.61 Policy H2 of the Local Plan states that on greenfield sites a target affordable housing provision of 30% will be sought. The tenure and mix of the affordable housing units should comply with the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) guidance.

Dwelling Mix

6.62 Policy H1 states that residential proposals must form a mix of market housing house types and sizes consistent with the latest SHMA. The SHMA provides a breakdown of the recommended housing mix for the Borough as follows:

Table 2 - SHMA Recommended Mix of Housing

Dwelling Mix	SHMA Recommended Mix Market Housing	SHMA Recommended Mix Affordable Housing
1 Bed	5-10%	30-35%
2 Bed	25-30%	30-35%
3 Bed	40-45%	20-25%
4+ Bed	20-25%	5-10%

Assessment

Tenure

6.63 The proposed scheme meets the policy requirement with regards to affordable housing. It comprises up to 351 dwellings and 30% affordable units (105no. dwellings) will be provided for, in line with Policy H2.

Dwelling Mix

6.64 The proposed indicative dwelling mix as shown on the accompanying Masterplan has been derived in accordance with the requirements set out in the SHMA. It has

therefore had regard to the evidence base, market demand and the need to provide for a range of different homes in line with identified local needs as follows:

Table 3 - Indicative Dwelling Mix

Dwelling Mix	Proposed Indicative Market Housing	Proposed Indicative Affordable Housing
1 Bed	7%	34%
2 Bed	30%	34%
3 Bed	43%	23%
4+ Bed	20%	9%

6.65 The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy H1 and the detailed dwelling mix can be secured at Reserved Matters stage.

Residential Amenity

6.66 The detailed design of the scheme in terms of public and private open space and landscaping will be secured at Reserved Matters stage. However, the Indicative Masterplan demonstrates how strategic residential development could be delivered with regards to this.

6.67 As demonstrated by the Masterplan, all homes could be provided with private amenity space in the form of gardens. Any flats proposed as part of the scheme would also be required to demonstrate sufficient private amenity space is provided. Details with regards to the space standards of the proposed residential dwellings can be adhered to in the preparation of the detailed layout at Reserved Matters stage.

Proposed Land Uses (Public Open Space)

Policy Summary

- 6.68 Paragraph 92 of the NPPF states that to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces (including open space) and other local services.
- 6.69 Paragraph 96 of the NPPF states that access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities. Further, the NPPF outlines the importance of planning policies and decisions in protecting and enhancing Public Rights of Way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users.
- 6.70 Policy SH1 of the Local Plan states that support will be given to proposals which improve the quality and quantity of green infrastructure networks and those which protect and enhance physical access, including Public Rights of Way and open space. The policy also supports proposals which promote opportunities for formal and informal physical activity, exercise, recreation and play.
- 6.71 Policy HS4 outlines the open space standards for developments with regards to children's play, green space, parks and gardens, amenity green spaces, allotments, and outdoor play pitches.
- 6.72 Part of the site (the southern and eastern areas) falls within the Strategic Green Infrastructure Network. Policy NE2 of the Local Plan seeks to protect, restore and enhance existing Green Infrastructure assets within the network and states that, where appropriate, new developments must provide suitable Green Infrastructure corridors throughout the development and adjacent to the network.

Assessment

- 6.73 It is proposed to deliver a new Country Park as part of the development proposals which will comprise a range of different types of open space, landscaping, ecological enhancements and opportunities for play and recreation throughout the scheme, as detailed on the Indicative Masterplan. The scheme proposes 17.2 hectares of open space providing for both formal and informal recreation. This includes a linear park along the eastern boundary, which includes a 'Fitness Loop', woodlands along the southern boundary, as well as allotments. In total, this is a significant amount

of open space and public amenity provision, which can be made available for leisure and recreational use.

6.74 The scheme will also provide for play space. This will be located within the proposed new Village Green at the heart of the development, in between the two areas proposed for residential development and will accommodate Locally Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) and several small pockets of open space to provide for Local Areas of Play (LAP) spaces. These play areas are set within larger expanses of grassed areas, providing amenity space for new and existing residents to enjoy. The location of the play areas at the heart of the development will also ensure that these areas benefit from passive surveillance to ensure safety and reduce potential for anti-social behaviour. Accordingly, the proposals are considered to comply with Policy SH1 of the Local Plan.

6.75 It is estimated that the proposed development will result in a new population of approximately 840 people. Table 3 below assesses the proposed open space provision against the requirements of Policy HS4 of the Local Plan. As shown in Table 3 below, the scheme significantly exceeds the policy requirements.

Table 4 - Policy HS4 Open Space Requirements

Open Space	Requirement – Rural Area	Scheme Requirement	Indicative Amount Provided For
Natural and Semi Natural Green Space	2.5 ha per 1,000 pop'n	2.1ha	12ha
Parks and Gardens	1 ha per 1,000 pop'n	0.8ha	1.6ha
Children's Play	0.2 ha per 1,000 pop'n	0.17ha	2.7ha
Amenity Green Space	0.5 ha per 1,000 pop'n	0.42ha	
Allotments	0.8 ha per 1,000 pop'n	0.7ha	0.9ha

6.76 In accordance with Paragraph 96 of the NPPF and Policy SH1 of the Local Plan, the existing Public Rights of Way which cut across the site will be retained. The proposed 'Fitness Loop' has been located to join up with the existing Public Rights of Way, thereby providing for enhanced public access across the site and improving connections to the wider areas also.

6.77 It is recognised that part of the site falls within the designated Strategic Green Infrastructure Network. In accordance with Policy NE2, the Indicative Masterplan protects and retains this as an area of open, green, space and formalises this Green Infrastructure Network as part of the new Country Park proposals.

Design/Landscaping

Policy Summary

Design

- 6.78 Paragraph 124 of the NPPF states that the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. The NPPF (Paragraph 127) requires planning policies and decisions to ensure that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.
- 6.79 Policy SD1 of the Local Plan states that factors including massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and access should be a key consideration in the determination of planning applications. Further, the policy outlines that the Council will consider appropriate housing density on a site by site basis.

Landscaping

- 6.80 The NPPF (Paragraph 170) advises that protection of landscapes should be commensurate with their status. In this case, the weight given to any concern related to the character and appearance of the area should reflect the absence of a specific landscape designation.
- 6.81 Policy NE3 states that new development which positively contributes to landscape character will be permitted. It requires development proposals to demonstrate that landscape planning has been integrated into the design of development at an early stage, including identifying likely visual impacts on the local landscape and sensitivity to an area's capacity to change.
- 6.82 Similarly, Policy SD2 states that the landscape aspects of a development proposal will be required to form an integral part of the overall design and a high standard of appropriate hard and soft landscaping will be required. In appropriate cases, there should be sufficient provision for planting within and around the perimeter of the site to minimise visual intrusion on neighbouring uses or the countryside.

Assessment

Design

- 6.83 It is noted that the application seeks outline permission with all matters reserved except for access. Accordingly, only an Indicative Masterplan has been submitted

which sets out the broad principles and parameters guiding the future development of the site. The detailed design of the scheme in terms of layout, buildings and landscaping will be secured at Reserved Matters stage. However, the Indicative Masterplan shows how a sustainable urban extension could be brought forward.

- 6.84 The proposed layout and siting of the built-form is landscaped-led and has derived from the site's edge of settlement location, its topography and appraisal of the site's visual influence from the surrounding area and existing landscape features.
- 6.85 The layout of the proposed development has been designed to create a legible and permeable place. The Indicative Masterplan illustrates how key vistas, landmark buildings and use of areas of Public Open Space help to frame and navigate the development to provide opportunities for meeting and connections throughout the site and surrounding area, particularly via sustainable modes of travel.
- 6.86 Further, the Indicative Layout identifies 'Key Frontages' which enable secure building types with 'active' frontages to streets and public spaces, as well as providing secure private backs for gardens.
- 6.87 A National Grid gas pipeline buffer zone runs across the site from east to west. The scheme has been designed to ensure that this is retained and will not be impacted by the proposed development.
- 6.88 The submitted Design and Access Statement demonstrates that the proposed development could be brought forward in accordance with Policy SD1 of the Local Plan, which requires high-quality design and layout.
- 6.89 With regards to density, the development achieves up to 351 dwellings across a net residential developable area of approximately 8.4 hectares. This will create an overall density of 42dph, which the applicant considers to be within the range of densities for modern, mixed tenure and like the densities of the surrounding townscape. As such, the proposal accords with Policy SD1 of the Local Plan.

Landscaping

- 6.90 It is noted that (residential) development of existing fields, by default, would cause an adverse effect on landscape character. However, the sensitivity of the landscape is reduced by the fact that the application site is enclosed by urban development on three sides, which limits the contribution the application site makes to the immediate landscape.

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- 6.91 The proposal would reflect the adjacent urban character and the magnitude of change would be limited due to the presence of significant urban influences within the vicinity and further reduced by the significant landscaping mitigation proposed as part of the new Country Park, areas of Open Space and new woodland planting within the scheme.
- 6.92 Accordingly, with the benefit of the proposed planting, the consequences of the development would be significantly reduced over time.
- 6.93 The application site is not subject to any statutory or local landscape designation. In such circumstances, it is important that the protection which is afforded to the area and the assessment of the potential effects of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area is proportionate.
- 6.94 Overall, it is considered that the proposals can be successfully incorporated into, and make a positive contribution to the local landscape in line with national and local planning policy.

Conclusion

- 6.95 The Indicative Masterplan represents a deliverable and sustainable scheme that is 'landscape-led' and responds sympathetically to its environment, demonstrating how the site could be developed to deliver up to 351 new homes in combination with the provision of land for a new school and a new Country Park.

Ecology and Trees

Policy Summary

- 6.96 The NPPF (Paragraph 170) states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment, including by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.
- 6.97 Similarly, Policy NE1 of the Local Plan requires development to deliver a net gain in biodiversity and to accord with the mitigation hierarchy. Policy NE3 states that development proposals will be required to address the importance of habitat biodiversity features, including aged and veteran trees, woodlands and hedges. Policy SC2 requires features of ecological significance to be retained and protected and new planting to comprise native species which are of ecological value appropriate to the area.
- 6.98 Finally, Policy DC5 states that proposals for development of strategic sites of over 100 dwellings must include comprehensive onsite Green Infrastructure Network, utilising existing habitats where possible.

Assessment

- 6.99 The submitted Preliminary Ecological Assessment outlines that the application site comprises improved, poor semi-improved grassland and arable land which is grazed by livestock. It states that the fields provide for limited suitable habitats for protected species and no evidence of this was found during the survey.
- 6.100 The Assessment recommends:
- Vegetation clearance is undertaken outside of bird breeding season;
 - Further pre-construction surveys are recommended for badgers;
 - Further dusk and/or dawn activity surveys are recommended to assess the farm building; and
 - Additional bird nesting boxes and bat boxes could be placed within the site, and trees used within the proposed development could be native species.
- 6.101 These details can be secured by condition and required at Reserved Matters stage. Similarly, a Landscape and Environmental Management Plan could also be secured

by Condition to ensure that development of the site would be suitably managed to mitigate the potential impacts on wildlife and habitats.

6.102 With regards to arboriculture, the existing trees are to be retained wherever possible and the Indicative Masterplan incorporates these into the proposals alongside significant new structural planting throughout the site. This addresses the requirements of Policy NE3. Further, the proposals include significant enhancement planting and soft landscaping, comprising a comprehensive onsite Green Infrastructure Network (in accordance with Policy CD5), and includes provision of new woodland to the southern end of the site. The species of these trees, to ensure that they are native, can be secured by condition or at Reserved Matters stage to ensure that the scheme accords with Policy SC2.

6.103 A significant amount of open space and structural landscaping is proposed, including SuDS ponds. This could be designed to create a variety of habitats. As such, the proposals would result in a net gain in biodiversity over and above the current limited opportunities for biodiversity at this agricultural site, in accordance with Policy NE1.

6.104 In conclusion, the Indicative Masterplan demonstrates how extensive areas of green space could be designed to create a variety of habitats. 17.2 hectares of open space is proposed as part of the scheme which provide significant opportunities to deliver a net gain in biodiversity.

Highways and Access

Policy Summary

- 6.105 Paragraph 103 of the NPPF states that significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. Paragraph 108 promotes opportunities for sustainable transport modes and states that access to the site should be safe and suitable and that any significant impacts from development on the transport network should be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.
- 6.106 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 6.107 Policy DC5 of the Local Plan requires proposals for the development of strategic sites to include provision of and/or connection to a direct, high quality public transport link between the site and key transport hubs. The policy promotes the provision of and/or connection to a comprehensive cycle network, to link residential areas with the key on-site facilities. It also requires measures to mitigate transport impact.
- 6.108 Policy HS5 and D1 state that development proposals should promote a shift to the use of sustainable transport modes and should be located where the use of public transport, walking and cycling can be optimised. Policy D1 requires all large-scale developments to be supported by a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan.
- 6.109 Policy D2 and Appendix 5 set out parking standards. The site is within the 'Low Access' zone and the below parking standards are therefore applicable.

Table 5 - Applicable Local Plan Parking Standards

Use		Car Parking Standard	Cycle Parking Standard (Minimum)
Residential (Dwelling Houses)	1-2 Bed Units	1.5 Spaces/ Unit	1/ Unit
	3 Bed Units	2 Spaces/ Unit	1/ Unit
	4 Bed Units	3 Spaces/ Unit	1/ Unit
School	Staff and Visitors	2 Spaces/ Classroom plus Facilities for Picking Up and Setting Down	Each Case Considered on its Own Merits

Assessment

Site Location

6.110 With regards to the location of the application site, in terms of NPPF Paragraph 103 and Local Plan Policies DC5, HS1 and D1, the submitted Transport Assessment sets out that the site is served by the following sustainable transport modes:

- Pedestrian Facilities – A lit shared-use footway/cycleway is provided in the northern side of Rugby Road/Lawford Road in the vicinity of the site and links the site with Rugby and its comprehensive pedestrian network to the east. A signalised pedestrian crossing has recently been installed on Rugby Road and pedestrian crossing facilities are incorporated within the A4071/Lawford Road signalised junction.
- Cycle Facilities - A lit shared-use footway/cycleway is provided in the northern side of Rugby Road/Lawford Road, connecting the site and Long Lawford with Rugby to the east. Long Lawford’s highway network is attractive for cyclists.
- Public Transport Facilities – The nearest bus stops are located immediately to the north of the site adjacent to Rugby Road and Lawford Road. These provide linkages to Coventry and the centre of Rugby and its rail station.

6.111 The Transport Assessment states that the location of the site will provide excellent opportunities for future residents to travel to and from the development using sustainable modes of travel in accordance with Paragraph 103 of the NPPF and Policy DC5 of the Local Plan.

6.112 The proposed development will provide direct access into the site for pedestrians from Rugby Road / Lawford Road via several segregated pedestrian accesses. The development's layout has been designed to promote low vehicle speeds and provide an environment which is attractive to cyclists.

Access

6.113 It is proposed to provide two vehicular accesses via conversion of the Rugby Road / Briars Close priority junction to a four-arm roundabout and formation of a new priority junction on Bilton Lane. The design of both junctions has been informed by traffic surveys and junction analysis, as set out in the Transport Assessment.

6.114 The provision of two access junctions, which will be linked via the development's internal highway network, will enable trips to disperse onto the local highway network, thereby minimising the development's impact at individual locations on the external network.

Transport Impact

6.115 The submitted Transport Assessment demonstrates that the development is forecast to have a minimal impact on the operation of the local and wider highway network and the development accesses are forecast to operate well within capacity following the addition of trips associated with the fully developed site. It is however proposed to alter signal timings at two existing junctions located in the vicinity of the site and provide an internal highway network facilitating connection between the A428 and Bilton Lane site accesses, with these measures shown to mitigate the impact of the proposed residential development. No other mitigation measures are required.

Parking

6.116 Parking will be provided in accordance with RBC standards.

Travel Plan

6.117 In accordance with Policy D1 of the Local Plan, the applicant has produced a Travel Plan for the proposed development, with the aim of putting in place the management tools necessary to enable the residents of the development to make more informed decisions about their travel and to minimise the adverse impacts of their travel on the environment. The package of measures has been designed to

reduce reliance on car journeys and to promote the use of alternative, more sustainable modes of travel.

Conclusion

6.118 The proposed development is not expected to have a significant adverse impact on the highway network. The site is well located within the walking, cycling and public transport network and sustainable travel patterns will be further encouraged. Therefore, the proposals are in-keeping with national and local policies and are considered to be acceptable on highways grounds.

Flood Risk and SuDs

Policy Summary

- 6.119 Paragraph 163 of the NPPF states that, when determining planning applications, LPA's should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere and that, where appropriate, applications should be supported by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). Major developments should incorporate sustainable drainage systems unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate (Paragraph 165).
- 6.120 Policy SDC5 states that applicants will be required to submit a site-specific FRA which is appropriate to the scale and nature of the development proposed, which must assess the flood risk from all sources and identify options to mitigate flood risk.
- 6.121 Policy SDC2 of the Local Plan requires development proposals to ensure that opportunities for utilising sustainable drainage methods are incorporated. Policy SDC6 states that SuDS are required in all major developments and such facilities should preferably be provided on-site. Infiltration SuDS is the preferred way of managing surface water.

Assessment

- 6.122 A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been undertaken which concludes that:
- The site is within Flood Zone 1, which is described as land having a less than 1:1000 annual probability of river or sea flooding. Flood Zone 1 is suitable for all types of development;
 - The site has a negligible risk of flooding from rivers and the sea;
 - The maximum flood level during the 1 in 100 year plus a 35% climate change allowance would be 85.56m AOD. As ground levels on site are all higher than this level, the site would be unaffected by flooding during this event;
 - The site is at low to negligible risk of pluvial flooding;
 - The site is at negligible risk of groundwater flooding during the 1 in 100 year event; and

- The site is not at risk of reservoir flooding.

6.123 The FRA recommends that the finished floor levels for the proposed development are set no lower than 86.16m AOD. It also recommends the regular maintenance of any existing and proposed drains and culverts surrounding or on the site. These details can be secured by condition and at Reserved Matters stage.

6.124 The submitted SuDS Report states that the proposed SuDS strategy comprises of infiltration basins and swales, located within green corridors. Permeable paving and rain gardens would provide further attenuation in and around driveways and access roads. It states that the proposed SuDS strategy would ensure surface water runoff is attenuated within the infiltration basins and swales up to and including the 1% AEP (1 in 100 year) event. Surface water runoff during the 1 in 100 year event, including a 40% allowance for climate change, would be managed within permeable paving and rain gardens and exceedance flows managed in the freeboard of SuDS features, as preferred by DEFRA non-statutory technical standards (DEFRA, 2015).

6.125 Accordingly, due consideration has been given to the potential for flooding in the planning process and the proposed SuDS strategy is demonstrated to effectively ensure surface water run-off is managed in accordance with national and local policy requirements.

Contamination/Agricultural Land

Policy Summary

- 6.126 The NPPF seeks to prevent unacceptable risks from pollution and requires decisions to ensure that new development is appropriate for its location. Where a site is affected by contamination, the NPPF is clear that responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner (Paragraphs 178 and 179).
- 6.127 Paragraph 170 of the NPPF requires LPA's to recognise the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land when making decisions on development proposals.

Assessment

- 6.128 The submitted Site Investigation Report concludes that, given the potential for contamination to be present at the site, it is recommended that a proportionate programme of site investigation and monitoring works will be undertaken in order to establish the presence or absence of contamination. This can be secured by condition as part of any planning permission.
- 6.129 The site is currently in agricultural use and is classified as Grade 3 agricultural quality (good to moderate quality). It is noted that Grade 3 agricultural land constitutes about half of the agricultural land in England and Wales.

Contribution to Sustainable Development

- 6.130 The NPPF was published in February 2019 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF is the framework beneath which the Development Plan sits. The NPPF seeks to deliver sustainable development (Paragraph 7) which comprises three elements: economic, social and environmental (Paragraph 8). It sets out a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' (Paragraph 10).
- 6.131 Policy GP1 of the Local Plan also states that when considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within the NPPF.
- 6.132 The following section therefore considers the proposal's contribution to the three elements of sustainable development and assesses whether the presumption in favour of sustainable development should apply in determining the application.

Social Role

- 6.133 The proposals will fulfil a social role by providing towards the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations, including the provision of affordable homes. The proposal, for up to 351no. dwellings, will play a significant role in assisting the Council to meet its objectively assessed housing needs, providing choice and flexibility in the local housing market. The provision of new market and affordable homes in an accessible location adjacent to a major town is a very significant benefit.
- 6.134 In addition, the proposed housing mix (which can be secured at Reserved Matters stage) can comply with local policy requirements to cater for a range of needs to deliver a sustainable, inclusive and mixed community.
- 6.135 Furthermore, the proposed extensive provision of green spaces throughout the site and connections to the wider area is designed to encourage recreation and activity and promote healthy lifestyles.
- 6.136 The proposal, which includes land for a new Secondary School, would also result in new education and community facilities representing a significant benefit associated with the scheme.
- 6.137 In conclusion, the proposed development is considered to contribute positively towards the social role of sustainable development.

Economic Role

- 6.138 The proposal brings several economic benefits, most notably the provision of additional education facilities. The scheme would also generate new employment both during the construction and operational stages. The construction of the school and the residential dwellings would result in direct and indirect economic benefits and a significant increase in local spending power.
- 6.139 As new homes are occupied a range of local benefits are generated, from spending power to Council Tax revenues, which help to sustain local shops and services.
- 6.140 In addition, in terms of education and training, the Home Builders Federation 'Housing Calculator'⁶ indicates that the development of the site for 351 new homes could also provide up to 11 new apprenticeships, graduates or trainee places and potentially generate £282,170 towards education spending, which when put into context, could provide up to 133 classroom spaces.
- 6.141 Accordingly, it is considered that the development would have a strong positive effect in terms of supporting economic growth and providing employment, education and training opportunities.
- 6.142 In conclusion, there are real net additional economic benefits associated with the development, at a time of considerable and ongoing constrained public finances. The proposal will contribute positively towards the economic role of sustainable development.

Environmental Role

- 6.143 Any harm generated by the proposals can be appropriately mitigated to ensure the scheme is sympathetic to the character and appearance of the area and sits comfortably within its surroundings. The proposals would cause some limited harm to the Green Belt, however, the overall development provides for significant green infrastructure and enhanced opportunities for access, recreation and biodiversity net gain. The proposals include the opening up of new footpaths across the site which would be made available to the public to enjoy.

⁶ <http://www.hbf.co.uk/policy-activities/other-policies/hbf-housing-calculator/>

6.144 As such, the proposed development is considered to successfully protect and enhance the natural and built environment at the site and therefore contributes positively to the environmental role of sustainable development.

Summary

6.145 Taking the three dimensions of sustainability together, the social, economic and environmental benefits are such that the proposal represents sustainable development and one in which Very Special Circumstances will apply to outweigh any harm to Green Belt at this location.

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of an Outline Planning Application at Land South of Lawford Road, Long Lawford in relation to national, strategic and local planning policy and guidance.
- 7.2 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that planning permission should be granted unless:
- (a) any adverse impact of doing so significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole or;
 - (b) specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted.
- 7.3 The proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which is harmful by definition. There would be harm by reason of a reduction in openness and by virtue of encroachment into the countryside.
- 7.4 There are three main aspects which weigh significantly in favour of the proposal and comprise very special circumstances:
- Provision of land for the delivery of a new Secondary School, providing a dual-use as a community facility, for use by existing and future residents;
 - The enhancement of beneficial Green Belt uses; and
 - The proposed residential accommodation, including both market and affordable housing.
- 7.5 Accordingly, in this instance there are material considerations which warrant a decision other than in accordance with the Development Plan. The considerations summarised above are considered to clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt, thereby justifying the proposal based on Very Special Circumstances. The adverse impacts of the proposed development would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. As such, it is considered that planning permission should be granted.