

BIG.

Birmingham International Gateway

**Birmingham Development Plan
Examination Hearing Statement: Matter E
September 2014**

The BIG delivery partnership



PROLOGIS.



**ASHFORD
DEVELOPMENT**



This response should be read in conjunction with the representations submitted by Ashford Developments and Prologis in February 2014

Matter E: Green Belt Policy, including the allocation of Peddimore employment allocation (GA6)

- 1) Does Policy TP10 set out an appropriate approach to the management of Green Belt?

No further response proposed

- 2) *This Question is not applicable to the Ashford Developments and Prologis response*

- 3) Do exceptional circumstances exist which justify an alteration to the Green Belt boundary to provide 80Ha of employment land?

Yes. The BDP¹ explains that "***the shortage of suitable brownfield sites within the urban area to meet the City's needs for large industrial sites represents the exceptional circumstances justifying the release of Green Belt land for development***". Should these exceptional circumstances be considered acceptable to support the release of Peddimore, then Ashford Developments and Prologis consider that the same very special circumstances will apply to the land east of Peddimore. However, the proposals being put forward by Ashford Developments and Prologis are considered to be more comprehensive and provide a wider range of employment opportunities. Along with the highway infrastructure proposed, it is considered that the larger proposals (Birmingham International Gateway) offer a solution for meeting Birmingham's employment land requirements and also better reflect the requirements to meet the national and international economic role identified in the BDP economic strategy. The Illustrative masterplan (**Appendix 1**) shows how the Birmingham International Gateway concept could provide a solution which delivers a truly comprehensive solution to Birmingham's employment land requirements. Additional opportunities may also include land further east of that being promoted by Ashford Developments and Prologis and also south of the Kingsbury Road, where Severn Trent have land interests.

Ashford Developments and Prologis support the provision of 80Ha of employment land at Peddimore, as a minimum response to the employment land requirements. However, it is considered that more could, and should, have been done to support greater delivery of employment land to the east of Peddimore as set out below (see response to Q8).

- 4) *This Question is not applicable to Ashford Developments and Prologis response*
- 5) *This Question is not applicable to Ashford Developments and Prologis response*

- 6)

- (a) Is there adequate justification, including Sustainability Appraisal and assessment of the transport, drainage, sewerage and other infrastructure implications, for the selection of the Peddimore site for employment development?

¹ BDP Paragraph 5.67



Ashford Developments and Prologis have appointed a range of consultants to review the technical evidence base submitted in support of the BDP.

Attached at **Appendix 2** is a report prepared by Royal HaskoningDHV (RHDHV) which provides a review of the Transport and Highways evidence base. It is acknowledged that a substantial amount of technical work has been carried out to determine the mitigation measures required to accommodate the traffic associated with the Peddimore and Langley SUE developments. However, the review has identified some potential difficulties and uncertainties with delivering the mitigation measures that have been developed to accommodate the additional traffic.

One of the questions that Ashford Developments and Prologis would like to raise is whether the proposed new roundabout access into Peddimore off the A38 is in the most suitable location in highway terms or whether it has been selected on the basis of Birmingham City Council's ownership. An alternative location further north, should have been considered, and may provide a better option in highway capacity terms. In this regard, an alternative location for the roundabout is identified on the Illustrative Masterplan provided at **Appendix 1** which shows the roundabout further north on the A38 than the position proposed by BCC. This option is considered to provide a potentially better solution in highways terms and would enable more employment land to be accommodated to the south of the road and also assist in providing a road alignment which would provide a new and permanent Green Belt boundary.

The RHDHV report² explains the wider benefits of a new strategic link road between the A38 and the M42 J9 that would better serve an international employment site than the single access proposed for Peddimore and the existing Kingsbury Road can offer. The benefits of the mitigation measures are set out in the report³ and summarised as follows:

"...the link road also has significant potential to relieve the impact on the four key junctions along the Kingsbury Road corridor. It also has the potential, depending on its design and purpose, to effectively serve as a bypass to the Kingsbury Road corridor that could encourage traffic using the corridor to divert. This creates the opportunity to fully reconsider the proposals and function of the corridor and allows for more public transport, cyclist and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure to be considered, which would be in line with the overarching strategy of the development sites."

Attached at **Appendix 3** is a report prepared by FPCR which provides a landscape and visual appraisal of land at the north eastern edge of Birmingham, between the A38 and the M6 Toll, including land being promoted by Ashford Developments and Prologis.

The report concludes that the landscape sensitivity of the land to the east of Peddimore, being promoted by Ashford Developments and Prologis, is considered mostly low.

The report also concludes that whilst the methodology in the landscape evidence base⁴ used to support the BDP appears robust, there is a gap in the evidence base where the landscape and visual character of Wiggins Hill Road and up to the BCC administrative boundary is not assessed. FPCR conclude that alone the recommended mitigation and enhancement proposals would not be sufficient to provide containment of a large scale employment development.

The report also concludes that a more ambitious and robust Green Infrastructure strategy that incorporates large-scale woodland planting would be necessary to provide containment of the development and to provide an enduring future Green Belt boundary. As shown in the Illustrative Masterplan (**Appendix 1**) for the BIG proposals being promoted by Ashford Developments and Prologis, there are substantial areas proposed for a Community Park / Ecological Corridor which would provide a more comprehensive landscape mitigation strategy and deliver significantly greater biodiversity and community benefits than proposed at Peddimore. The FPCR Report (Figure 3)

² RHDHV paragraphs 3.2.1-3.2.4

³ RHDHV paragraphs 3.3.1-3.3.13

⁴ BDP Landscape Character Assessment – Arup June 2013



concludes that the precise road alignment would be subject to further detailed assessment of the setting to Peddimore Hall and the Scheduled Ancient Monument.

(b) Is the development of the Peddimore site achievable within the expected timescale?

Based on the take up rate of 75ha (2002-2007) for Best Urban Land shown in the 2013 Annual Monitoring Report, we consider that it is a fair assumption that Peddimore will be delivered within the Plan period. Furthermore, based on delivery of say 10ha per annum, we consider that the wider Birmingham International Gateway proposals would take around 15 years to be delivered which broadly coincides with the Plan period, should delivery commence around 2016/17.

7) Is there adequate justification for all the requirements of GA6, including the preparation of a SPD?

In terms of the justification and evidence that has been submitted in support of Peddimore, we consider that there are a number of deficiencies in the evidence base (see Appendices 2 and 3). As set out in our responses to other questions relating to employment and the GA6 allocation, we do not consider that the Plan has gone far enough to secure a cross boundary employment solution to meet the employment requirements identified in the evidence base.

8) Do exceptional circumstances exist which justify further alterations to the Green Belt boundary to release additional land for employment development, either within the Plan period or as safeguarded land for development beyond the Plan period?

As set out above, the BDP⁵ provides an explanation of the exceptional circumstances which justify an alteration to the Green Belt boundary to provide 80Ha of employment land at Peddimore. We consider that those same exceptional circumstances exist to release additional land for employment within the Plan period east of Peddimore.

However, in addition, we also consider that the following further exceptional circumstances should be taken into account:

Insufficient Land and Need for Employment Land

- There is insufficient land in Birmingham to meet the employment land requirements identified in the BDP
- Peddimore is the only major employment site proposed in the Plan and the land to the east is available and suitable for release
- The Birmingham International Gateway (BIG) proposals being promoted by Ashford Developments and Prologis will provide substantially greater employment opportunities and provide an opportunity to meet a more diverse set of occupier requirements, than the Peddimore proposal, thereby maximising the economic potential

New Defensible Green Belt Boundary

- Unlike the Peddimore proposals, the Ashford Developments and Prologis proposals provide an opportunity to deliver a new clear, permanent and defensible boundary to the Green Belt, providing an opportunity ensure the Green Belt land to the north of it continues to serve the following purposes, as set out in the NPPF⁶:

⁵ BDP – paragraph 5.67

⁶ NPPF – paragraph 80



1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; and
3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

National / International Opportunity

- The Ashford Developments and Prologis proposals provide an opportunity to deliver a new link road, providing a more appropriate gateway entrance into the north east of the City which provides a setting for major economic investment, akin to national and international significance
- The Ashford Developments and Prologis proposal would elevate the employment opportunity (GA6) from being Peddimore Industrial Estate served off a single access to Birmingham International Gateway creating a site with all the characteristics of a Nationally/Internationally Significant site capable of attracting footloose international investment to the City in line with the BDP aspirations.
- The Ashford Developments and Prologis proposals are in close proximity to the M6, M6 Toll and M42 motorways, Hams Hall Rail Freight Interchange, the proposed route HS2 and the HS2 railway station at Birmingham International Airport, the NEC, Birmingham International Airport and International Railway station – presenting an unrivalled suite of access options for future investors and occupiers.

Regeneration

- Curdworth was recently included in the list of Assisted Areas, which came into force on 1 July 2014 under the Assisted Areas Order 2014
- The local area also includes some of the most economically deprived wards in Birmingham and therefore the Ashford Developments and Prologis proposals could provide significant, and unrivalled, social, economic, environmental and regeneration benefits

Major Infrastructure Investment Opportunity

- As well as providing a new clear and defensible Green Belt boundary, the new strategic highway proposals would also provide an opportunity to downgrade sections of the Kingsbury Road and provide a better environment for the residents of Curdworth village by removing significant levels of HGV traffic

Landscape and Ecological and Biodiversity Benefits

- As part of the Ashford Developments and Prologis proposals the land to the north of the proposed link road could be included as a major accessible strategic (Overgreen - Wishaw) Green Infrastructure Corridor/Community Park. This would ensure long term robust protection to the more sensitive settlement and landscape character components found along the Overgreen – Wishaw ridge line.
- Part of the landscape could be retained primarily in productive agricultural management, but with enhanced permissive public access, landscape structure (woodland belts etc) and major biodiversity gains. This strategic corridor would then be linked southward via subsidiary Green Infrastructure (GI) routes using Wishaw Lane (west and east arms), Wiggins Hill Road (the main north south link) to the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal corridor along the southern boundary.

Finally, we consider that as the only major Green Belt release proposed for employment that the land east of Peddimore should have been proposed as a continuation into North Warwickshire BC administrative area as part of a cross boundary / joint working solution to meeting a significant proportion of the shortfall in Birmingham's employment requirement.



9)

- a) If additional employment land is required, or if the selection of the Peddimore site is found not to be justified, is there justification, including SA, to release other specific areas of Green Belt for development?;

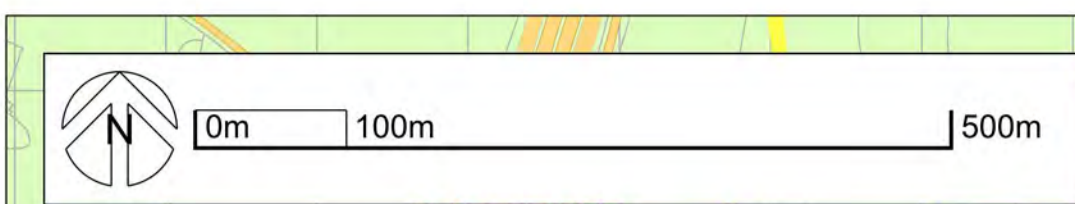
Additional employment land is required to meet Birmingham's employment requirement. A significant element of this should be met on the land being promoted by Ashford Developments and Prologis.

- b) Would the development of other areas/major Greenfield sites be achievable within the Plan period; or

On the basis that Birmingham has very few options for accommodating additional employment (and residential) expansion and certainly not enough land overall to meet the requirements identified in the draft BDP, Ashford Developments and Prologis do not consider there to be a suitable alternative sites which could provide the scale of opportunity required to meet national and international employment requirements in the Plan period.

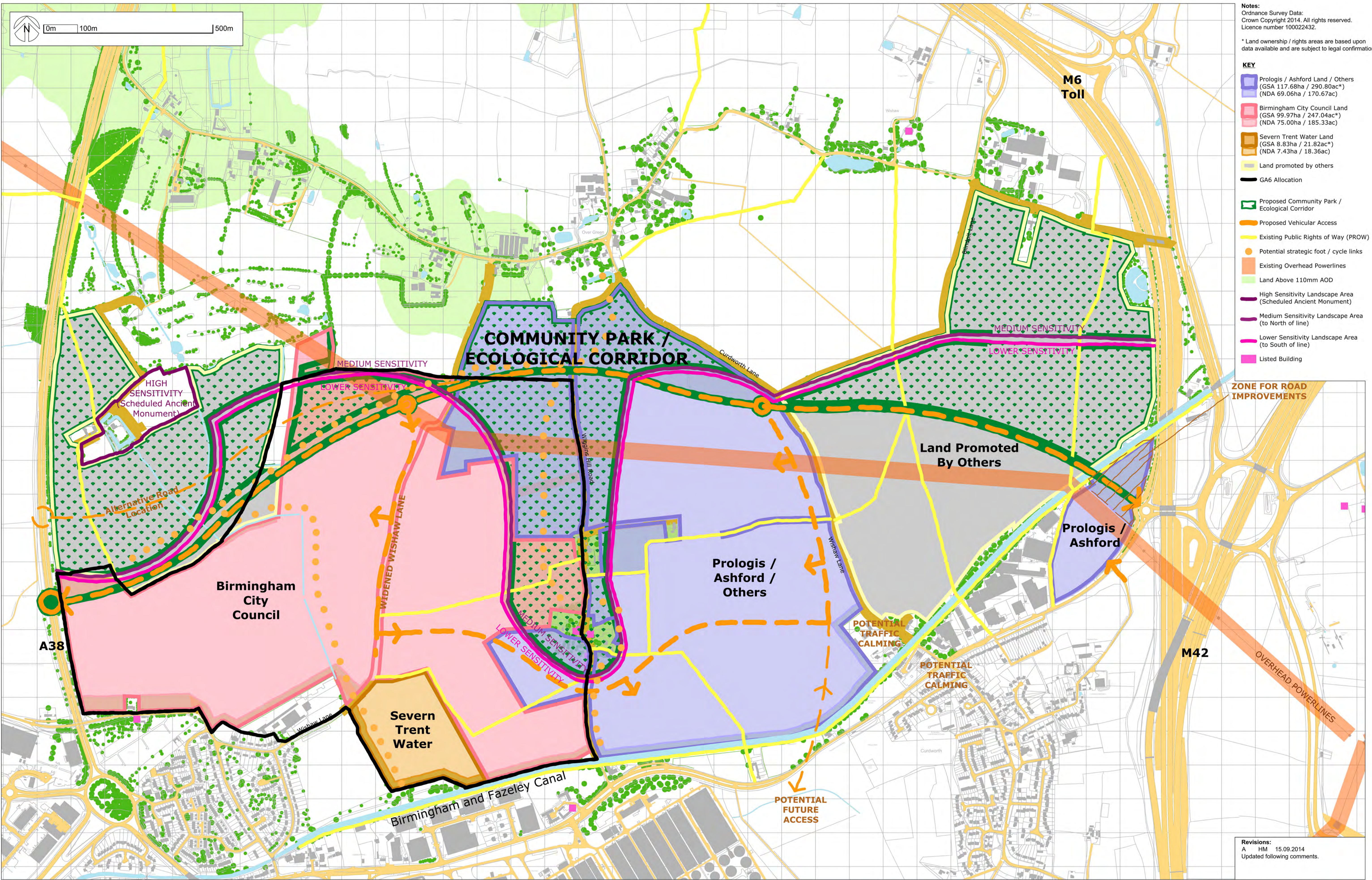
- c) Should it/they be safeguarded for development beyond the Plan period?

The land east of Peddimore should be included for release in this Plan period with the land in North Warwickshire the subject of a direction in the Birmingham Plan to be the subject of an early review in the North Warwickshire Borough Local Plan. The Illustrative Masterplan attached and supporting landscape and highways evidence shows how the land could be brought forward in a sustainable manner, with significantly greater benefits than the Peddimore proposals offer.



Notes:
 Ordnance Survey Data:
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 * Land ownership / rights areas are based upon data available and are subject to legal confirmation.

- KEY**
- Prologis / Ashford Land / Others (GSA 117.68ha / 290.80ac*) (NDA 69.06ha / 170.67ac)
 - Birmingham City Council Land (GSA 99.97ha / 247.04ac*) (NDA 75.00ha / 185.33ac)
 - Severn Trent Water Land (GSA 8.83ha / 21.82ac*) (NDA 7.43ha / 18.36ac)
 - Land promoted by others
 - GA6 Allocation
 - Proposed Community Park / Ecological Corridor
 - Proposed Vehicular Access
 - Existing Public Rights of Way (PROW)
 - Potential strategic foot / cycle links
 - Existing Overhead Powerlines
 - Land Above 110mm AOD
 - High Sensitivity Landscape Area (Scheduled Ancient Monument)
 - Medium Sensitivity Landscape Area (to North of line)
 - Lower Sensitivity Landscape Area (to South of line)
 - Listed Building



ZONE FOR ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

Revisions:
 A HM 15.09.2014
 Updated following comments.

Birmingham Development Plan Representation

Highways

Prologis

15 September 2014

Final Report

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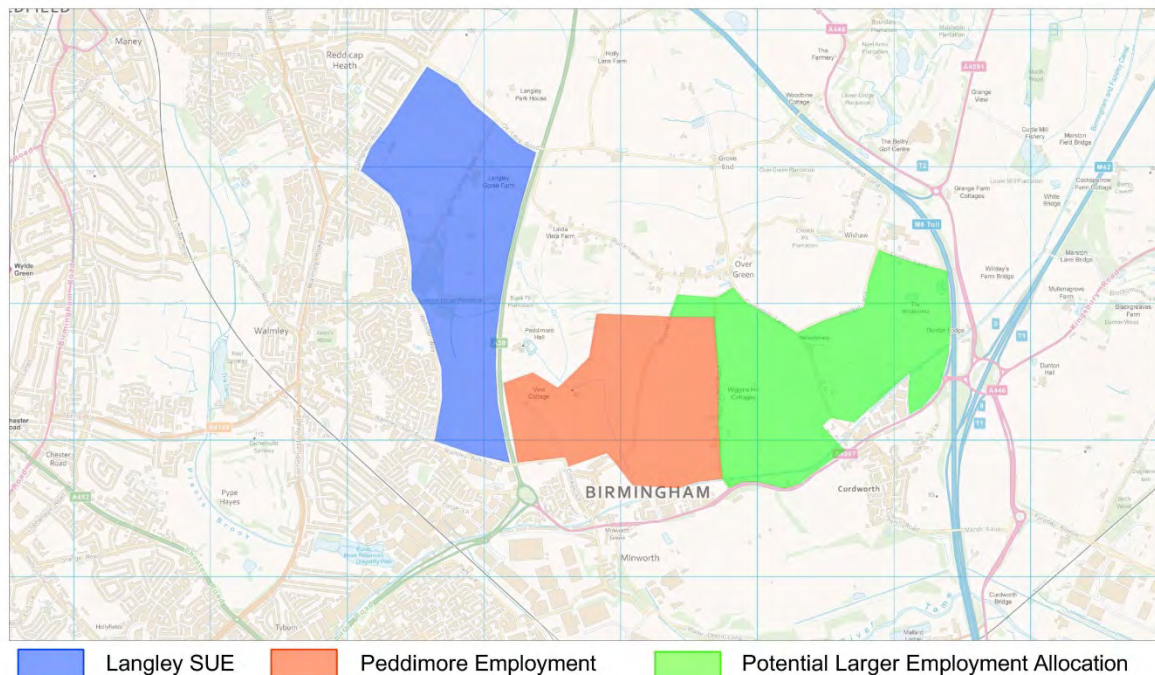
FIGURES

Figure 1 – Highways Context Plan

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Royal Haskoning DHV (RHDHV) has been commissioned by Ashford Developments and Prologis to provide transport advice as part of their response to Birmingham City Council's (BCC) Birmingham Development Plan (BDP).
- 1.1.2 The BDP currently identifies two sites that are subject to Green Belt removal that lie to the north of Minworth adjacent to each other and separated by the A38. The Langley site lies to the west of the A38 and will be treated as a Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) to deliver additional housing to accommodate Birmingham's requirements. The Peddimore site lies to the east of the A38 and is proposed to deliver the additional employment land.
- 1.1.3 Ashford Developments and Prologis are promoting circa 100 hectares as part of a much larger extension to the east of the proposed Peddimore site. This larger extension would allow BCC to better meet the forecast shortfall in employment land. Part of the Ashford Developments and Prologis promotion is the inclusion of a new strategic link road that would connect the A38 to the M42 J9; which would better serve the employment site and provide strategic links with nearby employment sites such as Hams Hall and Birmingham Airport.



Extract 1: Site Context

1.2 Purpose of Report

- 1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to review the evidence provided to support the BDP and to consider the opportunities that the extended employment site and associated strategic link road could bring. Figure 1 sets-out the development site in the context of the surrounding highway network.

2 EVIDENCE BASE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The impact that the Green Belt removal and associated residential and employment uses would have on the transport networks in the city has been explored in order to provide an evidence base to support the BDP. This evidence base is provided in a number of technical reports prepared by various consultants on behalf of BCC that consider the impact at a range of levels. A review of these technical reports forms the basis of the findings of this report.

2.1.2 The reports that have been reviewed from the evidence base are listed below followed by a brief summary of each one:

- Transport Evidence Base: Scoping and Methodology Report
Mott MacDonald, September 2012
- Transport Modelling Assessment Initial Output Report
Mott MacDonald, January 2014
- Transport Evidence Base Context Report
Mott MacDonald – January 2014
- Transport Analysis of Green Belt Options
Phil Jones Associates, September 2013
- Green Belt Development Movement Infrastructure Plan
Phil Jones Associates, January 2014
- Green Belt Travel Demand Model Report
Phil Jones Associates, June 2014
- Minworth Roundabout – Option Development and Appraisal Report
AECOM, February 2014
- Peddimore Access Modelling
AECOM, June 2014
- Peddimore Access Modelling – Access Option 2
AECOM, June 2014
- M42 Junction 9 - Local Model Validation Report
JMP, April 2014
- M42 Junction 9 – 2031 Model Assessment Technical Note
JMP, April 2014

2.2 Transport Evidence Base: Scoping and Methodology Report

2.2.1 This report sets out how the Transport Evidence Base to support the 2031 Development Plan would be prepared. The document describes the scope of the evidence base, regarding the assessment years, scenarios, infrastructure changes and sensitivity tests, to be tested using the PRISM model.

2.3 Transport Modelling Assessment Initial Output Report

2.3.1 This report provides the initial results quantifying the Birmingham Development Plan's transport impacts.

2.3.2 With regards to the Green Belt development, the impacts arising directly from the development are centred on the A38 corridor between the Green Belt proposals area and the city centre. In addition, some impact is forecast on Chester Road and towards M42 Junction 9 (along A4097 Kingsbury Road).

2.4 Transport Evidence Base Context Report

2.4.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a context to the PRISM strategic modelling undertaken to provide an evidence base for the Development Plan. The report notes that improvements to the Minworth Roundabout and along the A38 corridor are included within the strategic model in conjunction with the Green Belt proposals. Despite these improvements, as described in the Initial Output Report, junctions along this corridor are still forecast to operate over capacity.

2.5 Transport Analysis of Green Belt Options

2.5.1 This report considers the potential development of four green belt sites to the north-east of the Birmingham urban area. The document identifies that the area to the west of the Sutton Coldfield by-pass, which is proposed for the Langley SUE, would be most suited in terms of accessibility and connectivity.

2.5.2 The document then goes on to identify that the land to the east of the by-pass, currently proposed for the Peddimore employment development, could be suitably accessible and well-connected if considered in conjunction with the land to the west. The development of these areas would be subject to further assessment, particularly in terms of highway capacity and impact.

2.6 Green Belt Development Movement Infrastructure Plan

2.6.1 This report was produced to develop a more detailed Movement Strategy for the Peddimore and Langley development sites. The document identifies the key movement corridors to and from the proposed developments across all-modes.

2.6.2 The report sets out the overarching transport strategy and key principles that the development sites would be subject to. These include the provision of public transport improvements such as bus priority measures at key junctions; and high quality cycling routes such as a segregated cycle tracks between the two sites and improved connections to the wider cycle route network. In addition, the report sets an objective of providing sufficient capacity for all transport modes to accommodate the increase in travel-to-work and the need to connect Peddimore to the M42 J9.

2.6.3 With regards to motor vehicles, the proposed access location on the A38, 400m to the north of the Minworth Roundabout is identified as potentially being suitable.

2.6.4 It is acknowledged that improvements are likely to be required along the A38 corridor, along the A4097, and at the M42 Junction 9 to accommodate development traffic and future growth. For the A4097 Kingsbury Road, the report identifies the need to consider

improvements at Minworth Roundabout, Kingsbury Road/Water Orton Lane, Kingsbury Road/Coleshill Road, M42 J9 and traffic management to discourage through traffic using Curdworth Village.

2.7 Green Belt Development Travel Demand Report

2.7.1 The purpose of this document is to produce a travel demand model for the proposed Green Belt development. The report contains the following principle forecasts for the Langley and Peddimore proposals:

- Number of external trips by all modes;
- Start/finish destinations of the trips and principal routes;
- Modal share of trips split by destination.

2.7.2 This data provides the total number of external trips by car from the proposed Green Belt development. Using this, the model predicts how many cars would use a particular route or corridor in the AM and PM peak hours.

2.8 Minworth Roundabout – Option Development and Appraisal Report

2.8.1 The document reviewed the existing operation of the A38 / A4097 Minworth Roundabout, with a view to developing a preferred scheme to support the traffic generation arising from the proposed Langley and Peddimore developments to 2031.

2.8.2 An option to increase capacity was recommended, based on widening of approaches and the circulatory, and partial signalisation. The resulting junction would operate just within capacity in 2031 at an estimated cost of £3.1 million.

2.9 Peddimore Access Modelling

2.9.1 This document considered access options to the Langley and Peddimore developments, building on the February 2014 report which recommended improvements at the Minworth Roundabout. The report recommends an at-grade signalised roundabout on the A38, 400m to the north of the Minworth roundabout, at a cost of £12.7 million.

2.9.2 The junction would still be over capacity in 2031, however the operation is improved compared to the other options considered. In addition, improvements at the A4097 / Water Orton Lane junction would be required at a cost of £0.6 million.

2.9.3 The report then goes on to note that consideration should be given to how demand could be accommodated on the wider highway network, as junctions along the A38 corridor are at capacity under current conditions.

2.10 Peddimore Access Modelling – Access Option 2

2.10.1 This report considered an alternative access option to the Langley and Peddimore developments. Rather than building a new roundabout on the A38, the residential (Langley) development traffic would gain access onto Walmey Ash Road and the employment (Peddimore) development traffic would gain access via a new arm onto the Minworth Roundabout.

2.10.2 The analysis identifies that this may offer a viable access solution at the Minworth Roundabout, partly due to the re-routing of traffic away from this location. At least 700

fewer trips would be made through this junction in the peak hours, as vehicles would re-route through residential areas. The ability of the network to accommodate this traffic and the associated mitigation costs would need to be determined to support this approach.

2.11 M42 Junction 9 – 2014 Base Model – Local Model Validation Report

2.11.1 JMP were commissioned by the Highways Agency and Warwickshire County Council to produce a validated 2014 base model of the M42 Junction 9 and adjoining local network. The model was produced using the micro-simulation package, S-Paramics for the AM and PM peak periods.

2.11.2 Following validation and calibration of the model, this provides a suitable model to assess future traffic demands and any network enhancements.

2.12 2031 M42 Junction 9 Model Assessment

2.12.1 This technical note considers the impact of the proposed Langley and Peddimore developments on Junction 9 and the immediately surrounding highway network. The impact is compared to the 2031 (Do Minimum) scenario, whereby the Green Belt development is not included within the Development Plan.

2.12.2 The direct impact of the Green Belt development would be to cause a significant increase in queuing eastbound on A4097 on Kingsbury Road.

2.12.3 In addition, significant queuing would be observed on A446 Lichfield Road, both north and south of the junction, which would be exacerbated by the Green Belt development.

2.12.4 The note concludes by recommending that further potential capacity enhancements at this location should be considered.

2.13 Further Work

2.13.1 RHDHV met with JMP in September 2014 to observe further progress that had been made to the S-Paramics model. Since the May 2014 technical note, a potential mitigation package had been developed comprising:

- Signal optimisation;
- White line amendments and re-designation of lanes on the A4097 Kingsbury Road approach and roundabout circulatory;
- Removal of 'lane drop' along the A446 northbound from Junction 9, likely to require carriageway duelling.

2.13.2 Overall this would provide a much improved situation compared to the 'Do Minimum' scenario, with significant queuing remaining towards the Hams Hall access.

2.14 Summary

2.14.1 It is clear that a substantial amount of technical assessments have been carried out to determine the mitigation measures required to accommodate the traffic associated with the two development sites.

- 2.14.2 However, whilst the major junctions in the immediate vicinity of the sites have been assessed, the wider highway network has yet to be tested to the same level of detail. This is particularly important on arterial routes where congestion at one particular junction has the potential to effect the operation of the junctions up and down stream.
- 2.14.3 In addition, the initial improvement options put forward at this stage are subject to various conditions and caveats such as securing the necessary third party land and statutory undertakers diversions. Furthermore, it is noted that the recommended mitigation options developed as part of the detailed modelling have been adapted from the initial options set out in the Development Movement Infrastructure Plan. The initial options were developed with the overarching principles of delivering and encouraging sustainable transport choices. The revised layouts have been developed with vehicular capacity as its primary concern, and as such it remains unclear if the recommended options still support and encourage the sustainable transport objectives that have been set for the development sites.

3 OPPORTUNITIES

3.1 Land Allocation

3.1.1 Ashford Developments and Prologis are promoting circa 100 hectares as part of a much larger extension to the east of the proposed Peddimore site. This larger extension would allow BCC to better meet the shortfall in employment land.

3.2 Strategic Link Road

3.2.1 Part of the Ashford Developments and Prologis promotion is the inclusion of a new strategic link road that would connect the A38 to the M42 J9 which would better serve the employment site and provide better strategic links with nearby employment sites such as Hams Hall and Birmingham Airport.

3.2.2 The link road is envisaged to form part of a Gateway feature direct from the M42 J9 interchange that would better serve an international employment site than the existing Kingsbury Road corridor.

3.2.3 Such a link road has the potential to provide significant benefits not only to the development plots that are being considered but also to the existing highway network in the area, particularly Minworth Roundabout and A4097 Kingsbury Road.

3.2.4 The link road would not only complement the current proposals for the Langley and Peddimore sites but would enhance the opportunities to mitigate the traffic impact of the developments. The benefits to the mitigation measures that the link road would bring are discussed below.

3.3 Mitigation Enhancements

3.3.1 As identified in the technical reports that serve as part of the evidence base, a major focus of the assessments has been to identify what mitigation measures are required to accommodate the additional trips on the transport networks. Whilst the need to develop sustainable travel options such as high quality walking and cycling routes and improved public transport provision as part of the developments is strongly acknowledged in the evidence base; the primary focus of the assessments has been on the highway network and the impact on the already congested junctions in the area.

3.3.2 The junctions that have been assessed for mitigation measures are:

- Proposed site access (options)
- Minworth Roundabout
- A4097 Kingsbury Road / Water Orton Lane
- M42 Junction 9

Proposed Site Access

3.3.3 One of the options put forward initially for the site access on the A38 was a roundabout that provided all movements for both sites and included a segregated pedestrian / cycle crossing of the A38 as well as bus priority features. However, the access modelling report determined that the layout didn't provide enough capacity and recommended an alternative layout that removed the bus priority features.

- 3.3.4 The link road would enable a significant proportion of traffic that would use the access junction under the current plans to be redistributed directly onto the M42 J9 junction, thus avoiding the need to use the A38 junction both arriving and departing the site.
- 3.3.5 This resultant reduction in traffic flow that the junction needs to accommodate allows for alternative options to be explored that could include those originally proposed that included the bus priority measures.

Minworth Roundabout

- 3.3.6 Whilst a number of potential options have been developed based on various scenarios, they all require widening of the A38 carriageway, the circulatory of the roundabout and signalling of various arms. In addition to the infrastructure works, it is not clear whether the land required is within the control of BCC which could create difficulties in delivering the recommended layout. Furthermore, there is significant statutory undertakers' equipment in the vicinity of the roundabout including a high pressure oil pipeline that could significantly increase the cost of its construction. As such, the ability to deliver the recommended layout is uncertain and is likely to require significant construction works and associated costs.
- 3.3.7 As with the site access, the link road would facilitate a lower demand of traffic that is required to use the Minworth Roundabout, and as such opportunities to explore more cost-efficient options would be created.

A4097 Kingsbury Road / Water Orton Lane

- 3.3.8 The Peddimore Access Modelling report proposes an improvement option for this junction to alleviate the potential capacity issues. The improvement option consists of widening into the northern side of the carriageway which would reduce the existing footway width by approximately half in order to increase the traffic lanes from three to four in the vicinity of the junction.
- 3.3.9 It remains unclear whether the resultant footway widths can be provided to the minimum standard, but nonetheless, the proposal to reallocate pedestrian footway space in favour of additional vehicular space is likely to affect the environment of the road. There is currently only a footway on the northern side of the road, so reducing its current width in favour of an additional traffic lane could lead to increased severance issues and the road would generally become less favourable to both pedestrians and cyclists.
- 3.3.10 Furthermore, the Minworth Parkway was provided initially to serve as a bypass for Minworth Village with the intention of closing off Water Orton Road to through traffic. The proposals could lead to an increase of traffic travelling through the village.
- 3.3.11 The link road would again result in lower levels of traffic at this junction and the remainder of the Kingsbury Road. As such, this would bring the benefit of being able to reconsider the options at this junction that may better serve all road-users rather than focussing on vehicular capacity provision.

M42 Junction 9

- 3.3.12 The junction currently experiences congestion particularly on the Kingsbury Road approach. In addition, queues on the A446 Lichfield Road block back into the

roundabout circulatory as a result of the lane drop from two lanes into one and the impact of the BDP traffic would exacerbate this congestion. Whilst no formal reporting is available at this time, anecdotal observation of the model suggest that the mitigation package offsets the impact sufficiently.

- 3.3.13 The link road would tie into the M42 J9 interchange utilising the land available within the site to provide an upgraded junction with the M6 Toll road roundabout. This would enable the flow of traffic at the junction to be better managed in a controlled manner and removes the need for the development-related traffic to be accommodated on top of the existing traffic that uses the Kingsbury Road arm of the junction. As such, the potential to provide an upgraded link at the junction allows for more options to be considered.

Summary

- 3.3.14 As described above, the link road also has significant potential to relieve the impact on the four key junctions along the Kingsbury Road corridor. It also has the potential, depending on its design and purpose, to effectively serve as a bypass to the Kingsbury Road corridor that could encourage traffic using the corridor to divert. This creates the opportunity to fully reconsider the proposals and function of the corridor and allows for more public transport, cyclist and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure to be considered, which would be in line with the overarching strategy of the development sites.

3.4 Complementary Opportunities

- 3.4.1 A key objective of the Green Belt Development Movement Infrastructure Plan is to provide improved cycling routes in the area and particularly between the Langley site through to the Peddimore site and onwards to the other employment sites in the area including Hams Hall. The wider development plot would help deliver the aspirations for high quality cycle routes through the site and along the Birmingham-Fazeley Canal and thus would better link the Langley site with the wider employment areas.
- 3.4.2 The link road would also create better links between the site and the surrounding major employment sites such as Hams Hall and Birmingham International Airport. By connecting the site directly into the M42 J9 interchange, the site will be positioned strategically adjacent to the M42, the M6 Toll Road, Hams Hall Rail Freight Terminal and the forthcoming HS2 railway station at Birmingham International Airport. As such, it is likely to become more attractive to businesses due to its excellent transport links.

3.5 Traffic Flow Benefits

- 3.5.1 In order to set out the benefits that the link road could deliver into context, a high level assessment has been carried out of the changes in traffic along the Kingsbury Road corridor.
- 3.5.2 In 2013 the traffic flows on Kingsbury Road were approximately 1,800 two way movements in both peak hour periods. The Langley and Peddimore developments are expected to generate a total of around 3,000 trips in both peaks. Of those 3,000, around 700 will be expected to use the Kingsbury Road corridor. This equates to a 39% increase in traffic levels along the Kingsbury Road corridor.
- 3.5.3 The development traffic increase associated with the potential larger employment site would result in around 250 additional trips on the Kingsbury Road corridor. It is important

to note that the majority of the trips in the peak hours are associated with the residential element of the BDP, due to the majority of employment based trips typically occurring outside of the peak hours. As such, the increase in employment land allocation will not necessarily result in a directly proportional increase in the level of traffic that has already been assessed in the various traffic assessments.

- 3.5.4 Whilst a range of traffic assessment would need to be carried out, it is considered that in combination with the delivery of the strategic link road, the additional traffic associated with the larger development can be accommodated on the highway network and is likely to require less mitigation measures along the Kingsbury Road corridor.
- 3.5.5 The link road would not only remove the need for this development traffic to use the Kingsbury Road corridor, if designed appropriately it also has the potential to serve as a bypass and subsequently result in existing traffic to divert away from the Kingsbury Road and ultimately lead to a reduction in traffic flow. This then opens up a wide range of possibilities to reconsider the design and function of Kingsbury Road that could include priority measures for public transport, cyclists and pedestrians over motor vehicles; and this could lead to a high quality sustainable transport corridor that connects Minworth, Castle Vale, Walmley, Erdington and the proposed Langley residential site to the wide range of employment units in the area.

4 SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

4.1 Summary

- 4.1.1 The BDP currently identifies two sites that are subject to Green Belt removal that lie to the north of Minworth adjacent to each other and separated by the A38. The Langley site lies to the west of the A38 and will be treated as a Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) to deliver the additional housing. The Peddimore site lies to the east of the A38 and is proposed to deliver the additional employment land.
- 4.1.2 Ashford Developments and Prologis are promoting circa 100 hectares as part of a much larger extension to the east of the proposed Peddimore site. This larger extension would allow BCC to better meet the shortfall in employment land. As part of the Ashford Developments and Prologis promotion is the inclusion of a new strategic link road that would connect the A38 to the M42 J9 which would better serve the employment site and provide better strategic links with nearby employment sites such as Hams Hall and Birmingham Airport.
- 4.1.3 A review of the traffic and transport elements of the evidence base that supports the BDP has been carried out. The review has identified some potential difficulties and uncertainties with delivering the mitigation measures that have been developed to accommodate the additional traffic. Furthermore, it is noted that the recommended mitigation options developed as part of the detailed modelling have been adapted from the initial options set out in the Development Movement Infrastructure Plan. The initial options were developed with the overarching principles of delivering and encouraging sustainable transport choices. The revised layouts have been developed with vehicular capacity as its primary concern, and as such it remains unclear if the recommended options still support and encourage the sustainable transport objectives that have been set for the development sites.
- 4.1.4 An assessment of the benefits to the proposed mitigation measures as well as the existing highway infrastructure has been carried out and demonstrates how the link road, by providing a better and more direct connection with the M42 J9 interchange would:
- Better accommodate the development traffic
 - Better serve surrounding residential sites with the various employment centres
 - Reduce the level of mitigation measures required
 - Relieve some of the existing traffic congestion issues
 - Create better opportunities for more sustainable transport options to be considered along the Kingsbury Road corridor
 - Provide better connections to surrounding employment sites such as Hams Hall
 - Provide the opportunity to form part of a gateway feature to an international business park directly off the M42

4.2 Conclusion

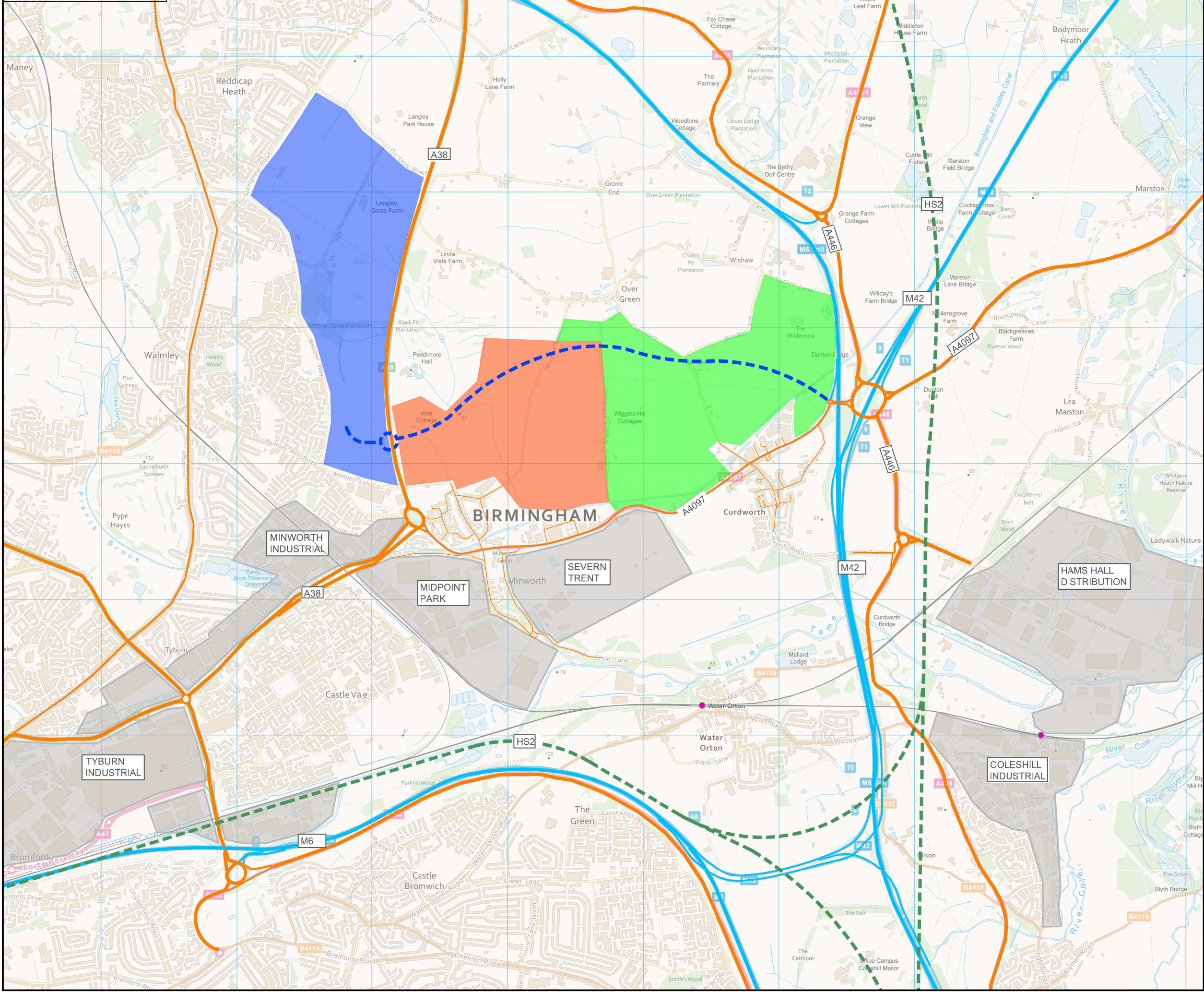
- 4.2.1 It is concluded that the opportunity to provide a larger employment site together with a new strategic link road would bring with it a range of benefits to the area and would deliver a unique opportunity to provide a more comprehensive and integrated sustainable transport network.

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Figures

Figure 1 – Highway Context Plan

DO NOT SCALE



Key

- Langley SUE
- Peddimore Employment
- Potential Larger Employment Allocation
- Potential Strategic Link Road



BIRMINGHAM INTERNATIONAL GATEWAY

FIGURE 1

HIGHWAYS CONTEXT PLAN



Prologis and Ashford Developments

Birmingham International Gateway

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

September 2014

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Figure 1: Study Area

Figure 2: Landscape Character Areas (published studies)

Figure 3: Landscape Analysis

Figure 4: Visual Analysis

Figure 5: Green Infrastructure Principles

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A preliminary landscape and visual appraisal of land at the north eastern edge of the Birmingham conurbation, between the A38 and the M6 toll, has been undertaken by FPCR Environment and Design Ltd on behalf of Prologis and Ashford Development.
- 1.2 The appraisal considers the feasibility in landscape and visual terms of land within a defined study area for a proposed employment allocation currently promoted by Prologis and Ashford Development as 'Birmingham International Gateway'.
- 1.3 The study area is clearly defined by existing peripheral landscape and urban features. West to east it comprises land between the A38 and the M6 toll, and north to south, between higher land to the north defined by Bull's Lane and Church Lane and to the south by the lower lying Birmingham and Fazeley Canal. The study area is illustrated on **Figure 1**.
- 1.4 The study area is located within Green Belt. However the Birmingham City Council (BCC) Evidence Base documents already demonstrate an exceptional case for the release of Green Belt land within the BCC administrative boundary.
- 1.5 This appraisal provides an overview of published landscape character assessment reports applicable to the study area and a preliminary analysis of the landscape and visual characteristics of the study area as a whole. It then identifies opportunities for delivery of a comprehensive framework of new green infrastructure across the study area that would define the extents of a large scale employment development in this location. The green infrastructure proposals in combination with the provision of a new relief road can be used to define a robust future Green Belt boundary.

2.0 ANALYSIS OF PUBLISHED LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTS

- 2.1 A number of landscape character assessments have been published that are of relevance to the study area. These comprise:
 - Natural England Character Area profile No.97 Arden, July 2012;
 - Landscape Character Assessment (BDP 2031), Arup for Birmingham City Council, June 2013; and
 - North Warwickshire Landscape Character Assessment and Capacity Study, August 2010.
- 2.2 The landscape character areas defined by each study are shown on **Figure 2**.
- 2.3 The only published assessment that provides a complete overview of the landscape of the study area is the Natural Character Area (NCA) profile description for Arden (NCA: 97).

Natural England Character Area Profile 97: Arden

- 2.4 **The Natural England publication provides a broad assessment that includes the landscape character of the study area as a whole and its wider context. The study area, Birmingham and elevated land just to the north lie within the 'Arden' National Character Area (NCA) No.97. This demonstrates that at a broad level all of the land within the study area shares common characteristics. In contrast the landscape to north of this and to the east of the M6 toll is located within adjacent NCAs 67: 'Cannock Chase and Cank Wood' and 69: 'Trent Valley Washlands' respectively.**

2.5 The Summary description for Arden is as follows:-

“Arden comprises farmland and former wood-pasture lying to the south and east of Birmingham, including part of the West Midlands conurbation. Traditionally regarded as the land lying between the River Tame and the River Avon in Warwickshire, the Arden landscape also extends into north Worcestershire to abut the Severn and Avon Vales. To the north and north-east it drops down to the open landscape of the Mease/Sence Lowlands. The eastern part of the NCA abuts and surrounds Coventry, with the fringes of Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon to the south. This NCA has higher ground to the west, the Clent and Lickey Hills and to the east, the Nuneaton ridge. The landscape of the lower lying central area is gently rolling with small fragmented semi natural and ancient woodlands. Mature oaks set in hedgerows, distinctive field boundaries, historic parklands and narrow river corridors are key features, all on the doorstep of a heavily urbanised area. Land use throughout the area is mainly, residential, agricultural and industrial including coal mining which is still active in the north east of the NCA. Numerous transport corridors; road, rail, air and canal run through the area. There is likely to be increased development and greater pressure upon the existing infrastructure, particularly around Birmingham, Coventry and the main towns. This pressure could lead to the creation of a new Green Infrastructure linking the urban areas out into the more rural areas. This NCA is among the most geologically diverse. This has had a strong impact on the landscape’s character and development and is further reflected in the range of locally and nationally important geological assets across the NCA. There are also many local biodiversity assets and strong cultural links with William Shakespeare and his ‘Forest of Arden’”.

2.6 The Character Area Profile identifies four ‘Statements of Environmental Opportunity’, these include:-

SEO2: Create new networks of woodlands, heaths and green infrastructure, linking urban areas like Birmingham and Coventry with the wider countryside to increase biodiversity, recreation and the potential for biomass and the regulation of climate change.

For example by:

- ...Planting new hedgerows, especially in the north-eastern part of the NCA, using species of local provenance, planting standard hedgerow trees primarily oak, to maintain the distinctive character of the area. Maintain associated grassland buffer strips and improve habitat connectivity, particularly where this can assist in regulating soil erosion,*
- Planning and creating new and improved links between urban areas, green belt and the wider countryside or major open spaces within and/or near the conurbation especially in and around Birmingham, Coventry and north Solihull,*
- Enhance urban areas and fringes through sympathetic building and landscape design, Creation of new green infrastructure with associated habitat creation and new public access especially around old mining and quarry sites in the central and north east areas of the NCA, Maintaining and improving the existing rights of way network such as the Heart of England Way, cycle routes and access land, Improving links to or within the wider network of canal towpaths such as the Grand Union and Avon canal walks and cycle routes.*

2.7 Under the heading ‘Landscape Change’ the document recognises that

There is development pressure throughout the area. The majority of the NCA falls within the southern half of the West Midlands Green Belt which extends around Coventry and Redditch and

south to Stratford. Growth proposals seem to be focussed around the East of Birmingham and North Solihull. Coventry is an area previously designated as a growth point and there has been consideration of sustainable urban extensions into the green belt.

- 2.8 'Future opportunities' include:
- *...Continuing development pressure in and around the Birmingham and Coventry conurbations and outlying towns. **Opportunities for good, sustainable design reflecting local settlement patterns, green infrastructure and local character reflected in design and materials.***
 - ***Potential for new transport infrastructure including railways. There may be an opportunity to manage proposals to ensure best outcomes for the environment.***
 - ***Associated potential for new green infrastructure building upon the network of sites in the urban fringe...***
- 2.9 'Landscape opportunities' include:
- *Conserve, enhance and restore the area's ancient landscape pattern of field boundaries, historic (including farm) buildings, moated sites, parkland and pasture and reinforce its well wooded character.*
- 2.10 **Essentially Natural England recognises opportunities with development for new green infrastructure to link the urban areas to the countryside.**

Landscape Character Assessment (BDP 2031), Arup for Birmingham City Council, June 2013

- 2.11 **This assessment only applies to a defined area of search (identified as areas A-D in the BCC Green Belt Assessment, October 2013) within the BCC boundaries and therefore only considers the landscape and visual character and sensitivity of land west of Wiggins Hill Road.**
- 2.12 The purpose of the BCC Landscape Character Assessment is to inform the development of the BDP 2031 and is described in the report as:
- *To more fully understand the local landscape and visual resource within the Green Belt area*
 - *To identify the relative sensitivity of the landscape within the Birmingham Green Belt to development*
 - *To inform decision making for changes to the Green Belt and future land allocations in the BDP and any supporting supplementary planning documents*
- 2.13 **Whilst the methodology described within the report appears robust, there is a gap in the evidence base where the landscape and visual character of land east of Wiggins Hill Road and up to the BCC administrative boundary is not assessed. The area excluded from the assessment is clearly identified on Figure 2 as a white strip of undeveloped land to the west of the administrative boundary.**
- 2.14 Within the BCC Landscape Character Assessment, Landscape Character Areas (LCA) 14-19 are located within the defined study area.

- 2.15 LCA 14 (Peddimore Hall Lowland Basin) applies to the majority of the land within the west of the study area and extends to the west of the A38. Key characteristics include Peddimore Hall and moat (at northern edge of the area), large open fields, lack of vegetation coverage, and basin of low lying land. Key views are identified as open 360 views from Wishaw Lane. Peddimore Brook passes through this basin and is described as being difficult to discern. Peddimore Hall is Grade II Listed and there are also Grade II listed farm buildings in this area. The earthwork and buried remains of the moated site, fishpond and ridge and furrow cultivation are designated as a Scheduled Monument.
- 2.16 LCAs 14, 15, 17 and 19 are assessed as having a low sensitivity overall to residential development. LCAs 14 and 17 are assessed as having low landscape and visual sensitivity. LCAs 15 and 19 have low landscape but medium visual sensitivity.
- 2.17 LCAs 16 and 18 are assessed as having a medium sensitivity overall. LCA 16 has medium landscape and low visual sensitivity and LCA 18 has medium landscape and visual sensitivity.
- 2.18 At page 9 the following statement is made on the assessment of sensitivity:-
- “Through mapping, identifying and describing key characteristics and linking them to landscape and visual sensitivity a measure of Relative Sensitivity to Housing Development has been arrived at for each LCA and is mapped on Figure 04. The sensitivity of each LCA to employment development is judged to be high, with the exception of LCA14 due to its large scale nature and lack of landscape components and visual receptors (with the exception of Peddimore Hall and its surroundings). This is due to the larger scale of building heights and footprints which results in reduced flexibility to design around existing landscape components and increased visibility from surrounding areas”.*
- 2.19 Some indication of assessed sensitivity to employment development is given in the written analysis for LCA 14 only. This says:
- “Due to the scale of the area and the visual containment provided by surrounding topography it is judged that the relative sensitivity of this area to employment development would also be low. This is due to the potential to accommodate this type of development without the loss of many landscape components and the opportunities to mitigate visual impact”.***
- 2.20 ‘Enhancement / Mitigation Options’ are given for development within each LCA. Those of relevance to our defined study area are given below:-
- *Reinstatement of historic field structures (LCA14);*
 - *An increase in natural and landscape diversity across the area especially reinstating and upgrading hedgerows alongside Wishaw Lane (LCA14);*
 - *Any development to the west of Wishaw Lane could be mitigated by appropriately designed blocks of woodland and native hedgerow planting along its edge. This would filter views towards development and retain more rural views to the east (LCA14);*
 - *Reinstatement of historic field patterns around Peddimore Hall could help to mitigate visual impacts from this location (LCA14);*
 - *Additional tree planting along the southern boundary of the sports pitches and management of vegetation surrounding the allotments (LCA15);*

- *Screen planting around the boundaries of the area where possible (LCA15);*
- *The creation of more woodland in the northern section of the area and providing additional biodiversity opportunities (LCA16);*
- *Retention and protection of the woodland block and mitigation could take the form of shelter/ screen planting around the perimeter (LCA16);*
- *Landscape and biodiversity enhancements could focus on Peddimore Brook and the PRow corridors and possibly the biodiversity of the golf course (LCA17);*
- *A further enhancement option would be to provide additional screen planting alongside the A38 corridor (LCA17);*
- *Enhancement of field boundaries, increased public accessibility and the promotion of available views (LCA18);*
- *Mitigation could take place around the boundaries of the area or individual properties to reduce visual impact (LCA18);*
- *Landscape enhancements could include increasing biodiversity within the area, reinstating historic field patterns and reinstate hedgerow planting alongside Wishaw Road (LCA19)*
- *Mitigation could include the creation of a green corridor along the PRow, retention of distant views from Wiggins Hill Road and the PRow. The setting of the cluster of Listed buildings should also be preserved (LCA19).*

2.21 **The ‘*enhancement and mitigation options*’, appropriate to each LCA, could be incorporated into a comprehensive green infrastructure strategy prepared for development of land within these LCAs. Alone however the recommended mitigation and enhancement proposals would not be sufficient to provide containment of a large scale employment development. A more ambitious and robust Green Infrastructure strategy that incorporates large-scale woodland planting would be necessary to provide containment of the development and to provide an enduring future Green Belt boundary.**

North Warwickshire Landscape Character Assessment and Capacity Study, August 2010

2.22 This assessment was prepared on behalf of North Warwickshire Council by FPCR Environment and Design Ltd to:

“... provide a better understanding of the District’s landscapes in order to;

- *provide the context for policies and proposals within the forthcoming Local Development Framework (LDF) for North Warwickshire*
- *inform the preparation of the Core Strategy of the Borough*
- *provide a robust evidence base to justify any future policy decisions*

2.23 The assessment provided an overview of the landscape character of the District and a landscape capacity study of the main settlements and service centres within the district. Curdworth was not assessed. The assessment applies to land within the east of the study area. It locates this land within LCA 12 (Langley Heath Agricultural Lowlands). This LCA covers an extensive area of land

which extends to the east and north east of the study area. Land adjoining the study area to the north falls within LCA 13 (Fox Hollies Wooded Ridge).

2.24 Within the context of the site the description of LCA 12 includes the following references:

“Several busier A roads pass through the area and connect to the busy and exposed A42 / M6 toll junction to the south. These busy transport corridors connect to nearby industrial areas to the south around Hams Hall and have an urbanising influence, particularly on the south part of this landscape area. The settlement of Curdworth is located just beyond the junction at the fringe of the area. Lines of pylons also cut through this landscape...”

The Birmingham and Fazeley Canal passes through the landscape but is not a clearly discernible landscape feature except in locations such Bodymoor Heath where the road passes over a humped back bridge and a collection of historic buildings located at the canalside...

A general lack of woodland and tree cover in combination with the sloping landform creates an open empty feel to this landscape, except within the immediate vicinity of the small villages/hamlets. As land becomes more elevated some parts are very open with long panoramic views east across the arable landscape to distant wooded scarps”.

2.25 Under the heading pressures for change/key issues:

This is a wide open landscape that has been subject to considerable agricultural intensification, this has resulted in loss of hedgerows and landscape features. Historic Parkland areas such as the Belfry have been converted to golf course use and golf courses are dominant landscape elements within this open landscape. Busy motorways and A roads on higher land have a significant urbanising effect on this landscape combined with peripheral industrial uses to the south.

2.26 Recommended management strategies of most relevance to the study area are:

- *The design and management of new and enhancement of existing recreational and golf course facilities should be in keeping with the landscape character of the area and seek to assimilate the facility within the wider landscape. Consider peripheral woodland planting blocks to better assimilate the Belfry golf course within the wider landscape;*
- *Conserve and strengthen primary hedge lines and manage these more positively as landscape features;*
- *Enhance tree cover through planting of hedgerow oaks;*
- *Encourage woodland planting on rising ground and particularly in the vicinity of the M42/M6 toll junction; new woodland planting should complement the shape and scale of the surrounding landscape pattern and use native locally occurring broadleaved species, predominantly oak;*
- *Encourage natural regeneration of trees and vegetation alongside watercourses and promote small areas of wetland planting in areas currently lacking in habitats;*
- *Encourage ecological management of grassland areas and wetlands.*

2.27 **This assessment clearly describes a number of existing urbanising landscape detractors in the local context of the site and irrespective of the potential for future employment development within the study area recommends woodland planting on rising ground in the vicinity of the M42/M6 toll junction.**

3.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ANALYSIS

3.1 In the absence of a comprehensive local assessment of landscape character and sensitivity across the study area as a whole, FPCR has undertaken an assessment of local landscape character and visibility. This section should be read in conjunction with **Figure 3: Preliminary Landscape Analysis** and **Figure 4: Visual Analysis**.

3.2 The landscape of the study area can be divided into three distinct areas:

A: Open farmland north of the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal

B: Wishaw Golf Course

C: Settlement and farmland alongside Bull's Lane and Church Lane

3.3 The undulating landform and presence (or absence) of trees and landscape structure play a significant role in defining these local character areas.

Area A

Landscape Character:

3.4 The majority of the study area comprises an unremarkable intensively farmed arable landscape, this is defined as Area A at **Figure 3**. Within this area much of the historic field structure has been removed, there are few remaining hedgerows and these are often gappy and heavily trimmed. Occasional hedgerow oaks, along with trees and taller hedgerows around a small number of properties, provide very limited tree cover. A number of lanes pass through this area. The majority of hedgerows have been removed alongside the lanes, allowing open views across the farmland.

3.5 Stretches of trees bordering the southern edge of the area are associated with the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal. At the eastern edge of the area there are trees around two water storage areas close to the M6 toll. The M6 toll passes the study area on embankment and is an elevated visual detractor within the local landscape. Planting on the motorway embankments is yet to mature. Adjacent to the western boundary, tree cover alongside the A38 is more established.

3.6 Landscape features of higher sensitivity are limited to Peddimore Hall and moat (Scheduled Monument) within the north west of the area and a central cluster of Grade II listed buildings alongside Wiggin's Hill Road. The Birmingham and Fazeley Canal passes through the Curdworth Tunnel, which is a Grade II listed structure. The Peddimore Brook passes through the fields within the western part of this area and is barely discernible within the landscape.

3.7 Pylons pass through this area and cross to the south east towards Hams Hall industrial area.

3.8 The landscape sensitivity of this area to change has been assessed as low. It retains few landscape features and would benefit from creation of new landscape structure as part of a comprehensive green infrastructure strategy.

Visual Character:

3.9 The visual character of Area A varies depending upon the orientation of the undulating landform. Area A1 comprises lower lying land which generally slopes towards the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal to the south. Within the west of the area land is orientated to the south west towards Birmingham city centre and within the east to the south east towards the Hams Hall employment areas.

- 3.10 Applying the BCC methodology, area A1 as a whole would have a low visual sensitivity to change. Low visual sensitivity is defined within the BCC assessment as:

“Limited views into the area or views from a small number of higher sensitivity receptors. Views across the area from commercial property or transport routes. Limited and short distance views that are readily obtained elsewhere within the wider area. Visual impacts could be mitigated”.

- 3.11 Area A2 comprises higher land defined by Wiggin’s Hill Road. From here there are wide views to the south west towards Birmingham City Centre and to the south east towards Hams Hall. Although it has the same landscape characteristics as area A1, applying the BCC methodology it has been assessed as having a medium visual sensitivity to change. A medium visual sensitivity is defined within the BCC assessment as:-

“Views across the area from public property or users of recreational facilities such as sports pitches. Middle distance views from within the area that have some rarity or are specific feature/s within the landscape. Some opportunities to mitigate visual impact”.

- 3.12 Area A3 comprises higher ground adjacent to Wishaw and Over Green. It forms the landscape context to the south of this settlement area and is overlooked from properties along Church Lane and Dunton Lane. This area has also been assessed as having a medium visual sensitivity to change.

Area B

Landscape Character:

- 3.13 This area is dominated by the Wishaw Golf Course. The BCC landscape character assessment describes the character of this area as:-

“...distinguished by the simple designed landscape and visual components of its primary land use as an 18-hole golf course. These include a pattern of greens and fairways with isolated stands of semi-natural vegetation that along with the golf house itself convey an urbanising impression to the local area...There is little ecological diversity or surface landscape heritage although the area has a degree of time depth where the golf course development has not disturbed natural features in the south west limit of the golf course where a field of ridge and furrow is visible and forms part of the Scheduled Monument or Peddimore Hall”

- 3.14 Peddimore Hall adjoins the golf course in the south west corner of this area, and properties adjacent to the hall appear to be occupied by users of the golf course. Golf buggies are parked alongside the properties. This gives an overall impression that the Hall and adjacent grounds form a part of the golf course landscape.

- 3.15 The sensitivity of the golf course landscape to change has been assessed as low due to it being a recently man made landscape with relatively young vegetation structure. However the landscape sensitivity of Peddimore Hall and moat itself is higher. It is located within an area of transitional landscape between the golf course and the open arable landscape to the south. A detailed heritage assessment will be necessary prior to detailing of any employment proposals to establish the remaining extent of the setting of the hall within the landscape and to determine an appropriate mitigation and enhancement strategy.

Visual Character:

- 3.16 The visual sensitivity of area B as a whole is assessed as low. This is a result of the relatively contained nature of the landscape.

Area C

Landscape Character:

- 3.17 The landscape alongside Bull's Lane and Church Lane is relatively intimate, with smaller fields enclosed by taller hedgerows and tree groups and clusters of properties including at Wishaw and Over Green. St Chad's Church at Wishaw is Grade II listed and provides a local landscape feature. Area C is located on a ridge of land, which falls gradually from west to east. In places there are open views across large arable fields to the south.
- 3.18 This area is more distant from the main transport routes and although in places there are long views towards the Birmingham conurbation it has a distinctly rural feel. Overall the area is assessed as having a medium landscape sensitivity to change.

Visual Character:

- 3.19 Much of this area is enclosed by trees and hedgerows, however due to its elevation where vegetation cover is absent there are long views to the south. Visual sensitivity has therefore been assessed as medium.

Discussion

- 3.20 The study area as a whole displays a lack of landscape structure and is influenced by existing urban influences at the fringe of the Birmingham conurbation. These include the A38 and M6 toll corridors, pylons both across the site and distantly to the south east associated with Hams Hall and various views towards the Minworth and Hams Hall industrial estates and Birmingham City Centre.
- 3.21 The landscape of the study area would benefit from the creation of new green infrastructure. Opportunities for creation of urban fringe green infrastructure are recognised in the Natural England Character Area profile description for NCA 97 Arden. The North Warwickshire Landscape Character Assessment recommends woodland planting on higher ground and within the vicinity of the M42/M6 toll junction. The BCC Landscape Character Assessment recommends measures to enhance the existing landscape structure and mitigation against development. However these measures alone wouldn't go far enough to mitigate against large scale employment or to provide a future enduring Green Belt boundary.
- 3.22 Sensitive landscape elements identified within the study area are limited to Peddimore Hall and moat (Scheduled Monument) and to a small number of listed buildings. Prior to the detailing of any employment proposals a detailed heritage assessment is recommended to identify the setting of these elements and to identify opportunities for mitigation and enhancement as part of any overall masterplan. Additionally mitigation and enhancement of the landscape corridor associated with the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal should be considered.
- 3.23 In visual terms the higher ground alongside Bull's Lane and Church Lane includes significant tree cover and provides containment of the study area to the north, it is this ground which truly contains the Birmingham conurbation. In contrast land along Wiggin's Hill Road (Area A2), although elevated is visually open due to a lack of landscape structure. Along much of the road there are no hedgerows even to provide enclosure. This north-south subdivision between the eastern and western bowls of area A is very much a subsidiary feature of local importance only.

3.24 Whilst much of the study area has been assessed as low landscape sensitivity, it is recognised that the higher ground and land that provides the setting to the rural settlements of Wishaw and Over Green is of relatively higher visual sensitivity. Therefore it is recommended that areas A2, A3 and B, C are excluded from any built development proposals, however opportunities should be explored for enhancement of the landscape within these areas as part of the development of a green infrastructure strategy associated with a large scale employment development. A new relief road can however be discretely accommodated through area A2 within cutting, passing below Wiggin's Hill Road.

3.25 **In summary new large scale employment development should:**

- **Protect higher ground from built development and include for significant areas of new woodland planting on this higher ground;**
- **Protect and enhance remaining hedgerows wherever possible;**
- **Protect remaining hedgerow oaks wherever possible and incorporate extensive new tree planting, particularly oaks;**
- **Protect the Birmingham and Fazeley canal corridor (including the Grade II listed Curdworth Tunnel) and seek to introduce landscape enhancements;**
- **Enhance the Peddimore Brook Corridor, which is currently barely discernible within the landscape**
- **Protect the landscape around Over Green and Wishaw (including the Grade II listed St Chad's Church at Wishaw) from built development;**
- **Protect and enhance the landscape around Peddimore Hall from built development. A buffer zone will need to be defined following detailed assessment; and**
- **Protect and enhance the landscape around the listed buildings on Wiggins Hill Road.**

4.0 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PRINCIPLES

4.1 The landscape and visual appraisal establishes that land within the north of the study area is elevated, rising to meet a ridge of higher land at Over Green and includes tree cover along the ridge. It is this east-west orientated ridge line which truly contains the Birmingham conurbation.

4.2 To the south of this, the landform descends towards the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal which defines the southern edge of the study area. Although the landform crests across Wiggin's Hill Road within the centre of this area, the landscape across this undulation within the landform reads as one open intensively farmed arable landscape, with few remaining landscape features and is assessed as being of low landscape sensitivity.



4.3 With any proposals for large scale employment in this area a comprehensive Green Infrastructure Strategy will be required. This will need to address existing landscape features (Peddimore Hall and moat Scheduled Monument, listed buildings, the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal and the Peddimore Brook), seeking opportunities to retain and enhance what is present within a new and more robust landscape framework that incorporates significant areas of woodland planting to provide an enduring future Green Belt boundary. The Preliminary Green Infrastructure Principles Plan (**Figure 5**) illustrates how this could be provided.

- 4.4 A new relief road that links the A38 and M6 toll / M42 junction would provide the access to the employment land and a clear defined Green Belt boundary. The relief road would be within cutting as it passes through the centre of the site, retaining Wiggin's Hill Road and minimising landscape and visual effects on the higher ground.
- 4.5 There is the opportunity with this large scale approach to deliver substantial new green infrastructure to the fringes of the Birmingham conurbation in an area lacking in landscape structure. A major accessible Over Green - Wishaw Green Infrastructure Corridor would ensure long term robust protection to the more sensitive settlement and landscape character components found along the Over Green – Wishaw ridge line. This strategic corridor would then be linked southward via subsidiary GI routes using Wishaw Lane (west and east arms), Wiggins Hill Road (the main north south link) to the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal corridor along the southern boundary.
- 4.6 As part of this there is the opportunity for substantial woodland planting and delivery of a new Community Park. New recreational routes associated with the Community Park would connect into a retained network of public footpaths that link between the settlements and identified landscape features, including to the Langley SUE to the west of the A38.
- 4.7 There is the opportunity to enhance the landscape, ecological and recreational resource of local waterways including the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal, where there is an opportunity to create a high quality walking and cycling route, and the Peddimore Brook, which is currently barely perceptible within the local landscape.
- 4.8 The creation of extensive green infrastructure at the fringes of the Birmingham conurbation would deliver not only significant landscape and recreational benefits but also major biodiversity gains. As well as delivering the recommendations of the published landscape character assessments, there are opportunities to deliver many national and city wide objectives relating to green infrastructure, biodiversity, recreation and health.

FIGURES

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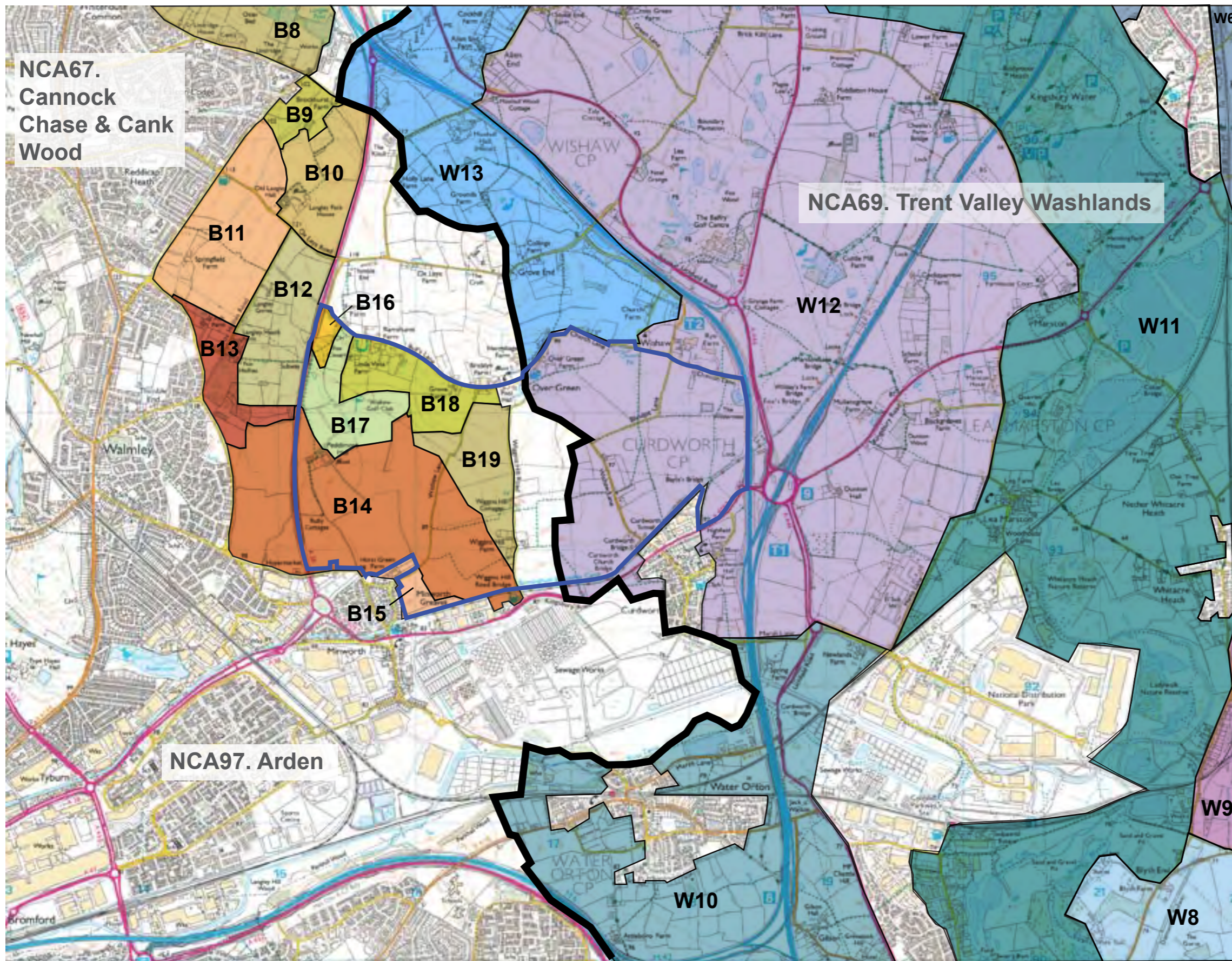
-  Study area
-  Birmingham and Fazeley Canal

Prologis & Ashford Development
Birmingham International Gateway




 STUDY AREA

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Figure 1



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-  Administrative boundary
-  Natural England National Character Areas
-  Study Area

Birmingham City Council Landscape Character Assessment

- B8 Lindridge Valley Farmland
- B9 Langley Brook Lowland
- B10 Langley Hall Farm Lowlands
- B11 Springfield Agricultural Lowlands
- B12 Langley Heath Agricultural Lowlands
- B13 Fox Hollies Woodland Ridge
- B14 Peddimore Hall Lowland Basin
- B15 Minworth Lowland Urban Fringe
- B16 Fox Covert Hillside Woodland
- B17 Wishaw Golf Course
- B18 Bull's Lane Ridgeline Farmland
- B19 Wiggins Hill Lowland Farmland

North Warwickshire Council Landscape Character Assessment

- W6 Wood End to Whitacre Upper Tame Valley Farmlands
- W8 Blythe Valley Parkland Farmland
- W9 Hoggrill's to Furnace End Hamlets
- W10 Cole Valley
- W11 Tame Valley Wetlands
- W12 Middleton to Curdworth Tame Valley Farmlands
- W13 Wishaw to Trickle Coppice Woodland

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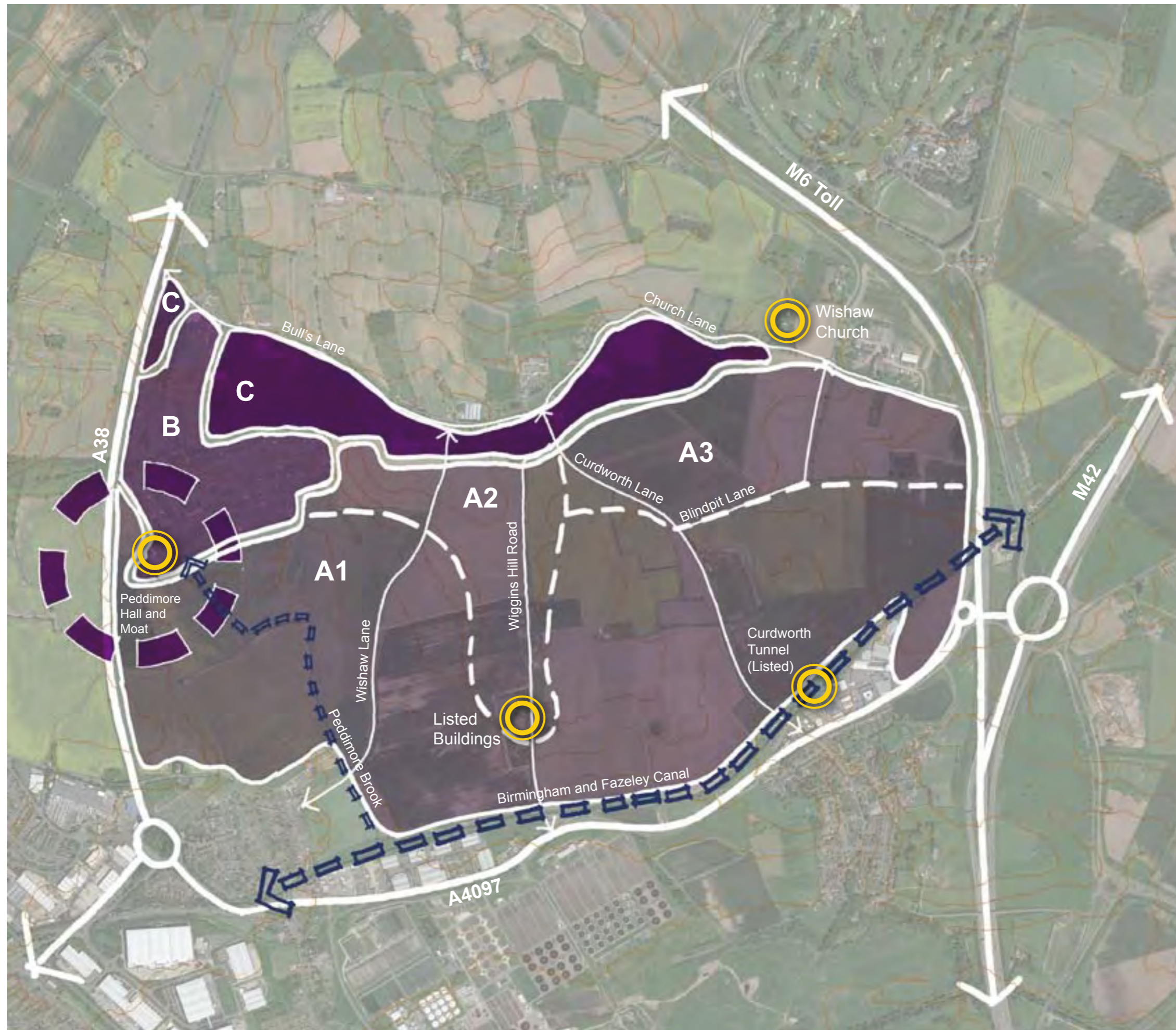
fpcr LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS
(PUBLISHED STUDIES)

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Figure 2

500m 1000m



Landscape Character Areas

- A1** Birmingham & Fazeley Canal Basin
Landscape sensitivity: Low
Visual sensitivity: Low
- A2** Wiggins Hill Road
Landscape sensitivity: Low
Visual sensitivity: Medium
- A3** Blindpit Lane
Landscape sensitivity: Low
Visual sensitivity: Medium
- B** Wishaw Golf Club
Landscape sensitivity: Low
Visual sensitivity: Low
- C** Bull's Lane to Wishaw Church
Landscape sensitivity: Medium
Visual sensitivity: Medium
-  Local landscape of higher sensitivity
-  Further detailed assessment required to establish the sensitivity and extent of the setting to Peddimore Hall and Moat (Scheduled Monument).







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fpcr PRELIMINARY LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

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Figure 3

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-  Land above 110 metres elevation provides visual containment
-  Landform & trees provide visual containment
-  Visually open but relatively elevated land provides local visual separation only
-  Local Visual Features
-  Visually open farmland with limited landscape structure
-  Birmingham and Fazeley Canal

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fpcr VISUAL ANALYSIS



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Figure 4

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-  Overgreen - Wishaw Green Infrastructure Corridor
-  Existing tree cover
-  Potential woodland planting
-  Key existing public rights of way
-  Potential strategic foot / cycle links
-  Blueways (Birmingham & Fazeley Canal and Peddimore Brook)
-  Local landscape features

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fpcr GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PRINCIPLES

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 **Figure 5**